

Access

Newsletter of Arts Access Society Inc.

June 1991

INTEGRATION THROUGH THE ARTS

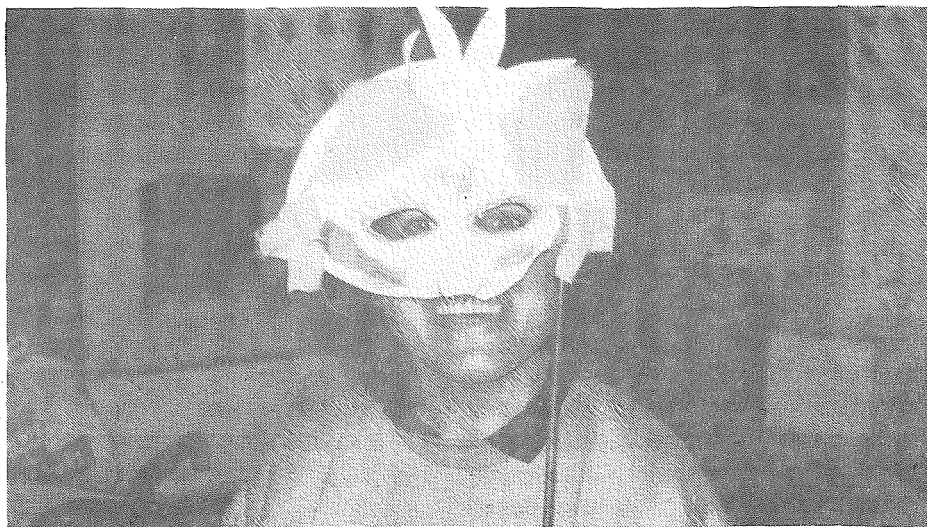
AN ambitious project which utilises the arts to help adults with intellectual disabilities integrate into the community is being piloted by Arts Access and the Disability Services Division of Community Services Victoria (CSV).

Under the project 18 clients from CSV's Inner Urban Region will participate in arts activities for one day a week for a whole year. If successful, the project could be ongoing and be extended to a number of CSV regions.

The participants in the pilot project already live in the community and attend Adult Training Centres. Now, for one day a week, they go to a community venue for a day of arts events - performing arts in the morning and visual arts in the afternoon. The first eight weeks of activities will culminate in a gallery showing and performance.

Project manager Linda Murrow said that the participants had already moved from institutions into the community. "We want to provide an opportunity for them to grow and develop new skills - to express themselves and build confidence," she said.

Linda has a background in creative arts and disabilities. She



LORRAINE Hayes of Parkville is all smiles as she wears a mask she made during a recent visual arts workshop which was part of a joint project between Arts Access and CSV.

works closely with the artists and a CSV worker also attends each session to assist if necessary. Students from the Residential and Community Services course at Prahran are also involved.

One group enjoyed an afternoon of mask making and related activities at the Sol Green Neighborhood Centre in South Melbourne recently. "We started off by playing games which looked at the idea of identity, such as mirroring each other," said artist Lyndsay Mason.

"Then we began making the masks - we used paper plates and small garden stakes, and decorated them with ribbons, glitter and paints. We played make believe

games with the masks, walking around the room and talking about who the person was behind the mask. Then we danced together holding our masks. We had a lot of fun."

Two other aspects of the project aim to give participants the opportunity to access the arts in their own time. Under the Community Linking Scheme, project worker Heather Graham will help individual clients to link up with other arts activities available in the community. In addition, they will learn about the workings of the EASE project, which aims to increase the community's access to mainstream arts and sporting events.

REGULAR SING-A-LONGS A HIGHLIGHT FOR RESIDENTS

A REGULAR sing-along in the community room of a North Melbourne high-rise has made life much more fun for the people who live in the block.

About 60 of the 204 residents of the block of Ministry of Housing and Construction flats for single people in Melrose St have found that Tuesday afternoons are the highlight of their week. It's then that they gather to hear singer and guitarist John Rasmussen play all their favourite tunes and spin some yarns. He encourages the residents to tell stories too and to sing along.

Theresa Carroll, 95, has lived in the block for 18 years, and started coming to the gatherings six weeks

ago. "I like the company. We sing all sorts of songs," she said. "I'm glad I decided to come down."

The year-long project is an initiative of the North Melbourne Community Health Centre, with Arts Access acting as consultants. It was due to end in May but a Melbourne City Council grant will allow it to run for ten more weeks. However the centre wants funding for another year.

Community Health Nurse Keri Chater said that the aim of the project was to generate a sense of community among residents.

"We are continually getting new people involved and encouraging people to go further in that involvement," she said. "Some of them are now on the health centre's committee of management, for example."

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

by Judith Isherwood
Acting Executive Director

ONE of Arts Access' strengths over the last 15 years has been its firm commitment to forward planning.

In addition to its regularly updated Five Year Plan, annual Planning Committee meetings carefully examine all aspects of Arts Access' operations and make recommendations for activities for the coming year. In addition, many possibilities for exciting projects become apparent through the year which, if funding is found, are acted on and put into place.

There are a number of areas that have been made a priority for Arts Access and a range of Arts Access activities that will be further developed over the next year.

Some of these include:

- ♦ **RESEARCH** - Arts Access has long recognised the positive impact that involvement in an arts activity can have for both communities and individuals - improved self-esteem and confidence are just some of the results. Arts

Access is seeking to undertake research to back up and evaluate these outcomes, particularly in the areas of disability, healthcare and integration.

- ♦ **THE ACCESS STUDIO** - although officially opened in late 1989, the Arts Access Studio has not been used to its full potential, mainly due to a lack of resources. A feasibility study has recently been completed, examining the viability of a range of activities in the studio. A special committee has been set up to make recommendations for its future use and these will hopefully be implemented by the second half of 1991.
- ♦ **THE PARTICIPANT PROCESS** - a priority for Arts Access has been to give program participants a process for airing their opinions and thoughts on both their own involvement in Arts Access projects and on how they perceive Arts Access' overall program to be developing. In the coming months, Arts

Access will be seeking to expand this process, encouraging input from a wider range of project participants.

- ♦ **FUTURE FUNDING** - as with many community-based organisations, securing adequate on-going funding is a constant battle for Arts Access staff. In an effort to lessen Arts Access' dependence on funding sources and allow for more effective future planning, a major fundraising initiative is currently being established by the newly-formed Fundraising Advisory Committee. This committee will both plan and implement the fundraising strategy.
- ♦ **ARTS ACCESS PUBLICITY** - Arts Access has long recognised the many benefits that come with publicity for both projects and Arts Access as a whole. Whilst projects have been fairly successful in the past in attracting publicity, Arts Access is now aiming to publicise both the range of work and the organisation as a whole.

MAKING RESIDENTS A PART OF THE COMMUNITY

THE Special Accommodation Project, now into its second year, is continuing to link residents of special accommodation homes into the wider community.

"Prior to the onset of the project, Arts Access had individual projects in special accommodation homes," said Project Co-ordinator Margaret Trail.

"But because the homes aren't government funded, there was a danger of residents being ignored by community workers.

"Arts Access had already begun holding special accommodation home projects in community centres to encourage the residents out into the broader community.

"Last year a number of musician-in-residence projects were held in special accommodation homes which culminated in two big concerts at senior citizen's venues in Newport and Footscray."

In April this year, during Senior Citizens Week, three music programs running in special accommodation homes were each linked up with nearby hostels or day centres for a party celebration and performance.

A textile artist is currently running craft workshops in two homes in Footscray, with the finished work to be displayed at an annual craft show organised by the Westhaven Day Centre.

In Williamstown, a primary school doing an oral history project will talk to residents of special accommodation homes about the city's past. A local high school band also plans to perform for special accommodation homes in the western region.

"We want to link the residents up with other aged care and community arts workers. Getting them linked in with the local community is vital because that's how projects become self-sustaining," said Margaret.

ARTS ARE FOR OLDER PEOPLE TOO

AN Information exchange afternoon to take place in early June between National Gallery of Victoria staff and aged care workers has been organised jointly by Arts Access and the gallery.

The aim is to stimulate the development of gallery programs for older adults by informing aged care workers of the gallery's programs and facilities and informing gallery staff of the needs and interests of older adults. A full report of the outcome will appear in the next issue of *Access*.

Arts Access has also produced an information leaflet on using the arts to enrich the lives of older people.

Arts Alive includes valuable ideas, examples of projects and resources to help plan a variety of creative activities with and for older people. Copies are available at Arts Access, 109-111 Sturt St, South Melbourne, or phone: 699 8299.

BRINGING TALENT TO FRUITION

WORKING with an established artist may be the best training an emerging artist can receive.

The Host Artist Scheme has given ten emerging artists the opportunity to do just that, by "apprenticing" each one to an experienced artist of compatible style and personality.

The results have proved fruitful for all parties, as an exhibition which opens in the Access Space in the National Gallery in July will demonstrate. The exhibition will be opened by gallery director James Mollison on July 12 and is the first to be held in the space.

The emerging artists are former Arts Access clients who had shown both artistic potential and dedication to the practice of art.

"We wanted to give them the opportunity to develop their art," said the scheme's co-ordinator Tracey Naughton. "So we matched each client with a practising artist on the basis of subject matter, visual style, and personalities. Each pair worked together for a ten week period.

"The results have been fantastic - the emerging artists have made enormous conceptual and practical leaps in their art. They all want to continue and they now have a lot more confidence in their abilities.

"But they have learned practical skills too, such as knowing how to



EMERGING artist Renald Protelli's Dean is one of the paintings in the Host Artist exhibition, the first exhibition to be held in the National Gallery's Access Space.

approach the gallery system, how to focus on a particular style, and how to develop an idea to fruition."

According to Tracey, an additional benefit for those artists suffering from an emotional illness has been learning to distinguish artistic depression from the effects of the illness.

The mentors have also benefited. "Practising art can be an isolating experience. I was surprised and overwhelmed by the

number of mentors who said how much they enjoyed having someone to talk to about art and to go out and draw with."

Tracey, a freelance arts administrator, is also curating the exhibition. "It will encompass a diversity of styles, including drawings, oils, ceramics, and sculpture. I'm keen to group the clients and mentors together if possible to show the relationship between them."

She said she had gained "a lot of personal satisfaction" from the process of matching the hosts and clients. "I enjoyed making it clear to the artists who are constrained by illness that we value their work in a way that isn't affected by the fact that they have that illness."

Emerging artist Barbi Voigt said the scheme was "fantastic. I've refined my processes and developed new techniques. I feel confident and enthusiastic - and now I paint nearly every day."

She said her relationship with mentor artist Angela Morgan had been a positive one. "She has taught me to use new colours and introduced me to a new medium, gouache. I also found it interesting to get a view of the artist's world."

The exhibition opening will take place on July 12 at 6 pm at the Access Space in the National Gallery and the exhibition will run from July 11- 28. The gallery is open every day from 10.45 am to 5 pm.

EXTENDING SKILLS IN WARNAMBOOL

THE second year of Arts Access' Regional Development Program will continue in Warnambool with a dance and movement program to be taught by Ruth Komesaroff in late June.

Under the program, local artists from regional areas are trained in the techniques used in working with people with special needs, with the aim of enabling them to

create their own programs independent of Arts Access.

This year Ruth will lead three local artists in a five day intensive movement workshop. Following this, the artists will each undertake a six-week program with one of three different groups in the community - children from a special developmental school in Warnambool, a group of intellectually and physically disabled adults in Terang and a senior citizens group in Camperdown. During this time they will continue to receive guidance from Ruth by telephone.

Cultural Services Co-ordinator for the south western sub-region of Victoria Rosemary Fish said that after undertaking last year's program, which involved the visual arts, trainees were able to develop their own programs.

She said it was hard for arts groups in regional areas to keep the initiative going because local government community services were cutting back due to the rural recession. "But there is a vital need for this type of program and I think the long term repercussions will be excellent."

DEVELOP YOUR SKILLS

WORKSHOPS for health care workers and community artists working with special needs groups will be run by Arts Access from June to November. They are:

CREATIVE DRAMA IN MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAMS

Full day workshop for staff and artists.

Clarendon Clinic, Albert St, East Melbourne

Cost: \$20

ARTIST TO ARTIST

Professional development workshops for community artists with an interest in working with special needs groups.

THE ROLE OF COMMUNITY ARTS IN HEALTH CARE

Planning, resourcing and implementing creative arts projects to meet the needs of people requiring long term health care i.e. in hospitals, clinics, special accommodation and rehabilitation programs.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT IN NEIGHBOURHOOD LEARNING CENTRES

Project planning and "hands on" workshops to assist development of integrated community arts programs.

For more information or to book, contact the Arts Access Resource Officer Carol Downey on 699 8299.

AN AFTERNOON OF MUSICAL FUN

A MUSIC program currently underway at Richmond Lodge Special Accommodation Home is getting residents up and dancing to some great old tunes.

Everyone in the room seemed to be enjoying the combination of sentimental ballads and faster paced tunes I heard on a recent visit to the program. Participants belted out a spirited rendition of "When the Saints Go Marching In" and the song "Kingston Town" produced some vivid recollections of the race track. Artists Michael Mildren and Marg Dobson produced some wonderful harmonies. They sought to involve each participant and succeeded in getting some of the more adventurous to boogie.

The musical afternoons are part of a 12-week program which uses music to improve the quality of life of a group of 15 Richmond Lodge residents with psychiatric and intellectual disabilities. Michael and Marg are adapting the program as they go according to the needs of participants and plan to introduce percussion and metaphysical music. Each participant has their own songbook which they will be encouraged to individualise.

Dorothy, 62, said she enjoyed the singing and dancing. "It makes me feel happy." She said she was able to notice the difference afterwards, "it lifts everyone."

Arts Access has a number of programs underway in psychiatric settings. At the Boomerang Club in Moonee Ponds participants are

choreographing their own dances with the help of artist Ann Scanlan. At Victoria Lodge in Brunswick clients have recently completed a drawing program with artist Maria Filippow. And at the Ernest James Clinic and Day Centre in Preston a drama and movement program with Ann Scanlan is set to commence later this month.

A DISPLAY OF PERSONAL TREASURES

DISPLAYING senior citizens' personal "treasures" is the aim of a new exhibition to be held in September in the Southport area.

The Senior Citizens' Treasures exhibition will include anything people have made themselves in all sorts of mediums - knitting, handcrafts, woodcarving, sculpting and painting are just a few of the possibilities. The treasures will be displayed at the Port Melbourne Library and the Albert Park Library from September 5th to the 15th.

If you are a senior citizen living in Port Melbourne, Albert Park, Middle Park or South Melbourne, and have something you would like to display, Arts Access would love to hear from you. Ring Noelle Curry on 699 8299.

TALKING ART

WOULD you like to be part of a group of artists who get together to make art, discuss art, listen to speakers on art, share art information and socialise? A number of visual artists are keen to form such a group in conjunction with the Community Linking Project.

Our first get together is on Sunday, 7th July at Arts Access so if you are interested, come along. This event will give you a chance to have your say about the group's direction so bring all your ideas and comments.

If you'd like to come you need to RSVP to Heather at Arts Access on 699 8299 by 4th July. If you can't make it to the event but would like to join the group, ring Heather afterwards and she will fill you in.

AN OPPORTUNITY FOR YOUNG ARTISTS

THE spectacular Mornington Peninsula Arts Centre will be the venue for an exhibition featuring innovative work by young visual artists to open in October.

Artists with a physical disability who are under the age of 35 and live anywhere in Victoria are invited to submit two-dimensional works for the exhibition. The entry fee is \$5.

The show will be curated by Stuart Koop, the former director of the George Paton Gallery at Melbourne University. The exhibition's aim is to bring the work of young artists to the community and to display work of the highest quality.

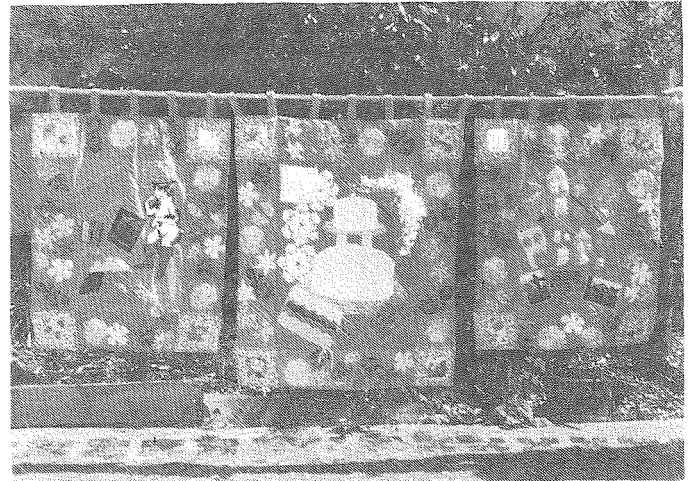
If you would like to participate, contact Ray Richards on 699 8299.

Representing a Lifetime of Experience

Photography: Katherine Tree



A THRILLED Eaglemont Nursing Home resident with the third panel of the textile mural created by residents and artist Kim Tarpey.



The completed mural.

PROJECTS which use the experiences of a group of people to form the subject matter of an artistic work have recently taken place in two nursing homes with the help of Arts Access.

When residents of Eaglemont Private Nursing Home in Ivanhoe were asked to name the most significant event in their lives the majority recalled their wedding day.

Their memories of this event are now recorded in a beautiful textile work designed to hang in the lounge of the home.

Seventeen of the residents and artist Kim Tarpey took part in a ten-week project to create a textile hanging to document the significance of the day. Some contributed with comments about the day, others helped to create the hanging.

The work was divided into three panels to represent events

that took place in the residents' lives before marriage, the marriage itself, and activities afterwards. The central panel, celebrating marriage, was the largest.

Statements made by the residents were hand embroidered in chain stitch on all the panels by Susan Kirkland, a former worker at the home.

For the first panel a resident, Jean, knitted mountains representative of Siberia where her daughter Tamara was born. Another resident, Ivenka, crocheted some white lace doilies for the wedding panel, which also featured an appliqued wedding cake. The third panel consisted mainly of knitted houses, knitted by Jean and another resident, Isobel. All three panels were surrounded by a border of flowers.

"Why was the wedding day significant? For the generation of people who live at Eaglemont, it

meant breaking away from the family home and setting up their own home," said Kim.

"The residents got a big buzz out of making it and seeing the finished product," she added. "When it was finished we took it around to show the immobile residents and they were glad to be a part of it."

"For the mural I chiefly used applique work, machine embroidery and pressed flowers. I discovered that one resident had a Diploma of Embroidery from RMIT and another was skilled in creating pressed flowers, so these skills were used."

A similar project took place at Harold McCracken House in Fitzroy North recently where residents and workers helped artist Rose Marie Szulc to create a three piece textile mural which reflected their lives, past and present, and the nursing home environment.

GROUPS PLAN TO FORM NATIONAL BODY

PEAK arts organisations from all over Australia working in the area of disability will meet in Melbourne next month to form a national body.

The groups decided to create a national organisation when they met at a forum hosted by Arts Access in Melbourne last November.

"We decided we needed to form a national body to represent

our interests and share information," said Arts Access Acting Artistic Director Ray Richards, who is helping to organise the July forum, alongside Cheryl Daye from Arts Project Australia.

"This year we'll be aiming to identify common concerns, establish a broad philosophical base and set up a permanent network. This could tie in with the National Community Arts Network within the next two years."

For more information about the forum, contact Ray at Arts Access on 699 8299.

CREATIVE DANCE IN PRESTON

INTERESTED in creative dance? Preston Neighbourhood House is offering two weekly creative dance classes for people with intellectual disabilities and others. The cost is \$5 per session. For more information, contact the artist David Wells on 329 8018 or Preston Neighbourhood House Co-ordinator, Brenda Muskat on 484 8806.

FACTS AND FALLACIES ABOUT AIDS

A FREE information/awareness session for artists working in community projects will be held at Arts Access on June 26. It will be an informal presentation by Scott Presnell, an occupational therapist at Pleasant View Alcohol and Drug Rehabilitation Centre. Scott gives public lectures in-house and is directly involved with activity programming and implementation. The focus will be on modes of transmission and practical health and safety precautions "on the job".

DATE: WEDNESDAY JUNE 26

TIME: 1 PM - 4 PM PLACE: ARTS ACCESS
109 - 111 STURT ST SOUTH MELBOURNE

Please phone Arts Access on 699 8299 to confirm attendance.

SEPTEMBER WORKSHOPS

LAST year's successful P-art-ICIPATE Conference has resulted in plans for a series of hands-on arts workshops to be held in September this year.

The conference focused on the achievements and concerns of people with disabilities in the arts. It included hands-on workshops in the areas of music, movement, performance, visual arts and discussion.

These were so successful that a steering committee has been established to plan new workshops for this year. The committee is currently running a series of planning sessions between workshop leaders and people with disabilities in order to get their input into the content of the workshops.

If you would like to be involved in organising the September workshops, contact Judith Isherwood at Arts Access on 699 8299.

A NEW WAY TO HAVE FUN

WHY not try wheelchair dancing - it's a great way to have fun! Classes are held in Fairfield every Tuesday night at St Paul's Anglican Church Hall, Station St, near Fairfield railway station, from 7 pm to 8.30 pm. The \$5 fee includes supper. Singles and those with standing partners are welcome. For more information, contact Tom and Audrey Stevens on 481 2982.

ARTS ACCESS SOCIETY

Arts Access Society is a non-profit organisation committed to providing access to the arts for people with disabilities or who are disadvantaged.

Acting Executive Director: Judith Isherwood

Acting Artistic Director: Ray Richards

Artistic Project Officer: Noelle Curry

Finance Officer: John Paxinos

EASE Project Officer: Julie-Ann Willems

EASE Bookings Assistant: Lisa McKoy

Resource Officer: Carol Downey

Office Administrator: Rae Rowbottom

Office Assistant: Samantha Marsh

EASE Volunteers:

Barbara Kitchen

John Pidd

Hilary Ash

Rifka Knox

Donations of \$2 and over are tax deductible.

Have you considered becoming a member of Arts Access? Join now and you will help us reach more people with more programs.

Memberships range from \$15 for concessional membership, \$30 for single membership to \$50 for organisational membership and are tax deductible.

Members are kept up to date with the year's activities through the quarterly newsletter *Access*. Members receive discounts on all Arts Access publications and are invited to participate by attending those programs that culminate in public performance or exhibition. For more information, contact:

ARTS ACCESS SOCIETY INC

109-111 Sturt St

SOUTH MELBOURNE, 3205

Phone: 699 8299 Fax: 685 5112

ACCESS is edited by Catherine Magree. This issue was laid out by John Paxinos using our new software AmiPro. Contributions and letters are welcome and should be sent to Arts Access, 109-111 Sturt St, South Melbourne, 3205.

ARTS ACCESS SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Registered by Australia Post

Publication No. VAW7218

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