

# KATY KRANTZ

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Retting Gun Store Mural Proposal  
11/13/23

## Overview

The recent unanimous vote by the Culver City Council to buy the Martin B. Retting gun store provides an incredible opportunity for a community art project. As Culver City's Artist Laureate, I would like to transform the exterior of the building with a painted mural that reflects this celebratory moment.

Right now, the building is covered with large text reading "GUNS," "KNIVES" and "ARMOUR," amongst other words. These words have had a powerful presence in the community. A parent in the neighborhood reported that when their young child was in kindergarten, "guns" was one of the first words they learned how to read. Now that the city owns the building, I propose to collect words from the surrounding community and paint these words on the building instead. For example, "GUNS" could become "HUGS" and "KNIVES" could become "FRIEND." Though the colors in the existing design would shift to a brighter palette, the fonts of the words would remain similar, thus creating a visual link to the history of the building.

There are also five trapezoid shaped niches on the exterior of the building that appear to be former windows. I propose to use the niches as additional sites for community activations for a potential second phase of the project.

## Community Involvement

Community involvement is key to this project and will be rolled out in two phases. First, I will collect words from members of the community to use in place of existing words. I will engage sites that fall within 1000 feet of the building\*. This will include La Ballona Elementary, King Fahad Mosque, Terraza Court Senior Living, as well as many businesses and residents.

The second phase of community involvement will activate the five trapezoid niches on the front and side of the building. In this phase, I propose working with a broader swathe of the community to do a hands-on community art project. How this part of the project will take shape is yet to be determined but possibilities include collaborating with CCUSD students or West LA College students to paint micro murals in the spaces, or working with small groups to create mosaics using old tile and mirror.

*Culver 878\*\**, the community group that originated at La Ballona Elementary and who lobbied the city for closure of the gun shop, is enthusiastic about the project. They are eager to transform the building and have offered to help facilitate workshops at the school and introduce me to other local stakeholders.

## Temporary Project - Moment to Celebrate

The project would be undertaken with the full understanding that the future of the building is still uncertain and that it's possible that the building will be sold or torn down. The purpose of the

project would be to celebrate a moment of coming together, acknowledge the hard work of the community members who advocated for change and broadcast the values of the community across the neighborhood. Related to this, I propose a celebratory community event tied to the second phase of the project.

### **Labor and Budget**

Labor (painting and facilitating community involvement) would be provided by me as a part of my Artist Laureate role. I have been in dialogue with Carlos Aguilar, the head of the Sign Painting program at LA Trade Tech College — he is enthusiastic about the project and will be advising me on technical aspects. It is also possible (but not yet confirmed) that current students in the program could aid in the stenciling and painting process. Pending approval, painting supplies would be covered by the Cultural Affairs Division's Cultural Trust Fund.

### **Timeline**

November 21, 2023 — Presentation to Cultural Affairs Commission

Late November 2023 — City repaints building (primer and base layer)

December 11, 2023 — City Council votes on item

December 13, 2023 - January 15, 2024 — Word collection from the community

January 15, 2024 - February 15, 2024 — Mural painted

April/May 2024 — Community Art Project in five trapezoid niches

May 2024 — Community Celebration

\* I have chosen 1000 feet in reference to Penal Code 626.9, otherwise known as California's Gun Free School Zone Act which makes it illegal to have or use a gun within 1000 feet of a school.

\*\* *Culver 878*'s name is a reference to the fact that La Ballona Elementary is 878 feet from the Retting Gun Store.



Photos of Current Building

