

## **Galleries, artists sigh in relief, hope to remain in structures**

By: Cameron MacLean

23/01/2009 8:52 AM | [Comments \(0\)](#)

MEMBERS of Winnipeg's art community are cautiously relieved by Manitoba Hydro's announcement it will hold off on plans to purchase and gut three historic buildings in the Exchange District until it talks to the parties involved.

Liz Garlicki, gallery assistant for Ace Art, believes Hydro was "taken aback" by the uproar from the community.

"I'm glad Hydro wants to talk to the community about this... instead of taking over the buildings and kicking us all out," she said.

But she's not getting her hopes up. "We're not out of the woods yet. Talking doesn't mean stopping."

The Wilson, Glengarry and Daylite buildings at 288, 290 and 296 McDermot Ave. — all on the city's historic buildings list — are home to many local galleries and artists.

To break up that community would have an enormous impact on the Winnipeg art scene, said K.C. Adams, director of Urban Shaman Gallery, the largest aboriginal-run art gallery in Canada.

Urban Shaman is directly across the hall from Ace Art.

Adams said the two galleries often hold simultaneous exhibition openings. "We bring them a whole new audience and they elicit a whole new audience as well," she said. "It becomes this one huge night of gallery openings."

As more historic buildings downtown are transformed into condos and office buildings, affordable art space has become increasingly scarce.

That creates a problem for artists like David Wityk, 33, who has been sharing a space in 288 McDermot Ave., for nearly three years.

"The competition for space is more intense. It also drives up the price," he said.

Wityk's art is recreating the interiors of old industrial buildings. He said the scuffed floors, cracked brick, and peeling paint of the old building is the perfect creative environment.

"I see a lot of beauty in the roughness," he said.

Wityk said there are at least 20 artists who work in the three buildings. If forced to move, many of them would not be able to find new spaces in the Exchange.

For now, local artists will hold their breath and wait to see what comes out of Hydro's public consultations.

"They want to co-operate with us, but in what way and how far? Are they going to buy us a new building? That would be great," Garlicki said.

cameron.maclea@freepress.mb.ca

**Find this article at:**

<http://www.winnipegfreepress.com/local/-Galleries-artists-sigh-in-relief-hope-to-remain-in-structures38217984.html>

Check the box to include the list of links referenced in the article.