



Contacts: Dawn Griffin
617.369.3449
dgriffin@mfa.org

Kelly Gifford
617.369.3540
kgifford@mfa.org

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**RITA J. KAPLAN AND SUSAN B. KAPLAN CURATOR OF JEWELRY
ESTABLISHED AT THE MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, BOSTON**

First Curator of Jewelry Named at a U.S. Art Museum

BOSTON, Mass. (September 26, 2006)—The MFA has announced that a Trustee of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (MFA), Susan B. Kaplan, has endowed the Rita J. Kaplan and Susan B. Kaplan Curator of Jewelry at the Museum. Yvonne Markowitz, an expert on ancient and modern jewelry who has been a research fellow at the MFA and is co-chair of the American Society of Jewelry Historians, New England Chapter, will become the first Rita J. Kaplan and Susan B. Kaplan Curator of Jewelry. With this new curatorial position in the MFA’s department of Textile and Fashion Arts, the Museum will raise the profile of its outstanding jewelry collection through exhibitions and special programs, while continuing to expand it through gifts and acquisitions.

“Jewelry is truly an art form, revealing excellence in both craftsmanship and design,” said Malcolm Rogers, Ann and Graham Gund Director of the MFA. “As such, we’re profoundly grateful to Susan Kaplan for her generosity in naming the first jewelry curatorship at the MFA—as well as the first at any art museum in the country, helping to establish the MFA as a major jewelry resource center.”

As the Rita J. Kaplan and Susan B. Kaplan Curator of Jewelry at the Museum of Fine Arts—a curatorship named by Susan Kaplan in honor of her mother, Rita Kaplan—Markowitz will oversee the MFA’s sizable and comprehensive collection. Spanning 6,000 years of civilization, it includes jewelry and adornments from several continents representing a wide array of

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materials, techniques, and functions. Objects range from Neolithic Chinese belt ornaments of jade, to excavated beadwork from Egypt's Pyramid Age. A recent gift to the Museum, the Daphne Farago Collection, comprises 600 pieces of contemporary craft jewelry designed and made by leading American and European artists from about 1940 to the present. With the addition of the Farago Collection, the MFA now holds the most comprehensive collection of 20th-century studio jewelry ever assembled. Pieces in the MFA's overall jewelry collection, which number in the thousands and have been amassed since the Museum opened more than 130 years ago, were acquired through gifts, bequests, excavations, and purchases. Additionally, in recognition of a gift to the Museum from the Rita J. and Stanley H. Kaplan Family Foundation, a jewelry gallery for the display of the collection will be named in their honor.

"Since I am passionate about both jewelry and the MFA, it's a pleasure for me to have the opportunity to endow a curatorship in jewelry at the Museum," explains Susan Kaplan. "With this new position, the MFA will continue to set the pace in the study of the history of jewelry, share its large and stellar collection with the Museum community in unique and exciting ways, and attract jewelry exhibitions from this country and around the world."

There are many noteworthy objects in the Museum's jewelry collection, including a pair of bracelets made of gold, emerald, green quartz, and pearl which date to the second half of the first century B.C. and were probably made in Egypt, the source of emerald in the Classical world. Additionally, a gold and amber jewelry suite in the collection, which was made in Rome, Italy around 1879, reflects the archaeological revival style popular in Western Europe and America during a time of extraordinary archaeological finds, such as Pompeii. More recently, a silver and semi-precious stone necklace by Art Smith (1917-1982), with an elegant biomorphic construction, reveals the importance of this 20th century American artist and jeweler.

"I'm delighted to be assuming the newly created curator of jewelry position," said Yvonne Markowitz. "The Museum has an exceptional encyclopedic collection of jewelry and adornments and its study, preservation, and display will be a high priority. I'm extremely grateful to Susan Kaplan for naming this curatorship in honor of her mother, and share her passion for the world's oldest decorative art."

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Susan Kaplan, who is vice president of the Rita J. and Stanley H. Kaplan Foundation, first became involved with the MFA through the Museum Council in the early 1980s and was elected to the MFA's Board of Overseers in 1992. A Trustee since 2000, she serves as Chair of the Board of Overseers and Chair of the Visiting Committee for the Roberta Logie Department of Textile and Fashion Arts. She also serves as a Governor of the School of the Museum of Fine Arts. Kaplan is affiliated with the Huntington Theatre, WGBH, Combined Jewish Philanthropies, Beth Israel-Deaconess Hospital, and the National Foundation of Jewish Culture. Her mother, Rita J. Kaplan, is a longtime advocate for education, health care and the arts. Susan's father, Stanley H. Kaplan, founded Stanley H. Kaplan Educational Center in 1938. Now owned by the *Washington Post*, Kaplan, Inc. is the one of the nation's leading providers of educational testing and career services.

In addition to her work as a research fellow in the department of Art of the Ancient World at the MFA since 1998, Markowitz has been the editor-in-chief of *Jewelry: Journal of the American Society of Jewelry Historians* since 1995 and contributing editor of *Adornment Magazine* since 2005. She received her B.S. in Biological Sciences from the University of Maryland, her M.Ed. in Art Therapy at Boston University, and is a Ph.D. candidate at Brandeis University in Egyptology in the Department of Classical & Oriental Studies. Additionally, she has been chairperson of the American Society of Jewelry Historians, New England Chapter since 2002, and a frequent lecturer at the Annual Antique and Period Jewelry Conference since 1995.

The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (MFA) and School of the Museum of Fine Arts (SMFA) employ approximately 1,000 employees and have approximately 1,000 volunteers. For general visitor information and employment opportunities, visit the MFA Web site at www.mfa.org.

The MFA is recognized for the quality and scope of its encyclopedic collection, which includes an estimated 450,000 objects. The Museum's collection is made up of: Art of the Americas; Art of Europe; Contemporary Art; Art of Asia, Oceania and Africa; Art of the Ancient World; Prints, Drawings and Photographs; Musical Instruments, and Textile and Fashion Arts..

The MFA was the first general art museum to characterize textiles and costumes as "fine art." The collection in the Textiles and Fashion Arts department features objects from the 16th century through today, and includes costumes, accessories, needlework, shoes, quilts, and fashion books from all over the world. The departmental library, one of the largest of its type in the country, is an international study resource that includes rich holdings ranging from rare books of the 16th to early 20th centuries, to contemporary fashion publications.

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