



¡VIVA México!

¡Viva México! Clothing and Culture, presented by Mexico Tourism Board opens in the Patricia Harris Gallery of Textiles & Costume on May 9, 2015.

Member Preview May 8th.

Over 150 stunning historic and contemporary pieces will be on display in this engaging exhibition, including complete costume ensembles, *sarapes*, *rebozos*, textiles, embroidery, beadwork and more. The ROM has one of the most important collections of Mexican textiles in the world, and the entire gallery will be dedicated to showcasing them.



Monkey Sampler Detail of Mid 19th century Mexican sampler 2002.19.32, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. W.K. Newcomb. Certified Canadian Cultural Property

Textiles are a vibrant expression of Mexico's enduring cultural legacy. Continually evolving, they combine remarkable technical skill with exquisite artistry, and reflect the diversity and achievements of Mexico's many civilizations over thousands of years. From the distinct dress of Mexico's indigenous peoples (the Maya, Zapotec, and other cultures), through the European influence after the Spanish Conquest of 1521, to contemporary Mexican fashion and textiles, the exhibition will showcase the dynamic fusion of indigenous and colonial histories with the living traditions of, 21st century Mexico. From the iconic to the innovative, *¡Viva México!* explodes with colour, regional diversity, and bold Mexican style!



Festival costume in *china poblana* style, 1932 963.24.A-K, Gift of Luisa Reynes Gisber.

ROM SPEAKS : ¡VIVA México! with Chloë Sayer

On Tuesday, May 5th, from 7 to 9:30, join the Mexican Tourist Board and the ROM to celebrate the ROM's new exhibition *¡Viva México! Clothing and Culture*.

Curator Chloë Sayer, the world's foremost expert on Mexican textiles will lead a whirlwind tour of this fascinating and beautiful country, as seen through its stunning and varied costumes.

Chloë is a freelance specialist in Mexican art and culture. In 2010 and 2012 she was the Veronika Gervers Research Fellow in Textiles and Costume History at the ROM and now she is a Research Associate with the Textiles section of the ROM's Department of World Cultures. She has made ethnographic collections for the British Museum, and has worked on television documentaries for the UK's Channel 4 and the BBC. Her many books include *Arts and Crafts of Mexico (1990)*, *Textiles from Mexico (2002)*, and *Fiesta: Days of the Dead and Other Mexican Festivals (2009)*. She has also written *Mexico: Clothing & Culture* to accompany the current exhibition.

Details of this event may be found at <https://www.rom.on.ca/en/activities-programs/events-calendar/viva-mexico> Through *¡Viva México! Clothing & Culture*, the ROM is participating as a Cultural Collaboration with PANAMANIA presented by CIBC, the arts and cultural festival of the TORONTO 2015 Pan Am/Parapan Am Games.

(986.206.9, This acquisition was made possible with the generous support of Mrs. A. Murray Vaughan from the Doris Heyden Collection)



Photo credit: ROM Archives

ROMtravel Goes to Mexico

Textile Traditions and Carnival Costumes of Central Mexico and Oaxaca, February 3-14, 2016.

Details have now been finalized for a ROMtravel Mexico tour with a textiles and costume focus to take place in February 2016. This will be a rare opportunity. Visit fascinating and lesser known parts of Mexico guided by Chloë Sayer, Guest Curator of *¡Viva México! Clothing and Culture*, opening May 2015, at the ROM. Among the tours highlights: Tlaxcala City in a Carnival mood with gala costumes and carved wooden masks; the market town of Cuetzalan in the Puebla highlands, a showcase for the region's textiles; in Oaxaca enjoy visits to homes and workshops of celebrated weavers and dyers including those who create gauze-like cloth on the back strap loom. All this and more enriched by haunting archeological sites, by enchanting historic hotels and by regional cuisines celebrated across Mexico.

For further information, contact Judy Ireland ROMtravel Trip Coordinator 416 532-1492 or judy028@sympatico.ca

Acquiring an Important Eighteenth Century Calash



In the Fall 2014, the Department of Textiles & Fashion received a donation for the purpose of purchasing an item from the Lillian Williams collection. Lillian Williams is an American who lived in France for over 30 years and amassed an impressive collection of 18th century fashion. Her expert eye enabled her to find the most precious and unusual pieces that rarely survive. In the past, the ROM has acquired many of her rarest and most important pieces. Those pieces significantly enhanced and filled gaps in the ROM's 18th century textile and costume collection and allowed the museum to better tell the story of the development of 18th century female fashion with iconic examples in terms of cut, textiles, embroidery and condition.

Pat Sparrer, the donor, approached Alexandra Palmer a few years ago about making a donation for a purchase for the ROM's collection. At the time Alexandra was eyeing items from the Lillian Williams collection that might become available and she had no hesitation in proposing Pat consider an item this collection. Pat's preference was an accessory piece and the calash was proposed and arrived in the Fall.

This fantastic calash, a woman's collapsible hood worn in the 18th and early 19th century, is made of black silk lined with pink silk, over ribs of cane structure. The extraordinary thing about this 1780's example is that it is not only the earliest, but it is very large in order to accommodate and protect an expensive and tall, powdered coiffure.

The addition of the calash to the Department's collection of 18th century fashion demonstrates this extreme fashion in action.

March Break 2015

Once again the Friends of Textiles & Costume offered the ROM's young visitors during March Break the opportunity to work with textiles. With the renewed interest in sewing, the ability to thread a needle and work with buttons were considered necessary tools for the future. "Textile Tech" provided them with the opportunity to string buttons for a necklace, headband or bracelet, make felt balls from wool roving and create a yo-yo (a basic quilt technique). On average, we had 80 young visitors per day.

Collections & Research

Adopt a Journal

Academic Journals are vital to the research of the ROM collections; several of the journals at the ROM are either extremely scarce or are not available anywhere else in the city.

As subscription costs to these journals continue to rise please support the ROM libraries by adopting today! Donors will be acknowledged on the display racks in the reading rooms. At the ROM website, choose Collections & Research. Choose Textiles & Fashions, Library & Archives for a selection of journals at Adopt a Journal



Worn : Shaping Black Feminine Identity

Worn is an installation in the Wilson Canadian Heritage Gallery, within the Sigmund Samuels Gallery of Canada. It is a contemporary art intervention that resulted from a public call launched by the ROM as part of the Of Africa Initiative.

Of Africa is three year project aimed to provide a space of sustained and purposeful "presence" of African and diasporic themes, histories, artists within the ROM's programming. *Of Africa* interrogates monolithic representations of Africa and its diaspora. The project's goal is to present a multiplicity of perspectives, and introduce audiences to African and diasporic historical and contemporary cultural and artistic expressions.

Vancouver base artist Karin Jones chose to explore the theme of the call with a piece that is at once a metaphorical self portrait and a commentary on the historical amnesia of people of African descent from main stream Canadian history. The piece consists of a Victorian mourning dress made of braided synthetic hair extensions, surrounded by a bed of natural cotton bolls, some of which are altered to contain tufts of the artist's own hair. For Jones, the Victorian mourning dress is a symbol of sadness, "high" culture, the British Empire, and the constraints of feminine beauty norms.

This dress is made out of African "hair" – "actually a synthetic material created specifically for use in African-style braiding techniques. The work underlines African hairstyles as a craft as refined as any decorative art produced in Europe; it alludes to the invisible labour of the thousands of Africans who contributed to the wealth of the British Empire; and it references the story of Sarah Baartman, an African woman whose silhouette helped shape 19th Century European fashion. The dress rises from a bed of cotton bolls and African hair bolls, a mythic figure born of the cross-cultural forces of colonialism, commerce, and slavery."



Photo credit: ROM Archives

Making a Donation To become a Friend of Textiles & Costume

If you are a Friend of Textiles & Costume, a past Friend or wish to become a Friend, June 1st, 2015 marks the start of a new “friendship” process. To meet Canada Revenue Agency rules for donations, and to receive an income tax receipt, any donation made to become a Friend of Textiles & Costume will be treated solely as a donation. No benefits will accompany the donation. Donations will be used to fund the philanthropic activities of the Friends of Textiles & Costumes, such as purchases for the Museum’s Department of Textiles & Fashion, additions to the Department’s collections or fund the Burnham Brett Endowment Fund for future Gallery exhibits.

In May 2015 more details will be released on the new process. We are currently working with ROM senior management to ensure a seamless process. If you wish more information in advance, please contact DMV Reception at 416-586-8097, and leave a message for Pat Sparrer. Pat will return your call and discuss becoming a Friend of Textiles & Costume.



Stephanie Kean

Stay tuned for more news on the **2015 Annual Veronika Gervers** lecture to be held in June. This year’s fellow will be Dr. Ruth Barnes, renowned scholar of Indonesian textiles and early Indian printed cottons. Dr. Barnes will be studying the ROM’s collection of printed fragments found at Fostat, Egypt.

Department Intern

If available, the Friends of Textiles & Costume will provide the Department of Textiles & Fashion with funds to hire an intern. Stephanie Kean was hired by the Department for the period of February 3, 2015 to March 19, 2015.

Stephanie’s primary activity involved assisting with the de-installation of the two Textiles exhibits; *Cairo Under Wraps* (CUW) and *Form Follows Function* (FFF). She returned to storage over 80 Tiraz fragments from CUW and 20 pieces from FFF. In addition, she assisted with Sarah Fee’s ongoing research of Indian textiles, photographing over 70 shawl fragments. She also assisted with fashion pieces by Martin Margiela.

Providing funds for an intern not only support the Department but provides a learning opportunity for students of textile, fashion and museum studies.

IN MEMORIAM

In her short time on earth, Arti Chandaria (1960-2015) touched numerous people at the ROM including many in the Textiles&Costume department. Best known for her role in the creation of the ROM’s South Asian Advisory Committee, she was also an early member of TEFCO.

Patricia Harris remembers:

“Textiles were her family legacy. Her Aunt Indira encouraged traditional textile production with a modern twist. To benefit village women, Indira Designs created contemporary patterns for sari silks that became highly sought after in fashionable society in India and internationally. A fond memory: one evening in Toronto, at a trunk show, Aunt Indira tossed one length of silk after another from a small suitcase. Those of us in the group eagerly snapped them up - These silks remain favourites in our wardrobes.”

“Sarah Fee remembers”, I came to really know Arti from 2013, when I accompanied the textile tour she organized to her homeland of Gujarat, India. Ignoring her growing pain after a 20-year battle with cancer, she relished every dusty bus ride, spice stall, and every minute spent in an artisan’s homes.

Arti never stopped feeding her eyes, mind and body with beautiful textiles, even when on palliative care. In the final months of her life, this past November and December, she came weekly to the ROM to share in my ongoing study of our Indian collections. She dressed in layers of her favourite Indian textiles, electric colours in the dead of winter, not only to keep her waning body warm, but to keep her soul alive, she said. Moving slowly around the table with her walker, carefully absorbing every detail, she forced me to slow down and truly see every stitch too. Her favourite pieces were the folk embroideries from Gujarat, their bright threads showing the human instinct for line, form, whimsy, and pure imagination. My view of these textiles has changed forever. Arti had that way with people. She will be missed.



A full remembrance of Arti Chandaria can be found in the *Toronto Star* February 8, 2015.

Chairs Report

In May 2014 I undertook the role of Chair of the Friends of Textiles & Costume (FTC). At the same time the Museum commenced developing a new strategy for delivering programs at the ROM. The strategy significantly changed the way the ROM's Friends groups would work to deliver programs to meet the unique interests of each group's members. While the new strategy continues to be developed, programs already scheduled proceeded.

The Fall 2014 schedule of programs began with Patricia Harris' presentation of 55 years of volunteering at the ROM and her involvement in the programs offered in the Textile and Costume field. This was followed in October with Sarah Fee's talk about the incredible range of textiles acquired by the ROM's founder, Dr. Charles Currelly. In November, Dr. Phillip Sykes, the 2014 Veronika Gervers Research Fellow, presented his research on the market for British printed garment textiles in Canada between 1780 and 1880. The Fall schedule concluded with "The Fashion Doctors", Dr. Alexandra Palmer's and Dr. Timo Rissanen's walking us through the creation of a garment from start to finish.

With respect to the new strategy, Chairs of the Friends groups continue to work with Museum administrators to formulate procedures for donations and the development and marketing of programs. Details continue to be fine-tuned as a June 1st implementation date nears. It should be noted that the Friends groups have been assured the support of the Museum's senior management as their future unfolds.

With changes pending, the FTC Executive Committee recommended that the 2015 Annual General Meeting be deferred until such time that plans for going forward were underway, or in place. I am pleased to say that the Executive Committee is planning on the FTC AGM being held in the Fall of 2015. We also hope to announce some textile and costume/fashion related programs at that time.

The FTC Committee remains committed to supporting the Department of Textiles & Fashion, and encourages ROM Members to do the same. The richness and breadth of the textile and costume collection at the ROM is truly memorable. While we continue to work with the ROM to meet these commitments, we ask for your patience and continued support.

Pat Sparrer - Chair

LECTURE: Presented by the Silver Society of Canada

Drizzling: A Peculiar Pass Time

Peter Kaellgren

In past centuries, textiles were a sign of wealth and status. Fine fabrics were slowly woven by hand at great expense. They were often colourfully dyed to attract attention to the wearer or occasion and frequently woven or embroidered with gold and silver thread or trimmed with metallic lace. Since lamps and candles provided the only source of light for formal occasions, the metallic threads contributed a shimmering effect to the evening. Costly fabrics were usually recycled and salvaged with the metallic thread being an important byproduct, especially in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Peter's talk is inspired by a drizzling set used to remove metallic thread from fabrics and an unusual collection of drizzled fabrics in the textile collection at the Royal Ontario Museum. Members are encouraged to bring scissors and other vintage sewing tools to the session, especially if they are all or partly silver. Kindly advise Philip and Dorothea (dburstyn@rogers.com) if you are bringing any guests.

Space is limited and will be on a first come basis.

May 27, 2015

Spadina Museum

Please register with Philip Cheong
ssc.secretary@yahoo.ca

FTC COMMITTEE Visits Costume and Textiles Collection.

On occasion, the FTC Executive and friends take excursions to textile and fashion displays in Toronto. Recently they visited two exhibits at museums in Montreal, the Museum of Costume and Textiles of Quebec and the McCord Museum, as well as Costume Collection of the City of Toronto

Museum of Costume and Textiles of Quebec (MCTQ)

The CHIC & CHOC exhibit at the Museum of Costume and Textiles of Quebec, presented sixty garments and accessories chosen for their scintillating beads and sequins, from a Roaring Twenties flapper dress to a stunning Céline Dion concert gown created by Annie Horth.

The exhibit explored the glittering and fascinating world of dazzling garments and accessories. It also shed light on the raw materials involved and the element of inconvenience: fabric quality and maintenance, material sourcing and use, craft or industrial productions. The impact and implications of this addition of luxury to fashion (CHIC) are exposed: this is the CHOC.

McCord Museum

"Love in Fine Fashion" at the McCord Museum was a display of 30 historic Montreal wedding dresses and accessories. The FTC group was welcomed and given a personal tour of the exhibition by Cynthia Cooper, who curated it. She is curator of Costumes and Textiles and Head of Collections and Research at the McCord Museum.

The story the dresses told was multi-levelled. A few brides' life-stories were highlighted and labels identified each bride and her dress, its date and materials. An audio tour presented popular French and English aphorisms or sayings like "She would never embroider the truth" or "She still veiled her feelings" which drew attention to the garments and their details.

City of Toronto Museum and Heritage Services

In April, the FTC Executive Committee and friends were given a tour by Neil Brochu, Co-ordinator of Collections and Conservation at the City of Toronto Museum and Heritage Services building on Atlantic Avenue. While 20 per cent of the Collection is on display in the City's 10 historic sites, the Collection holds more than 100,000 historical objects and close to a million archaeological pieces. The costume pieces viewed all told stories about the City of Toronto – the fabric or outfits were made here or the clothes worn to Toronto events, often by historically significant Torontonians.



#6928 Shoes from the Eaton collection representing items sold from their stores and catalogues. From left to right c.1940, 1930, 1910, 1950. Anne Armstrong