

VMFA ON THE ROAD Exhibition

Virginia as America: Navigating 'Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness'

FAMILY VISIT GUIDE

This guide offers families some helpful tips for visiting the Artmobile



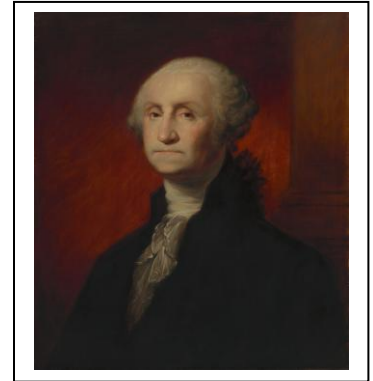
The spirit of rebellion that sparked the American Revolution and transformed the North American colonies into a United States was decades in the making, and the ideas that catalyzed it continue to shape American debate and dissent today. Born of values and opportunities arising from British common law, the liberal principles of the Enlightenment, an autonomy nurtured by geographic distance, and an economic independence supported by the pretense of vast quantities of “unoccupied” land, the aspirational ideal of “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness” undergird the drafting of the Declaration of Independence and the structuring of a three-part government. Imagined and articulated by Virginians, it prompted millions of people to cross an ocean, plant roots, and build communities. Yet, the elusive meaning of this ideal has been both a strength and a weakness. Left open to [re]interpretation, the intangibility of its intention has fostered ambitions and expectations promising great rewards—to live, think, worship, and labor freely within the confines of the law—and tremendous costs—the dispossession of indigenous populations, enslavement of peoples of African descent, and the marginalization of women and people of color. While its pliability afforded compromise in the construction of a Constitution, it portended conflict among states bearing vastly different interests—a Civil War that gave rise to “a new birth of freedom.” Two hundred and fifty years on, the principles that inspired the Revolution in 1776 continue to bond a diverse and discordant population towards the realizing of a “more perfect union.” The road to that achievement has been navigated by Virginians since the colony became a Commonwealth, its experience manifest in the material culture made by and for its people.

Exhibition Layout: (organized into two parts):

Part I: THE PROMISE – “Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness”

- a. Theme 1: “Life” – The Birth of a New Republic
- b. Theme 2: “Liberty” – Individual Rights under the Law
- c. Theme 3: “Pursuit of Happiness” – Economic Independence and Becoming “American”

Gilbert Stuart, “George Washington”, oil on canvas, 19th century.



PART II: CONFLICTS AND CONSEQUENCES

- a. Theme 1: “Life” – The Dispossession of Indigenous Peoples
- b. Theme 2: “Liberty” – Slavery and the Abolitionist Movement
- c. Theme 3: “The Pursuit of Happiness” – Civil War and Civil Rights

ARTISTS REPRESENTED in the GALLERY

- | | | |
|-------------------------------|------------------|--------------------------|
| *Ethan Brown | *Edward L. Henry | *Elbridge Wesley Webber |
| *Alonzo Chappel | *Payne Limner | *Henry Webber |
| *Reverend Heinrich Diefenbach | *Henry S. Sadd | *Thomas Jefferson Wright |
| *Benedict J. Fernandez | *John Sewell | *Unidentified |
| *Robert Gwathmey | *Gilbert Stuart | |



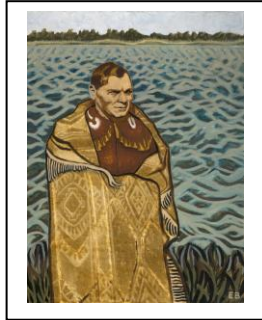
Edward L. Henry, “The Meeting of George Washington and Rochambeau,” oil on board, 1873.

ARTISTS REPRESENTED DIGITALLY:

- | | | |
|----------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| *Richard Barthe | *Jacob Lawrence | *Faith Ringgold |
| *Elizabeth Catlett | *William D. MacLeod | *Fritz Scholder |
| *Asher B. Durand | *Clark Mills | *Juan Quick-to-See Smith |
| *Moses Jacob Ezekiel | *Archibald Motley | *Junius Brutus Stearns |
| *Jefferson Gauntt | *Karl L.H. Muller | *Walter Benjamin Stephen |
| *Robert Indiana | *Gordon Parks | *John Trumbell |
| *Eastman Johnson | *Rembrandt Peale | *Kehinde Wiley |

MATERIALS & TERMS

Painting: an art discipline that requires applying wet or oily pigment to a surface with a brush.

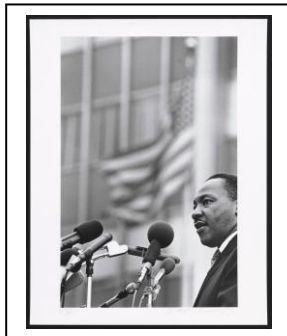


Oil-the pigment is mixed with drying oils like linseed oil.

Watercolor- pigment particles suspended in gum Arabic (water-soluble binder) and thinned with water to make colors transparent.

Ethan Brown, "Walter Bradby," oil on canvas, 2017.

Photography: an art discipline that captures images with a process of chemical action of light and other radiation.



Gelatin Silver Print-a black and white photographic process that coats silver salts and gelatin onto glass (light sensitive) and is exposed after capturing an image.

Benedict J. Fernandez, "Dr. King, United Nations, April 15, 1967" gelatin silver print, 1967-68.

Printmaking: an art discipline that uses physical or chemical reactions to create an image on a surface for the purpose of printing multiples (editions of that image) using a press or hand pressure.

Etching- a technique in intaglio where chemical (acid) is used to eat away at exposed metal plate, so it can hold ink. Plates are made of iron, copper, or zinc.

Engraving- a physical technique in intaglio where lines are cut into a metal plate (incised using a sharp metal tool) to hold ink.

Lithograph- a form of printmaking that originates with drawing (greasy material) on a stone that is etched (fixed) into the stone using acid.



Elbridge Wesley Webber, "Appomattox," hand colored lithograph on wove paper, 1865.

MATERIALS & TERMS continued

Sculpture: an art discipline that operates in 3 dimensions. An object made in any material that physically presents the dimensions of height, width and depth.

Hardstone Carving- carving into precious stones/minerals like jade, agate, rock crystal, onyx, jasper, and carnelian.

Wearable art- art that can be worn as clothing, jewelry, or accessories.

Decorative art- ornamental objects known for their beauty and indoor use. Often crafted to be functional.

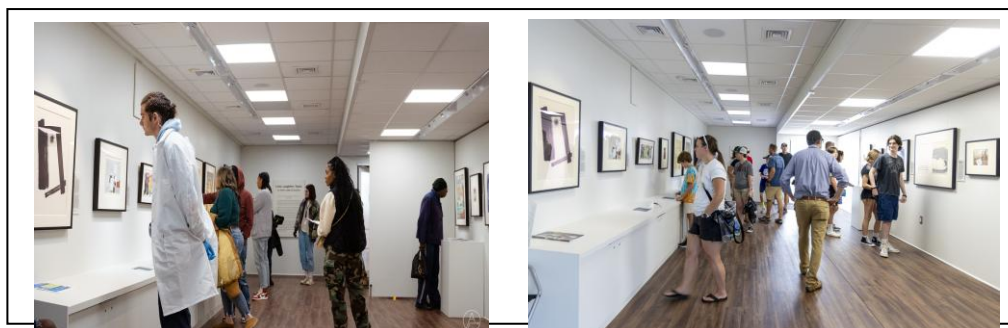
Functional art- art created with the focus to be used daily.

Unidentified Maker, *Presentation Box*, Gold, ca. 1785.



INTERACTIVE EXHIBITION

As a gallery on wheels, the artmobile represents a portion of the VMFA's permanent collection. It has four sections that include touch screen computers, touch screen tablets, 14 works of art, and area for distance learning.



TIPS FOR VISITING

Explore the art. When you visit the exhibition, take time to look carefully at a few works of art rather than walking quickly through the space.

Look together. Explore artworks in the galleries as a family and discuss what you see, think, and wonder.

Try an activity. Try some of the activities that follow to enjoy a more meaningful experience of the works of art. Additional activities are also available on the VMFA website

<https://www.vmfa.museum/learn/activities>.

ENGAGEMENT **ACTIVITY**

Looking to Learn About Virginia, USA-

<https://www.vmfa.museum/collection/learn/looking-to-learn-about-virginia-usa>

Artworks may evidence a variety of interpretations, investigations, or expressions of shared history and culture. Created between 1790 and the present day, the artworks in this object set provide a glimpse into the people, places, and environs of the United States, the Commonwealth of Virginia, and local tribal nations.

Sifting through the imagery and ideas each of these artworks presents to viewers, students can expand their understanding of Virginia, its history, and its people.

Teachers may wish to use the [Seeing and SIFTing](#) strategy to facilitate student examination of these artworks. <https://www.vmfa.museum/collection/learn/seeing-and-sifting?lang=en>

Based on their observations of these works, students can develop questions and consider:

- Past and present attitudes towards the ideals of the American Revolution.
- Cultural expression of different eras and how it may contribute to an understanding of US and Virginia history.
- The perspectives and experiences of a range of people living in the US and Virginia including political leaders, women, Indigenous people, and free and enslaved Black individuals.



Robert Gwathmey, "Family Portrait," oil on canvas, 1945.

WHEN YOU ARE DONE VISITING *VMFA On the Road*

We value your feedback. Please take time to answer a few survey questions. It will take a couple of minutes. Your answers will help us know how effective we are in sharing the VMFA collection with you.



<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/VMFAArtmobile26>

Reflect on what creativity is to you. Where has it taken you, or where can it take you? Was it a physical or mental journey? What did you produce or make from it?

Share what you experienced with others. Let others know about the various artworks that were created by artists from Virginia. What was your favorite? What did you already know? What did you learn? What will you never forget?

See traveling schedule at:

<https://www.vmfa.museum/exhibitions/vmfa-on-the-road-an-artmobile-for-the-21st-century>

VMFA on the road
An Artmobile for the 21st Century