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**Governor Youngkin Announces Free Admission for State Employees and
Preschool and K–12 Teachers to VMFA’s New Exhibition
*Storied Strings: The Guitar in American Art***



Person with Guitar (Blue), edition 25/45, 2005, John Baldessari (American, 1931–2020), color screenprint on Sintra board with hand painting. Collection of Jordan D. Schnitzer, © John Baldessari 2005. Courtesy Estate of John Baldessari © 2022. Courtesy Sprüth Magers. Image: Aaron Wessling Photography

Richmond, Virginia — Governor Glenn Youngkin announced today that Commonwealth of Virginia employees and preschool and K–12 teachers (public and private) can receive free admission to the new exhibition [*Storied Strings: The Guitar in American Art*](#) now at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts (VMFA). Active military and their immediate families can also receive free admission through the museum’s year-round extension of the Blue Star Museums program. The exhibition is on view at VMFA now through March 19, 2023.

“We are fortunate to have such an enriching and innovative host of cultural gems across the Commonwealth,” said Governor Glenn Youngkin. “With works featured from home-grown Virginia artists and performers, I encourage all Commonwealth employees and educators to enjoy their free admission to *Storied Strings* at VMFA.”

Storied Strings: The Guitar in American Art explores the instrument as a visual subject, enduring symbol and storyteller’s companion. Strummed everywhere from parlors and front porches to protest rallies and rock arenas, the guitar also appears far and wide in American art. Featuring 125 works of art, as well as 35 musical instruments, the exhibition

shows how guitars figure prominently in the visual stories Americans tell themselves about themselves — their histories, identities and aspirations.

The exhibition includes incredible paintings, drawings, watercolors, photographs and sculptures by prominent American artists such as John Baldessari, Romare Bearden, Thomas Hart Benton, Elizabeth Catlett, William Merritt Chase, Thomas Eakins, William Eggleston, Robert Henri, Lonnie Holley, Frances Benjamin Johnston, William H. Johnson, Jacob Lawrence, Annie Leibovitz and more.

Audio-visual kiosks featuring music and filmed performances further enhance the visitor experience. As an extension of the exhibition, performances by more than a dozen recognized guitarists will be videotaped in the fully functioning in-gallery recording studio for release as *Richmond Sessions '22–'23*. In partnership with [In Your Ear Studios](#), a new recording will be released every other week on [VMFA's YouTube channel](#) and linked on the [museum's website](#) through March 2023.

“Visitors to the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts will be captivated by the sights and sounds in this multifaceted exhibition,” said Alex Nyerges, VMFA’s Director and CEO. “We hope that our Commonwealth of Virginia colleagues and teachers will take this opportunity to see *Storied Strings: The Guitar in American Art*.”

Ticket Information

VMFA is the only art museum in the United States open 365 days a year with free general admission. Regularly priced tickets for the special exhibition [Storied Strings: The Guitar in American Art](#) are \$16 for adults, \$12 for seniors 65+, and \$10 for youth 7–17 and college students with ID. The exhibition is free for VMFA members; children ages 6 and under; preschool and K–12 teachers (public and private) and Commonwealth of Virginia employees. The exhibition is also free to active-duty military personnel and their immediate families.

Commonwealth employees and educators should call 804.340.1405 to make their reservations and 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. Tickets are scheduled to help limit gallery capacity to ensure the comfort of our visitors.

About the Sponsors

[Storied Strings: The Guitar in American Art](#) is supported by grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Wyeth Foundation for American Art, the Robert Lehman Foundation and the Peachtree House Foundation. Other sponsors include The Louise B. and J. Harwood Cochrane Center for American Art; the Lettie Pate Whitehead Evans Exhibition Endowment; Julia Louise Reynolds Fund; Nancy and Wayne Chasen; Community Foundation for a greater Richmond; Mr. and Mrs. Thomas F. Garner, Jr.; Dr. and Mrs. William V. Garner; Troutman Pepper; YouDecide; Birch Douglass; Hamilton Beach Brands, Inc.; an anonymous donor; Fralin Pickups, LLC; Dr. and Mrs. Michael Godin; Sherrie Page Guyer and Raymond A. Guyer III; Karen and Pat Kelly; Curry and Lindsey Motley; Pamela and Fred Palmore; Dr. and Mrs. R. P. Sowers III; Tredway S. Spratley and Janine M. Collins; Don and Pia Steinbrugge; and Courtenay S. Welton II.

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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Media Contacts

Jan Hatchette | 804.204.2721 | jan.hatchette@VMFA.museum
Amy Peck | 804.204.2680 | amy.peck@VMFA.museum
Kyla Coleman | 804.204.2702 | kyla.coleman@VMFA.museum

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