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The Hermitage Artist Retreat

One of the Region's Earliest Arts Organizations to Offer

A Safe New Model for Live Performance

Announces

Upcoming Beach Programs: April through Early May

The Hermitage's upcoming programs feature award-winning playwrights, artistic directors, performers, musicians, poets, educators, and more!

NEW! "Talking Theater"

An Evening with George Brant & Laura Kepley

Presented in collaboration with Venice Theatre

April 15 on the Hermitage Beach

NEW! "Conveying Meaning"

With Kristen Miller, Michelle Lopez, and Kathleen Driskell

April 30 on the Hermitage Beach

NEW! "Artists and Writers, Thinking Out Loud"

With Crystal Wilkinson, Hari Kunzru, and Lucy Kim

May 14 on the Hermitage Beach

NEW! “Hermitage Sunsets @ Selby Gardens”

Featuring Rona Siddiqui

May 27 at Selby Gardens Downtown

Reminder! “Storied Stories of the Creative Process”

With Michael Riedel & Robert Plunket

Presented in partnership with Sarasota Magazine

March 31 on the Hermitage Beach

(Also available via live-stream)

Reminder! “Transformations in Music & Words”

With Hermitage Fellows Henry Clarke and Denise Dillenbeck

April 2 on the Hermitage Beach

Reminder! Hermitage Greenfield Prize Weekend Events

Live and Virtual Events (See previous release.)

April 8-12, 2021

(March 19, 2021) The Hermitage’s busy season continues with a variety of in-person and virtual programs featuring Hermitage artists-in-residence who present performances and conversations about their works-in-progress and offer insight into their creative process. **Registration is required for each event—and is now available on the Hermitage website at HermitageArtistRetreat.org.**

Here’s a quick preview of upcoming events:

- **REMINDER! Wednesday, March 31, 5:30 p.m.: “Storied Stories of the Creative Process” with Michael Riedel and Robert Plunket.**
Presented in partnership with Sarasota Magazine.

Longtime columnist for the New York Post, host of “Theatre Talk” on PBS, and celebrated author Michael Riedel, along with Sarasota’s own “Mr. Chatterbox,” Robert Plunket, will share candid and colorful stories of famed artistic projects in early development. Moderated by Hermitage Artistic Director and CEO Andy Sandberg. *Hermitage Beach, 6660 Manasota Key Road, Englewood; also available via livestream. **Registration required at HermitageArtistRetreat.org.***

- **Michael Riedel** has been the theater columnist for the New York Post since 1998. New York magazine has called his column a “must-read” for the theater world. Riedel began his radio career as regular on the Imus in the Morning show in 2011. In 2017 WOR, New York’s oldest and highest-rated station, asked him to cohost its morning show with well-known sportscaster Len Berman. The Len Berman and Michael Riedel in the Morning show is the highest-rated morning radio program in the New York City area. Riedel’s book *Razzle Dazzle: The Battle for Broadway* won the Marfield Prize for arts writing in 2015 and is widely considered to be the successor to William Goldman’s celebrated 1967 book about Broadway, *The Season*. A graduate of Columbia University, Riedel lives in Manhattan.
- **Robert Plunket** (Sarasota Magazine’s own “Mr. Chatterbox” and a longtime contributing editor) is an acclaimed comic novelist whose works include *My Search for Warren Harding* (named by The Guardian as one of the 1,000 Novels Everyone Must Read) and *Love Junkie*. He is also a sometime actor who appeared in Martin Scorsese’s *After Hours*.
- **REMINDER! Friday, April 2, 5:30 p.m.: “Transformations in Music & Words” with Hermitage Fellows Henry Clarke & Denise Dillenbeck.** Music can transform a single life, and literature can transform a whole culture. Violinist Denise Dillenbeck will share musical samples as she reads from her memoir, *How Beethoven Saved Me*, exploring the relevance of classical music and its power to transform a life. Henry Clarke will read from his latest work, as he challenges us to explore how writing helps us to record, interpret, and shape our culture and society. *Hermitage Beach, 6660*

Manasota Key Road, Englewood. Registration required at HermitageArtistRetreat.org.

- **Henry Clarke** is a writer and actor. Television credits include *Chuck*, *House*, *Lie to Me*, *Blacklist: Redemption*, *Power*, *The Good Fight*, *FBI*, and a Chinese television show called *Action English*. He has performed Off-Broadway with the SourceWorks Theater and Mint Theater, and regionally with the American Repertory Theater, American Conservatory Theater, Hartford Stage, L.A. Theater Works, and Shakespeare & Co., among many others. As a writer, his plays have been performed in festivals and university theaters, and one was commissioned by the U.S. Embassy for two tours of China. Clarke holds a BA in English from Harvard University, an MFA in Playwriting from Smith College, and an MFA in Acting from The Moscow Art Theater School. He is currently writing a triptych of novels that explores the overwhelming systems of power and privilege that keep the bad guys on top, and what the good guys can do about it.
- **Denise Dillenbeck** is a versatile musician with a focus in solo performance. She has toured Europe and America with the Philadelphia Orchestra, and has played with the Seattle Symphony, Baltimore Symphony, Pennsylvania Ballet Theater, Philly Pops, and many other orchestras across the U.S. She is currently concertmaster of the Yakima Symphony, York Symphony, Siletz Bay Music Festival Orchestra, Lake Chelan Bach Festival Orchestra and the Northwest Sinfonietta. As a teaching artist in the Philadelphia Orchestra's Community Partnership Program, Dillenbeck led urban elementary school students in experiential music learning and directed workshops on aesthetic education for classroom teachers and music educators. The San Francisco Chronicle hails her playing as "simply first-rate."
- **NEW! Thursday, April 15, 6 p.m.: "Talking Theater," An Evening with George Brant and Laura Kepley.** *Presented in Collaboration with Venice Theatre.* Celebrated American playwright George Brant (*Grounded; Into the Breeches!*) and Cleveland Play House Artistic Director Laura Kepley – married artists in residence together at the Hermitage Artist Retreat – will

present a talk about their work and the state of the American theater, in a partnership between the Hermitage and Venice Theatre. *The conversation and audience Q&A will be moderated by Hermitage Artistic Director and CEO Andy Sandberg and Venice Theatre Producing Executive Director Murray Chase. Hermitage Beach, 6660 Manasota Key Road, Englewood.*

Registration required at HermitageArtistRetreat.org.

- **George Brant** is a playwright whose plays include *Grounded, Marie and Rosetta, Into the Breeches!, Elephant's Graveyard, The Prince of Providence, Tender Age, The Land of Oz, Dark Room, Grizzly Mama, Good on Paper, The Mourners' Bench, Salvage, Three Voyages of the Lobotomobile, Any Other Name, Defiant, Miracle: A Tragedy, Ashes, NOK, The Lonesome Hoboes, All Talk, One Hand Clapping, The Royal Historian of Oz, Lovely Letters, Three Men in a Boat, Borglum! The Mount Rushmore Musical, Tights on a Wire* and *Night of the Mime*. Brant's work has been produced internationally by such companies as The Public Theater, Atlantic Theater Company, Trinity Rep, Cleveland Play House, The Alley Theatre, Studio Theatre, Milwaukee Repertory, City Theatre, Gate Theatre of London, Page 73, Traverse Theatre, Dobama Theatre, and the Disney Channel, among others. His scripts have been awarded a Lucille Lortel Award, an Edgerton Foundation New Play Award, a Scotsman Fringe First Award, an Off-West End Theatre Award for Best Production, an NNPN Rolling World Premiere, the Smith Prize, the Keene Prize for Literature, a Theatre Netto Festival Prize, a Creative Workforce Fellowship, the David Mark Cohen National Playwriting Award from the Kennedy Center, and three Ohio Arts Council Individual Excellence Awards. He has received writing fellowships from the Hermitage Artist Retreat, the James A. Michener Center for Writers, the McCarter Theatre, and the MacDowell, as well as commissions from the Metropolitan Opera, and Trinity Rep. Brant received his MFA in Writing from the Michener Center for Writers at the University of Texas at Austin and is a member of the Dramatists Guild.
- **Laura Kepley** became artistic director of Cleveland Play House in 2013 and has directed numerous CPH mainstage productions, including *Tiny Houses* (world premiere, also at Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park); *Sweat; The Diary*

of *Anne Frank*, *Shakespeare in Love*; *The Crucible*; *Steel Magnolias*; *The Good Peaches* (world premiere); *Fairfield* (world premiere); *How I Learned to Drive* (also at Syracuse Stage); *The Little Foxes*; *Venus in Fur*; *Good People* (also at Syracuse Stage); *A Carol for Cleveland* (world premiere); *In the Next Room, or the vibrator play*; *My Name is Asher Lev* and CPH readings of Roe Green Award-winning plays *Soups, Stews and Casseroles*: 1976; Marjorie Prime and Daphne's Dive. A native Ohioan, Laura received her undergraduate degree from Northwestern University and her Master of Fine Arts from Brown University/Trinity Rep. She is a Hermitage Fellow, a Drama League Fellow, and a recipient of the 2009-2011 National Endowment for the Arts/Theatre Communications Group Career Development Program for Directors.

- **NEW! Friday, April 30, 6 p.m.: “Conveying Meaning” with Hermitage Fellows Kristen Miller, Michelle Lopez and Kathleen Driskell.** Visual and interdisciplinary artist **Michelle Lopez** will share how she conveys what social justice means to her through visual mixed media. **Kristen Miller** translates poetry, conveying meaning from the original language. Learn about this delicate transfer of meaning between cultures. Writer **Kathleen Driskell** will show how the punctuation you learned in English class can be used to enrich prose and deepen literary meaning. *Hermitage Beach, 6660 Manasota Key Road, Englewood. **Registration required at HermitageArtistRetreat.org.***
 - **Kristen Renee Miller's** poems and translations have appeared in *POETRY*, *The Kenyon Review*, *The Common*, *Guernica*, and *Best New Poets 2018*. She is the translator of *Spawn* (2020), by Ilnu Nation poet Marie-Andrée Gill. A recipient of fellowships and awards from the Foundation for Contemporary Arts, the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, and the American Literary Translators Association, she lives in Louisville, Kentucky, where she is the managing editor for Sarabande.
 - **Michelle Lopez** is an interdisciplinary sculptor and installation artist. As a builder, conceptualist, and manipulator of materials, Lopez inventively explores cultural phenomenon, stretching to their limits the industrial processes that craft consumerism in its many forms: she bends plywood to make body-sized wilted skateboards, mirrors glass to build smoke clouds out

of silver nitrate, manufactures heavy gold thrones out of slender lead tendrils. Lopez's gimlet eye examines collapsed political and social structures by inverting cultural tropes through the process of building, exploiting industrial materials to expose the hidden boundaries of embedded societal constructions. Lopez was a recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship in 2019 and had a solo show at the Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA) in Philadelphia (September 2019 - May 2020). She has taught at University of California Berkeley, Yale School of Art, the School of Visual Arts, and is director of Sculpture & Installation in the Fine Arts Program at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia.

- **Kathleen Driskell** is chair of the School of Creative and Professional Writing at Spalding University, and the author of the poetry collections *Blue Etiquette: Poems*, a finalist for the Weatherford Award; *Next Door to the Dead*, a Kentucky Voices selection by the University Press of Kentucky and winner of the 2018 Judy Gaines Young Book Award; *Seed Across Snow*, a Poetry Foundation national bestseller; *Laughing Sickness*, and *Peck and Pock: A Graphic Poem*. Her awards include grants from the Kentucky Arts Council and the Kentucky Foundation for Women, and she has received prizes from the Associated Writing Programs and Frankfort Arts Foundation. She currently serves as chair of the board of directors of the Association of Writers and Writing Programs. Driskell received her MFA in creative writing from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

**Kathleen Driskell's residency made possible by the Annette Dignam State College of Florida Residency in Literature at the Hermitage.*

- **NEW! Friday, May 14, 6 p.m.: "Artists and Writers, Thinking Out Loud" with Hermitage Fellows Crystal Wilkinson, Hari Kunzru, Lucy Kim.** Author **Crystal Wilkinson** will discuss and read from her latest work, *Perfect Black*, a book of poems and legends about ancestry, culture, and the terrain of a black girl becoming. Visual and multidisciplinary artist **Lucy Kim** will discuss her transition from traditional painting and photography to her less vision-centric, more visceral, three-dimensional work. Novelist **Hari Kunzru** will introduce and read from *Blue Ruin*, his third novel in a trilogy about music, literature, and visual art. Listen to

the thinking that went into their work and join them in a Q&A afterward.

*Hermitage Beach, 6660 Manasota Key Road, Englewood. **Registration required at HermitageArtistRetreat.org.***

- **Crystal Wilkinson**, a USA Artist Fellow, is the award-winning author of *The Birds of Opulence* (winner of the 2016 Ernest J. Gaines Prize for Literary Excellence), *Water Street and Blackberries*, *Blackberries*. Nominated for the John Dos Passos Award, the Orange Prize and the Hurston/Wright Legacy Award, she has received recognition from the Yaddo Foundation, Hedgebrook, The Vermont Studio Center for the Arts, The Fine Arts Work Center in Provincetown, and others. Her short stories, poems, and essays have appeared in numerous journals and anthologies including most recently in *The Kenyon Review*, *STORY*, *Agni Literary Journal*, *Emergence*, *Oxford American* and *Southern Cultures*. Her fourth book *Perfect Black* is forthcoming from University Press of Kentucky in August 2021. She currently teaches at the University of Kentucky where she is associate professor of English in the MFA in Creative Writing Program.

**Crystal Wilkson's Hermitage artist residency generously sponsored by Jane and Bill Knapp.*

- **Hari Kunzru** is the author of the novels *The Impressionist*, *Transmission*, *My Revolutions*, *Gods Without Men*, and *White Tears*, as well as a short story collection, *Noise*, and a novella, *Memory Palace*. His new novel *Red Pill* was published in September 2020. He is an honorary fellow of Wadham College Oxford and has received fellowships from the Cullman Center at the New York Public Library, the Guggenheim Foundation, and the American Academy in Berlin. He is the host of the podcast *Into The Zone* and lives in New York City.
- **Lucy Kim** is a visual artist working in sculpture, painting, and biological media. Her work is grounded in the mechanics of visual representation through sculptural paintings that combine casting with oil painting. Since 2019, her work has expanded into the biology lab, where she is developing a project (*Melanin Images Via Genetically Modified E. coli*) using bacteria. In her sculptural paintings, Kim uses oil painting both for its plasticity as a material, as well as its history as an image technology prior to photography, both of which have to do with its illusionistic capability. Her use of mold-making and casting stems from an interest in photography as a form of indexical documentation, but through touch.

While a photograph records the light reflecting off the surfaces within its frame, a cast, being a direct imprint, records the surface terrain. It still retains the authority of a record, but it does so in a very material, visceral, and less vision-centric way.

- **NEW! Thursday, May 27, 6 p.m.: “Hermitage Sunsets @ Selby Gardens” with Musical Theater Composer Rona Siddiqui.** Following her inspiring and uplifting performance on the Hermitage Beach this past fall, Rona Siddiqui continues her residency at the Hermitage and will present a sneak peek into her work at Selby Gardens Downtown. *Marie Selby Botanical Gardens, 1534 Mound St, Sarasota. **Registration required at HermitageArtistRetreat.org.***
 - Rona Siddiqui is an award-winning composer, lyricist, orchestrator, and music director based in New York City. The recipient of the Jonathan Larson Grant and Billie Burke Ziegfeld Award, Siddiqui was named one of Broadway Women's Fund's “Women to Watch.” Her show, *Salaam Medina: Tales of a Halfghan*, an autobiographical comedy about growing up bi-ethnic in America, had a reading at Playwrights Horizons. Other of her musicals include *One Good Day*, *The Tin*, and *Treasure*. Siddiqui is the recipient of the ASCAP Foundation Mary Rodgers/Lorenz Hart Award and the ASCAP Foundation/Max Dreyfus Scholarship. She has written pieces for *Wicked*'s 16th-anniversary commemoration, *24 Hour Musicals*, Prospect Theater Company, *The Civilians*, the NYC Gay Men's Chorus, and *52nd St Project*, and has performed concerts of her work at The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and *Feinstein's/54 Below*. Siddiqui has also orchestrated for Broadway Records, *Broadway Backwards*, NAMT and Pittsburgh Civic Light Opera. For more information, visit RonaSiddiqui.com.

CHANGE / CANCELLATION:

“Future Tradition” with Pulitzer Prize Winner and Grammy Nominee Du Yun. *Originally announced for Friday, March 26, at the Hermitage. Due to a family emergency, this program has been postponed/cancelled until further notice.*

Registration is required at HermitageArtistRetreat.org. *All live events will be held outdoors, and capacity will be limited to accommodate safe social distancing.*

Early reservations are recommended. Masks required at registration, and the Hermitage requests that masks be worn for all live programs, including outdoor events. To accommodate capacity restrictions, social-distancing measures, and virtual licensing costs, a \$5 per person registration fee will be added for most events (except where other pricing is indicated above as part of collaborative partnerships).

***The Hermitage Artist Retreat** is one of the region's most early adapters to offer **a safe new model for live events and performance** during the pandemic. The organization began to offer in-person events in early October at venues across Sarasota County, including Marie Selby Botanical Gardens, Historic Spanish Point, and on the Hermitage Beach, in addition to its ongoing virtual programming which is available to audiences around the country. Over the past few months, the Hermitage has safely and successfully presented over 20 unique in-person programs, implementing strict social distancing policies and outdoor-only venues, accommodating audiences ranging from 100 to 200, who regularly provide feedback on the Hermitage's health and safety protocols. "By doing this, we've been able to engage local audiences — and give **a rare and empowering opportunity to dozens of performers, musicians, visual artists, writers, teaching artists, and more to share their talents and their work in progress with Sarasota audiences,**" says Andy Sandberg, the Hermitage's Artistic Director and CEO. "We are fortunate in that we are not limited by production values or the need for an indoor performance space. What we offer is **a unique look into the creative process and early development of works by notable artists from around the world.** Therefore, we feel it is our responsibility and an opportunity to provide both artists and audiences a safe and inspiring way to gather." Many Hermitage artists and audiences alike have noted that these experiences have been a highlight and an escape from the pandemic while many of their regular arts and cultural offerings have been shut down or limited to online-only programming. HermitageArtistRetreat.org*

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 twelve Pulitzer Prize winners, Poets Laureate, MacArthur 'Genius' Fellows, and multiple Tony, Emmy, Grammy, Oscar winners and nominees. Works created at this beachside retreat by a diverse group of Hermitage alumni have gone on to renowned theaters, 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.

The Hermitage is supported by:

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