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MINUTES OF THE 30<sup>th</sup> MEETING OF THE ARTISTS' FILMS COMMITTEE HELD ON  
MONDAY 18 DECEMBER 1978 AT 10.00 am IN THE CINEMA OF THE ARTS COUNCIL  
AT 105 PICCADILLY, LONDON W1

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Present:	Professor Stuart Hood	Chairman
	Mr. Ian Christie	Committee Member
	Ms. Laura Mulvey	" "
	Mr. David Curtis	Assistant Film Officer
	Ms. Loveday Shewell	Subsidy Officer
	Mr. Anthony Blackstock	Subsidy Officer
	Ms. Rosemary Smith	Secretary

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1 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Mr. Tony Rayns, Mr. Simon Field, Mr. Deke Dusingberre and Ms. Caroline Tisdall.

2 Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the last meeting were accepted as an accurate record.

3 Financial report

The financial report was tabled.

4 Matters arising

a) Video Bursary - Maidstone

The Assistant Film Officer reported that there had been only one application so far, and that there might be the possibility of making no appointment at the meeting on 5 January.

b) Video Bursary - Brighton Polytechnic

The Assistant Film Officer reported that after a long delay, advertisements were to be placed shortly. The deadline would be 16 March and the meeting to prepare a shortlist would be 30 March. Final selection would be in Brighton on 27 April. Brighton were anxious for the successful candidate to take up his/her residency during the summer term.

c) Artists' Films Exhibitions

- i) The Assistant Film Officer invited Ian Christie to report on the progress of talks between the Film Office and various departments of the BFI on the problems of regional tour funding, ( Mr. Ian Christie temporarily wearing his BFI/FAS hat). The Assistant Film Officer reminded the Committee that these decisions had been prompted by the difficulties experienced by Mike Leggett and Rod Stoneman in determining what funding was available from where, and presenting a package drawn from these sources equitable to both film-makers and venues.

Mr. Christie reported that to date there had been three meetings, one of the results being the joint letter to Regional Film Officers already circulated to the Committee. He stressed that while the principle of a collective response to such tours was agreed desirable, it was seen as important that the different criteria employed by the separate agencies should not be distorted. The Committee approved the circulation of the letter.

ii) Brakhage exhibition

The Assistant Film Officer tabled the budget for this. He then explained the history of the exhibition and said he hoped that as the number of film exhibitions increased, a more formal method of assessing and approving them would be instituted, perhaps by a sub-committee of the Artists' Films Committee. Mr. Christie suggested that the element of subsidy to venues that the Brakhage exhibition contained constituted a risk, but one well worth taking if it led venues to taking an extended number of programmes. The Assistant Film Officer said that it was aimed at the kind of places that do not take avant garde films regularly, and that in the case of art galleries, etc., projectors could also be made available. The expenditure would come from the Film Exhibitions budget. Mr. Christie was a little doubtful about the shows being run properly at venues unused to film, and wondered how one could keep a check on the proper use of equipment lent out. Ms. Mulvey said that one should nevertheless be careful not to dampen enthusiasm. The exhibition budget was approved.

d) Video Funding

Mr. Christie reported on a further meeting with representatives of London Video Artists (David Hall and Steve Partridge). He said that one of the problems about video was the ambiguity about who and what London Video Artists represented. There were two main points discussed at the meeting:

1. Finding London Video Artists a home, which had been successfully arranged following Mr. Christie's suggestion that they approach the 'Other Cinema' about use of space in Little Newport Street.
2. Distribution. This question was discussed at length but without any concrete result. The Assistant Film Officer said that London Video Artists felt the greatest need was for money to be put into more production facilities, e.g., a colour camera, to be made available for loan. This was discussed and agreed in principle. The Assistant Film Officer said that there was a problem of staff and maintenance, and that a full-time technician was needed if any extension were to be made to the existing loan scheme. The appointment of a technician for the whole Art Department had been proposed and was currently being considered. The Chairman agreed that the purchase of a camera should await that appointment and hoped that it was being urgently considered.

A Video Makers on Tour scheme was discussed. The Assistant Film Officer suggested that similar rules should be applied to this scheme as to the Film Makers on Tour scheme in terms of

fees, expenses, etc. Given Committee's approval, the scheme might start in the middle of 1979, giving time to provide a promotional booklet. The Committee endorsed this proposal.

Mr. Christie reported that at the London Video Artists meeting a suggestion had been put forward with regard to someone with specific video experience being nominated to serve on the Committee. The Assistant Film Officer said that names had already been put forward to Council and were being considered.

e) ICA Cinema

The Assistant Film Officer reported that the Arts Council had recently been the object of repeated lobbying by the ICA, who were looking for funds to finance the dividing and equipping of their cinema space. The smaller space created was, it was being suggested, likely to be largely devoted to film and video work within the Committee's area of interest. With regard to video, the Assistant Film Officer had suggested they talk initially to London Video Artists. With regard to film projection equipment, the Film Officer had pointed out that Council considered its present support of the ICA precluded any further funding, but the Assistant Film Officer raised the question of whether Council's assessment of the ICA's total needs took any account of the necessity to subsidise some kinds of film/video activities. He also drew attention to the potential of the ICA's conjunction of cinema and gallery space. Ms. Mulvey agreed that this was particularly valuable and urged that they be encouraged to show intention to exploit it in any application they made. No formal application had been received, but discussions were likely to continue.

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Applications

1. a) Robert Grigg The Committee saw some film. Mr. Christie said it appeared random and lacked continuity. Ms. Mulvey raised the question of the Committee's attitude to 35 mm animated films. Mr. Christie suggested that the British Film Institute should be funding this sort of film rather than the Arts Council. The Committee decided not to support this application.
- b) Vera Neubauer The Committee saw part of Ms. Neubauer's recent film and thought that they should support her work. Ms. Mulvey said there was a great deal of originality and inventiveness in it, though she agreed it had structural weaknesses. The Committee agreed to recommend an award of £1,350 from the 1978/79 Artists' Films Allocation.

2. New Applications

- a) 1. Michael Calvert The Committee saw three films, and while unclear about the film-maker's direction, felt he nonetheless deserved encouragement. They agreed to recommend a bursary of £350 from the 1978/79 Artists' Films Allocation.
2. Benedict Mason Professor Hood said that he was known to him as an extremely witty and professional musician. The Committee were generally in favour of the application but wanted to have more details of the intended performance. It was agreed to recommend a bursary of

£1,025 from the 1978/79 Artists' Films Allocation with the proviso that there should be a public performance of the work.

3. Chris Welsby. The Committee were interested by the film, and generally supported the artist's work to date. It was agreed to recommend a bursary of £1,500 from the 1978/79 Artists' Films Allocation.
4. Mark Lyons. The Committee felt unable to support the application, the material shown appearing primarily a support for a theatrical performance rather than a film in its own right.
5. Peter Gidal. There was a long discussion about the relationship of this application and others like it to the subsequent work produced. Mr. Christie was not very keen on the project as described and felt it hardly justified the amount requested. But the film-maker's work was generally respected and it was decided to recommend an award of £3,300 from the 1978/79 Artists' Films Allocation, payable in two instalments, the second to be given on the Committee's acceptance of the film-maker's report and progress.
6. Phil Mulloy. The Committee agreed to recommend the cost of the print, in principle. The Assistant Subsidy Officer suggested to the Committee that the procedure should be for the lab to give an estimate of costs and that the offer should only be made after the actual costs had been determined. Advance payments based on the estimates would be made. Mr. Mulloy's application was then considered. The Committee's conclusion was that the brief treatment submitted still suggested that the final film would demand resources far beyond those the Committee was able to sustain. The application was rejected.
7. Gough Quinn. This application was not considered, the applicant already being in receipt of a bursary within the current financial year.
8. Nick Emery. The Committee was not sympathetic to this application and it was rejected.
9. Andrew Piddington. An application for a completion grant was tabled and film was viewed. Mr. Christie and the Chairman both considered the work to fall outside the Committee's terms of reference in its intention and the application was rejected.

Mr. Christie left the meeting at this point.

b) Video Production

1. Steve Partridge. The Committee viewed two video tapes. There was general agreement that the work was interesting and that the artist had continued to produce serious work over a period of years. It was agreed to recommend a bursary of £1,500 from the 1978/79 Artists' Films Allocation.

c) Film Distribution

1. Peter Gidal This application provoked further discussion of the principle of distribution print subsidy. The Assistant Film Officer suggested there were two potential problems. One was the situation in which no distribution prints existed in Great Britain simply because the film-maker had chosen to send them abroad elsewhere for distribution, in the confidence of being able to get new prints for Great Britain via this scheme. This one could possibly avoid by requiring an account of the whereabouts and condition of all prints made since origination to accompany all applications. The second was that of 'personal' prints. At present up to a third of all the 'Co-op's' prints were in fact lodged with their authors and simultaneously constituted 'personal' prints. An agreement to fund 'personal' prints for their own sake, without establishing real distribution need, might lead to a flood of applications with no increase in print circulation.

The Committee then agreed that there appeared to be real need for a print of Gidal's 'Upside Down Feature' to be made. It was agreed in principle to recommend the cost of a print up to £550 from the 1978/79 Artists' Films Allocation.

2. Jean Pascal Auberge The Assistant Film Officer reported Mr. Dusinberre's enthusiasm for the film submitted but a decision was deferred until the question of domicile was established.
3. Tony Bloor. There was some confusion as to what was being requested. Part of the application appeared to be a request for a completion grant, which was rejected on the grounds that Mr. Bloor had been awarded a bursary within the current financial year. The print cost application for "Jubilee" was deferred until support material was available.
4. London Film-Makers Co-op Ms. Mulvey was alarmed at the suggestion that a number of key works might be lost from circulation if no funds for restoration were forthcoming. But she and the Chairman agreed that evidence ought to be submitted that the film makers supported the application being made on their behalf, and that the Co-op was unable to meet the costs involved out of its 'service' percentage of the rentals. The application for a sprocket repair machine was agreed a worthwhile investment and it was agreed to recommend an award of £200 from the 1978/79 Artists' Films Allocation.
5. Stuart Pound The Assistant Film Officer reported that Mr. Pound had withdrawn his application for a print of "Film Without". The Committee were not convinced of the need for a second print of "Amphersand" at this juncture. The application was rejected.

d) Video Distribution

These items were deferred until a larger committee were

able to discuss them on 5 January.

e) Film Exhibition (Taken earlier)

1. Bradford Film Theatre. The Committee agreed to offer a guarantee against loss of £200 from the 1978/79 Artists' Films Allocation.

The meeting ended at 3.30 p.m.