

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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VMFA Receives Major Education Endowment

Generous Gift from Joan P. Brock Funds Art Education Programs and Joan P. Brock Director of Education and Assistant Deputy Director for Art and Education Position



Joan P. Brock, Photo by Ryan Livingston, © 2017 Sentara

Richmond, Virginia — The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts (VMFA) announced today the establishment of a new endowment to support education programs at the museum — the Joan P. Brock Education Endowment.

“This incredible endowment reflects the importance of education to the museum’s mission to enrich the lives of all Virginians through the arts,” said Alex Nyerges, VMFA’s Director and CEO. “We’re immensely grateful to Joan for this profound gift, ensuring the future of the museum’s engaging education programs.”

“As a lifelong supporter of education initiatives and institutions, I am delighted to make this gift to the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts,” explains Brock. “VMFA has become a leader in the field of museum education and I hope this endowment will encourage further growth and innovation.”

In addition to supporting the museum’s many education programs, the endowment will also underwrite VMFA’s Director of Education and Assistant Deputy Director for Art and Education position. This fall, Celeste Fetta, the current Director of Education will become the Joan P. Brock Director of Education and Assistant Deputy Director for Art and Education. After more than a decade in various roles in the department, Fetta became VMFA’s Director of Education in 2014. The museum’s education staff of 39 full- and part-time staff, and numerous adjunct faculty, interns and volunteers provide learning experiences and instruction for visitors of all ages, from infants to infinity. She will take on a range of new duties related to education and statewide programs, including assisting with the design and launch of the new Artmobile, *VMFA on the Road*.

“This is such a wonderful investment in our visitors and in VMFA’s future,” said Fetta. “From digital resources, gallery programs and lectures to summer art camps and Family Day celebrations, our education and interpretation initiatives enrich the experience of more than 550,000 participants each year. The Brock endowment will support our efforts in person and online to provide all of our visitors with a multitude of ways to engage with the museum’s collection and share their perspectives.”

“Endowments help to provide a secure future for the museum and its staff,” said Dr. Michael Taylor, Chief Curator and Deputy Director for Art and Education. “We are immensely grateful to Joan for this transformative gift to VMFA. The Joan P. Brock Education Endowment will support Celeste and her talented team of educators as they develop and present the museum’s educational classes and programs that reach audiences of all ages throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia.”

Joan P. Brock was appointed to VMFA’s Board of Trustees in 2019, and she has been a generous supporter of the museum through membership gifts and sponsorships of *The Dirty South* exhibition, *Fine Arts & Flowers* and the installation of Kehinde Wiley’s sculpture *Rumors of War*.

A native of Norfolk, Brock was the first woman to preside over the Chrysler Museum Board and has also chaired the ACCESS College Foundation and Virginia Wesleyan College boards. She was a long-time associate of Dollar Tree Inc., which was co-founded by her late husband Macon Brock. Through their philanthropy and volunteer leadership, Joan and Macon have made an indelible impact on higher education, environmental stewardship and the arts in the Commonwealth.

For more information about education programs at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, visit 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 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 more than \$190 million expansion and renovation project led by the international architecture firm SmithGroup. Tentatively scheduled for completion in 2027, 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 four acres 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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