

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**Virginia Museum of Fine Arts Announces Free Admission for Commonwealth Employees and
Preschool and K–12 Teachers to Exhibition *Dawoud Bey: Elegy***
Landscape Photography and Film Installations Explore Early African American Experiences



Museum visitors viewing the photograph *Cabin* from the series *In This Here Place*, 2019, Dawoud Bey (American, born 1953), gelatin silver print. Rennie Collection, Vancouver. Photo by Sandra Sellars, © 2023 Virginia Museum of Fine Arts

Richmond, Virginia — The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts (VMFA) announced today that Commonwealth of Virginia employees and preschool and K–12 teachers (public and private) will receive free admission to the new exhibition *Dawoud Bey: Elegy*. Active-duty military and their immediate families can also receive free admission to special exhibitions through the museum’s year-round participation in the Blue Star Museums program. The exhibition is now on view at VMFA through February 25, 2024.

A profound meditation on early experiences of African Americans in the United States, [*Dawoud Bey: Elegy*](#) marks the first exhibition of three photographic series and two film installations by renowned contemporary artist Dawoud Bey (American, born 1953). *Elegy* also debuts Bey’s new photographic series, *Stony the Road* (2023), as well as the artist’s latest film, *350,000* (2023), both created in Richmond.

“The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts is a significant cultural and educational resource for all Virginians,” said VMFA’s Director and CEO Alex Nyerges. “With a series of new works that explore Virginia’s connection to our nation’s history, I encourage all Commonwealth employees and educators to enjoy free admission to the exhibition *Dawoud*

Bey: Elegy. This important exhibition, which spotlights the artist's brilliant historical landscape photographs, offers visitors space to contemplate America's past, present and future."

The historically grounded images included in the exhibition spur moving experiences, inviting visitors to become active participants within Bey's immersive compositions. From the Richmond Slave Trail, where enslaved Africans were first marched onto auction blocks, to the plantations of Louisiana where enslaved people lived and labored, to the last stages of the Underground Railroad in Ohio, a route fugitive slaves traveled in their quest for freedom, Bey's powerful images evoke both factual and imagined realities.

Commonwealth employees and educators must show their employee IDs or badges at the Visitor Services Desk in the museum when picking up their tickets. One free ticket is available per badge. Reservations for first-available tickets to the exhibition can also be made in person at the Visitor Services Desk.

The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts is open 365 days a year with free general admission. In keeping with its annual schedule, the museum will be open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, New Year's Eve and New Year's Day.

Dawoud Bey: Elegy is organized by Valerie Cassel Oliver, VMFA's Sydney and Frances Lewis Family Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art. See the museum's complete exhibition schedule at www.vmfa.museum.

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General Ticket Information

Tickets for the special exhibition *Dawoud Bey: Elegy* are available at www.vmfa.museum: \$12 adults, \$10 for seniors 65+, and \$8 for youth 7–17 and college students with IDs. [Museums for All](#) participants can purchase tickets to this exhibition at the reduced price of \$2 each with a limit of four tickets per Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) card. Tickets are free for VMFA members and children ages 6 and under. As a participant of [Blue Star Museums](#), VMFA also provides free tickets for all active duty, National Guard and Reserve military personnel and their immediate families.

Sponsor Information

The exhibition *Dawoud Bey: Elegy* is presented by Altria Group and sponsored by the Lettie Pate Whitehead Evans Exhibition Endowment; William R. Kenan, Jr. Charitable Trust; Julia Louise Reynolds Fund; Community Foundation for a greater Richmond; Mr. and Mrs. Thomas F. Garner, Jr.; Dr. and Mrs. William V. Garner; Elisabeth Shelton Gottwald Fund; Nancy and Wayne Chasen; and Anne and Gus Edwards. VMFA is also grateful to the following sponsors: Caprice Bragg and Larry Thomas; Kate and Matt Cooper; Marietta Daniel; Eucharria "Ukay" and Richard Jackson, M.D.; Arnel Manalo; and Michelle and John Nestler. This project is supported in part by the National Endowment for the Arts.

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 the James W. and Frances G. McGlothlin Wing I after a transformative expansion, previously the largest in its history. A new expansion, the McGlothlin Wing

II, is planned to open in 2028. Comprising more than 170,000 square feet, it will be the largest expansion in the museum's history and will make VMFA the fifth largest art museum in the United States.

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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