

Journal

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News of The Cultural
Council Foundation
CETA Artists Project

Art for the People Alters the Quality Of a Community's Life in Long Island City

In the hallway of the Ravenswood Community Center in Long Island City, Queens, a plaque reads:

*The Great Man Is
He Who Doesn't
Lose His Child's Heart*
Mencius

These words could aptly serve as a working motto for CCF painter, sculptor, printmaker, and photographer Edwin Cadiz whose work with the children and teenagers of the community center over the past year has won him a place not only as official resident artist but also as unofficial counselor, psychiatrist, athletic director, and all-round trouble shooter.

Cadiz lives with his wife and two-year-old daughter two minutes' walk from the center in a project where many of the center's kids live too, and he has a difficult time making the usual distinctions between his job, his life, and his art, to say nothing of community service. "Art should be a natural part of everyday life in a community," says Cadiz. "When it is, remarkable things happen. Art should never be remote, inaccessible. When we first moved

here, this was a disaster area. I called it 'The Twilight Zone.' The kids didn't care about anything. They would wreck everything, the plants, the grass, the park benches, the windows. They were even killing the squirrels."

Cadiz looked glum for a moment. "Such a waste," he said. "And there's so much talent in these kids. All it takes is a little encouragement, a feeling of being part of something bigger — that's where the art comes in."

Four little girls — Jacqueline, Rhonda, Karen, and Michelle — shyly interrupted at this point to ask Cadiz about a difficult problem. After straightening it out, Cadiz continued, "So much has happened in a year. I have a file at home a foot high of records and photographs documenting our projects, but let me give you a small example. I found out early on that the kids here love T-shirts with mottos on them. Well, I soon had them learning how to silkscreen mottos on their own T-shirts. They loved it and even made their own designs. One series had imprinted, 'I'm spending the summer at Ravenswood Community Center.' We went on a hike one day, all wearing those T-shirts, up at Bear Mountain

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CCF Artist Gets Humanities Grant To Produce Plays, Documentary Film

Chris Kraus recently received a \$19,000 grant with The Labor Theatre from the New York Council for the Humanities for a three part project that grew out of her CCF/CETA residencies. This interview took place in her lower east side apartment near St. Marks Place.

Exactly what is the grant for?

The grant will pay for three projects that involve professional artists and academics working together with non-professional actors — members of a trade union, older people, and teenagers.

What are the three different projects?

The first involves a trade union group I met through working on CETA for The Labor Theatre — Local 1-S of RWDSU. Last year the idea was to create a play about the local's 40-year history. It wasn't just the union bureaucracy that wanted it, but members of the union. There were these four guys who work in the warehouse who'd formed their own production company, BSGR... They invited members of a dance company from Queens to get involved. So the script finally reflected the dancers and some of the workers at Macy's, as well as the labor history supplied by the education director, Charles Boyd.

Now that we have the resources to go into more depth, the next play will probably contrast a traditionally dramatic point of the union's history with the very different circumstances and conflicts of trade unionism in 1980. We have two excellent labor historians, David Rosen and Steve Brier, and an actress/director from The Labor Theatre, Gussie Harris, to work with.

Why is the New York Council for the Humanities so interested in work by non-professional actors?

They're probably not, *per se*. They're interested in getting the humanities out to as many people in communities as possible, and theatre is one effective way of doing this. Sometimes they'll sponsor a lecture series in neighborhood libraries... But in these three projects, the people who usually form their target audience will be participants, who'll in turn reach other audiences. I think this is why they were interested in our proposal.

From your point of view, what is the value of working with non-professional actors?

Let me give a concrete example — during my CETA residency I worked with a group of retired women civil servants. They were marvelous. They had extraordinary commitment, they'd try almost

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CCF artist Edwin Cadiz with friends at Ravenswood Community Center, Long Island City, Queens.

Ben Wong

Humanities Grant...

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Actress, playwright, and director Chris Kraus.

G. Amen

anything. They'd ride the subway from Queens three times a week to rehearse, they'd call each other up on the phone to rehearse. At the beginning, neither they nor I were sure what to do in the workshop and we sort of arrived at a solution together. Other groups might expect the teacher to pretend to know, even when she or he doesn't... Of course they also had lifetimes of experience to draw on... If these people keep working long enough they'll probably come up with something original and quite different from what professionals might do.

Do you think a fresh style could evolve from their work that could catch on in the commercial theatre?

It'd be a little presumptuous to expect that. But maybe it will find its own audience — new, more suitable audiences.

What are the old, unsuitable audiences?

Well, we performed this piece at their union's educational department, and that went off fine. Where to go next? The obvious choice was senior centers. But most of these senior audiences would have preferred more polished, professional entertainment. We didn't exactly have that... Ironically, I think the piece might have appealed more to professional actors.

Will this group continue next year?

Yes. We'll be working with another writer, Anna Smith, and Irene Croftdon, an anthropologist, at an experimental theatre studio, Re-cher-chez. Our idea is to take texts from mythology and legends of non-Western cultures, and perhaps dream material, and find ways of adapting them into performance pieces. Two years ago I did a workshop with Richard Schechner that involved mythology and dream material, and I've wanted to do more with it since.

This sounds very personal and a little difficult. Why are these retired women interested in doing it?

Well, they are. People can go along way with an idea once it's presented to them. If someone asks

you, 'What to do you want to do?', well, you don't know. The women in the group were wondering what they might do next. There had been an impulse towards adapting literature outside of plays... and, anyway, they'll make the final choices of which material to use.

It sounds as though you'll be pretty busy. What's the third project?

The most difficult, because it's with a new group of people. A Super-8 sound documentary, a short, about work in East New York.

Why work?

Tom Yemm — who'll work as the academic on this project — and I were interested in how changes in work patterns — unemployment, temp agencies, working off the books — are affecting people's non-work lives. There's a 40% youth unemployment rate in East New York. Many of its industries have relocated during the last ten years. Members of the United Community Center, who will be working with us, take an active interest in this data — it is their neighborhood. It seems like an excellent place to do this project. We'll work with a group of teenagers who've been trying to raise money to make their own Super-8 documentary about the history of the civil rights movement. A professional filmmaker, Ricky McKoy, will teach them how to shoot and edit the film. We hope to involve another writer, Nancy Reilly. So essentially the film will be made by kids from the neighborhood, with our help. The interest is definitely there. It's just a question of resources and money.

* * *

Book To Trace Ambitious History Of Artists Project

By ANNE DAHLGREN HECHT,
Editor-in-Chief

A 132-page book, *The Cultural Council Foundation Artists Project*, outlining the history of the CCF/CETA experiment in funding artists, has as its subtitle *On the Identification and Utilization of Largely Untapped Resources*.

The subtitle tries to convey, in its combination of government pomposity and poetic license, the daring outreach of a U.S.-funded program designed to help an almost forgotten segment of the population — artists. As the book's editor, and as an art historian, I was confronted for the first time by the difficulties of artists first-hand, which gave me a deeper understanding of art history and humanity, and I became convinced of the importance of such a government-funded program as CETA's for the development of artistic life in the United States. It was also exciting to be deeply involved with deciding the content of the volume. So often, as editor, one simply gets handed the finished copy.

The book documents the project from its inception in January 1978 until its termination in September 1980. Funded with a grant from Lila Acheson Wallace, it begins with a statement from Mrs. Joan Mondale, Honorary Chairperson, Federal Council on the Arts and Humanities, and continues with a message from Mrs. Donald B. Straus, president of the Cultural Council Foundation. An essay by Alice Neel, well-known portrait painter and member of the WPA Artists' Project, sketches the artist's role in the Depression and under the WPA. An historical survey of the CCF Artists Project by Ken Sofer, himself a CCF artist and then a staff member, completes the text. Following are about 100 photographs of all phases of the project with explanatory captions, statistics, and lists of artists, staff, selection

Art for the People...

cont. from page 1

Lake, and they were so proud, walking along, they never got tired. We walked twelve and a half miles. You see, they felt they were part of something, that they belonged. One day I took 100 kids from here into Manhattan to the Metropolitan Museum. Can you believe it? Thirty-one of them had never even been on the subway."

Cadiz was called to the phone. When he got back, he said, "Bad news. The free lunches aren't being delivered here today. That means we'll have to walk down to P.S. 111 to have lunch. Oh, well, it happens all the time. So let's go eat with the kids, and then I'll take you around the Project, so you can see what the kids have been doing. In the summer, much of the art work is outdoors. We've planted flower beds everywhere, beautiful! There hasn't been a single act of vandalism this summer. What they used to destroy, now they create."

Before we joined Cadiz to march down to P.S. 111 for lunch, we noticed another plaque on the wall. Aptly, it read:

*Go To The People
Live Among Them
Learn From Them
Love Them
Serve Them*

* * *

panelists and community sponsors.

The book's cover was designed by Dwight Johnson, head of the Graphics Team of the CCF Artists Project, with Elizabeth Pollock, former member of the team, as associate designer in charge of production. Other assistance by members of the CCF Artists Project was provided by Ellin Burke, photography coordination and archives, and Anna Werner, research. Judy Sund was proofreader.

CCF Dancer Plans Concert At Cooper-Hewitt

Anthony La Giglia and Sheila Kaminsky will present a concert of modern dance solos, duets, and group pieces in the garden of the Cooper-Hewitt Museum Sept. 9 at 6 p.m.

La Giglia will present the lyric duet "Fields of Passing," with an original score by G. Lindahl, "Helianthus," a comic solo with music by Sonny Terry, and the dramatic solo "Sketch for a Full Moon," to an original score by G. Lindahl.

Anthony La Giglia has danced and choreographed in New York since 1962. He has performed with most of the choreographers associated with the Judson Church and Dance Theatre Workshop experiments of the late sixties and early seventies and was a founding member of the Rudy Perez Dance Theater. He was a recipient last year of a New York State Creative Artists Public Service grant in choreography. La Giglia has taught extensively throughout the United States, most recently on the faculty of Bennington College. He is currently artistic director and choreographer for his own company as well as dance coordinator for the CCF Artists Project.

This concert will be a free-admission performance open to the public. The rain date will be Sept. 16 at 6 p.m.

Thank You Notes

Happy times we shared with you.
Poem writing, having fun.
But now its time for you to go,
We'll always have that poem feeling.
Swirling, turning, twisting, round and
round and round in our bodies.
Exciting times were here with you.
Thank you Janet.
We all love you.

by Amanda La Forge

(From Paul Sebolsky's third grade reading class,
P.S. 321, Brooklyn.)

On the last day of school I handed out the poem
I wrote in reply. It is a culmination of the postcard
poem sequence I developed with Paul Sebolsky
and his class last spring.)

The Secret Art of Living Suspense

They could not bring separate lengths
of steel cable
to Brooklyn Bridge.

Those long enough would be too big
and heavy to carry. And how would they
tie shorter ones together?
With knots? Bolts?

No, that wouldn't hold.
They had to learn to figure out how
to twist long spools of fine wire
together into heavy cable
just as strands of thread and yarn
are twisted
together for lengths of strength.

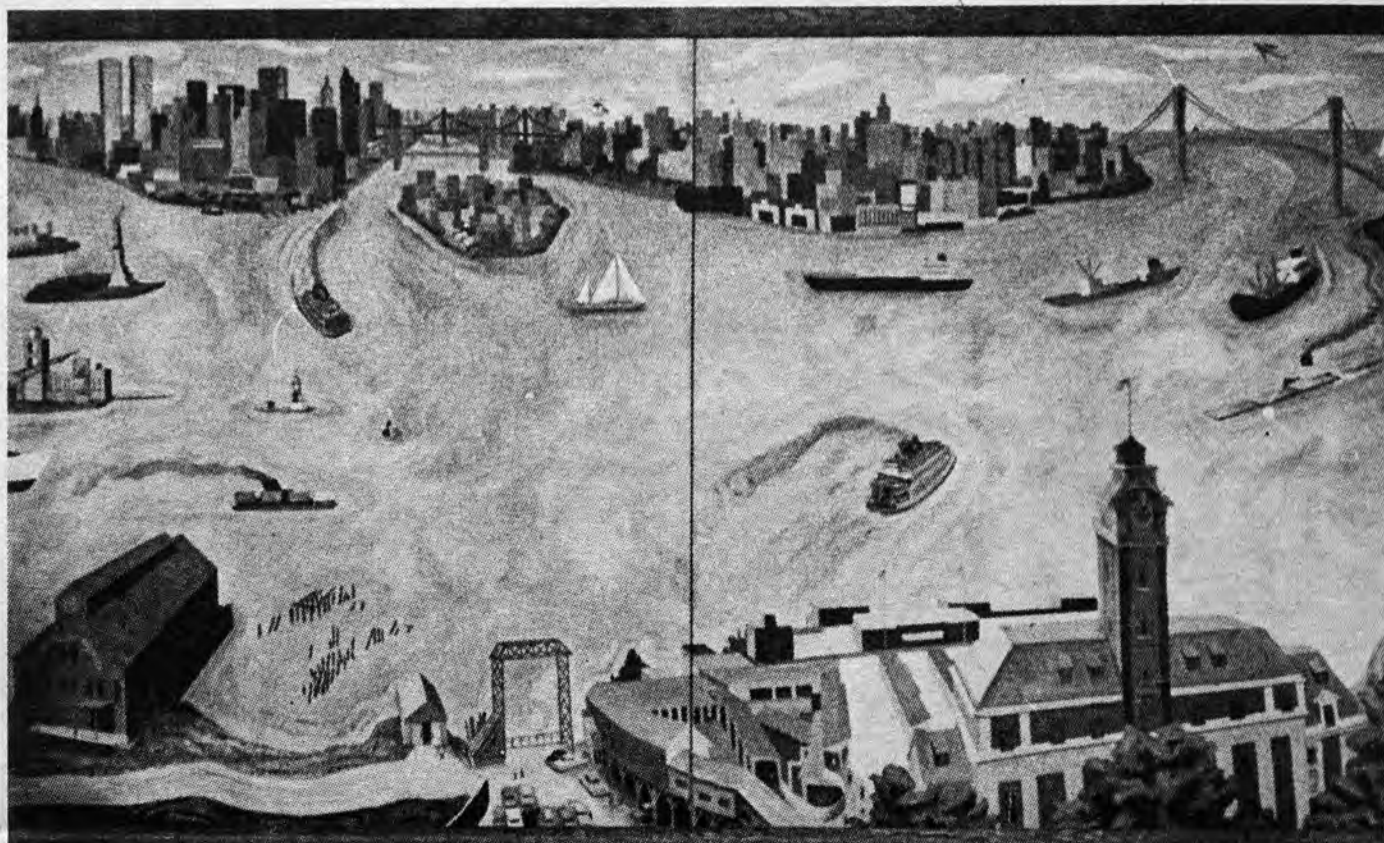
But they had
to do it right on the site over the river.
Suspended there, the bridge builders
wound
the graceful lengths of cable you can see
every time you ride the D train;
millions can see
every day, if they look.

Yesterday, on the way to see you
for the last
time, the white steel cables looked
like threads gleaming
against a smog so deep it hid
the Statue of Liberty
which usually rides back and forth
across the bridge.

A perfect web of steel rays and arcs,
man made
of seeing and of love, love of invention,
the leap of a gazelle.

How can I say my thanks to you for being
in loving suspense with forty-two people
turning out
the cables of their communications
bridges together
over and over and over again!
Where will they go?

—Janet Bloom



Myron Heise's new 5 x 11 foot mural at Todt Hil Senior Center, Staten Island.

Anna Werner

CCF Anthology Features Work Of 26 Writers

By BOB STOKES



CCF artist Bob Stokes.

Irving Vincent

The literary anthology that we've been working on so diligently for well over a year is now at the printer. One thousand copies of the book should be ready for distribution in a few weeks.

Twenty-six writers will appear in the anthology which is entitled *Words to Go: An Anthology of Creative Writing from The Cultural Council Foundation Artists Project*.

The anthology was edited by myself and Gersami Karen Frederick. Rosalyn Hawthorne, a CCF graphic artist, was responsible for the book cover and design concept. Madeleine Keller wrote the preface in which she put into perspective the impact that the literary artists had on the Artists Project as a whole. Although I initially envisioned a much more ambitious book (our anthology is approximately 125 pages), I am pleased with what we were able to accomplish under the circumstances.

The 26 writers represent a wide range of literary attitudes and styles. The motifs and techniques displayed run the gamut from allegory to zeugma: the work of imagists, surrealists, expressionists,

objectivists, impressionists are represented, as well as a few pieces that defy any category. The majority of the work is poetry (nineteen of twenty-six writers submitted in that genre); there are also three short stories (an erotic fantasy, a hilarious piece of black humor, and a children's allegory), and four excerpts from longer works (three selections from novels-in-progress, and one outrageous section from a long journal). In some of the work you can detect the presence of (literary) ghosts, but in most of the work you will be experiencing truly original talent.

Since the anthology will be published by CCF and not a commercial publisher (i.e. the book will not be sold but distributed for free) I am sure that it will disappear fast and is destined to be a "collector's item." I also feel that a few years (months?) from now, when we are all doing different things, this anthology, document, chronicle, will be a reminder to all of us of what we have individually and collectively experienced during our tenure as CETA artists.

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Sharon Mattlin at controls of station WBAI.

G. Amen

Photo Exhibit At Lever House Opens Aug. 26

An exhibition of photographs, highlighting 60 of the 175 works of public art created by artists in the Project since it began in January of 1978, will open Aug. 26 at the Lever House Gallery and run through Sept. 15. The work generated in two years by the Project represents the largest body of public art created by a single organization since the WPA projects of the thirties.

Says William Lapham, the show's curator: "This exhibit of public art gives us all an opportunity to assess our accomplishment. We can see now how we all have performed, both as artists and administrators. Although many projects could not be included, the selections we have are representative and demonstrate the wide diversity of sponsors and artists. Also important was the development of a

working partnership between art organizations and government, the arts and business, and the arts and non-profit organizations. We hope that these relationships will continue to bear fruit in the future."

The exhibit focuses on large-scale murals and sculpture throughout the five boroughs. It includes murals created for the World Trade Center, the Hall of Science in Queens, the Third St. Music School in Manhattan, The St. George Arcade above the Clark St. subway station in Brooklyn Heights, and 12 Social Service Centers operated by the New York City Department of Human Resources. The photographs were all taken by professional photographers in the Project.

* * *

Sharon Mattlin, a fiction writer, has been working in an Artists Project residency for over a year at WBAI as assistant to the Drama and Literature director, Rick Harris. She's an announcer and engineer with a third class FCC license and has been involved with every kind of WBAI project and program, interviewing and recording on audio tape for such feature as *Arts Extra* (a miscellany of art

news, reviews and announcements), *Open Ear* (poetry readings), and *Prose* (fiction readings). She's recorded many CETA artists. After working at WBAI, writing and producing, Sharon took a special course in announcing and engineering there in the summer of 1979. The course was held Saturday nights from midnight to 5 a.m. every weekend. "You had to be dedicated to work those hours," says Sharon. "No Saturday nights or weekends free." She feels that the four-day-a-week job has provided ideal on-the-job training, an apprenticeship unique in today's training and job market. "One year here is the equivalent of six years of academic training," she says. "And WBAI people may be better skilled because of the very fact that our facilities are somewhat primitive and require a certain inventiveness to achieve sophisticated results." She feels that interest in non-commercial radio is growing. The first week of August she helped in a "minithon" WBAI fundraising campaign. They hoped for \$10,000; expected \$6,000, but wound up with \$21,000 in pledges.

* * *

Christy Rupp has been at Bear Mountain State Park in upstate New York during August as an artist-in-residence, creating a herd of life-size paper mache deer for a public exhibit about deer overpopulation. This is the latest in a prolific series of projects she's had since being a CETA artist, educating the public and the communities to wild life problems, frequently urban and involving large on-site creations.

Earlier this summer, an exhibit entitled *Animals, Energy, and You* opened in the Children's Center of the Staten Island Zoo. It demonstrated the ways in which animals and humans depend upon energy for food, warmth, movement, and reproduction, and featured 16 different kinds of animals (73 individuals) most of which were created by Christy out of wire mesh skeletons and paper mache skin. Before that, she helped organize a huge show in an ex-massage parlor in Times Square, where over 100 artists exhibited environmental works throughout the month of June. *Animals Living in Cities* was the title of another exhibit of hers in the South Bronx. It focused on urban ecology, revealing in a scientific light, forms of city life usually thought of as vermin — mice, roaches, and rats.

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