



Creating A Unique Art Program to Invigorate Your Business District

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"... Investing in arts and cultural institutions ... can be the economic equivalent of bringing a manufacturing plant to a neighborhood and — from a cultural and quality-of-life standpoint — more than surpass it." + *Luis Ubiñas, President of the Ford Foundation*

Art Programs have long been recognized as valuable business district placemaking programs. In large cities like NYC and Los Angeles, public art installations are commonplace, but there are many advantages of art programming for smaller townships as well:

1. Fostering Community Engagement

Provides a platform for residents and visitors to connect with local businesses, artists, and each other. The shared art experience encourages conversations and builds a sense of community belonging.

2. Revitalizing Local Businesses

For businesses along the art walk route, participation is a win-win. The foot traffic that is generated introduces new customers, boosting sales and visibility. The art walk transforms businesses into more than just storefronts; they become integral to the artistic narrative of the community.

3. Showcasing Local Talent

Emerging and established artists have the opportunity to exhibit their work to a broader audience.

4. Sparking Economic Growth

Increased foot traffic benefits not only participating businesses but also the surrounding area. Visitors increase dwell time dining, shopping, and contributing to economic vitality.



5. Cultivating Cultural Identity

The program makes art accessible to all, reflecting a diverse and vibrant community and encouraging inclusivity.



6. Fostering Art Education

Interactive activities inspire learning about various forms of art, enriching the experience and fostering deeper art appreciation.

7. Enhancing Quality of Life

In a fast-paced world, the art walk offers communities an opportunity to slow down, appreciate beauty, and connect with their surroundings. The concept of art walks is not new, but the twist lies in how these programs have evolved, transcending from mere gallery tours to immersive experiences that combine art, culture, and community engagement.



One such groundbreaking program is *#ThroughTheWindows #AHobokenArtWalk*. The charming City of Hoboken is known for its rich history, creative community, and incredible NYC views. This art walk not only celebrates Hoboken’s artistic spirit but also breathes new life into its streets by transforming the city into a vibrant art gallery and spurring activity in the Business District. This innovative program, spearheaded by Main Street Pops and the Hoboken Business Alliance, has become a beacon of creativity, uniting artists, businesses, and the community. “Hoboken has long been known as a city that celebrates its artists, and there is no better way to do that than to make their work more accessible to as large an audience as possible,” Roxanne Earley, Executive Director of the Hoboken Business Alliance, said. “*Through the Windows* effectively turns every participating business into a gallery space and will once again encourage residents and visitors alike to experience all that our city has to offer.”



The program was successfully launched in 2022 with 75 participating shops and 45 regional artists. Throughout the month of June, the public experienced the exhibit by scanning a QR code on stickers in front of each window to view a digital map listing all participating shops and artists.

Building on the success of its inaugural year, *Through The Windows* returned in 2023 with an expanded offering of engagement and activity. In addition to 25% more participating shops and double the participating artists, three additional interactive events were introduced to encourage active participation and further engagement within the business community:

1. Art BINGO contest with retail gift cards for winners
2. Guided art tours, starting and ending at different restaurants
3. *Emerging Artist* program targeting Hoboken’s youth, attracting over 125 young artists

The program kicked off with a city-wide launch party where the public strolled from shop-to-shop, meeting artists and store owners, connecting with neighbors, and viewing the newly hung art.

This project involved support from various members of the community, including leadership and funding from Hoboken Business Alliance, curation and production by Main Street Pops, and help from local galleries, schools, and art organizations.

Every part of the program specifically targeted a different segment of the hyperlocal community to maximize the results for the Business District.