

Initiative seeks space for artists' studios

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An initiative aimed at persuading developers to include affordable studio space for artists in their projects will be launched tonight at the studio of renown sculptor Sir Antony Gormley.

The Studiometers project, coordinated by arts charity Outset with the support of the GLA, aims to increase the number of affordable studio spaces in London in a bid to prevent artists leaving the capital.

A recent study by the GLA found that 3,500 studios will be lost in London over the next five years.

Separately, a survey conducted by Outset found that 50% of artists are considering relocating to cities such as Manchester, Bristol, Brussels or Berlin due to the cost of workspace in London.

In order to ensure the spaces are affordable to most artists, the initiative is seeking spaces to be rented at £12-17/sq ft.

As well as working with developers, Studiometers is also looking to engage property owners with vacant space to fill.

Outset points out that by working with a registered charity to provide affordable space to artists, owners and occupiers can avoid paying business rates on empty space.

In both new and existing developments, it says, the presence of artists' studios can bring vitality to a building and create a link with the surrounding community.

Outset director and trustee Candida Gertler said: "In an environment in which public funding is being reduced, the right thing to do is to ask for private initiative. I think we all believe that high quality art cannot survive nowadays without at least a partnership between public and private sectors."

She continued: "We understand that businesses are businesses and artists are artists. We're not trying to pretend to either group that what we're setting out to do should change their thinking. It's about finding common ground."

The Studiometers initiative is led by Outset in partnership with office provider Second Home, the Mayor of London's culture team, PLP Architecture, charity Create London and PR firm Bolton & Quinn.

It is being launched under the umbrella body Entrepreneurs for the Arts, which was set up by Outset and Second Home with the aim of bringing together organisations that want to provide entrepreneurial solutions to support cultural projects.

Outset was founded in 2003 as an international hub for creative funding solutions for contemporary art initiatives.

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