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**COLAISTE NAISIUNTA ELAINE IS DEARTHA
NATIONAL COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN**

ART FOR THE ADULT LEARNER

**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE
FACULTY OF EDUCATION**

IN CANDIDACY FOR THE

DIPLOMA FOR ART AND DESIGN TEACHERS

BY

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JUNE 1999





I hereby declare that this dissertation is entirely my own work and that it has not been submitted as an exercise for a diploma or degree in any other college or university.

Signed Yiner Poole

Dr. van Dyke

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ABSTRACT

This premise of this dissertation is that there is great value to both the individual and society in promoting the participation of adults in the arts. In compiling this information it is important to give an account of Adult Education in Ireland with particular reference on *The Green Paper, Adult Education in an Era of Lifelong Learning*. Its conclusion is that more focus should be dedicated to the arts.

Supporting this premise, the dissertation focuses on the Case Study: 'Poole of Artists', an art class for older people. The analysis of the case study is used to derive lessons and make recommendations for the development of art groups such as the 'Poole of Artists'.

The dissertation examines the participant's backgrounds. It also discusses the views of the participants and observations of the art activity. The results of the survey are described. Relevant texts, reports and articles inform the dissertation analysis and conclusion.

There was a high level of satisfaction expressed by the participants of the 'Poole of Artists'. There was evidence that the participation in the class boosted the confidence and self-esteem of the group.

There are clear indications that there is demand for arts activities such as the 'Poole of Artists'.



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to thank the following people who aided me with the research for this dissertation: My tutor: Professor Gary Granville, (National College of Art and Design), for his help and encouragement. Kevin Smullen, Adult Education Officer, (Finglas/Cabra). A very special thanks to The 'Poole of Artists', (Finglas), for their help and commitment.



INTRODUCTION

“For age is opportunity no less than youth, though in another dress and as the evening twilight fades away the sky is filled with stars, invisible by day.”

Morituri Salutamus, Longfellow¹

I have worked in community arts, which involves adults, for four years, thus, my interest and passion for this subject. The demonstrable interest in adult involvement in arts and the wealth of talent among older people is a firm foundation upon which to base developments. Successful developments of adult education show that more effort should be put into reaching out to those who have not yet developed the habit of participation in further art education.

Interest among older people in arts activities is becoming more common. It can be seen in many local groups in which older people practice and develop their artistic skills. In the ‘Arts Plan 1995-1997’, Arts Council states that it endorses the tenet that the arts can act as a catalyst for self-expression for older people². This dissertation is concerned with mature students returning to visual community art and with current issues that surround this. I have used a case study (which is in Dublin) as an example of an approach to community art. The study contains extensive written and oral research from various publications and official reports.

The community art project is the 'Poole of Artists', an oil painting class which takes place on a weekly basis. It involves the participants, three men and thirteen women and the author as the instructor.

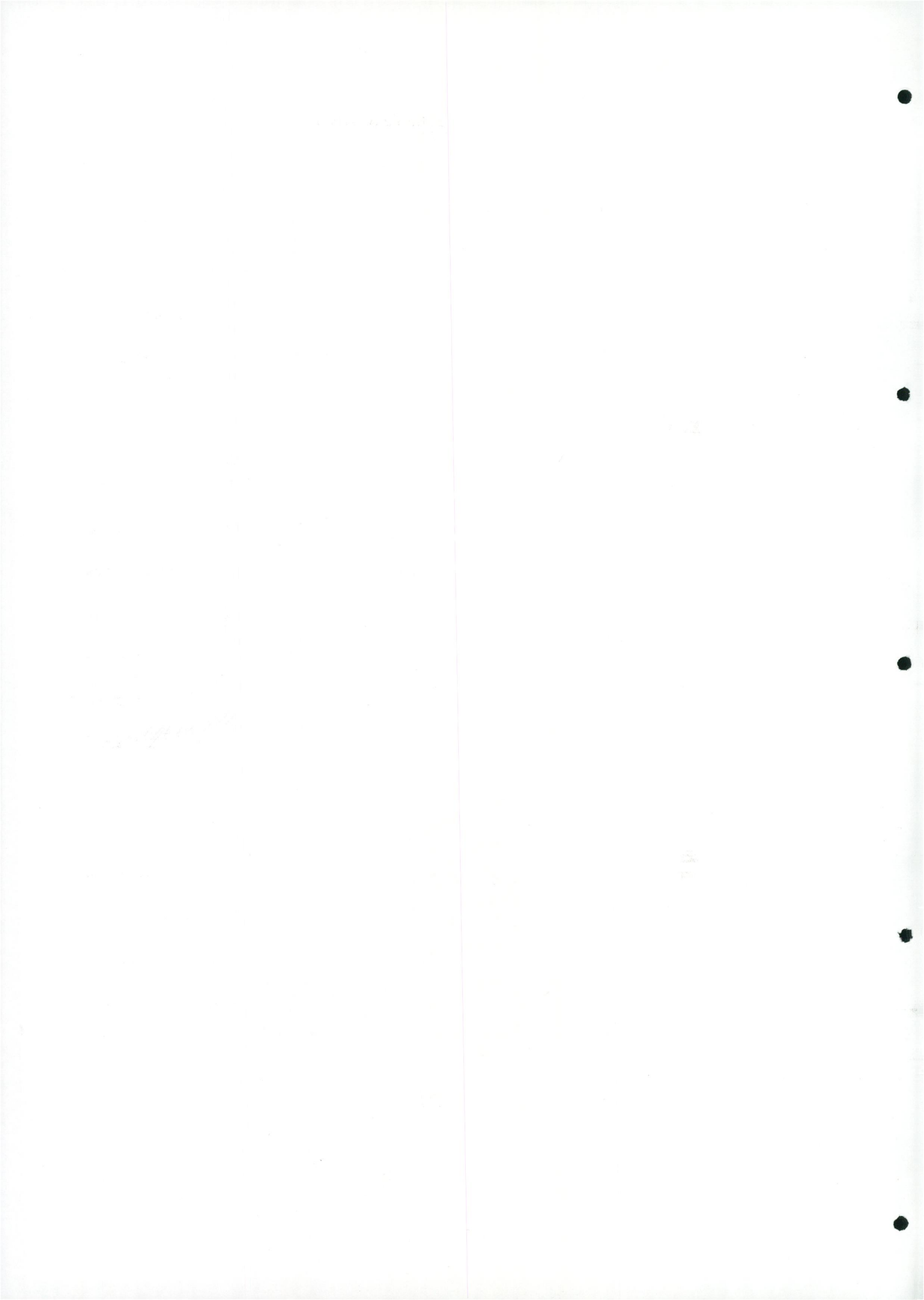
While I examine this project I also raise some important questions:

- Why do the participants choose to take part in this particular form of art?
- Do they feel that their choice is as important as that of other people's choices?
- Is the process as important as the end product?
- Are the participants attracted to the projects for the same reasons?

The case study describes personal experiences of being involved in the particular art activities and in participation. Generalisations are drawn for analysis of these groups' experiences

During my research on community art I found a much higher number of women participants. Because of this, I will examine the gender aspect of community art, with particular attention on the project mentioned. I will also examine the reasons why women become involved in community art. Are women braver? Do they have more stories to tell?

There have been dramatic changes in the role of women during the lifetime of older people. A career was unusual for women, and large families were the norm. Women's lives revolved entirely on managing the house and raising children. There was little time or energy for most to pursue other interests. Older women thus may never previously have considered the possibility of participating in the arts outside the home.



CHAPTER ONE

Adult Education

A Brief History of Adult Education:

Adult Education's evolution and history is difficult because of its multiplicity and diversity of providers and wide range of emphasis, developments and objectives. However, it is possible to map the evolution of Adult Education in Ireland since the states foundation in terms of three phases and two streams.

Phase One (1922-1969)

Statutory Sector:

This phase included legislative developments which had a lasting effect Adult Education and on Irish Education in general. In 1924 the government organised a new department of education. In 1930 the Vocational Education Act was passed, this established vocational areas to help develop and maintain systems of "continuing education" and to offer technical education. 1960s saw a long-term investment in education. ANCO, the state training council, was set up in 1967 which provided vocational education. Plans for an expansion in third level education began a submission on Higher Education in 1967.

The Non Government Sector:

Adult Education in the late 19th Century could be seen to shape the role of the nature of societies which evolved in Ireland after the states foundation.

Many of these societies were concerned with culture and farming in rural life, faced with limited opportunities and problems such as distances or access to urban centres and community structures. In 1940 University Collage Cork, set up an outreach centre which held Adult Education courses in more urban areas.

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Later, other education services were established which included Dublin Institute of Technology. The Trade Union Movement set up the People's College in 1948. These organisations are solid proof of the strong interest of Adult Education outside the formal statutory sector of this period.

Phase Two (1969 – 1988)

Statutory Sector:

In the 1960s the cultural and economic growth and its links with investment in education was acknowledged by the publication of the investment in Education Report in 1965. This was reinforced at International level by organisations such as the Council for Europe's Council, the Council for Cultural Co-operation, OECD¹ and UNESCO². However, it was evident that the main investment was in other areas of education rather than the Adult Education sector.

There are two major reports on Adult Education.

1. Report on Adult Education in Ireland (1973)
2. Report of the Kenny Commission on Adult Education "Lifelong Learning" (1984)

Programmes in Adult Education were never likely to expand due to the economic problems which emerged from the two oil crises in the 1970s and from the pressure of modernising the Irish economy after entering into the EEC in 1973, plus the growth in the population of school going children.

However, there were some important initiatives taken particularly the appointment in Adult Education organisers and support to key voluntary bodies. There was further significance with the establishment of community and comprehensive schools with specific provisions for adults.



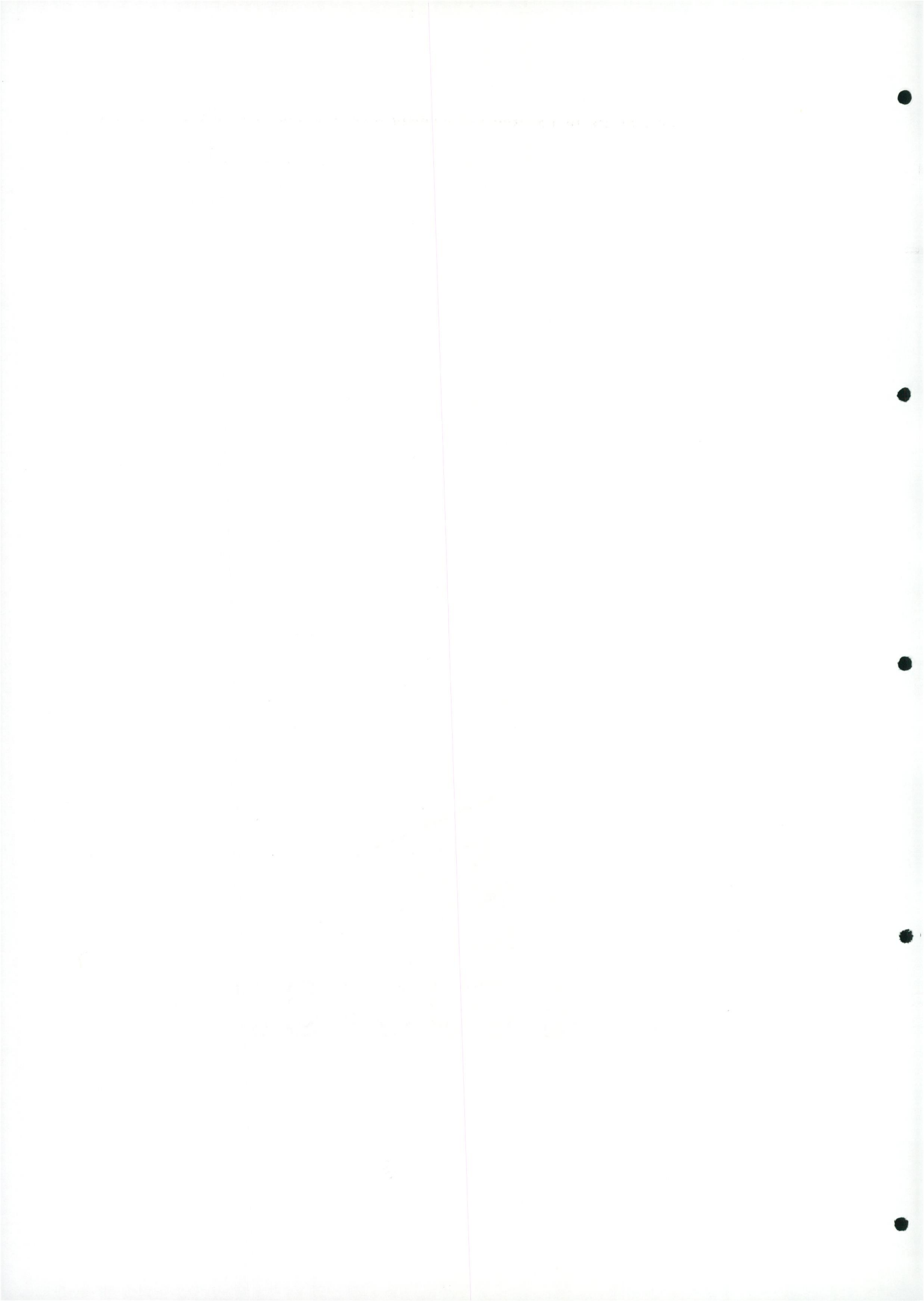
Non Government Sector:

Since the foundation of AONTAS (Association for Adult Education) in 1969 its members has shown a growth in diversity in the Adult Sector. In 1970 its members were mainly from the Statory Sector. Through the 1980s and 1990s the support has become broader with a range of voluntary organisations. In 1980 the NALA (National Adult Literacy Agency) was established and received a government grant to establish a secretariat in 1984. ✓

Phase Three (Developments since 1989)

The states involvement in Adult Education shows a major new departure since the introduction of National programmes for second chance education. In 1986 the Education Opportunities pilot project was set up in Limerick and Dublin. This led to the establishment of the VTOS (Vocational Training Opportunity Scheme).

Other Adult Education initiatives such as FAS (a State Training Body) set up out of school programmes which developed rapid training opportunities particularly those focused on the re-integration of the unemployed into the labour force. Later the establishment of Community Development Programmes by the Department of Social Welfare and community and Family Affairs. Universities, DITs and RTCs have been recognising the importance of Adult Education with its function to “provide vocational and technical education for economic, technological scientific commercial, industrial, social and cultural development of the state”³.



Development of the Non Government Sector during this time is seen by its increased size of informal community based groups in the voluntary sector. Adult Education and community education had become more urban based and 'suburban' especially in the working class areas.

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Adults should enjoy a degree of flexibility and support with regard to their use of learning opportunities and facilities at different times of their lives. In 1975 the Alexander Report on Scottish Adult Education declared that:

There are many adults in all walks of life who have acquired the capacity to maintain the process of self education through reading and discussion, through selective viewing and listening, through travel and by many other means without the need to participate in any form of organised education programs⁴.

Could this mean that individual independent learners, local hobbyists, groups and enthusiasts, use societies as their most important learning resource?

The Green Paper - Adult Education in an era of lifelong learning which was published in November 1998, states that “lifelong learning embraces all systematic learning by adults, both formal and informal. Therefore coverage of adult education is both diverse and fragmented: many settings, many modes and many providers”⁵.

If we examine adult education in our society at present, in comparison with the past, we can see it has become much more popular and quite healthy in covering a wide range of settings. Providers are no longer only from the statutory and voluntary sectors, they are also provided by the community and social welfare sector. It is not just supported by the Department of Education, but also the Department of Social Welfare with such schemes as the Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme and the Back to Education Allowance.



The Green Paper published on adult education proposes to “ review the current structure of adult education and provide a series of recommendations on how the sector should develop”⁶. Its aims are to:

- Promote awareness and debate on the key role of adult education in meeting the challenges which confront the society as we enter the new millennium:
- Place adult education within the context of overall educational developments in Ireland and the European Union and the changing economic, social and cultural environment:
- Outline current provision and participation and identify the main gaps or weaknesses in provision:
- Set out a basis for a national policy on adult education and propose a series of priority actions in the field:
- Propose mechanisms for the co-ordination and mainstreaming of the sector, as a key component within an inclusive education system which promotes access, participation and benefit for all on a lifelong basis.

The Green Paper also proposes an approach which recognises adult education

1. as a component of an overall lifelong education system with a fundamental objective of promoting the well-being of all citizens:
2. as a key contributor to social and economic cohesion through:
 - (a) second chance education and training opportunities and
 - (b) addressing skill needs of adults in a range of disciplines, particularly in the areas of literacy, communications and information technology and
 - (c) provision of reflective learning opportunities for particular disadvantaged sectors of the population, such as women, long-term unemployed, people with disabilities.
3. as a particular and empowering process which strengthens the democratic system.

The Green Paper recommends a balanced approach to adult education and lifelong learning incorporating social, cultural, environmental, and personal concerns.

In approaching the Green Paper it adopted the definition used previously in the Report of the Kenny commission on Adult Education:

Adult Education includes all systematic learning by adults which contributes to their development as individuals and as members of the community and of society, apart from full-time instruction received by persons as part of their uninterrupted initial education and training. It may be formal education which takes place in institutions e.g. training centres, schools, colleges, institutes and universities, or non-formal education which is any other systematic form of learning including self-directed learning.⁷

The definition embraces lifelong learning and occurs a variety of settings, both formal and informal. The modes of delivery should vary from formal classes to self-directed learning, and take place in a wide range of locations incorporating sports and leisure, discussion groups, and community groups.

Adult education must include groups whose goals are not only firstly educational. It should lead towards self-development. The Green Paper recognises the contribution of adult education to enrich the lives of the participants and society at large in a pursuit of a wide range of educational interests for their own intrinsic appeal. At the launch of the Green Paper, the Junior Minister of State for Education and Science Willie O'Dea stated:

I am not advocating a totally utilitarian approach to adult education. We all recognise that it embraces more than the vocational training, that it supports personal development and enrichment, pursuit of arts and culture.⁸

There is an educational component in self-developmental and activist initiatives such as the visual arts. This is a form of personal development education which is probably one of the most important educators of all. Because art is a visual activity we can see how well its participants learn, what resources are available and who effectively they use them. We can also see where there are areas of need that might not be met.

Art projects can function as an educational influence in that it is the setting in which peoples attitudes, talents and behaviours are influenced. Some art projects can attempt to develop and alter behaviour, attitudes and to stimulate fulfilment. It puts knowledge into a form of 'Creativity' for ordinary people to understand and use. It is obvious that more adults are actively involved in various creative activities. It must be said, however that artistic achievements of older people often go unnoticed (Fig 1).

It is interesting to consider why sometimes there is lack of recognition if these artistic accomplishments. It could be mainly accounted for by the prevalence of negative attitudes to older people which do not allow for older age to be a time for creativity?

Some adults are often slow to advertise their achievements, indeed, many artistic activities in which older people are involved are not labelled and thus are not seen as anything special.



Fig 1.




Oil Painting Class, Mater Christi, Finglas, 1994.
Left to right, Rita McCormack, Molly O'Loughlin, Phil Breslin and Richard Walsh.



The labelling of these activities as 'artistic' is important as it endows them with a status they may otherwise lack. It raises the self – esteem of the participants and gives them a more positive image in the eyes of others.

Many adults have found tremendous fulfilment in exploring their own creativity. They often share their personal learning and growth to the benefit of their families and their communities. Some adults have a lifetime of experience to contribute to creative activities. Developing opportunities for adults to engage with and investigate, connecting art to their own lives will confer benefits on the whole community.





CHAPTER TWO

Case Study: the 'Poole of Artists'

Adults usually seek activities to interest and challenge them. They are taking advantage of many mainstream activities and have needs and interests particular to their age groups. Painting can be seen as an enjoyable leisure activity which is interesting, rather than a useful process. Yet, 'amateur painting' is a popular form of art practice which is representative of the type of work made by the majority of art groups, especially retirement groups.

Finglas has always had a strong sense of community spirit and today that strength is still very evident. In the past projects were successfully set up by individuals or groups such as the Local Tenants and Resident Associations. But Finglas has grown so much since then that it has now got its own Partnership¹. There are around forty registered community groups in Finglas and out of that number there are only two adult art groups. There are other groups and centres which also hold arts and crafts classes but not on a constant weekly basis.

The youth of Finglas have certainly benefited from the input from the various funding bodies, but on examination the elderly seemed to be forgotten about. If it wasn't for private art groups or classes, many adults would be at a disadvantage.



The 'Poole of Artists' (Fig 2) is an oil painting class for adults which was set up by the author in 1993. It started off as a private venture then was invited to become a registered community member in 1994. The class took place every Thursday evening from 7.30 p.m. to 9.30p.m in Finglas Artsquad². The class involved fourteen women and three men. It aimed at giving instruction on how to use oil paint as simply as possible. It covered the basic fundamentals of painting for both beginners and the more experienced student and it enabled the student to get enjoyment and satisfaction from oil painting, regardless of age, or experience.

The participants came from various homes, employment and marital backgrounds and their age range from thirty to seventy years. As this class was held in the evening it made it more accessible to the participants who were employed during the day. The six retired members of the group (three men and two ladies) often painted at least one hour a day in their own homes. Whereas, the other eleven participants (all women) would have had no time because they were either employed or were working at minding their children and looking after their homes.

In the class the oil painting started off as a simple outline drawing, but the placing of the colours, the tones and the brushstrokes gave it the painter's own character. The participants felt that even copying a printed image of a painting by the French artist Monet was a personal expression because it was usually stamped with the participant's own individuality (Fig 3).



Fig 2.



Some members of the Poole of Artists, Ursula Deegan, Phil Breslin, Eileen Breslin, Rita Boyce, Marie Delahyde, Lily Fischer, Catherine Ryan, Lorraine Victory, Paula Duignan and Ada Byrne.

Fig 3.



A copy of Monet's painting 'A Woman Reading'
By Ursula Deegan the Poole of Artists



(We all approach whatever we do in our own individual way, and it is not good for a tutor to dictate that one should paint in a particular style. As a teacher I encouraged what came happily and easily to these participants).

Each participant of the 'Poole of Artists' personally felt they had benefited from the oil painting class. Most participants of the group felt the oil painting class is relaxing, 'especially after a stressful days work'. They felt that the class was a way to unwind and relax from the normal stresses and worries of life. The 'Poole of Artists' has helped them to get involved in a community art group and at the same time become involved in a social activity where some of the participants have now become friends outside its class environment.

The 'Poole of Artists' held an exhibition in October 1995 in Finglas Artsquad, which lasted for two weeks. The exhibition was opened by Mary McDermott (Artsquad Supervisor) and had a guest speaker Mr. Tom Murphy (donor of premises). The participants were awarded certificates for their work and most significantly they felt a huge sense of achievement as a result of the show (Fig 4).

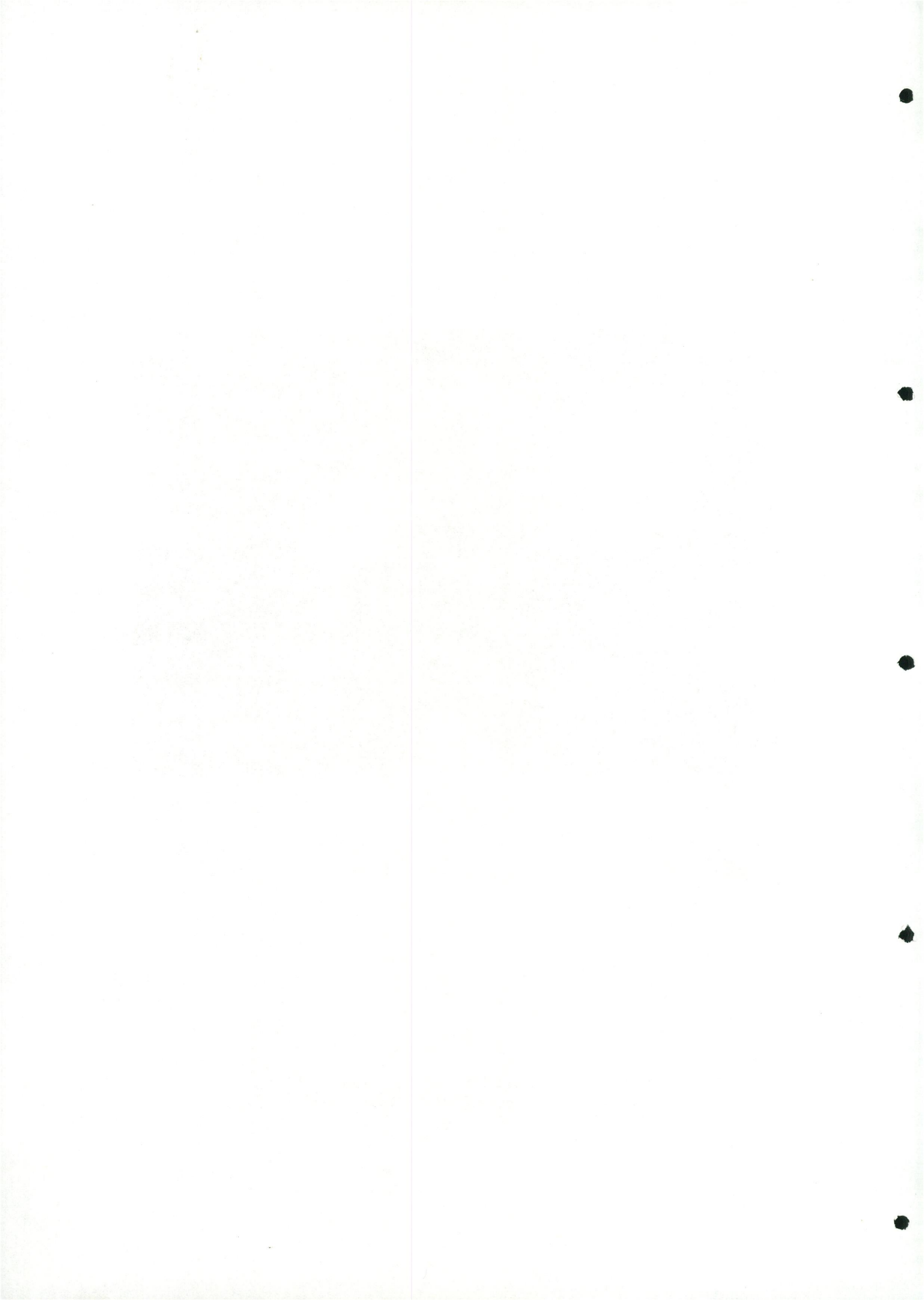
Creativity is one of the more valuable gifts that can be bestowed upon us. To these individuals it signified appreciation and understanding, both of which in their turn brought encouragement. More than this, when art is wisely acknowledged it provides a stimulus that acts on imagination and it opens the way for progressive endeavour.



Fig 4.



Tom Murphy presenting Eilish Whelan receiving a certificate
(on behalf of Rita McCormack) Poole of Artists exhibition, 1995.



The participants of this art group were attracted to the project for different reasons. The 'Poole of Artists' was an organized class, where the participants learned how to use oil paint, simply by copying photos or postcards. Its aims were less ambitious than other art groups who explore issues relating to themselves. The persons interested contacted the organizer of class; this meant that the participants were probably in already in some way motivated. On the other hand there are other organised groups which sometimes invite an artist in to work with its participants making art. These projects can relate to personal issues; so this means that the co-ordinators may have to work extremely hard to motivate and encourage each individual to express their creatively freely.

In a lecture by Laurence Cassidy³, he defines community arts as being "concerned itself specifically with society, politics, economics and spirituality". Unspoken Truths⁴ (Fig 5) was a project that helped its participants to express their feelings through creativity, relating to most of these issues. In that instance, the project could be seen as a classic example of Cassidy's definition of community art. Cassidy argues that there are two tiers in community arts: One layer which is occupied by the amateur arts and by very small arts organisations.

A characteristic of this form of community art is that its practitioners try to imitate or copy fine art forms, thus the 'Sunday painter'. He then adds, 'There is a low level of creativity involved in that particular tier of community arts'.

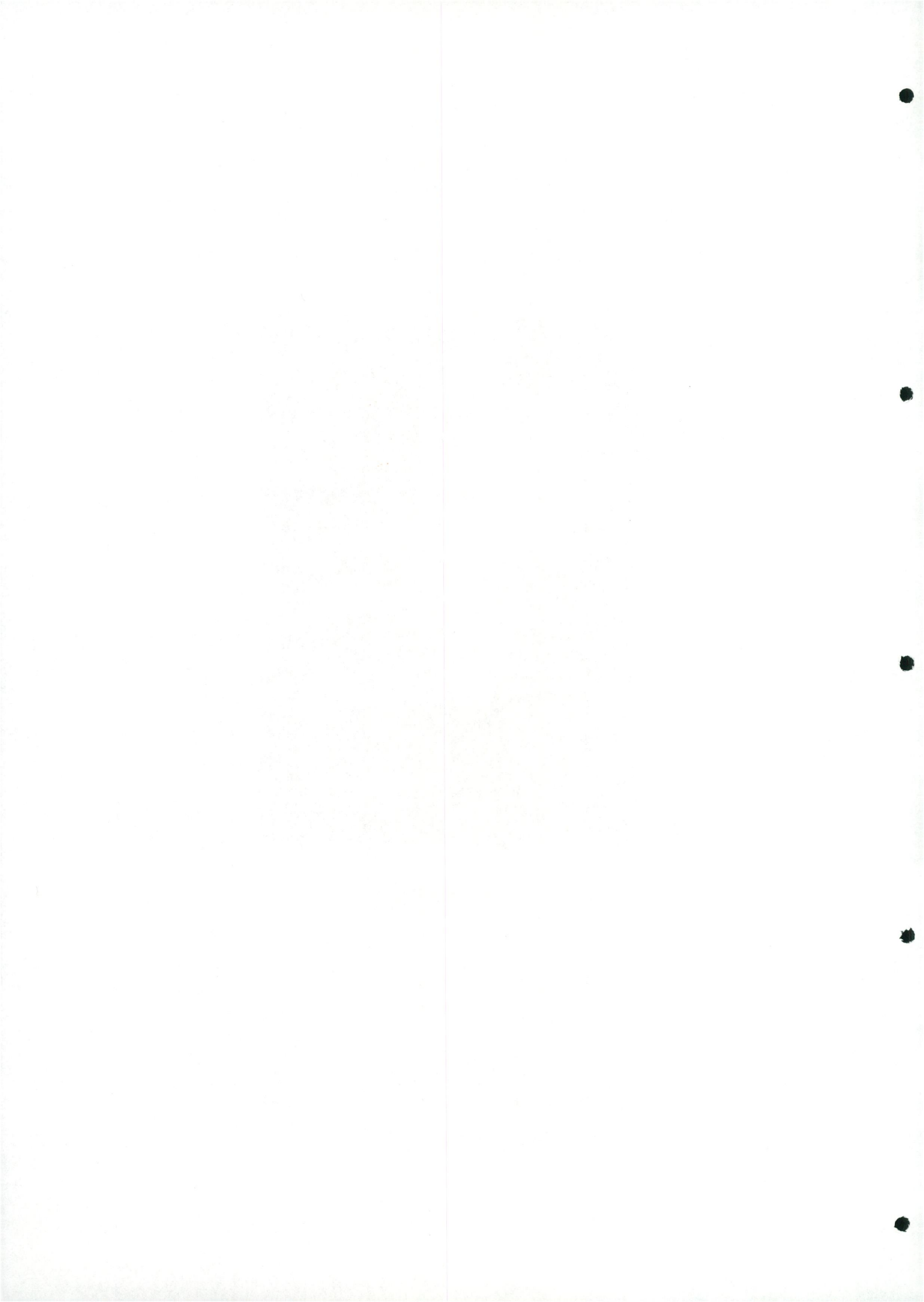
If Cassidy is right, then the Poole of Artists could be seen as having a very low



Fig 5.



Left to right, Aileen Foran and Maureen Downey
(Unspoken Truths Exhibition), Old Museum Belfast, 1993.



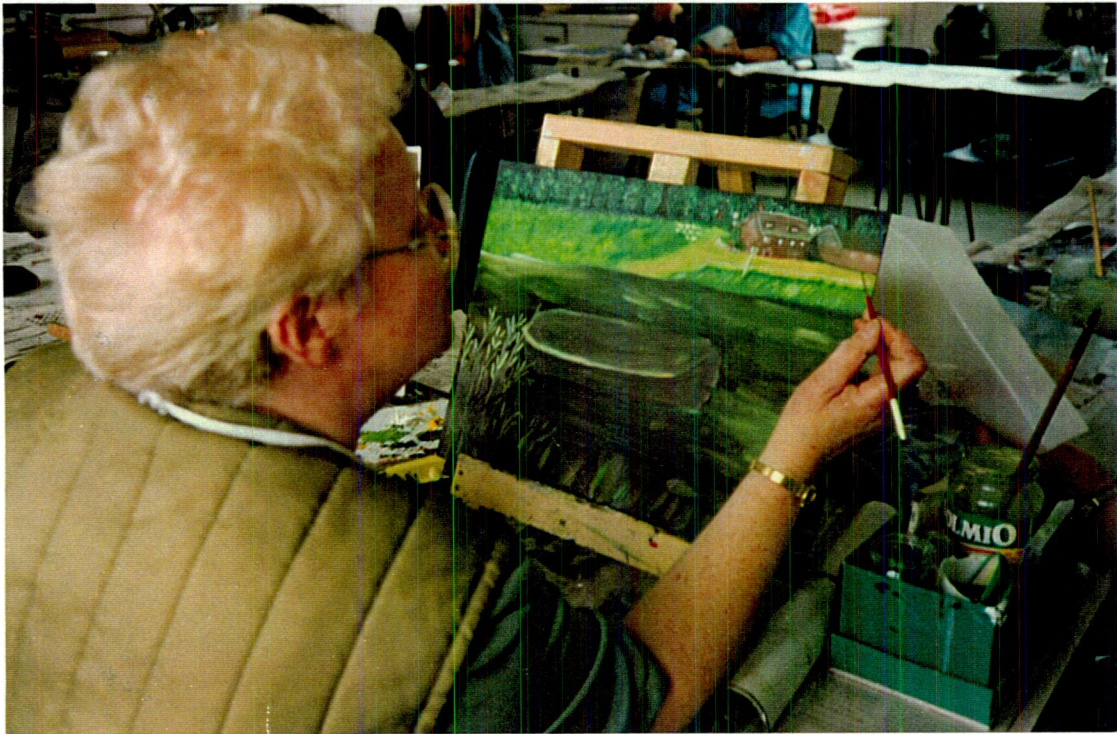
level of creativity. It can be described, as merely a 'leisure activity' or a 'hobby', yet the Poole of Artists believed that their form of creativity was as valuable as any other form of community art. This form of painting is representative of the type of work made by the majority of art groups.

Perhaps there is not much creativity involved in this form of community art. If we examine why, we may discover the reason. Most of the adults involved in the Poole of Artists were struggling to find their creativity, which had been taken away from them at a very early age. In some cases this could be fifty years ago (Fig 6). These adults felt inhibited; they were frightened of direct expression because they probably never got the chance to express their creativeness freely and they were afraid of change. They now find it impossible to pluck up the courage and try new methods of expression. Sadly, these problems stemmed from their earlier lives in which they wanted, but were not allowed, to explore their creativity. This problem came from a past society. At a meeting of the Royal Drawing Society in 1922, the first president T.R. Albett, expressed that 'at some time in every child's life there is genius, but all too frequently it is stamped out'⁵. What happens to young people who miss the arts at school, or those who discover an interest or talent when it seems too late?

On one occasion during a class with the Poole of Artists the teacher brought in some small objects: shells and acorns. The participants in the group were asked to try sketch and paint them from observation, as large as possible (Fig 7).



Fig 6.



Rita McCormack, The Poole of Artists.

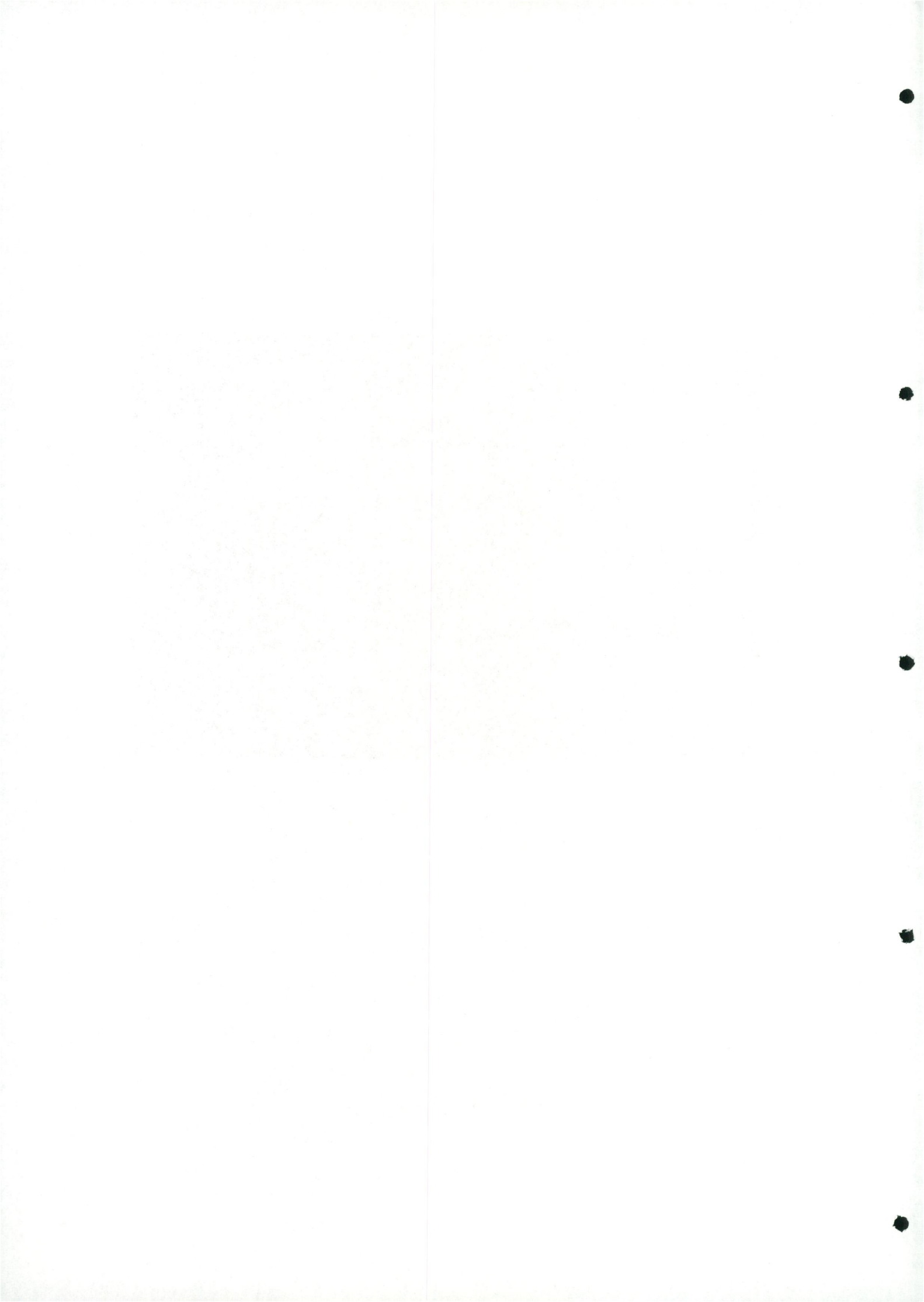


Fig 7.



Anne Keenan, The Poole of Artists.



Later the possibility of exploring personal ideas through new techniques for a future class was discussed, but some of the group found this exercise to be difficult to comprehend and it caused doubt. Most had no interest, and the class declined to take part in such an exercise again; all they wanted to do in the future was to sit down at their tables with their canvas boards and use small reserved brushstrokes. Did these actions reflect their inhibitions?

The process of did not seem to take precedence in this form of art activity. What appears to matter is the **product**. Laurence Cassidy talked about the Renaissance view of art, where the finished object was seen as of paramount importance. The finished product seemed to be most important to art groups like the 'Poole of Artists': a painting which the individual felt good enough to frame and hang on his or her sitting-room wall. It was almost like a prize trophy that they can show off to their friends and families.



CHAPTER THREE

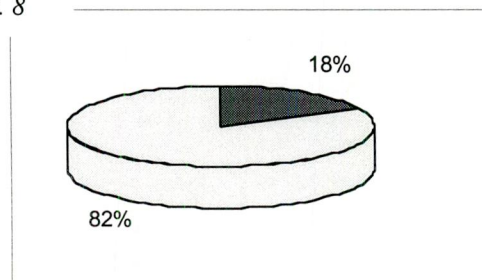
Survey of Participants

The findings presented in the next two chapters are compiled from both quantitative and qualitative sources. Information was gathered using a questionnaire, focusing on the 'Poole of Artists'. Chapter three outlines the statistical data from the questionnaire. Chapter four presents the results of the questionnaire. The latter is far more interesting for the purpose as it attempts to paint a picture of a group such as the 'Poole of Artists' as experienced by adult learners.

The statistical information in SECTION 1 is presented under the five headings:

1. **Gender**
2. **Age Group**
3. **Marital Status**
4. **Employment Status**
5. **Education**

Fig. 8



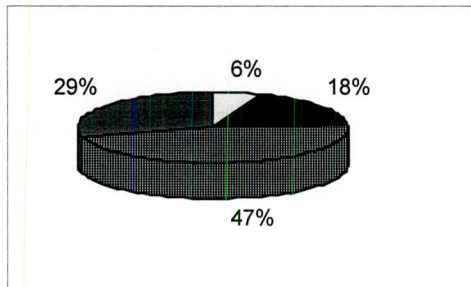
Male	18%
Female	82%

Gender

82% of the respondents to the questionnaire were female, and 18% were male. This profile puts the figure for female participants on a much higher percentage than males.



Age Groups Fig. 9



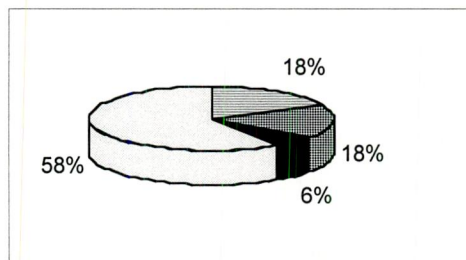
18-24	6%
25-44	18%
45-59	47%
60 +	29%

47% of the respondents to the questionnaire were between 45-59 years of age. 29% was 60 years or over. 18% were between the ages of 25-44, and the remainder of 6% was between 18-24.

This finding shows that 76% of the participants are over 45 years old.

Marital Status

Fig. 10

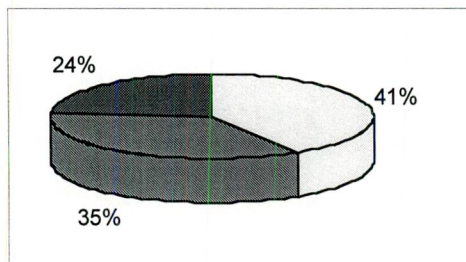


Single	18%
Separated	18%
Widowed	6%
Married	58%

58% of respondents are married. 18% are single. 18% are separated and the remainder 6% is divorced.

Employment Status

Fig. 11



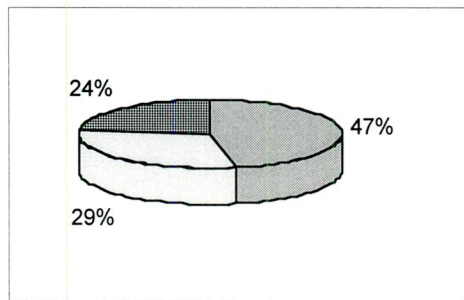
Employed	41%
Work in Home	35%
Other	24%

41% of respondents are employed. 35% work in their own home while the remainder of 24% are other.



Education

Fig. 12



Primary	47%
Secondary	29%
Third Level	24%

47% of the group took part in primary level school. 29% attended second level education. 24% were third level students with degrees.

On examination of subjects taken, it was very clear that they were mainly academic, with only 12% of people who studied art. 41% of the group are attending other adult education courses and when asked if they would choose art in Leaving Certificate there was a 100% response. FAS, Finglas Partnership and the Department of Education paid most of the course fees. There was a small amount of private fee paying courses.

SECTION 2

Most of the participants joined the 'Poole of Artists' in 1994 and have remained there until present. The majority of the group heard about the class through friends and relatives.

I have always wanted to do art but have no flair for it and did not think it was possible for me to even do a painting. Now since I have joined (the teacher's) class she has made me realise my dreams and given me the confidence in myself to accomplish this. She is a wonderful inspiration .



Question 18. Why have you chosen art as an adult evening class?

The respondent's to the questionnaire were very positive about their expectations of the class. They chose the 'Poole of Artists' as an evening class because they wanted a challenge, a non-judgmental way of expressing their creativity. It was a way to express their creativity by producing a 'beautiful painting'; while their expectations were learning about colour composition and all aspects of oil painting techniques. For some participants the notion of producing a painting with the hope of selling it was also stated. "To improve, if good enough to sell"².

Question 20. Which would you consider more important the process or the product?

The results of the above question were very surprising. The participants stressed that the process was just as important as the product. One of the comments on the process was they did not mind if the painting did not look great, but if it was, it would be an added bonus. The importance of the process dealt with the pleasure and the fact that time went by without realising it. However the product focused on the participants confidence. They feel very proud when they see a finished framed painting. "I also feel a little proud when my painting turns out well especially when someone wants to keep one!"³.

Question 22. State the 3 most positive features of the class:

The responses to the above question were unanimous in that the participants praised their instructor in terms of the knowledge of the subject and the patience she has with them. The participants also noted the fact that there was group dynamics and that they enjoy the humour and discussions they get involved in. The process and the product were also mentioned as a positive feature in the class.



Question 23. State the 3 most negative features of the class:

There were not very many negative responses to this last question. However, one comment that did arise was the fact the tables were too close together, therefore causing a lack of space to work in. This problem has recently been rectified due to renovations in the premises in which there is now more space.



CHAPTER FOUR

Analysis of Survey

Laurence Cassidy argues that there are two tiers of community arts. The first is an activity which is occupied by the amateur arts and by very small local arts organisations. One of the distinguishing characteristics of this form of community arts is that its practitioners are given to copy or imitate the fine arts. The second tier is concerned with the process of creating artwork rather than on the finished product¹.

Certain projects such as 'Unspoken Truths'² can be seen as being related to the second tier of community arts, Cassidy describes this form of arts as modern community art movement because of its specific concerns with society, its circumstances with politics, economics and spirituality.

In Owen Kelly's book Community Art and the State³, he describes this form of art as "laying foundations for the emergence of lots of groups whose consciousness had in the past been repressed or marginalised". Yet when the participants of the 'Poole of Artists' were asked in the questionnaire why they chose art as an adult evening class, one response was: "I always wanted to do art and had not got the chance while rearing a large family"⁴. Could this response be seen as someone who was repressed or marginalised in the past?

If the 'Poole of Artists' can be seen as a classic example of the first tier of

community art which Cassidy argues about it can be seen as merely a 'leisure activity' or 'hobby. Although this type of community art group may not deal specifically with politics and economics, its concerns are spiritual; this is an aspect of personal development, which does concern society. "I take great pride and enjoyment in developing a blank canvas. This helps my confidence to also develop"⁵.

The 'Poole of Artists' has laid a solid foundation and given support and encouragement to its participants, to develop not only they're painting skills, but also their personal development. This stable structure has also encouraged the communications between the participants, when they took part in the class. This is vital to all adult education. " The group of people are great, we have great conversations and great laugh"⁶.

Laurence Cassidy discusses about this form of art as the renaissance view of art, where the end product was seen as of most importance. A painting which the participant felt good enough to frame and hang on his/her sitting room wall. " The end product is very important"⁷.

At first the product did seem to take precedence in the 'Poole of Artists', yet on examination of the questionnaire the results where quite surprising. " To learn the elements of oil painting and eventually to be able to express my own ideas."⁸ (Fig 13).

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

PHYSICS DEPARTMENT

PHYSICS 350

LECTURE 1

LECTURE 2

LECTURE 3

LECTURE 4

LECTURE 5

LECTURE 6

LECTURE 7

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LECTURE 51

LECTURE 52

LECTURE 53

LECTURE 54

LECTURE 55

Fig 13.



Painting of Johnstown Park, Finglas,
by Catherine Ryan, The Poole of Artists.

The creative process does not always guarantee a creative outcome.

“The development saga outlines the attempts of man to arrive at true consciousness: to be aware of herself/himself in the process of knowing and to understand the process”⁹. The creativity of the process, thus the process may fail to produce a product but does this matter? For one of the participants it did,

“ The joy of having created an object of beauty which will live on after me, the admiration of others for what I have done”¹⁰.

Society should not deny the force of creativity in adults. Taking part in arts activities such as the ‘Poole of Artists’ can bring about changes in relation to their personal development. “Creativity was there but I never had the opportunity to bring it out, so the art class has helped the creativity to flow!”¹¹.

The practitioners of the ‘Poole of Artists’ seem to be precious about their paintings, why? It is probably because in the past they did not get the chance to express their creativity. The participants of the ‘Poole of Artists’ and ‘Unspoken Truths’ are from similar areas and backgrounds. Many of the women in ‘Unspoken Truths’ started off painting like the members of the ‘Poole of Artists’. They too found it hard to express their feelings especially in a group situation. Bernie Hanaphy explains her reaction:

When I first started in ‘Unspoken Truths’ I didn’t know what to expect, but after starting to reminisce about the old days we came up with the idea to do a project on our culture. It didn’t seem possible to me at the time because I’d always thought art was only for artists¹².



During my research, I found a large number of women participating in arts activities. What is the reason for this? Is it because many women are using arts activities like 'Unspoken Truths' to highlight personal issues that have been pushed under the carpet and ignored.

Others enter into art activities because they are concerned with creating a shared identity, mutuality and common interest in Stephen Brookfields book on Adult Learners. He writes about people, even from different communities, gathering together because of shared interests, he quotes Hayden Roberts,

The community exists when a group of people perceives common needs and problems, acquires a sense of identity, and has a common sense of objectives. Thus a profession may be a community despite its lack of physical locus¹³.

The women involved in the 'Poole of Artists' usually share norms, moral codes, beliefs and attitudes regardless of their locality. Many women have made their role of wife and mother their primary concern for many years. A participant of the 'Poole of Artists' stated: "I hadn't got the chance while rearing a large family"¹⁴. Women usually found they occupied hidden and subordinated roles, yet some women today have formed groups in their communities, which use art to express themselves.

The practice of some activities at community level therefore tends to challenge the broader social and cultural conditions in which some women find themselves constructed as the 'other'.

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Indeed, some arts activities may actually work to individualise economic and social disadvantage.

When we look at most community art projects, we may see a much smaller amount of male participation. This is mainly because there is no interest or enthusiasm from men. There are only 18% of male participants in the 'Poole of Artists'. Participants of the 'Poole of Artists' group, when questioned about the small numbers of male participants said that 'sometimes art can be seen as a sissy subject by other men'¹⁵.

Overall, the participation of men in societies and clubs is very small with the exception of sport activities. Men find it difficult to express them especially in a group situation. If they do they can be seen as soft and weak especially by their male peers. This stems from the traditional attitudes that label men as 'tough and macho'. Sometimes in today's society young boys are still been told by their parents 'big boys don't cry'.

In the past formal education treated boys and girls differently. The boys were guided towards different subjects so they could gain better skills and get better opportunities that would lead them to become employed in higher paid jobs in an already male dominated society. Fortunately the educational system is becoming more balanced in this approach to gender roles. (Fig 14). This is very important for both genders (Fig 15). As a child grows older he/she will have more practical skills and self-confidence when entering employment.

Fig 14.



Chelsea Mahon, age 4, Alison Smart, age 4,
Early Start, Pre-school, St. Kevin's Finglas, 1999.

Fig 15.



Luke Plummer, age 4,
Early Start, Pre-school, St. Kevin's Finglas, 1999.



Hopefully he/she will be accepted as being a man or women without having to conform to a conventional social stereotype.

The 18% of male participants of the 'Poole of Artists' are over 60 years of age. Could this be that they are a stage in their lives, in which they do not seem to mind what other males think about them?

I refuse to be judgmental about my work. While I welcome constructive criticism from the teacher and try not to be critical myself but to accept the finished product as a statement of my work/play at a given point in time. My aim is to enjoy rather than worry!¹⁶.

CONCLUSION

It is important to document policy achievements and evidence of need and interest in making a case for the development of arts for adults. The Green Paper - Adult Education in an Era for Lifelong Learning, states adult education is likely to engage a wider range of intelligence in the learning process than the purely or, principally, cognitive¹. For this reason, issues of self-awareness, interpersonal skills and different modes of 'creative expression' are deemed to be particularly relevant to the adult learning process. Yet, the majority of the Green Paper concentrates on the challenges of promoting of the task of upgrading the workforce through vocational training skills.

Knowledge and skills of the workforce will increasingly become the principle source of competitive advantage for firms . . . (and) for countries which compete for internationally mobile investment².

On examination of the Green Paper, there is very little recognition of the importance of the intrinsic value of adult education through arts activities. The Green Paper also recommends the relevance of flexibility within adult education services through the provision of part-time options including evening classes, morning groups and weekend courses³. Flexibility goes hand in hand with informal education. It can take place in a variety of modes and settings. Yet, the Green Paper contributes a focus on the elimination of the barriers between the 'formal' and the 'non-formal' system⁴. If adult education is to become formalised, will it kill its flexibility?

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In Ciaran Benson's Report, The Place of the Arts in Irish Education⁵, he discusses the notion of the arts being in a healthier state outside the formal system. Stephen Brookfield in his book Adult Learners⁶, states that: 'Adults should enjoy a bigger degree of flexibility and support with regard to their use of learning opportunities and facilities at different times of their lives'.

In a natural society setting there is day to day individual experience occurring from family interactions occupational life and most importantly recreational activities. All this is transcendent in the process of the making. Unfortunately, our society has not recognised the importance of incidental learning. Besides the formal learning that adults take part in there is an even greater amount of learning that comes about as a consequence of a person's everyday experiences.

Adults involvement in art activities can attempt sometimes intentionally, to create attitudes, facts of self-experience into an idea, at the same time learning skills such as self-development and respect for their own feelings and also the actual physical skills which can be involved i.e. painting techniques.

The case study: The 'Poole of Artists', varies in its structure, ambitions and its level of development in respect of its art activity. It has enthusiasm and commitment. The 'Poole of Artists' provides a relaxed atmosphere in which its participants express what they consider 'creativity' is.

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Growing trends within groups such as the 'Poole of Artists' indicate new understandings of what art is, what art can do and who can be an artist. A participant of the 'Poole of Artists' states: "I hope to become a half decent artist, and my paintings to look professional"⁷.

If a number of adults are receiving an introduction to art and are developing the confidence to express themselves, then the so-called 'arts establishment' will automatically find itself under redefinition.





NOTES

INTRODUCTION

1. See Eric Midwater, Age is Opportunity, Education and Older People, Centre for Policy on Ageing, London, 1982, p.1.
2. Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaion, The Arts Plan: 1995-1997, Dublin, 1995, p.15. The Arts plan, 1995-1997 has been extended to a five year plan, and now runs until 1999.

CHAPTER 1

1. (OECD) is the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development.
2. UNESCO, recommends the government should help keep an atmosphere which encourages freedom of artistic expression.
3. See, An Roinn Oidechais/Department of Education, Adult Education in an Era of Lifelong Learning, Green Paper on Adult Education, 1998, p42.
4. See Stephen Brookfield, Adult Learners, Adult Education and the Community, Open University Press, 1984, p3.
5. See, An Roinn Oidechais/Department of Education, Adult Education in an Era of Lifelong Learning, Green Paper on Adult Education, 1998, p17.
6. See, An Roinn Oidechais/Department of Education, Adult Education in an Era of Lifelong Learning, Green Paper on Adult Education, 1998, p6.
7. See, An Roinn Oidechais/Department of Education, Adult Education in an Era of Lifelong Learning, Green Paper on Adult Education, 1998, p16.
8. See Speaking Note at the Launch of the Green Paper: Adult Education in an Era of Lifelong Learning, Willie O'Dea Junior Minister for Education and Science, Nov 24th 1998, p.2.

CHAPTER 2

1. The Finglas Partnership was set up in 1990 and later joined with Cabra in 1997.
2. Finglas Artsquad was set up in 1990 and is one of four Artsquad projects dotted around Dublin. The other Three projects are situated in the Inner City, Tallaght and Swords. Finglas Artsquad employs 27 people, some who have an interest in the arts and others who are actually qualified professional artists, actors or musicians.



3. See copy of lecture on Community Art, given by Laurence Cassidy, Community Arts Officer, Arts Council, to the students of the National College of Art and Design, Thomas Street, Dublin. (No date given)
4. Unspoken Truths was a project, which began in 1991. It involved 32 Dublin women from the community development projects in which they were already involved. These were Family Resource Centre, (St. Michael's Estate, Inchicore) and the Lourdes Youth and Community Services Project, (Sean McDermott Street). The artist Ailbhe Murphy and the Education /Community Curator Helen O'Donoghue of the Irish Museum of Modern Art, Kilmainham.
5. See John Fitzmaurice Mills, Art for our Children, Wolfhound Press, 1991, p.8.

CHAPTER 3

1. See Appendix, The Poole of Artists Questionnaire, Section 2, Question 17, 1999, p.54.
2. See Appendix, The Poole of Artists Questionnaire, Section 2, Question 18, 1999, p.54.
3. See Appendix, The Poole of Artists Questionnaire, Section 2, Question 20, 1999, p.55.

CHAPTER 4

1. See copy of lecture on Community Art, given by Laurence Cassidy, Community Arts Officer, Arts Council, to the students of the National College of Art and Design, Thomas Street, Dublin, (No date given).
2. See Note No. 4, Chapter 2.
3. See Owen Kelly, Community Art and the State: Storming the Citadels, London, Comedia Publishing Company, 1984, p.9.
4. See Appendix, The Poole of Artists Questionnaire, Section 2, Question 18, 1999, p.54.
5. See Appendix, The Poole of Artists Questionnaire, Section 2, Question 19, 1999, p.55.
6. See Appendix, The Poole of Artists Questionnaire, Section 2, Question 22, 1999, p.56.
7. See Appendix, The Poole of Artists Questionnaire, Section 2, Question 21, 1999, p.55



8. See Appendix, The Poole of Artists Questionnaire, Section 2, Question 21, 1999, p.55.
9. See Eileen Pickard, The Development of Creative Ability, NFER, Publishing Company Ltd, 1979, p.15.
10. See Appendix, The Poole of Artists Questionnaire, Section 2, Question 21, 1999, p.55.
11. See Appendix, The Poole of Artists Questionnaire, Section 2, Question 21, 1999, p.55.
12. See Bernie Hanaphy, in Unspoken Truths Catalogue, IMMA, 1996, p.55.
13. See Stephen Brookfield's, Adult Learners, Adult Education and the Community, Open University Press, 1984, p.63.
14. See Appendix, The Poole of Artists Questionnaire, Section 2, Question 18, 1999, p.54.
15. Richard Kilbride, the 'Poole of Artists', Unit 14b Finglas Main Centre, Finglas, Dublin. 1997.
16. See Appendix, The Poole of Artists Questionnaire, Section 2, Question 21, 1999, p.55.

CONCLUSION

1. See, An Roinn Oidechais/Department of Education, Adult Education in an Era of Lifelong Learning, Green Paper on Adult Education, 1998, p108.
2. See, An Roinn Oidechais/Department of Education, Adult Education in an Era of Lifelong Learning, Green Paper on Adult Education, 1998, p33.
3. See, An Roinn Oidechais/Department of Education, Adult Education in an Era of Lifelong Learning, Green Paper on Adult Education, 1998, p17.
4. See, An Roinn Oidechais/Department of Education, Adult Education in an Era of Lifelong Learning, Green Paper on Adult Education, 1998, p17.
5. Benson, Ciaran, The Place of the Arts in Irish Education, The Arts Council, An Chomhairle Ealaion, Dublin 1980.
6. See Stephen Brookfield's Adult Education Learners, Adult Education and the Community, Open University Press, 1984, p.3.
7. See Appendix, The Poole of Artists Questionnaire, Section 2, Question 19, 1999, p.55.



APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRE

THE POOLE OF ARTISTS
Unit 14b Main Shopping Centre, Finglas, Dublin 11.

SECTION 1.

Please tick the following:

1. Sex: Female Male

2. Age Group: 18-24 25-44 45-59 60-Upwards

3. Marital Status: Married Single Separated
Widowed Divorced

4. Employment: Employed Self Employed Unemployed
Student Work in Home Other

5. Education:

Please indicate the level at which you completed your full-time education:

Primary Secondary Third Level

6. Please tick any examinations taken:

Primary Level

Primary Cert

Second Level

Group Cert

Inter-Cert

Junior Cert

Leaving Cert



7. Please list the subjects you studied for your last examination:

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

4. _____ 5. _____ 6. _____

7. _____ 8. _____ 9. _____

8. Please tick any third level qualifications obtained:

Certificate Diploma Degree Post -Grad

9. (a) Did you study art at school? Yes No

(b) At what level did you study art?

Primary Junior/Inter/Group Leaving

10. If you were to do a Leaving Certificate now, would you choose art as a subject? Yes No

11. Please state if you are currently attending any other adult education courses or have in the past Yes No

12. If yes please specify the course/courses attended: _____

13. Was the course/s fee paying, Yes No
If so who were they subsidised by? _____



14. Have you attended any courses organised by a home school liaison officer? Yes No

If so please specify them: 1. _____ 2. _____
3. _____ 4. _____ 5. _____

15. Were they fee paying or subsidised: Yes No

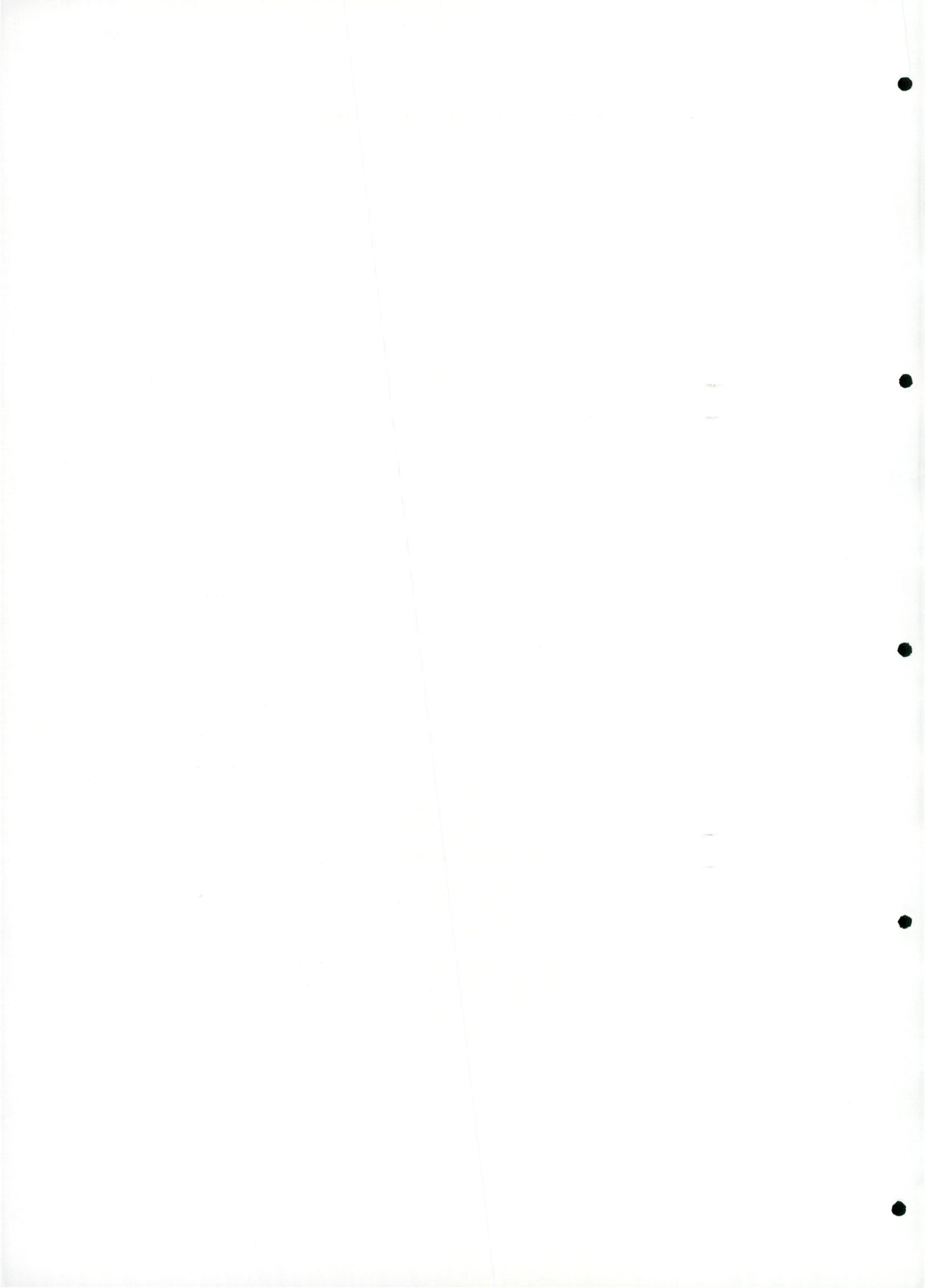
If so, who were they subsidised by? _____

SECTION 2.

16. When did you join the Poole of Artists? _____

17. How did you hear about the class? _____

18. Why have you chosen art as an adult evening class? _____



19. What are your expectations from this class? _____

20. Please tick which element you feel has the most importance:

Process Product

21. Describe why? _____



22. State 3 most positive features of the class:

(1) _____

(2) _____

(3) _____

23. State 3 most negative features of the class:

(1) _____

(2) _____

(3) _____



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The National Irish Visual Arts Library

The National Irish Visual Arts Library is housed in the National College of Art and Design. Opening hours are:

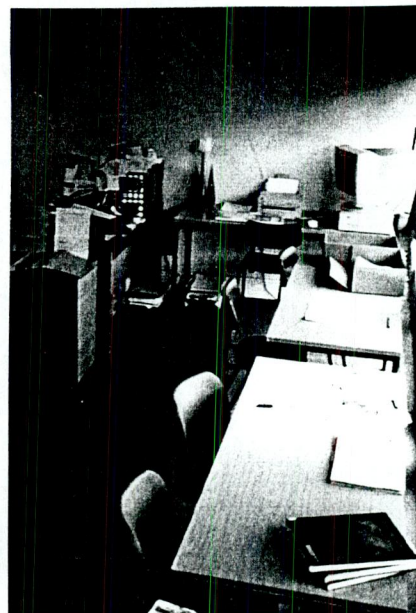
Monday	2.00pm - 8.30pm*
Tuesday	9.30am - 1.00pm	2.00pm - 5.30pm
Wednesday	9.30am - 1.00pm	2.00pm - 5.30pm
Thursday	2.00pm - 5.30pm
Friday	9.30am - 1.00pm	2.00pm - 5.30pm

*closed 5pm June – Sept. inclusive

All are welcome to visit and consult the collections.

For further information contact:

The Administrator
National Irish Visual Arts Library
NCAD
100 Thomas Street
Dublin 8.
Tel: 01 6364347



The National Irish Visual Arts Library

The National Irish Visual Arts Library was formally established in August 1997 and is jointly funded by the National College of Art and Design and the Arts Council. It also receives funding from the Arts Council of Northern Ireland. The Library's aim is to document all aspects of twentieth century and contemporary Irish art and design and provide public access to a national research resource.

The core collection which has been amassed over the last twenty years comprises files on individual artists (over 2500) and files on Irish galleries. A wide variety of ephemeral material makes up each file: exhibition catalogues, invitation cards, pricelists, press releases and reviews, and correspondence related to the art practice of artists. The artist and gallery files are complemented by files on related areas such as: design, craft, art collections, art societies, art and disability, public art, Government arts policy, and special exhibitions including, *Living Art*, *Rosc*, and *Iontas* etc. Archival material, limited editions, monographs, artists' books, videos and slides all form part of the collection. Donations of relevant material are always welcome.

The Library is a unique research facility which houses an extensive collection, particularly relevant to those interested in contemporary art and design in Ireland. Already it serves a wide range of users including students writing theses, artists sourcing suitable galleries, professional researchers writing books and papers and members of the general public interested in biographical information on specific artists or designers.