



April 12 - May 4, 2008
270 Sherman Avenue North, Third Floor
Hamilton, Ontario, Canada

TO HELL & BACK

TITS, HOOTERS & BOOBS

TIRED, HUNGRY & BROKE

TRAMPS, HOBOS & BUMS

These are a few of the colourful local nicknames for the TH&B markers that can still be found hidden in plain sight on the side of rail bridges and train stations around Hamilton. TH&B was the common name of the former Toronto, Hamilton & Buffalo railway that operated out of Hamilton, and crisscrossed the Niagara Peninsula from Lake Erie to Lake Ontario, from 1895 to 1987. The rail line defined a tangible link between cities, one that has since been dismantled, and like so many things in Hamilton either forgotten or folded into a larger corporate entity.

Resuscitating the moniker of the defunct railway, TH&B is now the creative partnership of Simon Frank, Dave Hind, Ivan Jurakic and Tor Lukasik-Foss, a group of visual artists operating out of the Hamilton area. The group collaborates on site-responsive projects that set out to examine unexpected intersections between culture, industry and the natural environment.

TH&B was conceived as a peer-to-peer alliance between artists with ties to the region. As such, the team initiated several off-site projects and envisioned developing a large warehouse exhibition focusing on sculpture, installation and performance. To that end, we endeavoured to secure a large venue in the industrial heart of Hamilton and found 30,000 square feet on the vacant third floor of 270 Sherman Avenue North.

270 Sherman is a mixed-use industrial heritage site. It is a prime example of the potential for adaptive reuse; a former textile mill transformed into an arts-friendly complex housing artists, designers, photographers and light industrial manufacturers side-by-side. The building represents an important piece of architectural and manufacturing history that was itself once connected to a spur line of the TH&B railway.

A select group of emerging and established artists were approached to take part in this inaugural exhibition. They were invited to develop new work or recontextualize existing works in response to the post-industrial nature of the space, with its patinated floors, abandoned change rooms, and mismatched light fixtures. Individually, each of the artists contributed engaging and challenging projects that variously addressed the scale, architecture, history and narrative possibilities of the site.

The scope of the TH&B exhibition vastly exceeded our expectations. Word of mouth spread, and on the opening night of Saturday, April 12, 2008, the venue was thronged by an estimated 800 visitors. A closing event featuring several performances was held on Saturday, May 3, and attracted an equally enthusiastic audience. The exhibition was also a featured destination of Doors Open Hamilton on May 3-4, allowing several hundred more visitors to see the show.

The project aimed a searchlight on the vitality of the visual arts in Hamilton, and tapped into the largely underappreciated ability of artists to inhabit, transform and reanimate overlooked spaces. TH&B set out to mark its territory and in the process struck a large pulsing vein.

On behalf of the TH&B collective:

Ivan Jurakic
Tor Lukasik-Foss
Simon Frank
Dave Hind

TOM BENDTSEN

Eerd

2008

Mixed media: drawing, sound and video components

Balance is at odds. A conflict is being played out between opposing forces; nature to nurture, confidence to desperation, strength to fragility, toxicity to purity.

