





ENGAGING ART:

The Artful Dodgers Studio

A THEORETICAL MODEL OF PRACTICE

by Martin Thiele & Sally Marsden

Front Cover: Trapped
Medium: water colour pencil on canvas
Artist: Adam



Jesuit Social Services
321 Church Street
PO BOX 271
Richmond Vic 3121

Tel: +61 3 9427 7388
Fax: +61 3 9427 1819

© Jesuit Social Services 2003
ISBN 0957780338

Authors Martin Thiele & Sally Marsden
Project Manager Julie Edwards
Editor Lynn Buchanan
Photographer Tim Gresham
Design Dianna Wells Design
Printer Bamba Press

This initiative was made possible with the generous support of The William Buckland Foundation.



This publication was made possible with financial support from:
The Commonwealth Government through the Australia Council, its Arts funding and Advisory Body and the VicHealth Arts for Health Program.

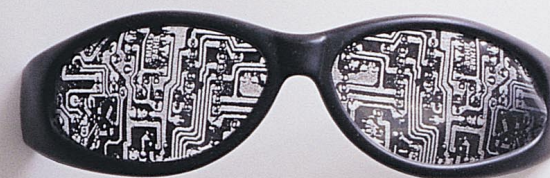


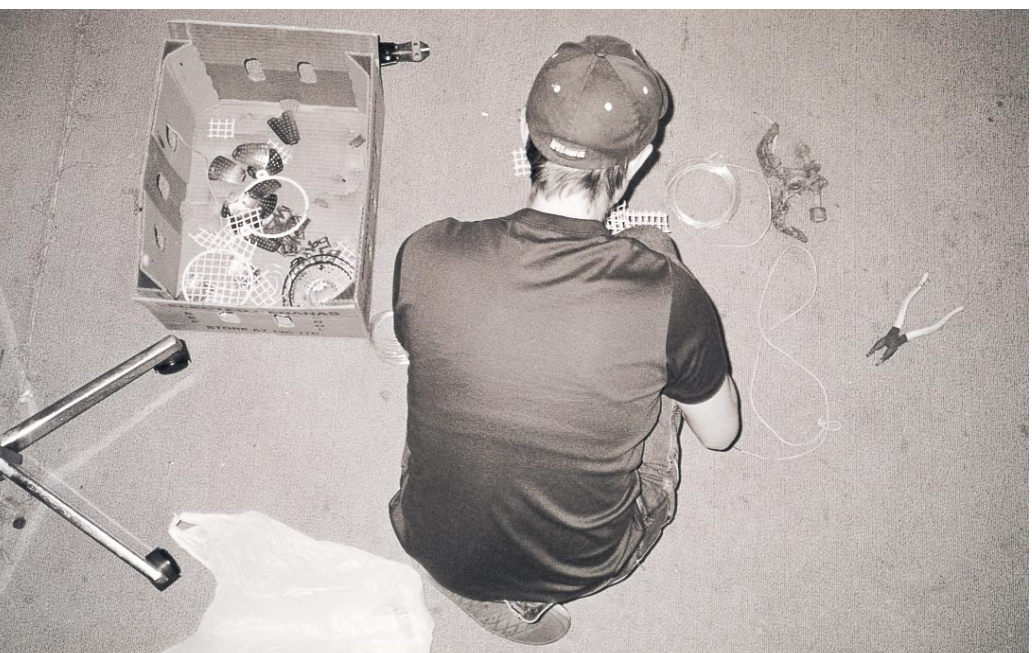
Our partners in promotion and dissemination of this publication are:



All rights reserved. This publication is copyright.

Except as permitted under the Copyright Act, no part of this publication may be reproduced by any process, electronic or otherwise, without the permission in writing from the publisher and authors. Neither may information be stored electronically in any form whatsoever without such permission. All efforts have been made to contact copyright owners of images included in this publication. Any queries should be directed to Jesuit Social Services.

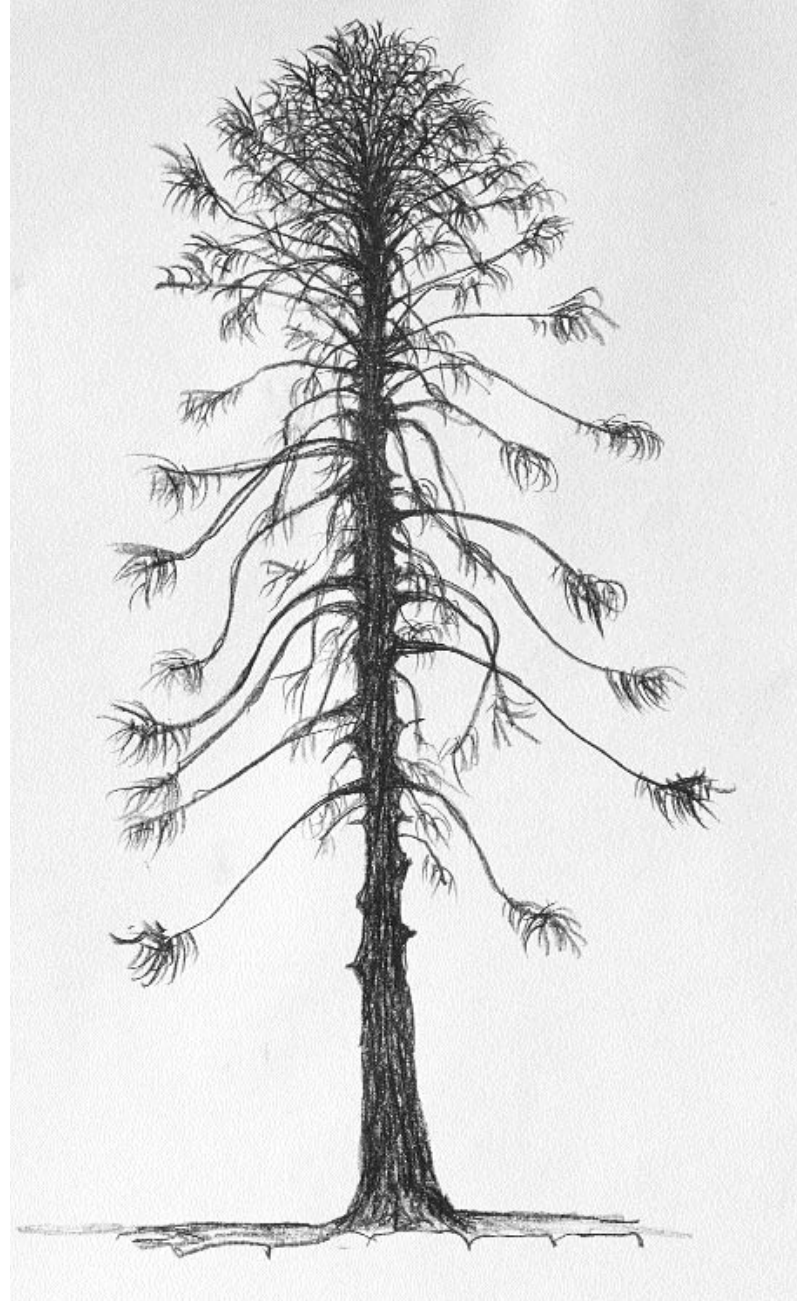




Hostile Environment (Detail)
Mixed media sculpture
Heidi



Venetian Houses
 Venetian blinds, wood frame, sound-scape
 Shanraah
 Mentor: Public Artist, Megan Evans



Tree
Sepia pen, lead pencil
Jason

Contents

PREFACE..... 12

INTRODUCTION.....18

SECTION ONE –
STUDIO PRACTICE: PARTICIPANTS AND ARTISTS

1 The theoretical model of practice
in The Artful Dodgers Studio..... 34

2 Case studies..... 44

3 The artist practitioner.....66

SECTION TWO –
ETHICAL PRINCIPLES AND EVALUATION

4 The pentagon model:
Towards an ethical practice..... 82

5 Building an evidence base:
Dynamic observation in community
cultural development..... 98

APPENDIX : 1
Assessing the compatibility of the
artist practitioner with the community..... 112

APPENDIX : 2
Checklist for artist practitioners when taking
on a project or setting up a program..... 116

REFERENCES..... 118

FURTHER READING.....120

Preface

MARTIN THIELE AND SALLY MARSDEN
SEPTEMBER 2002

In 2000 we edited *Risking Art: Art for Survival*, a publication giving an overview of twelve youth-focused health and welfare agencies employing artists on a continuing basis. We released *Risking Art: Art for Survival* as part of the 12th International Johns Hopkins Philanthropic Fellows Conference in Melbourne, July 2000, and were overwhelmed by the response. Initially we printed 2,000 copies of *Risking Art*, but six months after its release we had reprinted and distributed the best part of 5,000 copies.

This publication is effectively a companion book to *Risking Art: Art for Survival*. It represents the culmination of three years' work examining the role of the arts as a framework for socially re-engaging highly marginalised young people.

As we have both worked in community cultural development for a number of years, we were intrigued by the response to *Risking Art*. Many people expressed to us that, while there was no shortage of *artistic* debates about community cultural development practice, there was a dearth of relevant evidence and a lack of useful discourse about the social and community change effects of the practice. It was generally thought that this lack of evidence was the number one obstacle for practitioners seeking to obtain resources for the work. Naturally this got us thinking, and with the assistance of Elizabeth Cham from Philanthropy Australia and Sandra Whitty from the William Buckland Foundation, we investigated the possibility of adding another layer to our work.

It was Elizabeth Cham who pointed out that one of the problems we would experience, if indeed our objective was to build an evidence base, was the fact that we lacked our own theoretical reference points. She suggested that this might be the next stage in our work and we excitedly, though perhaps in retrospect, naively – given that neither of us had to that point thought of ourselves as ‘theorists’ – agreed. In April 2001 we modestly began the process of formulating our own theoretical model of practice, based largely on The Artful Dodgers Studio – part of the Connexions program run by Jesuit Social Services in Collingwood, Melbourne.

As an experienced critical writer in the field, Martin contributed much of the ‘modelling’ work in this publication, based on participatory research in the Studio, international literature

reviews and interaction with other community cultural development artists (many of whom contributed to *Risking Art: Art for Survival*). Sally's role has been both writer and custodian of much of the source material, ensuring that it was interpreted sensitively and appropriately. In developing her ideas she has drawn on her extensive network of community cultural development practitioners.

The way we worked on this publication was different at different stages. The theoretical model outlined in Chapter 1 was jointly written, initially for a paper presented at the 2nd International Conference on Cultural Policy Research in Wellington, New Zealand in January 2002. This chapter is the cornerstone of the publication as it sets out the five stages of an Artful Dodgers Studio participant's engagement cycle.

Sally wrote each of the three case studies collaboratively with the profiled participants. As well as reflecting their personal point of view, the case studies show our understanding of the engagement cycle by mapping the development trajectory of each of the participants. The accompanying images demonstrate the participants' social development as well as their artistic development.

The chapter on the working method of the artist practitioner is an attempt to formulate an overview of what is required for a community cultural development practitioner to build a solid and mutually beneficial foundation for work with a community. Although Martin helped to develop the model, it is primarily based on Sally's practice in the Studio and draws on other projects she has worked on over the past twenty years.

Throughout the process of putting this publication together we had many discussions about the need to explore ethics in community cultural development. While the Queensland Community Arts Network had dedicated an issue of *Network News* (edition 2, 1999) to a series of ethical dilemmas in community cultural development, we felt that their publication failed to articulate a sense of shared values or principles. Martin undertook an extensive literature review on ethics in community cultural development and struggled to find a framework that could assist to identify and clarify ethical parameters for artist practitioners.

The notion of ethics is tackled in two chapters of this publication. In Chapter 3 Sally focuses specifically on The Artful Dodgers Studio and identifies areas of practice that are often hard to tackle in an ethical way, such as disengagement follow-up, support infrastructure for practice, artist practitioner supervision and debriefing, and the management of participants' narratives or stories. In Chapter 4 Martin undertakes some detailed modelling work that explores five principles of ethical practice (the pentagon model) that can be applied to all community cultural development work.

The final chapter uses the pentagon model as a source for identifying key areas to monitor in community cultural development practice. We believe that an effective community cultural development evaluation model needs to be placed in a cultural context – that is, even social change needs to be explained 'culturally'. Martin developed the 'dynamic observation' approach in response to a three-pronged evaluation model initially suggested by Deidre Williams, an arts and cultural development consultant, during an online forum in August 2001. The dynamic observation approach is specifically configured for a long-term, sustained engagement model of practice that works with highly marginalised young people. It is still a theoretical model, however, and hasn't yet been used as a data collection tool in The Artful Dodgers Studio.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is important to acknowledge the contributions of a number of key individuals who have contributed in no small way to the success of this project – either as Jesuit Social Services staff members, as stakeholders or as artist practitioners and industry representatives.

We would like to thank past and present Jesuit Social Services staff, specifically, the staff at Connexions.

We would like to thank the following for their patronage, investment and support: Elizabeth Cham from Philanthropy Australia; Sandra Whitty and the Trustees of the William Buckland

Foundation; the staff and Board of the Community Cultural Development Fund of the Australia Council, particularly Bernice Gerrand, Andrew Donovan and Geoffrey Taylor; Susan Ball, Rob Moodie and the Board of the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation; Ruth Whittingham and Nicole Beyer from Arts Access; Michael McLaughlin, Celina McEwen and Rick Flowers from the Centre for Popular Education, the University of Technology Sydney; and Julia Tymukas, Jane Gronow, the staff and Board of Community Arts Network, South Australia.

The William Buckland Foundation, in particular, has demonstrated a long-term commitment to The Artful Dodgers Studio over a five-year period. Two-year funding was provided initially to establish the program and leverage other funding to ensure its continuity. In addition, the Foundation has funded the *Risking Art: Art for Survival* publication and now this publication.

Following the initial two-year period, funding was provided by the Victorian Government's Department of Human Services, Mental Health Branch, and in 2002 they committed recurrent funding to ensure the sustainability of the program.

We would also like to acknowledge the kindness, generosity and intellectual investment of the following community cultural development artist practitioners and contributors, who each contributed their ideas and feedback at various stages in the development of this publication: Maud Clark, Maria Filippow, Carey Lai, Eve Stafford, Deidre Williams, Michael McLaughlin, Eamonn Scott, Jeff Stewart, Helen Zigmond, Ollie Black, Kiersten Coulter and Judy Spokes.

We would like to thank the young men and women, both past and present, who have participated in The Artful Dodgers Studio, especially the three participants who have spent dedicated hours developing their case studies. Pseudonyms have been given to the case studies to protect the identity of the young people.

All artwork within this publication has been used with permission from the artist.

About the authors

MARTIN THIELE has worked as a cultural researcher in a number of contexts and written extensively about the role of the arts in social and cultural change. His work has been diverse in terms of both geography and context, from educational workshops for Tiwi artists to a cultural plan for an African-American neighbourhood project in Atlanta, Georgia. In addition to this he edited *Dissolving Distance*, a publication about the role of regional galleries in community development and has written about community cultural development practice in articles for both *Artwork Magazine* and *ABC Online*. In his spare time he has maintained research and production involvement in a series of independent film projects. In 2001 he was jointly awarded the NSW Premiers Award for his work as archival researcher on the multi-award-winning documentary *Thomson of Arnhem Land*. He has also researched a documentary series about activism in Australia and is currently completing his Master of Social Science at RMIT University.

SALLY MARSDEN was engaged to establish The Artful Dodgers Studio at Connexions and is currently coordinating the program for Jesuit Social Services. Before coming to Connexions, Sally was the Visual Arts Director of Somebody's Daughter Theatre. She has been an artist practitioner working in community cultural development since 1984. In partnership with Arts Access, Sally researched and wrote *Healthy Arts*, a guide to assist administrators and artists to incorporate arts programs within the health sector. In 1995 she received an Australia Council Fellowship in recognition of her commitment and contribution to community cultural development. In 2000 she received the Ros Bower award from the Community Cultural Development Board of the Australia Council for the Arts, for leadership in this field.

Introduction

Over the past few years in Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States support for, and understanding of, the social impact of the arts has steadily grown.

There is enormous variation in how artists engage with communities, their values and concerns. Many artists see their role as social and cultural commentators and are drawn into a plethora of environmental, humanitarian and social issues and causes.

While some artists actively engage in dialogue with communities and work with them to find and express a collective voice, others play more the role of objective observer and critic. It is the former group that is the focus of this publication. In Australia, this approach is generally referred to as community cultural development practice.

Community cultural development is a dynamic and varied practice. Artist practitioners work with communities in very different ways. Some work with participants for relatively short periods of time, while others work on a community cultural development initiative for years.

Defining community cultural development

In our use of the term ‘community cultural development’, we prefer a layered definition that sits within the parameters outlined below. For the purpose of this publication, when we use the term ‘artist practitioner’ we are specifically referring to artists who are also specialists in community cultural development practice.

For us, the word ‘community’ is primarily about how individuals perceive a sense of social connectedness. Communities can be understood both in terms of very real, clearly defined bonds, such as extended family, geographically based inter-dependence or membership of a friendship group. But communities can also refer to relationships based on either real or perceived mutual understanding, values and identity. It is likely that an individual associates or identifies with multiple communities simultaneously.

‘Culture’ in the context of community cultural development is defined in two completely different, but equally significant, ways.

Firstly, culture is defined in the anthropological sense of shared values, beliefs, symbols and rituals. Culture in this sense is generally thought to be an organising concept for describing a ‘way of life’ of a collective group. It considers how people give meanings to their actions and experiences and, importantly, how they make sense of their everyday life.

Secondly, culture is also considered in the artistic sense, including both artistic creativity and artistic product.

For us, ‘development’ is a process of growing or developing. It is an approach that seeks to have impact on a situation through an event or incident, but with the intention of being transformative.

We define community cultural development practice, then, as a process in which an artist practitioner works with a community in the development of artistic outcomes, while at the same time acknowledging the unique knowledge, skills, beliefs and values of the participants and working to enhance the group’s capabilities in a number of ways.

Funding and policy debates

A significant proportion of community cultural development practice, particularly that aimed at marginalised communities, occurs outside of the organised arts sector. Of the twelve programs included in *Risking Art: Art for Survival*, no two programs enjoyed the same funding profile and less than half received Australia Council funding. We found that funding to this sector is often received from a range of government sources, such as education and training, the arts and various health policy initiatives. It is also received from health promotion foundations, corporate sponsorship, local government and philanthropy.

Philanthropy has played a key role in the sector because it has often been prepared to fund long-term programs. Long-term strategies cannot be achieved without continuing funding commitment.

Most programs experience discontinuous and inadequate funding – irrespective of the source. Furthermore, while community cultural development and/or community arts funding streams are commonplace, it is quite normal for both the policy terminology and the funding allocations to reflect a bias for supporting mainly short-term project work.

Artist practitioners who have maintained a steadfast commitment to working with the same or similar communities over many years have explored and refined the potency of their practice on multiple levels. This knowledge and experience has been under-documented and, consequently, under-represented in policy debates.

In many respects this publication responds to a widespread lack of understanding of the social development outcomes of community cultural development. Equally, it responds to a dearth of literature available to artist practitioners regarding the working methods required to achieve these outcomes.

It is within this context that this publication seeks to draw on some of the knowledge and reflections of experienced artist practitioners and make these more available as an industry resource. The primary reference point for this inquiry is The Artful Dodgers Studio, a long-term, sustained-engagement community cultural development program.

The Artful Dodgers Studio

In 1996 Jesuit Social Services established The Artful Dodgers Studio as part of its Connexions program – a new and innovative multidisciplinary program established to engage with and provide specialist services to young men and women with complex needs, specifically, young people with a dual diagnosis of substance use and mental health issues.

Sally Marsden, an experienced community cultural development artist practitioner, was employed to coordinate the studio-based program. Following a six-month research and development period, she employed sessional artist practitioners for short-term projects and established the long-term program. The Studio was designed as

a sustained-engagement model specifically for young people who are extremely fragile and marginalised.

Based in a welfare agency in Collingwood, an inner city suburb of Melbourne, the Studio is one of a number of complementary programs that seek to assist young people at high risk, primarily those experiencing dual diagnosis. Other programs include Counselling and Intensive Youth Support, The Outdoor Experience and the Youth Grow Garden.

From a health professional's perspective, 'dual diagnosis' refers to people who are experiencing concurrent mental illness (including depression, psychosis, drug-induced psychosis, bi-polar disorder and schizophrenia) and substance misuse (typically, amphetamines, alcohol, heroin, marijuana and prescription medications).

The Artful Dodgers Studio is a central feature of the Connexions program, providing a safe and secure environment for young people to explore the arts. It provides an alternative strategy for engaging young people and enables them to give expression to their experience of marginalisation through artistic projects. A contributing factor to the program's success is the location of the Studio within a welfare program, enabling participants to develop relationships of trust with youth workers and counsellors and refer to them as the need arises.

Typically, the Studio participants experience a high incidence of homelessness and disengagement from family, school and other 'community' institutions. It is not unusual for participants to exhibit high-risk behaviours such as prostitution, offending, intravenous drug use, needle sharing, suicide attempts, and other forms of self-harm, including unsafe sex and binge drinking.

Over time the Studio has developed into a fully functioning visual arts workspace, designed around an open access studio model. At any one time, as many as eleven young people are working on individual art pieces or group projects. Adjacent to the Studio is a working kitchen where meals are prepared on designated days by one of the artist practitioners. The Studio employs one full-time community cultural development artist practitioner with visual

arts specialisation, one part-time artist practitioner and sessional artists for specific projects. The Studio projects are listed at the end of this Introduction.

The long-term continuity of this program has enabled the collection of information that can now assist in developing understanding not only about the artistic and cultural benefits, but also the social benefits, of community cultural development work in the Studio.

Our research, observations and aims

The Artful Dodgers Studio was the focal point for research. Over a two-year period we recorded daily attendances for a sample group of 63 participants. These attendance figures were then converted into participation graphs. We were then able to cross-reference these variations in attendance levels with arts projects and studio workshops to get a sense of how participants engaged with the Studio. (The case studies in Chapter 2 provide a glimpse into the lives of three of these young people.)

Our research relied on our own and other artists' observations of participants at the Studio. We also undertook interviews and discussions with participants and other allied professionals, including counsellors, outreach workers and therapists. Thus we were able to map both the artistic and social trajectories of participants through the program and gain a comprehensive picture from which we developed our theoretical model.

The aim of this work is to describe a model of arts practice that we believe delivers broad social change outcomes for marginalised young people. Our model might potentially be used by other similar organisations to set up an arts program in the welfare sector. In addition, using our knowledge of what happens to young people as they progress through the Studio, the final chapter provides a suggested evidentiary framework for artist practitioners and researchers to begin their own process of mapping the social and cultural outcomes from such a program.

This is an exploratory work and we have not yet used this framework comprehensively in the Studio, nor have we studied in

any statistically verifiable way specific outcomes such as reduction in substance use, improvement in mental health or increased stability in housing. Nevertheless, we know through our work in the Studio that there are many such outcomes for participants who engage in our community cultural development model.

Furthermore, since the research for this publication was completed, Jesuit Social Services has looked at participant progress as part of its ongoing evaluation of programs. By examining Studio participation data over a four-year period ending in 2001, the following trends have been identified:

- *Substance use* – on entry to the program, only 6% of participants reported not misusing drugs and/or alcohol. This picture changed drastically, with 36% of participants reporting not using any substances on exit from the program. Further, on entry to the program 76% of participants reported abusing depressants such as alcohol, heroin and prescription drugs, while on exit this figure had dropped to 37%.
- *Mental health* – there was an overall reduction in reported levels of anxiety, depression and self-harm, as well as a small reduction in the number of psychotic episodes experienced by some participants.
- *Education/employment* – almost all of the participants who came to the program had disconnected from formal education and/or employment; however, on exit 18% of participants entered some form of employment and 21% returned to formal education (such as CAE, VCE, TAFE and university).

These figures suggest that by engaging with the program participants learn to manage their mental health, substance use and other problems. This enables them to begin to develop significant relationships and engage with the community, in particular, through returning to education and/or employment, thereby reducing their social exclusion.

We need to be cautious about analysing and interpreting the data because there are multiple factors at play (especially in relation to dual diagnosis); however, the statistics presented here represent a preliminary overview which shows changes in mental health

status, substance use and education/employment. Future research will enable us to identify the multiple factors involved and to better understand the significance of these in relation to the participants' journey through the program.

Outline of chapters

The remaining chapters in this book are divided into two sections. Section One discusses in detail specific characteristics of community cultural development practice within The Artful Dodgers Studio. It contains a chapter on the theoretical model of practice, three case studies and a chapter on the artist practitioner's working method. Section Two considers broader issues about ethical practice and evaluation methods, using the Studio as a reference point. It contains chapters on ethical principles and on building an evidence base.

In Chapter 1, 'The theoretical model of practice', we discuss horizontal and vertical process in the context of the participant's engagement cycle. This cycle is characterised by five distinct stages which map the participant's journey from initial contact with the artist practitioner through to disengagement from the program.

THESE ARE:

- initial engagement,
- sustained engagement,
- project work,
- transitional engagement,
- disconnection.

Chapter 2 contains the case studies. Having identified that there is a lack of evidence in the community cultural development field, we have worked with three Artful Dodgers Studio participants to document their experience of the program, in order to provide insight into the social change outcomes that participants can experience. Rachel, Nathan and Adam (not their real names) have explained their participation in the Studio program from their own unique perspectives.

Each of these case studies is accompanied by a series of artworks representing the participant's artistic journey. Alongside each participant's narrative is an outline of the journey in terms of the five stages of the engagement cycle.

Chapter 3 outlines the artist practitioner's preparation, planning, project design and working methods necessary to assist a participant through the program. The artist practitioner's approach can be understood in terms of four distinct phases, which correspond to the five stages of the participant's engagement cycle.

THE FOUR PHASES ARE:

- research and development,
- introductory phase,
- nurturing connectedness,
- disengagement.

We believe that the theoretical model of practice and the artist practitioner's approach are two parts of the same picture. Together with the case studies, these chapters provide a detailed insight into community cultural development practice within The Artful Dodgers Studio.

In Section Two, we begin by suggesting that it is possible to think of community cultural development within a universal ethical framework. The pentagon model can, we believe, be applied as an ethical foundation to a range of community cultural development initiatives. The model is based on five distinct principles of practice that are a major part of The Artful Dodgers Studio practice. However, we have also found evidence of a commitment to these principles in the work of other artist practitioners.

THE FIVE PRINCIPLES ARE:

- artistic function and outcome,
- building connectedness,
- exchange of knowledge,
- respect,
- possibility.

Finally, the chapter concludes by articulating what we believe is the potency of community cultural development practice: its cultural, social and community development potential.

THIS CONSISTS OF FOUR ELEMENTS:

- possibility,
- animation,
- critical engagement,
- imagination.

The final chapter, 'Building an evidence base', uses these four elements, together with the five principles of ethical practice to consider an appropriate mechanism for collecting evidence about the cultural, social and community development outcomes of community cultural development practice. This theoretical approach, called 'dynamic observation', is an unobtrusive observational data collection method. While it has not yet been used in The Artful Dodgers Studio, it has been developed specifically for use in such a context. It is intended as a data collection tool that can inform the evaluation of long-term, sustainable community cultural development practice and outcomes.

We believe that ambiguity in the use of terminology has created a major obstacle to the development of theoretical debates within the community cultural development sector. We have therefore sought to be explicit in our choice of terms and would encourage others to do so as well. While we recognise that as a long-term, sustained-engagement model, The Artful Dodgers Studio is still relatively rare, nevertheless it provides an excellent reference point for considering community cultural development practice in a range of settings.

The Artful Dodgers Studio projects

1997 Two-year funding from the William Buckland Foundation. Sally Marsden employed as Arts and Culture Co-ordinator. The Artful Dodgers Studio was established after a 6-month research and planning period.

Five sessional artist practitioners employed to conduct short-term projects:

Mosaics – Sian Adnam

Music – Greg Sneddon and volunteer Greg Jordan

Voice Sculpture – Paul Henry

Radio – John Standish

Body Art – Cathy Poussard

Studio Exhibition of drawings, prints, painting and body art.

PERSEPHONE

Group devised performance utilising puppets and original music.

Performed by studio participants.

Director: Michele Spooner

Musical director: Greg Sneddon

1998 IN THE CAN

Installations in the old Pentridge Gaol as part of the Fringe Festival. Twenty one prison cells were transformed by the studio participants on the theme of 'Entrapment'. Due to public demand the show was extended for 4 weeks and viewed by 10,300 people.

Artist practitioners: Sally Marsden and Eamonn Scott

1999 DE-HINGED

Installation comprising of doors depicting homelessness. Exhibited outside the Melbourne Town Hall as part of the 2nd National Conference on Homelessness and the Art and Community Conference, St Kilda Town Hall. Funded by the Council to Homeless Persons, Victoria.

Artist practitioners: Sally Marsden and Eamonn Scott

2000 TRIPTYCH

Public art – 3 sculptures designed and constructed by participants commissioned by the Department of Human Services. Installed in the foyer of 555 Collins Street, Melbourne. Bronzes were produced with technical support from participant Matt.

Artist practitioners: Sally Marsden and Eamonn Scott

CHRISTMAS CARDS

Five cards designed by the studio participants and distributed through local businesses and organisations. A joint initiative of the Smith Street Business Network and the RACV Foundation.

Artist practitioners: Sally Marsden and Eamonn Scott

RISKING ART – ART FOR SURVIVAL

Funded by The William Buckland Foundation and the Australia Council Community and Cultural Development Fund. Launched at the 12th Annual International Johns Hopkins Philanthropy Conference in Melbourne, 24th–26th July. This publication highlighted practising artists working with 'high risk' participants in established arts programs within the welfare/health sector.

Edited by Sally Marsden and Martin Thiele

Accompanying exhibition at Span Galleries in Flinders Lane, Melbourne, involving 5 national arts programs, including The Artful Dodgers Studio.

Curated by Martin Thiele, Eamonn Scott and Sally Marsden

2000-2 NATURE VS CULTURE

Pilot project funded through the R.E. Ross Trust, incorporating mixed media, drawing, painting and photography resulting in exhibition. Participants explored their relationship with the urban and natural environment through field trips and studio based art practice.

Two-year funding from VicHealth Community Arts Participation Scheme to develop this project, with further funding from the R.E. Ross Trust.

Artist practitioners: Sally Marsden, Eamonn Scott and Jeff Stewart

XENA PONDER'S BLUE

Final year of Nature vs Culture project culminating in exhibition at Span Gallery, May 2002.

Artist practitioners: Eamonn Scott, Sally Marsden and Jeff Stewart

VENETIAN HOUSES

Public art installation in the Melbourne City Square as part of the Next Wave Festival and the Nature versus Culture project.

Studio participant: Shanrah

Mentor: Public artist Megan Evans

CATALYST – TEMPORARY PUBLIC ART

13-week poster project concluding in January 2003, in Knox Lane, as part of the Nature vs Culture project.

Funded by Melbourne City Council and the VicHealth Arts for Health Program.

Artist practitioners: Jeff Stewart and Eamonn Scott

CATALYST – FILM AND POSTCARD SERIES

Horti Hall, Melbourne.

A collaboration between the filmmakers and studio participants.

Filmmakers: Kirsty Baird and Zoe Horsfall

2001-2 IDENTITY

This project is a partnership between The Artful Dodgers Studio, Visionary Images and the Youth Substance Abuse Service. The Rotary Youth Arts Project is co-ordinated by the City of Yarra in conjunction with the Rotary Club of Richmond and the Victorian Department of Human Services through the Saving Lives Program.

STAGE 1 – I.D.

Exhibition at the Dickerson Gallery, and banners displayed on the Richmond, Fitzroy and Collingwood Town Halls, March 2002.

Toured to Launceston, Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery.

Artist practitioner: Lex Middleton

Mentors: Maria Filippow and Sally Marsden

STAGE 2 – INNERSENT

Postcards, launched at the Richmond Town Hall, November 2002.

Artist practitioner: Lex Middleton

Mentors: Maria Filippow and Sally Marsden

Section One

STUDIO PRACTICE: PARTICIPANTS AND ARTISTS

Chapter 1

THE THEORETICAL MODEL OF PRACTICE
IN THE ARTFUL DODGERS STUDIO

In the Introduction we explored a working definition of community cultural development practice in which both the arts and anthropological definitions of culture were discussed. To reiterate briefly, in the anthropological sense culture is an organising concept for a way of life of a collective group, providing the context within which people give meanings to their actions and experiences, and make sense of the everyday. Culture in an arts sense refers to artistic product and the output of artists.

In this chapter we first consider the ‘organising concepts’ or belief systems of The Artful Dodgers Studio participants. We then articulate a theoretical model of community cultural development practice based on research into the methods used by the Studio artist practitioners to meet the cultural and social requirements of this particular participant group.

Context of participant group

Due to the fact that Studio participants have a history of substance misuse alongside mental illness, their experience of social exclusion is likely to include disengagement from family, school and other institutions that are traditionally associated with a sense of belonging. Participants are often homeless or street dependent and engage in high-risk behaviours such as prostitution, criminal offending, intravenous drug use, needle sharing, suicide attempts and other forms of self-harm. It is therefore important for any artist practitioner working with this community to have an insight into the cultural practices that are associated with such high-risk behaviours in order to empathise with the participants when they first attend the studio.

Having said that, the values and beliefs of these young people do not vary greatly from any other young person facing adulthood and all the personal challenges that come with that. Like many young people, Studio participants are concerned about the future and often discuss issues such as environmental degradation and the impact of globalisation. However, in the context of the inhibiting factors they already experience as a consequence of their mental health and substance misuse, the sense of these problems can affect them acutely and overwhelm them.

Interestingly, participants also discuss their commitment to personal artistic expression. The vast majority of Studio participants have had artistic experience prior to their involvement in The Artful Dodgers Studio. Of the 63 participants looked at in our sample group, only one participant had no previous artistic experience.

The Artful Dodgers Studio caters for young people in the 16–26 year-old age range. A recent Australian Bureau of Statistics Report (ABS 2000), investigating the leisure and cultural activities of Australians, shows that young Australians are highly attracted to opportunities for participatory arts and cultural expression, and that arts and cultural activities are disproportionately more significant to the quality of life of Australians in the 15–24 year-old age range. This report documents participation rates of around 67.5% for this age group, higher than any other group. Participation consistently declines as Australians age (the lowest level of participation is 41.7% for those over the age of 55).

We can confirm that Australian young people attempting to resolve extremely complex social problems are just as interested in artistic participation as their mainstream counterparts. Moreover, in our experience this commitment to creative expression is integral to their cultural values and central to their quality and way of life. According to our research, previous artistic or creative experience can be both formal and informal and includes graffiti, tagging, chalk art, song writing, poetry, guitar playing, tattooing, body art, fashion, performance and installation.

Horizontal and vertical practice

As stated in the Introduction, we believe that community cultural development practice is a process in which an artist practitioner works with a community in the development of artistic outcomes, while at the same time acknowledging the unique knowledge, skills, beliefs and values of the participants and working to build the group's capabilities in a number of ways – based on the five principles of ethical practice discussed later, in Chapter 4.

In reviewing the past five years of practice at The Artful Dodgers Studio it has become clear that the artist practitioners promote

cultural connectedness and mainstream social emancipation using a combination of what we term horizontal and vertical practice. These two interdependent and complementary types of practice are used in order to achieve the program's cultural *and* social objectives.

In *horizontal* practice the intention of the practitioner is to actively encourage and guide participants to invest time in exploring their creative potential. Within *vertical* practice participants are encouraged to meet both personal and artistic challenges by engaging in collective art-making which results in a public outcome.

Horizontal practice promotes co-operation, continuity, respect, reliability, trust and connectedness. In The Artful Dodgers Studio this is reflected in an open-access studio environment where participants are able to experiment with different media and explore concepts and ideas in an unhurried and art-focused setting. As a co-operative working environment the Studio practice is underpinned by health and safety considerations, and participants periodically assist in the collective development of Studio policies and procedures. In this way the artist practitioners are able to work with the existing value systems of participants and, at the same time, promote a collective consciousness based on exchange of ideas and mutual priorities, thereby expanding the participants' repertoire of 'shared' values.

As a result of this horizontal process, which is designed to cultivate connectedness and belonging, groups of participants will often begin to coordinate their Studio attendance. This 'core group' is generally made up of a stable group of participants who attend reasonably frequently (three to four times per week) and support and encourage each other. In this group structure, established participants will often peer-mentor newer participants artistically, but also assist in ensuring the Studio is functioning properly and is well maintained.

Vertical practice is characterised by participants working towards the delivery of an outcome for an external audience. Vertical practice promotes collaboration, negotiation, discipline and

completion. The artist practitioner's role in this instance is to assist participants to communicate and negotiate their ideas and concepts within a group context. The artist practitioner actively works to maintain individual and group focus and to develop a sense of trust in the collective process, engendering faith that quality artistic outcomes are achievable.

Through vertical practice the participants develop resilience on multiple levels. This includes individual and collective artistic critique and an appreciation of the importance of a commitment to a structured and fixed-timeline process. The finished artwork is placed within a public context and the participant as *artist* has the opportunity to engage in dialogue with the mainstream community through their artwork.

The five stages of participation

We suggest that it is more appropriate to think of the developmental process in community cultural development as a series of loops – rather than a linear process – with each successive loop representing a development on the previous one.

These cycles should be recognised for what they are – the development of life skills and new knowledge based on the negotiation of attributes such as the capacity for contemplation or review, social obligations, connectedness, personal insecurities, anxieties, self-discipline and routine. They also represent the challenges associated with developing new artistic and social skills such as critique, research, debating and planning.

In the context of The Artful Dodgers Studio this can mean that over extended periods of time, in terms of their developmental trajectory, participants will be engaged in horizontal and vertical processes alternately. Variations invariably depend on how long it takes participants to develop certain capabilities or refine and develop a diverse range of skills or competencies. Through attendance graphs we have identified five different stages that demonstrate a participant's journey through the Studio program, indicating the nature of both their cultural and social development.

1. INITIAL ENGAGEMENT

As the first stage of participation, initial engagement is characterised by short, infrequent attendance by participants. At the time of initial engagement, participants are often still in the process of resolving the immediate consequences of substance misuse and frequently interrupt their studio participation because of legal, medical, personal or social obligations.

During this stage, the Studio practitioner works *horizontally* and prioritises the building of trust with the participant – often it will be necessary to make telephone calls to participants or their workers in order to engender a sense of familiarity. Participants will use Studio visits at this time to undertake simple artworks that can be completed within short time-frames. Our records indicate that 28% of participants disconnect from the Studio program within the first three visits. Through cross-referencing with other programs, we have found that participants who disconnect early from the Studio often disconnect from other workers (counsellors and outreach) as well.

Participants might take months to transit this phase depending on their own personal fragility and the complexity of their life circumstances.

2. SUSTAINED ENGAGEMENT

This second stage of participation is characterised by an increased frequency of attendance as participants begin to develop a routine and build familiarity with the Studio's core group.

The artist practitioner continues to work *horizontally* with the participant, who is now beginning to refine specific artistic skills and expressing preference for working on more complex and challenging artworks that require multiple visits to complete. It is not unusual for a participant to attend the Studio three to four times a week for up to seven hours a day during a sustained engagement period. During this phase the artist practitioner will seek to include the participant in core group discussions, inviting input and discussion about past artistic projects and foreshadowing future possibilities.

A participant's productivity provides an indication to the artist practitioner of his or her readiness to focus on new projects and explore options for the future generally. Most participants move through this phase to project work in around twelve to sixteen weeks.

3. PROJECT WORK

In this stage of participation the practitioner works *vertically* with participants to focus specifically on a collective public outcome. Participation is characterised by regular, self-disciplined attendance and open, critical dialogue related to the works in progress and the demands of a public outcome. The practitioner will frequently challenge participants to refine and refocus their skills in order to bring the project to a high standard.

These projects are generally presented in publicly accessible, high profile venues and, like other significant cultural events, are opened by leading public figures. As a time for celebration of achievement, participants are encouraged to invite family members, friends and workers to the opening. Stakeholder representatives, arts professionals and other industry colleagues are also invited to review the work.

Participants are introduced as the *artists* and are provided with ample opportunity to receive feedback from their audience. This can be an intense process and it is not unusual for participants to temporarily disengage from the studio for a few weeks following an exhibition or public outcome. This disengagement period can be a vulnerable time, with the artist practitioner seeking to maintain contact with participants through telephone calls, individual meetings or even contacting their case worker to ensure that participants navigate this period safely.

The artist practitioner will also periodically bring participants together as a group in order to reflect upon and acknowledge the magnitude of their achievement. The artist practitioner will use these group discussions to evaluate the project outcomes on the one hand and re-engage participants in a *horizontal* process on the other hand.

4. TRANSITIONAL ENGAGEMENT

It is during this fourth stage of participation that a participant repositions him or herself for increased mainstream or normalised social interaction.

Following project work participants demonstrate new skills, resilience and a heightened sense of self. We have noticed that participants begin to identify programs and activities outside of the Studio that they feel confident to pursue.

Typically, during this phase participants begin to re-engage with school, begin tertiary study or apply for work. At the same time they generally start to normalise other aspects of their lifestyles, such as a move into more stable accommodation. They begin to manage their mental health better and many find themselves in stable relationships.

During the transitional phase participants are often extremely disciplined and productive when they attend the Studio. Participants will also demonstrate more responsible behaviour and frequently mentor or support others, both artistically and socially, during this phase.

The artist practitioner uses both *horizontal* and *vertical* practice during transitional engagement. Often participants require assistance with their own individual projects such as the development of a portfolio or body of work. Frequently they will bring in work from a course of study for feedback.

It is during this phase that participants start to build their own constellations of positive social relationships external to the Studio. Attendance graphs show that transiting this phase is a comparatively slow process. It is not unusual for participants to take a year or more to transit this phase as they consolidate their newly acquired life skills to build confidence in new relationships with people who are external to the Studio, such as teachers, family, partners, friends, work colleagues and others.

Sometimes, as shown in the case studies in Chapter 2, there will be temporary disconnection phases followed by re-engagement.

5. DISCONNECTION

In the fifth stage participants will often voluntarily maintain informal contact with the Studio for months after they have ceased attending regularly.

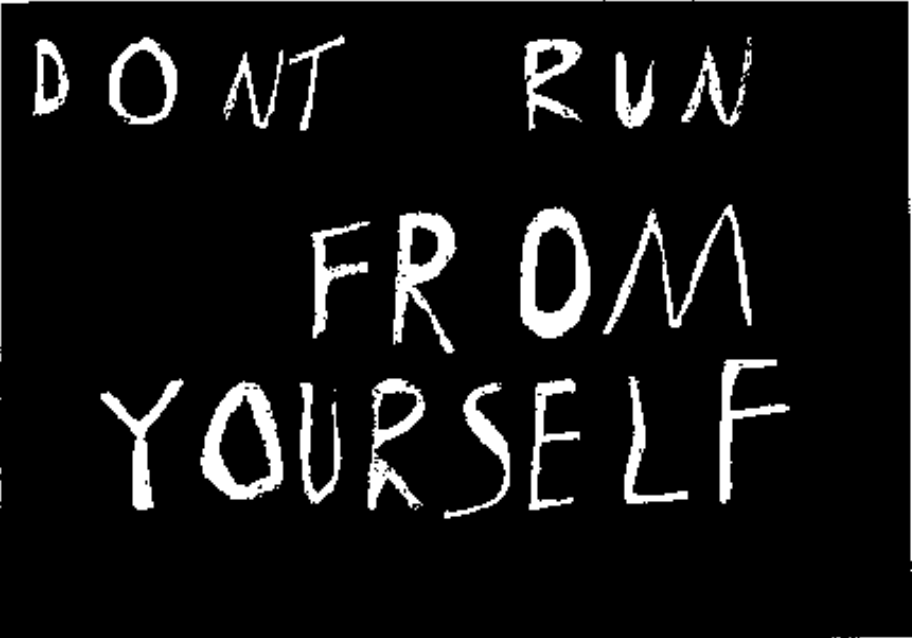
Typically, during the disconnection phase, participants integrate into the new social relationships they began to develop during transitional engagement. At this stage participants are fully engaged in 'normalised' social activities such as school, workplace, family and support groups. They are generally self-determining and demonstrating financial independence.

Overview of the engagement cycle

Participation records show that the overall *median* engagement cycle is about 24 months. However, records for participants who are currently in transitional engagement show that their average cycle is higher, at around 32 months. This means that a participant's journey through the program can take years.

No two participation graphs demonstrate exactly the same pattern. It is apparent to us that participants navigate their way through the program on an individually determined basis, where personal choice is paramount. While the Studio embodies a structure combining both horizontal and vertical process, in terms of artistic output it is usually through project work that participants are able to develop a clear sense of personal and artistic accomplishment. On the other hand, it is through the horizontal practice that they can reflect on this accomplishment and develop personal strategies to enhance this.

Untitled (pages 45–48)
Transparency etching
Adam



Chapter 2

CASE STUDIES

DONT BE
SHY...

LIVE
FOR
NOW



Case Study 1

ADAM

ADAM ENTERED THE ARTFUL DODGERS STUDIO AT THE AGE OF 19 AND HAS BEEN WITH THE PROGRAM FOR TWO YEARS. DURING THE FIRST YEAR HE DISCONNECTED FROM THE PROGRAM ON NUMEROUS OCCASIONS, SOMETIMES FOR MONTHS AT A TIME. IN THE SECOND YEAR HE BECAME A 'CORE' MEMBER OF THE STUDIO, SPENDING UP TO SEVEN HOURS A DAY, FIVE DAYS A WEEK FULLY ENGAGED IN THE PROGRAM AND PROJECTS.

INITIAL ENGAGEMENT I have been coming to The Artful Dodgers Studio for two years. The first year was disturbed and the second year was a year of change. I see myself heading towards art teaching, or assisting in a program like this.

When I was introduced to the Studio, I was living in emergency accommodation and I didn't know who I was and where I was going; in other words, I was scattered. I was smoking drugs and watching a lot of TV. I had a need to do something and get out. The drugs were stopping me from getting off my butt and doing things, and I was not aware of my own being. Something had to change. It came through a friend of mine who actually asked me if I was interested in art and said, 'You can't sit here all day watching TV and doing drugs'.

He suggested that I come to Connexions where you can do art downstairs and get help upstairs. I thought, why not, it could give me a chance to do something different and I hadn't done it before.

He brought me upstairs first because I needed help. Then we went down to the Studio and he introduced me to everyone. I felt apprehensive about the whole lot. To start with I didn't feel right. I just saw it all as another agency. I didn't want to meet any of the workers, I was too pissed off and angry with them all. To start with, I saw Sally as just another worker. I still wanted to come in, but I found it difficult to have someone just watching me even.

SUSTAINED ENGAGEMENT At the beginning I still didn't want to be here all the time and was still apprehensive. My writing was the first time I was able to express myself. It was an empowering experience. For once I had control of what I was doing. I was doing what I wanted. Everyone said they liked my poetry, this made it really hard because I couldn't tell if they were serious or just egging me on.

At this time I didn't know where I wanted to be, so I was coming to the Studio on and off. Also I was suffering heavily with the voices in my head. Initially it was hard because I hadn't spoken to anyone about it. Here I knew I could because I knew it wouldn't go anywhere. Also the dope was ruining my days when I first came to the Studio. I wasn't coming into the Studio when things were bad.

When I settled in I found the Studio atmosphere to be peaceful and it seemed like the place to be. I felt welcomed and I felt like I fitted in and liked the way people talked to me. They really listened.

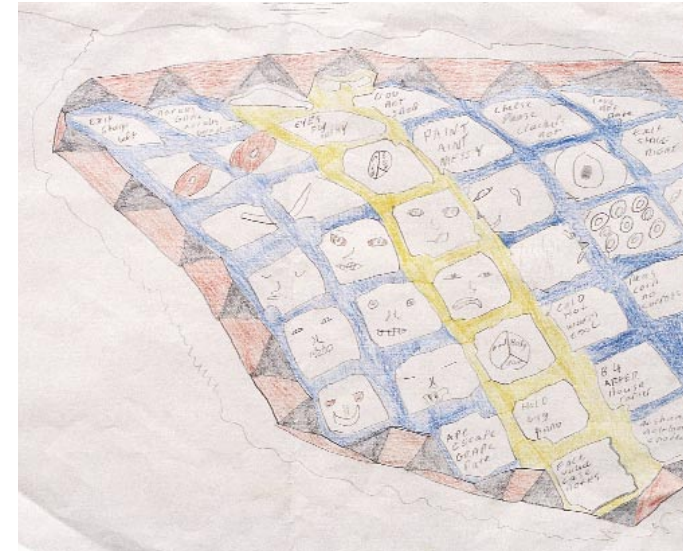
DISCONNECTION I went into counselling. At this time I met a few people at the rooming house and then went 'bush'. When I returned to the Studio three months later there was no interrogation and it felt a real blast to be back in. I was still doing my poetry and started drawing.

Housing was terrible, drug use had got bad. I linked back in with the counsellor and things started to smooth out.

SUSTAINED ENGAGEMENT After I came back, the Studio became a daily event for about six months.

PROJECT WORK I got involved in the group exhibition, which was called 'Nature versus Culture'. This project was a way of looking at the things that are man-made against, or versus, the natural world. The way I got into this project was from using my own life experiences at the time. I was living in between housing, in other words, living in and out of squats and on the street. I got to see both sides in one – nature's way, which is everything I find we don't have control over, and culture, which is everything that is built up around.

The project came together like brickwork. Each person's views or piece contributed to a wider understanding of the project itself and the clearing of people's minds about the differences between nature and culture.



I started on a big canvas that depicted two things. One was my inner feelings that I represented with colours inside the netting and the other was the nature side of things through the netting that I projected onto the canvas. This netting represented my own little piece of the natural world and trying to relate back to the natural way of life. I called this painting 'Trapped'. That's where it started. My creative side and my feelings started to be unlocked. This was a new beginning.

SUSTAINED ENGAGEMENT The social aspect of the Studio helped me to start asking questions about myself, about how, why and what I was doing in every way. Things became a little clearer. I felt supported and could ask for help on the way. I was encouraged to keep going.

I started on a group project. For me it was really hard. Trying to understand who everyone was and the rules of the place. Being in a group was still hard, it was really difficult to relate to others. Because I was doing art and felt good about it I wanted to stick to it and keep going.

I was also using art as a relaxation tool – it kept my mind off all the 'shit' from the outside world – and started doing work about myself and acknowledging myself through the art. I was coming in every day, all day and enjoying it. I was doing so much. My housing was still bad, but my emotional



Untitled
Coloured pencil on paper
Adam

stuff was starting to settle down and I was able to start to relax a little bit. I was pretty much in solitude through this, not making friends in the Studio.

We went on an art trip to Wilsons Prom. It was a ball. Once again I found it difficult with 24-hour contact with people I didn't really know well. My art goal was to find a new entry into my poetry. As a real life factor my goal was to be with a new group and enjoy the challenge. At the time I really enjoyed being without the dope and liked feeling fresh.

This started to get things moving in all aspects of my life. Following the trip my housing started to become somewhat settled, drug use was cut down, but there were other big things happening in my life.

DISCONNECTION I left the Studio again around this time. This time, only for about a month. This was a big change for me. I had been travelling constantly. I had more support, including a housing and outreach worker, around me. That made it easier to get out there and do what had to be done, to get settled.

SUSTAINED ENGAGEMENT Since then I have been coming to the Studio and Connexions almost every day and spending up to seven hours in the Studio doing my poetry and drawings.



Trapped
Water colour pencil on canvas
Adam

PROJECT WORK I have been involved in two exhibitions and even read a piece of poetry at the opening of one of them. I am actually now seeing my artwork more clearly and seeing why I am doing it. I'm doing it to get rid of my hidden 'shit'.

I am encouraged to make my art. We are encouraged in the Studio to get our creative sides going. I don't see it as therapy as we are not always doing one-on-one and talking about our feelings. The artists give us our own space to do our own art. And the 'ears' are there if you want them. This year has been a year of change for me.



Case Study 2

RACHEL

RACHEL IS 22 YEARS OLD AND HAS BEEN COMING TO THE ARTFUL DODGERS STUDIO FOR THREE YEARS. SHE IS NOW ATTENDING A TAFE COURSE PART-TIME, WHICH WAS HER PRIMARY OBJECTIVE ON ENTERING THE PROGRAM.

Depression started when I was 12 and I was suicidal. I was born with a facial deformity and was heavily bullied every single day at school and within the community, from 5–16 years old. At 13 I began correctional work on my face. This went on until I was 16.

I started self-mutilation when I was 13. It was also when the eating disorder kicked in too. I thought that if I made myself skinnier it would take the attention off my face. It was around this time that I lost all my friends due to my depression. I would go from group to group. I had a nervous breakdown at 15. I felt misunderstood, and was medicated and felt like a freak in my head, as well as my face.

I then went to a youth drop-in centre and did my first arts project. This project was a suicide prevention project. I did set design for them and it was good. When I was asked to leave school I started hanging around with kids in the youth hostel. They were just as messed up as I was. This is when I started smoking dope and binge drinking regularly.

At 16 I had my surgery, facial reconstruction and bone grafts. I got involved in somewhat abusive relationships. I was unaccustomed to being liked. Things led from one thing to another and before I knew it I was in Queensland. When I returned things had changed and I was depressed. I left town to show them that I didn't need them, to start afresh.

I moved here to start life again when I was 18 – left all friends and family to try and get away from old patterns. I ended up back into them anyway. I didn't know anyone or where anything was and was isolated in the outer suburbs. I

was bored and isolated and lonely. Dope was there and it gave me something to do.

INITIAL ENGAGEMENT I was introduced to The Artful Dodgers Studio through my JPET (Job Placement, Education and Training) worker, because I wanted to continue my art. My art was my way of communicating because I never used to talk very much. Art was all I wanted to do.

I came here because I was desperate to get out of the house. I didn't particularly like the fact that I was in a place that was helping people with drug and alcohol issues and mental health issues, as I knew I was in a better state than I had been in the past. So why was I here? I stayed because of Sally. Because she was not a worker, and didn't patronise me.

SUSTAINED ENGAGEMENT In the first year here, I was coming to the Studio every day to do my own art and started making friends. I felt that I was slowly starting to succeed here.

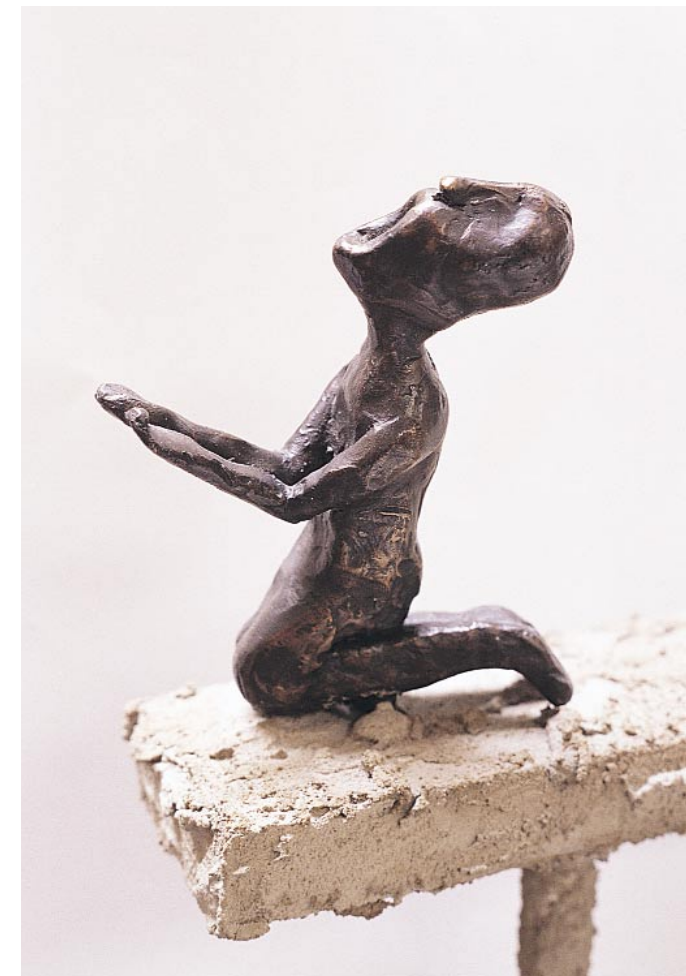
PROJECT WORK Sally gave me a door for the 'De-Hinged' project, which was about homelessness, to start painting on as soon



Living with Bugs
Acrylic painting
Rachel

as I walked in. We started designing what I was going to do. Suddenly I found myself part of a group again. It felt good. I was coming to the Studio everyday to do my own art and started making friends. I felt that I was slowly starting to succeed here.

I moved out of shared housing into private rental and lived by myself for the first time properly. I was not a very happy person in my personal life. I was lonely and depressed despite coming to the Studio regularly. I was drinking and smoking lots. Life was messy outside the Studio and I have always maintained that I can help myself. I was very careful about letting anyone know about life issues. I kept everybody at a distance.



Tryplich/Chaos
Bronze sculpture
Rachel

I trusted the artists in the Studio because they were not workers, not authority figures or counsellors. In the second year at the Studio, I was working with new art mediums such as oil painting and casting, and learning skills and getting constructive criticism. This built my confidence up and improved my art skills. Working with others on the group projects was good because they were like me, and we bonded and talked about all kinds of things relating to art and life in general. I felt like an artist.

The field trip to Hattah Kilcann for the group project 'Nature versus Culture' was challenging for me. The group was challenging and I was also detoxing from dope. I had been living alone again and had just come out of a traumatic relationship and was depressed and not really coping, so I had been smoking continually for some time. This trip was probably the first time I had been straight for some time.

I got sick of the scene and decided to try and get out of old patterns. The art Studio did show me that I did have a problem with the dope and that I did have an addiction.

TRANSITIONAL ENGAGEMENT The TAFE course came about because Sally nagged me to apply. She knew I wanted to go to TAFE at the end of that year, and I had my portfolio almost ready, and knew that I was unable, at that point in time, to care about moving on. I got in. I felt good as I knew I could get into this course and had been trying to since 1996.

The Studio gave me confidence and I came out of my shell. I am not timid anymore. No matter how bad my life had been I learnt that there were people who had more problems than me. It taught



Life as I know it
Oil painting
Rachel

me to be grateful for what I did have. I learnt that I was an alright person too. Here I have my own friends.

PROJECT WORK For the 'Risking Art' exhibition at Span Gallery, I painted 'My Life' and it was the first time I painted about my deformity. This was in my third year with the Studio. I painted in symbols, which allowed me to tell my story while still protecting myself slightly. I got good feedback from the show and have shown it to my TAFE class.

TRANSITIONAL ENGAGEMENT Now I am in priority housing and happy to live alone. I am in my 3rd year of a part-time TAFE Course and have a stable relationship and part-time job.

PROJECT WORK I have exhibited again at Span Gallery with another group show, 'Xena Ponders Blue'. The oil painting I exhibited was not about me, and I used it to mark my departure from the Studio. I painted it over one-and-a-half years.

DISCONNECTION That is how long it has taken me to move out of the Studio. It took me that long because I no longer had the time to be in the Studio. I have a busy, hectic life. My life is more stable. I have money to live and I am not reliant on welfare. I am happier and more confident. Life is pretty good now, a lot better than what it was.



Desert Plague
Oil painting
Rachel

Case Study 3

NATHAN

NATHAN IS 24 YEARS OLD AND HAS BEEN ATTENDING THE ARTFUL DODGERS STUDIO OVER A PERIOD OF THREE YEARS. HE DISCONNECTED FROM THE STUDIO FOR ONE YEAR AFTER A TWO-YEAR PERIOD AND HAS BEEN INVOLVED IN THREE ARTS PROJECTS.

INITIAL ENGAGEMENT I got involved with the Studio towards the end of 1998. My outreach worker suggested I check out the art room because he thought it would benefit me. He knew I was doing art all the time by myself. I stopped it for a while. I got disinterested because I was going nowhere.

I was in rehab. I had problems with living/independent skills and my confidence was low. I didn't have any communication skills at the time and felt uncomfortable in social situations. My mental state was more of a problem than dope. I self-medicated because of past traumas, and subsequently have had memory problems and social problems.

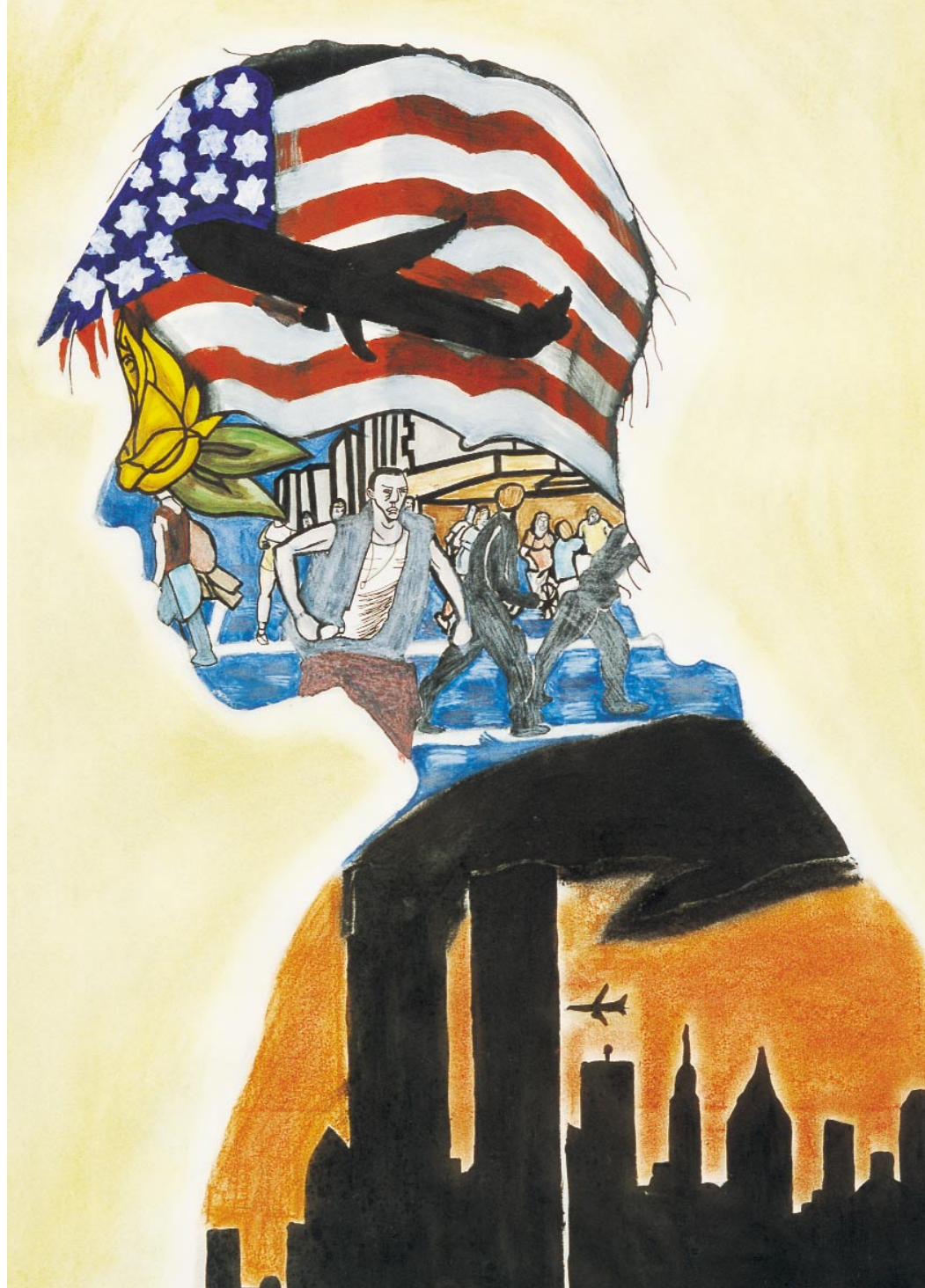
When I first came here I stayed for a couple of years.

DISCONNECTION Then I stayed away for 12 months and tried to think of what to do.

RE-ENGAGEMENT When I returned to the Studio it felt weird. Some people were different, some had gone. I came back, I didn't know anyone and I thought, is this a good thing or a bad thing for me to come back? This probably lasted for a month and then it sort of panned out from there, I just got back into the artwork, that was the only thing on my mind at the time.

I wanted to come back to the Studio so that I could improve myself. I thought to myself, I want to move on and not go backwards or stay in one spot. I spoke to my counsellor about returning to the Studio and he thought it was a good idea.

SUSTAINED ENGAGEMENT The first art project I saw in the Studio was 'In the Can' at the old Pentridge Gaol. I didn't want to be involved in the project because I had never experienced



Never Forget: September 11, 2001
Pastel, ink, water colour
Nathan

that scene, but I did go there a lot and got interested in it around that time.

PROJECT WORK The next project I did get involved in. It was called 'De-Hinged' and it was about homelessness, and society being oblivious about people under the poverty line. I worked on a door with oil pastels. It was a cityscape to represent society and then on the back of it I had 'wheelie' bins with a homeless person rummaging through them and also a storm-water drain with people living in it. I titled it 'The other side' after a famous CD produced by the band 1927.

I was coming to the Studio nearly every day. I got really involved every day with the public talking at the exhibition about homelessness, even though I was often feeling paranoid. It was around the time I was in hospital and nearly didn't make it to the exhibition opening. I was really sick with migraines and stuff. The door meant a lot to me, because it was the first thing I did in artwork and it sold. At the time I didn't really want to sell it because it was mine. I didn't really want to part with it, but I didn't have anywhere to put it.

The 'Footy Show' was another exhibition I participated in. The theme was 'Bring back the biff' and it was about violence in football. I did 'The mark of the year' and I got a good response to it. Eamonn invited me to be a part of this show with professional artists. It was the first time I was comfortable in a crowded room. I had my photo taken with the footballer James Manson. My brother thought it was all right. When I got home he said, 'I wish I could do things like that'.

I really like working towards exhibitions and would like to get to



The other side
Oil pastel on wooden door
Nathan

the stage when I could have my own one day.

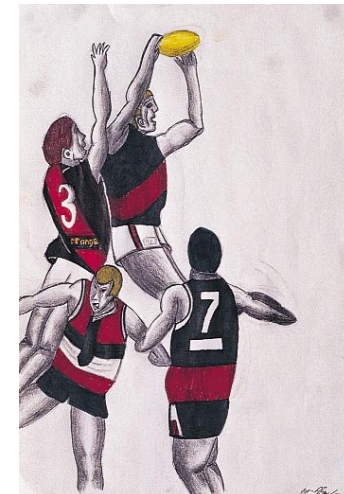
SUSTAINED ENGAGEMENT Art affects my health. I have found out that chalks and pastels affect my asthma, so I have to stick with pencils now. I couldn't go to Wilson's Prom. for a field trip because of my asthma – it was hard for me not going. Instead I drew Sydney Road in Coburg. I did that picture as part of the 'Nature versus Culture' pro-ject and showed it to the others when they came back. It was hard for me not going, like I felt I was discriminating against myself. If I didn't have asthma I would have gone.

A field trip I *could* go on and really liked was to the island in the middle of the Yarra River to do drawings. I was content. We had to cross over to it by a barge and we walked around it and went to the museum there and sat down and drew a few pictures.

TRANSITIONAL ENGAGEMENT Before the Span exhibition I said to Sally that I wanted to be recognised for my art and move forward and how do I go about doing this? I have been with the Studio long enough. If I go to art school I can't be taught because of the teacher–student thing I have problems with. I have been teaching myself for the last 13 years.

The difference with here and my interpretation of art school is that art school is more structured and predictable. Like Tuesday, I have to pull out my pencils and Friday, the paints; whereas here you aren't doing the same things each week. Most of the time in the Studio, I don't have anyone standing behind me saying that's not how you're supposed to do it.

In the Studio I like working on my own and I think I will always be like that. I can't collaborate with others. I feel like inside my ideas will get ripped off if I do that. In the 'De-Hinged' project, with the door, it was my idea what I put on it and it went with the project. I can participate in the exhibition



Untitled
Pencil, pen, texta
Nathan

this way. I like to do my own interpretation of things. I don't mind some guidelines, but I don't like to be controlled.

I think I am moving gradually towards my primary goal, which is to be recognised as an artist. My secondary goal is to move into more high profile exhibitions.

PROJECT WORK I easily go into withdrawal from people – I don't like to mingle – I lock myself away. In the Studio I isolate myself by listening to music to do my art, to keep myself safe and then I don't have to think about it. I can then get ideas. That's how I worked with 'Nature versus Culture'. When Sally accommodated my need for isolation, sometimes I didn't understand it because I am not used to people asking me what I want, and I didn't know how to accept it.

I don't want to work in a group – I feel also that my ideas will be washed away. I feel like someone's puppet. I want to do art, but I feel I have been disadvantaged in a group – I feel the need to know that this work is my own. I need that reassurance. It might sound as though these people just put up with me in the Studio, it felt like that early in the piece. I want to be part of it all. I see, though, that to be part of the Studio and the exhibitions is to collaborate.

In the 'Nature versus Culture' project Sally suggested that if I moved into the front area it would be of benefit for me. It was sort of like my mini-Studio. I had my art materials. I wasn't working around others. It was cold because I was at the entrance, near the door. Sometimes it was a bit noisy.

It was a good spot because I felt like a person. It had its advantages. They were: I set myself up with my own reminders of the timelines, the calendar, drawings from the field trips. I got a lot of positive acknowledgement from people while I was working in that spot. I'm not used to hearing positive stuff, only negative. It's hard to accept positive stuff from people.

TRANSITIONAL ENGAGEMENT In a little way I get a sense of moving on in my life. I would like to move on. I don't want to go backwards. I come to the Studio so that I can progress and move on. I don't want to stay on the same level with my art.

Naturalising Culture
Pencil, pastel
Nathan



Chapter 3

THE ARTIST PRACTITIONER

Like the participant’s journey, outlined in Chapter 1, the working method adopted by artist practitioners is not a clearly determined linear process. Nevertheless, there are identifiable phases and an understanding of these can assist artist practitioners to initiate, plan and develop community cultural development projects and programs.

This chapter will explore some of the critical issues, considerations and approaches utilised by artist practitioners within The Artful Dodgers Studio. These methods have been developed and refined to meet the needs of high-risk communities within an established arts program. There are a myriad of ways that artist practitioners and communities might work together in community cultural development practice. The particular working method elaborated here is based on years of experience and draws on discussions between artist practitioners and arts workers within the community cultural development field. It is important to note that this working method is as pertinent to short-term projects as it is to long-term programs.

Chapter 1 mapped a participant’s journey through the five stages of the engagement cycle. In this chapter we identify four distinct phases of practice for artist practitioners. The connection between the artist practitioner’s working method and the participant’s journey is set out in the table below.

TABLE 1:
CONNECTION BETWEEN ARTIST PRACTITIONER’S
WORKING METHOD AND PARTICIPANT’S ENGAGEMENT CYCLE

ARTIST PRACTITIONER	STUDIO PARTICIPANT
Research and development	
Introductory phase	Initial engagement
Nurturing connectedness	Sustained engagement Project work Transitional engagement
Disengagement	Disconnection

Research and development

The objectives of the research and development phase are to assess the compatibility of the artist practitioner and the community and to develop an overview of the community, including a sense of the pertinent cultural issues. The term ‘community’ was defined in the Introduction. It can include people drawn together for a common reason (e.g. prisoners), geographic locations (e.g. a country town), and relationships based on common experience or identity (e.g. homeless young people).

Firstly, consideration needs to be given to whether the artist practitioner and the community are a good ‘fit’. While it is always important that artist practitioners be clear on why they wish to work with particular communities, this is essential for those who work with vulnerable communities, such as young men and women at high risk. We have drawn up a series of questions that may assist artist practitioners to establish their compatibility with the community (see Appendix 1).

Once community fit has been established, artist practitioners also need to consider the viability of the project based on available resources (see Appendix 2 for a checklist). Sometimes part of the research and development task is to find funding for the program. To seek long-term funding the artist practitioner will need to research partnerships and appropriate funding sources, including philanthropic bodies, government, and corporate organisations.

Assuming that the artist practitioner and the community are compatible and resource issues have been considered, the next challenge for the artist practitioner is preparing an entry point for working with the community.

This involves preliminary investigation or research into the characteristics of the community so that when the artist practitioner and the participants meet there is a ready context for reciprocal exchange of interests, ideas, knowledge and beliefs. From the perspective of working with groups at high risk, such as The Artful Dodgers Studio participants, this also involves developing an understanding of what support systems are in place to assist with the complex needs of the participant group.

The purpose of this process is not to become an outsider ‘expert’ on what makes the community tick – rather, it is to inform the cultural and creative parameters of a project and to develop understandings that can be drawn on when dialogue with the participants begins. Artist practitioners may have preconceived ideas about the thematic development of a project and who the community is, but they need to remain open-minded until the project starts, when ideas and themes are really emerging. No matter how much planning artist practitioners do, it is the values and beliefs of the participants that provide the foundation for good community cultural development practice.

During the research phase artist practitioners will learn about community protocols or customs. They need to be aware that each community has its own dynamics. In order to build relationships, artist practitioners should be respectful of community norms and non-judgemental about perceived ‘dysfunctional’ aspects.

This phase can also be used to consider the participating group’s specific practical requirements – such as childcare, transport and safety.

Before establishing The Artful Dodgers Studio it was necessary to undertake a six-month period of research and development to identify: the participant group, the key individuals and organisations for referrals, the working environment, method and art forms, and artist practitioners to be employed. It was equally important to identify local industries and communities, government organisations, festivals, galleries, arts organisations and programs that had potential to resource or support the program.

We have identified three strategies that artist practitioners can utilise in building a community profile – whether one or a combination of these approaches is used depends on the resources available.

LITERATURE

Artist practitioners can begin building a social and cultural profile of the area by examining local literature. This might include health centre information, local government information, community noticeboards, local newspapers or newsletters. Such material can also be useful in identifying key organisations, community groups,

community leaders and local businesses that might consider becoming partners or be willing to contribute resources.

KEY PEOPLE

Every community has its key people who are committed to cultural and social development and who can potentially become part of the community cultural development process. These key people can provide artist practitioners with intimate knowledge about the community, help find partnership support, provide a sounding board for ideas, and assist the artist practitioner to identify participants and draw local media attention. Depending on the community, key people might include teachers, local health professionals, local historians, community officials and elected representatives, church or religious community leaders, and outreach workers.

Artist practitioners establish relationships with key people during the research and development phase, and continue to build on these throughout the project's duration.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Artist practitioners may need to take into account the local environment, including the local sights, sounds, colours, geography, gathering places and visual representations of common interests – such as a prevalence of sporting venues, markets or food outlets, churches, key businesses or industries. When discussing with participants what the environment offers it will be important to have knowledge of, or be able to refer to, key sights such as quarries, dumps, prisons or shopping centres.

In addition, artist practitioners need to consider the physical space available for the program to ensure there is a suitable working environment that is appropriate to the identified art forms' requirements. A welcoming and inviting environment will not only draw participants to the program, but will also help them develop a sense of ownership and being included in the program. In addition to the working space the artist practitioner will also need an administrative space.

In our experience, young people at high risk frequently have limited access to cooking and washing facilities, food, or money for public transport – factors that may inhibit them from full participation in an arts project. If artist practitioners budget for the provision of some of these necessities they are likely to enhance the experience of the program for the participants. Art can consume a considerable amount of energy, particularly in the final stages of a project, and time passes swiftly due to high levels of concentration and commitment. Taking time out for meal breaks and meetings will ensure that participants feel supported and cared for.

Introductory phase

While it is possible to identify the distinct components within this phase there is considerable overlap between them. The components of the introductory phase are:

- building rapport,
- stimulating possibilities,
- establishing a collective vision for the public outcome,
- negotiating values and protocols.

In order to *build rapport*, artist practitioners create opportunities to share experiences with participants where cultural and artistic knowledge is exchanged and a mutual understanding of the artistic collaboration is developed. By establishing collective rapport with the community/participant group artist practitioners will stimulate excitement and possibilities, and establish the parameters of the artistic project or program. How, and even how often, artist practitioners and participants meet in order to achieve this varies.

In The Artful Dodgers Studio and other programs that work with marginalised or transient groups where people are constantly coming and going (prisons, hospitals, community health centres or welfare agencies), artist practitioners must be prepared to repeat the initial information-sharing to accommodate new participants

within an established group that involves participants at different stages of their engagement cycle.

When working with participants at risk, artist practitioners need to invest significant time and effort into building relationships of trust in this period – both with other participants and with the artist practitioner. The initial contact is informal, with the exchange of artistic and cultural knowledge as the connecting point. Settling into a new environment can be intimidating and many artist practitioners utilise various strategies to facilitate this, such as the sharing of food and creating a welcoming environment.

Many artist practitioners agree that the success of community cultural development hinges on participants transcending their isolation and taking an active part in expressing community culture. As discussed in Chapter 4, building connectedness is a key principle of community cultural development and is primarily dependent on how the artist practitioner negotiates trust. This will be managed differently in different communities. In all circumstances, however, it is vital that artist practitioners take time to consider the needs of the community and to build a solid framework for a mutually fulfilling journey.

Experienced artist practitioners will recognise that the way individuals are able to engage with group dynamics is affected by whether they:

- have experienced violence, trauma, bullying or abuse;
- have experienced or expect to experience vilification on the grounds of sexual preference, ethnicity, gender, race or faith;
- have experienced any form of institutional isolation;
- have physical or intellectual disabilities.

In many cases individual participants struggle to find a sense of place or a voice in a group context. Therefore, cultivating group trust and mutuality may need to begin in the first place with the artist practitioner working intensively at the individual level to build relationships.

By contrast, it is relatively straightforward to design a project around participants who do not experience significant obstacles to social participation. If participants are already comfortable with group processes then the introductory phase requires minimal time. If, however, participants experience significant impediments to group participation the first contact phase may take an extended period of time.

In The Artful Dodgers Studio it often takes several informal meetings before a participant settles into the program. This may be due to substance misuse, mental health issues or simply that the participant has found the initial contact intimidating. Often, case workers are encouraged to accompany participants for the first visits, to help them feel more comfortable. These workers may be proactively addressing erratic life circumstances and can provide crucial assistance in negotiating safe participation in the Studio program.

During the introductory phase artist practitioners need to engage participants in a process of exploring the project's *possibilities*. An approach that genuinely seeks to build connectedness and knowledge exchange will allow ideas to flow freely and be negotiated by the group so that a sense of shared ownership is nurtured.

Early in the project development, artist practitioners demonstrate the skills and knowledge that they will bring to the project. As part of this introduction, artist practitioners usually present their previous work for the group to view and comment on, using slides or photos, video, digital documentation or CDs. The purpose of this is to *stimulate possibilities*. Through this process participants also begin feeding in their individual skills and knowledge.

Participants may be asked to suggest skills or capabilities that they are keen to develop. Available resources, avenues of research and artistic ideas are identified. Generally this is an exciting time when both artist practitioner and participants are learning and discovering new things as ideas are explored, artistic skills are discovered and identified, and individual values and beliefs are negotiated.

Artist practitioners who are paternalistic or prescriptive at this stage are likely to experience difficulty later. If participants don't develop a strong sense of ownership of, and commitment to, the project they are unlikely to feel any significant obligation or duty to the process of making the work. As experienced artist practitioner Maud Clark (2000) has said:

To begin working truly creatively you can't work with inequality. There can be no 'us' and 'them' – working creatively means an equal meeting place. It means really 'seeing' and really 'hearing' someone. This might sound pretty basic and that this is what happens in all human interaction – unfortunately it does not and it is less likely to happen in situations where there is a strong imbalance of power. You have to really 'see' someone to catch the source of their creative spark – to feel it, to nurture it.

After the group has explored and considered a range of possibilities for the project, artist practitioners focus the discussion to *establish a collective vision for a public outcome*. Most groups will use this time as an opportunity to define and establish roles based on the skills that have been identified by the group. Other structures such as timelines and deadlines will also be discussed. The artist practitioner takes on the role of artistic director or mentor, nurturing creativity and encouraging participants to rise to the challenge.

Group processes generally function best when members of the group *negotiate values and protocols*, thereby establishing relationships that are respectful and safe on multiple levels. Naturally, this will mean different things for different communities.

From the outset artist practitioners introduce systems for negotiating values and concepts so that 'problems' or 'concerns' can be constructively dealt with and resolved by the group in a way that contributes to connectedness. Participants need to actively engage in discussing and setting rules as part of the ownership process. Negotiating values and protocols provides a foundation for dignified and respectful community interaction that is based on trust, mutuality and obligation.

Health and safety issues can vary, depending on the art form and context. In a program where participants are constantly coming and going, rules are often discussed and re-negotiated as new opinions enter discussions. For example, within The Artful Dodgers Studio, participants have requested rules to keep the Studio free of constant intrusions from an external drug culture. A rule was established that participants be asked to leave if they are drug-affected when they come to a workshop.

Nurturing connectedness

The process of nurturing connectedness weaves through all the day-to-day activities, stimulating interest and ensuring continuous involvement in the program. The artist practitioner's experience in skilfully assisting participants to communicate ideas, concepts and personal narrative through an artistic process is crucial. This is a continuing process and often involves one-on-one interaction in conjunction with the development of a group project.

In The Artful Dodgers Studio much time is spent discussing issues or concepts for a project. Individual and group meetings are held, and participants engage independently in dialogue among themselves. This is the 'hub' of a project.

Skills development can be on an individual basis, with specific skills developed for a particular project. The artist practitioner must maintain a balance between encouraging individuals to develop their artistic skills and, concurrently, drawing the group together in the pursuit of a common goal. Experienced artist practitioners know that if a participant is given useful technical skills and a supportive infrastructure, they can be taken beyond personal narrative to a shared experience with the group. One of the benefits of an arts program is that young people can move between individual and group projects, enabling them to maintain a sense of individual personal development that feeds their involvement in the group project.

For artist practitioners and participants the point of contact is from one artist to another, from one human being to another, discovering shared interests through art. It is a collaborative effort

that engenders respect for differences of opinion, such as when a participant interprets an idea in such a way that it gives a unique and unexpected outcome to the artist practitioner's vision.

In the Studio we create opportunities for celebration, nurturing personal and shared experiences. We have found that by providing good meals and a number of exploratory meetings and workshops the project's outcomes are enhanced.

Artist practitioners need to be aware of an individual's mood, sensitively guiding them through difficult periods, providing room for them to work creatively through difficult moments or adjust to changes within the program.

Artist practitioners also need to be alert to the mood of the group, ready to slow things down to allow some participants to catch up with the schedule or new changes. This requires flexibility and attention to participants who may be grappling with the enormity of the task, may be experiencing a sense of inadequacy or may simply be feeling overwhelmed by new developments or the pace of the project. The process of interpreting and re-interpreting material from the individual to the group and finally to the public arena is central to the working dynamic of community cultural development.

The initial stages of a project can be stimulating and exciting, but as the project progresses tensions can develop between participants and also with the artist practitioners. Tensions within a group are to be expected and may present in the form of a difference of opinion over the direction a project is taking, or conflict between participants. Tensions can enrich a project because they bring out the emotional complexity and spiritual elements that are at the heart of much of the work. Through the resolution of such tensions stronger directions and bonds can develop.

It can be a challenge to sustain interest and meet deadlines while working with the vulnerabilities that arise through sharing personal narrative with a group. Some participants find it hard to accommodate change due to old patterns and fears. Routines and schedules provide security for participants by providing structure and framework. It is important, however, to be flexible. Breaking

up the routine with variety and encouragement is sometimes all that is needed when the going gets hard and a participant is struggling to see beyond the difficult point in a project. Lightening the atmosphere with humour and encouraging playfulness within the working environment are great tools for alleviating tensions within a group.

Critical incidents can occur when working with vulnerable communities, such as within prisons and with marginalised communities. These can take the form of suicide or self-harm and can have a profound effect on the participants of a program and on the artist practitioner. It is therefore important that artist practitioners seek out other professionals to assist them and the participants to deal with the effects of critical incidents, so that the project or program can continue to develop safely.

Debriefing or supervision can be sought through mentoring from experienced artist practitioners and peers within the field. Through dialogue, common experiences can be shared and creative and ethical strategies developed to help the artist to understand more complex human behaviour. Some artist practitioners have identified that regular professional supervision and debriefing from professionals from other disciplines can assist when working with high risk groups, such as marginalised youth and prisoners.

Disengagement

This phase explicitly considers the legacy of a project. Within The Artful Dodgers Studio participants are encouraged to initiate their own point of departure. They are encouraged to identify their own future pathways and, supported by the artist practitioners, to develop strategies for realising them.

In a program model like The Artful Dodgers Studio, which utilises both horizontal and vertical practice, the immediate need may be to explore a different medium, explore another artwork or work towards another project. However, ultimately, disengagement is about moving on from the Studio in a way that is self-assured and self-determined.

Participants are encouraged to develop skills that assist them to have meaningful participation in the wider community. They invariably develop a more profound sense of what constitutes healthy community participation. In addition, the process of creating good, inspirational art is central to how participants develop a more complete understanding of their own uniqueness.

Community cultural development is an intense, inclusive, collective, cultural experience that in many instances restructures daily life and gives participants an opportunity to reflect on life differently. The best initiatives interrupt participants' social trajectory, encouraging them to participate in activities that are not usually part of the everyday – such as critical discussion, use of imagination, artistic skills development and social commentary. If this interruption is successful, participants can be encouraged to consider new opportunities or pursuits that may not have previously seemed possible. Naturally, the experience can vary greatly depending on the group.

Experienced artist practitioners will recognise the euphoria that participants often feel when they have successfully completed and delivered a project to audience acclaim. Some artist practitioners interpret this euphoria as an improvement in self-esteem or self-confidence and see it as an end point or outcome of the community cultural development project. We believe this interpretation may over-simplify the moment.

Artist practitioners working with fragile or socially isolated participants over extended periods of time will recognise that confidence is not developed in an instant. Nevertheless, a moment of high self-esteem can be stored in the memory of both the artist practitioner and the participant and be drawn upon at moments of insecurity – assisting participants to recognise that they can continue to learn and work at developing strategies that facilitate the growth of a deeper and more long-lasting self-confidence.

Fundamentally, it is essential to understand that the end point of a project is not the delivery of the public outcome. The social impact of the process is contingent on how artist practitioners signal or facilitate pathways for participants to build on the experience. A good community cultural development project will increase

participants' sense of connection to community and their sense of opportunity. For participants at high risk, such as those at The Artful Dodgers Studio, the transition from social exclusion to social inclusion is a slow and difficult path that can only be addressed one small step at a time.

Section Two

ETHICAL PRINCIPLES
AND EVALUATION

Chapter 4

THE PENTAGON MODEL:
TOWARDS AN ETHICAL PRACTICE

Community cultural development is largely misunderstood as an artistic practice in both cultural and social development contexts.

The practice has been marginalised within arts/cultural debates (which usually prioritise artistic excellence in specific art form areas) because community cultural development artist practitioners see community participation and empowerment as integral to practice – and this is seen by others as inconsistent with artistic excellence. This problem has been exacerbated by the failure of the community cultural development field to develop a logic or terminology to adequately and appropriately explain its social development potency – which in turn has resulted in other social and community development fields undervaluing community cultural development art practice as a unique and effective approach to building community connectedness.

This chapter begins a process of identifying the key principles of practice. Our aim is to encourage artist practitioners to become more adept at identifying their working methods and articulating these, both to other artist practitioners and funding bodies, but also to practitioners in other disciplines outside community cultural development. We conclude the chapter by outlining the social and cultural potency of community cultural development.

Using The Artful Dodgers Studio as an objective reference point and considering the work of other practitioners and contributors to the field, we have identified five key principles that we believe are an essential part of good, ethically sound community cultural development practice.

THESE PRINCIPLES ARE:

- artistic function and outcome,
- building connectedness,
- exchange of knowledge,
- respect,
- possibility.

The combination of these five principles also provides a context for explaining the complexities of community cultural development as a working method that is arts-based, but seeks to influence social development through active participation in collaborative art-making.

If the five principles are considered interdependently they form a pentagon model which, we believe, provides an effective basis for considering good, ethically sound community cultural development practice. This model is discussed later in the chapter.

Principle 1 – Artistic function and outcome

Community cultural development practitioners are artists and their mode of working is ultimately driven by the discipline, skills, application and dedication required to make quality art. In this context, quality art-making is both an ethical responsibility for practitioners and a core component of community cultural development.

Melbourne-based artist practitioner Megan Evans once wrote that it is not the artist's role to 'develop' culture but to 'inspire' it, and to provide the vision of a society that places the spirit and the aesthetic sense above the economics of materialism (Evans 1998).

Many artist practitioners have noted that, increasingly, formal cultural institutions and funding bodies utilise the notion of 'excellence' as a central component in discussing hierarchies of artistic competence. Certainly an artwork might be 'excellent' in terms of resources and craft – a contemporary dance piece, for example, which is well choreographed, well performed and with high production values – yet be uninspiring because the intellectual framework or narrative is characterless or incapable of capturing the audience's imagination.

The distinction between the fine arts and a community cultural development approach lies in the way that intellectual content is developed and in the process used to make the artwork. Whereas the traditional fine arts are generally based on an individual's knowledge and skills, community cultural development involves the participation of a diverse group in the realisation of art.

Neither the traditional fine arts, nor community cultural development has a monopoly on inspirational art-making. Inspirational art is inspirational, in the same way that mediocre art is mediocre – irrespective of the creator/s and irrespective of the level of technical 'excellence'.

Whether the artwork is 'excellent', 'inspirational' or hopefully both, there are intrinsic qualities and skills associated with art-making that are fundamentally valuable to social dialogue. Artist practitioner Eve Stafford, based in Far North Queensland, believes that art is the most powerful weapon available to change perceptions because it uses symbolism and metaphor. She also recognises that its public and carnivalesque elements are useful tools for subversion. The strength of art-making is its capacity to communicate in multi-sensual or emotional domains. (Stafford 1998).

A skilled artist practitioner, then, is knowledgeable about historical art movements, the role of art in political dissent and the skills required to communicate complex knowledge using dramatic devices, comedy, parody, symbols and metaphors. These are all tools for artists and are essential qualities and skills for community cultural development artist practitioners. Ian Maxwell and Fiona Winning (2001) ask us:

Why talk about art? Shouldn't art just be there, in and of itself? Isn't the reason that people create a work of art (in whatever form) precisely because they want to deal with the ineffable, with that which cannot be put into words? Art 'works' through its appeal to our visceral, feelingful selves, as experience: immediate and personal.

Maxwell and Winning remind us that ultimately art is 'experienced' by the maker/s, but also by spectators and appreciators. Moreover, an experiential encounter with art cannot be superseded by, for example, reading an account of that encounter.

The community cultural development artist practitioner is bound to consider that spectators, both appreciators and critics, will view the finished product. Artistic function and outcome is an ethical principle in which artist practitioners commit to encouraging their

collaborators to engage in a process of making and realising inspirational art. As Adam, a Studio participant, notes:

I am encouraged to make my art. We are encouraged in the studio to get our creative sides going. I don't see it as therapy as we are not always doing one-on-one and talking about our feelings. The artists give us our own space to do our own art. ADAM, CHAPTER 2

Like every other form of art-making, community cultural development is a courageous undertaking characterised by inquiry, rigorous investigation, ambition, risk-taking and the interpretation and analysis of symbols, beliefs and ideas. Ultimately, the artistic process and outcome assists to mediate meaning, as a nexus between collaborating creators, but also between creators and audience. That is, the process of making and presenting art directly assists in the negotiation of perspectives, understandings, commonality and difference. As Stephen Spence (1998), a South Australian unionist, noted:

The arts are not therapy. They are a mirror to society and a hammer with which to forge it.

Principle 2 – Building connectedness

Building connectedness is a principle that deals with social trust and social cohesion. There is a growing body of useful and informative literature regarding social capital and the relationship between building connectedness and the development of civil society. Rather than reiterate the arguments here, when they have been presented far better elsewhere (see, for example, Winter 2001), we will simply re-define social capital and then explore the specific contributions collaborative art-making can make to the building of social connectedness.

Social capital has been described as the trust reciprocated between people. Mutual trust is the glue that holds a good society together, generating self-esteem and a sense of social belonging (Latham 2000).

In The Artful Dodgers Studio the artist practitioners specifically aim to build connectedness with participants by making art,

thereby encouraging the development of trust, the building of relationships and a sense of belonging. As Rachel, a Studio participant, recalls:

Sally gave me a door to start painting as soon as I walked in. We started designing what I was going to do. Suddenly I found myself part of a group again. It felt good. I was coming to the Studio every day to do my own art and started making friends. I felt that I was slowly starting to succeed here. RACHEL, CHAPTER 2

This sense of collaborative purpose and working together is another powerful facility of community cultural development. Latham has noted that opportunities for frequent and regular engagement are important to how communities develop both trust and connectedness. He argues that people develop a sense of obligation and responsibility to a group if they expect to be, and want to be, involved with each other again. Certainly, community cultural development initiatives ideally use a process of recurrent interaction over an extended period of time, which is exactly the type of structural process that best facilitates the development of trust and connectedness.

We believe that community cultural development also encourages participants to 'act together' as a collective, collaborative entity. Moreover, by exchanging knowledge and ideas they can negotiate a shared sense of values, ideas and beliefs. As Michelle, a Studio participant, suggests:

I believe the Studio is a meeting place for young artists who share similar interests and aspirations . . . Personally I have endured years of extreme and intense depression [that] I am now successfully and naturally overcoming, with help from the support network I am surrounded by. SPEECH GIVEN AT OPENING OF 'XENA PONDER'S BLUE' EXHIBITION, SPAN GALLERY, MAY 2002

Many artist practitioners will agree that art is one means by which contradictions in beliefs or values can be embraced by communities. Through community cultural development, both artistic and social/community tensions can potentially find a

common language in a challenging, rather than confronting, way. Experienced artist practitioners often use the community cultural development process to enable a group to negotiate under-the-surface anxieties or tensions. In community cultural development, moral codes, acceptable behaviour, exploitation or experiences of invisibility can be acknowledged, perhaps debated and even challenged in ways that would be difficult to achieve in other community forums.

Principle 3 – Exchange of knowledge

One can only share what one has, one cannot share what one is.

PHILIPPE NEMO (LEVINAS 1985)

The creation of any contemporary artwork involves a process of critical investigation and reflection. Whereas other artists usually undertake the process of investigation alone, in community cultural development this process is fundamentally a collaborative one – based on exchange between the artist practitioner and the community.

We believe that all inspirational art is underpinned by intellectual or critical inquiry. For this reason, because community cultural development is collaborative, its intellectual foundations draw on negotiated understanding, skills, thoughts and actions.

Many would agree that a community cultural development definition of knowledge is both broad and generous. That is, historical context, personal and collective experience, aesthetic preferences and practical skills often form part of the group's intellectual resources and can potentially inform a collective critical and creative process. Artist practitioner Eve Stafford (1998) has also observed this in her own practice:

A voice, or expression is a big part of being heard, hence community arts. Not fine arts, or after-hours tickets to long-dead art form voyeurism, but everyday personal experience of our contemporary selves. The art is about remaking and recreating ourselves. We start from where we are and with what we've got. The biggest resource is personal experiences, our stories, our life-skills, our creativity.

Participating in critical processes can be multi-layered. For many participants, finding a voice and expressing ideas to people that are listening is a crucial part of social validation, feeling part of a group and learning to participate. It is not unusual for group relationships to be complicated as the participants and artist practitioners negotiate and re-negotiate personal understandings in order to explore and refine collective meaning. In this way, the exchange of knowledge is just as significantly about the way individuals define (or learn to define), analyse, organise and express their own personal sense of reality within a collaborative context.

Identifying challenges, and collectively pooling knowledge and experiences to address them, is a powerful function in community cultural development. Certainly, in a context where knowledge is seen as multifarious and dynamic, all kinds of people have the potential to be recognised as knowledgeable. Within community cultural development, then, the exchange of knowledge is central to developing understanding because it involves participation, recognition, debate and re-invention of the ideas and experiences of all those who participate.

Community cultural development is about participants increasing their personal capacity to negotiate, receive and impart information – in effect, they practise learning. Any process involving intellectual reciprocity generally encourages participants to participate in a whole range of cultural, social and community situations requiring creative problem-solving skills.

Principle 4 – Respect

We believe that respect underpins all spoken, written and visual communications associated with any community cultural development initiative. It is every individual's need to respect oneself, every individual's right to be respected, and every individual's duty to be respectful. This includes the communications between artist practitioner and community, artist practitioner and participants, participants with each other, participants with the broader community, and participants with the audience.

Many artist practitioners identify that the public artistic outcome in community cultural development is a key component of its potency and success. Community cultural development artist practitioners work with personal narratives and stories of participants in ways that are quite different from other professionals. That is, they often set out to use personal knowledge, narratives and experiences in ways that will eventually result in an artwork that is intended to entertain, engage or inspire others.

We believe that an appropriate balance in the relationship between personal narrative and public outcome can at times be difficult to strike, especially if the community or participants involved are particularly vulnerable or fragile. There are international human rights benchmarks that make it unacceptable to violate, intimidate or defame another human being. However, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations 1948) has also identified that it is a breach of respect to subject another person to arbitrary interference with his or her privacy, family, home or correspondence. It is also a breach to contribute to attacks upon another person's honour or reputation.

This has the potential to be a major ethical challenge for community cultural development artist practitioners who occasionally, in the course of their work, come into contact with participants' personal stories, histories or disclosures either in personal conversations or group discussions. We believe that it is *essential* for any artist practitioner to question how any personal story, if told in a public context, might subject the participant to attack or dishonour.

Certainly most artist practitioners would agree that personal stories inform a participant's knowledge of the world. However, skilled and honourable artist practitioners will use alternative processes that integrate the knowledge of personal narratives into artistic projects in ways that do not breach the privacy of vulnerable individuals or reflect negatively on them, their loved ones, or associates.

Principle 5 – Possibility

This business of making accessible the richness of the world we are in, of bringing density to ordinary, day to day living in a place, is the real work of culture. DAVID MALOUF 1998

In community cultural development, the relationship between possibility and imagination is as significant to art-making as it is to imagining social options. This relationship between imagining options, making choices and taking action is a potent aspect of practice.

Possibility combines the key functions of thinking, saying and doing. Participants are encouraged to become active, directive, self-determining and empowered – and this can manifest in how participants seek to enrich their experiences of life beyond the arts program.

How the notion of possibility is integrated into practice can vary significantly, depending on the participant group. However, based on discussions with other artist practitioners and noting observations such as Pam Johnston's below, we believe that possibility is *central* to all good community cultural development practice:

Our community artist, Jo Darbyshire . . . taught us stuff that we wanted to know, not what she, or anyone else thought we should know. Art and artists had a significant role in the community and a massive influence on our lives. Many of us, myself included, as a result of that exposure, started a course of study that took us into another world. JOHNSTON 2001

In the Studio, the way in which artist practitioners work with the principle of possibility can mean different things at different stages in a participant's engagement cycle. Based on his early experiences of the Studio, participant Adam notes:

My writing was the first time I was able to express myself. It was an empowering experience. For once I had control of what I was doing. I was doing what I wanted. ADAM, CHAPTER 2

The Draft Declaration of Cultural Human Rights (as published in Mann 1993) draws a relationship between the degree of access, control and ownership people have over cultural resources/ expression and the quality and integrity of their society.

Certainly, we have noticed that The Artful Dodgers Studio participants do eventually begin to determine their own social and cultural environments, as Nathan indicates:

Before the Span exhibition I said to Sally that I wanted to be recognised for my art and move forward and [asked her to suggest] how do I go about doing this. NATHAN, CHAPTER 2

Based on our own observations we believe that stimulating a sense of possibility in participants can, in effect, simultaneously function as both a cultural and a social development mechanism. This view is supported by a ten-year study coordinated by Shirley Brice Heath with Adelma Roach to consider the long-term impact of arts participation on young people from economically disadvantaged communities (Brice Heath & Roach 2000).

In their study, Brice Heath and Roach reflected on how American life had changed as a consequence of technological advances, developments in communication and an evolving enterprise base. They explored the consequences of this for young people. They argued that the traditional institutions of school, family and the church, which were generally assumed to take responsibility for the positive development of the next generation, no longer meet the full needs of today's children and young people.

The authors noted that due to economic changes, family breakdown and technological advancements, there were significant factors impinging on the capacity of some young people to fully participate in society. For example, decision-making, thinking ahead and planning strategies make up most of what adults have to do in their everyday lives. However, they identified that young people were increasingly less able to talk themselves through similar tough situations. This was especially likely to be the case if these young people had never observed an adult doing this.

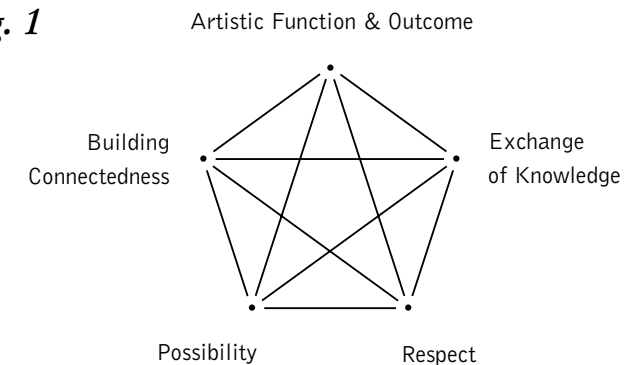
They noted that participation in arts programs offered these same young people the opportunity to play different roles, help make rules and take risks by trying something new and different. They observed that participants were able to engage in frequent oral exchanges that posed problems and considered hypothetical outcomes in a way that they would not normally have access to. They were also able to take inspiration from different sources and explore, create or reconfigure combinations of materials, ideas and people into different combinations and outcomes.

Through participation in arts programs they were empowered in a unique and supported way, to consider multiple ways of doing and being, both in their artistic world and beyond.

An ethical pentagon

Based on each of the five principles discussed above, we suggest that an ethical, and well-conceived and executed community cultural development initiative would effectively maintain each of these principles in balance (see figure 1). Conversely, and perhaps controversially, a 'wobbly' pentagon might represent less well-conceived community cultural development initiatives.

fig. 1



For example, figure 2 represents an initiative that disproportionately emphasised the artistic outcomes, but failed to genuinely engage with or explore community knowledge. In this initiative artistic function and outcome is weighted more heavily and exchange of knowledge is weighted less heavily than the other principles.

fig. 2

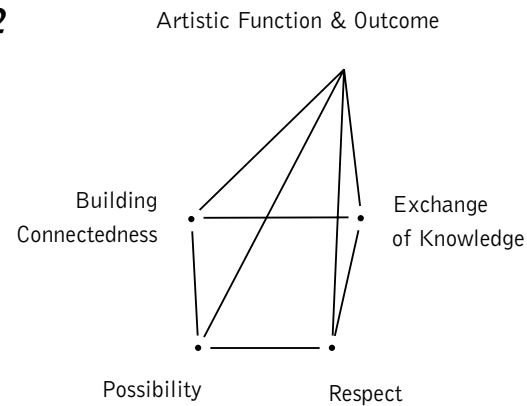
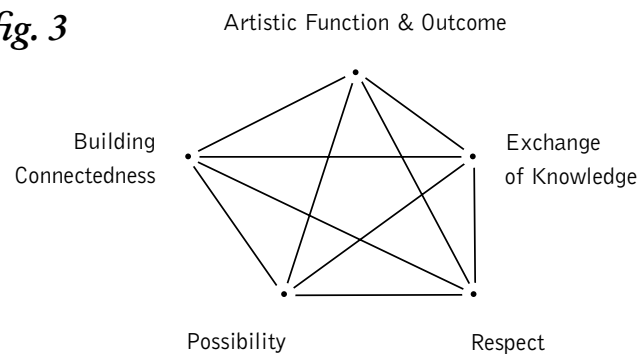


Figure 3 represents a project in which the artist practitioner invested heavily in building respectful group process, but failed to develop quality artistic outcomes. In this case both respect and building connectedness are more heavily weighted, while artistic function and outcome has less emphasis.

fig. 3



In Chapter 3 we said that working with high-risk communities such as the participants of The Artful Dodgers Studio requires a longer and more intense process of building relationships in order to cultivate connectedness (see figure 4). In this context it makes sense that all the other principles would also take time, commensurate with the effort and resources required to build connectedness, so that the pentagon remains balanced (figure 5). As Adam identifies, it has taken him the best part of two years in the Studio program to identify the purpose of his continuing involvement:

I have been involved in two exhibitions and even read a piece of poetry at the opening of one of them. I am actually now seeing my artwork more clearly and seeing why I am doing it. ADAM, CHAPTER 2

fig. 4

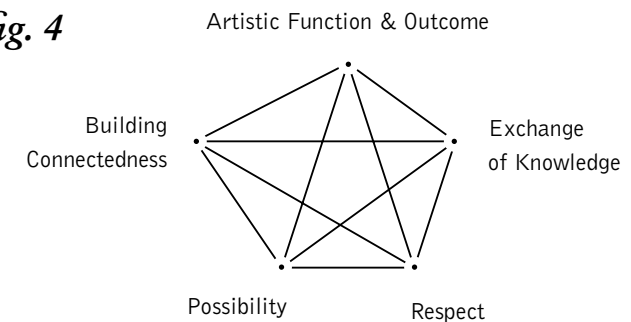
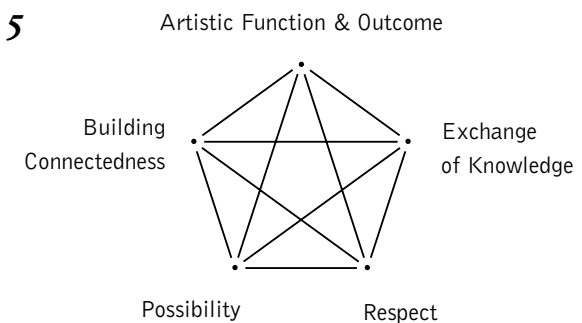


fig. 5



The pentagon model is equally suitable for short-term project work as it is for program work that is long-term and based on a combination of horizontal and vertical process. However, if one of the principles can only be addressed effectively with the assistance of a longer time frame, all the other principles are likely to be realised only if all the timelines are adjusted commensurately.

We believe that the pentagon model is appropriate for a range of community cultural development initiatives, irrespective of length, community need or artistic focus.

Outcomes: The potency of community cultural development

In defining the five principles of the pentagon model we have suggested that community cultural development has the potential to facilitate both cultural and social development.

Not only does it lead to artistic public outcomes, but also it gives participants other opportunities as a consequence of their participation. The legacy of community cultural development initiatives for participants includes artistic, cultural, social and independent (personal) developmental outcomes – these effectively constitute the potency of the practice.

These outcomes are discussed in detail in the next chapter. Briefly, the outcomes of community cultural development are:

- It engenders in participants a sense of *possibility* – that is, the space and opportunity to consider differently what life offers, as well as introducing participants to foundations upon which they can build alternative paths if they wish.
- It promotes *animation* – that is, the citizen's right and responsibility to be culturally, socially, personally and politically active.
- It cultivates a culture of critical *engagement* – where rules, values and ideas are proffered and discussed in a context of debate that is designed to reflect upon and objectively analyse social and cultural processes.
- It promotes an understanding among participants that *imagination* is central to both innovation and creativity and is directly related to purpose, fulfilment and pleasure in life.

Chapter 5

BUILDING AN EVIDENCE BASE:
DYNAMIC OBSERVATION IN COMMUNITY
CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

There is a considerable and diverse history of debate about approaches to the evaluation of community cultural development, both in Australia and overseas.

A significant proportion of evaluation debates are designed to address funding imperatives and either directly or indirectly consider the effect of policy. While it is appropriate for funding bodies to reflect on their own effectiveness, it is important that consideration is also given to the objectives or requirements of artist practitioners and outcomes for participants.

As already stated, community cultural development practice facilitates both cultural and social change. However, most artist practitioners believe that because the methodology is both artistically driven and collaborative, any cultural or social change that occurs from the process is, by definition, unable to be prescribed with any certainty at the beginning of the process.

Many believe that if community cultural development artist practitioners prescribed explicit social outcomes, the practice would effectively lose its integrity. Rather than imposing specific outcomes on participants, artist practitioners seek to empower participants to grow intellectually, socially, creatively and spiritually.

Nevertheless, building an evidence base that demonstrates cultural and social outcomes is crucial, not only to the future development and growth of community cultural development, but to its survival. Artist practitioners working alongside other non-arts professionals in fields such as criminal justice, health or welfare need to be able to explain the effectiveness of their practice to those other professionals. Furthermore, they need to be able to do this without compromising or overly simplifying what is effectively a highly structured and complex practice.

Dynamic observation approach

In this chapter we will use The Artful Dodgers Studio as a point of reference for suggesting how community cultural development outcomes might be recorded in a non-obtrusive and non-prescriptive way, using what we have called the 'dynamic observation' approach.

This approach has not been tested in the Studio. However, we believe it has potential as a tool for collecting evidence which would in turn inform a rigorous evaluation. Evidence collected using this method would increase understanding about both the cultural and social development outcomes of the practice, and would also provide an objective reference point for reviewing the effectiveness of practice in key areas.

The dynamic observation method is tailored especially for a long-term, sustained-engagement model that works with marginalised young people. It is important to remember that in this type of environment, practitioners are likely to find that participants may progress well at certain times, but also occasionally ‘lapse’ into previous, more familiar patterns of behaviour.

Based on our own observational research we have learnt to recognise these development cycles for what they are – the challenges associated with developing new skills such as critique, research, debating and planning. Further, they represent the negotiation of personal philosophies as participants contemplate the relevance of self-discipline and routine but also mull over their values, obligations, connectedness, personal insecurities and anxieties.

As discussed in Chapter 1, a participant’s journey through the Studio program is like a series of loops, with each successive ring representing a development on the previous one. It is not unusual at certain points in the engagement cycle for participants to appear as though they are taking a metaphorical step backwards, in between two steps forward.

It has been challenging to develop a data collection approach that monitors progression or change gently and in a way that does not prescribe an end result or benchmark. Below we outline a series of indicators based on each of the four areas of potency outlined at the end of Chapter 4, that is: possibility, animation, critical engagement and imagination. In concluding this chapter we identify how information collected using this method, either by artist practitioners or designated researchers, could be used to inform an evaluation process by linking ‘snap-shots’.

Possibility

Possibility is reflected in positiveness and naturally relates directly to the principle of *possibility* outlined in Chapter 4. Positiveness can be demonstrated in:

- language,
- physical appearance and body image,
- expressions of belief in the future,
- the development of new hobbies or interests,
- whether the participant is meeting basic needs (housing, food, income, clothing).

LANGUAGE

In Chapter 4 we referred to a ten-year study supervised by American linguist Shirley Brice Heath, investigating the positive effect of arts participation on young people from marginalised neighbourhoods. This report is significant because it suggests that language modelling based on linguistics is a culturally-based way to observe and comment on changing behaviour in participatory arts initiatives.

Few community cultural development practitioners in Australia have linguistics training. However, one does not have to be a trained linguist to recognise that participants will often change their speech patterns as their participation builds. For example, participants may progressively increase the number of people they engage with in the group or they may hold conversations more articulately, with greater confidence or self-assurance.

As positive attitudes develop Brice Heath and Roach indicate that more complex modelling of improved possibility can be observed in language. The authors suggest that phrasing which includes ‘What if?’, ‘What about?’, ‘We could try this’ and ‘Let’s try’ all indicate a commitment to *future scenarios*. They also suggest that the abundant use of certain words such as ‘could’, ‘will’ and ‘can’ directly assert possibility.

PHYSICAL APPEARANCE AND BODY IMAGE

From a Studio perspective, changes in presentation or body image can indicate the development of a more positive outlook. Naturally, different participants have different levels of commitment to personal style or fashion and certainly many would argue that body image is a big part of adolescence for any person.

However, we have noticed, particularly among young men, that changes in attitude can be reflected in a conscious effort to modify personal appearance or address hygiene issues. It is our experience that changes in personal presentation mean different things for different people. In some cases, it is a conscious process of experimenting with body jewellery, hair cuts/dying/braiding, new tattoos and other urban styles. In other cases, it may simply be a matter of buying new clothes or getting a haircut.

BELIEF IN THE FUTURE

Artist practitioner Michael McLaughlin (2001) has noticed that changes in the expression of expectations can indicate the development of positiveness. He has used the example of participants stating that the impetus to participate came initially from a desire to make new friends, but that later they developed a desire to become more involved in supporting other people in the community.

Young people at high risk who are often experiencing despair or depression can feel 'trapped' in the moment and sometimes are unable, or simply hesitate, to articulate longer-term dreams or desires. How participants (especially marginalised communities) express future desires and ambition is likely to be noticeably different as time goes on.

DEVELOPING NEW HOBBIES OR INTERESTS

Participants often begin to broaden their horizons and engage in new hobbies or interests through the Studio program. Writers become interested in the visual arts, painters experiment with writing or performance, and people who have never been

introduced to galleries, museums or live theatre start going to these forums of their own accord.

ACCESS TO BASIC NEEDS

Naturally, if participants are not meeting basic needs such as accommodation, regular meals, stability of income and clean clothing, it can prove extremely difficult for an artist practitioner to engage them in the program. Resolving basic needs is the role of other trained professionals, not artist practitioners, although it is certainly appropriate to signal to support agencies that participants need help.

Participants often continue to attend the Studio even when their life circumstances are chaotic. If participants are finding their involvement fulfilling and beneficial, they are likely to recognise a transient lifestyle as an impediment to a fulfilling engagement with the Studio program. As a consequence, participants who may have avoided addressing such issues in the past become more proactive in seeking to have particular needs met. Logically, there is often a noticeable, observable improvement in the focus, quality or complexity of participants' engagement when their basic needs are being met.

Animation

Animation is reflected in demonstrations of action and motivation and relates specifically to the principles of *respect* and *building connectedness* which are discussed in Chapter 4.

While respect and building connectedness are principles of practice for all community cultural development practice, the animation indicators below are heavily biased towards programs that deal with communities experiencing high levels of social exclusion. At The Artful Dodgers Studio it is not unusual for participants to have significant motivational problems as a consequence of their experiences of mental illness or substance misuse. Therefore, when monitoring animation one might consider how it is demonstrated in:

- time management and function,
- commitment to group process,
- commitment to appointments,
- self-directed approaches to art, work, family, study and support structures,
- demonstrated ability to set tasks and complete them,
- social contact with peers and staff.

TIME MANAGEMENT AND FUNCTION

This refers to a participant's capacity to manage their time, such as whether they complete tasks within appropriate time frames and how consistent they are in their attention to detail and outcome.

COMMITMENT TO GROUP PROCESS

Not surprisingly, participants will need to develop trusting relationships with the group and also feel comfortable in allowing others to rely on them. The relationship to group objectives will evolve over time and at different stages participants will demonstrate different levels of confidence and commitment to these objectives.

Participants are likely to change their level of engagement with the group over the period of their participation. Over time, we have noted that participants may often become more directive or demonstrate increased initiative in group processes.

COMMITMENT TO APPOINTMENTS

This refers to a participant's sense of reliability, particularly regarding making appointments, keeping them and then following through on the outcomes. Within the Studio, this information is often fed back to artist practitioners from other welfare professionals.

SELF-DIRECTED APPROACHES TO ART, WORK, FAMILY, STUDY AND SUPPORT STRUCTURES

We have noted that participants' commitment to their artistic development can improve significantly as time goes on. For example, in the early days participants are likely to start and finish artworks in the same day. Over time, as they become more self-directed and self-assured, they seek to challenge themselves more, perhaps by using new or previously unexplored media and taking longer to complete artworks.

During the period of *transitional engagement*, this growing self-direction and self-assurance can become increasingly obvious in terms of how participants obtain and sustain employment, perhaps re-engage with family, identify and pursue further education and develop a commitment to their continuing well-being.

DEMONSTRATED ABILITY TO SET TASKS AND COMPLETE THEM

If, and how, Studio participants set and complete tasks can be a key indicator – this is similar to the 'commitment to appointments' indicator above. The setting and completing of tasks is often initially reflected in an approach to art-making. As participants improve their self-reliance and motivation it is our experience that this will also be evident in how participants complete short courses, maintain employment and eventually initiate, and maintain, connection with a range of activities outside of the program.

SOCIAL CONTACT WITH PEERS AND ARTIST PRACTITIONERS

The Studio artist practitioners have recognised that friendships and relationships often develop gradually, but change substantially during the engagement cycle. For example, most participants form a relationship with the Studio artists in the first instance. Then they begin to build rapport and augment friendships with peers in the Studio. Participants then usually complement their Studio friendships with others external to the program, subsequently building on these external friendships as they decrease connection with the program.

CRITICAL ENGAGEMENT

Critical engagement is reflected in the participant's ability to challenge and negotiate ideas and relates to the principles of *exchange of knowledge, building connectedness* and *respect* which are detailed in Chapter 4.

Unlike the indicators for animation, these critical engagement indicators are likely to be appropriate for a vast array of community cultural development initiatives and are demonstrated in the ability to:

- negotiate rules and procedures,
- contribute to group discussions,
- clearly articulate a point of view,
- respond to one-on-one feedback regarding art-making,
- contextualise and respond to criticism.

ABILITY TO NEGOTIATE RULES AND PROCEDURES

In Chapter 4 we identified that negotiating obligation is a major part of building connectedness for any community. In environments such as The Artful Dodgers Studio, participants can have extremely limited experience of social trust, mutual respect or personal validation.

Logically, then, over an extended period of time working closely with a group, it is likely that participants will test the boundaries of obligation and mutual respect to determine what is appropriate 'group' behaviour. We believe that adherence to, transgressions of and contributions towards rules and procedures can tell us a great deal about an individual's social development.

ABILITY TO CONTRIBUTE TO GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Highly marginalised participants, such as those at The Artful Dodgers Studio, can experience group dynamics as confronting and even threatening.

The capacity a person has to engage with group discussions is vitally important to their sense of social connectedness. Similarly important is how a person evolves consciousness about group, rather than individual, objectives and whether participants are prepared to listen to, or engage with, other points of view.

ABILITY TO CLEARLY ARTICULATE A POINT OF VIEW

As stated previously we believe that a community cultural development definition of knowledge is both broad and generous, where each individual can be recognised as knowledgeable. As expected, it is normal for participants to take time to build trust and develop confidence in preparation for contributing their knowledge to the group.

ABILITY TO RESPOND TO ONE-ON-ONE FEEDBACK REGARDING ART-MAKING

How participants respond to one-on-one feedback is related to, and reflective of, the participant-practitioner relationship and the mutual experience of being artists. The Studio artist practitioners have noted that it is not unusual for participants to initially fear judgement. In this context, then, the acceptance of critical feedback can indicate the development of trust.

ABILITY TO CONTEXTUALISE AND RESPOND TO CRITICISM

As a collaborative enterprise community cultural development is inherently a critical process involving the negotiation of ideas, knowledge, belief and skills in the creation of art. On another level, how participants respond to community feedback and criticism to the finished artworks is also reflective of the participant-community relationship.

How participants negotiate and respond to criticism from each other, but also that from external sources, can provide significant insight into their capacity to be both resilient and proactive in the face of a range of challenges.

Imagination

Imagination refers to a person's ability to create or produce something that isn't present in one's own experience. It is often associated with a person's creative mental capacity. Imagination can be reflected in the participant's ability to self-generate ideas and approaches to perceived obstacles. In community cultural development, imagination relates to the principles of *artistic function and outcome, possibility and exchange of knowledge* and can be demonstrated in:

- ability to conceptualise cultural, social or environmental 'problems',
- ability to devise an approach to a 'problem',
- ability to articulate future challenges,
- working towards an exit point.

ABILITY TO CONCEPTUALISE CULTURAL, SOCIAL OR ENVIRONMENTAL 'PROBLEMS'

We believe that how problems are constructed and constituted is an integral part of seeking out or sourcing a solution to them. A community cultural development framework provides an opportunity for a participant to explore creative problem-solving using artistic media, and also contributing towards the development of projects. Within The Artful Dodgers Studio, as participants become more comfortable they will raise artistic, cultural, social and environmental problems for discussion or debate. How participants construct problems and frame the limitations, constraints and challenges on the one hand, but also the possibilities or opportunities on the other, can be a powerful indicator of self-assuredness and social preparedness.

ABILITY TO DEVISE AN APPROACH TO A 'PROBLEM'

As participants build connectedness with the group, how they solicit assistance or approach problem-solving is likely to change dramatically. As the relationship with the artist practitioners and the group builds, participants are likely to begin to develop more sophisticated approaches to problem-solving. Such approaches

may include using feedback from the artist practitioner, seeking feedback from peers or undertaking independent research.

In this context, how participants formulate the problem and then implement an approach to it invariably become more complex over time.

ABILITY TO ARTICULATE FUTURE CHALLENGES

Artist practitioners would agree that as a critical, collaborative practice, community cultural development is about debate and discussion. Raging debates in the Studio are sometimes, but not always, specifically focused on making art. The Studio environment becomes a safe environment to share experiences, make critical observations and explore concepts and ideas.

As part of this, the artist practitioners and other participants often function as a sounding board for participants considering possibilities for the future.

WORKING TOWARDS AN EXIT POINT

Having acquired new 'action oriented' skills, The Artful Dodgers Studio participants gradually position themselves to leave the program. While participants may initially request close mentoring from artist practitioners, generally they will become increasingly self-directive and self-determining in the way they identify the next major challenge. For example, if a participant wants to go to art school, then researching and selecting a suitable school for his or her requirements, identifying the requirements of a portfolio and beginning to develop a body of work are components of this exiting process.

The series of 'snap-shots'

We have attempted to develop this observational framework using indicators that are sympathetic and appropriate to community cultural development. We believe that the dynamic observation approach outlined above could provide significant insight into a Studio participant's development trajectory.

In Chapter 1 we identified that the average engagement cycle for a Studio participant is about 32 months, with five distinct stages of engagement.

If an artist practitioner or researcher compiled an observational report every two to three months, a documented history of participant development could be captured in a series of 'snap-shots'. These snap-shots would provide the evaluator or researcher with a detailed account of each participant's developmental journey through the program.

By contrasting successive observational 'snap-shots', artist practitioners would also be able to monitor the strengths and weaknesses of their own working methods and reflect on the potency of their community cultural development approach, in terms of the key indicators.

Conclusion

Any research method for monitoring change in high-risk communities is, and should be, subject to ethical scrutiny. All organisations should have in place protocols and procedures for protecting participants' privacy and confidentiality. Before undertaking any evaluation, including observational evaluation, the artist practitioner or researcher needs to understand the ethical procedures and protocols required to collect information about participants. If artists are working independently they will still need to seek advice about standards required for evaluation processes in order to respect the rights of the participants. Since the dynamic observation approach is limited to observation within a strictly defined cultural framework, we believe it is an extremely transparent method for collecting information.

It has been argued that observational research approaches are subjective. However, no data collection method is infallible and this approach attempts to gather developmental information without prescribing detailed outcomes from the outset. Indeed practitioners may use their observational 'snap-shots', not only as a tool to highlight positive changes for participants, but also as a reference point that can be used to frame specific challenges for participants.

Appendix 1

ASSESSING THE COMPATIBILITY OF THE ARTIST
PRACTITIONER WITH THE COMMUNITY

1. WHY DO I WANT TO WORK WITH THIS COMMUNITY?

Establishing a connection or relationship with any community requires some understanding of their circumstances. This can be extremely challenging for artist practitioners who would like to work, for example, with groups of young people at high risk but who have a limited understanding of the effects of trauma, incarceration or homelessness. Ultimately, the challenge is for practitioners to build trusting relationships and identify common ground.

Artist practitioners need to be clear about their motivation for working with a particular community. For instance, if they are not aware of the vulnerabilities of participants, and are approaching them from a romantic 'notion' of their situation, it can be a damaging experience for both parties. Marginalised young people such as the participants of The Artful Dodgers Studio have much in common, through shared experiences, but are also very individual in their personal circumstances, which may include mental health issues and trauma. The artist practitioners should work sensitively with the individual without generalisation.

Practitioners new to this field, with a strong artistic skills base and a clear understanding of community cultural development process, might benefit immensely from mentoring or training in order to ensure that they are well supported by experienced practitioners.

2. IS MY INTEREST IN THIS COMMUNITY HEALTHY AND ETHICALLY SOUND?

Maintaining a sound ethical position is always important for artist practitioners. In working with young people at high risk it is easy to become overwhelmed by the complex circumstances and issues surrounding them, such as homelessness, and drug, alcohol and mental health issues. Such material has the potential to fuel the imagination of cultural voyeurs who are more interested in a 'good story' than safe or respectful representation. Many artist practitioners would agree that the strength of this arts practice is in its ability to transcend, to move the focus from someone's disability or problem towards an active collective voice.

3. AM I EMPATHETIC TO THE CURRENT CONCERNS THE COMMUNITY MEMBERS OR THEIR REPRESENTATIVES ARE EXPRESSING?

Ultimately community members share common values. Effective community cultural development projects and programs involve negotiating these values and engaging with cultural practices and beliefs. In essence, the practitioner needs to be good at listening and identifying key concerns and at filtering ideas, issues and concepts to be developed through the artistic process.

Community cultural development is based on a collaborative partnership. Artist practitioners will benefit from being open to the unexpected. Artist practitioners who are overly interventionist, paternalistic or judgmental are unlikely to enjoy the work and in our experience it is a mistake to build up a preconceived notion of what a community will want to explore. As experience in The Artful Dodgers Studio shows, often without a great deal of warning, the 'wind changes', the group reconfigures and overlooked issues suddenly arise, needing to be acknowledged and incorporated into planning.

4. ARE MY SKILLS AND THE COMMUNITY'S REQUIREMENTS A GOOD FIT?

True consultation with the community in the developmental stages of a project or program will clarify the community's needs and directly assist to identify the art form and skills required for the project or program.

Community cultural development demands diverse skills from the artist practitioner in addition to their art form. Communication, administration, budgeting, management, lateral thinking, research and planning are just some of the skills required to undertake the work successfully.

5. DO I HAVE THE CAPACITY TO ESTABLISH A RAPPORT WITH COMMUNITY MEMBERS?

If artist practitioners are interested in the social and cultural context of the people involved, are empathetic to their values and concerns and committed to a genuinely developmental

partnership, then they are likely to establish rapport with their participants.

6. IS THE ROLE OF THE ARTIST PRACTITIONER DEFINED AND DEMARCATED FROM ROLES THAT ARE MORE SUITABLE FOR OTHER TYPES OF PROFESSIONALS?

It is important that prospective employers understand that artist practitioners are specialists with a particular role. They should not be expected to be personal counsellors, case workers, baby sitters, financial accountants, marketing supervisors or health promotions specialists.

With The Artful Dodgers Studio, which is placed within a welfare agency, it is not uncommon for young people to connect with the art program when they are actively cautious of or not ready to engage with drug and alcohol or mental health counselling. The participants are often interested in the arts project or program in the first instance, and involvement with this program leads to a more 'whole' engagement with the agency later.

Appendix 2

CHECKLIST FOR ARTIST PRACTITIONERS
WHEN TAKING ON A PROJECT OR SETTING
UP A PROGRAM

- Do I like the community?
- Is there a clear objective for this process?
- Am I happy with the financial and physical resources that have been allocated to the task?
- Do I have appropriate support from workers, collaborators, stakeholders and mentors?
- Am I happy with the timelines that have been proposed in the context of expected outcomes?
- Is the community clear on what sorts of outcomes they want from this project?
- Am I happy with the pay I am being offered?
- Do I have the necessary skills to realise this project successfully?
- Am I committed to the community's needs and objectives?
- Am I satisfied that there is a commitment to set up pathways for participants to explore other opportunities after this project is complete?

References

Australian Bureau of Statistics 2000, Report No. 4904.6, *Leisure and Cultural Participation, Tasmania*, www.abs.gov.au.

Brice Heath, S & Roach, A 2000, 'Imaginative Actuality – Learning in the Arts during the Nonschool Hours' in Fiske, E (ed), *Champions of Change – The Impact of the Arts on Learning*, The Arts Education Partnership/The President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities, Washington.

Clark, M 2000, paper given at United Nations Conference, July 2000, Vienna.

Evans, M 1998, 'Opportunities and Challenges for Artists', *Artwork Magazine*, No. 39, July, Community Arts Network SA, Adelaide.

Johnston, P 2001, 'Humans or Non?', *Artwork Magazine*, No. 49, March, Community Arts Network SA, Adelaide.

Latham, M 2000, 'If only men were angels: Social capital and the Third Way' in Winter, I (ed) 2000, *Social Capital and Public Policy in Australia*, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne.

Levinas, E 1985, *Ethics and Infinity – Conversations with Philippe Nemo*, English Translation, Duquesne University Press, Pittsburgh, pp. 53–62.

Malouf, D 1998, The Boyer Lectures, published as *A Spirit of Play – The Making of Australian Consciousness*, ABC Books, Sydney.

Mann, R 1993, 'Appendix Two – Cultural Rights Statement', in *A Bridge Between Territories – A Study of Community Cultural Development*, Media Studies Trust, Auckland.

Maxwell, I & Winning, F 2001, 'Towards a Critical Practice – A Model for Talking and Writing about Community Art Works', *Artwork Magazine*, No. 49, March, Community Arts Network SA, Adelaide.

McLaughlin, M 2001, CCD and Evaluation: An online forum, Centre for Popular Education, University of Technology, with Adult Learning Australia, July 2001, www.ala.asn.au/.

Spence, S 1998, 'The mission ahead', *Artwork Magazine*, No. 41, December, Community Arts Network SA, Adelaide.

Stafford, E 1998, 'CCD Why do we do it? In a word – empowerment', *Artwork Magazine*, No. 39, July, Community Arts Network SA, Adelaide.

Winter, I (ed) 2000, *Social Capital and Public Policy in Australia*, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne.

United Nations 1948 *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, adopted and proclaimed by General Assembly, resolution 217A (III), 10 December 1948.

FURTHER READING

African Commission on Human and People's Rights 1981, 'Article 28', *African [Banjul] Charter on Human and People's Rights*, adopted 27 June 1981, entered into force 21 October 1986.

Foucault, M 1997, *Ethics – The Essential Works 1*, English Translation, Allen Lane The Penguin Press, London.

Hawkins, G 1993, *From Nimbin to Mardi Gras – Constructing Community Arts*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney.

Michaels, E 1988, 'Carnivale in Oxford Street', *New Theatre: Australia*, No. 5, May/June.

Pitts, G & Watts, D 2001, 'The imaginary conference', *Artwork Magazine*, No. 50, August, Community Arts Network SA, Adelaide.

Thiele, M 2000, 'From convolution to revolution', *Artwork Magazine*, No. 46, March, Community Arts Network SA, Adelaide.



Participant in The Artful Dodgers Studio