

# SOAP FACTORY

Volunteer Handbook

# From the Executive Director

The Soap Factory, since its inception in 1988 as No Name Exhibitions, has always been about much more than art. In a way, the ethos of the organization is an attempt to embody Josef Beuy's notion of art and 'social sculpture'; that the work that we all do, as we move the world, interacting with one another as humans, is all a form of art.

Our volunteer corps at The Soap Factory are not just the people who get things done: getting their hands dirty in the basement, planting in the back, roofing, cleaning floors, gallery-sitting in the cold or doing data entry in the office, but those that through all these tasks create art together. It is this creation of a community, of a society, and the knowledge that this community is an important and authentic one, that makes The Soap Factory such a special and unique place.

Thank you for all your work for The Soap Factory.

Ben Heywood  
*Executive Director*

"Every human being is an artist, a freedom being, called to participate in transforming and reshaping the conditions, thinking and structures that shape and inform our lives."

– *Josef Beuys*

# Welcome to The Soap Factory

Thank you for volunteering at The Soap Factory. Our volunteer corps is one of our greatest assets and something that makes The Soap Factory unique. I hope that during your time as a volunteer, you explore all that The Soap Factory has to offer and come to appreciate this amazing organization which volunteers have built over the past two decades.

I began volunteering at The Soap Factory in 2007 and became the volunteer coordinator in 2009. During that time, I was an intern, gallery attendant, janitor, art installer, candy maker, gardener, photographer, film-maker, painter, actor, wedding chaperone, seamstress, and above all else, an artist. The Soap Factory relies on volunteers to enable the large-scale, adventurous programming that is so well known in the Twin Cities. We would be nothing without our strong volunteer community. However, The Soap Factory gives back ten fold what you put in as a volunteer.

The Soap Factory offers a one-of-a-kind volunteer experience. No other arts organization in the Twin Cities has a volunteer corps to rival ours. As a community primarily made up of working artists, we are a laboratory for new ideas. With emerging artists from across the country participating in our programs each year and a network of local artists, you have a wealth of knowledge and experience at their fingertips.

As a volunteer, you are called upon to staff events, gallery sit, install artwork, and maintain our building. We also have a wide variety of internship opportunities that are focused on specific skills or projects. In this handbook I will go into detail about different types of volunteer tasks and provide you with all the information you will need to start volunteering.

The Soap Factory started over 20 years ago as an idea among friends. Two decades later, The Soap Factory stands out on a national level. In 2009, The Soap Factory's 100 volunteers gave over 5,000 hours of their time. Without dedicated people like you, we would not be able to realize some of our most exciting, risk-taking programs. I can't thank you enough for taking time to volunteer at The Soap Factory.

Lillian Egner

*Manager of Volunteer Programs*

[lillian@soapfactory.org](mailto:lillian@soapfactory.org)

612-840-7702

# The Soap Factory, Support and Funding

*Executive Director* Ben Heywood

1995 - 1996 (volunteer)

2002 - present (staff)

*Development Director* Debra deNoyelles

2005 - present (staff)

*Program Manager* Katherine Rochester

2008 - present (staff)

*Building and Installation Manager* Mitch Redepenning

2004 - present (staff)

*Manager of Volunteer Programs* Lillian Egner

2007 - 2009 (volunteer)

2009 - present (staff)

*Soap Factory Gallery 4 (SFG4) Producer* Bob Fagerhaugh

2002 - 2007 (volunteer)

2007 - present (staff)

*The Soap Factory appreciates the generous support of:*

The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts

Jerome Foundation

McKnight Foundation

Target Foundation

Efroymsen Family Fund

Funding provided in part by a grant from the  
Minnesota State Arts Board, through an appropriation by the Minnesota State Legislature,  
a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, and private funders.

*Additional support provided by:*

Art Materials, Red Stag Supper Club, The Chow Girls,  
Moxie Salon, Red Bull Energy Drink, Room & Board Home  
Furnishings, Restaurant Alma and Brasa, Schell Brewing,  
and numerous volunteers, artists,  
and individual contributors.

*Board of Directors*

Ryan Kronzer, Chair

Ben Heywood, Executive Director

Zach Burnett, Mary Daniels, Meghan Elliot, Sarah Schultz, Megan Leafblad,  
Lars Jerlach, Joshua Tucker, Giselle Restrepo, Ben Schein, Scott Stulen

# History

The Soap Factory began in 1892. The building we now occupy went through many transitions in its 100+ year history. At first the building was railway storage for the Union Railway. Following a major addition at the turn of the century, the building was used by Grant Battery for storage and Wheeler Barnes for table and corn syrup packaging. It wasn't until 1924 that The National Purity Soap and Chemical Co. purchased the building and made the final addition in the 1930s.

National Purity occupied this space for the majority of the 20th Century until they moved to a new location in 1992. National Purity produced industrial cleaning supplies for farms and businesses throughout the midwest. Even today it is easy to look through the gallery space and find remnants of National Purity's production days.

In 1988, a group of local artists formed a non-profit gallery called No Name Exhibitions. This was the beginning of The Soap Factory. No Name's mission was to exhibit emerging contemporary artists—those who had not made a name for themselves yet—hence the name. In the first few years of the gallery's inception, No Name was housed in a rented store front gallery space. This quickly acquired the nickname "The Skunkhouse" due to the building's former use as a furrier and the lingering smell.

In 1995, No Name Exhibitions acquired the old National Purity building, where we stand today. Years of intensive cleaning and building rehab occurred in the late 90's. When No Name moved into the building, there was no working plumbing, electricity or heat. Volunteers completed all building renovations and worked for years to bring us where we are today.

In 2005, No Name officially changed its name to The Soap Factory and we rebranded with a new logo and name. Our mission is still focused on emerging artists and in our 20 year history, we have accomplished a great deal to further that goal.

## The Soap Factory's Mission

The Soap Factory is dedicated to the production, presentation and promotion of emerging contemporary practice across the visual arts. Committed to experimentation and risk-taking, The Soap Factory offers audiences a real and immediate experience of the arts, encouraging a wider understanding of and appreciation for artists and their work.

# Programs at The Soap Factory

Throughout our season, The Soap Factory is home to a wide variety of programs. These programs, while varied, all focus on exploring contemporary art and providing an exhibition space for artists with innovative ideas.

## *SOAP FACTORY EXHIBITIONS*

The Soap Factory accepts submissions from artists throughout the year. We typically receive between 500 - 600 submissions from artists around the world. We cull those submissions to 10 - 20 artists which are shown at The Soap Factory that year. Ben Heywood, the Executive Director, curates one show each year drawn directly from those submissions. Additionally, guest curators bring in artists for specifically themed shows throughout the year. We typically have 4 large-scale exhibitions per year.

## *SOAP FACTORY SPECIAL EVENTS*

Beyond our exhibitions, The Soap Factory also focuses heavily on special events or short, project-based work. This includes our 4-day performance art festival each summer, Artery, and our Ten Second Film Festival, which is held on the 4th of July each year. These projects are typically guest-curated or artist-lead, like The Haunted Basement which has a team of over 10 lead artists each year.

## *RENTALS AND HOSTED EVENTS*

Throughout the year, The Soap Factory is rented for smaller exhibitions and events. Those events are not curated or managed in any part by The Soap Factory. However, by hosting a variety of events like weddings, launch parties and the MCAD MFA Thesis show, we expose new audiences to The Soap Factory and our mission.

*"It took 25 people 10 days to make – in an unheated warehouse in winter," Murphy says.*

*"It was minus 40 degrees in there. You need the hard-core work ethic of the Nordic Minneapolis people for that."*

*- Clive Murphy, Soap Factory exhibiting artist in 2009, quoted in the Irish Times*

Our programs have gained local and national attention over the years. We have been covered by MPR, The Star Tribune and City Pages. Additionally, our shows have been written up in national and international magazines like Artforum, Art News, Art Papers and The Irish Times. In 2009, The Soap Factory was featured in a traveling exhibition called *Heartland* in Chicago at the Smart Museum.

Programs like The Ten Second Film Festival, SFG4, Workhorse, and The Haunted Basement were all suggestions from volunteers. Good ideas always have a home at The Soap Factory!

# Program Details

## ***THE \$99 SALE***

Our biggest fundraiser, The \$99 Sale is much more than a simple art sale. Artists from around the country, famous and unknown, all submit 5 x 7" works of art for the sale. All artwork is signed on the reverse of the piece making the author unknown to the purchaser. Collectors purchase the artworks that they are aesthetically drawn to, not the work by the most famous artist. With a universal price tag of \$99 the sale is a terrific way to discover new, talented artists and possibly find the Alec Soth hidden in the mix.

All Soap Factory volunteers are encouraged to submit at least one piece to The \$99 Sale. This submission is a supportive piece of our fundraising effort. Additionally, The \$99 Sale is an opportunity for collectors to purchase your work and possibly make a connection with an emerging artist, you!

## ***THE TEN SECOND FILM FESTIVAL***

Each year on the 4th of July The Soap Factory holds The Ten Second Film Festival. After the St. Anthony Main fireworks, finish over 2,000 people gather at The Soap Factory to watch the 100 best ten second films from our open film submissions. With a band, prizes, beer, sausages and celebrity judges, The Ten Second Film Festival is one of the most fun film festivals in the country. All Soap Factory volunteers are encouraged to try their hand at creating an award winning Ten Second Film.

## ***ARTERY TWENTYTEN***

Now in its third year, *Artery* is an annual performance art festival at The Soap Factory. Initially called *Artery 24*, the festival originally took place over a consecutive 24-hour period. While attendance was surprisingly high for the 4 and 5am performances *Artery* is expanding to cover 4 evenings at the end of July. *Artery* takes time to play with time and showcases some of the best performance work from the region.

## ***WORKHORSE***

*Workhorse* is a quarterly performance event. Unlike *Artery Twentyten* which showcases the best of the best, *Workhorse* is an opportunity to show brand new and in progress performance work. Artists are encouraged to take risks and experiment. Audience feedback is key, as the artists are hoping to improve their work over time.

## ***THE HAUNTED BASEMENT***

This is by far our largest event in terms of audience numbers. The Haunted Basement, now in its 4th year, is visited by almost 8,000 people annually. This is an amazing opportunity, not only to scare the pants off of people, but to showcase the amazing things we do here all 12 months of the year. A group of dedicated leads organize every aspect of the build and performance run of The Haunted Basement. We also take artist submissions for those interested in designing a room or environment.

The Haunted Basement (nicknamed HBX in 2010) takes an unbelievable amount of volunteer labor. All volunteers are required to help in some way with the project. The Haunted Basement requires volunteers to take tickets, build sets, make costumes, guide visitors and act. Tell your friends about volunteering for The Haunted Basement, it's always more fun to volunteer with a friend!

# How Does Volunteering At The Soap Factory Work?

The Volunteer Program at The Soap Factory is set up to fit into your schedule. We understand that everyone's work, school and personal schedules are challenging. Volunteers at The Soap Factory are expected to work a minimum of 4 hours each month.

## **EMAIL**

Each week Lillian, Manager of Volunteer Programs, will send out two email updates, "Volunteer Updates." These emails will include a variety of important material. Please read each email, even if you're too busy that week to volunteer, there may be vital information about submissions, building policies or safety that are included in those emails. Every volunteer is held responsible for the information in these emails.

### What does a typical email look like?

To: awesomevolunteer@gmail.com  
From: lillian@soapfactory.org  
Subject: Volunteer Update: gallery sitting and spring cleaning

#### Spring Cleaning

Hi everyone, We have a ton of spring cleaning to do this week. Please email me to sign up for either of these cleaning shifts. We will be working on the outside and inside of the building.

April 2nd 12:00 - 4:00

April 9th 12:00 - 4:00

#### Gallery Sitting

Friday April 7th

1:50 - 5:00: Shanda N. and ?

4:50 - 8:00: ? and ?

Saturday April 8th

11:50 - 2:30: ? and ?

2:20 - 5:00: Vena A. and ?

## **WWW.VOLUNTEERSOAPFACTORY.ORG**

Our volunteer web site is a hub of information for volunteers. You can access a copy of this volunteer handbook as well as view our volunteer calendar. I also keep a volunteer blog that is up to date with projects we have completed at The Soap Factory and lots of photos. There is also a "shout out" page where I post calls for submissions as well as announcements for shows where our volunteers have artwork.

## **GOOGLE CALENDAR**

The Google calendar is accessible via our volunteer web site or can be linked to your own personal calendar. This is a way to look ahead at events and volunteer opportunities at The Soap Factory. You cannot edit the calendar yourself, it is read-only. The only way to sign up for shifts is by emailing Lillian.

# Ten Steps to Becoming an Amazing Volunteer

**1. ALWAYS BE ON TIME**

**2. ALWAYS BE ON TIME**

**3. ASK QUESTIONS** If you need assistance or need direction always ask. Lillian, Mitch or another staff member will always be around to give you a hand.

**4. TRY NEW THINGS** Part of volunteering at The Soap Factory is learning new skills. Try something new and volunteer for a variety of different tasks.

**5. TREAT EVERYONE AND EVERYTHING WITH RESPECT** All Soap Factory volunteers, staff and artists should be treated with respect at all times. The Soap Factory's building, supplies, tools and artwork should also be treated with care.

**6. BE AN ADVOCATE FOR THE SOAP FACTORY!** Tell your friends, tell your mom, tell the guy you sit next to on the light rail, tell everyone who might be interested about the amazing projects we are working on at The Soap Factory. Bring your friends in to see shows and spread the word about volunteering.

**7. HAVE A GOOD IDEA, TELL SOMEONE** The Soap Factory has been influenced by volunteers since the very beginning. The Ten Second Film Festival, The Haunted Basement, Workhorse, The Volunteer Biennial and Artery 2010 have all come about because of volunteer suggestions.

**8. SAFETY** Working with a tool, climbing a ladder or just walking through a gallery with uneven floors could be dangerous. Please use caution when volunteering in the building and never be afraid to ask for help.

**9. FOLLOW DIRECTIONS AND FOLLOW THROUGH** All volunteer work at The Soap Factory is vital for our existence as a gallery. We rely on volunteers to complete tasks ranging from stuffing envelopes to assembling complex sculptural installations. If any Soap Factory staff person gives you directions, please follow them. Additionally, if you start a project remember to follow through with cleanup after you finish.

**10. CHECK YOUR EMAIL** The only way for Lillian to communicate with our 100+ volunteers is through email. Please read each and every email thoroughly. Every volunteer is held accountable for the important information covered in those emails.

## Drug And Alcohol Policy

Consumption/possession of illegal drugs is forbidden whilst on The Soap Factory premises or around the exterior of the building, this applies to whether you are volunteering, using studio space or at The Soap Factory for any other reason.

If a volunteer is found to be intoxicated during a volunteer shift, in their studios or on the premises for any reason, they may be asked to leave the volunteer program. Disciplinary action will be handled by Lillian Egner, Manager of Volunteer Programs and Ben Heywood, Executive Director.

# Gallery Sitting Guide

The primary responsibilities of a gallery sitter include:

- “switching on” or “switching off” the current exhibition
- place open sign outside by the driveway
- greeting visitors and answering questions
- monitoring the gallery while the show is open

**GREETING VISITORS** It is crucial to be friendly with every visitor to The Soap Factory. The first impression of the gallery is very important to first time visitors and thus the gallery sitters are key!

There should always be at least one person sitting at the desk. If someone needs to answer a phone call or smoke a cigarette it should be done briefly outside and AWAY FROM THE LOADING DOCK. Please use the side of the building or walk around the block.

We need to strive to make visitors feel welcome every time they come to The Soap Factory. Every volunteer needs to be a good representative of the gallery to every single person who walks through the front door. Help be an advocate for The Soap Factory!

**GALLERY LOG BOOK** Tally everyone who visits the gallery. (instructions inside)

**SWITCHING ON/OFF SHOWS** On the gallery sitting desk you will find a folder of gallery sitting instructions. This will include a map of the gallery and directions to accompany it. Each show is different and the gallery changes a great deal over time. When switching on and off a show you must follow the directions. The gallery sitting shifts start 10 minutes prior to the gallery’s opening times. Please be on time, we must always open the gallery on time.

If there is a problem with a piece and no staff member is in the building  
please call Lillian (612.840.7702) or Mitch (612.600.7663)

**MONITORING THE GALLERY** Occasionally walk through the gallery to watch out for mischievous visitors and to check that all of the artwork is properly switched on.

**VISITOR QUESTIONS** Simple questions about hours, the exhibition and The Soap Factory itself are easy to answer with the materials at the desk or the history display near the entrance. However, anything you can’t answer you can feel free to forward on to someone else:

Ben Heywood *Executive Director*: [ben@soapfactory.org](mailto:ben@soapfactory.org)

Katherine Rochester *Program Manager*: [katherine@soapfactory.org](mailto:katherine@soapfactory.org)

Debra deNoyelles *Development Director*: [debra@soapfactory.org](mailto:debra@soapfactory.org)

Lillian Egner *Manager of Volunteer Programs*: [lillian@soapfactory.org](mailto:lillian@soapfactory.org)

Mitch Redepenning *Building and Installation Manager*: [mitch@soapfactory.org](mailto:mitch@soapfactory.org)

Bob Fagerhaugh *SFG4 Producer*: [bob@soapfactory.org](mailto:bob@soapfactory.org)

The Soap Factory’s web site: [www.soapfactory.org](http://www.soapfactory.org)

# Maintenance & Cleaning & Building & Gardening & Installation

With so many varied building and maintenance projects at The Soap Factory it can be hard to describe this type of work on paper. However, whenever a project like this occurs, you will always have guidance from Lillian or Mitch.

As volunteers, we take care of the gallery at every step. That means that cleaning the bathrooms, taking out the trash and moving equipment all fall to volunteers. But volunteers also get to help build our new shop, screen printing workshop and plant alfalfa. During installations, Lillian will plan out a schedule in advance using availability she gathers from volunteers. Be on the lookout for installation updates in the weekly volunteer emails.

Helping out on a cleaning or building project may seem daunting at first. These are not only the best ways to learn about The Soap Factory from the inside out but, also some of the most fun. In the words of one of our fantastic volunteers, "People pay hundreds of dollars an hour for catharsis like this!" He was holding a sledge hammer at the time...

## Special Events

Volunteering for special events varies depending on the nature of the event. Volunteers may be called on to be bartenders, bouncers, videographers, information guides, and chaperones. When an exhibition is on display in the gallery the top priority of our volunteers is to protect the artwork. Sometimes the art can look comfortable or delicious. But it is key that volunteers prevent any artwork from being moved, broken, or eaten.

During any special event hosted by The Soap Factory (The \$99 Sale, Ten Second Film Festival, Artery Twentyten) volunteers will be supervised by Lillian, as well as other staff members. Please keep in mind that we want the gallery to look its best while we host large events and we couldn't do that without volunteers.

Weddings and private parties are another fun volunteer opportunity. Keeping artwork safe and answering questions for those who are first time Soap Factory visitors is top priority. Tim, Birdie, and Michael are The Soap Factory's special event team. These dedicated volunteers help renters navigate the gallery and setup/strike events. Additional volunteers are always needed to assist these three.

# Help Maintain The Soap Factory

The Soap Factory is a challenging place to keep clean and maintain. There aren't enough hours in a day for the staff to clean and pick up after artists and volunteers so we need to all take responsibility for our own projects. The following are common examples, a good guide for being an amazing volunteer at The Soap Factory.

The following is a list of easy solutions to common problems.  
This is a good guideline for becoming a stellar volunteer!

Put the cap or  
lid back on the  
can of paint

Put tools back  
where you found  
them

If you break  
something, say  
something

Keep a clear  
walkway while  
you're working

Wash paint  
brushes after  
you're finished

Do not borrow  
tools or supplies  
without asking

Bag paint  
rollers air tight  
if you don't wash  
them

Dump out the  
mop water  
after you're  
done mopping

Pick up any  
trash you see  
laying outside or  
inside the  
building

Refill the toilet paper and hand towels when they run out in the bathroom

Put a bag into trash bins, leave recycling bins without bags

Only you can prevent forest fires

Throw away burned out light bulbs

Coil extension cords

Keep the front dock clear of trash and cigarette butts

## Safety

Volunteers at The Soap Factory help with every aspect of running the gallery. While this often includes administrative work, special events and gallery sitting, volunteers also do more dangerous work around the building. Volunteers often work in teams or directly with staff members and artists. However, there are independent projects and times when volunteers are not directly supervised. At all times, supervised or not, volunteers should make safety a top priority.

The Soap Factory provides safety glasses, dust masks, gloves and ear plugs. All of these items are kept in the shop. Please ask Lillian or Mitch if you can't find them. Volunteers are encouraged to bring their own equipment if they prefer.

Working on installation, building and maintenance tasks are terrific ways to learn new skills and explore what The Soap Factory is all about. If you are unsure of how to use any equipment or tools please ask for assistance. Whenever you need an extra hand completing a task, finding something, using a tool, or lifting something heavy, don't hesitate to ask for help!

Accidents do happen—luckily no one has ever been seriously injured at The Soap Factory—but bumps and bruises do occur. If you ever injure yourself when volunteering please alert a staff person immediately. First aid kits are kept in the office and in the shop. The Soap Factory also has an accident report to be filled out for anything more serious than a scrape or paper cut.

# Volunteer Incentives

While the warm, fuzzy feeling one gets from volunteering could probably end wars and cure cancer, we at The Soap Factory realize that we need to recognize the amazing community of volunteers that support us! Your time is valuable and we appreciate each and every minute you spend at The Soap Factory.

Our volunteers are rewarded in a number of ways:

- Written letters of recommendation and references
- Monthly peer critiques
- Annual portfolio review with the executive director and members of the board of directors
- Volunteer barbecues
- End of the year volunteer wrap party
- Free studio space
- Communal screen printing facilities (in progress)
- The Volunteer Biennial
- Root beer floats

## ***THE SOAP FACTORY'S STUDIO PROGRAM***

The 2nd and 3rd floors of The Soap Factory are dedicated artist studios reserved for volunteer use. These studios are available to volunteers who go above and beyond to support The Soap Factory and our mission. The studios have a waiting list and the average wait time is 2 - 6 months for a studio to open up. Any questions can be directed to Lillian, Manager of Volunteer Programs, who manages the studios.

Those wishing to have their own studio must complete a minimum of 9 voluntary hours per month. Those wishing to share a studio space with one other person must complete a minimum of 5 voluntary hours per month. Additionally we have one mandatory studio meeting each month. During these studio meetings we include a peer critique. Any volunteer interested (even those not in the studio program) are welcome to participate in the critiques.

## ***THE VOLUNTEER BIENNIAL***

Every other year The Soap Factory hosts The Volunteer Biennial in our gallery. The entire 12,000ft gallery space holds a show planned by and featuring work by our volunteers. This is an opportunity to gain curatorial experience as well as a showcase for the work of our volunteers. In 2010, The Soap Factory is hosting the 4th Volunteer Biennial, *A Very Much More* in November.

## ***SCREEN PRINTING WORKSHOP***

Volunteers at The Soap Factory are in the process of building a screen printing workshop within the studios. This area is still in progress but, once completed will be available to all volunteers with studios at The Soap Factory. Volunteers interested in having access to the printing area should follow up with Lillian.

# Internships At The Soap Factory

Each year The Soap Factory relies on a talented team of interns. These interns work on large-scale term projects like The Ten Second Film Festival and recurring events like installation. While we do take outside applicants, we strongly encourage current Soap Factory volunteers to take on some of our internship roles.

Our internships begin in the early spring and summer and vary in length for each specific project. Applications details are included with each internship posting along with the individual deadlines. For more information about current internship opportunities, please visit the volunteer web site. There you will find our downloadable Internship Guide filled with details about our internship program.

## *THE SOAP FACTORY'S 2010 INTERNSHIPS*

Installation Team Lead (5 positions)

Shop Manager

Development

Research and Data Analysis

Public Relations and Database

Haunted Basement Costume Design

Haunted Basement Construction and Fabrication

Artery 2010

Ten Second Film Festival

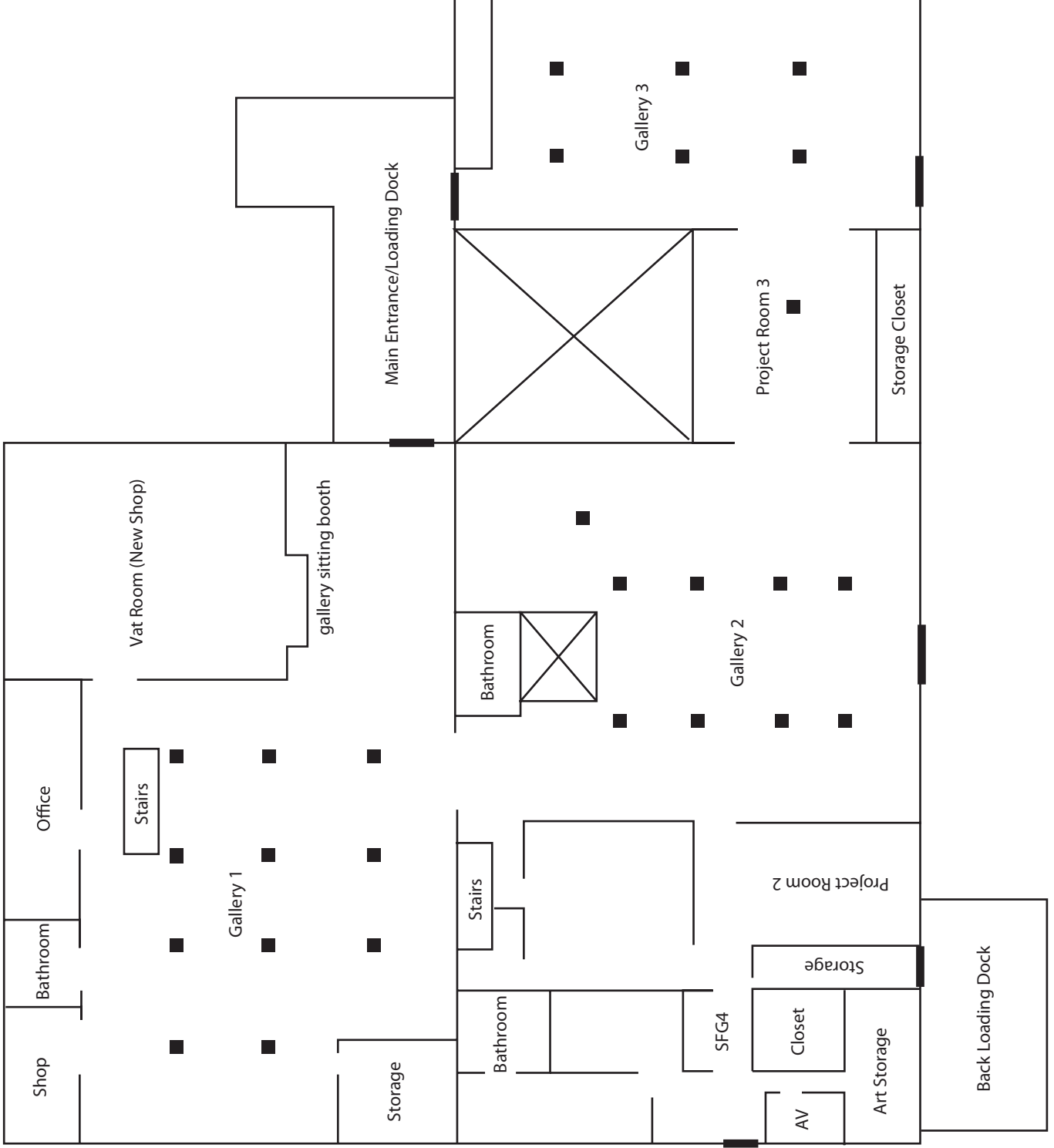
SFG4 Associate Producer

Publishing and Book Arts Internship for H.O.T.

## *COURSE CREDIT*

To receive course credit for an internship please contact your college or university advisor. Most schools accept The Soap Factory's internship program towards required internships and course credit. Please discuss minimum hour requirements and course details with Lillian.

<< 2nd Street >>



<< 5th Ave >>

