

A Fresh Look at the Historic Industrial Center Building in Sausalito

(Sausalito, CA) Nestled by Richardson Bay in North Sausalito, a landmark historic building steeped in the area's shipbuilding roots is re-energized by the creative activities of a lively artists' community. The building is officially known as the Industrial Center Building, but locals know it as simply "the ICB."

The ICB was born in the spring of 1942 as part of the huge Marinship complex that temporarily turned Sausalito and Marin City into bustling factory towns during WWII. Incredibly, 93 Liberty Ships were built and launched here during the course of the war.

Originally named the "Mold Loft and Yard Office," the ICB was one of the largest buildings at Marinship. According to the original plans, the first floor featured administration offices and template and tool storage; the second floor contained offices for the Engineering and Production Departments, as well as locker rooms and break rooms; the third floor was one large open room used as the Mold Loft, a giant open space for laying out templates on plywood which were then slid down a ramp and taken to the plate shop where they were used over and over to mark the steel sheets that would become integral parts of the ships. How fitting that such a productive building would become home to many artists over the years.

In 1957 Ernest and Polly Kettenhofen purchased the Mold Loft "for peanuts" and renamed it the Industrial Center Building leasing it for multi-purpose light industrial uses. The low rents happily caught the eye of artists, including Walter Kuhlman, then an ascending abstract expressionist who leased much of the third floor. By the 1960's the transformation of the ICB into an art space was in full swing. Polly, an artist herself, encouraged the transition. In 1968 the artists began an annual tradition of opening their doors to the public on the first weekend in December, and that tradition continues to this day.

The Kettenhofens' son eventually took over management of the building. Warren Weagant of Command Productions, a tenant since 1976, said of one early building rule, "You could drink beer in the building, but not wine ... because you could put a cigarette out in a beer can."

A number of artists have maintained studio space in the building for decades. Gail Sterling Smelick, after studying with Joan Brown and Elmer Bischoff, took a space to practice her craft and has seen the transition first hand. Kate Solari Baker, who has been in the building over 30 years, says, "The old elevator, which required you to lift a

very heavy gate to get in, was replaced with our contemporary elevator. It is now much easier to open when your arms are full of art supplies and paintings.” Jack Beck, 96, developed his painting style under Wolf Kahn and remembers the old days fondly, too. Ann Turner says of the earlier days, “It was very fun to be in the ICB, there were only about twenty-five artists in the whole building and everyone knew each other well and helped each other out.”

The Marinship area is now a vigorous community of artists, marinas, houseboat neighborhoods, marine industry and restaurants featuring local cuisine. The repurposing of the ICB as an artists’ collective that began in the 1950’s is now a vital part of waterfront history. The creative energy in the ICB has evolved over the years bringing the contemporary arts scene to the historic waterfront with “one hundred artists under one curved roof.”

A collective spirit has emerged as the building mounts its 48th year as a center for artists’ open studios in Sausalito. To design a logo for the new collaboration, ICB painters Chris Adessa, Terri Froelich, Elizabeth Giesler and Kathryn Keller worked together with a graphic designer. Starting with the ICB building logo, a crisp take on the silhouette of the World War II era industrial building, they created an artists’s logo that represents the history, setting and current use of the ICB. This new logo is part of an overall rebranding initiative launched by the artists in 2016.

Recently retired after 17 years managing the ICB, Sharon Cottrell claims “there are more artists in the building now than ever.” One of those artists, sculptor Nancy Ilg, has been hired to take her place by Peter Sullivan, owner of the ICB since 1998. Sullivan himself is a staunch advocate for the arts: “The Industrial Center Building is a building with a long and rich history that has fostered a vibrant artist community. We are honored to be the current steward of the ICB and look forward to continuing the tradition in the years to come.”

Winter Open Studios

One Hundred Artists Under One Curved Roof

December 2, 3, 4, 2016 from 11 am to 6 pm

ICB Building, 480 Gate 5 Road, Sausalito, CA 94965

Website: ICB-Artists.com

Facebook: [ICB Winter Open Studios](https://www.facebook.com/ICBWinterOpenStudios/)

https://www.facebook.com/ICBWinterOpenStudios/?notif_t=page_user_activity¬if_id=1474521879738042

Instagram: [icb_winter_open_studios](https://www.instagram.com/icb_winter_open_studios/) https://www.instagram.com/icb_winter_open_studios/

Attachments:



The new Artists Logo representing the curved roof of the building, the lovely setting the artists enjoy and the abundance of artists in the ICB community.



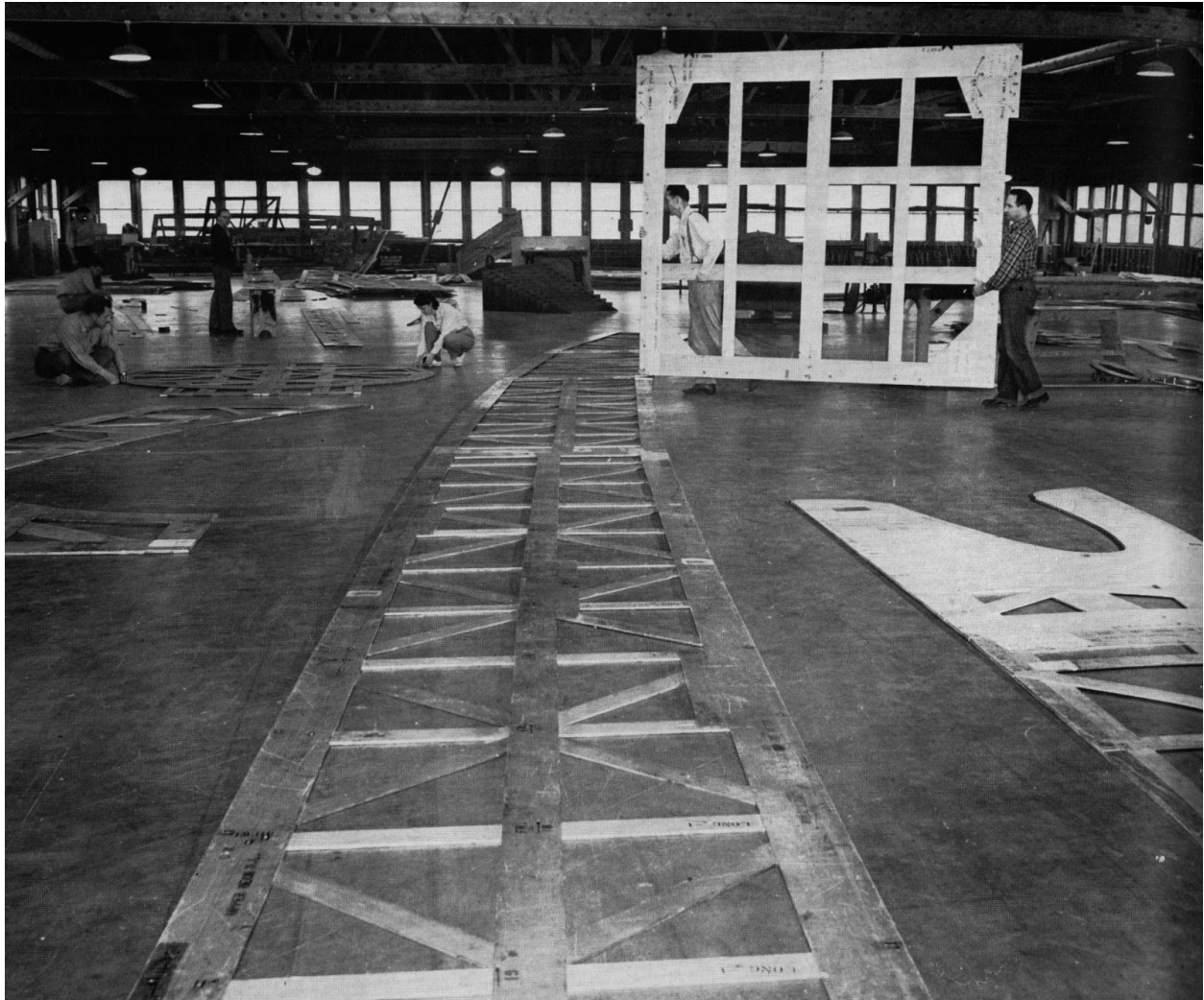
The ICB is the large building with the curved roof at the top right of this photo of Marinship during WWII. Formerly the Mold Loft and Yard Office, it became a haven for artists after the war. In the foreground are Liberty Ships under construction.



A Marinship Yard worker plein air painting a Liberty Ship during WWII. A fitting start to the current use of the ICB with "One Hundred Artists Under One Curved Roof."



The second floor of the ICB during WWII, where plans for Liberty Ships were designed and developed.



The third floor of the ICB during WWII. The post and beam construction allowed a huge open room where wooden patterns for steel pieces for the Liberty Ships were produced. This has now been divided into artist studios and other uses.



M Sausalito, oil on canvas by Gail Sterling Smelick



Napa Valley, oil on canvas by Jack Beck



Aphrodite, plaster, by Nancy Ilg