

# CAP = Arts for all

By Deirdre Slemon



Lindy Solomon and Cameron Voyiya at the evening art class.

C.A.P. - Community Arts Project. Heard the name before? Some art school or something? Remember they used to operate in Mowbray a few years ago? I heard that they had an exciting mime group on the go, and a top-class sculpture exhibition at the Gowlett Gallery recently, but I knew nothing beyond that.

So, one day during the July vac, I gave them a phone call and Derek Joubert, the organiser, invited me to come and talk to him. I found the building near a flyover down the road from the Oriental Plaza, and there was more life in the area than I had imagined - kids playing in the road, dodging in and out of the traffic.

### Goals

Founded in 1977, C.A.P. has two basic goals: firstly, to stimulate activity in deprived communities, and secondly, to provide training and studio facilities for serious artists. They currently have a membership of about two thousand people.

Money has always been a problem; according to Derek, they are finding it difficult to raise the money they need, but receive a generous subsidy from the Evangelical Churches in Germany and also from Anglo-American. Even the Cape Town City Council is reluctant to supply them with a minor grant.

Last year all groups were represented at the Botswana Arts Conference and a mime entitled "Culture and Resistance" was presented. Another mime, "Die Groot Baas", has been performed at the Grahamstown Festival and several venues around the city, including the People's Space. Four drama groups are in operation at present.

### Outreach Programme

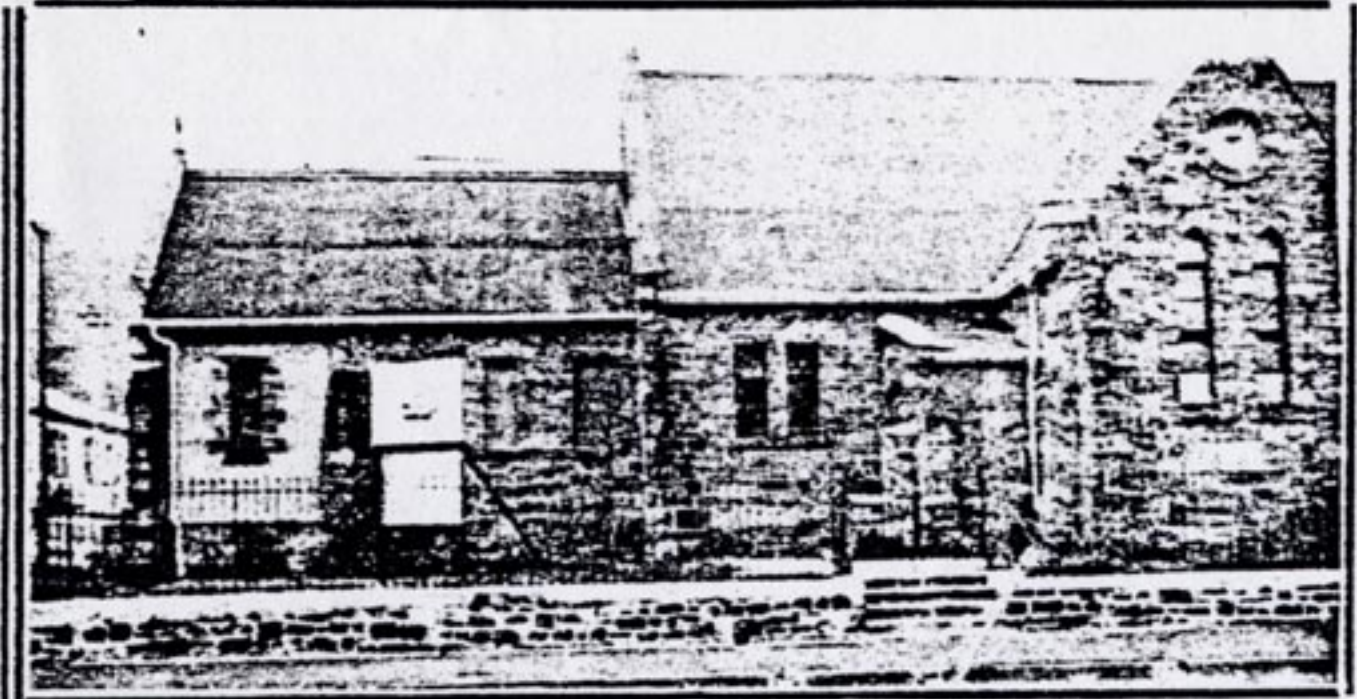
C.A.P. does not end in Chapel Street. A series of "Outreach Programmes" have recently begun in Guguletu, Langa, Bishop Lavis and Mitchell's Plain. Teachers travel to these townships every week and have established, on a smaller scale, interest groups similar to those in C.A.P.'s Cape Town premises. More staff, equipment and money is needed to develop the "Outreach Programmes" further. However, C.A.P. is doing much to fill the cultural void in these areas with the little they have.

A separate full-time branch has been established at the Crossroads Development Centre. It was decided that Crossroads' most pressing requirements were training and employment and so a Textile Co-op has been started. Fourteen women are being taught to sew and the profits will be shared amongst them. Future plans include training in embroidery, weaving, textile design and screen-printing.

C.A.P.'s premises are utilised to the full, acting as a resource centre for Community Organisations and providing conference facilities for community based organisations, such as UWO and the Congress of South African Students.

The Project has shown its resilience by constantly struggling through the bad periods - it may be short of money but not of morale. They have also publicly exhibited the results of their activities to considerable acclaim.

Such an organisation, which serves a vital function in the community - and particularly in the deprived communities - cannot be ignored. The Community Arts Project IS being, and will increasingly be, encouraged and praised. This is all happening on your doorstep - go and have a look! You never know, you might end up as a pupil - or a teacher. Phone number is: 45-3689.



CAP premises in Church Street, Cape Town.

Derek's office was situated on what had been a stage. Originally a church, the building was known as St Philip's School until shortly after the District Six removals when attendance dropped sharply and it had to be closed down.

C.A.P. has been looking for premises since they were deprived of their Mowbray home which was to become part of a new shopping centre. They leased this former school from the Anglican Church which provided them with long-sought-after space for their various activities. These include yoga, karate, drama, dancing, painting, graphic art, fabric-printing, photography, sculpture, a jazz workshop and mime.

Membership is one rand a year, and a monthly fee has recently been introduced for each class: five rand for adults and two rand for scholars and students - a minimal fee by any standards. C.A.P. just could not continue functioning without this extra income. "The effect was wonderful," said Derek, "not only financially. Now we can afford to pay some of the teachers. Consequently they are more committed, and the pupils more dedicated. There's a much more professional approach all round."

Most of the teachers are volunteers and many are professional, such as Cecil Skotnes who teaches sculpture. Hamilton Bouda also teaches sculpture. An exhibition of their work held recently at the Gowlett gallery was warmly received and many works were sold.