

LONDON VIDEO ARTS

The organisation for the promotion, showing and distribution of independent work in video art.

reg. no. 2162776

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our ref:
your ref:

date: 13th April '81

Dear LVA Member,

Since you last received a letter from LVA, dated 5th March, re ICA's proposed video/cinematheque sent to you subsequent to LVA Steering Committee Members meeting with A.Tate & A.Graham (ICA), there have been developments in the light of which LVA would ask you to do two things,

1. read and consider the points in this letter in relation to both the ICA sample contract and your own LVA consignment agreement form.
2. not to enter into any contractual agreement with the ICA until LVA can present contract amendments to the Independent Video Assoc's first AGM for discussion and/or ratification, on sat 25th April, and also to the ICA.

We hope this letter will clarify some of the problems in the ICA's propositions.

Feeling has been running high since word got out that not only the ICA but also the Arnolfini, Bristol, was about to start a video library, it was then made clear at the public meeting that Edinburgh would be a third, it was at this meeting that the audience, comprised mostly if not all, of independent film/video makers showed a very negative response to the project both in relation to the contract and to the sort of system to be utilized. When asked whether the ICA did not see its participation in the formation of other library's around the country as effectively/potentially undercutting other distribution networks, the response was that it was not a question for the ICA at this moment.

LVA as an organisation stands for the promotion of independent work, to ensure payment to artists upon the showing/hiring of their work, to ensure that artists have control of the context in which work is seen and to promote a realistic relationship of artists fees to the means and costs of production.

We feel that the ICA's proposed contract is totally unrelated to any of these concerns, "This is another attempt to rape the artist"; quote from a member of the audience, (independent film producer).

The ICA claim that their role is that of a 'showcase' and they view the cinematheque as giving 'exposure' to work. They are not interested in building an archive, (which raises some question about the use of a Phillips storage system) and they hold the right to exclude work after two years, based on the works 'showing performance' over that period, is on a best-seller basis and on public demand.

The proposed stock system is Phillips "U", we feel that this storage system will not give the resolution quality intended by the producer. "U-Matic" having been established as the preferred standard, and adopted by the producers contributing to the LVA library (also industrially and commercially), we feel that the Cinematheque should maintain that standard by keeping U-matic copies of material submitted to them on U-matic format and making these copies available to the Cinematheque Audience.

As other libraries are being set up nationally it would seem to be important that the precedent of U-matic professional standard be set rather than low quality storage systems. This also applies to the initial transfer fee payable to artists on contract with whatever library.

As regards the royalty agreement offered by the ICA, we feel that if they offer these royalties then it would seem realistic to suggest an initial payment to artists/producers for possession of the copy of the material ie on the transfer from the master tape to their stock.

We refer you to point 3 in your letter from LVA, the system of relating payment to half-hour segments (like grapefruit) had been adopted from LVA, however we would like to inform you that this system is under review in LVA due to lots of unforeseen problems, and new rates should take effect with the production of the new catalogue. This review is mainly due to dissatisfaction amongst members on the SC that the hire rates have remained the same since 1977! and an increase was felt to be overdue.

In relation to point 4, it was stated that the 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ % to LVA (as with the film co-op) was not our idea, we would like now to emphasize that it was not and that we strongly objected to this proposal put to us at the meeting with A. Graham & A. Tate on the grounds that LVA was never in existence to tax the artist even more for the dubious privilege of 'exposure'....or whatever else one might like to call it. LVA as said is interested in gaining realistic terms for artists which this arrangement does not aim to meet. You might also note that LVA's agreement with artists on hire charges affords 66 $\frac{2}{3}$ % to the artists and 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ % to LVA.

Re item 7 of the ICA contract, ie promotional showings, LVA members found problems with this as it seemed to be a waiving of artists rights. Also when asked how this right would be used, the response was "Reasonably". We find this unsatisfactory, we would like to see certain conditions enforced on this clause, for example that promotional showings should be limited per year in relation to the number of tapes in the library, ie that all tapes should be rotated for promotional use-- say 365 tapes--- I showing each per year and that any tape used for this purpose will be shown in its entirety. However as pointed out, LVA does not like promotional showings without fees on the grounds that it waives artists rights, and is essentially promotion for the ICA and rather than promotion or support for the artist.

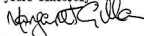
In conclusion we would like to say that we have had responses from artists abroad, for the most part the feedback has been negative, artists from Holland showing concern about the precedent this contract will set in Britain in view of other libraries being set up nationally, and also the potential undercutting of distribution here.

Some artists have written that they would like their tapes included in the ICA library. In response LVA would like to point out that we strongly recommend that copies be made from the master and that they should, for firm quality resolution, be U-matic copies.

A final thought on this matter. We feel that this sort of agreement perpetrates the exploitation of independents, keeping them on a low budget, which ultimately affects the work, undercutting the artist in relation to their means of production and seriously restricting their potential.

As said LVA would appreciate any response on these questions from its members, and for anyone who can get to the IVA meeting on the 25th April to help try and resolve these problems.

yours sincerely



Margaret Gillan
for LVA