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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Virginia Museum of Contemporary Art and Virginia Wesleyan University Unveil Plans for Groundbreaking Partnership**

VIRGINIA BEACH, VA - The Virginia Museum of Contemporary Art (Virginia MOCA) and Virginia Wesleyan University (VWU) proudly announce their collaboration on the construction of a state-of-the-art facility to be built on the University's Virginia Beach campus. This monumental partnership is a major leap forward for the arts and education in the Hampton Roads community and beyond.

Both organizations are expressing excitement about the project with Nicole Naidyhorski, Chair of the Virginia MOCA Board of Trustees, and Jonathan E. Pruden, Chair of the VWU Board of Trustees, emphasizing how profoundly it will enrich the cultural and educational landscape of our region.

Naidyhorski shared her enthusiasm for the venture, stating, "In our new home on the VWU campus, Virginia MOCA will continue to create an environment where art thrives and inspires individuals of all ages. The future of the arts and education will be even brighter than ever as a result."

The new facility will serve as a hub for creativity and innovation, fostering artistic expression and offering an immersive experience for visitors and students alike. With an inventive design and versatile spaces, the facility will be equipped to host a range of exhibitions, performances, and educational programs available to students and the greater public. It will replace Virginia MOCA's current home near the Virginia Beach oceanfront.

Pruden echoed Naidyhorski's sentiment, emphasizing the educational benefits the partnership will bring. "This collaboration between Virginia MOCA and VWU is a testament to our shared commitment to the arts and education in our community."

The new building will serve as a cultural landmark for the region, a vibrant gathering place where people of all walks can experience contemporary art in deeper and more interdisciplinary ways. The central location on the Virginia Beach campus of VWU makes Virginia MOCA even more accessible, allowing the Museum to better connect with the cultural and educational fabric of the Hampton Roads area.

Gary Ryan, Director and CEO of Virginia MOCA, commented, “This partnership will anchor us in our mission to present locally relevant, nationally resonant art that is exceptional. While Virginia MOCA remains an independent museum, our collaboration with VWU will allow us to do even more of what we do best: create groundbreaking exhibitions and engage the community in thought-provoking artistic experiences. Our mission remains the same, but we are now bolstered by our partnership with VWU and its amazing educational resources.”

Dr. Scott D. Miller, President of Virginia Wesleyan University, shared his enthusiasm for the joint venture, emphasizing the positive impact it will have on students and the local community. “By integrating the arts into our campus, we are creating an environment that fosters creativity, critical thinking, and cultural appreciation,” he said. “This collaborative effort with Virginia MOCA will further strengthen our commitment to providing a well-rounded education for our students.”

According to Dr. Miller, funding for the project has been generously provided by local philanthropists Jane Batten, Joan Brock, and Susan and David Goode. These esteemed individuals have long been strong supporters of Virginia MOCA and VWU. Their contribution will play a crucial role in advancing the mission and initiatives of both organizations.

Dr. Miller and Ms. Ryan expressed deep gratitude for the three donor families. “Their unwavering support for Virginia MOCA and VWU has been instrumental in securing the necessary funding for this project,” said Dr. Miller. “With their contribution, Virginia MOCA and VWU are poised to make significant strides in their respective endeavors, driven by the commitment of these exceptional philanthropists.”

“This new facility will in effect be an incredible new classroom on the campus of VWU,” Ms. Ryan added, “where we will conduct the very best interdisciplinary, experiential learning through the most vibrant art of our time. We are excited to help shape the future leaders of the world through the power of art.”

Virginia Beach Mayor Bobby Dyer joins in the excitement for the move and upcoming facility. “We are grateful to have been able to support the Virginia Museum of Contemporary Art in their current facility for the past three decades,” said Dyer. “The City of Virginia Beach is a home to the arts, and we are thrilled that Virginia MOCA will continue to call our community home as it embarks on this next chapter of growth.”

Further details are expected in the fall. For more information and updates on the Virginia MOCA–VWU collaboration and the construction of the new facility, please follow the official websites of Virginia MOCA ([www.virginiamoca.org](http://www.virginiamoca.org)) and Virginia Wesleyan University ([www.vwu.edu](http://www.vwu.edu)).

### **About the Virginia Museum of Contemporary Art**

An AAM accredited non-collecting museum, Virginia MOCA presents exceptional, locally relevant, and nationally resonant exhibitions that invite neighbors, strangers, students, families, communities, and cultures to explore our shared humanity through contemporary art, in all of its

timeliness, restlessness, and beauty. More information about Virginia MOCA can be found at [virginiamoca.org](http://virginiamoca.org).

### **About Virginia Wesleyan University**

Virginia Wesleyan University ([vwu.edu](http://vwu.edu)) is Coastal Virginia's premier university of the liberal arts and sciences. Situated on a 300-acre park-like campus in Virginia Beach, VWU annually enrolls approximately 3,200 learners in all programs in all locations, including 1,500 students in undergraduate, graduate and online programs. Students thrive in average class sizes of 15, and more than 90 percent of new graduates are employed or enrolled in graduate school within one year of graduation. Through its Environmental Guiding Principles, the University incorporates a commitment to sustainability in every aspect of campus life. VWU is an inclusive community dedicated to scholarship and service grounded in the liberal arts and sciences, inspiring students to build meaningful lives through engagement in Coastal Virginia's dynamic metropolitan region, the nation and the world.

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