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NY CULTURE | AUGUST 30, 2010

Constructive Ideas for City's Eyesores

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By PIA CATTON

Richard Pasquarelli's digital paintings are making construction sites around the city a little nicer to look at. Three of the artist's works—one of which, "Restore the View," went up Saturday on Barclay Street—are part of the latest installment of the Downtown Alliance for New York's public-art program, known as Re:Construction.



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Guillermo Stuart

Lordy Rodriguez's 'Water Movements' at Fulton and Pearl streets.

"The idea was to use construction barriers as canvases for temporary public art," said Elizabeth H. Berger, the president of the Downtown Alliance, whose initiatives for lower Manhattan also include projects ranging from sidewalk improvement to expanded wireless internet service to the annual outdoor River to River music and film series.

Re:Construction was launched in 2007 as a pilot program to mitigate the public effect of construction, which, whether seen, heard or felt, is an everyday part of life in New York.

"Community leaders were looking at big and small ways of helping lower Manhattan residents, building owners and workers live through one of the largest construction projects in the city," Ms. Berger said of the work in and around the World Trade Center site.

To select the artists, the Alliance works with four local art curators. It then identifies artists who would be willing and able to work within an established set of guidelines. Works of art that are intended for construction sites have to be easy to maintain and de-install. They also have to be somewhat modular, in case the site's dimensions change.



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Bryan Derballa for The Wall Street Journal

Artist Richard Pasquarelli stands in front of his new public-art installation, 'Restore the View,' on Barclay Street in Lower Manhattan. The image of clouds and sky is printed on vinyl and stretches along the top of construction scaffolding. Mr. Pasquarelli created the work with the help of the Alliance for Downtown New York.

"We've had work that's two-dimensional, some that are more sculptural, some that are weaving," said Ms. Berger of the projects that have been installed on parapet walls, timber barriers and Jersey barriers.

Mr. Pasquarelli's prints are on stretched vinyl that covers plywood scaffolding. The parameters involved with the material structured his creative process. "It couldn't have a narrative running through. It had to be printed on mesh to allow air to go through," the artist said.

The most arresting of the designs is "Secret Gardens," which will be installed in mid-September on Chambers Street between West and Greenwich streets. The *trompe*

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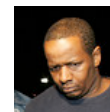
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'oeilx' print has the appearance of an ivy-covered wall with small portals that allow the viewer to peak in at private gardens on the other side.

Among the Re:Construction projects currently up for view are Maya Barkai's "Walking Men 99," a 500-foot-long work surrounding the Silverstein Properties construction site at 99 Church Street that depicts 99 versions of the "walk" traffic signal as seen around the world, and Lordy Rodriguez's "Water Movements," a mural at Fulton and Pearl streets that takes the form of a winding river.



Richard Pasquarelli

Mr. Pasquarelli's 'Secret Gardens,' which is slated to go up on Chambers Street in mid-September.

"I tend to work with melancholy and ambiguity, but in a public venue, I didn't want to do that," said Mr. Pasquarelli, who is represented by Salomon Contemporary gallery in Chelsea.

For this project, his goal was simply "to stop people and get their attention." The solution was to insert natural elements into the cityscape. On Saturday, he put up "Restore the View," an abstracted sky pattern located at the site of CUNY's Fiterman Hall construction project on Barclay Street. Mr. Pasquarelli's third work for Re:Construction,

"Hours of the Day," is a graphic play on the windows of the W Hotel at 123 Washington St., at Albany Street, where the work will be installed in late September.

Mr. Pasquarelli is the first artist to have three works up at the same time. "It's a Pasquarellifest," Ms. Berger said. "They are profound visually, but inexpensive to produce and apply. In all three cases, what will be compelling is that the work relates to what is happening at that site."

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