

# ARTS COUNCIL FILMS

Minutes of the third meeting of the Artists' Film and Video Committee  
held at 12.30pm June 19 1986 in the Finance Dept Meeting Room,  
Yarmouth Place, London W1.

APVC86m3

Present: Malcolm Le Grice Chairman  
Mick Hartney  
Jo Comino  
Rodney Wilson Director, Film, Video and Broadcasting  
David Curtis Film and Video Officer  
Secretary

Apologies for absence were received from Caroline Pick, Catherine Lacey, Tina Keane and Graham Marchant. The meeting was inquorate but it was agreed to continue but to make decisions on only those items which were uncontentious.

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- 1 Minutes of May 15/16  
Jo Comino pointed out that in discussion of paper 33 she'd been reported as 'being indifferent', whereas she had expressed her support. The minutes were approved.
- 2 Matters Arising
  - 2.1 Student Film/Video Art Prizes Scheme  
The Director announced that the scheme's sponsors, TSI, had agreed to substantially increase their support of the 1986 prizes.
  - 2.2 London Film-Makers' Co-op: Anniversary Event  
The FVO reported that the event scheduled for July 15 was now to be held on Oct 16/18.
  - 2.3 London Video Arts  
The FVO reminded Committee that as LVA was now an annual client a more formal process of assessment would have to be devised in line with the Council's Evaluation programme. Mick Hartney volunteered to be one of the assessors.

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- 3 Distribution/Completion/Small Exhibition  
The FVO reported that Jane Harris's application had been misread. The Chairman said that as he and TK had been supportive of the work and rejected it only on an issue of policy, he was happy for the FVO to reconsider the application and report back.  
The FVO further reported that a problem had arisen regarding the exhibition application of Four Corners. One of the artists had included a budget item of £40 for baby-minding costs and Finance Dept had refused to pay this. The Chairman thought this matter should be taken further. He suggested the FVO request a list from Finance Dept of the incidentals they considered bonafide.
- 4 Reports
  - 4.1 Funded Exhibitions  
Leicester Super 8 Festival  
JC reported that over 200 films had been submitted: attendances had been good. Extra effort had been made this year to introduce

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programming, although the festival had continued to include open access. A lesbian and gay event had proved successful. Another event had featured Super 8 documentary making. A tour was to be organised in conjunction with the BFI and some of the work had been included in the recent Channel 4 Super 8 season.

The FVO said he'd attended the festival for one day and considered the quality of the work and the attendances poor. However he considered the film projection and the presentation of video very good.

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#### Housewatch

It was noted that this group had made an application to Archangel Trust.

It was agreed that they should be asked what had become of their original plans to exhibit in the Regions.

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#### Umbrella Reports

Cordelia Swann: the Chairman thought the report was low-keyed. The FVO pointed out that she'd been asked only to provide a report on the result of her first tour and the work in progress. MH wondered how CS was gauging the success of her tour: was it on audience figures or on the quality of discussion around each show. He thought the scheduling of 2 programmes in one evening was exhausting. The FVO said CS had chosen this style of programming for pragmatic reasons: when prog 1 and 2 were shown separately the audience level dropped off on prog 2. MH did however agree that the programming was excellent and provided a wide variety of work of interest to the audience. The FVO thought it would be difficult to draw general conclusions from this programming as the content was untypical. CS had deliberately chosen work by unknown young artists, whereas the other Umbrella programmes had well known 'attractions'. The next programme planned was the Soviet Season which contained classic Soviet work.

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Mike O'Pray: MH asked if any overlaps had been planned between the British show planned by the Umbrella and the planned AC/BC Perspectives Show. The FVO reported there was none as yet. The Umbrella package was only in the first stages of planning. The Chairman was concerned that the organisers might feel obliged to programme historical work to maintain credibility with Committee. The FVO stressed that this was not the case; the artists suggested were all currently working but their work sprang from concerns other than those of the minute. He added that another programme had been discussed which included these artists but was based around the theme of 'politics of the body'. Committee were more enthusiastic about this idea. MH pointed out that only one video show had been planned by the Umbrella to-date. Were they planning more? The FVO pointed out that LVA obviously had ambitions to be the major tourers of video art, although little was being done. The Chairman added the Umbrella scheme should not be used as a vehicle for doing work because of others' failure to do it. If they already had areas of concern they should continue with them.

The Director thought Mike O'Pray should be encouraged to provide evidence of the scheme's influence abroad. Activities were clearly happening but no documentation or publicity material had been provided with this report. The presentation of the

report was poor and would have been unlikely to convince a hostile panel. The Chairman hoped that MO could be encouraged to acquire report-writing, bookkeeping and marketing skills. IT WAS AGREED to pass these comments on to MO whilst expressing confidence in his programming ability.

## 4.2

Forthcoming ExhibitionsSerpentine: Charting Time

The private view for this exhibition would be on August 8.

LenLye Exhibition

The FVO explained that a Len Lye exhibition had been proposed for the Cambridge Animation Festival for 1987. He had forwarded this to the Art Dept as a possible touring exhibition, to be organised by Andrew Causey and himself. The proposal had been accepted.

Perspectives on English Avant-Garde Film II

The FVO said this proposed AC/British Council show had been discussed in terms of a review of a decade of work - 1975-85. The previous show had represented the 60s and early 70s; the situation had since developed and new work and new areas of concern had emerged eg womens' work, yet no exhibition of any significance had been organised to reflect this development.

The Director thought the organisers should not make the assumption that people seeing the exhibition would be aware of the work of the previous show.

The Chairman was concerned that the exhibition should relate to contemporary themes. He was supportive of inviting Peter Gidal as a selector working in conjunction with someone from a different background. He hoped that programming might demonstrate the effect structural film had had on black groups and women film-makers. He thought the exhibition should concentrate on film as language rather than cinema as subject and should encompass new work and new ideas. The FVO agreed. The FVO explained that his proposal of A.L. Rees as Chairman was based on his concern to have an experienced editor involved. He hoped that Catherine Lacey would agree to work with the group to bring a different perspective and critical position to the work. The Chairman thought a thesis should be outlined before final judgements were made regarding selectors but the FVO hoped that the thesis would be formulated by the group itself based on an extensive view of work. Cerith Wyn-Evans was suggested as a possible co-selector.

MH stressed that video should not be ignored. The FVO thought that the influence of video might be incorporated into the exhibition catalogue but it was difficult to show film and video in a touring exhibition; the problem would be left to the group to resolve.

IT WAS AGREED to develop the proposal further and a progress report would be presented to the next meeting.

## 5

Film and Video Artists on tour Scheme5.1 Report on Use of Scheme in 85/65.1.1 List of Bookings

The Chairman asked if the data provided could be presented in different categories. He requested it be recorded in the

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AFVc86p68

AFVc86p69

minutes that word processing facilities were needed for the Film Department.

The FVO mentioned that there were fewer bookings in 1985/6 than in 84/5.

The Chairman noted that many of the active artists were relatively new and making headway in the area. The FVO confirmed that the scheme was particularly important to those artists.

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#### 5.1.2 Letter from the London Film-Makers' Co-op

The LFMC had written to the AFVC on 2 matters:

- a) some artists when using the FMOt scheme and renting their work from the Co-op were failing to pay the subsequent rental bills.
- b) responsibility for damage to films was unclear: normally a contract existed between the distributor and the venue whereas on FMOt the contact was between the distributor and the artist.

IT WAS AGREED that the FVO should explore the possibility of modify the scheme to allow venues to book the artists' work directly from the distributor, thus alleviating both problems.

#### 5.1.3 Artists Joining the Scheme

Mark Wilcox's name was added to the list. MH was concerned that it was difficult for some artists whose work was necessarily brief to meet the minimum requirement of an hour-long programme. Committee noted this problem and asked the FVO to use his discretion when advising artists about their eligibility.

The FVO suggested that Richard Philpott's film Archway Road Film should be excluded from his use of the scheme as it was a straightforward campaign film. This was agreed. It was further agreed to defer Susan Derges' application until more was known of her work.

#### 5.1.4 Artists Retiring: it was noted that Tom Hickmore had retired from the scheme.

### 5.2 The Scheme in 86/7

5.2.1 The proposal to continue circulating last year's booklet and publish a supplementary broadsheet for 86/7 was accepted.

5.2.2 It was agreed that the fees and charges remain unchanged this year.

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### 5.3 Extension to the Scheme

IT WAS AGREED to accept the proposal in principle: a draft of the terms would be drawn up and circulated for approval.

## 6 Video Access Libraries

The Director reported on the meeting held between the AC and the VAL representatives (ICA, Arnolfini, Midland Group, Newcastle, Essex Public Library Service at Southend). There had been broad agreement on a number of issues: the notion of viewing-on-demand had to be regarded as a public service; even with continuous viewing of work the income was insufficient to cover maintenance and staffing costs. The Director

had suggested that this problem needed to be itemised in a request for increased funding next year.

A discussion on the relationship of VALs within art centres and within the public library system had proven contentious: the Arnolfini considered it important that tapes on the arts and by artists should be housed in art centres where trained staff could provide a proper context. The Arnolfini had also expressed discontent at the demise of the purchase fund provided by the AFVC and the lack of an adequate touring scheme such as Network One. The ICA thought that the wider concept of access was best linked to public libraries where staffing and cataloguing costs could be absorbed. The representative from the Southend Library, Christine Pointer, had agreed; the initial equipment purchasing costs could prove problematic - these might be solved by sponsorship. MH asked if programming was possible within the library network; he thought a report should be provided by Network One. The FVO said that programming was a valuable way of supporting VAL's but it could not be seen as cost effective while so few libraries were active. As more came on-stream, he could foresee the appointment of an amateur to provide such an input. The Director reported that the Arnolfini had set up a franchise to enable educational institutions to use VALs as a low rental facility.

#### Regional Project Development Fund

The FVO thought this scheme would raise awareness of this form of project funding and therefore the standard of applications even though the level of funds available might be low.

The Chairman thought the scheme was potentially contentious and suggested it be left for discussion at a full meeting. The FVO stressed that a decision was needed in order to present the proposal to the CORAA meeting on July 4 in time to launch the scheme in Spring 87.

The Chairman was concerned that the AFVC was proposing to offer this money without first making a bid for new money. He was also concerned that past initiatives funded by Committee might fail to win funding under the new scheme. The FVO confirmed that some initiatives such as the Co-op Summer Show might well be discontinued under the scheme but thought the new scheme would be less inclined to privilege particular groups.

He agreed that a bid should be made for new money for the scheme, but felt a modest start could be made with existing funds. The Chairman hoped that support from the constituency could be brought to bear on the appropriate bodies to help secure new funds, which he felt were urgently needed. The Director said that even if a bid to Council was successful, Committee might not know until next March. He thought Committee should either make a bold commitment or abandon the scheme. He thought it impossible to predict Council's response to the scheme; the Department had been obliged to put forward proposals for development without a guarantee of any increase.

The Chairman suggested starting the scheme as a one-year 'pilot' rather than allow 3-year funding as proposed. If extra money was made available then the 3-year commitment could be applied.

IT WAS AGREED that the FVO should discuss the proposal with the CORAA group but should draft guidelines for the scheme as a one-year 'pilot', with no commitment to continuing (3 year) funding.

#### Humberside College of Higher Education: Placement Bursary Application

The Chairman was in favour of the proposal. He considered Humberside to be a lively course in a region which merited support. Recalling the criticism of Committee's last 'placement' in Newcastle, he suggested that Committee should ascertain that the ratio of male/female staff was acceptable

He suggested representatives of Committee visit the college (himself, MU/TK and DC) to discuss the proposal in more detail. The proposal was not only a straightforward production bursary, but an opportunity for involvement in course development; he thought discussion with senior college staff might prove fruitful. This proposal was agreed.

9

Any Other Business

There was no AOB . The meeting ended at 3.30.