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POSTING

Like Art? You'll Love Our Condos

By ALISON GREGOR

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AN art show is about to transform the empty spaces of One Brooklyn Bridge Park, and if Mary Mihelic, a real estate agent and artist, has her way, some art lovers — and artworks — will find permanent homes there.

Ms. Mihelic, an agent at Stribling & Associates with a master of fine arts degree from Parsons the New School for Design, is the curator of the art show, cheekily called "spctclr vws."

The monthlong exhibition, beginning with an opening on Friday, May 15, from 7 to 10 p.m. at the complex at 360 Furman Street, will feature more than 50 artists, some emerging and some widely known, like Tom Butter, Andréa Stanislav and Sandi Slone. Ms. Mihelic is exhibiting, too, an installation called Goodness Won, featuring church kneelers and a view of Manhattan, a hopeful comment, she says, on waning materialism in the economic crisis.

"Artists have a mixed relationship with real estate," said Ms. Mihelic, who wears Converse sneakers and a watch cap when making her conceptual art, but Chanel and pearls at Stribling. "The two things they need more than anything else are space and exposure."

Because the artists need marketing just as much as Stribling does, the real estate brokerage is giving the artists 100 percent of any sales. Typically, galleries take half of an art sale, Ms. Mihelic said. But Stribling gets something in return: potential customers.

"The artists will bring a lot of people who aren't even familiar with One Brooklyn Bridge Park into the development," Ms. Mihelic said. "We're doing everything we can to bring curators, critics and buyers in to see the work."

Ms. Mihelic has already been the curator of two shows in "borrowed" space, but this is the first one she has done expressly to market a property.

One Brooklyn Bridge Park is a giant complex with 441 condominiums and a full array of amenities. About 90 people are already in residence, with about 50 closings outstanding.

The developer, the RAL Companies & Affiliates, is asking about $525,000 for the least expensive 588-square-foot apartment, said Bruce Ehrmann, the executive vice president of Stribling Marketing Associates.

In late April, the developers decided to offer apartments for rent as well as rent-to-own arrangements. The cheapest loft unit would go for about $2,500 a month, Mr. Ehrmann said. He said that One Brooklyn Bridge Park — where Elizabeth Stribling, the president of the brokerage firm, has closed on a multimillion-dollar penthouse herself — is persevering despite the recession.

"There's no struggle here," he said. "The building is full-funded with loan extensions. I could rattle off buildings that are going under, but we're doing fine. And we have lender financing for buyers, and there's additional financing as necessary from the sponsor."

The art show, to be installed in the 3,000-square-foot lobby and four unoccupied apartments, will have such curious displays as a padded cell, ear trumpets, larger-than-life portraits of kabuki actors, hanging junipers and steps to nowhere, among other artworks.

"It would be great if there were sales of apartments as a result of the art show, and sales of the art as a result of people living there or buying there," Mr. Ehrmann said. "But I can't predict that."

He said he believed the show would demonstrate a healthy symbiosis between real estate and art. That hasn't always been the case in recent years, when art was used as an accessory to real estate and a branding opportunity for galleries, he said.

"The art became completely devalued as an object of the real estate," he said. "It just became more real estate porn, and it was one more awful excrescence of the real estate boom."

Far from feeling exploited as property marketers, Ms. Mihelic said, artists have been so enthusiastic about the show that she has had to turn some away.

"I'm getting this feeling from the artists that they're getting real again," she said. "They're excited to have a venue to show real work that's not a gallery that's part of a trendy scene with a goal to sell, sell, sell."

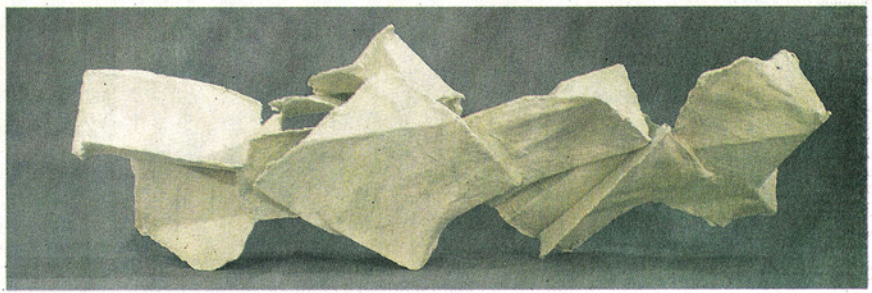
Paige Pedri, an emerging artist in Brooklyn, said she was thrilled when Ms. Mihelic asked her to join the show at One Brooklyn Bridge Park. She did point out that although the lease on her art studio is expiring, she can't afford space in the development.

"I'm starting out as an artist," said Ms. Pedri, who will show a cardboard and plaster piece called Vista No. 1, "so for me to get exposure, where people see my work and want to find out more about it, I'm all for it."

Peter Drake, who will display two acrylic paintings — Bad Dog and Assault II — said that artists had been the pioneers who turned around many New York neighborhoods for brokers, only to suffer higher rents as a result.

"Real estate hasn't often returned the benefits," he said, "but this show for me is an interesting model, because in this situation, potentially everybody benefits."

"Spctclr vws" will be open from noon to 6 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays through June 7.



THE DRAW
Part of the marketing plan at One Brooklyn Bridge Park is an art show opening on May 15. The show, in the lobby and four vacant apartments, will include paintings by Peter Drake and sculpture by Paige Pedri.