

## Artscape - Ten Years Old and Going Strong!

Artscape is celebrating its tenth anniversary this year and we extend our thanks to all those who have helped make our continued existence a reality.

We are proud of the accomplishments of the past decade:

**1985** - Arts space survey *No Vacancy* leads to development of Artscape by Toronto Arts Council with financial support from the City of Toronto

**1986** - Toronto Artscape incorporated - first staff hired and office set up at Toronto Arts Council

**1986-90** - Art space clearing house set up to match artists with available private-sector studios  
- work continues toward development of an Artscape studio project

**1991** - First studio project opened on 8th floor of 96 Spadina - 22 private and semi-private work studios for artists  
- lobbying for legal artists' live/work gains momentum through Ontario Building Code Working Group and application for social housing funds

**1992** - Momentum from the 8th floor project allows Artscape to open up almost 70 more work studios at 60 Atlantic and the 7th floor of 96 Spadina - Artscape moves administrative offices to 60 Atlantic

**1993** - The Music Gallery approaches Artscape to develop a new performance and administrative facility at 179 Richmond St. W. - Artscape oversees design and development of the project and takes on ten-year building lease  
- Artscape begins providing consulting services to other municipalities

**1995** - Artscape opens 900/910 Queen St. W. - the first legal live/work project for artists in the City of Toronto - 22 subsidized and market rate units made available along with six basement work studios  
- waiting list for live/work studios quickly expands to five-plus years  
- funding for new Ontario social housing projects eliminated

**1996** - Marks third straight year of 95-100% occupancy of Artscape workspaces  
- High demand for live/work and lack of provincial funding prompts a new approach to project development  
- Metro approves use of 1313 Queen for live/work and community uses  
- consulting services expanded to other provinces for first time  
- Artscape develops new initiatives and expands current services as it looks to the future (see next column)

**New Project Development:** Although both the provincial and federal funding for capital projects have disappeared, Artscape has not given up its role as arts space developer. The City of Toronto continues to be very supportive of its artists' live/work studio needs, Metro has confirmed a twenty year lease of 1313 Queen West to Artscape and partnerships with non-profit housing organizations and with the private sector are an emerging possibility.

**Outreach:** Artscape's outreach program was set up to support artists in the community who are looking for advice or information on space in Toronto. *Doing Homework: Educating Yourself As A Warehouse Tenant* is Artscape's latest initiative in this area (see "Reaching Out..." on p. 2).

**Consulting:** Artscape offers consulting services to organizations interested in developing new buildings or parts of buildings with artists' needs in mind. This service is free to City of Toronto artists and arts groups, and on a cost-recovery basis to others.

**On the Internet:** You can visit Artscape on the Internet at our new website: <http://www3.sympatico.ca/toronto.artscape>. (see "For Your Information" on p.3 for details)

### Who's Who at Artscape

It has been several years since Artscape introduced the people behind the organization and, not surprisingly, a number of changes have occurred in the interim. Currently the Board and Staff of Toronto Artscape Inc. and Artscape Non-Profit Homes Inc. are:

#### Toronto Artscape Board of Directors

Jini Stolk\*.....President

David Renaud\*.....Vice-President

Bob Widdowson.....Treasurer

Frank Addario  
Bonnie Alter  
R. W. W. Fraser  
Claire Hopkinson  
Rose Jacobson  
J. P. S. Mackenzie\*  
Councillor Martin Silva  
P. J. Taylor.....Directors

\*holds same position on ANPHI Board of Directors

#### Toronto Artscape/ANPHI Staff

Susan Wright.....General Manager

Richard D'Iorio.....Mgr. of Dev. & Ops.

Sandra Ferguson.....Studio/Tenant Mgr.

Jelica Vrana.....Office/Library Mgr.

## Third Rail Electrifies

The weekend of September 28-29 saw the return of the Third Rail Festival to the King/Dufferin neighbourhood. This volunteer-run open studio festival provides an opportunity for local artists to exhibit their work to the larger public, and is entertaining and educational to attendees, who are given the opportunity to see and discuss work with artists in their studios.

After three years of operating under the auspices of Artsweek (a fall event run by the Arts Foundation of Greater Toronto), festival organizers and participants made the decision to operate Third Rail independently this year, relying on support from local businesses and the skills of participating artists to make the event a success. Despite working without a formal funding structure, there was a marked increase in artist participation and nearly a 200% increase in financial support.

As in previous years, Artscape tenants were a driving force behind the festival's organization and participation. 60 Atlantic tenants made up a quarter of the artists participating in the event; a hallway exhibition at the building showcased Artscape artists from 96 Spadina and 900 Queen; and the poster and programme illustration and design were by Artscape tenant David Goldberg. As an organization, Artscape was pleased to continue its tradition of assisting Third Rail by providing free exhibition space and administrative support.

Another reason for the festival's success was the extensive media attention that it attracted: stories on City TV's news and "Ooh La La" and on CBC TV news; a half-page feature in the Toronto Star's "What's On" section; and articles in several local papers.

Artscape congratulates everyone involved in another successful Third Rail, and hopes to see everyone next year at this exciting, highly enjoyable event.

# ARTSCAPE

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## Metro Offers Building for Artscape Project

Thirteen is proving to be a lucky number for Artscape and Parkdale community groups. After over a year of planning and organizing, Artscape's next live/work project at 1313 Queen St. W. has been approved by Metro Council.

For those of you who missed the article about 1313 Queen in our last newsletter (September 1994 - sorry about the unplanned hiatus), this Metro-owned building in Toronto's Parkdale neighbourhood has been ripe for redevelopment since it was vacated in 1994. Originally built as a police station in the early 1930's, the building - identifiable by its distinctive Art Deco facade - was later converted into large affordable housing units. This previous residential retrofit will allow Artscape to develop nine live/work units, two administrative offices for cultural groups and a public gallery at an affordable cost.

Artscape will lease the building for 20

years from Metro Toronto for \$1 per year. After renovations are completed, Artscape will sublease the building's nine live/work units directly to artist tenants. The other spaces will be leased to a Community Board, who will allocate space to community groups. Although no final decisions have been made about tenancy, recent discussions have indicated that the Parkdale Village Arts Collective (PVAC) and the Mariposa Folk Foundation will be among those groups which will occupy the community offices.

Artscape has many people to thank for helping to bring this proposal forward. The drive to change the building into a cultural facility has come about through the efforts of area residents, members of the Parkdale Business Improvement Association and members of cultural community groups, all of whom worked together to create a proposal which satisfies the diverse needs of the neighbourhood.

Metro Councillor David Miller helped provide Artscape with strong community backing for the proposal, and was also instrumental in securing

the 22 to 4 vote from Metro Council. At the City of Toronto, Councillors Chris Korwin-Kuczynski and Martin Silva are working hard in support of Artscape's proposal for capital funding for the project. In addition, major financial commitments from the Toronto Arts Council and The Studio (a non-profit organization established to assist senior visual artists) have already been confirmed. Given the fact that the 1313 Queen St. W. proposal satisfies the need for a substantial economic and cultural development initiative in the Parkdale neighbourhood at a very limited cost, Artscape is optimistic that it will receive the support necessary to complete construction.

Located in the heart of Parkdale's retail strip, 1313 Queen St. W. has suffered significantly from vandalism and theft in recent years. Artscape's proposal offers a unique opportunity to help change the face of the streetscape in the neighbourhood (see "Artscape on Main St.", p. 3). The Parkdale area, after a long period of decline, is now beginning to see the results of positive effort by the local community. Artscape is pleased and proud to be involved in this initiative.

If you or your organization would like more information on the Community Board process you can contact Metro Councillor David Miller's office at 392-4071. If you are interested in the artist live/work units planned at 1313 Queen and have not yet contacted Artscape, we urge you to call us at 392-1038 as soon as possible.

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Photograph © Henry Gordillo



## Reaching Out to Warehouse Tenants

What happened at 347 Sorauren Avenue in January of 1995 was another chapter in a tale too often told by artists illegally living in warehouses in Toronto and around the world. Lured to the building in 1994 by an unscrupulous landlord offering unbelievably low rents, tenants moving in faced double-rented units, exposed electrical wires, and studio "walls" which consisted of lines drawn on the floor. Conditions were so hazardous that when Toronto's Buildings and Inspections Department investigated the building early in 1995, the City was faced with the unhappy prospect of a mass eviction.

Although this situation (and its ensuing media attention) seems extreme, most artists who have illegally lived and worked in warehouses can tell similar stories of exploitation, danger and discomfort. Although the price, space, light and location of warehouse spaces initially seem a boon to artists wanting to combine living and working space, often there is a hidden price to pay.

Recognizing the need to address this issue, the City of Toronto (following the recommendations of Mayor Hall's Artists' Live/Work Working Group) provided a substantial grant to help educate warehouse dwellers in health, life safety and legal issues related to this type of tenancy. The grant, which was administered by Artscape through an Outreach Committee (whose members included representatives from Canadian Artists' Representation Ontario, Parkdale Legal Services, the Federation of Metro Tenants' Associations and the City of Toronto) has been used to create and disseminate information; primarily through the publication and distribution of *Doing HomeWork: Educating Yourself as a Warehouse Tenant*. This 80 page book has been designed to provide practical information that will help tenants cope with - or preferably avoid - dangerous or unpleasant situations. The book is divided into five sections:

**The Warehouse Scene** offers information on how to look for space, the motivations of landlords renting warehouses and the role of Buildings and Inspections Departments.

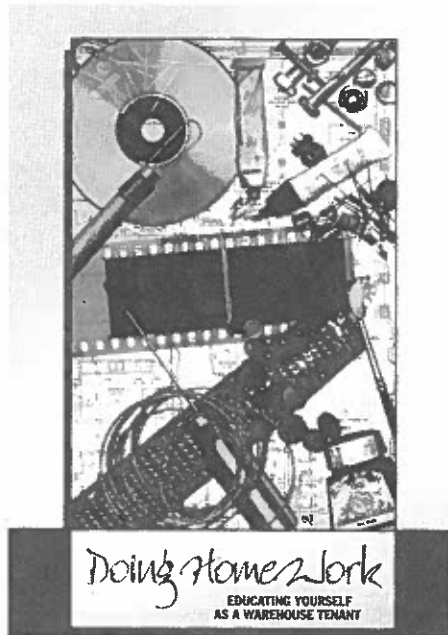
**Understanding a Commercial Lease** explores landlords' and tenants' responsibilities under commercial leases. Under these leases, tenants agree that they will not live in their spaces. Thus even though the landlord or superintendent may be well aware of the tenant's intent to live in the space, as soon as tenants sign a commercial lease they confer power on the landlord who can evict at a moment's notice for infringement of lease conditions. Commercial buildings and leases also have far different provisions for utilities, access to elevator(s), payment of property taxes etc., all of which may cause unexpected problems for tenants. This section outlines tenants' and landlords' rights and obligations, and offers suggestions and possible solutions.

**Collective Power** is a section describing actions which tenants in a building may consider taking if a landlord is proving unresponsive.

**Studio Health and Safety** provides a wealth of information on safety concerns. It outlines what to watch out for in the design and construction of warehouse space, key points when undertaking renovation, fire safety issues, and health hazards related to the use of arts materials. There are handy building safety and personal safety checklists at the end of the section.

**Appendices** include useful information, such as a standard commercial lease with explanations for every clause and areas of concern highlighted. Other items in the appendices include a warehouse maintenance survey and a directory of services.

Although *Doing HomeWork* has been written with Toronto's warehouse districts, municipal and provincial laws in mind, the book has been used by individuals and groups as far away as Regina, Salt Lake City and Perth, Australia. Copies of *Doing HomeWork* may be obtained by dropping by the Artscape office or the CARO office at 401 Richmond Street West. The book is available at no charge until the end of 1996, after which it will be available for \$7.50 Canadian per copy (plus shipping & handling if applicable).



## Healthy Art

**How can improper storage of your paintings make them spontaneously combust?**

**What commonly used artists' material can cause instant corrosion of your soft contact lenses?**

**How can use of certain markers cause you to keep dropping your coffee cup?**

**What is the difference between "vapours" and "fumes"?**

Ted Rickard answered these questions and dozens more at his presentation on Studio Health and Safety last May 29th at the Music Gallery. The presentation, co-sponsored by Toronto Artscape Inc., CARO, Gallery 44 and Open Studio, offered an in-depth analysis of artists' materials and work practices, with plenty of practical advice on how to purchase, store and work with materials and equipment.

As the Health and Safety Officer for the Ontario College of Art and Design, Ted's extensive experience allowed him to speak with authority on most artistic media, including painting, photography, printmaking, pottery, wood and metal working. "Just because a particular section of the presentation doesn't seem to apply to your work, don't tune out", he warned at the beginning of the evening. "You never know what the person in the studio next door could be doing to you".

Although he had a serious message, Ted presented his seminar with humour; also with strong (and sometimes gory) visual accompaniment. He offered an understanding of the realities faced by most artists, with lots of opportunity for questions and discussion. Even artists with years of experience remarked at how much they had learned. "He didn't tell us to never use this or that material", commented one artist in attendance, "but he did inform us of how to use those materials more safely, and of what alternatives exist".

As well as materials safety, Ted discussed material-related allergies and sensitivities and how factors such as work-related physical strain, loud noise, or fatigue can be hazardous to artists' health. Most importantly, he reminded artists that the main reason to be safe in your studio is so that you don't have to stop practicing your art because of illness or injury.

If you missed the seminar let us know, as we hope to offer a second free presentation in the future through our outreach programme. You can also check out the Health & Safety section of *Doing HomeWork*.

## A Happy First Birthday for Artscape Live/Work

On October 20, just over a year after the opening of Artscape's first live/work project, tenants of 900/910 Queen St. W. celebrated not just their first anniversary, but the strong community spirit that has grown in the building during this short time.

The event included a tour of tenants' studios, presentations of dance, music and poetry, and a delicious buffet, with much of the food donated by local merchants who have felt the economic and social benefits of the building's presence in the neighbourhood. As well, the afternoon's emphasis on friends, family and neighbours underlined the positive community feeling of the celebration.

This resident-sponsored event - along with other 900/910 Queen tenant incentives like the Signal Gallery and the now-famous front garden - has helped to create a powerful presence in the Queen/Crawford area - one which proves the positive and lasting impact artists and their work can have on an urban neighbourhood.

## Artscape on Main St.

Running through Toronto are numerous strips of commercial activity located on the City's main streets. These streets serve the needs of local residents and help to establish a neighbourhood's character. In recent years many of these retail strips have suffered from a poor economy and shifts in retailing trends, leaving high vacancy rates and an overabundance of dollar stores and donut shops. The depressing state of many main streets can keep area residents away and perpetuate decline, sending whole neighbourhoods into long-term slumps.

With shopping malls and warehouse superstores competing for the attention of consumers, main street is finding that while it can't necessarily compete on price, it can provide customers with a less generic shopping experience. Interest in areas such as Church Street, Bloor West Village and the Beaches has been achieved by providing the public with a diverse selection of small, owner-operated stores and eating establishments; this interest translates into neighbourhood prosperity.

In depressed main street areas, arts facilities can offer a neighbourhood a firm anchor to help establish and sustain this type of improvement. A facility has a permanence that community festivals and events often lack, and its positive

effect can be felt daily. Whether a gallery, a theatre or a studio workshop, an arts facility will encourage renewed interest in a main street area by local residents and prospective store owners - even in its planning stages.

The Parkdale Business Improvement Association and the Parkdale Village Ratepayers' Association have long recognized the potential of arts-related activities and uses to generate interest and investment in their area. These and many other local community groups together with municipal representatives have collectively placed their confidence in Artscape's proposal for redevelopment of 1313 Queen St. W. (see "Metro Offers..." p. 1). Artscape is extremely optimistic that the rejuvenated building - in addition to ensuring long-term affordable space to artists - will help foster a more positive image of Parkdale.

Increasingly, Artscape is interested in getting involved at an early stage in neighbourhood economic renewal efforts. 1313 Queen and 900/910 Queen are real examples of how we can work effectively and cooperatively with a neighbourhood community to be a part of its development and growth. With several other main street development opportunities being considered, we are now looking forward to working with other neighbourhoods to help build more long term solutions for main streets and Toronto's artists.

## Artscape in Motion...Across North America

1996 has seen Artscape travelling more than any other year in the past - a good sign that the importance of arts space in the eyes of government and the public is continuing to increase.

In July, Susan Wright attended the National Artists' Space Mini-Conference in Salt Lake City, hosted by the Minneapolis-based organization Artspace. This annual conference provides an intimate and intensive forum for arts space developers and development organizations to discuss solutions to their many common concerns. Artscape was the first non-American organization invited to participate in the conference.

In September, Richard D'Orio and Sandra Ferguson travelled to Regina and Saskatoon as guests of CARFAC Saskatchewan to conduct two day-long space development seminars. Geared to artists interested in developing their own spaces, the seminars also attracted officials from a number of municipalities in the province who were very interested in working with artists on economic development initiatives.

Finally, in October Billie Bridgman (past Executive Director) and Board Member Councillor Martin Silva represented Artscape in Montreal at the international conference *Les nouveaux lieux culturels* jointly hosted by the province of Quebec and the City of Montreal.

## For Your Information:

**Arts Facility Property Taxes**  
Toronto Artscape and the Toronto Arts Council have recently presented a paper to the province's "Who Does What" Committee (chaired by David Crombie) to emphasize the importance of low, stable, realty taxes for arts organizations.

With the province intent on introducing actual value assessment, many arts organizations could face very high realty tax assessments. The Artscape/TAC paper stresses that all arts organizations should be treated equitably, and that if arts facilities must be assessed for taxes (not our first choice!) a fair standard of property value which is based on current use should be applied, with non-profit organizations entitled to a lower tax or mill rate. For more information on this initiative, please contact Susan Wright at 392-1038.

**The White Show**  
A show and sale of small works by Artscape tenants is taking place at AREA Exhibition Space, on the fourth floor of 401 Richmond St. W. from December 2-20.

Working with the theme of the colour white, thirty-five tenants from 96 Spadina, 60 Atlantic and 900/910 Queen have created pieces for the show (all suitable for gift giving over the holiday season!)

To date, this is the largest-scale showing of Artscape tenants' work, and we hope that this tradition will continue for future shows.

The official opening is on Friday, December 6 with the party beginning at 5 pm. We hope to see you there!

**Looking for Artists' Live/Work?**  
A non-profit housing group requires assistance in planning a live/work rental project for artists. The building is located near King and River St., and is part of a larger non-profit development. The group requires input on the needs of working artists, including design, space and amenity needs, and affordability issues. For further information on a focus group to be held in December, call the Artscape office at 392-1038.

**Artscape on the Web**  
Artscape recently went online with its own website - <http://www3.sympatico.ca/toronto.artscape>. Although we still have a lot of work to do to expand this service, the site is already home to a lot of useful information - including the full text (and images) of *Doing HomeWork: Educating Yourself as a Warehouse Tenant*.

Future plans for the site include Artscape project information, listings of available space, and articles from past and current newsletters.