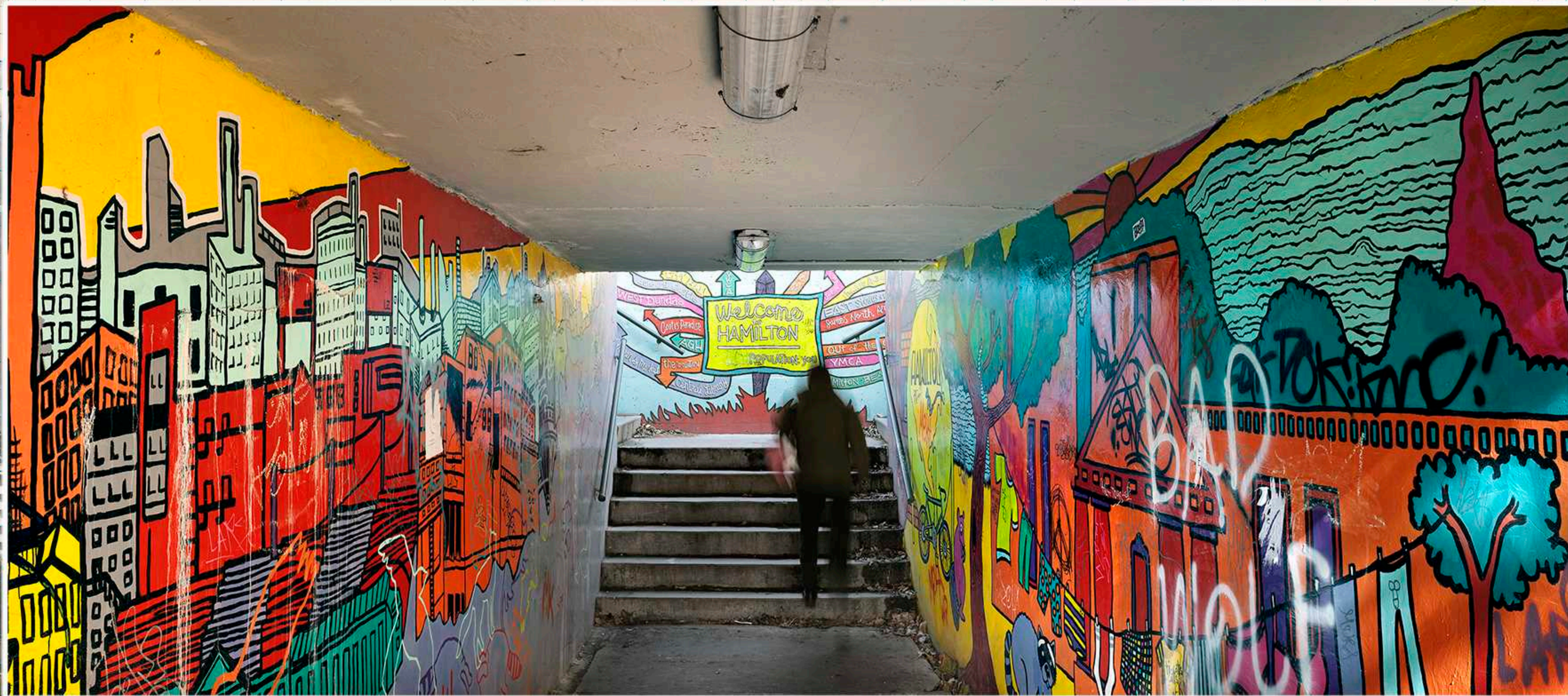


# Intermission



Janusz Wrobel



# About

Life without “progress” has consequences. Good and bad, and that depends how we define the means and terms of our progress. Advancing goals set by selective individuals, organizations, corporations or nations happens all the time. The outcome could be both positive and negative for individuals or the rest of us. What interests me is how our society can progress for shared benefit of us all while minimizing risk of the consequences.

Once I lived in a typical European city that grew over centuries, build with materials to endure, and layouts to preserve social structures. Traditions and cultures were ingrained in stones, city halls to endure a millennium rather than being built and demolished within a human lifespan. However, with no prospect of progress stifled by the installed political system. Living then in the town of Dundas, engulfed by Hamilton, I focused my attention on this city “progress”.

Built by the capital flowing from what was once been the colonial and industrial empire, by people escaping turmoil in many European countries, and the land conquered by the same empire. New “land of opportunity” that before was the pristine nature paradise in the corner of Lake Ontario. What happened since then could be symptomatic of many locations on this continent. As the trajectories of processes and their consequences. The multitudes of them unfolding now, finding us not well prepared to face their outcomes.

Democracy, for short, is a system of governance based on our formal ability of collective choice making. The precursors of it are faculties of collective sensemaking, identifying collective meaning, and common abilities to exchange our views and ideas. Democracy then relies on our awareness of what’s going on, why and what is important to us, and how we find the best ways to progress forward. All of it to be framed and supported by laws, education and press.

All depends on our brains better or less prepared for it. The evolution of human cognition took a long time in small tribal communities and ecological niches. Then, the economic servitude in the last few millennia. Our democracy is a few generations old, still blends with a servitude-based relationship, but allowed access to massive education and therefore processing a broader range of information despite undermining its credibility by multitudes of dubious sources.

I have chosen the role of a chronicler gathering evidence of what’s left from the original fabric of the city, its past evolution, and troubles with the lingering industrial legacy. One mighty source of iron, cars, farm machinery, appliances, textiles, labour and social movements, the city struggle to find a new identity. It could be a rewarding case study for anthropologist, and challenge for an urban planner to deal with decaying city core, and more farmland encroaching suburbs. A city like others inhabited by passive expectations.























ONTARIO  
GOAL EH  
DONATE TO RECOVERY







*The most perfect political community  
is one in which the middle class is in control,  
and outnumbers both of the other classes.*

Aristotle

I would be irrational to assess the current reality without looking back at the growth of the human population, and with it the earth resources consumption. From a few million of humans at the ice age, to around 200 million at the beginning of our calendar. At the dawn of industrial revolution, around a billion. When I was born, about 2.5 times more, and now about 8 times as much. Using resources for each of us grew twice faster than our population. We selectively use numbers advancing forward, we avoid losses and liabilities accounts along the way. We also do not define what the “progress” means. “Us” implicitly means fifty times more people than when ideas of democracy were born. The race is what’s matters. None of the above crosses daily people's minds.

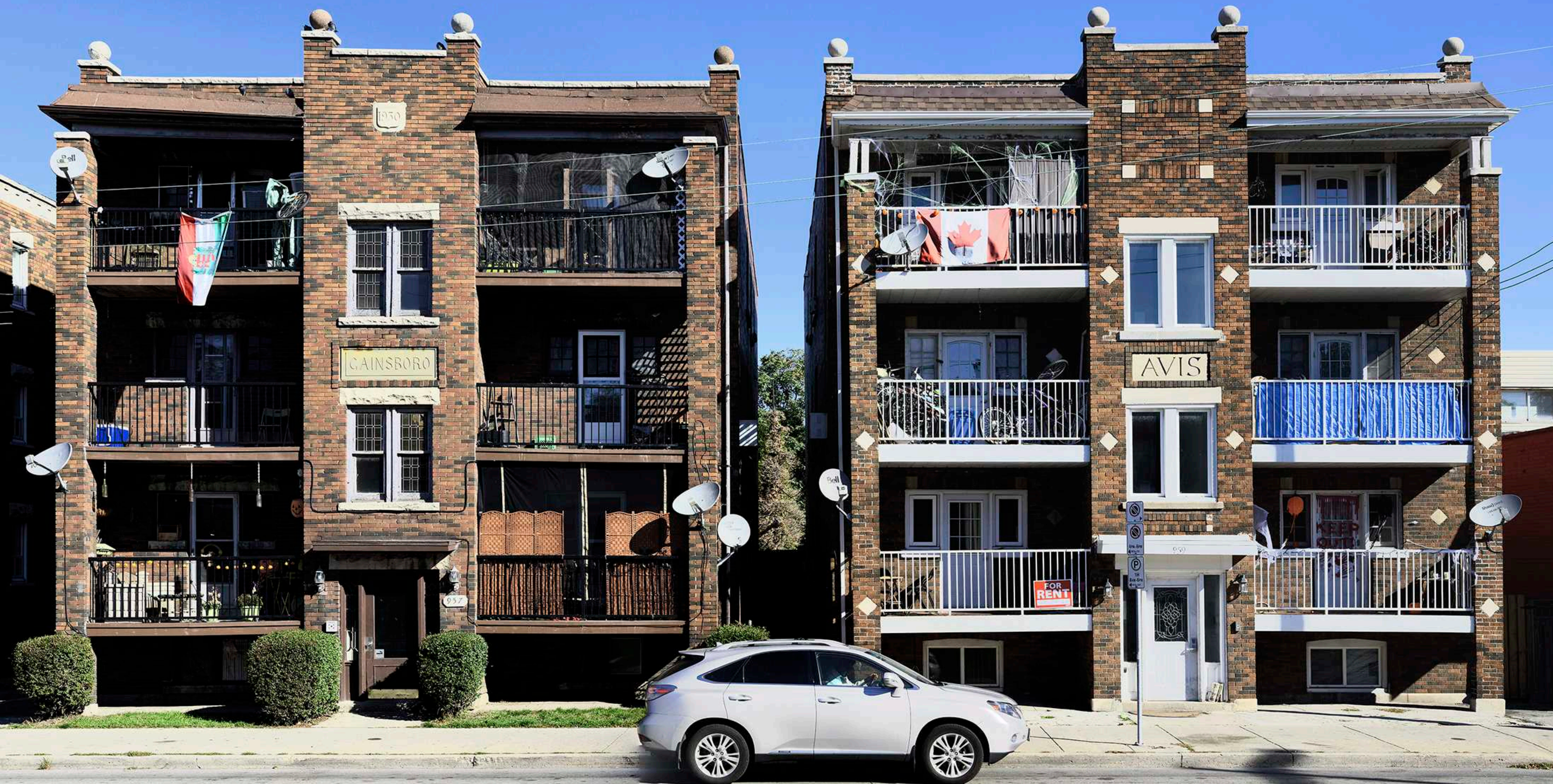
The industrial rapid growth at the beginning of last century quickly doubled the city's population. The multinational immigrants formed pockets of the “tribal” like communities, building their temples of faith, communities' halls, bars. They farther expanded their social integration by identifying and bridging the common interest, forming unions, social organizations, etc. Only the traces and the last remnants of it could be found now. And so, the once manifested candour, to express an individual interests, affiliations, or ties.

















*"We must learn to live together as brothers  
or perish together as fools."*

Martin Luther King Jr.

I cherish memories of an ever day life on my hometown street. The private small stores, independent from the state-controlled distribution network, with their storefronts showing the face value of what they offered. Values confronted and debated on the street in the face-to-face information exchange, debating their merits, trusts, and reliability of reputations, daily. Along them, things that had been hidden between lines in the state-controlled media and TV news, or the latest church sermons. In confined store spaces, the trust of information exchange, away from snooping ears and eyes, was paramount. I might say, the only advantage of aging is having enough my own materials to draw conclusions. It doesn't mean, though, that the maturity is age related.

*I do have in my DNA aversion to adverts. A way back, the evening news or movie was never interrupted by ads in European countries I visited or lived. When I arrived in Toronto, I was watching in TV the "China Syndrome" movie with Jane Fonda. At the critical moment of the movie plot, the "Maxi Pads" commercial appeared. I didn't wonder, then, why she stopped acting in movies. On that account, and since then, no ad ever influenced my buying choice, and I have subscribed no TV channel for decades.*

I found signs of changes in city neighbourhoods that were decades long, correlating with specific strategies of the marketing industry. Or, in fact, with market economy policies. The dominant one appeared to be the concept of isolating consumers from the established smart street and peers verification processes. As a result, the concept of shopping malls has developed to overwhelm consumers with choices. More strategies follow to pave the path to the growth economy. The consumerism trap found more fuel in the cheap labour elsewhere, more industry closures followed, farther affecting the social fabric of the city. The archival city photographs illustrate well this process. The sidewalks crowded with pedestrians and shoppers in the city centre before building there the shopping mall, taking down the City Hall to make room for mall expansion. I was interested in the consequences of the city's social fabric.









# Tattoo and Art Studio



4/5











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"Art is the only way to run away without leaving home."  
Twyla Tharp Appropriated by many on social media posts.

"Art is never finished, only abandoned."  
Leonardo da Vinci

Any attempt to define what is art could be suicidal. And it was so. It's much safer to look at it how arts functions on the receiving end. Although still shrouded there in ambiguity, often maintained by the handling arts channels for a sake of broadening its appeal. I view it from the perspective of its contribution to a state of our culture, yet another sphere of broad interpretations range. That is why I use the da Vinci quote. For his grasp of the world at his time, expressed in both. The commissioned paintings and the his wisdom of tools designs. In short, there could be something in arts for every focused mind. Or might not.

*I used the attendance at New York trade shows decades ago as an excuse the spend evenings in Soho. Crowded galleries, people sharing glass of wine, being able to talk for hours about artworks. The last time I was there before the Covid. Almost all galleries relaced with fashion stores.*

The Hamilton Art Crow on James Street North began in 2005. I moved that year to the city's area, and I had an interest in what was happening there. By the end of that decade, once a month, a sizable crow of people was touring many private and public galleries, as well as many artist studios on the street. Artists serving free wine, getting disillusioned with every passing month. Thousands of voices, or rather individual emotions, each focused on itself within the rapidly changing human culture. By then, the social media extorted their fees, with all due consequences. In the last few years, only two publicly founded spaces and one 150 sq ft private gallery survive on "gentrified" street.





CENTRE  
POINT

Donuts  
plus de 11

富臨小館

PET VALU

PRO  
SIGNS

24  
BIG BONUS  
CONVENIENCE

NO

CLOCK TOWER

H  
CITY

MEX

THE GARDEN

綠寶石

綠寶石 粵菜海鮮酒家

















## I Take My City Back Public Art Project



The essence of this project was, on my side, to encapsulate in one image an issue presented in Hamilton's traditional public media channel. The Issues like finding place for a new football stadium in the city at the expense of some proposed neighbourhoods, the LRT public transportation proposals, the prospect of buying NHL franchise for the city, etc. Then, after finishing them to the high gallery standard, I was presenting them at large city public gatherings. In the project manifesto also displayed, I presented myself as a newcomer asking for a guidance to what was happening in the city. I challenged viewers to make their comment on my images with a selection of permanent markers. The finishing line of it this manifesto was, **"Art is democracy. Democracy is an Art"**.

The most constructive input came from the city's major posting it above. The bicycle on the tightrope, drew with the thinness marker, summarized what to expect from him in his position. And not to have high hopes coming from my project, either. Indeed, I had no luck finding the place in the city to host my ready to hang "Intermission" exhibition, or place for extending the public interaction project. Although, there was something to learn from it. The city's major lost in an election that followed. He approached the election next after with his platform expressed in one sentence. All the other candidates had theirs very long. He won, although with a quarter of all eligible votes.

These observations might be a comparative case study of values attached to the information and emotions. Or the practical illustration of Marshall McLuhan's theory. And the explanation of why in provincial and federal elections people "vote for their" next premier without the legal and technical rights of doing so. Regardless of consequences.





Andrew & Billie...  
in the wall

THE  
WOLVES  
NEED  
FEEDING

A WINDOW TO OPPORTUNITY  
I'm so lost, and I live just around  
the corner!  
-the arkells.

WE ARE

Up Cycle!

Hamilton is Top Drawer

Stay Safe!

my diary is in here & keep safe.

Emma

the "just because" drawer. Extra food pack one

when down in my favourite th

I love him...

Big LOVE !!!

Margarete Donato

PIPE DRAIN  
DRAINAGE  
Green POWER  
cherry

# LIFE'S TREASURES

WAY TO HIGH!

FOR THE  
POLICE

Find your  
Indifference  
Stocking

HELLO!!

Do I have to pay?

critical  
mass not  
come ride bikes!  
less resource &  
Silo lost Frail  
of ten month

Final cat

my Home

I ♥ RENO REBAMONTAN

Community



All  
You  
Need

PARKING  
TICKET.

Molly O'NEAL  
AT THE  
ART  
ROCKS

I DO BELIEVE...

Amen  
brava.

C+S = BFF's

9 3/4

Shame is cool  
WPE

"Here comes  
the Bride"

"Mary's" xo.

love is the greatest thing  
you'll achieve  
Freedom

We'll  
was  
here



Melissa & Melissa ROSE !!!

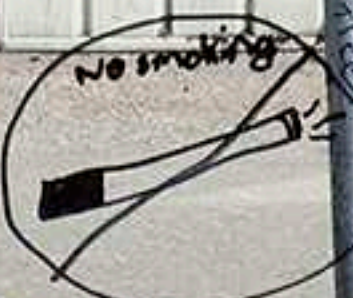
Running to something...

TRUE GAIT  
CLOSED  
sorry  
3234

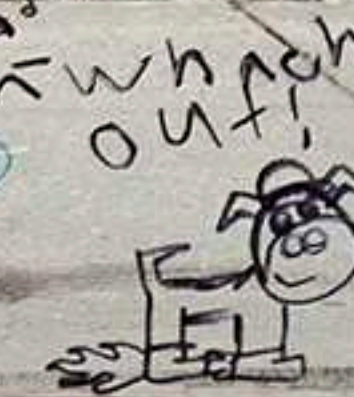
GIRIS ONLY

ONE LEADS TO THE CASTLE AT THE  
CENTRE OF THE LADY WITH...

another opera...



once a wild cat, always a wild cat.  
Westmount. CA.







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Realities I can claim own are what's I can perceive with tools available to me, and interpretations to fill the blanks. Ideally, "the reality" would be what I can verify with everyone within the time frame and Life space we inhabit together. Something tangible, agreeable to build trust on, and to move on. That is still free. The Information never was. If it appeared this way, it extorted the heaviest tolls already.

So, here we are, with our hopes and desires parked in our expectations, views and turfs of the group's interests, cherished possessions, age securities and insecurities, and growing sense of vulnerability.

Feeling lonely like never.

From where it will come from?





















*I alone cannot change the world,  
but I can cast a stone across the waters  
to create many ripples.*

Mother Teresa