Second Stage | Amherst
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Virginia Museum of Fine Arts' New Artmobile to visit Amherst .VMFA on the Road to be at Second Stage from March 7th - March 9th.

Amherst, Virginia – Sixty-five years after the launch of its original Artmobile, the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts is once again bringing traveling art exhibitions and educational offerings to audiences across the Commonwealth with *VMFA on the Road: An Artmobile for the 21st Century.* This state-of-the-art mobile museum and education studio made its public debut on Oct. 30, 2018, in Fredericksburg and will be in Amherst from March 7th - March 9th at Second Stage | Amherst.



Rendering of *VMFA on the Road* by Riggs Ward

Visitors will be invited to board the new Artmobile to view the inaugural exhibition, *How Far Can Creativity Take You? VMFA Fellowship Artists,* which explores the history and impact of VMFA's fellowship program, the largest of its kind in the United States.

The Artmobile will be hosting several classes from Amherst County Schools during the day Thursday and Friday. Public hours will be Thursday from 3:00 - 5:00 PM, Friday from 4:00 - 7:00 PM, and Saturday from 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM. Immediately following public hours on Friday evening, Second Stage is hosting a reception for the opening of an art show featuring works from Amherst County students in recognition of Youth Art Month.

The Artmobile Yesterday and Today

Beginning in 1953 the original Artmobile program brought art exhibitions and educational programs to colleges, schools, and community organizations across Virginia for 40 years, reaching 2.5 million people. For many Virginians, this unique art-museum-on-wheels was their first encounter with VMFA. Since then, museums around the country and throughout the world have created their own mobile museum experiences.

VMFA discontinued its Artmobile program in the early 1990s. As part of its 2015-20 strategic plan, and a renewed commitment to statewide outreach, museum leadership began exploring ways to bring this beloved program back. When the Commonwealth offered VMFA an 18-wheel tractor-trailer that includes 640 feet of display space, the museum began working with exhibition design firms Riggs Ward Design of Richmond and Explus Inc. in Sterling to design and fabricate a new and improved version of the Artmobile, equipped with cutting edge technology for 21st-century visitors.

"As a statewide art museum we are charged not only with welcoming visitors to our Richmond campus, but also with bringing art and educational programs to all corners of the Commonwealth," says VMFA Director Alex Nyerges. "*VMFA on the Road* allows us to significantly extend our reach so that every Virginian has access to authentic works of art and arts-based educational programming regardless of their location or economic status. It is our hope that *VMFA on the Road* will transform lives and communities through the creative power of art."

VMFA currently serves nearly 500,000 people beyond its Richmond campus each year through lectures, artist workshops, teacher trainings and traveling exhibitions hosted by more than 1,000 Statewide Partners, including schools, community centers, colleges and universities, libraries, hospitals and museums around the state. With

VMFA on the Road and Lettie Pate Evans Distance Learning Program (Evans 360°), the museum's new digital outreach initiative, VMFA hopes to reach more than 1 million Virginians each year.

The Exhibition: *How Far Can Creativity Take You? VMFA Fellowship Artists*

VMFA on the Road's inaugural exhibition explores the history and legacy of VMFA's Statewide Fellowship Program with *How Far Can Creativity Take You? VMFA Fellowship Artists*. Since the program was established in 1940, VMFA has awarded more than $5 million to more than 1,300 undergraduate, graduate and professional artists, and graduate level art historians, all of whom were residents of the Commonwealth when they applied. Each year, up to 30 artists and art historians receive more than $162,000 in support.



Chimneys, 1951, Benjamin Wigfall (American 1930-2017), oil on canvas. Virginia Museum of Fine Arts; General Endowment Fund. ©Benjamin Wigfall.

How Far Can Creativity Take You? VMFA Fellowship Artists uses the work of former fellowship artists to examine how different mediums and techniques are used to create unique works of art. Featured artists include painters Cy Twombly and Benjamin Wigfall; photographers Sally Mann and Emmet Gowin; printmakers Dennis Winston and Ann Chenoweth; and television writer and director Vince Gilligan, among other Virginians.

Jeffrey Allison, VMFA manager of statewide programs and exhibitions, notes there are original works of art on display, such as Wigfall's painting, *Chimneys*. "We wouldn't have resurrected the Artmobile, if we didn't plan on including works from the museum collection as part of the program," he says. "It's what drew people to the Artmobile in the past, and it will always be the major attraction."

The exhibition is divided into three sections, beginning with an introduction to VMFA and its unique history of serving the Commonwealth of Virginia. This history includes highlights of the statewide program as well as the history of the fellowship program, including video footage and historic images. An interactive digital map shows the location of where each VMFA fellow lives, or is from, and visitors can push additional buttons to uncover more information about the artist.

The second space is a gallery presenting works of art by fellowship winners along with in-depth video interviews with the artists, VMFA curators and educators. *VMFA on the Road* also includes a modular studio that can be used for interactive hands-on creativity. Visitors can participate in a collaborative project to be completed over the course of the tour and also create their own take-home projects.

In addition to bringing the museum experience to those outside Richmond, *VMFA on the Road* includes 21st-century digital components. From interactives featuring newly digitized collection images to classroom resources from the online Learn Portal, the mobile museum is fully integrated with VMFA's broader digital outreach efforts. In preparation for the mobile museum's arrival, local secondary schools can also participate in the new Evans 360° program, which enables students to interact in real time with a VMFA educator broadcasting live from the museum's galleries.

Two *VMFA on the Road* educators will staff the truck, with a separate driver transporting them from town to town. Like their Artmobile colleagues from the past, the educators and driver will set up the truck, greet our visitors, conduct tours, offer activities on-site and also work with local Statewide Partners to give lectures at community venues as well as hands-on workshops in schools and art studios.

2018-20 Tour

For details on the Artmobile's schedule, visit vmfa.museum/on-the-road. The anticipated tour schedule consists of a combination of visits to K-12 schools, short residencies at community partners such as Boys and Girls Clubs, stops at community colleges and four-year institutions, visits to Museum Level Partners, and participation in large festivals and fairs throughout the state.

The initial 16-month tour will place special emphasis on reaching communities in Southwest, Southern, and Central Virginia, in addition to venues in all 21 of the Commonwealth's planning districts. A *VMFA on the Road* residency will typically last three days.

Sponsorship Information

In addition to the Commonwealth of Virginia, *VMFA on the Road* has received generous support from the following donors: The Council of the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, William and Mary Greve Foundation, Inc., Francena T. Harrison Foundation Trust, Mr. and Mrs. William T. Miller, Dr. and Mrs. Harry A. Wellons, Jr., Mr. and Mrs. Haywood Blakemore, James Hixon, Mr. and Mrs. Peter I. C. Knowles II, Wall Foundation, Mr. and Mrs. John W. West III, WestRock Foundation, Capital Bank, The Reverend Doctor Vienna Cobb Anderson, Louise B. Cochrane Foundation, Cooke Foundation, Ralph R. Crosby, Jr., Jeanann Gray Dunlap Foundation, Anne and Gus Edwards, Mr. and Mrs. David R. Frediani, Margaret R. Freeman, Mary Mills Freeman, Norfolk Southern Corporation, Joanne B. Robinson, and The Bob and Anna Lou Schaberg Fund at the Virginia Nonprofit Housing Coalition. **Second Stage Amherst** has received generous support from VMFA, Sweet Briar College, Greif, Mary Snow Realty, and 1st National Bank.

Images

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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.

Second Stage | Amherst is a not-for-profit Center for Creativity and Community housed in an historic church in Amherst, VA. Our mission is to create an easily-accessible gathering place in Amherst County for public and private events, arts and cultural activities, and space for small businesses. We present performances, lectures, events, and special programs for adults and children.

For more information, call 434-946-0997 or visit www.secondstageamherst.org.