

Any debate on the nature of ethnic arts, what they are, how should they be supported must address itself to the nature of these art forms and their emergence in an historical political and economical context.

In order to arrive at an arts policy that is effective a number of questions needs to be asked.

1 What are ethnic arts:- Number of attempts have been made to define ethnic art but the context in which this has taken place has been wrong. Mike Philips writing about the crisis that ethnic arts are going through offered the following definition.

2 Population of the term 'ethnic arts' - need to examine the effects both detrimental and good this term has had. Many argue it has had a damaging effect on the ability of ethnic minorities to use their arts as a valid means of expressing themselves and as a challenge to the structure controlled and run by British arts establishments.

3 Definition of ethnic arts has wider implications of how the ethnic minority communities are viewed by a wider society. The arts of ethnic minority communities must be reflected as an integral part of the wider arts programme for London. Ethnic arts are not just for ethnic minorities.

4 Ethnic minority artists must be seen as more than just decorative additions to arts festivals, and educative tools or as instruments for making the majority take up talent attitudes. Ethnic minority artists have lived and contributed to the cultural life of this society going back to 16th Century as writers, painters, musicians. Arts must be seen as an active way of changing attitudes.

5 Ethnic minority artists must be involved in challenging the existing label; to re-examine the concept to re-assess the present function.

6 It is important to understand the sense in which the history of ethnic minority arts has been influenced and distorted by political functions whose dynamic was the exploitation of the nation, rather than an attempt to build a tradition.

7 Arts policy must reflect the multi-racial, multi-cultural nature of London. Ethnic minority artists must not only be seen as performers but active participants in policy formulation.

8 What is needed is a redefinition and a process which seeks to redefine, by following the most dynamic currents in the arts black practices. The intention would be to alter the grammar of the language of art, so that the perspective from which people view these matters can come to include, as an integral element, the traditions and the world view of ethnic minorities. All tendencies can and should flourish within this change.