

MIDTOWN

FOCUS ON KINGSTON



TANIA BARRICKLO/DAILY FREEMAN

Photographer Doug Menez poses for a photograph at the Center for Photography at Woodstock in its new location in Kingston located at 474 Broadway, on Thursday. Menez's exhibit, "Wild Place: People of Kingston" will open on Saturday with a reception from 5 to 7 p.m. at the new gallery and at the Rezny Studio/Gallery nearby at 76 Prince St., Kingston.

Center for Photography opens new gallery and exhibit in the city

By Brian Hubert

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KINGSTON, N.Y. » The Center for Photography at Woodstock opens Saturday in its new loca-

tion at 474 Broadway in the city with a show by Kingston-based photographer, director and artist Doug Menez.

The exhibition, titled "Wild Place: People of Kingston,"

opens from 5 to 7 p.m. at photographer Aaron Rezny's gallery nearby in the old Welch Industrial Supply building at 76 Prince St. and also at the new Kingston gallery, which is also an office and digital lab space.

Rezny, a board member, said he couldn't think of a better home for the center than Midtown Kingston with its vibrant

arts scene that has attracted national and international attention.

Barry Mayo, who serves as co-chair of the Center for Photography at Woodstock board with Clinton Cargill, said the center's move to Kingston from its original longtime home in a space that once housed Bob Dylan in

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the heart of Woodstock was a necessity, as its old space, dating to the 1800s, was badly in need of repairs.

"We did a study five years ago to see what it would take to bring it back to a good state of structural repair and it was \$2 million," Mayo said.

Mayo said that the project was cost-prohibitive and members decided to put the building — where a group of photographers led by Howie Greenberg and Michael Feinberg started the center in 1977 — up for sale.

He admitted a spike in Hudson Valley real estate prices made it an ideal time to sell and move.

As members looked for a new location, Woodstock no longer made sense, he admitted. "There was no logical place to buy," he said.

So they turned to Kingston.

With Kingston's growth, the center "started exploring moving here," Mayo said.

Mayo said the new space is only about half the size of their old space in Woodstock, and he added that it's only a transitional

space, as the center seeks a larger space between 7,500 to 10,000 square feet in Kingston.

And that extra space will come in handy as the center looks for a new home for its collection of 1,400 photos, which are presently housed at the Samuel Museum of Art at SUNY New Paltz. The Dorsey, facing its own storage problems for its collections, notified the center that it needs to find a new home for its collection by 2023, Mayo said.

Mayo spent 35 years in radio, always shooting photos as a hobby, before leaving that industry and getting more serious about photography. A New York City native, he credited famed photographer Dawoud Bey with introducing him to the area and the center.

Standing in Rezny's gallery on a recent morning, Menez, who once lived in the Bay Area, said he's worked on many long-term projects, sometimes lasting decades. He recalled a project documenting the rise of the tech industry and photographing famed tech leaders like the late Steve Jobs of Apple.

Menez said he ultimately grew disillusioned with the Bay Area and the tech industry when the vibe changed from changing and



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The Center for Photography at Woodstock's new home at 474 Broadway in Kingston, is pictured on Thursday.

bettering the world through tech to a focus on a more Wall Street ethos of share prices.

Menez said his new project now seeks to document the constant change in Kingston. Speaking of Kingston, he said while working on this project he was once told, "people want change now and they want less of it," by Guy Kempe, former VP of Com-

munity Development at affordable housing agency RUPCO.

Menez is no stranger to Kingston. He has lived and worked out of a loft in the Shirt Factory, employing upwards of eight others back in the 2000s, before leaving the area for New York City in 2007.

Menez said he later returned to Kingston after a big global

project he was working on stalled out. He said one common theme between his two stints in the city is the narrative that "it's coming back."

But Menez said there's a different vibe this time. "This new energy is constantly surprising," he said.

Mayo said he hopes this show could serve as an inspiration for people in Kingston to take up their cameras and document their family, friends and other Kingstonians to expand the scope of Menez's project.

This exhibition shows that "you don't need to travel the world to take great pictures," Rezny said. "You can get great pictures by photographing your own community. It's portraying all walks of life, Doug makes them stars."

Mayo said the city has been very helpful. "This town of 25,000 has been very welcoming," Mayo said. The center is also reaching out to other arts organizations and others about collaborations.

"We want the center to serve as a catalyst for photographic arts to transform and improve lives," Menez said.

For more information and gallery hours, call (845) 679-9957 or visit <https://www.cpw.org/>.