Artists vs. Blight (excerpt)

By ALEXANDRA ALTER */ photos by Greg Ruffing/Redux for The Wall Street Journal*

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PIONEERING ARTIST COMMUNITIES

Artists have long been leaders of an urban vanguard that colonizes blighted areas. Now, the current housing crisis has created a new class of neighbor: the artistic urban pioneer. Drawn by available spaces and cheap rents, artists are filling in some of the neighborhoods being emptied by foreclosures, such as hard-hit Cleveland and Detroit, and city officials and community groups are likewise offering them incentives to move in. Here's a look at several burgeoning artist communities.

Scott Hocking among pallets he plans to use for an art installation at a site in Detroit.

Exploring Art Communities

Upcoming tours, exhibits and events in Detroit

'I Repeat Myself When Under Stress,' through May 3
An exhibit at the Museum of Contemporary Arts Detroit showcases three artists who use visual and narrative repetition, including Tris Vonna-Michell, who projects slides of Detroit's urban landscape onto fragmented walls. mocadetroit.org.

Scott Hocking, May 29
Detroit artist Scott Hocking builds massive sculptures out of recycled materials in abandoned auto factories and empty neighborhoods, taking photographs before the structures get torn down. His photographs will be shown at 2739 Edwin Gallery in Hamtramck. http://2739edwin.com/index.html

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Discarded TVs can be seen in the abandoned carcass of the former Packard auto factory on the east side of Detroit -- a prime source of artistic inspiration for artists like Mr. Hocking.
Greg Ruffing/Redux for The Wall Street Journal

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