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VMFA Announces New Internship Funded by Souls Grown Deep Foundation

New grant program supports undergraduate students of color

Richmond, Virginia – The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts is one of three U.S. art museums to participate in a new grant program supported by the Atlanta-based Souls Grown Deep Foundation. The program provides paid internships to undergraduate students of color, allowing for the opportunity to develop professional experience in art museums while being paid. The program will launch in the spring 2019 semester, providing \$5,000 per intern, leading to full academic-year placements beginning in fall 2020, offering \$10,000 per student. Students will apply for internships in relevant curatorial, registration conservation, education and/or administrative positions at art museums that have acquired art from the foundation.

Along with VMFA, the New Orleans Museum of Art and Philadelphia Museum of Art will participate in the program. All three museums are currently working toward exhibitions of their respective Souls Grown Deep Foundation acquisitions.

“The Souls Grown Deep Foundation’s internship program presents a new way to support the original aspirations of our founder William S. Arnett—that the artists we champion must be and are being championed by others,” said Dr. Maxwell L. Anderson, president of the foundation. “In light of recent research by the Mellon Foundation on the challenges of diversifying museum staff, we are especially proud to fill the need of supporting undergraduate students to encourage the pursuit of graduate education and/or a career in museums.”

Successful applicants will be able to work alongside curators, registrars, conservators, educators and administrators, working directly with art recently acquired from the foundation collection and gain experience in museum work in general. Each internship includes a trip to visit the foundation’s collection in Atlanta and the artists and communities it serves in the Southeast. Internships are open to undergraduate students of color interested in professions related to museums and visual arts. For information on applying, go to www.soulsgrowndeep.org/internships.

“The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts is excited to participate in this new grant program that aligns perfectly with our strategic goals of diversifying our collections, audience and staff,” says VMFA Director Alex Nyerges. “With this grant and internship opportunity, we look forward to playing a part in shaping the next generation of museum professionals.”

In May 2018, VMFA acquired 34 artworks by African American artists from the Souls Grown Deep Foundation. Selected works will be featured in a special exhibition from June 8 to Nov. 17, 2019. The exhibition will include drawings, paintings and assemblage sculptures by Thornton Dial, Lonnie Holley, Ronald Lockett, Jimmy Lee



“Housetop” – fractured medallion variation quilt, 1977, Rita Mae Pettway (American, born 1941), corduroy. Virginia Museum of Fine Arts; Adolph D. and Wilkins C. Williams Fund and partial gift of the Souls Grown Deep Foundation. Photo by Ron Lee/The Silver Factory ©Rita Mae Pettway/Artist Rights Society ARS, New York.

Sudduth, Mose Tolliver, Jesse Aaron, James “Son Ford” Thomas and Purvis Young, along with a significant selection of quilts by the women of Gee’s Bend, Alabama.

Founded in 2010, the Souls Grown Deep Foundation is dedicated to documenting, preserving and promoting the contributions of African American artists from the South, and the cultural traditions in which they are rooted. Central to this mission has been a series of gift/purchase agreements to transfer works from the foundation’s collection to leading art museums in the United States and providing opportunities for research, education and scholarly initiatives around this art. To date, works have been placed in seven museums, including The Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco and the High Museum of Art in Atlanta. An ever-increasing number of art historians, curators, museum directors, art critics and journalists are studying, exhibiting and publishing the hundreds of objects being transferred. The internship program will invite interest in this art for new generations and continue to expand the depth of knowledge about African American artists from the South.

About the Souls Grown Deep Foundation

The Souls Grown Deep Foundation is the only nonprofit organization dedicated to documenting, preserving, and promoting the artwork by African American artists from the South. The foundation was established with the largest and foremost collection of works by African American artists from the Southern United States, which it is working to disburse into the collections of museums around the country to make the work accessible to the widest possible audience. The foundation advances its mission by advocating the contributions of these artists in the canon of American art history, accomplished through collection transfers, scholarship, education, public programs and publications. Through grants and other initiatives, the foundation has also extended its mission to serve those communities that gave rise to the visual traditions of the artists represented in its collection. For more information, visit www.soulsgrowndeep.org.

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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 40,000 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 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.**