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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Artspace's Board of Directors Announces Transition

(New Haven, CT, June 16, 2023) Artspace's Board of Directors announces that it is closing its venue to the public, effective immediately. It will continue to operate remotely on a much smaller scale to fulfill its mission. The organization is working to downsize and give itself time to reassess its situation and plan for the future.

The organization has worked over the past few months to assess its condition and obligations and has decided that to further reduce operating costs it must close its venue.

"Out of an abundance of both caution and necessity, the board has decided to downsize the organization and re-examine Artspace head-to-toe," says Kara Straun, President of the Board of Directors. "We understand that this may be upsetting to many. However, the Board and staff have carefully considered our circumstances and the significance of this decision, and believe these are prudent steps necessary to safeguard this vital organization and its bright future."

Programmatically, for the short term Artspace intends to pursue collaborations to host programs and exhibitions. Artspace's Summer Artspace Program (SAP), a four-week intensive led by east coast arts educators and teaching assistants for youth, which begins in July, will be located at Creative Arts Workshop at 80 Audubon Street in New Haven. Details and an announcement about that partnership will be forthcoming.

Beyond that, Artspace staff is developing plans to continue to mount exhibitions in collaboration with other venues and spaces in New Haven, much in the way it did prior to moving to its Orange Street location in 2008. Artspace will focus on local artists for these shows. These will be both partner- and funding dependent. "It is our hope that our loyal donors and funders who believe in the importance of this organization and how it figures in the lives of individual artists here in New Haven, will continue to support Artspace through this transition time," says Straun.

Artspace is based in New Haven, Connecticut, and since 2002 has officially operated out of a 5,000-square-foot storefront in a former Civil War-era furniture factory that anchors the city's largest affordable housing complex. Prior to that home, Artspace collaborated with other venues around the city to mount its exhibitions. In that way, the organization is returning, at least temporarily, to those roots.

After the public departure of its Executive Director in January the organization brought on an Interim Director, Karen Jenkins. In addition to Jenkins, who is on board for 6 months, Artspace's staff includes one full time curator, a part time controller, part time fundraiser and a part time program coordinator. This core staff and a board of now 5 members have been working to understand Artspace's condition and develop short term actions to safeguard the institution.

The organization is moving its flat file of artists' works and all organizational records this week to a secure location at the Ely Center of Contemporary Art. "We are grateful to the Ely Center for extending this opportunity to store those most essential records and items for Artspace, and for the generosity of spirit extended to help Artspace during this difficult time," says Straun. "We believe that collaboration with sister organizations will be the key moving forward."

In its work in the coming weeks and months, Artspace must raise funds to keep moving forward, to pay staff, meet its outstanding obligations, mount exhibitions, and do the hard work of engineering a turnaround. Its intentions are to be transparent and honest with artists and the arts community—and the donors which have made all of its work possible.

"We are working to understand how we got here, tighten our operational and financial controls, and do the hard work of charting our course for the future. This work will include an organizational assessment, which will look at the strategic plan passed last year, as well as board building, says Straun. "It's been a tumultuous time over the past few years, and the pandemic didn't help. I'm grateful to the hardworking and really dedicated staff that remain at Artspace. We're all looking forward to greater stability and are prepared to do the work to get us to an organization that will thrive into the future. We know that the work ahead will include direct work with the community of artists and other stakeholders that care so much about this organization. I expect that we'll be planning a series of community conversations as we move forward, but have to get through this critical stage first. We ask for support and patience from the community as we do that."

Items that are not moving will be offered for sale at the store at 50 Orange Street. Planned dates and times include: June 21, 22, 12 - 6 PM; June 28, 12 - 6 PM. The organization has created a page for updates for the public and stakeholders which include a statement from the Board chair and an FAQ with important information. That information can be found at www.artspacenh.org

About Artspace

Artspace's mission is to foster engagement with the visual arts by bringing artists and communities together to catalyze new ways of learning, thinking, and being.

Founded by artists in 1987 as part of the alternative space movement, Artspace has served as a home for artists from all walks of life to take risks, share their stories and build bridges between Greater New Haven's diverse communities.