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## CITY SIGHTS

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# If these walls could talk

Photographer preserves fading glory of the city's painted building ads

**T**hey speak to us from another age — painted advertisements on the sides of buildings — and Brooklyn photographer Frank Jump has been capturing as many images of them as he can before they fade completely from view.

In the three years since beginning his quest, Jump has shot more than 2,000 pictures; more than 50 of his photographs, several printed as large as 4 x 6 feet, are on display at the Williamsburg Art & Historical Center.

Some of the wall ads date to 1870; others are as recent as 1970. There are ads for dyes, tobacco and other hot-selling products of the day. There's a painted mural for a butcher's shop in Brooklyn, a music store in Queens, an embalmer in Bushwick, plus dozens of other businesses that once thrived in the city.

The images are a "metaphor for survival," says Jump. The description has personal meaning, he adds, explaining that he has been living with HIV for almost 16 years and was recently diagnosed with cancer.

Jump, 40, grew up in Far Rockaway

and once pursued a career Off-Broadway as a composer/lyricist. In 1997, he decided to go back to school for his bachelor's degree and enrolled in a documentary photography course.

A class project, depicting the rise and fall of the city, led to his shooting the fading advertisements.

His partner of 10 years, says Jump, is a contractor who works throughout the city and often spots ads that Jump is able to shoot just before they're demolished. Jump also drives around looking for candidates. Williamsburg is a treasure-trove of old painted wall ads, he says.

Generally, he takes eight exposures of each ad. Although more and more, he shoots only one or two frames. "I'm more confident in my work," he says.

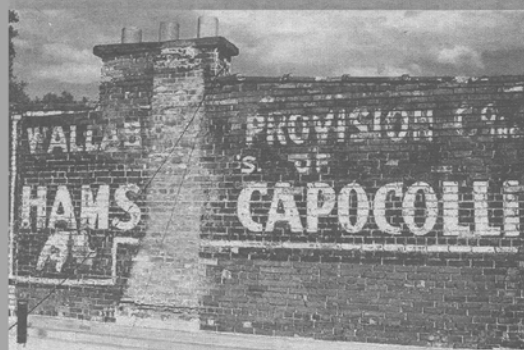
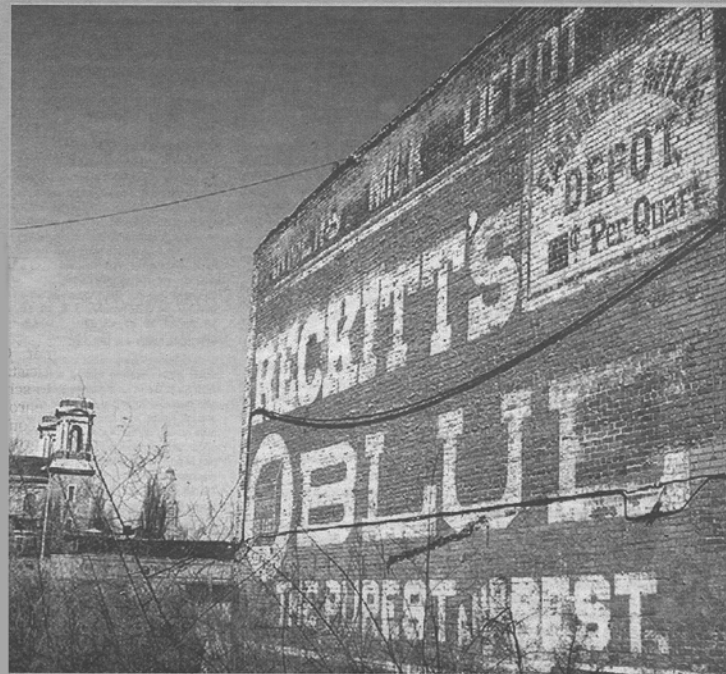
Williamsburg Art & Historical Center, 135 Broadway, Williamsburg, Brooklyn. Weekends only, noon-6 p.m. For more information, call (718) 486-7372 or visit [www.WAHcenter.org](http://www.WAHcenter.org) and [www.frankjump.com](http://www.frankjump.com).

— JIM MELANSON



**FITTING REMINDER** A shoe factory ad (with words in Hebrew) in Williamsburg

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## JUMP SHOTS

Among Frank Jump's photos are an ad for Reckitt's Blue, a reminder of bygone days on Washington Ave. in Brooklyn, and (left) a wall at the Brooklyn Navy Yard.