

## Los Angeles Firm Discourages Graffiti with SEI Chemical and Aggressive Property Management

An LA redevelopment and management firm – Creative Environments of Hollywood (CEH) – reports they have found successful formulas that both encourage tenants to live/work in excitingly renovated, under-utilized and under-performing properties while discouraging graffiti artists from exercising their talents or skills.

Their secret? As part of their renovation plans and budgets, apply specially formulated, environmentally friendly anti-graffiti coatings from specialty coatings formulator SEI Chemical to all vulnerable surfaces. But, note company officials, despite this when taggers do manage to display their “art,” CEH personnel quickly and easily remove the graffiti to discourage them from coming back. “After all,” quips David Djalilmand, the procurement agent for Creative Environments, “even graffiti artists have egos – if their work fails to ‘stick’ to a surface or is quickly taken off, they simply don’t come back.”



The net result, therefore is multifold, not just a major cost saver: tenants are happy; landlords maintain higher occupancy levels; maintenance costs are kept low; and tags are gone. Most importantly, buildings maintained by CEH stay almost completely graffiti-free, a major departure from other structures throughout the LA area.

CEH has found it prudent to make the buildings they rehab and maintain graffiti, mold and water proof with environmentally friendly anti-graffiti and other protective coatings. They accomplished this with a partner in the form of SEI Chemical of Northridge, CA. SEI has quickly earned a sterling reputation as the architectural and building industry’s fastest-growing multi-purpose coatings formulator. Why? Their broad line of protective coating works. SEI products utilize patented **nanotechnology** that impart high slip, anti-stick constituents that do not allow paints, stickers, markers or adhesives to adhere. In spite of the plethora of graffiti protection and removal products available on the marketplace, most landlords, maintenance firms and tenants opt to either spend thousands of dollars annually for ongoing cleanup, purchase marginally effective coatings or paint over the nouveau art, rather than take proven preventative measures. However, CEH acknowledges that their properties continue to be tagged, but only minimally. But, when graffiti appears, it is quickly (and easily) removed thanks to the coatings, prompting the artists to give up or simply go elsewhere. “We wanted to nip the problem in the bud, so to speak,” continues the CEH spokesman. “We’ve built our reputation and business specializing in the construction, conversion and rehabilitation of creative commercial, live/work and residential space for the inspired urban tenant. With the goal of revitalizing urban neighborhoods of LA, we knew graffiti was both inevitable and a costly problem.”

“A search for solutions found us locate a relatively young and aggressive firm right in our own back yard, so to speak,” continues Mr. Djalilmand. “Ross Sklar, the founder and CEO of SEI Chemical, showed us how their environmentally-sound anti-stick protective and cleaning products might be the answer to our needs, and keep maintenance costs at fairly low levels.”

The property portfolio of successful, superior risk-adjusted returns by CEH is quite diverse. Their mantra is to bring new life and value to their properties in the trendiest LA neighborhoods as well as newly emerging communities and fill them with happy tenants. One of their first revival undertakings was and is Cosmos Lofts at Cosmo Street in LA, one block east of Caheunga between Hollywood Blvd. and Selma. Cahuenga Blvd. is ground zero for Hollywood’s nighttime renaissance and the location is central to the Los Angeles freeway and public transportation system.

Cosmo Lofts was a conversion of an existing 1920's furniture warehouse into modern live/work units featuring high ceilings and fluted columns with industrial chic décor. Such converted buildings by CEH have garnered a high level of interest and occupancy appeal among Hollywood's artistic, fashion, entertainment and creative professionals for a unique living and working experience.

"For starters at Cosmo Lofts," recalls the CEH spokesman, "we needed a water resistant, resilient mold proof roof coat. Based on recommendations from SEI Chemical, we applied one of their **SMP-300 Mold Proofer®** insulative roof coatings. This is an elastomeric product that features ceramic technology for a seamless membrane that prevents the growth of micro-biological life. Further, it provides an insulative barrier on either porous or non-porous roof materials. An added benefit was that the formulation also stops leaks, reduces thermal shock and improves the lifecycle of the roof."

But it was the challenge of graffiti elimination and maintenance that posed the greatest challenges to the Cosmos Loft project. The product recommended by SEI Chemical, and used on the Cosmos Loft project, after all original graffiti was sandblasted away, was **GRA-200 Graffiti Proofer® Anti-Stick**, a highly fluorinated and extremely durable coating that utilizes a proprietary fluoro-polyol formulation. Its effectiveness can be attributed to the formulation having the highest concentration of fluorine of any resin system currently on the market, thus giving the highest level of anti-stick characteristics of any product currently available on the market.

"What sets this use of this **Graffiti Proofer** apart from all others," notes Mr. Djalilmand, "is that it is a deterrent coating, meaning many spray paints simply do not adhere to the surface and run off. When a tagger attempts to vandalize the structure, the paint and other graffiti materials simply run off – it's most impressive. If this doesn't work, special towels with built-in cleaner remove any traces of graffiti. Further, the coating is also UV stable as well as highly resistant to hydrocarbons, corrosion, graffiti and a wide variety of chemicals. Application onto concrete, brick or even metal with a sprayer or brush is easy and the color of the substrate doesn't change."

But, continues the CEH purchasing agent, "Taggers are quite persistent and despite our efforts, some graffiti manages to 're-appear'. We then turn to the **Graffiti Remover SYS**, an environmentally safe, high performing and economical product that utilizes migratory technology to penetrate and chemically fracture the molecular bonds in paints, lacquers, enamels and stains. It is effective since the product creates a space between graffiti and the substrate, making removal easy. Depending upon the severity of the graffiti, removal is accomplished with a spray or SEI Chemical graffiti removal towels".

When asked to put a tangible number to the gains or savings with the coatings technologies used on CEH projects, Mr. Djalilmand is quick to reply that it amounts to nearly 40% in time, energy and other material savings. This savings estimate can quickly be translated into major dollars when it is known that CEH has nearly 750,000 square feet of building space either completed, under construction or in pre-development, in addition to the Cosmos Loft facility. CEH, according to their spokesman, prides itself on seeing potential where others don't, delivering contemporary graffiti-free urban spaces at affordable prices. In doing this, the firm has cultivated a loyal tenant base and provides value-added real estate ventures for its own account, its loyal investors or together with joint venture properties.

**SEI Chemical**, with offices and facilities in Northridge, CA and Vancouver, BC, Canada and sales worldwide, has earned its way to become a global leader in the fields of release, anti-stick, anti-abrasion, anti-microbial, anti-corrosion and industrial coating products and additive technologies. The firm also synthesizes and formulates resins systems, coupling agents, curing agents, sealants and building restoration products.