

Art in America

INTERNATIONAL • REVIEW

OLD MEETS NEW AT THE VIRGINIA MFA

The **Virginia Museum of Fine Arts** in Richmond reopened on May 1 with a new wing designed by the American-born, London-based architect **Rick Mather**. To mark the occasion, modern and contemporary curator **John Ravenal**, who has been growing the VMFA's collection of contemporary works—adding pieces by Fred Tomaselli, Teresita Fernández, Julie Mehretu and Sol LeWitt, among others—proposed that the museum commission a work by Virginia Beach-born, New York-based **Ryan McGinness**. Comprising 16 panels and measuring 8 by 40 feet, the mural-size acrylic-on-canvas painting greets visitors at the new entrance. Working from books and photographic images, McGinness selected 200 pieces from the museum's various collections—whether an entire work or a small detail, a well-known piece or an obscure example. He then created hand-drawn, computer-manipulated images—sculptural heads, figures, decorative objects, buildings, furniture, etc.—that were screen-printed onto the panels, many repeatedly, and layered in a graffiti-like mashup.

Ryan McGinness's
commissioned
painting, at the new
entrance to the VMFA.

The \$150-million addition and renovation of the MFA's 1936 building gives the museum a more open and welcoming facade, as well as a sculpture garden on the landscaped roof of a new underground parking facility. The museum has added 53,500 square feet of exhibition space to the preexisting 80,000. Clad in limestone and glass, the new building connects to the old via a soaring atrium crisscrossed by walkways, one of which provides a closer view of McGinness's intricate mural. ○

