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BAM celebrates completion of the BAM Richard B. Fisher Building, a new model for the 21st-century performing arts center

BAM's first new construction in more than a century dynamically reshapes relationship between artists, audiences, and ideas and engages community and local arts organizations

Chase is the inaugural sponsor of the BAM Fisher

Brooklyn, NY/June 14, 2012—Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM) proudly announces the completion of the 40,000-square-foot, seven-story BAM Richard B. Fisher Building, named in honor of longtime friend and BAM Endowment Trust Chairman Richard B. Fisher (1936—2004). The BAM Fisher was conceived to allow BAM—a global cultural organization—to both grow artistically and to make a meaningful community impact. The result is a new model for the 21st-century performing arts center, one that is uniquely responsive to the creative needs of artists and to its surrounding community. The BAM Fisher provides BAM with an intimate and flexible non-proscenium performance option for both emerging and established artists, thereby inspiring the trailblazing work which has earned BAM a worldwide reputation. The building also enables the institution to build upon its legacy of arts education and community initiatives by providing an expanded home for the BAM Education & Humanities Department, under the new leadership of Vice President Stephanie Hughley.

About the building

Located on the site of the Salvation Army's former Brooklyn Citadel Corps at 321 Ashland Place—around the corner from BAM's Peter Jay Sharp Building—the \$50 million BAM Fisher is the first new performance venue added to the BAM campus since 1987; its creation was made possible through a combination of generous private and public funding, including the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, the New York City Council, the Brooklyn Borough President, and the Brooklyn delegations of the New York State Assembly and Senate.

“Over the past 150 years, BAM has become a cornerstone of New York City's cultural life—attracting audiences from around the world with innovative festivals and performances and engaging students from across the City with dynamic arts education programming,” says Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg. “The City was pleased to join in this public-private partnership,

transforming a landmark building into a modern day cultural destination for diverse audiences, artists and community organizations. The new Richard B. Fisher building will expand access to BAM's renowned programs, provide flexible spaces for our artists and community groups to exercise their imaginations, and ensure that the growing Downtown Brooklyn Cultural District continues to enhance our city's economy, identity, and quality of life for generations to come."

"When BAM was first contemplating this building, the Rockefeller Foundation provided us with the funding to conduct surveys and focus groups to determine what the neighborhood and the BAM Cultural District needed in terms of new artistic space and what was missing," says BAM President Karen Brooks Hopkins. "It was critical for BAM to create a building where we can thrive artistically and give back to our Brooklyn community in ways that feel uniquely BAM. We are forever grateful to the private donors, particularly the Fisher family and Jeanne Donovan Fisher, for their indispensable role in making this long held dream a reality, and to Chase our 150th anniversary and inaugural BAM Fisher sponsor."

Designed for LEED Gold certification, with a design overseen by Hugh Hardy/ H³ Hardy Collaboration Architecture, the 40,000-square-foot BAM Fisher features several spaces including:

- The Judith and Alan Fishman Space, a flexible 250-seat theater designed to accommodate a range of performance and art forms and audience arrangements
- The 1,600-square-foot Rita K. Hillman Studio, to serve artists rehearsing or developing work, and as a second performance space
- The Max Leavitt Theater Workshop for use by BAM education and humanities programs and for the development of new work
- The Samuel H. Scripps Stage in the Fishman Space
- The Geraldine Stutz Gardens (designed by Starr Whitehouse Landscape Architects and Planners and installed by New York Green Roofs), a natural environment on the BAM Fisher roof for public and private events and BAM Education programs
- The Peter Jay Sharp Lobby, which can serve as an exhibition space for Brooklyn visual artists. The lower lobby features carpeting designed by Madeline Weinrib.

About the programming

Inspired by the creative legacy of the original Lepercq Space (now home of BAMcafé), site of early works by such seminal BAM artists as Robert Wilson and Meredith Monk, BAM Executive Producer Joseph V. Melillo has long wanted to add an intimate yet technologically cutting-edge venue to BAM's existing portfolio of performance spaces, which includes the BAM Howard Gilman Opera House, the BAM Harvey Theater, and BAMcafé.

"Adding a truly unique facility to BAM's roster of spaces, the BAM Fisher will broaden the audience experience by hosting productions within a totally flexible performance space, an experience that will be realized on a non-proscenium intimate scale," says Melillo. "The vision of BAM Fisher was to create an open space to permit adventurous exploration into new approaches to visual imagery, movement, technology, and storytelling."

The Fishman Space, a 250-seat theater, along with the Scripps Stage, can accommodate numerous configurations. It will work in concert with the spacious 1,600-square-foot Rita K. Hillman Studio rehearsal space to serve as a full-service creative home for BAM's emerging and established artists. Tickets to all Next Wave Festival performances at the BAM Fisher are priced at \$20 to encourage risk-taking and to cultivate a new generation of live performance devotees. Programming in the BAM Fisher begins with this fall's 2012 Next Wave Festival, which features 15 BAM Fisher engagements, including four commissions by Brooklyn artists. For more information on BAM Fisher programming, please visit bam.org/nextwave.

About BAM Education & Humanities Department and community initiatives

BAM's education & humanities programs reach more than 25,000 students, teachers, and families annually. The BAM Fisher offers the opportunity to serve greater numbers via new arts education programs designed to serve the local community outside the school system. In addition to these offerings BAM will also be developing its exciting, intellectually provocative humanities programming. BAM Fisher Education & Humanities highlights include:

- The BAM Professional Development Program (BAM PDP) in collaboration with the DeVos Institute of Arts Management at the Kennedy Center (DVIAM) is a 14-month program begun on June 11 that utilizes the strengths of both institutions to provide professional development training and deeply discounted theater and rehearsal studio rental to an annual selection of qualifying Brooklyn nonprofit arts organizations. Through the program, which is supported by the Brooklyn Community Foundation and the New York Community Trust, BAM and DVIAM strive to help arts organizations expand their skill base, increase their institutional capacity, and build necessary foundations for their long-term success through sessions on marketing and fundraising, among others. The program culminates with six of the Brooklyn-based companies presenting self-funded productions in the Judith and Alan Fishman Space in the spring/summer of 2013.
- The BAM Fisher will house BAM's first classroom and developmental space, the Leavitt Workshop, for use by BAM Education to house such popular existing programs as Young Critics and Young Film Critics, in which selected students, from grades 10 to 12, learn about the performing arts or film writing techniques, produce an anthology of student writings, and meet with esteemed guest critics. Plans for future BAM Fisher education programming and initiatives include additional presentations of international artists for weekday school audiences and weekend family audiences, a series of weekend live performances, puppet, and film programs, and workshops for family audiences, special programming for teens, school break and summer intensive programs for various age ranges, comprehensive programming for middle through high school students combining arts education with developing career and life skills, and much more.
- Expanded BAM Fisher humanities programs include *On Truth (and Lies)*, a new series in which philosopher Simon Critchley will discuss philosophy, current events, and art in conversation with high-profile contemporary artists from multiple disciplines, post-show talks with BAM Fisher artists, and special events like the *Brooklyn Literary Mash-Up*, an evening of readings, spoken word, and musical performances based on 150 years of Brooklyn literature, curated by Brooklynites Nelson George and Danny Simmons.

About Chase

Chase provided substantial support for BAM's 150th anniversary celebration. The bank is New York City's largest private employer with more than 27,000 employees, including 3,100 in Brooklyn. Chase serves Brooklyn consumers and businesses through 75 bank branches and more than 330 ATMs.

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Credits

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