

Confidential

SCHOOL OF ORIENTAL AND AFRICAN STUDIES

BRUNEI GALLERY COMMITTEE

**Minutes of the meeting held on
Wednesday 16th May 2007**

Members The Director (Professor P Webley) Chair *=not present
Dr J Carpenter
Dr A Contadini*
Professor L Croll
Professor R Fardon
Ms K Hazell
Dr Elizabeth Moore
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 21st February 2007 were **APPROVED**.

2. Matters Arising

2.1 It was **NOTED** that the organizer of the proposal Edge of Arabia has informed the Gallery Manager that the project cannot precede due to problems with the funders. It is hoped that the project might be considered for 2008, as he is following up Saudi Ministry support.

It was **NOTED** that due to the proposal being already approved and that the keepers of the fire wish to postpone to 2010 leaves the Oct – Dec 2008 slot open for consideration. The Taiwanese project selected for Jan – Mar 2009 as agreed by the committee, were also offered the 2008 slot should a cancellation occur, have declined to change dates. It was therefore suggested by the Gallery Manager to offer the Edge of Arabia organizer Oct-Dec 2008 slot on the condition he confirms by the end of the year.

2.2 It was **NOTED** that Global Justice: Portrait of a Movement; following the last committee meeting whereupon permission had been sought in order to host this in the precinct, are unfortunately unavailable to provide this project in June 07 but available in July. However, the precinct area in July 07 will be heavily used by SOAS events. For future reference the precinct area can be used but permission would still need to be sought.

2.3 It was **NOTED** as part of the Abolition of Slavery bicentenary anniversary events, we are hosting a talk "Narrating the Atlantic World: A reflection on the work of New Beacon in the bicentenary year" by Brian Alleyne from the George Padmore Institute and lecturer at Goldsmiths University for June 5th. There will also be a documentary film showing of "Africa's Greatest Resource" by Steve O Taylor on June 7th with the Royal Africa Society and funding by the British Council, in support to bring over some of those involved in the film for the screening and take part in the question and answer session.

3. Recent and Current Exhibitions

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

3.1 ***50,320 Names by Khalil Rabah***

(9 January – March 2007) *Ground Floor*

It was **NOTED** that overall it was well received and had press coverage in listings and good exposure with British Satellite News, MBC and 2 other Middle Eastern TV companies.

3.2 ***A Future for the Past: The Petrie Collection of Archaeology from Palestine***

(9 January – March 2007) *Lower Gallery*

It was **NOTED** that this exhibit was well received and had a well attended comprehensive programme of accompanying events. There was also good coverage with British Satellite news, The Independent; and various Middle Eastern related media, such as Aramco world and more specialist archaeological press. Despite all this attendance was not as high for this period as hoped, especially from schools given the interactive design of the exhibition.

3.3 ***Positive Lives***

(9 January – March 2007) *First Floor*

It was **NOTED** that this exhibit equally had good listings especially on internet listing sites and there was a well received open panel discussion session with the CEO of the charity for Europe which was hosted in the galleries.

Visitor attendance for all these exhibits was just under 6,000.

3.4 ***Tapping into the Known – The Life and work of Christopher Okigbo*** ***(11 April – 23 June 2007) Whole Gallery***

It was **NOTED** that the opening and launch was well attended with approximately 250+ guests. The exhibition was attended by the Nigerian high commissioner and Prof. Tomlinson represented the school in the Directors absence. The artist Obi Okigbo gave two public gallery talks on the two days following the opening and there are a further two scheduled at the end of the exhibition on the 21st and 22nd June, there are also plans to have a closing ceremony with a poetry slam on either the 21st or 22nd June.

Coverage has been good with a piece in Time out and various art periodicals, also interviews with the BBC World service and local

African community radio stations and periodicals. It is hoped to take the exhibition to the states.

There have been a few college group visits and a number of bookings for events held, but visitor numbers have been low with a little over 2100 in approx 5 weeks. Numbers have improved as the weather has deteriorated.

It was **NOTED** that there are no signposts in the local vicinity directing the public towards the Brunei Gallery, it was suggested that the conference office should be informed as it would benefit all parties. The Director has offered to liaise with the conference office in following up this matter.

4. **Schedule 2007 - 2010**

The schedule was **NOTED**.

5. **Forthcoming Exhibitions**

Members **NOTED** the following report

5.1 *Edge of Arabia: Contemporary Art from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (11 July – 22 September 2007) Ground Floor/Lower Level*

It was **NOTED** that the organizer has had to cancel the use of this slot with further updates to follow.

5.2 *From Soho Road to the Punjab (July – September 2007) First Floor/Ground Floor*

It was **NOTED** that due to the Edge of Arabia cancellation the scheduled exhibition Soho Road has been offered by the committee the front ground floor gallery as well as the 1st floor and roof garden space. The organizers clarified that they have plenty of additional material, instruments and costumes to fill the extra space and produce a main exhibition. This will add to the INDIAN NOW GLA cultural festival taking place this summer to which it is part of the programme.

It was **NOTED** that the galleries for the first time have secured Arts council funding to support a series of 4 workshops and a 1 day symposium to accompany the exhibition.

5.3 *TREASURES of SOAS (October – December 2007) Ground Floor*
This is proceeding well.

5.4 *BRITONS IN CHINA, 1842 - 1957 (October – December 2007) Lower Level*

This is proceeding well and the organizer has confirmed that they will use items from the SOAS archives in the exhibition.

5.5 *ETHIOPIAN AIRLINES IN PERSPECTIVE: Past Present and Future (October – December 2007) First Floor*

This is proceeding well.

- 5.6 *Secrets of the River – Artefacts from the Brunei Museum (January – March 2008)*
It was **NOTED** that the Professor of Indonesia and Malay and the Senior Lecturer in Art and Archaeology have been liaising with the Brunei Museum which has had a number of staff changes. However, the museum is keen to proceed with the exhibition but with material from the Brunei Museums collections.
- It was suggested that contact be made with the Brunei permanent secretary by the Gallery Manager to assist in encouraging the proceedings.
- 5.7 *The Illustrated book in China: Historical and Contemporary practice (April – June 2008)*
This is proceeding well and the organizer will be using a number of items from the PDF collection. The PDF curator is already involved.
- 5.8 *Master Craftswomen of the Rich Cradle: Mongolian Kazarh Diaspora (January – March 2007 or April – June 2008)*
Further information is to be received from the organizer.
- 5.9 *Retracing Heinrich Barth (July – September 2008) Ground Floor Front*
All proceeding well, slot has been accepted.
- 5.10 *Our Positive Bodies (January 07 – Onwards) Lower Level Gallery*
This proceeding well, slot accepted.
- 5.11 *Keepers of the Fire (October – December 2008)*
The organizers (LMEI) have asked to move the slot back to 2010 to coincide with events to be held at the British Museum. It was **AGREED** by the committee to offer the October – December 2010 slot and see how proceedings develop over time.
- 5.12 *Refraction and Creation: Modernity and Identity in Taiwanese Crafts (January – March 2009)*
The organizers had been offered 2008 slot but wish to stay with 2009.
- 5.13 *ASEMUS (2010) with the British Museum*
This is proceeding well.

6. New Proposals

- 6.1 *The World in Single Colours (April – June 2009)*
Further images and information were provided and it was **AGREED** to accept this proposal.
- 6.2 *Fancy Stitch Group: Contemporary Indigenous Tapestries from South Africa. (October – December 2009)*
Further material provided with research followed up on the organizations with which they have had links with. It was **AGREED** to

provisionally schedule as further areas need to be considered, in relation to editing the written material and the choice of exhibition title.

- 6.3 The “Hibakusha” Portraits (July – September 2010)
The organizers have accepted the offered slot with an opening on the 6th June.
- 6.4 The Bakhtiari Migration (October – December 2008)
It was **AGREED** to accept this proposal particularly as it is a record of a disappearing world. The organizer is keen to include maps and a history of the region, with the possibility of a film showing with the event.
- 6.5 Photographing Asian Dance (July – September 2008)
It was **AGREED** to accept this proposal.
- 6.6 CALLIGRAFRIC (January 09 – Onwards)
It was **AGREED** to reject this proposal.

7. Preliminary Proposals Declined

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

8. Treasures of SOAS

It was **NOTED** that things are moving along with regards to the captions and the photographing of the objects is under control.

It was **NOTED** that the Lecturer in the Art and Archaeology of Islam was thanked for her report and the further information supplied with regards to the Design Consultants producing the overall graphics and panels. The Design Consultants are not involved in the decision making for the design of the exhibition.

Further information is being waited upon as to who will officiate at the opening, an application has been put in place to request the permission of HRH The Princess Royal. The Director will follow this up with a courtesy call. Other considerations are for the current Director of the V&A.

The Senior Common Room Committee has agreed to lend the portrait of Sir Richard Burton on the condition that it will be returned.

It was **NOTED** that areas of conservation need to be addressed, with specific objects being prioritized. A policy for long term art loan agreements needs to be drawn up, as a number of pieces which had previously been loaned to the school by the Cumings Collections in 1962 by informal agreement has caused considerable difficulties in trying to locate the loaned materials. Cumings Collections are working towards accreditation and need to formalize any loans.

It was **NOTED** that the seated Buddha made of alabaster is in the hands of the Head of the Art & Archaeology department, with details of ownership to be followed up. The Head of the Art & Archaeology department has requested

the loan of the standing Buddha which comes from the Cumings Collections, who have agreed to draw up a long term loan agreement for its inclusion within the Objects of Instruction/T.O.S.

The Head of Anthropology and Sociology has offered to contact retired professors in the hope of recovering some of the materials that were loaned once the Gallery manager has forwarded a list of the objects.

It was **NOTED** that further considerations must be placed on having a collection management policy; which will be incorporated into the School Governance.

It was **NOTED** that the plan is to keep the permanent display for at least 6 months, with funding needing to be sought for the exhibits changes in the future.

Joy Onyejiako
25.05.07

DATE OF NEXT MEETING: TBC