



Legacy Business Registry Staff Report

Hearing Date: December 11, 2023

CITY ART GALLERY 2.0

Application No.: LBR-2023-24-019
Business Name: City Art Gallery 2.0
Business Address: 828 Valencia St.
District: District 9
Applicant: Robin Bordow, Gallery Manager
Nomination Date: November 6, 2023
Nominated By: Supervisor Hillary Ronen
Staff Contact: Richard Kurylo and Michelle Reynolds
legacybusiness@sfgov.org

BUSINESS DESCRIPTION

City Art Gallery 2.0 (a.k.a. City Art Gallery or City Art Cooperative Gallery) is a cooperative art gallery that sells art made by local Bay Area artists. The idea for the gallery emerged when several friends who were also artists wanted to create a viable formula for a group-operated business where they could regularly show their art and open membership to other artists with quality work but who may not have had any viable outlets to show their art. A formula was worked out where artists could “rent” a wall space for a month and receive back at least 70 percent of any sales. To this day, this formula has been successful, more than covering rent and other gallery overhead without any paid employees. Artists themselves sit shifts any month where they are showing and cover other ongoing maintenance duties.

City Art Gallery was founded on July 1, 1998, at 828 Valencia Street by Katie Gilmartin who ran it for 17 years. The gallery has been managed by Robin Borrow since July 1, 2015. The original business name was City Art Cooperative Gallery LLC dba City Art Cooperative Gallery. When Katie Gilmartin left, the gallery’s official business name became City Art Gallery 2.0 LLC dba City Art Gallery 2.0, although it is still widely known to all as City Art Cooperative Gallery. The gallery has remained a constant in the radically changing Valencia corridor.

City Art Gallery provides a space for the public to view and purchase the work of local artists, which is offered at more affordable prices than most galleries. The business provides artists with experience in how art galleries work and how to sell and display their art. They are dedicated to giving back as much money as they can to the artists when they make sales. Artists receive a minimum of 71% of the sale price, and the gallery also pays credit card fees and collects and pays sales tax for the artists. Moreover, City Art Gallery provides a sense of community for the artists they serve. The gallery hosts monthly potlucks and openings for their artists to mingle with the public and each other. Many of the artists have been members of the gallery for over 20 years.

From 1998 through 2023, City Art Gallery has provided space for over 100 local artists to show their work. Many of the artists live and work in the Mission District, and most live in San Francisco, but the membership includes all of the Bay Area, as far as Petaluma and Sunnyvale. The gallery is managed by volunteer board members and operated by volunteer artists. The membership is diverse with a wide range of members who are LGBTQIA, women, African American, Latino, and Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) artists. The artists enjoy being a part of a larger artist community where they can meet and exchange ideas. All of the member artists contribute a little time and money so that they all can enjoy the benefits of a professional exhibit space that is well trafficked. The basic structure and operational model have been emulated by other cooperative galleries, such as the San Francisco Women Artists’ gallery.

Legacy Business Program

Office of Small Business
City Hall Room 140
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
San Francisco, CA 94102
(415) 554-6680
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CRITERION 1

Has the applicant operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years?

Yes, City Art Gallery 2.0 has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years:

828 Valencia St. from 1998 to Present (25 years)

CRITERION 2

Has the applicant contributed to the neighborhood's history and/or the identity of a particular neighborhood or community?

Yes, City Art Gallery 2.0 has contributed to the history and identity of the Mission District and San Francisco.

The Historic Preservation Commission recommended the applicant as qualifying, noting the following ways the applicant contributed to the neighborhood's history and/or the identity of a particular neighborhood or community:

- City Art Gallery 2.0 provides a space for new and emerging San Francisco and Bay Area artists to exhibit their work. The membership is very diverse with a wide range of members who are LGBTQIA artists, women artists, African American artists, Latino artists and Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) artists.
- City Art Gallery was featured as a location in an episode of Transcendent in 2015, which was a reality show that focused on the personal and professional relationships of a group of transgender women from the San Francisco nightclub AsiaSF. They were also voted "Best Art Gallery" a number of times in the San Francisco Bay Guardian between 2002 and 2008. City Art Gallery is regularly mentioned in the San Francisco Chronicle Datebook gallery section when they have a reception each month. The gallery was one of only four picks for the week in the San Francisco Chronicle Sunday Datebook of July 2, 2023, receiving an entire column encouraging readers to come to their 25th anniversary reception and party. City Art Gallery also has been mentioned in, and placed an advertisement in, every annual ArtSpan Open Studios guide.
- City Arts Galley is managed by volunteer board members and operated by volunteer artists. The membership is diverse. The business is very involved in their neighborhood's community, participating in street fairs and other community events as well as being active in the Valencia Street Merchants Association. They also host free art shows every month and strive to make art accessible and affordable.

CRITERION 3

Is the applicant committed to maintaining the physical features or traditions that define the business, including craft, culinary, or art forms?

Yes, City Art Gallery 2.0 is committed to maintaining the physical features and traditions that define the business.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

The Historic Preservation Commission recommends that City Art Gallery 2.0 qualifies for the Legacy Business Registry under Administrative Code Section 2A.242(b)(2) and recommends safeguarding of the below listed physical features and traditions.

Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business:

- A large painted sign with the gallery name and the gallery banner.

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- Providing locally produced art to San Franciscans and the broader world alike.
- Cooperative art gallery model.
- Diverse artist membership with a wide range of members who are LGBTQIA, women, African American, Latino, and Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) artists.

CORE PHYSICAL FEATURE OR TRADITION THAT DEFINES THE BUSINESS

Following is the core physical feature or tradition that defines the business that would be required for maintenance of the business on the Legacy Business Registry.

- Art gallery.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the San Francisco Small Business Commission include City Art Gallery 2.0 currently located at 828 Valencia St. in the Legacy Business Registry as a Legacy Business under Administrative Code Section 2A.242.

Richard Kurylo and Michelle Reynolds
Legacy Business Program

Legacy Business Program

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Small Business Commission

Resolution No. _____

December 11, 2023

CITY ART GALLERY 2.0

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Adopting findings approving the Legacy Business Registry application for City Art Gallery 2.0, currently located at 828 Valencia St.

WHEREAS, in accordance with Administrative Code Section 2A.242, the Office of Small Business maintains a registry of Legacy Businesses in San Francisco (the "Registry") to recognize that longstanding, community-serving businesses can be valuable cultural assets of the City and to be a tool for providing educational and promotional assistance to Legacy Businesses to encourage their continued viability and success; and

WHEREAS, the subject business has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years; or

WHEREAS, the subject business has operated in San Francisco for more than 20 years but less than 30 years, has had no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years, has significantly contributed to the history or identity of a particular neighborhood or community and, if not included on the Registry, faces a significant risk of displacement; and

WHEREAS, the subject business has contributed to the neighborhood's history and identity; and

WHEREAS, the subject business is committed to maintaining the physical features and traditions that define the business; and

WHEREAS, at a duly noticed public hearing held on December 11, 2023, the San Francisco Small Business Commission reviewed documents and correspondence, and heard oral testimony on the Legacy Business Registry application; therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Small Business Commission hereby includes City Art Gallery 2.0 in the Legacy Business Registry as a Legacy Business under Administrative Code Section 2A.242.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Small Business Commission recommends safeguarding the below listed physical features and traditions at City Art Gallery 2.0.

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Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business:

- A large painted sign with the gallery name and the gallery banner.
- Providing locally produced art to San Franciscans and the broader world alike.
- Cooperative art gallery model.
- Diverse artist membership with a wide range of members who are LGBTQIA, women, African American, Latino, and Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) artists.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Small Business Commission requires maintenance of the below listed core physical feature or tradition to maintain City Art Gallery 2.0 on the Legacy Business Registry:

- Art gallery.

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was ADOPTED by the Small Business Commission on December 11, 2023.

Katy Tang
Director

RESOLUTION NO. _____

Ayes –
Nays –
Abstained –
Absent –

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Legacy Business Registry

Application Review Sheet

Application No.: LBR-2023-24-019
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Nomination Date: November 6, 2023
Nominated By: Supervisor Hillary Ronen

CRITERION 1: Has the applicant has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years?
 Yes No

828 Valencia St. from 1998 to Present (25 years)

PER CRITERION 1: Has the business operated in San Francisco for more than 20 years but less than 30 years and significantly contributed to the history or identity of a particular neighborhood or community, and does it face a significant risk of displacement if not included in the Registry?
 Yes No

CRITERION 2: Has the applicant contributed to the neighborhood's history and/or the identity of a particular neighborhood or community?
 Yes No

CRITERION 3: Is the applicant committed to maintaining the physical features or traditions that define the business, including craft, culinary, or art forms?
 Yes No

NOTES: Although City Art Gallery 2.0 is not yet 30 years old, the business has operated in San Francisco for more than 20 years and, if not included in the Registry, would face a significant risk of displacement. The present lease will expire in two years and is expected to increase significantly. Art is a discretionary purchase, and sales are highly variable from month to month and year to year. It is only a matter of time before rents outstrip the gallery's ability to sell enough art. In addition, insurance costs went up 40% in 2022 after a break-in.

DELIVERY DATE TO HPC: November 8, 2023

Richard Kurylo and Michelle Reynolds
Legacy Business Program

Legacy Business Program

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Member, Board of Supervisors
District 9



City and County of San Francisco

HILLARY RONEN

November 6, 2023

Richard Kurylo, Legacy Business Program Manger
Legacy Business Program, San Francisco Office of Small Business

Dear Mr. Kurylo:

I am writing a Letter of Nomination in support of City Art Gallery 2.0, located at 828 Valencia Street as a District 9 Legacy Business. City Art Gallery 2.0, formerly known as City Art Cooperative Gallery, has served local artists and the local community by providing a space for Bay Area artists to share and sell their artwork. For 25 years, City Art Gallery 2.0 has provided affordable art space for over 100 local artists, many of whom are residents of the Mission District themselves. This dynamic, rotating art space that is free and open to all, has been a welcome and constant presence in the ever-changing Valencia corridor. It is critical that vibrant neighborhoods like the Mission maintain art exhibition spaces and I am happy to nominate this establishment as a Legacy Business.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Hillary Ronen".

Hillary Ronen
Supervisor, District 9



Legacy Business Registry Application



Business Information

Business name: City Art Gallery 2.0

Business owner name(s): Robin Bordow

Identify the person(s) with the highest ownership stake in the business

Current business address: 828 Valencia Street, San Francisco, CA 94110

Telephone: (415) 970 - 9900 **Email:**

Mailing address (if different than above):

Website: www.cityartgallery.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/cityartgallery.sf **Twitter:**

7-digit San Francisco Business Account Number (BAN): 1 0 1 5 7 4 8

Do any of these describe your business? (select all that apply)
Requires at least 51% of the business be owned, operated, and controlled by the business designation below.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Immigrant-Owned Business | <input type="checkbox"/> Owned by Person with a Disability |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> LGBTQ+-Owned Business | <input type="checkbox"/> Veteran-Owned Business |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Minority-Owned Business* | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Woman-Owned Business |

**Minority is defined as one or more of the following racial or ethnic groups: American Indian or Alaska Native; Asian; Black or African American; Hispanic or Latino; Middle Eastern or North African; Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander*

Contact Person Information

Contact person name: Robin Bordow

Contact person title: Gallery Manager

Contact telephone: () - **Contact email:**

Business Location(s)

List the business address of the original San Francisco location, the start date of business, and the dates of operation at the original location. Check the box indicating whether the original location of the business in San Francisco is the founding location of the business.

If the business moved from its original location and has had additional addresses in San Francisco, identify all other addresses and the dates of operation at each address.

Original San Francisco address: **Zip Code:**

Is this location the founding location of the business? (Y/N):

Dates at this location: **From:** **To:**

Other address (if applicable): **Zip Code:**

Dates at this location: **From:** **To:**

Other address (if applicable): **Zip Code:**

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Dates at this location: **From:** **To:**

Other address (if applicable): **Zip Code:**

Dates at this location: **From:** **To:**

Applicant Disclosures

San Francisco Taxes, Business Registration, Licenses, Labor Laws and Public Information Release.

This section is verification that all San Francisco taxes, business registration, and licenses are current and complete, and there are no current violations of San Francisco labor laws. This information will be verified. A business deemed not current with all San Francisco taxes, business registration, and licenses, or has current violations of San Francisco labor laws, will not be eligible to apply for grants through the Legacy Business Program.

In addition, we are required to inform you that all information provided in the application will become subject to disclosure under the California Public Records Act.

Please read the following statements and check each to indicate that you agree with the statement. Then sign below in the space provided.

- I am authorized to submit this application on behalf of the business.
- I attest that the business is current on all of its San Francisco tax obligations.
- I attest that the business's business registration and any applicable regulatory license(s) are current.
- I attest that the Office of Labor Standards and Enforcement (OLSE) has not determined that the business is currently in violation of any of the City's labor laws, and that the business does not owe any outstanding penalties or payments ordered by the OLSE.
- I understand that documents submitted with this application may be made available to the public for inspection and copying pursuant to the California Public Records Act and San Francisco Sunshine Ordinance.
- I hereby acknowledge and authorize that all photographs and images submitted as part of the application may be used by the City without compensation.
- I understand that the Small Business Commission may revoke the placement of the business on the Registry if it finds that the business no longer qualifies, and that placement on the Registry does not entitle the business to a grant of City funds.

Name: Robin Bordow

Signature:

Robin Bordow

Date: 08/09.2023

CITY ART GALLERY 2.0

Written Historical Narrative

INTRODUCTION

a. Describe the business. What does it sell or provide?

City Art Gallery 2.0 is a cooperative art gallery that sells art made by local Bay Area artists. The idea for the gallery emerged when several friends who were also artists wanted to create a viable formula for a group-operated business where they could regularly show their art and also open membership to other artists with quality work but who may not have had any viable outlets in which to show their art. A formula was worked out in which artists could “rent” a wall space for a month and receive back at least 70 percent of any sales. To this day, this formula has been successful, more than covering rent and other gallery overhead without any paid employees. Artists themselves sit shifts any month in which they are showing and also cover other ongoing maintenance duties.

b. Describe whom the business serves.

City Art Gallery serves the art community and art patrons of San Francisco, the Bay Area, and beyond. Much of their art is sold to local patrons looking for something special for their homes or a special gift. They also sell a lot of art to tourists who come into the gallery from all over the world.

c. In about 2-5 words (15-30 characters), describe what the business is known for.

Selling art made by local Bay Area artists.

CRITERION 1: The business has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years

a. Provide a short history of the business, including locations and owners.

City Art Gallery 2.0 (a.k.a. City Art Gallery or City Art Cooperative Gallery) was founded on July 1, 1998, at 828 Valencia Street. The gallery has remained a constant in the radically changing Valencia corridor.

City Art Gallery is a cooperative that is owned and operated by the members of the gallery. It was founded by Katie Gilmartin who ran it for 17 years. The gallery has been managed by Robin Borrow since July 1, 2015. The original business name was City Art Cooperative Gallery LLC dba City Art Cooperative Gallery. When Katie Gilmartin left, the gallery’s official business name became City Art Gallery 2.0 LLC dba City Art Gallery 2.0, although it still widely known to all as City Art Cooperative Gallery.

b. Provide the ownership history of the business in a consolidated year-to-year format.

July 1, 1998, through June 30, 2015: Katie Gilmartin
July 1, 2015, to Present: Robin Borrow

c. Describe any circumstances that required the business to cease operations in San Francisco for any significant length of time.

The gallery has been in operation continuously at the same location with the exception of a three-month shut down during the COVID pandemic from March 15 through June 15, 2020.

CRITERION 2: The business has contributed to the neighborhood's history and/or the identity of a particular neighborhood or community

a. Describe the business' contribution to the history and/or identity of the neighborhood, community, business sector, or San Francisco as a whole.

City Art Gallery 2.0 has been providing a space for new and emerging San Francisco and Bay Area artists to exhibit their work since 1998. They provide these artists with experience in how art galleries work and how to sell and display their art. They are dedicated to giving back as much money as they can to the artists when they make sales. Artists receive a minimum of 71% of the sale price, and the gallery also pays credit card fees and collects and pays sales tax for the artists. Moreover, City Art Gallery 2.0 provides a sense of community for the artists they serve. The gallery hosts monthly potlucks and openings for their artists to mingle with the public and each other. Many of the artists have been members of the gallery for over 20 years. Additionally, City Art Gallery 2.0 provides a space for the public to view and purchase the work of local artists, which is offered at more affordable prices than most galleries.

From 1998 through 2023, City Art Gallery has provided an art space for over 100 local artists to have a low-cost space to show their work. Many of the artists live and work in the Mission District, and most live in San Francisco, but the membership includes all of the Bay Area, as far as Petaluma and Sunnyvale.

The gallery is managed by volunteer board members and operated by volunteer artists. The membership is very diverse with a wide range of members who are LGBTQIA artists, women artists, African American artists, Latino artists and Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPI) artists. The artists enjoy being a part of a larger artist community where they can meet and exchange ideas. All of the member artists contribute a little time and money so that they all can enjoy the benefits of a professional exhibit space that is well trafficked. The basic structure and operational model have been emulated by other cooperative galleries, such as the San Francisco Women Artists Gallery.

b. Is the business associated with significant people or events, either now or in the past?

Not applicable.

c. How does the business demonstrate its commitment to the community?

City Art Gallery 2.0 has been an integral part of the Valencia Street corridor, participating in street fairs and other community events that have occurred in the neighborhood. They have art shows every month that are free and open to all members of the community. They are active with the Valencia Street Merchants Association, and they actively contributed to the SFMTA Valencia Bikeway Improvements project design.

Artists belong to City Art Gallery because it's a cooperative gallery, owned and operated by local artists. They like the idea of making their artwork accessible and affordable to hundreds of potential art buyers each week. In addition to selling their art, they understand the importance of belonging to a network of peers who promote and support their creativity. City Art Gallery includes artists who have never before shown their work in a gallery setting and members with established art careers. They do not insist on exclusive contracts with their artists, and the gallery shows a wide range of artistic mediums and styles.

d. Has the business ever been referenced in the media, business trade publication, and/or historical documents?

City Art Gallery was featured as a location in an episode of *Transcendent* in 2015, which was a reality show that focused on the personal and professional relationships of a group of transgender women from the San Francisco nightclub AsiaSF. They were also voted "Best Art Gallery" a number of times in the San Francisco Bay Guardian between 2002 and 2008. City Art Gallery is regularly mentioned in San Francisco Chronicle Datebook gallery section when they have a reception each month. The gallery was one of only four picks for the week in the San Francisco Chronicle Sunday Datebook of July 2, 2023, receiving an entire column encouraging readers to come to their 25th anniversary reception and party. City Art Gallery also has been mentioned in, and placed an advertisement in, every annual ArtSpan Open Studios guide.

City Art Gallery offers its member artists the public relations and marketing expertise they need. The gallery has developed media contacts throughout San Francisco and produces monthly press releases that are published in daily and weekly newspapers and magazines. Professional quality postcards are created by City Art Gallery and distributed, free of charge, to member artists for each month's exhibit. These postcards save artists the hundreds of dollars creating and printing their own promotional materials would cost. City Art Gallery also promotes its shows in art guides and other art-related periodicals, getting the artists' names and art before the public, the media, and most importantly — art buyers. Membership at City Art Gallery also offers artists online promotional opportunities, including a website that acts as a digital portal between the art-buying public and individual member artists. Their promotional emails broadcast exhibition updates to hundreds of potential art buyers online.

e. Has the business ever received any awards, recognition, or political commendations?

In July 2023, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors presented City Art Gallery 2.0 with a Certificate of Honor on their 25th anniversary.

f. How would the community be diminished if the business were to be sold, relocated, shut down, etc.?

The loss of City Art Gallery would be a blow to all the members who show there. Currently the gallery has 127 active members who rely on the gallery as a place to show their work and as a way of boosting their income. Also, as mentioned, the City Art Gallery serves many new and emerging artists who would be deprived of an outlet to show their work. It is notoriously hard for new and emerging artists to break into the gallery scene to get their first show. City Art Gallery is one of the very few galleries that make this easier. The San Francisco art buying community would lose access to a vibrant and interesting business that sells unique affordable artwork created by local artists. The Mission District would also lose a gallery where the neighborhood is able to gather and experience the works of local artists.

CRITERION 3: The business is committed to maintaining the physical features or traditions that define the business

a. Is the business associated with a culturally significant building, structure, object, signage, mural, architectural detail, neon sign, or any other special physical feature that defines the business?

City Art Gallery has a large painted sign on the front of the gallery with the gallery name, as well as a banner.

b. In a few words, describe the main business activity you commit to maintaining.

City Art Gallery 2.0 is committed to providing locally produced art to San Franciscans and the broader world alike.

c. What is the plan to keep the business open in the long term beyond the current ownership?

The plan for keeping the business going after the current ownership is for members of the board to take over. Three board members are designated beneficiaries of a \$50,000 brokerage fund with Merrill Lynch.

d. What challenges is the business facing today?

City Art Gallery faces many challenges including the increased cost of doing business such as utilities, supplies, maintenance, repairs, and mandated improvements. For instance, they need

to replace the front door of the gallery to meet ADA requirements, which will cost them in excess of \$17,000. Rents tend to rise with time, and the gallery's rent has been no exception. The gallery also had a break-in and burglary in early 2023 in which the burglars smashed their large front window and jewelry case. There was also a vehicle accident that broke the window again in June 2023.

Although City Art Gallery 2.0 is not yet 30 years old, the business has operated in San Francisco for more than 20 years and, if not included in the Registry, the would face a significant risk of displacement as noted below. Therefore, it is eligible for listing on the Legacy Business Registry.

City Art Gallery's present lease is affordable, but it will expire in two years, they will then be at risk of a rent increase that may be out of our reach to remain open. Since art is a discretionary purchase, sales are highly variable from month to month and year to year. The gallery sales were quite low in 2020, as all businesses suffered from the COVID pandemic. 2021 was their best year, and sales for 2022 and 2023 have been near their median. In an environment of increasing rents, it is only a matter of time before rents outstrip the gallery's ability to sell enough art. City Art Gallery maintains a "rainy day fund" that they saved during the good years, so the gallery remains viable in the face of the uncertain economic conditions. The fund sustained the business through COVID. This rainy day fund is at risk in an environment of high inflation and increasing rents.

The gallery would like to continue to keep the commissions paid to their member artists as high as possible. One possible way the gallery would handle rent increases would be to pass that on to the artists. This is something they absolutely do not want to do! Most of their artists are relatively low income and need to retain as high a percentage of sales as possible.

Lastly, City Art Gallery has gone 24 years without a break in, until 2022. One of their front windows was smashed and some artwork taken. Unfortunately, due to this break in, their insurance costs went up 40% in 2022.

Legacy Business Program staff will add the following details:

a. Features or traditions that define the business and should be maintained for the business to remain on the Legacy Business Registry.

Cooperative art gallery.

b. Other special features of the business location, such as if the property associated with the business is listed on a local, state, or federal historic resources registry.

The Planning Department Historic Resource Status of 826 Valencia Street is "C - No Historic Resource Present."



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CITY ART

COOPERATIVE GALLERY

828

826



ST OWNED AND OPERATED SINCE 1998

Marina Goldberg



CHRISTOPHER CAMPBELL



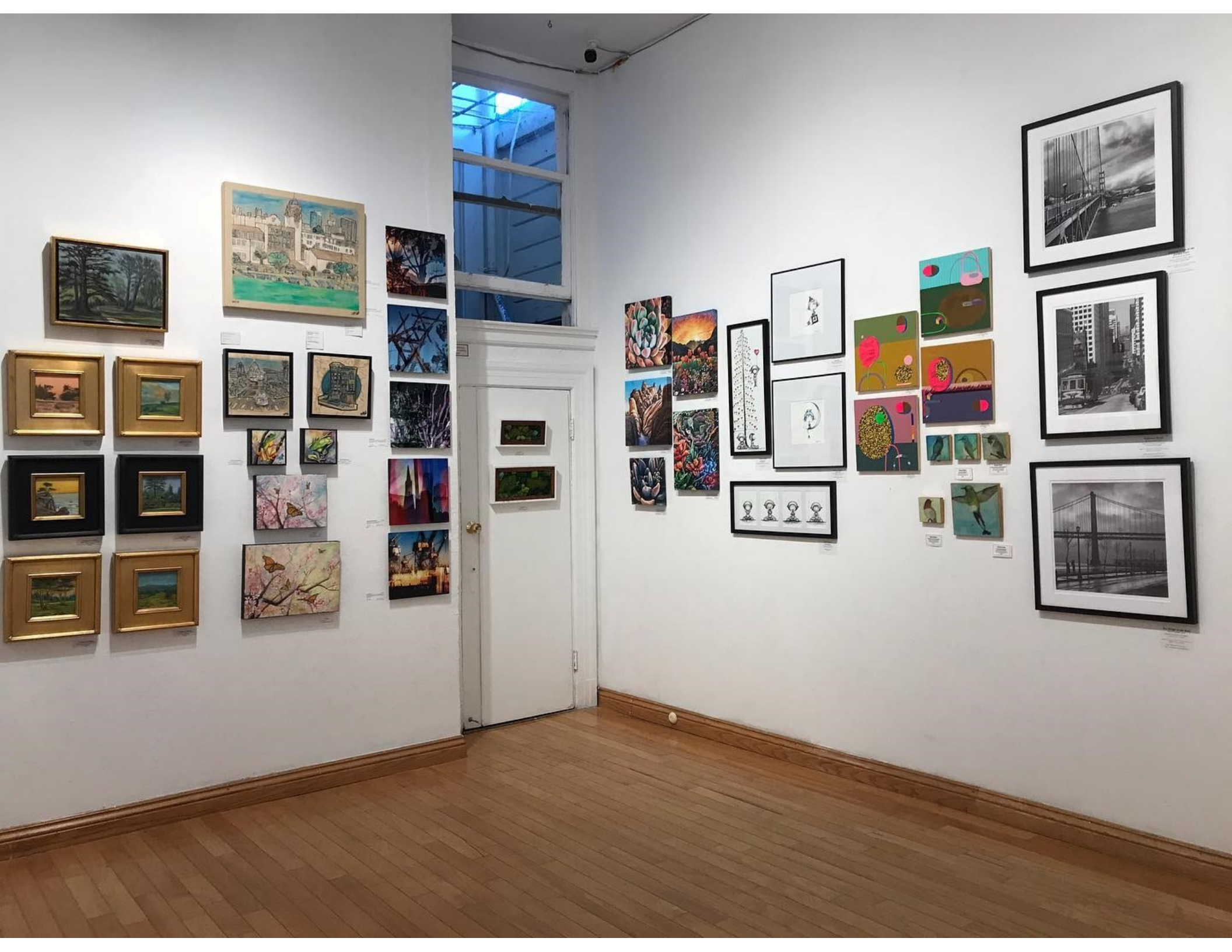
ARTIST ON DUTY



CITY ART
COOPERATIVE GALLERY

Artist on Duty





TRENDING Muslim ex-SF cop gets \$455K in bias settlement Smitten, Jewish ice creamery, to reopen after vandalism CSU faculty votes 95% to strike Make your plans for Dia de los Muertos
Can you beat the Halloween crossword? SF a hotbed of funding & friends for AI crowd Keep local news alive — donate today!

THE ARTS

City Art marks 25th anniversary with new gallery show



by GILARE ZADA
JULY 3, 2023



City Art Cooperative Gallery, July 2023. Photo by Lydia Chávez

Twenty five years ago, Katie Gilmartin and a couple of friends, all artists, observed the difficulty of breaking into galleries. Gilmartin suggested, “Let’s start one.” And they did.

On Friday, the City Art Cooperative Gallery plans to celebrate its 25th anniversary with an exhibition featuring 29 of its members’ artwork across mediums. There will be live music, wine, food, and a chance to meet many of the artists whose work will be on display.

A couple of those showing on Friday have already showcased their work in other collections; others have only recently joined the 100-plus-member cooperative.

“Our gallery gives people the outlet they need prior to taking off,” said Ann Krilanovich, a City Art board member since 2011.

When the artists took over 828 Valencia St. in July 1998, it was a relatively quiet area, occupied mostly by small, family-owned businesses. Now, it is next door to a bar as well as 826 Valencia Street, the tutoring shop and pirate store, and Paxton Gate, a taxidermy store.

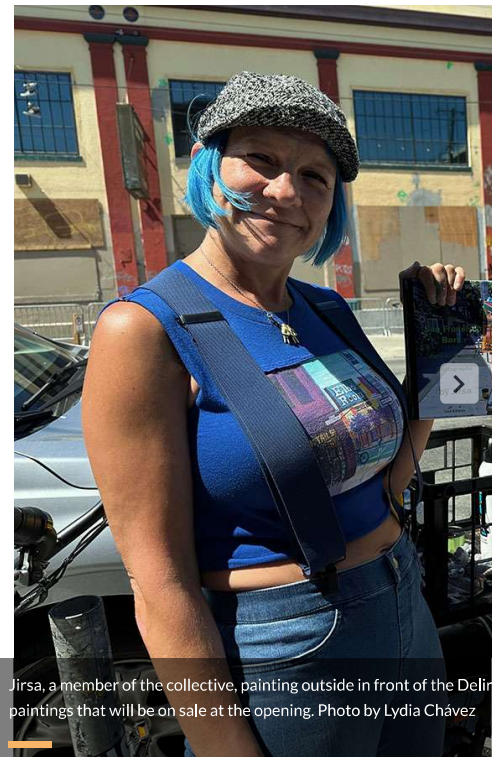
But if the neighbors have changed, the cooperative’s model has remained: Artists retain 70 percent of revenues, and the remainder goes towards maintaining the house. As City Art does not hire sales representatives, the artists have the unique opportunity to learn the ropes of both managing and displaying their work in galleries.

Krilanovich said that most of the artists don’t make a living from their contributions to the gallery — rather, they spend their profits on more art supplies. “Everyone is excited to come here, but there are realities to working at the gallery,” she said. “Keeping up with costs is our biggest challenge. So, with exceptions, the people who come here are hobbyists.”

Still, the rent must be paid and shows launched. Each member volunteers roughly 16 to 20 hours a month, showcasing and celebrating each other’s art at every turn. “It is a labor of love,” said Olena McMurtrey, an artist and member of City Art.



Sarah McCarthy Grimm, an artist manning the front desk. She has been with the collective for a couple of months. Photo by Lydia Chávez



Jirsa, a member of the collective, painting outside in front of the Delirio paintings that will be on sale at the opening. Photo by Lydia Chávez

The gallery hosts openings on the first Friday of each month, which entails concentrated efforts of repeated set-ups and teardowns of shows, and staff meetings beforehand to ensure that everything runs seamlessly. “Practice makes perfect. You have to train everyone as they learn what it takes to operate a gallery,” Krilanovich said.

City Art’s members come from all ages and backgrounds; regularly featured artists are between 18 and 80 years old. They are selected randomly to display their artwork at exhibitions. “It’s the first 30 names that show up on the computer,” Krilanovich said.

Although the gallery mainly boasts wall art, it also features work by sculptors, jewelers and photographers.

The artwork prices range widely, anywhere from \$40 dollars to \$10,000. Each artist sets their own prices. On holidays, the gallery hosts shows with affordable arts — \$500 or less, a rarity among upscale galleries such as those found on Geary.

Like all retail, the most difficult period came with Covid-19. “Valencia has always had its rough patches, but covid set the street back,” Krilanovich said.

Navigating the challenges of the pandemic, the gallery had to consolidate its community into a Zoom window, and it also saw an influx of break-ins. “My van got broken into twice in the same week [parked in front of the gallery],” McMurtrey recalled.

In the end, City Art, which only closed during several weeks of the pandemic, prevailed. “We made it through covid,” artist and member Mila Kirillova exclaimed as she beamed. “Many others did not, but we made it!”

There are several reasons behind their survival, one being the traffic of pedestrians flowing down Valencia’s bustling sidewalks. “We have a social media presence, but most interest and attention is generated simply by walk-bys,” Krilanovich said.

Other members have their own theories. “People came in for art to decorate the homes that they were confined to,” McMurtrey said.

Whether you’re an artist, a collector, or simply curious to know more, City Art’s anniversary celebration will take place from 7 to 10 p.m. on Friday. You can get a preview of the show when it opens on Wednesday. Attendees can expect live music, wine and food, as well as a chance to meet many of the artists whose work will be on display. The show will run through Sunday, July 30.

ARTSY NEWS

AI art, a refuge for techies



by [YUJIE ZHOU](#) JUNE 27, 2023

SF LGBT Center hosts joyous, artsy queer prom



by [BENIE COHEN](#) JUNE 23, 2023

The teen artist behind the new Giants mural



by [ANNIKA HOM](#) MAY 7, 2023



JULY 7TH, 2023 7-10pm

**CITY ART COOPERATIVE GALLERY
25TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION**

**828 VALENCIA ST
SAN FRANCISCO**

**Fresh Oil Paintings from my "Signs" collection
Colorful Metal Prints and SF Bar Books**

Live Music, Wine, Food and Fun!

Jirsa 6.2023



jirsapaints

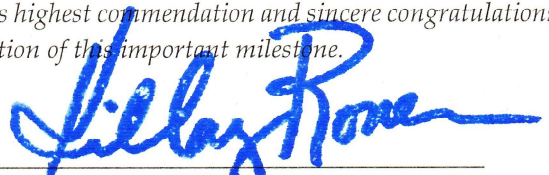
Certificate of Honor

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS City and County of San Francisco

The Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San Francisco hereby issues, and authorizes the execution of, this Certificate of Honor in appreciative public recognition of distinction and merit for outstanding service to a significant portion of the people of the City and County of San Francisco by:

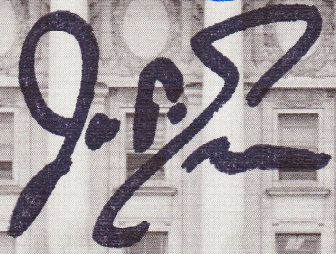
City Art Cooperative Gallery

The San Francisco Board of Supervisors recognizes your work in supporting art and artists in San Francisco at 828 Valencia Street, located in District 9. You have supported hundreds of local artists to show and sell their works, and played a critical role in our community in shaping the cultural landscape of the Mission District and art in San Francisco. In honor of your 25th Anniversary, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors extends its highest commendation and sincere congratulations in celebration of this important milestone.



Supervisor Hillary Ronen

July 7, 2023





LEGACY BUSINESS REGISTRY EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

HEARING DATE: DECEMBER 6, 2023

Filing Date: November 8, 2023
Case No.: 2023-010580LBR
Business Name: City Art Gallery 2.0
Business Address: 828 Valencia Street
Zoning: NCT (VALENCIA STREET NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL TRANSIT) Zoning District
55-X Height and Bulk District
Block/Lot: 3597/073
Applicant: Robin Bordow
828 Valencia Street
Nominated By: Supervisor Hillary Ronen
Located In: District 9
Staff Contact: edgar oropeza - 628-652-7368
edgar.oropeza@sfgov.org

Recommendation: Adopt a Resolution to Recommend Approval

Business Description

City Art Gallery 2.0 is a cooperative art gallery that sells art made by local Bay Area artists. The idea for the gallery emerged when several friends who were also artists wanted to create a viable formula for a group-operated business where they could regularly show their art and open membership to other artists with quality work but who may not have had any viable outlets to show their art. A formula was worked out where artists could “rent” a wall space for a month and receive back at least 70 percent of any sales. To this day, this formula has been successful, more than covering rent and other gallery overhead without any paid employees. Artists themselves sit shifts any month where they are showing and cover other ongoing maintenance duties.

City Art Gallery 2.0 (a.k.a. City Art Gallery or City Art Cooperative Gallery) was founded on July 1, 1998, at 828 Valencia Street by Katie Gilmartin who ran it for 17 years. The gallery has been managed by Robin Borrow since July 1, 2015. The original business name was City Art Cooperative Gallery LLC dba City Art Cooperative Gallery. When Katie Gilmartin left, the gallery’s official business name became City Art Gallery 2.0 LLC dba City Art Gallery

2.0, although it is still widely known to all as City Art Cooperative Gallery. The gallery has remained a constant in the radically changing Valencia corridor.

City Art Gallery 2.0 has been providing a space for new and emerging San Francisco and Bay Area artists to exhibit their work. They provide these artists with experience in how art galleries work and how to sell and display their art. They are dedicated to giving back as much money as they can to the artists when they make sales. Artists receive a minimum of 71% of the sale price, and the gallery also pays credit card fees and collects and pays sales tax for the artists. Moreover, City Art Gallery 2.0 provides a sense of community for the artists they serve. The gallery hosts monthly potlucks and openings for their artists to mingle with the public and each other. Many of the artists have been members of the gallery for over 20 years.

Additionally, the gallery provides a space for the public to view and purchase the work of local artists, which is offered at more affordable prices than most galleries. From 1998 through 2023, City Art Gallery has provided an art space for over 100 local artists to have a low-cost space to show their work. Many of the artists live and work in the Mission District, and most live in San Francisco, but the membership includes all of the Bay Area, as far as Petaluma and Sunnyvale.

The gallery is managed by volunteer board members and operated by volunteer artists. The membership is very diverse with a wide range of members who are LGBTQIA artists, women artists, African American artists, Latino artists and Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) artists. The artists enjoy being a part of a larger artist community where they can meet and exchange ideas. All of the member artists contribute a little time and money so that they all can enjoy the benefits of a professional exhibit space that is well trafficked. The basic structure and operational model have been emulated by other cooperative galleries, such as the San Francisco Women Artists Gallery.

City Art Gallery 2.0 serves the art community and art patrons of San Francisco, the Bay Area, and beyond. Much of their art is sold to local patrons looking for something special for their homes or a special gift. They also sell a lot of art to tourists who come into the gallery from all over the world.

City Art Gallery 2.0 is located on the commercial ground floor of a two-story mixed-use building in the heart of the Valencia Street Business Corridor.

The business's primary location at 828 Valencia Street is a Category C (No Historic Resource Present) building on the west side of Valencia Street between 19th and 20th Streets in the Mission. It is within the Valencia Street Neighborhood Commercial Transit (NCT) Zoning District and 55-X Height and Bulk District.

Staff Analysis

Review Criteria

1. When was the business founded?

The business was founded in 1998.

2. Does the business qualify for listing on the Legacy Business Registry? If so, how?

Yes. City Art Gallery 2.0 qualifies for listing on the Legacy Business Registry because it meets all of the eligibility Criteria:

- a. City Art Gallery 2.0 has operated continuously in San Francisco for 25 years. Although City Art Gallery 2.0 is not yet 30 years old, the business is eligible for listing in the Legacy Business Registry because it has operated in San Francisco for more than 20 years; it has significantly contributed to the history and identity of the Mission and San Francisco; and, if not included in the Registry, would face a significant risk of displacement.
- b. City Art Gallery 2.0 has contributed to the history and identity of the Mission District and San Francisco.
- c. City Art Gallery 2.0 is committed to maintaining the physical features and traditions that define the organization.

3. Is the business associated with a culturally significant art / craft / cuisine / tradition?

Yes. City Art Gallery 2.0 provides a space for new and emerging San Francisco and Bay Area artists to exhibit their work. The membership is very diverse with a wide range of members who are LGBTQIA artists, women artists, African American artists, Latino artists and Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) artists.

4. Is the business or its building associated with significant events, persons, and / or architecture?

No.

5. Is the property associated with the business listed on a local, state, or federal historic resource registry?

No. The property was found ineligible for listing in local, state, or federal historic resource registries through the Inner Mission North survey in 2004 and 2011. It was also identified in a reconnaissance-level survey in 2006, but not formally evaluated then.

6. Is the business mentioned in a local historic context statement?

No, not as of the date of this Executive Summary.

7. Has the business been cited in published literature, newspapers, journals, etc.?

Yes. City Art Gallery was featured as a location in an episode of *Transcendent* in 2015, which was a reality show that focused on the personal and professional relationships of a group of transgender women from the San Francisco nightclub AsiaSF. They were also voted “Best Art Gallery” a number of times in the San Francisco Bay Guardian between 2002 and 2008. City Art Gallery is regularly mentioned in the *San Francisco Chronicle* Datebook gallery section when they have a reception each month. The gallery was one of only four picks for the week in the *San Francisco Chronicle* Sunday Datebook of July 2, 2023, receiving an entire column encouraging readers to come to their 25th anniversary reception and party. City Art Gallery also has been mentioned in, and placed an advertisement in, every annual ArtSpan Open Studios guide. Additionally, in July 2023, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors presented City Art Gallery 2.0 with a Certificate of Honor on their 25th anniversary,

Racial and Social Equity Analysis

On July 15th, 2020 the San Francisco Historic Preservation Commission adopted [Resolution No. 1127](#) centering Preservation Planning on racial and social equity. Understanding the benefits, burdens, and opportunities to advance racial and social equity that proposed Preservation Planning documents provide is part of the Department's Racial and Social Equity Initiative. This is also consistent with the Mayor's Citywide Strategic Initiatives for equity and accountability and with the Office of Racial Equity, which required all Departments to conduct this analysis.

The Legacy Business Program is deeply intertwined with these goals. One of the primary purposes of the Legacy Business Program is to maintain San Francisco's cultural fabric and to foster civic engagement and pride by assisting long-operating businesses remain in the city. The Legacy Business Registry was established to recognize longstanding, community-serving businesses that are valuable cultural assets of the city. These businesses, ranging from restaurants to art galleries to tire shops to community shelters, are key to sustaining the racial and social diversity in San Francisco and adding to the identity and character of our city and the many communities within it.

City Arts Galley 2.0 is managed by volunteer board members and operated by volunteer artists. The membership is very diverse with a wide range of members who are LGBTQIA artists, women artists, African American artists, Latino artists and Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) artists. City Art Gallery 2.0 is very involved in their neighborhood's community, participating in street fairs and other community events as well as being active in the Valencia Street Merchants Association. They also host free art shows every month and strive to make art accessible and affordable.

Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business

Location(s) associated with the business:

Current Locations:

- 828 Valencia Street (1998 – Present)

Recommended by Applicant

- A large painted sign with the gallery name and the gallery banner
- Providing locally produced art to San Franciscans and the broader world alike
- Cooperative art gallery model
- Diverse artist membership with a wide range of members who are LGBTQIA artists, women artists, African American artists, Latino artists and Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) artists

Additional Recommended by Staff

- None

Basis for Recommendation

The Department recommends the Historic Preservation Commission adopt a resolution recommending the business listed above be adopted by the Small Business Commission to the Legacy Business Registry.

ATTACHMENTS

Draft Resolution

Legacy Business Registry Application:

- Application Review Sheet
- Section 1 – Business / Applicant Information
- Section 2 – Business Location(s)
- Section 3 – Disclosure Statement
- Section 4 – Written Historical Narrative
 - Criterion 1 – History and Description of Business
 - Criterion 2 – Contribution to Local History
 - Criterion 3 – Business Characteristics
- Contextual Photographs and Background Documentation



HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION DRAFT RESOLUTION NO.

HEARING DATE: DECEMBER 6, 2023

Case No.: 2023-010580LBR
Business Name: City Art Gallery 2.0
Business Address: 828 VALENCIA ST
Zoning: NCT (VALENCIA STREET NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL TRANSIT) Zoning District
55-X Height and Bulk District
Block/Lot: 3597/073
Applicant: Robin Bordow
828 Valencia Street
Nominated By: Supervisor Hillary Ronen
Located In: District 9
Staff Contact: edgar oropeza - 628-652-7368
edgar.oropeza@sfgov.org

ADOPTING FINDINGS RECOMMENDING TO THE SMALL BUSINESS COMMISSION APPROVAL OF THE LEGACY BUSINESS REGISTRY NOMINATION FOR CITY ART GALLERY 2.0 CURRENTLY LOCATED AT 828 VALENCIA ST, BLOCK 3597/ LOT 073.

WHEREAS, in accordance with Administrative Code Section 2A.242, the Office of Small Business maintains a registry of Legacy Businesses in San Francisco (the "Registry") to recognize that longstanding, community-serving businesses can be valuable cultural assets of the City and to be a tool for providing educational and promotional assistance to Legacy Businesses to encourage their continued viability and success; and

WHEREAS, the subject business has operated in San Francisco for more than 20 years but less than 30 years, significantly contributed to the history and identity of a particular neighborhood or community and, if not included in the Registry, faces a significant risk of displacement; and

WHEREAS, the subject business has contributed to the City's history and identity; and

WHEREAS, the subject business is committed to maintaining the traditions that define the business; and

WHEREAS, at a duly noticed public hearing held on December 6, 2023, the Historic Preservation Commission reviewed documents, correspondence and heard oral testimony on the Legacy Business Registry nomination.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the **Historic Preservation Commission hereby recommends** that City Art Gallery 2.0 located at 828 VALENCIA ST qualifies for the Legacy Business Registry under Administrative Code Section 2A.242(b)(2) as it has operated for 25 years and is still eligible for the Legacy Business Registry as it is older than 20 years, has significantly contributed to the identity of its neighborhood and city, and may face a risk of displacement if not included in the Registry

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the **Historic Preservation Commission hereby** recommends safeguarding of the below listed physical features and traditions for City Art Gallery 2.0.

Location(s):

Current Locations:

- 828 Valencia Street (1998 – Present)

Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business:

- A large painted sign with the gallery name and the gallery banner
- Providing locally produced art to San Franciscans and the broader world alike.
- Cooperative art gallery model
- Diverse artist membership with a wide range of members who are LGBTQIA artists, women artists, African American artists, Latino artists and Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) artists.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Historic Preservation Commission's findings and recommendations are made solely for the purpose of evaluating the subject business's eligibility for the Legacy Business Registry, and the Historic Preservation Commission makes no finding that the subject property or any of its features constitutes a historical resource pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5(a).

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the **Historic Preservation Commission hereby directs** its Commission Secretary to transmit this Resolution and other pertinent materials in the case file to the Office of Small Business on December 6, 2023.

Jonas P. Ionin
Commission Secretary

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

RECUSE:

ADOPTED: December 6, 2023