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For Immediate Release: February 2022

VCCA's "50th Anniversary Fund" to Support Free First-Time Residencies for 50 Artists of Color

Artist Residency Program Takes Steps to Improve Access

Feb. 1, 2022 (Amherst, Va.) – The Virginia Center for the Creative Arts (VCCA) has established the 50th Anniversary Fund to provide free residencies of up to two weeks for at least 50 first-time VCCA Fellows who self-identify as artists of color. Applications are now being accepted for 50th Anniversary Fellowships.

The 50th Anniversary Fellowships will be awarded to artists creating original work in a wide variety of literary, visual, and musical/sound arts who self-identify as part of one or more of these U.S. census groups: American Indian or Alaskan Native; Asian; Black or African American; Hispanic or Latinx; Middle Eastern or North African; Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander; or multi-racial.

Artists from these groups have been underrepresented at VCCA over the course of its 50-year history. "As we move thoughtfully into our next 50 years, it's vital that VCCA continue to become a more inclusive and accessible creative haven," says Quinn Graeff, VCCA Board President.

VCCA's mission is to provide time and space for national and international writers, visual artists, and composers of talent and promise to bring forth their finest works, because the arts are vital, diversity is a strength, and creativity is essential.

"To fulfill VCCA's mission to its fullest, our top priority (now that we have purchased our long-time home at Mt. San Angelo) is building an endowment large enough to sustain free residencies for every artist who participates in our programs," says Executive Director Kevin O'Halloran. "As we reach toward the ultimate goal of free residencies for all, we're first funding free residencies for groups of artists who have been underrepresented at VCCA."

At present, VCCA's Annual Fund supports at least half the cost of every residency, and significant financial aid is available beyond that. VCCA's endowment provides more than \$150,000 annually, including several endowed fellowships specifically for artists of color. But the 50th Anniversary Fund is unique for VCCA: while most VCCA fellowship funds are set up to support one artist per year in perpetuity, the 50th Anniversary Fund is designed to support at least 50 artists in a single year.

VCCA is taking two additional steps to improve accessibility to prospective applicants. Effective immediately, it will lower its application fee from \$50 to \$30 and make clearer the existing option to arrange an application fee waiver. And, VCCA will no longer require letters of recommendation as a part of the application process.

Over \$25,000 has been raised for the 50th Anniversary Fund toward a goal of at least \$100,000. Donations to support the program can be made online at vcca.com/50th-anniversary-fund. VCCA hopes to garner enough support to continue the 50th Anniversary Fellowships until all of its residencies are fully endowed.

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VCCA is among the nation's largest artist residency program, serving more than 400 writers, visual artists, and composers each year at two locations: Mt. San Angelo in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains in Amherst, Virginia, and the Moulin à Nef, in Auvillar, France.

Since 1971, VCCA has provided time and space for national and international writers, visual artists, and composers of talent and promise to bring forth their finest works, because the arts are vital, diversity is a strength, and creativity is essential.

For more information visit vcca.com/50th-anniversary-fellowships and vcca.com.



Pictured: VCCA's Studio Barn complex at Mt. San Angelo houses more than 20 studios for writers, visual artists, and composers.

Photo credit: Paige Critcher