NOTE OF THE SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT ART GROUP MEETING ON WEDNESDAY 23 AUGUST 2006

Present: Jamie Stone MSP, Chair
          Robin Harper MSP
          Richard Calvocoressi
          Alison Watt
          Fiona McDougall, Art Curator

In attendance: Stuart Todd, PA to the Director of Access and Information

(Minutes)

Apologies: Linda Fabiani MSP
          Ken MacIntosh MSP
          Jamie McGrigor MSP
          Liz Lochhead

1. Update from the Art Curator

Ian Hamilton Finlay acquisition

1. The Ian Hamilton Finlay acquisition was to be investigated as a possible acquisition of two works; one donated and one purchased.

   Action: Art Curator

Legal constitution for art collection

2. The Group would read the legal paper on charitable constitution.

Exhibitions policy

3. A draft SPCB exhibitions policy would be considered by SPCB in October. This would include exhibitions for the 1707 anniversary and art related exhibitions e.g. Year of Highland Culture 2007. As the Scottish National Portrait Gallery was planning around these themes, Richard Calvocoressi offered to put James Holloway in touch with the possibility of developing some partnership projects.

Exhibition on women’s suffrage

4. It was noted that the sculpture by Shauna McMullan to mark the contribution of Scottish women, commissioned by the Scottish Executive, was to be exhibited in the Parliament around end November and prior to the 14 December exhibition launch. NAS records on women’s suffrage would form part of a public exhibition and the Public Affairs Group had put forward a budget to contribute to this.
5. It was noted that the production of a published guide and development of an art and architecture tour would be commenced next spring. Art work not in the public areas would also be included in the guide.

**Action: Art Curator**

6. The Art Group agreed that in the longer term that Easy art in staff areas should be replaced by original art and the possibility of acquiring limited edition prints from Scotland’s major print studios was suggested.

**Loans programme**

7. It was noted that Loans programme was in progress and the Art Curator would visit the RSA store next week. The less open working spaces such as the Parliament’s ante rooms were considered to be appropriate areas for loaned artwork.

**Action: Art Curator**

**Conservation surveys**

8. The Art Curator would report to SPCB by the end of the year with recommendations for the art collection.

**2. Issues arising**

**Patrick Geddes commemorative seating proposal – Robin Harper MSP**

9. The Group agreed to consider the commissioning of seating artwork as a possible art development for the landscape but not specifically to commemorate Patrick Geddes; this proposal put forward by Robin Harper was to be kept aside at present.

**Caricatures for Members’ Restaurant**

10. The Group discussed the proposal to obtain caricatures of Presiding Officers, First Ministers and party leaders for display in the Members' Bar. It was agreed that:

- These would be an appropriate addition to a Parliament art collection and suitable for display in an area like the Members' Bar.
- Given the nature of caricatures, which often comment on topical/current issues, it was suggested it might be appropriate to purchase existing
caricatures rather than especially commission political cartoons. It was thought that existing caricatures could be an interesting record of Parliamentary history and events.

- Malcolm MacCormick should be contacted and researched but also that other caricaturist's work should be considered.
- The Art Curator would research works for purchase.

**Action: Art Curator**

**Photographic portraits**

11. It was noted that the Art Curator was continuing to progress the proposal to approach the photographer Harry Benson to explore a commission for photographic portraits of the current and previous Presiding Officers, to create a visual record of Parliament office holders.

**Action: Art Curator**

**Hugh McIntyre RSA donation offer**

12. It was agreed to contact Frances McKie regarding the donation offer and explain that the Parliament does not routinely accept donations but would like to view the paintings, and to consider whether an event or temporary display would be appropriate. Alternative homes such as the People's Story or Dumfries and Galloway Council would also be suggested.

**Action: Art Curator**

**James Clerk Maxwell statue**

13. It was noted that the PO had recently wrote to Sir Michael Atiyah of the RSE and Robin Harper declining the proposal to place a statue in the grounds of the Parliament site to celebrate the achievements of James Clerk Maxwell. The Parliament received a number of requests for placing commemorative or memorial statues or other works within the Parliament grounds and the SPCB had to consider the future development of the art collection and preserve the integrity of the architect’s design.

**3. Collecting Strategy 2006-08**

14. The Group agreed that it would be useful to view a presentation by the art curator of five specific proposals for acquisitions at a meeting of the full group. The group would contribute some artist’s names for consideration. The Art Curator will present on five artists and possible sites, and categories of work will
include new media, photography and textiles. Firm proposals would then be taken to SPCB before the end of 2006.

Action: Art Curator

4. Visit to Dovecot Studio

15. A visit to the Dovecot studio would be arranged for 31 October if possible.

Action: Art Curator

5. AOB

Ronald Rae exhibition

16. The Group noted the motion lodged by Margaret Smith MSP recognising Ronald Rae’s exhibition in Holyrood Park and calling on the SPCB to investigate the possibility of re-sitting the Lion of Scotland sculpture permanently outside the Parliament building. This has been declined on two previous occasions.

6. Date of next meeting

17. It was agreed to meet on 31 October.

Access and Information Directorate
September 2006