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‘Royal embroidery’ exhibition offers visitors first look at new curtains for Huis ten Bosch Palace, royal residence of King Willem-Alexander and Queen Máxima

The new curtains for Huis ten Bosch Palace – the royal residence of King Willem-Alexander and Queen Máxima – will go on display at the TextielMuseum in Tilburg this autumn. Her Majesty Queen Máxima, along with more than 150 embroiderers from across the Netherlands, is helping to embroider this new piece of cultural heritage. The new curtains, along with historical curtains that served as inspiration, will be shown in the exhibition ‘Royal embroidery: stitches and stories’, which runs from 1 December 2022 to 29 May 2023. The exhibition offers a glimpse behind the scenes of this extensive creative project and uncovers the wealth of stories that arise when people embroider together.



Her Majesty Queen Máxima and members of the 'Stik en Strijkgroep' embroidery group from 'Het Ronde Tafelhuis' in Tilburg during an embroidery masterclass given by master hand embroiderer Anna Bolk in the TextielMuseum, photo: Maarten Schuth for the TextielMuseum

The exhibition gives visitors a chance to see the new curtains up close before they are hung in the Chinese Hall of the palace. The curtains are a contemporary reinterpretation of the original curtains made in 18th-century Canton, which are now too fragile for use and need to be preserved. The new curtains are being machine embroidered in the TextielLab – the TextielMuseum's professional workshop – before they are hand finished by embroidery lovers from around the country. The exhibition offers a unique glimpse inside the palace and a behind-the-scenes look at the creative process while highlighting the craftsmanship, passion and personal stories of the embroiderers involved.

New Dutch heritage

The first room in the exhibition recreates the atmosphere of the Chinese Hall. Besides the historical curtains, the room features authentic furniture, fire screens and 18th-century tableware. Visitors can zoom in on the curtains' intricate embroidered scenes and listen to audio fragments that reveal the stories behind the images. For example, one audio fragment focuses on villagers washing clothes in a river, providing insight into the social status, dress, symbolism and architecture of China at the time. The next room displays the new curtains, which were designed by The Hague designer Liesbeth Stinissen. These depict the Dutch delta, inspired by the Chinese river shown on the historical curtains. The meandering waterways connect various architectural icons and everyday scenes from The Netherlands' rich history, some of which also have a special link to the Royal House. Examples include the Delta Works in Zeeland, NEMO Science Museum in Amsterdam and the Sint Servaas Bridge in Maastricht.

Craftsmanship

As a museum and workshop in one, the TextielMuseum places as much emphasis on the creative process as the end result. The 'Royal embroidery' exhibition takes visitors through all aspects of the curtains' design and production. In a space set up like a studio, sketches and samples show the creative choices Liesbeth Stinissen made to arrive at the final design. Meanwhile, a film shows her exploring the countless possibilities of computer-controlled embroidery in the TextielLab with machine embroidery expert Frank de Wind, as well as the technical challenges she encountered and overcame. Samples are provided for visitors to touch, helping to bring the details of the design to life.

Embroidering connections

The last room focuses on the embroidery lovers who are contributing to the curtains. Led by master hand embroiderer Anna Bolk, more than 150 people from embroidery groups as far apart as Friesland and Zeeland and Her Majesty Queen Máxima are helping to develop the curtains. Personal embroideries form a starting point to tell the stories

behind their owners' passion for embroidery, which sometimes dates back generations. In this way, the exhibition highlights the role of embroidery in facilitating connection, conversation and the exchange of knowledge and skills.

The exhibition 'Royal embroidery' is made possible by the structural support from Provincie Noord-Brabant, Gemeente Tilburg and the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science and in collaboration with Dienst van het Koninklijk Huis.

Bijlagen



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For more information or interview inquiries, please contact the communications department of TextielMuseum via simcha.van.helden@textielmuseum.nl or +31 (0)6 10 94 12 77. The Government Information Service can be reached on +31 70 356 4428.

The TextielMuseum is a dynamic and creative museum, located in a former textile factory in Tilburg, The Netherlands. It is the only place in the world where design, art, fashion, heritage and innovation in the field of textiles come together. The combination of inspiring exhibitions, workshops and the specialized TextielLab for making and innovating textiles makes the museum unique in its kind.

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