

Reviews

Textile Conservators gather in Hong Kong to Unroll and Unfold... IIC-Palace Museum 2017 Hong Kong Symposium

By Alice Tsang



It was such an amazing weekend from 24-26 November 2017 as over 280 textile conservators and practitioners from 24 countries and regions gathered in Hong Kong for the IIC-Palace Museum 2017 Hong Kong Symposium, right after the conclusion of its precursor, the 9-day IIC-ITCC 2017 textile conservation workshop held in Beijing. Pleasant weather, agreeable timing, animated discussions, great enthusiasm, high spirit, reconnecting old acquaintances and expanding connectivity..... contributed to a rewarding, fruitful and memorable Symposium.

Featuring a theme of long-standing interest to conservators and growing interest to other fields and professionals in recent years, "Unroll and Unfold: Preserving Textiles and Thangkas to Last" aimed to encompass a wide spectrum of issues ranging from artistic, historical to conservation, and scientific aspects of textiles. 18 distinguished specialists from different parts of the world shared their inspirational thoughts on the latest methodologies, strategies, and best practices in preserving textiles and thangkas as part of our cultural signifiers and legacies. By virtue of their illuminating presentations and discussions, the Symposium unfolded many unique and unprecedented challenges as faced by textile conservators in the fast-evolving era. It is believed that with the concerted efforts from conservators across boundaries of nations and disciplines, the merits and significance of our valuable yet vulnerable textile heritage can survive the passage of time and be passed down to inspire the future generations.

Adding spice to the delegates' experience in Hong Kong as our valued guests, the welcome reception was complemented with two demonstrations on traditional handcrafts, during which delegates were being



Dr Feng Zhou, Director of the China National Silk Museum presenting his findings in conserving textiles excavated along the Silk Road



Delegates during the event



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offered a gift of their names written in Chinese in rainbow ink and auspicious Chinese knots to bring them luck. Furthermore, delegates were invited to visit the behind-the-scenes tour of a Silk Road exhibition, in which over 200 sets of treasures selected from the Routes Network of the Chang'an-Tianshan Corridor were exhibited. Five cultural tours and a textile workshop were brought to some of the lucky delegates (who were fast enough to sign up for the programmes) as a finale of the Symposium before all departed Hong Kong with smiling faces, refreshed minds and new connections for opportunities. To recapture the fond memories of the Symposium, we will put together the event photos for all to share on the symposium's website.

We would like to thank again the 18 distinguished speakers, our sponsors, supporting institutions, and above all, our long-standing partners, IIC and the Palace Museum for their unfailing trust and support since the IIC 2014 Hong Kong Congress. As the event organiser, one of the most rewarding outcomes is to know the event will be a starting point to unfold a series of thematic conservation symposiums of similar nature in the near future! We trust these events will provide the fertile ground needed to foster advancement in the field and continuous professional linkages essential for collaborative journeys within the conservation community. Stay tuned and be included for the next one!

About the author

Alice TSANG is a Conservation Officer at the Chinese Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) and was part of the Organising Committee of the IIC-Palace Museum 2017 Hong Kong Symposium. Alice is also Fellow of IIC.

