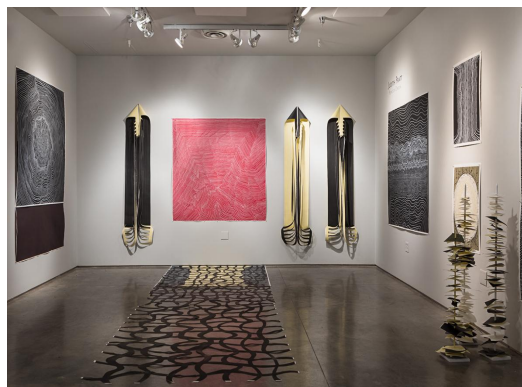


FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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VMFA Awards More Than \$120,000 to 23 Virginia Student and Professional Artists
2022–23 Visual Arts Fellowship Recipients Named



Top (L): Abigail K. Melvin, Drawing, Chesapeake (R): Skyler Mikkell Ancheta, Painting, Chesapeake
Bottom (L): Alexander J. Sausen, Painting, Richmond (C): Nastassja Ebony Swift, Crafts, Virginia Beach (R): [Judith Pratt, Mixed Media](#), Alexandria

Richmond, Virginia — The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts (VMFA) is delighted to announce the 2022–23 recipients of its Visual Arts Fellowships. Twenty-three students and professional artists were awarded over \$120,000 toward their artistic careers.

The VMFA Visual Arts Fellowship program has awarded more than \$5.9 million to more than 1,400 artists since 1940. Recipients must be Virginia residents and may use the award as desired, including for education and studio investments. Each year, art curators and working artists serve as jurors to select the award recipients.

“We are extremely proud to have one of the largest fellowship programs in the country,” said Alex Nyerges, VMFA’s Director and CEO. “The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts Fellowship program is honored to recognize and support the many talented student artists and professional artists from throughout the state of Virginia.”

This year, Katie Pfohl, Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art at the New Orleans Museum of Art, served as the professional fellowship juror; Dr. Anne L. Williams, Assistant Professor in the Department of Art History at the

University of Hong Kong served as the graduate art history juror and Alison Byrne, Deputy Director of Exhibitions and Education at the Virginia Museum of Contemporary Art in Virginia Beach, served as the graduate and undergraduate visual arts juror.

VMFA awarded eight professional fellowships of \$8,000 each to Nastassja Ebony Swift, crafts, Virginia Beach; Robert J. Mertens, crafts, Staunton; Judith Pratt, mixed media, Alexandria; Bohyun Yoon, crafts, Richmond; James Lam Scheuren, film and video, Charlottesville; Sarah E. Phillips, new and emerging media, King George; Shayne Herrera, painting, Warrenton; and Michael Borowski, photography, Blacksburg.

Six graduate students were awarded \$6,000 each. The awardees are Lauren Van Nest, art history, Alexandria, University of Virginia student; Jax Ohashi, sculpture, Annandale, George Mason University student; Abi Ogle, crafts, Richmond, Virginia Commonwealth University student; Aida Lizalde, sculpture, Richmond, Virginia Commonwealth University student; Mia Greenwald, mixed media, Harrisonburg, James Madison University student; and Giselle Hobbs, painting, Staunton, Cornell University student.

Undergraduate fellowship awards of \$4,000 each went to five students. The recipients are Morgan K. Jones, painting, Chesapeake, Hickory High School student; Stephon Anthony Slater, photography, Hampton, Longwood University student; Skyler Mikkell Ancheta, painting, Chesapeake, Western Branch High School student; Abigail K. Melvin, drawing, Chesapeake, Grassfield High School student; and Amber Robinson Pierce, crafts, Virginia Beach, Old Dominion University student.

Three undergraduate fellowships of \$2,000 each were awarded to Elise Wojtowicz, photography, Richmond, Virginia Commonwealth University student; Alexander J. Sausen, painting, Richmond, Virginia Commonwealth University student; and Leana Victoria Spain, film and video, Richmond, Virginia Commonwealth University student.

The Cy Twombly Graduate Fellowship, supported by the McClintock Endowment, honors a two-time fellowship winner. This year's awardee is Ellis E. Finney, film and video, Gloucester, Columbia University student.

About the Visual Arts Fellowship Program

The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts Visual Arts Fellowship Program was established in 1940 with a generous contribution made by the late John Lee Pratt of Fredericksburg. Offered through the VMFA Statewide Program, fellowships are still largely funded through the Pratt Endowment and supplemented with gifts from the Lettie Pate Whitehead Foundation and the J. Warwick McClintic Jr. Scholarship Fund. In addition to providing financial rewards to all recipients, VMFA exhibits works by past fellowship winners in VMFA's Amuse Restaurant and Claiborne Robertson Room, VMFA's Pauley Center Galleries and select spaces at Richmond International Airport. Several past and present fellowship recipients have also shown their work in the galleries of the Workhouse Arts Center in Lorton and the Capital One Commons in Richmond.

About the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts

The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts in Richmond, Virginia, is one of the largest comprehensive art museums in the United States. VMFA, which opened in 1936, is a state agency and privately endowed educational institution. Its purpose is to collect, preserve, exhibit, and interpret art, and to encourage the study of the arts. Through the Office of Statewide Partnerships program, the museum offers curated exhibitions, arts-related audiovisual programs, symposia, lectures, conferences, and workshops by visual and performing artists. In addition to presenting a wide array of special exhibitions, the museum provides visitors with the opportunity to experience a global collection of art that spans more than 6,000 years. VMFA's permanent holdings encompass nearly 50,000 artworks, including the largest public collection of Fabergé outside of Russia, the finest collection of Art Nouveau outside of Paris, and one of the nation's finest collections of American art. VMFA is also home to important collections of Chinese art, English silver, and

French Impressionist, Post-Impressionist, British sporting, and modern and contemporary art, as well as renowned South Asian, Himalayan, and African art. In May 2010, VMFA opened its doors to the public after a transformative expansion, the largest in its history.

The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts has begun its \$190 million expansion and renovation project led by the international architecture firm SmithGroup. Tentatively scheduled for completion in 2026, the project consists of adding a new wing of nearly 170,000 square feet and renovating 45,000 square feet of existing spaces, while maintaining 150,000 square feet of green space in the Sculpture Garden. Visitors will experience a seamless journey through the collections in the new wing, which will house contemporary art, African art, American art, a new suite of galleries for rotating special exhibitions, and a special-events space. The expansion and renovation will enable the museum to display more art, welcome more visitors, and provide more enjoyment.

The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts is the only art museum in the United States open 365 days a year with free general admission. For additional information, telephone 804.340.1400 or visit www.VMFA.museum.

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