

Vista Studios to Stormwater Studios

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Artist's rendering of new Stormwater Studios

plex, just off Huger Street in close proximity to One Eared Cow Glass and Lewis + Clark studio, are ten artists widely regarded for their work in a myriad of mediums. To make this move, they have packed up stone and clay, easels, paints and other supplies, paintings completed last week and years ago.

They leave behind a strong sentiment of appreciation for architects Richard Molten and Dick Lamar who allowed them to stay at 808 Lady Street all these years - at rental rates that conveyed an allegiance to the arts.

Vista Studio artists who will become Stormwater Studio artists are: Eileen Blyth, Stephen Chesley, Heidi Darr-Hope, Pat Gilmartin, Robert Kennedy, Sharon Licata, Michel McNinch, Kirkland Smith, Laura Spong, and David Yaghjian.

Vista Studios President Kirkland Smith said, "Vista Studios has served a number of artists during the 27 years it has been opened. Although an important part of The Vista, which recently received the distinction of being designated an "Arts District", Vista Studios has not been spared gentrification and, as usually happens when an area is revitalized, the artists have been pushed out for businesses that can afford the higher rent."

Smith added, "One thing that is special about Stormwater Studios is they have been built for the future of the arts in Columbia. Zoned for art, the idea is to create a permanent studio space for artists. Having the City (of Columbia) contribute to the project shows its support for keeping the visual arts a vital part of the Vista." Shepherding the lengthy project through local bureaucracy: easements, building codes, as well as design and construction has been visionary Fred Delk, executive director of Columbia Development Corporation (CDC.) Since 1983 CDC has been the public-private partnership entity undergirding commercial and residential development projects, especially in what is known as Columbia City Center.

A signal example of CDC projects has been the redevelopment of the Congaree Vista, once a dreary, overlooked warehouse and railroad district, now a thriving arts and entertainment mecca.

Arts catalyzed that first renaissance that ushered in The Vista; now arts are catalyzing a timely turn-of-the-corner, onto Huger Street, giving The Vista a new corridor for growth.

The plot of urban property on which Stormwater Studios has emerged was predestined for art. During Kirk Finley's tenure as Columbia Mayor, the property - close to a section of the Congaree River - had been earmarked for development by Columbia Museum of Art (CMA). When premium space at the corner of Hampton and Main streets became available, CMA chose it, and the plot at the end of Pendleton Street, off Huger Street, sat waiting

for decision makers to see its worth for other art purposes.

Visionary Delk saw it all along. The urban plot's potential never left his thoughts. His vision was another catalyst, but Delk emphatically said, "The CDC board decides which projects will be taken on; I could do nothing without them."

A natural aesthetic that rarifies this location is Kinsler Creek, running just behind the studios. The creek, that inspired the nickname Stormwater - which has stuck and become de facto - feeds into the Congaree River just beyond a thick hedge-row. Within easy view of The Capital, the property - interspersed by concrete trails - make this spot an urban oasis.

In the lengthy process, alterations were made, as happens in most construction undertakings. Cost savings were paramount, but how the space would be used was equally important. Now artists whose studios face the future courtyard will have roll-up doors, facilitating their maneuvering of art materials (think: stone and clay headed into sculpture studios.) Open spaces will enable them to showcase their work off more advantageously, to patrons as well as students. Exhibition space and lighting will make Stormwater Studios a coveted space in which to show art.

Delk explained the artists will have "virtually the same amount of work and exhibit space they have had for a quarter century at 808 Lady Street, although it will be configured differently. The entrance doubles as central gallery " Clark Ellefson designed the kitchen/hospitality area.

Occupants of the eleventh studio is not yet known, but it will become workspace for an MFA-candidate from the University of South Carolina School of Visual Art and Design working in sculpture.

"Forging this relationship is new ground for Columbia," Delk said. "USC has not had an off-campus site, so having a graduate student in there will afford the Art department visibility within the broader community."

A University presence also realizes the teaching aspects philosophically inherent in the project. A key point of studios occupied by working artists is to allow others to see creativity taking on life.

Stormwater Studios gets checked off the 2018 calendar; near the end of 2017, the City of Columbia moved the Columbia Arts Center to Taylor Street, adjacent to OneColumbia, and supports - in a variety of ways - many other arts projects.

Stormwater Studios will begin participating in First Thursdays as soon as artists are settled, and will welcome guests to Open Studios and Artista Vista, both events scheduled for April.

For further info contact Fred Delk, executive director of Columbia Development Corporation by calling 803/988-8040.

held on Feb. 15, from 6-9pm.

City Art Gallery recognizes the variety of the artist imagery as similar to past work but reaching into the future with diversity. "I always create to inspire the

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world, in the most powerful and positive manner. I aim to give you life, perseverance, power, and strength to move through life's obstacles, with a strong sense of beauty and boldness. Be bold and be beautiful," says Mix.

Mix received his undergraduate degree from Howard University in Washington DC. The strong African American studies program at Howard had a large impact on his painting. He found himself immersed in the culture and history of movements like the Harlem Renaissance and jazz figures such as Miles Davis and John Coltrane. They motivated Mix to create imagery evoking the smooth, laid back rhythm of jazz.



Work by Tariq Mix

Most of Mix's work prior to arriving in South Carolina was set in a jazz club scene, with the majority of the work focused on musicians. Recently, however, he adjusted the angle of the work to



Work by Tariq Mix

focus more on club-goers: diners, dancers, romancers. This does not mean that he forgoes the music aspect of his work. The essence of jazz is still there, in the contouring lines of the figures and the movement evoked by them. "My work dances with emotion across the canvas," Mix said, "I create with bold colors, strong design and composition and lively characters."

City Art Gallery is located on Lincoln Street in the historic Congaree Vista area in Columbia, South Carolina.

For further information check our SC Commercial Gallery listing, contact Wendy Wells, City Art Gallery, at 803/252-3613 or visit (www.cityartonline.com).

City Art Gallery in Columbia, SC, Features Works by Tariq Mix

City Art Gallery in Columbia, SC, is pleased to celebrate Black History Month with the work of Tariq Mix and his new show entitled *BOLD & BEAUTIFUL* featured in the main gallery from Feb. 15 through Mar. 31, 2018. A reception will be

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Columbia Museum of Art in Columbia, SC, Offers Works by Imogen Cunningham

The Columbia Museum of Art in Columbia, SC, proudly presents the major spring exhibition *Seen & Unseen: Photographs by Imogen Cunningham*, a retrospective showcasing one of the most

influential and innovative photographers in the history of the genre, on view from Feb. 2, through Apr. 29, 2018. The exhibition features 60 of Cunningham's best

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