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## **Prellwitz Chilinski designs 3,500 s/f Maud Morgan Visual Arts Center**

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The Maud Morgan Visual Arts Center, a new, all-ages community art facility located in the Agassiz Baldwin neighborhood, opened its doors on October 6th. Designed by Cambridge architects Prellwitz Chilinski Associates (PCA Inc.) as a re-creation of an historic 19th century carriage house and contemporary wing, the 3,200 s/f building culminates over 12 years of planning, fundraising, and development by the non-profit Agassiz Baldwin Community (ABC).

The event represents a major community milestone. ABC originally conceived the project in the early 1990s as a way to expand its community arts and after-school programs and combat declining public access to arts education. After purchasing the 20 Sacramento St. property in 1998, the organization won an initial round of arts center funding from MassDevelopment and Massachusetts Cultural Facilities Project Fund. A decade of permitting challenges and continued fundraising followed before the project earned final approval and a Massachusetts Cultural Facilities grant in 2009, enabling it to move into construction last summer. Highland Development of Medford, subsequently oversaw the 8-month construction schedule.

The building's two primary forms, a yellow re-creation of a carriage house that once stood on the ABC property and a simple, contemporary wing with a harlequin diamond painted pattern, are enhanced by nine site-specific art installations including over-scaled bronze paintbrush door handles, mosaics and art furniture benches. Each installation was designed by a separate local artist through a unique artist/architect collaboration. Inside, the building houses four fully equipped art studios for printmaking, ceramics, painting & drawing, and three-dimensional work. First and second floor lobbies, connected by an open stairwell, double as exhibition galleries to maximize interior space.

"We've supported this project every step of the way, contributing financial donations, pro-bono work, and of course architecture, because we believe everyone should have access to the arts as an amazing, powerful source of beauty and joy." said PCA co-founder and principal Wendy Prellwitz. "As a resident of the Agassiz Baldwin neighborhood myself, I was passionate about creating such a resource for the city of Cambridge, and as a painter, I was thrilled to be able to design artistic space for everyone from school age children to established artists."

"The building design is so successful" adds Terry Delancey, executive director of the Agassiz Baldwin Community. "Everyone loves it! It blends into the community fabric, but stands out as a beacon for all who value the visual arts – young and old, beginner and professional. It's the perfect culmination of our vision for a welcoming hub for high quality, affordable classes and activities taught by highly experienced faculty."