



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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# Saint Louis Poetry Center Brings Acclaimed Poet Mary Ruefle's *Erasures* Exhibition to High Low Gallery

ST. LOUIS, MO - For 75 years, Saint Louis Poetry Center has been championing the power of poetry and nurturing the work of poets. Marking this major milestone, Saint Louis Poetry Center announces some exciting new programming for National Poetry Month (April 2022).

In conjunction with Observable Readings (its premiere poetry series), Saint Louis Poetry Center has teamed up with Kranzberg Arts Foundation and Bennington College to feature acclaimed poets **Mary Ruefle and Mark Wunderlich**. With support from the Poetry Foundation and Missouri Humanities Council, the Observable series is also able to bring Mary Ruefle's artwork to St. Louis.

[\*Erasures\*](#), the first solo exhibition of visual work by Vermont State Poet Laureate Mary Ruefle, will be on view at High Low Gallery. **The show runs March 19 – April 19, 2022.** This exhibition is co-curated by Erin McKenny, director of the [Robert Frost Stone House Museum](#) at Bennington College, and Mark Wunderlich, director of the [Bennington Writing Seminars](#). "It has been a great privilege for us to assemble this work and to work closely with Mary," said co-curators Erin McKenny and Mark Wunderlich. "The work on view represents decades of painstaking and deeply original artistic practice, and Mary is truly one of the real geniuses of the genre of erasure texts. The work is witty, poignant, sometimes melancholy, and always beautiful and interesting."

Of the exhibition, *Hyperallergic* writer [Lauren Moya Ford](#) says, "Ruefle's textured, altered pages collectively form a nonlinear but sequential experience-object that playfully questions notions of authorship – whose work is this now? – while bridging, collapsing, and confounding tidy boundaries between image and text, collage and literature."

To kick off National Poetry Month, Saint Louis Poetry Center will host a weekend of exhibition-related events:



[April 1 from 7:00-9:00pm](#): Meet the Curator with Mark Wunderlich (presented as part of First Fridays in Grand Center)

[April 2 from 3:00-5:00pm](#): Artist Talk: Mary Ruefle in conversation with Mark Wunderlich about the exhibition (livestream event)

[April 3 from 1:30-4:00pm](#): Sunday Workshop led by Mark Wunderlich

In connection with this exhibition, Observable Readings will take place on [April 11 from 7:00-8:30pm](#) with acclaimed poets Mary Ruefle and Mark Wunderlich, featuring their newest books *Dunce* (Ruefle) and *God of Nothingness* (Wunderlich). This event will be livestreamed.

The High Low Gallery is open daily 8:00am-3:00pm, with Friday private appointments available via [Eventbrite](#). COVID-19 policies can be found [here](#).

## About Saint Louis Poetry Center

Founded in 1946, Saint Louis Poetry Center is a literary arts nonprofit organization that supports poets and audiences in the St. Louis region through an innovative array of artistic and educational programs, championing the power of poetry to enrich our communities and lives.

## About Observable

Now in its 18th season, the Observable series features local and national poets sharing recently published and new work. Originally started in 2003 by poet [Aaron Belz](#), Observable is a key part of the St. Louis poetry landscape, presenting the liveliness and diversity of contemporary poetry.

## About Erasures

Since 1998, acclaimed poet and artist Mary Ruefle has produced a series of altered books from which she creates poetic texts in a process called “erasure,” which Ruefle defines as an act of “creating a new text by disappearing the old text that surrounds it.” Using correction fluid, markers, and gouache, and often incorporating collaged found images, the original texts are partially covered over to reveal new and surprising voices, phrases, narratives, and fragmented poems. As part of the exhibition, Ruefle’s postcard collages, altered books, and erasures blend images and text, creating new poetic artifacts that establish a counterpoint between verbal and visual syntax. Her work extends the Modernist project that includes the collage artists Hannah Hoch, Joseph Cornell, and Alexander Rodchenko. *Publishers Weekly*, in a starred review, described Ruefle’s book of erasures, *A Little White Shadow*, as containing, “haiku-like mini-fables, sideways aphorisms, and hauntingly perplexing koans.”

## About Mary Ruefle

Poet, writer, essayist, and visual artist, Mary Ruefle is the author of over a dozen books of poems, essays, and short fiction, including *Dunce* (2019), which was a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award and the 2020 Pulitzer Prize, *My Private Property* (2016), *Indeed I Was Pleased with the World* (2007), and *The Adamant* (1989), which won the Iowa Poetry Prize. She is also the author of the essay collection *Madness, Rack, and Honey* (2012), the work of fiction *The Most of It* (2008), and *A Little White Shadow* (2006), a book of erasures. A full-color facsimile of her erasure

*An Incarnation of the Now* was published in a limited edition by See Double Press. A graduate of Bennington College, where she studied literature, Ruefle is the recipient of numerous honors, including an Award in Literature from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, a Guggenheim Fellowship, a National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship, and a Whiting Award.

### **About Mark Wunderlich**

[Mark Wunderlich](#) is the author of *The Anchorage* (1999), which received the Lambda Literary Award, *Voluntary Servitude* (2004), *The Earth Avails* (2014), which was a finalist for the Kingsley Tufts Award and received the 2015 Rilke Prize, and *God of Nothingness* (2021). He has received fellowships from the NEA, the Massachusetts Cultural Council, the Wallace Stegner Fellowship Program at Stanford, the Fine Arts Work Center in Provincetown, the Amy Lowell Trust and the Civitella Ranieri Foundation. Wunderlich has taught at Stanford and Barnard College and in the graduate writing programs at Columbia University, Ohio University, San Francisco State University and Sarah Lawrence. As an arts administrator, he has worked at the Academy of American Poets, Poetry Society of America, the University of Arizona Poetry Center, *Poets & Writers* and the Napa Valley Writers Conference. He holds a BA in German Literature and English from the University of Wisconsin, and an MFA from Columbia University School of the Arts. Wunderlich lives in the Hudson River Valley and has taught at Bennington since 2004. He became the director of the Bennington Writing Seminars in August 2017.

### **About Kranzberg Arts Foundation**

Through the development of artistic venues, studios and workspaces, short and long-term residencies, and community based programming, the Kranzberg Arts Foundation provides the essential infrastructure for the arts to thrive in the St. Louis region. Taking an arts-based approach to community development, the Foundation ensures we are aligning our investments with the needs and vision of the broader community. Committed to a diverse, equitable, and inclusive approach, we further economic development and cultural sustainability, while helping to establish St. Louis as a premier arts and entertainment destination.

### **About Bennington College**

Bennington College is a liberal arts college in southwestern Vermont that has distinguished itself as a vanguard institution within American higher education. It was the first to include the visual and performing arts in a liberal arts education. It is the only college to require that its students spend a term—every year—at work in the world. Bennington students work intensively with faculty to forge individual educational paths around their driving questions and interests. Notable literary alumni from both the undergraduate and MFA in Writing program include Donna Tartt, Bret Easton Ellis, Kiran Desai, Jonathan Lethem, Michael Pollan, Ann Goldstein, Safiya Sinclair, Anaïs Duplan, Anne Waldman, Mary Ruefle, Cynthia Sweeney, Jamie Quatro, Amy Gerstler, Morgan Jerkins, and Charles Bock.

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