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Karen

From: Glasgow Film Theatre [mrcosmo@btconnect.com]
Sent: 14 October 2004 16:47
To: info
Subject: SICA document[Scanned]

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SiCa.pdf (11 MB)

Dear James and the Cultural Commission

Please find attached a document prepared by the members of the Scottish Independent Cinema Association (SICA).

I'm afraid the document was prepared prior to meeting with the commission, and the issuing of the direct questions you asked to be addressed. However, I hope you agree that our concerns and some thoughts on how we would like to see the rights of Scottish people moved forward is clear within the document.

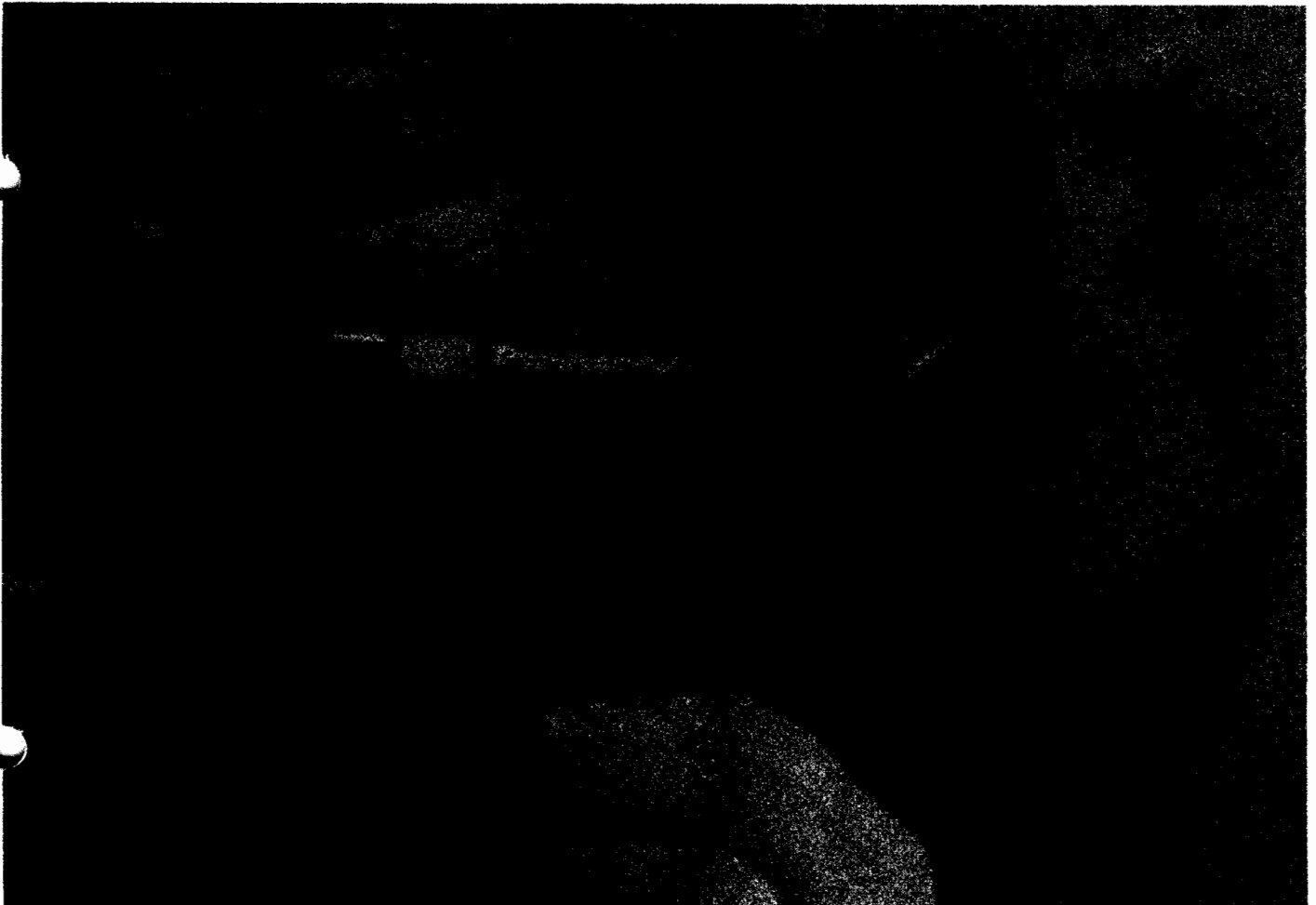
look forward individually, and as a group representing our sector, to be of service to you in the next waves of the consultation.

All very best wishes

Jaki McDougall
GFT Director

sica

Scottish Independent Cinema Association



DEVELOPING CULTURAL CINEMA IN SCOTLAND: A DISCUSSION PAPER



The moving image is an immensely powerful medium which helps to shape the way that we see and understand the world. It also represents a growing and central part of Scotland's creative industries. Great cinema informs, inspires and challenges, as well as entertains, its audience. Film and popular moving image culture penetrates Scotland more deeply than any other form of artistic endeavour. Moving images that both mirror and create desires and conflicts at the heart of Scottish life are the most influential form of communication that we have today.



1 FOREWORD

"Film and moving images are the single most important source of education, information and culture in the world today" - UK Film Council Strategy for the Moving Image

Scotland's cultural cinemas embrace the widest possible definition of what cinema should be - educating, inspiring, entertaining, reaching people; connecting talent and opportunity, activity and need. No other sector is better placed to take on the challenge of genuinely addressing the idea of cultural entitlement.

This report presents a state of the nation for cultural cinema provision in Scotland. By using the expression 'cultural cinema' we are not implying concepts of "high art" or to delineate a narrow band of select films, rather, the aim is to assert the possibility of the very opposite. Our goal is to widen the choice for cinema audiences, extend the range of films available, and to celebrate and stimulate appreciation of the diversity of Scottish and world cinema and cultures, to interrogate and challenge the social and artistic norms of the day.

This document represents the first stage in articulating a cohesive national policy for cultural cinema. Undoubtedly ideas and questions will arise from this paper and through a process of debate it is anticipated that steps will be taken towards the process of planning and resourcing citizens' opportunities to access, create and experience cultural cinema in Scotland.

When can
we make
another one,
please, please,
please, it's so
koooell(cool)
Ryan James 9yrs.





2 INTRODUCING SICA

SICA is an independent network of passionate cinemas, education officers and multiculturalists. Our aim is to:

- Celebrate the beauty and power of the moving image
- Entertain, challenge and inspire audiences and filmmakers
- Develop a knowledgeable and informed audience for tomorrow
- Actively engage with local communities
- Celebrate cultural diversity and social inclusion
- Support and enhance the education curriculum
- Encourage lifelong learning
- Inspire tomorrow's filmmakers
- Champion Scottish films and filmmakers
- Encourage economic development and regeneration
- Introduce young people to the art of filmmaking



We accomplish this through

- Programming the best of Scottish and world cinema
- Programming locally produced films promoting indigenous filmmakers, celebrating Scottish popular culture and giving a voice to Scottish views and opinions
- Presentations of curated seasons, classic films, a world class festival and special events across Scotland
- Mainstreaming work for, by and about Scotland's diverse communities
- Programmes of formal education events, in and out of school time, including special screenings, teachers and pupils study aids, filmmaking summer schools and after school clubs.
- Access for educators to quality Moving Image Education through teachers in-service training and advisory services
- Access to quality world cinema for young people, thus broadening their horizons
- Lifelong learning opportunities for all ages and abilities through programme notes, courses, introduced screenings, day schools and film discussion groups
- Offering the opportunity to create, as well as view, film, video and animation
- Providing a base, support, forum and point of public exposure for a range of associated media and moving image groups and initiatives
- Connecting to, supporting and promoting local, regional and national industry infrastructure
- Opportunities for Scottish filmmakers and the public to engage directly with filmmakers from across the globe at Question and Answer sessions, workshops and masterclasses
- Offering work placements, mentoring, internships and training opportunities
- Looking at film in new, exciting and life-affirming ways
- Making cinema available in Scotland's rural communities
- Working in many and varied partnerships with cultural institutions, community groups, schools, colleges, universities, local authorities, filmmakers, the film industry and broadcasters



3 DEVELOPMENT OF THE CULTURAL SECTOR

It began with the audience and it is still the audience that matters, with their thirst for inspirational cinematic experiences.

Cultural film exhibition could be said to have had its birth in 1930, when a group of film enthusiasts formed the Edinburgh Film Guild. Similar organisations began to sprout up throughout the country and it was the impetus created by these pioneering individuals that brought about the creation of the Scottish Film Council (SFC) and created the demand to support niche market exhibitors such as the Cosmo in Glasgow and the Cameo in Edinburgh.

For many years the film society movement and commercial sector sustained this interest in cultural cinema, but a flourishing of cultural film exhibition was inevitable. A cultural outlet was found in 1947 with the creation of the Edinburgh International Film Festival, but it took until the sixties and seventies for a network of cultural cinemas to be set-up (known as Regional Film Theatres (RFTs)). This was made possible by a crucial policy decision by the SFC to prioritise film exhibition on the grounds that every Scottish citizen should have access to the best in world cinema and that Scotland's own filmmakers had the right to have their distinctive voice heard. For instance, it was through the RFTs that Bill Forsyth learnt the techniques that he was to use in his own movies and it was at the RFTs that his first film *THAT SINKING FEELING* found its natural home. Wherever an RFT was in operation there was a consequent rise in cine-literacy. RFT attendances in Scotland became the envy of the rest of the Britain (Scottish RFTs accounting for 30% of UK RFT admissions).

Paradoxically, the growth in filmmaking, in part inspired by this policy, and the attention and resources directed towards this activity has had the effect of marginalising the exhibition sector. Where SFC had three officers dealing with exhibition, its successor Scottish Screen has the full time equivalent of just half a post dealing with this crucial area. In addition, the absence of a published strategy relating to film exhibition and its role in delivering education, cultural diversity, social inclusion and economic development have held back meaningful engagement with Scottish Executive policy areas such as education, enterprise and tourism.

Improvements to cultural provision have been made in recent years, with an exciting new arts centre in Dundee (DCA); new cinemas for Stirling (macrobert) and Aberdeen (Belmont); a mobile cinema to service the rural Highlands (the Screen Machine); an additional screen for the Filmhouse in Edinburgh and refurbishments of Falkirk Town Hall Cinema and Glasgow Film Theatre, but these have been largely down to the influence of the National Lottery.



"It's a joy to see, witness and taste the cultural delights of the DCA, especially as a born and bred Dundonian. 'Whod a thunk it!'" Brian Cox, Hollywood star



4 THE CURRENT SCENE

4.1 Summary

The established model in the Scottish sector is to work in local partnerships to provide for the needs of local communities. This approach ensures that cultural diversity and social inclusion is optimised, and with expertise and resources available locally, that local initiatives, partnerships and the leverage of resources are maximised.

However, the sector recognises that a more integrated approach is required to ensure better access, improved standards, increased provision and best value for money through effective collaboration, co-ordination and co-operation on a local and national scale. For example: the introduction of a (formal) national touring infrastructure would ensure that many more people in Scotland would have access to films and filmmakers brought into the country for special seasons, festivals and events; a national framework for moving image education initiatives would lead to improved standards and geographical reach of this crucial area of work, and result in a cine-literate population.

4.2 Festivals

Outside of the world-class Edinburgh International Film Festival, there are a number of ambitious Film Festivals and special seasons curated by SICA members which significantly increase the choice and opportunity for quality engagement which would otherwise be unavailable to the citizens of Scotland. These events offer the opportunity for collaboration and sharing of resources. For instance, the French and Italian film festivals originated in Edinburgh and Glasgow now tour to Dundee, Aberdeen and Stirling (as well as some English and Welsh venues). Similarly, Discovery, Scotland's first children's film festival, will be organised by the DCA (Dundee) and macrobert (Stirling) and tour Edinburgh, Glasgow and a range of other venues.



4.3 The Need for a Strategy

In a review of the work of Scottish Screen in 2002 the Scottish Executive noted that:

"The successful meeting of the cultural aspect of its (Scottish Screen) remit and the desire of Ministers for wider access depends to a significant extent on the RFTs. There should also be opportunities to develop their role in the promotion of Scottish film and filmmakers. They may, therefore, have a more prominent role to play than has so far been identified and the absence of an underlying strategy for them is disappointing".

In order to tackle this national policy and strategy gap and the inadequate levels of investment in the sector, we need to re-assess and re-formulate current working practices towards a coherent vision.

'when I was seven
I dreamed of
being a filmmaker
now through all
I've learned I know
I will become one'
Tom Chick 14yrs



5 THE VISION

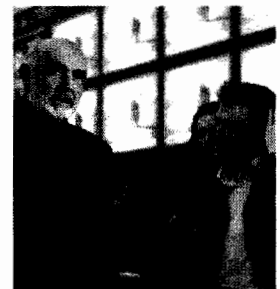
5.1 Introduction

The moving image is an immensely powerful medium which helps to shape the way that we see and understand the world. It also represents a growing and central part of Scotland's creative industries. Great cinema informs, inspires and challenges, as well as entertains its audience. Film and popular moving image culture penetrates Scotland more deeply than any other form of artistic endeavour. Moving images that both mirror and create desires and conflicts at the heart of Scottish life are the most influential form of communication that we have today.

At the heart of cultural cinema lies a media form that is actively used to mediate the experience of the majority of people. Engagement with this most accessible, immediate and familiar of mediums has the potential to genuinely transform the way people understand and express creativity and develop skills and how they relate to the world around them, their own communities and their own lives.

In the new millennium to be 'literate' means having a wider range of critical and creative competencies than had been adequate in the past. It has to now include knowledge and understanding of media as well as print. The moving image media are a crucial dimension to this wider literacy. Access to film and cinema culture encourages greater understanding of identity, representation, culture and creativity. Everyone in Scotland should have the right to learn about these media, starting in the earliest years and continuing through all stages of formal education to lifelong learning.

We believe that an under resourcing in the exhibition sector means that the potential market for cultural cinema and associated access to moving image literacy in Scotland is currently underserved in both urban and rural locations. An opportunity now exists to build on the expertise that exists in the cultural cinema sector in Scotland, in refining and structuring the provision of cultural film exhibition and associated education activities right across Scotland.



5.2 Improving the Infrastructure

A number of the RFTs in Scotland have stated a desire to fulfil a larger regional and where appropriate, national, remit. These organisations have gained a great deal of experience and knowledge over the years and this could usefully be applied in developing the sector regionally and nationally.

There is a need for the creation of integrated high quality innovative moving image centres which are both cinemas and proactive development hubs for moving image culture, which would facilitate a natural link to the creative industries.

These centres would complement the more conventional specialised cinemas and the network of film societies, both of which would need to be upgraded to grow the number of screens and/or introduce digital technologies as appropriate to audience needs.



It is expected that they might also work in partnership with commercial cinemas to ensure choice and access to the citizens of Scotland.

This layered approach would greatly extend the availability of culturally diverse product and learning opportunities with educational, social and economic benefit.

This would address the audience's rights of access to film culture while maximising resources through partnerships which address diversity, learning, social inclusion and creativity.

5.3 Education

Education is at the core of the cinemas' programming, in both the impetus for, and structure of, the artistic programme and in the range of innovative activities, from informal to formal practices. The selection of films, the programming of seasons and the education and outreach programmes constitute a cultural cinema programme and define the difference between an RFT and the commercial programme of a high-street chain venue. The aim of all of these is to engage the audience and encourage a wider understanding of the world we live in, as well as increasing enjoyment of cinema and a further exploration of the art-form.



Through its range of cinema and education events cultural cinemas bring a wealth of experiences to Scottish audiences. It is crucial that this should be available to all those who choose to engage.

Moving Image Education in Schools

There is much academic research into the positive outcomes achieved by using film viewing and intuitive filmmaking to support pupil's learning. Added value is delivered as Moving Image Education, offered in schools, assists in meeting the National Priorities for Education:

- achievement and attainment/ key triggers: improved literacy
- framework for learning/ key triggers: learning styles, teaching skills
- inclusion and equality/ key triggers: language, culture
- values and citizenship/ key triggers: values, society and identity
- learning for life/ key triggers: creativity, presentational skills

Attainment of skills in moving image education and use of ICT supports other literacies as born out of academic research:

Teachers believe that moving image education empowers pupils and fosters creativity, as it accommodates different learning and teaching styles. Some teachers noted that students who had difficulties in expressing themselves verbally or in written exercises readily took to film. Film is seen as a particularly powerful technique to encourage discussion of sensitive topics such as racism or areas of personal development such as identity and culture. (Pockets of Potential: Moving Image Education in Scottish Schools, 2003).



When students become actively involved in technology productions they develop learning skills, communication skills, and visual analysis skills, all of which are applied to real-life learning within the classroom curriculum. Students participate in all stages of the production process, which proves to be motivating for the students and allows the teacher and students to work personally and collaboratively. (Bazeli, - Marilyn: Visual Productions and Student Learning, 1997)

There is evidence of how and why feature films are effective instructional tools, particularly when teaching concepts of human development to students. Films help to dramatise and frame issues, generate discussion, and provide links with personal experience. (Digi-teens: media literacies and digital technologies in the secondary classroom Andrew Burn and Kate Reed (1999) English in Education)

There needs to be a range of providers to harness the current expertise operating in the Moving Image Education sector. Co-ordination of standards and dissemination of good practice could be through a national matrix. The matrix should seek to work with similar professional development initiatives being developed in the Arts sector.

5.4 Digital Technologies

It is expected that within the next year a number of Scotland's cultural cinemas will have the opportunity to embrace digital technologies and the benefits that these technologies will bring in choice and flexibility of programming, and access for visually impaired and deaf customers. Five Scottish RFTs have signed up as members of the Scottish based European DocuZone (EDZ) project Docspace, a digitally delivered programme which will provide European documentaries to 8 countries in the network. Many Scottish RFTs will apply for equipment from the UK Film Council's Arts Council of England funded Digital Screen Network. However, neither of these schemes are likely to have an impact on rural areas.

Digital technologies need to be investigated as a way of increasing the choice, diversity and quality of moving image presentations in Scotland. A strategy needs to be put in place to roll out high quality provision to a range of venues from arts centres and community halls to state-of-the-art cinemas. Additional benefits of a coherent digital strategy could be the 'live' transmission of other art forms and the possibility for underserved communities to interact with artists and filmmakers wherever they are in Scotland.





5.5 Governance

It is crucial that there is an overall coherent national exhibition strategy if creative energy is to be given its full rein and opportunity. The future management of shared responsibilities between local and national agencies presents one of the biggest challenges for the sector. Specific roles, relationships and responsibilities will need to be more clearly defined and structures reviewed as the first crucial steps to assisting the future development of cultural cinema in Scotland. Without this, where previously Scotland's RFTs led the way, they are now in danger of falling behind, and 30 years of development of cultural cinema in Scotland will be undermined.



The lead strategic body for delivering cultural film exhibition should have adequate resources, both human and financial, to support the network of cultural film exhibitors, especially in the first years of any new development strategy.

6 THE ROAD MAP

SICA feel that much groundwork must first be done in order to create the essential framework on which to deliver Scottish citizen's and artists' cultural rights to consume, create, experience and be inspired by the world of the moving image.

Given the significant variation in population structure across the country and the challenge to the economic viability of cultural cinema projects that this presents, a recurring theme throughout SICA's recommendations is the need to develop collaborative work practices and build operational partnerships in order to reduce costs and improve the range and quality of regional cinema provision.

The following recommendations are made:

- The film exhibition sector in Scotland should be consulted in informing national policy or proposals for the development of cultural film exhibition.
- National responsibility for film exhibition must be restated, with a national agency working in partnership with the cultural cinema sector, playing a larger advocacy role with renewed energy and commitment. Resources, both financial and human, must be allocated if Scotland seriously wishes to progress developments in cultural film exhibition.
- A public policy, formulated in close consultation with the cultural cinema sector, to develop opportunities for all citizens to access and create high-quality regional cultural cinema, should be introduced. This is in complete harmony with the Scottish Executive's policy objectives for balanced national cultural development as outlined in the Cultural Policy Statement (April 2004).
- Cultural film exhibition should be represented at a senior level within both the staffing and trustee level of the the national agency. This would reflect the equal importance of film exhibition to other film activities.
- A full time officer should be engaged to oversee these developments.
- In addition, a Film Exhibition Development Officer should also be appointed



on a full time temporary contract of three years to implement the first phase of regional development.

- The national body should take responsibility as enablers and advocates for cultural film exhibition, working more proactively with local authorities and other relevant local and national agencies in all areas to promote cultural cinema.
- Substantive supporting research on specialised audience habits, needs and preferences is required before strategic priorities can be determined. Research is also required to identify gaps in provision. This should involve cultural cinema venues and organisations, commercial cinemas, local authorities and their arts officers, and form the basis for ongoing audience development plans locally and nationally.
- From the initial research, the ways in which Scottish citizens access their cultural right to quality cinema should be determined. A series of networks should be formed to offer a matrix of provision locally, regionally and nationally and offer best value.
- Moving Image Education and media awareness should be embedded in the Scottish curriculum.
- The rights of every child to experience a wide range of film viewing and participate in filmmaking should be achieved through national strategy and delivered through a national matrix of providers.
- The profiling of the work of Scottish filmmakers should be championed.
- The potential for collaboration between cinemas and the media access projects (MAPs) should be explored. Both work in areas of education, access, social inclusion, cultural diversity, training and exhibition and strategic working may provide more effective delivery mechanisms.
- Appropriate training for cultural cinema personnel should be devised in order to build the capacity of the sector, resulting in improved business management, more innovative programming and educational practice, and more effective audience development plans.
- Meaningful and useful performance measures that challenge practice, and inform the development of the sector should be introduced.

'This (Imitation of Life) is one of my favourite films, I wanted to be like Lana Turner in the forties and fifties- I bawled my eyes out when I first saw it and I did it again today. I loved it. there's so much to say about films and I'm glad that people are still interested in what I've got to say. Thanks it was wonderful'
Audrey Smith

'Thank you for giving me the opportunity to introduce the Kurdish film Jiyan on Saturday. We nearly had a full house including many Kurdish people and among them was one person from Halabja who survived the chemical attack. The film was well received and people were moved by the story and the tragic consequences of the use of chemical weapons'
Sana Sadollah



SICA are:

Scotland wide:

British Federation of Film Societies (Scottish Group)
www.bffsscotland.co.uk

Aberdeen:

The Belmont
www.picturehouses.co.uk

Dumfries:

Robert Burns Centre Film Theatre
www.rbcft.co.uk

Dundee:

Dundee Contemporary Arts (DCA)
www.dca.org.uk

Edinburgh:

Cameo
www.picturehouses.co.uk

Edinburgh International Film Festival (EIFF)
www.edfilmfest.org.uk

Filmhouse
www.filmhousecinema.com

Falkirk:

Falkirk Town Hall Cinema (FTH)
www.fthcinema.or

Glasgow:

Centre For Contemporary Arts (CCA)
www.cca-glasgow.com

Glasgow Film Theatre (GFT)
www.gft.org.uk

Highlands:

Screen Machine
www.hi-arts.co.uk

Inverness:

Eden Court Theatre
www.eden-court.co.uk

Kirkcaldy:

Adam Smith Theatre
www.adamsmtihtheatre.com

Stirling:

Macrobert Arts Centre
www.macrobert.org

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"Wonderful cinemas in an exciting centre - I wish we had this kind of thing in Germany!" Hans Guenther Pflaum, author / film journalist / film historian, Munich