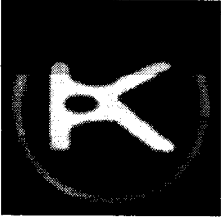


the kitchen
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we hold the
of what
and how to do
something

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about

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Mission Statement

More than twenty-five years ago, The Kitchen was founded in order to carve out a place for artists working along the boundaries of new media and performance. The foresight and the passion of that original vision have provided some of the most potent material in new performance and launched the careers of many influential artists. In keeping with this history, The Kitchen continues as a cultural center where emerging artists can challenge and expand the accepted definitions of performance, and experienced artists can test out new directions for an adventurous audience.

History of The Kitchen

Founded in 1971 by two video artists, Woody and Steina Vasulka, The Kitchen has been a powerful force in shaping the cultural landscape of this country for over two decades. Focused on the creation and promotion of the cultural vanguard, The Kitchen has helped foster the careers of international artists such as Philip Glass, Laurie Anderson, Eric Bogosian, David Byrne with the Talking Heads, Steve Reich, Robert Longo, Glen Branca, Bill T. Jones and Arnie Zane, Peter Greenaway, Nam June Paik, Meredith Monk, Brian Eno, Robert Mapplethorpe, Cindy Sherman, Bill Viola, LaMonte Young, and Robert Wilson.

The Kitchen literally began in a kitchen. On July 5, 1971, in the unused kitchen of the Mercer Arts Center, housed in the Broadway Central Hotel in Greenwich Village, three video makers and performers invited friends to see the results of a collaborative project.

Within this atmosphere of adversity and excitement, The Kitchen grew. It grew along with the new art form it presented and gradually embraced music as part of its presentations. In 1974, it incorporated as the not-for-profit Haleakala, Inc. and moved to 59 Wooster Street in SoHo, rapidly establishing itself as the center of the downtown art world.

For the ten year period that followed, The Kitchen became a sort of hotbed of artistic activity. By this point in time, The Kitchen was also presenting performance and dance as part of its season, as well as film. Within the confines of a beautiful, columned, gallery-style loft space, this new Kitchen presented work that was both daring, non-traditional, and cutting edge. Artists would often informally gather at The Kitchen. They talked, questioned, and argued. Ideas happened. Artistic forms would merge and tradition would frequently be broken. Inevitably, through such passionate and ambitious work, many Kitchen artists broke through and achieved national prominence. Over the years, The Kitchen helped foster the careers of many innovative artists. People as diverse as Philip Glass, Laurie Anderson, Bill T. Jones and Arnie Zane, Eric Bogosian, David Byrne with The Talking Heads, Robert Longo, Peter Greenaway, Dana Reitz, Meredith Monk, Brian Eno, John Lurie, Elizabeth Streb, Robert Mapplethorpe, Cindy Sherman, Vernon Reid, Jenny Holzer, and others. It soon became apparent that with more presentations of work, wider audience interest in The Kitchen, and heavy critical attention, The Kitchen needed to expand its physical space.

And so, in 1985, The Kitchen came of age. Through the hard work of many people, great generosity and drive, The Kitchen moved into its new and permanent home at 512 West 19th

Street. The 16,500 square foot building, an old ice house built in the late 1880's, housing two of the largest black box theaters in the country. Also made possible as a result of the building's spaciousness are a Media Services department with adjoining editing suite, archival storage and production facilities, and a large administrative space which itself often serves as the backdrop for The Kitchen's role as artistic meeting place. In addition to its Chelsea facility, in 1994 The Kitchen officially opened Kitchenette, The Kitchen's video annex for changing video installations in Thread Waxing Space, an alternative visual arts gallery, in SoHo.

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