

Mid Wales Regional Committee MID 01-02(p.6)

Date: Friday 1 February 2002

Time: 10.30am to 1.00pm

Venue: Tabernacl, Museum of Modern Art, Wales, Machynlleth

‘What is done well in the arts in Mid Wales and where there is room for improvement’.

1. The region itself does not need an explanation to this committee. There are however several points about the region that I would like to speak about. These will include bi-lingualism; the strength of the indigenous community; the proximity of Aberystwyth University and the National Library and the benefit that this brings; the importance of indoor attractions in a high rainfall area and the choice that is offered between physical and artistic recreation. These characteristics make Mid Wales uniquely attractive. Yet cultural tourism is still not given the recognition it deserves and we will suggest ways forward. I will also suggest ways in which art providers generally and galleries in particular can work together.

2. One of our objects, as a Trust, is to ‘organise, present and promote exhibitions, plays, operas, films, concerts and other similar activities’. Using this list I will outline firstly our own experience with each of these art forms and then touch briefly on the regional facilities as we perceive them.

3. I will speak about the Machynlleth Festival which we shall be running this August for the sixteenth successive year. This is a major event in the calendar of Welsh Festivals. In this context I would like to draw the Committee’s attention to the umbrella organisation for Welsh festivals, Festivals of Wales, and stress how important we feel this body to be.

4. The Trust also runs The Museum Of Modern Art, Wales and has sixteen years experience of different aspects of the visual arts in Wales. This will be our opportunity to comment on the huge talent that there is not just in the region but throughout Wales. We get almost daily requests from artists to show their work. We know that if we had greater resources we could provide an even

better service. In practical terms we need money to pay our two full-time employees more; to recruit an administrative assistant; to provide transport and better storage; to run classes for adults and young people; to market our exhibitions more professionally; and to expand our exhibition space. Our Curatorial Adviser is paid a token amount for his services which, over the years, have helped to raise standards and awareness of the visual arts in Wales.

5. I would like to pay particular attention to the permanent collection of MOMA Wales, an item of great educational value. For the local young people who see it, it is part of their heritage and for visitors from all over the world it encapsulates the visual traditions of Wales since 1900. Through the gifts that artists have made and the generosity of individual donors this collection is steadily growing. There are however one or two major gaps from the early twentieth century which require relatively small sums to fill. I will also stress how important it is for an organisation like MOMA Wales to be able to add to its collection from living artists.