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Cala-na-Sith
Colintraive
Argyll PA22 3AJ
16 September 2004

Cultural Commission
Broughton High School
Carrington Road
Edinburgh EH4 1EG

23 SEP 2004

Dear Commission\

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I have discussed your letter with the KSPC Art Club Committee, as it effects on us and the problems caused by being in a remote area. We have addressed the headings that concern us:

EDUCATION

Good teachers are extremely difficult to find, and engaging tutors to travel from England, which we have done in the past, is not making the most of the homegrown talent in Scotland.

An outreach department of the Glasgow School of Art would be a wonderful idea, doing the rounds of amateur enthusiasts in Argyll and bringing to us the traditional as well as the latest in painting techniques and skills.

It would have to be worth their while financially.. Help by way of grant to pay Tutoring fees, together with overnight and travel expenses, would encourage those Artists willing to travel around Scotland

A list of tutors available in Scotland, would be most useful, including the information necessary to choose a tutor. Names of those teaching in Primary and Secondary schools, who might be able and willing to provide sound tuition at a reasonable rate would be most helpful.

Institutional Infrastructure

We feel that not enough use is made of existing school premises. It would be great to see how those pupils are taken through the disciplines of doing art exams and producing portfolios. If older creative people could use Art Studio facilities at perhaps the local Grammar School there would be an enormous increase in creative people wanting to do such things as printing, etching, large scale works, murals, etc. Such subjects are impossible to contemplate at home, or indeed in village halls. The cost of buying and maintaining expensive equipment is also prohibitive. This would of course have to be properly supervised, so that no damage was caused, or inconvenience to the schools/colleges.

Local Weekend courses, or courses in the summer holidays on consecutive days run at these schools or other suitable venues would enable enthusiasts to obtain intensive tuition. At the moment there are lots of courses in Glasgow, those of us who have previously managed the 150 mile round journey plus ferry crossing, and possibly accommodation in Glasgow, find the whole undertaking too expensive, and exhausting.

There should be more peripatetic tutors of musical instruments in primary schools. At the moment even volunteer teaching of instruments is frowned upon and yet there appears to be no offer of official teaching of orchestral instruments. Without this we

shall have no aspiring students at musical academies, and no orchestras of the standard which have been produced by previous eras of enlightened thinking.

Access

At the moment we do have a mobile library. I was a regular user of this service, but found that when the bus was changed to a supposedly better model, it was more difficult to get into, and the book range was no better, indeed it seemed that few if any non-fictional books are purchased. But worst of all the loud horn that summoned readers was scrapped and I could no longer hear when the bus had arrived. Although I complained, no alternative to the old loud klaxon was produced. I got tired of sitting outside my house for up to 2 hours straining to hear the irregular arrival of the van and I now no longer use it. May be lots of other readers are in similar situations in rural districts.

Encouraging creativity

Art videos would also be extremely useful, "how to do" demonstrations for learners, and also tapes of more advanced practices and skills for the more experienced. Perhaps you could produce/commission Videos to be made by professionally trained artists, (who are good teachers) to produce a structured course for use by clubs such as ours, followed up by a visit by the artist who produced the video to examine our work and answer/solve our problems. Many of the videos I have seen are not filmed in the best way to show the learner exactly what is happening, and there is too much filling in of scenery, and general chat. I am sure you could do better.

Finally, just a footnote on my own behalf. I do not accept that anyone has so called "Cultural Rights". Culture cannot be imposed, if it is to be worthwhile it has to be earned.

Culture is improvement by training, and the development of the intellect. Serious thought should be given by your Commission to whether a lot of the so called modern, 'advanced' art is the sort of thing that should be encouraged to the detriment of the variety that takes a lot of work and effort. Play though enjoyable is not culture. A cultured person should not be made to feel guilty because they enjoy beauty more than ugliness, of which there is enough in the world.

Museums and Art Galleries should not only spend millions on 'old masters', but should also give the man in the street a chance to see what the people consider great (Scottish) art. The most obvious example of this is the failure of the powers-that-be to buy a Jack Vettriano picture when it was offered to them. This has resulted in the people of Scotland probably never being able to see one of his works in the original format which has certainly robbed them of a visual experience which cannot be gained by over familiarity with a reproduction.

Some effort should also be taken to try to improve the visual appearance of the countryside and maintain its present beauty. No nation can be considered cultured if they allow rubbish of all sort to accumulate in the street, despoiling of beautiful buildings by graffiti - I could go on,.

Best of luck in your project.
Ann Mattick
Secretary, Kyleaside Painting Group.

