

# SPACES AND PLACES

ARTSPACE

## STERLING MARKET LOFTS: NEW LIFE FOR BRIDGEPORT



For the community of Bridgeport, Connecticut, the opening of the Sterling Market Lofts is the realization of a long-held dream. Formerly Read's Department Store, the redeveloped building now provides 61 units of affordable space to artists and their families.

Residents have moved into spacious one-, two-, and three-bedroom live/work units ranging from 1,100 to 1,600 square feet. The project also provides new space for a locally owned gourmet pizzeria, Fat Cat Pie, and a commercial photographer.

When it opened in 1925, Read's was hailed as the largest and most modern department store in New England. Located in the heart of downtown Bridgeport, across the street from City Hall, Read's was a luxurious symbol of Bridgeport's sophistication and prosperity.

By the 1970s Bridgeport had fallen on hard times, and Read's, which closed its doors in 1981, became emblematic of urban decay. For 24 years the building remained abandoned — until now.

In mid-February, 50 of the building's new artist tenants gathered in the beautiful commons gallery area for a kick-off party. It was an opportunity for residents to meet one another and begin establishing a building-

wide community. By sharing personal stories about the building, they discovered a sense of shared history. Because 90% of the tenants are from the Bridgeport area, many have fond memories of Read's in the "good old days," such as family shopping trips during the holidays.

The transformation of the site into an artist live/work project is a powerful sign of Bridgeport's revitalization. "I have never seen a project where the building means as much to the broader community as this one," says Artspace Asset Manager Shawn Silver. "I feel honored to have this opportunity to participate in this celebration and appreciation of the new Sterling Market Lofts."

The city is tremendously optimistic about the project. The Sterling Market Lofts will spark revitalization, offer opportunities for artists to expand their work, and strengthen the community through art.

### THEY MADE IT HAPPEN

Sterling Market Lofts were made possible, in part, by financing from:

Bank of America  
 People's Bank  
 Connecticut Housing and Finance Agency  
 Apollo Housing Capital, LLC  
 City of Bridgeport  
 Connecticut Department of Economic  
 and Community Development  
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Artspace thanks the following funders for their generous support of this project:  
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 Bridgeport Regional Business Council

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## MOUNT RAINIER ARTIST LOFTS OPEN



## AT THE VANGUARD

Artspace was established in 1979 as an advocate for the space needs of artists. Over time, we've evolved into the nation's leading nonprofit real estate developer for the arts. But we have never ceased to advocate for artists, and in the last few years, Artspace has emerged as a major participant in a growing national reassessment of the role of the arts in America.

What's it all about? Simply this: All across the country, cities have begun to realize that the gentrification sparked by artists who colonize marginal urban neighborhoods can be harnessed as a tool of economic redevelopment — and that the presence of artists plays an important role in determining a community's self-esteem.

We at Artspace have long known that our buildings make it possible for artists to become long-term residents of their neighborhoods, which in turn gives them a much stronger voice in their communities. But what we've encountered lately is a fundamental change in the way America itself looks at the arts.

We believe we are at the vanguard of a 21st century movement that has the potential to transform America into a society that truly values its artists. Our profile has never been higher — nor our responsibility greater.

Mount Rainier Artist Lofts, the first Artspace project involving new construction exclusively, opened in April in Mount Rainier, a Washington suburb in Prince George's County, Maryland.

The 44-unit building is the first major project completed in the Gateway Arts District, a two-mile stretch along historic U.S. Route 1 where the county is using the arts as an economic development tool.

The \$11.6 million project was fully occupied when it opened, according to Artspace Asset Manager Dean Crowell. The project also has 7,000 square feet of commercial space; tenants will include an arts-themed coffee shop. Amenities include a large community room, workshop room, and a fully equipped outdoor playground.

The Mount Rainier project is a collaboration between Artspace and Gateway Municipalities Community Development Corporation (CDC), the agency dedicated to creating the Gateway Arts District.

Gateway CDC has worked since 1997 to support artists living and working in Prince George's County and to use arts-based development projects as a catalyst for economic revitalization along Route 1.

The project is one of several initiatives aimed at developing the Gateway Arts District, including an African-American history museum, a community arts center, a performing arts venue, and an "arts incubator" space for emerging arts organizations.



"It's very exciting," says Brooke Kidd, executive director of Joe's Movement Emporium, a multidisciplinary performance center across the street from the project. "The building is beautiful, dramatic, and with lots of juicy spaces. You can really imagine the place coming to life with creativity."

## THEY MADE IT HAPPEN

The Mount Rainier Artist Lofts were made possible, in part, by financing from:

Apollo Housing Capital, LLC

Maryland Department of  
Housing and Community  
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Prince George's County

Department of Housing and  
Community Development

Redevelopment Authority of  
Prince George's County

U.S. Department of Housing  
and Urban Development

Artspace thanks the following funders for their generous support of this project:

Eugene and Agnes E. Meyer Foundation  
Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz  
Foundation

# TO OUR 2004 DONORS: THANK YOU!

Artspace is fortunate to have many friends and supporters who have helped further our mission by making cash donations and pledges. Last fall, for the first time, we conducted an annual fund drive as part of our overall resource development strategy. Our goal was to raise \$50,000. Not only did we meet our goal, we exceeded it by raising more than \$70,000! We are thrilled and would like to acknowledge all the individuals who made contributions. We are extremely grateful for your support.

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Ellen & Steven Weiss  
Stewart Widdess  
Rebecca Yanisch  
Cree Zischke

## IN THE WORKS

### GRAIN BELT STUDIOS



The latest additions to the Artspace family of properties are the Grain Belt Bottling House and Warehouse (pictured) in Northeast Minneapolis.

The Bottling House (1906) and adjacent Warehouse (1910) served for seven decades as vital components of the historic Grain Belt Brewery complex. While the majestic brewhouse stood vacant for nearly three decades after the brewery closed in 1975, these matching two-story buildings filled up with artists and creative businesses in the early 1990s.

By the late nineties, however, the neighborhood around the brewery had begun to gentrify. Early in 2000, when the City of Minneapolis announced plans to sell them, the artists approached Artspace and asked us to buy and operate them as affordable non-residential facilities.

Acquisition of the Bottling House and Warehouse preserves 67,000 square feet of space for artists and creative businesses that might otherwise have been converted into offices or condominiums. Both buildings are in excellent condition, and the Bottling House boasts a large atrium suitable for receptions and other gatherings.



# ROEPKE + ARTSPACE = GOOD INK, AND MORE OF IT

If you've been reading and hearing good things about Artspace lately, chances are Roepke Public Relations had a hand in it.

Katherine Roepke's firm, located in the Foshay Tower, took on Artspace as a pro bono client in 2003. Since then, through the efforts of Roepke and her staff, Artspace has received more national, regional, and local coverage than ever before.

"Roepke has provided us with a level of recognition and national visibility that is vital to a nonprofit's survival," says Artspace President L. Kelley Lindquist. "They are highly professional, extremely responsive, and very proactive. And they're fun to work with."

Roepke Public Relations is a privately owned company that provides consistent, high quality, strategic public relations, and media relations for established companies and national startups in the fields of health care, technology, financial services, marketing communications, commercial real estate, hospitality/entertainment, and luxury consumer goods.

"Our firm feels very strongly about our commitment to the arts," says Katherine Roepke, Roepke Public Relations president. "Artspace is a proven asset to the communities it serves and an organization whose staff is truly passionate about their work. Helping Artspace gain national visibility and further its mission is gratifying work for our team."

For more information about Roepke Public Relations, contact Katherine Roepke at 612-677-1717 or visit the company website at [www.roepkepr.com](http://www.roepkepr.com).



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