NOTE OF THE SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT ART GROUP MEETING ON TUESDAY 16 MAY 2006

Present: Jamie Stone MSP, Chair
Linda Fabiani MSP
Robin Harper MSP
Jamie McGrigor MSP
Ken Macintosh MSP
Richard Calvocoressi
Fiona McDougall, Art Curator

In attendance: Stuart Todd, PA to the Director of Access and Information
(Minutes)
Richard Holligan, Media Officer (Item 5)

Apologies: Liz Lochhead and Alison Watt

1. Priorities for future collecting

1. The group discussed the possible acquisition of work by the late Ian Hamilton Finlay. Richard had started discussions with the artist before he died. Richard would arrange to visit the artist’s estate to explore this further and report to the group with proposals and costs.

Action: Art Curator

External landscape

2. Robin was in favour of a circular seat by Sir Patrick Geddes in the landscaped area for people to sit on, which was very much in the spirit of what Enric Miralles had planned for the exterior. This would be discussed at the next meeting.

Canongate Wall quotations

3. Robin called for a quote of the Scottish Poet Robert Fergusson to be on the Canongate Wall. The wall contained a representative range of Scottish stones containing text of quotations from a number of authors chosen by public entries and suggestions. It was noted that no female poets were on the wall.

4. It was recognised that some of the quotations were difficult to read but this could be dealt with as information was on the website and could be included in guides being published about the building or art collection.

5. The group agreed that any future use of the Canongate Wall should be in the spirit of the original development and not in response to ad-hoc suggestions for additional quotations. It was agreed the group would consider possibilities for a future project to add to the Wall.
2. Approaches to collecting

a. Gifts policy

6. The group discussed the policy on gifts to the art collection. An Acquisition policy was already in place and the group were invited to suggest any revisions or changes. The Art Curator would deal with minor gifts on a day-to-day basis and bring any major gifts to the group. The group wanted to positively emphasise the Parliament’s commitment to primarily contemporary artists and reflect their achievements in the collection.

7. The group was content with the broad policy and agreed to discuss priorities for addition to the collection over the next three years, focusing on the purchase or commissioning of works by living artists.

b. Donations from living artists

8. The group were supportive of the Parliament’s decision not to host the proposed event to launch an art prize for landscape painting. The group discussed the Parliament’s own approach to a competition for a commission and the importance of supporting new media approaches in art and younger generation artists.

9. The group considered a donation offer from an artist. One member of the group was in support of the donation. However, the group wanted to focus on supporting and promoting the work of contemporary artists producing challenging and innovative work. It was agreed to decline the offer.

3. Consider potential commissions or purchases for 06-07 in view of preceding discussion

10. The group agreed to investigate four possibilities before outlining proposals and making recommendations to SPCB after summer recess:

   • Research the acquisition of a work by the late Ian Hamilton Finlay. Richard and the Art Curator would arrange to visit the artist's estate on 2 June.
   • Explore further the acquisition of new media works.
   • The group would visit the Dovecot Studio and look at acquiring and commissioning a tapestry designed by a leading Scottish artist. Dovecot has already offered to gift a tapestry to the Parliament and have proposed to commission a new work.
   • The group would consider priorities for acquisitions prior to the next meeting.

11. It was agreed that these ideas could form the basis of a collecting strategy over the next 3 to 4 years but could not all be realised at once.
4. Update from Art Curator

Guide to art collection

12. The group noted that a publication of a guide book for visitors would be developed providing an interpretation of the art.

Art and Architecture tours

13. The group noted that these tours would focus on art and architecture information and interpretation.

Exhibitions policy development

14. The group noted that a policy to deal with exhibitions was being devised as part of the Events strategy. The group expressed an interest in contributing to the exhibition policy. The Art Curator explained the background and that some of the group’s concerns were being considered.

Exhibitions

15. The group discussed a proposed exhibition and reception in the Garden Lobby by Lithuanian photographer Antanas Sutkus which would coincide with the Lithuanian presidential visit in July. The group agreed to approach the Parliament’s Event Co-ordinator regarding the proposed event.

Action: Art Curator

Loans programme

16. The group noted that a loans programme for the Parliament was being developed, and it was content for the Art Curator to make a judgement on the loans that came in. She would report back to the group and SPCB on proposed loans from the National Galleries, Royal Scottish Academy and Glasgow Museums.

Scottish Executive sculpture commission

17. The group noted that the Scottish Women’s Suffrage Movement sculpture was to be installed in the Parliament. This was Scottish Executive led and funded which the SPCB had approved.

5. Introduction to Media Relations Office

18. The group were introduced to the Parliament’s Media Relations Office.

19. Possible news releases were suggested on the group’s policy with a link to the policy on the website, and the possible acquisition of a work by the late Ian Hamilton Finlay.
20. The group discussed the bust of John Smith by Sir Eduardo Paolozzi which was being loaned by Sir Angus Grossart. This was going to be displayed in the public area of the building near the garden meeting rooms. The bust would be installed on 20 June and a small reception was being planned to mark the installation.

21. The loan period was still to be finalised and the recommendation by the Art Curator was for a two year loan period.

6. AOB

22. The group discussed the issue of commissioning photographic portraits of key people e.g. Presiding Officer. This would be considered further by the group.

Window on the Parliament

23. The group discussed the Window on the Parliament and noted that the concept for its use was to display new media artworks. It was agreed that the Chair would write to the Clerk / Chief Executive to express the group's interest in using the Window to provide a display resource to support the acquisition of new media works for the art collection.

Action: Chair of Art Advisory Group

7. Date of next meeting

24. To be confirmed.

Action: Art Curator

Access and Information Directorate
June 2006