

## Art at the Centre

### Introduction

In August 2005 Gerry Wall and I were appointed as lead artists on the Isle of Wight Art at the Centre programme. The second half of our first year fell in 2006. See 2005 for the first part...

### 2006

Early 2006 was spent promoting our plans in particular the Bike Trails as well as planning for the coming year. The original master plan had specified a commitment to cycling and we believed that the vacant site could be used as a mountain bike park with built trails. This would help to deliver on plans for increased access to sporting facilities. It would keep kids off the street and improve health and fitness. We wanted to tie this in with a bike maintenance and a bike recycling scheme. We received support for the bike trails from the Pan Neighbourhood Partnership.

We planned for Pan Chromatic to be shown at the Quay Arts Centre in June and an extension of the Ideal Home work during Architecture Week. We planned the Pan World News project, which was funded by Creative Partnerships. We began discussions with the Medina Housing Association to build a permanent base for Art at the Centre in Pan.

In March 2006 the Arts Council and the General Public Agency arranged a study tour to Amsterdam. This brought home to me how far behind the Dutch we are in terms of design standards but also in terms of social commitment and responsibility in the built environment.

I left the scheme in April 2006 when there appeared to be a natural pause for breath. We had effectively squashed a year's work into nine months and were about to start the second year. Having established with Gerry the programme of work I was frustrated that the Isle of Wight Council was taking so long to decide how to proceed with the Pan extension. This was diluting the impact of our work from having a direct effect on the quality of the development to being just general community and capacity building. I am happy to do that kind of work but was disappointed to not be having the innovative role I had hoped we would have.

Gerry Wall has continued in post and continued to do sterling work. I have learnt a huge amount from the Art at the Centre experience and am very grateful for that, in particular...

More and continuing valuable lessons about institutional timescales and how they slide and abrade against each other.

More and continuing lessons about the deceptiveness of language and in particular the easy use of buzzwords in regeneration - a national vocabulary but very local interpretation.

More and continuing lessons about the benefit of thinking through doing, rather than just thinking. The visual representation of ideas clarifies and tests those ideas in a way no amount of thinking or writing can do.

More and continuing lessons about group dynamics. Groups seem to behave in unpredictable ways often seemingly against the impulses of individuals within those groups.