



DISCUSSION DOCUMENT



INTRODUCTION

Within this folder is a discussion document produced as part of the process of putting together a national strategy for the arts and media. It does not form part of the strategy. Neither does it express any sort of 'official' view. It was written in order to focus discussion and stimulate ideas.

WHY?

The arts and media in Britain are in renaissance. Over the last decade, they have shown a confidence and diversity never seen before. In quality of work and audience demand, the arts and media have never looked healthier or more central to people's lives. More than ever before, the arts are a source of civic pride as well as personal enrichment.

The arts and media in Britain are in crisis. Scarcely a day goes by without press stories of theatres facing closure, grants being cut or audiences declining; of a lack of good innovative work in all art forms; of the absence of a sense of direction, purpose and adventure.

These views may not be incompatible, and each has some truth. What is beyond doubt is that ideas of what is art have expanded; that demand has rightly grown for access to the arts, film and broadcasting to be the right of all rather than the privilege of the few; and that resources, both public and private, have struggled to keep up. Growth in the variety of the arts contains its own problems. So how can the strategic injection of public money, and the growth of partnership with the private sector, encourage new developments? What should the priorities be? How do we make sure that the opportunity to enjoy the arts is spread ever more widely throughout society?

This is where the national arts and media strategy comes in. In 1990, the Minister for the Arts asked the arts and media funding bodies (the Arts Council of Great Britain, the British Film Institute, the Crafts Council and the Regional Arts Associations/ Regional Arts Boards) to prepare a national strategy. One of its purposes is to provide the basic framework for their work. The Scottish and Welsh Arts Councils are conducting parallel exercises; and the local authorities and museums funding bodies are also associated with the strategy.

A further purpose is to consider whether the public money spent on the arts and media has been used to best effect, and how those responsible can do better in the future. It is important that all those with experience of and a passion for the arts and media provide support, assistance and advice to get the strategy right. Most important, it must be seen as a strategy for the arts and media, not for the bureaucrats.

HOW?

The paper in this folder is part of this process. It is one of a series of discussion documents; each is available free on request. Responses to them will be collated by the National Arts and Media Strategy Unit. Arising from this, a draft of the strategy will be prepared by Spring 1992. This too will be available for comment. The final version of the national arts and media strategy will be completed by Summer 1992. The hope is that the resulting document will be slim, challenging and readable - and that it will provide a mission statement for the arts and media over the next decade, as well as setting out clear goals and targets.

The national arts and media strategy will not write a single novel, put on a single play or make a single film. What it can help bring about, if the funding bodies receive the help of those who care about the arts and media, is the maximum opportunity for such creativity to flourish and for it to enrich the lives of ever more people. Your contribution to this process will be valuable and valued. Please send your views on this discussion document to the address below, to arrive by 30 November 1991.

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PHOTOGRAPHY

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NATIONAL ARTS AND MEDIA STRATEGY: DISCUSSION DOCUMENT ON PHOTOGRAPHY

This paper has been written in order to generate discussion and debate. It is not a chapter of the national arts and media strategy or a definitive statement.

We should like to hear what **you** believe may be the key issues throughout the field of photography over the next few years. With the paper as background, we should welcome views on all or any of the following questions, as well as on any other matters connected with photography on which you wish to comment.

The paper

1. Does the paper raise and deal adequately with the key issues? If not, where and how could it do better?

Developments in the art form

2. What have been the most exciting developments in photography over the past five years, in Great Britain or elsewhere? What may be possible exciting areas for development over the next five?
3. Where, how and with what effect are the edges blurring between photography and other art forms?

Public funding

4. Is the current public funding of photography (including funding by the local authorities) spent to best effect? If not, how could it be improved?
5. If there were a significant increase (say, 30% in real terms) in the public funding of photography what should be the priority areas for these additional resources? What effects might this have?

Photography in society

6. What is the relationship like between the commercial and non-commercial sectors of the photography profession? How would you like to see it develop over the next ten years?
7. What is the relationship like between photography and the published and broadcast media? How would you like to see it develop over the next ten years?

8. What are likely to be the key effects on photography in this country of international developments within Europe and elsewhere?
9. Is enjoyment of, or participation in, photography related to levels of education and social class? If so, how might the effects of this be countered?
10. What will be the main issues over the next ten years in relation to amateur photography, photography and cultural diversity, photography and women, and photography and disability?
11. What is the relationship like between photography and education (including schools, further and higher education, and informal education)? How would you like to see it develop over the next ten years?

Management, training and resources

12. What are the major needs in terms of physical infrastructure (such as buildings and equipment) if photography is to achieve its full potential? How are these needs likely to change over the next ten years?
13. What will be the major issues in the areas of training and management for the photography profession over the next ten years?

**NATIONAL ARTS AND MEDIA STRATEGY UNIT
AUGUST 1991**

NATIONAL ARTS AND MEDIA STRATEGY

DISCUSSION DOCUMENT ON PHOTOGRAPHY, THE ARTS AND CULTURAL INDUSTRIES

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PHOTOGRAPHY, THE ARTS AND CULTURAL INDUSTRIES

A Introduction

- 1 Europeans believe that photography was invented in Europe just over 150 years ago. French and English rivals competed to make their inventions public. Fox Talbot was an amateur artist and scientist; Daguerre was a commercial entertainer. The French government had the imagination to buy Daguerre's patent for public use, but the process he invented rapidly became obsolete. It was Fox Talbot's negative/positive process that became the foundation of a whole range of manufacturing and communication industries and of new forms of the creation, circulation and consumption of visual images. Photography rapidly became an internationally understood visual code with popular appeal. Yet the negative/positive photographic process had also been 'invented' in Brazil over twenty years earlier; a fact still conveniently overlooked by historians, textbooks and teachers¹.
- 2 Photography is now part of a massive cultural industry which encompasses a wide range of amateur, fine art, independent and commercial activities. As both a contemporary art form and mass medium photography crosses a number of the boundaries of the traditional structures for the arts. Its invention initially challenged traditional forms of fine art, but now as arts and other public funding bodies begin to embrace wider definitions of arts practices that bring together popular and elite, amateur and professional, commercial and non-profit areas, new opportunities for the development of photography arise.

B Photography and society

- 3 Still and moving photography are pervasive in late 20th century culture and are essentially uniform across the world. Photographic images surround us on cinema and television screens, in our homes, on the streets, in the shop windows of our neighbourhoods and in the magazines and newspapers which inform us about a wider world. Photography is the most familiar of the visual media in terms of its everyday consumption.
- 4 It is also the most popular cultural medium in terms of practice. Ownership of cameras in Britain runs at more than three per household and a recent survey of social trends suggested that photography was the second most popular leisure activity - after gardening.

¹ Boris Kossoy in "Les multiples inventions de la photographie" edited by Pierre Bonhomme and Alain Desvergnès, papers of the colloquium held at Chateau de Cerisy-la-Salle in September 1988 published by the Mission du Patrimoine Photographique, Paris in 1989.

- 5 The photographic industry continues to expand to meet popular interest in the photographic image, while commercial photography is centrally involved in the development of the publishing and media industries, particularly those linked to new technologies, both areas of expanding employment.
- 6 All these forms of photography are both readily and cheaply available and touch most peoples' lives in meaningful ways. Almost everyone is engaged with photography in some way at some level - sometimes as a producer, more occasionally as subject matter, and most often as a consumer of published or broadcast forms.
- 7 Through our experience of photographs in these media forms and of our own family and holiday snapshots we form ideas about ourselves and the worlds of others. Photographic reproductions and the film and television industries of the 20th century have provided as great a contribution to our culture as the invention of printing presses in the 15th century and the provision of libraries and statutory education in the 19th century.
- 8 A key factor that has contributed to this powerful role for photography is its aesthetic form, derived from 18th century traditions of Naturalism. This has led to a belief in photography's value as documentary truth - "the camera does not lie". However, new imaging technologies, based upon electronics rather than optics and chemistry, now emphasise the arbitrariness of previous technical and aesthetic norms of representation and will undermine popular and legal belief in the significance of photography as evidence.
- 9 These and other technological developments have been particularly rapid in the post-War period. Rapidly falling prices have made sophisticated cameras widely available and colour film and processing is available in every High Street over 100 million films each year. Books, magazines, newspapers and posters carry high quality reproductions and are made available at low prices largely as a result of earnings from advertising, which itself relies heavily on photography.
- 10 On the other hand the profit-seeking motives and institutional control of most forms of photography by a small number of national and international corporations limits opportunities, diminishes consumer choice, and restricts access particularly with regards to the expression of ideas and to training and employment. There are no legal requirements, or even union agreements, to compare with those that provide for a degree of protection of public interest in equal opportunities and cultural values in the broadcasting industries.
- 11 Apart from the French government's intervention in 1839, in providing Daguerre with a pension for life, there has been very little recognition by public authorities of the cultural value of photography. The direction of its development has been left almost wholly to commercial interests.
- 12 During the second half of the 20th century the major part of Arts Council and regional arts association spending has been on traditional art forms and their

institutions - fine art galleries, opera houses, concert performances, theatres, and so on. Very little support or recognition has been offered to those art forms mediated by mass distribution through publishing, broadcasting and the 20th century technologies. Thus leaving those recent cultural forms that have most impact on the lives of most people open to the largely uncontrolled exploitation of profit-seeking companies.

C Recent history

- 13 New ideas about the nature of photography, and indeed the notion of culture itself, have had a major influence in the last twenty five years. Theories of representation, feminist and cultural politics, post-modernism and critical analyses of the media and cultural industries have changed many aspects of the practice of photography, and inspired new kinds of cultural organisations - media centres, community workshops and community based publishing ventures, non-profit picture agencies and so on, as well as new approaches to the school curriculum and ways of teaching it.
- 14 This phenomenon has been an international one and a detailed historical analysis of the period has yet to be written. There were many, and sometimes conflicting, trends ranging from fine art investment to community politics. Auction sales of 19th century photographs began at Sotheby's in 1971, major museum exhibitions took place at the Victoria and Albert Museum in 1969 and at the National Portrait Gallery in 1972. The first non-commercially orientated degree course in photography began at Trent Polytechnic in 1972. Independent energy and commitment led to the founding of Creative Camera magazine in 1968, The Photographers' Gallery in 1971 and Amber Associates (film and photography) in 1968.
- 15 Arts Council subsidy for photography was first made available in 1970, twenty-five years after the foundation of the organisation. Accurate figures for annual Arts Council and regional arts association expenditure on photography over this period remain difficult to establish². In 1989 the total did not amount to more than 0.94% of total budgets. Additional public funds for photography are committed by the Office of Arts and Libraries to the National Museum of Photography, Film and Television, and through other national museums, such as the Victoria and Albert Museum, and the National Portrait Gallery.
- 16 Local authority expenditure on photography is almost impossible to determine, but there is no evidence to suggest that it even matches the combined Arts Council/regional arts association total.
- 17 This poor response of public bodies to the energy and commitment of photographers and to the cultural significance of their work is regrettable.

² "Cultural Trends 1990 Issue 8" (Photography), Policy Studies Institute, London, 1991.

Organisations and individuals working and operating within the independent photography sector remain severely underfunded and are now considerably demoralised. The value of their public funding has decreased in real terms even in the five years since The Glory of the Garden. In this period there has been a slow, but steady loss of key mature workers to the academic, local authority and commercial sectors, largely because of appalling salaries and long working hours.

- 18 A survey carried out in 1988 at the time of the compilation of the Independent Photography Directory³ covered over 250 organisations and indicated that almost 900 people, excluding photographers, were employed, either full or part-time. The turnover of this 'independent' sector was estimated to be over £10 million; tiny in relation to the media industries, but culturally highly significant.

D Public funding

- 19 Public bodies have the responsibility to protect, promote and encourage a range of public interests in the arts and cultural industries, including:
- creative standards and innovation
 - social, economic and cultural development
 - equal opportunities for access and employment
 - education and training
 - ethical standards of representation
 - preservation and promotion of the heritage.

E Creative standards and innovation

- 20 It is often claimed that British photographers are some of the best in the world, with some justification. Chris Killip was winner of the first prestigious international Henri Cartier-Bresson Award, and British photographers David Gamble, Nick Waplington and David Wise have won three of the first prizes of the European Kodak Award for Young Photographers since the scheme was launched four years ago.
- 21 Within Britain no comparable awards are offered to reward the highest standards or to draw the public's attention to the creative values and achievements of our photographers. Very few photographers have gained widespread public recognition for their work in this country in the way that artists have through the Turner Prize or authors through the Booker Prize. Public and private funding should be sought to establish comparable prizes for photographers.
- 22 Innovation in the arts often finds little immediate financial reward. Most commercial companies are reluctant to take the risks, which can be very high, of commissioning or buying truly innovative work. Yet it is such work that regenerates and enlivens the culture that we have. Support for creative work that

³ "Independent Photography Directory", edited by Michael Hallett and Barry Lane, AN Publications, Sunderland 1989.

engages with the dominant commercial practices should be a new key role for public funding.

- 23 Public subsidy could be used to create and support opportunities to integrate innovative and more diverse photography into professionally distributed cultural and commercial publications. A national scheme for the media industries would encourage documentary, fictional or constructed work that was innovative in form, content or cultural perspective, or was pioneering new working methods or styles.

F Social, cultural & economic development

- 24 It is widely accepted that the arts contribute significantly to social development. Involvement in arts programmes and activities increases self and community confidence and motivation, develops skills and creativity, and enables individuals and groups to identify and articulate their own ambitions.
- 25 Photography can be a very powerful tool in these processes, but in order to have such a role public funding is essential for community-based resources such as darkrooms, workshops and reproduction facilities, local provision of practical and critical skills training, and for locally produced publications, exhibitions, slide-tape events, and so on.
- 26 Critical elements within training are essential in order to stimulate debate about the treatment of social and community issues by the press and media, and to encourage the interrogation of conventional portrayals of gender, race, age and disability.
- 27 Other forms of cultural provision that enhance the quality of life for residents include exhibition spaces, and retail outlets for the purchase of books, magazines, posters and photographic prints. Consumers of the arts deserve to have access to the widest variety of historical and contemporary material. French law, for instance, guarantees the display at retail outlets of all published magazines and newspapers. Britain as part of a wider European market could learn from this.
- 28 The creation of a strong, dynamic and wealth-creating economy is frequently an objective of local authority investment, particularly in relation to inner city regeneration or rural development. Here the cultural industries and tourism are the means most often discussed in relation to the arts.
- 29 Research studies to date have tended to concentrate on film, video and television, and recorded music, in major urban areas. With the exception of the recently completed report by Practical Arts on photography in Birmingham, jointly commissioned by the Arts Council, West Midlands Arts and Birmingham Economic Development Department ⁴, the potential of photography has been

⁴ "Income Generating Opportunities for Birmingham Photographers in the Independent Sector", West Midlands Arts, Birmingham 1990.

largely overlooked. Yet there is no doubt that photography has already contributed in various ways to tourism, inner city rehabilitation, rural development, job creation, small business development, youth training and so on. Further research needs to be commissioned to uncover the evidence and develop the arguments for investment in photography.

G Equal opportunities and the diversity of culture

- 30 The principles of equal opportunities are central to the policies of arts funding agencies and grant-aided arts organisations, although many barriers and inequalities remain, even within those bodies, to their full and effective implementation.
- 31 The major employers of photographers and others who work with photographs are the commercial industries whose records in the area of equal opportunities are even poorer than employers in the public sector. Wherever possible public bodies should encourage both employers and unions to introduce fairer methods of selection and recruitment.
- 32 It is often assumed that access to employment as a photographer is relatively easy; sophisticated equipment and materials are cheap and simple to use. The majority of employed photographers have received little or no full-time photographic education or training. Formal qualifications appear to count for little, providing an illusion that access is open to all. In fact a considerable range of technical, creative, social and financial skills are essential. Existing education and training provision is heavily biased towards the technical aspects and its geographic availability is uneven.
- 33 Public authorities need to press for considerable changes to the content of courses and for better distribution of education and training opportunities (see section H below).
- 34 The profession of photographer is heavily dominated by men. The macho/techno image of the photographer in much of the popular photography press strongly discourages women from certain roles and often restricts them to such genres as still life and portraiture. However, women frequently occupy key positions as picture editors, book editors, designers, picture researchers, picture library/agency owners or directors, gallery directors or exhibition curators.
- 35 Within mainstream commercial and amateur practice women are most commonly regarded as passive subjects, and so constructed as objects of the male gaze. Work must be done to raise the status of the work women presently do in the photography field and to encourage their photographic production.
- 36 The absence of a clear action plan on behalf of women in the arts and media in the policies of most funding bodies is a key issue that will need to be addressed in a National Arts and Media Strategy.

- 37 The needs of Black photographers and communities, and people with disabilities have been addressed by the Arts Council in two reports - 'African, Caribbean and South Asian Photography' by Devdan Sen and Similola Coker⁵ and 'Photography & Disability in England' by Judith Crow, Liz Crow and Andrew Ormston⁶.
- 38 Central to the Arts Council's strategy in relation to the first of these two areas is its funding and support for Autograph, a broadly based national membership organisation whose task is to raise awareness of black photographers' work through publications, exhibitions, talks and other presentations, to network and provide information across the country, and to seek to provide and encourage education and training opportunities in all aspects of photographic work.
- 39 In the field of disability the Arts Council recognises that stereotyping in photographs of people with disabilities within advertising and photojournalism is the key issue to address (see Section I below).

H Education and training

- 40 Visual literacy is a basic entitlement for all citizens in our society. "A knowledge of photography is just as important as a knowledge of the alphabet. The illiterates of the future will be ignorant of the use of pen and camera alike."⁷
- 41 Research and critical work. At the present time comparatively little research into the history or theory of photography is carried out in academic institutions in Britain. There is no obvious government research council to fund such work, and while there are now a number of undergraduate photography degree courses and one taught M.A. course, the subject is not centrally established in undergraduate or graduate courses in universities or polytechnics. But photography research work is central to the project of both art history and media and communication studies.
- 42 Critical studies of the photographic image have grown over the last twenty five years within the school curriculum largely within English and partly as a result of the support and promotion of Media Studies and Media Education by the British Film Institute. The time has now come for its extension more broadly across the curriculum, particularly within Art and the humanities.
- 43 Outside the academic world few of the staff in independent photography or visual arts organisations have either the time or resources to undertake or to commission research. Royalties from books, or fees to contributors to books and magazines, rarely cover research expenses and seldom pay for the time involved. In the short

⁵ Arts Council, London 1986

⁶ Arts Council, London 1990

⁷ Lazlo Moholy-Nagy, 'Malerei, Photographie, Film', Munich 1925.

term the Arts Council and the new Regional Arts Boards should give priority to organisations or projects that include such research and develop publishing opportunities in partnership with them.

- 44 Regular communication, comment and critical writing about current activity is crucial to all the arts, and is particularly important for photography, whose role in society is so powerful. The Arts Council believes it should support a number of nationally distributed photography magazines to fulfil this role and ensure that they meet appropriate standards of writing and photography, design and production, marketing and sales.
- 45 Education. Traditionally photography education has been defined in 3 broad ways - as a hobby activity, as a set of technical skills within vocational training, and as a transparent medium of record.
- 46 Photography is used by teachers from a wide range of disciplines working at every level of the education system. This use, however, is largely instrumental; the specific nature of photographic skills and conventions of expression are rarely noted.
- 47 Within art and design teaching photography is frequently regarded as just another medium. It is seen as a form of mechanical mass reproduction of lesser worth than the traditional forms of painting and sculpture. Often it is relegated to a lunch-time or after-school club activity. Fewer than 5,000⁸ students register each year for GCSE Photography exams. Photography is also an endorsed option within most Art and Design GCSE's, but is taken up by barely 1% of candidates⁹.
- 48 By contrast demand for non-vocational degree courses in higher education is extremely high; for example, up to 1,000 applications for the 28 places on the BA course at the Polytechnic of Central London. Similarly, as the take-up for the City & Guilds 9231 (Photography) non-vocational modular course demonstrates demand by adults for recreational or leisure courses is also high¹⁰. The more imaginative, critical and creative of these are generally being offered by regional arts association funded workshops, photography galleries and arts centres. These should be encouraged and developed.
- 49 The Education Reform Act (1988) has forced a wholesale re-evaluation of curriculum matters and a very different structure of funding on to schools (Local

⁸ This figure is broken down to: 2708 candidates for the Southern Exam Board, 1753 candidates for the London & E. Anglia Group and 113 for the Welsh Joint Education Committee Group, making a total of 4574 for 1991 entry.

⁹ 2840 students entered for photography as an optional endorsed subject out of a total of 208,982 who entered for Art and Design in 1991.

¹⁰ There were 8470 registrations for course modules during 1990/91.

Management or L.M.S.). These changes have implications for the development of a critical practice in teaching photography at all levels and for adequately resourcing it. Through support for educational publishing the Arts Council should help make available a range of well produced resource materials.

- 50 The introduction to the interim report of the National Curriculum Art Working Group recognises that "children in the world today learn as much through visual images as they do through words. The understanding and use of visually communicated information, gathered from a whole range of sources has become a basic skills."
- 51 Following this lead the Arts Council's National Curriculum Working Party on Photography is currently producing a model for a coherent and structured approach to the place of photography within the curriculum, across a wide range of disciplines and for all levels. The approach is based on the premise that people of all ages are entitled to have the necessary practical and intellectual skills to express themselves visually, to represent chosen aspects of the world through photography, and to understand the ways visual images come to be produced and used in society.
- 52 Central and local government resources will be required for the training of teachers, youth workers and others, within both the formal and informal education sectors, as well as for the development of appropriate teaching materials. Such training and resources will also be invaluable to the staff and tutors of independent arts organisations. The Arts Council should be a pro-active partner in the development of models of good practice here.
- 53 Teachers of photography within the arts also need a fully representative professional association and national magazine, to support and promote their needs, to disseminate and distribute information, and to encourage debate and discussion.
- 54 Photography courses in higher education tend to divide clearly between vocationally based training where issues concerning the problems of dominant representation are barely addressed while non-vocational degree courses do not adequately prepare students for the exigencies of earning a living. Course modules for both contexts should be developed with the active participation of practising photographers.
- 55 Training. Most photographers work alone or in small businesses. Competition is fierce and partly as a result individual incomes are generally low. The relative cheapness of sophisticated equipment has tended to tempt many people into careers without business training, technical or creative skills.
- 56 Many photographers will always wish to work alone and demand already exists for training in marketing and business skills, which are essential in both commercial

and publicly funded sectors. However almost no short course provision is available anywhere and this need to be tackled as a priority.

- 57 Education and training provision in photography has been largely uncoordinated and no organisation has been responsible for the training needs of self-employed or freelance photographers. The recently established Photography Lead Industry Body has begun to investigate their needs. The Arts and Entertainment Training Council will be researching the training needs of photographers who work within the arts, although most will also work in the commercial sector. The Arts Council should work to ensure a consistency within the National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) suggested by the two lead bodies.

I Ethics of representation

- 58 Photography is a powerful medium for the creation and maintenance of stereotypes which perpetuate power relations and inequalities in society and divide people from people on the basis of class, gender, race, age, disability and so on.
- 59 Public arts and educational bodies need to make the tackling of such issues central to their policies. People need intellectual and practical skills to enable them to challenge stereotypes and to create alternative images of and for themselves. Access to institutions with power to distribute or promote alternative imagery is also essential. Support should be available for the production of critical works and self-generated media products.
- 60 Codes of conduct, which include detailed guidelines on the ethics of representation, need to be promoted and adopted by professional workers in the arts and media.
- 61 The Arts Council should also encourage relevant non-arts bodies, such as charities, campaigning organisations or advertising agencies, to acknowledge and engage with the debates about the photographic portrayal of people, places or social issues that are their proper concern.

J Heritage

- 62 It is widely accepted that public bodies have an obligation to preserve aspects of the past, and to promote and to interpret them for the benefit of the community. Photographs are both historical objects as well as images of the past.
- 63 The recently published Museums Charter¹¹ is a welcome statement of the key factors essential to the creation of a modern and dynamic museum scene. However, vast numbers of photographs exist in a wide range of non-museum collections; in national and local archives, in specialist, technical and commercial collections.

¹¹ "A National Strategy for Museums", Museums Association, London 1991

- 64 There is no coordinated national policy for the preservation and promotion of this photographic heritage at national, regional and local levels. There is not even an up-to-date national register of existing archives in public, private or commercial hands. There is no obvious national source of funds to support or promote research and historical studies in photography. Nor adequate funds for the purchase of important historical or contemporary material, for conservation and for cataloguing. The Arts Council has recently assisted the National Sound Archive to launch an appeal for funds for a programme of recording life stories for an Oral History of British Photography.
- 65 A national policy would need to include oral history, equipment, materials and ephemera, as well as the photographs themselves. It would also need to cover the active purchase and commissioning of new work, the promotion and interpretation for public access, and commercial use. Perhaps a major Millennium project documenting the urban or rural environment and contemporary life over the next nine years could be established to provide a model for different agencies to follow. Historical models for such a project include the Farm Securities Administration archive created in the USA in the 1930s and the French 'Mission Heliographique' organised by the Commission des Monuments Historiques in the 1860s. Contemporary parallels would be the French 'DATAR' project and 'Ecodoc' in Sweden.
- 66 Training is an issue too. A wide range of public, private and commercial organisations hold photographic collections and there is no coherent training available to staff. A number of different professional bodies and the Arts Council, need to work together to create an appropriate range of training provision.

K Photographers

- 67 Domestic and amateur photography. Most of us take photographs at times in our lives and camera ownership in Britain continues to grow. We shoot over 3000 million pictures each year, usually to celebrate and record important or personal experiences, family and friends. Many people have a curiosity and unsatisfied demand for more knowledge, education and training opportunities, and a desire to see more creative and imaginative work in publications, exhibitions and television programmes.
- 68 At a local level the provision of a range of recreational, educational or training courses for personal, creative or professional development is patchy and generally poor. Yet demand is high. Public darkrooms and studio facilities are popular and well-used wherever they are, but they are very thinly spread. Few have colour facilities and none have any of the new digital technology. Many large towns are without any such public resources at all. Local management of schools and colleges perhaps may provide one possibility for developing such provision. More also needs to be done to provide specialist library stocks of books, magazines and videos about photography.

- 69 Professional photographers. Photographers in former Eastern bloc countries are now discovering that capitalist economies provide few opportunities for creative artists to gain high or even secure or regular incomes. Also income earning opportunities outside the mainstream commercial sector remain scarce and are almost always poorly paid. Public subsidy for photography in Britain over the last twenty years has only had a marginal effect on the incomes of individual photographers.
- 70 Practical Arts' research in Birmingham ¹²clearly revealed that earning opportunities did exist but were not being effectively exploited by local photographers. Many individual photographers lacked the necessary skills, had little access to relevant training and frequently could not find darkrooms, studios or other resources at affordable prices.
- 71 Practical Arts' report therefore recommended public support for appropriate educational and training opportunities, technical resources including access to experiment with new technology and, more radically, for a new agency to seek or create work opportunities for individual photographers.
- 72 New models for non-profit agencies for photographers should be supported to explore ways to raise commissioning money for new work or to promote existing work for publication and commercial use, provided that they meet agreed standards of quality, are based on equal opportunities and take responsibility for the ethics of representation.
- 73 Photographers, whose interests and values do not wholly conform with those in the mainstream commercial arena, have no union or professional association to support or assist them in their work. They had no official representation in the lobby for changes to be incorporated into the new Copyright Act of 1989. Neither they, nor visual artists, were able to achieve the inclusion in the Act of the principle of payment for the presentation of their work in public exhibitions. Nor have the photographers' full moral rights of the Berne Convention been incorporated into law in Britain, unlike in most European countries.
- 74 The new digital technologies for the storage and manipulation of images emphasise the need to strengthen and secure photographers' rights, and the need for agencies to control the use of pictures and to collect reproduction and other fees.
- 75 Outside the commercial sector professional practice in photography is not well established. It must be a priority for a representative professional association or union to emerge which will promote codes of practice, model contracts, information distribution, training and debate, relevant to the needs of these photographers.

¹² "Income Generating Opportunities for Birmingham Photographers in the Independent Sector", West Midlands Arts, Birmingham 1990.

L Publishing

- 76 Ever since Fox Talbot's Pencil of Nature (1844) publication has been a primary means of distributing photographic images. The introduction of half-tone reproduction methods in the 1890s enabled publishers to reach even larger audiences economically. Recent duotone and four-colour offset lithography with laser scanning now makes it possible to reproduce faithfully all but the most subtle tones or finest details of hand-made prints.
- 77 Books, magazines and other publications have a permanence that exhibitions do not have and provide individuals with repeated opportunities to view images with supporting texts at a fraction of the cost of purchasing individual prints.
- 78 Commercial opportunities for photographers to work in publishing have grown enormously in the last fifteen years with the boom in magazine sales. However the nature of the opportunities has changed too. Much of the work now demanded is very routine or mundane. Creative work is harder to find. Extended picture stories are less frequently published as television news and documentaries appear to have replaced those roles. Photographers seeking to avoid the limitations of commercial magazines have been turning to book publishing, exhibitions and individual print sales to find outlets for their creative work.
- 79 Books. However, the high cost of reproducing photographs for books with relatively short print runs, leads to prohibitively high retail prices. Furthermore, booksellers prefer cheap, fast-selling titles and are increasingly reluctant to invest their capital in slow-selling stock for specialised markets. Even the recently established, more imaginative chains of high street booksellers do not carry a full range of less popular titles. All these factors strongly discourage commercial publishers from taking risks.
- 80 Public subsidy offered towards the publication of books enables commercial publishers and booksellers to reduce their risks and encourages them to provide a greater choice for consumers. Financial support for non-profit-distributing publishers committed to the highest creative standards, innovation and equal opportunities broadens the choice even further.
- 81 Magazines and newspapers. Picture editors need to be encouraged to develop or maintain an interest in contemporary creative or innovative work (see para 23 above). Imaginative photographers or picture agencies could be encouraged by public subsidy to offer work or commissioning opportunities to publishers at competitive market prices (see paras 71 and 72 above). Along with the relevant unions, such as the NUJ and ACTT, such agencies should also be expected to promote equal opportunities on behalf of disadvantaged or minority groups.
- 82 Very little training exists for picture editors in the publishing industry or for picture researchers or picture agency staff. This should be addressed by the lead industry bodies such as the Newspaper Society, Periodicals Training Council and Book House Training Centre.

- 83 Posters, postcards, etc. Photographic reproductions in the form of posters, postcards, calendars and so on have become extremely popular in the last ten years. However again the market is dominated by a few major publishers and retailers, and a wide range is imported from the USA and France. A valuable opportunity to popularise and promote high quality British photography is being missed by commercial and non-commercial publishers, galleries and museums, and photographers themselves.
- 84 Retail Outlets. Recently a range of independent newspaper and magazine publishers have formed a new Independent Publishers Group to draw attention to the rich diversity of independent publications in this country, and to safeguard their future in the face of increasing media ownership. The general public has a diminishing choice of titles and points of view as the number of newsagents displaying independent titles, especially those with a different point of view to the mass-circulation ones, is now a minority. The right to public display for all periodicals under French law has been mentioned above (para 27).
- 85 Retail outlets selling cameras and other photographic equipment materials and services are everywhere, yet the range of photography publications available in commercial bookshops is extremely limited. Public bodies should be prepared to support retail outlets with clear social and cultural policies in order to expand the range of consumer choice and to provide outlets for cultural producers and for specialised publications particularly in areas where communities are poorly provided for.
- 86 Libraries. Libraries are valuable cultural and educational organisations that are currently used by about 50% of the population. With branch libraries, travelling services and outreach programmes they are able to serve rural areas, hospitals, prisons, residential homes and schools.
- 87 Libraries are an important market for book publishers, but little or no research has been done on their purchasing policies for photography books, magazines and videos, or on user preferences. The Arts Council should consider developing closer working links with the library sector to discuss arts and cultural issues.
- 88 Many libraries or local authorities operate art or picture loan schemes, most of which are restricted to traditional forms of paintings or prints. Opportunities should be taken to expand these services to cover handmade photographic prints and high quality reproductions.
- 89 As libraries develop more promotional activities there are also opportunities to organise small-scale photography festivals, exhibitions, talks by authors and other events, all linked to new publications or acquisitions.
- 90 Libraries are also often small-scale local publishers. Frequently historical photographs are used in postcards and books, but far more imaginative possibilities exist, particularly if local publishers become more active in working with oral historians, community groups and contemporary photographers.

M Broadcasting

- 91 Most peoples' contact with the arts is through television. It is probably the most powerful medium for both popularising, as well as promoting, serious ideas. Research by the Independent Broadcasting Authority has revealed demand for more photography programmes. Apart from the special effort that was made by television companies as a contribution to the 150th anniversary celebrations in 1989, there appears to be no continuing commitment to production of programmes on photography.
- 92 The Arts Council and the regional arts associations are in a unique position to tackle this problem through advocacy, subsidy for productions and co-productions, and in the future through Arts Council Television.
- 93 Radio, too, is an extremely powerful medium which receives too little critical attention in cultural debates. It is also expanding at the present time. However its almost exclusive dependence on commercial advertising places it in a weak position in relation to less popular forms of programming.
- 94 Some regional arts associations have developed policies towards radio and there are arguments for a national commissioning trust that would partly finance exciting ideas for arts radio programmes. Despite photography being a visual medium occasional radio programmes in the past have certainly been popular. The Arts Council should consider encouraging and supporting such a trust.

N Exhibitions

- 95 Exhibitions of photography are generally popular whenever they are shown. 'The Art of Photography' at the Royal Academy in 1989 attracted almost 200,000 visitors and was one of their most popular exhibitions ever. The Photographers' Gallery in central London averages 50,000 visitors each month, while the National Museum of Photography, Film and Television in Bradford attracts 600,000 each year. Visitor surveys in art galleries have revealed a demand for more photography exhibitions in annual programmes.
- 96 As opportunities for photographers to find outlets for serious and creative work in magazines and other publications have declined, many have turned their attention to exhibitions. Venues ranging from museums to community centres now regularly include photography in their programmes.
- 97 Since the early 1970s a wide range of specialised photography centres have been established across the country, many created by photographers themselves. Many aim to be centres for the support of photographers by the offering of commissions, touring of exhibitions, production of publications and provision of darkrooms. Most offer educational activities or resources to the public such as workshops, lectures, libraries, archives and retail outlets for books, magazines and sometimes photographic materials.

- 98 Relatively few of these centres are adequately funded to fulfil their own ambitions, the needs of their users or audiences or to present well researched exhibitions with high critical and curatorial standards.
- 99 The National Arts and Media Strategy will identify a selected number of such key centres for the development of exhibition and education programmes that engage with and encourage an understanding of the dominant forms of domestic, amateur, independent, fine art and commercial photography. A number of these organisations are likely to be linked to or form parts of media centres with related philosophies and film, television and video programming at their core.
- 100 Several centres in major cities should aim to rival in scale such international organisations as the Centre Nationale de la Photographie in Paris, the International Centre for Photography in New York, or the National Museum of Photography, Film and Television in Bradford.
- 101 Each of the photography centres would aim to support photographers by payment of exhibition fees, purchase of work and offering of commissions towards exhibitions. Local, national and international touring and collaboration would also be central to their roles.

N Fine art

- 102 Over the last twenty years there has been a slow and gradual recognition of photography by fine art institutions. Arts Council interest began in a consistent way in 1973. The Royal Academy held its first ever exhibition in 1989 and only finally admitted one photograph into its open Summer Exhibition in 1990. However, very few public art museums, or corporate fine art collections have yet made any attempt to include photographs in any consistent way.
- 103 Younger curators, whose higher education has coincided with the development of post-modern theories which place less emphasis on traditional craft skills, approach photography with a more open, but still poorly informed historical background and critical values. At the same time, their rejection of a modernist historical framework often leads to the exclusion of many photographers working within documentary, journalistic, domestic or commercial genres.
- 104 In Britain the sale of fine photographic prints has been very slow to develop. The overall value of auction sales of historical and contemporary photographs remains insignificant in relation to fine art sales (Sotheby's, London sales in 1991 totalled just over £0.4 million) and very few commercial galleries are able to survive selling only photographic prints, even in London.
- 105 Photographers have yet to take full advantage of the growing opportunities provided by public art and Percent commissions and of a corresponding involvement in large scale work and alternative technical processes.

P Europe and Internationalism

- 106 At a moment when photographs may be transmitted around the world in seconds and transnational corporations control the media via satellites, the need for international experience and cooperation in the arts hardly needs to be stressed.
- 107 Opportunities for international travel and work experience need to be given priority for both photographers, publishers and exhibition organisers. Exchanges, exhibition touring and collaboration, book and magazine distribution all require further research, development and funding.

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