

SUMMER 09

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Liveworks

CREATING ARTS & CULTURE WITH YOUNG PEOPLE



CAN WA

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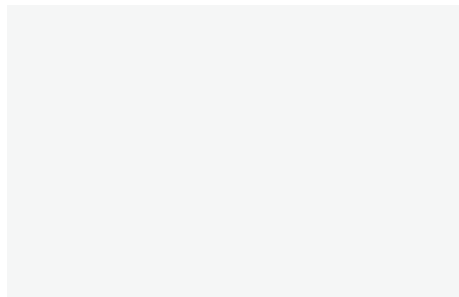
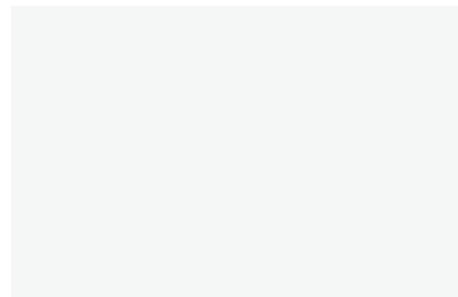
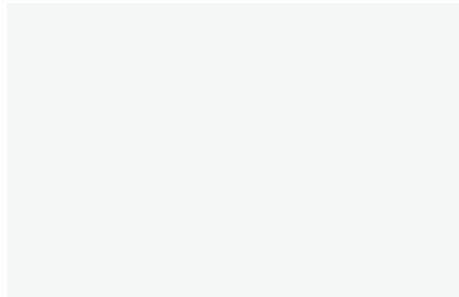
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Photos (Clockwise from top>bottom)
Mural; photo courtesy of CAN WA
Break dancing; photo courtesy of CAN WA
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EDITORIAL

YOUTH ARTS AND CULTURE: CREATING SPACES, PLACES AND PATHWAYS

SIMONE RUANE

MANAGER OF YOUTH ARTS AND CULTURE, CAN WA

For a range of reasons, young people form a particular focus of many organisations, programs and funding. Many of these organisations, including CAN WA, classify 'youth' as those people in our communities who fall roughly between the ages of 15-25 years (some of us in denial would like to push the age limit up a few years I must admit!). Basically, the time of life experienced between childhood and adulthood.

I began my work at CAN WA four years ago as the coordinator of its Youth Arts Program: LiveworX. I was pretty much fresh out of my uni studies in the area of sustainable development. I was green (in more ways than one), enthusiastic, and anxious in the face of what this new position and chapter in life would bring. Whilst I inherited some 'to be continued' projects and knowledge from my LiveworX predecessors, I was pretty much given one small, yet overwhelmingly broad task of 'initiating and supporting opportunities for young people to benefit from arts and culture'. Working out how the heck (for use of a better word) I could do this was the challenge.

Since then I have been involved in a range of projects and programs, that bring together a community cultural development approach with a vocational training framework. Using a range of arts mediums, creativity and interactive approaches, these activities enable young people to explore and express their own cultures, identities, environments, issues, and aspirations, whilst at the same time developing skills that are recognised by a national training system. CAN WA has undertaken these activities in a range of settings and contexts over this time, and whilst there is always room for improvement, the programs have proven to provide a positive learning and life experience for the young people who have been involved over the years.

The theme of this year's publication is WELLBEING — exploring how arts and cultural activities can be used as a tool for enhancing the overall quality of life for the young people involved. The concept of 'wellbeing' is being increasingly thrown around in policy and academic arenas as a necessary ingredient for the future 'sustainability' of our communities. A new buzz word to add to the growing list of program objectives which foster social capital: inclusion, cohesion, engagement, participation, empowerment and so on. I have a personal interest in how can we as community cultural development practitioners, translate the work we are doing on the ground into the language of policy makers and academics. How can we use this language wisely and genuinely to express how the work we do can create positive social change in our communities?

'Wellbeing' means different things for different people. It generally includes aspects of health, meaning, identity, time, resources, resilience, jobs, education, friends and family, happiness, housing, love, security and safety, relaxation, peace, leisure and wealth. It is important to remember that what contributes to my wellbeing may be different to yours, and the factors that contribute to those of young people are likely to be different again. In essence, wellbeing basically refers to all the elements that provide the means for individuals and communities to reach their potential and enjoy a fulfilling and meaningful life.

This publication is simply an overview and reflection of activities and projects that CAN WA and other likeminded organisations have been involved in with Western Australian young people. I am hoping that the articles in this publication provide you with some practical and creative examples of community cultural development work that contributes to enhancing the wellbeing of young people in subtle yet meaningful ways. I also hope that the stories shared in this document inspire and excite others who work with young people, and use or hope to use the diverse mediums of arts in their practice.

I would like to express a special thanks to all the young people who I've had the pleasure of working with and have learnt so much from while I've been managing this program. A big shout out to all of the writers who have contributed articles to this publication and shared their personal experiences and learning. A very special thanks to Rebecca Speidel, CAN WA's Communication Officer, for her fantastic help with editing and putting this publication together. Finally, big thanks to Claire Hanna from qalamDESIGN for the graphic design.

F I R E D U P W I T H
C R E A T I V I T Y :
Y O U N G P E O P L E
A N D C O M M U N I T Y
A R T S P R A C T I C E

BY SIMONE RUANE
MANAGER OF YOUTH ARTS AND CULTURE, CAN WA

CREATIVITY



Victory



'I think that the program is really beautiful and I just hope it keeps going for the young people. I think everything I have learnt is good for me, so my wish is now, if possible, for the program to keep going to help young people'

Fired Up program participant 2008

Managing CAN WA's Youth Arts and Cultural Program, I have had the privilege of working with and learning from diverse and inspiring young people, professional artists and community workers on a range of community arts based programs in both the metro area and Wheatbelt region. CAN WA's Livemork, Risky Bizness, and Fired Up programs have become, over the past four years, a way to activate and inspire young people and to facilitate the development of the personal, interpersonal and vocational skills that are needed to thrive in life.

These programs have been designed with the core principles of what we in community arts call community cultural development (CCD) — an approach which uses arts and cultural activities as a means for people to come together to explore their shared and differing life experiences, the issues affecting their communities and their aspirations for the future.

It is a process where people have an opportunity to work together on a collaborative arts project with a professional artist and their community members to develop creative, vocational and interpersonal skills. While CCD and community arts practice has a key focus on the process of exploration and development, the culminating community arts project, whether it be a performance, photographic exhibition, festival, film or public art piece, is just as important in terms of expressing the cultural identity and experiences of participants. It is telling a story to the wider community and potentially changing negative perceptions and fostering understanding.

CAN WA's Youth Arts and Cultural Program has brought together CCD practice with the Australian National Vocational Training System. The young people involved in these programs are able to reap the benefits of the community arts process, while at the same time achieving accreditation for their efforts and involvement in community-based cultural activities. Bringing together community culturally development and vocational training has been mutually beneficial. The very important yet 'soft' outcomes such as making friends, building trust and improving self esteem, communication and creative thinking, is coupled with the equally important vocational outcomes of job readiness, accessing further education, developing work-based skills, altering perceptions of education and attaining a nationally recognised certificate.

CAN WA's youth programs are specifically focused on young people who are having difficulty with school or employment and are likely to be experiencing a range of issues such as lack of confidence, goal setting and motivation, low self esteem, anxiety and/or depression, marginalisation, settlement issues and barriers to communication; all of which contribute to their overall experience of wellbeing and life quality.

All the programs are young people focused and therefore delivered in an interactive, flexible and non-formal way, based on mutual respect. The use of arts activities, particularly multimedia, drama, music, visual arts, imagery, and story telling are integral to the programs. These activities are used to facilitate a fun and relaxed learning environment, teamwork processes, communication, trust, confidence, self-expression, literacy and numeracy. All of the CAN WA youth programs have been customised depending on the needs of the particular young people we are working with, the themes we are exploring, the art forms we use and the community setting we are working within. These programs are delivered in a way which ensures that the ethos and the intentions of CAN WA are maintained.

Flexible delivery and participant feedback ensures the participants are actively involved in the decision-making and retain ownership over their learning and creative projects. The subject matter is delivered in an integrated way, valuing participant's experiences and interests and making it relevant to the local community setting. The venues where the programs are delivered are specifically community based, comfortable and suitable for the young people involved.



The programs are generally delivered over six to twelve days, with a mix of activities to ensure young people are stimulated and the different ways people learn are accounted for. The programs include arts-based activities, time with a mentor/support persons, group work, excursions, guest speakers and computer-based activities.

Professional artists and arts workers who have experience in working with the young people in a community arts context participate by facilitating creative workshops to build skills and provide a source of inspiration and role modelling for participants. All of the programs combine a community arts project that is planned and created by the young people with the support of the artist. This allows the young people an opportunity to gain work and project management experience and meet professionals in related fields.

The relationships between CAN WA, local governments and community-based organisations have been crucial to the success of these programs. Working in partnership with locally based organisations allows the young people in these programs to link in with the support services and activities already existing in their local community.

Through CAN WA's Youth Arts and Culture program, we are keen to support the aspects of wellbeing that underpin the quality of life for these young people: motivation, interest, trust, inspiration, connectivity, self-esteem, meaning, belonging, and value. It is these very important elements, which despite being difficult to measure, forms the basis for an individual's capacity to reach their potential, particularly in regards to education and employment.

The experience of CAN WA's Livework, Fired Up and Risky Bizness Program's have obviously been different for the different young people participating, particularly in terms of how it has impacted on their overall sense of wellbeing.

The feedback we have been given from the past participants has however, reinforced the positive impact that community arts activities can have on the lives of young people. It has been encouraging to hear that the large majority of young people who have been involved in these community arts based programs have felt that they have 'learnt new creative skill', 'enjoyed the experience of trying out different kinds of art', and for some 'realised it's the arts [they were] interested in'. One young person realised 'that there is so much to learn, the possibilities are endless'.

The simple fact that these young people have had an opportunity to 'meet new people' and 'make new friends' is worthy of mention. One participant expressed that they 'loved meeting all the people' and another said 'I've made pretty much a lot more friends here.' This increase of social networks can be incredibly valuable to young people who may be feeling isolated, unsupported or emotionally fragile. As one participant expressed 'when you come especially from different countries you feel alone, but when you are in the program you meet different people and you feel confident about that'.

CAN WA's youth programs have consciously brought together young people from different cultural and social backgrounds. This has been seen as a positive experience for the young people involved. One participant expressed that 'it has been great interacting with different people and finding out what others like' another said that 'it's good to make friends and to be with the other people from another country'. Many past program participants felt that they had learnt new skills and enhanced their cultural awareness as a result of working on community arts activities with people different to themselves. One participant shared that 'Yes, I've made a lot of friends here from different cultural backgrounds. It has taught me how to respect other people; that was really important for me when I came to this'.

Most of the young people participating have also felt that being involved in these community arts programs has enabled them to develop a range of social skills. Fostering interpersonal skills and self-esteem is at the core of the work we do with young people. Therefore participant's comments like: 'I have learnt how to work better in a group', and 'I'm quite shy and Livework has helped me being more confident' and 'the program got everyone talking and building relationships', are really important indications that these programs are contributing in small yet significant ways to the lives of young people and their sense of wellbeing.

Participating in arts and cultural activities makes an important contribution in enriching the quality of life and sense of wellbeing for most of us. The work that I've been doing with young people over the past few years has reinforced for me the value of community arts practice as a tool for inspiring and attracting young people who may be experiencing some hardship, or are faced with life challenges which unavoidably impact on their overall health and sense of wellbeing. While there is no denying that this work is full of challenges, I am so grateful for having had an opportunity to be involved in programs which have provided a space for young people (and of course myself!) to be involved in a creative, community based, educational process which has enabled the building of confidence, making of friends, creation of fun, development of skills, fostering of respect and the deepening of understanding — all of which are of vital importance for contributing to a positive life experience.

U S I N G
A R T S T O
C E L E B R A T E
D I V E R S E
I N T E R E S T S
O F Y O U N G
P E O P L E

BY CHRIS WOODS
YOUTH SERVICES COORDINATOR, CITY OF GOSNELLS

CELEBR

ate





The arts have been an integral part of programming for young people in the City of Gosnells.

The City is one of the State's most culturally diverse communities with more than 80 nationalities — so it's important that we provide programs that are innovative and creative to engage and meet the needs of local young people.

For projects with defined outcomes, whether it be leadership, developing teams or targeting youth issues such as violence, bullying or drug and alcohol abuse — the arts have a role to play in exploring relevant topics.

Having young people design their own projects and be able to experiment with ideas, either in a team environment or individually, gives them transferable experience — which is important in building confidence, creative expression and life skills. For this to take place, young people need access to space, support, mentoring and resources.

The City of Gosnells' Youth Services team has a diverse interest in the arts field and we are able to facilitate many varied arts projects from digital media and textiles to drama. It's great for the team to share individual experiences, expertise and passion, as it enables us to do much more in the community and helps us build good relationships with the local young people.

We partner with groups such as CAN WA to deliver specialist programs such as Liveworx and Risky Bizness. Through these programs, we have developed a close working relationship with many arts organisations over the years. This network has meant we can source and recruit young artists who are just in the early stages of making a living out of their chosen art form.

Our arts-based facility in Maddington has a film studio, complete with editing facilities and the City is about to open a new Youth Centre in the developing suburb of Canning Vale. This will be a state of the art facility with recording studios and other multimedia activities.

Community youth arts projects attract a lot of attention through the media. Young people contributing to the community have a very positive effect and help create a more positive perception of young people.

We are currently working with young people in the Gosnells area on a variety of exciting projects.

WESTFIELD SKATE PARK

At the Westfield Skate Park in Maddington, we are implementing a series of arts projects.

The park is maintained by the Maddington Skate Park Users Group — a crew of young, dedicated skaters and BMX riders who are actively involved in organising events and other initiatives at the park.

A concrete skate-able sculpture, 'MADDO' will become part of the skate park and will feature photos from the CAN WA Liveworx program delivered in 2007. The sculpture has been designed by Jahne Rees from Scape-ism in conjunction with the Maddington Skate Park Users group, which is hoping that this will be one of many sculptures to be installed into the park.

ART IN THE PARK

Art in the Park is a youth arts program based around urban art and design. The Maddington Skate Park Users Group and local young people will develop the skate park into a working art gallery. They will help facilitate a series of artists to paint sections of the facility and will help with designs and themes for works as well as the maintenance and organisation.

Supported by professional urban artists, participants will learn a wide variety of skills and learn how to use many different mediums. Some of these include the use of internet for research, design processes, use of electronic art design software, stencilling, drawing, spray painting, screen printing, organisational skills and program development.

IN STITCHES

In Stitches was established in July 2008 in response to a group of young people and their desire to learn how to knit. This group draws on the knowledge and skills of three senior citizens from the City's Addie Mills Centre.

The program offers the young people a chance to get to know some older members of the community, form new friendships and develop skills. Since its inception, the group has taken up other crafts to learn about sewing and millinery.

Left (opposite page)

Learn how to knit, *photo courtesy of the Community Newspaper Group*

Top>bottom (this page)

Filmcrew; *photo courtesy of the Community Newspaper Group*

MADDO; *photo by Chris Woods*

Previous page Young people in skate park with yellow mural; *photo by Chris Woods*

RISKY BIZNESS

Risky Bizness is being run as part of the Str8Talk'n project — a crime prevention project run by the City and funded by the Australian Government.

This uses film and drama to teach young people about the consequences of taking part in inappropriate or risky behaviours. It's run in partnership with CAN WA and Filmbites Youth Film School.

Students are involved in producing a series of short films about what happens when young people take risks whether they are hooning, drink driving, being violent or antisocial, using drugs or alcohol. Risky Bizness is held with young people from Sevenoaks College and Yule Brook College, as well as VIP Communicare.

GOZZY ROCK

Gozy Rock is Perth's longest running band competition. Now in its 22nd year, Gozy Rock has become one of Perth's iconic youth music events, attracting band entries from all over Perth. Last year, the City received entries from more than 45 bands, with 15 from the local area, and in total, over 120 aspiring musicians had a chance to compete for the Gozy Rock title.

This event is organised by the Youth Services team with the City of Gosnells Youth Advisory Council (YAC) and attracts crowds of more than 2000 young people.

THE IMPACT OF THE ARTS

The City's Youth Services believes that the arts can give young people freedom.

The arts help young people — regardless of their situation or abilities — giving them a chance to find their potential as creative people and as learners. By providing individual attention and recognition, arts practitioners can help young people to build relationships based on trust and respect.

We have also seen that through the wide range of arts based programs provided through the City, young people have had an opportunity to do something they feel proud of, enabling them to build self-esteem and confidence. Self confidence improves a person's ability to work in a team, communicate or find a change in the attitudes or behaviours that led them into offending.

Many evaluations of arts interventions highlight their effectiveness in engaging young people in education. This may be due to personal changes, but the learning is a natural part of the artistic process, particularly where young people have played a role in project development.

Being involved in the arts develops creative and thinking skills in a fun, yet often challenging way, giving young people an opportunity to work individually and as team members to solve problems, experiment and innovate.



OUT
THERE
REGIONAL
YOUTH
ARTS
DEVELOPMENT
PROGRAM

BY BEC COCKRAM
REGIONAL YOUTH ARTS DEVELOPMENT OFFICER, COUNTRY ARTS WA

OUTT

Here



I joined Country Arts WA (CAWA) in 2006. Before joining CAWA I was involved in a diverse range of projects with young people such as touring and managing the Making Movies Roadshow for the Film and Television Institute, playing around with filmmaking with a beautiful bunch of Noongar girls to collectively create a documentary called Mooditj Noongar Yorgas: The Story of the Katanning Wearable Art Fashion Show (it was shown in New York in 2007), and coordinating the Buy My Duck! Short Film competition for the Revelation Perth International Film Festival which asked young people to make short films about youth consumer issues. So I guess you could say that young people in the arts fuels my fire!

CAWA helps regional communities use the arts as part of their growth and celebrations. I believe that arts and culture can touch almost all parts of Australian life, add to wellbeing and offer many enriching experiences. CAWA can reach young West Australians living in rural and remote communities who are disadvantaged because of geographic, social or economic circumstances, through the Out There program. I love running this program because it can change lives (and they pay me to do it full-time!).

Out There builds community capacity, creating an environment to improve community relationships, strengthen community confidence and adding to the quality of life and general well-being of young people. We work towards these goals by creating partnerships between adults and young people in the formation of a youth focused art project. I work with young people and their community to develop one or several youth focused arts projects over a year.

The program has had a lot of success with young people who have become disengaged from life and has reduced anti-social behaviour by reconnecting them with their community. Out There involves young people in the arts, builds their sense of place and identity, strengthens community relationships, grows confidence, and creates relationships in communities that support young people with their arts ideas.

Out There spotlights young people's leadership talents and creativity in ways that are supported, valued and promoted. Relationship building means that this leadership can continue to grow and capacity can build after I leave the community. Projects that young people have created are based around their ideas, emotions and opinions. They don't often get to share their voice to their communities.

OUT THERE PROFILE: YIYILI ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY — THE WALKABOUT BOYS

The Walkabout Boys are an Aboriginal country-reggae group from Yiyili Community. Yiyili is 170 kms south east of Fitzroy Crossing in the Kimberley Region of WA on the cattle station, Louisa Downs. Gooniyandi is the traditional language. The Walkabout Boys is Quinton Cox and Ashley Cox on vocals, James Hester on lead guitar, Trevor Wallaby on acoustic guitar, Leon Cox on bass, Donald Cox on rhythm guitar, Bruce Wallaby on keyboards, and Joseph Quilty on drums. CAWA worked in partnership with Yiyili Aboriginal Community to create the band and has supported them since 2007 through Out There. All participants are on the Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP) and have had little access to arts resources, networks and opportunities before joining Out There. Some of the highlights have been:

REGGAE MUSIC PROJECT

The Walkabout Boys, led by Yiyili elder Mervyn Street, spent two days visiting sacred Gooniyandi dreaming sites and recording the Bat and the Croc story. The story was transformed into a reggae song with the help of musicians, Monkey Marc (Combat Wombat) and Matt Noffs (Ted Noffs Foundation). The song still receives airplay on Halls Creek Radio.

KIMBERLEY TAFE

Bel Skinner from Kimberley TAFE regularly visits Yiyili to deliver workshops in music industry skills. Bel said the band has provided 'a vehicle for building self-esteem, respect, pride, literacy and numeracy and has promoted empowerment and social development.' Bel continues to work with the band at Yiyili. They are currently studying for a Certificate II.

DJIVA WORKSHOPS

Perth based band, Djiva grew a strong partnership and mentor relationship with the band. They visited Yiyili on a regular basis to deliver music workshops to further develop their skills in performance, arrangements, songwriting and the development of a strong repertoire. The Walkabout Boys often support Djiva when they play gigs in Halls Creek. Della Rae Morrison, singer with Djiva said 'Conducting music workshops with The Walkabout Boys from Yiyili Aboriginal Community was an experience that will stay in my heart for a long time.'

GARNDUWA FESTIVAL IN FITZROY CROSSING

The Garnduwa Festival has become the pre-eminent Indigenous festival of its type in WA, if not Australia. Upwards of 5000 people attend over the five day period. The Walkabout Boys played to huge audiences at the 2007 and 2008 event.

KULLARRI NAIDOC BATTLE OF THE ARTISTS

The band performed three original songs to a sell-out crowd to take out the title. Bel Skinner said the Boys rose to the occasion and by the end of their act, even the judges were on their feet! 'Their energy and sheer talent is just amazing,' said Bel. 'These boys only started studying music in August last year and some of them had never even played before. Now they're rocking audiences every time they play!'

BAMA chairperson, Cathy Watson, presented the band with a \$2000 cheque and the Boys played a full set to finish the night off. While in Broome the group took the opportunity to jam at the local studios, play with the Broome Prison Band and was invited to play at the closing ceremony of NAIDOC week.

MARRA WORRA WORRA ABORIGINAL PARTNERSHIP

Fitzroy Crossing based Marra Worra Worra Aboriginal Corporation fully support the band. They have just contributed a substantial amount of funding towards the purchase of their own instruments.

The Walkabout Boys played a solid performance in Perth last month at the Chocolate Martini, Australia's premier Indigenous music showcase.

CHOCOLATE MARTINI

This Perth event presented emerging Indigenous musicians alongside the country's best known Indigenous acts and brings together music lovers from all backgrounds and origins to share reconciliation. Performers who have played at the Chocolate Martini are Archie Roach (SA), Djiva (Perth), Lorrae Coffin (Broome), Kerriane Cox (Beagle Bay), Stephen Gogos (Gnowangerup/Perth), Candice Lorrae (Darwin), George Walley & Knotwork (Pinjarra/Binjareb), Naomi Pigram and St Agnes (Broome), Bartlett Brothers (Geraldton), Joe Geia (Palm Island/Nth QLD)

The Walkabout Boys travelled almost 3000kms and played to a packed house in support of Peter Brandy. They were filmed for NITV Foxtel. The episode will be screened next year so watch out for it!

SKINNY FISH RECORDS

The band was successful in a funding application to the Indigenous panel at Department of Culture and the Arts to record an album with Skinny Fish Music. The recording will take place in the community in 2009.

My experiences at Yiyili have taught me many things. But as I come to the close of this project, I reflect on the importance of one thing that I keep coming back to: RELATIONSHIPS. Building sustainability into your arts project is all about relationships. Between you as the arts worker with everyone you come into contact with; elders, artists, Shire CEO's, CDEP managers, principals, pets, babies, store keepers and most importantly the young people. An arts worker should be a role model. A human being! The relationships you build need to scoop up the young people too, so when you leave, the relationship stays.

I would like to congratulate The Walkabout Boys for all of their amazing success during the Out There Program. I have loved working with the mobs from Pullout Springs, Ganinyi and Yiyili. To think we started from nothing and now you have won the NAIDOC Battle of the Artists, performed in Perth, made a good relationship with Kimberley TAFE and are making plans for a band room! Keep strong. Don't lose sight of your dreams. You are all role models in your community. Much respect and love to you all and your families.

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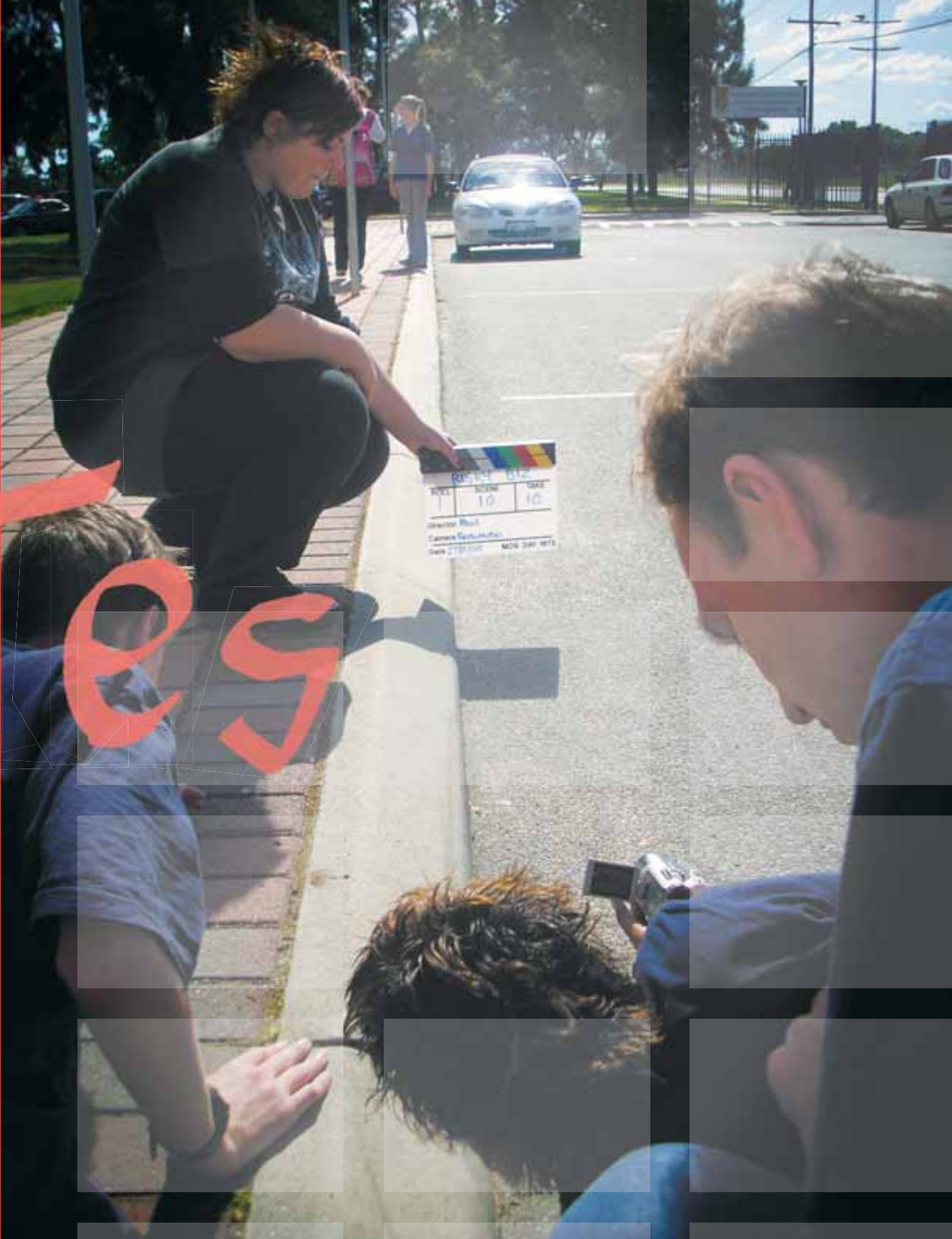
All photos by Tomaz Machnik



FILMBITES ...
BITTEN
BY THE
FILM BUG

BY HALLIE MCKEIG
DIRECTOR, FILMBITES YOUTH FILM SCHOOL

FILMBITES

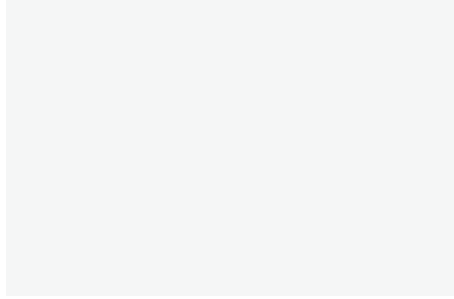


CLAPPERBOARD

ROLL	SCENE	TAKE
1	10	10

Director: [Name]
Camera: [Name]
Date: 2/2/14

es



Filmmaking provides many opportunities for young people to get involved in the creative process. Acting, camera, make-up, special effects, animation, music, writing and directing all offer interesting and varied outlets for young people to express themselves.

It has been so rewarding to see some of our original students from five years ago still involved in making short films, getting involved in the film industry with work on feature films, TV shows, shorts and looking at a career in film — some of our students even teach for us now. Yet while Filmbites was established with a view to giving young people an opportunity to learn skills at a young age that would see them through into a career in the film industry, it has been equally if not more rewarding, to see how our students have grown as people.

Watching our students develop in confidence and self-esteem as they develop skills — not just technical skills but also important life skills like leadership, discipline and learning to work in a team, has been extremely satisfying. Not to mention the firm friendships that have been formed and the support network that the children create for each other.

Feedback from their parents affirms this, with many commenting on how their children have shown greater enthusiasm for school and life as they begin to excel at something they love.

Filmbites operates on a semester basis, with the first term being skills based and the second production based. Our students get to see the outcome of all their efforts when at the end of the second term they write, act, direct and edit their own short film. The films are entered into film festivals, and have been extremely successful locally, nationally and internationally.

Furthermore, their film is screened at a 'Premiere Night' at which the year's student films are shown to their family, friends and Filmbites peers on a big cinema screen.

This is a great night at which the student's achievements are affirmed publicly, which adds to their sense of achievement.

Filmbites has also been privileged over the last year to have been chosen to work with young people in close connection with CAN WA through the Reel Connections program with the City of Stirling and the Risky Bizness program with the City of Gosnells.

Working with disengaged and disadvantaged young people, young refugees and new migrants has highlighted how the opportunity to work creatively on issues can have such a positive impact on young people and be a much richer learning experience than standard text-based learning.

The students in the Reel Connections and Risky Bizness programs have worked on films about family feuding, risk taking behaviours and driving without a license. In these programs, the students have discussed the topic in a group to brainstorm story ideas, and learnt skills such as acting, camera techniques and editing in order to create the film. Not only did they learn media skills, but they also had the opportunity to actively think and explore relevant issues and topics rather than being 'told'. The hands-on, visual, group creation process is understood to be a much more effective way to learn, particularly for young people with academic or learning issues and students learning English as a second language.

To add to the positive impact the process has added to their lives, one of the films in particular has been requested to be purchased for viewing at other community facilities including prisons. Furthermore, the students receive fantastic feedback, as all requests to screen the film are only approved if the organisation talks with the student filmmakers and lets them know how the film will be viewed and the impact it is hoped the film will make.

The interactive and creative approach used in these programs allows young people to explore and express their identities, relevant issues and cultures within the wider community and therefore facilitate social change.

Filmbites is now undertaking all sorts of workshops with young people. As well as our after school and weekend classes, we also hold holiday workshops in a variety of film-based skills, teach disengaged and migrant young people and hold professional learning seminars for teachers.

With a booming film industry here in Western Australia, Filmbites hopes to be instrumental in giving young people an opportunity to learn new skills and identify their filmmaking passion. It's a wonderful bonus to provide an outlet for young people to learn new skills for life.

CONTACT FILMBITES

To find out more check out:

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THE
KALEIDOSCOPE
ENSEMBLE
IN COLLIE
AND THE
FERGUSON
VALLEY

BY GILLIAN CATLOW
VIOLINIST AND ARTISTIC DIRECTOR, KALEIDOSCOPE ENSEMBLE

Kaleido



SOLO

The Perth-based Kaleidoscope Ensemble, a fun-loving string quartet and a host of outlandish characters, has been performing for and running workshops for young people since 2003. Our actors and musicians are experienced, highly creative performers who love to teach and above all, demonstrate to children who have little exposure to the arts, what a wonderful dimension music, theatre and poetry can add to their lives.

In our shows, which have been described as an explosive collision of classical music and interactive theatre, we aim to plant the seed for a lifetime of loving music, wonderful words and exploring the world of the imagination. The impact of a live performance, particularly a child's first one, can be huge, even life-changing. Working in disadvantaged areas, where the arts are not always very highly valued, is of great importance to us, and although a 'one-off' performance can be an eye-opener, to really make a difference in the lives of children, longer-term projects are obviously more valuable.

From 30 April to 26 June 2008 we undertook a workshop/performance project with students at Wilson Park Primary School, Collie. In the last week of the project, the Ensemble toured to several other schools in the region and collaborated with the owners of Ferguson Farmstay to present a day of feasting and performances.

Rob Evison, Kaleidoscope's actor, and I worked with a class of 28 Year 6-7 students over a nine week period, giving a total of seven 90 minute workshops at school on Mondays, and six three hour sessions at the Collie Police Community Youth Club on Sunday afternoons for those who wanted extra coaching. The project culminated in a performance by the students and Kaleidoscope at the school, to which many parents came, and a second public performance at the PCYC which attracted a large enthusiastic audience and was a great success.

It was very obvious to us from the first class we took at Wilson Park, that the self-esteem of even the most forthcoming students was not very high. We immediately made it our principle aim to get them feeling good about themselves and to perform confidently for their peers and families. They came to understand the whole process of developing an idea, then working very hard, focussing, rehearsing and polishing until they reached performance standard. A lot of teamwork was required and although there were many challenging moments, the end result was one of which every student was immensely proud.

Rob's group performed 'The Madness of Princess Perfect', a series of very funny sketches with musical interludes by the string quartet. Our large collection of costumes helped the children choose what character they wanted to be, and Rob developed sequences with them. We were amazed how many students came every Sunday, and the level of concentration of some of the children was outstanding.

With the students in my group, I created a story based around a simply structured piece of music. I made 4 'string cans': instruments consisting of a broomstick pushed through a large tin can and a guitar string attached with hose clamps. The string cans, which can be bowed, plucked or struck with chopsticks, were so popular that I had to make one for each of the thirteen students in the group. They were able to learn basic string instrument technique and invent many other ways of producing sounds from the string cans. They also had fun playing tunes on bottles, singing and dancing, and dressing up in costumes.

Clockwise (opposite page)

Town of Cambridge Community Project 2006, *photo by Paul McGovern*

Collie Project 2008, *photo by Drew Forrest*

Merriwa Project 2008, *photo by Drew Forrest*

Collie Project 2008, *photo by Drew Forrest*

(Previous page)

Collie Project 2008, *photo by Drew Forrest*

Collie Project 2008, *photo by Gillian Catlow*

We spent a lot of time with many of the students, who clearly benefited from 'one on one' attention. We loved their sense of humour and it was great to help them develop their ideas over the weeks and show them how to communicate with an audience.

As we earned the respect of the students, their confidence in their own ability grew and the atmosphere of excitement on the night of the final performance at the PCYC, which Rob and I spent all day transforming into a theatre with spotlights, raked seating and a 30m train track, will not be forgotten by anyone who was present!

We were especially happy that two students, who for one reason or another had chosen not to take part in the workshops, came to us in the last few days and asked to be included. The infectious enthusiasm of their classmates had won them over, and it was a delight to see these two boys not just mingling in with the crowd, but also stepping into the limelight.

Working with a whole class in a school environment is not easy when there are difficult dynamics within the group. While it was exciting to see how the class pulled together as we neared the performance, we found we could achieve so much more on Sundays when we could work only with students who were really keen to participate and learn. Our ideal model for future regional projects would be, in addition to running workshops in schools, to hold classes after school or at weekends for all ages.



On Saturday, 21 June, Kaleidoscope, with our hosts at Ferguson Farmstay, John and Rosa Madigan, presented 'Harlequin and the Violin' (meal and show package) attracting many patrons from Bunbury as well as locals. Both the midday Family Show, and the evening Dinner Show for adults, were extremely well received, with lots of laughter and audience participation. John and Rosa would love to have more performances at Ferguson Farmstay, and the audience questionnaire showed that there would be great support in the community. As all members of Kaleidoscope also work with other groups, including jazz, baroque, puppetry, circus, theatre and chamber ensembles, we are keen to facilitate further performances in this perfect venue.

In September 2008, the Kaleidoscope Ensemble and Friends presented 'The Carnival of the Animals', a spectacular program of music and stories, involving 15 musicians, actors and narrator Peter Holland, at the Octagon Theatre, UWA. The highlight of this program was the world premiere of 'Edward the Emu', a musical setting of the classic children's book by Sheena Knowles, written for us by South Australian composer Peter Webb. 'Edward' was such a hit with the audiences and critics, that we have commissioned Webb to write music for the sequel 'Edwina the Emu'. We will perform the two works in various Perth venues in September 2009.

Further plans for the year also include another project in Collie, which currently has no theatre group, and no arts-based activities for children to take part in outside of school. We have been invited by the principal to return to Wilson Park Primary School in term three, and look forward to working with Year 4/5 students. Adapting to the current economic situation, we will also be available as a trio (two musicians and actor) throughout terms three and four for performances in the metropolitan area.

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MAPPING
YOUTH
ARTS

BY SONJA BASIC
GENERAL MANAGER, PROPEL YOUTH ARTS WA

mapping



ing

Propel Youth Arts WA — the youth arts body of Western Australia, has searched far and wide across the state to give young people a chance to shape the future ...

THE STORY SO FAR

Arts Map is a project led by nine creative and community-minded people under 26, who have helped Propel Youth Arts find inspired ways to 'map' the youth arts community across Western Australia.

And what better way to share ideas, opinions and artistic ability than through the blogosphere. In August 2008, a committee of young people, better known as the 'Arts Map crew', decided to launch the Arts Map Blog Competition — a chance for West Australians aged 15-25 to share their likes, dislikes and dreams for their arts community, as well as be in the running to win cash prizes.

Entrants to the competition answered three open-ended questions, either by submitting a video entry online, a piece of creative writing, a song via MP3 or being filmed in person. The blog was designed to document this process as well as display a selection of 'top-rated' submissions sent to or recorded by us over recent months.

Check out the winners and a selection of over 200 entries received at <http://www.propelarts.org.au/blog> to hear what everyone had to say or sing.

BACKGROUND

After receiving a Foundation for Young Australians (FYA) Partnership Grant, Propel Youth Arts set about developing a youth-led project — utilising the shared resources and expertise of young people, FYA and Propelarts.

The aim of the partnership is to work together to develop and implement a creative idea that results in an innovative program for young people. Through consultation, or as we like to call it 'arts-mapping', with as many young people, arts workers and organisations as possible; Propel can gauge the wants and needs of the youth arts community and put together a proposal to create a new, youth-driven arts program. An exciting initiative for young West Australians to shape their arts futures.

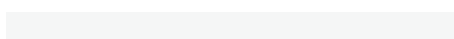
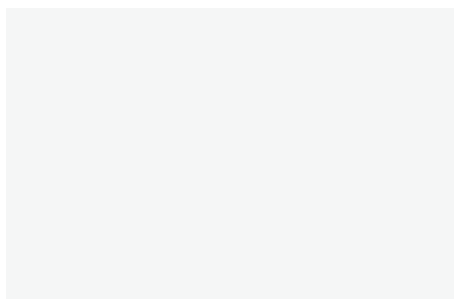
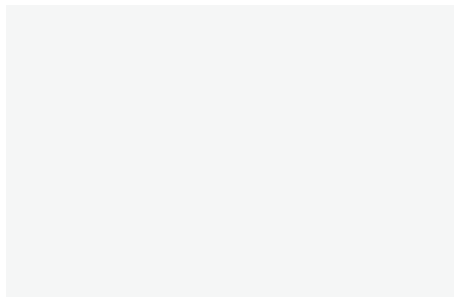
HAVE CUPCAKE, WILL TRAVEL

As well as through the online blog competition, the Arts Map crew held interactive workshops with young people in both metro and regional areas.

From pitching arts ideas to a make-believe panel at the South West Youth Conference in Busselton, to vox popping music lovers at the HYPER festival in Midland — we have set about creating fun and interactive ways to get people thinking about their art and creating ideas for the future of their arts community, no matter where they live. Mapping activities have taken place in Perth, Lesmurdie, Midland, Mirabooka, Busselton and Port Hedland. One of the most popular, and delicious, activities conducted was Arts Cupcake — where participants got to decorate their own cupcake with 12 M&Ms — each colour representing different areas of the arts they see as most important in their community. An edible art experience for all.

Arts Map crew member Kathleen Douglas loves the fact that community mapping doesn't have to be a boring process, which can put many young people off.

'Being able to exercise our own creativity to really connect with and find out what young people need, and then DO something about it — is fun and empowering work', Katherine said.



WHAT HAPPENED NEXT

Following the overwhelming response from over 500 participants, the Arts Map crew were able to identify four key issues of concern to young people through the arts map process. These included: arts spaces, arts information, skills development and arts events. And so the Amplifier program was born.

Amplifier is a two-stream program designed to provide young people with the building blocks to a sustainable career in the arts. Through interactive workshops and an arts camp, young and emerging artists 15-25 acquire practical tools to help develop, sustain and amplify their arts practice.

With a successful three-year funding grant from FYA to deliver the program, Amplifier is set to launch in 2009.

ABOUT PROPEL YOUTH ARTS WA

Propel Youth Arts WA exists to propel youth arts and culture through connecting, supporting and promoting young artists, arts workers and organisations in WA.

We are a dynamic and innovative not-for-profit organisation that offers information, advice, networks, skills development, funding and a collective voice for young people and organisations.

We support all art forms: music, theatre, performance, new media, visual arts and craft, writing, dance, film or whatever young people are into.

Our programs and activities include website and free fortnightly ezine, networking forums, workshops, arts camp, annual National Youth Week events plus general support, info and advocacy on how to make your art work for you.

CONTACT PROPEL YOUTH ARTS WA

For more information on the Amplifier program:

Phone **(08) 9328 5855**

Email **info@propel.org.au**



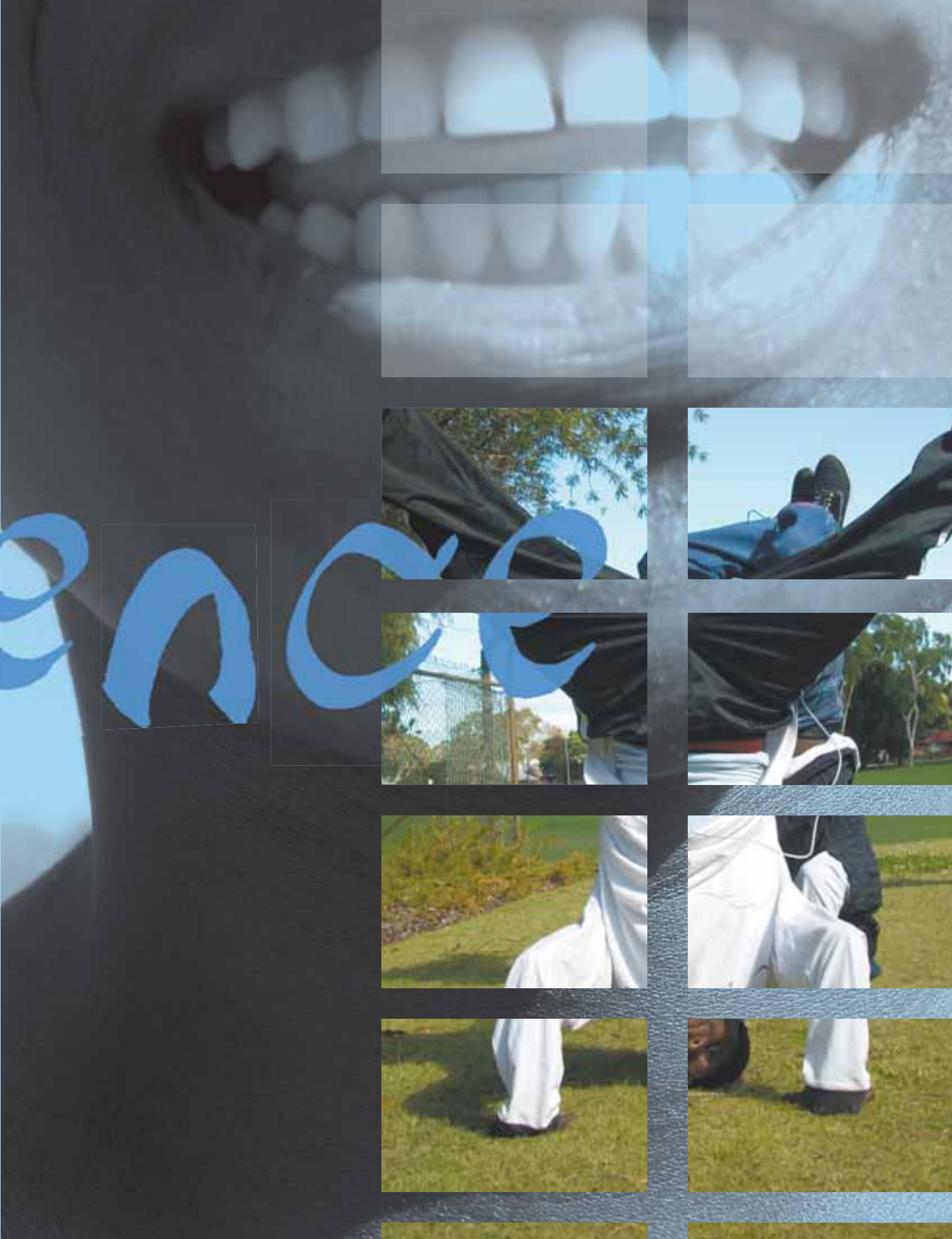
Photos are courtesy of Propel Youth Arts WA (2008).



Y O U N G
P E O P L E
M A K I N G
A R E E L
D I F F E R E N C E

BY SARAH MILLS
REEL CONNECTIONS PROJECT OFFICER, CITY OF STIRLING

different



In 2007, the City of Stirling received \$400,000 from the Australian Government's National Community Crime Prevention Program to implement a community partnership project aimed at addressing some of the social issues that have emerged in the Mirrabooka area in recent years. A shared desire to ensure that the vibrant cultural diversity of the region is harnessed and drawn upon as a source of strength for the region moving into the future, brought the cities of Stirling and Wanneroo, the WA Police, the Community Arts Network WA and Filmbites Youth Film School together to explore creative approaches to youth and community development. In one year of operation, Reel Connections has emerged as a positive force for change in the Mirrabooka area. Through drawing on the strength of the community partnership model and the enormous power of arts as a tool for youth engagement and social change, Reel Connections has been successful at engaging local youth in a range of community arts projects that have highlighted the role young people can play in the positive development of their own communities.

As the Project Officer for the Reel Connections Project, I have had the privilege of seeing Reel Connections evolve from an exciting and innovative project proposal into a dynamic project that continues to grow and evolve as it captures the positive energy of partner organisations and the vibrancy of the community in which the project operates. My role involves working closely with the partner organisations to coordinate the day to day running of the project and its associated programs. I am also responsible for promoting the project, coordinating the external evaluation process and the sometimes daunting task of recruiting young people for the programs we run. One year in, I can honestly say I still feel thoroughly enthused by this project, the energy of the staff involved in the project and the achievements of our young participants. Before

I touch on the specifics of the project and its achievements to date, I'd like to put the genesis of Reel Connections into context by highlighting some of the recent trends that have been impacting on the project's target communities.

Mirrabooka and surrounding suburbs make up one of the most culturally diverse regions in Australia. The Reel Connections office is located at Mirrabooka Square Shopping Centre, the hub of this multicultural heartland. One only needs to step foot into this buzzing shopping centre to get a feel for the uniqueness and vibrancy of the place. The 2006 Census paints a fascinating picture of this area with a staggering 48.6% of Mirrabooka residents indicating that they speak a language other than English at home, one of the highest rates in Australia and higher than the percentage of residents who speak English at home. Mirrabooka is also home to a large established Indigenous community which makes up 3.6% of the Mirrabooka population and 4.5% of the population in neighbouring Balga, compared to the 1.5% average for the Perth metro area. The large influx of refugees from the Middle East and Africa has also enhanced the religious diversity of the area with 15.8% of Mirrabooka residents now identifying as Muslim compared to the Perth metro average of 1.3% (ABS, Census of Population & Housing, 2006).

As in other Australian cities, areas where minority migrant and Indigenous populations are concentrated, cultural diversity is often also associated with significant disadvantage. Dropping Off the Edge, a recent study that maps levels of social disadvantage across Australia, identified Mirrabooka and neighbouring suburbs of Balga, Koondoola and Girrawheen as among the most socially disadvantaged communities in the country. The report raised concern that in these areas poor performance on a range of socio-economic indicators including imprisonment rates, employment status, income, education and

housing all contribute to families falling into an unforgiving spiral of intergenerational poverty and social disadvantage (T. Vinson, Dropping Off the Edge, Jesuit Social Services & Catholic Social Services, 2007).

The Reel Connections project was born out of a concern for this disadvantage as well as a number of social issues that have arisen alongside recent influxes of humanitarian migrants from the Middle East and Africa. Newly arrived young people in particular have been identified as a group requiring additional support to assist with their transition to life in Australia. Previous experiences of deprivation, torture and trauma, separation from family members, difficulty learning a new language and adapting to a new school system and the challenge of balancing family cultural expectations with pressures to fit in with the new peer culture are just a few of issues that impact on newly arrived young people as they attempt to make a new life for themselves in Australia. Difficulty coping with the pressure of this transition can often lead young people into confrontation with their families, disengagement with school, social alienation and anti-social behaviour.

Compounding the problem of social disadvantage in the Mirrabooka area and the complex issues new arrivals face are the negative perceptions of the community itself. Intercultural tensions that have begun to surface in the area present a barrier to the building of community pride and cohesion. A survey commissioned by the City of Stirling in 2005 into community attitudes towards Mirrabooka found that whilst Mirrabooka was perceived as 'multicultural', the cultural diversity of the community was not generally seen as a positive. On the contrary the multicultural mix of the community was often associated by residents with high crime rates and anti-social behaviour (Patterson Market Research, A Report on Community Attitudes Towards Mirrabooka, 2005). Along with the mainstream communities

unease with the 'multicultural' nature of the Mirrabooka area, specific tensions between newly arrived young people and Aboriginal youths had become a cause for concern for community workers and law enforcement officials. A series of violent confrontations between youth from African and Indigenous backgrounds underscored the need for initiatives that bring young people together in a spirit of mutual understanding and respect.

Reel Connections is a community partnership project that aims to address some of the above issues through information dissemination and community arts practice. By harnessing the positive energy of the community and drawing on its diversity as a strength, the project hopes to contribute to the individual well being of young people and engage them in the process of effecting positive change within their own communities.

On an individual level, the program initiatives that are delivered through Reel Connections use arts as a tool for developing the personal and social skills that build young peoples capacity to engage positively with their fellow peers and the broader community. In line with this focus, the Fired Up program facilitated by the Community Arts Network WA, provides young people with the option of receiving competency in accredited Certificate II units that include Working With Others and Working in a Culturally Diverse Environment. The programs also aim to build up young peoples support networks by providing opportunities to make new friends as well as building links with local youth services. Programs are supported by youth workers from the Balga Detached Youth Work Project and the Cities of Stirling and Wanneroo. This provides extra support for the young participants and the program facilitators as well as providing the opportunity for supportive links to be forged that often continue long after the program has finished.

On a broader community level, the project hopes to have a positive impact on community pride and social cohesion through building intercultural understanding, enhancing community safety and countering negative perceptions of crime in the area. The process of bringing young people from culturally diverse backgrounds together through community arts projects contributes to breaking down the misunderstandings and distrust that can lead groups of young people into conflict with each other. By publicising the artistic outcomes of the group process we hope to have a positive impact on the broader communities perceptions of young people as well as perceptions of culturally diverse communities.

As the title of the project indicates, film is an important component of the Reel Connections project. The multimedia training programs delivered by Filmbites Youth Film School as a part of the Reel Connections project, aim to engage young people in the production of multimedia resources that promote the safety and wellbeing of the community. In the project's first year we have had groups of young people produce short films that touch on serious issues such as family feuding and road safety as well as documentaries which celebrate community events that bring people together such as NAIDOC and International Youth Day celebrations.

In April 2008, a group of 15 students from the Swan Nyoongar Sports Education Program at Balga SHS produced an eight minute short film titled 'The Feud'. Family feuding has been identified by the Aboriginal Mirrabooka Local Justice Forum as a priority issue requiring urgent action. 'The Feud' explores the causes and consequences of family feuding. Since its launch in June 2008, 'The Feud' has been screened widely by the Aboriginal community at forums that have included the Aboriginal Local Justice Networks and the national Native Title Conference

where students received a standing ovation for their efforts. Quite recently staff from the Corrective Services department approached the students to request their permission to screen the film for inmates at Casuarina Prison with a view to holding further film screenings at other prisons across the state. Needless to say the students and staff from Reel Connections and Balga SHS were delighted at the exposure that this will generate.

These opportunities to engage young people in the process of positive social change are what Reel Connections is all about. Not only does the process allow them to identify and address issues that impact on their own communities, it also promotes a sense of confidence and self worth that we hope will assist them to pursue their goals in life, allowing them to act as positive role models for other young people. To cap it all off, 'The Feud' has just been selected as a finalist for the ATOM awards, a film festival which recognises excellence in over 30 categories of Film, Television, Animation and Multimedia and celebrates the very best of Australian and New Zealand production. Two very deserving students will be attending the ATOM Awards ceremony in Melbourne in October.

As I sit here pondering over how to fit in everything I want to say about Reel Connections into 1,000 words, the magnitude of the project's achievements and those of the young people involved, really begin to sink in. Building on these achievements and harnessing the momentum that the project has begun to generate will be the challenge for the next two years. I am confident that with the strength of the inter-agency partnerships, the enthusiasm of the young people involved and the support of the community, we will continue to work towards building a safer and more harmonious community that we can all feel proud of.



.....

'I get to be anyone I want to be' (17 yr old)

'All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players' (Shakespeare)

.....

RRaFT Educators has been using drama as a medium within the community for the last 12 years. What follows is a brief exploration of why we believe that by using drama we can ask the important questions and find the answers to almost everything ...

In a RRaFT workshop you'll be asked to sit in a circle and to share something with the person at the side of you. You'll be asked to listen to another, to watch and to think. You'll be expected to play, laugh and take your turn. The facilitators arrive with nothing other than themselves and a few ideas and what then happens is dependent on the group. Once the games have ended and the story is complete we all leave — nothing was brought in and yet we all experience leaving with more than we started with. It's for this reason that using drama is so powerful and effective — particularly in working with diverse youth.

RRaFT Educators have worked in settings from prisons to schools, local and regional communities, a Slum in Nairobi Kenya and a justice service in America. Whether it's a two hour workshop, a full day or a years program, the results of this work are inspiring for both participants and staff alike. RRaFT have brought together groups of refugees, mainstream and Indigenous youth as well as worked with detainees in juvenile detention. In working with students with Autism we created short videos in local high schools. We explored teamwork and leadership. In primary schools, empathy was the theme of the school term.

Since it's creation, RRaFT have provided training for children and young people as well as facilitators, teachers, group workers, drug and alcohol workers and accountants! What's the difference between facilitation and teaching? How do you use drama in the classroom? Conflict resolution, leadership, team-work and communication are all areas that we can explore and develop new understanding in using drama. All the theories in world make no difference if you can't work with people around you. At RRaFT we love having the theory become a reality. In a drama workshop you get the chance to see, to create and to experiment.

In life today it's easy to believe that if we don't have the latest 'thing' or enough money in the bank — we'll never get there and we'll never make it. What's rarely discussed is when is enough enough? Where are we trying to get to and what is 'it'?

By using drama we get to create something out of nothing — but the skills and talents of those present in the room. We can share in the beautiful and magical art of creation. We get to direct how life can go for a while, we can explore our ideas, deliberately make a mistake and work out a solution and we get the chance to step into another's shoes. We can ask those difficult questions and rather than getting stuck in our heads trying to find the right answer or explain things correctly, we can play. We can create a story — sometimes starting with nothing other than an image and be safe in the knowledge that it's fictional. We can pour our heart and soul into it if we wish, or we can throw around an idea from a movie last night, nobody will know and nobody will ask, it's all valid.

In real life the decision to smash a window, have sex or give someone a hug can take a moment. In a drama workshop, you can explore that one moment from so many angles, for as long as you wish. Without getting hurt, we can explore the consequences of the riskiest behaviours, and by laughing and playing together, we can create new relationships and understandings that can last a lifetime.

One moment I may be a parent and the next a student, a police officer or an old lady — the ability to switch from one role to another is a developed skill, which can make a difference in being employed, managing conflict and getting along with peers. In a drama workshop we play in this realm, nothing is wrong and everything is possible. I can be anyone and I can act as I've always wanted to, or as I've been afraid to.

AND HOW DOES ALL OF THIS IMPACT OUR WELLBEING?

To begin with, we get to take time out of our life — like a holiday, a few moments out can leave us refreshed and inspired. We may see our life from a new perspective or having just spent time laughing and joking, things may not look so difficult. We get to know the people in our community in a different way — teachers have just made a fool out of themselves and our peers have gone through the same process. Maybe I've acted out some of my frustrations in an environment where nobody will get hurt. In fact being expressive is encouraged, and it's even possible I've noticed something in the story we created together as a group that resonated with my life.



For teachers and facilitators we get to know our young people better — we come to understand why decisions are made the way they are, we see our clients/young people and peers in a different light, playing, joking and having fun — we get to create something and share something of ourselves. Programs are more effective and as a result we even find retention rates and attendance improving.

In a drama workshop we are all vulnerable and at the same time we are all protected ultimately it's all a made up story.

CONTACT RRaFT

RRaFT Educators are available as a resource for what you need. For more information and to set up to have RRaFT work with your community contact RRaFT on:

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www.canwa.com.au



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