

October 1998

## Art Day

Art Day is a major project within the Artistic Program of Arts Access. Co-ordinated by Barbara Doherty, it is funded by the Department of Human Services, Disability Services as a community based art project for adults with an intellectual disability.

Art Day currently provides projects within the Southern and Western Regions of Disability Services located in Dingley and Spotswood respectively. In these two localities, Art Day occurs every Friday from 9.30am until 3.30pm, for 46 consecutive workshop days annually, culminating in a special event.

On Friday 28 August, the participants of Art Day South presented, "The Magic Cat and Other Stories", for a large audience at the Dingley Community Centre. Led by Kim Baston on piano accordion, the cast sang and danced their way through some very entertaining numbers, including a boisterous variation on a popular song, "What shall we do with the drunken mermaid?" Valerie Hawkes' heart warming performance of 'Somewhere Over the Rainbow' was also an old favourite for many people, judging by the audience's response!

Afterwards, the audience could view the picture books created by Art Day South participants, containing the stories and illustrations which provided the inspiration for the performance. In the foyer, Magic Cat's garden was being created out of earthy materials like wattle, tanbark, fresh grass and hay, sand and soil.

It was wonderful that people from Art Day West, Spotswood, were also able to join the audience. Thanks to artists Kim Baston and Gali Weis, Support Workers Rick Doyer, Fran Kelson and Rob Bekker and volunteer Diane Zacanovsky.



Art Day South and invited guests at Scoring Expeditions, 1997

## Training

Dean Michael and Jedda Bellerjee completed another successful Disability Awareness Seminar in the studio at Arts Access on Wednesday 26th August. Those who attended included customer service staff, facility and program managers and staff from a range of art, recreation and entertainment venues, with a concentration of staff this time from metropolitan and regional local councils.

Topics covered in the seminar included "Barriers, Facilities, Services and Policies", "Customer Service" and "Marketing to People with Disabilities". Also of great value was a discussion on the Disability Discrimination Act and its implications for the workplace.



Jedda Bellerjee and Bridget Butler manage the Training Unit at Arts Access

The highlight of the day for many people was "The Panel" - consumers of the arts and entertainment talking about their experiences and requirements. Jan Doran, Ryk Rankine, Julie Elliot and Jane Trengrove gave enlightening presentations. Their first-hand accounts raised awareness of the many issues involving access to cultural and sporting venues and broadened our understanding of the things we, as staff and the general public, can do to improve access and equality. Their individual presentations were followed by open discussion time allowing participants to raise questions particular to their own places of work. We are grateful to all members of the panel for so enthusiastically sharing their time with us.

Arts Access runs training seminars on a regular basis. Customised training is also available, conducted on site. This training involves assessment of accessibility and recommendations for change. Contact Jedda Bellerjee on 9699 8299.

## From the Executive Director

Hello, welcome. This newsletter is a very special one as it provides an opportunity for me to let you know of major developments at Arts Access.

As you are probably aware, we have known for some time that we must move from Sturt Street. Apart from the problems posed by working right on top of the construction of the City Link Tunnel, our building is to be demolished to make way for new premises for the Australian Centre for Contemporary Art. This will become part of the contemporary arts 'precinct' planned for the land adjacent to the Malthouse (where Playbox is housed).

### New home

After much searching and extensive negotiation, we have accepted an offer from the City of Port Phillip for a lease on the former Albert Park Infants School in Pickles Street, Port Melbourne, right next door to Gasworks Arts Centre. Once renovated, this building will provide Arts Access with model premises which reflect our position as a professional arts organisation working with people with disabilities and people who are disadvantaged. Arts and access are the key principles driving the design of the refurbishment.<sup>1</sup>

### New look

To coincide with the move into our new home, Arts Access will launch its new corporate image and logo. This was developed by FHA Image Design. It reflects Arts Access' status as Victoria's peak professional arts organisation with expertise in arts and disability. The design of the logo is intended to represent a 'stamp of quality' for arts and cultural events and activities for people with a disability and people who are disadvantaged.

### New people staff members and roles

There have been a few changes of people and roles at Arts Access. Lisa McKoy, who was the EASE Ticket Coordinator for seven years, left us to pursue career opportunities in venue management and marketing. She is much missed, not least because of her great energy and infectious sense of humour. However, Fiona Hanrahan, who came to Arts Access with considerable experience of working for ticket agencies, has filled the gap admirably and is achieving great progress in developing the Service.

Dean Michael, who was the Program Manager for EASE, has taken on responsibility for Special Projects, in particular some major initiatives to celebrate Arts Access' 25th Anniversary in 1999. More about those later.

Caroline Cowley has recently joined us in the role of PR Manager. This position is a very important one and Arts Access is thrilled to secure the creative energy and intelligence of Caroline.

### New Board members

A number of new people have been elected to the Board (formerly the Committee of Management). The new appointments are Janice Florence, Kerry Martyn, Colin Pidd, Mark Robinson, Andrew Sanderson and Jane Trengove. They bring a wealth of expertise, experience and contacts in the arts, corporate, community and disability sectors and complement the skills and knowledge of ongoing members of the Board (Alan Moor, Laurie Reilly, Robyn Charlwood, Peter Hengstberger, Jo Raphael, Sandra Taylor Bowman).

### AGM

You will be aware from previous correspondence that Arts Access changed its financial operations from calendar to financial year. This has meant that we have two Annual General Meetings in 1998. The next is scheduled for Tuesday 24 November at 109-111 Sturt Street Southbank from 6.00pm. This Meeting will be a great opportunity to meet with staff and Board and to hear reports on Arts Access' activities in 1998 and plans for 1999. We do hope that you will come. Please advise Ali if you are able to attend.

### Newsletter

Arts Access' newsletters have been infrequent recently. We realise that this needs improvement and have established a plan to bring them out more regularly. Over the next few issues of the newsletter we shall feature information on the programs and services managed by Arts Access. I encourage you to contact us if there are particular things about which you would like to know more or aspects of arts and disability which you would like us to investigate for promotion through the newsletter.

### Jane Haley Executive Director



Artist Libby McKinnon oversees the work of a participant in the two day Mosaics workshop.

## CHANGES at Arts Access

This edition of the Arts Access newsletter is dedicated to Change. This world of ours is in a constant state of wonderful flux. The weather is getting warmer again, the City Link is nearing completion ("Hooray!" cry Arts Access staff), and just as one arts project is completed, another is begun.

We all get older, too. In 1999, Arts Access will celebrate its 25th anniversary - a marvellous milestone for an arts organisation, making us one of Melbourne's oldest. To mark this occasion, we are planning a number of major events during the year: *Verve!* - a conference investigating issues relating to the philosophies, policies and practices of arts and disability, to coincide with the Melbourne International Festival; and the inaugural Arts Access Awards - in recognition of exemplary practice in the provision of access among the art, entertainment and cultural industries. Both these major events are the domain of Special Projects Manager, Dean Michael and promise to be very exciting.

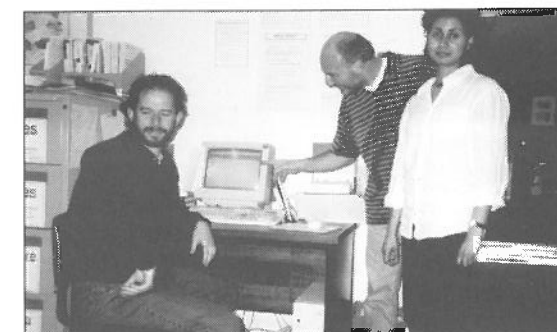
In line with our new logo (to be launched with our new premises), we are also making some changes to the newsletter. As an important communication tool, it will be a regular and reliable source of information for our members and friends. We are aiming for a publication that reflects the energy of Arts Access and says "Yoo-Hoo!" to the outside world! We want it to be interesting and exciting and a way of keeping people up to date - with us and with each other. By its very existence, it creates a network through which people can stay in touch. To make this really work, I invite all our readers to contribute to the newsletter. You can send us letters, news, photos, feedback or your opinion on matters relating to arts and/or disability. To contribute to the December issue, send any information to Caroline Cowley at Arts Access by Tuesday 10 November.



Bridget Butler and Ali Dart

The Membership at Arts Access is also changing. Our members are vitally important to the strength and success of our organisation. The changes to the membership at Arts Access are mainly structural,

involving the unification of EASE Members and Arts Access members into one membership group. Even though EASE will become a category of Arts Access Membership, subscribers to EASE will still need to fill out a separate application according to certain criteria. Membership will be \$25 for individuals, and \$55 for organisations and while the cost has not increased at all, we are offering members more benefits. We are investigating the possibility of retail discounts, exclusive members' functions and greater participation of members at Arts Access' activities. More about membership in the December newsletter.



Martin Wurt, Mario Agostinoni and Rushi Fernando

Just to keep you all on your toes, Rushi has been filling in on reception for Ali, who has been filling in for Fiona at EASE who has been on leave! (That's why we've not been sounding right on the telephone?) Fiona will be back managing the EASE Ticket Service by October 12 and we'll all go back to our usual desks!

Be on the lookout for our new logo to be featured in the December Newsletter. Until then, I look forward to hearing from you all.

Caroline Cowley,  
PR Manager

## Celebrations

Ali Dart our Administration Officer has announced her engagement to Collin Simpson and subsequent move to Urana, Southern NSW! The marriage will take place in December, in Melbourne. Norman the Beagle is of course going to be bridesdog. Congratulations Ali and Colin and good luck for the future from us all.

Meanwhile, Barbara Doherty, Art Day Co-ordinator and partner Mark, have been successful in an application for adoption! They are the proud new parents of a baby girl called Banashree, who will be joining them all the way from Cuttack, Orissa, India, sometime in the next 6-8 months. Congratulations and best wishes!



## Mental Health Week

Opening on Tuesday 20 October during Mental Health Week, **Seasational Mystic Mariner** - an Arts Access exhibition showcasing the art works created by residents of the Queenscliff Lodge Supported Residential Service and participants in the Day Activity Program, Bellarine Peninsula Community Health Services. The participants have worked on individual and collaborative art works, which have included drawing, painting and felt-making techniques.

The exhibition is the culmination of a series of workshops co-ordinated by Arts Access artist, Lynden Bobbitt with assistance from local artist, Lauren Leviston and the Salvation Army Community Access Program Worker, Dianne Schmidtke.

These visual arts workshops have brought participants together to learn new skills, express themselves through art, improve confidence and enhance social skills. The exhibition will provide visitors to the Queenscliff Library with the opportunity to appreciate the art works and celebrate the skills of the frail and elderly.

### Out Of Chaos

Also being staged as part of Mental Health Week, **Out Of Chaos**, a new play by Jill Curry, directed by Kim Baston and presented by Centrestage Theatre Productions.

"Carol is on the verge of another nervous breakdown. Should she give up an exciting career to look after her cantankerous, elderly father? Her family believe it is the stress of a demanding job that is driving her to the brink. Carol knows otherwise."

*Working outside the home is a key factor in maintaining the mental health of women. More than 1.3 million Australians over 60 require regular help outside institutions and 90% of their carers are women.*

**Out Of Chaos** is at the Athanaeum II, 15 - 24 October, Tix \$25/ \$20/ \$15. Bookings 9650 1500 / 136166.

## Arts Access On Line

The Arts Access web site can be found at: <http://www.vicnet.net.au/~artacc>. Be on the lookout for updates to the web site in coming months as we plan to make our page more interactive. Improvements will include links to other sites, an on line membership application process, gallery and current events list.

Also of interest, the US National Arts and Disability Centre's first on line conference can be found at: <http://www.dep.ucla.edu/nadc/conference.html>

## Legal Matters...

This year **Arts Law Week** will be held from November 9 - 13. The week aims to keep the arts industry informed about legal issues which impact on their work. Best of all, its free!

The program includes seminars from leading experts in the field of law and the arts. Some of the issues that will be addressed include: Copyright / Moral Rights, Intellectual Property, Governance and Directors and a special session for film makers and producers. Venues include KPMG, Arts Victoria and the CUB Malthouse. For further information about Arts Law Week, contact AMAG on 9696 5085.

### Voting and Disability

After what seemed like an eternal political campaigning period, the country has cast their last pre-millennium votes in a Federal Election. Voting is one of the rights and obligations of all Australian citizens, and although an Election has just passed, they don't take long to come around again! Below is an excerpt from an article in the recent Villamanta Newsletter, that may be of interest to friends of Arts Access.

"If you are 18 years of age or older, and are an Australian Citizen, then you have the right to be registered to vote. Many people with disabilities, particularly people with intellectual disabilities are not registered to vote - often because others have assumed that a person with an intellectual disability is unable to understand the nature and significance of voting. This is not usually true. We all need someone to help explain some aspects of voting to us from time to time. But regardless of the help and support we might need, we all have our own preferences about what we want to see happening in Australia, in Victoria and in our local area. You do not have to prove your ability to understand these things - the law assumes that you have the capacity to understand.

If you require some form of assistance to vote, you are entitled to have this, including help to fill out the ballot paper, if this is what you need. This help can be provided by either a friend or by someone working at the Polling Booth."

Villamanta Legal Service has produced a Fact Sheet on voting and you can obtain a free copy of this by calling 1800 014 111.

## Integrated Playground

The City of Boroondara is proud to present the Hays Paddock Adventure Playground for children of all abilities, to be launched on Sunday 25th October, 11am - 3pm.

Hays Paddock Adventure Playground has a native theme that stimulates children's imagination and appeals to their sense of fun and adventure. The play equipment is designed and arranged by two local residents, Dani Blanden and Jenny Graham. Both are parents of children with a disability.

The City of Boroondara facilitated the development and funding of the playground which cost \$478,000. The construction of Hays Paddock Adventure Playground was generously supported by sponsorship from many charity groups and private donations, mostly raised by Dani Blanden and Jenny Graham.

The official opening celebrations will be packed with family playground fun and festivities. The program includes stage entertainment, children's activities, roving entertainers, Variety Bash cars, pony rides and an information expo. For more information, phone 9278 4420.

## Back To Back

Back to Back Theatre in association with Snuff Puppets presents **Boomtown** - a large scale, extravagantly theatrical event, staged at the Geelong Kardinia Park football stadium in December. The stadium will be transformed into a giant cityscape, with a play unfolding on a much larger scale than would be possible in any indoor venue.

Footscray's Snuff Puppets have been brought in to build giant puppets and sets, and Geelong artist Mark Cuthbertson will be building an inflatable mountain-range, which will glow in the morning dawn (lights by Phil Lethlene). **Boomtown** will be directed by Ian Pidd.

The play tells the tale of a thriving post-industrial town, into which five scientists (the Back to Back actors) and their 50 strong team of assistants (local school students) will be probing to find the pulse of the town. A six piece band and a twenty voice choir will fill the arena with a glorious soundscape.

For more information, contact Back To Back on 5221 2029.

## Streb Dance Company,

reviewed by Janice Florence

During the Melbourne International Festival, a dynamic and controversial dance company from New York will perform. The Artistic Director and inventor of the company's unique style, Elizabeth Streb is playing with novel ideas which stretch the boundaries of dance.

I had the chance to see a dress rehearsal of one of the pieces they plan to perform in the Festival and to talk to Elizabeth. She is fascinated by the use of aerobics equipment, usually restricted to the gym, in dance. For this she has been criticised by people who are questioning whether the performance is dance or gymnastics.

I found strong choreographic qualities in the work, which for me firmly place it as dance. It also stretches the dimensions in which the dancers can work. Dancers in vivid red and blue leotards bounce off a trampoline and dive upward onto platforms in formation. They leap up to grasp bars above them and angle as another dancer dives neatly between their feet and is caught there. One dancer flies horizontally above the trampoline while another bounces breathtakingly in an arc on to a huge mattress. Dancers make landings on their back and front constantly on the mattress, which induces anxiety about instant injury! Apparently, injuries do occur but reasonably minor ones considering the feats performed.

The dancers are both trained dancers and gymnasts (ie. some are one and some are the other). According to Elizabeth, they are trained to land on their muscles, though some landings seemed to me to be in places where muscles are scarce.

It was a great spectacle creating for us land creatures the movement possibilities of water and air creatures swimming, diving, and flying around each other in lithe, rapid formation. It is an exciting new version of a widespread interest in combining disciplines and in the dance possibilities of aerial work.

## Attention EASE Subscribers!

The next Arts Access Newsletter in December will contain The EASE Corner, with bits of information about What's On, in addition to the Ticket Update. The EASE Corner will become a regular feature in the Newsletter.

Also note that EASE has a new email address: [ease@vicnet.net.com](mailto:ease@vicnet.net.com). If you have been experiencing difficulty getting through on the telephone, why not send an email instead?

## Personality Profile

Mario Agostinoni has been the Administrator at Arts Access for one year. As Administrator, Mario keeps our finances in order and knows all about sick leave, superannuation and many other bits of practical information. Originally from Piemonte, Italy, Mario is known around Arts Access for his great sense of humour and anecdotal repartee. To find out more about Mario, I asked the following questions...

### What is the best part about your job?

Having the opportunity to interact with the most diverse people.

### What is the worst?

The same.

### What book are you reading at the moment?

The War of Don Emanuel's Nether Part.

### What is your favourite food?

Rabbit Casserole.

### What is your favourite film?

Raging Bull.

### How is it being a daddy?

Very funny and exciting.

### What is your ultimate goal in life?

Achieving a moderate happiness.

### What (if anything) did you study at university?

Accountancy.

### What is your favourite art media and why?

Cinema - because I believe it is a very popular media which can be enjoyed on many levels.

### What do you do for holidays / relaxation?

Try to fix things.

### What are your political beliefs?

I believe that people should have more influence over the decisions that affect their life. (I don't believe in politics by career.)

### What would you like to change about the world?

I would like to abolish religions and borders.



Mario Agostinoni, Administrator, in taller days

## Arts Access turns 25 in 1999.

### Verve! Arts and Disability

Verve, (noun) - enthusiasm or energy as in literary or artistic work. As the major focus of the celebration of its 25th anniversary, Arts Access proposes to host **Verve!** in October 1999, to coincide with the Melbourne International Festival. **Verve!** will include a national conference to investigate issues related to the philosophies and practices of arts and disability and a program of performances and exhibitions which demonstrate exemplary practice.

Among its objectives, **Verve!** will showcase and celebrate the achievements of professional artists with a disability and interrogate key issues related to the philosophies, policies and practices of arts and disability. Not least of all it will build a dynamic network of artists, arts organisations and people working in the arts, disability, recreation and related fields.

### Arts Access Awards

The inaugural Arts Access Awards to be held in June 1999 will recognise exemplary practice in the provision of access for people with a disability and will be given to nominated organisations and individuals across a broad spectrum of the arts, cultural and entertainment industries.

Five years after the introduction of the Disability Discrimination Act, it is time to recognise and reward those venues which have responded by improving access to their services and facilities. The Arts Access Awards will encourage those recipients to continue their excellent work and provide an incentive for other venues to match these standards.

There will be five awards including:

- Exemplary New Venue,
- Exemplary Customer Service, and
- Exemplary Policy & Programs

For more information about Verve! or the Arts Access Awards, contact Dean Michael, Special Projects Manager, on 9699 8299.

## Library and Information Services

The Arts Access Library is unique, specialising in the Arts as it relates to Disability. Topics include 'Disability, Arts and Culture', 'Art in Prisons', 'Youth Arts' and 'Community Arts Management', to name just a few.

I chatted with Martin Wurt, Library and Information Manager at Arts Access. He highlighted for me a lot of interesting facts about the library. "Our collection would be especially beneficial to someone who is trying to set up a community arts project. It offers ideas on various types of artistic and cultural activities, what has been done in the past, difficulties that might be encountered and advice on funding and financial management." The library also has a strong collection on Arts Marketing.

Martin has been the Librarian at Arts Access for just over two years, in which time he has managed to put the library catalogue on line (see the link via Arts Access web site) and changed the library to a borrowing system. Arts Access membership entitles people to borrow up to six items at once. Non-members may also borrow from the library, but must leave a small deposit.

Another outstanding feature of the library is the extensive information on Access - including the Disability Discrimination Act and Building Design. An extensive video collection documenting past Arts Access projects is also available.

The Library also contains all Arts Access Publications, including The Vic Venue Guide, I Remember When...Reminiscences of World War II Veterans and Widows; The Work Guide: How to Establish an Artists in Community Project; and Healthy Arts: A Guide to the Role of the Arts in Health Care.

A lesser known fact about Arts Access information services is that Martin is also available for consultation on community arts projects and many other arts and disability related topics. You can see Martin for a consultation in the Arts Access Library on Tuesday, Wednesday or Friday afternoon.

Martin gained his library experience working at HAZMAG, the Hazardous Materials Action Group in Yarraville. He has also accumulated a wealth of experience in his time spent volunteering at Greenpeace.



The mailout team from Nadrasca ATSS (above) has been coming to Arts Access every month for the last three years to send out the EASE Ticket Update. Pictured are (from left) Angelo, Beth, Elizabeth, Anne, and Andrew. Dean, who is a regular on the mailout team, is not in frame. Arts Access appreciates enormously the work they do in getting our mailouts out on time.

## House Gang

Watch out for the second series of House Gang commencing nationally on SBS on Monday 5 October at 8.30pm. The first series of the audaciously conceived House Gang, starring three actors with disabilities (Saxon Graham, Ruth Cromer and Chris Greenwood) charmed and disarmed local viewers and international television audiences. It went on to win the Raspberry Ripple Award for the Best Portrayal of Disability in Light Entertainment (UK).

In the new series, "the biggest development is that the characters with disabilities drive the stories...They've also grown up so the stories have become a little more sophisticated: twenty something as opposed to adolescent." Series two contains six episodes with the last screening on 9 November.

## Training in Regional Victoria

We have received an indication of demand for our training services - including the Disability Awareness Seminar and Arts Practice - throughout regional Victoria, and are investigating the possibility of making this happen. The Victorian Arts Council, Victoria's regional arts body, have expressed some interest in opening their well established regional networks to us. If you live in regional Victoria and are interested in Arts Access' training, or if you know of someone who does, please let us know.

**THE DEADLINE FOR DECEMBER ISSUE OF ARTS ACCESS NEWS IS TUESDAY 24 November**



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