

Crossroad Arts 2017 Annual Report



Introduction

ambitious, transformative, evolving...

2017 was a mammoth year for Crossroad Arts. We delivered programs in Mackay, Winton and Japan, travelled to San Francisco for the Superfest International Disability Film Festival, presented two major works as part of our cross-cultural creative recovery efforts and celebrated our 20th anniversary by thanking founder Steve Mayer Miller for his significant contribution to community cultural development. We also and welcomed Alison Richardson as Crossroad Arts' new Artistic Director/CEO in November. It was a year of significant change, far reaching artistic programs with diverse audiences and participants and the building of new horizons for our company.

We are pleased to present our 2017 Annual Report. We would like to share our learnings, our successes and what motivates us for our future programs.

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Steve Mayer- Miller Report (AD/CEO and founder)

Artistic Director/CEO Report. 2017 was another bold and groundbreaking year for Crossroad Arts. We kicked off our 20th year of operation early in January with another ambitious overseas project. Hot on the heels from our December Gama project we travelled again to Sendai, Nagoya and Oshima Island in Japan to work with people with disabilities and those affected by Hansen's disease.

Accompanied by photographer and actor Brenden Borellini with his carer Autumn Skuthorpe, we began our journey creating a film in Sendai 'When Brenden met Hiroe'. working with members of Able Arts Japan. Later the film would be selected to be screened at the 25th Superfest International Disability Film Festival in San Francisco in November and provide us with another opportunity to expand our international network. At Oshima Island we organised a translated live video conference between our chair John Pickup, members of the Miyagi Prefectural Government and people affected by Hansen's disease.

In Mackay, arts worker Dougal McLauchlan continued his mentoring dance program with Sally Morley in the downstairs studio which would eventually lead to a public multi media dance performance in the studio later the next month.

One of the key goals of 2017, as set out by our new Executive Officer Autumn Skuthorpe in January was to tighten the administrative arm of the organisation. This included a system of multiple checks and balances with cash flows, an upgrading of the digital filing system to enable a more streamlined way of recording receipts and bills and the upgrading of the company's website. With participants from Endeavour joining our workshop program and the creative ageing program happening at Homefield Aged Care, Crossroad Arts was firing on all pistons in the first half of 2017 as we prepared for the major production in July 2017. On March 28 Cyclone Debbie hit the Queensland coast, creating severe flooding particularly in outlying areas. We responded by pooling our energies into finding ways of telling and re telling the stories of that cyclone and of others. Our company has a long history of working with communities in times of natural disasters and using art as a way for people to respond and reflect on their experiences. Solomon Islander Andrew Satini joined the Creative Disaster team on Saturdays along

with Jess Newman and visiting Japanese dancer Shin Sakuma who flew over for a 3 week residency. They were joined by members of the Small Miracles ensemble to create Meetings with Remarkable People which premiered in Mackay at the Parish Gardens on July 6,7 and 8 for the Arts Festival.

Jeremy Smith from the Australia Council flew to Mackay to see the show and also present me with the Ros Bower Award.

During this time, plans for a recruitment program were under way to find a replacement AD/CEO for myself. Cathy Hunt from Positive Solutions in Brisbane managed the process and worked closely with our Chair John Pickup to find a suitable candidate.

In October, Alison Richardson from Sydney was selected and she commenced duties on Nov 1.

The Board meanwhile was busy preparing for a professional development workshop with Tracker, a company who specialise in governance matters. Arts Queensland provided the funding. The workshop was well received and the Board are keen to continue doing more workshops.

In August I received a grant from the Japan Australia Foundation and left for Japan to direct a 9 community arts project with people in the Tohoku region affected by the 2011 Great Earthquake and Tsunami. 800 people engaged with the final outcomes with 5 films 3 public art exhibitions and a theatre production including a major dance performance at the Sendai Wheelchair Dance Festival.

While I was in Japan, Autumn Skuthorpe and Matt Tandy travelled to Winton for 2 weeks to assist artist Sue Hayes in the creation of a giant puppet for the Winton Outback Festival. When they returned both went straight into rehearsals with the Small Miracles ensemble with Autumn directing Meetings with Remarkable People Stage 2 at the Mackay Conservatorium on October 15. The audience's response was an overwhelming thumbs up.

On November 1 Matt Tandy, Brenden Borellini and I travelled to the USA for the screening of our film When Brenden met Hiroe in San Francisco. It was critically well

received. In 2017 Crossroad Arts was a hive of activity as we continued to fulfil our strategic vision of producing outstanding community art with and for our aged care and disability participants and partners in Mackay, Winton and Japan.

What keeps this engine room of creative energy and flair focused and on track is the support of a Board who share that vision. I would like to take the opportunity of thanking the board and particularly our Chair John Pickup for leading the board in 2017. Furthermore I would like to thank him for taking on such an enormous workload in the recruitment process. Thank you John. I would like to also thank our Executive Officer Autumn Skuthorpe who held the reins of the administration in 2017 and to Matt Tandy our new arts worker who I hope will continue to work with the company for years to come.

After founding and leading this wonderful organisation for 20 years, and after some considerable soul searching I stepped down as the Artistic Director/CEO on November 17. With my teams from many diverse communities I have developed Crossroad Arts from a local grassroots community arts company to one that now has a well respected state, national and international profile.

In that time we have produced 52 major productions touring nationally and internationally. We have given employment to 205 professional artists. We have generated over 2 million dollars to the local community and have provided entertainment, education and enjoyment to over 40,000 people throughout this country and overseas. I am proud of our accomplishment and am particularly proud of setting up the conditions for on going funding from state, federal and philanthropic arts bodies to guarantee security of tenure for the running of the organisation and the employment of administrative staff and art workers in the years to come. Crossroad Arts has always striven to set the highest standards in community arts and cultural development. Our artists and administrators have always aimed high in their achievements, their work ethic and their moral courage.

They have demonstrated values that go beyond just accepting the status quo. It's implicit in the communities that we are working for. Our participants in the aged care and disability communities need and demand champions who will go the extra mile. We have to continue to work harder for these marginalised groups. Anything less will only

lead to mediocrity and ultimately failure. Each of the staff now have a responsibility to continue the groundbreaking work that has already been laid down and to nurture the values that made this company such a bright beacon for so many people over so many years.

Marie Cameron - Acting Chair Report

Chair Person's Report

As Vice Chair of Crossroad Arts for the 2017 period, I am very pleased to provide this report. 2017 was an extremely busy and challenging year with the announcement of the intention of Steve Mayer-Miller who was the founding CEO/Artistic Director of Crossroad Arts to retire from the organisation at the end of 2017. Steve founded the organisation over twenty years ago and has been the driving creative force assisting people across the Mackay region of various cultures and abilities take part and be involved in many forms of artistic performance. This announcement was a significant catalyst for change to take place within the organisation, and throughout the year the organisation continued to work through the process of Steve's intended departure, and the recruitment of a new CEO/Artistic Director to take over the realm. During Steve's retiring year, it was wonderful that his outstanding contribution to community development in the performing arts was recognised by the Australia Council for the Arts with him being awarded the Ros Bower Award. This award is presented to artists in recognition of their proven record of high achievement in community arts and cultural development, driven by the principles of equality, respect and diversity. A very wonderful and worthy recognition indeed!

During this year of impending change, mention must be made of two outstanding people, Chair and Life member of the organisation, John Pickup and Executive Officer Autumn Skuthorpe who continued to ensure that Crossroad Arts delivered its programs and commitments whilst still working through the arduous task of filling the most enormous shoes of Steve. Sincere thanks must also go to Arts Worker Matt Tandy for his ongoing support, dedication and genuine good humour during this evolving process.

As an outcome it is with great pleasure that at the end of 2017 we welcomed Alison Richardson into the role as the new CEO/Artistic Director. Alison who has relocated from Sydney has an extensive and well recognised background working with community theatre companies. Alison has won a number of awards for her commitment to community arts and for improving social participation for people with disability, and including, most recently the 2015 Churchill Fellowship to support her research into disability led theatre practice and inclusive training programs in UK arts and disability companies and organisations.

It has been very exciting to be involved through this transitional period, and observe this wonderful community organisation continue to evolve with Alison's creative leadership and direction. As Acting Chair I have observed first hand the relevance and importance of the inclusive and engaging community development work that Crossroad Arts continues to strive to bring and which adds so much to the flavour and fabric of our community. Attending the 2018 program launch event at Artspace in March of this year was a highlight,

with many families, artists, and a broad cross section of community representatives coming together with such energy and positivity. At this time, I would like to recognise the work and involvement of our wonderful Crossroad Arts Ambassador Brenden Borellini, whose amazing photography and creative energy despite not having vision is an inspiration, as is the many other participants involved with Crossroad Arts and its programs.

Finally I would like to acknowledge our other Board members Sally Young, Sharon Bond as Secretary and Anne Clutterbuck for their contributions and continued support. Many thanks also to our three retiring members John Pickup, Debbie Brooks, and Sue Mayer-Miller. Also Blitzin Books and now Proactive for assisting with our bookkeeping and financial reporting. I look forward to the year ahead with us all working together to support this amazing organisation which aims to create an inclusive community and celebrate art as a key element in building a more vibrant society in North Queensland.

Marie Cameron

Vice Chair 2017-2018

Executive Officer's Report - Autumn Skuthorpe

Crossroad Arts plays a vital role within our community and beyond as demonstrated by the enormous reach our 2017 Artistic Program has achieved.

Always ambitious and driven to aim well above the status quo - I applaud the commitment and delivery of practice from our participants, arts workers and artists.

2017 marked the 20th year of Crossroad Arts. A year where we thanked Steve Mayer- Miller for his major contribution to the arts, our community and as the founder of Crossroad Arts. A year where we welcomed Alison Richardson as the new Artistic Director/CEO to create and develop new opportunities with her own creative vision and expertise.

As we mark this huge milestone we must recognise where we are from and where it positions us in the future.

Crossroad Arts has a strong personal significance to those who have engaged with the company over the years. For many, the mission of Crossroad Arts has created a place to belong, a stage to play and opportunities to stand boldly in their own story.

I would like to acknowledge the richness of our organisation over the years and the cultural value its history contains.

From stories I have heard, our company started out, in an electric space with hard wooden floors and rafters, where performers swung from great heights and despite being at a crossroads themselves, kicked in the doors and floored our audiences sitting on sand, or mismatched chairs and suspended for a moment that we were in fact in Mackay.

That vitality and striking spirit has travelled through many of our performances and works. Undoubtedly it has carried Crossroad Arts to where we are now.

Over the years, many thanks must go to those who have tirelessly worked on the administrative side and drummed up grants, fielded the day to day operations and in most instances also taken on artistic roles.

Many have volunteered and many remain in contact. Lifelong friendships have been created and many of those who undertook a mentorship are now in professional roles. Myself included. During the transition we have seen a huge wave of support to usher us into the next chapter and we are ready to continue leading inclusive arts practice.

Our work is made possible from the support of our funders: Arts Queensland, Australia Council for the Arts and Tim Fairfax Family Foundation. These funds employ our staff, our artists and provide opportunities for us to continue creating grassroots works that are ground breaking with our community and abroad.

To secure our future we must continue working diligently on securing further funds, supporting our community and creating unique stories that take our rich history to new heights.

I look forward to the next chapter and working to realise the possibilities of Crossroad Arts in collaboration with Alison Richardson, the Management Committee, our participants and the communities we work with.



Executive Officer, Autumn Skuthorpe,
Brenden Borellini and Oshima Island
resident, Takamatsu Japan



Financial Report

Partnerships, collaborations and opportunities

Crossroad Arts' programs are underpinned by the support and collaborations made available through strategic partnerships with key stakeholders. These partnerships enable wider impact, greater access to the communities we work with and sustainable practice to ensure the viability of the sector.

We celebrate these partnerships and in 2017 the connections and collaborations that were formed, culminated in a series of cross-cultural exchanges with the disability and aged care community. The outcomes were dynamic and resulted in a number of new works presented for and with our community.

Mackay:

Crossroad Arts' core workshop program was based on a partnership with the Mackay Endeavour Foundation. We delivered two x 12 week workshop programs in movement, music and visual arts. Participants explored these mediums with Crossroad Arts' Arts Workers and ambassadors from the Small Miracles Ensemble.

Whilst we have worked with Endeavour participants in the past, this was the first time Endeavour administered the NDIS funds of participants. As the roll out of NDIS funds creates more opportunities and challenges, Mackay Endeavour Foundation's contribution was of great assistance to us. Currently, Crossroad Arts is not an NDIS provider. Our staff and resources are allocated to significant work loads elsewhere and at this stage taking on the administration of the scheme is out of our reach. We have had successful trials in engaging service providers and working with self managed participants. Outcomes regarding the workshop program are reported further in the outcomes section.

Cairns:

JUTE theatre of Cairns, offered Crossroad Arts' Executive Officer, Autumn Skuthorpe, the opportunity to attend the Australia Council for the Arts Governance Workshop by Patrick Moriarty of Our Community and to also sit in on a JUTE board meeting.

Many thanks to JUTE AD/CEO Suellen Maunder and JUTE Chair Gill Townsend for their generous time and knowledge sharing. Autumn was able to gather information on the current trends and challenges that face non-profit arts organisations in the area of governance, business development and artistic plans. A key topic discussed was the shift of boards to take on more ownership of the overall artistic plan and to lead companies with confidence through clear and concise policies and procedures.

Attending a JUTE board meeting also provided Autumn with insight on how other organisations are currently governed, reporting styles and successful recruitment of key members with strategic knowledge and expertise to the benefit of the company.

It was a wonderful opportunity to work with a peer organisation and to bring the findings from the professional development opportunity to the Crossroad Arts' Management Committee.

Winton:

Four Crossroad Arts' art workers travelled out west to deliver a series of workshops in puppet making with students from Winton State School and St Joseph's Catholic Primary School as part of the Outback Festival - Giants of the Desert in September 2017. The festival is one of the busiest times for Winton and we extend many thanks to the Outback Festival team for their in-kind support. Festival organiser Robyn Stephens deserves special mention for her dynamo approach and hospitality. Additionally, we worked with the elderly at the Winton Hospital through timeslips of paintings created by Japanese artist Suzuka Yoshida working with Steve Mayer- Miller as part of the Floating-Meetings with Remarkable People Stage 2 project with Japan and Mackay.

Japan:

Crossroad Arts worked with several partners over two projects with disability arts organisations in Japan. Steve Mayer -Miller conducted several workshops with numerous partners in movement, music, storytelling and performance.

These partners include: Tam Tam Dot, Able Arts, Sendai Wheelchair Association, Tanpopo, Sanpucho, Polaris, Koala Club & Sendai Theatre in Education.

Further reporting about the Floating- Meetings with Remarkable People Stage 2 will be detailed in international outcomes below.



Challenges and Learnings

Resources

Crossroad Arts has always delivered a strong artistic program across many communities and locations with a small dedicated team of staff. Whilst we have championed in the delivery of contemporary new works, it is a constant balance to navigate business development and artistic vibrancy with our current resources.



There are many challenges in working regionally. Staff across all sections of the company require regular professional development opportunities to maintain quality outcomes and to ensure that there are initiatives and incentives in place that support succession.

We are unique in what we do. Often we have to travel outside of our community to contribute and also to bring back our learnings about the sector. Regularly, we salute up and coming artists and arts administrators as they relocate to metropolitan areas for further study or working opportunities.

As a result, the workload of managing artistic and administration generally is shared by one or two core staff members. This working culture is well-known across many small to medium non-profit arts organisations in the sector. Roles and responsibilities become blurred and keeping the ship sailing can be an enormous task for a small team.

As an example: in the second half of the year Crossroad Arts was working in Japan, Winton, Mackay and the USA all the while delivering its succession strategy - the first time we navigated change at the figurehead level. The output and energy required was significant.

It highlighted the importance of further infrastructure support, increased professional development opportunities and engaging experts in business and sponsorship development, finance, strategic planning and governance training. These measures

would relieve an already heavy workload for current staff and Management Committee members. The benefits of this investment will only strengthen the capacity of the company and we look forward to seeking out these opportunities in 2018.

Governance:

Crossroad Arts was unable to recruit a Treasurer in 2017. Past board member Sue Mayer- Miller provided support in financial reporting in the absence of a Treasurer. We also thank the generosity of our auditor Brian Tucker who provided advice throughout the year regarding complex areas around finance.

We are currently supported by major partners and we require expert knowledge on finance to ensure we are working transparently and reporting within our legal obligations. In the future we look forward to engaging financial consultants for quarterly reporting to our Management Committee and to recruit a suitable candidate to take on the role with expert knowledge in finance.

Raising the profile of the organisation locally will also demonstrate the direct value and impact Crossroad Arts' creates at the core of its' business - attracting the private sector to continue supporting the viability of our organisation.

Diverse Income:

Diverse income streams are vital to ensure the future of Crossroad Arts' dynamic and important voice in the arts locally, nationally and internationally. To continue building our reserves we must create further income opportunities through our workshop program, box office, contributions from the private sector and maintain our relationships with existing supporters. We are an inclusive arts organisation and want to ensure that our program does not present financial barriers for participants and audience member's access. Thus, we must create strategies that secure further earned income without impacting the role we play in connecting communities.

Innovative - creative recovery as an inclusive tool to connect across cultures

Meetings with Remarkable People Stage 2:

Former AD/CEO Steve Mayer-Miller led workshops, creative development programs and presentations in cross-cultural creative recovery projects with Japanese communities affected by the 2011 earthquake and tsunami. Whilst in Mackay, Autumn Skuthorpe worked with the Small Miracles ensemble in expressive movement and music workshops. The use of technology and traditional storytelling techniques resulted in the capture of stories from both communities and a unique presentation of them simultaneously in both countries.

The cross-overs resulted in unique opportunities to utilise the tools of creative recovery. It also presented opportunities to develop new methods that connect the disability and aged care community, using the arts to overcome cultural differences and to recognise resilience.

Being able to communicate instantly despite vast distances meant we were able to collaborate on films, respond to artworks, hear each other's stories and thread them together in our own works. Participants in Mackay understood the enormity of the recovery needed still in Japan after the 2011 earthquake and tsunami and reflected on how our local community gathers together after significant natural disaster. These stories were represented in performances that took place in Sendai, Japan and Mackay on October 15th, 2017.

Members of our Small Miracles ensemble have travelled to Japan in previous years and were able to again in 2017 as a result of support from the Australia Japan Foundation (DFAT).

Our members had a genuine experience to draw upon and in addition had met most of the artists involved in Meetings with Remarkable People Stage 2 through previous projects. Crossroad Arts' partnerships with Japanese disability arts organisations has provided our participants with leadership opportunities to represent Australian arts via international platforms, connect with other artists working in the disability arts sector and continue their development as ambassadors for Mackay and abroad.



John Pickup skyping with Oshima Island residents from Mackay

Professional Development/Mentoring Opportunities

Crossroad Arts has a long history of providing mentoring opportunities for our community. Through these initiatives over the last twenty years we have developed and supported artists, arts administrators and those interested in a career in community development.

In 2017 Arts Workers Dougal McLauchlan, Matthew Tandy and Jessica Newman mentored artists in movement, music and film in two 12 week programs. We thank our arts workers for their commitment and dynamic approach to support the creation of new pathways for artists. Our two major mentoring projects this year are outlined as below:

Sally Morley: *dancer, performer and artist*

Sally Morley has worked with the Small Miracles ensemble for a number of years and has performed in films such as *Troika* (2015), taken part in workshop programs, creative development and performed in many major presentations such as *Letters on Gordon St* (2016), *Meetings with Remarkable People Stage 1 and Stage 2* (2017). Sally is a



committed artist with a passion for movement and music. Her dedicated attitude during rehearsal and sense of humour brings a realness to the development of new works. In 2017 Crossroad Arts awarded Sally Morley at our 20th Year Celebration with an award for her development in Dance and Expressive Movement.

Stage 1:

Dougal McLauchlan and Sally Morley collaborated together over a series of dance and expressive movement workshops for 12 weeks. They explored floor work and the strength in using tension between their physical bodies. Sally was interested in realising a story that peered into the hum-drum of everyday banal tasks and how the arts has the potential to transport viewers and participants alike into new worlds.

Dougal and Sally began to look at streaming technology to present the work to a live audience online as well physically.

The mentorship culminated in a piece called *No one's Watching*. The movement piece was filmed live at the Crossroad Arts studio and was projected onto one of Mackay's busy streets in the CBD. Additionally this recording was streamed via Facebook with over 1k views. The piece was an opportunity for the audience to look in on an intimate story of a person performing domestic tasks until a sudden arrival of a guest. Dougal and Sally's dance piece challenged the voyeur. The piece concluded as they drove off into the night.

Most Significant Change:

Sally had worked with the Small Miracles Ensemble and in group work as part of a number of projects. This was the first time Sally had to develop a concept and deliver the performance in a one on one context.

"I like showing people that I am strong - that as a dancer I can do difficult things. I like working with Dougal because he tried different things that were sometimes silly...and fun. When we moved together - like when we were holding each other's arms : we were stronger and could move in the space..it was dangerous sometimes which I liked..I find doing the dishes boring and other stuff like that..dancing makes me feel free..." Sally Morley at the Q&A session after the performance.

Sally also assisted with our core workshop program and as a result of the learnings from the mentorship in Stage 1 was able to support and assist facilitating music/movement

workshops with other participants. It is important to continue developing leadership opportunities for our participants.

Stage 2:

As part of Stage 2 - Sally Morley worked with arts workers Matthew Tandy and Jessica Newman in music and film.

Sally's musical scores were included in the *Meetings with Remarkable People Stage 2* Mackay Performance.

Excerpt from artsworker Matthew Tandy

"Sally Morley's 12 week mentorship commenced in July 2017. Sally had indicated she wanted to learn about film, music theory, production, songwriting and instrument maintenance.

I worked closely with Sally one day a week for around 5 hours. We learnt about basic music maintenance and theory. In her first week Sally made a small list of basic instrument maintenance that needed to be repaired in our studio. The studio guitar needed new strings. So we went to the music shop and bought the correct sized strings and while we were looking at the physical components of an instrument like a guitar Sally was able to independently restring the guitar. This skill would be useful as Sally has a ukulele at home and enjoys playing it.



For around 8 weeks we learnt about sound and the engineering aspects and developed songs using Garageband. The use of this program allowed Sally to construct full songs. Layering music and vocals and she finished with a body of work and howed a sound improvement from week to week.

Sally was then asked to compose music for a scene in the Crossroad Arts production *Meetings With Remarkable People Stage Two*. Sally was given a film of a desert landscape, shot by Executive Officer Autumn Skuthorpe. Sally watched the film a few times and then using stringed instruments to come up with a powerful musical score which ended up in the production. This was a great indicator of how far she had come as a musician.

The final leg of this mentorship Sally teamed up with Arts Worker Jessica Newman and together constructed a short film about a day in the life of Sally Morley. The film required Sally to collect data

from different aspects of her life such as photographs and film. Jessica and I filmed her at the gym etc and Jessica filmed her completing various little projects.

Together they cut a really fantastic short film. Over the twelve weeks we watched Sally's confidence grow with technology, composition and in particular being able to work independently on the creation i.e music for a film..."

Stats:

Workshops:

Stage 1:

12 weeks

2 x participants x 12 weeks = 48

Stage 2:

12 weeks

2 x participants x 12 weeks = 48

Performance:

No one's Watching

Performance 1

Audience 1027

Total engagement: 1,123

Sally Morley playing ukulele in a workshop



Brenden Borellini:

Brenden Borellini has represented Crossroad Arts and our community as a casual employee, photographer, performer, ambassador for the community arts and as an individual practicing artist. The report below outlines the projects undertaken, learnings and challenges, outcomes and Brenden's future engagement with the community and beyond in line with his NDIS plan.

Relationship

Crossroad Arts collaboratively develops opportunities for people who experience a disability and those in aged care, to access and participate in the arts. By collaborating, an environment is created where people with a disability and those in aged care have a powerful voice and work with us in the creation and direction of their art.

Brenden Borellini has worked in collaboration with Crossroad Arts' in several roles since 2010. During that time Brenden has represented the organisation as an ambassador within our community, delivered workshops in Moranbah, Mackay, Japan and San Francisco and performed in several theatre shows.

As part of Brenden's NDIS plan, Crossroad Arts supported Brenden as he achieved his goals of a greater sense of independence, social cohesion and further access to the community.

Social Engagement/Ambassador for Crossroad Arts: Japan January - February 2017

Following a creative recovery cross-cultural project *Gama* in 2016 in which Brenden Borellini facilitated blind photography workshops with participants in Japan alongside the Crossroad Arts team, Brenden met fellow photographer Hiroe. Their friendship was the nucleus for the development and production of a film called *When Brenden met Hiroe*. The filming and creative development of the work took place over several months in Mackay and Sendai, Japan. *When Brenden met Hiroe* was entered into the Superfest International Disability Film Festival in San Francisco, the largest and longest running international disability film festival in the world.

Brenden was active in the creative development of the film and story line. Audio description and subtitles were developed to ensure the film was accessible as possible for all. The film explored connection beyond boundaries, friendship and hope: how far its' reach truly can be. Directed by Steve Mayer Miller, the film further strengthened Crossroad Arts partnerships with disability arts organisations in Japan and demonstrated the value of Australian disability arts. It was a fantastic opportunity for Brenden to continue his professional development as a photographer/film maker to a wider audience he had not engaged with previously.

For the remainder of the Japan trip Brenden co-facilitated workshops in theatre, puppetry, dance and music for our Japanese disability arts partners in Sendai and Nagoya.

The film was shortlisted in the Superfest International Disability Film Festival in San Francisco.

Watch the film here:

<https://vimeo.com/243050710>

Still taken from *When Brenden Met*

Hiroe





Music workshop Sendai Mediatheque: sOup exhibition with Able Arts Japan.



The Crossroad Arts team with residents from Oshima Island. The island was a leprosarium for several decades. Brenden met with the residents and listened to their stories of growing up on the island.

**Social Engagement/Ambassador for Crossroad Arts:
Mackay 2017**

Part 1: Mar-June 2017

Role: Ambassador for Crossroad Arts Inc / Photographer/Community Engagement



Responsibilities:

1. Connect with the community from a social perspective: meet new people and develop relationships with others.
2. Raise the profile of Crossroad Arts using photography as a tool to link in with local businesses, i.e *The Cutting Room* hairdressers, *Our Kitchen Cafe* on Wood St Mackay.
3. Research and develop skills as a photographer
4. Research photographers who have utilised light as a creative tool: Ansel Adams
5. Implement light to inform photoshoots: Mackay, San Francisco
6. Develop strong skills in the technical components of the equipment i.e camera, tripod, tactile 3D printer
7. Promote the project with the Mackay community
8. Speak as a representative at the Superfest International Disability Film Festival, San Francisco at forums and film screenings
9. Curate works for a 2018 exhibition
10. Teach others hand signing who may not have had social experiences with people with disability.
11. Connect with the community via creative arts.

12. Interview participants and general public about disability arts.

Outcomes:

1. Ability to work independently during research and creative development periods.
2. Increased knowledge and skills in photography
3. Expanded social network and new friendships
4. Ambassador for Crossroad Arts and Australian Arts on an international level
5. Community engagement via the arts
6. Professional Development
7. Series of photographic works for exhibition
8. Increased connections within the community
9. Promoted awareness of the benefits of inclusive communities

Stage 1 & 2: 24 wk program March-Nov 2017

Stage 1 Support Worker: Dougal Mclauchlan

Stage 2 Support Worker: Matthew Tandy



Photoshoot styled and designed by Brenden based on a story he had written during workshop with Dougal.

Brenden enjoyed interviewing people from the Mackay community and discussing their views on disability arts. People were very interested in the way that Brenden communicated and picked up his demonstrations of hand signing quickly. Staff at *Our Kitchen* cafe on Wood St were able to say hello to Brenden in his language and everyone looked forward to catching up with him during the peak lunch periods.

Typical questions:

Have you ever met a deaf blind person before?

Did you have any impressions of me?

Have they changed since meeting and talking with me?

How do you access the arts?

What is important to you?

May I teach you some hand signing?

I am photographer - may I take your photo?

Brenden would then scout the Mackay region for locations to photograph. The works were printed via a tactile 3D printer. These shoots were the beginning stages of creative development for his journey to Yosemite, USA in conjunction with the Superfest Disability International Film Festival.

One of the locations Brenden was able to secure and pitch a proposal to was *The Cutting Room* hairdressing salon on Wood St.

ANECDOTAL:

Linking in with local business and making new friends:

Matthew Tandy and Brenden Borellini headed to the trendy hair dressing salon *The Cutting Room* on Wood St, Mackay to meet Shaun for an appointment.

Brenden felt his way around the salon and inspected all of the instruments for the shoot. Shaun and Brenden communicated through touch and collaborated together potential angles and scenes.

The owner Jill said hello to Brenden before leaving. It turned out that Jill knew hand signing, this was a great surprise for Brenden. Unlikely encounters and meaningful connections. Brenden and Shaun remain friends.

Street Photography:

Community Engagement, Social Cohesion and Access to the Community.

As part of Brenden's plan to connect with the wider community a street photography project was established. Brenden enjoyed connecting and meeting with new people from a social perspective and used photography as a medium to open dialogue about disability arts, community arts and what experiences people had had with them. From these interactions, people participated in a barnyard dance live stream with our partners in Japan. Many of those who participated had not

engaged with Crossroad Arts before. Brenden was instrumental in connecting the wider community to the arts with his own practice.



Street Photographer: Brenden approached people on the busy cafe strip in Mackay's CBD and spoke to our community about hand signing and deaf/blind culture. This is an example of the portraits Brenden enjoyed taking.

Stage 2: Dancing with Ansel - Preparation

Supporting Brenden throughout his employment as a Crossroad Arts ambassador and photographer in preparation for the San Francisco and Yosemite trip.

Brenden researched a number of different photographers and their approach to using light.

Brenden began using this research to inform the style and approach to his own photography.

He would build sculptures out of clay of the forms that were before him and practice using lights at the Crossroad Arts studio to get an understanding of how it influenced the images.

Brenden taking photos at the Yosemite National Park



Brenden's Blog:

My American Trip by Brenden Borellini

I was so excited about travelling to the United States for the first time, I could not keep my excitement under control while getting ready to leave for the airport after saying goodbye to my mum. I introduced myself at the checkin desk by signing while my frineds translated for me. I also went through securtiy and got clearance. I met Moira's mum who was also travelling. My friends and I boarded the plane for Brisbane and the flight was smooth. When we arrived at the Brisbane airport, we rode in the buggy while I waved at the people passing by as well as I smelt all the food and perfumes from the shops and the pretty ladies.

I knew i was a celebrity because it gave me the opportunity to explore the world. I changed flights from brisbane to Sydney because the flights were direct from Sydney to San Francisco which took 18 hours. After arriving at the Mascot airport, I explored the shops and smelt some nice perfumes while relaxing for a few hours until it is time to board the plane. When I stepped on to the plane, I noticed that it was massive with lots of passengers seated in rows. I was glad to have my own seat by the aisle so I can see everything.

When the plane departed Australia, I was able to relax and enjoy the motion while napping and having meals. I slept for 8 hours while travelling through the night aboard the plane. When I woke up later, I discovered that it was still a few hours yet until arrival in San Francisco. I stretched and looked around the aisles full of passengers who were either sleeping or reading.

When the plane landed at the international airport, a gentleman helped me get on an old fashioned wheelchair and pushed me through the airport while doing customs and onto the car parking lot. I climbed into the van and travelled through the city which was beautiful. I also met Jennifer and her husband who were travelling with me.

Arrived at the hotel Fusion, I walked up to Vic the receptionist and greeted her while she gave me my room keycards. After thanking her, I rode up in the elevator to find my room which had the number 322 labelled in braille. After entering my room, I was impressed with its beauty and architecture. It was well furnished with a king bed, dresser, fridge, desk and cupboard. The bathroom was spacious and clean. it was comfortable and tidy. I relaxed and enjoyed the quiet until dinnertime. I also enjoyed some delicious american food for the first time. I also discovered that the weather in San Francisco was not cold which was strange.

After waking up the next morning, it felt weird lying in an american style hotel bed and the way of life would be a new experience for me. After doing my albutions, my friends and I took a taxi to Sammy's camera house and the music store where we bought some camera sets and a couple of guitars. I walked through the city while taking lots of photos and admiring some historical places.

I also attended the film festival and met some people who were sponsoring the show. I thought Emily was a very nice person and she thanked me for my speech which was well received by the audience. My friends and I were invited to dinner with the Lighthouse Organisation and I also met William who was one of the blind americans.

The next day, we attended the film festivals which were held at the Jewish national museum and I really enjoyed the film about the guy who overcame all the difficulties in his life. I was surprised to note that they had everything written in braille which was wonderful.

We visited the Yosemite national park where we took lots of photos including some beautiful rock formations and nature such as flora and fauna. We hiked up to the grassy meadow where we took some photos of the huge trees and I did the dance in memory of the famous photographer, Ansel Adams who did his work in the early 19th century. I also admired El Capitan which was a massive, vertical rock formation which was part of the mountain ranges. I met Olga from Venezuela, South America and had a lovely time chatting with her. We toured some parts of the valley by taking photos of the beautiful, natural sites. I also met Bill Bobbins who was our guide and he was very informative. We also visited the museum which contained all the old photographs and artifacts used by Ansel Adams. I also met Amanda who ran the place while Steve explained to her all about my work. I also admired the waterfall and the huge rocks situated around the park which looked so spectacular. I researched John Muir and learnt about his survival up in the mountains.

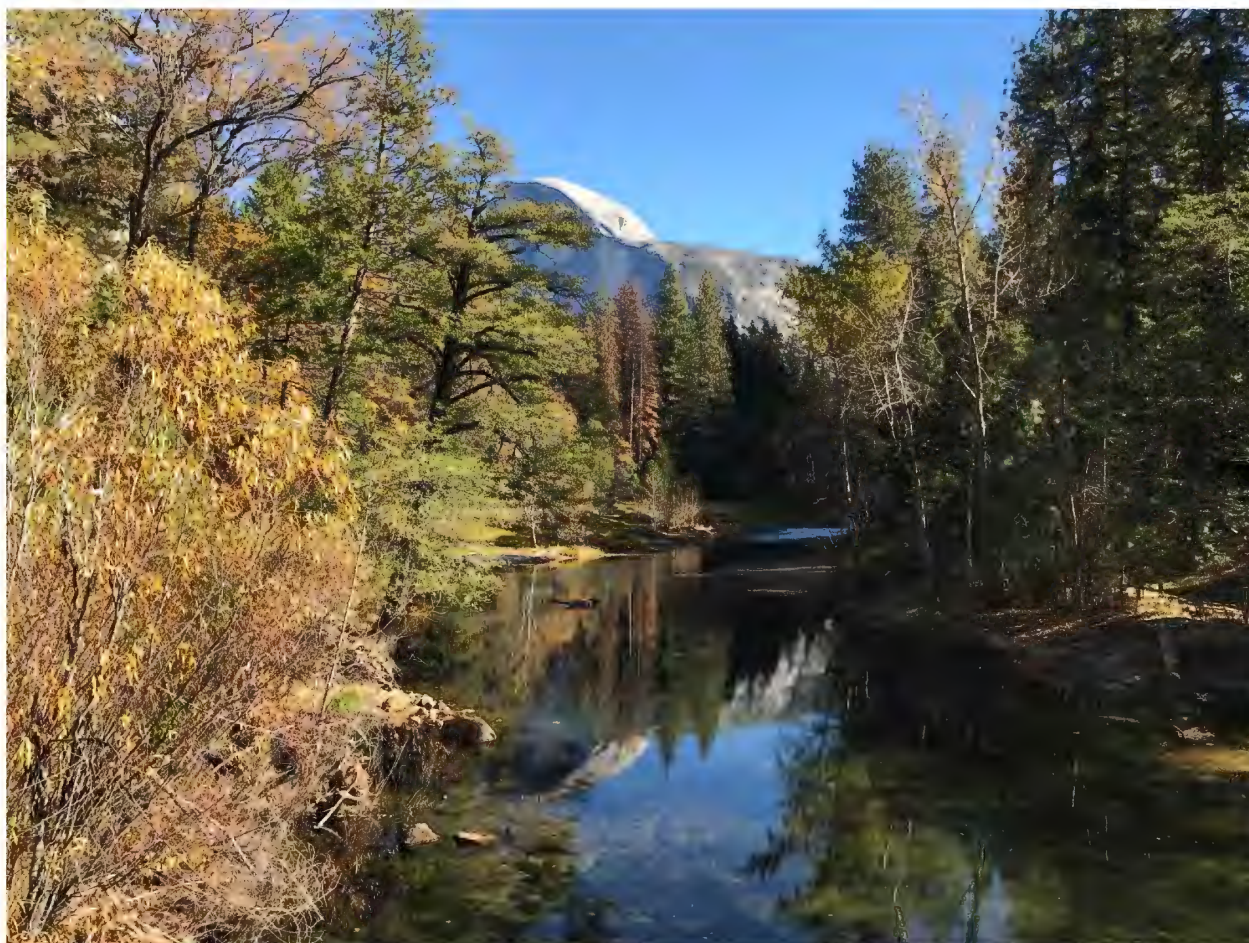
We flew over to Las Vegas where we hired the campervan which was designed for travelling. I did not like the look of the vehicle as I was concerned about my privacy. But my friends assured me that they respected my privacy. We drove all the way down from Las Vegas to Arizona where we tried to find the camping grounds but the weather was too cold which forced us to book our rooms at the View Hotel for a few days. I also met Prudence who was a receptionist and she seemed far nicer. I discovered that Arizona was Navajo country which dated back thousand years ago. My friends and I hiked up to the hills and took some photos of the rock formations around the desert. The next morning, our tour guide, Emiry took us to see the massive rock formations with holes where the old waterfall used to flow and some other glacial formations. The powdery desert sand was red with some warm colours which glowed in the dark. I also visited the traditional Navajo hogan and met Laretta who was weaving sheep wool. She showed me the traditional instruments which were used for weaving wool.

The next morning we returned to the place where the old waterfall was and I did some dancing while listening to the Navajo song played by Emiry. It was really beautiful and enlightening. I noted the shadows surrounding the sides of the mountains which were mirrored by the bright sunrise and sunset over Monument Valley that changes colours. I also took some more photos of John Ford

Lookout and made a note to research him when I had the time. It looked so beautiful with the ledge overlooking the hill just down below.

When I woke up the next morning, I decided to do some poetry and research for a while until it was lunchtime. When my friends collected me from my room, we went to lunch at the restaurant and I enjoyed the spicy buffalo wings chicken. When I had finished my meal, I met Krystal who was working at the reception desk while paying for our meals. She was really nice to me and I loved the smell of her perfume. When we got back to my room, I did some more blogging and then did some more dancing against the wall of the building outside and down the hill which was filmed by my friends who helped me get them all right.

The next morning, we left for Paige which is part of Arizona where we visited the Grand Canyon and took photos of the massive Candlestick Cave. While we were there, I met our new friend, Jesse who was from Shanghai, China who was on the tour. I was curious to note that there were all the different types of rocks carved into shapes from the wind and rain. After that, we drove the way from Arizona back to Las Vegas while grabbing some lunch on the way. We arrived at the hotel and made reservations for the night while I met Lesley who works at the reception desk. We then grabbed some dinner and came back. I knew it was our last day in America and I have made a vow to come back to America in the near future.



A photograph taken by Brenden Borellini at the Yosemite National Park.

Outcomes:

Japan:

Demonstration of empowerment and increased capacity as a member of our community:

1. Representing Crossroad Arts as a disability arts ambassador and artist on an international level.
2. Co-facilitating workshops in music, theatre and visual arts with other artist with a disability.
3. Increased capacity and empowerment through the arts during the creative development and production of the film *When Brenden Met Hiroe*
4. Overcoming challenges and representation in our community as a photographer and filmmaker to share stories from Brenden's perspective
5. Inclusion in the arts at a national and international level: increased leadership opportunities. Brenden was then able to share these learnings and experiences with other artists with and without disability in Mackay.

6. Inclusion - meaningful connections with artists with and without disability widening Brenden's social and professional network.

Stage 1 & 2 Mackay:

1. The development of individual projects that nurture and encourage Brenden's development as a professional photographer and filmmaker.
2. Meaningful connections with our community through social and business networks: raising the profile of artists with disability and a greater sense of independence for Brenden when approaching the professional sector.
3. Increased independence and sense of inclusion through employment
4. Independent research and development related to the projects: Brenden initiated the artists he used as reference for his own photography.
5. Connection with young people in our community and teaching others hand signing: raising the profile of diverse communication via a social and fun approaches
6. Opportunities for Brenden to contribute his story and vision with a broader audience than he had connected with before

San Francisco, Yosemite National Park:

1. Representation of Australian Disability Arts at an international level.
2. Guest speaker at Superfest International Disability Film Festival Q&A
3. Professional Development as a photographer
4. Connections and networking with other professional artists with and without a disability.
5. Development of works for an exhibition in April, 2018 for the Mackay community and forum session around disability arts and access.
6. Development of a documentary film about the process. Directed and filmed by support worker Matthew Tandy. April, 2018
7. Research on accessibility in USA and potential opportunities to introduce to our community/local business in Mackay i.e Braille menus

Overcoming Challenges:

Technology: often presented challenges during the project. Navigating the most efficient and reliable way to research, take photos and communicate sometimes encountered interruption from technology issues. These were often simple fixes but could cause frustration for Brenden as he was always looking to complete the tasks at hand. Brenden has taught and encouraged all staff at Crossroad Arts to develop their handsigning skills. This assisted whilst fixing technical issues with devices.

Communication: as this was a first trial for Crossroad Arts to engage as a support for Brenden via the NDIS, we learnt that open communication and clear programming is essential for the success of delivering support during Brenden's plan. From these learnings we will implement clearer agreements and timetabling with as much notice as

possible to ensure all parties involved have an opportunity to review and contribute to the program and that decisions are made aware to all.

Future:

2018 is an exciting year full of projects. We look forward to working with Brenden on his exhibition *Dancing with Ansel* launching in April at a local cafe in Mackay CBD. The exhibition will include photographs Brenden had captured on his trip to the Yosemite

Brenden will work over ten weeks with support worker Matthew Tandy on the development of the exhibition. Tasks will include: curating the works, including audio description in the exhibit, marketing, invite distribution, organising the exhibition space and engaging with the wider community to promote the event.

Additionally, there will be a Q&A session with Brenden and key members of the community to facilitate a panel discussion on access and inclusion. We hope through this discussion potential strategies and opportunities to make our art events, projects and productions more inclusive.

Braille menus (a concept that Brenden enjoyed in the US) and other accessibility requirements will be explored during the project. Local businesses will be invited to implement some of these strategies to develop stronger inclusive communities.

We will also continue Brenden's employment on Fridays. Brenden will be instrumental in managing our social media and newsletter platforms, the facilitation of workshops, creative development and delivery of projects through our Artistic Program for 2018.

Thank you Brenden for all of your hard work in 2017. We value your contribution to Crossroad Arts and look forward to collaborating further inclusive projects for and with our community.

Major Outcomes: Artistic, International, Succession

Artistic: Meetings with Remarkable People Stage 1 & 2

Meetings with Remarkable People Stage 1 was the culmination of a series of workshops led by Steve Mayer- Miller with the Small Miracles ensemble. The project explored stories of resilience from our community and our Japanese partners after significant natural disasters. Japanese dancer Shin Sakuma joined the Crossroad Arts team for two weeks and led movement workshops that were incorporated into the work. We explored stories of the rising sea levels in the Solomon Islands, the devastating 2008 floods in Mackay, the bushfires of Canberra and the 2011 earthquake and tsunami in Japan.



The performance was a part of the annual Mackay Festival of Arts and was presented over three nights. After our closing performance we celebrated our 20th year anniversary and Australia Council for the Arts representative Jeremy Smith presented Steve Mayer -Miller with the Ros Bower Lifetime Achievement Award.

Set in the Parish Hall gardens next door to the Crossroad Arts studio the performance was well received. It was significant for all involved as we recognised the strength of communities overcoming these challenges and encouraged

us all to consider globally how our community will respond to the changes occurring to our fragile environment, our home.



"Meetings with Remarkable People was a powerful performance. I loved the stories that captured the mateship after events like these. I remember the 2008 floods and the watermarks on the flood markers...it was pretty out of the blue. The unusual characters in the show left room for laughter - and often when things like this happen, mateship and a good laugh is what gets us through it..." Sean, Audience member

"We learnt from Shin how he could not get in contact with his family straight away when the tsunami was happening...I didn't know how big the tsunami was...he said that there were so many people who had to run...his family were ok. But many things were gone. It was nice for me to show Shin and the others the dancers and songs from my story and to dance with Shin about the big wave. It was beautiful." Andrew Satinie Performer

Stats:

Performance: 3

Audience: 70

Workshops

Creative Development:
8 workshops x 11 participants
176 Participants

Small Miracles Ensemble:
30 workshops
11 participants x 30 workshops= 1650



Stage 2- Floating Meetings with Remarkable People Stage 2

Stage 1 became a platform for creative development of Stage 2: a project that culminated in a unique collection of stories from Mackay, Winton and Japan.

The Australia Japan Foundation (through Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade) made it possible for Steve Mayer-Miller to spend a 2 month

residency in Japan while the Crossroad Arts team worked with the Small Miracles ensemble to present stage 2.



Mackay:

The Mackay part of *Meetings with Remarkable People Stage 2* was directed by Autumn Skuthorpe and arts worker Jessica Newman.

The Small Miracles ensemble worked with film, movement and music to create a movement piece presented at the Mackay Conservatorium of Music for the general public.

The opening scenes were set against footage captured of the magnificent landscapes of Winton from a recent project wherein the Crossroad Arts team had delivered workshops during the Outback Festival.

While the Crossroad Arts team were in Winton, the community and surrounding areas had not had rainfall for nearly a year. The resilience the community had established through its open cultural and tourism commitment meant that they had created sustainable and alternative opportunities for their township. Evident in their generous hospitality and camaraderie from many generations of enduring such extremes, Winton was familiar with the extremes of nature. On the flip side, we also heard of stories of when the town commonly experiences extreme flash flooding after a dry spell.

Meanwhile in Mackay we witnessed our neighbours in surrounding areas and in the Whitsundays battle with another side of Mother Nature's force at the unexpected arrival of Cyclone Debbie. For the most part Mackay came away unscathed, however, stories of strength and spirit emerged when we learnt of the communities out at the Sarina Range, Bowen, Proserpine and the Whitsunday regions rallying together to begin the massive recovery effort. Experiencing such natural disasters in the past, our participants

knew that the recovery would continue well into the future - with some areas losing their infrastructure, their homes and invaluable personal items.



Image from Mackay performance of *Meetings with Remarkable People* Stage 2, workshop program participants artworks hanging above

As part of our collaboration with Steve Mayer- Miller's leg of the project we included a film that featured animations by Suzuka Yoshida and stories from Shibasaki about the significance of the trees that stood against the powerful tide of the tsunami in 2011 to Japanese people.

One outcome of the project was that the participants of our core workshop program had their artworks featured in the performance. It was important to demonstrate how the core workshop program can contribute to other works in the artistic program. It widened the access points for our participants to have their works presented to larger audiences.



The Q&A session held afterwards opened discussion around the concept of cross-cultural collaboration and the importance of sharing our stories with communities outside of our immediate locality.

"The performance showed me that, regardless of where we are from, we are the same when we go through loss...we need to come together...we need to hear each other and with art we can tell these stories and rebuild..." Audience member, Corei



Image of Q&A session



Brenden, Matt and Sally
in creative development

Japan:

Excerpt from Steve Mayer Miller's report

'FLOATING - meetings with remarkable people'

The successful collaboration between Australian community artist Steve Mayer-Miller and 8 Japanese NGO's, engaging 120 people from the disability and ageing community in the creation of 7 public artworks over a 9 week period. The outcomes included 5 documentary films screened in Sendai and Nara, a major theatre production and an art exhibition and 30 skilled based dance, music and theatre workshops in Yamamoto cho and Sendai. Other outcomes included live workshop link ups in dance and music making between participants and artists with a disability in Mackay Queensland and pre recorded storytelling and Timeslip link ups between Japanese pre-school children in Sendai and elderly people in Winton Queensland. One of the Japanese films Voices of the Landscape - a town beside the sea was also screened simultaneously in Sendai and at the Mackay Conservatorium on October 15 2017 during the public Australian dance/film performance of Meetings with Remarkable People.

The social and cultural impact of this project was both profound and lasting, at an organisational, individual and community level, fulfilling and in many cases exceeding expected project results as set out in the original grant application. From an organisational perspective the original planned objective of partnering with 3 organisations (Able Arts Japan, Polaris and Tanpopo) increased to 8 organisations of some unlikely partnerships of people who had never worked together before. It's fair to say that each of these companies had their own agendas, time constraints and each were competing for philanthropic and government grants. One of the benefits of being an "outsider" is that you can bring something fresh into those established and competing networks by introducing different perspectives on ways of working, It was also strengthened by my wide range of artistic skills, incorporating, writing, theatre, dance, music and music composition and film.

Because I was not locked into working for just one Japanese company as had previously occurred in previous Japanese projects, I had a certain freedom to create unlikely exchanges and outcomes. Teaching a traditional Australian barn dance to so many different people. ranging in ages from 4 up to 90 years of age that culminated in a public event in Omachi Station Park in Sendai was a highlight.

Even the management of a taxi company (Niko cabs) in Sendai became an unlikely partner as one of their drivers Yuri Suzuki became a central figure in one of the documentary films and also a participant in the art exhibit. The key to maintaining the commitment and enthusiasm from so many different groups was a combination of: offering free skill based workshops in several art mediums (which saw me traveling in taxis and trains from one side of the city to the other in any one day)

Engaging key artists from different groups and being, able to pay them for their services which created a ripple effect of them bringing other volunteer artists to the project. A 9 week timeline, enabled me to bring the different groups together and take a genuine ownership in the realisation of the final outcomes. The final factor in maintaining this process was in creating and formulating a central galvanising artistic idea that everyone felt committed to.

That idea came together through the artworks of Suzuka Yoshida and the subsequent stories that were developed from them. (See film <http://vimeo.com/237990227>) The common ground that brought everyone together was the shared memory, experience and trauma of the 2011 Great Earthquake and tsunami.

From an individual, perspective the re-invigoration and re-connection of spirit, self worth as set out in the expected results of the application were achieved beyond expectation. One of the key factors in achieving this was the direct and genuine active involvement of 129 people across 3 cities.

The processes used during project was able to build interpersonal ties, creating a ripple effect that in turn led to an increase in volunteering from both professional and non professional artists, carers and families. By increasing opportunities for people to express themselves creatively they increased their enjoyment, sense of individual efficacy and self - esteem. And as a consequence individual social networks were built and improvements to people's

sense of attachment to their community. Through the many games, dances and musical workshops, the participants built their skills and creative abilities thereby improving human capital in their communities.

At a community level the impact and benefits were economic, cultural and social. Fees were paid to 6 artists and an interpreter while culturally there was a strong and evident sense of collective identity and efficacy. Social capital was built by directly involving 129 people and connecting organisations while participants became actively involved in organising and working with local businesses local government and other NGO's.

Approximately 800 people witnessed the public outcomes. From a community perspective this increased the propensity for community members to further participate in the arts, improved community image and through the participation of people with a disability and the aged, promoted neighbourhood cultural diversity leading to a greater likelihood of revitalisation.

MONITORING PROJECT RESULTS -EVALUATION COMMENTS

Suzuka Yoshida: Artist. *"I have never worked this way before. I have never collaborated with other people from so many different backgrounds and community groups. I loved the whole process."*

Yuko: Business owner of the YOUTOO Artspace and Coffeeshop Venue: *I have never seen film projected outwards from our windows onto the street below. It is a very clever idea of attracting more patrons.*

Mitomu Sakabe: Director . *I was very happy to have Steve come to Tam Tam Dot to run his dance and music workshops with our group. Being invited to participate in the final outcome was a thrill for all of us. I hope we get to work together again."*

Mariko Fujiwara; Teacher. As a teacher I found the way you used games and music very different to what I normally use and also really beneficial to teaching language. I am now going to incorporate them in my future lessons.

I also loved the time slips method as a way of describing images to tell stories. My students and their parents particularly liked learning the Australian Barn Dance. One of the measures of the project's success and realisation of the project's stated objectives was whether partner organisations wanted to build on the relationship with follow-up projects.

In January 2018 I received a letter from Mariko Fujiwara who facilitates the 30 strong Sendai Taihaku Wind Ensemble inviting me to collaborate with them in 2018. The ensemble run music programs for people in aged care and with a disability and also hold large public concerts in Fukushima and Sendai. I am currently negotiating with other arts based and business organisations in Sendai to build on this idea.

3 of the films are currently being revised with new translations, subtitles and in the case of the Wheelchair Dancers of Sendai a more in depth story of each of the dancers:

<https://vimeo.com/254166579>. Further filming is planned for Japan in 2018.

Statistics:

Skill Based Workshops

Sendai Wheelchair Dancers: 6 workshops x 4 hrs x 20 elderly people

Koala Club: 3 workshops x 3 hrs x 8 children

Able Arts Japan: 1 workshop x 6 participants

Tanpopo: 1 workshop x 8 hrs x 20 participants

Sunpucho: 1 workshop x 2 hrs x 30 participants

Blind Switch: 1 workshop x 2 hrs x 4 participants

Tam Tam Dot: 4 workshops x 2 hrs x 20 participants

Polaris: 1 workshop x 15 participants x 2 hrs

Creative Development Workshops:

30 workshops x 2 hrs each x 6 artists

Forums

3 public forums x 1 hr x 50 people in the audience

OUTCOMES

3 public art exhibitions in Sendai 1 theatre production in Sendai 5 short films in Sendai.

1 short film in Nara and Kyushu

AUDIENCES

Theatre Production 400. (including the public in the park, train station and street) Exhibition: 60.

Screenings in Sendai: 60 Screening in Nara and

Kyushu. 300



International: When Brenden Met Hiroe & Dancing with Ansel

Excerpt from Steve Mayer Miller's report:

1. BRENDEN IN THE USA :

"white braille cells fast moving, two rows of white dots chasing each other across a black screen...sound of a camera shutter. A black and white photograph of Brenden and Hiroe turns to a black and white film. Brenden's head rests on Hiroe's arm. His hands gently touch her arm as Hiroe's fingers dance across the thumb keys of his braille note, trying to write her name. As Brenden joins the dance Hiroe gently pushes him away. Brenden laughs. Nihongo English English Nihongo, tapping thumb keys....thumb keys tapping. Tap tap tap. Hiroe laughs. The film dissolves to a window overlooking a city street. It's one month later in Mackay Australia 36 deg celsius, as palm trees sweat. A container truck comes to a halt. Brenden leans against the window. Wind against his face. Outside a small bird perched on a telegraph wire scopes the horizon. Brenden's hands reach towards the window pane. His thoughts are caught in the light. "I cannot see or hear you" He turns and faces the camera. His fingers tell us " I feel wind on my face. I smell the Heat".

These were the audio captioned lines at the beginning of the film 'When Brenden met Hiroe' : The story of two blind people who meet at a photography workshop in Sendai Japan and begin a friendship. It was this film that would eventually take Brenden, myself and Matt Tandy to America.

The question most often asked by people when they hear that Brenden Borellini takes photographs is "How does he do it". It's often followed by "what's the point if he can't see the photograph" and "Why do it?"

The answers to those 3 questions goes to the very heart of trying to understand what is actually meant by the term 'seeing' and the tensions between the physical act of seeing something through your eyes and 'seeing' as something that is felt and understood.

Trying to unravel these mysteries was what motivated and propelled Brenden, Matt and I to travel so far, through the deserts of Utah, the hills of San Francisco and the peaks of Yosemite.

To begin to understand it means slowing down. The whole concept of time changed during our travels. It takes longer to do things when you're blind. It's more practical to pace out the room of a hotel or foyer to prevent walking into things. Trusting the environment takes time.....particularly at airports. LA, Las Vegas and San Francisco are not for the faint hearted. Bags to carry, escalators, documents to find, queues queues and more queues and of course American immigration. It's at the airport where we are bombarded with images, giant billboards of American eye candy and iconography from the world of instagram. Things move at a very fast pace as grabs and snaps where we see a lot in a very short period of time, yet absorb little of the emotional context and living reality of the images. It flashes by us without a second to contemplate. And everyone is rushing past us. This seems to be no place for a blind photographer. Except of course for Brenden. Brenden is the exception. He makes that clear when he moves in front of Matt and I and presents his passport and ticket at the airport check in, while signing with both hands to

the check in officer as Matt translates. Our bags are weighed our boarding passes handed over and we are placed at the front of the line in boarding priority ahead of first class. Not before Brenden has grabbed the hand of the woman wearing the blue uniform behind the counter, taken in her perfume, kissed her fingers and managed to take her photo. He later tells me he dreamt about her. I still wonder what exactly he saw in his dream and whether the colour of the woman's dress in his dream was the same blue I saw. It's probably silly even to say it...but I still wonder. It is the paradox of the blind photographer that seeing is somehow sharpened by blindness.

After 5 airports and 2000 kilometres of driving along American Highways and empty deserts, time slowed considerably when we arrived at Monument Valley. The claustrophobia, chaos and misadventures of living inside an RV was gratefully exchanged for our own rooms, hot water and the privacy of a hotel overlooking the red buttes and mesas of this Navajo Indian reservation.

Brenden methodically stepped out the distances from his room to our rooms. I watched as he moved around the room using his arms to navigate where the bathroom, fridge and bed was. He sensed where the eastern sunlight came through the main window of his room. It was in Monument Valley that we were finally able to take time. Armfuls of it...and time for Brenden to run free with his camera.

I watched as Matt led Brenden up the hill. Two people arm in arm. One sighted and one blind. Both carrying cameras. Forget about the F stops, the ISO's and the struggle to find the right exposure. Photography as a medium has created this collaboration, this exchange of understanding between a sighted person and a blind person.

The reality of what is in front of them will always be in question. That happens whether you are blind or not. Ask any two people to look at an image, a rock or another person and they will each have their own subjective viewpoint. The difference with Brenden is that time will slow down as he methodically goes up to the rock to feel its weight or the person's face and slowly and carefully place his finger tips onto the contours feeling the textures and smell the natural body odour. Perhaps he is seeing more than us.

Matt and Brenden Borellini got the chance of a lifetime to experience that unique partnership where a camera brought them closer together and where the power of those moments was shared, in understanding the world around them and each other. Those moments will later be shared with a wider community. That sharing of power is a crucial element in understanding how we as a society develop opportunities for people to develop their own art and represent themselves in that society- surely one of highest ideals for any society. That's the point of it. That's why we do it.

I visited Brenden a week after we returned home. He was still tired. I told him I was having dreams of Monument Valley. He clenched his right fist, nodding it up and down excitedly.....Yes! me too!!

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECT

Between Nov 1 and Nov 17 Brenden Borellini, Steve Mayer-Miller and Matt Tandy travelled to the USA. The primary purpose of the trip was to attend the Superfest International Disability Arts Festival in San Francisco following the acceptance of the film When Brenden met Hiroe in the festival and the subsequent invitation to attend from the

Festival committee.

The objective of the trip was:

- i) to give Brenden Borellini the opportunity of attending the Superfest International Disability Film Festival in San Francisco where the film When Brenden met Hiroe was screened .
- ii) To expand Brenden Borellini's international network in the disability arts community.
- iii) to give Brenden Borellini the opportunity to further develop his photographic skills using the landscape of the USA and in particular the landscape used by photographer Ansel Adams
- iv) To mentor and develop the photographic and film skills of emerging artist Matt Tandy as a future arts worker specialising in music and media.
- v) To further understand ways of seeing from a blind and non blind point of view and how that affects our understanding of ourselves and the world around us.

Background and Research:

Between August and November 2017 during 1 day per week Matt Tandy mentored Brenden Borellini in researching the photographic techniques and works of Ansel Adams. The research involved a combination of reading about Adam's work and his importance in the history and development of modern landscape photography as well as creating 3D models from clay of how Brenden imagines Yosemite and in particular el Capitan.

During September John Pickup invited Matt Tandy to join the Mackay Camera Club. I had initially said that I would make the film but as I was leaving the organisation immediately after our project on Nov 17 I put my energies into mentoring and encouraging Matt to step up to the mark and make the film and edit it himself. After all, he was the future of the organisation and there was no-one else capable of doing it once I left.

Note: One of the reasons Crossroad Arts has been able to sustain it's operations for over 20 years is through our mentorship education program of giving the responsibility to young emerging artists to direct major projects. In 2015 mentoree Kyla Ranger had no experience in film making and editing, and still she filmed and edited the 3rd part- 1hr film of the Red White Blue Troika project which premiered on the walls of the city cinema in December 3 2015. A month later the film premiered in Osaka Japan . Kyla Ranger is now completing her 3rd year major in Film Studies at QUT in Brisbane.

Outcomes:

When Brenden arrived in San Francisco he spent the first 3 days practicing his speech with Matt Tandy in readiness for the delegates, film makers and the audience for the Saturday screening. The speech was not on the official agenda but during the public forum that followed the screening of the film Brenden took the opportunity to stand up and deliver his speech ...to rapturous applause



One of Brenden's photographs

The email below indicate the effectiveness of the trip to the US.

Appendix 1: Email from Superfest International Disabilities Film Festival

Dear Steve and Brenden,

I'll send a longer email with additional follow ups later this week, but I just wanted to send a quick note to say how much we enjoyed having you at Superfest and getting to share your story, which hits home with so many of our attendees. The energy in the room was so palpable while your film was screening, and I agree with what Jim said - you really created a new model for integrated audio description. Cheers!

In gratitude,

Emily

Emily Smith Beitiks, PhD

Associate Director

[Paul K. Longmore Institute on Disability](#)

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2. ARTSWORKER MATT TANDY

The main objective of Matt Tandy joining the trip to the USA was to support Brenden Borellini. To enable this to occur Crossroad Arts applied and was successful in obtaining NDIS funding.

During the trip Matt also took on the role as photographer and film maker.

Matt was able to understand how to achieve effective exposure using an SLR camera.

Over the past 6 months Matt has made considerable progress in obtaining his qualifications from the USA to run Timeslips workshops in aged care centres. Outcomes: Matt Tandy did an exceptional job in supporting Brenden. Matt is a very caring and sensible person. The role began at 6.30am when he would go to Brenden's door to meet him and accompany him to breakfast. During these times Matt also took the opportunity to build upon his cinematography, photographic and editing skills. Being in the adjoining room to Matt I would often hear the keys of Matt's computer pumping away late at night as he tried to navigate the Adobe Premiere Editing Suite.

CONCLUSION:

It is anticipated that a public exhibition of Brenden's photography and Matt's film will occur between March and April 2018

Brenden's photography



Succession:

Steve Mayer- Miller founded Crossroad Arts in 1997 and during that time through an enormous body of work established a meeting place for our community to develop and collaborate in the creation of art across many mediums. Steve is well known for taking artistic risks, for keeping the engine room boiling and working round the clock to land ambitious leaps.

Over the years Crossroad Arts worked with many communities that often were unheard or had limited opportunities for their stories to be included in the landscape of regional arts. The history of our company is made rich through these unique meeting points. Through the new works that transport audiences to the edge and urge them to look beyond boundaries.

In 2016 the company was successful in receiving funding from long time supporters Arts Queensland, Australia Council and philanthropic support from Tim Fairfax Family Foundation. In this position of financial stability Steve Mayer -Miller decided to step down and make way for new leadership to drive the company into the next chapter.

Through the support of Tim Fairfax Family Foundation Crossroad Arts was able to engage recruitment agency Positive Solutions to seek out the next Artistic Director/CEO.

This process was challenging and required all hands on deck from staff and Management Committee members. It was the first time we had embarked on change at this level. One unexpected outcome was an opportunity for all to reflect on what Crossroad Arts had achieved already and what we could champion in the future.

It is a major milestone for a regional small-medium non profit arts organisation in a regional centre like Mackay to have worked 20 years with the community and to remain in a position viable enough to undergo such major transition.

We were successful in securing further funding from Arts Queensland through a Governance Support (SOA) Grant and with these funds we engaged Tracker Development to assist in reviewing our company's existing governance policies and procedures. This support was timely and provided further support for our Management

Committee and staff to prepare for the handover from a governance and strategic perspective.

As a result of the rigorous recruitment process we were excited to announce that Alison Richardson would take the helm and step into the role of Artistic Director/CEO. Alison has extensive experience and knowledge in the disability arts sector and has championed in the advocacy of inclusive arts throughout her work over 20 years.

In her short time in the position Alison has connected with our community seamlessly and taken on the task of steering Crossroad Arts into the next chapter with gusto. We have every confidence that Alison will create opportunities with our community and the sector with boldness and artistic vibrancy.

The transition has given us a chance to review the areas we are championing and areas we would like to improve. The type of future we would like to create and what opportunities abound.

It has also highlighted the challenges of succession. As such, we are able to take these learnings and implement strategies to ensure that Crossroad Arts' vision and impact can continue delivering excellent artistic outcomes with our community into the future.

We thank our community and supporters who support this exciting chapter with us. We welcome those new to our organisation and look forward to collaborating. And we extend warm thanks to those who continue to attend our programs and events, in particular our volunteers who demonstrate commitment above and beyond our expectation and genuine support for the spirit of our company.

Governance

As mentioned briefly, Crossroad Arts was able to engage through further funds from Arts Queensland, Tracker Development as part of a Governance Support program.

The engagement meant that the Management Committee members and key staff took part in a governance appraisal delivered by Tracker Development. The result was a Governance Action Plan to inform the Management Committee and executive staff of recommendations to action in short and long term planning.

As we were approaching the completion of our succession strategy this process was an excellent opportunity to provide the Management Committee a framework to continue strengthening the governance of our organisation. It was also a useful tool for our incoming Artistic Director/CEO Alison Richardson to gain a quick insight into the areas that we need to action to continue viability.

Throughout the transition we have referenced this action plan. After actioning some of the short term recommendations we will continue to work alongside Tracker Development in 2018 to ensure we are governing with best practise and that our company procedures and policies will equip us with the tools needed to create a sustainable future.

Many thanks to our past and current Management Committee members for their support and contribution throughout the transition process. We look forward to continuing the good work achieved so far.

The Future of Crossroad Arts

We are excited to continue in 2018 strategic vision, a vibrant artistic program and explore new horizons under the leadership of Alison Richardson.

Strategic:

We hope to continue engaging Tracker Development to assist with the review of a new business plan. This new business plan will update our policies and procedures. We are also excited to launch a new website and branding in 2018.

Program:

Alison Richardson is excited to work with the community in the creation of new works. An overview of the program is presented below. The full program can be found on our website: www.crossroadarts.com.au

Community:

Core workshop programs in movement, music and performance in line with the school terms.

1x workshop a term at Artspace Mackay inviting participants to respond to the current works in the gallery.

Co-facilitation training and mentoring for arts workers with disability and employment opportunities.

Intergenerational workshops in photography for young people with disability and residents in aged care.

Artistic:

2 x tactile interactive exhibitions for the public led by Crossroad Arts ambassador and artist in residence, Brenden Borellini.

1 x major presentation during the Mackay Festival Arts *An Unlikely Tour*:

Jump on a bus and uncover the lesser known side of Mackay! Through poetry, music, performance and projection see artists with and without disability come together to explore strength and vulnerability in a series of unlikely encounters.

2x social events featuring short left of field performances led by the community called *Loose Ends*.

Outreach:

Crossroad Arts will head out west to continue building on our relationship with the towns of Longreach and Winton. Artswomen will deliver a series of multi art workshops in October with schools and aged care facilities.

We are proudly supported by the following partners:

