

THORNES

MARKETPLACE

For immediate release.

For more information, contact:

Jody Doele, Marketing Manager
Thornes Marketplace
150 Main St., Northampton, MA 01060
413-650-5928
jdoele@thornesmarketplace.com
thornesmarketplace.com

Small Victories Opens in Thornes on Friday, March 29

Unique products include greeting cards that can be planted and pins that make a person's pronouns easily identifiable

NORTHAMPTON—Small Victories retail shop will open Friday, March 29 in Thornes Marketplace, offering unique, handmade wares from greeting cards that can be planted to grow herbs or wildflowers, and pins for easy identification of a person's pronouns.

The business, owned by co-founders Isa Wang, a designer, and Vincent Frano, an illustrator, herbalist and horticulturist, will be located on the first floor near the Main Street entrance. Goody bags will be available for the first 100 visitors who sign up for the company's mailing list on opening day.

Wang and Frano, also life partners who live in Belchertown, moved to the area in 2014 and operated a retail shop called The Bower Studio in Pelham and then later in Amherst, which closed in 2019 due to Covid-related issues.

Since 2021, they have been designing and producing their products in a studio space in Eastworks in Easthampton, selling online to retail and wholesale customers via their own website. Wang said their products are carried in over 2,000 stores across the country and abroad.

Frustration has been one key inspiration for their eclectic gifts. "The initial idea almost always comes from not finding the product I'm looking for in the market and deciding to make it myself," Wang said. "If I'm looking for a sleek, stylish pronoun pin, and all I find are plastic buttons, I'm going to make what I envision. I know someone else is out there looking for this thing and coming up short."

While their products include pens, writing utensils and original prints—and imperfect seconds that can be purchased through a vintage vending machine—the two most popular lines are plantable seed cards and the enamel and metal pronoun pins.

THORNES

MARKETPLACE

Plantable cards are original designs printed on paper made from all recyclable paper embedded with seeds; herb cards, when planted, grow basil, parsley and chives, and the wildflower cards produce a mix of six different flowers.

Pronoun wares include mix-and-match enamel pins that read “He,” “Him,” “She,” “Her” or “They,” and metal badges on which the buyer’s preferences can nestle together, for “She/Her” or “She/They,” for instance. There are also pins with neopronouns and Spanish pronouns.

“I started the pronoun pins in 2016 as a side project to see if there was interest,” Wang said. “It really took off as the conversation around pronouns and inclusivity grew. The need for the product grew as well.”

He added that they have been working for years to design the customizable version of the pin that allows users to create specific combinations. The pronoun line is doing particularly well with business leaders buying for their staff; customers include Hudson Yards Experiences in New York, Warby Parker eyeglasses and Salesforce, a software company.

Wang holds a bachelor’s degree in fine art from the Museum School in Boston and a master’s in fine art from the School of Visual Arts. Frano holds a bachelor’s degree in horticulture from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

Small Victories employs 10 staff members, eight of whom work full time, including Bee Leake, as the business’ director of marketing and community. Team members are musicians, fine artists, writers and are either members of the LGBTQIA+ community or allies.

Ten percent of all Small Victories profits are donated, currently to Translate Gender in Northampton, which leads efforts to fight gender oppression; The Native Land Conservancy, with a mission to preserve and restore healthy landscapes; and Harbor Camps, for transgender and non-binary/gender-nonconforming youth.

Wang said he and Frano are pleased to be moving into Thornes. “I have been visiting Thornes since 2003, and I always like how they feature local businesses,” he said, adding, “We wanted to be linked with the community at large. We want to be involved.”

Learn more about Small Victories at smallvictories.com.

To learn more about Thornes Marketplace, visit thornesmarketplace.com.

###

Thornes Marketplace has been the cornerstone of downtown Northampton and at the center of the Main Street shopping district for more than a century. Built in 1873, it holds 55,000 square feet of space for merchants and includes features like pressed tin ceilings and hardwood floors.