

# Visual art

## An exhibit both present and absent

**A sense of imminence pervades James Woodfill's work at City Ice Arts.**

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Special to The Star

**A**mbiguous and mysterious environments destabilize our capacity to express exactly where we are.

These kinds of experiences often occur when we find ourselves outside of familiar routine: in dreams, on airplanes, in elevators. For a length of time, we feel as if we are outside of time and space, suspended in a blank moment.

The title of James Woodfill's poetic, site-specific installation at City Ice Arts alludes to these kinds of experiences. The phrase, "The Outside of the Left Side of the Inside," subverts the idea of locating ourselves specifically in space or choosing one clear answer as to where we dwell.

In a foyer at the entrance to the gallery, Woodfill displays small photographs and medium-size paintings. The artist employs the space to usher the viewer into both his conceptual and physical intentions.

Unassuming images of the artist's neighborhood and studio, taken with his iPhone, are indefinite and intentionally generic. Woodfill records only what is common: sidewalks, walls, bricks and weeds. One could be looking at any city, any façade. The images are printed in black and white, making them appear to originate from an indeterminate era.

The four paintings on wood panels are on display



FROM THE ARTIST

### On exhibit

"James Woodfill: The Outside of the Left Side of the Inside" continues at City Ice Arts, 2015 Campbell St., through Sept. 13. Hours are noon-5 p.m. Friday-Saturday and by appointment. For more information, call 816-820-4105 or visit [cityicearts.com](http://cityicearts.com).

with the photographs in the entryway. The artist uses acrylic paint, sanding each of numerous layers of pig-

ment and buffing the surface until it becomes a tablet recording many moments compressed together into a

**James Woodfill's exhibit "The Outside of the Left Side of the Inside" at City Ice Arts includes various compilations of tables and workstations.**

glowing field.

Thus, the photos and the paintings express the same notion of the "fermata" (the title of a collaborative work by D.F. Miller and Woodfill from 1996 and a word that still inspires the artist). A fermata in a musical performance is an extension of

sound (such as a note), or lack of sound (such as a rest) to create a moment of sustained presence or absence.

But the idea of a fermata can be used visually as well. The photos and the paintings are present and absent simultaneously, located in

no specific place, accrued over time (numerous walks, numerous painted marks) yet existing in one image that can be ephemeral or protracted, depending on how long you look at it and how you choose to under-

**SEE WOODFILL | 16**