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Boston Street Lab to pilot performing arts rehearsals in vacant storefronts

This month, Boston Street Lab will pilot a new storefront-activation program called *Work in Progress*, which will bring rehearsals of performing artists to street-level properties in the Boston area. The first featured artist will be Weber Dance, which is in rehearsals for a piece that will premiere at the Cambridge Multicultural Arts Center in October 2011.



From April 22 through May 8, open rehearsals will be held in the dramatic ground-floor raw space at Midway Studios (15 Channel Center Street) in the Fort Point Channel neighborhood of Boston, overlapping with the Fort Point Arts Community's annual spring open studios event, Art Walk. Boston Street Lab will transform the space into a venue for dance using a portable, sprung floor, rented from the Boston Dance Alliance. The public will be able to view rehearsals through windows along the street, and from a mezzanine level accessible through Midway Studio's lobby. Boston Street Lab and Weber Dance will also test several features to facilitate interaction between the public and dancers, including window signage explaining the day's work from the point of view of the choreographer, and a drop box for questions.

Boston Street Lab Founder and Director Sam Davol says: "There has never been a better moment to do more with street-level space, both for the local economy, and for Boston generally. With *Work in Progress* we want to take the 'art windows' concept a step further and show not just works of art, but artists at work."

Boston Dance Alliance Executive Director Ruth Birnberg says: "Two major issues that the greater Boston dance community faces every day is gaining visibility for the art form and finding affordable space to work. *Work in Progress* offers a solution for both."

About Weber Dance and the featured "*Work in Progress*"

Dr. Jody Weber is the artistic director of Weber Dance (www.weberdance.com). The featured piece to be rehearsed is a collaboration between Weber and the author, scientist, and adventurer Jon Turk, and poet Andrew Arnett. The piece—as of yet untitled—integrates storytelling, poetry and dance to explore the relationship between the scientific perspective and the realm of mystery and magic.

Weber Dance is no stranger to working in unconventional spaces or extending the reach of dance through unconventional means. The company is committed to engaging the public in the expressive power of movement through programs that enable audiences to develop a deeper awareness of the language of human movement, the history of American dance, and the transformative power of live performance. Dr. Weber brings over 20 years of choreographic experience and a doctorate in dance history to her work. Next year, through a project called *Dance Core*, Weber Dance will outfit a clean-energy powered-van with a portable dance floor, lighting, and sound equipment in order to take performances on the road to underserved communities throughout New England.

About Boston Street Lab

Boston Street Lab creates programs for public space. Since becoming a nonprofit in 2009, the organization has executed a range of projects at street level, from one-day events, to complex installations that operate as mini-institutions. Its most recent project was a community-based library in Boston's Chinatown, called the Storefront Library.

Boston Street Lab focuses on piloting ideas at street level so they can be experienced and evaluated, and also contribute to a more interesting and vibrant city today. The organization looks for "lighter, quicker, cheaper" ways to improve the public realm, and aims to create replicable solutions that others can implement in their communities.

In 2011, Boston Street Lab is launching a new project called the UNI, a portable reading room and programming venue, which builds directly on the Storefront Library project.

About the location

Midway Studios is the city's largest live/work community, situated in the heart of Fort Point Channel, Boston's vibrant, historic, artist neighborhood. It was developed in 2005 by the Fort Point Development Collaborative, a joint venture of Keen Development Corporation of Cambridge, MA, and the Fort Point Cultural Coalition. In recent years, the ground floor space has hosted performances of the Actors' Shakespeare Project, the Fort Point Theatre Channel and The Boston Conservatory.

Work in Progress Dates:

April 22 - May 8, 2011

Location & Schedule:

Ground floor theater space at Midway Studios, 15 Channel Street Center, Ft. Point Channel, Boston. April 22 - May 8, 2011, evenings and weekends. Check www.bostonstreetlab.org for details.

Featured Artist:

Weber Dance

www.weberdance.com

Links:

Boston Street Lab

www.bostonstreetlab.org

Boston Dance Alliance

www.bostondancealliance.org

Midway Studios and HallKeen Real Estate Management and Investment

www.hallkeen.com

Fort Point Arts Community Art Walk, May 6-8, 2011

www.fortpointarts.org