

Olympic threat to studios

Affordable studio space for artists should be factored into the Olympic project if its existence is not to be threatened, a new study by the National Federation of Artists' Studio Providers (NFASP) recommends. 'Artists' Studio Provision in the Host Boroughs: a review of the potential impacts of London's Olympic Project' identifies a number of issues which may endanger the 28 studio providers in the host boroughs, Greenwich, Hackney, Newham, Tower Hamlets and Waltham Forest. Factors affecting artists across the whole of London include high rental costs, lack of security of tenure and the poor condition of many artists' studios. Naomi Dines, Chair of NFASP, said that for the host boroughs, the Olympic project appears to be making things worse. She called for "a concerted effort by all the agencies – those responsible for culture, planning, regeneration and the Olympic project itself – to include artists' studios as a vital ingredient in their vision". The study found that the clearing of the Olympic site had "significantly reduced the number of potential studio spaces within and around the Lower Lea Valley" and "dispersed some of the specialist trades and services that support visual arts practice". Planning mechanisms have not yet identified how existing space might be retained or new space developed.
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