

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

May 29, 2019

**VMFA Debuts Historic Exhibition at the National Museum of China**

Cultural Exchange Celebrates 40th Anniversary of Diplomatic Relations Between China and the United States



L: Installation view of *Butterflies*, 1956, Jean Schlumberger (French, 1907–1987), Tiffany and Company (American, founded 1837, Manufacturer), amethyst, sapphires, turquoise, peridots, yellow diamonds, diamonds, colored stones, 18-karat gold, platinum. Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Collection of Mrs. Paul Mellon; R: Chunfa tours VMFA with Nyerges, Taylor and VMFA’s Louise B. and J. Harwood Cochrane Curator and Head of the Department of American Art Dr. Leo Mazow on a visit to the museum in September 2018.

Richmond, Virginia—The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts announces the opening of *Jean Schlumberger: Twentieth Century Treasures from the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts* at the National Museum of China (NMC) in Beijing, on view May 30–Sept. 1, 2019. This historic exhibition is the result of a five-year cooperative agreement between the two institutions to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the establishment of formal diplomatic relations between the United States and China. The agreement promotes the exchange of exhibitions, facilitates loans of artwork from each museums’ collection and allows the museums to jointly organize major exhibitions together.

“The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts is honored to be the only American institution to have a partnership with the National Museum of China of this caliber,” said VMFA Director Alex Nyerges. “We have a longstanding history of collaboration with Chinese cultural institutions—the recent *Terracotta Army: Legacy of the First Emperor of China* exhibition at VMFA was drawn from the collections of 14 art museums and archaeological institutes across the Shaanxi province and attracted more than 211,000 visitors to the museum. We have no doubt that *Jean Schlumberger* will be similarly well received in China.”

The exhibition debuted at VMFA in 2017 under the title *The Rachel Lambert Mellon Collection of Jean Schlumberger* and has since traveled to the Museum of Fine Arts, St. Petersburg in Florida. It features more than 100 unique pieces of visually stunning jewelry and accessories designed by mid-20th century artist-jeweler Jean Schlumberger. From crafting costume jewelry for the Surrealist fashion designer Elsa Schiaparelli in 1930s Paris to heading his own private salon at New York’s Tiffany & Co. beginning in the 1950s, Schlumberger was known for inventive interpretations of animal and botanical subjects and iconic pieces that came to define mid-century chic.

In September 2018, NMC Director Wang Chunfa visited VMFA to sign the cultural exchange agreement and tour the permanent collections with Nyerges, Dr. Michael Taylor, VMFA’s Chief Curator and Deputy Director for Art and Education and Dr. Leo Mazow, VMFA’s Louise B. and J. Harwood Cochrane Curator and Head of the Department of American Art. Last month, Nyerges spoke at the Global Museum Directors Forum held at NMC that was attended by nearly 50 museum directors from around the world. Nyerges and Taylor will be in attendance at NMC for the opening of the exhibition on May 30.

### **About the National Museum of China**

The National Museum of China hosts a rich collection of diverse objects. The total number of works in the collection exceeds 1.4 million, including ancient cultural relics, modern and contemporary artifacts, antiquarian books and artworks. With a display area of more than 2 million square feet and 48 galleries, it is the largest single building museum in the world. It has a three-exhibition series that consists of permanent exhibitions, thematic exhibitions and temporary exhibitions. It constitutes an exhibition system that covers exhibitions on permanent display and thematic display, as well as exhibitions of major historical themes, historical collections, archaeological discoveries, classical artworks, regional culture and international exchanges. In 2018, the National Museum of China attracted more than 8.61 million visitors—reaching a record-high level attendance—making the National Museum of China one of the most popular museums in the world.

### **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 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](http://www.VMFA.museum).**

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