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VMFA completes \$1.2M challenge grant to support digital and educational initiatives

The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts recently completed a challenge grant in excess of \$1.2 million to benefit the museum's digital technology and education initiative, ArtShare. The initial goal from the Mary Morton Parsons Foundation was \$600,000. The funds will directly support capital projects necessary to sustain VMFA as a 21st-century museum, including the development of new educational content and platforms.

"The Parsons Foundation's challenge grant came at a critical time for the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, as we were assessing our progress since the 2010 expansion and determining where we wanted to be in 2020," VMFA Director Alex Nyerges said. "Investing in technology—to provide visitors with new opportunities to engage with Virginia's world-class collection and to share these treasures with more people than ever before—became one of the core principles in our new strategic plan. The Parsons Foundation's support has enabled us to strengthen our commitment to being a museum that's welcoming and accessible to all."



ARTshare is a multi-year initiative to expand opportunities for digital learning and outreach at VMFA. Through innovative tools that enhance the gallery experience and extend it beyond the museum's walls, ARTshare will benefit the museum's on-site visitors while advancing the mission to serve Virginians throughout the state. It is one of the museum's highest institutional priorities and is included in the 2020 Strategic Plan.

The ARTshare initiative includes:

- Digitizing the museum's collection and educational resources, thereby making them accessible through a variety of platforms onsite, across the Commonwealth, and beyond.
- Developing new interpretations and richer context for works on view.
- Creating and sharing new educational content for pre K-12 classrooms, museum visitors, and virtual visitors throughout Virginia and around the world, through distance learning programs, a growing body of online resources, in-gallery interactives, etc.

The matching funds are composed of leadership gifts from members of the Board of Trustees and the Foundation Board of Directors; corporate and foundation gifts; proceeds from VMFA's signature fundraising event, ARTrageous; and gifts from many museum supporters.

About the Mary Morton Parsons Foundation

Mary Morton Parsons and her foundation have a long history with the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts dating back to the late 1950s. During her lifetime, Mrs. Parsons made a generous gift to support the installation of the Egyptian Gallery and established an endowment to expand VMFA's holdings in

American Decorative Arts. The Mary Morton Parsons Foundation has continued this legacy with major gifts to VMFA's renovation of the Stan and Dorothy Pauley Center and the 2010 expansion. "Our mission is to strengthen the capacity of organizations that serve the Richmond community through projects that will have a long-term impact," said Amy Nisenson, Executive Director of the Parsons Foundation. "We are delighted to support the museum's efforts to share its collections and resources with new audiences." With this most recent grant, Mrs. Parsons' and the foundation's contributions to the museum exceed \$3 million.

About the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts

VMFA's permanent collection encompasses more than 33,000 works of art spanning 5,000 years of world history. Its collections of Art Nouveau and Art Deco, English silver, Fabergé, and the art of South Asia are among the finest in the nation. With acclaimed holdings in American, British Sporting, Impressionist and Post-Impressionist, and Modern and Contemporary art – and additional strengths in African, Ancient, East Asian, and European – VMFA ranks as one of the top comprehensive art museums in the United States. Programs include educational activities and studio classes for all ages, plus lively after-hours events. VMFA's Statewide Partnership program includes traveling exhibitions, artist and teacher workshops, and lectures across the Commonwealth. VMFA, a certified Virginia Green attraction, is open 365 days a year and general admission is always free. For additional information, telephone 804-340-1400 or visit www.vmfa.museum.

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