

2019

Community Arts

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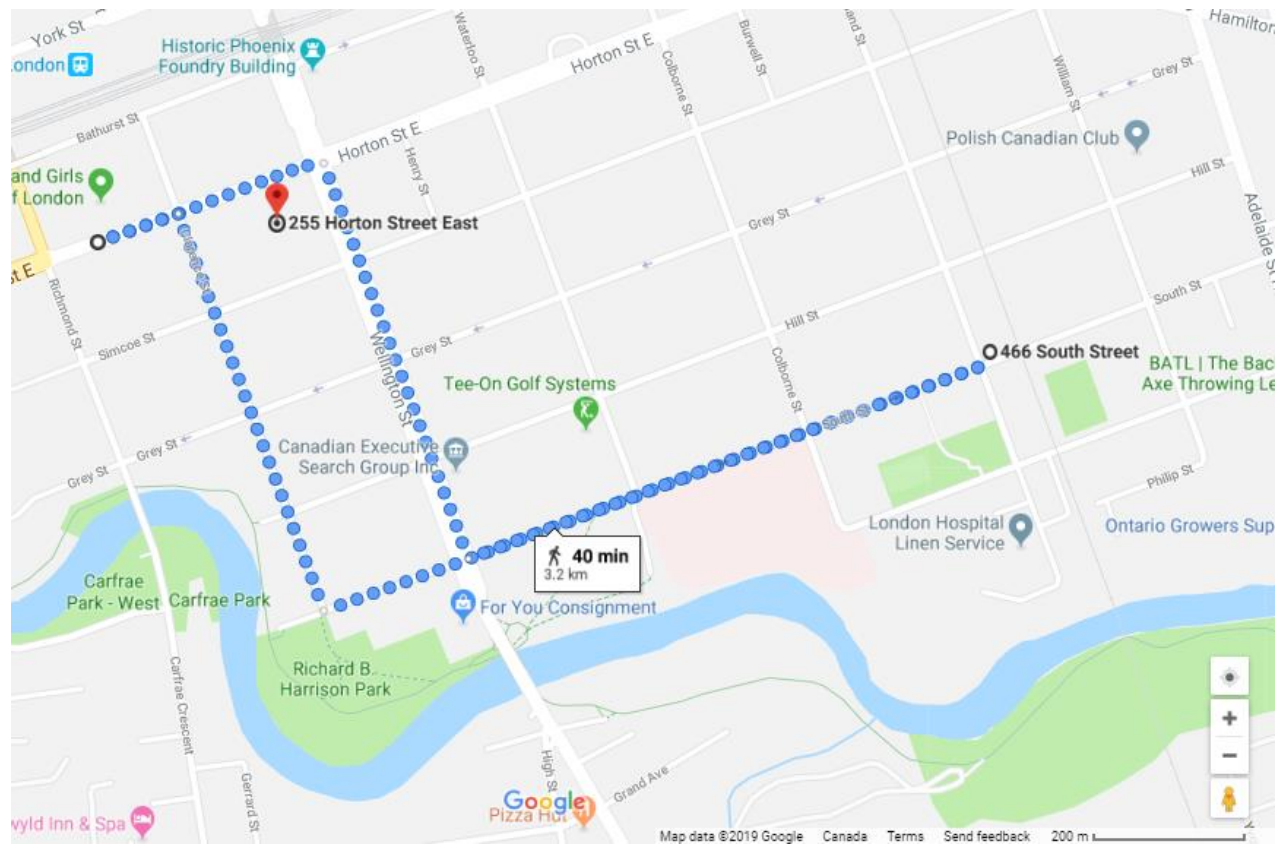
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SoHo Community Arts Tour
Rachel

- Story #1: Peter Karas (Mural) 183 Horton St E
- Story #2: Bill Exley (Victoria Tavern) 466 South St
- Story #3: Gerard Van Herk (Victoria Tavern) 466 South St

Route



Walking Tour directions

255 Horton St E

Head west on Horton St E toward Clarence St

183 Horton St E

Head east on Horton St E toward Clarence St

Turn right onto Clarence St

Turn left onto South St

466 South St

Head west on South St toward Maitland St

Turn right onto Wellington St

Turn left onto Horton St E

255 Horton St E

Introduction:

This tour will highlight the way art builds communities in the SoHo neighbourhood. Before we start the tour, please pull out your mobile phones and enter Here, Hear London's number in your phone: 1-519-672-4327. This tour will be approximately 50 minutes total, with 40 minutes of walking and the rest to listen to the stories.

Our first stop is a mural on the London Community Woodshop. I introduce the tour as we walk to our first story.

This tour highlights three stories of artists in our community. These stories span decades, recounting the experiences of these artists from the 1970s to 2016, and touch on the role of art in creating communities. Our first stop will be a mural painted on the wall of the London Community Woodshop and our second stop will be the Victoria Tavern.

As you visit each *Here, Here* story in this tour, consider the questions: How can art help to build a community? What barriers to community-building do some artists face? Why are certain artistic communities underrepresented in traditional histories/narratives?

Story #1: Peter Karas

Paragraphs:

The first story is from an artist named Peter Karas. Him and his wife, Corinne Garlick, were commissioned by Pathways, a non-profit that helps people gain new skills to get back into the work world, to paint a mural on the side of this building. This was part of a larger project meant to help beautify the landscape and create community spirit. Numerous mural ideas were submitted, and the community voted on which idea best suited the location. About 20 students and more individuals from the neighbourhood volunteered to help paint the mural. In the story you are about to listen to, Peter speaks about his interactions with the community during the painting process. Please dial 519-672-4327 on your phone now and enter the story number 21 when prompted.

Intro for the Victoria Tavern (say when walking to The Vic)

Our next two stories follow punk musicians from the 1970s-1980s who played at the Victoria Tavern. The building was built in 1917 by William and Rose Ginsberg was opened as a grocery store. During the depression in the 1930s, the son of the original owners Hyman Ginsberg turned the building into a tavern. It became a popular gathering space for members of the community. Since its opening as a tavern, the venue has hosted live bands multiple times a week. Beginning in the 1970s, the punk rock and underground music scenes flourished in London, Ontario as a youth led counter-culture against conservatism. Local bands played at numerous venues across downtown. Word of the music scene in London spread and bands from across Ontario and even some international bands travelled to play here. The Victoria Tavern became a popular venue for this music scene in the late 1970s, early 1980s. The Vic

was nicknamed the “Bucket of Blood” because it was a popular place for doctors and nurses from the nearby Victoria Hospital to come after their shift was over. There were rumours that the nickname “Bucket of Blood” was earned from the violence brawls that were took place outside the tavern. Live bands continued to play at The Vic until it shut down in 2013. It was reopened in 2016 but closed only three months later.

Story #2: Bill Exley

Paragraphs: The first story we are going to listen to at this site is narrated by Bill Exley, singer for the Nihilist Spasm Band. The Nihilist Spasm Band is a noise-band that was founded in London, Ontario in 1965. During the 1960s, they mainly played at The York Hotel, (now Call the Office) which was a very popular music venue during this era. However, the Nihilist Spasm Band was kicked out of The York Hotel in 1970 by the owner who called their music “noise”. Many venues in downtown London discriminated against underground bands and refused to let them play. After this incident, NSB began playing at The Victoria Tavern and helped to establish this location as a venue that accepted bands of all genres. Despite The Vic being geographically far from downtown compared to other venues, it became a popular site for people to gather and listen to this non-traditional music. Bill Exley’s story addresses the years directly after their move to The Vic and the violence he experienced at the Bucket of Blood.

Story #3: Gerard Van Herk

Paragraphs: The second story we are going to listen to at the Victoria Tavern is narrated by Gerard Van Herk, singer and guitar player in the band Deja Voodoo. Deja Voodoo was formed by Van Herk and his friend Tony Dewald in Montreal in 1981. They played at The Vic in the early 1980s. While playing here, they stayed with locals and created great memories. In his story, Van Herk speaks about his memorable first night playing at the Vic.

Please dial 519-672-4327 on your phone now and enter the story number 29 when prompted. You will first hear Bill Exley’s story. Once his is over you will be redirected to the after-story audio and it will prompt you to press 2 to hear the next story which is Gerard Van Herk’s.

Conclusion

Thank you for joining me for the community arts tour of the SoHo neighbourhood. We began with Peter Karas’ story about the community input in the mural painting process. The second story, from Bill Exley, spoke about the artists who gathered at The Vic to listen to bands. Finally, in Gerard Van Herk’s story we heard about an out of townner who made memories with his bandmate and the local crowd.

Consider again some of our questions from the beginning:

- How can art help to build a community?
- What barriers to community-building do some artists face?

-Why are certain artistic communities underrepresented in traditional histories/narratives?

Please take part in another walking tour if you wish. There will be a few closing remarks at Goodwill which you are welcome to stay for. There are many more stories around the neighbourhood that you can listen to, take a brochure and follow the map to the orange signs. All of the stories can also be listened to at hearherelondon.org. Thank you again!