

Subject: Re: message from david curtis

Date: Tue, 19 Apr 2005 16:24:14

+0200 From: Jeremy Welsh

To: David Curtis

Hi David,

sorry for the delay in replying, things have been a bit hectic of late. It's a time of year when there is a lot going on here.

In reply to your queries about LVA:

The short answer is that I became actively involved with LVA in 1981 and worked parallel with David Critchley for several years. The "parting of the ways" came around 1986, when Dave's (then) interests began to diverge dramatically from what LVA as a whole wanted to do.

And the ,long answer....

The background to my becoming involved goes back to 1976 when I first got to know Dave, Maggie Warwick, John Kippin, Kevin Atherton and various others through 2b Butlers Wharf and the early Basement Group. I was involved in various activities in connection with both of those spaces during the late seventies. I remember the first call for submissions that LVA sent out in 1976 or 77, when they began to build up the tape library. At that point I did not respond as I'd not yet made any single-screen video work, I'd only used real-time video within installations. In fact I was working much more with film in those days, but that's another story :-). My "induction" into video art per se occurred in 1980/81 when I started a post-graduate course at Goldsmiths and was invited to participate in an exhibition arranged by Steve Rogers at The Midland Group Gallery in Nottingham. The show was called "Body Strong" and was centred on performance/body art in relation to video.

The connection with the AIR Gallery was already established before I got involved, as an occasional venue for screenings - the difference was that I formalised it a bit more and established it as a more permanent space for video & new media. We continued the cooperation after Iwona Blazwick took over, but on a reduced scale, concentrating on annual exhibitions rather than an ongoing weekly programme. The last collaboration with AIR was "Window Box", a touring exhibition in 1986 that we sent to five or six venues around the UK. Iwona was at AIR for a relatively short time. Before that, she had been Sandy Nairn's assistant at the ICA, then after AIR she went back as exhibitions director at the ICA. We also did several projects in collaboration with the ICA, both through the galleries, and also with Alex Graham in the Cinematheque. The last LVA project I was directly involved in was the touring exhibition "Genlock" which I co-produced with Maureen Paley/Interim Art in 1987/88.

Regarding the LVA archive - I've got some material in the form of flyers, postcards etc. but not much else. I understand that all the organizational files, minutes, reports etc "disappeared" at some point during the demise of Hoxton Square. You'd be welcome to have the modest materials that I've got, if they are of any use to you.

It's interesting how there seems to be something in the air at the moment around that particular era, with the recent publication of Cate Elwes' book on video and various other initiatives. I've just had a flurry of correspondence with Steve Littman in connection with the anthology that he and Jackie Hatfield are putting together, and I have very regular contact with Dave Critchley on a whole variety of matters, including his evolving archive of Butlers' Wharf.

I've not heard from John Sundholm, but I'd be very happy to help him if he contacts me.

Otherwise, life in general goes on and we are reasonably content with our situation in Bergen. I started a new job last autumn as course leader for a new MA in Visual Arts, and I'm enjoying that very much. It is a very broad course, so I've got students working everything from ceramics to computer networks, and that in itself is both challenging and stimulating. One of my teaching colleagues here at the moment is Inger Lise Hansen, whose work I assume you are familiar with. A result of this has been that, between us, we've managed to get quite a lot of British artists' film and video shown here. I'm also still in close contact with Steven Bode and don't exclude the possibility that I might work on a new project with the Umbrella at some future date. Our last cooperation, in 1999, was mainly financed by the Norwegian Foreign Ministry and was quite successful, at least in terms of numbers of venues who decided to show it.

Next time I'm in London I'll try to call in and see you at St. Martins - it would be interesting to hear more about the research you're doing.

If you have any more questions, just let me know,

with best wishes

Jez

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