

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**VMFA 2020-21 Fellowship Program Supports 26 Student and Professional Artists**



Work by Dennis Wymer, Graduate Fellow (painting), SCAD, Mouth of Wilson

Richmond, Virginia — The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts is pleased to announce the 2020-21 recipients of VMFA fellowships. Twenty-six students and professional artists were selected from more than 500 applicants to receive a total of \$146,000 towards professional advancements in the arts. The VMFA Fellowship Program has awarded more than \$5.8 million to over 1,395 artists since 1940. Recipients must be Virginia residents and may 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 is proud to support student and professional artists working across the Commonwealth,” said Alex Nyerges, VMFA director and CEO. “We offer one of the largest fellowship programs of its kind in the United States and recognize this effort as a core part of our mission.”

**Fellowship Recipients**

VMFA awarded ten professional fellowships of \$8,000 each this year. Professional fellowship recipients are Paul Finch, New & Emerging Media, Richmond; Emma Gould, Photography, Richmond; Sterling Hundley, Drawing, Chesterfield; Sue Johnson, Mixed Media, Richmond; Abigail Lucien, Sculpture, Richmond; Margaret Meehan, Sculpture, Richmond; David Riley, Film/Video, Richmond; Dash Shaw, Drawing, Richmond; Jon-Philip Sheridan, New & Emerging Media, Richmond; and Susan Worsham, Photography, Richmond. Veronica Roberts, curator of modern and contemporary art at the Blanton Museum of Art, was the juror for the professional fellowship entries.

Undergraduate fellowships of \$4,000 went to ten students this year. The recipients are Tatyana Bailey, Photography, Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU), Richmond; Emma Carlson, Film/Video, VCU, Des Moines, IA; Nicolas Fernandez, Photography, VCU, Fredericksburg; Erika Masis Laverde, Mixed Media, VCU, Glen Allen; Amuri Morris, Painting, VCU, Richmond; Megan O’Casey, Mixed Media, VCU, Arlington; Zoe Pettit, Mixed Media, VCU, Mechanicsville; Sarah N. Smith, Sculpture, VCU, Williamsburg; Nadya Steare, Drawing, George Mason University (GMU), Falls Church; and Elizabeth Yoo, New & Emerging Media, VCU, Glen Allen. Gayle Paul, curator at the Portsmouth Art & Cultural Center, was the juror for the undergraduate fellowship entries.



Work by Nicolas Fernandez, Undergraduate Fellow (Photography), VCU, Fredericksburg

Five graduate students were awarded \$6,000 each this year. The recipients are Kelvin Parnell, Art History, University of Virginia (UVA), Charlottesville; Katie Revilla, Crafts, VCU, Richmond; Aniko Safran, Photography, James Madison University (JMU), Harrisonburg; Abed Elmajid Shalabi, Sculpture, VCU, Richmond; and Dennis Wymer, Painting, Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD), Mouth of Wilson. Katelyn D. Crawford, PhD and the William Cary Hulsey Curator of American Art at the Birmingham Museum of Art, and Gayle Paul, curator at the Portsmouth Art & Cultural Center, were the jurors for the graduate fellowship entries.



Work by Susan Worsham, Professional Fellow (Photography), Richmond

The Cy Twombly Graduate Fellowship, which honors the renowned Virginia artist and two-time VMFA Fellowship winner, was inaugurated into the VMFA Fellowship Program last year. The award is supported by the McClintock Endowment. This year's awardee is Gary Abbott, a graduate student studying New and Emerging Media at Hollins University.

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, VMFA's 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 the Workhouse Arts Center in Lorton and the Capital One Commons in Richmond.

**Additional images of works by 2020-21 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 its Statewide 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 50,000 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, 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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