

**PEDAGOGIES OF LEISURE:
CONSIDERING COMMUNITY RECREATION CENTRES
AS CONTEXTS FOR ART EDUCATION
AND ART EXPERIENCE**

by

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**A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

in

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

Department of Curriculum Studies in Education

**We accept this thesis as conforming
to the required standard**

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

October 1997

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Date Oct 14/97

**Pedagogies of Leisure:
Considering Community Recreation Centres
As Contexts for Art Education and Art Experience**

Abstract

This dissertation examines visual art programming and art education practices within the contexts of two community recreation centres in an urban Canadian West Coast Parks and Recreation Department. Addressing the academic communities of both education and recreation/leisure studies, it questions the dichotomy of education and recreation and looks at leisure institutions as pedagogical environments.

This research considers the question, "What is the context into which art programming in community recreation centres is expected to fit, and how does that context position and affect art teaching and art experience?" It uses interview transcripts, documents, visual data, and field notes to identify themes pertaining to the ideological and structural environments in which art programming practice occurs. The perspectives of staff/administrators are contrasted with those of art instructors, and elaborated by evidence related to participants' experiences and the physical/visual/symbolic environments of the settings. The study is positioned within sociological literatures of art, leisure, and education--including feminist analysis and critical theory--and draws particularly on the work of Pierre Bourdieu.

Analysis suggests numerous contradictions to the construction of leisure as freedom, pleasure, and non-education, and draws attention to the particular ways that these recreation centre sites frame and influence art encounters. For example, although one description of art education practice in these settings is that it is "wrapped in fun", it can alternatively be understood as occurring within the frenzied and fragmented temporal patterns of contemporary North American life; commodified and negotiated in expectations of pleasure; imbued with a formal lack of authority; and positioned within an environment which tends to privilege physical and male-dominated forms of leisure. The study suggests that informal institutional practices and tacit messages act to contravene a formal arts policy intended to increase recreational arts programming, ultimately maintaining the status quo.

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Acknowledgements

There are many individuals and groups whom I would like to acknowledge for their contributions to this study. First, I would like to express sincere thanks to the Parks and Recreation Department which permitted me to conduct my research in community recreation centres within that jurisdiction. I thank in particular centre coordinators and programmers who agreed to let me to "hang around" in their centres, assisted me in gaining access to various programs and groups, and included me in their already overburdened schedules, all in addition to teaching me about their work. It is to this organization's credit that it is willing to contribute to knowledge in this way.

I would also like to thank the many artists, instructors, and participants who volunteered time to help me with my study. I am painfully aware that projects such as these often perpetuate the practice of using the expertise and knowledge of disempowered groups--such as artists and women--for free. I can only hope that this study and my future writing will serve to improve understanding of the practices of artist/teachers working in community centre sites, in turn contributing to improving the conditions of leisure art as work and experience in these settings.

In addition to those people who acted as research participants, I would like to thank and acknowledge the contributions and insights provided toward this project by the members of my dissertation committee: Dr. Wendy Frisby; Dr. Jane Gaskell; and Dr. Allison Tom. Each of these people has served not only as academic guides but as role models who have helped me understand better what it means to be a good and ethical academic. I would like in particular to thank the chairperson of my committee, Dr. F. Graeme Chalmers, for his openness and willingness to support my ideas, his wonderful work as an editor, his endless patience, and his quiet faith that this project would eventually get completed.

I wish as well to thank my friends and family who bore the load of providing day to day support as I struggled through my studies and research. I thank my friend Barbara Shantz for her regular encouragement and for showing me what tenacity and inner strength really means. I thank my mother, Gladys Lackey, for her unflinching and ever-present support, which is always with me. And finally, I thank my husband David and my daughters Meghan and Erin for their many sacrifices throughout this long process and for giving me the only real justification for finishing. I hope that some day I will be able to repay all of these people in some way.

Chapter One Introduction to the Study

Introduction to the Problem

Is this a topic that you have created or did they give you a topic? Well, I don't think you're going to get a very long thesis out of that!

(This comment was made by a senior female amateur artist/crafts-person whose group used a room in the West Side Community Recreation Centre. The remark was made in the context of my request for an interview with her, after having heard the brief explanation that my dissertation research was about art programming in community centres, and then my admission that I did in fact choose the topic myself. She most emphatically declined to be interviewed when I told her that the process might take 45 minutes to an hour.)

There are any number of places at which I might begin to write about this study. I have chosen to start here, with this quote, however, because--while it has become meaningful to me on a number of levels--first and foremost this statement seems to exemplify the ways in which the realms of both art and leisure (individually but certainly in combination) are assumed to be unimportant or frivolous on the most spontaneous levels of everyday common sense. Over time I have realized that understanding the problem which my study addresses requires acknowledging and analyzing these perceptions.

Although I am surely not the first doctoral student to receive puzzled responses and glazed looks upon reciting a dissertation title, I do believe that I have had more trouble than most in establishing my topic as credible. A former colleague, for example--an artist--gaped (rather condescendingly I thought), "Recreation! Oh dear!" when I told him what my study was about. In a doctoral seminar in which we were required to present our research proposals, I was asked, "Why Art?" by the professor, a question I took at the time to suggest that, before I could begin my research, I would have to justify the existence of my entire field. Further, while the other

seminar participants--a diverse group of education PhD students--went on rather endlessly about how they "felt" about my subject and were eager to tell me about their childhood experiences with art class, they were unable to provide any useful critique of my presentation. I could not help but notice that similar responses did not arise with proposals for the study of issues in language arts or science, and I was left feeling that my project had not been taken seriously. I have had difficulty gleaning interest among school-based art educators for my non-school focus, and I was told (upon receipt of my resume and albeit very politely) by a professor of physical education and recreation that I had established a nice "niche" for myself, but that their department had focused on "active" recreation. And finally, as I began to search for other research dealing specifically with this topic, I found next to nothing of substance. In other words, the message I was repeatedly given about my chosen topic was that it was inconsequential, unsophisticated, not education, reflective of "passive" activity (and therefore not recreation), uninteresting, and certainly not worthy of research. More than a simple case of "studying down", this seemed to be a case of studying that which was blatantly without value and often distinguished and defined by categories into which it did not fit.

I admit that initially I found these experiences irksome and even deflating. Gradually, however, I came to think of each of them as clues, or even gifts. Further, I have concluded that the extent to which this topic is assumed to be insignificant is actually one of its most significant and interesting features. Moving beyond my own vague feelings of defensiveness about the focus of the study, I recognized that these exchanges contained references to the stratification of school subjects and the mystification of art as a form of knowledge; elitism in the art world; the hierarchical separation of work and leisure, and the continued dominance of the physical realm,

based on an assumption of the separation of mind and body, in recreation. I determined that my research project and the dilemmas it posed were entangled within--and made visible by--these issues, and that I should therefore be grateful to that senior woman who did not mince her words.

Statement of the Problem and Justification for the Study

In common sense terms, conceptions of art, education, and leisure divide into value-stratified and dichotomously interwoven relationships such that notions like formal schooling, mind, work, and core academic subjects are associated with necessity and importance, while non-formal education, body, play, and art are linked to the marginal and frivolous in life. Embedded within and solidified by social organization, such perspectives often obscure alternative understandings even when our own experiences and brief examination tell us otherwise.

We tend, for example to equate "education" with schooling, discounting non-school realms as insignificant or uncomplicated as learning environments, even though learning--always a complex transaction--undeniably occurs in every context of life. Within schools, we have privileged written and verbal modes of symbolic representation and suppress critical visual literacy, even though we are daily bombarded with images intended to influence and communicate with us. We further construe visual images as supplemental to or illustrative of textual arguments when in fact images use unique codes which hold meanings in their own rights and affect us profoundly, often on subliminal levels (Chaplin, 1994, pp 3-4). The marginality of art as a school subject has created circumstances in which art instruction is prevalent in non-school settings, and makes the emphasis on school-based practice in art education literature seem unbalanced.

We may cling to categories that separate work from leisure, assuming the former to be

important and the latter inconsequential, even though such obviously significant human events--birth, death, love to name a few--occur outside the official realms of work. We can blur claimed distinctions between work and leisure when we imagine leisure that requires effort and diligence and work that is playful or leisurely. Recreation and leisure also tend to be posed as falling outside the realm of education, even though we know that much leisure activity requires skill, knowledge, and learning. Within the field of recreation, physical forms of leisure are privileged even though these clearly comprise only one type of activity in which people engage in their free time.

The problem presented by my study, therefore, is not, as the initial quote suggests, that art and leisure are in some way naturally or inherently inconsequential realms. Rather, it is that human beings have built up an interconnecting set of institutional and ideological frameworks which act to maintain perceptions about the inconsequence of leisure in relation to education, of art knowledge in relation to dominant knowledge forms, and of art as leisure activity in relation to the physical realm, in spite of the fact that these are each relatively untenable positions to take and which dissolve or become complicated upon reflection.

As I will elaborate in chapter two, such common sense notions--what Bourdieu (1977/1990) would refer to as cultural arbitraries--can be traced to issues of power and have social and political implications. As a result of their strength in everyday thought, however, we have tended to limit the possibilities in art education according to the time, space, and power relations of public schooling while leaving unexamined the non-formal and alternative learning environments in which art experience so often occurs. As such, the experiences and perspectives of a broad range of learners and teachers have been marginalized and we have articulated neither

educational potentials nor constraints of non-school realms in general and recreation centres in particular. Perhaps more urgently, however, we have not benefitted from a clearer understanding of how we construe "education" by considering and questioning what we have constructed as its institutional and conceptual opposite--what it is viewed as "not", and indeed as so unlike school and so without consequence that we need not attend to it at all. By deflecting the spotlight away from leisure realms, we permit those who administer them to avoid confronting and taking responsibility for the learning and influence which inevitably occurs there, and limit the imagined functions and goals of prevalent publicly funded institutions.

This study begins to address these dilemmas through an examination of one type of non-formal context--the community recreation centre--which has increasingly included the arts within its mandate, yet has gone largely unquestioned in terms of the type of contexts it provides for art encounters and art learning. In addition, recreation centres may be viewed as interesting cases for this research, because they can be construed as sites where the traditions and ideologies of art and art education merge with those of physical education and leisure.

Purpose of the Study and Research Question

Given the complex dualisms surrounding notions of art, education, and leisure, and given that recreation centres in North America have received minimal critical examination as educational environments for art encounters, this study has collected evidence concerning the key question, "What is the context into which art programming in community recreation centres is expected to fit, and how does that context position and affect art teaching and art experience?" It explores how those who work in and use community recreation centres describe, encounter, and practice art programming in two community recreation centres located in distinct communities

within Greater Vancouver. It also considers how art activity fits within and is linked to the agendas and practices of particular recreation institutions. In its broadest sense, this study is concerned with expanding notions of "education" beyond schooling and questioning the assumption that recreation practices are not relevant to the education community. In a parallel sense, it also questions assumptions within the field of recreation that education is outside its realm of concern. In a more particular way, it is concerned with re-thinking the experience and contributions of recreational art teachers to art education, and re-examining the possibilities and constraints for art experience in specific non-school settings.

Introduction to the Research Settings

In order to include data reflecting distinct characteristics in terms of socio-economics and culture, I have selected as research sites two urban recreation centres situated in different geographic areas. Both, however, are part of the same municipal Parks and Recreation Department in the Lower Mainland, British Columbia. These circumstances mean that "describing" the research settings becomes a relatively complex task. While, for example, the two centres have certain features in common and are connected through a central bureaucracy, each is also unique, having somewhat different facilities and being situated in particular communities to which the centre's programs are designed to respond. Further, the community centres involved in this study are complex, multi-faceted organizations which are used by continually shifting groups and individuals over the course of each day, each week, and each season.

I approach this description, therefore, in the following ways: I first discuss aspects of the overall Parks and Recreation Department within which the research sites are situated. I then note

the Arts Policy which was recently developed by the municipality and which is now the official guide for arts programming in the centres. I also describe some of the range and variety of programming that might be found under the label of "arts programming" in these settings. Finally, I depict the two particular centres in which most of the data for this study were collected and to which I have assigned the pseudonyms West Side Centre and East Side Centre. I outline the facilities within each site and the nature of the community surrounding each centre. I also provide examples of the kinds of scenes that one might encounter at each place at a peak time of activity. I wish to emphasize, however, that these descriptions are merely selected introductions and in no way are intended to represent the whole. As this research is concerned with recreation center contexts, however, interview excerpts and field note passages throughout the study will build on and complicate the introductory descriptions offered here.

The Parks and Recreation Department.

The Parks and Recreation Department in which the East Side and West Side Centres are situated oversees 21 community centres and about 170 parks. Within this system, each community centre is governed by the combination of a non-profit association (run by a board made up of elected volunteer officers, members at large, and representatives of community user groups) and a central bureaucracy. Each centre is funded by a combination of public tax monies and revenue generated by programs and fund raising. Responsibilities for managing each centre are divided between these two groups. The central bureaucracy, for example, pays and supervises full time recreation staff and is responsible for maintaining facilities and parks surrounding the centres. It also oversees selected special programs which are viewed as being relevant to the city as a whole rather than specific to each centre. Part of a city-wide system of

municipal services, the Parks and Recreation Department's access to public funding is dependent to an extent on political whim and the particular ideologies of the dominant political party. Recently, for example, municipal elections included a referendum question which sought authority to devote extra monies to repairing and renovating aging community centre facilities in the area.

Community centre associations, on the other hand, oversee individual centre budgets and, for example, contract with part-time employees, like instructors. Their position as non-profit groups means that they may apply for grant monies and receive donations to which the government bureaucracy would not have access. Although this shared system of responsibility is in many ways effective and provides "on paper" opportunities for combining bureaucratic efficiency and local democratic decision-making and control, areas of responsibility are not always clearly defined--a situation which can create confusion or stall action. Related to this study, for example, both centres cited tensions between the associations and the central bureaucracies over which group was responsible for purchasing new kilns and equipment for the pottery studios. Each group, naturally, wanted the other to take on this expense, and pottery instructors noted delays in getting the equipment and repairs they needed as a result.

In addition, although centre associations officially approve such things as budgets, and a program committee, comprised of volunteer community members, approves programs at each location, in fact staff members responsible for implementing programs and supervising operations on a day to day basis actually have a great deal of control over what occurs at each site.

As well, boards may be more or less effective or active depending on the particular centre

and individuals involved. Staff members note that people may run for board positions--which are elected and done on a volunteer basis--for a variety of reasons. Motives may range from altruism and a general interest in serving one's community, to putting forward the perspective of a particular group, arguing a stance on a local issue, or using the experience on the board as a stepping stone to other political arenas or to augment one's resume. In general staff members noted the prevalence and influence of board members who represented male sport groups associated with the centres.

The Arts Policy.

In November 1993, the Arts and Culture Task Force and Members of the Arts Policy Working group--a group made up of members of the arts community and facilitated by Central Parks and Recreation staff, produced an *Arts Policy Report and Recommendations* which became the official mandate for the municipality with regards to the arts. Citing current arts activities as involving educational programs, festivals, and audience development (the use of centre facilities for rehearsal, performance, and exhibition space), the 23 page document provides goals, recommendations, and strategies for municipal arts activity and support. Four key goals are as follows:

Goal 1: To Expand Opportunities in the Arts for people to learn and create

Goal 2: To develop a broader role for the artist within communities

Goal 3: To create links between the arts and the everyday lives of people through a Community Cultural Development process

Goal 4: To make the arts an essential component of Park Board policies, planning, operations, parks, and facilities (City Parks and Recreation, 1993).

Associated with this new mandate, the department has a staff Arts Team made up of

interested staff members from many centres; has implemented an artist in residence program to which centres may apply; publishes a newsletter detailing arts activities in the department; and has recently completed the renovation of a heritage building in the city's core for use as a community centre with a special arts focus (although it also has traditional fitness facilities as well). In keeping with the new policy, staff members cite changing attitudes in the department that tend to support arts endeavors. Arguably, the goal of increasing arts opportunities within community recreation centres has been added to staff responsibilities.

Although I suggest that it is justified to examine arts programming generally within recreation centres, the introduction of this new mandate makes further analysis of the formal and tacit contexts and expectations for art programming an even greater imperative within this particular setting.

Visual Art Programming in Recreation Centres.

As the Arts Policy implies, there are many ways in which art activity is or can be evident in community centre life. In terms of visual art, progra

mming may include courses that focus on a single medium or technique--such as clay work, drawing and painting, or printmaking--or those that include a range of visual art activities offered over a number of weeks, often providing a different type of activity each class. In addition, there are art programs--usually special one-day workshops--that emphasize art activity related to a holiday theme, and art activity that occurs within the context of general social or play programming, often for preschoolers or as child care for school-aged children during holiday breaks. Finally, there are numerous art programs that occur in the context of special, one-time projects, sometimes in conjunction with a community issue or celebration or an artist-in-

residence commission.

In each case, the particular medium, format, age group, and focus of the program provide another level or framework within which visual art activity is nested, and cause both administrators and instructors to be oriented to programs in different ways. In addition, of course, programming is influenced by and geared to the particular characteristics of communities surrounding a given centre. In the next section I offer more specific descriptions of the two settings in which most of my field work took place.

The West Side Centre.

A concrete building with pale blue trim, the West Side Centre is situated on the West Side of the municipality and surrounded by several acres of park and playing fields. This year a long horizontal banner strewn just above the lettering of the building's name announces "40 years of Community Spirit" marking the 40th anniversary of the West Side Community Centre Association.

The grassy lawns around the centre roll gently downhill, and are spotted with towering, thick-trunked fir trees with full drooping branches. These shade the grounds and give the park a rather stately and established look. At the bottom of the slope are six tennis courts, surrounded by a high metal cage. During the Spring and as long into the Fall as the weather will cooperate, these courts are rarely not in use on weekdays or weekends. In the summer, they are in use all day, every day, and into the evening, until it gets too dark to play.

Beyond the courts, the lawns stretch out into several flat playing fields used by adult and child sport leagues--t-ball, baseball, softball, soccer, and field hockey, for example. Quiet residential streets line the centre's boundaries on three sides, and across from the courts are a row

of homes--Eastern Craftsman and English Builder styles (Chalmers, 1981), are prevalent, probably built in the 1920's or 1930's--and occasionally some larger, newer styles. Although this was originally a middle and working class neighbourhood, the homes' locations on the West Side of the municipality would make them quite costly today. Moving West toward the university and the protected forests surrounding it, the homes increase in size and value, and confirm the neighbourhood's reputation as among the most economically well-off in the area.

Several blocks north of the centre is a small business and shopping area which includes a movie theatre, banks, restaurants, and cafes as well as grocery, hardware, clothing and other stores. An older, established business community, this area is currently prosperous and growing.

The municipality as a whole has in recent years experienced an influx of immigrants, particularly from those of non-Western heritage, and this new population is evident to a small extent in this community as well. Overall, however, the neighbourhood has remained relatively stable in the composition of its population, and tends to be made up of Caucasian families of northern European ancestry. At the community centre, for example, it is not uncommon to hear voices with British accents. The staff note that the official boundaries of the centre border on the lands of a First Nations Band, although this population is in evidence neither at the centre nor on the neighbourhood streets. The key non-Western presence at the centre is the daily appearance of numerous Filipino nannies, who care for the children of professional working parents in the area.

Inside, the centre has a light, airy, and spacious feel. This is due to the glass walls that surround much of the main floor, the tall ceilings with glass skylights along the entire length of the front of the building, and the sheer amount of space, sparsely filled with furniture. A series of brightly coloured and hand-painted silk banners, made to celebrate the 40th anniversary, hang

high over-head and are positioned to allow the light from the skylights to shine through. The floor is covered with a soft grey rug, and the walls are also pale grey, with aqua and turquoise accents. The main floor interior looks clean and relatively new. A few large plants inside and the abundance of visible green outside somewhat offset the rather institutional effects of the furniture and colour choices.

To one side of the main entrance is a long curved counter for registration. On the opposite side, magenta padded office-type couches and benches line the walls of a spacious lounge area. Just around the corner is the "Juice Bar", another seating area made up of small white round tables and padded magenta vinyl chairs. The floor to ceiling glass wall across the back looks out into the green park and creates a pleasant place to sit and have snacks--I sat there myself writing notes on many occasions. From there, one can also see the parking lot which, on week-day mornings, is filled with newer model cars, mostly sedans, small station wagons, and family vans. Along one wall is a tall dispenser of Sun-Rype Juice which reads, "Made with pure fruit juices" across its front. An aqua and turquoise counter in the Juice Bar sells more juices, coffee, milk, muffins, soups, sandwiches, and a few pastries and cookies. Large glass windows cut into the wall opposite the juice bar counter look down into the racquetball courts on the lower level, at least one of which is usually in use. Also in the Juice Bar, a small shelf with a few books for children, and, for several months while it lasted, a child-decorated play house made from a large appliance-type cardboard box.

Down the hall on the main floor, is the glassed-in area--usually with Venetian blinds pulled down--which enclose the staff offices. Further, the large gleaming gymnasium where fitness classes take place several times every day, and from which amplified popular music often

emanates throughout the building. Just outside the gym is the wide wall display case filled with sports trophies and plaques. Down a narrow hall, in the older section of the building, is the small room shared by visual art activities and the pottery studio, also used to store the drama supplies and various miscellaneous equipment. At the end of this hall is a room used for babysitting during the daytime fitness classes, and a small kitchen.

Along a second hallway is the room used for a range of preschool classes, filled with preschool-sized tables, chairs, and stocked with toys and play equipment; the washroom (especially equipped with diaper changing facilities); and the Teen games room. Earlier filled with rather drab furniture, a pool table, and an old piano, it has now been renovated. The walls are a rich textured blue and purple, and the bland furniture has been replaced with a set of couches with matching wide grey and white stripe trim.

A gated stairway in the centre of the large main lounge area leads downstairs to the fitness centre: a room filled with blue mats, silver exercise machines, and lined with a full-length mirror. A whirl pool and change rooms are also in this area. Downstairs in the basement is a large room in which a non-profit preschool takes place.

On the upper floor, there is a tiny room containing a few computers for use by the seniors group, and several large rectangular "multi-purpose" rooms, which get used for more fitness classes as well as a variety of other activities, such as meetings and children's birthday parties. These have tiled or parquet floors, beige walls, and when not in use are cleared of furniture. Among these is one that is used predominantly for the Orff program, and is equipped with cupboards of special percussion instruments for this purpose.

Programming for preschool children is in especially high demand at the West Side

Centre. Fitness classes, the Fitness Centre, and the racquetball courts are also heavily used by the members of the community. Although art programs are perceived as being more difficult to "get going" here than sports oriented programs, the centre does have a core set of visual art programs (3 children's and 1 adult Drawing and Painting courses; 4 children's and 2 adult Pottery) that regularly attract registrants during the Fall, Winter, and Spring Programs. Additional visual art courses for children and preschoolers, and special workshops for adults are also offered each term. General preschool classes regularly incorporate some work with visual art materials as one of a number of activities available. The centre has a large Orff music program and offers some piano, dance, and drama programs as well.

I was surprised to realize that the centre was relatively quiet on weekends and evenings, when the snack bar is often closed. But, the West Side Centre comes "alive" on weekday mornings when the mothers, care-givers, and preschool children arrive to take part in programs. Many of the adults are there for fitness classes and children are put in the available babysitting service or other programs occurring simultaneously. Here is a description of one such week-day morning, gleaned from my field notes:

This morning the centre seems to be fairly swarming with young mothers, their young children and babies. I stand at the counter beside a woman with a very new baby in a car carrier with a handle. She asks the receptionist if she can have a receipt for her fitness pass, that her company will reimburse her. Most of the mothers are Caucasian, and many wear exercise clothing--one wears short black bicycle pants, white socks and white running shoes; a second one wears grey stretch "capri" style knee-length leggings, white socks, sneakers, and a hot pink t-shirt over top.

As the fitness class begins, most of the mothers and children disappear, the mothers to the class and the children to the babysitting room. During this time, the gymnasium becomes a sea of bodies--I count 50 easily. Lined up in long horizontal rows across the wide gleaming wooden floor, each woman--it is nearly all if not entirely women--has a small blue or grey and magenta plastic platform

near her feet--the "step".

The instructor wears bright purple leggings, white socks, white sneakers, and a sleeveless black stretch top that ends just short of her waist, showing a bit of midriff. Her dark hair is tied up in a high curly pony-tail. She wears a microphone, and her voice is amplified as she begins to call out commands over the booming music. They all begin "on the floor", that is, not using the step, warming up, and then gradually begin to use the little platform and to increase the pace. "Basic step!" "Double! Repeat! One more!" The women move continuously, using the step in what seems every possible combination. Step up, down, over the top, tap down, turn to the right, change legs, skip, hop, clap, "Whoo!" For the most part the women move in unison, and seem to understand immediately the complex combinations that the instructor calls out. A few look rather like people who Jane Fonda would invite to help her on her latest exercise video--extremely fit and slender. A few struggle to keep up and learn the combinations. The rest are somewhere in between. Overall, they move together to an increasing and unrelenting pace. To me, they look rather like they are dancing. (In fact, for some time I continued to be puzzled about why anyone would want to do this rather than dance until a fitness coordinator, surprised at the question, gently informs me that the step class is one of the most efficient ways to exercise and burn fat, which was what these women were trying to do.)

The instructor looks very fit and executes every movement with precision and vigour, continuing to bounce when the others began to wane. The music and her voice permeate the lower floor of the community centre and can even be heard outside in the parking lot.

Back in the lounge area I am struck by the "row" of Filipino nannies sitting shoulder to shoulder on one small couch in the open lounge area. I have noticed that they often sit clustered together and talk, the children they supervise playing nearby. As I sit at one of the round tables in the Juice Bar, drinking coffee and eating a favourite Danish that the juice bar often has available, two small and very blonde boys run back and forth between the counter and the large glass windows that allow spectators to look down on the racquetball courts. Earlier when I was ordering my coffee a blonde woman near by called to her child, "You can have some cheese with those crackers", and then, humorously under her breath and to me, "should you be so inclined!". She implied, I thought that the child rather ruled the roost and would do exactly as she pleased, regardless. Behind me a blond boy pushed and thumped on the keys of a small white upright piano that was temporarily pushed against the racquetball wall. Ping Ping, dong dong dong. People didn't seem to mind, even though the sound was rather irritating. A black haired Filipino woman approached the counter with two small preschool children, both girls. One child had a thin blonde pony tail, and the smaller, (I assume her younger sister) had dark blond hair in a tiny bun. The smallest one reaches up and whines, indicating that she wants to be picked up, and the woman complies, holding her so that she can choose a fruit snack from an assortment arranged in a

row of painted green and blue plant pots on the high counter. The young girl chooses one and the woman rather quickly puts her down. She then does the same for the older girl.

Three children play close to one of the couches in the open lounge area. Two boys crawl underneath the couch and press against the wall. A girl, lying on the floor nearby, puts her legs under the couch and pushes with her feet against one boy, teasing.

By now it's 11:45 a.m. The fitness class is finished and the group of women and children who have gathered for snacks in the juice bar are getting ready to go. The blonde woman who had spoken about the cheese was sitting at one of the round tables with a young brown-haired boy. "Let's go!" she says to the boy. "Say bye-bye to everyone!" says an Asian-looking woman who had been reading one of the books on the shelf to her little girl. A woman with short red hair and wearing a blue denim shirt tucked into blue denim shorts with a wide black belt, also gets ready to leave. She follows a little girl--also with bright red hair, denim shorts and shirt--as she pushes a baby carriage toward the door. To this red-haired friend, a woman with a cane calls, "I'm going this way, Penny, so I'll call you, OK?" By noon, the juice bar was often nearly deserted. People seem to snack there, but not eat lunch.

The East Side Centre.

Built in the mid 1960's, the East Side Community Centre is a two-story building which houses a gymnasium and an ice rink as its major facilities. Entering the parking lot one sees the high grey concrete exterior wall of the gymnasium, across which is stretched a boldly lettered white banner reading "Fitness Centre". Like the West Side Centre, the lot will usually contain numerous station wagons, sedans, and small family vans, but these will be slightly older models than those at the West Side. In addition, it is common to see several open-bed or covered trucks parked here. Off to one side, behind the centre and hidden from the road, is a small playground (onto which the downstairs preschool facility opens) and up a slight hill from there, tennis courts which are rarely in use, even in the summer months.

The lands that surround the centre are flat and open in comparison to the West Side site. Facing east and looking across the grounds from the parking lot, there is a narrow strip of grass,

then a dirt and gravel baseball diamond, and beyond that a stretch of green grass and the small East Lake. The lake is lined with slender trees (mostly deciduous, including a few weeping willows), reeds, and numerous short shrubs. It is also circled by a path that attracts walkers and bicyclists, especially in the warm months. The grounds in this area are officially bog lands, and have the interesting quality of bouncing--and actually sinking--if you jump up and down on them. This adds an element of mystery and excitement to the frenzied night time dancing that accompanies an annual summer solstice festival, created by a local artists' group.

To one side of the lake is a small sandy beach and a low brown building used for storage and as a summer food concession for swimmers and sunbathers. Beyond the lake are more grassy playing fields, and in the distance, to the north, you can see the blue-violet mountains. Although the park is often nearly deserted on weekdays, even in the summer time, it fills with visitors and activity on warm summer evenings and weekends. In the early evenings the baseball and other fields are often in use by amateur sport teams. In the darker rainy fall season, the lights on the fields for the rugby players illuminate the parking lot as well, and leave it surprisingly dark, silent, and rather eerie when they are turned off at the end of play.

Across the street from the main entrance to the centre are less expensive homes than those near the West Side site--World War II Bungalows and 1970's Builders (Chalmers, 1981). A few blocks north west is a lively commercial area known for its multi-cultural ambiance and range of cafes and restaurants that feature ethnic foods. The surrounding community, designated as generally lower income by staff members, is multicultural in nature and comprised of established immigrant families from southern Europe and more recent families from Asia--Chinese and Vietnamese are noted in particular. In addition a population of First Nations people

is in evidence, and the centre has frequently been used for the powwow, a major yearly event which attracts hundreds of First Nations participants from near and far.

From the main entrance to the centre, one enters a hallway with a red/orange tile flooring and concrete block walls which are painted off-white. To the left is the glassed-in office area behind which is the receptionist. A door which is kept locked leads into this area, where the staff members also have their cramped and cluttered office spaces. To the right off the hall is a turquoise metal door with the word "Upstairs" painted vertically in huge black letters. A bit further, an alcove with a "Pepsi" dispenser leads into the change room, where ice skates are laced on and taken off, and through the double doors is the ice rink. In the rink, the air is cold and grey. The walls are beige and accented with wide orange and brown accent "stripes". Blue and yellow banners with the names of amateur teams hang from the walls, as does a long white banner with "East Side Oilers " printed in large black and yellow letters. To one side are the bleachers for spectators. The smooth translucent ice stretches across the large room, bounded by walls which are half concrete block and rise up the rest of the way in plexiglass which allows spectators to see in but also contains flying pucks.

The centre's food concession serves to the skating change room on one side and the snack bar on the other. It sells hot dogs, french fries, a range of drinks--coffee, juice and pop primarily--doughnuts, potato chips, ice cream bars, sandwiches and chocolate bars. On the Snack Bar side, the room is carpeted with a drab brown and beige patterned rug. Positioned around the room are about 15 small square wooden tables and with them sets of wooden captain's chairs. On one side of the snack bar, the windows look out to the park. On the second, glass windows look into the concession and through to the skate change room, with its rows of long low benches, the skate

sharpening room, the bright blue cubicle lockers, and the glassed case full of sport plaques and trophies. On a third wall, glass windows allow one to look into the games room, where the youth at the centre play pool, ping pong, video games, and foos ball. Further down the hall, past the display cases for "Slo Pitch" and "Ball Hockey" and "Little League", is the gymnasium. Down stairs is the fitness centre, whirlpool, and lockers as well as the preschool. The racquet ball courts here are rarely used, and the fitness supervisor hopes to move some of the weight room equipment into one of them. Upstairs is the small cluttered pottery room, the room covered with floor mats for martial arts classes, and several multi-purpose rooms for meetings and rentals. Commonly spaces are identified by giant words painted on the doors and walls: "Change Rooms", "Fitness Centre", and "Rink", for example.

During the day time, the East Side Centre is often quiet in relation to the West Side Centre. Even the preschool classes and the daytime fitness classes draw far smaller crowds. Rather, this centre comes alive just after school and into the early evening when young boys and their male coaches, mainly Caucasian, begin to arrive for hockey practice. They carry awkwardly long duffle bags, long enough for a hockey stick to fit inside, over their shoulders. In many ways the rink is the pulse of the building. Almost any evening as well, however, the martial arts room will be filled with participants in their white loose clothing and sash belts. But perhaps the most noticeable activity, in clear sound and view from the snack bar, is the Games Room. Here is what I wrote about it one evening:

On a dark winter evening, the East Side Centre Games Room seems to roar with activity. One hour before, the room had been silent, locked while Cathy, the room supervisor was instead upstairs over-seeing the "Soup's On" program--in which donated food is used to prepare a meal for youth in the building who, for various reasons, couldn't or didn't want to go home for supper. The room itself is

about 40 feet long and 25 feet wide. At night it is lit with glaring fluorescent light. The floor is beige linoleum, and, except for one, the walls are also painted beige or tan. Down the centre of the room, perhaps 5 feet apart, are two pool tables topped with green felt, and two ping pong tables. Against one long wall are video and "foos ball" games, also two each. A small pile of paperback books are piled on a window ledge at the back of the room, although I can never remember seeing anyone look at them. At opposite corners of the room are two electric blue wooden lockers, for storing equipment. Later that year, a large television, bolted to the floor with a custom-built plywood case, would also be installed, the choice of the centre youth corps who had conducted a fund raising campaign to get it.

At 10 minutes to 6:00, several "youths" (as the centre referred to them) stand in the hallway outside the room, peering into the room and tapping impatiently on the glass windows cut into the doors. At 6 pm sharp, the doors swing open and suddenly 12 young people--all male--fill the spaces around the game equipment and take up play. Moving quickly into position at one of the pool tables, one young man swings an arm smoothly, deftly down the wall to plug in a large black tape/CD player. The sound is cranked up and heavy metal music pounds into the room.

On the opposite wall from the door leading to the community centre hallway is a second set of doors, positioned at the end of a row of tall glass windows. These doors open onto an outdoor concrete patio that in turn has steps leading down to the preschool playground, and beyond that, the playing fields, the lake, and the surrounding park. Tonight, a January week-night, these outdoor spaces are cold, damp, and dark. The doors open and close frequently as teens come and go to the patio, where they can be seen through the glass, smoking in the dim light outside.

The pool balls clatter against each other. The ping pong balls pop and occasionally fly around the room. The video games whir and ring. The foos ball game, however, is perhaps the noisiest of all. The players stand on either side of the small raised tables, grabbing and whipping the handles that jut out from the sides, trying to smack the pucks into the other goal, using the plastic "men" skewered a-row on a metal rod. I am amazed at the intensity and focus on the faces of the young men and boys who manage the handles. Throughout the room, loud playful voices can be heard above the din. Cathy and I stand side by side, talking. In order to hear one another, we nearly shout.

Now 7:10 pm, at least 40 people crowd the space around the games tables. I have moved into the snack bar and sit at one of the square wooden tables to watch through the long glass window that separates the two rooms. I eat french fries as I write my notes.

Looking around the games room, the five or six young people with pale skin and light hair stand out in a crowd with shiny black straight or curly hair. Many have Asian features. There are a few females in the room, and earlier I had watched two young women, perhaps 13 and 15 years, playing ping pong. One

was a competent player, but the other played awkwardly, as if she had had little practice, and later this one stood aside while the other played foos ball with a young man. The vast majority of users, however, are boys or young men. Most look as if they are about 11 to 18, but a few are older or younger. One Asian-looking man, for example--the only adult in the room other than Cathy, played fast and skillful ping pong with a boy of 9 or 10. I watch another two young men, in their mid to late teens, play ping pong as well. One wears faded blue jeans, a jean jacket, a white t-shirt, and a bright multi-coloured cotton baseball cap, backwards on his head. The cap is so tight fitting that it looks more like a bandanna from the front. His opponent wears black jeans, cuffed at the bottom, a black t-shirt, a black stain baseball jacket, and a white baseball cap, also backwards. Both have dark hair and olive complexions.

Cathy had told me that some kids are week-day "regulars" who perceive the games room as their own space. Others are kids who are in the centre for some other organized activity--perhaps the volleyball set up in the gym, hockey, or martial arts--and use the games room to fill time before or after. Some of the kids, I was told, might be characterized by words like street kids, or drop-outs, or unemployed. A number of the regulars live in "group homes". Several kids spend all of their out-of school time--from 3:30 to 9 pm daily (when the games room closes) in and around the games room. For some, Cathy said, simply being greeted by an adult who is glad to see them is unique in their day. A "youth worker" is employed at the centre to work with troubled kids, provide counselling, and liaise with families and schools.

My own age, gender, pale skin, and "middle-classness" make me feel self-conscious. In fact, I stick out like a sore thumb, one reason why its hard for me to stay in the games room unless I have a reason to be there. I feel embarrassed as I catch myself trying to represent these "others" and realize my bias and privilege when I wonder if it isn't rather late for some of the younger children to be out or why aren't all the kids home doing their home work.

Opposite the video and foos ball games, on a long wall which just a few months earlier had matched the rest of the room's stark beige, is the East Side Community mural.

This mural, and how it evolved, is a key part of chapter six.

Organization of the Dissertation

Having introduced the problems, the overriding questions which focus this study, and the research settings in this first chapter, the second chapter positions the study within selected sociological, critical, and feminist literatures of art, leisure studies, and education. Chapter three

offers a discussion of the methodological considerations and practices used for the study. Chapters four through six are analysis chapters which display data applicable to the key research question. Each works to describe recreation centre contexts for art experience from a particular cluster of perspectives. Chapter four relies on transcripts from open-ended interviews with 10 recreation administrative staff members in which they describe the nature of their work and how they understand art programming practice to fit within it. Chapter five relies on transcripts from open-ended interviews with 9 art program instructors working in the community centres. Again, they describe how they understand, experience, and practice their work in the context of community recreation. The talk in this chapter is supplemented with transcripts from art participants and parents of children enrolled in art programs. Chapter six offers excerpts of field notes describing art programming as it takes place in context, and examines how art programming is entwined with particular recreation institution agendas and broader social relations. Together these chapters offer an overview of how art programming is understood, practiced, and occurs within these particular sites. Chapter seven interprets the study in light of relevant literature and in terms of its implications for the fields of education and recreation/leisure studies. Drawing on evidence displayed in the analysis chapters, I here take the stance that recreation centres are "educational" contexts on numerous levels, and examine what it is that these sites may "teach" about art as leisure experience--hence the title of the dissertation, "The Pedagogies of Leisure".

Use of Terms

In concluding this chapter and introducing the next, I will briefly address my use of terms in this study. First, there are two sets of terms that may require clarification. One is my use of

"formal", "non-formal" and "informal" education. In this study I use Jarvis' (1987) notions of these terms: Formal education refers to officially sanctioned schooling; informal education refers to that which occurs in ordinary social interaction or by accident; and non-formal education refers to organized, non-credit education (p. 68). Although the programming provided in recreation centres is labeled as "leisure" activity, I suggest that much of it also has the characteristics of non-formal education.

The second is the distinction I make between recreation and leisure, because their common everyday uses tend to overlap. In this study, I use the term "recreation" to refer to the managed programming which is sponsored by the state, and in the case of this study, that which is overseen by the municipal Parks and Recreation department. I use "leisure" on the other hand to refer to a more general and encompassing concept within which recreation would be one component.

Having provided these explanations, however, it is important to note that a key focus of this research concerns the examination of how particular terms are understood and acted upon within recreation centre practice. Relevant to this study, I assume that terms like "art", "education", and "leisure" have multiple and contested interpretations and that they become institutionalized in ways which often imply particular philosophical, cultural, political, historic, and other social stances. I assume as well that the boundaries and values implied by notions such as "formal" or "non-formal" are humanly constructed and open to question. As such, while I use these terms in the study, I simultaneously think of them as part of its focus. In the next chapter, I explore some of the social influences and issues that underlie the meanings commonly applied to these terms.

Chapter Two

Discussion of Issues and Literature

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of issues pertinent to the research, and to clarify its important analytic assumptions. In one sense, this is a difficult task, because there has been a dearth of specific and credible academic attention directed to art programming in recreation. I have come to imagine the "field" in which this study is positioned, however, as crossing organizational and disciplinary boundaries, and the topic as suspended in a net made from the ideological and institutional relationships of art, education, and leisure. What becomes interesting and relevant then, are the ways in which the purposes and boundaries of each of these realms have been constructed, divided, and contested. Using this framework, I begin to address the subject of "art in recreation" as a cultural and institutionalized practice within a social and political world.

Underlying this analysis are my own personal questions--and the political position they imply--related to how and if non-school art education can contribute to a more democratic and equitable social and economic society, and how and if recreation can be solicited in helping people use visual forms to work toward those ends and make meaning in their own lives? My research question which seeks to understand and describe recreation centre contexts for art education and art experience is therefore underpinned by my hopes for and my assumptions about change and betterment in the social world and personal experience.

For purposes of this discussion I have found sociological literature--including work that falls into categories of feminist critique and critical theory--in art, education, and leisure studies

most useful. I begin where my own search began, in the field of art education, and work out from there to the other arenas related to the study. I touch briefly on issues of territoriality within art education; address certain critiques of schooling and issues in non-formal education; and examine aspects of the sociologies of art and leisure. Finally, I consider the nature of social institutions and address some assumptions which are particularly salient to analysis of this research. In my writing I draw heavily on previously published work (Lackey, 1994).

Art Education, Schooling, and Territoriality

In part, my own search to make sense of this topic grew out of an awareness in practice of frictions between school and non-school-based art educators, tensions which have also been evident in art education literature. In the U.S., for example, acrimony arose around calls for partnerships and cooperation between schools and philanthropic or government-funded cultural organizations that provide art educational experiences and often employ artists to lead activities. School-based art educators charge that such agencies are more interested in grant money than education (Smith, 1980) and warn that funding such groups could have the effect of fragmenting and weakening support for in-school art education (Chapman, 1982). A depleted school-based art education would, among other things, be vulnerable to take-over by a waiting cottage industry, interfering with sequential and integrated learning possibilities as a result (Kimpton, 1984).

For school art educators, non-school based art education also raises issues of who should teach art and which institutions should be the primary sites of art learning. Chapman (1992), for example, charges that cultural administrators tend to take art education as a straight-forward and a-political practice; assume that art can be as appropriately taught outside schools as in; and take

for granted that artists are necessarily suitable teachers of art. The effect, Chapman argues, is not only to challenge the primacy of schools as sites of art education but also to perpetuate romanticized notions of art:

What is significant...is the willingness of highly influential groups--outside the profession of arts education--to assume that school is not, in some fundamental sense, responsible for transmitting knowledge about art to young people; nor is it the most logical agency for doing so (p. 131)...The ethical question is whether we believe that the self-proclaimed truths of artists are an adequate basis for education. This issue is particularly important in the visual arts, where, in their desire to be regarded as innovative and creative, artists not only may endeavour to insulate themselves from historical and other 'outside' influences but advocate that students of art do the same (p. 132).

The accused agencies have answered back that they have no intention of taking on art education as a whole, wish only to augment and enrich school art education already in place, and chastise school-based critics for being territorial (Fowler, 1984). Soren (1993) acknowledges that while cultural agencies do increasingly view "education" as part of their role, it is primarily as a means to the end of building audience support for artists, and is not to be construed as doing the work of teachers.

School art educators' concerns are grounded, however, in personal experience with the persistent marginality of art as a school subject and in their awareness of the tenacity of taken-for-granted notions which devalue art as knowledge and practice: art as an unnecessary frill; art as effortless play; art as linked to the emotional and irrational; art as therapy; art as feminized activity; and artistic ability as genetically endowed. Indeed much of art education literature over the years has focused on trying to understand, de-construct, and refute these views. A small selection includes: Efland's (1976) case that school art is a form peculiar to schools, unrelated to the art world and used as a reward to be withheld until the "real" work of schooling is completed;

Feldman's (1982) essay calling on art educators to understand--and insist that others also embrace--a notion of art as work and therefore of value in school; Hamblen's (1983) argument that the persistent perception of art as non-cognitive is untenable; and Collins' (1995) analysis that art has been limited to a nurturing, supportive role in schools in order to maintain the primacy of dominant subjects and knowledge forms.

As these works also imply, however, common sense notions of art cannot be simply "explained" away. Rather, the ways in which art is conceptualized and moulded within particular institutions reflect its roots in historic, cultural, economic, and political conditions and struggles (Freedman, 1987; 1987a; Efland, 1990). As such, art education is also bound up in broad social issues related to power and equity.

Chapman (1992), for example, notes that support for art education by non-school agencies raises serious questions which centre on justice, "trustworthy knowledge", empowerment, and freedom of choice (pp. 132-133). Ultimately, she argues, these programs threaten democratic access to art knowledge by merging with and reinforcing common sense ideas that the school curricula need not take art education seriously. This perpetuation of low expectations for art in schools prevents most children from being empowered by art knowledge in the same ways that they may be by other subjects, and from using it to take advantage of future opportunities or to improve life chances. As such, equal access to art knowledge is prevented, and preserved instead as a "privilege of birth and the special advantage of one's parents' education" (p. 132).

In this argument, Chapman is supported by Bourdieu (1979/1984), who argues that keeping art in a peripheral position in the school curriculum maintains it as a mystified and

obscure form of knowledge. As a result, it is possible to learn "appropriate" art understandings, dispositions, and behaviours only through family and class-based socialization processes which he calls "habitus". Where knowledge forms are not accessible to all, they can be used as cultural capital, a kind of ticket which both distinguishes one as a member of and provides entry to elite social groups. In turn such knowledge becomes an instrument of domination, a means not only of establishing one's own more privileged social position but of suppressing the social status of others.

Critiques of Schooling and the Professionalization of Teaching

Such arguments seem to imply the necessity of an obligatory school-based art education, one taught by credentialed teachers who, by virtue of their experience and training, think critically about the act of teaching and the nature of education. They suggest that a system of mandatory schooling not only provides equal access to education and knowledge, but acts to level the social and economic playing fields, providing equal chances to all for life success. But these assumptions have also been critiqued.

According to May (1994), for example, the field of art education has tended to avoid acknowledging that the social and structural conditions of schools mean that they may be viewed as places of constraint as well as sites of possibility:

Our biggest mistake is denying that our work and workplace conditions are extraordinarily complex and often oppressive and abusive.... Why do we pretend that oppressive institutional structures do not exist, that these are necessary evils that go with the territory, posing no real threat to our goals and well being? (p. 136).

Writers in the sociology of education, however, have focused on precisely these issues. Critical theorists, for example, have charged that, under the guise of providing equal access to

education, the institutions of schooling actually serve to replicate the social status quo and privilege the interests of dominant social groups. They do so through complicity with taken for granted assumptions around knowledge; by supporting an agenda of conservative politics; and by assuming power relations which replicate and accommodate conditions necessary for the market economy, intertwining the purposes of schooling with the needs and interests of the workplace (Illich, 1971; Bowles & Gintis, 1976; Apple, 1990, 1993).

Labaree (1992) has also noted the complexity of issues surrounding efforts to professionalize teachers, and the multiple effects--which may be construed as both socially progressive and conservative--that have transpired. On one hand, he argues, professionalizing teaching practice has worked to establish and raise the status of a predominantly female field. In addition, on a certain level, professionalization constitutes a serious public commitment to work toward educational quality and equity. Simultaneously, however, Labaree traces the links between teacher professionalization and scientific rationalism. Establishing a "science" of teaching, he suggests, has had the effect of solidifying the power of some groups in education over others, and tends to skirt the fact that teaching is itself a political act.

The appropriateness of limiting "education" to those who are "professional" teachers has also been questioned in the field of adult education and under the tenets of lifelong learning (which are discussed later). Here, the concern has been that an emphasis on professionalizing teachers may interfere with certain traditional values in lifelong learning which embrace the non-credentialed wisdom of those who are self-taught or have learned in practice, and knowledge which is handed down by elders or through oral tradition. The implication is that we all have knowledge that is worth teaching and there is a loss when only a few are permitted to do so. This

work questions the right of the state alone to name who and what may be taught in the name of social good. Creating a teaching profession also has the effect of solidifying teacher authority and strengthening distinctions between teachers and students, relations which are viewed as properly blurring and equalizing in adult education settings.

Giroux (1992) has argued that educators who seek to counteract the tendency of formal schooling to merge with practices of social stratification and patterns of domination need to "cross borders" and begin to consider the educational possibilities of working in a range of contexts beyond schools. This position embraces the notion that schools alone cannot do all the critical work that needs to be done, and that many people in addition to teachers working in schools need to take on the responsibilities and behaviours of critical educators. This is a role which, for example, Trend (1992) advocates for artists. From this perspective, artists would be cultural workers, collaborative social critics, and animators of social action intended to build a more democratic and egalitarian world. Trend's work is positioned within a broader movement that seeks to ground art in a notion of community and everyday experience, counteracting the ways that high art has been institutionalized and kept for elite groups. Similarly, art education has begun to incorporate and consider certain non-school practices and community issues. This topic is addressed in the next section.

Art Education, Lifelong Learning, and Community-Based Practice

In spite of a general scepticism about non-school based practice, the field of art education has in recent years expanded to embrace certain non-formal realms. Certainly, there has been growing interest in museum education, and there is a current movement toward what has been called "community-based" art education. This latter term, however, tends to refer to the practice

of using the community as a focus for school-based work, or paying attention to local community values or resources in planning curriculum, as opposed to examining practice which actually takes place in non-school or non-formal sites. Hicks (1994), for example, examines assumptions about the notion of community as homogeneous and what she refers to as the "pedagogy of erasure" that ignores realities of students' lives and replaces them with cultural stereotypes. She then considers this analysis in light of school-based practice and experience. Even in the case of this thoughtful work, then, the "community", it seems, tends still to be construed as "out there" while the school is viewed as primary and central in terms of art education practice.¹

Among the exceptions are Degge's (1987) work concerning community-based artist-teachers, which finds this group to be highly educated, contradicting prevailing assumptions that non-school teachers are under-qualified. She argues that maintaining a narrow view of education will not serve art educators well in future, and charges that by ignoring the realm of community art programming, art educators themselves subvert the possibility of building a stronger art education network.

As a field, art education does not embrace the non-school population and has virtually ignored public interest and participation in the arts....Such disregard maintains the schism between school art education and the larger role of art in people's lives. Thwarted is the potential for ameliorating the disconnectedness of cultural services found in most communities and for bringing together the goals and purposes of local schools and community art programs (p. 165).

Other research has examined tensions between the "high art world" and the "everyday world" within particular non-public school contexts. For example Mullen (1989) studies the artistic value differences between amateur art hobbyists and their art college-educated instructors,

¹ Ingrid Kolt, a museum educator and administrator, referred in conversation to this sense of community as "out there" to school educators, and I thank her.

and Day (1986) considers the rather un-welcoming context that university art departments provide for non-art majors.

Perhaps the biggest pocket of interest in non-formal art education, however, is that associated with Lifelong Learning. This work, which has focused on adults (and older adults in particular), has been effective in initiating dialogue about who counts as learners in art education. It has also raised awareness about adult learners' characteristics and needs, and considered the implications these have for good teaching practice (Barrett, 1993; Blandy, 1993; Jones, 1993; Kauppinen, 1990; Kauppinen & McKee, 1988; and Sidelnick, 1993). As such, these authors have also urged art educators to think beyond a K-12 approach.

The continued tendency in this literature to equate lifelong learning with adult learners, however, may in one sense be viewed as a misconception of the term, which actually addresses learners of all ages. As well, its proposed adjunct, lifelong education, is in fact a system which blurs lines between formal and non-formal realms of education and between credentialled and non-credentialled teachers. Such a system would fundamentally challenge education systems as they currently stand in North America (Apps, 1985; Lackey, 1994; Long 1985; UNESCO, 1973). By not confronting broader interpretations of terms like lifelong learning or community-based art education, art educators avoid conflicts and institutional competition that could arise over non-formal practice designed for school-aged children, instead focusing on programs seen to sit along side or support schooling.

In addition, researchers of adult students may fall into a trap of assuming that student behaviours are attributable to qualities associated with the construct "adult"--such as age and life stages--rather than considering other possible explanations. In part, this may also reflect a

tendency to rely on psychological rather than sociological frames of analysis. For example, although Jones (1993) notes the tendency to ascribe unique characteristics to adult learners and to use age as an analytic construct, she found that scores on a commonly used "self-directedness" test were actually more influenced by education levels than age. In adult education, Keddie (1980) argues that adult learners are much less unique than has been assumed and that certain concepts--like self-directedness--are based on assumptions of individualism and middle-class values rather than on inherent qualities of adults as students.

To step outside the bounds of formal schooling and move into the realm of adult learners and non-formal education, however, also very often means taking up a position in the world of leisure. Because leisure studies contain numerous sociological critiques, and since leisure institutions have not been so rigidly divided along age lines, this work can be useful in understanding not only leisure in general, but the place of educational practice within non-school realms. This is also, of course, work that is key to understanding community recreation centres as institutions. In the next section, therefore, I explore some of this literature.

Issues in the Sociology of Leisure

Leisure and Work.

A key to common sense notions of leisure is that they have been viewed as distinct from and in relation to modern forms of work. Given that work in the industrialized world has been conceived in terms of the factory model and the production relationships of capitalism, Rojek (1989) notes that working class "work" tends to be construed as obligation and drudgery while leisure is viewed as its opposite and takes on an almost mystical potential:

Work is experienced as a burden or a drag on the self rather than as a means of

personal creative development. This gives leisure an extraordinary significance in popular Western culture. For it is in leisure rather than work that individuals see themselves as free to act and develop as they please (p. 109).

Smith (1987), however, notes that work is viewed as a self-directed project by professional and management classes, specifically from the perspectives of males in positions of power. Arguably, leisure is still viewed in terms of freedom, choice, and possibility within middle and upper class circles. Stokowski (1994, pp 3-5) reviews leisure definitions in leisure studies and suggests that there has been a "clustering of traditional definitions [of leisure] around three main topics". These include leisure as a "feeling or attitude of freedom and release from constraint,"; leisure as a "[self-determined] activity primarily chosen for its own sake"; and leisure as "non-obligated or discretionary time left over after the necessary commitments of work, family, and personal maintenance are met". Andrew (1981) similarly sites the voluntary, un-taxing perception of leisure, but adds another dimension as well:

Secondly, leisure transcends the production or reproduction of biological and social existence. Leisure, as E. Barker defines it, is 'growing time'. Or, to use the non-temporal metaphor of Lin Yutang, it is like unused space, 'like room to move around'. With the crisp precision of the sociologist, J. Dumazedier writes that leisure affords an individual the opportunity 'to enter into a realm of self-transcendence where his [sic] creative powers are set free to oppose or to reinforce the dominant values of his [sic] civilization (p. 21).

Sociologists have pointed out that such dualistic understandings of both work and leisure are narrow, misleading, and easily critiqued. Notions of leisure as reflecting freedom of opportunity, voluntary action, and self-directedness, for example, are undercut by the realities of unequal access and social constraints. According to Clark and Critcher (1985):

Inequality of leisure opportunity has both a material and a cultural aspect. The material aspect includes access to key resources, essentially those of time and money. The cultural aspect includes the perception of what is appropriate leisure behaviour for a member of a particular social group (p. 146).

Feminists, for example, have argued that notions of leisure as non-obligation do not take women's experience into consideration. Rather, women's leisure has historically been qualitatively different from men's, and more often occurs within social expectations and obligations for domestic labour or serving others' leisure, as in being responsible for planning and preparing holiday celebrations. While males have traditionally "earned" leisure in exchange for paid work, women may not be construed as having the same rights if they earn less or do not work outside the home. Women may also experience "free time" as being subject to interruption or a continual sense of being "on call" (Green, Hebron, & Woodward, 1990). Hargreaves (1989) lists the various obstacles that women have traditionally encountered in attempting to take part in leisure and sport: lack of time, lack of energy (having worked at domestic tasks which have no official time off); expense, access to transportation; child care; control of their leisure by males, fear and harassment associated with going out alone; and, in the case of sport, a history of male domination of the realm. While middle class women experience these constraints, most are amplified in the cases of working class women. Nevertheless, Hargreaves notes that leisure may also be construed as potentially empowering for women, and Henderson and Allen (1991) argue that notions of leisure as freedom seem bereft of an ethic of care that is important to women and may need to be reconceptualized in terms of this sense of connection.

This same dichotomy, of course, presents a distorted and limited understanding of "work", and once again, renders much of women's experience invisible. On one hand, Smith (1987) suggests that if one begins from the standpoint of certain forms of work in which women have traditionally engaged--housework, for example--the very claim that work and leisure can be distinguished collapses :

The work-leisure organization applies to employment. The sociological concepts are borrowed directly from it. If we started with housework as the basis, the categories of 'work' and 'leisure' would never emerge....The social organization of the roles of housewife, mother, and wife does not conform to the divisions between being at work and not being at work. Even the concept of housework as work leaves what we do as mothers without a conceptual home (p. 68).

Smith further argues that an assumption of self-directedness does not characterize much of women's work, whether at home or in the public realm. Rather, work in which women have traditionally engaged is often typified by a lack of personal projects and an emphasis on the needs of others:

The consciousness required in this type of relation is organized quite differently from the agenic model. What is required is a subordinating of attentiveness to self and a focus on others, the lack of development of an independent project organizing relevances and, in contrast, an openness and attentiveness to cues and indications of others needs....[Rather, she characterizes the patterns of women's work as having a] loose, episodic structure that reflects the ways in which their lives are organized and determined external to them and the situations they order and control (p.66).

Pringle (1994), for example, found that secretaries' work is rarely perceived as having specific tasks, but is instead described in vague terms and differs widely in responsibilities from one job to the next. Rather, it is viewed as malleable to the needs of a particular boss and undervalued in terms of its difficulty and complexity, to the extent that, "in everyday perception, secretaries' work [is]...treated as not real work" (p 115). Perhaps even more significantly, however, Pringle argues that the gendered nature of the organization is constructed through the discourse and interactions surrounding such work categories (117). The organization as a whole as "gendered" is a topic that I address in a later section of this chapter.

These conundrums surrounding work and leisure, however, tend to complicate rather than clarify the place of education that occurs within leisure, and I briefly address this topic next.

Leisure and Education.

Within recreation literature, dominant orientations to education refer to education about leisure and education for leisure. These perspectives are outlined by O'Dell and Taylor (1996):

Leisure education can be viewed from two perspectives: park and recreation professionals educating customers or customers educating themselves about leisure....Another concept closely related to leisure education is education for leisure. Education for leisure is developing appreciations, interests, skills, and opportunities that will enable individuals to use their leisure in personally rewarding ways. In addition, individuals should understand why this way of life is essential to their well-being and to the survival of society. It is one thing to learn how to use the parks, beaches, libraries, etc., it is another to learn to use individual leisure in satisfying and creative ways (pp. 17-18).

In other words, the association of education to leisure is predominantly understood as referring to, first, ways to provide consumers with information about what managed leisure services are available, and second, helping people develop the "capacity" to use those services productively and well. According to the authors this includes having not only an awareness of what may be selected, how it will benefit them, and the skills to take part, but knowledge of how to participate in a socially or culturally acceptable way (p.18). On one level, it assumes for park and recreation professionals the role of therapist, one who designs "leisure education programs to meet specific goals for their clients" (p. 19). Arguably, this position reflects a relatively uncritical stance toward the impact of social structure on leisure access, and appears to assume that problems of leisure access are primarily related to (and resolved through) improved communication.

A more critical stance is considered by Oakey (1990) who is among the few authors to acknowledge that adult education occurs in the realm of leisure and who considers leisure sociology in terms of her analysis. She notes that (like leisure literature) adult and continuing

education realms tend to stress free access, individual choice, and achievement while actually being available only to a minority and obscuring the social structures which constrain access. She also traces the tendency for concepts of work to divide along class lines, wherein work for the upper classes merges with leisure and life, while work for working classes is viewed as distinct from leisure, thereby offering the latter as a place of hope and possibility. She recognizes leisure in the minds of government agents as both a realm of possibility and, in terms of the idle or disenfranchised, a kind of threat that requires keeping people constructively occupied. She makes the distinction between education in leisure, and education for leisure, the latter of which she suggests is really only the prerogative of the middle and upper classes. In the end, however, she argues that assuming work and leisure as either separate and dichotomous or negatively interrelated

both...fail to satisfactorily point a way forward for those involved in adult education. This dilemma may be resolved through a consideration of adult education and leisure as part of culture, and to suggest that culture needs to be related to material reality, to the experience of work and non-work, but not in any simplistic or reductionist manner.

In this sense, Oakey provides an entry into the relationships among education, art, and leisure as a set of cultural and institutionalized practices. I pursue these ideas further in the last section of this chapter. Prior to that, I address the links of leisure to body, pleasure, commodity, and modernity, and also discuss some issues concerning the sociology of art.

Leisure/Body/Commodity/Pleasure.

Recreation as a field of study is acknowledged to have grown out of physical education, and has had a long association with the "body", often as opposed to the "mind". In part, this distinction again reveals links to socio-economics and class. Bourdieu (1979/1984), for example,

argues that class distinctions are found in the extent and mode of corporeal participation in leisure, exemplified by such behaviours as the distant, reserved, and reflexive participation in high art by elite groups and the more boisterous and overtly corporeal engagement in other leisure forms by working class groups.

In recent years, however, a finely honed body may be viewed as a sign of membership in middle and upper classes. White, Young, and Gillett (1995), for example, argue that bodywork such as fitness activity and workouts, is today often veiled as a moral imperative, and the responsibility of the individual in maintaining his or her own health. The presentation of the "fit" body may be read as a statement of self control, self-sufficiency, and competence, a sign that individuals are capable of hard work and responsibility. Further, they suggest that those who do not take up this bodywork are often construed as lazy, deviant, and even responsible for their own illnesses. The authors also argue that while there are undeniable health benefits associated with exercise, an uncritical acceptance of this practice ignores both the ways in which access to such forms of fitness is mediated by social structure and the extent to which excessive adherence to the ideology of health and fitness can actually be detrimental to health. Examples are the links between eating disorders and obsessive exercise, and the consuming of dangerous drugs in order to enhance body size and physical performance, especially in professional sport. For women, they suggest, the fitness movement can be viewed as having potential in counteracting gender bias in terms of how women's bodies are perceived. Simultaneously, however, it has contributed to body ideals which are often unattainable and which therefore maintain a continual sense of inadequacy and imperfection, and re-focus the purposes of exercise on creating a body appealing to the male gaze:

While the women's movement has made great strides in reclaiming women's bodies from patriarchal institutions, it is unfortunate that the commodification of women's aerobics has compromised its original goal of providing an opportunity for women collectively to participate in and enjoy forms of music, dance, exercise, and sociability outside the home. Instead, the co-option of fitness by the marketplace has displaced these original goals...and [has] transformed a potentially emancipatory phenomenon into a possible form of body regulation and social control (p.168).

Rojek (1989; 1993) on the other hand, describes the traditions of recreation in physical education and sport. He notes the perception of the realm as both regenerative activity used to prepare working class males to return to work, and as activity more easily controlled and preferred by work site managers and the state to visits to the pub. In addition, sport as recreation has been viewed as training for the military. Rojek draws attention, therefore, to the social and moral control that has been imposed on leisure--what he refers to as the management of pleasure--through state regulations which define what is considered healthy and normal leisure behaviour and which are based in an aversion to idleness.

Issues of control, however, are interwoven with accommodation of an industrialized market economy. A second link to the notion of pleasure, therefore, is found in the commodification of leisure experience. Relevant to this study,

commodification refers to the...process by which goods, services and experiences are packaged and sold as objects to the consumer. Leisure and culture are shaped by the process of commodification (Rojek, 1995, p.4).

Clarke and Critcher (1985) argue that the notion of freedom of choice in leisure is complicated by the ways in which leisure activity is caught up within commercialism:

Most studies of leisure recognize the existence of this leisure economy, but they neither explain it nor explore it. They treat it instead as the framework of opportunity within which individuals make choices in attempting to satisfy their leisure needs. Attention is focused on what individuals and groups choose to do with their leisure time within this framework of what is available. We believe that

this treatment of the leisure economy as the passive background for studies of leisure activities is erroneous. Between them, the market and the state play an active role in constructing leisure. They determine what is available as leisure, controlling the supply of most goods and services among which leisure consumers can choose (p. 100).

To the extent that leisure is a package to be sold, leisure managers are required to engage in advertising and the appealing presentation of leisure experience. In part, this appeal is created through the promise of hope and pleasure. Mercer (1986), discusses the complex inter-relationship between pleasure and power in popular culture and advertising, and I suggest a parallel with the realm of leisure and its commodification. He notes, for example, the ways in which popular newspapers interweave pleasure and information, creating a "tissue of confirmations, beliefs and expectations" (p. 55) which reinforce common sense. Mercer reminds that this writing reveals a link to the body, and refers to physical pleasure.

Leisure, Time, Space, and Modernity.

Andrew (1981) notes the imposition of scientific rationalism and Taylorism² on leisure, a practice which he calls "managed leisure" and which has been used to schedule, fragment, and standardize the leisure realm in the same ways that it has been applied to the industrial work place. An obsession with the ordering of time and space, of course, is one of the defining characteristics of the modern world, and as such can be "found" throughout institutional life. Slattery (1995), for example, considers linear, modernist notions of time as they converge with assumptions about what is to be done to "fix" the problems of contemporary schools. He points to the "Newtonian vision of the universe as a giant clockwork mechanism with time marching

²Taylorism refers to management practices, associated initially with industrialisation and the factory, which simplified and divided the tasks of labour in the name of efficiency. The term refers to F. W. Taylor, who is credited with devising such systems.

forward in an irreversible trajectory" and the "popular adage 'time flies' [as a] metaphor for modern life, where the ticking clock and the flying arrow dominate human consciousness and control life experiences" (p. 613). He suggests that thinking about time as a linear progression and a tool which can be ever more efficiently controlled and managed interferes with curricula which attempts to connect in meaningful ways to students' lives.

Again, according to Rojek, this is essentially in keeping with a modernist perspective which views planning and time control as a means to more efficient and effective leisure experience:

Modernity is presented as a social order in which rational principles can be imposed on daily life. The time and space allocated for work and leisure can be determined by mathematical precision to ensure the well-being of the individual and society. Leisure activity is presented as fulfilling and enriching. Planning is freedom and freedom is essentially orderly (p. 6).

The ordering of time and space does not have benign effects, however. Bourdieu (1980/1990) argues that practice "is constructed in time, that time gives it its form, as the order of a succession, and therefore its direction and meaning" (p. 98). In this sense, practice can only be known and understood within a particular place, sequence, and time (Harker, Mahar, & Wilkes, 1990). In addition, controlling time and space is one way that institutions may enforce symbolic institutional messages. Through such practice, individuals come to "embody" institutional structures and to accept them as relatively unquestionable. To control time and space is therefore to control experience.

And finally, Rojek notes that, in addition to the characteristics of capitalism, we experience the intrusion of qualities of modern and postmodern life in our leisure, creating an unfocused or disengaged state of mind during leisure.

The process of exchange, circulation and commodification which characterize modern market society carry strong tendencies towards fragmentation because they only require fragments of the individual personality to be involved. This is an obvious fact about many forms of contemporary leisure activity. For example, we watch the evening news with one eye on a magazine and half a mind on an office meeting scheduled for tomorrow. We stroll through the countryside with a walkman playing classical music through our headphones and a camera in our hand. Dedicated leisure activity is quite rare, which is why the compulsive hill-walker, the serious amateur musician, or even the serious reader of fiction, stand out so starkly. Most of us are content to flit from activity to activity. We neither seek nor claim expertise in anything. We follow the latest movie or musical recording, we read the latest novel or attend the weekly sporting fixture. But our engagement is partial and episodic. Passions and interests quickly roused are just as quickly forgotten...Our leisure allows us to enter a different rhythm of life and provides us with momentary distraction (Rojek, 1993, p. 216).

Indeed, he refers to the worlds of pop music, TV, film, and mass sport as "distraction factories" (1995, p. 11)

Issues in the Sociology of Art

In terms of modernist perspectives, Wolff (1993) suggests, that the "artist is seen as outside society, marginal, eccentric, and removed from the usual conditions of ordinary people by virtue of the gift of genius" (p. 10). The "kernel of truth" in this suggestion is that artists in Western society have in fact been marginalized (p. 12). She traces this, however, to the change in working conditions for artists that occurred around industrialization, when the "older system of patronage was over-taken by the dealer-critic system." (p. 11). The many common sense assumptions about the nature of artistic processes--as mystical, emotional, spontaneous, free expression, for example, and the characteristics associated with "artist" are all in fact due to the social conditions of artistic production and the influence of an orientation toward individualism which have existed in the modern era. Her stance is that while art has come to be understood as the only "work" which is truly "creative", such a perception holds true only in light of the narrow

view of work developed in the industrial era. During this period, work has been commonly understood in terms of the factory model, and as a practice which is obligatory and serves someone else's interests and wishes. Wolff argues instead that all work that is not coerced is a form of creative practice.

I start then with labour, or work, as the basic necessary human activity, and also from the statement that in so far as it is not forced there is no immediate reason to distinguish artistic work in this respect; it shares common ground with all labour...(p. 16).

Ironically, she notes the necessity that modern art making requires leisure or an alternative means of support.

Becker (1982) pursues this notion of art as work by examining what he calls "art worlds" and by tracing the many people who are engaged in the production of an art product from its inception. His work calls into question both the assumption that artists work in isolation and the practice of naming only one member in the group "artist".

As in other realms, sociologists in art have uncovered ways in which art knowledge and conceptualizations are entangled with power issues. Bourdieu (1979/1984), as noted, examined ways that art knowledge is bound up in distinguishing class membership and maintaining social privilege for dominant groups. Markowitz (1994) describes the ways in which distinctions made between art and craft, although untenable, have had real life implications related to class and gender. She argues that the mind/body dualism that underlies this distinction:

...has shaped the way we regard morality, politics, and gender; now we must ask as well how it has shaped our view of art. It is no accident that the work of marginalized groups often counts as craft. Those who see to physical, practical, everyday tasks and needs may well produce artifacts that bear the mark of their work, and even when they do not, stereotypes may determine how these artifacts are classified and evaluated. In any case, normative dualism helps explain not

only the distinction we make between art and craft, but also the high status we give to art, a status quo so well entrenched that it is conveyed by the very meaning of the term "art" (p. 68-69).

Certainly, the extent to which art has been distanced from everyday life; selectively positioned in the institutions of high art; mystified as a process while emphasizing originality, uniqueness, and authorship which fuel its economic value; and linked to social privilege, have caused it to be a target of critique. Currently, a growing number of artists wishing to counteract these perceptions and the elitist associations of art have become interested in work which is collaborative, grounded in social issues, removed physically from the institutions of high art, and undercuts the exchange of art as a commodity (Gablik 1984,1991; Lacy, 1995). In part, it is this community-based movement in art which has influenced the increase of special art projects within recreation centres. In part, new arts policies are also a response to pressure from artists and artists' groups who find it increasingly difficult to survive economically and are seeking various means of assistance, among them support from municipalities and community recreation centres.

Institutions, Ideology, Pedagogy, and Gender

In this final section I address some assumptions about the relationship of structure, agency, and freedom, which influence this work. I also want to discuss some issues related to the nature of institutions, particularly in terms of notions of taken for granted knowledge and ideology. Finally, I want to propose an understanding of institutions as both pedagogical, and within that, as capable of reflecting and perpetuating cultural bias, including in particular that related to gender.

My assumptions about structure and agency rely on Wolff (1993), who suggests that

while all action is "determined" (p. 21), social structures--such as institutions--must be construed as both constraining, or placing a certain limit on actions, and enabling, or creating possibilities in which to act. In this sense, human beings are neither entirely "free" nor entirely controlled by structures. Put another way, while we can never step outside of social structure, we are free to interpret, make choices, and act in relation to the circumstances and environment in which we find ourselves.

Agents are therefore 'free' not in the sense of being un-determined, but in their ability to make situated choices and perform situated practices...and in their conscious and reflexive monitoring of their actions (p.24).

This conception also assumes an inter-relationship between structure and thought, or ideology. For Lather (1991), ideology can be understood as the "stories a culture tells about itself" (p. 2). Scruton (1982) more traditionally defines ideology as:

A set of ideas and values which has the social function of consolidating a particular economic order....The function of ideology is to 'naturalize' the status quo and to represent as immutable features of human nature the particular social conditions which currently persist (p. 213).

Both would agree that implicit within a conception of ideology is that what we know and understand about the world, the way that the world is presented to us, is entwined with and acts to reify relations of power in our social environment. (In addition, Lather (1991), Thomas (1993), and others assume that numerous categories of oppression exist, and include among others gender, race, able-bodiedness, and sexual orientation in addition to class).

As well, the term "ideology" encompasses an assumption of a common sense level of reality. This, according to Thomas, refers to that set of dominant beliefs which obscure other realities and are assumed not to require further investigation (p. 3). These are "taken for granted"

as the way things are. Apple (1993) takes care to present "common sense", however, not as something which is entirely arbitrarily imposed, but as something which does connect in meaningful ways with real life circumstances. In addition, he argues that it is a system of thought that can be analyzed and counteracted through agency.

The notion of ideology merges with an assumption that organizations or institutions can be understood as having both dominant or formal and subordinate or informal levels in terms of the knowledge that they perpetuate and the agendas that they carry out. Apple's (1990) sense of the hidden curriculum in schools--defined as the "tacit teaching of social and economic norms and expectations to students" (p. 44)--is an example of such an informal institutional agenda. Here, he charges that while schools claim to provide equal access to education and life opportunities, in fact the hidden curriculum acts to privilege some knowledge over others and serves to support and maintain an unequal social and economic status quo.

For purposes of this study, I suggest that, in relation to such a tacit or hidden agenda, all institutions can be understood as both pedagogical and gendered. The sense in which all institutions are pedagogical reflects Dewey's (1916/66) broad interpretation of education as engagement and interaction with one's environment, and activity which pervades our existence. He reminds us that schooling, is but one part of our learning lives:

Schools are, indeed, one important method of the transmission which forms the dispositions of the immature; but it is only one means, and, compared with other agencies, a relatively superficial means. Only as we have grasped the necessity of more fundamental and persistent modes of tuition can we make sure of placing the scholastic methods in their true context (p. 4).

He goes one step further, taking a rather valued stance, that any institution's contribution is measured in terms of the quality of this educative effect:

While it may be said without exaggeration, that the worth of any social institution, economic, domestic, political, legal, religious, is its effect in enlarging and improving experience, which is limited and more immediately practical (p. 6).

Specifically, however, this study relies on Bourdieu and Passeron's (1977/1990) notions of pedagogic action and pedagogic authority. In a forward to this work, Bottomoor (1976) describes "pedagogic action" as referring to "education in the broadest sense, encompassing more than the process of formal education" and "which is defined as the imposition of a cultural arbitrary (an arbitrary cultural scheme which is actually, though not in appearance based upon power) by an arbitrary power" (p. xv). Pedagogic action, then, or the teaching of cultural arbitraries, goes on within all the institutions of society, including the family. Bourdieu and Passeron suggest that pedagogic action perpetuates two levels of symbolic violence: first, in that what actually occurs in teaching cultural arbitraries is the perpetuation of social domination, and second in that there is a concealment of that power relation under the guise that what is taught is normal and natural (taken for granted). The social conditions and structures within which pedagogic action occur are such that a certain legitimacy or pedagogic authority is always associated with the teaching of these cultural arbitraries. Compulsory schooling is a dominant institution used for the transmission of cultural arbitraries; the practice of school teachers, therefore, is delivered with the legitimacy and weight of significant pedagogic authority.

Within its pedagogic role, institutions may therefore be construed as teaching arbitrary values. Rojek (1993) notes that in the modern world, these values can be linked to dualisms that are now the target of critique, among them leisure/work, male/female, and mind/body. In modernism as well there has been an emphasis on rationality over irrationality, the assumption that one can manage, predict, and plan one's life from a standpoint of objectivity and neutrality

which falls outside social conditions or emotional response (p.100). As previously noted, the organizational practices which embrace these assumptions are generally referred to as Taylorism.

Smith (1987) argues that it is in part this system of rational management that masks the gendered nature of social institutions.

The relations of ruling are rationally organized. They are objectified, impersonal, claiming universality. Their gender sub-text has been invisible (p. 4).

As such, the conceptual structuring of institutions may be viewed as both assuming the standpoint of ruling males, and obscuring the bias inherent in organizational practices, by presenting them as neutral and rational. Numerous feminist researchers have examined ways that modern institutions may be construed as founded on assumptions of gender inequity. Acker (1990), depicting the organization as "one arena in which widely disseminated cultural images of gender are invented and reproduced" (p. 140) suggests that these include the division of work along gender lines; the assumption of "worker" as male or as leading a life style associated with traditional male work; suppositions that female behaviour in the workplace stems from and will be determined by family commitments rather than working conditions; the blaming of women's lack of achievement on psychological rather than structural factors; differential valuing of the complexity and difficulty of job skills; and practices which perpetuate patterns of domination and submission between male and female employees (Acker, 1990; Biklin, 1985; Feldberg & Glenn, 1982; Gaskell & McLaren, 1991; Kanter, 1982; and Shakeshaft, 1989). Ferguson (1984) argues that the bureaucrat's role in a hierarchical institution can be likened to the powerlessness of women in society and suggests that success as a bureaucrat is dependent on subservience and conformity to organizational power relations.

As I will suggest in the next chapter, tacit organizational messages and underlying assumptions are revealed in talk, documents, and behaviour within the institution, and symbolically through the organizational structures, construction and use of space, and visual information in the sites,

Summary

The fields of education, leisure, and art lace together and reinforce a set of common sense notions which are made concrete in institutional divisions and practices. These position work and education as interconnected, essential, and obligatory. Leisure and art are framed as free and unencumbered, but non-essential, lesser than and distinct from work and education. The critiques of these modernist positions remind that the ways in which these realms are understood and institutionalized are humanly and arbitrarily constructed in ways that mask relations of power and perpetuate practices of domination. They further argue that dominant claims within each of these realms can often be contradicted when considered in the light of social circumstances and everyday realities in which they are nested.

In this chapter I have explored some of the tensions surrounding institutional claims for art education. This discussion reveals implicit frictions between the worlds of high art and education as well as tensions over who is best suited to teach art. The most stringent arguments grow from concern over the marginality of art in schools, and the ways that its mystification as knowledge ultimately perpetuates social and economic inequity.

Arguments which counter an approach in which art would be taught exclusively in schools suggest that state control of education can also serve to replicate the social order even while claiming to do otherwise. Those who advocate "border crossing" in terms of doing

education in non-school sites do not suggest that public schooling should be diminished, but argue that more individuals and institutions need to take responsibility for education.

Leisure literature provides ways to consider non-formal education from sociological perspectives, as well as enlightening the particular contexts in which this study is positioned. Again, dominant understandings of leisure conflict with the realities of leisure experience when considered within social contexts and individual lives. This work details the links of managed leisure to state control and the market economy, and considers issues related to education in and for leisure, including the influences of modern contemporary life in North America. Perhaps most significantly this work details the conundrums presented by dichotomous understandings of work and leisure, and the links of each to social organization.

Work in the sociology of art has struggled to refute dominant understandings of art as a product and process, in particular through recent community-based practices. Posed as mysteriously free and creative, dominant conceptions of art oddly merge with prevalent understandings of leisure.

Finally, this chapter addresses assumptions about the nature of institutions which underpin this study. Taking a broad view of education, this study assumes that all institutions are pedagogical, if not overtly, then as part of the tacit teaching of social dispositions and cultural knowledge. In this light, institutions can be assumed to project values related not only to their particular realms of focus--in this case recreation and art--but with respect to the construction of social categories such as gender and class.

What this discussion means for recreation centres, it seems to me, is that by providing art activity, these settings take up a position within the broader set of institutions engaged in art

education. They must, therefore, be acknowledged as sites in which people not only learn about the practices and processes of visual art, but are also enucleated with assumptions about art's purposes and values. Simultaneously, recreation centres are working contexts for art teachers and art administrators, and may choose, as institutions, to assign value to this work, or not.

Like schools, recreation centres are in circumstances which permit them to act either as a force which replicates the status quo in terms of maintaining mystified forms of art knowledge, or as vehicles for seeking alternative solutions and possibilities. Clearly the issues involved are rife with complexities which deserve careful attention.

In the next chapter, I continue a discussion about the underlying assumptions of this study as they relate in particular to methodological practices. In the analytic chapters that follow, I consider the particular ways that issues raised in this chapter arise in the talk and everyday experiences related to art in recreation centres.

Chapter Three

Research Methodology

Critical Qualitative Research

I have chosen to apply the label "critical qualitative research" to this study. Because this term can have numerous interpretations, I draw on Denzin and Lincoln (1994); Carspecken (1996), Thomas (1993), Lather (1991); Apple (1990; 1993) and others to clarify my particular meaning, but do not claim to embrace any of these authors' arguments or methodologies in full.

This study is "qualitative" in the sense that it uses methods such as open-ended interview, participant observation, and the examination of documents and visual data to consider one realm of social practice. In particular, it uses gathered evidence to explore a key question directed at understanding community recreation centres as contexts for art encounters and art teaching practice. Assuming the value and relevance of individual research participants' perspectives, and "rich descriptions of the social world" (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p. 6), this study is concerned with how instructors, administrators, parents, and participants describe and experience art programming within recreation centre sites. This interpretation of qualitative research as a form of inquiry which uses multiple ethnographically-based methods to explore a problem is in keeping, for example, with a description provided by Denzin and Lincoln:

Qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. Qualitative research involves the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials...that describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in individual's lives. Accordingly, qualitative researchers deploy a wide range of interconnected methods, hoping always to get a better fix on the subject matter at hand (p. 2.).

This study is "critical", however, in the sense that it assumes a political orientation in

keeping with critical research. Carspecken (1996), for example, fits critical qualitative research within the broader field of qualitative or ethnographic research practices. He suggests, however, that "criticalists" tend to share orientations in terms of the political nature and purposes of research; epistemological and ontological assumptions; and what counts as credibility or claims of truth.

Lather's position concerning the political nature of research is that, as the possibility of researcher neutrality has been discredited, researchers are obligated to reveal their political biases and even urged to be overtly ideological. She argues that researchers need to openly direct inquiry toward ends that seek to counteract social inequities.

Thomas (1993), however, suggests that critical research can "...[imply] a call to [social] action that may range from modest rethinking of comfortable thoughts to more direct engagement that includes political activism" (p. 17). In addition, critical researchers embrace democratic ideals and assume an interconnection between taken-for-granted notions and social structure, whereby the two work together to maintain and perpetuate social power relations which privilege a dominant group. It is in this more modest sense--as research which makes assumptions about the political nature of the social world, and questions prevalent and common sense assumptions that create inequity--that I claim this study qualifies as critical research.

While some critical research collaborates with research participants and asserts "empowerment" (Lather, 1991, p. 3) as a goal, this study does not. Rather, I acknowledge the complex and possibly arrogant implications of this term (Ellsworth, 1989), and concur with Lather that "empowerment is a process one undertakes for oneself [and] is not something done 'to' or 'for' someone" (p. 4). Particularly in this case where I, as researcher, have decided on both

the problem and the question, and the study was agreed to and permitted rather than sought or invited, empowerment is not an end that I can claim. Rather, I offer this work as a contribution toward what I hope will be ongoing academic dialogue that may eventually re-position thinking and practice related to the realm of this study.

Epistemology and Ontology

In terms of epistemological assumptions, I view knowledge and learning as socially constructed and contextually mediated. I have also found Nelson's (1993) notion of epistemological communities, which embraces feminist critique, useful. According to her, "it is persons, embodied and situated in specific social and historical contexts, who know, with both their embodiment and 'situations' relevant to their knowing (p. 121).

Nelson, however, also argues that both what is known and what counts as evidence are constructed in the context of epistemological communities, which are in fact "prior" to the individual. This is a "naturalized" knowing based upon experience and is considered valid to the extent that it is useful in making sense of that experience. In this conceptualization, knowledge is partial and can embrace multiple views and disagreement, rather than universal or foundational. Neither, however, do all perspectives become equally valid and therefore relative. An assumption that knowledge is communal and validated through empiricism, Nelson suggests, has the potential to counteract knowledge that has dominated through claiming to be universal when it is in fact partial (p. 151).

This epistemological position is consistent with assumptions about ideology and taken for granted knowledge which critical research also assumes, and as discussed in Chapter Two. In part, critical research is concerned with analyzing common sense assumptions, comparing them

with lived experience, and exploring the means through which certain sets of beliefs and actions come to be preferred over others (Thomas, p 9).

In keeping with these ideas, I assume that the institutions in which I conducted my study can be construed as holding both more dominant, taken-for-granted forms of knowledge and versions of reality--which often converge with "official" mandates and the perspectives of more dominant actors in the setting--as well as alternative understandings that can be gleaned through the perspectives of non-dominant participants in the site, and everyday experience.

I also use these notions of epistemological communities and taken-for-granted or common sense knowledge in terms of my approach to the particular knowledge of research participants. I assume on one hand that two key groups--art instructors and recreation administrative practitioners--can be construed in part as belonging to different epistemological communities, and as having constructed their views within distinct academic realms reflecting relatively different beliefs and values. Although I continue to recognize the heterogeneity among members of each, I suggest that, as groups, they may be assumed to have different understandings, especially around the realm of art and art programming. Both of these realms--recreation/physical education and art/art education--can be viewed as embracing common sense perspectives which obscure alternative realities. I also caution that it is not my intent to present these two groups as representing epistemologically dualistic positions or to suggest that either group necessarily reflects a more valid "truth". Within the institution, however, I suggest that the administrators and their perspectives are more powerful and dominant by virtue of their places in the bureaucratic hierarchy and their roles as representatives of organizational policy. As such they are in positions which better allow them to define "common sense" in the institution as a

whole. I justify my "sorting" of these two groups in my dissertation in part by using these ideas.

In addition, and in keeping with assumptions related to the tacit aspects of organizations, I incorporate a focus on organizational symbolism, or messages that an institution sends through its organizational and physical structures, formal and informal visual presentation, and various aspects of material culture or production. Jones' (1996) list of considerations, for example, are: the "design of the workspace; the quality and allocation of equipment; organizational charts, manuals, newsletters; bulletin boards (location, contents, aesthetics); posters, photographs; memorabilia on display; [and] costume, company uniforms, standard attire" (p. 6). He suggests that although these aspects may appear trivial, in fact

...Structure...grows out of and expresses assumptions about the relationship between the organization and its members....who is rewarded, when, and why indicate what is valued in the organization. The allocation of resources is based on beliefs about who needs (or should have) what and in turn represents and reinforces those opinions (p.7).

Having embraced these ideas about critical qualitative research, I nevertheless note that, in keeping with qualitative research practice, my understanding of both the methodology, and the research question that would focus my study evolved over time in the field. I discuss this further in a later section.

Trustworthiness

Claims for the overall validity or trustworthiness of this project rely on assumptions connected to the ethics and transparency of the research process, researcher reflexivity, and the data presentation and convergence of multiple forms of evidence. In addition, I use Maxwell's (1992) notions of descriptive, interpretive, and theoretical validity. These refer on one hand to ensuring that research participants words and meanings are presented as they were said and

intended. On another level, the credibility of analysis, interpretations, and conclusions, each the result of researcher constructions, rely on the extent to which they are grounded in the data presented, but make connections to "some community of inquirers on whose perspectives the account is based" (p. 284). Put another way, qualitative research is strengthened to the extent that evidence converges with participants meanings; that methods are revealed to readers; and that conclusions build from and are analyzed in relation to thought which has been previously established as credible within the academic research community. As such, questions of trustworthiness permeate the research experience. I attempt to display the ways in which this study has taken such issues into consideration by interweaving them with the remaining segments of this chapter.

Ethical Considerations

I acknowledge, first of all, the complexity of ethical issues in qualitative research, in which participants' informed consent moves beyond the frames devised for research conducted in the scientific mode and is negotiated within a framework of relationship which evolves over time (Wax, 1980). I recognize numerous ways in which the ethics of any qualitative study may be questioned. It is difficult and perhaps impossible, for example, to fully inform participants about the purposes of this type of research, given the evolving nature of the methodology. Punch (1986) argues that all qualitative research inevitably involves some deception if only in not telling the full truth. Researchers may need to be vague, for example, about research goals in order to leave room for participant interpretation of meanings. This research may also be viewed as partly self-serving in that it is produced as a requirement for my dissertation (Rabinow, 1986). The fact that this study took place within a bureaucratic organization also held ethical

implications, in that consent often had to be gained through established power relations. This undoubtedly had consequences for the extent to which I was able to achieve access to the internal workings of the organization and, although never made overt, very likely framed the ways in which participants such as administrators and instructors responded to me in the site (Punch, 1986; Tobin & Davidson, 1990; Schwartzman, 1993; Gubrium and Silverman, 1989). While being aware of ethical pitfalls, I nevertheless took numerous steps, both formal and informal, to ensure that ethical research practices were maintained to as great an extent as possible. I describe these in the following sections.

Permission to conduct this study was approved by the University of British Columbia Office of Research Services on March 8, 1994. A consent form was signed by a staff representative of the parks and recreation department in which the study was conducted on January 31, 1994. Subsequently, I approached the coordinators of the East Side and West Side recreation centre sites and received permission to approach staff and members of the public using the centres.

Written consent forms were signed by all individuals who took part in tape recorded interviews. Instructors who permitted me to observe their classes also signed written consent forms. In addition, I circulated general consent forms to recreation centre staff members who were likely to be working in public areas of the settings where I would be doing observations.

In cases where I would be observing children's classes I notified parents either by sending notices home or by posting notices on doors one week prior to the observations. Due to the complexities and ethical considerations involved in gaining consent from children (Fine and Sandstrom, 1988), I opted not to interview children as part of this study. In the case of one

preschool setting, I was also required to have a criminal record check prior to being admitted to observe. In cases where adult classes were involved in observations, I engaged instructors' help in introducing my study and seeking verbal consent from class participants at least one week prior to my attending the class to observe.

To the extent that it was possible and not disruptive, I attempted at each observation to make my presence and purposes as a researcher known by introducing myself and briefly detailing my research. (In reality this was not always practical, particularly in large public meetings.) In cover letters and verbally, I described myself as a graduate student who was conducting research about art programming in recreation centres. Where people were interested in further information, I informed them that my background was in art education, but that I had in the past worked in community-based and recreational art administration. I explained that my purpose was not to "evaluate" or make judgements about the quality of art programming, but that I wanted to learn about how people in the setting understood and experienced it.

In terms of ethical representation, pseudonyms were assigned to all participants and efforts have been made to present the text in ways that do not connect biographical or teaching circumstances to individuals. In some cases participants have been given two pseudonyms where it seemed necessary so that identifying information could not be linked.

With the exception of a few individuals who could not be reached or who did not respond to telephone messages, people quoted in Chapter Four and Chapter Five were each given draft copies of the chapters. Each person was asked to ensure that they believed that their anonymity had been protected and that their words had been represented in a context in keeping with their intentions at the time. They were invited to contact me with comments or concerns. It was in

part because of the power relations between instructors and staff members--and the fact that sometimes critical comments were directed at the other group--that I decided to place these two sets of speakers in separate chapters. This facilitated distribution of the chapters and meant that instructors, for example, could check their words before staff members would see them, and vice versa.

In fact, only three people responded to these chapters. One staff person requested that words like "ums" and "you knows" be removed from quotations, and I have complied with this, applying it to all quotations. (A second phoned just to confirm that she didn't have any comments.) In addition, in order to present speakers with more dignity, I have occasionally added words in brackets which I believed were implied but not spoken, and gave a fuller sense of the meaning intended. One instructor phoned with a very positive response to the chapter in which she was quoted, and requested one small change to how she was presented in one quote. Overall, however, the low response from individuals to these interview chapters reminded me that this research engaged people in discussion around questions and issues that were largely of concern to me, and clarified my understanding that I could not be construed as speaking for people who work in or use these settings.

Key individuals described in Chapter Six were also given copies of the section in which that description occurred. In that case, however, I was pleased that a key participant, who might have been at some risk in terms of the critical nature of some of the writing, took time to ensure me that the material seemed to be presented fairly and was in keeping with what occurred. In addition, the organization and centres involved will receive a summary of the dissertation.

Researcher reflexivity

Bell (1993) refers to researcher reflexivity as "an awareness of self as an instrument of observation" (p. 8), and therefore of the extent to which one's historic, political, and social positions, previous life experiences, motives, and personal characteristics have influenced the research. In my case, I can position myself to an extent by saying that I am a middle-aged, middle class, Anglo-American female. It is probable that being female made it socially acceptable for me to attend art college in the early 1970's. In hind sight, however, I believe that my arrival there was also the result of a certain amount of confusion and "a touch of adolescent rebellion against authority" in keeping with my class, and the times (Lippard 1977/1995, p. 118) It is also possible that being female may have contributed to my relatively uncomfortable "fit" with an art school culture which I often construed as mystified and pompous, and my eventual gravitation to the art education department there. I view my art school experience as the probable impetus for my scepticism about the ideologies of the art world, my interest in examining them through the sociology of art, and my commitment to democratizing art knowledge through education.

After a truly bizarre school practicum experience, however, I chose to try teaching in non-school settings rather than in schools, and eventually found myself in full time work as a community art administrator. I nevertheless maintained my interest in art education and believed what I was doing in community settings to fall into that category. Unfortunately I could not see the work that I and my colleagues did within the official literatures of art education. Our work also felt peripheral (and even frictional) in the overall world of recreation where it was located. Wanting to sort out the unique position of this practice that seemed to be caught between the two

worlds of recreation and education became a motivation to return to graduate school, and eventually to embark on this study. Caplan (1993) notes that many "ethnographers use field work to work through other parts of their lives" (p. 24), a charge, therefore, that in certain ways applies to me.

This background has given me a certain empathy and comfort with both the women who teach in these settings and the practices of leisure programming as administrative work, although my experience was not in a recreation centre like those in this study. My social position has meant that "hanging around" in places like the East Side Games room was difficult, and that the parts of the centres that were the most "physical" were relatively foreign to me. It has also meant, perhaps, that I did not take the marginal status of art in these sites for granted, and viewed it as an unfortunate peculiarity. Nevertheless, I believe that in a very genuine way, I have been curious to learn about how art programming is understood in these particular sites, and to come to terms with both the possibilities and constraints these settings offer for art experience.

As I continued to work through the research process, however, my understanding of reflexivity expanded. I began to see that it was not simply an awareness of the assumptions a researcher brings to the setting, but a tool for analysis. In the next section I address this idea further through a discussion of my stance on empathy and emotion.

Empathy and Emotion

Kleinman and Copp (1993) argue the need for qualitative researchers to acknowledge their feelings during fieldwork. They claim that an overemphasis in the literature on taking empathetic stances has lead researchers to play down their emotional reactions, including feelings of guilt, discomfort, pain, and even liking some people more than others. These

emotions, however, are not only clues to one's position as a researcher, but can be a means of identifying power relations and can inspire a movement away from mundane analyses of data. In my case, once I finally acknowledged that many of my field work experiences aroused negative emotions--and permitted myself to analyze those reactions--my field work started to make a great deal more sense. An important example has to do with my general feelings about being in the recreation centre sites. Although I had expected to feel uncomfortable at both sites during the first few times I did field work, three months into the study I was still feeling the same way. I was dragging myself to observations and sometimes avoiding them. Even though I was accumulating more scratch notes than I could keep up with, I was not experiencing that sense of having immersed myself in the setting, nor feeling like my presence had become so unremarkable that I was nearly invisible, as I had read would happen. It was rare that anyone was actually rude or unkind and on the whole people were very helpful and cooperative, so I was puzzled about why I was feeling so resistant and anxious. I felt inadequate as a field worker, lonely, and began to think that I simply did not have the personality to do this kind of research.

Once I acknowledged these feelings, however, I began to consider why it was that I might be having them. I realized that in fact I could not "settle in" to these sites no matter how hard I tried. Every day was, as the programmers told me about their work, completely different. Each day I was faced with introducing myself to strangers. Perhaps it might be to convince a new instructor that I was trustworthy enough to attend their class. Maybe I would need to impose on a participant who, like the senior quoted at the start of Chapter One, had waited for this free time for nearly a lifetime. Perhaps I would have to stop a running mother in the hallway to ask if she might talk to me about her experience in the centre. No matter, I came to think of my research as

very often involving the "cold sell". I met an extraordinary number of new people, but formed lasting relationships with very few.

In addition, the "administrative" aspect of the research seemed to take up an inordinate amount of time. That is, getting in touch with people, arranging to meet, keeping track of when classes were taking place, and the time frame in which I needed to complete an observation became a major part of the research, and was made more difficult because I had no office or base other than my home.

I also realized that while the staff members were unfailingly pleasant and friendly, I was never actually invited into the core of the administrative life. Rather, I was regularly directed to the more "public" face of the organization and to the programs and instructors whom the staff members supervised. It occurred to me that they did not perceive me to be in the setting to "study" them. Rather, I would be allowed to study their underlings and the "products" of recreation centres.

Admittedly I am a rather shy person, and this may all have been more difficult for me than for other people. My choice to look at two settings certainly affected the extent to which I was able to merge into either. But what I gleaned from reflecting on my emotions in this case was the extent to which the organizational contexts were affecting what I could know and understand about these sites, and reinforced that sense of alienation and frenzy that I had been feeling. Realizing this, I began to shift my attention from art programming per se, to the context in general, which turned out to be significant in terms of the study as a whole.

This experience, however, also made me realize the futility of a pretence of continual empathy, and that I needed to acknowledge negative as well as positive feelings toward research

participants. As a result, I began to clarify my role as researcher, both as learner/listener and writer/critic. On one hand, my research stance became more deliberate, and more in keeping with the approach described by Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule (1986) to the academic world, which is to first try to empathize and understand, and then step away for critique. In this sense, in both listening and analyzing, I tried first to consider and represent words and circumstances in the most positive light in which they could be understood. I then however turned away from that perspective, to consider alternate ways that ideas could be interpreted.

On another level, reflexivity helped me acknowledge an underlying discomfort with my role as critic within a research form dependent on forming relationships and engaging peoples' cooperation. Through analyzing this, however, I came to understand that my critique is not in fact directed at individuals per se, but rather at an institution as a whole and the systems of power that it represents and perpetuates.

In the next section, I continue a discussion of the evolution of the research question that grew out of my reflexivity.

Evolution of the Research Question

As noted, the key question that this study addresses is as follows: "What is the context into which art programming in community recreation centres is expected to fit, and how does that context position and affect art teaching and art experience?" In keeping with the traditions of qualitative research, however, this question evolved over the course of my field work. An earlier version of this question was simply, "How does art programming fit within the context of community recreation centres?" Although on the surface the initial question may appear little changed, I view it as a reflection of certain revelations in my thinking that occurred over the time

I was involved with the project, and as part of my own growing understanding as I moved through my research.

Reflecting on the earlier version of the question, I believe it assumed that "art programming" was a relatively autonomous category within the recreation centre, and occurred in comparative isolation from the rest of the setting. Each class had, after all, a distinct name, a different group of participants, different goals and instructor. My assumption was that art activities "fit" into a kind of value hierarchy or set of other program blocks, side by side. I also presumed, I think, that part of the "problem" was a kind of tension or friction between the natures of art activity and sport or physical activity--that somehow these two realms were inherently different in kind, and that this difference was likely at the root of difficulties encountered in merging art within the recreation institution. If I may be permitted to use a food metaphor¹, I assumed that art programming was like the chocolate chips in a chocolate chip cookie--little pristine chunks of a very different content and flavour suspended in cookie dough--and arguably the best part, suggesting my bias.

My evolved question, however, evokes an image that is more like a chocolate swirl or marbled cookie. It is true that art activities in the centres did tend to take place in separate blocks of time and space. But the longer I spent in the setting I realized that there were elements of the organizational "cookie dough" that permeated all the activities at the centres and that in turn framed and influenced art programming. In this sense, my attention shifted from the "ground" of

¹ I credit Dr. Ron MacGregor with this permission, as he was the one who, in questions during another student's dissertation defense, originally referred to ethnographic research as involving "lumps in the stew" rather than a "smooth puree" that is often suggested in ethnographic writing.

art programs to the "background", what I called the "context" of the sites, and by which I mean both the ideological and structural frames that recreation centres provide for art programming. It was this blending of the institutional ground with art activities, I came to believe, that coloured art experience and distinguished them in these sites. In this sense, the question that I have pursued in analyzing my data has to do with how people in the setting understand, describe, and experience this context, and then how that context influences art programming practice.

Settings and Research Participants

The physical, social, and geographic settings of the research sites have been described in Chapter One and are elaborated further throughout the remaining chapters. As noted, although selecting two sites complicated the study and meant that each site would be studied in less depth, two sites were selected in order to consider the influences of differing communities on recreation centre contexts. In addition, the sites were relatively equidistant from my home, making fieldwork feasible.

Research participants are also described in connection to each chapter in which their words or actions are included. Briefly, 10 recreation centre staff members are the key speakers in Chapter Four. This group is comprised of individuals who were working in the two key sites at the time of my field work, but also include staff members working in other recreation centres within the same department. The latter group were selected because their centres were involved in an artist in residence pilot project, and so had some involvement in implementing the new arts policy. I determined to use these speakers from outside the two sites in part to help maintain anonymity (a total of only five administrative staff worked in the two sites), but also because staff members moved frequently from centre to centre and so their work place knowledge could

not be construed as being attached to any one particular site. In addition, while I was concerned with understandings that were specific to each site, I was also interested in a broader organizational perspective, which I believe this group can represent. (Using these additional staff speakers also had the effect of providing a more even number of perspectives to draw upon in generating meanings, relative to the number of instructors.) Nine staff members are Anglo-Canadian, and one is Asian, a Japanese-Canadian. Three are male and seven are female. Of these, two are centre coordinators, seven are programmers, and one is a central area staff person. They range in approximate age from their early 30's to late 40's.

Chapter Five is comprised primarily of nine women who were currently or recently instructing a visual art activity or program in one of the two sites of focus. They range in approximate age from their mid 20's to late 40's. Their talk is supplemented by three West Side Centre parents, female participants, and selected staff members from the previous chapter. With the exception of one Chinese-Canadian woman, all are Anglo.

Chapter Six relies on descriptions of activity in both sites which involve members of the public, instructors, and staff members. In some cases, these include speakers from Chapters Four and Five, while in other cases new speakers and actors are introduced.

Data Collection Methods and Procedures

Fieldwork began at the East Side site in July of 1994 and continued until July 1995. Fieldwork at the West Side site began in September of 1994 and continued until July 1995. A range of methods were used to collect data relevant to the key question: Open-ended interviews; participant observation; and the collection of documents and visual data (photographs). Record keeping involved maintaining a research log and reflective journals in addition to field notes and

interview transcriptions. Particularly in the beginning of the study, observations and interviews were wide ranging in scope and arranged as opportunities presented themselves. I elaborate on the methods used in the following sections.

Participant Observation

During the course of this study I took a range of researcher roles, from full participant to relatively distant observer. For example, I enrolled in an adult visual art course that was held at the West Side Centre, and took part as a participant. In certain circumstances I moved back and forth between participant and observer roles, as when I performed certain volunteer activities like minute-taking at meetings, running errands, or helping to set up for special events. In the majority of situations, however, due to nature of the activities and the brief time that could be spent observing each one, it was most appropriate and comfortable simply to maintain an observer's stance. In that way I was able to make my researcher status explicit and to take more careful notes.

I conducted a number of indoor and outdoor general observations in public areas of the centres and attended numerous public and special events. These included activities like the West Side registration night, craft fairs, the "Artists in our Midst" project, the East Side Summer Solstice workshop and celebration; and Breakfasts with Santa. I joined the "program committee", made up of community volunteers, at the East Side Centre, and attended the East Side Centre Annual General meeting. I followed certain larger ongoing projects such as the East Lake restoration project, attending numerous meetings, and the East Side Community Centre mural. I also attended several events and meetings associated with a pilot project for recreation centre Artists in Residence which occurred outside the two sites designated and involved the

central staff administration.

In particular, however, I tried to observe as many visual art programs as possible, and observed both short term workshops and longer programs for preschoolers, children, adults, and seniors. In all, I recorded 250 hours of field contact in my log, in "bites" which were generally of one and a half hours each in keeping with the time frames of programs, and which therefore reflected numerous separate entries.

After I had focused my research question around the "context" of recreation centres, I also conducted observations of non-visual art activities like those that occurred in the gymnasium, on the playing fields, the rink, and the fitness centres.

During observations I took written scratch notes, which were then re-constructed and saved on computer disks after leaving the field. In addition, I maintained journals of personal reflections about my field work.

Interviews

Open-ended interviews were conducted with recreation staff members, instructors, adult participants, and parents of children enrolled in classes. Interviews varied but tended to be approximately 45 minutes to one and one-half hours in length. In total, approximately 70 interviews were conducted and audio-recorded. Some people were interviewed more than once. After the focus of the studied was narrowed, approximately 25 interviews were transcribed in full and became the focus for Chapters Four and Five of this study. Remaining interviews were selectively transcribed and used to supplement discussion. The content of interviews varied according to the individual being interviewed, the time that could be devoted to the interview, and my own growing understanding of important issues to pursue. Appendices 1 and 2 provide

lists of the kinds of questions that tended to be asked of instructor groups and staff groups.

Visual Data

Throughout the process, photographs were taken of spaces, visual art products, and to record special events. (I avoided taking photographs of children and or particular individuals in general due to issues of anonymity.) These documents served to help recall memories and to expand on field note descriptions, but were also analyzed for content in their own rights in certain cases.

Documents

Documents produced in the setting were also collected. Brochures, flyers, meeting agendas and minutes, budget information, and policy documents were among the types of documents accumulated.

Data Selection, Analysis, and Representation

I determined to focus on interview transcripts from staff/administrators and instructors, using parents and participant interviews as supplementary data, for the following reasons. First, as noted, due to the ethical and circumstantial difficulties involved, I had earlier on decided not to interview children as part of this study. Contacting parents had also proven complicated. Further, although I had collected some interview data related to adult participants, I did not wish to privilege adult participants over child participants, particularly as adult programs were far fewer in number. Also, given the much smaller number of programs at the East Side Centre, balancing voices between centres would have been a bit more difficult. Finally, much of the data from adult participants had been collected very early in the study, before the research question had been focused, and I didn't feel it addressed the research question as well as it might have

otherwise.

The decision to focus less on participants and parents and more on instructors and staff, therefore, was based on early choices in the research design and the availability of what I construed as applicable data. Nevertheless, the weaker presence of voices from participants is not insignificant and means that conclusions drawn rely more on the perspectives of those who were in a position to influence the context and less on the perspectives of those who experienced it as a framework for leisure.

The process I used in making sense of the data is similar to the one described in Bodkin and Biklen (1992). Hard copies of interview transcripts and field notes were printed and filed. I then began a process of reading and re-reading the data, and identifying categories and themes into which I could sort them. This took place several times, and categories changed and evolved throughout. Certain insights, however, were also gleaned from "head notes" (Sanjek, 1990) that only tangentially found their ways into concrete data. Early themes or codes tended to reflect the "aboutness" of data, such as responses to a particular question or talk about a certain topic. Later themes became more abstract and were sometimes inspired by my reading.

Analysis continued as I began to write up the data. My writing, first of all had a temporal quality to it, and began with the staff interviews. My assumption, as noted, was that staff members could best represent dominant organizational understandings, and I used their talk to establish certain preliminary categories and to define some common sense assumptions prevalent in the setting. Instructor interviews are presented in light of talk generated by staff, and considered in terms of how their perspectives converge with, elaborate on, or differ from staff orientations. (My argument for this position is further explained at the outset of chapters

involved.) The final analysis chapter builds on the first two by providing evidence that describes art experience in context, drawing on field notes, documents, and visual artifacts. Each chapter, therefore, considers the key question about the nature of community centre contexts from the perspectives of different speakers or different forms of data.

I also use the analysis chapters as a way to lay out data in a way that is full and accessible to readers. I work to present talk in ways that summarizes responses to interview questions in the speakers own words, and in a manner which I hope will provide a sense of the complexity of issues and the heterogeneity of the speakers as a group. I deliberately leave in much of the detail from field notes as well as researcher comments in the final section. In each chapter, however, I also step away from this more descriptive mode and begin to consider ways that evidence offers alternatives to dominant and common sense notions.

Summary of Research Credibility

It may be useful to reiterate that, in keeping with the epistemological position presented, all forms of data are assumed to be partial and that the "writing up" of field experiences can be likened to interpretations mediated through the researcher (Clifford and Marcus, 1986). This assumption of partiality and the selected nature of data includes visual data (Calarola, 1988), which is sometimes misconstrued as depicting reality. Qualitative research, therefore, is strengthened by the consideration of multiple perspectives and forms of evidence. Claims this study makes about recreation centre contexts use people's talk, descriptions of everyday experience, photographs and documents produced in the setting to describe and position art programming in recreation centre contexts. It therefore justifies findings through drawing on varied forms of data and different speakers that converge around identified themes. Conclusions

are therefore grounded in the data and linked to specific academic communities of thought. I use practices like the presentation of richly described data--such that readers may consider whether instances can be applied to circumstances with which they are familiar (Wolcott, 1990); the transparency of research procedures analysis and writing procedures; and making links to relevant academic communities to make my case.

Chapter Four

Framing Art in Leisure Contexts:

Recreation Work, Official Talk, and Private Wishes

Introduction

Well, if I were to ask for something for Christmas that would make me better as an art programmer, I would ask for time. I would ask for time to be able to actually do the stuff myself, and create a larger appreciation for it. [Recreation Programmer]

In this chapter I examine the perspectives of recreation staff administrators¹ as they describe their work and understand the context into which art programming is expected to fit within their places of employment. I begin here because in many ways the views of this group--who are charged with carrying out organizational mandates--can be construed as constituting much of the "official" institutional position on art in recreation centre sites. Submerged in recreation centre work environments on a daily basis, these speakers may also be assumed to be a source of certain taken-for-granted ideas and practice within these contexts. As such, staff "talk" will later be used as a foundation from which to point out certain inconsistencies between

¹ I use "administrative" staff here to refer to recreation employees involved generally with the supervision of programs and activities at community centres, as distinct from those people who teach classes or people who provide office support (typing, answering phones, taking registration and managing the cash register, for example). Specifically I use this term to refer to three "levels" of employees--"programmers", "centre coordinators", and "central area staff". Programmers directly oversee programs, while centre coordinators supervise programmers and are responsible for the centre as a whole. Central area staff comprise a second level of administration to which each centre is responsible, and also are responsible for special programs viewed as "city-wide". In this first section I attribute excerpts to a "programmer" or a "coordinator" in order to provide a sense of the distinctions between the two positions. In later sections, however, I have opted not to label positions in an attempt to maintain anonymity. Because there are very few coordinator and central staff positions, labelling could increase the possibility that, internally, speakers might be revealed.

commonly held assumptions about art programming, and how I have observed it to occur or how it is perceived by instructors, participants, or parents.

While I will take a critical approach to the content of this talk (as well as to the content of interview excerpts with members of other centre groups), I wish to take an empathetic and supportive stance toward recreation staff as individuals. As the quote above indicates, many recreation staff members are genuinely concerned about enhancing the quality and quantity of arts programming within recreation practice and eager to increase their own knowledge and experience in this realm. Equally, they are aware of and frustrated by problems encountered. Arguably, in recent years there have been many interesting and successful new efforts to incorporate the arts in these recreation contexts--particularly in terms of special projects--due at least in part to the willingness of staff members to embrace a new direction. In terms of everyday programming, however, practitioners are often limited by the complex circumstances of their immediate working environments, the relationships and ideologies of the larger society in which leisure institutions are positioned, and their personal knowledge and educational backgrounds.

Engaging people in general talk about art programming in the context of recreation, obviously, becomes complicated for a number of reasons. Among these are, first, that there are many particular kinds of circumstances into which art gets inserted in community centre life, making generalizations difficult and often inappropriate. As well, attempting to distinguish the unique characteristics of recreational art is tricky because this activity often appears similar to programming provided by other local agencies (schools, art galleries, community arts organizations), and the roles of these institutions may interconnect and overlap. For example, identical activities may be experienced in several different types of settings; staff and instructors

may have done work of a similar nature in more than one institution; and facilities and programs may be shared between organizations. And, finally, articulating and defining the values and purposes of artistic practice has traditionally been a conundrum within modern Western society, and it does not magically become less so in this context.

These circumstances being the case, arts programming in this study is often talked about not directly, but in relation to other types of activities and concepts in the settings; to the overall goals of recreational activity; to staff members personal experiences, sometimes in non-art realms; or to programming provided by other local institutions. Documents produced in community centres by these staff members (such as brochures) also indirectly reveal issues and concerns that administrators need to take into consideration in art programming practice. Taken together, however, relational talk and promotional material can be used to construct a kind of "common sense" conceptual and practical context for art programming in recreation, and to set the scene for the rest of this study.

The following excerpts are drawn primarily from individual interviews in which staff members responded to a series of open-ended interview questions dealing with the nature of their work in general, their attitudes and beliefs about art and art programming activity, and some issues that they identified as affecting their work with artists and art instructors (See Appendix 1). In addition I have quoted selections from relevant documents and sometimes cite informal information from my notes. I have organized quotations under several comparative themes that I identified in the data, specifically: the relationships between recreation centres, schools, and

education; the relationships between recreation centres and The Young People's Arts Institute²; and the relationships between recreation, art, and sport. In addition, themes of balance versus specialization; structure versus non-structure and flexibility; and the importance of fun and enjoyment versus coercion were also prevalent. Although I have tried to lay out interview excerpts in a manner which is coherent and consistent with these major themes, readers will recognize that the talk often overlaps and flows in many directions, incorporating simultaneously many of the issues raised in the literature. Always, talk about art programming serves to clarify--and should be understood in terms of--the broader context and structure of recreation centre work.

The Nature of Recreation Administrative Work

Recreation administrative work is diverse, complex, and cyclical. Staff members invariably seem to enjoy their work, and cite its variety as part of what keeps their jobs interesting and stimulating. Coordinating the manifold details of recreation centre activity, however, is also perhaps their biggest challenge, and a sense of coping with many things at once pervades their talk as they describe what they do. In addition, recreation workers often work when others play, making weekend and evening shifts common (and, ironically, their own leisure time more scarce and precious). Although the administrative tasks associated with recreation work are very similar from centre to centre, the emphases in program content and the volume of work differ according to the particular community in which the centre is situated. The following excerpts provide a sense of what recreation programmers and coordinators each do in general as

² The Young People's Arts Institution is a pseudonym for a local non-profit organization providing arts programming for children.

well as the distinctions between these two roles.

...I provide programs for the community in this area....Workshops, clubs, groups, and some special events....And there's so much involved in programming. It's knowing your community and finding out what they're interested [in and] what kind of programs, what they want at the community centre. And there are the ongoing programs that have been here for years. So I come in, and we just kind of keep them going. Evaluate them..., supervision of staff, and any other kind of related duty ...any kind of emergency. There's always something that happens in this community centre. You never know. There's never the same thing each day. Let's see. We do our brochure information, we do our advertising, the marketing....And...the programs really need to be diverse. There needs to be...quite a variety of programs. You want to have some health and wellness, you want to have some...arts....And you know the arts, I mean, there's so many different types....The programs that we run, the weekly ones, for the whole session, say, ten weeks, or what ever....Those are pretty...the same....They flip from session to session, but sometimes they don't meet the minimums [don't get the minimum enrollment for the program to proceed and so have to be cancelled].
[programmer]

It's quite a list of things that we have to do. I guess the core part of the job, I mean if you wanted to look at not moving ahead,...is to look after the existing program. We have in the neighbourhood of 400 classes that go on in a season, when you include all the little tid bits....So the first thing we've got to do is make sure that all the details are worked out with that. So the basic job of a programmer, not going into imagination or anything, but just the mechanics is, in most cases, in a centre like this which has a lot of existing programs, you just reconfirm your instructors, get the advertising, enter the data base, all the information, what the dates are--which can seem redundant at times, but if you miss [something] it has got quite a large effect, right? I mean it seems, no matter how many times we proof...we find out that maybe a time is wrong in the brochure or something like that. So we do all those [things]. We set them [instructors] up in contracts and everything else. We come to agreements with the instructors and set up a brochure, and we actually even do quite a bit of the desk top...publishing and setting up of the brochure, too. We're also responsible for--we do get support from the computer program we've got--but also setting up our registration system....And then I guess functionally what happens after that is the registration happens, you have to make decisions on the programs and contact the instructors, if you have to cancel a program. You have to contact the people [participants], get refunds, and go through a whole process that way. Once the program's going and you've confirmed with the instructors and...people show up, you have the class lists for them, and then once, that first week--the first week it seems that there's a million questions because...whether it's the instructor or the public that are coming in, it

seems we spend a lot of time almost like trouble shooting, really. Once that part's over, it would seem that...the programs start to run themselves, but usually by that time it's time to start gathering program proposals for the next session...so there's quite a cycle there. So that, in essence, I mean, that potentially could be almost a full time job right there, just going through the program cycle over and over again. But it's not progressive. I mean, you could keep cycling and cycling and cycling. So there's a number of other things we do, a lot of them depending on whether an initiative comes out of, say, our board or program committee, we may do something with that. We may receive a phone call or a suggestion and we may go looking for additional information or resources to see if we can run such a program....So those sort of things do bring on some research....Somebody mentions maybe scuba diving, and you have to look into it, and you go wherever the scuba diving shop is, so there's a bit of travel. There's also Park Board initiated, more city-wide type initiated activities. I mean, they're countless. They could go anywhere from a social committee for staff to an arts committee for the city, to well, you name it, there are committees for everything. Youth services committee, there are committees all over the place actually. ...I guess the most interesting things in the job come from those committees and the initiatives from the association. That's where...some creativity and imagination get to take place. But the one thing that happens...that sometimes is tight in the job is the fact that that program cycle that I explained about before virtually takes all hours of the day that I work, with a few lulls where it's a little bit calmer....Additionally, I guess with that program cycle, there's the administrative stuff:... supplies ordering, payroll, two payrolls actually....Basically if there's something going on that we need to run your program...[then we have to find ways to overcome the problem]. So usually there's the bureaucracy or red tape, so lots of paper work to either order things so that people can [run their programs] or what ever. And of course, we've got to keep statistics....

[programmer]

Okay. I'd say that probably my biggest, most of my time goes toward liaising with instructors. Setting up the programs at the start of the term, hiring instructors, and the ongoing liaison with them. Keeping in touch, with, you know, what the equipment status is, how the class is running, looking at the program evaluations at the end of term. Changing things,...creating new programs. That's the majority of my time...I'd say another portion of my job is program promotion? A big part is doing the brochure, seasonally, putting [it] together, and doing all kinds of other promotion, not just by way of [the] brochure, but of course the outside sign, and flyers. And we deliver bulletins to the schools and so forth. We do news releases, we do newspaper articles....I'm in charge of all special events at the centre, so that's very time-consuming.... There's a lot of administration. I have to check payroll, I have to make sure records are done. To come out with the brochure you have to do a lot of costing, cost out your programs. So that's quite time

consuming. Then you have to keep records of what programs go. How many people came to the program, that's your statistic. So there's quite a bit of record keeping to the job. Making sure that the facility is safe. Like, we have first aid kits [so] we have...[to] keep the supplies ordered, we have craft supplies, we have sports supplies--so its purchasing supplies....And we do building maintenance checks. And we have to do work orders for repairs. So that's part of my job as well....[programmer]

Okay, I guess there's a job description that goes along with the position that says you supervise the centre staff, the programmers, the facility clerk, [and various others associated with this particular centre]; we work with the board and the community groups and...of all that sort of thing. But, you know, I mean, that's the text book paper stuff. And more [than that] is sort of the reality and the relationships and creating networks and services for the wider community. It's like working with the youth and being directly involved with the youth--sort of being somebody that they can look up to and respect. And if they have questions, come in and have questions. It's like being able to communicate with preschoolers at their level, and having them--making them feel a part of an atmosphere of family and sharing and caring. And it's working with the board, you know, providing them with information and skills to have an active participation role in the community and make decisions that are based on...fact and knowledge and need, versus an emotional decision that they make. So its sort of...very much an "assisting" process--I won't say enabling, but you know, helping, it's like helping...[for example one staff member] is very skilled, but being there to support him when he needs it, whether it's a special event or whatever, or giving him a sounding board or ideas to go on when he's sort of stumped or....It's doing the paper work (we laugh), the mounds of paper work. It's, it's, everything. I think the excitement of it is every day is a new day. It's not like [a relative whose job deals with the same problems day after day]. It's always constantly changing and your role changes. Your role changes depending on what the needs of the community are, the people, the staff. So it's just...I love it. I love it. [coordinator]

In addition to the diversity of recreation work itself, the above excerpts suggest that variety in general is valued in terms of the programming provided, a theme that is also addressed later. The following quotation acknowledges this, and expands somewhat on how programs are selected.

...There are a few ways that our programs start, where we get our ideas. And, [one is] our city-wide program committee. You know, we sit around, all the

programmers, and we kind of talk about what's new and happening. And there are...different types of recreation guides from other municipalities, and several people are out there selling themselves. So we get all kinds of proposals in. [Someone may] want to do workshops on comics or...food. I mean it's just amazing [the variety of program ideas there are]. And once we get the ideas and stuff on paper...you might say, "Hey, there was a great course that someone put on at UBC or Douglas college!" or whatever. It's like, "Who was the instructor? How do we find that out?" You know, sometimes we have to do a lot of research making sure that we get the instructor. And once we get that information, the community centre itself has a program committee, which makes up of part of the community association board, and they're members of this particular community. So we sit down, and we share the list of program ideas. They come up with some of their own ideas, and we try and [help by saying], "Oh, that's a good idea!" and we'll see if we can find an instructor to teach that. [The process continues from there and includes such things as considering what the program will cost; the experience and references of the instructor; deciding on the length of the program, and assessing whether it will require additional advertising.] It's a variety. You know, if we had twelve people send in twelve cooking courses...we're not going to fill up our brochures with cooking courses. We want...a wide variety of programs, so its sort of picking and choosing. [programmer]

While recreation workers talk about valuing the diversity in their work, some of these excerpts also suggest that it is possible to feel overwhelmed or stifled by a large program load, and even to feel some resentment at not having the time to do new research or be "creative" in program development. An advantage to working at a centre where there is less program volume, for example, is that time is more available to do things other than maintain what is already there.

Now there is a bit of time [at this centre] as opposed to [a centre with a high program volume] for some community development, which is really an exciting part of my job....I mean I'm not a machine like I was at [another centre]. [At that centre] they have such a large program, you would basically spend your whole time just trying to keep up with this machine, that was created, right? But so you did not have any time in your day to actually do anything other than continue with what was [already] created, and putting on new programs, and so forth. Whereas [because I have fewer programs here] I have some time to do some community development. So what [that] is, is some outreach. Working more closely with the schools, knowing the community a bit better....[programmer]

Occasionally staff implied that they sought out opportunities to learn new things for the

interest and stimulation that such activities offered. In the following cases, working with special arts projects provided this opportunity.

Now that I'm into it [a special artist in residence project] I'm really enjoying it and I think it's just another new experience for me. I could continue to do the same job every year and not grow, but this is--I'm not artistic. So it's like , really exciting for me to learn a whole new thing....I'm taking it as an education.
[programmer]

Number 2...for me as a programmer, it's an education [working with a special arts project]. Because as recreation programmers, we're generalists....We have a background in working with people, we have some [particular kinds of] skills--a lot of my skills are towards physical education. And a lot of fitness students wind up in recreation. So when it comes to art we are basically at the primary entry level. Again, I'm not speaking for every other programmer, but as for myself...the type of art that I'm seeing is maybe stuff that you [would] see on playgrounds. Or you have a special event and you have someone doing this and that. But when it comes to professional mediums like watercolouring or ceramics, which is altogether another type of programming, that is one area which I'm very weak on, when it comes to the knowledge [required]. So what [this special project] provides me with is a wider scope, more of a secondary entry into art.
[programmer]

In addition to the variety within recreation work, recreation employees are regularly moved from centre to centre in order to gain additional experience, and there seems to be a continual flow of staff into and out of various temporary or "acting" positions. During the year that I was conducting my research, at just the two key sites, for example, a rink coordinator was moved to a programmer position at another centre, leaving a rink position vacant for several months. Then the person who filled that position was made a centre coordinator very shortly afterwards, so a seniors' worker from another centre was brought in to replace her, requiring someone else to be brought in to "act" in her position. A fitness coordinator who had been at one centre for five years was moved, so the fitness coordinator I spoke with had been there only a few months. A year after the data collection was completed, two of the three programmers I worked

with at the key sites had been moved to other centres. The third was still in place by virtue of the fact that she had just started her work at that centre in the September when I started my research. Numerous other staff changes occurred through maternity leaves and the resignations of part time (program assistant) staff members.

...but part of the contract we sign is that you're initially placed at one facility and they could move you. Now they--they being the Park Board--they place us. And a lot of work is done with management all the while--there's all these reports going back to them, and they have an idea where each person should go. You're smarter if you deal with, talk to them up front and say I'm looking for this kind of experience. Generally most programmers are moved between two and three years in a centre--a facility. And, you're not always asked where you want to go, and you just go where the work is, or you specify the kind of work experience you want to get. And maybe they'll place you that way. But there is a lot of transition, and that's difficult for staff....Naturally, I would not want to go, if I still felt like I had big projects to do, and ...had something to offer to the centre. And most programmers feel that way. And especially as you get older, and you're starting with family, that turmoil of being moved to a new place, even though that's exciting, it can be very stressful. [programmer]

Moving from centre to centre also tends to interrupt the forming of deep ties and commitments to any given community, and, it seems, encourages staff to strive toward a notion of themselves as playing an informed but relatively neutral role, largely implementing the wishes of the community. In the following excerpt, the speaker refers to the fact that policy at the centre is actually made by the board and the members of the community that make up the program committee:

Absolutely. In fact none of the pressure is on me. And that I think is one of the most important things that I've learned in my eight years now with recreation, is that I never make a decision on my own. Ever. If somebody wants to teach a program here, you know, I bring it to the program committee--they (the instructors) fill out a program proposal [and] I bring it to the program committee. And that's what they're (the committee members are) for. The program committee is the one [that] makes the decision on policy. [programmer]

Recreation, Physical Education, and the School System

For most staff members, finding themselves in recreation work involved a journey starting in physical education. (Although for at least one person with whom I spoke, the move from physical education to recreation was one of recognizing that she was "not a jock", thereby also differentiating recreation and physical education as career realms.)

For most, choosing recreation work also included a career decision about whether or not to work in the school system. In part, therefore, people's understandings of their work involved distinguishing between "recreation" and "education", and incorporated the advantages that they saw recreation work providing.

I went through, probably two years of Phys. Ed. and I realized that I really didn't want to be in a school setting. At that time UBC was set up where it was Phys. Ed. and Recreation combined, but Phys. Ed. was geared almost exclusively toward teachers--there was no sports medicine at that time and all that kind of thing. I realized after about the second year that I really didn't want to be in a setting where people were forced to take something that I thought was fun. And so I started taking more recreation courses as options because you could transfer around at that time. And that's when I thought, recreation is more where I want to be. [Terry]

So by that time I was going in for my Bachelor of Physical Education at UBC. [And] by the time I was not even half way through my program I already was starting to see certain things in education that I felt might not be for me. And that's not to say the experience at school was bad--it was actually one of my favourite experiences--but I also was looking at the job of teaching and what it entailed. And I saw a lot of teachers that looked extremely exhausted at the end of the year. And I saw teachers who probably, when they first came out of school, had a lot of ambition, that were [now] losing part of it. And I knew from working with kids full time that, although I liked working with kids, to have them five days a week for five hours a day for close to ten months a year would be hard to keep going. I think it takes a certain type of person to be able to do that, and not all teachers that are in there [in schools] are able to. So I started to see that the mixture of administrative and people work was available in recreation, [and] I started to turn my mind towards that. [Allen]

[Also, after a Bachelor's Degree in Physical Education, thinking about what she would like to do with her life],...very much, that, in my sports background, not athletically but working in a team, and working toward a goal, are really good strengths that I carry with me into this position. And just naturally I'm an organized person. I like to take a lot of things on all at once. But I'm glad I didn't choose teaching. That was what it was, my choice was down to between teaching and this. And this doesn't have as many restrictions as do teaching guidelines and when you're in a classroom and having to follow your curriculum. This is much more open-ended, and you can tailor your jobs to what experiences you want. I was at [another centre] for 5 years, and the focus there was just learning the system and how to program and budget. The move to here expanded all that to more community outreach, more committee work, more project-oriented things. So you grow, and the next step, who knows where I'll want to be. The next centre I would look for a whole new focus. [Ruth]

Simultaneously, however, there is general acknowledgement that recreation has an educational component, making the distinctions between the two rather slippery.

I think everything we do is education. And I think that a lot of times we have this prejudice involved, like...being in a recreation centre is all sports. Same as if you take a recreation program, you don't learn--you're here to be entertained, not to be educated. I would say that a good 75% of our programs are educational. Even some of our sports programs--learning how to spike the ball, or learning how to shoot the perfect basketball--there is a learning component. We offer [cooking classes] and that's education. I mean, it must be education because the City School Board offers [the same kinds of programs] in their Night Schools. And they call it education. There's a very thin line between culture, recreation, and education. [Patrick]

It's definitely a fine line, and you toe that fine line. And we try to keep things relatively simple and low key and with a recreational flavour....You know, you look at institutions that are designed and set up [for art educational purposes], and, if it's the case of music, then I look at the Academy of Music, and if I want my kid to be an accomplished piano player or a violinist...you send them to the academy....I wouldn't look at a community centre to develop that skill, to go on to be...a star. I don't think we're set up in that case....Now whether it's education or if it's just fun, that's a philosophical question. I mean, you're learning something and if it's done in a less threatening environment and it's fun and relaxed, that's acceptable in our field. So I think it's getting that balance. I mean...we're always going back and forth. An example is the Orff Music program, and that's always been a bit of a contentious issue. Because it's very focused. There are board members that don't like that idea of just dedicating a room and dedicating that

time, and special registration for it....because it takes away from everything else that we do. It's different. Very structured. And so, philosophically it goes back and forth. But we're definitely serving a need in the community, and so I think they accept it and rationalize it because of that....But that's where we've diversified or gone off the track...It's almost like there's a curriculum there....But there's a balancing thing, you know--whose to say we're right or wrong? Or where we are--and I think we're kind of in and out--in how you mesh the two and define them. But I think that, you know, the fact that a recreation activity has an educational component is, there's nothing wrong with that. Yeah. It's terminology. We don't get caught up in that too much. [Ed]

In addition, however, making links to the schools is viewed as extremely important for a number of reasons. (For example, in a pilot project involving artists in residence at four community centres, each centre initially identified work with children in schools as a priority, even though not all of those links eventually took place.)

I want to have really close ties with the schools. Also that's where the kids are. That's where we, we're going to share--its another form of educating, it's a way of linking, to me it's a way of linking the community centre with the school and getting the kids accustomed, to [the fact that] there is a community centre [and] what can we do. It's a way that we can touch the community in a larger fashion, in physical places that right now we may not touch. It's very important to me that our community, A) recognizes that we're there [and] B) that we are providing something of value. Because if we don't do that, then what is the point of our existence? And the community will start asking that question and our funding will go zip. [Barbara]

Finally, there is a significant number of programs that are administered by recreation centre staff, but which take place on school sites during noon hour and after school, further blurring the line between recreation and education.

Art and Recreation

On the whole, recreation workers with whom I spoke were enthusiastic about the arts and recognized that arts activities could be beneficial in terms of people's leisure experience.

Sometimes staff members talked about art in terms of its relationship to recreation and leisure in

general.

Leisure is a spiritual process. It's about the recreation of the soul. It's an opportunity, every time people go out to play, to have a look at what they do and get a crack at playing at being something they want to be....There's a theory of flow. And if there's too much of "stuff", there's anxiety, and if there's not enough, there's boredom, and in the middle there's the flow, when things are just "going"....So art is a form to get to the focus to get into the flow. As is meditation, as is....really everything. Everything can be utilized to move people into that flow state. [Barbara]

I think it's, it is equal to fitness or whatever. It's anyone's perception of their recreation. I go back to my definition of recreation and leisure, which is whatever you do on your free time, whatever passions you have, interests, things that you want to learn, and that could be from reading a book to sleeping to needlecraft, whatever that definition is. And recreation centres should be for everybody. And for every purpose....And its their money. It's public money. And the public should be entitled to a variety of activities. So I see art as no different than fitness, or no different than Tai Chi or an exercise program, or any of them. It's just another expression. [Ruth]

In the context of expressing their interest, however, staff members also frequently "apologized" to me about what they perceived as a lack of personal artistic knowledge or skill³. Recognizing this in themselves, they sometimes empathized with others who might feel the same way:

...I've sort of seemed to have played in the arts, very unskilled. I took an art appreciation course, and, lousy at it, loved the pictures, loved the Picasso. I can't talk, like a lot of people can about art. For me it's another form of meditation to be more alive. [Barbara]

³Because art education is minimally provided in relation to core subjects in public schools, one frequently hears otherwise self-confident adults make self-deprecating remarks about their artistic abilities. In my own experience working with pre-service elementary teachers, for example, it is common for much of the class to express concern and even anxiety over the prospect of making art in the course, and teaching it in the future. In this sense, these remarks should not be assumed to uniquely reflect recreation staff members. At the same time, the emphasis on physical education in professional programs in recreation and the correspondingly minuscule attention devoted to the arts does little to counteract this circumstance and may even exacerbate it.

[On taking part in a special community art project]...I took part in the _____ project. And I felt proud. I'm a terrible artist--I have the art skills of a pre-schooler--but that's okay! [I was able to create something], and I could leave, within the wider community, my imprint....And I know that's mine!....And part of it is, I think sometimes people feel that they're not good enough, to do art. You know? I mean, if I was to do a drawing class, I know I wouldn't be good enough. But every now and then on Saturday I'm surfing channels before I go out, and there comes that guy who starts with his blank canvas and he starts with his little palette. And uses that putty knife, and I'm thinking, I can do that! And someday I'm going to get one, and as he starts, I'm gonna start. You know, just because it looks so easy! So, I think that people don't want to risk, in many cases, being in a situation or an environment where they might feel they might be criticized about their art work. [Fran]

In addition, they tended to see the problem of introducing the arts into recreation as one of evolving notions of recreation, and moderating the predominance of sport and physical activity in the realm.

When I first got [to this community centre], the people before me--it's interesting how people's interests **do** influence what's happening in a complex--there was a lot of emphasis on sports. And I think that...a lot of our centres, historically, were developed around sports [and] physical activity. And there's been a real thrust in the last few years...to emphasize the arts. And so we're not only getting--you can see it in your community, you can put it in place--but we're also getting reinforced at the main office--the political level. There seems to be a lot more support for when you want to do something in the arts....so it makes it a lot easier. I guess you tend to get rewarded for it as opposed to, in the past, you were always getting flack if you didn't have the facility pumped with physical activity, or...[had] a lot of things happening around sport. So now I think there's a better understanding [of] a more diverse type of programming....[Ed]

I think sometimes the challenge is getting people who might not have a background in the arts--at an art gallery it's pretty easy to run an art program because you have people who are interested in art coming to your facility every day. You don't necessarily have that at a community centre. In fact, a lot of people in society think that community centres are really sport centres. So I think that's a challenge....It's an interesting story. I don't consider myself an artist or talented in the arts in any way, but I've always had an interest in the arts, and I appreciate art, and I enjoy art, and I enjoy photography, and I enjoy seeing something different....And so when I walked in [to my new office] and saw all the [sport] posters, I thought, "My goodness!" And from talking to different people,

it's like, the last six programmers here have been sport, sport, sport all the way. And I think that was reflected in some of the programs. Because you can't help but do that. Reflect your personality in what course[s] that you're offering. So I thought, "Oh. It's going to be an interesting job here." It might have been easier [at a different centre] to introduce some art programs, but I wonder what's going to happen here. [Nancy]

For some, a greater comfort and personal experience with sport and athletics was used to make sense of art activities in the centre:

I think that phys. ed is art. I think for myself, competing for so many years, I felt like I was an expression of nature. That was my performing. [Debby]

My personal feeling about art is its an expression. Actually my feeling about most recreation and leisure are, they are expression[s] in some way, shape, or form. Whether you do a sport or an art thing. I mean it is an expression....Some of the people in [one of the art groups at the centre] are in there daily. So I know that they must feel that same sense of relaxation that comes after you have expressed yourself or have put yourself into something that really soothes you or does something to you. I get it from sports too. If I go for a run, and do other things, then at the end of the day I feel relaxed and I have a grin or a good feeling, so, I think most of the activities we have in here come up with that type of thing. [Allen]

Aside from physical recreation, creativity is one of the most universal things. Everyone has an imagination and a lot a of times people are physically limited to how high they can take themselves. But creatively, you know, almost the sky is the limit. And art is one of the easiest ways for people to express themselves without physically having to be gifted....You're working at your own individual level....You can do this. I find that also art can be very inexpensive. It doesn't cost very much to get a piece of paper and to start to draw. And with art you have a greater variety of choice. [Explains that we are physically prevented from taking part in some sports because of our size or height, for example] but I definitely can do a lot of variety that art can offer me. [Patrick]

Some also suggested that, as enthusiastic as many people are, there continue to be some difficulties concerning how the arts should fit into recreation.

I really believe that we should be providing programs for the community that cover all areas, you know sports and cultural programs as well, the whole range of them. The arts programs don't get a lot of support from many boards because the

majority of people who sit on boards for some reason are usually more involved in the physical kinds of things. You know, there's a lot of board members who are like, if there's a rink involved, they may be involved with the hockey league, and that's why, you know, it's self interest kinds of things. It's really a push to get them interested in the [broader] purpose of a community centre because they're so interested in their own area. And so from my point of view and the long term thing is, you know, wouldn't it be great if one of our board members decided to take an art course after this [after experiencing a special art project in the centre]. And it seems to me that, we provide lots of art programs for young children and we provide lots of art programs for seniors, but some how, in the adult years, they get left behind. And for relaxation, and you know whatever, self-expression, and developing that part of yourself, the arts can do that and people don't tend to gravitate towards it. [Terry]

Well, I'll talk about it terms of the arts and people who aren't connected with the arts, and what I see as being, what makes the bumps in the road. There is, I would say, there is a body of thought that I've encountered, that feels that recreation getting into the arts is going to sully the arts in some way. That it's going to pull resources from the [professional] arts and put them into amateur [arts] and lower the level of arts standards, that kind of thing. So I've encountered that kind of negativity, which I find upsetting. On the other hand, what I get from people who have experienced that attitude, [perhaps who] are trying to understand what [the arts] are all about, because they don't have the experience or knowledge or what ever, is that resentment of the elitism that...seems to be inherent in a lot of that kind of art practice. And so I'm skating this line between...working primarily with artists in order to understand the need to build that grass roots base, and saying we're not talking about more amateur theatre, we're talking about the community, different kinds of interface between professionals and people in the community, different roles that they can play. But we're also not saying "exclusive", that this is all we want to see in the arts. There's a wonderful quote ...[about] seeing art as a continuum...[in terms of amateur and professional practices] and where I see our role is in the cross over between those two lines. And generally, I'd say, more than not, there has been positive reception of that, but I still meet pockets of, "Oh, yeah, oh, yeah, [you're] trying to tell us that artists are better than recreationists," or, "Oh, yeah, [you're] trying to pull down the quality of the arts." And I still get those regularly.... There've been quite a number of people who say, "Yes! there is a role here that's realistic and really exciting, and there's been quite a number of people who have really clicked into this concept. But it's still, you know, its still hard. It's still hard, those kinds of things, hard to counter, because I'm sure at both ends there've been experience[s] that lead people to feel that. [Pam]

I think its very important for the public at large to realize the role of art in the community. When I started out I was a youth worker, I was a jock, and basically

what I would offer, I would have a playground type of craft type of program. My concern is that art is looked upon as a luxury, [and] not as a need. As basically something you can do if you can afford it, if you can afford to have the time. Getting involved with sports, at least you're developing a strong body which helps you cope with life. But art is, its something to do, but, you know? And I'm finding that there is this attitude that because art is a luxury, the opportunities for art are limited. Because the powers that be, our politicians, don't look at art as something that--politically, it's not something that is trendy. So what happens is that, when it comes to cut-backs or funding and that, it's the arts that get hit. You're not going to tear down gymnasiums and parks and fields...but when it comes to developing an arts centre, or do something nice like a mural or a sculpture, that is given very low priority. [Patrick]

So, obviously this art thing, people are interested, but maybe it hasn't been affordable. For them? Maybe it just hasn't been in a venue that they feel comfortable in...[and later]...I think, one thing is finances. Economics. I mean paying the instructor, you know, and artists have to make a living too. And sometimes art lessons are probably very low on the priority list. And so, they take, maybe parents will say, "We want you to take swimming lessons because you got through all your levels and then you can be a life guard, and you can make money (chuckles)... And you won't drown!" So...skating lessons, and maybe you'll go in the Olympics and support me. You know? For the rest of my life! (chuckles again). Or you can teach skating or something. But in terms of a marketable commodity for parents, for children, later on, it [art] doesn't have a lot of value. It has a value for leisure opportunities for many people--my grandmother took up painting when she was 75...people look at it from a leisure aspect ...where does leisure fit in to your...family matrix. First we have the groceries and we have the house... and then maybe we should teach you something that maybe you can get a part time job in, and then we have some extra discretionary money, then maybe you can...take ballet lessons or you can take art lessons. [Fran]

I think there's a tremendous split that still exists, there's an attitudinal split. We're the "Reckies", and then, there's the "Artsie Fartsies". And I don't know how we ever build a bridge. Because, for me, the root of recreation is really to re-create ourselves. And in what we all thought was going to be a very different society, come the 90's, when we were supposed to have all these gobs of leisure--which has not really worked out according to "The Great Plan!" But, I mean, when I look back at some of the courses I took in university around leisure and recreation, I mean, the two [art and leisure] go together!

Recreation and The Young People's Arts Institute

In describing recreational art programming, staff members often spontaneously raised the topic of The Young People's Arts Institute. Oddly, for some, it helped to define what recreational art should not be, while for others, it seemed to generate feelings of envy.⁴

The Young People's Arts Institute is a pseudonym for a local non-profit organization devoted to providing non-credit visual and performing arts programming for children. It is located on the city's West Side and has a reputation for charging high fees (a Fall 1996 Drawing and Painting course for ages 9 - 12 providing a total of 16 hours of instruction costs \$94.00; a similar program listed in the West Side Recreation Centre Brochure during the same season cost \$58.00 for 15 hours) and survives through actively seeking corporate sponsorships and providing a series of socially prestigious fund raising events. Although its promotional materials stress that "bursaries, scholarships and our free programmes to the public schools make our classes available to all children", it is often perceived as catering primarily to the Lower Mainland's more privileged children.

Its glossy brochure, full of professionally photographed children engaged in arts activities, announces to its reader that

You are about to embark on a truly unique adventure in North America. The Young People's Arts Institute originated 17 years ago in the spirit of giving young people the finest arts education to increase their self-awareness, their creativity,

⁴ While initially I construed this section as a "category" called The Young People's Arts Institute Talk, I later came to think of The Young People's Arts Institute as a kind of conceptual "presence" which was repeatedly used as a frame against which to describe, compare, and clarify recreational art programming. It is in this sense that I began to think of The Young People's Arts Institute as part of my data--in spite of the fact that it is an entirely separate institution, ostensibly not within the delimitations of my study--and decided to devote space here to describing The Young People's Arts Institute as an institution, in addition to quoting people's talk about it

and their confidence....We are fortunate to have such an institution in our city and welcome you to get involved. For those of us who are volunteers, board members, donors, sponsors, parents, and young people, we have found the Young People's Arts Institute experience to be profoundly satisfying. When we help young people to experience and interpret the world around them, we are giving to our future. Something important is happening here.

Lower on the same page, a second author writes:

I truly believe that to touch a child's soul and make a difference is more important than anything we may do in our lives. These young people are the promise of tomorrow. Through accomplishment, inspiration and knowledge, they will lead the way.

Throughout the brochure, individual programs are identified as being "sponsored by" specific companies or individuals.

By contrast, the West Area Recreation Guide for Fall 1996 is a large tabloid format, printed on 60 pages of news print. Although individual programs are not "sponsored" there are four full pages at the back of advertisements taken out by non-profit groups and clubs associated with the centres and local businesses. Including program listings for five West area community centres and cramped for space, a brief statement at the front, from the City Parks and Recreation Department reads:

This brochure describes activities available to you at your local community centres, swimming pools, ice rinks and fitness centres. Many activities are suitable for people of all ages and we encourage you to become involved. If you speak English, our staff would be please to provide you with information--please give us a phone call or drop in. If you do not speak English, we hope you will get a friend to assist by translating the material for you.

As noted, recreation staff talk about The Young People's Arts Institute raises important but sometimes contradictory perspectives. Informally, several staff implied to me that it was the fact that The Young People's Arts Institute "specialized" in the arts that distinguished it from

recreation, which was properly there to provide a broad selection of many recreational opportunities. (This theme of balance and variety versus specialization is a strong one and is dealt with again later.) In addition, however, interview excerpts suggest a sense of competition between the two organizations. Staff also imply frustration that recreation centres have been (in their views) unfairly deemed to provide less credible programming than The Young People's Arts Institute, and are as a result not perceived as places to seriously explore the arts.

We are really tightly competitive with The Young People's Arts Institute and they are considered more of the quality programming. We think that's our main competition, especially for children's programming. [Ruth]

With the art gallery or [the local art college] or The Young People's Arts Institute, I do see some of the differences there. And sometimes its difficult in saying, "Register for our Watercolour Painting course, not The Young People's Arts Institute." And the reason I say do that is because we charge \$30.00 less. But a lot of people associate quality with price. So if The Young People's Arts Institute charges a hundred dollars and you guys only charge forty, they've got to have a better instructor, they've got to make neater things. But you sometimes find exactly the same instructor....And I wouldn't say that happens with every program, but some, there is no difference. [Nancy]

Oh yeah. We were talking about The Young People's Arts Institute. Most community centres tend to offer programs that are for the beginner, or introductory programs. And I don't know if its a cart and horse thing, but that's also the way the community perceives community centres. And I've tried running programs for artists that are at intermediate or advanced levels and have a real difficulty getting them to go. And the frustrating thing, I think--from my point of view--I would really like to be able to develop arts programs in the centre, to be able to appeal to that level of the artist. But it seems like they [participants] gravitate towards facilities that are there for that purpose alone. Its all self-serving, because as the people go there, then they [the other institutions] can provide those programs and then they're successful, and the people keep coming and on and on. [Terry]

Further to these is the suggestion that equal access is one recreational value. The implication is that perhaps recreation centres have the potential to provide a democratic and

egalitarian access to the arts that is opposed to the elitism frequently associated with The Young People's Arts Institute.

...Recreation is very democratic, recreation should be available to all, and... each individual should be entitled to a recreative activity. [Patrick]

Balance, Structure, and Flexibility: Artists in a Recreation Context

This category is a rather amorphous one, encompassing three interrelated ideas that surface in slightly different ways within staff talk. The notion of "balance" is raised first in terms of overall programming practice, and refers in part to the perceived need to provide a variety of types of programs rather than focussing on just a few. In part, offering a diversity of programs is seen as an organizational mandate, but it is also implied in a suggestion that a balance of recreational activities is good and healthy for participants. Specialization, and the related act of offering more advanced levels of program content, on the other hand, may be viewed as something to be questioned or even avoided.

Program-wise I want to afford...opportunities that are balanced...[Kids often like to have a] place to come and hang out. [The community centre] is a place for them to sit down, and you can waste away your life just sitting in the [room where youth congregate] all day. You know, chit-chatting with your friends. But I think everybody needs to have a balance, and if you don't provide them with that opportunity [to do other kinds of activities] then I think that we're failing in our job. [Fran]

You know, you could almost take every program that is specialized and say, should a community centre be offering this type of program? Whether it's...advanced badminton, or whatever. Any level that's really structured or advanced. A lot of people's philosophy is, a recreation centre is a place to learn things--introduction to beginner's pottery, beginner's music. It's not a place to specialize. And a lot of people think that [specialized programs belong] at a private facility that can attract the people who want that specific program. Let's face it. The instructors in that [specialized program] make a lot more money than instructors in a beginner's badminton program or a pottery program. So number one, the instructors make more money [and because of the structure of the

program], the program is more expensive. Definitely expensive....but as soon as you do have a specialized program, you sometimes price yourself out of the market. One school of thought is, if we can, if there's a demand in the community, if people are registering, why shouldn't we offer it?....But a lot of people think it's not our place, and those rooms should be used for beginner programs--something more affordable for the community. [Nancy]

A second way in which the notion of balance arises in staff talk concerns perceptions of how artists and art teachers do and should fit in to a recreation centre context, as well as talk about some of the tensions that arise from that merger. As elsewhere, there are sometimes contradictory views. For example, one line of thought suggests that artists and art teachers need to be flexible in their approaches to both what the centre can offer them and with respect to their students. On the other, there is a suggestion that being overly flexible, or being perceived as not having a structure, may also be a problem, both in teaching and in relations with centre staff.

Finding a balance between two extremes is viewed as important.

[In response to my prompt, "Just what do they [artists and art instructors] need to know in order to fit in to your organization well? I mean are you talking about just being a little bit flexible?"]

Yeah. I think flexible is probably the word. Because you don't want them to come in, or I don't feel like I want a teacher [to say], "Hey, go home and practice ten hours a day and then come back to the next session." And if they don't they have to do 400 laps around the community centre. That sort of thing, you know. I think people are there and what you're trying to do is to expose them and educate them to, you know, an appreciation. What ever it might be. And to introduce some skills. But at the same time, not to have these great expectations. If they don't fit then kick them out of the class, you know. Don't want to see that sort of thing. And we've had to deal with that. And I, sure, there's age appropriateness and there's other factors. But the ability thing I don't think should be a factor. So I think you've got to be flexible with that. Take the good with the bad, the budding with the not so talented and what ever, and you're dealing with group situations, you're not dealing with one on one, and its not an ideal situation. Usually the activities are done in groups, although piano, we're private with that, but we've just introduced that. But....you know, I think they have to live with us. I would warn them that...instead of dealing with a dollar package of tempera paint,

they're going to be educating our staff. And if they would just live with that to maybe bring them to a point where, whatever the materials they're using there's a certain standard and a certain thing that we have to get out of our mode, because we've bought supplies traditionally from the same suppliers and the same whatever for the last hundred years. And. We might have to get re-educated in what's out there. In what's available in terms of materials. And it's gonna cost a little more. And that sometimes puts our backs up. And, so its just to be a little more flexible with staff, and educating them as to what's available for their...And yeah, there's all sorts of those kind of pains that are associated with someone whose really got a high standard.[Ed]

For example, say our (one of the visual art programs). [One instructor] has a certain style of teaching. She has sort of a laissez faire attitude, and she's not a real structured person herself, so of course that structure doesn't come out in her class. She doesn't say, "Today, we're going to do, I'm going to show you how to [make something specific] and we do it in this way. This is step one, two, three, four. She doesn't work like that. She's more like, you know, "I'm going to let you play with [the tools and materials], you [make, do] what you feel like (making, doing)] today. If you need help [with your] project, then come to me. You know, everybody's an individual, you work on your own projects. I think a lot of times people expect that structure more on the West side. They expect class "A"s going to be like this, because their lives are more structured? And, so, you would probably get a lot of feedback if you're running the same class with the same instructor on that side, saying, "Gee, I think I'm going to withdraw from this program because I don't think the instructor's very good. And it's not that she's not very good, it's just that she's got a different style. But I don't think her style matches [on the West side as much it matches [on the East side]....[Nancy]

If you were to ask me what was important as opposed to...like I said, I've seen different styles. I've seen very effective instructors that were very punctual, organized, and everything else. To me, I feel that those are keys in almost everything that's done here. The public--and I have two sides to this--I have found, my personal feeling is, I think that someone who's really expressive and allows people to be expressive is the best instructor. However, I have found that the other side of it, the organization and the really more rigid formalities sometimes create more confidence in people in the public. So I think that, a lot of times I find that...people are strong in one area and not so much in another. I think if somebody really has a creative ability to sort of look at a situation and evaluate it for the moment and determine what to do at that time is a good thing. However, a lot of times the public, if they see something like that, will assume that there's nothing organized, and therefore its very important to have a structure because when they walk in it helps relax them? People get quite anxious. It's like, a lot of times with programs, people look like they're trying to get out of the starting

blocks, right? And they're anxious to do it, and they want to know what they do first. And if it's not really clear cut, if there's no structure for them [then that's a problem]....So for communicating, its good to have the structure, I think. I think for an instructor to truly be good through, [they need to]...have the flexibility to look at--say you were doing [one] type of work and this person tends to express themselves and be happier expressing themselves in what we previously did and they don't show any interest in moving on, well, you may have to make a judgement. Well, why should I make them do this, you know. I can tell them there's some value in doing this, but if they really aren't motivated to do it, once again, we're coming down to, it's their leisure time. They want to come away feeling good about their expressions and that, so there has to be some flexibility there. I think combining those two area [is important.]....I think people stereotype people as art people and sport people. But in actual fact there are athletes who are always known as being late for practice and never practiced really hard, but always played like, you know, they were amazing on the field in the games, sort of thing. Same thing, its an emotional thing, right? They're not very good with the structure, they're not very good with all these other things. The same thing, you've got artists that are like that and some that aren't. I think there are creative people in all walks....There're instructors, the ones that are harder to evaluate, though, are the ones that...[are] more creative or... [have] less formal structure. Because it often looks like--and may be possibly true--[that] they're not ready for things, but then their ability to make people feel that they can express is good, so if I was to tell somebody what they should work on, I think they have to look at both sides of themselves. But look deep into their creativity ...because I think that there are intangibles that go beyond having a good lesson plan. In fact I think those are really important. You know, a good lesson plan without any heart or feeling into it is just basically something that went on schedule but has less meaning? So I think its important that people can dig down and find that, I guess it's a passion, or whatever, in doing the thing, but then also, to, for communication purposes, have some formal structure that creates confidence in people....But I do feel that in anything I prefer a character over a robot. I think sometimes we're, well, I'm tolerant of some things that the rest of the staff might not be. Just because of some intangibles that I feel are important. I've seen two instructors teach the same program and one has got lesson plans and very organized and everything like that, and they don't draw as much as the person that comes in, has no lesson plan or anything, cause that person is a performer, they make people want to do things, for what ever reasons. It's their character, it's their passion for what ever they're doing. So that is something, you know, I do like to see. But there is a comfort zone in somebody who shows that everything is all organized and everything like that. So, I guess, I would like to see a mix in all my instructors where they can at least give confidence to the public that are using the thing that, yes, we do have a structure, but the ability to go off and do some, improve on what ever it is they're doing, right...And if I was to lean to my own personal

favourites, I would still like that passion and creativity more so than just structure? But I realize that potentially those programs might not go...If I lean towards that, because people might go in and say, look, I don't think your instructor is prepared, I've gotta go, you know, I've got to withdraw.[Allen]

I think perhaps, that, artists in general, if you can categorize people, artists I find are sometimes the most difficult people to work with? And the reason I say that is because a lot of times they're not that scheduled--in their thinking? And I think that to be successful in this [work] you have to have a scheduled mind? So I might think very scheduled. And somebody's thinking, okay, I'll see you Tuesday, at two, and so you're sort of waiting for them to show up for your appointment, and they maybe forget to call or, they come the next day, or...I don't know, I guess it's just temperament and difference in personality between a lot of artists and, you know, you can't generalize really, but, from my experience a lot of artists sort of are quite unstructured....So, you know, its a reliability thing, but sometimes their expectations are quite high? And, sometimes they, everything, oh, just some of the artists that I've dealt with, they expect everything to be set up for them? And they just want to arrive and teach the class? Where as, no, this is a community centre, this is where the supplies are kept, if you need, you know, paint brush and paper, this is where it is, but you might have to come before your class and get it all together, and you know, if the room, if the table was not set up in the room, I can certainly help you, but that's part of your job as well. Set up the tables and chairs.[Nancy]

And, again, in response to my question, "Is there anything in particular that artists need to know about a community centre in order to fit in?"

Well, its really interesting because in many ways they're diametrically opposed positions. I mean that sounds strange, but here at the community centre, we're schedulers, we're planners, we're organizers, we're time management. And this may just well be my perception of artists and the artists that I've dealt with, over the last three or four years, if the meeting's one o'clock, maybe they'll mosey in at two o'clock. [Tell's a story about an artist saying she wished she were more organized]. And I think sometimes that's the frustration? You know, is that art is spontaneous, artists are spontaneous, they're, they're shy and yet gregarious, and, they, when they come forward with their idea, it's now....okay? When we come forward with an idea, we develop it, and we come forward in September so that we can have it up and running for January. So there's that sort of organizational time lapse. So trying to combine those two, those two philosophies, is really difficult. But, part of it is, accepting, being tolerant of people's differences. But it's hard when you have, you know, when most of your community are people who are time oriented. But when you do that, as I say, you probably lose a lot of your

creativity. And your freedom, freedom of expression, so I think we have to reach a balance at where we're at with it. If you make, I always have a little saying that I use and try to follow. I only promise what I can give and give what I promise. And so and in the time you have! So doing that. I don't know. I'd like to involve them as much as I can because it creates a new excitement, a new energy...it's sort of like a revival. [Fran]

Well, unfortunately there's always this myth out there that all artists are flaky and all artists are, you know...(pauses)

Me: Artsy Fartsy?

Artsy Fartsies! They have nothing...they just [go] straight ahead. And...I think that you have to educate staff that, yeah, they do have a focus, they do have an understanding of their particular trade. And I think that we have to appreciate that and work along with that. And don't put it in the sense that they don't know what they're doing or they're flaky or whatever it might be. They just, maybe in a lot of cases are somewhat more focused on what they're doing, and the rest of the world doesn't really matter. Or they might be perceived that it doesn't matter. And they put their, whatever, art talent or abilities--and not to condemn and pigeon hole them into that--just make them aware of that. And sensitive to those...yeah. I don't really know what else you can do....but not all, you know, don't paint them all with the same brush. I think that's important. [Ed]

Fun, Pleasure, Relaxation, & Non-coercion.

A final category that reveals itself in staff talk is concerned with the related criteria that recreation programming should be enjoyable and non-coerced, or free from obligation. The following excerpts refer to this general recreational value as well as to how art programming may fit within it. The first quotation addresses the issue of free choice in terms of children and parents, and the point that parents sometimes place children in programs for reasons other than purely the child's interest, which can create problems.

Now whether it's the kid's choice--and hopefully it is the kid's choice as opposed to the parent's choice, because that's the true definition, it's by choice. And you're doing an activity.[Ed]

The next excerpts deal more with the concern that recreational art should be pleasurable and create positive feelings in participants:

Everybody does everything in their own unique way....I still come down to looking at, whether it's by paint brush or anything else, [leisure] is an opportunity for an individual to express themselves. So I guess when I look at our programs I hope that when somebody comes out they'll be happy and if they're happy I feel that means that they felt comfortable expressing themselves in the program. So for what ever barriers that have either been created by the centre or that they have [personally]. And I guess those are the sort of things that I think in all of our programs [should foster], that's why we have feed back forms.... [Allen]

Well, in a way, I think [art is] a key to unlocking the inner self. That sounds corny. But, you know, sometimes because of environmental circumstances and family circumstances, and what ever, you shut out much of the rest of the world so that you can deal with the problems that you're facing every day. And to me, art gives you that opportunity to explore. To...look at other things in life, and to be creative. To take chances. To provide yourself with a little freedom. A chance to step away from your everyday concerns, problems, and relax. [Fran]

As noted, documents found in the setting--in this case program descriptions--also reveal certain underlying criteria and purposes for recreational art. The following descriptions arguably exemplify much of what is perceived as appropriate recreational art programming. They also, however, indicate the programmer's task and dilemma, which is the need to attract customers by making the program sound simultaneously credible and fun. In addition they reflect the need to appeal to a broad category of people--people with a wide range of experience--in order to increase chances that a high number of people will register and the course will have enough paying participants to cover its costs. In particular there has been an effort to appeal to beginners or those who may lack confidence in their artistic abilities.

Drawing for Pleasure (Adults)

Learn basic drawing techniques and express yourself! All levels welcome, all mediums used. Please bring drawing paper and pencils. Come and join us!

Drawing in Pen and Ink (Adults)

Learn basic pen and ink drawing techniques combining ink with colour pencil, ink, and wash, and ink and brush, etc. A fun, creative class!

Drawing and Painting (7 -12 years)

This fun class explores many facets of art and media to encourage self-expression and creativity. Individuality and originality will be stressed through a variety of projects.

Oil Painting (Adults)

Learn basic oil painting techniques or further develop your own skills in this fun class. Learn basic colour theory and some drawing techniques. Demos and lots of personal attention. All painting levels welcome.

Summary and Analysis

Returning to the questions asked at the outset of this chapter, what can be said about how recreation centre administrators understand the ways that art programming fits within their work?

What can be said about the context into which art programming is positioned in these sites?

A first important issue is that community recreation centres are multi-faceted, hierarchical, social institutions which exist and function within a modern urban Western society and a market-based economy. Listening to recreation staff members describe their work, the complex organizational image that begins to emerge at the very least belies a rather common perception of these places as straight forward or even "leisurely" sites. Recreation practice here occurs somewhere between the idealism, good intentions and hard work of the staff, and the need to work within, accept, and negotiate around the contextual realities of these organizations and broader social influences. Like schools, however, these are fascinating contexts precisely because they are multi-layered, laced with overt and informal agendas, and rife with apparent inconsistencies. Although I have tried to provide evidence which broadly reveals the nature and context of recreation centre work, it has not been my intention to construct a full organizational ethnography; rather, I will focus here on certain of these contradictions as they seem relevant to understanding art programming in these settings.

One of these is the rather ironic contrast between the claims made for the purposes of leisure activity and the ways in which recreation administrative work is conducted and experienced. Although recreation is ostensibly directed at helping people find enjoyable, relaxing, loosely structured and healthy activities to fill their free time and enhance their lives, recreation administrators experience their work as highly structured and often hectic. Further, most activities that are sponsored by the centres are themselves rigidly framed in terms of time and space. By their own admission, recreation staff are planners, organizers, and schedulers, and the ability to work in this way is viewed as necessary to doing their work well. A perceived lack of understanding about the importance of this focus on rational planning and time management is viewed as a key problem in working with artists.

Listening to recreation staff talk about their work environments, one also gets a sense of constant change and perpetual motion. While as previously noted, the unpredictability and variety of recreation work can make work exciting and enjoyable, avert boredom, and even provide opportunities for learning and growth, there is also a suggestion that, particularly for programmers, coordinating a program of an unwieldy size and complexity can at times become a burden.

In addition, however, it seems that much of the program and the work itself is not varied or changing, but "the same" (as in the "ongoing program") simply repeating itself, "cycling, and cycling, and cycling" throughout the year. Mechanical metaphors pepper this talk, and an image emerges of the "ongoing program" as rather like a massive churning machine that requires constant maintenance, eventually begins to "run itself", but by the time it does, it is time to gather new parts to build the next machine. While the name "programmer" implies a technical worker

who creates a framework in which others will interact (and who therefore "controls" the interaction to an extent), talk about the ongoing program sometimes suggests that it has gotten away, drives itself, and has rather a life of its own that is outside the control of those who coordinate it. Under this weight, programmers may seek stimulation in work which falls outside the common frameworks of the ongoing program or relief at a centre that does not have such a high volume of programs and at which recreation staff refer to feeling like "machines" themselves, or the centre as a whole as a "program machine". This impression of continual movement is exacerbated by an overt management policy of moving staff from centre to centre every few years. Taken together, these practices are in keeping with Andrew (1981) who argues that in modern society we have experienced the imposition of Taylorism and scientific management on leisure as well as in the workplace.

The notion of "marketing" and advertising the program is also something that is cited as integral to recreation work: the extent to which people "purchase" a program determines whether or not it will continue to exist. In this sense, recreation programming is an act of the commodification of leisure (Rojek, 1995), or a development of leisure "packages" which are framed in ways that will entice people to buy them. A program is an experience to be purchased. Although as noted, many of these packages remain the same from season to season, new ideas for programs are continually sought and tried. Often because of the heavy volume of work, however, selections and decisions may be made relatively arbitrarily, according to proposals that are available at any given time. Alternatively, packages developed by other organizations may be borrowed. Comments about people "selling themselves" reminds that often a leisure "package" is tied to an instructor's hope for employment, and that employment also depends on the extent to

which members of the public are willing to purchase the experience offered and the "effectiveness" of the marketing.

Recreation staff note, however, that art programming is not often perceived as a valuable commodity, or is seen to be low on a list of other more essential needs. Further, staff members cite the problem that community recreation centres continue to be associated with sport and athletics--indeed perceives as "sports complexes" rather than places for art. In this sense, finding ways to market arts programming is viewed as particularly problematic.

In addition, while recreation programs continue to be marketed in terms of rather traditional conceptions of leisure--as pleasurable, non-taxing, rejuvenating activity--this programming competes with that of The Young People's Arts Institute, which arguably uses marketing strategies more closely associated with one of Welsch's (1996) notions of "aesthetization". (Although Welsch describes a number of levels through which he understands this term, the one I refer to here is the practice of increasingly applying a fleetingly fashionable type of design to products and advertising in order to sell objects, such that the "aesthetics" or style of the product effectively becomes more important to the consumer than the object itself. Indeed the "aesthetic" may become dated before the object actually wears out. When an "appropriate" style is attached to a product, what is "sold" is a lifestyle or an experience associated with the aesthetic.) In turn, one can suggest that the special lifestyle that The Young People's Arts Institute predicts for children who use its services is more geared to the expectations and life chances of the privileged, while the expectations of simple fun and relaxation that recreation "sells" suggest simply a break from work or school. These both point to issues of class that continue to attach themselves to the realms of recreation and fine art (Rojek,

1995; Bourdieu, 1984).

Philosophically, recreation is sometimes defined as distinct from or even in opposition to notions of education, in spite of a recognition that education also permeates recreational activity. For many staff members, opting for work in recreation rather than education is viewed rather hopefully or idealistically as a choice for maintaining enthusiasm for a personal passion or to ensure having the stamina to do his or her work well. Schools may be viewed as places which are potentially coercive to students and restrictive for teachers. The promise of freedom and flexibility that recreation seems to hold as a career, however, may be tempered in these settings by mechanistic structures or overwhelming variety and compartmentalization which bind the work in their own ways.

Educationally speaking, instructors are asked to walk a fine and rather vague line between being too structured and too flexible, and some art instructors are criticized for being both too laid back and having expectations that are too high. Being unstructured may sometimes be viewed as a characteristic of the artistic personality, and something that, therefore, must be tolerated if one is to incorporate the arts. On the other hand the taboo on advanced level classes, specialization, and overtly educational agendas combined with the often rigid scheduling of activities and the expectations of participants and parents for a sense of structure may catch instructors in the middle, trying to give the appearance of flexibility within what is actually a rather taut frame.

Finally, as noted, while staff members are often open to and interested in learning more about the arts, their own backgrounds are overwhelmingly within physical education realms, a fact which they acknowledge has affected the kinds of programming selected in the past. (This

type of background may also be construed as helpful to doing general recreation work and contribute to a resistance to promoting staff with other specialties to administrative positions, a problem which has been indicated to me, and which is raised in the next chapter. (I admit to being surprised when some staff referred to themselves as "generalists" rather than physical education specialists.)

Lacking personal experience in art, recreation practitioners may make sense of art in physical terms, referring to art as, for example, a vehicle for reaching a uniquely balanced physical state, as an act which releases a kind of physical tension, or as a very relaxed form of play. The difficulty here is that art making is just as often anxiety-ridden, frustrating, and filled with purpose. In addition, while their own insecurities about art may heighten sensitivity to others who feel the same way, fears or misconceptions may also lead recreation practitioners to misconstrue or narrow the purposes of art experiences in recreation contexts. Having a limited art background also means that staff may rely on dominant or common sense descriptions of artistic processes (such as that they deal with "creativity" or "expression") which are in fact ambiguous. Finally, the sheer volume of work that most recreation staff members experience make engaging in a new program arena, particularly one so vast, difficult. While practitioners may wish for more time in order to learn about and experience art processes, they may cope by learning as they go and by depending on--and even expecting--instructors to "teach" them.

This chapter has detailed recreation staff members' perceptions of their work and how art programming is understood to be positioned within it. In doing so, it partially describes the ideological and structural frameworks into which art programming is expected fit in recreation community centre contexts.

Unlike perceptions that may exist about recreation centres as places of playfulness, freedom, and relaxation, recreation administrators reveal their practice as tightly planned and rationally organized, and as existing within a diverse (and often rigid) grid of compartmentalized activities which are intimately tied to a market economy. First and foremost, this is the environment that exists in recreation centre "complexes", and with which any program, including visual art ones, must cope. Certainly, I do not wish to suggest that this structure prevents participants from benefitting in a number of ways from this programming. Further, there are a number of examples of special projects that are working to alter standard program formats and to bypass the necessity for participants to pay directly for recreational experiences--some of these will be addressed in chapter six. Nevertheless, I suggest that the previously noted organizational and social structures have a profound influence on interactions that occur in these recreation centre sites.

Second, these are contexts which, perhaps predictably, continue to be dominated by the realms of physical education and athletics. While practitioners may loosely define leisure as "anything people do in their free time", their own backgrounds are consistently influenced by physical education, and the success of introducing the arts in these settings is viewed as requiring that the physical realm be less emphasized. An orientation to physical activity may affect how practitioners understand visual art experience and--in terms of board members interests and perceptions of the centres by members of the general public--may act to subvert attempts to increase visual art programming.

Finally, staff talk suggests a scenario in which the parameters of art programming in recreation are rarely explicit. Rather, frameworks are explained in relation or opposition to the

practices of other social institutions which offer similar experiences. Expectations are further described as existing within a balance between notions such as structure and unstructure; specialization and diversity; freedom and coercion; education and fun. Finding this balance and working in the community centre requires an instructor to "be flexible", suggesting that it is the instructor rather than the structure that needs to bend. In particular the persistent tensions surrounding issues of whether recreation should involve overt educational goals and mastery versus dominant views that recreation programs be enjoyable, relaxing, and introductory seem to create a dilemma for art instructors who wish to work in these sites. In the next chapter I will focus on how community centre instructors describe, experience, and navigate their work in these recreational contexts.

Chapter Five

Wrapped/Trapped/Negotiated in Fun:

The Hope and Plight of Community Centre Art Instructors

Introduction

Definitely I think that people who are making the decisions about how programs are run and money is allocated should be taking a program. Should be going through it from start to finish. To experience. That's the only way they're going to understand. I've had, you know, one person from the office...stop in periodically for maybe half an hour to sit in and watch what I do, but it's not enough. To understand why I'm doing what I'm doing, why I need the things that I need. There's not a lot of communication going on and not a lot of effort to bridge that gap. [Carol, visual arts instructor]

In this chapter I shift my attention primarily to the talk and perceptions of nine women who teach visual art programs in community centre settings. I continue to explore the recreation centre context for art, this time through the ways in which these individuals describe, interpret, and manoeuvre their work in these sites. In doing so I work toward understandings which expand on, embellish, and sometimes contradict explanations as they are presented by staff members in the previous chapter. Implied in the statement above, for example, is the suggestion that instructors--like the staff person quoted at the start of the previous chapter--also "wish" that they might work in contexts in which administrators had better understandings of the visual arts. While the administrators present the problem as a lack of time, however, instructors may construe the situation as a lack of priority or determination to learn, and experience it in frustration.

In part, I ask what it means to try to be a "flexible" instructor within this context. I consider, for example, the impact of staff calls for art teachers to create a balance between--yet

tip the scale slightly in favour of--providing loosely rather than overly structured programming; offering variety and introductory experiences rather than specialization; responding to the preferences of participants rather than being too directive; and providing opportunities to have fun rather than to be "educated". I also try to draw out how instructors may nevertheless try to insert and maintain their own, sometimes different agendas.

As in the previous chapter, I reiterate my stance of empathy toward this group of research participants as individuals. In this case, I also acknowledge that I may at times appear to be speaking out on their behalf. In part, I wish to honour what these women do, and I hope to show that their work is in many ways more complex, laborious, and demanding of expertise than it is ordinarily given credit. Recognizing the hierarchical and contract-based working relationships between this group and the centre staff members who supervise them, instructors are arguably more economically vulnerable and hold less power in the community centre context than the administrators quoted and described in the first analysis chapter. It is also my perception that instructors like these have limited opportunities to make their perspectives known in these sites, and so I hope that this chapter will provide one avenue for sharing their views and experiences. In addition, it is my intention to compare the perspectives and experiences of staff members and instructors around the realm of art programming, purposefully seeking ways in which instructors may provide alternative versions to the perceptions of staff members.

At the same time I do not wish to suggest that the perspectives of instructors in some way reflect a "correct" or "true" interpretation of circumstances and events while staff members have simply misconstrued them. Rather, like administrators, instructors are limited by and must manoeuvre within the circumstances of their working environments and the social and structural

relations of the society in which they practice. Influenced in their interpretations by personal and social histories--including for most the ideologies of art college, art education, and the art world--these speakers are as likely to reveal contradictory ideas as any other groups or individuals in the centres, or any other educational practitioners. My point is that their views, however, are less heard and arguably less dominant in these settings than those of recreation staff members. In addition, it is in large part the actions of this group that program participants experience as everyday realities of community centre art activities. As such, individuals in this group provide important perspectives which can complicate and elaborate dominant assumptions about art programming in leisure sites.

In this chapter I rely primarily on excerpts from open-ended interviews with women who teach programs which are solely concerned with visual art content, in this case drawing, painting, clay work, printmaking, found object sculpture, textile painting, and courses which are described as a blend of these activities with what are described as "craft" work, involving the making of things to play with, to celebrate a season, or to give as gifts (See Appendix 2). A few of these individuals teach, in addition, programs which include but are not entirely devoted to visual art, such as general preschool programs. It should be noted that these instructors may teach adults, children or both--sometimes simultaneously--a fact which tends to distinguish their work from school contexts.

At the time of the interviews, these women ranged in age from their mid-twenties to late middle age. Of the nine, five had children and at least two were single mothers. At least seven of the nine were also practicing artists. I note that in most cases I have chosen not to identify speakers by specific course content because such labelling could--due to the small numbers of

people and courses involved--interfere with maintaining anonymity. The fact that this material may be read by these women's supervisors and is sometimes critical of their actions makes this a particularly sensitive topic. I supplement and corroborate the discussion with data from interviews with parents, participants, and staff members.

Finally I would like to make a point about my use of the word "instructor", a term which one speaker told me that she found demeaning. I have chosen to use it nevertheless because it is the term overwhelmingly used in these sites to refer to these women's positions. ("Teacher" is avoided by staff members because it is suggestive of schooling.) I personally also find terms such as "facilitator", often used in adult education, or "leader", which is common in recreation, to be inadequate as well. In part, however, my goal is to expand common understandings of what these "instructors" do, and to argue the need for a reconceptualization of the role. Ultimately this may imply the need to rename the position.

I proceed by first describing how community centre art instructors perceive their work in general, and how it was that they came to this kind of employment. I then describe something of the physical and social contexts in which instructors conduct their work, and finally, relay ways that instructors believe their work is understood by staff members and perceived by the Parks and Recreation Department as a whole. As in the previous chapter, people's talk often flows in and out of the categories that I have imposed; as a result I use a summary and analysis section at the end of the chapter to retrace key themes and to draw some preliminary conclusions.

Art and Recreation

It is worth stating first of all that, in many ways, community centre art instructors love their work. Many of these women experience their practice as joyful, and the recreation centres

as friendly environments which offer unique and rewarding teaching opportunities that are not available elsewhere.

Delightful! is the first word that pops into my head. I really, really enjoy it. I'm constantly blown away by the feedback I get from the kids. Their contributions...treasures all around me all the time, and the comments.... I really get a lot of joy out of just being around children anyway.... It was just like these bright little stars shining (chuckles) all over the place and I was just looking from one to the other. It was a really lovely experience. [Gwen]

Maybe I'm used to teaching here, so I like to come here more [than other centres]. Sometimes it's just that the people [here] give you the feeling that you're [welcome].... Every time I come in, they say, "Hi", and you feel the warmth and the welcome. [Ellen]

The community centre is a very welcoming place [a place for everybody]. It's also a place where I can be myself.... I teach a whole range of classes and I love it...I really do enjoy working with whole families. So siblings, and working with children [in a range of activities and different program formats]. So that [I have an] opportunity to get to know the different facets of a child and also families. [Ann]

...I love it when I'm there because I love to teach art.... And I've had some experiences there that I would never have had if it hadn't been for the community centre. For example, [a Chinese family who spoke no English attended a class together], and I found that...was definitely a big challenge.... You had one person designing, the mother drawing it out, the father painting it...and it was a group sort of thing that they'd figured out not telling me that this was going to happen [when the instructor expected each person to do individual work]. It was wonderful. It was absolutely fabulous...You know...that was just a wonderful experience.... So I've had really good [times]. When I deal with the [participants] I've had wonderful times. [Marcia]

In spite of these positive orientations, however, the explanations that art instructors provide for how they arrived at recreation work are somewhat more diverse than those offered by centre staff, and often seem to reflect happenstance rather than deliberation. For many recreation staff members, readers will recall, finding employment in community centres frequently involved making a choice between working in recreation or working in the formal school system. This

decision was often presented as a relatively intentional selection, with work in recreation being chosen for its perceived advantages and work in schools being rejected for its assumed disadvantages. Clearly, of course, art instructor's part-time contract work does not hold the same opportunities for security, income, or benefits that can be obtained by full time work in either the school system or recreation. This being the case, instructors' talk about how and why they find themselves working in recreation centres reflects a greater ambivalence about the decision, and the need to consider the advantages such work may offer against other life circumstances, values, and goals. In part, explanations seem influenced by whether individuals define themselves as artists or as educators, although the line between the two roles is often blurred.

Among those who seem to view themselves primarily as artists, for example, reasons for choosing recreation centre work are most often practical ones. One pottery instructor, for example, had other employment but was attracted to teaching in community centres because it would give her access to a pottery studio--the wheels, kiln, and work space which she could not have in her home. A second woman, unable to afford to return to school to get early childhood certification, was instead attempting to make the transition from her previous work as a nanny to a place where she might support herself through making and teaching art. A third, a recent art school graduate, applied for work in community centres because her friend had vacated a teaching job there and the work seemed like something she might like to "try". A fourth woman, a recent immigrant to Canada, sought community art teaching as one of the few avenues of employment in her field that seemed available at the time. A fifth instructor teaches in community centres mainly to supplement her income and support her family, and identifies herself, first and foremost, as a practicing artist:

I'm primarily [an artist], that's how I would define myself. I'm not a teacher. And about 12 years ago I became a single mother and became desperate for money. And I just did any old job that I could find for a long time. And, as you know, [artists] don't make lots of money, and I picked up all sorts of jobs and one of them was [teaching at a community centre].... My career is far more developed [now] and I've given up a lot of the other jobs.¹

Those women who tended to be oriented more toward education or who seemed to embrace both "artist" and "educator" in describing themselves, also work in community centres for practical reasons. For this group, however, full time employment in the school system was at least a consideration. (All had or would soon complete some form of public school teacher credentialing program, though two did not have credentials for this province.) Their talk, therefore, often reflects a more intentional weighing of work in the schools versus recreation work, and contains as well what might be termed a sense of educational mission. These instructors indicated that they might have preferred the employment security offered by the school system--and that was usually the reason given for taking the teacher education program--but also described circumstances in which they were either prevented from teaching in schools or chose to step away from the school system for other reasons.

One woman, for example, a recent graduate of art college, was about to enter a professional teacher training program at the time of the interview. She reflected on how some personal transitions and experiences at art school influenced her choice to teach in community centres:

I became more political, I became more conscious of what I was actually doing, teaching the things I was teaching...I guess because, I was simply spitting out what I had [learned from one teacher]...regurgitating what I had consumed all of the

¹ Because this first section contains biographical information which might potentially identify speakers, I have opted to omit even pseudonyms in this section.

years [before].... I felt that all those years I did little to open boundaries and horizons for kids...So I guess what I'm trying to say is that I decided to teach at community centres because...I suddenly felt like I had a lot more to offer, [and] I really felt that [the community centre] was a good venue to do that....

In spite of intentions to get teaching certification, however, this same speaker remained sceptical about schools as sites for art education:

...before I actually taught in community centres,...I called a few people in the board of education with proposals. And their feedback was, it needs to be structured, it needs to be more history and/or techniques oriented, it needs to be all of these things. And I didn't feel that's what I wanted to do. It's funny, ironic, since I'm about to do the [teacher education program], so I may end up not teaching in schools. I'm hoping to bring some of what I feel they need [she laughs], which is [some of the things] that I've been able to do in the community centre.

Over the course of my data gathering, several artists reiterated this position of distrust or even disdain for the school system as a context for art learning, and implied that community centres offered a hopeful and suitable alternative, which was why they chose to work there:

[Teaching in schools and in community centres is like] night and day. First of all, kids are at school because they have to be at school, no ifs ands or buts. I don't like the way I was taught--it was boring, it just wasn't a good centre for teaching. What the community centres have to offer, and why I like teaching [there] is, Number one, I have a very specialized teaching skill, and [Number two], people are here because they want to learn, 100%. When I was teaching art at school, I would have 25, 35 kids in my class, which is nuts!...And half of them didn't want to be there. They were bored. They were frustrated. It was just a sluff-off class. And my response to that was, if you don't want to be here, go outside. Do what you want. I don't want you in here because you're wasting my time, you're wasting your time, and I'm not here to waste your time. If you want to be here, hang around, see what I have to offer. And at first they didn't know what to make of me. I treated every child with respect, and also like an adult. I have ground rules. You always say please and thank you; you share; no fighting--all the stuff you're supposed to learn in Kindergarten. And I tried to make everything exciting, fresh, and new.... Not, "Jamie, colour in the lines". Life should never be boring.... Yet when you go for your Education degree, you've got formulas of little books in art that you have to follow.... And it's like, it is so dead. A good teacher will take that boring formula and turn it into something creative. But still, you're held back.... Mathematics are different. You have to know how to add and

multiply...But when you're taking about a subject like art, how dare you say you have to colour in the lines! Try and tell that to a Pollock or a Rauschenberg, or a Picasso. I mean, what happens if I had Picasso in my class and I said, "You cannot colour outside the lines." How damaging. Who am I to say I am God? My response is, here is an option. If you choose to colour in the lines, if that's what you want to do, go for it. If you want to go nuts and do Picasso, I am all behind you, so long as you're excited about it. And let me tell you, teachers did not like that. [male professional artist and community centre art project coordinator]

Those instructors who had obtained a professional teacher's certification--either in this province or elsewhere--settled or opted for recreational art teaching when employment in the BC school system did not work out.

I had my teaching certificate [from out of province and a bachelor's degree], and we moved to [a small BC town]. And at that point I was offered a job teaching junior high school art, which is what I was trained to do. And I could teach art and at the same time get certified in British Columbia. And I was really excited about the prospect of doing that, but I quickly realized that I was a city girl? and I couldn't live in [that place]! So we moved back to the lower mainland, and there were no jobs in the public schools available. And initially, I was at...a half a dozen community centres...all the time thinking, well, if I won the lottery I could go back and do that last year and get certified, and then, weighing that with that part of me that still didn't want to be part of the system. That part of me that didn't want to compromise anything. And also, 15 years ago, still feeling like, well, what ever money you make is very nice, but you're still young and you don't have family, and don't need to worry about the future. So that was really how it all got started.

...Anyway, so I graduated from high school and I went to [two universities, obtaining a degree and a teaching certificate in art education]. And then...at first I couldn't get a teaching job in the elementary situation, and, I went up north. And there...it was really just developing.... So I had the opportunity of being at the forefront of developing programming up there.... [Then, after a time obtaining grants and building a program] for me, everything came to a halt because I started having children, and, I was torn, and also, living in the north, it's a very hard life, just keeping your car running, let alone trying to keep your supplies from freezing while you're taking them from the school, to your house, to the car.... So I found everything just extremely difficult, and so I had to withdraw, for a number of years. And I'm just starting to get back into it now. I've started at the community centres again and applied at the department of education.... I have applied, but the jobs are there are for other specialities, not for art education.

...In college I applied to go to art school--I wanted to make a portfolio and do a BFA, but my father thought that was impractical, so I ended up going to a BA and studio art, where I had an education background too, which in some ways is probably good...I got married and pregnant half-way through my under-graduate [degree], so the teaching became a lot more important to me because I became a mother.... then I got out of school and did a variety of things sort of to survive.... and I taught here and there...we moved quite a bit so my credential was not always current for the [location], and by the time I'd get it changed, [my husband] would be on to some other level of education or something, we'd move to a new [location]. So, I only taught in the public schools once, for one year, and other than that I ran my own day care, taught after school, taught private lessons, and a variety of things like that....

In addition, instructors struggled with whether they would call what they do "education" or "recreation" and what the distinctions between those two terms may be. A music instructor, for example, told me adamantly that what she did was not recreation, but "education wrapped in fun" [field note] a phrase which took on increasing meaning for me as I worked through my research. Visual art instructors talked about recreation and education in the following ways:

I'd have to first of all define those terms for myself, but, education has all sorts of connotations for me that I would not apply to what I'm doing, which is ironic, so I guess recreation, yeah. [But at the same time], I would think its too important to sort of want to choose recreation...it's too important to me, the idea that when a person pursues the making of art. I think it's a very important thing to do, and I think at a spiritual level or what ever you want to call it, at some deep level, people need to do that.... So I hate to call it recreation either. But I certainly don't feel that you go some place and you learn how to do that [make art]. So I guess neither of those terms really would [fit what she understands that she is doing]....
[Gwen]

Well, I'm not sure that I can separate the two. And I'm not sure that one should, separate the two. Certainly, recreation in terms of what the Parks Board considers to be recreation, [my own program has] much more of an educational component; But for the student, it has to be a combination.

Lara: What do you think that is, the Parks Board's conception of recreation?
It's much more physically oriented, that appears to be what the stress has been. So the arts are really, not even on the list.... I also think that, when I think about recreation, I think about play, because I think about children and so then it's the value of play, and children learning through play, and then art..is..a way of

playing. And that's how I could fit it in to my construct. [Ann]

I think it's both. Because there's a lot of information that needs to be conveyed for anybody that's just starting to use the medium. It's not a straightforward thing to use. It involves a lot of levels...to get it to completion, it involves a lot of stages of involvement, you know, and that's something that people need to realize, so that's certainly an education. [Carol]

I've been toying with that one too. It's been pulling me, because the work [courses] I've just submitted for the summer, the class is for older kids, [and] I thought well, you could really pick a child's mind in what they've created and have them write it out.... That's just like art school stuff, that you learn in university. Having to depict why you chose this colour, why you did this design and what is it saying to you. And I found that hard to accomplish in school as well. And I feel kids have taken this course to get away from the structure of school and home. They get a lot of that at school, and they're ordered around a lot at home. And if they've done something wrong, they [parents] want to know why. Why have you done this? why why why? And I don't want them to feel that they have to say why they've done something...in the class, even though it's in an art form. If they would like to volunteer that, it's no do's and don'ts. So I want it to be more recreation, but the kids are taking this, [program dealing with a specific technique].... If they don't know how to do this, or they've maybe seen it, had a taste, but really don't know how to do it. So I'm showing them how you go about making this, to apply the marbling, what you need to make that paint to sit on the top, what does this, so in a sense it's like a science, it's [a] lab cause you're adding some chemicals to the water to make it thick, and so that it's--the paint's--buoyant. So it's sort of an experimental thing for me, so I guess maybe that's more educational...but they're doing it, I want them to have fun. You doing art because you enjoy it. It's fun. So is that recreational?...Because they have to learn, but you're not gonna learn if you're not having fun. And if you start doing it outside of your class, that's recreation, isn't it? [Jenny]

Instructors, like staff members, however, also tended to understand their practice as being positioned between schools and the non-profit organization noted in the previous chapter, The Young People's Art Institute. Several instructors with whom I spoke were familiar with the YPAI through having taught there, having enrolled their own children there, or simply by reputation. As a result, it often came up in conversation. Instructors' opinions varied, however, on whether the YPAI should be construed as a model for the recreation program. For some, the

YPAI offered a kind of credibility and appreciation for the arts which they longed for or valued.

For others, the YPAI was as equally suspect an environment for art education as schools, though for different reasons.

The contrast [between recreation centres and the YPAI] is amazing. Everything there is for art. It's so important, and it's just a whole different ball game.... And there's respect. Respect for what you do. Which is sorely lacking in the community centre [Margaret]

I would love to have been able to work with [the parks and recreation system] so that there would have been a place for me and other people who want to teach in community centres. Because the whole idea of neighbour hood, of accessibility, of welcome...I mean, it ain't happening at [the YPAI]!.... As soon as you move from the community centre, you move into the elite.

Lara: There's no mid-point, is there?....

No, because in school they're so obsessed with evaluation! [Ann]

Regardless of whether they framed themselves more as artists, recreation instructors, or as educators, however, these women believed that their work was important. They viewed it as making a worthwhile contribution to the lives of individuals taking part in their programs, but often also understood its value as extending to the community centre context as a whole, and to society in general. Individually, instructors nevertheless explained the purposes of their work in diverse ways: art activity encourages quiet, inner reflection which is in contrast to other recreational experiences; empowers people through "knowing how"; provides opportunities to represent and express personal meanings; teaches a visual language through which we may connect with beauty and the spiritual; fosters a process of personal creation which may be distinct from that which can be experienced in other contexts; and offers a step toward independence. Another art instructor (not quoted below) told me that what she was trying to do was to let people in on the "secrets" of making art, in essence to make art knowledge more

accessible. Art instructors' descriptions of what art programming is for in community recreation, therefore, overlap with but also embellish, extend, and even contradict some of the comments made by staff members on the same topic:

The [art activity she provides] seems to bring a different...it's very different [from the sport/game-type activities that usually go on in the space where it is offered. That other activity is] not very creative, and I think it's really important to have something that's more creative, or actually just peaceful in terms of doing it, like, meditative or what ever...so I would say that would be the function of it, and I think enjoyment--sort of meditation and creativity in a way.

You know, that challenge [that's given them] to be able to do it on their own. To know how to use a roller, or how to...apply the paint, and how to rub it to get your print. [Helen]

What I'm trying to achieve with my art teaching is...for them to have a clear understanding and ability to reflect upon their own perception of the world. So I usually try to teach them a variety of techniques so that they can use them to express themselves.... But my main reason for being there is, for me, self expression. For them to be able to create something, realize it's theirs, realize it's different from other people's expressions, and reflect on what it means to them. [Catherine]

Well, I guess I'm there to expose them to art. And to try and nurture their own individual forms of expression.... I know [that my students are not going to be] artists, but, it enriches their lives. And, you could say in a way that it raises the general consciousness of the entire population just to have people exposed to a visual language because it's sadly lacking in our society.... Our society lacks a consciousness of things that are beautiful or spiritual, and it's really sad. We need it. We need it as human beings. And so I'm just like a little foot person at the bottom of the rung, trying to expose a few people to some new things.... [Margaret]

I want to offer families, not just the children, but their parents too, an opportunity to get involved with art. And to experience the many different varieties, the many different roles it could play. I want to give children an opportunity to be creative on their own. I want to really be that other alternative, to the teacher directed, colouring book, craft, and that's probably one of the reasons I've stayed, because I have always been that alternative, the process-oriented rather than the product oriented. [Ann]

Working Structures

Designing Programs and Getting work.

Teaching art in community recreation centres--and trying to implement some of these goals--however, could at times be difficult, complicated, and frustrating work--a reality which tended to be obscured by staff claims and publicity that framed art activity as fun, relaxing, and pleasurable experiences for participants. Certainly, the ways in which this part-time work was organized and structured could create surprisingly stressful conditions for instructors. In most cases, for example, the instructor was responsible for more than simply "teaching" the class.

Rather, programs must first be devised and "sold" to the programmer:

The first thing I'd like to say is that I created these courses. So I made up a name for them and I created the goals and objectives, scope and sequence, and that they've all developed and evolved over time.... I had free reign. [Imitating staff person] "What would you like to do here?" [Ann]

Well, I just went around proposing [various programs].... I have about ten courses that I work with, basically covering everything, because I've had experience with everything, so depending on what [the situation was].... I basically interview the programmer, and ask them what their community, what their feeling about the community was in terms of what their needs were, and then we sort of designed a little program that was related to what their needs were, including age groups and those kinds of things, to budgets, [which] were very different in different community centres. [Gwen]

Having the "freedom" to design and develop their own courses is something that many instructors valued, even though it potentially meant more work and was granted in terms of some other costs which will be addressed later. In part, this freedom was deemed desirable because it allowed instructors to pursue their own interests and to experience the satisfaction of program design.

I guess, also, I think that, I've enjoyed the community centres more than I can

imagine, having worked through the school system, just because I've been given so much freedom. Basically entirely designed my own programs, and everything, and use my own supplies even.... [Gwen]

One instructor also described potential tensions that could develop when one was asked to design activities to fit within a pre-established theme. In that case, the instructor felt that the theme--selected by the programmer--did not lend itself easily to a meaningful art activity. She said simply that, "It was not a theme that I would have chosen." In this sense, she also preferred to design her own programs.

In many cases, instructors also wrote their own brochure copy. Again, writing one's own course descriptions was viewed by instructors as a way to gain greater control over the course content and who would be attracted to their programs. The programmers, however, were formally responsible for the final brochure submissions, and sometimes needed to edit instructor writing due to limited space. One instructor described problems that arose at this point, when a programmer, without consulting the instructor, deleted and changed wording that the instructor felt was essential information about the program. Another's program description was entirely deleted from a brochure after a miss-communication. In both cases, the programmer's errors were perceived as significant because the courses were cancelled, and instructors lost work. Arguably, the actual cause of the cancellation in the first case could not be linked absolutely to the deletions in the course description. The instructor, nevertheless, interpreted the deletions as contributing to the lack of enrollment in the course, and the programmer's mistake as reflecting a lack of understanding about the program content. In the latter case, the mistake clearly affected the instructor's employment--because the program was never advertised at all--and was the only one of her classes, arranged at several community centres, to cancel that session.

Although the potential for cancelled classes was always present, instructors teaching long established programs did not tend to raise this issue as a particular concern. Those who were teaching new courses, however, experienced cancelled classes frequently, and among this group there was sometimes a perception that more interest might have been generated in the course if more time or effort had been put into overall program promotion by staff members. The frustrations around this sometimes caused instructors to resent and blame programmers, who were occasionally perceived as having secure, relatively easy, well-paying, full time positions with little or no incentive to take the reality of cancelled classes seriously in terms of instructor's livelihoods.

I thought about it afterwards, and if the person who is the programmer, if their living depended on what went, too, then perhaps there would be a much [greater] interest in making sure [that promotion was done] properly.... My true feelings were that there was a non-caring; there was just a [couldn't] care less sort of attitude.... You see, I don't have the whole picture. I only know how I feel, and about my little things that I've tried to do. I don't know about the other instructors. I don't know what has gone or not gone. You know, like people say to me, "Oh, you must be...really busy because I saw your name at this and that and this and that and the other thing. I say, well, none of them went. So. People get the impression that there are all these things happening. But in fact they're not.
[Marcia]

To be fair, some other instructors construed programmers as over-worked rather than uncaring; either way, however, instructors perceived programmers to have an influence over the success of their programs through marketing.

This threat of cancelled classes and the resulting need to attract enough registrants for programs, therefore, became an ongoing consideration for instructors. Whether or not a course would actually take place (and the instructor would therefore be employed), depended on whether a pre-established minimum number of people enrolled. The number selected for the

minimum was based on the smallest number of registrants required in order to recover the instructor's fees, the supply costs, and sometimes a minimal profit for the centre. (Any additional revenue was kept by the centre, although in cases where programs were in "high demand", instructors were in better positions to negotiate higher pay rates). If the minimum number of participants did not register, instructors were sometimes given the option of teaching the program for less pay than originally agreed upon. Instructor's fees were individually negotiated at each centre, with centres in lower income areas generally paying lower instructor rates in order to keep the registration costs low.² This structure meant that individuals might be paid at different rates for teaching the same course at different locations throughout the city. It also meant that instructors may not know until the last minute whether or not they would be employed, even though they had to make a commitment to be available for a particular day and time. As a result, instructors often had to arrange classes at many locations in order to increase the odds that at least some courses would "go". From instructors' perspectives, this employment uncertainty was

² Remuneration for instructing visual art courses in community centres varies according to the location of the centre, the experience of the instructor, and most importantly the amount the neighbouring community is perceived to be willing to pay. At the West Side Centre, instructors of visual art courses may be paid in the range of \$20.00- \$27.00 per hour. Payment is a flat rate per class per hour. No remuneration is given for preparation time. Visual art instructor pay compares with fitness instructors who are paid \$20.00- \$25.00 per hour; music instructors (perceived to have specialized training) who are paid \$35.00-\$40.00 per hour; instructors of social programs, who are paid \$15.00-\$25.00 per hour; and sports drop-in instructors who are paid about \$10.00 per hour. Instructors who teach preschool programs are paid \$15.00- \$25.00 per 45 minute session, depending on whether the program is open play or more structured.

At the East Side Centre, visual art instructors are paid in the range of \$15.00-\$20.00 per hour. Staff members estimate that this relationship--about 25% less per hour than at the West Side Centre--is fairly consistent across the board for all courses offered on the East Side.

Staff members stress that no payment is fixed. Remuneration could be higher or lower at any location, depending on what the "market" will bear.

one of the most difficult aspects of teaching in community centres.

I'll tell you one thing...that its very difficult in terms of employment, my stability, because I have to...there're only so many days in the week and the time slots [for teaching children] are pretty much...from when kids come out from school 'til 7, and you can only book in so many per week. And then you don't know till like a week before whether people are going to sign up, so there's no guarantee. It's like your income basically, and...you sort of think, "Well,...I could have signed up at the other place [community centre] and that might have happened" [the course might have gone ahead there]. So you have to juggle a lot and also I think it's quite difficult to earn a good living in a way. [Helen]

Given that each centre could sustain a limited number of art programs and had limited space, instructors also at times felt competitive with other instructors for the "good" days and times or for the most popular programs. This instructor, for example, explained that another program, which was popular and which she was experienced in teaching, was already being taught by another instructor. This meant that she had to try to devise new programs, and to work her schedule around those that were already established:

[It's] just that the scheduling is sometimes...like I get the day that nobody else is using. So it's often, as a new instructor especially, you get the worst pick of the days of the week. [Catherine]

The lack of assurance that a program would actually take place also created a conundrum around the time and energy spent planning and preparing for it prior to its start. One instructor, for example, was very frustrated by the fact that she repeatedly spent time and money on supplies and in preparation for classes which were then cancelled at the last minute, and for which she was not reimbursed.

In any case, there was an ongoing tension between the administrators' views that cancelled classes reflected a lack of community "demand" or interest and the difficulty of getting art programs to "go", and the reality that instructors needed work. Instructors had to become

actively involved in creating more financial security for themselves, and inevitably incorporated this concern as part of their work overall.

Well, it was a job. I kept expanding it as it became more and more expensive to live in town. [Ann]

In part, the uncertainty and the impermanence of this work-- the fact, for example, that contracts had to be re-negotiated every session--was interpreted by instructors to mean that this programming was not particularly valued by centre administrators. These perceptions, coupled with the sheer volume of work involved in teaching the courses and the relatively low remuneration, meant that many instructors eventually found other employment or at least found strategies through which they could cope. All of these themes--impermanence, the low valuing of the work, instructor coping strategies, and the impact they had in total on how people grew to think about their work, will be further addressed later. In the next section, however, I want to discuss the nature of the work in more detail.

Supplies.

Many visual arts instructors with whom I spoke identified the issues of less than adequate supplies, facilities, or equipment as affecting how they did their work. Staff members, readers may recall, acknowledged that they often were not familiar with art supplies, sometimes purchased the wrong materials, and relied on art instructors to teach them about these things. Instructors explained that some supplies were kept at the centre, but others needed to be purchased by individual instructors.

[There are some supplies that are available but] other things I pick up. I'm given a budget. I don't always remember what my budget is, so I just kind of go and buy, but I try to keep it as low as I can.... I submit my receipts to [the programmer] or I write them out and staple them on...and I'm reimbursed. I get a cheque later. But

the budget's 30 dollars for 8 weeks for 5 kids. It doesn't really go very far.
[Jenny]

Well, it has varied down the years. Right now mostly I'm given an amount of money and I buy my own supplies.... I get them delivered--a courier. The community centre pays for it. I just go down to my own art supply store, which has a children's section, buy what I need, and have it couriered to the centre. They give me a cheque in advance, and I take the cheques and go and spend the money. And then give them the receipt. They give me five dollars a child. [Margaret]

Although "basic" supplies--such as paper, paint, brushes, and scissors--were supposed to be kept at each centre, very often they were not actually available. As a result, instructors sometimes found it necessary to sneak or borrow supplies that belonged to other programs or instructors. One instructor described having to borrow a pair of scissors, with the help of the office staff, from a programmer's desk because there were none in the supply cupboard. Several instructors characterized gathering supplies together as going on a search or a treasure hunt in the centre. Several spoke of resorting to bringing supplies from home because it was ultimately easier than trying to get them through the centre.

Let's see. They have glue, paint. Sometimes in multi-colours, sometimes you're only left with blue and green. There's paper--I found some crepe paper. There's some wire, I found a box of wire, which was great. Construction paper is there, scissors, glue, and that's basically it--sparkles.Around Christmas time I found some sparkles stashed somewhere, I'll take it and hide it. I get that out of the preschool room, out of their cupboard. I kind of scrounge through their cupboard. And they also have a big cupboard full of toilet paper rolls, you know, the empty ones.... So I run in there and raid their cupboards.... I had a hard time getting paint brushes, so I got some of the preschool paint brushes again, I took out five that I liked, for the kids to use, and I keep them in the cupboard, because if you don't, if you keep them in the other cupboards, you go to get them [and] they're gone. So I'm scrambling looking for these things.... And then I actually found a cupboard full of, that was another instructor's cupboard, so I now have access to the other stuff. But before I couldn't go in it because it was her cupboard. So I just found it. It was a great find. [Jenny]

Well, I think the material thing is...there are some difficult things, really petty

things in a way, but to do with materials. Like there was supposed to be paper, just plain white paper, and then [she was told] it was in certain cupboards, and I can never--you know, every cupboard's got a different padlock on and no one knows where the keys are (laughs) and then, basically I've ended up bringing in my own paper. Which I could probably take out of the budget if I wanted to, but it'd just be nice if the community centres had the very basic things? Like white paper. In another community centre where I'm working I assumed that all the paints were there, because there's this great cupboard full of paints, and when I went to check them out, most of them were red. They didn't have any white. [Helen]

I've got a studio; we have shelves, boxes, I have a lot of garbage in my studio, so its, most of [the supplies] were mine, my stuff that I just selectively brought along in the morning and filled my trunk with. [The community centre had] the usual, poster paint--but didn't have any red or black. Actually I had to search down some paint brushes from the day care, but that wasn't a problem, and some fabric scraps, which is good to see. The only centre--[centres name] has a really good supply closet, or two or three. And, aside from that, most of the centres are extremely undersupplied. And small budgets.... But we're talking twelve dollars in some cases, for the entire class. So I ended up, I mean in terms of my own input, I found it frustrating. It's not that, you know, at one level I was very happy to supply things, because I have them, and I enjoy doing that. But its also frustrating because, again, the priority is somewhere else. It's not about giving these kids an opportunity to make art. [Gwen]

Given the myriad activities that go on at the community centre and the frenzied nature of programming work, the fact that sometimes basic art materials--which do, after all, get "consumed"--were not available or easily accessible may not seem very surprising or even significant. As the speaker in the last excerpt indicates, however, (and when considered in relation to the ways in which other programs were provided with facilities and supplies, which will be addressed in the next chapter) this factor began to take on a larger set of meanings for instructors, and implied a lack of respect or caring for the program. One instructor took this a bit further, suggesting that because staff members did not appear to understand why she needed certain basic equipment and supplies, her requests for them were not taken as valid. The

implication was that she herself was not perceived as rational.

I also don't feel like a lot of the people who make the decisions about the way the funds are allocated have any interest or understanding in this program. So, if they don't have a basic understanding of even what [this activity/program] is about and what it takes, what's involved in it, then it's hard for me to ask for the things I need and have it understood as something that's reasonable. [Carol]

Similarly, another instructor used the lack of attention to supplies to illustrate how she felt a lack of respect both personally and in terms of the program in general. Considered within the overall context, poor supplies contributed to a cynicism about her work:

Well, I feel like I've sort of overcome the problems. Because, you know, when I first was there, they were just really awful to me and I had to carve a little niche out for myself, you know. And it's fine now, I don't have to worry about it, I can just go in there, do it, and go home. And I'm very adaptable, whatever they give me I've used. You know, they give me three cans of [art materials, inadequate for a group class], okay so be it. I'll teach the class--whatever, you know. Because basically I'm just there for my housekeeping money. I'm a bit cynical about it, because, I guess because it's not treated with respect. So, you know, I'll just go...and do it. But I like my time with my students always. I do like [my students]. I like what I do, but I'm slightly cynical about it. [Margaret]

In addition, the ways in which art materials were individually purchased and "used up" by each program, with no seemingly permanent system of maintaining a core of supplies, contributed to a sense that the art programming was "invisible" (another theme to be addressed later) in the sense that there was no legacy of supplies, and no evidence of the program's existence after each program finished.

[Having finished teaching a series of programs in community centres, and feeling vaguely discomfited] I feel like I've got to sort of leave that now. I mean, I wish I had some way of donating tons of stuff [materials] to each centre, so that, if it was there it might occur to them to actually let kids make something with it. Because, at this point it [the supply stock] seems to be dwindling. If the supplies go, so does the program, or something.... I feel a frustration.... I'm not suggesting that it's going to disappear, but I'm suggesting that, at least from what I've observed, there just doesn't seem to be any ongoing kind of system. People come

in, they design a course, they have a budget for \$20, and they add the \$20 worth [of supplies to their stock and then use it up again]. I used, I have basically taken the budget for "my supplies", I call it.... But the fact is, I didn't contribute anything else, is what I'm trying to say. If there was an adequate [budget], each time, say you went out and bought 12 boxes of pastels, you could leave them there, and they would be there, you know, if there was enough money to do that. [Gwen]

Facilities.

Several instructors raised issues around facilities that they perceived to affect their practice. Among these were the problem of repeatedly having to change rooms--not having the same room to work in each week--and not having basic facilities like sinks. Often, for example, art activities would be moved to less desirable quarters if another activity needed the room that day. In addition, there was the problem that rooms were not designed with visual art activities in mind.

It would be great if there was a room to do art in? It's just, it is very difficult not to have anywhere to display [the art work] and hav[ing] to pack everything away [and] hav[ing] everything kept in one room and taken to another.... Not all the places that I work in have sinks [in the room]. [Helen]

In a later excerpt, an instructor describes how moving classrooms, combined with other factors, contributed one day to a very unsatisfactory teaching experience. Issues of space and facilities will be also be addressed further in the third analysis chapter, especially in relation to how spaces for art compare with those used for physical activity in recreation centres.

Setting up and Cleaning up.

Preparing and planning for visual art classes was often time consuming and physically taxing. The fact that supplies were often not easily accessed, of course, exacerbated the process of trying to set up. One instructor, for example, described having to borrow tools necessary for

her program from another community centre. She did this without telling the programmer, because the instructor felt that, had she told, the programmer would feel pressured to "deal" with it in some way. My interpretation was that, in part, she didn't want to be perceived as someone who created more work for the programmer. In part, however, it was simpler and faster to handle it herself in a unofficial way, as programmers were often too busy to take care of such details and might even forget. In the following, the first excerpt refers to a children's class that happened once per week for one and one-half hours, while the second excerpt refers to a "family" workshop activity. The third refers generally to issues of preparing for visual arts programs in the centres:

Yeah. Its a lot of energy [that's needed to prepare for classes.] I feel that it takes and hour to set up a class, [and] usually an hour to put it back. Sometimes I'm not there the whole hour both ways, sometimes part of that time I do at home, but its at least an hour just in the physical getting up and down. And then, on top of that, you have your curriculum, and your research, if you want to make it meaningful. If you want to bring in art history.... And if you don't do all that, the level of teaching is just not as good. You know, the kids don't enjoy it, you get much more discipline problems, you don't enjoy being with them as much. I mean, if I'm not really ready --I don't know what other teachers feel--but if I'm not really ready on a lot of different levels, and clear about what I want to do, and all my supplies are there.... You only have an hour to work with them. You've got to be really ready to make every minute work. With those different ability levels, with one kid getting done and one kid working for two hours, and one kid frustrated in two minutes, it really hard to get to a level that I want to. I mean, its really hard to teach art in public schools, too, but those are the challenges you always have. But at least in a public school, you're there all day. Or you're there part of the day or part of the week. This is like, a one hour class takes three hours at least, getting there, setting up, taking down, sweeping the room, putting things away, and a lot of times you arrive and the scissors aren't there any more, because somebody's taken them to another room, the paint brushes aren't there, and, you know, then you have twenty minutes that you spend looking for a paint brush instead of getting the rest of the class ready. And you look bad to parents, you feel bad yourself, and the whole class, you are 20 minutes behind. [Catherine]

And I come an hour before [the class] and I don't get out of there until after ten.

Ten o'clock, you know, they shut the doors, by ten o'clock. It's a scramble to get out...The hours I put in [for a special project] were phenomenal. Absolutely ridiculous. But I was determined that...I always get my projects done.... There have been times where I was literally rushing, really really rushing to try to get out at ten o'clock.... [Marcia]

And also the number of hours that you put in, I mean I'm just starting, but I do put in hours and hours of preparation for a one hour class or a one and a half hour class. But I mean I enjoy it, so I don't really mind at the moment. I think it's probably limited the amount of people who want to do it.... I mean...if you're teaching kids, the younger they are the more work it is. Like I teach three-year-olds at one place, and... you have to do loads of preparation, 'cause they get through activities so quickly and they can't do so much themselves. [Helen]

Instructors were usually also expected to ensure that rooms were cleaned up after their classes, another factor which added to instructors' work loads. One pottery instructor, for example, had to regularly sweep the clay dust out of the studio because she was told that the custodian at the centre refused to do it. Because accumulated clay dust can be a health hazard, she said she did the sweeping for her own sake as well as for her students. In cases where art activities took place in "multi-purpose" rooms--spaces that were also used for other programs--cleaning the room sometimes became a source of tension between instructors and staff. On my first tour of the West Side centre, for example, the staff person who led me around commented on how "messy" the room used for art was, implying his dissatisfaction with the situation. Instructors spoke about this expectation that they keep the rooms clean, and the sense of disapproval they felt around this issue.

I had left some paper [covering]...the table...I had left it on the table because it wasn't that mucked up, and they always put, because the tables are so ratty and so mucky, I have to put new paper on pretty well every time.... So I have to put new paper on top. Well this paper wasn't too bad, so I left it there. I'd taped it down and I just left it there. And well, anyways, the person who came after me, I guess they didn't want paper and they freaked out that there was paper left on the table and they complained that I had left it a mess. So then they [the staff] came down

on me saying that I was leaving the whole place a mess. [Marcia]

One instructor had, however, developed a strategy of arriving just at the start time of the class and leaving immediately when it was finished, investing minimal effort in planning or clean-up. She explained that when she first had started working at the centres, she did extra work related to her programs, but had given it up finding that there was little support or recognition for it. Keeping preparation minimal was one way in which she could conserve her energy for other work which she considered more important--in this case her art making--and tried to have the time spent at the recreation centre reflect the relatively small remuneration that she received for teaching.

Fragmentation.

The impermanence of the work and the difficulties involved in preparing for and teaching individual classes, however, were made that much more complex and taxing by the short term, fragmented ways in which programs were structured, plus the fact that most instructors taught at several sites. The following instructor told me that she realized that she had "too many bosses", indicating the need to make a new adjustment to the context, procedures, and expectations in each and every setting in which she worked. This structure also, however, had implications for her in terms of how she felt about the quality of her teaching:

You know...the whole scheduling thing is a nightmare for me, and this whole Spring has been so hard, to run from one class to another, and prepare.... And you never really get to teach the same class again because its [never the same situation in terms of age groups or format.] So it's not like you create a curriculum and by the third time it's really hot. You make up a new thing every time. A new problem, a new solution. Sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't work. You never get that reflection back the way you do if you teach six classes in an elementary school and you really get to see where the problems are. And the next year it's a lot stronger. So I think that's a problem. You're always making up a

new curriculum. [Catherine]

In the next section, I want to further explore the natures of these contexts and how instructors understand and negotiate their practices within them. I begin with issues of teaching children in these sites, and the consideration of parents' wishes as part of the work.

Parents, Care-givers, and Participants

Introduction.

Community centre art instructors who taught children described parents as influencing their practice on a number of levels. Unfortunately, parents were among the most elusive participants within these sites to contact and interview, and as a result their direct perspectives have been represented in only a limited way in this study. At both sites, for example, staff and instructors describe the practice of working parents who use the centres for child care, particularly in the after school hours, a fact which partly explains the absence of parents but also creates a unique circumstance with which instructors must cope. At the West Side Centre, it was very common to see nannies or other care-givers dropping off and picking up children from classes, and even participating in classes or attending performances in lieu of parents.

In any case, although I sent children home with many notes seeking parents to interview, made myself completely available, and frequently stood outside rooms as programs were ending to introduce myself and plead, I was able to convince only three parents to take part in interview sessions with me. Further, because parents were usually rushing to and from classes, circumstances were rarely conducive to engaging in casual conversation.

While it is perhaps unwise to speculate, my observations (and personal experience as a parent) have led me to interpret the lack of parents' willingness to be interviewed as primarily a

reflection of the hectic and stressful nature of modern life and parents' general lack of time and energy to devote to activity which they perceive to be non-essential in their lives. (In fact, I believe that the frenzied context in which leisure--and community centre art programs--occur is significant to this study.) Because I am, however, most concerned in this chapter with how instructors perceive and experience parental influence as part of their practice, I rely largely on instructor descriptions of relations with parents, and to a lesser degree on administrative staff members talk and beliefs about parental involvement to make my case.

I must also frame these comments by noting that all three parents whom I was able to interview are from the West Side Centre, a result which is at least partly due to the vastly larger number of successful art programs, and therefore contacts and notes going home, at that site. As such, however, these parents' responses very likely reflect an approach to recreation programming based on the socio-economics and values prevalent within the West Side community. Staff members, for example, suggested that West Side parents were more vocal and insistent about their expectations than parents at the East Side site.

[At the West Side Centre]...there's a lot of that just off the street kind of input. And a lot of that caring. Where as I've worked in other areas of the city where that just isn't there. And there [are] a lot of factors and reasons why. We get a lot of parents who are not necessarily working, but at the same time there [are] parents that do work, so you do have the nannies that are somewhat involved in the kids in their activities and the supervision of those kids during the day. But there are a lot of parents, especially in those formative years that do stay back from work and are involved and I think they, they have that energy, and I think they focus it on their children. And as a result they want the best, and what's really, they feel is the best for the kids. And so they make us aware of what they want..in no uncertain terms. That's positive, if you've got the energy that's very positive. But it can be very draining, and very, it takes a lot of time and energy. Because obviously you can't meet everyone's needs.... I know they want quality. ...They demand a high standard of our instructors...and of the complex. I think...they want to expose their kids--and I don't think it's in the true sense of recreation--it's

like they want to develop a skill. And when they get something, I think a good number of them want to... develop whatever the skill might be. If it's a painting skill, or they might think their kid is a budding artist or...a budding basketball player or a whatever. And I think what they demand is a high standard in the leadership so that [the children] get the skills and the rules and the regulations and they get everything. There's a fair bit of that. At the same time, safety, understanding and rapport with their kids. The values I think are very important when they're dealing with an instructor. They, I feel they get very close to our instructors and they're very critical of our instructors. And they make us aware that they see some flaws. So my reading is that they're very careful as to who they're sending their kids to. And that their kids are spending time with. And I just feel that they, and...it's probably the wrong way of putting it, but it's like a replacement of, because of their working--a lot of them are professionals--and obviously they can't spend that kind of time, day time, so they want to make sure that who's ever there is expressing a lot of their same values. And standards. [staff member].

They seem I guess to be in a little bit more of a hurry, at [the West Side Centre] or [in] that area than here at [The East Side Centre, which] seems to be a little bit more laid back. And also, I think the expectations are always higher in that [West Side] community. Because [those are] people that are better educated and have higher expectations, and, they make a little more money, and they expect a little bit more.... I would say that the differences are fairly limited [between the two centres] except that they might have higher expectations and want a more structured program [at the West Side Centre]. [staff member]

It should be noted however that, as these same staff speakers themselves would be quick to acknowledge, these broad perceptions do not hold true in all circumstances, and a lack of parental involvement at the East Side centre may be rooted in circumstances that are far more complex than the reference to being "laid back" implies. For example, staff members also talked of beliefs that, in new immigrant families, both parents may hold down two jobs each in order to make ends meet, and children are left of necessity to fend for themselves. Staff members also told me that certain children who used the East Side centre lived in foster or group homes or had stressful home lives, and used the centre as a kind of safe haven as much as possible. Parents tended not to be present at the centre for children who fell into either of these categories.

Alternatively, staff believed that some immigrants were unfamiliar with the concept of a community centre, were not aware of what community centres might offer them, may not be interested in or familiar with the culturally specific forms of recreation which the centre emphasized (hockey, for example), did not speak enough English to feel comfortable there, and were perhaps even suspicious of the government authority such institutions represented. As a result, these families were perceived in general as participating less in community centre activities, though children of the family might participate sooner than parents as a result of school acculturation. Alternatively, some East Side parents were active at the centre and did have agendas for their child's involvement, as this quote from an East Side staff member attests:

And you have the parents who are trying to, in the younger kids, find something that their child is "good at." I want you to go to gymnastics so you can be good at gymnastics, or I want you to take ballet so you can be a prima ballerina.... I always see these [sports] parents who come in, and [sports] dads, and its sort of like trying to have their children live the dream they never had. So they get out there and they're having, its them and that...game. [staff member]

On the other hand, the particular West Side parents with whom I spoke did not claim to want the more specialized training that staff members perceived them to demand. They did, nevertheless, have expectations for the programs and offered reasons and conditions for their children's involvement. In addition, they could shed light on how recreation programs fit broadly within their families' lives.

One parent, a mother who lived in another municipality but worked in this city, described a situation in which her children, aged 3, 5, and 6, were cared for during her working hours by her mother-in-law, who lived near the recreation centre. She said that the children had grown "bored" at her mother-in-law's home, and so were initially registered in recreation programs for

the stimulation such programming might provide. At the time of the interview, this mother provided the following description of the organized activities in which her children took part outside of home or school:

Well, they swim, they do soccer, they...My older son likes t-ball as well. My middle son, he likes the art classes, and he goes to a [general sports program] at [another recreation centre]. And my daughter does a dancing class as well, and [a general activities pre-school program at the West Side community centre.]
(Nadine, parent)

A second parent, a father who was the care-giver for his children while his wife worked outside the home, described the following scenario:

My idea is to expose the kids to a lot of things, and not necessarily get them doing any one thing, so they do skating at (one community centre); gymnastics out at (the university community program); and they do, Callie was doing jazz dance here. I try and teach Jason and Callie racquet ball but their arms aren't quite strong enough, so we do badminton instead. The clay class that Jason was in, he did that because Callie was doing jazz dance and so what could he do--and it's kinda fun anyway--and he was having so much fun at it, Callie now does jazz dance, and then there's a bit of overlap, Jason hangs around till Callie can get down, and then Callie does [clay class too.] Callie, because she really likes it. And we're really busy. Just in terms of, if anything, we don't have enough days when we do nothing, which we're sort of trying to...She's in baseball right now which is great, but it's horrible on the schedule...for the whole household...it's a short season which is good, but it's erratic. Callie had five games in seven days. (Paul, parent)

Arguably, there are numerous motivations behind parents' decisions to enrol children in programs, and whether to continue to place a child in a given class. One parent, for example, noted the centre facilities as an attraction:

Like the painting and drawing, there's no way that I want to be doing that in my house, so its really nice to have a place where that's available for them and, you know, that lovely messy stuff is not in my living room!.... (Christa, parent)

Parents also, however, indicated expectations for programming which touch on several

of the themes raised in the previous chapter, and deal with issues of recreation versus education, structure versus freedom and the importance of having fun. When asked what they looked for in a recreation program for their children, these mothers responded as follows:

It's funny, the first thing that comes to mind is safety. But also, a well organized class, so that you don't walk in and look as if the teacher doesn't know what she's doing. Somebody that has that air of, "I know what I'm planning to do today" ...-- not that its regimented, like, "We're all going to make something that looks exactly the same"...but it looks as if the environment is prepared for the children. There isn't anarchy there? That there is a real sense of, the teacher has a sense of control--and I don't mean that in an autocratic [way], just a sense that there's calmness there so that they can focus on what they're wanting to do.... And that whole thing of taking instruction from someone else.... That is a really important part of his education.... I think that its really hard to separate recreation and education. Then again, it's that thing of taking instruction from somebody else. That's a whole part of getting ready to go to school.... [Christa]

Well, I signed them up as like a recreation, but I kind of expect that they learn something out of it? Like not so much [my son but my daughter, who is the youngest], like learning to play with others, and share, and stuff like that. She's not very good at sharing!.... More that they learn to get along with other kids in the class, that there are other people in this world, and you have to learn to get along with them, and in a small space.... But they also do learn things, counting, and listening skills--they read stories and stuff. [Nadine]

In addition, however, Christa indicates that she is hoping her child would gain some things from the program that move beyond any of the points previously mentioned. The following excerpt, for example, refers to her six-year old son:

With him, I have enrolled him in a variety of different courses up until this year, trying to find one that would inspire him. We did creative movement, we did karate this year, and I never could find the right one, and finally, a light went on and he discovered painting and drawing, and pottery. And for him art and being able to represent his thoughts has become a huge opening.... It's a form of expression that he's never had before, and he's just excited by it, which is nice to see.... It's been interesting to watch him. He has a passion.... [Christa]

In addition to these ideas, parents were concerned with the overall well-being of their

children and wished to place them in an environment which was empathetic to their child's needs and wishes, and in which they would be emotionally as well as physically and intellectually supported. Where this was the case, particularly for younger children, the content of the course may be relatively unimportant.

For me, if my son didn't like the person who was teaching the course, it didn't matter how good the course was.... I found a teacher he just loved, and then I signed him up for all her courses. He loved going there, so that helped a lot....
[Christa]

Parents may construe an empathetic teacher as one who allows children the freedom to be self-directed and to explore personal interests:

He saw a picture of a horse on the wall in the art class...[and he really wanted to make a horse.] And he kept saying, Eileen's [the instructor] going to help me, Eileen's going to help me, for two weeks. And each time he came back [from the class], he hadn't made it, and the third week, I came [to the class] and Eileen said, this is the most marvellous thing, he got this idea, and he has followed it through. And I've helped him, but he had totally duplicated the picture on the wall. And I looked, and he had taken the picture on the wall...and had made a rocking horse out of clay. And she allowed it, she encouraged it, she [helped with] the how-to's, but totally let him develop his own ideas. And she just kept saying to him, you know, you've got such a clear idea, is there anything you need me to help me with. So she just allowed him to be who he was. And even though the class was finished, she let him finish the project. She seems to kind of acknowledge who he is and let him be who he is.... We did something at the Young People's Arts Institute, one time, and that teacher was just very regimented, where as [this teacher] just kind of lets him go at it. [Christa]

Ultimately parents did make decisions about whether a program fulfilled their expectations, and did make their wishes known. Gauging the child's "happiness" based on a willingness to attend is one way in which some parents seem to make this judgement. Where a child is perceived not to be enjoying him or herself, the consequence might be that parents withdrew children from programs. This, of course, could potentially affect enrollment and

therefore instructor employment.

Well, I was talking to Yara--who [teaches one of the dance programs] saying, you know, unfortunately you're gonna lose some of the kids. Callie's [the speaker's daughter] done it the whole year, but a lot of them [the other children]...a third of or half just did the first session and quit, and I sort of, that was where I thought, it's just too much serious stuff, and stretching--I'm sure it's really important, especially when you're my age, but at their age, five minutes of running around, they're limbered up enough. And its probably very good, I can see they're developing good habits, but I would say, save that for the advanced class.... When you have to start dragging the kids to it and their reason is 'cause it's boring, you're gonna defeat yourself...she can run it that way, she's just not gonna have a whole lot of kids continuing on because most parents don't put up with draggin' their kids to things. I mean, if they're not wanting to do it more than two or three times in a row, you're going, okay, next time, we won't do this. [Paul]

The implication in this final excerpt is that instructors must ultimately design programs in such a way that parents will perceive their children to be enjoying themselves. The sense in which, like the phrase coined by the music teacher, programming must be "wrapped in fun" therefore becomes an important theme in terms of how instructors understand and describe their work. In the next sections, I explore how instructors perceive parents to influence their practice, and consider further how this notion of wrapping programming in fun is played out and experienced by instructors in recreation centre contexts.

Instructors on Parents.

As noted, there are numerous ways in which recreation centre art instructors take parents into consideration. For example, Instructors recognize that parents may have diverse reasons for placing children in particular classes, and that sometimes children attend classes more due to parents wishes than to their own. This may affect children's behaviour in classes, and may therefore influence how instructors interact with students:

...Sometimes it's like a babysitting drop off thing? People...want some time to

themselves, [so] they drop the kids off.... Sometimes [it's], kids who have behaviour problems. The parent hopes that somehow your class is going to help [the child] "express themselves" and settle down, and behave.... [Jenny]

For the children's class,[at the beginning of the class] I ask the kids, why did you come to the class? [I tell them] If your parents make you come to the class, its okay, you can say so. So, occasionally I have some kids [in the class] because their parents put them in the class. It's not because they want to [be in it]. And those kids will have less attention, they will play a little bit more than actually [doing art work]. But that's fine. [Ellen]

Another instructor described having to let the office staff know that she would always make room for two--but not more than two--children in each class who had "behaviour issues" or special needs. She explained that the art class was sometimes perceived as a place to put all children who could not fluidly take part in other, physically-oriented recreation programs, and this particular instructor's classes had at times got over-full with children who needed extra attention.

Parents motives and wishes were, however, often not clearly defined, nor was there always a direct means of communication between parent and instructor.

...I think that, probably, I don't see a lot of the parents of the older [children's] classes, and that is probably a really big problem, in that I don't even know what they expect and I don't know if they were satisfied.... I'm very surprised sometimes when I get back the recommendations. I think parents, their perception of whether a class is good is often how comfortable they are talking to you. I'll get...rave reviews in a class that I feel like hasn't worked out very well, and then I'll get like really crummy reviews in a class where I related really well to the kids.... Sometimes you just don't have a clue where...parents are coming from, and what they're trying to say to you. That's a problem.... In my summer programs where its more of a day care situation, the parents pretty much drop off and pick up, [and so] you get a lot more interaction...than specifically the after school programs where you may not see the parents at all, the kids come and go by themselves. [Catherine]

In some cases, parents' wishes could influence the content of the course directly. One

instructor, for example, referred to an incident in which a parent complained about a painting activity that the instructor had provided on the first day of class, because the parent said that her child "paints all the time at home". Although the instructor defended her use of painting on the first day in order to assess children's general capabilities, the conversation caused her to reflect on how the parent may be interpreting the course description, and to re-think and change somewhat the kinds of activities she would later provide in the class. Alternatively, parents sometimes praised and therefore reinforced activities children did in programs. This latter circumstance was the case when a West Side parent told the instructor that she had been "impressed" that the painting her son had brought home clearly made reference to some aspects of art history.

Instructors may also, however, conceive of their work as encompassing the "teaching" of parents and care-givers as well as children in their courses. In some instances this is a literal situation, in cases where parents or care-givers are physically present and take part in certain preschool classes. In other cases, teaching parents about children's art is part of a broader set of intentions that instructors identify, one which involves bringing parents in line with a particular philosophy about art education.

In the preschool programs I find that you have to begin to teach [parents] to allow their child to experience it [art activities], not to produce something.... Specifically the nannies are under a lot of pressure I think in their own minds to make something that looks like art in their perception of what art is--usually... [like] primary grade bulletin board[s], where it's rosy cheeks, and big eyes, and that sort of thing. And so it's really hard [in the classes where nannies or parents stay with the children]. They'll push, they'll draw it on [the paper] if the kids don't draw it, or they'll hold the kids' hands and draw it. So I find that in that sense you're working with both [the child and the adult]. But in that class, I feel like that's my responsibility too. I'm not frustrated by [the fact that] that person's going to be with the kid more than I am. It's more important to convince that person

why the kid needs to do art and why it's successful...rather than the other way around. Rather than feel like, you know, I should just ignore this adult and...deal just with the kid, 'cause...at the most you're there nine weeks [times] an hour. You don't have that much affect on a kid's life. You'd have a lot more effect if you helped their parents appreciate something else...or their nanny. [Catherine]

I think initially, for families who didn't know who I was, they were signing up for an hour and a half's worth of what they considered at the time to be an art activity for their child. And for some kids it was something to do after school. But because of the other component of the class and the kinds of fliers and things that I would copy, and those kinds of interactions that I would have with the parents before and after class, parents who came back [re-enrolled their children for a second class] I think grew to expect that we were sharing the same kind of philosophy about open-ended art activity.... [And, about sending home information about what she was trying to accomplish in her art class] Yeah, I do. So it would start off really basic, maybe with the creative stages of artistic development, because, you know, one of the first questions I would have is, "Why isn't my kid drawing people?" so, it would be information. And just that little blurb from Lowenfeld [this is a reference to an art educator whose philosophy was highly influential in the 50's to early 70's] about why colouring books aren't good for kids!... Oh, you know, that kind of stuff...gentle, but always reinforcing that idea of the child's own creative potential.... At the end of most classes, there's that time when I talk with the group about, "So. What have we done today?" So that kind of discussion...it's not really an evaluation or critique, but, so the door is always open there and parents hear how that goes, and then if I had 12 or 15 kids in the group, over the weeks I would make sure that I was able to talk to each parent and let them know what the child's doing. Because, you know, sometimes it's [the child's explanation] just muush! [Ann]

As the previous excerpt suggests, some instructors deliberately try to communicate with parents about the importance of art education and to set up circumstances which will encourage parents to engage with their children around their art work.

I think the best way to teach parents and children is to get a piece of art work that's self expressive. If you can get to the kid enough to be able to [have him or her] create something that the parent...can understand...and they're sold. Then you don't have to have any further explanation...and for me, that means that no matter what age they are, that you have them, either dictate to you some impression or reason they did it [and the teacher writes that dictation on the art work]...because if they do that, that parent has other than visual information to analyze it. So if...a two year old [makes an art work]...and he says something like, "The elephant ate

the ice cream",...and you write that at the bottom...and the kid gives that to the parent and they say, "the elephant ate the ice cream" it makes the child remember what he was thinking and feeling, and it creates a reflection experience for the child, and it also is very rewarding to the child that the adult understood, and it's very rewarding to the adult that they were able to communicate and understand. And then you don't have to do any explaining, you don't have to do any theorizing. That joy of getting to communicate--then I find they're totally sold; then there's no problem with appreciating what it's about.... It's like a communication to the parent and a pocket to hold the memory of the child. [Catherine]

One instructor described planning art products in such a way that they would appeal more to parents, and, as a result, have a chance of staying in the home longer (and receiving more status and respect). In her mind, that involved finding a balance among spending more on supplies, producing more appealing products, and maintaining a fee that parents would find acceptable:

And I find that the parents don't want--or I don't want--the children to be making real junky stuff, where it ends up in the garbage after a week. So...it does cost more money to create [something like that]. But then the parents complain because the fee is so high, but they want the kids to be doing these, nicer [things], but they don't realize it costs more. [Jenny]

This same instructor also used the tactic of mounting and writing on children's work in order to encourage parents to engage with and respect the child's effort.

I don't know if the parents are looking to learn anything [about children's art]. I find that if it's mounted and there's something written on it, the parent will keep it around longer, and will put it up on the wall. And I feel art should be displayed. It gives the children a pride? A self worth. To see their work, represented nicely. It makes them feel good, that they've accomplished something. I'm proud of this. And some parents don't see that. They don't even think about it and it just goes on the shelf or on the floor, or on the table, and in the garbage. So to stop that I thought, "I'll mount them." And I think it makes the parents feel more involved with the children's art? If they can read it, because the kids [don't always] feel like talking about it, once they get [away from the class]. Their mind's on something else, on the next thing that's going to happen. So they're not interested in what they did in class.... So this [writing and mounting] helps the parent be able to communicate with the kids. [Jenny]

As the last excerpt suggests--and not unlike staff members who sometimes disagreed with parents' agendas for their children's recreational activities--art instructors also at times disapproved of how parents understood or supported their children's art work at the centre. Where this was the case, instructors sometimes viewed their instructional practice as providing a kind of protection or haven from those parental attitudes. A lack of parental support for children's art work was also viewed as a force which contradicted what the instructor saw herself as trying to achieve.

I also found that he was being told "no" a lot, at home, and he would be a different child [in class, and then as soon as his mother came] he stiffens right up, and I had noticed that, so I thought, okay, he's disciplined a lot at home, so in my class, I'm not going to discipline him.... [And, continuing, on parents attitudes about art] But there're parents who really don't care. And I've learnt that [in my other work with children]. There are parents who really don't care what their kids have made. They don't recognize it as a lovely piece of art. Or they don't recognize it as an outlet for an emotion. That, if a child draws pictures of sad people all the time, they must be sad inside. [Jenny]

Part of that, for me, was, two parents...had come the first day of class [and had] run down their children, told me I can expect this, [that] they'd been kicked out of preschool, etc. etc. "Keep an eye on them because they're likely to interact poorly with the other children." One in particular...is...one of the children that I felt had the most potential, in terms of just being really special, really neat. And I didn't discover that there was any behaviour problem at all. So it was very distressing for me to actually see that that's the way the parent perceived this lovely little child. So I think part of the enjoyment for me was to feel that I contributed some kind of positive experience for her, during the time she was there.... I see individuality as being primary, somehow, managing to explore individuality in the context of making art, so it's a bit of a contradiction. Because I think that's what the kids need. And I'm sure the parents, sort of, wouldn't necessarily expect that. And I'm not sure what they specifically want, because I didn't have time to interact with them and talk to them, but it's a sense I get, you know, its the sense that they bring you here, you be good, you sit down and behave like you're in school, kind of a think, rather than taking an interest in the fact that...they are actually producing what I find [to be] joyful and wonderful expressions of who they are, and, one in particular, the one who I mentioned whose parent had...She didn't even look at these incredible creations that I was just blown away by, like this child I

think is really bright and really really sensitive and really has a lot to share.

[Gwen]

I called and said where I was going to leave it and to pick it up, and they said, "Oh, Okay, we'll come, if we think of it, you know, I'll send him over. And...it's like, this is his work!.... So it's not just the staff, it's the parents not seeing it as precious as I do. I feel like, you know, you don't just leave a half of a portfolio...to be thrown out.... And you certainly don't communicate that to the artist: "Oh, well, we can just throw it out. We just sent you there because we wanted you to have something to do after school. We don't really care what you did, you know." I mean, that really works against my teaching, which is saying, this is important. [Catherine]

On Participants.

Not surprisingly, instructors make distinctions between what it's like to teach art to children and to adults:

Well, with adults you have to deal with a lot of preconceived conceptions. Like they have an idea of what art is and what they want. With the kids, they're just totally responsive, they just lap it all up. They're not critical at all. But so that's a big difference. And I can just be far more wild and crazy with the kids.... So. Probably the work that comes out of the kids is better. [Instructor teaching visual art to both children and adults].

Further, while adults who were enrolled in courses for the second or third times tended to be interested in learning more about the medium itself, those new to the medium cited numerous other reasons for registering, many of which were minimally related to the particular course content. (The range of purposes adults identify in choosing to take part in general adult non-credit courses is well documented in adult education literature and the following remarks tend to

concur with this literature.) One of these explanations was socialization, and the practice of "making a date" to spend time with friends or family by joining a class together surfaced several times during informal conversations I had with participants. In interviews, program participants refer to the social aspect of taking courses, but note other reasons for taking a course as well:

I decided to take the course because its something that's always interested me and I've been wanting to get in to more. I wanted to use more of my creative mind, instead of just my scientific mind, which my schooling has brought me. It's also a way of getting together with some friends, friends that I don't get to see often enough.. It's a nice environment, taking the course that is, makes for a nice environment for chatting, and it's light hearted and, takes away from the stresses of life, so to speak.... Another one of my goals is to, I'd eventually like to have a little cafe or restaurant or something with a craft shop attached to it, and I wouldn't mind making my own crafts, and I wouldn't mind looking at a number of craft-like activities that I can become somewhat good at, good enough to possibly sell some stuff--I realize its gonna take a few years!.... But, I'm trying to gather skills to do some things on my own-- sellable, usable, practical skills. Especially I think, so many people nowadays are in career transition, such as myself, and I think a lot of people are looking for that sort of thing. [Female pottery registrant, young adult, unemployed at the time of the interview.]

I've always been interested in learning and studying.... I've always loved the arts and creativity, mainly expressing it myself through music, and [I] admired how my daughter expressed it so easily through painting, which I encouraged. And that's how I became aware of all the different mediums that were available and supplies and things. I realized it was quite limited, what I was exposed to when I was a child. My former husband also had an artistic element and I explored a bit of that with him. So...and also in my family there's always been an element of art appreciation, especially from my mother.... Time has often been an issue [for me, fitting courses into a work schedule that was variable].... I realized that I would have a block of time this Fall, due to some health concerns, and I thought, well, what can I do in this time that will also be a nurturing, healing thing for me. I need to mobilize everything I can. I thought, well, an art program would be really good.... So I chose one course [due to the appropriateness of the time of day; feeling positive about the setting; and the good reputation of the instructor]. [Female health care professional, drawing and painting registrant, mid 40's]

I happen to like pottery which is probably why I took a pottery course. And I like to do things that I see as...pottery is not a dying art, but I'm really into skills that we are losing because everything is so automated. And so, and I don't know where I get that.... I love pottery, and I also thought that I should learn to do it

because pottery is also very expensive to buy. I thought maybe I could learn how to do it myself. Well, its far more difficult than I ever expected. I wouldn't say I have an artistic streak, I am more I think of a technician. Because I'm very good at...handicrafts but I use other people's patterns I rarely create my own. But I think...I just don't have the training.... For me, the classes are just a form of recreation. I was at university for years and years, and it was for me very relaxing. I don't know why I took a pottery course per se. And I didn't take art in school because I did band. And there definitely wasn't room for both. Female young adult, professional and mother of infant child]

In addition to recognizing a wide number of reasons that participants may be attending classes, instructors noted that the students may also be extremely varied in their art experience. This diversity seemed to be a result of the need for programs to be made attractive to a large number of people in order to increase the chances that the "minimum" number of registrants will enroll and the class could proceed. In addition, the centres' resistances to providing advanced level courses seemed to be a contributing factor. The resulting range of participants, however, was cited as being difficult with which to cope. Again, it is a problem that permeates this work, and applies to child and adult classes alike:

Every [class] is so different. It's hard to say. You go in there the first day [and] you sort of just have to feel the way and see, "What have I got here?" It [a recent one] was quite a small class, and half the class had repeated many times, and half were brand new. So it meant that I had to kind of walk this line between the two groups. So it was kind of stressful, knowing what to do. With the new ones, I work at loosening people up, that's the first thing,...and to teach them just the basics.... And then with the other people, I just want to, because all of them have gone through at least one or two classes of the basic structure and maybe another one or two classes where they've been left on their own far more, so it's like guiding, because they're well on their way to doing something.... And because I get such a wide variety of people coming to the class, its like every level and God knows what, I deliberately keep it non-specific so that it can accommodate everybody. And its evolved...out of years of trial and error. And I think when you have such a group of different people, you can't really teach [one specific technique].... I find that when you try to do that you put it on a kind of basket weaving context, with people that know absolutely nothing about anything,... so its like trying to teach the very basics. [Adult instructor]

And I also think its a huge problem [in terms of] age level. I'm teaching a bead making class at [one centre]. They put 15 kids in the class and its all different age levels. Well, as soon as I get the older kids on a bead loom--and you know, they have a lot of problems with it. They're older, but the needles break or they can't figure out how to get as many beads as they're supposed to across, or how to get their pattern.... Then, a little kid needs me on something like making a fimo bead or remembering to put a hole in a bead. And I think I won't do it with that big of a range again, but because they [the community centre staff] are looking for enrollment, they hardly ever do advanced and intermediate...classes. So you end up teaching too much of a range. [At another centre, in another kind of art class] I have very young kids--first and second grades--and then I have older kids, fifth and sixth [grade]. And the young kids tend to misbehave when the fifth and sixth kids are most engaged in their work, because they can't keep up. You know, and they won't say, "I can't do this", they'll say, "I'm going to stab the kid next to me with the lino cutter!" [Children's instructor]

Not surprisingly, the particular expectations with which participants arrived at courses, were at least somewhat dependent on the medium involved. Pottery, for example, tended to be linked to the production of domestic objects and gifts:

So usually they come with a "list", in their minds. They will tell me, "I talked to my friends, I talked to my mom, [and] I'll be coming to the pottery class--what would you like me to make [for you]?". So [when they arrive on the first night] they have already collected a list of gifts that they want to [make] and give to their families." [pottery instructor]

Instructors often learned about student expectations, however, through trial and error, and the content of their programs evolved in response to how they understood what students wanted:

The students are not interested in history [and] they don't want to get into [things that are too technical].... I did try...when I first started teaching my adult class, I thought, "Why just teach them all the technical things?" [So] I brought in slides and showed them a little bit [about art] history. So I tried that once, and [then] I asked for people's feedback on that. They said that they preferred to have more time to do [their own work] instead of looking at slides. So I just got the idea that they didn't want to get too much into...they didn't want to get too much information. They won't remember it anyway. They just want to come here [and] have fun, enjoy it.... They want to come here and enjoy [themselves]. One or two are parents, so they want to have their own time, do their own thing. [Ellen]

In order to accommodate student preferences, therefore, instructors often needed to alter their teaching plans and "un-structure" activities. I discuss this practice next.

Freedom, Structure, and Un-structuring

As has been suggested, instructors construed the creation of a less structured environment as necessary to their work. In addition to making students happier and possibly affecting one's evaluations, a looser environment was considered part of what motivated students to return to or repeat classes:

But I have kids that come back for a second or third time because they enjoy [the medium.] And they come because when I teach, I teach the technique and then they can make whatever they want to make. [So] They have a lot of freedom, or they have a lot of room to create their own things. So they enjoy it, and they come back. [Ellen]

Some adult instructors described this circumstance, however, as a complex and sometimes frustrating relationship of power that required balancing student preconceptions [or even misconceptions] and the constraints of the setting with their own agendas for program content. These excerpts describe both "giving in" to students, and struggling to maintain a particular position on the approach that will be taken.

Well, that's something that I've had to learn to...that was probably the biggest thing that I had to let go of when I started doing this kind of a program, because coming from art school, there's just so much more content, so much more consideration, and it's just not here. And every once in a while I run across someone [like a student standing nearby] who's just a natural and...just flies. And then I can start talking to [that student about more advanced ideas.] But lots of times people just come in with really basic ideas. They just want to [make/represent] an object.... They make it look nice and they're satisfied with that. So I've had to accept that that's their limitation. So in many ways I've probably just slacked off in that area. Because there isn't enough time to focus on art history or influences from other areas, and most people don't want that. They don't want complications. So I guess.... The instructor part comes down to a really basic beginner level... I try to give them the basics...and pretty much let

them do their own thing, 'cause this is a community centre.... I try to structure it so that they feel like they're [not] forced to do certain projects.... It's still kind of a struggle for me to play off what people want or what they expect from a community centre as opposed to being in an art school? Because I'm still frustrated by the content? And what I want to get across to people, based on the reality that they are only here for two and a half hours a week, most of them.... But most people just want a recreational kind of experience. So it is hard, because I also find that people still have the expectations of someone who would be in art school full time.

L: As far as their own work?

C: Yeah...in terms of the experience they have at the end of ten weeks. I still come across that. And it's frustrating because there are kind of two camps going on. Like some people just want to come and relax, and have a good time, and...use it as a recreational thing to tune out the rest of their lives, and come have fun--which is fine. But I sort of can't do both things at once? I find that there're such time restraints, that for me to implement a strong structure ends up frustrating some people in the class, because they don't necessarily want that, and I end up taking up probably half the class time trying to instruct and structure, and then I feel, well, you've only got an hour left to go and do your thing and I'm sort of taking away from their time, too. It's kind of a hard thing to balance. And not many people go on [to a more advanced level].... It's something that takes a lot of commitment, initially, and not many people want to put that time in...for a recreational thing? Like they're not interested in that. But it's hard to sort of convey to them that that's the commitment that they have to make to get to an intermediate level. [Carol]

Often I'll get really hard cases in the class who challenge everything I say, and that's really hard.... They're wanting something different for sure. And they're wanting something far more structured and they're wanting something with rules. And they know already what the rules are, and its like I'm deliberately even telling them that that isn't...that's not a rule! And they don't like that. [Margaret]

With children's classes, this struggle between what the instructor would like to teach and what the participants expected and were willing to do also became problems of behaviour control. This was the case because, while instructors were expected to bend to student wishes, to create that "free" environment, they also felt compelled to appear to be appropriately managing children's behaviour. Having no formal authority on which to rely, instructors tried various strategies in order to cope: One instructor described deliberately trying to set up environments

that were not "like school", but also noted a case in which behaviour problems arose--and more structure was required--as the number of children participating increased.

I think the kids expectations were entirely different than the parents expectations.... I think their expectations at one level were that they were in school, so they were very quiet the first day, and didn't know what to expect.... So one of the first things I did was...play games, you know...so we just played [with the materials] and went outside with the drawing boards and stuff.... But after that they came in enthusiastic, with ideas, because I sent them home each night, thinking about problems that had come up during the day.... The exception to that was, I had one extremely large class.... [And I made it] very structured because I couldn't handle it otherwise. There were was a couple of really disruptive kids.... I had age ranges from about six to fourteen, and...it was a little difficult. [Gwen]

A second instructor described trying to "convince" students to behave.

And if he doesn't feel like doing what everybody else is doing, that's fine, but I say, "Jake, do you want to be involved in this? If not, you might feel a little sad at the end when everybody else has their pictures to take home...and you don't have anything. [Jenny]

This same instructor implied the conundrum faced in trying to provide a "free" and flexible environment for the children in her program, but still feeling compelled to attract parents to their children's art, perhaps to realize and establish its value.

But it is an art class. I want them to learn something too about their art, about what they've created. But I don't know if children, in the summer, if that's really what they want to know. They're doing it [taking a class] because it's something new. I'm thinking about another instructor here, and she's more...deep. ...Getting into the brain work: "Why do they think this, why do they do that?" Which is very interesting, but I don't want to force that on them. But I do want them to, in my class, give me a little something [a little information about their art work] so that I can write it out so then their parents can start asking questions. [Jenny]

Yet another instructor relayed how the dilemma of trying to control behaviour combined with the low valuing of the activities and numerous other contextual situations to exacerbate the difficulty of her work and ultimately affect how she felt about it.

It's really frustrating doing after school art because the kids' expectation is to not really have to do anything that counts. I mean I had one kid that kept saying, "This doesn't really count right? This doesn't really count." And I think that they're so burnt out from school sometimes that they really...aren't ready to put a lot of thought in something. And I have, maybe my own style of teaching, my own feeling is that I empathize a lot with their sort of emotional state first. And so, for instance, [one day] we got switched to a new room for our last class.... We got switched to a preschool room because [some staff members had been using the art room.] And so I sort of had my mind set up how we were going to do the critique in the art room and where we were going to hang up things, and I didn't have much time [because of a family member's surgery that day], so I'd come with only a half an hour or 45 minutes to set up. Everything was prepared before I came, but I spent that half hour shuttling things to the other room...so I wasn't feeling [ready]. Actually, they [the staff members] had said, "Do you want us to move?" But...that would have taken as long to do that.... So it was just one of those things that happens when you're not here all day... And...another thing is [that] you get a lot of range of ability [among your students. [There were, for example, some younger, very quiet children who didn't speak English, combined with several older and rambunctious boys in the group] And I really wanted to help the [younger ones] complete their projects for the end of the time. And so the two more active kids...[one especially] he was just being silly and playing with the toys in the room and the trampoline and the rocking thing, and to me, it was like, Okay. He wasn't endangering anything, but several people sort of came in from the desk and said, "What's going on in here?" and I felt badly about it.... [The boys] were done with their work and I couldn't motivate them to do what I wanted them to do next, and I thought, just let them blow off steam.... And those kinds of situations seem to happen quite a bit. Where it's frustration because the kids aren't ready to learn, the centre doesn't give you a clear expectation what they want, and I'm sort of sensitive to those sorts of undertone of, "What are you doing?" So that I think that those after school programs are a lot more stressful for me. Although its art, and I love doing the art part, its harder to get to where I want to be. [Catherine]

The difficulty and complexity of the work, however, is rarely acknowledged. Yet another described the conscious way in which she un-structured her classes, only to be perceived then as not teaching or not working.

I'm very often frustrated actually when I hear people sort of suggest that, "Well, you're not really working at all, you're not really teaching.... Excuse me, yes I am! Yeah. A lot of people have that perception that this is just easy, you're just coming in and playing [with the materials] and that's all there is to it. And it's a

deliberate effort on my part to make people just feel like they're coming here for a relaxing experience. I mean, I do that deliberately, because that's generally what people want from this experience. Yeah, it's kind of frustrating because I'm setting that up on purpose. And if, when I do try to change to something more structured, then it's not fun for people anymore, you know, if they're actually expected to be here, seriously, then it's not just something they want to do in their spare time, and they lose interest, or they drop out or they feel pressured or they resent it, or, something. [Carol]

Feeling Under-valued and Misunderstood

As implied in the last section, there was a general sense in which instructors felt that their work was not taken seriously. The inference that this was not "real" work, for example, was also reported by other instructors.

[And] I remember [a recreation staff person who is no longer at the centre] saying, "Art teachers are a dime a dozen, _____. We can't possibly pay you more than \$9.00 an hour. You know, we could get a high school student to do what you do. Lara (surprised): Was he trying to be unkind? No, no. He was saying, you know, why would you want to do this? Why don't you get a real job? [Ann]

These kinds of comments, along with a number of other circumstances, contributed to instructors perceptions that their work was not valued in the centres. Instructors often spoke about this issue in terms of weighing the balance among several factors, or as trading the lack of social recognition for something else that made it worth while. In the next excerpt, for example, the speaker describes the benefits of being able to plan what ever you wanted to do, and having a work space and administrative chores done for you, recognizing that the centres did in many ways support her work. She realized as well, however, that her freedom came, at least in part, from a perception that what she chose to do did not seem to matter to the staff.

....being part of the Parks Board system had always been a problem for me because there's such a lack of awareness of the arts. There has never been, in the entire time that I have been part of this system an understanding or an interest to

gain an understanding about what it is I have been doing.... But because I had complete autonomy, that kind of balanced that total lack of interest, from the administrative part of the parks board, and everybody else there.... Most of the programmers that I worked with were incredibly accommodating. They pegged me as someone who was going to be around for a while, and the turnover is so great, in the community centre, that to recognize that somebody is going to be there--she's not going to leave--so just that freedom of being able to order my own supplies... having my own space, locked cupboards, [equipment], just that kind of, whatever it is you need, _____, to do your class--"I don't know what it is you're doing and I don't care what you're doing (laughs) but if this is what you need, hey [go ahead]." That was really very appealing.... A couple of times I thought well, I could just go do this some place else on my own, but I loved it that they took care of the overhead, the administration, the registration, all that stuff--they just provided me with a place...to do what I really wanted to do. And initially, the way it worked financially was good too, because, being self-employed, it was all, everything else then became tax deductible. [However] I was always on contract, to the association, but I was never hired and I began to resent that.... The community centre offered three month contracts dependent on registration. So it was that lack of security and medical benefits and sick time and holiday pay [that eventually took its toll]. [Ann]

This charge that administrative staff did not seem interested in or knowledgeable about arts programs was one that was repeated over and over again. In most cases, instructors could see some recent improvement or particular individuals who did not fit into this broad category. Nevertheless, there was a great deal of concurrence around this perception.

Well, first of all I have to say that the situation's improved a hundred percent, and that _____ I think is a really good director for a community centre. But I mean, even though its improved a hundred percent it's [still] sort of a hostile environment. And they don't understand about what I'm doing, they won't put themselves out for me. You know, basically I'm sort of thrown out there and told to survive...its not great. The general atmosphere is quite jock-like, very non-visual and there's this very very very institutional [environment]. And it's just not a flourishing environment for the arts. And the people who work there probably think I'm a little bit weird or dress funny, and you know, a bit flaky....

Lara: Is that the crux of it for you, is it that you think that the people who work there really don't get it? They really don't understand, perhaps because they don't have any background in it?

M: Yeah, I think so. It's like they're all trained in physical education and they know nothing about the arts. [Margaret]

I honestly don't think the problem there is [with an individual staff person]. _____, I feel, is carrying a larger load than she probably needs to carry, right, and that's probably funding and all the rest of it goes with her job, which is probably three jobs actually, that she does. But the thing I will mention is that [at] other centres I observed a complete lack of awareness, about what the community needed in terms of art.... "I dunno", kind of response to my questions. Completely unaware of even simple kinds of requirements, like if you need water, and so, I had to sort of be very very very careful in advance when I looked the place over...because there did not seem to be--it seemed to be a foreign [subject]. I felt that at a couple of centres, and at surprising locations, too. Just surprising in that I would expect that art would be a bigger part of the community, that's all. [Gwen]

In addition, staff were perceived as just not really paying attention to what occurred in the art program:

It's fascinating, there's just that sense of "Well, if its not broken..." [Ann]

One person, who had taken care to detail her fine art background in her resume and write out a course outline, noted her perception that staff didn't seem very concerned about ensuring that art programming had qualified instructors:

...but actually the other thing is, the one place that I went for an interview, some people don't even care that much, what experience you've had or...I mean I was surprised at one place at how easily they offered me a job. [Helen]

Another instructor became disenchanted when she realized that her experience was not valued in terms of moving up into permanent administrative positions at the centre.

And a couple of times I applied for those assistant programming positions that would come up, thinking, this would be great, I could teach and then, program these courses. But I didn't have a proper degree...

Lara: Which was--what?

Some kind of recreation degree.... Well, it took me a couple of times. I remember filling out the application and then being rejected and then filling it out a different way, thinking, well, maybe I'll get a little closer to it this time, and ultimately you have to go through the track to get into the Parks Board system. [Ann]

Staff members were aware of this issue--that people with art backgrounds were not able

to move into administrative work in recreation--and were trying to address ways to improve the situation. Nevertheless, I knew of at least two people who had experienced rebuffs and who eventually left the organization rather than remain in low level positions. One office staff member with a fine arts degree and a teaching certificate, relayed a story about expressing interest in doing some programming work. She said one of the administrators simply told her she would never be a programmer [due to her background]. She left soon after to take a full time teaching position.

Invisibility

Another issue that was raised by instructors concerned a sense that the art program was not visibly evident in the centres. Instructors noted, for example, the problem that there were no public displays of student work, and therefore no public statement of organizational support or evidence that the art programs had even occurred. This contributed not only to a sense of not being valued, but of being, rather literally, "invisible" in the centres. Visibility, in turn, was viewed as a crucial part of promotion, and necessary for and making the public aware of the value of art:

...you have to have a big promotion night or something.... And I don't want to see instructor's stuff. I want to see what the kids have actually done. I go into the art room and I see piles and piles and piles of paintings.... Those paintings are not finished off. They are not framed. They are not mounted. They're just a big stack of paintings. You pull out some of those paintings and they're excellent. Absolutely wonderful. [But] who's gonna know? Who's gonna see? Who understands? [Marcia]

In addition to being tools for promotion, art displays were seen as a way for students to both invest of themselves in the art classes, and have that investment publicly, formally rewarded. It leant, in effect, an element of credibility and seriousness to the activity.

[At another setting] when I had an art show at the end [of the program] its like a self reviewing thing. The kids aren't going to put something up that they don't care about.And that would be my suggestion, is that there needs to be art shows at the end of the session. Everyone needs to be invited, all the instructors need to be there. I mean you have to have that same kind of competition and evaluation, and exposure that you do in the things that people are focusing their attention on.... I just think that would improve it a lot--if kids knew they were working toward...a play off! Working toward the show...and putting it on a level of this is important. This is not just something that we offer because some kids might want to do it sometimes, but this is also important.... That stuff is real important, for art to get out there and sell itself and for the kids to get strokes for it. Or else we're communicating to them, Big Deal. This is something you do when you don't have anything else to do. And the behaviour is different, and the investment for them is different. [Catherine]

Some instructors implied that they interpreted the general lack of valuing for recreational art teaching as a personal failing. This instructor spoke about this in the context of describing a perceived lack of interest on the staff's part:

Well, when you come from a place of a total lack of interest. Its not just a lack of interest, but there's that also that underlying lack of respect, and then, because of the lack of respect, then there's no value to what you do, as an educator.... I would always say, "Hey!" you know, "Come on in, and watch a class!" And in [all the time] that I taught...only one programmer ever took an interest, enough of an interest, to come in and observe a class.

Lara: And you interpreted that just as a lack of interest, not, [that staff felt too intimidated to observe the art programs]...

...Well, I'm the one whose intimidated, and with the lack of confidence, I mean you know, I think [as if speaking to herself] well, "Why are you in the community centre setting and not some place else?"

No. I perceive myself to be a very approachable person, and.... I mean it goes without saying that you visit your instructors. You don't walk in, you ask, but...I invited.... [Ann]

A second instructor spoke of this self-critical stance in the context of teaching only beginning level students. She described having to balance her less than positive feelings about teaching in a community centre with the reality that teaching in another setting might take energy away from her art work, where she felt it really needed to be.

And so, if I get really depressed and down about, oh, you know, 'cause obviously I'd like to be teaching at a more advanced level. I would, but on the other hand, because it would require too much of myself, because essentially I am a practicing artist. So to have to go [and teach] at Emily Carr or something would require a lot out of me, and that's why I'm at this level.... And its interesting because you feel like, "Ooh, God. I teach a stupid class. And you think that you're not doing anything--basically I'm just making my grocery money for one day.... But it was interesting to see [a small group of students who had returned to the class several times] that these people actually had accomplished something, they actually were doing something. Even though they were just doing it once a week, they were getting some where. Something was coming out of them and that I found quite interesting and encouraging. It's really the first time, the last two or three sessions, that I've seen that happening with students. You know, its on a very amateur level, but still, you know, I could see they were happy, and it was great. [Margaret]

Instructors used various strategies to counteract the problem of working just with beginners, one being to design courses in a way to attract returning students:

Over the years I tried to vary [the courses I offered] so that I could get the same kids back (gesturing in comic longing) because I loved seeing them grow! [Ann]

At least two instructors also held classes in their own homes, effectively using the centre (and its promotional capacities) as a means of attracting beginning level students and then inviting students interested in continuing to their home studios for more advanced and ongoing work.

Fitting in Overall

Reflecting on the situation in general, instructors talked about what they thought was at the crux of the problems they faced in working at community centres. These thoughts refer to the underlying perspectives and approaches that seem to be privileged in the centres, including an imbalance in emphasis on sport and physical leisure and a general lack of awareness about or experience with art:

[The problem is that...at the community centre, things have to have a purpose, like a concrete purpose. Art doesn't. You know, the exercise class is getting in shape. then they have ESL classes, language classes, business classes, I don't know, its all got a purpose. That you can talk about. And art doesn't. [Margaret]

I think, again, it's about priorities so that, an awareness that [art] is more important than most people think it is. But second to that, I think that there [are] different kinds of people, and I think...the kinds of programmers that are being hired do not have a focus that is, well most of their focus is on activity...even the art programs...are you going outside, are you going to be doing...which is fine, which is great, I agree with that. But it was, I could tell that in their minds, they just couldn't necessarily understand that, this is also important, to sit down and to play with colour or materials. So, I got a real sense that, pretty well consistently, they didn't understand what the importance of art could mean to kids. To have that option, as one of the things to make ...better people. [Gwen]

There's this enormous gap between what they [administrators] talk about and what happens in the room. There's no--I remember there was some talk going around about, you know, standards and criteria. It was a while back, with a group of folks, again, with no art background, education background, child development background, trying to create some criteria for these "instructors"...even the term, the label that they gave us, but it was very misguided because they didn't have that foundation.... [Ann]

Well, I, to start with they need to, I mean _____ is good, okay? But they need to start hiring people to work in the community [centre] who are more artistically literate. That are more in tune with artistic and spiritual things. I mean, why, because it's a community centre are you hiring very kind of like jock-like kind of people? I mean what is it about a community centre that makes for that? Like, with a community centre it could be like far more of the heart of a community in a more spiritual sort of a way. But it's very practical. It's very down to earth. But it..I think it could be more. It's [also] very exclusionary. I mean I am excluded from partaking in that community centre. It's not my thing at all. [Margaret]

As noted in the quotation that begins this chapter, several instructors perceived the need for staff members to begin to experience art activities on a first hand basis as an antidote to their lack of knowledge and understanding.

First of all, I think these people have to take some of these courses themselves. They have to have professional development courses. They have to do [various art activities]. So that they understand what the materials are, what needs to be done, what [these courses] need, what needs there are. They have to know what

it's like to go to the wash room and clean out your wash can because they've got another course in the same room and they're using that sink and the wall [room divider] is across.... They have to see what it's like to put their stuff away, what do you do with it at the end, where do you put your stuff when its wet [and there is no place to do that]. You have to experience it. [Marcia]

Summary and Analysis

The women who spoke to me about being art instructors in community recreation centres chose this work out of interest and altruism as well as for practical reasons. They enjoy their students and often find the centres to be pleasant, welcoming, and un-encumbering places in which to conduct their practice. They construe themselves as making a valuable contribution not only to the lives of particular class participants (and sometimes their families), but also as providing a necessary balance to the centre's programming and as improving the society as a whole. Several can be characterized as having educational missions, and as aiming to spread the joys and benefits of art knowledge and art experience. In numerous cases, they note appreciating what they interpret to be a lack of constraints or imposed curricula, relative to their perceptions about what it would be like to work in a school setting. They recognize that while this environment holds less prestige as a teaching context, it permits them to earn an income while doing what they believe is worthwhile, enjoyable work, have access to certain facilities, and also to conserve energy for other important activities in their lives, like art making. In the community centre instructors can design their own courses, have control over program content, write their own brochure copy, select the supplies they wish to use, and even determine the age groups with which they prefer to work. With little or no attention paid by administrators to what actually occurs in programs, art instructors have a sense of freedom and relative control which allows them to experiment with and modify programs almost at will. As such, it provides opportunities

for personal growth and learning in terms of teaching knowledge. In some cases, the community centre is preferred and deliberately selected as a teaching context because it is construed as a site of freedom and non-evaluation that is more appropriate for art instruction than school settings, which are sometimes characterized as rule-bound and authoritarian, and therefore inappropriate as environments for art learning.

Arguably community centre art experiences do permit many of the things that art teachers hope to accomplish, and can provide interesting and challenging teaching contexts. Attitudes which position community centres as free and more appropriate for art experience than schools can also, however, be seen to converge with romanticized assumptions that artistic processes are inherently individualistic, rebellious, and require a lack of parameters, as opposed to being socially constructed cultural practices reflecting relatively arbitrary beliefs and values. From a more critical perspective, the sense of freedom claimed by instructors is belied by the particular conceptual and structural frameworks that community centres impose on this practice, and especially by the ways in which the work is permeated by an imperative to accommodate and appeal to a "market". In fact, successful instructor employment entirely depends on whether this is accomplished.

Before work is obtained, programs must be "sold" to programmers, parents, and participants, groups that have each been identified as often not seeming to understand or value art experience. Brochure copy entices enough students, in part, by inviting participants of a wide range of experience and skill levels, and by making the content sound pleasurable and non-threatening. Maintaining an element of quality control over the course and how it is marketed often means extra work for instructors, as they write their own brochure copy and order and pick

up their own supplies.

Once programs are underway, providing an "appropriate" leisure activity and being a "flexible" instructor in many ways means continuing to appease the market through the encouragement of ongoing registration and ensuring that participants are "satisfied" and "sold" on the value of the product that instructors present. Being flexible means accommodating students who may have very different purposes for being in the class such as socialization, job skills, and therapy for adults, and the need for child care, behaviour modification, and preparation for school in children, all of which may be quite distinct from the stated content of the courses. It also means accommodating a wide range of skills and abilities within one group, in effect teaching more than one class simultaneously. It may mean being satisfied and not complaining about less than adequate supplies and facilities. In addition, students who have been influenced by brochure write-ups to expect easy and fun-filled sessions, may resist instructors overtures to introduce more serious content or may not be willing to invest of themselves enough to learn basic skills required. Being flexible therefore means modifying program content according to the wishes of participants, even when these preferences may be based on misinformation and when the instructor is reasonably sure that such a decision will interfere with learning and accomplishment.

Parents may base decisions about whether to return children to programs on whether they perceive the child to be enjoying him or herself, and on the extent to which the instructor appears empathetic and supportive of an individual child's wishes and directions. Alternatively, students, especially adults, may be disappointed or frustrated when they do not achieve the claimed ends of the program through minimal effort. Ultimately, students and parents who are dissatisfied,

whether or not their perspectives are reasonable, appeal to administrators who have power over hiring, or choose not to re-enrol, both of which affects the instructor's chances for continued employment.

Children's instructors engage in the "education" of parents in order to convince them of the value of art education and their educational package or the appropriateness of a particular art education philosophy. They may alter art projects so that they will be more appealing to parents, and use strategies such as mounting art work and writing on art products in order to establish the value of art experience through an interaction involving the child, the parent, and the art product. The education of parents may also stem from a level of disapproval of how parents raise or support children's art experience.

In addition, to teach in a community centre is to teach without authority, and therefore to rely on the informal motivations of pleasure and fun to entice students to engage in activity which is necessary for the achievement of even a modicum of success. In the case of children, instructors may need to rely on similar enticements in order to convince students to "behave". In these ways--in terms of "selling" the educational package as pleasurable and using enjoyment and "what people want to do" as a means of negotiating with participants, this is education wrapped in fun.

Instructors struggle with defining their practice and the ambivalence they indicate around whether they do recreation or education reveals the delicate and vague net in which their work must be conducted and negotiated. They tend to concur with staff members that to teach in a community centre means to be institutionally positioned somewhere between the formal, official world of schools and the world of the YPAI, arguably associated with high art in leisure and the

development of cultural capital. In this light, instructors may un-structure their programs both as a means of differentiating their work from that which occurs in school, and in response to students who demand traditional forms of un-taxing fun and play from recreational programming.

The complexity of this work, and the skills that are required as teaching practice, however, are rarely acknowledged. Nor is the overall level of effort, caring, and even physical exertion that is involved. The work is taxing in the amount of planning and physical set-up and take-down required, relative to the program time and remuneration. The effort required, however, is exacerbated by the extremely fragmented ways in which the courses occur, which require continually accommodating new circumstances and "bosses" at each site and physically travelling from one centre to the next. This work is also made more difficult by the lack of basic support systems, such as making supplies and equipment readily available.

In addition, the programs occur in the context of often frenzied modern leisure, where children may be slotted into a different short term activity several times a week, each homogenized by the similarity of structure. Adults squeeze classes into busy lives and may justify taking the courses by trying simultaneously to achieve goals peripheral to the course content. The times available for classes are those "left over" from the times when participants are most alert and energetic, which are reserved for work and school.

For instructors who would like to be rewarded by seeing growth and achievement in their student's work, this can be a demoralizing teaching context. This is due to circumstances which require: continually working with beginning students and only rarely having the chance to work with somewhat more experienced or returning students; the necessity to try to address

participants with a wide range of experience and motives, and as a result feeling that one is not serving anyone well; the need to continually invent "new" activities and work with new groups rather than building on experiences that have accumulated over time or honing practice by applying the same strategies to many similar groups; and the fact that participants may have unrealistic expectations for what they will achieve in a limited time, potentially leaving the instructor feeling unsuccessful when the impossible is not achieved. Instructor may try to counteract these circumstances by developing a core of more interested students to work in the instructors home studio, in effect using the community centre as a means of regularly generating new students. Others may re-design programs in ways that they can encourage beginning students to return to class.

Instructors may experience further demoralization when their work is not recognized as "real" work, when their experience is neither valued in terms of being promoted in the setting nor acknowledged through permanent positions. Some instructors may interpret the low status of teaching in community centres as a personal failing or a lack of achievement. Others learn to restrict their efforts, or even find other work, when they do not feel valued or rewarded. Instructors may have a sense of powerlessness in that they perceive what they do to be "invisible" in the centres, without any formally supported recognition (through displays of art work); through the emphasis and obvious embracement of physical forms of leisure and experience; through the lack of permanent structures in place to ensure proper tools and supplies; and the ways in which programs "disappear" and supplies get "used up" every 8 to 10 weeks, and therefore have to be re-established. In general instructors believe that their work is neither understood by nor of interest to staff persons. Some even believe they are perceived as "odd" or as irrational in their

requests due to staff misunderstandings. They may feel frustrated or angry at mistakes that arise out of staffs' lack of knowledge--such as the misinterpretation of program content necessary for the brochure or the ordering of supplies, because these mistakes ultimately affect or reflect on instructors, and further endanger employment which is already fragile.

Chapter Six

Recreation Centre Art in Context: Leisure Moments and the Institution

Introduction

In this chapter I continue to explore recreation centre contexts for art experience and art teaching. I shift now, however, from an emphasis on talk about art programming to a focus on revealing the context through analysis of artifacts produced in the settings, the physical and visual environments of the sites, and descriptions of selected behaviours and interactions as they occur. As evidence I provide passages from my field notes, head notes, and photographs, in addition to segments of interview transcripts. I use these data not only to expand an understanding of the context and how art programming occurs within it, but to corroborate themes that have arisen in other chapters, and to trace ways that art programming may reveal, be constrained by, and cooperate with overt and tacit agendas of the institution and the broader society of which it is a part.

I acknowledge that in selecting this material I have often deliberately chosen examples and themes which question dominant assumptions about recreation centres as benign sites of freedom and play. Rather I represent these organizations as social institutions with political mandates. In doing so, I do not wish to suggest that constructive, playful, and meaningful experiences do not or cannot take place within these settings. Rather, I assume that this more dominant perception does have some grounding in experience, and some of the examples I use do reveal this more positive view. Overall, however, my selections reflect my intention to seek

out alternative ways to think about common sense views of these sites, in order to expand and complicate our understandings of them as contexts for art education practice and experience.

I have chosen to represent the details of this chapter primarily through extended selections from my reconstructed field notes. While each excerpt has been chosen in order to illustrate a particular theme or issue that I wish to address, they simultaneously reveal the complexity and multiple meanings and interpretations that may be drawn from data such as these. In addition, I have opted to present this material in relatively isolated "chunks" rather than attempting to provide a smooth, interrelated, and homogeneous description. I suggest that events in these sites do in fact occur in partitioned bites, under circumstances in which activities and participants are often separated by time and/or space. Further, although most of my examples are related to visual art, in some cases I use scenarios of non-visual art activity to explore a theme or the context in general. Again, my goal is to reveal the context into which art programming is expected to fit, so I use examples which seem to best suit that purpose. In addition, I have often opted to leave in my personal questions and reflections from my field notes. My hope is that this approach will provide a fuller sense of not only the diversity and variety that characterize these settings, but also the realities of my research experience and my presence at the sites and as a writer.

My analysis touches on issues of variety and diversity in the settings; the impact of socio-economics; the gendered nature of the institutions; the everyday realities of leisure experience within contemporary urban life; the links of recreation to issues of education and schooling; and the relationship of the centres to particular communities. These themes tend to arise in more than one segment. Necessarily, the chapter touches briefly on many issues rather than delving too

deeply into any one. I suggest that this broad approach is useful in generally repositioning some of the tenacious and pervasive cultural myths that exist about the leisure realm. It also means, however, that the chapter is best comprehended as a whole, rather than in light of arguments presented within each part.

I begin with a simple list of some of the kinds of art products that I recorded and often photographed over the period in which I was conducting research. Viewed as artifacts produced in the settings, these reveal, among other things, the surprising vastness of the category "art programming" in these particular sites. I next examine the intersection of recreation programming with socio-economics, and consider the implications for visual art experiences. This is done through the analysis of a special event, "Breakfast with Santa", that is annually offered in recreation centres in this region, and which occurred in both of the settings in which my research was conducted. In addition I briefly discuss issues of community participation as they affect art programming. I then consider the ways in which the institution may be construed as containing a gender bias, as revealed through the distribution of resources and the privileging of certain forms of leisure. I use art programming as a tool for uncovering this agenda. In a segment that includes descriptions of art programming for pre-schoolers, school-aged children, adults, and families, I consider the relationships between recreation and education, and the affects of the leisure setting on the role of art instructor. Finally, I examine the series of decisions and events that led to the creation of a mural on the wall of the East Side Community Centre, and consider how this case exposes a particular institutional framework for art experience and art programming. Throughout I draw attention to the ways that events and interactions in the settings may reveal tacit organizational agendas and question dominant discourse about the

nature and purposes of leisure.

One additional note is that the instructors and staff portrayed in this section are, with few exceptions, the same individuals who spoke in Chapters Four and Five. For purposes of this chapter, however, I have reassigned or omitted pseudonyms in order to maintain anonymity, which I think could be threatened by the small numbers of programs and the descriptive natures of these passages.

Art Products

Visual art products can be construed as cultural artifacts (Chalmers, 1981a) and as such can provide clues to the social context in which they were produced. Here, for example, is a partial list of art products which I encountered during my field work in recreation centres:

egg-carton caterpillars made in a preschool class for the stated purpose of learning "gluing" skills; cardboard and paper sculpture projects that were metaphors for "a secret" and produced in an adult class introducing a range of visual art activities; large silk banners made to celebrate the West Side Centre Association's 40th anniversary, and produced in workshops for adults and children; hundreds of pieces of functional pottery made for home use or gifts; clay tiles depicting images in and around the East Lake, created in the context of a series of events intended to raise awareness about the Lake's poor health; colouring book type Christmas tree outlines for children to paint at a Breakfast with Santa event; Artist's murals depicting the natural history of the East Lake region, again in keeping with the special Lake project; A small clay sculpture--a human figure--produced by a senior male pottery student; A special event involving visiting artists' home studios near the West Side Centre; A range of visual displays that were produced by staff members, usually office or part time staff who enjoyed doing it; felt pin cushions created in a children's sewing course, and which the instructor viewed as involving a kind of "survival" skill which was being lost; store-bought baskets and flower plants decorated with net fabric and paper hand-prints-on-a-stick, made in a preschool class for mother's day; Valentine's cards decorated with feathers and sparkles; large paintings made by children "after Monet" and other Western art history "greats"; a clay copy of an ancient mask found in a book, copied as exactly as possible, I was told, out of respect for the artist; t-shirts painted with fabric paint and the East Side "symbol" that would later cause a controversy for a community mural; paper lanterns and "shrines" created for the annual lantern

parade at summer solstice; fabric banners for an open house for the East Lake restoration project; fish stencils printed on the ice in the ice rink for the same event; children's clay sculptures and castles; preschoolers silhouettes and painted "shadows"; oil paintings done by a senior woman of a favourite picnic spot; various drawings and paintings produced in conjunction with an adult daytime course; printmaking compositions made from organic and human-made objects; a myriad of objects crafts--candles, stuffed animals, ornaments, jewellery, clothing, toys--for sale at the Christmas Craft Fairs; and terra cotta plant pots decorated by a senior female tole painter. In this latter case, she painted the favourite plants of friends (strawberries or violets for example) on the sides of the pots and then put those same live plants inside. They were gifts for friends who were sick--one was dying of cancer.

I suggest that reading this list and looking at these products has the effect of repositioning common pre-conceptions about art in recreation centres--that visual art experiences within them are minimal and of a similar ilk. Rather, this list suggests that art activity in recreation centres can be wide ranging in approach and purpose. In the list above, for example, we have instances of art used and produced in order to develop particular skills; for making sense and meaning; for institutional and holiday celebration; for domestic functions and decoration; to make connections with the natural environment; for filling time; as illustration; for making links with artists; to promote art as commodity, for gifts, and as a poignant marker of friendship and coping with the end of life.

In addition these products evoke a sense of the variable amounts of time, thought, and care that people may invest in these activities. They therefore imply the diverse meanings and impacts that engagement in art activities may have for individuals in these sites, and provide clues about the potential and limitations that particular art experiences might hold.

Drawing conclusions from end products, however, can be limiting, especially without additional evidence. I suggest that exploring the circumstances in which art products were

produced is more revealing in terms of understanding the frames that recreation centre contexts provide for art experience and art teaching. The rest of this chapter, therefore, considers the contextual circumstances in and for which art products are created.

Art, Recreation, and Socio-economics.

As noted elsewhere, my choice to examine two sites has resulted in data that is perhaps broad rather than deep. It also, however, has had the important advantage of revealing the extent to which the socio-economics of a given community permeate all programming at a centre, often in ways that are so taken for granted that they might have eluded me had my focus been narrower. The two sites at which I conducted my study were obviously distinct in terms of socio-economics, and elsewhere I have briefly referred to ways that the average incomes of populations surrounding each centre were perceived to influence choices to enrol in recreation programs generally, and decisions about participating in art activities specifically. One important effect of the higher income levels associated with the West Side Centre, for example, was what staff referred to as a significantly higher "demand" for programs in general:

Registration Day--West side Centre.

I had made an effort to arrive at the West Side Centre early (about 8 am) for what I thought would be the morning line-up for registration. The programmer had told me that registration actually begins in the evening (the sign out front says 6:30 p. m.) but that people start lining up for their "time saver coupons" at 7 am. What happens, I was told, is that people can come by the centre earlier on the first day of registration to get a piece of paper that indicates what time they will actually be registered, so that they don't have to stand in line all evening. Sitting in the parking lot this morning, however, there was no sign of a line up--I assumed that I would be able to see a queue--and the centre did not even appear to be open, as it was not lit up inside. I opted, therefore, just to stay in my car, write a few notes about what was going on in the park (several of the tennis courts were in use and an Asian woman did slow Tai Chi exercises under a tall fir tree), and take advantage of being there at a relatively unusual time for me. As it turned out, the

coordinator later told me, people had been there at 4 o'clock that morning, and that he himself had been there at 5:30 to give them the coupons (I wondered really what the point of this was, and why the coordinator would feel obligated to be there at such an hour, to "reward" people in a way for that kind of behaviour. These were, after all, "only recreation programs". What was it that people were so worried about not getting into?)

(Later that day West Side Centre, 5:45 PM)

I arrive at the West Side Centre and seat myself in the spacious lounge area facing the reception counter. Close to the other couches and benches in the lounge area is a pre-school sized orange and yellow plastic picnic table. There are few people in the centre when I arrive, but more are starting to trickle in. I hear someone behind the counter say "Hi there!" "OK! We'll be calling people, we'll get people to line up." As I watch, an Asian family arrives, a man, woman, and two children--a young girl, perhaps 9 or 10, and a toddler. They have a green piece of paper, and later I realize that the "time saver coupons" are colour-coded according to time slots allotted. The girl sprawls on her tummy on one of the "couches" and works in a workbook or colouring book of some kind. A tall Caucasian man with a bag over one shoulder enters the centre and goes downstairs. There is a low hum of voices, but you can still hear the buses going by outside. Behind the counter, a young male staff person sticks a sign up on the wall: "Child Minding Available, Room 202". One young staff woman talks on the phone, and two others talk to each other. Looking around the space, four people sit on the couches in my area. The Juice Bar is closed, and there is no one sitting near there right now.

Most of the people arriving in the Centre are Caucasian, although there are a few Asian families too. For the most part people are dressed casually, however several people look like white collar workers just coming from the office. There are many women with children and babies, but also quite a number of men. Most people are clearly here for registration, but many are here to use the fitness centre downstairs. I have notes about a large muscled Caucasian man who comes up the stairs, wearing a yellow tank top with very large #44 on the back, blue shorts and a baseball cap; A mother who says "Aerobics instructor!", smiling, to her toddler who is out in the centre of the carpeted floor, one knee bent and the other leg outstretched; the man with the large belly and the pony-tailed girl who hurry together down the hall; the man carrying a bicycle helmet; the two women, one pregnant; an Asian woman in a tidy navy blue skirt and low pumps; the carefully groomed man in pale blue ironed jeans, a blue and white striped oxford cloth shirt, white socks and loafers; the couples talking outside, each with a baby stroller; The man in the sweater, khaki shorts, and white socks--the kind with the stripes around the top.

At 6:15 pm I count 28 people, including staff, in the room. I am surprised that it is not more crowded, from the way the programmer had described the evening to me. But as I continue to watch, I realize that the crowd has been "controlled" by the time-saver method, and had all the registrants arrived at once there could easily have been 100 people in the lobby. The programmer comes out and stands in front of the counter. A muffled telephone rings five times before someone answers. "You set for the great registration night?" says a voice across the room. The noise level is gradually increasing as the room fills.

At 6:25, and seemingly all at once, people start to line up. The line winds back to the area where I am sitting, but comfortably. No one is crowded. I count 30 people in the line. Suddenly the whole line moves down the hallway, away from where I am sitting, and the room is nearly empty again. I am startled because I assumed that registration would occur at the counter, and worry that I am in the wrong place, missing the "action". As it turns out, the "action" out here is still okay as the room gradually refills and the line reforms for the next shift. The actual registration, however, is occurring in the large open room in the basement. "You've got another 15 minutes to wait, so you can kind of relax over there". The coordinator has been standing at the head of the line, at the entrance to the hallway into which people disappear. Now he continues to stand there directing people either down the hall or to wait in the lounge. A man in a suit arrives and hurries down the hall. I assume he has a time saver coupon for the previous group but is late. At 6:40 the line reforms, begins to move, and disappears down the hall once again, leaving the room empty.

"Do you have a green registration?" Someone asks. A golden coloured dog is tied up with a bright red leash to one of the metal railings outside. Two boys come into my area, one about 8, the other about 10, probably brothers. They wear shorts and long t-shirts, high-top leather runners and baseball caps. They sit for a moment at the too-small orange and yellow plastic picnic table. One lies on the floor with legs bent at the knee and resting on the bench. The other sits on the table-top. This one belches loudly. Then they stroll across the table to look at the racket ball game down below. Two young women--probably in their early to mid twenties--sit together nearby. They look like they might be office workers. They both wear wide flowing pants and low heels, and have their long-ish hair tied back in french braids. They sit together on the couch near me and I can hear some of their conversation. "I heard it's excellent...rest period in between...then you eat or something...." I can't decide if they are talking about a children's program or an adult ski program...or?"; A couple at a near-by couch peer over at me, seemingly wondering what I am doing.

The whole scenario repeats itself one more time, although the 7:00 shift is slightly smaller than the ones that have gone before. On the way out I notice some

corrections to the brochure posted just on the way out, near the door. #2354-B Craft Club will be instructed by Patty Newman # 2354-C Craft club will be taught by Kathy Fisher. Halloween Treats should read October 29. The coordinator is still standing near where the line starts. People mill about him and ask questions. He wears a white shirt and slacks--unlike the shorts he had on at our initial meeting--and looks rather tired. I get his attention--I'm not even sure if he remembers me--and tell him that I have just done my first observation. He looks surprised and asks, "Of what?". I say I was interested in watching registration night, and watching the lines fill up and then disappear and then fill up again. This is when he told me that people had been there at four am this morning to get their time saver coupons, and that he had been there at 5:30. I said "No kidding!" An elderly lady approaches him and he immediately turns his attention to her, and does not look back my way. I wait rather awkwardly for a few minutes, feeling like we hadn't quite finished our conversation, and then finally say that I had just wanted to say hello and that I would probably be around the centre more often now. He said "Because everyone is back now." I said good bye and left. I felt relieved to be going. As I walked out, I noticed the man in the blue and white striped shirt walking in front of me. Obviously, he was finished with his registration. (Looking back at my notes, I saw him in the lounge/lobby around 6:35, so he was done in less than half an hour.

On returning to my car, the parking lot is now quite full, so much so that people are waiting for me to pull out so that they can have my parking spot. Before driving away I notice that several of the tennis courts are still in use, even though the light is starting to get dim on this early Fall evening.

Later, in an interview, one of the West Side mothers with whom I spoke told me about her frustrations with registration in general, but particularly for "high demand" activities--of which visual art programs were not:

It's not difficult to get into them [the art programs] which is kind of nice! Some of the classes you have to literally be there at five o'clock in the morning to sign up for them.

Lara: Which one's are those?

The Orff classes, some of the dance classes--and that's one of my major concerns about a community centre, is that because our community centre runs high quality programs we tend to get a population that joins from way outside of our boundaries, and that's a really big concern for me. I understand why they do it but I think that there should be a limit that says that the people who live in the neighbourhood, and excuse me, pay the taxes, should have first crack at the programs.... And that then they should be open to people who are out of the

district. I know that's hard to enforce. I mean literally, when you go to sign up for a program, and it's a highly demanded program, you have to be there at 5:30 in the morning. Which I find really....I'm not a person who lines up to put my children in the "best", but I mean, if I wanted him in a soccer program, which I put him in at one point--big mistake--I thought it was important that he tried a lot of different things--I had to be there at 6 o'clock in the morning to get a time-saver pass! So, one of the benefits about having a child who's artistic rather than sports-oriented is that we don't have to go at 6 in the morning [to register]! I'm lucky in a way. There's not as high a demand. There's a demand, but its not nearly as high for the art programs as it is for the sport programs.

In contrast, the East Side site, has no special registration night at all. Registration, I was told, was ongoing until the start of programs, and the centre did not experience difficulties with registration line-ups or tensions around people concerned about getting into programs.

Later, however, I came to understand that the economics of the surrounding community had an even greater effect than a "demand" for programs. Rather, it permeated and influenced programming at each centre in very subtle and sometimes insidious ways. This became visible to me when, by happenstance, I was able to observe two events that were ostensibly the same at both sites, but which on closer examination revealed numerous distinctions. It was at this time that I also came to realize the extent to which I was "missing the point" by focussing exclusively on programs concerned with visual art. The activity described is "Breakfast with Santa", an annual event at each centre, requiring a great deal of planning and preparation by programmers, as well as the physical presence of all staff and numerous volunteers on the day itself.

West Side Centre Breakfast with Santa.

As I pull over to park on this early December Saturday morning, I am surprised at the relative lack of activity. It is a clear, bright day, and the centre parking lot still has lots of spaces at 9:55 am for an event to start at 10:00. As I watch from my van, only a few cars pull in. Unlike the Craft Fair that took place here a few weeks earlier, people cannot be seen "streaming" toward the centre on foot, nor do I have to park a couple of blocks over on the residential streets, but easily find a

spot just across the from the main entrance. As it turns out, Breakfast with Santa is a somewhat smaller, but still well "supported" event here.

Entering the building, a large sign near the front counter directs me upstairs to Breakfast with Santa. Val, a part time program leader, and a young man who appears to be in his early teens, sit at a card table, taking tickets, outside the room where the first "sitting" will take place. Two young girls, each about seven years old, stand near the table. One has a very long straight blonde pony tail and wears a purple dress. The other wears a jumper. On the table are a stack of bright green papers titled "Breakfast with Santa Seating One Agenda". Down the page it lists:

10:00 Food is being served in room 303

10:15 Santa arrives

10:45 Finish breakfast and move to entertainment in room 303 [this is a mistake--the entertainment will take place in a separate room from the breakfast]

11:00 entertainment

11:30 Goodbye and have a Merry Christmas!

Positioned around the agenda is a cartoon image: Huey, Duey, and Louey (Donald Duck's nephews) are dressed in pyjamas and stand beside a large bed, looking out a window with snow-drifted glass panes. In another corner of the "agenda", a cartoon Santa, carrying a large sack, enters a room.

After I introduce myself and my purpose in being there to the young man at the card table, he asks me if UBC is "fun". I tell him yes, it is. He asks what kind of marks are needed to get in, and on hearing my speculated answer he replies, thoughtfully, "That's not too bad," as if he were considering his own future chances and it was not out of reach. (I was interested in this exchange because I was thinking about the kids who frequented the Games Room at the East Side Centre. I wondered if they would have been confident enough to ask such questions of a stranger. I also suspected that the possibility of going to UBC was not something that entered their thoughts often, if ever.)

In the "Breakfast Room", Lyle, another part-time employee, was in the kitchen with a group of teens, helping to cook the pancakes. The teens--most are female, but there are a few males--are volunteers gleaned from the centre's teen group and friends. A total of eleven tables are positioned in two rows, forming a broken chevron pattern with a path down the middle. They point down the rather long narrow room to a brown arm chair and a squat Christmas tree, decorated with Christmas ornaments and shiny gold garlands. The tables are covered with a dusty red-coloured paper and each has seven magenta vinyl covered chairs positioned around it. Windows line one side and the end of the room, so the space is filled with light. The walls, ordinarily bare and beige, have for the occasion

been adorned with a number of seasonal novelty store type cardboard images--a full figure Santa, two Santa "heads"; a shiny Christmas tree; carolling "snowmen". Three large red accordion style fold out tissue paper "bells" hang from a narrow pipe that runs down the length of the ceiling. Taped Christmas music is playing in the background, although it is nearly inaudible in the din of voices, especially high children's voices. People seated near one another have to raise their voices to be heard. People are seated at all the tables, and counting staff and volunteers, there are probably 90 people in the room.

There is a problem getting the pancakes cooked which causes some delay. A parent approaches the kitchen pass-through saying, "Do you have any pancakes coming? I have a table full of hungry two year olds!" A young poised male volunteer speaks to a father at a table near by: "We apologize for the wait..." The father replies heartily, "That's OK, you're doing a great job!" A tall blonde long-legged woman, wearing black corduroy pants, a cream-coloured turtle neck, white thin socks and black loafers strides gracefully to the kitchen window. Her posture and gait make her appear confident. She leans smoothly in over the counter and says matter of factly to a volunteer, "We've been waiting for ages!" She does not seem angry or aggressive, but does seem comfortable with providing this information and appears to expect action. "There's four of us." Very soon after this, the problem with the pancakes is solved. Carried by the teen volunteers, the plates of brown pancakes and accompanying pieces of orange flow into the room.

The faces at the tables are overwhelmingly Caucasian, and there are many blonde children. I am hard pressed to find a dark head of hair that might reveal a non-Northern European heritage among the crowd. There is no evidence even of the many Filipino nannies who oversee children's class arrival and departure during the week, indicating perhaps that interaction with Santa is reserved for the parents. Most of the adults are woman and look like the children's mothers, though there are quite a number of men as well. Only a few older people who might be grandparents are in the group.

A number of the little girls are dressed in pretty dresses, tights, and Mary-Jane shoes. Many children wear bright red or red plaid. Even the children dressed more casually wear clothing that is clean and tidy and looks relatively new. The parents are dressed casually, but still there is a sense of deliberate dressing. I struggle to describe it--one man, for example, looks carefully rustic, like a model you might see in an L.L. Bean catalog. He wears blue jeans, tan leather tie-up shoes, and a crew-neck sweater with a blue oxford cloth button-down collar underneath. Across from him at the table is a woman with sleek blonde chin-length hair held back with a black velvet hair band. She wears black leggings, a long black sweater, and a long string of white pearls with pearl earrings. Beside her is a little girl, a preschooler, who sits with her short legs jutting straight out on

the grown-up sized chair, her feet just past the edge of the seat. She wears a burgundy dress, white tights, and black patent leather shoes. Another woman walks by, holding a baby on one hip. The woman wears short black boots, black tights, a very short pleated plaid skirt and a long bright red sweater. A very blonde little boy with bangs cut straight across his forehead wears a bright red turtle neck shirt and dark green blue jeans that look stiff and new.

The music has been turned off and Greg, one of the programmers, appears at the door and calls out loudly, "Anybody here know how to sing Here Comes Santa Claus?" The group sings out immediately and confidently, "Here comes Santa Claus, Here comes Santa Claus, right down Santa Claus Lane..." and then into the room swings Santa in his red velvet suit and white beard. "OOOOOOHHHH!!!" the parents respond all together, increasing the excitement for the children. A little girl wearing a black dress with white polka dots and black tights, about three years old I guess, begins to jump up and down, smiling and squealing with delight. Santa waves and smiles and strolls down the centre aisle between the tables, walking toward the brown arm chair. Just in front of me, Lyle stands holding a camcorder, videotaping Santa's big entrance. Children and parents stream into the aisle behind Santa, lining up to talk to him, and the music is turned back on. Soon I can't see Santa at all for the crowd around him. Shortly after, the little girl in the black polka dot dress runs back to her table, waving a green and red-striped candy cane that she apparently got from Santa. The woman in black and pearls turns enthusiastically to her, asking, "What did he say to you?"

The volunteers and Val begin to clean up by collecting "finished" plates and carrying them back to the kitchen. Now it is time to move into the adjacent room where the entertainment is to take place.

This second room is also lined with windows along one long side, and has beige walls and linoleum floors, but is much larger. I had seen it used for such things as morning "step" (fitness) classes and seniors' exercise, among other things. For today it has also been decorated with seasonal cardboard cutouts, some of which are identical to those in the first room. A line of blue gymnastic-type mats are laid out end to end in front of the three long rows of folding chairs, which are positioned in a wide crescent and facing the wall opposite the windows. There are about 100 chairs in all. When I enter a few people are already in the room, and gradually it fills with children and adults awaiting the "show". Some of this group are also here for the "second" sitting. The adults encourage the children to sit down front on the mats, while the adults take the chairs. Again and again, mothers with cameras approach the mats to take photos of their young children in their holiday clothes. A few little children run round and round the circular path that is left on the outside of the mats and the chairs. One child predictably slips and falls. I expect to hear a loud wail, but surprisingly he just gets up and keeps running.

The noise level is getting quite high. There is stamping on the floor--the children are jumping and stomping on the mats, getting exciting at the event to come. I notice Jack, the centre director, behind me now with the video recorder, taping the scene.

At this point two women wearing "elf" outfits enter from the right, singing "Deck the Halls"...fa la la la la.... One holds and strums a guitar. They wear short red tunics with pointed zigzag-type hems all around, cinched in wide black belts, green tights, and Santa hats. At the end of the song they ask "What did you have for breakfast?" of the children seated near their feet. They explain that they are going to do some singing and some story-telling and that they need all the children of any age to help them out. "We need everyone to help us!" The performance includes singing songs with lots of actions--leaping Up on the Roof Top and lunging to a deep knee bend on Down Through the Chimney. The children on the mats try to sing along but few adults do. Now the performers begin a story about how Santa almost didn't make it out to deliver the toys one Christmas Eve because he couldn't wake up. Naturally, the children and the performers need to try all kinds of noise making activities, and finally all of them at once, to wake him.

During the last song two men behind me carry on a continuous, un-hushed conversation, paying absolutely no attention to the performance. The entertainment--which lasted about 15 minutes in all--concludes. I opt not to stay for the second sitting.

East Side Centre, Breakfast with Santa.

I arrive at the centre at 9:20 am This time I am less surprised that the parking lot is not full. The weather is grey and very wet. Inside, on the main floor of the centre, various decorations give evidence of the season. A wall-mounted display case advertises today's event with white hand-cut block letters on red paper: BREAKFAST WITH SANTA. High on one side of this display is a large paper hand-painted cartoon Santa head: white beard, pink face, red stocking cap, and a big red clown-like nose. A hand-drawn white paper scroll lists further information: 2 Sittings 9:30 and 11 am. Cost: \$3.00 per person, \$8.00 per family. Below, in green and red hand-printed block letters are the words "MORE FAMILY EVENTS" and beneath this, a row of paper mittens--pink, yellow, turquoise, and green--each announcing the days and times of other holiday-related events: CRIS CRINGLE CRAFTS; HOLIDAY BAKING; BOX MAKING; and CAROL SINGING. Another display case, decorated with paper snowflakes, paper bells, and hand drawn holly, gives more details of the carol singing event, and yet another case announces SENIORS EVENTS THAT LIGHT UP THE SEASON, with details printed on large paper circles, arranged as ornaments on a green paper fir tree. The glass window that encloses the receptionist's area is

dotted with hand-made paper snowflakes and has been painted with a cartoon-like image of a large brown sleeping lion with a full fluffy white beard and a large red Santa hat.

I make my way upstairs to where the breakfast will take place. At the door I am greeted by two volunteers recruited from the program committee, Sharon, from the pottery club, and Fiona, a young woman who is enrolled at one of the local community colleges. Already the room is crowded with adults, children, staff and volunteers. I am asked--as one of the few people who hasn't been assigned a particular job--if I could please run over to an adjacent store to buy a couple more litres of milk. I comply, rushing out in the teeming rain, but worry that I will miss something important.

When I had stopped in the night before to see some of the preparation for this event I had been puzzled that many of the "volunteers" were young people whom I didn't recognize from around the centre. I had written in my notes, uncomfortably, that somehow they didn't look like they "fit", either because of their physical appearance or their dress. For one thing, among the approximately 15 volunteers, there were as many young men as women. (When I attended the youth corps meeting at the centre, it was entirely composed of young women.) For another, although this group seemed to represent a range of ethnicities, I was surprised by the number of light skin tones. Today I learned from an enthusiastic female member of the group that they were part of a outside youth organization. They were aged 18-24, came from a range of backgrounds and levels of education (completion of grade nine to university graduates), and took on various volunteer projects around the community as a means of exploring the kinds of work in which they might be interested. They had been contacted by the programmer in order to ensure that there were enough helpers on hand. Usually, the young woman told me, they didn't "work" on Saturdays.

The room is noisy, buzzing with the voices of adults and children. A man in a red flannel checked shirt plays Christmas Carols--Joy to the World at the moment--on the brown upright piano at the far end of the room. His back is to the group. Red and green Balloons are tied in bunches of two or three at the top corners of the piano. A long table to my right, near the pass-through to the kitchen, is covered with white paper and set with rows of wax paper cups filled with apple juice. A big silver urn on one end holds hot chocolate. Down the centre of the room are row after row of tables, set up in twos, end to end. A few more are placed in the wider part of the room near the front. I try several times to count them but keep losing track because of the crowd. There are at least 11 sets in the long row and several more in the short one. Each double table has 5 chairs on either side, so I guess that there are over 100 settings in the room. The tables are each covered with a thin plastic table cloth, white with green Christmas wreaths. At each place

setting is a mandarin orange to one corner of a white place mat.

As at the West Side centre, the beige walls are ordinarily bare, but have been decorated for this occasion. Green and red balloons are bunched in groups of three and attached to the walls in a few places, and alternating red and green balloons are also tied to a long string along the window side of the room, which is lined with burlap-like curtains. Fluorescent lights along the ceiling assist the cold grey light from the outside.

The centre director, who is helping out in various capacities, wears a bright red t-shirt and a Santa's cap today. Nina, a part time program leader, wears an elf costume...green tights, a green belted tunic with blue zig-zag hem; a blue felt peaked hat which curls forward with a large bell tied on at the tip; blue felt slippers, also with curled toes, and pointed plastic ears. (She is rather petite, and somehow the peaked ears suit her very well....) Many of the volunteers, who all look well-groomed and tidy, also wear bright red or green. Lorraine, the red-haired leader of the volunteers, for example, wears a bright green sweater. Another volunteer with black curly hair wears black knee-length shorts, black nylons, black doc martin shoes red socks, a red cardigan sweater and a green t-shirt.

In general people attending are quite casually dressed. Although a few of the little girls are dressed in skirts or dresses, most parents and children wear blue jeans and sneakers. Some of the children wear clothing that looks old or rumpled. A little boy, perhaps 4 or 5, bounces up and down near me. He wears "rain" pants, navy with a wide red stripe down the leg and a white turtle neck shirt. He has short brown hair and pale skin. Two little girls, perhaps 9 years, wear wide pants, black and white print. One girl wears a black ruffled blouse. The other wears patent leather strapless shoes with purple socks. They are both blonde. Their hair looks uncombed or hastily fixed. A woman near the girls has long blonde hair that looks dyed. She wears blue jeans and a white sweatshirt with a hot pink and purple pattern. A chubby little girl "skates" by me, sliding her feet along the beige linoleum floor. She wears black pants and a white sweatshirt. An Asian-looking family arrives, a man, woman, boy, and girl. They all look more dressed up. The girl has long black hair which hangs down her back and is neatly pulled back in a pony tail at top. The boy wears slacks that are belted and his shirt is tucked in. His hair looks neatly combed.

Plates of pancakes, two sausages, and an orange slice are carried to the tables by the volunteers. Without too much fanfare, Santa arrives. Santa is Michael, who oversees the games room on Saturdays. He is tall and hefty and a second-generation Chinese Canadian. "Ho ho ho! Merry Christmas! he comes in jingling bells and wearing a red velveteen suit, wide black belt, traditional white curly wig

and beard. His boots are black rain galoshes with the upper edge and toe tips painted gold. Nina (the elf) accompanies him and hands out candy canes. A small group of children gather around Santa. There is no chair for him to sit in, and he just speaks casually to the children that he meets. A little girl, perhaps 4, stands looking shyly at him, pressing close to her mother. Says Santa, "Aahh, you don't have to be afraid of me, I'm Michael!" He jingles his bells while he talks to everyone. The line dissipates and Santa and Nina leave. This sitting comes to a close as people finish their meals and move out of the room. A rather heavy boy with black hair, olive skin, rather baggy pale blue jeans, a mauve button shirt, and a printed tie resets the tables.

Moving downstairs, I find Santa and Nina in the gym, seated on a low platform. Behind them is a hand-painted brick fireplace with blazing fire, and near by an artificial Christmas Tree, decorated with garlands and ornaments. Santa sits in what looks like an office chair covered with a piece of Christmas printed fabric. Nina, with her red bag of candy canes, sits on the floor of the platform near Santa's feet. A small group of adults and children cluster around, and a few parents take photos of their children with Santa. Rita, the programmer, asks me to take a photo of her, Nina, and one other young woman as they sit on Santa's knee.

Red and green balloons have been tied in bunches of three to a line that stretches from basketball hoop to basketball hoop--there are four--at the ends and sides of the huge room. Balloons are also affixed to various spots on the walls, as they were upstairs. Although there are many "activity stations" set up, and about 50 people in the room, there is still a great deal of empty space. In one corner a man playing guitar sings Christmas carols. There are several rows of grey metal chairs set up in front of him, the intention clearly being that people will sit down and sing with him, but there are only a few people sitting there. One or two sing valiantly. He has a microphone set up, and can be heard all over the room. "Here comes Santa Claus, here comes Santa Claus...He doesn't care if you're rich or poor, he comes just the same. Lets do the chorus again!..." 7 people, adults and children, sit in about 20 chairs. "Good stuff" he says as they finish. "Anybody care to join us...comfy metal chairs to sit on!" Now going to turn to your 11th song...over here for Christmas Carols." They sing Winter Wonderland. "You'll have to sing really loud, there's only 11 of us now."

To my right, three young volunteers paint on the cheeks of little children and at a second table the children paint their own faces. One little girl's face is entirely orange. On the floor nearby is the "cookie" station, where children decorate store-bought cookies with tubes of icing and sprinkles. Moving around the room, there are several blue preschool-sized tables with photocopied outlines--fir trees and snowmen--to colour or decorate with crayon, sparkles or pieces of fabric. A few of the finished products are up on the gym wall behind them. Parents sit close by.

Adjacent to that group are several large plastic "vehicles" for children to drive around. And beside that, a child-size slide with mats spread out in front of it.

People mill around and talk in small groups. Parents watch and help small children on the play equipment. Rita announces over the guitar player's microphone: "Hi everyone. If you're here for the 11 o'clock sitting, we can serve you now." Its only 10:30 but, she explains that they are very organized this year and can take people ahead of schedule.

Next door, the games room has begun to fill as people either bide time until the second sitting or round off the morning with some ping pong, pool, or foos ball before heading home. A thin young Caucasian man who looks like he is in his early twenties plays foos ball with two very small boys--they look about two and three but must be a bit older. The children stand on chairs to see the game. They wear identical multi-coloured sweaters--blue, green, and red--and their blonde hair is messy and uncombed. The adult--I can't be sure of his relationship to the children, though he could be their father--wears blue jeans and a thin blue wind breaker, too thin for the season. He turns and spits on the floor. His face is pale and he has dark circles under his eyes. He looks exhausted. I am struck by how riveted all three of them are on the game, how focused the older of the two small boys is, flipping the handles with agility and confidence. For such a young looking child, he seems to have played this game many times before. Watching the three of them, I feel an incredible sadness--as well as an awareness of my own privilege and rudeness in watching them--come over me. I felt like crying. I left soon after. This moment and my thoughts that the young man had somehow managed to get himself and the children to Breakfast with Santa in spite of that grey tired face, became one of the important memories of my research.

In many ways these two "Breakfasts" are common frames set down in two locations. Both serve pancakes on December Saturday mornings to about the same number of people. Both occur in rooms with beige walls and beige linoleum floors, enhanced for the occasion with popular and cartoon-like images and novelty store type seasonal decorations. Both provide some form of "entertainment", and both engage the resources of full and part-time staff as well as volunteers to carry off such large events.

Their differences stem, however, from the community that uses them and the subtle ways in which each centre has moulded the events to respond to that community. At the West Side

Centre, Breakfast with Santa is a celebration of prosperity and one of likely many special events that build to the crescendo of Christmas Day. Santa's entry on the scene is cause for oohs and aahs as parents delight in stoking the imaginations of their children about the magical possibilities of Christmas morning. Mothers with cameras record for history their beautiful children in their beautiful clothes. For these children the future is a bright and hopeful place about which one is encouraged to dream. As well, however, the morning is presented as an efficient and well-managed agenda, with the expectation that it will be scrutinized by an upper middle-class community used to giving orders and being served, and with a reputation for being vocal when dissatisfied. It is supported by teens in the area who can afford to volunteer their time and have every expectation that their own futures hold university and a prosperous life.

At the East Side centre, however, Breakfast with Santa is toned down to the point that it seems barely a step above the everyday. Not only is Santa's arrival down-played, but the myth of Santa is diffused by revealing Santa's real identity. "Professional" volunteers must be brought in to help, as the core teen users of this centre are either not willing or not available, voluntary work perhaps being perceived as a luxury. At this event, transitions between activities occur casually and informally rather than by rigid schedules and agendas. The many "messy" activities presuppose that children will not be wearing clothes that a bit of paint or icing would affect, nor is it a time to "display" ones prosperity through clothing choices. One senses that for some this event is not one of many, but one of a very few events that will mark the coming of Santa. If nothing else, this Breakfast is about being careful and pragmatic about what you wish for, at Christmas and in life.

It is within these general contexts of socio-economics and class that all programming--art

included--must negotiate in each centre. In such circumstances, leisure activities move beyond a choice to participate or even a consideration of what one can afford, to experiences which frame and reflect life chances. Visual art activities being likely "too messy" for the West Side event, a performance (entertainment) is selected instead, and the participants take on the role of audience. At the East Side Centre event, visual art activities are included, but as one of many "stations" where one stops for a brief time and needs to invest little thought or effort before moving on. Oddly, both approaches have a way of curtailing engagement in the arts, either by maintaining a distinction between artist and audience or by providing art experience in the context of distraction.

Gender, Art, Physicality, and Space

Although recreation centres claim to embrace all forms of leisure, in many ways they are in fact places that are "about" physicality and bodies. On one hand this seems obvious, although I did not begin to realize the extent to which the physical is assumed--and how it influenced my position as a researcher--until a visit to the fitness centre at the West Side site. I had just met the fitness coordinator and told him about my wishes to do some general observations in the area, but that I did not want to make people feel uncomfortable by staring at them while they exercised. He suggested that one way to do it would be for me to sit on one of the exercise machines or on one of the blue mats, do some simple exercises, and look around at the same time. While I remained polite and thanked him for his help, I remember utterly rejecting such an idea in my mind. I wrote in my journal that I would no more do that than jump off the top of the building. It was at that point that I realized how much bodies were a part of recreation centres, and the extent to which such an emphasis had the potential to be discomfoting or even exclusionary to

some one like me who was relatively physically disengaged. After that I began to look for ways that the recreation institution spoke about the importance of physicality. I began to think about, for example, the clothing that the staff regularly wore, which was most often very casual. Even among those whose work was actually administrative rather than directly involved with leading some physical activity, shorts and t-shirts were donned as soon as the weather warmed, and running shoes were the favourite footwear.¹

What became more interesting to me, however, were the ways in which an emphasis on physicality and sport seem to become interlaced with the gendered relations in community centre settings, and formed a relationship--albeit a complex one--among art, sport, and gender which leant toward maintaining an art/female, sport/male dichotomy.

Like other bureaucratic settings, British Columbia recreation departments reveal gendered patterns in terms of the clustering of female staff within certain kinds of jobs and a dearth of women in senior management positions (Frisby, 1993). Although the fields of art and art education attract women, feminists have uncovered a range of inequities and differences concerning practice and rewards which tend to privilege males in the field (Collins, 1995). In recreation centres, the vast majority of visual art instructors are women, and public participation in programming is often divided along gendered lines, a fact which is readily acknowledged by staff members:

I think it's a natural gender division in terms of if you go to a baseball

¹ I began to suspect that wearing "sporty" clothing was a way for practitioners to "fit in" to the centres as well as to claim their allegiance to recreation as a field and to physicality in general. Some art acknowledged feeling a lack of fit in the centres because they lacked this orientation to physicality. Some artists, particularly those involved in special projects, dressed in ways that seemed to distinguish themselves and maintain their difference as "artists".

game and you see mainly men. If you go to a craft fair and you see mainly women. I think a lot of women and men are interested in different things to some extent. I'm not saying all of them. You know, I love hockey myself. And there's a lot of men in the pottery studio² But in general I do see the gender divisions. We actually...have set up...programming for women and girls. So, for instance, trying to get girls more interested in sport?... Something we tried this time is women's indoor soccer. But it didn't run.... And I guess the challenge is in the reverse, too....Offering different programs that appeal to men...or try[ing] to get guys interested in art if they're not interested. I think you expose them to it. If they'd like to try it, great. [Female staff person]

Well, we have ringette, which is a girl's hockey game. We have female hockey. We do have minor hockey, and in minor hockey we have two or three girls, so I mean the hockey area, yeah, you can say that [it's slowly changing to include more females, but remains male dominated]. Baseball has more girls into it, but again, if you have four or five out of 150, you're doing extremely well. So I think there still is a lot of division [in terms of] gender. I think part of it is that people don't walk the talk. They believe in all these principles, but when it comes down to it, you know, they just can't take that extra leap....I think part of it is the leadership. And how many of [the leaders in male dominated sports] have perceptions of women. If you look at the executive of the minor hockey, usually the president's a guy. And the secretary's one of the "ladies", and the treasurer is one of the "ladies", and then you've got all your divisional coaches and then when you get down to the Tykes, who are the littlest ones, there may be a woman (coach). [female staff person]

Part of this gendered pattern involves a tendency toward higher enrolment by females in visual art programs, although this is not a straightforward division, and varies somewhat according to the age of the participants and the specific activity. Adult visual art instructors cite the fewest male registrants, usually only one or two per class. This pottery instructor also notes differences in the approaches of male and female students to their work:

Do you mean why are there so many more men in the karate class?...for the most part, yeah. I may get one, at the most maybe two men per class--that's unusual. Usually one....I want to be careful what I might project about that whole thing.

²This statement is refuted somewhat by pottery instructors.

Socially, I see [pottery] as accessible to women to come with another friend and make some things for the kitchen. I mean it comes down to what people's, the general public's perception of ceramics is....Or it comes down to, people want to make dish sets. It comes down to their perception of the medium, I think. By and large I'd say the men that I've had in my class tend to be more interested in learning about the "art" aspect. They take it much more seriously, they tend to focus, and they do tend to stay for a few sessions anyway. If they're interested at all, they stick around, you know?

A lack of male participants in children's art classes in the centres, however, is often viewed as a problem. A female board member at the West Side site, for example, was concerned that the Centre seemed to have been more diligent about involving girls in sports than in encouraging boys to take part in the arts. An art instructor noted concern about creating a comfortable social context for boys in her class:

First of all there were very few male children who registered in the first place...I mean there was probably... 90%, no more that, it might be 95% female child enrolment. So that in itself is a statement that is curious to me. There [also] seemed to be some dynamics that were curious to me, because I would expect--just from having raised three boys who were very assertive--I hesitate to use the word aggressive, but [they] certainly did make demands of teachers and parents--the boys that have been in my class have been quiet and I've had to draw them out a little more. And I'm wondering if that's simply the numbers difference....[art instructor, East Side Centre]

Another instructor, however, described feeling it necessary to accommodate male students in order to keep them in class at all. This comment refers to being flexible about boys' behaviour.

And to me, an after school program, at a certain state it has to be that way. They've [the children] had so many demands on them all day, especially the boys, I think, cause its really hard for them to sit all day. And I think the other choice is there just won't be any art classes--they'll be signed up for all the sport stuff, and never try the art classes, if you make them [the classes] too inflexible for them. I mean, that's my sense of it. It's a choice, and they just won't go. They'll stop coming....And the thing that [the programmer] became aware of this year is that in all the sort of craft activities, music activities, those kinds of activities, drawing

and painting, and clay, there was a drop off [in registration] after baseball started. And so he wants to end the term in April, and go January to April, and then just do outside stuff after that. And that makes perfect sense to me, because you do get a drop-off when kids have other demands on them, and again, I think it's a priority of the centre and a priority of the parents, the coaches. You know, if you miss a practice, you don't get to play. Well, if you miss an art class, nobody says anything, so it is hard to compete against that mentality, that you're part of a team and if you don't show up you're letting us down. Art instructor, West Side Centre]

I asked this same instructor about how clay classes did seem to attract boys, that clay seemed to be perceived as something that was okay for younger boys to do. Her comments elaborate on what it may mean to frame programs in ways to attract male participants:

Yeah. I think okay and actually fun.... There's a lot of joy in it. It's a very forgiving medium, you can do a lot of things.... I don't teach clay with a project in mind. I give them the parameters of the medium and then we have a challenge, like creating different spaces inside the clay.... So, I think the adventure of it.... And also, allowing the problem to be solved by the kid attracts more older male students. I'm not sure that's so true when they are little, but when they have a choice of going to soccer or baseball and art class, I think it's definitely true. It has to have a sense of adventure and self expression. When, for girls, a lot of times it's a social thing. You know, just to be good at drawing--it seems to be a lot of status for them--a skill they can sort of show off. [But] you know, being good at drawing, especially rendering reality doesn't seem to be such a status thing in those 4-7 grade boys. It seems to be if you can make someone laugh, if you can make a joke.... I don't know. I certainly have never made a study of it. That's just my sense of what they're looking for in a class. It needs to be adventurous.

None of these points are surprising given what we already know about the gendered associations of art as a school subject and its links to the feminine in western society (Collins, 1995). The mother who spoke about registration problems earlier, for example, described her son--who was more interested in the arts than in sport--as someone who didn't "fit in the system" and as "not a macho boy." This art/sport/gender relationship became clearer to me through two additional data sources: 1) the images the department used to depict itself in brochures, 2) the built and visual environments of the centres themselves; and 3) the program structure and design.

Over the course of my data collection process, for example, the Parks and Recreation Department as a whole seemed to be making an effort to present itself as an organization which was less exclusively focused on sport and physical activity--I took the depictions on a series of West Side brochure covers as evidence of this. At the same time, however, with the decrease of depictions of sport and physical activity and the increase of images concerning a range of leisure options (including the arts), also came an increase in the depictions of females taking part in recreation.

The Fall 1993 West Side brochure cover, for example, depicted an active group of four teens playing basketball at an outdoor court. One player could be female, but it is difficult to tell. The Spring 1994 cover is a photo of two young boys gleefully climbing atop a mound of dirt. The summer 1994 cover is a shot of a young boy clutching a football nearly as big as his entire chest. The Fall 1994 cover shows a vigorous game of frisby football played by four young adult males and two young adult females. The women both wear sports-bra type tops and have bare midriffs while the males all wear baggy shorts and t-shirts. The women look strong and physically fit, but also appear to be protecting themselves as much as playing with the four males who leap up and over them. The winter 1995 brochure cover shows two young boys dressed in full hockey gear sitting on a bench in the hockey rink. They seem to be being given a ride over the ice by a young female adult, probably a staff member. The Fall 1995 brochure cover depicts a male teen skate-boarder in flight as he takes off from a ramp in the basement of one of the centres. By summer 1996, however, the brochure cover is split three ways and depicts a female kayaker, a senior female gardener, and two adults, one male and one female, painting and sketching on the beach. The Fall 1996 brochure depicts one female and two male children

wearing costumes; a female child holding a puppet; and a young boy working on a wood-working project. In Winter 1997, the photos depict a woman involved in a community fibre art project; a pre-school-aged girl seemingly involved in an art project; an adult male and adult female involved with a silk-screen activity; and a group of four women displaying their clay projects.

The brochures indicate that the department would like to present itself as embracing a range of leisure forms beyond sport and physical activity, and as being inclusive of women. Other aspects of the centres' visual and built environments, however, often continue to speak about the value of physical recreation and sport, much of which remains male dominated: the permanent displays of sport trophies, dated and giving a sense of sport tradition; the perennial photos of little league teams, almost exclusively of little boys; and the hanging banners and painted plaques that name the amateur male hockey team that uses the rink. The large specialized spaces which are designed for physical activity and which continue to be used predominantly by males are also examples: the expanse of playing fields surrounding each centre and carefully maintained by the parks board; the large ice rink which, when it is drained each Spring, practically closes the East Side centre³; the fitness centres filled with clanking metal equipment⁴; the large smooth-floored gymnasiums; and the tennis and racquetball courts. These,

³In the Spring of each year, when the Rink was drained, the snack bar was also closed and the centre became noticeably quieter until the Rink was once again re-opened in the Fall.

⁴The female fitness coordinator at the East Side Centre, for example, told me of the difficulties she had encountered encouraging women to use her weight and exercise room. She described having to insist on less vulgar grunting and groaning by the males lifting weights and had lobbied for one "women's night" in the centre, an idea that received much resistance before finally being tentatively granted. The West Side fitness coordinator concurred that the fitness centre was used far more by males, although there had been an increase in women's use in recent

in comparison with the small and often multi-use or make-shift spaces created for visual art experience inform visitors of the kinds of activities that are most valued in the settings and who is most welcome there. At the East Side site, the giant banner proclaiming "fitness centre" across the exterior wall is one of the first sights one notices upon entering the parking lot. While I am aware that it was intended to draw people's attention to the fact that the centre had a fitness room inside--it had been having trouble competing with the many newly emerging privately run fitness centres--part of the effect of the words is to give the impression that the building, as a whole, is a fitness centre and to perpetuate previously noted public perceptions about recreation.

The power of these informal messages became clearer to me one day when I watched a pre-school indoor play activity offered in the gym.

The gymnasium at the West Side centre was large and windowless except for a few skylights and tiny windows in the top corners. It was however brightly lit and had rather an airy feel to it. The high ceiling was supported by wide and heavy wooden beams, and the floor was an expanse of light coloured polished wood, overlain with straight and circular lines delineating the boundaries for various games. (No hard-soled street shoes were allowed on this gleaming floor.) Compared to its counterpart at the East Side Centre, it looked pristine and new, although both were equally large and well designed facilities. The walls were painted beige to a place parallel with the tops of the heavy metal turquoise double doors, and circled by a wide orange stripe at just the place where the bottom of the back boards for the basketball nets--six of them around the room--jutting out, braced by heavy pipes. The remaining wall--about two thirds of the total height--was painted in cream colour to the top. Lower down, large brown action-figure silhouettes were painted around the walls at even intervals: a dancer, raised on tip toe with other leg and arms gracefully outstretched; a basketball player leaping high under the nets; a figure flung diagonally to catch a ball; field hockey players; tennis players; runners. Of these, only the dancer and one of the tennis players were discernably female, though one or two others, I thought, were rather ambiguous in their intended genders. All the figures appeared to be adults, as they were all of the same relative size.

years.

Today I had come to visit a weekday morning Parent and Tot Gym Time (ages 1 - 5) at the West Side Centre, an activity for preschoolers and their parents or caregivers, and which is offered every weekday morning for an hour and 15 minutes during the Fall and Winter months.

As I watch, a young blonde woman begins to pull the various pre-school-sized play equipment from a large storage room off one end of the gymnasium. These she positions at various places around the spacious room: A small blue and red plastic slide; a large padded mat with a wooden (gently) springing ramp leading up to it; a pale blue plastic merry-go-round formed to look like an octopus wearing a sailor hat; a large blue "tube" to crawl or run through; a second turning merry-go-round; a small rectangular trampoline with blue mats all around its base; a short free-standing basket ball net; a single wooden balance beam running along the floor; two black net "cages" for catching swatted pucks and balls; a pale blue plastic rocking horse; two bright blue half spheres--like giant cereal bowls--to rock in; two red plastic "airplanes" for driving, each with a black driver's wheel and a white propeller; a bunch of hula hoops; several large red rubber balls; a number of plastic balls of various sizes; and plastic hockey sticks. There was still lots of space not used.

I sit on one of a series of long low wooden benches that line one side of the gym. By 10:45 the room is filled with sound, echoing in the way the gymnasiums seem to do. I count 18 adults and 19 children to start. I was told, however, that that was a fairly small crowd, and that the centre would get a full house of 35 children and their accompanying adults on a rainy day. Young children--all less than three feet high--variously call out, squeal, and bounce around the room.

At the small trampoline, the adults kneel on the blue floor mats watching the children take turns jumping; A small blonde-haired boy follows an Asian-looking woman who walks across the room. She takes his hand--rather stoically I think--and leads him to a spinning toy near the centre of the room. A young girl with very long blonde hair sits in one of the red plastic airplanes; she looks a bit older than the rest. A second taller girl with a long brown pony tail bounces a ball by herself. Two Asian women, sitting on the floor near some children playing, tease and push one another, smiling. They are both wearing sweatshirts, sweat pants, and sneakers. A woman with a blonde ponytail and a baby sitting nearby rolls a broken hula hoop at the wall, to get it out of the way. She is wearing a sweatshirt and blue jeans. A tall man with grey hair walks by drinking coffee. He is wearing khaki pants, a royal blue fleece jacket, and beige suede sneakers. He picks up a plastic hockey stick and pushes an orange plastic puck toward the blonde girl with long hair. He stands watching her with his hands in his pockets while she plays with the stick.

By 11:00 there are more people in the room--I count 23 adults and 24 children. The same two women who were teasing each other now walk around the room together, pushing two small Caucasian boys in a big canvas basket on wheels--used for storing balls. I assume they are two nannies socializing.

By 11:10 the play has become a bit more quiet; At 11:20 the blonde "leader" and one of the nannies drag several blue mats across the floor to one side of the room. Almost immediately the children stop their play and everyone converges around the mats, sitting in a large circle. The leader pours small glasses of juice which are passed around, and then a short session of singing begins. "Oh Mr. Sun, Sun, Mr. Golden Sun.... The wheels on the bus go round and round...." At 11:30 precisely the leader directs the children and adults in a congratulatory clapping and shouts of YEEAAH!, signalling the end of the Gym Time. The children each get a hand stamp. Belongings are gathered together and everyone heads on their ways. A few adults and children help the leader whisk the mats and equipment across the floor to the large double doors where they are stored. By 11:35 the floor is completely cleared and the gymnasium is back to its silent, pristine empty state.

Watching the class, I couldn't help but remember the cramped quarters for the arts at both sites; the lack of tools, materials, and equipment that the instructors described; and even the amount of storage space available, which indicated that the gymnasium had been designed with care and attention to specific needs of programs that would occur there--indeed that someone very clearly understood what was needed. An enormous amount of money had apparently been spent on the facilities and equipment available for these programs. As well, seeing the storeroom doors close and realizing that all that equipment had been put away in 5 minutes, I thought about the art instructors who described the time they put in before class tracking down supplies, not having adequate tools, and the time after class, cleaning up and rushing to finish within an hour--I had often helped with this myself.

In addition to the messages sent by the visual and physical environment, however, the centres seem to privilege sport and activity through the structure of the programs they provide. One day, for example, as I looked at the schedule of fitness classes on the bulletin board outside

the gymnasium, I realized that the West Side Centre offered 26 fitness classes a week, of at least 9 different varieties. On Monday alone there was: "Step" class from 9:30 to 10:30; Fitness Walking, 10:30 to 11:30; Gentle fit, 11:00 to 12:00; Pre-and Post-natal, 5:00 to 6:00; and Stretch and Strength, 6:15 to 7:15. On other days there were "Energizer", "Power and Pump", "Step Circuit", "First Step", and "Step plus". This schedule went ahead every day, every week, throughout the year, with the exception of statutory holidays, as the sign noted.

In one sense, the fitness program is the counter example to the notion that physical and sport activity in recreation tend to be male dominated. The fitness classes are in fact filled with women. Hall (1996) notes that women's interest in these "physical" classes can be read as either compliance with social expectations of female attractiveness or as a way in which women can establish personal control. Nevertheless, the single "arts" program with an equivalently year-round and differentiated program--Orff Music--has, as noted previously, a history of resistance by centre board members who view it as too educational and too specialized.

Finally, thinking about these issues of space, program permanence, and gender made me recall a story told to me by a woman, Eleanor, in the senior art group. She explained how, a number of years back, their group had had a store front which they used for their painting club. It had been a very good place to paint, in part because it had no telephone. "No one could get hold of you", she said. Eventually they lost it--she didn't specify why--approached the centre, and were allotted space once per week on Tuesday mornings from 10:30 to 2:00 in the art room. When I was there, I saw them arrive each week, several of them with their large bags of supplies and equipment strapped to rolling hand carts. They waited (sometimes a bit impatiently I'm told) for Jenny to finish cleaning up from her pre-school art class, and then moved into the room, to set

up their easels. The tole painters also shared the room at that time. Eleanor told me how once at the centre she had had a similar experience to working at the store front when it was between sessions and no one else was using the room. She said she wasn't sure if she was supposed to do it, but she stayed in the room painting all day long and it was wonderful.

All of these data--the physical spaces; the equipment and storage space; the visual display; the program structures, the time limitations placed on the painting club--became evidence for me that claims made about supporting the arts in recreation centres could really only be understood in relation to the very real and tangible support the centres provided for sport and physical activity, and, further, that the allotment of this support had a gendered edge to it.

In the following segments, I provide selections of data which reveal more about the effects of structural constraints on visual art experience. They also suggest additional institutional agendas and social influences with which art becomes merged in recreation centre settings.

Art, Education, and Leisure

Art in the East Side Games Room.

The difficulty that the East Side Centre had in engendering participation in traditional programming with fees attached led them to try alternative frameworks in order to meet the mandate for the provision of art programming. Among these was a program called "Free Family Art". This involved hiring an art instructor--using funds from a special budget provided by the board--to lead an art activity once per month in the Games Room. Beyond providing an art experience for people who might not otherwise be able to afford it, however, the centre hoped to accomplish several additional goals. First, they wanted to draw some of the teens who used the

games room into the art activity. The teens had a reputation for resisting or avoiding organized activities in other areas of the centre, and tended to stay close to the games room, which they viewed as their space. In the games room, as noted, they played (often raucous) games night after night in the fall and winter months. Offering an art activity in the games room, therefore, provided an alternative kind of opportunity, but within a familiar arena, and in a casual format that allowed teens to move in and out of the activity as they wished. Second, however, the centre was somewhat concerned that the Games Room had developed a reputation as being rather exclusively a space for teens and that other groups tended not to use it. Offering a clearly labelled Family Art Activity in that room, then, was a way that the centre could make a statement that the Games Room was for everyone--in part, to reclaim the space I thought--and to actually encourage some mixing of groups. Here is a depiction of one of the Family Art events:

I arrived at about 10 minutes to 6 for an activity that was to begin at 6 pm, and came across Deborah and Chad who were just coming out of the empty, locked Games Room. Deborah was the woman who had been hired to conduct the "Family Art" program. Chad, I was told, was going to "volunteer" to help with the activity tonight. (Tall, somewhat heavy, about 14 or 15 and very very blonde, I had never seen him around the centre before and didn't think he was part of the usual crowd. As the evening passed, he did not interact with any of the other teens. Later I realized that Chad's "volunteer work" was actually in connection with some community service that he was required to perform, probably because he was caught in a misdemeanour by police.) They asked me to wait in the games room until they returned, as it would soon be open and some supplies had been set out that needed watching. They would be doing clay work that night, and Deborah said that she would give people the choice of making pots from pinch, slab, or coil techniques.

At the back of the room, one of the ping pong tables had been covered with black garbage bags, secured with masking tape. On the table were a pile of white plastic forks, about 7 metal butter knives, and several wooden dowels, about 1 1/2 inches in diameter, for rolling clay. Deborah and Chad returned, and Deborah told me that she needed to wait for the regular pottery instructor to arrive before she could begin, because the pottery room was locked, and she wasn't sure which clay she

was supposed to use.

At 6 the room was opened and as usual filled almost immediately with "youth", who all went directly to the games. Simultaneously the music was turned on. The first people to arrive for the Family Art were a French-speaking woman and her two children, a girl about 9 and a boy about 7. She remarked on the music, which I found almost unbearably loud, and said that she had hoped they would have the program in the small room next door instead, the room known as the "fitness testing" room, although it was simply a small carpeted room with no furniture or equipment in it. (Looking at the little family I thought they seemed out of place; I wrote that I would not have wanted to bring my small children there. Besides the loud music, the environment was pretty rough, with the regular smoke breaks on the patio, and the rowdy play. Most of the kids who used the games room were much older than the children at the clay table.)

By the time the clay finally arrived--about a half an hour later--there were 12 people around the table besides me, Deborah, and Chad--a fairly good turn out. In addition to the French mother and her children, there was an Asian mother and her daughter, about 8, and three Asian girls (about 9, 9, and 11 years) who seemed to be on their own. A Caucasian woman, wearing jeans and a white sweatshirt, came with a young child, perhaps 3 or 4 years, and two girls, about 5 and 7 years respectively. Later two more boys and a girl came to join the group. It seemed as if the mothers were engaged in this activity with one or two children while others in their care were involved in other programs, as additional children would later arrive and some there to begin would leave, while the mothers stayed throughout.)

Two of the little girls ran around the room chasing ping pong balls with paddles. Although Chad was officially there to help, he mainly made things himself with the clay. I asked him if he had worked with clay before and he told me not for a long time. He worked quickly, rather frenetically I thought, trying to force together an ashtray. I tried to help him but I wasn't sure what he was trying to do. It was incredibly hard to hear--you had to get very close to people to hear what they were saying. I missed Deborah's demonstration because I had turned away briefly to talk with the room supervisor. I realized that my whole observation had occurred in that context--of not being actually able to hear what people were saying to each other at all. Because the music obliterated every other sound, it had the effect of watching TV with the sound off. I'm not sure how Deborah managed to explain what people were to do, although apparently she had.

There were not enough chairs and I had given mine up to one of the children. We were crowded into one corner of the room and it was difficult to move either along the outside edges of the chairs, down the narrow aisle between the clay table and the ping pong table or to squeeze between the chairs and the wall. Ping pong

balls were continually flying over into our area, and people took turns retrieving them and sending them back. (Deborah told me later that she felt like she needed to duck several times to avoid being hit in the head.) Standing back in a corner, I kept having to move and began to feel like I was in the way and simply adding to the congestion. Eventually I moved out of the room and sat in the snack bar by the glass windows to watch. I felt relieved to be out of the crush and the din.

Everyone had started making coil pots. One of the small Asian girls was making a tiny one that was only about two inches in diameter. Chad scrapped the ashtray he was making and started building up coils, but had not made a base for the pot, so there was a big hole in the middle. Later I saw him talking to Deborah, who gestured toward the hole, obviously wondering about it too. Soon after that I saw him out on the patio having a smoke. A young boy who had joined the woman in the white sweatshirt fashioned a long narrow clay form. He showed it to the woman and then another boy who had just joined the group. Then he held it up with an outstretched arm, as if to show the whole room, the long object in front of the clenched fist of his other hand. I don't think it was a rocket ship.

The door to the patio swung open and four young women--they looked about 13 to 15--breezed quickly into the room. With them was a young man with Asian features wearing a long, near floor-length tweed coat, his hair cut in a contemporary style. They stood in a clump to watch a pool game for a moment and then moved into the snack bar, choosing a seat near me. One of the girls said loudly that she had to go to the bathroom, and for the boy to stay right there, not to go away, and did one of the other girls want to go with her?

Later I wrote in my journal that the two groups in the games room--those at the clay table and those at the games--seemed to be distinct in several ways--age and gender in particular. Arguably the little girls had been distracted from the clay project by the games, and the boy who had made the clay phallic symbol had found it necessary to ensure that everyone in the room knew his gender affiliation

This scenario was actually a fairly typical one for children's art experiences at the East Side site. Most children's art programs there were presented either in the context of this monthly activity, a more general program (pre-school or school break day-camps), or, occasionally, in a short one-session holiday workshop such as Halloween Spooky Crafts or Christmas Stocking Making. (The adult pottery program at East Side was well established, however, and I will describe that later). In contrast, the West Side site had several short term (8 to 10 week)

programs that focused exclusively on some visual art content. The description to follow reveals, then, a very different kind of recreational art experience.

Children's Art at the West Side Centre.

Excluding preschool levels, all the visual art classes at the West Side Centre took place in a room about 30 feet wide by 60 feet long, which was in the older wing of the building. This room was divided near the centre by a folding accordion-style wall, although it was usually not pulled across. One of these sections was specifically for clay work, and the other half was used for more general visual art activities, although it was sometimes used for other things as well. In the case of children's classes, the two spaces were often in use simultaneously and given that there was only one small sink and both spaces were rather cramped, this could sometimes be a problem.

Compared to other rooms in the building, this room was rather dirty and cluttered looking. Several sets of tall wooden cupboards--painted "liver colour" as one dismayed art instructor put it--and each individually padlocked, served as individual and common cupboards for supplies. One day when the drama instructor came into this room and climbed up on a chair to get down two large boxes from atop the cupboards, I learned that her boxes of costumes and dress-up clothes were also stored here. Boxes of office paper and various miscellaneous objects--a jumble of white metal pipes of unknown use, for example--were piled on top of the liver cupboards. On a small table near the centre of the room was a stack of large paintings, obviously completed by children in a previous week. On top of the pile is a handwritten note on a piece of white paper the same size as the paintings: Please don't touch. Nora's paintings. Do not pile stuff on top. Thanks!"

To one side of the room, was the rack that contained long rolls of coloured, white, and brown paper--some for art work, some for covering the table tops. As many as 15 more of these rolls, still wrapped in paper or in boxes, stood on end on the floor, clustered together near the wrack. One end of the room had a few old wooden tables and several wooden easels. For some months an old table-top loom was also kept here, the cut warp strings dangling off it, a regular fascination and distraction for children who came in for classes. The other end, which was used for the pottery classes, had the single sink, spattered with paint and clay, above which an also-spattered sign was posted: "PLEASE KEEP THIS AREA CLEAN". In this area there were several smaller tables that were always covered with clay pieces in various stages. Large canvas-covered boards covered a large table area where people could work with clay, and near by another large liver coloured cupboard filled with supplies such as clay tools and glazes. Two electric kilns, one smaller one and a larger one were separated off from the rest of the room by a tall metal mesh "cage" with a door and padlock. Near the sink, a doorway led to another small adjoining room where there were six small electric wheels and more shelves for storing clay work as it dried. The floor throughout the room was pale green linoleum.

The following scenario describes a drawing and painting class taught by Nora on Monday afternoons from 4 - 5:30. Although the course is advertised for 9 -12 year-olds, one boy, who Nora considers advanced and talented, has been permitted to take the class although he is only 8. At 4:30, a children's clay class also begins in the other half of the room, although this description focuses on Nora's class.

The room is set up by pushing all the tables and chairs back to the edges of the room so that the floor space is clear. Nora and the children sit on the linoleum floor near the centre of the room, clustered in a small informal circle. There were

3 boys and 5 girls at first. Two of the girls are Asian and speak to one another in Chinese. Their English is broken and Nora speaks more slowly to them than to the others. All the rest of the children are Caucasian. The kids are relatively quiet and well-behaved. In fact, they seem tired. It is after school, and they just didn't seem to have a lot of energy. Several of the kids lie down on the floor, feet outstretched behind them, to draw. One boy does much of his work with his head actually lying on his paper, turned to the side so he could see where he was drawing, and another drew lying on his side, knees bent and head down, kind of curled around the paper.

Nora introduces the activity for the day. She says that since they have done painting last week, they would do drawing this week. She holds a book on van Gogh and shows some of his landscapes. She talks about the way in which he uses texture by filling his work with lines and dots. She explains that he had gone outside with his sketch book and looked until he found something he wanted to draw. She talks about how he gives a sense of distance in his drawing, by making things bigger at the front than in the back, that things get smaller as they go away. They would do large drawings in black and white. She shows them a range of materials, two different kinds of charcoal, one which could be brushed over with water to make a tone, some conte, some 6b pencils. "Next session I'm going to get you guys some ink and we're going to experiment with some ink." She shows also the work of Holbein. "Do you know who Holbein was?" She explains that he was a well-known painter who had been the artist for Henry VIII. About fifteen minutes into the class another boy, Ryan, joins the group. As he came in, a woman's voice, apparently his mother, calls, "Sorry we're late". Having just finished the explanation of what would go on that day, Nora re-explains now to Ryan.

Nora said that she doesn't want them to use the pencils too much, that they were to do a landscape, and that they were to put lots of texture in their drawings. "If you do one in black and it gets finished and you're happy with it, then you can do one in black and chalk pastel. She tears off huge white sheets of paper for each child. They form an informal line waiting for their piece. The paper is about a yard square. The children find places on the floor where they spread out their paper. The four boys are generally on one side of the floor, the two Asian girls next to each other, off to the right, and the three Caucasian girls next to each other on the opposite side.

It is near 4:30 now, and Darlene, the pottery instructor has arrived. Her class will take place in the room as well, on the pottery side. The folding curtains are open today, so both classes are visible, divided only by a small table horizontally positioned at the back boundary of Nora's room. Darlene pushes a table from her section into Nora's. It makes a terrible loud screeching noise as it slides along the

floor, so loud that Nora, who is talking at the time, can't speak above the noise.

One boy, Ira, the one Nora had identified as talented, asks if he can do something else besides a landscape. Nora asks what his idea is, and he says a castle. "Do you want to do lots of texture with it?" she asks. The boy agrees and Nora says that it will be okay do that picture then. "Is there anyone else who had a set idea? You're Okay with the landscape?" "Can you do, like a person?" one boy asks. "Can you do a house?" They ask about various alternate ideas. Also, some of the children seem not to know what a "landscape" is. The Asian girls seem not to have an idea. Nora explains "The trees and grass and a river. The mountains, the sea. Just go for it! Do me the mountains and the sea.

Seeing another boy, Jamie, working with a pencil she says to all, "If you get uptight with a pencil I'm taking it away! You've got like 3 minutes to show me you're not uptight!"

Nora says that they might also try using some white paint with the black charcoal. "I like colour!" says one of the girls, offering a mild complaint about the restriction on not using colour.

The two Asian girls haven't started yet. Ryan works just in front of me. He begins to draw a large stone castle. To the three Caucasian girls Nora says, "You three girls, why don't you try using one of these [kinds of conte] 'cause you're using a lot of different colours of conte.

Behind me the children from the clay class have arrived and start thumping their clay on the table, patting and pounding it into balls. Both groups work relatively quietly, but there is a low hum from each and the general noise level in the room increases.

A tall girl wearing black leggings, black shoes and a bright red Esprit sweatshirt seems to need help. Nora sits beside her and they look together at the Van Gogh book. The Asian girls have barely started. They have just a few light lines on their paper. They sit back on their heels and look around. They talk to each other. My impression is that they don't really know what to do, and aren't very interested either. Although one of the girls soon becomes more involved, the other seems listless. They wear poorer clothing than the other children. One of the girls wears overalls that end a couple of inches above her ankles. Nora tries to get them going. By now the other children are all working. "You've got whole worlds--you can put in fences and..."

Nora moves informally around the room, making comments about the various progress that children are making in their work:

Nora (to Jamie): "So what's this all about?" and pointing to an empty section of his paper, "So what's going to happen over here?" Before you get too detailed over here, show me what's going to happen over here" gesturing to the other side of the paper. She is trying to get him to plan out his overall composition first before focusing in too much on the detail.

(To Michael): "Oh that's looking good Michael. Everybody look at Michael's here. His river is done with a light charcoal and this [part is] dark. So we've got a contrast. "Now Ryan, if you've got a lump there...don't you think you need something on the other side? That's the important thing, get the composition in." "Hey Michael! Have you been to Hawaii lately?" Nora remarks on the fact that he often makes pictures with palm trees in them, as he is today. He indicates no, but that he is planning to go soon. Ryan is planning to go over spring break too. "Maybe you'll see each other there" says Nora. "Hey Ira, have you got it in your mind how it's [your drawing is] going to be organized? 'Cause you've got great bits...What you've done is fabulous.

The Asian girls are still having trouble deciding what to make. Nora sounds mildly impatient. "Well, you must know what's outside. Houses and trees and mountains, and rivers....you understand."

Nora, to one of the Caucasian girls, "You're desperate for some colour? Well. We'll have a new rule. You can use one colour besides black. Michael: "I only wanna use the black." Nora: "Yeah, the black is nice all by itself."

Three times during the course of the class Nora attempts to close the accordion-style "curtain" that can be used to separate the two rooms, as the noise has been gradually increasing. She is unsuccessful, however; it sticks and she is only able only to close it part way.

Jamie asks Nora if she has a ruler. Smiling she shakes her head no. "Come on, you do lovely stuff when you're all free..."

Later, looking at Jamie's work she says, "Now you've got a really big problem. It's really hard to make a figure if you don't start at the head. 'Cause if you can't fit in the feet its not a big deal. But if you can't fit in the head, its like a disaster. Now what can we do? " One of the girls suggests, "His head could be in the clouds." Nora says, "It could be half a figure coming down. Or you can just start again...and I'll take that pencil away from you!" She says it gently, but she does mean it. Jamie asks, "Can't we work on a smaller piece of paper?" Nora: "No. You can work on a small piece of paper for ever at home." One of the other boys says, "Here is one of a kind." Nora continues, "Here I'm working on your getting loose." Nora gives him a new huge piece of paper. She sets up the Van Gogh book, on edge so he can see a picture, in front of his paper.

"Ira, you've got your foot on Michael's drawing," Nora says. Ira moves. He seems very absorbed in his work.

To everyone, "Well, you're certainly leaning how to draw with different kinds of [materials]. Michael has been tap tapping on his paper, making the texture marks. Now Ryan is making dots all over the background of his paper, in the "sky" around his castle. He just dot dot dots, often gazing off into the room, not even looking at his paper. Michael comes over to see. "I think you've got enough [dots]. Nora: " The whole thing must be covered. The entire drawing."

To the one girl who is still dawdling, Nora leans over and presses on several bare patches on her page. "What is this! what is this! what is this? "You know how to draw. Do some drawing! Come on. Look at the other kids!"

The rest of the children continue to work and Nora makes comments which encourage them to salvage mistakes, think of ways to improve parts of their drawings or just generally to persevere.

To one of the girls, she says, "What I'd like to see at the end is the whole thing as textured as that, the whole thing built up to that level, pointing to one section.

At 5:12 Ryan seems to be finished. The others continue to work. The uninvolved girl, however just sits. She watches her sister work, and now just looks out the window. Her paper is mostly blank. She makes a couple of light long squiggle lines, rather off-handedly it seems. The boy who started over--Jamie--now states, "I'm done now." But Nora presses him. "What's down here? You don't have to make it really detailed, but it would be nice to kind of indicate..."Really nice, Ryan. It might be nice to bring these out. She shows him how to go over some of the square shapes along the top edge of his castle. "See how it makes it kind of stand out?"

To Michael, "That's a beautiful drawing." "Beautiful, and complete! he responds. "Do you think its complete?" "Why don't you smudge some grass so the trees stand out?" He rubs around the trees. The class finishes off. There is some confusion as both classes converge around the single sink.

Nora's class illustrates how widely recreational art practice can vary from each other and makes clear how socio-economics--in terms of participants ability to pay for a longer term program--can profoundly affect children's art experiences in these sites. It is, for example, far more overtly educational than many recreational art programs. Still, the children work on the

floor and share the smallish room with another class of students.

In addition, while the East Side program maneuvers within a highly distracting physical and aural context, Nora's class reveals how content and the parameters of projects are nevertheless continually negotiated in light of the perception that leisure time doesn't count. Arguably, teachers in schools experience art as a "negotiated" subject as well, since students often perceive it to be concerned solely with personal preference, and all school teachers would recognize this ongoing effort to keep children "on task". Lacking formal sanctioning, however, Nora must use long experience and a kind of personal authority to prod students into accomplishing what she wants them to achieve, and bends around certain issues, like whether or not they may use colour and the subject matter of the work. In one case, however, she is not successful. Nothing she could do would convince one girl to take up the project. I came to understand the issue of authority more fully, however, after a coincidental visit to a school well after my data collection at the centres.

Comparing Leisure Teaching with Formal Teaching.

Near the end of my writing process, I found myself in the art room of a high school situated within a wealthy neighbourhood in Greater Vancouver. Although I was there for the purpose of conducting student interviews for someone else's research, I was struck by what I heard as I stood at the back of the room. The teacher was an active, experienced, and highly respected female art educator. She had worked hard, probably harder than most, to make her art program of the highest calibre. Now she was in the process of introducing a new drawing project in which her students were to select objects from their own environments and produce five drawings from observation. The grade 9 students sat around the wide art tables which lined

either side of the room. I recognized the stunned sleepy faces with which so many teens--including my own daughters--seem to maneuver through their days. She stood behind the students, often facing their backs, walked up and down the centre aisle, and spoke in a slow, deliberate, forceful voice. She explained precisely what kinds of drawings she did and did not want her students to produce--no "pretty", no "cute", no cartoon characters, no generic cliches. She wanted to see drawings that recorded her students real lives and showed something of their everyday environments. There was an edge to her voice as well, a slight insinuation, albeit a bit humorous, that some students would inevitably choose the less satisfactory solutions. Every student was attentive--or at least as attentive as could ever be expected given the age group. Her carriage was erect and poised. This, I thought later, was a teacher who had assumed power. I thought about how taking this authority was essential in schools, and that a teacher's survival depended on it if both teacher and content were to be taken seriously, especially for a female in a marginal subject like art. She seemed strong, determined, and tenacious, and I admired her for that. Nevertheless, I believe this woman literally embodied the difference between teaching practice in schools and community centres.

Pottery Contexts and Adult Participants.

The adult pottery program at the West Side Centre was not as old and established as that at the East Side centre. Only in the last two years had a "Pottery Club" been initiated, a practice which allowed those registered in classes to use the pottery studio anytime it wasn't in use, and non-registered students to use it for a small fee. So far there hadn't been a heavy use of the space in this way. The adult classes, however, were popular and the centre usually had two per week. (In addition, the centre had pottery classes for children from pre-school to teen age). This section

describes an adult class taught by Leslie, a young woman who had recently graduated from the local art college:

There are five young women (in their early 20's I guess) who attend Leslie's pottery class on the night I am observing. They are all Caucasian. Three of them have signed up together specifically so that they can do "female bonding", they joke, because they are friends and don't get to spend enough time together. One says--also joking--that she had been out of the country at the time and had been signed up "without her consent". They gaily tease each other throughout the evening. When one is struggling, for example, another says, "Gee---you make me feel better" (implying the other's rather unsuccessful attempts make her own products look good.) The other two women seem to work together as well, although I can not be sure if they had known each other previously. Leslie does a demonstration on the wheel, showing how to make a candle holder by first throwing a small plate and then pulling up a tiny cylinder in the centre. (She had done this very same demonstration for her 10 -12 year old group when I visited them the previous day.) While she works she gives hints about centring--"Put the clay on the wheel in the same direction that it has been wedged; Make it into a flat-topped cake shape to begin...". She goes through the procedures step by step, throwing skilfully as she speaks. Two of the young women not with the "friends" group watch the demonstration and then try throwing on their own. Later one tells me that she has "only thrown several lumps of nothing."

Leslie also does a demonstration at the handbuilding table. She shows how to get a marbled effect by first pressing different colours of clay blocks together, flattening them, slicing, them, and laying them out side by side to roll a slab. Another method involves pressing holes into one piece of clay, stuffing clay of another colour into the holes, and then rolling it out. While Leslie works, one of the young women quips that the slabs were making her hungry, reminding her of a Big Mac. Earlier one of the women had taken a clay mask she made out of the kiln, but was disappointed because she thought that the glaze would turn out differently.

Once the demonstrations are done and the women begin to work on their individual projects, Leslie works at mixing glazes. She remains busy at this for the remainder of the time that I stay, about an hour. Earlier she had told me that she did all the firing, and got paid extra for that. She said that before she hadn't, but now that there was a pottery club, there was more work to be fired, and so she was paid extra. On Mondays she stayed through from her first class, from 4:30 to 6:00 and then had a class from 7:45 to 9:45 pm. Mondays, she said, were long days.

Out in the West Side lounge area at 8:50 pm, the Juice Bar is closed and the lights are dimmed. The space is empty except for Sarah, a part time staff person who is behind the counter and the centre quiet except for the noise that can be heard down the hall in the gymnasium. There three volleyball games are set up across the floor, and the room is nearly filled--I estimate 36 to 40 people. About 5 of these are women, all of whom seem to be in their late teens or early 20's, and except for a few men with slightly greying hair, the rest are all men of about the same age as the women. All but two seem to be Caucasian. The teams clap each time they make a point and rotate spaces

At the East Side Centre, as noted, the pottery program was well-established, although it was offered only for adults. The two classes offered each term enjoyed consistently high enrollment and the "pottery club" there attracted a small core group and often one or two artists from the neighbouring community on a transitory basis. When I arrived on the scene the club was currently working to raise money for a new, badly needed kiln. (One of the things they did, for example, was to sell some of their work at the Centre's Christmas Craft Fair.) This goal was eventually achieved with the help of the centre's board. Like the West Side program, adult classes here attracted a far greater number of females than males. Many participants lived near the centre; others worked in the area and found it convenient to take early evening courses here as well.

Beyond the ongoing problems with the kiln, there had been difficulties convincing the board that something had to be done to keep clay from clogging the pipes throughout the centre and destroying the centre's entire plumbing system--the sinks used for cleaning up did not have clay traps installed in them. In addition, the room in which the pottery classes took place at the East Side centre was even more cramped and cluttered than the one on the West Side, to the point that moving anywhere in the room was always cause for caution. A room of about 30 x 40 feet, it had counters on two sides that were filled with pottery room paraphernalia: wooden batts;

rolling pins, clay tools, plastic buckets; plastic bags, and various "unsuccessful" hand-made vessels that were now turned to functional purposes for the studio. Perpendicular to the wall on the window side were three short open metal shelves, a bare minimum of space between each, used for storing clay projects at various stages of completion. Across the front ends of these was a metal pipe coat rack. Nearby, along the floor, was a myriad of plastic buckets filled with glaze and slip, and in a tiny room off one end--actually a closet--was the electric kiln. There were two small work tables in the room, one a sturdy canvas covered one, and the other a flimsier looking wooden one with fold-down metal legs. A stack of grey metal chairs was, on this night, blocking the closed door into the next room. All the equipment and furniture were carefully positioned around the room with just enough space to squeeze between them along a narrow path.

There were also three electric wheels, clustered together at one side. Unlike the wheels at the West Side site which whirred softly when turned on and were not noticeable in the main room, the East Side wheels had a loud high-pitched sound of grating metal when turned on, making casual talk nearly impossible when anyone was doing wheel work. The fact that there were so few wheels meant that students had to take turns using them. During the first classes each session, however, when there were usually 12 people registered, accommodating this number in the small space was rather difficult. Inevitably, however, by about the third class, a few people would drop out. The instructor had grown to count on this "attrition" to make the class more manageable.⁵

As noted, usually this room was used by two evening classes per week and a small group

⁵This "drop-out" characteristic of adult continuing education programs is very common and well-documented. In this sense, it should not be interpreted as reflecting negatively on the centre, the program, or the instructor.

of pottery club "regulars". During one of my visits, however, I watched a special tile-making workshop related to the East Lake Restoration Project.

The East Side Tile Workshop for All Ages.

As I have noted, the East Lake Restoration project was initiated by community members who were concerned about the poor water quality, the decreasing numbers of fish and other lake life, and the gradual reduction in water levels in the East Lake, resulting in the closure to swimmers for the past several summers. As part of a process of "community development" around this concern, the department had hired a project coordinator and an artist whose functions would be to raise public awareness and discussion about the problem and initiate public processes to generate solutions. This was a long and complex project involving numerous public meetings and events. Both the causes of East Lake's problems and the end goal for the park were disputed. For example, some people wanted to maintain the park for use by people's recreation-- such as swimming and field games-- but others believed that these were part of the problem and wanted the park returned to its original and relatively wild state. Much of the coordinator's role was to generate publicity around East Lake's circumstances in general, and, for example, when the City suddenly agreed to do a long-requested core sample of the lake--which would, it was believed, clarify the problem--the project coordinator had it delayed for a week so that she would have time to inform the media about the act.

The artist's role in this project was somewhat ill-defined, and in the end numerous staff members perceived the "art" part of the project to have been rather peripheral to the key concerns of the project. Visual art was used quite extensively, however, during an open house to illustrate natural and human histories of the region--and therefore presenting some of the complex issues

in a briefer form--and to decorate the centre in ways that celebrated East Lake.

In addition, a series of free clay tile making workshops were held in which participants were asked to make tiles that recorded their relationship to the lake. These tiles were later fixed to the tops of the wooden tables in the Snack Bar. This in itself was somewhat controversial, as the table tops contained carved initials and other bits of "history" that were important to the teens in the Games room. Further, because of what was perceived as a health issue, the department insisted that the tiles be "sealed" in resin--a move which the pottery instructor saw as unnecessary, given that glazed tiles are in fact vitrified. The resin, however, made it possible to include bits of organic material--moss, leaves, reeds, etc. from the Lake to be embedded in the table tops, adding another dimension to the finished table tops. The following excerpt describes one of the tile making workshops:

I arrived at the pottery room at about 7 pm, but was asked by the project coordinator to run an errand--to see if there were some name tags in the office--and then if I could share some of my paper so they could record the names of people participating. As part of the coordinator's job would be to prepare a final report on the project, this kind of record-keeping was necessary. By the time I was re-settled at about 7:25, there were 19 people in the pottery room. Including me, the instructor, the coordinator, there were 11 adults. (The single "teen" was Chad, who was also "volunteering" for this project. By 8:10, however, he was gone.) The rest were children of various ages. Everyone in the room looked Caucasian, with the exception of one young woman, who looked Asian. She, however, spoke perfect English. The instructor had rolled out flat slabs of clay and cut them into uniformly square tiles. These were laid out on the canvas-covered work table, along with some photocopied botanical drawings of flowers and plants found near the lake. The workshop participants could then carve drawings into the clay and "paint" them with coloured glazes--a slip with stain in it, I was told. Afterwards they would be fired in the kiln.

The three electric wheels were pushed to one end of the room and two people sat on them to work on their tiles. Most of the rest sat on grey metal chairs around the long low table near by. They were elbow to elbow.

At 7:35 a tall man with glasses spoke to a boy wearing an over-sized maroon sport jersey with a large number "42" on the back. "See ya later, bub." "Where ya goin', Dad?" "Baseball Meeting," the man said as he rushed out. Two middle-aged women had quickly made a tile each and left, all in about 15 minutes. A girl about nine years old had started a tile that had a small pond-like shape at the bottom with some small spiky tufts of grass sticking up out of the shape. She explained to the instructor that, "the pond was all garbagy."

An older woman with grey braids wrapped around her head and wearing a maroon smock showed me several little drawings she had made in the park the day before. There were lovely flowing bare trees and scenes of the lake on a clear winter day. The drawings were done with what looked like a ball point pen on white paper about 4 x 6 inches. She said that there were so many beautiful things around the lake and that she was "supposed" to be walking that day--I got the impression that this was for her health--but that she had ended up drawing instead, as if she couldn't resist. Someone told her she could bring the drawings in and use them to make a tile, which was why she was here.

At 7:45 a woman wearing a green plaid shirt said, "We're going to go soon," to the children she was with, encouraging them to finish what they were working on. The boy with the #42 on his jersey told her he was on his third tile. "Your third! You're the guy who didn't want to come!" said the woman. To one of the young girls, a second woman said, "Did you put your name on it?" "You don't have to," replied the girl. "How will you know if it's yours?" asked the woman (probably her mother). "It doesn't matter if its yours," said the girl.

The boy in the jersey spoke to a younger boy wearing a grey hooded sweatshirt. "It that yours?" "Yeah." "Well, I think you kind of messed up the paint." "It's still mine," said the boy.

As the woman with the two girls encouraged them to finish their work, one said, "Can we come back? Are there any more of these?" "I think there are two more times.

We'll see what we have to do." At this point the coordinator told them about another event coming up, "A Wacky Love Affair with the Lake" for Valentines. When asked what that would involve she said, "I have no idea, but it will be in this room!"

By 8:05, the only people still working on tiles were the elderly woman, the two girls, and the woman who spoke to one of them earlier. The boys, who were getting ready to leave, were investigating the electric wheel and turning it on to hear the grinding metallic sound. Some of the jackets had been put up high on one of the cupboards during the workshop, and they now had clay dust on them. As the woman began to brush them off, the instructor joked, "Welcome to the

pottery studio!"

At 10 minutes after 8, I counted 34 tiles laid out to dry. 8 more were still in progress, so most people had made at least two. Many of the finished pieces were surprisingly beautiful. The little girl who had made the "garbary" pond had drawn rolling mountains behind it, topped at the upper left corner with a sprig of a tree and balanced by a yellow sun diagonally crossing the corner. There were also depictions of a green lizard, a fat frog with a long pink tongue, a dragon fly in a field of tiny flowers, and a close-up view of reeds or grass. The older woman's tile was a graceful piece made from her drawings--a landscape painting really.

These excerpts of activities in the pottery rooms at both centres provide further evidence about the nature of the recreation centre contexts in which art experience and teaching occurs in recreation centres. At the West Side Centre, we see again the assumption of leisure and fun, and the deliberate choice of adult students to enrol in programming for the purpose of socializing. Indeed one person was not even consulted about taking the class. But these scenarios also reveal moments of disappointment and frustration that individuals can experience when work does not go well, and that are arguably realities in art learning. In addition, it elaborates on both the very explicit teaching that goes on in these classes and the continual work that is required, by the instructor, in this case, in simply maintaining the studio. As well, this excerpt reveals the extent to which these adult classes in particular attract more women, in contrast with the gymnasium filled with males playing volleyball just down the hall.

At the East side site is an example of mixed adult and child classes that typify much of recreation centre activity and the kinds of interaction that occurs. This description, however, seems to capture simultaneously both the cluttered make-shift nature of the facility and the very positive potential for meaning and making sense of one's world that art experiences can sometimes provide.

Art for Preschool and Young Children.

I include a section about art for young children in recreation centres for two reasons. One is that art programming is more prevalent for this age group than for any other in these sites. In addition to programs that focus on visual art experiences for younger children, recreation centres provide many programs that focus on play and socialization in general, and in which visual art is almost always a component.

My abiding memory of observing these classes, however, concerns the relative frenzy that I associate with them, particularly when a somewhat larger group of children (10 or more) was involved.

In some cases, frenzy in young children's classes seemed exacerbated by the rooms themselves. At the East Side Centre, for example, an independent preschool used a room in the basement of the building. Moving around the room one could see a large carpeted area used for talking and reading stories; several tables that had different art and manipulative activities set up each day; a table with play dough, cookie cutters, and rolling pins; "real" kitchen with sinks and space for preparing snacks; a "play" kitchen; a dress-up and imaginative play area; a music station, from which music almost always emanated (I remember hearing the sound track from the Disney movie, "The Little Mermaid"); and shelves positioned all around the room filled with toys and games of every sort. One day when I was observing, the teachers began the session with everyone at the carpet, and introduced the art activity that day, which involved painting hearts with thick pink paint, for Mother's Day. When the introduction was finished, the children--there were about 20--ran out into the room, many of them rushing to the "art" station and quickly filling the six chairs around the table. Three minutes later, however, only two children were still

there working, and they were soon gone as well. The time spent at the art table was, in almost all cases, a matter of a few minutes. I wrote in my reflections that children often seemed to be running from one place to the next and the next, frantically trying to "get it all in." When it was time for snack break, the teachers flicked the lights to signal children to return to the rug, turned off the music, and then kept the lights dim for a while to help them calm down and re-focus.

At the West Side Centre, a room regularly used for preschool classes was similarly equipped and set-up. In one program in which parents or care-givers stayed with the children during class, the instructor had set up numerous extra art activities in addition to all the activities that were already available. In part this was because there were extra adults there to help; in part, I understood, it was because she was particularly conscientious, and wanted to make the most of the brief time she had with the children.

The theme that day was "shadows" and the special activities included painting on black paper cut in the shape of moving figures; a figure-tracing activity where children were to lie down on a long piece of paper while an adult traced around them with a felt marker--the children could then decorate the tracing in a way they liked; and an area set up with a large white piece of paper and a projected light, where children could make shadows. There was also a special story about shadows. In addition, there were the usual activities: play dough; regular easel painting; the sand box full of shovels, dump trucks and devices to pour the sand through; the play kitchen area; the small wooden house to go inside; the blue plastic slide; the rocking boat; the water play table; shelves full of toys--train tracks, large cardboard bricks for building, cars and trucks, puzzles, and a "sensory" table with magnets. The class was one hour in length and took place once per week.

In some cases, where recreation programs did not occur in such rooms, and where there was a special focus, instructors essentially had to rely on their own sheer will and energy to keep a group of young children focused and busy for the allotted time. In the Baby Orff class, for example, the instructor essentially "performed" non-stop for a group of parents and their 18 month old children by singing and playing a variety of instruments for forty-five minutes: "The wheels on the bus go round and round...the Doctor said, Put that monkey right to bed!" The instructor started at one end of the room, strumming guitar and singing, while parents with children on their laps sat in chairs in a circle around him. When the first few songs were completed, they all stood up and moved to the mat in the middle of the room and sang a few more songs. Then they all stood up and moved again, toward the window at the end of the room. Eventually they ended up back where they began. This week, one of the mothers told me, had been good as far as keeping the kids attention, that sometimes almost all of the kids are at the window when they are supposed to be at the mat. The instructor told me that the kids go for weeks "not doing" anything [not participating] and then all of a sudden they know it all [know all the songs].... They're taking it all in. They're taking it all in." One woman brought in a sleeping child and had to wait for him to wake up in order to take part in the class.

Or the preschool dance teacher who talked continuously during the class for 3 and 4 year olds, working feverishly to keep everyone together and paying attention. All were little girls, and most were wearing pink leotards, ballet slippers, and pale pink or hot pink gauze tutus. "Now lets make a circle, now lets BLOW the circle up like a big balloon. And we plie and bend our knees, but do we stick out our bottoms or our tummies? No! No! We stretch our tendons so we can jump! jump! and twirl. We pretend we have glass slippers on and tap our feet lightly."

[and then the children are divided into two groups, half are witches and wear black felt hats and capes and half are flowers, who get scarves and flowered headbands; there is some confusion while the costumes are put on] "And we hold our scarves high... there's enough pink for everyone! Then we do our story. And the beautiful flowers grow up and twirl as the wind blows them to the mountain top, and then the Witches come after them, and the wind blows them back to the mountain top...." and so on for forty-five minutes.

In other cases, the difficulties of working with young children who had already spent a day at school, but in a setting where the instructor has little real authority became painfully apparent:

The West Side Clay Handbuilding class for six to eight year-olds took place on Tuesdays from 3:30 to 4:30. The class is taught by Katherine, an energetic woman who is both experienced with and seems to delight in working with children. By 3:40, there were seven boys and five girls in the class. The children had each pushed a metal folding chair up to the canvas-covered table and were working elbow to elbow. There was barely enough space for everyone to squeeze in. The activity for the day was to make or continue working on a slab castle. Some of the children had started theirs the previous week, but some children were away and so needed to start theirs now. Others could not be convinced to try the castle project and would work on projects of their own choice. Katherine, having just gotten the work from a class that finished at 2:15 put away in the cupboards, now begins to try to locate the work from this class. "Uh, oh. Now whose is this? Now you see how important it is to put your initials on. Is there anybody who can't find their castle?" she asks, holding one up. The children are noisy though, and seem distracted. Holding a book, Katherine says, "I wanted to show you some pictures. Remember last week we looked at some of the pictures in this one." While she speaks, two boys began to bang the table with their rolling pins. Thump Thump Thump. "Excuse me but that's not really a sensible thing to do", says Katherine, and then resumes, "Look at where the soldiers are at the top of the tower. Look inside the castle. One of the boys rolls the rolling pin back and forth on the table, making another distracting noise. This boy and another now begin a pretend sword fight with the rolling pins and then play at using the rolling pin as a baseball bat. There are only two rolling pins and others need them anyway, so Katherine asks the boys to pass theirs along to someone else. "We should have one! Batter up! Play Ball!" "Excuse me, if you don't want your rolling pin, then

you can pass it" says Katherine. One of the boys--whose behaviour would be particularly bad today-- has no clay and now begins to chant, "I need clay! I need clay" in a high pitched voice. Katherine says, "Why are you speaking in a silly voice today? When you talk in a big voice, you can have your clay too." This boy and one other begin to throw their clay onto the table haphazardly. "Batter up. Play Ball!" they repeat this over and over, slamming the clay onto the table with the "pitch". "Its going down...its NO GOOD! It's a HOME RUN! FOOTBALL!" Katherine: Could we have quieter voices please?" "YAAAHAH!" By 4:00 pm nine of the children are working relatively quietly, and Katherine has been extremely busy attending to each child's different project, arranging a numbered waiting system for sharing the two rolling pins, and cautioning about over watering the clay or handling the drying fragile castles too roughly. Two of the boys, however, continue to make a great deal of noise by slamming clay onto the table and talking loudly in a way that gets attention. "Shit!" says one. "I only say that at my house, he informs the other. "I can't or I have to put five cents in the swear jar." Katherine:" Guys, can you be a little more quiet? Its really hard to work when you are making so much noise. "UP YAAAAAH! SCUUSE ME!" Says one. Katherine," This is the noisiest you have ever been. Why are you being so noisy today?" Although the worst of the two begins at last to work on a project his yelling and demanding behaviour continues. "I need the knife. I need the knife. HELLOOOO! I need the knife! I need the knife! I need the knife! Katherine, at last becoming a bit exasperated, has this exchange with the boy: "Your behaviour hasn't been very good today." "It's bad because I had a bad day at school" "At school?" "A screaming day! I screamed all day!" "Well, it must have been hard for your teacher. "It was." Having admitted this, the boy does, however, seem to settle down a bit for the remainder of the class.

In addition to this issue of chaos in young children's classes, I also identified what for me was a surprising theme in art instructor talk, that of "Crying Children". The following excerpts reveal not only how instructors experienced this phenomenon, but how art activities became entangled with it. I rely on interviews rather than field notes here because, in cases where classes actually contained crying children, I was told that my presence as an observer could make matters worse.

[In] the class before this, a little girl, she cried--she was younger than everybody else, actually, she was quite young, but she was going through a phase...where she didn't like to be separated from her mum, and was afraid of new things for the first time. Usually she [was] used to day cares and new environments, and she

adjusted quite well, but she was at a point in her life that she wasn't too sure about this. So she pretty well cried all the way through the class. And it was quite distressing for the other kids. And they would look at her and ask, "Why are you crying?" and she wouldn't answer. She would just howl even louder. And [the other kids] were saying, "Oh, you're hurting my ears! Be quiet! Be quiet!" They were holding their ears and saying, "Be quiet! We're trying to listen to the story!"... She finally broke from it. We were making paper in one of my classes, and the kids were quite enthused about making paper. [And] she seemed to be, but when it actually came down to getting your hands wet, she just [got] up against the cupboards and stayed there [saying] "I don't wanna make paper. I do not want to make paper." And I went to get her mum. It was getting to the point where she was too much... Her mum was in a preschool class with her younger [sister]. And I went to find her, and she wasn't there. It turned out she was in the washroom. So, that's the worst situation. A child crying. Constantly. It was hard on everyone in the class. But she got over it. And, the last two or three classes actually she was fine. It was, well, she missed one class, so four classes she cried, all the way through. Well, almost all the way through, three quarters of the way through. And so she finally eased into it, and everyone was happy, and at the end the funniest thing was [she said], "Oh, well. I'm not really a morning person." Hearing that from a little three and a half year old is priceless. And the kids kind of looked at her funny. [Jenny]

So, for the twos, the course was called By Myself, and it was a ten week session with eight two-year-olds, the goal being that first experience on their own. And, of the eight, maybe five or six of them were able to be on their own after the end! [Ann]

[In the program this preschool instructor teaches] most of the children are one, two, two and a-half, three.... We have songs and nursery rhymes, and short colouring [time], like something very easy, or a little cut out, frog, or anything that interests them. You know, on a stick. Their attention spans are very minimal at that age.... We have toys and the climbing apparatus... we have snack time.... And the hour goes very quickly. Sometimes we have a little piano which we take out and I sing the songs and we play on that little piano. And other than that I use my tape a lot.... [With] the two to fours.... I have four days of that, those are a little bit more structured.

Lara: So, what do you think, besides all of the things that you do, then, how do you understand what it is that you're trying to achieve with the kids, overall?

Patricia: I'm trying to teach them to be sort of independent... without their parent at that age. Not independent like an adult or a teenager, [but] as a little person. It shows them a bit of independence, that they can be on their own.... And a lot of

parents don't believe that their children can be by themselves, and they have to be there. It's just one hour or two hours out of one or two days a week.... It's just teaching them to be on their own, and learning some social skills.... It gives the parents a bit of freedom, and both of them, when they're re-united again, it's so nice, 'cause they're so happy to see each other.... [Other instructors who allow the parents to stay in the room] have a difficult time because the children do not listen when the parents are in the room. It's just the way kids are. My mom's here. I don't need to be focused on this person, I go to my mum.... Yeah. To be honest, a lot of parents have problems with a lot of it. They do not want to leave their children. They're paranoid, they connect themselves. Like, I have one now, she's just started her boy. He's come five times [and] he's cried all five times. He came today, he cried for about fifteen [minutes].... He's like seventeen months now, but he's like a clinging vine [on his mother]. He's part of her shoulder. And I said to her, "Boy, it's going to take you a long time," but I said, "He's doing a lot better, believe it or not".... And at the end [today] he wasn't crying.... You know, so for the parent to leave, it's hard, too...the first day in September, you should see them. They all hover around out there at that door and they want to see Johnny or Timmy. And what are they doing in there, and did mine stop crying? But they do. And it's hard for them to see it.... Some snap out of it in two days,...some take 10 days, some take a whole year. But they do stop. And...some parents say, "It's going to wreck them for the future." But I don't believe it does. I think it helps them.... We're here for a fun time, and to enjoy ourselves. It's not like we're in a dungeon in here or anything.... And then I have the ones that persist, like on Friday I had Ewen, and Ewen cried and cried, and one of the mothers said, "Oh, no. I can't do this. How can you do this? Don't you feel sad?" I said, "Sure I feel bad because they're crying, but they're not hurt. They're crying because of a separation.... Once they understand, that lousy little hour is hardly anything. The kids are fine.

L: Okay, then. The other question I wanted to ask you is just about, if you could talk about all of the ways that you see art or craft activities fitting into your program. And what do you think those are for....why do you do it?

Patricia:....There is a reason. I find it to be very relaxing for some children...If they're really getting wound up and they're running around, and you say it's craft time or art time, automatically they all run to the table, and stop. What are we making today? ...And once they all get into it, it's a peaceful time. It's mind relaxing, and everybody gets time to collect themselves again, I feel....If you're having a really rough day and everyone's out of control, just bring out those crayons or paints or something.... Everybody wants to paint. And some kids will rebel, they'll slap it down, and it goes flying, and they'll rip up their paper, that's okay, we let them do it. Basically they're taking out their frustrations.... They could paint all day if I let them. Yeah, it's a relaxer. [Patricia, preschool instructor]

The frequency with which instructors talked about both crying children and the need for children to learn independence suggests the overall importance of this theme in terms of tacit organizational roles. For parents, children's independence was arguably part of preparation for school. Although recreation has been described as a realm which is distinct from schools and even opposed to overt education, these excerpts suggest the role of the community centre in preparing children to accept both the authority structures and time frames of schooling. Art activity it seems, is a salve that can and is sometimes used in the process, to distract children from their anxiety.

The final excerpt I offer is a description of the development of a community mural, which I observed as it evolved at the East Side site over a period of two months. It further explores the tacit agendas and parameters into which art programming gets placed in recreation centre environments.

The Community Mural

In the games room, on the long wall opposite the video and foos ball games, is the East Side Mural. Painted with latex interior paint on the concrete block wall, it covers the full length and height of the wall, 40 X 10 feet. The image surrounds a small interior window on the left that looks into the gymnasium next door and incorporates into its design a post, a pipe, and another window, all fixtures of the wall. The predominant colours are blues, greens and browns, highlighted with bright reds and yellows. Nearly half of the mural depicts the lake, and the fact that the lower edge of the lake is cut off right where the wall meets the floor gives the viewer a sense of being very close to the water's edge. This perception of closeness is reinforced by the fact that both the post and the pipe, which are against the wall but jut out into the room, have been transformed into three-dimensional trees: one is a brown-trunked fir tree, the other, a black and white "striped" birch, with branches that move out into the room on a ceiling beam and a second pipe. "In" the blue-green lake we can see the reflection of the trees and the mountains that provide the background for the mural. Also in the lake floats a North West Coast Native-style killer whale, a white row boat in red trim, and a large glowing lantern in the shape of a giant sea horse. In the grass behind the

lake is a tall brown totem pole, topped by a North West Coast Native Thunderbird with wings outstretched. On the totem pole are three symbols representing, respectively, world peace, the Yin-Yang, and the organized Gay and Lesbian community. In the pale blue sky above floats a black and yellow Native sun and a grinning Chinese Dragon kite with a long wide brightly coloured tail wafting behind. To the right of the lake is a small sandy beach, the logs against which sun bathers rest, and a brown shingled building for the life guards and the outdoor concession. On the side of this "building" is the logo of the mural's major sponsor, a community-minded credit union, and the names of various individuals who worked on the project. Across the background, on the "grass" are a few pale green silhouette figures taking part in some activity in the park: riding a bicycle; chasing a ball; or doing exercises. An older person is depicted with a cane, walking with a child, and a person in a wheel chair flies the dragon kite up above. The overall effect is serene and cheerful. The scene depicts a bright sunny day, a beautiful geographic setting, healthful recreational activity, and a harmonious multicultural community. The general consensus around the centre is that the mural is a great improvement over the bland institutional wall that had previously been in its place.

What follows is a description of the series of decisions and events that lead to the creation of the East Side Mural.

Background.

The wall mural at East Side Centre was initiated at least in part in response to the city's recently ratified Arts Policy. The application for funding the project had been submitted in the Spring. Now in July, the project was about to be implemented. The sponsoring agency, a local credit union known for providing support to community endeavors, had demonstrated a commitment to social causes by its efforts to support ethical investments and by its unwillingness to co-sponsor projects with organizations perceived as bringing harm to humans or the earth. The had also been willing to risk providing funding for projects that other agencies might deem too controversial or political with which to be associated. The application, prepared jointly by Ryan, the artist/coordinator of the project, and by Sharon, the centre program coordinator, read as follows:

To link seniors and youth in a cooperative mural project to encourage mutual understanding. The theme of the mural is "Working together to preserve the natural environment". A contest will be held to create the design of the mural. Art from different cultures will be incorporated into the design, as part of our outreach to our multicultural community. The mural will be painted on the north side of the games room. This community art improvement project will be open to everyone, but our core participants will be seniors and youth.

The original plan which the centre submitted was that \$250 in prize money would be distributed among "1 to 5" individuals, whose designs would then all be incorporated into the mural. Seniors and youth would subsequently be invited to help reproduce the design on the wall. The project coordinator later explained his hope in this regard that the money would attract some of the teens in the area who might not otherwise see the sense in getting involved.

The credit union representatives, however, felt uncomfortable with this approach, with both the notion that individual artists would be paid to develop the design, and that the design and production legs of the project seemed to be separate. The credit union's philosophy had been to foster community involvement and development. The community project coordinator at the credit union--a highly articulate and enthusiastic woman with a graduate degree in cultural anthropology--noted her own board's wish that projects also have some kind of lasting impact beyond the project itself, and be in some way educational. The credit union's counter suggestion was that the centre re-structure the project in such a way that members of the community be invited to engage in discussion about environmental issues, out of which the mural design could emerge. The centre agreed to do this, and the project was approved.

Of course, the credit union could not be characterized as entirely altruistic. One of the questions on the funding application was: "Specifically how will the project provide Dartmouth Credit with access to the site, service, or program for public relations purposes? Examples might include logos on ads, promotional literature, print advertising, publicity and promotional opportunities. " But to be fair, neither could this sponsor be framed as simply self-serving.

The first planning meeting that I attended took place in July, in the East Side Centre's snack bar [and in fact was my first day in the field there]. At the meeting were Sharon, the centre programmer; Ryan, the project coordinator; Bob, a young man who lived across the street from the centre and had been involved in numerous activities there; Connie, a retired woman who had travelled some distance by public transit from her home in a neighbouring suburb, having heard about the project by happenstance when attending another event; Yara, a woman who lived near by, Yara's 4 or 5 year old daughter, and me.

Ryan, a young art school graduate and professional artist, was employed part time at the centre to do building supervision, supervise one of the indoor sport activities, and occasionally lead art activities in the centre. He was, he told me, sometimes referred to, unofficially, as the "artist in residence" at the centre. He lived in the East Side community, but told me that he had actually grown up in a more affluent area of town. He had worked at the centre for about two years.

Sharon had also worked at the centre for about two years, having transferred to East Side recently from another centre; this was in keeping with organizational policy that encouraged staff to move around from centre to centre throughout the city, in order to get a range of experience and to provide communities with "fresh" ideas on a regular basis. Sharon's job as programmer was essentially to devise and supervise all of the programs offered by the centre, with the exception of fitness and ice rink activities. It required keeping track of an incredible number of details and people, and balancing expectations that the program simultaneously fulfil community needs and honour budget restrictions. The big challenge at East Side, of course, was to provide programming for a community that often could little afford to pay for them. In accomplishing her work, Sharon answered to her immediate supervisor (the centre coordinator), the members of the locally elected centre board, and to an extent the administrators and policies of the central municipal recreation department, who had initiated the arts policy.

Bob was currently enrolled in a community college and hoped to start at a local university when he finished his second year. He was a self-taught artist who enjoyed drawing and painting. His involvement in the project would give him community service credit which, in lieu of summer employment, would make him eligible for a student loan in the Fall.

Connie said that she had been involved in art all her life and had also taught it. She was currently enrolled in a university program as well. When I introduced myself to her and told her about my research, she decided that she would also try to use the project as research, hoping that she could get an independent study credit toward her degree.

Yara, who had taken a Fine Art Diploma program at a local community college, said she was interested in the design process of the mural. When Yara's daughter was asked what she was going to do to help with the mural, she said loudly and emphatically, "Nothing!". All of us were pale skinned and spoke English as a first language.

We were told that a plan to create a "portable" mural, given the multiple and changeable uses of many of the spaces in the centre, had been considered and reflected as too complex. As well, although about 20 people had already participated in brainstorming sessions for the mural, the tendency has been for new people to attend each meeting. This meant that the purposes of the mural had to be re-introduced each time, and created the potential that each new session might take the mural in a completely different direction. As a result, Ryan felt obligated to act both as the facilitator for the current group and as a representative for those who had made previous suggestions.

The project was described as having three themes: multiculturalism; inter-generationalism; and respect for the environment. The inter-generational theme would be addressed by the use of a buddy system, which would be devised so that older people and younger people would be matched up and work on the mural at the same time. Ryan explained the various steps that would be required to complete the project, which would include two more design meetings, the development of an image, and the presentation of the image to the East Side Community Centre Board.

The Style.

The design would be developed by taking photographs around the park and then creating a composition from the subjects selected. Essentially, the mural would be a landscape. Ryan said that the majority would rule as far as choosing the design. He had decided, however, to stay away from styles of "super realism" because he didn't want to "terrorize" people with an over-emphasis on having things look just right. He said that we should get a good sense of proportion, but small discrepancies wouldn't matter so much. He said that the process and the honesty of making the mural were most important. The result would look fairly flat. He emphasized again that the process, not the product was important...that if love was put into it, love would come out of it. He likened it to cooking something with love, that it was always good.

The image would be enlarged onto the wall with a grid system, and all the parts would be colour-coded. Once the design was completed, the design would be kind of like paint-by-number, so that anyone who wanted to could help with the painting. Later he also noted that he did have some parameters about what was appropriate or inappropriate to be depicted. He wanted to suggest a healthy environment and healthy activity, arguing that in our society there was a certain consensus about this, that smoking, drugs, violence, or the debasement of other human beings could not be construed as healthy.

The Youth Symbol.

One image had already been submitted to the mural, a symbol created by the members of the centre "Youth Council", the kids who frequented the games room. The symbol was a kind of "cross" with wings, and had an implied three-dimensionality. The letters E-A-S-T were written on the horizontal bar and the letters V-A-N were written on the vertical bar, intersecting at the "A". Ryan had said that, although frankly he found the symbol rather tacky, even ugly, he was pleased to include it in the mural because it was a representation of the kids' culture. The others were also enthusiastic about incorporating the symbol into the mural.

The Walk Around the Park.

Tonight's task would be for the group to walk around the park taking photographs of scenes or events that might be incorporated into the mural design. Although this had apparently been done already in a previous meeting, the photographs had been either lost or stolen.

In my notes I wrote that it was a golden summer evening as we started for our walk. Ryan was ill and so did not go with us, and Yara and her daughter--who was recovering from the chicken pox and getting tired--left at as well. Sharon, Bob, Connie, and I started out with the camera, walking along a path around the little lake.

The park was filled with people of all ages who were out walking, talking, playing, or just sitting and looking at the water. There were lots of dogs of every shape or size running and socializing; most were unleashed but no one seemed to mind. I was impressed by a group of young men, mostly Asian, who were practicing a martial art on the field. They wore the familiar wide legged pants and wrap-around tunics. Their dance-like movements and bright white clothing looked striking against the green grass.

As we moved along the path around the lake, scenes were pointed out and snapped as good subjects for the mural: the little sandy beach with a bright red life guard's boat pulled up at the edge; a wooden dock surrounded by tall rushes and lily pads floating in the water, maneuvered by many small brown ducks; A young boy with a little green net trying to catch fish from the water's edge; and a bench, facing the water and made of wooden slats. In the background, the mountains were quite purple. The conversations that floated past us that evening were often in languages foreign to me. Music wafted through the air from a small jazz band with a bass player, practicing under one of the willow trees down the hill. I wrote that there was a relaxed feel about the park that seemed to welcome everyone.

The Lake.

The lake, I later learned, had a story of its own which the previous passage does not reveal. Over the past number of years, the community had grown increasingly concerned about the health of the lake, and a group from the community centre had formed to consider the causes and lobby for solutions to the problems identified. For the past number of summers, the lake had been closed to swimmers by the middle of July, roped off with a bright yellow plastic ribbon. There were concerns about the drastically reduced populations of fish and the poor quality of water. The causes of the lake's problems were disputed, but many thought that it was human intervention--the blocking off of underground streams that had provided a fresh water source to the lake and the landscaping and manicuring of the surrounding area for use as playing fields, making it inhospitable

to wild life, that were at the crux of the problem. Lake mythology abounded (especially among the senior members of the community) including stories of mysterious drowning, screaming and rapes behind the blackberry bushes (which have since been cut down), and the salvaging of peculiar things--large appliances, vehicles, horse carcasses--from the water. As well, there were tales of happy childhood summer play and winter ice skating. After this summer when I walked there with the camera crew, the group of advocates would sponsor a concerted drive to raise awareness--through a series of public consultations and events--about the lake's problems and the need to restore it to health.

Events Unfold.

In the next two weeks, two more design meetings took place, and an image for the mural was developed. The process was facilitated by Ryan, and the images were sketched out by Connie, Bob, and a young woman who attended that meeting only. The meetings were of course open to the public, and some advertising had been done, but these were the only people who showed up on these weekday summer evenings. Ryan tried to maintain a distance from the creation of images for the design, encouraging Connie and Bob to work it out themselves. He made the point that this was not his mural, but the community's mural. He wanted people not only to make suggestions about possible content, but to actually take part in the creation of the images.

By the end of the second meeting, a mural design had been completed, sketched on a 10 x 40 inch piece of paper. The image, depicted from a slightly aerial perspective, showed the lake, trees, and mountains in the background and a number of people involved in activity in the foreground. One figure was digging into the earth with a shovel, planting a young tree; a woman read while sitting on a blanket spread on the grass; and elderly man sat on a bench with a child; two young men played soccer, and another played tennis. Behind this group, a woman pushed a baby stroller; children played on the swings; two figures practised Tai Chi; dogs played Frisbee and tugged on leashes; three bicyclists rode along the path around the lake; people played in the water and sat on the beach; and a softball game went on in the distance. On the wall of the depicted community centre, off to the wall, was the youth symbol prominently displayed. At least four different colours were used to depict skin and hair. Several of the figures had long hair, and could be read as either male or female. A man wearing a turban and a woman wearing a sari walked with two children between them.

The image completed, the next step would be to have the design approved by the board of the community centre. Ryan assured the group that this would most likely be simply a rubber stamp procedure. He did not foresee any resistance.

The Board Meeting.

I arrived at the appointed time for the board meeting, expecting to hear a presentation by Ryan, and to see a vote taken by the board which would grant permission for the painting phase of the mural to begin. Instead, I learned that there had been some "problem" with the design, and that the purpose of this meeting would be to re-create the mural. Several staff members had been invited to the meeting, as well as two members of the centre program committee (volunteers) and five new people who had not been involved in the planning to date. Bob, Sharon, and Ryan were also there, but Connie did not attend.

At the meeting itself, the reasons for wanting to re-work the mural were somewhat vague, except that it was suggested that it would be more appropriate to depict the multicultural community through the use of symbols rather than figures, and that figures in any case were "too hard to draw". In conversations later with several staff persons, I learned that the presented mural design was perceived as looking out of proportion or amateurish; as not Ryan's work, as expected (although I felt he had made his stance clear on this); that the use of figures might easily "date" the mural; and that depicting figures from various ethnic groups "realistically" might be perceived as insulting to those groups. There were also concerns that the first mural design would not meet the criteria set out by the sponsor, and that was seen as essential. One individual said that, as the staff was also part of the "community", it was important to listen to their concerns as well.

Bob said later that he did not really understand why it was deemed more important to use symbols than figures, but was willing to proceed with the new plan. At the meeting, he did make the point to the group that this was the first meeting at which more than four people had shown up, indicating that he wished people had made their ideas and concerns known earlier. He had, after all, put quite a lot of time and thought into the project to date. Ryan was surprised and unhappy with the change in direction, felt that the new approach did not respect the ideas and efforts that had already gone into the design, and was now worried about completing the mural according to deadline. He nevertheless felt he had no recourse but to re-work the mural, and still wanted the project to be a success.

The meeting proceeded with the request that everyone brainstorm ideas for symbols that could be put on the mural. A list of possibilities was made: Chinese and Japanese symbols for the martial arts; a dragon kite; a totem pole; a Native salmon; a Buddha; a Krishna; a Shiva. One young man suggested that a "multicultural" totem pole might be included. One person noted that figures could be depicted in silhouette, and idea that was prosed because it left the question of who was being represented open to interpretation.

Throughout the meeting, Ryan tried to encourage people to draw the images that

they were naming. Often people would respond to this suggestion, however, by commenting that they weren't artistic or couldn't draw. Ryan was concerned about how the actual images would get produced. One staff person said, "That's why we have you here, Ryan. You bring together everyone's ideas." As the meeting drew to a close, Ryan tried to get individuals to make commitments to bring examples of the symbols they had suggested to the next meeting, which would by necessity be the final planning meeting.

At the last planning meeting, which took place in one week's time, there was a disappointing turn out, and many of the most vocal advocates of the new plan did not attend. Few people had brought examples of the symbols they had proposed. At this meeting it was also suggested that a depiction of paper lanterns be included on the mural as a representation of the summer solstice event, which drew hundreds of people to East Side Centre on one summer night each year. Connie had not attended the previous meeting, and so the changes and the rejection of the first proposal had to be explained to her. It turned out that this would be the last meeting she attended. She forwarded a message that she wouldn't be able to get the university credit she had hoped to get in return for her participation, and as such it was too far a trip to take. Because Ryan had to order the colours of paint that would be used by the next day, he had to quickly put together a composition from the ideas that came out of the last two meetings. He produced a couple of symbols--the Native sun and the Chinese dragon kite--by amalgamating some images he found at the library. That night at home, he put together the new composition, to scale.

Painting the Mural.

It was fundamentally this image that Ryan had to develop quickly that went up on the games room wall, though it was modified somewhat in the painting process. (The "trees" that grew out into the room, for example, were inspired by the post and pipe that the mural was painted across.) Ryan had hoped to paint over the tiny window that looked into the gymnasium, but was told that he couldn't--it was a security thing. Bob, Ryan, and the young man who had offered the multi-cultural "totem" did most of the painting. Two groups of children also came to work on the mural, one a preschool group from the program in the basement of the centre, and the other a group of children from a summer day camp program based in a near-by school. Occasionally adults or children would help out when they had a bit of free time before or after a program. A few of the games room "regulars" painted, but as the games room was closed for the summer, not that many were around. At least 8 of the "volunteers" who worked on the mural were actually young people who were required to do "community service" at the centre, as restitution for breaking the law, likely some relatively minor offense.

Mid-way through the painting process I realized that the youth symbol had not yet

been put up, and learned that the youth symbol had not yet been put up, and learned that the centre administration had forbidden it. They feared that the symbol might have some gang connotations and decided that, if that were true, the centre couldn't be seen to endorse it. Whether the symbol did or did not have that meaning, or was intended as such by the youths who designed it, was disputed.

The mural took only two weeks to paint on the wall. In September, an opening celebration was held at the centre at which the sponsor, several members of the staff, and participants in the design and painting process received certificates acknowledging their achievement. Overall, the mural was deemed a success. It was generally agreed that the "buddy" system meant to team seniors and youth didn't really work, but that the other goals of the project were largely met. It was recorded that 100 people took part in the project.

Summary.

The East Side mural project was implemented with good intentions and can be understood as an effort to respond to a new mandate recognizing that recreation should be more than sport and fitness. It can also be construed as an attempt to acknowledge the important place of the arts in everyday life. On one level, the process can be viewed as an effort to foster harmony and to portray with respect and dignity the variety of cultural traditions that can be found among the residents of the surrounding community. It was an attempt at community collaboration within a society in which traditional notions of community no longer hold. It may be read as depicting a wholesome and hopeful lifestyle, and as celebrating a beautiful geographic setting. Aesthetically, it suggests a commitment to the need for beauty in our public surroundings, and a rejection of the sterile institutional environments that have been imposed on public spaces.

At the same time, this project raises serious questions about the tacit rules of recreation centre contexts and the ways in which they mould and influence art experience. It highlights, for example, the problems of achieving "community" involvement--and questions claims that it has

occurred--where participation is voluntary. Arguably few of those participating in this project were completely altruistic, and the most involved and committed participants could only justify their involvement if there was to be some tangible return for efforts. Others were "forced" to take part as part of a punishment. In this sense, the relatively idealistic imposition of voluntary rather than paid participation by the sponsor actually acted to exclude members of this community who might otherwise have taken part, and even saw people exclude themselves. The planning sessions, for example, attracted people who perceived themselves as already having artistic skills while others offered ideas but deferred to the "artist" when image development came up, claiming that they "couldn't draw" or "weren't artistic". Given the lack of art education provided in our society, asking people to volunteer here had the effect of maintaining the distinction between the roles of "artist" and "audience", in spite of efforts by the project coordinator to move things in another direction.

What was even more curious about this event, however, was the total rejection, in the end, of any of the images that could be construed as developed by "bona fide" members of the surrounding community. Images produced were rejected on the basis of differences in style preference (as too "realistic") or as not "realistic" (proportional) enough. More profoundly, however, images were rejected on the basis of what were implicitly considered appropriate ways to portray the multicultural community surrounding the centre and the preferred public presentation of the centre itself. Images in the first proposal, for example, portrayed individual people with particular characteristics and features taking part in recreational activity that ranged from sport to playing with a dog, gardening, and reading. It incorporated the symbol created by the youth group, which claimed their membership as part of the East side of the city, rather than

as a member of a particular ethnic tradition.

The second proposal, however, arguably heavily influenced by staff members, chose instead to portray the multicultural community through traditional symbols--which were in the end designed quickly by a young Caucasian man of Northern European descent. People were depicted as blank "shadows", all involved in physical activity (and suggesting maleness to my view.) Adding insult to injury, none of the activities depicted on the mural had any relationship to the kinds of leisure forms in which the kids in the games room took part. And no one was depicted as taking part in art activity. In this sense the mural had become a statement of the Centre's corrected version of appropriate depictions of multicultural communities and appropriate forms of leisure, and a representation of cultural "others" from the staff's perspective. The rejection of the youth symbol had the effect of making explicit the centre's ultimate allegiance to the state. Casting aside the efforts of community members who did try to take part, it also obscured the realities of poverty and social tensions that exist for many who use the room and the centre. The youth members who created the symbol were hurt and angry by the rejection, making the celebration ceremony in which people were rewarded for their involvement seem somewhat less than sincere. Ironically, two years after the mural was completed, and to the dismay of the artist, the ceiling in the games room was painted and parts of the mural that jutted into the room as "tree branches" were erased by being painted over.

Figures 1 & 2

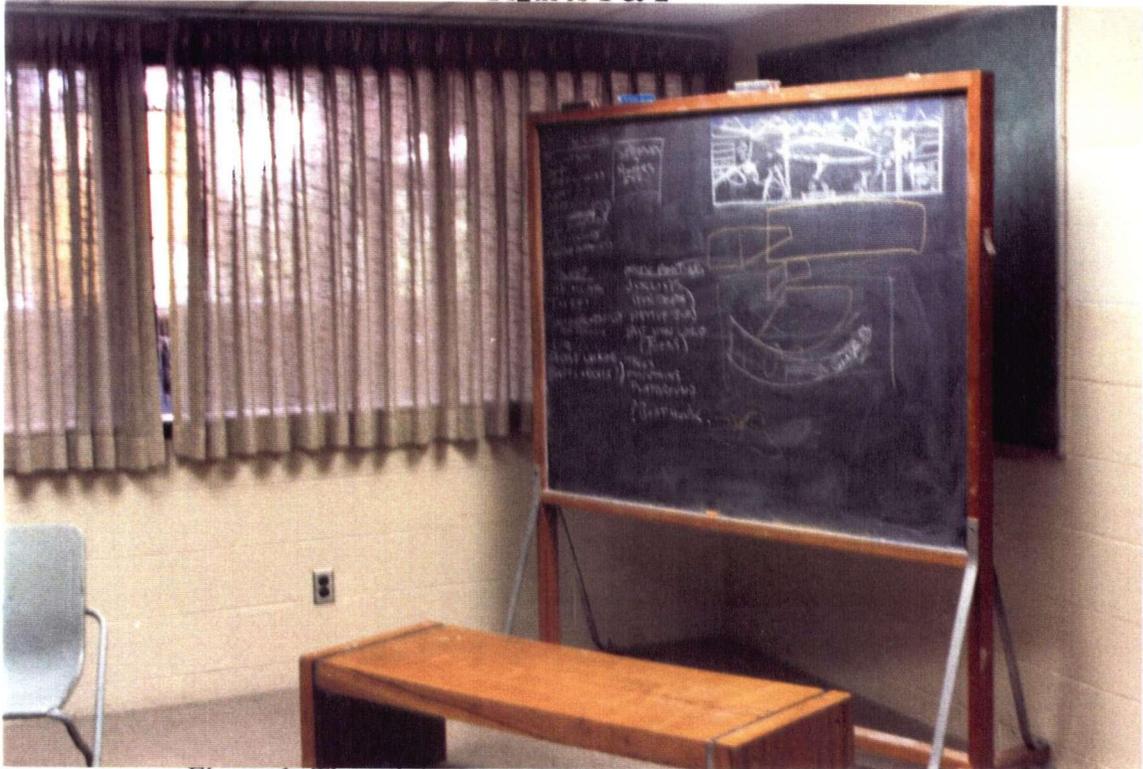


Figure 1: The original mural design planned on a chalkboard.



Figure 2: First mural design, executed by design committee.

Figures 3 & 4

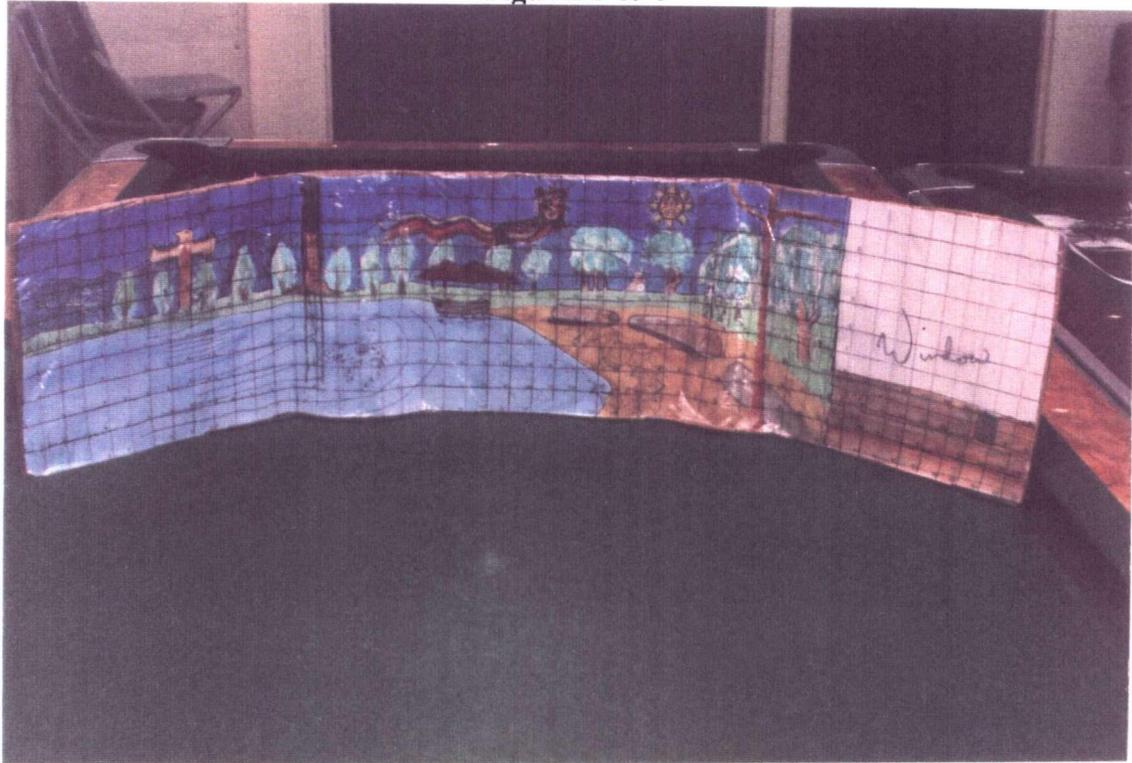


Figure 3: Second mural design, executed by artistic director.

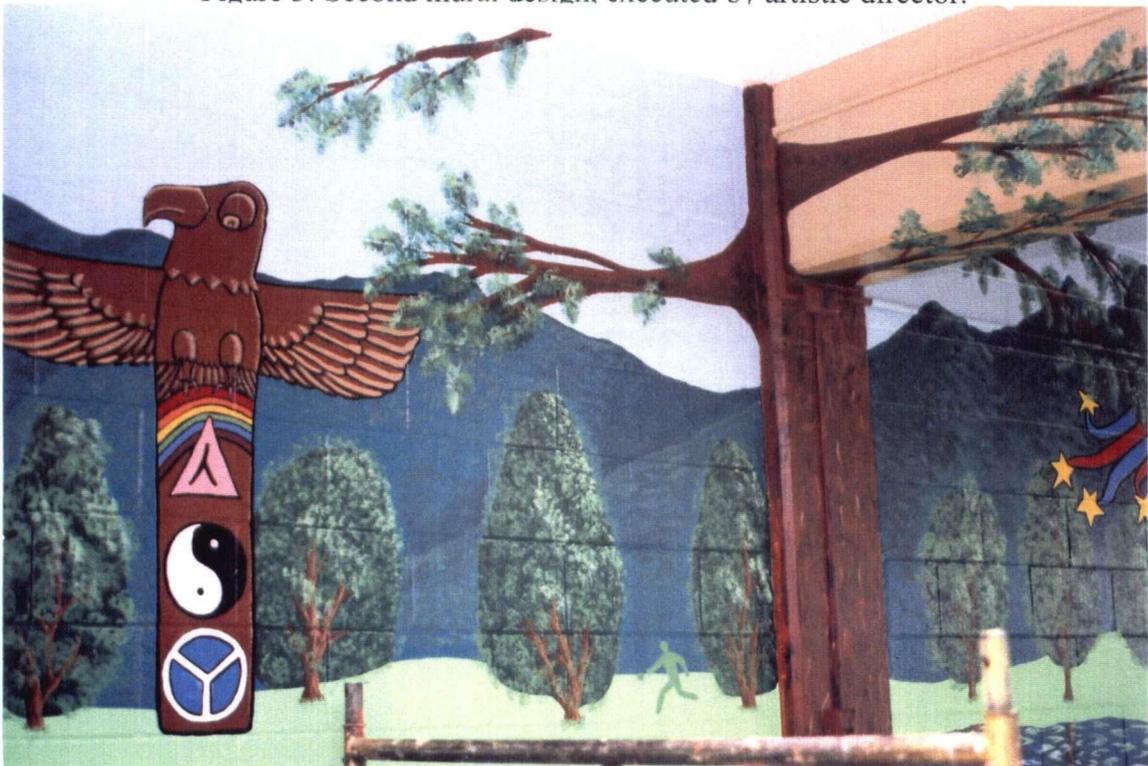


Figure 4: Mural segment, multicultural totem and tree extension.

Figures 5 & 6

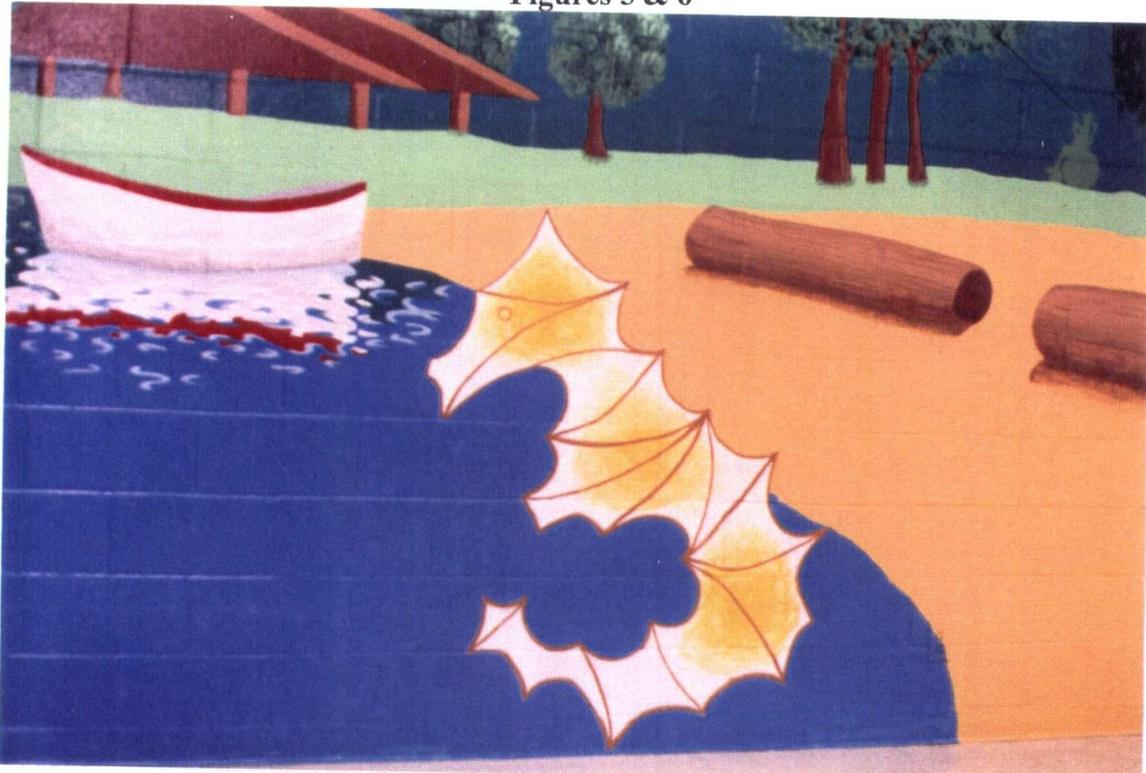


Figure 5: Mural segment, lake, boat, seahorse/lantern, and beach.

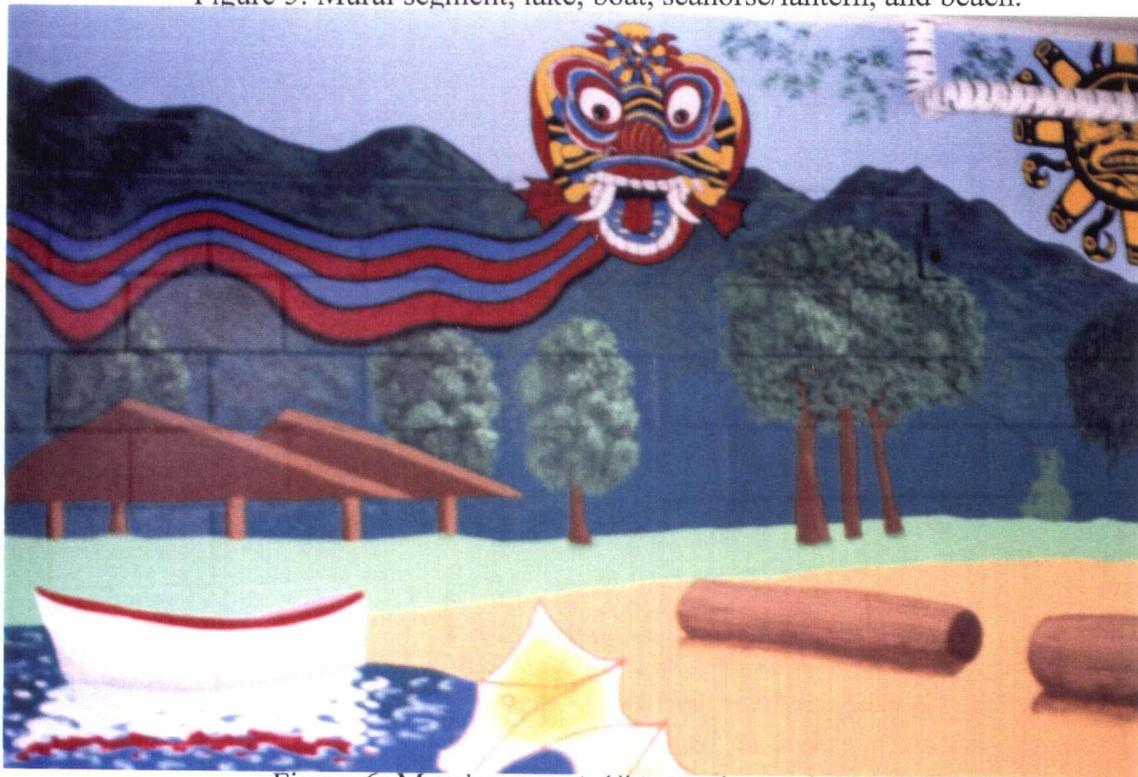


Figure 6: Mural segment, Chinese dragon kite.

Figures 7 & 8

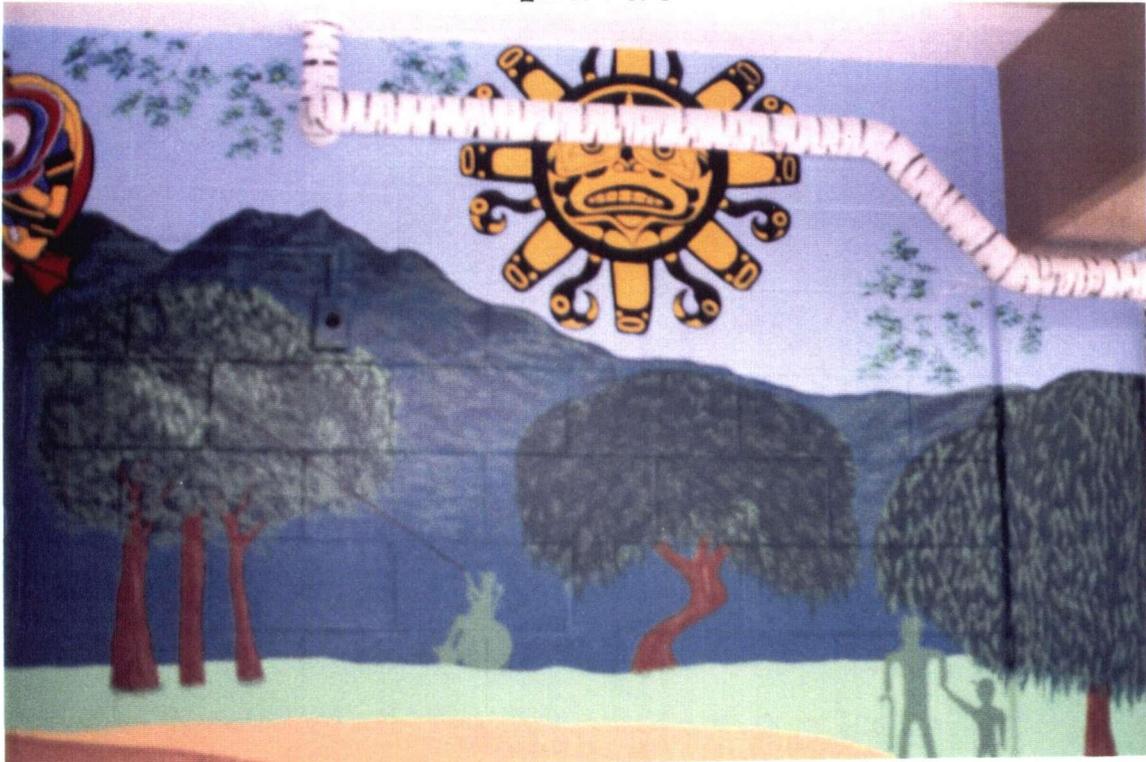


Figure 7: Mural segment, First Nations sun, silhouette figures.



Figure 8: Mural segment, tree/pipe extension.

Chapter Seven

Conclusions and Implications:

The Pedagogies of Leisure

Introduction

What is the context into which art programming is expected to fit within community recreation centres, and how does that context position and affect art teaching and art experience?

In this final chapter I address both parts of this question, drawing in particular on Bourdieu's notions of pedagogic action and pedagogic authority to frame my analysis. I wish to reiterate that my conclusions are based on data from two particular recreation centre sites, and as such are not assumed to be generalized to all such settings. Rather, readers are asked to consider the descriptions that I have offered to determine if they are fully or partly applicable to other settings with which they are familiar. Nevertheless, I suggest that much of the discussion provided here will be useful in analyzing other recreation centre contexts, given the links it makes to and the ways in which it often concurs with established related literature and research. Minimally, interviews with staff and several instructors draw on experience from a range of centres within the department, and therefore reflect some common themes. In addition, this work provides an opportunity to consider how recreational art programming compares and contrasts with school art practice, thereby simultaneously clarifying assumptions about school-based education.

I organize my analysis under two broad headings, the first of which relates to recreation centres as institutional--and pedagogical--contexts. I discuss how these community centre environments can be described in general, and the frames they provide for art experience. I

consider ways in which recreation practitioners position their work in relation to other institutions; the context in terms of contemporary urban life; issues of class and socio-economics; the ideologies of pleasure and fun; and issues of gender and sport as they relate to visual art. Primarily I explore the key "cultural arbitraries" or what I call the pedagogies of leisure that these institutions "teach". In the second part of the chapter, I focus on ways that these community recreation centres influence art teaching practice that occurs within them. In this section, which I have subsumed under the heading, "Education Wrapped/Trapped in Fun", I consider recreation centre teachers' work as it is affected by the ideological and circumstantial influences of their work, including issues of power and authority.

In a final part of the chapter, I suggest some general implications and specific recommendations that I see emerging from this project. The strength of this work in my opinion, however, is not that it points to clear solutions to difficulties and problems, but that it complicates assumptions about recreation centres as pedagogical sites and elaborates on the realities of teaching and experiencing art within these settings.

Art, Recreation, and Institutional Pedagogy

As noted, I rely here on Bourdieu's notion of pedagogic action (1977/1990), and assume that institutions may be construed as teaching "cultural arbitraries" or common sense ideas which are taken as natural but in fact obscure relations of power. In a parallel sense, an institution can be understood as having both a formal, claimed mandate and tacit or informal agendas. Given that Bourdieu's theory also assumes a notion of pedagogic authority--the fact that cultural arbitraries are always presented with a certain legitimacy--that is also a key to my analysis.

First, I suggest that among the most prevalent common sense assumptions that recreation

centres perpetuate about themselves is that they "don't really count" in terms of what has been claimed as socially valuable and important. In this sense, and in keeping with Bourdieu's notion of cultural arbitrariness, issues of power and authority in recreation centres are uniquely and fascinatingly obscured. These are sites, for example, which ostensibly provide leisure opportunities which are posed as non-work, individually driven, and "free"--notions which permeate the talk of staff members and others who describe these contexts. The centres are, however, managed and controlled by state authority. This, it seems to me, puts recreation centres, as institutions, in the unusual position of being "officially unofficial". In other words, their inconsequence is backed by the authority of the state. This arbitrary so permeates common sense, that, like the senior woman whose quotation opened the first chapter, we may find it inconceivable that recreation centres could be relevant or important sites of research. As a result, in spite of the increasing amounts of art education that occurs in these settings, art educators have felt no compulsion to examine these sites, and these publicly funded institutions have gone unquestioned in terms of their practical and ideological assumptions.

In the next sections I summarize some of the ways in which ideologies perpetuated by recreation centres can be questioned through evidence in this research.

Frenzy and Modern Life.

While staff and instructors continue to frame their work in talk of freedom, self-direction, and human potential in keeping with modernist versions of leisure and art education, these recreational experiences can be regularly read in alternate ways. The findings of this study concur with Rojek (1995) that modern leisure in general can often be characterized by order and control of time and space on one hand and the experience of fragmentation and distraction on

another. These issues are raised in the talk of staff members and instructors as they describe their practice; they are acknowledged in the talk of parents who explain how their children and families take part in these activities; they can be seen in the brochure documents produced in these settings; and they are evident in my own experience as a researcher. They can be observed particularly in the qualities of children's programs, which in some cases are experienced as a daily stream of organized activity. In other cases, like in the East Side games room, there is a physical experience of frenzy and distraction, where the centre permits noise and activity to the extent that it is impossible to converse. Rojek's (1995) metaphorical reference to the worlds of pop music, TV, film, & mass sport as "distraction factories" (p. 11) might therefore also be applied to recreation centres in some cases.

As argued in chapter two, the drive to order time and space is a defining characteristic of modernity, and as such is in evidence throughout these and other institutional contexts. Indeed, community recreation centre administrators take for granted that planning and scheduling recreation centre programs in terms of time and space are essential to their work. Arguably they understand the practice of parcelling out community centre experiences as a fair and efficient response to diverse community "demands" on facilities and the necessity and value of variety in general. Alternative ways of providing leisure services may seem unimaginable in this world.

But as Bourdieu (1980/1990) and others have suggested, the structuring of time and space is not neutral, but rather an act that controls practice and through which participants physically experience (embody) important institutional ideologies. On one hand, I suggest that fragmented, controlled time and space interfere with meaningful art experiences in these leisure contexts by curtailing art encounters and ensuring that in depth experiences do not occur. This may be

accomplished either by limiting the time allotted, or by placing art opportunities in competition with a myriad of other activities, thus detracting from engagement, as in the East Side Games Room. Rigid time frames also act to standardize and homogenize programming, blurring lines of distinction between activities. This has the effect of reinforcing the fact that institutional ideologies--such as the fact that programs "don't count"--applies equally to all.

Alternatively, individuals may be asked to engage with one-time art opportunities based on their current (and usually limited) experience. Where time and space are not provided to develop new skills, participants are confined primarily to replicating art knowledge that they already have rather than building on or expanding their art skills and knowledge. In such cases, as in the mural project, people defer to those who are perceived to have skills and tend to maintain distinctions between artists and others. Where these kinds of scenarios take place, recreation centres simply perpetuate the status quo rather than making gains toward democratizing art access to art knowledge, as the goals of the new Arts Policy suggest.

In contrast, May (1991) suggests that we make meaningful connections to our world through "lingering".

I linger because something is provocative, unusual, pleasant, or jarring in a time or place that feels like it needs to be grasped, prolonged, fully experienced, and understood. I take advantage of time and place, risk personal ridicule and punishment, and am able to recognize mundaneness for what it is and recoil from it temporarily. Linger means making room for myself and reflecting upon my relation to the world and what it means to be in it. I have learned to create occasions for myself and others to linger by locating and recognizing the significance that lingering has had for me personally (p. 140).

And Becker (1994) writes of this lingering in art making as a kind of subversive practice:

Here too, the sheer act of concentration necessary to produce art resists the diffusion and fragmentation characteristic of postmodern society (p. 114).

Even if we insist that recreation centres are not for finding meaning, but rather for "play", Dewey (1916/1944) reminds that play is a habit of mind that requires sustained purpose and engagement with interesting problems. He notes that when we play, we are not simply doing something. We are trying to do something (p. 203).

Finally, while all recreation centre activity is influenced by the temporal and spatial frames that are imposed there, I suggest, that restrictions of time and space are sometimes differentially imposed according to program content, and are more often made either flexible or extensive (rather than rigidly timed and infrequent) for physical activities. Time restrictions are not imposed by the centre, for example, in terms of how long one might stay in the fitness centre working out or how frequently one might attend. In addition, the fitness centres are open on a daily basis. While individually, fitness classes are strictly controlled in time and structure, the number and variety of opportunities and levels of advancement, and the sustained, year-round nature of the program, means that the possibilities to engage deeply with this realm are far greater than those one might find in visual art. Further, in some cases the structures of organized sport are permitted to usurp time previously allotted to art programs, as when art classes are cancelled in deference to the Spring league schedules. In the two sites of my research, no visual art programming was continuous or varied to the same extent as these physically oriented ones.

Class and Socio-economics.

Literature in the sociology of art reveals the many links of art to issues of class, and in fundamental ways, all access to recreation programming in these sites is economically based. Income levels at both the West Side and East Side Centres are offered as reasons for, respectively, high and low programming levels generally and in the arts. Certainly, the ability to

pay for programming meant the difference between longer and more in-depth visual art programming at the West Side Centre, while at the East Side centre, art programming was characterized by unique bare-bones programming, restricted in time, space, supplies, and offered simultaneously with one of the most noisy and distracting activities in the centre--but free.

Although Clark and Critcher (1985) discuss leisure in terms of time and money, they and Bourdieu both also address an additional ingredient necessary to leisure access, that being the capacity to view a given leisure form as socially appropriate and possible. This sense of possibility, suggests Bourdieu is one of the key jobs of the work of habitus, which frames dispositions and assumptions about what life opportunities may be and therefore influences and potentially curtails "choices" made about leisure.

Certainly, however, there was a sense in which staff could be construed as modelling programming in accordance with perceptions and assumptions about class values and community needs, and therefore perpetuating certain expectations about appropriate and imaginable leisure activity for different groups. In this study, the extent and subtlety of this program moulding was exemplified by the Breakfast with Santa events where life hopes were diffused at the East Side Centre and buoyed up on the West Side, and in which art activities were differentially provided. In this sense, recreation practice in these settings, can be understood as more than the offering of a neutral set of activities for free selection.

In a similar vein, participants enrolling in programs may be construed as individuals who perceive themselves to "match" (or not) the ideal consumer implied in course descriptions and program promotion, or who can imagine themselves taking part in visual art activities. This cycle of attempts to match community wishes and the self-censorship of potential participants is

powerful in terms of maintaining participation in art programming at consistently low levels in relation to other programs. Certainly, some projects viewed during this study--the East Lake Tile Project and the East Side Mural, can be construed as attempts to counteract tendencies to attract to visual art experiences only those people who may already think of art making as a personal possibility.

Gender, Sport and Visual Art.

In conjunction with a notion of institutions as pedagogical, I have suggested that organizations may also be construed as gender-biased in terms of the structure and the cultural meanings which they teach. In this way, recreation centres may be viewed as no different than other institutions. In this setting, however, I suggest that the key vehicle for maintaining gender bias is an agenda which privileges male dominated, "active" or corporeal forms of leisure such as sport, games, and athletics.

Most evident through the symbolic messages of an organization (Jones, 1996), the preference for corporeal leisure can be seen in recreation centre facilities which are specially designed and generously equipped for athletics and physical activity; the carefully maintained playing fields; the extent of programming available within this realm; the visual displays of sport trophies and memorabilia; the brochure covers which depict "active" leisure; the informal clothing of staff members which claim membership in a kind of club; the in-depth training of staff members in physical education realms and the taken-for-granted assumptions that art teachers will never get promoted to administrative work, that they are simply outside the track. The dominance of the physical realm therefore speaks through the building structure, is embodied by the staff members, reiterated in produced documents, is displayed in the visual

codes around the site, and even announces itself through the sound systems when the fitness class music blares throughout, and even outside, the centre.

This can be contrasted, however, with the minimal and crowded facilities for visual art programming, most commonly attended and instructed by women and girls. This includes: the lack of attention to supplies and equipment, the lack of training among staff members in this realm (and the expectation that this is something that they can pick up on the job), the lack of opportunity for in-depth or long term arts experiences for participants, and the general invisibility of this leisure form through the lack of art product display and the "disappearing" structures of programs.

Certainly, members of the recreation centre staff seem aware that embracing the arts means de-emphasizing the physical realm, but the dominance of the fully corporeal in leisure is, nevertheless, deeply entrenched and goes largely unquestioned. (Recently, for example, a new community centre that emphasizes the arts was opened within the department. As if a recreation centre without corporeal leisure forms is unimaginable, however, this centre includes a large new gymnasium in addition to performance spaces and other arts facilities.) Smith (1987) argues that such gender-biased agendas are presented as neutral and rendered invisible through rational management practices that reflect the perspectives (and in this case the leisure preferences) of powerful males.

Given the extent and pervasiveness of sport and athletic opportunity in these sites, the taboo on "education" (discussed further in the next section) and the claimed need for "variety" in programming might alternatively be read as a resistance to in-depth experience in any non-corporeal forms of leisure. Alternatively, it may also be read as resistance to a leisure form

associated with the feminine.

In drawing attention to the privileging of physical leisure forms versus art and non-physical recreation I do not, wish to perpetuate a dichotomous sense of mind and body. Rather, I concur with Hall (1996) who argues that what is needed here is a notion of body (and I suggest also a notion of leisure) that includes the head, and indeed the full, situated person. But the gendered nature of this issue seems even to have escaped many feminist writers in leisure studies. There is a sense in which the problem continues to be construed in terms of how to induce more women to take part in sport and athletics, and how to gain more credibility for women who take part in sport, rather than recognizing and validating forms of leisure which many women already prefer and select. Within this study, as well, the solution to supporting the arts in recreation was viewed as necessitating more male students rather than valuing and celebrating female participation. Some writers may continue to devalue these forms by labelling them "sedentary" even while recognizing that these realms appear to be "very important" to women (Brown, Frankel & Fennell, 1991 p. 381).

Further, the argument that Collins (1995) makes with respect to schools may also apply here. She suggests that school art teachers have been prevented from taking control of art curricula in schools and kept in a nurturing role in order to support and perpetuate the status of dominant knowledge forms. Similarly, one might argue that art programming in recreation is maintained in fragmentation and described as a kind of therapeutic expression in order to maintain the unchallenged privilege of corporeal leisure forms.

Institutional Relationships and Roles.

Literature in art education reveals frictions between schools and other institutions that

provide art education, suggesting institutional struggles to claim that realm. Charges have been made that schools provide equal access to knowledge and a successful life while non-school realms support systems of social oppression. Counter claims have been made that power relations in schools also, however, worked to replicate the social status quo through informal agendas.

In the recreation centre sites of this study, staff members and instructors defined the role of community centre art programming in relation to both schools and local non-profit organization. In this relationship, schools were construed as coercive and authoritarian, the non-profit organization was viewed as specialized and elite, and community centres were viewed as in-between or a taking an opposing role to both, being simultaneously non-coercive and "free". In some ways recreation centres were viewed as providing a positive, even slightly rebellious alternative to the other options, one which avoided the pitfalls of both. Most staff members and some instructors chose to work in recreation centres based on these perceptions.

In certain ways, however, community centres can be construed as supporting institutional roles of both other agencies, and challenging neither in terms of providing an alternative route to art knowledge. The centres' support schooling, for example, through the inclusions of children's programs which foster separation from families and prepare children to accept school-like authority relations and time frames or which fill in gaps in times when children are not required to be in schools. Parents acknowledge and expect that this preparation for school will be one of the roles of recreation centres. As noted, art experiences are sometimes used in recreation centres to ameliorate separation anxiety, a fact which is also acknowledged in other early childhood literature (Alter-Muri, 1996).

Alternatively, recreation centres may be seen to tacitly support agencies like the Young People's Arts Institute in preserving art knowledge for privileged groups. They do this by insisting that their programming must not be education or specialized, instead offering programming within fragmented, distracting environments which may actually detract from engagement.

In either case, recreation centres cannot be construed as "free" environments in which it is possible to step outside of social structures. Rather, they are organizations which provide both opportunities and restrictions, but which clearly frame experience in particular ways. This notion is explored further in the segment about recreation centre art instructors.

Pleasure and Fun.

The assumption that leisure equates with pleasure is deeply rooted in leisure ideology, and art as leisure is regularly presented as easy and fun in these sites. Such claims about art making are contradicted by talk of virtually all administrative staff members who apologize for their lack of artistic abilities, and by the ways in which people defer to an official artist when it comes time to produce, as in the mural project. Clearly people harbour anxieties about this activity which are not in keeping with the claims.

Nevertheless, the assumed link between recreation and fun is so strong, that researchers in leisure studies may be surprised to realize that some people do not have positive and pleasurable associations with leisure experience.

It is clear from this study that although women may indeed have something that they identify as 'leisure' in their lives, the experience is not always what would be hoped. Leisure professionals may tend to overlook the fact that leisure can be unenjoyable or an area of stress for some people (Bolla, Dawson, & Harrington, 1991)

In part, this pleasure requirement is tied to the need to accommodate the market in which this programming is sold and buyers must be enticed. In this sense, art programs are presented not only as pleasurable but relaxing, stimulating, and therapeutic, skimming over the realities of frustration and repeated practice which are actually required to succeed. There is, surely, a sense in which these programs are framed as much as mini-vacations--what Rojek (1993) would call "ways of escape"--as they are opportunities to learn or to even make things.

In program descriptions such as these, one sees Mercer's "tissue of confirmations, beliefs and expectations" (p. 55) which reinforce common sense notions about art. Arguably, the framing of art education in these sites as leisure and escape contribute to the expectation that participants bring to these settings, and create for recreation art instructors a unique circumstance for teaching. In the next section, I address the particular ways that recreation centre contexts frame art education teaching practice.

Community Centre Contexts for Art Teaching Practice:

Education Wrapped/Trapped in Fun

In terms of dominant opinion, and even in the words of some instructors, teaching in a community centre is to engage in "education wrapped in fun". While this phrase can on one hand be interpreted to mean that this is a practice which is inconsequential, enjoyable, and even easy, I suggest that it can also be understood as a practice which is entangled in complex issues of pleasure and commodity; constrained by modern frenzy; and imbued with a lack of authority which both depletes instructors' feelings of personal accomplishment and involves a continual negotiation with students and parents.

First of all, the "good" art instructor according to staff members is a "flexible" one who is

able to accommodate students and keep them happy, and does not insist that students defer to her wishes. As well, she is someone whose standards are not too high in terms of supplies and equipment and is willing to take on duties of room set up and clean up. This description oddly parallels the vague job descriptions of secretaries who are to mould themselves to the habits and wishes of particular bosses rather than having set job requirements (Pringle, 1994). In the same way that Acker (1990) argues that women's work is differentially evaluated in terms of complexity and skills required, the fact that this is actually complex work requiring a high level of knowledge and skill--and is regularly implemented by highly educated individuals-- is not acknowledged. Understanding the need for programming to be pleasing and not coercive, is nevertheless one of the most important requirements for instructors who wish to succeed in these settings. Indeed, where students or parents do not perceive programs to balance learning with fun and pleasure, instructors could ultimately find themselves unemployed.

Expectations that learning in these sites must and will be "wrapped in fun" create, as noted in chapter five, a unique and complex task for recreation centre art instructors in which they find themselves negotiating with and working to appease students while simultaneously trying to "sell" parents and students on the validity of their practice. Their hopes for student accomplishment and their feelings of worth in their work are compromised within this negotiation. This of course is not to suggest that their practice never results in meaningful experience for participants, but it does suggest a far more difficult and complicated work than is usually credited.

Beyond making their practice pleasurable and appealing to the market, however, community centre instructors grapple with the problem of a lack of authority within their

teaching practice. What I mean by my claim, however, is not that recreation centre art teachers are able to step outside the power relations that frame all institutions and to teach in a "free" realm. Rather, I refer again to the cultural arbitrary that recreation centres are just for fun and don't count. What I suggest is that, like the recreation institution, the work of recreation centre art teachers is officially de-legitimated and unsanctioned by the state; as such in Bourdieu's sense, the authority attached to this work is actually related to the common sense notion that it is not important. Although art teachers are in certain ways complicit with this agenda, there is a sense in which a violence is also perpetuated against them, in that they have been taught that recreation centres and art are realms of freedom and pleasure, and they diligently strive to achieve those hopeful goals. What is concealed, and what daily confronts them on informal levels, however, is their own illegitimacy--that they simply "don't count", no matter how hard they work. As a result they may find themselves in a spiral of trying ever more desperately to make their practice meaningful, or withdrawing emotionally or actually, physically, from this work.

Feminists have struggled with the dilemmas faced by women teachers working in formal settings who may be asked to "give up" authority in the name of more egalitarian practice, when women are not perceived to have as much authority as their male counterparts in the first place (Briskin, 1990). Nevertheless, those who teach in formal settings are at least imbued with a certain amount of sanctioned authority. In these settings, these female instructors have neither formal authority nor the informal authority attached to being male.

As noted in Chapter Five as well, the lack of importance of art instructor's work is further solidified in its short term, fragmented nature and invisibility both as a program structure and in

terms of the products it produces and the lack of acknowledgement that supplies are required. The final insult comes when art instructors realize that they cannot be considered for promotion to administrative work.

Conclusions and Implications

In an effort to understand recreation centres as contexts for art education, this study has also used art programming as a means of understanding the tacit messages of recreation centres. The pedagogies of leisure, I suggest, often work to maintain non-corporeal and feminized leisure realms like visual art in fragmentation and distraction, and in ways that are undervalued in relation to dominant leisure forms. In effect, they prevent a democratized access to art knowledge even while new policies claim to be working toward them. Those who teach visual art in these settings are also relegated to positions which are dissipated in their authority and are prevented from gaining or establishing power in the institution.

In addition, while recreation centres claim not to be concerned with education, in fact art programming here can be construed as a distinct form of education that is embedded within consumerism, socio-economics, and dominant ideologies of leisure related to physicality and pleasure. Arguably it is the deliberation about curriculum and what should occur in these programs, rather than "education" itself that is missing. As such, the hidden agendas of recreation centres are permitted full reign in driving education and learning in these sites.

What seems necessary, therefore, is not simply a continued quest to increase art programming in these settings as they are, for the current contexts appear to repel and undervalue art experience on numerous levels. Given that these contexts grew out of and reflect conceptions of leisure and organization that have increasingly been the target of critique, however, perhaps

new conceptions now need to be generated. Rather than imagining these institutions as a realm of individual escape, distinct from work, education, and the mind, it may be useful to imagine a site where lingering, making sense and meaning, playful work, and community become more feasible, and which incorporate a notion of community members as integrated, situated bodies with minds.

In a more immediate sense, I suggest that the following ideas are implied by this study: There is a need for recreation professionals doing community arts programming to engage critically with issues in the sociologies of art and leisure, in order to begin to deconstruct common sense notions surrounding art and the taken-for-granted privilege of sport and athletics in recreation. I also suggest that construing leisure institutions as "pedagogical" reveals tacit organizational messages that may need attention. For example, it may be useful to examine informal messages that the organization is sending about visual art experiences in terms of the visual and physical environment; organizational structure; and underlying values. In addition, acknowledging the concerns of recreation centre art teachers means taking visual art contexts as seriously as one would take the gymnasium in terms of supplies, equipment, and storage, and support in terms of cleaning up and setting up. Administrators also need to make greater efforts to learn about community centre art teachers work, through observation and hands-on experience. Together with instructors, efforts need to be directed at creating working contexts for this art education practice which are more respectful and supportive, as well as indicating the value of this work.

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Appendix 1

Sample Interview Questions, Staff and Administrators

The following questions reflect the range and type of questions commonly asked of recreation administrators quoted in the first analysis chapter. Due to time restraints and the particular circumstances and responses in each interview, not all questions were asked of each person and sometimes additional topics raised were also pursued. In addition, individuals were often asked about particular programs or events rather than their work in general, as these suggest. Questions in parentheses were sometimes used as a prompt or to clarify the first question where it seemed necessary.

It is helpful, first of all for me to get a sense of who is speaking, so I was wondering if you could talk a little bit about yourself, and some of the events or circumstances in your life that you think led you to a place where you are now doing this job in a community recreation centre?

How would you describe the work that you do here in this centre? What are all the different kinds of things you do as part of your work here?

(How do programs "happen" at this centre? what are all the things that have to happen in order to get a program going?)

Beyond the things that you actually do and are responsible for, how would you describe what it is you see yourself as trying to achieve or accomplish overall in your work?

Can you talk a little bit about the community in which this centre is situated and who uses this centre--perhaps in comparison to some other centres at which you have worked?

What would you say are all the ways that art programming enters into your work?

What things make it hard or easy for you to do art programming? (What are some of the circumstances or attitudes that make art programming hard or easy for you in your work?)

In the context of this centre and your work, what do you think art is "for"? (In the overall context of this centre, how do you think art "fits in?")

In my research I have become more and more interested in the overlap and distinctions between education and recreation. Do you see what you do as more about education or recreation?

If you were going to give advice to art instructors or artists who would like to work at your centre, what would you tell them? What do you think they need to know or understand in order to

fit into this organization well? (In your mind, what makes a "good" art instructor?)

Are there things that you think you or other recreation staff need to know or understand in order to help you do better art programming?

Is there anything else, perhaps something that I didn't ask about, that you think is important for me to know or understand about art programming in a community recreation centre?

Appendix 2
Sample Interview Questions, Recreation Centre Art Instructors

The following are questions commonly asked of instructors during interviews. Like in interviews with administrators, I often also pursued topics that seemed important or interested me at the time, asked for clarification, or asked for expanded or particularized answers with prompts like, "Can you give an example of that....?" Very often, I interviewed instructors after having "observed" one or more of their classes. Where that was the case, I would frequently also ask about things that I had seen and about which I had become curious. Due to time constraints and the ways in which interviews often followed tangents, I did not ask all of these questions of every person.

It's helpful for me to get a sense of who's speaking, so I usually start by asking people if they could position themselves a bit by talking perhaps a bit about your background, and some of the circumstances and events in your life that you think have lead to this place where you are teaching art at this community centre.

Can you describe the work that you do, and talk about what it's like to be an art instructor in the context of this particular centre? [Where instructors were teaching at more than one location, I often asked them to compare and contrast the sites, to get a better sense of what was unique or particular about the ones I was studying.]

Can you talk a little bit about your students....What kinds of things do you think they expect or need from classes with you?

[And, in the cases of instructors who are working with children]

Can you also talk a bit about parents? From your perspective, what do you think parents want or expect from you and your classes?

In general, and beyond all the things that you actually do in your work, what kinds of things do you see yourself as trying to achieve or accomplish with your students?

What kinds of circumstances or attitudes make it either easy or hard for you to do your work in this setting?

[Somewhat later on, as I realized that "supplies" were something of an issue, I began to ask specifically about them]:

Can you talk about supplies? How do you get the supplies you use for teaching your classes? How does it happen that they are there for you to use?

One of the areas that I've become interested in, in my research, has to do with the distinctions between recreation and education, and how people understand what they do in relation to those ideas. Do you think of what you do as more about recreation or more about education?

Another area that I've become interested in is the area of gender, and how programs at the centre seem to divide along gender lines. There seem to be more women, for example, in art programs. Have you found that to be the case in the classes that you teach? Do you have any thoughts or comments about this situation?

In the context of the work that you do in community recreation centres, what do you think art is for?

In general, how do you see the kinds of classes that you teach fitting into this centre over all?

If you were going to give advice to the people who administer these programs, what would it be? Are there things that you think they need to know or understand in order to help you do your work?

What advice would you give to other people who want to teach art in community recreation centres? What do people need to know or understand about this work?

Is there anything else that you think is important for me to know or understand about what you do--perhaps something that I haven't asked about?