



CREATING POP-UPS IN VACANT STORES

A Short History & Inspirational How-To Guide

Jackie Lightfield & Margaret Bodell.

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Jackie Lightfield: How to Build an Artist Storefront.

Thank you all for being it curious as to how one goes about creating chaos in what would be a vacant space or vacant lot or vacant park.

As David mentioned, I co-founded Norwalk 2.0 in 2010, so we're in our ninth year of operations. We're a non-profit. Despite "Norwalk" in our name, do many different things in other towns and communities in other cities and we try to never do the same thing twice

And yet there's a theme that runs through the work that we do

Right now we're most known for the pink container project - two shipping containers that we transformed into a mobile art space and we have this located across from the Maritime Aquarium which you can vaguely see in the distance back there. We do concerts and art exhibits out of this facility. This is a typical night. I like to refer to it as Norwalk trying to be Brooklyn

The train line runs behind it and you may have heard about replacing the Walk Bridge that the trains run over as they keep getting stuck. We thought this was a great place to activate as there has never been any kind of arts activity in this tiny park, even though it's across from SoNo, which is one of the more vibrant downtown-type areas of Norwalk.

Another thing that we're known for these days is a project called **Iconic Norwalk** - where we offered a competition to upload what residents love about Norwalk and what they thought was iconic. We're in our third year and we've received over 2,500 entries in the project. What it

essentially did was to put Norwalk on the Instagram map, at a time when people weren't really using Instagram very much. (Of course, today everybody's on Instagram, but when we conceived of this project and wrote the grant, the number of Instagram followers at Norwalk 2.0 was under fifty, and now we have over seven hundred).

This project lives on in a couple of different ways: both as part of Instagram and in exhibit form, as we also print out the winning entries and also all of the entries and exhibit them around town -showing what people have submitted. It serves the idea of being able to document what the real world thinks of the town that you live in, as opposed to, from a planning standpoint, what formalized focal focus groups say, which is often different from what they will take pictures of.

So there's a lot of social demographic information that we're able to extract from our projects, which helps inform the economic development projects we then pursue.

Another project was *Inside Out* - which we've done a few times., though not in consecutive years. Here we solicit artists around the region and occupy studio spaces: storefronts and restaurants that are actually filled with almost anything we can do to highlight the diversity of the arts within our community.

We did this in August 2016 in response to finding out just two weeks before that the SoNo Arts Festival was not going to happen that year. In two weeks we convinced all of our artist friends (and they in turn convinced all of their artist friends) that they needed to go and install in all sorts of different places. Here's a picture of social media being used to get people down there. Here is inside the former, notorious and infamous Black Bear Saloon, where we had artists work with the management of those Washington Street restaurants to have art displayed in the establishment all day while they were going about their normal business.

Here is a storefront that took the theme of branding with a red dot where we published a map that we distributed all over the place so people could go to the places where art was installed. We tried several last-minute wayfinding efforts as we were doing things at many places over a large geographic area. So the red dots were helpful for people to find where the art installations were visually, as well as having a map to locate them.

Here is 64 Wall Street - a 4,000 square foot vacant property that had not been leased out for over 20 years. We had formed Norwalk 2.0 partly to highlight the fact that property owners land bank buildings and don't feel compelled to lease them out to viable businesses or to artists or for any purposes, unless there's an incentive to do that, or a stick to make them do that, and so we staged a protest in front of the building. At that time there was about a 70% vacancy on Main Street and we said we wanted to do something about this and wanted to change the zoning regulations and put in some additional taxes for long-term vacancies, and as a result the property owner of this particular space said "OK, you can have it for the summer and let's see what you can do." So we put on artist talks, exhibits (including the Congressional Art Exhibit that Jim Himes puts together for student artists), we did talks on entrepreneurship, on finding money, on books, and we even had a divorced men's night, where people would come and sit on our donated sofas to talk about what they were going through.

Basically, we acted as part community center, part art exhibit, part incubator. We let the landlord know we had brought in Wi-Fi. (That's a whole other story of how you get Wi-Fi, Electricity and working bathrooms into old buildings that have sat vacant for 20 years.) This was our attempt to activate the space. We did activate the space and then of course the landlord threw us out and they brought in a CrossFit gym - which just last week closed.

This was back in 2013, so we have a pretty good track record of whenever we did a project in a vacant storefront, we then got kicked out - but that was by design. We were not planning on being there permanently: the point was to get the building activated and then leased - and that's what happened.

This image is 64 Wall Street again. We did kids programming - this was in partnership with Stepping Stones Children's Museum. Then, because we like to be outdoors, we took a vacant park and created a series of concerts there, which, to this day, still go on. We don't do them anymore (we try not to do the same thing twice) but we initiated it and put stages in place. We had art that was designed within our facility and then we hung it in the library. We've hung art in City Hall; we've hung it all over the place - always trying to not just do things in the spaces that we're in, but outside the spaces that we're in.

So this is what resulted in our renting four shipping containers and building an artists' village over the course of three weekends (only two days of rain, which wasn't too bad). What was particularly great was that we had music every night that we were open, and people from the neighborhood, who we did not know, came out and played in our shipping containers. So we were very excited about activating a neighborhood-centric art project. As with all of our projects, it's not just about showing art, or having people perform art in our spaces: we want people to make art. So we do a lot of coercing of our artists to get them to work *with* the public and show them the techniques, show them the materials, and get them to participate in the project.

This is the interior of one of the shipping containers. We put blackboards on the interior, put a bunch of chalk out, and we said "Come make art!" And then every night we'd wipe it down and the next day would be a brand new set of art.

This was the very first storefront that we did on Washington Street and it did get flooded as part of Irene - so we've experienced that as well. This was in our first year of operations and this was the market. This was a multi-artist exhibit that coincided for the entire summer and the lead-up to the SoNo Arts Festival.

This is the market again. You can see that, in addition to the four walls, we had temporary walls put up in the interior of the space, and we crammed as much art and people in it because we had to pay for lots of air conditioning, so we figured that we were just going to go overboard.

We do all of this because we want to create a vibrant and flourishing creative scene in the areas that we work in and for much of our existence we've done the same kinds of things. We essentially match artists in the creative community with the business community, with

government, and with property owners. Without such a matchmaker, these entities would operate in parallel and never cross paths. We mix them up and believe good things will come out of that mixing. By doing place-based art projects we think that we're building a better connection between the community that lives, works, and creates in our towns and we think that as we put projects together we are always keeping in the back of our mind "What is the outcome from an economic development point-of-view? What is the outcome from a community development point-of-view? What is the outcome from bringing the community together to build something bigger?"

The end results of our projects are not the projects themselves but what happens afterwards.

The work that we do is based on a creative ethos. We care very much about the quality of art and artists that we're working with, but we also want to be all-inclusive and work with the community as a whole. So we veer, as good creative people do, all over the place as we put these things together. But it's important to always remember why you do these things.

Every project really needs to be solving a problem. If you're just doing something for entertainment's sake, it's not going to be as successful as you probably envisioned it. If it's going to be to change the perception of our downtown, which we thought was distressed, we thought that people who lived in Norwalk didn't really understand how many people actually earned a living by creating something - whether it was the guy who was making designer cupcakes or the people that were creating these fantastic hairstyles, to people who were performing, visual artists, or audio artists - we just got them all out of the woodwork and participating in our projects.

Also, because we like to be outside, we're always trying to get people to walk from one location to another - so that's another recurring theme that you see in our projects.

What does public art bring to solving that particular problem? What it does is that it changes the experiences that people currently have, so if you're looking at a storefront and saying it would be great if we did something here, you have to look outside that storefront and say "How do I get people who walk by this, or drive by this, every single day to see something different, and to know that something's happening?"

It's that change, that chaos, that vibrancy and visualization, that become really important in creating public or place-based art. The design techniques that we use in activating spaces basically ensure that that happens - so the permanent art that gets created out of what we do we try and place within the city. The impermanent art is the more interesting, because we're trying to get people to create art in these places so that they have an emotional response to the place and an emotional response to the project and carries it forward beyond that.

So I mentioned earlier that we had started a concert series at Freese Park. Once we got the concert series going, and funded it for the first year, we pulled back. But the community rallied to keep it going, and that to us was success. It wasn't that we could say that 4,000 people came to these concerts, it was that somebody was willing and wanted to keep it going, because that

speaks to building the community in a way that lasts long beyond our lifetimes and project history in Norwalk.

What does the storefront do? It gives you a unique way to get public participation, because storefronts tend to be typically where people walk and, at the very least, even if you're in a strip mall, there are cars that park in front of it and you will get people out of their cars. So the visualizations that you want to do need to address the fact that people are mostly pedestrians and not necessarily in their vehicles.

Most of the cool things that happen inside towns, particularly in Connecticut, are very "suburban" - so we like partnering with other institutions that are very fixated on their sense of place.

In Norwalk it's our library, it's our aquarium, it's our Children's Museum, it's our City Hall and we say we're going to work together. We've approached it in different ways: we've promoted things that are happening within their facilities in our spaces, and in turn we have done projects in their spaces just to activate what's going on.

The result of one of our interventions was that the City of Norwalk decided it wanted to celebrate its WPA mural collection and, after several years, produced a map, cleaned the art and put labels on the art, indicating its history and context.

The point is that we focus attention to bring people together to do something, but then it lives on beyond our intervention. So it's really important if you're in a storefront to work with the existing businesses around you. For example, if you're planning a crowd-gathering music performance, and partnering with restaurants, you won't want to do it on the days or nights that they are regularly busy. Do it at a time when they need the help.

One of the lessons learned from all that we've done is that it's a daily process and you need to be nimble and able to adapt, because if "anything can go wrong, it will go wrong!" We've had a great track record of working in spaces that did not have any bathroom facilities. That endeared us to many of our neighbors because we had to go over to the open businesses and say "Hey, you know we're doing this thing in this vacant store and you probably don't like it empty, and we'll be bringing in people - but we don't have any bathrooms - so can we send people your way?" And most of the restaurants and businesses said "Sure!" because they saw us every day, we worked with them and told them "If it's too much, let us know and we won't send people over and we'll encourage people to come buy your stuff, eat at your restaurant," and so on. It was a partnership. It was a challenge, but it worked in terms of making people aware of the other businesses on the street and why we were doing what we were doing in these spaces.

However, we often had people expecting a completely different experience than what we were offering. Maybe they were looking for the art show and weren't expecting to make art. Or they were looking for white tents in the park, not pink shipping containers. There are a lot of preconceptions about what art is, and if you don't do the things that are expected then it's often

not considered “art” and that was often a very interesting conversation to have when we seeking permits.

I had the benefit of being the former zoning chair for the City of Norwalk, so I had something of an inside track in this regard. But prior to being the zoning chair, I had no experience in land use, no experience in buildings, no experience in permitting. In fact, I thought permitting was something that other people did and I didn't have to do that.

However, permitting can work to your advantage because, when you start working with the people who need to give you permits and tell them what you're trying to do and ask for their help, it opens up the door in being able to get the permits done properly and expedited (sometimes you know things run a little bit late). So it's always helpful to basically ask for help and then not be afraid, when you're looking at permits, to say “I don't understand why you're making me fill this out,” or “can you explain what you're afraid of?” What they're afraid of, often is noise—they don't want to get complaints at City Hall about whatever you're doing. So, if you're in a park and you want to throw a music concert, you should be prepared to to say “We have a sound guy. We're going to keep it at this decibel level. We're going to cut it off at 11 o'clock.” If there's somebody who's going to complain, we'll alter our programming and make the loud performances earlier and the quieter ones later. That gets back to being nimble and being adaptable, and it also it gives you a great track record in working with the regulatory agencies that you have to work with, because the next time that you go for something, and you say “Here's my sketch, here are the hours, this is what I want to do,” then the permits go a lot faster than in the beginning.

A great example of this is that we convinced about 12 restaurants, before the food truck phase, to be our food vendors at an outdoor festival. They had never done this before, so it took us a month to figure out what the health permit was. The Health Department did not know how to give a permit to a restaurant that was off premises, that did not have a tent, or traditional cooking stations, or traditional places where you wash your hands, so we had to work through with everybody so that they understood what we were trying to do, and let us do it and still meet the rules.

And another example was when we wanted to sell beer and wine, and there were ordinances in the town of Norwalk that you could not sell beer or wine, or consume beer or wine, in certain parks. Of course, the main park that we were using was Mathews Park and we wanted to have people strolling around looking at art, sipping wine and beer. So up we went to the liquor commissioner and the police chief (now our mayor) explaining what we were trying to do. They basically said “Okay—as long as you check IDs and people have noticeable wristbands, you'll be allowed to do this. But you have to enclose where you're selling this.” So we created the “kayak of beer!” We took an old kayak; we put a whole bunch of ice in it; we put the beer in there, with the wine on the side and people then went to the kayak of beer in order to get their alcoholic beverages and their wristbands and then walk through our project, which was called “Party in the Park.”

So there are ways of asking for help, explaining why you're doing it, explaining what you're trying to do, and being able to accommodate what they're concerned about. Meeting those concerns in a creative way will get you a long way.

We think it's important when we go into a project to invite people that we don't know. For us, a true sign of a great project is that we walk in and we say "Who are these people? We don't know who they are. How did they hear about us? This is great!" We do get a lot of repeat visitors to our projects, especially ones that run multiple nights because the program is different each night. So if you're activating a storefront, and you're doing an exhibit, our recommendation is that you swap out the exhibit every ten days. It's a lot of work—nobody likes hanging artwork, nobody likes taking down artwork—but by changing the exhibits you are going to get people coming back, because they know there's something new.

What's key is to fully engage all the stakeholders in a project. These are not just the people in the creative community: it's your elected officials, government officials, everyone in City Hall. They should all be put on your mailing lists - and it's up to them to unsubscribe. Whether they show up or not isn't the point. That they know something's happening, that they know we're doing it that way and they know why we're doing it. We do this before the event, during the event, and after the event, so they are always aware of what we're doing.

We take lots of pictures—because nobody likes to read. This is another shot, inside one of the shipping containers, of the daily art show. And this is the outside of the shipping container. Once we realized that people really liked drawing on things, we said "Let's put up some white boards on the outside of shipping the containers and have people do stuff."

Here you see this is our promotion of the city murals, the WPA murals. We did a "sip and stroll," with themed cocktails available at different restaurants, and docents talking about the history of the WPA murals.

This is just one of our many strategy sessions we would have. We always invited the public to help us plan and create the events. These are not top-down events; we always invite people to participate in what we're doing and we do unique promotions. We've done a lot of work with lawn signs and banners. This is a part of a "fence art" project where we put historic photographs of places in Norwalk that don't exist today, or have been completely transformed, at the locations where the historic photographs had been, with some explanatory text.

The City was never going to promote the fact that it had murals inside City Hall and that they had been in there for 25 years. Nobody ever did any kind of sign up front, so we put a sign up, and put it right on City Hall, and then told them what we had done. It's really very simple. If you say it's a free exhibit, and these are WPA murals, and they are inside City Hall, people will come and look for it—and they did! The outcome was that the city finally went through and put labels on all of the artwork and shifted them around and created more of a permanent kind of exhibit, rather than just having them decorating City Hall with no explanation of what you were looking at.

We also produced lots of maps. We printed out downloadable maps from Google that were part of our Fence Art series. We always tell people to go out and explore so that the work we put into the exhibits, the locations and the activation live on beyond the projects.

Here's an example of some of the historic photos and descriptions. This is up on our DiscoverNorwalk.com website and here is a list of how we promote things. We're all over the place trying to promote things. We try to break new ground to reach new audiences. That's our primary focus. Just don't tell people that you're going to be doing something and then stop the community conversation. It's really important to keep that conversation going.

Finally I want to emphasize that partnering is the greatest way to get the word out: getting people involved in helping you design your projects also is one of the greatest ways to be successful in community building. Don't just show art, make people respond to art, make people create art—get that emotional connection with people.

There are too many events that are just exhibits where the artist is sitting by quietly. The work is on the wall and nobody's interacting. Make it interactive!

Questions.

Feedback: we always do a survey after an event, asking what did you think? Was it what you expected? Should we have done things differently? Would you like us to do this again? We go through a series of questions depending on what kind of outcome we're looking for. For some projects we had quite specific goals, in terms of reaching a specific audience, so we have different types of questions. We run a newsletter blast. When we're not doing anything, we talk about what everybody else in the community is doing, and we get people asking to share news about what we are doing. This can get overwhelming, so we created a whole bunch of self-serve tools for the greater Norwalk arts community: there's a listserv that people can email to, to get events disseminated to the 400+ people on the list. However, we found that most people won't make even that effort to communicate —they want to give it to someone who will then blast it out for them. But of course it's more authentic if you send out your own information and people can respond directly to you.

We have a Facebook group; we have Instagram; we're not on TikTok (the short video platform) yet, but we will be. We're on YouTube and all social media and we encourage people to become members and to post.

Margaret Bodell

I just want to say thank you so much for hosting this event because it's just such a fantastic notion that those empty storefronts and spaces can be put to good use.

The Storefronts Project started in New Haven. I had started taking over storefronts about 20 years earlier when I saw in New York City that so many art galleries were in storefronts and they had this whole scene. I said if they can do it, I could do it. So I went to New Haven and I said

“Hey, can I use this storefront for a little while, for a few hundred bucks?” and that's how the love started. I love pop ups, but I love art storefront programs even more, because it gives entrepreneurs an opportunity, because of their long-term potential, and their ability to change communities for the better.

I'm going to give you some “ancient history.” Phantom Galleries was one of the first noteworthy of these storefront projects. These were empty storefronts in L.A. in a deserted part of town. These though were only art installations, people could not go in and out of them. They did something for the neighborhood but they didn't do anything for artists or people there.

There were other storefront programs popping up. The Lower Manhattan Cultural Council had a great store for an exchange, but these were mostly temporary: you would go in, do a hit, and leave. You wouldn't improve the neighborhood. You would do things, but you're not *building* something.

I love pop-ups and I think that maybe perhaps in this room we'll create a new hybrid of storefront programs and pop-ups.

New Haven Connecticut: I get this job and I'm trying to do something with the empty storefronts. None of the landlords will play. I'm despondent. I don't know if I'm going to be able to pull it off. And then I find this row of empty storefronts that are all connected and I think I've hit the jackpot. These storefronts were owned by related companies that happen to own places all over Connecticut. I made friends with them and made it easy on them. I said, “I'll take care of everything.” I got the insurance and I went back to where I worked at the City of New Haven, doing public art and managing the program, and said “Let's start a storefront program, and let's give entrepreneurs a little bit of money, have them complete an application and give them a chance - let's give them a storefront!”

So that's how it was all born. (This PowerPoint is indeed ancient history as we put it together to get an NEA grant.) Anyway, a year went by running the Storefronts program, and we forgot about the grant until we heard that we got it.

You know, the traditional gallery system is very different now: it's not like it was. You can do much better just doing pop-ups or create a program where you can show your art and bring your community together: fashion shows, anything you can think of. We developed a whole system of just any events people wanted to do. It was a creative catalyst: people would come and we created community.

We needed money and went around looking for people to invest in it. Many were apprehensive, but then they saw the successes and it was “identify and negotiate”!

If you are doing pop-ups, you're at a phase where you might need some tips on that. I can tell you my experience and how to work with difficult landlords.

Basically you want to make them heroes. Make it easy; show them the results. My store for our program had a hundred percent success rate after three months - then their place would be rented and now some of those storefronts are going into 10-year leases, so it wasn't a "flash in the pan" - it's still going on.

We had another initiative that covered the whole state. I'd go in and clear out an entire building and everything would be great—the community would be happy - they had a theater and then the landlord took the space back, thinking, "I could make some money now that that building is still vacant." Karma ...

So this program was no joke. You had to apply; we wanted to see if you had a solid business plan, and there was a lot of tough vetting. This is The Grove. It started in one room and then took over an entire city block and had many copycats. It was super successful; it made me so happy. The application process itself helped create community.

One of the things about doing this project was the way the project looked. It had to have a great graphic; it had to be identifiable; you had to invite unusual partners down and invest a minute. We made sure that Yale came in with their musicians—there's the mayor there.

We hardly had any money to do this. We ran the whole program for a year on \$30,000, but as it started to grow and get more successful, the press started coming, people from other states came and asked, "How are you doing this?" Then the money started coming in.

Some of the problems are: security; managing the expectations of the entrepreneurs; lack of business training. However, if you really want to be in a storefront, you've already studied this up.

So there are support structures that can help people to get this type of training. At the end of the day, it's a lot of hard work, and it's not for everybody. After three months in a storefront, some people figured out it wasn't for them; others said, "I can't wait to sign the lease—this is what I wanted to do my whole life."

All these creatives, like our friend Kyle, and Upcycle Arts, and all of this started growing out of these spaces on the street. Then we got a little award, oh nice!, and then we're in Phase Two, where we get two... thousand dollars and the first Creative Economy award because we were creating a creative economy. We weren't doing flash-in-the-pan and people were actually making money. The neighborhood was lit up and, better, we closed the street off. We work at the restaurants and all kinds of stuff was going on. Then, more press following multiple sites. I was a busy person!

So looking at this storefront, you see this was the one of the worst in New Haven. Everybody said "Don't work there." But it was the exact place to go: go to the worst and transform that, and you will show them what you can do. The landlord said "Of course you can have this for no rent for a year. Thank you so much: you painted for me, you cleaned up, you changed my

reputation,” And, after a few years a developer snapped it up and transformed it into a coffee shop. It wasn't revitalization it was pre-vitalization.

Here we have this drab, horrible looking building, nothing's going on, and then it's fabulous because we have this notion.

Then a couple of Yale graduates said they wanted to try out what they were doing on the west coast: open a “Free Store.” I was a little nervous myself, but we did it and we tried it. Everything was free: when Yale students get out, they dump all their stuff —it has to go somewhere, so it all came to the free store.

It was a crazy scene and they also had the notion of a bicycle shop: if you could learn how to repair this, you can have a bicycle, because none of the kids knew how to work on bicycles anymore, so that was kind of cool.

So managing this, with events and everything, you know, it's a 24-hour-a-day job. What happened here with the FreeStore was it became so successful nobody wanted to go home at night. We had professors, homeless people, doctors, priests, people coming through, everybody was coming to see “what is this free store?”. Then came a really big renter, like REI, who came in and that was the end of the Free Store. It needed to go as it was getting a little out of hand.

Then someone, seeing what we had done, opened “Empty Space.” She becomes her own real estate agent renting out pop-ups. So you see the ripple effect of a storefront program. 42:21

After running the storefront program for two or three years, I wanted to start doing exchanges with other states and bringing talent in. There was MASS MoCA and we've invited Martha to come down and we'd go up there and this was this was going great for a while.

The holidays are always a good time for storefronts and pop-ups and I think people love coming into something unique and to talk. If you're having a dialog with the person that made the objects for sale, then your storefront becomes like the Underground Railroad —it's the route for all the trucks: the mobile trucks all are coming by: “Can I do a pop-up here tonight?” and you know people traveling around in trucks doing pop-ups - that's a really interesting development.

Then we started “A Light in the Night,” a light festival in downtown New Haven that went on for five years. It drove more traffic, so all the storefronts stayed open at night, more storefronts moved in, and it was just a whole new neighborhood—and that was the best part about this storefront program, which I think went on for another five or six years.

I then went to work for the state of CT, doing this for the entire state and all the municipalities. Hartford was very different, probably like Westport: the rents were very high, and landlords didn't want to give them up. But they developed a program called “I-Connect” and they were able to take a few storefronts. One very successful example is “Harford Prints.” This was a business that went into the I-Connect program and managed to stay all this time, and negotiated a lease at a reduced rate.

These people here are not paid - they're dropping by because they want to see this space transformed so they can have music here in their neighborhood with their group of people and don't want to go to a bar.

The ripple effect was people tagging each other and saying "Go to New Haven and create a piece of art," and it just became a bunch of people coming in and making work, dropping by from other states, and from all around Connecticut. These are some of the people that actually stayed in the storefront a long time ago.

Storefronts have a soul, they have a feeling inside, and these folks were here talking about when it was like Chess King or something and they were musicians so they played that night and as you can see it just was a wonderful gathering of artists.

That bohemian idea that "I'm gonna move to an artist community," for an art student, it doesn't exist anymore. But in a storefront program, or in a growing pop-up, or with what Jackie's doing, you can have that again, and you'll be able to talk to creative people.

So this doesn't have to be complicated. A simple thing is putting a chess board out there for people to stop and play. It doesn't have to be big money ways of getting people to come in and get engaged. Come in and convene - walk-ins are always welcome.

Neville Wisdom is a success story - you could see a lot of the anchor people on TV wearing his clothes. He was working in a tiny workshop in Westville. We gave him a chance at a storefront. He took that storefront, started blocking off the street and having fashion shows, and then took another storefront and now he's across from the Yale Art Museum and he's always giving lessons to the community, which is really good.

So to be in this program, this is no joke, you had to fill in this form, you had to track, you had to talk about your profit-and-loss in what were you doing. Your doors must be open. Do not be seen having your lunch sitting in the front! It was all super-professional and I was pretty much the police of the operation, trying to tell them: "We're near the window to the world, so be careful, and have it looking great and clean!"

This was just what we had to do to sort of get to that next level of finding funding and convincing people that there's money in this: "You're gonna do great Mr. Landlord, or related properties, here's what's going on." Then a Merchants Association was started. This was in the New Haven's Ninth Square, which still goes on today, and they do monthly things.

I want to just talk a little bit about engaging unseen populations and social service programs - the whole community - you just want to have everybody involved. And reach out to someone from Brooklyn. Take the train, we're on the train line, it's easy to get here, so let's exchange and have some fun.

With the Press, other places started asking how they can do this. Well, it's not so easy in other places, but they'll find their own way. They use the basic principles, have a little seed money, and they're able to do it.

This slide is about The Grove's rise to stardom and then selling their business.

Finally you know in New Haven there's the university: there's a lot of creative minds. The Bourse opened up as another co-working space and lived for a long time (on this slide, we're doing a presentation about this movement). At the endgame you know the whole neighborhood is hopping. Make Haven is another success story that came out of this.

So much comes out of doing pop-ups and storefront programs. So, I'm very proud about all these things: going where no one wanted to go, and doing the movies. It really worked; this program worked. So I think that's pretty much it

I do want to say after this what happened was Art Place America gave us a grant and we were just all around in the state of Connecticut and then I was in Memphis with Bloomberg's innovation team. They said how can we do this in the worst part of Memphis and they started something called MemShop, which runs today,

I couldn't update my slides, but just if you're interested, look at MemShop because then they started MemMobile - they took over this Broad Street area and the marketing on it was so brilliant you see it: "Like wow, that looks so good I just want to go there." And they they really changed a lot of how Memphis was. There was a part of Memphis called Soulsville and the buses would drive in, just to go to Stax Records and then drive right out, so we had to change that by investing in the local folks to open a little pie shop or let's keep some money in the neighborhood. So I just want to say in your storefront exploration, look at MemShop.

I'm just really excited to see what you all want to do here. I hope that you'll start a program and take over all these storefronts and make them like a campaign.

Get your beautiful branding down and every storefront. Get all these people to participate and have your little trail and I think it just will create a creative community.

Years ago, I'm from Connecticut there used to be real art down here in this part of Westport. I know there's a lot of chain-stores and other great stuff happening, but it'd be great to see a little bit more, you know, "making," and for people to be able to talk to an artist, or start an art collection with one of your works. So, thanks everybody.