

ART



PHOTOS BY SAED HINDASH/THE STAR-LEDGER

The Bushberg Brothers Furniture store on Market Street in Newark is one of several storefronts displaying artwork in its windows with help from the Gallery Aferro, also on Market Street.

Window dressing

Installations brighten Newark's Market Street storefronts throughout the night

The downtown block around the alternative art space Gallery Aferro — at 73 Market St. — last night introduced art all night long to Newark. The project, called "Activate Market Street," is using abandoned storefront display windows for bright, around-the-clock art installations.

ON ART
Dan Bischoff
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You could say the gallery is just expanding an art show that's already up. For the past month, the Aferro has been showing five life-size white neon figures by French artist Fanny Allie. Standing in the main display window at the front of Gallery Aferro, they are simple outlines of figures looking heavenward — sort of Keith-Haring-does-Baroque-saints.

"We decided, on a whim, to just keep it on 24 hours, since it was mounted in our window," says Evonne Davis, who, with Emma Wilcox, founded the independent gallery. "And boy, did people like it. We kept getting compliments, from our landlord, RBH Group, especially. So we started plans for filling all the abandoned storefronts on this block with art that can be on all night long."

"It's something I think we've been thinking about since we came here, seven years ago now," Wilcox says. "It's a way of filling the city environment with art with a year-round project, really beyond the gallery's walls."

Many European and Asian cities have vigorous programs of public light and projection shows after dark, often conceived by internationally known artists like Robert Longo or Cai Guo-Qiang. The form can be quite complex, telling stories, as well as sending cascading color or wry messages across beautiful old buildings. Other art projects have turned storefront windows into sidewalk museums — Manhattan has had a storefront museum on Broadway near Ninth Street for years, and the curved prow window on the Flat Iron Building is often filled with art installations.

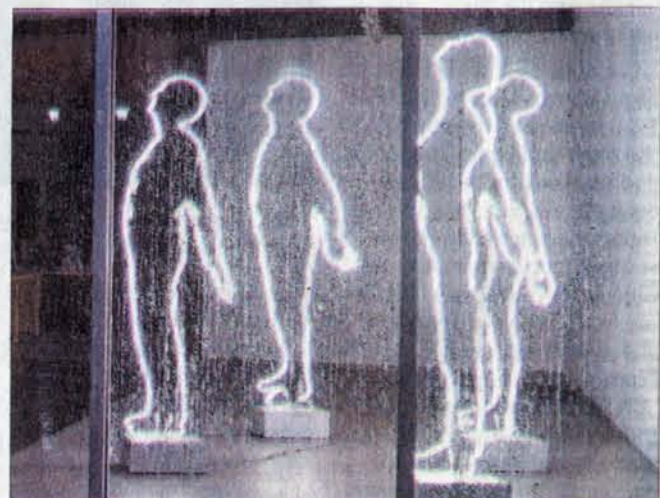
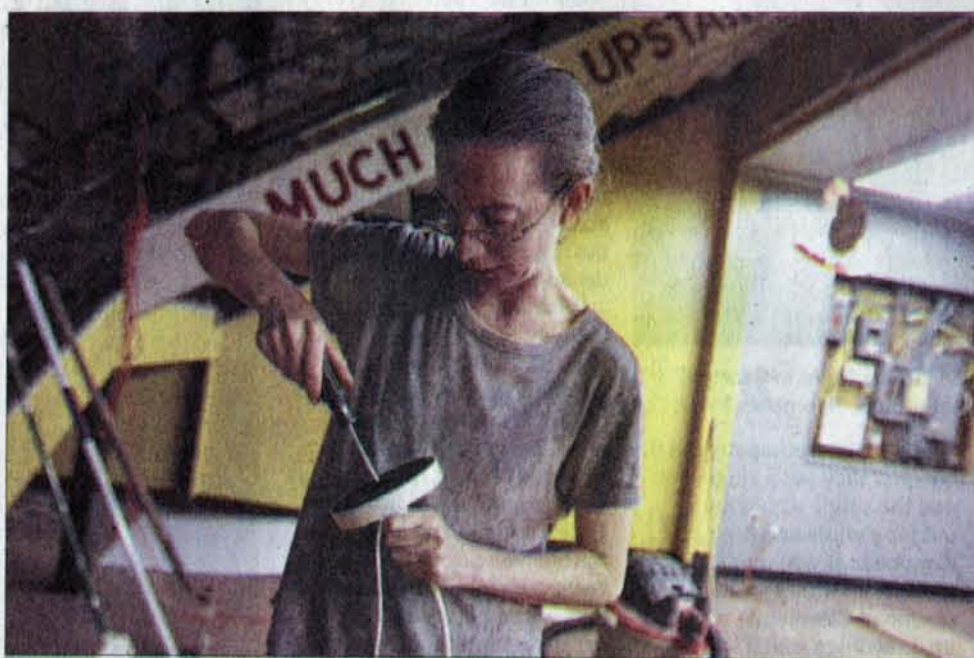
"Activate Market Street" is more modest, but striking all the same. Four buildings, in addition to the second-floor windows of Aferro, are illuminated all night, three with video installations and the last with a spotlighted installation of New Jersey artist Katie Truk's colorful wire sculptures covered with stretched pantyhose. Truk fills the window at 93 Market, at the opposite end of the block from the gallery.

The rest of the projects use the street fronts as movie screens. "We take the windows of the storefronts into giant video screens by spraying them with a translucent gel and projecting directly on them from behind," Davis says. The windows act like a theatrical scrim.

Next door to Aferro, at 75 Market St., they've installed a mash-up of five



Above: Gallery Aferro art director Evonne Davis, right, and gallery manager Jacob Mandel collaborate on the "Activate Market Street" installation. Left: Gallery director Emma Wilcox at work. Below: A cluster of neon figures in the window of the gallery.



filmmakers put together by Wilfried Agricola de Cologne of CognOFF, a European program coordinator that has brought artists such as Ezra Wube, Stine Gromshott, Johanna Reich and Signe Lillemark to Newark sidewalks.

Several of the shops along Market have huge window displays with double-fronted windows. At 77 Market St., the window on the right is filled with Matt Broach's black-and-white, hand-drawn animation that looks like the view out the window of a train passing through countryside, suburbia and, finally, an urban neighborhood.

Installations such as Broach's use the window as Brunelleschi did the painting frame, but the window can be a flat cartouche, too. On the other side of the door at 77, Dave Beck is projecting a video of his own hand as he covers and recovers it with reminders of day-to-day chores — such as "buy milk" or "call home,"

each written in a different ink — over the course of a month. Called "Things I Have To Do Today," the video consists of dozens of snapshots of his hand growing ever more festooned with notes, each image flashing by in seconds.

"I like to mix humor in wherever I can," Davis says, "and Dave's work is sort of a funny reminder of how everyday distractions can really mount."

The display windows at 85 Broad St. — formerly Rupert Ravens' downtown art emporium and, before that, a really huge furniture store — has display windows on the first and second floors. In the sidewalk-level window there's Dmitry Morozov's pristine slow-mo video of black ink dissolving in a glass of clear water. Upstairs will host Fanny Allie's saintly white neon figures, moved from the front window of Aferro.

As the project develops, the Aferro hopes to use the sidewalk for

Activate Market Street

Where: Gallery Aferro, 73 Market St., Newark

When: Every night, beginning at dusk, through early September. Gallery Aferro's regular hours are 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Thursdays through Saturdays.

How much: Free. For more information about the gallery or the auction, visit aferro.org.

interactive displays, as well as art events and performances, too.

Both Aferro founders have played with projections before. Wilcox projected giant quotes from Walt Whitman across the facades of downtown office buildings for one of the early iterations of the Newark Open Doors studio tour shows. And Davis, as an art project, used to set up film projectors in an old Volvo, screening artsy movies on the gel-smear-

back window of the parked car for passersby (after carefully parking it in Brooklyn or other suitably artsy areas).

"Just after we got here, we set up a projection on the gallery building, using my car battery to power the slide show," Davis says. "Not a really sustainable method. But we hope to develop all sorts of capacities over time."

Street projections "use light as a paintbrush," Davis says, but more than that, they "engage people who weren't thinking about going into an art gallery with art."

"It's a great audience builder. We get that all the time here, just a huge number of people walk in off the street to see what we're doing here and, all of a sudden, they're art junkies. It's one of the most exciting things about moving art out into public spaces."

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