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The LittleMissMatched "pop-up" store on the Upper West Side is one of two that the retailer has in the city.

## Stores just popping up

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A number of stores are popping up in prime shopping corridors, taking advantage of cheap rents at vacant storefronts, but only for a short time.

"Pop-up" stores are becoming a go-to strategy for retailers because it's a way to test the market, showcase unique products, drum-up interest, and they don't have to commit to lengthy leases in uncertain times, experts say.

"Many retailers can't afford the overhead all year," said Howard Davidowitz, chairman of Davidowitz & Associates, a retail consulting firm based in the city. "If you have a merchandising flare and you don't have much money, November and December is the time to do it."

While the temporary stores get a piece of the holiday shopping, the landlords get a couple months of rent paid at a space that would otherwise be vacant.

"It has now become much more popular from the landlord side," said Faith Hope Consolo, chairwoman



RED, which raises money to combat AIDS, has its first store on Fifth Avenue. (PHOTOS BY JEFFERSON SIEGEL)

of the retail and leasing sales division at Prudential Douglas Elliman. "Pop-up stores ... fill the gap in this market."

Consolo said the typical rent for a pop-up is about half of what it is for a permanent store. Prices for a long-term lease in Manhattan range

from about \$200 to \$700 per square foot depending on the location.

Stores that have popped up include the first RED store, the brand that benefits the fight against AIDS in Africa, which is on Fifth Avenue. Wired magazine even has a store in Chelsea.

LittleMissMatched is also using a pop-up strategy. The nationwide retailer sells a variety of clothing, furniture and accessories, and has two temporary locations: one in SoHo and the other on the Upper West Side.

"We plan on opening year-round stores, but given the fact that there is a lot of retail space available, this was an ideal opportunity to test the market in order to better understand our customers," said LittleMissMatched co-founder Jonah Staw said.

Customer Donna Zapin was shopping recently at the LittleMissMatched on the Upper West Side, and said she planned more trips before it shuts down.

"I'm coming here now because I know it won't be here in another month," she said.