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September 6, 2017

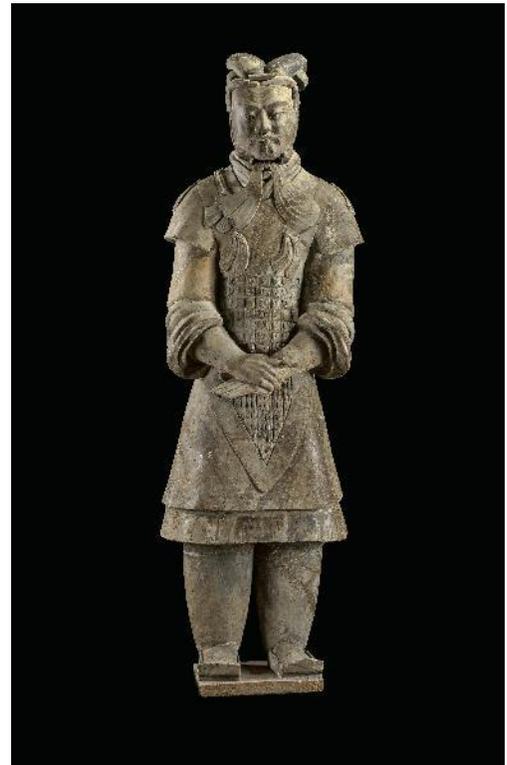
VMFA to present *Terracotta Army: Legacy of the First Emperor of China* *Exhibition will explore evolution, lasting impact of Qin History*

Ten life-size terracotta figures, including warriors and a cavalry horse, that protected the tomb of China's First Emperor will march into Richmond as part of *Terracotta Army: Legacy of the First Emperor of China*, which opens at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts in November. The exhibition will showcase more than 130 works of art, drawn from the collections of 14 art museums and archaeological institutes across the Shaanxi province in China, and will tell the story of how the Qin state developed into an empire under Ying Zheng (259-210 BC), who unified China and declared himself Qin Shihuang, or the First Emperor of Qin. His journey to immortality began soon after he became the king of Qin in 246 BC. *Terracotta Army*, which includes more than 40 objects never shown before in the United States, will be on display at VMFA from November 18, 2017 to March 11, 2018.

The terracotta figures to be on view at VMFA were among the estimated 8,000 life-size sculptures of warriors, chariots, and horses that were discovered in 1974 by local farmers in Lintong District, outside Xi'an, in the Shaanxi province of China. The farmers found pottery shards and bronze arrows while digging a well, but further excavation led to the astonishing discovery of the Terracotta Army, in three pits one mile east of the burial site of the First Emperor. In 1987, UNESCO designated the mausoleum complex as a World Heritage Site. Not all of the figures have been excavated.

Presented in three sections, *Terracotta Army* will explore the rise of the First Emperor, the history of the Qin state, and the emperor's quest for immortality. The exhibition will feature arms and armor, horse and chariot fittings, ritual bronze vessels, works in gold and silver, jade ornaments, precious jewelry, ceramics, and architectural components that were excavated from the Emperor Qin Shihuang's mausoleum, as well as aristocratic, commoner, and nomadic tombs. Dating from the Zhou dynasty (1046-256 BC) through the Qin dynasty (221-206 BC), these objects reflect the complex history, myths and burial customs of ancient China and explore the First Emperor's profound influence on Chinese history, art, and culture.

"The Terracotta Army is one of the most important archaeological discoveries of the 20th century. In our 80-year history, *Terracotta Army* will be the first exhibition organized by VMFA that is devoted to the art and archaeology of ancient China," VMFA Director Alex Nyerges said. "From the featured objects, our audience will learn about the First Emperor's political and cultural innovation and legacy, as well as gain a better understanding about ancient Chinese cultural history as part of world civilization."



Armored General, Qin Dynasty (221–206 BC), earthenware. Excavated from Pit 1, Qin Shihuang's Mausoleum, 1977. (© Emperor Qin Shihuang's Mausoleum Site Museum)

The exhibition is organized by VMFA and the Cincinnati Art Museum, in partnership with Shaanxi Provincial Cultural Relics Bureau, Shaanxi History Museum (Shaanxi Cultural Heritage Promotion Center), and Emperor Qin Shihuang's Mausoleum Site Museum of the People's Republic of China. The exhibition is curated by Li Jian, VMFA's E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Curator of East Asian Art, and Hou-mei Sung, Curator of Asian Art at the Cincinnati Art Museum, where the exhibition will travel after it closes at VMFA.

"I believe this exhibition will provide a great opportunity for American audiences to understand the daily life of Qin people and the visual culture of the empire more than 2,000 years ago. This exhibition actively promotes cultural exchange between China and the United States, and increases understanding and friendship between peoples of both nations," said Dr. Zhao Rong, Director of the Shaanxi Provincial Cultural Relics Bureau.

"The legacy of the First Emperor is enormous, including administration, law, language, art, architecture, interstate roadways, and the Great Wall," Li Jian said. "Our exhibition is organized to bring our audience a better understanding of Qin history, and ancient Chinese art and archaeology."

The catalogue and exhibition contribute new scholarship and research, including information gleaned from recent excavations. The catalogue *Terracotta Army: Legacy of the First Emperor of China* is written by Li Jian and Hou-mei Sung, with an essay by Zhang Weixing, an archaeology research fellow from Emperor Qin Shihuang's Mausoleum Site Museum, and contributions by William Neer, VMFA's Curatorial Assistant for East Asian Art.

The museum will offer two audio tours, one targeted for adults and another for families as they view the exhibition, along with a printed gallery guide for general audiences. "VMFA is dedicated to creating experiences that allow our visitors to deepen their understanding of art and culture from around the world," said Dr. Michael R. Taylor, VMFA's Chief Curator and Deputy Director for Art and Education. "This landmark exhibition will offer a breathtaking experience for our visitors as they engage with these monumental terracotta figures and related objects from the Qin dynasty. It is also notable for the significant research that Li Jian and her colleagues have carried out while working on this exhibition, which will expand our knowledge of the First Emperor and his profound impact on Chinese history and culture."

On February 2, 2018, VMFA will host an Archaeology Forum. The program will feature scholars and archaeologists from China and the United States, and address topics such as recent excavations and new research, as well as innovative approaches to archaeology. The museum will also offer lectures, gallery talks, and films in conjunction with the *Terracotta Army* exhibition, as well as programs for families and students. A comprehensive list of public programs accompanying the exhibition is available online.

An interactive exhibition in the museum's Memorial Foundation for Children Teaching Gallery, *Dig It!* complements the *Terracotta Army* special exhibition and offers visitors of all ages the opportunity to explore the field of archaeology through the use of augmented reality. Focusing on discovery, excavation, and lab study, *Dig It!* encourages visitors to uncover objects in VMFA's permanent collection through a virtual dig and learn more about their date, function, and how archaeology contributes to the study of objects from ancient China. *Dig It!* is free and open to the public until July 2018.

After it closes at VMFA in March 2018, *Terracotta Army* will travel to the Cincinnati Art Museum, where it will be on display from April 21, 2018 to August 12, 2018.

Sponsorship information

Terracotta Army: Legacy of the First Emperor of China is presented by Altria Group and the E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Foundation. Sponsors include the Anne Carter and Walter R. Robins, Jr.

Foundation, Virginia H. Spratley Charitable Fund II, Michael and Maura Bisceglia, The Community Foundation *Serving Richmond & Central Virginia*, Mrs. Frances Massey Dulaney, Jeanann Gray Dunlap Foundation, Frank Qiu and Ting Xu of Evergreen Enterprises, Norfolk Southern Corporation, Richard S. Reynolds Foundation, Mr. and Mrs. Fred T. Tattersall, Ellen Bayard Weedon Foundation, and YHB | CPAs & Consultants. The exhibition program at VMFA is supported by the Julia Louise Reynolds Fund.

Dig It! is made possible by generous support from the E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Foundation, The Community Foundation *Serving Richmond & Central Virginia*, and The Jeanann Gray Dunlap Foundation. Additional support is provided by Maggie Georgiadis, Margaret and Thomas Mackell, and Jack and Mary Spain.

Ticket and catalogue information

Timed admission tickets for the exhibition are now on sale. The exhibition is free for VMFA members, children ages 6 and under, and active-duty military personnel and their immediate families; \$20 for adults, \$16 for seniors 65+, and \$10 for youth ages 7-17 and college students with ID. Visitors can reserve tickets online (<http://reservations.vmfa.museum/state/info.aspx?ActivityID=4461>) or by phone at 804.340.1405.

The exhibition catalogue can be [ordered online \(http://vmfashop.com/\)](http://vmfashop.com/) or by calling the VMFA Shop at 804.340.1525 after November 1, 2017.

About the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts

The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts in Richmond, Virginia, is one of the largest comprehensive art museums in the United States. VMFA, which opened in 1936, is a state agency and privately endowed educational institution. Its purpose is to collect, preserve, exhibit, and interpret art, and to encourage the study of the arts. Through the Office of Statewide Partnerships program, the museum offers curated exhibitions, arts-related audiovisual programs, symposia, lectures, conferences, and workshops by visual and performing artists. In addition to presenting a wide array of special exhibitions, the museum provides visitors with the opportunity to experience a global collection of art that spans more than 6,000 years. VMFA's permanent holdings encompass nearly 40,000 artworks, including the largest public collection of Fabergé outside of Russia, the finest collection of Art Nouveau outside of Paris, and one of the nation's finest collections of American art. VMFA is also home to important collections of Chinese art, English silver and French Impressionist, Post-Impressionist, British sporting, and modern and contemporary art, as well as renowned South Asian, Himalayan, and African art. In May 2010, VMFA opened its doors to the public after a transformative expansion, the largest in its 80-year history. The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts is the only art museum in the United States open 365 days a year with free general admission. For additional information, telephone 804-340-1400 or visit www.vmfa.museum.

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