

CONFIDENTIAL

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MINUTES OF THE ARTISTS' FILMS COMMITTEE HELD ON FRIDAY
25 FEBRUARY 1977 AT 10.30 AM. IN THE CINEMA OF THE ARTS
COUNCIL AT 105 PICCADILLY, LONDON W1V 0AU

Present: Professor Stuart Hood Chairman
 Mr. Ian Christie
 Mr. David Curtis
 Ms Laura Mulvey
 Ms Caroline Tisdall

 Mr. Rodney Wilson Film Officer
 Mr. Richard Landau Finance Assistant
 Ms Stephanie Featherstone Secretary

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Mr. Simon Field and Mr. Tony Rayns.

2. Minutes of the Last Meeting

These were agreed as correct, having already been circulated.

3. Financial Report

The Financial Report was laid on the table, showing that of the original allocation of £40,000 for 1976/77, £31,075 had been allocated to date, leaving £8,925 available for consideration.

4. Matters Arising

a) RCA Video Bursary

The Film Officer said that it was unlikely the scheme would operate next year. Brian Hoey had only just been able to start work in the colour studio and had found the technicians very obstructive. There would have to be discussions with the college. Mr. Curtis felt that in any case the most important video work was being done in black and white rather than colour.

b) Maidstone College of Art

The Film Officer reported that at a meeting with David Hall costings had been worked out and the wording for advertisements

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and application forms drafted. The Film Bursary would be £750 and the Video Bursary £1,500 both payable in two installments. The amounts had been based on the major film bursary now offered plus facility fees and the cost of train journeys from London to Maidstone. The first adverts had already been placed and the deadline for returning completed applications was 24th June. The Committee approved the amounts for the two bursaries as it was agreed that the selection meetings would be arranged at a later date. The funds would be made available from the 1977/78 Artists' Films Allocation.

c) London Video Arts

The Film Officer reminded the Committee that London Video Arts had been asked to expand on their original application for financial support to set up a video tape library and exhibition venue.

There were two considerations: firstly was this the kind of application the Committee should support and secondly was there enough money left to do so?

Ms Mulvey thought it a good idea; but Mr. Curtis pointed out that while not exactly an exclusive undertaking, people would still have to be invited to take part and he felt it very important that access should be completely open.

He said that he would have preferred to see more detailed plans of how the library/exhibition centre would be run. He thought it would be better to promote video by organising exhibitions to stimulate the demand for new tapes rather than simply make a collection of existing tapes.

The Film Officer thought that what was really needed was a centre for video workers rather like the London Film Makers Co-op. Mr. Curtis said he thought London Video Arts could probably make arrangements with the Co-op for tapes to be distributed by them, leaving them free to concentrate on the exhibition centre. The Film Officer reminded the Committee that John Hopkins of Fantasy Factory was at present involved in a research project in conjunction with the Arts Council's Research and Information Department, to investigate the distribution of video tapes and to assess public response to existing material through a series of shows.

He explained to the Committee that the new equipment the Arts Council had recently purchased was being kept permanently at Fantasy Factory because too much damage could be done moving it about from one hirer to another. The Committee expressed interest in the information available to date as it would help with the consideration of L.V. Arts proposals. The Film Officer agreed to report on its progress at the next meeting.

In general the Committee felt that the re-application did not provide the information that had been hoped for.

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Mr. Christie suggested that it would greatly help assessment of the application if the members of the London Video Arts Group were invited to talk to the Committee. The Chairman agreed and the Film Officer undertook to make the arrangements. It was agreed to defer a decision until after the meeting with L.V.A. Mr. Christie asked whether any subsidy made available to L.V.A. would be in the nature of a continuing revenue grant; the Chairman said that if so the Committee would be unable to recommend any subsidy it could not guarantee continuing support.

d) Film-makers on Tour

The Film Officer told the Committee about the publicity for the scheme. There had been two major elements - one being paid advertisements in such magazines as Studio International and Sight and Sound and the other being unpaid 'mentions' in publications like The Museums Bulletin and all the R.A.A. magazines and newsletters. There had also been direct mailing of catalogues to likely places such as arts centres, film societies, art colleges and polytechnics.

He reported that Malcolm le Grice was dissatisfied with the current fee which he did not feel was high enough to justify long distance bookings. The problem was the amount of time taken in travelling could be extensive thus reducing the value of the fee.

Mr. Christie and Mr. Curtis agreed and felt every encouragement should be given to stimulate film-makers taking their shows to the regions. The Film Officer also agreed but pointed out that it was nevertheless in the film-makers' own interests to publicise their work and that the tour was providing them with a rare chance to do so.

It was decided to offer an additional £10 for any booking further than 125 miles away by road or more than two hours journey time away by rail.

The Committee then discussed incorporating more film-makers into the tour. It was eventually decided not to do so before the end of the next financial year by which time it would have been possible to see how the scheme had worked out. A new catalogue could then be produced to include any adaptations necessary. For the present the original possibility of including other film-makers outlined in the catalogue would remain in force. The Film Officer was congratulated on the current catalogue and on the good start that had been made.

e) Perspectives on British Avant-Garde Film

The Film Officer reported that the GLC had given unofficial clearance for the show to go ahead but so far this had not been confirmed in writing.

He said that where possible films had been purchased that could be used on the Art Film Tour. In addition, the estimated cost

of rentals had been £1,000 but in fact it was just under that. This did not include statutory rental payable on Arts Council films where the Arts Council still held the copyright. This had been worked out at £5 for under 30 minutes; £7.50 for 31-45 minutes and £10 for over 46 minutes. Expanded Cinema performances were payable at £25 per show.

Other expenditure had been incurred on posters, programme schedules and introductory notes, publicity and postage.

The Film Officer explained that most of the finance for the exhibition had come from Art Film General but funds had been allocated from the Exhibition budget to cover 1) hiring of equipment 2) building the cinema 3) projectionists' salaries and 4) some programme notes. He told the Committee that a fee of £20 would be paid for selection of programmes and a further £20 per thousand words actually written.

Most films purchased had been prints of films that the Committee had funded over the last couple of years; prints had been purchased at double the current lab costs. EARLY ABSTRACTIONS was the only exception.

He confirmed that Deke Dusinberre had been employed on a fee basis to organise and run the exhibition. He had arranged for weekly programme listings to appear in Time Out and Tony Rayns would be writing a long piece on the show in the Artefact section.

Total expenditure apart from rentals would be about £2,000. The Film Officer would circulate the Committee with a summary of the series of planning meetings held in January and February. When known, details of the actual expenditure would be provided.

5. Proposed Projects

1. Deferred from Last Meeting

Production - Film

a) Guy Ford

The Committee were shown an extract from his 16mm film 'Portrait of Kevin Whitney'.

There was no support for the application and it was rejected.

b) Karl Francis

The Committee saw an extract from a film he had made with BFI Production Board support ABOVE US THE EARTH.

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Mr. Curtis and the Film Officer thought it was conventional but Ms. Mulvey thought the Committee should bear in mind the fact that the film was being shown in working mens clubs in Wales and was therefore reaching a new audience. However it was felt in general that the film did not help assessment of the present application. The Film Officer told the Committee that he had had a long talk with the applicant in order to find out exactly what he was aiming to do but had found him rather vague concerning the details of the films to be made. In fact he had formed the opinion that the application had been specially phrased in order to appeal to the Committee while not really being the kind of thing they should support.

Mr. Christie found the references to self-portraiture particularly hard to understand and the Committee agreed that this was probably a device to make the work seem more appropriate to the Committee's terms of reference.

Ms. Mulvey felt his application would be more sympathetically received if he asked for less money to make a shorter film and wondered if perhaps he should re-apply to the BFI Production Board for further support. However the Committee were against advising him to do so, especially as his application had been deferred from the previous meeting.

Mr. Christie was against offering Karl Francis the full £1,250 he had asked for but suggested awarding a smaller sum. The Film Officer suggested offering him the smallest bursary of £300 to make what could be considered a pilot film for a future application.

It was agreed to recommend a bursary of £300 from the 1976/77 Artists' Films Committee.

c) David Shetcliffe

The Committee saw some 16mm animated tests. Mr. Curtis was not very impressed but Mr. Christie thought the film showed potential and it was agreed to recommend a £300 bursary from the 1976/77 Artists' Films Allocation.