

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

DTLAB: Why Downtown LA

Chiwan Choi · Wednesday, June 4th, 2014

UPDATE: We have changed the location for the entire duration of DTLAB. It's now at happening at Les Noces Du Figaro – 618 S. Broadway Ave., LA CA 90014

I am a few minutes from heading out of town with Judeth for a few days. She just finished an amazing 6 year run as a middle school/high school theatre teacher at Rolling Hills Prep and deserves some time away from things. But before we go, I just wanted to say a couple of short things about *why* we are doing DTLAB and why it is so important for us to always do this in downtown Los Angeles.

I've spoken about [the politics of space](#) before.

As you all must know (and must be feeling the effects of it), prices in this city are [going up faster than the ridiculous SF rates](#) we've seen.

We have [developers who literally want to build bridges that go over the poor folk](#) so the haves don't even have to deal with the have-nots.

Art walks are nothing more than bridge-and-tunnel drunkfests.

Old establishments with community history are being evicted [one](#) after [another](#).

Even our mayor, the one that was supposed to be all about the people, have [sold us out to billion-dollar corporations](#).

I hear from people all the time, telling me that we should set up here and set up there because it's cheaper and easier.

I get it. And we *will* spread to other parts or help others do so.

But we can't just abandon places like downtown because *all* places get gentrified (in fact, we as artists are the ones who open up gentrification more appealing) and I don't want to keep running. We want to experiment, fail, succeed, find ways in which *all* artists and arts businesses and art lovers can exploit even the biggest and most expensive cities.

Because we talk about the poorer neighborhoods as book deserts, but when you think about it, there are no damn books in rich neighborhoods either. There's no room for culture. Only for commerce.

The actual space doesn't matter. Kitchen Table doesn't matter. It could be at any other bar. The reason DTLAB is popping up again in DTLA and why it will continue to do so: So all of us can gather in one place and say, "Fuck your bridge. This is ours."

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