

T1473

NC 0020913 9



NATIONAL COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN

DEPARTMENT OF DESIGN, PRINTED TEXTILES

***COMMUNITY ARTS:
BROADENING OUR CULTURAL EDUCATION***

**BY
NIAMH KELLY**

**Submitted to the Faculty of Art and Design and
Complimentary Studies
in Candidacy for the Degree of Bachelor of Design in Printed Textiles.**

1995



Illustration No. 1

**"Sea-bed"- Work by the pupils of St. Attractas N.S. Ballinteer,
with artist Julian Hills.**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank several people for their assistance and encouragement in the compilation of this thesis. Firstly to Deirdre Enright, Dun Laoghaire Youth Arts Officer and Jacki Condron Co-ordinator of the Dun-Laoghaire Arts Project , who provided me with valuable and helpful insights into Community Arts. Also I wish to thank Gertie Doyle , Principal of St. Attractas N.S who allowed me to photograph the work of her students as part of the Artist-in-Residence scheme.

In particular, I would like to acknowledge sincere thanks to my thesis tutor, Niamh O'Sullivan for her enduring patience and dedication of time and energy.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

INTRODUCTION	6
CHAPTER ONE:	
Review of the literature on Community Arts.	8
CHAPTER TWO:	
A history of Community Arts in Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown.	19
Youth Arts.	
Arts Council Funding.	
CHAPTER THREE:	
Artist- in- Residence.	30
CONCLUSION	41
ARTICLES	44
BIBLIOGRAPHY	46

LIST OF PLATES

	Page
1. "Sea-bed,"- Work by the pupils of St. Attractas N.S. Ballinteer with the artist, Julian Hills.	3
2. "Sea-bed,"- St. Attractas N.S., Ballinteer.	33
3. "Sea-bed,"- St. Attractas N.S., Ballinteer.	35
4. "Henge."- (1971.) by David Harding, Stone sculpture at the entrance to an estate, Glenrothes, Scotland.	37
5. "Black Spiral,"- (1969-'70) by David Harding. Sculpture made by Willie Bruce, bricklayer in Glenrothes.	39

INTRODUCTION

Community arts are a relatively new phenomenon in Ireland. They started in the 1970's as a reaction against the elitist attitudes that existed and unfortunately still exist today. The arts movement was a natural progression from other movements such as the women's movement, and equal rights movements that were taking place internationally. The general public was finally beginning to make a stand demanding that art provisions be made available to all, and not just those who could afford to participate in elitist practices.

This thesis examines relevant events in Ireland since those early beginnings in the seventies, how we have progressed, what has changed and how much more we have to do. The first chapter will review some of the literature available on Community Arts, concentrating on three of the main texts used as references for Community Arts information in Ireland. The authors are all highly thought of educationalists in their respective fields.

The second chapter will focus on several of the activities that take place under the classification of Community Arts, from youth arts to art groups which cater for every age and social group. One area in particular, Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown, has a great number of arts activities in existence run for and by its residents, who come from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds. This chapter will also deal with the funding of the Arts Council and what has happened in recent times to improve its financial situation.

The third chapter deals with one of the most successful developments of Community Arts practices in detail, the Artist-in-Residence scheme. I will discuss and analyse several projects which have taken place and are in general seen as highly successful and worthwhile projects.

CHAPTER 1

20 years amounts to a lifetime for someone who has only lived for that long, however, in an historical context it represents a relatively short period. But as Community Arts has only existed in this country for 20 years, it is not yet 'old' enough to have had a substantial body of literature devoted to it.

There is undoubtedly a lot of good and worthwhile activity in progress, it has however remained largely undocumented. A great proportion of activity goes on among small localised groups whose activities have never been recorded, registered or assessed. *The Place of the Arts in Irish Education* and *The Art and the Ordinary* were written by Ciaran Benson in 1979 and 1989 respectively. The first report is one of the key texts that addresses Community Arts in Ireland. Both are in fact used as seminal references for almost every subsequent work on this subject.

Jude Bowles has been described as the, "shining light" in Community Arts, her book *Developing Community Arts* provides us with a general outlook on the history of community arts in Ireland. It also recounts the activities of the participants in the National Youth Arts Workers Course, providing an insight into how the actual arts workers feel about the current practices in this country. While *Cultural Policy in Ireland* by Anne Kelly is a more analytical history of the institutional place of the arts in Ireland.

These books abound with recommendations that are largely dependant on more funds being made available, but realism must also prevail. If all of these

recommendations were to be implemented some £10million extra per year would be required for the Arts Council budget. This figure is highly unrealistic when, considering how this year's official Estimates provoked outrage in the arts world be stating the Arts Council would only receive an additional £3million. It was in fact awarded £16million in the final Budget, £3million short of the total request.

The first book I will discuss is the Benson report. *The Place of the Arts in Irish Education* was written in 1979 at a time when Community Arts were largely unknown other than to those directly involved.. Benson, considered to be a radical campaigner for the Arts, conducted the report to fulfil the urgent need at the time to assess the circumstances of Arts Education.

In 1976 following the Richard's Report a meeting of the Arts Council determined that unless they conducted a detailed investigation of the arts in Irish Education, it would be impossible to produce the badly needed arts education policy necessary for the development of the arts in Ireland.

At the time, it was government policy to oppose the expansion of employment in the public sector. This made it impossible for the Arts Council to appoint its own Education Officer. However, the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation agreed to finance the position for the first two years while the Officer, Ciaran Benson, researched and wrote the report. Following the Reports completion, the Taoiseach, Charles Haughey, agreed to provide suitable funding for a permanent full-time Arts Education Officer.

The Place of the Arts in Irish Education was the first report to gather information on all aspects of the Arts and examine its position within the

education system. It also provided over one hundred recommendations, some of which would have been easier to put into action notwithstanding funding, resources and expertise factors.

Benson, in categorising the place of the arts, draws on the UNESCO report *The Place and Function of Art in Contemporary Life*, (1977), reminding us that art represents and interprets our society, its values, beliefs and hopes. The reports also assert that successful artists should be capable of translating and communicating insights to its audience which will result in a greater perception of life within that society. It sees the artist providing us with a vision of life as it can be lived. Art is thus a potent way of conveying a sense of direction within society.

To date Ireland has had a chequered history of involvement with the arts. There have been periods of outstanding contribution, but also elements of a "great but broken tradition." (Kelly, 1989, p36). Years of wars and conquests, national disasters and more recently, political unrest have combined to create an unsettled and underdeveloped artistic environment. Historically, divisions between the art traditions of the wealthier Anglo-Irish and the poorer native population have created an uneven balance of which there are still traces today.

Incredible though it may seem, it was not until 1976 that the Irish National schools curriculum of 1951 was updated. This gives an example of how outdated and unsuitable our education programme was for a modern European society, particularly in the area of the arts. Art as a subject often did not even feature in most school curricula. Many schools suffered greatly from inadequate funding, resources and staff expertise. Since the establishment of the 1976 curriculum there

has been much successful development of the arts, and a greater integration of a wide range of projects at primary level.

Some government bodies today are more aware of the relevance of a good arts education and how it will contribute to the personal development of young people, how it plays a key role in the development of their creativity, as well as assisting them with their understanding of the advance of technology and communications. The integral value of the arts in education and the community, additionally is the importance of pleasure and satisfaction from direct participation.

According to Paddy Woodworth, Benson is known for his "commitment to community arts," (The Irish Times, Wednesday, December 15 1993.)

In his Report on art education he divides Community Arts into two groups, first the arts of the amateur, (naturally the larger of the two), and secondly that of the professional artist. One of the foremost recommendations of the Benson report was the introduction of Arts Officers throughout the country. These would tackle the major problem of poor access to facilities and personnel for communities outside major urban areas. The officers would provide a closer and more sensitive assessment of local community needs and seek to satisfy them. In practise they are usually placed at the centre of a community, advising local authorities on the most effective ways of obtaining funding, and giving expert advice. At the moment there are over one hundred arts officers throughout the country developing arts programmes and policies for their own area.

Another main recommendation by Benson for Community Arts was the introduction of the Artist-in-Residence scheme. It had been a vital part of the Arts in Britain in the ten years prior to his report, and was considered a successful initiative. In 1986 the scheme was finally introduced to Ireland and has been a

success ever since, until then the public only had a vague idea of how an artist worked. But it had taken a full six years to receive approval and the necessary finance by the Arts Council.

The Arts Council has no authority in the role of formal education. Its function is to stimulate public interest, promote knowledge, appreciation and practice of the arts. According to the Richards Report , *The Provision of the Arts* (1976), which Benson refers to in his own report, the Arts Council should, "seldom become involved in promoting the arts - let alone artistic creation," and should "seek all ways of improving standards of education, informing and encouraging maximum participation,

Since the publication of the Benson Report there have been many changes within the Arts Council. Most ironic of all is that the author of the report is now the Chairman of the Arts Council, appointed by the then Taoiseach, Albert Reynolds. Benson's theories and recommendations were thought to be radical for their time so, it is not surprising to discover, that his theories on the role of the Arts Council are different to the ones printed in his 1979 report. He does agree that their main function is to maintain and encourage high standards but also,

"Acknowledge their responsibility to further those structures which assist and develop dialogue between the artists, the arts and the community from which they emerge."

(Ciaran Benson, , Article by Paddy Woodworth in *The Irish Times*,
Wednesday Dec. 15th 1993.)

The report also suggested that the Arts Council should seek to consult with the Department of Education on the planning of a committee for developing the arts in

primary and post primary education . Following this in 1980 the Department of Education published it's White Paper with, for the first time a chapter on Arts Education. In 1984 the Minister established a Curriculum and Examinations Board who published the *Rationale for the Arts in Education*, (1985) compiled by Martin Drury and Ciaran Benson. This contains a highly sophisticated and convincing argument for the role and place of the arts in the Irish education system..

1951 saw the creation of the first Arts Council. This followed the Bodkin Report which recommended the establishment of such a body. .The Arts Act that was introduced, based on findings of the first council demonstrated the government's goodwill towards Bodkin's Report.

The first time a separate chapter on the arts in education was included in the Departments *White Paper* was in 1980. The following *Curriculum and Examinations Board Discussion Paper 1*, (1985) was a major development in the emergence of art as a necessary element in education. It states that "the rationale rests firmly in a description and justification of the intrinsic value of the arts as a distinctive form of knowing". Development of cultural activity is vital to our well being for achievement in life. Most human interaction takes place through symbol systems, that is, verbal or numerical. These alone are inadequate for comprehensive development. The emphasis on art in schools must be altered to include visual awareness into the symbol system along with numerical and verbal forms which are already frequently used, as referred to in the *Rationale for the Arts*. It should be art as education not just in education. To achieve a cultural democracy, political involvement alone will not suffice, participation across the board from every sector of society is necessary.

In conclusion there are many aspects to the Arts Councils position in education. It should assist in influencing the policy decisions in favour of the arts in education, compile and selectively provide information on the arts to school. It should introduce its own schemes to involve young people with artists and their art, for example the Artist- in- Residence schemes as well as assist financially, in the development of the arts in education. Provision of specialist courses for all, from arts workers to the art participants to heighten the present standards of art education is a necessary addition and one which is presently being answered in the form of such courses as the National Arts Workers Course.

Developing Community Arts by Jude Bowles was published in 1992 in association with CAFE. Ms Bowles has been involved in virtually every aspect of Community Arts in Ireland. Her experience as Education Officer at CAFE, and her present work with The Combat Poverty Agency have informed her authorship of this book. It provides us with an overview of Community Arts and a comprehensive report and evaluation on the CAFE devised National Arts Workers Course which ran from October 1991 to June 1992 for thirteen active arts workers.

Community Arts were a natural progression for the democratic movements taking place in the sixties. Political and cultural activists were challenging the conventional beliefs that had previously existed. The activists were motivated by a belief that creative expression was an essential element in the struggle to transform society, thus the cultural definition of the arts was changed to include a wider range of activities. Art was to be brought to the people out of its institutionalised format through festivals, community groups and education. Technical advances in communication helped make it a more accessible subject for all.

Ireland did not develop such socially aware art groups until the seventies as we were more caught up in our own political development to be concerned with cultural issues. We still had many problems within our society which needed immediate attention from rising unemployment to inner city decay . These areas were now being assisted by the introduction of socially aware artists, cultural workers and political activists providing self-help formulas.

Bowles gives the impression that community activists, whether artists or community art workers such as those who participated in the N.A.W.C., are the social workers of the future. These new action groups were tackling issues of poverty, social inequality and education. By discovering and exposing their own creativity, and improving their mental and physical well-being, people were given more control in the direction of their lives. It is not solely an artist's responsibility to make our own environment a better place . It takes a combination of people with similar aims, complimentary skills and talents to help us improve society. The government should be aware of the assistance that these groups provide and back them up in any way they can, through financial resources, facilities and even the allocation of time.

While there was an increasing interest in Community Arts and its possibilities it was not until 1982 that they became part of the Arts Council Budget. The state and its institutions were failing by not providing adequate resources for participation in the arts. As projects took off throughout the country community arts began its transition towards a set of new aims and objectives. Bowles believes that there are four separate areas within Community Arts.

The first category includes artists who present art forms in a local, easily accessible manner such as street theatre, or locally based art exhibitions. Often the themes are relevant to issues within the community. The second category concerns artists who work with local communities or schools, such as the Artist -in - Community scheme funded by the Arts Council and supported by many local councils and educational establishments. The third category relates to the developmental section of community arts uses the activities as tools of personal and community development where a combination of skills are required including organisational and administrative skills. Encouraging people to enhance their confidence and take responsibility for their own lives are the aims of this particular area. Finally the fourth category refers to a community group with a set project in mind who look for a specialist artist to assist with their project.

To divide these areas into separate sections is to suggest they are individual entities and do not overlap or inter-link . This, I believe, is not the case. None of the four sections appear to be radically different enough from each other to merit their own classification. All four areas while defined as separate groups are inextricably linked together to provide a strong community arts development scheme. It is viable for these areas to become involved with each other. For example in Bowles second category an artist in residence is quite likely to use the arts activities as tools of personal and community development with his or her students. Part of the community arts principles is it's availability and accessibility and is what Bowles would advocate as an essential element of its make-up . This is lost when these different "strands" are created.

Until adequate financial assistance is provided for community arts it will be impossible for groups to reach their full potential. In 1991 only 2% of the Arts

Council budget , £219,000 was designated for community arts. This paltry sum was nowhere near what was required for their needs, particularly as that year £10,000 of it went to a once off but valuable project, The National Arts Workers Course.

Yet as Anne Kelly notes in *Cultural Policy in Ireland*, (1989) the state remains the country's most important arts patron, it provides most of the funding and generally has the final say in many major decisions. Private companies, particularly the banks, also provide financial support for Irish Art, but their involvement is predominantly investment motivated. Thus, a combination of both state and public patronage would, it seems, potentially provide the required funding for cultural activities.

Ireland has a narrow definition and understanding of the term, 'Arts'. Two areas, of the arts, in particular, are long overdue a re-analysis. Firstly the, exposure of the public to "high culture" in traditional and relatively exclusive forms and secondly, alternative arts forms. Part of this analysis must recognise that cultural democracy is a dynamic force to be developed by and for all people through education and participation with the community at all levels.

In 1983 the Arts Council published a document on participation in the arts in Ireland, *Audiences , Acquisitions and Amateurs*. It showed that unless considerable recognition was given to the every area of the arts, participation in the arts would be confined to only a small section of the community.

Irish audiences are significantly lower in per capita numbers than other European countries. Many grant-aided theatres and concert venues are reviewing

their policies on winning audiences from a larger cross-section of the population. One such example is the National Concert Hall, which provides a programme of lunch time recitals at very reasonable rates to attract in particular, retired people, part-time workers and the unemployed. The concert hall also runs the 'Music for Fun' programme particularly for children, providing an exhaustive range of music. The programme has been widely acclaimed and its attendance figures rise each year. To introduce people, especially the younger age group to such impressive surroundings provides them with a great sense of occasion and excitement. The whole experience of appreciating good music is therefore associated with enjoyment.

While recognition and acknowledgement of the role of arts is supposedly improving at ground level, the government - rather than letting cultural development expand parallel with social and economic changes - felt it could be left aside and dealt with when economic conditions improve- a situation which is unlikely to occur in the near future. Economic development has and will always remain paramount to the government.

CHAPTER 2

DUN LAOGHAIRE/RATHDOWN:

This chapter will focus on one area in particular as a case study of community arts, that is Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown. Sited south-east of Dublin it has a population of 185,000. Only 10 miles from the city it borders the Wicklow mountains and is also a busy port for passenger and cargo transport. The area covers a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds, from the very wealthy to the under-privileged. Thus there are varied needs. As usual it is those who are less well-off and less mobile who suffer most from poor facilities. These groups have extra problems in standing up for themselves and without support may fail to make their needs apparent.

As an established town there has been time to establish many art groups in the area, unfortunately until recently there was no arts policy and, therefore, much confusion and counter-productive work had taken place. A Co-ordinator of the Dun Laoghaire Arts Project, Jacki Condon, said that "without an organised arts plan the work that was being carried out was not beneficial to the participants". There were so many conflicting beliefs within the community that progress was impossible and quality work was not being achieved. This changed in January 1993 when an Arts Officer was appointed. In 1994 Dun Laoghaire /Rathdown's Arts Officer, with the assistance of the County Manager, Kevin O'Sullivan, published their own *Art Development Plan for 1994-1997*. Their primary aim was to:

"...build a proper foundation for the arts and culture in Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown.. so people can partake, enjoy and contribute to the development of the arts."

(Dun Laoghaire/ Rathdown Arts Plan- June 1994.)

The intention of the plan was to create full access to all sections of the community by maximising existing resources. It identified the areas that needed to be restructured and secure adequate funding to put the above aims into place. A considerable amount of activity is going on at several different levels within the community. The Dun Laoghaire Community Arts Project has been in existence longer than the new Arts Policy. It is involved with six projects, from helping to supervise art schemes to running workshops for local residents.

The Dun Laoghaire Project runs under many different branches. Now that the arts officer and the co-ordinator of the project are able to work together on what the community needs, they can then assist in facilitating these goals. The most effective way to have a successful and vibrant arts community is to start at the beginning , that is, to involve young people. Introducing young people to the arts when they are at their most impressionable age will encourage them to take part in the arts as they grow older. It is the ideal time to capitalise on creative expression , because as we age we may find it more difficult to express ourselves in new ways.

The National Youth Arts Committee was established to cater for the growing interest in youth arts. It produced a report, *Making Youth Arts Work* in 1993. The main aim was to create movement within the arts for young people.

"Movement by the general public towards fuller recognition that young people not only can make their art , but actually need to do so if they are to develop fully as a person."

(National Youth Arts Committee, 1993, p(ii)).

The National Youth Arts Committee believes that involvement in the arts is a crucial element in the development of education and creativity of young people. One does not have to create a piece of work equal to that of the Great Masters to be successful at this stage, or indeed any stage of involvement. It is the development of the self that is important. Some critics do not agree that worthwhile artwork can be achieved if the artist is not, in the words of Edward Doherty "...a specially endowed person." (The Irish Times, Wednesday, August 3, 1994).

Edward Doherty is a retired teacher who has strong views on the role of the arts in society and about who can be described as an "Artist." He is prepared to admit that the arts do have too small an audience, however he believes widening access to the Arts is a delicate issue and must be developed slowly. Several areas, he claims, become relevant, from income and education to background- class and custom. The "D.I.Y. approach", suggesting we are all artists is not his idea of what art should be. Although he will acknowledge that children do have a "creative spark" which if neglected, must be reignited. The problem, according to Doherty, lies with many of the Community Arts workers who's belief that the "issue is not self- expression, but power" Not surprisingly, this strong statement drew much criticism from community arts workers across the country who retaliated virulently in the Letters page of *The Irish Times*. Community arts came about from the need to challenge the notion of the conservative view of culture within society. It contributes to the debate on cultural democracy. Doherty believes, however, Art is a pure activity above the life we lead on a day-to-day basis. By placing the artist on such a high pedestal alienation between arts and the people is expanded. Each of us is a creative being, and with the assistance of the arts may become aware of our own capacity to create and achieve satisfaction from our creativity. This is

what the community arts workers whom Doherty thinks are naive are striving to pass on those who are interested and wish to become involved.

YOUTH ARTS:

Regardless of anti-community arts advocates, work progresses around the country. Ireland has the highest youth population in Europe, in Dublin city alone 44% of the people are under 25 years. This figure rises to 50% in the satellite towns such as Tallaght and Clondalkin. Yet in 1961 a UNESCO report on design in Ireland found, "Irish schoolchildren to be the most under-educated in Europe." Not a statement to be proud of, it is an indication of the low regard which art education once held. Art has never been central in the Irish educational system, to describe it as, at best, peripheral may also be an overstatement of its former position.

Literacy development has traditionally been more important, providing a basic minimum education for all. Fortunately, a more child centred approach that takes creative development into account, now exists. The political and religious history of our country has meant that we have held a low opinion of art. Even today a child's involvement in arts education is often due to:

"Parental income, geographical location or fortunate education opportunity.
An education system... should not be dependant on such variable factors."

(National Youth Arts Committee, 1993, p(vii).)

The National Youth Arts Committee's recommendations are directed at breaking those outdated features. They have begun to put their recommendations into action by introducing four youth arts officers throughout the country. Dun

Laoghaire is fortunate enough to have one of the first. Deirdre Enright began her term in June 1994. She is employed by the National Youth Arts Council, the Catholic Youth Council and the local Vocational Education Committee, (V.E.C.).

Although Enright is not funded by the Arts Council both she and the Arts Officer work together frequently on many projects. Their aim is to co-ordinate a youth arts programme which is developmental, exciting , functional and appealing for the participants and their facilitators. The youth arts officer also provides a network of information for youth groups. If a group is looking for a specialist she can provide the contact between the artist and the youth group.

Hand picking potential artists for a project is an important feature. All the experience in the world as the greatest landscape artist does not mean the person would make a good community artist. The artist must possess leadership qualities, enthusiasm , creative adaptability and great patience, if they are to be suitable for working for any length of time with young people. An example of the suitable considerations needed to set up a project was highlighted in an article in CAFE's December '94 newsletter .

A youth project was set up in the Glen area of Cork city, an area of high unemployment. The leaders had previously decided it was to be an art project, although the participants would really have preferred a youth club. This meant the group was starting on the wrong footing as there were different aims and objectives. A theme had been planned, but again as the young people had not been consulted, it had to be abandoned due to dissatisfaction and disinterest. Several sessions of different art activities were tried out until a model making project

proved the most popular. Masks were created and at a later date, to the great pride of the participants, they were exhibited locally.

The project was successfully salvaged, but not before a number of lessons had been learnt. Amongst the most important points learned was to include members of the group in the planning process. Creating an honest and open atmosphere between all parties helped the project and encouraged members to try things out. In particular, the leader must work hard to motivate the members and communicate easily with them. This lets participants discover their strong points, and educates them in the areas where they work best and feel most comfortable.

Persistence on the facilitator's side is essential, as it can take time for young people to see their creations as purposeful unless the finished product is in sight. Perhaps television is partly to blame for this dependency on passive entertainment. Young people do not have to contribute anything to see a finished product. The art projects can challenge the mind and its creative skills to go further than would ever be possible when an imagination is trapped inside a television screen.

Gradually more and more attention is being paid to the importance of art for young people in education. The Green Paper for 1994 , *A Changing World* highlights the fact that the "educational development of the individual takes place in both formal and informal settings," and that youth work provides opportunities for young people to recognise and develop their talents by doing and reflecting on the experiences created.

Not all youth organised art groups encounter as many difficulties as the one that took place in Cork. The Dublin group Wet Paint, claim to be the only drama

group in existence for young people outside of the formal educational framework. Although only full members of Wet Paint's theatre group can participate in their projects, membership is open to all young people.

"Everyone has the capacity to develop some artistic ability and this is fundamental to the well-being of the individual, they are making the arts relevant to the people who feel excluded."

(Niall O'Baoill, - *The Irish Times*, Wed, May 20th, 1992.)

Director of Wet Paint and also the author of the *Work in Progress* booklet, Niall O'Baoill, is adamant that the realities facing young people be taken into account in the design and practicalities of the programme. As programmes are community based there is the connotation of amateurish work being acceptable simply because of volunteer involvement, in addition the participants are often from under-privileged backgrounds and, therefore, deserve a "sympathy vote" The audience needs to be as critical of a community arts performance such as Wet Paints as it would be of a professional production in a city centre theatre, argues O'Baoill, as it is the only way the groups will achieve credibility.

Wet Paint is not, fortunately for art commentators like Edward Doherty and Tom Duddy attempting to replace or outdo the artists who have a 'vocation' by allowing anyone to take part in their drama group. Rather they are maximising the opportunities and facilities available to them in the most professional manner possible.

Tom Duddy declares himself the "Devils Advocate", of Community Arts. His connotation of, "heroic" community art work is of, "young people painting murals on gable-ends and poetry readings in the local library". He believes arts activists

are naive about the world, being inadequately aware of the enormity of the task they undertake. Accordingly, "Art does not and cannot exist outside the official art world."

Tom Duddy believes community arts activists have the , "romantic and liberating idea that all human -beings have the right and power not only to respond to creative efforts but to express themselves creatively also".

(Duddy, Tom, *Circa*, Issue 67, p28-31.)

ARTS COUNCIL FUNDING:

This year has seen the introduction for the first time of a truly strategic Arts Plan drawn up by the Arts Council and commissioned by the Department of Arts, Culture and the Gaeltacht. This proposal has received praise from almost everyone in the arts and more importantly has obtained the approval of the Minister for Arts ,Culture and the Gaeltacht, Mr. Michael D. Higgins who sees it as a feasible proposal.

The 3 year proposal outlined their financial requirements for '94-'97. They had hoped to double their Budget , bringing it up to £16million over the three year period. The increase was to happen gradually, from £19.5 million in 1995 to £26 million in 1997.

The plan envisages that the youth population, people living in the regions and marginalised groups will benefit most. This particular emphasis was a major feature of the 300 proposals received from a cross-section of the population. The predominant theme was: "The need to allow more opportunities to participate in

the arts." The overall indication was a rapidly increasing public involvement in the arts showing the significant contribution it has to jobs and the material wealth of the country. Arts are now centre stage in the Irish economy, but the infrastructure is still critically underdeveloped.

Observers in the art world are worried about the gaps in the planned programme, in particular the question of who retains overall responsibility for the Abbey Theatre and what are now called the other "strategic institutions." Indeed fundamental questions need to be asked and answered about the relationship between the Arts Council and the Department of Arts, Culture and the Gaeltacht.

The following week, the Estimates for the Department of Arts, Culture and the Gaeltacht showed that while overall there would be an increase for the entire department of 20%, the Arts Council was only to receive £14.25million. The Chairman of the Arts Council Dr Ciaran Benson said he wouldn't be able to address even the minimum needs of its present clients, unless "substantial" increases were made. 1994 saw an increase of 17% in contrast to the 7% published in the Book of Estimates for 1995. Jim Nolan, Artistic Director of the Red Kettle Theatre Company in Waterford believed the allocation, "amounts to a rejection of the three-year plan." One Arts Council member regarded it as a "defeat for the Minister and the Chairman," and threatened resignation if the government did not raise the allocation. The Minister, Mr Higgins still, "affirmed his continued commitment," to seek further increases regardless of the final Budget allocation by submitting the plan to the government for further funding in, "a matter of weeks."

(Paddy Woodworth, *The Irish Times*, January 28, 1995.)

Fortunately in the final Budget allowance the Council were somewhat mollified when they received a £3million increase bringing their budget up to £16.25million. While it is a good deal short of the original proposed allocation submitted by the Council of £19.5million, the Estimates gave the impression that £14.25 million was the designated figure, resulting in uproar from every department within the arts. Dr. Benson believes they will now be capable of supporting under-funded groups and strengthening the position of the arts. Consultation by the Arts Minister with other Government departments should, he hopes, provide the full increase within the year. The allocation was met with great approval and relief from every sector of the arts.

Congratulations from the Artistic Director of the Red Kettle Company were offered on the "framework that, represents the most comprehensive analysis of artistic activity ever undertaken in this country. Endorsement by the government amounts to recognition that the work of individual artists and arts organisations no longer be peripheral, but play central role in determining the quality of all of our lives." The most important element of the plan, according to Nolan, is the question of access for all, with the integration of the Arts Education Curriculum the first essential step. While Jerome Hynes, Chief Executive of Wexford Opera Festival believes that, "arts as a sector is at last being taken seriously in Irish society," there has been, slow but steady progress which has to be advantageous to the community. Hynes also advocates that the Arts have the potential to be of significant economic and social benefit to the public. Fiach Mac Chonghail is the Artistic Director of the Projects Arts Centre in Dublin, he too is an avid supporter of the new arts plan. The public acknowledgement by the Council of its own downfalls is somewhat of a surprise to him. These include the over-dependency of Fas schemes, underfunding of organisations and a lack of strategic planning. Two

areas Mac Chongaill is especially pleased with are the, "Support for the working artist and the strategy to encourage innovative practice in and across all art forms."

Public interest was so great that on the February 12th a discussion meeting took place in the Gate Theatre to discuss the present Arts Council funding situation. While the overall mood was relief on all sides, the general feeling was that State recognition for the importance of the Arts was only the first step, and that the arts could contribute a lot more to society if it were to receive higher recognition in the future.

CHAPTER THREE

ARTIST -IN - RESIDENCE:

The artist-in-residence scheme was introduced in Ireland in 1986. It had featured among the long list of recommendations as far back as 1979 in Benson's report, *The Place of the Arts in Irish Education*. A success story in Britain and the U.S. it was badly needed in Ireland as it provides a unique way of combining the audience and the artist together.

Now in it's eight year the scheme places over one hundred artists a year in schools and communities throughout the country, for a period of six weeks up to one year. The artist and the students work together constructing a piece of art that can be placed on display for the rest of the school or community. The project devisor, Martin Drury, is intent on changing the public's view of the artist and their work.

"Artists aren't dead people. They are the sort of people who drive a car, listen to Gay Byrne and eat corn flakes in the morning."

(Joe Lowry, *The Irish Times*, Friday, Sept. 4 1992.)

The aims of the scheme include, trying to break down the hereditary view of an artist as someone who cannot communicate with his audience, much less work with them on an equal level. Communities and children alike are given the opportunity to work jointly, and try new and exciting creative projects often doing something they never before would have dreamed they could be capable of.

To become part of the scheme schools must apply for an artist with a suggestion of a potential project and the reasons why they believe their school would benefit

from participation. Artists too must submit a detailed application to qualify for the scheme. The Arts Council are quite strict in the application process to avoid any abuse of the scheme, they are not providing a replacement teacher but a supplement to the school's curriculum.

Most primary school teachers only have a basic knowledge of art so cannot possibly pass on more than a basic education in this area. By engaging specialists in whatever field - sculpture, ceramics, textiles, etc. - they are able to pass on a much wider and professional element to the children.

The primary school principal, of Dalkey National School, Ms Christine Lennon believes that "it broadens the children's educational experience and creative skills." While the Art Councils Education Officer, Kieran Walsh considers it is vital that the children are "exposed" to high quality arts in an educational context, "The children see that art is real work and that artists can work in diverse ways."

(Anthea McTeirnan - *The Irish Times*, 16 Feb. 1993.)

The opportunity for young people to work with a "real" artist can be a daunting but enlightening experience, the outdated impression the public have about artists and their art is gradually demystified as the artist and his students work together. Pupils are made to feel important too when such specialists are prepared to work with them on a personal level.

Artists are employed with the brief to produce a finished piece within a fixed time schedule which will be used for display purposes or as part of another project within the school such as the backdrop to the end of term school play. It is an opportunity for both the artist and the pupils to learn from each other. The artist is opened up to a new audience which has new and exciting influences. This exposure can enable a range of different responses, an opportunity to work on a much larger scale, for example, maybe possible as more resources are available through such schemes. Alternatively the artist, such as Seamus Dunbar, who worked in Glenbrien N.S. in Enniscorthy thought that "it might spark off a desire in one of the children to become an artist. I didn't get this opportunity in art and it would have helped a lot ."

(Joe Lowry, *The Irish Times*, Friday, Sept. 4 1992.)

Interaction with the teachers and students can be a bonus for the artist too . Frequently artists work in solitary situations, thus it can be lonely work. Community projects provide at the least a welcome opportunity to associate with the outside world.

Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown Arts Council has an excellent track record, with many primary schools applying for participation. One such school is St Colmcille's N.S. in Ballybrack where artist Julian Hills has just finished creating, "A Forest in a school" with the pupils. They transformed the monotonous corridors and hallways of the school into lush green vegetation that is on permanent display for all who work and visit the school.

The Artist-in-Residence scheme is usually run in conjunction with some classroom work and this one was no exception. The teachers ran a complementary course on rain-forests and their effects on the environment. This meant that children could have a very real connection between art and everyday life instead of their earlier experiences, where art was often disconnected from their lifestyles. Julian Hills has just completed a project a three month project with the pupils of St. Attracta's N.S. in Ballinteer.



Illustration No. 2

**"Sea-bed"- Work by the pupils of St.Attractas N.S., Ballinteer,
with the artist Julian Hills.**



On this occasion they were creating a "Sea-bed" that formed part of an installation for the end of term school production. Each class in the school had a maritime theme for their own drama productions to correspond with the scenery. Members from every class within the school helped in the design and construction of the 'Sea-bed'. According to the School Principal Mrs Gertie Foley, the school hopes to leave the 'Sea-bed' display up in the school-hall for as many people as possible to see. Julian Hills will be returning to the school for the last term to work with the pupils in a classroom situation for more art education.

Luckily it is not only primary schools who benefit from the scheme, but the whole community too. The area also has an artist working in Shankill village for a year in collaboration with Choices Community Resource Centre, Dorothy Heywood is the artist working in the unusual medium of mosaic. She has ten people working with her helping to design and put together a collection of pieces to be installed throughout the village of Shankill. These ten people are mostly graduates from art colleges, (three of whom come from the Dun Laoghaire Community Arts Project), are given the opportunity to work in full time employment for a period. Providing eleven positions for a year is an advantage to start with, but together teamwork, and of course, new design skills are learned. Naturally it is the community itself who will benefit in the long run as the mosaics are fitted in and around the village making it a more aesthetic and interesting place. Often permanent art work in towns and villages can be quite drab and boring in colour and texture, huge slabs of grey concrete in an abstract form are not everyones idea of beautifying an area. Hence these highly individual, ornate and interesting mosaics create a welcome, yet eye-catching change.

Craigavon, Co. Armagh has also come under the influence of the Artist-in-Residence scheme. The artist Ken Parker has been working with the Brownlows Community Trust for the past year.

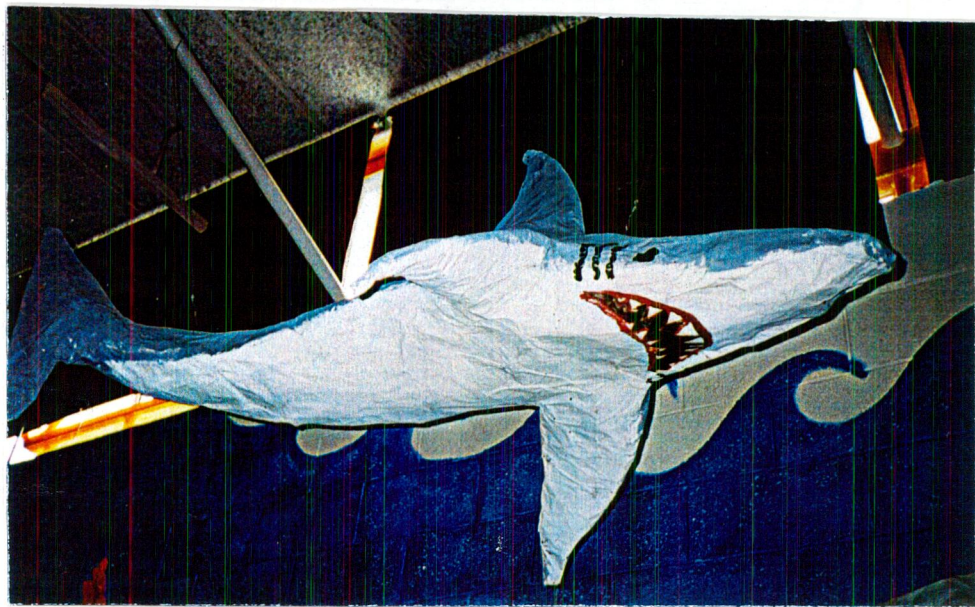
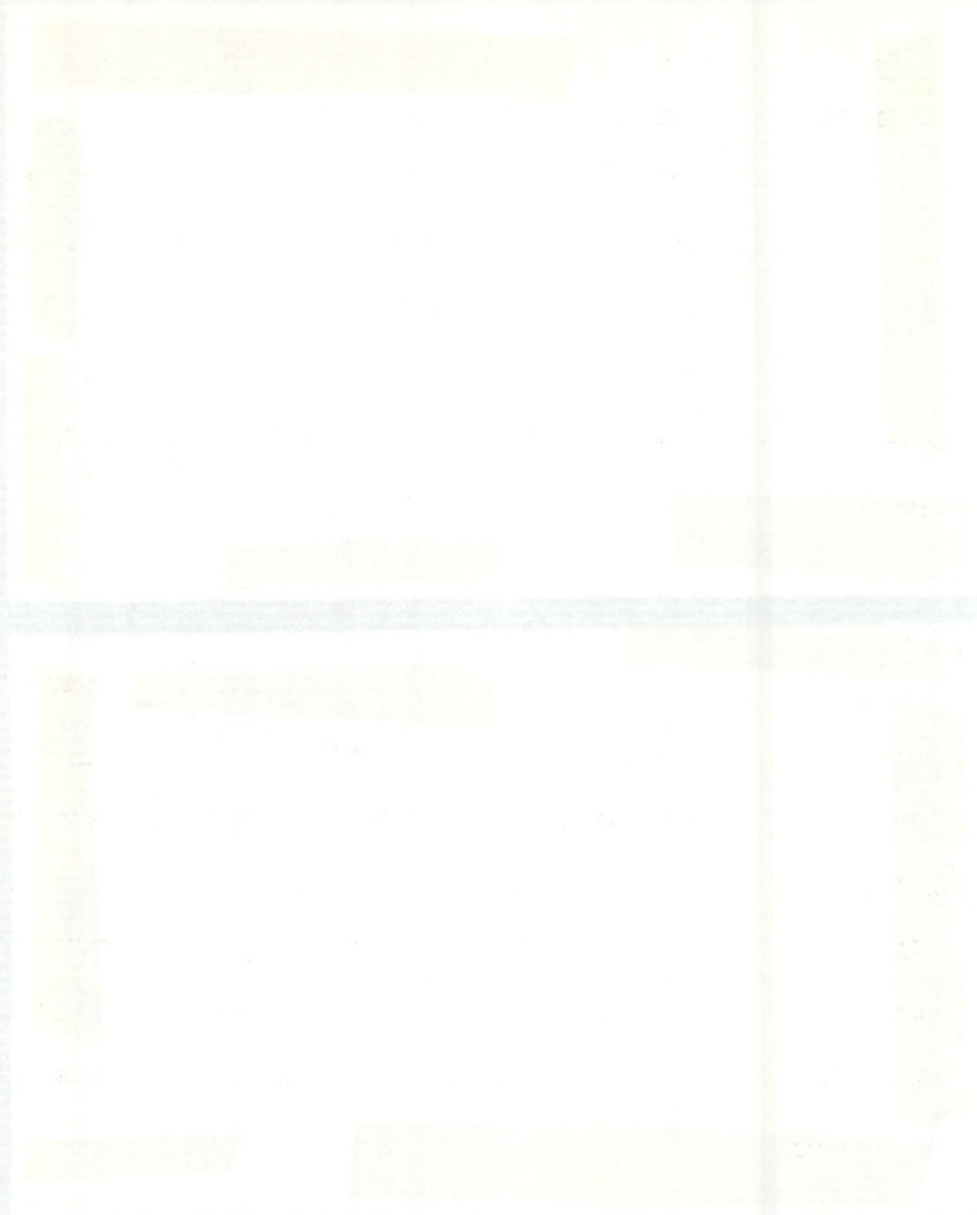


Illustration No.3

**"Sea-bed."- Work by the pupils of St. Attractas N.S. Ballinteer,
with the artist Julian Hills.**



Working with young people, he believes, can only help them decide what they would like to do in the future. Imaginations are fired and creative skills are enhanced, giving them an interest in the arts that will last for ever. In this scheme people from all areas of the community are involved, they are provided with opportunities that they otherwise would never have come across. Basic communication and integration skills are developed while confidence is raised among a group of people who once would have thought that art is only about painting a picture.

For almost thirty years the Artist-in-Residence scheme has been established in Britain. It was particularly effective during the development of new towns in Scotland, similar for example, to the satellite towns of Dublin. An artist was employed by the county council along with the architect and builders to assist in the development of the area's design. The town of Glenrothes for instance, employed David Harding, an experienced community artist to assist with the aesthetic aspects of the environment. Shops, community halls, schools, roads and entire estates were built in one enormous construction development, thus creating a mass of uniformity .

Harding's brief was to contribute to the built environment, by adding focal points of interest, and generally improving the appearance of the new town. Harding also researched the area in great detail. As most of the work was taking place on active building sites he decided to maximise the skills of the local trades people, such as builders and bricklayers, so that they could show off their own creativity and talents in design and draughtsmanship. It also meant that more employment was provided for the locality. Art students and young people over 16

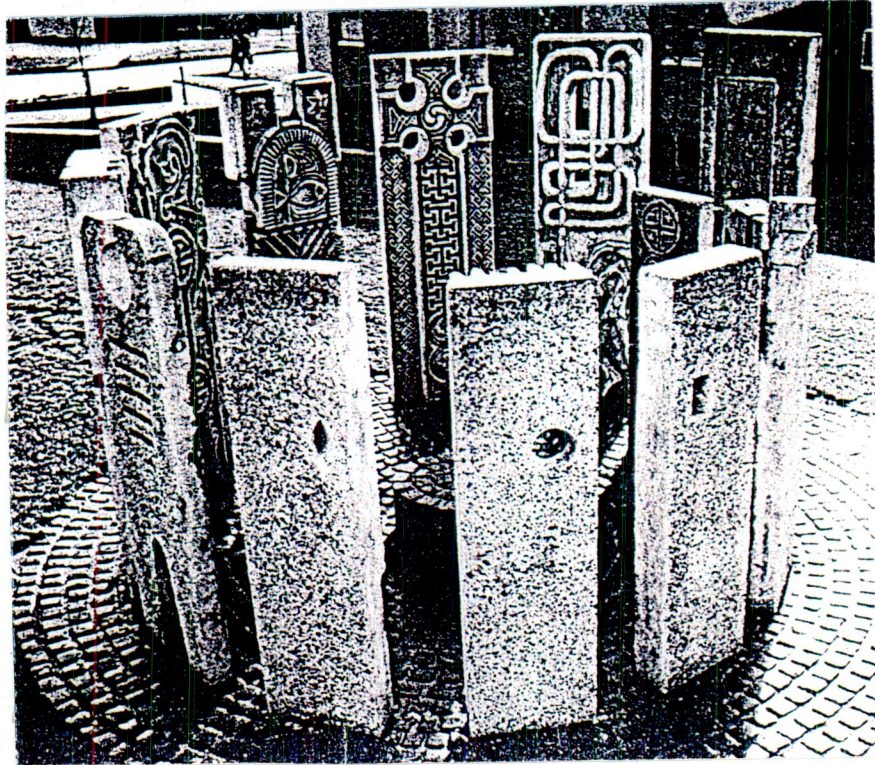


Illustration No. 4

"Henge". - David Harding, (1971.)

-It is a pre-cast form based on Celtic and Pictish images and is situated at the entrance to an estate in Glenrothes.



years were employed during the summer months. By involving people who lived in the area, Harding helped them develop a strong sense of pride in their work.

The art work has not merely become eye-catching pieces as one passes by, but in fact become part of the community. Sculptures at the entrance of estates become meeting points, even a place to develop a children's game. Integration between the fine arts and everyday life occurs almost without the resident's realisation.

"Henge" built in 1971, is an ideal example of this. It is a pre-cast form based on stone circles and spirals of ancient Britain, with Celtic and Pictish imagery. Situated at the entrance to an estate it is used as the basis for a ball game which local children have invented. When something like this happens Harding feels his goals have been achieved. "The base of art was broadened and democratised....demonstrating that there should be a cultural democracy."

(Moir Roth, *High Performance*, Vol. 9, p.42-46, 1986.)

Since his involvement with the town of Glenrothes a clause in the planning briefs of new towns has stated that the artist must be consulted at every stage of development. It is an obvious sign of approval from the government and local councils that they realise the relevance and necessary role the artist can play.

Here in Ireland we have not quite made that breakthrough statement yet, although circumstances are certainly improving for artists. Over the past few years an increasing number of Public Art projects have taken place. The brief for this falls under three areas, (i) Public advertisement, (ii) Short-listing applications, and (iii) the selection of the "winning" piece by a Board of Officials. Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown County Council made a provision of £300 to assist them with their proposal designs.

The first piece commissioned in 1987, was designed by Rowan Gillespie and stands at the Blackrock by-pass. It cost the Corporation £15,000.



Illustration No. 5

"Black Spiral". - David Harding, (1969-'70.)

-This sculpture was made by Willie Bruce, a bricklayer from Glenrothes.



In 1991 an abstract metal sculpture was installed in the forecourt of Blackrock Fire-Station. This piece was designed by Richard King costing just under #15,000. The remaining money was used to pay for seven prints which enhanced the interior of the of the station, a welcome example of using the available funds as creatively as possible to benefit the stations staff also. The third commission was an unusual public art piece as it was not the standard sculptural work but a ceramic mural designed by Michael Lonergan for a new Pumping Station. It was also unusual in that it was designed specifically for the interior of the station rather than the exterior, proving that the Council was also interested in improving their workers environment, and not just winning acclaim for highly visible pieces.

It would be impossible for any project to remain faultless and indeed the Artist-in-Residence scheme is not perfect. One feature which can present problems is the stipulation that the local council must employ an artist from its own area. While it does provide much needed employment for the locality it is not always possible to find a suitable professional for a particular project. This problem has arisen in the Tallaght area. It is a new town, so there would not be a great history of the arts, hence a limited number of artists are available. It is unrealistic to expect to have the best candidate available in every community, and as a result the individual expert required may not live in the locality so either a project may have to be abandoned or else continued on, but without an artist of the required calibre or experience. Another complaint of the scheme by participants and the art workers is the brevity of a project, they usually only last for about six months to a year. Those involved feel they are over far too soon to benefit them in the long-term, but then this only proves the success of the schemes, if they didn't work, no one would complain about them being too short..

CONCLUSION

Throughout the thesis we have seen the gradual progress, made within Community Arts in Ireland. From the introduction of reports and recommendations on this subject to the more recent instigation's of successful projects, for example the Artist-in-Residence scheme.

Primarily the recent developments in the Arts Council Plan, (1994-1997) have demonstrated the growing acknowledgement by the government for a substantial improvement in arts education policy. Greater finance alone is not the answer to every problem within community arts. Leadership skills for the arts facilitators are requisite to a successful arts endeavour. Projects such as the CAFE co-ordinated, National Arts Workers Course should not just be a one off venture. Places for only thirteen art workers were available for this course, which cost over £10,000 to fund. There are hundreds of dedicated arts workers throughout the country who could not have participated in the CAFE organised course. With figures like these involved, serious consideration must be taken on how to make it a more commercially viable resource.

Just two years ago the Final Report of the National Youth Arts Committee, commissioned by the National Youth Council and the Arts Council was published, *Making Youth Arts Work*, (1993.) Their recommendations were aimed at all aspects of youth arts, "Movement" was one of the key issues to address.

'Movement' has taken place within Youth Arts since the introduction of arts officers in specific areas. The arts situation has become a more organised and successful venture, as is the case in the Dun-Laoghaire/ Rathdown area. Communication between local County Councils and the Art Council's Officers

have led to many projects including, Dorothy Heywood working on the mosaic project in Shankill and a Youth Arts Weekend organised the Youth Arts Officer Deirdre Enright.

Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown has also benefited from their Youth Arts Officer working in the community . The young people here have an advantage over other areas as they are likely to have a more comprehensive artistic education than their contemporaries. Four Youths Arts Officers is an improvement, when the alternative was no arts officers, which was the case until 1994. By increasing the number of Youth Arts Officers young people will have greater opportunities to become involved in creating and appreciating the variety of activities within the arts. Judging from the enthusiastic and successful response achieved to date, it is possible that the Arts Council and local Councils will recognise the need for more Youth Arts Officers and provide the finance necessary .

The instigation of the Artist in Residence scheme proved to be one of the most successful ventures for the Arts Council to date. Each year it grows in stature and popularity, as it becomes a more widely known project. It demonstrates how large projects such as this one can succeed when they are suitably funded and researched and that the money is well spent. Funding spent on many art groups who receive only a small subsidy for their project cannot possibly have as professional and successful project as the few lucky groups who do receive a reasonable amount of financial and practical assistance. When the Arts Council has funded a particular project adequately the rewards have been greater as the National Arts Workers Course and the Artist-in-Residence have demonstrated.

Providing arts development continues at a similar level as at present, that is: The current Arts Plan receives the rest of its proposed allocation and the Arts Council follow their recommendations, Ireland will finally be looking at a healthier arts situation for the majority. It is due to many dedicated people that the circumstances have improved to the present level. With continued support and interest Ireland should no longer be the country to have the most under-educated school-children in Design in Europe.

ARTICLES

1. Arnold, Bruce , "The Gentle Art of Not Throwing Money Around," - The Irish Independent, January 26th 1993.
2. Crudden, Eamonn, "Yellow Pack Workers Unite," - Circa ,-Issue 68 , p. 32-35.
3. Doherty, Edward, " Art for the People,"- The Irish Times, Wednesday, August 3rd 1994.
4. Duddy, Tom, "The Politics of Creativity, " Circa - Issue 67 ,1994 p.28-31.
5. Fitzgerald, Sandy (Second Opinion,) "Art for Democracy," The Irish Times, August 23rd 1994.
6. Grimes, Nancy, "The Rivington School,"- New Art Examiner. November 1989 p. 29-32
7. Holland, Mary, "Arts Plan: First Responses,"- The Irish Times, Thursday, February 9, 1995.
8. McEneaney, Annemaria, "Extra £2m will set Grand Plan,"-The Irish Independent, Thursday, February 9,1995.
9. McTeirnan, Anthea, "Arts Council to Double Number of School Artists," The Irish Times , February 16 1993
10. Pine, Richard, (Letters Page,) "Community Arts and People,"- The Irish Times, March 3rd 1993
11. Richardson, Sue, (Letters Page), "Community Arts Funding", The Irish Times November 11, 1994.
12. Roth, Moira, "Art in a Community Context", High Performance, Vol. 9, No. 1, 1986, p42-46.
13. White, Victoria, "Celebration reigns after 'a heck of a week' for the arts" The Irish Times, Monday, February 13 1995.

14. White, Victoria , "Tallaght Tangles with the Arts," The Irish Times, May 26 1993.
15. White, Victoria, " What Makes Community Arts so Different?,"- The Irish Times, Wednesday May 20 1993.
16. Woodworth, Paddy, " Anger at 7% Increase" - The Irish Times, Saturday, January 28th 1995.
17. Woodworth, Paddy, "Doubling of Budget... " - The Irish Times, Saturday, January 21st 1995.
18. Woodworth, Paddy, "The Changing Powers of the Arts Council," The Irish Times, December 15 1993.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Artists Association of Ireland, Crisis in the Arts.
2. Benson, Ciaran, Art and the Ordinary, The Report of the Arts Community Education Committee. Dublin: Orchard Press, 1989.
3. Benson, Ciaran, The Place of Arts in Irish Education. Dublin: The Arts Council
1979.
4. Benson.C. and Drury.M. A Curriculum and Examinations Board Discussion Paper 1. -Rationale For the Arts in Irish Education. 1986.
5. Bowles, Jude, Developing Community Arts. Dublin: CAFE Ltd., 1992.
6. Eisner, Elliot.W., Educating Artistic Vision, New York: Macmillan Co. 1972.
7. Kelly, Anne, Cultural Policy in Ireland. UNESCO/ The Irish Museums Trust, 1989.
8. Kennedy, Brian, Dreams and Responsibilities: The State and the Arts in Independent Ireland. Dublin: The Arts Council, no date given.
9. Lowenfeld.V. and Brittain. W.L., Creative and Mental Growth, 8th Edition, New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1987.
10. Miles, Malcom, Art for Public Places. Hampshire: Winchester School of Art Press, 1989.
11. National Youth Arts Committee, "Making Youth Arts Work", April 1993.
12. Shaffrey,C, and O'Sullivan, K. The Dun-Laoghaire /Rathdown Arts Development Plan. (1994-1997).-June 1994.
13. The Dublin Arts Report Working Group, The Dublin Arts Report. ELO Press, 1992.

