Access Arts' Programs, Practice and Perspectives

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Right: Workshop participant, Andrew Miles, at a 1994 music workshop. Photographer: Melanie Gray

S. C. M.



Above: Angus Douglas, mixed media, 1991. Photographer: David Gerrand

## From our Patron

- Over the past eleven years, Access Arts has developed into one of the most dynamic and interesting professional arts companies in Queensland. Access Arts has worked in every artform from papermaking, to dance, to giant-sized mosaic murals, to professional theatre shows which have toured nationally. Whatever the ventures undertaken, all have contained a theme of boldness and freshness which reinforces Access Arts' basic philosophy that people with disabilities are people first and foremost.
- This book ARTability: Access Arts' programs, practice and perspective is an exciting and powerful testament to the many Access Arts members and participants, over the years, who have contributed to the creation of fine art in galleries, parks, theatres, shopping centres and festivals. They have worked with local councils, trade unions, hospitals, institutions and the general public, challenging the stereotypes concerning people with disabilities.
- The Access Arts team has worked professionally and with great enthusiasm, commitment and skill to support people with disabilities to contribute and be part of their communities, and to empower them to be advocates for a more equitable share of society's resources.
- I am honoured to have been patron of Access Arts for the past two years. I congratulate everyone involved in producing ARTability and I wish Access Arts every success with this book and its ongoing work.

Roisin Goss Patron of Access Arts

ARTabi



Left: Warren Haren at a 1995 painting class. "Painting class is one of the few times I am allowed to makes a mess. Photographer: David Gerrand

## From the Minister for the Arts

- It is a pleasure to be able to support the ongoing activities of Access Arts.
- As a non-profit professional arts company supporting people experiencing disabilities and disadvantage to pursue their ambitions in the arts, Access Arts has operated for the past twelve years in Brisbane and regional Queensland and receives on-going funding from the Queensland Office of Arts and Cultural Development and the Department of Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs.
- Some of the most recent successes have been the national recognition achieved with the tour of Cabaret Erratica to the National Festival of Australian Theatre in Canberra, the Melbourne Fringe Festival and its performance in Sydney for the Disabled People International World Assembly in December 1994. Another outstanding illustration of the success of Access Arts has been the invitation to perform in Indonesia.
- I offer the organisation and its members my sincere congratulations. We are very proud of the achievement of Access Arts. For too long, people with disabilities have been seen as passive recipients of help and charity. Access Arts provides the opportunity for people with disabilities to express themselves, to share ideas and experiences and to develop their own cultures.

#### **Dean Wells**

Minister for Justice and Attorney-General and Minister for the Arts



Above: Peter Shields and Keith Armstrong (on ground) perform in Glimpses in the Park, 1992, a multimedia outdoor theatre piece set in New Farm Park. This show was based on the real life experiences of some of the cast. Photographer: Christabelle Baranay

ARTOS



## Abourt Access Arts

- Access Arts is a professional arts organisation working across all artforms.
- Access Arts' members are people who are experiencing disability or disadvantage. This includes people with physical, intellectual, sensory, psychiatric and behavioural disabilities.
- The major role of Access Arts is to support people experiencing disability or disadvantage so they can pursue their ambitions in the arts. There are over 200 members of Access Arts, 75 per cent of whom have disabilities.
- Access Arts has five full-time staff and employs an average of 50 part-time and casual staff each year.
- Access Arts' program balances integrated community arts projects with arts skills and confidence development classes. Whilst open to everyone, these projects are designed to cater for people with support needs.
- Perhaps the two key elements which can be found in all Access Arts' work is the philosophy of integration and an integrity of expression. Not a diluted 'hobby' approach to the arts, but a fair-dinkum go.
- This is the tradition of Access Arts practice, a tradition which has been fostered by members, staff and artsworkers over the years.
- Access Arts is proud of this tradition and the thoughts, guidelines, rights and issues outlined in this booklet are the basic building blocks which have allowed Access Arts' participants to achieve their goals.

"I found working with an artist with a disability a liberating experience," said Joanne Kaspari (shown left). She was one of three artists chosen by the Queensland Art Gallery to work with Access Arts' artists for the 1993 project Across the Palettes.

Photographer: Chris Ellis





Above: Melissa Williams, Mark Reed and Peter Brandt participating in a music workshop in 1993. Photographer: Chris Ellis

Below: Christine Retchless, Ruth Gardner, Judy Legs, Gary Cross and Leone Huddle at a music workshop in 1993. Photographer: Chris Ellis



ARTABILITY



Below: Neil McCartney at music workshop, 1993. Photographer: Chris Ellis



## History of Access Arts

- The idea of an arts organisation for people with disabilities began to take shape in 1982. At the time there were no opportunities in Queensland for people with disabilities to participate in the arts.
- Barbara Allen, a Community Arts Officer with what is now Metro Arts, and Annette Innes from Arts Access in Melbourne began the process of developing arts projects for people with disabilities through the formation of Access Arts.
- Their first project was run at the Hydrotherapy Unit at the Royal Brisbane Hospital and involved the creation of a large mural. Then a theatre project *Cast Off* toured Australia on an Australia Council grant of \$20,000.
- Following this, Access Arts became incorporated in 1983.
- In the early years Access Arts was run largely by the enthusiasm of volunteers.
- As funding became available Access Arts organised activities in all art forms, ensuring there were professional support workers and accessible venues, allowing all members of the community to have access to the arts.
- Access Arts fast built a strong reputation for creating arts advocacy projects with people experiencing disability and disadvantage.
- In 1989 David Gerrand was appointed the first full-time director of Access Arts and Olwyn Redshaw was appointed the first full-time project officer.
- As the organisation grew, it became evident that a five-year plan would be of benefit in the direction and development of the company. This was introduced in 1989.
- In 1990 Access Arts coordinated the first statewide Arts and Disability conference, followed by the 1992 Inaugural National Disability and the Arts, Disadvantage and the Arts Australia (DADAA) Conference.
- Access Arts founded and has provided resources for the Queensland DADAA Network and has regularly toured artists to regional centres.
- A major aim of these tours is to train local artists to work in the field of arts and disability and assist community groups or arts organisations to include people with disabilities in their activities as a matter of course.



Artist, Pat Curgenven (shown above) participated in the Across the Palettes Project in 1993. "It was one of the best experiences for me as an artist to work alongside an artist with totally different experiences," she said: Photographer: Chris Ellis

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## Members' Rights

One of the things about having a disability is someone will always try to speak for you. This includes making decisions on what arts activity you may wish to be involved in. Access Arts is a member driven organisation, with over 75 per cent of members having disabilities.

The members of Access Arts felt it was important to state clearly what they believed were their rights:

To develop the statement of members' rights, consultation was conducted by personal interviews, planning meetings and board meetings to ensure the statement reflected all members' needs and aspirations.

## Statement of Members Rights

Every user of Access Arts' services has the right to:

- become a member of the organisation and hence to vote and to nominate for and be elected to the Management Committee
- personal assessment and programming
- choice concerning their involvement in Access Arts' programs
- access to programs appropriate to their age
- programs that are culturally appropriate
- input into program design
- service delivery and program design that is responsive and sensitive
- opportunities for integration into the arts in the broader community
- opportunities for ongoing development of skills in the arts
- special provision of support for their particular needs
- access to and participation in the arts
- access to the best possible resources that Access Arts can provide
- · access to information on their own file
- confidentiality of information held by Access Arts
- advocacy and support within the organisation
- the expectation that a positive image of people with disabilities will be generated by Access Arts
- air grievances about any aspect of the organisation.



Left: Deb Hill and Mark Reed during a 1993 movement class. Photographer: Chris Ellis

## Policies

Over the years the members of Access Arts through the board and staff have developed policies which protect and enhance their rights.

Access Arts' members and staff have developed policies covering several areas.

- The Media and Disability policy seeks to promote a positive image of people with disabilities in the media.
- The Advocacy policy outlines procedures which enable people with disabilities who need assistance to appoint an independent advocate of their choice.
- The Grievances policy establishes clear pathways, protection for the complainant and a timetable to solve problems within the organisation.
- The Sexual Harassment policy establishes a set of guidelines to try to provide a safe environment for both members and staff.
- The Purchase of Members' Artworks policy establishes protection for artists so they are not financially exploited.
- These policies are regularly reviewed alongside the strategic business plan which is rewritten every five years.

# pporturnity

Irene Dehaan (shown right) participated in the 1993 Across the Palettes Project. "It was only after the project that I was given the respect and the chance to be seen as an artist, not a person with a disability," she said. Photographer: Chris Ellis



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10



Above: David Smlth, at work in 1994. David's work is held in the permanent collection of the Queensland Art Gallery. Photographer: Melanie Gray.

## Art Paths

- All members of Access Arts have the opportunity to design their own 'art path' to enable planning of their own development in the arts.
- This may involve aiming for a professional career, learning new skills, or being regularly involved in arts activities of their choice.
- Art paths are an ongoing process with each person identifying their own goals in the arts, monitoring progress and setting new goals. They include a statement of what a person
- wants to do in the arts, what support is required, how to achieve goals and how to recognise when goals are achieved.
- Art paths enable Access Arts as an organisation, the individuals, the community and funding bodies to track how well expectations are being met.
- Four types of information are generated from art paths:
  - 1. individual options and choices
  - 2. support requirements and allocation
  - 3. project information
  - 4. accountability.
- As well as assisting individuals, art paths help Access Arts staff to develop a program of art classes.
- Each year the proposed program of art classes is presented to members at Members' Day. Members then have the opportunity to modify the program.

## their own groals in the arts, & setting new groals.



Above and below: Julie Gardner and Donald Hall at rehearsals for Cabaret Erratica in 1993. Cabaret Erratica has been Access Arts' most successful show, touring professionally to Melbourne, Sydney and Canberra. Photographer: Chris Ellis





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## Training

All Access Arts artsworkers must undergo training on an annual basis.

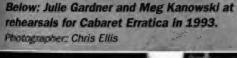
The training is designed to provide practical information as well as raise philosophical issues for artsworkers and support workers to consider.

Training includes:

- an overview of Access Arts philosophies, program and policies
- an overview of Social Role Valorisation Theory
- staff roles
- grievance procedure
- Sexual Harassment policy
- privacy issues
- anti-discrimination information
- communication techniques
- first aid
- health and safety issues
- dealing with intellectual disabilities, psychiatric disabilities and physical disabilities
- client care including toileting, lifting and wheelchair operations
- planning classes.

Access Arts has developed their own handbook for artsworkers entitled *Guidelines for Artsworkers*.

At the end of every term, artsworkers are invited to feedback sessions which provides information so training can be upgraded and improved.









Above: Access Arts' members at the 1993 Members' Day. Working groups of members discuss the annual program in small and then large groups with the aim of reaching consensus by the end of the day. Photographer: Chris Ellis



## Planning

- Like all well-run organisations, Access Arts places a strong emphasis on planning.
- In the early years when funding was hand-tomouth, planning was project-to-project, then year-to-year.
- In more recent years, Access Arts developed a five-year plan of business and artistic goals.
- This is about to be superseded by a second five-year plan which is being developed on the following analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

Strengths are:

- · talents of members
- strong philosophy
- body of work
- commitment of artsworkers and members.

**Opportunities are:** 

- untapped talent of people with disabilities
- international interest including contacts with Indonesia
- 2000 Olympics in Sydney which should include Paralympics, Special Olympics and a cultural festival
- marketing training expertise
- setting up trust fund to raise money and buy premises.

Weaknesses are:

- reliance on government funding
- community is low on socioeconomic scale
- community arts viewed as low on artistic scale.

Threats are:

- change of government policy
- pressure to keep producing work.

Above: David Smith and model during a life drawing class in 1993. Photographer: Chris Ellis .

ARTO



- Access Arts' core activity is running in-house arts classes for members and other participants.
- The classes cover a wide range of arts practice and have been designed to develop art skills and confidence.
- The type of classes depends on the preferences of members, either through their art paths or comments during the annual Members' Day.
- Classes are run over three terms usually with a set goal such as a performance, exhibition or publication.
- There are four classes which are run every year – drama, visual arts, writing and multiarts which includes music, dance and drama.
- A recent off-shoot of the visual arts class was a regular life drawing class which has become a self-supporting group.
- Each class is conducted by a professional artist with two support workers. There are a maximum number of participants, usually 15 people.
- Artists conducting the classes are expected to develop a term plan which sets goals and provides for a progression for class participants.
- The plan is discussed with Access Arts' project officer and program manager.
- Artists conducting the classes are not expected to lower the level of artistic content for participants who have a disability, however, they are expected to adapt equipment where necessary.

Time: Cost: Artists: Annual event \$50,000 Over 50 Access-Arts-trained professional artists every year. A database of artists with expertise and experience may be supplied on request. Arts Queensland, tuition fees

Funding:

Left: David Rallings during a paper-making workshop in 1992. Photographer: Chris Ellis

Above: Erin Childs who

Community Sculpture Project in 1993.

Photographer: Chris Ellis

participated in the

Paterson Reserve

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"Everything visible hides something else visible." Magritte

Above: John Best during a 1993 performance of Cabaret Erratica. Photographer: Chris Ellis

"Do the actors enjoy being whipped? I know I do"

A Cabaret Erratica cast member



Right: Karyn White and Bill Thomas during a 1993 performance of Cabaret Erratica. Photographer: Chris Ellis



## "First=rate expressionist cabaret, full of bite, tough humour and poignancy."

## Robyn Archer



## Cabaret Erratica

- Access Arts' first fully-professional theatre production *Cabaret Erratica* was originally performed as part of tenth anniversary celebrations in 1993.
- In 1994, the production toured nationally to events including the National Festival of Australian Theatre in Canberra, the Melbourne Fringe Festival and the Disabled People International World Assembly in Sydney. It tours to Perth in 1995 for the 4th International Abilympics.
- Sponsored by Telstra White Pages Directory, Cabaret Erratica features an integrated cast of actors with intellectual, physical and psychiatric disabilities, and some without disabilities.
- This tour established Access Arts as an arts company of national significance.
- Cabaret Erratica has its roots in the 1920s Berlin style where the lines between sex, disability and mainstream theatre are deliberately blurred.
- The cast of nine featured able and disabled performers.
- "Illusion is the key to Cabaret Erratica. Its characters are born-to-the-boards performers at the Much More Ballroom: voyeurs' paradise, palace of pleasure and perversity.
- "Yet suddenly, the Ballroom's traditional acts are turning towards nightmare territory, the magician is consorting with the enemy, and the greatest sleight of hand is no longer in the spotlight.

"Propelled by the European-style decadence of the music, the cast explore the prisons of our skin and circumstance; illusions of safety and danger; minor S & M variations; and the attitude of the outlaws." Meg Kanowski, Director

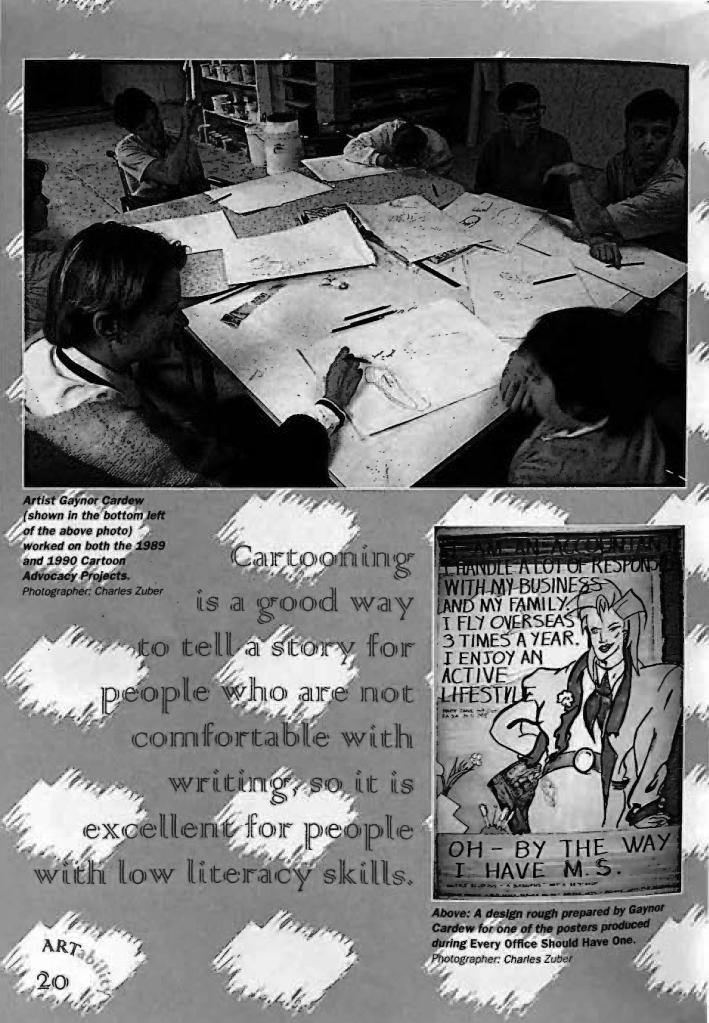
1993-94

Directory.

Time: Cost: Artists:

Funding:

\$100,000 Meg Kanowski (director), Hugh Watson (writer), Marcus Hughes and Donald Hall (music directors and composers), Gavan Fenelon (designer), Andrew Meadows (lighting). Arts Queensland, Department of Health and Human Services, National Festival of Australian Theatre, Playing Australia, Telstra White Pages



a. What

#### INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY IS ONLY PART OF THE PICTURE







INCREASE PRODUCTIVITY GIVE ALL WORKERS & FAIR GO

A WORKER WITH AN INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY HAS THE SAME RIGHTS AS YOU DO

Above: One of the finished posters by Gaynor Carden



Above: Another design rough by Gaynor Cardew. Photographer: Charles Zuber

## Cartoon Advocacy

- Every Office Should Have One was a poster project for workers with disabilities which looked at their special occupational needs in the workforce. It was the first of its kind in Australia.
- Artist Gaynor Cardew spent nine months in 1989 working with the Queensland State Service Union in Brisbane.
- She visited many workplaces, held meetings and organised a focus group to develop ideas and stories about the problems faced by workers with disabilities.
- Gaynor said the most important part of the project was gaining the confidence of participants so they would share their thoughts and ideas.
- "People with disabilities think you are just another do-gooder, in one day and out the next," she said.
- After her discussions with workers, Gaynor worked on a series of poster designs which were then taken back to the participants for their comments.
- From this evaluation six posters were chosen for printing. The Queensland State Service Union paid for four, Access Arts paid for the fifth and the MS Society paid for the sixth.
- The six posters were distributed throughout Australia. Some are still in demand and have been reprinted several times.
- Every Office Should Have One lead to another project the following year.

In 1990 Access Arts coordinated the ACTU National Advocacy Project which concerned workers with intellectual disabilities.

- Gaynor said this project was more difficult than the first.
- "It was hard work just getting people to talk about the issues," she said.

1989

Following a similar process to the first project resulted in four printed posters.

Time: Cost: Artist: Funding:

in and

\$25,000 Gaynor Cardew Visual Arts and Craft Board, Australia Council

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Thoughts on the Melrose Park project

- On leaving the Access Arts annual members' exhibition. I thanked the director. David Gerrand, for giving me the opportunity to exhibit my work for the first time. He replied, "Well, that's what we're here for Ray." I replied, "I know that, but I'm thanking you. It meant a lot to me." At first when I started on the Melrose Park project it was just going to be a Tuesday thing, then I found myself there three days, sometimes four. Even if I wasn't
- working on something, I found myself being welcomed just to drop in for a chat.
- Not only have I learnt new artistic skills by being involved with Access Arts. they have also given me opportunities to teach others these skills. The papermaking, linocut and printing skills that I picked up at Melrose Park were able to be put to use running my own group at the Nundah Community Centre. This was very empowering for me and made me quite confident in looking to other places to get work and use my new found talents.
- I have found getting over the stigma involved in having a psychiatric disability quite awesome. Working as a support worker and bus driver with Access Arts has given me the chance to view my disability in a different light. I am accepted now by others and myself, more so for who I am, not just as the label doctors have given me. I have always found Access Arts understanding and flexible to any situation that I found confronting.
- Society puts a lot of pressure on people with psychiatric disabilities. The long process of coming out has been given a helping hand by Access Arts especially through the National Mental Health project at Melrose Park.

Ray Black, 1994



Above: Print making on hand-made paper. Ray Black and Kay Ferguson participated in the 1994 National Mental Health Initiative Project. Photographer: Melanle Gray



Above: Dianne Hill painting a street-pole mural, New Farm, 1991. Photographer: David Gerrand

#### National Mental Health Initiative

## Community

Access Arts received funding from the Federal Department of Human Services and Health to develop a national model using communitybased arts projects to integrate people with psychiatric disabilities into their communities.

- The idea of a model was to enable people with psychiatric disabilities to:
  - improve their quality of life;
  - increase their community living skills;
  - reduce their dependency on health services;
  - give them the skills and confidence to inform health professionals about the type and level of support they will require in the future.

The project began with a community sculpture project in Melrose Park a small suburban park in Wooloowin. It involved local residents, community groups and people with psychiatric disabilities designing and manufacturing sculptural pieces. It was completed in September 1994 and a second project began the following month in Caboolture. This project involved public art and performance.

- This was the largest community-based project Access Arts had undertaken employing two teams of artists to work in an outer Brisbane suburb and in a semi-rural, feeder town to Brisbane and the Sunshine Coast.
- Another unique aspect of the project was that it had an independent research team evaluating the process and outcomes.
- The initial findings indicated that there was a demonstrable improvement in the health and social support of people with psychiatric illness involved in the project.
- The project was completed in March 1995 and the report was published in June 1995.

Time:	1994-95
Cost:	\$112,000
Artists	Melrose Park: David Atkinson,
	Guy Robinson, Michelle Brettle,
	Neal Price and Fred Driver.
	Caboolture: Gavan Fenelon,
	Elise Goodrich, Joanne Kaspari and Annette Poole.
Researchers:	David Gerrand, Michelle Brettle,
	Neal Price (Artist-in-residence,
	Prince Charles Hospital),
	Dr Jennifer Radbourne (QUT) and
	Cliff Leong (Caboolture Mental
	Health Service).
Funding:	Department of Health and Human
	Services, Brisbane City Council
	(in kind), Caboolture City Council.



Above: The New Farm Mosaic Rose Mural, made in 1992. Is the largest community mosaic mural in Brisbane. Photographer: Chris Ellis

Exist. 1.

Over 70 participants from the local neighbourhood, Aboriginal people, local Special Schools, Access Arts members and staff and psychiatric patients worked on the mural ... They were free to make their own contribution and felt a greater ownership and communitionent to the project.

In some to think

## New Farm Park Mosaics

Brisbane's 1994 White Pages featured a photograph of one of Access Arts' two New Farm Park Mosaic Murals with the caption "Access Arts – harnessing community spirit...".

Designed and coordinated by former Access Arts Project Officer, Kez van Oudheusden, the first mosaic stretches 5 x 3.2 metres along a block wall of a sports shed in New Farm Park.

Over 70 participants from the local neighbourhood, Aboriginal people, local Special Schools, Access Arts members and staff and psychiatric patients worked on the project from February to November 1992.

- By giving groups and individuals the opportunity to make their own contribution to the mural, they felt a greater ownership and commitment to the project. Mosaics are a good form of expression for people with low motor skills.
- The mosaic has a central art deco rose garden motif. New Farm Park is famous for its rose garden and its rotunda and kiosk are designed in art deco style. The central motif is surrounded by a frieze made up of individual designs. It is constructed from broken pottery, tiles, crockery, cups and saucers donated by residents, local businesses and tile shops. It is an environmentally-friendly piece of public art.
- The mosaic was officially opened by Access Arts patron Ms Roisin Goss on 11 December 1992.
- Following the first mural, Brisbane City Council approached Access Arts to produce a second which was completed in 1994. Artists Kim Davies, Keith Armstrong and Chad Ryan worked on Kez van Oudheusden's design to complete the second mosaic mural in New Farm Park.

Public meetings were held with local residents and library staff discussing potential designs. Kez then produced a design which was on public display at the library for further comment. Once the Brisbane City Council approved it, work commenced. It took nine months to complete.

- The mosaic measures 5 x 2 metres and is comprised of recycled bathroom and kitchen tiles and broken crockery. Local businesses donated materials and the project was funded by the Brisbane City Council.
- The Brisbane City Council has approached Access Arts to feature these projects in a special handbook in community arts.

Time: Cost: Artists: Funding: 1992 \$15,000 Kez van Oudheusden, Kim Davies, Chad Ryan. Brisbane City Council, local businesses.

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#### Follow that Dream

- Follow that dream was only one of many hit singles recorded by the late king of rock'n'roll Elvis Presley.
- I think it's by far the best advice I can give anyone, whether they be able-bodied or disabled like myself...
- From the age of 10 years, I was educated at the Spastic Centre of New South Wales which is situated in the Sydney suburb of Mosman.
- The Centre had a theatre-sized entertainment room complete with huge, revolving stage and beautiful wine-red velvet curtains.
- The concerts held there featured various brief plays by the students who would become stars for a day...
- That's when I knew, once and for all, that a show business career was for me. I was determined to follow that dream...
- A dream I have is to become a movie star and act alongside some of my favourite celebrities.
- Whether it will come true or not is another matter, but there's always the chance it could. You just never know what's around the corner.
- However, there's one thing I do know. I'll look forward to yet another fantastic year with Access Arts and continue to follow that dream.

#### Jeanne Lavallée

#### Haikur

Drinking lots of beer faster, faster, through a straw bottle is empty

**Elizabeth Navratil** 

#### Foot Art

- Art is a wonderful thing. It's all around us. It comes in many forms: drama, writing, painting and sculpture, even the way we move our hands. Some people even say that love-making is a form of art.
- I have no use of my hands, but I'm able to use my feet. I like to paint and I love to mix the different colours with my big toe. It's like creating a new world coming to life.
- The best part of it is that you can make any sort of world that you like. It only takes a bit of imagination and some paint.
- I like doing mainly landscapes and abstracts. But sometimes I get so frustrated when I can't get anyone to set me up with the paint and water. I feel like yelling out and tipping paint everywhere - and over everyone. But when I start, I go into another world – like when I'm writing. I forget about everything; I go into my own world of make-believe and colour. I forget who I am and where I am.
- When I'm painting, my foot becomes a paintbrush and my mind becomes a picture or an object. When I'm writing, I become the person in the story.

So that's why I like art. Thanks to Access Arts.

#### **Bernadette Taylor**

#### Being Capable

- I have a slight disability which is cerebral palsy. I'm quite capable of doing most things, but it takes a little longer.
- As a young child my mother couldn't see that I would be capable of doing very much at all...
- She mightn't say that now if she was here. Once, mum was staying with me for a longer period in my unit, when she started to see what I could do.
- She said, one day, "Kathy, I didn't realise how well you could manage."
- I was amazed to hear mum saying that. A friend taught me to read and write. It took many years, but we got there. I thought it was best not to tell my mother until I made a little headway with it. Because she told me many times that I didn't have the concentration to learn.

Kathy Brennan

#### A Transport of Delight

- The Access Arts bus is white with wheels and headlights, windscreen wipers and bumper bars, windows and doors. There is an hydraulic lift tucked neatly into the back. It is not an ordinary bus. I like to think of it as a performance piece, an installation with attitude.
- Consider the scratches and dents in the paintwork. They are minimalist but trees and fences and posts have moved to make those marks. The floor of the bus carries the traces of previous activities. An archaeological dig would reveal the ceramic fragments of a mural, stone and glass from a sculpture garden and fabric scraps from theatrical events. Brushes and dazzling paints, photographs and the ubiquitous black umbrella could be excavated. A jumble of straps snake across the floor and up the walls. For the connoisseur there is an exquisitely hand-crafted extension for the hydraulic lift made from recycled industrial steel.
- The heart and soul of this bus are its passengers with their bags of emotions: anger, frustration, anticipation or excitement. The space is filled. Weariness and pleasure are for the journey home. The noise is talking. Conversations with oneself and friends are animated. Some people recreate with sounds of driving: horn, blinker and handbrake. Others articulate more fully the abuse hurled by the driver at wayward cars and pedestrians. The bus makes music and dances. Its smell is thankfully not old dogs and cigarettes. Perhaps the sweet scent of success is dabbed behind the wheels.
- If you are looking for "oh, what a feeling" you can bang your head on the roof, jam a finger in the door or bring the lift down on your best foot. Of course the main purpose of this user-friendly installation is to transport people to and from activities. It is the bus to access arts.

#### Sue Taylor

## Writing by Members

#### The Best Day of my Life

It all started at the doctor's surgery. I had just turned eight. I couldn't say a word, but I knew everything that was going on. When I saw the doctor take out his rubber hammer to test my reflexes I started to kick my legs. so my father told me to sit still. he doctor banged my poor bony knee and it hurt like hell. That's when I said my first word... a swear word. Who would have thought that my first word would be "Bugger"? Everybody thought it was a boy outside, so they closed the door, and the doctor went on with the test. This time my father had me on his knee. "One more time", the doctor said. Then he got my leg and hit my knee with his rubber hammer again, and I said "Bugger!" again. My father looked at me excitedly and said "That's my daughter!"

All the way home I kept on saying it: "Bugger... bugger... bugger!" I guess I was the only kid in the world whose parents were pleased she was swearing.

#### **Bernadette Taylor**

- Go to Peak
- I think I thank

I finger the scope of absolute corporeal until moonshine shows...

#### l no l now

I know Vision by human nature be alright... fine and well

#### l go I goad

I goatee to place of spike... Peak Marvellous spirited view of vision over land with out green no rainbows colours to compere No rainbows So time goes, it goes it goes it goes

E-v-e-r-y w-h-e-r-e

#### Andrew McLean

rir



## Visual Arts Exhibitions

- Every year Access Arts holds an exhibition of work by members. In early years this was a display of all work submitted by members.
- In 1994, with a growing professionalism, the policy was changed so that the best of the work would be selected for hanging.
- In November 1994, Access Arts held its first professionally curated and hung exhibition of visual art.
- A total of 40 artworks were submitted for consideration by 22 artists.
- Two categories of two-dimensional and threedimensional works were assessed by a selection panel of Irene Girsch-Danby, the Queensland Arts Council's Exhibition Manager and Neal Price, Artist-in-Residence at the Prince Charles Hospital.
- The exhibited works were selected based on quality as well as with the aim of showing the diversity of Access Arts members styles and mediums used.
- The position of the space in the heart of Brisbane's city shopping centre exposed the artists to a wide public audience of city shoppers and workers. An average of 50 people viewed the exhibition each day.

Time: Cost: Artists: Funding:

00

Annual event \$1,000 Access Arts members. Arts Queensland.

Left: VisABILITY 11, a visual arts exhibition, held at the Arts Council of Queensland Gallery in 1992. Brisbane City Councillor David Hinchliffe, Peter Owen, David Gerrand and Lester McGregor (seated) look at one of Lester's paintings. Photographer: Chris Ellis "Everyone has the chance to perform, to be creative. The only limit is our imagination." Sally Baker at a music workshop in 1993. Photographer: Chris Ellis





Above: Members of the Passions and Perceptions cast: Sue Taylor, Kathy Brennan. Sharon Casey and Debbie Grice. The show featured members' poetry, dance and Renalssance music played by the Cantelina Players and Singers. Photographer: Melanie Gray

AR7.6

### What Can We Do? - Video Project Explaining Discrimination

- The most common subject of complaints to the Queensland Anti-Discrimination is sexual harassment.
- For women with intellectual disabilities, sexual harassment is something they have to deal with constantly. Few understand their legal rights or how to take action to stop harassment.
- Sexual harassment emerged as the major issue when Access Arts and communications company ToadShow ran workshops with Access Arts' members and conducted research for an anti-discrimination video aimed at people with intellectual disabilities.
- Unfortunately most of the excellent material on this issue is in printed form which is of little use if you have no or little literacy skills.
- Access Arts wanted to make a video which involved the target group in the research and performance of the piece.

What Can We Do? was the common cry of the women who told their stories.

- The video tells three stories about discrimination of people with disabilities and how they might be resolved. Two of the stories are about sexual harassment.
- A special edition of the video was produced in AUSLAN.

Time: Cost: Artists: Funding: 1994 \$25,000 Sean Mee, Anne Jones, Gary McFeat. Community Cultural Development Board, Australia Council.

Access Arts ventured into the world of video with "What can we do?", a production to explain harrassment and discrimination in an accessible format.

### Access Airits

Director: Program Manager: Project Officer: Secretary:

David Gerrand **Robert Plant** Marcus Hughes Elaine Neill

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Please contact Access Arts for more information about the policies and activities of the organisation.

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- The Queensland Government through the Department of Family Services and the **Oueensland Office of Arts and Cultural** Development.
- The Federal Government through the **Community Cultural Development Board** of the Australia Council.

The Brisbane City Council through the Community Development Committee and Cultural Services Branch. Telstra White Pages Directory.

**Right: A performance by** the movement and music class on Members' Day 1993. Photographer: Chris Ellis

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Above: Participants at the multi-arts workshop in 1993. Photographer: Chris Ellis

Access Arts members, artsworkers, and staff before the drinks were served at the 1994 Christmas party at New Farm Park Photographer: Melanie Gray



