

We're a group of young artists petitioning for the vacant properties in Dublin to be opened up to the Arts. We have set up an initiative programme called Open Dublin that proposes to allow artists to turn unoccupied storefronts into temporary galleries, studios, rehearsal spaces, workshops, etc for free. Property owners give artists short-term leases with a "ten-day kick-out provision" – the space remains on the market with rental signs up while its being used as a gallery, and if it gets rented it has to be vacated and returned to its original condition within ten days.

The amount of vacant properties has expanded in recent times, leaving an empty hole in our city's identity. This could be used as an opportunity for growth of the Arts. In the case studies we have looked at, artist's open studios and exhibitions have affirmed the Arts importance in the City securing its presence alongside the industries it has helped to rejuvenate.

Recently we have been given the use of a vacant warehouse off Thomas Street. Our aims for the space are for it to be an experimental, innovative, collaborative creative space for emerging artists. We have a short term contract with the developers as explained above.

Obviously we are hugely interested in space. "New spaces for experimentation, innovation and entrepreneurship in the cultural and creative sector."

We agree with the point made in section 3 that "The setting up of meeting places and "laboratories" for user-centered and open innovation and experimentation, where various disciplines work together should be promoted; intermediaries or brokers between different sectors and disciplines should be encouraged." And also that the "production of processes of the CCI's are subject to constant adaptation and innovation, making is essential to exchange information, build on intangible assets and attract talent." Our campaign would fail immediately if there were no interested innovative talented people wanting to use the vacant spaces our campaign will supply.

It is also clear that this cannot happen without an official body of support, bridging the gap between property owners and artists.

We are asking for the provision of a model where by property owners are informed of the benefits of occupying artists, including the reduction of the rates or the removal of derelict property penalties. This is not an appeal for money, as we feel that a model like this can run without draining Arts funding. We have also found reports that buildings on the market can sell much faster when open for exhibitions and studios. One developer said that having a group of artist on his site was equal to the effect of having a five thousand dollar advertising campaign, and a property previously on the market for six months was sold in three weeks while occupied by artists.

One of our biggest issues is insurance. We are very fortunate to have cover supplied by our college, NCAD, but we are aware that this is not available for other cases. We would like to see the provision of an insurance scheme where artists would be covered under a national policy which would cover public and employer liability within these spaces.