

ACCESSIBLE ARTS INCORPORATED

REPORT

CREATE ABILITY;

A CONFERENCE ON CREATIVITY AND DISABILITY

DOUGHERTY COMMUNITY CENTRE
7 Victor Street,
CHATSWOOD.

FRIDAY 17TH AND SATURDAY 18TH NOVEMBER, 1989.

P.O. Box 773,
NEWTOWN. NSW. 2042.

Edited by Victoria Keighery
SKOAP (Special Kinds of Artists' Projects)
March, 1990.

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APPENDIX Conference Registration List



Michael Champion



Marla Guppy



Jeffrey St. John



Annie Harvey

This publication is an abridged version of a fully detailed report on the "Create Ability" Conference held by Accessible Arts Incorporated. The report was reduced in size for ease of reading and because of budgetary restrictions.

The unabridged version contains the following additional sections;

1. Methodology.
 - a) Role of the Working Party
 - b) Development of the Conference Theme
 - c) Development of the Conference Title
 - d) Time Frame and Critical Path
2. Publicity and Promotion
3. Registration details
4. Survey and Evaluation of Participants' Responses to Conference by Janet Haswell, Student in Leisure Studies at Kuring-gai College of Advanced Education.
5. Report on the Workshop Program (with photographs) by Jim Tyler and Carol Alderdice, Workshop Tutor and Assistant.
6. Additional speakers' papers;
 - a) Diversion -v- Creativity; Allan Harrison
 - b) An Overview of Peer Support Services under Home and Community Care; Martin Bass.
7. Conference budget

These additional reports, papers and information are freely available through Accessible Arts Incorporated, P.O. Box 773, Newtown. NSW 2042. Ph 560 6291.

2. BACKGROUND TO THE ACCESSIBLE ARTS INC. CONFERENCE

In 1988 application was made to the Australia Council for funding to stage a seminar or conference focusing on the issues of;
~ access for people with disabilities to community arts programs and activities, and
~ the need for integration of people with disabilities into existing community arts programs.

The aims of the seminar or conference were to;
~ provide a forum for discussion and debate of the issues, and,
~ to provide a contact point for exchange of information between the field of disabilities and the community arts network.

Because Accessible Arts Inc. did not employ a worker, it was decided that a conference co-ordinator would be appointed to ensure the smooth running of the seminar or conference.

In early September, 1989, Victoria Keighery was appointed to the consultancy.

The conference was first proposed to occur in National Arts Week, 9th-13th October, and to be staged in the Parramatta area or a similar centrally geographical area, however, time restrictions and the availability of appropriate accessible conference venues determined the final date and location for the conference.

A conference working party was established to act as a resource base and decision making body for the day to day planning. This ensured smooth running and sufficient human resources to undertake a State-based conference.

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3. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This conference came about through the determination of Accessible Arts Incorporated to provide a forum for raising the issues of accessibility to arts activity for people with disabilities. We acknowledge the initial work, support and encouragement of the Accessible Arts Committee, several of whom gave their time and expertise as members of the Conference Working Party.

The Conference Working Party, who dedicated many hours of their valuable time, comprised;

HOLMAN COOK SUZY CULKIN ANNETTE DONOHOE ANNIE HARVEY.

The dedication of this small group of people provided a source of inspiration to all those who came into contact with the working party over the two months prior to, during and after the conference. Their vision and enthusiasm maintained the energy required to tackle such a large task in a short period of time.

My congratulations and heartfelt gratitude to them. It has been a positive inspiration working with you. I should be so lucky if all working parties were as productive and energetic as this one.

Our gratitude also goes to the many speakers and presenters for their time and effort in preparing the talks. They represented a group of dedicated, visionary and professional people whose support is of the utmost importance to the aims of Accessible Arts Incorporated.

In particular, my thanks to Jeffrey St. John, whose long telephone calls with me reinforced the importance of such a conference in providing an inspirational, philosophical framework for discussing and debating not only the important issues addressed by the Conference, but the subject of the "arts", in general.

Thankyou also to Jan Haswell, whose dedication to the development of the Participant's survey resulted in important information being collected for future activities. Jan also contributed on a practical, and equally important, level attending meetings, setting up and taking registrations.

In addition, thanks to Jim Tyler and Carol Alderdice for their dedication and professionalism in staging the workshop, a rewarding experience and positive source of ideas for many of the participants.

Finally, acknowledgement must be made of the Community Cultural Development Unit, Australia Council, for the funding to undertake the conference and, in particular, Tamara Winikoff for her positive support and encouragement.

Victoria Keighery,
Conference Co-ordinator.

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4. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE CONFERENCE

AIMS;

- ~ provide a forum for discussion and debate of the issues, and,
- ~ provide a contact point for exchange of information between the field of disabilities and the community arts network.

OBJECTIVES;

1. To increase community awareness of the need for integrated community arts programs.
2. To increase community awareness of the issues relating to the involvement of people with disabilities in community

- arts programs.
3. To increase community awareness of Accessible Arts Inc. its programs and services.
 4. To motivate and empower people with disabilities to become involved in arts activities.
 5. To demonstrate to community artists, community arts organisations and workers in the field of disability that people with disabilities can be involved in arts activities.

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5. THE TARGET GROUPS

The Working Party recognised the importance of targeting possible conference participants in order to effect the changes outlined by the objectives for the conference.

It was determined that the target group or groups were people in a position to affect the way in which community arts programs were established and run and who could, with encouragement, make these programs accessible to people with disabilities. In addition, workers who were involved in general program planning for people with disabilities were identified as potential sources of change through encouragement to include community arts activities in their general programs. It was also determined that an equally important target group was people with disabilities who were involved in both general and arts programs in the community, or who were active in arts programs or could be encouraged to become active. The working party determined that this last target group could well be the most difficult to motivate to attend the conference.

So, target groups were identified as;

- ~ Community artists and community arts workers,
- ~ Community arts organisations,
- ~ Workers in the field of disabilities, and,
- ~ People with disabilities.

The Working Party determined that the methods which would be used in the conference to effect change amongst the target groups would be to;

INSPIRE INFORM and DEMONSTRATE
effective models for changing community attitudes to people with disabilities.

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6. BACKGROUND TO THE PROGRAM FOR THE CONFERENCE.

The program for the conference was determined according to the aims and objectives, target groups and conference theme. It was decided that speakers would be selected who combined knowledge with the ability to effectively communicate that knowledge to conference participants. Speakers with good "performance" ability was determined as a factor in selection, where it was known.

Program blocks followed the theme for the conference and a program flow, from philosophical through to practical, was determined as leading from the broad/philosophical to the particular/practical. This strategy in programming the conference was determined as appropriate to meet the strategies of INSPIRING AND INFORMING. The program included the strategy of DEMONSTRATING, by providing concurrent workshop activities in art media on the Saturday, conducted by Jim Tyler, and by including sessions whereby models of arts programs could be presented and discussed.

Wherever possible action based, or model based focuses were used to maintain cohesion to the program and also to break up the program format in order to achieve a more interesting conference base. The usual format of "talking heads" was avoided where at all possible, it being felt that a balance was required to keep such a broad base of target groups interested in the conference. The use of visuals and audio visuals was encouraged to ensure an interesting and energetic conference format.

A brainstorming session was staged with the Working Party to determine the topics and potential speakers for each of the sessions, thereby ensuring that there were options for both topics and speakers, based on the collective expertise of the working party. This proved very effective in identifying the "specialists" in the field of disabilities and community arts/arts networks. 19 speakers were approached. The President of Accessible Arts Inc., Michael Champion, was asked to play the role of M.C. He shared the task with Jaque Goldman.

Initially, the number of topics to be covered demanded a two-day conference to accommodate them and it was determined to run for the two days and accommodate the workshop activities (for people with disabilities and others) concurrently with the second day. Half hour papers were considered to be sufficient, given the number and breadth of topics being covered.

Several draft programs were drawn up and discussed and the following program considered the most appropriate to accommodate the theme, aims and objectives, target groups and budgetary considerations.

"CREATE-ABILITY: A conference on creativity and disability."

Presented by Accessible Arts Inc.

PROGRAM

Dates: Friday 17th and Saturday 18th November, 1989.

Venue: Dougherty Community Centre, 7 Victor Street, Chatswood.

DAY 1: Friday 17th November, 1989.

10.00 a.m. Registration. Tea/coffee.

11.00 Opening: Andrew Tink, Member for Eastwood, Member of Arts Backbench Committee, representing the Honorable Peter Collins, Minister for the Arts and Health, NSW.

11.15 Welcome and Introduction to Accessible Arts Inc. Michael Champion, President, Accessible Arts Inc. Program Officer, Coastlink, Gosford.

11.30 Key Note Address; The Ordinary/Extraordinary and Community Arts; Vivienne Binns, Community Artist/Visual Artist, Vice-President, National Association for the Visual Arts.

12.00 Opening Up the Arts; Jeff St. John. Musician and Social Educator.

12.30 The Philosophy of Arts Accessibility and Participation; Gaye Hawkins, Educator/Tutor, Kuring-ai College of Advanced Education.

1.00 Lunch.

2.00 "Long Time Dreaming"; Video presented by Dave King, Musician/Training Officer, AQA.

2.30 Diversion -v- Creativity; Allan Harrison, Recreation Officer, Western Sydney.

3.00 Community Attitudes to Integration; Barbara McEvoy, Student, M.F.P.A. and Tannia Vassallo, Community Arts Participant.

3.30 Afternoon tea/coffee.

4.00 Panel Session; Models for Changing Community Attitudes.
1. Jan Spencer, AQA project.
2. Mustard Seed Theatre, Patrick Russel, Artistic Director.

5.00 Performance; Mustard Seed Theatre, "What About Us?".

- DAY 2: Saturday 18th November, 1989.
- 10.30 Morning tea/coffee.
- 11.00 Locating Community Arts Activities and Setting up an Arts Activity Group in a Community Centre. Judy Finlayson, Executive Officer, Community Activity Centres Network.
- 11.30 Resources for Community Arts Activities; Marla Guppy, Community Artist, President NSW Community Arts Association.
- 12.00 | Training the Community Artist to work with People with Disabilities; Annie Harvey, Community Artist/Ethnic People's Disability Program.
- 12.30 Lunch.
- 1.30 Video/s. Topics to be confirmed.
- 2.00 | Gizmos, Gadgets and Ramps; Bill Watson, representative of Technical Aid for the Disabled.
- 2.30 Support Services for People with Disabilities. Martin Bass, Co-ordinator, Leisurelink.
- 3.00 Transport; a Moving Issue. Tim Sussman, Community Transport.
- 3.30 Afternoon tea/coffee.
- 4.00 Panel session; Models for Arts Activity for People with Disabilities. Theatre of the Deaf. Rosalind Richard. Arts Access Melbourne, Tori de Mestre, Community Artist.
- 5.00 Conclusion; Michael Champion, President Accessible Arts Inc.
- 5.30 Entertainment; The Jah-Kevin Band.
- 6.30 Conference dinner.
- 9.00 Close.

Concurrent with the above program for Saturday, a multi-media workshop, covering Marbelling on paper, Carving plaster blocks and Woodblock printing, will be conducted by Jim Tyler, multi-media artist, from 10.00 a.m. to 3.00 p.m.



Gay Hawkins



Audience



Photographer,
Victoria Monk

Audience participation in Mustard
Seed Project's performance

There was a 6.2% response rate to the number of pamphlets and registration forms distributed (1500).

Breakdown of registrations:

93 registrations, comprising 48 full time registrations (for both days) and 45 part time registrations.

32 registrations from the Health/Disability Services sector.

31 registrations from the Arts/Community Arts sector.

15 registrations from individuals.

10 registrations from the Community Services sector.

5 registrations from the Education sector.

66 female participants

27 male participants

17 participants with disabilities

Day 1 attendances; 73 participants

Day 2 attendances; 62 participants

Workshop attendances; 18 participants (6 with disabilities)

Conference dinner; 33 participants

There were 3 late registrations on the 1st day.

There were 4 "no shows".

See Appendix for list of registrations.

1. Welcome Address;

MICHAEL CHAMPION,
President, Accessible Arts Inc.

First of all may I extend a very warm welcome to all of you who have travelled short or long distances to be here.

To have a fully fledged Accessible Arts Conference for me is a very exciting and fulfilling concept. Fulfilling because of all the hard work that has gone into keeping Accessible Arts going especially this year, when, without a development worker we were effectively reduced to being a voluntary committee. But, here we are, an independent organisation ready to support people in their endeavours to make the arts a real choice for people with disabilities in the community.

And I am excited because of all the support that people have given to us. Support that has grown from the early days of Art Reach, support generated by Nina Angelo's enthusiasm whilst artist in residence in 1987/88 and support we have kept as we forged our way towards making it an independent organisation. Support we have kept during this year when we could offer very little as, for us, it was a time of consolidation and review.

Now we are here for two days to talk and exchange views but let us not forget that Accessible Arts is about inspiring people to achieve goals, to realise ambitions and to be creative beyond their wildest dreams. If you think this is a grandiose statement, ask anyone who participated or helped at the Accessible Arts Camps - the excitement and inspiration was infectious. We want to be able to spread that inspiration state wide to any person or group striving for artistic choices in their leisure.

Today and tomorrow are designed to inspire you whether you are an arts worker or a professional in a service for people with disabilities but most importantly you the participant no matter what your disability. Because, Accessible Arts is not about your disability its about your ability. You can achieve great things with a brush or a camera, in music or drama, by designing or constructing. Accessible Arts' aim is to bring artistic choices within the reach of the disabled community, to bring community arts to people who were considered by others or even themselves as not being creative people.

Community art is all about people creating and achieving at their own level and then as they gain confidence going out and doing more and more. Community Arts is for people who want to create together, to enjoy and be inspired by sharing with others, learning new skills in secure environments, then being stretched to achieve more and to develop and grow.

For people with disabilities the choices have been too few and too inconsistent. "Not good enough" may not be the phrase used openly but I feel it is often thought by others, even parents - but people themselves who consider people with disabilities "not

good enough" only reflect that phrase back onto themselves.

Community arts, the great leveller and inspirer can make everyone "good enough", give self esteem, allow achievement, give hope and give expression to feelings of joy and pain that often cannot be released in any other way.

We are here for two days to reflect on the undoubted value of arts and creative pursuits for people with disabilities. Keeping my theme of inspiration uppermost I hope people have come to problem share more than problem solve especially in view of our busy crowded agenda.

We have some terrific speakers who I know will excite and inspire you.

Solutions in this field are never ready made but by sharing your ups and downs with others we can all feel that what we are trying to achieve is worthwhile and that you are not doing it alone.

So, to begin finishing, Accessible Arts is about making things happen, initially with support, networking and information but ultimately the aim is to help you get out there and do it. Our support may be in a group trying to start; to people aiming to gain access into their local community arts scene; it may be to support artists who don't find it easy to work with a particular group or person with a disability; it may be to put you in touch with a group so you can do things together. Our aim is to resource you to help you find your best solutions - solutions that work for you.

Accessible Arts has been going for a while but now we are about to really get going. Already we have a committee with a wide range of expertise in making it happen. You can use this expertise to your advantage. To help you in your job or quest to have creative choices - your life. Hopefully (and here I must ask everyone to cross their fingers) with sufficient funding to provide for workers we can provide this support in a consistent, professional and ongoing way.

I also feel I need to do some public thanking as we haven't had a public arena before. First, to Network as we were, after all, their idea and even though we have been a while getting this far, we are now alive and kicking. So thanks to Judy Finlason and the staff at Network for hanging in there and to the committee, Holman, Annie, Annette, Warren, Jacques, Jack, Dave and lots, lots more who came to meetings, gave support and made it worthwhile. And the last thank you is to the CCDU of the Australia Council who gave us a hard time, but believe in us and helped us in 1989.



Vivienne Binns and Victoria Keigh



Jim Tyler and Judy Finlason



Photographer,
Victoria Monk

Barbara McEvoy and Tannia Vass

2. Key Note Address; The Ordinary/Extraordinary and Community Arts VIVIENNE BINNS

(Visual Artist, Community Artist, Vice-President of the National Association for the Visual Arts, Recipient of the Ros Bower Award for contributions to Community Arts in Australia.)

Mr. President, Mr. Tink and delegates.

It was an honour to be invited as keynote speaker to the conference "Create Ability".

I looked at a fragment and after a while found I could see the whole world in it. When I'd had more experience of the world, I changed my understanding of the fragment.

I looked at a world and found it was a fragment. When I'd had more experience of the fragment I changed my understanding of the world.

This address is about art. Expression through art forms. The remembrance of exploration, interpretation and transformation of experience. A process described as creative which is coloured by hope, fear, joy or anger, stimulated and spurred on by conflict, desire and love. It is articulated through the manipulation of materials, sounds, words, movements, knowledge and traditions.

(Quotation from "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland"; Chapter XII, Alice's Evidence; From "Beginning at the beginning" the King said, very gravely ---- to ----- fluttered down from the trees upon her face". This quotation cannot be reprinted here as it would contravene copyright laws. However, Vivienne's own words stand on their own as inspirational prose.)

I stand in my studio ready for work. I look at an art student and sit next to a child. I am talking about art to colleague or an old lady, a farmer, a housewife, a man with one leg, a blind woman, an adolescent, a potter in Blacktown, a painter of landscapes, a musician, an abstract expressionist, a paraplegic, a mechanic, a dancer, a maker of home movies, a gardener etc.;

To start at the beginning.

The first thing to do is do.

Make a mark, any mark, any way you can. Push materials around. Pull threads through other threads, make sounds, move, think a thought, look, be and loose yourself. Listen, feel, try that.

Touch, stroke, what is the most simple thing I do well? When am I most self assured? When are you most absorbed? When am I not conscious of what and how I do whatever I do? When are you unselfconscious? When are you unaware of time passing? When am I unconscious of what or who I am?

When have you forgotten the past?

When have conscious memories faded and my absorption in the present moment made me conscious only of what I do now? When has

your desire fled; your ambitions for change and difference in the future lain down and left you free of their demands and expectations?

Can you think of those moments when no fear clouds any horizon behind or in front? When you are doing nothing other than the doing of the moment. I will practice these moments irrespective of how simple they may be, how unimportant they may seem. You will get used to how those moments feel for they are the gold, they are it, where it's at, the hub, the secret, the simple fact. Then when we've got a grasp on them; become full of wonder at the benefits they hold, how good they make us feel, how easy it is to do the simple thing we do best. Then stretch - I reach out, stretch up.
Fill your lungs and blow out the air with force.

Lets read, talk to people, listen, look at the world, look at images. Look particularly at the spaces surround the solid forms - look at the edge - the blurred - the air. Listen to the space between the sounds, listen to every noise, one by one, at any moment. Look at the back of things. Feel them with any part of us that feels; fingers, hands, cheek, tongue, stomach, toes. Taste the food, feel what your feet feel.

What happens when I suspend judgement and experience everything with the same degree of attention?

When are we not relaxed? I think of that moment, often, remembering how it feels.

I like myself most - when?

What else is happening when you most like others?

Make a mark, any mark, push materials around, move, make a sound. Play, see what happens.

Stop! When do I say "stop" and when do others say "stop"? Those boundaries and limitations which define a safe place - are we happy to stay within them? Some want to cross over, burst through and break out. Do I want peace or conflict, challenge, love or indifference?

What do you want? What do you aspire to? Is it reasonable, is it appropriate? Can you achieve it? If I answer these questions my way, do I also have a view on how others would answer them for me?

The first step - then a second. Do I need someone to talk it over with? Can you share your ideas? In the face of opposition can you move sideways or reach out and ask for help? Can you give a helping hand?

Then the earth gives way. Over and over again this happens. I am afraid, confused, uncertain, insecure, insignificant, foolish, no good. I can hear the voices now - ought, should, no good,

wake up!
Just part of the process.

Take one step at a time, run when you can run. Find someone who's interested - see what others are doing!

Take an idea from a book, any book, pick up a notion from television, movies, radio, magazines, someone else, an art exhibition, concert, dance, whatever. Take the idea that strikes and fascinates - do it yourself, freely, enjoy it, do it. I say to myself "see what happens".

Imitate, copy, do what fascinates you in others, other work, sounds or movements. Do it, enjoy battle with it, see what happens, acknowledge the other.

Is it possible to suspend judgement and still make choices?
Is it skill that's wanted? - then practice.
Is it knowledge? Then read, listen, see, explore.
An idea hurts, a sight seers, a sound jars, a movement destroys.

I try this - take it, strike it, speak it, feel it, express it, draw it, sing it, describe it, turn it into movement. Reinvent it till it is even half way understandable. Can it be loved? and freely left?
And so the process goes on and on, over and over.

What do we look for on days like today? Strategies, techniques, wisdom, philosophy, new understandings, new approaches, reassurance, affirmation, inspiration, entertainment, conflict, fascination, seduction, to share and exchange?

I speak now in this performance with the voice of a prophet; "Beware of notions such as 'excellence', 'common sense', 'dressing for success', 'real art', they are often used to hide meanings quite different to their apparent one".

So, what has this been all about? An idiosyncratic address using quotations; at first from "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland" by Lewis Carroll and then from my own thoughts which are often traces of other voices. Fragments of associations, cliches, beliefs and inspiration messages are clustered together in an attempt to arrive indirectly, against a pastiche of images, at an understanding of a process of making art.

It is this process that informed the work I do individually or collaboratively, as well as when I am teaching.

Inevitably because of the nature of my practice the bias is towards the visual arts.

So to end at the end. And if its open, it seems to me an appropriate form for the introductory talk of the day. I hope you feel there's been communion between us and that these fragments are reflective of the concerns of this conference.

3. Opening Up the Arts;

JEFFREY ST. JOHN.
Musician/Social
Educator

My first thought when asked to deliver a paper on this subject was "What the hell is art?"

A friend and musical collaborator once said "If you can't sell it, it isn't art" and for a long time I thought that was the ultimate definition until I realised that art, in itself, is the most contentiously subjective exercise humanity indulges itself in.

Art is you.
YOU ARE ART.

The only problem with that statement stems from the differentiation between simple self expression and true art. But then, who among us is capable of anticipating histories' perception of art?

Van Gogh was a manic depressive whose only recently appreciated emotive depth resulted in physical mutilation ... think about saying THAT with flowers ... and yet to Van Gogh this appears to have been the ultimate artistic expression of love.

The question of the concrete egg atop Dalis' castle.

The sometimes enigmatic lyric poetry of Bob Dylan, Paul Simon, Neil Young and Jackson Brown.

And although I am not in the same publicly recognised space, the metaphoric lyric expressions of Jeffrey St. John. Possibly transitory art, but then only history will be the real judge.

So if only the future can decide what was important and only art dealers can decide what is currently relevant then why am I bothering to deal with something as intangible as the definition of art?

BECAUSE ...
as we all understand, the encouraged child does well, and although there are exceptions to the rule, the disparaged child will possibly carry that with them through their entire life.

And yet art, because it has its BASIS in pure self expression, is the simplest way of building self confidence from what can begin as a skill-less base. Does the name Grandma Moses carry any weight in a group like this?

Let me return to the "skill-less base" term and try to clarify that from my own perspective.

Due to a variety of reasons, some medical, some attitudinal, my formal education ended before the end of what is known as Year 8 in high school. Although I exhibited an interest in poetry, I

was far from being an English major and yet driven by the simple love of the language, my poetry has become for me a major source of artistic expression. Some of it is lyric poetry which to me means metre ... and melodic potential.

And then there are the immediate experiences that must be notated spontaneously regardless of metre or rhyme, lest the personal emotional depth be lost. I warn you now ... all of my poetry is personal.

If I may offer you an unpublished form of the latter, and a published form of the former, then we may start to share an understanding of the fact that, regardless of history's perspective, these were the words I needed to write down at the time;

"She talks to me of art;
and as she talks the colours sparkle in her voice.
I have never met a woman before.
I have met children who find authority in age;
she talks to me of art".

And now for some metaphoric lyricism;

"Flowing silver streams of dreams
flow from the mouths of the kings it seems;
as easily as water flows from mountaintop to ocean.

Happy Sunday promises,
that we'll have as much as "The Thomases",
while suppressing voices that might stem their auto-motion.

The image makers primp and preen
to try and mould the king, it seems,
into a guise we all appear to have long awaited.

Still the "NEW CENTURIONS" silently wait;
As the new Caesars quietly debate."

The difference is obvious ... would you like to hear more?

"The might that once was Rome is gone
with Egypt, as with Babylon.
The most that any one has left are stones in some formation.
DIVISION of the golden realm
The KING still fights to hold the helm.
But buildings are just stones upon the bones of many a dead
nation.

See that man who holds the floor,
was his hair styled like that before?
Apparently the ideas-men have spoken to him lately;
Still the "NEW CENTURIONS" silently wait;
as the new Caesars quietly debate.

The story-tellers weave a web,
of how the families shall be fed
that sign the declaration that will bring the king to reign.
But promises of fairness, seem to lack a real awareness
as the sea-bird flies away ... to be never seen again;
Still standing in the shadow, with a voice that chills the marrow
of your bones,
Is a man ... who may someday rule your fate;
He's the "NEW CENTURION" who silently waits;
As the new caesars quietly debate ...
Still we must give to Caesar that which is,
truly Caesars' and rightly his;
But let no private army decide my brothers earthly fate!"

Regardless of prescribed construction techniques this, to me,
describes in poetic form, the emotions I feel about the
contemporary circumstance that may last no longer than the
moment...

Still I need to voice my comment.

In regard to academic accreditation this is a skill-less base,
but I learned. IF encouraged any interest can become a sense of
achievement; can develop a sense of adventure.
What is life if not a voyage of discovery?

There was probably an expectation that I would have chosen music
as my specific in relation to this topic but to simply reiterate,
any form of self expression, if encouraged, can become
a motivational source from which can be developed a sense of self
achievement, that heightened sense of adventure, that inspires us
to hone and perfect these sometimes unsuspected talents to the
point where the real challenge becomes the acquisition of greater
skill to enhance our self expression.

Through self expression comes a greater sense of self and self
worth. Isn't that what we are all here for? To try and help
people realise their own value through their own abilities?

Be it music, sculpture, poetry, acting, mime, painting,
photography, the list, obviously, is much longer but the point is
simple; art has this potential ... ART CAN BE THE KEY!

(Lecturer, School of Leisure, Tourism and Community Studies, University of Technology, Sydney).

For me ACCESS is the most important objective of cultural policy. Unfortunately it is usually the one you hear least about. The rhetoric that dominates government and media discussions about arts funding focusses on terms like 'excellence', 'national prestige', 'professional' and 'of international standard'. We hear a lot about how the Sydney Dance Company wowed them in New York, or about how Joan Sutherland is a national treasure.

Now this is great and I wouldn't want to begrudge any of these artists or companies the recognition that they deserve. But this sort of hype tends to distract our attention from some of the more fundamental and less glamorous questions about arts funding and how it should be organised in a democracy. These 'other' questions are the ones that I am interested in and that I think are perhaps more important than how well Australian culture is regarded overseas.

These questions are:

- * What is the most equitable way to organised government support for the arts?
- * Which audiences are being served by current patterns of subsidy and which are being ignored?
- * What cultural forms are being supported by the state and which are left to the market?
- * On what basis should requests for subsidy be judged?

Lots of people dismiss these questions as 'stirring', or answer them with a fairly glib set of responses. We've heard these justifications for the status quo: 'Everyone in Australia benefits from subsidy to the opera, even if they don't go they feel pride in their country from Joan Sutherland's achievements.' or: 'aesthetic criteria should be the only basis for giving out subsidy, only excellent art deserves support.' Or: 'some art forms are just too precious to be left to the market - money would taint their special qualities'.

Now I don't think that these answers are good enough. Each can be shot down in flames:

- * 97% of the population never goes to the opera and within this enormous group a very sizeable number would never have heard of Joan Sutherland - where are the national benefits here?
- * To claim that art is too precious to be contaminated by money or markets is to ignore the very political fighting that goes on around the allocation of subsidy. Money from the state is seen as somehow purer than money from the market. Apart from this, lots of art is distributed through markets, look at the private gallery system, art investment, the classical music record industry, corporate sponsorship. Art has never been above the market. The question is why do some arts get state support and others don't?

* If excellence is the main criterion for subsidy then how is the term defined? Is it's meaning fixed and agreed upon or are aesthetic judgements above social forces? Does excellence really occupy such high moral ground?

If you look behind popular discussions about arts funding and start asking some tough questions then its not hard to conclude that a lot of subsidy currently operates as a form of redistribution to the middle class; their leisure and cultural pleasures get underwritten by the state whilst other groups have to go to the market for theirs.

Now the term ACCESS has been very important in introducing some of these uncomfortable issues into debates about arts funding. It has tended to rock the foundations on which subsidy to the arts has so comfortably sat for too long. Access has politicised arts funding. It has challenged the sanctity of excellence and national benefits. It has proved to be a continual irritant in cultural policy.

BUT WHAT DOES ACCESS MEAN?

1) Access entered cultural policy in the early 1970's with the election of the Whitlam Labor government. Whitlam was committed to extending access and participation in the arts. In the conversion of the Australian Council for the Arts into the Australia Council he placed this new objective for arts funding next to the support of excellence and promotion of a national identity as major justification of public support for the arts. The creation of the community arts program was the most visible response to this new objective. In the earliest invocations of access, the term was used to imply the 'culturally disadvantaged'. Access programs were organised around the democratisation of culture, the definition of culture went unchallenged. All that was needed was to spread its 'civilizing benefits' further and wider.

2) In the 1980's this rather patronising definition of access has been gradually replaced by one that emphasises cultural difference rather than cultural disadvantage. In this configuration access implies plural cultures and points to the role of arts funding in giving equal resources to the support and development of these.

3) There is also a definition of access which emphasises barriers people confront when they want to participate in the arts, these barriers can be economic, physical and/or social. I will explore each of these different meanings for access in turn.

Access and Cultural Disadvantage

The Community Arts Program was created to convert Whitlam's policy for increasing access and participation in the arts into concrete strategies and projects. In the earliest documents of the Community Arts Programs access was defined in terms of cultural disadvantage. There were certain populations who did

not know about the arts or go to them and they needed special assistance in order to discover them. This was very much a 'blame the victim' approach to access. The problem of uneven levels of participation in the arts was not because they were irrelevant and alienating but because some people lacked the proper education and skills to appreciate them. There were groups who lacked culture and with lots of help and remediation they could gain access to its wonderful benefits; they could adopt the cultural tastes and preferences of the middle class.

Early community arts or access programs reflected this philosophy. They were geared at reaching out to and educating the culturally disadvantaged. The sorts of programs funded were:

- * country tours;
- * art in institutions for captive populations;
- * art workshops for kids in order to capture their 'natural' creativity before it became destroyed by television;
- * art education programs in schools.

These programs were and still are very important because there are some profound geographical and institutional barriers to arts participation. Art does need to be de-institutionalised, taken out of special places where special people enjoy special objects. The metropolitan dominance of most arts provision also needs to be confronted.

However, I do think there are some fundamental problems with notions of access that emphasise cultural lack or disadvantage. For a start, these definitions of access rarely question the nature of art and culture. These categories remain unexamined, assuming consensus. Instead the focus is on how to distribute culture better. An opera in the park or Shakespeare in the suburbs model of arts reform.

The second big problem with the idea of access and cultural disadvantage is that it tends to patronise. It presents those who are not interested in subsidised culture as without culture, as lacking, as ignorant, rather than recognising that they may be differently cultured. So this model implicitly reinforces the idea of high culture as the best culture and those who enjoy it as superior. To talk about cultural disadvantage is to automatically affirm the other side of the equation, the culturally advantaged.

The equation of access with cultural disadvantage is contradictory. It can lead to important new techniques for distribution and outreach but it can also be very conservative. It can reaffirm the status of 'high' culture as the best culture and it can imply that all Australians should strive to adopt the leisure choices of an elite. It also brands those uninterested in this culture as inadequate.

Access and Cultural Differences

Another way of interpreting access has been to focus on cultural difference, on the variety of cultural identities and traditions

which exist in Australia. This approach is far better. It challenges the authority and dominance of 'high' culture by pointing out that this is simply one of a multitude of different cultures which constitute Australian culture. This approach stresses the reality of plural cultures and cultural diversity and it raises questions about how arts funding does or does not support these various cultural traditions. Rather than identifying cultural victims this definition of access seeks to redress the imbalances in arts subsidy. It draws attention to the privileging of some cultural forms and traditions and the exclusion of others. Here access means the rights of different cultural groups and traditions to public support.

Much of community arts practice is based on this model. Some good examples are:

- * The Art and Working Life program which recognises trade union culture as an important cultural tradition justifying government support and resources if it is to flourish;
- * Community theatre companies which recognise the need to create theatre that is relevant, that reflects and speaks to the constituencies that watch it;
- * Poster projects that give people the skills and resources to speak for themselves about issues that concern them.

In each of these examples access means having resources for cultural expression and identity as a basic right. Much of community arts is committed to producing cultural forms that affirm. This means recognising the great social, ethnic and economic diversity that characterises Australia and fostering cultural traditions and practices that speak to cultural difference rather than deny it.

The Barriers to Access

In speaking to a conference focusing on creativity and disability I am struck by the very bottom line of access, and that is the immense physical difficulties that some people face when trying to either consume or produce culture. So, I cannot stress enough that one of the major barriers to arts access is the attitude within so much of public culture that the audience is all able to walk, talk, drive etc.

Obviously lots of gains have been made in this area. Thanks to the immense battles people with disabilities have fought to claim their basic right to have access to the public cultural resources others take for granted. Guaranteeing physical access to all groups should inform all subsidy to public culture. While this may be enshrined in state anti-discrimination legislation, arts funding bodies could do a lot more in demanding that the cultural organisations they support are exemplary in this area.

But physical access is only one of many forms of access that should be enshrined in cultural policy. As I have already outlined there are many different interpretations for access. Some of which leave the status quo in tact and simply seek to distribute culture better. Others of which imply a complete

demolition of the current assumptions which underpin arts support.

In terms of distribution, another barrier to access is the sheer metropolitan dominance of much cultural provision; the glut of subsidised services in and around the capital cities and the scarcity in the suburbs and country. Touring is one remedy, specifically forcing state companies to embrace questions of wider distribution of their cultural forms. This does not just mean hitting the road. There are lots of innovative methods for taking the arts further and wider. The mass media is the most obvious, but for a long time this has been resisted because of the negative association of mass with mediocre. The touring and access policy of the Australia Council is another step in the right direction because it is based on giving control over what to tour to rural areas. Decisions come from the audience not from some city slicker deciding what their poor country cousins need in terms of culture.

~~Another barrier to access that is often mentioned is money.~~ The argument is that people don't go to high culture because they cannot afford the ticket prices. I think that this claim is wildly exaggerated. Research shows that the major barriers to participation are usually cultural not economic. People don't go to the opera or art gallery because they don't feel comfortable there. Because they feel that these places are not meant for them. Because they don't enjoy what happens there, there are few references to their lives or concerns.

What this highlights is that cultural consumption, whether it is going to art gallery openings, or country and western bands or a movie, is an important process in social differentiation. The idea of universal access, of everybody liking and doing the same things, is an illusion. Cultural consumption is one of the ways in which differences in gender, class, ethnicity and age are expressed. The general public does not exist, audiences are both active and various. Ultimately, this makes access a contradictory demand. No cultural form will ever recruit equally from all section of the population. Cultural forms will continue to function as markers of social difference.

I think that there are four meanings for access that should form cultural policy. These are:

- 1) physical access,
- 2) geographic and regional access,
- 3) access for different groups to cultural expression and the resources to maintain and develop their own cultural traditions,
- 4) access to a public culture that is pluralistic not elitist.

These issues should not be quarantined within community arts. Community arts programs should not be the only place within arts funding institutions where a commitment to equity and access exists. These are issues that should underpin all subsidy to culture.

5. Summary: Community Attitudes to Integration BARBARA McEVOY
TANNIA VASSALLO

TANNIA: (Experiences in Art Class and with Art Teachers)

If you have too many people with disabilities in one class then there is too much fussing round, too much time is spent setting up. Independence in class depends on the table height, the teacher has to help set up which causes a few problems.

Able-bodied students can't be expected to stop their own work to help me. Not having the ideal situation in class is not such a bad thing - you can learn then take your thoughts home and do it properly there.

A community aide woman ensured my independence by working as my hands. Simple adaptations like bricks under the table legs can help with height problems.

The teacher in one course, as an artist, was used to drawing in large spaces and was constantly encouraging me to do larger drawings. It wasn't till second term that she seemed to realise that I could only work in small areas. If the teacher shows techniques then the student can come up with adaptations that suit her - a joint development, both have to find a way to achieve results. Teachers don't want to teach in their normal way because they think that the person with the disability is doing the best that they can! We want to be treated the same as everyone else.

Society's attitudes have got to change - parents still seem to be freaked out by disabilities but the children are more open and questioning.

BARBARA: (Attitudes of the community to integration)

It is hard for our age group because with rehab. finished we are the guinea pigs for integration into community groups. Because you look different you are treated differently.

At the Tramshed, people speak directly to me but at Bathurst there were problems because people kept on speaking to my "Claytons" hands instead of me. Doing oil painting, it was an older group who seemed to have more problems. The youngest member of the group was a lot more friendly. The other woman I went with was more physically able and didn't seem to have the same problems - also doing water colour she had a younger class. The teacher had problems because she tried to adapt to me rather than the other way around.

Suggestions:

For the community; Don't ask a person with a disability what's wrong with them; Were you born in a wheelchair? No, my mother's not that big!

For teachers, treat us as potential artists and don't try to do our thinking for us.

For people with disabilities; don't have a rehab. attitude to art classes, get in and have a go!

6. Models for Changing Community Attitudes to Integration
JAN SPENCER.

Art Co-operative course - TAFE Outreach, AQA.

After concluding my contract as an Accessible Arts artist I was able to follow up an enthusiastic response to an Accessible Arts Inspiration Day at Prince Henry Hospital. This day involved inviting ex quadraplegic patients, accessible arts artists, in-patients and AQA members. Music, art and gardening ideas were presented not only for recreational use but as skills development for enhancing career opportunities.

Armed with the expressed view of AQA members for the desire to further their art skills and with some experience in TAFE I approached a supportive Mary Macken from Randwick TAFE Outreach. The course could only be funded if its aim was the enhancement of career development. Mary was indeed against leisure art courses but was enthusiastic with my submission and the determination of the AQA members after our first meeting with the group to organise the course.

So, with TAFE Outreach funding, the course was inaugurated. AQA was to provide the facilities and volunteer assistance. Equipment, personal tools and paints were funded by the group - some with assistance from Darlinghurst and Ashfield rehabs. As with all students I feel it important that they provide their own tools and a commitment to homework and outside study. Unfortunately no co-ordinator funds were provided - OK for me for the first time but definitely not a recurring aim. I committed myself to attendance throughout to assist the three other teachers and to co-ordinate the course.

For me it was imperative to have exposure from a variety of teachers to satisfy the aim of the course.

So to the course

The aim was to set up a group or co-operative for the continued art skills progression and to sell art works. Of course the aim was also to provide sufficient training of appropriate art and presentation skills, a resource file and contacts for existing courses for further development of particular art areas.

It certainly helped having exhibiting artists as teachers and one of the students a pottery businessman prior to his spinal injury. However, as always, there were hurdles in convincing AQA and some students that the course be taken seriously and not merely as time occupying.

The teachers included: Jan Spencer, Jo Williams, Simon Hanly, Nina Angelo and a huge thanks to Annie Harvey, Accessible Arts trainee who ended up more a teacher than a student and also a helper due to the lack of volunteers.

The content covered;

1. Establishing a co-operative surveying information from Sydney Itec, Artslaw, tax issues and set up costs.
2. Screenprinting with print goco, assistance was sought from TAD, however all adaptations are personal and therefore a personal cost commitment - so often we struggled and learned and fortunately laughed our way through, surviving mostly on lateral thought for successful adaptations. Unfortunately the volunteer programme to be provided by AQA did not surface. Hopefully the achievements by the end of the course enabled AQA to see the worth and thus the need for committed assistance.
3. Black and white photography - maybe best summed up by David Bailey's comment: 'In particular I have been able to use the skills obtained to be able to take photographs knowing they will be properly in focus and correct in every possible way' ... and another statement pertaining to the whole course ... 'trainees at AQA are now putting some of the skills gained from the course to good use by providing a video of AQA's facilities for use in a public awareness package.' Jo Williams, photography teacher, found a lot more research was required for the best types of cameras and adaptations but we were all amazed with the aesthetic and technical shots produced by students from a part time course (4 hours a week over 20 weeks) using a space that had to be set up each week.
4. Drawing, colour and design - this introduced the practical part of the course and also the expectation of commitment and outside research. It was the hardest part because often students drowsed and lost attention. This was the first course I ran that I noticed such a profound change from the beginning to the end in attention and enthusiasm. I'm sure the variety of teachers and the intelligence to trim the skills covered (e.g. 'see painting') contributed to the heartening change from about halfway through the course. The lack of volunteers rallied all individual resources, so that in the end learning was gained as much by watching fellow students as by doing ... and the realisation that "doing" is only a part of the process any way e.g. In screenprinting at the end of the course in preparation for exhibition work, one student was excellent in touching up, 2 students were printing, and others were painting terracotta pots while waiting to print.
5. Painting - the tour de force in production of finished artworks. Simon Hanly, teacher, came with masses of flowers and an embarkation into watercolours which became the focus because of the enormous response. Simon decided to give just a little info on other painting techniques in order to capitalise on the water colour interest. It certainly worked.
6. Computer graphics - proved difficult in that a concurrent computer course had just started where students were learning computer skills and not quite ready for putting time into graphics skills. Here we were able to make students aware that

skills progression was essential. A TAFE visit was organised with great help from Randwick graphics and Ian Proverst. Particular interest was in computer graphics, photography and illustration courses available and to utilize TAFE disabilities staff. One student has continued studies in drawing because of her particular skill in illustration. Others have developed computer skills, business skills and other ventures such as hydroponics.

7. Use of techniques in finished products - Gary Fearon, student and potter produced some fantastic pots, the water colour paintings were complete and wonderfully framed by Cam Crofts, and the skills learned used in pot decoration, screenprinting for advertising and t-shirts.

8. Exhibition. Although the aim of developing a co-operative failed in the sense of a structured business group - mainly due to lack of money, but also due to the newness of the skills in art and business and other commitments that individuals had, the production of 2 exhibitions did go ahead and bared all souls. The first was of the water colour paintings at Seymour Centre. Beatrice Brickhill was so impressed with the works that the exhibition filled all requirements of standards that Beatrice was developing. A sad scenario was that the AQA bus bringing the group to the exhibition got waylaid so many did not see it. The second was at Bondi Pavilion - totally organised and set up by the group, over 2 days of a weekend and attracted sales of pottery, t-shirts, paintings and drawings.

At the course conclusion a fully comprehensive file was left with the group for further resourcing and as a record of all the info from the the course.

So where did we all get to? I know the course touched and changed TAFE, TAFE Outreach, AQA, Accessible Arts, Bondi Pavillion, Seymoure Centre, Students, Teachers and viewers.

... and it gave the opportunity to develop some art skills for not only leisure or time occupation, also the awareness of existing resources and how to access them more appropriately.

... and the determination that the next course will be more accessible, better equipped and organised, but for the outcome of group tenacity and enthusiasm to be the same.

Thanks to Tannia, David, Russell, Fiji Frank, Gerry, Wayne, Greg, Warwick, Maria, Annie, Jo, Simon, Nina, TAFE Outreach, AQA, Cam Crofts and Accessible Arts.

NETWORK *of* Community Activities

66 Albion Street
Surry Hills NSW 2010
Telephone: (02) 212 3244

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LOCATING COMMUNITY ARTS ACTIVITIES AND SETTING UP AN ARTS ACTIVITY GROUP IN A COMMUNITY CENTRE

BY JUDY FINLASON

Locating suitable venues for arts activities is always a problem, particularly when it is essential to have wheelchair access and proximity to transport.

Community centres can be defined in many ways but for the purpose of today's talk I have defined them as centres which are generally run by a community committee and may provide a range of activities.

The Group or Individual interested in arts activities would need to know:

- what type of activity they intend or would like to run
- how many people would possibly be involved
- times of operation
- what facilities would be required - space, sinks, tables, etc

Community centres are usually run by :

- a 530A or 527 committee of Local Council (this group may only take responsibility for the hiring of the premises or may be actually involved in organising and running the program at the centre. Many new areas have such a centre).
- a management committee of local residents independent of council or other groups. Sometimes these groups are part of neighbourhood centres whose focus is welfare and information with some community activities. Others may be primarily community activities involving arts, adult education and children's programs.

The method of operation and range of activities varies enormously, and usually reflects the local community's interests and needs.

Linking up with a community centre can have many advantages including:

- sharing skills and expertise with staff, tutors and volunteers of the centre
- being part of an organisation and possibly sharing resources, publicity, etc.
- having access on a range of activities that would be available for people to become involved in
- the centre may have access or contact with community transport facilities

In using community centres it would be important to decide whether the arts activity would be:

- run by an independent user group
- the responsibility by a sub-committee which came under the umbrella of the management committee
- an integral part of the total management structure

This would depend on each group. Points to be considered include:

- legal status of group/employment of staff etc.
- insurance
- ability of group to operate independently
- ability of community centre to involve itself in additional activities (most centres are already overstretched and either non funded or under funded).
- what contribution could group make to overall running of centre (this may be vountary help etc.)
- what would be the responsibilities of group
- how will arts activity be financed

The centre may be able to help with submission writing and sources of funding.

If a community centre lacks access it may be possible to suggest possible modifications/sources of funding or support for alterations. The centre may not have previously had demand for special access.

Sharing of resources and facilities can usually be extremely cost effective. It does require prior planning and negotiations. It is important to clearly understand what are the roles and responsibilities of all concerned.

Network is happy to put people in touch with community centres in city and country areas.



Workshop participants



Clare Murphy singing with "Jah-Kevin"



Tori de Mestre - Melbourne Arts Access

Allan Harrison



Photographer
Victoria Mor

(Community Artist, President of the NSW Community Arts Association)

Resourcing Ourselves

Great community arts projects don't happen by spontaneous combustion. They occur because a group of people have been able to locate the skills, equipment, technical and creative expertise and style of organisation that can turn an inspired vision into reality. Resources are designed to put people in contact with whatever they need to make their project a success. Although many resources are practical some of the most important resources in the arts are inspirational. These are the photographs, videos, writing and, of course, people who make us believe that extraordinary things are possible. That ordinary people, whatever their limitations, are capable of making beautiful and powerful creative statements. Good resources are a tool for unlocking the creative potential in us all.

1. Identify which Resources you need

Your first step is to be clear about what it is you need resources for. Often groups need help with one or more of the following areas;

- * Developing Ideas or Choosing a Project
- * Funding Options
- * Project Management
- * Employing an Artist
- * Documentation and Evaluation.

Discuss your cultural needs with your group.

Your next step is to be clear about the kind of resource most appropriate to your group. A video won't be useful to blind participants but audio tapes would be great. Your group might like to talk things through in which case your best resource would be an art resource worker. Larger organisations can sometimes adapt an existing resource to your needs. Make enquiries!

2. Use Key Organisations and People

If you are not sure exactly what you need, or if you don't know how to get it, contact one of the large arts resource organisations such as the NSW Community Arts Association, Accessible Arts and the Community Activities Network. These groups have extensive experience that is based on a knowledge of many projects and organisations across the State. They will be able to evaluate your needs and put you in touch with the appropriate people and resources. This will save you time and energy that would be better spent enjoying your project.



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3. Identify resources in your own community

Too often people overlook the skills and facilities available locally. Before you begin your project contact the following organisations to check what resources they offer;

- Local Council (Community Arts Officer, Community Services)
- Libraries
- Community Centres
- Health and Resource Centres
- Area Assistance Schemes
- Existing Cultural Facilities and Workshops.

Make use of your local Community Director.

Use the yellow pages to identify local suppliers and outlets for equipment and art materials. Take time to explain your project and how you intend to publicise it. Small businesses are often happy to sponsor projects if you agree to acknowledge them in your publicity material.

Be aware of the skills available in your community. Many people don't have the opportunity to use their skills in a creative way. Others may appreciate the chance to work with others as part of a creative team. A skills register is a great resource and will assist you to find workshop leaders in everything from applique to welding, quickly and easily. Why not put an ad in your local newspaper encouraging residents to put their names (and skills) down.

Another advantage in establishing a skills register is that it gives your group the opportunity to look objectively at the kinds of cultural statements already being made in your area. Existing cultural statements are an important resource in that they tell you about the art forms, styles and venues that your community is already comfortable with. Many successful projects have taken an existing activity, such as graffiti or cake decorating or embroidery, as a point of departure, interpreting it in new and innovative ways.

4. Resources from Unexpected Sources

Community Arts projects don't just concentrate on 'making art'. They also develop an awareness of the sometimes complicated interrelationships of community life. This dimension of the project can often be much more demanding for artists and organisers than problems of 'paint and paper'. Fortunately there are many resources available at the moment that assist us to sharpen up our 'people skills'. This doesn't mean that we become 'therapists' or start to behave like we are on day release from American Psychology. It simply means that we take advantage of ideas, techniques and skills that make for better management, more active involvement by participants and more harmonious and productive teamwork.

Organisations such as the NSW Council of Social Services, the Conflict Resolution Network, Evening Colleges and, of course, local libraries and bookshops should have courses and resources

Documentation

The photos, video, tapes and written records that document your project are an invaluable resource and it is worth ensuring that they are the best quality possible.

Plan beforehand what kind of documentation is appropriate for your project. Make sure you have the right equipment and that the person using it is comfortable with it.

Explain to everyone involved why you are documenting and what the material will be used for.

Respect the right of people to decline to be photographed. Suggest alternatives such as 'over the shoulder' shots or close-ups of the actual work being done.

REMEMBER - BE SPECIFIC. Record who was involved and what they did.

If you are taking photos, get in close and use a flash. If you are recording ask specific questions about the project, the work being done and the participant's reaction. If your budget is very limited keep a scrapbook with snapshots, quotes, drawings, snips of fabric, diary entries, to document your project. Remember to take a good 'celebration shot' of everybody at the finish of the project!

Resourcing ourselves is not just a matter of finding the right pamphlet or video. It is a skill that enables us to acquire the knowledge we need to live our lives in the most creative way possible. Above all it is an active skill requiring that we be inventive, questioning, curious, and demanding. It is a process of negotiation that is stimulated by changing circumstances. Resourcing ourselves is a fundamental step towards becoming more culturally self-sufficient.

9. Training the Community Artist to work with People with Disabilities. ANNIE HARVEY.

My introduction to working with people with disabilities was as a CEP trainee community artist at Network. The community arts project that they were running at the time was Accessible Arts and the artists were Nina Angelo and Jan Spencer. I have also trained and worked as a clown, performing at Darling Harbour, Paddy's Market, local and country festivals and children's birthday parties.

Working with Nina and Jan was a very inspiring introduction to community arts. The main thing that struck me was how natural they were in their communication with people and how adaptable they were when it came to sharing their skills.

For me working with the Accessible Arts project was a fairly confronting and wonderful experience. The people we were working with weren't confronting but a lot of my social norms and learned behaviour were challenged and also my own feelings about people's differences and vulnerabilities. When you are confronted with someone whose life experiences are very different from your own and who, through necessity, has to view things with different priorities, then the whole concept of communication takes on another meaning. By that I don't mean you have to learn another way of communicating but that communication itself becomes important.

Listening to Vivienne Binns and Jeff St. John yesterday speaking about creativity and the expression of the individual's creativity, all I could think of was "Yeah, this is what it is all about". We all know that as community artists our job is to help others to realise their own creative potential. The question is, how?

I'm one of the contact people for Accessible Arts and I seem to get all the 'arty' questions. The co-ordinator of the Australian Association of Dance Education rang me to ask, amongst other things, where her teachers could go to get training to work with people with disabilities. I said the same thing to her as I say today - You do not need formal or informal training to use your art skills to work with people with disabilities. You do need to draw on your qualities as an artist and teacher (as you do for any group) to be adaptable, giving, and open to learn from your group. If you give them the space they will be the first ones to let you know their needs.

I have a sad story with a happy ending that a friend of mine wants me to tell you.

A little 7 year old girl with downs syndrome who had grown up with her family in America; three brothers and sisters so she was fairly used to being included in things. The family moved back to Sydney and her mum took her along to be enrolled at the local gym class for 5 year olds. Her mum realised her abilities and

knew that the class would probably be suitable. So here she was dressed and ready to go to class... the teacher opened the door, took one look at her and closed the door again. Her mum eventually managed to fight her daughter's way into the class and she's having a good time and making friends. The teacher was freaked by anything out of her experience but when she opened the door again then she could begin to learn.

Tannia Vassallo and Barbara McEvoy in their talk yesterday brought up good points about not trying as a teacher to have all the answers for your students. Most people with disabilities know their own abilities and how to adapt accordingly. That's not to say don't be thinking but that it is a joint development and learning experience.

There are all sorts of different levels that artists could be working with people with disabilities, the main ones I see are:

- running art classes for people with disabilities,
- integrating people with disabilities into existing art classes,
- integrating people with disabilities into large scale collaborative community arts events.

In running drama classes for people with disabilities my starting point is always the same warm-up exercises I would use with any group. Any adaptations I make are dependent on the individual needs of the participants and the end results that they want from the time they spend with me.

When integrating people with disabilities into existing art classes there are two levels of acceptance that have to be noted; acceptance of the person by the teacher and acceptance by the class. The first I have already discussed the second is certainly helped by the artist's acceptance, but it is also dependent on trusting both the person with the disability and the general community to work it out.

My experience tells me that generally there is not a problem. I directed a youth theatre production in which two youths with disabilities were integrated. There was the normal group eyeing each other off to start with but by the end of the time the group were all abusing each other in the normal, comfortable way and the play was a great success.

The most exciting project that I have been involved in was the 'Homage to the Elements' in Terrigal. This was a large scale collaborative community arts event. My role was to integrate three young people with disabilities into the lead-up and overall performance. The artists on that project were great, and met with each of my people to work out which was the area that they wished to perform in. Each of them had to look at their abilities and work out what was appropriate. At the age I was working with that could be difficult because their image of themselves had to be realistic. The artists were working on a tight time scale and couldn't schedule separate rehearsal times so it was great that they had to rehearse with the rest of the

community. It was wonderful to watch them each grow and develop more confidence. One girl in particular found that the group things didn't fulfil her needs so she choreographed her own piece and performed it in the body of the overall celebration.

On whatever level you work as a community artist - open the doors and give yourself the opportunity to grow and learn by helping make the arts accessible to people with disabilities. The artist is the bottom line - without you access is a joke, so look at people's ability rather than their disability and open up to another rich source of creativity within your projects and classes.



Jack Skidmore and Janet Haswell



The Band "Jah-Kevin"



Mustard Seed Project Performance
with Patrick Russell

Photographer
Victoria Mon

"CREATE ABILITY" CONFERENCE - 18TH NOVEMBER, 1989

GISMOS, GADGETS AND RAMPS - Technical Aid to the Disabled

Bill Watson - TAD volunteer

Disability acquired through an accident, disease or at birth has many implications. It can severely restrict the life and emotional development of a person who suffers the disability. It may become an imposition of that person's family and friends. And it may place heavy social and economic burdens on the entire community.

Technical Aid to the Disabled has one major objective - to improve this situation.

To achieve that objective, TAD focuses on two specific operations. The first is to use the skills and energy of technical volunteers to design, construct and install aids and devices for people with disabilities where such devices are not readily available commercially. The second is to provide specialised technical advice and information to people with disabilities and to those concerned with their welfare.

In short, TAD exists to apply innovative technology so that the lives of people with disabilities can be noticeably enriched.

TAD has made a number of devices to assist people with disabilities pursue arts and crafts. These range from simple height-adjustable arm support to enable a painter with Multiple Sclerosis to pursue her work to a complex electric easel. The electrically operated easel was for a boy with severe Cerebral Palsy and also had a magnetically coupled docking platform which allows him to easily change his paint brushes.

Advice is also part of TAD's work and we are often called upon to give advice on ramps which provide the vital physical access for wheelchairs at art classes and studios. People are always amazed how much space is needed to build an adequate ramp for wheelchair access.

TAD's clients pay only for the cost of materials used in the project. Self referrals are accepted.

Our volunteers are happy to help anyone where a technical solution can help them achieve a goal.

When I was first asked to talk at this conference I was concerned that despite the catchy topic it could be rather dull for people not vitally concerned with the transport of the people. Then I realised that culture and individual creativity does not grow in a vacuum. You need other people for a culture to exist. And for people to express their culture effectively you need to be able to bring people together: performers with one another, audiences to cultural events and, other more solitary creators, such as writers, to contact with publishers and the support of others.

This is where transport comes in at this "Create Ability" conference. Without transport to get people together often in a more creative environment than might otherwise be experienced talents can lie fallow or even become extinguished through lack of a place to exercise them.

I propose to make a brief survey of some of the issues in the public transport domain, some concerns with the access of people with disabilities to the public transport system and then look at some of the practical ways to overcome the lack of access to activities in the creative arts thrown up by an inaccessible public transport system.

Public Issues.

As a preface I would like to express my belief that as our urban development becomes dominated by urban sprawl, transport difficulties associated with the transportation of the people will come to play a much larger role in the political agenda at some time in the next five years than before. The general aging of the population will increase the pressure to keep public transport on this agenda.

While a lot has been said or promised by governments since the International Year of Disabled People, very little has been achieved to make public transport more accessible to Australians as a whole. For instance, you can count the number of wheelchair accessible stations in the Sydney system on the fingers of one hand out of about 100 stations. Many people who can negotiate flights of stairs onto stations, especially in the older age group, find the gap between the train and the platform quite insurmountable. And in my experience the taxi industry has proved generally inadequate to the task of carrying some people with disabilities from their homes into the buildings which are their destinations on time. They don't see it as their job.

Public transport is concentrated on providing the most effective and cost efficient service to able bodied commuters for the high volume journey to work. From the economic perspective of the operators of the system, other costs, such as those which would be incurred to make busses more accessible to people with limited mobility, would constitute an unwanted waste of scarce resources. Indeed, the present corporate plan for the NSW State Transit Authority looks at reducing the operating losses on the government busses to nil over five years. This will not be achieved by concentrating funds on the development of public transport for those who cannot use it now.

Before we throw up our hands in despair I would like to point out that this does not have to be the way of the future. People in the United States with disabilities have a right to gain access to public facilities at the management's expense if they are not accessible. Some European and Scandinavian countries have a more accessible transport system than exists here. In England, whole new cities have been designed with accessibility as the major criterion.

As I see it a number of factors influence the accessibility of public transport for people who cannot use it now. They are:

1. Political Will. Because it is just seen as a drain on the public purse for a set of outcomes with a diffuse political impact, it is easier to cut services than save them. Those who provide the advice must also take their share of the blame. In the past the bureaucracy has been at best moribund and at worst resistant to influence from the community.
2. An historical approach to service operation which concerns its self with the needs of the system not the people it serves. The vested interest of private industry suppliers, transport unions and official administrators serves to keep the influence of the public to a minor irritant.
3. An historical and continuing process of underdesign and underplanning which does not reference the actual needs for transport only those expressed by system use.
4. A reluctance to contemplate or envisage the development of new services or improvements to serve more people not otherwise being served. The marketing and development of the system and its services to new geographical areas or to new population groups like people with disabilities and so on is woeful. For instance, a couple of years ago a brochure was produced for the community transport program which implied disabled people were being offered some sort of welfare service.

Practical Choices.

So, while we are waiting for our political and administrative masters to get their acts together lets look at how we are going to get people to where they need to be to experience createability.

First, if you want to make things accessible for people with disabilities you have to be serious about funding for their transport, especially if it requires regular attendance. Community transport or assisted taxi fares may exist, but both these services still require money to run. If it is not coming out of the coffers of the organisation running the activity it must come from the pockets of the person with the disability or their family. Most disabled people do not have lots of money as they ususally have to survive on a pension. Regular return trips by assisted fare taxi can make a real hole in a fortnightly pension. I suggest the following formular be used for calculating realistic transport costs. Allow about one dollar per kilometre per average inward trip distance per person per attendance per week of the activity. Discover if you can get the use of community transport or sharing taxis or whatever on a regular basis and adjust costs accordingly. And finally, when you have recieved the funding, advertise that transport will be supplied or costs refunded and in what proportion.

For organisations writing submissions this cost can be justified because it enables people to get to your activity who would not otherwise be able to get there. Inclusion of reasonable transport costs also protects your organisation from the accusation that you are in the business of providing arts workshops only for people who can afford it. Lack of suitable transport can be one of the factors which stops a potentially creative individual from earning money with which to support their activities. Self subsidised arts is even more difficult on the dole when you have to pay special prices to get around.

Community Transport is usually more flexible and can usually be adjusted to the need of the organisation in question.

1. Most local community transport groups have a mini bus. It may be wheel chair accessible or, have a driver or helper to assist people on and off the vehicle or both.
2. The group may run an individual transport service which might be easier for some people coming to your activity. Or, if not they may be able to guide you to someone else who can help.
3. You may even be able to change around you time to fit in with a more convenient regular service run by the group.
4. Or if the worse comes to the worst you may be able to use the a groups government supply status to get a selfdrive vehicle at bottom dollar from the local community transport group.

If by some unhappy chance you do not have a local community transport group. You may be able to get hold of a minibus and/or a driver from community aid, local councils, church groups, service clubs and/or hospitals. Be warned though the minibus may be zealously guarded. It may take quite some negotiation to get the use of it. You never know you might be get so into it you might want to start a community transport project. For more information telephone the ministry of transport office in your state and ask about community transport funding. It could be the beginning of something big. Good Luck.

Tim Sussman,
written for "Create Ability" conference Nov89

REGISTRATION LIST:

"CREATE ABILITY: A conference on creativity and disability"

Name	Organisation	Day 1	Day 2	W/shop
ANDERSON Judith	Blue Mtns. Mobile Inc.	x	-	-
BARNES Joanne	Willoughby Council	x	-	-
BENTON Bret	Spastic Centre of NSW	x	x	-
BURTON Chris	Willoughby Council	x	x	-
CALTABIANO Rose	Valley Music Centre	x	x	-
CHAPMAN Donna	Lane Cove Council	-	x	-
CRONIN Sue	Willoughby Council	x	x	-
DONNELLY Glynis	Tuggerarong Com.Arts	x	x	x
DRISCOLL Judy	Newcastle C.A. Centre	x	-	-
DUNCAN Stephanie	Centre House Inc.	x	x	-
EDMAN Angela	Spastic Centre of NSW	x	x	-
FRANCIS Sue		-	-	x
GAVAN Pam	Wesley Resid. Services	x	x	x
GRAY-ROSS David	Wesley Mission	x	x	x
GREGORY Karina	D.D. Service Hornsby	x	-	-
GURNEY David	M.S. Socy. Lidcombe	x	x	x
HARVEY Tonina	Tuggerarong Com.Arts	x	x	x
HINCHE Viv	Willoughby Council	-	x	-
HOGAN Susan	Art Therapist	x	x	x
HOWARD Adele	RAPS	x	x	x
HULL Bianca	Spastic Centre of NSW	x	-	-
IMHOF Lani	Mercy Family Life Ctr	x	-	-
JENKINS Margery		x	x	-
KEILLER George	DDS Facs.	x	x	-
KRINGAS Branka	Spastic Centre of NSW	x	x	-
LANGFIELD Kay	Willoughby Council	x	x	-
LEMS Mary	Forrest Community Arts	-	x	-
LESCHI Louise	Spastic Centre of NSW	x	x	-
LEWIS Ms.	Artist	x	x	-
LUKINS Nadine	Spastic Centre of NSW	x	x	-
MCDONALD Robyn		x	x	-
McDUFF Marion	Forrest Community Arts	x	-	-
McINTOSH Stephen	HADPAC	x	-	-
MACKINTOSH Janell	Valley Music Centre	x	x	-
McNAMARA Michelle	NSW Socy Crippled Child	x	-	-
MALONEY Mick	Richmond-Tweed RCSD	x	x	-
MATSAS Yvonne	HADPAC	-	x	-
MELE Belinda	Royal North Shore Hosp.	x	x	x
MOON Celia	TAFE outreach	x	-	-
MURPHY Claire		x	x	x
MACE Margaret	N-W Community Arts Comm	x	x	x
NOBLEZA Lucille	Tuggerarong Community A	x	x	x
NUNAN Kate	Deaf Socy of NSW	x	x	-
PATTERMORE Anne		x	x	x
PYKE Jo	KCAE	-	x	-
RISPOLI Renato	NSW Ministry for Arts	x	-	-
RITCHIE Ceri	Bowral Dist. Hosp	x	x	x
ROBINSON Jennife	Royal Blind Socy	x	x	-
SHARPE Annette	Rozelle N'hood Centre	x	x	x
SKIDMORE Jack		x	x	-
SAMPFLI Roz	Spastic Centre NSW	x	x	-
THORNE Tim	CACTI Tasmania	x	x	-
WALLACE Robyn	Paraquad	-	x	-
WAKEMAN Judy	Tramshed Community Arts	x	x	-
WALKER Jill	Spastic Centre NSW	-	x	-
WINIKOFF Tamara	Australia Council CCDU	x ⁺	-	-
WOOD Carmel	Wesley Resid. Services	x	x	x

REGISTRATION LIST: Cont.

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STAFF/COMMITTEE

Name		Day 1	Day 2	W/shop
<u>CHAMPION</u> Michael	Committee	x	x	-
<u>DONOHUE</u> Annette	Committee/Working Pty	x	x	-
<u>HARVEY</u> Annie	Committee/Working Pty.	x	x	-
<u>GRIEVE</u> Jan	Committee	x	-	-
<u>COOK</u> Holman	Committee/Working Pty	x	-	-
<u>CULKIN</u> Suzy	Committee/Working Pty	x	-	-
<u>GOLDMAN</u> Jacque	Committee	x	x	-
<u>KING</u> Dave	Committee	x	x	-
<u>MONK</u> Victoria	Photographer	x	x	-
<u>LES HOLCOMBE</u>	Tech. assistant	-	x	-
<u>McKEE</u> Barbie	Committee	-	x	-
<u>KEIGHERY</u> Vic	Co-ordinator	x	x	-
<u>HASWELL</u> Jan	Student placement KCAE	x	x	-
<u>BURN</u> Cathy	Tech. assistant	x	-	-
<u>JAH-KEVIN</u> (The Band)		-	-	-
<u>TYLER</u> , Jim	(Workshop tutor)	-	-	-
<u>ALDERDICE</u> , Carol	(Workshop assistant)	-	x	x
		-	x	x

SPEAKERS (other than staff/committee)

<u>BASS</u> Martin	Leisurelink	-	x	-
<u>BINNS</u> Viv		x	-	-
<u>DE MESTRE</u> Tori		x	x	-
<u>ST JOHN</u> Jeffrey		x	-	-
<u>HAWKINS</u> Gaye	KCAE	x	-	-
<u>HARRISON</u> Allan		x	-	-
<u>McEVOY</u> Barbara		x	-	-
<u>VASSALLO</u> Tannia		x	x	-
<u>SPENCER</u> Jan		x	x	-
<u>RUSSELL</u> Patrick	Mustard Seed	x	-	-
<u>FINLASON</u> Judy	Network	x	-	-
<u>GUPPY</u> Marla		-	x	-
<u>WATSON</u> Bill		-	x	-
<u>SUSSMAN</u> Tim		-	x	-
<u>RICHARDS</u> Rosalind		-	x	-

DAY REGISTRATIONS:

<u>FLOOD</u> , Marie	Univ. of Technology	x	-	-
<u>DUDMAN</u> , Beyerley	ARAFMI Central Coast	x	-	-
<u>MONOGHAN</u> , Sam		x	-	-

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