

Hello lover of art!!! Thank you for your interest in starting an artist co-op in Bremerton. Whether you attended the meeting or shared interest online, I appreciate having you around!

There is A LOT of text below and plenty of information to intake. Please be sure to read over it again before asking any questions!

Basic idea of co-op

I would like to have the main area of the building dedicated to retail for handmade goods. Artists will get space as small as a 2 ft shelf or as large as a 6-8 sq ft nook/area similar to how antique stores are divided out. The other part of the building I would like to have a workshop space, and while there are no classes going on the artists can use that as studio space.

Run down of the building

The building I would like to rent is 522 4th st in downtown Bremerton. It is directly across from the Brinkerhoff's Appliance building where the Artist Garage Sale Market was held in June. It is the storefront with no signs or logo and the blinds are always closed, in between Ashley's Pub and the VR & Karaoke place (Beyond Reality). Currently, it is being used as a distribution warehouse to sell plushies and toys - AKA *three stories* of prime real estate not being used by the community. They've been there for years and Elevated Property Management is looking to rent it to someone else.

So, now we get into the nitty gritty details. The Brinkerhoff space I originally inquired about is owned by Diamond Parking and is asking a whopping \$15,000 a month for rent. It's a bit silly for multiple reasons, first of which it needs many, many, many renovations before moving in and that's going to take a year or more after permitting (plus a lot of negotiation to make Diamond Parking cooperate). That building is listed at about 6,000 sq ft, while the 522 distribution company has about 7,200 sq ft. Somehow, they've only been paying \$4,000 for rent this whole time. But, obviously, the owners are going to ask more to the next person that moves in. I met the owner of Beyond Reality and he let me know he's been paying \$7,000 a month and been making it work for 3+ years. When I mentioned that to the rep I'm working with from Elevated Properties, he said that could be a doable number for the owners to work with for the new tenants. The perk is that the building is in great condition and we would be able to move in in a few months if we're ready.

The main floor on street level has 3 office spaces, kitchen (single sink and dishwasher), 2 bathrooms with 2 stalls each, a storage room, and back alley access. The basement is a bit unfinished, but it has a sump-pump and is safe for storage (or maybe even a rustic & moody evening event). The upstairs has 2 separate staircases, plenty of windows, and would be perfect for the workshop space. The upstairs also has 1 office space, 2 single bathrooms, and a mop room with a drain.

More fine print details about co-op operations & artist perks:

So that brings me to the next point: **rent**.

To be able to make this idea work, we will function as a collective cooperative and pay that \$7k(+) together. Think of it as owning your own store, but sharing the responsibilities so you don't have to spend so much time and financial investments to get there. Just for reference, the small shop on Callow ave that Little Bee Home held is about 900 sq ft and \$1600 a month, and Uptown Barber in downtown is about 650 sq ft and paying \$1400 a month. Even Gastropup, the pet store downtown, is paying \$4200 a month. So, taking up 7,200 sq ft is a much bigger responsibility. I am not sure what the artist spaces will cost yet and how many people we can fit, but I would gauge anywhere from \$25-400 for rent depending on how much space and building access you would prefer.

BUT.....

Since we will be operating as a co-op, we will be eligible for grants.

We can also take the idea from People's Exchange and other collectives and start a patreon (a patreon is a subscription that you choose how much to pay monthly). If you didn't know, People's Exchange runs entirely on a patreon and volunteer hours! They pay their \$620+ rent entirely by the community and then take nothing home. I hope as time goes on, we will be able to lower artist rent, and if it's successful enough for years, eliminate rent overall and move to a yearly membership fee.

There will also be a **commission fee**. It will be a low percent and only exist to cover credit card processing fees, taxes, and insurance.

Next: **volunteer hours**. As a basic co-op runs, you pay your dues in not just monthly fees but time as well. You, or one person appointed by you, needs to put in a certain amount of hours per month. I am unsure of how many at the moment, but you would help run the register and make sure no ones area is in a ruffled up mess. There would be a small amount of training to make sure you know how to run the programs, and I would like to always have at least two people in the building for safety.

Lastly (in this section *(bear with me)*): **the perks** of having an artist space! I would like to use the workshop area as studio space when there aren't any classes going on. Whether that means you get to work somewhere other than your living room for better focus, use tools you don't own, or use a drafting table instead of the floor - it's open to all. It would be an area you bring your items in and take them with you when you're done. Another form of revenue for the business would be letting customers use that space and charge a certain amount per hour or more depending on if they're using the tools left there as well.

*If you pay for an artist space already, and if you wanted to use the space to host your own classes, I would hope to make that very low cost for you.

*There are a couple offices and storage rooms in the building, so if you're interested in keeping your artwork and tools there fulltime, that could be worked into your rent costs. If there is enough interest in that, be aware there will be an application process and possible waitlist.

Board member / Founder

To make this idea work, we will need a core group of artists to run the behind-the-scenes operations & paperwork. That might look something like putting in more hours, investing more money (or at least upfront costs), managing people and communicating, conducting research in person or online, filling out paperwork, or just being a general team player. This will be pretty intense since none of us have done anything like this before at this scale. I would like to divide up responsibilities to whoever is strongest with each task - you will not be randomly appointed to do something you hate doing. And if possible, I would also like to stray away from typical president, treasurer, secretary titles and have more fun with it.... call yourself the princess I don't care as long as you can commit to the responsibilities!!!

I would like to keep the founders at 5-7 people max since it'll be hard to meet up in person or communicate with more people, plus we need odd numbers for voting. That means 4 or 6 people can be appointed. I honestly didn't think many people would be interested in this much responsibility, but after the meeting it seems there's enough interest so I have now made and included an application in this email and you are welcome to share it with anyone you know. After the deadline, I will be reviewing and vetting everyone and make a decision within a week.

DEADLINE IS AUGUST 22 11:59 PM. I WILL BE REVIEWING THEM SUNDAY AUGUST 23RD.

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScN24brN7WTNNnWaSxxj1RRxkDddWyGzM49mjwe0Kmpgtl29g/viewform?usp=publish-editor>

Survey

Here is an anonymous survey you can take to let me know the level of interest and commitment you're able to make. Someone brought up in the meeting that I should get more market research on what artists can afford for rent, how much time or product they would like to put forth, what they would like as perks, etc. So please let me know your many opinions!! If you can't fit it in the text boxes please send me an email!

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SHYVYCF>

Bio about the speaker

Ok, now after all that info you might be wondering who in the world decided to start this thing?!

Well, my name is Carly Rae and I have too much creative passion to contain myself!

I have been an artist since I could hold a paint brush, trying out every craft imaginable with my mom and sister growing up. I started making custom orders in high school and was very involved with clubs. I attended the Art Institute of Seattle and studied Fashion Marketing - it was essentially a business degree for creative brands. How to run a retail store successfully from product management, customer engagement, PR & advertising, and all the nitty gritty paperwork for taxes. I spent 6 years working at retail stores doing the merchandising & displays and have taken color theory classes on what will catch a customers eyes first.

I started my business 7+ years ago and continued my custom fine art/craft orders - adding on graphic design. About 6 years ago is when it officially became 'A Rae of Design' taking the meaning for an array of designs and/or pulling from the phrase Ray of Sunshine. I've tried plenty of festivals and markets through the county and Seattle, and have found I love farmers markets best for my tie dyed apparel. More than just participating, I have also hosted markets. For 3 years I was the sole coordinator for Deep Draft Brewing's Sunday markets where I hosted 10-15 vendors once a month from may-sept. This year, I hosted the Artist Garage Sale Market where I got permits to take over an empty building in downtown Bremerton. The month before, I overtook a smaller empty building next to Ashley's pub (where Cafe Alara has now moved in) and displayed only my own products and art: 6 clothing racks, 7 tables, and 3 walls of artwork. Both times, it was really REALLY hard to give up the building keys. I have wanted my own store since I was 16, and I even looked into getting a spot years ago before Winco went into the silverdale mall - granted, now I'm glad I didn't get a store there since it's still not a very busy mall, but just know I have been looking for spaces for a very long time.

Lastly, I will share that I work a full time job mon-fri. I am a caregiver for adults with developmental disabilities. Meaning, I'm very good at meeting people where they're at and communicating. But also, full time hours with a mentally exhausting job can be... a lot. That is why I need to help from other founders to be able to start this; there is WAY too much research, paperwork, decision making, and time investments to be able to make this happen on my own. So, if you can jump on board with my crazy idea, I would love to have the company!

Another meeting date

I would like to host another meeting, more so for the people interested in being a board member/founder but also for anyone that didn't come to the first one or just want to sit back in another. There will still be meeting notes sent out so if you don't make it that's ok too. But if we're going for that building space we gotta get this show on the road!!!

Right now I am looking at August 19th, Wednesday 6 pm again.
Evergreen Park under the covered area with the picnic tables.

If you can come, I'd love to see you. If you are busy during these hours, I will do my best to get the zoom meeting to work! Otherwise, there will be another email sending out notes on everything.