

Digital Graffiti; Plugged in to Jamaica

The Australian Network for Art and Technology (ANAT) is proudly supporting **Daniel Flood** to deliver accessible technology workshops at the pioneering **Container Project** in Jamaica in May 2008. A talented new media, theatre and community cultural development artist and founding member of the FRESH media group, Daniel will be presenting Digital Graffiti; Plugged In. Digital Graffiti will examine the role of **arts and technology in engaging, animating and enlivening neighbourhood spaces** and the role that arts and culture can play in neighbourhood revitalisation.

The **Container Project** is an innovative, **arts-driven engine for community empowerment through creativity**. Based in a bright yellow converted shipping container in the heart of Palmers Cross, a rural township noted for its poverty and associated social problems; it is the initiative of one of its own, digital artist mervin Jarman (sic).

To celebrate the Container's fifth anniversary in 2008, a series of extended workshops have been organised under the banner "**As We Move**". The aim is to introduce New Media Arts to the Jamaican population by "taking participating practitioners from around the world into the field and some unusual situations." The iStLab will be a vital component of the anniversary program as visiting practitioners can take their workshops into the field with all the tools they need.

The workshops will be a "launching pad for exciting research and development of community resources in ICT and multimedia productions," mervin announces, "concluding with the *Digitizing Culture* International Symposium in March 2009."

Discovering that art could provide an avenue out of the hopelessness and lack of horizons experienced by underprivileged youth relegated to life "on the corners", mervin decided to share his visions and creative media skills with others. The result was the **Container**, launched in 2003 as a community-based media art and training facility.

This grassroots project has been proudly adopted by Palmers Cross residents, who have taken on increasing responsibility for its day-to-day running. "The project allows people from the local community to become sensitized to the use of computer technologies and its relationship to their everyday lives," mervin explains.

mervin continues, "many of our youths feel unwanted and have often been described as fit only for dumping. The iStLab is a subsidiary of the Container Project and is aimed at the many disadvantaged young people on our street corners. The hope is to give these young people an opportunity to make a difference in their own lives, and by so doing help to make a difference in their communities."

The Australian Network for Art and Technology (ANAT) believes we all deserve access to the opportunities afforded by global digital culture and are providing Professional Development Funding to enable Daniel to deliver workshops over six weeks from May 2008. ANAT recognises the need to enable diverse engagement in the digital world that we often take for granted in privileged environments both in Australia and around the world.

ANAT's Executive Director, Dr Melinda Rackham comments, "Container is one of the most successful community driven empowerment projects globally and Daniel's expertise will greatly benefit both the Jamaican community as well as enhancing his work with disadvantaged Australian communities".

For more details go to <http://www.mongrelstreet.org/5thAnniEvents/5thAnni.html> or contact mervin Jarman at containerproject@gmail.com or Amanda Matulick on communicate@anat.org.au.

