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ICA at VCU Announces Partnership with Soul N' Vinegar to Relaunch its Cafe

Richmond, VA – Nov. 18, 2019 The Institute for Contemporary Art at Virginia Commonwealth University announced today that it is partnering with Church Hill's [Soul N' Vinegar, run by chef Michelle Parrish](#), to operate its relaunched cafe. The cafe began service with a soft launch on Nov. 5. and will be fully operational on Friday, Dec. 6 in time for the ICA's First Friday programming.

Michelle Parrish opened Soul N' Vinegar's first location in June 2018 at R and 29th streets in a converted 572-square-foot brick studio that formerly housed Ruth's Beauty Salon. The flagship restaurant specializes in "healthy, affordable, diverse foods for diverse peoples" and fills a vital need for fresh, economical food options in the East End area. Designed to make every guest feel welcome, with décor sourced from the Church Hill neighborhood and greater Richmond, the original Soul N' Vinegar specializes in grab-and-go food. As with the Church Hill location, the cafe will serve a weekly rotating and affordable menu.

"Although the ICA is located in a different neighborhood and the cafe will welcome different customers, the goal is the same," said Parrish. "I hope to offer the very best I can to collaboratively create an inviting space filled with thoughtful design and goods produced by good humans."

Michael Lease, Director of Facilities and Experience Design at the ICA, describes the new cafe as akin to a curatorial partnership. "Michelle has an incredible story and a vision for how food is part of the culture and a way to build community. Her visionary approach to food, from the locally sourced ingredients to the way it is presented, is a natural fit to accompany the exhibitions and programs that the ICA offers. We hope that our visitors and the greater VCU and Richmond communities will share our excitement for this new partnership and we look forward to welcoming them to the cafe soon."

As part of the partnership, ICA graduate assistant Houria Boumzairig, a Fulbright Scholar from Morocco and student in VCU's Interior Design Department, collaborated with Parrish to ensure the new Soul N' Vinegar space is as welcoming and familiar as the original. The cafe will feature Relativity Textiles Kilim print wallpaper, a staple and inspiration of Soul N' Vinegar's East End location.

Soul N' Vinegar at the ICA's Abby Moore Cafe is open 10am–6pm Tuesday—Sunday, with extended evening hours on Wednesdays and First Fridays, beginning December 6th. [1]

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About Michelle Parrish

Parrish is a Massachusetts native now living in Richmond, VA. She previously worked at Troquet in Boston, Secco in Richmond and Blue Talon Bistro in Williamsburg, Virginia. She is a two-time recipient of the Supporting East End Entrepreneurship Development (SEED) grant. She used that grant to open Soul N' Vinegar catering in January of 2018 before growing the business into two locations.

About the Institute for Contemporary Art at Virginia Commonwealth University

The Institute for Contemporary Art at Virginia Commonwealth University is a non-collecting institution that showcases a fresh slate of changing exhibitions and programs. The ICA is a place to explore new ideas, providing an open forum for dialogue and collaboration across the region and the world. Mirroring the increasing emphasis on cross-disciplinary studies across VCU, the ICA has created a new environment for artists and scholars from around the world to test ideas. As a university-wide resource, the ICA links campus, community, and contemporary artists by supporting local creative communities, engaging an international network of contemporary artists and organizations, and encouraging collaborations with VCU departments, faculty, students, and the Richmond community. The ICA is a responsive institution that offers a broad range of artistic perspectives from across the world, with the goal of questioning assumptions and encouraging critical discourse. For more information on the ICA, please visit icavcu.org.

About VCU and VCU School of the Arts

VCU is a major, urban public research university with national and international rankings in sponsored research. Located in downtown Richmond, VCU enrolls more than 31,000 students in 217 degree and certificate programs in the arts, sciences, and humanities. One of the nation's leading schools of arts and design, VCU School of the Arts offers 15 undergraduate and 10 graduate degree programs in fine arts, design, performing arts, historical research, and pedagogical practice. Distinguished faculty members are internationally recognized in their respective fields, contribute significantly to the stature of VCU, and are committed to mentoring the next generation of artists, entrepreneurs, scientists, scholars, and engaged citizens of diverse communities around the world. Its campus in Qatar provides students and faculty with a direct tie to the Middle East and underscores the school and university's commitment to global education and experience.