



# Downtown Diary

09/01/2010 at 9:20 am

## A Conversation With Re:Construction Artist Richard Pasquarelli



Restore the View

There's a place in Lower Manhattan where the clouds float only a few feet above street level. Walk over to the corner of Barclay and Greenwich streets, and look up. There, adorning the wooden planks flanking the **Fiterman Hall** construction site, are billowing white clouds and a bright blue sky.

The artwork is the latest to pop up at Lower Manhattan's construction sites as part of *Re:Construction*, a construction mitigation program that recasts construction sites as canvases for innovative public art and architecture. It's an intervention to create a cheerful and welcoming environment in the midst of an urban renewal.

The program—made possible through a \$1.5 million grant from the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation—began in 2007 and has produced 15 pieces, seven of which are up for viewing. The newest installation, *Restore the View*, was created by Richard Pasquarelli. You

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can see images of the project [here](#) or watch a video about the project [here](#).

Pasquarelli is a former Lower Manhattan resident whose paintings have been shown at The Miami Art Museum, The Bronx Museum of the Arts, The Chelsea Museum, Jersey City Museum and the Islip Art Museum. His work was recently acquired by the [National September 11 Memorial and Museum](#).

The Downtown Alliance recently asked Pasquarelli about his work.

*Why did you want to be a part of this program?*

I have been lucky enough to show my work in galleries all over the world, but these projects will be my first opportunity to create public art on such a large scale. So when Karin Bravin asked me to put together some proposals for the Downtown Alliance, I jumped at the opportunity. By placing artworks all over construction sites in Lower Manhattan, the Downtown Alliance is helping create a more beautiful, colorful and open streetscape while introducing a broader audience to contemporary art in an original and accessible way. I am honored to be part of this valuable endeavor and have enjoyed the challenge of creating site-specific works on such a grand scale. My family and I lived just a few blocks away from the installation locations for almost 10 years and I still have a strong attachment to the neighborhood, so it is especially exciting for me that my work can be part of the rebuilding and revitalization of the area.

*How would you like people to view your work?*

I hope that these works will challenge the common perception that art is just a picture on a wall. The location and sheer scale of the works will demand the viewer's attention, but what each viewer takes from a work is necessarily very personal. Through the juxtaposition of natural and geometric elements in the urban landscape—familiar images out of place—I hope to create something unexpected, to evoke an emotion or a memory. I want to make people stop and wonder, look up close, then step back and see the work again, only differently.

*What do these three works say about your artistic vision?*

As a painter, my work has a psychological intimacy. And work of this scale, for such a broad audience, posed a new challenge for me. Unlike a painting, which is, in a sense, self-contained, these works are part of their environment. The tension in my paintings is between the content and the surface; in these pieces, it is instead between the work and its surroundings. While my paintings tend to be more charged, the use of light and color to evoke mood is common to my

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1:01 PM 08.31.2010

Visit <http://www.downtownny.com> for free dining guides Downtown. (@ Alliance For Downtown New York) <http://4sq.com/c8KeaU>

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I just ousted Candice H. as the mayor of Alliance For Downtown New York on @foursquare! <http://4sq.com/c8KeaU>

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I just unlocked the "Local" badge on @foursquare! <http://4sq.com/csj0JV>

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work, as is the graphic quality. The large swaths of color read one way from a distance, and another way up close, an effect that is magnified with the scale of these installations. My work tends to have an element of mystery and ambiguity that leaves it open to many interpretations and I hope that passersby will each have their own individual responses to these works.

In the next few weeks, Pasquarelli will have two other pieces on full display as part of the *Re:Construction* program. The second, *Secret Gardens*, will be installed around a street construction project at Chambers Street between West Street and West Broadway, thanks to New York City Department of Transportation Commissioner Janette Sadik-Khan. The third piece, *Hours of the Day*, will be installed in the piazza at the W Hotel, 123 Washington Street (at Albany Street).

*Re:Construction* is the best kind of public-private partnership, an ongoing opportunity for government, artists, curators, property owners and business people to work together to make something beautiful. It's a win-win for everyone.

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