

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Jan. 28, 2019

### **VMFA Celebrates Black History Month and New African American Art Acquisitions** Events include a public art project, African American Read-In and Artist Talk with Glenn Ligon

Richmond, VA—As part of its longstanding initiative and 2015–2020 strategic plan, the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts will celebrate Black History Month with special events honoring African American artists and the museum’s growing African American art collection. In 2018, VMFA acquired 95 works by African American artists. Highlights among these acquisitions include Paul Rucker’s *Storm in a Time of Shelter*, Hale Woodruff’s *The Banjo Player*, Nick Cave’s *Soundsuit* and Glenn Ligon’s *A Small Band*. On view in the Cochrane Atrium, *A Small Band* is a neon sculpture featuring words stated by Daniel Hamm, a man wrongly accused of murder and imprisoned before his exoneration.

Glenn Ligon will host an artist talk on Feb. 7 in the Leslie Cheek Theater to discuss *A Small Band* and his practice, which has pursued critical perspectives of American history since the 1980s. Richmond-based artist Hamilton Glass will also be at VMFA during the month as he leads RVA Community Makers in a public art project and mural honoring local African American community leaders. Visitors are invited to join him in the WestRock Art Education Center as he works on the painting on Feb. 3. The completed mural will be on view in the Cochrane Atrium Feb. 21–27.



“At the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts we always look forward to welcoming the Richmond community to the museum for the incredible educational programming held during Black History Month,” said VMFA Director Alex Nyerges. “We are especially excited to showcase our African American art acquisitions, not only during Black History Month but year round, with an ongoing commitment to celebrating the outstanding work of the talented artists represented in our growing collection.”

Left: Glenn Ligon. Photo © Paul Sepuya. Right: *A Small Band*, 2015, Glenn Ligon, American (born 1960), neon, paint, metal support. Arthur and Margaret Glasgow Endowment, 2018.350. Photo © Virginia Museum of Fine Arts.

Additional programs include an African American Read-In with Mayor Levar M. Stoney on Feb. 21 and Dominion Energy Jazz Café: Jazz Around the Museum, featuring live music by the Cloud 9 Band. A full list of VMFA Black History Month programming is outlined below.

### **VMFA Black History Month Programs**

#### **FIRST FRIDAY with David Noyes, host of Ambiance Congo WRIR**

Friday, Feb. 1, 6–8:30 pm

Free, Cochrane Atrium

Enjoy a special extended First Friday program for a selection of the best of Congolese popular music. Since the 1950s, Congolese music has been the most widely distributed music throughout the African continent. It’s also appreciated worldwide—from Western Europe to Japan, Colombia and the Caribbean.

#### **TALK: Masking Traditions of the Congo, with Dr. Manuel Jordán, Deputy Director, Chief Curator and Curator for Africa, Musical Instrument Museum, Phoenix, AZ**

Friday, Feb. 1, 6:30–7:30 pm

\$8 (\$5 VMFA members), Leslie Cheek Theater

Dr. Manuel Jordán, a specialist on the Chokwe-Lunda people from Central Africa, will discuss masking traditions from the Democratic Republic of Congo. This lecture is inspired by the special exhibition *Congo Masks: Masterpieces from Central Africa*.

### **VMFA AFTER HOURS: Game ON**

Saturday, Feb. 2, 7–11:30 pm

\$45 (\$35 VMFA or Black History Museum members), Museum-wide

For a night of art, music and games after dark, join hosts Kelli Lemon and Micah “Bam-Bamm” White plus DJ Lonnie B! See *Congo Masks: Masterpieces from Central Africa*. Dance in the Marble Hall. Play games like Family Feud in the Cochrane Atrium. Join UnlockingRVA for karaoke. Compete in the gallery scavenger hunt to win a prize. During VMFA After Hours, the galleries will remain open, inviting attendees to experience the museum’s diverse permanent collection from around the globe.

### **OPEN STUDIO SUNDAY: Public Art Project with Hamilton Glass**

Sunday, Feb. 3, 1–4 pm

Free, no tickets required, WestRock Art Education Center

In Studio 1, assist Richmond-based artist Hamilton Glass with a public art project honoring local African American community leaders. Visitors are invited to return to VMFA during the week of Feb 21–27 to see the finished mural on display in the Cochrane Atrium. In Studio 2, be inspired and create a mask that reminds you of your community.

### **GALLERY TALK | 3 in 30: African Art with Richard Woodward, Curator of African Art, VMFA**

Tuesday, Feb. 5, 11–11:30 am

Thursday, Feb. 7, 6:30–7 pm

Free, meet at Visitor Services

Join Richard Woodward for a closer look at three works in VMFA’s collection of African Art.

### **ARTIST TALK with GLENN LIGON**

Thursday, Feb. 7, 6:30–7:30 pm

\$8 (\$5 VMFA members), Leslie Cheek Theater

New York–based artist Glenn Ligon will discuss his art and practice, which has pursued critical perspectives of American history since the 1980s. This talk will highlight *A Small Band*, which is one of VMFA’s recent acquisitions and is currently on view in the Cochrane Atrium.

### **FILM: *Black Is the Color***

Tuesdays, Feb. 12, 19 & 26, 1–2:15 pm

Free, tickets required, Leslie Cheek Theater

This recent film is a comprehensive survey of great work by African American artists who for so long encountered barriers in the mainstream art world. In it, key artists such as Edmonia Lewis, Whitfield Lovell, Kerry James Marshall, Ellen Gallagher and Jean-Michel Basquiat are highlighted. Art historians and gallery owners place the works in context—juxtaposing them with racist images of African Americans and setting them against the larger social contexts of Jim Crow, WWI, the civil rights movement and ingrained racism. Contemporary artists also discuss their influences.

### **DOMINION ENERGY JAZZ CAFÉ: Jazz Around the Museum**

Thursday, Feb. 14, 6–8:45 pm

Free, Marble Hall

Cloud 9 Band always packs the house with a classy blend of jazz standards and the latest R&B hits! Featuring Lucy Kilpatrick on keyboard, Juan Nelson on bass, Keith Anderson on sax and Brian Johnson on drums, Cloud 9 Band loves to take its audience on a musical journey to a higher level.

### **RVA COMMUNITY MAKERS: Public Art Project with Hamilton Glass**

Feb. 21–27, on view during museum hours

Local artist Hamilton Glass creates a public art project throughout Black History Month, celebrating African American community leaders in a large-scale mural. The mural will be on view in the VMFA Cochrane Atrium Feb. 21–27 during museum hours. Community members are encouraged to participate in the mural-making activity Feb 3, 1–4 pm.

## **AFRICAN AMERICAN READ-IN**

Thursday, Feb. 21, 5:30–7:30 pm

Free, no tickets required, meet in the Cochrane Atrium

Literature and fine art come together in African American Read-In at VMFA. See and hear notable figures from the greater Richmond community, including Mayor Levar M. Stoney, as they lend their voices in prose and poetry readings throughout the galleries. In this powerful display of storytelling, experience evocative and poignant pairings of works by African American artists and authors.

## **FILM: Oliver White Hill Social Justice Short Film Competition: Face the dawn not the setting sun**

Friday, Feb. 22, 6:30–8 pm

\$8 (\$5 VMFA members), Leslie Cheek Theater

The Oliver White Hill Sr. Foundation presents a screening of the winning entries from its first film competition. Filmmakers including students and professionals were invited to create short films that highlight the life and legacy of Virginia Civil Rights Attorney and Presidential Medal of Freedom winner, Oliver White Hill Sr.

## **FAMILY AFRICAN AMERICAN READ-IN**

Saturday, Feb. 23, 11 am–noon

Free, no tickets required, meet in the Cochrane Atrium

Bring your family to VMFA to experience this unique event and enjoy readings of African and African American children's literature by members of the community, including Virginia Secretary of Education Atif Qarni. Children will also enjoy music, movement and enrichment activities. (Intended audience: children ages 2 1/2–8 years; everyone is welcome).

## **DOMINION ENERGY JAZZ CAFÉ**

Thursdays, 6–8:45 pm

Free, no tickets required, Best Café

Groove to a mix of jazz ensembles every Thursday. Dominion Energy Jazz Café is presented to the public by Dominion Energy and VMFA in conjunction with the Richmond Jazz Society. Light fare and beverages available for sale.

## **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](http://www.VMFA.museum).**

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