

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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VMFA Installs Sculpture by Richmond Artist in Robins Sculpture Garden Today

Neptune Virginia Beach Maquette Served as Model for the Well-Known Virginia Beach Statue of “King Neptune”

Richmond, VA—The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts is pleased to announce the addition of *Neptune Virginia Beach Maquette* by Richmond-based sculptor Paul DiPasquale to the E. Claiborne and Lora Robins Sculpture Garden. This is the first piece by DiPasquale to enter VMFA’s collection and reflects the museum’s commitment to collecting and displaying the work of Virginia artists. DiPasquale is well known in the Commonwealth for public art commissions such as the Arthur Ashe statue on Monument Avenue in Richmond and *Neptune Virginia Beach*, a monumental 34-foot high sculpture in Virginia Beach, for which *Neptune Virginia Beach Maquette* served as the scale model. The 7-foot tall version installed at VMFA was cast in bronze in 2004 and is a gift from Aubrey and Peggy Layne. *Neptune Virginia Beach Maquette* sits across from the museum’s main entrance, at the base of the Robins Sculpture Garden waterfall—a nod to the Roman god’s sovereignty over the sea.



Paul DiPasquale (American, born 1951), *Neptune Virginia Beach Maquette*, 2004, bronze. Gift of Aubrey and Peggy Layne, 2018.299

“We’re delighted to have the sculpture of such a cherished Virginia statue go on public display in the Robins Sculpture Garden,” said VMFA Director Alex Nyerges. “By exhibiting the scale model for the finished work, we allow our visitors to understand DiPasquale’s artistic process and highlight the remarkable talent of artists who live and make their art in the Commonwealth of Virginia.”

Neptune Virginia Beach was installed on the Virginia Beach boardwalk in 2005. The Virginia Beach Neptune Festival received fifty entries from their request for design proposals, but only one was from a Virginia artist—Paul DiPasquale, who ultimately received the commission. Since its installation, “King Neptune” as it is commonly known, has become a popular and beloved tourist attraction for visitors and residents of Virginia Beach.

“We are lucky to have VMFA, a world-class institution, right here in Richmond,” said Aubrey Layne, the Secretary of Finance for Virginia Governor Ralph Northam. “Peggy and I couldn’t imagine a better home for *Neptune Virginia Beach Maquette* than the Robins Sculpture Garden and are thrilled that this gift will continue to strengthen ties across the Commonwealth, from the capital city to Hampton Roads and beyond.”

“Before any sculptor creates a piece as massive as *Neptune Virginia Beach*, he must first create a scale model, as was the case with *Neptune Virginia Beach Maquette*,” said

artist Paul DiPasquale. “The commitment to my vision that creating a maquette requires is no different than creating a much larger sculpture and often calls for more research and care. As a Richmond-based artist, it is an honor to have this piece represented in VMFA’s collection in a way that acknowledges the spirit and soul of the sculpture.”

The addition of *Neptune Virginia Beach Maquette* to the Robins Sculpture Garden follows the installation of *Chloe* in 2017, a 24-foot tall head of a young girl by the Spanish artist Jaume Plensa. Dale Chihuly’s *Red Reeds* was installed in 2012 in the Anne Cobb Gottwald Reflecting Pool and was the first site-specific outdoor installation by Chihuly to be acquired by an art museum.

A ribbon-cutting ceremony for *Neptune Virginia Beach Maquette* will be held on Dec. 11, 2018, at 6:15 pm.

About Paul DiPasquale

Paul DiPasquale is a Richmond-based artist with extensive experience with public sculpture, including the Arthur Ashe statue on Monument Avenue. DiPasquale investigates and produces public sculpture about history and the people who made it. A graduate of the University of Virginia with degrees in sociology and art, he trained at the Boston Architectural Center and received his master's degree in sculpture from Virginia Commonwealth University in 1977. He has twice been a visiting artist at the American Academy in Rome and recently a resident artist at Cité Internationale des Arts (the International City of the Arts) in Paris. Additionally, he has been an instructor, resident, and a visiting artist at Northern Virginia Community College, Maryland Institute College of Art, and the College of William and Mary, as well as an adjunct instructor at Virginia Commonwealth University.

Neptune Virginia Beach Maquette was an opportunity for the sculptor to adapt Italian Renaissance sculpture for the 21st century. Trained in abstract constructivist and figurative sculpture, DiPasquale intended Neptune to affect the viewer on an emotional and a formal level. In addition to the Arthur Ashe monument and *Neptune Virginia Beach*, his public bronze and granite sculptures in Virginia include Governor and Mrs. Mills Godwin, Oliver Hill, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and the Law Enforcement Memorial in Virginia Beach. Reviews of his private and public work have appeared in *American Artist*, *Sculpture Magazine*, *Newsweek*, *The New York Times*, *Time*, the *Wall Street Journal* and *The Washington Post*, among others. He is listed in *Who's Who in the World*, and *Who's Who in the Arts*.

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 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.

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