

Chinese craftsmen construct spectacular lanterns destined for Scotland

A team of 150 specialist craftsmen from China are hand-making over 450 dazzling lanterns to illuminate RZSS Edinburgh Zoo with the Giant Lanterns of China this winter.

To showcase the scale of the project, the craftsmen opened the doors to their workshop in China giving a behind-the-scenes look at the team skilfully constructing each giant lantern by hand.



The expert team based in Sichuan Province PRC, China, includes steel fabricators, painters and silk seamstresses who have worked 25,000 hours to construct the spectacular lanterns destined for Scotland's capital.

Around 40 craftsmen and artisans from the team are set to accompany the lanterns as they make the 5,000 mile journey from the Far East ahead of the official opening of the Giant Lanterns of China festival at RZSS Edinburgh Zoo in December.

The 469 handmade lanterns will be part of 34 installations set to transform Edinburgh Zoo into an impressive light spectacle for 50 nights between 1 December 2017 and 25 February 2018.

The trail will explore three themes: China, RZSS Edinburgh Zoo, and the Royal Zoological Society of Scotland's (RZSS) worldwide animal conservation work. There will be:

- 211 large-scale animal-themed lanterns
- 30 giant pandas, which takes 30 hours each to build
- 12 lions
- 30 native birds
- 25 flamingos
- 20 penguins

- 15 snails
- a 19-foot high and 115-foot long Chinese dragon, which will take 15 craftsmen a total of 2,000 hours to build.

They will be showcased alongside beautiful flowers, fauna, insects, and Chinese heritage symbols such as signs of the zodiac and traditional archways.

The Giant Lanterns of China project is co-produced by DDM Entertainment & Events Inc of Ontario, Canada and The VYA Creative Lantern Company.

Barbara Smith, CEO at RZSS Edinburgh Zoo, said: “Seeing the intricate work which has gone into creating these incredible structures is remarkable. These impressive sculptures will not only transform the Zoo this winter but showcase our important conservation work by shining a new light on the animals we support.

“We’re looking forward to welcoming the team when they arrive here in Edinburgh and to see these magical lanterns in all their glory.”

Each evening, visitors will be entertained with special surprises such as performances, food and craft stalls.

It will give visitors a taste of Chinese culture while they explore the epic works of lantern art. Tickets for The Giant Lanterns of China are priced from £17.50 per adult and available at: edinburghzoo.org.uk/lanterns