

L e e P a q u e t t e

S I T E W O R K S

HAMILTON ARTISTS INC. - July 3 through August 1, 1992



ROYAL BOTANICAL GARDENS - July 3 through September, 1992

An Art Gallery of Ontario "Artists With Their Work" Project.

## SITE WORKS

Lee Paquette's project consists of two central components: an installation of sculptural, photographic and book work elements at the gallery of the Hamilton Artists Inc. (HAI) and a series of object and image-based works sited on the grounds of the Royal Botanical Gardens (RBG) in the Hendrie Valley at Plains Road, Burlington. **Site Works** continues the artist's characteristic practice of direct personal engagement with particular environments, a process which incorporates collection, documentation and an ordering of attribute elements. For **Site Works** the project is conceptually "framed" within the notion of "site". In this definition site can be defined as both a tangible physical setting or as the more personal process of defining a relationship to an environment. Each "site" has been developed and defined through an evolving, fluid process of accumulation and re-presentation.

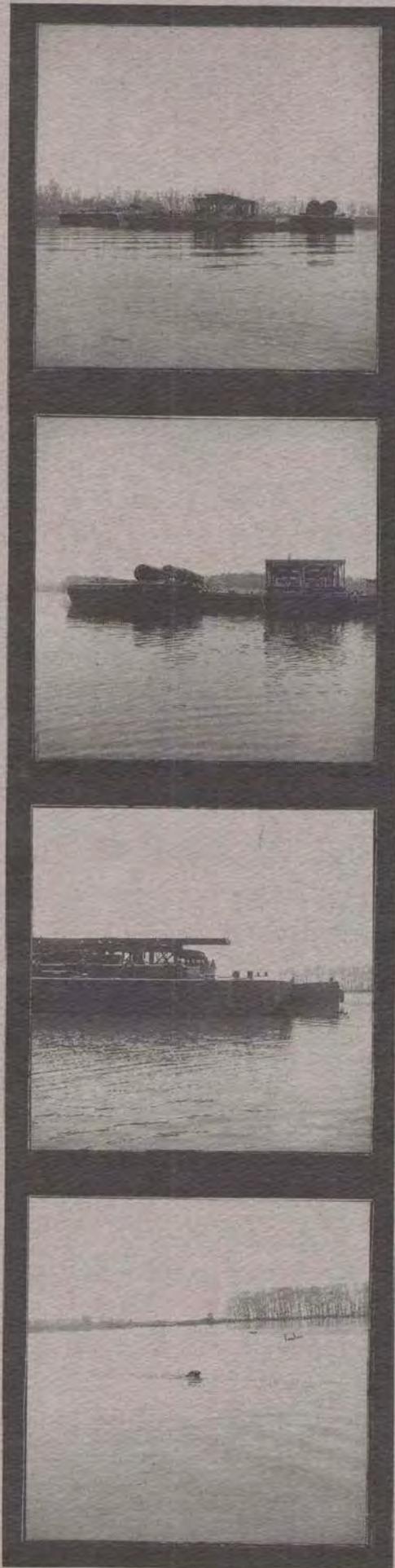
Lee Paquette: "My art making tends to be an extension of my being in a particular environment and collecting information, materials and images from that context. The manner in which I interpret that experience and finally materialize some sense of it is always under review."

The elements in **Site Works** exemplify Paquette's ongoing engagement with a number of diverse environments during recent years. Some of these environments can be generally identified or described and are the result of regular trips throughout Northern Ontario. Others are highly specific, harbour and bay settings in Toronto and Hamilton. Most recently he has worked with the cultivated gardens and nature trails of the RBG. These later investigations are the primary result of a mutual intensified focus and condensation of the broader information gathered on general excursions. The "industrial" decoys are a typical example. Paquette's consistent, broad interest in settings where industry meets nature is specifically focused on the abandoned barges at the Lesley Spit, Toronto harbour. The documentation of this setting makes reference to the artist's involvement and reaction to it through castings (lead, wax, iron, rubber latex), photographs and drawings. The selection of materials (scrap metal, cast iron, gas tank) is directly informed by the site while the conceptual relationship of both the artist and viewer to the setting is suggested through the panoramic, joined photographs and the book works.

The formal configuration, the assemblage, of **Site Works** is also reflective of Paquette's typical fluid and evolving process. Elements are temporarily assembled (bolted, screwed, clamped, tethered, placed) which allows them to be disassembled, rearranged and restructured as required. The elements at the Hendrie Valley (RBG) are consequently simply tethered, bundled or piled to form a grouping. A similar approach was used for **Extractions. Reflections** Paquette's 1991 contribution to the McMaster Art Gallery's **Under A Canopy of Blue?** exhibition of six site specific installations on the grounds of the University campus. **Extractions. Reflections** combined a number of newly created objects and structures with several substantially altered elements from previous projects. **Steel Tree** for example was originally fabricated in the early 80's and was sited upright on the roof of the artist's studio in downtown Toronto while the plywood billboard is one of the walls from the **Maple-Seed Room** first exhibited in **Recess** in 1983 in the Toronto Sculpture Garden. These two represented pieces, especially the panel's silhouette cut-outs of maple keys and the fallen tree, worked in 1991 to convey a wry and particularized comment on the unanticipated infestation of the surrounding woods by gypsy moth caterpillars.

Paquette's typical method of representation and alteration of both structure or physical orientation in relation to new contexts has been central to the HAI project. The particularities of the site have determined reworking. As a result the objects have been imbued with new meaning. The articulation depends on the context. Paquette's presentations are not intended to be productions of final, static pieces. Rather they are reference points within a broad field of activity, subject to constant fluctuations, established through recontextualization and a relocation of reference to personal experience. This ongoing process involves a multidirectional approach from spatial reorganization to the expansion and contraction of elements in relation to the particular parameters of a given situation. Paquette's work foregrounds the polysemic nature of the elements with which he works. His activity is not restricted to a fixed reading. Engagement in an open dialogue typifies Paquette's approach. It is a process that is open to chance and which recognizes the fundamental role of the viewer as a participant in both the creation and completion of the work.

Andrew Hunter, curator  
June 1992



Documentation of Lesley Spit (contact sheet)

viewer  
lover  
hater

controller  
destroyer  
pedestrian

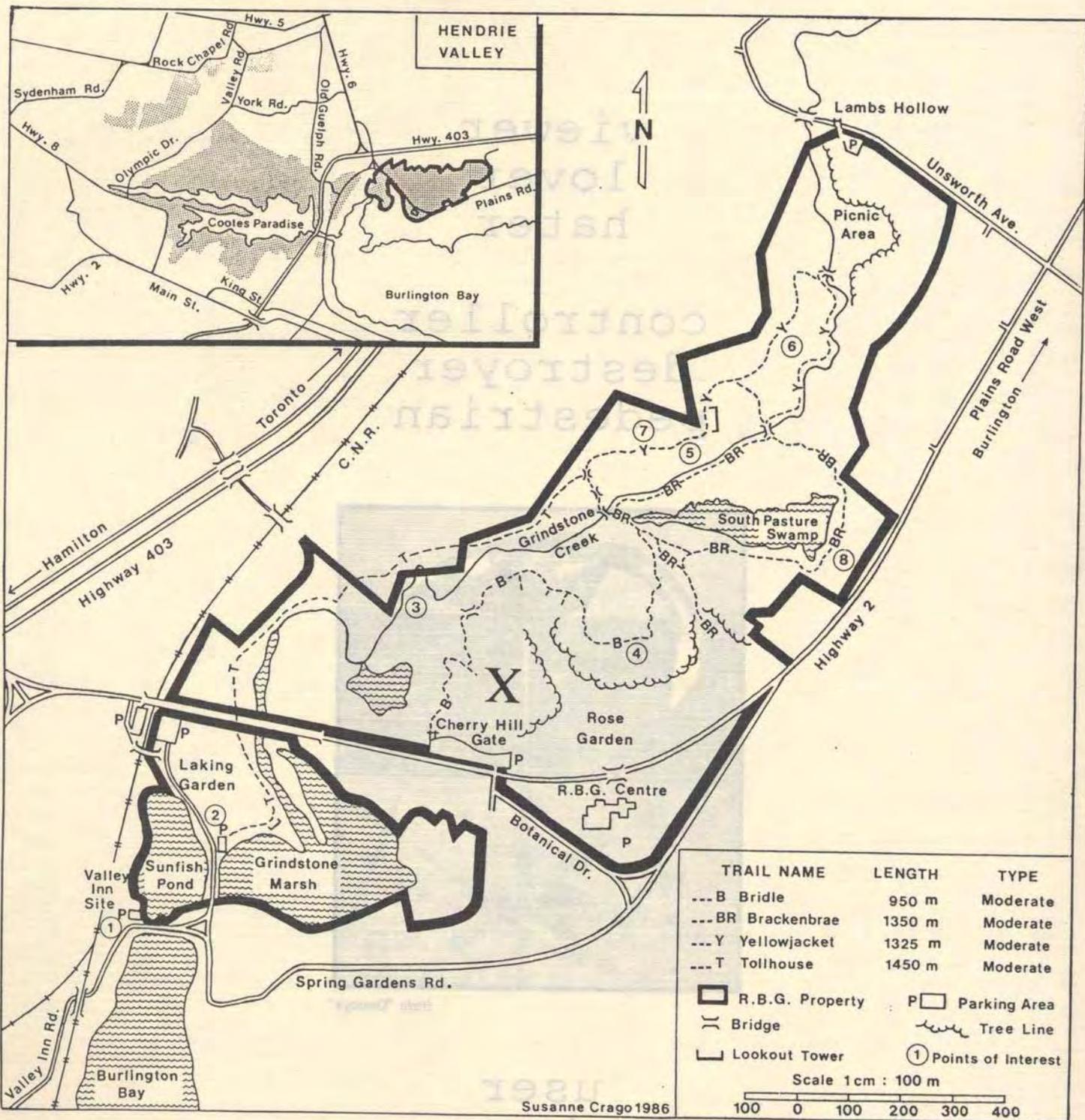


from "Decoys"

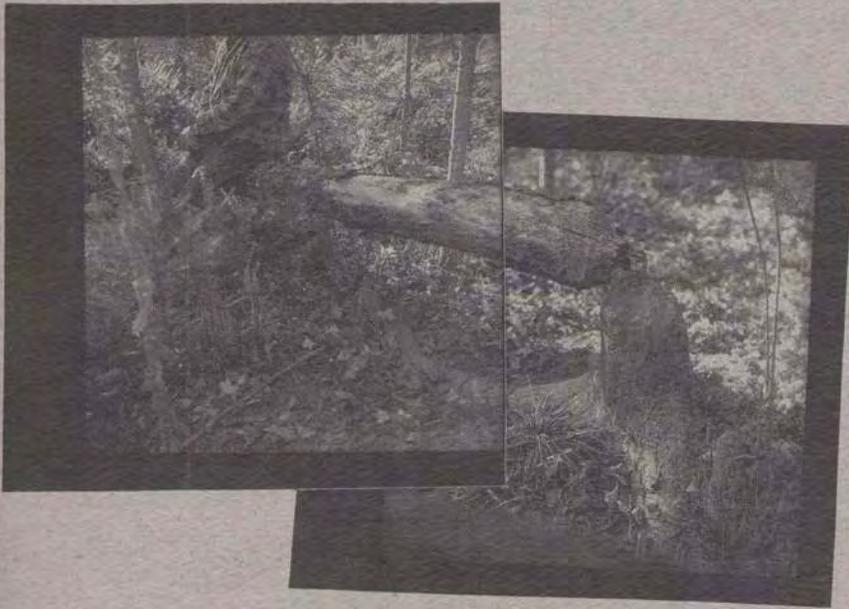
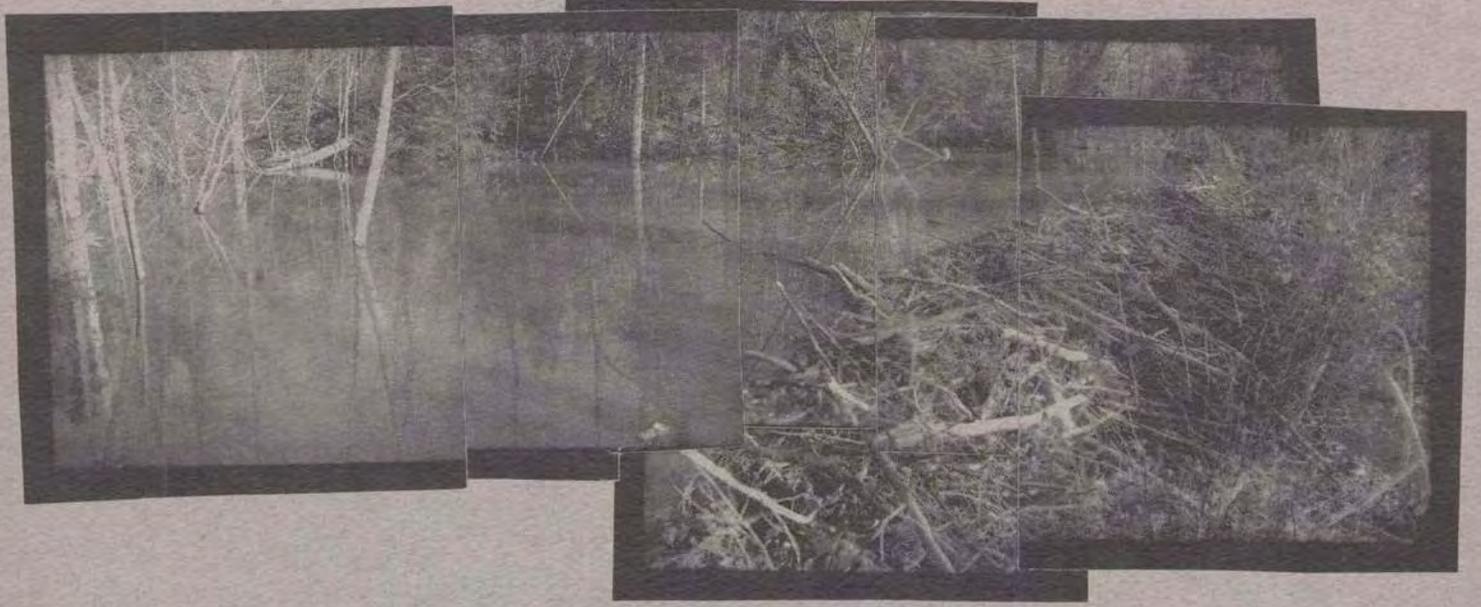
user  
giver  
taker

boss  
worker  
protector



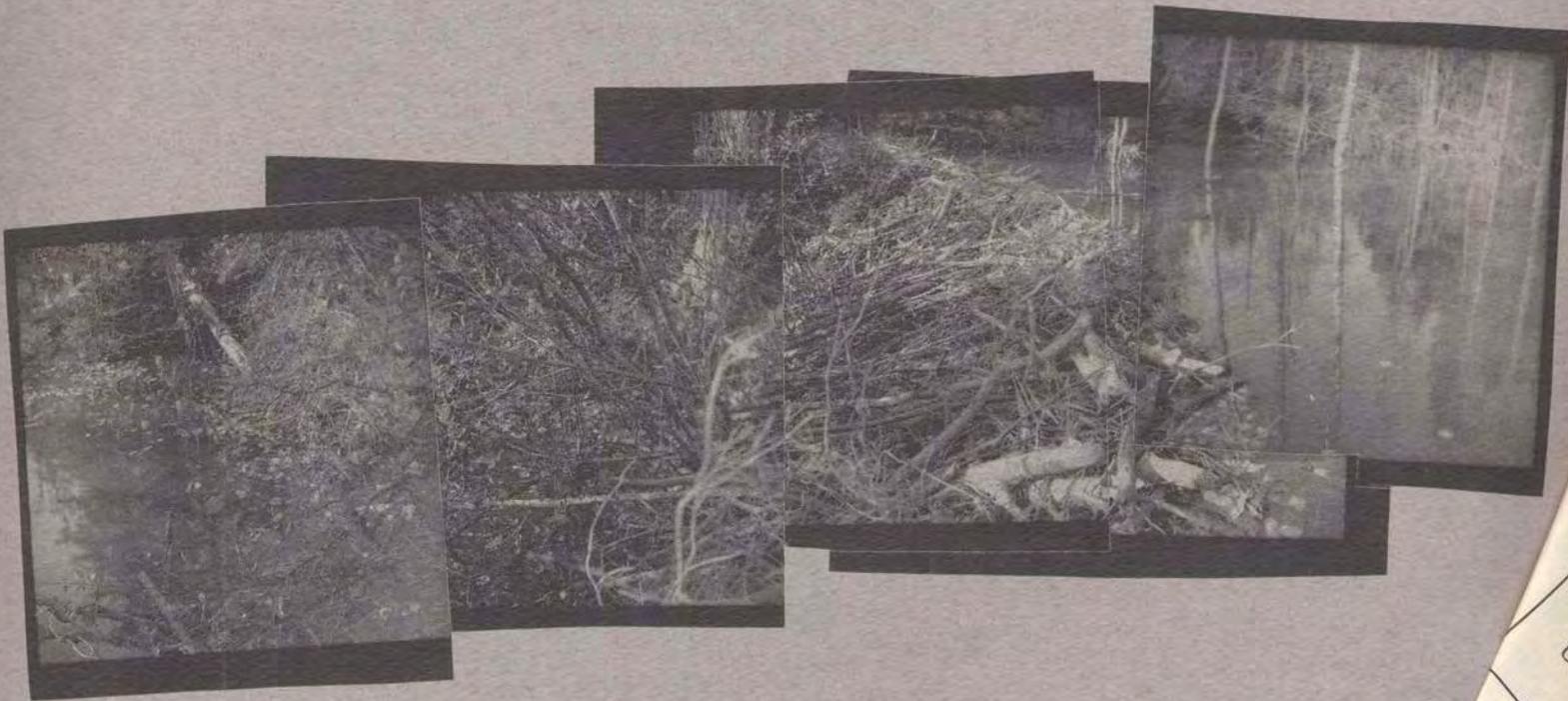


Lee Paquette's installation is marked by the "X" on the above map of the Royal Botanical Gardens' Hendrie Valley. It can be accessed by entering through the Cherry Hill Gate (free access) or through the Rose Garden (paid access for non-members of the Royal Botanical Gardens). The work is situated in a meadow adjacent to the "Bridle" Trail. R.B.G. trails are open daily until dusk.



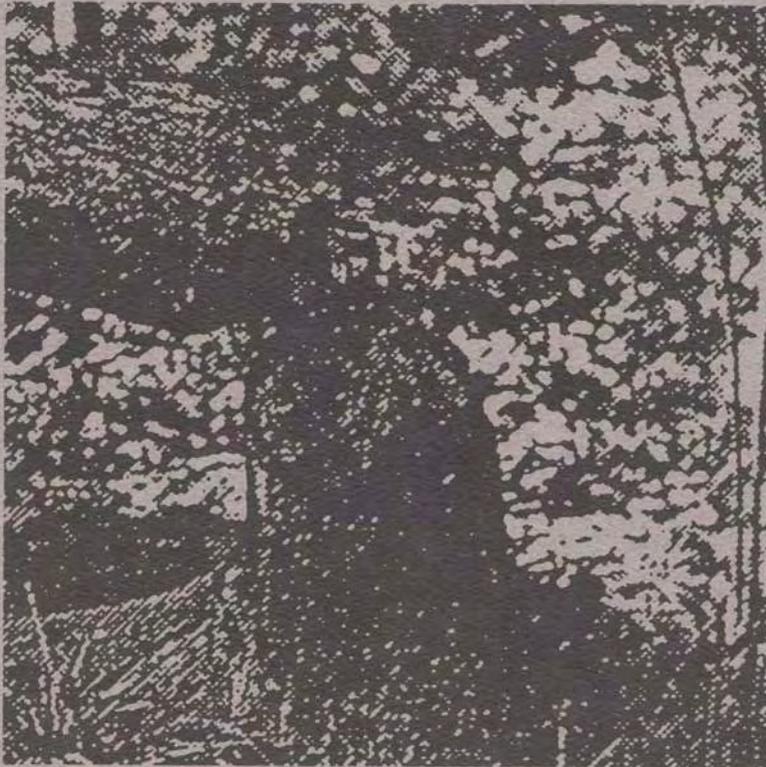
Documentation of beaver pond  
Bruce Mines,  
Lake Huron Region,  
near Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario.

Source material for screened  
images on aluminum plate.



Special Thanks to:

Mairin Wilkinson  
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David McFarlane & Daniel Wilkinson



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Gallery Hours

Tuesday through Friday, 11:00am - 5:00pm

Saturday, Noon - 4:00pm



The Hamilton Artists Inc. is a full member of the Association of National Non-Profit Artist-Run Centres (A.N.N.P.A.C.), Artist-Run Centres Ontario (A.R.C.O.), CARO/CARFAC, and the Bay Area Arts Collective.

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