

Report on Artists Talk: 'The international perspective: community based arts initiatives overseas'

December 14, 2008, North Melbourne Town Hall

This informal afternoon featured artists and artswriters who had recently travelled overseas to develop their skills and understanding of arts practice in diverse communities.



Kirsty Baird



Anne Riggs and Jyoti Mukherjee

Kirsty Baird spent four months in the UK and Cambodia in 2007. In the UK she visited a number of organisations and projects working with communities using film/video and new media. In Cambodia she worked with the NGO Epic Arts on puppetry and film projects with deaf and disabled young people. Kirsty discussed some of the insights into the nature of community based arts, both in the 'developed' and in the 'developing' world, that this trip afforded her.

Anne Riggs and Jyoti Mukherjee (also known as Alex Pinder) discussed their recent visit to India where they ran visual and performing arts workshops for socially disadvantaged children, and professional development workshops for their teachers and community leaders, across the whole country. **Their paper '[Art Across India](#)' can be downloaded from CDN's website at www.culturaldevelopment.net.au/cdnevents_past.htm**

Rosalie Hastwell discussed her Asialink residency in India in 2006 and 2007 that led to a community engagement program with Adishakti Laboratory for Theatre Arts Research, where she worked especially with families and communities who live close by the Laboratory.

Raelene Marshall discussed her recent visit to the EcoMuseo in Cortemilia, northern Italy, an institution that focuses on the preservation of the cultural landscape (dry stone wall and grapevine terraces). EcoMuseo is a story of one woman's achievements to create a community of interest where one did not previously exist, involving artists at every step.



The event was attended by an audience of fifty, mostly artists and artworkers, with some students, local government cultural development workers and staff from arts organisations and companies. Lively discussion ensued over Christmas drinks. Those attending enjoyed the opportunity to hear about the very different projects, as well as enjoy the opportunity to network after the event. Several of the speakers commented that the opportunity to talk about their work assisted them to make sense of their experiences, and they too enjoyed the opportunity to hear about each others' work.

