

*Hamilton Artists Inc. in collaboration with the Royal Botanical Gardens,  
and The City of Hamilton presents:*

# **The Urban Moorings Project** Floating Sculptures Re-interpret Hamilton's Past



*Two of the artists in their studios: Tor Lukasik-Foss (L) and Susan Detwiler (R)*

Up until the 1950's, **Cootes Paradise** was the site of Shacktown, a working-class settlement consisting of housing made from the materials at hand. This community included homes which floated on water, allowing residents to drift to another area of Cootes Paradise when pressured to do so by urban expansion.

In recognition of this historic site, **The Urban Moorings Project** brings together the work of artists **Susan Detwiler, Noel Harding and David Acheson, Tor Lukasik-Foss and Steve Mazza**. Using man-made materials and indigenous plants of the area, the artists will create floating sculptures and gardens on the wetlands of Cootes Paradise, which will resound with an admiration for the ingenuity, creative spirit and adaptability of Hamilton's historic Shacktown community.

**Curator Nora Hutchinson** describes the project as "a traveling canvas, one that is ever changing...sun on calm waters extends and mirrors perfectly the sculptures and their reflections on the bay. Morning fog, dusk, and the terrible beauty of Hamilton's factory plumes of smoke and fire play a part in this ineffable landscape. Culled into the visual frame of floating homes, there is the call of birds, the hush of wings and the sound of water lapping..."

Hamilton Artists Inc. is extremely pleased and excited to produce this project. **The exhibition will open on June 21st, 2008 at 1 pm**, as the artists install their houseboat sculptures on the shores of Princess Point, Cootes Paradise. The exhibition will continue **until August 5, 2008**. We welcome you to join us. It's a great opportunity to meet the artists and gain some exposure to some new contemporary work.

***Further related events not to be missed:***

**Artists Panel Discussion:** June 26th, 6 - 8pm at McMaster Museum of Art

**Films: *Urban Moorings and Starfloats*** July 11th, 7 pm at Hamilton Artists Inc.  
161 James St. North - Starfloats by Ingrid Koivukangas: a film about  
endangered wetlands in Finn Slough, British Columbia

**Panel Discussion with Artists & the Royal Botanical Gardens (RBG):**

July 13, 2 - 4 p.m. at RBG Auditorium

***This exhibition is sponsored and funded by:***

*The Canada Council for the Arts, the Ontario Council for the Arts, the Hamilton  
Community Foundation, The Ontario Trillium Foundation, Turkstra Lumber and The City  
of Hamilton.*

If you would like more information about "The Urban Moorings Project", or Hamilton Artists Inc., **please contact: Irene Loughlin** at 905-529-3355/cell 905 719 7477 or by email at [Irene@hamiltonartistsinc.on.ca](mailto:Irene@hamiltonartistsinc.on.ca)

**About the Artists and Their Works**

**Susan Detwiler** is a contemporary visual artist, educator and writer." Her work "*Green Cleaning House*" raises questions about the industrial transformation of nature into toxic waste." Detwiler makes a shelter frame for growing edible plants from household cleaning tools. These utensils, brooms, swiffers and mops are on display as if they can clean the waters of the bay.

**Tor Lukasik-Foss** is a Hamilton area visual artist and musician whose work re-conceptualizes the idea of the 'performance stage'. The floating sculpture "Viking Soliloquy Chair" transforms a sinking Viking burial ship into a piece of floating stage furniture, useful for all manner of doleful Shakespearian monologues, acapella Wagnerian wailing, and/or Becketesque chatter.

**Steve Mazza** is a sculptor who has spent his entire life on the waters of Hamilton Harbour. His piece considers "what it means to live in an industrial city, in an industrial province, in a country that doesn't seem to want to be industrial anymore." By incubating the industrial [Stelco and Dofasco] into a green house structure, Steve Mazza pays homage to the places where the people of Shacktown worked. His works plays on the notion that industry is an anachronism to be museumed as well as providing a safe place for industrial pollutants to be contained.

**David Acheson and Noel Harding** create work that is preoccupied with the merging of sculpture to landscape, landscape to sculpture. Both artists are fascinated by the human consideration to manipulate and shape nature to an imagined ideal. In the work "*romance park for endangered turtles 2008*" Turtle basking platforms, water aeration, wetland plantings provide a theatrical stage. Their islands arise in an artifice of technology as transplanted tools toward real environmental engagement. Artist Noel Harding has been working for several years on technologies that address the role of nature in the midst of contemporary urbanization. He is most noted for his *Elevated Wetlands Project* and his work with green roof elevations (*Green Corridor Project*).

## About the Curator:

**Nora Hutchinson** Nora Hutchinson is a video and performance artist who has exhibited nationally and internationally, as well as a producer, writer and composer. She holds a BA in Music and a MFA from the University of Guelph and has recently produced the operatic performance work *In Safe Places*.

**Hamilton Artists Inc.** is committed to the presentation, dissemination and support of contemporary visual arts practice in Canada. The centre seeks to reflect the concerns of emerging and mid-career artists within the context of both a local and larger national discourse. The centre presents a diverse range of multidisciplinary programming with a primary focus on emerging aesthetics in contemporary art including: installation, painting, photography, graphic arts, video, performance and new media. The centre pays artist fees for all selected exhibitions, programs and curatorial initiatives and supports the processes of working artists by providing them with an accessible forum which acts as a social backdrop for their artistic investigations. The centre empowers artists and cultural producers by supplying them with necessary resources and a cooperative working environment, which facilitates artistic freedom of expression.