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PERKINS EASTMAN ARCHITECTS AND WILSON BUTLER ARCHITECTS CELEBRATE OPENING OF NEW BOSTON ARTS ACADEMY, THE ONLY-OF-ITS-KIND IN BOSTON

A campus for the community, the award-winning school provides space for students and local artists and performers alike



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Boston, MA (October 12, 2022) Perkins Eastman and Wilson Butler Architects recently joined the Mayor's Office of the City of Boston, Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA), Boston Public Schools, Boston Arts Foundation, school administration, teachers, and students to celebrate the ribbon cutting of the new Boston Arts Academy in Boston, MA. Located across the street from famous Fenway Park at 174 Ipswich Street, the \$137 million, 153,500 sf visual and performing arts building welcomed students for the first time on September 8, 2022.

"It is an honor to have worked with the school and community of Boston Arts Academy to create a building that not only reflects its academic and artistic culture, but which also serves as a literal backdrop—a stage, a canvas—for BAA's very special programs. The BAA is truly a unique environment where arts and academics are intertwined, and we have worked to design a facility that supports their process and expresses their values," states Perkins Eastman Principal

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Joseph Drown. "Through its unique location and investment in the community, this new school will anchor the revitalization of its neighborhood and serve as an exemplar of design excellence for art schools in the future."

Boston Arts Academy is Boston's first and only public high school for the visual and performing arts. The school's previous building was originally constructed in the 1920s as a post office vehicle maintenance facility. The heavily built concrete structure limited the school's ability to carry out its unique arts and academic program and serve as the only portfolio- or audition-based admissions arts high school in BPS. The new building not only provides Boston Arts Academy with a purpose-designed facility, but it will also accommodate future enrollment growth.

"Our students deserve school buildings made for modern learning environments, and that is what we have created here," said Superintendent of Boston Public Schools Mary Skipper. "We are proud to provide Boston's young people access to a world-class visual and performing arts high school. The students who attend this school help shape the culture and beauty of our society. It is our hope that we achieve these up-to-date spaces for all of our students so they can grow and thrive."

Situated on a prominent corner across from historic Fenway Park, the new building was designed as a beacon for the neighborhood—to communicate to passersby its importance as a learning community. This is expressed at the exterior through a series of projecting glass bay windows that showcase the activity occurring within and keep occupants constantly connected to the urban fabric. The building also includes rooftop outdoor learning and performance space.

The new five-story building includes greatly enhanced performance and rehearsal spaces including a new 500-seat theater featuring a proscenium stage, a black box theatre, dance studios, a recital hall, art gallery, music practice rooms, and visual arts and fashion technology studios and workspace, in addition to common gathering and teaching spaces for the school's award-winning STEAM program. The facility also includes a gym and a health and wellness center for students.

"It has truly been an honor to have continued our collaboration with the Boston Arts Academy and the City of Boston. More than a decade in the making, the project is the culmination of efforts to provide the BAA with a state-of-the-art facility commensurate with their unique program and the incredible talent of its students. One of the goals established during the early planning sessions was to create a building that would serve as a beacon for the arts. The end result does just that, but perhaps more importantly, it provides an environment that will prepare our artists of the future like never before," says Thomas Hains AIA, Principal at Wilson Butler Architects.

The building has been designed to foster health and well-being among its users by providing a range of features that are proven to improve indoor environmental quality (IEQ), with a focus on improved daylight, thermal comfort, acoustics, and reduced CO2 levels to improve cognitive function.

While programmed for the student, the building also provides space rental options for local artists and performers. In this way, BAA can continue to develop a community learning environment where students can not only create and compose their own original work but also be inspired through working artists in and around Boston.

The project team includes PMA Consultants as the owner's project manager and Lee Kennedy as the construction manager.

ABOUT PERKINS EASTMAN ARCHITECTS

Perkins Eastman is a global design firm founded on the belief that design can have a direct and positive impact on people's lives. The firm's award-winning practice draws on its 1,200 professionals networked across 24 studios

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worldwide. By keeping the user's needs foremost in the design process, the firm enhances the human experience across the spectrum of the built environment. For more information visit perkinseastman.com.

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Wilson Butler Architects is an award-winning architecture and interior design firm with 25 years of expertise in creating outstanding entertainment, hospitality, and cultural experiences. Our projects span a wide range within this specialty area, including historic theaters, state-of-the-art entertainment venues, civic performing arts centers, and new and renovated higher education arts facilities. For more information visit wilsonbutler.com.

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