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Exquisite. Theatrical. Inimitable.
Fashion Designs Become Masterworks of Art in
the Canadian Premiere of *Guo Pei: Couture Beyond*

*Exhibition Marks First Fashion-Focused Presentation
in Vancouver Art Gallery's History*



Media are invited to a preview of *Guo Pei: Couture Beyond* presented as a conversation between the designer and renowned fashion journalist Bronwyn Cosgrave on **Thursday, October 11, 2018, 9:00 AM** at the Vancouver Art Gallery. RSVP directly to Hanah Van Borek (hvanborek@vanartgallery.bc.ca)

September 13, 2018, Vancouver, BC – For the first time in its history, the Vancouver Art Gallery presents an exhibition dedicated to the art of fashion with the Canadian premiere of *Guo Pei: Couture Beyond*, October 13, 2018 to January 20, 2019. Organized by the Vancouver Art Gallery in collaboration with Atlanta's SCAD FASH Museum of Fashion + Film, this exhibition features more than forty breathtaking designs by China's foremost couturière.

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 modern sensibilities. This includes the imperial yellow cape—constructed from fifty-five pounds of embroidered silk and featuring a five-meter train—famously worn by recording artist Rihanna at the 2015 Met Gala.

Tracing the evolution of Guo's design sensibility over ten years, *Guo Pei: Couture Beyond* begins with significant examples from her early collections, *Samsara* (2006), *An Amazing Journey in a Childhood Dream* (2008) and *1002 Nights* (2010), with a lively installation in the Gallery's rotunda of the collection from Guo's 2015 MAC Cosmetics collaboration. It continues 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. Guo's critically lauded Paris Collections conclude the

exhibition: shimmering metallics from *Encounter* (fall 2016) and ornate garments inspired by Switzerland's Cathedral of Saint Gallen in *Legend* (spring 2017).

"With works by one of the fashion world's game-changing icons, *Guo Pei: Couture Beyond* marks the first time the Gallery is presenting an exhibition focused on the intersection of art and fashion as a dimension of visual culture," says Kathleen S. Bartels, Director of the Vancouver Art Gallery. "Guo'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."

About Guo Pei:

Since she began designing, Guo Pei's work has aimed to capture the splendour of China's last imperial dynasty, the Qing Empire (1644–1912), 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.

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.

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.

Public Programs for *Guo Pei: Couture Beyond*:

- ***Guo Pei and Bronwyn Cosgrave in Conversation on Tuesday, October 9 at 7:00 PM at the Fairmont Hotel Vancouver Pacific Ballroom.*** A talk with designer Guo Pei facilitated by renowned fashion journalist and best-selling author Bronwyn Cosgrave. Presented in both English and Mandarin, this event will shed light on Guo as an artist whose medium of expression is fashion while examining the designer's oeuvre of contemporary works revitalizing long-lost traditions.

Tickets: \$30 for Non-members, \$27 for Members, \$25 for Students/Seniors now on sale at vanartgallery.bc.ca

- ***BuYun Chen on the work of Guo Pei and the globalization of Chinese Fashion on Tuesday, January 15 at 7:00 PM in Room 4East at the Vancouver Art Gallery.*** For this lecture, Professor BuYun Chen draws on her knowledge as a historian of China to examine the impact of Guo Pei's work in China and abroad. Chen currently teaches Chinese history, the history of women's work in premodern China, and fashion in modern East Asia at Pennsylvania's Swathmore College.

Tickets: \$15 for Non-members, \$12 for Members, \$10 for Students/Seniors to go on sale November 2018.

For more up-to-date information on Public Programs, visit vanartgallery.bc.ca

Presented in partnership with Vancouver International Film Festival: Film Screening of *Yellow is Forbidden*

- New Zealand director Pietra Bretkelley's 2018 documentary follows designer Guo Pei during her preparation for the spring/summer 2017 show at the La Conciergerie in Paris. Screenings on **Sunday, October 7 at 12:45 PM** at International Village Cinemas; and **Wednesday, October 10 at 6:30 PM** at the Vancouver Playhouse. For more information, visit: viff.org

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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.

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IMAGES ARE AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST

MEDIA CONTACT

Hanah Van Borek, Communications Specialist
hvanborek@vanartgallery.bc.ca, ph: 604.662.4700 ext. 2403 or 778.322.8967

About the Vancouver Art Gallery (vanartgallery.bc.ca)

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.

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.

The Vancouver Art Gallery is situated on traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səɬilwətaʔɬ (Tseil-waututh) peoples, and is respectful of the Indigenous stewards of the land it occupies, whose rich cultures are fundamental to artistic life in Vancouver and to the work of the Gallery.

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