

The Virginian-Pilot

# VA Goods showcases variety of products from across state

By ALISON JOHNSON VIRGINIAN-PILOT CORRESPONDENT |  
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VA Goods, a new business in Selden Market, sells a variety of goods from Virginia artists and companies. Pictured is owner Kim McGinnis. Courtesy of Selden Market

Kimberly McKinnis is a maker whose business goal is to generate retail opportunities for other makers in Virginia.

The glass artist's new store at Selden Market, VA Goods, does precisely that.

The gift shop, which held its grand opening in mid-March, is a carefully curated selection of unique products created in the commonwealth: jewelry, prints, glasswork, spice mixes, soaps and lotions, leather bags, all-natural cleaning solutions, small-batch gourmet foods such as handmade pastas and much more.

“It’s a little bit of everything,” McKinnis says. “I want to showcase emerging entrepreneurs, designers, small businesses that are just getting started — that might not yet have an entire line ready — plus some established brands. There are so many people deserving of attention.”

VA Goods is a sister store to For All Handkind, an artists’ collective McKinnis founded with two other artists in 2018 and still manages. For All Handkind has an online gallery and is expanding its retail space at MacArthur Center to incorporate five artists’ studios.

The Selden Market shop has a broader range of products but also operates with a consignment-type model, allowing makers to test individual items or brands on the market. Vendors also can volunteer in person at VA Goods if they want to interact with potential buyers.

“We’ve found it’s really valuable for customers to connect with the people who have made a certain product and to hear their stories,” McKinnis says. “Our newer makers also can have a chance to learn from more veteran entrepreneurs that way.”

Over time, VA Goods hopefully will entice more creative individuals and businesses to open permanent storefronts in Norfolk or hold regular full-day or weekend pop-up shops, says Careyann Weinberg, Selden Market’s director.

“VA Goods is not picking items out of a catalog and writing ‘Virginia’ on them,” Weinberg says. “They are researching new, exciting brands and older favorites from across the state and hand selecting products that really showcase the talent, style and drive that exists here.”

A California native, McKinnis, 39, moved to Norfolk in 2016 for an internship at the Chrysler Museum Glass Studio and fell in love with its small-town feel and bigger-city-like cultural amenities. She primarily makes glass pieces and other 3D sculptures.

McKinnis holds two degrees from California State University, Fullerton, both useful for her business ventures: Bachelor of Fine Arts in Studio Art, and Master of Fine Arts in Exhibition Design. The latter has helped her maximize display space at her new 350-square-foot shop.

VA Goods will continuously recruit new vendors to keep its inventory varied and surprising, McKinnis says. The business likely will build an online store in the future but is currently focused on its brick-and-mortar space.

And while McKinnis may one day try to sell a few of her own pieces there, she’s currently too busy enjoying what her fellow makers have to offer.

“One thing you don’t learn in art school is how to get into business,” she says. “There are never enough opportunities for people just starting out, and I want to help change that.”

Alison Johnson, [ajohnsondp@yahoo.com](mailto:ajohnsondp@yahoo.com)

### **WANT TO KNOW MORE?**

VA Goods is located at Selden Market, 208 E. Main St. in downtown Norfolk. For more information, visit the business on Facebook or Instagram; to apply to become a vendor at the gift shop, go to [vagoods.wordpress.com](http://vagoods.wordpress.com). Up-to-date hours for individual Selden Market shops can be found at [downtownnorfolk.org](http://downtownnorfolk.org).