



JULIA BRENNAN, TEXTILE CONSERVATOR

26 December 2015



I met **Julia Brennan** in Thailand in 2013 at the impressive conservation lab of the recently opened **Queen Sirikit Textile Museum** in Bangkok. She actively participated in designing the department. She also trained the team of conservators in charge of the outstanding range of Thai costumes, ceremonial dresses, and textiles, all preciously kept and exhibited in the museum. A textile conservator, instructor, and consultant, she travels the world—Asia in particularly— to transmit and share her knowledge. Always looking for new methods and innovative archival materials, she supports Asian local museums in the treatment of their textile collections that often include fascinating examples of ancient traditions and techniques.

And when she is not traveling, Julia Brennan lives in Washington DC. In her studio, she extends the life of commissioned textiles and costumes at the request of individuals or institutions, preparing them for exhibition, and preserving them from the dangers of time. She has worked for nearly a decade at the **Textile Museum** in Washington DC before starting her own business. The textiles she receives—sometimes in critical condition— are the product of the famous and the lesser known history. They may come from a family heirloom, a personal collection, and found during a faraway trip. Each case is a new challenge, an opportunity to explore a chapter of textile history, and a scientific research to conduct.

Conservators must define the base material, the techniques, but also the dye to be able to consider the best way to proceed. The applied treatment must be minimally invasive and as respectful of the object and its condition as possible. Textile conservation is a work of patience which requires a broad spectrum of skills. It combines manual skills, scientific and historical knowledge. **Julia Brennan** always expresses such a deep curiosity for all types of ancient and contemporary textiles from all over the world, spanning from American folk patchworks to graphic Indonesian batiks. Her passion and enthusiasm make her the eloquent advocate for the necessity to preserve this essential global textile heritage.

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