

# ARTS

## CONFERENCE

# REPORT

**GMCDP**

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Defending Jobs - Improving Services





# THE DISABLED PEOPLE'S ART CONFERENCE

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Mandy Colleran

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## PREFACE

### Disabled Peoples Arts Conference

Manchester Town Hall had never seen anything like it, as disabled people took over for the weekend conference and workshops. This is literally true as only a year previously such an event would have been impossible, as like many other public buildings bequeathed to us by the Victorians, the Town Hall had been totally inaccessible.

The weekend's events were not just about disabled people's arts, it was a symbol of how far the disabled people's movement had come - a refusal to accept either inaccessible buildings or patronising attitudes of Art as therapy for disabled people.

Not everything went according to plan at the Conference, mistakes were made, but people who came were willing to accept the rough edges, because they understood that what was happening was an event for disabled people, by disabled people. Before the memory fades we must ensure that the ideas and enthusiasm are made full use of.

As always, the big stumbling block are resources - making sure that sufficient funding is acquired which can service the enthusiasm there undoubtedly is in the region for developing disabled people's arts. So here's hoping we are at the start of something big.

Bernard Leach  
August, 1988

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Conference organisers are delighted to acknowledge the generous support given to the conference by:

**Trusthouse Forte Hotels**  
The Post House Hotel  
Palatine Road  
Manchester M22 4FH  
(061) 998 7090

**The Village Hotel**  
Captain Clarke Road  
Hyde  
Cheshire  
SK14 4QC

**Novotel Manchester West**  
Worsley Brow  
Worsley  
Manchester M28 4YA  
(061) 799 3535

The Conference organisers would also like to thank the following people for their support and contribution to the making of this Conference:-

Judy Clegg  
Miriam Whitworth  
Mary Moss  
John Mason  
Brian Warburton  
Di Williams  
The Henesy players  
Pamela Neild & Colleague  
Dennis Freeman & His Trio  
Peter Street  
Jan Joldko  
Glissade  
Brian Hilton  
Linda Waugh  
Janice Lomas  
Sue Napolitano  
Neville Strowger  
Peter Downey  
Lynda Carroll  
Barry Johnson  
Anne Seabury  
Ken Lumb  
Anne Rae  
Mandy Colleran

*Signer*  
*Signer*  
*Painting*  
*Photography*  
*Drama*  
*Poet/Singer*  
*Acting Group*  
*Singer/light opera*  
*Keyboard, Jazz*  
*Poet*  
*Percussion*  
*Dancers*  
*Writer*  
*Manchester City Council*  
*Manchester City Council*  
*Manchester City Council*  
*Manchester City Council*  
*Manchester City Council*  
*Manchester City Council*  
*Manchester Disability Forum*  
  
*Former Chairperson of GMCOP*  
*London Disability Arts Forum*  
*Arts Integration Merseyside*

Workshop  
Workshop  
Workshop/Performance  
Workshop/Performance  
Performance  
Performance  
Workshop/Performance  
Workshop/Performance  
Workshop  
Workshop/Performance  
Workshop

### *Organising Group*

Robert Broughton	)	
Paul Mittler	)	
James Fisher	)	Art Sub Group
John Wells	)	
Frances Wharton	)	
Adrian Mealing -		Green Room
Di Christian -		Consultant
Sally Medlyn -		North West Arts
Ian Stanton -		G.M.C.D.P.

*\*Note: The organising Group is often referred to as 'we'.*

Last but not least, we express our thanks to the following Organisations for financial, moral or personal support:-

Manchester City Council Equal Opportunities Committee  
 Manchester City Council Cultural Services  
 North West Arts  
 Greater Manchester Coalition of Disabled People  
 Green Room  
 Disabled People's Steering Group  
 Manchester City Council Education Department - Musical Service  
 Corner House

Keith Stephens  
 Equal Opportunities Unit  
 Disabled People's Section





TIME FOR REGISTRATION

# BACKGROUND TO THE DISABLED PEOPLE'S ARTS CONFERENCE

## INTRODUCTION

The Disabled People's Arts Conference took place on the 26th/27th of March 1988. As will be seen later, the Conference was successful both in terms of the attendance of disabled people and the ideas put forward by disabled people for progressing the issues related to disability and the arts. However, the conference was a long time coming and its roots sprang from the Attenborough Report and the proposed 'Artability' Conference. Before setting the scene, we would like to make explicit the context in which art is seen and to clarify the perspective from which this report is written.

## CONTEXT OF ART

The definition of what 'Art' is or should be about is often disputed. The following is NOT an attempt to define 'Art.' However, we would suggest that wherever and in whatever context art is defined, such a definition must we believe encapsulate the following:-

- (1) Imaginative skills as applied to representations of the natural world or figment of the imagination. See Appendix 3, (1).
- (2) The exercise of human skills (as distinguished from nature). See Appendix 3, (1).
- (3) Techniques or methods used in the deliberate creation of an image or object. See Appendix 3, (2).
- (4) Collectively, the various techniques and methods by which images and objects can be created. See Appendix 3, (2).

## CLARIFICATIONS

This report will reflect the principles of the 'social model' of disability.

We reject the 'medical model' which sees disability in terms of personal tragedy, a 'burden' belonging to the individual whose bodily condition prevents the person from playing an active and equal part in society. This medical condition is fixed and can be changed only by medical intervention - ie 'cured'.

The social model of disability sees the roots of the 'difficulties' faced by disabled people as arising from a society dominated by able bodied people who consciously or otherwise 'marginalise disabled people'. Society has consistently failed to take account of the needs of disabled people. From such a perspective disabled people are therefore forced to search for a niche of their own. In this context it is difficult not to draw out the parallel between the struggle of black people in their effort to assert their own identity and independence, and the disabled people's movement.



In essence, the social model of disability is suggesting that disability is society's responsibility and not an individual problem. The Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation (UPIAS) defines disability as, 'the disadvantage of restriction of activity caused by contemporary social organisations which take little or no account of people who are physically impaired (lacking part of or all of a limb or having a defective organ, limb or mechanism of the body) and thus excludes them from participation in the mainstream of social activities ..... disability is therefore a particular form of social oppression'. See Appendix 3, (3).

Explicitly and in relation to the above, the term 'disabled people' encompasses all people who have an intellectual, sensory or physical impairment.

## ARTS AND DISABLED PEOPLE - THE ATTENBOROUGH REPORT

'Arts and Disabled People' - The Attenborough Report was published in 1985. The report was the work of a Committee chaired by Sir Richard Attenborough and was sponsored by the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust.

The terms of reference for the Committee were 'to look into the extent to which existing facilities enable people with disabilities to involve themselves in the arts, whether as artists or audience and to make recommendations to encourage development and improvement'. See Appendix 3, (4) Page 1.

In the preface to the report Sir Richard said, 'anyone who studies this area will find that it has been lamentably neglected by bodies, both national and local, well placed to take the lead'. Sir Richard also said that a new range of 'imaginative initiatives' could serve to bring about 'almost limitless possibilities for involving disabled people in artistic pursuits'.

Amongst the many recommendations that the report argued for were :-

(a) **Access to the Arts**

*That all new arts buildings (new and major building alterations or extensions to buildings) for public use should be made completely accessible to disabled people, i.e., building legislation should ensure the above. It should be noted that the ethos of the Attenborough Report was not on physical access only, but also on creating wider opportunities within the arts for disabled people e.g. as performers/practicing artists, organisers/administrators and as members of the audience.*

(b) **Sub-titling of Films**

*That the British Film Institute should promote the building up of a library of sub-titled films for hire.*

(c) **Policy Statement**

*That the IBA and the BBC should issue policy statements on the involvement of disabled people in their programmes.*

(d) **Local Authorities**

*That the Chief Executive in each local authority should ensure '..... that there is a clear allocation of responsibility within the authority relating to arts provision for disabled people'.*

The Attenborough Report was widely accepted as the gospel according to which disabled people could progress in their artistic endeavour and thus was born 'Artability'.

## 'ARTABILITY - THE WAY AHEAD FOR THE ARTS AND PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY'

'Artability takes a positive approach to disabled people and the arts

- it provides an opportunity for artists and craft people experiencing a disability to demonstrate their work
- it brings together many people with key roles in the provision of facilities and the shaping of attitudes to consider examples of and arguments for the practice of the arts and crafts in their widest sense'. See Appendix 3, (5).

'The Carnegie Council for the Arts and Disabled People', which was set up in 1985 to help fulfil the recommendations of the Attenborough Report, arranged a three day event - 'Artability' - to take place at the Palace Theatre (Manchester) with residential facilities at Owen's Park, University of Manchester. 'Artability - the way ahead for the arts and people with disability' was arranged for the 22nd to 24th September 1986.

## OPPOSITION TO 'ARTABILITY'

As is well known by now, the 'Artability' conference never took place. Disabled people's organisations nationally objected to the style, venue and the contents of the conference. The Greater Manchester Coalition of Disabled People (GMCDP) was asked to co-ordinate the opposition to the planned conference. It was decided that if the conference went ahead as planned then disabled people would boycott it and would probably mount a demonstration.

Disabled people opposed 'Artability' for the following reasons as indicated by a motion passed by the Disabled People's Steering Group (DPSG) at their meeting on July 2nd, 1986. (See Appendix 3, (6).)

- (i) *The DPSG opposed this conference on the grounds of :-*
  - (a) *Lack of involvement of disabled people from the start.*
  - (b) *Use of inaccessible venues*
  - (c) *The philosophy of the conference.*
    - (1) *The medical/therapeutic model used.*
    - (2) *Orientated towards policy makers rather than disabled people.*
- (ii) *The DPSG calls upon the City Council to withdraw its support for the 'Artability' conference until such time as it meets the DPSG criteria for acceptability.*

## AFTER 'ARTABILITY'

With the cancellation of the 'Artability' conference it was generally felt that there was a need for an art event organised by disabled people. Its cancellation served to highlight the appalling lack of access to the arts for disabled people in the Greater Manchester area. Indeed, it is bizarre that a major conurbation such as ours did not have an Arts Advisory Service at all and certainly no general disability arts organisation run by disabled people.

The DPSG elected from amongst its members an Arts Sub-Group. Di Christian from Arts Integration Merseyside (AIM) was invited to one of the DPSG meetings (March '87) and later she became involved with the organisation of the arts conference.

The Arts Sub-Group and Di Christian met several times and from these meetings a plan was submitted in July 1987 to the DPSG to hold a two day arts conference. This first report did not suggest a date for the arts conference but it included the likely cost, venue and aim of the conference. The report submitted to the DPSG was approved.



## FUNDING OF THE CONFERENCE

November 1987 was chosen as the date for the conference to be held. However, due to financial constraints this date had to be put back. Funding for the conference was eventually obtained from - Manchester City Council Equal Opportunities Committee, North West Arts, Manchester City Council Cultural Services and the Greater Manchester Coalition of Disabled People.

## THE ORGANISATION OF THE ARTS CONFERENCE

As mentioned before, Di Christian and the Arts Sub-Group worked out a plan for the conference which was accepted by the DPSG. This plan eventually came to fruition with minor modifications through the involvement of GMCDP, North West Arts, Green Room and of course the Arts Sub-Group through a series of regular planning meetings.

## THE AIMS OF THE CONFERENCE AS PRESENTED TO DPSG ON THE 1st JULY 1987

*"As a group, disabled or impaired people contribute to the make-up of our society. However, like other socially oppressed groups their contribution to the melting pot is seldom taken as valid and worth while.*

*One result of such invisibility is that the image created of disabled people by society at large is one of passiveness and dependency.*

*One of the aims of this conference will be to establish a forum (if disabled people so desire) through which ideas on how art at various levels (visual, written, admin, organiser, workers, etc.) can be related in a positive way to disabled people and on what basis disabled people should take part.*

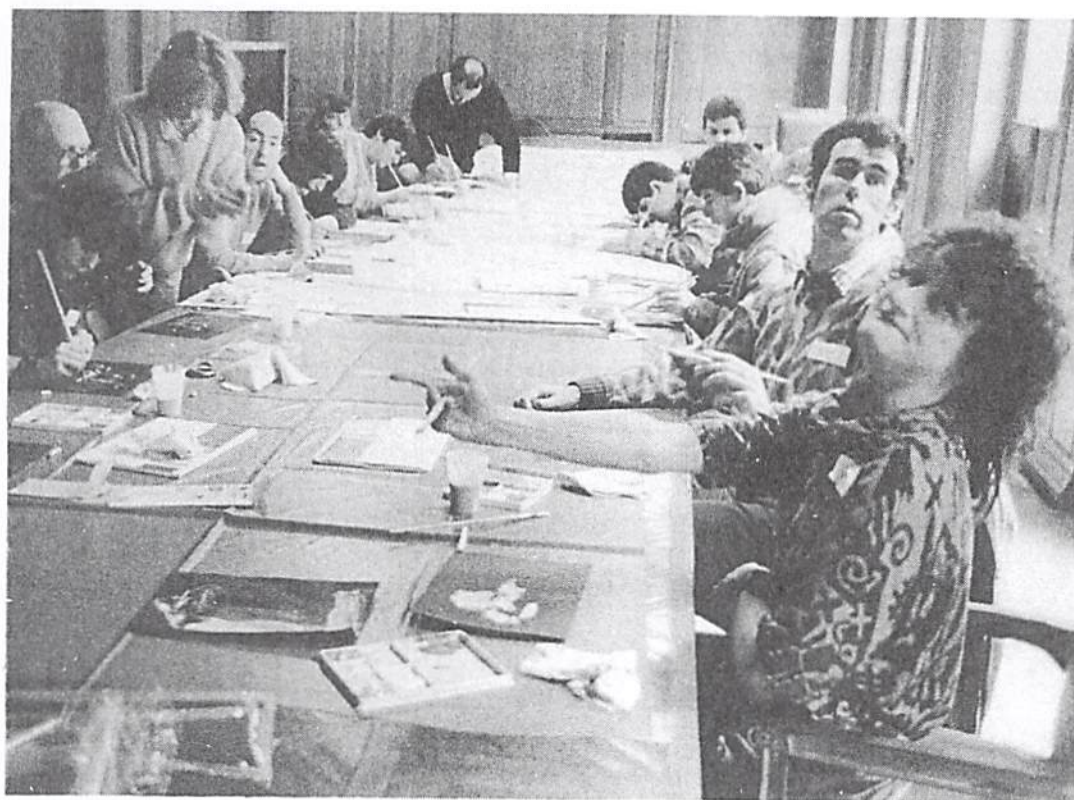
*The forum could eventually become the body which arts organisations and individuals in the region come to when seeking advice and guidance on art and disability issues.*

*A report of the conference will be produced which should be widely circulated to Council Departments and art funding bodies throughout the region e.g. Cultural Services, North West Arts.*

*This report will indicate the views of disabled people and what needs to be done within the arts to make these views a reality."*







ARTISTIC EXPRESSION

# REPORT OF THE CONFERENCE

## ATTENDANCE AT THE CONFERENCE

Over 150 people attended the two-day event, which was split into two equal and distinct halves (though the majority of people attending stayed for both days).

Welcoming the delegates, Chair of DPSG Bernard Leach emphasised the philosophy on which the Conference was based, 'as the title suggests, it is disabled people's arts, that is, belonging to and involving disabled people right from the start'. (See Appendix 1 for the full text of Bernard's Leach's speech.)

## THE FIRST DAY OF THE CONFERENCE

The first day comprised of "taster" workshops, led by disabled artists, in which delegates could try out or develop skills in different arts activities. Ten workshops in all were held - dance, drama, poetry, keyboards, screen-printing, writing towards performance, voice, painting, percussion and photography.

Some criticisms have been made of these workshop sessions. One person felt they were not geared towards those who already had a degree of skill in a certain activity, more than one person felt that they were geared to too high a level, and just to be even handed, one person felt that the conference tried too hard to be "all things to all people".

In fact, the workshop leaders were asked to prepare a session taking into account as far as possible different abilities and experience, and they managed remarkably well considering the wide range of abilities and experience they were faced with. Perhaps a better idea might have been to have a "beginners" session and a separate "improvers" session, though this may have caused even more organisational difficulties.

Still, these concerns didn't appear to dampen the enjoyment of this light-hearted first day, and the evening meal in the magnificent Banqueting Hall, was taken in an atmosphere of excitement and tale-swapping.

## CABARET - THE FIRST DAY'S FINALE

The day's finale came in the form of an evening "cabaret" featuring only disabled performers and integrated groups. This represented the main organisational clanger; the room in which this was held was far too small to provide a "cabaret" setting for the unexpected number of people who stayed for the evening session (if only we could do it all over again ....).

But despite the cramped conditions, and the fact that the stage-lights conked out and the sound was atrocious, the performers provided a memorable evening of entertainment.

A criticism made of the entertainment session was, that it was too much, that is, too many "acts" (there were six different acts) and thus the whole thing was long and drawn out. Little or no time was given over to the disco, except as a filler between acts. The next time we will do better!

Here ends the first day of the Conference.



## THE SECOND DAY OF THE CONFERENCE

The second day of the Conference concentrated on discussion about the more serious aspects of disability arts; e.g. is there such a thing as disability culture? Art for Art's sake or Art as therapy? The Integration of Artists, etc.

Heavy stuff, especially in view of the loss of one hours sleep (thanks to British Summer Time) and a late-night party at the Green Room. Still, despite some pasty faces and bleary eyes, the discussions throughout the day were often lively, even heated.

Chairing the day, Ken Lumb the former Chairperson of the GMCDP outlined the issues which led disabled people to oppose the "Artability" event.

After Ken Lumb had set the scene and tone of the day, guest speakers Anne Rae and Mandy Collieran took the stage and they certainly didn't pull any punches in their talks.

Anne articulated perfectly the grave reservations that many disabled people have about using 'the arts as therapy'. (See Appendix 1 - Some Notes from the Conference - Sunday, 27th March, 1988.)

Mandy Collieran outlined the battles that disabled people in Liverpool had had to endure in order to seize and maintain control of their own organisation - Arts Integration Merseyside (AIM). Mandy explained why the group had recently felt obliged to withdraw from the national SHAPE network.

*"..... because they did not conform to our principles of empowerment through the arts. But we see this as a positive move towards establishing our own identity".*

(See Appendix 1 - Some notes from the Conference - Sunday, 27th March, 1988.)

Both speakers made reference to "integration," and warned of the dangers of trying to conform to standards which had not been determined by disabled people themselves. Disabled people did not have the same access to education, training, art colleges and other arts establishments, transport etc - all the things required for a greater number of disabled people to obtain a high level of artistic skill.

## OPEN DISCUSSION

The open discussion which followed underlined the need for an established and open forum for further discussion. Many issues were touched upon, and opinions often contrasted starkly. The central debate, and a heated one at that, concerned the "integration" of artists.

Many people saw the formation of disabled-controlled groups as a form of "self-segregation". Others argued that such groups were necessary so that disabled people could decide for themselves, without outside interference, what they wanted and where they were going; integration would be achieved but on disabled people's own terms.

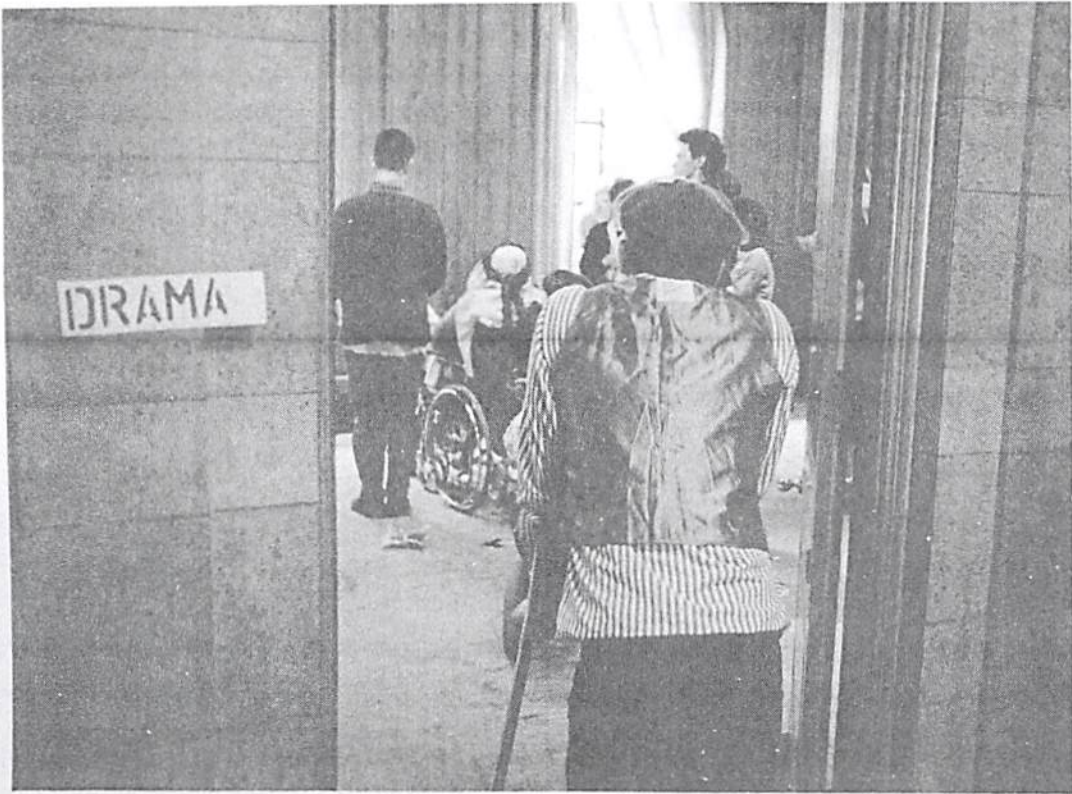
The issue was debated more fully in an afternoon workshop where, again, no consensus was reached. It's an argument that will probably go on for a long time. (See report back from the discussion groups.)

Dr Linda Moss, representing the Arts Council, defended the Council's funding policies, pointing out that this conference had been partly funded by North West Arts, and that the Graeae Theatre Company had been funded to the tune of £26,000 for a national tour and a workshop in Cumbria.

A London delegate answered this by drawing attention to the fact that Graeae, who have a "wonderful reputation amongst disabled and non-disabled people alike" had had to fight long and hard to secure that funding. Their first request had been turned down on the grounds that Graeae did not reach the Arts Council's standards of "artistic excellence".

From this discussion a feeling of unease was left in many participants' minds. The artistic merit of even Graeae, a well known company of disabled professional actors and actresses, had been called into doubt. It raised the question of what chance did isolated individuals and groups have when the "artistic excellence" of such a company is challenged.





DRAMA FOR ALL



TAKE 2



# REPORT

## BACK FROM THE DISCUSSION GROUPS

### ARE THE ARTS ACCESSIBLE?

Basically the answer was no. The conclusion of this group was that disabled people should be putting pressure on arts funding bodies and their clients to provide better access. One way in which the above could be brought about was for disabled people to strongly support existing legislation.

One suggestion that emerged from this group was the setting up of a national disabled art organisation to link up all the groups in different areas. It was thought that through such an organisation disabled people would gain strength.

### IS THERE SUCH A THING AS DISABILITY CULTURE?

Broadly speaking this group acknowledged by the end of the workshop that there is a disability culture. Culture, the group felt, came from basic facts eg. personal and collective background, experience, life style, etc. Because of their different life experiences, disabled people produced an art that could not be produced by an able bodied artist eg, art produced by blind people could not be produced by anyone other than a blind person. There was acknowledgement that we live in a multi-cultural society, eg, there is black people's culture, women's culture, etc. If the fact of disabled people's culture was acknowledged the group thought this would cultivate confidence and encourage disabled people to come out.

The group made it clear that the criteria used to judge art produced by able-bodied people cannot be used to judge art produced by disabled people, there is thus a need to set our own standards.

The group felt that disabled people needed a sense of identity to tackle issues imposed upon them by a society which on the whole does not take into consideration the needs of disabled people. Disability culture can provide this sense of identity.

### DISABLED ARTISTS/INTEGRATION OF ARTISTS

In terms of the disabled artist the group felt that the media, particularly television, never or seldom represent disabled people in everyday situations. There was also a feeling that disabled artists are seen as an embarrassment to media personnel eg advertisers and producers feel that disabled artists may frighten children. The group felt that schools should provide education about disability. Such educational provision should not only apply to children but to adults as well.

In terms of the integration of artists, two arguments ran through the discussion. On the one hand there was an argument for the establishment of the disabled artist within a culture (disability culture) working together with other disabled people. It was felt that this would provide greater common ground to practice art, to practice control, to gain confidence to operate on their (disabled people's) own terms. It was argued that this was an option which should be open to disabled people.

On the other hand, the fears raised were that disability culture could be a barrier to integration if it became too complete or too insular.



COME DANCING



The positive aspects for integration were about the building of bridges between people and establishing common ground between disabled and able bodied people. However, it was recognised that as things are at the moment, there was an inequality of power over, for example, access and resources for disabled artists- disabled people on the whole are not in a position to initiate things on their own terms.

### **ART FOR ARTS SAKE OR MUST ART BE THERAPY/REHABILITATION FOR DISABLED PEOPLE**

The group essentially condemned the use of the word "therapy" in relation to art and disabled people. The group felt that "therapy" implies rehabilitation and this should not be what art is about for disabled people.

A question of funding for art groups was raised and there were suggestions that when the word "therapy" was used in the name of a project funding was often forthcoming. The group asked why this was so? Part of the answer seemed to lie in the fact that "normally" the people who control and make decisions on resources are not disabled.

There is a danger, argued the groups, that if art is seen purely in terms of therapy then disabled people's groups might never get the funding to pursue their own arts.

### **MEDIA**

Most of the conversation centred around the representation of disabled people on TV. Everyone felt there was not enough representation. Programmes such as Coronation Street do not acknowledge the existence of disabled people. In advertising especially, disabled people are not shown as they actually are - when a wheelchair does appear, its occupant is always an able bodied person with a temporary impairment eg broken leg, the inference being that the wheelchair user will "get better."

The group felt that there was a need for TV to show society that disabled people are a part and fact of life and will always be there. It was generally felt that the way the media presents disabled people is largely due to the fact that they have virtually no contact with disabled people, as there are few disabled people employed in the media. By applying equal opportunities policies in the media the group felt this situation could be changed.

Newspapers - very similar problems were seen in the representation of disabled people in newspapers.

There was discussion about setting up a group, probably in Greater Manchester, which could give a more effective voice to disabled people in the media. There was a debate about the form such a group could take. It was felt amongst some of the group members that it was a bit odd that it was necessary for them to justify the fact that they wanted to control their own group.

### **THE WAY FORWARD - LOCALLY OR NATIONALLY**

*The following are a selection of comments from people who attended the conference.*

We need a national organisation. We need that kind of strength to promote disability issues in TV, radio, etc.

On the local level there is a need for something like a disabled arts forum in Greater Manchester. There are a lot of disabled people active in the arts.

I see that one way is to establish at a local level and then from there to go on to a national group.

Agree that a local forum would be good to see, but a lot of very careful thought is needed to make sure we start off on the right basis.

There is no point in having groups if disabled persons are not interested in joining. As a blind person it is very difficult to find out information about what is going on. Could there be a possibility of setting up say an arts line using the telephone so disabled people could find out what is going on in the NW area.

Very sad to witness a discussion which has become about organisation and structure rather than about issues.

Really important need for organisations to pass on information to other organisations and we should all get together to show a solid front as this is the only way we are going to get anything changed. One way to set it up is to use as a springboard, organisations already in existence.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO ART FUNDING BODIES

As a result of this Arts Conference and the concerns expressed by disabled people, the following recommendations are made to Art Funding Bodies.

### RECOMMENDATIONS TO FUNDING BODIES

That arts funding bodies should take positive steps to ensure that their clients (the group they fund) are:

- a) *aware of the needs of disabled people;*
- b) *are taking steps to ensure that the events they promote are accessible in all its aspects to disabled people.*

Following from (a) and (b) above, arts funding bodies should be in a position to offer appropriate training and information to their clients.

That arts funding bodies should take "positive action" to encourage disabled people to participate in their decision making structures.

That in the difficult area of judging "the arts" and what is considered to be "good artistic standards", decisions as to the "excellence" of disabled people's artistic worth should not be left purely in the hands of able bodies people, ie., disabled people should be consulted.

The arts funding bodies should take appropriate action to ensure that disabled people have the opportunity to participate in arts at all levels - administrative, performers, audience, etc.

Recommendations to the DPSG and the Equal Opportunities Committee.

### MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL'S INITIATIVE

Manchester City Council has accepted in principle the holding of a bi-annual disabled people's Arts Conference starting in 1990.

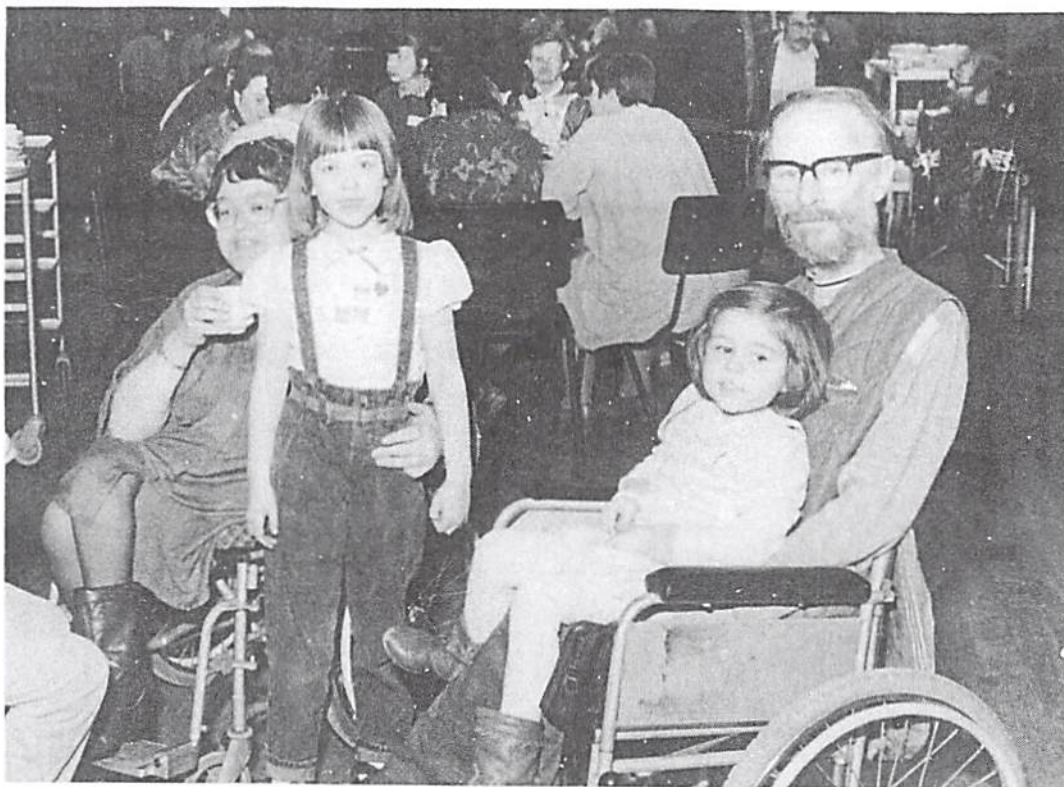
The Council has also asked the Director of Libraries and Theatres, and The Director of Art Galleries to report to a future meeting of the DPSG and the Leisure Services Committee on -

- a) *The present situation regarding disabled people and arts; and*
- b) *proposals for future improvements and action with regard to this report.*





**DOWN TO BUSINESS**



**FAMILY TIME**

# FOR OTHER ORGANISERS

## NOT A BLUE PRINT

The following is not meant to be a "blue print" which ought to be consulted and followed when organizing a disabled people's arts conference or any other event with disabled individuals in mind. However, it might be helpful to those organising similar events to be aware of the lessons learned through our experiences of organising the conference. Each individual event will present its own difficulties, issues and problems which are unique to itself and which must be surmounted before the event takes place.

From our experience of the organisation of this arts conference, it seems to us that the following must be sorted out in the progress towards the big event. Some of the points that follow may seem obvious, but we believe that they are worth mentioning.

## SUPPORT

The organising group must ensure that there is always adequate administrative support available eg., amongst other things, the task of minute taking is important. There must be adequate physical help available for individual participants in workshop or discussion groups. Consultative links with appropriate voluntary organizations should be established as early as possible.

## WORKSHOP OR STARTER COURSE LEADERS AND ORGANIZERS

It is essential that workshop or starter course leaders ensure that each individual at the conference can participate effectively in whatever is planned. This means that all activities should take account of all types of impairment.

Organisers should make every effort to ensure that no discussion group contains more than 12 people and that all discussion group leaders know exactly what their role within the discussion group is.

## ACCESS

It is absolutely essential that wherever the venue for the event is situated, physical access within is good. This means paying attention to:-

- (a) *lifts - if lifts must be used, ensure that they are of a size that wheelchair users can comfortably use.*
- (b) *ramps - ensure that ramps are of a reasonable gradient - at a minimum 1:14. Preferable gradient: 1:20*
- (c) *signs - ensure that signs giving directions are clear and in highly contrasting colours if possible.*
- (d) *ensure a good PA system is available.*
- (e) *ensure a central place where information can be obtained.*
- (f) *ensure good accessible toilets.*
- (g) *ensure the availability of a loop system and signers.*
- (h) *ensure that braille and tape information will be available.*
- (i) *ensure adequate car parking facilities.*



## WHO DO THE ORGANISERS WISH TO ATTRACT?

The event organisers should be clear as to which group of people they wish to attract. They should be careful that the format and context of the conference is not so general that it becomes a sort of 'panacea'. However, the organisers must also ensure that the conference has a broad appeal. Finding the 'right' mix can be difficult.

## DEADLINE

Organisers should specify a deadline after which no booking will be accepted. The deadline will enable organisers to fully assess the composition of the conference - ie., ratio of disabled people to able bodied people and to notify people whether their booking has been accepted or refused.

When the details of participants are known it may be necessary to call upon voluntary organisations for additional help, depending on the needs expressed by individuals.

## PEOPLE WHO HAVE NOT BOOKED A PLACE

As indicated above, organisers should set a deadline after which bookings should not be accepted. However, it often happens that individuals who have not booked a place for the conference will turn up on the day. Here we believe that organisers must be prepared to be flexible and use their own judgement. Catering arrangements should allow for this flexibility.

## CATERING

The organisers should ensure that there is a range of refreshments available - fruit drinks as well as tea and coffee. It is advisable to have refreshments (fruit drinks, tea, etc.) available throughout the event - not just at scheduled breaks in the proceedings.

## MATERIAL FOR WORKSHOPS

We have already mentioned the necessity for close liaison between organisers and workshop or taster course leaders. This working together should ensure that it is clearly known what type and quantity of material is needed for a particular workshop, who will provide it and that it will be available on the day and at the specified time.

## FUNDING

It is absolutely essential that organisers identify as early as possible who will fund the event, how much funding is needed and who will handle it - pay bills, collect information and answer questions on the budget.

## APPLICATION FORMS

Careful consideration needs to be given to the design of the application form so that the needs of the individual applicant can be identified. For example, the organisers need to know if the applicant needs a signer; vegetarian food; or support in discussion groups or workshops.

## PUBLICITY

The timing of publicity is important. At a general level a basic information mailing to as many publications as deemed necessary by the organisers is satisfactory. More in-depth articles require more information and the targeting of publications. Organisers should remember that different publications have different deadlines. These should be determined at an early stage.

Different styles of presentation should be considered from the outset - tape, braille, Ceefax, etc.

## ESCORTS

Consideration must be given to the needs of people who wish to bring an escort to the event, eg will escorts be charged an admission fee? Will catering be provided for them?

## A CHECKLIST

*Note: this list is not in any order of priority.*

1. Organisers regular meetings set the aims of the event.
2. 
 

Date	}	of conference
Time		
Venue		

  - access
  - parking
  - public transport
3. Deadline for booking place.
  - Catering; numbers/type of food
- Accommodation
  - Selection of speakers and artists
  - Size of groups
  - Helpers, interpreters, creche places, play organisers, escorts
  - facilities e.g. medical/physical
4. Publicity - Print and design, tape, braille, Ceefax, Oracle, general publications, targeted publications
5. Workshop materials, facilities.
6. Liaison with workshop leaders and between workshop leaders.
7. Discussion group - note takers
  - leaders
8. Financial and Budget Handling. Application for funding.
9. Report production, photographs, display of material from the conference, follow up.

*Note again, this check list is not in any order of priority*





TEA AND A CHAT

# AFTER THE CONFERENCE

## PARTICIPANTS' RESPONSE TO QUESTIONNAIRE

All participants received a questionnaire when they first registered for the conference. After the conference was over a further thirty participants were selected randomly and sent the questionnaire again.

Twenty six completed questionnaires and two letters in total were returned to the organisers.

Included in this Section of the report is an analysis of the questionnaires returned by participants and one of the letters received by the organisers.

## ACCESS

On the whole respondents positively stated that in terms of access, the venue was satisfactory. However, some individuals suggested that sign posting in all its aspect - parking, direction to rooms where the workshops were taking place - could have been better. One person was disappointed that only the 'cranky' lift in the old Town Hall was available for use on the Saturday night. From one of the respondent's point of view, toilet arrangements were unsatisfactory - no facilities for a person who used the toilet lying down.

## COMMENTS ON SATURDAY'S PROGRAMME

There was overwhelming agreement that Saturday's workshops and programme was satisfactory.

However, there were specific comments on some workshops. It was thought that because of the different needs of people involved in the group, difficulties were created where not all the participants could effectively take part in the workshop. There were other comments about workshops being 'high brow' or pitched too low.

## COMMENTS ON SUNDAY'S PROGRAMME

The comment on Sunday's programme was very wide ranging. By far the majority of respondents felt that the arrangements for the Sunday's discussion were satisfactory and they enjoyed the whole discussion atmosphere. The tedious issue of time allowed for discussion within workshop groups and, in particular, in the report back session was a concern for some people, they felt that the organisers did not get it 'right' and thus for them the conference fizzled out, it was incomplete.



## WHAT WOULD YOU IMPROVE?

There were many suggestions as to areas - facilities that could have been improved:-

1. Smoking - there should have been a separation between smokers and non-smokers. This is specifically related to catering arrangements.
2. Cabaret - more disco as mentioned previously.
3. Availability of fruit drinks as mentioned previously.
4. More helpers.
5. More vegetarian food.
6. Better sign posting.

## HOW DID YOU FIND OUT ABOUT THE CONFERENCE?

People found out about the conference in a variety of ways:-

GMCDP  
Salford Cultural Service  
Local paper  
Link programme on television  
Henshaw School for the Blind  
Friends  
College  
NWA  
Northern Shape  
Manchester Disability Forum  
Arts Line  
London Disability Arts magazine

## CONFERENCE FEES

All the respondents except 2 confirmed that the conference's fees were fair at £10 and £4 for the weekend including catering. One person suggested that the fees were too high for a disabled person coming to the conference for only one day and another thought that a disabled person in work could have afforded more.

## CATERING

By far the majority of delegates felt that the catering arrangement was 'very good' or 'excellent.' We have mentioned already about people's displeasure at the scarcity of vegetarian food and fruit drinks.

## THE FUTURE

In terms of a follow up to the conference respondents suggested a range of options:-

1. An annual event which has links with other disabled people's art organisations. The point was also made that a more formal contact should be made with people with learning difficulties.
2. The co-ordination of a disabled people's arts group to fight issues such as access to the arts, to gain control over resources and to give 'us' more leverage when seeking funds from the Art Council, for example.
3. Discussions should take place about the 'political role' of art in the disabled people's movement.
4. The setting up of a disabled people's art group in Manchester.
5. The establishment of an arts information and advice centre in the north.

It should be noted that a couple of respondents expressed the feeling that they would somehow like to see a closer working relationship between disabled people and able-bodied people.

When we directly asked the questions -

*Would you like to see an ARTS FORUM set up?*

*If so, would you like to contribute to its organisation?*

The vast majority of respondents answered YES to both questions. ALL respondents wanted information about any development of the above activities.

Overall, respondents wanted to see:

1. More contact with other art/ability groups.
2. A greater visible involvement of disabled people other than the physically impaired.
3. A more professional cabaret.
4. More 'action.'
5. More time - to discuss ideas.

As well as completed questionnaires, many appreciative letters and telephone calls were received after the Conference. One of these is reprinted below.

28th March 1988

Dear Sir

I attended your Disabled People's Arts Conference Workshops on Saturday 26th March, and found it to be both engaging and stimulating. May I also compliment you all on the wondrous Manchester Town Hall, which was a joy to behold.

As a disabled person who writes poetry, I understand how important it is to be able to express hopes, fears, frustrations, and achievements. The Arts are a very powerful medium, through which the disabled can have a voice to encourage the World to listen.

I wish you all success, especially in helping to promote positive images of disabled people, after all, the best way the abled bodied are going to understand is to show them through our art.

Yours sincerely

P.S. Please say Hello to Peter Street for me if you see him





THE POET'S CORNER

# WHAT THE PAPERS SAY

The Conference received some press coverage, below is the resulting articles.

## THE AFRICAN TIMES

### 'ART CANNOT BE LADLED ONTO DISABLED PEOPLE AS THERAPY'

More disabled people are acting on the realisation that the difficulties they face are caused by the political decisions that shape the structures of the society they live in and have to contend with day-to-day. This realisation matches that made by an increasing number of black people and women.

Anne Rae an outspoken activist within the disabled people's movement, told African Times that she believes there are parallels between the fight of both disabled people and black people to be recognised as individuals but be treated equally with the rest of society. Society either ignores discrimination against disabled and black people or it offers charity - the begging bowl dependency on others.

Neither of these are the solution. Discrimination, she said, like any other form of oppression, has to be fought by the organised political strength of its victims.

Along the corridors of Manchester City Council's Town Hall, from where the Black Sections Conference took place, Bernard Leach gave the following address to the Disabled People's Arts Conference Workshops.

See Appendix 1 - See opening of the Disabled people Arts Conference.  
- Sat, 26th March - Speech by Bernard Leach.

## LONDON DISABILITY ARTS

### DISABILITY ARTS CONFERENCE IN MANCHESTER

Two days of workshops, talking, tea-drinking and serious whooping it up happened in Manchester at the end of March. The City Council and North West Arts joined forces to fund the Conference and the power behind it was for the most part disabled people. Bernard Leach, Chair of Manchester's Disabled People's Steering Group explained the history of the Conference. An 'Artability' conference was proposed in response to the Attenborough report on 'Arts and Disabled People' in 1985. It foundered because the organisers came from the Arts establishment and concerned themselves primarily with attracting 'top names' and big funding. It was only very much later in the day that ANY disabled people were consulted. Disabled groups in Manchester were the first and they made it clear that if 'Artability' persisted in planning to use inaccessible venues, not only would they not support it, but they would quite likely picket it. The upshot was that the conference was cancelled, but the organisers let it be known MOST strongly they were upset.

This sorry tale inspired, however, a clearer understanding of how Arts and Disabled people should connect. The Arts should not be 'for the Disabled', heaped on like some sort of therapy. Rather, the Arts should belong to and involve Disabled people right from the start. That is the thinking behind this and other Conferences in the control of Disabled people.



This two day Conference was held in the cavernous warren of Manchester Town Hall. A gothic creation with preservation orders slapped all over it. Once a classic example of the 'Inaccessible Building'. However, due to the picketing pressure of the main Manchester disability groups it can now accommodate and has facilities for Disabled people. Day one was devoted to workshops. Given the sprawling nature of the venue a map and Sherpa to accompany the information pack wouldn't have gone amiss. Finding the workshop rooms unfortunately chewed into workshop time. And there is the unanswerable question of how to part people from their tea-cups. There was a large variety of workshops to choose from including painting, photography, screen-printing and keyboards. On the whole they went along well, the main problem being that some leaders hadn't designed their workshops to include everyone no matter what their disability. In one instance, for example, deaf people were asked to respond to a spoken command from someone who had their face hidden. Of course we must use each other wherever we can to be workshop leaders, but it is vital that experience of working with other Disabled people and all the extra needs which have to be taken into consideration are dealt with. Generally though, it was felt that the workshops were either too long, too short or just right!

Day Two was the actual Conference. In the morning Ken Lumb from the Manchester Coalition, Anne Rae of the London Disability Arts Forum and Mandy Collieran of Arts Integration Merseyside spoke to a vast crowded roomful of people. Subjects explored were a working definition of the word 'culture', a short history of the oppression of Disabled people and Disability Arts - a segregated or a mainstream culture?

Much pink-faced debate ensued especially around the issue of integration. Is integration acceptable if it isn't on Disabled peoples terms? Why do Disabled people need a separate space to explore their identity and culture? I shall not go into the debates now but if anyone has any strong feelings about integration and how best to achieve it please write something for DAIL.

On the whole it was a very positive weekend. There was talk of setting up a National Disability Arts Forum to link the work of all organisations and keep us in touch with that what each area is doing. Manchester expressed interest in starting their own Disability Arts Forum and the general tone of the Conference was one of communicating with each other. Here was an example of Disabled people's involvement that could have taught the 'Artability' fiasco a thing or two.

## PHOENIX ISSUE 6

### MANCHESTER DISABLED PEOPLE'S ARTS CONFERENCE

This conference took place on the weekend of 26th/27th March in Manchester Town Hall.

The conference was based on the following line of argument:-

Firstly, 'there are very few positive images of disability anywhere in our social world.' For example how many fictitious disabled people are cast as hero ... and why so few? (ED:- Ironside and the Singing Detective spring to mind. Can you think of more?)

Secondly 'as disabled people we know that it is the existing social structures and the ensuing social relationships that oppress, thwart, frustrate and deny our humanity.'

This conference then was to 'give an opportunity to disabled people within the region to say how things ought to be in one area of the social world -- art in all its aspects.'

That was the rationale behind the conference and explains the structure of the two days, Saturday was dominated by ten workshops (drama through to painting) whereas Sunday was dominated by a variety of discussion groups.

I was there but then I am a fan of the GMCDP (I have found their thinking invaluable in formulating my own approach to disability) and I am favourably pre-disposed to anything they organise.

I do not want to give an account of what went on at this Conference rather I would like to give some personal impressions ... from which you may glean what you will.

Manchester, the heart of the city centre, may not (did not) sound as if parking would be easy but it was. One street alongside the Town Hall had its parking meters wearing hoods to allow parking for disabled people, that was a first-rate start. Even better was the thoughtfulness in having a person in the street to show people the way into the Town Hall and thence the Conference proper.

Do you know Manchester Town Hall? It is years since I have been. It is a model of what can be done to provide access and facilities ... if the will be there. There is a long ramp, doubling back to itself to provide a suitably gentle gradient. The ramp has handrails both sides and set at two levels (for wheelchair and ambulant users) and halfway, where the long ramp doubles back on itself, there are pull-down seats. All this is done so it does not seem out of keeping with a building built, I assume, with money from the cotton mills. (Inside there are excellent toilet facilities.)

So what of the conference itself? My main impression is of the good-will, the determination to get things done, to shape the future better than the past.

This is not to say everything was perfect. Sometimes the discussions were so circular I wondered if we were trapped inside some evil spell. The majority of people looked drab; jeans, muted dull colours. But of course there is a reason why they dress like students ... poverty. I would guess ninety percent of the people at the conference were unemployed. Crushing, grinding poverty. I was in a drama workshop, working with the man next to me, inventing people, putting them into imaginary situations. His world, real and imaginary, was of giros gone astray, his setting was the grim offices of social services. This poverty is more than a lack of money it has become a way of life that impoverishes the imagination.

Then I remember the woman from the Arts Council, an able bodied woman in charge of Arts Council provision for disabled people. No matter how well she argued, how strenuously she defended her position, most eloquent was her being able bodied. Her very presence shrieked to us 'the Arts Council are doing things FOR us' – the Arts Council are so lacking in tact and insight they appoint an able bodied person to have charge of our art allocation. We were affronted, insulted ... the atmosphere darkened.

The conference was the first time I have seen a mass of disabled people in control over events (events appertaining to them) and it was, simply, a good feeling. I had an overwhelming sense of having glimpsed the future ... and knowing it can be made to work — despite the crassness of the Arts Council!





**DOWN TO BUSINESS**

# THE FIRST STEP WHAT NEXT?

The first step has been taken in trying to bring to reality the overwhelming support at the conference to establish a disabled people's art forum or something of that nature in The Greater Manchester region.

On Thursday, 4th of August, a meeting took place amongst individuals who were present at the Arts Conference and who were interested in the idea of setting up a disabled people's Arts forum - information centre. After some lengthy discussions the group decided to seek funds so that representatives from established organisations e.g. London Disability Arts Forum, could be invited to speak to them on the topic of how they went about establishing themselves. The group also thought it was sensible and prudent at this time that they should make contact with other disabled people's arts groups from around the region.

As soon as funding can be found the group will be meeting to set in motion the ideas indicated above.





## **THE OPENING OF THE DISABLED PEOPLE'S ARTS CONFERENCE - SAT 26TH MARCH - SPEECH BY BERNARD LEACH**

### **Welcome**

As chair of Manchester City Council's Disabled People's Steering Group (DPSG), I would like to welcome you to these two days of Arts Workshops and Conference. I am sure it is going to be an exciting two days - both a celebration and, hopefully, the start of something big for Disabled People's Arts in the North West.

### **Background**

Many of you will be familiar with the growth of the disabled people's movement in this country. There has been awareness amongst disabled people that our issues are just as much about discrimination and lack of opportunity as those which gave rise to the black people's and women's movements.

In the last few years, things have really started to happen. Disabled people have realised that disability is a political issue, which means that we must get together to organise to get resources and to gain control over our own organisations. This last point is important because organisations for disabled people (rather than organisations of disabled people) still have tremendous power, both politically and economically.

Typical of this trend in Manchester has been the foundation of the Greater Manchester Coalition of Disabled People by disabled people and the setting up of the DPSG as part of Manchester City Council's equal opportunities initiative. The DPSG, as the result of pressure by local disabled people, consists of representatives from disabled-controlled organisations only. Any such local organisation is entitled to send a delegate to the DPSG. It has been by no means easy to ensure that the DPSG is representative of disabled people, but strenuous efforts have gone into contacting those groups (eg: the deaf community) who were not represented initially.

I think it's fair to say that through the DPSG, disabled groups in Manchester have had a significant effect on City Council policies. Already £2m has been spent on improving access and another £1m is budgeted this year, despite the Council being rate-capped. It has been a struggle, we even had to picket inaccessible conferences being held at the Town Hall. But the politicians have begun to realise that disabled people being denied access to buildings, jobs, or the arts is just as much a form of discrimination as, for example, the infamous Clause 28 of the Local Government Bill is against the Gay community.

### **The Conference**

'The Arts' too can be insulated from what goes on around. 'Arts and Disability' must have seemed a fairly safe combination when the idea of an 'Artability' conference was proposed a couple of years ago. Artability arose out of the 1985 Attenborough report on 'Arts and Disabled People'. The conference foundered because the organisers were from the Arts establishment, they got carried away with their own ideas about attracting 'top people' (and funding). Only at the last minute did they realise that they had failed to sufficiently involve disabled people's organisations.

So when, late in the day, disabled groups in Manchester (where it was planned to hold the conference) were consulted, we made it clear that if Artability persisted in planning to use inaccessible venues, not only would we not support them, but we would quite likely picket it. The upshot was, that the conference was cancelled.

At this, the full fury of the Arts establishment was unleashed. I personally received some very unpleasant phone calls from people whose pet schemes 'for the disabled' were now without their showcase, and from bigwigs who said disabled people 'would lose millions' because of what we were doing.



Out of this mess however, several positive developments emerged. Most importantly is the realisation that the Arts cannot somehow be ladled onto disabled people as some kind of therapy, but as the title of this conference states it is disabled people's arts, that is belonging to and involving disabled people right from the start.

That's the thinking that lies behind this conference and workshops which have been planned and developed by disabled people's organisations together with North West Arts, who have been enormously helpful and supportive. The weekend is split into workshops today and the conference tomorrow. The workshops are for you to sample, join in and enjoy. The conference is for the discussion and exchange of ideas (and to enjoy as well!). Let's hope the weekend is stimulating and leaves you wanting more. If this is the case, then it is up to us to ensure that in the future we will be able to look back at this weekend as a major stimulus to developing a disabled people's arts movement in the North West.

Thank you.

Bernard Leach

## **SOME NOTES FROM THE CONFERENCE - SUNDAY, 27TH MARCH, 1988**

### **Ken Lumb**

Ken Lumb from the GMCDP was chair person for the day. Ken explained why the GMCDP and disabled people in general opposed the Artability Conference.

From the Artability perspective, he argued, art was regarded as a health and therapy issue, 'a pick me up for disabled people'. Ken suggested that what the whole 'Artability' episode demonstrated was that disabled people's groups around the country had become strong enough to oppose events such as 'Artability'. Disabled people were able to think more clearly about the involvement they wanted for themselves.

### **Anne Rae - London Disability Arts Forum**

Anne Rae made the following points:-

#### *1. Disabled People's Culture :-*

Anne argued that historically culture is one way in which people decide how 'they should live and how other people should view the way they live. Generally, disabled people have had no way to express how society affects them personally. Art as 'therapy' at best is a way to get into the art world for disabled people, at worst it is a way for the professionals to see the work we do and define our state of mind. This is not acceptable and should be rejected.'

#### *2. History:-* Anne spoke about the history of disabled people.

'We have got a history - this has still got to be discovered and written up but I am convinced we need to write up our own history because any person coming into the movement needs a point from which to work. You cannot start a journey in the middle as you don't know where you have come from or where you are going to.' Anne suggested that prior to the Industrial Revolution disabled people had a place in the community - in society as a whole. With industrialization people had to show their use, machinery was not designed with the disabled person in mind, the family unit became smaller and the disabled person was gradually pushed into institutions. The phenomenon of disabled people moving out of institutions only began two decades ago. Anne went on to say that it would not be extreme to argue that if we (the impaired) were able bodied people in another country we would be considered under house arrest. 'People have been condemned by society - accused of no crime - just for having a disability', said Anne.

'We have to fight this and we have to understand ourselves and what we are all about. It is very easy to sit here and say we don't need the disability movement as we are free to be here today, but we should fight for those who cannot be here. In the last few years care in the community has been talked about, but there is no such thing as there are no resources. It is very frightening. All of us have a responsibility to find out about our history and find out where we all come from'.

#### *3. Disabled People's Art:-*

Anne spoke about disabled people's arts and mainstream arts. 'Disabled people's arts is part of mainstream arts and that should create no problems. The only problem is when our arts are being judged by able-bodied people's criteria. Disability politics are a way of bringing us up to the same level as everyone else and to gain us access to training and education e.g. drama, schools, T.V. training, etc.' Anne continued by suggesting that no-one has a right to suggest that disabled people have no place in able-bodied people's theatre. What is needed is for disabled people to get together and to start working out fundamental principles.

Anne finished her address by suggesting that it is very important for us to get together, perhaps forming a 'Northern Disability Arts Group' and after that a 'National Disability Arts Group'. It is only through such groups that we gain strength because as isolated and small groups throughout the country we are very vulnerable.



'The establishment of some sort of representative body would make us legitimate. People like the Arts Council would have to take notice of a disabled arts group. It is so important that we recognise that what is happening here today has to be taken further, we must exchange experiences, information and just generally be together and be given the time to discuss the systems which affect us,' Anne said.

## **Mandy Colleran - Arts Integration merseyside (AIM)**

Mandy Colleran from AIM spoke of her organisation. Originally AIM was part of the SHAPE organisation. AIM has a Users Committee which means that participants in events are also organizers. AIM also has an Executive Committee consisting of five disabled people.

AIM is no longer part of the SHAPE network.

Mandy argued that artistic expression is one way that all human beings have of exploring and understanding the way they fit into the society in which they live.

Mandy saw disability culture as a part of our society - we are by our very nature part of a multi-cultured society.

'What we produce should not be considered second rate. We have just as many talents and basically all we need is the opportunity to display them.'

'What we produce is strong and meaningful to us', said Mandy. 'We must recognise the strengths we have as disabled people, but if we are ever going to have a rightful place, not just in the arts, but in the whole body of society, we have to know who we are before we can demand our rights, and it is only by getting together and exploring these issues that we can find out about ourselves. Society will be sitting up and taking notice because we are not going to sit and be quiet. We are a human resource which is being totally wasted'.

Mandy pointed out that 'disability is something that is created', e.g. lack of access.

## **Ken's - summing up**

Ken Lumb pointed out the necessity for disability arts organisations to communicate with each other on a local, regional and national basis. It will take some time for groups to be formed and for such networks of communication to be established, but this will eventually come, Ken believes.

Ken looked towards expanding representation and having the control ourselves. Many changes were needed and all kinds of things need to be done. 'However, we can celebrate our own achievements' said Ken.

Ken thanked everyone for their participation in making the event a success.

## **'A PEOPLE WITHOUT A HISTORY IS LIKE A TREE WITHOUT ROOTS'**

### **QUOTABLE QUOTES**

'We have got a history - this has still to be discovered and written up, but I am convinced we need to write up our own history, because any person coming into the movement needs a point from which to work. You cannot start a journey in the middle as you don't know where you have come from or where you are going to'.

'All of us have responsibility to find out where we all come from.'

'We need to show society what we are capable of and need to use Art to celebrate disability.'

'We need to say quite clearly, that we want access to education, drama schools etc. Disabled people themselves should say, this is where we start from'.

Anne Rae - Disabled People's Arts Conference  
26th/27th March, 1988.

*'Disabled Culture has in no way impaired their (disabled people) ability to communicate with the able bodied'*

**Comment of a representative from Shape.**

*'What we produce should not be considered second rate. We have just as many talents and basically all we need is the opportunity .....'*

*'I actually see disabled culture as largely a part of our society - we are by our very being part of a multi-cultural society'.*

**Mandy Collieran (AIM)**

*'..... Important to recognise able bodied are not necessarily against disability culture itself ..... All disabled artists do not see themselves as disabled but as professional artists'.*

**Representative from the Arts Council**

**Anonymous**

'What I did say was that disabled people have to judge for themselves what their own standards are. Nobody in this room would apologise for what we do and what our standards are.'

'I will be so happy when disabled people can drop the phrase 'I am being allowed'. I am sick of being 'allowed' and not having my rights to do things.'

'I have a hearing impairment - I found that this particular conference and the workshops yesterday did not come up to standard. I am very keen on drama, but I find the activities happening do not let people act in their own way.'



## APPENDIX 3

1. New Collins Concise Dictionary.
2. Concise Oxford Dictionary.
3. 'Backlash - disabling the able' by Mitchel Bishop in British Journal of Special Education volume 14 no.3.
4. Arts and Disabled People - The Attenborough Report published in 1985 by Bedford Sq/NCVO.
5. Provisional programme for the 'Artability' conference.
6. The DPSG is part of the committee structure of Manchester City Council. The members of the steering group includes some Councillors from the Equal Opportunities Committee but most of the representatives are from organisations that are controlled by disabled people.

The DPSG function is to provide an 'expert' view from disabled people on the Council's plan and policies from all departments and to inform the Councillors of initiatives that could be taken.