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VMFA Recipient of Major American Arts Endowment
Gift from Bev Perdue Jennings Funds New Curator Title



Bev Perdue Jennings

Richmond, Virginia — The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts (VMFA) announced today the establishment of an endowment that will provide significant ongoing funding for an important new position at the museum — the Bev Perdue Jennings Assistant Curator of American Art.

“Bev and her husband, Ed Jennings, are longtime members of the museum and previously contributed to the 2018 exhibition *Congo Masks: Masterpieces from Central Africa*,” said Alex Nyerges, VMFA’s Director and CEO. “Bev’s generous gift is a major investment in the museum’s curatorial department and will support continued exemplary scholarship in American art.”

“I am delighted to support VMFA by endowing this position,” said Perdue Jennings. “Creativity is essential to the human condition. Art gives us a window into the past, a way to imagine the future and an opportunity to grow our spirits. We are so fortunate to have in VMFA an institution that celebrates and encourages creativity in its galleries, exhibitions, studio classes and statewide programs, and this gift is my way to support those efforts.”

Dr. Christopher C. Oliver, currently VMFA’s Assistant Curator of American Art, will take on the newly titled position. Dr. Oliver arrived at VMFA in 2013 and has organized several exhibitions including the recent exhibition [*Virginia Arcadia: The Natural Bridge in American Art*](#) and the upcoming exhibition [*Ansel Adams: Compositions in Nature*](#), which opens September 25, 2021.

“I am incredibly grateful to Mrs. Perdue Jennings for this endowment and honored to accept this new title,” said Dr. Oliver. “This endowment demonstrates her profound support of VMFA and its collection — and her commitment to the future of art in Virginia.”

“Endowments like this are the gifts that keep giving and help to ensure the long-term financial security for the museum and its staff,” said Dr. Michael Taylor, Chief Curator and Deputy Director for Art & Education. “We are therefore extremely grateful to donors, including Bev Perdue Jennings, and to the curators whose groundbreaking work they are supporting through such endowments.”

Perdue Jennings grew up on Maryland's Eastern Shore without easy access to art museums. Her experience has led her to champion children's access to art, and her appreciation for art is reflected in her work as an award-winning watercolorist and oil painter. Perdue Jennings, known professionally as Bev Perdue, is a Signature Member of the prestigious American Watercolor Society, the Transparent Watercolor Society and Virginia Watercolor Society. Her work is found in national and international galleries and has been featured in *Artist* and *American Watercolor Artist* magazines. As a volunteer, Perdue Jennings teaches painting through the program Art for the Journey that serves women in the Virginia Department of Corrections.

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 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 museum has undertaken an exciting \$190 million expansion and renovation, anticipated to be complete in late 2025. International firm SmithGroup is charged with designing a 105,000-square-foot wing for contemporary art, African art, photography, special exhibitions and events; a new 40,000-square-foot collections center to accommodate an expanded conservation department and collections storage; and 45,000 square feet of renovations to the museum's 1936 building, 1970 building and Leslie Cheek Theater.

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, phone 804.340.1400 or visit www.VMFA.museum.

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