

## ArtsAccess and Kitchener Public Library Collaborate on Community Art Project

February 21, 2008 - *Kitchener, ON, Canada* – The Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery's ArtsAccess program and the Kitchener Public Library (KPL) are collaborating to offer the first touring exhibition of its kind in Waterloo region. Two community art projects in an exhibition titled, *Crossing Paths: A map of some of the places we go, a web of our pathways to and fro*, are touring various KPL branches from February 8 to July 4, 2008. The exhibition is the culmination of two art projects, one at KPL in May 2007 and the other at KidSpark in August 2007, both facilitated by community artists from ArtsAccess.

ArtsAccess, a community arts outreach initiative of the Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery (KW|AG), focuses on building relationships with cultural organizations, schools, libraries and community centres. Through the exchange of ideas within collaborative learning models, visual art becomes more accessible to a broader cross-section of people.

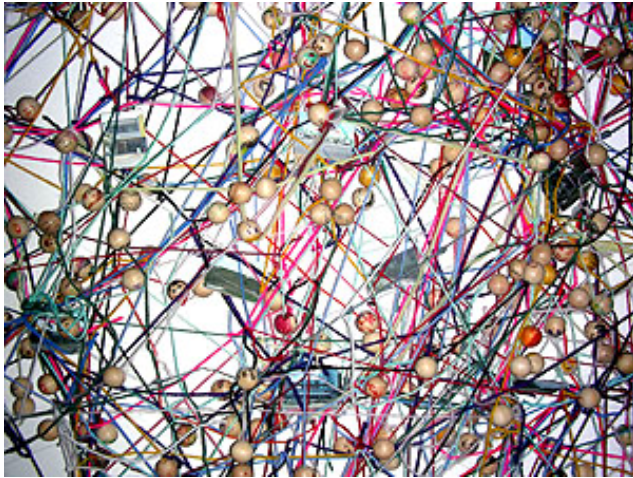
The *Crossing Paths* exhibition is comprised of two works: *Storytime Project* and *Local Area Network*.

"The title, *Crossing Paths*, conveys a theme of mapping the pathways we take and the places we go, which I realized is common in both works," explains Mosa Neshamá McNeilly, Lead Community Artist Facilitator, ArtsAccess. "In both projects, participants were invited to discover, in the process of building their collaborative map or web, that they share common points of interest and neighbourhoods. Together they wove an invisible web of pathways that describe their city. This process of discovering our relationships to each other and to our communities through collaborative art-making is the essence of ArtsAccess."



*Storytime Project*, Mixed Media, 36" x 48", May 2007, KPL,  
ArtsAccess Artist-Facilitator Cornelia Peckart

*Storytime Project* was created by children attending regular story-time programs at all KPL branches citywide. Over a period of two weeks, facilitated by then ArtsAccess Community Artist Facilitator Cornelia Peckart, KPL's preschool story-time groups at each location added images of buildings, people or vegetation to a large map of Kitchener on canvas. The children discussed how their contributions affected the community space and their relationships with one another.



*Local Area Network*, Mixed Media, 58" x 57", August 2007,  
KidSpark; Victoria Park, August 18 and 19 2007, Artist-Facilitator  
Devon Mordell

*Local Area Network (LAN)* is inspired by the idea that a city is not just a collection of roads and buildings, but is also constructed of the experiences and memories of the people who live there. The project makes the invisible relationships among citizens visible, through beads and intertwined threads on a large wooden frame. Participants of all ages at last year's *KidSpark* in Kitchener's Victoria Park were invited to add to the network over a two-day period. After creating their own "node" (a self-portrait or symbol on a wooden bead), they could connect themselves to photographs of local sites, helping to weave together the web of shared experiences that makes up the vibrant community of Kitchener-Waterloo.

"The word 'network' is associated with computer systems, transportation and social groups, and what all of these things have in common is the idea of many parts being connected to each other," explains Devon Mordell, Community Artist-Facilitator, ArtsAccess. "*Local Area Network* examines how, although our community is made up of many individuals, living here knits us all together in significant ways."

"Being a part of a larger community artwork project and interacting with professional artists was a wonderful opportunity for the children," said Laura Reed, Coordinator of Children and Teen Services, Kitchener Public Library. "The project's theme of connecting neighbourhoods and communities is especially appropriate since KPL and the Gallery are neighbourhood associations who collaborated on many different levels to bring this project together. KPL is very grateful to have been part of this experience and are excited about the possibilities of future initiatives like these."

*Storytime Project* and *Local Area Network* will tour five community libraries, and then remain as permanent works in one of the library branches.

### Touring Schedule 2008

Fri. Feb. 8 – Fri. Mar. 7	Main Kitchener Public Library
Fri. Mar. 7 - Fri. Apr. 4	Grand River Stanley Park Community Library
Fri. Apr. 4 – Fri. May 2	Forest Heights Community Library
Fri. May 2 – Fri. Jun. 6	Pioneer Park Community Library
Fri. Jun. 6 – Fri. July 4	Country Hills Community Library
Fri. July 4	Permanent installation at a KPL branch

### About ArtsAccess

Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery's (KW|AG) participation in ArtsAccess, a three year provincial partnership between KW|AG, the Art Gallery of Ontario, Thunder Bay Art Gallery, and Woodland Cultural Centre,



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provides an alternative approach to programming that draws from community arts practice, with values congruent to the Gallery's goal of transforming the "institutional box" into a catalyst for community development. Over 6300 people have already participated in initiatives through ArtsAccess, the majority of whom represent new audiences for KW|AG. Current community partners include: Anishnabeg Outreach, The Children's Museum, Downtown Community Centre, Forest Heights Collegiate Institute, Kitchener Public Library, Kitchener Youth Action Council, the Multi-cultural Centre, Open Sesame, St. John's Catholic School, St. Mary's Secondary School, University of Waterloo, and the Working Centre.

#### **About the Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery**

Through thoughtful and engaging programs, the Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery (KW|AG) connects people and ideas through art. The Gallery's exhibits and programs are built on the mission that art is the catalyst for shared experience, dialogue and imagination. The Gallery emphasizes contemporary art, often premiering works by Canadian and international artists. Exhibitions frequently draw upon selections from the 4,000 -work permanent collection to provide a forum for dialogue. KW|AG plays a vital educational role in the community, offering a full spectrum of artistic experience for adults, children and families alike. Established in 1956 and operating within Centre In The Square, KW|AG is the oldest and largest public gallery in Waterloo region: roots in the community, eyes on the world. For more information, contact [mail@kwag.on.ca](mailto:mail@kwag.on.ca) or visit [www.kwag.on.ca](http://www.kwag.on.ca).

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**Connecting people and ideas through art.**