

## **Prebys Foundation Supports Vision for Downtown Arts with \$5M to UC San Diego for The Depot**

*The funding will provide for general operations of UC San Diego's new multidisciplinary arts incubator and cultural hub in Downtown San Diego*

Prebys Foundation has awarded \$5 million to support The Depot, the University of California San Diego's new multidisciplinary arts incubator and cultural hub in Downtown San Diego. The campus recently purchased the property, which is located at the Santa Fe Depot stop of the UC San Diego Blue Line trolley, from the Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego.

The Depot will be designed to create an ecosystem with opportunities for students and people working in the arts, keeping artists in the San Diego region. Nonprofit arts residencies are planned, as well as studio space for individual visual artists during a time when there is an urgent need for affordable spaces where nonprofit arts organizations can create and present work.

"UC San Diego is a vibrant destination where art, science and technology converge in unique educational and creative experiences," said Chancellor Pradeep K. Khosla. "The generous support of Prebys Foundation enables us to continue to expand our vision and deepen our commitment to the arts in downtown San Diego, where we will strengthen partnerships with nonprofit arts organizations and foster an enriching cultural scene for our community."

UC San Diego will invest significant resources in initial upgrades that will include a seismic retrofit, upgrades to mechanical systems, updating A/V capabilities and making the space fully adaptable for a wide array of programming. The San Diego City Council approved the transfer in late 2024. Renovation and updates of the historic building are anticipated to be completed in late 2026. Prebys Foundation is investing in operational support to advance the artistic vision, optimize site operations and foster multidisciplinary programming, which will include a breadth of art forms alongside the visual arts.

The space will be designed to offer flexibility for large-scale events and fully immersive experiences, as well as more intimate spaces for performance and visual art. In addition to providing space to produce, rehearse and perform, the university plans to support artists with ticketing and other administrative support.

"At UC San Diego, we envision a vibrant cultural hub for emerging artists that is both affordable and accessible. The operational model we are designing for this exciting space will offer essential resources that artists and nonprofits need to grow, thrive and sustain themselves," said Colleen Kollar Smith, Executive Director of the Campus Performance and Events Office and Jess Berlanga Taylor, Director and Curator of Stuart Collection and The Strauss, at UC San Diego. "As a public institution, UC San Diego aims to serve as a

cultural anchor, and we strongly believe that this space – so large and centrally located – has the potential to become a significant pride point for the region."

Blindspot Collective and Disco Riot, local art collectives that have utilized the space for the past two years, will be the first residents of the newly transitioned facility, using space in the non-historic portion of the building during renovations.

"We applaud UC San Diego's exemplary leadership in saving The Depot as a resource for the arts community and as a creative asset for downtown," said Grant Oliphant, CEO of Prebys Foundation. "This grant is designed to help the university deliver on its vision for The Depot to serve as a creative hub that enlivens our city, supports artists and connects two dynamic centers of San Diego life."

### **A Destination for the Arts**

The acquisition of The Depot builds upon UC San Diego's position as a globally recognized destination for the arts and will be further strengthened by the university's new ArtsConnect Initiative. The campus and local community is invited to engage in a range of arts education and creative experiences, from the world-renowned [Stuart Collection](#) and highly acclaimed [ArtPower](#) to [top-ranked programs in the visual and performing arts](#) and multiple distinctive venues — including the [Mandeville Art Gallery](#), the [Epstein Family Amphitheater](#), [The Loft](#), [UC San Diego Park & Market](#) and an upcoming art gallery, [The Strauss](#), which will be housed in Triton Center, slated for completion in 2026.

"The Depot will serve as an inspiring hub where artists contemplate important issues impacting our society while initiating meaningful connections in our binational community," said Dean of the School of Arts and Humanities Cristina Della Coletta. "We are excited about the new educational opportunities, nonprofit organization collaborations and cultural events we'll be able to foster downtown as part of our ArtsConnect initiative thanks to the generous support of Prebys Foundation. This gift is truly transformational to our arts community in San Diego."