

58th Meeting of the Artists' Film and Video Sub-Committee, held on Monday, March 5 1984, at 10.30 am in the first floor Board Room, 105 Piccadilly, London W1.

M I N U T E S

Present:

A.L. Rees Chairman
Anne Rees-Mogg
David Parsons
Tina Keane
Mary Pat Leece
Roger Wilson

Jo Comino
Vera Neubauer
Mick Hartney

Rodney Wilson Film Officer
David Curtis Assistant Film Officer
Anna Kruger Assistant Subsidy Officer
Trisha Anderson Secretary

Apologies for absence were received from Joanna Drew and Stuart Marshall.

1 Minutes of the Policy meeting of January 16.

Tina Keane said she had been mis-reported in para 3 saying that money should be freed from Film-Makers on Tour or the Umbrella Scheme in order to fund Circles. She suggested the amendment: "the needs of Circles should be considered".
The minutes were approved.

2 Financial Reports

- 2.1 The Assistant Subsidy Officer pointed out that the 1983/4 budget was overspent by £600 due to distribution awards over the £4000 originally allocated. The AFO pointed out that there was likely to be a shortfall in the Umbrella spending, and he proposed that this should offset the distribution overspending. This was agreed.
For the benefit of new members, the Chairman explained the financial relationship of the AFVSC to the parent body, the Advisory Committee on Arts Films. He summarised the Sub-Committee's discussion of the Arts Development Strategy as follows:
- a) Committee should continue to give priority to production funding. (pp2/6)
 - b) The position of LVA should be consolidated, especially in the area of exhibition.
 - c) There was an urgent need to establish the identity of film/video as an art form; and to extend its visibility in art galleries. (p5)
 - c) There was a need to give greater support to installation and expanded work. (p4)

- d) The Umbrella Scheme had mixed support, but there was full agreement on the need to increase promotion of work, especially through external initiatives. (p5)
- e) Purchase of equipment for workshops was no longer a priority. (p6)
- f) The placement bursaries scheme needed re-appraisal.
- g) Video Access Libraries attracted mixed support, but a majority looked at them favourably. (p7)

This had translated itself into a strategy for dealing with cuts or standstill, which placed Committee's activities in the following order of priority:

- a) Production funds (50% of total), including placement bursaries.
- b) Distribution Awards.
- c) Support for Film-Makers/Video Artists on Tour Schemes.
- d) Support for Umbrella Scheme.
- d) Support for LVA, and other major exhibition outlets.
- e) Purchase funds for Video Access Libraries.

Mary Pat Leece asked the Chairman whether the ICA was included in the video access library support. The Chairman stated that although the ICA library was initially funded by the AFVSC, responsibility for the ICA was the Regional Department's and Committee's recent commitment was to the regional libraries.

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2.2

The Assistant Film Officer introduced his suggested breakdown of funds. He told Committee that he had written the paper in response to the extreme difficulties facing the Committee last financial year. The first part of the paper was a suggested breakdown of funds for the financial year 1984/5 in the light of policy decisions made on January 16. The second part was intended merely to demonstrate the very real limitations on Committee's spending power. He reminded Committee that the support for video access libraries had been agreed at Policy Meeting, and needed to be built back into the allocation. His proposal entailed an increase in support for small/large production awards and bursaries; cessation of placement bursaries with the exception of those already allocated to LVA; (the policy decisions regarding placements to be postponed until 1985/6); a reserve of £9000 for the Umbrella Scheme, (which in the absence of funding for new Modular proposals, represented an overall reduction in exhibition subsidy); and a standstill on FMoT, Distribution/Completion funding.

David Parsons was concerned that the assessment of placement bursaries agreed at the Policy Meeting might be overlooked, and that colleges with placements would lose that element of their own budgets if the placements were discontinued for any length of time. The AFO pointed out that the timetable for the assessment had not yet been set. He added that at the Policy Meeting, provision for bursaries had been made within the production figures, and suggested possibly earmarking funds at the first 1984/5 producing meeting. DP remarked that whilst supporting the LVA bursary, it represented a concentrated period of activity in contrast to those in colleges such as NELP which allowed the production of a different type of work - one requiring time to develop, and involving the bursary holder in contract with the students and staff. He regarded this as very valuable.

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The Film Officer noted that in 1983/4 funds committed under Distribution had far exceeded the original allocation. He pointed out that the Completion element of this allocation had overtaken Distribution considerably, which suggested inadequate production funding in the first instance. The AFO agreed and suggested the problem stemmed from lack of more frequent Production meetings, pointing out that numerous projects requiring urgent funding emerged between the twice yearly Production meetings, and were consequently directed towards Distribution/Completion meetings. This he thought increased the case for a higher level of production funding. Tina Keane agreed and suggested a film placement bursary on similar lines to the video bursaries would help to relieve this situation. She was also concerned at the possibility of losing the Reading Bursary, it being the only bursary to include a performance element, an area Committee had agreed merited increased support.

Mick Hartney pointed out that the cessation of the Brighton Bursary would not pose a problem as the role of video within the college was being reappraised at present. He suggested that an extra tier of bursaries was necessary which would be placed within commercial corporate facilities. The FO pointed out that the bursaries were collaborative and money would have to be matched £ for £.

The Chairman suggested that further data was needed before policy decisions about placement bursaries could be taken. Committee agreed to bear in mind the AFO's paper when allocating funds, and to leave the decision on placement bursaries until later in the year.

Committee then considered part 2 of the AFO's paper. The AFO suggested that Committee should set a notional figure for video access libraries, LVA and for the Co-op before proceeding with the applications in detail. Jo Comino expressed concern over allocating the entire funds for exhibition/equipment at this meeting and leaving none for September. The Chairman pointed out that there had been a similar situation last year and Committee had warned the constituency of its lack of funds.

3 Matters Arising

AFVsc84p8

3.1 Completion/Distribution Meetings since November 1983

The report was accepted. IT WAS AGREED that a new member be appointed at the next meeting to supervise Distribution meetings from May onwards.

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3.2 NFT Shows and Forum

The Chairman thanked the AFO and Anne Rees-Mogg for their work on the shows, the Committee members for their participation in the Forum and Trisha Anderson for producing programme broadsheets and forum notes. TA mentioned that the attendance figures were approximately 160 (full house) for programme 1, and c90 for programmes 2, 3 and 4.

MPL asked Committee if any provision could be made in the budget for future forums and shows. This was thought impossible but Committee expressed a strong wish to develop the idea and it was decided to investigate other sources of funding for these events. The AFO suggested the possibility of mentioning the annual show in the terms of offer to artists. MPL was anxious that any forum or exhibition should be organised in consultation

with distributors and exhibitors and reflected their work in artists' film/video and the links between them and the Arts Council.

IT WAS AGREED that a special meeting be held to discuss the form and content of the proposed forum, and the possibility of regular annual shows of funded work.

- 3.3 Film-Makers/Video Artists on Tour 1983/4: attendance figures. The figures were accepted. The AFO informed Committee that the BFI Production Board had now set up its own FMoT Scheme and had enfranchised 6 film-makers to participate.

3.4 Subsidised Exhibitions: reports by the AFO

- 3.4.1 Diorama: had been a very enthusiastically attended show.
- 3.4.2 Northampton: had been fairly disappointing in attendance. MH agreed and thought as a participating artist, it was a disappointment. He thought this resulted from the siting of the venue, which was inaccessible. Publicity and organisation had otherwise been good
- 3.4.3 London Video Arts: comment was deferred until Committee considered their application.
- 3.4.4 "33" Guildford Street: The AFO expressed concern that there was little reference to the forthcoming events in recent publicity, but the Chairman understood that a leaflet was being prepared.

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3.5/6/7 Modular Scheme Units

The Chairman outlined the background to these exhibitions for the benefit of new members, and explained that due to the relatively high cost of the scheme, Committee had decided to curtail these activities in favour of the lower cost Umbrella Scheme.

The AFO pointed out that the paper provided showed Committee's exhibition policy to be working effectively. He pointed out that Frame by Frame and Image and Sound had only recently been made available and had therefore fewer bookings to date.

At this point Mike O'Pray joined the meeting to report on the Umbrella Scheme, its present programme and the new proposals. He reported that audience figures had been very good and noted the speaker attracted higher audiences. He pointed out that all of the current packages had been originally assembled by other organisations. The venue's own publicity had generally been good and reviews had appeared in Art Monthly, Time Out and City Limits. The broadsheets seemed popular and had been used to full effect.

The Chairman thanked MO for his report.

ARM asked why the lifespan of the packages was limited.

MO said whilst some packages (eg Cubism) could have been continued successfully, the distributors had other commitments for the films. He thought it possible that the distributor might reassemble the packages if there was sufficient demand.

MH suggested purchasing the films but the AFO pointed out that this was too expensive in present circumstances. The FO explained that this had been one of the reasons for discontinuing the Modular Scheme.

The Chairman thought the scheme so far had been extremely successful, especially in the regions.

MH questioned MO on the capacity of the scheme.

MO said he thought the maximum number of programmes possible in a year was probably 10. There were currently 3 on tour and 3-4 in preparation.

MPL asked whether he thought there was any possibility of working more closely with the distributors in the future. MO said that this was already occurring informally, with the Co-op and was an area he regarded as a priority.

4 Applications

4.1 Touring Packages

The Chairman outlined the background to these packages and asked the AFO to report on them.

4.1.1 Female Sensibility/Variations on the Square

The AFO explained that these proposals had been a response to the Modular Scheme and had been developed in 1982/3 when funds were more available. In the light of the present financial situation, he doubted the suitability of funding them. He suggested that Committee should either reject them completely or pass them for consideration to the appropriate distributors, or the Umbrella organiser for possible inclusion in his scheme. In either event the cost would be considerably reduced as the films/tapes could then be rented rather than purchased. He mentioned that Circles had shown some interest in the packages by Cecile Starr.

Committee expressed the view that the packages were interesting, particularly Female Sensibility, and valuable work would be wasted if they were to be abandoned completely. TK said that Female Sensibility was much needed as the tapes suggested were unavailable in England.

IT WAS AGREED to offer the packages to interested distributors and/or the Umbrella organiser. No budget discussion was thought possible until a system of packaging and promotion was agreed.

4.2 Maya Deren

Committee was generally supportive of this application. It was noted that Circles wanted to distribute, promote and publicise the package themselves, in parallel with the Umbrella. MPL said she thought it was a valuable proposal and thought Committee should make long term provision for such applications from Circles. TK agreed. It was decided to standardise the fees with those of the Umbrella organiser's, at £30 per day; the additional print costs in the budget were thought essential; the typesetting and printing could be removed and an offer of in-house printing be made; the additional work with a designer was unnecessary.

IT WAS AGREED to write to Circles expressing support for the work done by Judith Higginbottom and offering them £1250 plus in-house printing facilities, and asking for their acceptance of modifications to the budget.

At this point it was decided to allocate funds for expenses incurred in circulating this, and existing Modular Scheme packages during 1984/5.

IT WAS AGREED to reserve £1000 for this.

Umbrella Scheme proposals for Summer/Autumn

There was general discussion before the details of each new programme were considered.

MO mentioned that the Sitney Tour had not been included in the paper as no financial commitment was necessary. He outlined the criteria for choosing the programmes and mentioned the possibility of an installation show of French experimental films organised by Yann Beauvais in Paris. He explained that the forthcoming German Show would be expensive due to high rental fees.

ARM pointed out that whilst supporting the installation show, she thought it was extremely expensive subsidy for the work of 3 people. The AFO said the budget included provision of a technician to tour with the show. This was generally accepted as a wise precaution.

The FO thought that Committee should press the RAAs to contribute to regional tours, especially where the venues were RAA-supported organisations.

IT WAS AGREED that the FO should write to John Bradshaw, the CORAA observer and press him to attend the Committee's meetings. DP suggested that he be invited to the special meeting on forums/exhibitions etc. Committee agreed.

IT WAS AGREED to recommend support for the Umbrella Scheme for one more term and allocate £5500 for the exhibition programme from the 1984/5 Artists' Film and Video Allocation.

4.3.4 Support for further year's bursary

The Chairman asked MO to comment upon the nature of his work and the level of payment offered. He said he thought payment was adequate although he thought the work required a full-time exhibition organiser. The low level of subsidy was obviously a constraint on selection of programmes but the scheme itself was a very effective low cost method of exhibition provision. He stressed that he would like to see promotion and publicity more fully developed.

The Chairman thanked MO for his work to date and his report. MO left.

A discussion followed on the possibility of offering MO a further bursary to continue as Umbrella organiser. Committee thought it advantageous to continue MO's bursary period and agreed he had worked very efficiently. A change in organiser was thought inadvisable at present. ARM said that an appropriate maximum term for the bursary might be 2/3 years and the appointment should be offered alternately to male/female applicants. IT WAS AGREED to offer a further year's bursary to MO for 120 days work; £3000 + £500 expenses from the 1984/5 Artists' Film/Video Allocation.

MPL added that it was imperative that the Umbrella Scheme should also reflect the work done by distributors concerning social issues. Also it was important to agree a proper procedure for selecting the Umbrella organiser and distributors be consulted in the selection. Committee agreed but was concerned that the flexibility of the scheme, which was seen as a major advantage, should be preserved.

4.3.5 Recent British Video

IT WAS AGREED that this package should continue to be offered via LVA in 1984/5.

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4.4

Video Access Libraries4.4.1 Arnolfini

The FO reported on the Arnolfini. He said he had been told that if the Arnolfini's funding was cut it was intended to continue as a gallery only, and that the video access library would remain an important element of that gallery. The tape viewing figures had been very good reaching near full capacity. He said that the possibility of obtaining extra funds from other sources was not certain as the Arnolfini had an accumulated internal cash flow problem in addition to the possible withdrawal of AC funds. There was a possibility of local authority support. No information on proposed budgetting was available. The AFO reminded Committee that withdrawal of AC support from the Arnolfini would necessitate Committee making decisions on whether or not it wished to continue its support, or withdraw its tapes. The FO pointed out that only the documentary tapes would be withdrawn as the artists' tapes were the property of the Arnolfini. Committee noted that the video access libraries each had their own problems and it was thought advisable that a block sum be allocated for division between the libraries, with the provision that the AFO and other committee members met with the responsible person from each library to discuss this division. The FO pointed out that this decision should not be left to the libraries alone, as the context of funding varied considerably between the libraries.

IT WAS AGREED to reserve £9000 from the 1984/5 Artists' Film and Video Allocation, for the video access libraries collectively, the division to be agreed upon between the AFO, FO and 2 committee members. Mick Hartney and Tina Keane volunteered.

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4.5

London Video Arts: administration/exhibition/overheads

The Chairman drew attention to the supplementary information produced by the AFO; a letter from Channel 4 to LVA stating that their offer of subsidy had been withdrawn.

TK pointed out that Ch4 was now funding no artists' work or workshops and had placed the responsibility for it on the Arts Council.

The AFO explained that the LVA application resulted from a dialogue between the AFO, ASO and LVA regarding possible revenue funding, and was produced with the expectation of Ch4 and GLC funding. GLC funding was still a possibility. He thought it was impossible to fund LVA to the requested level.

The FO suggested that Committee write to Alan Fountain and express concern over the decision. Committee AGREED.

Committee was generally in favour of supporting LVA but concern was expressed over the continued failure of the exhibition policy.

The FO was particularly concerned that LVA's exhibition policy, including this application, did not reflect an adequate public interface. The FO and JC agreed that LVA publicity material was very poor and a more intensive lobby of magazines such as City Limits could be made.

It was decided to set up a group, including the FO, AFO, MO and 2 committee members (MH/DP and JC volunteered) to advise on exhibition programming and monitor spending.

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IT WAS AGREED to offer LVA £10000 from the 1983/4 Artists' Film and Video Allocation, for funding of an exhibition worker and an exhibition programme, to be paid in instalments on approval of satisfactory exhibition proposals.

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4.6 Other Exhibitions

- AFVsc84p17 4.6.1 Bermondsey Artists' Group
Committee supported this application and noted that it fulfilled the policy decision to support expanded work more fully. Committee decided to reduce the budget slightly removing the equipment hire element and replacing it with an offer of Arts Council equipment.
IT WAS AGREED to award £1000 from the 1984/5 Artists' Film and Video Allocation.
- AFVsc84p18 4.6.2 Cross Currents (RCA)
There was considerable support for this application and the budget was thought to be reasonable.
IT WAS AGREED to award £3800 from the 1984/5 Artists' Film and Video Allocation.
- AFVsc84p19 4.6.3 Graham Ellard
Committee was doubtful about offering considerable funds to a relatively inexperienced applicant, although the application was well planned.
IT WAS AGREED that the AFO write to the applicant and advise him to reapply for a production bursary.
DEFERRED
- AFVsc84p20 4.6.4 Leicester Independent Film-Makers' Association
Committee was supportive of this application. The AFO provided supplementary information which effectively reduced the budget.
IT WAS AGREED to award £456 from the 1984/5 Artists' Film and Video Allocation.
- AFVsc84p21 4.6.5 London Film-Makers' Co-operative: Distribution Show
Committee was supportive of this application and thought the Distribution Show was an important event and worth funding.
IT WAS AGREED to award £460 from the 1984/5 Artists' Film and Video Allocation.
- AFVsc83p22/p23 4.6.6/7 London Film-Makers' Co-op: Summer Show and Salon
It was thought that both of these applications warranted funding but that decision of priorities should be left to the Co-op.
IT WAS AGREED to award £2000 for both exhibitions, from the 1984/5 Artists' Film and Video Allocation; the Co-op to budget accordingly.
- AFVsc84p24 4.8 Counter Image
Whilst supportive of this application, Committee was unable to recommend allocation of funds until the situation of capital funding from other sources had been clarified further.
DEFERRED.

- AFVsc84p25 4.9 Northampton Arts Centre
There was general support for this application.
IT WAS AGREED to award £135 from the 1984/5 Artists' Film and Video Allocation.
- AFVsc84p26 4.10 Slow Dancer Film Co-operative
The ASO was concerned that Committee should be asked for a £200 deficit when in fact this represented monies owing to the Arts Council from FMOt. She thought it unfair to single out any organisation for clearing of debts. The AFO undertook to urge MAA to give support to this organisation.
REJECT
- 4.7 Equipment
- AFVsc84p27 4.7.1 Bradford Playhouse and Film Theatre
The Chairman reminded Committee of the policy decision of January 16, not to offer equipment funding. It was noted that this applicant was a RFT and the amount requested was prohibitive.
REJECT
- AFVsc84p28 4.7.2 London Film-Makers' Co-op: Telecine Research
Whilst supportive of the application, Committee regretted its inability to respond to this application due to severe financial problems.
REJECT
- AFVsc84p29 4.7.3 The Minorities
The AFO, the Chairman and ARM were supportive and were impressed by the energies of the group. It was noted they were supported by their RAA and had been given video equipment.
IT WAS AGREED to award £1000 from the 1984/5 Artists' Film and Video Allocation, via Eastern Arts Association.
- AFVsc84p30 4.7.4 Open Eye
There was no support for this application.
REJECT

The Chairman thanked the retiring Committee members for their work during the past 2 years and their work at today's meeting.

- 5 Any Other Business
There was no AOB and the meeting ended at 5.55 pm.