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Yonkers artist cooperative to host open studio tours this weekend

Ernie Garcia
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YONKERS - The YoHo Artist Studios will host its fifth annual open studios exhibition this weekend as the building prepares to expand to bring more artists to the city.

About 30 artists in the former Alexander Smith Carpet Factory will open their studios to the public and answer questions about their work. The art on display ranges from painting to sculpture and jewelry, among many other media.

The event's organizers say the two-day afternoon event gives the public a chance to encounter art outside a museum or gallery and to hear some local musicians.

"You get to see the relationship between the artist and the art," said George Huang of The Heights Real Estate Company, which owns the building. "You can approach them. It's not like a gallery, where it's don't touch, don't talk."

Huang's company purchased the former Alexander Smith Carpet Factory three years ago and has invested more than \$300,000 to improve the building. It plans to invest another \$400,000 for the expansion, decorating the building's facade and renovating 20 existing bathrooms.

There are 42 artist lofts in the former carpet mill, and the expansion will permit 27 new lofts.

Huang is promoting the open studios, the arts cooperative in his building and his new lofts with four professionally produced promotional videos he posted on YouTube.com on May 6.

"I wanted to create something interesting and viral," Huang said of his efforts to boost the building's artistic profile. "I'm about to invest even more in creating a documentary this weekend."
