

Journal

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News of The Cultural
Council Foundation
CETA Artists Project

124 Original 1978 Artists Laid Off May 30; 1979 Artists to Continue through Sept. 30

Now that the Artists Project is continuing with only 82 artists—124 artists having been laid off May 30—two major efforts will be made in the four months remaining: to diversify the available talent according to public service needs and priorities and to develop a working structure that could eventually result in a new Artists Project independent of CETA funding.

New funds were made available to CCF through the New York City Department of Employment by the U.S. Department of Labor. Without these new funds, which resulted from massive efforts by artists, administrators, and supportive politicians and government officials, the entire Artists Project would have been terminated May 30.

"No lay-off plan was a satisfactory one under the circumstances," said Rochelle Slovin, Project Director. "But the original artists did have two years and five months of employment, and this way most of the artists hired after March 1, 1979,

will at least get one and a half years of Project service. Also, the Project itself will continue four more months, enabling us to explore possibilities and develop strategies for setting up a long-term Artists Project. In fact, the CCF board of directors recently decided that it wished to make the administration of artists' employment a definite and permanent part of CCF's function and responsibilities."

In addition to the terminated artists, the Project's administrative staff is also being severely decimated by the end of June. Only one staff member, Sherekaa Osorio, recently of the Job Development Unit, is leaving on her own for a new job. All the other departing staff members are being laid off: Madeleine Keller, Andora Hodgkin, Ken Sofer, Dwight Johnson, Ellin Burke, and Leslie Stackel; (Michael Cummings is moving to the Job Development Unit).

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Job Development Unit Thriving On Variety of Artists' Needs

During the last six months, CCF's Job Development Services has found an impressive number of jobs for program artists. Of the 225 artists laid-off so far (including those with the sub-contractors), a total of 55 have found full or part-time employment.

But Charles Bernstein, Job Development Director, points out that this has not even been the main or most interesting aspect of the program. "Very few artists walk into our office and say, 'What jobs are available?'" For the most part, the service has helped artists to achieve very specific goals in their careers. The sheer diversity of the kind of help artists have been seeking is the most noticeable trend to emerge.

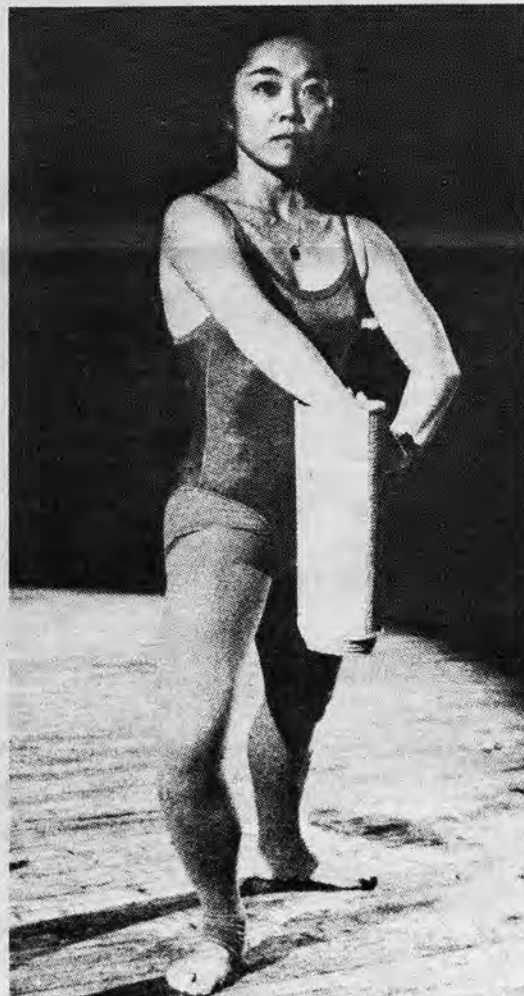
"Job Development has evolved into a kind of consultancy and technical assistance program where people come in to discuss particular projects they have in mind. Some concentrate totally on their art careers—seeking attention for their art or selling their work. Other projects have to do with writing grants, organizing reading tours, or publishing books. Still other people are interested in finding jobs either art-related, such as teaching or commercial design, or in finding well-paying jobs having nothing to do with art."

Many of the program participants have a realistic view of their capacities and are sufficiently self-motivated not to need the Job Development program for routine job-searching. For example, many of the writers and performers are interested in getting commercial work—soap operas, trade magazine editing, and the like. "Of course we consult with the people on these projects, but in many cases it's just a matter of preparing appropriate resumes, and answering ads in *The New York Times*."

As for preparing resumes, Counseling Coordinator Joan Snitzer had some cogent insights and advice to offer from her experience. "A lot of people have a complex about what to include or exclude. They're afraid to leave certain things out or to put certain things in. There was one person who had the specific experience a job ad called for but for some reason left it out. The whole point of resumes is to include what's relevant, what's appropriate. That's why a serious job hunter will likely have more than one resume."

"Prospective employers don't necessarily care what you do on your own time," Bernstein added, "and including information on your art work may well be inappropriate for non-art jobs. What employers are concerned about is that you have

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CCF dancers Jane Goldberg (left) and Theodora Yoshikami, who performed at the week-long celebration *Salute Brooklyn at Fulton Ferry Landing!* The arts celebration was presented in association with Olga Bloom's Bargemusic, Ltd., and Brooklyn Borough President Howard Golden.

Sarah Wells

Artists Laid Off...

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"The termination of staff members saddens me greatly," said Ms. Slovin. "Each of them is a working artist in his or her own right, and they have worked with great dedication for long hours without any overtime pay and without the benefit of an artist's studio day. I've been much moved by the many statements and gestures of gratitude I've received from the departing artists, but I feel that the staff members deserve this gratitude more than I do."

A major change in work patterns for the remaining artists will be an emphasis on flexibility and versatility. Things may work on a more temporary assignment basis. Artists may be asked to take on new assignments different from those they have been accustomed to in the immediate past.

As for the sub-contractors, they are each working the problem out in a different way. The Foundation for Independent Video & Film is adopting a staggered lay-off approach as is The Black Theatre Alliance. The Association for Hispanic Arts is limiting its CETA activities to a single project—a summer series of street theatre performances throughout the city.

Because of the abrupt and massive lay-off of artists, the Job Development Unit at 1133 Broadway (phone: 255-1400) is expanding its efforts to find artists' employment of every kind, full or part-time. All artists who have left the Project since January of 1978, whether voluntarily or involuntarily, are eligible to make full use of the Job Unit's services through the end of September (see accompanying Job Development story for further details).

As for the possible new Artists Project independent of CETA, it is still in the initial planning stage. Essentially, though, it's hoped that it would consist of a standing but rotating pool of about 100 artists of different disciplines. They could be selected by a number of possible criteria, including experience with CETA, CAPS, NEA, or Ford and Guggenheim grants.

"We are hoping," said Ms. Slovin, "to create a new program which we are calling an employee



Dancer Naaz Hosseini who performed in *Salute Brooklyn* at Fulton Ferry Landing celebration. Nathaniel Tileston

enrichment program. It is directed at the office worker or corporate employee who often cannot afford much cultural activity—concerts, theatre, dance, and the like.

"Funding, of course, is the big problem, but we will be looking carefully for any money that is out there, public, private, and government. And we have two big advantages working for us—experience in both *marketing* and *administrating* artistic services. There are very few other organizations about with these qualifications.

Of course we hope for further CETA funding during federal fiscal year 1981. That would give us more time to make the transition to independent funding. But the prospects right now are not favorable. We must do all we can in the next four months to get this new idea going on our own."

Job Development...

Cont. from page 1

the common sense to realize what the specific job calls for and the judgment and perspective to reveal in a resume or interview only what is relevant to that. What's important is to make them aware that you realize what the job calls for, the particular professional function. There's little value in mystifying what employment is all about. To echo the old saying, 'Employment is for profit, not people.'"

Many artists are interested in increasing earning potential from their art work. Dancers, for instance, may need practical advice on arranging performances or working with other dancers to promote themselves. As far as painters are concerned, "we advise them on the nature of the gallery system or try to arrange connections with corporate dealers. An interesting situation is how many painters have the notion that the art world is some kind of benevolent force dedicated to promoting the talents of individual artists. In such cases, we try to emphasize the fact that making money—from fine or commercial art or otherwise—is a business, not a philanthropic pursuit.

Another problem that the job development staff faces is that many of the artists do not have a realistic idea of what kind of jobs are available. "Oddly enough, the CETA experience has tended to make some program participants unrealistic about what to expect after their CETA jobs end.

For instance, they may have had community service work teaching senior citizens, and may have done very well at it. Since this kind of service is obviously needed, they expect to be able to continue doing that kind of work after CETA. The fact is that funding for such social service employment is very minimal. While some of the artists are staying on with their former sponsors, these sponsors tend to be well-funded institutions like the Museum of Modern Art. There are only a handful of community organizations that will be able to keep their CETA artists without CETA funding.

So far, the Job Development Services have interviewed about 200 people in a total of 400 counseling sessions. They have organized 22 seminars on subjects ranging from portfolio preparation to funding free-lance work. In addition, the staff is researching a number of areas relevant to artist employment, such as an ongoing compilation of all U.S. artists-in-residence programs. They intend to produce a number of booklets on their findings.



Poetry Performance Troupe members Rose Lesniak (left, seated) and Brenda Conner-Bey being taped for cable TV. Both poets participated in the week-long celebration, at Fulton Ferry Landing. Dawoud Bey

ARTISTS AT WORK

- Sarah Wells has gotten a job photographing a private collection of Greek and Egyptian art in the Brooklyn Museum and The Metropolitan Museum of Art.
- Roland Legiardi-Laura has received a \$7000 New York State Council on the Arts grant to run an upstate poetry reading series. The program—Poets Overland Expeditionary Troupe—is modelled on CCF's own "Words To Go" and will hire other former Artists Project participants.
- Rochelle Feinstein will be teaching all aspects of printmaking at Bennington College, Vermont, starting this fall.
- These are just a few examples of the many recent placements of our Artists Project participants.



Dancer David Malamut who performed in Brooklyn program.

E. Lee White



Poet Bob Holman who read at Brooklyn Fulton Ferry Landing celebration.

Anne Marie Rousseau

Modern Poetics: The Manifesto Of a Troubador

By **PEDRO PIETRI**

Without rum there can be no spontaneity.
Nothing can happen unless it's planned.
Disasters require great planning.
Dreams are planned.
Anything that's spontaneous is a major disaster.
I want to turn an audience off, but it's hard,
they're so polite.
If you are not upset yourself, you cannot upset
anybody else.
The Piss-Off Point can be reached at the Peak of
Boredom.

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The Cultural Council Foundation Artists Project places artists in community based residencies throughout the five boroughs of New York City and provides artistic services and products through six specialized teams: Public Art, Exhibitions, Literary Works, Graphic Design, Documentation-Neighborhood Life, Dance Programs, and the Performance Ensemble at Lincoln Center. The Association of Hispanic Arts, Black Theatre Alliance, & The Foundation for Independent Video & Film, all CCF subcontractors, provide additional services & performances throughout New York City.

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Take pride in your lies but don't get caught lying.
This is a spontaneous poem I've been working on
for ten years.
Once I thought I'd write a poem about love. I got
hit by a truck.
If you must have an accident, make sure it's fatal.
Required reading.:
Disney, Walt, *Mickey Mouse (Best Comics)* Abbe-
ville Press: NY, 1978.
Keylin, Arleen, & Brown, Gene (ed.), *Disasters*
(*From the Papers of the NY Times*), Arno
Press: NY, 1976.
Pietri, Pedro, *Invisible Poetry*, Downtown Train
Publications: NY, 1979.

(All quotes guaranteed lies from the mouth of
Prof. Pietri and nobody else as found in Bob
Holman's Poetry Performance Workshop note-
book dated 1-4-80, Rose Lesniak's loft.)



Poet Nathan Whiting who led an historic literary walking tour in the recent Brooklyn arts celebration.

Sarah Wells

The Movie Was Great But Wait Until You Read the Novel

By **RICHARD VETERE**

After seeing a recent New York production of my play, *Rockaway Boulevard*, an independent film producer asked me to write a paperback novel based on an original screenplay which he had already made into a movie. The movie, *Maniac*, was a well-made, suspenseful and sometimes gruesome feature which I have no doubt will do quite well in its market. Starring Joe Spinelli, the movie is about a mass murderer who does in his victims with the same calculating efficiency the IRS uses when splitting your check.

Like most serious writers, I had several "friends" who had put soap operas into novels or had adapted well-known screenplays, but I had never done it before myself. In fact, the only prose I had written and published up to then consisted of non-fiction essays and articles and one short story. But since I had written several screenplays and movie treatments and unemployment is around the bend, I talked it over with my agent, settled on a price (nothing my CETA employers could get nervous about), set aside a couple of weekends and went to work.

The novelization of movies has been a big business lately, especially when such movies as *Rocky*, *The Rose*, and *Halloween* have been such hits at the box office. Seeing this, publishers figure that if a best-seller can help a movie, like *Jaws*, *The Godfather*, and *One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest*, then a hot movie should sell an inexpensive paperback. Many articles on such writing have appeared in the *New York Times Book Review*, *Poets & Writers' Coda* and, for the first time last week, Vincent Canby actually did a favorable capsule review of the novelization of Coppola's *Apocalypse Now*. Even producers of small-budget movies are looking to novelizations as adding a little "class" to their films. Since *Maniac* will make a showing at the Cannes Film Festival, this particular producer saw the paperback as something he could "hand out" to prospective distributors.

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CCF playwright and poet Richard Vetere.

Sarah Wells

The Movie Was Great ...

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Doing a novel of a movie is not much different from doing an adaptation of a stage play for the screen. Of course, adaptations of novels are a big hit in the T.V./movie business, and some serious writers have done some excellent work in this area. Israel Horovitz did a fine screenplay from Herman Melville's *Bartelby the Scribner*, and John Huston's film of Flannery O'Connor's novel, *Wise Blood*, might receive an Oscar nomination next year. Of all these, however, novelizing a film is the newest literary genre, and its development is quite interesting since no one expected that. Though movies and T.V. have taken the place of books in many people's lives, the film industry and the power of the box office are indirectly having *more* books published. I doubt that novelizations will ever be taken seriously by literary critics, yet their appearance in the pop-pulp market says much about the connections between moving pictures

and turning pages. If you ever find yourself reading or actually doing a novelization, keep in mind that connection before you make any judgments.

First off, in doing a novelization, a writer must screen the film and decide what scenes will translate into prose and what scenes will not. Some fine novelizations include Curtis Richards' of *Halloween*, and John Russo's of *Dawn of the Dead*, yet both novelists told their stories from a strong allegorical viewpoint and kept the suspense going with a driving narrative that had time to create more for their characters than the actual movies did. The books had more substance than the movies.

Secondly, a writer must usually make up scenes in his novelization that might never have appeared in the movie. This happens because most screenplays are quite thin and rely mainly on visuals and sequence, not language and description. Having written both screenplays and prose, I've learned that in film it is all "show" and hardly any "tell" while in prose the author can interject as subtly as he wishes his own viewpoint without becoming rhetorical and without sermonizing. He can do

this and still remain honest to the world he is writing about.

Doing the novel of a movie gives you the opportunity to give your interpretation of the film. You can highlight what you like and expand on events that you prefer. Most producers do not really care or even know the motivation of the characters in their movies. To them, it's a property with the same neutral identity as if it were a Bagel Nosh they were investing in. If the novel sells it doesn't matter why a character does something. The *effect* each scene has on the audience is all that matters to them. A horror movie should scare. Period.

Thirdly, writers can never rely solely on the screenplay since what is filmed usually differs at least 45% from what the screenwriter intended. Directors, actors and even locations have input on what will and can be shot. I read through the original script only to find that what I had seen at the screening was quite different from what the project started out to be.

Lastly, don't forget the film editor, since his impact on a movie can drastically shade a film in ways he decides to highlight certain takes. An editor's preference for certain moods of the same scene shot several times can help you in your interpretation, thus making your job a lot easier.

When I was finished with my novelization, I realized that I had written a story from someone else's idea, with their characters and using their title. Not really something you can say warrants tremendous applause and maybe, in all, authors who do novels of movies put themselves right where film producers want to see all writers — as employees.

Whatever the case, I was treated with respect. I was given a free hand in my interpretation of the film, and I was excited to be a part of the project. Even though my first draft was too thin and the scenes I added that hadn't been in the movie are probably the best of the bunch, I feel that it is a good sign that film producers are hiring writers to actually *write* novels. That means people are reading. And maybe someone who sees the movie and buys the novel to help him "remember" his favorite scenes, will go out and buy another book. It is a new way for authors to build up a readership.

In my private cold war against bad movies and dull T.V., I feel like a successful double-agent for the "serious writers" side when I tell people that the movie's good, but read the book, it's better.

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