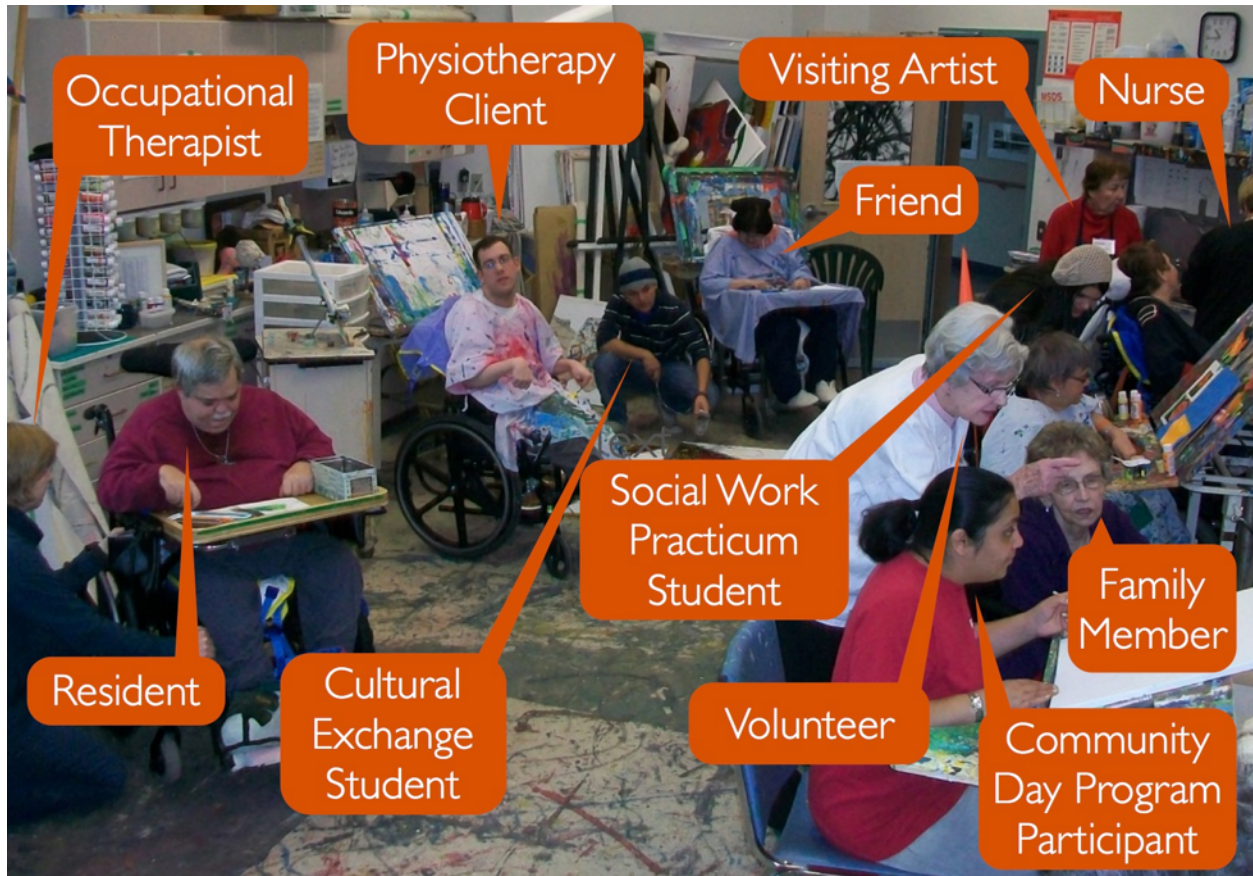


OPEN STUDIO PROJECTS



©Jeff Nachtigall, 2013

Engaging Communities in Accessible and Inclusive Creative Environments

The Philosophy

Open Studio Projects is based on the philosophy that we are all born artists. Art is our first language, as before we can read or write or speak, we communicate visually, making marks with anything we can get our hands on. This visual language transcends borders and has the ability to bring people with diverse backgrounds together and to be a vehicle for change, healing and hope.

The Open Studio functions much in the same way as any professional artist's studio. Emphasis is placed on creativity, self-exploration and self-expression. This is not a craft room or art therapy. Open Studio Projects promotes a peer group environment where all artists are treated as equals and there is no hierarchy of "teacher" and "student" or "patient" and "physician". It does not matter if you are a resident or a staff member, a practicum student or a client from the community ... once you enter the Open Studio you are referred to as an artist. This may seem like a small or even unnecessary distinction, but it is actually the foundation for building a creative community, which will in turn help bring about a true culture change.

This is not to say that participants will become the next Picasso or Matisse. It is not the intention of Open Studio Projects to turn out professional artists seeking a career in the field (although this does happen). It is about helping individuals rediscover their creativity (which in many cases has been laying dormant for years) and better express themselves. As a society we have handed art over to a select few. This truly innate human quality that lies within all of us has been placed on a pedestal that many of us are unable to reach. We are intimidated by what has become an academic pursuit and have forgotten the importance of the intuitive approach to creativity. Open Studio Projects nurtures this process and challenges the artist's perceptions of art, tearing down the walls that many of us have built that separate us from our creativity. Once these barriers are overcome, the artist is free to explore their unique form of expression and develop an understanding that we are all personally invested in art. These new skills will benefit your community as creative thinking becomes the norm.

The creative journey can be intimidating, and it is the beginning of this journey that can seem the most daunting. Art needs to be demystified and made accessible to everyone, including patients, clients, staff, family and volunteers. Through dialogue, experiential learning, and partnering with physicians, clinicians and healthcare providers who are interested in exploring the use of the arts, all stakeholders can begin to cultivate a creative vocabulary which will augment all forms of communication and encourage creative thinking. The community will help inform

subsequent projects and identify the needs of the organization, which will shape the Open Studio to each new and unique environment.

Open Studio Projects will have a profound impact as your organization realizes the potential for the arts to become thoroughly integrated into its very fabric. The scope and scale of what can be achieved is limited only by the vision of the organization and the resources that are made available.



Practicum & Internship Opportunities



Active Living



Intergenerational Programming

A Day in the Open Studio

The studio started small. Within months, dozens of residents were working in a variety of mediums and styles, filling the small space to the point of overflow. Most had never made art before. Reduced and restricted mobility (paraplegia and quadriplegia) and cognitive disorders (Alzheimer's, dementia, and acquired brain injuries) presented them with new challenges and limitations. With perseverance and dedication (and in some cases, working through physical pain), these limitations grew into strengths. Through art, the participants in the studio have found a new voice...and this new voice has empowered them.

The Insiders Exhibition Catalogue, 2007

The residents/patients/clients come as their schedule allows. They fit it into their day as they see fit... it becomes a part of their routine, a part of their lives. There are no scheduled classes, no scheduled days, as it is impossible to schedule creativity or program passion. As with any new initiative, the Open Studio will take time to grow.

The first curious individuals through the door will help shape an environment where they are free to explore their creativity. They will dictate how and what the studio will look like. Art will be produced and hung on the walls of their rooms and throughout the building. As their confidence grows they will become more vocal about their experience. Those who expressed little

interest in the studio will begin to take note as they see the changes in their friends, neighbours and community... something is happening and they want to be a part of it.

This peer group environment offers participants the opportunity to assume leadership roles by taking ownership of the successes of the Open Studio. Every artist in the Open Studio becomes an integral component of something that is larger than themselves. They are actively engaged in a process, exploring and expressing their own creativity and helping others to do the same in a safe and nurturing environment.



Mutual Trust & Respect



Volunteer Opportunities



Fulfillment & Wellness

The studio is more popular than ever and continues to be a vibrant hub of activity and exchange. The breakthroughs have been substantial and the benefits profound. Residents who once contemplated suicide are now mentors and role models. Individuals who were previously inactive have found a new energy, enthusiastically expressing themselves through art. The level of productivity has grown exponentially as the residents' dexterity and confidence have increased. Fine motor skills have improved; those who once shook as they tried to grip a brush are now expressing themselves through fluid motions. The positive impact on the residents and their families is astounding and we continue to push the boundaries of self-expression and challenge the stereotypes of individuals with special needs.

The Insiders Exhibition Catalogue, 2007

This is an opportunity for individuals to grow, allowing them to give back to their families, their community and their caregivers. *This is independence.*

The staff will play an equally important role in the development and implementation of a successful studio program. Residents/patients/clients will share their experience with their physicians, clinicians and caregivers, including them in the creative conversation, instilling the possibilities and virtues of a life with art. This informal introduction will help prepare the staff for their more formal role as participants in the Open Studio through workshops, information ses-

sions and presentations. They will be encouraged to explore their creative potential as they work alongside the patients/residents/clients and their colleagues.

Open Studio Projects will help your organization realize a more vibrant workplace where the staff are able to contribute to a community that is larger than themselves and their respective departments. This helps remove the barriers created by internal hierarchies and provides an opportunity where staff can work alongside one another as peers. The Open Studio helps foster a truly collaborative environment and encourages cross-over projects that can involve any number of departments. *This is partnership.*



Innovation & Independence



The Voice of the Individual



Personal Growth

The Open Studio quickly becomes the hub of your organization. It is a natural gathering place where ideas are shared, discussed and critiqued. It is a crossroads where clients, clinicians, physicians & patients, volunteers, family, residents and staff can meet and engage one another on neutral ground. Open Studio Projects provides a forum for a dialogue that breaks down silos and promotes communication. This process will open doors and create endless possibilities for the participants as they begin to understand their potential and utilize their creative voice. I believe that some of the most profound and ground-breaking work will come from the artists' ability to work alongside physicians, specialists, clinicians, and researchers from a multitude of disciplines. *This is community.*

Open Studio Projects embraces and utilizes all forms of creativity, as it is important to acknowledge all of the art forms as part of an overall creative experience. The creative process is not limited to any one medium, however it is crucial to focus on a single medium in order to establish a strong foundation that can be built upon over time. Initially the visual arts are introduced in the Open Studio. As the Open Studio evolves it expands to encompass all forms of creative expression including music, theatre, dance, writing, poetry, film, digital and new media.

Open Studio Projects

Jeff Nachtigall, Founder and Director

www.openstudioprojects.com



Jeff Nachtigall is a multidisciplinary artist, curator, speaker, and social entrepreneur. His work has been exhibited throughout North America, Europe and China, and is represented in numerous public and private collections. He is the co-founder of Make Work Projects, a 2000-square foot storefront studio and sometimes art project space, located in the Riversdale district in downtown Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada.

He has led dozens of residencies across Canada, and regularly lectures and facilitates workshops in communities and institutions across Canada and the United States. A talented artist and gifted facilitator, he has combined his gifts to be a top-notch teaching artist. He is equally committed to both artistic excellence and inclusivity, and the artistic work that emerges from his participants, as well as the positive impact on their lives, is a testament to that.

Through working as a full-time artist-in-residence at an assisted living facility for eight years, he developed the Open Studio, a model that he has successfully replicated throughout Canada and the United States. This inclusive, non-hierarchical, client-centred strategy challenges traditional

clinical approaches and pushes the boundaries of the arts in health care. This model has evolved and grown into a community-based practice, engaging marginalized groups across North America in art interventions that act as a catalyst for social change.

The Open Studio is especially effective in delivering an accessible and relevant creative outlet and experience for individuals with Alzheimer's and Dementia. Nachtigall has worked closely with Cognitive Enhancement Specialists, providing tools, techniques and training to artists, facilitators, clinicians and staff, so that they might integrate creativity into their overall model of care.

He is the founder and director of the Museum of Temporary Art, a roaming multi-city collaborative initiative that engages communities in creative activism, installing large artworks in under-utilized urban spaces, organizing alley walks, and reframing the concept of gentrification in neighbourhoods in transition.

Nachtigall is the inventor of the Mobile Painting Device (MPD), an adaptive technology that transforms the wheelchair into a giant paintbrush, giving people living with neurological disabilities opportunity to express themselves on a very large scale. With delicate and precise movements of the wheelchair's "joystick," the artist applies calligraphic lines of paint. This is not an accidental process, a virtual substitute, or a computer-generated facsimile—the artist is in control in real time on a real canvas with real results.

The MPD has been utilized in a number of communities and projects throughout Canada and the United States, most recently in Saskatoon, Toronto, Calgary, Hamilton, and Detroit. The *City as Canvas* project uses the MPD as a tool to create massive paintings and map accessible routes, transforming city streets and sidewalks into a living canvas.

Nachtigall's work has been profiled in numerous articles and documentaries, most notably in the National Film Board of Canada's 2009 feature-length film *A Year at Sherbrooke*. His work was also featured in the National Center for Creative Aging's Online Artist Training in Arts and Aging released in 2013. He is a sought-after speaker and has presented the keynote address and contributed to numerous conferences and symposiums, including:

- National Center for Creative Aging National Leadership Exchange 2014, Washington DC
- Power of the Arts National Forum 2013, Ottawa Canada
- American Society on Aging 2013, Chicago

- Creative Aging Symposium 2012, Calgary Canada
- Creating Space for the Arts and Humanities 2012, Banff Canada
- Artist + Community Symposium 2012, Winnipeg Canada
- The Society for the Arts in Dementia Care 2011, Oakville Canada
- TEDx 2010, Saskatoon Canada

He has worked with multiple post-secondary institutions in Canada that are investigating ways to integrate his Open Studio model into the curriculum for their arts and humanities students, including: Alberta College of Art and Design; Creative Age Forum at the University of Alberta; Sheridan Elder Research Centre; University of Saskatchewan Departments of Art, Psychology, Sociology, and Education; University of Regina Department of Social Work; and Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology, Faculty of Nursing.

Nachtigall was key in developing the arts-based learning component for the Centre for Learning, Research and Innovation in Long-Term Care at Toronto's Baycrest Hospital, one of the world's top research institutes in cognitive neuroscience. His Open Studio model taught students in the health professions the importance of using art as a vehicle for developing well-rounded clinical and interpersonal skills in geriatrics.

Nachtigall has been twice short-listed for the Lieutenant Governor's Award in Arts and Learning. The Lieutenant Governor's Arts Awards is an annual celebration to recognize the contribution and achievements made by Saskatchewan individuals, groups, and organizations in the arts.

He consults and advises institutions and organizations throughout Canada, Australia, and the United States on integrating the arts into the fabric of their communities. Recent partners and projects include:

- The College of Family Physicians Canada
- Family Medicine Forum, Quebec Canada
- National Center for Creative Aging, Washington DC
- Arts Health Network Canada
- The Ottawa Hospital Rehabilitation Centre, Ottawa Canada

- Mackenzie Art Gallery, Regina Canada
- Glenrose Rehabilitation Hospital, Edmonton Canada
- Saskatoon City Hospital Rehabilitation Centre, Saskatoon Canada
- North Dakota Arts Council and North Dakota Art for Life Committee
- Royal University Hospital, Saskatoon Canada
- Learning Research and Innovation Baycrest, Toronto Canada
- Innovation Technology and Design Lab Baycrest, Toronto Canada
- The Society for the Arts in Dementia Care, Perth Australia
- Organization of Saskatchewan Arts Councils, Regina Canada
- City of Calgary, Calgary Canada
- Meewasin Valley Authority, Saskatoon Canada
- Saskatoon Public School Division, Saskatoon Canada
- Saskatoon Health Region, Saskatoon Canada
- Government of Saskatchewan
- Centre for Cultural Partnerships, University of Melbourne, Melbourne Australia
- Saskatoon Police Service Anti Graffiti Unit, Saskatoon Canada
- Saskatchewan Association for the Rehabilitation of the Brain Injured
- Saskatchewan Association of Rehabilitation Centres, Supported Employment Transition Initiative
- Dubé Centre for Mental Health and Addictions, Saskatoon Canada
- Riversdale BID, Saskatoon Canada

Links to Projects

A Year at Sherbrooke: National Film Board of Canada feature length documentary that follows the origins of the Open Studio in longterm care.

https://www.nfb.ca/film/year_at_sherbrooke

CTV Intergenerational project that focuses on building bridges in the community and the transformational power of art.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1MonqZV850U>

TEDx Saskatoon.

<http://tedxtalks.ted.com/video/TEDxSaskatoon-JeffNachtigall-Ra;search%3AJeff%20Nachtigall>

Jeff Nachtigall
openstudioprojects.com



creative tools for
Family Physicians