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AMAZWI CONTEMPORARY ART PLANS MOVE

TO NEWLY RENOVATED AND EXPANDED SPACE IN SAUGATUCK

May 5 Reception Planned to Mark Gallery's 3rd Anniversary & Grand Re-Opening

April 25, 2007 – Amazwi Contemporary Art, one of very few galleries in the U.S. to offer original paintings and sculpture from various countries in Africa, will be celebrating its 3rd anniversary at a reception on May 5 in its newly renovated gallery space at 249 Culver Street in downtown Saugatuck, Mich.

Situated directly across the street from its original location, the new gallery space is nearly twice the size and offers the opportunity to hang 50 percent more paintings and display a great deal more Shona sculpture and unique craft from such faraway countries as Zimbabwe, South Africa, Ghana and Kenya.

To open up the new space, which used to house Tuck's Christmas Shop (Tuck's itself has relocated to 30 Culver Street), walls were broken down and smaller rooms such as a bathroom and separate office were reclaimed as gallery space. The gallery has also expanded into what was a short-term rental unit, and as a result will have a full working kitchen. This will better enable Amazwi to rent the gallery for private functions at which hot food can be served.

The multi-purpose building will still offer two rental units. Now known as the Amazwi Suites, each rental has a full kitchen and adjoining living room area with a sleeper sofa, as well as a separate bedroom with a queen-size bed and a full bath complete with Jacuzzi spa tub.

"We couldn't pass up the opportunity to buy this turn-of-the-century building, especially considering its location at the southern gateway to Saugatuck's historic district. The building has a varied history; when we uncovered the roof we discovered that at one point the building was likely used as a barn. As a result, we've tried to add elements to the newly renovated building that pay tribute to its past, but with a contemporary flair that complements the artwork we carry," said Mike Tischleder, gallery director.

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Added gallery partner Wally Petersen, “After the three-month renovation, we’re really looking forward to moving into our new space. With all of the windows we’ve added, there is lots of natural light. Plus, we have great views of Cooks Park and the Kalamazoo River. We especially appreciate our close proximity to the Saugatuck Center for the Arts, which has an awesome season planned, as does Mason Street Warehouse. We anticipate that the caliber of performances and the newly expanded seating at the SCA will be drawing thousands of people to the area, benefiting our business as well as many others.”

“We’re grateful to Nicolaas Wilkens and his colleagues at Fenn’s Design Mill in Douglas, who did a wonderful job designing our new building. We also very much appreciate the hard work of our contractor, Jason Dedic of JPD Builders. He mobilized many local craftsmen to finish the building right on schedule, and their attention to detail was first-rate. Jason was an integral part of the process, personally building some custom-made furniture and display pieces that have made the new gallery both warm and inviting,” said Tischleder.

Amazwi first opened for business in downtown Saugatuck on May 1, 2004. Tischleder and Petersen have made multiple trips to Africa to build their inventory, traveling extensively through Kenya, Tanzania, Ghana, South Africa and Zimbabwe.

“We’re especially proud of the fact that we are helping artists who often live and work in difficult conditions to pursue their artistic ambitions, while helping to support their families” said Petersen. “When word spreads that the Amazwi boys are coming back to their cities and towns, our schedules fill up very quickly. Our artists are thrilled that their work has been met with such an enthusiastic response here in southwest Michigan, as are we.”

To celebrate three successful years of business and its move into its new building, Amazwi will host a reception with complementary food and beverages on Saturday, May 5 from 3-7 p.m. at 249 Culver Street. Call 269-857-5551 or visit www.amazwi.com for more information. All are welcome.

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