

Loong 龍 Conservation Project

Update Number 6 | 16 June 2022

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Loong 龍 conservation short film



Image: Dr Holly Jones-Amin in the video discussing the conservation process.

The Loong 龍 Conservation Project has been documented in a short film by producer and director Paul Burston. The video features interviews with Dr Holly Jones-Amin on the conservation treatment process, Bendigo Chinese Association (BCA) President Doug Lougoon discussing the cultural significance of Loong 龍, Conservator Marica Mucic on the advancement in sustainable practice implemented during the project, and Masters of Cultural Materials Conservation student Isabel Walker on her experiences working alongside conservators and community.

The video is available on YouTube on the [Grimwade Conservation Services Channel](#).



The Loong 龍, Chinese Dragon Conservation project is supported by the Victorian Government through the Living Heritage Grants Program.



Image: BCA President Doug Lougoon discussing the significance of Loong 龍.

Stitch repairs to Loong's 龍 skirt

Loong's 龍 skirt is made of hand-dyed silk and adorned with decorative ribbon and tiny mirrors. During its lifetime, the skirt sustained damage caused by movement during his parade life and aging. The conservation team has spent over 90 hours stabilising tears using fine filament silk threads. A small patch of nylon net was cut and placed on the inner surface of the Loong's 龍 skirt and carefully sewn on with silk threads using couching stitch to join tears. All stitching repairs are problematic to perform. Textile repairs are usually performed with the textile lying flat on a table. Repairing Loong's 龍 skirt requires conservators to work on a vertical plane, making neat controlled stitching challenging and physically demanding.



Image (l to r): Holes in skirt; nylon net patch on the inner surface.



Image: Couching stitch using fine silk filament threads.



Image: Split fabric in the process of being stitched.



Image (l to r): Conservators Jude Schahinger and Dr Reyhane Mirabootalebi completing stitch repairs.

Local conservator Jude Schahinger

The Grimwade Conservation team were joined by local conservator Jude Schahinger in June. Jude has played a leading role in the conservation of Loong 龍 for over 10 years. Her work has included masterful repairs and condition documentation, and supervision of handling and movement as per Heritage Victoria permit requirements.

Jude will continue to work on Loong 龍 in the Museum when the Grimwade team return to Melbourne. There is a lot of stitching to do!

Image: Conservator Jude Schahinger working on repairs to the skirt in June 2022.

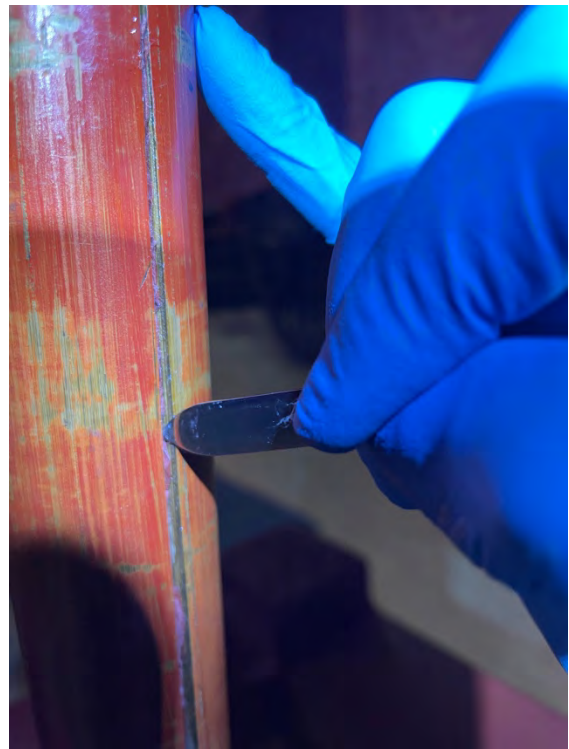


Pole stabilisation

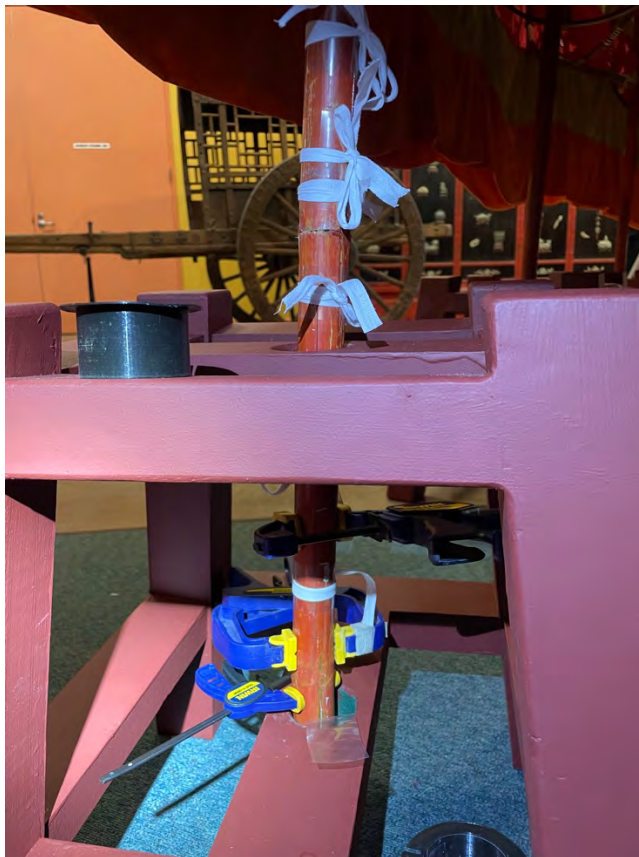
Loong's 龍 bamboo support poles have been subjected to significant stress for over 100 years, with some displaying significant splits and splintering. The condition of each support pole was assessed. One-third of the poles have undergone conservation treatment to prevent splinter loss and the splits from further widening, and weakening. The process to remediate the splits has included the insertion of fish glue. One pole with significant splits which could not be joined required a Japanese paper fill to close the split. Conservators frequently use Japanese paper (made from paper Mulberry tree bark) to stabilise objects. After adhering, the pole was clamped and left to dry for several days. After the clamps were removed, hand-painted, colour-matched Japanese paper strips were wrapped and adhered around the most unstable poles.



Images (l to r): Fish glue is inserted into wide cracks, and then hand-painted Japanese paper is prepared.



Images (l to r): Japanese paper pre-tinted red carefully inserted into the split cavity.



Images: The bamboo poles are clamped and left to dry.



Images (l to r): Strips of hand-painted Japanese paper adhered with fish glue and wrapped around the pole.

Raising Loong's 龍 head

A new stand was made to raise Loong's 龍 head in late 2021. However, after careful consideration and consultation with the Bendigo Chinese Association and Golden Dragon Museum representatives, it was decided that additional plinths were required to raise Loong's 龍 head further and aid in lengthening his neck. The Bendigo Woodturners Inc designed and constructed the new plinths.



Image: Dr Holly Jones-Amin measuring up plinth.



Image (l to r): BCA President Doug Lougoon, Grimwade Conservator Dr Holly Jones-Amin, and Golden Dragon Museum Collections Manager Megan Hall discussing the plinth size needed to raise Loong's 龍 head; and after construction.



Scales repair continues

The delicate repairs to the silk on Loong's 龍 scales have continued throughout June. The split silk and protruding cotton stuffing on each scale have been carefully repaired using funori and hand-coloured Japanese paper.



Image (l to r): Scale with split silk and protruding stuffing; and Grimwade team member Tina Kalliakmanis working on the repairs in June.

Get in touch

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