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MINUTES OF A MEETING BETWEEN THE ARTISTS' FILMS COMMITTEE
AND LONDON VIDEO ARTS HELD IN THE CINEMA OF THE ARTS
COUNCIL, 105 PICCADILLY, LONDON W1V 0AU, ON FRIDAY 20 MAY
1977

Present: Mr David Hall	London Video Arts
Mr Roger Barnard	"
Mr Harlan Cockburn	"
Mr David Critchley	"
Mr Brian Hoey	"
Ms Tamara Krikorian	"
Mr Peter Livingstone	"
Mr Stuart Marshall	"
Mr Steve Partridge	"
Mr Jon Turpie	"
Mr David Curtis	Committee Member
Ms Laura Mulvey	"
Ms Caroline Tisdall	"
Mr Richard Landau	Finance Assistant
Mr Rodney Wilson	Film Officer
Ms Stephanie Featherstone	Secretary

The Film Officer opened the meeting by welcoming the representatives from London Video Arts and apologising for the unavoidable absence of several members of the Artists' Films Committee.

There were two main points he wanted to make initially:

- 1) The nature of funding the Artists' Films Committee could undertake was determined by overall Arts Council policy, which was against taking on new clients for

revenue grants at present, due to the general shortage of money

- 2) Even if Arts Council policy enabled the Artists' Films Committee to make revenue grants there were several other groups who would no doubt submit applications and the Committee's allocation was not sufficient to help everybody; therefore LVA's claim would have to be considered alongside those of rival organisations.

For these reasons he proposed to discuss only that part of the application dealing with the setting up of a tape library and exhibition venue at a cost of £3000.

The Artists' Films Committee needed to know more about the constitution of LVA as a group and also they wanted to know exactly who would have access to anything they funded. It was important to be sure that when financial support was given it would benefit the maximum number of people.

In response to questioning from various Committee members, David Hall agreed that the main bias of LVA was towards artist rather than community video. However Roger Barnard felt that in this way LVA was the same as the London Film-makers Co-operative; it was a natural progression for art forms to break away and specialise as they developed. David Curtis disagreed that the Co-op was purely devoted to artists' films; they would accept any films offered for distribution. Tamara Krikorian said that LVA operated the same policy in relation to distribution; they had written to as many people as was financially possible informing them of the new library scheme and inviting them to join. There would be no discrimination against community tapes. When David Hall had mentioned

artists he did not just mean video artists but artists in general.

David Curtis explained that one reason for the setting up of the Co-op had been to facilitate distribution of films which would not stand a chance of commercial distribution. Video had not yet reached that stage as there was no distribution network at all. That was why the Arts Council had commissioned Hoppy's report into video distribution; and that was why he felt video workers should co-operate initially in trying to get something organised for mutual benefit. He thought it was a mistake to split resources.

When Caroline Tisdall asked whether LVA had been in consultation with other video groups Tamara Krikorian admitted that they had not.

David Hall added that such co-operation worked better in theory than in practice.

David Curtis repeated what the Film Officer had said earlier about other video groups also requesting help. He thought it should be possible to organise a central distribution centre for both artist and community video tapes with shared facilities.

Tamara Krikorian agreed with Roger Barnard that there was no reason for video to be organised on a different basis than film.

Steve Partridge told the meeting that he had just secured some shared exhibition space in a converted meat factory in Brixton, through the Acme Housing Association. David Hall

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said one important use of exhibition space would be to facilitate access to foreign video, particularly American, which very few British artists had the chance to see. Caroline Tisdall thought that British video artists would also benefit from exposure to other forms of British video.

Tamara Krikorian said that she was in contact with other forms of video work, as were several LVA members. David Hall told the meeting that in his experience some community video people were not in sympathy with the aims of artists' video.

David Curtis repeated that he thought a centralised distribution system for all types of video, rather on the lines of that operated by Concord, was the best solution. Laura Mulvey said she felt this was a practical solution to the problem of limited resources rather than an ideal one, since in her view it generally worked better to keep different aspects of film separate.

David Hall asked the Film Officer why their application was being treated differently from any other request to the Committee for funding; the Film Officer explained again that it was because the application was for such a large amount of money and because it would create a precedent. The Committee had to decide whether LVA deserved such a large proportion of their annual allocation. He also felt there would be additional upkeep expenses.

He asked David Hall whether the £3000 requested would really be sufficient. David Hall said it would be enough to finance the exhibition centre alone.

David Curtis asked whether the exhibition centre could function effectively without the proposed back-up services. He regretted that LVA were not prepared to share their resources with other branches of video.

Steve Partridge said that an exhibition venue was very important to people just beginning to use video, as it was vital to exchange ideas with other people working in the same medium and this might happen spontaneously there. They could also see tapes of current work.

Caroline Tisdall asked whether it would be possible for LVA to gradually incorporate other groups into their scheme once the exhibition centre was operating; David Hall thought this might happen - there was already considerable interest in LVA both here and abroad.

David Hall then went through the individual items of expenditure listed in the first part of the budget. Sony equipment had been chosen because it was the most widely used. The Film Officer agreed that the Arts Council would probably want to retain ownership of any equipment they bought for LVA and that they would therefore be responsible for servicing costs. LVA would have to guarantee its safety.

Even at the low cost given in the budget David Hall felt it would be possible to start a small tape library and arrange simple tape shows.

In reply to a question from the Film Officer he said that people wanting to show tapes to prospective purchasers would probably be charged a nominal fee.

David Curtis asked whether there would be a programme of screenings, as at the Co-op, and Steve Partridge said there would be. However, as the exhibition space was shared it would have to be booked in advance and would not always be available on demand.

Stuart Marshall added that the venue would be open to everyone and that individuals would be able to organise and finance their own shows.

David Hall suggested charging a small entrance fee, giving the venue club status, and eventually enabling LVA to put on videotape shows for which they could pay visiting artists.

Steve Partridge said that LVA hoped to put on a couple of shows compiled from the catalogue of tapes available from the library.

Stuart Marshall assured the Committee that any tapes could be entered in the catalogue; access was completely open.

Laura Mulvey asked what would happen if members joining LVA at a later stage wanted to have a say in the administration and organisation; Steve Partridge replied on behalf of LVA that the current members would be delighted to hand over some of the responsibility.

The Film Officer said that he felt the only way LVA would get all the money they were asking for would be by co-operation between the Arts Council, the BFI and possibly the GLC. Their application was too large for any one body to fund. That would mean each

institution would attach its own conditions to the award.

Steve Partridge repeated that even if there were a central video distribution and resource centre there would still be a need for an artists' video association. David Hall felt that the Arts Council paid more attention to community video workers than it did to video artists; otherwise why should Hoppy have been commissioned to report on video.

The Film Officer explained that Hoppy's report had in fact been commissioned by the GLC to be made to the Research & Information Department of the Arts Council; discussions would now follow.

David Hall told the Committee that he felt LVA's proposals were quite practical and their demands quite reasonable; he wondered if the same could be said of Hoppy's report.

(sorry, missed the next bit telephoning about the tea; when I got back Brian Hoey was talking about Aidanvision I think).

Roger Bernard agreed to send the Film Officer a copy of his introduction to the LVA catalogue which was still in draft form; he read out an extract which indicated that LVA had an artists' video emphasis but that they would accept any tapes for inclusion in the hire catalogue.

Laura Hulvey asked for more details about the exhibition venue and David Curtis said he would be interested to hear more about the proposed screenings.

Steve Partridge said that there was also some potential office space available at the meat factory; Acme would meet the conversion and equipment costs. LVA members would take turns to run the office until a part-time person could be recruited, paid for out of any returns there might be from tape hire.

In reply to a question from the Film Officer David Hall said that LVA would operate on a collective basis and would have its own bank account.

The Film Officer asked LVA to provide in writing, for presentation to the next meeting of the Artists' Films Committee on 22 June, a detailed account of their plans in respect of their administrative constitution; the proposed exhibition venue and screenings; and the catalogue of tapes for hire.

David Hall asked the Film Officer which aspect of their application the Committee were likely to consider the most important; the Film Officer told him that he thought the exhibition venue took priority.

The meeting then ended.