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MOHA Artist in Residence MAY 2015

Currently a studio artist at MOHA

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Greetings,

This is a letter of support for the Museum of Human Achievement. I first became acquainted with MOHA during the summer of 2014 while I was still living and working in New York City. My band was on tour and we performed at MOHA through the incredible arts organization, The Church of The Friendly Ghost, which has collaborated with MOHA in countless fabulous ways over the years. It was during that performance that I met Zac Traeger for the first time. Zac explained what was happening at MOHA and I saw that it was absolutely incredible and unique. I have toured all over the U.S. and Canada and I have experienced my fair share of DIY venues and artist communities. MOHA was far and away the most organized and productive collective I had seen since the demolition of Cold Castle in NYC. Cold Castle was an example of a working artist-run community that promoted the arts and facilitated extraordinary work and collaboration. The space in the Chelsea neighborhood of NYC was donated to the artists by a developer; its time ran out and the building is now replaced by high-rise condominiums. This is partly why I am compelled to write this letter. Losing artistic community and so many venues over and over again is why I left New York after 12 years of living in the vibrant arts scene.

In May of 2015 I was asked to be the artist in residence at MOHA. I was still learning my way around the city and meeting other performers and artists. I had just finished recording a record and I was able to team up with one of the other artists working at MOHA, Adam Smith. Adam Smith had also recently moved to Austin and he brings such extraordinary expertise in his field. He has been influencing the music scene here in Austin with his above-average vinyl mastering and expert ear. He is a huge addition to the music/art scene; an example of one of the amazing people I met during my residency. Adam and I created handmade records on his one-of-a-kind lathe. I created unique artwork for each individual record and was able to have a final showcase at the end of my residency. The show was very well attended, thanks to MOHA's excellent email list and non-social media approach to growing community.

Recently a studio opened up in the building and I became the newest member to join the MOHA community. Between the performance venue, the gallery, the art studios, the common area, and the workshop of the resident artists, there is always work being created that is vibrant and totally essential. I'm thrilled to be a part of it.

Reasons why I think The Museum of Human Achievement is the best thing Austin has going for it:

- MOHA is located close to the city center which makes it accessible to the public (who we as artists desperately depend on)
- MOHA is the brain-child of Zac Traeger who is one of the most extraordinary people I have ever met; he is organized, passionate, resourceful, a brilliant artist/musician in his own right, AND INCREDIBLY SUPPORTIVE OF ARTISTS
- MOHA Brings together all of the arts disciplines into one building which encourages COMMUNITY and COLLABORATION which are the most important things in the world if you ask me ☺
- MOHA brings artists from all over the country and internationally into the Austin scene helping to make Austin richer in every way

In closing:

Austin is growing at an extraordinary rate. I have experienced first hand how art and music suffers when a city grows fast and leaves its artists behind. It is my deepest wish that the city of Austin keeps its reputation as a mecca for artists by supporting The Muesum of Human Achievement and other arts/music organizations.

Sincerely,
RACHAEL BELL