

Kew Cottages celebrates spring

Stilt walkers, dancers and musicians were all a part of the Spring Flower Festival held at Kew Cottages in October. The festival involved many of the residents and staff in some exciting activities, including a Spring Hat Competition that featured hats made by all the units.

Kew Cottages has been the site of some exciting work during the artists-in-residence that has taken place throughout 1990. The Spring Flower Festival was one of the year's highlights.

The typical Melbourne spring weather did little to dampen the enthusiasm and enjoyment of the day's events. Music and singing was provided by "Dream Cafe" and everybody got up and danced in between the showers.

The artists-in-residency, funded by The Sidney Myer Fund, has involved artists Lyndsay Mason and Kate Clere working with those clients who had been accessing three hours or less programme involvement in a week. Some of their activities have included the creation of a 'sensory room', which is a soft tactile room with a mixture of sensory stimulus



Enjoying the day at the Kew Cottages Spring Festival.

for the clients.

A creative package programme is another angle Lyndsay and Kate have organised where they prepare a complete 'art

package' for staff to enjoy with clients. Flags and banners have been created to decorate some of the units and flower murals are next on the list.

Castlefield Community Festival

During 1990, Arts Access ran a mural and festival project at the Castlefield Community Centre aimed at linking and celebrating the many diverse cultures within the local community.

The Castlefield Community Festival was held in early October. The mural was officially launched at the festival which was in itself a highly successful day of fun and activities.

A Mandolin Orchestra, Gypsy the knottologist, Maypole dancing, Australia's youngest rock group KAZAM, folk dancing, buskers, magicians and lots of displays and stalls all featured to make an exciting day.

Other performers included The Love Birds, a Turkish group that played alongside a female Turkish Dance group, the Brighton Exercise Group and the Light Opera Company.

Funded by the Lance Reichstein Foundation, the project gave many people within this diverse community the chance to meet and engage in activities together, sharing skills and experiences. The festival was well attended, especially by the residents of the Castlefield Housing Estate. Many residents in fact were also very involved in the running of the event.

Artist Maria Filippow worked with the community on the development of the mural which reflects the theme of the festival - Community.

The mural is now hanging in the Castlefield Community Centre and has three components: Sandringham's natural heritage, the historical heritage of the area and a contemporary representation of Sandringham.

Arts Access plans for 1991

At this time year, much of Arts Access' time is spent planning a range of programmes for the year ahead. Securing funding for those programmes is a lengthy process and we are presently awaiting the outcome of funding applications for a range of exciting projects for 1991.

Many of these projects have developed from the work done throughout 1990 whilst others are new initiatives.

Among them are the following projects:

Touring Exhibition

The various exhibitions held over the last two years have been so successful that a major touring exhibition is planned. It will highlight the works of a cross-section of disadvantaged artists, tour to three metropolitan and three country venues and provide an opportunity for participating artists to run workshops about their own work.

The Integrated Dance Programme

The success of this project during 1990 has been such that participating groups are keen to continue on in 1991. The project aims to successfully link young people from mainstream primary schools and special development schools in dance and movement workshops.

Young people and festivals

Young homeless and disadvantaged people will have an opportunity to link with the St Kilda Festival through a banner-making project. The banners will line the Esplanade during the festival. Following the festival, a series of screen-printing workshops will help the participants communicate their ideas to the local community.

Integrated Performance Project

An exciting initiative has been developed between Prahran TAFE and Arts Access.

An integrated course is being developed as part of the Showbiz programme to lead to the creation of a small professional performance group. This "suitcase group" will also learn personal management and arts business skills.

In addition to these projects, work will continue with the residents of Special Accommodation Houses and people attending psychiatric day centres. This work continues to be made possible through the Office of Psychiatric Services.

Successful projects conducted throughout 1990 will continue in 1991 including the Resource Project, the Community Linking Project, the Kew Artists-in-residency and the Arts-at-the-Austin project.

At the moment, Arts Access has nearly 30 practical projects planned for 1991. In addition, the EASE programme will continue to operate and develop along its present lines.

If you would like more information on any of Arts Access projects or if you have any particular interests in making the arts more accessible, contact Arts Access' Senior Project Officer, Ray Richards, on 699 8299.

Christmas message— Justice all year round

As always, 1990 for Arts Access has meant creating opportunities in the arts with disadvantaged people. This year, however, all of those working with us have focused more and more on the importance of making the whole arts industry more equitable, more just.

The EASE programme worked with ACROD to produce The Melbourne Venue Guide, highlighting the pluses and minuses of access to our entertainment and recreation facilities.

The P-art-ICIPATE Conference and National Forum highlighted the need for increased recognition and better resourcing of people with disabilities in the arts.

The Community Linking Project worked with people running arts activities in the community to establish more and better opportunities for individuals to get involved in the arts.

The Inside Art exhibition showcased and marketed the visual arts work of people with psychiatric disabilities. Women prisoners, children in remand, homeless men and those who were seriously ill expressed views about their worlds in powerful ways.

At a time when the whole community is seriously concerned about economic values, it has been heartening to see the support and enthusiasm we've received, ensuring that enjoyment in the arts is not just for the few.

Thankyou for your support this year. As we look forward to a Christmas time of peace and justice, I know I can rely on you to help us make these good wishes a reality for 1991.

Sincerely



Kate Brennan
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Inner visions of outer images

Lady Young officially opened the 'Inside Art' exhibition held during October at the Caulfield Arts Complex.

With its title of 'Inside Art: Outer Images of Inner Visions', the exhibition comprised contemporary paintings, drawings and sculptures by established and emerging artists.

This exhibition was mounted to coincide with Mental Health Awareness Week and featured selected works by psychiatric patients from clinics, hospitals, day centres and community health centres around Melbourne.

Much of the work was of an extremely personal nature, with the artists concentrating on images and themes closely connected with the emotions and experiences of their daily lives.

The exhibition, which ran for nearly two weeks, was a big success and many people have expressed the desire to exhibit again next year.

Horsing around at the Austin Hospital

How do you turn a large, colourless, drab room into something more lively and inviting?

Answer: Turn it into a circus!

That is exactly what artists Sally Marsden and Jenny McCarthy have done to the Outpatients Area at the Austin Hospital as part of the Arts-at-the-Austin project.

Working with staff and patients of the hospital, Sally and Jenny have spent the last several months painting walls and freestanding signs with clowns, elephants, balloons, trapeze artists, horses and much more to make the area a really vibrant and exciting place to be.

The mural was designed to present a welcoming environment whilst the free standing signs have been designed to overcome the disorienting affect the unfamiliar surroundings can often have. Comments from patients have proved that the concept has been successful.

Arts Access is working with the Austin to ensure that the Arts-at-the-Austin project continues in 1991 on an on-going basis, allowing for many more areas within the hospital to take part in these innovative activities.



Artist Sally Marsden (second from right) with staff and patients of the Austin at work in the Outpatients clinic.

The mural will be launched in mid-December by Mrs Jean McCaughey and will include a day of fun activities for the whole hospital, with local school children providing the entertainment.

The Outpatients Area is the first point of contact for the majority of the Austin's patients. In any one week, thousands of people pass through Outpatients, many of them experiencing long waits to visit their clinic.

The national perspective

On November 26th, Arts Access will host a national meeting of those active in the Arts/Disability/Healthcare fields throughout Australia.

Generously supported by the Strategic Planning Unit of the Australia Council, this meeting aims to introduce the many people active in this field, to identify the breadth of activity across the country and to take the first step in establishing national networks and strategies.

Each state will be represented. Arts in Action in South Australia, Access Arts from Queensland, Accessible Arts from

NSW, many organisations and individuals from other states and those active within the field in Victoria.

The meeting will be fast and furious, with a full agenda and limitless opportunities. Arts Access is excited to be taking this national initiative and I am sure readers will look forward to hearing the outcomes of this day next year.

The meeting will also be attended by Penny Eames who is the manager of Arts Access in New Zealand (part of the QEII Arts Council). Penny will provide another valuable national and international perspective.

Memories and whimsy – the Heatherton Mural

Many people wonder at how residents of a psychogeriatric unit could create a mural.

Residents of Heatherton Hospital's South One ward worked for several months with artist Lynden Bobbit to create the mural pictured above.

While many people had severe memory loss and limited ability to participate, all shared memories, stories and glimpses of their lives in order to start the mural off. Lynden talked and listened and many of the staff shared ideas about what sort of pictures might make a pleasant and enjoyable environment in what was a plain ward.

A country home, a fairground and a magical sky emerged. Some parts of the mural were three dimensional so that residents could touch and remember. The sister of one resident created a beautiful textured peacock.

The mural was launched in September as part of a Spring Festival that was organised by staff. At the launch, it was



Putting the finishing touches to the Heatherton Mural.

clear that families and friends admired the work of the residents and that Heatherton Hospital has a deep

commitment to aspects of healthcare that reach into the spirit of those they are supporting.

Dancing wheels

Wheelchair dancing has finally come to Melbourne thanks to the recent visit of the world's leading exponent of wheelchair dancing, Corrie Van Hugten and her partner Ondine de Hullu.

Dutch-born Corrie was in Melbourne in November as part of an Australia-wide tour which included Sydney, Canberra, Adelaide, Perth and Melbourne.

Two workshops were conducted with more than sixty people learning a variety of dances including the Lambada and some rock'n'roll!

Corrie and Ondine both live in Holland where they have established the Dutch Foundation of Wheelchair Dancing which has more than 1500 members throughout the Netherlands.

Corrie was a professional dance instructor for 15 years in Holland before an illness cut down her promising career ten years ago and she was told she would never dance again.

After seeing a very simple style of wheelchair dancing in England, she realised that all kinds of dances should be possible in a wheelchair and so began to develop her technique for wheelchair dancing.

Corrie's passion for dancing now takes her all over the world teaching and demonstrating the art of wheelchair dancing.

Every form of dancing has been translated into wheelchair dancing by Corrie and Ondine, including waltzes, rumbas and Latin American.

The enjoyment of dancing should not be restricted to those who could stand upright, she said. "The most important thing is, you feel the music in your body, in your heart. That's the place where able-bodied people feel it and it's the same for people in wheelchairs. Even lying in bed you can dance, you can twinkle your eyes or tap your fingers."

At present, there are very few people qualified in Australia to teach wheelchair dancing. Part of Corrie's visit to Sydney was to run teacher-training sessions so that more people can be introduced to the fun of the dance-floor. Arts Access is hoping to assist Corrie to return to Melbourne some time in the new year to run similar sessions.

Stop press

Here's a chance to take part in some wheelchair dancing of your own.

Lynette Salmon, who attended Corrie's teacher training workshops in Sydney, will be running wheelchair dancing classes in Boronia on a monthly basis from December 1990. Lynette is Victoria's only qualified wheelchair dancing teacher.

The classes will be held on the 4th Saturday of every month at the Boronia Church of Christ Hall between 2pm and 4pm. The cost per class will be \$2.00. The first class will be on November 24th with the second one scheduled for December 22nd. For more information and bookings, contact Alph Stephens on 881 8333.

P-art-ICIPATE '90—an Australian first and a big success

The P-art-ICIPATE '90 conference, held on September 23rd and 24th was a state and national first and an overwhelming success.

P-art-ICIPATE '90 aimed at focusing on the achievements and concerns of people with disabilities in the arts.

Attended by over 200 participants and presenters, there were many highlights of the conference.

These included the P-art-ICIPATE '90 exhibition opened by Mirka Mora and visual arts workshops including sculpture, computer arts, weaving and an artists speak forum.

Performing arts workshops included dance run by Pam Sullivan and the Milparinka Dancers, music workshops with Gonghouse and improvisational dance, storytelling and drama. The lovely surrounds of Victoria College were home to parachutes, orchestras, outdoor performances and environmental sculpture.

The seminar workshops produced important recommendations in employment and training, media representation, resourcing and arts planning and community education.

The conference began with an introductory statement by artist Phil Driver which raised some of the main concerns and issues.

These were:

- That the arts belong to everyone;
- That the achievements of people with disabilities are an exciting and innovative part of the arts life of the community;
- That the arts can and should be made more accessible;
- That there is a need for affirmative resourcing by arts authorities of the initiatives of people represented by conference participants;
- That unions and affirmative action agencies have an important role to play in creating employment opportunities in the arts with people with disabilities.



Gonghouse lead an exciting percussion and music workshop at P-art-ICIPATE '90.

Chris Biddle, president of the P-art-ICIPATE '90 Steering Committee, felt the conference was successful in every sense of the word.

"In each of the 48 workshops, I saw genuine involvement and pleasure amongst the 180 people who shared their skills and ideas and each workshop had a vastly different impact on me, the observer.

"What I saw was an impressive range of talents in the textile designs and ceramic plates; in the dance, performance and innovative drama; in the painting, exhibiting and discussion of individual art pieces; in the sculptures and orchestral music; in the voice production, writing and artists' forums. The list goes on."

"I feel the strongest outcome of the conference was the statement that it is the talent, not the disability, that stands on its own in the community."

A comprehensive conference report will be available from Arts Access in December with a summary of process, recommendations, activities and evaluation. In addition, slides and

photographs are also available from Arts Access' Resource Centre.

As a follow on in 1991, a series of weekend workshops are planned.

Perhaps the participants themselves are the best at summing up the weekend;

"very friendly and dynamic"

"an opportunity to talk, learn and share skills and meet other artists"

"the best experience, I've seen things I never knew"

"a sense of comradeship and unity"

"a marvellous experience, I wouldn't have missed it for the world"

"P-art-ICIPATE uplifted my hopes for the future of the arts in Melbourne"

EASE— still going strong.

One of Arts Access' major on-going projects is the Entertainment Access Service known as EASE.

EASE has been operating for three years now and, despite funding problems, looks like continuing well into the future.

Under the guidance of project officer Julie-ann Willems, the service has continued to operate as a ticketing and information service throughout 1990, distributing more than 7000 tickets to many different shows and sporting events in Melbourne.

During 1990, in conjunction with ACROD, EASE produced The Melbourne Venue Guide with venue assessments on 19 venues, assessing disabled facilities, physical access, seating etc.

These venue assessments will continue in the new year with the possibility of a second edition of The Melbourne Venue Guide late in 1991.

If you would like more information on EASE and the services it offers, Julie-ann can be contacted at Arts Access on 699 7636 Monday to Friday.

Imagine this... it's finished!

'Imagine this...' a video looking at the arts and disadvantaged groups and individuals, has finally been completed and will be launched in mid-December.

Produced by Arts Access, 'Imagine this...' looks at the uniqueness of the arts and their enormous potential to change people's lives for the better.

The video uses a range of arts projects involving disadvantaged individuals and groups and looks at the enjoyment and benefits that come from such involvement.

'Imagine this...' will be a valuable resource for people in self-help groups and community groups as well as support workers, professionals, families and volunteers. It is hoped it will inspire them to get involved in the arts whilst showing them the benefits and giving them information about how to develop and manage their own arts activities.

The video will also be an active advocate for the arts, showing them to be a valuable and empowering area of activity and a catalyst for people to take positive steps in their own lives and services.

'Imagine this...' will be available for sale or hire and will be used as a valuable part of Arts Access' resource activities. For more information, contact the Resource Project Officer at Arts Access on 699 8299 from Tuesday to Thursday.

ARTS ACCESS SOCIETY

Arts Access Society is a non-profit organisation committed to providing access to the arts for people with disabilities or who are disadvantaged.

Executive Director: Kate Brennan
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EASE Project Officer: Julie-ann Willems
Resource Officer: Carol Downey
Office Administrator: Rhona Bester
Office Assistant: Samantha Marsh
EASE Bookings Assistant: Barbara Milne
Volunteer Office Assistant: Linda Smith
EASE Volunteers: Hilary Ash
Betty Rankin
Barbara Kitchen

Donations of \$2 and over are tax deductible.

Have you considered becoming a member of Arts Access? Join now and you will help us reach more people with more programmes.

Memberships range from \$15 for concessional membership, \$30 for single membership to \$50 for organisational membership and is tax deductible.

Members are kept up to date with the year's activities through the quarterly newsletter 'Access'. Members receive discounts on all Arts Access publications and are invited to participate by attending those programmes that culminate in public performance or exhibition.

For more information, contact

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ARTS ACCESS SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Registered by Australia Post
Publication No. VAW7218

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