

access all areas



INSIDE ISSUE ONE
August 2002

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(2002 Aug)

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Arts Access provides access to arts and cultural activity for people who are disadvantaged including people with disabilities.

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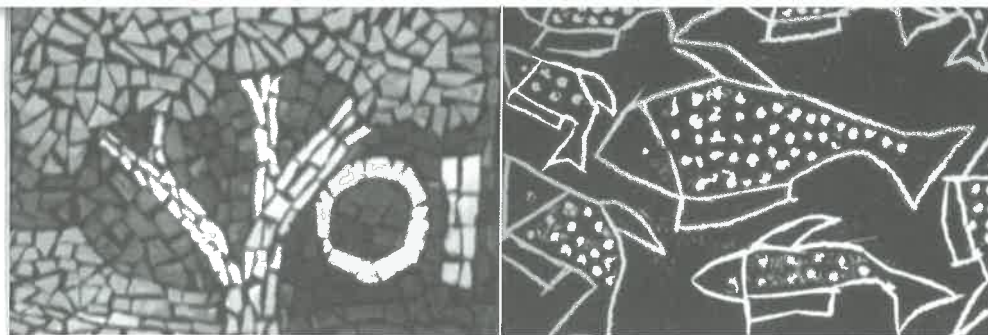
www.artsaccess.com.au

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www.artsaccess.com.au

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top left: Gneetung Tukae, right: Art Day Easter Holiday Program.
Front Cover David Fajgenbaum, Art Day Easter Program 2001
Photography: Catherine Acin
Design: sweetdesign



Nicole Beyer, Executive Director

Welcome to this edition of **access all areas** which focuses on art by Arts Access artists and participants.

I have been thinking a lot about art lately, and I reckon that we don't talk and think about it enough, whether we work (and play) in the arts or not. It's a great exercise to discuss why art is so important: it's empowering, it creates bonding, it tells stories, it allows new viewpoints, it challenges, it entertains, it strengthens, it reinvents and reapplies meaning...

We know art is an essential part of a healthy society, but we need to articulate and promote that belief. And we need to keep talking about it. Go forth and talk, talk, talk.



**ARTS
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creative writing

'My Man' by Janice Grant

He strides tall through the kitchen - head bowed slightly as if he were a beast of burden or a moose with heavy antlers. I wonder how his height may have been a burden in his life. He couldn't stand upright in the new caravan we were looking at. I hear him flush the toilet. He'll leave the toilet up but he is a male after all and that's what I love about him - his maleness. He has such a tiny dog, a little miniature fox terrier. She (Babs) was the runt of the litter and headed for doggie heaven but he saved her. So mismatched in size. The odd couple. Sometimes he forgets to feed her. Not often but sometimes.

He has lived all his life in Horsham in the Wimmera, near the Wimmera River where the corellas flock by the hundreds and talk to each other by screeching. Pelicans gather in groups by the banks seemingly at ease with their environment. Bill was a country boy, now he's an aging man. He's an avid fisherman and enjoyed shooting and trapping when he was younger. Bill is tanned - the tan of a man that has worked outdoors all his life.

Juxtaposed to this stereotypical male country lad is his love of cooking, not just steaks on a barbecue but light delicious sponges and delicately stuffed chicken breasts are among his many skills. "Do you have a sewing machine, Janice?" he calls. "Why?" "I need to do some sewing" he says "and my wife took the machine." What a complex man.

**Saturday Afternoon Art Class
Creative Writing Workshop 2002.**



Saturday Morning Art Class
Creative Writing Workshop
Photography: Catherine Acin

'Trying to Write' by Kim

I really hate critics. And writing terrifies me. But I need to do it, I can't just talk about doing it anymore. The combination of the desire to create and the feeling of blockedness sometimes makes me feel like I want to die. So, I'm going to write anything down, be indiscriminate. I don't know how to discriminate anyway.

I've got a nasty critic from hell. He sticks knives into my heart and puts my dreams through a meat grinder. I'm trying to hold on to my dreams. But sometimes it's like trying to hold on to a piece of fabric by being sucked up a vacuum cleaner. It's half gone, but it might be saved. You have to hold on. You can't even let go to adjust your grip.

So, Mr Critic, what's your game? I'm terrified of you. You're a torturer. I sometimes catch you, like the other night when I was leaving that election ceremony you whispered, "They probably think that you have no life." And I went "hang on....that was me thinking that, I have a life, I came because I wanted to come."

But sometimes I don't catch you, you asshole.

Saturday Afternoon Art Class, Creative Writing Workshop 2002



'From The Ground Up' by John P Coutis. Review by Sue O'Neill

John P Coutis was born on 14 August 1969. His disability was so severe, doctors didn't think he would survive the first day of his life. How wrong they were!

"From the Ground Up" is the moving, sometimes extremely funny story of John's life, growing up in a very loving family in Richmond, New South Wales.

John's sense of humour and positive attitude, shines through in this book. I'm sure that anyone who reads "From the Ground Up" will get something out of it, whether or not you have a disability.

John talks very candidly, about the different events that have shaped his life e.g. his decision to have his legs amputated at the age of 18, his marriage to Trish and the scare he had with cancer. It's obvious that without his spirit and the love and support of his family and friends, John's life would have been very different.

John is a very charismatic motivational speaker, having spoken on the same stage as General Norman Schwarzkopf, Alan Jones and Lisa Curry-Kenny. He has also spoken to the Essendon Australian Rules Football Team and the Australian Cricket team. Steve Waugh has written the Foreword for "From the Ground Up".

You will find this book and other resources at the Arts Access library. The library is open by appointment. Contact Sue or Carly to arrange a time.



1 Ward, Art Day South Holiday Program, 2001 **2** Candace, Get Out! Summer Holiday Program "About Face" 2002 **3** Art Day South Holiday Program, 2001 **4** Christine Mooney (detail), Western Lodge 2001 Entrance Foyer Arts Project **5** Christine Mooney (detail), Western Lodge 2001 Entrance Foyer Arts Project **6** Gali Weiss, Dianne Zaconovsky, (detail) Art Day South Holiday Program 2001 **7** Art Day South Holiday Program, 2001 **8** Art Day South Holiday Program, 2001. Photography courtesy of Catherine Acin

A global presence for disability arts

In 2001, New Zealand comedian, Philip Patston had a vision. He had been performing at kickstART! (an International Celebration of Disability Arts and Culture) in Vancouver and was bowled over by the impact the experience had on him. "I couldn't shake the thought that the energy of kickstART! and particularly the union of the artists and performers - could not be allowed to dissipate. I saw a need for disabled artists and performers to communicate, share ideas, be represented and promoted, and to continue to build a global presence in order for the disability arts movement to mature and develop. I knew of many organisations that organise and promote disability arts and performance events. However, there did not seem to be an international organisation of disabled artists and performers. I thought there needed to be. I thought it was time. So I created it."

Almost a year later and a world away from Vancouver, the inaugural meeting of the International Guild of Disabled Artists and Performers (IGODAP) was held. Fifteen artists and performers from the UK, Canada, Australia and NZ met in Adelaide as part of the High Beam Festival to exchange ideas, network and discuss the aims of the Guild.

"It's still informal and in its infancy," says Patston, "but IGODAP has the potential to become a significant voice in communities of disability, art and culture."

While one of the Guild's main aims is to provide an opportunity for artists and performers to network at an international level, it will also be a leading authority on disability arts. Longer term plans include advocating for appropriate working conditions and establishing global and regional agencies and management for artists and performers with a disability.

Membership to IGODAP is open to professional and amateur artists and performers of all genres that experience physical, intellectual or learning disablement, mental illness, or a combination. In addition the Guild offers membership to those individuals and organisations who are involved in or supportive of disability art and performance. **Want to become a member or find out more? Check out the IGODAP website at www.diversitynz.com/igodap**

Arts Access made a commitment following the Heart and Soul: Small Town Voices Search Conference in 2000 to work in partnership with disadvantaged regional communities to establish an arts project for youth. The result – The Solid Rock Project, a partnership with the Tallangatta Health Service and Tallangatta Secondary College.

Four professional artists worked with 60 college students exploring dance, singing and voice technique, filmmaking and costume and design. Workshops led to a final public extravaganza at the Tallangatta Memorial Hall. Arts Access will continue to work with the Tallangatta Health Service to ensure that the project will run independently in 2002. Rock on!



A creative and energetic community spirit **Arts Access 1991-1999, Performing Artist,** **Project Coordinator, Project Manager**



Jedda's passion for the arts, her love of community and her ability to communicate with people from diverse backgrounds were qualities that led her, by chance, to Arts Access.

In 1991, Jedda was employed as a Performing Artist working with people with mental health issues and intellectual disability. She then went on to work as an Artistic Project Coordinator managing a range of arts projects that provided artistic opportunities for frail, elderly residents living in Supported Residential Services.

Following this, Jedda became the

Arts Access Trainer, working with artists from the community arts sector. She was an enthusiastic presenter who inspired artists with her passion, commitment and understanding of the arts.

Whilst presenting Disability Training Sessions involving staff from major funding bodies, Jedda would weave personal stories through her presentation to ensure that participants would understand and relate to the topic – and they did! She had the capacity to gain and hold the attention of the group with her clarity of thoughts and energetic delivery.

In 1997, Jedda relished the opportunity to become the Arts Access Training and Development Manager. This role brought new career challenges for her which she met professionally through considered consultation, attention to detail and her own creativity. Through the arts and with her own unique qualities, Jedda

made a significant contribution to the broader community arts sector. She was highly respected by her peers and was regularly employed as an Artist and Project Coordinator with other arts organisations, including, La Boite and Gasworks Arts Park.

Those of us who had the privilege to work with Jedda, remember her as a passionate, energetic, professional, playful, enthusiastic, warm and caring team member - a friend - a beautiful woman.

Jedda Bellerjee passed away peacefully, after a long illness, in December 2001.

Contributors: Jyoti Mukherjee, Carol Downey, Dean Michael, Helen Bowman, Anne Riggs and Ruth Whittingham. Noelle Taylor (Curry) has written Ode To A Special Friend, for Jedda. This is featured, along with a photo of Jedda, on the first page of the Arts Access website: www.artsaccess.com.au

Arts Access in partnership **with Victorian Aboriginal** **Health Service**



Photography courtesy of Catherine Acin



State Library of Victoria

Calendar of events: July to September

13 July to 30 November

Get Out! at Cube 37 in Frankston.
Run by Arts Access it's a program of visual and performing arts for adults with a disability. Every second Saturday. Bookings essential. Contact Anne Riggs at Arts Access.

July 19, 20, 21 at 7.30pm

Weave Movement Theatre and State of Flux perform Big Conundrum at North Melbourne Town Hall, Errol Street, North Melbourne. 7.30pm Enquiries: 9416 9673

Friday August 9

Club Wild at North Melbourne Town Hall. Details to be advertised. Phone 5222 6522 during office hours or visit www.clubwild.net for more information.

Friday 30 August at 7.30pm

Audio described performance of Wizard of Oz. Limited tickets available to EASE members. Phone Jenny or Fiona at the EASE office.

Saturday 7 September at 1pm

Audio described performance of Wizard of Oz. Limited tickets available to EASE members. Phone Jenny or Fiona at the EASE office.

Sunday 15 September at 5pm

Sign interpreted performance of Wizard of Oz. Limited tickets available to EASE members. Phone Jenny or Fiona at the EASE office.

Ongoing

MTC, Melbourne Festival and other companies offer sign-interpreted and audio-described performances. For full details contact Jenny or Fiona at the EASE office.

And now a word from our participants...

What do you like about Art Day?

(I like) Seeing all the people here. Seeing different faces from every other day of the week. Talking to people about your music and having them listen and understand. Walking to the milk bar at lunchtime. Travelling in the big taxi.
Angelo – Art Day West participant

Do you like coming to Art Day or would you rather go somewhere else?

I like going to art – I go every Friday and to work for 4 days. I want to be an artist.

Valerie – Art Day South participant

On Art Day I look forward to Fridays.
Maree – Art Day West participant

Art Day is a performing and visual arts program for adults with an intellectual disability. For Further information contact Jo Cohen at Arts Access.

Membership

Become a member and help us to access all areas. We offer three types of membership:

General Membership:

Open to everyone. You contribute to the overall running of our programs, receive invitations to public events, discounts on various products and you get to vote at the AGM.

Ease Membership:

For people whose access to venues or choice of seating is restricted due to physical or sensory impairment. As an EASE member you'll be able to access tickets and we'll help you with seating arrangements.

Corporate Membership:

For companies wanting to keep up with current issues and access a full range of services including audits, disability action plans and staff training. Phone Fiona Hanrahan, Access Program Manager for more information.

To become a member

Phone 03 9699 8299

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24 Eastern Road, South Melbourne, VIC 3205
Arts Access newsletter
Print Post approved
PP325649/0005
ISS N 1329 0517

surface mail

postage paid

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Arts Access is supported by the Australia Council, Arts Victoria,
Department of Human Services
and VicHealth