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VMFA's fellowship program supports Virginia artists

27 fellowships totaling \$161,000 awarded for 2018-19



Work by Sharon Shapiro, Graduate (Painting), Louisa.

The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts has selected 27 Virginia art students and professional artists from 771 applicants to receive fellowships worth a total of \$161,000 for 2018-19. The program was launched in 1940 and since then, VMFA has awarded nearly \$5.6 million to more than 1,325 professional artists, art students and graduate students from across Virginia in the largest fellowship program of any kind in the United States.

Recipients must be Virginia residents and can use the award as desired, including for education and studio investments. Each year, professional curators and working artists serve as jurors to select fellowship recipients.

“The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts’ Fellowship Program has a long and proud history of providing a vital source of funding for the visual arts and art history in Virginia,” says Alex Nyerges, VMFA director. “We are proud to support and nurture professional and emerging artists through these fellowships as well as offering them opportunities to exhibit their work. The Fellowship Program is an important part of VMFA’s mission to ensure that all Virginians across the Commonwealth have access to the arts.”

Fellowship Recipients

This year, VMFA awarded 12 professional fellowships, each worth \$8,000. The recipients are (in alphabetical order by hometown): Sean Samoheyl, sculpture, Louisa; Braxton Congrove, sculpture, Richmond; John Freyer, new and emerging media, Richmond; Hope Ginsburg, film/video, Richmond; Aaron McIntosh, crafts, Richmond; Michael Jones Mckean, sculpture, Richmond; Becca Schwartz, Photography, Richmond; Ricardo Vicente Jose Ruiz, painting, Richmond; Hilary Wilder, painting, Richmond; Sayaka Suzuki, crafts, Sandston; Mike Jabbur, crafts, Williamsburg; Abbasi Akhame, film/video, Woodbridge.

Michelle White, senior curator of The Menil Collection in Houston, Texas, was the juror for the professional awards.

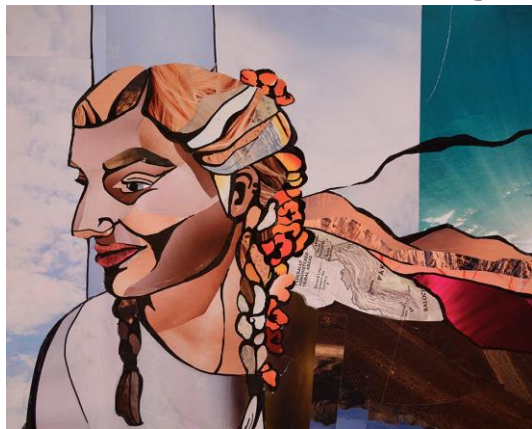
Three graduate students were awarded \$6,000 each. They are Emily Fussner, George Mason University, printmaking, Fairfax; Sharon Shapiro, Maine College of Art, painting, Louisa; Sarah Kleinman, Virginia Commonwealth University, art history, Richmond. One graduate student was awarded a half-year Fellowship worth \$3,000. She is Cosima Storz, printmaking, VCU, Richmond.

Undergraduate fellowships of \$4,000 went to 11 students, including five high-school students. The recipients are Ryan Potts, film/video, Hayfield Secondary School, Lorton; Sarah Morgan, mixed media, VCU, Midlothian; Hannah Scaparo, drawing, Maggie L. Walker Governor’s School, Midlothian; Bryce Edwards, mixed media,



Work by Braxton Congrove, Professional (Sculpture), Richmond.

Warwick High School, Newport News; Dillon Bolton, drawing, VCU, Richmond; Phuong Bui, new/emerging media, VCU, Richmond; Eibhlin Villalta, photography, University of Richmond, Richmond;



Sarah Morgan, Undergraduate (Mixed Media), Midlothian.

Jennifer Detlefsen, crafts, VCU, Virginia Beach; Cullen Dinneen, photography, Kettle Run High School, Warrenton; Noah Hook, painting, VCU, White Stone; Norah Peterson, painting, Warhill High School, Williamsburg.

Erin Corrales-Diaz, curator at The Johnson Collection in Spartanburg South Carolina, served as the juror for the art history graduate award. The juror for the undergraduate and graduate visual arts awards was Cory Garman, director of exhibitions at the Museum of the Shenandoah Valley in Winchester.

In addition to providing financial rewards to all recipients, VMFA offers exhibition space in VMFA's Amuse restaurant and the Claiborne Robertson Room; the VMFA Pauley Center Galleries; and select spaces at Richmond International Airport. Currently on view are past Fellowship winners Kelly Seeber, Seth Bauserman, and Nils Westergard, respectively. The museum's Fellowship Statewide Exhibitions Program allows statewide partners to curate exhibitions featuring work of recent VMFA Visual Arts Fellowship recipients. Since the program was launched, several past and present fellowship recipients have shown their work in the galleries of Workhouse Arts Center in Lorton and the Capital One Commons in Richmond. When VMFA launches its new artmobile, VMFA on the Road, this fall, its first exhibition will feature work by Fellowship winners represented in the museum's permanent collections, including Sally Mann, Cy Twombly and Vince Gilligan.

The Fellowship Program was established in 1940 with a generous contribution made by the late John Lee Pratt of Fredericksburg. Offered through the VMFA Statewide Program, fellowships are still largely funded through the Pratt endowment and supplemented by gifts from the Lettie Pate Whitehead Foundation and the J. Warwick McClintic Jr. Scholarship Fund.

**View a slideshow of works by 2018 VMFA Fellowship Recipients: <https://youtu.be/TaAjhZA0Wsc>
Additional images of works by 2018 VMFA Fellowship Recipients are available [here](#).**

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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.