

ARTS COUNCIL FILMS

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Director of Film, Video & Broadcasting
Rodney Wilson

4 July 1988

Barry Barker
Director
Arnolfini
Arnolfini
16 Narrow Quay
Bristol BS1 4QA

Dear Barry

I'm writing to you in connection with the Arnolfini Video Library, prompted by our receipt of the 1987/88 figures for viewings and income.

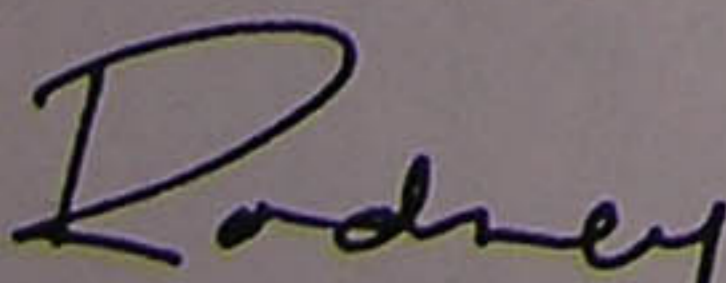
These show a total number of 299 viewings as compared to 1115 for the corresponding period for 1986/87. A drop in the region of 70%. This is obviously a cause for concern from our point of view, compounded by both my own and Will Bell's impressions on our separate most recent visits to the Arnolfini. The Video Library seems most notable for its invisibility and I think it must in reality be said to have ceased functioning. I'm afraid that screening arts documentaries in the restaurant and other parts of the Arnolfini without sound does not seem to me to be adequate compensation for the loss of the Access Library as a functioning service.

I don't intend these points as criticism but as a recognition of the situation. We discussed the changes you intended to make not long after you took over at the Arnolfini. I do understand your problems. However the experiment of housing the resource in the bookshop and showing tapes in other parts of the building doesn't seem to me to be working. The objectives we sought by loaning copies of all Arts Council Films are not being achieved and I've come to the conclusion that the best course of action will be to withdraw the tapes. We intend to explore the possibilities of another venue in Bristol or some other location in the West Country but at this stage no decision has been made. It may turn out that the initiative we've launched to make our material available through public libraries will supercede access libraries.

I doubt if this comes as a surprise to you and I'm happy to discuss the situation if you'd like to. In any event, with your agreement, we will be in touch about the destination of the video cassettes in due course.

Best wishes

Yours sincerely



Rodney Wilson
Director
Department of Film, Video and Broadcasting

cc Will Bell

