

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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New Exhibition and Website Create Interactive Experience for Visitors

Beyond the Walls opens September 7

The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts will launch the interactive exhibition *Beyond the Walls* on September 7 from noon to 4 p.m., with a ribbon cutting at 12:15 p.m., in the MeadWestvaco Art Education Center. In contrast to the world of the emperor on display in this fall's *Forbidden City: Imperial Treasures from the Palace Museum, Beijing*, this hands-on exhibition will provide a glimpse into the home of a merchant-class family who lived in the 18th century.

A complementary interactive website where visitors can explore daily life in imperial China will be available the same

day. The online [Beyond the Walls](#) can be accessed anytime from computers or mobile devices in order to interact virtually with objects and to learn more about Chinese artworks.



The *Beyond the Walls* exhibition is designed to encourage visitors to explore Chinese culture through hands-on activities that include practicing Chinese calligraphy on touch screens, designing personal, virtual seals, and playing traditional musical instruments and games. There also will be opportunities to unroll and view reproduction hand scrolls, similar to those featured in *Forbidden City* and in VMFA's East Asian collection. Whether visiting as part of a school group, or a multi-generational family, *Beyond the Walls* will offer visitors of all ages a new perspective on China's imperial past. These offerings are generously sponsored by the E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Foundation, MeadWestvaco Foundation, The Community Foundation *Serving Richmond & Central Virginia*, Memorial Foundation for Children, and the Jeanann Gray Dunlap Foundation.

In addition to creating an interactive technology experience for the exhibition, programming will bring to life the rich history of China through standards-based docent-guided tours for students in grades K-12. These tours for K-12 students, college students, and adults will begin on October 28, 2014 and run through January 9, 2015. Reservations are required and space is limited; complete a tour request form on (<http://vmfa.museum/tours/students/>). Guided tours for adults are available for groups of 10 or more and are offered during afternoon hours only.

Museum guests can experience the new exhibition and visit the studios to participate in art activities inspired by Chinese artwork from VMFA's permanent collection and a lantern-making workshop hosted by 1708 Gallery. Families are welcome to create a Chinese lantern to bring to the Community Lantern Parade to kick off 1708's *InLight Richmond* on November 21 at Monroe Park.

For adults, the museum will offer a number of lectures, talks, and a film program around the exhibition including nationally recognized speakers. These programs will support the exhibition with scholarly insights into the objects from the Palace Museum while making ties to VMFA's own collection.

About the Forbidden City

The Palace Museum is located in the center of Beijing on the site of what was once the imperial palace, known as the Forbidden City. The residence was home to 24 emperors of the Ming and Qing dynasties from 1420 until the last emperor in 1924. The Palace Museum is the largest art museum in China and the largest palace in the world. Established in 1925, the Palace Museum holds more than 1.8 million works of art and artifacts, many of which are either on view in the palace halls or featured in special exhibitions in the palace. In 1987, the Palace Museum was listed as a World Cultural Heritage Site by UNESCO, and it attracted more than 14 million visitors from China and abroad in 2013.

About the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts

VMFA's permanent collection encompasses more than 33,000 works of art spanning 5,000 years of world history. Its collections of Art Nouveau and Art Deco, English silver, Fabergé, and the art of South Asia are among the finest in the nation. With acclaimed holdings in American, British Sporting, Impressionist and Post-Impressionist, and Modern and Contemporary art – and additional strengths in African, Ancient, East Asian, and European – VMFA ranks as one of the top comprehensive art museums in the United States. Programs include educational activities and studio classes for all ages, plus lively after-hours events. VMFA's Statewide program includes traveling exhibitions, artist and teacher workshops, and lectures across the Commonwealth. VMFA, a certified Virginia Green attraction, is open 365 days a year and general admission is always free. For additional information, telephone 804-340-1400 or visit www.vmfa.museum.

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Press Contact:

Suzanne Hall, suzanne.hall@vmfa.museum, 804.204.2704

Pryor Green, pryor.green@vmfa.museum, 804.204.2701

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, 200 N. Boulevard, Richmond VA 23220-4007