Heritage Lottery Fund helps young people to dress the world in silk

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Through the project ‘Dress the World - Living in Silk’, young people will explore, learn about and help conserve rare Chinese silks that form part of the collection at Nottingham City Museums and Galleries.

Working with the Keeper of the World Cultures Collection, the group of 22 young people from across Nottingham will select items from the main collection, including a Manchu soldier’s outfit, damask silk woven skirts, embroidered panels, sleeves, purses and costume figures, and explore how such fragile artefacts are conserved and prepared for display.

The silks, date back to the 1800s and many were donated as part of the founding collection of the Castle Museum in the 1870s.

The project will culminate in an exhibition interpreting the history of the silks and their heritage created by the young people, who will also work with 15 fashion students from Nottingham Trent University to put together a cultural cat-walk fashion event.

The young people will also support and deliver bespoke tours of the exhibition, to be staged at Nottingham Castle. The exhibition will include the beautiful, newly-conserved Chinese costume and textiles, most of which have not been seen in public for over 20 years.

Through these activities, volunteers will learn new skills in photography, graphic design, social media, marketing, and contemporary collecting.

Emma Sayer, Head of the Heritage Lottery Fund East Midlands, said: “HLF funds projects that are interesting and different, reaching out to new audiences and providing innovative and exciting learning opportunities for everybody to enjoy. This project is one of those opportunities, giving the young people of Nottingham a chance to show their passion and creativity and share it with their community”.

On completion of the project a small number of the conserved items will be left permanently on display as part of the Threads Gallery at Nottingham Castle, whilst the digital photos recorded during the project will be uploaded to the Culture Grid for the world to see.

Ron Inglis, Service Manager for Nottingham City Musuems and Galleries and Regional Lead for Dress the World collaborative programme, said: “We have been developing this project with support from Museums Libraries Archive (MLA) and endorsed by London Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games (LOCOG) and we are delighted to have been awarded this grant from HLF. It will enable us as a service to engage young people with our Chinese textile collection in the build up to the Olympic Year.”

Living in Silk is part of Dress the World, a collaborative programme of three East Midlands’ exhibitions, was launched today as part of the Stories of the World project for the London 2012 Cultural Olympiad.

Notes to editors

Dress the World is the East Midlands' contribution to Stories of the World, for the London 2012 Cultural Olympiad, and aims to showcase to a worldwide audience innovation and excellence in museums, libraries and archives. The project is led by the MLA in partnership with the London Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Further information

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