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SCOTTISH SOCIETY FOR THE HISTORY OF PHOTOGRAPHY

Rosebank
150 West Princes Street
Helensburgh G84 8BH

February 16 2005

James Boyle
Cultural Commission
Broughton High School
Carrington Road
EDINBURGH EH4 1EG

ARTS

Dear James,

I have pleasure in enclosing SSHoP's submission to the Cultural Commission.

If you have any queries, or would like to pursue further any of the issues it raises, please let me know. I am sure the Society will be very willing to contribute to the work of the Commission in whatever way it can.

Kind regards,

Yours sincerely,



David Bruce
Convenor

SCOTTISH SOCIETY FOR THE HISTORY OF PHOTOGRAPHY

Submission to the Cultural Commission

Introduction.

The Scottish Society for the History of Photography (SSHoP) was established in 1983 following the Glasgow School of Art conference, *Scottish Contributions to Photography*. Its objectives are to 'promote and advance' the medium of photography in both historical and contemporary contexts. Its members include curators, photohistorians, art historians, photographers, academics, and enthusiasts in Scotland, Europe and America.

SSHoP's regular manifestations are its Annual Lecture given by outstanding international and Scottish photographers including William Klein, Calum Colvin, Fay Godwin, and Jane Brettle; and *Studies in Photography*, its yearly publication, generally regarded both here and abroad as one of the most authoritative journals of its kind. SSHoP's projects have included the highly successful David Octavius Hill Bicentenary Festival 2002 resulting in more than ten exhibitions, as well as publications, events, and an international conference at the Royal Society of Edinburgh.

Submission.

The claim that photography is the art form to which Scots have contributed more than to any other is not lightly made. The proof, for it certainly exists, is in the very beginnings of the medium when Hill and Adamson first discovered the artistic potential of a scientific wonder of the early Victorian age. It continues in the remarkable exporting of talent to the rest of the world resulting in Scots being the most distinguished early photographers in many countries, including Russia, the USA, Canada, Italy, Australia, Turkey, India and New Zealand.

The tradition of Scottish excellence in photography remains strong to this day with many of our contemporary artists in photography gaining world-wide recognition. It is therefore at the heart of this submission that photography is specifically and specially a Scottish art.

We therefore ask the Cultural Commission to take into account these important points:

- Photography is the most democratic of art forms, being practised and appreciated by all sectors of society.
- Access to our outstanding photographic heritage is a universal cultural right which can only be achieved by the establishing of an institution such as is proposed by the Scottish National Photography Centre at the former Royal High School in Edinburgh.
- Excellent access for all to the work of the world's greatest photographers can only be achieved if physical and intellectual circumstances are of international standard, which requires a Scottish national centre specifically devoted to photography.
- Study and research in photography requires not only a national institution but such commitment on the part of universities and colleges throughout the country as is already the case in, for example, St Andrew's and Napier Universities and Edinburgh College of Art.
- Education in the heritage, theory and practice of photography and related arts is vital for the understanding of art and society and must be offered in schools and colleges at all levels.
- Access to the means and knowledge of how to make photographs must be available to all.
- The status of photography within the visual arts must be sustained at a level commensurate with the high reputation of Scottish photography through appropriate funding and governance within the public sector.
- Public financial support for artists working in photography and related media must continue to be made available through The Scottish Arts Council and should be enhanced.
- Support for the exhibition and general promotion of contemporary photography should be provided at an increased level by SAC.
- Support for our photographic heritage and the capacity to build on it through acquisition and conservation must be made available at government level.