

Nahum Ben-Yehuda

Ars Textrina International Textiles Conference: “Natural Fibres - A World Heritage”

In celebration of the “International Year of
Natural Fibres”.

2-3 September 2009, Leeds, UK

This year's annual Ars Textrina conference was held on the 2nd and 3rd of September 2009, in association with the University of Leeds School of Design and the University of Leeds International Textiles Archive (ULITA), under the auspices of Professor Michael Hann and his invaluable assistant Jill Winder.

In accordance with Ars Textrina tradition, the conference presented a variegated staff of delegates, both veteran Ars Textrina participants and many new faces - academics with historical, industrial and theoretical perspectives, some of them textile craftspersons in their own right, museum curators, independent researchers and textile artisans. All in all, over 40 presenters from 13 countries.

The program consisted of a wide range of subjects, all focused however, on the central theme - natural fibres. Keynote plenary presentations were given by Barbara Setsu Pickett, University of Oregon USA - “Silk Ikat Weaving in Uzbekistan”; Nahum Ben-Yehuda, Bar Ilan University Israel - “A Fresh Look at the Linen in the Hebrew Bible”; Eugene Nicholson, curator of the Bradford Industrial Museum - “Simply Red”, and Patricia Williams, University of Wisconsin USA - “Spaniards, Indians, Traders and... Muslims? International Influence in American Southwest Style”. The parallel sessions dealt with places ranging from Japan and Madagascar to Novgorod, fibres from

hyacinth and jute to Khadi spun silk, time periods from Ancient Egypt and Ancient Greece to the Modern Era, textile processes from spinning and weaving to rag recycling, and products from priestly vestments and women's woolen knitwear to lampshades. As a rule, the well-prepared speakers chose interesting and innovative topics, and presented them with enthusiasm.

A poster session was presented by students from Hanyang University of Korea.

Abstracts from the conference are currently available at:

http://ulita.leeds.ac.uk/docs/Ars_Textrina/Abstracts2009.pdf

Summaries are in process of being prepared for the above website.

Next year's conference will take place in Seoul, Korea.