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Textile Museum of Canada to debut 40th anniversary series of exhibitions featuring founding collections with *Good Beginnings: Children's Hats and Clothing from China*

The Textile Museum of Canada is pleased to debut the first in a new series of exhibitions highlighting the Museum's earliest acquisitions in conjunction with its 40th anniversary in 2015. *Good Beginnings: Children's Hats and Clothing from China* opens on Wednesday, February 11 at 6:30 pm, celebrating the richness of Chinese traditions through textiles that comprise one of the largest and oldest of the TMC's collections.

Good Beginnings brings together some of the most eloquent textile expressions of China, the embroidery undertaken for the delight and protection of children. Among the most elaborate pieces are hats beautifully constructed by Chinese mothers and grandmothers in shapes representing powerful animals – tigers, dragons, rabbits and bats which were believed to bestow a child with strength, wisdom and power, frighten away evil spirits and ensure a prosperous future. The exhibition presents over 80 of such hats handcrafted in the early 20th century from silk and detailed with appliqué, metal thread, tassels and beads, as well as other highly decorated and embellished garments including collars, bibs, vests and shoes, all worn by children for Chinese New Year and other festive occasions.

Amassing stellar pieces from the earliest donations to the Textile Museum of Canada after its founding in 1975, the exhibition also speaks to a larger story – that of the connection between private collectors and public institutions in this country. Among the collectors celebrated in *Good Beginnings* is real estate developer and businessman Fred Braida, whose significant gifts to the Museum include not only 1100 Chinese textiles, but also the TMC's current location in a highrise development in Toronto's original Chinatown, secured as part of a private-public partnership in 1989. Interviews with key donors are incorporated within the exhibition, offering new insight into the rich cultural traditions on view.

Many aspects of traditional Chinese culture have disappeared during the course of the 20th century, but some elements continue to flourish – the Chinese zodiac and the lunar New Year still play an important part in the lives of many people today, and festive garments continue to be richly embroidered with auspicious motifs and symbols. Coinciding with Chinese New Year celebrations, the TMC will launch a dynamic series of public programs exploring Chinese culture and traditions, connecting to the contemporary Chinese community as well as the general public.

Good Beginnings: Children's Hats and Clothing from China is open to the public February 12 – May 24, 2015. The Textile Museum of Canada is located in downtown Toronto (55 Centre Avenue, Toronto, Ontario, M5G 2H5) and is open daily 11-5 pm, Wednesdays 11-8 pm. Visit www.textilemuseum.ca for more information on all of our exhibitions and programs.

- 30 -

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