

## PRESS INQUIRIES

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### **Art Center Sarasota Welcomes Javi Suárez as Board Member**

*Suárez is an award-winning architect and artist.*

(January 30, 2023) Philip C. Baker, whose position as chairman of Art Center Sarasota's board of directors commenced with the start of the fiscal year, recently announced that the organization has welcomed the celebrated architect and artist Javi Suárez to its board of directors.

"I am honored to welcome Javi Suárez to our board of directors," says Baker. "Javi has a proven track record of great leadership and has demonstrated a tremendous commitment to the arts and culture sector in Sarasota. As we begin to implement our new strategic plan, Javi will bring a breadth of artistic experiences and business perspectives that will help support our mission to build community connection through the universal language of art."

Javi Suárez was born in Santurce, Puerto Rico, and moved to Sarasota when he was 10. The son of an architect, Suárez felt honored to follow in his father's footsteps, although art was his first love. At the University of Florida, Suárez's architectural studies prepared him well for a future as an artist. He says his studies there taught him to question everything—and to rely on his own ideas and innate passion. Suárez went on to receive a master's degree in architecture from the

University of California at Los Angeles in 1997. While researching a thesis topic there, his interest in improvisation inspired him to look beyond the historical precedents within architecture. Under the teachings of the acclaimed jazz guitarist Kenny Burrell, Suárez focused his thesis work on jazz as a model for architecture. The ideas behind this thesis have influenced the process and concepts of his art, as well.

Suárez's work has been shown at private studios and galleries and is displayed in several private and public collections. His regional architectural projects include the Sarasota branch of Bay First Bank; the Bradenton headquarters of the REALTOR Association of Sarasota and Manatee; Sarasota Midtown Plaza's facade renovations; the Church of the Redeemer expansion; Sabal Palm Plaza; and a Bird Key residence.

Suárez has served on several regional boards, including The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art Foundation, the AIA Florida Gulf Coast Chapter, the advisory board of the City of Sarasota Community Redevelopment Agency, and the Salvador Dali Museum. He was part of the 2009 Leadership Florida team and served as a board member for Art Center Sarasota from 2005-2006.

"It's motivating to reengage a former board member," says Kinsey Robb, ACS's executive director. "Javi brings not only an exceptional set of skills and talent to our board, but a true passion for art and community building. Having Javi join our board is a great way to start off a new year!"

Art Center Sarasota's board of directors includes: Philip C. Baker, Chair; Michael J. Shelton, Vice Chair; Ramsey Frangie, Treasurer; Carolyn Benedict-Drew, Secretary; and Barbara Banks, Ned Norris and Javi Suárez, with Barbara Zdravecky serving as a board consultant.

## **About Art Center Sarasota**

Founded in 1926 and later incorporated as a nonprofit in 1941, Art Center Sarasota serves as the first and oldest visual arts organization in Sarasota. Art Center Sarasota's mission is to bring together creatives and the broader public to increase understanding of our human condition, support wellbeing, and build community connection through the universal language of art. Art Center Sarasota is admission-free and open to the public.

## **Art Center Sarasota**

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[www.artsarasota.org](http://www.artsarasota.org)

## **Gallery Hours**

Monday-Friday: 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

Saturday: Noon-5 p.m.