As the end of a very interesting and challenging 2020 nears, the Friends of the Textiles & Costume Committee want to thank you, the Friends of Textiles & Costume, for your continued support. Through your donations, attendance at our sponsored events and interest in our news pieces, you have demonstrated your interest in the ROM’s Textile, Costume and Fashion collection. And the Textiles and Costume Department acknowledges your enthusiasm and attention to the collection. We hope to continue in 2021 with new approaches to Textile, Costume and Fashion news and activities.

Last week Dr. Alexandra Palmer and Dr. Sarah Fee shared some of the Department’s recent activities, reminders of articles on the ROM’s website and upcoming events. The list, with some website links, follow.

All the best to you and your family for the holiday season and 2021. Please stay safe.

Pat Sparrer
Acting Chair, Friends of Textiles & Costume Committee, December 2020

Figure 1 Chintz fragment with tulips and insects, India Ca1700-30. (@halimazine 2020)
Dr. Sarah Fee

Continuing with the conservation work of the textile pieces, the palampore in the South Asia Gallery is rotated (there is always a palampore on display in the Gallery).

Dr. Fee provided this picture of Karla Livingston finalizing the mounting by smoothing out the hanging. This particular palampore features a number of charming animals.

For those of you who were fortunate enough to get into the ROM before the end of November, to see the Cloth that Changed the World exhibition, would have seen the fabulous Indian wall hanging, which was one of 9 panels, 30 metres wide. The hanging was on loan from a French collector and was returned in November 2020 in accordance with the loan agreement. It was such a treat to see this vibrant, detailed hanging depicting Indian life in the 1640s.

Dr. Alexandra Palmer

Along with Renuka Reddy and Berta Pavlov, Dr. Palmer is working a book on 3 Chintz banyans. Ms. Reddy prepared the “process exhibit” that is in the Chintz Exhibition and Ms. Pavlov is the 2020-21 Veronika Gervers Fellow.

The ROM’s Christian Dior exhibition was open for 6 days at the McCord Museum in Montreal before the museum was forced to close due to
Covid. The time frame for the exhibition will be extended, but as expected, those details are not known at this time. Dr. Palmer and Cynthia Cooper, of the McCord, did an opening conversation and it is hoped that it will be posted on that Museum’s website.

Dr. Palmer was a keynote speaker at the Balenciaga conference in Spain. Her talk, and the one by Berta Pavlov on the ROM’s collection, are available here on the conference’s website.

Other activities

Dr. Fahmida Suleman, ROM Curator for Islamic Art & Culture has prepared a series on Islamic Art & Material Culture. Click here: Islamic Art & Material Culture. This is a new research network based in Toronto that brings together the capacities and resources of the University of Toronto, the ROM, and the Aga Khan Museum.

Hard to believe but Covid has sparked a mask collection project at the ROM. Dr. Fee, Dr. Suleman, and Dr. Palmer have been collecting masks to document the pandemic. So far 20 countries are represented and over 200 masks have been collected. In addition to help fight the pandemic, the masks are very creative and their stories fascinating. This activity was highlighted in a CBC National spot. Here are some live media links to click on:

CBC Interview with Dr Alexandra Palmer on Masks

ROM Curators show and discuss the ROM’s Mask collection

Kate Taylor, reporter for The Art and Architecture section of the Globe and Mail, recognized the ROM’s The Cloth Changed the World exhibition as one of the top 10 artworks of 2020 she saw in a gallery, museum or on-line.

“This exemplary exhibition devoted to chintz is filled with lovely things and revealing facts about how India’s technical improvements in dyeing cotton produced a global trade.”

“Among the most spectacular items is an 18th-century palampore, a wall or bed hanging, donated to the ROM from the Harry Wearne collection. It features a central motif of a flowering tree with feathery leaves delineated in soft blues, reds and greens.”
Future events

In the new year, Dr. Fee Sarah and Renuka Reddy are presenting a lively discussion on the exciting revivals and innovations taking place today in India’s unique art of painting cottons using the kalam pen and natural dyes. Click here: Chintz Today: Breathing New Life into Traditional Textile Design

Wednesday, January 27, 2021 | 4:00pm - 5:00pm

Berta Pavlov’s Veronica Gervers’ research lecture will be live online in 2021. The topic “Mapping the Textile Patterns from the Fashion Patterns” focuses on three 18th Century Gentleman’s Chintz Banyans in the ROM Collection. Details to follow.

Finally, here are several live links from the ROM’s website for refreshers on Chintz and other departmental interests.

ROM Flora Danica
ROM 12 Months of Flowers
ROM Florals Desire and Design
ROM The Making of Chintz: Behind the scenes at Cloth that changed the World
ROM Sneak Peek of the Cloth that changed the World

ROM at Home Cloth that changed the World
ROM Christian Dior Evening gown
ROM at Home A Chanel Tie
ROM at Home Fashion research and the ROM Library: Lessons from Covid-19
ROM at Home Sportscar shoes

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Friends of Textiles & Costume is organized by the Royal Ontario Museum’s Department of Museum Volunteers to provide support for the Museum. The ROM is an agency of the Government of Ontario.