

open door art blog

This little project started when I wanted to learn more about Toronto's visual arts culture. So I set out to find and talk to The Artists. Here are those transcribed interviews - somewhat edited and full insights for those interested in the artist's process and perspective. Hope you enjoy!

MONDAY, JUNE 28, 2010

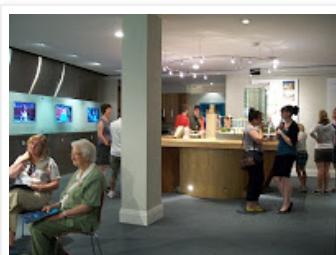
The Projects: Port Credit - June 27th - July 25th 2010



141 Lakeshore Rd E, Mississauga

This free off-site exhibit, presented by [The Blackwood Gallery](#) showcases the work of ten artists who take a look at the changes that have been going on in the community in recent years. As Director/Curator Christof Migone states;

*"Some of the areas under scrutiny are commuter trains, bicycle routes, commemorative displays, architectural models, resonant frequencies, water parks, public sculpture, vanishing chairs, descriptive language, and graffiti on glass. Throughout, there is a clear intent and conviction that contemporary art in Port Credit has a place in the daily fabric of the community. **Imagine, if you will, a cultural boom to accompany the construction boom.**"*



This is not a typical gallery showing. To kick off the show I participated in Cheryl Rondeau's bike tour, which in itself was part of the exhibit. (Rondeau documents her various art projects at www.cherylrondeaucycles.com.) She led us through the older parts of town to the more recently developed (and developing) parts of Port Credit in order to get a first-hand look at the contrasts between the old and new. Cheryl explained to us that concerning the recent demolition and redevelopment of certain areas *"there is contention within the community"*. We ended the tour at the exhibition, which is currently taking place in a condo showroom

for a new condominium being built directly across the street. Having grown up in Port Credit for most of my life, I'm personally very interested to find out what others think of the ideas being explored in this show.



One of the volunteers at the exhibit, Martina, explained that Sarah Febraro's *No Place Good Place* exhibit outside represents mourning for the loss of public space, while the flowers themselves also symbolize death and rebirth. In keeping with the theme of public interactivity visitors are encouraged take some of the flowers provided and attach them to the artwork themselves. When I asked her what she thought of the new condominium being built, she stated that *"It's trying to*

be forced on the community. It sticks out like a sore thumb, excluding people. ...this exhibit gets people to think about what could have been done."

"It's an awkward place for an art exhibition", noted one viewer of the show, Michael Juzepczuk, who observed also that *"it seems like a fight to get art in P.C."*. When asked about his thoughts on the new condo, he replied; *"When I look at it I see the disposition of the Mississaugas (an Aboriginal tribe). That's what I see."*

ARTIST INTERVIEWS

- [Claudio Ghirardo](#) (1)
- [Curtis Amisich](#) (1)
- [Diana Meredith](#) (1)
- [Hugh C. Bisset](#) (1)
- [Jesse Albert](#) (1)
- [Kathy Toth](#) (1)
- [Sonja Hidas' Large Items - Stolen](#) (1)
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Adam Bobbette and Seth Porcello's *This space and that over there right here, let's celebrate!*



I was lucky to get a chance to talk to Director and Curator Christof Migone, who related his personal experience of living in a town in Québec where similar societal changes seemed to happen very quickly. When asked what he hopes the viewer walks away with from the exhibit, he said it's really up to the viewer, and that he simply wanted to expand on his gallery's off-site exhibit from last year, which took place in an architect's studio. Christof also pointed out that the building and real estate companies have been very accommodating and cooperative with allowing the gallery to use its showroom.

Paul Fulton is a practicing Mississauga artist and coordinator of [The HotBox Riverwood Project](#). He is also known as an outspoken member of the Mississauga Arts Council. I asked him what his thoughts were of the exhibit and of the current situation for practicing artists in the community. He told me that since there are very few practicing artists in Mississauga, (actually only around 30), that; "*Unfortunately there aren't a lot of benefits for artists to be involved with the public.*"



Making art for the public was one of artist Sonja Hidas's main objectives when creating this very interactive work entitled *Large Items*. Last year Sonja was recognized as Mississauga's Visual Artist of the year. She is also a member of the Ontario Arts Council and is currently directing an outdoor educational project called [Hotbox Joshua Creek](#). Her contribution to *The Projects* is an outdoor installation of a refrigerator, washer, and dryer. This public art installation takes up a very precious part of private property - a parking space.



Through her work, and with this piece, Sonja explained that she hopes to bring art to everybody, and that people should feel as though they can touch art and interact with it, unlike some art displayed behind glass, or next to "do not touch" signs displayed in some galleries. "*A lot of people are intimidated by galleries*", she states. When asked about the art scene in the city, Sonja explained that "*in Mississauga they are developing the public art policy to expose the public to art*".

Hidas's piece along with the others in *The Projects* exhibition certainly encourage the public to get involved and reflect on the many changes happening in their community. The show also hopes to incite reflection on the place of art in the community and of the "everyday" viewer's contribution and involvement with the visual arts. To point out the importance of the public's interaction with the arts, Paul remarks while watching someone open up the fridge door of Sonja's work; "*I hope someone puts something inside.*"

