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The Vancouver Art Gallery Announces the Major Fall Exhibition *Guo Pei: Couture Beyond*

Fashion Masterpieces by China's Illustrious Couturière to be Presented in Canadian Premiere



July 10, 2018, Vancouver, BC – The Vancouver Art Gallery announces the Canadian premiere of *Guo Pei: Couture Beyond*, an exhibition of breathtaking designs from China's foremost couturière, to be presented October 13, 2018 to January 20, 2019. Exquisite, theatrical, inimitable, Guo's oeuvre of immaculately-crafted masterpieces evoke the decadence of China's historical dynasties and have secured her place amongst the world's premier fashion designers. Organized in collaboration with Atlanta's SCAD FASH Museum of Fashion + Film, this exhibition traces the evolution of Guo's design sensibility over ten years, and features more than forty pieces from her most iconic runway shows.

Rife with symbolism, Guo's avant-garde silhouettes seamlessly fuse contemporary design with pre-republic opulence. The only Chinese national designer invited to join Paris' prestigious Chambre Syndicale de la Haute Couture, she is revered for combining China's rich aesthetic tradition with contemporary sensibilities. Guo's accomplishments in fashion have earned her a spot on *TIME Magazine's* list of 100 Most Influential People as well as *Business of Fashion's* 500 list. Her critical success reveals the proliferation of influential fashion practices outside of the traditional Euro-American centres of Paris, London, Milan and New York.

This exhibition will begin with a lively installation in the Gallery's rotunda featuring the collection Guo produced to launch her collaboration with MAC Cosmetics in 2015. It will continue with a number of works presented in Guo's *Legend of the Dragon* (2012) collection, which animates the mythical dragon motif that figures prominently in the Chinese zodiac. Two important pieces from her critically lauded Paris Collections will conclude the exhibition: shimmering metallics from *Encounter* (2016) and ornate garments inspired by Switzerland's Cathedral of Saint Gallen in *Legend* (2017).

Visitors will be invited to feast their eyes on Guo's artistry such as her imperial canary-coloured cape. Famously worn by recording artist Rihanna at 2015's Met Gala, the piece propelled Guo into the international spotlight. Constructed from fifty-five pounds of silk, layers of embroidery, and featuring an elaborate five meter train, the piece has since come to epitomize the detail and craftsmanship of Guo's designs.

Since she began designing, Guo's work has aimed to capture the splendour of China's last imperial dynasty, the Qing Empire (1644–1914), as well as restore traditional craft practices that had been lost. Not long after graduating from Beijing School of Light Industrial Design, she launched her own label and atelier, Rose Studio in 1997, which today employs nearly 500 skilled artisans.

"For the first time, the Gallery will present an exhibition focused on the intersection of art and fashion as a dimension of visual culture with works by one of the fashion world's game-changing icons," says Kathleen S. Bartels, Director of the Vancouver Art Gallery. "Guo Pei's pursuit of excellence is unmistakable in every stitch of her creations. Each of her designs is a masterpiece and feat of craftsmanship that will undoubtedly captivate fashion-savvy visitors and art-lovers alike in this Canadian premiere."

Guo Pei: Couture Beyond is organized by the Vancouver Art Gallery in collaboration with SCAD FASH Museum of Fashion + Film and curated by Diana Freundl, Associate Curator, Asian Art and Stephanie Rebick, Associate Curator.

Supporting Sponsor:



A program of the Vancouver Art Gallery's Institute of Asian Art

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Image: Guo Pei, *One Thousand and Two Nights*, 2010 (detail), silk mesh gown embroidered with silk-, 24-karat gold- and silver-spun thread, and embellished with crystals, gems, beads, sequins and pearls; embroidered silk cape trimmed in fox fur; brass crown embellished with gems, Swarovski crystals, diamantes and pearls, Photo: Courtesy of SCAD.

IMAGES ARE AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST

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About the Vancouver Art Gallery

Founded in 1931, the Vancouver Art Gallery is recognized as one of North America's most respected and innovative visual arts institutions. The Gallery's ground-breaking exhibitions, extensive public programs, and emphasis on advancing scholarship all focus on historical and contemporary art from British Columbia and around the world. Special attention is paid to the accomplishments of Indigenous artists, as well as to the arts of the Asia Pacific region—through the Institute of Asian Art that the Gallery founded in 2014. The Gallery's programs also explore the impacts of images in the larger sphere of visual culture, design and architecture. www.vanartgallery.bc.ca

The Vancouver Art Gallery is a not-for-profit organization supported by its members, individual donors, corporate funders, foundations, the City of Vancouver, the Province of British Columbia through the BC Arts Council, and the Canada Council for the Arts.