

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**VMFA Statewide Structure Broadens Engagement**

New website complements resources

As a national leader in education, VMFA's Statewide division has restructured to reach an even wider audience including all schools, educators, and community-based non-profit organizations. Libraries, retirement homes, historic sites, art centers and also accredited museums are now part of the outreach.

**Resources for educators**

A key component of the restructuring is a resource-rich website, [www.vmfa-resources.org](http://www.vmfa-resources.org), a resource for educators who are seeking deeper knowledge of the artists and work represented in VMFA's permanent collections.

This portal offers access to lesson plans, pre-visit and post-visit guides, art projects, artist videos, and more. It is available to all K-12 schools, public and private, as well as home school organizations, parents, and students. All of these will be eligible to become entry-level VMFA partners at no charge.



Paul Mellon Collection Educator Jeffrey Allison works with students from John B. Cary Elementary School to write songs based on their interactions with art at VMFA. Photo: David Stover © Virginia Museum of Fine Arts

“The site expands our already unique statewide outreach program to truly open the museum and its resources to all Virginians and indeed, the world,” said Jeffrey Allison, Paul Mellon Collection Educator and VMFA Statewide Manager. “Membership for all educators is free. Our goal is to reach every school in the Commonwealth.”

Virginia educators have access to Virginia Standards of Learning based teacher workshops, which are offered throughout the state. VMFA's education staff will be busy now through early September attending annual teacher in-service training at many key city and county school systems.

“We work with a number of locations and various specialties including art, English, foreign languages, science, and world and U.S. history,” Allison said. “While we do them throughout the year as well, the start of the school year training establishes VMFA as a definitive resource to introduce SOL-based learning about the arts across all curricula.”

### **Resources for statewide arts organizations**

Non-profit organizations throughout Virginia have access to a wide range of artist workshops, lectures, and performances available from VMFA to host for their audiences.

Another important component of VMFA's Statewide Program is exhibitions. "Museums want to exhibit works from our permanent collection in their own communities," Allison said. Right now there are 16 sites around the state capable of housing museum-level exhibitions, including traveling VMFA exhibitions such as *European Modern: Master Artists from the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts*, which will run through William King Museum in Abingdon January 5, 2014.

Not only does VMFA offer these exhibitions, it also provides technical assistance and support.

But the approach is not just top-down. VMFA will also serve as an intermediary so these museums can share information and take advantage of cost-saving opportunities on services such as insurance, shipping, and other tasks and expenditures related to organizing an exhibition. Another goal of the new program is to encourage partners to curate their own exhibitions. Partner curators will have online access to VMFA's collections database.

Shifting demographics provide additional opportunities, and VMFA is looking more toward institutions such as colleges and universities for potential partnerships. Radford University and the University of Mary Washington are two examples of institutions of higher learning that are beginning to host more exhibitions and programs. Another area ripe for expansion is retirement communities, where exposure to the arts is seen as an enhancement to the quality of life.

From K 12 students and teachers to college students, retirees, and others, VMFA is currently serving some 611,000 Virginians outside its Richmond campus. With these new statewide initiatives, the museum hopes to reach even more people.

### **About the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts**

VMFA's permanent collection encompasses more than 33,000 works of art spanning 5,000 years of world history. Its collections of Art Nouveau and Art Deco, English silver, Fabergé, and the art of South Asia are among the finest in the nation. With acclaimed holdings in American, British Sporting, Impressionist and Post-Impressionist, and Modern and Contemporary art – and additional strengths in African, Ancient, East Asian, and European – VMFA ranks as one of the top comprehensive art museums in the United States. Programs include educational activities and studio classes for all ages, plus lively after-hours events. VMFA's Statewide Partnership program includes traveling exhibitions, artist and teacher workshops, and lectures across the Commonwealth. VMFA is open 365 days a year and general admission is always free. For additional information, telephone 804-340-1400 or visit [www.vmfa.museum](http://www.vmfa.museum).

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