

New Institute for Contemporary Art at VCU Will Open in Richmond Spring 2018

Richmond, VA – June 29, 2017 – Virginia Commonwealth University today announced its new Institute for Contemporary Art (ICA) will open in Spring 2018. The new opening date is based on a revised schedule for the completion of construction and the subsequent adjustment of the internal climate before art can be installed. The ICA is already active in Richmond and on VCU's campus through programs, faculty and student collaboration, and artistic commissions, and will continue to engage the VCU and Richmond communities through special programs prior to the opening.

The new contemporary art institution is designed by Steven Holl Architects and located at the intersection of Richmond's historic Belvidere and Broad streets, one of the city's busiest junctures. The ICA provides a striking new gateway for Richmond, with dual entrances opening to the city's arts district on one side and VCU's Monroe Park campus on the other. Free of charge to all visitors, the ICA will be a significant new cultural resource for Richmond and VCU, in direct dialogue with VCU School of the Arts, the #1-ranked public graduate school of art and design in the U.S. The ICA will offer a vital new dimension to a premier urban research university, and contribute to a national and international cultural dialogue. With nearly 41,000 square feet of flexible space, including an inviting 33-foot high central forum, the non-collecting ICA will feature a dynamic slate of changing exhibitions, performances, films, and interdisciplinary programs. The Markel Center's fluid spaces are designed to support the diverse practices characteristic of the art of today, mirroring VCU's interdisciplinary approach and supporting the varied needs of contemporary art and audiences.

The ICA's inaugural exhibition, *Declaration*, will explore contemporary art's power to catalyze change, and will feature painting, sculpture, multimedia works, site-specific installations, and time-based performances by emerging and established artists. Featuring new work by artists from around the globe, including Amos Paul Kennedy, Jr., Marinella Senatore, Paul Rucker, and Cassils, the exhibition will also include artists from Richmond's vibrant arts community, such as VCUarts Associate Professor Hope Ginsburg and VCU alum Levester Williams.

"While we are eager to unveil the Markel Center to the community this spring, we are committed to ensuring that contemporary art thrives beyond an institution's bounds," said ICA Director Lisa Freiman. "We are all working hard to realize the vision and mission of the ICA, and will continue to mount dynamic programs for our VCU and Richmond communities while we plan for our launch."

"The ICA is exemplary of VCU's dedication to the arts, and to the university's belief in the importance of contemporary art and creative discourse in an engaging education," said VCU President Michael Rao. "We are looking forward to experiencing its full program this spring, and cementing Richmond as one of the world's important contemporary art centers."

About the ICA's Design

The open design of the ICA features a series of dynamic exhibition and programming spaces across its three levels that allow for creative opportunities that engage the unfixed and multidirectional nature of contemporary art. The glass walls and windows create continuity between the interior and exterior

spaces of the building. On the first floor, a 4,000-square-foot gallery and large café, bar, and retail space radiate from the ICA's central forum and frame an outdoor garden, which Steven Holl describes as the "Thinking Field," that will be used for social gatherings, temporary art installations, and public programs. The first floor also features a state-of-the-art 240-seat auditorium for film screenings, live performances, lectures, and community programs.

The second floor includes two forking galleries and an adaptable learning lab for interactive educational engagement that will be open to the public. It also includes an accessible terrace—one of the four green roofs—that will be programmed with art works and available for special events. The soaring 33-foot-high gallery on the ICA's third floor will feature large-scale installations and experimental projects. The third floor also houses one of the administrative suites and the boardroom. Additional staff offices are located in the building's lower level, which also includes a lobby for visitors, art storage and preparation facilities, a fabrication workshop, a green room, the catering kitchen, and general storage.

In keeping with VCU's master sustainability plan, the ICA's design incorporates state of the art technologies and environmentally conscious design elements, and makes use of numerous natural resources. The pre-weathered, satin-finish zinc exterior of the Markel Center, which houses the ICA, includes interspersed clear- and translucent-glass walls and skylights that infuse the building with natural light and lessen the reliance on nonrenewable energy. These include the use of geothermal wells to provide heating and cooling energy for the building, and four green roofs to absorb storm water, offset carbon emissions, and maximize insulation. Native plantings include wood oats, little bluestem, Pennsylvania sedge, and goldenrod. Building materials include Virginia bluestone and custom glass cavity walls, designed to exhaust heat in the summer and harness it in the winter. The project is designed to meet LEED Gold Certification standards.

About the ICA's Capital Campaign and Endowment

The ICA has raised more than \$36 million in private funds to date toward its goal of \$41 million for construction. An endowment campaign is also ongoing. The ICA is the largest privately funded arts project in VCU's history and is supported by generous leadership gifts from ICA Campaign Co-Chairs Steve and Kathie Markel, and Pam and Bill Royall. Additional major donors include: John David and Meg Newell Gottwald, George W. and Helen H. B. Logan, True and Charlie Luck, Markel Corporation, Abby W. Moore, NewMarket Corporation, The Mary Morton Parsons Foundation, Patsy K. and Hunter R. Pettus, Jr., and Carolyn and John Snow.

About Steven Holl Architects

Steven Holl Architects has realized architectural works nationally and overseas, with extensive experience in the arts (including museum, gallery, and exhibition design), campus and educational facilities, residential work, and master planning. Steven Holl Architects is a 40-person architecture and urban design office founded in 1976, and working globally as one office from two locations, New York City and Beijing. Steven Holl leads the office with partners Chris McVoy and Noah Yaffe. Most recently completed are the Reid Building at the Glasgow School of Art (Glasgow, U.K.), which opened in April 2014; Campbell Sports Center at Columbia University (New York, NY), which was completed in March 2013; and the Daeyang Gallery and House (Seoul, Korea) which opened in June 2012. Steven Holl Architects currently has eight projects under construction, including the John F. Kennedy Center Expansion in Washington, D.C.; the Glassell School of Art at the Museum of Fine Arts Houston; the Lewis Center for the Arts at Princeton University; and the Institute for Contemporary Art at Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, VA.

About VCU and VCUarts

Virginia Commonwealth University is a major, urban public research university with a diverse student body recognized for its commitment to community engagement, with national and international rankings in sponsored research. Dedicated to advancing scholarship and creative expression, VCU fosters interdisciplinary learning and collaboration. Located on two downtown campuses in Richmond and a satellite campus in Qatar, VCU enrolls more than 31,000 students in 225 certificate and degree programs in the arts, sciences, and humanities. With a distinguished faculty of professional artists and 16 departments, including Craft/Material Studies, Fashion Design and Merchandising, Dance and Choreography, Graphic Design, Music, Painting and Printmaking, Photography and Film, Sculpture + Extended Media, and Theatre, VCUarts has been the top-ranked public university visual arts and design graduate program in the country for nine years, according to *U.S. News & World Report*. Its campus in Qatar provides students and faculty with a direct tie to the Middle East, a region of increasing significance in the contemporary art world. For more information on VCUarts, please visit: arts.vcu.edu

About the Institute for Contemporary Art

The Institute for Contemporary Art (ICA) at Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) is a non-collecting institution that will showcase a fresh slate of changing exhibitions and programs ranging from innovative visual and performing arts to various forms of design and film. Part exhibition and performance space, part laboratory and incubator, the ICA will be a place to explore new ideas, providing an open forum for dialogue and collaboration across the region and the world. Mirroring the increasing emphasis on cross-disciplinary studies across VCU, the ICA will create a new environment for artists and scholars from around the world to test unconventional and challenging ideas. As a university-wide resource, it will engage an international network of contemporary artists and organizations while encouraging collaborations between audiences and contemporary artists and with VCU departments, faculty, students, and the Richmond community. The ICA will be an agile, responsive institution that offers a broad range of artistic perspectives from across the world with the goal of questioning assumptions and encouraging critical discourse. To date, the ICA has raised \$36 million towards its capital campaign. An endowment campaign is ongoing. Additional information on opening programming will be available in the coming months. For more information on the ICA, please visit: ica.vcu.edu

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