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Detroit 'Pop' City: A Case For Pop-Up Retail In Detroit

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As unique small businesses continue to sprout and help transform the economic landscape of the once-booming automotive capital of the nation, a largely untapped retail concept is quickly gaining steam. Unequivocally of the moment, uncertain, changing -- words that could also describe Detroit and its up-and-coming movers seeking their next -- pop-up shops, temporary stores that "pop up" one day then disappear shortly thereafter, may offer local entrepreneurs just the opportunity they've been looking for.



Detroit real estate fixture The Farbman Group has a history of getting creative with their unused spaces. For the past two years they've given away a year's worth of free rent at Garden Court Condominiums. In exchange the winner blogged about his or her experiences living downtown on their website. On December 2nd the group launches "Reigniting Retail," a pop-up showcase that invites local retailers to showcase their products during a two-day period in the lobby of the Fisher Building. Seasonal pop-ups have always been around; shops like Halloween USA appropriately pop-in to take advantage of the holiday hoopla. But the temporary shops of late seem to be more thoughtful incarnations, with emphasis on involving local brands and artisans.

"As the area has become a haven for art and innovation, [we] recognize this and want to highlight the growth of the market for their creative and unique output," says Farbman Group President, David Farbman. "Detroit's creative class will be front and center, showcasing the drive and passion of the people fueling the city's rebirth."

Posch agrees, "Pop-ups can really act more as agents of transformation and incubators for ideas," he says. "They're also a great way for budding businesses to get exposure."

With plenty of unused space, low start-up costs, and built-in marketing, pop-ups may offer Detroiters a real life crash course in retail business. "Hugh was the best idea I ever had," says Posch. "I tested an idea based on lessons learned and it worked really well."