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It's True, It's True: Everything Free In NYC Store

There's No Catch ... Financial District Business Gives All Its Products Away; Owners Say It's A Form Of Art

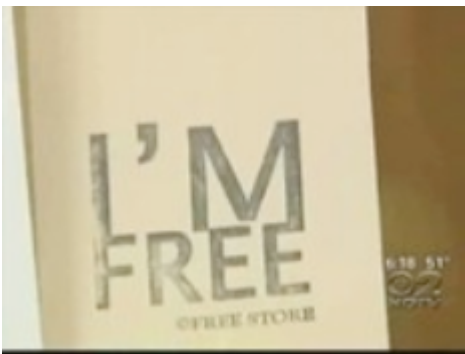
When the owners of the "Free Store" in NYC say it's no joke, everything in the store is free ... they aren't kidding.

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By *JOSH LANDIS, CBS 2 HD News*

NEW YORK (CBS) — If you think nothing's really free in life you haven't been to the "Free Store." It's a shop on Nassau Street in the Financial District where everything ... costs nothing.

The sign out front says it all — free.



"Why would they be giving away free stuff? There has to be a catch," customer Shayna Danielle wondered.

There may be a line but there's no catch.

"If you see something that you want and you feel like you really need it we say you're free to take it," store employee Athena Robles said.

Still, customer Jessica Jones was looking for a catch.

"Nothing in life is free," she said.

Until they saw the bags, hats, t-shirts, kitchen cutlery and movie posters. There was even a tiny Eiffel Tower and artificial flowers.

All ... free.

Business, if you can call it that, is booming.

But Robles and Anna Stein said the idea of the store isn't about money. They said it's art.

"Public art can be the billboards you see in Times Square for example, but it can also be a participatory interactive public experience," Robles said.

They received grants and began planning more than a year ago. For Sammy Howard the timing is just right. He lost his moving job.

"[I got] a plate teacup, some shoes, bar of soap and a hat," Howard said.

And the women who put this together said even in a store where everything's free, some people still find it better to give than receive.

"They actually want to give something because they don't want to take it without giving something back," Robles said. "They really ... I mean people have taken their hat off their heads, rifled through their stuff just to swap."

One customer, John Seminerio, said he donated a suit and several ties. In exchange, "I got a free handmade card."

Getting back to customers Jones and Danielle, who swore nothing in life is for free, they said they aren't so sure now.

"Yeah, I guess we were wrong. I got these nifty shoes and a bag, I guess I'm gonna use for my laptop. And I got "The Full Monty" DVD brand new, still sealed," Danielle said.

Call it art everyone can appreciate.

The "Free Store" is on Nassau Street and it's open Thursdays to Sundays, but don't wait too long, the exhibit ends March 22.