



## **About the Institute for Contemporary Art at Virginia Commonwealth University (ICA at VCU)**

The Institute for Contemporary Art at Virginia Commonwealth University (ICA at VCU) is a non-collecting institution that showcases a multidisciplinary slate of exhibitions and programs that engage with the artists, issues, and ideas of our contemporary moment. Since its opening in 2018, the ICA has served as a forum for new perspectives, productive conversations, intersectional dialogues, and mutual learning. Free to the public and sited at one of the city's busiest gateways, the ICA is embedded in Richmond's social and cultural landscape, and in direct conversation with VCU and VCUarts, one of the nation's leading schools of arts and design.

Through a dynamic roster of exhibitions, performances, films, programs, site-specific commissions, digital content, and more, the ICA offers a broad and balanced range of artistic perspectives from Richmond and across the world that encourage critical discourse around current issues and ideas. While international in scope and impact, the ICA's program is also deeply rooted in its local context, spotlighting the region's creative communities and often confronting Richmond's own complex history head-on. In its first few years, the ICA's programming has addressed topics as relevant and varied as racial constructs in the United States, borders and immigration, feminism and intersectionality, and the history and legacy of the 'commonwealth' in Virginia and beyond.

An active site of production and a key incubator for contemporary artistic talents, the ICA provides established and emerging artists the space, resources, and support needed to realize innovative new projects. The ICA's robust commissioning program—including its annual *Provocations* series, which invites artists to create major new works in response to the ICA's distinctive architecture—spotlights a balanced and diverse set of voices, always seeking to create visibility and opportunity for those who have been historically underrepresented. Commissioned artists have included Dineo Seshee Bopape, Tania Bruguera, Rashid Johnson, Richard Kennedy, Tomashi Jackson, Autumn Knight, Guadalupe Maravilla, Xaviera Simmons, Tavares Strachan, Kandis Williams, and many more.

As part of a public university, the ICA also has a deep-seated commitment to research and study, creating opportunities for the exchange and dissemination of ideas between the institution, its artists, and its audiences. An ethos of collaboration, transparency, and experimentation is at the heart of the ICA's work, and is the driving force behind initiatives like *Public Study*, a slate of in-person and digital programs that invite the public to engage with art and research in an open-ended and collaborative way, and the VPM + ICA Community Media Center, a free resource supporting the production of audio content and the training and cultivation of the next generation of storytellers.

The ICA's iconic building, the Markel Center, was designed by Steven Holl Architects and includes 41,000 square feet of flexible exhibition and programming spaces across its three levels. Keeping with VCU's emphasis on sustainability, the building is LEED Gold-Certified and incorporates state-of-the-art green technologies, including innovative use of zinc panels and translucent glass, an outdoor green space with a large reflecting pool, four rooftop gardens, and a 33-foot-high central forum. Located at the corner of Belvidere and Broad streets, one of the most prominent crossroads in Richmond, the Markel Center faces both VCU's campus and downtown Richmond, reflecting the ICA's role as an educational and cultural resource for the University and the city.