

LONDON FILMMAKERS CO-OPERATIVE

22 March 1976

Mr. Keith Lucas, Director
BRITISH FILM INSTITUTE
81, Dean Street
London, W1V 6AA

Dear Mr. Lucas,

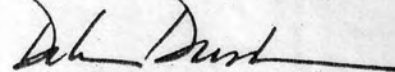
Enclosed is a paper detailing the current activities of the London Film-Makers' Co-op and asking for financial assistance from the BFI. This is a matter which we would like the Executive Committee to consider at its next meeting, for the reasons outlined in the introduction to the report.

Appended to your copy of the application is a selection of screening schedules and programme notes which serve as documentation to the Cinema report.

If you have any questions or would like further information, please feel free to telephone me (or any one of us who prepared the application) at the co-op.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,



Deke Dusinberre,
Distribution office.

cc: Brenda Davies
David Frances
Leslie Hardcastle
Penelope Houston
Douglas Lowndes
Alan Knowles
Colin McArthur
Gerry Rawlinson
Peter Sainsbury

LONDON FILMMAKERS CO-OPERATIVE

APPLICATION FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

To: The Executive Committee of the British Film Institute

From: The London Film-Makers' Co-operative

19 March 1976

INTRODUCTION

By the very nature of its organisation, the London Film-Makers' Co-operative aspires to provide the full range of film production/distribution/exhibition activities for its members. It not only attempts to integrate the work of the film-maker on all levels of the filmic experience, but also attempts to integrate its own operation in recognition of the interdependence of various aspects of film culture.

This represents a shift from the conventional relationship of the film-maker to his/her work and its social function; the film-maker engages not only in shooting and editing, but also in printing, distributing, and exhibiting his/her work. This film-making environment has been established for--and is designed to encourage--film-makers who insist on control over their work at all levels of its social intervention, offering possibilities for an intense exploration of the limits of film language and resulting in what can be perceived as a filmic 'avant-garde'. Thus the shift in production relationship suggests a concomitant aesthetic shift, a shift which is visible principally in the films produced in/around the co-op in the last five years. Just as the altered environment of co-operative production requires greater participation on the part of film-makers, so their new product requires a shift in expectation on the part of the spectators; any really new artistic activity is obligated to re-educate an initially antipathetic audience.

The co-op survived its first nine years without outside assistance precisely because it is based on personal involvement and commitment, but the scope of its operations were seriously limited since independent film-makers have always been forced to support themselves by other means, restricting the time and energy available to organise co-op activities. The immediate impact of last year's grant from the Production Board to the co-op Workshop was to greatly enhance our production facilities and to stimulate much new activity by providing for salaried staff who can assume a greater work load and a greater level of responsibility for co-op activities. The Cinema and Distribution services have attempted to keep pace with the Workshop by expanding their activities--sponsoring David Curtis' year-long season of screenings devoted to reviewing the history of the avant-garde, initiating seminars like 'Theory of Avant-Garde Film Practice' held in February, and planning a new distribution catalogue--

.../...

and yet something of an imbalance in our operations has resulted; operations which, we would like to stress, are viewed as inter-related aspects of the general project of stimulating a healthy independent British cinema, a project in which the co-op's specific contribution is the development of a filmic avant-garde.

In seeking financial assistance for our activities in the past, we have been forced to fragment our operations to suit established categories of arts patronage. Because we now feel a need to present our activities as an entirety (the need, say, for a new catalogue should be seen in light of increased production on the part of the Workshop, a point which is more difficult to make in separate applications forwarded to different BFI departments), we are submitting an overall application to the Executive Committee for consideration. The application is fully itemised to facilitate analysis, but it is presented in the hope that the co-op's needs will be considered in their entirety.

Application jointly produced by: Deke Dusingberre
Mary Pat Leece
William Raban
Liz Rhodes
Guy Sherwin

On behalf of the LFMC Executive Committee: Mike Dunford, Chair
Anne Rees-Mogg, Secretary
Peter Gidgal, Treasurer
Malcolm Le Grice
Annabel Nicolson
Chris Welsby

WORKSHOP REPORT

62 ~~new~~ members.

In the four months since the Co-op re-opened at the new premises, ~~thirty-nine~~ more filmmakers have joined the workshop. Not only does the workshop serve filmmakers in the London area, but new members are coming from as far afield as Paris, Wales, and Manchester.

The grant aid from the B.F.I. has enabled the workshop to improve existing facilities and provide extensions into new areas of film production:

Editing - We now have excellent facilities for all aspects of picture and sound cutting. There is sufficient space and equipment to accommodate four people editing picture and sound at any one time.

Printing - The contact printer produces high quality black and white and colour release prints. The optical printer is arriving soon, and will fulfill a vital need for filmmakers who in the past have been largely deprived of this most expensive of laboratory processes.

Processing - The demand on the contact printer has been greatly increased now that we have an on-site b&w processing plant. It has effectively cut delays in the intermediate stages between shooting a film and projecting the rushes. It is now easily possible to view a rush print from negative material that has been shot on the same day.

Film viewing - Now that the Co-op has installed a dual purpose sound recording booth and projection box, film viewing facilities have been raised to cinema standards. The newly acquired double band projector is useful here and is our first step towards an integrated dubbing and sound transfer studio.

Staffing - Perhaps the most significant advance has been in staffing the workshop. Previously the Co-op didn't have the resources to pay organisers to run the workshop. All the work that was done was voluntary. This made it extremely difficult to teach new members how to use the equipment, and most important of all, there was no technician regularly on hand to service and repair the machinery when necessary.

The workshop is now staffed five days and one evening a week and there is always at least one organiser available to do everything from giving teaching and advice, to servicing of equipment, to the general caretaking job of keeping the building clean and tidy.

In the last six months, much time has been devoted to converting the new building to our needs and to installing the equipment. But now with most of the work completed, we look forward to several months of uninterrupted film production.

However, we want to continue our expansion over the next year. The area we are most in need of is in sound transfer and dubbing. We need more staffing time to service this area and extend our teaching possibilities. We want to make structural improvements to the building, start a maintenance workshop, and so on.

The workshop application that follows is in six sections:

1. staffing
2. overheads
3. maintenance
4. new equipment
5. structural alterations
6. insurance against moving

1. Staffing

We need three people to run the workshop. Firstly, to enable us to stay open longer (6 days a week) and for more evenings. Secondly, to set up and service the sound dubbing and transfer equipment. Thirdly, to devote more time to developing the educational function of the workshop. On this third point we envisage short film courses as a growing function of the workshop. Following a trial short course in printing and processing techniques with a group of students from Exeter we have extended invitations to other art schools and adult education centres.

The three members of staff would have specialist skills and responsibilities:

- 1st person - technical advisor and servicing of printing, processing and editing equipment.
- 2nd person - technical advisor and servicing of sound transfer and interlock equipment and tape recorders.
- 3rd person - to organize group classes, or workshop sessions devoted to particular aspects of film production.

Three persons at £45 per week for one year.
(£45 x 3 x 52)

£7020.00

2. Overheads

Rent	£ 460.00
Telephone	250.00
Electricity (lights, machinerey, some heating)	600.00
Calor Gas heating	200.00
	<u>£ 1510.00</u>

3. Maintenance

Much time and money would be saved if the Co-op became more self-sufficient for doing essential repair work. For this purpose, application is made for tools to equip a small machine-tool workshop. This would be administered by the workshop technician.

This workshop would be of particular benefit to filmmakers since it would ~~be~~ provide resources for manufacturing various specialised items of camera equipment. In this capacity, it would be fulfilling the practical needs of those engaged in experimental film research.

For setting up repair workshop:

Metalworking tools (workbench, vices, lathe, tap & dye sets, power drill, spanner sets, files, grinders, etc.) £ 1200.00

Woodworking tools	£ 100.00
Electrical circuit testing equipment	30.00
Other servicing of equipment and replacement of parts, estimated	300.00
	<hr/>
	£1630.00

4. New Equipment

This is in three parts: a. Sound Transfer and Dubbing
 b. Shooting Studio
 c. Equipment for Teaching Purposes

a. Sound Transfer and Dubbing

The Co-op has developed a reputation for its innovating role in film printing techniques, largely due to the availability of an ex-laboratory contact printer.

The equivalent development of the possibilities of sound has been prohibited by the cost of hiring dubbing theatres. For significant advances to be made in the use of sound with film, availability of equipment is a prerequisite.

It is therefore most important that we build on this aspect of film production.

For this we need the following equipment:

4 track interlocked magnetic playback/record machine	£ 4500.00
Projector interlocked with the above	1000.00
Nagra III	600.00
Nagra synchroniser & equaliser	300.00
Revox Tape Recorder	400.00
Mixer	170.00
Quad Amp	130.00
Speakers	150.00
Leads, sockets, patchboard	100.00
Installation & streamlining functions of above equipment	400.00
	<hr/>
	£ 7750.00

b. Shooting Studio

An application is being made by the cinema to build a lobby and add curtains (for acoustics) to the cinema space. This also doubles with our requirements when using the cinema space as a shooting studio.

To realize the full potential of the shooting studio, we need the following equipment:

Strong dolly tri-pod	300.00
Directional Mike	220.00
Mike booms and stands	100.00
Lighting track	150.00
Colorama backdrop paper	80.00
Lightweight dexion-type framework for flexible partitioning of space, (also useful for expanded cinema events.)	150.00
	<hr/>
	£ 1000.00

c. Equipment for Teaching Purposes

As mentioned previously, one of the new roles that the Co-op sees for itself is in teaching.

The courses that we are now offering deal only with the secondary stages of film production.

i.e. printing..to..processing..to..editing..to..projection.

This limits our classes to those who have their own 16mm cameras and tape recorders. We want to extend our teaching scope by making all aspects of film production available, on site, at the Co-op.

i.e. camera..to..process..to..print..to..
tape..to..transfer..to..mag mixing..to.. > edit..to double
band
projection

There is an undeniable immediacy of filmmaking procedures here, which makes it highly suitable for teaching purposes.

To this end we need three inexpensive cameras and portable tape recorders:

3 non-reflex Bolexes at £80 each	£ 240.00
3 Uher portable tape recorders at £70 each	210.00
	<hr/>
	£ 450.00

total of sections a.b.c. £9200.00

5. Structural Alterations

For efficient use of the workshop space we must make the following structural alterations.

Sectioning of print room into 2 halves, so that both printers can be used simultaneously	£ 100.00
Building of self-draining floor for processing area	100.00
Building of lobby to shooting studio space, as a barrier to heat/light/sound (this figure is entered in the Cinema report)	--
Further sectioning of edit room space to enclose separate editing tables	100.00
	<hr/>
	£ 300.00

6. Insurance Against Moving

We are hoping it may be possible for the Co-op to stay in its new location for several years, since it is well suited to our present needs. However, there remains an element of uncertainty, pending the result of a public enquiry into the proposed redevelopment of the present site.

This may mean that another move will have to be conducted in the near future, and as insurance against this, we would like to

make application for costs to cover these expenses should they occur.

Hire of plant to move machinery and transport to new location	\$ 300.00
Re-installation costs, (rewiring, plumbing, drainage.) estimated	1200.00
	<hr/>
	\$1500.00

Total of Application Made

Items 1 - 6

1. Staffing	7020.00
2. Overheads	1510.00
3. Maintenance	1630.00
4. New Equipment	9200.00
5. Structural Alterations	300.00
6. Insurance Against Moving	1500.00
	<hr/>
	\$21900.00

DISTRIBUTION REPORT

Paralleling the increased activity of both the workshop and the cinema the Co-op distribution office has increased the efficiency of its operation and has begun to expand its services to the film community. Many of the North American prints which the distribution library possesses were deposited with us in the summer 1968, and since print care has not been consistent, there is much checking and cleaning work to be done in order to insure that our users receive prints in satisfactory condition. This task, originally delegated to the workshop staff, was simply too much for the workshop staff to undertake in addition to setting up and running the workshop; the distribution office has therefore assumed this responsibility.

Therefore, an immediate need of the distribution office (and we would like to stress the urgency of this request) is for some education in the proper care and maintenance of prints. Basic sprocket repair and simple cleaning (with carbon tet substitute) are the extent of our knowledge and technology and seem inadequate in the long run.

We would greatly appreciate the opportunity to spend some time with an expert in print conservation (from the National Archive ?) to learn specific techniques (e.g. the best way to repair an old splice) and general procedures (e.g. whether it is best to wax or to lacquer a new print or not to treat it at all, etc.) This minimal commitment on the part of the BFI would benefit the distribution library.

As part of its increased distribution services, the Co-op is now preparing a new catalogue, one which would rationalize existing data and which would include the new titles added to the library since the previous catalogue was issued over two years ago. We have considered the problem in terms of initial cost and in terms of constant revision, and have decided to produce the catalogue on our own Gestetner duplicating machine. This drastically reduces cost (only the cover would be printed elsewhere) yet, when done carefully, produces a fairly impressive catalogue (see, for instance, the recent catalogue produced by Ulrich Gregor for the Arsenal Kino, Berlin.) Our plans also entail having two holes punched near the spine so that the catalogue can be inserted in a 2-ring binder by regular users; thus, with the Gestetner at hand, we can issue supplements/corrections regularly, thereby indefinitely extending the life of the catalogue.

The impending publication of a new catalogue is, of course, itself a stimulus to the acquisition of new prints. The Co-op distribution office is now actively encouraging film-makers here and abroad to use our services by depositing prints with us. (Jonas Mekas, for example, has appointed us as his executors in the attempt to regain his prints seized by the Official Receivers after the liquidation of Vaughan Films: those prints will then be distributed by the Co-op.) There remain, however, several gaps in the Co-op's valuable collection of North American

and European avant-garde films, films which should certainly be available for viewing in Great Britain (e.g. ANTICIPATION OF THE NIGHT and DOG STAR MAN by Stan Brakage, EAT by Warhol, HEAVEN AND EARTH MAGIC by Harry Smith, FLAMING CREATURES by Jack Smith, ~~an~~ BIRTH OF A NATION by Klaus Wyborny, etc.) While the final selection of titles will rest with representatives of the FAS, the film community as a whole and the Co-op, we are asking for a commitment from the BFI Executive to support this project by allocating enough funds to purchase roughly five hours of new prints.

A related capital investment which the distribution library currently needs but cannot afford is another film storage cabinet. We depleted our resources by having three very good ones built last year (to the specifications of our insurance agent); we have already outgrown them.

Lastly, but by no means least importantly, we find that our ~~ambitious~~ plans entail more work than can be reasonably handled by one full-time staff member. The return on our bookings pay all overheads including one salary, but in order to realize our objectives for the coming year, we will need a supplementary salary.

LFMC DISTRIBUTION OFFICE APPLICATION

1.	Catalogue: 200 pgs., 2000 copies stencils, paper, cover, binding.	£ 700.00
	Gestetner overhaul	50.00
2.	New Prints (ca. 5 hours 16mm colour film)	1700.00
3.	Film Storage Cabinet	175.00
4.	One supplementary salary - £45 per week	2340.00
		<hr/>
		£4965.00

CINEMA REPORT

In the four months since the cinema has been operating out of premises at Fitzroy Road the number of programmes has been increased to include not only the original weekly screening of contemporary experimental work but also:

1. a weekly series of historical avant-garde programmes
2. open screenings
3. a two-day seminar "Theory of Avant-Garde Film Practice
4. from April 7 regular Independent Filmmakers Association screenings (see Appendix for programmes.)

In conjunction with the expansion in programming the audience attendance has risen from twenty people per screening (see GLAA Cinema Application April '75) to a regular attendance of 60, special programmes drawing well over 100 people, (the cinema has good seating for 60 people and can manage seating over 90.)

Membership is increasing by an average of 100 members per month.

However, if the cinema is to continue to provide this unique opportunity for Independent/Experimental film to be shown and discussed it requires financial help.

CINEMA PROPOSAL

This is divided into two parts. Section A is concerned with a basic grant to cover one salary, and certain improvements to the existing cinema. Section B is an application for a guarantee against loss.

Section A

<u>Salary</u> £45 per week for one year	£2340.00
<u>Repair and Maintenance of Cinema</u>	
1. Structural Improvements to the entrance lobby and stairs	200.00
2. Acoustics (curtaining)	100.00
3. Floor-covering for projection room	50.00
4. Bricking up windows (insurance requirement)	250.00
5. Re-decorating and maintenance	150.00
	<hr/>
	£3090.00

Section B

The cinema has run thirty-one programmes since November 5, 1975. In the year July 1976-June 1977 the cinema's present scope should be expanded to include:

- low
Churn*
- a. more seminar/lectures
 - b. a series of video programmes of artists working in this area. This could be financed with a minimum of additional funds.
 - c. a series of structured programmes based on the Co-op's own collection of films by independent/experimental film-makers, possibly collaborating with the BFI Regional Dept on importation of new or unavailable prints.

Expenditures per month:

1. Rent/basic electricity	£16.00
2. Maintenance of projectors	10.00
3. Heating (gas/electricity)	40.00
4. Projectionists fees	80.00
5. Phone & postage	30.00
6. Film rentals (calculated at approx. £25 per performance)	400.00
7. Publicity/Programme notes	30.00
	<hr/>
	£606.00 per month
	12
	<hr/>
	£7272.00 per annum
8. Occasional overheads (i.e. lecture fees and foreign rentals.)	600.00 per annum
	<hr/>
	total per annum £7872.00

Income

1. Revenue from audience attendance (Average audience of 50 per screening at .50 * £100 per week)	£5200.00 per annum
2. Membership (50 per month at £1.00)	600.00 per annum
	<hr/>
	total income £5800.00
	<hr/>
Guarantee Against Loss Needed	£7872.00
	- 5800.00
	<hr/>
	£2072.00

CUMULATIVE APPLICATION FIGURES:

Workshop	£ 21,900.00
Distribution	4,965.00
Cinema	5,162.00
	<hr/>
LFMC Total	£ 32,027.00