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**JACOB'S PILLOW DANCE CELEBRATES OPENING OF NEW PERLES FAMILY  
STUDIO BY FLANSBURGH ARCHITECTS**



The Perles Family Studio at Jacob's Pillow Dance by Flansburgh Architects. Photography by Robert Benson.

July 29, 2017 – (Becket, MA) Jacob's Pillow Dance will celebrate the opening of the Perles Family Studio at an official ribbon cutting ceremony on August 18, 2017. The Pillow's 85th Anniversary Festival Finale, on August 26, will be the first event in the brand new space, which marks the first major on-site construction project at the Pillow since 1992. The \$5.5 million building was designed by award-winning Flansburgh Architects of Boston, MA and constructed by Allegrone Companies of Pittsfield, MA. The Perles Family Studio is an integral part of the Pillow's five-year strategic plan, Vision '22, which launches the Pillow as a year-round campus for programs, research, and development with initiatives made possible through a deep commitment to The School at Jacob's Pillow, artist residencies, community engagement, and educational programs.

“This new studio ensures that our facilities live up to the prestigious reputation of The School at Jacob’s Pillow, and symbolizes a commitment to our growing role as a center for dance research, development, and training,” says Jacob’s Pillow Director Pamela Tatge. “The potential it offers is an investment in dance artists and the future of this form.”

“Paying homage to Jacob’s Pillow’s roots as a farm, we designed the new studio to be thoroughly modern but vernacular to the campus,” says David Croteau, President of Flansburgh Architects.

The 7,373-square-foot building, clad in weathered board and batten wood siding to create a farm-like aesthetic, features a 3,500-square-foot dance floor — nearly double the size of the main rehearsal space currently used by The School at Jacob’s Pillow, the Sommers Studio. As the largest building at Jacob’s Pillow, the studio was thoughtfully arranged like a barn with additions, including smaller spaces such as porches and sheds to complement the 50’ x 70’ central space and create multiple entrances at different levels.

The Perles Family Studio is multifunctional, serving as rehearsal space, instructional space, informal performance space, and facilities for visiting artists. The flexibility of the space is supported by carefully chosen building materials that minimize sound overflow between studios. Clerestories and cupolas control natural light and airflow in addition to concealed underfloor heating and cooling systems, which eliminate temperature and humidity challenges faced by dancers during the summer season. Oversized barn windows and doors create a strong linkage to the Berkshires landscape surrounding the building and a sense of community for dancers and visitors alike. Alcoves, overlooks, and ambulatories allow spectators to view classes and rehearsals without interrupting dancers and faculty. The space can accommodate up to 200 seats, such as for Inside/Out performances in the instances of rain and inclement weather.

The studio will be the new home for The School at Jacob’s Pillow and its prestigious professional advancement programs. A distinguished dance education institution, The School’s summer intensive programs include Ballet, Contemporary, Musical Theatre Dance, and a fourth that changes annually (Tap in 2017), led by legends and luminaries of those fields. Alumni of The School go on to direct their own companies, work as choreographers, dance on Broadway, in films, and with leading companies across the world, including Ballet BC, Dorrance Dance, Martha Graham Dance Company, and American Ballet Theatre, among many others. Throughout the fall, winter, and spring months, the new studio will allow the Pillow to expand its capacity for year-round programming, including increasing the number of Creative Development Residencies it can make available to choreographers.

The studio is named for the Perles Family, in recognition of a lead gift from the Perles Family Foundation and Jacob’s Pillow Trustee Claudia Perles. The project was also supported by a \$225,000 grant from the Massachusetts Cultural Facilities Fund, one of the largest gifts distributed this year. The project broke ground on October 14, 2017 at an official ground-breaking ceremony.

This project continues the Pillow’s long relationship with local contractor Allegrone. The company has worked on several projects at Jacob’s Pillow including the Inside/Out stage, facility structures, and housing for artists and seasonal staff. Allegrone’s work also includes projects at numerous Berkshire cultural organizations including the Mahaiwe Performing Arts Center in Great Barrington, Shakespeare & Company in Lenox, and the Clark Art Institute in Williamstown, among others.

**VISION ‘22** is a strategic approach for the Pillow’s development over the next five years, through 2022. The plan provides a blueprint for enabling the Pillow to become a year-round center for dance creation and to more robustly serve artists and audiences alike. Three key areas of focus are: strengthening the artistic core, boosting civic leadership and community involvement, and renewing essential campus facilities. Jacob’s Pillow is America’s first and longest-running dance festival; as it celebrates its 85th anniversary this summer, the organization sets its sights on important future milestones.

#### **ABOUT JACOB’S PILLOW**

Jacob’s Pillow, celebrating its 85th Festival in 2017, is a National Historic Landmark, recipient of the National Medal of Arts, and home to America’s longest-running international dance festival. Each Festival includes more than 50 national and international dance companies and 350 free and ticketed performances, talks, tours, classes, exhibits, and events. The School at Jacob’s Pillow, one of the most prestigious professional dance training centers in the U.S., encompasses

the diverse disciplines of Ballet, Cultural Traditions, Contemporary, and Musical Theatre Dance, as well as an Intern Program in various disciplines of arts administration, design, video, and production. The Pillow's extensive Archives, open year-round to the public, chronicle more than a century of dance in photographs, programs, books, costumes, audiotapes, and videos. Notable artists who have created or premiered dances at the Pillow include choreographers Antony Tudor, Agnes de Mille, Alvin Ailey, Donald McKayle, Kevin McKenzie, Twyla Tharp, Ralph Lemon, Susan Marshall, Trisha Brown, Ronald K. Brown, Wally Cardona, Andrea Miller, and Trey McIntyre; performed by artists such as Mikhail Baryshnikov, Carmen de Lavallade, Mark Morris, Dame Margot Fonteyn, Edward Villella, Rasta Thomas, and hundreds of others. On March 2, 2011, President Barack Obama honored Jacob's Pillow with a National Medal of Arts, the highest arts award given by the United States Government, making the Pillow the first dance presenting organization to receive this prestigious award. For more information, visit [www.jacobspillow.org](http://www.jacobspillow.org).

#### **ABOUT THE SCHOOL AT JACOB'S PILLOW**

The School at Jacob's Pillow is one of America's most prestigious training centers for dance, encompassing four professional advancement programs. An integral part of Jacob's Pillow, The School draws program participants and acclaimed artist faculty from all corners of the globe and is one of only five organizations in the United States selected for the Talented Students in the Arts Initiative award, a collaboration between the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and the Surdna Foundation, Inc. Through this initiative, the Pillow has been able to establish The Fund for Jacob's Pillow School Endowment to ensure the availability of scholarships, world-class faculty, and free access to all Festival performances and events for all faculty and students. Alumni of The School include dance luminaries such as Nikolaj Hübbe, Meredith Monk, Mia Michaels, Robert Swinston, and *So You Think You Can Dance* winner Joshua Allen. Others appear in *Dance Magazine's* "25 To Watch," on Broadway, and in major companies worldwide. For more information, visit [www.jacobspillow.org/education/school](http://www.jacobspillow.org/education/school).

#### **ABOUT FLANSBURGH ARCHITECTS**

Flansburgh Architects is an internationally recognized leader in the planning and design of cultural and educational facilities. The firm has received over 125 international, national, and regional design awards. Its architecture is driven by a strong belief that the design of our surroundings has a deep influence on the quality of our lives. Connecting artistic practice with the design of cultural spaces, the office draws inspiration from a rotating series of artworks and artists' talks.

For over 15 years, sustainability has been central to the firm's work. Flansburgh Architects has pioneered passive and renewable energy solutions, significantly reducing pollution and carbon emissions. Its approach is responsive to location and culture, combining cutting edge technology with a modern, vernacular style to create distinctive, innovative designs.

Noteworthy projects include the Seabury Hall Creative Arts Center (Makawao, Maui, HI), an award-winning 400-seat theater that extends outdoors; Hawai'i Preparatory Academy Energy Lab (Kamuela, HI), a building dedicated to green technologies that meets the coveted Living Building Challenge; and the forthcoming Lili'uokalani Trust Civic Center (Kona, HI), a multi-use cultural complex that includes a theater, outdoor park with amphitheater, school, retail, residential, and office spaces.

For more information, please visit [www.flansburgh.com](http://www.flansburgh.com).

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