

PROGRESS REPORT

As at 31/10/1985

PROGRAMMING

We have been meeting with a number of groups to discuss the possibility of them being commissioned to organize the projects in the above programme. The following is the state of development of that process.

1) FOCUS ON CLR JAMES

The focus in one major project on the life and work of CLR James with two components which will be linked in terms of the venue, publicity and all other possible areas of overlap.

a) The Black Jacobins Play

This is the most developed of the projects to date. Talawa Theatre Company has been commissioned to stage the play "The Black Jacobins" written by CLR James. Concerning "The Contemporary Significance of the Black Jacobins" Talawa have written...."Because it is so often the case with black dramatic productions in this country that the material they use is untried and new, the black theatrical community has to prove itself on too many fronts simultaneously. This is undoubtedly a good thing as it requires fierce determination and we learn as we go...however, when a play of such historical authority, proven distinction, a play of elegance and vision exists, then it is right that not only the black community but the general theatre-going public should have an opportunity of seeing it produced.

THE BLACK JACOBINS has been performed in England before, in the year it was first written, 1940, when it was presented by the London Stage Society with Paul Robeson in the lead, but never since. This is explained away by the large budget necessary to mount it. The play has, nevertheless, been regularly produced in Africa, the West Indies and the United States of America. This play, a classic of black theatrical tradition which so eloquently portrays the only truly successful slave revolt in history, has much to say to the embattled black community of this country, portraying as it does the historical and political events of the late eighteenth century which still influence today's attitudes."

The play like the exhibition will be staged at Riverside Studios from 17th February to 16th March 1986. Talawa, on agreement with Riverside Studios will be responsible for the administrative arrangements and the staging of the play, together with publicity and general P.R. around the play and the exhibition.

a) Exhibition on CLR James

Creation for Liberation is about to be commissioned to undertake the staging of this exhibition which is also to take place at the Riverside Studios.

With panels of photographs, books, articles, publicity and other relevant material, the exhibition will be organized around 6 major periods of his life:-

- 1901-32 - His early life as featured in the book BEYOND A BOUNDARY.
- 1930's - His arrival in Britain and wide journalistic work in the years which followed. His writing on cricket which continued throughout his career.
- 1950's - The writing of BEYOND THE BOUNDARY. His return to the Caribbean for the first time in 26 years in 1958.
- 1960's - His conflict with Williams and resignation from "The Nation". His dialogue with other contemporary West Indian writers and his visits to East and West Africa.
- 1970's - A decade of teaching and lecturing.
- 1980's - His return to London and settlement in Brixton. His continuing journalism and his remembrances.

Creation for Liberation will also be totally responsible for the administrative and artistic arrangements for the exhibition and jointly with Talawa and Riverside Studios for the publicity of the exhibition and focus as a whole.

2) DANCE

We have approached Greeta Mendez, a well-known dancer/choreographer from Trinidad who has agreed to put together a proposal and detailed budget for a new dance performance that will be organized for the Black Experience.

So far, the concept in mind is a multi-media dance show which is also to include film and music to achieve the desired effect around an essentially dance event. With the title "From Coffee Beans To Disinfectant" Greeta Mendez intends to trace the Caribbean experience with its rich vitality, colour and free expression to the constraints of the labour-fodder, political and economic realities of life for black people living and working in contemporary Britain.

Ideally, the show would take place from mid-March and would run for about 4 weeks. Potential venues include:-

- a) The Show Theatre
- b) The Albany Theatre
- c) The Riverside Studios

Commissioning of this project should take place by the end of next week, subject to a satisfactory proposal, budget and venue.

3) MURAL TAPE/SLIDE

This project, although not in the initial programme outline, was felt to be an interesting and novel idea put forward by Gavin Janjtes, a South African artist. Gavin Janjtes would be the consultant on the project which would be co-ordinated by Graham De Smidt (a photographer) on recommendation from Gavin.

They state that "the proposed slide/tape presentation will be aimed at an audience which does not know a great deal about the tradition and "spirit" of mural painting. The aim will be to focus on the murals in London which have a political message, particularly those linked with universal struggles, and discuss the issues which surround them (the contents, the politics within the contents, public versus gallery art, the history and origins of murals).

Images in the tape/slide presentation will concentrate on the murals, their environment, the artists, their work with traditional material illustrating the historical and traditional influence whenever this may be obtained. We would also like to bring in comments from neighbours who were involved in the process of the mural's development.

4) HEROES AND SHEROES

The idea of a photographic exhibition on this theme is to be represented as 2 parallel parts of one single project. One part would present Afro Caribbean heroes and sheroes and we are in negotiation with Obala to see whether, with modification, their existing exhibition can be used here. The other part would present Asian heroes and sheroes, and SAAC is in the process of putting together a detailed proposal and budget for such an exhibition.

Both of these proposals will be finalized by the end of next week with budgets, venues, etc.

5) PHOTOGRAPHIC EXHIBITION

Historically, due to the racism of mainstream arts institutions black photography in Britain has been fragmented into isolated units and rendered invisible.

An exhibition entitled 'Photographic Perceptions/Reflections of the Black Experience' will hopefully bring together a group of 10 photographers who will produce 10 photographs each on the theme of black resistance and struggle both contemporary and historical. This exhibition will consolidate the work of black photographers and look at the Black Experience from various perspectives.

Futhermore the photographers will constitute themselves into an organisation that will manage and distribute the exhibition around London.

The launch of the exhibition will be at the Brixton Art Gallery in February 1986 along with the booklet. This launch will form the basis for a long term exhibition programme with the photographers themselves talking about their work to Schools, Colleges, Youth Clubs and Galleries.

List of 10 Photographers

David Bailey (also the co-ordinator)

Armet Francis

Glynis Nislen

Dave Lewis

Lesley Mitchell

Marc Boothe

Ingrid Pollard

Brenda Agard

Mumtaz Karimjee

Sunil Gupta

A proposal and budget has been approved for this project and the commission will be confirmed next week.

Associate

Riots

Carnival

- Newton Brown
- How names selected
- Crisis Photographer
- Theme of Exhibition
- Black Audio Film Collective
- Coordinated input in context
- Overall Artistic Director



6) BUSINESS BEHIND PERFORMANCE

*Keith hat her
wife walks*
- Hardest place for new labels
"Business behind performance" within The Black Experience project is envisaged as a 3 day music event which will open with a concert and be followed by exhibitions, workshops and films by black musicians, record companies, promotion and distribution organisations. The idea is to promote black music by looking behind the scenes of - and stimulating interest in - how black music is produced.

A proposal has been submitted for this project by a group of 10 people on the Arts Administration Scheme. The ten people concerned who have all worked in the arts before coming on the scheme will pull together their expertise to form an organisational structure from which to administer the project.

A meeting with the group took place on Tuesday 29th October. It was decided that further development of the concept was needed and the group would eventually provide a detailed proposal and budget.

It was also agreed that the programme co-ordinator and director would work closely with the group during the length of the project.

A further meeting has been arranged for Wednesday 6th November 11.30am.

7) STRUGGLES FOR BLACK COMMUNITY - FILM SCREENINGS

We have met and discussed this project with the Black Film and Video Workshop Association. The concept remains the same as described in the original report and the Association have been asked to elaborate this into a detailed proposal and budget which we expect to receive next week.

8) FILM SCRIPT COMPETITION

Prabhu Guptara who organised the Literature Competition held earlier this year has been asked to organise this competition also, on the basis of the project as outlined in the report.

He will select the six judges which are to be from television companies, as it is intended that the six best scripts be produced by television.

The judges would select 12 treatments from all the entries. These 12 would then be able to spend at least 2 sessions with one judge while working on the development of their script. The final judging of the playscripts will take place at the end of February. The winning scripts will be announced at a reception in mid-March. Mr Guptara would organize the publicity and P.R. needs of the project.

9) ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Len Garrison of The Afro-Caribbean Educational Resource (ACER) project and Amin Patel of C.U.E.S. responsible for a similar system in respect of an Asian Educational Resource have been approached with a view to jointly undertaking this project as outlined in the report. They are both keen to do this project and a meeting has been arranged for Wednesday next 6/10/85 to discuss the details further.

10) THREE YOUNG BLACK THEATRE COMPANIES

Ready-made productions from Afro-Sax, Double-Edge and Hounslow Co-operative Theatre will provide representation from the young black theatre sector.

a) AFRO-SAX

Afro-Sax have submitted a proposed budget which is under consideration for touring "Invisible Man" and "Four Seasons", and we will be meeting with them on Friday of this week to decide which of the productions we can tour.

Invisible Man is a play about black people who are distorted and negated in racial settings. The prologue takes the form of a dramatic monologue by a man delivering on his dilemma as a seeing, thinking, feeling being, marooned in a society that refuses to acknowledge his real identity. "I am invisible, understand, simply because people refuse to see me".

b) DOUBLE EDGE

Double Edge Theatre company have submitted a proposed budget for touring "Johnny Was a Good Man" and "Remnant".

The Double Edge Theatre Co has a high regard for youth education and has in the past performed the play 'Johnny Was a Good Man' (a play about black youngsters using heroin) at various youth clubs and community centres throughout London. The message of the play is harsh but realistic without sensationalising the issue.

However, as there is a possibility that this play could be funded by ILea and as the second play, The Remnant is more directly relevant to the theme of the Black Experience, we are considering a joint funding of the Remnant Tour, with Camden Council.

The Remnant which was very successfully toured in London earlier this year, is about six young black urbanites who set off for a weekend in the country only to have their relative peace disturbed by an old visionary tramp called 'History' who is pushing a wrecked bike called Africa around with him. But 'History' is more than he seems for he is the torn soul of Africa and mysticism meets twentieth century cynicism in the pretty English countryside.

c) HOUNSLOW ARTS CO-OPERATIVE THEATRE

Hounslow Co-operative Theatre are young Asian theatre company based in Cranford. They will be completing a new production shortly after Christmas which they hope to tour in the first week of March.

The production is based around the trial of the Newham Seven and would therefore be a good representation of 'Black Resistance and Struggle'.

Hounslow Co-operative Theatre have been approached and have indicated an interest. We are now awaiting a proposal and budget from them.

All 3 companies will be commissioned to tour their productions rather than produce them, as production monies will come from elsewhere.

11) Black Resistance and Rebellion

The Institute of Race Relations has agreed to produce an exhibition around the history of Black resistance and rebellion in England as set out in the Black Experience Report.

A proposed budget is expected by Monday 4th November.

12) Race and Labour History

The Black Audio Film Collective has submitted a proposed budget which is under consideration for carrying out a series of lectures and research which will relate to their existing film project.

B.A.F.C. intend to make a two and a half hour film about Black Workers and the Labour Movement.

It is hoped that the materials and information from the Race and Labour History project will be a valuable contribution towards the making of the film.

*Acce & young ppl
Black Series
Party Black*

28th October 1985

Mailing List for the Black Experience

Lists Available

Local ethnic groups in Wandsworth
Local ethnic groups in Croydon
" " " Lewisham
" " " Southwark
" " " Lambeth

Community Relations Councils in London
Race Relations committees in London
London Boroughs with Race Relations Units
Black Media Workers Group
Black crafts list
Ethnic Press list
National Press list
Youth Theatre / venues / companies
Black Music Groups
Black arts Organisations
List of film officers
Black Magazines
Community arts venues
Ethnic publishers
Ethnic music list
Carnivals festivals list
Ethnic press in english
Black Radio Workshop / steering committee
Black womens groups
Film societies in London
Speacialist libraries working with ethnic minorities
University and College newspapers
Ethnic arts sub committee advisers
Black visual arts and crafts

Art colleges
Schools

Lists to be Obtained

Schools

Youth clubs ?

Art / Dance / Drama colleges ?

Art galleries

Photographic galleries

PRESS RELEASE

REFLECTIONS OF THE BLACK EXPERIENCE

A PHOTOGRAPHIC EXHIBITION

Nine black photographers have been commissioned for the first time in London, to express and reflect in black and white photographs, some of the most pressing issues concerning black people's presence in Britain today as well as those of the past. Each photographer will submit 10 final prints and a further 10 photographs will be made available from a cross-section of non-commissioned works by Arhmet Francis, a leading black photographer living and working in London. Arhmet's work will be the subject of a special profile.

The overview of the photographic exhibition will be seen as five broad categories, cultural, political, social, economic and sexual/gender and the nine photographs commissioned to interpret these are: Mark Boothe, Vanley Burke, Sunil Gupta, Mumtaz Karimjee, David Lewis, Madi, Zak Ove, Ingrid Pollard, Sue Roden.

The exhibition, one of the events in the Black Experience Arts Programme is a London-wide programme reflecting historical and contemporary black experiences through a variety of art forms. It runs from February to end of March 1986 in mainstream community arts and black arts venues.

Venue:- Brixton Art Gallery
21 Atlantic Road
London SW9 8HX
Tel: 733-7757

Opening times:- 10.00 - 6.00

Date of Exhibition:- 1st March - 25th March

For further information:
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