

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**VMFA 2019–20 Fellowship Program Supports 28 Student and Professional Artists**  
\$167,000 Awarded as Part of the Largest Fellowship Program of Its Kind in the Country



Work by Madison Hansen, Undergraduate Fellow (new and emerging media), Virginia Commonwealth University, Midlothian

Richmond, VA—The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts is pleased to announce the 2019–20 recipients of VMFA fellowships. Twenty-eight students and professional artists were selected from 753 applicants to receive a total of \$167,000 towards professional advancement in the arts. Since the VMFA Fellowship Program was launched in 1940, the museum has awarded nearly \$5.8 million to more than 1,350 professional artists, art students and graduate students from across Virginia. 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 is pleased to support the work of student and professional artists across the Commonwealth,” said Alex Nyerges, VMFA Director. “Financial resources provided through the Fellowship Program help pave the way for a successful career in the arts and create a longstanding connection with fellowship recipients and the museum.”

**Fellowship Recipients**

VMFA awarded 12 professional fellowships of \$8,000 each this year. Professional fellowship recipients are Mahari Chabwera, painting, Richmond; Eric Cowan, sculpture, Radford; Lily Cox-Richard, sculpture, Richmond; Soomin Ham, photography, Alexandria; Patrick Harkin, new and emerging media, Richmond; Rob McDonald, photography, Lexington; Jon McMillan, sculpture, Fredericksburg; Holly Morrison, photography, North Chesterfield; Julia Pfaff, crafts, Richmond; Russell Richards, sculpture, Charlottesville; Rebecca Silberman, photography, Gordonsville; and Sasha Waters-Freyer, film and video, Richmond. Hazma Walker, director of Laxart in Los Angeles, California, was the juror for the professional fellowship entries.

Undergraduate fellowships of \$4,000 went to 11 students across Virginia, studying at Virginia Commonwealth University, the University of Virginia and Parsons School of Design. The recipients are Ava Blakeslee-Carter, film and video, VCU, Alexandria; Amarise Carreras, photography, VCU, Chester; Jae Cha, photography, VCU, Haymarket; Michelle Erin Dominado, film and video, VCU, Chesapeake; Abigail Giuseppe, mixed media, VCU, Burke; Madison Hansen, new and emerging media, VCU, Midlothian; Alexis O’Neill, new and emerging media, Parsons School of Design, Mechanicsville; Kiel Posner, crafts, VCU, McLean; Marisa Stratton, drawing, VCU, Arlington; Kia Wassenaar, film and video, UVA, Charlottesville; and Qiduo Zheng, drawing, VCU, Henrico.



Work by Sarah Phillips, Graduate Fellow (photography), James Madison University, King George



Work by Russell Richards,  
Professional Fellow  
(sculpture), Charlottesville

Four graduate students were each awarded \$6,000. Recipients include Zaria Huggins, new and emerging media, Savannah College of Art and Design, Springfield; Nicole James, new and emerging media, UVA, Charlottesville; Caroline Paganussi, art history, University of Maryland, Oakton; and Sarah Phillips, photography, James Madison University, King George.

Jaynelle Clark Hazard, director of exhibitions at the Workhouse Arts Center in Lorton, served as the graduate and undergraduate visual arts juror. Cory Korkow, associate curator of European art at the Cleveland Museum of Art in Cleveland, Ohio, served as the graduate art history juror.

A new feature this year is the Cy Twombly Graduate Fellowship, honoring the renowned Virginia artist and two-time VMFA Fellowship winner. The award is supported by the McClintock Endowment, and its inaugural winner is David Fransich, a graduate student at Virginia Tech from Christiansburg with a focus on new and emerging media.

To celebrate nearly 80 years of the Fellowship Program, VMFA's traveling museum—*VMFA on the Road: An Artmobile for the 21st Century*—launched in October with an exhibition focused on the history and impact of fellowship

recipients throughout the decades. *How Far Can Creativity Take You? VMFA Fellowship Artists* features work by former fellowship winners such as Sally Mann, Cy Twombly and Vince Gilligan and is currently on view as *VMFA on the Road* travels throughout Virginia on its initial 16-month tour. Details on upcoming tour destinations can be found at [vmfa.museum/on-the-road](http://vmfa.museum/on-the-road).

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 with gifts from the Lettie Pate Whitehead Foundation and the J. Warwick McClintic Jr. Scholarship Fund. In addition to providing financial rewards to all recipients, VMFA exhibits works by past fellowship winners in VMFA's Amuse Restaurant and Claiborne Robertson Room, the VMFA Pauley Center Galleries and select spaces at Richmond International Airport. Several past and present fellowship recipients have also shown their work in the galleries of Workhouse Arts Center in Lorton and the Capital One Commons in Richmond.

**Additional images of works by 2018 VMFA Fellowship Recipients are available [here](#).**

### **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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