

FILM AND VIDEO UMBRELLA

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R E P O R T a n d F E A S I B I L I T Y S T U D Y

October 1988

Introduction.

Since April this year the Film & Video Umbrella, as well as continuing to promote touring packages of artists' films and tapes, has been involved in research into the opportunities for increased exhibition of video in particular, and time based work in general, in U.K. galleries and arts centres.

A three page questionnaire was circulated to public sector galleries and arts centres throughout the U.K. and 54 replies were received. The results of this survey are included in the form of statistical information, proposed developments and proposed solutions to apparent problems.

David — Juliet's
comments attached — which
I agree with. Discuss further
if you'd like to

R

Rodney

for ~~the~~ your attn:

My main concerns are

1) There is not a much in the way of timescale mentioned for projects

2) Contribution of British Artists / APVC work underrepresented

What are your thoughts?

CURRENT PROJECTS

Hold Me While I'm Naked: The Perverse Comedies of George Kuchar

A 3 programme touring package plus options of six feature films as further contextualization. Opened at the Scala Cinema London. Brochure produced and copy attached. Press cuttings attached. Venues confirmed as follows:

Scala Cinema London September 1988
Phoenix Cinema Leicester
Filmhouse Edinburgh
Cornerhouse Manchester
Watershed Bristol
City Lights Nottingham
Chapter Arts Cardiff
Metro Cinema Derby
Duke's Cinema Lancaster
Corn Exchange Ipswich
Triangle Birmingham
Forum Northampton
Film Theatre Glasgow
Everyman London
Antwerp International Film Festival

Rituals In Transfigured Time: The Films of Maya Deren

A 4 programme touring package and the first showing of Deren's complete works (including Divine Horsemen especially purchased for the tour). Brochure produced and copy attached: Venues confirmed as follows:

Cornerhouse Manchester
Tate Gallery London
Antwerp International Film Festival

Peter Gidal and Materialist Film Aesthetics

A 3 programme touring package of films including Peter Gidal, Kurt Kren, Nicky Hamlyn, Paul Sharits, Mike Dunford, Malcolm Le Grice, Annabel Nicholson, Michael Maziere, Lis Rhodes, Lucy Panteli, Andy Warhol, Michael Snow and Jean-Luc Godard.

Avant-garde Film Event/Conference

To be co-curated with Kate Leys. At present negotiating with the ICA London, the BFI Production Division and Routledge Books for a fairly substantial event on avant-garde cinema for 1989. At very early planning stages.

The Dada Effect

A 3-4 programme touring package of film and video tracing the influence of the Dada aesthetic from the 1920s to contemporary work. Brochure to be produced. Tour to begin early 1989.

FUTURE PROJECTS

British Film-makers Tour

*Track to David
Rohrer*
A possible tour of black film/video/installation for galleries in 1989.

Kenneth Anger Guardian Lecture Tour

At planning stage but NFT have already approved project. For September 1989

American Women Film-makers Tour

Includes work by Marjorie Keller, Lesley Thornton, Abigail Child, Su Friedrich and will focus on found-footage, memory and the family.
For January 1990

Andy Warhol Tour

To coincide with major Warhol exhibition at Hayward Gallery London. September 1989.

C U R R E N T P R O J E C T S (V i d e o)

A Thoughtful Gaze: The Video Tapes of Bill Viola.

A 3 programme touring package, produced in association with Riverside Studios, London. Includes a six page illustrated brochure. Available for touring from October 1988.

Electric Eyes: British Video Tapes 1985/88.

A four programme package with brochure, due for release in November 1988. To be previewed at London Film Festival.

The Observatory: A European Video Collection.

Presented in association with EDGE 88. The Observatory is a collection of 27 video tapes to be exhibited as a public access, self selection videotheque. The programme was shown in London during the EDGE 8 Festival and is now touring. The dates and venues are:

EDGE 88/Art Works Space, London: Sept 14th. - 25th.
The Cornerhouse, Manchester; through October.
9th. National Video Festival, Bracknell; 21 - 23 October.
Kettles Yard, Cambridge; November 5 - 13.

During EDGE 88 The Observatory was open daily for six hours and was constantly in use. There were over 250 individual requests for tapes during the London run, and approximately 500 visitors in 11 days.

FUTURE PROGRAMMES.

THE SUITCASE SHOW:

A touring exhibition of small scale mixed media installations by four commissioned artists. The exhibition will be launched in summer 1989 and will tour into 1990. The artists being commissioned are:

Rose Finn Kelcey
Ivan Unwin
Donald Rodney
Graham Young.

MADE IN SCOTLAND (vol. II)

A package produced by the Television Workshop, Duncan of Jordanstone College, Dundee, featuring work by artists and post graduate students made at the Workshop. This package is being co-promoted by the Umbrella. "Made in Scotland" will be released at the end of November.

O N G O I N G D E V E L O P M E N T S &
F U T U R E P R O J E C T S

1: Information.

As a long term development, an extensive information archive is being built up. The archive will exist both in terms of printed matter, and as a computer database. The physical archive is a collection of catalogues, magazines, articles, books, brochures and publicity materials relating to artists' film and video.

The database is gradually being assembled and will eventually incorporate all of the following elements:

- An extensive international listing of artists' video tapes.
- An international register of video artists.
- A directory of installation artists & works.
- Bibliographies of film/video publications.
- Listings of major exhibitions and festivals.
- Comprehensive address & Mailing lists of artists, galleries, festivals, distributors and publications.
- A selective international listing of experimental film.

The database will be an invaluable resource both in terms of the Umbrella's own programming activities, and as an information source for curators, programmers, writers and others interested in the field.

2:
Printed Matter.

In addition to the regular broadsheets produced with each touring package, there will be occasional special publications. The first of these is to be a catalogue of Media Installations by British artists. It will cover video installations, expanded cinema installations, tape/slide and computer/interactive media works produced in the U.K. over the past decade. The publication will cover selected works by each featured artist, along with a full listing of other works by those artists. There will also be introductory essays and other information intended to provide an overview of this area of contemporary art. It is intended that the catalogue should serve as a promotional device for the artists featured; as a source of information for exhibition organisers and as a research tool for writers and students. The catalogue is due to be published in February 1989.

*To collector
available*

3:

Promoting Video Nationally.

On the basis of the information generated by the galleries survey, a number of strategic initiatives are being taken. The first of these is to send regular information bulletins about video events to venues throughout the U.K. Following on from the survey, a conference is being arranged, to involve representatives of all the galleries involved, as well as artists, distributors and writers. The conference will be for one day, and will take place during VIDEO POSITIVE 89 at The Tate Gallery Liverpool next February. It is intended that the conference will co-incide with openings of video installations at the Tate and Bluecoat galleries, and with screening programmes, so that delegates will be able not only to take part in seminars, but also to see a selection of video works. The occasion will also be used to launch the Media Installations Catalogue.

4:

Projects for future development.

Preliminary discussions have taken place with a number of venues, organisations and individuals around the country with a view to developing a variety of projects and initiatives over the next three years. These schemes include:

EDGE 90: Projects U.K. Newcastle. It is proposed that the follow up to EDGE 88 will take place in Newcastle in 1990, and should include a significant video section.

GLASGOW 1990. As European City of Culture for 1990, Glasgow will be hosting a broad range of arts events. Various ideas for video exhibitions and festivals are being discussed.

MANCHESTER. A proposal is being developed to stage a major video installation exhibition in Manchester in 1989 or 90. The main venue would be The Cornerhouse where a number of installations and screening programmes would take place, and in addition, artists would be commissioned to produce site specific video works for various public locations around the city.

SHEFFIELD 1991. The location for the 1991 World Student Olympic Games. An international video festival or exhibition is planned to co-incide with the games.

It is envisaged that the Umbrella's involvement in the above projects would generate substantial touring programmes.

DISTRIBUTION.

As well as offering touring packages to venues for one off or multiple screenings, the Umbrella is planning to distribute its programmes in a number of ways, beginning with ELECTRIC EYES. The package, which is drawn largely from tapes at LVA, will be available on Umatic and VHS formats, for a variety of applications. It will be available as a complete exhibition package to be shown in the U.K. and internationally: individual programmes will be available for screening in Film Theatres, Arts Centres and Colleges: VHS copies will be available for sale to libraries and private individuals. In the case of VHS sales to libraries etc. the tapes will be sold subject to an agreement that forbids public screenings.

The Umbrella will be collaborating with Eventspace (Glasgow) and Artapes (Dundee) on joint distribution of two packages: "Electric Eyes" and "Made in Scotland II". Artapes, based at the Television Workshop, Duncan of Jordanstone College, is releasing "Made in Scotland" at the end of November. The Umbrella will help to promote the package in England. In return, Artapes and Eventspace will promote Umbrella packages to a network of smaller venues throughout Scotland.

INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION.

Discussions are under way with organisations in the USA, Canada and various parts of Europe, to exchange information and programmes in the future. The Umbrella will be aiming to export packages of British film and video to galleries, museums, festivals etc. and is discussing possible international programmes for exhibition in the U.K.

5:

The Galleries Survey:

General Comments:

The overall response to the survey itself, and to follow up discussions and enquiries, has been positive and encouraging. In principle, the basics are in place to establish a network of regional galleries that could support an ongoing programme of touring exhibitions and events. Many of the respondents are interested not only in taking on touring programmes, but also in originating projects, and in finding ways to incorporate video/time based work into other exhibition programmes. There is an evident need and desire for information, and an enthusiasm for new kinds of art practise. There are, however, a number of practical problems that need to be addressed before advantage can fully be taken of the opportunities that potentially exist.

5a:

Access to technical facilities.

A major obstacle to the growth of video exhibition, particularly in terms of installations, is the difficulty and expense of obtaining and maintaining video equipment. What is available in the public sector is inadequate and over subscribed; rentals from the commercial sector are prohibitively expensive; sponsorship in kind is increasingly difficult to secure as a result of overuse in recent years; rentals even from the access/workshop centre are expensive, in addition to which the equipment is often old, under maintained, and anyway, in short supply. Ways of making good quality equipment available to would be exhibitors is therefore of the utmost importance if any real growth in video exhibition on a national scale is to be pursued. This problem was stressed repeatedly by galleries responding to the survey; indeed, it was cited as the most difficult problem in the majority of cases. We envisage that it will be a primary topic of discussion at the regional programmers' conference to be held during VIDEO POSITIVE 89 in Liverpool next February.

There are several ways in which this problem could be addressed.

Proposal 1:

Pressure be brought to bear upon a major manufacturer or supplier of equipment to engage in significant sponsorship: i.e. an agreement to loan equipment for [x] number of exhibitions over a specified time scale.

Proposal 2:

The Arts Council equipment loan scheme be significantly augmented to meet demand.

Proposal 3:

That a national equipment pool be established, under the joint direction of the Umbrella and the subscribing galleries. The pool would be administered and maintained by a) a small permanent staff devoted entirely to this function, or b) an existing technology based organisation such as Steve Littman's Hands On Productions.

The pool could be financed under the Arts Council's incentive funding scheme in the following way: an AC grant would make up one third of the budget and the remainder would be raised by contributions from subscribing galleries, rentals of the equipment, and sponsorship from Corporate interests.

Estimated costs:

In very general terms, a budget of 45,000 would enable the establishment of a core facility that should address the needs of most video exhibition projects.

Facility provision:

The equipment pool would operate in two ways: firstly it would hold a reserve of video equipment to be used for large scale installation exhibitions; i.e. quantities of monitors as well as Umatic and VHS video machines; secondly, it would provide a number of small touring exhibition modules, consisting basically of a Umatic system with large monitor and stereo sound. These modules could be sent as part of a touring package so that venues without easy access to playback facilities could accommodate the programmes.

5b:

Access to information.

Many galleries who have stated an interest in exhibiting more video comment that it is difficult to find out what is available, where, and when new work can be seen. We will try to address this in a number of ways:

By compiling and circulating regular information bulletins about video events & exhibitions.

By producing an occasional broadsheet with reviews and information about new productions.

By producing an annual 'sampler' of new tapes that would be available to galleries for preview purposes.

By continuing to offer high quality packages and programmes at subsidised rates for touring.

Furthermore, we will endeavour to make promotional visits to strategic regional venues at regular intervals, to follow up on the publicity materials that will be circulated.

5c:

Staff training/Technical expertise.

Many galleries are worried about exhibiting technology based work on the basis that their staff lack experience and confidence in this area. Perhaps an AC training scheme in video/av for gallery staff could help to address this problem. The Umbrella could provide information and expertise to help establish such a course.

5d:

Financial resources.

Many smaller regional venues have problems finding spare money to invest in new areas like video exhibition. On the one hand, we recognise that they must be encouraged to consider video as not an extra but as one choice among others within the range of programmable exhibitions. On the other hand we are also aware that in order to develop new audiences and to encourage those galleries without experience or proven commitment, we must allow a process of familiarisation to take place, and to expedite this, it may be necessary to find additional funding that will ease the financial burden on the receiving organisation.

GALLERIES SURVEY

STATISTICS

54 Galleries/Arts Centres in England, Scotland and Wales replied to the FVU survey and the following information was obtained in response to a series of 21 questions.

PREVIOUS EXHIBITIONS:

Of the venues contacted, over 3/4 had in the past two years exhibited some form of time based art:

Video Installations:	25
Video Tapes	34
Multi media installations	30
Performance	36
Tape/Slide	20

TECHNICAL INFORMATION:

The distribution of technical facilities for video/film exhibition was found to be as follows:

Umatic Video player	19
VHS video player	31
Monitor/Television	35
Carousel Projectors	42
16 mm Cine Projector	21
Technician, or staff member with av skills	32

FUTURE PROGRAMMING:

Asked about their interests in exhibiting video and time based work, venues responded "yes" in principle to featuring the following types of work, as follows:

Experimental/Artists' Film	20
Artists' video tapes	39
Video/Media based installations	39
Mixed exhibitions including video	41
Combined Video/Performance exhibitions	34

Asked about what specific FVU services would be of most benefit, the answers were:

Information about video/time based art	40
Ready made touring programmes	36
Curatorial help and advice	26
Technical help and advice	31
Assistance with the production of shows	28

These responses were further broken down into priority areas which were distributed as follows:

[H = High M = Medium L = Low O = Other]

	H	M	L	O
Information	21	6	2	11
Touring packages	21	4	4	7
Curatorial help	5	10	2	9
Technical help	14	10	0	7
Assistance in production	3	9	8	8

In terms of general interest in the area, and stated commitment to try to develop programming, the following positive responses were registered:

Programme would benefit from more video etc.	41
Would like to be involved in FVU network	40
Would collaborate with FVU on projects	33
Would take part in workshop/discussion	42

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Of the galleries responding, 20 were part of an arts centre or larger arts complex of some kind, and 15 had some kind of links with other local arts organisations including Film Theatres, Performance Spaces and Film/Video Workshops. Of these, 29 were to some extent involved in co-programming with other departments or outside venues.

*Lyndal
Haines*