

Subject: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: VAACC to unveil Unity in the Community Art Walk Along the Virginia Beach Boardwalk for Juneteenth Weekend

**MEDIA ADVISORY:** For Immediate Release  
**DATE:** June 3, 2022  
**CONTACT:** Dr. Amelia Ross-Hammond  
Virginia African American Cultural  
Center  
[anrphd@aol.com](mailto:anrphd@aol.com)  
Cell 757-270-4658

## **VAACC to unveil Unity in the Community Art Walk Along the Virginia Beach Boardwalk for Juneteenth Weekend**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE (June 3, 2022)-- The [Virginia African American Cultural Center, Inc.](#) nonprofit announced today that it will host an inaugural Juneteenth Festival partnership with the City of Virginia Beach, at the Virginia Beach Oceanfront. The event includes reflective public art murals created by artists from across the Commonwealth in celebration of the theme “Unity in the Community and families activities.”

In collaboration with the [ViBe Creative District](#) and the [Virginia Museum of Contemporary Art](#), VAACC selected artists to paint live from June 16-19, between 15th and 31<sup>st</sup> streets. The public is invited to come watch the artists work as they paint live during the four-day weekend. Following an open call for artists in early May, which garnered more than 60 artwork submissions, VAACC worked with the Virginia Beach Public Art Committee to select

artists to paint 30 temporary murals located in 15 locations along the Virginia Beach boardwalk for an art walk stretching 1.25 miles long. The artworks will be visible from both the paved boardwalk and the beach to create memorable photo opportunities.

The Unity in the Community Art Walk was inspired by important key words:

- UNITY
- TOGETHERNESS
- INSPIRATION
- HISTORY
- CONNECTEDNESS
- KINDNESS
- UNDERSTANDING
- LOVE
- ACCEPTANCE
- COMMUNITY

The purpose of the art walk is to: promote positive public dialogue about important social issues; strengthen bonds between diverse communities and local government; embrace and showcase the multi-cultural arts community in Virginia Beach; provide residents and visitors to the Boardwalk an engaging, positive memory to share on social media and with friends and family that celebrates all people.

A total of 21 artists will paint 30 murals along the Virginia Beach oceanfront railing June 16-19, 2022. The selected artists include:

Nico Cathcart  
Brianna Cole  
Amity Dewey

Joseph Dishmon  
Desiree Donovan  
LaJae Essence  
Yvonne Frederick  
David Freeman  
Hailey George  
Chris Green  
Nicole Gomez  
Tylor Jessee  
Hanna Kirby  
Amanda Lackey  
Seth Lubaton  
Parrish Majestic  
Ruby Starcher  
Rosemarie Spracklin  
James Thornhill  
Chavonne Whisonant  
Jasmine Williams



Sample artwork by Rosemarie Spracklin



Sample artwork by Hailey George

"We hope this art project creates a space where diverse cultural viewpoints are shared and appreciated by one united community," said Dr. Amelia Ross-Hammond, founder and chairman of VAACC. "The City of Virginia Beach's partnership on this project reflects the importance of Juneteenth as a national, state and city holiday."

Displayed on custom designed wooden frames attached to the boardwalk railing, the temporary murals will be on display for 30-60 days (dependent on weather conductions), starting Juneteenth June 19<sup>th</sup>, 2022. The artworks will be visible by visitors walking the boardwalk and from the beach. VAACC worked with local architect Jeremy Maloney of Altruistic Design and professional contractor Taylor Construction to plan the custom

mural frames to be built onsite at the boardwalk, planned for installation beginning Monday, June 13<sup>th</sup>.

A formal Opening and Awards Ceremony will be held June 19 at the 24<sup>th</sup> Street Park at 11am and will include remarks by elected officials. The murals will be judged by renowned artists, Clayton Singleton and Ken Wright, and Virginia Museum of Contemporary Art executive director Gary Ryan. Prizes will be awarded at the ceremony. Culminating with an inspiring “Call for Unity in the Community” by representatives from VAACC, Interfaith Alliance at the Beach, the Human Rights Commission, the ViBe Creative District, the Mayor’s IDEA Commission, a poem by a local poet laureate, and soloists: International Artist Dee Polite and Opera Singer Denise Battle, the event will close with remarks from Virginia Beach Arts and Humanities Commissioner Mia Guile. Opportunities for family art activities will also be available in a tent located inside 24<sup>th</sup> Street Park on Sunday from 10am to 5pm.

A complete list of artists and event details are listed on [VAACC's website](#).

Additional Juneteenth Festival programming is being held both Saturday and Sunday, June 18-19, 2022 from 10am to 10pm by TEAM LAMB, also supported by the City of Virginia Beach. Visitors are encouraged to enjoy both experiences as one Juneteenth Festival at the Beach. The City of Virginia Beach first celebrated the holiday in 2021.

---

### **About VAACC: “Curate \* Cultivate \* Communicate”**

VAACC is an organization whose goal is to build Virginia 1<sup>st</sup> African American Cultural Center in the City of Virginia Beach. The organization vision is to be the statewide leader in generating historical and cultural content through programs, artistic performance, and curated exhibits, One of VAACC’s goals is to

create an opportunity for those who desire to learn more about African American culture and to explore and revel in its history. To reiterate the important role of African Americans in the Commonwealth of Virginia and share the significance of African American culture and history. Its mission is to collect, preserve, interpret, inform and celebrate Virginia African American history, culture and community, and to educate the public about African American contributions in all areas of endeavor. Follow VAACC on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and the [VAACC website](#) for latest news and events.

### **About community partners ViBe Creative District, Virginia MOCA and Virginia Beach Cultural Affairs**

#### **ABOUT VIBE CREATIVE DISTRICT**

The ViBe Creative District non-profit is a 501c3 that exists to promote, support, connect, and inspire the creative industries to boost our local economy, grow jobs, and enhance our quality of life. It works to create and revive economic vibrancy in our neighborhood with a remarkable local vibe. The ViBe Creative District believes in equal access to opportunities that reflect our Virginia Beach community. ViBe highlights diversity, equity, accessibility and inclusion as a key focus of its goals and programming. We acknowledge that equity requires deliberately applying time, resources and consideration to achieve this initiative. Social practice engages the creative sector with the community in creating and developing collaborative change. More information can be found at [www.vibecreativedistrict.org](http://www.vibecreativedistrict.org).

#### **ABOUT THE VIRGINIA MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART**

An AAM accredited non-collecting museum, Virginia MOCA presents ever-changing exhibitions where neighbors, strangers, students, families, communities, and cultures are invited to explore our shared humanity, through locally relevant and nationally resonant, contemporary art that's exceptional—in all of its timeliness, restlessness, and beauty. More information about Virginia MOCA can be found at [virginiamoca.org](http://virginiamoca.org).

#### **ABOUT THE CITY OF VIRGINIA BEACH CULTURAL AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT:**

The Cultural Affairs Department engages residents and visitors through meaningful arts, heritage, and cultural experiences to connect and strengthen

communities. The Department assists and directs the Virginia Beach Arts & Humanities Commission, coordinates the City's Public Art Program, oversees Virginia Beach History Museums, provides contract management for the Sandler Center for the Performing Arts, serves as the liaison with Virginia MOCA and the ViBe Creative District, and serves as a resource to local arts and humanities organizations. Follow the Virginia Beach Cultural Affairs Department on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) for the latest Virginia Beach arts and cultural news, artist calls and more.

###