

## Hermitage Artist Retreat Announces New Programs in May with Hermitage Fellows, including Tony Award-Nominated Playwright Bess Wohl (*Grand Horizons*)

*Playwright Jessica Huang and contemporary classical composer Scott Lee on May 6, Tony Award-nominated playwright Bess Wohl on May 13, writers DaMaris B. Hill and Kirya Traber on May 20, and composer and performer Pauchi Sasaki and poet Monica Youn on May 26.*

April 4, 2022 (Sarasota County, Florida) — The Hermitage Artist Retreat announces four new community programs in May with Hermitage Fellows specializing in music, writing, multimedia, and theater, including an event with Tony Award-nominated playwright **Bess Wohl** (*Grand Horizons*, *Small Mouth Sounds*). Most of these programs are presented at outdoor venues throughout Sarasota County as part of the Hermitage’s partnerships with local organizations, including the Conservation Foundation of the Gulf Coast and Bookstore<sup>1</sup>.

First, “Sounding the Deep: Words and Music Inspired by Nature” features selections of award-winning playwright **Jessica Huang**’s work focused on the changing climate, as well as contemporary classical composer **Scott Lee**’s album *Through the Mangrove Tunnels* on Friday, May 6 at 6:30 pm on the Hermitage Beach. Next, Tony Award-nominated playwright **Bess Wohl** returns to Sarasota for “Cats Talk Back,” an excerpt from her irreverent and insightful send-up of a fictional talkback with cast members from Andrew Lloyd Webber’s musical, presented on Friday, May 13 at

6:30pm on the Hermitage Beach. Then, on Friday, May 20 at 5pm, Hermitage Fellows **DaMaris B. Hill** and **Kirya Traber** read and discuss their evocative work at “Hermitage Poet’s Corner: The Contemporary Word” at the new Bookstore1 location in Downtown Sarasota. Finally, in “Worlds: A Part,” internationally renowned composer and performer **Pauchi Sasaki** and acclaimed poet **Monica Youn** share their words and music on Thursday, May 26 at 6pm at the Conservation Foundation of the Gulf Coast’s Bay Preserve in Osprey.

“The Hermitage’s May programming speaks to the expansive creative range of our Hermitage Fellows, who are all extraordinary talents in their respective artistic and literary fields,” said Hermitage Artistic Director and CEO **Andy Sandberg**. “We are grateful for our continuing partnerships in the community with the Conservation Foundation of the Gulf Coast and Bookstore1 to help introduce these acclaimed Hermitage Fellows to the local community.”

Hermitage programs like these are free and open to the public with a \$5/person registration fee. Due to capacity limitations and social distancing, **registration is required** at **HermitageArtistRetreat.org**.

[See below for complete program details and artist bios.](#)

**The newly announced program descriptions:**

- **“Sounding the Deep: Words and Music Inspired by Nature” with Hermitage Fellows Jessica Huang and Scott Lee, Friday, May 6 @ 6:30pm:** Award-winning playwright **Jessica Huang**, whose theatrical work explores the prospect of a future impacted by the world’s changing climate shares selections of her latest work surrounded by the fragile beauty of Florida’s coastline. Contemporary classical composer **Scott Lee** grew up exploring that coastline near Weedon

Island – a magical and mysterious place that has helped to inspire his latest album, *Through the Mangrove Tunnels*. Listen to selections of Lee’s music as he shares stories about the environment that inspired it. *This event is presented in partnership with the Conservation Foundation of the Gulf Coast. **Registration is required at HermitageArtistRetreat.org** (\$5/person registration fee). **Hermitage Beach, 6660 Manasota Key Road, Englewood, Florida 34223.***

- **“Cats Talk Back” – A Reading with Hermitage Fellow and Tony Award Nominee Bess Wohl, Friday, May 13 @ 6:30pm:** Award-winning playwright Bess Wohl has had work performed on some of the most prominent stages around the country but, like so many artists, can trace her career back to the fringe and avant-garde. Hear selections from one of this Tony-nominated playwright’s earliest public works, *Cats Talk Back*, an irreverent and insightful send-up of a fictional talkback with cast members from the Webber classic. How will this New York Fringe audience respond to the artists behind the commercial success of one of the longest running shows in Broadway history? And how long does it take to put on all that make-up, anyway? Wohl’s Tony-nominated play *Grand Horizons* recently concluded a run at Asolo Rep. **Registration is required at HermitageArtistRetreat.org** (\$5/person registration fee). **Hermitage Beach, 6660 Manasota Key Road, Englewood, Florida 34223.**
- **“Hermitage Poet’s Corner: The Contemporary Word,” Friday, May 20 @ 5pm:** Presented in Partnership with Bookstore1, two incredible writers and Hermitage Fellows come together to read and discuss their evocative work. **DaMaris B. Hill** shares selections from her critically acclaimed *Breath Better Spent: Living Black Girlhood*, a Netgalley "Must-Read Books by Black Authors" in 2022. Playwright, performer, and award-winning poet **Kirya Traber** shares selections from her previous works and teases her forthcoming novel. Join these two writers, both deeply engaged with our contemporary moment, for a discussion following their readings. *This event is presented in partnership with Bookstore1. **Registration is required at HermitageArtistRetreat.org** (\$5/person*

registration fee). **Bookstore1, 117 S. Pineapple Avenue, Sarasota, FL 34236.**

- **“Worlds: A Part” with Hermitage Fellows Pauchi Sasaki and Monica Youn, Thursday, May 26 @ 6pm:** Internationally renowned composer and performer **Pauchi Sasaki** and acclaimed poet **Monica Youn**, seem worlds apart. Sasaki is an interdisciplinary artist working on an original opera inspired by NASA’s mission to transport the first woman to the surface of the moon that utilizes a self-designed dress made of speakers. Winner of the Poetry Society of America’s William Carlos Williams Award, Youn’s poems are sharply crafted and weave together historical allusions and cultural references as diverse as Piero della Francesca, Goya, Martha Graham, and Twinkies. Both artists are grounded in their intersectional identities and multifaceted pursuits. Join these two Hermitage Fellows at the cutting edge of their disciplines as they discuss and share work on the beautiful grounds of the Conservation Foundation of the Gulf Coast. *This event is presented in partnership with Conservation Foundation of the Gulf Coast. **Registration is required at [HermitageArtistRetreat.org](http://HermitageArtistRetreat.org) (\$5/person registration fee). Conservation Foundation of the Gulf Coast, 400 Palmetto Avenue, Osprey, FL 34229***

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### **About the Hermitage Artist Retreat:**

The Hermitage is a non-profit 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](http://HermitageArtistRetreat.org).

**The Hermitage is supported by:**

Hermitage programs are supported, in part, by an award from the National Endowment for the Arts; by Sarasota County Tourist Development Tax Revenues; and by The State of Florida, Department of State, Division of Arts and Culture and the Florida Council on Arts and Culture (Section 286.25 Florida Statutes), as well as the Gulf Coast Community Foundation, Charles & Margery Barancik Foundation, and the Community Foundation of Sarasota County.

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**PREVIOUSLY ANNOUNCED HERMITAGE PROGRAMS:**

**Friday, Apr 8, 6pm**, “A Theater Maker’s Year: ‘What Went Down’” with Playwright and 2021 Hermitage Greenfield Prize Winner **Aleshea Harris** (Live at New College of Florida’s campus bayfront, Sarasota)

*Presented in partnership with the Greenfield Foundation and Community Foundation of Sarasota County*

**Saturday, Apr 9, 3pm**, “**Angélica Negrón**: The Journey, The Work, The Inspiration” (Virtual Zoom Live-Stream)

*Presented in partnership with the Greenfield Foundation and Community Foundation of Sarasota County*

**Saturday, Apr 9, 6pm**, “Artistic License: Whose Story Is It?” with 2022 Hermitage Greenfield Prize Jurors **Terrance McKnight** and **Gary Padmore**, and **Nate Jacobs**, Founder and Artistic Director of Westcoast Black Theatre Troupe (Live on the Hermitage Beach, Manasota Key)

*Presented in partnership with the Greenfield Foundation and Community Foundation of Sarasota County*

**\*Sunday, April 10, 6pm – 2022 Hermitage Greenfield Prize Dinner\***

*This is the Hermitage’s annual Spring Gala at Michael’s On East, this year celebrating Angélica Negrón. This event is separate from the other free community events listed here. Sponsorships for this event start at \$1,000. Contact the Hermitage directly for further details.*

**Thursday, Apr 21, 6pm**, “Music Around the World” with Hermitage Fellow **Kavita Shah** (Live at The John & Mable Ringling Museum of Art, Sarasota)

*Presented in partnership with The John & Mable Ringling Museum of Art*

**Friday, May 6 @ 6:30pm**, “Sounding the Deep: Words and Music Inspired by Nature” with Hermitage Fellows **Jessica Huang** and **Scott Lee** (Live on the Hermitage Beach, Manasota Key)

*Presented in partnership with the Conservation Foundation of the Gulf Coast*

**Friday, May 13 @ 6:30pm**, “Cats Talk Back” with Hermitage Fellow **Bess Wohl** (Live on the Hermitage Beach, Manasota Key)

**Friday, May 20 @ 5pm**, “Hermitage Poet’s Corner: The Contemporary Word,” with Hermitage Fellows **DaMaris B. Hill** and **Kirya Traber** (Live at Bookstore1, Downtown Sarasota)

*Presented in partnership with Bookstore1*

**Thursday, May 26 @ 6pm**, “Worlds: A Part” with Hermitage Fellows **Pauchi Sasaki** and **Monica Youn** (Live at Conservation Foundation of the Gulf Coast, Osprey)

*Presented in partnership with Conservation Foundation of the Gulf Coast*

## **COMPLETE ARTIST BIOS**

### **Jessica Huang**

Hermitage Fellow Jessica Huang is a playwright based in New York, originally from Minnesota. In addition to her Hermitage Fellowship, Huang is the inaugural recipient of the 4 Seasons Residency; the 2019 resident playwright at Chance Theater; a 2018 MacDowell Fellow; and a three-time Playwrights’ Center Fellow. Her work includes *The Paper Dreams of Harry Chin* (2018 Barry and Bernice Stavis Award, 2017 Kilroy’s List), *Mother of Exiles* (2020 Rosa Parks Playwriting Award, 2020 Paul Stephen Lim Playwriting Award, 2020 Kendeda Prize Finalist), *Transmissions in Advance of the Second Great Dying*, and *Purple Cloud*. She has commissions with Manhattan Theater Club, TimeLine Theater Company, Audible, Theater Masters, History Theater, and Theater Mu. Her work has been seen or read at New York Stage and Film, The New Group, Atlantic Theater Company, Berkeley Repertory Theater, The Old Globe, Indiana Repertory Theater, Mixed Blood Theater, The Consortium of Asian American Theaters and Artists, The Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, The Minnesota Museum of American Art, Yellow Earth Theater and more. She has received awards from the Sloan Foundation, the Jerome Foundation and the Minnesota State Arts Board. Huang co-founded and co-directs Other Tiger Productions, a theatrical production company with a mission to pursue multidisciplinary collaborations, intentional inclusivity and a re-examination of traditional theater practices. She has been a member of the Civilians R&D Group, Page 73’s Interstate 73 and Ars Nova Play Group. She is a graduate of the Playwrights Program at Juilliard.

### **Scott Lee**

Contemporary classical composer and Hermitage Fellow Scott Lee writes concert music infused with the visceral sounds of popular music. Lee has worked with the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, North Carolina Symphony, Portland Symphony Orchestra, Symphony in C, the JACK Quartet, yMusic, Da Capo Chamber Players, Deviant Septet, chatterbird, ShoutHouse, and pop artist Ben Folds. Recent commissions include the

Tanglewood Music Center, Aspen Music Festival, Atlanta Symphony Youth Orchestra, loadbang, Baltimore Classical Guitar Society, and the Raleigh Civic Symphony. Notable honors include a Charles Ives Scholarship from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, two ASCAP Morton Gould Young Composer Awards, winner of the Symphony In C Young Composer's Competition, and the grand prize in the PARMA Student Composer Competition. Active as a music educator, Lee is Assistant Professor of Composition at the University of Florida School of Music. Lee earned a PhD in Composition at Duke University, mentored by Scott Lindroth and Steve Jaffe. Lee also holds degrees from the Peabody Institute and Vanderbilt University.

### **Bess Wohl**

Hermitage Fellow Bess Wohl's plays include *Grand Horizons* (Broadway), *Small Mouth Sounds* (*New York Times*, Best of 2016), *Make Believe* (*New York Times*, Best of 2019), *Continuity*, *American Hero*, *Barcelona*, *Touched*, *In*, *Cats Talk Back*, and *Pretty Filthy* (with Michael Friedman and the New York-based investigative theater troupe The Civilians, where she is an associate artist). Her plays have been produced at theater companies around the country, including Second Stage, Manhattan Theatre Club, Ars Nova, Williamstown Theatre Festival, Geffen Playhouse, Goodman Theater and many more. Wohl is the recipient of the 2015 Sam Norkin Special Drama Desk Award for "establishing herself as an important voice in New York theater" and the John Gassner Outer Critics Circle Award. She currently holds new play commissions from Lincoln Center, Manhattan Theater Club, and Williamstown Theatre Festival. She is a MacDowell Fellow and an alumna of Ars Nova's Play Group. BA Harvard, MFA Yale School of Drama.

### **DaMaris B. Hill**

Hermitage Fellow DaMaris B. Hill is the author of *A Bound Woman Is a Dangerous Thing: The Incarceration of African American Women from Harriet Tubman to Sandra Bland* (2020 NAACP Image Award nominee for Outstanding Literary Work in Poetry), *The Fluid Boundaries of Suffrage and Jim Crow: Staking Claims in the American Heartland*, *Vi-zə-bəl Teks-chərs* (Visible Textures). Hill is inspired by the anxieties of our contemporary existence, complicated by fears that certain linear narratives of history fail to be inclusive. "I belong to a generation of people who do not fear death, but are afraid that we may be forgotten," she states. Driven by a keen interest in the work of Toni Morrison and theories regarding 'rememory' as a philosophy and aesthetic practice, Hill uses digital material and critical fabulation research methods to write about "America" and geographic place. Similar to her creative process, Hill's scholarly research is interdisciplinary. Hill is an Associate Professor of Creative Writing at the University of Kentucky. For more information, visit [damarishill.com](http://damarishill.com).

### **Kirya Traber**

Hermitage Fellow Kirya Traber is a nationally awarded writer, performer, and cultural worker. Originally from Northern California, she now resides in Brooklyn. She is a collaborating artist with Ping Chong + Company and is Curator-in-Residence with Hi-ARTS. She was New York Stage and Film's 2020 Founders Award recipient. From 2015-2020, she was Lincoln Center's lead Community Artist in Residence. She is the recipient of a NY Emmy Nomination (*First Person*, PBS), Robert Redford's Sundance Foundation award for Activism in the Arts, a California Governor's Award for Excellence in the Arts, and an Astraea Lesbian Writers Fund Award for Poetry. She has been commissioned by notable New York arts institutions such as the New York Philharmonic, Morgan Library & Museum, Orchestra of St Luke's, and La Mama, among others. Throughout her ambitious performance and writing career, Traber has continuously utilized her art for social change as a cultural organizer. KiryaTraber.com.

### **Pauchi Sasaki**

Described by *The Wire* as an artist "unafraid of working within different disciplines and stylistic constraints," Hermitage Fellow Pauchi Sasaki's interdisciplinary approach integrates musical composition with the design of multimedia performances and the application of new technologies. A Peruvian-Japanese composer, performer, and improviser who collaborates actively with projects linked to film, dance, theater, installation, site specific, and interdisciplinary performances, Sasaki has performed internationally throughout Latin America, Europe, the United States, and Japan. Her compositions involve acoustic, amplified, and electronic instrumentation performed through ensemble formats influenced by improvisational aesthetics and ethnic musical traditions. An active film scorer, "Pauchi Sasaki's effective scores" (*Variety*) are featured in more than 30 feature and short films. Pauchi is the recipient of four "Best Original Score" awards, the Paul Merritt Henry Prize for excellence in the musical composition of stringed instruments, the Ibermúsicas Latin American Grant for Sound Composition with New Technologies at CMMAS (México), The Rolex Mentor and Protégé Arts Initiative, selected by American composer Philip Glass, the Goethe-Institut's artist residencies in Brazil and Berlin, Civitella Ranieri Fellowship, and Columbia University's fellowship at the Institute for Ideas and Imagination in Paris. Commissions include ACO/Carnegie Hall, The Silkroad Ensemble, Pan American Games Opening Ceremony Lima 2019, among others. Her work has been presented at international venues and festivals as the Tokyo Experimental Festival, Venice Biennale, Carnegie Hall, Cannes Film Festival, Walt Disney Hall, MET, Museum of Contemporary Art (MAC Lima), The Kitchen, Gran Teatro Nacional del Perú, Festival Cervantino, the Art Basel Miami week, Lincoln Center's Mostly Mozart Festival, and John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.



### **Monica Youn**

Returning Hermitage Fellow Monica Youn is the author of *Blackacre*, which won the William Carlos Williams Award of the Poetry Society of America. It was also shortlisted for the National Book Critics Circle Award and the Kingsley Tufts Award, longlisted for the National Book Award, and named one of the best poetry books of 2016 by *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and BuzzFeed. Her previous book *Ignatz* was a finalist for the National Book Award. She has been awarded the Levinson Prize from the Poetry Foundation, a Guggenheim Fellowship, a Hermitage Fellowship, a Witter Bytter Fellowship from the Library of Congress, and a Stegner Fellowship, among other honors. The daughter of Korean immigrants and a member of the Racial Imaginary Institute, she teaches at Princeton and in the MFA programs at New York University and Columbia.

[HermitageArtistRetreat.org](http://HermitageArtistRetreat.org)