

Artistic endeavors

Here's how four Atlantans got their start in the business of art

CHIC, HIP AND SOULFUL

WHO: Linda Edmonds-Lima, executive director/curator/artist, and John Lima, marketing director, Studio Clout Fine Art Gallery

THE BEGINNING: The inspiration for the gallery came from Linda being an artist and wanting to establish an environment rich in resources for artists with the opportunity to work with other artists and to create a comfortable place for them to gain expo-

sure. "We made a conscious decision to be the type of art gallery that artists of all disciplines would be drawn to and welcome," John said. "We lived in Europe for two and a half years, from 2001 to 2004, and visited a multitude of galleries in various countries, and that experience played a part in our decision to open a gallery here in the U.S. as well." They chose Castleberry Hill because of its vibrant, eclectic vibe and proximity to

downtown Atlanta.

WHAT: Studio Clout is housed in a 6,700-square-foot, authentic loft building in Historic Castleberry Hill and is within walking distance of the Georgia Dome, Phillips Arena, CNN and Georgia Aquarium.

The interior of the lower gallery features exposed metal beams and brick, hardwood floors, warm lighting and comfortable leather seating, while the second floor main



PHOTOS/SPECIAL



gallery offers a white ceiling and white brick walls, and a high-gloss creamy floor that serves as an elegant setting for both exhibits and events. The main gallery's rooftop terrace showcases an urban backdrop and view of the Atlanta skyline. "This historic loft exudes a chic, hip, soulful ambience that is unmatched," John said.

HOW IT WORKS: The gallery represents a cross-section of artists, with a focus on African-American artists. "Our vision is to feature artists that have something to say and aren't afraid to explore artistically and won't compromise their artistic voice to be 'accepted' or 'trendy,'" John said.

DISTINGUISHING FACTORS: The African-American-owned art gallery works with artists from various ethnic backgrounds. Artists have a chance to participate in open studios, to teach classes and to exhibit their work. Live music, dance, performance art and poetry often are incorporated in art openings, unveilings and other unique gallery events as well.

FINAL THOUGHT: "Local galleries

add an important grass-roots creativity to the city that you don't always get from the major arts institutions in Atlanta," John said. "Talented young artists are emerging from local galleries. Galleries that show works from local artists who are capturing the culture of Atlanta are invaluable to the history of the city. People should visit and embrace all the Atlanta galleries and the diverse offerings provided.

"Great art is happening throughout the city, and sometimes it's troubling that local artists, especially African-American artists, have to exhibit in other cities to be accepted and collected," he added. "Atlanta needs to do a better job of supporting local galleries, recognizing and collecting local artists who live in Atlanta and exhibit in the local galleries."

FOR MORE INFORMATION: Hours are Tuesday (Open Studio/Figure Drawing) from 7-10 p.m., Thursday and Friday from 11 a.m.-3 p.m., Saturday noon-5 p.m., and Monday and Wednesday by appointment; call (404) 688-2787 or visit www.studio-clout.com.

FAMILY BUSINESS

WHO: Margot and Charlie Smith, co-owners, The Metropolitan Business & Arts District

THE BEGINNING: Working together, this brother and sister lease creative lofts, office and warehouse space in The Metropolitan. "Real estate has been a family business started by my father and continued with my brother and I," said Margot, adding that the units are attractive to many artists and small businesses alike for the large square footage offered at low prices, as well as the 16-foot-to-17-foot ceiling heights. Many of the units also have drive-in, roll-up doors.

WHAT: The Metropolitan is in the historic West End of Atlanta directly behind the West End MARTA station. It has about 200 loft, office and warehouse units that it rents to artists from furniture-makers to metal-workers to sound studios to photo studios, including Charlie Smith, a metal worker; Portal Gallery; Blue Tower Gallery; The Atlanta Printmakers Studio; The Monarch; Greg Wattleton; and many more.

DISTINGUISHING FACTORS: "The art community at The Metropolitan is very unique and very underground," Margot said. "From the outside of the building it looks like old warehouse space, but inside it is amazing to see what some of our tenants/artists/business owners have done with the spaces, as well as what they create within the walls of their spaces. Our galleries do show art, but some combine a unique blend of art, performance art and lots of fun. Going to these shows are always inspirational and are key for a thriving art community."

FOR MORE INFORMATION: Hours are Monday-Friday from 9 a.m.-6 p.m., Saturday from 11 a.m.-4 p.m. and Sunday by appointment; call (404) 758-8800 or visit www.metropolitanwarehouses.com.