



**MEDIA CONTACTS:** Ron Johnson, [ron@theabstractathlete.com](mailto:ron@theabstractathlete.com), 804-514-0302  
Emily Smith, [esmith@1708gallery.org](mailto:esmith@1708gallery.org), 804-643-1708

**The Abstract Athlete™ will spotlight the Balance of Art and Athletics with an Exhibition and Symposium featuring Professional Athletes and Military Veterans.**

Richmond, VA. (January 9, 2018) — A touring exhibition featuring world class athletes creating world class art is coming to Richmond's 1708 Gallery on February 23, 2018. The first stop on a worldwide exhibition and symposium tour, The Abstract Athlete™ features artists from the NFL, NBA, MLB, U.S. Olympic and World Cup teams, and the U.S. Military.

Proceeds from the exhibition and symposium will go to charities selected by each of the athletes as part of the exhibition's "My Art, My Cause" charitable giving program.

**About the Event:**

- **Exhibit Opening:** Friday, February 23rd at 6pm at 1708 Gallery
- **Symposium:** Friday, February 23rd at 1-3pm at the Bon Secours Washington Redskins Training Center. This is a ticketed event. Tickets are \$7.50 for adults (part of the proceeds go to the Vernon Davis Foundation) and are free for students and youth. Tickets available at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/the-abstract-athlete-symposium-tickets-41968634315?aff=eac2>  
For further information, please visit: <http://theabstractathlete.com/>
- **Private Press Event:** February 16, 2018 at 10am-12pm with limited slots available- please contact The Abstract Athlete™ as soon as possible to reserve your spot.

**About the Exhibition:**

The Abstract Athlete exhibition inspires artists like sports heroes of days past. This exhibit focuses on creativity as exercise for the mind and promotes the idea of daily creative practice for everyone.

The exhibit highlights work from a diverse roster of professional athletes, artists, and veterans making world class artwork in balance with physically rigorous athletic training or high stress careers.

The gallery exhibit will feature artwork from:

- Vernon Davis – NFL
- EJ Manuel – NFL
- Percy King – NFL
- Aaron Maybin – NFL
- Larry Sanders – NBA / VCU
- Brett Tomko – MLB
- Hillary Werth – US National team
- Jay Demerit – US World Cup Soccer
- Ridley Howard – Artist / Soccer
- Joe Olney – US Army Veteran
- Alicia Dietz – US Army Veteran
- Veronique Sandler – Mountain Bike Pro

"With walls between artists and athletes, the world will suffer from a lack of creative thinkers, artists, and pioneers in self-expression. We pit artists against athletes, and it's time to change that way of thinking." *Ron Johnson, Co-Founder of The Abstract Athlete™*

## **About the Symposium:**

The symposium will take place on Feb 23, 2018 at The Bon Secours Washington Redskins Training Center, 2401 West Leigh St, Main Event Space. This is a ticketed event: \$7.50 for adults, free for students and youth. Speakers will discuss the benefits of arts in sports with a special focus on the effects of creating art on the mind and body. This ticketed event will have guest speakers and moderated discussions. Featured speakers include:

- Vernon Davis: NFL/Artist/Entrepreneur
- EJ Manuel: NFL/Artist/Entrepreneur
- Larry Sanders: NBA/Entrepreneur
- Percy King: NFL/Artist
- David Cifu: VCU School of Medicine
- Alicia Dietz: VCU Arts and US Army Veteran
- Joe Olney: Professional Artist and US Army Veteran.

*Additional featured guests to be included- contact TAA for more information.*

## **About The Abstract Athlete™:**

The Abstract Athlete™ explores the collision of Art, Athletics, and Science. TAA events showcase curated artwork and merchandise that inspire arts participation and drives charitable giving to programs that foster Art and Science. This includes collaboration with Universities to pilot the TAA curriculum to study the effects of Art on Athletic Performance with a special focus on brain injury rehabilitation, CTE, and other TBIs.

The Abstract Athlete is a B-Corporation, founded in 2016 by industrial designer and entrepreneur Chris Clemmer and renowned artist and VCU Arts professor Ron Johnson, bridging their backgrounds within Art and Athletics to inspire new artists to create great art with greater purpose.

To learn more about The Abstract Athlete™ continuing art programs and events, visit [theabstractathlete.com](http://theabstractathlete.com)

## **About 1708 Gallery:**

1708 Gallery is a nonprofit arts organization founded by artists in 1978. Their mission is to present exceptional new art. 1708 Gallery is committed to providing opportunities for artistic innovation for both emerging and established artists and to expanding the understanding and appreciation of new art for the public. 1708 Gallery is located at 319 West Broad Street, Richmond, VA 23220. To learn more about 1708 Gallery, visit [www.1708gallery.org](http://www.1708gallery.org).

## **About Dr. David Cifu:**

David X. Cifu, MD is the Associate Dean of Innovation and System Integration at Virginia Commonwealth University School of Medicine as well as the:

- **Herman J. Flax, MD Professor and Chair**, Department of PM&R Virginia Commonwealth University School of Medicine
- **Senior TBI Specialist**  
Principal Investigator, Chronic Effects of Neurotrauma Consortium  
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
- **Director, Sports Sciences**  
NHL Florida Panthers