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SCHOOL OF ORIENTAL AND AFRICAN STUDIES

BRUNEI GALLERY COMMITTEE

**Minutes of the meeting held on
Wednesday 1st November 2006**

Members The Director (Professor P Webley) Chair *=not present
Dr J Carpenter
Professor C Clunas*
Dr A Contadini
Professor L Croll
Professor R Fardon
Ms K Hazell
Ms J Rankine
Professor T Tomlinson

In attendance: Mr J Hollingworth
Ms J Onyejiako

1. Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the last meeting held on the 17th May 2006 were **APPROVED**.

2. Matters Arising

2.1 It was **NOTED** that having had to move The Petrie Collection of Archaeology from Palestine to the January slot, it would be offered the use of the ground floor also. Sally MacDonald and Peter Ucko would like to include contemporary works on the ground floor, leading to the archaeological artefacts in the Basement Gallery. It was **NOTED** that the Contemporary work, is named 'The Palestinian Museum of Natural History and Mankind'. It was **AGREED** to show the work of a single artist who is part of the same project, but it will not set as a precedent.

It was **NOTED** that any additional material would first have to be approved by the main committee as consideration would need to be made in regards to their being any offending political overtones.

2.2 It was **NOTED** that The New Mongolians exhibition has been cancelled by the organizer Prue Robinson due to funding.

2.3 It was **NOTED** that there was major flooding of the lower level of the Galleries over the summer, which caused a lot of damage to both public

and non public areas. The repair of which is the main reason for the postponement for the Petri Exhibition. Tom Tomlinson raised the point that the Estates department reported that the leak was due to a cracked pipe, while others had reported that the damage was caused by several small leaks and that the plant involved may actually need to be replaced rather than repaired due to being over 10years old.

2.4 It was **NOTED** the Brunei Gallery café has not be replaced after extensive refurbishments but is now used for corporate engagements.

3. **Recent and Current Exhibitions**

Mr Hollingworth reported on the success of recent and current exhibitions:

3.1 ***The World in Colours***

(25 April – 24 June 2006) Ground Floor

It was **NOTED** that a number of college students, special interest groups visited the exhibit, including a series of guided tours. The organisers were also extremely pleased with the 140+ people who attended the accompanying day seminar which was held on the 14th June 2006. There was also a successful collaboration with the Development Departments Alumni event, whereupon the organizer and Chair of the Oriental Ceramic Society, Mrs Jean Martin gave a well received guided tour.

3.2 ***Layered Lives***

(25 April – 24 June 2006) Lower Level

It was **NOTED** that there was a comprehensive programme of events, with lectures, workshops and film screenings to accompany the project and all were well attended. As previously reported there were areas of the project that were less organized, including the late finalisation of the catalogue, which arrived with just under two weeks left before the close.

3.3 ***Sights of Light***

(25 April – 24 June 2006) First floor corridor

It was **NOTED** that this was reasonably well received and those involved were pleased with the exhibition.

Visitor attendance for all these exhibits was approximately 6,500+.

3.4 ***Heroes of Our Time (13 July – 23 September 2006)***

Ground Floor

It was **NOTED** that this exhibition will be exhibiting at three other venues due to the exposure received at SOAS. The private view was extremely successful which was attended by Mary K. Blewitt, the Director of the Survivors Fund (SURF). The charity has expressed much thanks and delight in the extra public interest and donations so far received directly due to the exhibition.

3.5 ***WSLOT: Women See Lot of Things (13 July – 23 September 2006)***

Lower Gallery

It was **NOTED** that Professor Colin Bundy attended the opening of the private view which was held on the 12th July. Overall the exhibit was

well received, but due to the nature of the exhibit/installation, the likelihood of it being considered for touring has proved difficult. There had been considerable interest in the project, particularly as one of the ex child combatants, Anita Jackson attended the opening the exhibition.

It was **NOTED** that on the 13th July there was a special viewing of the installation hosted by Anita Jackson, followed by the first public screening of the accompanying film and a question and answer session also co-hosted with the Film Director Meira Asher, this was well attended by the public and a number of students. The film was then screened twice a week for the duration of the exhibition.

It was **NOTED** that the only issue in regards to the exhibition Face_WSL0T, was due to a major internal problem with a water leakage, which caused flooding within the lower basement gallery's workshop storeroom, where the electrical panels used for the Face exhibitions installations were contained. This also affected the exhibition space. The exhibition had to be closed for a few days whilst repairs took place. The leaks have subsequently been fixed, but there had been serious water damage which required the area to be refurbished and redecorated. The Estates department have now done this.

3.6 **Home Is Where the Heart Is (13 July – 23 September 2006)**

First floor corridor

It was **NOTED** that there was a small private view held on the 19th July. This exhibition received considerable internet exposure including radio coverage and an interview with the BBC and British satellite News. The exhibitor has also been approached by two other venues and is presently on exhibiting for Black History month with Ealing Council.

All of the summer exhibitions received very good press coverage, including community radio interest and various publications in which we had not been previously included, with full page features in The Big Issue, Time out, Metro newspaper, London Lite Newspaper to the, BBC World Service – Africa, British Satellite News TV, Voice of Africa Radio, New Nation Newspaper and the Voice Newspaper. The attendance for period was up, due to the press coverage and Saturday openings.

3.7 **Images from the End Game – Alexander Iyas**

(10 October – 09 December 2006) Ground Floor

The exhibition was opened by the new Director, Paul Webley, this being his first opening, it included a book launch with 'Saqi' book publishers and there were over 200 guests on the evening of the 10th. John Tchelenko will be giving a number of guided tours of the exhibition and there is a scheduled lecture on 22nd November. There will also be an evening Alumni event in co-ordination with the Development Department on December 6th.

3.8 **Immensity of the Spirit**

(10 October – 09 December 2006) First floor corridor

It was **NOTED** that an informal private view was held on the 11th

October. The music department are currently holding a series of concerts, with a scheduled performance of Shaman musicians'; this has enabled a liaison between the gallery and the music department towards sharing publicity.

It was **NOTED** that there has been good press coverage with several reviews in the more specialist photographic press for the End Game exhibition and book, and good internet reviews for Immensity of the Spirit. **So far the exhibitions have received just over 2,400 visitors.**

It was **NOTED** that in regards to publicity, Tom Tomlinson raised the fact that the Galleries do not have a marketing budget. The Director asked whether any support was received from the Marketing department. John Hollingworth confirmed that some assistance is received but the bulk is done by the Galleries staff largely Joy Onyejiako with John Hollingworth using funds from other budgets to fund this.

4. Schedule 2006 - 2008
The schedule was **NOTED**.

5. Forthcoming Exhibitions
Members **NOTED** the following report

5.1 A Future for the Past: The Petrie Collection of Archaeology from Palestine (9 Jan. – Mar 2007) *Ground Floor/Lower Gallery*
This is proceeding well, with a launch for the private view being scheduled for the 9th January 2007.

5.3 POSITIVE LIVES: HIV (Jan – Mar 2007) *First Floor*
Photographs by various artists - organized by Ash Akhtar
This is proceeding well.

5.4 *Tapping into the Known – The Life and work of Christopher Okigbo*
Whole Gallery (11 April – 23 June 2007)
All proceeding well, funding in place and dates confirmed, with the private view scheduled for the 10th April.

It was **NOTED** that the accompanying exhibition will be in relation to marking the Bi-Centenary of the abolition of the British slave trade. Various areas of input area to be considered, with the missionary collection from SOAS archives, John Hollingworth has spoken to Susannah Rayner in regards to this, with possible links with the George Padmore Institute, and a series of talks and films.

5.5 *(Views from) The End of Arabia: Contemporary Art from Saudi Arabia and Yemen* *Ground Floor/Lower Level (11 July – 22 September 2007)*
This is proceeding well, with regular updates from the organizer Stephen Stapleton.

5.6 *From Soho Road to the Punjab (July – September 2007)*
First Floor
All proceeding well, John Hollingworth met with the curator Simon Redgrave who is looking to secure additional funding and is also very keen to liaise with the Music Department.

- 5.7 TREASURES of SOAS (*October – December 2007*) *Ground Floor*
This will have a variety of artefacts as an exhibition on the ground floor, later followed with the permanent collection on display in the Ground Floor back space of the gallery.
- 5.8 BRITAINS IN CHINA, 1842 - 1957 (*October – December 2007*)
Lower Level
This is proceeding well, but it was **AGREED** that the organizer would need to change the title.
- 5.9 ETHIOPIAN AIRLINES IN PERSPECTIVE: Past Present and Future (*October – December 2007*) *First Floor*
This is a small exhibition of archive material, the organizer has expressed that the Ethiopian Embassy will assist with the funding
- 5.10 *Keepers of the Fire* (*October – December 2007*)
This is proceeding well; Sarah Stewart is keeping John Hollingworth informed of developments.
- 5.11 *Secrets of the River – Artefacts from the Brunei Museum* (*January – March 2008*)
This is proceeding well.

6. New Proposals

- 6.1 Retracing Heinrich Barth (*January 07 – Onwards*) *Ground Floor Front*
It was **AGREED** to accept this proposal but more time is required to develop the text and overall structure. It was **NOTED** that Professor Richard Fardon suggested that the proposer should make contact with Dr Benedetta Rossi towards further assistance with the development of the exhibit. It was **AGREED** to offer this proposal the summer slot of July – September 2008.
- 6.2 Our Positive Bodies (*January 07 – Onwards*) *Lower Level Gallery*
It was **AGREED** to accept this proposal as the images are well designed with informative text which would also include an accompanying film. The exhibition would get a lot of publicity and the positive body imagery links with the development studies at SOAS. It was **AGREED** to offer the summer slot of July – September 2008.
- 6.3 Master Craftswomen of the Rich Cradle: Mongolian Kazarh Diaspora (*January – March 2007 or April – June 2008*)
It was **AGREED** that further development would be required. It was suggested that the proposer would benefit by liaising with Ruth Mandel of University College London, with the possibility of hosting a joint exhibit. It was **NOTED** that the proposer be advised of the suggested exhibition date of 2009 to also allow for following up areas of possible funding, such as The Mongolian Embassy.
- 6.4 Made in Palestine (*April – June 2008*)

It was **AGREED** to reject this proposal for this slot as the Gallery will be holding a major Palestine project in 2007 including work of a Contemporary nature. It was **AGREED** there was some interesting and engaging material but overall there were reservations as to the overriding politics.

6.5 Tribal Transitions: Photographs of Arunachal Pradesh, India
(April – June 2008)

It was **AGREED** that further advice be sought with reference to developing the exhibition towards an intellectual engagement. It was suggested that the proposer could liaise with Crispin Branfoot of the art and archaeology department and work towards a 2009 scheduling, which would allow for extra time to seek sources of grant funding which would help towards the exhibitions further development.

6.6 Refraction and Creation: Modernity and Identity in Taiwanese Crafts
(April – June 2008)

It was **AGREED** to accept this proposal, as it focused on intellectual issues that would be of challenging interest. Due to the forthcoming China Festival 2008 it was **AGREED** that this exhibit would be best suited to the 2009 scheduling but held in reserve for Oct- Dec 2008 if a cancellation should occur.

6.7 The Illustrated book in China: Historical and Contemporary practice
(April – June 2008)

It was **AGREED** to accept this proposal, although the proposer Anne Farrer had informed John Hollingworth that she would have to cancel the project as the Curator involved would be unable to proceed.

It was **AGREED** that SOAS would be willing to co-curate with Anne Farrer with the added possibility of offering financial assistance with resources from the PDF Academic Fund, also to offer the exhibition use of material from the P.D.F. special collections and manuscripts. This project is of particular interest as it would coincide with China Festival 2008. John Hollingworth will reiterate this information to Anne Farrer.

7. **Preliminary Proposals Declined**

The preliminary proposals declined by the Management Group were **NOTED**.

8. **Treasures of SOAS**

It was **NOTED** that Anna Contadini presented an update of the objects that have so far been catalogued and that the quantity of catalogued artifacts outnumber what would be needed. It was **NOTED** that research for material from the archives and library will continue throughout this autumn term allowing for an even wider selection of choice. By the end of term it would be possible to draw up a preliminary list of objects and after further consideration finalize the list. Currently an application is in the process of being submitted to The Foyle Foundation. The AHRC application is due at the end of December 06, and Anna Contadini will liaise with all concerned.

It was **NOTED** that John Carpenter has been in liaison with the Japanese Embassy and is preparing an application for November 30th with hopes that the Japanese scroll would go to Japan for conservation in December 06.

A.O.B

It was **NOTED** that Tom Tomlinson expressed that consideration must be made towards the Treasures of SOAS requiring a marketing budget and that Joy Onyejiako's contract which has recently been renewed will expire in November 2007 and would need to be once again extended. It was **NOTED** that the Gallery and the whole building with a permanent collection could be eligible to VAT dispensation on goods and services should Treasures of SOAS be established.

It was **NOTED** that the Director tabled the suggestion that he would like to see the Galleries put forward as one of the schools possible nominations for The Queens Award, recognizing the good work and overall activity of the Galleries in showing a comprehensive exhibition of programmes that reflect the academic studies of the school.

Joy Onyejiako
16/11/06

DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Wednesday 21st February 2007, (10.00am).