

Media Release:

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Museum Conservation Workshop for Tropical Climates

A series of conservation workshops at the Eastern Indonesian Provincial Museum (UPTD Museum Daerah Nusa Tenggara Timur), in Kupang, West Timor, Indonesia have just been delivered by staff from the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory (MAGNT).

MAGNT Curator of Southeast Asian Art and Material Culture Joanna Barkman and Conservator Carolyn McLennan said their skills and knowledge are very applicable to the UPDT Museum, as both museums are working with cultural materials in similar tropical climates, and face the same kind of challenges in conserving and handling wooden, bamboo and fibre objects.

“The workshops ran over a three week period, from 1-18 April, with the initial week covering materials and technology of wooden and bamboo artefacts, including deterioration; physical, chemical, mechanical and biological, in addition to pest management in tropical museums,” Ms Barrkman said.

“Silverfish, cockroaches, beetles, moths, borers and termites are all potential hazards to museum collections in tropical environments, so we introduced systems that help to reduce the occurrence of these pests, as well as how to monitor the damage they can cause, which is critical for the preservation of these valuable collections.”

Ms Barrkman who recently returned from the initial one week workshop said it was a great success with the two Indonesian provinces of Nusa Tenggara Timur (eastern Indonesia) and the Maluku represented.

“We had a total of four museums attend, including West Sumba Museum, 1000 Moko Museum Alor, the Ambon Provincial Museum and the Eastern Indonesian Provincial Museum,” Ms Barrkman said.

“We also had an archaeologist from the Office Culture and Tourism from Bajawa, Flores attend as they plan to establish a museum to house the archaeological remains of the *Homo floresiensis* (Man of Flores) discovery at the Liang Bua cave in Flores in 2003.”

The following two week workshop, run by MAGNT Conservator Carolyn McLennan, focussed on creating and improving a dedicated textile store.

“This part of the training had a hands-on focus, where we developed a suitable storage system for the UPDT Museum’s extensive textile collection and included designing storage systems, construction of these systems and applying techniques for reducing light which causes fading to delicate textiles” Ms McLennan said.

“We also covered methods used to establish a dedicated ‘receiving room’, which involves creating a space to establish practical procedures to receive, quarantine, condition report incoming objects, undertake insect inspections in stores, and identify and implement any necessary treatments.”

The establishment of a receiving room at the museum will improve the conservation and collection management practices that underlie the care and preservation of the museum’s collections.

The program, which has been funded by the Australia Indonesia-Institute and the Northern Territory Government, fosters the continuation of strong working relationships between museums within the Southeast region.

This current program builds on a previous workshop delivered by Ms Barrkman and Ms McLennan in 2007, which focused on the care of textiles.

Ends

Media Note – for more information contact Joanna Barrkman on 8999 8249

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