

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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VMFA launches *Evans 360°*

Digital learning platforms lead education initiative funded by Lettie Pate Evans Foundation

The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts has launched *Evans 360°*, a multidimensional learning experience that offers the public new ways to engage with the museum and its world-renowned collection. The three-year initiative, which incorporates on-site, web-based, and statewide components, is made possible through a \$1 million grant awarded to the museum by the Lettie Pate Evans Foundation in 2016.

“The impetus for the grant is in our 2020 Strategic Plan, which seeks to create an industry-leading education platform,” said Celeste Fetta, VMFA’s Director of Education. “The generosity of the Lettie Pate Evans Foundation will enable the museum to expand the breadth of our educational offerings to all corners of the state.”

In December 2017, the museum began a soft launch of [Collection Search](#) and [Learn Portal](#), two newly developed sections of [the VMFA website](#) and the first steps in the *Evans 360°* project. The museum’s Art & Education Division worked in tandem with Charlottesville-based company Vibethink to develop a robust digital education platform with features that will serve all potential audiences.

Collections Search gives users unprecedented digital access to VMFA’s permanent collection, as well as the rare book collection and portions of the museum’s archives. The search tool offers an intuitive desktop and mobile experience, allowing users to browse via collection area, genre, material, origin, and more. Each object entry provides information and images of the work, and automatically links to related audio and video files, archival materials, and other resources available on the *Learn Portal* companion site. New acquisitions are added to the site shortly after being entered into the museum’s internal collections management system. *Collections Search* will be constantly updated, and will soon become the pathway for virtual access to the museum’s entire collection of nearly 40,000 works of art.

Learn Portal is the hub for all of VMFA’s digital education initiatives. Users can explore education resources from the perspectives of *Educators and Students*, *Kids and Families*, or *Visitors and Researchers*, emphasizing the resources and activities that are most applicable to each user’s individual needs. Additional filters based on grade, subject area, and activity type are available to further narrow search results. Categories like *Museum Activities* and *At Home Activities* provide a broader look at the tools and activities visitors to *Learn Portal* can enjoy. A virtual “backpack” allows users to collect and save their favorite resources in one convenient location. Feedback provided by the VMFA Teacher Advisory Council helped the museum develop *Resource Packs*, thematic groupings of objects, expanded content on each object in the set, and activity suggestions to use in the classroom or during a museum visit. The content and activities featured in *Resource Packs* and throughout the site are designed to be highly adaptable to the needs of both teachers and students.

“We have had an excellent start to 2018 with the spectacular success of our *Terracotta Army* exhibition, and we are thrilled to now launch *Evans 360°* as yet another way people of all ages can enjoy VMFA,” said Alex Nyerges, Director of the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts. “This endeavor will redefine what education means to our visitors, offering them a truly exciting and interactive learning experience.”

In addition to its digital components, *Evans 360°* includes *The Lettie Pate Evans stART Orientation Space*, a new interactive space on the located on the museum’s first floor. The orientation space is intended to help first-time and returning visitors prepare for their journey through the permanent collection galleries and special exhibitions. The grant also supports the hiring of an In-Gallery Evaluator and the creation of the *Lettie Pate Evans Distance Learning Program*, which is being developed to give students and teachers the opportunity to learn from museum educators in real time via digital link.

“*Evans 360°* supports the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts ongoing initiative to develop a visitor-centric experience that meets the needs and expectations of diverse and growing audience, while also placing the museum at the forefront of museum education in the 21st century,” said Michael Taylor, Chief Curator and Deputy Director for Art & Education at VMFA.

About the Lettie Pate Evans Foundation

The Lettie Pate Evans Foundation is an independent private foundation that invests primarily in education and arts and culture. Mrs. Evans established the Lettie Pate Evans Foundation in 1945, making periodic gifts until her death in 1953. The Foundation has awarded more than \$244 million in grants since its inception. The Foundation makes grants in the program areas of [education](#) and [arts and culture](#). Education grants support health education, higher education, and select independent schools, while arts and culture grants primarily support historic preservation, museums, and performing arts organizations.

About Vibethink

Vibethink’s designers, developers, and strategists work together to find solutions to the unique and complex issues presented by today’s digital landscape. Vibethink uses a strategically focused mentality to successfully work with clients of the highest tier, executing design, development, and storytelling projects for organizations like Global Press Institute, Willow Tree Apps, SNL Financial, Semester at Sea, Stanford University’s School of Engineering, and The University of Virginia. In 2016, Vibethink developed VMFA’s popular *Fabergé at VMFA* app, and the *Lillian Thomas Pratt Archives* website.

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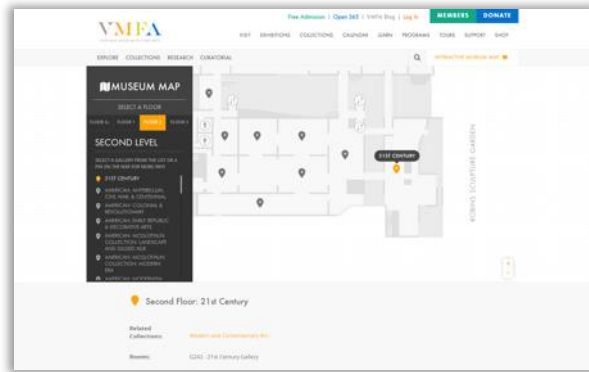
The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts in Richmond, Virginia, is one of the largest comprehensive art museums in the United States. VMFA, which opened in 1936, is a state agency and privately endowed educational institution. Its purpose is to collect, preserve, exhibit, and interpret art, and to encourage 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.

Publicity Images for *Evans 360°*



Collections Search Landing Page



Interactive Museum Map



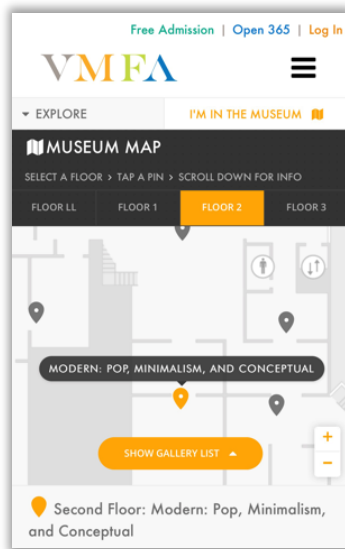
The Permanent Collection Introduction Page



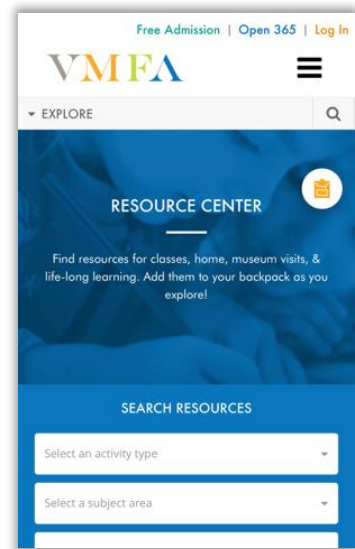
Learn Portal Resource Center Landing Page



Mobile Collections Search Landing Page



Mobile Interactive Museum Map



Mobile Resource Center Landing Page