

Visual Poetry Transforms Empty Storefronts in White Plains

Evidence of Outcomes: **Warren Lehrer's Community Design class**, Purchase College, SUNY
White Plains Storefront Project: Art In Vacant Spaces

Year One: Eight storefronts launched December, 2015. Six featured in this document.



detail



A Place | design Elise Assenza

Sloan's poem begins: "a place is more than the empty spaces..." Elise Assenza's design uses bright and pastel colors, amorphous shapes, and expressive typography to bring out the hopefulness on the other side of emptiness. The poem ends on a hopeful note: "we all have empty space somewhere inside, leaving room for something new to grow and reside."

Positive Thinking | design Courtney D. Brown

Courtney Brown's solution for this poem of hope effectively usurps the vernacular of storefront signs such as *Come In We're Open* and *Be Back Shortly*. While some passersby don't notice the poem, those who do are smiling all the way to the bank (or wherever they're going).





***The Future?* | design William Pineda**

William Pineda situated this poem in a vacant storefront next to the Barnes & Noble bookstore. Inspired by a single comment by a White Plains resident, the poem ponders the future of books and face to face storytelling. "Is there someone standing behind you reading? Can you see their reflection in the glass? Sometimes you just have to inquire."



***Reverse Commute* | design Courtney D. Brown**

The commute is central to many people in White Plains—no matter which direction they're going. Courtney Brown's brilliant lenticular design enables reader/viewers to *experience* the poem differently depending on the direction they're heading.



i live	i live
in white plains	in the city
i work	i work
in the city	in white plains
i take	i take
the train	the train
every day	every day
to work	to work





Reverse Commute | design Tessa Goode

Repetition plays a big role in Tessa Goode's interpretation of *Reverse Commute*, as do the colors of concrete and grass, the textures of paper (layered and torn), and the trajectory, ebb and flow of taking the train every day down and up the Harlem River Line.



Hold On | design Alexa Dragonetti

This close-up photo gives you a sense of the immersive quality of Alexa Dragonetti's design which evokes interstellar spaces, the spaces between, betwixt, and on their way toward becoming. Reflections bounce between right-angled and opposing windows creating a celestial hall of mirrors effect, as readers think of their city's and their own pathways through harder and better times.

Year Two: Ten storefronts launched November, 2016. Seven featured in this document.

This year's installations occupied one continuous swath of properties—50+ windows and doorways—spanning an entire block. The media used included animation, video projections and laser cuts. The BID also teamed up with *Otocast*, a free downloadable public art app that provides details about each location on the Storefront tour.



That Guy | design and photography Alexander Beach

Alexander Beach's visualization of *That Guy* spans 13 windows. He took photographs around downtown White Plains focusing on cityscapes, trees, a bicyclist riding down the street. By changing the orientation of some of the photos and using typography to diagram aspects of the poem, he places the viewer in the shoes of the outsider looking in. We might feel alienated in a new place when we just arrive but eventually we find our footing, are reached out to and reach out, and become 'that guy' who helps strangers and neighbors.



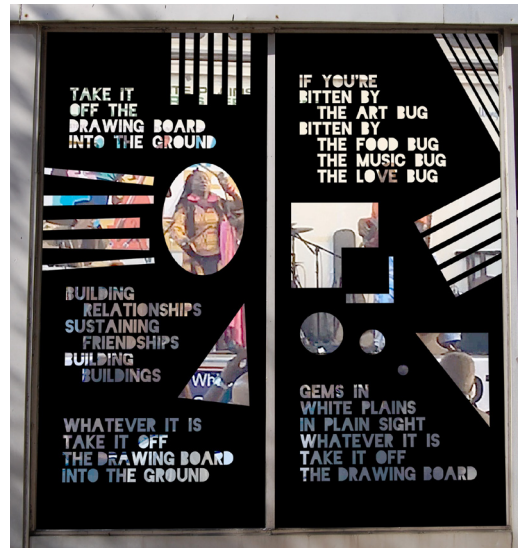
Urbia | design Emily Seto

Looking through the layers of Emily Seto's laser-cut, tunnel-book-like construction creates the experience of being in a place that is at once urban and suburban.



Off the Drawing Board | design Gunnar Artin

Gunnar Artin turned the words of this poem—about bringing

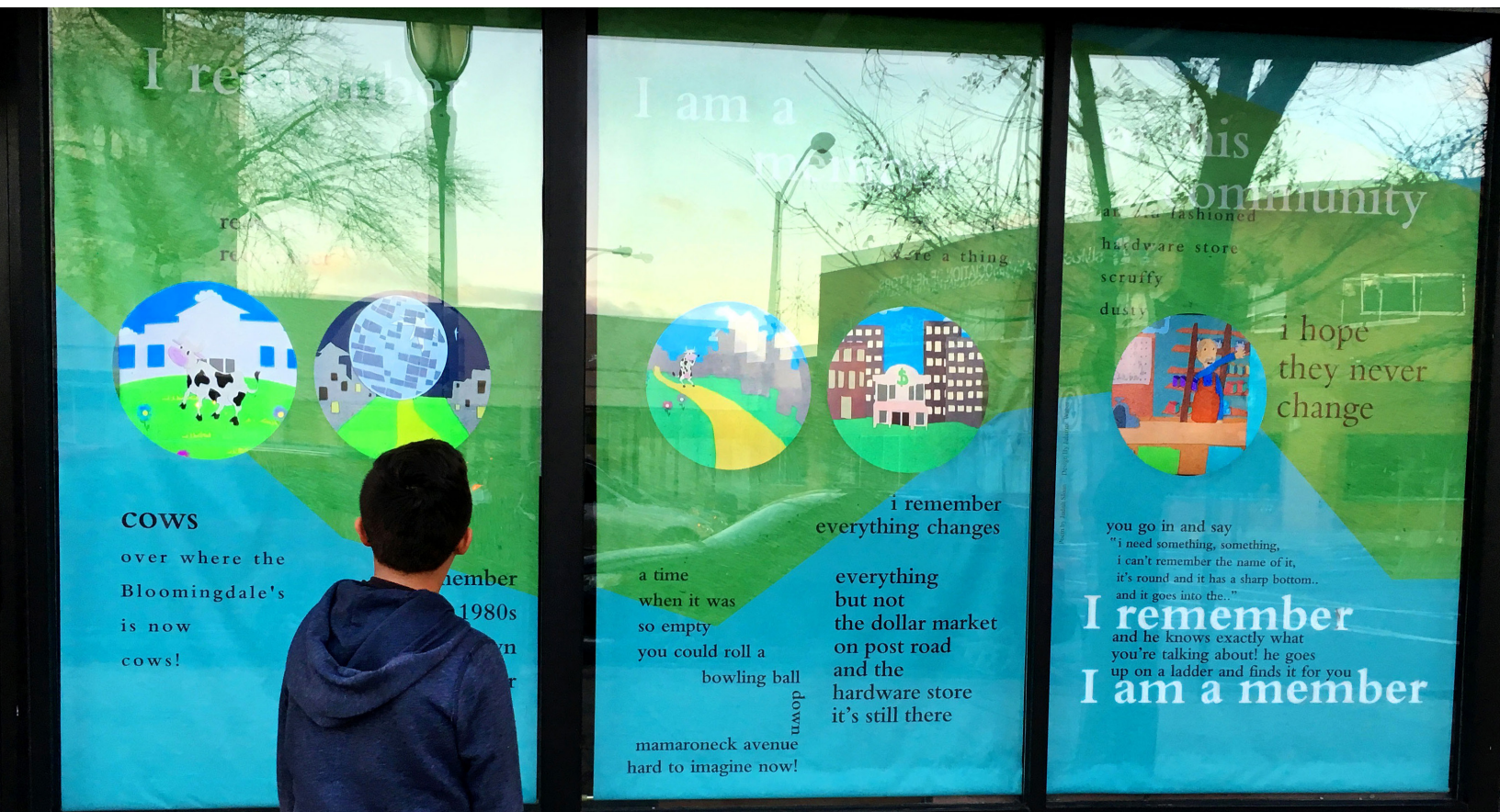


one's dreams to life—into masks and openings through which we see video projections of people who took their dreams off the board into public festivals and live events in White Plains.

[View video](#)

I Remember | design Julianne Waber

Waber's treatment of *I Remember* uses colorful cut construction paper imagery and animation to evoke vast changes that have taken place over eight decades. As farmland transforms into city, a cow character moves across the animated portholes. [View video](#)





I Remember | design Danielle Foti

"Memories are like a quilt," says Danielle Foti, "stitched together over time." Her interpretation of *I Remember* is inspired by the rich history of quilts. Family, ancestry, sharing, community, repurposing of old materials—the quilt reminds us of a past time and of people who brought us to the present moment.



I Remember | design Danielle Foti

Foti's second interpretation of *I Remember* embraces the layering of memories and the passing of time. As you walk down the street, stanzas appear to jump across the ten window neon-like typographic design; eyes follow the words up, down, and across. While everything changes, the past is not forgotten, though it sometimes is blurry. Each moment is built on that which preceded it.



The Seat, The Light, The Pulse, The Heart design Paige Nehlsen [View video](#)

Paige Nehlsen's animated interpretation of this poem draws a connection between the verses and the rhythm of a heart beat. Its screen-based typographic design highlights the permutational word play of the poem as it depicts the aspirations and energy of White Plains.

Additional Links about the Storefront Project

- [Article about the Storefront Project in Purchase College's *The Beat Magazine*](#)
- [A more comprehensive document about the Storefront Project](#)
- [Article about the Storefront Project in *USA TODAY*](#)
- [Article about the 2016 Storefront Project on the Purchase College website](#)