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September 21, 2023

**Library of Virginia and Virginia Museum of Fine Arts Announce Winner of
Annual Art in Literature Award**

Hans Luijten to be honored at the 2023 Virginia Literary Awards

Richmond, Virginia — The Library of Virginia and the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts are pleased to announce Hans Luijten's book *Jo van Gogh-Bonger: The Woman Who Made Vincent Famous* (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2022) as the winner of the annual **Art in Literature: The Mary Lynn Kotz Award**. Luijten will be honored on Saturday, Oct. 14, 2023, during the [26th Annual Virginia Literary Awards Celebration](#) at the Library.

[Art in Literature: The Mary Lynn Kotz Award](#), sponsored by the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts and the Library of Virginia, recognizes an outstanding book published during the previous year that is written primarily in response to a work (or works) of art while also showing the highest literary quality as a creative or scholarly work. Submissions can include works of journalism, poetry, fiction, biography or history, as well as museum exhibition catalogs. Established in 2013, the award is named in honor of Mary Lynn Kotz, author of the award-winning biography *Rauschenberg: Art and Life* (Harry N. Abrams, 1990).

A rich and in-depth biography, this year's winner, *Jo van Gogh-Bonger: The Woman Who Made Vincent Famous*, charts the multifaceted life of the little-known but no less influential sister-in-law of Vincent van Gogh, Jo van Gogh-Bonger, who was married to his art dealer brother, Theo. When the brothers died soon after each other, Jo took charge of Vincent van Gogh's artistic legacy and devoted the rest of her life to disseminating his work, ultimately establishing his reputation as one of the finest artists of his generation.

Despite being widowed with a young son, this visionary woman successfully navigated the male-dominated world of the art market. She published Van Gogh's letters, organized exhibitions in the Netherlands and throughout the world, and made strategic sales to private individuals and influential dealers. Van Gogh-Bonger's efforts fundamentally changed how we understand the relationship between Van Gogh and his work.

The author of this remarkable work, Hans Luijten, is a senior researcher at the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam. He studied Dutch language and literature and graduated with a degree in art history from Utrecht University, where he also taught Renaissance literature. In 1996 he obtained his doctorate with a dissertation on the 17th-century emblem book *Sinne en minnebeelden* by the Dutch writer Jacob Cats (Huygens Institute – Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences. Printed in 3 volumes, 1627).

Luijten, author of *Van Gogh and Love* (Exhibitions International, 2007), edited *Vincent van Gogh, Painted with Words: The Letters to Emile Bernard* (Rizolli, 2007) with Leo Jansen and Nienke Bakker, the web version of Van Gogh's complete correspondence, www.vangoghletters.org (2009), and the six-volume *Vincent van Gogh — The Letters: The Complete Illustrated and Annotated Edition* (Thames & Hudson, 2009), which was also printed in Dutch, French and Chinese. This edition was followed by a row of anthologies in various languages. In 2019, Luijten published the biography of Jo van Gogh-Bonger, *Alles voor Vincent* (All for Vincent) (Prometheus Publishers) based on previously unpublished diaries, documents and letters.

Luijten lives in Amsterdam near the river Amstel with his wife, Natascha Veldhorst.

Awards Event Details

Saturday, Oct. 14, 2023 | 26th Annual Virginia Literary Awards Celebration
In-person event: 6:00–9:30 p.m. | Library of Virginia, 800 E. Broad Street, Richmond, VA 23219
Tickets: www.lvafoundation.org/tickets

The winners of the Fiction, Nonfiction and Poetry Awards — as well as the People’s Choice Awards — will be announced at the 26th Annual Virginia Literary Awards Celebration honoring Virginia authors and friends. The event, presented by Dominion Energy and supported by Carole and Marcus Weinstein, attracts authors, publishers and those who enjoy the written word. With Virginia author Adriana Trigiani serving as host for the event, this year’s celebration will also include the presentation of honorary Patron of Letters degrees to four distinguished Virginians. The festive evening includes cocktails, a seated dinner and author book signings. For more information, please call 804.692.3813 or visit www.lvafoundation.org/literaryawards.

About the Literary Awards

In 1997, the Library of Virginia established its annual Virginia Literary Awards program to honor Virginia writers and celebrate their contributions to the literary landscape of our state and nation. Given to Virginia authors in the categories of fiction and poetry — and to nonfiction authors for works about a Virginia subject as well — the awards are presented at an annual celebration that has become the Library’s signature event and an eagerly anticipated cultural tradition in Richmond. While the main award recipients are selected by independent panels of judges, the Library also invites book lovers and readers to vote for their favorite works for the People’s Choice Awards for Fiction and Nonfiction. In the past, the Library has also bestowed a Literary Lifetime Achievement Award to recognize the enduring influence of an outstanding Virginia writer, with past winners including Earl Hamner, Lee Smith, Jan Karon, Tom Robbins, Charles Wright, Barbara Kingsolver, Rita Dove, John Grisham, Tom Wolfe and David Baldacci.

About the Library of Virginia

The Library of Virginia is the state’s oldest institution dedicated to the preservation of Virginia’s history and culture. Our online offerings attract nearly 4 million website visits per year, and our resources, exhibitions and events bring in nearly 100,000 visitors each year. The Library’s collections, containing more than 130 million items, document and illustrate the lives of both famous Virginians and ordinary citizens. The Library is located in downtown Richmond near Capitol Square at 800 East Broad Street, Richmond, VA 23219. Learn more at www.lva.virginia.gov.

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 the James W. and Frances G. McGlothlin Wing I after a transformative expansion, previously the largest in its history. A new expansion, the McGlothlin Wing II, is planned to open in 2028. Comprising more than 170,000 square feet, it will be the largest expansion in the museum’s history and will make VMFA the fifth largest art museum in the United States.

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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