

‘Working Well, Together’: Arts-Based Research and the Cultural Future of Small Cities

Lon Dubinsky¹ and W.F. Garrett-Petts²

¹*Kamloops Art Gallery, Kamloops, British Columbia, Canada*

²*University College of the Cariboo, Kamloops, British Columbia, Canada*

Abstract: This article offers a research update on a 3-year programme initiated by the Kamloops Art Gallery and the University College of the Cariboo in Kamloops, British Columbia. The programme is supported by a ‘Community–University Research Alliance’ grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, and the collaboration focuses on the cultural future of small cities – on how cultural and arts organisations work together (or fail to work together) in a small city setting. If not by definition, then certainly by default, ‘culture’ is associated with big city life: big cities are equated commonly with ‘big culture’; small cities with something less. The Cultural Future of Small Cities research group seeks to provide a more nuanced view of what constitutes culture in a small Canadian city. In particular, the researchers are exploring notions of social capital and community asset building: in this context, ‘visual and verbal representation’, ‘home’, ‘community’ and the need to define a local ‘sense of place’ have emerged as important themes. As the Small Cities programme begins its second year, a unique but key aspect has become the artist-as-researcher.

Keywords: Artists-as-researchers; Cities; Collaboration; Community development; Culture; Social capital

1. Introduction

For the past year, the Small Cities programme has been exploring the cultural challenges and possibilities facing small cities in a world increasingly dominated by large urban centres, suburban sprawl and economic globalisation. Kamloops, a city of 80,000 in the southern interior of British Columbia, is the focal point for a programme of interdisciplinary research, training and knowledge sharing. The programme is supported by the ‘Community–University Research Alliance’ programme (CURA) of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) and local funders and has nine partners: the Kamloops Art Gallery (KAG) as lead organisation, the University College of the Cariboo (UCC), City of Kamloops, Forest Research Extension Partnership, Kamloops Museum and Archives, John Howard Society,

Secwepemc Cultural Education Society, Stuart Wood School, and Western Canada Theatre. Research studies and related community initiatives fall under four overlapping thematic areas: (1) city, regional and environmental planning, (2) local history and heritage, (3) linking cultural resources to social development and (4) representing Kamloops.

The overall research programme is self-referential as it explores the structures, institutional and otherwise, and resources, such as social capital, that shape the cultural fabric and future of small cities. The research component together with this referential aspect are also directed at sharing knowledge about cultural expression and community development that are transferable to other cities of comparable size in British Columbia, Canada, and elsewhere.¹

2. Conceptual Framework

What follows is an account of the theoretical, methodological and organisational considerations that inform the small cities programme, followed by a comprehensive description of its research, training and knowledge-sharing aspects.

The Small Cities programme takes as its starting point a recognition that most current research and scholarship in the arts, humanities and the social sciences focus primarily on the cultural dimensions of large metropolitan centres. This focus is understandable given that the world's population is concentrated in large cities; however, the literature does not necessarily apply to the realities of small cities with populations ranging from 50,000 to 150,000, and thus contributes to a rather 'metrocentric' perspective on city life. Influential studies by Castells (1985, 1999) and Sassen and Appiah (1999) on global cities and flows, as well as those specifically about urbanisation in Canada, such as Caulfield and Peake (1996) and Bunting and Fillion (1999), are certainly valuable but require a levelling when applied to small cities. There is also a large literature on rural community life in a Canadian and international context, as demonstrated variously by many edited proceedings and collections, such as Beesley and Ramsey (1999) and Reimer and Young (1994). Yet their emphasis tends to be on small towns or sparsely populated regions. In either case, experiences may be similar but the conditions and configurations of small cities can be decidedly different, owing to, among other things, what Geertz (1983) terms 'local knowledge', and to factors such as scale and geography. Indeed, small cities culturally

¹Recent presentations, for example, include: Deutschmann, L. (June 2002). Theorizing Not In My Back Yard: Critical Approaches to Social Marginalization and Exclusion. In *Canadian Sociology and Anthropology Association Annual Meeting*, Toronto, Ontario; Dubinsky, L. (May 2002). Culture and Infrastructure in Kamloops: Implications for Atlantic Canada. In *Atlantic Cultural Space Conference*, Moncton, NB; Dubinsky, L., Nelson, R. and Schooling, J. (May 2002). Culture and Community in Kamloops: Initial Observations from the Small Cities Project. In *Canadian Cultural Research Network Colloquium: 'Cultural Development in Canada's Cities'*. Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Toronto; Garrett-Petts, W.F., MacDonald-Carlson, H., Moen, E. (May 2002). Documentation: A Workshop in Visual and Verbal Literacies. In *Inkshed 19: Literacies, Technologies, Pedagogies. Working Conference of the Canadian Association for the Study of Language and Learning*, Stanhope, Prince Edward Island; Garrett-Petts, W.F. and Nash, R. (May 2002). Visual Literacies: the Artist's Statement as Genre. In *Inkshed 19: Literacies, Technologies, Pedagogies. Working Conference of the Canadian Association for the Study of Language and Learning*, Stanhope, Prince Edward Island; and MacDonald-Carlson, H., Duckworth, E. and Cotter, J. (May 2002). 'Children in the Museum?' *Annual Canadian Museum Association Conference, Calgary*.

occupy what many observers have identified as a 'third space' (Bhabba, 1994), positioned as they are in the shadow of large cosmopolitan cities but still bound by rural history and traditions.

Cultural formation, participation, expression and support can therefore be multifaceted and complex. In Kamloops' case, it supports a successful art gallery, museum, theatre company and symphony – cultural organisations which many cities of comparable size either do not have or cannot adequately sustain. Yet there is an interplay of related forces such as aboriginal concerns, tourism, immigration, economic marginalisation, technological change, mass culture and gentrification. All are redefining Kamloops as a cultural space and attendantly its arts and heritage organisations, schools, community groups, social service and health organisations and the University College of the Cariboo, itself a cultural institution.

The underrepresentation of small cities, and particularly with respect to cultural issues, is thus a key rationale for research. The process and value of collaboration is also a focus of analysis and documentation. At the initial meeting of potential partners in 2000, Jann Bailey, the Director of the Kamloops Art Gallery, pointed out that 'we are all doing it well, but not together'. Given this observation, the participants immediately recognised that they were beginning with a knowledge and appreciation of Kamloops' diverse cultural resources, as opposed to its deficiencies and drawbacks, thus possessing the fundamentals for what Kretzmann and McKnight (1993) have termed 'asset-building community development'. However, the participants were also being asked to consider what might be further possible by working together and sharing resources. This led to a consideration of the very purpose of collaboration for the partners and the community of Kamloops.

The group recognised that while arrangements like partnerships can have a dramatic impact on the life of a small city like Kamloops, the possibilities and challenges are even greater when a topic as complex as culture is the focal point. Accordingly, a self-appraisal component was built in that takes into account the diverse literature on cooperation and community development, as well as related work on strategy and organisational theory by scholars such as Mintzberg. To illustrate, he and several colleagues discuss collaboration as an organisational strategy and simultaneously reflect upon their own collaboration as co-authors (Mintzberg et al., 1996).

Attention to collaboration as a mechanism and process also led to an initial consideration of the very idea of community. As attested by the CURA programme itself,² few would dispute the value, if not the increasing necessity, of fostering a sense

²The Community–University Research Alliance programme, established by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, offers grants to institutions and organisations requiring infrastructure support to coordinate 'programs of activities and partnerships within a broadly-defined theme area'. The CURA programme's express purpose is to 'support a diverse range of innovative research, training and related activities that will (1) enhance mutual learning and horizontal collaboration between community organizations and universities, (2) contribute to the social, cultural and/or economic development of communities, (3) enrich research, teaching methods and curricula in universities, and reinforce decision-making and problem solving capacity in the community, and (4) enhance students' education and employability through diverse opportunities to build their expertise and work-force skills in an appropriate research setting'. SSHRC scheduled two competitions (one in 1999/2000 and one in 2000/01) to fund 37 CURAs; this pilot period covered 4 years, with a total budget of \$22.6 million. The Cultural Future of Small Cities programme was awarded funding for 3 years in April 2001. CURA has now become a mainstream programme and will receive a new round of applications in Fall 2002. (Source: SSHRC Web site: www.sshrc.ca/english/programinfo/grantsguide/cura.html)

of community for the purpose of fusing research and education with the public good, be it in small cities or large metropolitan areas. An expanding literature about the meaning of and possibilities for community now traverses many disciplines and fields in the arts, humanities and social sciences. Community has also become a watchword for diverse collective endeavours and arrangements not necessarily tied to local or civic associations or structures, or to a specific group held together by a common aim or purpose, as was traditionally the case. Community now is wrought large, as in 'the global community' but as Katz (2000) and others have suggested, it also has become synonymous, yet often erroneously, with network and other technological configurations.

For our part, we viewed and continue to see Kamloops and the surrounding Thompson region as constituting a defined community, a cultural and geographical place with implicit and explicit similarities and differences to other places and having a diversity of cultural identities and interests. In this respect the initiative continues to take its cue from Lucy Lippard, who has perhaps best articulated the possibilities for art and cultural expression in local situations. As she puts it, 'Community doesn't mean understanding everything about everybody and resolving all the differences; it means knowing how to work within differences as they change and evolve' (Lippard, 1995a: 127).

In addition to collaboration and community, the third key term is of course culture. As Raymond Williams observed, 'culture is one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language' (Williams, 1983: 87). Williams' early work (1961) and a specific study of the country and city (1975), as well as work by others, such as Geertz (1973, 1983) and Carey (1977), laid the foundation for what has become known as the 'cultural turn' in the arts, humanities and social sciences. For a recent and comprehensive overview of these developments, see Bonnell and Hunt (1999). What has emerged is the encompassing field and approach called 'cultural studies' An academic sea change has occurred which now provides a framework and an appreciation for the legitimate and interdisciplinary study of a range of texts, artefacts, practices and events, some of which are included in the programme of work.

However, since culture now refers to a multitude of enactments and interpretative possibilities, issues about the very conditions and contours of cultural participation become equally pertinent. Berger (1995), for example, asks what needs to be known about the relationship between cultural (i.e., symbolic) choices that people make and the social locations in which they take place. Or to raise matters in terms of Kamloops and other comparable cities, we are asking: (1) What comprises a viable and sustainable cultural life that has meaning and value for its citizens in an economic and political climate characterised by megastructures and forces such as globalisation? (2) To what extent do the local and the vernacular give way to these more cosmopolitan trends and standards? (3) Echoing Kemmis (1990, 1995), what is the value to the community in either celebrating or institutionalising a local history?

Working from these questions, we recognise, both theoretically and thematically, the importance of social capital in creating and sustaining cultural activity. Putnam (1993b, 2000) as well as others, such as Fukuyama (1995) and Briggs (1997), define social capital as 'features of social organizations, such as networks, norms and trust relations that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit' (Putnam, 1993b: 2). Social capital is thus the glue that binds communities, and for individuals

and groups with cultural interests and objectives it is an essential resource, given the collaborative aspects of creation. It also has significant ramifications for policy making, cultural and otherwise, for, as Putnam explains, 'Social capital is not a substitute for effective public policy but rather a prerequisite for it and in part a consequence of it' (Putnam, 1993b: 13). Yet Putnam contends that in the United States, at least, while there is enormous and unprecedented capital accumulation in the form of money and goods, social capital is depleting, with the result being less citizen participation in civic life. For confirmation he points to the decline of voluntary associations and other social ties and alliances that bring people together and not entirely out of self-interest. In his much-quoted dictum, people are increasingly 'bowling alone' (Putnam, 2000).

Social capital is therefore a key resource and phenomenon which is reflected in the Small Cities programme's very partnerships and studies. The attention to collaboration also provides a platform for seeing social capital in action within a Canadian small-city context. This includes examining its forms and extent, for, as Portes and Landolt (1996) point out, individuals, groups and places always face barriers to participation, cultural and otherwise, because they lack such resources. While social capital may be of concern to the public and private sectors, it is especially an issue for the world of non-profit organisations, now commonly regarded as the 'third sector', given their mandate, associations and diverse activities (Drucker, 1995). Putnam may well be correct about the decline of voluntary and communal activity, yet the pressures and expectations of the third sector for services are dramatically increasing (Banting, 1999; Rifkin, 2000). Thus the Small Cities programme hopes to provide some insight about the capacities of non-profit cultural organisations in small cities and also about some of the challenges faced by the larger sector in which they are situated.

3. Principal Partners

Before turning to the research studies, here is some background information about the two principal partners – the art gallery and the university – that provides a further context for how the Small Cities programme emerged and what it is doing.

The Kamloops Art Gallery, a registered non-profit organisation, is the principal gallery for the visual arts in the southern interior of British Columbia. The gallery has an active programme of research, exhibitions, publications, education and community activities pertaining to historical and contemporary art, including an emphasis on art that reflects the history, character and diverse culture of the region. Established in 1978, the gallery opened a new facility in downtown Kamloops in 1998, which enables it to expand programming, strengthen its community ties and make a greater contribution to the cultural life of the Thompson region.

The gallery's professional staff participate in a range of project activities. Jann L.M. Bailey, director of the gallery, has taken an important role in community liaison and raising additional funds. Lon Dubinsky, research associate, co-directs the programme for the 3 years while engaging in research, teaching, community and dissemination activities. As gallery curator, Susan Edelstein is responsible for the design and organisation of exhibitions related to the programme, as well as other research and documentation tasks. Grant support has also resulted in the recent hiring

of a curatorial assistant who, during the first year, and as a UCC student, was a research assistant.

4. University College of the Cariboo

The Division of Arts is principally involved, with faculty from English, History, Geography, Journalism, Sociology and Visual Arts participating in various components of the programme. Also participating are faculty from the Department of Early Childhood Education in the Division of Professional Schools. A UCC faculty member, Will Garrett-Petts (English), serves as programme co-director in years 1 and 3; in year 2, the role devolves upon Helen MacDonald-Carlson (Early Childhood). The rotation of the co-director at UCC allows for other disciplinary perspectives and enables more faculty to have significant release time for research.

The academic strengths and community affiliations of individual faculty members and specific departments provide a solid foundation for research and related activities. Here are the primary linkages:

1. Many faculty members already have experience working on interdisciplinary projects given their association with the university's Centre for Multiple Literacies Research. Of particular note is the Heritage Fair Documentation Project (Garrett-Petts, 2000), a collaborative analysis and compilation of several projects that culminated in a national Heritage Fair in Kamloops. This work provides a conceptual basis for several CURA activities, such as the development of a children's area in the Kamloops Museum and Archives.
2. Faculty in Geography and Sociology have published on topics such as rural change and regional development; some have also worked with departments of the City of Kamloops and/or with community organisations on development issues and social policy, thus providing a basis for research and related activities in planning and local history.
3. Faculty from the Department of Visual and Performing Arts and English are working together on several research and publication projects about the convergence of text and image, such as the exhibition 'PhotoGraphic Encounters', which opened at the Kamloops Art Gallery in October 2000.
4. Faculty members in English, Sociology and Geography have all been involved in recent community debates relating to housing subsidised by the John Howard Society, project partner.

5. Community-Based Research

The Cultural Future of Small Cities programme consists of four sub-themes held together by a commitment to interdisciplinary research and several community alliances. An intentional overlap aims to share resources and to address issues of common interest. The research projects do not employ a single methodology; rather there is a commitment to methodological diversity where the fundamental criterion is to use the most appropriate form of inquiry for the topic under study. Some projects incorporate traditional archival and historical methods; others employ ethnographic

approaches and action research, while some use a combination of methods. Here is a description of the themes and their activities, including governing assumptions, time frames, the names of the researchers and partner affiliations, intended results and how each contributes to the programme's overall direction.

5.1 City, Regional and Environmental Planning

Small cities face an increasing number of cultural challenges bound up with issues such as housing, zoning, recreation, environmental concerns and economic development. Recognising these realities, geography professor Ross Nelson (UCC), with the assistance of UCC students, is working in cooperation with the city's Department of Development Services and several community organisations on a 3-year study of major streets in Kamloops. An early pilot study called the 'Biography of a Building' project, initiated by Robert MacKinnon (formerly of UCC, now Dean of Arts at the University of New Brunswick, Saint John) provided important background data (2000); now, factors under consideration include the history of each thoroughfare, economic pressures, forms of social capital and possibilities for future development. The study is careful to attend to the needs and roles of various stakeholders, including businesses, arts and cultural organisations, government agencies and offices, voluntary associations and residents. Recent work, for example, on Tranquille Road, the main street in the city's north shore area, is linked to two design charrettes that, among other things, looked at the creation of cultural facilities. This research is also informing KAMPLAN, the city's 5-year development strategy now in preparation, and points to the *Small Cities Forum*, a key component of the entire programme. It will occur in the third year (2004) and address the various challenges that are particular to small cities as they engage in planning and development. Cultural expression, participation and support will be among the major issues receiving examination.

A second study, *'Neighbourhood, Culture and Health'*, is an ethno-geographic investigation of several contextual factors affecting health status in two Kamloops neighbourhoods. The strong association between social status and health is the subject of a large literature in various fields, with researchers, notably Kaplan (1996) and Orfield (1997), demonstrating links between an individual's health and factors such as a community's physical environment, housing, social capital and cultural networks. This study is looking at the utility of the community health perspective by comparing two neighbourhoods with similar socio-economic statuses and populations but markedly different geographies and cultural fabric. The 2-year study is also being conducted by Professor Nelson, who builds on his recent work (1998–99) with various community organisations such as the Thompson Health Region. Using basic geographic field and archival methods, the investigation documents the physical environment of the neighbourhoods. Unstructured and structured interviews with residents, health care workers, educators, service clubs and local organisations describe the extent of formal and informal support networks. We expect the findings will provide suggestions about how local health officials, planners and community advocates can engage social capital and cultural resources to help create healthier neighbourhoods.

Finally, the Forest Extension Research Partnership, a consortium of forest companies, government agencies, scientific bodies and community organisations,

undertakes research, development and public education in forestry. A significant part of its mandate is a commitment to informing professionals in the forest industry and the larger public about some of the social and cultural dimensions of forest management. This goal is germane to the Small Cities programme because it provides an environmental frame for looking at the cultural future of small cities like Kamloops which still have an economy that is primarily resource-based. More particularly, the Forest Research Partnership recognises the importance of communicating in plain and clear language technical terms and data about forestry. It also intends to demonstrate how forests and forest renewal are part of the history and everyday life of people in Kamloops and the Thompson region, not just in obvious economic terms but with respect to their symbolic and cultural import. First Nations groups, for example, see a direct link between preserving culture and sustaining the environment, as reflected in their forestry practices. To initially address these matters, the Forest Research Partnership supported the production of a 22-minute video: 'Understanding Conflict in the Forest: The Words Behind the Message', prepared by UCC's Will Garrett-Petts and five service learning students. The video required some preliminary research in the form of focus groups and other instruments to determine attitudes and understanding of various client groups about the proposed subject matter. A team of three students prepared a literature review on environmental discourse and issues in British Columbia. One student from that group plus two others from UCC's School of Journalism, under the supervision of Garrett-Petts (and with content advice from Rachel Nash and Lon Dubinsky), used this background research as the basis for, first a script, and eventually the completed video production. Shawn Morford of the Forest Research Partnership is currently at work creating an accompanying study guide and workshop materials.

5.2 Local History and Heritage

One of the foundations basic to sound cultural planning and development but also a rich source in itself for cultural expression is a city's and a region's very history. Knowing about the evolution of local developments also contributes to understanding the formation and use of social capital. The biographies of streets being undertaken by Professor Nelson (see above) fulfils this objective, as does *Kamloops Neighbourhoods 2000*, which the Kamloops Museum and Archives are undertaking in collaboration with two UCC professors, Rachel Nash (English) and Andrew Yarmie (History). Together they intend to present findings in book form and in periodic displays. The purpose of this project is to research the history and growth of Kamloops' diverse neighbourhoods by using archival documents and related historical materials and by attending to the built environment. There will be an account of several factors, such as social and economic developments, but with the recognition that neighbourhoods are identifiable yet often changing spaces that matter in the everyday lives of people. In Kamloops' case, the independent aspects of many neighbourhoods also contribute to various perceptions of what the city was and is. Residents, for example, still identify themselves as being from this or that side of the Thompson River, which runs through Kamloops. For a small city, Kamloop's cultural, geographic and historical terrain is quite varied; yet as Hayden points out in her work on public history, 'working within an inclusive urban history can connect diverse people, communities, without losing a

focus on the process of shaping the city' (Hayden, 1996: 228). To realise these dual aims she calls for a collaborative history involving different specialists, such as archivists, geographers and planners working together with community groups. The prescription applies to the neighbourhoods project, to other studies and to the overall intent of this Small Cities programme. As Hayden explains:

The urban landscape is not a text to be read, but a repository of environmental memory far richer than any verbal codes. An evocative public program using multiple sites in the urban landscape itself, can build upon place memory in all of its complexity, to bring local history, buildings and natural features to urban audiences with a new immediacy as part of daily life. (Hayden, 1996: 227–228)

The rich and complex history of Kamloops and the surrounding Thompson region is also bound up with the history of First Nations People. Two projects still in the planning stages will record and document this experience while also ensuring aboriginal voices in related considerations of cultural formation and identity. Indeed, there is a great deal to learn about the forms and constituents of cultural participation, if, for example, social capital and civic engagement, which are primarily Western and urban concepts, have their equivalent in aboriginal cultural life or whether the First Nations experience offers alternative forms of association. First, a successful collaborative documentary photography project will continue with students and staff of the Secwepemc Cultural Education Society Gallery (Re tsuwet. s re Secwepemc, 1999) partnering with the Kamloops Art Gallery. By using photography as a research tool and as a form of artistic representation, participants will document the cultural traditions of the Secwepemc, including how the people themselves, as well as others, historically used images to depict their daily lives. Second, we have planned a series of discussions and public programmes relating to the presentation of a Thomson Highway play commissioned by the Western Canada Theatre and based on the 'Laurier Memorial,' a 1910 document that depicts relations between settlers and the Secwepemc people.

5.3 Linking Cultural Resources to Social Development

Just as a city's varied history is important to understanding itself and its future, many of its community organisations now recognise the vital importance of enabling particular clienteles to give voice to their life experiences through various forms of cultural expression. Many arts organisations are responding by collaborating on activities generally defined as 'community arts'. The possibilities for engagement are diverse, as indicated by Wallis (1991), Lacy (1995), Lippard (1995b), Burham and Durland (1997) and Dubinsky (1999). The educational system is also moving beyond traditional notions of art education and cultural involvement as evidenced, for example, by museum–school partnerships that emphasise multiple visits and curriculum integration that are rooted in the cultural life and geography of a community (Dubinsky, 2000). Accordingly, three projects are currently being undertaken.

First, and working with the John Howard Society, Professor Peter Murphy of the Department of English is assembling a collection of writings based on conversations with parolees and with families of parolees when possible and appropriate. The exchanges enable a relatively voiceless population to speak, a population that others often feel should not be heard or 'deserves' to be misunderstood. The 3-year project

complements already existing anthologies of writings by prisoners and paroles (Murphy and Johnsen, 1997; Murphy and Murphy, 1998). To place this project in a wider cultural context, sociology professor Linda Deutschmann is doing a community mapping project depicting the needs, resources, interests, services and locations of the various clienteles served by the John Howard Society. These include people who have actually been in conflict with the law and other 'at risk' populations who experience the culture of poverty as they have limited resources to support and protect themselves or do not have their voices heard when decisions affect them. Dr Deutschmann's 2-year study will build on recent work (Deutschmann, 2000) while the sources for the maps will include published information and extensive survey and observational data such as a random sample of city residents, and select samples of storeowners, social service agency workers and city planners through in-depth, qualitative interviews. The study therefore complements work being carried out under the project's city, regional and environmental planning theme by looking at the social capital, or lack thereof, of marginalised groups. It also speaks to the 'not in my backyard (NIMBY) syndrome', which cities, and especially small ones because of closer proximities, must inevitably address with respect to housing and the provisions of various community services.

Second, working with the art gallery, children in grades three, four and five and their teachers from Stuart Wood School in downtown Kamloops are participating in a writing and image-making project about the idea of home. The project is conceived as an integral part of the school curriculum and is affiliated with *Writing Home*, a multi-year initiative that began in the province of Alberta in 1999 to advance and examine museum and gallery-school partnerships. The children's work will also complement displays of community life from other projects. The research component consists of an ethnographic account of the project's development that will be undertaken over 2 years by programme co-director Lon Dubinsky. Projects in Alberta had an evaluation and teacher education component, yet the situation in Kamloops allows for a participant-observation study of the project's process within the context of a larger initiative devoted to cultural collaboration and creation.

Third, free-standing children's museums or children's areas in museums are a growth area in Canada and abroad. Some places are primarily activity centres, where the emphasis is on rapid and repeated forms of representation and episodic experiences with children proceeding quickly from one activity to another. Others have active components but pay more attention to actual content and to diverse forms of knowing and engagement. In either case, many assumptions about cognitive and social development are evident in museum practice and programming (Gardner, 1991). Responding to these developments, Helen MacDonald-Carlson of UCC's Early Childhood Education Program, student interns and the Kamloops Museum are working together to develop a children's museum area devoted to local and regional history (see Fig. 1). During the first year, the project has emphasised documentation, observing children's current experience of the museum, studying a representative group of other children's museums or museum areas and relating these findings to the recent literature in visitor studies, such as Falk and Dierking (1995) and Hein (1998). Researchers and museum staff are now in the process of developing and testing displays by building on the information collected and on the approach to child development at the core of UCC's programme. It is a process approach to teaching and



Fig. 1. Student researcher observing children in the Kamloops Museum.
Photograph courtesy of Helen MacDonald-Carlson.

learning that is especially committed to encouraging and documenting children's visual and verbal expression (Katz and Chard, 1995; Edwards et al., 1993).

The research team will also continue to draw on the findings of concurrent CURA projects and on previous and related work, such as *The Heritage Fair Documentation Project* undertaken by UCC's Centre for Multiple Literacies Research (2000). There is also a particular theoretical and concrete link to Putnam's ideas about social capital and civic engagement (noted above). Putnam partly bases them on a comparative study he undertook on community associations and social cohesion in northern and southern Italy (1993a). In the north he found strong social links among people that are realised through associations as diverse as fraternal societies and choir groups, relationships pivotal to maintaining the democratic process. In this respect, we find it of interest that UCC's participatory approach to child development, which engages children, teachers and their families, has its origin in the city of Reggio-Emilia in the region of Emilia-Romagna in northern Italy.

5.4 Representing Kamloops

Given the participating organisations, forms of collaboration and diverse issues to be studied, the projects described represent Kamloops culturally in many ways. However, the art and act of representing is itself a cultural consideration, given factors such as who and what is presented and the media and methods used to represent them. This

final theme is taken up with several forms of representation that complement or extend other studies and activities. First, documentation is of particular interest to many of the researchers, including the co-director, Will Garrett-Petts. Together with sociology professor David MacLennan and fine arts professor Donald Lawrence, he is conducting a 3-year study of how documentary representation both reflects and shapes the subcultures of Kamloops. This study has several layers, given how local expression, or what Barton and Hamilton (1998) call 'local literacy', can migrate or oscillate between high art/academic production and popular culture (Garrett-Petts and Lawrence, 1996, 2000). Moreover, since the overall theme is the cultural future of small cities, then modes of communicating are as important as capacity building, policy making and knowledge creation. Indeed, all four together call to mind the initial theoretical concerns while also being central to the training and dissemination aspects described below.

An important focus that is linked to issues of personal mediation and documentation is how Kamloops as a small city represents itself. In much of the promotional literature, for example, Kamloops is touted as 'the tournament capital of Canada', owing to the many competitions that have taken place in sports and other activities provincially, nationally and internationally. Other literature presents Kamloops with 'the heart of a small town and the excitement of a modern city', highlighting the natural beauty of the Thompson region, together with its amenities and services (see Fig. 2). Gold and Ward (1994) term this 'place promotion', an increasing part of any city or region's image and text repertoire as it develops its own capital, social and otherwise, and competes for investment and resources. Various researchers and community partners are just beginning to examine some of the means and strategies used to represent Kamloops and the Thompson region to itself and to areas beyond, including how culture, in particular, is conceived, promoted and supported. They are also observing informal interactions, often implicated, or in appropriate instances highlighted, in place promotion, such as people using parks or other public spaces, frequenting restaurants and taverns or attending performances and events that bring both locals and visitors into proximity. Urban observers such as Jacobs (1961), Sennett (1976) and Oldenburg (1991) stress the importance of such interaction for a vibrant and desirable city culture, noting that such participation is as crucial for urban life as the social capital that flows from formally constituted associations.

The 'art' of representing has emerged as an especially significant area of self-referential inquiry. Although an 'artists-as-researchers' theme was not highlighted in the original grant application, the commitment to a public exhibition in the gallery setting was there from the outset. Yet once the programme was underway, and at our first major meeting of researchers and community partners, the co-directors presented a discussion paper, 'Moving Ahead'. There we reviewed our goals for (1) collaboration and assessment, (2) new partners and alliances, (3) additional funding possibilities, and (4) communication and dissemination strategies; in addition, we presented a brief on the potential involvement of artists:

The notion of engaging artists throughout the duration of the program is an example of how we might involve new participants, one we'd like to advocate at this time. Initially, we proposed a culminating exhibition at the gallery and other venues in 2004 that will document the projects and include work by artists that reflects project concerns. The exhibition remains in place but we now propose an integrated approach

with an artist(s) attached to each project from the outset. This enhanced use of artist-participants is based on the progress of several current projects and is generally supported by an increasing interest by the contemporary art world in what we might call 'community-based art.' We envisage several possibilities, yet each would be contingent upon agreement by the researcher(s), community partner and artist(s) for each project. For example, some artists might participate fully as researchers with their work incorporated into, if not in some cases synonymous with, a specific project. In others cases, artists might work as more detached observers. (Dubinsky and Garrett-Petts, 2001: 4–5)

We are now in the midst of working out the forms and models of collaboration involving artists, academic researchers and community organisations – including how artists are to be chosen for each project, the role artists might play in the assessment process and, of course, the financial implications. To date, we have engaged four artists to work with four community-based research teams, encouraging them to follow one of three inquiry models:

1. *Affinity* – where the artist is encouraged to match existing work with issues under exploration by a particular research group.
2. *Response* – where the artist is encouraged to create new work responding directly to the particular research group's project.
3. *Integrated* – where the artist works with a particular research group, becoming in effect a co-researcher by committing skills, insights and art production to the research findings.

As an indication of what has developed thus far, the Representing Kamloops theme now features a community mapping project and offers a wonderful case study of art-as-research in action: part travelling art exhibition, part social science study of narrative attachment to place, the project integrates forms of artistic inquiry and representation traditionally excluded from formal research. Community members are being asked to construct 'memory maps' detailing their attachment to Kamloops landmarks, both public and private. These visual representations form the 'pretext' for oral narratives, opportunities to tell the story or stories of belonging and alienation. The memory maps and the stories are collected, documented and displayed in exhibition format; and with each new collection the exhibit changes and grows. In concert with the gathering of images and narratives, artist-researcher Donald

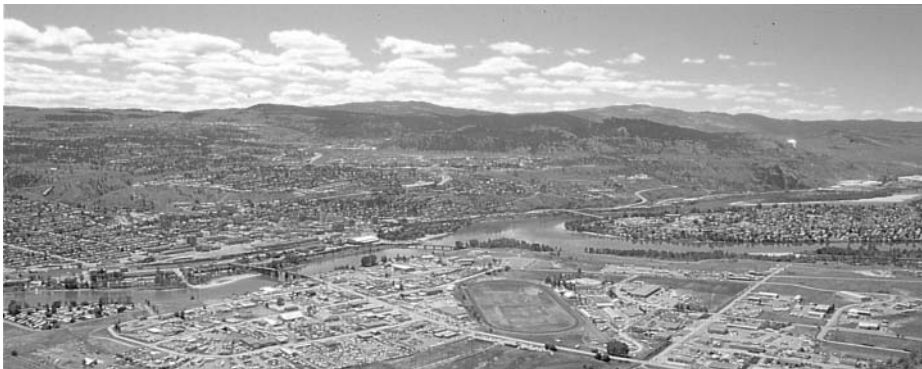


Fig. 2. Aerial photograph of Kamloops.
Photograph courtesy of James Hoffman.



Fig. 3. Constructing a city map model.
Photograph courtesy of Donald Lawrence.

Lawrence, together with a team of students, has constructed a sculptural map of Kamloops. The map, a maquette for a room-sized final version, provides a topographical landscape of *space* (see Fig. 3), while the narratives provide a collective story of *place*. The final result will be a merging of the two, where the images and oral texts are embedded into the sculpture and placed on public display in the Kamloops Museum.

6. Training

The enrichment of teaching and the enhancement of students' education and employability are central to all thematic areas. The collaborations provide a knowledge base and setting for instruction and several work/study opportunities. Some of the expertise and workforce skills to be gained by students include: creative, academic and technical writing, qualitative and quantitative research methods, social animation and community development, teacher education, art, museum and heritage studies, cross-cultural communication and experience in local planning and government. A significant outcome, and a direct result of the Small Cities CURA,

has been the institutionalisation of a 'Service Learning' programme at UCC: students, working together with a faculty member, now gain academic credit for service learning activities. Here are some of the current linkages, although the programme may present other opportunities as studies progress and are subject to the availability of additional resources:

1. *Bachelor of Fine Arts, UCC.* The programme's co-director from the Kamloops Art Gallery is teaching in the new BFA programme, including a course in gallery and museum studies. BFA students are also engaged as gallery interns and participate in other projects with an arts component, such as *Writing Home*.
2. *Local History and City and Regional Planning.* Through course work in Canadian historical geography, other Canadian Studies courses and other classes offered by the Department of Social and Environmental Studies, students participate in research on streets, neighbourhoods and buildings, in the planning studies and in the investigation of place promotion.
3. *The Department of Journalism/Forest Extension Research Partnership.* In addition to the involvement of faculty and students in the video production noted above, during the duration of the project the Forest Research Partnership will compensate journalism students for writing articles about links between culture and the environment on its online journal. Forest Research staff will act as mentors to the students in preparing this work. Also, journalism students are putting together the Small Cities newsletter.
4. *Early Childhood Education Programme.* Through classes and work/study arrangements, students are currently participating in the development of a children's museum area in the Kamloops Museum.

7. Knowledge Sharing

The plan consists of a strategy that will communicate: (1) the progress of the projects, (2) the results of research studies and other activities, and (3) the transferability of the programme's work for particular organisations and for other small cities. It will make information available to the scholarly community, to city officials and staff, to cultural organisations such as museums and to other relevant associations and professional communities. Its primary objective, therefore, is to increase overall public knowledge and awareness about the cultural future of small cities.

1. *Local activities and coverage.* Periodic displays about the projects will culminate in a major 'retrospective exhibition' at the gallery in the third year. Activities will be regularly covered in the local media and in the programme's newsletter and web sites. All participants will also have informal exchanges and regular in-house colloquia to present and discuss their work.
2. *Web site and Web links.* In its own Web site, with links to related sites, the 'Cultural Future of Small Cities' will present its activities and encourage dialogue about the challenges facing small urban centres.
3. *The Small Cities Forum.* There will be a week-long conference about the social, economic and cultural challenges particular to small cities. Supported by the City

of Kamloops, the programme's co-directors, researchers and partners will work closely with city management to develop the forum. The forum, scheduled for the Spring of 2004, will make every attempt to attract professionals, researchers and citizens in British Columbia, Canada and elsewhere. It will have a variety of formats, including plenaries, panels and workshops, highlight the work of the Small Cities initiative, include cultural events throughout the city and allow considerable time for discussion of specific cultural issues.

4. *Scholarly conferences and journals.* Researchers are participating in meetings and conferences and are submitting papers to academic journals and magazines. Given the Small Cities programme's interdisciplinary thrust, the possibilities are large. There are also professional associations, venues and networks that will involve researchers and community partners, and some of the possibilities include meetings and publications of practitioners such as the Early Childhood Educators Association, the Canadian Museums Association and the American Association of Museums.

8. Some Tentative Conclusions

Now that we are one-third of the way into the research programme, we are beginning to appreciate the implications of Jann Bailey's observation that local individual arts and cultural organisations were working 'well, but not together'. Community–university research alliances like the Cultural Future of Small Cities initiative bring communities together in ways that make all partners productively self-conscious about community development in general – and about the shape (and purpose) of 'research' in particular. Working together, however, means more than establishing shared projects and goals; it also means understanding and negotiating otherwise hidden or unspoken assumptions, procedures and agendas. Partnerships, however well intended, involve some measure of gain and some measure of loss – that is, all those participating are beginning to recognise that we need to work differently if we are to work *well* and *together*.

A community–university research alliance, as outlined in the SSHRC guidelines, is conceived as an 'entity based on an equal partnership between organisations from the community and the university'. Equality we are working towards, but initial differences of perspective, tradition and purpose preclude any immediate creation of a utopian alliance. Community organisations and universities do not necessarily speak the same language, or hold the same objectives and values. Moving ahead with the university's research agenda while remaining sensitive to community sensibilities and expertise remains a dimension crucial to this form of research. And it is here, we suspect, that the presence of artists-as-researchers may prove especially instructive. Artistic practice – and the presence of working artists – offers the possibility of well-crafted critique, playful destabilisation and an identifiable 'third view,' one not tied directly to either the university or the community partners. As an aspiring learning community, we continue to pursue our initial purpose, but we have also turned to art and artists to help refine our terms of reference, to help redefine our working relations.

References

- Banting, K. (ed.) (1999). *The Nonprofit Sector in Canada: Roles and Relationships*. McGill-Queens University Press, Montreal.
- Barton, D. and Hamilton, M. (1998). *Local Literacies: Reading and Writing in One Community*. Routledge, New York.
- Beesley, K.B. and Ramsey, R.D. (eds) (1999). *Rural Research in the Social Sciences and Humanities VI: Proceedings of the Sixth Annual Colloquium*. Rural Research Centre, Nova Scotia Agriculture College, Truro.
- Berger, B. (1995). *An Essay on Culture: Symbolic Structure and Social Structure*. University of California Press, Berkeley, CA.
- Bhabha, H. (1994). *The Location of Culture*. Routledge, New York.
- Bonnell, V.E. and Hunt, L. (eds) (1999). *Beyond The Cultural Turn: New Directions in the Study of Society and Culture*. University of California Press, Berkeley, CA.
- Briggs, X. de S. (1997). Social Capital and the Cities: Advice to Change Agents, *National Civic Review*, **86**(2). 111–118.
- Burham, L.F. and Durland, S. (eds) (1997). *The Citizen Artist: 20 Years of Art in the Public Arena*. Critical Press, New York.
- Bunting, T. and Fillion, P. (eds) (1999). *Canadian Cities in Transition: The Twenty-First Century*. Oxford University Press, Toronto.
- Carey, J.W. (1977). Mass Communication Research and Cultural Studies: An American View. In Curran, J., Gurevitch, M. and Woollacott, J. (eds) *Mass Communication and Society*. Edward Arnold and Open University Press, London, 409–425.
- Caulfield, J. and Peake, L. (1996). *City Lives and City Forms: Critical Research and Canadian Urbanism*. University of Toronto Press, Toronto.
- Castells, M. (1985). *The City and the Grassroots*. University of California Press, Berkeley, CA.
- Castells, M. (1999). *The Information Age* (3 vols). Blackwell, Oxford.
- Centre for Multiple Literacies Research. The Heritage Fair Documentation Project. University College of the Cariboo, Kamloops, BC.
- Deutschmann, L. (2000). Not in My Backyard: Resistance to the Placement of Sited Social Services. Annual Meeting of Canadian Sociology and Anthropology Association.
- Drucker, P. (1995). *Managing in a Time of Great Change*. Truman/Talley Books/Dutton, New York.
- Dubinsky, L. (1999). Literacy and Visual Culture in Three Art Gallery Settings. In Irwin, R. and Kinder, A.M. (eds) *Beyond the School: Community and Institutional Partnerships in Art Education*. National Art Education Association, Reston, UK, 70–79.
- Dubinsky, L. and Garrett-Petts, W.F. (2001). Moving Ahead. A discussion paper presented at the August 2001 Meeting of the Cultural Future of Small Cities Project, Kamloops, BC.
- Dubinsky, L., et al. (2000). *Writing Home: Exploring Language in Museums*. Glenbow Museum, Calgary.
- Edwards, C., Gandini, L. and Forman, G. (1993). *The Hundred Languages of Children: The Reggio Emilia Approach to Early Childhood Education*. Ablex, Norwood, NJ.
- Falk, J.H. and Dierking, L.D. (1995). *The Museum Experience*. Walesback Books, Washington.
- Fukuyama, F. (1995). *Trust: The Social Virtues and the Creation of Prosperity*. Free Press, New York.
- Gardner, H. (1991). *The Unschooled Mind*. Basic Books, New York.
- Garrett-Petts, W.F. (ed) (2000). The Heritage Fair Documentation Project. The Centre for Multiple Literacies Research, Kamloops, BC.
- Garrett-Petts, W.F. and Lawrence, D. (eds) (1996). *Integrating Visual and Verbal Literacies*. Inkshed, Winnipeg.
- Garrett-Petts, W.F. and Lawrence, D. (2000). *PhotoGraphic Encounters: The Edges and Edginess of Reading Prose Pictures and Visual Fictions*. University of Alberta Press, Edmonton.
- Garrett-Petts, W.F. et al. (2002). *Understanding Conflicts in the Forests*. Workshop video, Forest Extension and Research Partnership, Kamloops, BC.
- Geertz, C. (1973). *The Interpretation of Cultures*. Basic Books, New York.
- Geertz, C. (1983). *Local Knowledge*. Basic Books, New York.
- Gold, J.R. and Ward, S.V. (eds) (1994). *Place Promotion: The Use of Publicity and Marketing to Sell Towns and Regions*. Wiley, New York.
- Hayden, D. (1996). *The Power of Place: Urban Landscapes as Public History*. MIT Press, Cambridge, MA.
- Hein, G.E. (1998). *Learning in the Museum*. Routledge, New York.

- Jacobs, J. 1961. *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. Vintage, New York.
- KAMPLAN 1997 (1996). *The City of Kamloops Official Community Plan By-law No. 5-1-1144*.
- Kaplan, G. (1996). People and Places: Contrasting Perspectives on the Association Between Social Class and Health, *International Journal of Health Services*. **26**. 507–519.
- Katz, L.G. and Chard S.C. (1995). *Engaging Children's Minds: The Project Approach*. Ablex, Norwood, NJ.
- Katz, P. (2000). The 70 Percent Place, *Government Technology*. May. 8–9, 45–47.
- Kemmis, D. (1990). *Community and the Politics of Place*. University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, OK.
- Kemmis, D. (1995). *The Good City and the Good Life*. Houghton Mifflin, New York.
- Kretzmann, J.P. and McKnight, J.L. (1993). *Building Communities from the Inside Out: A Path Towards Finding and Mobilizing a Community's Assets*. Institute for Policy Research, Northwestern University Press, Chicago.
- Lacy, S. (ed.) (1995). *Mapping the Terrain: New Genre Public Art*. Bay Press, Seattle.
- Lippard, L. (1995a). Looking Around: Where We Are, Where We Could Be. In Lacy, S. (ed.) *Mapping the Terrain: New Genre Public Art*. Bay Press, Seattle, 114–130.
- Lippard, L. (1995b). *The Lure of the Local*. New Press, New York.
- MacKinnon, R. (2000). *Biography of a Building Project: Doing Geography Outside the Classroom.* A presentation delivered at the Canadian Association of Geographers Meeting, Western Division, University College of the Fraser Valley, Abbotsford, BC.
- Mintzberg, H., Dougherty, D., Jorgensen, J. and Westley, F. (1996). Some Surprising Things About Collaboration, *Organizational Dynamics*. Summer. 60–72.
- Murphy, P. and Johnsen, L. (1997). *Life-25: Interviews with Prisoners Serving Life Sentences*. New Star Books, Vancouver.
- Murphy, P. and Murphy, J. (1998). *Sentences and Paroles: A Prison Reader*. New Star Books, Vancouver.
- Nelson, R. (1998–99). Low Birthweights: Spatial and Socioeconomic Patterns in Kamloops, *Western Geography*. **8/9**. 31–59.
- Oldenburg, R. (1991). *The Great Good Place*. Paragon, New York.
- Orfield, M. (1997). *Metropolitics: A Regional Agenda for Community and Stability*. Brookings Institution, Washington, DC.
- Portes, A. and Landolt, P. (1996). The Downside of Social Capital, *American Prospect*. **26**. 18–21.
- Putnam, R.D. (1993a). *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*. Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ.
- Putnam, R.D. (1993b). *The Prosperous Community: Social Capital and Public Life*, *American Prospect* (online). Issue 13, Spring.
- Putnam, R.D. (2000). *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. Simon & Schuster, New York.
- Reimer, B. and Young, G. (eds) (1994). *Development Strategies for Rural Canada: Evaluating Partners, Jobs and Communities*. Summary of Proceedings from the 5th Annual ARRG Conference, Canadian Agricultural and Rural Restructuring Group.
- Re tsuwet. s re Secwepemc: *The Things We Do* (1999). Secwepemc Cultural Education Society, Kamloops.
- Rifkin, J. (2000). All Government is Derivative (Interview with Steven Ferry), *Government Technology*. May. 10–15, 25.
- Sassen, S. and Appiah, K.A. (1999). *Globalization and Discontents: Essays on the New Mobility of People and Money*. New Press, New York.
- Sennett, R. (1976). *The Fall of Public Man*. New York, Knopf.
- Wallis, B. (ed.) (1991). *If You Lived Here: The City in Art, Theory and Social Activism*, A Project by Martha Rosler. Bay Press, Seattle.
- Williams, R. (1961). *The Long Revolution*. Penguin, London.
- Williams, R. (1975). *The Country and The City*. Oxford University Press, New York.
- Williams, R. (1983). *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*. Oxford University Press, London.