

CONFIDENTIAL

Minutes of the 16th Meeting of the Artists' Films Sub-Committee held on
Wednesday 7th April 1976 at 10.30.a.m. in the Cinema of the Arts Council,
105 Piccadilly, London, W1V 0AU

Present:	Professor Stuart Hood	Chairman
	Mr. David Curtis	
	Mr. Simon Field	
	Ms. Laura Mulvey	
	Mr. Tony Rayns	
	Mr. Richard Landau	Assistant Finance Officer
	Mr. Rodney Wilson	Film Officer
	Mr. Jonathan Harris	Assistant Film Officer

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Mr. Ian Christie.

2. Minutes of the Last Meeting

The Minutes for the last meeting were still being printed but would be circulated to the Committee as soon as they were ready.

3. Financial Report

The Finance Officer reported that the total expenditure by this Committee for the year ending 31st March 1976 was £21,537. This figure was made up as follows: Contracts £3,206; Awards and Bursaries £14,331; Video Bursary £1,000; Expanded Cinema Festival at the I.C.A. £3,000.

It was reported that the Artists' Films Committee allocation for 1976/77 was £40,000, a considerable increase on the figure for 1975/76. Of this amount £1,000 had been reserved for the Expanded Cinema Exhibition at the Arnolfini Bristol, £1,742 for the Derby Film Awards and £1,000 for the Video Bursary at the Royal College of Art. A balance of £36,300 was therefore available.

4. Matters Arising

a) Video Bursary The Film Officer reported that the Bursary had been advertised and the first responses received. The closing date for entries was April 26th. It was agreed that the applications would be assessed on Tuesday May 4th at 10.30. Professor Hood would discover if the meeting could be held at the Royal College of Art in order to take advantage of the additional play-back facilities available. It was agreed to invite David Hall to join the Committee for this meeting to assist in selecting the successful applicant.

b) Film-Makers Exhibitions

The Film Officer reported that four more film-makers had been contacted - Marilyn Halford; Tony Hill; Derek Jarman; Ron Haselden. All had agreed to participate bringing the total to be included in the pilot scheme to eight. A meeting had been held with Film Officers and Visual Arts Officers from the Regional Arts Associations and the Welsh Arts Council and the scheme had been well received. A meeting, arranged by the Art Department with organisers from Arts Centres was to be held on April 30th. Once programmes of work had been obtained from the film-makers and the necessary literature to present the scheme had been written it would be possible to make an initial mailing to identified organisations that had expressed an interest. The Committee agreed

that installation pieces that required the film-makers presence for a number of days should be paid for at the rate of £25 per day, a figure based on part time teaching rates at art colleges. Travelling expenses would also be covered.

A discussion concerning the most suitable model of projector to be purchased followed. The Film Officer favoured the Fumeo used in the Milan exhibition 'British Art Now' but it was agreed to consult the film-makers before a decision was made. Mr Field asked if it would also be necessary to purchase 8mm. projectors but it was agreed that a decision could be left until it was known if there were sufficient demand.

5. Policy for 1976/77

a) The Film Officer said that some recent applications suggested a review of the Committee's current terms of reference, particularly Patrick Masefield, (film in theatre) and Elsa Stansfield (experimental community video). Additionally the B.F.I. Production Board had also made grants available to some film-makers whose work had been supported by the Committee. It was necessary therefore to discuss any changes that might arise from consideration of these factors. Mr Field said that he felt the Committee were not competent to assess theatre groups' activities and that a representative of the Experimental Drama Committee should be asked to give advice. It was agreed to follow the procedure adopted by the Arts Films Committee and invite the appropriate officer from Drama or other Departments, should it arise, to advise the Committee as needed.

Concerning video, Mr Rayns said that two papers on video had been discussed by the B.F.I. Production Board. The emphasis was entirely on Community Video and of specific application received by the Board, none were for Artists' Video. It was agreed that the Committee's implementation of its terms of reference in regard to video was adequate and there should not be an extension to include community orientated work. With at least three other Committees supporting this work (B.F.I. Production Board, G.L.A.A. Film & Video Panel, Arts Council's Community Arts Centre) The Artists' Films Committee would be most effective in pursuing its present course of action.

The question of the Committee's relationship with the Production Board was discussed. Mr Rayns said that although the Board had supported one or two avant-garde film-makers the procedures adopted in assessing applications precluded the majority of film-artists supported by the Committee. Film projects were rarely considered with budgets of less than £5000, a sum double the largest award the Committee had made to date. The increase in costs when an application went to the Board was partially accounted for by crewing fees etc. which were no guarantee of increased quality. It was agreed that the degree of overlap with the B.F.I. Production Board was so small as to make no material difference to the Committee's activities and certainly not enough to warrant any change in the existing terms of reference.

b) The Film Officer asked the Committee if it was felt that a major award similar in size to the Photography Bursary or the Art Dept. should be offered. Mr Rayns said that he thought an award of that kind would have to be offered in a way similar to the Photography Bursary on a competitive basis rather than an on-going basis as with current awards and bursaries Mr Curtis pointed out that given the Committee's expertise in the field it would probably be possible to predict who would receive it and certainly a short list would be excessively small. In addition it was unlikely that in current circumstances many film-makers would want to give up teaching

for a one year bursary that was not really very large. He was more interested in the question of cost-of-living awards. It was pointed out, however, that cost-of-living awards would create tax problems for the recipient. There was considerable discussion of the issue but it was agreed that a major film bursary would not be offered. Projects costing more than the average awards and bursaries could be individually costed and assessed within the present structure. It was further agreed that awards and bursaries would continue to be offered on a materials only basis.

c) and d) The Film Officer asked if large awards and bursaries should be paid in two instalments so that some check on how the money was being spent could be made. Mr. Rayns said that bursaries were specifically intended to remove the obligation of a fixed programme of work and he could not see how a check could be made on the progress of works such as Malcolm Le Grice's 'After Manet'. Mr. Curtis suggested that the monitoring was more concerned with seeing that the money was being spent on film-making than on the quality of the work. Mr. Field said that the Committee would have to take risks because this was inherent in a non-institutionalised area such as avant-garde film. The Film Officer circulated a statement entitled "Production Assistance on Offer 1976/77". It was agreed that a letter derived from the statement would be sent to successful applicants setting out the terms under which the money was made available and placing an obligation on the film-maker to show the completed work to the Committee. It was agreed that the bursaries should continue to be paid in one instalment, but awards for specific projects of amounts more than the largest bursary would be paid in two instalments subject to a written statement that work had progressed to the point that the remaining financial assistance was required.

e) The Film Officer suggested that in view of the increasing number of exhibition applications and the increasing amounts of financial assistance asked for, a set of guidelines would be timely. As with the "Production Assistance on Offer" paper already discussed, the guidelines would also serve to draw attention to the fact that the Committee was open to applications for this kind of funding. It was agreed that the budgeting priorities the Committee would respond to were those directly pertaining to the film-makers:- fees to participants; travel expenses; production of material for the event; equipment rental. However, in assessing the application the Committee would need to know:- the context of the festival; how it relates to other exhibitions of avant-garde film; what audience it is intended for; criteria to be employed for selecting work and for programming it; who will select; the over-all budget including items to be funded elsewhere; what publications will result from the festival. The Film Officer would incorporate these items into a paper to be made available when appropriate.

6. Proposed Projects

a) Jenny Okun A supporting film, "Tiger", for this application had been viewed unenthusiastically by some of the Committee at the last meeting when the project was deferred. Mr. Rayns felt the application was very unprepossessing and the film shown very dull. The project was rejected.

b) Ronald Henocq

This project had been deferred from the last meeting. A test film for the project was looked at and slides of Mr. Henocq's paintings circulated to the Committee. Mr. Rayns thought the project was banal on a conceptual level. Professor Hood thought that Mr. Henocq could be given a small amount

of money to buy film stock and do more tests on super 8. Mr Curtis found the ideas in the project potentially interesting but agreed they were not thought through enough. It was agreed to reject the project and that the Film Officer would write to Mr Henocq suggesting he do some work on super 8 and the Committee would consider a future application.

c) Richard Johnson

Some video tapes, including 'Notes' relating to the present project, were looked at by the Committee. The Film Officer informed the Committee that the project had been passed on by the Art Department but had not been considered by them. There was no support for the project and it was rejected.

d) John Hopkins

It was agreed to make an award of £143 available to Mr Hopkins for video transfer out of the 1976/77 allocation.

e) Research Instrumentality

The Film Officer reported that the application had been considered favourably by the Community Arts Committee and recommended to the Research and Information Department for funding. The G.L.A.A. had been pleased with research previously carried out by John Hopkins and it was agreed that a series of programmes of video-tapes currently organised by him were working well. The Committee agreed that the research should be undertaken and endorsed the recommendation to the Information Department. It was agreed that the resulting information would be of value to the current plans for the exhibition of artists' films.

f) Patrick Masefield

The Committee thought that the application was a difficult one because the criteria contained within the application were alien to its terms of reference. It was felt that if the film was an integral part of the stage performance then it should be funded through the relevant Drama Department Committee. As a film project it was essentially concerned with illusion and mystification and as such was rejected.

7. Any Other Business

Mr Field tabled an application prepared by himself and Peter Woollen for a Forum on Avant-Garde Film to be held during the Edinburgh Film Festival. Mr Field explained that the application was not fully detailed but as the Committee were experienced in the field and knew the participants he was concerned that a response should be available as soon as possible. The reason was that unless the organisers could make a firm commitment to the participants and begin advertising the event it would not be possible to prepare it adequately by August. The background to the event was two festivals of avant-garde film held at the N.F.T. in 1970 and the N.F.T. and I.C.A. in 1973 and the fact that relevant new work would be programmed into the Edinburgh Film Festival. This facility made Edinburgh a more suitable location than the N.F.T. Additionally the Forum would be a development from the Brecht Seminar held during the 1975 Festival. The application was for a grant of £5,195 plus a possible guarantee against loss. The exact amount of this making a total budget of £8,345. The amount of the latter, if anything would be determined by the help provided by Embassies in covering the

expenses of their nationals participating in the Forum. Mr. Field offered to leave the meeting whilst the application was discussed. This was not considered necessary by the Chairman. It was noted that the organisers would be unpaid. The Finance Assistant emphasised that the application would have to be dealt with by the Scottish Arts Council as the event would take place in Scotland. It was pointed out that the S.A.C. did not have a specific fund for this kind of event and the Artists' Films Committee was constituted to assess this kind of application. Mr. Landau pointed out that the Committee's terms of reference did not extend to subsidising events in Scotland. However, concern was expressed by the Committee that unnecessary delay would have resulted from making a formal approach to the S.A.C. who might not, for various reasons, be sympathetic to the application. The Film Officer said that he was having a meeting with Lesley Greene of the S.A.C. in two days time concerning arrangements for the event. The Committee was enthusiastic about the application and agreed that, pending an agreement with the S.A.C., the subsidy applied for would be reserved from the 1976/77 allocation, and Mr. Field was informally assured that the event could be confirmed and the necessary plans put in hand. He undertook to confirm the level of funds available from other sources when this became known.

8. Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday 18th May at 10.30.a.m.

The Meeting then ended.