



April 8, 2025

Leaders to tackle affordability crisis for creatives in global cities at the inaugural Creative Land Trust Summit in San Francisco

- Creative Land Trusts, inspired by San Francisco's [Community Arts Stabilization Trust \(CAST\) model](#), are becoming a global movement to ensure creative workspace is affordable, which is essential to attract and retain creative talent in global cities.
- As rent and living costs rise in global cities, funders, developers and cultural leaders are forming new partnerships to set up Creative Land Trusts—innovative legal structures that protect creative workspaces in the long-term. This approach is key to building a diverse and resilient creative economy.
- The first ever Creative Land Trust Summit in May 2025 will bring together cultural leaders, funders and developers from over 15 cities, including London, Austin, Sydney and Helsinki. Participants will share how this groundbreaking model has been adapted in various cities and explore similar solutions.
- The rapid loss of affordable creative workspace is a crisis for many global cities. A new Creative Land Trust toolkit to help other cities replicate this solution will be launched ahead of the Summit. Additional resources and key takeaways will be shared publicly after the event.

From May 27-30, 2025, cultural city leaders, funders, and developers from over 15 cities including London, Sydney, Helsinki, Montreal, Warsaw, and Dubai will attend the inaugural Creative Land Trust Summit in San Francisco. Held in the city where this model was developed and proven successful, the Summit will showcase how global cities have adapted it to safeguard and retain their creative communities and help them thrive.

The event will be hosted by the Kenneth Rainin Foundation in collaboration with Left Bank Co. and World Cities Culture Forum.

Shelley Trott, Executive Director of the Kenneth Rainin Foundation, said:

“The first ever Creative Land Trust Summit will bring together cultural leaders who are successfully implementing this model in their cities. It’s essential in this chaotic geopolitical environment to build a global coalition and community of practice dedicated to sustaining strong, diverse and vibrant arts and culture ecosystems—ensuring that artists continue their critical work of connecting us with our shared humanity.”



Creative Land Trusts in Action Around the World

Creative Land Trusts offer a powerful solution to securing affordable spaces for the arts as cities navigate rising costs and market pressures. Without intervention, the pressures of rapid urbanization threaten a sharp decline in artist studios, rehearsal and performance spaces. Many artists struggle to afford to live and work in cities, which could lead to loss of creative talent.

In 2013, the Kenneth Rainin Foundation pioneered this model with Community Vision and funded the Community Arts Stabilization Trust (CAST) to address the displacement of artists and arts and culture nonprofits during a tech boom that created a surging real estate market in the San Francisco Bay Area. CAST builds arts and culture nonprofits' capacity to lease or own property long-term at below market rates and with low-cost, stable financing. As capital is reimbursed, it is reinvested to acquire more spaces, establishing a perpetual cultural asset that ensures permanent homes for nonprofit organizations for decades to come. In 2024 alone, CAST stewarded over 86,000 square feet of performance, studio and rehearsal space for Bay Area artists and organizations, with another 100,000 square feet in the pipeline. It has helped over two dozen arts and community groups gain dedicated workspace and connected 630 individuals and organizations with real-estate advice, capacity building and space solutions.

Ken Ikeda, CEO of Community Arts Stabilization Trust (CAST), said:

"With sustainability as an outcome, we must think 20-30 years into the future, through transitions in organizational leadership, shifts in real estate value and the gentrification of communities where the arts create value. The ability to stay in place and have the space to dream are fundamental to CAST's mission and to the sustainability of the arts and cities. They are inextricably bound together."

Facing a predicted decline of [30% creative workspace within a decade](#), London set up a Creative Land Trust in 2019.

Justine Simons OBE, London's Deputy Mayor for Culture and Creative Industries, and Founder and Chair of World Cities Culture Forum, said:

"Culture is at the heart of thriving cities, boosting the economy, tourism and jobs, as well as bringing communities together building civic pride. Cities need artists and creatives to be able to put down roots, but the loss of cultural spaces threatens long-term prosperity, striking at the heart of what makes them unique — their rich cultural offer, their cosmopolitan mix of people



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and their ability to innovate. That's why London set up a Creative Land Trust in 2019, inspired by San Francisco's CAST model, to secure affordable creative workspaces for generations to come. Through the World Cities Culture Forum, cultural leaders have been inspired to adapt this innovative model, including in Austin, Sydney and Vancouver."

By securing a blend of funding from donors, investors and grantmakers, London's Creative Land Trust sustains the future of the capital's studios through the purchase of freeholds or long leases, gifts and asset transfers. Using local agreements, the Creative Land Trust sets affordable rents based on transparent assessments of local conditions.

Sydney is the latest to set up a Creative Land Trust, where creative workspace declined by over 1,861,000 sq ft between 2012 and 2022.

The Lord Mayor of Sydney, Clover Moore, commented:

"The scale of the loss of creative spaces is too great for any of us to tackle alone. Governments at all levels need to urgently work together to retain, rebuild and restore creative spaces close to affordable housing."

"A Creative Land Trust would be an independent, not-for-profit entity with a board of trustees that takes land out of the private market and places it in the hands of the cultural sector for good. It can build a portfolio from philanthropic and other private investors, and it can manage properties from the City of Sydney and other governments."

Ahead of the Summit, World Cities Culture Forum will launch a practical toolkit for setting up Creative Land Trusts, based on insights from city leaders.

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Notes to editors

A Creative Land Trust is an innovative legal structure that safeguards a property for creative use in the long-term

Cities with Creative Land Trusts who are attending the Creative Land Trust Summit include:

- Austin, USA: [Rally Austin](#)
- Minneapolis, USA: [Art Space](#)
- San Francisco, USA: [CAST](#), [Artist Space Trust](#)
- Seattle, USA: [Cultural Space Agency](#)
- Calgary, Canada: [cSPACE Projects](#)
- Vancouver, Canada: [Cultural Land Trust](#)
- Helsinki, Finland: [KAAPELI](#)
- London, UK: [Creative Land Trust](#)
- Margate, UK: [Margate Creative Land Trust](#)

About the Kenneth Rainin Foundation

Kenneth Rainin Foundation is a family foundation that collaborates with creative thinkers in the Arts, Education and Health. At the Rainin Foundation, we believe in taking smart risks to achieve breakthroughs. We support visionary artists in the Bay Area, create opportunities for Oakland's youngest learners and fund researchers on the forefront of scientific discoveries. Since 2009, The Foundation has awarded over \$61 million in funding to support small to midsize Bay Area arts organizations that are pushing the boundaries of creative expression. **Learn more about the [Kenneth Rainin Foundation](#).**

About World Cities Culture Forum

World Cities Culture Forum is the leading global network of civic leaders from over 40 creative cities.

Our cities span six continents and represent a total population of more than 270 million. Our global network champions the transformative role of culture in urban development, acting as a driver to create equitable, prosperous and sustainable cities.



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Our civic leaders share solutions to meet the challenges of the 21st century, from tackling climate change to growing affordable workspace, developing strategies for cultural tourism and the night-time economy, and increasing diversity in the public realm.

World Cities Culture Forum was founded in 2012 around the belief that global cities can achieve more by working together and being generous with ideas. It was founded and is chaired by Justine Simons OBE, London's Deputy Mayor for Culture and the Creative Industries. Sadiq Khan, the Mayor of London, is the Patron.

A decade on, we've established the principle that culture is a golden thread in cities: supporting our communities, our health and wellbeing, attracting tourists and boosting economies. We champion practical solutions through our annual [World Cities Culture Summit](#) and partnerships with leading institutions. We grow civic leadership with our [Leadership Exchange Programme](#). We make the case for culture with [leading research, data and case studies](#). The [World Cities Culture Report](#) is our flagship research publication, published every three years. It is the most comprehensive global report looking at the role of culture in cities.

Learn more about [World Cities Culture Forum](#).

About Community Arts Stabilization Trust (CAST)

Community Arts Stabilization Trust (CAST) is a community-centered real estate organization committed to ensuring artists and cultural workers can stay anchored where they create. Founded in 2013, CAST secures and stewards affordable, inclusive spaces for creative and cultural expression by applying real estate financing tools and structural models in innovative ways, building community knowledge and agency, and creating and holding space for visioning and arts activation. Its programs and services have helped arts organizations like [CounterPulse](#) in San Francisco build pathways to ownership, enabled artists to secure long-term affordable leases, and created dedicated spaces like [447 Minna](#) for cultural connection and exchange. **Learn more at [cast-sf.org](#) or follow CAST [LinkedIn](#), [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Bluesky](#).**