

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Vancouver Art Gallery Launches *Institute of Asian Art*  
Expanding its Exhibitions, Collections, Programs and Curatorial Leadership**

**Gallery Creates New Endowed Senior Curator of Asian Art,  
Marking First Time in History it will have Curator Dedicated to the Field**

**Exhibitions under New Initiative Focus on Historical and Contemporary Chinese Art**

**Vancouver, BC** – October 16, 2014 – The Vancouver Art Gallery announced today the launch of a new, comprehensive initiative committed to advancing scholarship and public appreciation of Asian art. Building upon the Gallery's longstanding commitment to fostering cultural connections throughout the Pacific Rim, the *Institute of Asian Art* will expand and further develop the Gallery's exhibitions, public programs, and permanent collections dedicated to the visual arts of Asia, with particular focus on China, India, Japan and Korea. The Gallery has created a new, endowed senior curatorial position for Asian art—marking the first time in its history that it will have a curator devoted to the field—and will form an international advisory council to help support the Institute's diverse range of programs. The Gallery also plans to dedicate permanent space in its new Herzog & de Meuron– designed building to Asian art.

“The City of Vancouver has one of the fastest growing Asian communities in North America and is one of the most important gateways to the Asia Pacific. For the past 25 years, the Gallery has been at the forefront of the incredible exchange of art and ideas between these two regions, and we are thrilled to continue building upon this commitment with the launch of the *Institute of Asian Art*,” said Kathleen Bartels, Director of Vancouver Art Gallery. “With dedicated curatorial leadership and the support of an international network of advisors, the *Institute of Asian Art* will be an important resource for our community, stimulating new dialogue and further strengthening the ties between Vancouver and the Asian Pacific region.”

The *Institute of Asian Art*'s inaugural programs focus on historical and contemporary Chinese art and include:

- ***The Forbidden City: Inside the Court of China's Emperors*** (opening October 18, 2014), a major traveling exhibition featuring approximately 200 rarely seen historic works, from Beijing's Palace Museum; and
- ***Unscrolled: Reframing Tradition in Chinese Contemporary Art*** (opening November 15, 2014), a focused exhibition spotlighting the work of three generations of contemporary Chinese artists.

From fall 2014 through 2015, the Gallery is planning a series of additional exhibitions and public projects that explore new facets of contemporary Chinese art including a project with Tsang Kinwah. In 2016, the Gallery will launch a major exhibition of contemporary art from India. Future exhibitions will be mounted on an annual basis, ranging from surveys of contemporary art, to premieres of historic collections from abroad, to focused collection-based shows. Through the establishment of a dedicated acquisition fund, the Institute will oversee the continued growth of the museum's permanent collection of contemporary Asian Art.

"I am absolutely delighted to see the realization of the *Institute of Asian Art*. The timing is perfect as we celebrate two significant Chinese exhibitions at the Gallery in the coming weeks," said Zheng Shengtian, Trustee of the Vancouver Art Gallery. "The Institute is a logical result of years of the Gallery's efforts to exhibit and promote Asian art for the community, and it will no doubt open a new and exciting chapter for the Vancouver Art Gallery through expanded programs and outreach."

Located in one of North America's largest cities on the Pacific Rim, the Vancouver Art Gallery has spearheaded major Asian art projects and promoted cross-cultural collaborations throughout its history. Since 1985, the Gallery has presented twenty-eight exhibitions of Asian art including *Kimsooja: Unfolding* (2013), *Offsite: Madeln Company* (2013), *Fiona Tan: Rise and Fall* (2010), *Song Dong: Waste Not* (2010), *Zhang Huan: Altered States* (2008), *House of Oracles: A Huang Yong Ping Retrospective* (2007), *Power and Desire: South Asian Paintings from the San Diego Museum of Art, Edward Binney 3rd Collection* (2003), *Rupture in the Floating World: Japanese Prints in the Early Modern Era* (2001), *Pan Tianshou* (1998), and *Contemporary Art in Asia: Traditions / Tensions* (1997), and has acquired major works by such prominent artists as Song Dong, Madeln Company and Fiona Tan.

### **About *The Forbidden City: Inside the Court of China's Emperors***

*October 18, 2014 – January 11, 2015*

*The Forbidden City: Inside the Court of China's Emperors* presents approximately 200 works rarely seen outside of China—including 80 works exclusively shown in Vancouver—that provide a glimpse into the iconic and long-hidden city which was the centre of imperial power from 1416-1911. Through historic artworks selected from the collections of Beijing's Palace Museum—including paintings, ceramics, gold and silver wares, jade, cloisonné, bronzes, and textiles all ranging from as early as 500 B.C.—the exhibition showcases the imperial life during China's last heyday as an empire. *The Forbidden City* is organized by the Palace Museum, Beijing, China, and the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, and the coordinating curators for the Vancouver Art Gallery Presentation are Timothy Brook, Republic of China Chair, Department of History, University of British Columbia and Daina Augaitis, Chief Curator/Associate Director, Vancouver Art Gallery.

### **About *Unscrolled: Reframing Tradition in Chinese Contemporary Art***

*November 15, 2014 – March 22, 2015*

Featuring the work of three generations of contemporary Chinese artists, *Unscrolled: Reframing Tradition in Chinese Contemporary Art* explores how artists are both informed by their cultural heritage and continue to actively engage in a wider global art dialogue. Presenting a range of artworks and organized by the Vancouver Art Gallery, the exhibition will showcase artists who rework traditional aesthetics through new forms and media, from digital animations to site-specific installations, in order to make visible the enormous and complex relationships to traditions that exist in present-day China.

### **About the Vancouver Art Gallery**

Founded in 1931, the Vancouver Art Gallery is recognized as one of the most respected and innovative visual arts institutions in Canada and is committed to strengthening ties between artists and diverse communities throughout the city, province, and beyond. As the largest public art museum in Western Canada, the Gallery features the work of ground-breaking contemporary artists from around the world, presents historical art of international significance, and provides a global platform for British Columbia's dynamic artistic community, including the work of First Nation artists as well as art of the Asia Pacific. Its growing collection represents the most comprehensive resource for art in British Columbia and is the principal repository for visual art produced in the region, as well as related works by other notable Canadian and international artists. The Gallery also places an emphasis on advancing scholarship through major publications and presents a multitude of public

programs that offer new ways to consider art for visitors who come from throughout the region and internationally.

In response to the significant growth in collections, exhibitions and attendance over the past decade, the Gallery announced in 2014 the selection of Herzog & de Meuron for the design of a new and expanded home in downtown Vancouver. The new facility will double the Gallery's current size and will be a vital catalyst to Vancouver, enhancing the city's cultural community and serving as a centre for cross-cultural dialogue and exchange in the visual arts.

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.

To request further information on the *Institute of Asian Art*, please contact Debra Zhou, Communications Specialist at [dzhou@vanartgallery.bc.ca](mailto:dzhou@vanartgallery.bc.ca)

-30-

**CANADIAN MEDIA CONTACT:**

Debra Zhou, Communications Specialist  
Direct: 604-662-4722 Mobile: 604-671-2358  
[dzhou@vanartgallery.bc.ca](mailto:dzhou@vanartgallery.bc.ca)

**INTERNATIONAL MEDIA CONTACT:**

Juliet Sorce/Emily Viemeister  
Resnicow Schroeder Associates  
Direct: 212-671-5158/5177  
[jsorce/eviemeister@resnicowschroeder.com](mailto:jsorce/eviemeister@resnicowschroeder.com)