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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 (revised November 1988)

F I L M A N D V I D E O U M B R E L L A

INTRODUCTION

Since April this year the Film and 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 UK galleries and arts centres.

A three page questionnaire was circulated to public sector galleries and arts centres throughout the UK 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.

CURRENT PROJECTS

A Thoughtful Gaze: The Video Tapes of Bill Viola

A 3 programmes 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-programmes package with brochure, due for release November 1988. Previewed at the London Film Festival. Includes three works by ethnic film-makers.

Video Positive Festival, Liverpool February 1989
ICA London January 1989
Event Space, Glasgow, March 1989
Aberdeen Art Gallery March 1989

The Observatory: A European Video Collection

Presented in association with EDGE 88. The Observatory is a collection of 27 video tapes (included one British ethnic video artist) and was exhibited as a public access, self-selection videotheque. The programme was shown in London during the EDGE 88 Festival and was toured on a limited basis at following venues:

Art Works Space, London (EDGE 88) September 14-25 1988
Cornerhouse, Manchester October 1988
Ninth International Video Festival, Bracknell October 21-23 1988
Kettles Yard, Cambridge November 5-13 1988

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.

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 contextualisation. Opened at Scala Cinema London. Brochure produced (copies sent October) and copies of press-notices sent October. Venues confirmed as follows:

Scala Cinema, London September 1988
Ritzy Cinema, London (programme 2) October 6 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 Cinema Birmingham
Forum Nottingham
Film Theatre Glasgow
Everyman London
Antwerp International Film Festival

Rituals in Transfigured Time: The Films of Maya Deren

A 4 programme touring package of complete retrospective of Deren's films. Brochure produced. Venues confirmed as follows:

Tate Gallery London December 1988 - January 1989
Cornerhouse Manchester December - January
Antwerp International Film Festival March 1989
Phoenix Leicester February 1989

The Austere Gaze

A 3 programme season of films centred on the work of Peter Gidal to coincide with the publication of his new book Materialist Film. Broadsheet to be produced. Includes work by British artists Nicky Hamlyn, Lis Rhodes, Michael Maziere, Lucy Panteli, Mike Dunford, Annabel Nicholson, Malcolm Le Grice etc

ICA London January - February 1989

DADA Lives!: Dada-inspired films from past to present.

A 3 programme touring package tracing the influence, from past to present, of the Dada spirit in film.

ICA London March 1989

Antwerp International Film Festival March 1989

FUTURE PROGRAMME PROPOSALS

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 this year.

British Artists' Time-Based Work Tour

A gallery (about three) tour of time-based art by including video, film and installation. For late 1989 early 1990. Commissioned installation work and suggested curator: Karen Alexander.

Scorpio Rising - Kenneth Anger Guardian Lecture Tour

A tour of Anger films for September 1989.

New Directors Tour

A tour of new work from Arts Council/BFI/Channel 4 commissioning schemes for end of 1989 beginning 1990.

ONGOING DEVELOPMENTS AND FUTURE ORGANISATIONAL PROJECTS

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:

1. An extensive international listing of artists' video tapes.
2. An international register of video artists.
3. A directory of installation artists and works.
4. Bibliographies of film/video publications.
5. Listings of major exhibitions and festivals.
6. Comprehensive address and mailing lists of artists, galleries, festivals, distributors and publications.
7. 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 UK 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.

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 UK. 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 of the North Liverpool next February. (Feb. 17) It is intended that the conference will coincide 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 few years. These schemes include:

EDGE 90: Projects UK 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 1990. The main venue would be 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 coincide with the games.

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

5. 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 UK 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 1988. 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.

The Umbrella has negotiated non-theatrical distribution rights with James Mackay for a three-year period for two programmes of early Derek Jarman Super 8 films (both on video and Super 8 format). This will provide the Umbrella with income with minimum overheads and at the same time, make Jarman's short independent art films available.

We are considering bringing more kinds of film and video into distribution where appropriate.

5. 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 and festivals etc and is discussing possible international programmes for exhibition in the UK.

6. Finance

Rentals and Hiring:

Most packages comprise programmes of 60-75 minutes and venues are charged £45 per programme per screening. Multiple screenings at the same venue are given reduced rates. It is felt that this figure is the most attractive one to venues and will in general allow us to break even financially. However, the recent rental price increases by the London Filmmakers Co-op, for example, from 50p per minute to 75p per minute is a set-back and is difficult to pass on to the venue. This will probably mean either higher subsidy for packages which include Co-op films or coming to an arrangement with the Co-op to keep the prices basically the same for extended tour bookings.

Where galleries are concerned, £45 per screening is used but for block bookings, multiples of single day pricing are arranged. For example, a booking for a week would be charged at a three-day rate. For a monthly booking cost of making copies of tapes would also be included as tapes would be worn out after month show.

Most tapes are hired from London Video Arts with whom we have established a good working relationship. We have arranged terms for extended tour deals giving us also limited rights to make

copies, for example. We are charged half the price LVA use for museum sales.

7. Expansion of Touring Activities

In the case of video, we have already, prior to our target date, launched two major tours (Bill Viola and Electric Eyes - see above) and a short one (Observatory programme - see above). These major programmes have a long tour life (perhaps two years or more). The nature of video makes this possible. This will have a cumulative effect, with each year touring programmes being added to existing tours. We believe that a total of six new tours per year for film and video should be our target. It must be pointed out that there are appropriate points in the year when tours can be launched (September, January and April) in order to attract publicity and audiences and have a fairly long opening run. Summer is very much a dead period for venues. Equally tour openings can be governed by other events like festivals e.g. Electric Eyes was opened successfully at the London Film Festival in November 1988.

It is hoped that tours will be complemented by single events e.g. the Liverpool Video Festival in February 1989 or by fairly brief gallery tours of either video or installation media work e.g. the Suitcase tour is aimed at three or four galleries.

8. Collaboration with Galleries

Meetings have been arranged with gallery curators and joint-projects are at early stages e.g. Tate Gallery London (with Catherine Lacey), MOMA Oxford (with Chrissie Iles), MOMA San Francisco USA and numerous other British galleries.

It is also hoped that the Umbrella one day event being organised for the Liverpool Video Positive 89 event (see above) in February 1989 will provide a basis for working with galleries and responding to their needs in the areas of financing, technical back-up, curating advice etc.

9. British and Ethnic Work

The Umbrella was constituted originally in 1983 as a means of picking up in an opportunistic fashion British and overseas work already packaged or brought into this country by other institutions or organisations e.g. Robert Breer tour, P. Adams Sitney tour, George Kuchar tour and Svankmajer tours. It has also made a major contribution to British film and video culture with its extensive tours of British Super 8 work. the Subverting Television which brought scratch to a wider public, the British women's work (programmed by Cordelia Swann), the Derek Jarman

tour and by co-ordinating all of the Arts Council's Prizewinners programmes (now ceased).

In video, three or four ethnic artists are included in the Electric Eyes tour. In film, most black experimental film-makers are funded by the BFI and toured by them through the British Film Institute. There is also an appointment imminent of a full-time Ethnic Advisory Programming officer at the BFI with whom we will hopefully collaborate, however it seems unrealistic to commit finances to an area already financed by other institutions. However we are hoping to organise a gallery installation show centred on notions of culture in the widest sense which would include ethnic film and video and multi-media artists.

Where British film-makers are concerned there is a familiar problem of touring British artists per se and we have adopted a policy often of including work by young British artists in thematic or auteurist packages e.g. Benita Raphan was included in the extremely successful Svankmajer II tour.

We have also based our programming on the fact that very little international work is seen in this country particularly since the collapse of the British avant-garde festival in the late 70s. This state of affairs still exists. Since the inception of the London Film Festival's inclusion of avant-garde film, this situation has improved but only for London audiences. Regional venues and audiences are still starved of even the classics of avant-garde/experimental cinema.

10. Umbrella Services

The Umbrella would and does charge for services where that involves a measurable work load, is well defined and requested by an institution or individual capable of paying e.g. EDGE 88 paid for our assistant to perform certain services for them. However most requests for information and such-like are made by artists, film-makers, venue programmers, researchers and curators and charging for such "services" would sour any good relations between us. We also see it as part of our function to provide a free information service obviously within reasonable limits.