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Exhibition at the Indianapolis Museum of Art to Examine Material Culture Through Luxurious Textiles

***Material World will feature extravagant clothing and textiles from the IMA collection,
highlighting a variety of cultural traditions around the world***

INDIANAPOLIS, IN, September 30, 2010— From court dress to couture, the objects in *Material World*, on view from April 22, 2011, to February 5, 2012, will feature extravagant ornamentation of textiles and personal adornment from cultures around the world while highlighting the significance of textiles in displaying wealth, status and power. The exhibition will showcase items adorned with luxurious materials including gold and metallic threads, beads, shells, mirrors, semi-precious stones, bones, fur and feathers, ranging from a Buddhist bone apron to Dior and Chanel couture pieces, spanning several centuries to the present day.

“*Material World* juxtaposes exotic textiles from the IMA’s extensive collection that are not typically exhibited together, providing a rare opportunity for visitors,” said Maxwell L. Anderson, The Melvin & Bren Simon Director and CEO of the IMA. “This exhibition unites some of the Museum’s most dazzling pieces to illustrate a theme prevalent in cultures around the world – the relationship between materialism and wealth.”

“Since ancient times, dress and other material possessions have indicated a person’s status and role in the community,” said Niloo Paydar, curator of textile and fashion arts at the IMA. “*Material World* will reveal the allure of exotic materials used to decorate clothing and furnishings in diverse societies. As clothing is the oldest and historically definitive communicator of status, it also serves as an indicator of the differences and commonalities that exist among cultures.”

Representing a variety of cultures from Asia, Africa, Europe and the Americas, *Material World* traces how different societies use luxurious materials in rituals and customs. The exhibition will feature royal garments, personal attire and furnishings, ceremonial costumes and religious garments.

Among highlights of the exhibition are an intricately embroidered Russian court gown designed by Charles Frederick Worth, a Norman Norell sequin mermaid dress, an Indonesian skirt adorned with cowry shells, a Chinese imperial robe embroidered with gold threads, a Bill Blass snakeskin evening jacket, a Buddhist ceremonial bone apron, a group of fashion and ceremonial feathered hats, an African king’s beaded robe, and couture from Dior and Chanel. A selection of ritual textiles will include a gold thread Buddhist temple hanging and a velvet Italian chasuble.

Featuring more than 40 works from the IMA’s textile and fashion arts collection, many of which have never been shown before, *Material World* will contextualize the importance of textiles and personal adornment in various cultures. Organized by the Indianapolis Museum of Art, *Material World* will be on view in the Paul Textile and Fashion Arts galleries.

Fashion and Textile Arts at the IMA

The IMA’s collection of textile and fashion arts began with the acquisition of an Irish embroidery in 1888. Today, the collection comprises approximately 7,000 items and represents virtually all of the world’s traditions in fabric.

Among the objects from Asia are textiles and costumes from China, kimonos and Buddhist robes and furnishings from Japan, Kashmir shawls, ceremonial hangings from India and a large group of textiles from Indonesia. West and Central Asian holdings include rugs and kilims from Iran, Ottoman embroideries from Turkey, and costumes and ceremonial textiles from Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. In 1996, the late Colonel Jeff W. Boucher's collection of 65 Baluchi rugs and weavings was donated to the Museum. Later, this collection was augmented by 11 pieces, making it the largest and most comprehensive in the United States.

The IMA also houses a significant African textile arts collection, with a particular concentration in rugs, costumes and embroideries from Morocco.

European holdings feature silks from the late 16th to 19th centuries, a lace collection spanning 500 years and a large group of 19th-century paisley shawls woven in England. Also represented are European fashions dating from the late 18th to the 20th centuries, as well as couture by prominent designers such as Dior, Balenciaga, Chanel, Gaultier and Versace.

The North American textile collection features noteworthy Indiana quilts and coverlets, as well as fashions by designers Norman Norell, Bill Blass, Halston and Rudi Gernreich. Central American holdings include Guatemalan textiles and a significant collection of about 360 Panamanian Molas.

About the Indianapolis Museum of Art

Encompassing 152 acres of gardens and grounds, the Indianapolis Museum of Art is among the 10 largest encyclopedic art museums in the United States, and features significant collections of African, American, Asian, European and contemporary art, as well as a newly established collection of design arts. The IMA offers visitors an expansive view of arts and culture through its collection of more than 54,000 works of art that span 5,000 years of history from across the world's continents. The collections include paintings, sculpture, furniture and design objects, prints, drawings and photographs, as well as textiles and costumes.

Additionally, art, design, and nature are featured at 100 Acres: The Virginia B. Fairbanks Art & Nature Park and Oldfields–Lilly House & Gardens, an historic Country Place Era estate on the IMA grounds. Beyond the Indianapolis campus, in 2011 the IMA will open to the public the recently acquired landmark Miller House and Garden in Columbus, Indiana. One of the country's most highly regarded examples of mid-century Modernist residences, Miller House was designed by Eero Saarinen, with interiors by Alexander Girard, and landscape design by Daniel Urban Kiley.

Recognizing the IMA's positive impact on its community, the Museum was named a 2009 National Medal for Museum and Library Services – the nation's highest honor for museums and libraries. The IMA's commitment to free general admission, programming for schools and teachers, environmental leadership and online initiatives were among cited community contributions in the Museum's selection for the award.

Located at 4000 Michigan Road, the IMA and Lilly House are open Tuesday through Saturday, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Thursday and Friday, 11 a.m. to 9 p.m.; and Sunday, noon to 5 p.m. The IMA is closed Mondays and Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's days. For more information, call 317-923-1331 or visit www.imamuseum.org.

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