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Purchase College and White Plains BID Collaborate for Art in Vacant Spaces Project Purchase Design Students Take Over Empty Windows to Provide Hopeful Messages for Holiday Shopping Season

Purchase, NY, [November 25, 2016]: Starting **November 26**, Small Business Saturday, design students at Purchase College, SUNY's School of the Arts will once again collaborate with the White Plains BID (Business Improvement District) to exhibit **Art in Vacant Spaces**, an innovative art project utilizing empty storefronts across downtown White Plains.

The project was initially launched last year to improve the visual appearance of several vacant storefronts, thereby enhancing the overall ambiance and pedestrian experience in the downtown.

Again this year, Graphic Design Professor Warren Lehrer worked with his Community Design class to populate the storefronts with visual poetry as part of the students' pro-bono work for the semester. The School of the Arts hired poet Judith Sloan to research and interview people in White Plains, and to write site-specific poems for the project that represent the hopes, desires, memories, and soul of people working and, or living in White Plains, leaving room for evocative interpretations by student designers. The students then visualized the poems using design elements and tools including typography, color, shape, photography, animation, projections, and dye cuts.

This year, the Art in Vacant Spaces project will feature ten works. It will also include video projections and animation for the first time.

White Plains Mayor Thomas Roach said, "We are pleased to be able to showcase the wonderful art of SUNY Purchase Community Design students in our downtown. Their work has enlivened

our streetscape and created inspiring and thought-provoking messages about community and place. Kudos to the WPBID for visioning and spearheading the implementation of the Art in Vacant Spaces project and to SUNY Purchase President Thomas J. Schwarz and Professor Warren Lehrer for their willingness to collaborate and partner on the project.”

The project will have a dramatic impact on the corner of East Post Road and South Broadway. All of the artwork will be installed in one property that has 50 plus windows and doorways spanning this corner of the downtown.

Brittany Brandwein, the Director of Events and Business Promotions for the White Plains BID and the project manager said, “We had the opportunity this year to create a stimulating art wall along East Post Road and South Broadway that will be both captivating and transformative. It will be a showcase for how creativity, ingenuity, and passion can transform an empty space into a place that inspires and connects our downtown residents and workers to each other and the city. This year we have incorporated the free downloadable app Otocast into the project that will give viewers detailed information about each piece, as well as four pieces from last year’s project that are still on display. The art will be on view until the individual stores are rented.”

Warren Lehrer said, “At the heart of Community Design is the opportunity to serve the public, while providing students with challenging professional experiences. We’re honored that the White Plains BID once again trusted our students with this important project.”

Student designers include Gunnar Artin, Alexander Beach, Danielle Foti, Melissa Murillo, Paige Nehlsen, Emily Seto, Julianne Waber, Ashley Yalaju, and Sarah Yalaju. Images, text of the poems, specific addresses and interviews with Professor Lehrer, Judith Sloan, Brittany Brandwein and/or any of the students are available upon request.

The White Plains BID is appreciative to the City of White Plains for their support, PIP Printing and Marketing Services and for the generous sponsorship from Post Broadway Associates, LLC, Glacier Global Partners, The Ritz-Carlton, Westchester and the Hudson Valley Gateway Realtors Foundation.

For more information, visit www.wpbid.com.

About Purchase College–SUNY

Purchase College, part of the State University of New York (SUNY) network of 64 universities and colleges, was founded in 1967 by Governor Nelson Rockefeller. His aspiration for Purchase was to create a dynamic campus that combined conservatory training in the visual and performing arts with programs in the liberal arts and sciences, in order to inspire an appreciation for both intellectual and artistic talents in all students. Today, Purchase College–SUNY is a community of students, faculty, and friends where open-minded engagement with

the creative process leads to a lifetime of intellectual growth and professional opportunity. For more information about the College, visit www.purchase.edu.

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