

# EDITORIAL

DEE MARTIN



Photo: Jessica Allthorpe

Just between you and me, I've struggled with the way our sector seemingly embraces the breadth of work that we do. I have to tell you, the non-judgemental, tolerant, inclusive responses I've observed over the years have, frankly, given me the pip!

But then I come from a world of Catholic boarding school, apoplectic nuns, and a misguided up-bringing that left me with an intimate understanding of the concepts of Judgement and Retribution. I grew up knowing that there was Right, and there was Wrong, that I either succeeded or excelled (failure was not an option). That there existed an eternal set of standards, set in stone, against which all endeavours were measured. One set of standards, one voice.

Demonstrating against the Vietnam War, it amused me that so many of my comrades were lapsed Catholics. While there was a different set of standards on the Left, there was still a sense of authoritarian 'rightness', and there was still one voice advocating for those standards (usually white men.)

As I became more involved with the community cultural development (CCD) sector, I admit I was dismissive of the range of practices of which it was comprised. Those that had no overt political position (small 'p' please) for example, weren't 'real' CCD. I identified 'real' CCD as having political analysis, a process that affected social change, and a conscious privileging of those communities traditionally made invisible by the dominant culture.

I still embrace that approach. Only now I'm also intensely interested in the way in which 'the mysteries' in a life context rather than in a religious one, are so richly experienced in CCD. The mysteries – our journey, the nature of intelligence, our human frailty, our capacity for joy, our fear and violence, our fleeting time in the world. The powerful idea that creativity and identity survive death and that, in the end, all existence is simply memory....

In discussing CCD we are essentially discussing ways of being in the world. So it makes sense that we examine, reflect upon and negotiate our ways of doing this.

The way we chose to facilitate this for the current edition of *Artwork*, was to visit the latest edition of *hands ON!*, a booklet produced by the Community Cultural Development Board (CCDB) of the Australia Council. The projects described in *hands ON!* provide a 'surface layer', quick examples of the kind of project each program funds. We wanted to know more about these projects, (and not just the dirt!). We wanted to 'unpack' the complexity of a CCD project and give readers more of an in-depth experience that went beyond rhetoric.

In developing the brief for this edition, we tried to ensure that each article reflected some of the many experiences that any one project can engender. We wanted to acknowledge the different forms of collaboration that artworkers undertake as part of their practice. We wanted the stories of these projects to

enable multiple voices, so that any understanding of what these projects achieved was multi-faceted. While the process of producing the articles involved many perspectives, it was hoped that the articles themselves would (reflect on and provide) a previously invisible layer of analysis about what took place, as well as other questions.

The brief was informed by our discussions about the projects and, more broadly, relationships between practice, critique and the concept of excellence. Critique, as applied to an artistic product and informed by a traditional western aesthetic is limited. The product versus process argument, which responds to situations where the 'outcomes' of CCD are dismissed as not measuring up to the



For a copy of *hands ON!* contact the Australia Council on toll free 1800 226 912, email [ccd@ozco.gov.au](mailto:ccd@ozco.gov.au) or visit the website [www.ozco.gov.au/ccd/handson](http://www.ozco.gov.au/ccd/handson)





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standards of traditional art, is still located within a traditional art-form paradigm. It continues to reference mandated conventions of excellence. This is problematic not only in terms of CCD but also in terms of good practice in critique.

An excerpt from Fiona Winning's and Ian Maxwell's article on critique from *Artwork* 49, espoused the view that critique is based on an approach which looks not for an objective truth about a work, but for an understanding of both how a work of art creates an experience, and in what ways the experience is arrived at. This approach stresses an interrogation of the process of analysis itself. Critical thinking is not about arriving at judgements but understanding how judgements are made, they say, stressing that 'no process of making sense of anything is innocent'.

Another concern involved the relationship between critique and evaluation. We agreed that the issue of evaluation is on-going, and will recur again in future editions of *Artwork*.

For this edition, Rick Flowers has given us an introduction to evaluation, referencing the critical processes described by Fiona Winning and Ian

Maxwell. Rick's article identifies a range of perspectives on evaluation as well as some critical decisions that CCD workers need to make when deciding what it is they are actually evaluating!

In *God I Hope You Work Again: the fellowship experience*, Michael McLaughlin, who is, himself on a fellowship, examines the nature of fellowships, their expectations and unrealised potential. How should we critically examine and evaluate what we expect of fellowships in terms of benefits to the sector and to the recipient?

Like fellowships, residencies are 'applied' across artforms and practices, as if one size fits all. Maria Filippow's residency in Paris raised issues about the way the traditional residency model could be adapted for CCD.

Vickie Sentas describes a journey taken by three hip hop artists in *Hip Hop Down Under*, a journey from Western Sydney to London and back again. She uncovers a consciously political, organised and 'universal' form that the union movement could learn from.

*Frocks, Finesse and the Framing of Trust* reflects the era of the debutante ball, set in Mackay, Queensland. Annie Bolitho

explores *Shades of White*, capturing both artists' and participants' perspectives about meaning, significance and trust within an ambitious CCD project.

The drama of the Adelaide Festival 2002 may be subsiding, but it still provides a place to reflect on, critique and evaluate process, as well as looking at the environment in which it took place. Lockie McDonald takes us into the cultural landscape of the festival, and provides a specific perspective on that landscape, framed by his own diverse, and probably unique, work experiences. Stephen Spence has an historical perspective, which is essential for readers not living in, or cognizant with, the Adelaide Festival 2002. Don Chapman is someone who is both, and his passionate suggestions to review the festival comprehensively, reflect the impact and potential that the festival still has ■

**Dee Martin**

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On behalf of The National *Artwork*  
Editorial Committee.

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**Cries & Whispers - make some noise about ccd**

**ccd.net**  
communityculturaldevelopment

Now that **ccd.net** the National Community Cultural Development website is up and running, *Artwork* readers can take issue with or support, perspectives reflected in this issue of *Artwork* Magazine.

Simply go to **ccd.net** at **www.ccd.net** and login as a member.

Follow the Current Forum link to *Artwork* Magazine – Issue 53 – Cries and Whispers, the many voices of CCD, and have your say!

If you are not already a member, register by following the REGISTER link on the home page.

ccd.net is an online resource for communities, artists and organisations working in the field of community cultural development.