

# oc2sas

August 2011

Greetings Fellow EA Teachers, Students, Parents, and Friends,

We imagine many of you have heard of the plans to renovate the Art School, beginning perhaps as soon as early winter, 2011.

Actually “renovate” is probably the wrong word since dictionary definitions of the word include “to restore to a former better state (as by cleaning, repairing, or rebuilding)” and “to restore to life, vigor, or activity.”

If there were a definition of renovation that meant “close down for two years and then relocate to the fluorescently lit [basement](#)<sup>1</sup> so the naturally light-filled space could [house a gym and catering service](#)<sup>2</sup>, oh and don’t reopen the photography and welding studios at all” *then* that might be an accurate description. We can think of a lot of more descriptive words for EA’s plan for the Art School, none of them complimentary. “Destroy” might be the most descriptive word of all, not over-the-top if you consider how such a radical altering of the studios would betray the original mission and spirit of the Alliance and the Art School.

The question of course is what can we do? What can we do if we believe moving the Art School to a space in the *basement* less than [a third of its current size](#)<sup>3</sup> is a terrible idea? What can we do if we believe the dark-room and welding studios are too rare and valuable, especially in this increasingly digital-ized world, to simply abandon? What can we do to stop this from happening?

We’re not sure yet exactly what we can do, but we **are** sure that if we are to convince the EA leadership to change course, it will take more than a few of us to affect that change. As a first step we have formed the “Organizing Committee to Save the Art School” (AKA "oc2sas") a name we don’t believe is the least bit melodramatic given the stakes at hand. We anticipate having strategy meetings and reaching out to more of the Educational Alliance and Lower East Side community in the coming weeks as well as building an online presence\* to help keep all supporters properly updated, even those who may live far from the City.

If you are interested in learning more or helping us in our efforts, please send an email to [oc2sas@juno.com](mailto:oc2sas@juno.com) with your name and contact information. Make sure to indicate in the subject line whether you are interested in being kept informed of the Committee’s plans and/or if you might be interested in joining the Committee and volunteering your time and ideas. Also, please note that your name and any contact information you provide in this email will NOT be publicized now or in the future until and unless you give us permission to do so. At this point our first goal is simply to build a network of informed and concerned Art School patrons and friends.

Sincerely, The Organizing Committee To Save the Art School

\*Find us at [www.oc2sas.wordpress.com](http://www.oc2sas.wordpress.com) and “like” us on Facebook (search for: oc2sas).

## [September 2011 edits and clarifications to original letter](#)

<sup>1</sup> EA management claims the new space for the Art School will be in the “ground floor.” The space they refer to is currently called the “M Floor” or the mezzanine. It is one flight down from the main entrance on East Broadway but indeed one flight up from the current basement where the gym is presently housed.

<sup>2</sup> The new gym is scheduled to be housed on the fourth floor. EA has yet to adequately describe what the large “multipurpose” space planned for the fifth floor will be used for. There are planned kitchen facilities there and oc2sas has heard that the larger space will be used primarily as a banquet hall for internal VIP events and as a rental space.

<sup>3</sup> EA claims that the new art school space on the “ground floor” will be comparable in size to the current space, though it will house three (instead of five) studios. Despite assurances offered by EA management (at the 8/31/11 open meeting) to provide more detailed specifications within two weeks, we have yet to hear exact per studio comparisons in terms square footage, ceiling height, window size and placement, and we have yet to hear details on the exact future plans for the fifth floor library and the Ernest Rubenstein Gallery.