

SYDNEY HYER FUND
PERMANENT COLLECTION
ARTS PROJECT AUSTRALIA

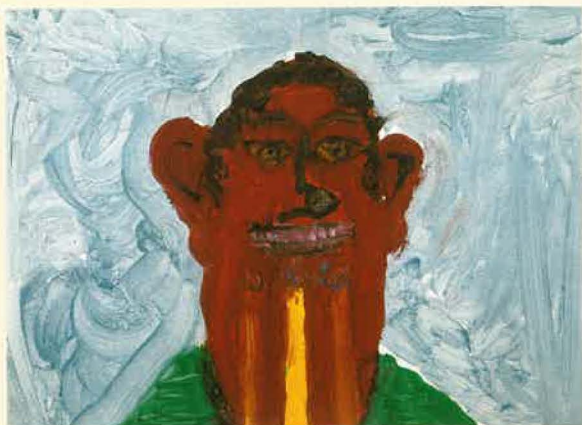


A Profile

[1999?]



Arts Project Australia



"My Friend" Artist: John Merks
from the Sidney Myer Fund Permanent Collection

Arts Project Australia is a unique organisation dedicated to the development of individual artistic expression by people with an intellectual disability and its recognition by the wider community.

Through the provision of a supportive environment, individual approaches and a professionally based exhibitions program, Arts Project Australia challenges traditional notions of intellectual disability and creativity by promoting the educational vocational and recreational aspects of visual art.

Arts Project Australia respects the creativity of people with an intellectual disability and provides them with opportunities to develop their artistic skills and awareness and to have their work appreciated in a serious way by the wider community.

Arts Project Australia Sidney Myer Fund Permanent Collection

The Sidney Myer Fund Permanent Collection is one of the only collections of artwork by people with intellectual disability in Australia.

The Collection is comprised of four hundred drawings and paintings selected from two early, landmark exhibitions: the "Minus/Plus Exhibition" in 1975 and the later exhibition, "Tommy's World" in 1980 that opened at the Canberra Australian National University Gallery, and also contains some international works.

The Sidney Myer Fund acknowledged the special importance of this collection by supporting its documentation, preservation and conservation.

The Collection is housed at Arts Project Australia, and each year selected artists currently attending the studio workshop program are invited to donate work to the Collection.

This material continues to grow in significance as a unique resource for research into the development of artwork by people with intellectual disabilities, and as a valuable document of the creative energies and abilities of individuals who would otherwise be forgotten.

The Sidney Myer Fund Permanent Collection occupies an important historical and symbolic role as the foundation upon which the organisation was established.

The Studio Workshop Program

Arts Project Australia has played a pioneering role in shifting preconceptions and stereotyped views of people with intellectual disability through its record of excellence and high achievement.

It has developed and maintained a unique studio-workshop program, staffed by practising, contemporary artists, who provide creative and technical support. Individuals make a choice to attend the programs and are encouraged to explore a range of mediums from painting, drawing, etching and ceramics using professional quality materials.

Integration is a strong operating principle within the organisation. Classes operate six days per week, and are open to any interested members of the community. These activities and other outreach programs ensure a process of integration which focuses on ability, not disability.

Arts Project Australia is committed to developing a range of diverse educational experiences and exhibition opportunities for artists.

Artists attend art classes at the School of Art and Design at RMIT (Bundoora Campus), and have worked and exhibited at the Australian Print Workshop in Fitzroy.

The successes of the Studio Workshop program lie not only in the artistic development of the individuals, but also in the more intangible realms of their personal growth, increased confidence in their abilities and the opportunity to develop their capacity for self-expression.



Above:
"An Aboriginal Lady
in a Spaceship and
our Lord and Bird
Eating a Fish." 1991
Artist: Dorothy Berry



Right:
Valerio Ciccone
working in the
studio.

The positive outcomes of the program extend beyond the immediate context by enabling individuals to achieve a social and cultural identity and to enjoy greater community participation.



(Untitled-Penguins) 1994 Artist: Alan Constable

The Supported Employment Program

The Arts Project Australia Studio Annexe Supported Employment Program has enabled some individuals to pursue art at a vocational level. This program supports them in developing careers as professional artists.

As a result of this professional development, two of these artists are now represented by an outside commercial gallery and another artist, Julian Martin, was selected for the highly prestigious 1994 Moet & Chandon Touring Art Exhibition.

Artists have also been selected for inclusion in the Mornington Peninsula Drawing Prize, the Richmond Acquisitive Art Award and the Diamond Valley Art Award and have participated in many other local and overseas shows.

The Supported Employment Program has been an excellent opportunity to demonstrate the vocational nature of Arts Project Australia's activities and has achieved a new benchmark in serving and promoting artists with an intellectual disability.

The Exhibitions Program

Exhibitions are an integral part of our activities and Arts Project Australia has been involved in over one hundred exhibitions locally and overseas.

Our own gallery in Northcote stages a full annual program of changing exhibitions which features work by artists from the studio-workshop as well as from the wider community.

The exhibitions program also incorporates shows at external venues. Over the past few years these have included the National Gallery of Victoria (Access Gallery), 200 Gertrude Street, Victorian Ministry for the Arts, ROAR 2 Studios, Linden Arts Centre, Centre d'art Differencie (Belgium), the Sorbonne (Paris), and the Honolulu Academy of Art (Hawaii).

Artists from Arts Project Australia are represented in collections in Belgium, USA (Hawaii), London, Japan, Latvia and New Zealand as well many private and public collections in Australia, including the Australian Gallery of Sport.

Gallery Hire and Painting Rental

The Arts Project Australia Gallery is available for hire by individual artists or groups. Applications are assessed on an individual basis by a selection committee. Application forms are available on request.

Arts Project Australia also operates a painting rental scheme which leases work to corporate, public and private agencies.

A wide variety of works are available and arrangements can be tailored to suit individual needs.

The Future

Arts Project Australia looks forward to its continuing involvement in the creation of opportunities for people with disabilities in the visual arts by expanding services, developing consultancies and seeking fresh challenges in exhibition development.

It will continue to stimulate and encourage critical interest in artwork by people with disabilities and seek to have the work recognised within contemporary art debates.

Our focus for the future is on ensuring continued support, encouragement and opportunities for people with disabilities to achieve recognition and participation in the visual arts and the cultural life of the community.



"Landscape" 1994 Artist: Jimmy Fuller

If you would like further information or to be on our mailing list please contact:

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Arts Project Australia is an Incorporated Association and a recognised charity. Donations over \$2.00 are tax deductible

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