
ROXBURY

'ArtROX! Holiday Pop-Up Shop' open for business in Dudley Square

Posted by Patrick Rosso

December 6, 2013 04:15 PM

By Patrick D. Rosso, Boston.com Staff

As shoppers scramble to complete their holiday gift lists, Discover Roxbury is making it easy to find unique gifts, support local entrepreneurs, and add momentum to the revitalization of Dudley Square.

On Friday the arts advocacy group swung open the doors to its “ArtROX! Holiday Pop-Up Shop.”

Located at 2201 Washington St. in the heart of Roxbury’s Dudley Square, the temporary holiday shop, now in its second season, features crafts and goods from local artists as well as fun holiday activities.

“Part of idea behind the shop is to establish a presence for Discovery Roxbury, as well as bring more visibility to the artists who work and live in the community,” explained Derek Lumpkins, executive director of Discover Roxbury.

Located in a retail space that has struggled over the years to find a tenant, Lumpkins said Discover Roxbury wants to add activity and visibility to the square with the shop.

“We want to enliven the space and create a stronger cultural identity for Dudley Square,” said Lumpkins. “Roxbury, even after all these years, still has a negative stereotype around it and part of this is changing that conversation about what Roxbury is.”

On Friday as Santa stood outside the shop and greeted customers, the vendors were busy setting up their booths.

From handmade scarves and hats to jewelry and paintings, the shop offers a little of everything.

“I think the shop is an inventive way to use the space; it helps out local artists and lets the community know where are hear,” said Sheila Springfield, a 55-year-old Roxbury resident and one of the vendors featured at the shop.

The idea of bringing life and shoppers back to the square was shared by many of the vendors.

“This was my downtown growing up,” explained Betty Akins, a 61-year-old South Boston resident who was working at her sister’s booth. “Shops like this bring back memories of the old square; it used to be everything you needed was right here and hopefully things like this will help bring that back.”

For the shoppers, many were just happy to be able to find unique holiday gifts right in their own backyards.

“Things like this are needed,” Dwayne Watts, a 45-year-old Roxbury resident, said as he browsed the booths. “I’d like to see more things like this. We need more stuff in Dudley Square other than fast food and hopefully something like this will spark that interest and bring more people in.”

Although last year’s storefront was temporary, thanks in part to a grant from Massachusetts Cultural Council, this year’s storefront will continue to be active past the holiday season.

From performances to food tastings, Lumpkins said the space, which will be dubbed the “ArtROX! Hub,” will add to that cultural identity his organization is trying to create.

“The momentum in the square has begun, but it’s not at the scale it needs to be,” said Lumpkins. “It’s not just about building buildings it has to go beyond that and support the people.”

The “ArtROX! Holiday Pop-Up Shop” will be open Friday through Tuesday from 12 p.m. to 5 p.m. until December 24. The closing hour will be extended to 7 p.m. from December 20 to December 24.

For more information about the shop and vendors, [click here](#).

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