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**Art house: 48 Abell might not be long for this world**

IMAGE CREDIT: DAVE MCGINN

## Go West

The West Queen West Art and Design district may soon lose a hundred or so more artists to that old creative buzz kill: gentrification. The infamous 48 Abell Street is under threat of demolition to make way for yet another condo tower. For the last 20-odd years, the building has provided cheap live-work spaces for scores of artists and a venue for notoriously outrageous all-night parties (last year's "Green Party" attracted more than 700 ganja-loving cool kids and led to burst pipes and flooding; another featured an inflatable pool, left to fester until it became a noxious bog).

The recent shenanigans notwithstanding, some very successful artists spent their lean years in the former lamp factory, including GG Award winners **John Scott** and **Arnaud Maggs**, installation artist **Spring Hurlbut** and designer-artist **Barr Gilmore**. The place is currently home to such up-and-comers as **Michael Toke** and **Jessica Rose**. (Rose organized a "funeral" for the building, in which 150 tearful mourners marched in a procession along Queen.) Singer **Sarah Harmer** also keeps a pied-à-terre there.

Residents, rallying under the moniker Model48, pleaded their case during a recent nine-week OMB hearing. A ruling is expected in the spring, but the building's demise seems a foregone conclusion. Just look at that other, nearby development, the yet-to-be-built Bohemian Embassy, "so stylish and cool it promises to redefine the way this city's hipsters live." Just how far west will our fledgling artists have to go to find affordable space? We hear good things about Hamilton.—*Bette Lawson*