National College of Art and Design

Fine Art Painting

Communication, Empowerment and Change

By

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Introduction

The traditional perception of the esoteric nature of art has led, in many peoples view, to the cultural alienation of the masses. In order to redress this imbalance, many movements have been founded with the intention of nurturing the communal aesthetic response.

Community arts became an identifiable activity in Ireland in the 1970's. Chapter one deals with its genesis and continuing evolution. Chapter two is concerned with some divergent views on the role of art in peoples lives with particular emphasis on the underprivileged and the unemployed. Attention is given to the Arts Council's attempts to demystify the arts and to give every child the opportunity through its various education schemes to have some contact with the arts and contemporary culture. Kieran Walshe in an interview which is included in Appendix 2, provided valuable insights on this aspect of the Art Council's policy. Another body with a major role to play in the field of community arts is the Irish Museum of Modern Art.

Dublin's cultural coming of age was marked by the opening of the Irish Museum of Modern Art at the Royal Hospital Kilmainham, on the 25th of May 1991. The belief of the new museum's director, Declan Mc Gonagle, in the value of local community participation in the arts, and in the value of engaging in your local community has been the driving force behind I.M.M.A.'s Education/Community programme. The impact of this programme, whose policies of access and engagement are bringing people into the arts, is discussed in chapter four. Their most visible achievement to date is 'Unspoken Truths", a collaborative project from the Family Resource Centre, Inchicore and the Lourdes Youth and Community Services, Rutland Street. The success of the project will be examined with reference to its background, how it was funded and how it has explored the links between artists and community work. An interview with the co-ordinator of the project, Ailbhe Murphy, is included in Appendix 4 and sheds light on some of these concerns.

A number of artists in the 1970's concentrated their efforts into working as artists in the community, responding closely to local needs and initiatives. A pattern of frequent government cuts in arts funding in the 1980's undermined the potential of such organisations. The conservative climate of the last decade, with cautious attitudes to public spending, has concentrated funds towards prestigious exhibitions in public galleries and museums. This attitude of economic timidity completely underestimates the inherent value of community participation in the arts. The value of art cannot be measured in monetary terms and any attempt to do so fails to recognise the fact that participation in the arts should lead to a feeling of achievement akin to magic. This latter quality is embraced by Ernst Fischer in his book, "The Necessity of Art".

> In all forms of its development, in dignity and fun, persuasion and exaggeration, sense and nonsense, fantasy and reality, art always has a

little to do with magic. Art is necessary in order that man should be able to recognise and change the world . But art is also necessary by virtue of the magic inherent in it. (Fischer, 1978, p. 14.)

CHAPTER ONE

BEGINNINGS

Community arts emerged in the western world as one of the democratic movements of the 1960's. Community arts challenged the conventional exclusive relationship between the arts and the social elite, and the conventional definition of what constitutes the arts[1] .

While the arts in general were becoming more popular, some artists, cultural workers, and political activists were forging the link between the arts and social, political, and cultural movements. The arts spread out of the city galleries and theatres into the streets, local communities and cultural action groups. Many challenged the notion of art as exclusively the work of individual artists by promoting collective creative workshops. Two of the best known examples took place in the early 1980's in Dublin's north inner city, the Inner City Looking on Festival, and the City Workshop. The working class Dublin suburb of Ballymun spawned a number of creative and media projects such as Ballymun Arts Workshop Base 10, and community newsletter, "Ballymun News". Community arts emerged in different ways in different countries but a number of common factors can be identified.

First, there was the movement by groups of artists out of the art institutions of the major cities. They took the arts away from the commercial arena onto the streets and into the town and suburbs, organising open-air music festivals, mural painting and art workshops, which experimented with art forms. They sought to create new and liberating forms of expression of direct social relevance to people and which, in some cases, encouraged the participation of "ordinary" people in the creative process. Early community arts projects included Moving Theatre which, under the direction of Annie Kilmartin, worked with communities in the local authority housing estates of Dublin.

Secondly, the sixties saw an increase in the political and cultural activities of social minority groups such as the women's movements, the working class and ethnic groups. These movements believed that creative expression was an essential tool in the wider struggle towards a radical transformation of society. Their activities pushed the conventional boundaries of cultural definitions and creative expression.

> All significant social movements of the last thirty years have started outside the organised class interests and institutions. The peace movement, the ecology movement, the women's movement , solidarity with the third world, human rights agencies, campaigns against poverty and homelessness, campaigns against cultural poverty and distortion; all have this character, that they sprang from needs and perceptions which the interest based organisations had no room or time for, or which they had simply failed to notice. (Williams, 1985, p172.)

Thirdly, improved resources as a result of economic growth and a change in political will led to a more liberal attitude, by the state, towards marginalised groups and innovative

projects.

Fourthly, technological advances in communications, which on the one hand created an instant centralised world, had also a completely opposite effect. The new communications technology, for example radio and video, became increasingly compact, portable, and cheap. Therefore individuals and small groups could make use of technology as a means of creating their own images and communicating their own ideas.

AWAKENINGS IN IRELAND

In the Republic of Ireland, "community arts" became an identifiable tendency at the end of the 1970's. Reflecting a different history of industrialisation and urbanisation, the Republic lacked the politically active groups that existed in both Britain and the North of Ireland. But increases in urban unemployment together with the development of new sprawling working class suburbs and the decay of inner city areas, had created large areas of disaffected and alienated populations, experiencing high levels of social, economic and "cultural deprivation". The self help initiatives in these areas were supported by socially aware artists, cultural workers, and political activists. By the late 1970's and early 1980's, world wide themes such as adult and development education and the women's movement were influencing the voluntary sector's approach to tackling poverty, social inequality and alienation. Exploring one's own creativity through experimental workshops in an attempt to improve both well being and people's control over their lives was part of that trend.

In the voluntary sector, arts groups were motivated not only by their belief in the value of arts activities as tools of personal development, but also by the importance of providing opportunities for creative activity to as wide a social group as possible. By the mid 1970's, the Arts Council was already responding to, and putting into place, policies of increased access to the arts. These policies encouraged greater regional and local access to the arts through increased funding for regional arts centres, theatres, and theatre groups, and an increase in funding for touring theatre. "Community Arts" were first included as a specific expenditure in the Arts Council's budget in 1980[2]. However, despite improving access to arts events, the argument was gathering support that the state and its institutions were failing to provide opportunities for everyone to discover and enhance their creative potential through participation in the arts.

"Creativity is not a special faculty with which some children are endowed and others are not but it is a form of intelligence and as such can be developed and trained like any other mode of thinking." (Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation. 1982. p29.)

In its influential 1982 report, the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation reflected a growing body of opinion when it argued that art is a language and creativity, an intelligence common to all human beings, without which people are excluded from taking

a full part in society. It concluded that arts activities should play a much move important role in education. It was in this context that An Chomhairle Ealaíon initiated its Artists-In-Schools programme. The emergence of agencies such as AnCO, now FAS, with a statutory responsibility for training and employment, meant that a new context and funding opportunities emerged for community activities. While Jenny Harris was not necessarily in agreement with their ideals in C.A.F.E.'s seminar report of 1984, she recognised the opportunity to obtain funding.

> We know that people involved in Manpower services and unemployment are doing it because they think its important. They think it's a panacea for unemployment and mass leisure. I don't think art is anything to do with that. I think it's an end in itself. But yes , we can use that as a way of getting money. (4. Harris, 1984, p.9)

CONTEMPORARY IRELAND AND COMMUNITY ARTS

"Community Arts" embraces two kinds of practice, 1. professional artists of all disciplines working for or with particular communities, 2. communities using the arts as a means of community development. In this practice the emphasis falls more on the arts helping to make the community, rather than the community making art objects or events. Communities are usually defined in geographic terms (Ballymun, Artane, Cabinteely) or as interest-led (unemployment action; women's groups). There is of course overlap between amateur and community arts, as there is between community arts and professional arts practice.

> It is not possible to survey or describe adequately the present state of community arts practice in Dublin. In part this reflects the enormous growth in such activity and in part the lack of a co-ordinated approach by the many agencies directly or indirectly involved. (Drury, 1992, p91)

Seven models of community arts practice in Dublin are listed and exemplified in the table reproduced in Appendix 1.

A review of the activity in Dublin, such as is represented by the table 7.3 and of the over abundance of agencies involved - such as the Arts Council, Combat Poverty, and FAS; the three existing local authorities in Dublin, the Vocational Education Committees and library services; the umbrella body C.A.F.E. and other key art bodies in this area, like the Association of Artists in Ireland, the Sculptors Society, Wet Paint Arts and the City Arts Centre; education and community bodies such as Aontas, Barnardos, Maynooth College and the National College of Art and Design; and finally strategic funding sources such as the Department of Social Welfare, the Gulbenkian Foundation, the Ireland Funds and DPOL - confirms that the trend towards ever increasing levels of community activity should be harnessed and consolidated under an umbrella group, which would establish a cultural action plan with clearly defined mutually acceptable objectives.

In short, community arts practice in the Republic to-day reflects the divergence of aims and objectives evident in its emergence. One linked to the policies of the Arts Council, the other integrating itself more firmly with the aims of development and social change.

NOTES :

1. *The advent and development of community art is chronicled in C.A.F.E.'s launch document 1983.*

2. *For a more indepth discussion of the Arts Council's policy towards community arts see the Arts Council's Annual Report 1989, p.40.*

CHAPTER TWO

TALKING HEADS

There are diverging opinions on what role the arts may play within a community. Although he does not use the phrase "community arts " in his collection of essays "Art for the People?", Anthony Cronin's sympathies and reservations have much to do with this area. His major objection is to the types of practice which have emerged in schools, museums, and galleries as means of "preparing and shaping " peoples experience of art and other works. He asks; "Are the educational processes which are supposed to end "cultural deprivation" in fact major contributors to it ?" (Cronin 1988. p. 9)

He believes much of what is taking place in the name of education, far from providing a positive stimulus to the arts, is actively destroying artistic receptivity and response. He argues his case for the arts claiming , "(Moreover)since it comes through the faculties, it develops them and therefore deepens and enriches almost all other experiences, visual auditory tangible and psychological." (Cronin, 1988, p.10)

There is much truth in his criticisms, but, while Cronin's objectives are praiseworthy, there is a danger of his romantic tendencies undermining his argument. For example his position relies on ideas of "initial receptivity",
"It is possible however that no amount of exposure to works of art or literature after a certain age will increase the initial receptivity, and that age may well be around 16 or so." (Cronin 1988, p.11)

- on the notion of pleasure as being central to aesthetic experience, "The experience of a work of art is a funny feeling inside." (ibid p32.)

- on the idea that "the creation of a work of art, which is like it or not, the attempt to attain perfection." (ibid p.13.)

,and on conceptions of artists as "special people in their sensitivities and innate or acquired powers of expression." (ibid p.35)

An opposing view is put forward by Ciaran Benson who, in his report Art and the Ordinary, suggests that "Bad practice, and institutions whose practices are not in harmony with their avowed purposes" are more convincing reasons than the abstract theories which Cronin offers. (Benson , 1989, p.21) Cronin's belief in the concept of "initial receptivity " has led him to query the usefulness of art education for adults.

"Most art education where adults are concerned is therefore doomed to failure." (Cronin, 1988, p. 11)

Not only does he question the usefulness of art education for adults, he also objects to art being made "into a mere pastime or social distraction or even therapy", believing to do this is "therefore to take the very things that make it important out of it, the mystery ,

the terror, the placatory and, yes, sacrificial elements." (Cronin, 1988, p.13)

> Oppressed groupings, not least among them women began to attack what they saw as the high elite culture of the societies in which they lived and to claim that they had a right to oppose it with an art which was an expression of their own situation or even, heaven help us, of objective reality.

And he proposes,

"The arts of the dispossessed is seldom great precisely because it is the art of the dispossessed." (ibid p.35.) Claiming "Since cultural deprivation usually accompanies other kinds of deprivation, it shows in the product." (ibid p.35.)

It is against such objections as these that the case for greater expenditure on the arts in the community arts area must be made.

CULTURE ON THE DOLE

THE QUESTION OF ART AND UNEMPLOYMENT

For most people, experience with art can be no substitute for paid, socially valued work. That is because, for most people, the functions of art are different to those of paid employment, and therefore cannot substitute for them. Anthony Cronin is quite correct when he says that -

> to presuppose a society in which all questions of work satisfaction, seeing the end-product-of-ones-labours satisfaction were to be loaded on to art is to presuppose a monstrosity. But an equal monstrosity and one with which we are all too familiar, is a society in which most people have no experience of the ordering, annealing, compassionating and re-vivifying power of art at all. (Cronin, 1988, p.13-14)

The question is one of how most people are to have that experience. The traditional view is that they should do so as recipients of the work of others who are "fully fledged" artists. The other argues that as well as the aesthetic experiences of reception, they should be enabled to have the experience of production, for purposes appropriate to themselves. At its best, community-orientated arts practice aims to create those conditions where ordinary people can spend time working with various art forms, so that they can make the sort of difference to their own lives which only the arts allow. It is upon such issues as these that an evaluation of the success or failure of such practices depends.

It should be no surprise that "community arts" are associated with the poor, the unemployed, the marginal. These are the ones for whom the education system has been an unhappy experience of failure and irrelevance. These are the ones whose every day lives are "aesthetically threadbare". These are the ones whose time has the exchange value of dole money. If "Community Art" seems preoccupied with questions of power,

perhaps this is because it has come to be valued amongst the relatively powerless.

UNEMPLOYMENT AND SELF WORTH

Community Arts has a particular relevance to youth and indeed to unemployment. Unemployment has very corrosive effects on its victims, because of the interrelationship of the image of the self and the holding of the job. In our society the definition of self, albeit not to the same extent as had previously been the case, is derived for most people from the job they hold. The recent statistics on the level of unemployment in this country have meant that job creation is now a priority concern for the government. The apparent failure of traditional strategies for encouraging employment has helped to focus attention on less traditional areas which have suggested a potential for growth. One such area is the arts, and both its supporters and practitioners alike have been eager to convince central governments that support for this field can lead to real, sustained, and lasting job creation. The Arts Council is therefore justified in its insistence upon the implementation of an appropriate grant from the government if this sector of Irish society is to assist in the erosion of the present high unemployment. Real jobs can be created in the arts, but they need the support of real and realistic funding. Naturally there remains some scepticism.

C.A.F.E. AND THE PILOT NATIONAL ART WORKERS COURSE

The benefits arising from community participation in the arts are not relevant solely to the young or the unemployed. Groups like C.A.F.E. wish to extend those benefits to all levels of society.

BACKGROUND

In 1983 a group of community arts workers established C.A.F.E. (Creative Activity for Everyone), as an "umbrella body and network" for community arts in Ireland. Over the past nine years, C.A.F.E. has responded to needs within "Community Arts", and its work has included running community arts education and training programmes and workshops. The Pilot National Arts Worker Course (N.A.W.C.) was designed as a continuing education course for experienced community art worker's. The year long course is an extra mural diploma from St. Patrick's College, Maynooth, and is the first accredited course to specifically address community arts workers. It ran between October 1991 and June 1992 with a participant group of thirteen experienced community arts workers from all over Ireland.

ARTISTS OR ART WORKERS?

Participants of the pilot N.A.W.C. were concerned with the duality of roles expected of community arts workers: the role of artist with arts skills and their own artistic and

social aims, and the role of facilitating the social aims of the group through arts activities[1].

The above mentioned tension caused by this duality is evident in the following quotes which record the divergent perspectives of the participants.

> If you go in as an artist with the same aim as the group with which you are working it can create a very exciting project. If you go in with "skills" it takes a lot longer. I have to go in with a personal perspective; you can't force the group's personality on yourself.

"These are two issues; the need to use art to satisfy your own ends but (sic) in the community; (the need to use art) to satisfy the community group."

"It depends on what comes out - and the ownership of the work. The litmus test is who owns the work." (Bowles, 1992, p65)

In addition, participants argued that the title, community arts worker, is associated with middleclass people from outside a community group going in to working class communities to do something for people. Questions were also raised about whether the use of the word "community" in community arts is redundant and whether these activities would be better described as "collective arts".

"I hate the term community arts.....It's used to marginalise the work. It can be employed by funding agencies as a form of tokenism, you find yourself being patronised."
Annie Kilmartin (Chairperson of C.A.F.E.) The Sunday Tribune, Arts Section 4th June, 1989.

They also queried whether community arts practice is, in practice, a cheap alternative to job creation.

"The question is whether community arts is just containing a situation. For example, it is cheaper to fund a community arts project than to put people in jobs." (Bowles, 1992, p.66)

THE ART COUNCIL'S COMMUNITY ART POLICY

Other concerns are the issues of access and participation. The Arts Council, through its Community Arts Policy, encourages participation in creative activity in people of all ages, from all levels of society, and in both urban and rural areas. Specifically these policies are directed at those who may be termed "the dispossessed ", people who for a variety of reasons have been excluded from the benefits and excitement of contemporary culture. The Arts Council sees three strands to the practice of community arts and festivals, namely,

1. Professional arts.
2. Community arts.
3. Amateur/Voluntary arts.

Their definition of professional arts is those arts' practices which strive for excellence in the fine arts tradition. They are often brought to the community setting. In community arts activity, there is often an emphasis on the involvement of people and audiences in the process by which the product comes into being. Such an emphasis will be upon the participation of people rather than solely on the excellence of the finished work of art. The Arts Council sees the empowerment of people and the encouragement of community development as of vital importance. The third strand they see as being well known and popular throughout the country, with many thousands of people being participants in locally-based activity.

"Community Arts" have an important role in allowing the local cultures within Irish society to declare their own cultural positions in their own terms. The practice is concerned with the issue of equality of access and direct participation in arts activity, and is therefore a key area of work for the Arts Council's policy development.

"The most encouraging thing about community-orientated and community-situated arts activity is that it is led by demand." (Benson, 1989, p.33)

NOTES :

1. *For more discussion on this duality of roles see "Artists Newsletter" November issue 1992 p.32.*

CHAPTER THREE

THE ART COUNCILS EDUCATION P0LICY

Art in schools should of course be like art anywhere else, a matter of the wind blowing where it listeth; plenty of opportunity to practice and beyond that the miracle of introduction to something magical by a teacher who can convey enthusiasm without anxiety for a rehearsed response. (Cronin, 1988, p. 33)

PLATE I

Children of Rutland Street working on Christmas Mural.
Sponsored by R.T.E., 1992.

THE ART COUNCIL'S EDUCATION POLICY

There is no statutory obligation on the Arts Council to be involved in education but, since the late seventies, it has recognised that the neglect of artistic and aesthetic education in Irish schools would have too be addressed if the Arts Council were to fully discharge its role in "assisting and promoting the arts." The Arts Council's active involvement in education commenced with the publication of the Benson Report, "The Place of the Arts in Irish Education", in 1979, and the appointment of its first Education Officer later in the same year. What had become clear was that the policy makers in the Department of Education and in the Irish government had to be convinced of the importance of the arts to education. It was not sufficient simply to argue the case, the Council would also have to demonstrate the case. Its policy and practice concentrated on the arts in schools. Following a review of education policy and practice in 1985, the council drew a distinction between arts education and arts-in-education, and defined its role accordingly. It stated that arts education (the artistic and aesthetic education of the individuals in a formal schools context) is the responsibility of the education system, but given the neglect of the arts in school curricula , the Arts Council identified a number of ways through which it could exercise its influence in establishing the central educational importance of the arts.

Over the last thirteen years, the Arts Council has developed and provided a variety of Arts-in-Education services, these include;

1. Exhibitions for schools.

2. Artists Residencies in Schools and Colleges of Education.

3. Artists-in-Schools Pilot Programmes.

4. Support for theatre-in-education companies.

5. Support for music recitals and concerts for schools.

6. Support for youth drama and youth theatre programmes.

Some of these schemes are directly promoted. The Arts Council sets them up, funds them, and administers them, except in a case where the Council subcontracts one particular scheme out to venues. The Arts Council also supports the work of two theatre in education companies, TEAM (based in Dublin) and Graffiti (based in Cork); Ceol Chumman Na Nóg who organise special concerts for school students by the R.T.E. symphony and Concert Orchestras; and the Music Association of Ireland who provide recitals and workshops for schools. These schemes are practical ways of implementing Arts Council policy. These services are complemented by a process known as advocacy,

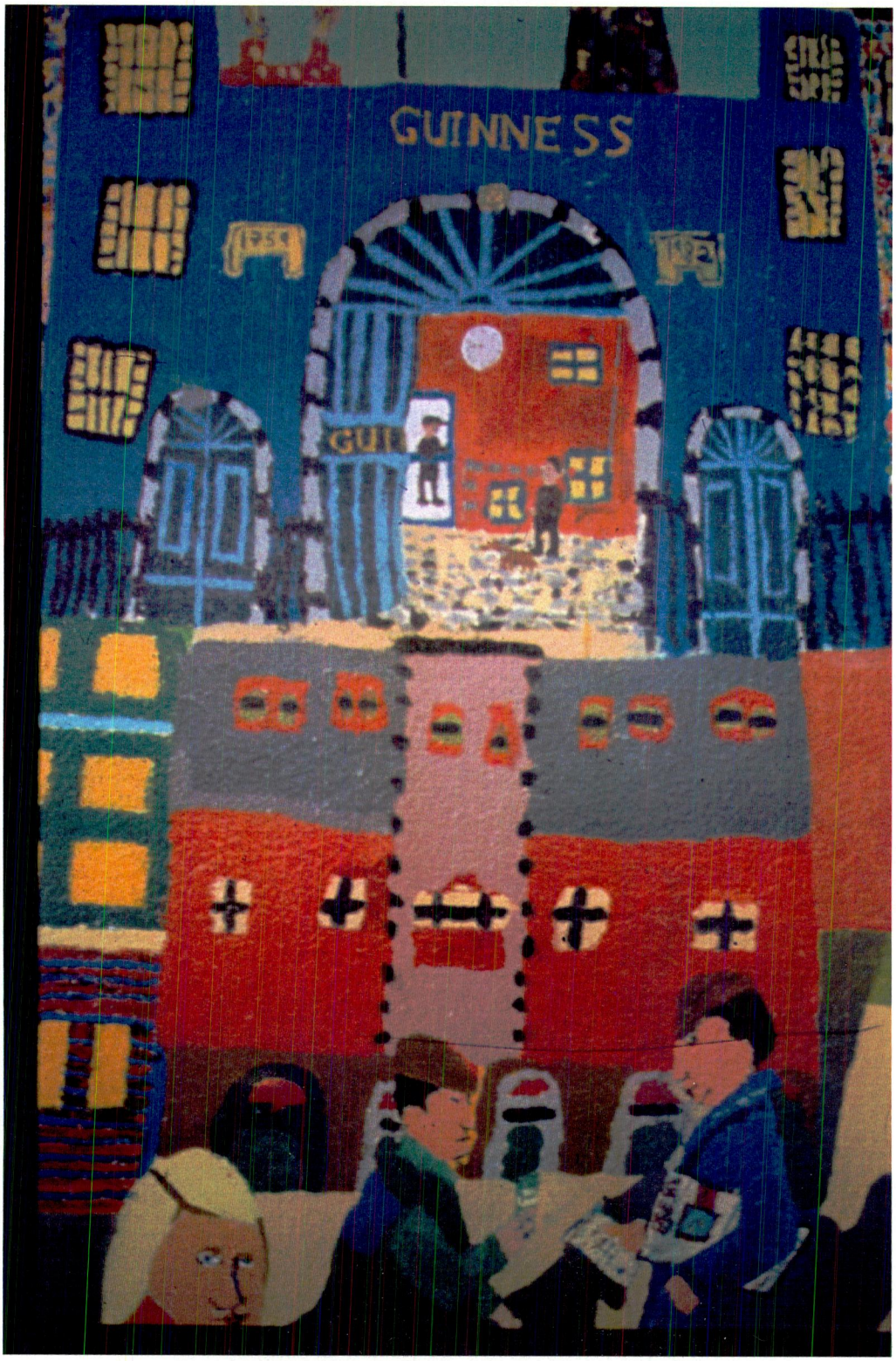
which is continually arguing the case for the arts in education. This involves making submissions to government, publishing reports like the Benson Report, and influencing the work of key committees on issues relating to the arts in education. The Benson Report was one of the first to be commissioned, and it arose out of the findings of J. M Richards in his significant report "Provision For The Arts" (1976). While the importance of Benson's report has been acknowledged, its implementation leaves a lot to be desired.

"The Benson Report as it is known, remains the most important survey of this area of Irish education. Regrettably it also remains a 'live' document in terms of the large number of recommendations which wait to be addressed by education authorities." (The Arts Council and Education 1979-1989. p9.)

Faced with the education system's failure to recognise the distinctive and important contribution that the arts can make to education, and the subsequent neglect of the artistic and aesthetic education of young people, the Arts Council has intervened in education to ensure that young people have the opportunity to experience and participate in high quality arts activities at some point in their education. (See Appendix 2, Page 37) (Plate II and III). The Artist in Residence in Schools Scheme is a six week to six month intensive collaboration between artist and students in an education context. The Arts Council are very concerned with the training of teachers in the area of the arts, particularly primary teachers, and they give support to them through their Artists-Residencies-in-Colleges-of-Education programme. The Artists-in-Schools Pilot Programme involves a day workshop or an illustrated talk, and, at the moment is operated by The Triskel Arts Centre, The Douglas Hyde Gallery Dublin, The Butler Gallery Kilkenny and Dundalk U.D.C.. The Arts Council are "hitting" the education system at crucial points, almost like strategic intervention, with the hope that eventually the policy makers will take note of what they are doing and act accordingly. As Kieran Walshe pointed out, it is not a hit and run situation, it is very well planned , very deliberate, and policy led.

He also felt that the intervention idea itself was one that should be looked at very carefully. The question that hangs over intervention based projects is what effect do they ultimately have? One of the things said about the music programme is, - a single recital in a school to about one hundred and fifty children in a hall , what is that going to do in terms of promoting an awareness about the arts? You could say, absolutely nothing, children come in, they listen to the concert, that means nothing. There is no context within the school to support their appreciation of the music, so what benefit does it have? But some people will say that they would never have thought of getting into composition, or directing, or musicianship, if they had not experienced a concert in a school. It is a very difficult one to judge. The residency programme is intended to be more longlasting. As it is project based and focused, generally, around an event or an art object, for example a film, a piece of drama, a puppet show , that has a lasting impression on the school.

PLATE II



Guinness Brewery
James' Street Christian Brother National School
Sponsored by the Arts Council

PLATE III

The Japanese Gardens
Detail - The Tea House and Lava Bed
Kildare Town Convent National School
Sponsored by The Arts Council

But what impact does it have on the schools ability to develop and deliver a coherent and developmental arts syllabus? Does it effect the real issues, which are the inadequate training of primary teachers, the inadequate supply of post primary teachers, and the inadequate provision within the curriculum for the arts? What effect does it have other than to highlight what can be achieved? So the Arts Council are leading by example, and using these examples to illustrate their arguments.

After discussing the advantages of the scheme for the students and artists involved, Kieran Walshe also spoke of the benefits for a teacher. He believed if there is good quality collaboration between the teacher and the artist, it can actually invigorate the teachers own art teaching experience. Reducing it down to a basic level, it is also direct support for an artist, one thousand and two hundred pounds for six weeks work, or six months if they spread it out thinly. A lot of artists also leave some lasting trace, whether it is a musical composition or a playground , as well as a general creation of awareness. Ultimately what fascinates a lot of children and teachers in schools is the fact that artists are normal human beings. In fact this is one area where education and "community arts" meet. The shared objective being to demystify the artistic process. This will serve to make the artists relevant, and, as Ciaran Benson says, bring them back into the experience of everyday living rather than having them perceived as separate or elitist. This is just one of several traditions within the area known as community arts.

> One hundred and fifty children in a hall listening to a concert. How many of them are going to get involved in the arts or get an interest in the arts, particularly when the music company goes away, the theatre company goes away, the residency finishes. There is no structure there to develop that interest. It is a fairly complex problem. (See Appendix 2, Page 38)

Community Arts are faced with the same problem in that a lot of "community arts" activity up until now has also been intervention based. There has been "community arts" programmes run under TEAM Theatre In Education Groups, using TEAM work funding , which lasted for twelve months, after which time the funding was withdrawn. There are also the schemes run by the Arts Council, based on the intervention of professional artists or art administrators in the life of a community, towards the development of a community arts event, series of events policy or programme. Pull out the professional, pull out the "animateur" and what are you left with? How long will it last? (See Appendix 2, Page 38)

We also discussed "unmediated community art", art projects that arise spontaneously without the involvement of the arts community, (of which precious little is to be found).(See Appendix 2, Page 38) What is the ultimate effect of that in terms of cultural politics within Ireland? Will it dramatically change the cultural make up of Ireland, or will cultural power remain with the middle class and professional arts establishment. It is a parallel argument to the problematic question of what effect you

have on an individual by exposing him to a residency or a concert. What effect does putting a community art project into a community for six months have on the cultural life of that community? (See Appendix 2, Page 38)

C.A.F.E. (Creative Activity For Everyone) was established in 1983, and since then there has been a phenomenal growth in community arts activity. The structures are developing within the community arts area, and funding is coming on stream. The planning and setting up of courses like the Pilot National Art Workers Course, means that training is becoming more readily available. The Arts Council are working on a similar proposal for the training of youth officers through European funding. "The early 80's were quite tough in the community arts/arts education area, but I think it is getting better." Kieran Walshe.

The Dublin Arts Report 1992 marked something of a breakthrough in terms of the official perception of what are now being called participation arts rather than community arts, where the emphasis is on groups outside the normal arts community actively participating inside it. Normal in this case, meaning the arts establishment, - the dealer-gallery-artist-studio-Arts Council-theatre syndrome or network. People outside of that network getting involved in the arts, whether it is in education, in communities, or wherever. There has been a sea change in terms of attitudes. What will that mean in terms of cultural change in Ireland over the next ten to twenty years?

Kieran Walshe suggests that it is worth a "long shot" and argues that it is an aspect of post modernism where, the old divisions between popular and traditional culture or classical culture "what they call 'posh pop' or 'pop posh'", are beginning to break down. There is talk of a cultural plurality, where the traditional classical approach to the arts with a capital A and culture with a capital C, will no longer be seen as the only approach. That popular culture and other forms of culture will be seen as equally significant.

CULTURAL PLURALISM

We must now consider Cultural Pluralism. There are two broad interpretations of cultural pluralism. One is from the left which argues that what happens in marginalised groups is as culturally significant as what is happening in National cultural institutions. The other view is a right wing, Thatcherite, view which is much more market driven, and claims that if the market prefers "posh pop", then they will go for "posh pop", and funding will go for "posh pop". The two are diametrically opposed. (See Appendix 2, Page 39)

PLATE IV and PLATE V

Preliminary Drawings for Christmas Mural by 1st and 2nd Class Pupils, Rutland Street. Sponsored by R.T.E., 1992.

THE ARTS SECTION OF THE NEW PROGRAMME FOR GOVERNMENT

The arts section of the new programme for government, which was published on the 7th of January this year, does not have a reference to education or community arts. It places a lot of emphasis on local authority structure and the creation of employment. There is a strong emphasis at the moment that the arts can create jobs. One question that must be looked at is whether the arts can actually create sustainable jobs, whether the jobs that are created are well paid, have the right conditions, and are full time. Not full time in the sense of permanent and pensionable, but full time in that they are set up like any other full time employment. That is an issue that has to be seriously looked at in the overall job creation argument. What is needed is training, adequate funding, and adequate structures.

THE DUBLIN ART REPORT 1992

The Dublin Art Report contains some strident criticisms of the Arts Council in the community arts area,

> It has been submitted by several key representatives that the existing structure of the Development Committee for Community Arts is lacking in direction and that it seems of little interest to the Arts Council as a whole. Although it has identified a number of significant training initiatives for funding, it has been reactive rather than provocative. There is general disappointment in the community arts sector with this committee...It seems clear that the Council has allowed its traditional aesthetic priorities, as evident in Standing Order 26, to obscure its sense of the enormous social and cultural significance of community arts. (Drury 1992, p.89)

> While recognising the need to encourage local enterprise and community activity, the Council's main function is to maintain and encourage high standards in the arts. It is the standing order invoked to refuse support to a wide range of arts activities, principally amateur drama productions and brass fife and drum pipe or reed bands. (Drury, 1992, p.63-64)

In short local enterprise and community activity are to be "encouraged", while arts activity of a high standard is to be "maintained and encouraged".

As we have seen, the community arts practice is concerned with issues of equality of access and direct participation in artistic activity. The Arts Council, under its director Adrian Munnelly, has a policy called access and opportunity. The policy, by providing and developing a national infrastructure of buildings and services in arts organisations, hopes to widen access to the arts. But access has another side to it, and that is the provision of artistic opportunities to groups of people who would traditionally have been excluded. This exclusion would not necessarily have been actively promoted by the

professional arts establishment, but would have had its roots in social, economic, or cultural factors. The extension of access to these groups would mean an increasing role for people in the community arts /youth arts/ education area.

The Arts Council is increasingly aware of the emergence of a "vibrant youth arts movement", - the active participation of young people in arts activities outside the school context, the use of arts activity as an integral part of youth work, and the provision of arts events devised with young people in mind. The Council is committed to the development of youth arts, and supports a number of arts organisations, including Dublin Youth Theatre, the National Association of Youth Drama, and Wet Paint Arts.

> What I think is needed more than anything is a cultural development policy. That's what I would see as one of my objectives here, an overall cultural development policy that would bring together all those participation areas within a coherent whole. What is needed now is not so much an ideology as a policy of cultural development. Kieran Walshe (See Appendix 2, Page 40).

PLATE VI

Rutland Street Mural - Detail

CHAPTER FOUR

I.M.M.A.'S COMMUNITY / EDUCATION PROGRAMME

"Very simply what cultural democracy is about is learning to tell your own story on an equal footing with all the other stories. Its discovering ways of giving expression to your own values and heritage and joining with others to do this in some sort of action." (4. Harris Jenny, 1984. p.8)

"It is an insult to the members of any grouping to treat them as children whose efforts must be overpraised to ensure that they continue to make them. (It is probably an insult to children too.)" (Cronin, 1988, p.36)

I.M.M.A.'s COMMUNITY/EDUCATION PROGRAMME

In an article entitled "Museum of the Future", Declan Mc Gonagle on I.M.M.A.'s Education/Community programme states,

"I don't really see it as a subsidiary activity, It's about unlocking the energy and sophistication that people possess".

He sees these aspects of the programme as crucial to I.M.M.A.'s development, one strand of activity among others.

"...Our primary concern is to close the gap between the artist and the non artist. All plans feed into that... The Museum shouldn't be a terminus for ideas. It should only be a moment in the process, a crystallisation of ideas in a certain form." The Irish Times, 14th January, 1993.

In the 19th century model of the museum, the meaning was locked away in the object. In Declan Mc Gonagle's view, the 19th century model of the museum as a treasure house, a depositary which precluded the involvement of the viewer as a participant in the process, has been rendered obsolete. At the conference, Unspoken Truths - A Critical Response - held at I.M.M.A. on the 29th January 1993, he alluded to Anthony Gormley's Derry piece near the city wall. He went on to speak about how it engaged the community. How people who arrived from outside could not read the work. It was the people who had been marginalised socially, historically, and economically, who were able to interpret the images. "Unspoken Truths" demonstrates the principle that the meaning of a work of art resides, not in the work itself, but in the mind of the person perceiving it. Hence the art object is the catalyst that draws this meaning out of the individual. In this way the community empowers the artist.

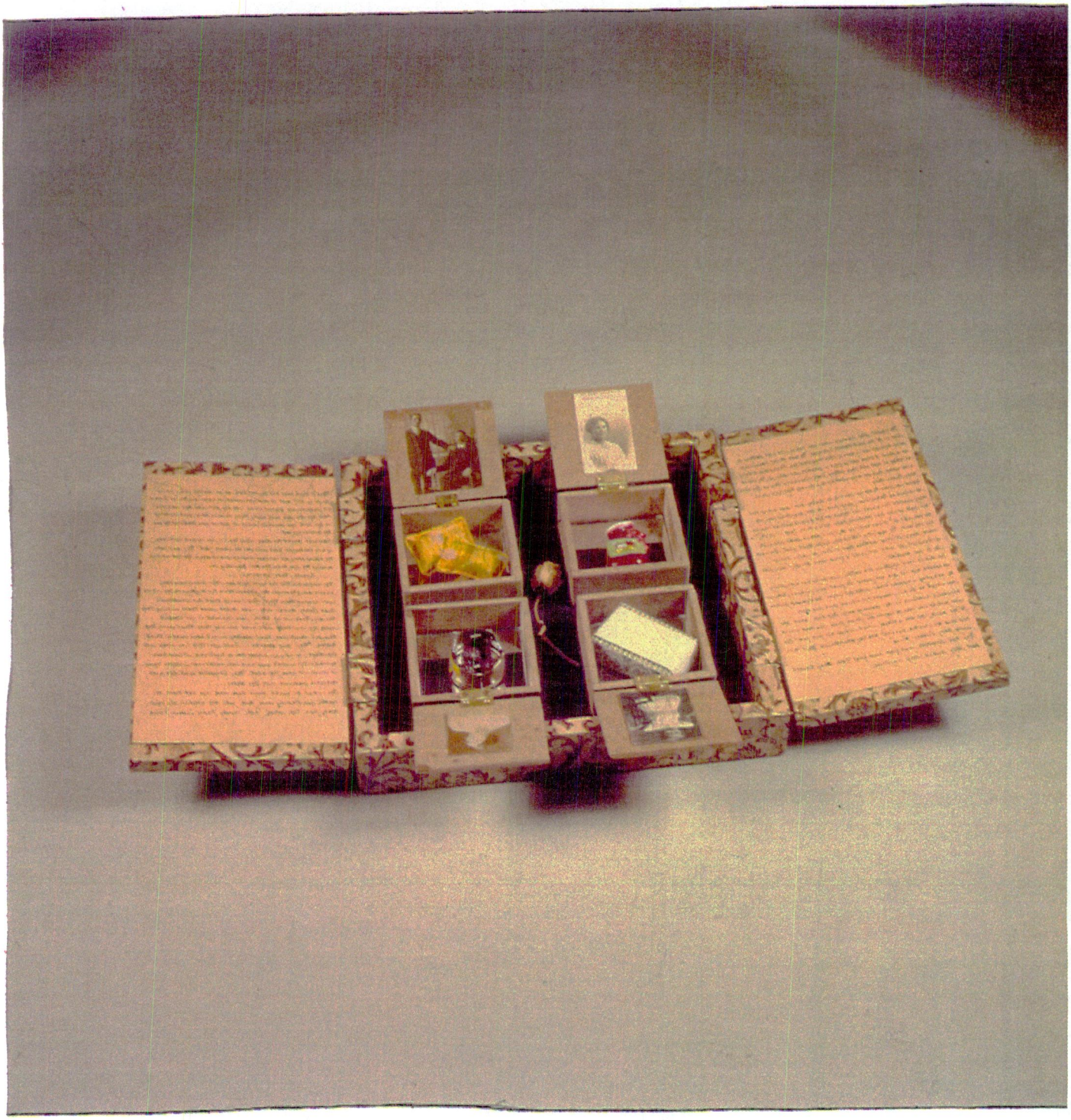
Helen O'Donoghue, in the same article, on "Unspoken Truths", states,
"similar groups have been set up in Tallaght and elsewhere...It happens in ripples. You prove the model works and then it spreads across the country...At this stage our intention is to infiltrate the curriculum." The Irish Times, 14th January 1993.

At the conference she spoke of how this project had grown out of the practice of the last two years. "It reflects I.M.M.A.'s thinking at this point in time." It raised a challenge to all involved to partake in a new relationship, I.M.M.A., The Arts Council, the L.Y.C.S., the Family Resource Centre, and the Combat Poverty Agency. "The depth and quality of thought put into the project is evident in the art on show". The project poses the question when does one put ones art into a public arena? When does one take the project from a private to a public space? How does one do that ? It challenged the notions that community art is secondary to high art and that only an artist can make art.

PLATE VII

"Memories Offended" by Una Shaw.
Mixed Media.
I.M.M.A.
The work depicts the decline of Mountjoy Square where Una Shaw lived as a child.

PLATE VIII



"The Gift" by Mai Norton
Mixed Media
I.M.M.A.

> Unspoken Truths represents the lives and issues that affect women in Ireland today and is the outcome of many hours, days and months of considered thinking by all involved; the thirty two women who created them, Ailbhe Murphy who as an artist sensitively co-ordinated the women's work, two very secure community based projects, the Family Resource Centre and the Lourdes Youth and Community Services and myself, in my role as I.M.M.A.'s Education/Community Curator. Helen O'Donoghue.(Plate VII and VIII)

In this first phase of IMMA's Education and Community programme, a number of projects have been set in motion with the intention of developing greater access, in the broadest sense, to the resources, which IMMA has to offer, and to share the creative initiatives which are being developed at a community level. The process is woven into the fabric of the museum's exhibition and collecting programmes, providing opportunities for direct contact with artists working with a wide range of ideas and across a wide range of media. Access and engagement is a key concern of the museums thinking and is a central concern of IMMA's policy.
Information courtesy of IMMA.

UNSPOKEN TRUTHS

In April 1991, a public mural was painted by women from the Family Resource Centre, St. Michael's Estate, Inchicore, to celebrate the opening of the Museum, and the women met with artist, Ailbhe Murphy. Ailbhe Murphy's work practice had introduced her to women in the Lourdes Youth and Community Service in the north inner city in 1990 and this introduction to south inner city women motivated her to develop her project proposal. "Unspoken Truths" presented the possibility of working together on an innovative cross community arts initiative.

> As an artist my work is concerned with exploring change in a particular environment and the implications of those changes for the community. If this work is to be informed and have any relevance to the environment from which it stems, I believe it is necessary to engage and work closely with groups who are effecting positive change in their communities. Ailbhe Murphy (See Appendix 4, Page 43).

The starting point was to bring the women together to engage in an exploration using visual and literary expression of their own experience. This gave the women the opportunity to meet and work with many artists, poets, and writers. These workshops alternated between both centres and the Museum. This resulted in an ongoing exchange of ideas, skills, and experience, which proved crucial to the development of the work and the project as a whole. (See Appendix 4, Page 43 and 44).

> Through these workshops and the increasing level of openness and support among the groups, the women involved came to acknowledge the value of their own experience as a source for their work, and the possibilities for re-interpreting the Book format as a record of peoples experience and memories were opened up and developed through a wide

variety of mediums. Ailbhe Murphy.

It was not taken as read when the women started the project that they would exhibit in the museum. "It was going to be a process, they were going to see what happened, we were going to work towards a book maybe" Ailbhe Murphy. However, after a big meeting in May 1992, the women were unanimous in the decision that they would like the work to go to a wider audience. (See Appendix 4, Page 45).

The groups talked about bringing the work further. At this stage the funding had finished and the work had reached a certain level where it would have been possible to say that they were completing the project. But everyone's commitment to the project was such that they were determined to continue and achieve as high a standard as possible. It was at that point that all involved realised that the work would have to be exhibited.

> One of the difficulties in the beginning was for the women involved to acknowledge the value of their own experiences as a source for their work....That was a process that was facilitated by workshops in the Museum and by the workshops in each of the centres...the work in the exhibition reflects the diversity of influences and experience brought to the project by all those who were involved. It also reflects the process of collaboration which allowed the work to be realised in ways unforeseen by us all, but to a standard that reflects to the level of ideas and commitment brought to the project by the women involved.
> Ailbhe Murphy.

> We in the Family Resource Centre were deeply touched by the women's work and stories, by the contribution of the professionals and the process which embraced, challenged and linked all the groups together in a dynamic relationship. The project for us was positive from beginning to end. It reaffirmed our belief that given the opportunity individuals are capable of high standards and high commitment to the work, challenging the assumption that community art is of a lower standard. It demystified the art process, making it more accessible, and it gave a new meaning to Art Institutions - seeing them as a resource rather than a place apart. Rita Fagan, Women's Co-ordinator Family Resource Centre.

> It was of central importance that the women had an opportunity to tell their own story, as experienced by themselves or their community, not as interpreted or constructed by others. The process of creating the story and expressing it in their chosen art medium developed further the participants creative skills and the ongoing work of individuals and groups... we became more conscious that art and creative processes are not some unknown sphere of existence outside the general public, but that the process is within all of us, just requiring the opportunities for its expression. Deirdre Clarke, Adult Instructor.
> Information courtesy of I.M.M.A..

Rita Fagan has put faith in the community development projects ability to promote social change and encourage empowerment. She believes that culture belongs to the people, and that there are many kinds of culture. At the conference Unspoken Truths - A

Critical Response, she stressed that community movements are not lacking in creativity and imagination, that the community movement promotes alternative models, and that people who have been excluded can become participants in social change. She stressed the ability of art to transcend social boundaries.

"The exhibition cuts across class. People have responded, and not in a patronising way, they were touched. And we were touched because they were touched." Rita Fagan, Family Resource Centre, Inchicore.

Maureen Downey, from the L.Y.C.S. Rutland Street, spoke at the conference about the women's background. Their urban environment, where unemployment, crime, and urban decay are the dominant social forces, would normally have excluded them from an Institution like I.M.M.A.. She felt the project demystified the whole museum process and that it challenged a society which historically excluded women from the artistic process. She firmly believes that these "Unspoken Truths", these "half whispers", are part of our history, part of the culture of our city.

One of the women involved spoke of the benefits of this process of demystification.

"This is a reflection of all that we have been through....we were a group who were willing to share ideas and skills..." Terry Webster, The Family Resource Centre.
As the women worked towards completing pieces, they considered very carefully the shift from the private into the public space. Each woman had the choice whether or not to include her piece of work.

"...Each of us had to make a decision how much we would reveal to the public." Terry Webster.

After making that decision Terry Webster spoke of how she experienced "a great uplift in my life" and of how she attained a sense of who she was.

Unspoken Truths was reviewed by The Irish Times' Mic Moroney on Saturday 16th January 1993. The review entitled "Women with plenty to say", began:

> Those who bemoan the decline in painterly values in recent years will find little solace in this extraordinarily moving exhibition by a group of women from St. Michael's Estate Inchicore in Dublin, whose collages, sculptures, assemblages, museum-like displays, wall drawings, sound pieces, and even installations show a catholic and sophisticated sense of what constitutes art.

He saw "The bloody grind and unavoidable neurosis of poverty, - in particular the way it relates to women", as a recurrent theme. "...from quiet, personal testimonies to the polemical rage of Rita Fagan's 'Cage a Bird that's Free and it will Struggle'". He alludes to five of the women's pieces and concludes,

> The funding friendly buzz phrase "community art" sometimes makes me feel like reaching for my revolver, but this show is so well-served by the museum, it is almost subversive of the "professional" work displayed elsewhere. Perhaps one inevitably makes allowances for such work, but if some of these pieces lack finish, they appear fresh unselfconscious and certainly avoid cliche. Irish Times, 16 January 1993.(Plate IX and X.)

According to Ailbhe Murphy, one of her biggest motivations for the project was to challenge the way people look at community arts. She believes the project challenges the idea that community based art is somehow secondary, or does not reach as high a standard as fine arts. Ailbhe feels that the work in "Unspoken Truths" goes a long way towards breaking down those attitudes. She firmly believes that Unspoken Truths has brought the work up onto a higher level. It has questioned the nature of art practice by looking at who or what normally qualifies to be involved in the process, and questioned that constructively. Ailbhe Murphy believes that if you make the resources available to bring out the best in people, that people wish to, and will, make good work.

THE NEXT STEP

The project provided a context for the women to communicate through art. I asked Ailbhe what happens with these women now? Is there a context within their community to continue and support their appreciation?

> Unspoken Truths was part of an ongoing process of development for the women. The Family Resource Centre has been active in initiating a formal education for women run in the Emmet Road V.E.C. This course is a next step for women who attend the women's programme in St. Michael's Estate Inchicore and other local community women's groups. The women from the L.Y.C.S. have gone on into a project called New Opportunities for Women (N.O.W.), which involves a nine month training programme with a view to either further education or training or paid employment. "Unspoken Truths" is a further stepping stone in a whole broader process of development that the women are involved in through their community development projects. Ailbhe Murphy

Funding for the project was provided by the Arts Council, I.M.M.A., the L.Y.C.S., and The Combat Poverty Agency. (See Appendix 4, Page 43 and 45).

To conclude, Ciaran Benson in his report "Art and the Ordinary" suggests, "Perhaps we should judge artistic activities in educational or community settings as having been successful or not by referring to their avowed function, rather than merely evaluating them as good or bad art." (Benson, 1989, p.26)

I believe "Unspoken Truths" is an eloquent demonstration that creativity exists in abundance at all levels of society, and that this creativity can find a very real outlet in the arts.

PLATE IX

"Memories Offended" by Una Shaw.
Mixed Media.
I.M.M.A.

PLATE X

"Letters Unfolding" by Mary Mc Cann
Mixed Media
I.M.M.A.

VISITORS COMMENTS

"To me it is a wonderful exhibition, very thought provoking. Everyone has at least one story in their lives."

"Very impressive ambitious honest work" Mary Brady.

"An exhibition of great strength, imagination, creativity and hard work."

"Life's memories and painful truths and stolen days."

"A certain determination takes place."

> I was greatly moved by the manner whereby these artists created with the very basic material of their surroundings, a statement of feeling and visual sensation which is quite as valid as are precious objects in gold, silver or metal like rings or broaches. It was quite a privilege to enjoy it. James White.

"One of the most impressive and important projects I have seen this year - a model of how such projects should be organised."

SOME OF THE WOMEN'S COMMENTS

"I thought art was just painting". Marie Burns, Lourdes Youth and Community Service.

"This is a reflection of all that we have worked through." Terry Webster, Family Resource Centre.

"Telling our stories was most important."

"I see art everywhere. It has opened my eyes , I see everything differently."

CONCLUSION

THE SILENT MUSE

One of the main concerns of community arts has been the reintegration of the artistic process into the fabric of society. The Industrial Revolution had profound implications for humanity and the psychological upheaval occasioned by the advent of the machine age undermined mans sense of his own worth.

> For man had indeed paid a colossal price for his rise to more complex and more productive forms of society. As a result of the differentiation of skills, the division of labour, and the separation of classes he was alienated, not only from nature , but from his own self. The complex pattern of society meant also the breaking up of human relationships; increasing social enrichment meant in many respects, increasing human impoverishment. (Fischer, 1978, p.42.)

This compartmentalisation of life led people to shy away from areas where they felt insecure. One of the main symptoms of this cultural malaise was a tendency to regard art as the property of the elite. This esotericism led to a widening of the gap between the community and the arts.

During recent years, a new development has emerged in some industrial countries which is now known as "community arts". Its origins and history go back to the early sixties. While a search for a definition is probably futile, it is possible to pick out certain features which together add up to a distinctive picture. The common ground for community artists was their attitude towards the place of their activities in the life of society. Their primary concern was their impact on a community, and their relationship with it. By assisting those with whom they make contact to become more aware of their situation and their own creative powers, and by providing people with the facilities they need to make use of their abilities, these artists hope to widen and deepen the sensibilities of the community in which they work and so enrich its existence. They seek to bring about this increased awareness and creativity by involving the community in the activities they promote. They have claimed that their "tilling of the cultural soil" (The Report of the Community Arts Working Party, 1974, p.8) must in time bring its own harvest, and that its fruits will include new artistic activity and creation as well as increased awareness of the arts among sections of society which at present regard the arts with indifference or even hostility. Although hampered by a lack of funds, these artists continue to reach out to the community.

The young audiences which were attracted to these ventures brought with them new social problems such as drugs, housing, and unemployment. The technological forces unleased by the Industrial Revolution have overtaken the society they were supposed to serve. As major technological advances have led to mass redundancies, man has been replaced by the machines that he himself invented. The problems of unemployment and

poverty are harmful, not only in the economic sense, but in the way they inflict psychological damage on the individual. One of the greatest deprivations an individual can feel is to be without a job. Culture can provide a light in the economic abyss of unemployment, and help alleviate the sense of alienation and absence of self-worth that pervade the outlook of those who have no job. Anthony Cronin argues,

"Since it (art) comes through the faculties, it develops and enriches almost all other experiences, visual, auditory, tangible and psychological." (Cronin, 1988,p.10)

In other words the sense of incoherency and impotence brought on by unemployment and poverty can be replaced by positive values as people reinvent their lives in a time and space of their own making.

The Arts and Education are two important points of reference for reflection upon the culture of any country. Lack of understanding of the true nature of artistic intelligence has led to a conception of the arts as trivial or merely recreational, with a certain unspecified contribution to make in the area of effective learning .

Since 1979, the Arts Council has sought in a variety of ways to intervene in the domain of education "so as to heal the fractured dialogue between the twin worlds of art and education". (13. Colm O hEocha, 1989, p.6) The Arts Council would be failing in its duty to promote an understanding and practice of the arts if it did not underline its conviction that the continued neglect of the arts, within the Irish Education System, represents a cultural dysfunction of significant proportions. The Arts Council is proud of its role in stimulating and providing much of what is excellent in the arts-in-education movement. However, the crucial partners in the dialogue are the artists and the schools.

Another aspect of the Art Council's commitment to increasing access to the arts is their involvement in projects such as "Unspoken Truths". This exhibition, and projects like it confront the negative aspects of unemployment and poverty, and at the same time challenge some of the more outdated preconceptions of art as merely a hobby. The seriousness with which the women undertook "Unspoken Truths" contradicts the notion of this type of work being merely recreational or therapeutic. The level of collaboration between the artists and the women involved explodes the myth of the socially disconnected artist in the garret.

As we have seen, this does not represent a simplistic desire to declare that everybody is an artist, as this is merely swapping one hyperbolic generalisation for another. What "Unspoken Truths" principally aimed for was to enable the discovery of the artistic self complementary to the work self, the home self, the domestic self, the private self, and the wife self. Through IMMA's policies of access and engagement, Ailbhe Murphy was able to back her belief in the women's potential and integrity by providing access to the museum, which became a forum to develop rich experiences for those involved. She

firmly believes that if the resources are made available, then people can, and will, make good work. The projects recognise that it is not that these people have nothing to say, it is that they have no way of saying it.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1.

RANGE OF COMMUNITY ARTS PRACTICE IN DUBLIN.

TABLE 7.3 • RANGE OF COMMUNITY ARTS PRACTICE IN DUBLIN

Type of Activity	Description	Example
Community Arts Groups	Geographically-based groups with a commitment to the practice of, and training in, the Arts within their locality.	Alternative Entertainments (Tallaght)
Community Arts Festivals	Locally-based festivals with an arts programme that has a strong emphasis on participation.	Dublin 15 Festival (Blanchardstown)
Community Arts Projects	Short to medium term projects, built around specific occasions or the needs of particular interest groups .	A Woman's Place (series of visuals arts projects with women in various Dublin communities during 1991)
Community Arts Residencies	Short-term residencies by professional artists in particular communities (geographic or interest)	John Byrne in Lourdes Youth and Community Services (under Arts Council Artists-in-Community Scheme)
Community Arts Teams	Teams of professional artists, of various disciplines, usually employed under an SES scheme, and working on a range of projects with particular groups within a more widespread community.	City Artsquad (1990-91); 5 County Artsquads (1991-92);Dun Laoghaire (1988-89 and 1991-92)
Community Programmes of Arts Organisations	Programmes specially designed to link the work of a professional arts organisation with local communities.	Irish Museum of Modern Art - an ongoing programme with Active Aged.
Arts Programmes of Community Organisations	Courses, classes or workshops forming part of a wider educational or developmental programme.	Dublin Travellers Education and Development Group.

From The Dublin Arts Report 1992, Page 92.

APPENDIX 2

INTERVIEW WITH KIERAN WALSHE

Kieran Walshe studied Art and Design Education at N.C.A.D., graduating in 1984. He then worked in Base 10, Ballymun, and taught at Rosmini Community School, Drumcondra. In 1987 he worked on the ACE funded Art Education Workshop at Cork Teachers' Centre from 1987-9. From 1989-92 he was Education Officer at Triskel Arts Centre, Cork, and a member of CAFE board of directors. He is currently the Education Officer at the Arts Council.

The following is a synopsis of an interview with Kieran Walshe which took place on the 8th January, 1993, at 2.30 pm in the Arts Council offices, 70 Merrion Square, Dublin 2.

Do you feel the product is still seen as more important than the process?

"No. The product is important because within education, particularly within arts education, you have two trends. You have the progressive trend which tended to emphasise totally spontaneous activity as a form of creativity. It is based on the writing of John Dewey (1929). Then on the other side you had the much more formal approach, some would call it a classical approach to the arts, where there is much more emphasis on the intellectual elements; the aesthetic as well as the artistic. Within the formal system you would have a very strong emphasis on the art object, the art event, the poem, or whatever. Generally, the Arts council's programme very much tends towards the latter, the formal tradition, where you have a very strong emphasis on creativity and expression, but also in intelligence and aesthetics, on the art object, and the professional artist. But that does not neglect the process. The way the Artist-in Residence-in-Schools scheme is set up, the way the applications are judged, the way they are assessed, is to ensure that there is genuine collaboration between a professional working artist and a group of students, with overall support provided by the school. So it is not just simply a question of an artist telling a group of students what to do or how to do it. Decisions either come directly from the children or are worked at, arrived at between the teachers and the students through a collaborative process. The terms of the formal training tradition emphasise the fact that art is not simply a spontaneous activity, it involves intelligence as much as feeling, it involves cognition and emotion..... And the Art council's position has always been that there must be a balance between the two. Unfortunately within the education system, the Green Paper is a classic example of this, the arts are seen as to do entirely with expression, feelings, emotions. They are usually suited to weaker children, they are something that is done after hours, its for girls, its a pastime, a hobby, it is not a hard subject... Those are attitudes and they are very entrenched attitudes, even within the teaching profession who are generally sympathetic to the arts, but who received absolutely no training in the arts. The subtext of the 1971 curriculum that was introduced into

primary schools was based on the writings of Dewey, on a highly mechanistic approach to arts activity which confused spontaneous activity with creativity and neglected the aesthetic side of arts activity."

What do you see as the advantages of the scheme?

"A question that was raised at the very beginning as to why should the Arts Council, given that its statutory function is the promotion and assistance of the arts in Ireland, why should it have an education policy. One of the reasons why was because the arts are so neglected and the education system is seen as crucial to the development of the arts, of art and culture taking a broader term 'culture', the arts as being one small aspect of cultural activity. The education system is crucial to development, therefore the future of the arts and culture depend on the arts being taken seriously in the education system. But they are not. Very few children who would go through schools would have experienced the arts. It is not so bad now, but it is still a minority of students who would have a reasonable, and reasonable from the point of view of quality as well as time, experience of the arts in schools. So the advantages of arts in education services is that you get professional artists, who know their way around schools, who understand the education system, or learn to understand it, going in doing a job like any other person in a school, and getting children involved in a process that for some of them might actually lead to an interest in the arts. So that is the advantage, at least within a system that is generally regarded as inimical to the arts or unsympathetic to the arts, some children having some exposure or some contact with the arts. Another aspect of that.... every year we commission an exhibition to travel around schools and again that is just another element, another layer to the Arts In Education Services, and ideally what would be happening is that every school in the country could, and would, have one exhibition, one theatre touring company, workshops, and a residency, so that within an overall year, the living arts, the contemporary arts, would have a very real place and meaning for children in a school. It is still very underdeveloped."

Are you trying to create a dialogue with people?

"A dialogue on the natural policy level between the Arts Council, as the statutory agency promoting the arts, and the Department of Education, as the governmental agency responsible for the education system. At a level below that, a management level dialogue between education policy makers, artists, and art educationalists. At a level below that, between inspectors, teachers, schools, artists, art administrators, arts centres, and art organisations. Then at a level below that between artists and teachers and then artists and students or children. So it is a whole series of dialogues."

Once people have had a successful experience with a project, would you agree that they are then far more likely to become involved in subsequent art related projects?

"To teachers, yes. If teachers have had a good experience of an arts project, they will more than likely see it as an area that they can develop on themselves or learn from. But as far as the individual child who experiences a concert or takes part in a residency, or sees a theatre company, what is the ultimate effect? In Rod Taylor's book "Education for Art", ...he asks the question, what is it that makes these demented people go off and train to be artists or get involved in art in the amateur sector? Why do bank managers go out at night and spend time rehearsing an amateur drama play, what is it? He says that one element of it is that when you have a very strong experience of the arts, maybe as a participant, maybe as a receiver, that that motivating experience stays with the young person and eventually develops into a more concrete interest and desire to become actively involved in the arts. How often does that happen? One hundred and fifty children in a hall listening to a concert. How many of them are going to get involved in the arts or get an interest in the arts, particularly when the music company goes away, the theatre company goes away, the residency finishes? There is no structure there to develop that interest. It is a fairly complex problem."

"I spent twelve months working in Ballymun on Base 10 Community Arts Project, and another person, Aine Farrell spent twelve months after me, and another person spent twelve months after her...what effect did it have? Unfortunately I think that is what is really needed, and it might be worth your while to go up to Ballymun and ask them, after having had community arts projects there from December 1984 to three years later, what has that done for community arts in Ballymun? What is the residual effect? Has there been any? That is what I think is the core issue. That leads into another distinction in community arts between what they call mediated arts experiences, where you have a professional involved, whether it's an animateur, someone who sets something going, motivates people, or a professional artist working on a specific project within a specific time frame. Then you have the unmediated community art that arises spontaneously without the involvement of the arts community. You will find precious little of that. But it is increasing ...It is increasing because of the role of groups like CAFE, while CAFE may run a very mediated programme initially, people involved in that may get involved in, or set up, their own activities. That is the whole idea, its a ripple effect."

"I would love to see the position where art, the term 'art', actually disappeared and culture took its place. And there was not this view of the arts as extremely specialist and separate...Working both in education and community arts, it is the one thing you come up against, it is that mystique. Until that is broken down, on a very general cultural level, until that disappears, and the distinction between creative work undertaken by children in school, creative work undertaken by groups in disadvantaged areas, in middle class areas, and creative work undertaken by professionals. Until those distinctions disappear, I think interventions will always be seen as the arts establishment moving in on an area of community activity, and the effect of that, long term, is debatable."

ON CULTURAL PLURALISM

"If you talk to Declan Mc Gonagle and use the term community arts, he will go bananas. (sic) His whole argument is based on the fact that there are centres of cultural power and outside of them are regions and peripheries, and its almost like a hierarchy moving in from the regions into the centre of cultural power. There exists a hierarchy, therefore funding, support, attention, and credit go to the centre and the margins are ignored. But that breakdown is being tackled, and there is now recognition that what is happening in a marginal area, whether it is an urban "disadvantaged" area or a rural area, can be as significant in its own terms as what is happening in the National Gallery or IMMA. Part of that process of breaking down those barriers is the work that Helen O'Donoghue is doing in IMMA with community education outreach work, where you are basically trying to bring in people who would normally never have considered going near IMMA, but also working in the community with them, recognising the fact that you can have access to art in your own community, that you do not have to travel to an institution like IMMA to have access to art. But to draw a distinction between what you are doing there and what is happening in IMMA is as invalid as saying that only art can take place in IMMA, and whatever is happening there, well, it is creative but is it art?"

"Clive Priestly has introduced a new word into the community arts debate and its called the third constituency, and that is basically the disadvantaged, the community arts constituency, the non professional arts activist, and the whole community arts area."

Would you accept the view that "community arts" is often seen as the little brother to community development?

"The Combat Poverty Agency would be very much seen to do with community development and CAFE with community art. The little brother?...They are complementary processes...Initially in Britain, coming from a very strong label movement, an established working class culture which I don't think Ireland has ever had outside of small parts of Dublin, coming from a very left perspective, "community arts" in Britain had a social political agenda. The whole object of community arts was to challenge the power structures and to affect social and political change through the arts somehow, by releasing the creativity of the working class, you could challenge, you could empower. So community arts little brother of ?....In terms of funding, yes, the priority has gone into community development projects, particularly literacy, single parents, drug related problems, increasingly H.I.V. and health issues. Those are ultimately what effect the material quality of peoples lives. However one area that has not been addressed in that area is the whole idea of the person as a creative individual. That has generally been the territory of CAFE and the community arts movement."

"While structural funds, government funds, have gone into social programmes, not so much political programmes, but certainly social and health programmes, 'community

arts' is not being funded, which has resulted in community arts and community development running in parallel tracks, sharing many of the same objectives, but never really connecting in terms of structures. Combat Poverty and CAFE have gotten together and this is an example of one such structure. I think one of the aims of that is to see if on a pilot project base, if similar structures can be established elsewhere, so the gap between community arts and community development is closed. And arts projects in a community development context or a community arts context are funded on the same basis as programmes in health education and single parents support. There is a direct parallel between that argument and trying to convince people who are concerned with the creation of jobs, and the training of people for jobs, to take art seriously within an education context."

"At the moment you have the National Association of Youth Drama up in Gardiner Street, CAFE in Moss Street, the Arts Council education programme here in Merrion Square, Wet Paint in Herbert Street, and the city Arts Centre. What I think is needed more than anything is a cultural development policy. That's what I would see as one of my objectives here, an overall cultural development policy that would bring together all those participation areas within a coherent whole, so that youth arts are not seen as the responsibility of the Department of Education Youth Affairs Section. That community arts is seen as the responsibility of CAFE, the Arts Council, and the City Arts Centre. Derek O'Gorman, of the City Arts Centre, in his programme, is putting into effect a cultural development policy which embraces a wide range of participation arts activities. That is one area where Wet Paint were involved, CAFE have been involved, as have groups like North Wall Women's Groups who have put on productions there. That is where I think the argument has moved to now.... The case for community arts has been made. The case for education has been made, whether it will ever be acted upon, or not, is another question. But what I think is needed now is not so much an ideology as a policy of cultural development."

APPENDIX 3

The Family Resource Centre and the Lourdes Youth and Community Services.

THE FAMILY RESOURCE CENTRE

The Family Resource Centre is based in a local authority flat in the complex of St. Michael's Estate, Inchicore. There flats were opened in 1970 and replaced "Keogh Square" once known as one of the worst slum areas in Dublin.

There are two hundred and eighty eight family units and fifty nine old folk dwellings in the complex.

St. Michael's Estate which is high in unemployment, has a large female population. Many who are women rearing their children in isolation. To address the needs of this group the women's programme was put in place. In its early years it was traditional in its approach providing a space where women learnt to cook and sew etc. As it progressed it changed its focus to a local education model which challenges women to use their intellect and develop their skills and knowledge regarding the society they live in.

One of the objectives of the local education model is to get the participants to think about learning as opposed to schooling. The courses run throughout the year are chosen by the women themselves. The Family Resource Centre has also been active in initiating a formal education for women run in the Emmet Road V.E.C. This course is a next step for women who attend the women's programme in St. Michael's Estate and other local community women's groups. The development of this course offers women an alternative from women's groups and creates greater access to education opportunities for working class adults.

The Family Resource Centre is a community project involved in many areas of work in the community of St. Michael's Estate.

LOURDES YOUTH AND COMMUNITY SERVICE

Lourdes Youth and Community Service was founded in 1984. It is based in the North Inner City.

There are four basic activities which the project is involved in,

1. Full Time Training.
   The project runs a community training workshop for forty young people who are paid a FAS training allowance. Training comes under three main headings; Woodwork, Arts and Crafts and Community Service.

2. Part Time Adult Training.
   The part-time programme offers an opportunity to adults to avail of both training and social amenities organised in fixed groups which meet on a regular basis - the programmes are chosen by the groups themselves and vary from cooking to computers, arts and crafts, literacy and numeracy, assertiveness and personal development.

3. Providing Resources and Opportunities.
   The basic object of the project is to be there for the benefit of the community. In order to do this we try to target as many resources and opportunities as possible. May users have become involved in further education through the project.

4. New Opportunities for Women. (N.O.W.)
   Fifteen women are on a training programme for nine months with a view to either further education or training or paid employment.

Information courtesy of I.M.M.A.

APPENDIX 4.

Interview with Ailbhe Murphy.

The following is a synopsis of an interview with Ailbhe Murphy which took place on the 21st of January 1993 at 2.00 pm. in the Irish Museum of Modern Art, Royal Hospital Kilmainham, Dublin 8.

"As an artist my work is concerned with exploring change in a particular environment and the implications of those changes for the community. If this work is to be informed and have any relevance to the environment from which it stems, I believe it is necessary to engage and work closely with groups who are effecting positive change in their communities. This work practice led me to the North Inner City and introduced me to the Lourdes Youth and Community Services. While working on a project with a women's group there in Spring 1991, I was asked by Rossa Nolan to assist in the design and painting of a mural for the museum. This was when I first met Helen O Donoghue, Rita Fagan, and the women from the Family Resource Centre who participated in that project.

I was very interested in the opening of the museum. I attended a meeting there for artists in May 1991. I came away excited by the potential of the museum as a resource, whose unfolding policies of access and engagement could be shaped as much by artists and groups who choose to work with those ideas.

The contact with both groups, their community projects, and the museum reinforced the idea for the next stage in my work - A project whose starting point would be to bring the women together to explore creatively their experience and how that is shaped by their environment.

I proposed the idea to both projects and the museum, and they were interested. I worked closely with Seanie Lawlee in the L.Y.C.S. and Helen in the museum, (Rita was away at the time) in formulating the aims and objectives of the project. This proposal was submitted to the Arts Council in August 1991 and we received a grant of two thousand pounds under the Artist in the Community Scheme. Matching funding of one thousand pounds came from the L.Y.C.S. and one thousand in kind from the museum who resourced the Family Resource Centre.

The project needed a focus and starting point and, so, at the end of September the women from both centres who were interested in being involved went to see the Great Book of Ireland which was on exhibition in the museum. It was an opportunity to view a collaboration between a wide range of artists and poets, and I saw the initial work evolving as a response to the book.

In October, the ground work of identifying participants had taken place in both centres. In November, both groups met in the museum to identify aims for the project and to agree on a structure that would best respond to the concerns of all the participants. This first meeting was also to begin the process of sharing ideas and experience which would shape future work.

The groups began to meet regularly, the emphasis was on the process of collaboration, on establishing links between the women, the projects, and the museum. Each group met weekly in their respective centres and collectively once every four weeks alternating between the centres and the museum.

The work evolved in distinct phases and was facilitated through workshops given by artists who were identified in response to the needs of the project as it unfolded.

The initial stage concentrated on the value of the women's own experience as a source for their work. This process was complemented by Jean Doyle, who spoke about her one woman play, 'Shades of a Jellywoman', and Paula Meehan's interpretation of personal experience and memories, expressed through her readings and discussion of her poetry with the groups. Kathy Prendergast helped to draw out the important visual metaphors in the stories, and made the links between the idea and the expression of them visually.

This is a process that has been underlined by the other artists who met the groups and exposed them to a wide range of media. They included Maeve Monaghan, Barbara Broughel, Geraldine O'Reilly, Sheila Gorman, Pauline Cummins, and Louise Walsh.. Different ways of approaching the written and the spoken word were explored by Peter Sheridan and the rap poet Maireaid Maeb, with whom the Family Resource Centre recorded a rap poem.

I worked closely with Helen throughout these stages, discussing and exchanging ideas about how the museum could respond to the project, and the project to the museum. As the work intensified so did the depth of exploration of personal experience. For some women this was a particularly painful and difficult process. It was possible to sustain this level of exploration and work because of the support among the women, and the support and experience of both community development projects and their co-ordinators Rita and Maureen. They were a crucial link for the women and myself at all stages of the project. The principles of community development were an intrinsic part of this project, the process was the important factor, and both projects and the museum developed a very close working relationship. The groundwork for this project had been completed through links between myself, Rita, Helen, and the L.Y.C.S., and so 'Unspoken Truths' was a development from there.

Both groups continued to meet together once a month and so a meeting was held in

May 1992, and was facilitated by Patricia Prenderville. It was then that the groups talked about bringing the work further. I should point out that at this stage the funding had finished and the work had reached a certain level where it would have been possible to say that we were completing the project. But everyones commitment to the project was such that we were determined to continue and achieve as high a standard as was possible, over a longer period of time. It as at this meeting that everyone decided they would like the experience to reach a wider audience by exhibiting the work and seeking funding for a publication that would document the entire project. This was to be our 'Book'.

We continued to work until mid July. This was an extremely intense period with the groups coming together in their respective centres twice, sometimes three times, a week. We took a break of eight weeks and came back in mid September. A co-ordinating team of myself, Rita, Helen, and Maureen was agreed by the women and we met once a week from that point on to co-ordinate the project. This allowed the women to concentrate on their work and its completion. The importance of having the project evaluated was identified, and a proposal for funding to the Combat Poverty Agency was successful. Patricia Prenderville and Martin Drury are carrying out this evaluation. As the latter stages of the work was in progress many questions were put forward for consideration - why show work, when, and how? -, which were important to forming the exhibition. As the women worked towards completing pieces, they considered very carefully the shift from the private into the public space; each woman had the choice whether or not to include her piece of work.

A team of mediators worked for a week and a half on the installation of the exhibition; there was no differentiation made between our work and other artists exhibiting in the museum. Some of the women worked closely with the mediators and everyone visited the space during the installation.

There were five hundred and seventy people at the opening of the exhibition, which was opened by President Robinson. It was a brilliant night for all of us. We have been meeting groups every day and bringing them around the exhibition; the response has been incredible. There is an ongoing dialogue between the women, the projects, the museum, and the audience, which is another phase of the process that is the project.

I feel the level of collaboration and consideration throughout the project is reflected in the standard of the work. The exhibition is an example of what can be achieved when resources are made available, however, the evolving nature of this work should be accommodated within funding bodies, - like the Arts Council -, in that further injection of funding can be applied for, and granted, if the project extends beyond its original time frame. 'Unspoken Truths' represents a stage in this field of art practice which embraces Arts Education and Community Development, and it is an area of arts practice which needs to be addressed in art colleges."

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