



Flying out of Accra at 10 p.m. the pilot announces that it's 83 degrees. Sitting here in Boston it's not even making it up to freezing. Not only does the mind have to adjust to re-entry, but the body wonders what's going on.

Our first activity this year was a January tour for the Textile Society of America. Twenty hearty souls visited Kente weavers, tried making adinkra cloth (some successfully) and experienced other aspects of Ghanaian art and culture. Many beautiful textiles were purchased and might be seen soon at your local museum.

In a few weeks we'll host a group from Skidmore College who will visit the Ashanti Gold Mine, a cocoa plantation and other examples of Ghanaian economy. Also in the



works are groups of art students from both high schools and colleges.

In January Gasali Adeyemo came from Nigeria to teach an adire workshop. This is the first time that we had an artist from another African country. The workshop participants loved him and he loved Ghana! Adire is done with cassava

paste resist and indigo dye. Like Kente, it is labor intensive and the younger artists are not following this beautiful traditional art. Indigo used to grow in Ghana, but it's seldom found now. Gasali is going to send some plants to be farmed at Aba House so we'll have our own supply. The cassava: no need to import that.

And we are also collaborating within Ghana. Pictured at right are Aba and Virginia Ryan, an artist and co-director of FCAGhana — a network of contemporary art in Ghana. We are exploring ways for CCC, Inc. and



FCAGhana to assist Ghanaian artists.

And as always, we look forward to our summer workshops. August is the month for our ambitious project to set up a grass roots paper factory. We have 3 well known and talented "paper" people as our facilitators and we are thrilled to be offering an employment opportunity to Ghanaian artists.

Although we have been in business for several years, we've never had an official opening, so on August 27 everyone is invited to a reception. We will have an exhibition of Jackie Abrams' baskets (*sample above*) and work from the paper factory.



# Cross-Cultural Collaborative

We will also officially open the Cultural Collaborative Art Gallery. There's even a rumor that there will be traditional drummers and dancers. It's happening at Aba House in Nungua. As Ghanaians say, "You are invited."

If you're interested in touring Ghana or just hanging out with us next to the ocean, check out our offerings on the workshops page. Also read Liz's story. It's always interesting to see how first time visitors react to Ghana.



*Papermaking Facilitator Shawn Sheehy*

## CROSS-CULTURAL COLLABORATIVE

## WINTER 2005 PHOTO GALLERY





# WINTER NEWSLETTER 2005

## RECYCLING IN GHANA: FROM USED CEMENT BAGS TO FANTASTICAL PAPER HATS!

I have been back from Ghana exactly one week. As I sit typing snow flakes are falling here in rural England. My head is still full of Ghana. It's full of the heat, dust, mystery, magic and people of West Africa. In January / February 2005 I spent six fascinating weeks in Ghana.

During this time Aba House became my home and the Ghanaian families who lived around Aba House became part of my temporary neighborhood. Every day was a cultural experience; talking to the local children, listening to visiting artists and working with other workshop participants. Every day provided opportunities to learn and be exposed to a completely different way of life. Every day opened my eyes to another world and immersed me in the people and land of Ghana.

The neighborhood children were always welcome at Aba House. On many afternoons one or other of them would materialize to find out if they could come and draw for a few hours. We would sit with them surrounded by pieces of paper, crayons and pencils as they quietly worked. Gideon and Elliott at age 3 would appear barefoot, running across Aba's backyard to greet you with their wide smiles and even wider eyes. The older children took responsibility for the younger children, everyone shared and worked together, everyone was thirsty to learn and happy to try. The children learn to share from an early age. With a hand as their fork each family member eats their meals from one large shared bowl, this simple act develops a sense of community and communal responsibility from an early age.

As we all got to know each other the afternoon sessions progressed from drawing to making masks and hats. Their creativity began to emerge. We made simple masks which provoked African songs and dance, especially when Gasali Adeyemo a visiting Adire workshop artist played the drums! The children danced to his beat of Africa and their bodies moved easily following the rhythm inherent within all of them.

After the masks came paper hats. The original idea was to make hats using Seven Eleven paper bags. In true Ghanaian style we improvised. Thanks to Talktrue we used the inside of old cement bags instead of Seven Eleven bags!. Nothing is wasted in



Ghana, recycling at its best!

As well as working with the local children I also had the opportunity to work on two of my own creative projects. One was to make an African puppet with Kobbi. The puppet took 3 days to make. Each day I sat with Kobbi in his studio at the Art Market in Accra, chipping, chiseling and sanding to produce my very own African Mermaid aka Mami Wata (*pictured above*). Aba also gave me the opportunity to paint my first mural on my bedroom wall. As you can probably guess I painted a mermaid surrounded by fantastical fish!

My time at Aba House as well as my travels in Ghana were a unique opportunity which provided me with a truly cultural AND collaborative experience. Although I have been lucky enough to travel to other cultures my experience in Ghana was one of the most culturally intense and diverse I have ever had. I miss the people, the land, Aba House and the roar of the sea at night!

THANK YOU, Fiona Fraser-Smith

# Cross-Cultural Collaborative

## Winter Newsletter 2005

We're booking Summer 2005 now! Join us for one or all workshop weeks. Our goal is to create workshops where people can share ideas and be creative. This is truly a unique opportunity to work with artists from all over the world and hone your creative skills.

See the workshop page of [www.CulturalCollaborative.org](http://www.CulturalCollaborative.org) for more details, or call 617-277-0482.



### SUMMER 2005:

JULY 11-17

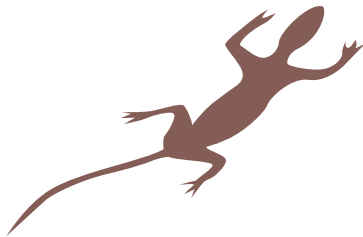
Cultural Tour of Ghana

AUGUST 1-28

Handmade paper from indigenous materials. If you're a beginner, come learn! If you're a papermaker, come share your knowledge.

Facilitators: Jacki Abrams (*pictured left*), Marta Herbertson, and Shawn Sheehy.

FOR MORE DETAILS, SEE THE WORKSHOP PAGE AT [WWW.CULTURALCOLLABORATIVE.ORG](http://WWW.CULTURALCOLLABORATIVE.ORG).



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