The Community Arts Project: legacies and limitations of an arts centre

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The Community Arts Project (CAP) is widely acknowledged for its impact on arts education in South Africa, particularly for black artists in Cape Town. It was a multi-faceted and multi-disciplinary initiative that over time came to focus on the visual and performing arts, as well as on what it termed ‘media’. CAP played many roles, often simultaneously, some of which were relatively sustained or intermittently recurring, others associated with specific periods. Sometimes these various functions, and the individuals and personalities associated with them, complemented each other. However, the pressures on the Project to serve a wide range of interests also meant that CAP was often a deeply contested site, with significant internal tensions. What follows is an attempt to provide a narrative account of the organisation from its inception in the 1970s through to its closure three decades later. As an overview it is strongly biased towards the visual arts. It also focuses on the apartheid period when the organisation was most active and produced its best-known work. Through this account, I aim to highlight a few key observations concerning the extent to which the donor funding of the project both facilitated and limited the work of CAP as an arts centre.

Early days — CAP in Mowbray (1977–1982)

CAP grew out of concerns about the lack of arts facilities for Cape Town’s black communities, along with the need to create dialogue and interaction across the racial and class divides. Its birth was spurred on by the urgent need for artists to respond to the events of June 16th, 1976. The organisation was formally registered as a Trust in 1977, and opened its doors to

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1 This is a revised version of an essay that was originally commissioned for Hidden Histories: the impact of South African community art centres in the 1970’s, 1980’s and 1990’s, to be published by the Bag Factory during 2020/2021.
2 This account draws substantially on archival press-clips and newsletters that ASAI has published online, see https://asai.co.za/peoplesculture/community-arts-project-cap/ I have also drawn on my personal experience working for CAP in the 1990s.
4 The Soweto Uprisings are widely regarded as one of the major turning points in the struggle against apartheid.
the public in Mowbray, Cape Town. The organisation began its life with no funding, save R700 that had been sourced from the defunct Artists’ Gallery, an earlier attempt by Cape Town’s professional artists to exhibit and sell their work on a co-operative basis.

The early CAP was a membership-based organisation, with nominal fees and bursaries ensuring access to a broad range of constituents. Members played a central role in determining the nature and range of activities, with voluntarism a strong feature. Situated in a white suburb, directly opposite the police station, but also at a busy transport junction that serviced the Cape Flats, the centre was accessible to diverse groupings. A press cutting

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5 The early trustees represented a range of interests, indicative of its genesis. These included members of the University of Cape Town’s (UCT) Michaelis School of Fine Art, the South African Council for Higher Education (SACHED), the South African Institute of Race Relations, and the church. The early trustees appear to have not been particularly active in the organisation. Exceptions include UCT’s Peggy Delport and Gavin Younge, who were active in the early years.
from December 1977 claimed that CAP had 600 paid up members, of whom 150–200 were considered active. In June 1979 an article in the magazine *Fair Lady* claimed 800 members. By November 1981, 2,500 people had paid their one Rand membership. Early activities included theatre, mime, creative writing, music, sculpture, printmaking, weaving, super 8 film-making, photography, and lunch-time films. Classes ran mostly in the evenings and on weekends, but the centre was also busy during the day. Children’s classes were also an important feature. Overall, emphasis was on ‘learning by doing’ and self-expression. Throughout the organisation’s history there would be a tension between informal, responsive initiatives and a more structured approach to delivery. Funded with small grants from church groups as well as from fees, within a year the Project was able to appoint its first staff members, albeit for a limited period. Derek Joubert, who led the mime group, was appointed organiser in 1979, the year that CAP ran the first of its intermittent Winter School programmes, directed at schoolchildren, mostly from the townships.

A key element within CAP’s early structure was its appointment of a resident artist. Resident artists were important exponents of the ‘learning by doing’ ethos, since they stimulated and sustained attendance of workshops through their presence and example. The first was Mpathi Gocini, a printmaker from Langa who had studied at the art centre at Rorke’s Drift, a rural setting in the (then) Natal Province. He was followed by Bongani Shange, a sculptor and printmaker who was also a graduate of Rorke’s Drift. The Rorke’s Drift connection was important for CAP, and more broadly for Cape Town. Lionel Davis, who joined the organisation shortly after serving a sentence for political activities, went to study there. In 1980, Shange went to study sculpture in Florence, funded by the Italian Embassy in Cape Town. The following year, Hamilton Budaza, who had joined the project as a student in 1978, went to Rome to study graphics and sculpture. On his return Budaza would take up the resident artist position for several years.

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9 These were initially taught by UCT’s Patricia Pierce-Atkinson.
10 Dimitri Fanourakis, a former UCT fine arts graduate and photography lecturer at Michaelis, served as coordinator for one year. He was assisted by Donald Parenzee, later active in the Congress of South African Writers. Their successor, Christine Walters, served in a voluntary capacity.
12 Shange was incidentally a nephew of Sydney Kumalo, the sculptor associated with Cecil Skotnes at the Polly Street art centre.
13 As did Velile Soha, who was associated with the Nyanga Art Centre. The links between CAP and the Nyanga Art Centre were strong in the late 1970s and early 1980s, and were influential in popularising linocut printmaking in Cape Town.
The growth of the Project was frustrated by restrictions on the number of people who were allowed to be on the premises at one time. This was due to the building being declared a fire-risk by the City. As a result, whole sections of the large warehouse could not be used and activities were confined to one open space. While the fire-threat was probably legitimate, it may also have been a convenient method of curtailing the activities of CAP. Certainly the attitude of the authorities appears to have been ambivalent. CAP was promised the use of an abandoned school in Observatory but this offer was reneged on, only months before the Project was due to vacate its premises. One can also point to a lack of funding from the City, despite fairly frequent and positive media coverage of CAP.  

One should also note a growing radicalism within the Project. In 1979 members decided to reject funding from the Urban Foundation, an initiative by big business to build a black middle-class as a strategy towards diffusing the threat of a black revolution. In 1980 members began rewriting the constitution, shifting CAP away from the liberal orientation of its founding Trust Deed towards a more participatory and empowering community organisation.

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14 Earlier, by-laws were used to order CAP to remove a mural painted on its exterior.


CAP moved to the old St Philips Church in Woodstock in March 1982.16 The building was in a serious state of disrepair and it took much effort on the part of members to get it into an optimum condition. Re-establishing CAP was aided by a three-year grant of R70,000 from the German Evangelical Churches and an equipment grant of R10,000 from Anglo-American that enabled the purchase of a kiln, facilitating the development of pottery and ceramic sculpture at CAP.

A broad and active membership continued to be a feature of the Project.17 One of the Project’s most celebrated events took place in 1982, when artist Manfred Zylla invited the public to *Inter-Actions*. Zylla had produced nine large-scale realistic drawings of security personnel, which were drawn, painted, and written on by participants, accompanied by the live performance of a local reggae band, playing within a cage.18

16 The site had earlier been used for art classes that were attended by, among others, Peter Clarke, Albert Adams and Louis Maurice.


18 Zylla also taught printmaking at CAP in the 1980s. A video recording of the event can be found on [https://asai.co.za/peoplesculture/community-arts-project-cap/](https://asai.co.za/peoplesculture/community-arts-project-cap/). The catalogue documenting the event was banned. Manfred Zylla, *Inter-Action: a public event.* (Cape Town, 1982).
It was also in 1982 that CAP played an active role in organising participation in the *Culture and Resistance Festival* in Gaborone. As a direct consequence of this event, commonly credited with popularising the notions of the cultural worker and of ‘culture as a weapon of struggle’, a poster workshop was set up at Chapel Street. Among those central to this process were Jon Berndt, Trish de Villiers and Lionel Davis. With increased political activity in the Western Cape, the United Democratic Front having being launched in Mitchells Plain in 1983, the new unit soon realised that it had to shift its focus from producing posters for community and political events towards training members of community organisations to produce their own media.19

The engagement with community organisations extended beyond the poster workshop. In 1983 outreach programmes for children were started in the townships,20 and a textile cooperative was established for local women in Crossroads. The same year, CAP organised

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20 These workshops began in Guguletu, Langa, Bishop Lavis and Mitchells Plain, and spread to many more areas until 1993 when this service was curtailed.
a *Festival of Black Theatre*, with performances featuring various groups staged in churches and community halls in the townships.\(^{21}\) CAP’s facilities were also used for meetings of political organisations.\(^{22}\)

Alongside the more overtly political functions of CAP, Chapel Street was slowly developing into an art school. Cecil Skotnes, who began teaching at CAP in the last years at Mowbray, was central to this process. In 1983 exhibitions were organised at the South African Association of Arts in Worcester, and the Gowlett Gallery in Cape Town. Another exhibition with artists from CAP and the Nyanga Art Centre was held the following year at the South African Institute of Race Relations’ shop in Rondebosch. Among those who exhibited in these early shows were Hamilton Budaza, Fuad Adams, Ishmael Thyssen, and Vania Holt.\(^{23}\)

CAP’s photographers also began to make their mark at this time. In 1984 Jenny Altschuler, Pam Warne and Costa Christie exhibited documentary photographs of street children at St

\(^{21}\) The Festival was in Nyanga, Crossroads, Guguletu, Langa and Mitchells Plain. CAP’s performances at this time were not limited to its centre and township venues. In 1983 CAP performed a workshopped play *The Great South African Circus* at the People’s Space in Long Street. In the same year the mime group took *Die Grootbaas* to the Grahamstown Festival.

\(^{22}\) Such as the United Women’s Organisation and the Congress of South African Students.

\(^{23}\) Holt became the third (and last) CAP student to receive funding from the Italian Embassy to study abroad.
Georges Cathedral. CAP’s visual artists also participated in the Cape Town Festival that year.  

Full-time training began in 1984 when Mavis Taylor, Professor of Drama at UCT and chairperson of the CAP board of trustees, secured funding from the Ford Foundation for a two-year course for an eight-member drama company.  

As part of this training, plays were performed at UCT and in township venues. In 1985 Taylor’s students staged The Great South African Circus at the Market Theatre in Johannesburg. This play attracted the attention of the South African police, and the final play produced by the first full-time drama students, The Trial of Dedan Kemathi, was limited by the Publications Board to two weeks at UCT.

By the mid 1980s, the Project was increasingly benefitting from anti-apartheid funding from international sources, mostly from European churches. Full-time visual arts training was introduced in 1985. Andrew Steyn had been appointed coordinator of the visual arts.

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24 The range of spaces used by CAP, from community halls in the townships to parastatal sites (such as the South African Association of Arts and Cape Town Festival) testifies to the energy of the Project but it also reveals deeper ideological tensions between the more radical and conservative orientations in the project. These tensions would continue to play out in various ways throughout the organisation’s history. Part of the debate would centre on questions of the relative autonomy of art, and the extent to which it was inextricably linked to broader notions of struggle.

25 Taylor later founded the New Africa Theatre Project.

programmes, and under his leadership the visual arts programmes became increasingly structured.27

Police harassment intensified in the mid 1980s. In November 1985 news reports noted that over 1,000 items, many of them posters, had being seized by police, conducting their fourth raid in recent months. The growing militancy of the period can be seen in the organisation’s public response to the November raid, which they condemned as intimidatory. They also called for the end of the State of Emergency, for troops to be withdrawn from the townships, and for a unified democratic South Africa.28

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27 Skotnes was still active in the evening classes until 1986. Lucy Alexander was also active in the visual arts training. Mario Sickle was a full-time visual arts educator in the late 1980s until 1993.

Alongside the increasing emphasis on training in the visual arts, drama and poster production, CAP continued to offer a wide-range of classes and workshops, including music, creative writing, karate and yoga. Dance was also an intermittent feature, until the late 1980s. This included ballet and modern dance. The first full-time drama course had not yet succeeded in attracting funding for a second course, but continued as an important activity at CAP.

The politically directed energy of the Poster Workshop was expanding within and beyond CAP. In 1986 the full-time visual arts students produced banners for Cosatu, and the Loosely Affiliated Group’s (LAG) Jan Cheifitz and Roger van Wyk began a t-shirt printing workshop that was located in Salt River due to space constraints within the Poster Workshop. That CAP was a natural home for broader organisational activities can be seen in the involvement of CAP members and use of CAP facilities for the organisation of the *Towards a Peoples Culture Festival*, which was subsequently banned by the authorities. More conservatively, also in 1986, the full-time students exhibited at the South African Association of Arts, The South African National Gallery’s Touch Gallery and the University of Stellenbosch’s Gallery.

In June 1986 Derek Joubert left CAP, with leadership being handed to an elected committee. While this transfer of management was linked to an ongoing debate concerning the democratisation of CAP, the push for participatory democracy within the Project was increasingly in conflict with the pressures on CAP to become an educational project. The ‘art school’ tendency may have been there from the beginning, but it possessed an organic or responsive character that was increasingly being shed, as subsequent events would demonstrate.

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29 In February 1986 *The New Nation* reported that 600 students were attending classes at CAP. Anon, “This is art for the people’s sake”, *The New Nation* (13 February 1986), UCT Libraries Special Collections (BC1195. M3). A December 1986 news report put the number of part-time students at 400. Anon, “Community Arts in focus”, *Observatory News* (December 1986), UCT Libraries Special Collections (BC1195. M3). The discrepancies between figures highlight the difficulty in quantifying attendance when activities spanned relatively structured courses or programmes and event-based workshops. Also, the number of children attending classes off-site were often not factored into attendance figures.

30 David Poole, a Professor at UCT’s Ballet School was a CAP trustee. He later founded Dance for All. In February 1986 the CAP Dancemakers, a group of choreographers that included Alfred Hinkel, attracted significant attention at the Grahamstown Festival. Hinkel later co-founded Jazz Art.

31 Also in 1986, Phyllis Klotz took an all African women cast from CAP to Grahamstown to perform *Wathinta 'bafazi wathinta imbokothoo* (You strike a woman you strike a rock). Klotz would later form the Young Peoples Theatre Education Trust and was a co-founder of the Sibikwa Players.

32 There was intermittent engagement with the South African National Gallery. In 1992 CAP students participated in the SANG’s *Made in Wood* exhibition and workshop. In 1993 Emile Maurice of the SANG drew on the CAP collection for the exhibition *Picturing Our World* at the Grahamstown Festival. In 1999 CAP held a retrospective exhibition (*Water in a Dry Place*) at the SANG, and the following year CAP students exhibited *Questions of Identity* at the SANG annexe.
1987 was something of a milestone year – the Poster Workshop, along with LAG’s t-shirt workshop, moved to the newly established Community House in Salt River. Community House is a site for community organisations and trade unions, and the relocation brought the CAP Media Project, as it was now known, into closer proximity with many of the organisations it serviced. With the politically responsive Media Project increasingly autonomous, CAP at Chapel Street came increasingly to look, at least to the outside world, like a school for the visual and performing arts. However, this appearance was deceptive as the emphasis from teaching artists towards training trainers was well underway. The second full-time visual arts course that commenced in 1987 reveals the shift that was taking place. Many of the best-known CAP-trained artists, such as Billy Mandindi, Sophie Peters, Sipho Hlati, David Hlongwane, Solomon Siko and Vuyile Voyiya were among the intakes for the first two full-time courses. Noting that these classes were small (less than ten students in each of the first courses), it is instructive that all of their class mates (including Lungile Bam, Henry de Leeuw, Eunice ‘Tshidi’ Sefako, Robert Siwangaza, Zolile Kwinana and Xolani Somana produced memorable work.33

33 Mandindi, Peters, Hlongwane, Voyiya, Sefako and Siwangaza were in the first intake (1985-1986); Siko, Hlati, de Leeuw, Bam, Kwinana and Somana were in the subsequent group (1987-1989). Sophie Peters, personal communication, 10 July 2020.
However, while promising visual artists were selected for the second course, the emphasis was shifting towards training ‘facilitators’ (teachers). This was in part a response to pressures from funding bodies such as Kagiso Trust to reposition CAP as an educational project rather than as a cultural organisation. This was a time when concepts of people’s education and people’s culture were rallying calls of the mass democratic movement, with the slogan ‘each one teach one’ popularised by the militant Congress of South African Students (COSAS). Funders were also increasingly interested in the ‘multiplier effect’, and less inclined to contribute towards expensive training that benefitted individuals (artists). In reality this push was creating a new problem: CAP’s teacher training was operating outside of the formal system, meaning that CAP-trained teachers struggled to find employment as such, with several of them being employed by CAP in its child art programme. This in turn created perceptions of ‘dependency’, ‘entitlement’, or ‘ownership’, depending on one’s point of view.

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34 This began in 1987 when a third year was added to the training of Peters and Sefako. The fact that this training was offered to the only female graduates of the first course, when CAP’s visual arts students were overwhelmingly male (Sefako actually benefitted from two full-time courses, an unprecedented example), is evidence of not only the progressive outlook of CAP but also a reflection of donor interests.

35 According to Sipho Hlati, the second course was originally expected to run for two years, and that the students themselves requested the additional year for ‘teacher training’. Sipho Hlati, personal communication, 11 July 2020.

36 This clash between who was really ‘CAP’ came to a dramatic head in 1988 when the full-time visual arts students vociferously challenged the decision by staff and trustees to withdraw a promised national tour of cultural centres. Some of these students removed their artworks from the CAP collection in protest. It is also revealing that these students organised exhibitions in the townships (Guguletu and Mbekweni), whereas all of CAP’s other exhibitions, organised by staff, were either at the centre or in established venues.
By 1989 CAP had redefined itself as an ‘arts education and training institution’. By that time the second (and final) full-time drama course had been introduced, led by Mike van Graan and Patti Henderson. The ‘popular theatre’ course, as it was known, recruited students from community organisations from across the country for training as ‘cultural workers’. A

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37 Van Graan was initially appointed drama coordinator in 1988, and subsequently became the first director (as opposed to the earlier, flatter notions of coordinator and organiser. Henderson had worked with Cosatu’s cultural unit in KwaZulu-Natal.
similar model was followed by the third visual arts course. The thinking was that graduates would have ‘structures’ to return to. In hindsight one can recognise that the organisations from which students came were either too weak or disinterested to accommodate their trained ‘delegates’. Also, that while some remarkable work was produced in the third visual arts course, none of this generation of students went on to establish careers for themselves as visual artists, in sharp contrast to the students in the first two courses.\(^{38}\)

The increased emphasis towards formalising training was also evident in largely unsuccessful efforts initiated in 1988 to structure the part-time classes as eight-month long courses. Having retained something of the informal character of ‘learning by doing’ that had begun at Mowbray, the part-time classes were a productive site at Chapel Street. Notable artists such as Willie Bester, Vuyisane Mgijima, Thami Kiti, Xolile Mtakatya, Thembinkosi Goniwe and Ricky Dyaloyi all attended evening classes that were influential in their career development.

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\(^{38}\) The possible exception to this observation was Mpumelelo Melane, who was already active as a visual artist before coming to CAP, and who subsequently played an important role in the work of Imvaba, an arts collective based in Port Elizabeth that was extremely active at the time.
None of the weaknesses of the late 1980s model were apparent at the time. Fuelled by growing international funding, CAP presented itself boldly and confidently, holding its own ten-day festival, *Building a National Culture*, in 1989. Following the end of the Cold War and the subsequent end of apartheid, international donors began withdrawing financial
support for arts projects in South Africa. CAP at Chapel street — which by now was operating with an annual budget of R1.8 million — employed over 30 full-time staff members (including twelve members of its Theatre Company), as well as part-time staff, mostly facilitators. With a monthly wage bill that it could not meet, the trustees retrenched almost the entire staff, including its director. The CAP Media Project, which had always operated a lean structure and had its own sources of funding, was less dramatically affected by the change in funding patterns. Chapel Street, which in making the transition from cultural organisation to education ‘institution’ had done away with membership, had little capacity to weather the change.39 The full-time visual arts course was prematurely curtailed, and a small number of the once widespread child art outreach projects managed to continue.

Desiree Kok, *untitled [Grand Parade]*, c.1990. Linocut. CAP Collection, Centre for Humanities Research, UWC. Kok is exemplary of many part–time students who produced striking work but did not pursue careers as artists.

39 A handful of staff members, notably Lucy Alexander and Sicelo Nkohla (a former drama student), held Chapel Street together, assisted by CAP chairperson Jacqueline Nolte.
Re-positionings and collapse (1992–2008)

CAP at Chapel Street slowly reassembled. Late in 1992, Zayd Minty was appointed coordinator of CAP (including the Media Project), and this was followed by appointments of coordinators for the theatre and visual arts, the latter position filled by myself. There was pressure to reposition the organisation to meet the changing social and political situation. Somewhat naively, it was thought that the post-apartheid education system would ‘normalise’, with art education to be introduced in all schools. As a result of this projected scenario, it was considered necessary to stop the programmes that had served children and youths, notably the evening classes and children’s classes. This collateral damage was justified by the argument that it was the unemployed youths and adults with little formal schooling who would not be served by the new dispensation. Since CAP had always served the ‘have-nots’, it appeared logical that we should focus on those unlikely to benefit from the new dispensation. This constituency required two things: meaningful certification to be able to enter the formal system, and income generating skills. This analysis informed the design of new visual and performing arts courses. With the child art programme, emphasis was placed on enhancing the creativity of adults working with children in under-resourced contexts. The new approach to child arts struggled to attract sufficient numbers and CAP’s child art programmes were closed down in 1996. While the visual and performing arts courses were reasonably successful, in so far as they attracted reasonable numbers and dropout rates were low, the failure of most formal institutions to implement the policy of Recognition of Prior Learning that was a cornerstone of the concept of Lifelong Learning that was promised by the new National Qualifications Framework (NQF) meant that only a limited number of CAP’s new graduates managed to find their way into the system. Furthermore, there was limited success in developing income generating skills, despite the introduction of a course in arts administration and micro-enterprise training.

As a result of the new emphasis on providing training for adults, most of whom had no prior experience in the visual arts, the overall standard of the art produced at CAP in the 1990s does not match that of earlier periods. An exception occurred in the late 1990s, when visual arts educator Joseph Gaylard briefly re-introduced full-time training, where emphasis was placed on design. Graduates of this programme included several artists practicing today, among them Ndukumbule Nqinambi, Lonwabo Kilani, Dathini Mzayiya and Shakes Tembani.

* There were several false starts, with high profile appointments of directors withdrawing once the financial position of the organisation became evident to them. The most consistent source of funding came from the Swedish International Development Agency, which began supporting CAP in the late 1980s. Generally, the budget for the 1990s was barely half of what CAP received at its peak in 1990.

* I was later appointed education convenor and, after Minty’s departure in 1996, director. I left in 1999.
Photocopy poster by Mario Pissarra for one of three visual arts discussion forums, convened to help CAP reposition itself in relation to other visual arts bodies, 1993. Source: ASAI.

Postcard invitation designed by Sipho Hlati for CAP’s Learning to Change Festival, 1996. Public events during this period struggled to attract media and broader support, and were largely attended by students and staff, unlike the festivals of the 1980s. Source: ASAI.
Parallel to these developments at Chapel Street, the Media Project was also having to make significant adjustments. Even before the first democratic elections, it became apparent that the new political system had little interest in retaining the kinds of political media that had been a hallmark of anti-apartheid resistance, such as silkscreened posters and t-shirts, and painted banners. While the Media Project had some success in establishing community media projects across the Cape, these were ultimately out of step with the new, preferred methods of mass communication. Evidence of the activist CAP was still visible in programmes aimed at addressing gender stereotypes in the media, especially sexist representations of women. But ultimately the Media Project was being pushed to train black people to enter industry. This became more prominent after the Media Project reconstituted itself as an independent trust, Media Works.

With funding for NGO's increasingly difficult, a decision was taken to re-amalgamate Media Works and CAP as a new organisation, the Arts and Media Access Centre, which moved into premises in the east end of the City that are owned by the District Six Museum. By this time, the transformative agenda of the NQF had been defeated by the widespread conservatism of the formal education system. Accordingly, AMAC began to introduce entrance criteria that included comparatively high school qualifications, as this enabled more access into the formal system. By now there was little of the arts for social change agenda that defined the CAP of the 1980s. Instead the organisation was trying to assimilate into a conservative, industry-led education framework. With limited success in negotiating this new terrain, such as the administratively taxing provision of learnerships for the MAPPP-SETA,42 it is clear that the odds were heavily stacked against AMAC. That the new organisation did not scale down the staffing that came with the two bodies, effectively sealed its fate, and its doors closed in 2008.43

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42 The Department of Labour established Sector Education and Training Authorities where young people could acquire industry linked training. Visual arts was accommodated under the auspices of Media, Advertising Publishing, Printing, and Packaging (MAPPP SETA), testifying to the lateral leaps art training had to make in order to benefit from the new system.

43 The archives of the organization were donated to the University of the Western Cape (which received a fairly vast body of artworks) and the University of Cape Town (which received most of the documentary records). See Heidi Grunebaum and Emile Maurice (eds), Uncontained: Opening the Community Arts Project archive (Cape Town: Centre for Humanities Research, UWC, 2012).
Conclusion

Public perceptions of CAP as an art centre that trained artists fail to recognise the constraints on this achievement that were a consequence of pressures to pursue an educational or development agenda. In hindsight, there were very few moments in which the training of artists was a clearly articulated and unambiguous goal. Notwithstanding these limitations, the donor funding of the 1970s and 1980s — when international support was ultimately concerned with an anti-apartheid agenda — enabled the organisation to have considerable success in promoting art as a vehicle for social change. This environment facilitated a safe space for expressing social and political concerns, resulting in a vast number of powerful images, including many produced by black youth who did not pursue or sustain careers as professional artists. In comparison, the failure of the post-apartheid education and training framework constrained the potential social and artistic impact of the post 1990s CAP. In hindsight, it appears that a more flexible, organic response to the new situation may have served the organisation better, although whether it could have attracted sufficient support at that juncture remains a moot point. Certainly, considering how the once vibrant community arts sector has ceased to be a major factor in developing South African art and artists, there is an argument to revisit the prospects of open-ended, multi-faceted, Mowbray-style art centres today.