



Winter/Spring 2010

News

The Workers Arts and Heritage Centre celebrates 15 years at the Custom House which turns 150 in 2010.

Wayne Marsden (HDC) and Mayor Bob Morrow cut the ribbon to open the new OWAHC, 1995



It is 15 years since the Workers Arts and Heritage Centre opened its doors at Hamilton's former Custom House, and 150 years since the original building first opened for business. Now a national historic site, the Custom House has seen its share of good times and bad – being used for everything from a school for girls, to a macaroni factory and even more recently a karate studio. Today, the Workers Arts and Heritage Centre continues to focus on the history and culture of workers, and offers the public a unique combination of history museum, art gallery and heritage site all in one location - in downtown Hamilton.

To mark the occasion, WAHC will be offering special tours and programs on the history and many lives of the building. The story constitutes a slice of Hamilton's history and its changing economy over three centuries. WAHC will be particularly looking at the workers who created it and laboured within its walls over the years.

The Custom House is an important building in Hamilton's history and worth preserving. Under the Workers Arts and Heritage Centre, it has become an important centre for historical, artistic, social and cultural activities. It is a community resource.

The Workers Arts and Heritage Centre is one of the few not-for-profit organizations which owns and operates a nationally designated heritage building. It is an expensive building to sustain. In recognition of the 150th anniversary – or sesquicentennial – of the opening of the building in 1860, WAHC will be launching a three year campaign with the goal of creating an endowment of \$3 million dollars.

Dr. Elizabeth McLuhan, Executive Director



Other Initiatives

Events under the 15/150 anniversary's banner in 2010:

Tours Marking 15/150, WAHC offers *The Many Lives of the Custom House*, that look at specific eras in the building's history. Tours available on demand. For information, please call Fabiola at (905) 522-3003, ext 21 or fabiola@wahc-museum.ca.

Doors Open Hamilton. May 1 and 2 with WAHC tours. WAHC will reunite with the popular Doors Open. Staff will offer visitors insight into the buildings history and architectural features of our unique building.

Opening *El arte de trabajar/The Women's Labour Project*. Lynn Hutchinson, Amelia Jimenez and Margot Charlton present a collaborative project with members of SEIU, Local 1, and newly their discovered means of expression. May 14 to Sept. 3. In the Main Gallery the reception will be co-hosted by the Hamilton District Labour Council,

Opening in the Community Gallery. *Art Works: 20 years of the Mayworks Festival*. May 14 to June 5. WAHC celebrates two decades of pioneering work in the arts and labour communities with Toronto-based Mayworks. A collection of art memorabilia showing the breadth of their work will be shown.

Labour Lounge May 21. WAHC celebrates the official publication and release of *Making Art Work: A Labour Arts Manual* by Ingrid Mayrhofer. The volume provides artists, activists and educators alike with practical how-to information, worksheets and project examples for coordinating labour arts activities of their own. Labour Loungers may opt to participate in a one of a kind labour art project.

Sod Turning of the Heritage Garden: *The seeds of our past*. WAHC is expanding its programming into the grounds at the Custom House with the introduction of heritage plantings. Date (tba).

Co-celebration with *Homecoming 2010*/Hamilton Black History Committee. "... and still I rise!" will be installed in the Community Gallery from July 9 to September 3. Back by popular demand, the touring exhibition "... and still I rise!" recognizes the contribution of the African Canadian community to the labour movement in Ontario.

15/150 Birthday Celebration/Block Party Saturday September 11 at 1:00 pm. A gala open house for all to enjoy. Events to be announced

Sam 15 Dinner WAHC Founders Recognition Event. November 13. This year WAHC will acknowledge the great efforts of its founding members and the work that they started 15 years ago. Special guest performers (TBA).

Andrew Hunter and Tor Lukasik-Fos. September 10 to December 23. Inspired by WAHC's historical collection, the artist will create new songs and songbooks for today's workers.

Mayor **Bob Morrow** watches the opening ceremonies in the back yard at the Workers Arts and Heritage Centre, 1995



Beatriz with her work from the upcoming exhibition *El arte de trabajar*



Karen Tam *Opium Tussle* from her exhibition *Liki Liki* in the Main Gallery January 8 to May 8

