

# Final Report Art and Professional Practises

## Introduction

This workshop was the brainchild of Todd Noseworthy, the Deh Cho Business Development Centre General Manager, myself (visual artist and President of the Open Sky Creative Society), and Suza Tsetso, who is a Dene Artisan and Cultural instructor. After several ideas emerged it was decided that there was a definite gap to fill in the area of the Arts and Cultural Industries. I took the direction from there to design a program aimed at encouraging young artists to pursue a career in the arts and thus create some creative self-employment. It has been said that small business is the corner stone/back bone of the Canadian economy. This project was a way of motivating artistic youth, who otherwise would not find any thing formal in place to encourage their artistic professional development in this region of the North.

I feel extremely fulfilled and grateful for being a part of this course. Of course, the highlight for me was the trip to Ottawa to meet with artists and gallery curators who extended the learning experience by adding their in depth wisdom and extensive experience to our brief classroom overview of the industry. Yet, working with the young artists proved to be an equally rewarding experience as I witnessed their excitement and motivation through their new discoveries. As this report outlines, the course has opened up a door to a career option that was previously overlooked and made it more accessible to the youth of the remote North Country. It serves as a road map to the obscure career of the professional Artist. In conclusion, it is our hope that the Art and professional practises course has contributed to the revitalization of a self-reliant economy through creative self-employment.

## Course Description

### Purpose:

The course was intended to assist young artisans to have greater capacity to develop their talent and traditions into meaningful employment. This was done by introducing them to the business side of art, meeting with professional artisans and exposing the students to various marketing and formal distribution possibilities.

### Objectives Met:

#### *1. Assisted youth to discover hidden talent:*

- Raised awareness among the youth about what artistic gifts are and how they can be nurtured through exercise # 2 “SGA from NACCA’s Youth Entrepreneur Training guide pg 64
- Cultivated a sense of commitment to this field as a legitimate career goal by exposing the youth to professionals and the role of the artist within society.

#### *2. Build self –esteem and promote self- sufficiency among participants:*

- Utilized down to earth, humorous aboriginal and non aboriginal role models who related to the youth and helped them realize that if they could do it so could the youth!

- ☑ Presented information that would help them make informed decisions concerning their artistic endeavors such as various arts sectors, appropriate venues, educational institutes that support choices and funding sources.
- ☑ Discussed issues such as copyright laws and gallery contracts to assist the youth to protect themselves and encourage positive experiences.
- ☑ Familiarized the youth with art as a healthy outlet for expressing one's emotions, and as a safe platform to address awkward topics.
- ☑ Developed an artist statement and portfolio to use as a promotion tool. This process was started but due to time constraints and lack of professional experiences this portion was incomplete. However we were able to start portfolios and identify goals for the future Artist CV's. I am willing to meet with the youth on a volunteer basis to develop their portfolios further.

### ***3. Instill cultural pride among the young artists.***

- ☑ a) Explored the NWT's original economy of self-sufficiency out on the land and how that has a role in developing a healthy economy today. This was referred to all guest speakers presentations.
- ☑ b) Revisit the traditional Dene Art forms and inspire the youth to want to learn more if that is their back round. If not, then encourage them to explore their own cultural arts. This was a universal theme that resonated throughout the course.
- x Wanted to acquaint the youth with knowledgeable elders who could instruct and demonstrate to improve on skills and maintain excellent quality. Not Done due to time constraints and lack of craft producers in course.
- ☑ d) Showed examples of artists who are exploring cultural themes and those who are blending traditional with contemporary to bring forth exciting new culturally based art forms. This would be meeting Ron Noganosh, who was so fascinating and inspiring to everyone. My personal favorite on the whole trip.

### ***4. Present self-employment alternatives to the youth:***

- ☑ Discussed the wide variety of job and business opportunities in the arts and entertainment field.
- ☑ Informed youth as to what the diverse art collector's wants and needs are by getting them to ask questions of the guest speakers and trip hosts.
- ☑ Helped connect them to the markets and complimentary industries that appreciate what they will have to offer by brainstorming possibilities.

### ***5. Train the youth on how to turn their art into a feasible business:***

- ☑ Illuminated the viability of becoming a professional in any chosen art form by highlighting various styles and venues of art.
- ☑ Provided the knowledge and tools to use in order to start making this happen for them selves. Helped them realize their dreams in a very tangible way. The trip really served its purpose here as well as starting their very own artist portfolio.

- Introduced the wholesaler's and retailer's who will act as agents on the artists behalf and be an important link to foreign markets. This was done through Glen and the Galleries we visited down south.
- Instructed them on how to determine what their art is worth in the world marketplace. Glen Wadsworth touched on this in his presentation.
- Introduced marketing that will help them to thrive in a remote area. We looked at the possibilities of the internet, trade shows, studio tours and entering art competitions as well as the importance of getting in contact with art associations and volunteering to meet people who can connect you.
- Offered an example of a proposal and business plan and its uses.
- Informed them about the latest successful art products and services in existence in the NWT. Went to the leading NWT galleries in Yellowknife on the trip home from Ottawa. Also Glen touched on this in his presentation.
- Provided access to and information about all educational and funding agencies that would suit their artistic needs.

***Motivate the youth through inspiration and personal experiences:***

- Offered numerous opportunities for youth to interact with mentors and accomplished artists who shared personal stories about what it takes to make it there.

1. John Sabourin – painter/carver 8 yrs-NWT
2. Suzan Marie – traditional Crafts and Marketing specialist NWT 5 yrs
3. Glen Wadsworth – Gallery Owner operator- 20 yrs
4. Ron Noganish – Painter/carver/printmaker- 30 yrs Ontario
5. Michael Shreier – Photographer- 17 yrs
6. Jim Borcoman – Photography curator 30 yrs
7. Greg Hill – First Nation art Curator and visual artist 8 yrs ON
8. Michael Blythe – Youth Artist-NWT

**Students:**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>In School</b>
1.Christine Wrigley	16	Dene	Yes
2.Ryan Hanna	22	Metis	No
3.Skylar Deneyoua	20	Dene	No
4.Vicky Williams	15	Dene	Yes
5.Vanessa Waugh	15	Dene	Yes
6.Gracyn Tanche-Simms	14	Dene	No

**Instructor:**

Tonya Makletzoff - Professional Artist and Business owner, also the former Youth Business Development Officer. Has training and 3yrs experience as a Facilitator. See attached Artist CV

## **Resource Materials:**

- 1) The Art of Managing Your Career, The Human Resources Council, 2002
- 2) NACCA's Training Manual – Youth Entrepreneurship
- 3) Emily Carr Institute Portfolio Guidelines
- 4) Various Art Educational Institute Catalogues
- 5) Various Art Zines
- 6) Exhibition promotional samples
- 7) Artist CV samples

## **Guest Speakers:**

### ***Guest # 1- John Sabourin***

*BIO:* John is originally from Ft. Simpson and now works full time on his art from his home studio in Yellowknife. His artwork is in Gallery collections around the world. Please refer to his Artist CV.

*PRESENTATION:* John came to the classroom on April 10<sup>th</sup>. His presentation was informative and down to earth about what it is like to be a full-time artist. He talked about how he got to where he is today and what type of art inspires him. He gave out advice on inexpensive marketing tools, and how to protect yourself from being exploited by the distributors. He made suggestions about how to get into the art world from a remote village and how to keep disciplined about the work. He also brought in examples of his work and the marketing materials that he uses, i.e. business cards, brochures, etc. There was a potential buyer, who came in the room and John greeted him and gave the youth an example of how to talk to potential buyers. This is the part of the business side of art that is usually most difficult for the reclusive artist.

### ***Guest # 2- Susan Marie***

*BIO:* Susan is a master Craftswoman and promoter of Dene Traditional art forms. She has been instrumental in the past five years at bringing awareness to the world on the high value of Dene arts within the NWT. Another career highlight for Susan has been the reintroduction of Spruce Root Basketry, a lost Dene art form to one of the communities in our region, Trout Lake.

*PRESENTATION:* Susan's presentation was packed with informative information as well as visual stimulation. She brought examples of the Fine Crafts she has helped to bring to foreign markets as well as her own art. She prepared a CD rom presentation that focused on preparing for market as well as showed a video called "From Product to Market." In her presentation she showed examples of drawing on strength from one's cultural background to survive in today's society and thrive. She gave tips on making your work distinctive to give yourself an edge, as there are a lot of producers in the NWT from ages 13-79! She also suggested some free marketing ideas such as magazine articles and packaging with Tourism.

Another interesting aspect of her presentation was a discussion on the importance of pricing your work to match its value in time, materials gathered /bought and skill level/experience. There were other things to consider when creating and pricing a work of art, and that was that if there is a historical significance to the art form chosen that it is rare and therefore higher in price. I even learned that there are numerous different types of beads out there, some of which have a higher value and therefore must be priced accordingly.

### **Guest # 3- Michael Blyth**

*BIO:* Michael Blyth is a recent graduate from the Calgary College of Art, who grew up in Ft. Smith. He has had numerous experiences applying for grants and displaying his work in public galleries. He is the Coordinator of the Open Sky Festival for 2003.

*PRESENTATION:* Michael shared about the role of the public gallery as a venue for the type of artwork, which is more controversial and less of a decorator piece. (He was speaking on the type of art, which you don't buy to match your couch.) This is also good for the young people to know as they are just starting out and it would be unlikely that a commercial gallery would consider carrying their work until they have some experience at exhibiting and establishing themselves with their peers. He also shared about the importance of hooking up with festivals and associations or other artists to get moral, financial and peer support, while getting started. He handed out a number of samples of Art Zines, Art School catalogues and promotional samples.

### **Guest # 4 – Glen Wadsworth**

*BIO:* Glen has been the manager of the Northern Images Gallery for five years and before that worked for a number of years with NWT Development Corporation. Glen has hundreds of encounters with artists and buyers everyday, so he offered the other side of the spectrum in terms of the business side of art.

*PRESENTATION:* Glen brought a group of various art pieces and asked each of us to guess the prices which was extremely difficult to illustrate the point that it can be extremely difficult to determine the exact worth of a piece of art work. Like Susan, Glen gave us the key things to consider when pricing a piece of artwork. He also spoke on the importance of developing a positive relationship with a gallery and the commercial gallery's role.

## **Ottawa Field Trip**

**Day One:** **Thursday May 1<sup>st</sup>**

### **2:30 pm**

- Airport - Safety Orientation
- Flight from Ft. Simpson to YK to Edmonton
- Handed out \$20.00 to each youth

### **7:00 pm**

- Arrival in Edmonton- bought round trip shuttle bus tickets
- Check into Hotel- Chateau Louis –close to Kings way mall
- Shopping at Kings way Mall to get dress shoes for Ottawa Galleries

### **10:00 pm**

- Rising Sun Café- Dry Dance Bar
- Singing Performance- Youth Rap Artist & Karaoke
- Some of the youth got to try their performance skills out on the karaoke machine

**Comments:**

The day went by without a hitch. The youth were all in good spirits and looking forward to the trip. After the dance bar, Suza took a small group over to Denny's to eat. They got in quite late, but were safe.

They all picked out some dress clothes to wear at the Galleries at the mall in Edmonton. The hotel Chateau Louise was exceptionally nice with lots of room and good bathrooms.

**Day 2: Friday May 2**

**5:45**

- Woke up early to get to airport early 5:30 am
- Fast breakfast of donuts and coffee
- Gave out twenty bucks each

**2:00 pm (12:00 pm our time)**

- Lunch on the plane
- Arrival in Ottawa
- Decided on a Limo for transportation, as the bus shuttle would take too long and we had our first engagement at 4 pm.
- Checked into Aristocrat Hotel and freshened up.

**4:00 pm**

- Met with Greg Hill the Aboriginal Art Curator at the National Gallery of Canada. Discussed and viewed the emergence of aboriginal art forms and additions to the gallery. He went over the layout for the First Nations displays which were put together with the non-aboriginal pieces in a chronological order. He went on to explain the history of the exhibit. For example, it was debated for over twenty years whether First Nations art is art or artefact. So finally this significant display was created to honour the aboriginal artists. All of the pieces are on loan and not for resale. Skylar asked his questions at the end of the tour.

**6:00 pm**

- Went out to supper at a nice Italian Bistro in the Market place
- Shopping at the mall down the street
- Movie Night 6 youth and Suza went to a movie Tonya went back to hotel to do log book.

**Comments**

Wonderful day. Everyone was excited and a little shy still. We tried some new foods out in the restaurant and discussed the surprising fact that aboriginal art from past masters is only now being recognized as such instead of it being labelled "ethnic art", which lowers its value.

All of the youth asked questions and were intrigued with the work as well as the history behind it. They were surprised to find a snowshoe, which is a practical tool we still utilize up here on display as a piece of art. It was an introduction to a new way of perceiving objects of beauty and skilled craftsmanship.

## **Day Three**

## **Saturday May 3**

### **8:30am**

- Wake up and off to eat at MacDonald's for Breakfast

### **10:00 am**

- Ron Noganosh Visit in his home. Most youth would say that this was the highlight of the Trip. Ron was funny and down to earth, besides being absolutely brilliant and innovative. He has experimented and mastered many different art forms, and now he is making sculptures with found objects, a sort of recycling art with a message. He also reads 6 books a week and has been doing so since high school. Right now he is working on some pieces that use found objects such as old hubcaps to make a series of modern "war shields." He incorporates humour and political or ethical statements in his work. His being Native influences his art as he also explores the universal human condition.

He shared a lot with the youth about the reality of making a living as an artist full-time. He advised us to balance our expenses and invest back into our artwork with part of the profits. He spoke of our responsibility as artists to be knowledgeable about many different topics and spoke of himself as an avid reader.

Gracyn Simms asked her questions here. Ron's wife spoke to us about copyright and how to protect your art and get paid the proper prices for a public display. Then we all headed out for a picture and reluctantly said farewell.

### **12:00pm**

- Visit to the Saw gallery, which is an artist run space that displayed many thought provoking perspectives on animals.
- Here the youth were exposed to the background of an artist run gallery space and how everything works together such as fundraising, rentals, readings and openings.
- The gallery was started to offer the emerging artist a public display for their work

### **1:00pm**

- Lunch at the food court in Rideau Centre

### **2:00 Pm**

- Back to the National Gallery for Edward Bertinski's photography display
- Here we met Jim Borcoman (Sophie's Dad) who had been working there since the 70's
- We discovered he was instrumental at raising the profile of photography artists, as they were not considered artists back then. Now the National Gallery recognizes photography as a visual art form. In fact they have the biggest collection in the gallery.
- The youth were exposed to a dynamic exhibit and Jim brought out many observations in the work. For example, the way in which every piece was composed in very abstract way, the order in which each piece was displayed, the hidden messages, the beauty, the truth and the ugliness were all highlighted by our knowledgeable guide. The most important topic discussed was the ethics a photographer must use when taking very personal shots.

#### **4:00 pm**

- Went for a snack at the gallery cafeteria
- Then headed outside to the monument overlooking the bridge to Hull, the parliament buildings and the Rideau River.
- Everyone did some sketching and photography for a change of pace.
- There was a behaviour problem with our youngest group member. However, after a sharing circle on the park grass we worked out our differences and were able to carry on as a group.
- We also discovered that Vicky was a contortionist and had the potential to become a professional dancer!

#### **6:00 pm**

- Headed back to the hotel to change clothes and find some supper.

#### **8:00pm**

- Headed to the theatre to watch a play entitled “Timberly Troopers”, by Tom Griffin.
- Interestingly enough, the play turned out to be offensive as it contained a racist joke, so it was decided that we should leave. Lesson 101 in critiquing artwork watching for racial slurs or politically incorrect atrocities.
- We headed to the market where we discovered another art form; a Blues festival was taking place. So we ordered some good coffee and watched the show. The young women were courageous enough to dance in spite of the large crowd of spectators!

#### **11:00 pm**

We headed back to hotel to get a good rest for next day, which was hard because we were so excited from such an awesome day full of exposure to the fascinating world of the Arts! Most of the youth stayed up late watching a movie against my better judgement.

#### ***Day Four***

#### ***Sunday May 4<sup>th</sup>***

#### **9:00 am**

- Breakfast at hotel restaurant Carmello’s

#### **10:00 am**

- Tour and talk with Museum of civilization collection Nicholette Prince was cancelled due to our not having the right time on our itinerary –we were very late and therefore we missed her. So we went ahead with another tour guide and explored the various collections on Aboriginal cultural objects and preservation.
- Our tour guide was a university student, who did not know a lot about our aboriginal culture, however he spoke a lot about the West coast collection, which was the culture that was most prominent in the Museum.
- When we got to the section with the Dene artefacts Suza took over and was very knowledgeable on the pieces on display. There was a replica traditional puberty dress, which her mother had worn that was recently added to their collection.

#### **1:00 pm**

- Lunch at the beautiful museum cafeteria deck on the riverbank.
- Debriefing about the museum collection brought up all kinds of interesting issues. The main point that the youth recognized was that the museum had a lot to learn about other aboriginal cultures. It seems as though the curators of the museum have a misconception that our Dene art forms are extinct as opposed to the thriving living culture it is here in the present. Feelings of anger, disgust as well as feelings of awe

and being impressed with the beauty in all of the pieces all surfaced during this session.

- Another keen observation the students made was that there were no depictions of Dene artists or culture in the 2 dimensional realm. Some of the students realized that there was a gap or a niche they could in fact fill.
- Some of the students brought up an interesting debate on repatriation of the sacred objects. There was an agreed feeling that some of the artwork had been removed without permission. In doing so the curators may have lost touch with the original intent through the movement of them to the gallery.

#### **4:00pm**

- Wal-Mart shopping

#### **6:00 pm**

- Supper with cooking as an art form; French cuisine at the Claire Du Lune  
Enjoyed the tasty delights and had a lot of fun!

#### **8:00 pm**

- Walked back to the hotel
- Tried the sauna and hot tub
- We ordered a couple of movies to watch- Stayed up too late again.

#### **Comments**

Good day-not too rushed, however missing the hand picked collection at the Museum of civilization was a disappointment. Upon Discussion with Suza, it was decided that perhaps it was meant to be that way, as they may not be ready to view the old pieces that the ancestors wore.

#### **Day Five            Monday May 5<sup>th</sup>**

#### **8:00am**

- Breakfast to go at the Bagel house and check out of hotel rooms

#### **10:00 am**

- Tour and Talk of National Gallery with Curator Monique Baker. Discussion of what art is, how art works are chosen, fine art vs. craft, contemporary and modern art.

#### **11:00 am**

- Tour other parts of Gallery on own.

#### **12:00 pm**

- Lunch at the Parliament Dining room with Senator Nick Sibbeston, Honourable Ethel Blondin-Andrew, and NWT Commissioner Glenna Hansen
- View Question Period at the House of Commons

#### **3:00pm**

- Visit Photographer Michael Schreier at his home. Discussion about photography as an art form and tour of his home studio.

#### **4:30 pm**

- Back to hotel to pick up baggage and leave to airport

**6:30 pm**

- We were worried because we thought we were late. To our relief we were early.
- Had just enough time to grab a bite to eat at airport food court.

**7:30 pm**

- Flight departure to Edmonton

**11:00pm**

- Arrival in Edmonton- Check into the Nisku Inn – a little confusion sets in about where the rooms are, however we managed to finally find them.
- View the photos and exchange before going to bed.

**Comments**

- The day was harried and we were all exhausted by the end of it from all of the rushing around. The tour of the National gallery was interesting, because the youth got to see that there are not too many limits when it comes to expressing oneself. There were odd art displays in the modern section such as a car or a painting with an angry scrawl across its surface. The modern movement was a good way to close the tour, as we had been able to sort of go in a bit of a chronological order throughout the whole trip.
- Glenna Hansen had some words of encouragement for the young artists and even offered a commission for them to create for the Northern Ministers. This was significant as she caught on to the importance of what we were doing and it would be the first official source of income for most of the artisans with respect to their artwork.
- Also, the youth really enjoyed the experience at Question period. This surprised me, as I had no idea this would mean so much to them. It is a good sign that they all care about what is happening politically. This will help their artwork immensely.

**Day 6****Tuesday May 6<sup>th</sup>****6:00 am**

- Check out and head to airport

**9:00am**

- Arrive in Yellowknife
- Head to town until afternoon flight
- Tonya departs for a meeting with the NWT Arts Council

**11:00 am**

- Youth visit two Northern Galleries to complete their Gallery Tour. They talk to one of their guest speakers; Glen Wadsworth from Northern Images.
- They grab a bite to eat and do a little more shopping before heading back to the airport.

**1:00 pm**

- Depart Yellowknife to final destination home a.k.a. Ft. Simpson.

**2:30 pm**

- Arrival and the Art Odyssey is complete.

## **Course Time Line:**

The course had a total of 16 hrs classroom time, four hours of homework time, and approximately 24 hours of hands on activities in the art world. This would bring the total course hours to a total of 44 hours. The youth met two nights a week at the local High School in the Cultural room.

### **Week One & Two March 17 - 28:**

#### *Preparation for Course*

- ❖ lesson planning
- ❖ arranging guest speakers
- ❖ advertising, recruitment, registration
- ❖ gathering supplies and resources to deliver course

### **Week Three April 3-10:**

#### *Introducing the youth to the industry as a whole*

- ❖ Expectations
- ❖ Art Sectors
- ❖ Setting Goals and Career Strategy
- ❖ Product Development
- ❖ Guest Speaker- John Sabourin- Deh Cho Artist

### **Week Four April 15 & 18:**

#### *The Art of Self Promotion.*

- ❖ How to price art work
- ❖ Writing an artist CV
- ❖ Portfolio development
- ❖ Marketing Tools
- ❖ Guest Speaker Suzan Marie

### **Week Five April 22 & 24:**

#### *Connecting to the Professional world.*

- ❖ Identifying the difference between a public and commercial venue
- ❖ Exporting and distribution channels
- ❖ Art Educational Institutions
- ❖ Projects and applying for funding, writing proposals etc.
- ❖ Guest Speakers Michael Blythe and Glen Wadsworth.

### **Week Six April 29 – May 2nd:**

#### *Hands on exposure to the Professional Art World*

- ❖ Trip preparations, insurance, signed consent and waiver forms
- ❖ Arranging travel and accommodations
- ❖ Organizing the Gallery visits with gallery curators and artists in their homes and studios.
- ❖ Departure to Field Trip to Ottawa Galleries and Museum

## **Week Seven May 5<sup>th</sup> – May 9<sup>th</sup>:**

### *Trip conclusion and Report writing*

- ❖ Finish Trip
- ❖ Hand out assignments and evaluations
- ❖ Collect evaluations
- ❖ Certificates and ceremony to acknowledge the youth participation
- ❖ Write final report.

## **Evaluation**

### **Outcome:**

The Art and Professional Practises students were made aware of possible distribution channels, marketing tools as well as where to obtain funding for projects, and how to approach them. This will serve them well to be able to continue with their career development and to achieve success in this field. The students were given numerous opportunities to meet role models from both sides of the industry and this had a positive impact on them. Prior to taking the course, it was noted that the students considered the Arts a hobby at best, yet because of taking this course are now seeing the Arts and Cultural industries in a professional light.

Six out of eight students completed the course and went on the trip to Ottawa. The skills gained include the following:

- ❖ Market analysis
- ❖ Product development and pricing techniques
- ❖ The art of self promotion - marketing tools & public relations
- ❖ Project management and goal setting
- ❖ Approaches to obtaining financing, distribution channels and marketing
- ❖ Interacting with role models and seeking mentors

## **Recommendations**

1. The course was jam-packed and covered a lot of material in a short period, therefore I recommend that the course be made longer, about double the hours.
2. There should be more courses like this to raise awareness and assist in career development.
3. There needs to be an effort on the GNWT's part to produce some resource materials on what careers there are in the arts. On career day, the E.C.E. should have some pamphlets on careers in arts and culture as well as a booth to share with the youth.
4. There should be complimentary course such as a one-day proposal-writing workshop to enhance the effectiveness of the course, with some type of certification.
5. Perhaps the college could offer this as a credit course or the high school could incorporate it into the art curriculum or as a CTS course.
6. There needs to be a marking system to find out how well each student grasped the concepts upon completion.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, I feel that all of the objectives were met, however would have liked to be able to lengthen the course to complete the processes. As stated in this report there is some unfinished business that we could cover if further funding could be found.

The Art and Professional course was the first of its kind here in the Deh Cho and the young artisans were very appreciative to have this opportunity to develop themselves further into that career choice. At this point in time there is little incentive for creatively minded students until they leave the North and discover the possibilities in the South. I am glad personally, that those youth, who may not have otherwise had a chance to, were able to see their own skills as a means of self-employment and interact with several role models who do this from all over Canada.