



## **MEDIA CONTACTS**

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### **Hermitage 2020 STARS**

*Five outstanding Florida arts educators were selected for a July residency at the Hermitage Artist Retreat in Englewood. This year's recipients hail from Ocala, Kissimmee, Fort Myers, Port Charlotte, and North Miami Beach.*

(Sarasota County) This month, five Florida public school arts teachers are spending part of their summer breaks on Manasota Key working on their own artistic endeavors. They are the winners of the 2020 State Teacher/Artist Residency program (STARS), presented by the Hermitage Artist Retreat and the Florida Alliance for Arts Education (FAAE). This year's recipients include three visual arts instructors, a library media specialist, and a creative writing and English teacher. The five receive a residency at the Hermitage on Manasota Key, where they have the opportunity to leave their classroom responsibilities behind and focus on their work as creative artists.

“These brilliant teachers are also talented artists in their own right,” says Andy Sandberg, Artistic Director and CEO of the Hermitage. “During the academic year, their attention is devoted to their students, and this past semester has been particularly challenging for educators throughout our nation. The STARS program gives five distinguished teachers the opportunity to experience what leading artists from around the world have come to the Hermitage for – to focus on their craft, their art, and their creative process. Over the years, the STARS have created some truly stunning works

of art and literature during their time at the Hermitage. Many teaching artist alumni have shared that this program enables them to return to their students with a new fire and passion for arts education.”

The chosen five are Daniela Drazan, a library specialist at Horizon Academy at Marion Oaks in Ocala; Gláucia Mir, a visual art, drawing and sculpture instructor at Liberty High School in Kissimmee; Joy Williams, a drawing, painting and ceramics instructor at North Fort Myers High (Center for the Arts) in Fort Myers; Tara Salovitz, an English and creative writing instructor at Port Charlotte High School in Port Charlotte; and Lucia Morales, a visual art instructor at Jose Marti MAST 6-12 Academy in North Miami Beach.

Florida arts educators apply for the Hermitage summer residencies through FAAE. Applications are open to all Florida music, theater, visual art, and creative writing teachers. Since the start of the program in 2011, 48 teachers have represented 21 Florida counties. Residencies culminate with a free community program; due to coronavirus, this year’s programs will be captured virtually and presented at a future date.

A Czech immigrant, **Daniela Drazan** has worked at the Library of Congress, taught English in Japan, conducted market research in the Czech Republic, and sang in a nightclub. She says that these experiences infuse and inspire her literary work. She hoped to write more and achieve publication but “like for many of us, work and family pushed aside the dream.” During her residency at the Hermitage, she hopes to continue work on a novel she’s started. “At five pages a day at the minimum, it might

just be possible to complete the first draft, especially with a residency that provides the time and space for contemplation as well as productivity,” says Drazan.

Brazilian-born mixed media artist **Gláucia Mir** spent her childhood in São Paulo and her teens and 20s in New York City. Later she lived in the bucolic Bucks County, in Pennsylvania and now she calls Central Florida home. Her background in illustration and her gusto for adventure means her artwork often tells a story. Mir says she “thrives in the knowledge that my art can bring joy, questions or even disturb the viewer.” During her residency at the Hermitage, she plans on “delving into a set of works inspired by the ‘Mapping Vulnerability’ works that I began during my final graduate capstone project. My first set of works consisted of ink wash and mixed-media paintings which together made one large body of work. I would like to continue experimenting by using white on black to create a second set.” She adds that she would also like to read and listen to audiobooks and podcasts—something she rarely has time for. Finally, she says “I am my own worst enemy in settling down to work, because I let interruptions become my excuses. This time alone will let me focus and get to work.”

**Joy Williams** says that her art is inspired by Robert Rauschenberg, who told her that his mission is to “ennoble the ordinary.” “Our conversation inspired me to crystalize the message of my own work,” says Williams. “My objective is to offer an aesthetic of flowing ‘waves of joy’ in contrast to the angst of modern life.” The artist and teacher says she hopes to continue creating “art that concerns our worldwide need for clean water and clean oceans. I would like to continue this theme but expand mediums to work with printmaking and sculpture, incorporating objects found on location at the

Hermitage. While I will take a stroll on the beach or a kayak in the mangroves, I will also be able to work well into the wee hours of the night as my muse calls.”

**Tara Salovitz** has already self-published a novel and says she will spend her time at the Hermitage to work on a young adult novel that she’s already begun. “It’s the story of two extraordinary sisters who are on a treacherous journey across the country in order to fulfill their destiny. The book is to be the first in a trilogy. I would strive to write or work on some aspect of my writing for at least eight hours a day.” Salovitz says that she also hopes to spend her time at the Hermitage reading books about her craft. “As a novice writer, I try to learn as much as I can from experts,” she says. “As for the rest of my time, I would like to take a walk and perhaps go for a swim every day; hopefully, the fresh ocean air and physical activity would stimulate my imagination as well as sustain me through long hours of work.”

Originally from Lima, Peru, **Lucia Morales** says she derives great inspiration from her heritage. Leaving her home and family in Peru has also shaped her art in ways she’s still discovering. “Through dance and painting I feel that I can maintain the connection to my heritage and explore new pathways of the relationships that those who leave home come to form with their new one,” she says. During her residency, she hopes to “use the time and location as a catalyst for my creative process. A place and time to continue the introspection that I simply cannot continue as a busy art educator during the school year, and the perfect scenery to continue studying nature, light and composition through plein-air painting.”

“We look forward to seeing what this latest group of STARS will create,” says Sandberg. “It is an honor to celebrate Florida’s top arts educators, and we are grateful

to the Florida Alliance for Arts Education for their continued collaboration.”

**Photo caption: (left to right):** *The 2020 Hermitage Artist Retreat STARs:*

*Daniela Drazan, Lucia Morales, Tara Salovitz, Gláucia Mir, and Joy Williams.*

**About the Hermitage Artist Retreat:**

The Hermitage is a nonprofit artist retreat located in Manasota Key, Florida, inviting accomplished artists across multiple disciplines for residencies on its beachfront campus, which is on the National Register of Historic Places. Hermitage artists are invited to interact with the local community, reaching thousands of Gulf Coast residents and visitors each year with unique and inspiring programs. Hermitage fellows have included nine Pulitzer Prize winners, along with multiple Tony, Emmy, Grammy, Oscar, and MacArthur Fellowship award winners. Works created at this beachside retreat by a diverse group of Hermitage alumni have gone on to renowned theatres, concert halls, and galleries throughout the world. Each year, the Hermitage awards the \$30,000 Hermitage Greenfield Prize for a new work of art, and the Aspen Music Festival awards the annual Hermitage Prize in Composition. For more information about The Hermitage Artist Retreat, visit [HermitageArtistRetreat.org](http://HermitageArtistRetreat.org).

**The Hermitage is supported by:**

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