

Marin artists get together to promote their work

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The ICB Artists Association guide. (IJ photo/Jeff Vendsel)

Suzie Buchholz (left) and Dayna Willard, in a hallway at the Industrial... (IJ photo/Jeff Vendsel)

ARTISTS who rent studios at the Industrial Center Building in Sausalito have formed an organization to promote themselves. The ICB Artists Association comes 40 years after artists began annual December open-studio events at the building when a small group opened its doors to the public.

The building, a former shipbuilding facility, now houses more than 100 artists and is considered a model "studio cluster" in the art world. Suzie Buchholz, the association's first president, said the organization of artists caps years of discussions about pulling the tenants together. "It's like any other community that comes together - things work informally É and then as things grow, you need to systemize it," Buchholz said. "This organization gives us the opportunity to tap into all those creative talents." About 70 of the artists have joined the association, paid dues and agreed to by-laws developed in recent months. "We keep raising the bar on how we expose ourselves and interact with the community," Buchholz said. "We want to let people know what exists here; there haven't been that many occasions to bring the public in."

Jeanne Bogardus, executive director of the Marin Arts Council, said the association will benefit the artists with unified public relations efforts. "They are responding to some of the needs they see and trying to reach out," Bogardus said. "They are thinking smart - more like a business."

Diane Dunn, the council's associate director, said artists need alliances to market and promote themselves but typically are caught up in working on the art they love. Dunn said many artist "clusters" have popped up in Marin, and each has its own culture. "The ICB is the grandparent of them all," Dunn said.

Buchholz said the association will host events such as workshops, seminars, artist talks, art sessions and gallery events. "The whole Bay Area is a very rich community for fine arts," Buchholz said. "This just really helps us to be able to focus more attention and highlight what exists on this side of the bridge."

ARTISTS MIXER

The ICB Artists Association will celebrate at a Sausalito Chamber of Commerce mixer from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Aug. 7. Guests may tour the building and visit studios to see art ranging from painting and sculpture to photography, prints, textiles and jewelry. Admission is free for chamber members and \$10 for others.