



Hope in Shadows Photographers Recognized for their Art

When Pivot started the Hope in Shadows project in 2003, we knew that it would bring into focus the talent and creativity that exists in the Downtown Eastside community. The three-day photo contest is open to all low-income residents of the neighbourhood and continues to give rise to some brilliant photography.

Upon seeing the winning images, it often surprises viewers to learn that the photographs are taken with single-use cameras. Pendulum gallery curator Chris Keatley says that "working within a limited technical format levels the field for the participant and puts the emphasis on the eye of the artist."

As the project has evolved, the Hope in Shadows photographers are being recognized for their "artist's eye". Their photography has twice been exhibited at the Mayworks Festival on Vancouver Island and private sales of prints are a regular occurrence. Recently a selection of Hope in Shadows photographs was auctioned at Dignity, a touring international event curated by the NURU project benefiting the Acumen Fund.

This month, five Hope in Shadows photographers are being commissioned to create new photography for an interdisciplinary performance by TomoeArts. Selected for their ability to shoot portraits with awareness and sensitivity, these photographers will have a unique opportunity to collaborate with theatre and dance communities while developing their skills in digital photography. The images they produce will provide the backdrop and scenic setting for a contemporary dance performance reminiscent of a Japanese festival dance. The project - which has a working title of *EN (circlefate)* - will have public performances at the Firehall Theatre in July as part of the Dancing on the Edge Festival.

Director and choreographer Colleen Lanki of TomoeArts tells us what drew her to collaborate with the Hope in Shadows photographers. "The Hope in Shadows photographs I have seen are not just beautiful photographs, all capture the hearts of the people and places in the photos. There is an honesty and power in the Hope in Shadows artists and it will be an honour to work with them." A selection of Hope in Shadows photographs has also been selected for publication in Megaphone's 68-page Voices of the Street literary issue which is currently available from street vendors.

Hot on the heels of collaborations with TomoeArts and Megaphone we will launch the 9th annual Hope in Shadows photography contest. On the first day of June, early in the morning, 200 Downtown Eastside residents will visit us at a local gallery to receive a single-use camera and an opportunity to submit a winning entry that showcases not only their talent but their way of seeing their community.

1. Take part in the Hope in Shadows community vote
2. Check out our new website and blog at www.pivotlegal.org
3. Tell the Federal Government addiction is a health issue not a crime. Visit our site for details.
4. Support Hope in Shadows - make a donation today!
5. Help your neighbourhood go from NIMBY to YIMBY. Watch our site for details.

**5 THINGS
YOU CAN DO**



Message from the CEO

The first time I met John Richardson, I was interviewing for a volunteer outreach position at Pivot. It was late 2004 and Pivot was in a tiny office on Water Street. I walked into the office, past a well-used couch and boxes of legal files, and sat down at a small table surrounded by people working feverishly. I was quickly introduced to John and he returned to work, hunched over his computer. The interview went well and I began to volunteer regularly.

John was always around the office, but in those first few months, we didn't really find the time to actually talk. It wasn't until a job became available and I applied, that we actually sat down together. The first question John asked me was "do you want to be a lawyer?" I told John that I was unsure whether becoming a lawyer could truly have any social impact. John looked me straight in the eye and said - "well, you haven't seen Pivot yet."

John's vision changed our city. By putting legal tools in the hands of people directly impacted by poverty and marginalization and by allowing them to articulate a vision for change, Pivot's campaigns have shifted the balance of power in Vancouver. Pivot has also challenged the traditional non-profit model by being aggressively entrepreneurial, open-sourcing campaigns, and leveraging amazing volunteer talent (like the design of this newsletter or our new website).

John has been many things to many people over the years - activist, radical, social entrepreneur, visionary - but to me he was a mentor and a friend. Occasionally, it is difficult for me to look up from my desk and not see him sitting across our busy office; but John is off preparing his next big thing for the world - and I am certain the world will be better for it.

With deep respect,

Peter Wrinch

PIVOT PROFILES

Alex DeForge

I've always known I wanted to be involved with human rights activism, and upon arriving in Vancouver two and a half years ago, I knew Pivot was where I needed to be. I began working with Pivot in the summer of 2010 as a coordinator of their street canvassing team. I spent the summer months speaking directly to residents of Vancouver about social justice and Pivot's campaigns. The positive reception of Pivot's work in this city was absolutely inspiring and has given me so much energy to keep going.

I spent this school year studying philosophy at SFU and doing donor relations work for Pivot. Having Pivot's work to ground my focus made school seem actually worthwhile! Even as a volunteer, Pivot brought me to campaign meetings and invited me to really be a part of the bigger picture, while giving me space to grow into a role here. Because legal action is core to Pivot's approach, I can finally be part of dynamic and proactive movement that creates concrete change in my community. Right now, as Pivot's Donor Relations Coordinator (I know - fancy title!), I get the chance to connect with our amazing community

of supporters. You will be seeing me doing canvassing outreach on the streets this summer, and hopefully be hearing from me as we move into our Hope in Shadows fundraising appeal.





HEALTH, HUMAN RIGHTS & THE LAW:

THE INSITE CASE AND THE FUTURE OF DRUG POLICY IN CANADA

When the Supreme Court of Canada announced that on May 12th 2011, it would hear the Federal Government's final appeal of the decision to allow the InSite supervised injection facility to continue to provide lifesaving medical services to people who use injection drugs, we felt the need to mark the occasion.

We wanted to honour the commitment and hard work of everyone who has been involved in the fight for InSite, to give the community an insider view of what this important case is all about and to make a space for dialogue about the future of harm reduction and drug policy in Canada. A forum focused on the InSite case and the intersection of health, human rights and the law became even timelier with the election of a Conservative majority government that is openly opposed to a health-based approach to addiction.

The May 17th event brought together an amazing array

of presenters, each of whom has a unique role in the struggle for an evidence-based approach to drug policy that values the health and human rights of people living with addictions (and hundreds of participants from the Downtown Eastside and beyond). Pivot board member and author of Vancouver's groundbreaking Four Pillars Drug Strategy, Donald MacPherson led us through an evening of discussion with legal professionals, medical experts, community activists and safe injection site users.

The evening focused on demystifying the case, celebrating the successes and challenges of the movement for evidence-based drug policy, and turning our attention to the future of drug policy in this country. This event has also been an opportunity to collaborate with SFU Woodward's new community engagement office. We look forward to partnering with SFU on two more social justice forum discussions later this year.

NEWS IN BRIEF

- Pivot calls for new police dog regulations
On April 29th, 2011 Pivot lawyer Doug King served a lawsuit on the City of Vancouver on behalf of Scott Philippo. Mr. Philippo received serious wounds to his torso after being bitten by a police dog when a VPD officer who mistakenly suspected that Philippo had stolen what turned out to be his own bicycle, lost control of the animal. Pivot has also launched a service and policy complaint asking for a full investigation into VPD policies related to the use of police dogs. Pivot has received nine complaints about police dogs in the last two years.
- Pivot opposes amendments to City by-law
On April 19th the City adopted amendments to the Street and Traffic Bylaw that prohibits anyone from erecting overnight structures, includes tents or makeshift shelters, without a permit. Violation of the By-law would attract at a minimum \$1,000 fine. Pivot lawyer Scott Bernstein appeared before Vancouver City Council twice in the lead up to the vote to ask them uphold the rights of homeless people to protect themselves from the elements. Pivot continues to monitor the impact of the By-law on homeless people.
- Ministry of Social Development amends discriminatory policy
Last year Pivot and West Coast LEAF filed a complaint asking The Provincial Ombudsperson to look at a Ministry of Social Development policy that reduces a family's shelter allowance while children are in temporary care. When a child is in temporary care, the goal is family reunification. MSD's policy undermined that goal by forcing mothers out of their housing. The complaint was filed on behalf of the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre, Atira, The Kettle Friendship Society and Battered Women Support Services, all of whom work with women impacted by this policy. On May 3rd the policy was amended to address the concerns laid out in our complaint.

EVENTS

A Gallery Exhibition of Emily Carr University's Community Projects Class: The Red Tent Campaign
Foyer Gallery and Ikes Gallery Cafe on the UBC campus from July 1 - July 31, 2011. Opening reception will be held on Saturday, July 2, 2011 upstairs in the Irving K. Barber Learning Centre. Everyone Welcome.

EN: a raincity dance by Tomoe Arts featuring original works by Hope in Shadows Photographers
Dancing on the Edge Festival dates: July 7 - 16, 2011
Firehall Arts Centre
www.dancingontheedge.org

Hope in Shadows Community Vote
Come check out the potential winners of this year's Hope in Shadows photography contest. We'll be on Commercial Drive from July 12th to 14th and at the Vancouver Folk Festival July 15, 16, 17.

An Evening of Photography and Storytelling with Hope in Shadows
Friday June 10th, 6:30pm- 8:30pm
Rhizome Café 317 East Broadway, Vancouver

John



I remember the night very well. It was Saturday, September 2, 2000, a couple of days before I was to begin my articles at Sierra Legal Defence Fund. I was walking on the beach late at night as was my habit. It proved to be a very unusual walk, however, for that night Pivot was conceived in what I can only describe as a vision, and my life changed forever.

Those close to me have often heard me talk as if Pivot was my child. It's an odd thing to hear, I imagine, that an organization could be like child. A mother might disagree; and of course there are many differences. But the hopes and dreams, the sleepless nights, the emotional attachment - the similarities are also many. Having no children of my own, Pivot took that kind of primacy for me, and demanded a similar single-mindedness to raising it and making it strong.

Of course, I was not alone - far from it. It takes a village to raise a child, and Pivot's village has grown greatly over the years. It grew in ways I could never have conceived at the time, because the simple vision of using the law strategically to improve the lives of those on the margins took root and filled the imaginations of many amazing people, each person adding something unique and beautiful from their own vision for social change. What incredible good fortune Pivot has had over the years, to have attracted such stellar advocates as Katrina Pacey, David Eby, and many many others less public but no less notable, each contributing some of their own precious life-force to its vibrancy.

As the vision and community has grown, so has Pivot's list of accomplishments. Looking back over minutes from our first year of community meetings, I was struck by how many of the chronic problems we identified at that time have, over the years, been tackled by Pivot with undeniable impact if not success. The opening of a safe injection site, accountability and independent investigations of police, the decriminalization of prostitution, improved housing for low-income residents of the Downtown Eastside - Pivot has made an indelible

impact on each of these and many other fronts, and uncounted people's lives have been positively affected. Perhaps even the consciousness of the City has shifted somewhat, to make space for Pivot. It makes me happy and proud. But along with the successes remain many challenges, and Pivot, now ten years old and strong on its feet, is as important a force as ever in pushing the boundaries of social justice and equality.

Letting go of Pivot has been one of the hardest things I've ever done. Perhaps this is where the analogy to a child is strongest; stepping away has been like having a piece of my own heart extracted. So hard! But, I always knew the day would come; even when along with the vision that led to the founding of Pivot, was a ten-year time limit for my role as its leader. In September, 2010 with the support of the board and staff, the very talented Peter Wrinch became the CEO of Pivot, and I began my process of leave-taking. This editorial is the culmination of that process. It's a very rare privilege, I know, to not only begin an organization like Pivot, but also when the time has come to leave it, healthy and safe, in the dedicated hands of such passionate activists and visionaries. Thank you all so much for that, and for the years working together. I can't even begin to describe what it has meant to me.

Where to now? An old dream is finding voice in the space that Pivot once filled. Political change...can there be any deep and lasting social change without fundamental political change? I'm not simply speaking of this party rather than that party having power, although certainly I have my preferences. I'm speaking of the process and system of politics itself. Democratic governance must evolve, and rapidly, if it is to rise to the challenge presented by society's increasingly complex social and environmental problems. We need new ways of making decisions together, of negotiating our social contract in real-time, ways that are transparent, inclusive, accountable. The internet, I believe, is the key. And so this is my new path, and destination. Stay tuned, and watch for Party X.

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