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COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP THROUGH AN ARTIST DRIVEN,COLLABORATIVE PROJECT BETWEEN LEARNERS FROM THE RIDGE SCHOOL AND SALVAZIONE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

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COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP THROUGH AN ARTIST DRIVEN, COLLABORATIVE PROJECT BETWEEN LEARNERS FROM THE RIDGE SCHOOL AND SALVAZIONE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

Kathrin Marion Schulz

A research report submitted to the Faculty of Arts, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of Arts in Fine Arts

Johannesburg, 2004

Abstract:

A Community Partnership Art Event, resulting from curating and facilitating an educational collaboration was held on the 23 March 2004, ten years into South Africa's democracy. Through a Masters in Fine Arts coursework entitled "Creating, Curating and Critiquing" offered at the University of Witwatersrand, I attempted to test the boundaries of the Arts and Culture Learning Area and explore alternatives to the current definition of "outreach".

The grade six learners from The Ridge School, an independent boys' preparatory school and Salvazione Christian School, an assisted government school, were brought together over a period of ten weeks during regular school art lessons. Through the guidance and expertise of various artists, workshops were co-coordinated with the collaborative ideas of the learners coming to the fore. The process and dialogue established between learners, artists and educators was intended to shift my own parameters of teaching primary school art. Focusing on people rather than the final products points to a readiness to view knowledge not as a commodity owned b the expert teacher, but rather as something which can be constructed and developed with the learners. Originally the collaboration was intended as a celebration of the opening of new premises for Salvazione Christian School. The public art happening was held in a tent next to the informal settlement where a large majority of the children from Salvazione Christian School live.

Rather than what might be described as a modernist approach to art education, where the focus seems to be on the artist and artwork, the focus was on linking art to *social* interaction, and it was through the discovery of a form of *hybridity* that a number of differences between the two communities were challenged and exposed. This resulted in an approach that seems similar to the manner in which the Indian writer, Salman Rushdie writes of hybridity:

> "Hybridity, impurity, intermingling, the transformation that comes of new and unexpected combinations of human beings, cultures, ideas, politics, movies, songs." (Coombes, 2000:39)

Through this hybridity tensions were created and explored rather than a 'rainbow' or melting pot created, where differences are glossed over as in a multicultural approach.

The primary research methodology was participant observation in which directly observed data was analyzed and interpreted. Data was gathered from the interactions in the workshops, setting up the exhibition and the art event.

As intended, a link between art and 'outreach' was established. In order for this link to change into a community partnership, it must be seen as part of a much longer process. The process as a whole did become a different kind of primary school art space, preparing the way for possible positive transformation of the visual arts in the arts and culture learning area at primary school level.

Key words

art event

artists-in-school

arts and culture learning area

community partnership

curating

dialogue

hybridity

participant observation

site-specific

witnessing

Declaration

I declare that this research report is my own unaided work. It is submitted for the degree of **Masters in Fine Arts** in the **University of Witwatersrand,** Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination in any other university.

KATHRIN MARION SCHULZ

6th day of June, 2005.

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Final thanks go to Mr. David Andrew, my supervisor, for his invaluable guidance throughout the project.

Foreword

COMMENTS ABOUT THE SLOVO PARK ART EVENT

"The exhibition was inline(sic) with the policy of education, making art and culture part of the curriculum to shape social bonds and nurture nation building. The exhibition was nurturing patriotism and affirming citizenship to learners."

Thokozani Nkwanyana

(Gauteng Education Department)

"The context of the exhibition is important, and highly and significantly welcome. The sheer fact of Ridge boys' art work being exhibited in a marquee pitched on a desolate heath in a part of Johannesburg far away in distance and style from Westcliff says a great deal in itself. Whatever artistic weight the exhibition may have carried the effect of where and how it as displayed must have contributed to the enriching of the lives and perspectives of those who produced it and those who beheld it. No kind of art can be seen – or produced – in social isolation, and this point remains high in one's mind.

I am in no position to judge the absolute quality of the artworks, but enthusiastically endorse the idea that it is as much in the doing of the work that fulfilment comes as in any achievement of supreme quality. To reach that would be a bonus, a huge one, but a bonus.

The Joe Slovo name reminds us that there are different sorts of freedom, or manifestations of freedom, that our land now has available. Some of them were there on the evening. We have to thank the organisers and the energetic initiative and leadership of Kathrin van Rensburg (Schulz) for showing us such artistic freedom".

John Gardener

(Independent Schools Association)

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Chapter1. INTRODUCTION TO THE PROJECT

1.1 Background

Since 1999 I have been working as an art specialist at The Ridge School, an independent preparatory school in an affluent suburb of Johannesburg. The Ridge School has for the past twelve years supported The Salvazioné Christian School as their main drive of 'outreach'. (In this research report I will use the abbreviation of "Salvazioné" instead of the correct Salvazioné Christian School and similarly "The Ridge" as opposed to The Ridge School.) Salvazioné operates from the back rooms of the Mayfair Baptist Church. The Ridge provides substantial financial support to Salvazioné and its community residing in the nearby informal settlement of Slovo Park. Enough money had been raised by The Ridge to build new school premises to be named The Slovo Park Community School.

The notion of outreach is often seen as a charitable relationship where the recipients passively receive 'handouts'. In wanting to shift the direction of outreach to a community partnership or 'twinning', I am advocating a dialogical partnership. This 'twinning' emphasises a relationship that 'reaches both ways'. In this respect, my understanding of 'twinning' is similar to Freire's notion of the 'dialogical'. The use of dialogue was advocated by the Brazilian educator Paulo Freire (1921 – 1997) who claimed that knowledge should not be gained directly from the teacher or library, but created by learners. In his 'critical pedagogy', the

classroom becomes a site for the production of new knowledge grounded in students' practices.

Using dialogue and a cooperative approach, I attempted to create connections between the schools that do not exist at present. Through a sharing of ideas, cultures and experiences, the benefit of working towards an art event in celebration of twelve years of a supposed 'union' between the two schools was explored. The 'union' up to now was mostly in the form of financial assistance from The Ridge, with very little teaching and learning exchanges. Through a governing body system with The Ridge Headmaster as chairman and financial guidance from The Ridge bursar, the day to day school business is administered.

The aim of this visual arts project was firstly to explore the idea that a financial lack does not necessarily imply a cultural lack through an attempt to change this one sided 'outreach' into a more reciprocal 'community partnership'. Professor of Anthropology at Yale University, Arjun Appadurai (2003:3) links the capacity to aspire to the inclusion of futurity. Through this the poor can deduce their own poverty. He notes that the lack of resources is the biggest obstacle of the poor not having a "voice". This notion of "the capacity to aspire" can provide a link between arts and culture and outreach. Appadurai's suggestion is that some local cultural form can be used to increase the aspirations of the poor.

The two grade six groups who participated in this research are both part of the Intermediate Phase of the General Education and Training Certificate (GETC) replacing the previous “Primary School”. The Ridge boys are taught by a specialist art teacher (myself), a specialist music teacher and at an extra cost can master various musical instruments. Drama is covered by an annual musical. The Salvazioné children are taught arts and culture by their class teacher and a production is put on at the end of the year. Visual art is limited to card making with pictures cut out of magazines, rather than drawing or painting. Some volunteers from the church have made crafts with the learners for a short period.

In wanting to shift the boundaries of the Arts and Culture Learning Area, workshops presented by various artists in conjunction with myself and the grade six Salvazioné class teacher were arranged. The process and products of the workshops were displayed and presented in an art event including visual art, drama (performances) and some elements of dance and music. The learners were encouraged to negotiate solutions and direct the process under the guidance of artists and educators.

Through these interactions, the intermingling and new combinations alluded to by writers such as Rushdie, began to take place, often with unexpected results. It is these moments that provide some evidence as to how an arts and culture programme might be reconceptualised to take on the challenges of a more

socially responsive educative experience – one that speaks of community partnership.

1.2 The schools involved

In the writing that follows, I will adopt a consistent approach in first discussing The Ridge and then Salvazioné.

1.2.1 The Ridge School

> **"The Ridge is a school for boys that is 85 years old. It has the highest academics in johannisburg."** A Ridge learner describing The Ridge School. (Quotes by learners from both schools will have original unedited spelling throughout the document)

> ***"Is A Very big place and a big field When I saw the school I thought it a President House... I like the Field to play, the music room and the Art room because it is a beautiful room there's a lot of Art and Pictures's best of is the Assembly because of the instruments and chair's."***
>
> A Salvazioné learner describing The Ridge School. (All quotes by Salvazioné learners will be in italics throughout the document)

The Ridge School was founded in 1919 and is an independent preparatory school for boys from grade 0 to grade seven. It is in the affluent suburb of Westcliff in

Johannesburg. There are a total number of 406 learners (January 2003) with a majority of white, full fee paying students. The average school fees are R24000.00 per year (without compulsory uniforms or sporting equipment). There are twenty seven educators (full-time teaching staff), and fifty six support staff, including eleven music teachers, seven learning support therapists, ten assistant teachers and students as well as administrative, catering and estate staff. The Headmaster since 1998 is Mr. Paul Channon.

The school buildings and surrounding estate have grown from the stately home known as 'The Woolsack'. Many traditional 'English' values are instilled and reinforced by fathers and grandfathers who are old boys. Events such as Armistice Day on the 11 November are celebrated with a formal assembly. There is a visiting pastor, a bugle player and traditional 'poppies' celebrating the end of a world war.

The waiting lists for grade 0 are full and there is considerable demand for places to the extent that children need to be registered for a place at the school at birth. Junior classes are small with eighteen to twenty learners and in the senior school there are up to twenty seven learners in a class. The facilities include a computer room, a resource centre, sports fields, a combined music, design and technology and art block. Hot lunches are offered for both staff and learners. Staff are well supported with staff housing; further studies and attendance of both overseas and local conferences are encouraged.

Boys are expected to attend a full day; starting before eight in the morning and with many compulsory sport and cultural activities in the afternoon. Art and music are part of the timetable but can also be extended into extra lessons.

In The Ridge Mission Statement, it is stated that the school offers an 'exceptional, balanced education which instils respect for self and tolerance of difference, developing a confident individual with a generous spirit and responsible character'. The ethos is described as being progressive, based on Christian values, and dedicated to the flourishing of learning and community development.

1.2.2 Salvazioné Christian School

> ***"Salvazione is the good school because every morning we get e-pap and e-pap gives us energy And we are now healthy... Salvazione teach us a lot And when you don't know English they teach you."***
>
> A Salvazioné learner describing Salvazioné.

> **"Salvazioné is The Ridge's outreach school. They are underprivileged and don't have sports facilities or library books."**
>
> A Ridge learner describing Salvazioné.

Salvazioné Christian School was founded in 1991 and has been associated with the Ridge since then. Registered with the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) as an assisted independent school, there are boys and girls from grade 00 to grade seven with a total number of 120 Black learners (January 2003). The assistance from the GDE is financial. The monthly school fees of R150 per child are subsidised by the governing body of The Ridge as well as by Ridge parents 'adopting' a child by paying these fees for parents who are unable to pay. There are a total number of eight educators and since inception Ms. Catherine Ludya remains the Headmistress.

The Mayfair Baptist Church in Crosby houses the school which largely serves the Slovo Park informal settlement nearby. Approaching from the street the large brick church does not have a sign or name on the outside to indicate the school operating within. The church allows teaching to take place in their hall and the other small downstairs rooms. The grade sixes' attend lessons in the 'coffee area' with wooden screens put up to give some privacy. The lack of space is very noticeable with overflowing boxes, donated books, toys, broken musical instruments and old newspapers stacked everywhere.

Desks, chairs and all teaching equipment have to be packed away every Wednesday (for prayer evening) and Friday (for the church service on Sunday).

Very little sport or afternoon activities are offered and the play area is the small piece of grass and a very narrow space at the back of the church which the learners have to share with the two church buses.

According to the promotional handout, Salvazioné is non-discriminatory, non-racial, co-educational and democratic. The diverse nature of the children at the school can be seen in the range of home languages the children speak. Within the grade six class seven different languages are spoken, none of which is English. Because they are financially disadvantaged and come from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, the Headmistress feels the children would not fit into the schools in the surrounding areas.

1.2.3 The proposed Slovo Park Community School

> ***"I am so happy because they are going to build us a new school so we can move from the church when they build Joe Slovo every one is going to be happy and we will miss Salvazion."***
>
> A Salvazioné learner describing the new school.

> **"Slovo Park is the new school that Salvazioné hopes to move into. The Government is against the idea of building a school. It is supposed to be founded in 2004."**
>
> A Ridge learner describing the new school.

The Slovo Park Community school is to become the 'new' Salvazioné School premises on 12.44 hectares of Spoornet land. It is at the end of Ashanti street in Langlaagte, one kilometre from the church. It was to be built to commence schooling in January 2004 (see Site Development Plan Appendix A on page 151). By the time the art event took place in March 2004, negotiations were still underway to gain assistance from the Gauteng Education Department (GDE) for the new school. The GDE determined that they would not support the new school as demographics clearly indicate that there are 10 primary schools in the area that are below 90% full. Since the enrolment at Salvazioné is only 120 learners (January 2003), it would not be cost effective to establish another primary school in that area.

Two million rand has been raised through corporate support by the Ridge School for the building. Despite there being no building to house the art exhibition, the learners were very excited with the idea of setting up a tent on the empty land. An event designed around the community school that might never be.



PHOTO 1 : Site for the Slovo Park Community School

1.3 Arts and culture at GETC level in South Africa

In this sub section I will give a brief overview of the present state of arts and culture education at GETC level. By challenging this Arts and Culture Learning Area, it can be experienced in a different, alternative way by melding together community partnership, artists and learners. Given the nature of this research report, the overview cannot claim to be conclusive but it does try to provide the context for a clearer understanding of the work done by teachers, learners and artists at both Salvazioné and the Ridge.

1.3.1 State schools and Independent schools

Having reached the ten year anniversary of the democracy of South Africa, many changes have occurred in education since 1994 and still much is to be done. I focused on two of the major constituencies within this education system, namely the state-run Department of Education and the Independent Education Board (IEB). The two schools that are involved in this project each belong to the two different bodies. The local education department concerned being the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE).

Arts and Culture is **one** of the eight Learning Areas prescribed by the National Qualifications framework outlined in the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) which was first printed in draft form in 2001. In 2002 the Revised National

Curriculum Statements (RNCS) were issued. As a strengthening of Curriculum 2005 it is the first design of a non-racial, non-sexist and democratic education system in South Africa. Primary and High school have been replaced with the General Education and Training (GET), up to grade nine, and Further Education and Training (FET) up to grade twelve. This present system of education is underpinned by the philosophy of OBE or Outcomes-Based Education. The NCS explains that this system, based on the new Constitution, aims at removing the after effects of the apartheid system. This includes removing divisions of class, race and gender from schools and curricula and developing a new sense of national identity based on dignity and respect for all people. OBE is seen as developmental and learner-centred with the outcomes based on the process of learning. The activity-based approach is designed to promote problem-solving and critical thinking.

State schools are required to follow the new system which will evolve with the first revised Matric examinations taking place in 2008. What about the IEB schools?

Sue Rees-Gardner (Deputy Director Policy of ISASA)[1] says that according to the Education Laws Amendment Act 2002, independent schools are required to achieve the minimum standards and outcomes of the RNCS, but are not required to follow the methodology, sequence or content of the public school system. In practice, she explains, many schools do adhere closely to the design followed by

public schools. The Ridge under Channon's guidance has fully embraced the OBE system. The first fully OBE based learner report is due to be released in the first term of 2004.

Educationalist Jonathan Jansen (1999:5), now working as Head of the Education Department at the University of Pretoria, sees OBE as a "reductionist pedagogical practice" that is doomed to fail. He says that the shift in resources and advantages needed from those who are white and privileged, to those who are black and marginalized in education and economy, will not happen. In his research he has found that the distance between privileged (although not entirely white anymore) and disadvantaged schools (remaining mainly black), has in fact increased since the implementation of OBE. He also challenges the prescribed 'outcomes'.

1.3.2 Visual art as part of the Arts and Culture Learning Area

Jansen's challenge of the learning outcomes are very valid for the visual arts. Although the learning outcomes for Arts and Culture[2] are very wide, Jansen (1998:131) makes a valid point in claiming that there is a contradiction in prescribing outcomes in a learner centred education system. He maintains that the personal experiences and values of learners should shape the educators task and that educators should not determine outcomes in advance, rather allowing them to emerge from a process of joint decision making.

Visual art is an open ended process that often differs from other subjects in that there is not one single correct answer and the many different possible answers ideally require much discussion to determine their validity (Eisner,1986:3). Due to the very nature of the subject the art teacher often encourages divergent thinking and has continuous interaction with the learner.

The vast differences between The Ridge School and Salvazioné are perhaps emblematic of the large gap between most independent and state schools. Independent schools employ skilled specialist teachers for the arts and culture subjects (and other subjects) while in contrast in most state schools class educators are expected to offer arts and culture in conjunction with other subjects. Apart from a lack of resources and trained staff, Jansen (1999:5) points out that while the “enabled white schools” can meet the demands of this curriculum passage, black schools will fall further behind rather than manage “such complex innovations”.

There are several other issues that could be addressed under this section that can be highlighted as negatively influencing a linking to a community partnership. Firstly, there is the problem of the four subjects grouped together as one. This could result in the subjects visual art, drama, music and dance losing their uniqueness. In the previous curriculum (dated 1995) they were stand-alone subjects. In theory these arts and culture subjects have collectively been given a

new importance, and are seemingly "equal" in status to subjects deemed to be essential, such as Mathematics and Languages. But in practice, in my experience as an art educator at both GET and FET level, this is not the case.

Secondly, a lack of 'commitment'[3] by educators could lead to a resistance to change[4]. This resistance to change is seen by South African art educator David Andrew (2000:19) as a challenge for visual and performing arts educators. He is concerned with an art education system that begins to direct itself to learners and the community we live in. If art as a subject is to realize its new potential in the curriculum, then a change in mindset is necessary. Looking at alternative ways in which school art programmes can be revitalized, he points to the existence in our country of a unique opportunity to "move towards an art education system that begins to direct itself to learners and the community we live in" (2000:18-19). Willingness and commitment is needed to make current arts and culture education something more diverse and different. Bringing together the ever present disparities that still exist in our education system after ten years of democracy, this remains a challenge. Perhaps one way this can be attained is by creating dialogue through arts and culture partnerships between different communities.

1.3.3 Redressing cultural imbalances

> "In a progressively more culturally diverse society, it is important, indeed necessary, for young people to have the knowledge, attitude and skills of inquiry and interpretation to be able to make their way effectively through such diversity." (Chalmers,1996:7)

According to the NCS (South Africa. National Curriculum Statement,2001:15) cultural imbalances should be addressed in arts and culture in two ways:

- Firstly to provide arts and culture access to all learners, not only to a privileged, select few as was historically the case.
- Secondly, through the curriculum and its content.

The community project I am advocating could be a positive way to address this lack of arts and culture in a disadvantaged school. The problems associated with the first point have been explored in depth by Chris Klopper (2003:3), Art Educational Specialist of the Tshwane South District, currently researching through the University of Pretoria. He advocates a 'multi-disciplinary interactive approach', focusing on the learners' unique experiences. These include limitations of impoverished facilities, lack of resources, lack of prior experience of learners, lack of skills or formal training of educators and limited involvement and support of the community.

Most practitioners/educators in the arts and culture sector would agree that access to arts and culture education for all learners from reception year to grade nine is a far off, but not impossible, goal. Given this, what are the mechanisms in place that begin to address this challenge? In-service teacher training programmes and artists working with learners in both school and community art centres are but two of the ways in which this challenge is being addressed at present. The project undertaken for this research suggests an alternative path – that of rethinking what an arts and culture education programme might look like;

what it might become through what is increasingly known as a community partnership. In other words, accessing arts and culture education programmes can be seen as an opportunity for school communities to meet, sometimes comfortably, at times perhaps even abrasively, through these activities. As such, the research project undertaken confronts the deadlock in two ways:

- Partnering schools with varying resource availability and, in doing this, recognising that *all* school communities have potentially rich cultural resources
- A commitment to a transformed arts and culture practice that allows curriculum and content to emerge from these 'meetings'

I will be looking at the second point in more detail; namely, the curriculum and its content. The tone of the new curriculum was already set in the 1995 syllabus; the learner is not an empty vessel (1995:4-5) and the educator is to build on the learner's own culture and expression. Chairing a symposium about Education and Social Transition in South Africa (1994 – 1996),[5] Jansen explored a reciprocal relationship between education and social change in transitional societies. Included were similar issues previously explored in Tanzania in the 60's where founding President Julius Nyerere launched an educational philosophy in an attempt to assist a poor and underdeveloped nation. Nyerere stated in 1968[6]:

> "The development of a country is brought about by people, not by money. Money, and the wealth it represents, is the result and not the basis of development [...] to build a society in which all members have equal rights and equal opportunities; in which we all can live in peace with our neighbours without suffering or imposing justice, being exploited, or exploiting; in which all have a gradually increasing level of material welfare before any individual lives in luxury."

The policy of multiculturalism as advocated by Nyerere recognises and accepts different cultural groups with cultural diversity seen as a source of enrichment for all. But is multiculturalism, on its own, enough? Jansen (1998:138) maintains that many schools still remain unicultural, with the many different social, religious, racial, and class backgrounds not being addressed adequately in order for changes in our country to take place.

During the 1960's and 1970's American and British educationalists strove for elimination of discrimination towards people of colour through civil rights movements, showing us that we must go beyond multiculturalism. American educationalist Cameron McCarthy (1990:131) points out that one must go further than the 'compensatory strategy of simply adding diverse cultural knowledge onto the dominant curriculum' (1990:131). He suggests that the experiences of those marginalized must become the core of the curriculum.

Looking at arts education in particular, how can this be achieved? American theorists Grant and Sleeter (1996), call for dynamic social action through cultural projects. To achieve justice, equality, dignity, and self-determination they call for an art that is multi-vocal, critical, vibrant and timely but also "encourages questioning, thinking, critique, and celebration". Calling this multicultural education "social reconstructionist", they stress that for this to happen a change in instructional method is required with the 'voice' of the learner being brought to the fore.

By linking the curriculum to social reconstructionism, it should not be sequential but in a state of flux. This, combined with multiculturalism, would be best suited to create an informed citizenry who question authority and the status quo, accept differences and act in defence of others and the environment (Efland, 1996: 90).

Multiculturalism can also be called cultural pluralism and is a term describing the coexistence of many cultures in a locality, without any one culture dominating. Multiculturalism strives to make a broad range of human differences acceptable seeking to overcome racism, sexism and other forms of discrimination. As part of post-modernism, multiculturalism calls for a replacement of the 'genius' artist, who is untouched by social, political and economic forces, with a move to the collective, dealing with issues such as social oppression and inequality and moral issues. But multiculturalism is often criticized as being merely a superficial label,

avoiding or masking the very substantive problems that exist rather than dealing with cultural difference at a more fundamental level. South African art critic and curator Colin Richards explains that the inherent underlying violence is missing from an implied (nominal) recognition of cultural difference. His exhibition entitled '"Graft" at the 1997 2nd Johannesburg Bienale recognises the violence and trauma within inter-cultural interactions. He finds that these differences cannot be simply masked or assimilated into a comfortable cultural pluralism. Nelson Mandela's concept of the South African "rainbow nation" was ideal multiculturalism. Richards' concept of 'graft' included corruption, labour and hybridity, relating to an imperfection and how things collide when they are grafted together. I will return to the concept of hybridity as an alternative to multiculturalism later in this research paper, as a way of fulfilling a social reconstructionist ideal in arts education.

These developments as discussed by both British and American writers can inform our local position. The content of the new arts and culture learning area includes the introduction of specific South African art forms, promoting human rights and a framework of social and environmental justice. This is stressed in the NCS:

> "to prepare the youth for the future learners need to be exposed to and learn to understand and affirm, the diversity of the cultures in South Africa" (NCS,2001:15)

In the visual arts, ideally, this exploration and active participation in African art forms should be the core elements in attaining this diversity.

Notes:

1. Rees-Gardener,S. (Suzanner@isasa.org) 23 March 2004 *Re: ISASA*. E-mail to K.Schulz (Kathrinv@ridge.gp.school.za).
2. Learning Outcomes for Arts and Culture Grades R – 9:
   Learning Outcome 1 *Creating, Interpreting and Presenting*
   Learning Outcome 2 *Reflecting*
   Learning Outcome 3 *Participating*
   Learning Outcome 4 *Expressing and Communicating*
3. By lack of commitment I do not mean that the teacher does not do his work, but merely just doing it just to get it done without passion, not trying anything new or different, being comfortable. Notwithstanding that the lack of commitment could be due to circumstance as well.
4. A noticeable and ongoing example of resistance to change by educators, a good example from The Ridge was the change to the OBE system. This resistance snowballs to include parents and learner.
5. *Symposium Education and Social Transition: Case Studies Of Reform and* Reconstruction, 1994 – 1996[online] available from http://www.acs.appstate.edu/orgs/afcab/jansen.htm [accessed 24 April 2003].
6. Kassam,Y.,*Julius Kambarage Nyerere*, 2000 [online] available from http://www.ibe.unesco.org/Internation [accessed on 24 April 2003].

Chapter2. INTRODUCTION AND CONCEPTUALIZATION TOWARDS THE PROCESS OF ESTABLISHING A COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP

In the conceptualization of the establishment of a community partnership between Salvazioné and The Ridge, the following underlying elements were considered:

- Hybridity
- Community Partnership
- Dialogue
- Collaborative Learning
- Bringing Artists into the Classroom

2.1 Hybridity

Unexpected connections and a palimpsest layering were created through the arts and culture community partnership between Salvazioné and The Ridge School. This overlapping process can be seen as a type of hybridity. This was achieved, not through a collaborative dialogue resulting in what might have been a melting pot of diversity, but rather a series of events which on reflection seem to have many of the qualities that are associated with hybridity. This juxtaposition of state and independent school systems intermingling over a set time period made for a very different primary school art event.

My original intention for the two groups of learners to come 'together' (in retrospect a somewhat naïve intention) changed more towards a realization of features which in retrospect are similar to those associated with hybridity.

The presence of hybridity is seen an essential element in contemporary curating, according to Annie Coombes (1992:52). She quotes Homi Bhaba:

> "[A] willingness to descend into that alien territory ... to conceptualizing an international culture, based not on the exoticism or multi-culturalism of the diversity of cultures, but on the inscription and articulation of cultures hybridity". (Coombes,1992:39)

I want to extend this essential presence of hybridity in curating into the education field, especially for the community partnership I am espousing. This willingness to move into another kind of space created by more than just juxtaposition of these two very different communities alluded to a kind of hybridity. In retrospect, my willingness, whether conscious or not, to allow the Ridge/Salvazione partnership to move into what was for all of us an alien territory, to allow for a space to emerge, alludes to something akin to hybridity. At the same time it must be said that a mere juxtaposition of the two communities was also present. Hybridity is often seen in terms of whether power relations shift. Given this, I became more aware of recognizing instances of these shifts taking place within the process. What was evident particularly in the latter part of the programme, during and after the Slovo Park event, were the tensions present in the community partnership.

Rather than these tensions being glossed over, there was an attempt to recognize them as being critical elements of this combination of arts and culture programme and community partnership.

Artist and lecturer Penny Siopis alludes to an ‘out of placeness’ that is characteristically found in hybridity. This was something felt strongly at the event, created by the juxtaposition of the artworks with the presence of different kinds of people. This was accentuated by the presence of the space the event took place in, which would not have been the case had the event taken place in The Ridge art room, an art gallery or the church hall. This out of placeness was an essential presence that had the effect of disturbing conventions, disturbing the status quo and provoking powerful questions, even outrage, felt very strongly by all the different audiences at the art event. This was in contrast to the earlier phases of the collaboration where these tensions were expressed tentatively and at differing levels. These tensions will be discussed in depth in chapter 4.

Recent writing about ‘hybridity’ has increasingly informed my position in regard to hybridity as I have sought to understand the process that I undertook with these two communities. Both multiculturalism and hybridity are buzzwords in political, economic, social and cultural exchanges. Both terms are widely criticized in postcolonial discourse, with hybridity being a term apparently negating and neglecting the imbalances and inequalities of the power relations it

references. The word originates in horticulture referring to the cross breeding of two species by grafting or cross-pollinating to arrive at a third form of 'hybrid'. This was something alluded to by Richards in the 'Graft" exhibition I mentioned earlier.

American Sociology professor, Jan Nederveen Pieterse (2001), in an article entitled *"Hybridity, so what? The Anti-hybridity Backlash and the Riddles of Recognition"* explores writing for and against hybrity in various contexts. Pieterse argues that hybridity should be seen as a concept deeply rooted and layered in history. Following this he feels that hybridity is quite ordinary having different meanings in different cultures, contexts and times. He defines hybridity in cultural studies as denoting "a wide register of multiple identity, cross-over, pick-'n'-mix, boundary crossing experiences and styles, matching a world of growing migration and diaspora lives, intensive intercultural communication, everyday multiculturalism and erosion of boundaries"(2001:3). On the negative side hybridity is seen as possibly inauthentic, without roots, for the elite only, not reflecting social realities, glossing over deeper issues including issues of power and inequality with hybridity referred to as a kind of 'multiculturalism lite' (2001: 2).

But important in my understanding is Pieterse's point of hybridity only being meaningful with prior assumptions of difference, purity and fixed boundaries. These boundaries include 'cultural codes' (2001:15) such as nation and class and

it is through these codes that boundaries are experienced, lived and/or upheld. These boundaries are historical and social constructions making their meanings fluctuate. This ever expanding awareness becomes *critical hybridity* when it involves a new awareness of and a new take on the dynamics of group formation and social inequality. This critical awareness is furthered by acknowledging rather than suppressing hybridity (2001:21). Questions should be asked here as to whether this awareness was registered by the audience, especially the learners. If so, an acknowledgement of this critical hybridity, third space or an in-between-ness as understood through the writing of Bhahba, means, according to Pieterse (2001:20), 'going beyond dualism, binary thinking and Aristotelian logic' and stepping out of the Cartesian box of knowledge and order.

In creating the conditions for this other space to emerge, the focus on people becomes more important. The different communities and different audiences participating in this collaboration actually created the unusual art happening. Although I am predominantly part of one of the two communities and as such write from the particular view of the society I belong to, I have a multifaceted identity in relation to the different audiences I worked with. I repeat Rushdie's quote from my abstract:

> "Hybridity, impurity, intermingling, the transformation that comes of new and unexpected combinations of human beings, cultures, ideas, politics, movies, songs." (Coombes,2000:39)

It was in focusing again on an increased motivation to recognise and nurture new and unexpected combinations that this collaboration within the current arts and culture learning area occurred.

2.2 Community partnership

The notion of 'outreach'[1] is currently being replaced within the independent schools in South Africa (ISASA) with the notion of 'community partnership'. 'Outreach' is seen as a charitable relationship with recipients passively receiving 'handouts'. On the other hand community partnering or 'twinning' is a two-way relationship, implying reaching both ways. 'Reaching both ways' is central to this project. Through community partnerships ISASA see mutual enrichment and ultimately transformation happening in this country. The community partnerships are threefold; independent schools, communities and the government. The independent schools see themselves as 'proudly South African'; encouraging a South African-ness and wanting to broaden perspectives and build our nation through its' people. Jane Hofmeyr, National Executive Director of ISASA, says that this is something that can only be done if the partnership is not seen as a one-way flow'.[2] Although this mutual relationship is essential in striving for this transformation, implementation is problematic and will take a long time before any real progress is seen.

A number of positive steps have been taken in this regard. Through ISASA the first 'outreach magazine' was published in January 2003, entitled "Growing Together: A Story of Schools Reaching Out". Secondly, ISASA organized a National Conference, "Transformation through Partnership", held at an independent school Michaelhouse in Kwazulu Natal[3] in October 2003. Attended by over 60 schools and other educational facilities, the key principle was that transformation should be a core activity of the independent schools not only in the budget but also in the curriculum. This transformation includes a willingness to contribute to the development of new skills and create networks to enable South Africans to effectively pursue shared objectives that will secure the future of our country. This was clearly illustrated in Bishop Rubin Phillip's opening statements that the conference was about "building up relationships, about moving away from the past to the present and the future". Essential to this process is the collective focus on the future in which this transformation can take place.

In her keynote address at the conference, Dr. Brigalia Bam, Chairperson of the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC), said that she believes education to be central to the process of change and transformation. She pointed out that after almost ten years of democracy in the current school infrastructure, trust and communication remain problematic. She writes that to create a nation, one needs to build trust, not an easy task given South Africa's diversity in language, values, aspirations and hopes. (Perhaps history is another factor to be

considered here). She continues by emphasising that through interdependence and dialogue, due recognition could be given to others around us. Coexisting and sharing are essential in advocating the idea of a true partnership, not one that is unequal, one-sided or inferior/superior. Reciprocal communication is needed including respect for each other and a mutual valuing in each community. Bam concluded with endorsement of Freire's thinking, challenging all at the conference to make education a 'dialogue of the meeting of life', and an interpenetration of different cultures and ways of thinking.[4]

Unfortunately for the attainment of these ideals, the essential element is time. Since discussing these issues at the conference just over a year ago, small steps are being taken like this collaborative project between The Ridge and Salvazioné. Although most of the heads of schools at the conference were very much in favour of making transformation part of the curriculum, no real implementation has taken place as yet. A second edition of the ISASA 'schools reaching out' magazine is currently underway and a second conference planned for 2005 but underlining these issues is that these conferences are at this stage 'reserved' (financially) for the wealthy schools who are able to afford the costs of accommodation and conference fees. To date community partnership remains outreach.

In order for dialogue to be created between two institutions, the reciprocity in the partnership cannot be underestimated. Connections need to be established

that did not exist previously. The ideals, wishes and concerns of the 'outreach school' must be considered. Right from the start both partners should be equal, but is this in fact ever possible? The huge discrepancy continues to exist in available resources and skills between two schools like Salvazioné and The Ridge. David Tripp[6] points out that although collaboration should have both parties' values being mutual and symmetrical, it does not mean they have to contribute in the same way or gain the same outcome. He underlines that it is the "very differences between contributions and expectations that makes collaboration so strong methodologically". If both parties already have enough finances, resources and skilled staff is there a need for a collaboration? Similarly, would a disadvantaged school gain as much if collaborating with an equally disadvantaged school. With the financial assistance including the responsibility for the consequences, from one party, in this case the independent schools, a collaboration of assistance and sharing would take place. Hybridity would find its place in the differences between the two schools. Ideally another element would be created, rather than the two institutions merging into one shared one. However, the dominating party, due to the nature of the partnership, should adopt a position which would allow both parties to benefit. Then a true community partnership would be established.

Gillian Attwood, lecturer at the College of Education at Wits University, in her address at the Conference, points out that often the major problem in trying to establish a community partnership is that the received need is usually established

by outsiders with little or no participation in the conceptualization of the partnership. If this is not present then surely it will remain 'outreach'? There are many key issues in wanting to establish a community partnership, so many in fact that a kind of palimpsest layering occurs. Discovering these while conceptualising this community partnership, unveiled many issues and ideas many of which were initiated at the Michaelhouse Conference. This project is an attempt at addressing some of the concerns.

2.3 Dialogue

2.3.1 What is written about dialogue?

A *dialogue* can be defined as a conversation between two or more people and means something different to *conversation* or *talking*. Conversation is spoken exchanges of thought, opinions and feelings that are more continuous and sustained when compared to talking. Different opinions and discussions by various writers about dialogue have been collated by Smith (2001) in 'the encyclopedia of informal education' on the internet entitled 'Dialogue and Conversation'[5].

In one of the articles Hans-George Gadamer explains "*dia"* as meaning two or between or across in the process of two people understanding each other. But

this process must include opening up to another person and truly accepting their point of view as worthy. Not seen as a fixed thing or commodity to grasp or 'out there' waiting to happen, but rather an aspect of a process, arising out of an interaction. He explains that this opening up to what the other is saying is not necessarily agreeing but the result of a to and fro play of *dialogue*.

What becomes clear in the article is that dialogue requires a particular kind of relationship and interaction. A kind of 'engaging social relation' according to Nicholas Burbules (1993) who elaborates by explaining that the following values and emotions should be present for dialogue to take place: concern, trust, respect, appreciation, affection and hope.

David Bohm (in the Smith collation,1991) sees dialogue as a conversation between equals and explained that there are three basic conditions for dialogue:

- Participants must suspend their assumptions
- Participants must view themselves as colleagues or peers
- In the early stages there needs to be a facilitator who 'holds the context' of the dialogue

In comparison to the above writers, Freire (1985) uses *dialogue* in a specific way. He saw dialogue as a cultural-political tool with the aim of wanting to free and unite the oppressed in a shared language. Freire established this emphasis

on dialogue in popular and informal education and emphasized that dialogue must involve respect, not one person acting on another but rather people working with each other in a co-operative activity. This dialogue is also about making a difference to the world, enhancing the community and building social capital. This Freirean process involves focusing on justice and human flourishing and on those who's voice is suppressed. Furthermore this dialogue is linked to the development of consciousness, a consciousness that has the power to transform reality. In order for this to happen he emphasises that the educational activity must be situated in the lived experience of the participants.

Freire is often criticized for advocating an informal based education while remaining curriculum based and formulating his ideals within a pedagogical space. But his use of dialogue with an emphasis on the oppressed makes his writing an important source for establishing a shared language between the two schools as in this project.

I will use the term 'Freirean dialogue' or 'shared language' when speaking of his ideals in particular and use the word 'dialogue' for the everyday conversation created in the classroom.

Can this ideal shared language, as espoused by Freire in fact be established in reality? Can this kind of 'unity' be created in dealing with learners from such extremely different circumstances as was the case with the Salvazioné/Ridge

project? Although the answer would be “no” to both questions with the idea of a language shared remaining an unattainable ideal, something did happen. Something was shared. What was created can be seen as a rather hybrid kind of a connection, the establishment of another space within which the learners shared what they did. A hybrid situation was established rather than a shared language.

Henry Giroux (1992) and Roger Simon (1992) extended Paulo Freire’s thinking by wanting to broaden parameters of thinking about education and cultural politics. They see critical pedagogy as ongoing and having no fixed rules. Furthermore they see teachers and other cultural workers as “border crossers” that can create alternative public spheres by creating social equality through cultural diversity and thereby co-exist in a democracy. This idea of ‘border crossers’ creates a link to hybridity, being important within the bringing together of the two communities and crossing over to a third space. Crossing over into the alien territory is a new experience for both groups of learners and for curator, artist and educator. The two communities are brought together rather abruptly, more like a clashing than a shared language. Dialogue is created throughout the process of the collaboration with a border crossing taking place at the final event. The kind of dialogue seen during the latter part of the process can be likened to what can be seen as a productive challenge to Eurocentricism (Coombes,2000:39), disrupting boundaries set by the two different parties, namely the state schools and the

ISASA schools. 'Sharing' the space at the Slovo Park event was certainly 'alien' for all audiences present.

2.3.2 Dialogue as used by the educator

Although the educator is in a position to initiate, create and sustain a dialogue or conversation with and between the learners, this dialogue can also be blocked by the educator. Grant and Sleeter (1986:252/3) see the practice and views of the educator being of equal importance to that of the curriculum. They liken these views of the educator to 'blinders'. This could include biases and assumptions that educators follow depending on their skills as teachers, their positions in social structure and their teaching methods. Jansen (1998) also sees these unexplained personal biases as overshadowing good intentions when educators act. Educators need to examine their actions and interests and challenge and confront personal biases. Given the aims of the project this could be seen as one of the key challenges faced during the various phases.

Following from the above, personal meanings and value systems that underlie day-to-day decisions should be 'flushed out' (Stokrocki,1997:36). But is this possible in any subject, in the visual arts in this case? [7] The teacher's "beliefs, emotions and feelings color the outcome for the student, therefore these beliefs, emotions and feelings are valid issues for educational concern" (Fenstermacher,1984:3). The ideals of the art educator are most often

suggested and taken up by the learners while working on practical projects. Although the aim of the production of the art works was 'learner-centred', most of the creative ideas and the structure of the show were ideas suggested by me that the learners followed. But is this an intrinsic part of the educator-learner situation, particularly at primary school level? Although this could be criticized as authoritarian in approach, for me the learners ultimately create and learn through my leadership in the visual arts.

The present outcomes based curriculum suggests a prominent place for the learners' voice with a greater focus on collaborative work, critical and creative thinking, decision-making and problem-solving strategies. This could be intensified by linking arts and culture with a community partnership. Many class teachers in some state schools, lack skills in this field and coupled with limited resources (in the conventional sense), the possibility of offering visual art or any of the other arts and culture subjects seems an insurmountable task. Team teaching within the arts and culture subjects along with financial assistance from a wealthier school, might contribute to some of the aims of the NCS.

Through the 'dialogue' of tensions created by the partnering of two different communities, an avenue or 'voice' was established which both Salvazione and Ridge learners could use. One objective of the collaboration was to try and increase the capacity for the 'voice' of all learners including the capacity to debate, contest, inquire and participate critically. This element of participating

critically is a skill that would be beneficial to all learners. In order for this to happen, it would seem that planning for this to happen would be essential. But a lot of this kind of dialogue occurred by chance in the Salvazioné/Ridge collaboration.

2.4 Collaborative learning

Collaborative as well as cooperative teaching and learning both have a place in the educational space, but the similarities and differences between them need to be addressed.

American Dr Theodore Panitz (1996) specializes in collaborative learning[8]. He explains that cooperative learning is a set of processes in which learners interact in order to accomplish a specific end product or goal. Essentially this remains teacher-centred in task giving, division of groups and facilitating specific content. Collaborative learning, on the other hand, is more than a classroom technique and can be extended into a philosophy of respecting others in the group while sharing authority and accepting responsibility. Another essential aspect is that collaboration is learner-centred. This philosophy could extend into hybridity.

According to Panitz cooperative teaching does not empower the learners. In order for a task to be collaborative, the educator must transfer all authority to the group and ideally the task given to the group should remain open-ended. But

can this ever happen? Planning and assessment must be effectively done by the educator before commencement of the task. Collaborative teaching and learning and learner-centredness is more conducive to arriving at hybrid spaces.

Learner-centredness is an aspect of my project that I wanted to foreground and highlight as a key element. The actual success of this will be elaborated on at a later stage. Learner-centredness refers to a willingness to shift roles within the traditional teaching-learning environment where educator and learner are co-learners in the process of acquiring learning and transferring knowledge. It also allows the learners to build on their own interests and skills thereby creating a more effective learning environment from the learner's point of view.

It is possible for learner-centredness to take place in both cooperative and collaborative teaching spaces. When these two approaches are combined they have a 'transaction' orientation[9]. Educators should choose the most suitable approach for the learning environment, the learners and the ultimate educational goal.

Panitz (1996) elaborates that collaborative teaching and learning is a *dialogue* between the student and the curriculum. "A conversation in which, teachers and students learn together through a process of negotiation with the curriculum to develop a shared view of the world"[8]. Linking this up to Freire's dialogue, this remains one of the key elements I sought in my project.

In advocating this approach in arts education I am extending the idea that learners can learn from teachers, artists, their community and each other. This would move teaching beyond 'telling' and towards dialogue (Bentz,1985:4). It is a range of voices talking within the dialogue. In order to achieve this dialogue, the focus needs to be on the process rather than the end result. The dialogue should start with the learner and continue with the guidance or assistance, ideas and encouragement of the educator or artist. This is needed to keep the conversation or process going until the goal is reached. The idea that the process should be at "the heart of an alternative cultural pedagogy" (Goodman,1986:22) is underlined by American art critic and curator, Valerie Cassel (2000:4) who argues that the focus in arts education should not be on the objects but on the people. Learners should actively participate, be challenged and their own experience and knowledge drawn upon. Teachers should become learners while learners sometimes teach. It is much more than just putting learners in groups.

2.5 Bringing artists into the classroom

Bringing artists into the classroom is also a kind of collaboration. A collaboration that can potentially enable a kind of Freirean shift. This shift can reflect "a

pedagogy of possibility" and even become a "vital mode engaging in the task of social transformation" (Simon, 1992:35).

In the 1980's in England, the 'Critical Studies in Art Education Project' (CSAE) was established with a very strong interest in artist-in-residence schemes, starting with the Wigan scheme in Dumcroon where artists and teachers worked closely together. Since then the practice of artists being employed in classrooms is well documented in both Great Britain and the United States and today it seems quite commonplace. In both Great Britain and the United States funding and publications are available from various sources to assist teachers and artists working together in schools.

An aim that many art educators share is the wish to see knowledge gained in the art room as enriching the learners' lives which extends beyond formal schooling. The presence of artists in the classroom can enhance the teaching and learning programme which could include other subjects. Sharp and Dust (1997) claim that not only is the curriculum enriched but the profile of the subject in school is enhanced, enthusiasm created and at the same time critical skills are developed. They claim that a link with the community is provided through the presence of the artists who could become role models. They could teach learners new skills, concepts and ideas that could spread to other schools in the community. As yet, this has not been implemented in many schools in South Africa and these potentially positive advantages have yet to be established.

Linking the artists to a community project could stimulate a wide range of ideas, discussion and learning which is why I wanted this element added to the collaboration. The artists need to remember the importance to remain flexible in planning and build on any unexpected ideas that could develop without prescribing or hampering individualism (Dawtry,1996:97). In my experience, primary school art can often restrict learner's individualism. This can often be seen in artworks appearing almost indistinguishable from each other. Cassel (2000:6) writes that this would include how the learners view themselves rather than focusing on what adults assume they need or would like to focus on. The artist – driven workshops were aimed at facilitating *learner* knowledge that could extend beyond the classroom through an exploration of different skills and learning approaches.

In a local context, this type of research is ongoing, but there is very little published material documenting and critiquing these procedures. One project focussed on artists in the classroom is the initiative lead by the Curriculum Development Project. Started in March 2002 in partnership with the Witwatersrand University School of Arts, it initiated a programme of artists looking at schools and Community Art Centres.[10] The CDP is a non-profit, registered trust established in the late 1980's in response to the total lack of relevant creative education and training for mainly disempowered communities. Alternative paths for the training of arts and culture educators are being sought through this partnership. A pilot implementation of the programme was targeted

in ten schools in the inner city of Johannesburg. Their programme includes the initiative of training self-employed artists to share their skills and knowledge with the community and shifting away from expensive, elitist types of visual art. The CDP is interesting in that they see arts and culture education as one of the most powerful vehicles for transformation. In their information booklet it states the following:

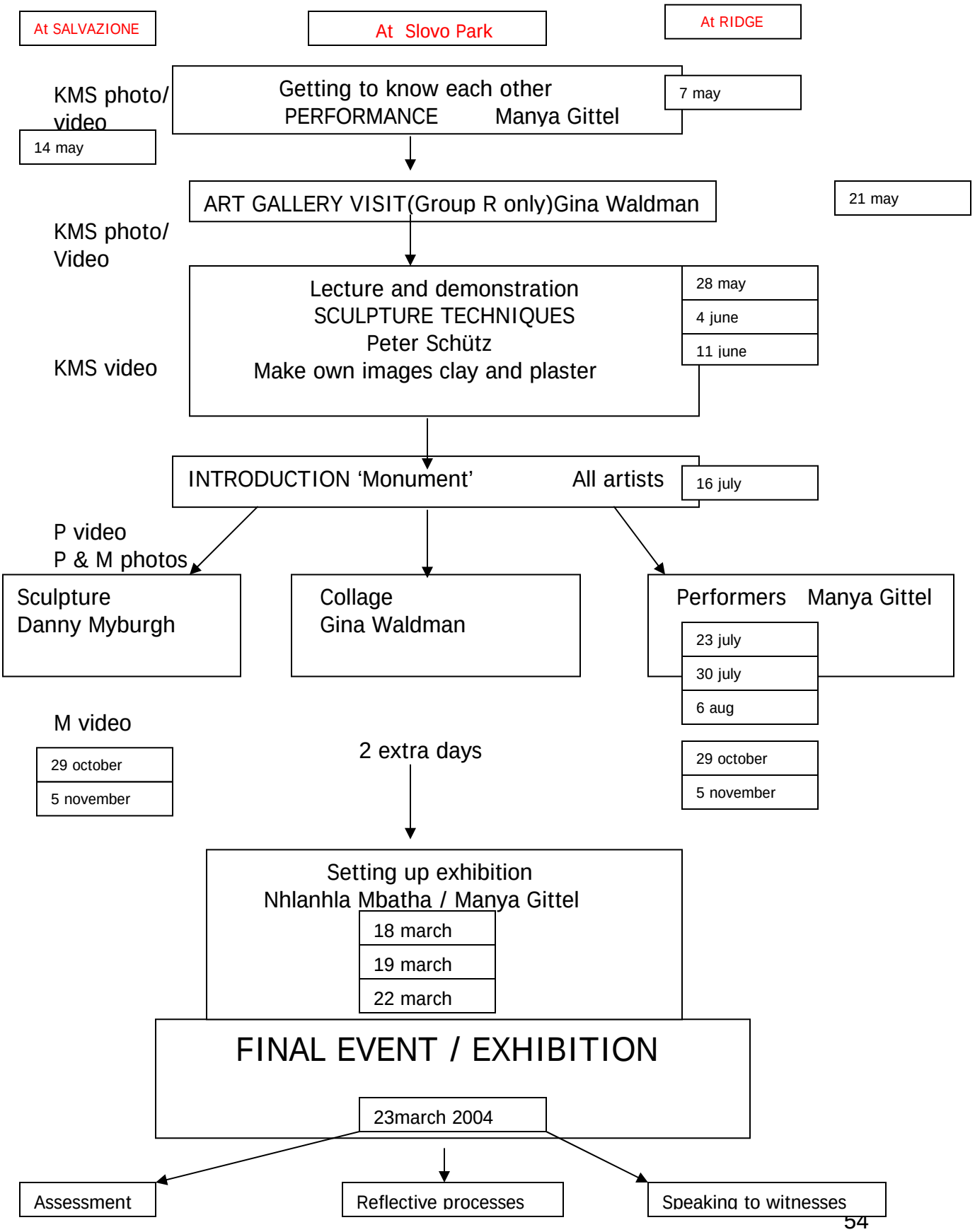
> "...enabling unique multi-modal forms of knowing through creative and expressive acts, a sense of identity and healing, and the celebration of commonality and diversity". CDP information leaflet (2004)

The above alludes to an important aim of celebrating diversity and I feel this could be important at a GETC level. With hindsight although the use of artists in the classroom was not absolutely essential in achieving what I did with the project, their presence added a dimension that would otherwise have been missing in this palimpsest like project.

NOTES:

1. "Outreach" meaning to provide services beyond conventional limits, as to particular segments of a community [online] available from http://education.yahoo.com/reference/dictionary/entries/65/00166500.html [accessed on 5 July 2003]. The word "outreach" is currently being replaced within the Independent schools in South Africa with the word "community partnership". The latter seems to indicate a two-way relationship, which is what I am advocating through this project. "Community partnership" as a concept goes back to 1813 to Robert Owen, a Welshman who set up innovative social and industrial workshops for children in Scotland. [online] available on http://education.yahoo.com/search [accessed on 5 July 2003}.
2. Hofmeyr,J. (2003:2) *Growing Together*,ISASA,South Africa.
3. Michaelhouse/Independent Schools of South Africa Community Partnership Conference "Transformation through Partnership" 23 – 25 October 2003. Goals where explained in the Conference Programme.
4. Bam,B.(2003:5 *)"Communication and Trust"* Keynote Address Michaelhouse.
5. Smith,N. 2001 *'Dialogue and Conversation'* [online] available on http://www.infed.oeg/biblio/b-dialgh.html [accessed on 3 October 2003].
6. David Tripp (1993:148-9) was referring specifically to a collaboration between an academic and a teacher.
7. But can personal meanings and value systems that underlie day-to-day decisions be 'flushed out'? One way to do this is by educators "mobilizing a collective power base" (Sleeter and Grant (1986:254) in school and with other schools. This is recommended by IEB Outcomes Based Assessment training. This course is run by the IEB which I attended in 2000. By creating a cell group with schools in the surrounding areas one can help each other by creating exemplars, share ideas, assisting each other, especially in assessing practical work which by its very nature can be very biased, depending on the taste of the educator. A standard could be then be set within the district, the region and ultimately the country.
8. Panitz,T.1996 *Cooperative learning* [online] available at http://www.lgu.ac.uk/deliberations/collab.learning/panitz2.html [accessed on 3 November 2003] In the myriad of information available, this short article summarizes relevant points needed for this report very succinctly.
9. Panitz,T. 2003 Cooperative Learning vol.11 [online] http://www.lgu.ac.uk/deliberations/collab.learning/panitz2.html [accessed on 4 July 2003]
10. Discussed at a Wits School of Arts presentation "Artists in Schools and Community Art Centers – An innovative Response to a Critical Need" 5 June 2003. A report was released in April 2003 reporting their findings to date.

Figure 1:
WORKSHOPS LEADING UP TO EVENT



Chapter 3. THE RIDGE AND SALVAZIONÉ COLLABORATIVE PROJECT

3.1 Initial planning

In my role as not only curator but also educator, facilitator and artist, the primary tool used for gathering data was participant observation. This method is described by Mary Stokrocki (1997:37-38) as important to the arts researcher who can "learn from people" rather than just study them. This is similar to the position adopted by Cassel (2000) referred to earlier in this research report. The process of describing, analyzing and interpreting is multidimensional with three possible stances: complete observer, full participant or half participant and half observer. A combination of all three is termed triangulation, which is the process I have used. The use of questionnaires, interviews, diary writing and videotaping were other key methodological devices employed in the process.

Participant observation went hand in hand with facilitating and planning throughout the process, up to and including the final event. The most important planning events included:

- Obtaining written permission from learners, parents and both schools.
- Financial planning which was realized before the start of the project; the Ridge paid for all materials and artists fees. Sponsorship was secured for many of the requirements for the event.

- Timetabling the project which was planned over a total of ten active weeks spread over a fourteen-week period to accommodate both GDE and IEB (Independent Examination Board) terms. Permission was granted from both schools to work during normal school time. Two extra days were added to complete artwork excluding the time used for planning, rehearsing the performances and setting up the event. Workshops took place mainly in the art room at The Ridge and in the Salvazioné church hall.



Photo 2: Learners outside the Mayfair Baptist Church.



Photo 3: On the Herzog sports field at The Ridge School with Eunice Gous and Manya Gittel.

3.2 Workshops leading up to event

I planned ten weeks of artist-driven activities or workshops that took place at both Salvazioné and The Ridge. A broad outline of these activities can be seen on Figure 1 on page 54.

3.2.1 The artists involved

In order to extend learner knowledge of the visual arts, I selected artists working in the disciplines of sculpture and performance, areas I normally do not teach. Performance would also extend the visual arts and include drama.

- The first artist is Manya Gittel, a masters graduate, who works as an Interactive Change Theatre facilitator. She initiated a 'getting to know you' project phase with two weeks of performance focusing mainly on 'mirror images'. These two weeks formed the introduction to the project.



Photo 4: Learners on Herzog sports field at The Ridge in initial performance mirror images working with Manya Gittel.

- Secondly Peter Schütz, a well-known South African sculptor and retired sculpture lecturer, demonstrated different sculpture techniques specifically showing learners how to use plaster of paris and impress shapes into clay. The learners then made individual plaster images.
- The third artist was Gina Waldman, a recent graduate of a Masters in Fine Art degree who specializes in found object art and multimedia. She took the learners on a tour of the Johannesburg Art Gallery focusing on found object images.

All three of the above artists are affiliated with The University of Witwatersrand. Two other educators played key roles in the establishment of a collaboration between the two schools:

- Eunice Gous, the grade six class teacher from Salvazioné, and
- Danny Myburgh, a Ridge parent and artist who is also an art therapist in training. She sometimes assists me in teaching art at The Ridge School.

Initially artists were selected because they were easily available. During the course of the project these choices turned out to be problematic. A more involved and critical selection initially would have ironed out difficulties encountered at later stages of the collaboration. The lack of diversity in selecting artists for this project showed up my white, middle class, teacher trained, four year Fine Arts Degree training. It reflected a very narrow conception of art and art concepts at this level of study, I experienced feelings of inadequacy and

inexperience after leaving university seventeen years ago. I was still very firmly rooted in the apartheid era. My 'blinders', as explained earlier by Sleeter and Grant (1986) were firmly in place. Nhlanhla Mbatha, a multimedia artist focusing on land art, was brought in to assist in the build up and layout of setting up the art event, a crucial part of the whole process.

3.2.2 Workshop tasks

The learners were originally divided into two separate groups. The experimental group consisted of twenty six boys (class 6P) from The Ridge and eighteen grade six learners from Salvazioné consisting of five boys and thirteen girls. The 'control group' was class 6W, twenty six boys from The Ridge. The latter had no contact with Salvazioné until the final preparations for the event, by which time the groups had become intermingled and largely obsolete.

The initial planned theme in both the visual and performance groups was a 'monument' to show the establishment of a community partnership between The Ridge and Salvazioné. The theme of a monument was built around the narrow idea of a unity or possibility of togetherness that was assumed on my part. At the onset of the project my vision was limited to a 'rainbow nation' or multicultural idea of diversity. All the facilitators met before starting the workshops and again later just before learners broke up into smaller groups. Discussing ideas around a monument, a three-dimensional piece or pieces were

envisaged with all the learners working collectively to make up some kind of a public piece showing the manifestation of time spent together. A symbolization was imagined in the art pieces showing the connection between the schools. This visual art piece or pieces were then to remain at the new school as a reminder of the learning exchanges that were internalised.

As the workshops progressed it became clear that this ‘monument’ theme as a literal three-dimensional piece or pieces was not going to work out as the artists and I had originally envisaged. After a four week break, with all the facilitators present, learners were introduced to the idea of making an image of themselves. This self representation is linked to the underlining the concept of the ‘voice’ of the learner coming to the fore. Ultimately the ‘voices’ created in the visual artwork tended to remain rather individual in most of the figures that were made. This could possibly have been more successful as a ‘dialogue of voices’ if these self images were linked up with the ‘mirror’ ideas first conceptualized with Manya Gittel’s performance workshops, which were very successful as interaction between Salvazioné and Ridge learner.

The learners were encouraged to make this self image in any form and in their own choice of media. To give the learners some ideas Gina Waldman gave a slide show of her own multi-media work and Peter Schütz showed them images from a book about David Hockney “Painting the Stage”. This gave the learners some ideas of figures in spaces and how they could be made.



Photo 5: Large scale printed environment designed by David Hockney 1983 *The Rake's Progress,* ink, charcoal and canvas 120cm x 192cm x192cm

After the learners formed their own groups, they elected to be involved in one of the following groups:

- **Performance** (with Manya Gittel)
- **Found object construction / Painting / Drawing**

  (With Gina Waldman, Eunice Gous and Danny Myburgh) or
- **Sculpture**(with Peter Schütz)



Photo 6: 'Cut-outs' of learner figures in paper lying on the floor in The Ridge art room

The learners started off by making a life-size paper cut out representation of themselves (see photos 6, 7 and 8). The learners successfully worked together in assisting each other with the outlining of their body contours onto large sheets of paper and then cutting them out.

Unfortunately both Peter Schütz and Gina Waldman were unable to continue working with the project so the groups changed resulting in the following three groups:

- **Performance** (Manya Gittel)
- **Found object / collage** (Eunice Gous)
- **Sculpture** (Danny Myburgh)



Photo 7: VM (Salvazioné) tracing AR's (Ridge) outline on paper outside Ridge art room



Photo 8: Learner cut-outs hanging on a stand

In order for easy identification and discussion amongst the learners and facilitators including arrangement of these at the final event, easily identifiable labels were given to the groups of self-images. These 'labels', selected for convenience, could have served as an ideal opportunity for learners to have their voices heard. These labels include:

- Society people (these include a Scottish rapper, Mr. Bean, several ‘rich’ ladies dripping in expensive jewellery and people made entirely of food images)
- “Stuffed people” – these were named as such as they were literally stuffed with newspaper to make a three-dimensional form. These figures were later dressed in real clothing; these included a mayor and James Bond.



Photo 9: DM(Ridge) with his rock artist figure and MC(Salvazioné) with his cheetah self-image



Photo 10:CLK(Ridge) and The Mayor a ‘stuffed figure’ under construction

- Carpet images were collages glued onto a carpet and displayed on the floor; these included Michael Schumacher and a murdered man
- Soccer players
- Zebras, other animals and natural features including a tree-man

Many of the collage images tore with arms and limbs going missing, a practical problem of workshops stretching over a long period of time. As a result another group formed which was:

- Paraplegics. This was not meant to be derogatory and many interesting discussions were had with the learners on how to display these figures including hiring wheelchairs and seating the figures on an old couch.

At the final event all the collaged images were displayed in the same way, namely doubled up on two sided easels almost like standing figures present at the event.



Photo 11: Zebra and Society images by Salvazione learners



Photo 12: EA (Ridge) with his "Paraplegic" image

Gina Waldman's influence can be seen in found objects used by the learners including toy cars, a 'real' gas mask and clothing. Danny Myburgh bought reams of brightly coloured material including material printed with ANC imagery.

At the end of the ten weeks of workshops, two extra mornings were organized to complete the visual art pieces. During this time the performance group worked with Eunice Gous in the church hall to make 'learner-made' catalogues in which all the preliminary drawings and photos were made into three books showing the process of the collaboration. Included were logos, school uniforms and class room designs made by both groups of learners. Designs of ideas that learners had of unifying the individual plaster images made with Peter Schütz were also included.

These three colourful catalogues gave Eunice Gous, the grade six class teacher from Salvazioné, her first opportunity to work with both groups of learners independently of the artists. Under her supervision, evidence of the learners working collaboratively can be seen documented in the art work. This time spent at the Mayfair Baptist church also enabled the performance group to contribute examples of visual art to the exhibition/event.





Photo 13 and Photo 14: Eunice Gous working in the church hall with the performance learners in putting together the large, hand -made catalogues

Apart from these individual images, large planning drawings were collaboratively made, making up central pieces of the exhibition. Working in groups the learners explored various ways in which the images could be placed in a given space. Using various drawing media learners worked on large sheets of paper exploring three different venues. An art gallery, the church hall or in a tent, were the three options given to the groups. These were the venues that were available for the

event. Within these spaces the orchestration of the stage, screen and projector, food and drink areas and all the self images were conceptualized by the learners. Originally worked on in groups, the drawings were then rotated so that each learner was able to represent him/herself in all of the drawings, either as an artwork (representation of self) or as a performer. The learners completed a simple questionnaire to identify which of the three spaces they found to be most suitable; and then gave a reason for their choice. As a result of this process the *tent* was selected by the learners as the most suitable place for the event. Here are a few responses as to why they chose this:

"I think there will be more of an atmosphere"

" because i want people to see my new school"

"It will be different"

" because that is where our school will be"

"It promotes the location of the school and it feels more open"



Photo 15: Charcoal plan for event inside tent with Thabo Mbeki flag being put together

3.2.3 Preparations for an art event using 'space' as a medium

Three days were spent preparing and setting up the space where the planned opening of the art event would take place. The piece of land destined to become the Slovo Park Community School, although an empty field of land, is in fact loaded with unique symbolism (see photo 1). As it is situated adjacent to the Slovo Park informal settlement it created different meanings for the different parties involved in the project. The Ridge community were invited to go to a place they would normally avoid and for the Slovo Park community, a whole range of tensions was set up because they too did not know what to expect. A situation similar to what is described by Coombes earlier as moving or "descending into an alien territory" or space was set up. During this evolution I

was exposed to a number of planned and unplanned elements. This experience continued to contribute to the shifts that were taking place in my teaching and learning.

The site specific art event envisaged using ‘space’ as a medium. South African artist and lecturer Clive van den Berg (2003) explains that a specific site is loaded with symbolic meaning whereas a gallery tends to be neutral with no tensions and not much dialogue. Had this event taken place at an art gallery, the church hall or The Ridge school art room, a totally different set of parameters would have been set up. All these places are ‘safe’, quite normal places for learners and the community and the conditions for hybridity would certainly have been lacking. Having the event in the open field showed up the many differences and similarities between the learners from the two communities. Learners from both schools were placed in an unfamiliar situation. The Ridge learners are accustomed to the annual art exhibition in The Ridge art room, while the Salvazioné learners had not been exposed to this kind of cultural affair previously. Features such as serving cocktails and awarding prizes are foreign to them. On the other hand they were far more comfortable at the Slovo Park site, which holds something of the future in it; this being the space where they hoped their new school would be built.

By adopting this conception of ‘space’ as a medium, the present perception of arts and culture in a primary school was challenged. Van den Berg explains that

a 'traditional'[1] monument in public art is usually a kind of colonial sculpture. Made from a 'precious' material like bronze, it is high, looking down onto the audience. In contrast, by *using space*, the monolith which usually makes up public art is challenged. It becomes an installation which allows the audience to become a part of the art work, as opposed to artworks being looked at by the audience. This provides an important bridge between art and society. Just as the presence of hybridity became more discernable over the two years I was involved in this project, so too the idea to use 'space' as medium evolved. Given the realization that the space was critical to the project, the original idea of a monumental sculpture fell away.

In using space as a medium this event also becomes part of the public art realm. 'Public art' is described in ARTLEX[3] as "*expressing civic values, enhancing the environment, transforming a landscape, heightening awareness's, or questioning our assumptions."* These descriptions certainly match some of the intentions in the latter part of the project. The definition continues; *"Placed in a public site, this art is therefore for everyone, a form of collective community expression."* This would have been the ideal but a conscious effort was made to make it a school event for the children from Salvazioné and The Ridge. The community was informed of the event (Appendix 2) by way of pamphlets and by word of mouth. The news of both the event and the earmarking of the site for the Slovo Park Community School, spread through the neighborhood, residential area and informal settlement.

It is noteworthy that this project occurs during the tenth year of democracy in South Africa. Jane Taylor (2002:4-7), in a keynote address at a conference on Public Art in contemporary South Africa, addressed several noteworthy issues about public art. She refers to the presence of audience as 'witnessing'. She regards the notion of audience as an integral part of a public work and says that by reinventing public spaces one can challenge and shift notions of citizenship through documentation. The elections held in 1994 are for her a real act of public art. A mass community jointly participated in something that was transformed into a new public 'thing', a new South Africa and the creation of a National Constitution (2002:10).

This provides an interesting link to Appadurai's "capacity to aspire" by bringing the future into the relationship between democracy and development. He makes it clear that a dialogue can be built between aspirations and sedimented traditions (2003:19). He says this is possible by changing our focus to the future. He believes that this can have direct implications for increasing the ability of the poor to truly participate in the aims of their own development. It was hoped that the use of space as an arts and culture medium could instill this kind of thinking in the Ridge and Salvazioné learners.

3.2.4 Working on the site to prepare for the event

During the first two days the learners were introduced to land art while exploring the space where the tent was to be erected. On the third day the tent was in place and the actual artwork arranged inside and around the tent.

The proposed site for the Slovo Park community school is situated adjacent (in the south side) to the informal settlement from where it will get its name. Bordering the west and north are houses of the area Langlaagde, originally an area of houses for railway workers. On the east are the Spoornet offices. The grass is long with debris scattered across the field. A central 'man-made' pathway cuts through the site from north to south. There is a deep trench on the north and east making access difficult.

Land artist Nhlanhla Mbatha and I negotiated and debated on where the tent would go and what activities the learners would take part in over the three days. Many of the ideas only evolved during the process of creating the artworks. The learners could have been included in the initial planning. Many unexpected elements made for a palimpsest event (see the layout as it resulted on page 77) rather than a sequential, organized plan. This echoed my own overlapping roles within the project; curating, organizing, facilitating, teaching, creating and learning.

When the learners first got together in the veld, a few months had gone by since the workshops and the learners from both schools sat very clearly apart from each other, The Ridge boys looked visibly uncomfortable. The space they were in was foreign to them; one Ridge learner wrote:

“I thought it would be more like a park with smooth ground and green grass it was nothing like that.”

The creation of a “third space”, disturbing the boundaries of both groups of learners, included crossing preconceived notions of ‘safe’ and comfortable places.

Other issues including the occupation and transformation of the space, of the learners leaving a trace through their presence were discussed by myself and Nhlanhla Mbatha (see brainstorming diagram on page 75). The positioning of the tent as an intervention over the pathway was planned, allowing for the possibility of a chance audience. Would the residents who use the path daily continue to do it, or would they avoid the path? Would they see our activities as an intrusion? The role of the security guards was to play an important role in this regard as they would let no one near the tent. Learners were only allowed to enter accompanied by a teacher.





Photo 16: Traces left on the Slovo Park site after two days

Photo 17: Putting up the tent over the traces

Brainstorming by KMS and NM for set up of the site:

SPECTATORSHIP:

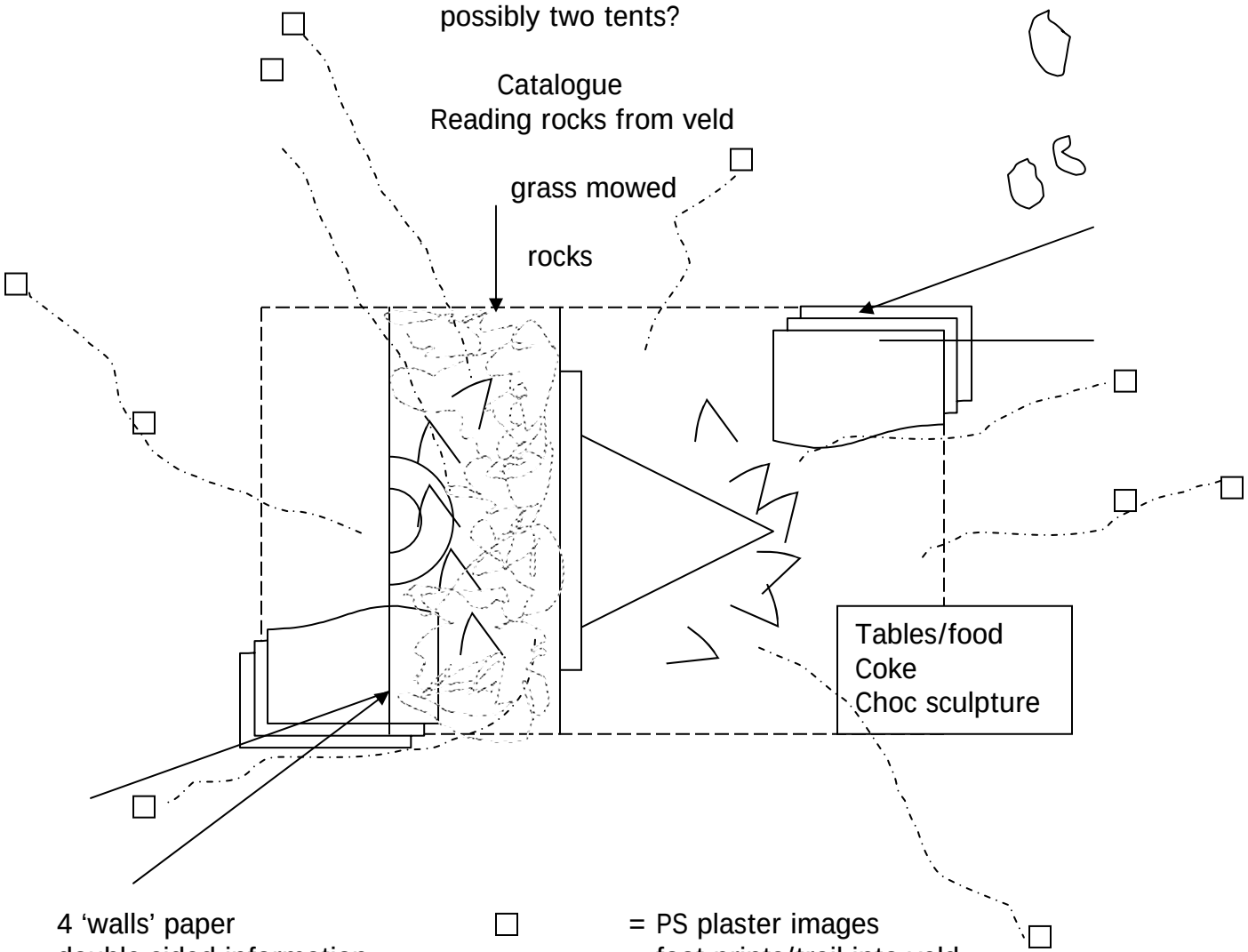
Eclectic Installation Public

possibly two tents?

Catalogue
Reading rocks from veld

grass mowed

rocks



4 'walls' paper = PS plaster images
double sided information ------- = foot prints/trail into veld
large drawings corners
"pedestrian" passing glance = easel

Maze
Soccer field
Stage
Graffiti
Footprints
Found objects
Screen
Reportage

A third of the approximately sixty learners practiced their performance scenes with Manya Gittel facilitating, while the visual artists explored the outside space with Nhlanhla Mbatha. The nine by eighteen metre tent was roughly demarcated using large strides. We then created an 'outline' of these parameters; firstly with the learners' bodies, then the plaster cast images made with Peter Schütz and finally with chevron tape held down by stones collected on the site. The chevron tape remained in place for the event as a demarcation but also as a trace of our presence.

The children divided into four groups to make a collaborative work of their own choice. This can be seen as a continuation of the independent process encouraged in making their self image. The facilitators intervened by directing the learners to interact with the space by collecting items. Bits and pieces of plastic, metal, paper and natural elements were found on the site and made into an artwork of their choice. Issues of the environment were discussed before the children explored the space. Each group was allocated to a corner of the tent. At this point it is noteworthy that apart from one group, there was no integration of learners from the two schools. This was a repetition of what had happened at the workshops. The same group of Ridge and Salvazioné children interacted with each other, while the remaining groups remained distinctly separate.

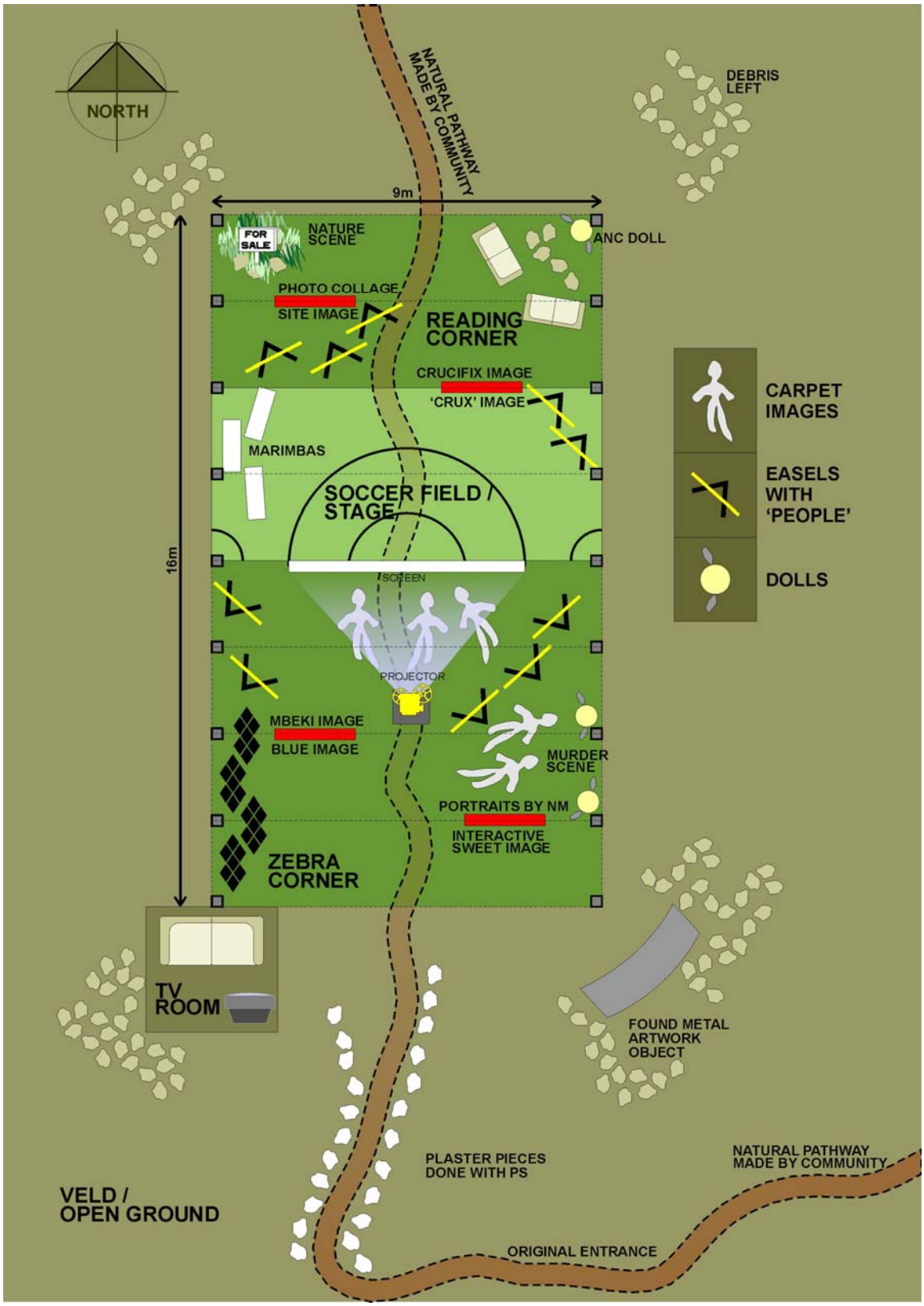


Figure 2 : Layout of site with artwork

In the **north-west corner**, natural elements were used to create a little landscape to feature inside the tent. Stones, branches and leaves were arranged with their plaster images, and finally they added a found "For Sale" sign. This group consisted of only boys from The Ridge. Most of the children remained in groups that consisted of their friends. These boys were in a group that had previously made their self-images into 'stuffed' people.

"I enjoyed collecting leaves and stuff because it let us rome around and learn about the area around us. Even if it is pollution, soil and trees."

"Some things I enjoyed when making land art was it was fun, we could make anything and there was teamwork."

In the **north-east corner**, a group of girls from Salvazione, who had previously made their self images as the collaged "Society People" continued the idea of a 'doll' image by using large polystyrene shapes to form a large person with a paper plate face and hands. These ladies possibly represent what the girls would like to be – rich, and so wealthy that they are dripping with jewels. They later 'dressed' the figure with a piece of ANC material with a repeated image of Nelson Mandela. The ANC doll was placed inside the corner.

"I enjoyed collecting rubbish and turning it into creative art…"





Photo 18 and 19: ANC 'doll' in north-east corner of tent dressed in the ANC colours

In the **south-east corner**, a metal mattress was rolled up by a group of Ridge boys, to create an image 'decorated' with cans and tufts of grass. This collection of metal and related objects became a potent image as a result of the learner discussion. The video made with Danny Myburgh included this learner discussion in which references to the symbolism of the work and analogies to drugs were made. This image is linked to an unexpected event that occurred on the first day. About twelve Ridge boys wondered off unaccompanied by any adults (there were however a few Salvazione learners present), walking the one kilometer or ten minute walk to the church. Not only was this a huge disruption to the three performance groups but also a safety issue with the boys spreading a rumour that they were offered drugs on the road. It was interesting to note that this 'drug-offering' incident involved some of the same group of Ridge boys who

made this metal image. Their references on video to ‘weed’ show the interests of these learners are very different to those of the previous two groups.



Photo 20: Metal scrap image with houses of Langlaagde in the background

The use and access to the different kinds of material found on site shows the creativity that can emerge from using waste or found materials in contrast to the often expensive materials found in a more conventional art room. The use of these could shift arts and culture learning into a different realm, possibly linked to the strange sense of descending into an unknown territory as alluded by Coombes earlier. The images were in stark contrast to those created in the earlier stages of the collaboration.

“Nhlanhla the artist… had very good ideas… collecting items in the field was interesting, to see what items and intrecates where in that field.”

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The **fourth image** was created by the only group which had a combination of Ridge and Salvazioné learners. This was the original ‘zebra’ group that Danny Myburgh had facilitated. This group consisted of learners making their images into animals. There included mainly zebras, a cheetah, a ‘rock artist’ and a tree image. This group of images was placed inside the same corner. In comparing this group to their working earlier at the Ridge school, Danny Myburgh noticed that both groups of learners were more comfortable on their ‘own turf’. In spite of the fact that The Ridge and Salvazioné learners were working together in this group, no real unity occurred. The girls from Salvazioné where shy and withdrawn at The Ridge but later on, at the field they were almost ‘bossy’, ordering the boys from both schools around. They collected plastic elements and created a room with a bed, couch and a TV. Could this interior space created with modern conveniences allude to some sense of the future? A discussion with the group about this could have led to interesting discussions and comparisons between the children. An interesting contrast of a ‘space’ created outside the tent to the ‘nature’ people they had made during the workshops, which were to be placed just inside the same corner of the tent (see the positioning of the ‘zebra’ corner and the ‘TV room’ on the diagram on page 77). It was interesting to note the younger children from the informal settlement really enjoyed playing ‘house’ in the space after it was completed.



Photo 21: TV Room image outside south-west corner with chevron tape visible

The bringing together of a *space of contrasts* and a *people of contrasts* created an intriguing situation that could be described as a puzzle. Perhaps even a riddle that emerges showing the totally different children we are dealing with. The differences also extend to the parents and the assumptions they have about people. This includes The Ridge learners assumptions about the Salvazioné community as well as the Salvazioné learners assumptions about the Slovo Park inhabitants. The Ridge learners were stressed by the lack of available food and drinks during the setting up of the event, especially having to walk about 600 metres to the nearest tap across the road. These are most probably daily inconveniences in the lives of the children living in the informal settlement.

Working in this space, the children were preparing to put the puzzle together for the invited audience. Preparing this journey had many unexpected elements. On the second day only half of the boys from The Ridge came, a few with sickness

and sports excuses, but for me also a sign that they did not enjoy working with so many inconveniences. In contrast many children from Salvazioné were there, not only the grade sixes. This was especially noticeable on the third day, a public holiday when attendance was not compulsory. On this day only four Ridge boys came to assist in setting up the art work. Many teachers from Salvazioné were also on hand to assist. This keenness and enthusiasm was certainly lacking on The Ridge front.

3.2.5 Setting up the exhibition

Learner explorations and ideas were developed on large planning drawings and formed the basis of my curation of this exhibition[2]. Artlex, an online art dictionary, defines a curator[3] as being a person responsible for collection building; selecting, researching and exhibiting the interests of community members which is reflected in a special exhibition often resulting in the meeting of educational goals. In the publication entitled "Curating. The Contemporary Art Museum and Beyond" edited by Nicola Kearton(1997) it becomes clear that the nature of the word 'curator' in the late twentieth century is a hybrid in itself. It is multi-layered, with the contemporary curator working in many layers and adopting many roles. In this publication curator Lois Keidon (1997) relates curating to:

> "drawing a map to navigate the relationships between artists, art and society, and a structured consideration of interconnected ideas that test the nature of contemporary practices and negotiates complex concerns."

Definitions by other curators include; a curator as a catalyst, creating bridges between art and the public as well as art and other fields (Obrist,1997) and curators creating a conversation or negotiation or renegotiation (McGonagle, 1997). This catalytic quality includes an intermingling and a rupture that in itself alludes to the hybrid.

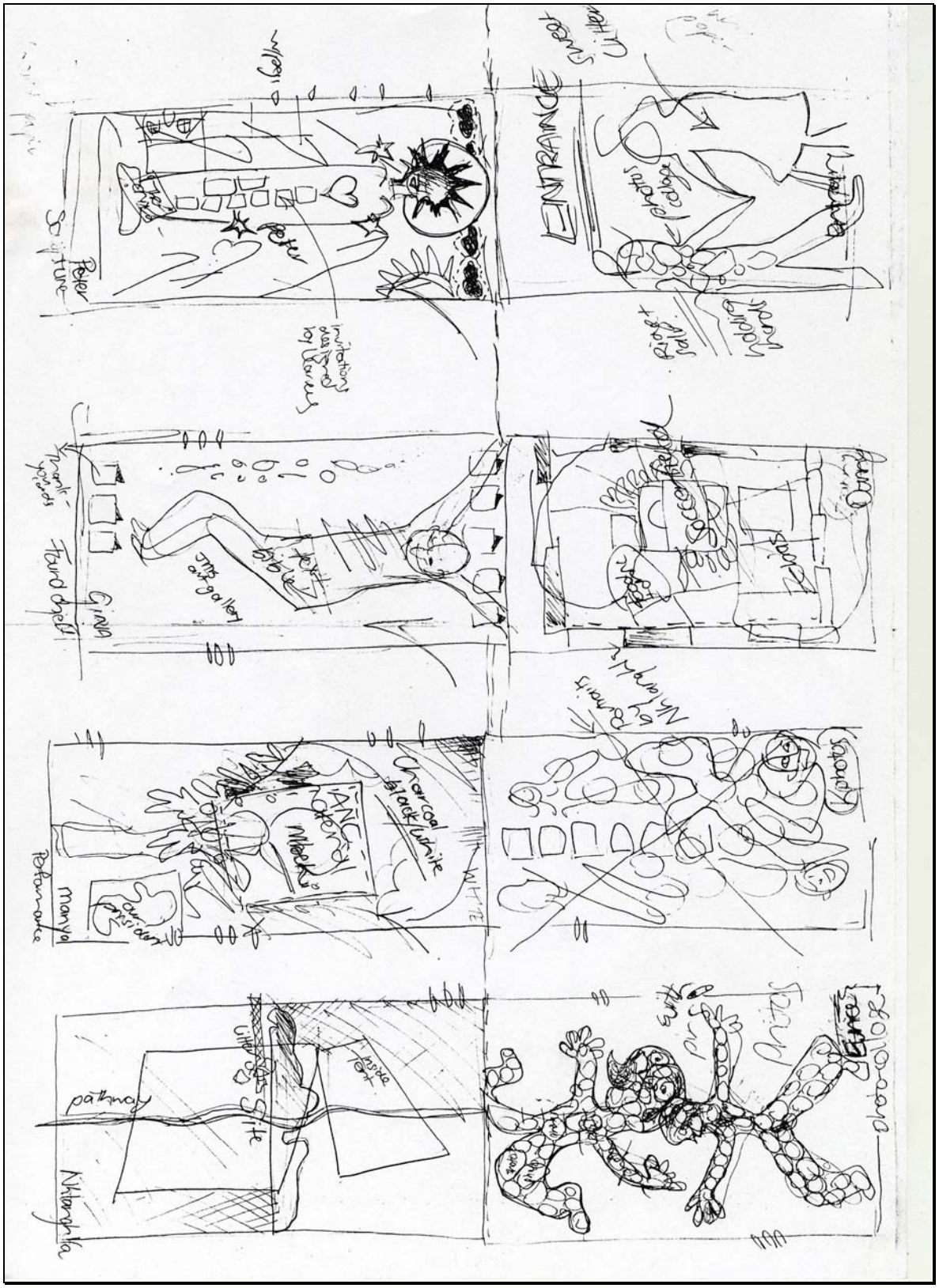


Photo 22: Maquette model looking in at planned entrance following the path with planned 'sweet wrapper' art piece visible

Ideas for the exhibition had begun to 'gel' with the large drawings done by the learners and were then consolidated in a maquette model of the tent into which learners placed tiny miniatures of their representations of self, either as artworks or performers. The metal structures making up the framework of the tent provided the foundation for placement of artworks.

The large flimsy paper drawings were sewn onto eight drops of coloured material four metres high. I had decided to limit the colours to both school colours being grey, pink and blue and I added two in plain calico. Educators and learners sewed the images together with various printed matter including thank you cards, a gallery poster showing Peter Schütz's sculptures and an ANC scarf showing our President's face. Juxtaposing the material back to back, the metal cross bars of the ceiling of the tent were used to hang up the work with wooden washing pegs keeping them together. The material was deliberately made long enough to drape onto the floor and was kept in place by rocks found on the site. Children from Slovo Park, eager to be involved, had collected and painted them.

Echoing the idea of a process, a journey of overlapping ideas and people, each of the eight images was brought together by tying in elements from the learners and the artists' involvement with the learners (see sketches of ideas to make up large drawings on page 86). My own ideas were central in 'creating' the basis for the eight panels. The role of the artist within the overlapping roles of curator took over at this stage of planning the show. The ideas collected from the entire journey were used in a co-operative way with learners, educators and assistants helping me put all the drawings together. One panel pays tribute to Peter Schütz in a reference to an image entitled 'The Crux'.



Sketches of ideas to make up large drawings for the tent, by KMS:

Large parts of the painted image had collage elements in the form of invitations designed by learners for the exhibition. In the border a link is made to the site by mixing sand into the blue paint. A television set was drawn by a learner and a photograph of three Salvazioné learners from the "Healthy Me" TV series acted as a screen; a memory from a collaborative past where learners from the Ridge and Salvazioné made a television programme together in the Ridge art room.

Gina Waldman's presence was echoed in a large black and white crucifix collage, a reminder of Wim Botha's powerful bible image *("commune: suspension of disbelief"*, 2001 installation) experienced by the learners at the Johannesburg Art Gallery during their visit there. According to the press release of Gina Waldman's exhibition "Decorating the Damaged" at The Standard Bank Gallery earlier in the year, the idea of something lurking beneath the surface is emulated by including the actual invitation on the chest of the Jesus image, visible under layers of "white skin". The white skin of the Christ figure was collaged from several written documents made by myself and the learners – linking up to the process we had all gone through but also reminding us that Botha's image was literally 'carved out' of bibles. At the top and bottom of the crucifix image thank you cards made by the Salvazioné learners were sewn.



Photo 23: Crucifix image based on Wim Botha's image seen at the Johannesburg Art Gallery, overlapping a collaborative drawing with thank you cards from Salvazioné learners at top and bottom.

A single layer of wider calico material was placed directly in the middle of the tent to act as a screen for the video and slide show footage. This central feature directly crossed the natural pathway creating an intentional obstruction. In front of the screen a four metre wide 'soccer field' was created out of the natural vegetation. This soccer field also doubled up as the stage which was the allocated area for the performers. A few learners had made their self images as soccer personalities and several of the group drawings had soccer field images

present. This gave me the idea of making this the only section of the site where the grass was cut and then lines painted like in a soccer field.

Instead of having programmes printed, the learners wrote a paragraph about each of the three schools (including the Slovo Park Community school), which were cut up and pinned onto the sides of the screen. This invited the audience to look closer while watching the images projected onto the screen from far. Some examples of the quotes by the learners were:

"Salvazione Christian School is a school with money-challenged pupils in it. It has no facilities. This school is hoping to change to Slovo Park".

"I am so happy because we are going to the new school we are so happy to learn in our new school Joe Slovo Community School. I want to go to a new school"

"The Ridge school is a spoilt school. We help other schools and the community and the environment."

The idea of spectatorship, of people looking at people, witnessing and watching was extended into the ten double sided easels holding some of the learners' people images. This links up some of the key elements of my project including the idea of a public art space. This was extended by the juxtaposition and mingling of a diversity of people including *artworks* of people. Nhlanhla Mbatha extended the idea of watching people by arranging the collaborative works on easels facing the screen. Images portrayed by the learners include a fictitious

murder scene. The learners also created a reading corner where the audience was invited to sit on a rock and look through the catalogues. This idea of people and portraits was to be extended by Nhlanhla Mbatha drawing portraits of all the learners involved. These portraits were to have been completed during the process of setting up the exhibition. In the end however, they were produced on the night of the event.

Working on this unusual 'canvas' of the Slovo Park space was an interesting experience, despite the arrival of many unexpected elements. Manya Gittel was, however, not happy with the space for her performance group:

"performance needs a proper, safe, enclosed, ample and preferably happy, bright space for working and sufficient time to rehearse... I was surprised on Thursday to find we were in an open field space again."

She was happiest when she was working with learners in the Ridge school hall which was not always possible due to other commitments at the school and I think it was very valuable for the learners to practice in the space where their final performance would actually take place. In retrospect I feel there is definitely a place for performance work and land art to work together.

"to talk the truth we were not practicing we were playing but on the night we did very well"

3.3 The art event



Photo 24: Young child with Michael Schumacher carpet image made by a Ridge learner

The Slovo Park event created a space that allowed for several seemingly very different communities to mingle. Not merely juxtaposed, they often clashed. This conflict was sometimes planned but at other times it happened unexpectedly. These interactions seem to allude to a very different kind of arts and culture educational space, one which actively engages the possibilities and potential of hybridity. This 'space' was not intentional from the start, but rather emerged through ingrained social forces being identified and exposed throughout the process. The unplanned for interactions were not part of the original outcomes but only achieved much later in the project. This often indescribable element is

what Coombes (1992:52) says is important in contemporary curating. Power relations in Homi Bhaba's 'hybridity' must not remain intact and unexposed. What was revealed especially during the night of the exhibition is that the Ridge learners' felt somehow 'superior' to the Salvazioné learners but the Salvazioné learners displayed the same attitude towards the Slovo Park residents. These feelings were exposed and showed us not a 'togetherness' of all South African citizens but highlighted an awareness of social hierarchies.

The image of the young child playing with the toy cars (photo 24) placed on the Michael Schumacher carpet image made by a Ridge learner seems to embrace a kind of strangeness; a tension one could call 'hybridity'. Oblivious to the speeches going on around him the little child plays in a fantasy world. The only items that went missing that evening were the four toy cars which according to many audience members held a fascination for many little people that evening.

The 'stage was set' in the space by the orchestration of space through the layering and overlapping of art works and also by the audience and their physical positioning. Right from the start the space in the tent was alive with sound. This was created by the many audience dialogues that became part of the dialogue of the space itself. The unique tension and felt presence in conjunction with the new and varied audience added to the sense of hybridity.



Photo 25: The tent showing people arriving and debris left in situ

This creation of a ‘third space’ as compared to the kind of space usually used for displaying children’s art, created a different kind of ‘mood’ or atmosphere. Once installed in the tent the artwork somehow needed the noticeable sight and sounds of the audience as a necessary feature. This new space on a field had a volatility created by the focus on people rather than objects. There was a particular tension, excitement, and a feeling of celebration in and around the tent that had begun when the people started arriving. These tensions were created by the presence of a whole range of audiences. The Slovo Park community including those affiliated with Salvazioné; those from the northern suburbs, the mostly white community from The Ridge; the working class; homeless people; those affiliated with the University. There was a huge range of

people, from the wealthiest to the poorest, ISASA members, GDE members, parents, brothers and sisters. There was a noticeable tension set up at the beginning of the event, when a diversity of different communities members were brought together.





Photo 26: Inside the tent with security man

Photo 27: People looking in at fruit near screen with learner notes.

At the beginning of the function, a division was set up. This division was created by Ridge community members, mostly white people, going inside the tent with Salvazioné community members, mostly black people, remaining outside. The security men were almost ‘patrolling’, walking up and down the demarcated lines (still present in the chevron tape) and a sense of ‘on the outside looking in’ was created. This seems to have exposed power relations from the past. The

community members had been invited but hesitated to enter. Being restrained by the security staff made these tensions more noticeable. As the organizer of the event, I felt almost powerless and frustrated, wishing them to come in.

And suddenly the tent was crowded. The usual hushed silence when speeches take place at an exhibition opening remained noticeably absent. This was noticed by quite a number of Ridge learners but it did not seem to be an issue for the Salvazioné learners:

“The actual night …was fun with lots of noise”

“ restless, no one was quiet”

“I thought it was OK but it was to crouded and I couldn’t hear or see anything happening”

“caotic”

A variety of issues were brought up about the event by the Ridge learners:

“it was OK but there were a bit uncomfortable, but it was a cool night”.

“…it would have been better to have the exhibition in an art gallery”.

“too many speeches, performances and dances and not enough looking at art”

“I have accually never been so scared of being in a place people were screaming from the squattacamp not for the show but to steal sweets and coke I have never hated something more”

“ theft and noise was a bit disturbing’

The last points concerning the stealing issue, were the ones that really disturbed most of the Salvazioné children. They were all very bitter that the cool drinks, sweets and fruit which they felt were meant for them were taken by what they considered to be intruders.

" I di'nt Enjoyed Because people they were Fighting for the Food I well never forget that day because is the Fighting day"

"I hate when people jumped on the fruits maybe he didn't bath and he stinks and I will never forget that day all the people were angry"

"my mother says those people are dogs ... I never even got one sweet or chocolate"

"I enjoyed exbition when I was doing my activities, traditional dance (zulu), performance and marimbas from then I didn't enjoy cause people were fighting for fruits, drinks and sweets. I did even get.'

Most of them blamed other children and adults from the squatter camp but a lot of them also blamed the security people. The issue surrounding food and drink is a critical element in this event which was foreshadowed in selection of the site and the stark contrast between the two communities: The Ridge boys complained bitterly that they had nothing to eat and drink in the veld and had to walk to a tap across the road for a drink of water. This was portrayed clearly in the video where The Ridge boys 'pretended' that they were hostages being held against their will and dying of thirst and hunger. I had not realized at that point that this would become an essential point in the collaboration.

The presence of a huge excited crowd including very young children made the evening quite trying for the audience (trying to listen) and the speakers (trying to speak). This was particularly noticeable during the planned silent performance. The seemingly large tent felt too small, very crowded and hemmed in, with children desperately scrambling to get closer. The playing of the marimbas, the dancing and performance caused great excitement, reaching a peak when the sweets were made available. This interactive art piece was meant to welcome viewers at the entrance. With the benefit of hindsight this should have been rethought. This sweet-wrapper interactive art piece was subsequently improvised by Nhlanhla Mbatha who pinned cool drink can wrappers onto the large piece of material. On the other side of this scene Nhlanhla Mbatha had intended to draw portraits of all the learners on the site as one of the planned activities while setting up the tent. As I had mentioned previously, the idea behind the portraits was to link up with the representations of self seen throughout the project. Unfortunately an unforeseen transport problem he had on that day necessitated improvisation. He then drew the portraits on the night of the event. He drew the children on loose A4 sheets of pink paper which were to be pinned onto pink material on the back of the 'sweet scene'. It was unfortunate that rather than pinning up the portraits he never revealed them but kept them in a folder.

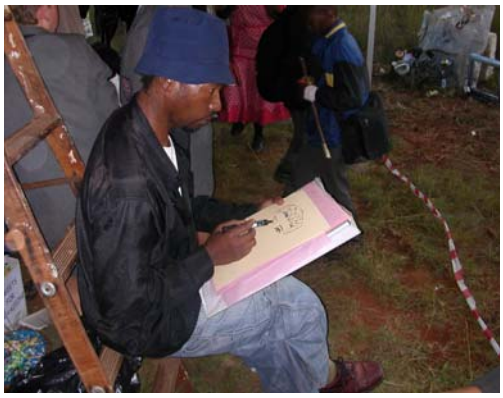




Photo 28 and 29: Nhlanhla Mbatha drawing a portrait of Ridge learner AM at the art event

The idea of remaining flexible continued throughout the formalities and the planned became unplanned. There was some departure from the planned speeches with a GDE official wanting to say a few words and two artists not arriving.

Learner participation was foregrounded at the event by two learners, JEF from the Ridge and EK from Salvazioné. Instead of inviting a guest speaker, the two learners assisted with the speeches. They asked questions prepared in advance to educators and artists involved in the project. The idea of a 'reporter-type' interview was reinforced by simultaneously being projected onto the screen which could be viewed from both sides and from a distance. By explaining to everyone what the whole project was about, the process as a whole was unraveled. At the end of the formalities a power-point presentation by learners MN and PB was shown on the screen giving glimpses of the project as a whole and reinforcing the importance of the process. With hindsight, all the children should have been included, perhaps in the performances and possibly also

including them more in the speeches which were directed more at the invited guests and parents.



Photo 30: On screen image of Ridge learner JEF reporting with KMS and onlookers

Individual music elements from each school were brought in, a Marimba band by the Ridge and singing and dancing from Salvazioné. This added the elements of dance and music which although not the focus in the project, were necessary to achieve my aim of embracing the entire arts and culture subject on the night of the event. The Salvazioné learners and educators chose several 'traditional' (their words) pieces including Zulu, Tswana and Congolese[4]. Grade six class teacher Eunice Gous who coordinated these dances explains:

"According to our culture each song that is composed is triggered by the nature of the circumstances and a person needs to be obviously skilled art wise for him to be able to read the situation carefully and create a song out of that. When you look at the attire itself it tells a lot about art, ie. most of our cultural attire is made using raw material (animal skin). Interaction of different cultures promotes the idea of art and culture by making our children aware that art is not limited to the classroom only"



Photo 31: Salvazioné Zulu Dancers on soccer field stage showing written learner information pinned onto screen

At the end of the formalities boys and girls from both schools played an item together on the marimbas.

> ***"I enjoyed marimba because it was the best. I had never play marimba before. It was my day."***

After a short 45 minute rehearsal in the preceding week the children enthralled the packed audience. With hindsight much more emphasis should have been placed on the parts that the children did 'together', including both the music and the performance.

The evening came to a hasty halt when scuffling broke out about who was to get the fruit which so far had only been used as a display. This had not been my intention - as with the sweets, they were there for the taking. The hungry residents from the informal settlement fought desperately to get the bowls filled with fruit away from Salvazioné school members.

A number of issues arose around donations of cool drink cans, sweets, fruit and ‘pap and meat’. Similar discussions and debates, about electricity, transport, drinking water, toilet hire, security issues and invited guests also made for a palimpsest event. The site was transformed into an event over a number of days, surviving a few hours under a perfect South African evening, and dissolving back into an empty tent in less than an hour.

When the tent was taken down early the next morning, except for the soccer field and the rearranged debris, the site was empty once more awaiting the building of the new school. Hopefully ‘one day’ would be hurried along as a result of the event.

I want to end this section as I started it with another interesting photographic image from the event. The image overleaf picks up many of the hybrid details present at the event that evening: a carpet image made by a Ridge learner; the tempting bowls of fruit; an extension chord reminding us of the drama of getting

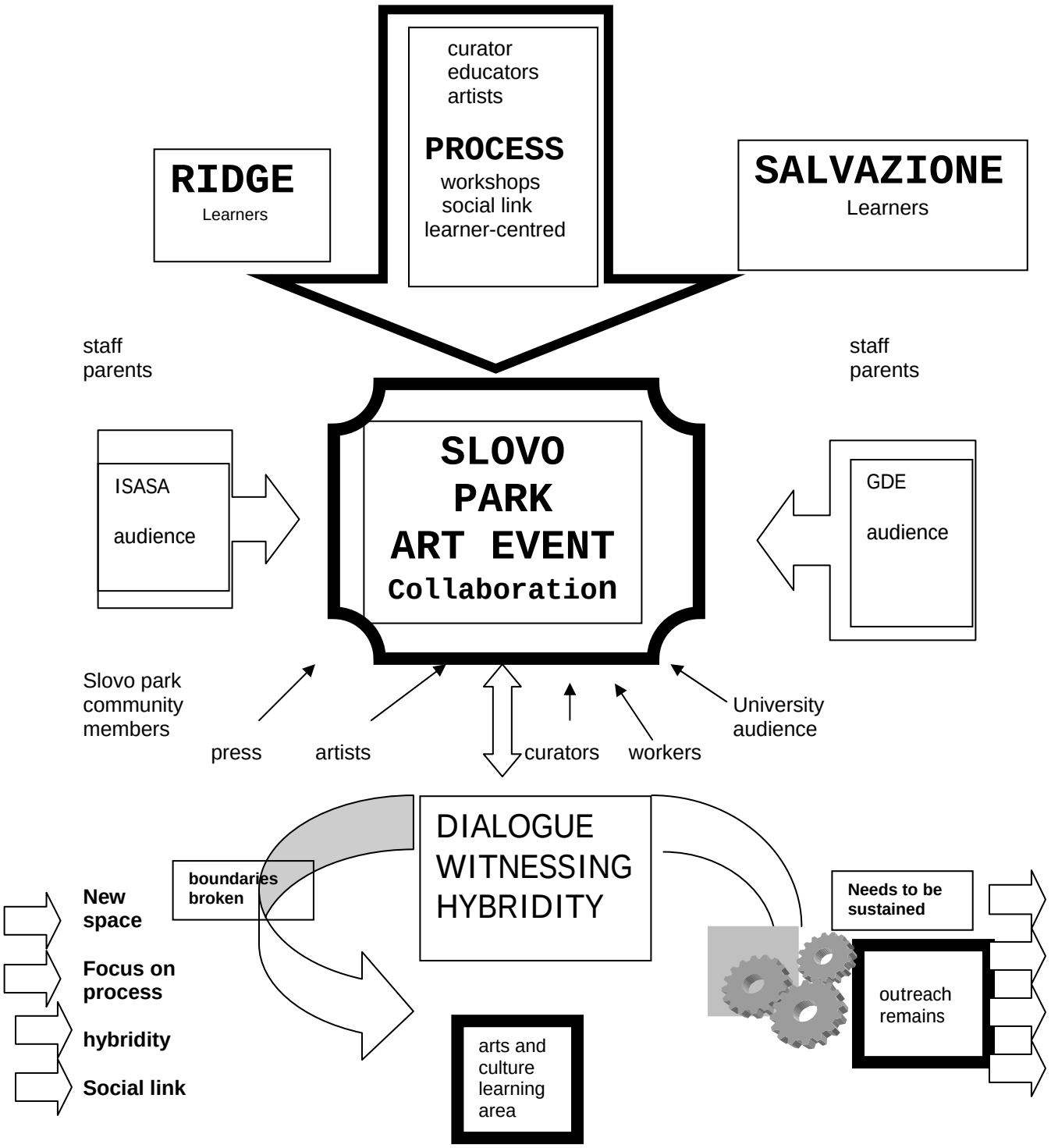
it there in the first place; sweet papers littering the floor instead of the interactive sweet panel; a suitcase that could be filled with sweets according to a story told by a teacher; plastic bowls brought along for just in case there was something to take home, and the girl watching the screen in front of her. This photo embodies something of the strangeness that pervaded that evening.



Notes:

1. Traditionally monuments were (and still are, e.g.Nelson Mandela statue in Sandton, 2004) made of materials like bronze and granite in a very naturalistic language.
2. The *art exhibition* here refers to layout and placement of the visual artworks, including placement of elements like a stage, tables, screen etc. whereas *the art event* is time linked and includes everything happening on that particular evening.
3. Artlex is an online dictionary of 'art' terminology (hpp://www.artlex.com)
4. The dances hinted at the diversity present at the Salvazione school. Although this aspect was something not really explored in this project, in the first questionnaire completed by the learners, I became aware that seven different languages are spoken within that particular grade 6 class.

Findings from the Collaborative Project
Figure 3
PROCESS DIAGRAM



Chapter 4. FINDINGS FROM THE COLLABORATIVE PROJECT

Going back to the initial impetus of this study, let us return to the two key questions we started with. Firstly, is there any evidence that through this collaborative project the accepted understanding of what constitutes an Arts and Culture Learning Area has been challenged? Secondly, has the notion of 'outreach' moved closer to that of a 'community partnership'? A third question might be, can we begin to answer the above questions through the data that has been collected? Through an artist-driven collaboration evidence was gathered in order to address these questions. This evidence, or in some cases lack thereof, is grouped into the following areas:

Firstly, a transformed arts and culture practice at GETC level: Has the conventional aesthetic practice in schools been challenged in any of the following areas:

- Have any cultural imbalances been addressed?
- Has the 'genius artist' been replaced with a move to the collective?
- Was the focus on the process rather than end product?
- Was an alternative space created for an arts and culture community partnership?

Secondly, the establishment of a community partnership between the two schools:

- Was there a shift of a one-way outreach of charity to a two-way relationship?
- Was there a shift in power relations?

Then thirdly, was convincing evidence gathered in both of the above areas which seem to relate to the following:

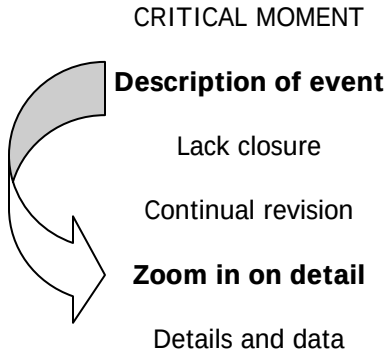
- Emergence of what seems to be a form of hybridity in teaching and learning
- A social process through a focus on people

Research in arts education is about looking at, thinking and observing from an artistic perspective and creating new parameters (La Pierre and Zimmerman 1997: introduction). Although ongoing involvement in 'action research' does not necessarily provide prescriptive solutions, it is about being based in situ and using ethnographic methods including participant observation, diary writing, dialogue, and collecting and analyzing learners' work (May and Diket,1997:223-237).

I attempted to collect evidence from the action research by means of what David Tripp (1993:24) calls 'critical incidents' or events. I will be referring to them as 'critical moments'. Spending considerable time as part of participant observation, I attempted to record significant moments that occurred during the process of the collaboration. As an alternative for the educator-researcher, Tripp sees critical moments as an alternative to the diagnostic method used in the scholarly

and academic field. He says that for the educator this is a kind of reflective teaching that can assist in improving personal professional development. Rather than drawing on specialist theoretical knowledge, these critical moments are used as a basis for their (the educators) judgement.

The diagram below describes a critical moment according to Tripp. He defines it as “an event or situation which marks a significant turning-point in the life of a person or institution or social phenomenon.”



According to Tripp these critical moments are rarely a major event, often being unnoticed, commonplace or straightforward. Furthermore these moments do not just happen but are rather produced by the researcher-educator during participant observation. Like all data they are created. A critical moment is an interpretation of the significance of an event; lacking closure, needing continual revision and is never a final draft. To take something as a critical moment is a value judgement. On the basis of that judgement is the significance we attach to the meaning of the incident. Tripp feels that educators seldom make time for reflection. Through the ‘collecting’ of critical moments through, for example,

diary writing the educator will be able to become more aware of their professional practice particularly with regard to the lived experience of the learners and the society they are a part of. Teaching is a social activity and we all teach within ideologies that legitimize what we do and inform our judgement. What we feel is right and best for our learners is often socially constructed. Often ideologies control our behavior. Tripp feels that through an analysis of critical moments an educator can improve his/her professional judgement.

Given the nature of this research report, the following section will focus on one or two 'critical moments' within each of the three sections; *Workshops*, *Setting up the Event* and *The Event*. Included in each analysis is a diagram or mind map exploring the 'moment'. It must be remembered however that the moments are all connected. A connection that is essential in a focus on the process rather than objects.

WORKSHOPS:

"I think we should give these learners the opportunity to interact like they did once every year." grade seven class teacher at Salvazioné

" ...sculptural bodies out of waste... racing car driver, devils, animals with horns, famous personalities, rich people, fat people. The learners drew around their bodies, cut them out and collaged those using found objects materials...found objects particular to the personality chosen." Gina Waldman

During the workshops, apart from new technical skills that were learnt, most of what happened was in the framework of a 'normal' art class. No real interaction

between the learners from the two schools was observed, particularly during the more ‘traditional’ style of teaching of Peter Schütz. By ‘traditional’ teaching I mean that of a more teacher-centred situation with the teacher being the only source of information. Peter gave a lecture style lesson writing on the blackboard, explaining the chemical composition of plaster of paris and then demonstrating how to mix it. The learners’ only involvement was as observers. No interaction took place between teacher-and-learner or between learner-and-learner. This then continued with individual art pieces made. Although invaluable skills were learnt, in keeping with the more explicit aims of my project, an entirely different process following the idea of mirroring could have been explored.

Interactions between learners occurred more readily during performative and photographic activities. It should be noted however that this interaction was directed by the educator.

“Mirroring” critical moment 1:

The first critical moment selected occurred during a performance activity led by Manya Gittel. The activity introduced learners to the idea of mirroring themselves against or with each other. The following diagram begins to unpack this moment. Following the diagram I will attempt to analyze the significance of the moment.

S h a d o w i n g
LOOKING

witnessing

Learner ⟷ Learner

me **identify self** **others**

others **me**

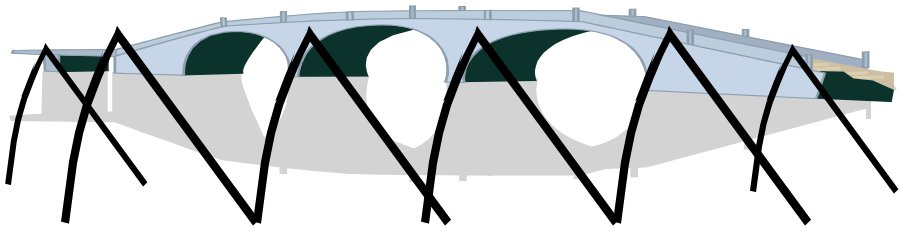
M I R R O R I N G

Ridge | **Salvazioné**

Social Interaction

exploration of other

Dialogue initiated



bridging gap/s
TWINNING

Potential PARTNERSHIP

The initial mirror imaging aimed at 'getting to know each other' by artist Manya Gittel, had the potential to be used more effectively as a starting point for a series of similar experiences in other modes. These activities were structured by Manya Gittel in order for the learners to introduce themselves and to 'break-the-ice' for the coming weeks of the project. Interactions were organized through various pairing games ensuring that learners join up with someone from the other school. Exercises in representation of self took place performatively with the one trying to become the other. The activities mirrored a 'togetherness' that was never really repeated anywhere else in the project and the potential for exploring and understanding identity became 'lost' in the process. Although the mirroring seemed to me enveloped in an apparent air of 'innocence', certainly similar activities, either visual or performative, could have become a metaphor for a more successful partnership.

"The interaction between the schools was not great... all we need to do is to find solutions of how the two groups can interact comfortably with one another"
Student teacher at The Ridge.

Perhaps these solutions could have been found through connecting and extending the idea of 'mirroring'?

The use of reflection through Tripp's 'critical moments' enabled me to look back at my teaching and learning practice within the collaboration. This brought about

a realization of how I could have done things differently. One of the most important professional findings was that the basic underlying structure or scaffolding of the planned activities, throughout the project, where not in place. Watching the video of the mirroring activities that took place both at The Ridge and the Mayfair Baptist church, I realized that the tentative interaction that had occurred at that point was not furthered.

This potential mirroring leads to an analysis of other moments where the presence of the learners' voices where heard. EK, from Salvazioné and JEF, from The Ridge, were involved in the speeches by way of asking artists and educators about their involvement in the project. I initiated this apparent learner-centredness through the construction and direction of questions that the two learners had to ask. Although it was a break with the traditional 'guest speaker' scenario usually found at a private school art exhibition opening, more learners could have been involved. I wanted the speeches to be at an information level explaining the whole process of events to the invited audience. I should perhaps have also considered addressing the children during these proceedings thereby increasing learner participation.

Two learners PB (Ridge) and MN (Salvazioné) also interacted successfully in the use of the camera and video camera, particularly towards the end of the workshops where they worked together to compile a slide show used at the event.

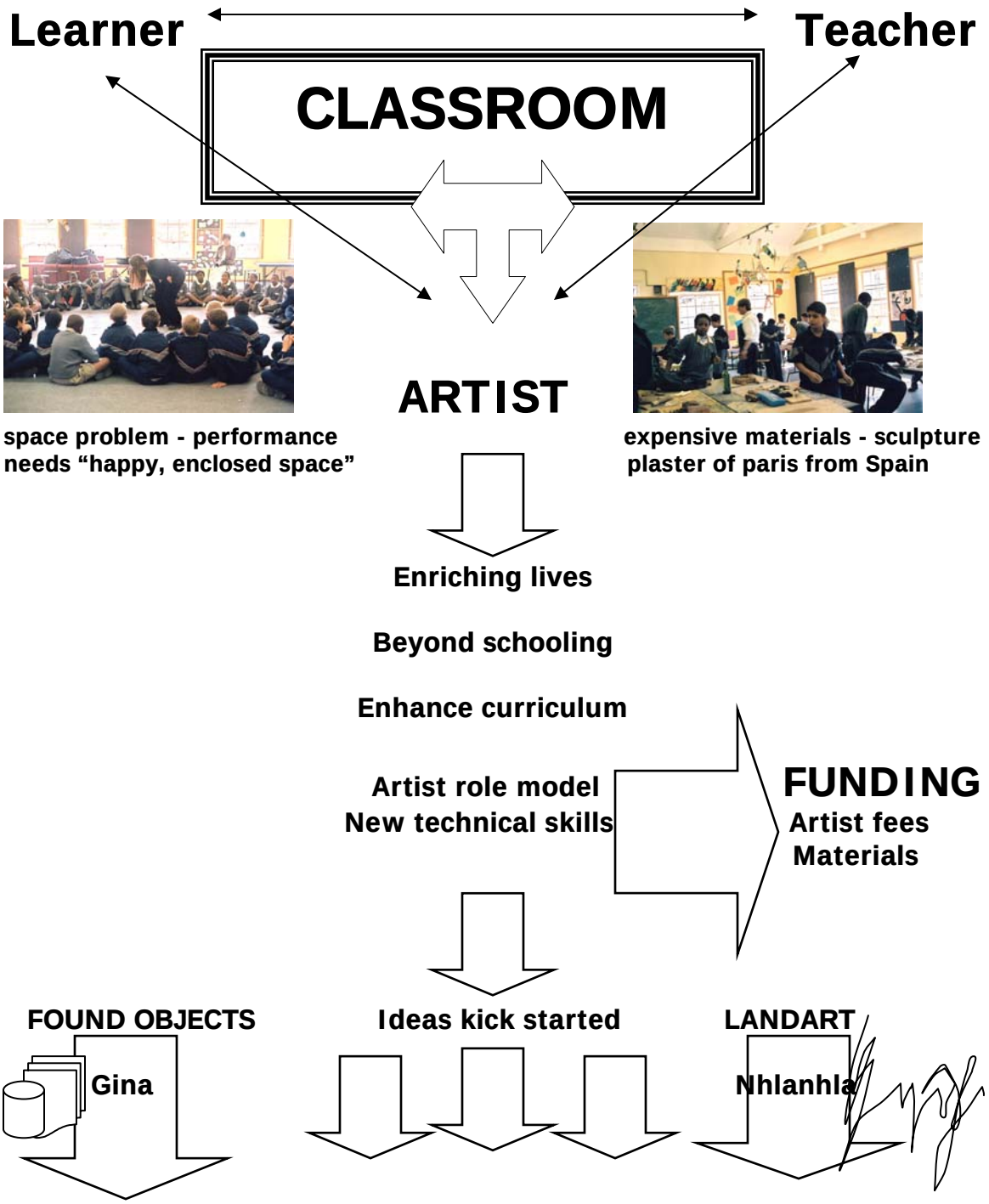
"I learnt to communicate with other learners and Peter helped me a lot with the vidio camera" MN.

This was a successful learner-centred activity in that PB, on his own, taught and assisted MN who had never worked on a computer before, to create a slide show of the photos they had taken during the workshops. But their interaction with each other, although successful, was also educator directed.



Although the learners were given 'brokerage' within the process, I cannot claim to have achieved a successful 'collaboration' as discussed in Chapter 2. The image above is the invitation to the event, which although is made up of a combination of a Ridge artwork and a Salvazioné artwork, the layout and design is mine. So although 'mirroring' does appear also in the visual art it remains educator centred.

ARTIST IN THE CLASS:



“Artist-in-the-class” critical moment 2:

This is in fact not one moment but more a series of moments. As I continued to search for these moments as described by Tripp, I realized more and more that it was almost impossible to find these specific moments describing or encompassing all my objectives and aims within this collaboration. Rather it was more like a series of moments; points building up the structure required for the implementation of a community partnership through the arts. In describing the first critical moment of “mirroring”, I indicated the need to build bridges. It is these bridges between learners and members of a broader school community that enable the establishment of a partnership. This bridge remained rather ‘rickety’ throughout the process but the introduction of the artists into the classroom and later on the field with Nhlanhla Mbatha, brought structure and learning to the project. The presence of artists, or experts in the field, allowed learners to gain a range of skills.

The diagram on page 114 shows the possible positive elements in the centre of the diagram. The value of introducing learners to the concept of the master artist, the expert and apprentice cannot be denied. It does however create a challenge to learner-centredness and funding remains a perennial problem. The artists expect to be paid for their services as this is their livelihood but schools do not usually have funds available for a long term project.

This funding of artists and the requirement of expensive materials requires the assistance of a wealthier school like The Ridge.

The introduction of Gina Waldman with her found objects and Nhlanhla Mbatha with his land art challenges some of these issues in that expensive materials are not required and could have been explored more successfully in the establishment of a community partnership.

The introduction of the artists into the classroom certainly challenges the conventional aesthetic practice in a GETC school. They contributed towards a move to the collective and a focus on the process despite remaining 'genius artists' themselves. The artists are also people, people from a specific background and with their own 'blinders'. Gina Waldman's quote at the beginning of this section alludes to some of the richness that each of the artists brought to the project. The **dialogue** initiated with learners, the **social interaction** that took place, the **exploration** of materials and ideas, all make up moments creating richness within the process. Here we can also see a link or connection to the 'mirroring' moment. I think that the social nature of the project, and its focus on the participants and their activities, rather than on finished artworks, contributed to a series of interconnections that ultimately led to conditions allowing for a closer partnership between the two schools.

SETTING UP THE ART EVENT:

"The work set was appropriate and enabled a variety of talents to be involved; socially the groups worked as teams and although there were obvious divisions of race, sex and economic status, no one appeared uncomfortable." Grade 6 class teacher from The Ridge.

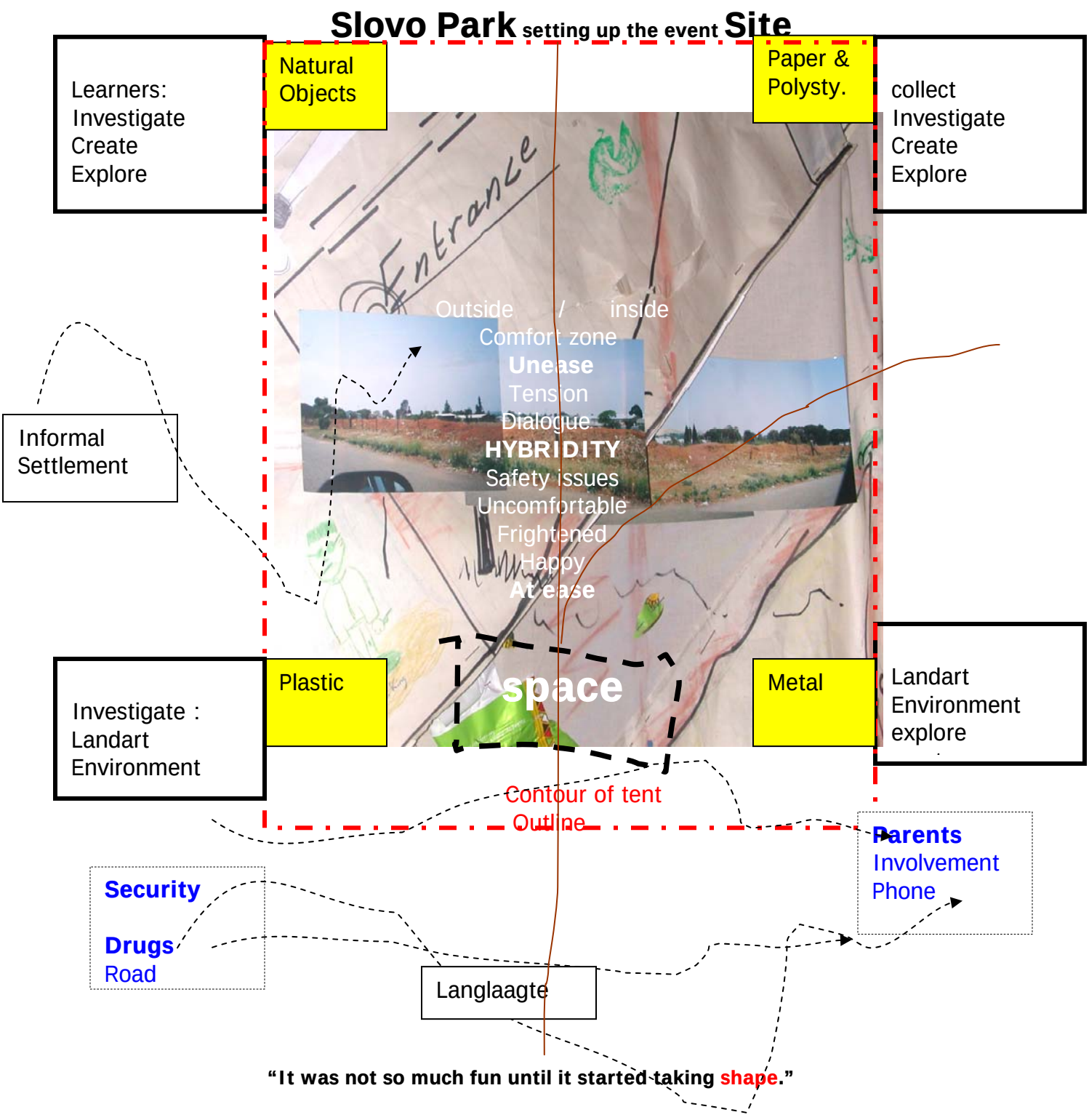
"On site": Critical moment 3:

The following diagram (on pg 118) illustrates the few days prior to the event when the art event was set up on the site near Slovo Park. Once again I will look at several rather than only one critical moment during this period. It is important to look back at the definition given by David Tripp of a critical moment: an "event or situation which marks a significant turning-point in the life of a person or institution or social phenomenon" (1993:24). In comparison to the critical moments occurring during the workshops which were spread over a number of months, the activities during the few days leading up to the event, happened rapidly, in quick succession, and often overlapped.

Firstly, the site specificity or location chosen for the event is essential. The idea of a 'space' cannot really be defined as a moment or moments but the use of the space led to a number of identifiable changes in my practice of art and opened several opportunities towards creating an arts and culture learning programme linked to a partnership between the two schools. By selecting this particular 'space' a situation was provoked that led to a series of interactions that would otherwise not have happened.

"We should have chosen a different place. It was hot and dirty".

"On site": Critical moment 3:



"It was not so much fun until it started taking shape."

The diagram illustrates the first activity done on the site where the learners collected materials found on site under the guidance of artists and educators. The four groups of learners collected objects found on the site such as natural materials, plastic, metal and paper. This marks a difference to the expensive resources used in a well resourced art room such as the one at The Ridge School. Simultaneously it showed the Salvazioné children that they do in fact have resources available that can be made into creative visual art. Having Nhlanhla Mbatha play a key role in this phase of the project was an important experience for learners. Mbatha often uses materials similar to those on site and provides a concrete example of how a 'real' artist works.

"Nhlanhla was a great artist and he helped us with land art and he explained what was land art".

The learners' exploration of materials and space demonstrated a new resourcefulness. In retrospect learners could have had a series of discussions around land art and site specific work.

"I didn't really enjoy collecting stuff, but I did enjoy setting up the exhibition and measuring it out".

The use of the site led to issues of a social nature. One of the main aims of the collective activities on site was to create an alternative 'gathering space' that can be identified as socially, ecological and culturally democratic (Congdon and Blandy,1999:78). Working on the site was in many respects an attempt to

achieve this ‘gathering space’. At the same time the ‘gathering space’ highlighted and contrasted the differences (and similarities?) between the various communities.

Social processes are about people and the spaces they occupy or don’t occupy. One of the results of using this particular space was the **disturbing of comfort zones**. Although a lot of what happened was planned it was mainly unexpected journey moments that led to disturbances around issues of prejudice, bias and stigmatization. It was at these disruptions that human rights and dignity within specific communities came to the fore.

During the organization of the event The Ridge headmaster made a decision to use **Slovo Park community members to organize the security** involved before and during the event. I have selected this as the fourth critical moment. My own initial ‘white’ entrenched reaction was one echoed by my community of fear and even horror at the thought of all our lives and the tent with its contents being left in the hands of five Slovo Park residents. The security was organized by M, a Salvazioné parent and board member of the Salvazioné Trust. He epitomizes that looks can be deceiving and his ‘Rastafarian look’ convinced several of The Ridge boys that he was a drug seller. During the few days on the field he was seen to be extremely dedicated. He set up a living area within the tent with a couch and a television set, setting up a strange kind of mirroring of the lounge scene set up by the learners on the outside of the tent.



Photo 32: A shot of Security Chief M's couch which he had been using inside the tent, placed outside and clearly visible from the tent, became part of the exhibition and 'critical moment 4'.

Although an issue like security is not really evidence of an alternative art and culture programme or a community partnership, it is socially related, part of the process with its focus on people. Security which was an issue throughout the event, strangely echoed the role that it plays in our lives living in 2004 in South Africa.

These security issues crept in repeatedly and randomly before and throughout the event. Lack of confidence in the ability of the security guards was felt by both The Ridge and Salvazioné community members. While setting up on the site 'security' is linked to the **'safety' of the learners at the site.** On the first day several Ridge learners from the performance group left the field without

permission. The presence of an unknown in the guise of the informal settlement created a variety of tensions, not only for the learners but also for myself. Not only did it disrupt the performances but on returning they started a rumour that they were offered drugs by people in the street. Relaying these stories to their parents, a chain of events was created by Ridge parents phoning each other that evening about the apparent safety, or lack thereof, of their children. Tensions were created in both learners and parents resulting in a large majority of Ridge learners not arriving on site on the second day.

"A few Ridge parents were anxious and wanted everybody to feel the same way" Danny Myburgh.

These social issues around security reappeared at the event and will be discussed later.

"The security was not tight and ineffective." A Salvazioné teacher

Other social issues included the 'borrowing' of electricity from a neighbouring business, the Ridge children 'dying of thirst and hunger', and Nhlanhla Mbatha captured on video with an old TV frame interviewing two learners. There were many other moments of a 'social nature' that foregrounded the many tensions present in the event. These tensions were largely absent from the earlier learner interactions with teachers and artists, as they would have been in more conventional art lessons.

“The security didn’t bother me but I would have preferred to have it in a museum”.

Critical moment 5: Salvazione learner / Ridge learner interaction

Getting close to the final event with many aspects coming together, more and more overlapping moments occur. This next critical moment is an example of a series of moments that starts on site and overlaps into the final event. BM, a girl from Salvazioné, very keen and involved with all activities right from the start, is seen on video and in photographs noticeably interacting with Ridge boy DP. They epitomize what could be the ideal interaction between learners from the two schools through a noticeable collection of moments. This ideal I often see in an uncritical romantic kind of way. Perhaps what this project reveals is the need for an understanding of the myth of the ‘rainbow nation’. Rather than insisting on a situation where everyone gets along perfectly, this ‘getting along’ is interrogated. The ‘hybrid’ that I have referred to in this project is not always a ‘friendly’ relationship. Space for the clashes that occur must be entertained. The differences should clash as referred to earlier by Richards.

This ‘ideal’ partnership between the two learners did not occur right from the start of the project as DP was in the class that had no contact with Salvazioné. It is noticeable that no other partnership of this nature were formed in the many hours that many other learners spent together. In light of what I said in the previous paragraph maybe this is not surprising. In response to a questionnaire about the beginning phase of workshops DP writes: “The project was a bit wrong because we never even met the other school”. He meets BM for the first time

when all the performers meet (both of them selected performance as a medium) at the church to work on the brochures with Eunice Gous. But their first noticeable meeting was on the site while the learners were exploring the space. I recall witnessing BM and DP chase each other through the unkempt field with long blades of grass. This does indicate a possibility that there interaction was most probably an attraction of a gender nature. But it is noticeable as a 'moment' because there were no other such 'close' interactions visible between any other learners. A more in depth investigation as to what elements need to be in place for more of this kind of interaction between the learners would have been useful, but whether this would have led to the establishment of a more successful community partnership between The Ridge and Salvazioné is debatable.

Brief moments of dialogue between the learners from the two schools, needs to be sustained. The Salvazioné learners wrote thank you notes addressed personally to various boys. In one of the letters mention is made of an earlier connection made between the schools in the form of a Zulu writing exercise:

"Dear Ridge Boy Aziz, Looking forward to working with you guys again. You must write to us letters too like you did last year, but this time in English. Thank you for your kindness. From Mirriam."

These are the kind of connections that need to be built on in order to sustain the partnering of the two schools.



Photo 33: DP and BM on the site



Photo 34: BM and DP in a 'mirror image' sequence at the event

Critical moment 5: Salvazioné learner/Ridge learner interaction:

SOUTH AFRICAN

GETC

Boy LEARNERS Girl

GRADE 7

12 **age** 14

RIDGE **SALVAZIONÉ**

English **home language** French and English (parents originally from the French Congo)

One brother **family** Two brothers

When I grow up I want to be…

…. A rap artist … a doctor

rap **favourite art** sculpture

AWESOME **assessment of this project** GREAT

DP **BM**

Social Interaction

performer - performer

"togetherness for the moment "

dialogue – getting to know you

repetition of moments



DP and BM on the site

male– interaction-female

"mirroring" remains tentative – no real sense of getting to know each other on a deeper level

"It was really fun doing performance. I never thought we would do as well as we did, cos on practice we were a bit dodgy. It was also fun working with Salvazione. I wouldn't mind doing it again".DP

"I can't wait for Joe Slovo school. It is good there's a play ground and a netball court big class to many learner and big place". BM

AT THE ART EVENT:

"The sheer unusualness was pretty artistic now I think of it, and I suppose that started with the (almost) shock of finding myself in a field, in Mayfair, at night, having crossed pretty rough ground... etc. Breathtaking stuff when you come to think of it. Perhaps my most abiding impression was one of exuberance. Another was having to search for the exhibits... on the ground, on the ceiling, on a screen, was some of it on some rocks outside the tent? All of this stretched my experience of art exhibitions more than a little." Sue Rees Gardner (ISASA)

The art event cannot be seen only in terms of the way Tripp sees critical moments. Rather, the multiplicity of moments that occurred where of a fragmented and shifting nature. I have decided to use the above quote by Sue Rees-Gardner as a starting point for a mind map of the critical 'moments' of the art event. As a witness to the event, an outsider and audience member, this critical response of her reaction to the event seems to encapsulate several of the complex elements present that evening.

Overlapping key words into the writing of Rees-Gardner at selected points was done deliberately to show the complex palimpsest-like overlapping nature of the happening. Within this confusion, certain moments occurred during the event that require elaboration. The social issues underlying the situation cannot be ignored and can be seen to be of a hybrid nature. It is again, as in the previous section, the focus on these social issues that come to the fore in the attempt to bring together this arts and culture community partnership.

"The sheer unusualness **The Event** was pretty artistic **Witnessing** now I think of it, and I suppose that started with the (almost **dialogue**) shock of **Social interaction** finding myself in a field, in Mayfair **Site space** , at night **site**, having crossed pretty rough ground **Affluent/poor** ...etc. Breathtaking stuff **Celebration** when you come to think of it. **Slovo Park residents SALVAZIONE gde ISASAlearners parents staff RIDGE DIALOGUE** Perhaps my most abiding impression was one of exuberance. **Prejudices/stereotypes** Another was having to search for the exhibits **Art** ... on the ground, *descend* **alien territory** *ascend* on the ceiling, **A need exposed** on a screen **Mirror differences**, was some of it on some rocks outside the tent **Food and drink**? All of this stretched **Tension** my experience **Identity** of art exhibitions ***Arts & culture*** more than a little **Gaps between**."

Sue Rees Gardner <Suzanner@(ISASA)**. org>**

Tue, 27 Jul 2004 11:59:57 +0200

At the start of the event, a situation described earlier in the research report, concerned the a tension that was created by audience members. White people (including myself) gathered inside the tent while Salvazione/Slovo Park members (mainly black people) were being restrained by the security members from entering (see photo 26 and photo 27). A strange moment of **tension** was created between the two communities that continued to permeate the space throughout the event. This tension was exacerbated by Ridge boys handing around bowls of chips. According to two Ridge staff members these snacks were only offered to white people. Wearing their traditional 'blues', a blazer, tie and blue shirt which is prescribed by the school for all formal events, seemed to underline the already stark differences between the learners. Perhaps if they wore casual clothes they would perhaps both have been more fitting?

During the event a sense of the unknown was present. Clearly there would be a number of undetermined outcomes at the end of the gathering. The intersecting spaces and the people within these spaces were more fractured and disjunctive than the planned for connectedness. I had hoped for a narrowing of the differences between the two communities through the event. In fact the opposite seemed to happen on the night of the event.

One element of difference was the way in which **celebration** was manifested as a 'noisy' affair. The way of celebration and excitement for the Salvazioné community is inherently a problem for The Ridge communities, who have been

conditioned to remain silent during speeches and performances. This also leads to the involvement of more of the **learners** throughout the evening which could have been rethought in terms of more cohesive activities. The speeches were directed at the invited guests including explanations of what occurred throughout the entire collaboration. This may have included activities like 'mirroring' that could have created more effective interactions between different audiences in order to establish a kind of witnessing that could lead to the establishment of a community partnership.

The issue of the **food and drinks** at the event created several tense moments also linking up to **security** elements. The food and drinks intended as a treat for the Salvazioné children included chips, sweets in wrappers, fruit, cool drinks, meat and maize meal. With hindsight packs should have been made up and handed out to the Salvazioné learners at the church. Although fires were prepared in the veld as discussed with Salvazioné **staff** and parents, these fires were never lit. The fighting that broke out later in the evening with Slovo Park or other community members indicated to me that it was a good thing that the other food was kept at the church as the sight and sound might have led to a worse outbreak of fighting by hungry residents from Slovo Park. The Salvazioné children were very distressed by what happened and many insinuated that it was in fact the security members involved in the stealing and fighting:

"There was a lot of fighting because people were greedy and stubborn some of the Slovo Park children were the ones who were fighting. I can't believe that I didn't get something from the tent. I've never seen people fighting like that even adults were fighting for cooldrinks."

"Those people were very hungry they jumped on top of the fruits. The Security didn't want us to have colddrinks and those people were very greedy and I never even got one sweet or chocolate. I was very angry I wanted to beat them."

Tripp explains that critical incidents are measured in the way they show an emotionalism or are repeated frequently. Although this is true for many of the above points, they also show some form of **hybridity** through the tensions created. In a strange way they also underline some of the ideals I have wanted to achieve through this arts and culture collaboration. The clash or contrast that occurred mostly *unplanned* was often due to the difference in upbringing, culture and way of life of the diverse participants and audience present at the event.

Rees-Gardner's **witnessing** alludes to the sense of hybridity spoken about by Coombes in quoting Homi Bhaba's "willingness to descend into that alien territory". But this willingness must be instilled in all of the participants of the intended partnership. My own willingness, whether conscious or not, to allow the Ridge/Salvazioné partnership to descend into what was for all of us an alien territory did allow for a space to emerge alluding to something akin to **hybridity**.

4.1 Have the boundaries of the Arts and Culture Learning Area been tested?

Redressing cultural imbalances

The context that the collaboration took place in did not easily lend itself to redressing cultural imbalances as stated as an outcome in the National Curriculum Statement. Despite a tentative link created by a common OBE approach, the state-run and private school systems are still separated by levels of available resources and staff training. This also applies to the status of the four arts and culture learning areas, with The Ridge employing specialist music and art teachers that Salvazione do not have. According to Salvazioné learners:

> ***" we don't have enough classes For the art and we don't have things that we can play our music with"***
>
> ***" we don't have money to pay the teachers"***

Through a project linked to a community partnership like the Salvazioné/Ridge collaboration, the aim of arts and culture being for all learners and not just the privileged few, could become a reality. This could be done by linking a wealthy school with a more poorly resourced school. But issues of food and other essentials like the 'e-pap' feeding schemes, should be a priority. Although a

border crossing through the visual arts could occur by linking to a community partnership, it is very obvious that basic needs are much more pressing and need to be addressed before attempting a community partnership. An educator from the Ridge writes:

> **"…any interaction whether social, scholastic or cultural would be very difficult because you are dealing with two communities who are at different ends of the spectrum. The majority of The Ridge boys come from extremely affluent, sophisticated, cultured homes whereas the children from Salvazioné are at the bottom of Maslow's 'Ladder of Needs'[1] thus they lack adequate food, proper shelter, clothing or familial security. The two groups of children function in different paradigms and it would be difficult to build a bridge to establish any real communication… a weekly art lesson is a good idea and doing a joint project could work as an art project, but one cannot expect the two groups to relate socially"**

To achieve the NCS desired diversity and cultural balance, much more is needed than to provide access to arts and culture to all learners through a multicultural curriculum and content.

Replacement of 'genius artist' with a move to the collective

The move to the collective began with Manya Gittel through her performance activities. The nature of performance is collective and the 'mirroring' activities are ways to successfully initiate a kind of 'togetherness'. Although most of the workshop processes from the sculpture techniques completed with Peter Schütz and the separate self-image representations are more individual, the final event in itself was focused on the collective and not on any focus on individual artists or artworks.

Although the artists involved in the project are genius artists, their aim was to facilitate the work of the learners.

Focus on the process rather than the end product

Linked to the move to the collective is the focus on process rather than the end product. This is also linked to the *focus on people*. As such the prescribed 'outcomes' of the OBE system seem to be a contradiction within an apparent learner centred education system. The personal experiences and values of learners can be allowed to shape the educators task, with the outcomes not prescribed in advance but rather allowing them to emerge from a process of joint decision making.

In the Salvazioné/Ridge collaboration focused on process in the following ways:

- Photographs taken by learners and educators during the workshops made into collages and a slide show shown at the event
- Focus not just on finished artwork but also exploratory and preparatory drawings including catalogues made by learners
- video showing the proceedings of the evening on the screen while it was happening
- Explanations by learners, myself and other artists of the process during proceedings.

An alternative art space for an arts and culture community partnership

"My ideal institution in the twenty first century would be… a flexible and continuously evolving organism, or a network connecting people, or ideas and actions in both 'local' and 'global' state of being and acting." Slide 21 Hou Hanru

The above quote is from a slide show made by a group of contemporary artists and curators known as the Trinity Session. These slides formed part of their inaugural exhibition entitled SHOW US WHAT YOU'RE MADE OF - PART 1 at the gallery "The Premises" (2004).

The alternative venue used for this community partnership art event seems to have been like this 'evolving organism'. The setting up and use of a tent in a space adjacent to an informal settlement and the resultant witnessing that took place within it, fits into the kind of art space being created in contemporary art curating, but is not common in an educational context.

> **"A new audience is emerging that does not differentiate new art from innovative music, film, fashion and design. This new audience has the potential to make the contemporary art institution much more important as well. The art institution of the twenty first century should be a broadcast facility as well as a exhibition facility. Placing art on the walls and on the floor and reproducing it in catalogue is no longer sufficient."**
> **Slide 56 Jeffrey Deitch.**

> **"An art institution… like an organic body, an organism which is more liquid…a continuation of collapsing events, which never ends."**
> **Slide 42 Rirkrit Tiravanija**

This community partnership event was made into a contemporary art event through the linking of people and witnessing of two very different groups of learners. The learners were exposed to contemporary arts and culture experiences through linking art to social processes. This idea of art becoming more like a social event is presented by Grant Kester in an article about the role of dialogue in socially-engaged art. He describes how a number of contemporary artists in Europe and America have defined their practice around dialogue amongst diverse communities. “Parting from the traditions of object-making these artists have adopted a performative, process-based approach.”(2004:76) Quoting British artist Peter Dunn, these artists are seen as ‘context providers’ rather than ‘content providers’. Artists like Dunn orchestrate their collective encounters well beyond the boundaries of the traditional gallery or museum and these exchanges can “catalyze powerful transformations in the consciousness of their participants” (2004:77). Kester gives an example of an exchange that took place through the collective Wochenklauser on a boat cruise on Lake Zurich in 1994. A group of diverse people had a conversation that ultimately led to organizing a *pension* for drug-addicted sex workers. Kestner looks at this ‘dialogue-based’ art that solicits participation and involvement by exploring its claims of being antithetical to dominant beliefs in modern and postmodern art theory. Being introduced to this writing has created an awareness for me that many more socially orchestrated activities could have been held or can still be held to achieve the aims of creating a community partnership through the arts and culture learning area. Possibly a number of community members from The

Ridge and Salvazioné could meet like the boat trips on Lake Zurich to discuss some real ways in which the Slovo Park Community school could become a reality.

4.2 Has 'outreach' become 'community partnership' in the relationship between The Ridge and Salvazioné?

My original intention of naming the event "Together" is a myth like the rainbow nation. The National Department of Education (DoE) uses the word 'Tirisano' meaning 'working together'. Although we did 'work together' and both schools became aware of the other community, in the process and culminating event, this 'togetherness' was not of a nature that would enable a community partnership to be sustained. But an awareness has been established between the learners from both schools that was not there before the start of the process. Danny Myburgh writes about the connection between the two groups of learners: **"I am not sure how much they learnt from each other. But 'the others' helped them to learn a whole lot about themselves".**

"I learnt a lot of things like working with other learners and experience lots of things that I have never done before."

"You don't have to be rich to be cleaver. Lots of poor kids did good art."

"How similar we are."

"We can have good ideas when we work together."

"I have learnt to treat people differently, I have learnt that people aren't so different from each other."

Outreach becoming part of the curriculum within the independent schools and at The Ridge is still very far off. Certainly the ground has been prepared for in the possible establishment of a two way relationship. Trust is one element that must be firmly entrenched between the learners before any sharing and co-existence can take place. Another factor which I failed to take into account until much later in the project was taking the ideals of the outreach school into consideration. What kind of arts and culture assistance is needed at Salvazioné? Which educators would like to be involved? In order for 'outreach' to change into a community partnership, my assuming and dictating role needs to change into one of sharing and communicating with the school and educators even before commencing with a project.

Although the Headmaster of The Ridge, in his address at the event, said that **"there is more holding us together than keeping us apart"**, the event with all the preceding and resultant occurrences, was more an event highlighting the differences between the two communities than showing any kind of 'togetherness'. It is clear that through the visual arts alone, a task of partnering between two schools is not possible. Certainly more than just charity took place and through the focus on social activities and interactions, a kind of **shift in power relations** did take place at the final event. But this was only created for a short period of time. In order for it not to merely shift back to where it was this 'third space situation' needs to be repeated or sustained.

4.3 A transformed arts and culture practice through a community partnership

In combining a *transformed arts and culture practice* with the establishment of a *community partnership*, which I was attempting to do in this collaborative project, the following emerged: Firstly, the appearance and re-appearance of what seems to be a form of **hybridity** in the teaching and learning that took place. Secondly, a **social process** occurring through a focus on the people of the collaboration. Both of these were strongly felt in the events leading up to and including the art event. The presence of the diversity of voices and the presence of the people from the community including the wife of the late Joe Slovo, Ms. Helena Dolny, and residents from Slovo Park, made for a palimpsest evening turning an art event into a hybrid happening.

> ***"my mother said those people are dogs and my mother said she will never forget that day"***

"I think it will be better if in the future the exhibition can be done during the day preferably on Saturdays if possible, so that those that use public transport can be accommodated as well." Eunice Gous

"my parents said it was very different but you can only grow from the ocaision"

> **"Although the messages of one or two of the speeches were at a level that were too sophisticated for the audience and consequently the involvement of the participants was watered down, including musical items was a bonus, as it put children of various cultures in their comfort zones and broke the ice." Educator The Ridge**

"...shame, what would the Ridge teacher say about what happened?"

"Well done! For a courageous and interesting project. A real adventure. Imagine if we could get people to do more of this kind of thing – SA would truly be a better place" Manya Gittel

"two boys wanted to fight with me Just for a ten of cooldrinks"

"You've broken new ground and I suspect people will be citing your work for a long time to come!" Headmaster of The Ridge

"If only it could be made into a yearly event to sustain knowledge gained, to foster rehabilitation and to strengthen skills achieved. But it should occur before sunset and invitations to the community should be limited to manageable numbers." Headmistress Salvazione.

"My parents came to the art exhibition and were outraged by the pikinese"

"A very innovative and ambitious project"
A Ridge staff member

"The event should not be in the evening. If it was during the day it was going to attract more community members" GDE official

"Sorry about the fighting over the fruits." Salvazioné secretary

The audience stepped into an unknown territory alluded to by Bhabha as '"alien". A space that challenged issues of self/others, colonized/colonizer and dominant/resistant. The two opposing parties had equal presence even in the presence of distinguished guests from the GDE and ISASA. All three elements of the community partnership triangle were present. But this does not mean a community partnership was created.

Although a shared language between the two communities was not achieved, the binary division between the two communities was disturbed through this experience of arts and culture linked to a community partnership. The resultant

instabilities begin to suggest a form of hybridity. It must be said however, that this realization was one that came to me *during* the process. The initial focus on collaboration and co-operation seem to have facilitated this state. While this state seems to have some of the character of a hybrid experience it was gradually recognized by myself as being a potential key to shifting the arts and culture learning area programme. There was however little to suggest that this realization was shared by learners or the extended school community. Given the status quo existing in both schools this is not a surprising observation. Perhaps the question to ask now is how can the positive aspects of a process and event that celebrates impurity, intermingling and transformation be embraced by institutions that are largely founded on reproducing the existing status quo. Nevertheless it seems to me that there were moments encouraged by this process that have potential as critical learning moments. The extent to which learners realized the moments in the process is debatable. Perhaps these moments have their value in something akin to a longer term process of learning.

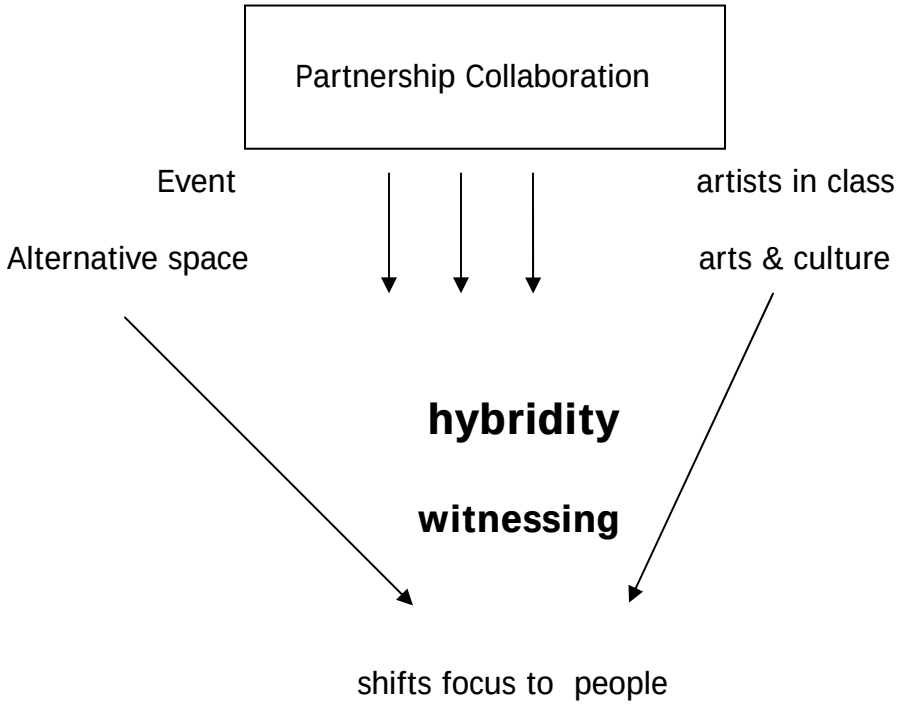
The element of hybridity was nowhere more noticeable than on the night of the art event. The contrast between the two schools, between the two communities and groups of learners was critical; the affiliations with a sense of hybridity, as in 'an impurity, an intermingling, new and unexpected combinations of people and ideas', was extremely noticeable through the bringing together of opposites. Despite having worked together for an extended period of time, the elements of

rich/poor and black/white were noticeably present. Through a suspension of time during the course of the event, despite strong differences between community members, a different type of space was created. This difference was noticed by a guest:

> **"I was very uncomfortable as a white person noticing a lot of stark contrasts like the juxtaposition of the luxury tent with the veld; and the smart clothes one of the artworks, the 007 doll, was 'wearing' in comparison to some of the clothing some of the poorer children from the community members". AN**

The site specific art event was loaded with tensions created particularly by the close proximity of the informal settlement and the Ridge parents and learners feelings of insecurity. They were literally out of their comfort zones. The trauma or violence of the past, in the faces of the chance audience, was still very clearly present showing in a multicultural celebration containing an 'out of placeness' as alluded to by Penny Siopis earlier. This effect would not have been present had the event been held in any other more conventional space. The effect was one of disturbing conventions, provoking powerful questions, even outrage, in both communities but for different reasons. Here I would like to repeat what I said earlier about Richards[2] referring to the GRAFT exhibition: inter-cultural interactions in the art world and the cultural domain that are not just masked or assimilated into some comfortable cultural pluralism but that the violence involved in cultural contact and exchange should be recognized. This recognition seems to be, even if unintentionally, present at the art event.

In the introduction to the article by Cassel (ART JOURNAL Spring 2000), referred to earlier in this report, the following is written: “art has the potential to play an integral role in society by opening up spaces in which individuals may re-examine their own lives and their relationships to the world”. This contains elements of what I hoped would take place through the planned art event. Essentially it was **a socially driven process** not linked to a formal modernist focus on the end product.



‘Outreach’ has not yet become ‘community partnership’ between the two schools. Although they were given equal opportunities and were ‘together’ for the art event, circumstances for the Salvazioné School have not changed, except for a possible greater awareness of their plight.

Multicultural and social reconstructionist education is... ‘a process whose

goals will never be fully realized. Educational equality, like liberty and justice, are ideals toward which human beings work but never fully attain'. (Stuhr,1995:193-5)

American Art Educator Patricia Stuhr in this quote advocates how being vigilant is necessary in wanting to create an equal education for all. She elaborates on four practices derived from Sleeter and Grant that should be followed in order to create a foundation for an education concerned with diverse social groups based on race, class, gender, age and handicap:

- Democracy must be actively practiced in schools
- Students learn how to analyze their own circumstances
- Students learn social skills for above two practices
- Coalescing, or getting the poor, people of colour and women to work together in fighting oppression

In order for outreach to change into a community partnership, more than a project like this one is necessary. Indeed, unless the goal of community partnership is more of a core curriculum value, the situation will remain one of a reaching out of hands from *them,* and a giving from *us.*

"I was so shy to talk to other learners except my class mates. But now I am no more scared of anything."

"All the children are nice. They are kind even though they have nothing."

Notes:

1. Maslow,H. [online] hhtp://web.utk.edu/~gwynne/maslow.HTM Maslow has established a theory of a hierarchy needs; physiological, safety, love,esteem and self-actualization.
2. Richards,R.(richardsc@artworks.wits.ac.za) 13 may 2003 *Re: Graft and Multiculturalism*. E-mail to Kathrinv@ridge.gp.school.za

Chapter 5. CONTINUING THE PROCESS

"If only it could be made into a yearly event; to sustain knowledge gained, to foster rehabilitation and to strengthen skills achieved."
Headmistress of Salvazioné Christian School

5.1 Outreach and the two schools

> **"Borderlands... are spaces crisscrossed with a variety of languages, experiences and voices. Borderlands are physically present whenever two or more cultures edge each other, where people of different races occupy the same territory, where under lower, middle and upper class touch, where the space between the two individuals shrinks with intimacy." [1]**

The above quotation by Chicana feminist poet Gloria Anzaldua (1987) is what I feel has been achieved through my project. The borderlands between Salvazioné and The Ridge, including some of the differences and similarities, were brought to the fore. The learners from both schools who may feel no different now, but, in the future will look back and remember, even just a small detail. I hope that it has 'kick started' a shift within the relationship between the Ridge and Salvazioné. But for the journey to continue after the end of the event, and for the project to be a success it cannot just be a "once off".

> **"Projects like these need to be ongoing, they can't just stop abruptly"**
> **Danny Myburgh**

It must be sustained through continued encouraging / sponsoring/ organizing.

This could be done in the following ways:

- Ideally as mentioned in chapter 1, the Ridge School should follow the lead of the ISASA ideal stated at the community partnership conference by making outreach not only part of the budget but also part of the curriculum. The whole concept of 'outreach' and who will benefit, and how, should be reviewed. An appointed delegate should negotiate these ideals with the parents, governing body and staff.

- The art department should be joined by other subjects

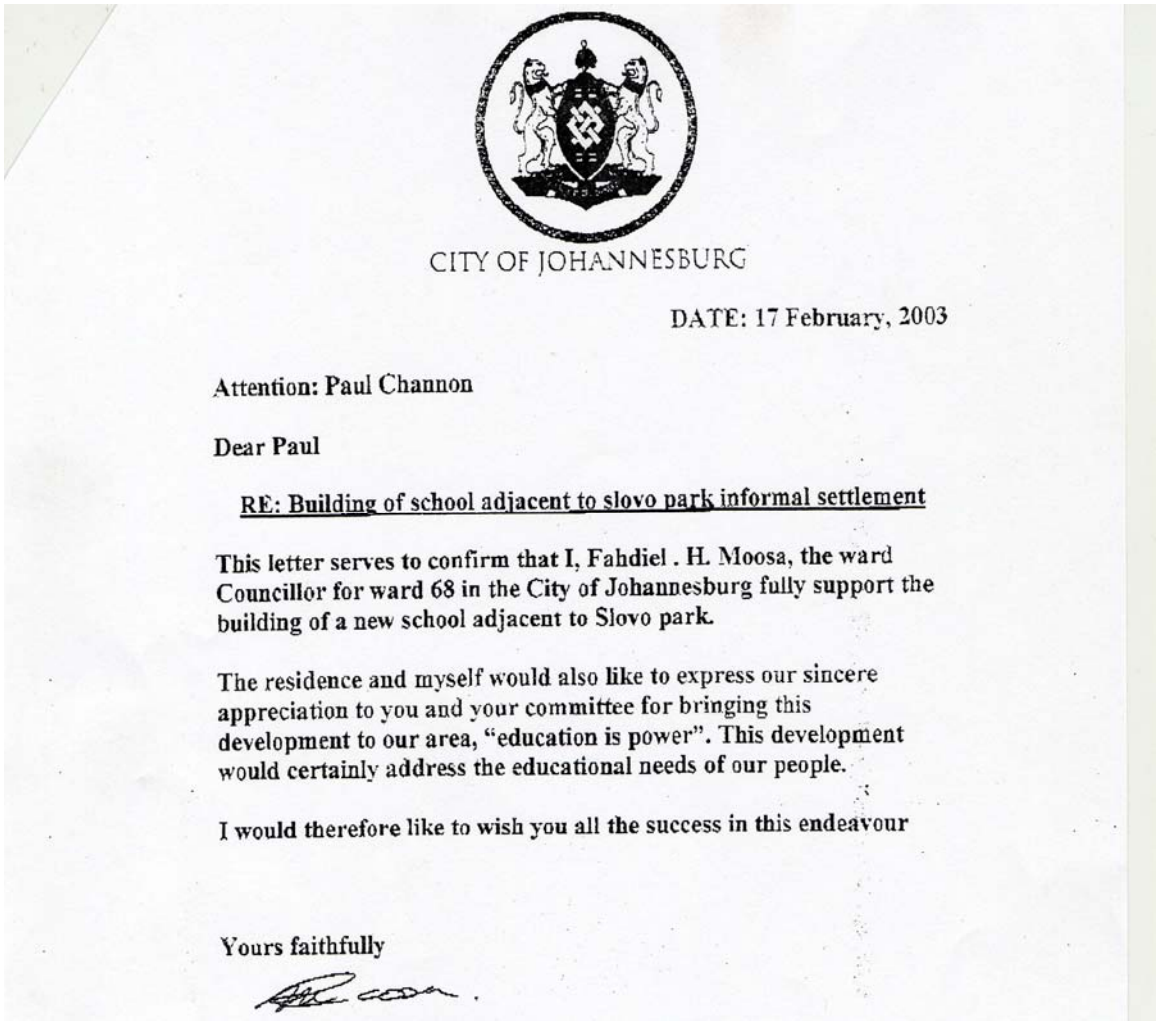
- It could form part of daily class activities. The grade six classes annually work at the 'game of life' (similar to the game Monopoly) where real life situations including finance, buying and selling of property are orchestrated with a 'winner' at the end. This could be extended to include a community partner.

- An important measure of success of this project would be Salvazioné or the Slovo Park Community School taking the lead and initiative.

According to the teaching of Freire, dialogue should not involve people acting on one another but rather people working with each other. The building of trust needs to be established before social transformation can take place. This has been done in a small way through this project.

An environment, within both schools, needs to be fostered that will ensure sustainability. The ultimate challenge must include looking to the future connections between the two schools. The ultimate challenge in particular to Ridge community members is to continue on the journey. Just to return to our privileged lives and carrying on with business as usual, would create an end to what has been achieved so far.

Gaining support from the community is also important. The fact that high profile personalities like Mrs. Slovo and Councillor F.H. Moosa from the Johannesburg City Council took the time to attend the event shows us that the building of the Slovo Park School is supported. The letter is one addressed to Headmaster Paul Channon prior to the event.



CITY OF JOHANNESBURG

DATE: 17 February, 2003

Attention: Paul Channon

Dear Paul

RE: Building of school adjacent to slovo park informal settlement

This letter serves to confirm that I, Fahdiel . H. Moosa, the ward Councillor for ward 68 in the City of Johannesburg fully support the building of a new school adjacent to Slovo park.

The residence and myself would also like to express our sincere appreciation to you and your committee for bringing this development to our area, "education is power". This development would certainly address the educational needs of our people.

I would therefore like to wish you all the success in this endeavour

Yours faithfully

5.2 The visual arts and arts and culture – a different kind of programme

As an educator my outlook has changed towards the way I would approach teaching and learning especially in the way of presenting future art exhibitions for learners. This change could include:

- Focusing on learner-driven ideas and more active learner participation in putting together an exhibition
- Orchestrating the possible implementation of hybridity as a productive challenge to Eurocentric curatorial strategies (Coombes, 1992: 39)
- ongoing and continuous research

In wanting to change how you teach it is necessary to plan effectively. In 2000

The Ridge required that all departments work on a five year plan. My five year

plan included the following five points:

- Linking Art to Outreach
- Bringing in Specialist Artists
- To try and unify the subject of art with the other Arts and Culture subjects notably the areas of music and drama
- To introduce an annual art tour for the learners involved in Extra Art
- Changing my way of Assessment to embrace Outcomes Based criteria

Having planned this in advance and keeping in mind a constant goal makes implementation of new ideas possible, I have been able to implement most of these ideas. The first one, as a result of this project, is the most important shift. Linking art to the social and to people rather than focusing on the end products has certainly enriched my teaching and learning in ways that I never thought possible. This was further enhanced by bringing in artists, again making another connection to the social and to people.

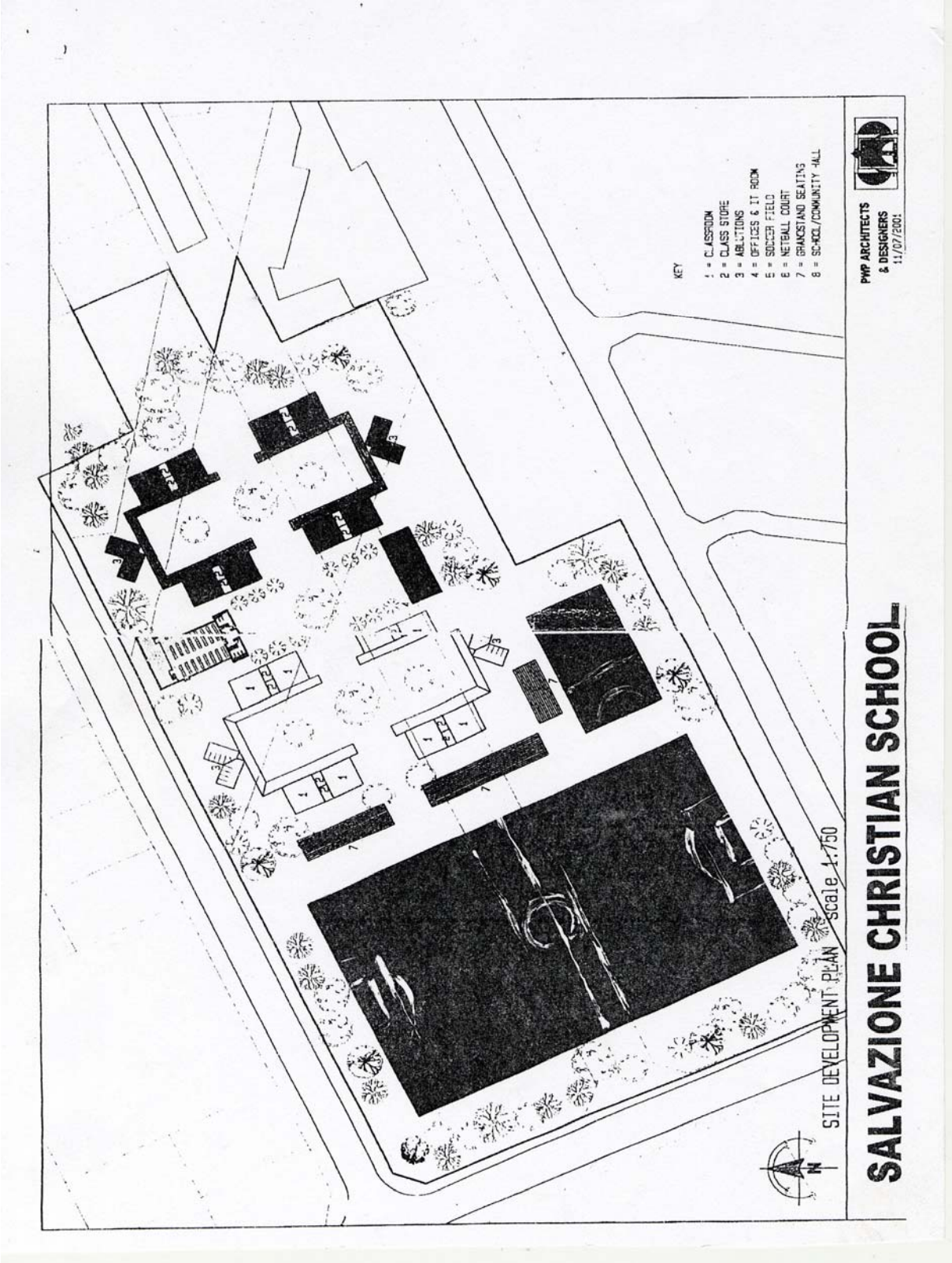
Attempting to unify the arts and culture subjects only happened on a surface level. The educators in the other subjects need to make the same commitment in order for these connections to be sustained. As with a community partnership, this partnership cannot be successful if it remains one sided.

The implementation of these changes has been successful for me as an educator. But it is debatable whether the same can be said of learners, parents and other staff at either school. Sustainability is the key and if ISASA and the GDE can support art initiatives of this nature, possibly learners can be made more socially aware of each other through the Arts and Culture Learning Area.

Notes:

1. Anzaldua,G.*Cultural Studies, the Classroom and the Public Sphere* [online]http://www.uoguelph.ca/culture/glossart.htm [accessed 18 April 2004]

Appendix A:
Site Development Plan



Appendix B:

DID YOU KNOW?

The Slovo Park Community School is going to be built on the empty land just opposite you?

- **The Salvazioné Christian School** is a Gauteng Education Department assisted primary school and has been operating from the back rooms of T**he Mayfair Baptist Church** in St.Jeffery's Road since 1991

- As part of their **outreach** programme, The Ridge School, an Independent Preparatory school in Westcliff has raised enough funds to build a new school which will be known as the **Slovo Park Community School**.

- The GRADE 7's from both schools have put together an **ART EVENT** which will be held in a marquee on the proposed site on **Tuesday 23 March at 17.30.**

- The exhibition will be set up on THURSDAY 18 March, FRIDAY 19 March and Monday 22 March (Public Holiday). An alternative arts and culture programme is being explored through this **community partnership** initiative.

Thank you for your time!
Any queries please phone
Kathrin 481-5851 or Emily 839-4188

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3. Cahan,S. & Kocur,Z.(eds) 1986, *Contemporary Art and Multicultural Education,* Routledge, New York.

4. Chalmers,F.G. 1996, *Celebrating Pluralism, Art , Education and Cultural Diversity*, The Getty Institute, California.

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