



*chashama*  
GIVING ARTISTS THE  
SPACE TO CREATE

PRESS KIT

**MISSION:** chashama empowers artists in New York City with space to create by transforming unutilized real estate into work and presentation space, and by promoting and educating artists through our programs.

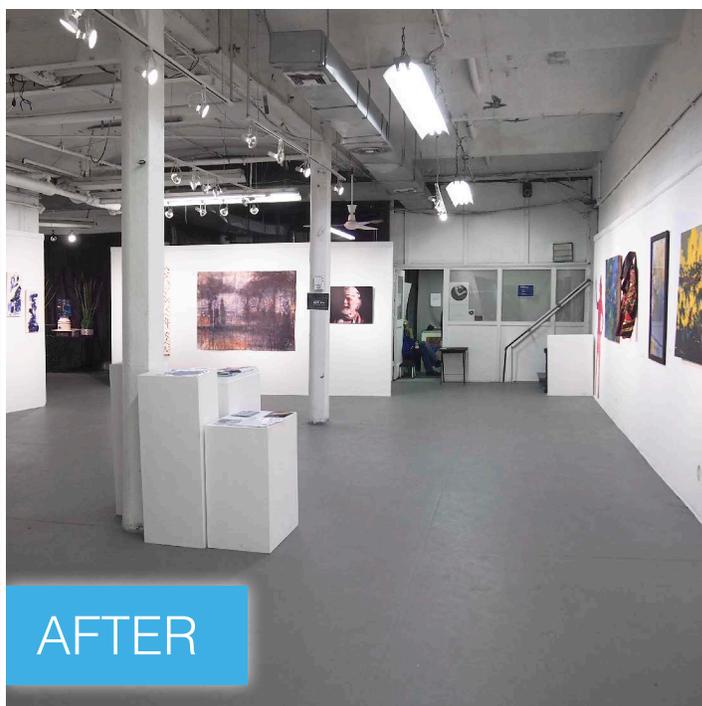
## ABOUT

chashama partners with landowners, receiving in-kind contributions of real estate that are converted into highly subsidized studios, galleries, event and performance venues that artists at any stage of their career can afford.

chashama has championed the movement to repurpose unused properties into spaces where creativity, artistic innovation and culture can flourish. With dual expertise in navigating the real estate, leasing and development industry, and in meeting the needs of artists and the creative community, chashama's spaces redistribute New York City's untapped resources.

By making use of real estate-in-transition, chashama brings culture, new audiences, economic activity, increased foot traffic to local businesses, and life to surrounding areas. This combination has made chashama a major force in the now vibrant creative-placemaking movement.

## Transforming unused real estate into art space:



*Space transformation at 461 W. 126th St., Harlem. Gallery and Studio space donated by The Janus Property Company*

Currently, chashama manages a portfolio of over \$1.5 million worth of property, which is transformed into creative space for 1,000 artists per year.

chashama is the largest provider of creative space in New York City. We currently program 23 locations in Midtown, Harlem, Brooklyn, and Queens, serving 127 studio artists and presenting over 150 events each year. These programs foster career development and a stepping stone for artists to advance their practice.

chashama provides a high level of professionalism while working with landlords - comprehensive insurance, utility expense coverage, facilities management, logistical and curatorial support for the installation and management of exhibitions.

# PROGRAMS

---



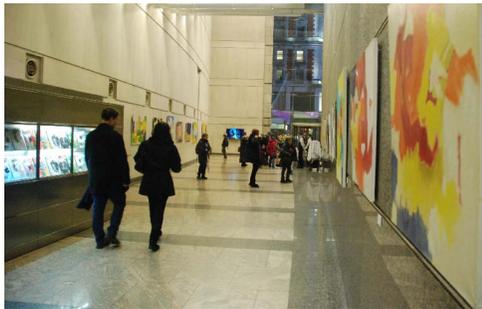
## **WORKSPACE**

The Workspace program supports visual and performing artists with low cost studio and rehearsal space to develop their work, ideas, and careers. chashama empowers artists in all aspects of their creative and professional development.



## **PRESENTATION SPACE**

Our Presentation program gives visual and performing artists free space to exhibit their works to the public. We also award cash grants to select presentations and professional development workshops to all of our artists.



## **LOBBIES**

chashama's Lobby Program brings artists into some of Manhattan's most prominent buildings such as The Bank of America Tower, 4 Times Square, and the Financial District's 45 Broadway. Lobby exhibitions are a steady platform for artists to develop and present their works.



## **ARTIST HOUSING**

In partnership with the Mid-Bronx Senior Citizens Council (MBSCC) chashama provides subsidized artist housing in exchange for participation in community youth and senior arts programs. Currently 3 teaching artists have been placed with plans to expand to 20 artists.



## **ACCESSING REAL ESTATE FOR THE ARTS**

chashama's AREA Program allows real estate owners and developers an easy way to donate space for the visual and performing arts, while passing many of the responsibilities of management and maintenance onto chashama.

# HISTORY

---

chashama, which means “to have vision” in Farsi, was founded in 1995 by Anita Durst, to celebrate the legacy of theater artist Reza Abdoh, and support artistic work embodying his spirit of experimental productions in unexpected places. The organization initially focused on presenting theater performances in vacant properties along 42nd Street. After the success of initial productions, Durst began fielding a steady stream of requests from artists asking to use the spaces during off-nights.

Recognizing that the lack of affordable work and presentation space was a great threat to sustaining a diverse, dynamic, and provocative cultural environment in New York City, Durst’s vision was to find a way to connect artists and performers with the untapped reserves of temporarily vacant commercial real estate: empty storefronts, office spaces between tenants, in-transition raw spaces or pre-demo developments.

In 2007 chashama expanded into spaces at the Brooklyn Army Terminal, 37th Street in Manhattan, and on 126th Street in West Harlem, where we continue to hold a strong presence today. From a single theater space on 40 Worth Street, chashama has grown to a dynamic roster of over 20 locations. Our recent programs have engaged communities in Jamaica and Long Island City, Queens, and the Bronx.

Since 1995, chashama has been able to support the work and ideas of over 12,000 artists through free and low-cost gallery, studio and window space programs, which have brought arts programming to approximately 2 million viewers. In recent years, chashama has continued to reach new audiences through its youth programming, lobby curation and affordable artist housing.

chashama has supported some of New York City’s most renowned contemporary visual and performing artists, giving them a home for courageous experimentation, and nurturing their careers and creative focus. By bringing edgy, contemporary theater and visual art to the forefront, chashama has created and exhibited art in some of the most prominent and dynamic spaces in the city.

# ARTIST TESTIMONIALS

---

“In the 19 months since getting our chashama studio, our careers have advance by leaps and bounds, and this is directly related to having this space at the Brooklyn Army Terminal.”

- Jake Margolin, Brooklyn Studio Artist

“Having a workspace at the Brooklyn Army Terminal has given me a place to connect with fellow artists, create and document new work, and host curators to discuss my art. A visit from a gallerist to the open studios at the Brooklyn Army Terminal resulted in my inclusion in a group exhibition.”

- James Brendan Williams, Brooklyn Studio Artist

“Before chashama, we did not exist.” - Ryan Whinnem, Vacant Lot Theatre, Artistic Director

## OUR PARTNERS

---

- Atlantic Development Corporation
- Brause Realty Inc.
- Buchbinder & Warren Group
- Cammeby's Management Company LLC
- DSD&D, LLC
- DG Development Partners
- The Durst Organization
- Ekstein Development
- Forest City Ratner
- Grand Real Estate
- Greater Jamaica Development Corporation
- Jamestown, L.P.
- The Janus Property Company
- JRT Realty
- L+M Development Partners
- New York City Economic Development Corporation
- Newmark Family Properties
- The Rizzuto group
- The Real Estate Board of NY
- Rockrose Development
- Salt Equities
- Scope Capital LLC
- Stonehenge Management LLC



## LANDOWNER TESTIMONIALS

---

“Working with chashama had a lot of benefits for us as the landowner. We got to activate space that otherwise would have been fallow, and it brought the type of people that we wanted to bring into the neighborhood.”

- Justin Elghanayan, Rockrose Development Corporation

“chashama was a pleasure to work with. They made the move in /out process very easy, and while they occupied the space they were very careful to maintain (and actually improved) the property. Their artists and exhibits increased pedestrian traffic to our store, and the area, and was a welcome addition to the neighborhood. I would strongly recommend them as an enhancement to any vacant store.”

-William Abramson, Buchbinder & Warren Realty Group LLC

“We could not have attracted such a wonderful buyer without chashama having improved the block!”

-Andrew M. Manshel, EVP, Greater Jamaica Development Corporation

## RECENT PRESS

---

### **What you missed at chashama's 20th anniversary gala**

published in The Real Deal on June 9, 2015

<http://therealdeal.com/blog/2015/06/09/what-you-missed-at-chashamas-20th-anniversary-gala-photos/>

### **REBNY showing its art with chashama partnership**

published in Real Estate Weekly on March 25, 2015

<http://rew-online.com/2015/03/25/rebny-showing-its-art-with-chashama-partnership>

### **Artist seeks help to create work at Brooklyn Army Terminal**

published in the Brooklyn Daily Eagle on June 3, 2015

<http://www.brooklyneagle.com/articles/2015/5/29/artist-seeks-help-create-work-brooklyn-army-terminal>

### **Artists invoke Dante de Blasio to keep police, race conversation alive**

published in Metro NY on March 1, 2015

<http://www.metro.us/new-york/artists-invoke-dante-de-blasio-to-keep-police-race-conversation-alive/zsJocb---GqSnCS29Ct5XA/>

### **chashama sheds light on its good work**

published in Real Estate Weekly on June 11, 2014

<http://www.rew-online.com/2014/06/11/chashama-sheds-light-on-its-good-work>

### **Inside the chashama Studios at Brooklyn Army Terminal**

Published in Untapped Cities on Monday, November 11, 2013

<http://untappedcities.com/2013/09/25/inside-chashama-studios-brooklyn-army-terminal>

## VIDEO

---

### **DIRT Rehearsal at chashama's Urban Garden Room, 43rd and 6th Ave**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hsPdclKUHLO>

### **KOSTYA'S ROOM Rehearsal at chashama 210 East 43rd Street**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=reEGGfxt9QI>

### **Artist Seunghwui Koo - 'NARCISSISM' 2013 show at chashama 266 West 37th Street**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6AcSvzHnuEo&list=PL291C6FB7BA1BF8BD>

### **Studio Artist Spotlight: Roy Secord at chashama Harlem studios**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b-EdMhHqncw>

### **chashama, 1996-2004**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4FKz5UucTuU&list=UUcOrrRusRmZhiWwjNBmmhuA&index=1>

## CONTACT

---

Chelsea Escher  
chelsea@chashama.org  
(212) 391-8151