

For Immediate Release: Monday, June 29, 2015

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****Photos available**

New Community Arts Space Opens at Historic Williamsburgh Library

Brooklyn Public Library Partners with Non-Profit Spaceworks to Create Affordable Spaces for Local Artists, Free Community Arts Programming

Brooklyn, NY – The fully renovated second floor of the Williamsburgh Library will now offer affordable studio and rehearsal space to artists and a range of free arts programming in collaboration with local community organizations. This innovative new multi-arts space in one of Brooklyn’s most historic library branches is a partnership between Brooklyn Public Library (BPL) and Spaceworks, a non-profit organization dedicated to expanding the supply of long-term, low-cost artist workspace in New York City.

The renovation project was made possible by \$650,000 of public funding, provided by the NYC Department of Cultural Affairs and managed by the NYC Economic Development Corporation. The 4,400-square foot space features:

- Three studios for individual visual artists;
- One classroom studio for a local arts education provider;
- One rehearsal space/multi-purpose room designed for BPL programs and dance/theater artists;
- One rehearsal space/multi-purpose room designed for music activities and rehearsal, outfitted with a piano, drum kit, microphones, guitar/keyboard amps, and digital mixing console;
- Renovated common areas, kitchen facilities, and restrooms for artists and library staff.

“Brooklyn Public Library’s partnership with Spaceworks will allow us to offer expanded free programming to library patrons while supporting the arts community in Williamsburg,” said **BPL President and CEO Linda Johnson**. “Our collaboration is a contemporary milestone for Brooklyn’s first Carnegie library, which has served its community for more than 110 years.”

“We are thrilled to launch this remarkable new partnership with the Brooklyn Public Library to provide affordable, stable work space for artists at the Williamsburgh branch. We are also excited to partner with local groups like El Puente and LDBA Brooklyn, which will provide ongoing community-based programming within the space. We believe the project will be an important resource for the entire North Brooklyn

community for years to come, and will attract many new users to the Williamsburgh branch,” said **Paul Parkhill, Executive Director, Spaceworks.**

“There is nowhere in the world like New York for artists who want to hone their craft and connect with communities that care about the work they’re doing,” said **Cultural Affairs Commissioner Tom Finkelpearl.** “Community libraries are inspiring hubs for civic life and infusing this environment with active arts programming is an exciting proposition that we are proud to support. The renovated space at Spaceworks Williamsburgh is going to provide an extraordinary and affordable facility that forges new connections with a neighborhood so many artists call home.”

"Access to the arts is fundamental to fostering the creativity, joy, and understanding which make a community holistically healthy. This burgeoning partnership between the Brooklyn Public Library and Spaceworks will activate the Williamsburgh Library with an energy of true excitement. I congratulate the first resident artists at this new arts space, and I thank Deputy Borough President Reyna and the rest of the panel who worked on selecting them. Art is alive in Williamsburg like never before!" said **Eric L. Adams, Brooklyn Borough President.**

“Williamsburg, as it is known today, was built on the creative economy. Artists helped make North Brooklyn what it is today, but unfortunately they have been priced out. Space is limited and expensive, making it very difficult for artists to thrive here. Spaceworks and the Brooklyn Public Library have realized this need and stepped to the plate. Through the creation of affordable rehearsal space for musicians and other artists they have shown their commitment to Williamsburg’s roots,” said **Assemblyman Joseph R. Lentol.**

"El Puente is excited to be partnering with Spaceworks in an effort to make public spaces, like the Williamsburg Library, more accessible to longtime community artists of color in Williamsburg. As the need for quality, affordable rehearsal and studio space for artists increases, especially in places like Williamsburg, such collaboration will help activate and transform underutilized space in the library for community cultural benefit,” said **Frances Lucerna, Co-Founder & Executive Director, El Puente.**

L’Ecole des Beaux Arts (LBDA), a Williamsburg-based arts education provider for children and adults, will provide programming in the classroom studio. LBDA has already begun providing free visual arts workshops for children at the branch, and will continue to provide 100 hours per year of free programming to patrons of all ages, including bookmaking and printing.

BPL will use the multi-purpose space to expand the free programming currently offered at the Williamsburgh branch, including music classes, writing workshops, and more. Long-time Williamsburg community-based organization El Puente will also provide weekly free programming in the multi-purpose space, including meetings and programs

for CADRE, a network of mostly Latino artists, artisans and cultural workers rooted in North Brooklyn. IDEAS Creative Drama will bring its youth theater and improvisational drama workshops to the library, while 826NYC, a non-profit that helps children and teens develop writing skills, will host a day-long children's art festival in the summer, with other offerings throughout the year.

Artists Alison Hall, Vincent Romaniello, and Esther Ruiz were selected by lottery from a pool of over 200 qualified artists who were pre-vetted by a panel of community leaders, including Deputy Brooklyn Borough President Diana Reyna; Artist Xaviera Simmons; Neighborhood Library Supervisor Catherine Skrzypek; and (former) Director of El Puente's Green Light District Anusha Venkataraman. Eligibility requirements included New York City residency, active artistic practice, and commitment to the program. The artists will occupy the studios for one year, with an option to renew. Library patrons will be able to view the studios for special programs, open studios, and artist demonstrations.

The multi-purpose and music rehearsal spaces will be available for ongoing hourly bookings by performing artists from Williamsburg and across New York City. Renters can book space online at www.spaceworksnyc.org or through a kiosk at the library. Spaceworks expects the rehearsal spaces to accommodate hundreds of musicians, dancers, and theater companies each year.

"Gotham Dance Theater is very excited to begin rehearsals at the brand new Spaceworks location in Williamsburg! The studio is spacious, beautifully renovated, conveniently located by the train and incredibly affordable for artists," said **Marc Andrew Nuñez, Founder/Artistic Director, Gotham Dance Theater.**

"We love Spaceworks because it is affordable, well-equipped, clean, gets great natural light, and is easy to book! We look forward to rehearsing at the Williamsburg facility," said **Jeff Young, musician, composer, and member of [thingNY](#) artist collective.**

About Brooklyn Public Library

Brooklyn Public Library (BPL) is an independent library system for the 2.5 million residents of Brooklyn. It is the fifth largest library system in the United States with 60 neighborhood libraries located throughout the borough. BPL offers free programs and services for all ages and stages of life, including a large selection of books in more than 30 languages, author talks, literacy programs and public computers. BPL's eResources, such as eBooks and eVideos, catalog information and free homework help, are available to customers of all ages 24 hours a day at our website: www.bklynlibrary.org.

ABOUT SPACEWORKS

Established in 2011, Spaceworks is a nonprofit cultural community development organization dedicated to expanding the supply of long-term, affordable rehearsal and studio space for artists working in New York City. Spaceworks provides artists with the

workspace that they need to make their practice possible. We believe this strengthens the cultural landscape of the city, making it a more affordable place for artists to work and live. For more information about Spaceworks, visit www.spaceworksnyc.org.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Alison Hall works in drawing and painting, creating work that is influenced by her experiences of growing up in Southern Virginia and living in Italy. Hall currently has a solo exhibition at Steven Harvey Fine Art Projects, Manhattan and will begin work on a public wall drawing commissioned in Bonn, Germany later this year. **Esther Ruiz** is a sculptor whose work investigates and celebrates fictional landscapes and the objects residing in them. Like snow globes collected from travels, Esther's sculptures act as markers of time, commemorating sacred and valuable moments in time, imagined or real. Esther's recent works use concrete, Plexiglas, neon and rocks. **Vincent Romaniello** works in installation and painting. In 2008, Vincent founded Sage Projects and in early 2009, the group opened a co-operatively run gallery in a repurposed retail store that was on loan for an eight-month period. During this time, more than 200 under-recognized artists were given an opportunity to exhibit their work. All three artists have exhibited nationally and internationally.

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