



For immediate release

Over 100 people rethink the city of the future

From bicycles that keep plants alive to a city in a suitcase, the Art Gallery of Hamilton's *Future Cities* exhibition project throughout downtown Hamilton invites visitors to construct in their minds a city of the future. On view from April 15th – October 31st, 2004, the exhibition invites 42 artists to explore the multi-layered character of the contemporary city. Many of the featured works by local, national and international artists suggest innovative uses for urban space and may be viewed in a warehouse, at Hamilton's City Hall, on bike racks and building facades, in a shopping mall, on sidewalks, and in the GO Station and Gore Park. Related programming to the exhibition includes conferences, tours of the city, and family-friendly activities.

With the Art Gallery of Hamilton (AGH) under construction, all exhibition activities take place at off-site locations. The *Future Cities* main space is located in the former Bank of Montreal building on the Mall and Plaza Levels of Jackson Square at 2 King Street West and is open Tuesday, Wednesday, Saturday 10:30 am – 5:30 pm and Thursday, Friday, 10:30 am – 8 pm. Admission to the exhibition is free, courtesy of Orlick Industries.

"People have been imagining future cities for as long as urban communities have existed. For many, the dreams of a future city are founded in the belief that the perfect city will lead to universal happiness," says AGH Chief Curator Shirley Madill. "We've invited artists to view the city as a living organism, and the work they've created encourages discussion of the many themes related to urban living, including mobility, street culture, surveillance, the loss of public space, gated communities, meaning in architecture and the natural environment."

Hamilton-based artist Liss Platt, for example, focuses on the "fine line between being ironic and being genuine" by placing wooden signs marking a "scenic view" throughout Hamilton denoting locations that would not typically be considered scenic, thus inviting viewers to reconsider the aesthetic value of various urban landscapes. In an installation by Mowry Baden, who currently lives and works in Victoria, B.C., viewers pedal one of two stationary bicycles that have been modified to keep plants alive (pedaling one bicycle inflates a dry cleaning bag that serves as a hothouse for a tomato plant; pedaling the other bicycle generates electric heat that warms the soil for a beet plant). Hamilton-based artist John Deal has encased objects donated by city residents in resin and attached them to the sycamore trees surrounding City Hall.

Susan Detwiler's turns discarded household materials (collected in Hamilton) into shelter-like structures, addressing social concerns around displaced people in the urban environment while exploring the boundaries between sculpture and architecture. DIN Projects, a design firm based in Winnipeg comprised of partners Neil Minuk and Jae-Sung Chon, offer an urban intervention in the city of Hamilton designed to heighten our awareness of the smell of the city. Beijing-based Yin Xiuzhen has added a Hamilton suitcase to her suitcase series, in which she builds portable cities in old suitcases made from the used clothes of residents of those cities.

With the AGH undergoing a major renovations project and the City of Hamilton implementing an ambitious revitalization plan for its downtown, *Future Cities* uses Hamilton as its core subject. The AGH joined with City Hall and its other collaborating partners, McMaster University (Institute of Globalization and the Human Condition; Department of Humanities); Hamilton & Burlington Society of Architects; Yale Properties; GO Transit; and The Royal Connaught Howard Johnson Plaza Hotel, to present the works downtown and to invite artists, architects, urban theorists, activists and theorists to discuss issues of importance to city spaces and urban living in a series of conferences.

Artists featured in *Future Cities* from Hamilton and surrounding area include Michael Allgoewer and Margaret Martineau; John Deal; Susan Detwiler; Alan Flint; Simon Frank; V. Jane Gordon; Ivan Jurakic; Robert Mason; Anne Milne; Liss Platt; Rick Pottruff; Studio of Acceleration (Ed Aoki, Michael Constanzo and Michael Reich); C.Wells; and Maria Whiteman. Canadian artists from outside Hamilton include: Roy Arden (Vancouver); Mowry Baden (Victoria); Eleanor Bond (Winnipeg/Montreal); Roland Brener (Victoria); Edward Burtynsky (Toronto); Marlene Creates (St. John's); Christos Dikeakos (Vancouver); Linda Duvall (Saskatoon); DIN Projects (Neil Minuk and Jae-Sung Chon, Winnipeg); Erik Edson (Sackville); Arni Haraldsson (Vancouver); Geoffrey James (Toronto); Doug Lewis (Winnipeg); Ellen Moffat (Saskatoon); François Morelli (Montreal); Robin Pacific (Toronto); Ian Wallace (Vancouver); Kelly Wood (Vancouver). International artists include: Carlos Garaicoa (Havana); Aglaia Konrad (Brussels); Marjetica Potrč (Ljubijana, Slovenia); Yin Xiuzhen (Beijing); Catherine Yass (London); and Ella Ziegler (Berlin).

Official Opening: Thursday, April 15th from 7 – 9:30 pm at the main *Future Cities* exhibition space (former Bank of Montreal building, Mall and Plaza Levels, Jackson Square, 2 King Street West). Many of the participating artists will be in attendance.

The Art Gallery of Hamilton is undergoing major renovations that will transform an aging building into an international art destination and safeguard its 8,000-plus work permanent collection and visiting exhibitions from the leaks and inadequate environmental controls currently plaguing the building. The AGH will relaunch in April 2005 with two major exhibitions: *Lasting Impressions: Celebrated Works from the Art Gallery of Hamilton*, featuring the Gallery's significant Canadian works, and *Heaven and Earth Unveiled: European Treasures from the Tanenbaum Collection*; these exhibitions will then travel to galleries and art museums across Canada and abroad.

Related programming:

CONFERENCE: Urban Experiences and Cultural Identities

Saturday, April 17, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Sunday, April 18, 2004, 10 am to 3:30 pm
McMaster University Downtown Centre
Room 216, 50 Main Street East

For further information about the conference and registration fees, please contact Booking Agent, Ola Wlusek at ola@artgalleryofhamilton.com or (905) 527-6610, ext. 273.

This second in a series of conferences brings together artists, activists, architects, curators, and theorists to discuss the multi-layered character of the contemporary city. Conference participants include Roy Arden (Vancouver-based Photographer); Carol Becker (School of the Art Institute of Chicago); Adrian Blackwell (Dept. of Architecture, Landscape and Design, U of T); Christine Bold (School of English and Theatre Studies, Guelph); Colleen Cutschall (Manitoba-based Artist); Christos Dikeakos (Vancouver-based Photographer); Monika Kin Gagnon (Communication Studies, Concordia); Shelley Hornstein (Fine Arts, York); Ric Knowles (School of English and Theatre Studies, Guelph); Fuyuki Kurasawa (Dept. of Sociology, York and Yale Center for Cultural Sociology); Belinda Leach (Dept. of Sociology and Anthropology, Guelph); Janna Levitt (Toronto-based Architect); Don McLean (Hamilton-based Activist); Jane Mulkewich (Human Rights & Equity Services, McMaster); Sherene Razack (Dept. of Sociology and Equity Studies in Education, U of T); John Terpstra (Hamilton-based Poet and Author); and Kika Thorne (Toronto-based Artist).

Participants will examine urban planning, architecture, and visual and literary representations as they shape perceptions of the city, focusing on the ways in which histories and memories are created through commemorative building projects. Particular attention will be paid to who is included and excluded from these sites and how the forgotten histories affect a sense of community belonging. Further discussions will analyze the formation of gated communities, city slums and red light districts.

Speakers will examine the power dynamics behind urban planning and urban renewal projects and explore how this affects access to public spaces, particularly based on race, class, gender and homelessness. Additional considerations will be given to the ways in which public art and architectural projects address social and political issues in urban centres.

Joint Conference 2004

Advocating for Adaptive ReUse: Creating a Culture that Values our Heritage Buildings, Neighbourhoods and Landscapes

May 14, 15, and 16, 2004

Presented by the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario and Community Heritage Ontario in partnership with the Art Gallery of Hamilton

Featuring a keynote address by Anthony M. Tung, New York-based author and urbanist, the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commissioner from 1978 – 1988, and author of *Preserving the World's Great Cities: The Destruction and Renewal of the Historic Metropolis*.

To register and for more information, please visit www.architecturehamilton.com.

Historic City Walks Series

The Art Gallery of Hamilton's Mini Tour Volunteer Committee invites you to reflect upon Hamilton's future by learning about the city's past with four walking tours exploring downtown neighbourhoods.

Historic City Walks Tour 1: Hurst Heritage Area on Durand's Nob Hill

Tuesday, June 22, 10:30 am – 12 noon, plus time for lunch (meet at northwest corner of James South and Bold, rain or shine; please wear comfortable clothing appropriate to the weather)

Registration: \$20 includes lunch at One Duke Street

To register or for more information, please contact (905) 522-8222 or booking@artgalleryofhamilton.com.

Local historian and author Bill Manson leads a walk exploring the history, architecture and heritage of Hamilton's oldest "suburb," which dates back to 1815. Includes a tour of MacNab Street Presbyterian Church and lunch at One Duke Street. Presented by the AGH Mini Tour Volunteer Committee.

Historic City Walks Tour 2: The Heart of George Hamilton's Hamilton – Historic Jackson Street

Saturday, June 26, 2 – 4 pm, plus time for finger foods (meet outside Whitehern Historic House and Garden, rain or shine; please wear comfortable clothing appropriate to the weather)

Registration: \$15 includes “munchies” at Slainté

To register or for more information, please contact (905) 522-8222 or booking@artgalleryofhamilton.com.

With local historian and author Bill Manson at the helm, this walk through the Durand and Corktown neighbourhoods explores George Hamilton's early town and includes a tour of Whitehern and St. Paul's Presbyterian Church and ends at Slainté for finger goods. Presented by the AGH Mini Tour Volunteer Committee.

Historic City Walks Tour 3: Durand and Corktown's “Main Drag” – Historic James Street South

Tuesday, June 29, 10 am – 12 noon, plus time for lunch (meet at Queen Victoria's statue in Gore Park, rain or shine; please wear comfortable clothing appropriate to the weather)

Registration: \$20 includes lunch at On the Terrace

To register or for more information, please contact (905) 522-8222 or booking@artgalleryofhamilton.com.

Local historian and author Bill Manson leads a tour of one of Hamilton's oldest streets with a close look at the history, architecture and heritage of this “main drag.” Concludes with lunch at On the Terrace. Presented by the AGH Mini Tour Volunteer Committee.

Historic City Walks Tour 4: Up and Down Locke Street South

Tuesday, July 6, 7 – 8:30 pm (meet at Royal Bank parking lot on the southeast corner of Locke and Main, rain or shine; please wear comfortable clothing appropriate to the weather)

Registration: \$5

To register or for more information, please contact (905) 522-8222 or booking@artgalleryofhamilton.com.

Local historian and author Bill Manson leads a tour exploring the unique history and heritage of Hamilton's “trendiest street,” and includes a tour of Melrose United Church and its stunning stained glass windows. This tour ends at The Bad Dog Café, where you are welcome to sample the menu (not included in registration fee). Presented by the AGH Mini Tour Volunteer Committee.

Family Day 2004

Sunday, June 27, 1 – 4 pm

On the grounds of Dundurn Castle

Activities appropriate for children of all ages. No registration required.

Free refreshments.

FREE ADMISSION

With the beautiful Dundurn Castle as our backdrop, our 2004 theme explores Future Cities. Children will make their own flying machines, time capsules, futuristic hybrid animals, magnets and cityscapes of the future. At 3:30 pm, a special guest will entertain all. For more information, please contact (905) 527-6610, ext. 226 or tina@artgalleryofhamilton.com.

Family Day is generously sponsored by DOFASCO.

Many thanks to the staff at Dundurn Castle and the City of Hamilton for kind use of the Castle grounds.

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