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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SOULS GROWN DEEP FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES INAUGURAL RECIPIENTS OF INTERNSHIP GRANT PROGRAM, WHICH SUPPORTS UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS OF COLOR THROUGH PAID INTERNSHIPS IN THE MUSEUM FIELD

**Dorthy Ray, Akili Davis, and Jacynth Serrano Rodriguez Join New Orleans Museum of Art,
Philadelphia Museum of Art, and Virginia Museum of Fine Arts for Spring 2019 Internship
Program**

**The Foundation also Announces Museums Participating in the 2019–2020 Academic Year
Internship Program Will be The Baltimore Museum of Art, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and
Minneapolis Institute of Art**

February 19, 2019 (Atlanta, GA) – The Souls Grown Deep Foundation (SGDF) is pleased to announce the recipients of its inaugural museum internship program, which provides paid internships to students of color to support professional development in the museum field. The Spring 2019 Souls Grown Deep Foundation internships have been awarded to: **Dorthy Ray** (Louisiana State University) at **New Orleans Museum of Art**; **Akili Davis** (Bryn Mawr College) at **Philadelphia Museum of Art**; and **Jacynth Serrano Rodriguez** (Virginia Commonwealth University) at **Virginia Museum of Fine Arts**. The three students were selected based on their academic and artistic achievements, as well as their strong interest in exploring professions related to museums and visual arts. The Foundation has also announced the museum partners for the next round of internships will be **The Baltimore Museum of Art, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (MFA), and Minneapolis Institute of Art**.

“We welcome Dorthy, Akili, and Jacynth as our first class of interns in the Souls Grown Deep Foundation internship program,” said **Dr. Maxwell L. Anderson, president of the Foundation**. “These students are at an exhilarating moment in their lives as they enter the professional

world, and we are proud to have a role in supporting them as they learn from and contribute to the study of art from the African-American South in these leading museums. All three students not only have substantial portfolios as artists and curators but also have tremendous acumen and aspiration for the visual arts field. They will pave the way for the many classes of interns to come and we look forward to continuing to build a community of diverse professional leaders long after the semester has ended.”

Souls Grown Deep Foundation developed the internship grant program to offer another avenue for undergraduate students of color to develop a professional museum background. Students have the opportunity to learn about and within several museum departments, including curatorial, registrarial, conservation, education, and/or administrative. Souls Grown Deep Foundation is committed to supporting each student financially and professionally, by providing the students with part-time experience in a leading art museum, a stipend, and a trip to the Foundation’s headquarters in Atlanta and to Montgomery, Selma, and Gee’s Bend, Alabama to introduce students to the artists and communities it serves in the Southeast. Ray, Davis, and Rodriguez will begin their work with each museum, coinciding with the spring 2019 academic semester.

“This new internship program is both welcome and exciting. It will bolster our efforts to diversify the museum profession that is critically important to its future,” said Timothy Rub, The George D. Widener Director and Chief Executive Officer, Philadelphia Museum of Art. “For us, Akili stood out among many talented applicants because of her passion for the art of the American south and her interest in how museums like ours engage visitors. While working on the upcoming summer exhibition, *Souls Grown Deep: Artists of the African American South*, Akili will have a hand in everything from installation design and label writing to planning events and reviewing marketing materials. This internship will be a valuable experience for her as she works closely with an experienced mentor to develop new skills and hone existing ones as we create what promises to be a compelling and memorable exhibition for our audiences.”

“We are exceedingly thrilled to have Jacynth interning with us in the Modern and Contemporary department at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts,” said Valerie Cassel Oliver, Sydney and Frances Lewis Family Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art at VMFA. “Her deep interest in cultural histories and experience in journalism well positions her for a deep-dive into our recent acquisitions from the Souls Grown Deep Foundation to prepare informational materials for a statewide exhibition of objects.”

Following the launch this spring, Souls Grown Deep Foundation will expand the internship program to the full academic year – Fall 2019 to May 2020 – offering a \$10,000 stipend per

student. Each year, the Foundation will select three new partners from among the many museums that have demonstrated a commitment to innovative research and community engagement. The 2019–2020 Internship Program participants are **The Baltimore Museum of Art, the MFA, and Minneapolis Institute of Art**. These museums will expose students to art of the African American South as well as to museum career opportunities. Internships are open to undergraduate students of color interested in professions related to museums and visual arts. 2019–2020 Academic Year applications are due by May 3, 2019. For information on applying, go to www.soulsgrowndeep.org/internships.

SPRING 2019 SOULS GROWN DEEP FOUNDATION INTERNS

New Orleans Museum of Art

Dorothy Ray was born and raised in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. She recently completed her B.A. in Art History at Louisiana State University. She works primarily with Futures Fund, a program offering training in the arts to middle through high school students. As a curator, photographer and mixed media artist, her work seeks to challenge viewers to explore the ambiguities of identity, gender, and sexuality as they relate to the Black body.

Philadelphia Museum of Art

Akili Davis is a junior Sociology major and Visual Studies minor at Bryn Mawr College. Her academic interests include museum studies and moving image media. Akili has previously interned with other Philadelphia cultural institutions like the Slought Foundation and Till Arts Project, and she is currently on the Barnes Foundation Campus Outreach Council. On her college campus, she is the Civic Engagement representative to the Student Government Association. Although she is originally from Greenville, South Carolina, Akili calls Philadelphia home and hopes to continue working in the arts community there after graduation.

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts

Jacynth Serrano Rodriguez is a senior at Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) located in Richmond, Virginia. In May 2019, Jacynth will receive her Bachelor of Arts in English with minors in both Art History and Media Studies. In addition to receiving the Souls Grown Deep Foundation Internship, she previously held internships with Blackbird Literary Journal and VCU's Recreational Sports Program. In 2016, she received awards and accolades for her visual and written work including the 1st Place and Purchase Award, the Vincent Hammond Visual Arts Scholarship, and the Chadab Foundation Scholarship for the Arts at Northern Virginia Community College. Upon graduating in the spring, Jacynth plans to attend graduate school and continue exploring the nexus of her passions and her studies: art, culture, and media.

FUNDING FOR SOULS GROWN DEEP FOUNDATION INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

The Spring 2019 Sponsors of the SGDF Internship Program are the generous donors Karen Elizaga & Jay Ptashek, whose donation supports the internships at the New Orleans Museum of Art, Philadelphia Museum of Art, and Virginia Museum of Fine Arts.

The multi-year internship program is also supported by the sale of Thornton Dial's *Fading* (2002) at Christie's in November 2018. This was the first time a work from the collection was auctioned to support the Foundation's advocacy initiatives.

ABOUT THE SOULS GROWN DEEP FOUNDATION

Souls Grown Deep Foundation is dedicated to documenting, preserving, and promoting the contributions of artists from the African American South in the canon of art history, and the cultural traditions in which they are rooted. The Foundation's collection encompasses over 1,000 artworks by more than 160 artists. In 2014, the Foundation initiated a program to transfer the bulk of its holdings to the permanent collections of leading art museums, and has to date placed over 300 artworks in a dozen institutions, including The Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, and Spelman College Museum of Fine Art. The Foundation derives its name from a 1921 poem by Langston Hughes (1902-67) titled *The Negro Speaks of Rivers*, the last line of which is "My soul has grown deep like the rivers." For more information, visit www.soulsgrowndeeep.org.

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