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Teepie Architects leads transformation of Shaw Street School into Artscape Youngplace

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Artscape Youngplace officially launched last week on November 19, 2013 in the former Shaw Street School, located in Toronto's West Queen West neighbourhood. Artscape has blazed trails in the adaptive reuse of schools – projects that present rich opportunities for communities across the country. Artscape Youngplace is the organization's latest project, and serves as a superb example of the vast potential that repurposed schools represent. After sitting vacant for more than a decade, the century-old former Shaw Street School (at 180 Shaw Street) has undergone a \$17-million transformation led by Toronto-based Teepie Architects to become a new community cultural hub that opened to the public on November 19, 2013. The reinvigoration of this 75,000-square-foot community gem has taken many years and involved hundreds of stakeholders in a process that will ultimately deliver a facility designed to meet the community's needs and provide sustainable space for the arts, culture and creativity in Toronto's West Queen West neighbourhood.

Artscape Youngplace, named in honour of a lead donation from The Michael Young Family Foundation, will be a new social heart in the West Queen West neighbourhood – a fully accessible public facility to showcase artistic creation, learn about the arts, practice art and design, create art together and connect with the arts community and neighbours. From painting to music, dance to theatre, media arts to interdisciplinary practices, Artscape Youngplace’s organizations and artists represent a vast range of artistic excellence, with many planning to share their creative gifts with the community through exhibitions, performances, classes, workshops and more.

“Investing in great ideas that make Ontario a better place to live, work and play is a key focus for the Ontario Trillium Foundation,” said Andrea Cohen Barrack, CEO of the Foundation. “Artscape’s got a solid track record of revitalizing buildings from Toronto’s past to ensure they play a vital role in our artistic community’s future. The Foundation knew a \$150,000 investment for key accessibility upgrades would help you reach an even larger audience.”

Artscape’s project partners in the \$17-million transformation of Artscape Youngplace are Teepie Architects, who led the renovation and design of the new spaces, and the Dalton Company, in charge of construction. Artscape Youngplace will be home to the following organizations, artists and programming activities: SKETCH; Luminato Festival; Koffler Gallery and Koffler Centre of the Arts; College-Montrose Children’s Place & Trinity Spadina Early Years Centre; Centre for Indigenous Theatre; Youngplace Coffee Pub, Artscape Flex Studios; Artscape Youngplace Hallway Galleries; Inspirit Foundation/Fondation Inspirit; Paperhouse Studio; Intergalactic Arts Collective; Small World Music Centre; TYPOLOGY Projects; Ruth Adler; Barbara Astman; Allan Bonner, Eve Egoyan (Eyewitness Studio); Emily Filler; Shabnam K. Ghazi (atelier “ascenseur”); Miriam Grenville; Gillian Iles; Vid Ingelevics; Elyssa Lefurgey-Smith (Bellwoods Academy of Music); Cristine Matos-Albers (The Developing Tank); Heather Nicol; Midi Onodera (Daruma Pictures Inc.); and Matthew Schofield.

Artscape Youngplace is the second repurposed school project in Artscape’s portfolio, alongside Artscape Gibraltar Point, the former historic Toronto Island Public and Natural Science School. Both projects represent the revitalization of community gems and the important provision of creative space to support and enable local arts and culture. These repurposed school projects have mobilized the creative community, local residents, city-builders, public and private foundations, as well as philanthropists and corporations, resulting in a triple-win solution: a win for the creative community in creating a mix of affordable spaces for arts and culture; a win for city-builders in addressing a development challenge in an innovative way; a win for past, present and future community members in preserving and enlivening a precious piece of shared heritage.

For a schedule of winter 2013 events, artist and organization profiles and an outline of current opportunities, please visit www.artscapeyoungplace.ca.

Photos



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Caption: artscape youngplace in the former shaw street school in...