

Media Inquiries

Holly Evarts, Director of Communications, World Monuments Fund (New York)

+1-646-424-9594, hevarts@wmf.org

Ben Haley, Public Relations Assistant, World Monuments Fund (New York)

+1-646-424-9594, bhaley@wmf.org

Yan Zhang, Foreign Affairs Department, Palace Museum (Beijing)

[86-10]-8511-7053; zhangyan_wenyi@hotmail.com

**PALACE MUSEUM AND WORLD MONUMENTS FUND
CELEBRATE RESTORATION OF JUANQINZHAI
IN THE FORBIDDEN CITY'S QIANLONG GARDEN
NOVEMBER 10, 2008**

**JUANQINZHAI (STUDIO OF EXHAUSTION FROM DILIGENT SERVICE)
IS FIRST LARGE-SCALE HISTORIC RESTORATION TO BE COMPLETED
AFTER MAJOR FIVE-YEAR INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION**

For Immediate Release—Beijing, China, November 10, 2008 . . . The **Palace Museum** (PM) in Beijing and the **World Monuments Fund** (WMF) today officially unveiled Juanqinzhai (the Studio of Exhaustion from Diligent Service) for its first public viewing after a comprehensive restoration that brings the building close to its original state when it was created by the Qianlong Emperor some 233 years ago. The two organizations are celebrating the results of an intensive five-year project by the Palace Museum working in partnership with the World Monuments Fund. The 18th-century Studio, which features one of the most significant, exquisitely designed interiors to survive relatively unchanged from the times of Imperial China, is the first large-scale restoration to be completed in the Qianlong Garden. Its opening marks the successful first phase of a major 12-year, multimillion-dollar project, funded by the Palace Museum and the World Monuments Fund, to restore the entire complex. The project is WMF's most comprehensive and the Palace Museum's most important collaboration with a foreign organization to restore a historic interior.

Juanqinzhai was built between 1771 and 1776 by the Qianlong Emperor (r. 1736–1795) as part of the Ningshougong (Palace of Tranquility and Longevity) District, which was designed as a “mini-Forbidden City” complex within the Forbidden City. The Qianlong Garden, almost two acres (about 6,400 square meters), is one of the largest areas in the Forbidden City to remain relatively untouched since imperial times. The Qianlong Emperor planned to use the complex after his intended retirement in 1795. The Studio's exquisite interiors include a private theater adorned with a stunning masterpiece: superb room-sized silk murals that were painted using European trompe l'oeil perspective techniques and that are unique not only in the Forbidden City but in all of China. The paintings cover the entire ceiling with an intricate wisteria pattern and the walls with detailed scenes of palace buildings and mountainous landscapes. Although large trompe-l'oeil murals of this type were once used in imperial settings by the

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Qianlong Emperor, these are the sole surviving of their kind and reveal the influence that European aesthetics had on Chinese decorative arts. In addition, Juanqinzhai contains an imperial receiving room that reveals fine bamboo thread marquetry, jade inlay, and wood carpentry techniques, such as inner-bamboo-skin carving, seen nowhere else in the Forbidden City. These rooms will offer ample opportunities for study by scholars, art historians, and the general public, who have never before been able to see them.

“The restoration of the Juanqinzhai interiors is the first-large scale interiors restoration project since the founding of the Palace Museum,” said **Zheng Xinmiao, director, the Palace Museum**. “Interior decorations were of unprecedented complexity in the Qing Dynasty, especially during Emperor Qianlong’s reign. As the Juanqinzhai interiors represent the highest level of interior decoration of the time, this project is of tremendous importance and presents unique challenges. It has attracted great attention at home and from abroad. The completion of the restoration of Juanqinzhai interiors has resulted in beneficial exploration and valuable research for future interior restoration projects in the Palace Museum. It has given us precious experience in both theory and practice, paving the way for future interior restorations in the Palace Museum. Therefore, the completion of the restoration of Juanqinzhai interiors is a milestone in the history of restoration and conservation in the Palace Museum.

“The Juanqinzhai interior restoration project not only charted uncharted waters but also laid the foundation of Sino-US collaboration in protecting world cultural heritage sites. Due to this great relationship, both sides expressed wonderful wishes to expand their collaborations. On September 13, 2005, the Palace Museum and the Smithsonian Research Center and the World Monuments Fund signed an agreement for a second phase collaboration. On February 28, 2006, the Palace Museum and the World Monuments Fund signed an official agreement to jointly restore and conserve Ning Shou Gong Garden, which epitomized artistic styles of North and South China to create an unique charm in imperial gardens. This restoration project will span 12 years and be completed in 2017. We firmly believe that the restoration of Ning Shou Gong Garden will be another milestone in our collaboration. Looking ahead, we cannot help but feeling excited, we are full of hope and expectations.”

“One of the biggest challenges in this project was how to use traditional craftsmanship and materials for restoration work while introducing modern conservation approaches and scientific applications,” said **Bonnie Burnham, President of the World Monuments Fund**. “Collaborating with the Palace Museum, we successfully met this challenge by putting traditional craftspeople together with modern conservation scientists to thoroughly research and develop the best approaches in order to adapt the building with contemporary climate control, lighting, and museum exhibition technologies. The building was as fragile as the art it contains. Now it is in a condition that will protect its precious contents for a long time.”

The success of the project can be attributed to applying traditional methodologies and craftsmanship to new conservation tools, an approach that will be used at other renowned heritage sites in China, preserving them for both the Chinese and the rest of the world.

Burnham added, “Our partnership with the Palace Museum has been, and continues to be, one of our most satisfying. The restoration of the Studio is an exciting milestone for all of us and we look forward

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to many more years of collaboration. Juanqinzhai was created during a historic period when China was an extremely prosperous and important global trading partner throughout the world. Its restoration has been completed, likewise, during a period when China is once again fully engaged with the west in commerce and art, as it was during its creation.”

Juanqinzhai (Studio of Exhaustion from Diligent Service)

The Qianlong Emperor was renowned for being a great patron and connoisseur of traditional Chinese arts and for encouraging the imperial workshops to reach new creative heights of extravagance and technique in materials and workmanship. He made use of the best available materials and most skilled artisans for his Garden buildings to create sumptuous and elegant spaces that represented the epitome of Chinese interiors at the time.

Juanqinzhai and the other 26 buildings and structures in the Qianlong Garden, a number of which house equally important interiors that have survived almost completely intact, were largely neglected after China’s last emperor, Puyi, left the Forbidden City in 1924. Although many areas of the Forbidden City have since been opened to the public, Juanqinzhai, as is true for all the buildings in the Qianlong Garden, has always been off limits and never open to the public. Before the restoration of Juanqinzhai began, much of the building’s most delicate decoration, including the bamboo marquetry, white jade cartouches, and double-sided embroidered silk panels, was disintegrating.

During the past century, the interiors suffered from neglect and natural deterioration and were in a state of major disrepair when, in 2001, the Palace Museum and WMF created an international partnership to restore Juanqinzhai—and subsequently the entire garden and all its buildings—and open them to the public.

Visitors will see the interior architecture of Juanqinzhai much as the Qianlong Emperor would have seen it. A number of original pieces of furniture and decorative objects from the building will be on view, offering visitors a sense of how the Emperor used these rooms for relaxation and entertainment and how exquisite the workmanship was under his direction.

In addition to repairing and conserving the original interior finishes and art work, the restoration project included the installation of modern environmental controls, almost invisible to visitors, that will regulate the building’s internal temperature, humidity, and air flow and purification in order to maintain optimum conditions to maintain the restored paintings and wood finishes. New lighting and security systems have also been installed with minimal visible impact.

The two primary rooms of Juanqinzhai, the Theater and the Reception Hall, will be available for visits on a limited basis in 2009.

Conservation Team

The conservation team, led by the Palace Museum and the World Monuments Fund, included master craftspeople from Zhejiang Province and Suzhou who still practice some of the fine traditional Chinese textile and woodworking craftsmanship used in the building. In addition, a number of leading modern conservation experts were brought together to work on the restoration. These included specialists

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from top institutions in China and the U.S., including Tsinghua University in Beijing, and, from the United States, the Smithsonian Institution, the Winterthur Museum, the Getty Conservation Institute, and the Peabody Essex Museum in Salem, Massachusetts.

Symposium

Following the opening celebration of Juanqinzhai, on November 11 and 12, 2008, the Palace Museum and WMF will host a one-and-a-half day symposium on the restoration of Juanqinzhai for Chinese and international conservation professionals. Symposium participants will examine the project's major conservation challenges, describe alternative approaches that were considered, and discuss the solutions that were eventually adopted. The symposium's goal is to assist other conservators facing similar challenges and to help the Palace Museum-WMF team identify the best approaches for subsequent stages as the restoration of the Qianlong Garden continues over the next decade.

Publication

In conjunction with the completion of the Juanqinzhai restoration, the World Monuments Fund and Scala Books are copublishing *Juanqinzhai in the Qianlong Garden: The Forbidden City*, edited by Nancy Berliner, Ph.D., Curator of Chinese Art at the Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, Massachusetts. This fascinating book, which includes contributions from Chinese and Western specialists, delves into the life of the Qianlong Emperor, explores the international collaborative restoration project, details the conservation work, and dazzles with stunning full-color before-and-after images. Visit www.wmf.org or www.scalapublishers.com for details on purchasing.

Exhibition

A traveling exhibition on the Qianlong Garden and its pavilions is being organized by the Peabody Essex Museum in Salem, Massachusetts, in cooperation with the Palace Museum and the World Monuments Fund, to open at the Peabody Essex Museum in September 2010, and remain on view for four months. The exhibition will feature 80 to 100 magnificent objects from the Qianlong Emperor's private place of respite and contemplation, including spectacular thrones, paintings, and intricate works of carved jade, precious stones, cloisonné, lacquer, and bronze.

Donors

The restoration of Juanqinzhai was funded by the World Monuments Fund with support from the Freeman Foundation; The Brown Foundation, Inc., of Houston; British American Tobacco; the Robert W. Wilson Challenge to Conserve Our Heritage; Tiffany & Co. Foundation; and Mr. and Mrs. Peter Kimmelman.

The Palace Museum

The Palace Museum was established on October 10, 1925, on the foundation of a Ming and Qing Dynasty palace, incorporating its collection of treasures. It is a large, comprehensive national museum that embraces the palatial architectural complex with its exquisite art and imperial court history. This

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location—the Forbidden City—was established in 1420. It was designated by the State Council as a key national cultural heritage protection site in 1961 and in 1987 it was named a UNESCO World Cultural Heritage site. The Forbidden City boasts the largest and most intact antique palatial architectural complex in both China and the world. The Palace Museum is dedicated to the conservation of its unique architecture, collections, and imperial court history through archiving, research, and display so they may be enjoyed by people from all around the world.

World Monuments Fund in China

Since 1996, the World Monuments Fund has worked with the People’s Republic of China and its citizens to raise worldwide visibility of and financial support for the protection and restoration of internationally recognized Chinese cultural heritage sites. During this time, WMF has provided technical assistance and financial support to projects throughout China. In addition to WMF’s large-scale project with the Palace Museum to restore the Qianlong Garden in the Forbidden City, WMF’s other projects in China have included imperial sites, ancient temples, village theaters, and archaeological sites.

World Monuments Fund is the leading independent organization devoted to saving the world’s most treasured places. For over 40 years, working in more than 90 countries, our highly skilled experts have applied proven and effective techniques to preserve important architectural and cultural heritage sites around the globe. Through partnerships with local communities, funders, and governments, we inspire an enduring commitment to stewardship for future generations. Headquartered in New York, WMF has offices and affiliates worldwide. www.wmf.org

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