Nichelino (Torino), Palazzina di Caccia di Stupinigi

The textiles conservation project

The conservation of the textile heritage of the Palazzina di Caccia di Stupinigi takes its place within a larger project of extraordinary maintenance, conservation and re-fitting of the Palazzina itself. It has been preceded and followed by organised investigation of the documentary sources.

The conservation started in 2003 with the treatment of the upholsteries from the Appartamento di Levante. This treatment was allocated to the Tessili Antichi s.r.l. of Viterbo by the local Soprintendenza.

Conservative problems of upholstery fabrics come from environmental and use conditions not greatly unfavourable, but lasting over a very long period, that heighten natural decay of fibres, affecting chemical, physical and aesthetic levels.

The restoration aimed to conciliate conservative and aesthetic needs, in accordance with the standards established for the recovery of the entire mansion.

Wall hangings are made with different fabrics dated from XVIII cent.: figured, chine à la branche, and painted silk textiles that show characteristics typical of the period. Copies made during the '60s line some rooms.

The state of conservation is compromised by protracted hanging, soot, plaster flakes and dust, insect action and by repairs made by gluing patches in the areas at eye level. During works it appeared that wall hangings were repeatedly detached and readapted.

All phases have been accompanied by research to identify methods, materials and products that best meet the specific conservation problems. During restoration textiles have been cleaned (microvacuuming and water wash), supported with cotton-polyester or silk-polyester materials and surfaces have been protected sewing on maline net. Then fabrics were prepared to allow their relocation.

Intrusiveness of gaps was lightened by inserting chromatic integrations. In painted silks the paint layer has been consolidated and then textiles have been fixed to a silk crepeline support treated with a thermoplastic polymer. Trimming, tassels and rosettes of pelmets of windows and doors were recovered and consolidated.

Furniture often had original textiles en suite with wall hangings.

Conservation of furniture coverings of Appartamento di Levante was carried out without removing fabrics, to not alter the original assembling: sewing on maline net protects surfaces and allows periodic dusting. Fitting local supports closed gaps and contained padding.

Documented wall hangings (painted silks – péquins - of western manufacturing) now lost are recognizable in fragments that are layered on four stools. First the original covering en suite with wall hangings (1), then two layers derived from pelmets and wall hangings now lost from other rooms (2,3). Finally a copy of the '60s (4).