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Two Hermitage Greenfield Prize Commissions to Premiere at The Ringling Museum of Art in Spring of 2025

*2023 Hermitage Greenfield Prize winners – street dance legend **Rennie Harris** and celebrated visual artist **Sandy Rodriguez** – will premiere their original works resulting from the commissions this spring at The Ringling Museum of Art, coinciding with the 2025 Hermitage Greenfield Prize Weekend.*

January 10, 2025 / Sarasota County, Florida — **The Hermitage Artist Retreat** (Andy Sandberg, Artistic Director and CEO) announced today that The Ringling Museum of Art will host the first public showings of the original commissions resulting from the 2023 **Hermitage Greenfield Prize** (HGP). Los Angeles-based visual artist **Sandy Rodriguez**'s exhibition ***Currents of Resistance*** will be presented in the Keith D. Monda Gallery for Contemporary Art and represents the latest in a series of exhibitions featuring Hermitage Greenfield Prize-winning visual artists at The Ringling, beginning with **Sanford Biggers**' 2012 exhibition *Codex*. **Rennie Harris**, the first HGP recipient in the field of dance and choreography, will share the first public presentations of his original work ***Losing My Religion*** at the Historic Asolo Theater on April 4th and again on April 5th, with his dance company Rennie Harris Puremovement. The premieres of these original Hermitage commissions will coincide with the Hermitage Greenfield Prize Weekend, culminating in the Hermitage Greenfield Prize Dinner on Sunday, April 6th.

Sandy Rodriguez, a first-generation Chicana who grew up along the US-Mexico border, is an artist who engages with the colonial histories of the Americas, Indigenous knowledge systems, memory, and issues surrounding migration, both past and present, all grounded in the specificity of land. One of the unique aspects of her practice is her engagement with and research into the material aspects of indigenous artistic traditions for the Americas. She is using hand-processed pigments derived from earth, plants, and insects, sourced from specimens collected during her fieldwork and residency at the Hermitage for her watercolors. Her Hermitage Greenfield Prize commission, *Currents of Resistance*, is a further exploration of a series of exhibitions for which she has been celebrated, mapping the ongoing cycles of violence on communities of color by blending historical and recent events; this will be her first map of the Southeast United States. Rodriguez's exhibition, curated by Christopher Jones, the Stanton & Nancy

Kaplan Curator of Photography & Media, will be on view from April 5th through August 10th, 2025.

Rennie Harris' HGP commission introduces audiences to a new dance piece titled *Losing My Religion*, a personal reflection on his own journey that weaves in thoughts on the world's collective dilemmas. Harris is known for challenging what has come to be expected of street dance and hip-hop culture and the degenerative social norms and beliefs that ground the struggles of our time. As part of the work, he has incorporated a reimagining of his renowned solo piece *Endangered Species*, an autobiographical work recounting his experience of being chased and shot down in Kingston, Jamaica while touring as a U.S. ambassador for President Reagan's 'American Embassy Tour.' The solo's inclusion in the work completes a story of systemic racism and revolt, shifting away from what *was* to what *is* and what *can be*. Harris' Hermitage Greenfield Prize premiere presentation will take place on Friday, April 4th at 7:30pm and Saturday April 5th at 7:30pm at the Historic Asolo Theater. *Losing my Religion* is part of the Art of Performance Series at the Ringling, curated by Elizabeth Doud, Currie-Kohlmann Curator of Performance. This event will also be presented in partnership with Westcoast Black Theatre Troupe, a frequent Hermitage collaborator.

"We are excited to continue our long history with The Ringling as a presenting partner for the Hermitage Greenfield Prize," said Hermitage Artistic Director and CEO **Andy Sandberg**. "Sandy Rodriguez and Rennie Harris first met when we celebrated this dual award in 2023 at The Ringling for the 15th anniversary of the Hermitage Greenfield Prize Dinner. We're grateful to be returning two years later to share the work of these extraordinary talents – both visionaries and pioneers in their respective fields."

"Since 2012, The Ringling has proudly presented Hermitage Greenfield Prize recipients in the visual arts in our galleries," added **Steven High**, Executive Director at The Ringling. "We are once again thrilled to present a significant new work in visual art from HGP recipient Sandy Rodriguez, and – for the first time – a work of performance from HGP recipient Rennie Harris. Congratulations!"

The 17th annual Hermitage Greenfield Prize Dinner will be held on Sunday, April 6th, 2025, starting at 6pm at Michael's On East in Sarasota. This elegant annual dinner heralds the jury-selected recipient of this prestigious prize, which will be awarded this season in the discipline of music. **The Hermitage Greenfield Prize** (HGP) is a distinguished national commission awarded by the Hermitage Artist Retreat in partnership with the Philadelphia-based Greenfield Foundation; the \$35,000 award rotates annually among music, theater, and visual art. The 2025 winner's newly commissioned work will have its first public presentation in Sarasota in the spring of 2027. The Hermitage Greenfield Prize Celebration is presented in partnership with the **Greenfield Foundation**, with the **Community Foundation of Sarasota County** serving as Lead Community Sponsor. This year's HGP winner, HGP Dinner co-chairs,

and sponsorship details will be announced at a later date. *For early sponsorship inquiries, call (941) 475-2098, Ext. 2.*

Past recipients of the Hermitage Greenfield Prize include **Deepa Purohit**, playwright (2024); **Sandy Rodriguez**, visual artist (2023); **Rennie Harris**, dancer/choreographer (2023); **Angélica Negrón**, composer (2022); **Aleshea Harris**, playwright (2021); **Helga Davis**, composer/performer (2019); **Martyna Majok**, playwright (2018); **David Burnett**, photojournalist (2017); **Coco Fusco**, interdisciplinary artist (2016); **Bobby Previte**, composer/drummer (2015); **Nilo Cruz**, playwright (2014); **Trenton Doyle Hancock**, visual artist (2013); **Vijay Iyer**, composer/pianist (2012); **John Guare**, playwright (2011); **Sanford Biggers**, visual artist (2010); **Craig Lucas**, playwright (2009); and **Eve Beglarian**, composer (2009).

Prior to the premiere of these two original commissions, additional Hermitage Fellows will have their work featured at The Ringling. Two Rivers Ensemble, led by Hermitage alum and musician **Amir ElSaffar**, will perform on February 15 and 16, 2025. Currently, Hermitage Fellow and contemporary artist **Jess T. Dugan's** exhibit *I Want You to Know My Story* is on view at The John & Mable Ringling Museum of Art through February 22, 2025.

A leading national arts incubator, the Hermitage is the *only* major arts organization in Florida's Gulf Coast exclusively committed to supporting the development and creation of new work across all artistic disciplines. The Hermitage hosts artists on its Gulf Coast Manasota Key campus for multi-week residencies, where diverse and accomplished artists from around the world and across multiple disciplines create and develop new works of theater, music, visual art, literature, dance, film, and more. As part of their residencies, Hermitage Fellows participate in free year-round community programs, offering audiences in the 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 innovative programs include performances, conversations, readings, interactive experiences, open studios, school programs, teacher workshops, and more, serving thousands in our regional community each year.

For more information about the Hermitage and upcoming programs, visit: **HermitageArtistRetreat.org**.

The Hermitage Artist Retreat

Sarasota County, Florida
Andy Sandberg, Artistic Director and CEO

The Hermitage is a leading national arts incubator and multidisciplinary artist retreat located on Manasota Key, Florida. For more than two decades, the Hermitage has invited 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 17 Pulitzer Prize winners, Poets Laureate, Guggenheim and MacArthur Fellows, and multiple Tony, Emmy, Grammy, Oscar winners and nominees. Works created at this beachside retreat by a diverse and accomplished group of Hermitage alumni have gone on to renowned theaters, concert halls, and galleries throughout the world. Each year, the Hermitage awards the Hermitage Greenfield Prize for a new work of art, the 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.

The Hermitage is supported by:

Hermitage programs are supported, in part, by the National Endowment for the Arts; Sarasota County Tourist Development Tax revenues; the Welles Murphey Fund at Gulf Coast Community Foundation; Charles & Margery Barancik Foundation; and the Community Foundation of Sarasota County.

The Ringling is a preeminent center for arts, history, and learning that is dedicated to bringing the past and contemporary culture to life through extraordinary visitor experiences. A place of exploration, discovery, and respite, The Ringling's campus in Sarasota, Florida – which includes the Museum of Art, the Circus Museum, a historic mansion, an 18th-century theater, and bayfront gardens – is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. As the State Art Museum of Florida and part of Florida State University, The Ringling fulfills an important educational mission, offering programs of study serving as a major resource for students, scholars, and lifelong learners of every age within the region, across the country, and worldwide.

FULL PROGRAM DETAILS

Newly Announced Program Descriptions:

- **“Losing My Religion,” An Original Commission from Hermitage Greenfield Prize Winner Rennie Harris, *Friday, April 4, 7:30pm & Saturday, April 5, 7:30pm*: *Losing My Religion* is a new dance creation from Rennie Harris, resulting from his 2023 Hermitage Greenfield Prize commission. The performance is a retrospective inspired by Harris's life journey, the human experience, and today's current political and socioeconomic theater. Through this original piece and his remarkable body of work, Harris challenges both what has come to be expected of street dance and hip-hop culture and degenerative social normatives/beliefs with his reconstructionist philosophy and approach to artmaking. As a part of this work, Harris will incorporate a reimagining of his renowned solo *Endangered Species*. The piece's inclusion tells a story of systemic racism and revolt and offers a shift away from what *was*, to what *is*, and what *can be*. *Losing My Religion* examines languages of protest, resilience, and power, while the choreography and forms invite audiences to imagine the ways in which they can use their bodies as resistance. **Please note this performance is not part of the Hermitage's traditional free programming. This ticketed event (\$30-\$40/person) is hosted by The Ringling in the Historic Asolo Theater as a part of the 'Art of Performance' subscription series. A link for registration can be found at HermitageArtistRetreat.org. Historic Asolo Theater, 5401 Bayshore Rd., Sarasota, FL 34243****

- **“Currents of Resistance,” an Original Commission from Hermitage Greenfield Prize Winner Sandy Rodriguez, Opening Saturday, April 5; on view through August 10, 2025:** Sandy Rodriguez, a first-generation Chicana who grew up along the US-Mexico border, is an artist who engages with the colonial histories of the Americas, Indigenous knowledge systems, memory, and issues surrounding migration, both past and present, all grounded in the specificity of land. One of the unique aspects of her practice is her engagement with and research into the material aspects of indigenous artistic traditions for the Americas. She is using hand processed pigments derived from earth, plants, and insects, sourced from specimens collected during her fieldwork and residency at the Hermitage for her watercolors. This Hermitage Greenfield Prize commission is a further exploration of a series of exhibitions for which she has been celebrated, which maps the ongoing cycles of violence on communities of color by blending historical and recent events; this will be her first in this region. ***Please note this program is not part of the Hermitage’s traditional free programming. This exhibition is part of The Ringling’s admission fees (\$30/person). A link for registration can be found at HermitageArtistRetreat.org. The Ringling, 5401 Bayshore Rd., Sarasota, FL 34243***
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Previously Announced Hermitage Programs:

- **Hermitage Sunsets @ Selby Gardens: “Book, Music, and Lyrics” with Hermitage Fellow Mark Sonnenblick, Thursday January 30, 2025 @ 5:30pm:** Fresh off the ‘heels’ of his collaboration with Elton John on the West End premiere of *The Devil Wears Prada* and celebrated for his talents as a lyricist, book writer, and composer, Hermitage Fellow **Mark Sonnenblick’s** work has been called “lushly romantic” by *The New York Times*, as well as “sly and unexpectedly subversive” by *The New Yorker*. With a career that already spans stage and screen, including songs on such hits as Apple’s *Spirited*, starring Ryan Reynolds and Will Ferrell, Searchlight Pictures’ *Theater Camp*, and Netflix’s *Lyle, Lyle, Crocodile*, Sonnenblick’s abilities span styles. An Emmy Award and Drama Desk nominee as well as a recipient of the Jonathan Larson Grant, Sonnenblick shares stories and songs from his work so far, and previews some of what might be next. ***Presented in Partnership with Marie Selby Botanical Gardens. Registration is required at HermitageArtistRetreat.org (\$5/person registration fee). Marie Selby Botanical Gardens – Downtown Sarasota Campus, 1534 Mound Street, Sarasota, FL 34236. Mark Sonnenblick’s Hermitage Residency generously sponsored by the Huisking Family Fund of Community Foundation of Sarasota County***

Additional Hermitage programs will be announced in the coming weeks.

ARTIST BIOS

Lorenzo ‘Rennie’ Harris

(2023 Hermitage Greenfield Prize Winner, Dance & Choreography)

Lorenzo ‘Rennie’ Harris, winner of the 2023 **Hermitage Greenfield Prize** in Dance and Choreography, was born and raised in an African American community in North Philadelphia. In 1992, Harris founded Rennie Harris Puremovement, a street dance theater company dedicated

to preserving and disseminating hip-hop culture through workshops, classes, hip-hop history lecture demonstrations, long-term residencies, mentoring programs, and public performances. Harris founded his company based on the belief that hip-hop is the most important original expression of a new generation. With its roots in the inner-city African American and Latino communities, hip-hop can be characterized as a contemporary indigenous form, one that expresses universal themes that extend beyond racial, religious, and economic boundaries, and one that can help bridge these divisions. Harris' work encompasses the diverse and rich African American traditions of the past, while simultaneously presenting the voice of a new generation through its ever-evolving interpretations of dance. Harris is committed to providing audiences with a sincere view of the essence and spirit of hip-hop. Harris was voted one of the most influential people in the last one hundred years of Philadelphia history. Among his awards are honorary doctorates from Bates College and Columbia College. *The London Times* wrote of Mr. Harris that he is "the Basquiat of the U.S. contemporary dance scene."

Sandy Rodriguez

(2023 Hermitage Greenfield Prize Winner, Visual Art)

Sandy Rodriguez (b. 1975, National City, CA) is the recipient of the 2023 **Hermitage Greenfield Prize** in Visual Art. She is a Los Angeles-based artist and researcher, and first-generation Chicana raised on the US-Mexico border. Her *Codex Rodriguez-Mondragón* is made up of a collection of maps and paintings about the intersections of history, social memory, contemporary politics, and cultural production. Rodriguez earned her BFA from California Institute of Arts. She has exhibited her works at the Denver Art Museum, The Huntington Library, Art Museum and Botanical Garden, The Amon Carter Museum of American Art and Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Museum of Contemporary Art, Busan, South Korea. Her work is in the permanent collections of Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA; Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Bentonville, AR; Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth, TX, The Huntington Library, Art Museum and Botanical Garden. San Marino, CA and others. She was awarded the Caltech-Huntington Art+Research Residency, Creative Capital Award and Migrations initiative from Mellon Foundation Just Futures Initiative and Global Cornell. Rodriguez and her work have been featured in *BBC News: In the Studio*, *Hyperallergic*, *LA Weekly*, *Los Angeles Times*, *New York Times*, *Spectrum News/NY1*, and on several radio programs and podcasts.

HermitageArtistRetreat.org

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