



THE WILLIAM AND JUDITH BOLLINGER JEWELLERY GALLERY OPENS AT THE V&A

Opens 24 May 2008

The V&A will open the new William and Judith Bollinger Jewellery Gallery on 24 May 2008. The gallery will display 3,500 jewels from the V&A's jewellery collection, one of the finest and most comprehensive in the world.

The new gallery will centre principally on the story of European jewellery during the last 800 years. On show will be jewels that reflect the splendour of courtly life, some of the finest designs from the great jewellery houses of the 20th century and jewels designed by important contemporary makers.

Historic highlights include jewelled pendants given by Queen Elizabeth I to her courtiers, and diamonds worn by Catherine the Great of Russia. The age of Napoleon is represented by the famous Beauharnais Emeralds, the gift of Napoleon to his adopted daughter, and by tiaras and ornaments worn by the Empress Josephine.

A gift of £7million from William Bollinger has enabled a four-year renovation of the V&A's jewellery gallery. This substantial donation includes a generous endowment which will be used to maintain the gallery to the highest standard.

The architect, Eva Jiricna, has redesigned the space, introducing a central glass spiral staircase rising to a new mezzanine floor. Videos and interactives, in the gallery and on the V&A website, will explore the techniques and history of jewellery, providing over 7000 images of jewels.

New additions to the displays include a superb group of jewellery by Lalique, and Lady Mountbatten's 'tutti frutti' ruby, sapphire, emerald and diamond bandeau, which she bought from Cartier in 1928. The gallery will provide the first opportunity to see the jewels given by New York collector and dealer, Patricia V. Goldstein,

which have significantly added to the V&A's collection of jewels by Tiffany and Cartier.

The gallery will display exquisite pieces made by some of the most prestigious designers of New York, Paris, London and St Petersburg. There are two diamond tiaras by Cartier, a rare plique-à-jour enamel and pearl bracelet by Boucheron and a gold Chaumet bangle with a core of rubies and diamonds. Among the objects by Fabergé is an enamelled snuff box with the diamond monogram of Tsar Nicholas II.

The V&A's collection is outstandingly rich in 19th century jewellery. There are sprays of diamonds mounted on tremblers as well as revivalist jewellery in the archaeological and renaissance styles. New to the gallery will be the Judith H. Siegel gift of jewellery by Castellani and Giuliano which includes the Helen of Troy necklace designed by Sir Edward Poynter.

Over 140 living goldsmiths and jewellers are represented in the gallery. The contemporary work ranges from ring sets by Wendy Ramshaw to a carved pin in recycled acrylic by Peter Chang and a vivid papier-mâché neckpiece by Marjorie Schick. Another addition will be a selection from the Royal College of Art Visiting Artists Collection.

Mark Jones, Director of the V&A, said: 'The power of jewels lies in their beauty and their ability to stir human emotions. The V&A has one of the finest collections of jewellery, and the imagination and passion of William and Judith Bollinger have allowed us to create a gallery worthy of this collection'.

William and Judith Bollinger said: 'It has been an enormous pleasure working with the V&A's talented staff and consultants to create a truly unique gallery. We hope it provides inspiration to all who visit – whether craftsmen, aspiring artists or simply lovers of beauty.'

ENDS

Notes to Editors

- The William and Judith Bollinger Jewellery Gallery is part of the V&A's FuturePlan to transform the Museum through new galleries and beautiful redisplays of its collections.
- The William and Judith Bollinger Jewellery Gallery is designed by Eva Jiricna Architects Limited. For more information please contact Georgina Papathanasiou on 020 7554 2400 or gp@ejal.com.
- A multi-media programme, Hidden Treasures, has been commissioned for the new gallery to enable visitors to explore in detail a selection of jewels.
- Three specially commissioned short films will show contemporary makers demonstrating their techniques. 1. The making of a diamond ring by leading London designer Shaun Leane; 2. Artist-jeweller Jane Short showing the enamelling of a brooch; 3. Watchmaker Martin Matthews creating a watchcase.
- To celebrate the opening of The William and Judith Bollinger Jewellery Gallery the V&A shop will showcase the very best in contemporary jewellery, combining well-known names with exciting new talents. The shop will also be commissioning several new ranges of jewellery which will be exclusive to the V&A and which draw inspiration from the V&A's collections. To receive further information about these products please contact Lee Kendall in V&A Enterprises on 0207 942 2681 or l.kendall@vam.ac.uk or (not for publication).
- For further information on the books accompanying the new gallery, please contact Julie Chan on 020 7942 2701 or j.chan@vam.ac.uk.
- The V&A is collaborating with Coutts London Jewellery Week (11 June – 15 June), which showcases the city's status as the home of world-class jewellery. Organised by the City Fringe Partnership with funding from the London Development Agency, it brings together leading names and cutting-edge talent, positioning London as an important city in global jewellery. For more information please see www.londonjewelleryweek.co.uk

For further Press information and images please contact Henrietta Sitwell or Dorothee Dines in the V&A Press Office on 020 7942 2500/02 or press.office@vam.ac.uk (not for publication)

High resolution images are available to download from www.image.net