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# Forget your coffee break! Take an art break instead

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Two artists set up public art tables at five spots in the Bay Area on Friday, encouraging people to stop for a few minutes (or a few hours) and draw or paint a picture.

**Lisa Rasmussen** and **Lauren Odell Usher** organized "Take 5: Art Break Day" as a way to make passersby into artists. They also hope to draw cubicle workers out of their buildings to refresh and renew themselves in what is probably an unfamiliar creative act.

"We feel that a lot of people shy away from art," said Usher, who lives in Berkeley and describes herself as a photographer, printmaker and "creative reuse" artist.

She and Rasmussen, who met in graduate school, set up tables in Justin Herman Plaza in San Francisco, San Rafael, Berkeley, Richmond and Oakland with the help of a \$9,768 grant from Art4More and stocked them with paints, markers, pencils and paper. From 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Friday, anyone who wants can sit under a canopy and make art.

The pair describe it as a "no judgment zone." There's no theme and there's no time limit.

People can keep the pictures they make, or donate them to the organization (Rasmussen and Usher run a group called Art is Moving) which will publish them on line and show some at a show in January at Flax Art Supply on Market Street in San Francisco.

Rasmussen, who recently moved to Santa Monica and who keeps in touch with Usher via Skype, described the preparation for today's event as "A year of blood, sweat and tears."

Though the five cities they contacted were all enthusiastic about the event, Usher said it was

still sometimes tough getting all the right permits. "The hardest part is getting in touch with the right person."

Rasmussen, an abstract expressionist painter, also said raising money was hard. "We didn't raise enough money," she said. The pair sought corporate and individual donations, and also applied for art grants.

They began fundraising in April and made their biggest push in July.

This isn't the first attempt by the two artists to bring easy artmaking to the public. Two summers ago they created an "art cart" -- "like a hotdog stand but for making art," Usher said - - that they've taken onto sidewalks in Oakland's Koreatown district along Telegraph as well as the Fillmore District in San Francisco and in Berkeley.

"Every fourth person stops," said Usher. "We've had homeless people sit next to people in suits."

Usher and Rasmussen hope to repeat Take 5: Art Break Day every year, and to expand it to more cities and even other countries in the future.

Read more about [Art is Moving](#) and about [Take 5: Art Break Day](#) [here](#).

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