

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts Appoints Karen Daly as Its First  
Senior Manager of Provenance Research**

This new full-time position demonstrates VMFA's commitment to provenance research,  
collection stewardship and transparency



Karen Daly stepped into her new role as VMFA's first Senior Manager of Provenance Research on March 10.  
Photograph by Sandra Sellars, © 2025 Virginia Museum of Fine Arts

**Richmond, VA** — The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts (VMFA) announced the appointment of Karen Daly as the museum's first Senior Manager of Provenance Research. Daly assumed the new role on March 10, 2025.

The objective of provenance research is to trace the ownership history and location of an object, ideally from its creation to the present. VMFA conducts research on all works of art in its collection.

“The creation of this new full-time position at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts demonstrates our commitment to proactively researching the provenance of the more than 50,000 objects in our collection and sharing this information with the public,” said Director and CEO Alex Nyerges. “We are delighted that Karen will lead this important effort.”

Daly brings to the position more than 25 years of experience in museum collections management and registration. For more than a decade, she has served as both the senior registrar for exhibitions and the museum's part-time provenance specialist. She contributed her valuable insights to the landmark 2005 publication *Vitalizing Memory: International Perspectives in Provenance Research* and participated in the 2017 German and American Provenance Research

Exchange Program (PREP) for Museum Professionals. Daly earned her M.A. in art history from Virginia Commonwealth University.

“I am grateful to be able to bring my institutional history to this new role. My varied experience with VMFA’s wonderful encyclopedic collection has prepared me to focus on provenance research,” Daly said. “I am excited to collaborate with my incredible colleagues to expand VMFA’s provenance program and to train staff in provenance research and standards. I also look forward to further engagement with national and international networks on behalf of VMFA.”

As Senior Manager of Provenance Research, Daly will oversee provenance research on all objects in VMFA’s permanent art collection and identify research priorities with key staff. This vital role will coordinate efforts across all museum departments engaged in collections scholarship and stewardship. Working with Dr. Michael Taylor, VMFA’s Artistic Director and Chief Curator, as well as the museum’s 15 curators and other integral staff, she will help develop protocols and conduct research on works in the permanent art collection, as well as future acquisitions, deaccessions and loans. Daly will also respond to restitution claims and expand public access to this information via the museum’s website.



VMFA’s Senior Manager of Provenance Research Karen Daly. Photograph by Sandra Sellars, © 2025 Virginia Museum of Fine Arts

“Karen Daly is an internationally recognized expert in provenance research, cultural property, repatriation and restitution,” said Dr. Taylor. “She will advance the museum’s provenance and restitution efforts, ensuring that provenance-related best practices are integrated throughout the institution in agreement with national and international guidelines and VMFA’s mission.”

Provenance research is essential to ensuring that all objects in the museum’s collection are lawfully held and rightfully owned, thereby maintaining public trust. Museums have traditionally conducted provenance research as part of the overall approach to curatorial research. Within the last few decades, there has been an increased focus on the provenance of museum objects, and the field has gained in importance and become a focus of study.

In keeping with guidelines issued by the American Association of Museum Directors (AAMD) and the American Alliance of Museums (AAM), one focus of provenance research at VMFA is on paintings, sculpture, works on paper and other objects that were created before 1946 and that might have been stolen or looted in Europe between 1933 and 1945. Since 2004, VMFA has resolved four Nazi era art claims, three of which were returned to rightful owners and one of which remained in the collection through a compensation agreement.

The museum also follows AAM and AAMD guidelines and standards regarding the provenance of archaeological materials and ancient art. In 2023, VMFA repatriated 44 works of ancient art to Italy, Egypt and Türkiye.

VMFA is also fully compliant with the 1990 Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), which was updated in 2024. The museum has repatriated five objects to their respective tribal communities.

Provenance research is an ongoing endeavor, and VMFA is continually updating its provenance data and sharing this information on its website. For more information about the museum’s [permanent art collection](#), [provenance research and restitutions](#), visit [www.VMFA.museum](http://www.VMFA.museum).

### **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 more than 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, 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 fourth largest comprehensive art museum in the United States.

**Recently named one of the 20 best art museums in the U.S. by *The Washington Post*, 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](http://www.VMFA.museum).**

#### Media Contacts

Jan Hatchette | (804) 204-2721 | [jan.hatchette@vmfa.museum](mailto:jan.hatchette@vmfa.museum)  
Amy Peck | (804) 773-1791 | [amy.peck@vmfa.museum](mailto:amy.peck@vmfa.museum)  
Camryn Royal | (804) 204-2717 | [camryn.royal@vmfa.museum](mailto:camryn.royal@vmfa.museum)

200 N. Arthur Ashe Blvd., Richmond, VA 23220