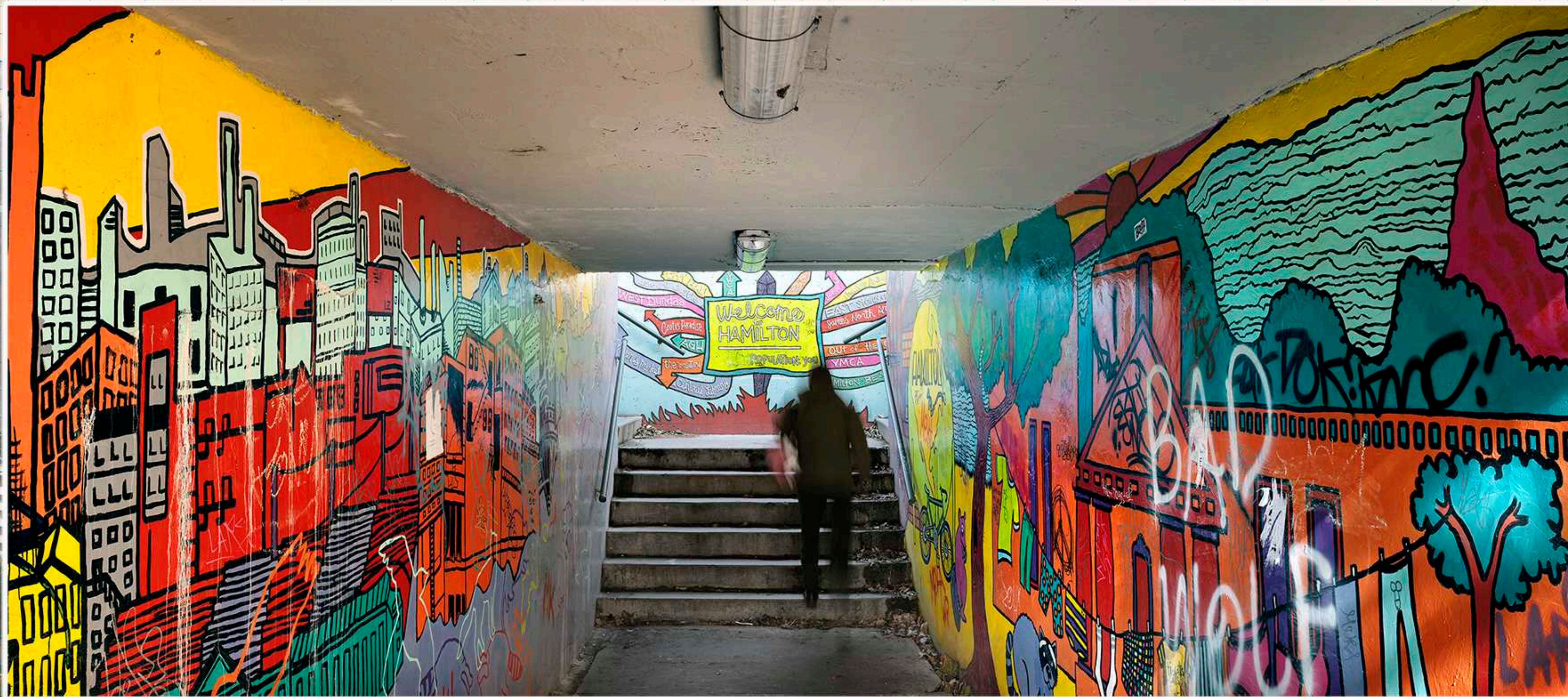


Intermission



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.

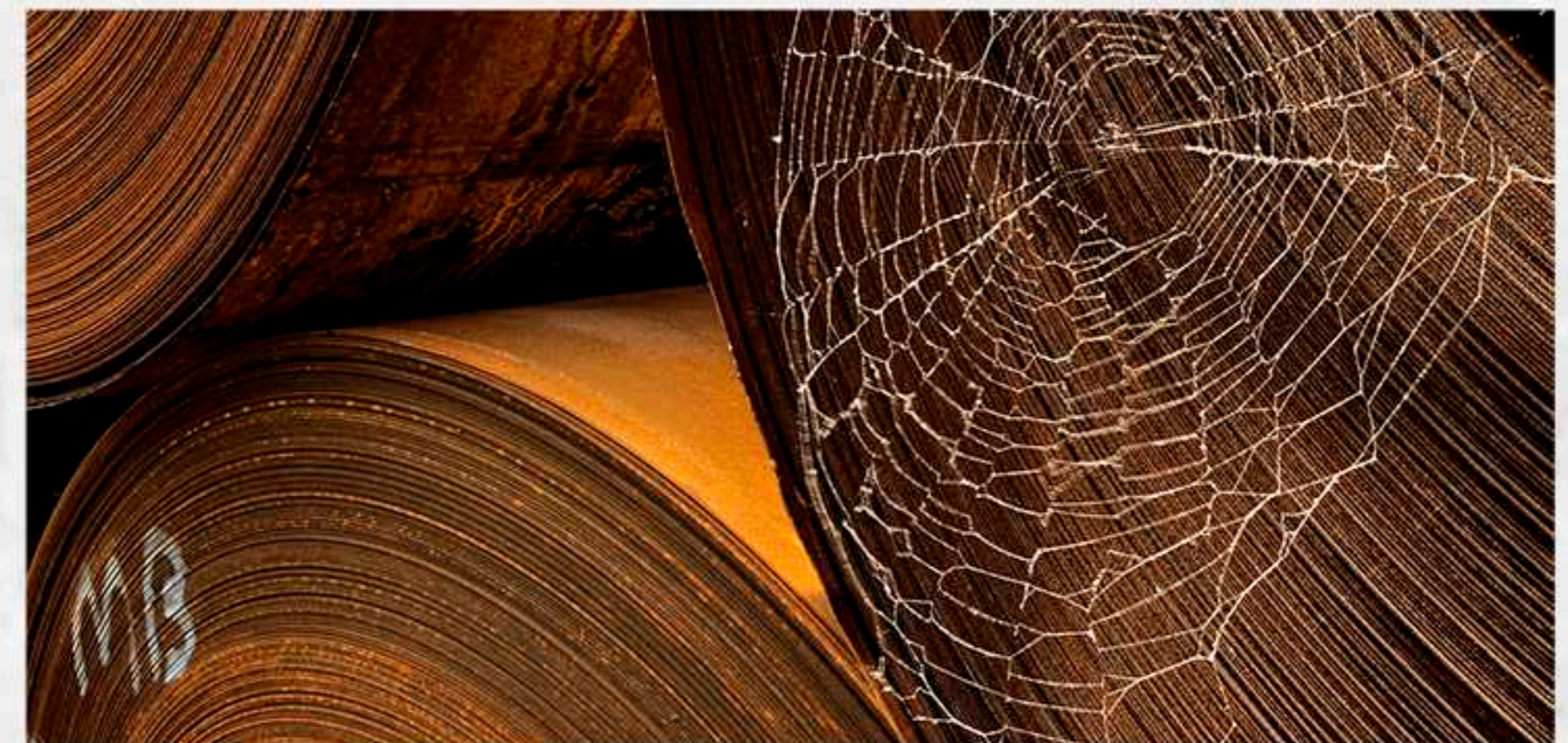
Once I lived in a typical European city that grew over centuries, build with materials to endure, and layouts to preserve social structures. Traditions and cultures were ingrained in stones, city halls to endure a millennium rather than being built and demolished within a human lifespan. However, with no prospect of progress in the 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 the above depends on people's minds prepared for it. The evolution of human cognition was long and took place in small tribal communities or ecological niches. Then, the economic servitude in the last few millennia. Democracy is a few generations old, still blends with servitude-based relationships, but with access to massive education. Capable to process a broader range of information, burdened with growing difficulties of validating their merit and credibility.

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 struggling 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.













1222





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

Aristotle

Evaluating any social structure requires considering human population growth and resource consumption. From a few million since the ice age, the population reached about 200 million at the start of our calendar, one billion during the Industrial Revolution, 2.5 billion when I was born, and now about eight billion. Each person uses resources twice as fast as the population grows. We use GDP to measure progress, while concealing growing liabilities and redefining "progress."

None of the above crosses daily people's minds.

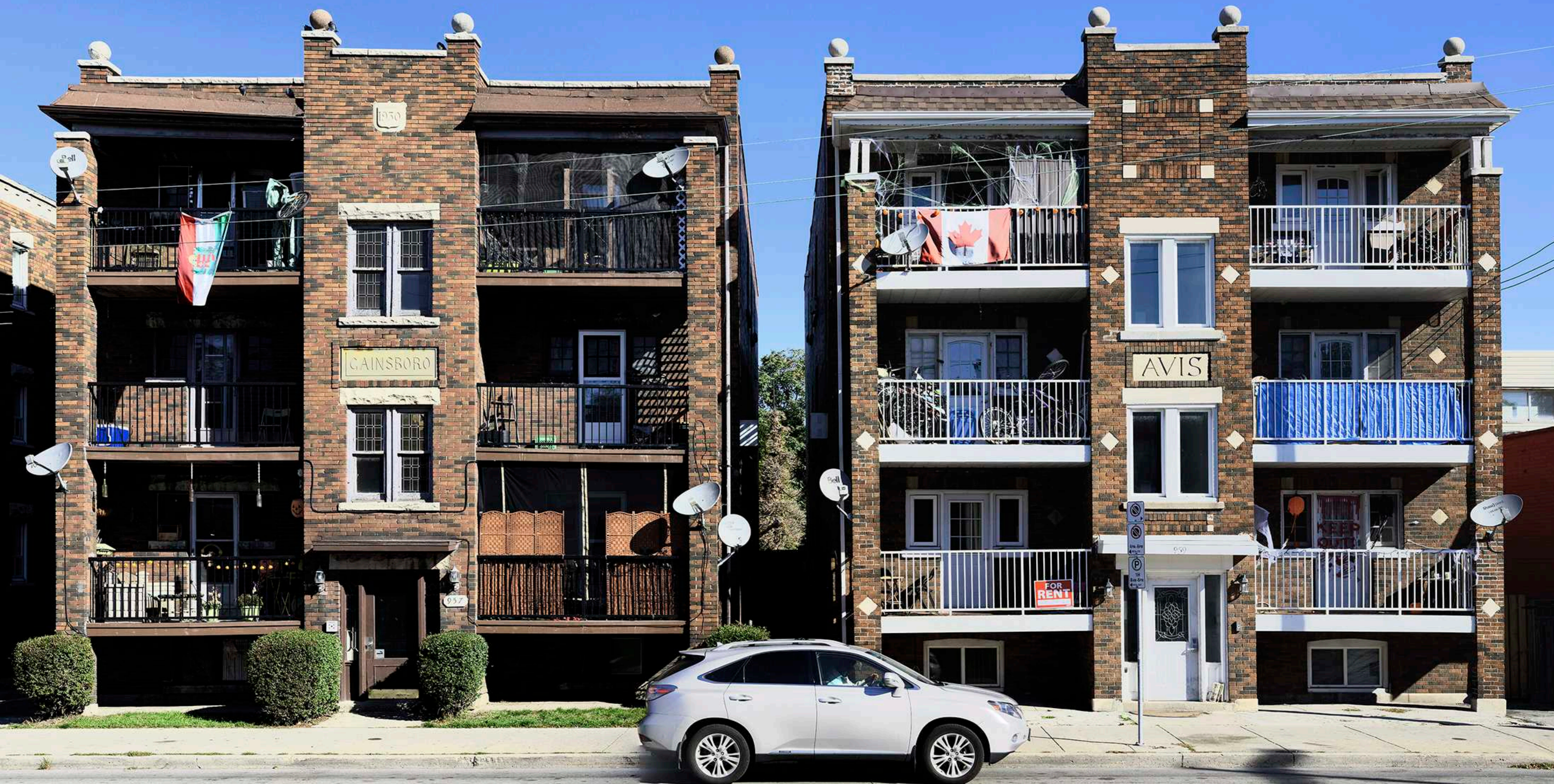
The rapid industrial growth at the beginning of the last century quickly doubled the city's population. Immigrants from various countries formed communities, establishing places of worship, community centres, and bars. They further expanded their social integration by identifying common interests and forming unions and social organizations. Today, only traces and remnants of these early communities remain, and the expression of individual interests, opinions, affiliations, or ties is less evident.





OLD MAN'S GARAGE

DANGER





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

Martin Luther King Jr.

I cherish old memories of a daily life on my hometown street. The small private 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 own materials to draw conclusions. One shouldn't assume, though, that the maturity is age related.

I found signs of changes in Hamilton 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 validation 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. As 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







\$800
\$800
\$800
\$600
\$500

4PC
Clip On
Extensions Wig
Angie3

BARTON FURNITURE

905-526-9566

581 Barton St

581









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

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

Any attempt to define what is art carries now the risk not worth taking. It is safer to look at how arts function at the receiving end. Although, that is still shrouded in ambiguity, as it involves many art handling channels. To keep it simple, I evaluate it by the merit of contribution to the state of our culture, yet another sphere of broad interpretations range. I used above the Leonardo da Vinci quote for his wisdom expressed not only in his artwork. In short, arts maintain their staying power by ideas they sprout in the minds of beholders. Connecting us to, not facilitating escapes from, the realities of living.

I used the attendance at New York trade shows decades ago as an excuse to spend evenings in Soho. Crowded galleries in the evenings, people sharing wine, being able to talk for hours about what any artwork could stir us to. The last time I was there before the Covid. Almost all galleries replaced with fashion stores.

The Hamilton Art Crawl on James Street North began in 2005, the year I moved to the city's area. Being involved in arts while in my twenties, naturally, I had great interest in what was happening there. By the end of that decade, once a month, a sizable crowd 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 the noise of individual emotions, each focused on itself, as a testimony of the rapidly changing human culture. It was already evident how the social media extorted their fees, with all due consequences. In the last few years, only two publicly founded spaces and only one tiny private gallery survived on "gentrified" street.



CENTRE
POINT

Donuts
plus de 11

富臨小館

PET VALU

PRO
SIGNS

24
BIG BONUS
CONVENIENCE

NO

CLOCK TOWER

HA
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, as I had intended, to encapsulate in one image the issue presented in Hamilton's traditional public media channels. An issue like finding a place in the city for a new football stadium, at the expense of some proposed neighbourhoods. The LRT public transportation proposals, the prospect of buying the NHL franchise for the city, etc. Then, after finishing them to the high gallery standard, to exhibit them at large city public gatherings. In the project declaration also displayed, I portrayed myself as a newcomer asking for a guidance on 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 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 he drew with the thinness marker, summarizing 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 the election that followed. He approached the election next after with his platform expressed in one sentence. Unlike all other candidates addressing theirs with very lengthy promises. 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.



in the wall

THE
WOLVES
NEED
FEEDING

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

Up Cycle!

Hamilton is Top Drawer

Stay Safe!

my diary is in here & keep safe.

Emma

love him...

Big LOVE !!!
Margarete Donato

LIFE'S TREASURES

WAY TO HIGH!

FOR THE
POLICE

And your
Indifference
Stocking

HELLO!!
Do I have to pay?

critical
mass
can ride bikes!
less resource
500 lost funds
of the month

Final cat

my home

I ♥ RENO REBAMONTAN

Community



All
You
Need

WOLLY OATS AT THE
ART
ROCKS

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

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...

9 3/4

Shame is cool
WPE

"Mary's" xo

"Here comes
the Bride"

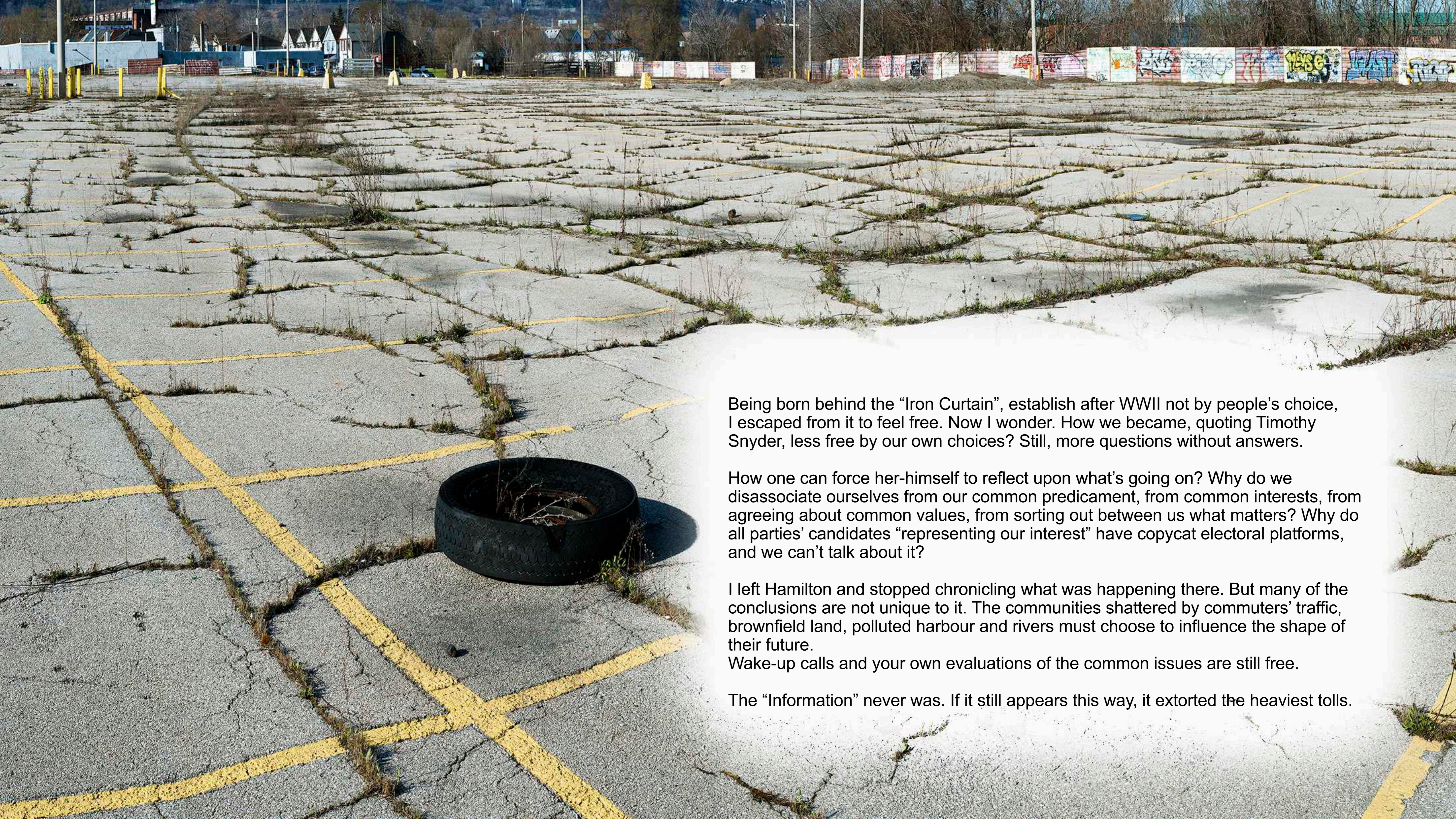


NEW SERIES THURSDAYS
PRIME SUSPECT
Global
GlobalTV.com









Being born behind the “Iron Curtain”, establish after WWII not by people’s choice, I escaped from it to feel free. Now I wonder. How we became, quoting Timothy Snyder, less free by our own choices? Still, more questions without answers.

How one can force her-himself to reflect upon what’s going on? Why do we disassociate ourselves from our common predicament, from common interests, from agreeing about common values, from sorting out between us what matters? Why do all parties’ candidates “representing our interest” have copycat electoral platforms, and we can’t talk about it?

I left Hamilton and stopped chronicling what was happening there. But many of the conclusions are not unique to it. The communities shattered by commuters’ traffic, brownfield land, polluted harbour and rivers must choose to influence the shape of their future.

Wake-up calls and your own evaluations of the common issues are still free.

The “Information” never was. If it still appears this way, it extorted the heaviest tolls.











*"The best argument against democracy
is a five-minute conversation with
the average voter."*

Winston Churchill.