

BLACK CREEK FOUNDATION/FONDATION



LIVE/WORK SPACES FOR VISUAL ARTISTS IN TORONTO IS AN ELECTION ISSUE

FACT: DEVELOPERS BENEFIT FROM SHORT-SIGHTED ZONING POLICIES. IT MAKES SENSE TO PROVIDE VISUAL ARTISTS WITH LEGAL, NON-PROFIT LIVE/WORK SPACES IN INDUSTRIAL AREAS.

Why is Toronto the only major city in North America that won't let visual artists live legally in industrial areas where they work?

Politicians say: If visual artists live in industrial areas:

1. They will sweeten the industrially zoned areas for gentrification. We are trying to save blue-collar jobs.
2. If we let you in, the developers are next.
3. Search in the Niagara or Spadina/King areas where zoning exists for live/work.
4. Construct a new building with a provincial subsidy.

Visual artists' answer:

1. Black Creek' lawyer says: site-specific re-zoning for live/work spaces used by visual artists, when owned and operated on a non-profit basis, will not create a precedent.
2. Developers are flipping downtown industrial land now. Provincial and City Hall records show this.
3. Buildings in Spadina/King, Niagara and other areas zoned generally for live/work have escalated beyond reach of artists.
4. Visual artists are small industries, use surrounding small craft industries, and suit best the circumstances of older industrial areas.
5. New construction, even with free city land, is too expensive for most visual artists. Provincial subsidies are for public, e.g., gallery spaces, or for housing. They are not available for work spaces.

The Black Creek Foundation is a charitable research organization whose present focus is economic problems faced by visual artists in Toronto.

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ARTISTS