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ROOT DIVISION SECURES EXPANDED HOME IN SAN FRANCISCO'S MID-MARKET DISTRICT



Nearly One Year After Rent Increase Displacement, Root Division Plans for Summer 2015 Opening in New Space

Root Division, one of San Francisco's most dynamic community based non-profit visual arts organizations, is pleased to announce that they have successfully **secured a 10 year lease on a new, larger facility at [1131 Mission Street](#)** in San Francisco's Mid-Market/ SOMA neighborhood. The multi-level, **13,000 square foot stand-alone building** will house 22 subsidized artist studios, multiple classrooms and exhibition spaces, a digital lab, and workshop, enabling Root Division to flourish as a thriving hub for the creation, instruction, and presentation of art in San Francisco.

The organization's unique model of community arts engagement **offers visual artists discounted studio space in exchange for their volunteer work** with the organization, including teaching free art classes to low-income youth and organizing exhibitions of local emerging talent. Notes Root Division's Executive Director, Michelle Mansour, ***"We envision a San Francisco where artists remain an essential part of our community and where art and arts education are highly valued. Our strengths lie in our ability to connect diverse constituencies – artists, professionals, youth, and families – through accessible and engaging arts programming. From our new central location at Mission and 7th, we will cultivate additional community partnerships, reach new audiences, and expand impact to more neighborhoods including Mid-Market, SOMA, the Tenderloin, Civic Center, and beyond."***

After a decade in San Francisco's Mission District, Root Division was displaced from its home in the summer of 2014. Securing the new home on Mission Street is a triumph for Root Division and for the City of San Francisco, both of whom are working to retain and nurture a vibrant arts community. ***"This time last year we were announcing the loss of our home, wondering where we would move in an increasingly intense real estate market, and fielding questions and concerns from a distressed arts community. With an overwhelming response of support from our constituents, the past twelve months have brought us a renewed importance and sense of purpose in being an anchor for artists in San Francisco. Root Division is proud to remain an active, collaborative force in the city, and we believe our unique and innovative arts engagement model will thrive in our new, larger centrally-located space,"*** states Mansour.

“Root Division’s growth in the face of a challenging real estate market is a win not only for the organization, but also for the City of San Francisco,” remarks Tom DeCaigny, San Francisco Director of Cultural Affairs. *“I applaud Root Division’s leadership for being proactive in seeking support from the City and the Northern California Community Loan Fund (NCCLF) to help secure this long-term lease. We are thrilled to welcome them to the Central Market Arts District. Through the \$2 million Arts Non-Profit Displacement Mitigation Fund we hope to celebrate many more similar successes city-wide.”*

This upcoming spring, Root Division will launch the public phase of a \$750,000 capital campaign, \$350,000 of which has been secured to-date through their dedicated Board of Directors, a core base of loyal donors, and the pro-bono architectural services of acclaimed design firm [Studio O+A](#). With a roster of clients from Yelp to Microsoft, Studio O+A will help Root Division create a high-functioning, multi-purpose arts facility that serves as a means for connecting artists with each other and with the community at large. *“The arts have influenced our designs from the beginning,”* says Studio O+A co-founder Verda Alexander. *“It’s great to be doing a space where we can combine our passions for design and art.”* Co-founder Primo Orpilla adds, *“As long-time supporters of Root Division we’re thrilled to help create a new venue for this exciting organization.”*

While the **new Root Division home is slated to open to the public in Summer of 2015**, the organization’s annual spring fundraiser [TASTE 2015](#) will provide event guests with an early sneak peek of the venue *on Thursday, April 23rd*. *TASTE 2015* features over 16 famed local chefs and mixologists in an evening of food-inspired art and art-inspired food. In addition to dozens of culinary treats, this special event will serve up **A Taste of What’s to Come** for the vision of the new facility and Root Division's future in their new home.

The organization is grateful to the City of San Francisco for its support via the San Francisco Arts Commission, Grants for the Arts, the Mayor’s Office of Economic Workforce and Development, and most essentially to NCCLF and CAST (Community Arts Stabilization Trust) for their technical assistance via the Non-Profit Displacement Mitigation Program.

Please join us, along with Tom DeCaigny, Director of Cultural Affairs, and Jane Kim, District 6 Supervisor for a Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony.

Date: Tuesday, March 10, 2015 from 9:30 - 10:30 AM

Location: 1131 Mission Street (at 7th Street), San Francisco, CA 94103

ABOUT ROOT DIVISION

Root Division is a visual arts non-profit that connects creativity and community through a dynamic ecosystem of arts education, exhibitions, and studios. Root Division's mission is to empower artists, foster community service, inspire youth, and enrich the Bay Area through engagement in the visual arts. Root Division was founded in 2002 to constructively address the challenges facing emerging artists and remedy the lack of arts education in schools. Since its inception, Root Division has provided 135 artists with below-market cost studios; empowered and trained 280 artists to teach; provided over 4,800 hours of free art classes for neighborhood youth; hosted onsite adult art classes for 1,700 students; exhibited 1,800 artists; been a gathering place for over 36,000 visitors; sold over \$426,000 of emerging artwork to the public; and developed partnerships with two-dozen public schools/ community centers and over 150 local businesses. For more information, visit www.rootdivision.org.

ABOUT STUDIO O+A

Studio O+A is a San Francisco-based interior design firm serving companies nationwide. Founded by Primo Orpilla and Verda Alexander during the early 1990s, O+A’s original mission was to bring sophisticated urban design to Silicon Valley start-ups and the venture firms who supported them. That start-up mentality is still a key feature of the O+A aesthetic, but through the years, the firm’s mission has broadened to include a range of services for a diverse client base that extends to all parts of the country. A long roster of clients includes Paypal, Facebook, Ebay, Microsoft, Yelp, Giant Pixel and Zendesk, among many more. For more information, visit www.o-plus-a.com.