



[For immediate release 27 October 2008]

## **Sidestreets brings Digital Story-Telling to Cyprus!**

Sidestreets' Resident Fellow, Dr John Higgins, a professor of communication and professional puppeteer, will be in Nicosia during 22 October – 12 November 2008. During this time he will be making presentations and conducting workshops on Digital Storytelling, and also giving street performances with his Night Vision Puppets.

Digital Storytelling is a method of telling personal stories using digital tools. These are typically stories of personal relevance – transcendence, transformation, change, of events or people in our lives who have made a difference.

The focus of digital storytelling is on *hearing* the stories of everyday people, the communities in which they live, and the people with whom they share the planet. The belief is that there is empowerment in *hearing* the stories, as well as empowerment in the *telling* of the stories. Digital technologies are tools to aid in this ancient human process.

Primarily initiated by the multimedia performance work of Dan Atchley and developed by Joe Lambert, founder of the Center for Digital Storytelling in Berkeley, California, USA, the technique has spread across the globe. Contexts have included support in healing and prevention of domestic violence, awareness of HIV, conflict resolution and reconciliation, and self-reflexivity in the college classroom.

Digital storytelling focuses more on the stories told, and less on the technical polish of the finished production. Simple digital tools and methods are used, drawing from archival family photographs and artifacts, with the voice of the storyteller favored over that of the polished professional announcer.

There are striking similarities between the tenets of digital storytelling and notions of self-reflexivity, oral history, ethnographic methods of social science, and media as tools for building community and affecting personal/social change. With stories rooted in the experience of the storyteller searching for personal or universal human truths, digital storytelling offers a unique method of prompting practical self-reflexivity for people in a variety of personal and cultural contexts.

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Dr. John W. Higgins is an associate professor of Communication and Media at Menlo College in Atherton, California, USA. Since 1974 he has been involved in alternative, grassroots, community-based media in a variety of roles. Most recently he served as president of the board of the San Francisco Community Television Corporation, the non-profit organization managing the city's and county's public access cable television facilities and channel.

Dr. Higgins' areas of expertise include community-based, alternative media; media production; media technologies; critical pedagogy; and storytelling and oral history as art and social science. His background includes twenty-five years as a professional puppeteer and street performer. Dr. Higgins' interest in narratives has typically been focused on the stories told by people within communities. A recent outgrowth of these interests has been digital storytelling, which fuses individual and group narratives of struggle and transformation, personal reflexivity, ethnographic research, and digital distribution.

## **Program**

### **Friday, 31 October, 2008 at 19.00-20.00**

Presentation on Digital Storytelling - Dr. John Higgins

### **Saturday, 1 November, 2008 at 09.30-17.30**

Workshop on Digital Storytelling - Dr. John Higgins  
(The workshop will be open to a maximum of 5 people)

### **Saturday, 1 November, 2008 at 13.30**

Street Puppet Performance - Dr. John Higgins

### **Saturday, 1 November, 2008 at 14.00**

Sidestreets Film Screening for Children

### **Saturday: 8 November 2008 at 13.30**

Street Puppet Performance - Dr. John Higgins

### **Saturday: 8 November 2008 at 14.00**

Sidestreets Film Screening for Children

\*All events are free of charge and open to the public! It is highly recommended that you call and reserve for the presentation and Workshops.  
(Sidestreets, 22 Mahkemeler Önü, Lefkoşa. Tel: 2293070, 2293071 or [info@sidestreets.org](mailto:info@sidestreets.org), [www.sidestreets.org](http://www.sidestreets.org))