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VMFA Announces the Upcoming Retirement of Two Exceptional Museum Leaders

Senior Deputy Director for Conservation and Collections and Chief Financial Officer Retiring



Left: Stephen Bonadies © David Stover, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts August 2013; Right: Hossein Sadid © David Stover, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts August 2015

Richmond, Virginia — The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts (VMFA) today announced the upcoming retirement of two members of the museum’s senior leadership team. Stephen Bonadies, Chief Conservator and Senior Deputy Director for Conservation and Collections, will retire in November and Hossein Sadid, Chief Financial Officer (CFO) and Deputy Director for Finance, will retire at the end of the fiscal year in late June 2022.

Bonadies joined VMFA in 2009 and, as Chief Conservator and Senior Deputy Director for Conservation and Collections, his efforts to expand and improve the institution’s facility included managing the comprehensive reinstallation of the museum’s permanent collection galleries for the museum’s 2010 reopening. In addition, Bonadies was responsible for overseeing the renovation and expansion of the new Eda Hofstead Cabaniss Galleries of Fabergé and Russian Decorative Arts, planning for the rehabilitation of the Robinson House, developing an exhibition dedicated to the history of the museum’s grounds and collaborating with the VMFA Council on five biennial Fine Arts & Flowers.

Bonadies also bolstered VMFA’s collection by implementing an innovative new collections management system integrated with a new digital asset management system to improve access to works of art in VMFA’s care. Bonadies secured more than \$3.5M in government and foundation grants from organizations that include the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and the Getty Foundation. He established VMFA’s first paid undergraduate internship program in art conservation with a focus on increasing diversity in the field and expanded the Susan and David Goode Center for Advanced Study in Art Conservation.

“Stephen has been a major contributor to VMFA’s tremendous growth and has led the institution toward the next phase of expansion,” said Alex Nyerges, VMFA’s Director and CEO. “In the 13 years that he has been at VMFA, he has worked to ensure the stewardship of the collection and grow the conservation department into one of the largest and best among all American art museums. As with the care he has placed on securing the art collection for future generations, Stephen deeply understands the importance of diversity within museums and cultivating the knowledge, skills and talents of the next generation of conservation professionals. We owe so much to his insight and service to the field,” said Nyerges.

Previously Bonadies worked at the Cincinnati Art Museum for 27 years where he served in various roles as chief conservator, director of museum services, deputy director and interim co-director. Prior to his work in Ohio, he was a member of the conservation staff of the Philadelphia Museum of Art and served as a lecturer in conservation science at the Cooperstown graduate program of The State University of New York at Oneonta. A graduate of the University of Rochester, Bonadies received his master's degree in art conservation, with a Certificate of Advanced Study from the Cooperstown Graduate Program. He has a notable record of service to the profession through a long and active involvement with the American Alliance of Museums (AAM), the American Institute for Conservation (AIC) and other organizations devoted to the care and preservation of works of art.

Sadid joined VMFA in 2014 as the CFO and Deputy Director for Finance and has worked tirelessly to streamline financial and operational practices and promote fiduciary responsibility and effectiveness throughout the museum and foundation. Among his many accomplishments are the successful implementation of integrated financial planning and budgeting, a redesign of the government relations program, participation in developing the 2020 and 2025 Strategic Plans and significantly enhancing financial accountability, reporting and transparency. His contribution to enhancing the museum's physical assets, including the construction and renovation of the Robinson House, can be seen throughout the museum. He successfully advanced the Foundation's real estate acquisition strategy, acquiring and financing four strategic properties and securing a right of first offer on several other properties.

"Hossein's commitment to VMFA, its foundation and the community has made such an indelible impact," said Nyerges. "His work to advance VMFA has been transformative and he has been a tireless advocate for VMFA's growth as well as a thoughtful guardian of the museum's finances. He has applied both his pragmatism and vision, in guiding the museum through numerous years in the black despite a pandemic and enormous growth. Hossein understands VMFA's value to Virginians and the importance of protecting its future."

Sadid is currently serving on several non-profit and governmental boards including the Black History Museum, Richmond Economic Development Authority, Virginia Passenger Rail Authority, Governor Northam's Debt Capacity Advisory Committee and Metropolitan Business League.

Prior to VMFA, Sadid worked as a consultant to the Smithsonian Institution overseeing a management transition in the finance and accounting unit and served as the vice president for business and finance/treasurer at the University of Richmond from 2009 to 2013 during his 28-year career. Sadid has also held positions at other institutions of higher education including Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Wake Forest University, Virginia Commonwealth University, and Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland. A certified public accountant, Sadid holds an MBA in accounting and finance and a post-graduate certificate in management information systems from Case Western Reserve University.

"Stephen and Hossein have played an integral part in the museum's success and they have developed such strong friendships with colleagues at the museum, across the community and in the industry," said Nyerges. "I want to congratulate them on their retirement and thank them for their exceptional contributions to VMFA. They will be truly missed."

As this is a crucial time in VMFA's development, national executive searches for VMFA's next CFO and Deputy Director for Conservation and Collections will begin immediately. For more information about the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, visit www.VMFA.museum.

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, 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 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, telephone 804.340.1400 or visit www.VMFA.museum.

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