

Whitney | 'Positive urban art makes us accidental tourists'

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with the Wind" and "It's A Wonderful Life."

The "Gratitude Wall," painted by Ulibarri, located on the Santander Bank parking lot, adjacent to a PRG Rugs, emerged from a collaborative Gratitude Project that reached out to schools and asked students to submit words that expressed their gratitude. The words that form the rays of sunshine were culled from a field of over 1,200, summarizing the collective gratitude of Nashua community children and teachers.

The most recent Positive Street Art mural, "The Promise," dedicated on Veterans Day 2017, is located on the Quincy Street wall of the Nashua Foundry. This mural is the third in the group's "Hearts and Minds" series, dedicated to veterans, inspired by graffiti messages found on walls near vets' gathering places that communicated their sense of isolation. The idea for the mural occurred to Ramirez after participating in a yearlong community effort to listen to vets about their experiences through informal coffee and donut gatherings and other activities.

In "The Promise," the largest mural in size and

scope, Ramirez depicted all five branches of the military – through giant profiles of soldiers in uniform. Super-imposed on each profile is an iconic experience common to military personnel and their families: a child standing in a military cemetery strewn with flags; a family reunion; a young girl saluting a Marine; a purple heart recipient saluting and soldiers in the field, stopping to help children in need.

Public murals improve what are otherwise neutral, often overlooked spaces in the city. They make walkable places welcoming and invite

pedestrians and drivers to rethink their assumptions about a place. Street murals and positive urban art make us accidental tourists, in an accidental gallery that is the cityscape, encouraging us to see familiar surroundings in a new light, awakening the mind's eye to consider new possibilities.

Someone getting off the bus and heading home in Depot Square now sees a "Gratitude" mural where there was once a drab wall. Pedestrians are drawn into Nashua history every time they pass by the "Nostalgia" mural. "The Promise" mural

backs up to the rear end of the Post Office, so Postal workers see it each morning as the trucks pull out – communicating validity and support to veterans, many of whom happen to be Nashua postal workers.

One of the greatest legacies of public art is that it reaches those who might otherwise never open a book or enter an art gallery. In the case of Positive Street Art, murals have been catalysts for and emerged directly from community activities aimed at increasing connection and understanding between groups that might otherwise never meet –

fostering conversations, and building relationships and community while beautifying the city.

Ultimately, public art is about leaving a mark. Particularly for the artist and an observer who takes time to notice and celebrate the present, an idea suggested by Harris, writing to the very specific dimensions required to fit carved words on stone. Her poem, carved with capital letters into the granite of the "Sunapee Mandala" reads:


"Leave your shadow here on the long memory of rock

that you may number among the friends of this planet.

We are one in summer woods overflowing with wings in fires kindled by orange lily struck against fern flint, one with the music of the wind played on icy birch bones, and the promise pollen spells across the watery mirrors of our future."

D. Quincy Whitney is a career journalist, author and historian and Nashua resident of more than 40 years. Contact Whitney at quincysquill@nashuatelegraph.com.

Isaksen Bankowski



Lynn Bankowski and the late Richard Bankowski of Nashua, N.H. are pleased to announce the engagement of their daughter, Alison Bankowski to Lance Isaksen of Jackson, N.J. He is the son of William Isaksen of Melbourne, F.L. and Kay Schaulfer of Charlotte, N.C.

The bride-to-be graduated from Nashua High School South and University of New Hampshire in Durham, N.H. receiving a Bachelor's of Arts in Communications and Business Management. She is an Assistant Vice President of Client Operations at State Street Bank and Trust in Boston, M.A.

The groom-to-be graduated from Jackson Memorial High School and University of Massachusetts Lowell receiving a Bachelor's of Science in Information Technology. He is a Data & Analytics Manager at Fidelity Investments in Merrimack, N.H.

A September 2018 is planned at Church Landing in Meredith, N.H. on Lake Winnepesaukee.

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