



Outline

news from Arts Project Australia

Welcome to the first edition of Outline the newsletter of Arts Project Australia. Outline will be published three times a year and provide information about the organisation, its artists and activities. It will contain news and items which we hope will be of interest to new audiences as well as those already familiar with our organisation.

an intellectual disability and their widely varying needs. Her warmth, wisdom and dedication have underpinned the organisation's growth, bringing to it not only the valuable insights gained from personal experience, but also the ability to relate this experience to a much broader understanding of the arts and disability sectors.

Myra was an outstanding leader and although sadly missed, her memory will endure, not just in formal recognition, but in the essence of the organisation, in its core beliefs and structures. We live in an era of rapid change, and stability and commitment are not always thought of today as positive attributes, but they lie at the heart of Arts Project Australia's success. We are fortunate in having such a strong base to build upon, and the principles that Myra established will continue to guide the organisation in the coming years.

What is Arts Project Australia?

Arts Project Australia began in 1974 as an arts-based advocacy group for people with an intellectual disability. 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 people with an intellectual disability displayed aptitude in the visual arts, and that the flexible conventions of these artforms could provide access to a variety of means of expression and communication, even when the more common forms, particularly linguistic, were difficult for them to utilise.

Briefly, Arts Project Australia aims to:

- provide the means for people with an intellectual disability to participate fully in the visual arts
- promote work by people with an intellectual disability as integral to contemporary art practice
- increase understanding and appreciation of art by people with an intellectual disability amongst other artists and the general public
- advocate art as a valid vocational option for people with an intellectual disability

The Studio workshop program

Arts Project Australia operates from shopfront premises in Northcote, just near the Westgarth Theatre. Here we employ practising contemporary artists to work in our studios and to assist program participants to develop their skills in the visual arts. While our main focus is to support people with an intellectual disability, these sessions are open to any interested members of the community, and are geared to meet a wide range of individual needs and interests. Those participating in the program have the opportunity to choose from a range of activities including painting, drawing, printmaking, ceramics and, in an exciting new development, animation. Evening life drawing classes are also held on a regular basis.

Arts Project Australia works closely with RMIT's School of Fine Art and Design and the Australian Print Workshop to enable participants to gain access to professional art training facilities and to work alongside other artists. Both of these programs have proven to be enormously successful and valuable in developing a greater awareness

For this, our first issue we will be providing an introduction to the work of Arts Project Australia, in particular the studio and exhibition programs, which form the core of our activities. There is also a special feature on our major touring exhibition Drawing on Experience: Reflections on Popular Culture, which was launched in June at our gallery in Northcote and which will tour the eastern states of Australia over the next two years.

We hope that you will find *Outline* informative, entertaining and stimulating and that it will be an effective means of promoting the work of Arts Project Australia and the artists it represents to a wider audience. We also hope that, in time, it will provide a forum in which to examine some of the issues surrounding artists with an intellectual disability, and the valuable contribution they can make to the cultural life of our society.

Obituary

On 18th June, 1996 we were all saddened by the death of Arts Project Australia's Founder and President, Mrs. Myra Hilgendorf O.A.M. after a short illness. Arts Project Australia owes an enormous debt to Myra who, as both an artist and a parent of a person with an intellectual disability, contributed so much to the organisation's philosophy and development over the past twenty two years. Over the course of its history, Myra provided the organisation with a clear sense of purpose derived from a profound respect for, and understanding of, people with



artist: Anne Lynch 'Greenpeace' 1996 Pastel on Rag paper 250 x 330mm

Arts Project Australia

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and understanding of artists with an intellectual disability and their work within the wider arts community.

Outline will provide a vehicle for highlighting the achievements of the participants in the studio workshop program, and some of the innovative activities in which they are engaged.

The Exhibitions Program

Integral to the activities of Arts Project Australia is the staging of regular exhibitions which feature the work of studio participants. These are held either in our own galleries in Northcote, or in external venues such as public or commercial galleries, corporate or government offices, conferences and public spaces. The exhibitions program operates locally, nationally and internationally, and over the past few years work has been shown in France, Belgium, Latvia, the United States and Canada. One of the functions of *Outline* will be to provide information about upcoming exhibitions, and to report on related events.

The Supported Employment Program

Through this program, Arts Project Australia provides support to six individuals with established histories of exhibiting and selling their work, to pursue careers as visual artists. Of the six, four are now shown by mainstream commercial galleries on a regular basis and are establishing themselves as artists whose work is appealing to serious collectors as well as the general public. One of these artists, Julian Martin, was a finalist in the highly prestigious 1994 Moet et Chandon Fellowship, and was selected purely on the basis of his work and without mention of disability.

The recognition of art as a potential vocation for people with an intellectual disability is a significant achievement because it implies a serious regard for the artists and their work, and affords them the opportunity to carve out a valued role in the community.

ACFE Program

Arts Project Australia has received funding from ACFE (Northern Regional Council of Adult and Further Education) to develop a more structured visual arts course for adults with an intellectual disability. Following the success of the Visual Arts Foundation course run last year as a pilot program at RMIT's School of Art and Design (Bundoora Campus) Arts Project Australia is again offering students the opportunity to participate in a more formal type of art education, consisting of a general orientation component and then elective modules in the areas of painting, drawing, printmaking, ceramics, animation or collage, depending on interest and demand.

This innovative model offers exciting possibilities for people with an intellectual disability to participate in a further education program which reflects the norms and structures of the mainstream, yet is flexible enough to accommodate widely varying learner characteristics.

Printmaking and Ceramics in the Studio

These programs run two days per week in the studio, and provide participants with an opportunity to diversify their technical and expressive skills. Artswoker Carmella Grynberg, herself a printmaker, assists people to create monoprints and linocuts which often result in dramatic contrasts and effects. These techniques are especially popular as they provide immediate results and are relatively simple.

Another artswoker, Maxine Ryder, works with small groups of participants in the area of hand built ceramics, focusing more on expressive rather than utilitarian outcomes. This program offers participants a chance to work in a three dimensional medium and to explore the tactile qualities of the materials. Thanks to the Department of Human Services, we now have a small kiln which has made the firing and glazing of work possible on a regular basis. Both of these programs are funded through the Department of Sport and Recreation Victoria.

Drawing on Experience: Reflections on Popular Culture

This nationally touring exhibition, funded through Visions of Australia (a federal government touring program), was launched at the Arts Project Australia Gallery in June this year. Exploring the themes of art, disability, popular culture and identity, this project has received much critical acclaim. Thanks to the Stegley Foundation we were able to invite Mr. Errol Cocks, one of the contributors to the catalogue and Director of the Centre for Disability Research and Development at Edith Cowan University, WA, to give a lecture on the theme of intellectual disability and the development of valued identity. Telstra generously provided the venue for this lecture at their conference centre in Melbourne, as well as corporate support for the catalogue, which was also supported by The Australia Foundation for Culture and the Humanities, the Australia Council and Arts Victoria.

Currently the exhibition is in Hobart after which it will travel to the ACT, followed by NSW and QLD. If you would like more information about the catalogue, talk, exhibition or tour please contact Arts Project Australia.

Moving Pictures

An exciting new development in the studio has been the making of animated short films using participants' own painted backdrops, props, and drawn images.

According to artswoker Tina Douglas who initiated the project, *"The idea for an animation project began when I saw one of the participants demonstrating his excitement at being able to make ceramic models of the heroes and evil monsters he had seen in his favourite movies. I thought 'maybe it would be interesting for him to be able to transfer his own world into this format that he loved, and make a movie which could be played on the television screen.' One of the most interesting aspects of the medium is the possible variety of its parts. Participants have the options of thinking about not one element of communication but infinite combinations. Whether it be through the drawings themselves... sound, movement in space, or the placement of a sequence of images in time."*

Early in 1997 we are planning to hold a film festival of short animated films which have been produced at Arts Project Australia. This will coincide with an exhibition of models, sets and storyboards which were used in the production of animations being screened. Further information as to specific times and dates will be available in November. If you would like to know more about the animation project, Tina Douglas can be contacted on Mondays at Arts Project Australia on (03) 9486 3103.



artist: Johanna Hilgendorf 'Untitled' Pastel/pencil on Rag paper 600 x 500mm



Our major touring exhibition
'Drawing on Experience: Reflections
on Popular Culture' was launched
in June at our gallery in Northcote
and will tour the eastern states of
Australia over the next 2 years



artist: Stelio Costa 'Untitled' 1993
Acrylic on paper 700 x 1000mm



artist: Julian Martin 'Untitled' 1996
Pastel on rag paper 500 x 650mm



artist: Valerio Ciccone 'John Clarke and
Brian Dawe' 1995 Pastel 655 x 500mm

Art Bound

A new book making project has been initiated by artworkers Amanda Laming and Sarah Tomasetti which involves creating artists' books of participants' work. These books are beautifully finished using hand made papers and provide an intimate format for some of the more delicate works. Priced from \$90 - \$300, they will be available for sale from Arts Project Australia's stand at the Australian Contemporary Art Fair or through our own gallery. Enquires 94824484.

Saturday Morning Classes

Vacancies currently exist in our Saturday morning sessions. These classes run from 9.30 - 12 noon every Saturday. Please contact Judy Anderson on 9482 4484 if you or someone you know may be interested in joining the group.

Publications

Arts Project Australia has produced three publications on its work and the broader field of art and intellectual disability which are available by mail order. These are:

McAuliffe, C. (Ed.) (1992) Inside Out/Outside In: Artists from Arts Project Australia

This catalogue was produced to accompany an exhibition of the same name and provides background information about Arts Project Australia as well as essays by key contributors on the topic of outsider art. \$15.00 plus \$3.00 postage and handling.

Daye, C. (Ed.) (1996) Drawing on Experience: Reflections on Popular Culture

This catalogue documents the exhibition of the same name and contains essays on the themes of art, disability, popular culture and identity. \$15.00 plus \$3.00 postage and handling.

Daye, C. (Ed.) (1995) Between the Lines - Art and intellectual disability slide kit

This kit contains a booklet examining issues related to artists with an intellectual disability and their work, 12 full colour A5 reproductions of work with biographical details about each artists, and thirty six slides. It is designed for adaptation for many teaching situations from secondary to tertiary and adult levels. \$85.00 plus \$5.00 postage and handling.

Cards for Sale

Arts Project Australia has a large range of cards and postcards for sale, featuring full colour reproductions of work by artists from our studio. Cards cost \$1.50 each or 10 for \$12.00. Large (A5) postcards are \$2.00 each or 12 for \$20.00. Christmas cards are also available.

Recent and forthcoming events:

8th August - 22nd September

McClelland Gallery

'Border Crossing'

Group show of artists from the
Arts Project Australia studio

2nd September - 18th September

Arts Project Australia Gallery

'The Word'

Exhibition of works with text by artists from the
Arts Project Australia studio (held in conjunction
with the inaugural Westgarth Writers Week)

23rd September - 23rd October

Arts Project Australia Gallery

'Wild Thing'

Artists from the Arts Project Australia
studio on an animal theme

2nd October - 6th October

Royal Exhibition Buildings, Carlton

Australian Contemporary Art Fair

Arts Project Australia will be
represented at Stand no. 16

14th November - 15th December

Canberra Contemporary Art Space

'Drawing on Experience:

Reflections on Popular Culture'

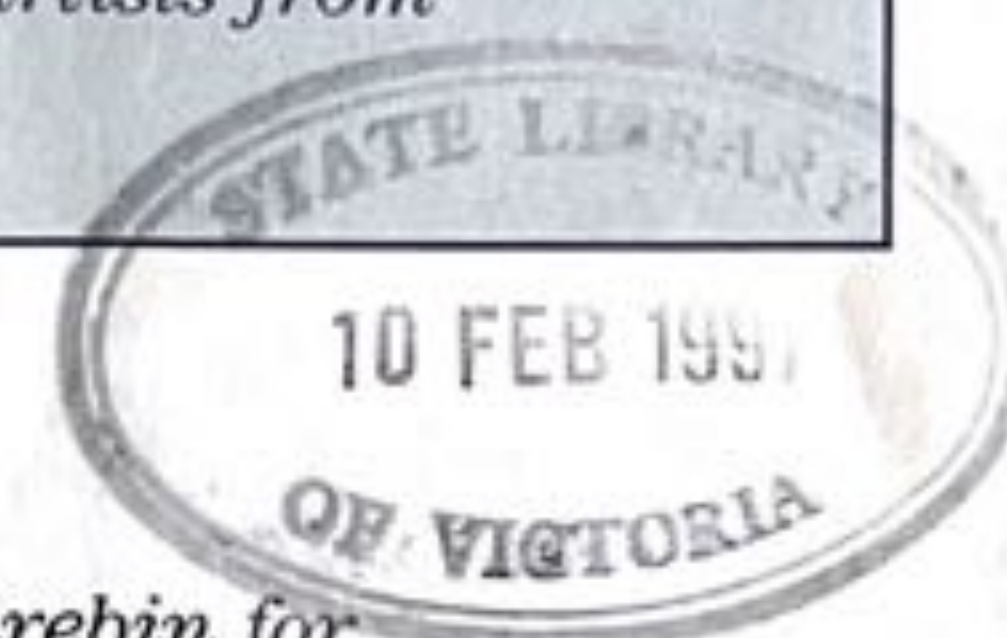
Travelling exhibition of works on the
theme of popular culture by artists from
Arts Project Australia

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Arts Project Australia is an incorporated
association and a recognised charity.
Donations over \$2.00 are tax
deductable. Membership subscriptions
are available for \$20.00 per annum.





artist: John Northe 'Pocahontas' 1996 Acrylic & Graphite 740 x 534mm from 'Drawing on Experience. Reflections on Popular Culture'