



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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The RiNo Art District is a
Non-Profit Organization

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RiNo Art District's Response to Rhinoceropolis

Last night, we – the staff and board of the RiNo Art District – watched the eviction of individuals from Rhinoceropolis unfold on social media and mainstream press alongside the rest of you. We did not know it was happening. We did not see it coming.

Rhinoceropolis opened in RiNo in 2005 and has defied the odds by existing as an all-ages DIY venue that has been welcoming artists and hosting performances at 3553 Brighton Blvd. It's been the heart of the underground scene in Denver, introducing new bands and artists to the scene. It has been viewed as more than just a performance venue, but also a place for new, young artists to experiment and grow their talent. The building's landlord has long supported the venue by providing affordable rent, creating a safe, up-to-code space, and allowing Rhinoceropolis to continue doing its thing.

We have learned that the eviction was a directive of the Deputy Chief of Police, likely a knee-jerk response to the tragedy at Ghost Ship that occurred earlier this week. While we support any effort to ensure that people are safe and protected in such spaces, we feel this rash move to evict people on a cold winter evening without reaching out to us, or other partners, to identify a solution or strategy, was a misstep.

In the last 24 hours, we have been actively engaged in a conversation about how to right this situation. By all accounts, it appears that Rhinoceropolis will be able to continue as a music venue, but not as a home. We respect both the zoning code and the rights of the property owner on that particular matter.

But this matter brings to the fore a bigger conversation about the need for affordable, flexible creative space within the City of Denver, and RiNo, for artists. Rather quietly, the RiNo Art District, Business Improvement District and General Improvement District have been working on a number of initiatives to this end, even as we recognize the changing, challenging dynamics happening here. It's time to be louder. It's time to be bolder.

So, here's what happens next.

1. We are committed to working with Rhinoceropolis, the property owner, Denver Fire Department and Denver Police Department and the City of Denver to reopen Rhinoceropolis as a music venue as soon as possible.

2. We will be relooking at zoning of former industrial buildings in our neighborhood, such as the one Rhinocerospolis calls home, to identify how we can make amendments to allow for utilizing these affordable spaces as live/work places for our artist community in a safe way.
3. With urgency, we will be continuing our conversation with the City about the importance of artist-run spaces and what we all can do to help ensure they continue to exist, in a safe, but affordable way so that our artists can live and create in our urban core. Shutting things down is not a solution. Working together, creatively, to address safety issues while allowing creative uses... IS.

We must start giving artists their fair dues. They should be supported and celebrated as culture makers and shapers. Cultural institutions like Rhinocerospolis must have a home here in Denver if we want to truly be a first-class city with a creative soul.

If you want to join the RiNo Art District in supporting this work, we need you. Contact us [HERE](#) to get involved.

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