



Echo Street West's Guardian Studios to Open in June

A vacant brick warehouse has been transformed into an art amenity for the community and will be curated by a local minority and women-led arts organization

ATLANTA (June 4, 2021) – Lincoln Property Company, the international real estate firm leading the mixed-use development of 19-acre [Echo Street West](#) on Atlanta's Westside, is nearing completion on the adaptive reuse of an underutilized warehouse into Guardian Studios — a collection of makerspaces, artist studios, gallery space and public art exhibits set to open in June. In preparation of this exciting milestone, the developer is partnering with local minority and women-led arts advocacy group, Black Women in Visual Art (BWVA), to manage studio rentals, curate exhibits, foster connections and oversee educational programming for the community.

In its first phase, Guardian Studios offers 14 rentable studios ranging in size from 200 to 500 square feet, a 3,000-square-foot open gallery space and multiple outdoor murals. The second phase will add another 26 studios bringing the total creative community to over 40 artists. A ceramic studio complete with kilns and pottery wheels is also planned and will provide Atlanta with one of its only ceramic studios. The early 1900s-era warehouse has been completely repurposed to create what will be a unique art community that will foster collaboration among local creatives and bring an incredible amenity to Atlanta's Westside. In addition, Guardian Studios will be easily accessible from the Westside BeltLine Connector, supporting the BeltLine's vision for infusing art into the pedestrian trail experience.

"As we continue the development of Echo Street West, our team understands the vital role art plays in fostering a mixed-use community in a way that is authentic and truly enriches the quality of life for everyone who lives, works, shops and visits our project," said Tony Bartlett, Executive Vice President of Lincoln Property Company. "The hope for Guardian Studios is that we can pair artists with community members and neighborhood youth for teaching and engagement opportunities. With the strong leadership of BWVA, we can't wait to begin welcoming people to the property this summer to experience the one-of-a-kind art program at Echo Street West."

Co-founded in 2019 by Atlanta natives Lauren Jackson Harris and Daricia Mia DeMarr, BWVA began as an organization for visual arts and culture professionals of the African Diaspora that aims to foster networks, share resources and develop programs with the goal of increasing visibility for women in the global majority. At Guardian Studios at Echo Street West, Harris and DeMarr will expand upon that mission to support artists of all backgrounds as well as host inclusive experiences for the public to participate in.

"As Atlanta's diverse and vibrant art community is desperately in need of more resources and support to keep flourishing, and the challenges of the past year have shone a light on that need like never before, the partnership with Guardian Studios at Echo Street West is a great opportunity for the Atlanta arts

ecosystem,” said Harris. “Guardian Studios offers local artists not only a beautiful space at affordable rates, but also a chance to network with each other, showcase their talents and engage with the community in new ways.”

Prior to creating BWVA with DeMarr, Harris earned her Bachelor of Fine Arts in Graphic Design and Art History from Howard University as well as a Master of Arts in Creative Business Leader from SCAD. She has worked in a variety of arts management roles, including as former manager and curator of ZuCot Gallery, a black-owned fine art gallery exhibiting the works of notable Black artists in Atlanta’s historic Castleberry Hill District. In addition, she formerly worked with the Atlanta University Center’s Art History and Curatorial Studies Collective, which prepares undergraduate students for visual arts careers.

DeMarr launched her collegiate career at Clark Atlanta University before receiving her Bachelor of Arts in Art History from Georgia State University and a master’s degree in Visual Arts Administration from New York University. Her cross-disciplinary repertoire spans from curating more than 100 exhibits at the NYU Kimmel Center Galleries to participating in the renowned Art Program at Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport to serving as an assistant producer on documentary films.

“We want to make this space not only for professional artists, but a place where arts enthusiasts of all ages, backgrounds, ethnicities and genders can connect, cultivate and thrive,” said DeMarr. “As the granddaughter of residents from the English Avenue community, I am especially looking forward to immersing ourselves in the hyperlocal community, getting to know their needs and finding ways to inspire them through art.”

Guardian Studios at Echo Street West is located adjacent to the Guardian Works event venue, which is housed in a brick-and-beam building that also dates back to the early 1900s and is set to open this month. The names are a nod to the buildings’ history as the former Guardian Company’s complex, and the adaptive reuse design is maintaining the architecture. The buildings are separated by a nearly 5,000-square-foot covered, open-air patio and an additional 23,000-square-foot green space, making Guardian Works one of Atlanta’s largest, most flexible venues. Managed by Novare Events, bookings at Guardian Works are now available for select dates in 2021 and later.

The restoration of Guardian Studios and Guardian Works are debuting this summer in conjunction with several other exciting community activations, including outdoor gathering areas and a forthcoming open-air bar and dining experience. When complete, Echo Street West will span 2.4 million square feet of mixed-use space. The first phase encompasses 300,000 square feet of creative office, 50,000 square feet of retail, 3.4 acres of outdoor entertainment and gathering areas and 300 multifamily units, of which 20% will be affordable.

To learn more about BWVA, including updates on Guardian Studios, available studio space and sponsorship opportunities, please visit www.blackwomeninvisualart.com. For more information about Echo Street West, visit www.echostreetwest.com.

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About Echo Street West

Echo Street West is a 19-acre, multi-use development located in Atlanta’s West Midtown near the intersection of Donald Lee Hollowell Parkway and Northside Drive. Echo Street West is strategically located in short proximity to the Mercedes Benz Stadium, the World Congress Center, State Farm Arena, Georgia Tech, the new Bellwood Quarry Park and is directly on The Atlanta Beltline Westside Connector.

Echo Street West is a multi-phase project with the initial development consisting of 300,000 square feet of creative office space, 50,000 square feet of retail and restaurant space and 300 multifamily units. Future phases will bring additional office, retail, residential and hotel components to the site. Please visit echostreetwest.com for more information.

About Black Women in Visual Art

Founded in 2019 by two arts professionals, BWVA was created to steward and nurture enduring representation and leadership in the visual arts and cultural sector. BWVA aims to foster networks, share resources and develop programs with the goal of increasing visibility for women in the global majority. With the mission at the forefront, the company's goals are to promote lasting equity in the visual arts and cultural ecosystem, cultivate effective mentorship across the sector, participate in arts advocacy, provide opportunities for educational and professional development. To learn more, visit www.blackwomeninvisualart.com.

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