

## ALL ABOARD FOR LIBERTY STATION

ART STUDIOS AND GALLERIES BECOME DESTINATIONS ON THE FIRST FRIDAY OF THE MONTH



Bill Jenkins contributes to a collaborative painting during a visit to Peggy Fischbeck's studio gallery during Friday Night Liberty.

**A**S A MECHANICAL ENGINEER, Bill Jenkins uses the left hemisphere of his brain. Stretching the creative right hemisphere, he brushes paint onto a canvas in Peggy Fischbeck's studio gallery.

Peggy invites guests to collaborate on a painting as part of Friday Night Liberty's open artist studios at Liberty Station that attract crowds on the first Friday of the month. She has chosen "fall leaves" as October's theme.

"I think the whole art thing is fun, but my mother was the immediate catalyst," Bill says, noting that he lives two blocks away. His mother, Janet Collins,

read a "Day Trip" article in the August issue of *Sunset* magazine titled "Why You'll Love Liberty Station, CA." Among the reasons given: "It Loves Art."

Alan Ziter, executive director of NTC Foundation, estimates that the monthly event attracts 500 to 800 people, who come to enjoy artist receptions, live music and dance performances, wine and hors d'oeuvres, and a celebratory atmosphere. Around the middle of each month, the foundation posts on its website ([ntclibrestation.com](http://ntclibrestation.com)) a program for the upcoming Friday Night Liberty (5-8 p.m.). A full-color, four-page program in print is

distributed on campus around the 20th of the month.

In addition to about 20 artist studios, NTC at Liberty Station tenants participating in the event include the Visions Art Museum of textiles, Women's Museum of California, a children's bookstore, a tea shop, a pottery and candlemaking studio, dance and music centers, the San Diego Watercolor Society and a gallery and gift shop operated by St. Madeleine Sophie's Center of El Cajon.

In October, Sophie's Gallery showcased its annual *Sitting Pretty* exhibition, timed to coincide with National Disabilities Month. Mounted on the walls and sitting on the floor were wooden chairs painted by the center's developmentally disabled students in a style inspired by famous artists whose work they admire. This year's collection included tips of the hat to Jean-Michel Basquiat, Paul Klee, Jackson Pollock, Norman Rockwell, Helen Frankenthaler, Mark Rothko, Leonardo da Vinci and more.

Emily Halpern, who also has a studio at The Brewery in Los Angeles, worked on a large painting as guests wandered in to view her display of oil-on-linen abstracts with intriguing titles such as *Tight Rope Walking for People With Complicated Lives*.

Adele Richert had turned over walls in her space to William Ferrell and was discussing materials and techniques with him as guests stopped in to view his new *Rifting* series of abstract paintings.

Metal sculpture and mosaic artist Aida Valencia greeted guests to Casa Valencia Galería Baja, the gallery she opened in August to promote not only her own work but also the work of artist friends in Baja.

"My studio and gallery is in Tijuana," she says. "The artists I showcase in Liberty Station have different studios, but all of us are part of a group we call Artes de Mexico. We feature every first Friday different artists in group or solo exhibitions. I'm always there because it is our opening reception."

Andy Gonzalez also promotes works by Mexican artists in his gallery, La Onda Arte Latino. His exhibition included paintings of matadors and mariachis and Rosarito artist David Silvah's flamenco dancers and portrait of Don Quixote. Andy had booked complementary entertainment for the space behind his gallery: Lilian Rey and Anthony Mendez, performing Latin music as a duo, and the folklorico and flamenco dance group DanzArts.

The San Diego Watercolor Society opens a juried show of



In October, the San Diego Watercolor Society hosted a crowd of art lovers during its 33rd Annual International Watercolor Show. Among the 95 works, *Union Square* by John Salminen of Duluth, Minn., (seen at left in the foreground) won second place in the competition.



Casa Valencia Galería Baja (above) features different artists from Baja each month, with shows opening on the first Friday of the month. Shown at left is *Between my hands*, a mixed-media sculpture by gallery owner Aida Valencia, who divides her time between Liberty Station and her studio/gallery in Tijuana.

ALL PHOTOGRAPHS BY JANICE KLEINSCHMIDT

members' art each first Friday and in October hosted its 33rd Annual International Watercolor Show. More than 500 people came through the gallery that night, and many voted for their favorite among 95 paintings for the people's choice award.

"We have had a first Friday event for many years," says Alice

Kayuha, the watercolor society's immediate past president. "After we moved to NTC three years ago, NTC adopted Friday Night Liberty. We have at least doubled the number of people coming through the gallery on Friday nights. [Liberty Station] has become a destination for a lot of people on Friday nights." ❖