



Fort Greene | Clinton Hill

May 11, 2010, 5:23 pm

An ‘Inspiration Lab’ on South Oxford

By [TZE CHUN – COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTOR](#)



Tze Chun

South Oxford Space in Fort Greene’s BAM Cultural District houses almost two dozen arts organizations.

One can easily walk by [South Oxford Space](#) in Fort Greene and not realize that the building is home to a family of 22 theater and performing arts organizations.

The [Alliance of Resident Theatres New York](#) (A.R.T./New York), a non-profit theater service organization, purchased the 19,200-square-foot building in January 2000 to provide affordable office space for small and mid-sized Brooklyn-based theater companies. The rents are calculated by square footage, and range from \$120 to \$1,000 per month.

“It can feel very lonely trying to create new work in New York City, sometimes like you’re up against the world,” said Frances Black, 27, A.R.T.’s director of member services. “South Oxford Space’s offices give our member theaters a really tangible sense of community.”

South Oxford Space is marking its 10th anniversary this year with more than half of its original tenants still in the building – including [White Bird Productions](#), a theater company that runs a children’s program called *Creative Theatrics*.

“South Oxford Space provides small non-profit theater companies with legitimized office space and gives us the opportunity to share a commonality with our neighbors,” said Lorrie Harrison, 42, the managing director of White Bird Productions. “We’re in close contact, and can often hear each other’s conversations through the walls. If anyone has a creative knot that they are trying to untie, they can rely on a base of support and the sense of camaraderie among us.”

Jana La Sorte, executive director of the [Urban Bush Women](#), a dance company, calls the building an “inspiration lab.”

“Everyone keeps each other informed about what they are doing,” said Ms. La Sorte, 41. “Everyone helps each other.”

In addition to lowering expenses for the theater companies with flat-rate utilities, the building’s shared resources help to facilitate this sense of community. There’s an in-house performance space, a gallery and even a backyard barbecue in the garden.

“I love being in touch with theater companies and seeing what they are up to,” said Stephanie Bok, 43, the building manager. “My office is the first stop when people come into the building so I hear if they received a grant or a great review. Being on the ground floor of where theater is made is the most exciting thing.”

Upcoming events at South Oxford Space:

- The Urban Bush Women dance company produces the Great Room Series on the second Wednesday of every month. On May 12, the company will presents “Being Bushified!,” which includes performances by Long Island University, Rutgers University, and Montclair University dance students. The event, which costs \$5, starts at 7 p.m.
- South Oxford Space will open its doors to the public on May 15 and May 16 as part of the [SONYA Studio Stroll](#). Visitors are encouraged to view the photography exhibit “Looking Out/ Seeing In,” on display until June 1, 2010.