

The aims of The Orion Society:

To heal the fractured relationship between people and nature by undertaking educational programs and publications that integrate all aspects of the relationship: the physically immediate, the analytical and scientific, the inspirational and creative.

To support changes in ethics and action at the local level that will offer genuine solutions to the global environmental crisis.

To cultivate a generation of citizen-leaders whose wisdom is grounded in and guided by nature literacy.

from **END OF THE LINE**



Left: The “urban removal” bus billboard created from participants’ photos. Right: *End of the Line* creators Carolyn Speranza and Lisa Link.

Perhaps the most compelling arts projects are those that weave into a whole the many distinct voices that compose a community. In Pittsburgh, Lisa Link and Carolyn Speranza, artists and research fellows at the Studio for Creative Inquiry at Carnegie Mellon University, designed a community-based artistic collaboration that resulted in thematic billboards that circulated on public transit buses, using images and text from community workshops and addressing the issues of greatest concern to Pittsburgh neighborhood residents. The website from which this excerpt is taken also contains images of the final billboards, as well as an archive of text and collages that were gathered during the workshops.

about important issues in their neighborhoods. From these discussions of past and present neighborhood issues, several common areas of concern and celebration emerged: neighborhood gardening, community leaders, urban dislocation, and community-based urban renovation. The resulting five collages that recirculated back into neighborhoods on buses in May of 1997 to May of 1998 resulted directly from the visual and audio materials contributed by participants at each workshop. Once the billboards were up, the artists hosted a press conference at a downtown bus stop and an open-house at the Studio for Creative Inquiry at Carnegie Mellon University to reunite community participants and to explain how their images fit into the overall structure of the project.

LATE-TWENTIETH-CENTURY decentralization of power and communications in the art world is redefining its structure, challenging a cultural system once dominated by exclusive blue-chip galleries. Art is leaving the salon for more publicly accessible electronic networks, community-operated cable TV stations, billboards, neighborhood gardens, and subway systems. In this spirit, *End of the Line* is a community-based artistic collaboration examining historic and contemporary issues in Pittsburgh’s neighborhoods—resulting in the creation of five computer collages displayed on 20 Pittsburgh buses for one year.

In the summer of 1996, Lisa B. Link and Carolyn P. Speranza conducted six free art workshops at Pittsburgh-area libraries. During each workshop, the artists present-

ed a brief overview of the history of photo collage and discussed its importance as a basis for contemporary digital art. Participants then made collages using historic photographs, their own photo albums, the library’s photocopier, colored pencils, scissors, and glue. Using these artworks and photographs as a springboard, the artists then interviewed workshop participants

Taken together, these excerpts reveal, in various ways, how art is used to reverse the momentum of a very superficial relationship to the natural systems that sustain us, while also serving to deepen that relationship. They also demonstrate how we might bring new and traditionally exiled or unheard voices into this conversation. If we are completely serious about changing the way we live, about making the ecological perspective the context for our actions, and therefore our lives, then it will take art of every kind and from every activist and every educator to draw a circle wide enough for us all to stand in together. ♻️

—MD

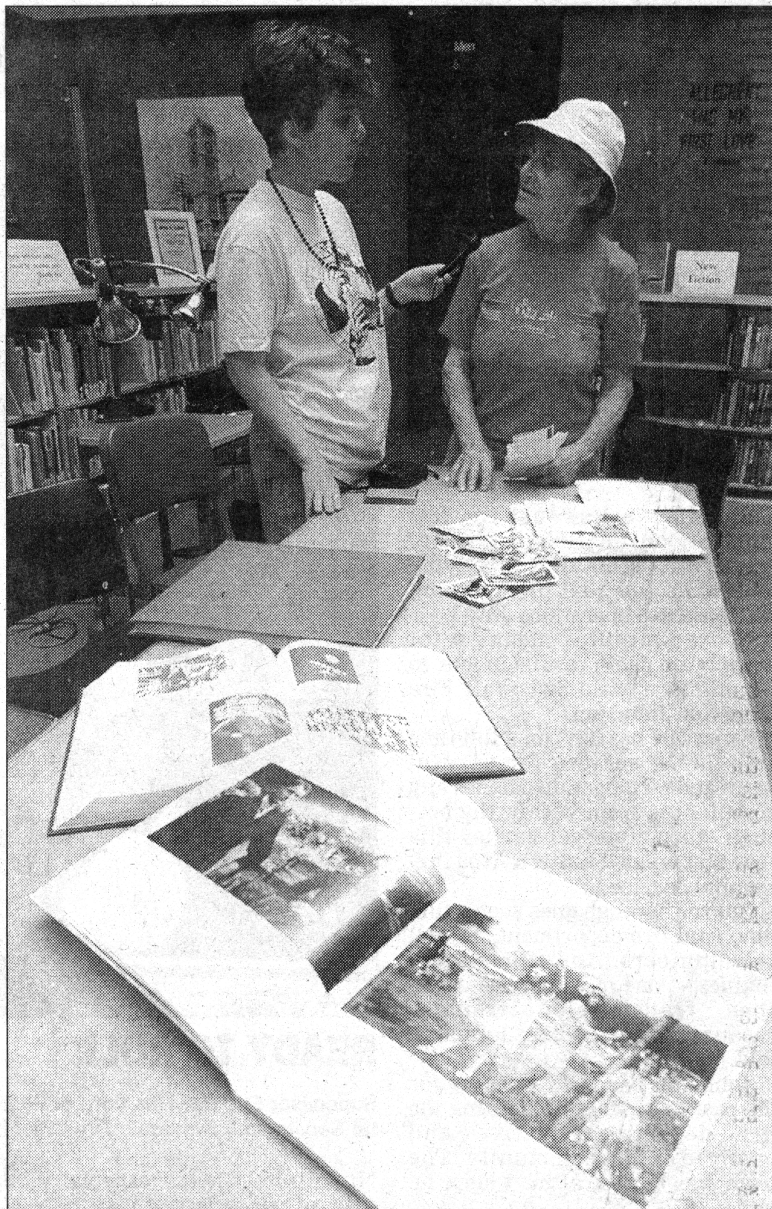
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PAST AND PRESENT

Artist Carolyn Speranza (left) looks over Shirley Nusser's photos of historic North Side sites at an 'End of the Line' workshop at the Carnegie Library's North Side branch. Speranza is using digital technology to blend historic photos and modern images into collages to be posted on PAT buses.

Neighborhood portraits will ride PAT bus fleet to the 'End of the Line'

By Kelly B. Casey

TRIBUNE-REVIEW

It started with a simple idea. Artist Carolyn Speranza was sitting behind a bus one day when she saw a sign inviting her to rent its space.

She decided to do much more than that.

With the help of fellow artist Lisa Link, local librarians and dozens of residents, Speranza plans to use PAT's mobile advertising space to display computer-generated collages that will depict Pittsburgh's past and present through its diverse neighborhoods.

The project, called "End of the Line, Building Bridges along Pittsburgh's Busway," is funded by a regional grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.

When the year-long project is complete, copies of four to six colorful murals will be placed on the back of as many as two dozen PAT buses.

FRESH AUDIENCE

"I kept thinking what a great place (a bus would be) to put artwork that a lot of people will see — people who may not ever get to a museum or gallery," said Speranza, 33, of Shadyside.

The images also will be sent out onto the World Wide Web.

The murals will be "historical in flavor and also very contemporary, addressing what's going on now," Speranza said.

The project is in its first phase. Speranza and Link are holding workshops at several branches of the Carnegie Library to gather stories and photographs from people who live in Homewood, Hazelwood, Beechview and Lawrenceville, as well as Pittsburgh's North Side and West End.

The final workshop was held Saturday at the Carnegie Library's West End branch.

At the workshops, the artists record stories, note community

concerns and make copies of photographs, some of which will be used in the collages.

At a recent workshop at the library system's Allegheny branch, lifelong North Side resident Shirley Nusser, 75, shared pictures of a long-gone bandstand in West Park and a barbershop that was razed to make way for Interstate 279.

"I think it's a great idea," she said of the project. "I guess it's a good way to get people to know each other."

Workshops have been attracting about 10 or 20 participants each.

"We do have kids and older people interested in telling stories, and that's really important," Speranza said.

LEARNING PROCESS

Link, a digital imaging artist who lives in Greenfield, believes art is a learning process.

The "End of the Line" project, she said, has taught her about Pittsburgh's history as well as current issues.

It also will put positive images in spaces often filled with messages harmful to communities, such as ads for alcohol and tobacco, she said.

"End of the Line" is the third joint public art project for Speranza and Link.

In 1992, they teamed up with local high school students to create the Literacy Mural, a 20-by-30-foot mural now being displayed on the Goodwill Industries building along East Carson Street.

Their second effort, a billboard in Aliquippa, Beaver County, paid tribute to a pauper who died in 1939.

The man became a local folk hero after he swept Aliquippa's main street to pay back the community that during the Depression had given him a small stipend.

"We both look for alternative ways to show art to the public," Speranza said.