



Urban Times

ARCHIVES

FROM: MARCH 2008

Two artists promote merits of Circle City Industrial Complex

A LITTLE MORE THAN A YEAR AGO, WHEN THE artist named Wug Laku was looking for a place to practice his multi-faceted artistry, he looked around at facilities such as the Stutz Business Center and the Murphy Art Center.

But he knew his search was over when he walked into the massive Circle City Industrial Complex, a monolithic structure nestled between Massachusetts and Brookside avenues just east of Interstate 65 and the southern terminus of the Monon Trail.

“As soon as I saw this building, and learned that Dolphin Papes was here,” Laku remembered, “I said to myself, ‘I’m home.’”

That feeling was already well-embedded in Martha Narwold, who has called the Circle City Industrial Complex home for five years. Just down the hallway from Wug Laku’s Studio and Garage sits Narwold’s Five Seasons Studio, where she works on art she calls experimental – impressionistic landscape marbling. But she still has one foot in the traditional world, with watercolors and acrylics. In both categories, much of her subject matter is often related to nature, not surprising for a woman whose background is in zoology. The American Southwest is a particular inspiration. She also does three-dimensional work, “as the spirit moves me.”

In that sentiment, Narwold and Laku are kindred spirits.



▲ Wug Laku “Ripple Effect” is a digital photo/mirrored landscape, taken north of Zionsville.

“Like Martha, I’m doing some innovative stuff,” Laku said. “I just don’t know what to call it.”

Together, they form perhaps the city’s smallest artist colony. Although the Circle City Industrial Complex totals 13½ acres under one roof, their studios are in a section of the complex which doesn’t have any sense of size. Visitors can find their studios through a business entrance at 1125 Brookside Ave., across the street from a sizable parking lot.

They would like other artists to keep them company – a sentiment they say is shared by their landlord, who will tailor to suit spaces from 800 square feet to 40,000 square feet.

TWO ARTISTS / page 2

Both artists pass the word to their fellow artists, and to folks who visit them on First Fridays. The two galleries take part in the monthly events sponsored by the Indianapolis Downtown Artists and Dealers Association, with attendance varying from about 20 to 50, depending upon how hard the two artists work on publicity.

“I expect the numbers to go up quite a bit this year,” said Laku, whose enterprise is actually five businesses – abstract paintings and drawings; decorative wood boxes; “Waku light boxes,” Waku furniture, and photo-mirrored landscapes.

About that name: “Wug” is an old nickname, he said, “while ‘Laku’ comes from an Evelyn Waugh novel. The local artist understands it to mean “undetermined destination,” a fitting appellation for an artist who had an early hand in the Art in Hand Gallery, a seminal Zionsville space, and the School 30 co-op on the city’s Westside.

Today, Lug Waku’s Studio and Garage sits in a cozy space which was once a bio-medical testing room. When Narwold moved in five years ago, her next-door neighbor was a wind-tunnel testing room, leading to some strange sounds emanating through the thick walls.

Those sounds are gone, replaced by the quietude of art, at least in one particular section of the enormous building. And while they wait for some more artistic company, Narwold and Laku spread the word, put signs along East 10th Street to help guide visitors to their studios, and keep experimenting.



▲ Martha Narwold’s current work focuses on “marbled” paintings inspired primarily by landscapes.



◀ The studios of Wug Laku and Martha Narwold can be found at 1125 Brookside Ave. just across from the building’s parking lot.

- Bill Brooks