

# Painting the town

Art

By MARY JO PALUMBO

**C**all it art a la cart. Jerry Beck has a new art mobile on the road this summer, a converted ice cream truck that will visit Boston neighborhoods and elsewhere with a mini recording studio, artist-made arcade games and a wide range of community-based projects.

The "I Scream Art Truck" launched its summer run at the Festival Betances in the South End last weekend. Children crowded around the truck, eager to make their own musical tapes and contribute to arts projects that will travel from neighborhood to neighborhood.

"I hate to throw out old things," said Joel Huaba, 8, as he and several other children glued seashells and bits of glass on a community altar project. "I'm making an artwork with them."

The truck, donated by New England Frozen Foods, is covered with drawings, portraits and poetry by children. Beck plans to add more artwork to the truck as it makes its 21 scheduled stops over the summer.

Sixteen artists will create radio and video works, games, murals and improvisational music and dance pieces. They aim to make artwork from everyday objects, enabling children to see common things in a new light.

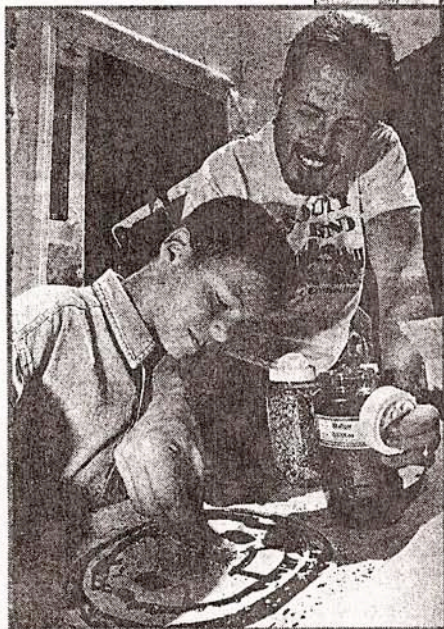
Bo Lembo makes prints directly from manhole covers and gives them to children to color and decorate.

Visual and performance artist Mauricio Cordero is creating a "traveling altar" from a chest of drawers. Children make a statement about themselves and their communities by gluing words, prayers and slogans to the drawers along with objects such as pennies, mirrors, keys, bottle caps and shells. The mosaic-like project will take shape as it collects images over the summer.

"There is so much art that we can't touch," said Cordero. "I wanted to create something that people could touch. It was to get communities talking to one another."

Beck created the "I Scream Art Truck"

Converted ice cream truck brings cool creations to Hub neighborhoods



**GOOD HUMOR:** Above, artistic director Jerry Beck stands in the 'I Scream Art Truck'; at left, John Paul Torre, 8, gets some help from Bo Lembo in making a poster for his mom; at near right, Miguel Gutierrez laughs as his friend Christopher Ortiz sings a song.

Staff photos by Ed Nissen

of his frustration with what he perceived as a commodity-based commercial art world that didn't seem to offer people the joy and spontaneity of creating art.

"So often the art world seems like an esoteric thing for the few," said Beck. "But art can be created anywhere by the masses. Something happens to people when they engage in creative play. It raises our consciousness and allows us to celebrate our culture."

Toward that end, in 1984 Beck established the Revolving Museum, which brings visual and performance art to pub-

lic spaces. Beck's traveling installations often call to mind carnivals, amusement parks and penny arcades.

Past public artworks include an installation in 12 abandoned railroad cars, a theatrical boat ride to George's Island and a performance caravan using airline baggage carts.

The carnival-like arts projects have a nostalgic importance for Beck, whose father owned a penny arcade in Hollywood Beach, Fla.

The truck will make unscheduled stops in parks and on street corners and sched-

uled appearances at festivals and youth and community centers, Beck said.

"We plan to do some spontaneous roaming this summer," Beck said. "We might pull over into an empty lot or head into Harvard Square for 15 minutes and then move on."

"The 'I Scream Art Truck' will appear at the Nazarro Community Center in the North End tomorrow and at the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art in North Adams on Saturday. To sign up for free workshops, call (617) 439-8617 or (617) 542-6801.

