

MEDIA CONTACT

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The Hermitage Artist Retreat Announces “Artists and Thinkers: An Intimate Conversation Series”

*A new virtual series featuring nationally renowned Hermitage curators and artists,
including Golden Globe Award winner Regina Taylor*

Join us online for a deep dive into the creative process with:

Limor Tomer and Luke Stewart

Thursday, September 23, 7 p.m.

Christopher Burney and Regina Taylor

Thursday, September 30, 5 p.m.

(August 31, 2021) Amidst its active season of live outdoor programming and events, the Hermitage Artist Retreat is launching a new virtual series spotlighting the brilliant curators and Hermitage alumni who have developed their work and craft in residence at the Hermitage. Presented online in real time via Zoom, these candid and intimate conversations between Hermitage alumni artists and members of the Hermitage’s National Curatorial Council strip away the trappings of performance to get at the heart of the creative process and the vital role art plays in shaping our future. Focused on themes determined by the curator and artist, these hour-long events will be moderated

by a member of the Hermitage team and provide audiences a unique glimpse into how curators and artists alike keep their finger on the pulse of our time to boldly create the impactful works of tomorrow.

“For years, Hermitage Fellows have been creating forward-thinking works of art that tackle stories of social justice, climate change, civil rights, and many complex issues of our society,” says Hermitage Artistic Director and CEO Andy Sandberg.

“These brilliant artists illuminate our time and show us a mirror to the future, and the curators who’ve introduced these extraordinary talents to the Hermitage are some of the nation’s leading creative thinkers with a deep understanding of the arts’ vital role in our lives. This series is designed to give our audiences an insight into the minds of these curators and artists as they engage in an intimate and candid conversation.”

To launch the series, Hermitage curator **Limor Tomer**, general manager of the Metropolitan Museum of Art’s concerts and lectures and creator of the Met’s renowned Live Arts Series, will speak with the celebrated jazz musician and Hermitage Fellow **Luke Stewart**. A lauded multi-instrumentalist and composer whose genre-morphing talents have made him an anchor of the DC music scene and beyond, Stewart has been praised as one of the “25 most influential jazz artists” of his generation. *Thursday, September 23, 7 p.m. This online event is free with a \$5 per household registration fee. Registration is required at HermitageArtistRetreat.org.*

Next in the series, Hermitage curator **Christopher Burney**, an award-winning producer and current artistic director of New York Stage and Film, speaks with Golden Globe Award-winning actor, playwright, and activist **Regina Taylor**. An acclaimed writer, performer, playwright, and educator, Taylor has been honored with numerous

awards, including a Golden Globe and NAACP Image Award and is currently the Denzel Washington Endowed Chair of Theatre at Fordham University. *Thursday, September 30, 5 p.m. This online event is free with a \$5 per household registration fee. Registration is required at HermitageArtistRetreat.org.*

The Hermitage hosts artists on its Gulf Coast Manasota Key campus for multi-week residencies, where diverse artists from around the world and across multiple disciplines create and develop new works of visual art, theater, music, literature, and more. As part of their residencies, Hermitage Fellows participate in free community programs, offering audiences in our region a unique opportunity to engage with some of the world's leading artists and to get an authentic "sneak peek" into extraordinary projects and artistic minds before their works go on to major galleries, concert halls, theaters, and museums around the world. These free and innovative programs include performances, lectures, interactive experiences, readings, open studios, school programs, teacher workshops, and more, serving thousands in our regional community each year.

Limor Tomer, the Lulu C. and Anthony W. Wang general manager of Live Arts, has led The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Live Arts program for ten years, during which time she transformed the program into a world leader in museum-based performance. She curates, commissions, and presents groundbreaking performances, both in the museum's 700-seat auditorium and its galleries and public spaces. Tomer regularly gives presentations on museum-based performance around the world and leads workshops with museums nationally and internationally.

Luke Stewart is a DC/NYC-based musician and organizer of important musical presentations and has a strong presence in the national and international improvised music community. Stewart is noted in *Downbeat Magazine* in 2020 as one of “25 most influential jazz artists” of his generation. He was profiled in the *Washington Post* in early 2017 as “holding down the jazz scene,” selected as “Best Musical Omnivore” in the *Washington City Paper’s* 2017 “Best of DC,” chosen as “Jazz Artist of the Year” for 2017 in the *District Now*, and in the 2014 “People Issue” of the *Washington City Paper* as a “Jazz Revolutionary.” Stewart has performed in a myriad of collaborations and performances in venues such as The Kitchen, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Pioneer Works, Roulette, and Issue Project Room. As a scholar/performer, he has performed and lectured at Harvard University, Johns Hopkins University, Medgar Evers College, George Mason University, Wayne State University, University of Montana, New Mexico State University, and the University of South Carolina.

Christopher Burney is the artistic director of New York Stage and Film. Previously, he was the Tony-Award nominated artistic producer of New York’s Second Stage Theatre where he worked since 1996. He is also on faculty at Columbia University, where he teaches creative producing. Burney has lectured at Barnard College, The Einhorn School for the Performing Arts at Primary Stages, The Juilliard School, Bard College, The Boston School of Music, Marymount Manhattan College and the New England Theatre Conference. He currently serves as a member of the Tony Awards Nominating Committee. Burney has consulted for various organizations, including the Philadelphia Theatre Initiative, the Kesselring Prize, the Kurt Weill

Foundation, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the New York Foundation for the Arts, the Asian American Arts Alliance, and the Jerome Fellowship.

Actress, director, playwright, educator, and activist **Regina Taylor** is the Andrew W. Mellon grant Playwright in Residence for Repertory Theatre of St. Louis. Taylor is writing new plays for Audible and for The Old Vic and is the curator/director of the Black Album mixtape in collaboration with SMU—an initiative created by Taylor to invite creatives from all fields to think about ways to create a better future. Taylor’s playwright credits include *Bread, Crowns* (four Helen Hayes awards, including Best Director), *Oo-Bla-Dee*, (Steinberg-ATCA award), *Drowning Crow* (Broadway, MTC), *The Trinity River Plays* (Edgerton Foundation Award) and *stop.reset*. She received the Denzel Washington Endowed Chair Fordham University at Lincoln Center. An artistic associate of Goodman Theatre, Taylor is its most produced playwright. As an actor, she is featured in *First Lady*, *Love Craft Country*, and *All Day and a Night*, and guest stars in *Council of Dads*, *Red Line*, and *The Good Fight*. She received a Golden Globe Award for Best Performance by an Actress for her role as Lily Harper in *I’ll Fly Away*, and three NAACP Image Awards and two Emmy Award nominations. Taylor was the first African American lead in Masterpiece Theatre’s *Cora Unashamed*, starred as Anita Hill in HBO’s *Strange Justice* (Gracie Award), and *A Good Day to Die*, starring Sidney Poitier. Taylor was also the first Black woman to play Juliet in *Romeo and Juliet* on Broadway.

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 14 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, the newly announced \$35,000 Hermitage Major Theater Award for an original theater commission, and the Aspen Music Festival's Hermitage Prize in Composition. **For more information, visit HermitageArtistRetreat.org.**

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