



# Making Art Work: The Art and Disability Educational Manual



# Gateway Arts





62 Harvard Street  
Brookline, MA 02445  
617-734-1577  
[www.gatewayarts.org](http://www.gatewayarts.org)

## **About Gateway Arts**

Gateway Arts is a unique service of Vinfen Corporation that includes: the Gateway Arts Studio Center, the Gateway Crafts Store, and the Gateway Gallery; all located at 60-62 Harvard Street in Brookline Village.

Gateway Arts, established in 1973, is a vocational arts service which serves more than 100 artistically talented adults with disabilities. Gateway was originally established to fill the gap created by the deinstitutionalization of individuals in state schools. The award-winning artists with disabilities who come to Gateway produce original, high quality fine art and crafts with guidance from a staff of professional artists. Profits from sales are returned to the individual artist.

## **The Art and Disability Educational Project**

*Funded in part by the Carl and Ruth Shapiro Family Foundation's Special Assistance Initiative*

The goal of this one year project (2010-2011) was the creation and widespread dissemination of information along with hands-on Curriculum Guides based on the Art Facilitation project which provided direct, one-to-one, therapeutic assistance to severely challenged artists with disabilities over three years to help them succeed professionally in an art career by providing physical, psychological, and social supports.

The success of the Art Facilitation Project, which directly benefited ten Gateway Artists and other artists with disabilities through its accompanying manual, was deemed worthy of further dissemination to an even larger world-wide audience. The subsequent Art and Disability Educational Project caused Gateway to delve more deeply into its methods of working with artists with disabilities, in order to document its procedures and techniques, and to share the information with providers of services to individuals with disabilities. To this end Gateway has published and widely disseminated this Art and Disability Educational Manual both in hard copy and via the internet along with accompanying Power Point Presentations. Additionally, Gateway offered in the spring of 2011 a comprehensive, day-long workshop attended by students, educators, and other professionals in the fields of art and disabilities. Three Power Point Presentations were offered at this workshop and were also transmitted over the internet as a webinar. The participants also took part in hands-on workshops in the Gateway studios where people learned directly how to use specific materials and techniques when working with artists with disabilities.

This Educational Manual was produced to document the Gateway Arts method of working with artists who have disabilities and particular behavioral challenges. The artists' stories in this journal have been reproduced with the permission of the artist or their guardian. No portion of this journal may be reproduced without the specific authorization of Gateway Arts.

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*Making Art Work: The Art and Disability Educational Manual*, is a Curriculum Guide that is Gateway's answer to an unmet need in the field of rehabilitation for talented people with disabilities. This alternative educational manual captures how individualized art services are successfully provided to this population. The Shapiro Family Foundation, through its support, has enabled both the production of this Guide and the dissemination of its methods at local, national and international symposiums and online. We salute them for their leadership role in this endeavor.

Gateway Arts is also grateful to a number of individuals and to its Advisory Committee who have provided matching funds that allowed this project to proceed to its ultimately successful completion. The entire Art Center and its staff and artists have made this Guide possible. We would like to specifically acknowledge the following staff members who had a critical role in the development of this concept and its related material.

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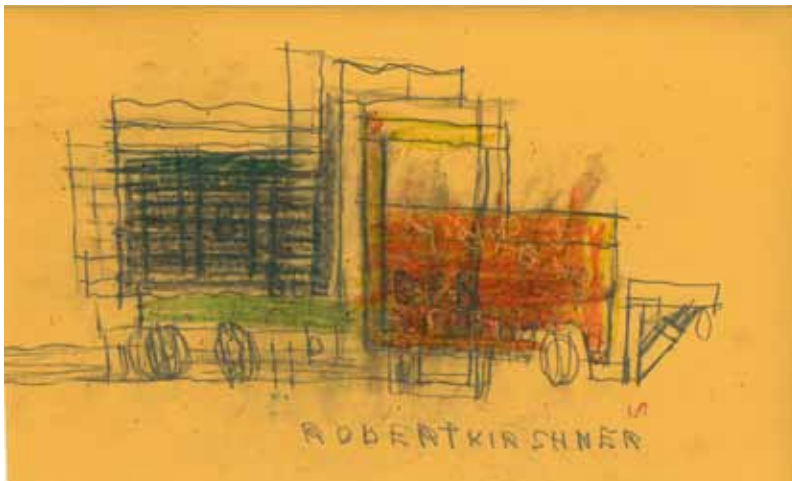
Rae Edelson, Director of Gateway Arts

## Introduction

Gateway Arts helps people with disabilities create lives and careers in art. In 2013 Gateway Arts will celebrate its 40th Birthday. Gateway was created in response to the deinstitutionalization of individuals with disabilities from state schools. Over the years it has perfected its method of providing a unique, arts-based rehabilitation service. Many people and organizations have toured Gateway and asked the question: “How can we do this in our area?” This educational manual is an attempt to provide an answer to that question. Some may call this a “curriculum guide” or the “Gateway Method”, we are simply calling it: “How We Do It”. Since its inception Gateway Arts has gone through several expansions and now occupies more than ten thousand square feet of space in Brookline Village and serves more than 100 artists. There is no specific formula for serving these individuals; each with their own unique needs, challenges and talents. So, it has been said that Gateway creates 100 programs for 100 artists. People who come to Gateway do not necessarily have to be artists, but must enjoy making fine art or crafts and be able to acclimate to the studio environment. Scott Alberg, one of Gateway’s most renowned art facilitators, has created a thesis on the studio environment and methods of working with artists. This was presented in the spring of 2011 at a workshop and produced as a webinar and is available online at: <http://www.anymeeting.com/GatewayArts/EE56DD8983>. Also available is a presentation by Rae Edelson, Director of Gateway Arts and Stephen De Fronzo, Gateway’s Artistic Director. In this publication Rae Edelson provides the administrative overview of Gateway Arts. Since 1978 she has been a visionary director who has guided the service to its current success. Stephen De Fronzo shows how Gateway Arts connects its artists to the art world; he says that the art world is the place where art and commerce intersect. The bulk of this manual takes the reader through the specifics of art making in each studio at Gateway Arts. The art facilitators provide overviews of their areas and work with a particular artist on a project. This process is documented from its inception as an idea, through its creation and finally as an object for exhibition and sale.

### **A Message from Lorri Berenberg, Chair of Gateway Arts Advisory Committee**

Making Art Work is the next best thing to spending a day at Gateway Arts. Following the creative progress of eight Gateway artists, this inspiring guide demonstrates how the artists and their studio facilitators work together to bring artistic visions to fruition. From setting up the studio to exhibiting and selling works of art, we are given a window into the many challenges and immeasurable successes of Gateway Arts. Making Art Work is a must read for anyone interested in the ways in which art can transform lives.



Robert Kirshner, (1955 - 2009)  
Untitled © 2001, paper, crayon and pencil

## **The Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow of Gateway Arts**

A message from the Director, Rae Edelson

Gateway Arts is the most comprehensive art center for people with disabilities on the East Coast. It was founded in 1973 as part of the deinstitutionalization movement in Massachusetts. Ten adults, formerly in state schools for the “mentally retarded”, were funded for services by forward thinking people in the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health. In 1978 when I came on board, this small program, then called Gateway Crafts, was housed in a basement on Commonwealth Avenue in Boston. It offered weaving and pottery, and sold its products outside on the sidewalk. It was a welcome throwback to the 1960’s for adults confined to restrictive state institutions, but it was small in scope and limited in its ability to provide services for a broader population of talented individuals with special needs.



*Rae Edelson, Director*

However things were to change. A perfect storm was brewing; deinstitutionalization in Massachusetts and throughout the country was evolving through class action suits. Also, the Outsider Art movement promoted by the French artist Jean Dubuffet in the 1940’s travelled across the Atlantic and self-taught art also known as “Art Brut” or “Intuitive Art” began to be exhibited, collected and sold in America as well as Europe. Wolfensberger in 1972 from Scandinavia developed the Principle of Self Determination; which meant that people with disabilities could make choices and lead “normalized lives” with the same broad range of options as the general population. His principles of “normalization” for individuals with disabilities gradually grew in the United States with Massachusetts proudly being in the forefront.

When I started out as Gateway’s Director, the program had minimal funding: \$60,800 - of which \$60,000 was from the Department of Mental health and \$800 from crafts sales. The potential for transforming lives through art was there and I set off to find suitable studio space and store front opportunities for this little program. I was encouraged in this effort by Jeff Keilson, the regional Director of the Department of Mental Retardation. He supported innovation and saw an “interesting opportunity” for citizens with intellectual disabilities. Our parent corporation Vinfen similarly encouraged thinking outside the box and supported entrepreneurial ventures. The studio and retail space I found for the service in Brookline Village gave us a well lit former factory space that Thomas Fodor our architect was able to design in a manner that enabled us to grow step by step from 10 individuals to our current capacity of over 100.

The growth was gradual and we developed a totally individualized philosophy of service. The goal evolved from enabling people to recreationally do enjoyable crafts; to one of fulfilling a dream that included professionalism, recognition and integration in the community, and receiving earnings for work done as an artisan and artist. Our development from a crafts program to an art center happened person by person.

People came to me and they would say “I am an adult with a disability and I am interested in art,” or a family member or a clinician would tell me that there was no other solution for the individual they represented but a life in art at Gateway. So, other funding sources representing individuals with talent and special needs emerged. Other state agencies joined hands with us: Perkins School for the Blind, Mass Commission on the Blind, Mass Rehab Commission, public and private schools transitioning students with special needs from school to work, and ultimately the Mass Department of Mental Health seeking recovery for individuals with psychiatric disabilities through careers in the arts. By necessity, as the population and its special needs grew, the range of arts based services expanded as well to include the art that is produced, exhibited and sold. Studio services were offered in response to the individual’s talents, abilities, and the market for sales in fine art, jewelry making, folk art, and writing for publication. Each individual entering the studio program created a shift in the service.

By necessity the crafts store expanded to carry the goods created by the increasing number of artists and artisans and a professional gallery was instituted by our Artistic Director, Stephen De Fronzo. Our expanding revenue base of service and sales enabled us to expand the physical space to ten thousand square feet of studio space with an onsite gallery and street level crafts store. The model had been developed; i.e., an individual program for each artist falling under the broad umbrella of fine hand crafts, fine art, and publications provided in a professional studio setting staffed by professional artists with training in human services.

An important mentor taught me the principle by which I have operated all aspects of this studio art center; i.e., diversification. We serve a diversified population and hence we have diversified funding. We have diversified products in art and fine hand crafts. Our financial base constantly represents diversification in funding sources and now encompasses fundraising led by an amazing advisory committee accompanied by grant seeking from foundations and companies.

Gateway Arts is positioned in the human service sector as arts based vocational rehabilitation. For the arts to weigh in as work there must be remuneration. Artists receive pay at the point of sale. As the outsider art and folk art movements grew, earnings in the field of fine art and crafts became increasingly significant in further legitimizing art making as a feasible career for some talented individuals with disabilities. The final element in the perfect storm that solidified what is known as the studio art movement in America is the Outsider Art Fair, an international art market and annual event coming to New York since 1992. These specialized venues set the standards and prices for self-taught art and legitimize art as a career path for talented adults with disabilities.

We are not the only comprehensive art center for people with disabilities. Consider the discovery of DNA by Watson and Krick and how there was one model for DNA, the double helix. Well the situation is similar with studio art centers. Here we were on the East Coast, Elias Katz and his wife Florence founded NIAD in Berkeley on the West Coast in the mid seventies and then spun off two superb outgrowths in California: Creative Growth in Oakland and Creativity Explored in San Francisco. As of 2012 there are dozens of what are now termed studio art centers that all share a common mission. In the fall of 2011 Amy Taub, the director of Creativity Explored, held an international meeting of 29 such centers in San Francisco, all of which are now sharing materials, methods and strategies of which I anticipate this curriculum guide will be a part.

Is art work, or is it therapeutic? Clearly for individuals irrespective of disability it is both. Art creates a bridge from the artist to the public in a way that creates meaning. It is decorative, collectible, and sometimes wearable and something that can bring joy and happiness to the creator and the person who views and buys it. This curriculum guide is intended for American and international studio settings that are primarily public funded. Techniques are described for individuals and are waiting for you to make them your own. Create your own perfect storm; the intersection between your talents and professional skills, the needs of your artists, requirements of your funding sources and the standards of the art market. We hope this curriculum guide will be enjoyable as well as instructive because what is art if it is not of value in myriad ways including its basic nature as play. We anticipate and welcome the future generations of studio art centers, facilitators and artists.

## Opening the Door Into the Art World

Commentary by Stephen De Fronzo, Artistic Director, Gateway Arts

The mission of Gateway Arts is to provide lives and careers in art for individuals with disabilities. Providing the daily activity of making art and crafts is relatively easy, but taking art making a step further and positioning it in the “Art World” is more of a challenge. The world of art is something that every one of us is involved in every day. We are constantly making aesthetic decisions in our lives and we may make art and crafts as hobbies or for self-gratification. But the Art World is a particular place within the world of art; it is the place where art and commerce intersect. It is the Art World that bestows the title of “Artist” on individuals and decides who will have historical significance.



*Stephen De Fronzo, Artistic Director*

At Gateway we serve over 100 artists with varying disabilities and different art backgrounds. Some of our artists have college degrees, but many make art intuitively. In fact, many of our artists are completely uninvolved in thinking about art intellectually or even labeling what they create as art. The first challenge is how to look at the work of these individuals. We look at it with the same eyes and in the same way as we look at any work of art. Whether a work is art or not can be a subjective decision. Everyone has personal likes and dislikes. At Gateway we seek collectors and patrons whose tastes gravitate toward the kind of work produced at the art center. Some Art World terms used to describe this genre or type of work are Primitive Art, Self-Taught Art, Folk Art, Naïve Art, Outsider Art, Vernacular Art, Art Brut, Raw Art, and Visionary Art.

Cave paintings from 32,000 years ago show the need of individuals to express themselves using pigment to create visual images on wall surfaces. No one at that time was thinking about the Art World or describing their work in art historical terms. What existed was a need or compulsion to express and communicate. Art, like many other aspects of life, became more controlled with the development of civilization. Societal norms dictated the purpose, meaning and visual appearance of art.

It was not until the modern era that visual artists, in part because of the invention of the camera, were freed from creating works that mirrored the natural world. Artists began looking inward, into the past, and at other cultures for inspiration. All of these developments in Western art began to make it possible to expand the definition of art. In the early 1900's people began to look differently at art work created by individuals in mental institutions, and in 1945 Jean Dubuffet declared the beginning of the Art Brut movement. Folk artists and untrained artists from rural areas began to be discovered as individuals with a special kind of genius. Roger Cardinal's book, published in 1972, referred to all these new forms of nontraditional art as Outsider Art. Today there are many well known and famous intuitive artists from around the world and also many galleries and dealers that specialize in this kind of work. There are several museums dedicated to collecting and exhibiting this genre.

Gateway Arts, and other art centers for artists with disabilities around the world, is aware of the viability of its artists in this particular market. But we also realize that in today's Art World these categories are less important and we seek to mainstream our artists as part of the contemporary art scene. We treat our artists as professionals, supplying portfolios of their work, bios and resumes. Their work can be viewed by collectors on our web site. We have a fine art gallery where their work is shown in six shows a year. We have opening receptions, listings in professional journals, announcements, price lists, and press releases. We also have a street level crafts store that is open six days a week. It is professionally staffed and has won awards for its uniqueness and excellence. Like any professional, Gateway artists receive payment when their work is sold.



We promote our artists by exhibiting in other venues like the Berenberg Gallery which specializes in self-taught and contemporary folk art, and the Outsider Art Fair in New York. Work by Gateway artists has been shown in prestigious galleries and museums nationally and internationally, like the Museum of Everything in London, England. Artists receive fees when we reproduce their work as posters, cards, mugs and other products. We work with publishers to have their work reproduced in text books and we license their work for use as logos or on other professional material. Individuals can commission work from our artists, and we have a viewing room dedicated to showing art work to the public.

Gateway Arts has come a long way since its inception in 1973. When I first stepped into Gateway in 1987, an artist myself, I didn't realize that I would find individuals with intellectual disabilities, speech deficits and spectrum disorders who approached their work like any other artist would. Today, with over 100 artists and a staff of more than 20 professional artists, Gateway is a vibrant, creative and joyous place to be.

## A Pottery Project With Brenda



*Brenda in the Pottery studio at Gateway Arts*

### About Brenda

Brenda Sepulveda is 37 years old and has been working at Gateway Arts for 15 years. She is a thoughtful artist who goes through a continual process of reinvention, using past projects as inspiration for new work. Her favorite themes include the Boston Red Sox, flowers, fruits and vegetables, and Barack Obama, as with her recent Obama ceramic bowl done in the Pottery Studio. Brenda's sculptural works capture the artist's ability to breathe life into form and give viewers a glimpse of her playful, compassionate spirit. Brenda is always enthused when a new idea surfaces, and she would like to work quickly to its completion. However, planning ahead is especially important when working 3-dimensionally. Brenda has a developmental disability, which makes it difficult for her to understand sequencing or breaking down a process into smaller parts. This leads to self-doubt. Looking at past artistic

accomplishments with a facilitator helps the artist to see that she is capable and talented. By encouraging Brenda to think of a project as a step-by-step process rather than as a finished product, the facilitator can help the artist to understand how the various parts of a sculpture relate to make a unified, structurally sound whole.

### Pottery Studio - Tuesday Morning

River Cortes, the Ceramics facilitator, is busy setting up other Gateway artists with projects and materials; meanwhile he cues Brenda to consider what she might do for her next project. When River is available, the two discuss options. Talking about Brenda's past work as well as looking at work by other Gateway artists, sparks an ambitious idea. Brenda will create a twelve inch high ceramic sculpture of the President, Barack Obama, standing.



*River shows Brenda an example of a sculpture with a base.*

River helps Brenda to understand the mechanics of the proposed project by showing her work by another artist who created a standing figure with a supportive base. He also helps Brenda to locate an image of the

president online to use as visual resource material. A binder of visual resources from past projects is kept in the Pottery Studio as possible inspiration for future work. River stops by Brenda's work area for brief conferences, providing assistance with proportions; i.e., how much clay will be needed for the head and other body parts? He emphasizes how the weight of each part will affect the balance of the whole figure.



*Brenda enthusiastically sets to work.*

The project quickly takes shape, as Brenda works the clay with ease. Soon, she has made all of the basic body parts, and calls upon River for some pointers on how to handle the details. River offers Brenda options. “The fingers could be rolled out individually and then scored and slipped to the hand or a clay tool like this or that could be used to carve out the fingers.” Brenda is a visual learner, and benefits from River's practical demos.

Brenda has learned many studio techniques over time through a process of scaffolding, beginning with basic molding

and joining projects and working up to more complex projects by adding steps with each new project. Here Brenda demonstrates score and slip (a method of joining clay) by first scratching the two surfaces to be joined and then applying slip, a clay and water mixture, to each side. Brenda has also learned to care for her projects when not working on them by wrapping them in plastic to keep the clay moist and pliable while the work is in progress.

### ***Putting Learning Into Practice***

Once all of the body parts have been made, River facilitates the careful decision making process of how to put them all together. Now Brenda has a plan, to work from the base up, attaching the feet and legs to the base first, the body and arms next, and finally the head. This method should make her sculpture structurally sound and able to withstand the laws of gravity.



*Brenda applies slip to Obama's ankle before adhering the foot.*



*River models one way to make fingers.*

### **Finding Resources**

One of the greatest challenges facing Gateway facilitators is working with multiple individuals with various learning styles and abilities in one studio work session. On day two in Pottery, River has a group of nine Gateway artists and the help of one student intern. Brenda is anxious to proceed with her project, but River has promised to work one-to-one on the wheel with another Gateway artist. First, River checks in with Brenda. She will work on Obama's facial features today in Pottery, and needs visual reference material. Brenda has a great idea; she will look at a past Obama project from the Art Making Studio for guidance. This kind of flexibility and willingness to draw upon the resources outside of one's own studio is characteristic of Gateway artists and facilitators and one of the major strengths of the program.



*River prompts Brenda to look at her Obama portrait from another angle in order to see the shape of the nose.*

Brenda's expressive skills are much stronger than her receptive skills. Talking about ideas is very helpful for her. Brenda is a visual learner. Like all artists, Brenda uses her artwork to express herself in a way that is perhaps more universal than using words alone. She does not read, so it is important for supportive material to be visual, such as the image of Obama standing that River helped Brenda locate online and the Barack Obama head made in the Art Making Studio.



*"How does this look?" Brenda asks, as the Artistic Director, Stephen De Fronzo passes through the studio.*

Through a series of conversations, using past work and online images as visual resources, Brenda and River have developed a way of working together that works for Brenda. Positive reinforcement and cueing also help to keep the artist focused as her project develops. River respects Brenda's independence and ability, while also being ready to adapt should questions and challenges arise.



*Things are really coming together. Brenda smiles as River holds the pieces together for her to see.*

Facilitators and artists are continually adapting materials and procedures to suit individual projects. Realizing that Brenda's sculpture is potentially top heavy, River suggests that hollowing out the head will make it less so. He guides Brenda to select an appropriate clay tool and demonstrates a carving technique to remove excess clay. Brenda benefits from the facilitator's practical example of how to use a less familiar clay tool.

Another adaptation is made when the Obama sculpture needs some extra support to stand on its own two feet. Working together, River and Brenda mold temporary supports to hold the sculpture upright while it is drying. Once it is dry, River will do a bisque firing in the kiln.

## **Adaptations & Finishing Touches**



*River and Brenda try out the temporary clay supports which will allow Obama to dry standing up.*



*Brenda paints Obama's eyes*



*Brenda works carefully and steadily.*

The finishing process takes place over the course of several weeks. Brenda must be patient as she waits for her piece to be fired. After the initial bisque firing Obama is ready to be painted with acrylics. River suggests that Brenda should practice drawing on paper what she would like to paint on Obama. This helps her to practice some more detailed areas, such as his collar and tie.

Brenda works carefully and steadily. Soon she is considering details such as Obama's facial features. Periodically stepping back from the work helps Brenda to see her progress. Soon she has painted every detail, from the eyes to the cuffs and his button down shirt. Ultimately, Brenda would love to see her latest Obama inspired work in the window of the Gateway Store.

### **Finished Project**

Brenda's latest rendition of Barack Obama moves from its home in the Pottery Studio to stand proudly in the window of the Gateway Store greeting customers and passersby. (Note the blue turtle lamp to

the left right of Obama in picture frame—another exciting pottery studio project by Brenda.) This project has sparked an even more ambitious one. Brenda would like to create a life-size Papier-mâché sculpture of the president in her Art Making Studio. The success of her pottery project has built confidence in the artist and she is ready for her next challenge.



*Brenda Sepulveda. Barack Obama. \$100  
Pottery Studio (5-24-11 to 8-16-11)  
Facilitator: River Cortes*



*Brenda's sculpture of Barack Obama stands proudly in the window of the Gateway Store.*

## **Pottery Studio Overview**

### **by River Cortes**



### **About The Facilitator**

River Cortes is a 2-D and 3-D artist who has been at Gateway Arts since 1998. He has been the Pottery Studio supervisor since 2002. He received his Master of Science in Art Education from Massachusetts College of Art in 2002, where he also studied painting and ceramics. River's work at Gateway Arts is rooted in his interest in the unique work created by its population, who frequently embrace, in one way or another, a nontraditional aesthetic of unquestioning self-belief. It has been his privilege to help the artists to maintain this approach.

### **Introduction**

Clay is a medium of many possibilities, and when faced with over 60 different artists using the studio weekly, managing facilitation and projects can be a challenge. However, the same philosophy that applies to all of Gateway holds true for the Pottery Studio: artists work on their own unique, artist-directed projects, with appropriate input from staff. This is the "100 programs for 100 artists" approach. The facilitator must have a basic knowledge of the principles of ceramics, including safety and processing. Wheel-throwing, hand building and slip casting are essential skills.

### **Safety**

The safety concerns are the same as those of any ceramics studio. The studio needs ventilation for the kiln and air filters to collect dust. Sweeping will scatter dust, which will stay in the lungs. We mop frequently instead and keep surfaces clean. We also use a ceramic vacuum. We use dust masks, preferably outdoors, when sanding or otherwise dealing with clay dust. Aerosol varnishes are applied outdoors. All glazes and underglazes are non-toxic and dinnerware safe. Physical strain: carpal tunnel, back strain, etc. can be an issue in ceramics, though activity here is usually varied and intermittent enough to avoid injury through repetitive motion.

### **Materials**

We use basic, white, low fire earthenware clay, and brush-on under glazes. The convenience, versatility and predictability of these materials suit the situation, though low-fire products are somewhat less durable and occasionally not entirely watertight.

Tools are user-friendly but versatile. Some basics include: under glazes, brushes, fettling knives, pin tools, ribbon tools, various wooden sculpting tools, water cups, sponges, paper towels, water sprayer, bats/plywood, canvases, and plastic wrap. These are all easily accessible to the artists. Many everyday items can become clay tools.

Also useful are banding wheels, lazy susans, paddles, mallets, hump and slump molds, stamps and other texturizing tools. Underglaze chalks and pencils are handy for artists to apply their 2-D skills to ceramics. There are two wheels and an extruder in the Gateway studio. Non-traditional tools include acrylic craft paint, Goop adhesive, Sharpies, polyacrylic varnish, acrylic aerosol, plywood and basic woodworking tools like saws and sandpaper.

Various hump and slump molds are available to the artists. We also have basic slipcasting molds for basic forms such as mugs, vases, bowls and plates.

Books and videos on ceramics are available in the studio. Artists also use the image-rich books on various topics available in the Gateway library. Computers are often available for image searches. We have a binder of collected images, from online searches and other sources, organized into the sections “People”, “Man-Beasts”, “Things”, “Designs/Logos”, and “Other”.

### **Evaluating Prospective Artists**

The initial evaluation consists of a tour of the studios, viewing the individual’s previously made artwork (if there is any) and working on a project for 20-30 minutes. This is a limited amount of time, and initial appearances may prove misleading. An evaluation can provide hints, but no guarantees, about an artist’s development. What it does let the facilitator know is whether or not there is a viable starting point.

If the initial screening seems promising, further trial sessions will be scheduled. Some good initial projects are: underglazing a tile or a piece of bisqueware, sculpting, making a plaque, making coils to use on a hump or slump mold. This is a time to be especially sensitive to the individual’s responses; some will need encouragement and instruction throughout, others will be more independent. If the individual shows signs of interest, and is able to work in the setting and ratio of facilitator to artist, then this may be someone who could find a niche at Gateway.

### **Facilitation**

There is a great deal of variety in the kinds of projects being facilitated daily in the studio. The facilitator must help match artists with appropriate projects and be prepared to

facilitate different projects simultaneously. Daily activity is vocational and based on the particular situation and culture found at Gateway; to that end, the two goals of facilitation are artistic expression and a viable product line.



*Various types of finished pieces.*

In the Pottery Studio there are many examples of work to show artists. Having artists look at images from the Gateway library, image binder or other sources is also very helpful. These are not attempts to foster imitation, but to provide inspiration. It is also frequently helpful to narrow down an individual’s choices if they are at a loss, e.g. asking: “Do you want to make a butterfly or a caterpillar?” instead of leaving someone with an entire book on insects. Sometimes it is best to pull back – either to let the artist explore, or to let them burn off their own resistance. They may only start working after the facilitator walks away.

Artists build their skills over time, but this process is interspersed with attainable goals. It is best to distinguish greater accomplishments and praise accordingly, particularly in the Pottery Studio where projects are quite varied. There is a difference between painting stripes on a prepared vase and creating a complex sculpture from scratch.



The overall tone in the Pottery Studio, as in the other studios, is more project-based than skill-based. Skills are addressed as necessary and vary according to an artist's interests and staff's suggestion; it is difficult to have very linear skill-building. Different skills will apply to different artists at different times. That said, it is worth noting a few core handbuilding skills that come up frequently: 1. making slabs, 2. making coils, 3. making balls, 4. joining pieces (scoring and slipping, etc.), 5. ensuring balance and stability, and 6. ensuring survival in the kiln (no air pockets, not too thick).

We encourage artists to do as much as they can independently while intervening as necessary to ensure the viability of the pieces. The level of facilitation varies with artists' capabilities and complexity of projects. Ultimately, everyone should be comfortable with how the end result came about. Facilitators should delight in their own engagement without underestimating the artists. Making something marketable is a legitimate end, but suppressing or underestimating the artist's achievement is not a legitimate means.

### **Studio Management**

The demands of managing the Pottery Studio affect the degree to which facilitation is possible. Assistants (interns, work study students and volunteers), artist capabilities, studio organization, studio atmosphere and complexity of projects are all major factors in studio management. A calm, work-focused atmosphere lends itself to productivity. The Pottery Studio at Gateway has the advantage of being set apart from the main studio space.

Project storage is organized into in-progress, greenware and bisqueware. Finished work goes into the store, gallery, or the in-studio retail space. There is additional storage space in the basement for work that is rotated out of the retail spaces.



*Greenware ready for firing.*

The studio offers some prepared work for artists: slipcast vases and mugs, thrown bowls and vases, and bisqued tiles. This ensures the availability of ready-to-work-on pieces, and a certain amount of quality in the product line.

Assistants can be very helpful with projects in which artists require more one-to-one attention. Of course, we guide them toward the Gateway philosophy of facilitation. The amount of access to assistants the facilitator has plays a significant role in what types of projects can be started on a particular day. Assistants can be very helpful in other areas, like studio maintenance and organization.



*An assistant adapts to an artist's physical limitation.*

A certain degree of finishing is necessary. This can mean glazing; varnishing, firing, helping to ensure a piece's structural integrity, and so on. If there are steps in the process the artist is not able to engage in physically, those steps should nonetheless uphold the artist's intentions. It is best to be cautious when enlisting the help of assistants for these steps; sometimes it is more worthwhile to rely upon one's own skills. We take assistants' strengths and weaknesses into account just as we do with the artists.

Every artist is not always working on a ceramic project. It is necessary to provide alternative activities; such as drawing, helping out, projects from other areas, etc.



*Artists work on a variety of different projects.*

The facilitator loads and fires the kiln when the facility is closed; each firing takes about 12 hours. After a bisque firing, artists apply underglaze as necessary to the bisqueware. Other pieces may be painted with acrylic paint or other mediums. The studio supervisor applies overglaze to functional pieces and does a glaze firing. Some nonfunctional pieces are coated with a brush-on polyacrylic varnish or acrylic aerosol.

Even with good studio management and storage space, unsold work can pile up. Gateway artists, like most artists, make more work than society can absorb. Periodic purging of old, unsold work can be painful but necessary.

### **Project Examples**

1. Plaques: artists can make 2-D images in scraffito, relief (reductive or coils), or simply underglazing. Sometimes artists treat fired clay slabs as "canvases", using non-ceramic 2-D mediums like acrylic paint.

2. Simple repetition: the artist applies texture or repeated design element to cover clocks, sculpture, etc.



*A clock and a sculpture utilizing simple repetition.*

3. Hump/slump bowls: coil or slab constructed.



*Hump and slump bowls.*

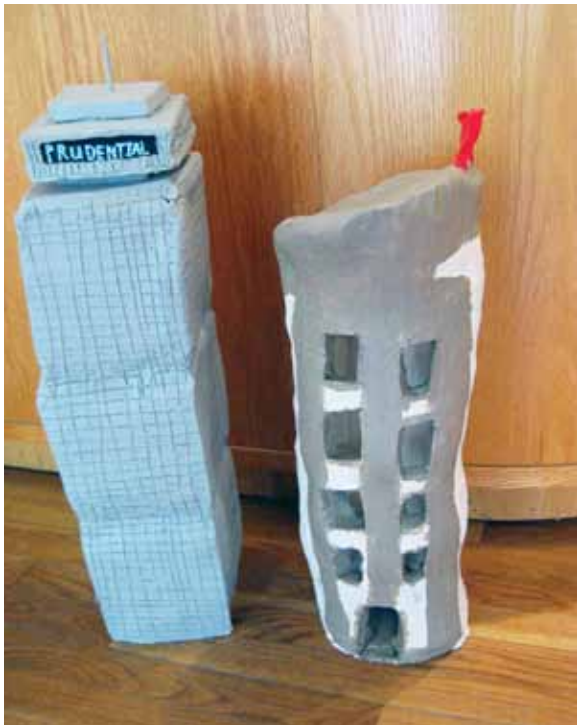
4. Slab vessels: a great simple project suited to many skill levels. They can have two sides (a “boat”-shaped vase), three sides, four sides, etc.



*Two slab-constructed vases.*

5. Small works: magnets, press molds.

6. Large works: artists can work on large sculptures over time with simple repeated process like slab construction or coiling. Artists have made simple, large forms to sculpt buildings, volcanoes, etc. in this manner.



*Two examples of large works.*

7. Mixed media sculpture: exploiting the magic of Goop, masking tape and acrylic paint, and sometimes paint marker and Sharpie, too. The idea is to help artists think in terms of “drawing in space” through whatever means are available. Structurally, it may make sense to make some parts of a sculpture out of wood or other materials and attach them after firing.



*A mixed media sculpture of an accordion.*

8. Collaboration between artists: an artist’s abilities may only allow them to complete part of a project; they may be able to sculpt parts, for example, but someone else may need to assemble and paint them.



*A series of a collaborated artworks.*

9. Wheel throwing: as anyone who throws on the wheel knows, throwing isn't something someone can sit down and easily play around with cold. It requires some one-to-one attention. At Gateway, the opportunity to throw is something of a special occasion.



Two kinds of wheel thrown bowls.

10. Prepared work: with slip casting; basic, simple forms are best. We are not looking for manufactured creativity, shaping it before the artist even touches it. Molds are available commercially, or they can be made with plaster in the studio. One of the artists assists with most of the slipcasting. The staff throws some things on the wheel, larger pieces especially, onto which artists add designs. Some bisque ware is available commercially, but in terms of cost effectiveness, it's better to create it in-house.



Completed slipcast pieces.

## Resources

### Supply Companies

#### **Bailey Ceramic Supply**

PO Box 1577  
Kingston, NY 12402  
(800) 431-6067  
baileypottery.com

#### **Portland Pottery Supply**

87 Messina Dr.  
Braintree, MA 02184  
(781) 356-4112  
portlandpottery.com

#### **Macky Molds**

mackymolds.com

*Try the Arnels link for basic forms – bowls, plates, etc. There are many figurine molds and the like to sift through; Gateway generally steers clear of these.*

### Books (all available on Amazon)

**Sculpting Clay** by Leon I. Nigrosh. *An overview of sculpting clay, including a word on safety.*

**Making Pottery Without a Wheel: Texture and Form in Clay** by F. Carlton Ball and Janice Lovoos. *Many creative approaches covered, with an emphasis on texture. **Note: the section on glaze is dated and suggests using lead glazes! AVOID LEAD GLAZES!***

**The Clay Lover's Guide to Making Molds** by Pierce Clayton. *A beginner's guide to making different types of molds. Slipcasting, hump, slump and other molds covered.*

**Children, Clay and Sculpture** by Cathy Weisman Topal. *Obviously, Gateway doesn't work with children, but this book takes an interesting exploratory and playful approach to sculpting with clay from which many, children or not, can benefit.*

**Ceramics Monthly.** *The leading ceramics periodical. The tip of the month can be handy.*

## A Jewelry Project With Darlene



*Darlene in the Jewelry studio at Gateway Arts*

### About Darlene

Darlene Whittier is 50 years old and has been working at Gateway Arts for 15 years. She participates in all main studio areas as well as Drama Studio. Darlene has delighted audiences at Gateway in various Drama Studio productions based on popular fairy tales. Her robust personality and strong communication skills make her an ideal actress. As an artist, Darlene is an explorer, always willing to try new materials and techniques. Recently she has learned wet felting in the Fabric Studio and created a line of felt beadwork, a collaboration between Fabric and Jewelry Studios. Darlene is always willing to push the envelope of traditional work and her own abilities to fabricate new and innovative work. She takes pride in what she makes, exhibits, and sells.

Overall, Darlene is an exceptionally independent artist at Gateway. Her developmental disability is mild and does not affect her ability to conceptualize new

projects in collaboration with a facilitator. Nor does it affect her ability to find appropriate materials and integrate them into a project. However, at times Darlene becomes anxious and discouraged. This usually happens when practicing a new technique. As much as Darlene loves to experiment, it can be frustrating when the work involved proves to be more difficult than she had anticipated. In these situations the facilitator should be attuned to Darlene's frustration as well as her capabilities.

### Jewelry Studio - Thursday Morning

It's another Thursday morning in Jewelry Studio. Gateway artists busily prepare themselves for studio session by setting up bead boards, taping wires, and selecting beads. Artists working in Jewelry are very independent when it comes to set up. The Jewelry facilitator, Melanie Bernier, assists them by giving aesthetic advice, looking at other work for ideas, helping to fabricate more ambitious projects, finishing projects with clasps, and in numerous other ways.



*Darlene and Melanie talk colors as they look at the dazzling array of beads in Jewelry Studio.*

Darlene has decided to start an ambitious project today, a multi-strand bracelet using spacers. She wants to use bead spacers for this project, and knowing her capabilities, Melanie suggests something more complex using buttons as spacers instead. Each wire will pass through each of four holes in buttons spaced evenly apart. Darlene and Melanie spend some time talking about color and size options for beads and buttons.

### **Getting Organized**

After Melanie helps Darlene to select the beads and buttons she will be working with, Darlene gets a bead board on which to plan the arrangement of beads. Darlene carefully lays out each tiny bead in rows on the board, creating a pattern of beads that is broken up by buttons spaced evenly apart. Check-ins with Melanie will help Darlene to maintain the pattern.



*Darlene lays her beads out in the gutters of a bead board to plan her pattern.*

Next, Darlene needs to cut wire to string the beads on. She must cut four strands of even length. Melanie holds the wire and guides Darlene to make the cut. Darlene can do most of the set up for a new project independently, but as with many artists at Gateway, she needs assistance determining proportions. Melanie helps Darlene to measure a length for her bracelet and repeats this four times. She also helps her to determine what bead size will be needed to sandwich the buttons between.



*Melanie measures and holds the wire in place for Darlene to cut.*

Once the project is underway, Darlene no longer needs the structure of the bead board. She resorts to her usual work area setup of bead cups containing each color she needs. This allows more space for her project and encourages her to work more intuitively. Some new technical aspects of the project present challenges, such as sandwiching buttons between two beads larger than the seed beads, known as E-beads. This prevents buttons from sliding over the seed beads, acting as a washer between button holes and beads. Darlene responds well to Melanie's modeling of this technique and positive reinforcement as she masters the technique herself.



*Soon, Darlene abandons the bead board in favor of a more intuitive way of working.*

### ***Putting It All Together***

Once a project is underway Darlene is very focused and dedicated. She can at times be distracted by peers or come to a difficult part in a project that makes her feel frustrated. Positive reinforcement and a tone of respect from the facilitator help Darlene to refocus her energies on the work at hand. Melanie asks Darlene about her choices and asks her to look at what she has done so far to determine the next step. Darlene is committed to her work and doesn't let challenges or distractions get in her way.



*Darlene is now ready to get down to work.*

The project progresses quickly and Darlene is halfway there by day two. In general, Melanie explains, Darlene is very craft-oriented. She excels at work requiring technical ability.

Sometimes Darlene exhibits off-task behaviors like socializing with peers during studio time. This is usually evidence that she is bored with a project. Melanie strives to design projects for Darlene that are challenging and engaging for this reason. Projects for Darlene should be tiered, with each one building skills upon the last.



*Almost there...*

By day three Darlene has mastered the pattern and no longer needs reminders about technical aspects. Her intuitive use of color and skillful craftwork make this an impressive and exciting piece. Melanie's positive reinforcement, combined with Darlene's high level of interest in this project has made the process a pleasure.

By the end of studio session, Darlene has completed her multi-strand button bracelet. She has learned a new technique that will transfer to future projects and created a beautiful and memorable piece in the process. Now she will have to think about what to do next.



*Darlene proudly fashions her multi-strand button bracelet.*

Soon, Melanie will finish the bracelet by selecting and attaching an appropriate clasp, known as a “finding” in jewelry speak. Darlene, not being the least bit camera shy, proudly shows off her skillful work.

### **Finishing Techniques**



*Melanie attaches crimps to the end of each strand. The crimps prevent beads from coming undone.*

Finishing jewelry pieces is an intricate process requiring patience and meticulous attention to detail. For multi-strand pieces, such as Darlene’s button bracelet, each strand must be finished separately with crimps, bound together, capped with a crimp cover, and secured with a finding or clasp. To attach the crimps Melanie must insert each wire into the eye of the crimp and then feed it back into the seed beads seamlessly. This process is replicated many times during a typical week in Jewelry Studio, and facilitators working in this studio quickly become practiced in this finely tuned craft.

### **Finished Product**



*Darlene proudly dons her latest creation.*

Melanie has priced the bracelet according to Darlene’s past work and sales history. It will soon be showcased in the Gateway store amongst other fabulous jewelry pieces handmade by Gateway artists.



*Darlene Whittier. Button bracelet. \$16  
Jewelry Studio (6-16-11 to 8-11-11)  
Facilitator: Melanie Bernier*



## **Jewelry Studio Overview** by Melanie Bernier



### **About The Facilitator**

Melanie Bernier received a BFA from the Massachusetts College of Art and Design in 2008. She is the co-founder of the Rock Slop Art Collective and performs in a garage rock band. Her main art form is fibers, but she also works in sculpture, ceramics and performance.

### **Introduction**

Gateway's Jewelry Studio follows the "100 programs for 100 artists" approach. The flexibility of this model helps identify an artist's strengths and defines a direction for their creative expression. Jewelry facilitators benefit from an understanding of 3-D construction, basic metalsmithing, an interest in fashion and design, patience, and an artist's temperament - focused yet flexible.



*Mary models her crown, made of plastic crystals and stiff wire, outside the Gateway store.*

### **Safety**

Jewelry Studio materials pose few immediate safety risks, but there are some scenarios to be mindful of. Beads pose a risk of choking. Wire cutters can be harmful if used inappropriately; artists who can't safely utilize scissors should not use wire cutters. Long-term health risks include eye, back, arm, and wrist strain. In our studio, these injuries are avoided by varying activity throughout the day. There are supports for artists with existing physical strains; i.e. magnifying tools which come in a variety of styles. They can be worn like goggles or held like Sherlock Holmes. We prefer lamp models with a large magnifying area that attach to desks or floor stands. Appropriate chair-to-table height ratios will assure that artists don't slouch into bad posture.



*Joe works under the light of a magnifying lamp.*

## **Materials**

### For Creating

- ◆ Beadalon 7 Beading Wire - this is the base material for most jewelry that we produce. We use 0.15 and 0.18 thickness.
- ◆ String - for more loom beading, pearl stringing, and other detailed beadwork.
- ◆ Head Pins - flat, loop, and decorative.
- ◆ Beads - plastic, glass, crystal, semi-precious, etc.
- ◆ Masking tape - to hold one end of the wire “closed” as artists are beading.
- ◆ Bead Boards - to lay out designs.
- ◆ Inspiration - beading magazines, fashion magazines, museums, stores, etc.

### Basic Tools or Finishing

- ◆ These materials come in a variety of shapes and sizes for an array of applications: wire cutters, pliers, crimps.
- ◆ Findings: clasps, jump rings, etc.

Quality - Stock your studio with a spectrum of materials. Plastic, glass, and base metal beads are affordable and can be beautifully arranged. These projects should be finished with base-metal or silver/gold-plated findings. Semi-precious stones, ceramic beads, crystals, sterling/gold beads, and the like will cost more to stock. These pieces could be finished with sterling silver, gold-filled, or plated findings depending on the quality. However, there isn't a strict code to making a valuable or high-quality piece of jewelry. The cheapest hardware can assemble into the most interesting jewelry when done right. Unorthodox materials such as nuts, washers, plastic tubing, zippers, cloth, and buttons (to name a few) are great to experiment with. Artists who enjoy ceramic arts can make their own beads out of ceramic or polymer clay.

Variety - As stated above, to achieve a variety of work, we simply keep a wide catch of exceptional and conventional materials. We also don't shy away from experimenting with unorthodox techniques. For instance, sculpture and fiber art methods have been applied to many pieces of folk art jewelry in our studio with great success. These include embroidered earrings and necklaces, and individually sculpted ceramic and polymer beads.



*Glass, plastic, metal and wood beads are organized in plastic boxes.*

## **Evaluating Prospective Artists**

It's helpful to know if an artist has made jewelry before. In the case that they have, they may be able to demonstrate how they've worked in the past. Otherwise, show how to make a simple AB-pattern necklace by laying two different types of beads in the wells of a bead board. Ask the artist to lay out a pattern alternating the two. The artist may lay out a whole necklace or a few and then end up beading from the wells. Observe how they work. When they're done, ask them to choose some new colors and let them guide you through the process as they wish to do it. Some will find the activity enjoyable; others may tire from the repetition. By making their own choices about color, size, and type of bead, you will learn a lot about your prospective artist.

The major requirement necessary to make jewelry is the desire to do so. The traditional abilities associated with this art; sight, good motor skills, and two hands; are not a requirement. In fact, the artist's unique ability and perspective will inform their aesthetic in a very meaningful way. Learning how to facilitate each individual will take more time to master.



*Ken happily beads from the shallow wells of a bead board.*

## **Facilitation**

Develop Relationships - The trust created between you and the artist is integral to achieving their potential and will take time to nurture. During studio time, ask the artist questions about their work; this will give them a sense of ownership, and will also help you understand the direction they are going and where they could go. Don't seek to correct their artistic impulses; what you see as a "mistake" could be part of an artist's expression. Do not intervene with any engineering or technical issues that need to be addressed. While the work should reflect the artist's aesthetic, it also needs to be viable for sale; i.e. stay in one piece.



*Learning a new skill - beading on a loom.*

Strive for a Focused Studio - A workspace where individuals can focus is crucial for successful facilitation. Here are some key traits to promote in your studio for both facilitator and artist: **patience and flexibility**, especially when approaching a new technique or skill. A **calm, casual atmosphere**, light conversation is good but should not be the main event. If someone is under/over-stimulated by their work or the studio atmosphere, you run the risk of losing this balance. **Work-appropriate behavior**, make clear what is appropriate and what isn't. Artists are at work, so they should dress and act in a way that reflects this. Staff should enforce this through example and encouragement.

Promote Productivity - Set each artist up to create in a way that's natural to them. For instance, some people work better taking beads from cups, some by laying out patterns on a bead board. An artist's unique production style will depend on many factors, including physical and cognitive limitations. Using trial and error and asking questions will help determine an appropriate method for each individual. Keep materials accessible and organized. This will aid productivity and allow greater independence for your artists.

## Studio Management

Keeping Organized - It will aid productivity, support a calm atmosphere, and keep you sane. Managing thousands of beads in one studio is no small feat. We group beads of similar quality together and then organize by color. However you choose to do it should make sense to most artists. After all, they will be a big part of the organization process as they work in the studio from day to day.

Recycling Materials - While many great items will be made in your studio, not everything will sell. Jewelry that is not saleable can be taken apart and recycled back into the system. This includes stringing wire, head pins, beads, etc. This is a positive, as it saves considerable amounts of money and finishing time.

Cleaning - Like organization, this is an important part of keeping a professional work atmosphere that is accessible for all.



*Various findings are organized behind the facilitator's desk.*

## Project Examples



*Lengths of beading wire with tiny seed beads are assembled into a free-form necklace.*



*Necklace made of high-end beads including: black snakeskin beads, glass, bone, and coral.*



*Multi-strand necklace.*



*This necklace is made of 40 lengths of beading wire with glass rocailles and finished by the facilitator with bead caps and chain.*



*Felt bead necklace finished with silver chain.*

### **Resources**

**Wolf E. Myrow** (*Closeout dealer of beads and findings.*)

46 Aleppo Street  
 Providence, RI 02909  
 Phone: (401) 331-2921  
 Fax: (401) 331- 2172  
 info@closeoutjewelryfindings.com  
 www.closeoutjewelryfindings.com

**Rio Grande** (*Supplier of beads, findings, tools, and everything else associated with jewelry.*)

7500 Bluewater Rd NW  
 Albuquerque, NM 87121  
 1-800-545-6566  
 www.riogrande.com

**Fire Mountain Gems** (*Supplier of beads, findings, tools, and everything else associated with jewelry.*)

One Fire Mountain Way  
 Grants Pass, OR 97526-2373  
 Customer Service: (800) 423-2319  
 Order by Phone: (800) 355-2137  
 www.firemountaingems.com  
 Questions@firemtn.com

## **A Painting Project With Jesse**



*Jesse in the Painting studio at Gateway Arts*

### **About Jesse**

Jesse Gould is a 42 year old man who came to Gateway in 2009. He is diagnosed with autism. Throughout his life he has exhibited a fondness and talent for the arts. He plays classical violin and has a deep appreciation for folk music from the 1960's and 70's. Artistically, Jesse is an adept draftsman. When making his art he works rather quickly, sometimes not looking at the surface he is drawing on. In this case the immediacy of drawing materials such as pencils and markers suit his style best and allow him to work independently without much outside facilitation once he is set up. Jesse can become easily distracted and nervous with all the sounds and talking going on in the studio. Often he responds to and repeats words from other artist's conversations. Jesse is someone who very much likes and is comforted by a set routine.

### **Painting Studio - Monday Morning**

Jesse arrives in the studio about a half an hour late. Upon entering the studio Jesse is met with some nonverbal cues from

the facilitator saying hello. This is done by a wave and making eye contact. Sometimes speaking to Jesse before he has acclimated to the studio can make him nervous and irritable. Upon arriving he spends about ten minutes on routine activities which prepare him for work.

Starting a new project with Jesse requires the facilitator to be engaged with Jesse quite extensively. It is good to make sure other facilitators know this beforehand and can be around in the studio. The facilitator's task will be to break down the process of the project into steps that can offer Jesse a series of choices. In this way the facilitator will not just lead Jesse, but attempt to share the lead with him.

When Jesse is done prepping himself the facilitator greets Jesse with a "hello" and asks how he is doing. The facilitator also introduces that it is time to start a new project. This is proposed by presenting Jesse with two or three options as not to overwhelm or confuse him.



*Possibly an overwhelming choice of projects.*

### **Project's Beginning**

The facilitator proposes acrylic or watercolor painting and he is shown the paints. Jesse states that he would like to try working with the acrylic paints. Next, the facilitator asks if Jesse would like to work on canvas or paper. Jesse chooses canvas.

Jesse then will need to set up at a table in the studio. He chooses one that offers the most privacy, so that he is not distracted by other artists in the studio.

Jesse and the facilitator next move to pick out the stretcher bars, deciding as to what size the canvas should be and gather the remaining materials needed to stretch the canvas (canvas, staple gun, hammer, and square). Jesse, with the aid of the facilitator, then proceeds to stretch the canvas.



*One pulls, one staples.*

Once stretched, further preparation of the canvas is discussed. Does he want it left unprimed or primed? The idea of working on a colored ground is brought up and explained. Jesse seems interested in this approach and states that he would like to have an orange background. The two consult a color chart to be more specific about the orange Jesse would like to use.

They both agree that the orange chosen is warm and leans a little more toward red rather than yellow. The facilitator and Jesse go to the supply closet and pull out the colors they think will make the orange that they are looking for. The facilitator points out that since this color is going to cover the entire canvas they may need to mix a large amount so a cup is obtained. The facilitator demonstrates how to get the paint out of the canister with a palette knife for the first color of the mix and Jesse is asked if he would like to finish getting the rest of the colors and the

blending. Jesse proceeds mixing the color following the facilitator's example. Once mixed the color is tested on a scrap piece of canvas and adjusted until acceptable to Jesse. He then cleans up, chooses a brush, gets a cup of water and moves everything to his table.



*Consulting the color chart.*

The facilitator checks in one more time making sure Jesse has everything he needs and asks Jesse what he thinks about painting the sides of the canvas orange. Jesse states that he does not want the sides to be painted and the facilitator suggests taping them off. Both Jesse and the facilitator tape off the sides of the canvas. Now Jesse is set to work. It is usual for the facilitator to check in with Jesse every twenty to thirty minutes, or when observed as needing help, keeping him focused on his task and progressing forward with his work. While working with another artist the facilitator notices that it has been roughly ten minutes and Jesse has not started painting. He seems to be stuck and laughing to himself quite a bit. The facilitator decides to check in with Jesse. In a calm and casual tone he asks Jesse if everything is alright and if Jesse is in need of something to get started. Jesse states that he was just thinking and that there is nothing that he needs. The facilitator reassures Jesse to take his time in preparing for the task and to only paint the canvas when he is ready, all the while making eye contact in attempt to refocus him. Shortly after this, the facilitator observes Jesse beginning to cover his canvas.



*Jesse starts a new painting.*

The facilitator makes a pass by Jesse's table and offers some positive reinforcement telling Jesse that the color is looking really keen. Jesse agrees and says "thank you". Later, when the facilitator notices Jesse resting his brush on top of his water jar he engages Jesse by asking him if the background is finished and how he feels about it. Jesse replies that it is finished and that he thinks it looks good. It is also the end of the day and time to clean up. The wet canvas is brought to the drying rack and Jesse washes his brush, cleans up his area by putting things away and wiping down his table, and leaves the studio.

The next time Jesse is scheduled in the studio he arrives at his usual time and again is met with some nonverbal cues. When Jesse is done with his routine the facilitator engages with him. Jesse chooses a table and is met with a group of hellos from other artists. This seems to distress him some and he states that he already said hello and that he is very busy. The facilitator talks slowly to Jesse and asks how he is doing and if he remembers what he was working on. Jesse says that he is OK but that he does not remember what it was that he was working on last time. A nonverbal cue of follow me is given by the facilitator and they both slowly walk to the drying rack. The facilitator pulls out the orange canvas and states that he thinks that Jesse was working on it and that it is coming along nicely. The facilitator then asks Jesse if he would like

to continue working on it today, to which Jesse replies he would. The facilitator asks Jesse what he is thinking of putting on the canvas and would he need any images from the computer? Jesse says he would like to get some images for the new piece. Together they put the canvas on Jesse's table and make their way to the computer. Jesse states that he would like to get some pictures of Phil Ochs.



*Searching for imagery.*

While looking at images, Jesse wonders when Phil Ochs was born. Together they look it up on the computer and start to discuss how old Mr. Ochs was when he died. In having this conversation Jesse seems to start looking a little more relaxed and engaged. Pictures of Doc Watson and Charlie Patton are also printed out. Jesse gathers his pictures and goes back to his table. The facilitator and Jesse talk about materials again and Jesse expresses interest in continuing with acrylics. Jesse states that he wants to use three colors: yellow, blue and black. The color chart is consulted and the colors mixed. Jesse chooses his brushes and goes back to his table to work. Again the facilitator routinely checks in with Jesse to help him focus and to see if Jesse is in need of anything further. This was a rather smooth day and Jesse did some fine work. At the end of the session Jesse follows the clean up procedure of the studio and departs.





*A fine days work.*

### **Project's Middle**

For the next few visits the approach with Jesse remains much the same and after some help getting set up and oriented, Jesse spends the majority of the time working independently. He is also slowly building up a picture archive that he can reference fully on his own without needing help with the computer.

The facilitator, in between working with the other artists in the studio, continues to check in with Jesse both to keep Jesse engaged with his work and for the sake of maintaining a routine for him.

Two new approaches are introduced during this period of the project. On one occasion Jesse entered the studio and was somewhat more distressed than on an average day. After letting Jesse go through his prepping, the facilitator approaches Jesse to see how he is doing. Jesse could not tell the facilitator what was bothering him but was speaking quickly and nervously shaking his arms and laughing. The facilitator asked Jesse to take some deep breathes with him, and Jesse being open to suggestions such as this did. The facilitator then gave Jesse some space. In a few minutes Jesse said he felt better, but he still looked a little ill at ease. When asked if he wanted to paint on his piece Jesse replied, “No, thanks”. When asked what he would like to use, Jesse replied that he would like to use markers. The facilitator

then proposed using paint markers, which Jesse was interested in. Markers were chosen and a small demonstration as to how to use them was worked into Jesse’s set up routine. After allowing Jesse some time to work with the new medium the facilitator checked back in with Jesse and discussed what was happening in the painting. Both agree that the new medium was adding something nice to the piece. The piece was feeling a little freer with the new marks, whereas the painting process was moving along at a slower pace and maybe felt more restricting. Jesse continues to use both mediums through the completion of the artwork.



*Jesse consults his image archive.*

When working, Jesse will tend to keep drawing over and over on a piece, even drawing on the back. He does not pay much attention to composing what he is putting down in relation to what is already on the piece. In this way a piece can just be continually gone over, or layered, until Jesse feels that it is filled up. To try something new with Jesse the facilitator talks about masking off areas in the piece in order for some earlier layers to retain some integrity. A quick demonstration of taping off part of one of his

printouts, smearing paint over the printout and peeling the tape off was shown to Jesse. Jesse responded that he would like to try the technique. The facilitator proceeded to rip off pieces of artist tape while Jesse positioned them on the canvas over areas that he liked. This new technique for Jesse will also be used for the remainder of his working on the piece.



*Piece masked off.*

### **Project's End**

Jesse is an artist who reaches a point with a piece in which he will state that it is done and not continue to work on the piece any longer. It is hard for a facilitator to gauge when a piece is done for Jesse as the amount of time he spends with pieces varies greatly but for this piece Jesse is spending a longer amount of time than he usually does. When asked if the piece is done, Jesse's response has frequently been "almost". The facilitator asks Jesse to take off all of the tape and look at it on the wall. In this way Jesse can get some distance on the piece and this may lead to the piece's resolution. Together they

talk about what they each see and what it might need. The facilitator listens and tries to get Jesse to talk about the piece. In this way the facilitator gets a sense of how Jesse is experiencing the piece and can possibly offer some constructive input while being sensitive to him. Doing this in the studio also generates some positive comments from other artists, which Jesse handles very well and seems pleased with. The facilitator asks Jesse if he has considered turning the canvas and working on it in a different direction. Jesse says that he has not considered turning the canvas. When asked if he would want to work this way he replies "no thanks", good enough for the facilitator and Jesse decides that it needs a few more images. Both make their way back to the computer to track down some new images. Once they have the images Jesse and the facilitator tape off new areas on the piece and Jesse goes back to work. A few more days pass working the same way, with the facilitator adding critiques to the daily routine. After each critique Jesse chooses whether or not to continue the practice of masking, sometimes choosing to, sometimes choosing not to.

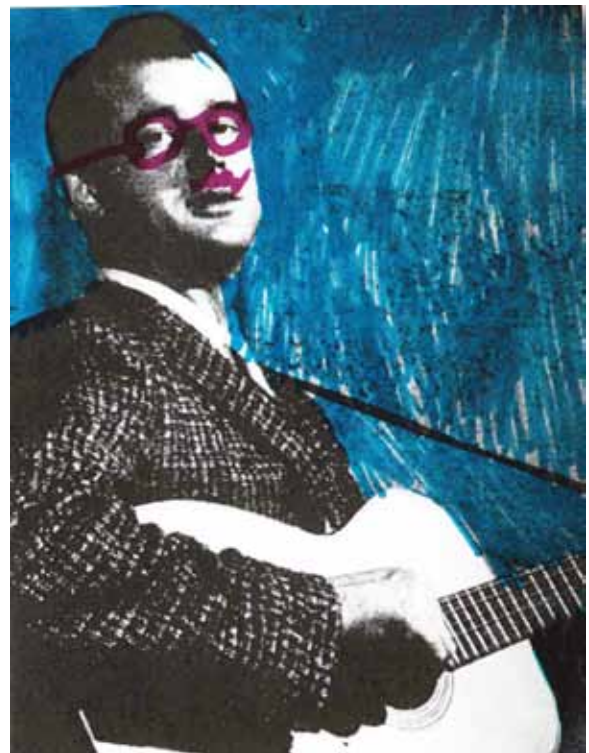


*Jesse gets some inspiration off the wall*



*Jesse Gould. Untitled \$250  
Painting Studio (4-23-11 to 6-13-11)  
Facilitator: Gary Batty*

The day has come when Jesse feels that his work is complete. He tells the facilitator and the facilitator agrees. The work is hung in the studio. They discuss the piece a final time and both say that they feel good about it. The piece will be shown at Jesse's next quarterly meeting and hopefully get exhibited. Some greeting cards were made after the project using manipulated images from the image archive, which Jesse gathered for the piece and will be put into the store for sale.



*Manipulated image from archive.*

## **Painting Studio Overview**

by Gary Batty



### **About The Facilitator**

Gary Batty received an MFA from Parson School of Design in 1997. His artwork is represented by Feature Inc. Gallery in New York City. He serves as a Program Specialist, Art facilitator and is the Assistant Gallery Director at Gateway.

### **Introduction**

The Painting Studio at Gateway is part of what is known as STUDIO A. Here a variety of individuals with different backgrounds participate in creating artwork. Painting as an activity takes place in many areas at Gateway, but here the focus is more concentrated. In this studio, the facilitators are not only involved with helping artists realize their artistic visions, but also their career goals.

### **Safety**

Painting is not an activity that is physically dangerous, but there are some serious health concerns with materials to contend with and some tools involved in preparation that can lead to injury. The most important aspect to safety in a studio is realizing the limitations of your working space. The Painting Studio at Gateway does not have direct ventilation so we stock art materials accordingly and with safety in mind. The majority of paints we supply are acrylic and watercolor.



*Painting materials stored in the supplies closet.*

Both make for easy clean up and emit little to no odor. Materials that require cleaning up with any solvents are not used in the studio. Beside the fumes from the solvents themselves the materials that require them (oil paint, lacquer, enamels, etc.) can be toxic. Similarly, any type of aerosol spraying (fixatives, adhesives and spray paint) is done outside with a respirator and brought in when completely dry. Due to a high risk for potential injury, sharp tools (utility knives, gravers/ chisels, staple gun, etc.) are not kept freely in the studio and are accessed by staff when needed. Direct staff supervision is required when these tools are in use.

### **Space & Materials**

The set-up of the studio is dictated by the space being used. Gateway's space for painting is not large but is utilized well. The space as a whole lends a sense of community through openness and clusters of tables. We dedicate one table to each artist.



*Tables in the studio work space.*

Easels are also used. Gateway also has plenty of wall space in the studio for people to put up work whether finished or in progress. Lighting is another key issue in a studio. Gateway has both natural lighting via skylights and ample electric, task lighting over the work areas. We also use extending table lamps to suit specific artist's needs. There is a sink area in the studio, for access to water and clean-up as well as two restrooms.



*Sink area.*

Storage of both materials and work can be an issue in any studio. All of the materials at Gateway are kept in a closet and are restocked as needed. There is an area designated for works in progress and a drying rack consisting of both wooden and screen shelves for holding work. Finished 2-D artwork is contained in portfolios and flat files. There is floor to ceiling shelving for canvases and framed work.

The primary material of the studio is acrylic paint. A general palette is described at the end of this document. Acrylic paint is used for the most part on canvas, though at times a heavy paper or board is used.



*Painting on hardboard.*

Artists are shown how to and then stretch their own canvases as well as prime them with gesso. We also have many artists using watercolors from tubes and pans. A variety of size and type of brushes (round, flat, small to 4 inch for priming) are available for use, as well as brayers, squeegees, sponges, etc. Artists can use a reusable or paper palette with a cover along with wetting spray to extend the life of unused paint. We stock watercolor pads for everyday use and order some specialty rag papers for more developed projects. Various utensils for drawing are on hand including: pencils, colored pencils, conte crayons, oil pastels, etc. The paper used with these ranges from pads of paper for sketches, pads of Bristol and rag papers.

Artists are encouraged to sketch out their ideas and make a series of preliminary studies before getting started on a painting. However, some artists like to work directly. We have to keep in mind the unbridled use of materials and storage of finished works. Creating works for the Gateway store warrants our stocking some materials specifically for products: unpainted wooden and cloth items are kept on hand in the studio.



*T-shirt painted with fabric paints.*

These items require having fabric paint, dye and wood markers. Other materials that make up the studio are various glues, matte medium, gloss gel, pen and ink, tape, sand, pebbles, buttons, etc. There is a library that includes books on technique, artists, and resource imagery such as magazines, comics, and catalogs for artists to use and pull imagery from as well as a computer with access to the internet and photo editing program.

### **Evaluating Prospective Artists**

Prospective artists are evaluated through a tour and a meeting that lasts about an hour and a half. A separate three hour session working in the studio is then planned. The tour and interview enable staff to talk with and view artwork by the prospective artist. Setting a time for the artist to come back for the rest of the assessment can be an indicator as to the seriousness and dedication of the artist. During the three hour working session the artist is treated as the other established artists in the studio that day and is expected to follow any routines of the day. As with

the other artists, the prospective artists are free to work in any medium that they feel comfortable with. It can be good to give them initial leeway in choosing a project to assess their level of self-motivation and decision making. Staff will frequently check in with them to get a sense of their artistic tendencies and also gauge their response to direction and criticism. What we are looking for is the person's desire to make art and to express themselves in a visual language. Other than one's ability to attend the program, this is most important in evaluating an artist. Facilitators should put aside making judgments about an artist's "talent" or perceived "abilities" during an evaluation.

### **Working With Artists**

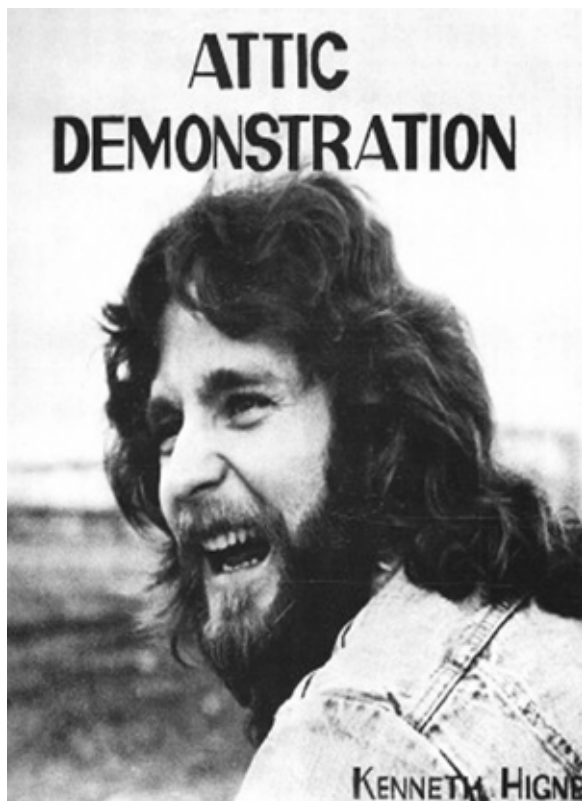
Working with artists at Gateway Arts requires flexibility. Each artist is individual and requires a unique approach to foster success in their art making.



*Try to work with what is there.*

The first step in this process is getting to know and forming a bond with the artist. A facilitator should spend time with the individual, find out what is of interest to them, observe any motivational or behavioral problems or patterns (both physically and mentally), and interact with them in a range of ways noting what is successful and what is not. The goal of this is twofold: one, it can provide a facilitator with some long term tools or "hooks" that can keep the individual invested in what they are doing;

two, it can start to build a trust between the artist and facilitator and create a safe, less pressured atmosphere. After a relationship has been established and a momentum in the artist's work is achieved, the facilitator needs to shift focus. Artistic growth in the individual should be at the forefront of a facilitator's approach. The objective is not to make a range of different types of artwork, but to strive to open doors towards progression by exploring and exploiting nuances that happen naturally in their work. Talking about the artwork with the artist is a critical and objective way for the facilitator to gently steer the artist in these directions. Ultimately the artist should learn to recognize these opportunities on their own. Reviewing prior work with the artist is also a very useful tool in this regard and can help deter stagnation.



*One artist loves 1970's record covers.*

Other than nuts and bolts preparation (stretching canvas, tearing paper, etc). a facilitator should try to keep in the background. When a facilitator needs to

take more of a role in helping an artist with their art, separating the task at hand from the artist's work is vital. For example, when aiding an artist with color mixing, one should ask the artist to be specific about the hue that they have in mind. They should be involved as much as possible in the mixing and testing of the color on scrap surfaces.



*Artist painted the sides of this canvas to make it ready for showing.*

Artists need to make mistakes and be allowed to make them. What the facilitator sees as a mistake may be an aesthetic prejudice. Facilitators should not fix or finish a piece for an artist.

This really has no place in what is known as "Outsider Art". When the facilitator sets aside personal artistic preferences, something extraordinary and unique may be achieved by the artist.

## Studio Management



*Books organized by color coding.*

The artists who come to Gateway deserve to have a clean and organized studio. That is not to say that there needs to be a stringent organization of materials. When a strict routine is created in a studio, it can stay on the neat side but the atmosphere may become restricting.

An artist may have a hard time processing when walking into a supply closet full of labels representing where things go. Also, sometimes an artist's inspiration can come from noticing one thing in relation to another, if that is always a constant, i.e. an overly specific paint color order on a shelf, this motivation can be dulled. The studio should be a 'mess', but a place where there is balance. How a studio is kept reflects

largely upon those who take care of it. At Gateway the artists have to start to clean up fifteen minutes prior to departure. This clean up is usually announced by the facilitator. Artists are expected to put their supplies and work away and wipe down the surface they were working on. Facilitators get trash and recycling together and ask that some artists take the bags to the dumpster when they leave.

Also, someone is asked to clean the sink area at the end of the day. Facilitators should not have to clean up or straighten up after the artists, though this does happen. It is also important to bear in mind that no matter how careful one may be, paint will get on places like the floor, tables, and counters. If this is a problem, precautions need to be taken or other materials investigated.



## **An Fabric Project With Maria**



*Maria in the Fabric studio at Gateway Arts*

### **About Maria**

Maria, A.K.A. “Bunny”, Fulchino is 60 years old and has been working at Gateway Arts for twenty-two years. Maria is best known for her “small flower paper”, roughly 4 x 6 in. pieces of torn paper that she bedecks with flowers in crayon and words in black ink. The words are taken from her daily experiences at Gateway, such as “I go home early”, or “Ted is a nice.” It is quite impressive to see an assortment of “small flower papers”. Together they work as a vivid visual diary. Maria also finds subject matter for her artwork in Eyewitness books. She is drawn to nature in all her work, from fish to butterflies to birds to, of course, flowers. Her drawings are of lovely, serene things and it seems to calm her to draw them. Her use of color, particularly in her embroidery, is intuitive and painterly. She sees more than meets the eye. What may look like a green fish to you or I, has an array of colors to Maria including browns and blues.

Maria works very hard on her artwork. She is often anxious as a result of her disability, and as stated before making artwork seems to have a calming effect on her. Maria is diagnosed with P.K.U., or phenylketonuria, an inborn error in the metabolism caused by the absence of the enzyme phenylalanine hydroxylase. Traits of people diagnosed with P.K.U. include being easily upset, anxious, and having difficulty with transitions and interruptions (Accardo, 1996). Maria has often been heard saying, “No more interruptions”. A calm, orderly studio environment and an attentive facilitator set Maria up for success.

### **Fabric Studio - Monday Morning**

It’s another Monday morning in Fabric Studio. Artists work on a variety of projects in this area, including but not limited to—wearable items, hand-sewing, embroidery, felting, Tie-dye, and soft sculpture. Fabric facilitator, Ashley Brown, is kept busy setting artists up with materials, facilitating various projects, managing the studio, and finishing projects on the sewing machine.

Today Maria is beginning a new embroidery. Her embroideries began with the familiar flower motif from her drawings, but have since expanded to include other subjects. Ashley gives Maria options on what she would like to do next.



*Ashley cuts a new piece of fabric for Maria’s embroidery project.*

## Finding Resources



*Maria and Ashley look through an “Eyewitness: Fish” book to find some good imagery.*

Maria has decided that she would like to work with another favorite theme, fish. Selecting “Eyewitness: Fish” from the Gateway Library, Maria skims the pages looking for good images to draw from. Maria will first draw the picture with fabric markers. This will give her a pattern for her embroidery to follow. Maria settles on a page she likes and gets to work. Her drawing is quick and fluid. She does not include every detail, but she very keenly observes the changes in color and hue on the fish’s scales.



*Maria closely observes her chosen image as she sketches it in fabric marker.*

Ashley asks Maria lots of questions about her drawing, being mindful of not making the questions pointed. It is better to ask, “What’s that?” sometimes, than to make an educated guess. Maria happily points toward what she is drawing from the book. Once Maria is finished with her drawing, Ashley sets her up with an embroidery hoop. Maria collects her thread, needle and scissors, and Ashley asks Maria what color she would like to start with. “Dark red”, she says.

Color is very important to Maria and to her work. Each week she comes to work at Gateway sporting a new shade of nail polish and happily tells staff the name of her latest color.



*Maria eagerly awaits as Ashley threads her needle.*

When Maria finishes with a thread she calls upon Ashley to thread her needle. She also occasionally needs assistance adjusting and tightening the embroidery hoop, or getting out a tangle. By day two she has completed enough that one can see the various stitches beginning to build upon each other, like brush strokes.

Maria is thrilled by the compliments she receives on her work from Ashley, student interns, and even passersby. This extra attention helps Maria to focus on the positive and curbs her daily anxiety.

## Communicating



*Ashley chats with Maria as she threads her needle. Maria benefits from these regular check-ins.*

One of the most important aspects of working with Maria Fulchino is having the ability to speak her language. Communicating with Maria means being privy to a variety of phrases that she uses frequently to express her emotions. When she is anxious about her ride home being on time Maria might say, “I go home early. You tell me when it’s 2 o’clock.” When she is getting frustrated with uncooperative materials in the studio she might say “Don’t haunt”, towards the cumbersome materials, to which Ashley replies, “Yeah, you tell them. Don’t haunt.”



*Ashley points toward an area that needs more work and asks Maria, “What color should go here?”*

When Maria is happy she is very loving and expresses this openly by saying, “I love you”, “I like you”, or “You’re nice”. She likes to know everyone’s names, and is usually curious about new interns and work-study students. When someone is not sure how to respond to Maria the best rule of thumb is to ask her. Sometimes a simple, “How can I help you? What would you like me to say?” is just what Maria needs to move on to the next thing and not get stuck. Ashley is very good at speaking Maria’s language. It is important to Maria that what she communicates is acknowledged. This is one of the key traits of Personal Relationship Building in a classroom, and applies at Gateway as well. Acknowledgement equates respect. Ashley responds to Maria in a positive and calm tone, even when Maria is very upset. This has a ripple effect, and Maria becomes calm because Ashley is calm.



*Ashley points toward an area that needs more work and asks Maria, “What color should go here?”*

Ashley checks in with Maria regularly while she is working. She does this not only to thread Maria’s needle or tighten her embroidery hoop, but also to chat with her and to provide positive reinforcement. Maria lights up when Ashley recognizes her hard work. Even something as simple as telling her that she has made a good color choice, has quite an impact on her mood and focus. Pointing out how much work she has done so far by saying, “Look. This fish is almost done”, motivates Maria to focus on her work. Each week Ashley is sure to note Maria’s progress.

## Finishing Techniques



*Maria proudly holds up her final embroidery to the camera with a smile.*

Maria's embroidery is finished. She has earned a lot of praise for sticking with one project and seeing it out to the end. She embroidered the two fish and kept the background drawn on with marker. Ashley rewards Maria with her favorite activity, "small flower paper."



*Ashley sews the embroidery to a beach bag.*

Now that Maria has finished the embroidery, the behind the scene work begins. Ashley first heat sets the marker by placing the piece in the dryer for approximately an hour. When it comes out of the dryer, Ashley cuts off the tattered edges on the fabric and presses the piece with an iron to get out the wrinkles. Ashley pins the piece to a ready-made tote bag and finally sews the piece to the bag using a sewing machine.

## Finished Project

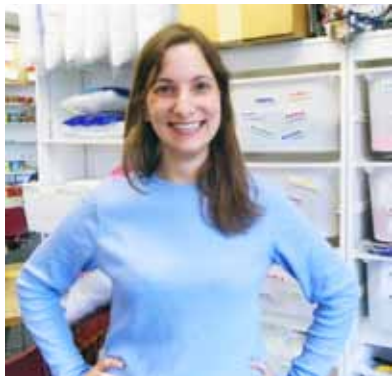
This piece was finished just in time for the summer months. It makes a great beach bag. It was priced at \$25 and sold within a couple months. Maria broke out of her comfort zone with this project. Flowers and butterflies are Maria's usual subjects, but this time Maria chose to draw fish. She observed many details from the Eyewitness Book. She drew stripes on the fish and saw varying colors in the scales that only a skilled artist can observe. She also did a background. It is very rare to see any background in Maria's studio work, but this background is complex with sand, plants, and water. Like other projects completed by Maria in the past, the embroidery has a painterly quality that is uniquely hers.



*Maria Fulchino. Two Fish in the Sea. \$25  
Fabric Studio (6-6-11 to 8-1-11)  
Facilitator: Ashley Brown*

## **Fabric Studio Overview**

*by Ashley Brown*



### **About The Facilitator**

Ashley Brown is a 2-D and 3-D artist who has been the Fabric Studio Supervisor at Gateway Arts since 2010. She received a BFA degree from the School of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston in affiliation with Tufts University. Ashley studied stained glass, oil painting, and fashion design.

Her work at Gateway Arts is centered on her interest in empowering individuals with developmental disabilities. She enjoys helping artists gain skills and abilities that transform their lives.

### **Introduction**

Located in the main studio, the fabric area is bustling with movement. A flurry of sounds fill the air: the sharp sheers snipping off loose threads, the splash of colorful paint across a tote bag, the soft flicker of pages rustling as an artist searches for resource material, the squeak of fabric markers against soft cotton, and the monotonous hum of the sewing machine. Every artist is hard at work using their skills to create their own, unique work. It is the facilitator's pleasure to create a safe and supportive working environment for the artists to pour out their visions and realize their dreams. The goal of the Fabric Studio is to help artist build confidence, skills, and ultimately create saleable items that will go in the Gateway Arts Store.

The studio supervisor must have basic knowledge of stitching, cutting, threading needles, drawing, painting, and quilting. The use of a sewing machine and ability to work from patterns are essential skills a fabric facilitator must possess.



*John feels the stitches he has sewn.*

### **Safety**

The number one concern in the fabric area is safety. There are many sharp tools, hot objects, and intricate machines that can cause physical harm if not used properly. We monitor artists when using scissors in a correct manner, like using their dominant hand and cutting away from their body. When using needles, sometimes hand-eye coordination will result in a finger prick. Thimbles can be a preventative tool. We use extreme caution when using irons and ironing boards. Also, while personal lamps help provide light to artists who are visually impaired, the personal lamp will get very hot over time. We use caution when transporting hot lamps. All fabric paints and silk dyes are non-toxic.



*Materials are labeled, color coordinated, and in reach for easy access.*

Physical strain is an important safety topic. Since sewing is a repetitive motion, we avoid injury by taking periodic breaks.

### **Materials**

We use common fabric materials that can be found in any home sewing kit. The basic tools needed to get started are scissors, needles, measuring tape, and a ruler.

Being familiar with different types of fabric and materials is absolutely necessary. Types of fabric we commonly use include muslin, silk, corduroy, linen, wool, spandex, cotton, and rayon. Thread, embroidery floss, embroidery hoops, fabric paint, water cup, brushes, rags or paper towels, silk dyes, beads, sequins, and fabric markers are basic materials found in the Fabric Studio.



*Embroidery thread organized by color.*

A sewing machine, washing machine, and dryer are absolutely imperative equipment. Irons and ironing boards are necessary to heat set fabric paint. Light boxes can be used to trace images onto a sheet of fabric. Lamps are used to help illuminate projects. Readymade items are also a helpful foundation. We order many types of readymade items which include tote bags, adult and youth t-shirts, shoes, pants, skirts, dresses, purses, headbands, lunch bags, scarves, ties, and sweatshirts.

Resource material is another very important source of inspiration and should not be overlooked. We have an organized library of books and magazines with colored photography on almost every subject ranging from pop culture, nature, and various artists. Also helpful is access to the internet and a full color printer. If an artist needs help brainstorming ideas for new projects, we have an image database of the artist's completed products from other studios such as sketchbooks, paper products, and pottery items.

### **Evaluating Prospective Artists**

We evaluate a prospective artist based upon the safety, skills, and behaviors that they display. We observe how the prospective artist shares the studio space and materials. We expect them to be courteous and respectful to other artists and facilitators. How committed the artist is to an initial project can be a glimpse into how hardworking they will be in the studio setting.

Studio time to evaluate a prospective artist is limited. We must get to know the artist. How much experience does the artist have using fabric? Is the artist familiar with threading a needle and tying a knot? Do they know how to use scissors safely? Can they sew on a button or follow a pattern? Do they work from their imagination or reference material? How much on-to-one attention do they need?

Initial projects are good for evaluating their potential fit in the program. We use a blank square of muslin and direct the artist to draw and paint on the square of fabric. The facilitator begins with observation. Does the artist use reference material? How are space, color, shapes, texture, and line used? Then we stir in conversation about how they are using those visual elements. We observe how they react to the setting of the studio. Is the artist disruptive to other working artists? Is the artist committed to this project? How is the artist responding to the schedule? Based upon this observation, the facilitator will determine whether the artist would be a good match for the studio.



*Artist draws on a square of fabric using fabric markers.*

## **Facilitation**

Creating saleable art is the primary goal. The word saleable is at times hard to define. By working closely with the store manager, we can determine what has the ability to sell. Store managers can be a great resource to find out what items are doing well in the store and what items are out of stock. Another thing to consider is how long a project will take versus the purchase price.



*Fabric products on display in the store.*

There are many more unseen objectives to working in the Fabric Studio. Along with self-confidence and independence, the artist is building fine motor, communication, and behavioral skills. The artist works on the projects based on their own interests. We encourage independence by having artists get their own books, tools, and materials. Although the art itself is creative and fluid, the studio is organized and well kept. Maintaining a clean, organized environment helps create a safer and more efficient workspace. An organized studio plays a big role in the ease an artist will have in completing their objectives. To help the artist, we make sure supplies are labeled with words, pictures, and colors.



*The fabric studio at work.*

The space is designed to streamline production and allow facilitation. We have a massive circular, wooden table in the center of the space. On either side of the large table there are two smaller tables that give the artists, who have a harder time focusing, a quieter and less distracting place to work. We provide an atmosphere that fosters creativity and growth by coaching every artist individually.

One thing coaching includes is motivating. And where there is motivation, there is determination and perseverance. The challenge for the facilitator is to discover what motivates each artist. The structure of our program financially motivates artists to create artwork for a monthly paycheck. Other artists may be motivated by recognition; whether from a facilitator, friends, family, or even international fame. We recognize artists' achievements with an "Artist of the Month" board, gallery shows, and verbal praise. Some artists are motivated for a more specific, short-term reward, like listening to the radio, making puzzles, drawing, or even walking around the neighborhood. We use conditional statements that are linked to good working behavior with earning a short-term reward such as, "If you draw on this for twenty minutes, you will earn twenty minutes of radio time." Consistency with executing the reward builds trust between artist and facilitator.

We remind artists to ask for help when they need it. Many artists will ask for help disassembling knots from thread, applying an embroidery hoop, and pulling fabric taut for painting or drawing. Depending on the artist's skills, the facilitator is asked to thread needles and tie knots. Giving help also includes finishing a project. Cutting loose threads, adding a dash of paint to fix a line, heat setting, or sewing it onto a readymade item are all examples of finishing and making the product store-ready.



*Fran decorates a dress using fabric markers.*

When the item is finished, we photograph the final product and keep an image database of the artist's work. This gives the artist the option of looking back on their body of work and printing out an image of a project that has significant meaning for them. It allows Gateway to have an image mass produced on products such as t-shirts, coasters, or mugs.





*Whimsically wild stretch pants.*

### **Project Examples**

1. Tie Dye: an excellent project suited for many skill levels and many disabilities. Artists experiment with color spontaneously and intuitively. It is a sculptural, hands-on activity that is great for active artists. This is a quick project with instant results that requires one-to-one attention.



*A beautiful example of a tie dye t-shirt created by Ona.*

2. Felting: a hands-on, sculptural activity that is great for active artists. At times it can be messy with the materials being soap, water, and felt. Try having artists create small felt balls which can be used as beads in the Jewelry Studio. This may appeal to artists who need structure. Repetitive steps make it easy for an artist to be independent.



*A felted bracelet created by Darlene.*

3. Embroidery: a focused activity that is repetitive. Stitching can either be spontaneous or planned out with a drawing on the fabric. Build skills in measuring embroidery floss, cutting, threading needles, and tying knots. Embroidery items can be finished by the facilitator by being sewed onto a ready-made item.

4. Painting: this works well on bags and other fabric items. Tape off the desired area where you want the design. When the design is finished, peel back the tape to get a crisp edge. Painting can be more spontaneous by using a sponge to build up the surface. Improve skills by mixing paint colors, controlling the use of the brush, increasing vocabulary about edges and surface texture. Avoid layering paint on paint as it can affect the sustainability of the product.

5. Drawing with Fabric Markers: this is easy to control. Use resource material. Stretch a t-shirt over a large piece of cardboard and clip it using clothespins. Use masking tape to mark off desired area. Follow heat set directions on fabric markers.

6. Soft Sculptures: this is good for one-to-one facilitated projects. Build pattern making skills, drawing skills, and cutting skills. Wrapping items with yarn or thread is a good project for an artist who does not like needles but wants to work with yarn or embroidery thread.



*An example of soft sculpture..*

7. Pillows: Artists decorate two squares of fabric. Sew together the two squares using a sewing machine or having artist hand stitch, and insert a pillow form. Sew pillow shut using a whip stitch.



*An embroidered square becomes a pillow.*

8. Shoes: Available to artists in all mediums. Artists can sew, paint, or draw on a pair of shoes. Add ribbon, buttons, or sequins for additional “Glam” factor

9. Collaboration between artists: At times, artists’ skills will match up perfectly. One artist doesn’t like to draw, but loves to sew. Another artist loves to draw but does not like to sew. These individuals can join together to make a product that both can benefit from.

10. Smaller items: such as bookmarks, pins, coin purses, or magnets are good quick projects with instant results.

11. Hand-sewn cards: a popular item around Valentine’s Day. Artists sew pre-cut backgrounds and pre-cut hearts directly onto the front of a paper card.

12. Silk scarves: white scarves can be dyed using non-toxic silk dyes. Artists can experiment with color by splashing the dye onto the scarf with an eye dropper or squeeze bottle. For an artist that would like more control of the dye, refillable markers have a long life and are very user friendly.

## **Resources**

### Supply companies

#### **Fairfield**

Danbury, CT  
(203) 744-2090

#### **Alpha Shirt Company**

(800) 523-4585  
alphashirt.com

#### **Dharma Trading Company**

San Rafael, California  
(800) 542-5227  
Dharmatrading.com

### Books and Magazines

**Selvedge** - a great British textile magazine. Although it is a bit pricey, it is loaded with inspiration.

**The Quilts of Gees Bend** - Beautiful hand-sewn quilts

## A Folk Art Project With Jim



*Jim in the Folk Art studio at Gateway Arts*

### About Jim

Jim Adams is not only an artist; he is a poet and an inventor of the absurd. Jim is 29 years old and has been attending Gateway Arts for four years. Ambitious and fun-loving, the artist delights his viewers with highly original, often humorous takes on art and the nature of existence. His sculptural works incorporate a wild mish mash of materials and concepts. For example, his recent Batman Zombie sculpture is an assemblage of various parts, including a hollow grandfather clock face, cardboard tubes, a coffee can, and saddle leather. He has earned the respect and admiration of his fellow artists and the facilitators at Gateway.

When faced with challenges, Jim is, as ever, innovative. Jim uses his feet to bend metal rods and his knees to thread a needle. Speech and mobility challenges are not impairments for the artist. He surmounts what would otherwise be barriers with his innate creativity. Jim has left side hemiparesis

resulting in impaired mobility and dysarthria resulting in speech and language challenges. A particular challenge for Jim, as an artist, is that he has limited use of his left hand. However, this does not stop him from trying anything that he wants to do.

### Folk Art Studio - Tuesday Morning

Jim Adams is ready to begin another project in his Hell series. This series began in the Pottery Studio, with Jim's wall mounted pieces: Hell of Mouth, Nose of Hell, Hell of Ears, Hell of Eyes, and Hell of Hand; now in a private collection. Recently, in the Folk Art Studio, the artist created what he called: A Rooster from Hell. Now Jim wants to create a mixed media sculpture of a Flamingo from Hell. With the help of Folk Art facilitator, Peter Laughlin, Jim has located an online image of a flamingo to augment his visual ideas about the bird.



*Staff member, Cole Swavely (left) assisting today in Folk Art, holds up the image Jim will work from. Jim (right) holds up a possible piece for the flamingo's neck. In the background facilitator, Peter Laughlin talks with another Gateway artist.*

### **Preliminary Decisions & Construction**

Folk Art Studio is a veritable treasure trove of materials, from feathers to metal rods, clock parts to cardboard tubes. Peter keeps his studio well supplied with materials perfect for artists like Jim, who delight in the unexpected lucky find. The beginning of a new project gives Jim license to rummage. Peter encourages Jim to use the materials that are interesting to him. Peter is there to anticipate the construction of the project, and to help Jim put the puzzle pieces he selects together as a structurally sound, saleable work of art.



*Jim lights up when he finds this pair of egg beaters. Hmmmm.....*

Jim locates a watering hose segment for the neck, a coffee can for the body, conical cardboard spools for the head, and egg beaters for the “something”, as Jim often says. Some saddle leather will give the flamingo’s body shape, and fabric wrapped around cardboard triangles become the flamingo’s webbed feet.



*Peter helps Jim anchor the screw which will affix saddle leather to the flamingo’s body.*

Jim has become very at home with a variety of hand building and power tools in the Folk Art Studio. Peter does an excellent job of guiding Jim to the appropriate tools by offering him choices. For some jobs a little muscle is all it takes, but drilling through leather and aluminum requires some extra power. Peter provides support, and Jim gets the job done.



*Things are certainly shaping up. Take note of the egg beaters, used to accent the flamingo’s posterior.*

## Adapting To Challenges

Jim and Peter realize that a base will provide the flamingo's spindly legs with essential support. Jim communicates that he wants the base to be covered in "fire" representing the flames of hell. He does this by saying "fire", and then writing it to be sure that he is understood. It is all about reusing and recycling in Folk Art. After finding a suitable piece of scrap wood the two discuss dimensions for a base.



*Peter helps Jim by holding the piece of wood so it doesn't fall.*

Jim begins the tough work of sawing down the wood. Peter encourages Jim to use his left hand, which has less dexterity, as support to give himself leverage and balance. Jim sets to work, while Peter provides additional support.

Peter suggests that the neck may need additional internal structure to retain its shape, but what to use? After scoping the studio from top to bottom, Jim strikes gold. He grips the handle of an empty paint bucket. The sturdy wire of the handle will do the trick.



*Jim and Peter puzzle over the flamingo's neck.*



*Jim removes the wire handle with a pair of shears.*

## Finishing Touches



*Jim is ready.*

Jim and Peter take the Flamingo from Hell, nearing completion, outdoors for some finishing touches. When working with toxic chemicals, of course, safety comes first. On a hot summer day, Peter helps Jim adjust his heavy duty dust mask. Jim wields a spray can with delight, first adding some black, then some white.



*Jim integrates the sculpture with the base by bringing the spray paint upward onto the legs.*

Before long, the flamingo is nearly covered in black and white. Jim releases a heavy sigh as he tears off the uncomfortable dust mask and wipes his brow. Now Jim has only two parts of the project to resolve: making sure the neck keeps its shape and creating the flames of hell surrounding the flamingo.

Jim has been informed that his piece will be included in an upcoming exhibition hosted by VSA Arts Massachusetts, an international organization founded to give arts and educational opportunities to people with disabilities and to increase art awareness and access for all. The show is titled, Collaborations: Gateway Arts at the Open Door Gallery, and it features drawings, paintings, and sculptures by 40 Gateway artists.



*Jim hand picks feathers for the flames of hell.*

Jim's work is certainly an exciting addition to any group show. His Flamingo from Hell is sure to be a stand out for its unique use of materials and highly original concept. Gateway provides Jim with essential support to realize even his most lofty ideas. The technical aspects of putting a mixed media assemblage together are exciting to Jim. He is being given the opportunity to be challenged daily, and reveling in it.

## Finished Project

Jim has carefully selected red feathers to cover the base of his sculpture, representing the flames of hell. Soon, he has finished his project and eagerly awaits the opening reception of Collaborations at the Open Door Gallery.



*James Adams. Flamingo from Hell. \$400  
Folk Art Studio (5-24-11 to 6-21-11)  
Facilitator: Peter Laughlin*



*It's opening night at the Open Door Gallery.*

Friends, family, and art enthusiasts join to celebrate exceptional work by Gateway artists at the Open Door Gallery in downtown Boston. Jim is there with his family. His Flamingo from Hell is displayed prominently at the entrance to the exhibition, in a space of its own.

As with past work, like Jim's Devil Angel, the uniqueness of the materials and the time spent fabricating the project make it difficult to price. Projects are priced according to the artist's past sales history and exhibition history. Jim is a young artist and relatively new to Gateway. However, during his short time working here he has exhibited regularly. All of these factors will be considered when pricing his work. Ultimately, however, the reward is the reception and recognition of the artist's talent and abilities.



*Image of Jim's Devil Angel in past exhibit. Jim ran electrical wire through this mixed media sculpture to give it a glowing, beating heart.*

Despite his many talents, Jim is a modest man. He almost refuses a photo op next to his latest creation. The finished piece has elegance, seen in some of Jim's work that ironically defies the mish mash of materials involved. Jim has unified the piece through his use of color. It is wild, elegant, and playful at once. As with all of his work it is truly his own.

## **Folk Art Studio Overview**

**by Peter Laughlin**



### **About The Facilitator**

Peter Laughlin is an artist and musician with extensive experience working with people with developmental and other disabilities. He began working at Gateway in 1991 after completing a service requirement of the Roxbury Latin School. He attended the University of Massachusetts and focused on psychology. He returned to Gateway as the Folk Art and Activities facilitator. Now a veteran staff member, Peter is dedicated to promoting self-determination of the artists through visual art and music.

### **Introduction**

Folk Art includes sculpture, painting, decorative arts, toys, instruments, handcrafts, and even ritual art. Folk Art serves to define its very cultural context. For these very reasons Gateway's Folk Art Studio offers open-ended opportunities.

A wide array of materials, traditional and otherwise, offered with a spirit of exploration and discovery gives artists the potential to express, create, and develop. Paper, wood, metal, plastic, glass, fibers, and found objects are materials that are only limited by external constraints. Techniques can be derived by the artist to turn these materials into artworks.

The role of the facilitator is to support the creative process vigilantly. This requires a few considerations: safety first, knowledge of the artists, and knowledge of the materials. It will help to set up the studio with harmony in mind and a good staff to artist ratio. The struggle should comfortably remain with the project, and not with the artist. In such a dynamic setting it is crucial to build positivity into the design.

### **Safety**

“Safe and happy” can serve as an excellent mantra for this studio. Though not at odds, these two ideals need balance to be at optimal levels. There is dignity in risk, so individuals' assessments should never underestimate the individuals and thereby limit their expressive potential. Conversely, any spirit of freedom should never stray from the supervisor's control. That said, there are some definite “must have's” in the studio to achieve this balance. These are best on hand as needed. Proper use will encourage a culture of safety.

1. Safety goggles: always use around motorized tools such as a drill, impact tools such as a hammer, and even with heat tools such as a glue gun.

2. Ear protection (headset): though very rarely used because noise levels should be fairly low in the studio, some artists may like them on occasion.

3. Work gloves: a heavy pair of gloves get occasional use, should an object get hot, splintery or sharp.

4. Dust masks and respirators: keep plenty of dust masks available. They are inexpensive and should not be shared or even reused. Any task which generates sawdust requires these. Having respirators occasionally do help.



Folk Art requires so many materials such as paint and adhesive that it is worth saying: **Do not use toxic materials.** There are non-toxic alternatives to almost everything, even spray paint. Become accustomed to looking for the APnontoxic seal on your products. Products applied to projects after the session such as water-based polyurethane can be used with low risk at the facilitator's discretion, but good ventilation is advisable.



*Safety with the help of the facilitator.*

**Tool Talk:** Choice of tools is important. A drill is crucial to so many tasks, but a plug-in power drill is just unnecessary. Even some battery operated drills (greater than 18V) would be prohibitively noisy and dangerous. A 7-12V, rechargeable, reversible variable speed drill is all you need (and an old fashioned hand auger would be fine too). Analogously, a light-duty staple gun is the most you'll need. A hand saw is very useful. A table saw is not (it is noisy and very dangerous). I will cover tool choice again in the Materials section, but please understand: our population needs access and exposure, not endangerment.

Certain of the tools described here should be used in one of three ways with deference to the artist's abilities:

1. Under Supervision - based on demonstrated ability, some tools may be used by the artist with the right guidance.

2. Under Supervision - other situations may have the facilitator performing tasks for the artist under the auspices of the artist.

3. Off-site - This is the same situation as #2, except the tool may not be appropriate for your studio site such as a band saw.

The last, but possibly most important "must have" for safety is organization. Clutter is a vicious enemy. In an area with potentially so many tools and materials, everything must have a home, and the artists should learn to put everything away properly. Also, when choosing projects, one may need to clarify to an artist, that the size is important. Unless you have 20' ceilings, you may not want to undertake creating a life-sized brontosaurus. You may remind them that there are other artists who need to make small things too.

Along with organization goes cleanliness. All "found objects" should be clean and appropriate to the studio. Disease and infestations are clearly not welcome. It is not worth the risk of dealing with dubious sources such as the curbside.

### **Materials**

The following suggested materials should be stocked as necessary according to usage and should not be considered an inclusive list. However, they are stated as a guide of commonly needed or requested materials and most prove very useful.

### Art Materials/Tools

- ◆ Paper: assorted weight, color, texture, size
- ◆ Paper tools: crayons, pencils, pens, water-based markers, assorted scissors, white glue
- ◆ Paint: craft acrylic and/or liquid acrylic
- ◆ Brushes: the \$5 assortment actually holds up when cared for
- ◆ Paint containers: trays, water jars, cups, paper towels
- ◆ Paint markers: nontoxic

### Craft Materials/Tools

- ◆ Unfinished wood: prefabricated boxes, birdhouses, small furniture, etc.
- ◆ Clock mechanisms: these bolt onto almost anything
- ◆ Unfinished wood: plaques and panels for the 2-D artists
- ◆ Unfinished wood: scraps from a cabinet maker or dealer
- ◆ Dowels: a small assortment always comes in handy
- ◆ Construction glues: yellow carpenter's glue and "Welbond" nontoxic, bonds to anything
- ◆ Hot glue gun: bonds quickly
- ◆ Anything not too kindergarten: in other words, feathers, seashells, and beads, but not popsicle sticks and macaroni

### Found Objects

- ◆ What comes naturally to your area is the best. Some favorites have been discarded parts as in: toaster, broken guitar, wheels, fan blades, brass bed, coffee cans, phonograph, keys, and telephones. Cut all electrical cords immediately and discard.
- ◆ Organic objects have really gained notoriety as materials- branches, clean feathers and pelts

### Tools

- ◆ A lockable tool chest with several drawers
- ◆ 9-12V reversible variable speed drill (or hand auger) with a variety of bits
- ◆ Sandpaper: 80, 100, 150, 200 grit
- ◆ Carving tools: rasps, files, chisels, small plane
- ◆ Hand saw: Japanese style or western Hack saw for metal
- ◆ Hammer: 13oz and rubber mallet, 12-16oz
- ◆ Screwdrivers: at least two 4 in 1 and a few precision size.
- ◆ Pliers/cutters: needle nose, linesman, adjustable, snips, "craft cutter" for thin wood
- ◆ Clamps: a few hand clamps and c-clamps; also vise grips and a mounted vise
- ◆ Wrenches: 1 small adjustable, small socket set with ratchet



*Keeping materials visible and accessible.*

## **Facilitation**

Two overriding factors go into an individual's potential for working in the Folk Art Studio: a demonstrated interest in making things, and a manageable level of behavior in the social milieu. Usually between 20 and 200 minutes (over as many as three sessions) will tell a lot. Knowing the threshold of what is manageable in the environment is a fair question. For instance, Gateway has several artists who are (Deaf-Blind), but only those with good impulse control will use the drill.

Developing a standard evaluation tool will surely help you to gauge important levels of ability in a prospective artist. We focus on the individual's strengths, what the artist can do. Assuming the potential artist can communicate in some form; offer a pine plaque, a pencil, paint, and perhaps potpourri. Careful observation of the individual's response will speak volumes about the person.



*Artist at work.*

One can ask: Was there a response? What was it? What mode of communication do they use? Do they ask for help? Do they demonstrate preferences? Do they know when they are finished? Are they willing to keep working? One should take nothing for granted, but make the necessary inferences to successfully communicate with the person. Remain friendly but neutral, making careful observations based on all interactions. Share observations with professional staff. There are probably other observations to compare from other screenings.

Evaluating a prospective client involves a lot even after a determination of readiness has been made. Can the artist function without extra help? What help will they need and for how long? Working with people is full of surprises. As the applicant becomes a new artist, allow plenty of room for growth, when the tone changes from neutral to positive.

## **Facilitation**

Provide Support - From the beginning to the end of a project, the facilitator sets a tone, provides options, and performs tasks for project completion. The tone should be positive, but as challenging as is appropriate. The direction should also never waver from the artist's intent. This is a crucial difference between Gateway and a holiday craft class. Much self esteem is gained as the artist forms their own decisions about their work. A sensitive questioning approach to problematic decisions can be successful, but the facilitator should also question themselves. One's own preparedness for unconventional decisions will help the integrity of the piece. Some artists will ask for help with artistic decisions, and this is okay. Two or three positive options usually get the flow back. Of course, any need for help with tools, and questions about technique can be satisfied as the need arises. Once at the best stopping point try to show the artist why it is finished.



*Artists share their materials.*

Encourage Independence - Along with providing support, we are certain not to provide unnecessary support. Allow time and prompting to take hold. “What’s next?” is the right type of prompting.



*An artist working independently.*

Provide Encouragement - Verbal praise is simple, but important. Most participants by an adult age have come to rely on it. But, it should be sincere. Also, try not to forget the other artists who may be in earshot. Some individuals can be discouraged by hearing the praise of others. One can also praise the group as a whole. This can address the problem of the individual who does not like to be singled out.

## **Studio Management**

Managing the Folk Art Studio may present special challenges, but business is conducted in the same way as in the other studios. Work produced in the sessions is facilitated then stored until completion, when it receives “finishing” touches for saleability, documentation, and entry into store inventory and a place in our gallery, retail store or website.

This is our system, and the way that Folk Art achieves this best is by careful organization of its area. There is a section for working (tables), for facilitated work (bench), for tools (chest), for arts media (shelves), for craft media (bins), and for different projects (shelving units).

With such a potentially dynamic area, it is important to accept assistance when available. Most student interns learn quickly how to apply a protective finish or to get pre-fabricated items ready for use i.e. light sanding and acrylic primer. Others show a knack for recording data and entering inventory. The most valuable assistance can be just a quiet presence and positive regard for an artist, who at that very moment needs that attention.



*A variety of finished artworks.*

## Project Examples



*'Pipe Organ' by Charles.*



*Yasmin's 'Untitled' wood sculpture.*



*'Rooster from Hell' by Jim.*



*Maria's 'Lampshade Clock' mixed media artwork.*

## Resources

**AC Moore**

**Dick Blick**

**Books:** *(all available on Amazon.com)*

**Making Things**

*by Anne Sayre Wiseman*

*Art New England*

## A Paper Project With Maria



*Maria in the Paper studio at Gateway Arts*

### About Maria

Maria Field is 36 years old and has been attending Gateway Arts for over 14 years. Maria loves to draw and the subject of her drawings is often about something else she loves; words. Her fascination with language began to feature more prominently in her work during 2009, when she received one to one tutoring at Lesley College, primarily focused on developing reading skills. Although Maria no longer attends tutoring, she has expressed an interest in continuing to practice her reading and writing skills. The artist also loves music and dance. She writes words the same way a dancer dances; expressively, with movement, with energy, and of course with color. One of Maria's primary goals at Gateway Arts is to continue to create saleable artwork.

As the result of a traumatic brain injury at an early age, Maria struggles with sequencing, language processing, motor planning and perceptual motor skills. Maria

also struggles with a mood disorder and may be drowsy at times due to medications. Facilitators at Gateway help Maria by giving consistent verbal cues, giving her sufficient time to formulate a response, and setting her up with appropriate tools and materials. Occasional breaks from work are also necessary to keep Maria feeling energized and stimulated. Overall, she benefits from a highly structured approach that still allows room for her to make choices.

### Paper Studio - Thursday Afternoon

Thursday afternoon in the Paper Studio is a buzz with activity. Artists move around locating projects and materials. Cleverly organized using the color coded P.R.I.M. system developed by Paper Studio facilitator, Mark Hennen; this user friendly system encourages independence and care of the environment in the Paper Studio. Mark informs Maria that he would like to begin a new project with her and asks for her to wait before choosing her materials. Mark makes sure that the other artists have what they need to get started, so that Maria will have his full attention.



*Mark shows Maria the gift cards that she designed in the Paper Studio.*

Looking at the gift cards, of which many have sold, is a good way for Mark to introduce the artist to the more ambitious idea of making an entire line of paper products

including cards, bags, and gift wrap. Mark also recognizes that Maria's word based artwork is particularly saleable. Maria seems pleased with this recognition, and chooses a book with words to include in her new project.



*After looking at a few illustrated dictionaries, Maria finds one for her project, declaring, "Yeah, I know those words".*

### **Getting Started & Staying Focused**



*Mark helps Maria to look at a specific area of her bag that is underworked.*



*Mark helps Maria select a page of familiar words to use in her project.*

Mark helps Maria to get started by writing a list of words from the page she selected. The words have a springtime theme, like daffodil, baseball, fawn, etc. After the words are selected, Maria and Mark look at color options. Mark encourages Maria to choose a limited palette by choosing one color, purple, and then selecting other tones of purple. Soon, Maria is ready to get started.



*Mark helps Maria gather her materials.*



*Maria talking to a fellow artist.*

Sometimes Maria gets distracted by her coworkers. When this happens it can be a challenge for her to regain focus on the work at hand. This also presents a challenge for the busy facilitator, who must provide instruction to multiple artists and maintain a peaceful, focused, cooperative tone in the studio. By giving Maria specific instructions, Mark gets her back on track. This can mean suggesting a change of color, or pointing towards an area of the composition that needs more attention. Mark makes an effort to phrase redirection as a question or suggestion, using an empowering and motivational tone.

### **Adapting To Challenges**



*Mark holds up flash cards for Maria to copy.*

After the first day, Mark realizes that the words he jotted down as a list may be more accessible and easier to differentiate as flash cards. He enlists one of the Gateway work/study students to make a set of flashcards for Maria in a large, clear font. Mark sets aside a special area in the Paper Studio to house the flash cards and tells Maria about it. She is delighted. The novelty of this new resource seems to spark newfound enthusiasm for the project. Maria sets to work with her flashcards laid out around her. Later Mark checks in with Maria and holds up individual cards for her, after noticing that she is having difficulty focusing in on individual words with the cards scattered around her work space.



*Maria is feeling especially fatigued today.*

Later, Maria feels very fatigued. At one point, she is having such difficulty working on her project that she rests her head on the table. Mark acknowledges this, and suggests that she rest for a few minutes. Several minutes later, Mark suggests that Maria should drink some water and maybe remove her thick velour sweat shirt. Then, the two do a series of rejuvenating exercises in an effort to wake up. Maria seems to enjoy this, especially when coworkers at the table join in.





*Maria and Mark do some rejuvenating exercises.*

### **Finishing Touches**



*Mark helps Maria put her project and materials away, so that she won't miss her ride.*

Maria can get flustered and confused when gathering or putting away materials and projects in the Paper Studio. The process requires light physical assistance and verbal prompts from Mark. Artist and facilitator work together to make transitions smooth, so that Maria can focus her energies on what

matters most, her artwork and daily routines. Maria has had a productive day in Paper Studio, but needs to clean up early. She has plans to stay with her mom in Cambridge for the weekend and is eager to get on the road, so Mark helps her put her materials away quickly.



*Maria's bags are packed and she's ready to go.*

Work continues at Gateway, even when the artist is not there. Mark asks his colleague Elena to add some finishing touches to Maria's first finished product in her new line of paper products. Elena selects a color that complements the artist's palette and sets to work. By painting the sides, bottom, and back of the bag Elena creates a lovely frame around the artist's work.



*Maria waits eagerly for her ride to arrive.*

Mark has found that paper products with a more finished, professional appearance are more saleable. One of Maria's primary goals at Gateway is to create saleable artwork and Mark sees the finishing touches that happen after the fact as supportive of Maria's artistic and commercial goals. When Maria returns, she will be greeted by a finished, original product, ready for the Gateway store. The recognition and honor of displaying work in the store is a motivating force for Gateway artists. After all, art is not made in isolation, and every artist likes to share their accomplishments with others.



*Elena carefully finishes Maria's bag, by adding a border of cobalt blue which frames Maria's drawing nicely.*

### **Pricing & Display**

The finished product as crafted by Maria and facilitated by Mark is a complete set of thematically cohesive Paper Studio paper products. A complete set of Paper Studio products consists of five vertical cards, five horizontal cards, one narrow gift bag, one wide gift bag, and one gift wrap.



*Maria proudly holds up her finished gift wrap.*

### **Finished Project**

These are the standard prices for these products. The theme of this set was spring time. There are no titles per se.



*Maria Field.*

*Cards are priced at \$1.50*

*Narrow gift bag is \$2.50*

*Wide gift bag is \$3.00*

*Gift wrap is \$4.00*

*Paper Studio (approx. 6-15-11 to 8-15-11)*

*Facilitator: Mark Hennen*

## **Paper Studio Overview**

**by Mark Hennen**



### **About The Facilitator**

Mark Hennen graduated from Massachusetts College of Art with a degree in Studio Studies (2-D). He has been the Paper Studio supervisor at Gateway Arts for more than ten years and is an active 2-D artist.

### **Introduction**

The primary goal of Gateways production studios is to facilitate the creation of potentially marketable art and craft work for the gallery and store. Experience has shown that the establishment of a structured and reliably consistent daily routine encourages a calm work environment which in turn greatly enhances each artist's ability to concentrate on the art making process.



*A structured daily routine encourages a calm work environment.*

Upwards to eighty artists rotate through the Paper Studio in the course of any given work week. Each day there is a morning work session and an afternoon work session with a forty-five minute break for lunch in between. Eight to ten artists will work in the studio each session.

Typically the art and craft work generated in the Paper Studio is two-dimensional in nature. The divide between what is art versus what is craft is always vague. For example at Gateway the only real difference between a color pencil drawing on a piece of paper that is framed and is hanging in the gallery and a color pencil drawing on a card that is packaged with an envelope in a plastic bag may be the asking price.

### **Safety**

The physical layout of the studio space is a safety consideration. The Paper Studio is set up to accommodate eight to ten artists working at two sturdy six foot by three foot utility tables. This gives each artist a personal work space of approximately three feet by one and half feet (less if there are ten artists). The artists find themselves working at close quarters. In addition to the artists themselves, sufficient space must be allocated for the safe storage of the Paper Studio's raw materials, source materials, works in progress, and finished products. Artists also need to have adequate space to safely move around the studio in order to access and put away their tools and projects.



*The Paper studio uses non-toxic paint.*



*The X-ACTO knife is kept on a high shelf.*

Cleanliness and sanitation are another important safety consideration. Gateway like the rest of the universe is subject to the arrow of entropy. Artists and facilitators work together on a daily basis in order to keep this law of thermodynamics temporarily at bay.

### **Materials**



*Less expensive markers are for everyday use.*

The Paper Studio stocks a variety of tools and materials typically used by both outsider and insider artists engaging in the drawing and painting process. They include pencils, hand-held pencil sharpeners, erasers, color pencils, acrylic and watercolor paint, gesso, acrylic matte medium and glaze, paint brushes, palettes and paint cups, paint markers, crayons, pens, illustration markers, artist books, various types of paper, Bristol board, card board, wooden panels, and stretched canvas. In addition a stock of ready-made cards, gift bags, and a roll of heavy craft

paper used for the creation of one of a kind cards, unique gift bags, and distinctive gift wrap are maintained along with the necessary packaging supplies for these products. These are the raw materials of the Paper Studio.



*Artists ask for the more expensive project markers.*

### **Evaluating Prospective Artists**

Artists are assigned to the Paper Studio with the hope that they will ultimately find artistic success while working alongside one facilitator and seven to nine fellow artists. The daily routine provides a structure for a new artist to rely on while developing both vocational and artistic skills to the point that he or she is consistently able to manipulate and transform available raw materials into marketable finished products.



*Roger working in the Paper Studio.*

How to know if a new artist will be successful in this setting? Initial impressions can be deceiving. It takes time. Each person is a different scenario. The artist has to get to know Gateway and Gateway has to get to know the artist. It needs to be acknowledged that sometimes it does not work out. But most often the new artist and the Paper Studio can make the adjustment.

### **Facilitation**

Each artist and facilitator brings a unique personality and artistic sensibility to the art making process. However Gateway is a big place where a lot of people come to work each day. Within this context both artists and facilitators benefit from the maintenance of concrete and consistent work place expectations

In the Paper Studio basic target vocational skills include the following: Know and follow the daily routine, Know where tools, materials, and on-going projects are kept, Know the proper care and use of available tools and materials, Put tools, on-going projects, and finished products away properly at the end of the work session, and Remember that studio time is work time, Concentrate on your work and do not distract others from concentrating on their work.



*Artists become invested in the studio environment when given the responsibility to help out.*



*Each facilitator brings a unique personality and artistic sensibility to the art making process.*

Within this framework the facilitator works with each artist to foster artistic skills and creative growth as their individuality dictates. It is an evolutionary process. Usually the making of artwork is not a problem (sometimes it is). The challenge for the artist and the facilitator is in attaining the sweet spot that is to be found somewhere in the vicinity of outsider quirky and Gateway funky.

### **Studio Management**

The key to the smooth operation of the Paper Studio is daily resource management. The philosophy is to get organized and stay organized. Keep it simple. Systematizing the process increases efficiency and decreases stress

The Paper Studio uses a color wheel format for the organization and storage of the Paper Studio's raw materials, source materials, tools, works in progress, and finished products. There is a place for everything in the Paper Studio. The artists have come to know and rely upon this system. They know what the studio has to offer and they know where to find it.



*Organizing and systematizing the process increases efficiency and decreases stress.*

A tremendous amount of drawings that are fabricated throughout Gateway end up in the Paper Studio's "Drawings Complete" bin. Ideally every drawing could be saved and used in some way. Unfortunately this is just not practical due to space concerns and a decision must be made to either save the drawing or not. The question to ask is, is this drawing potentially saleable? It is better to make this decision sooner rather than later. On the other hand certain Gateway artists are ultra prolific drawers, this is what they are about and it is an important part of their artistry. How to document the manifestation of their expended energy? One option is to save all the drawings of an ultra prolific drawer for a certain interval of time such as a month or a year. Another option is to encourage the ultra prolific drawer to focus their extreme energies on an artist book which condenses more drawings into a smaller foot print.

Objects that are saved, whether they are cards, gift bags, gift wrap, artist books, drawings, or paintings, are documented with a photograph which is archived in Gateways online image library. Cards, gift bags, and gift wrap are then packaged and sent to the store for a barcode which provides another tracking data base. Once this process is completed they are brought back up to the Paper Studio until needed in the store. Artist books, drawings, and paintings are also stored in the studio for possible inclusion in future gallery shows or offsite exhibitions.

Eventually unsold and unused objects will have to be purged to make way for newer items. Even a card takes up a certain amount of space and there is most definitely a finite amount of space within the confines of the Paper Studio.

### **Project Examples**

The Paper Studio is lucky enough to be located on the second floor of an old mill building that was built before the advent of widespread interior electrical lighting. Hence the seventy-six inch high windows which line both sides of the studio space. Today these expansive windows provide Gateway artists and facilitators alike with a stage to observe the unwinding spectacle of each passing day, week, month, and year. It is cloudy and it is sunny. It rains and it snows. The wind starts and the wind stops. The leaves come and the leaves go. The bird lands and then flies away. This is a story very much of interest to all people and so it is very much of interest to the people who work at Gateway. In the end it is really all there is.



The new cards for the fall are in the card rack.



The summer paintings are finished.

## Resources

Gateway Arts facilitators are trained and certified in the behavioral management model Safety-Care. ([qbscompanies.com](http://qbscompanies.com))

**The Art and Creative Materials Institute** ([acminet.org](http://acminet.org)) is a good source of information in regards to non-toxic art materials.

**Dick Blick** ([DickBlick.com](http://DickBlick.com)) has an extensive selection of non-toxic art materials. Set up an account, order online, and have it delivered directly to the studio.

Google Images is an excellent resource for visual source material.

Other examples of visual source material that have proven popular in the Paper Studio include the **All-American Ads** series published by Taschen and **Scholastic First Picture Dictionary** published by Scholastic Inc.

### Books, Periodicals, etc.

**On Deep History and the Brain** by Daniel Lord Smail, University of California Press, 2008

**The Science of Willpower**, On Point with Tom Ashbrook, National Public Radio, September 19, 2011 ([npr.org](http://npr.org))

**Autistic and Seeking a Place in an Adult World** by Amy Harmon, New York Times, September 17, 2011 ([nytimes.com](http://nytimes.com))

**Raw Vision**, International Journal of Intuitive and Visionary Art, Ed. John Maizels, published quarterly by Raw Vision LTD

## **An Art Making Project With Matt**



*Matt in the Art Making Studio at Gateway Arts*

### **About Matt**

Matthew Treggiari, known as Matt, is 27 years old and has been working at Gateway Arts for over six years. Matt is a quiet young man who becomes anxious when he feels that he is not in control. He is diagnosed with dyslexia and a developmental delay with autism. Matt is a highly motivated and hardworking artist who pays close attention to details. He has a delightful sense of humor that is conveyed by his playful, vibrant, often cartoon inspired creations. When Matt began at Gateway he worked primarily on meticulously detailed drawings, many of cats, a favorite theme. Over the years sculpture has entered into his repertoire. Matt began making soft sculptures in the Fabric and Weaving Studios. Matt also works with clay in the Pottery Studio and has recently worked with Papier-mâché in the Art Making Studio. He is well liked by his peers, who derive great pleasure from observing Matt's poetic use of the materials around him as zany props. He has been observed using bits

of thread clumped together to give himself a lion's mane. Structure coupled with the familiarity of Gateway have made Matt feel at home, and given him the freedom to pursue his goals.

### **Art Making Studio - Thursday Afternoon**

It's another Thursday afternoon in the Art Making Studio. Nancy Ames, the studio facilitator is busy getting everyone set up with a current project or brainstorming for new projects. Art Making groups are small, allowing artists to work large scale and with a variety of materials and techniques. Matt already knows what he wants to do next, and is anxious to get started. Nancy is very calm and direct with Matt. She asks him to find the drawing he wants to work from and wait until she is ready to talk. Then, when she is ready, Matt proudly presents his latest drawing of Brokk, an alien with tentacles from the Green Lantern Corps comic book series.



*Nancy and Matt discuss Matt's drawings.*



## Experimentation

Nancy emphasizes the importance of experimentation. For detail oriented artists like Matt, this process of trying out different possibilities can be very freeing. Working from Matt's drawing of Brokk the plant alien, Nancy and Matt rummage about for potential materials. Matt agrees that the legs will need to be flexible in order to bend in the way he wants them to. Nancy and Matt play around with some wire and foam shapes and eventually develop a base. At one point, Matt begins randomly threading foam beads on the legs of his sculpture. Although this was not part of the original plan, Nancy encourages this inspired play. As Nancy explains, they are in the experimental phase of the project. It is good to leave room for discoveries and departures from the plan. Overall, Matt is an exceptionally skillful artist at Gateway. He can do most work independently, but sometimes struggles with part to whole relationships and proportions. His drawings are a wonderful resource. It is easier for Matt to see part to whole relationships in 2-D rather than in 3-D. Referencing his drawing gives Matt a visual model for his 3-D project. Part of the process is searching for just the right materials based on Matt's drawing. Matt and Nancy look for a globe to use for the alien's spherical head. Having had no luck finding the ideal piece for Brokk's head, Nancy makes a trip to one of Gateway's favorite resource, A.C. Moore. Matt is pleased to see his drawing given form as he rests the Styrofoam globe atop the base.



*Nancy and Matt experimenting with materials.*



*Matt tries an empty spool for the neck, but decides it isn't right.*



*Matt rests the Styrofoam globe atop the base.*

## Putting It All Together

Matt begins to apply Papier-mâché to his sculpture in order to strengthen the bond between the different parts. Matt can do most of this process independently, but Nancy steps in when she sees Matt's frustration peak as he tries to cover harder to access surface areas. Nancy has developed a way of responding to Matt's occasional anxiety over art projects, which he may express through arm flapping and saying things like, "I don't know. I don't know what to do." Nancy's tone is positive, light-hearted, and often humorous. She gives Matt the message that he should relax, and that he can do it. When Matt gets anxious he tends to perseverate. It is difficult for him to break free and to see another possibility. Nancy gives him options, but no more than two. This helps Matt to feel in control.



*Matt applies papier-mâché.*

Matt's project continues over several studio sessions. Sometimes he works with studio assistants such as Dan Becker. When Matt seems tired, he is asked about his work to reignite his enthusiasm. If he does not have enough time on a given day to finish his work, it is important to remind Matt of all the work he has accomplished, taking the focus away from work left to be done.



*Nancy's calm, direct, and light-hearted approach helps Matt feel at ease.*

There are many steps involved in transforming a drawing into a sculpture. It can be frustrating for Matt to think about a project as a series of steps. This is such a different way of thinking for an artist who draws so automatically. However, over time he has developed a way of working with materials that makes the process more intuitive, almost like learning a new language. The facilitator provides options and prompts that help Matt continue to develop his own 3-D aesthetic.



*Today Matt is working with Dan, a studio assistant.*

## Finishing Touches

In the next Art Making session Matt has enough time to finish the project with Nancy. Matt enjoys sharing his work with the entire Gateway community. He has been known to parade a project around the studio areas getting feedback from various facilitators and friends.



*Matt carefully applies the finishing brush strokes to the Green Lantern emblem.*



*Matthew Treggiari. Brokk. \$75.  
Art Making Studio (5-31-11 to 8-16-11)  
Facilitator: Nancy Ames*

### **Finished Project**

Matthew was pleased with his project. It was priced at \$75 and sold within two days. His passion for science fiction provides a rich source of inspiration for his work. He has a file filled with his drawings of characters and images and often reviews the pages and adds new ones. This makes it easy for a facilitator to open a dialogue which will invariably lead to the focus of his next project. Currently he is interested in the character of Dalek, an evil robot from the TV series Dr. Who. This will make a fine project for his Art Making Studio.

## **Art Making Studio Overview**

by Nancy Ames



### **About The Facilitator**

Nancy Ames is a 3-D artist who has worked at Gateway since 1996. She is the jewelry supervisor and also works in the areas of Art Making and Drama. She received her diploma from The School of The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston where she studied photography and ceramics. Nancy received her Master's Degree in studio teaching from Boston University. She enjoys the process of brainstorming with the artists and facilitating the connection of their interests with materials that actualize their ideas.

### **Introduction**

Gateway's philosophy of facilitation is based on the artist centered approach where by the artist is supported and encouraged to take the lead in the realization of their work. Each artist is unique in their abilities, interests and approach. The challenge is to present a studio environment that fosters experimentation, independence, and self confidence and is supportive of each artist's uniquely singular creative process.

### **Safety**

Keep all sharp and heat producing tools off of the work table: utility and mat knives, saws, drills, glue gun and hot wire used to cut Styrofoam. All these things should be used with caution and by staff only. Choose materials that are non-toxic. There are nontoxic alternatives to most

art supplies. Look for the AP nontoxic seal on markers, paints, spray paint, etc. Keep solvents, aerosols, and finishes inaccessible. Store projects and materials safely, off the floor and out of the way to prevent accidents as well as damage. An orderly area is easier to work in.



*Safety materials are organized on these storage shelves.*

### **Materials**

The materials are only limited by your imagination. Keep in mind storage considerations as too many materials can get out of control.

- ◆ Found objects - can be used in myriad ways, transformed by paint, decoupage, wrapped in wire etc., deconstructed and recreated in a new context.
- ◆ Wire - for armature and all types colored or plain.
- ◆ Styrofoam - scraps, inserts or shapes.
- ◆ Wood - scraps, dowels, sticks, found.
- ◆ Modeling material - Model Magic, a self-hardening clay from Crayola. Sculpey, a brand of polymer clay that is fired in the oven. Plasticene clay which never hardens, good for making molds.
- ◆ Paper - craft, newspaper, prints images, drawing paper, Bristol board etc.
- ◆ Cardboard - sheets, scrounged pieces, tubes, found.
- ◆ String - yarn, cord, ribbon, fabric scraps.

Also useful and present in most studios; pencils, markers, paint markers, Sharpie markers, erasers, colored pencils, watercolor paint, acrylic paint, ruler, tape, paint brushes, disposable palette sheets, glue, gesso, mat medium, polyurethane, sponges and paper towel.

Resource books are highly recommended. Books with images of animals, birds, flowers, logos, everyday objects, cartoons etc. are useful. The Eyewitness Books series is excellent. Google & Bing are good for finding images as well.



*Storage area for a variety of labeled materials.*

### **Evaluating Prospective Artists**

A prospective artist will usually visit several studios for a 30 minute evaluation. During that time the facilitator is observing whether the artist is able to work in the studio environment with a ratio of one staff to eight artists without becoming distracted or requiring redirection. By asking them about what they've done previously; painting, papier-mâché, work in clay and drawing etc. staff is able to get a sense of their familiarity with materials and processes. Typically the artist will be presented with a few tasks to get a sense of their skills, interest, and potential.

### **Facilitation**

Dialogue is the best beginning. At this point the discussion is not about their skills but about their interests. Finding an

idea that resonates with them becomes the motivation behind the project. It becomes theirs. Consulting resource material is most often helpful. After that the discussion is about how it will be realized. What are the possibilities? Keep questions open ended. Encourage flexibility, to be open to the happy accident and to play. Over time increased proficiency and confidence are apparent as well as a decrease in resistance about trying new things.

How much assistance is given varies of course on the project's complexity and artist's ability. It is usually necessary to assist in the creation of an armature to ensure a sculpture's stability. If it's not established from the beginning it's almost impossible to get it to stand on its own and so the piece is compromised.

### **Studio Management**

Successful studio management depends on the intersecting play of its many components:

- ◆ Studio ambience - foster an atmosphere of calm productivity.
- ◆ Storage for work in progress - store work by studio time slot i.e. Wed pm. A dedicated shelving arrangement is useful. Artists can be more independent.
- ◆ Availability and storage of materials - store materials in see through storage bins with like items labeled clearly and easily accessed.
- ◆ Clear workspace - lessens distractions.
- ◆ Availability of interns - it's always helpful to have another pair of eyes and hands. They are utilized as support for staff as well as artists. Projects can be more ambitious if there is extra help.
- ◆ Clean-up - it's important that everyone participate and take responsibility for their work and for the studio environment.

## Project Examples



*Brenda's papier-mâché head of President Obama.*



*Liz's Lollipop sculpture.*



*Collaged papier-mâché objects by Maria.*



*Yasmin wrapping the card stand.*



Mixed media artwork by Yasmin.



Matthew's feather sculpture.

## Resources

Dick Blick - [www.DickBlick.com](http://www.DickBlick.com)

IKEA

A.C. Moore

Home Depot

Be open to donations

Found objects



Alligator sculpture, papier-mâché over an armature made by Barbara.



Resource area.

## A Weaving Project With Ona



*Ona in the Weaving studio at Gateway Arts*

facilitate a conversation with Jenine Shereos, the Weaving facilitator. The interpreter acts as Ona's voice and ears. Many considerations must be made in weaving; i.e. color, texture, cloth width, structure and design. Through this conversation, Jenine provides Ona with options and Ona decides to weave cloth for a set of pillows, using a cool color scheme.



*Jenine brings out a past project made by Ona.*

### About Ona

Ona Stewart is 52 years old and has been attending Gateway Arts for 16 years. Ona is deaf and blind. She communicates primarily in American Sign Language. Ona was born with Usher's Syndrome and has been deaf her whole life. She did not become blind until she was a teenager. Ona is a passionate advocate for the deaf and blind community. Ona works in the Weaving, Pottery, Jewelry and Fabric Studios at Gateway. Ona's highly developed sense of touch is particularly evident in her beautifully crafted woven works.

### Weaving Studio - Monday Afternoon

Today Ona's case manager, Stephanie Schmidt, has arranged to have Evelyn Shields, an interpreter, visit the Weaving Studio. Sign language interpreters communicate what has been said via signs or finger spelling. One of the most important steps in beginning a new project for Ona is having a conversation. The interpreter is here to



*Ona signs to the interpreter as Jenine looks on.*

### Dressing The Loom

Extensive preparation goes into weaving. Mallory Biggins, the Weaving assistant prepares the warp for Ona. The warp is the long vertical threads running through a piece of fabric. The thread that the weaver weaves through the warp, or the horizontal thread, is known as the weft. Mallory must prepare the warp on a warping mill, being sure that the yarns stay in the correct order.





*Mallory gets the warp ready, using a warping mill.*



*Mallory dresses the loom by threading each thread in order through wire heddles.*

Once warping on the mill is finished, Mallory must feed each individual yarn through the loom. Mallory first hooks each thread through the eye of a wire heddle in groups of four. The heddles connect to the foot pedals of the loom, and together they determine the weaving pattern. When the weaver weaves the pedals control the movement of the yarns inside of the heddles, up and down, up and down. This creates the pattern. In this case it is a plain weave, i.e. over and under, over and under.

The next step further organizes the yarns by separating each one into its own space. This is called “sleighting the reed”. The reed is roughly the width of the loom and made up of thin steel rods side by side. Each yarn must pass between two of the rods, in the order that it will rest in the cloth. This is a careful and tedious process. It ensures that the warp is truly in order. After the reed has been sleighted the ends of the yarns are tied to the front beam of the loom. The loom is then wound, establishing tension across the warp. Just like in machine sewing, it is essential that tension remains consistent to produce a cloth that does not pucker or sag. Once the warp is ready, Ona will be able to weave the weft through it. The process of dressing or warping the loom establishes order (or the pattern). It also creates tension. Every yarn must be tied onto the loom at the same tension.



*Mallory further organizes the threads by “sleighting the reed”.*

## Adapting To Challenges



*Ona points out the guide for selecting yarns adhered to the beater bar of her loom. Stephanie signs "yes" by nodding her closed hand up and down, showing that she understands.*

Sometimes it is necessary to adapt the physical loom to the weaver. Ona is able to read large, clear font. Jenine has made signage to remind Ona of which weft yarn to use, thick or thin. By alternating thicknesses of yarn, she creates not only pattern but also texture in the weaving. The colors of the thick and thin yarns also vary slightly. This creates a visual effect like gradation in drawing or painting. The colors actually blend in the cloth, much in the way a painter blends paints on a canvas. The use of multiple yarns makes the weaving pattern more complex, and signage acts as a helpful place keeper for Ona.



*These guides act as a reminder to Ona of what her pattern is. The thick weft yarn goes through the warp from the left and the thin weft yarn goes through the warp from the right.*

The weft yarn is wound onto wooden shuttles. As Ona passes the weft yarn over and under the warp the shuttles unwind, and release yarn that builds the cloth. A typical project in weaving takes at least a few months. The warps are quite long, up to 16 yards in length and the cloth is built by yarns a millimeter or less mm thick, one can imagine the amount of work involved.



*Ona points out the brackets which hold her loom fast to the floor, so that it will not move while she works.*

One troublesome issue in weaving is that the loom literally moves as the weaver weaves. The constant and repetitive actions of the weaver, combined with the fact that often one hand is more dominant than the other causes the loom to shift. Because Ona is visually impaired, she relies on things being in the usual place. She travels through space largely dependent upon her touch sense, so when something is even slightly askew she notices. Ona's loom has been adapted to

avoid this issue. Here Ona points to one of two metal brackets that anchor her loom in place as she weaves. This way she knows that her loom will always be exactly as she left it. Ona initiated the process to remedy this challenge by communicating that it was bothering her. Often Ona finds herself pointing out problems that are less visible to the seeing world.

### **Getting To Work**



*Ona passes the weft yarn over and under the warp yarns.*

Finally, Ona's new warp is ready to go. Ona uses the foot pedals to make the warp yarns rise and fall alternately. She passes the weft yarn through the space between the warp threads. This is what creates the pattern of over and under. Ona is a natural weaver. She responds to the tactility and rhythm of the weaving process. Touch is perhaps the sense most central to weaving, and Ona has found herself very at home with weaving for this reason.



*Ona packs in the weft yarns with the beater bar.*

After the weft yarn passes over and under the warp threads, the weaver releases the pedal causing the warp to lay flat. The weaver then thrusts the beater bar towards herself, "packing in" the yarn. This is what causes the weft yarns to lie evenly across the warp yarns. Depending on the beat, how hard or soft the weaver packs the yarn in; the cloth will be a loose or tight weave. Ona packs the yarn hard, creating a tightly woven cloth.

Sometimes in weaving there is stopping and starting. Ona has run out of weft thread, so she has to wind more onto her shuttle, before she can continue to weave. As with all motions in weaving, winding the shuttle is a repetitive, rhythmic motion. Ona stands, so the yarn will naturally wind off of the spool, and so that she will have plenty of room to flip the long wooden shuttle back and forth as the yarn winds around and around. Independence is encouraged in the Weaving Studio. Although the work of preparing and dressing the looms falls to Jenine and Mallory, artists are encouraged to wind their own yarn and to advance the cloth on the loom as they weave.

## Finishing Techniques



*Undressing the loom.*



*Gathering up the yardage.*



*Cutting the cloth.*



*Completed pillows.*

## Finished Product

Ona is very happy with her final product. Ona has now completed a beautiful pillow in new colors of blue, yellow, and green to compliment her previous pillow in red, orange, pink, and yellow. She wove approximately fifteen yards of fabric in each color, and the remaining fabric will be used to create more pillows, placemats, and bags to be sold in the Gateway store. For her next project, Ona says that she would like to weave warm, wool blankets for the winter. Jenine will research different yarn options, design and wind a warp, and set up the loom so that she can weave the blankets.



*Ona Stewart. Pillows \$35 each  
Weaving Studio (approx. 7-1-11 to 9-1-11)  
Facilitator: Jenine Shereos*

## **Weaving Studio Overview**

by Jenine Shereos



### **About The Facilitator**

Jenine Shereos is a sculptor and installation artist specializing in fiber and textile processes. In 2006, she received her MFA from California State University, Long Beach, and during the 2007-2008 school year she was a Visiting Artist in the Fiber/Textiles Department at the University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth. Her work has been shown both nationally and internationally and published in *Fiberarts Magazine*, *Frame Magazine*, *Textile Plus*, and will also be included in Mary Schoeser's upcoming 2012 publication, *The Art of Textiles*. Ms. Shereos has been the Weaving facilitator at Gateway Arts since 2009, where she has had the pleasure of working with and being inspired by the artists in the Weaving Studio.

### **Introduction**

The Weaving Studio at Gateway Arts is a bright and colorful space bustling with activity. In addition to weaving on floor looms, artists in the Weaving Studio also knit, embroider, crochet, and sew. Their work culminates in a myriad of colorful knit and woven scarves as well as rag rugs, placemats, table runners, purses, beach bags, blankets, and other fanciful products for the Gateway Store. The finish products are professional, functional, and truly unique.



*Richard weaves yardage that will be used to make infinity scarves.*

### **Safety**

There are several safety factors to keep in mind in a weaving studio. In general, the best way to maintain a safe and healthy environment is by keeping things cleaned and organized, and keeping materials easily accessible. Even though the looms are quite heavy, they can shift around while an artist is weaving. Many of the weavers at Gateway are visually impaired, so this can be dangerous as someone could easily run into a loom that is not in its usual position. As a result, the looms that tend to shift have been bolted to the floor. Another safety concern involves dust from the fibers that are used. Artists and student volunteers who rip the rag used to weave rag rugs are encouraged to wear dust masks to avoid inhaling any loose fibers. Dust from fibers does tend to accumulate quickly in a weaving studio, and as a result the weaving area is frequently cleaned using a vacuum or handvac as opposed to sweeping, which tends to scatter the dust. In addition, tables and other surfaces are regularly cleaned using a green cleaner. Another potential safety concern involves physical strain, such as repetitive motion injury. Artists are encouraged to take breaks as needed and stretch their back and wrists as necessary.

## **Materials**

Looms - The Weaving Studio at Gateway Arts features eight production floor looms. The largest loom is used primarily for weaving wide, sturdy fabric that is used for rag rugs. Four standard sized looms are each assigned to individual artists for the fabrication of cloth that is then used to create saleable items such as pillows, placemats, bags, or scarves. Additionally, there are three small-scale looms shared by several artists that are used exclusively to weave yardage for scarves. The Weaving Studio at Gateway also houses a rigid heddle loom, which is essentially a simplified version of a floor loom in which the heddles are incorporated into the reed so that all of the motions can be completed by hand and no peddles are necessary. This is an especially good option for artists who would like to weave, but may have mobility issues.



*The Weaving Studio at Gateway Arts.*

Yarn - The types of yarns used most commonly in the Weaving Studio include cotton, tencel, and rayon chenille. Cotton is most often used to create yardage for placemats, pillows and bags because it is a strong, durable, and easily washable material. Chenille is a soft, synthetic fiber that is ideal for weaving scarves. Tencel is an environmentally friendly fiber that is made from wood pulp cellulose. It has a soft, silky feel, and scarves woven in tencel are lighter weight than those woven with chenille. Artists

occasionally weave with wool, which can be used to create interesting effects by fulling, a process in which the woven woolen fabric is washed and shrunk, giving it a texture similar to felt. Wool is used only by a few specific artists, however, because it is a common allergen. Finally, some products are woven using a combination of the above mentioned fibers, resulting in an exciting array of fabric structures and textures.



*The shelves in the Weaving Studio are filled with colorful cones of yarn.*

Other Materials - Other materials essential for a weaving studio include a warping board or wheel for creating the warp, bobbins and shuttles for the process of weaving the weft, and a bobbin winder for preparing the bobbins. In addition, materials that would be used in any sewing studio such as an iron and ironing board, a sewing machine, washer and dryer, sewing needles and thread, scissors, fabric, buttons, zippers, etc., are used by the Weaving facilitator for finishing products and creating woven yardage into products to be sold in the Gateway store.



*In the sewing area of the weaving studio, woven yardage is transformed into saleable items for the Gateway store.*

### **Evaluating Prospective Artists**

Many artists are attracted to weaving because of its tactile quality and meditative process of repetition. Also, the resulting product is quite attractive and saleable in the store. When evaluating prospective artists for the Weaving Studio, the Weaving Studio facilitator first demonstrates the process of weaving on a loom that has already been set up. Next, the artist sits down at the loom and goes through the process step by step. It is often quite apparent right away whether the Weaving Studio is a good fit for someone. Some artists find the coordination aspects too difficult, or are simply bored by the repetitive nature of the process. In these situations, if the artist is assigned to work in the Weaving Studio, the Weaving facilitator works with them to find a fiber-related project or process that they find more suitable and engaging such as embroidery, knitting, or crochet. If an artist does seem to be a good fit for working on a loom, the facilitator then works more closely with them on beating each row of yarn down with even pressure, and keeping nice even selvages (the edges of the weaving). Once an artist has woven for a couple of sessions and feels comfortable with the basic process, they then learn how to forward the loom, wind a bobbin, and overlap threads when one thread has ended and it is time to begin a with a new thread.

### **Facilitation**

Although the work of preparing and dressing the looms falls to the Weaving facilitator and weaving assistant, artists are encouraged to have as much independence as possible. For most artists, this involves weaving in the weft after the loom has been set up, winding their own bobbins, and advancing the loom themselves. Artists who work on their own individual looms will consult with the Weaving facilitator before beginning a new project to discuss possible materials, colors, and ideas for the next project. In some cases, an artist is able to participate in literally every step of the process, from designing the warp to dressing the loom. It is up to the facilitator to work with each artist on an individual basis.



*Ona weaves at her loom.*

On any given day there are also a number of artists working on non-loom projects, either by preference or because their loom is in the process of being dressed. Artists are encouraged to work on fiber related projects as much as possible while working in the Weaving Studio such as knitting, crochet, embroidery, or fiber sculpture. In addition, there are a couple of small table looms that are available for artists to use. Independence is encouraged, and artists are provided with guidance and resources to help them find their own creative voice.



*Betty crochets a beautiful cover of her own design for a large pillow.*

### **Studio Management**

The Weaving Studio is an inspirational space filled with shelves of beautifully colorful and textured yarns, and the rhythmic sounds of weavers weaving on their looms. There are always many projects going on simultaneously in the Weaving Studio, so it is important to create an inspiring environment that is also organized, clean and calm. Materials should be well organized, clearly labeled, and easily accessible for artists, and the Weaving facilitator should plan ahead ordering materials for specific projects well in advance.

A large part of the Weaving facilitator's job involves design and creativity. The Weaving Studio is stocked with plenty of books and magazines filled with inspiring color combinations and project ideas. The Weaving facilitator should have an excellent eye for color and design, as well as a strong sense of sewing and product construction skills. Finally, it is the job of the Weaving facilitator in conjunction with the weaving assistant to keep the looms in good working order, and also to prepare, or "dress" the looms. This process can be quite time consuming, and involves the following steps.

Step 1: Designing the Warp - The first and most creative step of preparing a loom is designing the warp. This involves choosing the types of yarn that will be used, selecting the colors, designing a pattern, and calculating the size and texture, or "hand" of the desired material. The vertical threads that run through the loom are referred to as the "warp," and the thread that the weavers weave horizontally through the warp are known as the "weft." In the Weaving Studio at Gateway, usually a single color is chosen for the weft, and the pattern for a weaving is predominantly determined by the yarns in the warp. This is known as a "warp-dominant" design.



*The Weaving Studio facilitator creates color sample cards to design warps for woven projects.*



Step 2: Preparing the Warp - When preparing the warp, it is essential to keep each thread in the correct sequence. This is done by wrapping the thread warp around a warping board or wheel and creating a “cross” to keep the individual yarns in order. Because the set-up process is quite time consuming and involved, I usually set up each loom to produce approximately 16 yards of fabric. This would for example, be long enough to weave six completed scarves to sell in the store. Generally, it takes approximately 1 to 2 months for the weavers to complete one 16-yard bolt of cloth.



*Weaving Studio assistant winds a warp on a warping wheel.*

Step 3: Winding the warp on the loom - After the warp has been prepared, it is then transferred to the loom. The cross (which has been preserved by tying it through with strings) is separated by two leigh sticks and a

special beam is used to temporarily separate the inches. The warp is then wrapped attached to the back beam and wound on. This process involves two people; one person to “comb out” the tangles in the yarn and then hold the yarn taut while a second person winds the warp onto the back beam. During this stage, it is very important to hold all of the threads under even tension.

Step 4: Threading the heddles - Once the warp has been wound onto the loom, the next step is threading the heddles. Each thread is placed through the individual heddles based on the order determined by the weaving pattern.

Step 5: Sleighing the reed - Next, a special hook is used to pull each individual thread through the reed in the proper order.

Step 6: Tie ends and adjust tension tie-up - At this point, all of the threads are tied to the front beam in one inch bundles. It is essential to retie each cluster of yarns as many times as needed in order to ensure that the tension is distributed as evenly as possible throughout the warp.

Step 7: Select weft yarn and begin weaving - Once the loom is set up the facilitator or artist weaves a sample piece, experimenting with a variety of colors and textures of yarn. It is important to really experiment during this stage, as the results can sometimes be quite unexpected. After a loom is set up, the Weaving facilitator continues to assist weavers by fixing broken warp threads, checking occasionally to make sure that the tension is even and the selvages are straight, and helping to trouble-shoot any problems that may arise. On looms that are shared, weavers pin a name tag into the cloth after each weaving session so that their weaving total can be calculated and they receive proper payment for scarves sold in the store.



*Joe weaves yardage at his loom.*

**Step 8: Finishing Woven Products -**

After the fabric has been woven and taken off of the loom, the Weaving facilitator then prepares the fabric by fixing any mistakes in the cloth, washing the fabric, and sewing the cloth into finished products to sell in the store, such as rag rugs, pillows, placemats, beach bags, purses, and scarves. Assistants are invaluable when it comes to the task of winding or tying off the ends of the numerous scarves, rugs, and placemats that are produced in the Weaving Studio. Finished work is photographed, labeled with price tags and care labels, and then sold in the Gateway store.



*Cotton, tencel, and chenille scarves in the Gateway store.*



*A colorful array of woven items such as rag rugs, pillows, placemats, and scarves are on display in the Gateway store.*



*Various types of finished placemats and table runners.*

**Resources**

**Supply Companies**

**Great Northern Weaving** (a good resource for rug warp yarn and rag coils for rag rugs)

451 E. D Avenue

Kalamazoo MI, 49009

1-800-446-5977

[www.greatnorthernweaving.com](http://www.greatnorthernweaving.com)

**WEBS** (*a good resource for tencel, chenille, and cotton yarns for weaving scarves*)

75 Service Center Road  
Northampton MA, 01060  
1-800-367-9327  
www.yarn.com

**Fairfield Processing** (*Fairfield carries pillow forms and poly-fil*)

P.O. Box 1157  
88 Rose Hill Avenue  
Danbury CT, 06813-1157  
1-203-744-2090  
www.fairfieldworld.com

**Halcyon Yarn** (*a good resource for weaving and knitting yarn*)

12 School Street  
Bath, ME 04530  
1-800-341-0282  
www.halcyonyarn.com

**Harrisville Designs** (*an excellent resource for wool, as well as looms and loom accessories*)

P.O. Box 806  
Harrisville, NH 03450  
1-800-338-9415  
www.harrisville.com

**Jo-Ann Fabric** (*carries supplies for sewing such as sewing machines, needles, fabric, sewing thread, etc.*)

5555 Darrow Road  
Hudson, OH 44236  
1-888-739-4120  
www.joann.com

#### Recommended Reading

Chandler, Deborah. **Learning to Weave**. Loveland, Colorado: Interweave Press, 1995. *A great resource for any beginning weaver that covers everything you will need to know. This book includes step-by-step instructions on how to dress a loom, different weave patterns and variations, as well as troubleshooting techniques and more.*

Dixon, Anne. **The Handweaver's Pattern Directory**. Loveland Colorado: Interweave Press, 2007.

*A good reference for anyone who would like to expand their weaving repertoire beyond plain-weave, this book contains a collection of over 600 weaves including basic four-shaft structures, to block drafts, double weaves, herringbone, twill, zigzag and diamond designs.*

Gipson, Liz. **Weaving Made Easy: 17 Projects Using a Simple Loom**. Loveland Colorado: Interweave Press, 2008.

*This book gives excellent, step-by-step instructions for the beginning weaver. Although it is specifically geared for those using a rigid-heddle loom, the color, design, and construction of finished woven products covered in this book are very useful for any weaver.*

Held, Shirley E. **Weaving: A Handbook of the Fiber Arts**, third edition. Belmont, California: Wadsworth Group, 1999.

*A comprehensive introduction to the fiber arts, this book covers a history of the fiber arts, techniques such as felting and basketry, and an extensive section on weaving.*

Birrell, Verla. **The Textile Arts**. New York: Shocken Books, 1959.

*A comprehensive handbook that includes instructions on weaving, dyeing, textile printing, and other textile techniques.*

**Handwoven Magazine**. Loveland, Colorado: Interweave Press.

*This magazine is an excellent up to date resource that includes many current ideas for woven projects.*

## Evaluation Form / Gateway Arts Educational Manual

<input type="checkbox"/>	This is my first time using a curriculum guide.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I have used curriculum guides in the past.
<input type="checkbox"/>	The curriculum guide was easy to use.
<input type="checkbox"/>	If I had a specific issue, the curriculum guide would help me resolve it.
<input type="checkbox"/>	The curriculum guide helped me solve problems.
<input type="checkbox"/>	The curriculum guide can help me stick to my aims and accomplish my goals.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I am confident that I could deal efficiently with unexpected events after reading the curriculum guide.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I see the curriculum guide as a resource on how to handle unforeseen situations.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I can solve most problems using the methods and techniques explained in the curriculum guide.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I feel confident eliciting artwork from talented adults with disabilities.
<input type="checkbox"/>	When I am confronted with a problem, I can usually find several solutions within the curriculum guide.
<input type="checkbox"/>	The curriculum guide inspires me.
<input type="checkbox"/>	As a human service worker, I may need more training to be able to use the curriculum guide.
<input type="checkbox"/>	As an administrator, the curriculum guide reveals the need for specific training for my employees.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I am working with someone where I can see myself using this curriculum guide.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I can see myself trying a project I learned from this guide.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I can see a way I can adapt projects for someone I work with.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I see how I can prepare work for selling professionally.

0= does not apply 1 = Not at all true 2 = Hardly true 3 = Moderately true 4 = Exactly true

Comments:

Thank you for using this manual and sending us your feedback.

Please return to Deidre Cummins at:

Gateway Arts

62 Harvard Street, 2nd fl.

Brookline, MA 02445

p: 617-734-1577

f: 617-734-3199

cumminsd@vinfen.org