

**SEEKING THE ESSENCE: AN EXHIBIT THAT WILL AWAKEN YOUR INNER CHILD**  
*Saludarte Foundation Presents Beloved Venezuelan Author and Award-Winning Illustrator*  
*Menena Cottin*

**Miami, FL** (February 16, 2018) – The prolific Menena Cottin has already touched the lives of many through her vivid and compelling narratives for children and adults alike. Her books, which have garnered international attention and praise, have received critical acclaim from *The New York Times Book Review*, *Premios ALAS-BID*, *School Library Journal's Best Books for Children* and Bologna's *New Horizons Award*, to name a few. Now, the creative genius that is Menena, springs to life in the bilingual (English and Spanish) *Seeking the Essence*, a multisensory and playful exhibition showcasing the author's fictional characters and philosophical book themes.

Books like the award-winning “The Black Book of Colors,” which has been translated into 19 languages, engages exhibition participants via a thought-provoking journey around what it means to “see colors” when you’re blind. An actual tunnel will be constructed to transmit the visceral feelings of colors. The immersive exhibition, which was first shown in Caracas’ Sala TAC to immense media attention and public success, will be on display at **Ideobox Art Space** in Wynwood from **April 26 to June 23, 2018**.

Presented by non-profit Saludarte Foundation, which creates Pan American and international artistic and cultural programs for socioeconomically challenged audiences, Menena, her books, and exhibition perfectly demonstrate the organization’s core mission of educating and uplifting audiences through art and culture. Foundation Founder and Chairman Tanya Capriles de Brillembourg says the exhibition, “promises to be an experience of solidarity, learning, culture, but above all, one of curiosity for all who come to see it.” Brillembourg and her team are hosting special presentations for local schools and organizations throughout the exhibition’s 8-week run, for groups like The United Way, The Wow Center Miami and the Learning Experience

On the heels of a busy and highly rewarding 2017, which included author presentations at the International Book Fair of Bogotá (the largest book fair in the hemisphere) as well as the Miami Book Fair, Menena is delighted for her exhibition’s Miami premiere. Working in close collaboration with Curator Pedro Quintero, the duo will showcase 18 books through conceptual and experiential art transforming the Ideobox Art Space completely.

“The purpose of this exhibit is to make complex concepts simple. We invite participants to think and question, but within the context of simple texts and minimalist aesthetics,” explains the jovial Menena. Her uplifting spirit infectious. Menena currently resides in Miami, but travels extensively to her native Venezuela where there is a major humanitarian crisis. Menena and her books are revered there, and she is constant with her efforts to support this community that has given her so much.

All are welcome to come and experience *Seeking the Essence*. Guided tours for groups of 5 or more can be arranged by calling 305-573-4618. Ideobox Gallery is located at 2417 N. Miami Avenue. Gallery hours are from 9am-5pm, M-F. A public opening reception, with artist talk, guided tour, food and refreshments, is programmed for April 26, 6-9p.m. Special thanks to Fundacion Bancredito and Bodega Otazu for their generous contributions in making this possible.

An instagram account, showing the build out of *Seeking the Essence* along with special sneak peeks of the exhibit and one-on-ones with the artist, will launch on March 1, 2018 @SaludarteFoundation. For more information about Seeking the Essence visit <http://www.saludarte.org/>.

*A private media reception is programmed for April 26<sup>th</sup> in the morning, 10a.m.. For additional details contact frances@albancommunications.com*

### **About Saludarte Foundation**

Saludarte Foundation was created in 2003 by Tanya Capriles of Brillembourg with the purpose to connect the Arts and Health for the benefit of children and youth from socio-economic disadvantaged groups. The main objective of Saludarte is to design and implement extensive educational, cultural and social development programs that facilitate inclusive artistic processes, promote positive social change, and integration for people with diverse abilities.

### **About Menena Cottin**

Author, illustrator and designer of more than 30 children's books published in Venezuela, México, Colombia, Brazil, Perú, Guatemala, Spain, Italy, France, Portugal. She has also published adult storytelling that includes stories, novels, and the autobiographical book "Close the Eyes We're Going to See" (Dahbar 2013), which also produced the audio-book version (And Then Story Designers, 2016). In the digital media, Menena Cottin, together with her son Alfredo, is the creator of "And Then Story Designers", an editorial that has produced five digital books, authored by Cottin, including Double Double, winner of Special Mention at the Fair Of the Children's Book of Bologna 2014. Menena Cottin lives in Miami with her husband. They have two children, two daughters-in-law and five grandchildren.

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