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# Crealdé School of Art chooses next executive director, Peter Schreyer to step down after nearly 30 years



Crealdé School of Art's main campus in Winter Park recently received a \$425,000 expansion and renovation. (Patrick Connolly/Orlando Sentinel)



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UPDATED: July 18, 2024 at 12:48 p.m.

After nearly 30 years at the helm at [Crealdé School of Art](#), Peter Schreyer will step down in January. But his successor is already at work.

Emily Bourmas-Fry will be the new leader of the Winter Park school, known for its classes, galleries and summer camps, Crealdé officially announced today as word spread throughout the arts community. As part of an unusual 18-month leadership transition plan that started a year ago, Bourmas-Fry will spend the next six months working with and learning from Schreyer.

“I am excited to work with Emily,” Schreyer said in the announcement of Bourmas-Fry’s hiring. “I look forward to coaching and mentoring her over the next six months.”

After stepping down as executive director, Schreyer will remain with Crealdé as executive consultant for community relations, he said. He also will remain on the school’s faculty and manage its photography program.

Bourmas-Fry, a former leader at [Orlando Museum of Art](#), stood out during the Crealdé board’s extensive search for a new leader, Schreyer said.

“She brings tremendous knowledge and expertise to our organization, with a vision and commitment to sustain and build upon everything we have created over the last decades,” Schreyer said. “The board and I are confident in her ability to guide Crealdé into the next half-century. Her innovative approach and dedication to the arts make her a visionary leader.”



Emily Bourmas-Fry will spend the next six months working with and learning from Peter Schreyer, current executive director of the Crealdé School of Art in Winter Park, before taking on the job herself. (Courtesy Laurie Hasan via Crealdé School of Art)

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The nonprofit Crealdé School of Art has provided community-based, hands-on art experiences since 1975. In 2007, the school opened the Hannibal Square Heritage Center in partnership with the city of Winter Park. Annually, the school offers more than 125 visual arts classes and humanities-based programs.

In May, the school celebrated a \$425,000 renovation that yielded five new teaching studios at Crealdé's main campus, including a sculpture classroom, a second ceramics studio and dedicated teaching studios for its jewelry and young artists programs.

Schreyer, 68, told the Orlando Sentinel he first alerted the board about his plan of stepping back three years ago. Details were hammered out at a board retreat about two years ago, he said, and the search for the next executive director began last year.



Peter Schreyer, Crealdé's CEO and executive director, is surrounded by the work of Haitian-American artist Patrick Noze in the gallery at Crealdé School of Art in Winter Park on Sept. 21, 2023. Schreyer is stepping down at the end of the year. (Patrick Connolly/Orlando Sentinel)

"It was important to me the new director could inherit the organization in great shape," said Schreyer, explaining the transition plan kicked in when he felt the campus was ready, the school was fully staffed and the nonprofit's finances were strong.

Bourmas-Fry, who previously served as director of marketing and development for Orlando Museum of Art, said when she heard about the opening, "I just remember thinking it would be an absolute dream job."

She was familiar with the organization and its mission; years ago, she took a painting class at the school.

"I love being in this environment," she said. "I think people who take classes here at Crealdé should be proud; they are artists."

Bourmas-Fry, who holds Greek, Australian and U.S. citizenship, was also drawn to the job because of the unique six-month mentoring period. Technically, her position until January is styled as associate/incoming executive director.

"What a wonderful opportunity to have that experience in my first position as an executive director," she said.

Schreyer said the board was determined to make sure Crealdé's next leader would be set up for success and not leave the organization foundering with a revolving door of leaders – something Schreyer said he has seen happen to other nonprofits "so many times."

“This is not a test,” he said of the mentorship period. “We’re going to make sure Emily succeeds. That’s our job.”

Bourmas-Fry, who has experience in creative services and public relations in local television, also volunteers with [FusionFest](#), the organization that produces an annual festival celebrating cultural diversity. She has a master’s degree in cultural anthropology from the University of Adelaide in Australia.

After meeting with Crealdé faculty members at a reception this week, Bourmas-Fry said things were off to a good start.

“It’s been great hitting the ground running,” she said. “I feel so welcomed and supported here.”

And she praised what Schreyer had achieved in his 29-year tenure: “The foundation he has built here is just wonderful.”

Schreyer recalled how Crealdé had a shoestring budget in his early days as executive director.

“When I took over, it needed everything,” he laughed — from upgraded technology to roof repairs. Under his tenure, the Crealdé annual budget grew from \$275,000 to \$1.5 million as the student population grew from about 1,000 to 4,500.

He counts the opening of the [Heritage Center](#), which shines a spotlight on the historically Black neighborhood of Winter Park, as a highlight of his career.

“It has become more beautiful and impactful than I could have ever dreamed,” he said.

“It’s absolutely amazing that an art school was able to give birth to that.”

He’s equally proud of the growth in programs and diversity of the school’s students.



In 2004, Peter Schreyer, executive director of Crealdé School of Art, and instructor of a documentary photography class, speaks with former Orlando Sentinel columnist Joy Wallace Dickinson. Schreyer has led the Winter Park school for nearly 30 years. (Rick Lang/Orlando Sentinel archive photo)

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When he started teaching at Crealdé, classes were during the day a few times a week so students “were mostly moms, and the people were not terribly diverse,” he said. Today, adults from seven counties attend classes seven days a week. “It’s a United Nations of people in our classes in terms of background and ages,” he said.

Bourmas-Fry will now take on future plans for new woodworking and metalworking studios, and Schreyer said he won’t miss the grant application deadlines and mandatory meetings that go along with being executive director.

“It’s a special place,” he said of Crealdé. “And I’m happy to hand the torch over.”

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Originally Published: July 18, 2024 at 12:05 p.m.

