



department for
**culture, media
and sport**

Government Art Collection
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Advisory Committee on the Government Art Collection

Summary of the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 5 July 2007 at the Government Art Collection's London premises

Present

Chairman: Julia Somerville

Members: David A Bailey, Penelope Curtis, Margot Heller, Penny Johnson (GAC Director), Andrew Renton, Charles Saumarez-Smith

GAC: Adrian George, Clive Marks, Julia Toffolo

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Alan Davey, Stephen Deuchar, Sandy Nairne and Sarah Shalgosky.

2. Welcome new Committee Members

The Chairman welcomed David A Bailey and Dr Andrew Renton as new Independent Members.

3. Minutes of the Last Meeting, held on 7 March 2007

The Committee approved the Minutes which were signed by the Chairman.

4. Matters arising from the Minutes of the Last Meeting

The Director provided a further update on the proposed sculpture for the garden of the Ambassador's Residence in Washington. The new Ambassador does not wish to proceed with the commission.

The Public Catalogue Foundation (PCF): Oil Paintings in Public Ownership in the Government Art Collection: Before discussion began, Charles Saumarez-Smith declared an interest. DCMS has agreed to fund 50% of the publication with the remainder being sought from other sources, including diplomatic posts. The Chairman will write to Heads of Mission on behalf of the PCF to encourage advance sales of the catalogue.

UK Supreme Court: A meeting with the architects and Baroness Hale has still to be arranged by the architects.

Olympics: Informal discussion has taken place with London 2012 about a possible GAC commission for the 2012 Olympics.

5. Acquisitions

The Committee noted the Director's list of acquisitions since the last meeting.

The Director noted that there was no work currently available or appropriate for

consideration at the meeting. She asked Members to think about emerging artists whose work would be suitable for the collection and will arrange a meeting with Members to discuss further.

The Committee noted that the Collection has no works by a number of leading contemporary British artists. It was agreed that the GAC should endeavour to acquire appropriate and affordable work by these artists.

6. British Embassy, Doha

The Ambassador noted that the map of Qatar (which forms the centre portion of Jonathan Parsons' work) would inevitably change over the coming years and requested that the artist review his proposal while further research is being carried out into its fabrication and materials.

7. Ministry of Justice (MoJ)

Revised proposals by were discussed.

Having reviewed the original MoJ art strategy in light of the compressed building schedule, the GAC concluded that only two remaining commissions were practical:

- A mid-scale work for the café/restaurant area
- A work of art which can be distributed to all staff regardless of location (for example, a CD-ROM based work for presentation on almost all desktop PCs or a multiple work)

The Committee agreed that the GAC should take this forward and make recommendations at the next meeting.

8. Home Office: Update of Public Art Strategy

The Director updated the Committee on the Home Office project. The vast majority of the projects had been completed successfully and were well-received by members of staff and the public. The Director said that an important point to note for future commissions was, wherever possible, to ensure that the commissioned art was completed at the same time as the building's opening. The Committee noted that the GAC should as a matter of principle always be involved in the commissioning of art for central Government buildings.

9. Director's Report of GAC activities since 7 March

The Committee accepted the Director's report. The Director highlighted the fact that there are new Embassy buildings being constructed in Algiers and Manila and that commissions would be sought for both.

10. AOB

The Committee agreed to the Chairman's proposal to amend the Constitution to allow for five independent members.

The Chairman proposed a formal vote of thanks to Charles Saumarez-Smith who was stepping down as a consequence of leaving his post as Director of the National Gallery. She thanked Charles for his clear and reasoned advice, strong support and good humour during his time on the Committee. The proposal was welcomed and agreed by all.

11. Date of next meeting:

Wednesday 21 November, 2007 at 18.30.