



Community Arts Workbook

...another Vital Link

ONTARIO ARTS
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Angela Lee
 Researcher and writer
 Toronto

Beginning with the creation of the Community Arts Sector in the 1970s, the Ontario Arts Council (OAC) has recognized community arts potential as a significant creative movement. It is with this history that OAC moves forward to present the *Community Arts Workbook: Another Vital Link*.

Over the years, many individuals—artists, arts administrators and community members—have made significant contributions to community arts, and though too numerous to mention, should be acknowledged for their efforts. There are also a number of OAC staff, past and present, whose contributions to community arts and to this publication need to be acknowledged.

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Melanie Fernandez
 Community Arts Officer
 Ontario Arts Council

Introduction

Why a Community Arts Workbook

This is a workbook for artists, communities and the public for anyone engaged in or who wants to become involved in community arts. It is designed to give some background on the application of community arts as well as provide hands-on tools, advice, frameworks, techniques to help artists, cultural workers and communities plan, begin, complete and evaluate a community arts project.

The creation of this workbook follows on the important ideas explored at the Ontario Arts Council's *Vital Links: Enriching Communities through Art and Art through Communities* conference which took place in September 1997. The three-day conference brought together many of the artists, community groups and participants engaged in community arts across Ontario, and some from other parts of Canada, the United States, Great Britain and Australia.

The conference provided a forum in which to discuss and explore the nature of community arts between

the different constituencies working directly or indirectly in this art form, many of whom had never had the chance to meet and talk about community arts. *Vital Links* also saw the presentation of a number of community arts projects undertaken by various groups. Organizers and participants of these projects discussed the goals, challenges and processes of undertaking community arts projects. Organizers hoped to have participants leave the conference feeling energized about what a truly great community arts project could do for a community and the artist. When participants actually saw what was possible from these projects whether by hearing about the experience of working on a project from a participant, or by visiting a project-in-progress many of the conferences' discussions and seminars were brought to life. This workbook aims to gather all of those ideas, inspirations and discussions and put them down in a format that will help those working in, or wanting to work in, community arts. More information about the *Vital Links* conference can be found on page 49 of this workbook.





How to Use this Workbook

The first part of the workbook provides some background on community arts: What is community arts? How can we view it as an artistic discipline as we would dance, music or theatre? How has community arts emerged in Canada and in other countries? This section will also examine the principles of community arts and their practical application on projects initiated by artists or communities. *Community Arts in Action* answers questions such as: How does one start a community arts project? What are some of the challenges to working in this creative collaborative process? Throughout this section, ideas and practical suggestions for community arts work will be presented.

The second part of the workbook presents several community arts projects that have taken place not only in Canada, but in the United States, Great Britain and Australia as well. The purpose of this section is to provide examples of how community arts has been applied and interpreted



in different countries, and in different contexts. Included in this section is a brief overview of the relationship between the arts and the labour movement – a relationship which has a long tradition of developing community arts projects. Many of the projects in Section Two illustrate the practical application of the principles discussed in Section One and are therefore referred to in that section as well.

Opposite page: The *Vital Links* conference begins at Toronto's Harbourfront Centre; left: dancer Allen Kaeja and choreographer Bill James speak at the workshop, "Dance is a Universal Language – NOT!" *Above:* Conference-goers who took the ferry to Ward's Island were greeted by the musicians and stillwalkers of Shadowland Theatre.

“Truth becomes true in community.
The social order hungers for a center, a spirit, a soul that gives it identity, power and purpose.”

Howard Thurman, theologian

The projects are intended to inspire ideas for community arts projects, rather than act as strict models for creation. Anyone reading this workbook will hopefully be encouraged and inspired by the material presented.

A Resources and References section is presented at the end of this workbook. It provides a summary of *Vital Links*, a list of the materials used in compiling this workbook, a list of Community Arts Councils in Ontario and contact names for the projects discussed in the workbook.

Finally, a page is provided for your thoughts and ideas, and potential projects you may want to undertake.



In a Vancouver neighbourhood, artists and community members built the Mount Pleasant Community Fence to demonstrate community identity and creativity. Pickets for the fence were carved or engraved by individuals and groups of children in workshops held at an artist-run gallery.

What is Community Arts

Broadly defined, community arts is a collaborative creative process between a professional practising artist and a community. It is a collective method of art-making, engaging professional artists and self-defined communities through collaborative, artistic expression. It is as much about process as it is about the artistic product or outcome. Community arts provides a unique way for communities to express themselves and enables artists, through financial and other support, to engage in creative activity with communities.

This broad definition identifies three elements which separate community arts from other methods of art-making:

- ❑ the co-creative relationship between artist and community;
- ❑ a focus on process as an essential tool for collective, collaborative, mutually-beneficial results;
- ❑ the active participation of artists and community members in the creative process.

Community arts is not new. Since the beginning of time, artists have

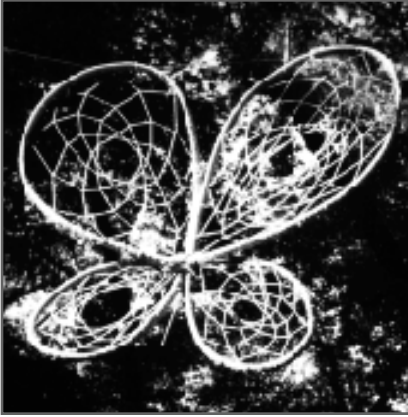
worked closely with communities to creatively educate and build bridges of dialogue, understanding and connection in communities where they have been torn down or never existed. Community arts activities can touch communities and artists deeply by highlighting or exploring a particular aspect of a community in a creative way. Its socially-engaged nature differentiates it from other art forms.

What is new about community arts is the recognition of this art-making method as a means by which to dissolve the divisions between art, society and life; between the artist and the community.

Given the breadth of its definition, community arts is sometimes difficult to distinguish from those projects that may have components of community activity. What separates genuine projects from others is the nature of the collaborative process and the active, co-creative involvement of artist and community.

At the Vital Links conference, participants of all ages added to the community tapestry, an activity guided by Art Starts, a Toronto community arts organization.





Interesting things grow in the Spiral Garden, located at the Bloorview MacMillan Centre.

Evolution of Community Arts

Creative expression has always been a powerful element of the social, economic and political landscape of most societies. Art, in one form or another, is an element of daily life in the majority of the world's cultures and civilizations. It has been argued that Western society has gradually removed the artist from that integral role in society, formalizing the arts and isolating the individual creator as artist, rather than thinking of him or her as part of the integral make-up of society. Community arts makes it possible to remove that isolation; community arts projects put the artist back in the role of co-creator and facilitator of public artistic expression.

In the past 20 years, community arts has evolved differently in the English-speaking world. In the United Kingdom, for example, significant financial resources allowed community arts projects to develop on a grand scale until the Thatcher years, which saw severely curtailed cultural spending. In Australia, the concept of community arts has been woven into the federal and municipal fabric, with paid community arts facilitators at the local government level creating an infrastructure for community arts activity. In Canada, the community arts movement has been emerging at different rates throughout the various provinces.

In each country, including Canada, common elements have contributed to the development and growth of community arts, including the:

- recognition that arts activity, when integrated into the everyday lives of people, is an effective means of addressing social and cultural concerns;

- need to make the arts accessible, supported and appreciated by larger segments of society through more public and local exposure;
- increased use of public and community-based venues for artistic expression;
- need for funding institutions to recognize artists whose work is culturally/socially engaged;
- influence of non-Western artistic activities and art forms.

The last point above is especially significant when we think of the notion of equity and community arts. For many First Nations artists, artists of colour and immigrant artists, community arts is the manner in which they have worked and developed as artistic creators throughout their lives. Their struggle with arts institutions and agencies for access and recognition of their arts practices has largely paved the way for community arts.

As you read this workbook, it is our hope that some of this background and context will help you think about what community arts means to you and provide ideas or inspiration for projects you undertake.

Building a Framework for Community Arts Activities

Just as there are principles which guide us in how we live, work and relate to each other, there are principles which help define community arts activities. Naturally, the use of these principles in community arts activities differs from project to project. Keeping these principles in mind when you are setting out to do a project, or are engaged in one, can provide a framework that will strengthen your project and its creative process.

Four Principles of Community Arts

1. Mutual Respect

Mutual respect—the consideration that all participants give to and receive from each other while working on a project—is a fundamental principle which runs through every stage of community arts work. The very nature of community arts—the working relationship between artist and community collaborating on an artistic project—demands that this principle be upheld at all stages of a project. Methods which allow for mutual exchange of skills, knowledge, enthusiasm, inspiration and satisfaction among participants need to be recognized and carried out for a community arts project to be successful. The community arts projects, *The Women's Circus* (page 44) and *The Mountain Project* (page 22) are excellent examples of this.

2. Process and Consensus

Process—how the creative work is initiated, planned, designed, produced, documented and critiqued—is as important as the product or outcome in a community arts project. Consensus, or reaching agreement

among participants through effective management of the decision making process at each stage of the project, is paramount to the collaborative nature of community arts.

3. Inclusivity

By its very definition, community arts involves the active participation of community members in the creative process. It is paramount, therefore, for those organizing a community arts project to include all those community members wanting to play a role in the project. The manner in which this occurs differs from project to project.

4. Generosity of Spirit

The fourth principle of community arts is generosity of spirit—a willingness to trust and contribute to the collective artistic process and vision of a project. This spirit may manifest itself in any number of ways such as patience and adaptability, for example. Generosity of spirit engages the artist and community in a synergistic relationship where the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Few obstacles can impede the short- and long-term benefits and results of community-based art work infused with this kind of spirit.

Community Arts in Action

Process: How Community Arts Projects Get Started, Take Shape and Are Realized

Why Choose Community Arts?

"Artists need to be aware of the tremendous amount of extra responsibility they are taking on in community arts work which is not normal for them in their studios. They are asked to be social workers, psychiatrists, politicians, caretakers, humanitarians, as well as great artists! No amount of training could accomplish that unless they have the temperament, willingness and full understanding of the task".

*Kai Chan, visual artist,
Toronto, Ontario*

Kai Chan sums up the reality of an artist's role in community arts work. It is not simply about an artist working in or with a community. All participants in community arts activity should possess a strong desire to strengthen community through a collaborative, collective, creative process.

In this context, it is obvious that community arts is not for every artist or every community. Community arts demands both artists and community participants to assume a variety of roles in addition to that of co-creator or facilitator. Responsibilities of participants are seldom limited to three or four functions. Individual artistic vision and expectations need to be merged with those of the community.

Before committing to a community arts project, it is important to carefully consider your personal interest and motivation for wanting to work in community arts.

When is community arts the most appropriate means of artistic expression?

For artists, this may be:

- ❑ when their skills are sought by other members of a community, as in the case of the artists who were invited to participate in the Northwood Arts Program (page 24);
- ❑ when seeking social change by using artistic skills and expertise, such as the artists organizing Tele-Vecindario (page 38);
- ❑ when wanting to memorialize or draw attention to social issues by experimenting with socially-based methods of artistic work, as in El Cab Art in a Taxi (page 42);
- ❑ when individual artistic interests evolve into community-based work, as in Mosaic Creek (page 28);
- ❑ when community arts projects in progress are given added support and attention, such as The Selma Project (page 40).



For communities, this may be:

- ❑ when marking a public celebration or amplifying community identity, as in *The Mountain Project* (page 22);
- ❑ when facilitating community self-expression and identity, as in *West Meets East* (page 42);
- ❑ when redefining community image in the eyes of larger publics, such as private industry, as in the *Elevated Wetlands* (page 26);
- ❑ as an artistic extension of education or training, as in the *Aboriginal Project* (page 45).

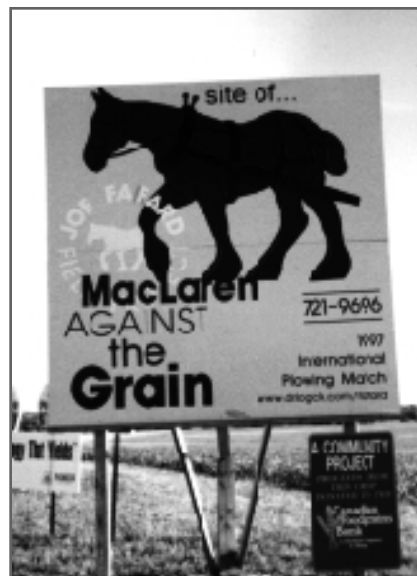
Both artists and community participants require certain characteristics and skills to carry out a community arts project. These include:

- ❑ patience, flexibility and adaptability;
- ❑ ability to communicate with and listen to other community members;

- ❑ ability to share and draw out talent from participants;
- ❑ team-building and motivational skills;
- ❑ negotiating and interpersonal skills.

Those who think they have the personality and skills to work in community-based art, and want to get more information on the actual hands-on experience, may want to:

- ❑ experience a project currently being undertaken by a local artist and community go on-site and see how they work together, ask them questions about the project.
- ❑ find local community arts facilitators (local arts councils or community centres can provide names); talk to those who are practising community arts about their experience working in this art form.



Above: Art on a large scale: some conference delegates visited the MacLaren Gallery's *Against the Grain* project, a collaborative landscape art project by Joe Fafard and local farmers. Grass on acres of farmland in Barrie, Ontario, was ploughed to form various textures and colours, which, from an aerial view, were in the shape of a horse. Below, left: Clay and Paper Theatre together with members of Toronto's Dufferin Grove Park were one of the off-site hosts at *Vital Links*, showing their multidisciplinary piece, *Building Community Stories* to visiting conference delegates.



Making it Work: Community Arts in Practice

Key Ingredients for Community Arts Projects

One of the keynote speakers at the *Vital Links* conference was Kathie Muir, Australian artist, unionist and community arts facilitator. She spoke about five ingredients to a good community arts project. They are:

- ❑ adequate time for the project;
- ❑ clear decisions about the respective roles, obligations and responsibilities, especially around the issue of consultation and control;
- ❑ respect for the skills of artists their industrial and moral rights and the rights of participants and their stories;

- ❑ adequate funding;
- ❑ the need for a very good person inside the community organization who is responsible for its ongoing management.

Throughout this section, these key ingredients will appear and be expanded upon as we examine the steps to put community arts in action.

First Steps

a) Identify the community

This obvious step is often overlooked by those starting a community arts project. Identifying a community is not as simple as determining its geographical or cultural make-up. Most important for an artist who is not a member of the community with which he or she would like to work is to identify that community's world-view and make-up: how it sees itself and others; how it defines and expresses itself; who its members are. Once this is determined, the artist can better appreciate the



Opposite page: Keynote speaker, Kathie Muir, Curator, Australian Studies at the Museum of Victoria. *This page, right:* An excerpt from the community play, *So Far, So Close*, presented at *Vital Links*. *Below:* Participants at the Spiral Garden, located at the Bloorview MacMillan Centre for children with special needs.



community and understand how he or she fits within it.

Artists should consider:

- ❑ Why do you think the group is a community? Could you be part of it? Why? Why not?
- ❑ How does the community define or characterize itself geographically, ethnically, racially, religiously, linguistically, gender-based, etc.;
- ❑ What key elements hold the members together? What creates internal conflict?
- ❑ Does the community function as a group?
- ❑ What are some of the community members' shared beliefs, values, customs, traditions? Do they conflict with yours?

More insight into the community's identity might be obtained by:

- ❑ researching articles, books, community members and organizations (public libraries are excellent resources);
- ❑ examining activities and projects the community has undertaken in the past;
- ❑ attending community events and networking with members;
- ❑ inviting community members to arts functions;
- ❑ arranging a casual meeting with community members to discuss potential projects;
- ❑ arranging a formal meeting to present your ideas for a project.

b) Make contacts

The way a project is initiated can be as different as the artist and community involved. Here are a few suggestions to make an initial connection with the partners in your project:

For artists:

- ❑ contact organizers or members of the community known to be initiators on a formal or informal basis to discuss your ideas (see First Contract, page 35).
- ❑ make your work and your interest in working with the community known through flyers, posters, letters, etc. (see Mosaic Creek, page 28).
- ❑ attend a function within that community and meet/speak with members (see the Elevated Wetlands, page 26).
- ❑ meet with key organizations and groups in the community to discuss potential project ideas (see the Northwood Arts Program, page 24).

For community members:

- ❑ get to know the work of artists and the artists themselves;
- ❑ discuss ideas with several artists until there appears to be mutual interest and enthusiasm;
- ❑ contact arts organizations to find names or examples of community-based work which artists have done;
- ❑ contact other communities that have undertaken community-based projects.

Whether you are an artist or a community member, you will want to:

- ❑ establish a clear understanding of what is being proposed;
- ❑ identify what is to be gained, achieved or enjoyed by all parties;
- ❑ confirm that there is mutual interest and willingness to invest in the project;
- ❑ remember that although a project or activity may be artist or community initiated, it will move forward collectively and collaboratively;



- ❑ identify and discuss potential problems that could have an adverse effect on realizing your project such as: lack of funds, community or artistic factions, political circumstances, etc.;
- ❑ establish at least two people, an artist and community member, who will maintain contact with each other until the project is formulated and responsibilities outlined.

c) Establish a purpose

As facilitator of a project, what is your purpose? The catalyst for a community arts project can come from any imaginable place, person, experience or a dream, as in *The Flower Mandala Project* (page 46); a tragic death, as in *El Cab Art in a Taxi* (page 42); a need to heal, as in *The Women's Circus* (page 44); or the need to celebrate after a difficult collective struggle, as in *The Mountain Project* (page 22). Sometimes the project simply evolves from a very specific endeavour that is followed through its own course, gathering community involvement along the way (see *Tele-Vecindario*, page 38).

Develop and Refine Process

Process in community-based art work is where skills, information, perspectives and ways of working are developed and implemented. It is where imaginations are ignited and talents revealed. A product or outcome will be the fruit of this effort. Agreeing upon what and designing how the work will be done is the beginning of the collective, collaborative process.

a) Brainstorm and plan

After initiating a community arts relationship, it needs to develop into a working union. Brainstorming often reveals the concerns and varied skills of participants. A planning exercise might strengthen mutual understanding among participants. It can be used to help schedule, assign responsibilities and agree on decision-making methods. *The Mountain Project* (page 22) is an example of how participants brainstormed to identify each others skills and concerns.

Opposite page: *Sweetgrass Narratives*, one of the workshops at the conference. *This page, right:* The U.B.U. theatre company entertained delegates with excerpts from *Ubu the Barbarian*, an absurdist musical rock performance by and for youth.



b) Manage expectations

There are both individual and collective expectations within community arts projects. Expectations need to be adjusted because of shortage of time, money or other factors, but initial vision and expectations provide important guidelines throughout the process (see *West Meets East*, page 42).

c) Establish roles and manage decision-making

Agreeing on who does what, and how decisions are made are key elements to a successful project, particularly in its early stages. Some tips for establishing roles and decision-making processes include:

- ❑ **Define your vision and audience.** Reiterate the vision (product or outcome) or the effect you would like your project to have and the publics/audiences it is intended to reach; how you plan and achieve these results is the entire process (see *Les Compagnons*, page 30).
- ❑ **Finances.** Identify those who will raise and manage the budget. As the project evolves, so too will allotted time and money. Who will

be responsible for monitoring these items? Community partnerships, where goods and services in-kind are contributed, might be valuable budgetary contributions which also must be managed with the finances (see *The Women's Circus*, page 44).

- ❑ **Publicity.** Explore how the product or outcome will be made known to your audience. Does someone in the group have a particular talent or interest in publicity/marketing? Does someone have connections with printers, promotion companies, etc. (see *First Contract*, page 35).
- ❑ **Artistic decisions.** What process will be used for artistic decisions and how will non-artists have input? (See *Mosaic Creek*, page 28.)
- ❑ **Disagreements.** How will disagreements be resolved? Perhaps your group will need an outside facilitator to mediate disagreements. We will expand on how to manage disagreements later in the workbook.

- ❑ **Ownership.** Who will own the final product, and have access to later use of it? This must be decided at the outset of the project. Many projects belong to the entire community in a public space (see The Flower Mandala Project, page 46; The Mountain Project, page 22; and Mosaic Creek, page 28); others involve private ownership (see Atlas Moves Watching, page 32 and El Cab Art in A Taxi, page 42).
- ❑ **Permissions, legal considerations.** Copyright, moral law, usage rights, photographic releases, simple written permissions, special permits, licenses or dispensations

may be required (often unexpectedly) during or at the end of the project. Discuss the permissions you may need; it is best to deal with as much of this in advance as possible.

d) Negotiate differences

"Without a willingness to relinquish control and follow the projects where they lead – into the thoughts and realities of communities, into the hopes of the artists, into the artistic possibilities of these collaborations – the richness of these projects, and their real strengths and weaknesses, cannot emerge."

Michael Brenson,

Culture in Action, United States

Negotiation means conferring with another party in order to establish a common ground from which both can proceed; it goes to the heart of collaborative work. In community arts, this means that at least one, but ideally all, parties are willing to relinquish some aspect of their expectations for the good of the process, the product or outcome toward which they are working.

In the preceding section on establishing roles, we identified that disagreements are inevitable in collaborative work, and that there should be mechanisms in place to handle them. Difficult dynamics can develop within any group of people that are working together. It may be that one person always makes decisions for the collective, or that power-based groups develop within the larger group and compete for control. The methods for decision-making, money management and dispute resolution should be agreed upon prior to the working experience.

The important point is to avoid having decision-making control in the hands of one person or small group. Methods to avoid this include:

- ❑ agreeing to achieve consensus on issues that arise;
- ❑ voting on issues, with majority rules outcomes;
- ❑ creating small groups to oversee each area of responsibility, thereby minimizing the possibility of individual domination over vision, finance, information, control etc. (one participant could be responsible for each group, either self-assigned or assigned by a facilitator);
- ❑ having these groups report on their activity, communicating on a regular basis to an impartial group or person who provides feedback on how the big picture is shaping up.





If establishing these consensual decision-making guidelines does not work, project organizers may want to obtain guidelines on formal dispute management or arrange for an impartial third party to mediate the situation.

Personality is a powerful force in collaborative work. The interplay of personality traits often develops into chemistry which can make collective creation a joy, or not. Some methods to address potential tensions based on personality differences include:

- ❑ Identifying a buffer zone for participants—a place where anyone can go to be alone (this can diffuse individual and collective tension and prevent emotional issues from developing into inappropriate behaviour).
- ❑ Devising a system for anonymous feedback, such as a Feedback Box where comments regarding the project or process may be addressed. It allows issues to be raised with impunity and gives less vocal participants a voice.
- ❑ Establishing an optional, regular ritual around an enjoyable activity such as a snack exchange, poetry

session, etc.

The best negotiations occur when all parties agree that they are in this together, willing to listen, be heard and find an area of mutual agreement. Communication is critical to developing mutual understanding and building relationships. Words often have different meaning to different people. They carry energy, emotion and power. Successful outcomes usually occur when difficulties are negotiated and communication is clear (see *Tele-Vecindario*, page 38).

Collaborate

Collaboration means working together in a joint effort toward a shared goal. There are many models of collaboration which may:

- ❑ involve artists either as facilitators or community members with a particular skill needed to realize a collective vision (as in *The Mountain Project*, page 22), or a community's own voice and vision of itself (as in *The Selma Project*, page 40);
- ❑ teach and impart artistic skills to

community members (as in *Local 75 Hotel and Restaurant Employees Union*, page 34, and *The Aboriginal Project*, page 45);

- ❑ be community-initiated and incorporate artists for specific roles (as in *The Women's Circus*, page 44, and *Spinning Yarns: The Story of Women's Work in Hamilton's North End*, page 36);
- ❑ be artist-initiated and incorporate community for specific input and expression of their concerns (as in *Tele-Vecindario*, page 38, and *El Cab Art in a Taxi*, page 42).

Document the Project

"Working within community, whether it be sharing a project with another person, or with a larger group, we are able to experience joy in the struggle. That joy needs to be documented. For if we only focus on the pain, the difficulties which are surely real in any process of transformation, we only show a partial picture."

bell hooks, Outlaw Culture, Resisting Representations

History shows that what has not been recorded has difficulty claiming a space in our collective psyches. As a result, recording or documenting community arts work is valuable both to those who participated in the project, and to the future of the communities involved. One objective of community arts for many artists and communities is facilitating social change (see *The Northwood Arts Program*, page 24 or *The Selma Project*, page 40). Each project can be looked at as a collective work of public expression to resonate beyond the boundaries of its creators. Artists, cultural workers, community members and the public benefit from documentation. It shares a collective product or outcome with potentially unlimited numbers of people.

Documentation often becomes the official record of communities that are continually changing, as well as of those that may disappear over time. It is a collective family album, describing a history, and focusing, in each instant, on the different groupings we call community.

The completed work itself may be a form of documentation; or documentation can take on another form, or be incorporated into the process of the project. It is an important consideration from the outset of a project and a natural extension of the design and work process. Some interesting examples come from the project *Spinning Yarns: The Story of Women's Work in Hamilton's North End* (page 36).

Quality of Outcome

"...The recognition that what you've got is important and that it's good, and that other people can relate to it."

*Lorraine Leeson, Art of Change,
Great Britain
Vital Links conference*

While process is extremely important in community arts, so too is the product or outcome. The collective investment of time, energy, expectations and creative work demands that the product or outcome be a public expression of quality—a work in which both artist and community can take pride. The quality of the outcome is determined on pre-agreed criteria during the planning stages which are evaluated upon completion.

In developing that criteria, misconceptions on the part of artists or communities may emerge that can stifle aspirations and the setting of standards within the creative process. They can also undermine the spirit and quality of the collective effort. Some examples of the



misconceptions and negative attitudes that can arise during a community arts project include the belief:

- ❑ that community standards are lower or different from artistic standards;
- ❑ that previously untrained community members cannot produce or perform to the standard of those who are trained;
- ❑ that merely engaging in an endeavour involving the arts and community is so enjoyable that there is no need to aspire to high standards in the completed work.

In the end, the goal of most community arts projects is to make people feel connected, either emotionally or aesthetically, through the creative process. This broad goal should be kept in focus by all participants throughout the course of a community arts project, so that negative attitudes and misconceptions can be kept at a minimum.

*Vital Links site visits: Opposite page: Everybody's Theatre Company performed *The Spirit of Shivarree* on the banks of the Eramosa River. Above: Noel Harding speaks with visitors to the Elevated Wetlands.*

Evaluate the Project

Honest and critical evaluation of a project is an important aspect of development for an artist and for a community. It develops both the tools and the strengths necessary for further development and it clears the path for future work. Evaluation can be ongoing, and can assist with managing expectations.

Initial questions for evaluation might include:

- ❑ How do I feel and what do I think about the product or outcome?
- ❑ How was the work or project initiated? Did that method provide a solid foundation?
- ❑ What was the nature of the collaboration and how did it work?
- ❑ How actively did the community participate in the project?
- ❑ How was the context of the community reflected in the outcome? The process? The decision-making methods that were developed? Any other choices?

- ❑ Through what process was the project or work developed and designed?
- ❑ What were the aesthetic considerations involved? How did they relate to the community? To the artist(s)?
- ❑ What were some of the benefits to the artist(s) and community members?
- ❑ Were artist and community expectations realized? How were they adjusted?
- ❑ How was acknowledgment given (e.g. was the work signed, was there a written document acknowledging all who contributed, etc.)?
- ❑ How was the process documented?
- ❑ How was ownership (or copyright) determined?
- ❑ What were the major problems? What might have prevented them?
- ❑ What were the greatest achievements?

The working process and outcome should be rigorously reviewed and critiqued, not the people who worked on the project. Use functions to describe what happened, rather than the names of those who performed them. It might be useful for each participant to write a sentence or brief paragraph about the experience. This might be used for documentation, or become its own art work over time. It is a valuable legacy of the work. (Be certain that each participant provides a note of permission or release if it is possible that this element will be used for a video, film, a public document or a published work.) Collective assessment usually takes the form of some kind of celebratory closure to the project by its participants. Give praise to people where appropriate and thanks to all.

Participants Jennifer Cayley and Robin Pacific at the Vital Links conference.



"The 'new internationalism' has opened the institutional doors wider, but it also has created new problems. In part of this conference [*Vital Links*] we have tried to project what some of those would be, but I think inevitably it always boils down to one thing – and that is funding."

*Tom Hill, curator,
Woodland Cultural Centre,
speaking at Vital Links*

Funding

Public funding greatly shapes and influences the development of the arts, as well as the fabric of our society and individual communities. Generally speaking, where there are dollars, there is development and growth.

In Ontario, the Ontario Arts Council (OAC) has been a leader in supporting community arts since the early 1970s, contributing to its development and growth in all regions of the province. Since that time, OAC has developed programs to support community arts organizations, residencies and projects between artists and communities, as well as a variety of community-based festivals. Funding for community arts is also present at the municipal level. Nationally, the Canada Council for the Arts, together with OAC, the Toronto Arts Council and the Laidlaw Foundation, recently participated in a national pilot program to facilitate projects between artists and communities (see *Resources and References* for funding contacts).

The development of community arts programs at the municipal, provincial and national levels shows that community arts is coming into its own as a recognized art-making method. However, community arts is drawing attention at a time when the arts and social services sectors are experiencing major restructuring

and cutbacks at every government level. In light of these funding challenges to the arts in general, community arts is well-positioned to find new sources of support beyond government funding.

The following are examples of how community arts organizations have secured the support of business, community, arts and public funders to support their community-based art work:

- ❑ sharing resources and infrastructure such as facilities, people, expertise and goods-in-kind (see *Les Compagnons*, page 30, and *The Women's Circus*, page 44);
- ❑ approaching the private sector with proposals that specify what's in it for them (see *The Elevated Wetlands*, page 26);
- ❑ cultivating relationships with potential funders, donors and business partners by making the community and the artist known to them (see *Spinning Yarns: The Story of Women's Work in Hamilton's North End*, page 36);
- ❑ developing partnerships with other communities for resource-sharing and cultural development (see *The Northwood Arts Program*, page 24, and *The Selma Project*, page 40);
- ❑ documenting community arts work in an attractive, informative package as a way to gain future support (see *The Mountain Project*, page 22).

The public is also an excellent ally to ensure the support of community arts. This is where documentation, solicitation of written feedback, collection of names and addresses for mailing lists and on-going contact become all the more important.

Letters from artists, arts supporters and community members carry

tremendous weight with those who make decisions regarding arts funding. The use of community arts to reach new and larger audiences within the arts can also foster financial support. The nature of any given project may indicate unique sources of support if careful, creative thought is devoted to it.

more far-reaching results (as opposed to short-term project creation which is often one-off with little opportunity to foster longer relationships);

- ❑ support for research, planning and creation of projects;
- ❑ support for the training of artists and community members in the skills essential to community arts.

Development

Community arts is about more than one-off projects. It can lay the foundation for significant community cultural development. Support for ongoing development is as important to community arts as it is for individual artists and arts organizations working in other disciplines.

The strategies for obtaining funding and partnerships for ongoing development are similar to those used to attract shorter-term project support. Hopefully, as the far-ranging effects of community arts work reach more audiences and its benefits are documented, more funds for its development will become available. (See Bibliography: *Creating Social Capital A Study of Long-term Benefits from Community Based Arts Funding*)

Development support involves:

- ❑ longer-term investment funding which allows artists to develop;
- ❑ encouragement of long-term working relationships between artists and funders, which have



The creativity of community-based artists was evident in little ways, such as this envelope containing pictures of a community arts project.

Community Arts Projects

The following projects illustrate how community arts is undertaken within Canada, the United States, Great Britain and Australia.

Each project is different, yet there are similarities that represent the principles and processes discussed in the first part of this book. All of these projects illustrate the many interpretations and applications of community arts.

Each project includes:

Background

- ❑ Who are the members of the community?
- ❑ How is the community defined by itself or others?
- ❑ What characteristics of the community give it its sense of identity and common purpose?

Project

- ❑ What is the nature of the project, how was it conceived and what were its objectives?
- ❑ Why were artists and artistic expression selected to achieve the objective or outcome?

Process

- ❑ How was the collaborative process between artists and community carried out?
- ❑ How did the community participate in the project's initiation, design and creation?
- ❑ How was the project supported by community, the private and/or public sector and others?

Outcome

- ❑ How was the project or activity received by the community and the public?
- ❑ What were some of the effects of the project for the immediate community and others?

The Canadian projects also include examples from the Arts and Labour movement. A brief history of the relationship between arts and labour is presented for some context.

Toronto's Clay and Paper Theatre



CANADA

The Mountain Project – A Show Of Hands

Sudbury, Ontario

Background

The Donovan and Flour Mill area of Sudbury is an established working class community and home to a diverse population including First Nations people, francophones and new immigrants.

Since 1992, these neighbourhoods have been the site of a unique development project called Sudbury: Better Beginnings Better Futures. The project's focus is to work with the community to create a safe, healthy environment for its inhabitants. Results of this work include the creation of parks, gardens, community centres and programs for families and children. Over 400 families are members of Better Beginnings.

In 1995, when a local mountain area – one of the last bits of wild space in the area – was zoned for condominium development, Better Beginnings joined the Save the Mountain coalition to successfully negotiate the preservation of eleven acres of mountain area for parkland, as well as limits on future development. To celebrate their victory, the two groups created a permanent piece of art in the community.

Project

The project was coordinated by the Myths and Mirrors Community Centre, working with the Better Beginnings group, residents and three artists with previous connections to the community. The purpose of the project was to:

- commemorate the group's achievement of saving the mountain;
- honour the people of the community and their stories;
- create a video documenting the process.

Process

Myths and Mirrors coordinator Laurie McGauley, artists Lori Corbeil, Vickie Merrifield and Stuart Cryer began by talking to community members to determine what kind



of commemorative display they wanted. This consultation took place through meetings and community sessions. Community members were asked to honour the community using oil pastels on paper, and describe their drawings, working with the visual artist. The video artists used this opportunity to gain the trust and permission of community members to videotape the process. Over 180 people took part in this initial consultation process. McGauley coordinated the project, which saw a core group of 40 people

responsible for the final concept and design of the installation.

Using the images and stories collected during the consultations, the core group noticed that the themes were leading away from the mountain and back to the connections between people in the community. Hands were a predominant image, representing the notion of reaching out and fences were identified as barriers faced by the community.

Participants decided to trace the community members' hands on plywood. Once cut out, they were asked

to paint on their hand images that said something about themselves and their communities. The hands were then mounted together on a large chain-link fence in the neighbourhood. Two of the artists recorded the entire process on videotape, talking to participants about their experience in the project.

Once the concept was agreed upon, work teams were formed to:

- ❑ trace community members hands, cut them out with jigsaws, and sand and prime each cut-out;
- ❑ return the hands to community members during painting sessions led by visual artists;
- ❑ design the final installation;
- ❑ develop the video outline;
- ❑ write and record an original song for the video;
- ❑ edit the video;
- ❑ plan the unveiling celebrations;
- ❑ evaluate the process and results with the community and larger public.

More than 450 community members created a hand for the final installation. Funding for the installation and video was raised from a variety of sources including government agencies, private foundations, local businesses and community groups.

Throughout the process, they developed the following community principles:

- ❑ commitment to group process and consensus decision-making;
- ❑ belief in importance of community identity and support;
- ❑ mutual respect and the involvement of people from all cultures;
- ❑ a strong focus on children, and the community's collective hopes and dreams for them.

Outcome

The emotional impact of this project on the community is a testament to the power of community arts. The unveiling of the installation unleashed a fierce pride in community members that continues to this day. One member made plastic hand-pins to distribute at the unveiling. Another created a two-foot by three-foot photo album of the entire process which is on permanent display at one of the Better Beginnings sites. Community members now create personalized hands as gifts.

The launch of the video was an experience that participants still talk about a spontaneous, tearful 10-minute standing ovation for themselves and what they created together. Participants regularly borrow the video for formal and informal showings. Currently, the video is used as a teaching tool at two universities and three colleges, and was broadcast on local television.

"People are hesitant to do art, because they haven't had experience and they assume it's done by an artist. With this project, because it was about community and about the people in the community, it was for them to do."

Lori Corbeil, visual artist

Opposite page: Participants paint onto hands made of plywood (top); fences were incorporated into the project, identified as barriers faced by the community (bottom). *This page:* A Show of Hands: the variety of hands was as individual as the participants who created them.





Above and opposite page, top: The Northwood Arts Program included a mural project on the local ice rink shack. *Opposite page, bottom:* The program involved young people aged 12-19; 34 of them were paid full-time during the summer program, and 121 on an intermittent basis.

The Northwood Arts Program Thunder Bay, Ontario

Background

The Northwood Arts Program was designed to serve the Thunder Bay neighbourhoods of Vale and Limbrick, an economically-depressed area with a large number of street youth from various ethnic backgrounds. The project was originally called the Vale Arts Project, but was renamed to eliminate past boundaries drawn between the two neighbouring municipal regions and ensure access to community programs for both neighbourhoods.

Although it is the most challenging area of Thunder Bay for an arts project, it is also where such activity is most needed, especially considering that it has few activities for youth, and that it attracts more young people every year (the neighbourhood is a popular place for youth to arrive when they come to the city, usually from more northern communities). The community has an honest desire to work together to foster positive change for the youth.

Actor/director Randolph Swyer

lived in Thunder Bay and worked in youth theatre for almost two years prior to initiating this project. He was key to formulating Magnus Theatre's youth program *Positive Strokes* and modeled the Northwood program on its success.

Project

The Northwood Arts Program consisted of:

- ❑ a youth drama camp for training and exploring youth issues and ideas;
- ❑ the creation of a temporary community theatre company;
- ❑ the presentation of a public performance;
- ❑ a mural project.

The intention of the program was to:

- ❑ offer a variety of arts-based programs to young people between the ages of 12 and 19 who would normally not be exposed to such programs due to financial restrictions and negative attitudes;
- ❑ encourage youth to use theatre as a positive way to address social problems and/or negative feelings;
- ❑ empower each individual to express themselves constructively and creatively;
- ❑ mount a play which involved and reflected these participants;
- ❑ instill self-discipline and a sense of responsibility in participants, and foster an atmosphere of mutual trust and emotional safety.

Process

Programs were conducted over a three-month period in an environment that was designed to allow young people from this area a forum for self-expression. The space and

atmosphere created were both private and safe.

The structure of the program was designed to:

- ❑ enhance discussion of their lives and problems;
- ❑ have solutions examined without fear of failure or judgment;
- ❑ provide a supportive environment in which risks could be taken;
- ❑ provide an opportunity for those interested in theatre as a vocation to be hired to take on additional responsibility.

Swyer selected five youths to manage and run the theatre with him, placing them in key professional theatre roles either as paid staff or non-paid apprentices. As they became a team where each opinion carried equal weight, they learned to listen and consider each other's opinions carefully. The young people developed a sense of control as they made decisions and managed the theatre component of the project. All participants understood the budget.

The drama camp consisted of one drama session per day, six days a week. Theatre activities focused on autobiographical improvisations without the pressure to present one's work.

Artist Jennifer Garret coordinated The Mural Project, which translated the community themes and issues into a visual piece. Young people painted the local ice rink shack which had been plagued by graffiti.

Artists Lila Cano, Joel Kuper, Jelena Psenicnik and Eleanor Albanese held classes in physical theatre, acting, movement and play creation for the 34 young people involved in the program.

Through The Wall, the public performance, was a series of scenes comprised of:

"You can't be afraid of tears, voices raised in anger or talking about taboo subjects."

Randolph Swyer, theatre artist

- ❑ a commedia dell arte skit;
- ❑ an interpretation of the participants version of the modern day Seven Deadly Sins racism, political corporations, prejudice, environmental ignorance, consumerism, jealousy and war depicted in movement;
- ❑ a dramatic mime depicting the tragedy of war;
- ❑ individual monologues describing their feelings and commenting on everything from racism and artistic training to political problems.

Magnus Theatre's track record of addressing the community's concern



for youth attracted many funding partners, participants and volunteers to the project, including:

- ❑ Thunder Bay District Housing Authority
- ❑ The Northwood Neighbourhood Committee
- ❑ Limbrick- James Tenants Association
- ❑ Vale Community Centre
- ❑ Thunder Bay Multi-Cultural Association
- ❑ Old Fort William
- ❑ Fort City Kinsmen Club
- ❑ Sir Winston Churchill High School & Wastage High School
- ❑ The City of Thunder Bay

Outcome

The program paid 34 young people full-time, and 121 on an intermittent basis throughout the summer. Many of them expressed interest in theatre, which eventually resulted in the inclusion of theatre programs in their high schools curriculum.

The summer community theatre was created, and produced three performances of *Through the Wall* that were attended by approximately 300 members of the community. Admission was a donation to the Limbrick Food Bank. While the theatre was temporary, the mural still graces the park today.





The Elevated Wetlands

Society of Plastics and Noel Harding
Toronto, Ontario

Background

The idea for the Elevated Wetlands emerged informally at an art opening when internationally-renowned artist Noel Harding and Paul Cohen, on the Board of Directors of the Society of Plastics Industry of Canada (SPI), were talking about using plastics as a medium in art. The artist was frustrated that existing criteria on public art work denies the use of plastics; the executive was frustrated by the negative public

perception towards plastic. They thought it would be very useful to deal with the aesthetics of this material to give a new appreciation for plastic. An idea began to emerge the idea of Plastics + Art that would benefit both.

Project

Plastics + Art was designed to:

- ❑ inform the public of the usefulness, resourcefulness and aesthetic appeal of plastics, creating positive awareness for the entire plastics industry;
- ❑ bring together, for the first time, the two very separate worlds of art and the plastics industry;
- ❑ create public works of art in five Canadian cities.

The partnership between the artist and the industry became an artistic exploration designed to meet artistic, corporate and civic objectives through the creation of a significant piece of art in an urban setting. The artist established the budget and had free reign to design and execute

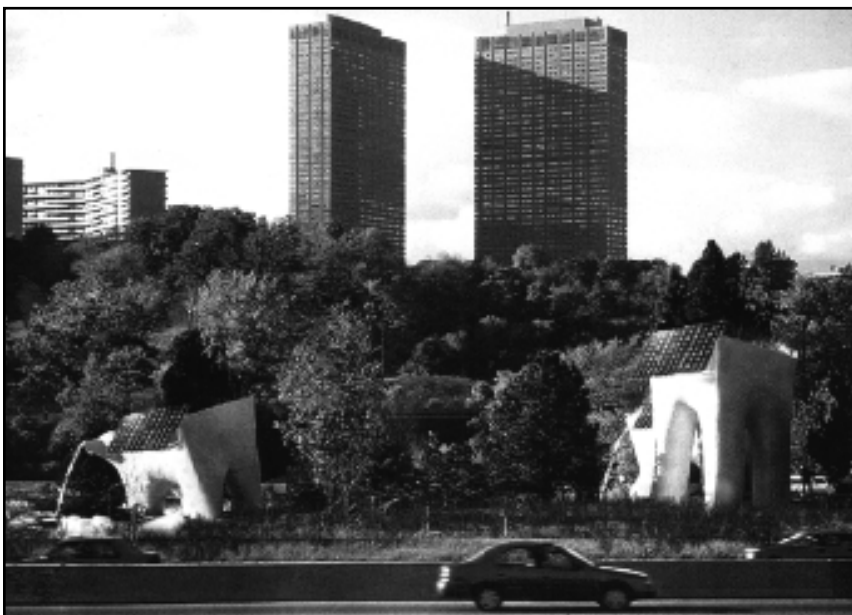
"Artists are far too paternalized by our society; if we want to live in an age where artists are valuable to us in a total 'community sense', then more respect need be given to the independence and entrepreneurial spirit of artists."

Noel Harding, visual artist

his or her work, from choosing the site to overseeing the construction. The industry provided financial and resource support. This idea led to the concept of an Artist in Residence project the residence being the broad community of the plastics industry, including research and manufacturing, industry service organizations, and major retail businesses. The residency program consisted of:

- ❑ one year in which the artist investigates what materials will be made available to him or her by a group of companies;
- ❑ one year in which the artist, in cooperation with the industry and local government, identifies a public place for the final outcome/product.

The Plastics + Art initiative selected five internationally-acclaimed artists to be part of this residency, for the creation of five pieces of major public art in Toronto, Calgary, Vancouver, Montreal and Halifax over the next several years. The works will be created sequentially, so that each artist will support and assist the subsequent artist.





This page, and opposite page, top: Noel Harding's Elevated Wetlands is part of a major, national community arts project. Six sculptures maintain wetland vegetation and improve water quality through solar irrigation. Opposite page, below: Set on Toronto's Don Valley Parkway, the sculptures are viewed by about 3 million motorists monthly.

Noel Harding's Elevated Wetlands beside Toronto's Don Valley Parkway is the first of these works to be created.

Process

Although Harding's work had familiarized him with plastics, it was the industry's recycling needs that drove his exploration into what should be created. In particular, his idea was sparked by a recycling plant employee's comment about how some discarded plastics materials in a field resulted in rapid, lush plant growth. As a result, Harding decided to base his project on plant remediation—the process through which certain plants extract heavy metals and other pollutants.

Harding's project is an installation consisting of a series of six large plastic sculptures that, through solar irrigation and recycled plastic soil, maintains wetland vegetation and improves water quality. Set along Toronto's Don Valley Parkway, it is viewed by 3 million passing motorists every month. Harding calls it a poetic gesture that will create for people a gateway of beauty in the elevated waterfall and massive

growth which surrounds it.

With the financial and intellectual support of the Canadian Plastics Industry Association, Harding arranged partnerships with: the University of Lethbridge departments of Arts, Biological Science, Geography and Water Resources; the University of Calgary's Chemistry department; the University of Guelph's Botany department; and the National Research Council of Canada. Funders were attracted to the nature and process of Harding's work.

Outcome

The prototype for the Elevated Wetlands was built on the campus of the University of Lethbridge. All six elements of the actual sculpture were put in place on the Don Valley Parkway in Toronto by the summer of 1998. The complete complement of full growth will mature approximately one year later.

The Elevated Wetlands is a clear indication of how art, education and industry can work in tandem to improve our environment. The project is exemplary of the kinds of collaborations necessary to make such innovation possible.

"Britannia Neighbours felt strongly that involving local people in both the design of the park and art-making would build a strong sense of ownership and create a unique public space, truly reflective of the neighbourhood."

*Sarah White,
project coordinator/designer*

Mosaic Creek Park

Britannia Neighbours
Vancouver, British Columbia

Background

Grandview Woodlands is a low-income, culturally and racially diverse neighbourhood with a significant immigrant and artist population in Vancouver, British Columbia.

A group of artists, designers and residents from the Grandview Woodlands neighbourhood came together in 1993 as Britannia Neighbours to research and work on a project around the theme of sustainability. They realized that they

lived in one of Vancouver's most park-deficient areas, and that the Vancouver Park Board had an acquisition fund to purchase land for park development.

One member of Britannia Neighbours lived across the street from a 12,000 square foot piece of land. In January 1994, Britannia Neighbours convinced the Park Board to buy the land for \$750,000. The Board gave Britannia Neighbours \$50,000 towards the development of a community park.

Project and Process

Britannia Neighbours created a series of flyers in three languages, notifying community members about the new park land and inviting them to attend input sessions. The Britannia Community Centre became a partner by providing meeting, office and workshop space and other services.

The team developed an open design process for the park by giving every person at the meeting a blank sheet of paper, with only principle elements written on it (i.e. where the sun rose and went down). They had each person draw in the elements that they wanted to have in the park. By spring 1994, after several



community meetings (with an average of 40 people per session), the plan for the park became clear.

With a plan and the basic park design in hand, they began the business of fundraising. The following funds were secured:

- ❑ \$70,000 from a provincial matching fund: one-third grant, one-third cash from the group, and one-third in volunteer labour;
- ❑ \$5,000 each from Vancity Credit Union; Mountain Equipment Coop; Canada Trust Enviro Fund; Britannia Community Centre; Vancouver Park Board Neighbourhood Matching Fund;
- ❑ \$6,100 from the Community Public Art Program (City of Vancouver);
- ❑ \$2,000 from The East Van Garden Tours;
- ❑ many material donations.



The Britannia Neighbours efficiency was recognized by the Park Board, and earned them great latitude in their process, administration and decision-making.

The group had to investigate each suggestion thoroughly on behalf of the community, to assess its safety, durability, cost-effectiveness, etc.

The artistic component of the project came out of the design process, after some of the money was secured. Again, leaflets and flyers informed the community of another series of meetings, this time indicating non-artists wanted. Over 500 community members were involved in these sessions and their work became the guide for the artistic design of the park and its elements.

Water was a recurring image, but was found to be logistically problematic. Britannia Neighbours recommended symbolic water in the form of mosaics—pieces of different coloured broken tiles—which could take the shape of a creek running through the park. This was also an artistic means for many community members to contribute in a hands-on fashion.

Mosaic artists were consulted and workshops were held four times per week at the Britannia Community Centre and in the schools over a five month period. Community members from age four to seniors participated and made approximately 300 individual designs which now form the Mosaic Creek that permanently runs through the centre of the park.

Many community members were involved in fundraising activities pertaining to installing the mosaics and planting a herb garden of local, edible plants—another element that keeps people involved in the park.

A contractor was hired to clear the land and build the physical park. Local basalt rocks were selected for



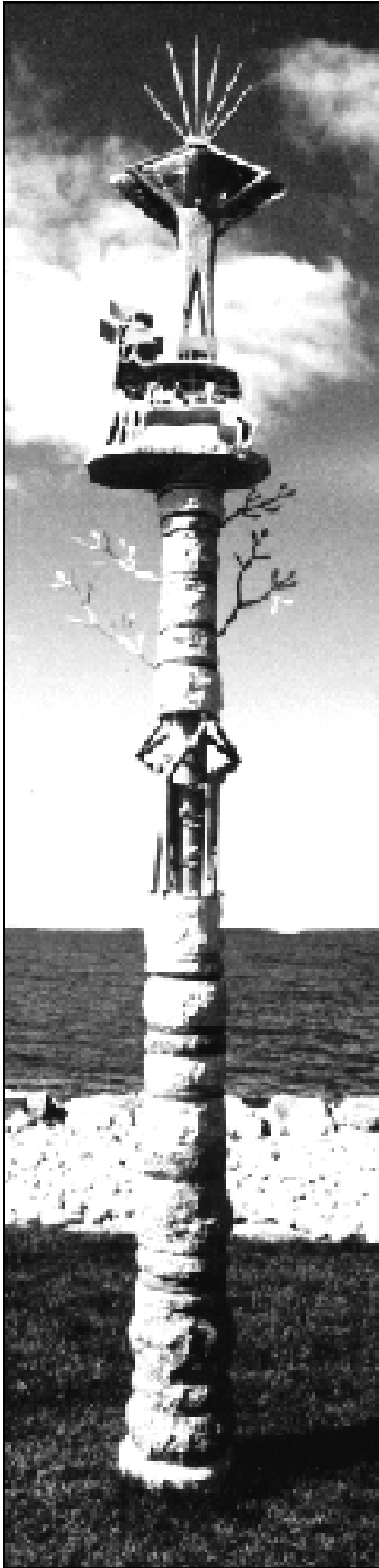
their columnar beauty and the park's benches were made by youth involved in a skills-trade program in the area.

Outcome

More than 600 people and 5,000 community hours were put to work in creating Mosaic Creek Park. Skills were gained, community development was advanced and civic pride was developed. The colours and aesthetic treatment of each tile reflect each individual involved in the project. The community has built its belief in itself. Since its opening, there has been no vandalism in the park.



Opposite page: Sarah White and Walter Gibson work on the mosaic installation's bottom section (top); the dedication plaque in the park (bottom). *This page:* Children explore the park's basalt play area (top); a participant at the mosaic-making workshop at Britannia Community Centre (below).



Les Compagnons: The Right to Be Different

A Work of Public Art
North Bay, Ontario

Background

The city of North Bay is home to approximately 56,000 people, primarily of working class backgrounds. About 20% of the population is francophone.

The city's public museum and art gallery were not widely supported by the community's francophone population. Many francophones believed that they did not possess enough formal education and knowledge to make use of, or even enter, these facilities.

Project

Les Compagnons, a francophone cultural centre established in the mid-1960s, served as both a community and cultural catalyst in the area. They approached the city of North Bay to support the creation of a sculpture for the entire community to be located in a park by the city's marina. The group felt that a sculpture in a public place could provide not only the francophone population, but all of the inhabitants, with a work of art to which they could feel connected.

Process

For two years, Les Compagnons was the base of operations for a 22-member committee with the following responsibilities:

- ❑ surveying and gathering support and ideas from the larger community;
- ❑ envisioning, defining and formu-

lating the project;

- ❑ devising a process for selection of the artists who would create the sculpture;
- ❑ ensuring that the larger community's needs and concerns were met;
- ❑ making recommendations to the Board of Les Compagnons.

The committee issued an open call to artists from across North America and received 42 responses. Six were shortlisted and asked to submit proposals. Among the requirements of the proposal were specifications that the work must:

- ❑ be a piece of sculpture;
- ❑ reflect the community;
- ❑ be environmentally sound and safe;
- ❑ last at least 25 years.



The proposal of MichÈle Lapointe and René Rioux entitled *The Right to Be Different* was selected. Their proposal was for an 18-foot sculpture with a base formed by a granite donut circle. The middle held three human figure shapes in bronze which appeared to be supporting the rest of the sculpture, topped off by animal shapes made of polished steel. Above the animals were a man

"I would always recommend that you work with artists who like to talk and work with people. It makes all the difference. Now, they [the community] go to the museum and gallery and feel that they have a right!"

*Floriane Le Blanc, former
Program Coordinator,
Les Compagnons*

and a woman holding a light made of glass. The sculpture was also to act as a year-round sundial.

The committee secured the support of the city council and the space for the sculpture. For two summers, the artists were housed at the community college. During the first summer, they surveyed the site and became familiar with the community; during the second, they built and installed the sculpture.

Traditional arts funding could not be obtained. They turned to local people and businesses who supported the project in the following ways:

- ❑ the local Pizza Hut provided food for all committee meetings over a two year period;
- ❑ a North Bay steel company cut the steel to blueprint specifications;
- ❑ Ontario Northland Transportation contributed parts and expertise in the making and assembly of certain elements;
- ❑ Rahn Met Metal supplied the bronze;
- ❑ G & P Welding facilitated and participated in assembly;
- ❑ the City of North Bay and its

employees worked with the committee and Les Compagnons throughout the process;

- ❑ community residents and Les Compagnons held many Bingo nights and sold lottery tickets to raise the money for the sculpture.

Outcome

People have taken pride in their park and its sculpture. Since its installation in 1991, there has been no vandalism even though the park is not guarded.

Attendance at the museum and gallery has risen 200 percent due, in large part, to community interaction

with the artists, and community contribution and participation in making this monument possible.

Although not a typical community arts project, as community members did not participate directly in the creative process, it is included here to illustrate the impact of working closely with the artists on a community's attitude to the arts. The artists and community established their own methods of organizing to create this project and now know that they can use these methods to achieve other collective goals.

Artists Michèle Lapointe and René Rioux assemble the 18-foot sculpture (below and opposite, left). *Opposite page, far left:* The sculpture as it stands today.



Atlas Moves Watching

Bill James

Toronto, Ontario

Background

In 1985, choreographer Bill James camped out in a downtown storefront on Toronto's Queen Street West with little more than a coffee machine and a video camera.

Leaving the door open most of the time, he observed and interacted with passersby and the regulars/outpatients from the local mental health centre, prostitutes, runaways and the homeless.

When he brought his dancers and musicians to the space, he found that there was great interest from the street. Passersby would look in through the window on the dance theatre taking place inside which sometimes moved outside amidst the pedestrians and traffic.

From this experience, James developed the dance work, *Atlas Moves Watching*. It was revived in 1989 with two companies Dancemakers, and students from the School of the Toronto Dance Theatre.

Project

When James was invited to present a work at the 1997 *Jane Jacobs: Ideas that Matter* conference in Toronto, he thought it was an excellent opportunity to portray contemporary urban and social themes for a broader audience. Distressed at the large number of youth living on Toronto streets, he proposed a collaboration with homeless and formerly homeless street youth affiliated with the Kensington Youth Theatre Employment Services (KYTES).

KYTES is a social program using theatre and education to provide young people with an opportunity for

personal and social change. Its 17-week program involves skills training, as well as nutrition programming and other tools.

The primary objective of this project was to involve a group of outsiders into an artistic process, while bringing an authentic voice to a performance-work set in a street environment. The nature of the collaboration was to co-design a contemporary version of *Atlas Moves Watching* with youth who had an intimate knowledge and understanding of life on the street.

Process

James received an Ontario Arts Council Artist in the Community/Workplace grant to undertake this project, and arrangements were made with KYTES to select 15 young people to participate. Most had completed the 17-week training program, some had previous theatre experience and all were in the process of making transitions from the street. Each participant was paid and bank accounts were arranged for those who were homeless.

For three weeks, James collaborated with the young people in a dance studio, teaching them basic movement, percussion and improvisation; the movement and gesture were based on their knowledge and experience of the street. The process was documented by video and later shown to an audience of artists, social service professionals and peers who provided valuable feedback prior to the first public performances.

Outcome

The young people worked with professional dancers during two weeks of performances on the street, with indoor audiences viewing the perfor-

"The youth were very committed to their own life and moving forward. Even a little bit of self-confidence and goal-setting that they gained through the project were of tremendous benefit to them."

Bill James

mance through windows while other spectators passed by. The hour-long performances let the public in on the often seen, but rarely understood, world of street people. The performances also stimulated dialogue between the youth and adults in the audience.

The young people developed a physical language for the emotions of their life on the street—the evocation of desperation, fear, pleasure, hope and anger—and demystified physical and language-based street codes.

The work was performed at the *Jane Jacobs: Ideas that Matter* conference to great acclaim. Participants developed an appreciation of their worth and contribution to a collective process and product. Several of the young people involved were prompted to explore performing arts careers.

Arts and Labour Projects

Through many diverse projects in a variety of art forms, labour arts the practice of having an artist or group of artists working within a workplace to bring out the creativity and expression of workers through an artistic project exemplifies the nature and impact of creative collaborations between artists and communities. In this section, we present three community arts projects that involved artists and the labour movement. First, we have provided some background on the history of association between these two groups.

Arts and Labour: Background

The labour community is multi-layered with a long history of association with the arts. The labour arts movement has been a force in community arts development in Ontario for several years.

In North America, particularly through the left-wing political activism of the late 1920s, 30s and 40s, many artists were associated directly and indirectly with the labour movement. Both saw labour in social terms working conditions, wages, education, etc.

By the 1970s, labour in Canada was focused on education programs, union stewardship and social justice, and gained recognition as a social movement with another generation of artists.

In the 1980s, artists and leaders in the labour movement agreed that a formal structure was needed to have a voice in the development of working class culture. They created the Labour Arts & Media Working Group (LAM). By 1989, LAM had become a committee of the Ontario

Federation of Labour.

In 1986, LAM approached the Ontario Arts Council (OAC) for matching funds to produce an annual festival to showcase artists working with labour and working people. This event became the Mayworks Festival in Toronto and eventually spurred the development of a similar festival in Vancouver. Two years later, LAM approached OAC to recommend an Artist-in-Residence pilot program to:

- support the creation of work for the festival;
- more tangibly support arts and the labour community;
- duplicate the Australian model where three-quarters of the money for artistic projects is provided by government and one-quarter by labour.

"A democratic culture recognizes that all work is creative and does not rate one kind of work or worker over another."

Karl Beveridge, artist

This became OAC's Artists in the Workplace program, which was one of the first formal linkages between artists and labour in Ontario. Presently called the Artist in the Community/Workplace (it was broadened to recognize other partnerships in addition to labour), the program encourages artists and arts organizations from all art forms to work with communities and/or trade unions through a collaborative creative process.

One of the latest results of labour's association with artists was

the 1997 opening in the north end of Hamilton, of the Ontario Workers Arts and Heritage Centre (OWAHC) the only cultural centre devoted to the preservation and celebration of the culture and history of working people (see Spinning Yarns project).

Many of the artists involved in LAM, the Mayworks Festival and the Artists and the Workplace Program were also involved with the artist-run centres such as A Space in Toronto.

The early membership and board of A Space is worthy of particular mention because many of the issues they successfully raised in the labour movement and in specific communities have been brought to the attention of the broader community. Subsequent work by members of A Space resulted in the establishment of arts organizations such as Black Film & Video Network (BFVN); Canadian Artists Network: Black Artists in Action (CAN:BAIA) and Women's Arts Resource Centre (WARC).



Winsom and Local 75 of the Hotel and Restaurant Employees Union

Toronto, Ontario

Background

In 1996, Ann Healey, who worked in the education department of the Hotel and Restaurant Employees Union Local 75, contacted visual and textile artist Winsom to develop a collaborative project between the artist and members of the union local.

Winsom and Healey met with some of the workers and designed a project that would:

- ❑ accommodate workers with varying work schedules;
- ❑ give them insight and experience with textile printing, screening and tie-dying;
- ❑ assist them in designing and transferring their own union logo onto fabric;
- ❑ help them create banners and T-shirts for Toronto's annual Labour Day Parade.

Project and Process

With the help of an OAC Artist in the Workplace grant, Winsom developed several projects with various

groups of workers over a three month period. The union arranged use of a studio space within a carpet factory. Winsom made herself available during odd times in order to accommodate workers' schedules and family commitments; the union provided the workers with paid time to participate in the project.

Each work session provided an opportunity for workers to learn about the history of the various techniques they were using, as well as share their personal histories and stories with each other.

Both men and women participated in the making of a quilt, each creating at least one square reflecting the work that they did in the union. The men, though initially reluctant, gradually joined the various groups and made their squares.

Male and female workers helped each other with their designs. They also designed a logo which became the recurring image for every other square of the quilt.

Another group of workers participated in making banners for the Labour Day Parade using tie-dye and screen processes, while several sewed down the sides of the banners and put handle-sticks through them for carrying. Others made T-shirts using silk-screen techniques. Many workers who did not participate in any of these activities provided translation for the messages which were to be printed on the banners and T-shirts in several languages.

Outcome

The union and all of the workers were extremely proud of their work and were able to see and wear some of the elements they made for the Labour Day Parade. The quilt was hung on a truck for the parade, exhibited as part of the Mayworks

Festival in 1997, and won a 1997 Ontario Federation of Labour (OFL) Banner Competition.

Since then, the union has contacted Winsom to work with them again. Some of the workers have continued to use the skills that they learned in the course of this project.

Below: Visual and textile artist Winsom helped workers create a quilt made of squares, each reflecting their particular line of work in the union. Opposite page: A close-up of one of the squares.



First Contract

Carole Condé and Karl Beveridge
Kitchener, Ontario

Background

Artists Carole Condé and Karl Beveridge have developed long-term relationships with labour unions and workers through volunteer work and activism. In 1988, they met with local executives of a national union explaining that they wanted to collaborate with workers on a project.

A meeting was arranged with staff representatives of a public sector union, and then with the executive, before a union of women workers in Kitchener, Ontario, was selected as the group Condé and Beveridge would work with. The union had recently gone on strike for their first contract (when a new union local is formed and certified, it has to negotiate a contract within one year in order to retain representation of the employees concerned; if this is not accomplished, a strike results, as in the case of this union).

"We're not just responsible for ourselves and the art we produce. We don't just produce art as individuals with our own particular burning visions. We make ourselves responsible to a community, and in our case, it's the labour community."

*Carole Condé and Karl Beveridge,
artists*



The book, *First Contract: Women and the Right to Unionize* (above), tells the story of a group of women workers from Kitchener, Ont.

Project and Process

Over a five month period, Condé and Beveridge worked with the women to create a book about the development of the union and their struggles at home and in the workplace during that time. Together, they:

- spoke with the women workers to understand the home, workplace and strike context;
- identified and agreed on issues and concerns;
- interviewed a cross-section of members, eliciting their personal stories and strike experiences;
- developed the stories to produce an accompanying video on the subject.

Funding for the project was secured from the Canada Council and OAC's Artist and the Workplace Program. The book was published by Between the Lines publisher, and was a joint project between Dumont Press Graphix, Kitchener, and the Development Education Centre, Toronto.

The women and the union liked the stories, appreciated the way they were told, but would not agree to be photographed for the book out of fear of workplace tension and job risk. The artists faced the question of how to bring in critical content without putting community members at risk.

In order not to jeopardize the women's work environment, Condé and Beveridge initially softened some of the stories. However, once they decided to use actors in all of the depictions, the stories were told in the original voice.

Outcome

The book, entitled *First Contract: Women and the Right to Unionize*, was so well-received by the union that it was made into a slide show which was screened for the public. The women were pleased that their stories were finally made public.



Above: Phely Rivera, who participated in *The Stories of Josefina, Phely and Jarmila*. Opposite page: Irma Hernandez and Martha Villata work on *White Fiesta*.

Spinning Yarns: The Story of Women's Work in Hamilton's North End

Ontario Workers Arts and Heritage
Centre and St. Joseph's Immigrant
Women's Centre
Hamilton, Ontario

Background

The mandate of the Ontario Workers Arts and Heritage Centre is:

- to preserve, display and communicate the heritage of Ontario workers and their unions, reflecting the broad cultural and racial diversity of Ontario and the role of women; and
- to foster the display and interpretation of the creative expression of work as depicted through the fine, decorative and performing arts.

The north end of Hamilton is home to people who have come from all over the world. St. Joseph's Immigrant Women's Centre provides integration services and English as a Second Language programs for recent immigrant women and refugees. The Ontario Workers Arts and Heritage Centre (OWAHC) approached St. Joseph's Centre and initiated the following project.

Project

OWAHC and St. Joseph's Centre wanted to explore the traditions and tell the stories of immigrant women living in the north end of Hamilton using oral and written storytelling translated visually, in various settings.

The project, supported through an OAC Community Arts Special Projects grant (to assist with artists fees), focused on women within a

specific age-range and socio-economic group who worked at home, either by choice or circumstance. The involvement of St. Joseph's Centre ensured the participation of these recent immigrants, as well as assistance in translation to English for both oral and written formats of the several languages they spoke. The language barrier was a significant challenge.

Process

After a series of small focus group sessions, V. Jane Gordon, Juliet Jansco, Dawn Beatty and Anna Torma, all artists from the Bay Area Artists for Women's Art, were partnered with women from the north-end community.

After a consultation process, the women and artists began to create the themes and the installations for the project, which consisted of a number of works installed in a garden, using various elements from the women's home countries and their adopted home, along with various textiles. Each installation was based on the immigrant and refugee experience of the participants. Together, the women and the artists created four unique installations:

- **Letters Home The Bench Mound:** This garden installation involved women from Asia, Central America and the Middle East. The garden contained local plants, plants from the home countries of the participants, a bench, a pathway made of large stone slabs and a mailbox. The installation focused on the natural elements of water and landscape which together form a place of connection and healing.
- **The Stories of Josefina, Phely and Jarmila:** This piece consisted of photo and sculpture work of

three women from Mexico, Vietnam via the Philippines, and the Czech Republic. An old, fragmented wood column formed the base of the piece, symbolizing the complexities and challenges of the cultural framework in which the women lived.

- ❑ **Mending the Fabric:** This installation consisted of text and objects prepared by Somali women detailing their experiences with war and violence. Many of the objects mementos, tools and textiles were among the few items these women brought with them to Canada. The poster component of the project used text and images to address issues of violence and female genital mutilation.

- ❑ **White Fiesta:** This installation,



done by women from Latin America, consisted of a tapestry made out of textiles of cotton, silk, linen, wool and hemp. The tapestry was symbolic of family, home and comfort. The needlework signified the weaving of emotions, time and sentiment.

Time was a challenge in the project. There were discussions among the women who disclosed their stories. Some of their stories involved tor-

ture and loss of family members. This emotional sharing became another binding force for all involved.

OWAHC served as a resource centre during the project, with partners creating site-specific works in the north-end community. Studio space was provided by the artists.

Outcome

Many community partners were involved in both the creation and assessment of *Spinning Yarns*. Their thoughts were documented as part of the multi-venue project. Local artist Yvonne Maracle documented the process of the project and wrote articles about it for local media, including *Worklines*, a publication of the Centre made available to its members, the labour community and the community at large.

Community contributions to the project included:

- ❑ Royal Botanical Gardens (trees and plants);
- ❑ City of Hamilton (cobblestones and screenings for the garden);
- ❑ CUPE Local 5 (volunteer labour to lay stones);
- ❑ Labourers International Union, Local 837;
- ❑ Bricklayers Union Local 1 (labour to lay cobblestone path).

This project reaffirmed the value of the various women involved and the domestic work that they do, and gave conscious recognition to traditions which are often misunderstood or forgotten. It also laid the groundwork for more collaborative work in the future.

"It was an opportunity to tell our stories – some secrets we have [had] in our hearts for a long time, that we couldn't say to anybody. But now we can tell them with this beautiful garden. Now, when I see this beautiful garden, it reminds me of my home, my family..."

Touran Majidi, participant in Letters Home The Bench Mound



Clockwise from top: passersby in Chicago's West Town neighbourhood look at the video installation created; two of the 75 video monitors that were put on the street, in backyards, porches and lawns.

UNITED STATES

Tele-Vecindario

(Neighbourhood Conduit/TV)

Iñigo Manglano-Ovalle and

Street Level Video

Chicago, Illinois

Background

Videographer Iñigo Manglano-Ovalle's experience was that of an immigrant living between his mother's native Bogota, Columbia, and Chicago's West Town neighbourhood.

Formerly a Polish, Ukrainian and Italian district in the early 1900s, West Town is a low-income, working-class Hispanic community. Like many other ethnically-defined, under-served urban neighbourhoods, it suffered from drugs, gangs, crime, lack of jobs, and the social instability caused by these elements.

The unifying goal of maintaining the Spanish language and culture actually contributed to greater divisions of the community, fostering gangs and a lack of focus in the community's common Latino traditions.

Project

Manglano-Ovalle wanted to use shared cultural tradition as a vehicle:



- to alleviate the social and cultural isolation of his community; and
- for residents to reclaim and transform their neighbourhood.

In most Latino cultures, adults gather outside under a streetlight for conversation and socializing *tertulia*. Manglano-Ovalle's grandfather used to tell him of the *sereno* or lamplighter, who went through the streets telling news and giving time to the community.

Manglano-Ovalle's idea was to

have young people ritually turn on the streetlights, thereby reclaiming the physical space that defined the community, with the light symbolizing dialogue and the elimination of gang-created turfs. Manglano-Ovalle also wanted traditional, hand-crafted jute chairs to be situated around each light, making the atmosphere communal and authentic.

Process

In 1992, Manglano-Ovalle met with Nilda Ruiz Pauley, a respected teacher and community leader at Wells High School. Pauley told him that his project was an excellent means of rechannelling gang energy, which was the greatest single problem in reclaiming the community space, and that he needed inter-generational involvement. It also became clear that the space to be reclaimed was, in fact, the street.

Manglano-Ovalle selected video as the tool for creating dialogue and securing positive youth involvement in the community.

First, he guided young people through the creation of their own video map of the community, which was also a catalyst for getting more people involved. It became the first phase of the tertulia project. Video proved itself the binding element for creating dialogue.

By year's end, what began as Sereno/Tertulia, lighting the streets, had become multiple, inter-generational community video dialogues cumulatively known as Tele-Vecindario.

Manglano-Ovalle solidified the alliances and associations developed over the year into a coalition of youth organizations. The 20 men and women who comprised its youth division became Street-Level Video (S-LV). In the summer of 1993, S-LV

realized Manglano-Ovalle's original concept. After many gang arbitrations and community meetings, one residential street was designated as a neutral zone for Tele-Vecindario, the event.

For six hours on a summer day throughout West Town, the Tele-Vecindario installation was in the street. It consisted of:

- seventy-five video monitors on the street, in backyards, on porches and on lawns behind chain fences;
- an installation of eleven monitors in a vacant lot which was called Rest In Peace—a memorial to youth who had died as a result of gang violence;
- yellow power cords extended from windows and doors like veins to video organs of the community, extending and sharing power to the street where, via video boxes, people were speaking to each other.

Outcome

Through this project, this community took a giant step toward reclaiming its power, its street and using its voice for dialogue. The use of video provided an ongoing vehicle for internal and external expression.

S-LV was able to keep some of the equipment as a permanent vehicle for public art and currently occupies a storefront space in the heart of the neighbourhood on neutral ground, negotiated with gang members. Iæigo Manglano-Ovalle is its artistic director, Paul Teruel is its production director and Nilda Ruiz Pauley is its field director.

"Artists don't kick-start culture; it's a shared process... the intention of the project was not to organize, but to channel and illuminate the vitality of the community's own organizational structures. My hope was that collaboration in the project would prove to be beneficial to participating individuals and groups."

*Iæigo Manglano-Ovalle,
artist, Culture in Action*

The Selma Project: Understanding the Struggle for Community

Selma, Alabama

Background

Thirty years after the historic march that led to passage of the *Voting Rights Act* of 1965 in Selma, Alabama, little had changed. The mayor who was voted to office on a segregationist ticket in 1964 was still mayor in 1993. In response to the dramatically increased African-American voter base, African-Americans were appointed to committees, councils, boards and other positions of authority, in numbers just short of a majority, creating the appearance of radical change where, in reality, little existed.

Selma erupted in 1989-90 when the school board fired its first African-American superintendent in a racially-split vote. Schools were closed and almost every white student in Junior and Senior High School transferred to a private school.

These events gave rise to several deeply-rooted community institutions which, though underfunded, provided much needed programs:

- ❑ The National Voting Rights Museum which acknowledged the citizens who had contributed to that achievement, and served as a facility for art and education;
- ❑ The Black Belt Arts and Cultural Center (B BACC) which provided storytelling, music and African dance for community self-image and pride;
- ❑ The Selma Youth Development Center (SYDC), developed by B BACC alumnus, award-winning boxer and visual artist Frank Hardy, where daily painting, boxing and dance classes were taught to local youth.

The SYDC was housed in an unused school building. Tri-Tech Services Inc., a local corporation and Frank Hardy's employer, was so impressed with his youth program that the company reassigned him from the assembly line to full-time directorship of the Center.

"[The arts] allow a child to develop as an individual. Sometimes a child does not fit into the realm that society sets for him or her. The arts gives them a way to make their own place."

*Frank Hardy,
Selma Youth Development*

Many people raised in Selma during the 1960s had returned to create and work within its educational and social institutions to provide strong development for youth, and support the transformation of the community. Over a two year period, the Selma/Dallas County Council for the Arts (SDCCA) developed a relationship with this community and recommended an arts residency which could be used to counteract racism and support further development.

Project

This community knew itself and what it wanted from an arts residency. Key community members were involved with the process. The community agreed that the arts residency needed to:

- ❑ be integrated into the existing fabric of current community activities and programs;
- ❑ involve those working in the existing programs and facilities;
- ❑ reinforce and build on strong creative community traditions;
- ❑ provide a program of creative empowerment;
- ❑ leave a tangible legacy.



Funding for the SDCCA-Road Company Artist Partnership Residency Project was provided by The National Endowment for the Arts, The Southern Arts Federation, The Community/Artists Partnerships Project of Alternate Roots, and The Alabama State Council on the Arts.

Process

Bob Leonard, the co-artistic director of The Road Company a Tennessee-based traveling theatre company was invited to coordinate the project. Together with the community members, he spent a weekend outlining the type of artists, programs and products that would be part of the residency. These 25 people created the structure, schedule and name for the residency Understanding the Struggle for Community.

The SYDC became the primary residency site. The eight artists selected included dancers, musicians, storytellers and a poet. Each had experience working within a community. Residency activities included:

- ❑ photo-essays created via in-school workshops;
- ❑ videotaped documentation of all performances by Selma artists through arrangement with Alabama Public Television;
- ❑ exhibits/slide shows of photographic work coupled with readings;
- ❑ desktop publishing of student poetry;
- ❑ new dances choreographed by Selma residents;
- ❑ a photographic essay and slide show of student photographs inter-cut with poetry written by the photographers;
- ❑ praise poems written by students in workshops;
- ❑ a short play, written and performed by Selma youth involved in workshops;
- ❑ new songs written, composed and arranged by youth;
- ❑ one-on-one training in administration to augment artistic skills;
- ❑ arts council workshops held throughout the school system illustrating how the arts could enhance the existing curriculum.

Outcome

The public performance, in March 1993, played to standing-room only houses in the Selma Performing Arts Centre. It gave a glimpse of how young African-American residents saw themselves and their future.

The tangible benefits of this project include:

- ❑ collections of poetry published in a cooperative venture with a local community project, made available in schools for demonstration and fundraising purposes;
- ❑ regular airing of the public broadcast video which is also used by the arts council as a guide to developing new projects in Selma;
- ❑ ongoing post-residency contact with the visiting artists;
- ❑ a county-wide teacher workshop held as a mentoring session;
- ❑ partners for creation of a cross-cultural arts center;
- ❑ extensive documentation for the school system to justify more arts programming;
- ❑ the arts council's firsthand experience of working with a community to forge change across cultural and racial grounds.

The intangible benefits of the project are the creative tools of self-expression honed by these youths and supported by a broader community.

Opposite page: Selma youths pose with their cameras. Students at Selma Middle School created a photographic essay comprised of a slide show of student photographs intercut with poetry.

El Cab – Art in a Taxi

Pepón Osario
New York, NY

Background

Multidisciplinary artist Pepón Osario has lived and worked in New York's South Bronx since 1985. His work addresses social issues and engages audiences who would otherwise not experience art.

Known for his multichromatic style and love of excess—more is more—he learned of the murder of an on-duty taxi-driver and decided to both memorialize and comment on its tragedy.

Project

Osario designed a series of mobile, interactive micro-installations inside approximately 10 independent taxis that serve the Manhattan and South Bronx area. He was inspired by culturally specific models—the private cars that create public transport in the developing world (Africa, Asia and Latin America) as well as the driver's or owner's personality, humour, religious beliefs and aesthetic expression.

Process

Osario envisioned his public art in the tradition of traveling exhibitions and created a partnership with each independent taxi he used for the installations. He paid them \$25.00 each for the use of their vehicle and was given an hour or so to complete his installation.

He also discussed each work with each driver in hopes that they, in turn, would share insight and information with their passengers, who were to occupy these artistic spaces.

Osario made the most private of public transportation genuinely public. Each taxi featured a video monitor which played a continuous loop, created in collaboration with video artist Irene Sosa.

Text, photographs, montages, memorabilia, packages of sweets, flowers and a variety of other materials formed a baroque, multichromatic presence within each cab.

The installations addressed the following issues:

- the murdered cabbie;
- gender roles;
- Latino family life;
- single parenthood;
- religious commitment;
- family unity.

Outcome

Response from media and the public alike was overwhelming. Many in New York and the South Bronx had never been to the developing world, so this project gave insight into contemporary life in other countries, in a thought-provoking, visually attention-getting manner. It was also, in part, a memorial to the dead cabbie, making the entire city aware of the social and political realities that underline such a murder.

GREAT BRITAIN

West Meets East

The Art of Change
Bow, East London

Background

East London is a culturally rich, but visibly rundown inner-city area. The Central Foundation Girls School in Bow, East London, began doing arts education work with students enrolled in a Pre-Vocational Education Certificate program.

Twenty recently immigrated 15 to 16 year-old Bangladeshi girls were involved in this program. The teachers had tried a billboard project with them with little success. The young people had little experience in this form of artistic expression.

Project

With funding from the London Docklands Development Corporation, artist Loraine Leeson worked over a twelve-week period with Art and Design teacher Ros Thunder and her students to facilitate their expression of themselves, their concerns and their identity through artistic means.

Process

Some of the girls spoke English well and others did not; all had lived in Bangladesh villages and some had only recently arrived in London. Though very few had any experience in making figurative art, all had done some kind of needlework, embroidery or collage work.

Leeson began to work with the group by finding out what interests and skills they had. First they explored ideas and materials by making simple patterns or pictures

“We wanted to show what ordinary life was like. We did a project about two cultures mixing together – Western and Asian. So now we are showing you a picture of two cultures close together.”

Student participant in the West Meets East project

on paper. Leeson asked them to bring in six items from home which had meaning for them or told something about themselves – CD covers, jewellery, photographs etc.

During their first attempt, the girls brought in magazines which turned out to be problematic because of their complete Western focus and imagery. So as not to discard them, magazine images were photocopied to remove the advertising component and to change their meaning in the

work created.

Leeson provided a visual structure to liberate the girls in their expression of more personal ideas and concerns. Using landscape format, similar to that of the photo-mural, she again asked them to bring items from home, substituting the contents of their purses, the scarves they wore and any other items they had with them if they failed to bring anything from home.

These items were then drawn or photocopied and used to make the background and central images of their designs. They were also given rectangular and square windows to take home through which to draw images or patterns significant to them, to make a border.

This process resulted in twenty beautiful collages from which a common theme emerged – a juxtaposition of Eastern and Western cultures.

From the work emerged a combination of memories from their Bangladeshi villages and the Western European environment of London in which they now found themselves.

It should be noted that for cultural and linguistic reasons, brainstorming was not a useful tool. The challenge at each stage was to find images, materials and processes which engaged them and facilitated their ability to express their thoughts and ideas.

In order to free them to explore these ideas and images, Leeson used their work to create a large border leaving space in the centre, while Thunder worked with them to reconstruct the border in textiles.

For the remaining period of the school term, they created a large border constructed of a variety of fabrics. They embroidered and printed many of the images they had made earlier, other images of Western life, and added sets of words about themselves which were translated into Bengali and English.

The sewing machine became the primary means of pulling these diverse images and elements together. Working at the sewing machine made reference to the local textile industry in which many of their families worked in East London, but was also strongly evocative of their lives in two cultures.

Outcome

The final result was a 16-foot by 12-foot photo-mural which toured the Art of Change billboard sites in East London and was later exhibited in The Public Domain exhibition in Barcelona. It also toured East London schools and became the catalyst for a similar project with youth in the London Docklands.

The 16 ft. by 12 ft. photo-mural reflected the themes explored by teenage Bangladeshi girls living in two cultures. The image shows hands, decorated as for a marriage, joining material from the two cultures through a sewing machine. The border, constructed in textiles, contains a combination of Western and Eastern imagery and words in Bengali and English.



AUSTRALIA

The Women's Circus

Footscray Community Arts Centre
Melbourne

Background

The Footscray Community Arts Centre (FCAC) was established in 1975 in Melbourne's West end where 43% of the population are from non-English-speaking backgrounds. It is a multidisciplinary arts facility which, through a core of professional arts workers, provides programs in music, theatre, literature, visual arts and crafts, and develops projects which cross art forms and cultural boundaries.

The Centre's programs are available to women of all ages and levels of artistic experience, and it hosts:

- ❑ workshops, classes, exhibitions, performances, training programs;
- ❑ forums on community arts theory and practice;
- ❑ artist-in-residence projects;
- ❑ self-directed groups who use the centre for rehearsals, meetings and performances;
- ❑ Aboriginal artists programming and performance;
- ❑ the Gabriel Gallery – the only gallery space in Australia where new immigrant artists may regularly exhibit.

Project

The Women's Circus developed from the Footscray Centre in 1991. It is a feminist-focused project designed to assist women who have suffered physical or sexual abuse. The project focuses on training and use of the body. It has become a year-round training and performance organization with 120 members involved at

"I am an incest survivor and I participated in the Women's Circus of 1991. I went to all the workshops, practiced and performed. I didn't always succeed or achieve what I set out to do, but I had a go and I bettered myself. I can proudly state that I can walk on a tightrope, juggle, hang from a trapeze and walk on stilts. I now feel different in the best of ways, when I only used to feel different in the worst of ways."

*Linda Wilson, Women's Circus member,
From Creating Social Capital: A
Study of the Long-Term Benefits
from Community-Based Arts Funding.*

any given time.

The founders intended to:

- ❑ create a process based on feminist principles of non-competitive support, non-ranking and personal goal-setting;
- ❑ heal the entire person.

The first production, *Women and Institutions*, a performance on the Maribyrnong River, was intended to give women survivors of sexual and physical violence a voice. It was presented in two sections, actively involving the audience. The audience walked along the railway track by the river, as the performers balanced on posts, swung from the trees, and rode unicycles.

Each performance explores large issues of culture and identity in

body, space and time which mere language might inhibit.

Process

The women train in unused factory space adjacent to FCAC. The space is leased long-term by the city of Maribyrnong for nominal rent as part of its contribution to the refurbishment of the centre. It is also used by other FCAC community groups.

Physical training is the process through which the Circus seeks to heal and build the body, mind and spirit of its members. Through stretching, breathing, yoga, nutrition, as well as training in circus arts, the women develop individual and collective trust by doing skillful and formerly unimaginable things!

Upon joining the Circus, provisions are made for child-care and a labour exchange for low-income earners. Personal goals are set and requirements are given to each member in job description form. Once a member, a person has access to all aspects of the organization the Music Group, administration, performance etc. Several members have performed and worked in other technical or administrative areas.

Financially, the Women's Circus depends on revenue from performances and merchandising, philanthropic organizations, a few government grants, and the infrastructure provided by FCAC.

The Circus is responsible to the Board of FCAC, and there is an advisory group comprised of representatives from each area of the Circus. The Circus motto is think, debate, decide and act. It is open to women of all ages, heritage, political beliefs, sexual orientation and physical abilities on a voluntary, first-come first-served basis.

A final evaluation is held each December at the end of the performance season when think tanks are organized to plan, discuss and debate the past, and upcoming year.

Outcome

The Women's Circus continues to provide a means for any woman who chooses to re-create her life through her body, mind and spirit. Its audiences are growing and potential new performers and members sign-up with each performance.

The Aboriginal School Project

From Little Things, Big Things Grow
Alice Springs, Northern Territory

Background

The independent, bilingual, bi-cultural Aboriginal school is run by the elders of the town camp in Alice Springs. All of the children speak one of the four Aboriginal language groups and 90% speak English as a second language. The Yipirinya school teaches children in their first language and English as a second in their primary years, then moves them into a senior group where English becomes the first language.

Though the school has incorporated traditional languages, cultural perspectives and corresponding values into its programs, the poverty, alcohol dependence and cultural gap between Western and indigenous culture makes integration of the two cultures difficult.

Project

The Yipirinya School hosted the Lajamanu students who are from a remote community outside of Alice Springs. They had been learning dance and movement performance with visiting artists Tim Newth and Sarah Calver. The Yipirinya School community decided to invite the artists for a ten-week residency to include a series of short workshops. They sought and received funding from the Australia Council for the Arts to make it possible.

The entire school worked with the artists during the residency. They worked towards the creation of a night performance based on themes prevalent in aboriginal culture, incorporating giant planes, birds and other creatures, as well as firelight, spotlights, music and dance. It proved to be a grand spectacle which took the community and audience by surprise.

Outcome

The workshops and performance generated:

- ❑ a strong sense of identity among students and staff, allowing them to work and perform as a collective;
- ❑ positive feelings of extraordinary unity and the spirit of the place ;
- ❑ extensive media attention which led to the school receiving more promotion and support;
- ❑ discussion about the school's philosophy among larger publics;
- ❑ performance confidence for the children;
- ❑ invitations for future performances.

"Part of the reconciliation process is the Western acceptance and understanding [of] and deepening respect for Aboriginal cultural values. The two-way educational model is very significant in this process, particularly with the people here. But it's not just the Aboriginal people learning Western ways, it's the other way around as well. It's hard for Western culture to understand those things."

*From Creating Social Capital:
A Study of the Long-Term Benefits
from Community-Based Arts Funding*

Senior students and staff created a large performance puppet, the Yipirinya caterpillar, and an Aboriginal choreographer came to teach the children some dances and create a performance piece which will be shared with neighbouring communities.



AN INSPIRING PROJECT FOR ANY COMMUNITY

The Flower Mandala Project

c.j. fleury
Wakefield/La Pêche, Québec

Artist c.j. fleury worked with her community in Wakefield/La Pêche to create a community mandala—a symbolic circular figure representing the universe, usually made from mosaic of materials (flowers, sand, etc.) and put together on the ground. A mandala is generally to be used as a symbol of peace and offering. fleury's mandala project involved no cost, yet captured the spirits of all who participated in making or seeing it.

A mandala project is ideal for large, small, urban or rural communities and can accommodate the participation of great numbers of people or only a few. It is described here both as a project and a recipe contributed by c.j. fleury and the Wakefield/La Pêche community for anyone to do, in any community.

Background

fleury was interested in finding a way to involve community in a universal, yet local, way, through a creative process. She wanted to design a project that was no-cost, intergenerational and non-polluting. The idea came to her in a dream where she saw a room-sized flower mandala in the vacated fire hall in her town. In actual fact, The Biblio Wakefield Library wanted to acquire the adjacent fire hall to use as multi-purpose community room.

fleury posed the following questions to herself while thinking about how to go about this kind of project:

- ❑ What memory stays with children as they become part of the adult world?
- ❑ Is it possible to design a process that is universally clear and satisfying to capture both the artist's imagination and that of their community?
- ❑ Is it possible to think of installation art as a verb—install the artist in community?

Project

fleury's personal objectives for this project were to generate a powerful collective memory for her community, with materials which could be returned to nature—an event which could celebrate nature and the community, and perhaps take place annually.

The public objectives were to create individual and collective moments through the collaborative designing and making of the mandala.



Process

After receiving the support of the library, fleury told every villager she met, who told every villager they met about the mandala project. A permit was obtained from the Mayor's office for use of the fire hall and a date was assigned for the assembly of the mandala on the first weekend after school resumed in the fall. As Wakefield has a busy summer season, choosing this time of year was an excellent opportunity for the villagers to reconnect at the beginning of a new cycle of community activity (the fall harvest). During the summer, participants gathered wild materials for the mandala and distributed information about the project.

The centrality of the fire hall made it a natural magnet for people. The walls provided a space for exhibition of mandala art, which is a term given to the art pieces made in the same way as the mandala (from natural materials), but which can be hung on the walls instead of built on the ground as is the case with the mandala itself.

On the day of the mandala making, a five meter chalk image of a starburst was drawn on the floor as a guide. Participants discussed design and colour schemes. Some who had intended to only watch, rushed back to their gardens and brought back fresh coloured blooms.

fleury suggested that if there were wood chips available, they could serve as a frame for the circle; and almost immediately, two bags appeared. That was the kind of enthusiasm and keen participation that took place throughout the building of the mandala. The mandala was completed in about four and a half hours, taking on a life of its own.



The patterns, groups of colours and repetitive shapes came together to form a kaleidoscope of natural materials which lasted for many days.

Outcome

When the mandala was completed everyone gathered in a circle to applaud the results of the community's creative energy and efforts. People came from cities and farms to see the mandala. The mandala was eventually dismantled and its components were put into the local river, returning them to nature.

The project gave many in the town a first hand opportunity to participate in a collective art project. It met fleury's goal of engaging the community in a collaborative creative activity that would allow them to appreciate how simple it is to create art. The project also succeeded in capturing the imagination of the participants and fleury even beyond her dreams, literally. The community was so enthusiastic about this project that they are investigating the possibilities of making a winter mandala!

Opposite page: Residents of all ages helped assemble the mandala (top); the mandala took on a life of its own, made up of various patterns, colours and shapes created from the natural materials collected (bottom). This page and next: Participants gather around the mandala after its completion.

The Flower Mandala Project Recipe

Ingredients

People, a site, an invitation, time, harvested materials, paint chips, chalk and string.

Cost

Energy. The Flower Mandala Project is designed to be cost-free.

People

A few or a great many. People with special interests will contribute special expertise and materials. The importance of sharing is key to the project and will go far in shaping the mandala.

Site

Any spacious flat site with protection from the wind. Natural light and fresh air benefit both the materials and the participants. Ground-level is good for accessibility to all and enhances the spontaneity of the work; however, the entrance to an office building or rooftop could also be appropriate.

Process

An individual or small group of people invite others to participate. Invitations can be given out and/or flyers can be posted throughout a community.

Timing

Set a date with enough time for the harvesting to be a pleasurable, personal aspect of the making. The actual mandala will be made in one day and can stay in place as long as the space has been secured.

During the dismantling and cleaning up process (which is only

a couple of hours), the materials should return to nature; that can become an event in itself. The process might be as simple as putting all the materials into the compost, or as elaborate as a ceremony surrounding their careful placement in a nearby river or field. Some may even want to keep pieces of the mandala for themselves.

Materials

Any organic material is appropriate. The key is to have products that can return to nature such as petals, pods, buds, berries, leaves, stems, pine cones, acorns, mushrooms, thorns, etc.

Drying the materials can be done on well-ventilated paper towels, screen windows or wicker trays away from the sun, or on reused paper plates. Paper bags, fruit baskets and recycled pie plates are good vessels for storage and allow you to see the range of colours and textures as they are collected. Dried materials last longer and change less during the project.



Mandala-Making Day

Begin by preparing the space. Select the centre of the mandala space and mount any mandala artwork on the walls or have all participants create mandala artwork during the mandala-making.

Cardboard paint samples (available from hardware stores) can be set up to let people know where to place their contributions on the palette. Chalk and string are needed to lay out the axis on which the mandala will be built. The chalk and string make a huge compass. While one person holds the string end firmly in the centre, another participant walks around at a set distance and draws concentric circles. A long piece of lumber can be a guide for the linear work.

In building the mandala, work intuitively from the start letting the materials find their place through colour, texture and a seeming rightness. Try to avoid overly detailed design which forces the materials into existing frameworks. Share the decision-making and let children take a lead. Be sensitive to what quieter, newer participants or watchers think and draw them into the process.

The energy grows as the mandala pattern takes form and the room will seem to vibrate with the enthusiasm and delight of the project's participants. The group as a whole should decide when the piece is finished and may choose to perform a closing ceremony to acknowledge the success of their collective work.

Optional Ingredients

- a person to document the entire process in photographs and/or video;
- art supplies for kids and adults;
- musicians, choreographers, poets, readers, etc.;
- candles to place at the main axis points after the sun goes down;
- food!

The *Vital Links* Conference – Enriching Communities through Art and Art through Communities

A Summary

September 25 - 28, 1997
Harbourfront Centre
Toronto, Ontario

The following is a summary of some of the themes discussed at the Vital Links conference.

The *Vital Links* conference was the result of work done by the Ontario Arts Council (OAC), a leader in community arts. It was the culmination of a two-year review of community arts conducted by OAC and an advisory panel of community members.

The conference provided a point of convergence and exploration for artists, arts and cultural workers, and community members who use the arts as a primary tool in their work and those interested in the intersection of art and life. It was a forum for information, the exchange of ideas, challenges, partnering and possibilities for both artists and community members.

Pilot projects funded by OAC's Community Arts sector and other projects were reviewed. The conference examined whether community arts projects have been successful at being integrated into the mainstream of institutional funding and public recognition. There was also discussion about whether, in some cases, community arts projects may be seen as marginalizing the groups or communities they seek to assist.

The keynote speakers of the conference were Marta Moreno Vega, founder of the Caribbean Cultural Center/African Diaspora Institute in New York; Tom Hill, Curator of the

Woodlands Cultural Centre in Brantford, Ontario; Haruko Okano, Canadian visual artist in Vancouver, British Columbia; Loraine Leeson, visual artist and co-founder of Art of Change in East London, England; and Kathie Muir, artist, unionist and former Curator of Working Life at the Museum of Victoria, Australia.

Marta Vega defined the community and the artist as a group of people working together with a similar vision, sharing common experiences and a common interest, playing different roles and bringing different skills together. The artist is part of the community, and his or her role is to help articulate that community's vision and experience: The community brings forth art, and art transforms, she said. All people come from a community.

The themes brought forth by Ms. Vega were reiterated by Tom Hill, who described a similar definition of community, discussing a new internationalism or globalism, which actually has the effect of localizing people. But ultimately, according to Hill, the development of community arts all boils down to ensuring that there is funding available for these projects.

Haruko Okano discussed examples of community being created out of common experience, pointing out that community needs to be identified and actively involved.

Loraine Leeson's work in London's East End provided a tangible example of the power of arts work to transform and its tremendous possibilities for social change.

Kathie Muir presented a striking view of how collaborative artistic work within institutions can effectively address social change. She gave an example of how such work can be vulnerable during shifts in the political climate, even though it

"In situations where there are ideas to be communicated more widely, aesthetic power becomes especially important – it is central to the work's ability to speak beyond the confines of any single group."

*Loraine Leeson & Peter Dunn,
The Art Of Change, Great Britain*

is precisely in these times when the community visibility and voice, often fostered in community arts projects, is essential.

The question of equitable distribution of money to communities, the validation of a community's chosen artist or arts-worker and the nature of evaluation were central to many discussions, and gave rise to a series of others. Ideas that came about included the notion that communities should be involved in evaluating themselves, especially if they are on comparable financial footing with other groups or institutions. They are, at that point, quite capable of determining the nature and value of their expression.

It was noted that it is sometimes possible for groups to use communities for purposes that are not necessarily artistic under the guise of a community arts project.

Communities must be respected and their trust should be earned in any project in which they are asked to participate. In this context, it often makes sense for communities to work on long-term projects, to establish relationships and trust with those initiating projects, rather than getting involved in one-time, short-term projects.

The range and methods of working with community presented and discussed during the conference were enormous, and the contexts in which these methods are carried out are equally varied.

Everyone has the need to speak and work in their own way, and have their words and their work respected and valued. Although everyone is not a trained artist, everyone has some form of creativity within them. Terminology, language and frames of reference need to be inclusive.

At the end of the first evening of the conference, Marta Vega left the group with the following thoughts:

How would we, as a group, recreate the world? It seems to me, going into the third millennium, that **that** is the thinking we have to bring to forums like this. Because it is only when we envision difference, when we understand that we are developing a future for our children, our youth, and our grandchildren, that we can think differently. Because it really is about thinking differently. This speaks to the preciousness, and the sacredness and the spirituality that we bring as a people.

Isolationism will not work; neither will it work that we think we bring to others something that they don't have. We have to understand that everyone brings culture; everyone has creative experiences, and that some of us have the skill to translate those creative experiences into sacred objects that can be touched, that can be felt, that can be seen.

And that is the artist's role to be part of community; to help that community articulate its sacredness, not only for its particular group, but to share with others.



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Women's Circus: Leaping off the Edge, edited by Adrienne Liebmann, Deb Lewis, Jean Tylor, Jen Jordan, Louise Radcliffe-Smith and Patricia Sykes, Spiniflex Press Pty Ltd., 1997.

Community Arts Councils in Ontario

Algonquin Arts Council

P.O. Box 1360
Bancroft, ON
K0L 1C0
613-332-1542

Almonte & District Arts Council

P.O. Box 1199
Almonte, ON
K0A 1A0
613-256-5565

Arnprior League of Artists

P.O. Box 343
Arnprior, ON
K7S 3H6
613-623-8492

Arts Alive (Advisory Committee)

c/o Halton Hills Civic Centre
P.O. Box 128
Halton Hills, ON
L7G 5G2
416-453-2411

Arts & Culture Timmins

98 Pine Street South
Timmins, ON
P4N 2K2
705-264-7473

Arts Council of Elliot Lake & District

180 Mississauga Avenue
Elliot Lake, ON
P5A 1E5
705-848-1034

Conseil des arts de Hearst

P.O. Box 2350
Hearst, ON
P0L 1N0
705-362-4900

Arts Council of Sault Ste. Marie & District

690 Queen Street East
Sault Ste. Marie, ON
P6A 2A4
705-945-9756

Arts Council Windsor & Region

1942 Wyandotte Street East
Windsor, ON
N8Y 1E4
519-252-6855

Arts Etobicoke

6 Eva Road, Ste. 606
Etobicoke, ON
M9C 2A8
416-622-8731

Arts Richmond Hill

139-10520 Yonge Street
Richmond Hill, ON
L4C 3C7
905-508-0789

Arts York

2700 Eglinton Avenue West
Toronto, ON
M6M 1V1
416-394-2560

Blue Mountain Foundation for the Arts

P.O. Box 581
Collingwood, ON
L9Y 4E8
705-445-3430

Blind River Arts Council

P.O. Box 640
11 Hudson Street
Blind River, ON
P0R 1B0
705-356-2251

Brampton Arts Council

24A Alexander Street
Brampton, ON
L6V 1H6
905-874-2919

Brantford Regional Arts Council

P.O. Box 23042
Brantford, ON
N3T 6K4
519-759-1071

Community Folk Arts Council

173B Front Street East
Toronto, ON
M5A 3Z4
416-368-8743

Seaway Arts Council

P.O. Box 64
Cornwall, ON
K6H 5R6
613-933-6250

Council for the Arts in Ottawa

2 Daly Avenue, Ste. 1
Ottawa, ON
K1N 6E2
613-569-1387

Elora Arts Council

P.O. Box 668
Elora, ON
N0B 1S0

Gloucester Arts Council

4355 Halmont Drive
Gloucester, ON
K1J 8W6
613-749-4978

Guelph Arts Council

147 Wyndham Street North
Suite 404
Guelph, ON
N1H 4E9
519-836-3280

Hamilton & Region Arts Council

2 King Street West
Hamilton, ON
L8P 1A1
905-529-9485

Kincardine Arts Council

P.O. Box 534
Kincardine, ON
N2A 2Y9

Kingston Regional Arts Council

P.O. Box 1005
Kingston, ON
K7L 4X8
613-546-ARTS

Kirkland Lake Arts Council

P.O. Box 548
Kirkland Lake, ON
P2N 3J5

London Arts Council

P.O. Box 696
London, ON
N6A 4Y4

Arts Lindsay

P.O. Box 695
Lindsay, ON
K9V 3B0

Mattawa & District Arts Council

P.O. Box 1145
Mattawa, ON
P0H 1V0
705-744-5310

Arts Milton

R.R. #2
Milton, ON
N0B 2K0
905-854-2173

Mississauga Arts Council

1055-300 City Centre Drive
Mississauga, ON
L5B 3C9
905-615-4278

**Mt. Forest & District
Arts Council**

240 Normanby Street South
Mt. Forest, ON
N0G 2L1

New Tecumseth Arts Council

P.O. Box 313
Alliston, ON
705-435-7430

**North Bay and Region
Arts Council**

896 Maplegrove Drive
North Bay, ON
P1B 2F9
705-476-2319

Northumberland Arts Council

45 Hamilton Avenue
Cobourg, ON
K9A 1V9
905-372-7244

Oakville Arts Council

120 Navy Street
Oakville, ON
L6J 2Z4
905-815-5977

Oshawa & District Arts Council

P.O. Box 62508
555 Rossland Road East
Oshawa, ON
L1J 2J7
905-438-8729

Peterborough Arts Umbrella

Peterborough Square
P.O. Box 823
Peterborough, ON
K9J 7A2
705-749-3220

Pine Ridge Arts Council

P.O. Box 66099, RPO Town Centre
1344 Kingston Road
Pickering, ON
L1V 6P7
905-509-3855

Prince Edward Arts Council

P.O. Box 1320
Picton, ON
K0K 2T0

Quinte Arts Council

P.O. Box 225
Belleville, ON
K8N 5A2
Council Office: 613-962-1232

Sarnia-Lambton Arts Council

P.O. Box 562
Sarnia, ON
N7T 7J4
519-344-2787

Sequin Arts Council

76 Carondale Crescent
Agincourt, ON
416-497-6134/7974

Scarborough Arts Council

1859 Kingston Road
Toronto, ON
M5V 2R2
416-698-7322

**Shelburne & Dufferin
Arts Council**

P.O. Box 670
Shelburne, ON
L0N 1S0

Sudbury Arts Council

248 Larch Street
Sudbury, ON
P3B 1M1
705-675-6700

**Thunder Bay Regional
Arts Council**

308-101 North Syndicate Avenue
Thunder Bay, ON
P7C 3V4
807-623-6544

Toronto Arts Council

141 Bathurst Street
Toronto, ON
M5V 2R2
416-392-6800

Valley Arts Council

P.O. Box 1344
Pembroke, ON
K8A 6Y6
613-735-2613

**Wallaceburg & District
Council for the Arts**

P.O. Box 20077
James St. Postal Outlet
Wallaceburg, ON
N8A 5G1

Waterloo Regional Arts Council

25 Frederick Street
Kitchener, ON
N2H 6M8
519-744-4552

Funding Agencies

Ontario Arts Council

OAC offers community arts programs for individual artists and arts organizations, aimed at helping to develop community arts activities across the province. For further information, contact:

Community Arts Officer
Ontario Arts Council
151 Bloor St. W., 6th floor
Toronto, ON
M5S 1T6
416-961-1660
Toll-free in Ontario: 1-800-387-0058
E-mail: info@arts.on.ca

Canada Council for the Arts

350 Albert Street
P.O. Box 1047
Ottawa, ON
K1P 5V8
(613) 566-4414
Toll-free in Canada: 1-800-263-5588

For information about funding programs at the municipal level, contact your local municipality's cultural department. The Community Arts Councils listed in this publication may also be able to provide information about municipal community arts programs.

Artists and Arts Organizations

The following is a selected list of Ontario artists and arts organizations whose projects were either supported as Ontario Arts Council pilot projects for the *Vital Links* conference, or whose projects are used as examples in this publication.

A Space

Ingrid Mayrhofer
401 Richmond Street West
Suite 110
Toronto, ON
M5V 3A8
416-979-9633

Art Starts Neighbourhood Cultural Centre

324 Oakwood Avenue
Toronto, ON
M6E 2V7
416-656-9994

Atlas Moves Watching Dance Projects

Bill James
960 Queen Street West
3rd Floor
Toronto, ON
M6J 1G8
416-538-6658

Karl Beveridge and Carol Condø

131 Bathurst Street
Toronto, ON
M5V 2R2
416-703-0477

Community Arts Ontario

Patricia Hiemstra
48 Glendale Avenue
Ottawa, ON K1S 1W4
613-238-6779

Centre les Compagnons

Michelle Lapointe and René Rioux
681A Chippewa Street West
North Bay, ON
P1B 6G8
705-472-5521

Clay and Paper Theatre

David Anderson
163 Concord Avenue
Toronto, ON
M6H 2P2
416-537-9105

De-Ba-Jeh-Mu-Jig Theatre Group

Ron Berti
General Delivery
Wikwemikong Indian Reserve
Manitoulin Island, ON
P0P 2J0
705-859-2317

DEC Cultural Productions

Aida Jordão and Nuno Cristo,
836 Bloor Street West
Toronto, ON
M6G 1M2
416-530-4699
416-516-2966

c.j. fleury

Box 175
Wakefield/La Pêche, Québec
J0X 3G0
819-459-3144

Everybody's Theatre Company

Dale Hamilton
106 York Street
Eden Mills, ON
N0B 1P0
519-856-9891

Harbourfront Centre

Marilyn Brewer
410 Queens Quay West
Toronto, ON
M5V 2Z3
416-973-4600

Noel Harding

303-2154 Dundas Street West
Toronto, ON
M6R 1X3
416-533-1663
Web site: www.plastics-art.com

**Lake of the Woods
Ojibway Cultural Centre**

Don Kavanaugh
P.O. Box 159
Kenora, ON
P9N 3X3
807-548-5744

**Magnus Theatre Company
Northwest Incorporated**

10 South Algoma Street
Thunder Bay, ON
P7B 3A7
807-345-8033

The Mountain Project

Laurie McGauley
c/o Better Beginnings
110 Elm Street
Sudbury, ON
P3C 1T5
705-671-1941

**Ontario Workers Arts and
Heritage Centre**

RenØ Johnston
51 Stuart Street
Hamilton, ON
L8L 1B5
905-522-3003

Robin Pacific

28 Heathdale Road
Toronto, ON
M6C 1M6
416-787-0770

Lib Spry

Passionate Balance
275 Crichton Street
Ottawa, ON
K1M 1W3
613-744-5672

"There are many levels of community arts in my understanding. Some of it comes directly from an inclusive process that works on consensus; others are through the community determining the criteria through which projects that are submitted are chosen."

*Haruko Okano, visual artist,
Vancouver, B.C.
Vital Links conference*

Trinity Square Video

172 John Street
4th Floor
Toronto, ON
M5T 1X5
416-593-1332

U.B.U. Theatre Company

Brian Richmond
4 Gormley Avenue
Toronto, ON
M4V 1Y8
416-481-5155

Winsom

P.O. Box 15, Station C
Toronto, ON
M6J 3M7
416-516-9944

Woodland Cultural Centre

Tom Hill
P.O. Box 1506
184 Mohawk Street
Brantford, ON
N3T 5V6
519-759-2650

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page 6:
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page 8, 10, 11, 16, 21, 27:
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The Art of Change, London

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Your Thoughts and Ideas...

"Success in the art world is still related to an individual artist's work in the studio rather than work created with the community. A shift is necessary to give similar values to working in the studio and in the community, thus making them equally artistic options."

Winsom, visual and textile artist, Canada