

IT MUST THEREFORE BE RECOGNISED THAT:

1. The black artist is professional artist .
2. The work of the black artist is situated within contemporary art practices.
3. The history of black artists in Britain is part of the history of postwar art in Britain.
4. The contribution of black artists to contemporary developments in art in Britain has been ignored. Every effort must be done to redress this situation in the interest of the whole society.
5. Black artists have participated in all the various developments and their work varies from one decade to another according to the social and historical conditions specific to the postwar Britain.
6. Black artists belong to all the international movements in art since the War, since postwar developments in Britain in which black artists had participated are recognised internationally.
7. Even when the black artist took a radical political position as part of black struggle, the work produced as a result is situated, historically as well as aesthetically, within the contemporary developments of the time when all kind of media and/or manifestations were used to expand the boundaries of contemporary art.
8. The black artists has thus been part of all the new developments of performance art, mixed media works, video, photography, tape/slide projections, etc. in the Seventies.
9. Contemporary art practices are not necessarily based on the practices of crafts or craft traditions. The relationship of the black artist to the position of crafts in contemporary art is not different from his/her white contemporary.
10. There is a difference between cultural traditions and contemporary art practices. Traditions are important as they provide historical continuity and contexts, but they do not and cannot replace the function of contemporary art.
11. Black artists do not belong to the category of 'ethnic arts'. This category has been designed by the establishment in order to separate black artists from the mainstream and then not to recognise their important contributions within it.
12. To see black artists in terms of 'ethnic arts' is based not only on the ignorance of their actual work but it is also an attempt to deliberately push them to the marginal roles, and then to keep the mainstream exclusively for the white artists.

13. The separation of black artists from the mainstream has further marginalised their position, in spite of the fact that some money is now available for their 'ethnic' activities. They are no longer able to intervene critically in and expand the scope of contemporary art in Britain in the light of their own experiences. And thus the mainstream culture is being prevented from becoming multi-racial culture.
14. The black artist within the function of 'ethnic arts' has become exotic, and is often judged not on the basis of artistic criteria but merely by the attitudes which are ideologically questionable.
15. The true multi-culturalism in this society will emerge only when all the cultures are given equal recognition and without making any distinction between the indigenous mainstream and the so-called 'ethnic minority cultures'.
16. There is a difference between amateurs, community artists and the commitment of the individual professional black artist. The work of individual professional black artists must be recognised in their own right.
17. To see the black artist only in terms of his/her 'commitment' to the community is to limit his/her artistic function and abilities.
18. The support structure, in terms of exhibitions, promotion, recognition and evaluation of one's work, must be available to the black artist without making any distinction of race, class, gender or sex.
19. The prevailing support structure is in fact not available to the black artist due to institutional racism. It is therefore the right of the black artist to demand his/her share of the publicly funded pie. But this should not be used as an excuse for developing separate funding structures or/and ignoring aesthetic criteria when it comes to the work of black artists.
20. The prevailing aesthetic criteria or standards of the (white) institutions are not suitable to the needs of the multi-cultural and multi-racial society. They must therefore be changed, and they must be changed within the mainstream.
21. The needs of the black artists are however specific, in view of the prevailing situation in this society, and they must urgently be met by making changes with ⁱⁿ the mainstream funding bodies.
22. The needs of black women artists are also present us with a specific situation, and they must be met in every respect in view of their own specific and additional needs.
23. We need structural changes within art institutions to get rid of all those attitudes which perpetuate institutional racism, before anything significant can be done.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The major difficulty we face today in our struggle for recognition is the lack of documented information about our history in Britain. We therefore require, as a first task, support and funding for extensive research work in this area, and subsequently to establish a comprehensive archive and information centre.
2. Funds must be available for extensive programme for the publication of this material, in the form of art books, magazines, leaflets, video, etc.
3. Funds must be available to set up training schemes, particularly for the young generation of black artists and teachers so that they become aware of their own history of achievement in this country.
4. Funds must be available for the educational programmes which will make people aware of the contemporary contribution of black artists to art in Britain, through community centres as well as art teaching institutions.
5. Regular seminars are essential to discuss the issues black artists face in this country, as well as the problems of art in contemporary cultures.
6. Art critics and historians constitute an important part of art support structures. There are no black art critics and historians. Schemes should be set up to promote interest in this area and also to offer scholarships to black students to study art criticism and history of contemporary art.
7. There is a need for a large gallery, with lecture rooms and studios, in central London where black artists could show their work and where regular seminars could also be held. This kind of centre should not be established on a sectarian or 'ethnic' basis.
8. The present GLC's funding policy is not only ideologically incorrect, but it has created further problems for the position of the professional black artist in this country. It has somehow encouraged, perhaps unintentionally, amateurish and sectarian activities, not only at the expense of the professional black artist but has also created divisions within black artists community on the basis of 'ethnic/racial' differences.
9. If such a gallery centre is to be established, it must be run and managed by a body constituting all sections of black artists community, with equal representations in terms of race and sex.
10. Separate black galleries are useful, but they perform limited functions on the periphery. Mainstream galleries which take up black artists must be encouraged and provided with public funds for their expenses (as collectors do not often buy the work of black artists even when they are shown in the mainstream galleries), in particular for the publication of the catalogues.
11. A fund must be established to purchase the work of black artists to form a permanent collection, and this should be established on the basis of some artistic criteria and with the help of proper expertise.