



NATIONAL
ENDOWMENT
FOR THE ARTS

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**ROCCO LANDESMAN COMMENTS AT THE
BROOKLAND ARTSPACE LOFTS GROUNDBREAKING**

Friday, April 30, 2010; Washington, DC

Thanks, Kelley [Lindquist]. I have now been with Kelley and his staff in Peoria, Illinois; in New York City's Spanish Harlem; and now right here in Brookland. At those visits and also at lots of meetings at the NEA, we have been talking about artists as place makers and the ways they contribute to creating more livable, sustainable communities: the arts are a poverty fighter, they increase child welfare, they drive civic participation, etc.

But as much as I have been talking about artists as place makers, I haven't yet spent as much time talking about places as artist-makers, and the things that communities need to do to invest in creating the next generation of artists.

This project does exactly that – it creates affordable housing for artists, and it also creates much needed rehearsal space. Other sectors talk a lot about the importance of research and development to maintaining a competitive advantage in the world at large. Well in the arts, rehearsal space is our research and design space, and there is a direct line between that and our creative competitive advantage in the world.

Europe has a great tradition of choreographic centers, where dancers and choreographers work in beautifully appointed spaces for long periods of time. Too often in this country, our dance makers are forced to cobble together rehearsal space in a patchwork of borrowed basements and studios at odd hours of the day.

The American dance that tours Europe is, therefore, sometimes under-rehearsed. We need more dedicated and beautifully outfit rehearsal space, so we can quite literally put our best feet forward in the world at large.

On a single day, a dancer is likely to teach classes to earn money, rehearse a new piece in development, and hopefully some sort of public performance.

Since 1978, Dance Place has created space for all of these functions – classes, rehearsal studios, and performance space. In doing so, they have also created the infrastructure for dance to flourish.

Now, by adding new rehearsal studios and affordable live space, this project will expand and ensure dance's presence in Brookland forever.

Thanks so much.

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