

Arts Access



NEWSLETTER OF ARTS ACCESS SOCIETY INC. OCTOBER 1986

"CINDERELLA" — the movie!



"Start your day off with a smile"

Arts Access received funding from the Community Arts Board of the Australia Council and the Health Department Victoria for a six month artist-in-residency programme at Larundel. We advertised the position/s in June and received a tremendous response. Richard Bengel and Libby O'Neill were the successful applicants and they started at Larundel at the beginning of August, 1986.

Is it only six weeks ago that we began at Larundel? Our two days each week seem to go so quickly - full to the brim with greetings, meetings, planning and doing.

Initially we were a bit overwhelmed. Larundel is such a large complex of buildings and people. So much to absorb and identify about the system. So many possibilities of how to go about being "artists-in-residence".

By way of introduction we began by singing and dancing our way through a variety of wards, administrative offices and workshops - getting patients and staff to join in - letting them know two new people had arrived at the hospital. Great fun!

There are many people here who have given us a warm welcome, backed up by practical support. We have been given our own studio to work from, access to materials and secretarial services.

Our first big commitment has begun, using drama with a group who are usually involved with Industrial Therapy. Every Wednesday we work for 1½ hours in a workshop that is beginning to involve as many members of staff as patients.

The first workshop involved story-telling. Richard dressed as a wizard

style story-teller, while Libby acted/danced parts of the story. Patients were then keen to make up their own story which we both performed. Then they told a story that even more patients participated in.

With this group we are now making a large drama - "Cinderella and the Silver Slipper - The Movie". This familiar story is crammed with large characters and events and has the scope for lots of full group participation. Using Dorothy Heathcote's method of group devised drama, we hope not only to entertain but stimulate and involve patients and staff.

We plan to extend Cinderella's wedding celebration out onto the grounds of the hospital. October 8th will see a procession of characters and coaches pass through the "streets" of Larundel. There, as many people as possible from the hospital community will be gathered in.

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in lots of costumes to wave the coach by and then join in the outdoor "Wedding Breakfast"!

It's great seeing the spontaneous involvement of patients and staff - knowing they look forward to our sessions. We love working with them.

It's time for us to go and dream up the practicalities of a pumpkin coach

*Libby O'Neill and Richard Benge
Artists-in-Residence, Larundel
Hospital.*

ARTS Access

Our New Look

The above logo has been approved by the management committee and will soon grace the front of our building and be incorporated into the design of letterheads and other Arts Access printed material.

It was designed by Robin Goodall in consultation with Arts Access staff and the public relations committee. The logo, to be a vibrant red, presents a modern and lively image of Arts Access to the public and is one part of a campaign to raise the profile of the Society. As part of that campaign, a new brochure has been designed, again with the help of Robin, which details our philosophy and our work. A poster is also being planned. It is essential that the community understands the role and importance of our work and, to this end, Mark Madden has been appointed to a part-time position as public relations officer.

The general aim of the campaign is to raise the profile of Arts Access among those who are disadvantaged and disabled, the people who work with them and the wider community by showing how the creative experience can change our lives.

"Challenging ... always rewarding."

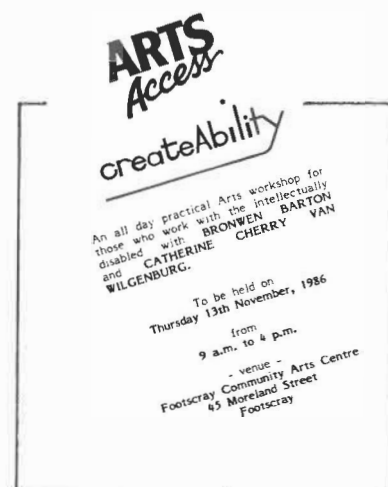
The interest in and response to Arts Access' first CreateAbility workshop in July was so encouraging that a second has been scheduled for November.

The workshop, held at St.Martins Theatre, was aimed at those who work with the intellectually disabled and included, among the forty who attended, were teachers from Special Schools, trainers, house supervisors, instructors and therapists.

The workshop was led by artists Bronwen Barton and Catherine Cherry van Wilgenburg who set out to awaken the creative ability in each participant so that they can recognise and encourage 'createability' in others.

"The day was always challenging, often uncomfortable, but always rewarding", one participant wrote, which was a response indicative of the reaction of many who attended.

The second CreateAbility workshop will be held on Thursday, November 13th, 1986 at the Footscray Community Arts Centre. Registration is limited to forty. If you would like more information or registration forms, please contact the Arts Access office on 699 8299 as soon as possible.



Feedback ...

"The boys involved in the music programme look forward to it each week; speak a lot about it and spend time practising with the drum sticks. For one boy it is the first time in his life he had achieved such great results." *Principal of a Boys Home, Melbourne.*

"In the drama programme the participants gained noticeably in real self-confidence, and encountered, many of them for the first time, the joy of display and performance rewarded by positive recognition and interest from others." *Senior Occupational Therapist, Psychiatric Centre, Melbourne.*

"He's a very reserved person, but in the drama sessions he opened out and embraced people. I'd never seen him do that before or since." *Staff Member at a Melbourne drop-in centre.*

Information access



A Resource Centre for people requiring information on the arts for the disabled and disadvantaged is being established by Arts Access.

The material in the centre, based at Arts Access, will include reports from Australia and overseas about arts programmes for the disabled, general arts information, video tapes, slides, audio tapes, newsletters, annual reports and funding guidelines. Although it will not be a lending library, Arts Access has the facilities for the viewing of slides and video tapes.

The Resource Centre will cater to students, artists, disabled and disadvantaged groups and other interested people in the community.

Clearly, it takes time to set up such a Resource Centre, but we envisage it will be ready for public use by the beginning of 1987.



Behind the mask

While practising the drama exercises taught us by Arts Access last year, the drama group of Clarendon Clinic was intrigued at the prospect of becoming involved in mask making with artist Sally Marsden.

We had to make a cast of each face as a base, to be filled with plaster. It was a sort of death mask and we then worked on each other, layering little pieces of plaster bandage over immobile, captive faces.

Sally encouraged us to find cuttings of physical appearances that fascinated us - odd features, caricatures and what have you, which we tossed around.

The cameras were brought in to record the construction of the masks. We moulded, with potter's clay, the desired swollen shape over the vaselined base and this was removed when we built up a pithy covering. Each one was painted and decorated when dry. Great fun! We speculated how each could project the image of his or her special creation.

We pierced eye holes, secured them to heads with elastic, then dressed up and leered, or maybe peered at each other!



Strangely, the most universally agreed fact was that when we lent a mask to someone else in which to caper, it took on a completely different look from its owner.

I consider that in this art of changing one's expression, there is a unique mystique.

Nola Bren

Arts Access Society

Arts Access Society is a non-profit organisation which is committed to providing access to the arts to those who are disabled and disadvantaged.

Please contact us if you would like to become a member of the Society or know more about our activities.

Executive Officer: *Diana Downie*
Programme Director: *Jo Caust*
Project Officer: *Trish Collinson*
Office Administrator: *Sue Malings*
Office Assistant: *Michelle Stone*

Public Relations Officer: *Mark Madden*
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Arts Access Society Inc., 109/111 Sturt Street, South Melbourne, 3205
Telephone: (03) 699-8299

Donations of \$2 and over are tax deductible.

Investing yourself in art

In past centuries, art used to be part of everyday life. Nowadays we have to somehow create special situations where people can partake in artistic activities.

Most people in our society are art consumers, but have very little to do with art themselves. They buy art, own art, but do not go through the process of investing themselves into artwork.

I believe it is very important and healthy to bring art to people. Not so much to acquire some sort of cultural knowledge but more to facilitate their creative experience. Creative expression allows people to maintain a physical and mental balance. I see that an artistic experience brings knowledge to people, knowledge about themselves, about their imagination, about their creative potential, about their needs and about their environment.

The study of dance movement is a study of human movement, both functional and expressive. Dance is a powerful medium. It facilitates the integration of body and mind. I believe that nowadays our society does not facilitate this integration. One of my main observations when I teach disadvantaged people is that they do not cope well with the environmental demands. I see that most of the time there is a dichotomy between their body and

mind. Anyone who has taught dance and movement, or anyone who has been observing peoples' movement behaviour, has probably realised that movement behaviour says everything. One can hide behind words but not behind movement.

When I assess the needs of my clients I try to be as objective as I can. I have been studying the Laban method analysis or Effort-Shape analysis for the last fourteen months. It is a systematic method that allows one to observe, describe and notate movement behaviour. This method has been widely used all over the world by anthropologists, ethnologists, dancers, choreographers and teachers.

Once I am able to understand my clients' movement behaviour I am able to set goals, all in movement terms, in order to free the person from any emotional conflicts. I try to help my clients to enlarge their movement vocabulary in order for them to have access to greater emotions.

I see that dance is an educational and curative process as well as being an artistic experience.

Solange Pinget

Solange Pinget has been employed by Arts Access over the past two years as a dance/movement artist, working mainly with disabled children.

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