



LUMBERYARD Releases New White Paper on Critical Gaps in New York City's Performing Arts Presenting Ecosystem

Advances in Technology and Performance Spaces Have Left American Artists Struggling to Create Work that Matches Ever Increasing Presenter Capacity for Artistic Innovation. LUMBERYARD's White Paper Presents Initial Trends and Recommendations; Calls on the Performing Arts Community to Come Together to Identify Structural Challenges and Develop High-impact/Low-cost Solutions.

NEW YORK, NY (October 3, 2019) – LUMBERYARD Center for Film and Performing Arts today released a [white paper](#) that explores new structural challenges facing the performing arts presenting field. While technology has transformed artistic creation models and presenter capabilities, a rapid increase in the cost of developing new work has left many American artists without the means to make work that matches the demand for artistic innovation. Most artists still only have access to very simple rehearsal studios up until the week of their premiere, leaving no time to work and experiment with design and technology.

“Artists consider technology and design before rehearsals start because these elements are vital to their vision,” said Adrienne Willis, Artistic and Executive Director of LUMBERYARD. “Artists lack, however, dedicated spaces and sufficient resources to facilitate experimentation. We’re approaching a crisis point in American artistic innovation. We have phenomenal presenting venues in NYC but the pool of American new works is shrinking because our artists lack access to essential experimentation opportunities. Access to the design and technology at the ideation phase should not be something exclusively reserved for a small handful of artists. As a field, we must come together to develop solutions and partnerships to optimize the creation process, ensuring that American artists thrive.”

LUMBERYARD's [white paper](#) draws on eight years of experience readying over 60 productions for New York City premieres through its technical rehearsal program to define the challenges facing artmaking today and present key recommendations to ensure that performing artists are able to continue creating and premiering work in New York City.

"LUMBERYARD has afforded us the ability to open ourselves up, and calmly feel safe exploring," said Wendy Whelan, Associate Artistic Director of New York City Ballet. "In all my years as a dancer and collaborator, I have rarely come upon a system built to be so purely in

service to the art. When you're in that kind of environment, your leaves get a little greener, you feel a little more fluidity, and I think the product becomes greater."

"Guggenheim theater time is in high demand," said Duke Dang, General Manager, Works & Process at the Guggenheim. "Technical residencies at Lumberyard allow artists the time, space, and technical support to refine ideas and solve complex production demands before they arrive at the museum, resulting in the most efficient use of theater time and producing higher quality finished productions."

While each artist's process is unique, LUMBERYARD identifies four trends in gaps in the process of developing work which require multifaceted solutions:

1. **Flexible Space:** While technical rehearsal space is a key to new work development, artists – particularly choreographers – benefit most when the technical rehearsal space can replicate the premiere location.
2. **Multidisciplinary Work Process Support:** Artists collaborating with peers from differing art forms or genres have, in all cases, required almost twice as much time in technical rehearsals throughout the creative process than conventional contemporary artists.
3. **Design and Technology in the Beginning:** Design and technology are no longer simple additions to illuminate or emphasize a completed rehearsal process. Most contemporary artists consider design and technology long before rehearsals start.
4. **Early Support/Early Commitment:** Artists benefit most when the technical rehearsal residency is utilized early in the creative process, especially for emerging artists; Early commitment helps artists fundraise and assuages presenters' fears of unrealized work.

Based on these specific challenges, LUMBERYARD offers four key recommendations:

1. Ensure that a diverse and inclusive cross section of American artists can benefit from the billions invested in New York City presenting institutions by increasing access to affordable technical rehearsal spaces.
2. Ensure that emerging artists with limited presenter resources beyond premiere are able to work with design and technology while developing new work.
3. Develop and identify sustainable high-impact/low-cost solutions that can benefit a greater number of artists, given the rising costs associated with presenting.
4. Facilitate formal partnerships between presenters, funders, and organizations that support technical rehearsals, so this critical piece is committed from the onset of an artistic process.

Above all, LUMBERYARD urges the contemporary performing arts community to come together to catalogue the needs of the field, assess these challenges facing artmaking, and collectively come up with solutions that will ensure the field continues to grow and innovate for years to come. Sustainable solutions will require buy-in from all stakeholders: philanthropy, artists, and presenters.

LUMBERYARD is the first organization to bring the contemporary performing arts presenting community together in a collective effort to identify and tackle these challenges. On November 19, LUMBERYARD is co-hosting an event – *American Artistic Innovation in Crisis: Ensuring a Strong Future for NYC’s Artists* – with Bill T. Jones at the Park Avenue Armory that will bring together these stakeholders to continue the conversation around how best to address the shortcomings.

LUMBERYARD’s white paper can be found here: www.lumberyard.org/white-paper.

About LUMBERYARD Center for Film and Performing Arts

LUMBERYARD is a non-profit performing arts and film campus located two hours north of New York City in Catskill, New York. With a state-of-the-art facility that can recreate New York City stages, LUMBERYARD offers performing artists time and space for technical rehearsals, and gives Hudson Valley audiences the opportunity to see performances before they premiere in New York City.

In addition to providing a vital performing arts program, LUMBERYARD rents its 12,000 square foot space to film and television production companies. 100 percent of the net proceeds from these rentals are invested back into the Catskill community through programs such as: [LUMBERYARD Young Performers](#), which provides free dance education for students living in low-income communities in and around Catskill, [Fresh Start](#), an intervention program for incarcerated teens, and [Junior Crew](#), which provides local high school students summer jobs and workforce development training – from resume building to learning how to network.

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