

Caulfield Arts Complex

PRESS RELEASE

ARTS PROJECT AUSTRALIA INC. ANNUAL EXHIBITION

The annual exhibition of Arts Project Australia opens at the Caulfield Arts Complex on Thursday 8th September, 1988 at 7.30 p.m.

The opening address is being given by Dr. Rodney Wilson, Director of the National Gallery of Victoria.

The pieces on display are the work of intellectually handicapped artists.

The size of the Caulfield Arts Complex permits a much greater range of work to be displayed than has been possible at previous exhibitions. Because of this the exhibition is divided into three, with the main section comprising a survey of work from the studio-workshop over the past year. This is supplemented by a section featuring work by the two students who have been attending first year drawing classes at Phillip Institute of Technology, and a section which will utilise works from the original "Art Project" collection to illustrate the history and development of the project and its artists.

Arts Project Australia began in 1974 as an arts-based advocacy group for people with intellectual disabilities. A major reason for the formation of "The Art Project" (as it was then known) was the insight on the part of its members that many intellectually disabled people displayed aptitude and talent in the visual arts, and that the flexible conventions of these art-forms could give a means of expression and communication when more common forms, particularly language, were difficult. Broadly, the aims of the association are as follows:

- To provide the means by which intellectually disabled people can participate fully in the visual arts.
- To promote the work of intellectually disabled people as integral to the broad spectrum of contemporary art practice.
- To facilitate participation by intellectually disabled people in appropriate mainstream programs and courses, and to encourage meaningful artistic exchange between disabled and non-disabled artists.

- To broaden understanding and awareness of the art of intellectually disabled people amongst artists and the general public.
- To advocate art as a valid vocational option for people with an intellectual disability.

The Arts Project Studio-workshop is an innovative community based visual arts facility which acknowledges the particular needs of people with intellectual disabilities. It offers them the opportunity to develop artistic skills and awareness. The program commenced in 1984 by providing one two hour session per week for ten clients; since then it has expanded both qualitatively and quantitatively to the point where it now offers access to a full range of two dimensional media including printmaking. It provides these services three days a week for up to seventy clients. The Arts Project Studio Workshop is located at 116 High Street, Northcote.

Participants in the studio-workshop program have access to high quality materials together with advice assistance from practising artists. Artistic independence and self reliance are encouraged through success orientated programs, emphasizing ability rather than disability.

An integral aim of the studio-workshop program is to attempt wherever possible to include participation in the arts by intellectually disabled people within the broad community, and to promote involvement in the visual arts by intellectually disabled people as a facet of contemporary art practice which deserves greater recognition. During the period 1985-1987 there have been five exhibitions of work from the studio-workshop. These were held at the AMP Gallery, Melbourne (March 1985), the Arts Council Gallery, Canberra (September 1985), and the St. Martins Theatre Gallery, Melbourne (March and September 1986, June 1987). Additionally, works from the studio-workshop have been on permanent display in the office of Arts Access Society, Office of Intellectual Disability Services, and the Commonwealth Department of Community Services and Health. To date there have been over eighty works sold through these exhibitions for a total of almost \$10,000.

The exhibition is on until Wednesday 5th October.

For further information contact Arts Project Australia Secretary Iain Stewart 452 175 (A.H) 819 1917 (9-5) or Alan Moor. Caulfield Arts Complex 524 3277.

Caulfield Arts Complex
Cnr. Glen Eira and Hawthorn Roads, Caulfield.

Open: Monday - Friday 10.00 a.m. - 5.00 p.m.
Tuesday until 7.00 p.m.
Saturday and Sunday 1.00 p.m. - 5.00 p.m.

