April 15, 2022

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

I am writing about an issue which affects the growth and vitality of our city San Diego: the current lack of affordable studio and work-live space for artists. Affordable artists’ space is crucial to the health of a city. The purpose of this letter is to ask for your help in obtaining funds for affordable studio and live/work spaces in San Diego and influencing public policy wherever possible so that this support becomes permanent and increases.

Space4Art is a long-time San Diego Artist Collective with a proven history of benefitting the community with educational programs such as its innovative “STEAM to the Streets.” Space4Art, an exemplary creative organization worthy of public support, will lose its current rented home within two years. It was already dramatically downsized in 2017 because its rented warehouse was sold. A small portion was rented back to Space4Art. Now as the current lease will expire, Space4Art faces extinction unless a permanent location can be built or purchased.

The time I spent at Space4Art directly influenced my decision to become a Science Illustrator. I was one of the original members of Space4Art and helped to build out the small warehouse with beautiful light on 15th Street in the East Village. Because of the excellence and enthusiasm of our “melting-pot” members, Space4Art was a very fertile place to make art. It was a constant idea factory. There was a gallery and an outdoor performance space where exhibitions showcasing varied media were held—both members’ work and curated shows of Southern California artists. Saturday was the day when kids from the neighborhood came in for classes.

A group of galleries grew up around us and we held openings together, wonderful parties drawing large art-loving crowds. Space4Art created community, and this reverberated widely and also personally. My time and relationships at Space4Art nurtured and inspired me to imagine the next phase of my life as an artist. I entered a post-graduate program in Science Illustration and now I work with scientists from Scripps Institution of Oceanography. Last summer I was “Artist-at-Sea” aboard the R/V Falkor, an oceanographic research vessel owned and operated by Schmidt Ocean Institute, an enlightened organization which recognizes how fruitful the partnership is between disciplines.
My illustrations have been published in scientific texts and travel around the world in support of groundbreaking scientific research, facilitating scientific literacy and engagement with the yet-unknown ocean and its creatures. This work began and is supported by the Space4Art community. Losing this space for artists to work inhibits this type of crucial and visible art-making.

Artists’ communities contribute to the vitality of cities. The cities which most thrive have flourishing arts support. San Diego has recently made strides towards status as a world-class arts city, inaugurating the Rady Shell and reopening the expanded MCASD in La Jolla. However, it has become even more difficult to find affordable studio or live-work space. That makes Space4Art more essential than ever. We as the San Diego Community must now step up to further strengthen the base on which all arts organizations rely—support for the artists who make the art.

Please do everything in your power to create this base of strength. Help Space4Art find a permanent home, a multidisciplinary arts center in the heart of San Diego. It is good for the City and the whole community.

Sincerely yours,

Tanya Young

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