

MODEL SPACE

Chicago's Center for Lost Arts provides space and tools for architects and designers to get their hands dirty

By MATTHEW MESSNER (@MESSNERMATTHEW) • October 11, 2016

Charles Adler knows a thing or two about startups. A founder of Kickstarter, Adler is now on the ground helping makers, architects, artists, and inventors get their hands dirty with a new experimental venture.

The Center for Lost Arts is a shared space dedicated to making and being around others with a penchant for working with their hands. Now in its second iteration, Lost Arts is using the next six months to test and tweak a membership model.

Members of Lost Arts will have access to the 10,000-square-foot shop space on Chicago's Goose Island. The space is filled with all of the tools that small companies and independent designers can rarely afford for themselves. Sawing machines, CNC routers, circular saws, and 3-D printers abound in the former industrial space. The large space is divided by use; a lounge area, a coworking space, a clean-working area, event space, and the shop. For those not familiar with a piece of equipment, one of Lost Arts' experts will be on hand to provide guidance and safety instruction.

After starting with an initial group of 60 invited members—comprised of artists, architects, designers, musicians, and entrepreneurs—the project is now open for new members. Different levels of membership are designated by when and how much time you are allowed to use the space. A weekend membership starts at eighty dollars per month, with a full-time membership costing five hundred dollars per month. The month-to-month membership allows those who might only need access for one month to complete a commission or build a model or prototype on a budget. This works well for small architecture and design firms that often need model building space, but usually only have office space.

The large industrial building in which Lost Arts is located is one of many owned by Chicago developer [R2 Companies](#). With its sights set on transforming the formerly industrial Goose Island into a tech and research and design hub, R2 is a big supporter of Lost Arts, renting the space to the start up for one dollar. Comcast is also involved providing fiber internet to the space. More support has come from institutions such as the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, which will be holding a class in the

space this next semester. The first iteration of Lost Arts, a one-month test of the idea, was (appropriately) funded through Adler's former venture: \$11,000 was raised on Kickstarter.



Lost Arts is not alone in providing space targeted at startups and small practices, but it is one of the few dedicated to making physical products. In the Merchandise Mart, 1871 Chicago focuses on computer programming and business startups, while a handful of coworking spaces across the city are simply a place to have a desk. The shared economy which all of these spaces are a part of is still evolving. Young architecture firms are some of its earliest adopters, bringing together lost arts and new models of practice.

For more on Los Arts, see their website [here](#).