Editorial

Think Carefully! We Love Our Children. They Are The Pride Of Our Future.


CAP's theme for 1987 is "Youth and Unemployment". According to unofficial estimates, between three and five million South African workers are presently unemployed.

Unemployment, poor housing, overcrowding, poverty, malnutrition and lack of recreational facilities have serious effects on family life.

Children especially suffer under such conditions.

All South Africans are part of the same social and political structure whereby some get richer while others get poorer.

All children need homes, security, food, parental love and recreational facilities. They need the space to express themselves and how they feel about the time and place in which they live. They need to be able to involve themselves in cultural activities; in drawing, dancing, painting, music, acting.

Children's art is just as important as adult's art, both for the children and for what it says.

Second Quarter

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Note: Opinions expressed in the newsletter are not necessarily those held by CAP.
Mi Hlatshwayo:

Mi Hlatshwayo, a poet and playwright from Durban, recently visited CAP while in Cape Town.

His poems appear in Black Mamba Rising, a recently published collection of poetry by three well-known worker poets in Natal.

Mi came to see the work being done at CAP and was asked to lead an informal discussion on the role of culture and cultural workers in the struggle.

He began by reading two poems. In discussing the poems he said people needed not only to condemn what was happening now, but also to work towards a new South Africa.

"Culturally this means putting out a new vision of a new generation," he said.

For Mi, the struggle is like a tree and culture is its foundation, its roots. Without strong roots the leaves would not be green and the fruit would be sour, he said.

If we don't do our work right now, the struggle will not bear fruit, he said. This is the responsibility and challenge I am trying to impress on cultural workers, he added.

"Culture is a very powerful way of enhancing our struggle," but "for culture to be relevant it has to assert the concerns of the majority of the people - who are oppressed and exploited," Mi said.

"Any cultural act, while it can draw from many traditions, has to embody those concerns," he said.

When asked what he felt about the cultural boycott, Mi said: "If cultural workers are organised on a national level there should be no tensions about who should go overseas and who should stay behind".
cultural worker

Mi Hlatshwayo was one of the central organisers of the Durban Workers Cultural Local. Here is an excerpt from a talk given by the Durban Workers Cultural Local in 1985.

"Why do we believe cultural work has an important role to play in the workers' struggle?

Because, even if we are culturally deprived as workers, we demand of ourselves the commitment to build a better world. Because we cannot abdicate, hand over the responsibility of this world to others. There are too many intellectuals, teachers, politicians and bosses everready to 'civilize' us and reap all the harvest for themselves. Because we have been culturally exploited time and time again: we have been singing, parading, boxing, acting and writing within a system we did not control. So far, black workers have been feeding all their creativity into a culture machine to make profits for others... it is time to begin controlling our creativity: we must create space in our struggle - through our own songs, our own, slogans, poems, artwork, plays and dances. At the same time, in our struggle we must also fight against the cultural profit machines. We must conquer: yes. But our struggle is not there only to destroy institutions of oppression. It is there to build new ones embodying our principles of democracy, of unity and of our new world."

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WHY ART?

Quotes from full-time art students

Art is a necessary thing because it is part of the human.

When you do art you can expose a lot of happenings in life that other people can't see.

It is nonsense to say artists are not politicians.

Art is a weapon.

Art fits into the political and human rights struggle.

Murals are a very good way to communicate with people.

Art is a gift.

I'm doing art because I have talent in art.

Art is something that when you are gifted like myself, you can't reject that part of yourself.

Our lives are political, we are in a political situation. As an artist you have the consciousness that comes from your life, your background, your culture, your society. Automatically you express that pain and anger in your art.
CHILDERN’S ART

The Children's Art section at CAP ran a workshop for people wanting to learn various skills to run art workshops for children.

This was the first such workshop held at CAP and it took place on the Easter weekend.

Themes that emerged were the importance of stimulating children's imaginations and of providing a variety of experiences involving the physical, intellectual and emotional aspects of children.

The 18 participants explored ways of making art from a large variety of cheap or waste materials.

Participants included several members of the Bishop Lavis Action Committee, a teacher from Khayelitsha, two teachers from Cape Mental Health, a member of the Mitchells Plain art group, two voluntary workers at Bonnietown Place of Detention.

Two trainee art teachers from CAP and several people who were involved in or were starting up children's groups in their communities were also involved.

Each person had the opportunity to express their own creativity and get ideas about how to give children similar experiences.

The group painted a mural, played non-competitive games which emphasised group involvement, made puppets and produced a puppet show for local Woodstock children.

They also made simple musical instruments which they played as a group, made clay pots and had a drama workshop.

The activities were co-ordinated by people experienced in teaching children in schools or workshop situations.

The session ended with an assessment in which the need for further workshops of its kind was expressed. It was suggested these could take the form of one-day workshops focussing on a particular activity and perhaps involving children in a practical workshop situation.

WINTER SCHOOL

The Children's Art section at CAP is running a week-long course in how to give art workshops for children.

This is a follow-up to the Easter weekend workshop and is taking place from June 22 to 26 at CAP.
From the United Nations Declaration of Children's Rights

All children have the right to a name, enough food to eat and a decent place to live. All children should be looked after when they are sick and have a right to grow up with love, affection and security.

Handicapped children have a right to special treatment and education. All children have a right to free education and should be protected from neglect, cruelty and exploitation. All children should not be made to work before a certain age and should be protected from discrimination.

All children should never have to fear arrest and detention and should be brought up to understand that their energy and talents should be devoted to the service of their brothers and sisters.
Interview with MAMPHELA RAMPHELE

"GIVEN THE DARKNESS OF THE HOUR IN WHICH WE WALK HISTORICALLY, ART MAKES THE FUTURE LOOK BRIGHTER"

Art was one area of activity which could contribute in dealing with the immense problems facing South Africa, said Mamphela Ramphele. Dr Ramphele, together with Francis Wilson, has proposed the setting up of a Children's Institute to help counter the brutalisation of children in South Africa.

Talking about the role of art in combatting the escalating repression and violence, she said no activity could be seen in isolation. The "immensity of the problem" called for "multiple strategies", she said.

Children who did creative work tended also to approach problem-solving in a creative way, Dr Ramphele noted.

Dr Ramphele is senior research officer in Social Anthropology at the University of Cape Town and is concerned with community health.

The proposal for the Children's Institute is made in a report called "Children in South Africa" which was written for the United Nations Children's Fund.

"The problems which impinge upon our children especially call for creative approaches," she said.

Art brightens our environments and is also a form of self-expression. By giving concrete form to people's creative forces, by channeling the normal energy in children, which otherwise can become destructive, children can paint their anger and frustration, they can put it out there and confront it, Dr Ramphele said.
She stressed the importance of stimulating creativity in very young children "because once they have developed their artistic awareness they do not lose it" while in older children it might be more difficult to awaken a love of art.

"For any person to create something, in itself, has a healing effect because it concretises the fact that all of us have a creative force."

In South Africa children "are being socialised in a violent culture in which their needs are largely unmet."
Lack of creche and pre-school facilities, poor housing, poverty, racism - the whole environment in which children grow, robbed of parental care by the labour system - plus the impact of the political situation with all its demands on children, "has engendered a condition where children are involved in violence both as victims and perpetrators".
Lack of leisure facilities reinforced the other problems so children with nothing to do ended up doing things they otherwise wouldn't have been forced into, she said.

Against this background, every contribution helped. CAP's programmes were important, particularly the teacher training aspect with which CAP was broadening the base of its work, Dr Ramphele said. She suggested more linkage with church groups and schools in different localities.

"Under the present political set-up we don't have the resources to deal with the situation in a comprehensive way because the kind of resources needed would normally be those provided by the state, but the state doesn't care, it can only intervene with guns."

The Children's Institute could provide a forum for debate for people involved in the same area to look at the problem in a more coherent way, she felt.

"Lots of community organisations are focussing on children in Cape Town, but there is no co-ordination of their efforts and there is even hostility between them," Dr Ramphele said.

"Within the confines of organisations people develop a very myopic view of the problems they face - this is an indication of failure of analysis, because the more people get involved, the better.

"In Cape Town and in South Africa as a whole there is a sense in which people have an intolerance for different opinions. There is a purist approach to politics, as if you might be contaminated by people if you speak to them and you should be careful who you are seen to talk to," she added.

"If the work can be more effective by pooling resources, then let's do it. The role of the Institute would be to facilitate communication between groups so they can operate in a more co-ordinated rather than competitive way," Dr Ramphele said.
Eye of the Artist

Inspiring work by a group of mainly Guguletu artists, among them past and present CAP students, was exhibited at the Eye of the Artist exhibition in Guguletu.

At the opening on June 8, Dr Mandla Tshabalala talked about the artists sharing their work with their community in Guguletu.

He said the work at the exhibition was the soul of the people and therefore relevant for the people's culture. He said the work was not for individuals as commercial commodities but for the community as a whole.

Their work showed what their lives were about, which often reflected their anger and pain, he said.

The exhibition, which was initiated by a group of seven Guguletu artists; Hamilton Budaza, Sipho Hlati, Cameron Voyiya, Xolani Somana, Tom Sefako, Luthando Lupuwana and Godfrey Mpuulu, was held in link with Italian Culture '87.

Twenty two out of the 35 artists who exhibited are closely associated with CAP, either as past or present students or teachers.

Some artists, not resident in Guguletu, had contributed their work in support of the exhibition.

The group Intsikane played marimba music and poems were recited at the opening.
POEMS

AFRICA

Every time I hear the rhythm of nature
When the birds sing
Early in the morning
When the sun comes up

Every time I hear
Lonely music
Which the bird sings
When the sun goes down

Every time I see
Children dancing on the pavement
and I hear the rhythm of their hands

African rhythms
which hear when the grass sings
when the wind blows

Every morning when
I comb my hair
I hear clashes of comb
and my hair
which makes
African rhythm

David Hlongwane

ORGANIZING THE LITERARY FESTIVAL

Everybody here is so polite
so quiet
they're tight upright
heads at delicate angles
mouthing clever words
devoid of any passion

Everybody here is so polite
they argue blandly
about genteel aspects of literature
and how to bring
such weighty matters
closer to the people.
They clear their throats
to speak in turn and humbly
beg for pardon
if any earnest word squeaks out
before another has soft spoken

Everybody here is so polite
that I feel if I should
burp or sneeze, or do something
physically completely natural,
they would fall apart
and faint
or even worse,
pretend it never happened.
But no-one here
would yell or screech:
Sis! you filthy little beast!

And so I sit
imprisoned
by their manners
stifled by their sidelong stares
and silenced
by their wordy heads

Mavis Smallberg
November 1986
ONE DAY IN MAY

May I plea you to recognise
my human currency

I can sit, stand, eat, drink and sleep
When a new day is dawning
I reckon anything can happen

It is the concept of life that man
must sweat a brow
It is the concept of an ideology
to capitalise
Heyi ungandixeleli
It is the concept of man ukuqinis amasende
to survive
If you don't, you stand face to face
Pack and voetsek!
May, you bring us a day
or may you bring us a day?

Lungile Maninjwa
UPDATE ...

...update on last year's full-time art students

David Hlongwane is teaching art to children and teenagers at Luyolo Centre in Guguletu. He is assisting Hamilton Budaza there. He is also setting up other venues where he will be able to teach art in Khayelitsha.

He has continued with his own work and is busy on an oil painting dealing with "ancestors and God".

"I learnt a lot from my two year course at CAP and now I am trying to express in that painting the lack of communication between people who believe in ancestors and people who believe in God. I believe that ancestors and God are parts of the same thing," he said.

Robert Siwangaza has been spending time in Worcester where he has been giving art workshops to children three times a week in a church hall. He has also been working twice a week with two self-taught, established artists in the hall. He has been doing mainly watercolours and graphics.

Other work has been making charts and doing drawings for lower-primary school teachers.

He has sold some of his artwork to people in the townships and is also busy with a correspondence writing course.

Billy Mandindi is studying art further at Michaelis. He is also teaching children painting and pottery at CAP once a week.

He is also writing poetry and making visual learning aids for people learning English at Masifundisca in Langa and Observatory.

Eunice Sefako and Sophie Peters are both still at CAP. They are involved in the teacher training programme in which they are learning methods and techniques of teaching art to children.
Writing creatively

The Creative Writing group has been working with music, rhythm and clay this quarter.

In one of the workshops, people explored rhythm with Philip Nangle who teaches percussion at CAP. This resulted in some very strong rhythmical poetry and songs which were passed on to the music group.

The music group has already put one song to music and will play it on June 13 at the CAP-IN-PROGRESS open day.

The Creative Writing group has also worked on the open day theme of "Youth and Unemployment", using found objects and clay to explore their feelings and ideas about the theme. These sculptures created concrete images from which people could write and very rich and unusual writing came out of the exercise.

The group is working to produce a "group poem" from the writing they did on this theme.
INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S DAY

Between five and six thousand children from various Cape Town communities, mainly the townships, went to the Bellville Teachers Training College to celebrate International Children's Day on June 6.

The event was organised by Molo Songololo and Upbeat magazines as well as CAP and other community and resource organisations involved with children.

There were art, drama and music workshops, food stalls and performances.

CAP-IN-PROGRESS

CAP students are displaying their work to the public on June 13 at a mini-Open Day titled CAP-IN-PROGRESS.

Much of the work is centred around CAP's 1987 theme of "Youth and Unemployment".

There will be open workshops and demonstrations in poster-making, drawing, pottery, ceramics, lino-cut, etching, music, drama, poetry and children's activities.

Yoga Day

The CAP Yoga group held a Yoga Day on 16 May.

John Evans, an experienced yogi, was invited by the two yoga teachers, John Weinberg and Tom auf der Hyde, to give a session in postures and breathing.

This was followed by a bring and share meal in the afternoon.

Two of the students Elizabeth Linsell and Rachelle Feldman, said they hoped there would be further such days at CAP where students could get together and expand their knowledge.

They said they had learnt how to improve their breathing and methods of relaxation especially by using the exhalation breath to release tension.
Mission Statement

The CAP Management Committee, which felt the need to further clarify CAP's general direction, enlisted the help of an outsider to look at goals, strengths and weaknesses of the organisation.

During a full two-day workshop held at a borrowed cottage in Simonstown, Tony Morphet led the group through a carefully structured debate on CAP's purpose in South Africa now.

Tony, who works at the Adult Education Centre at the University of Cape Town has had experience in this and led the Funda Art Centre in Johannesburg through a similar workshop.

The aim of the debate was to get each member of the committee to agree on a "mission statement" which would clarify both CAP's purpose and direction.

Areas looked at included opportunities, threats, strategies and effective management needed for CAP to achieve its goals and fulfill its mission.

This was the statement the Management Committee finally agreed on:

CAP's mission is to train cultural workers by participating in building the growing cultural movement and developing and supporting grassroots cultural activities.

The committee would be interested in hearing any feedback anyone may have to offer.

New co-ordinator

CAP has been interviewing people for the position of project co-ordinator.

The post was advertised in several newspapers and by sending notices to many other organisations.

Trish de Villiers, who has been in this position, will be moving over to setting up the new media training project during the second half of the year.
CAP CALENDAR

International Children's Day - June 6

Cap-In-Progress - June 13

Eye of the Artist Exhibition - June 8 - 12

Winter School - June 22 - 26

Beginning of third quarter - July 6

General Meeting - July 25

End of third quarter - September 11