

PROPOSAL FOR A MODULAR FILM EXHIBITION PROGRAMME

FOR DISCUSSION

1. Background

This proposal stems from the need for a much smaller-scale and flexible exhibition programme to complement those ACGB schemes already in existence, 'A Perspective on Avant-Garde Film' and '7 Films' both have the disadvantage of being too big and unwieldy for the small venues, independent cinemas, galleries, colleges. Thus a large amount of potential interest is being lost due to lack of access to informed programmes on independent and avant-garde work.

A further objective is to elicit new perspectives on avant-garde film, and to find a form by which these writings can be made available in conjunction with the films themselves.

2. Proposal (Summary)

The proposal is for an open modular format for film exhibition, in which programmes of 50-90 minutes are compiled by one or more individuals (filmmakers/critics) accompanied by programme notes or thesis which develops ideas between the films programmed (c.f. '7 Films'). A wide range of ideas is envisaged, reflecting the current breadth of concerns. The content, design and character of each module would be up to the programmer, the only constraint being to contain the film programme and notes to within a certain length. Programme authors might choose to accompany screenings of their programmes to stimulate discussion. A modular format for film exhibition has these advantages:-

- It can adjust to an evolving situation.
- It offers multiperspectives, and is non-authoritarian.
- Individual modules may be grouped together into any overall shape or size.
- It is a manageable size from the point of view of programme author, renter, and viewer alike.
- It encourages initiatives from outside the ACGB which then acts as a filtering umbrella organisation (as in the case of production grant)
- It encourages participation at every level.

3. Further Practical Details

To get the idea off the ground the ACGB film panel would invite say 20 people to submit ideas for programmes, and the first 8 completed would be launched together. From then on the ACGB panel would simply await further applications, and deal with them in much the same way as it deals with production grants. Members of the panel itself would not be eligible. A fee of £50 would be paid to authors, the only other costs being for purchase of prints, ~~and~~ production of programme leaflets, and fees to authors accompanying their programmes. As editorial policy, attempts would be made to keep the range of treatments and ideas as broad as possible, and to maintain a balance between male and female, filmmakers and film historians, London and the regions, British and non-British. (possible starters might be Chris Garrett, Annabel Nicolson, Regina Cornwall, Tim Cawkwell, Lis Rhodes, Frank Abbott). Monographs on individual films or filmmakers would be discouraged as being unduly promotional, and not relevant to the central idea of cross-referencing. In general new writers and new films would be encouraged, though that doesn't rule out 'historical' works being re-situated.

Written matter can be up to 2,000 words, or 3 back to back A4 sheets, which would be the standard format. B/W diagrams or stills are optional. ~~Standard~~ Layout and design rests with the author. The film programme would be between 50 and 90 minutes (this should take into account the likelihood of the author accompanying some or all of the screenings). Optical sound prints would be purchased from the filmmaker at print cost only, and all the films in the programme kept spooled up (pref. on one spool) with appropriate titles between films. Together with programme notes they would be housed at, and distributed by the LFMC at the normal rental - the rental then going to the filmmakers/Co-op in the usual way. In the case of films not in Co-op distribution (clips from Verto for example) a deal would have to be made with the existing distributor, so that the film could be rented for the period of one year. A woman with a film in Cow Distribution might agree to have another print of her film distributed in this alternative context.

Individual programmes might run for a couple of years, then be disbanded, as new programmes are introduced.

note. This scheme has been conceived in terms of 16mm film, but might be extended to include video and super 8.