

## **Brooklyn Army Terminal mixes affordable artists' studios with manufacturers**

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It's way better than painting in the living room.

At a Sunset Park industrial complex that once served the U.S. military, artists who have been priced out of Brooklyn studios find an affordable place to work.

Rent at the nonprofit-run art incubator in the Brooklyn Army Terminal is 77 cents a square foot — less than \$100 per month for a good-sized studio — which lets penny-pinching artists get out of their homes and into professional workspace.

“In New York, space is such a hard commodity to come by,” said Anita Durst, who runs Chashama, the nonprofit that set up 98 studios at Brooklyn Army Terminal.

Her organization gets grants that allow it to charge relatively little; studios rented from conventional Brooklyn landlords are \$6 to \$20 per square foot, she said. The studios fill space that was sitting idle in two 58th St. buildings at Brooklyn Army Terminal, which the city Economic Development Corp. operates.

The artists are tucked away among industrial tenants such as electronics-component maker Altronix and baby-gift manufacturer Silly Phillie Creations. Brooklyn Army Terminal was America's largest military supply base through World War II.

Nicholas Fevelo for New York Daily News Stephen Holding with his piece titled "Dystopia Filter" at the Chashama at the Brooklyn Army Terminal in Sunset Park.

Artist Jake Margolin came to the complex from upstate Washington County. He left Brooklyn because he couldn't afford an apartment with enough space for him and his husband, Nick Vaughan, to work in.

The couple, who do paintings and art installations together, were caretakers in a house 15 miles from the nearest town.

“We got antsy being so far from the city,” said Vaughan, 29.

Nicholas Fevelo for New York Daily News Nick Vaughan and Jake Margolin with a piece titled "Desert 1."

After the isolation of country living, moving to Red Hook and getting a Brooklyn Army Terminal studio — where they walk around and talk to other artists — is a relief.

“There’s a culture of creativity,” said Margolin, 31. “Upstate, there was a culture of dairy cows.”

In their studio, a work made of 11 fluorescent light panels holds pride of place. The panels, standing side by side, show a giant portrait of a traditional family with a husband, wife and kids — with their portraits superimposed.

“Our work is about what it means to be a man, a gay man, in a marriage,” Margolin said. In the studio next door, Stephen Holding, 35, works on huge double-sided paintings on Plexiglas inspired by his memories of working in Asia. He spent two years as a graphics designer for Nike in Hong Kong.

Having artists as neighbors helps him focus on work.

Nicholas Fevelo for New York Daily News Brooklyn Army Terminal in Sunset Park.

“It gets me motivated to be here,” the Williamsburg resident said.

If Tirtzah Bassel, 33, had to pay a full-scale Brooklyn rent for a studio, she’d have to spend many more hours a week teaching art at the 92nd St. Y.