A stitch in past times! Young East Londoners learn the embroiderers' art

09/05/2012

Inspired by garments worn by Queen Victoria, King George III and Princess Diana, young people will learn about traditional British embroidery and go on to create their own ceremonial dresses which will go on public display.

The project is being run by Hackney-based FAD (Fashion Awareness Direct) which will be working with Kensington Palace where the Royal Ceremonial Dress Collection is kept. Ten young volunteers will be trained in leadership and heritage embroidery skills and they will pass on their knowledge to a further 60 young people from East London schools and community groups.

Having visited Kensington Palace, they will take part in a series of workshops with an embroidery specialist and they will be able to compare the traditional British heritage with that of other cultures, such as India, Pakistan or Turkey, where embroidery is also a traditional skill.

They will use their discoveries and the skills gained to create an embroidery 'toolkit' that will be made available online to more than 80 schools and community groups. But the centrepiece of the project will be to create six modern ceremonial dresses that will go on public display over the course of 2012/13, firstly at Kensington Palace followed by the 'Knitting and Stitching Show' at Alexandra Palace in October. The dresses will also form part of a touring exhibition which will visit schools and community centres taking part in the project.

Sue Bowers, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund London, said: "This is a hands-on, practical project that will introduce fashion-conscious young people to a fascinating aspect of British heritage while learning a range of skills."

Maria Alvarez, Executive Director of FAD, said: "We are very excited to be working with the Heritage Lottery Fund and Kensington Palace on this unique opportunity for young people to learn about their heritage, develop new skills and create their own modern interpretation of ceremonial dresses".

Notes to editors

FAD is a creative charity supporting young people to bridge the gap between education and the fashion industry. It specialises in running professional fashion workshops and competitions for 13 – 25 year olds, working with creative young people throughout their education from secondary school and college to university.

Further information

Vicky Wilford, HLF press office, on 020 7591 6046 / 07973 401 937, vickyw@hlf.org.uk or Phil Cooper, HLF press office, on 07889 949 173

Fran Lawton, Communications Manager, FAD, on 020 7490 3946