

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Media Contacts:

Amy Mannarino
410-547-9000, ext. 277
amannarino@thewalters.org

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***BEDAZZLED: 5,000 YEARS OF JEWELRY SHINES AT
THE WALTERS ART MUSEUM THIS FALL***

Enjoy exquisite jewelry from a variety of cultures from over five millennia

Baltimore—From an ancient Roman snake bracelet to a ceremonial Chinese headdress to a Tiffany & Co. glittering necklace, *Bedazzled: 5,000 Years of Jewelry* will highlight more than 200 pieces from the Walters Art Museum. On view Oct. 19, 2008–Jan. 4, 2009, the exhibition will feature some of the Walters’ greatest masterpieces as well as many hidden treasures on view for the first time. The allure of gold and gems and the desire to design objects of adornment have remained constant throughout history and across a spectrum of cultures. This selection of Walters’ holdings will not only present the evolution of techniques and materials but also demonstrate the importance of jewelry as an expression of creativity and often wealth and position. In addition, a special exhibition section will be devoted to rings, the only type of jewelry worn continuously through the ages.

The Walters is one of the few museums worldwide that can provide examples, both in depth and range, of stunning jewelry from 3000 B.C. through the early 20th century. Assembled primarily by one of the museum’s founders, Henry Walters, during the first three decades of the last century, this renowned collection contains superb examples of expert craftsmanship.

“We are so lucky to have this rich, varied and aesthetically beautiful jewelry collection at the Walters,” said museum Director Gary Vikan. “Henry Walters’ eye for great pieces and his immense generosity has made this one of the world’s finest collections of jewelry.”

This exhibition was organized by the Walters Art Museum. The exhibition includes many spectacular pieces from the renowned collection of Benjamin Zucker (New York), which are on loan to the Walters. *Bedazzled* is presented by The Women’s Committee of the Walters Art Museum with lead support from Betty Cooke, Bill Steinmetz, and The Store Ltd.; Richard S. and Rosalee C.

Davison; The Eliasberg Family Foundation; and The Tiffany & Co. Foundation. Additional support is provided by Bob and Jackie Smelkinson.

Exhibition Highlights

- Gold bracelet from the first century B.C. encrusted with precious stones and multi-colored enamel inlay discovered in a tomb in the Greek colony of Olbia (present-day Ukraine)
- Tiffany & Co. iris corsage ornament decorated with 139 sapphires, diamonds and other gems, which was a grand prize winner at the 1900 Paris Exposition Universelle
- Nineteenth-century imperial, ceremonial Chinese headdress with designs of phoenixes, butterflies and peaches and crafted of gilded silver, kingfisher feathers, silk thread, pearls, rubies and glass beads
- *Plique-à-jour* enamel and sapphire pansy brooch created by renowned Art Nouveau designer René Lalique and purchased by Henry Walters at the 1904 Louisiana Purchase Exposition
- Finger rings that held a variety of roles throughout history, including emblems of love and marriage, death and mourning, power and faith

About the Exhibition

Bedazzled will open with works from the ancient world, such as two pendants in the form of rams' heads demonstrating the remarkable development in multicolored glass production by the fifth century B.C. Egyptian treasures will be presented, including a bright blue faience amulet featuring the lion-headed goddess Sekhmet as well as an intricate necklace strung with beads and amulets of gold, faience, carnelian and glass.

One of the most admired objects in the collection is a bracelet from Olbia at the northern coast of the Black Sea in the first century B.C., which is decorated with gold granulation and set with colorful gemstones backed with foil. Other gold masterpieces from the early centuries B.C. will include a delicate pair of Etruscan spirals from the 7th century, a gold and garnet Greek diadem, and a gold, horse-shaped pendant crafted by Greek artisans. Also perennial favorites are two sixth-century A.D. Visigothic garment clasps in the form of eagles. These colorful birds are executed in bronze overlaid with gold and set with garnets, mother-of-pearl, crystals and amethysts.

Another rich section of the Walters jewelry collection is from the Renaissance. During this time, there was a revival in the production of sumptuous jewelry, utilizing the talents of the greatest artists of the period and sustained by princely patrons' wealth. Examples include pendants incorporating enameled figural elements mounted with pearls and gemstones and exquisitely detailed gold dress ornaments illustrating the height of 16th-century fashion.

In the 18th century, men and women wore chatelaines, a clasp or hook from which hung suspended watches and signet seals. A particularly attractive gold example comes complete with a

rock crystal seal and a key. In the 19th century, historical revival dominated, and the exhibition will follow its sequence beginning with an Austrian Gothic revival bracelet with pointed arches in gold set with carnelian, malachite and other colored stones. *Bedazzled* will also feature classical revival or archaeological style works from the mid-century by the Castellani firm and Giacinto Melillo. True gems from the early 20th century include a Tiffany & Co. iris corsage brooch set with 139 Montana sapphires that was shown in the 1900 Paris Exposition Universelle and several *bijoux d'art*, or art jewels, that the premier Art Nouveau jeweler René Lalique displayed at the 1904 Louisiana Purchase Exposition.

“An exhibition focus will be on ring design throughout history. The Walters will include spectacular rings loaned from the renowned collection of Benjamin Zucker,” said Associate Curator of Ancient Art Sabine Albersmeier. “Rings never went out of fashion, and no other type of jewelry has so many facets and functions. They are the most personal items among jewelry.”

The role of rings as symbols of love, marriage and death will be illustrated with medieval posy rings, Renaissance and Baroque marriage rings, both Christian and Jewish, and skeletal *memento mori* rings. Special emphasis will be placed on precious diamond-set rings and the technological development of early diamond cutting.

The last section of the exhibition will explore the intriguing questions raised by recent scholarship concerning forgeries and replicas. In the 19th century, the increasing interest in and demand for jewelry of earlier periods gave rise to numerous revival styles and to “archaeological” jewelry. Forgers seized the opportunity and produced pieces of high quality, which even today are sometimes difficult to distinguish from originals.

About the Jewelry Collection

The Walters jewelry collection is the most wide-ranging collection of jewelry assembled by a private collector in the United States. Henry Walters (1848–1931) purchased a vast array of jewelry objects from numerous cultures and over five millennia, thereby significantly expanding the efforts of his father, William T. Walters (1819–94), a railroad magnate in Baltimore who started the collection. Henry Walters visited and commissioned jewelry from some of the leading jewelry makers and workshops of his time, including Peter Carl Fabergé in St. Petersburg and Melillo in Naples. At his death in 1931, he bequeathed his entire collection to the City of Baltimore “for the benefit of the public.”

Travel

The exhibition has returned from a tour of the Frist Center for the Visual Arts, Nashville, Tenn. from Sept. 15, 2006 to Jan. 14, 2007 and the John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, Sarasota, Fla. from Feb. 18 to May 13, 2007.

Publication

A small, 64-page full-color publication, *Bedazzled: 5,000 Years of Jewelry*, presents more than 50 of the most intriguing highlights from the exhibition. The book is authored by Walters curator Sabine Albersmeier. The soft cover book is \$9.95.

Admission

Bedazzled is a special ticketed exhibition. General admission to the Walters' permanent collection is free. Purchase tickets at www.ticketmaster.com, 800-551-SEAT or by calling 410-547-9000, ext. 265.

Special Exhibition Admission

Adults	\$8
Seniors (65+)	\$6
College students/young adults (18-25)	\$4
Age 17 & under/Walters members	FREE

Hours

Museum hours are 10 a.m.–5 p.m. Wednesday through Sunday. The museum will launch a new series—*First Fridays*—which will take place from October to June on the first Friday evening from 5 to 9 p.m. The museum is closed on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. The Walters will be open to the public on New Years Day.

The Walters Art Museum

The Walters Art Museum is located in Baltimore's historic Mount Vernon Cultural District at North Charles and Centre streets and is one of only a few museums worldwide to present a comprehensive history of art from the third millennium B.C. to the early 20th century. Among its thousands of treasures, the Walters holds the finest collection of ivories, jewelry, enamels and bronzes in America and a spectacular reserve of illuminated manuscripts and rare books. The Walters' Egyptian, Greek and Roman, Byzantine, Ethiopian and western medieval art collections are among the best in the nation, as are the museum's holdings of Renaissance and Asian art. Every major trend in French painting during the 19th century is represented by one or more works in the Walters' collection.

Peabody Court is the official hotel of the Walters Art Museum. This historic property is just around the corner from the museum and features George's, a full-service restaurant. For hotel reservations, call 1-800-292-5500 and ask for the special Walters discounted rate.

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