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Application to the Artists' Films Sub Committee for a personal grant to set up and administrate for one year a Circles distribution office

Three days a week for one year at £25 a day : £ 3,900

In trying to write an application for a personal grant I've found it very difficult to separate myself (a would-be administrator) from Circles (a would-be institution) as we have become inextricably linked, both ideologically and financially, since Circles's inception some 19 months ago. So I'd like partly to base this application on the very need for Circles to have a framework that is independent from me personally. This will be partly effected by Circles's physical removal to proper office premises at Four Corners in Bethnal Green (as opposed to my flat). It also necessitates the changeover from voluntary labour to paid labour in running Circles and the establishment of a systematic office practice and filing system that is not dependent on the memory or vagaries of one person, i.e. me.

So, I'd like to apply for a grant to enable me to run Circles for a year, to establish it in its new office and set up its long term administration practice. I see this as an interim measure to enable me to work on expanding circles without being dependent on it financially and without necessarily having to take on other work in order actually to live. A sort of breather. One of the problems in the past has been the knowledge that Circles can't expand its distribution until I spend more time working on it and knowing it can't be self-sufficient financially until it expands and therefore couldn't afford to pay me to spend the (day) time working on it... a vicious circle! (My income has come from various part-time jobs, ranging from working in a bookshop to typing and occasional film programming). I should stress however that Circles does generate enough income to cover all its operating overheads such as rent, electricity, phone, post, etc.

If this application is successful I would work on the following:

- 1) Setting up Circles as a limited company with an efficient accounting system - records of income and expenditure are kept now but they're a bit sparse. Also investigate the desirability of becoming a charity and possible applications to charitable trusts for further capital funding.
- 2) As well as a workable filing system I'd like to set up a small reference library of written work by and about women working in the general area of Circles's activities. This would be more in the way of collecting articles than specifically books (I have alot of both already), cross referenced to the women in Circles. I would see this as being used by women who have research interests in specific areas to work and would request copies of catalogues and articles from outside the UK.
- 3) Doing a lot more work with programming and getting the films and video tapes seen more widely (outside the 'art house' slot), i.e. more contact with women's groups, health and educational groups. At the moment Circles is responding to demand for help with screening suggestions rather than actively going out and working with these groups. Some travel outside London could be involved for this but also for looking at work by women living outside London.

- 4) Updating and redesigning the present and future catalogues so that there is a page per woman with enough loose leaves printed so that they can be sent out with films and tapes as programme notes. I'm getting a lot of requests for 'dossiers' on certain films and tapes and at present this is accommodated by photocopying various articles and synopses. This would be in addition to the personal statements already in the catalogues. There is still three quarters of the small capital grant awarded to Circles in the previous financial year by the Arts Council to cover the printing costs of this.

This is all in addition to the routine work of despatching films, checking them and the usual invoicing and correspondence, etc. involved.

I hope all the above information is sufficient. I am assuming that members of the committee are already familiar with myself and work done with Circles, and prior to that with the London Film Makers Co-op, however I will be happy to supply further information if requested.

Additional information requested from Felicity Sparrow for grant application to the Artists' Film & Video Committee

I have been asked to substantiate my application for a 'one-off' grant by giving details of Circles's financial position at present and what our future income/funding is likely to be in order to reassure the Committee that I will not apply again to the Arts Council for revenue funding.

Before giving financial details I'd like to stress two points I mentioned earlier. The first is that this is a personal application, not a 'Circles' application, although of course it would indirectly be beneficial to Circles, as it would enable me to distance myself and adopt a more professional relationship as distributor/administrator than at present. The intention is, and always has been, that Circles should be self-sufficient and not rely on grants for revenue funding - my role in the forthcoming year would be to ensure that this is so and to work on expanding the library and its outlets in order to generate more income from which a worker's wage could be paid as well as the existing overheads which Circles pays already. The second point is that the small amount of resources left in Circles after royalty payments and other overheads, which should be paying a small wage to an administrator, are all going towards capital expenditure in setting up new offices: new telephone, desk, filing cabinets, stationery, film storage/maintenance equipment etc.. So there are many immediate expenses now, and over the next six months or so, which won't necessarily recur.

Below are approximate figures for Circles income and expenditure for its first year of operation, up to 31.3.81, and for the six months up to 30.9.81. Although the figures themselves are correct it is only an approximate picture as it doesn't take into account debtors and creditors (ie the overlaps) at the end of the given periods, nor assets

Total Income 1980/81		£ 2827.65
Rentals & Sales	1762.85	
Grants (Travel/Brit. Council + ACGB Capital grant	851.00	
Performance/lectures	120.00	
Misc.	93.80	
Total Expenditure 1980/81		(2162.64) -
Balance		665.01*
Total Income 1981 April 1st to 30th September (ie last 6 months)		2111.83
Rentals & Sales	1271.83	
Performance/lecture	220.00	
Grants (Jan Dawson Award etc)	620.00	
Total Expenditure to 30.9.81*		(2296.50) -
Bookings/money owed to 31.3.82 as at 30.9.81 (ie next 6 months)		1066.35

So, at the moment the income for 1981/82 is about £3000 but by 31.3.82 it will probably be £4000 as bookings are still coming in. This is of course based on the first 2 catalogues and does not include new films, so it could be more. Income has to at least double to pay an administrator's wage.

If Circles becomes a charity applications may be made to the Rowntree Trust to fund the education and research side of Circles. An application to the Gulbenkian Foundation is being contemplated.