

NATIONAL COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN

COMMUNITY ART TOWARDS CULTURAL SYNTHESIS

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY OF ART AND  
DESIGN AND COMPLIMENTARY STUDIES

AND

IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE TO THE FACULTY  
OF FINE ART, DEPARTMENT OF PAINTING.

MARY FITZSIMON

APRIL 2, 1989.



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The practice of art in contemporary Society has largely been subordinated by the dominant force in our society. The production of culture is outside the experience of the majority of the people for whose 'benefit' it is produced.

"Artists are cultural producers - they are producers of meaning. It would be easy to say that artists produce art, but this gives us no information. It is more appropriate to say that all Societies produce and cultivate the conditions which nurture the kind of cultural practice (art and artists) which is needed to support the ideology of a particular system, and that the function of the system is to render the system of Controls invisible. In this situation, the artist who opposes even aspects of his or her society has little choice but to attempt to render these controls visible for analysis." (1)

The introduction to Conrad Atkinson's show 'Picturing the System' 1981. This is the basic reason behind the practice of what is called community arts. To reclaim the practice of culture so that it does have a meaning for, and is applicable to everyone.

We are living in an age of information, where every day the dominant culture is processed through the Media, Newspapers, Radio, Television to us the public, the audience. It moulds for us our desires and tells us who we are. We are dictated our cultural meaning as we sit back and relax, we are passive, it is active and there is no exchange.

Artists are cultural producers, but for whom and why do we produce - if the only audience for art work is other artists,



what meaning are we producing? Is there a function for such an art practice in this society?

The necessity of community arts lies in the reclaiming of the production of culture. Today's mass culture is not produced by artists and is, only indirectly, produced by the state, through the financial or fiscal policies of consumerism, and produces more culture, more in that it is read and received by more people, than do artists. This culture produced and projected on us is not of our making and has little in common with our experience - we are strangers to it, yet, by saturation and by prime-time advertising we absorb and become its products.

Community arts, as it has come to be known does not define any specific activity, it is, rather an approach to creative activity which often involves people on a collective basis and encourages the appropriation of art forms for communication and expression, Owen Kelly in his book 'Community Art and State' quotes the Greater London Arts Association (2)

"..In a way that critically uses and develops traditional art forms, adapting them to present day needs and developing new ones ... Encourages the use of a collective statement but does not neglect individual development or the need for individual expression ... Community arts proposes the use of arts to effect social change and affect social policies, and encompasses the expression of political action, effecting environmental change and developing the understanding and use of established systems of communication and change. It also uses art forms to enjoy and develop peoples cultural heritages ... Community arts activists operate in areas of deprivation, using the term <<deprivation>> to include financial, cultural, environmental or educational deprivation."



In this Thesis, I hope to show that resistance to this alienating mass culture is not impossible and that this 'Resistance' to over-culture works. That the policies of activism through art which occur both within State apparatus, through bodies such as The Arts Council, schools and public media and without the State, where community arts happens spontaneously out of a communities direct need for expression and where this happens, encourage cultural literacy and a critical awareness to equip the members of a Community to see the hidden meanings of this over Culture but also validates the work of the artist (inside and outside community) as an individual within community, by the evolution, through community arts of a more literate public, an audience unmistified by the arts - a non-public - by being able to read and interpret the meanings that the artist may produce. This widens the possibilities and purposes of the arts to the general public and widens the boundaries of culture so that people are able to create a culture which is sympathetic and relative to their own real needs and experiences.

The practice of Community Arts (as defined) is not necessarily a product of the 1960's nor is it confined to a western type society.

The worker-photographer movement which developed in Europe in the 1920's and 1930's can be seen to be of this type of practice. It was part of the Workers International Relief set up in Berlin by Lenin in 1921 to promote aid for the Russian Famine. The movement called on workers to act as 'worker-reporters' and 'Photo-Reporters', (3) in Germany for the Communist magazine 'Arbeiter-illustrierte zeitung' and in Holland for 'Due Tribune'. The manifesto of the workers film and photo league in England called upon its members to record the conditions of working class life.

"The worker-photographer movement ... offers an historic precedent for a popular move to intervene in the



professional mass media domination over public information. Its emphasis .. on the process of educating awareness, passing on skills through their workshops, independent of formal institutions of education, is as revolutionary as was the conscious recognition of the separate character and value of the working class culture .. it originated not with the producers but with the distributors, thus ensuring that the work always had an outlet".

In Germany that the movement co-operated with the 'Radical Bourgeoisie' ie. George Grosz and John Heartfelt can be seen indicative of its success, unfortunately it was quashed during the Nazi Rise to power before the war. In America the League remained until the 50's when the McCarthy witch-hunts called a halt to the radical press, thus ending the outlets for the work up until then it ran a programme not just of photographic technique but was promoting through its workshops a critical awareness of the conventions of photography, which it communicated to its worker-audience.

Outside of Western Society the use of the arts by both oppressed and developing societies can be seen as Community art in that their identity is affirmed by the images produced and in that the organisation of the centres of the production are often co-operative. The arpiller as of the Chilian Women (Patchwork Pictures) illustrating the realities of life under a military dictatorship, these patchworks are distributed through charity type agencies and the women earn some money from their sale also these patchworks escape censorship as the messages are subtly encoded and anyway, how can patchwork be regarded as subversive?



- (1) Conrad Atkinson. Introduction Catalogue Picturing the System.
- (2) Greater London Arts Association. An advisory paper on community arts. Quoting the GLAA through Owen Kelly in his book Community Arts & State.
- (3) Su Braden, Committing Photography.
- (4) Ibid.



## CHAPTER 1

"Everything we do is located in and therefore affected by, Social Structures... The existence of these structures and Institutions enables any activity on our part and this applies equally to acts of conformity and acts of rebellion." (1)

The artist lives in society and has the same basic needs as other members of society, the artist is subject to society in much the same way as other workers are.

The work of the artist is relative to the society and has to be seen as historical, situated and produced. However, this is not how the artist is seen;

There is the romantic notion of the artists as an anti-social or even asocial outcast, marginalised and eccentric and removed from the conditions of production which affect ordinary folk. He (for the Artist' is seen as male) starves in a garret and it is his alienation from society which inspires his genius - which is a divine gift). Janet Wolff suggests that this myth arises from the development of Industrial Capitalism with the concomitant rise of the individual, and the breakdown of the old system of patronage which removed the artist from the previous clearly defined social class, and the development of the dealer-critic system which gave the artist a precarious self-employed position in the market. Before the Industrial Revolution "artists and writers were well integrated into the social structures in which they worked. Painting and writing to commission from aristocratic patrons, exhibiting in Academies, and in no sense defining themselves as outcasts or opponents of the social order". She suggests that there are "new" forms of patronage and employment for artists which integrate the artist into the capitalist system namely "graphic artists working in industry, designers artists in advertising, community artists and so on". But this however, has



little bearing on how the notion of artist is still perceived by the general public.

It is probably how the artist is historically seen to be disenfranchised from society which promotes the rejection of worker produce by other workers. The paradox posed; how can what the artist produces be relevant to society if the artist is positioned outside society.

Through the apparent received classlessness of the artist in a class orientated society. This is how the work of the artist who maintains this myth may be regarded a irrelevant and art in general to be largely disregarded.

But even though seen outside society and disparaged by general public - and therefore against all odds this type of artist, freelance who sells through galleries is surviving, there is a market space although it is not the artist who makes most of the profits. This type of artist is often envied and admired as are themselves employed for a macho type quality of being their own men in the face of such extreme opposition, for carving out individual space from the ant-hill of the capitalist social structure yet this image of un-alienation is not clear as it may at first seem. This type of artist is in control of his or her product from beginning to end - he or she conceives of an idea builds (in the case of the painter) the canvas stretcher and primes and executes the image.

Varnished and framed and (perhaps) eventually sold - all my own work - an original work of art, yet what of the social controls, what of censorship which is universal, self censorship and what is the image and what is the trend in the market and who is the artist and is he/she in fashion. The artist who would survive by artistry must regard the market and make work accordingly if he/she hits upon a 'style' which is approved of, must remain with that, the market forces determine the artists produce. The artist



may not be alienated from all the stages of the physical construction of this work. The conditions of the production of the work are controlled.

The high prices commanded for unique works of art limit the market even further and the more successful the artist, the smaller the market and the more constraints on the production. yet this is not integration, this is seen to be outside capitalism where art workers are seen to be integrated, the myth of their artistry dissolves and is less potent. It is seen as relative to society in one or another way and becomes ordinary and unmystic - and perhaps not art by its relevance is accepted. This applies to graphic designers whose position is seen clearly, more complex perhaps is the position of the community artist.

The work of the graphic artists and designers as supporting the capitalist system, when they work in the industries of advertising and media, and can be seen as part then of the ideological state apparatus but when community art is classed as being supportive of the capitalist system.

There are two paradoxes raised here. That the un-alienated from his work but from society outcast, is seen as Artist and whose work can be seen as supporting the capitalist system (even if the artist disclaims it) by the way it becomes commodity and is accepted by those who can afford to spend large amounts of money -The ruling ideology.

The the community artist (who comes in from the cold?) is seen as rebellious - even if he/she is part of capitalism but by who's work is apparently not? And criticises the ideological state apparatus but is seen to be part of it - lacks creativity but by the 'cheapness' (excuse me) of the work and the lack of market pressure, other than state sponsorship and even that can be got around, is surely more authentically original?



".. In order to exist, every social formation must reproduce the conditions of its production at the same time as it produces, and in order to be able to produce, it must therefore reproduce" (2)

and if the production - in this instance - of meanings (cultural) fails to reproduce the conditions of production, it will fail totally, so someone or something is keeping us as artists in a state of confusion as to our validity in society. For surely the forces which place artists in such an unsure position in society are the same forces which maintain the inequalities in our society. The same forces which are seen as oppressive and unjust, the same forces which maintain the majority of our society as an expendable and disadvantaged labour force. Could it be the art schools and general education?

"How is this reproduction of the (diversified) skills of labour power provided for in a capitalist regime? Here .. this reproduction of the skills of labour power .. is achieved more and more outside production: by the capitalist education system and by other instances and institutions. What do children learn at school? They go varying distances in their studies, but at any rate they learn to read, to write and to add - ie. a number of techniques and a number of other things as well, including elements (which may be rudimentary or on the contrary thorough going) of 'scientific' or literary culture' which are directly useful in the different jobs in production (one instruction for manual workers, another for technicians, a third for engineers, a final one for higher management, etc). Thus, they learn know-how"

But besides these techniques and knowledge and in learning them, children at school also learn the 'rules' of good behaviour. ie. The attitude that



should be observed by every agent in the division of labour, according to the job he is 'destined' for; rules of morality; civic and professional conscience, which actually means rules of respect for the socio-technical division of labour, and ultimately the rules of the order established by class domination" (3)

more scientifically put

"... the reproduction of labour power requires not only a reproduction of its skills, but also, at the same time, a reproduction of its submission to the rules of the established order, i.e.

A reproduction of submission to the ruling ideology for the workers and a reproduction of the ability to manipulate the ruling ideology correctly for the agents of exploitation and repression, so that they too will provide for the domination of the ruling class 'in words! so the system as it reproduces itself, reinforces itself and the art which is produced is part of that reinforcement and the systems of learning about about, as well as most other things only serve to reproduce the same sociality in the next generation the isolation of the artist (as perceived) from a societal class structure only estranges him or her from the working classes, of which logically he or she is a member. This would seem to suit the dominant class very well.

Where the artist is seen to be full integrated into the capitalist social structure as graphic artists, designers in industry, fashion or advertising, these positions are seen as middle class and they are - particularly the regions of graphic and advertising and fashion - codes of dress delineating class segregation, and are very obviously part of the apparatus of state



ideology, and as Althusser says in his essay on the 'reproduction of the conditions of production', that the repressive state apparatus can use repression. The commercial advertising industry and the media are, by semiotic control and seduction, becoming increasingly repressive and the boundaries between the repressive state apparatus and the ideological state apparatus becomes less distinct, particularly where the government as in Ireland controls the media (particularly television i.e. Section 31 of the Broadcasting Act) but also where advertising arouses in us the desire of an unrealistic and idealised (and impossible to attain) lifestyle.

Any artist - if as artists are producers of meaning and are therefore well versed in understanding and reading these instruments of control, and are conscientious, cannot but object to such a repressive system as I have described - and surely then the valid work of such artists is to actively practice analysis of the social structure and "Render the Controls Visible". (4)

Janet Wolff asserts that the community artist is integrated into the systems of capitalist production - by the art worker being employed and paid a wage, but, by the nature of the artist having no clearly defined position in a class (unless they choose to define themselves within a particular one) and therefore partially outside societal structures as they are seen are possibly less alienated from their production than the majority of workers.

"In non-alienated conditions, people have the ability and potential to act, consciously and with the use of abstract thought and imagination, to change nature and their surroundings. This labour, then, is creative; it



arises out of human needs and intention, it is freely exercised on its object and is constructive and transformative." (5).

- (1) Janet Wolff. The Social Production of Art, 1981.
- (2) Louis Althusser on the Reproduction of the Conditions of Production, 1970.
- (3) Conrad Atkinson
- (4) Janet Wolff on Marx, 1981



## CHAPTER 2

### POPULAR ART AND RESISTANCE

Since 1973, the Military Pinochet Regime in Chile has produced a monetarist free-market economy imposed by fascistic terror and repression. Formerly, Chile had many of the characteristics of a developed country, a large middle class, long-standing civic and parliamentary traditions, education and welfare programmes, high literacy and a conscious and organised working class. Chile has moved from liberal christian democrat government in the early 60's through Salvador Allende's 'democratic transition to Socialism', to the present regime via military coup d'etat. Where formerly, uneasy, but stable relationships existed between the societies. Within society since 1973, ie. church and army, have confronted each other in many incidents. The 'Liberation Theology' of the Latin American church supports a widespread popular movement for change (liberation theology supports the material as well as spiritual rights of the individual within society, rather than supporting the status quo as the traditional catholic church is seen to do), and this organisation, coupled with the growing political consciousness and cultural aspirations ties in with the emergence of the arpilleras.

Arpillera-making probably has two separate points of origin, one being the formation of the group 'Families of the Disappeared', mothers and grandmothers of mostly young people who have been seized by the secret police and never heard of again. The second, in the shanty towns if the re-located and unemployed. The church set up soup-kitchens, laundries and workshops where the wives of the unemployed men could earn some money to keep from starvation, for both groups, arpillera making is expression for the shanty town group. Necessity. The church buys the arpilleras for small sums and distributes them



abroad through charity agencies. As the movement spread, it's therapeutic function changed to one conscious communication, the groups would get together and decide on a 'theme' for each meeting. The meetings becoming centres for discussion on the happenings depicted in the patchwork pictures.

'With this work I learned to grow as a person, to have an opinion, to criticise, to understand. Women are at home, just keeping everything going. They don't know how to do anything else. People who are just physical, and in the head, nothing.' (1)

From the beginning the arpilleristas introduced codes into their picture making as a form of compressing ideas and to avoid censorship. The junta is depicted variously, as four black vultures, or as four clowns. The secret police are made from black cloth, with a lighter outline. The secret detention centres 'Los Quatro Alamos' and 'Los Tres Alamos' are depicted by four and three vertical strokes - an unknown place by a black square - the disappeared are white-outlined, but without faces (like the police or by representation of photographs). (One of the badges of the women of the families of the disappeared is to pin a photograph of the missing person over their heart). They use devices of splitting the picture plane in half to show an action and it's consequences. In short, they illustrate simply in images and using text what has been happening in Chile since 1973.

The making of these patchwork pictures is an act of resistance. To come together in groups at all in Chile is to risk unwarranted attention from the police and the authorities are well aware of the critical nature of the pictures, but usually accuse the church and occasionally seize shipments at customs. However, unlike the work of graphic artists involved in making agit-prop posters, the arpillera makers are not regarded as 'dangerous' or subversive', even though their patchwork do



depict many of the injustices of modern Chilean life, they are classified as artrsania (craftwork) and are produced by poor and ignorant women.

The patchworks are never signed, and at most carry a small explanatory note folded into a pocket sewn on the back of the work.

The resistance to the Junta is not just in the illustration of its injustices and terrorisms. The dehumanisation of being sent to a shanty town and of being unemployed and having to depend on charity is also combatted in the making of these pictures. The ability to express gives satisfaction - the making of these little 'tapestries of defamation' is an affirmation of the courage and the individualism of those who have no choice, but to survive under such a system. That wit and humour and beauty are also expressed in these patchworks in depicting a playful child, or the offering of a bunch of flowers to the memory of someone killed by the forces of the Junta.

The real controllers of the arpillera production would be the intermediaries - those who distribute. Where the church 'manages' groups it is tightening its control. In the last few years it has asked the women to embroider generalised themes, such as human rights (as in the United States Nations Declaration) whereas other more politically orientated groups have been concerned to develop the original relationship to the reality of life, as they change each is equally relevant. The important thing is that they remain resisting.

The growth of the individual with group awareness and the ability to think and be critical and a sense of pride and identity is central to the defiance of organised state repression, and this is being developed through the craftwork of the Chilean women.



'The process which makes the event and the artistic expression so connected in the eyes of outsiders must appear inadequate and fragmentary to the individuals involved. Demands of the situation direct creativity into channels by necessity... people are turned into artists by the pressure of events... pressures which heighten a need for art in its multiple role of therapy, desire, communication, memory and love of beauty which is present in everybody but stifled in modern normality'.(2)

Spontaneous public art movements such as that of the arpillerista's in Chile, the drawings of the survivors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings and the actions of the women of Greenham Common illustrate the need for freedom of expression.

Living under a military dictatorship, one might expect this to be curtailed, and that ingenious ways of internal and external communication thought up as has happened in Chile - but in modern Japan? and in Britain.?

'One day in May 1974, Mr. Iwakichi Kodayashi, the old man visited the N.H.K. (T.V.) station in Hiroshima. He had a single picture with him...titled 'At about 4.00 p.m. August 6, 1945 near Yorozyo Bridge'. The people in the television station were very startled both by the vividness of Mr Koboyashi's memory no doubt, but also of the power the picture had - even after 30 years had elapsed. In June of the same year the N.H.K. Television station made a local broadcast based on the drawing, and made an appeal.

"Let us leave for posterity pictures of the atomic bomb drawn by citizens".

By 1983 2,200 drawings had been sent in. It is strange to think that before this occurred that no government or international agency of peace group or therapist or



private individual had thought to ask the people who had survived the bombings to represent themselves. (3)

The pictures, like those of the Chilean women are simple and direct and show eloquently the terrible real aftermath of the bombings using text to explain what is happening in the picture - and the text is almost always in the nature of 'I have seen this' or 'this is what happened'.

That the people can still and will take back creativity into their own hands is reassuring but it is seen as a phenomena when it occurs.

That there is an issue at stake is clear and that it is directly dealt with is good, but in Britain it is indicative of the state control of broadcasting when the Greenham women were drawing too much support through the medium of television, that coverage of their activities was stopped.

(The ideological state apparatus remembering it's duty as state apparatus.

The mass culture, produced by the media is not what is need by the people, the mobilisation of popular art movements proves this, yet they (the popular art movements) are seen as a phenomenon, which suggests there rarity and and unusualness and as may be seen in the changing bias of the news coverage on the Greenham Women from positive to negative to not all all. Their questionable desirability to state, they cannot be outrightly suppressed but they can be 'not encouraged' or ignored - and what might happen if this energy or drive were to be harnessed.

Gramsci, writing in prison under the fascists in Italy, defined cultural hegemony as the mass of institutions comprised of schools, universities, church, media unions and the family which informed the cultural thinking of the working class with



bourgeois ideology comparing western Europe with the Russia of the Tsars - where the non existence of these institutions enabled the Revolution to succeed and that revolution in the west could not occur until these supports to the state were overcome. He claimed, as does Althusser, that the private or independent nature of these institutions was false and irrelevant, that they are agents of the state. 'Independence' is necessary for their credibility, since it enables them to claim such indispensable characteristics as being 'balanced' or 'responsive'. At times, socialist thinking even penetrates these institutions and they are taken over by pro-left factions.

'The important factor about such institutions, however, is not whether they pursued policy of toleration towards representation from the left, but this this occurs within an overall structured context which ensures that these representations are encompassed by dominant cultural messages'. (4)

So - what of community art? is it to be seen as part and parcel of this dominant cultural apparatus? and particularly what of the more recent developments here in Ireland, of the Art Council's involvement in promoting the arts within education and beginning to pursue a very vital programme of promoting community art - and is it possible that if everybody did it we'd get there!

1. Guy Brett - All this we have seen
2. Guy Brett
3. Guy Brett
4. Su Braden - Committing Photography



Community arts in Ireland.

The programme designed by the arts Council encompasses arts and education together although the workings of the arts Council are impoverished. lack of government funding.

The government has given <sup>over</sup>all control of the arts in Ireland to the arts Council

the government white paper ~~of~~ the arts (1986) by the then in power Fine Gael party in co-alition with the Labour party, the Fine Gael party being a member of the International Christian-Democratic Organisation

- It has not been amended by successive governments

Let us look at the government or the State organisation in Ireland regards the <sup>Production</sup> ~~Recreation~~ of Cultural meaning - That The Role of government to Culture <sup>Relation</sup> ~~The Objectives of The State~~ wishes to have to 'its' culture

- to create a climate favourable to Cultural Development
- to develop at national, Regional and local level the Infra Structure to Support the Cultural life of the nation, in all its diverse manifestations;
- to provide for every individual, from the earliest age conditions conducive to the full achievement of his or her creative potential and to develop opportunities for creative activity and self-expression. Reducing cultural obstacles presupposes the development of arts education - especially within the school system but also in other sectors of life;
- to recognise Irish Creative artists, in every medium, as primary exponents of the culture of contemporary Ireland, to acknowledge the economic vulnerability of artists and to create the necessary environment



within which artists can work and earn a living ( ~~thereby~~ <sup>thereby</sup> fulfilling the social function of renewing values and increasing social awareness).

- to ensure the protection of the Irish heritage in all its aspects and to provide access to this heritage for all sections of the population;
- to provide particular support for those distinctive elements of Irish culture and to assist their survival as part of ~~the~~ <sup>our</sup> culture, in the face of strong competing external cultural forces;
- to ensure that the cultural needs of the community are adequately catered for in the national broadcasting service and the developing communications media
- to promote further cultural co-operation between north and south
- to enhance Ireland's reputation abroad
- to join with our European partners in consolidating and protecting our shared European culture and heritage "

The state recognises "two great networks of artistic and cultural ~~content~~ content" R.T.E. and

the Public Library System. library cutbacks

The government regards the arts as falling into the same category as health, welfare and education!

2.4. 1951-1972 State funding for the arts was low and what was produced during that era was of elitism minority interest and elitist.

In 1968 'The Revolution' of the students of the then National College of Art (reflecting the student unrest elsewhere) may have spurred on the state to revitalise the arts, for in 1973 the Arts Council was reconstituted and enlarged, its emphasis changed



chapter 3. p.3.

it began to create education and training schemes  
~~as well as~~ activity being seen to be as important  
as giving grants to institutions.

2.6 .... The arts Council is the predominant government agency  
in the arts and is responsible for distributing government  
funding .... The creation of an independent body  
has removed decisions on funding from the ~~political~~  
~~sphere~~ sphere of direct political influence ....

2.7 ..... it is understandable that the Council in interpreting  
its role should seek to promote ~~local~~ experimental,  
adventurous work over traditional forms...

2.8 .... it would seem essential that the most influential body  
in the arts should continue to be the Arts Council .... (however)  
The level of grant aid to the arts Council is grossly  
insufficient to meet present or future needs.  
Increases in grant aid will have to be found from non  
exchequer ~~sources~~ sources. (~~principally~~)

2.9 funding to be doubled by 1990 - Principally from the  
National Lottery.

2.10. Prime Importance • Art Education  
• Community arts  
• Regional arts, and  
• Arts Centers.

access to culture and opportunities ~~to~~ for participating  
in creative activity throughout - for all sectors.



The government has handed over responsibility for the arts to The Arts Council and has advised the Arts Council that, <sup>adequate</sup> funding from the exchequer is not available and proposes that ~~the~~ <sup>funding from the</sup> national lottery will ~~enable the Council to achieve~~ help to make up the difference, <sup>on its projected budget. - not all the necessary funds have been forthcoming</sup> This lack of funds and apparent autonomy of the Council do lead us to believe that the Irish Arts Council may be indeed independent and certainly from its policies in the developing fields of community art and Education, its thinking is certainly ~~of the~~ progressive (see appendix 1. Martin Drury interview) and appendix 2.

In 1978 <sup>and appendix 2.</sup> The arts Council Comissioned a Report on the State of the arts in Irish education. The Resulting document 'The place of the arts in Irish Education' <sup>it</sup> author Cearán Benson, was published in 1979.

its findings were that the arts in Ireland were neglected in education and therefore in Irish society at large there could not expect to be an appreciation of ~~the uses~~ <sup>the function</sup> of arts making.

for the duration of the <sup>making of the</sup> Report, the New post of Education officer ~~was~~ established - This was funded by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation & <sup>post</sup> since agreed to the continuation of by the terms

many of the Recommendations in the Report (and my own particular interests) are in the fields of <sup>particular</sup> community arts and education, where ~~the~~ the country cannot afford to expand any educational policy, the arts council if intent on increasing ~~the~~ ~~appeal~~ not just the appreciation but access - ~~following the 1972~~ would have to intervene, "~~The Arts~~"

"The Arts Council has neither the statutory Responsibility nor the Resources to provide for arts education in Irish schools"



- product
- not
- process

The Second Scheme or group of Schemes from 1986 included an involved 'artists in Residence' ~~first~~ in a school or college by December of 1987, 20 schools had participated. The Second group of Schemes - introduced in 1986 -

Visual  
Supplement  
Art matters. 2.  
1986.

Artist in  
residence  
in schools

Supplement to  
set matters  
Issue 2.  
1986

(Visual arts, theatre, literature, music, dance or film.)

24



and theatre as well as other varied areas of creativity

Information  
sheet -  
Artist in Res.  
in Schools.  
1988.  
Arts Council.

"In some projects it is the artist who makes the work, informed by and assisted by the students, in other projects ~~the~~ the artist makes ~~the~~ his or her work alongside the students who are working on the same aims. The precise nature of the ~~the~~ collaboration depends upon the art form chosen and the age of the students involved. It is important to remember that the artist is not primarily engaged as a ~~the~~ teacher but ~~as~~ rather as an amateur and a maker".

as yet. There has been no <sup>formal</sup> evaluation of the Residency ~~scheme~~, but certain objectives are emerging.

Naturally some projects are seen as more successful than others, more successful in degree of engagement or involvement of the children in the process and the beginning of understanding of the language of art, - a literacy in culture - particularly as described by Martin Denry in The Girls National School in Ballymun (a Residency with contemporary composer, John Buckley) where the girls were introduced to the primary source of music and <sup>Realised</sup> ~~showed~~ how it <sup>is</sup> ~~may be~~ processed into a piece of music.

see  
Appendix 1.

There is no particular code of practice recommended and it is very much up to the individual artist how he or she decides to <sup>enter into dialogue</sup> ~~investigate~~ ~~the~~ ~~chosen subject~~ with the ~~children~~ <sup>public</sup> young people.

The aim then of this Residency Scheme is to "... involve public experience of the artists processes as well as their products." as ~~this influence~~ in ~~the education system~~ "... with an education (in the arts)

Artist's  
very letter  
man  
1985



The Individual's capacity to Symbolise, Reflect and engage in Problem-solving is extended significantly "

perhaps ~~another~~<sup>an</sup> Indication of a good ~~or~~<sup>or successful</sup> scheme is the Residue which it leaves, not materially (a play Sculpture is a play Sculpture whether the children of whose school it was created for participated in its design and execution or not) but the Residue of action. ~~For~~ A Residency is for a limited period of time and the artist will leave and if the effect of the Scheme leaves with the artist then it has been to ~~no~~<sup>no</sup> ~~any~~<sup>any</sup> ~~real~~<sup>real</sup> ~~lasting~~<sup>lasting</sup> purpose, nothing will have been learnt which is of Value - but a Scheme which opens up <sup>Real</sup> possibilities for both children and teachers will continue when the artist has gone, for example in 1988,

a ~~the~~ Residency with Miriam Lambert and Scott Catriona NS. Baggot St. where the school continues to present New Puppet Shows, ~~written~~ devised by the pupils of the school, having had a short, if full, Introduction to (Puppet) Theatre from Design of puppets to production and performance of a show -

The list of Residencies for 1989 seems to Recognise and promote ~~the need for~~ analysis more than the earlier schemes, there are less ~~site specific~~<sup>site specific</sup> Sculptures and play Sculptures and murals and more emphasis on Investigating environment and Codes of meaning.

Particularly interesting are the projects which at second level investigate media ~~the~~ particularly in photography and video - part of our everyday ~~the~~ dominant culture as it is through these implements of the media that we receive the major part of our cultural information



- The Use of photography as a tool
- ~~for~~ i.e. " a six-month exploration by artist and students of Kenmare town and surrounding area in landscape, portraiture and documentary terms..." in County Galway
  - and " a four-month long documentary project involving children as photographers Recording and interpreting their homes, families, friends, school and villages parallel to the ~~the~~ work of the professional photographer in school & local community"
  - and " The making of four wall hangings and a Complementary Installation based on the materials and images of fishing and seafaring"
  - and at primary level. ~~a piece~~
    - " an eight week mime project exploring childrens Ideas and feelings about the environment "
  - and " a wall sculpture and ornamental path, based on exploration of walls and boundaries in childrens stories and Imaginations. "

In Relation to the failure of the formal system of education to allow for the arts but <sup>intending to keep separate from it,</sup> in 1985, in association with the arts Council and the Calouste Gulbenkian foundation, Arts Community Education (ACE) was founded initially as a 3 year project to select and fund arts projects in the areas concerned. ACE. was designed to be 'experimental' and approached ~~the~~<sup>its</sup> applicants with the critical attention "... which would reveal the full possibilities of the proposed project both in itself and as an exemplar for future practice" (in community arts)

A.C.E.  
newsletter.  
November 86  
Ciarán Benson



C.3.P.9.

its primary concern to ~~do~~ aid in the development  
of interactive community arts projects and to  
Research into the theory of the process involved  
and its particular interest in aiding the development  
~~from~~ of " projects that emerge organically from  
communities as a natural part of their  
own particular development ".



## Conclusion

The Irish experience of Community arts is quite different from the British, and those Responsible for its development here, have had the opportunity to learn from the mistakes made in its development elsewhere. Also, the Irish arts Council is a very different ~~entity~~ <sup>body</sup> to its ~~British version~~, for historical-political reasons, from the British Arts Council. Whereas in Ireland, the Council is concerned in helping a culture emerge and develop, the British Arts Council is maintaining or sometimes defending a culture against progress. The Irish Arts Council, is still, however the Agent for the Irish state in the arts. even if it is seen to have a great deal of autonomy however it may be - if not completely independent, a great deal ~~more~~ less structured, if only because of ~~the~~ the inadequate amount of funding it receives from the state, and the necessity to actively find sponsorship and funding from other bodies. such as the Calouste Gulbenkian foundation.

The Community arts in Ireland are in the main administered to, through the Arts Council via the Regional arts officers. through C.A.F.E (creative activity for everyone) or through a newly set up organisation. A.C.E. - (the function of which is to research and develop community arts and education in Ireland, Education is seen as the main cause of community arts, and in Ireland arts education is underdeveloped particularly at primary and post primary levels, for this reason also because of its relative cheapness the 'Artist in Residence in schools' and related schemes were developed, the 'Residence' scheme appearing to have after the three years of its existence quite a success although a code of practice has not yet been established.

This would seem now to be the most important thing the arts Council could do to improve the 'Schools' scheme as some of the projects could be a little woolly in their relation to a cultural literacy programme.



## Conclusion

It is five years since the publication of Owen Kelly's 'Community, Art and State' so Community Arts will be celebrating its twentieth birthday this year - and how has it developed, since those heady days of the late 60's when Marcuse saw in the student movement how a negating culture might be substituted for affirmative culture

"In the 'new Sensibility' of blues, jazz and Rock'n'Roll, of flower power 'exotic belligerency' and long hair"

~~From many mistakes made, as with any new practical activity, Community Arts practitioners have learnt~~

"by the belief that culture can be challenged, and consciousness raised, by experimenting with new forms of art, which ~~can~~ involve the audience in a more active manner than the traditional forms"

and today Community Arts is continuing to work on a programme of cultural literacy, seeking to reclaim the production of cultural meaning from a dominant culture via the acquisition of skills in relation to perceived needs

"The illiterate ~~only~~ become literate only when they recognise the relevance to their individual lives of the printed word"

If culture is a particular set of coded meanings relevant to a society, surely it is <sup>then</sup> everyone in that society's right to know the meanings expressed by their society, rather, a necessity to know the meanings of their own society so as not to be alienated from it. and ~~if Community Arts can help~~

Janet Wolff.  
1981. P.89  
Marcuse  
1969 P.36

Janet  
Wolff.  
1981.

Do freers  
listed in  
Shifting  
Photography!  
on Braden  
1987.



APPENDIX I

INTERVIEW BY MARY FITZSIMON  
WITH MARTIN DRURY  
EDUCATION OFFICER, ARTS COUNCIL OF  
IRELAND

JANUARY 1989



Martin Drury - Education Officer, Arts Council of Ireland.  
January 1989.

The main problem, I suppose, about talking about this is to find a language and a territory so that one is talking about the same thing, and not seeming to talk about the same thing.

What I would say is that two phenomena are going on at once, one would be the phenomena of democratisation and the other would be cultural democracy. Now if I can try and explain what the difference is between those, it seems to me that democratisation of culture is in a word, its access, its trying to make accessible to individuals and communities the organisations and sectors of society cultural experiences which they were previously prevented from having any touch with and which they regarded as being the preserve of an elite, so in a sense I suppose is a lateral access in which one is trying to spread image making of all sorts to a wider community, plus I don't think it is a one way traffic.

I think it is also that the convention or establishment, if you like, art practices, need to open themselves to those communities, and in a way artists and residence in schools or artists and residents in local authorities or local factories or residence associations are whatever, are part of that process. It is part of a process in which one is recognising, I think probably since the 50's, many artists have actually wanted to break out of the kind of chains which previously kept them in their individual studios or rooms working and where they were obliged only to emerge for exhibitions or performances or publishing and, I suppose, hand in glove with the development of education, free education, comprehensive and community education, and the whole sort of sociological shift through television and things like that, values have shifted, values have changed.

There are many artists who want to have a much more direct relationship with society and therefore they choose at least for part of the time and sometimes for all of the time to work in a much more immediate relationship with a particular community, so that is kind of one trend. I mean artists in residence is one



example as how that might be manifest. There would be others one talks about community theatre companies, if one talks about theatre and education companies, if one talks about women publishing companies, such as Attic Press, all of this is in a sense, previously shut-off communities getting their hands on cultural expression and the cultural resources. Now the other thing that is much more important, much more fundamental and much more problematic is not the lateral axis, and that's what I mean about cultural democracy, which is to say in a kind of phrase that one has now, again individuals, groups and communities who are not content to surrender up their creative function to artists, but they actually want to hold onto it, claw it back, and to say "hang on a bit, we want to make images of our own lives, we want to tell stories of our own lives, we want to make plays, performances of our own lives". Therefore in a sense its traditional definition of the function of the artist in which either as an act or as a musician or as a visual artist, or as a film maker or whatever he or she was there to do societies playing for it, so we all sat in front of the cinema or went to the theatre or looked at the exhibitions and we felt like those people have a kind of god given right to make our images for us and our function is merely to go and look, or like, or buy or applaud or whatever. That is being replaced by a sense that people are not prepared to surrender up that creative function, and for me community arts is part of a much broader a political and social movement, in which people are saying we want to take responsibility for our own lives. So, the creative function is part of something that is much broader a people saying that they want to choose the type of environment that they live in, the way that they bring up their children - talking about social issues.

One is talking about notions of power and responsibility. In a way one looks at parliamentary democracy its a bit like the establishment arts handing over to 166 people who sit in a building and have power to make decisions as to how we live our lives. I suppose that is necessary, but that does not mean that it has to be "all or nothing", through say local democracy, community action groups or whatever, or saying "Hang on a bit, we want to hold on to some of the way we live or own lives, we are



not prepared to surrender everything and the Arts, our creative function is one of the things.

I feel, it is always difficult to know, but I feel that since the 70's, or late 60's I suppose and certainly with increasing speed through the 80's, Community Arts, which is extremely difficult to define, but because something is difficult to define it does not mean that it does not exist. It certainly does defy the conventional kind of linguistic frame which we normally bring to bear upon the arts and how they organise themselves and all of that. But, I would have thought that the biggest issue that is facing Arts Councils is the cultural policy in the country generally. No longer is it possible to simply say - the following kind of organisations who are the the spine of creative activity and artistic cultural direction, but there is actually is this whole other kind of set of vertebrae which needs to be looked at and at the moment the looking is a very piecemeal approach, partly through labour schemes, partly through individual local authorities, no comprehensive and thorough-going kind of policy in relation to this famous phrase "community arts".

The arts in residence in schools is a broader educational philosophy which in could be in some ways quite simple though fairly fundamental again. The Arts Council has a statutory function to promote and assist the arts, it wasn't long about its business before it realised that the biggest obstacle to it being able to realise that function properly was an educational system which for a whole set of reasons (which I won't go into because they are so complex) had very inimical, if not downright hostile attitudes to arts and in 1979 the Council produced a report called The Benson Report on the place of the arts in Irish education and that created an agenda, both for the Department of Education and the educational authorities themselves. but also for the Arts Council, and obviously these two things have to be done in tandem, these two organisations, as the two have to work in tandem. This was published by the Arts Council. It has effectively been the agenda for action for us in the schools area for the last ten years. Interestingly, in 1989 we are using as a platform to try and celebrate what has been happening in the last



ten years and also to draw attention to what needed to be done in the last ten. But, the range of recommendations that that report threw up, a whole cluster which would have to deal with the place of the artist in society, the alienation that you talked about in the sense that art is in some way without purpose and does not mean anything to people and those are very true, but they are very abstract concepts.

The Arts Council has to try and address this and we have done this in a range of ways and currently we are spending one million pounds, largely on young people, in schools. Now, part of this work relates to the artist in residence in school scheme. The scheme arose recently I suppose out of the initial murals in schools scheme which was very much the breaking open of the primary school system in particular to have an artist in for the day. It was in fact failing to make the school do its own creative thinking, in so far as a school principal could say "Oh good, a mural scheme, all we have to do is effectively sign a cheque for £200 and open our door to have this artist in". It did not have sufficient responsibility built into it I think, to have the school sit down and do something.

We reviewed, half way through the Benson Report to see if we create a scheme which was in fact more flexible which was saying - you can have an artist in and we will dictate what is I suppose the broad criteria, but essentially you have to make some pretty crucial choices. The kind of artist, what kind of work, what is the nature of the project to take place. Immediately what that does it seems to me it throws the responsibility for the site specific or a school specific experience on to the staff with the artist. But let it be said that the residency involves a much greater amount of contact between the artist and the school that would have been previously the case. Perhaps, it seems to me is what was important for the school, both the students and the teachers to understand that art is inspirationally accidentally, the kind of old romantic notion of bolts of lightning hitting the artist, are made, like a lot of other things in life are made by hard work and thinking about it and tearing it up and starting it again and then putting up with the thing and then finally then saying lets go for it here are the materials. And it is a



dialogue and a dialogue with materials and if it is a collaborative project it is a dialogue with people, so obviously time would be required if it is to take place. The danger of murals in schools is that time is such a constraint that you just go A,B,C,D, and it as such has to fall into place. For those number of reasons and I suppose a desire to open up idioms, not just paint on walls but also could be theatre, or print making or photography or as you can see from the list of residencies they do fairly span, mostly in the visual arts, but the range of techniques and idioms and stuff like that it.

Occasionally I get a school saying "A school in the next county had a play sculpture - can we have one like that" and I say to them, well no that is in fact its not about repetition and copying, its about original thinking. So thats it I either go on about that, but thats where the residency notion comes from. Can I say just that in the visual arts area, the residency is the most extended version in what I was talking about. We do have a slide-loan service as well, which I suppose is a remote form of contact but at least it does allow art teachers to get their hands on examples of contemporary art which we group generically or thematically.

We have an artists in school scheme which is equivalent to our writers in school scheme, but full time artists are available to go in and talk about their work and maybe do a workshop for half a day. We also then have a series of commissioned exhibitions in which we are asking artists - as part of our policy we say to the artist we are are not just buying some of your work and putting it in a case and sending it off to schools saying - here is contemporary art, we are saying to a group of artists, we want you to make a piece on a particular theme, and we want you to think about making this piece for thirteen to eighteen year olds. Now, as I speak to you I have had two meetings with artists this morning and I have another in fact in half an hour in which we are meeting the artist who are the next exhibitions for schools which is called "A Special Place" which is going to be in one word I would say landscape which in fact is very deliberately intended as a version of conventional notions of landscape, no doubt painterly landscapes, so it will be mixed media work, with



even across the range of work and including the more traditional painterly approach.

What we are saying through this exhibition is people do not make images out of a sense of decoration or skill, no artist could sustain himself or herself imaginatively or intellectually if that was the case, that's for Sunday afternoon painters to do that is why their images are largely so banal, but that actually the exterior landscape that is painted is in some ways a correlative for the interior landscape in the artists mind. Through this exhibition and through the artists statements which accompany this exhibition we will be able to have, hopefully, a good landscape show which in a way has a real cutting edge and it not simply a set of decorations. That is in a series of exhibitions which I can give you catalogues for. Actually we have been trying to "push out" what the notion of contemporary art might mean.

I think the critical thing for me is the question of people making choices, still realising that they have an artistic and creative function themselves, but that they may need, particularly taking the poor training of teachers in the arts, and I am thinking particularly of primary teachers, that they may need the support that an artist can give. I mean, I see the artist as having two functions in the residency scheme, one is, if you like, to be an amateur of the creativity of the people in the school themselves, but the other is to push at a pace and to a level of finish, if you like, that they would not be capable of themselves. To cut through a lot of problems simply on the basis of their experience and their talent. We all remember in life, and particularly at school, if you have one solid kind of positive experience, it tends to reinforce that this is a worthwhile thing to do.

If one is 9-14 years of age, you are very fluid, very open to experiences, if you could have a positive experience of art, it can actually stand for an awful lot later on, and my whole belief, my bottom line belief is that this is not a form of evangelical zeal, "Get them young, and turn them into artists" or



art buying public, or whatever, its more subtle than that. The French have a wonderful phrase for this- they talk about, in theatre terms, which is where I come from, thats why so many of my references are theatrical, they talk about a "Non Public" and essentially what I am interested in is the "non public" and the conditions in which the arts exist in this country are made just as much by the "Non Public" or the so called "Non Public" than by the public, and its not necessary that the nine year old who is having the residency experience now in twenty years time will be a twenty nine year old art connoisseur, or collector or art, but if he or she has just a more normal approach to art, would regard art as not being weird, or silly or wasteful, and if they heard that their local corporation or local authority was going to invest in a piece of public sculpture, or was going to fund a programme of art classes or whatever that they would not say that that was a disgraceful waste of public money, that they would actually have a sense of public money, as a metaphor, is correctly spent in a range of areas such as roads, sewage, dustbin collection and cultural expression. Its as simple as that.

Its a process of normalisation. One of the peculiar things about the arts, in some ways is that one is walking a tightrope. On the one hand you are saying that the arts are terribly important, terribly special, but there are people, and it is true, I dont believe that everybody is an artist with artist abilities, but I think that there are people with things to say, images to make, stories to write and it is incredibly important that they are invested back, so on one hand one is emphasising the specialness of it. On the other hand one is emphasising that this specialness arises from a relationship of continuity with life so its not special and remote its actually special but emerging out of a relationship of continuity with life. Another thing, going back to the artist in residence and the school exhibitions with the artists statements, one of the things that I am terribly keen on is that teachers and students would realise that artists have one head, they wear the same kind of clothes, they ride a bike, they listen to the radio, and they make these things.



I used to work up in Leitrim, where there was a writer in school, Desmond Hogan in fact, he said "I make stories, other people make sausages, or they make cars or they make tables, and here's a story that I made recently" and he proceeded to read it. Now if that, on the one hand he is stating that yes I am a specialist, I don't make sausages, on the other hand he is saying, a society is made up of people who make different things, and I happen to be a story maker. Now it's that kind of a thing, where one is actually enjoying it for what it is but not feeling "Weird", this guy is weird, he has landed from Mars that to me is terribly important.

Of the Projects that you have seen over the past few years, -how would you term successful?

Well I think it is difficult to evaluate and I think one of the problems about art in education generally, as well as the arts in society is that one says that it is not measurable. But I would not make the next step which I think most of society and a lot of educationalists do which is because something is not measurable it is not valuable, so I would say, curiously, when I go into a school it is in talking to the principal and the staff and seeing the artist working that you actually get a sense "this actually has impacted"- this has effected in a way that is both subliminal and obvious. Their own sense of themselves and their own sense of the world, also I mean it has to be said that I am not a product obsessed person but I do feel that it is important for all concerned that whatever the realisation of the residency is be it the making of a piece of sculpture, or an exhibition or a performance or whatever that that is done fully and completely and as well as possible. Because I do think that like a lot of other things in life, whether you are knitting a sweater, fixing a bicycle or cleaning or whatever you know one does ... that the work that you have put into it emerges into something that you can enjoy and have pride in. So, I actually think that one part of the evaluation is actually saying, look, what work emerges from this.



If I could give you an example actually, perhaps I will take an example from music, because there has been very few in music, two in music, but one of the best ones was in music and I will try and explain why I think it was the best one. It was John Buckley who is a contemporary composer working in the International School in Ballymun, you might say most unpromising circumstances for a music project which was based on composition. It was not just playing instruments, he was actually going in saying 'I am a composer, with you, I am going to make a piece of music, and its not going to be a piece of music that you are used to hearing, it is not going to be either a three minute pop song or theme music that you might hear on television or whatever and over a period of 8/10 weeks and working in the theme of water', he brought those kids through a set of experiences, now, some of those experiences would have been going out to rivers and lakes with a microphone and experiencing water and taping the water, some of them would have been dealing with percussive instruments, bells, chimes, little tiny little hand cymbals, drums and things like that investigating with them, some of this would have been play, there is a lot of good art about play, but, investigating what happens when the instrument is dipped in and out of the water, what is the quality of the sound, so it was almost like a clay experience, they were actually dealing with sound, a most abstract of things, in many ways, and they were making a plastic.

Through simply getting "dirty" with sound, so to speak, it kind of crashed through a whole lot of stuff, like what music was and secondly then agreed on certain conventions by which they would record, not just with the microphone, but when it came to deciding that they would have seagulls in, they drew seagulls in and if there were seagulls for a long time, there were seagulls for a long time written in, there were seagulls going up and louder and drawn so, and so therefore, without any fuss or bother or the word being used notations was used and they realised its okay to be mucking around in clay or in anything plastic, but you also must be able to organise the materials and in a sense gutter in the materials in the way that you want. Through this they starting recording the pieces and they staring putting a shape and through this they produced a 13 minute electronic tape which



then John brought to the recording studio, which again goes back to this point about finish, it was brought to the level of finish which made them so proud, and it is a remarkable piece of work, it is called "Drip, Drop, Drip". It includes their own human sounds, seagulls, natural water sounds and made sounds from the instruments. But, why that was successful for me was that they seemed to me looking at them and watching them, that they seemed to have a primary sense of what music was.

Music had, in a way that they could not articulate themselves, had been reduced to its most fundamental elements, the elements of sound and they had actually done that, understood that in their gut and in their blood almost whereas most conventional music teaching, as with art teaching is sort of going immediately for their head and its about song singing and scales and things like that and in many ways one can operate quite successfully. There are many artists who operate quite successfully within the conventional modes but they have never had the primary experience of the language of it. Now, the fact that that was for me worked through at a level appropriate to 8-9-10 year olds, was remarkable and also because I think music is extremely difficult to deal with, because there are so few people working in it and it is so problematic and it is so monopolised by what we think music already is, which is not so much the case with visual art, I think we might have a more flexible notion of what be a more visual image, so I mean that story metaphorically, as a good residency as well as anything else.

I think the only issue would be in talking to Lar (Cassidy) later, the only issue that we have not discussed is the political or organisational issue is given the kind of points that I was making in the beginning about changes in society about exceptions in people controlling their own lives, given the implications of free education and generally better education per population, we still have conventionally a notion in say in the governmental circles that the Arts Council is there to do a certain set of things which is largely to fund the conventional arts and it is given a set of money to do that, what is not realised, because we don't have a sophisticated cultural policy in this country is that the Arts Council actually is trying to do those sort of



things with its left hand, while its right hand is shaking hands with, like, I just literally put down the phone, thats why I was late coming down to you, is in fact a women ringing up who is involved with travellers. Now, somebody rings me up and says I am working with travellers and I want to do some drama work with them, I mean one part of my head is saying this has not got a chance in hell, because I know the left hand is already overburdened, but another part of me says that this is the cutting edge of the new arts and new cultural expression.

Our problem in the Arts Council is that I think we have a fairly sophisticated understanding of whats going on but we don't have the means to either in terms of staff, or resources to address, because this issue here is just enormous. Its about all the population and their creative function, I need not tell you what its all about. Now if we were to engage in that fully, with all the unemployment groups, with all the youth groups, with all the travellers groups, with the disabled groups, with all the youth groups, all the womens groups with all of the socio-economic groups that aren't part of this, I mean you could multiple the A. C. grant, and thats not necessarily the most important thing, except in the end ones capacity to actually provide a genuine service is dependent on having the resources to do it.

Now, we have so far had a very limited relationship with this sector of society, not really through any desire to sort of shut those people out, but the best we have been able to do, and it has been inadequate, has been to be involved in the democratisation of culture but cultural democracy, we are barely tickling it and it could be argued that to barely tickle it is dangerous, because it may actually give the whole sector itself, but more importantly, Government, the impression that this is actually being dealt with and I think that this is the single most important issue facing it. Is the Department of the Taoiseach, which is responsible for in a sense, the Government Department for Arts and Culture, is it actually going to wake up and understand that culture and the arts are not just happening between eight o'clock at night and ten o'clock at night, in various galleries, concert halls and theatres, but they are actually 24 hour a day experiences and that there are not just 8-



9-10% of the population, but there is another 60-70-80% of the population and their cultural birth-right needs to be - now you need to set up various sophisticated structures but the problem that I feel, perfectly honestly is that nobody wants to address the issue of culture seriously, and where part of the reason for this is that its never been dealt with seriously at education level.

If you look at most other European countries the relationship between the education and the department of culture is like "that" its a really intimate relationship. It is not here. I don't believe we have a Department of Education, I believe we have a Department of Schooling and I think the difference between education and schooling is like what we have been talking about for the last hour.

The practice of community art that I have seen and that I have admiration for does not seem to me to smell of that. Now I think that there probably are situations in other countries where you know cultural and artistic policies are sometimes used for what might be called "soft policing", but I do not think that we have got to that stage here, I mean I do not think its an issue. I actually think that underneath community arts is potentially a very radical kind of phenomenon, it just depends on how deeply you hear this word "culture" I mean, when I say culture out there most people probably think of paintings and sculpture and music, but I don't believe that that is the case, I believe that culture is about ideas and social practice and how we think about ourselves, and I think that potentially that this is the most radical kind of movement in the arts for a long long time.

The problem for it is that can community arts function in a society which is governed by rather right-wing policies, because its a bit like the arts in education. I don't believe that there is actually that there is any kind of conspiracy in Marlborough Street about art, music and drama and dance, I actually believe that there is a conspiracy if you like, in a subliminal sense about creative thinking and in a sense that is a much more shocking phenomenon. I think the arts in some way are deeply



problematic for the education system, because if you look at the arts they are about divergent meanings and the whole education system is about convergent meanings. I think the same is true of community arts. It could be a very positive critical force socially and politically speaking, but I fear that it will be tolerated, and this comes back to my point about tickling something, that in fact we will just take the pressure cooker off, whereas it would be much healthier if the pressure cooker built and built and built and then exploded, but I think I would fear that that won't happen.

My background is two-twin-tracked, one the I trained as teacher and worked as a teacher and secondly when I went to college I became more interested in drama and in theatre, and I suppose at a certain point, about ten years ago, I kind of "did the flip", the drama which was the appendix to my working <sup>f</sup>lie, became in fact the spine and I worked then for a couple of years in Sligo-Leitrim as an Arts Education Officer, doing the kind of work that I am doing here but on a local basis, I then worked in with T.E.E.M. the Theatre and Education company as Artistic Director for four years and I am here in the Arts Council for four years. So basically for the last ten years I have been working in the arts in education, mostly in this kind of policy making and programme designing field, but also for four years being responsible for the work of a theatre company touring schools.



1. *State, State Ideology and the Apparatus of State Ideology.* New Left Review 1972

2. Conrad Atkinson  
Picturing the System, Exhibition Catalogue  
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3. APPENDIX II  
TAPED INTERVIEWS WITH :  
LAR CASSIDY - COMMUNITY ARTS OFFICER  
ARTS COUNCIL OF IRELAND

4. PAULINE CUMMINS - ARTIST  
PANEL DISCUSSION ON PUBLIC ART

5. GUY BREST DOUGLAS HYDE GALLERY  
Through our own eyes, Popular Art and Modern History  
INCLUDING DEZLAN MCGONAGLE, PATRICIA NURL,  
MESH RUANE.

6. The Necessity of Art 1959  
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7. Owen Kelly  
Community, Art and State. Storming the citadels.  
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David Butler

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## TAPED INTERVIEWS

1. Lar Cassidy - Community Arts officer. Arts Council
2. Pauline Cummins - Artist, Community Artist.
3. Martin Drury - Education officer. Arts Council
4. Douglas Hyde Panel Discussion on Public Art.  
Declan McGonigle, Curator, Orchard Gallery.  
Patricia Hurl, Artist.  
Mebh Ruane, Visual Arts Officer, Arts Council.
5. Dennis Nowlan. Artists Association in Ireland.