

Dr. Weston
1st floor

TWJ
forward.
(pl return)

Mike O'Pray and Jez Welsh,
Film and Video Umbrella,
7 Rossetti House,
Erasmus Street,
London, SW1.

4th May, 1988.

Dear Mike and Jez,

Following our discussions, we thought it would be a good idea to commit to paper some of the points raised, to confirm our position with regard to the expanded Umbrella, and to set down a basis for further discussion.

We are now agreed that the Umbrella provides the best means of achieving the Video for Galleries touring for which development funding is available in 1988/89.

This funding has been secured for three years in recognition of the fact that it will probably take 18 months for the new scheme to prove itself, and although at this stage we are unable to provide an automatic commitment of funds for the Umbrella over this period, we foresee the possibility that this objective will be achieved. I can confirm that Council has allocated a total of £43,000 for the Umbrella for 1988/89, but any increases for the following two years are unlikely to exceed 2%.

The Council is intending to give the Umbrella the status of an "annual" client, which means that we shall want to monitor and review closely your work in 1988/89 before recommending Council to confirm funds for next year. For this purpose we shall be using Arts Council officers and advisers. The terms and conditions covering the Council's subsidy will be enclosed with the formal offer of subsidy in due course, but you might find it helpful to receive a copy in advance so that you are aware of our requirements. The relevant Conditions of Financial Assistance are therefore enclosed. Meanwhile, there are a number of other important issues which need to be clarified.

We understand that the Umbrella is being formed into a Company limited by guarantee, and we look forward to receiving a copy of the Memorandum and Articles of Association as soon as these documents are available.

The conditions make clear that the directors of the Company are solely responsible for its financial affairs, and that no recourse can be

made to the Council. All plans, including responses to objectives which the Council might specify as desirable, must be drawn up bearing this requirement in mind.

We will require revised detailed estimates of income and expenditure for your organisation in the current financial year, and it would be helpful if we could receive a detailed cash flow statement indicating when you might need payments of cash to finance your work during the year. We will be sympathetic to the release of cash advances if these are justified.

In the summary which follows I have flagged a number of issues which may take time to resolve. I am proposing that we should consider the first six months of 1988/89 to be in part a feasibility study, with a meeting in November at which a two year plan with specific targets should be agreed. For this purpose, therefore, I suggest that your revised 1988/89 estimates be divided into two parts, reflecting the cost of the feasibility work and your plans for the remaining six months. Outline estimates for the following two years should be prepared for that meeting.

1. Video for Galleries.

Objective: To increase the provision of Touring Video/Film/slide-tape exhibitions in the major regional galleries, by co-ordinating existing initiatives and acting in partnership with regionally-based curators on the generation of new exhibitions. A further more general objective is the achievement of a higher profile for film and video within the gallery circuit, within the existing repertory of mixed shows, the galleries 'events' programmes etc. This we would expect to result from a background of amateur work by the Umbrella.....

Questions which remain to be resolved include:

- 1) What would be the appropriate relationship between the Umbrella and clients already in receipt of Arts Council funding (.e. 'Glory' funded galleries and exhibitions in receipt of Arts Council Art Projects funding)? The issue is essentially one of finance and best use of resources.
- 2) When use is made of the Umbrella's 'project' funds, what financial contribution should the gallery be expected to make? ie. should the Umbrella's funds be released only on a challenge basis - to be matched by the gallery, or in what circumstances might the Umbrella increase its subsidy to the venue?
- 3) If new work is commissioned for exhibition, what would be the appropriate local contribution; should additional Arts Council

funds be made available; and should the Umbrella aim to establish a range of standard fees to the artist?

2. Cinema Programme Touring.

Objective: To achieve a greater exposure for artists films within the repertory of the RFT cinemas and at other screening venues.

We are more than happy with the Umbrella's present policy of mixing old and new work, British and international work and marginal with more mainstream. The only issue raised in our discussions concerned the volume of product that the Umbrella could provide in a year, and the degree to which the existing network of venues could be extended (and at what, if any, additional cost)? We would like to see some targets for growth established in this area.

3. General.

Moving to more general issues which apply to both arms of the Umbrella: a subject which we haven't yet discussed is that of the overall percentage of British work in the Umbrella's packages.

Also, in view of the Council's Ethnic Minority Arts policies, the Umbrella's commitment in this area.

Similarly, in our discussions you raised the question of the Umbrella's involvement in the export of British work abroad.

In all these areas we would expect to see maximum and minimum targets established.

Another general area of concern to Council is marketing and promotion and our clients' ability to maximise revenue from earned income and other sources of funding. Most immediately this suggests the Umbrella's pricing of its programme, but it also might also extend to putting a price on information and other services offered; the Umbrella's client relationship with the BFI etc is also significant.

The Council's Marketing department is able to offer general advice in this area, and you may want to contact them.

In conclusion, I'm sure there are many more points which you could add to this list, but I offer this now as a statement of our current position.

Yours sincerely,

David Curtis
Film and Video Officer.