

**Dancing Through a New Lens
Considering Cultural Diversity in Screen Dance**

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Executive Summary

The initial remit of this consultancy was to determine the extent of Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) interest and participation in Screen Dance¹ and dance film as a genre, to assess and make recommendations for *Open Frame – South East Dance*' three year screen dance programme (2006-2009). South East Dance undertook this consultancy as part of its wider diversity action planning. It sits within this wider context.

Initial conversations with South East Dance aimed to clarify the focus of the consultancy. It became clear that in its wider organisational development South East Dance is working with cultural diversity in a broader sense, rather than focusing on ethnicity in isolation. This is also in line with Arts Council England's wider focus on cultural diversity. With this in mind, rather than aiming to determine the extent of BME interest and participation in screen dance, the consultancy aimed to assess the position and needs of the screen dance sector in terms of cultural diversity and make recommendations to *Open Frame* based on this.

The methodology was to collect qualitative and quantitative data from the sector. Within the time available, the consultancy focused on gathering data from practitioners and organisations involved in producing, programming and disseminating screen dance work. From this, the consultancy was able to make recommendations on the current needs of the sector in relation to cultural diversity.

The combined consensus of the respondents was that the sector needs greater diversity and that there is a particular willingness to make this

¹ Screen Dance is the department of South East Dance which leads on the development, creation, presentation and distribution of screen dance work in the UK.

happen. This consensus is supported by the limited statistics that are available. One of the findings of the consultancy is that the paucity of statistics needs to be addressed in order to build a better picture of the sector and develop the art form accordingly. Suitable action is recommended.

The consultancy recommends South East Dance may develop its practice in relation to diversity by building on the existing work of the organisation, both internally and in its partnerships. It recommends positive action as a strategy in Open Frame, to embed cultural diversity within the broader development of its screen dance work. Further it recommends that good practice is shared with other organisations in the sector.

1 Introduction

1.1 *Background*

'South East Dance has always been committed to equal opportunities in relation to recruitment practice and has long had clear policies relating to this. It has also implemented several other policies for staff and freelancers aimed at supporting diversity and equality within the workplace. As part of South East Dance's organisational development project in 2005/6 a large amount of work was undertaken with the aim of defining what 'diversity' meant for the wider organisation. South East Dance also provided staff training in this area and ensured that diversity action planning was embedded within the new 3-year business plan that was produced at this time.

This work was supported through engagement with 2 key ACE initiatives (*Get a Plan* and *Making it Real* which respectively fed into the disability and race equality action planning processes for South East Dance). South East Dance's work and practice was audited against current legislative requirements and guidelines for best practice. As a result 2 clear action plans were produced and the targets within them included in their new business plan.

Internally it was felt that our Community & Learning programme already supported diversity through valuing and promoting creativity and diversity of forms within the work delivered. In response to wider debate within the sector, our screen dance work was therefore prioritised for review as part of our race equality action plan. This piece of work is the outcome of that decision. Both action plans have a number of other targets which SED also prioritised for action including representing diversity and meeting a diversity of needs through our communications, improving physical access, reviewing monitoring information and its use etc. Our Board of Trustees as part of our

wider business plan monitoring monitors performance against these action plans.’²

The current programme of South East Dance’s screen dance work is *Open Frame*. It is a three-year programme (2006-2009) and comprises several strands of activity which include: commissioning new work, production and distribution, sales of films, screenings, international exchanges, artist fellowships, ‘Forward Motion’ a curated programme with the British Council, and hosting Dance for Camera Nights – a quarterly artist event. As part of this full programme, South East Dance has commissioned this consultancy into cultural diversity in the sector. Vicky Bloor, Head of Screen Dance, said, ‘As a department within a very established arts organisation we are already working within a cultural diversity policy and framework. However Screen Dance as an art form can appear to be made by a very specific group of people who have very similar backgrounds and work in a similar aesthetic. South East Dance identified that further research was required to investigate this and if we as an organisation should, and could, implement further recommendations to apply to our Screen Dance programme specifically regarding diversity.’³

1.2 *Context and remit of the consultancy*

The initial remit of this consultancy was ‘to determine the extent of Black and Minority Ethnic interest and participation in Screen Dance and dance film as a genre, and to assess and make recommendations for Screen Dance *Open Frame* Programme’⁴

² Judith Matthews, Business and Development Director, South East Dance, 06.03.2007.

³ Email Correspondence 19.04.2007

⁴ *Screen Dance Cultural Diversity Consultation* Invitation to tender document p.1, South East Dance. www.southeastdance.org.uk

Initial discussions with South East Dance undertook to clarify the parameters and focus of the consultancy. These conversations highlighted that at an organisational level, South East Dance is working with a broader definition of diversity than one relating only to ethnicity. The organisation commissioned this consultancy to look at cultural diversity in screen dance specifically in relation to art form development. This led to an adjustment of the parameters and aims of the consultancy. The adjusted remit was:

to assess the needs of the screen dance sector in terms of cultural diversity and to make recommendations for *Open Frame* based on this assessment. South East Dance Screen Dance activity has a primarily national remit, although there is an international aspect to the work. The main impact of the work from this consultancy is expected to be on the national level. South East Dance's definition of Screen Dance is dance made specifically for the camera, for presentation as a single screen film or video.⁵

The consultancy discussed with South East Dance its self-positioning in relation to cultural diversity, in order to get a sense of the organisation's current position and desired direction in this area. Responses from senior members of staff stated that while the organisation has achieved a lot in implementing strategies for equality and diversity there is a desire to achieve more. Judith Matthews, Business and Development Director, said, 'In the last 12 months the staff and Trustees of South East Dance have worked hard to deliver the aim stated in our business plan - to be an open and welcoming organisation which reflects our diverse society and questions its prejudices. We have delivered the targets in our action plans relating to disability and race and the Board has engaged with this work as well as all the staff. Major achievements include updating our communication resources to better reflect

⁵ This does not include other practices of dance and media/ moving image such as installation works. It is recognised that these practices share much with the definition of screen dance given here. However, they fall outside the remit of this consultancy as they are not included in the work of South East Dance.

the diversity of the work that we already undertake, and commissioning this research project to review a specific area of our work and consider if this can be further developed to contribute more strongly to this aim in the future....As the senior member of staff responsible for taking an overview of all our work relating to diversity, I feel that the work done this year has moved us forward and also meant that we can communicate what we were already doing well more clearly. I am particularly proud of the way we have integrated this work into our ongoing business planning rather than considering it as something to be added on. The Trustees are about to receive proposals for continuing to develop things in the future, and I am certain that continuing to take this approach gives our work an integrity and tangible connection to all of our activities.’⁶

In relation to screen dance in particular, Mairead Turner, Chief Executive and Vicky Bloor, Head of Screen Dance both expressed a desire to lead the sector in this area.⁷ In terms of recent developments in the work of the Screen Dance department, YD’Screen – recent co-productions with Youth Dance England – were seen as an important step in creating greater diversity in the work of the organisation.

‘With our latest commissions YD’Screen we really set out to work with a new approach and a greater diversity of cast and directors, I think this really shows in the films. They are very different in aesthetic from anything we’ve produced before, the movement they use is predominantly inspired by street dance and hip hop culture, they feel totally rooted in youth culture. The directors are from a diversity of backgrounds, two are what you could call ‘dance film makers’ one comes from a very filmic background and one comes from a more self taught film background. It was a great learning process for

⁶ Email correspondence 01.05.07

⁷ In conversations with author.

us and we captured a completely different energy in the films through working with young casts and young directors.⁸

To sum up, the position from which South East Dance commissioned this research was one of a desire to build on their current organisational initiatives as well as in the screen dance department per se. The desired future direction is to lead the sector on cultural diversity. In order to do this, a clearer picture of the needs of the sector was required.

1.3 *Key Questions*

Key Questions for the consultancy were as follows:

1. Where is the art form now and what are its future directions? A primary question was that of the definition(s) of the art form. What are the parameters of its content? (Addressed in section 3)
2. What is the sector's understanding of and relationship with cultural diversity? (Addressed in section 5)
3. What are the current requirements of screen dance in terms of cultural diversity? (Addressed in section 5)
4. How can South East Dance address these requirements? What specific, measurable actions is it appropriate for South East Dance to take? (Addressed in section 6)

1.4 *Overview of Report*

This report first sets out the context of cultural diversity within the publicly funded arts sector through a brief history, current position and future pathways. It then presents a snapshot of the current issues for screen dance in the UK, with reference to the international context. Then the methods used in the consultancy will be presented. This is followed by a look at cultural

⁸ Mairead Turner, Chief Executive, South East Dance, 03.04.07.

diversity within screen dance. Next, it sets out recommendations for *Open Frame* in the form of guiding principles. Finally, specific action points are recommended for *Open Frame*.

2 Cultural Diversity: history, present moment, future pathways

‘Cultural diversity’ is part of an ongoing and changing dialogue/ practice within the publicly funded arts sector. A brief look at the history of this dialogue/ practice sets the present moment in context – important for understanding why the term ‘cultural diversity’ has the resonances that it does. Initially, it was linked closely with ethnicity, but increasingly includes a range of identities.

While it is possible to write many histories of this dialogue/ practice one of the most significant moments – and one that is often considered a starting point - was the publication of Naseem Khan’s British Arts Council (the forerunner of Arts Council England) report *The Arts Britain Ignores*⁹. This report highlighted the serious under representation of what it termed ‘ethnic arts’. Since then, terminology has changed, first to ‘black arts’, then ‘black and minority ethnic arts’. These terms have been central to the dialogue on ‘multiculturalism’ then ‘cultural diversity’ within the arts. In many ways, the term ‘cultural diversity’ grew out of the discussion on ethnicity and the arts. This dialogue/ practice has also been – and continues to be – part of the wider political dialogue that has a recognisable historical trajectory. The sixties saw the political birth of the move for ‘integration’. Roy Jenkins’ speech as Home Secretary in 1966 is usually cited as the starting point for this.¹⁰ He was speaking of integrating ethnic minority immigrant populations into the majority population. Over time, integration evolved into multiculturalism;

⁹ Naseem Khan *The Arts Britain Ignores*, CRC 1976.

¹⁰ See for example Avtar Brah, *Cartographies of Diaspora: Contesting Identities* London and New York: Routledge 1996, p.25.

today, we are shaping and making cultural diversity. In making an art form that reflects the cultural diversity of this country's society the concern lies with a range of identities: ethnicity, age, gender, (dis)ability economic disadvantage are the most cited. It is not about simply moving on to the most current area of focus (or the most current terminology) but about realising that there are several identities within our society that are barriered from the arts – from screen dance. While tokenistic measures are to be avoided, social barriers need to be addressed. Future pathways for cultural diversity would include integrating diversity as a key component of art forms, rather than it being an appendage to the main event. This requires a shift in thinking and is discussed in section 5.1.

3 Screen Dance: snapshot of the present moment

3.1 Identity

Screen Dance stands out for its inherent multiplicity. Various terms are used to describe the practices that fall within this genre, some overlapping. The most commonly used are 'screen dance' – usually used to describe works for the single screen, 'dance and the moving image' – a broader category that includes all work that brings together moving image technologies with dance (however construed), 'dance film/ video' – again usually used to refer to single screen work. 'What do you call it—dancefilm, dance on camera, video dance, dance on screen...? Whatever it is, it was the topic of the first Screendance, State of the Art Conference held at the American Dance Festival (ADF) in Durham, North Carolina.'¹¹

Along with a multiplicity of names, the identity of the art form remains a topic of discussion. Debate often revolves around what constitutes the art form, what are its boundaries, and what are the criteria by which a piece of work is

¹¹ Karen Pearlman at *Screendance* conference in the USA
<http://www.videodance.org.uk/pages/opinions.html> Website accessed 18.12.2006

categorised as screen dance. This came up at Nightingale Nights on 18.11.2006 (now Dance for Camera Nights), a quarterly networking, debate and feedback forum for screen dance artists, managed by South East Dance. It was also discussed at a showcase for dance and the moving image 10.11.2006 at Bristol's Watershed Media Centre organised by film maker Lisa May Thomas on behalf of Dance Bristol. There are different answers to the questions of content, criteria and boundaries depending on who is answering – again reflecting the multiple facets of screen dance. For example, when it comes to audience profile programmers for a television audience are likely to have different parameters than a screen dance festival curator.

Whether or not a dancing body needs to be present within a work also remains a 'live' question for some. The syncretic background of the art form – in the sense that it draws on more than one existing discipline – is the background for its multiplicity. Film, television, dance, video art, artists' film and video all have their own aesthetics and the genre of screen dance is a space where these come together, influence and transform each other. In short, the answer to key question 1 on the definition of the art form is that its identity is fluid and looks set to continue this way.

3.2 *Formats for presentation/ dissemination*

There are a range of avenues for the presentation and dissemination of screen dance. Respondents to this consultancy highlighted the fact that currently, some of these formats are in flux, not only in this country but also internationally. Kathleen Smith, director of Moving Pictures Festival in Toronto said, 'We feel the time has come to step off the treadmill and make way for new approaches to the presentation of dance on film and video. The world has changed dramatically since we started Moving Pictures at the Rivoli on Queen Street West back in 1992. We've seen technology profoundly impact the way dance and media artists make work, and the way viewers and

audience members experience both disciplines. We'd like to re-think the festival format.'¹² Moving Pictures is taking a break from the festival format it has used for many years. At the same time the festival format is flourishing in other countries.

In terms of dissemination through television, Lynnette Kessler at Dance Camera West in LA is looking at developing a weekly television broadcast for screen dance.

'Dance Camera West has momentum and an example of this motion forward is a recent request to develop a weekly national broadcast. DCW would like to hire a festival manager in 2007. I would like to focus on the artistic direction of programming for both the festival and the broadcast.'¹³

In Britain, there is a history of dance for camera being broadcast on television. While this continues, both Jan Younghusband (Channel 4) and Ross McGibbon (BBC) point to new technologies as an important aspect of the future of screen dance, alongside more traditional formats such as television broadcast. Capture – the national strategic agency for dance and the moving image – continues to fund both single screen work and work that can be disseminated and experienced through a range of formats. These new technologies include internet downloads or pay per view and podcasts. This goes hand in hand with the more general move towards content on demand. While new technologies are seen as holding much potential for the future of screen dance, the more traditional formats of television and festivals – both sector specific and beyond – have an ongoing role.

¹² Email correspondence 12.12.2006.

¹³ DCW 2006 Festival report http://www.dancecamerawest.org/2006_report.htm

3.3 *Finance*

One of the points that came up repeatedly was that of finance – or the paucity thereof – in supporting makers of screen dance to make a living. While it is beyond the remit of this consultancy to explore this issue further, it is noted here as a point that is relevant to all aspects of sectoral development. Bob Lockyer, Chair of South East Dance said, ‘There is very little opportunity for even senior artists to make a living wage. From the outset, dance for the screen was a source of pocket money for creators.’¹⁴

Finally, an interesting snapshot of the international screen dance community is shown through maps highlighting visitors to the Videodance website www.videodance.org.uk in summer to autumn of 2006.¹⁵ The largest concentration of visitors comes from Europe and North America with consistent interest from South America and some visitors from Australasia. In terms of this report, the hits on the Videodance website are a reminder of the international context of screen dance.

4 **Method**

In conducting this research individuals and representatives of organisations were consulted. A list of those consulted is presented in Appendix 1. This research was undertaken to give a sense of the needs and positioning of the sector in relation to cultural diversity by canvassing opinion from the sector itself. This relates to question 2 of the Key Questions listed above.

Questionnaires were sent out to South East Dances’ nationwide database of artists. One hundred and twenty six artists were contacted of which nine responded. Nationally, key organisations and individuals were invited to either email or converse about the issue. As noted above, while the focus of this consultancy was national, screen dance has an international community: film

¹⁴ In interview 16.11.2006

¹⁵ Many thanks to Simon Fildes of Videodance for supplying the maps.

festivals typically show work from several countries and there are co-commissions and international exchanges. To look at this context for *Open Frame*, the international community of MAD (Media and Dance) members were invited to respond by email, offering their perspective on cultural diversity in screen dance. However, only two responded - Kathleen Smith of Moving Pictures Festival in Toronto and Paloma Madrid (on behalf of Christina Molander) of *SHOOT – Dance for Screen* festival in Sweden. Moving Pictures' response focused on the changing formats for presentation. The response from SHOOT shows active engagement with increasing diversity among practitioners and audiences. It said that 'The film media is more open to new participants, that's why the dance on screen media is such a good thing culturally in Sweden', and stated, 'We are heading for getting a more open minded audience. To get to know dance on screen showing the young audience international patterns.'¹⁶ Statistics were provided, and are shown in the following section.

A range of activities were undertaken with South East Dance to assess their current activities in relation to cultural diversity – both in the screen dance programme and in the work of the organisation as a whole. This included looking at documentation of the previous three years' work and the plan for *Open Frame*.

A series of events were also attended. These were either directly relevant to screen dance in the UK or to cultural diversity practice in the South East. These events included Nightingale Nights – a quarterly networking, debate and feedback forum for screen dance artists, managed by South East Dance, Peer to Peer – a regional skills and good practice event; and the dance and the moving image showcase event organised by Dance Bristol.

Further, in depth conversations were held with the screen dance department of South East Dance and other senior staff members to discuss findings from

¹⁶ Email correspondence 24.11.2006

the above activities and ways forward. The consultancy collated statistics on the commissioning strand of South East Dance's work to date. Recommendations were made that were specifically tailored for *Open Frame*.

5 Cultural Diversity and Screen Dance

5.1 Overview

Because screen dance is a relatively small and developing sector, cultural diversity is not necessarily seen as the most pressing need for art form development. The relative paucity of responses to the artist questionnaires is perhaps indicative of this. One artist said that diversity was not something about which they thought, as they needed to focus on getting opportunities for themselves. At the same time there was a clear and informed awareness about diversity within the sector both among artists who responded and programmers and commissioners. Awareness was accompanied by a desire for change. Examples of artists' statements provided to this consultancy are:

- 1. I have felt angry & very uncomfortable for some years working within a system that I feel discriminates both by class &, as a consequence, by race.*
- 2. Screen dance is already a rather exclusive ghetto... so the question is could a positive approach to cultural diversity inform the practice by broadening dissemination.*
- 3. I am from a very working class background, which indeed has its own culture, which I feel isn't often represented in a positive way, if represented at all....*

This being said, if discussion still focuses on defining the art form, (see section 3.1) where is the room for cultural diversity? This stems from the

notion – still prevalent within the arts as a whole in the UK – that diversity is an additional issue to art making. This consultancy suggests that this in itself is a barrier to increasing diversity, and that far from being an additional issue, diversity is central to art forms and their development. Diversity is often perceived to be located in some people – ethnic minorities, working classes, and disabled people for example. A shift in perception to realise that diversity is in the mix and that everyone is part of that would make for a change in approach. Significantly, cultural diversity would no longer be about someone else, but would be embedded in everyone – and it would be everyone’s issue. Cultural diversity is about social identities and on a supplementary note, screen dance, which often places the human body at the centre of its frame is inextricably entwined with (the display, play re/presentation of) identities. While this is not the place to explore this further, it is noted here as a useful starting point for discussion on this issue.

Secondly, there is the issue of equality of opportunity and removing barriers. Open Frame can undertake measures that sit within the context of South East Dance’s existing diversity practices to ensure that barriers are removed.

One of the concerns that came up in conversations with South East Dance was around sacrificing quality in the name of diversity. This was part of a concern to avoid discrimination and tokenism in the name of diversity. South East Dance has a clear commitment to both quality and fairness in all its work. This consultancy suggests that increasing diversity within the art form by drawing on a pool of talent from a wider range of people would contribute to strengthening and developing the sector for the following reasons. By having a greater pool of talent, there are increased chances of producing good quality work. Secondly, this fosters a competitive edge – again, with the likely result of increasing the volume of high quality work. Thirdly, a sector that is composed of people from a range of social backgrounds and with a range of

identities is more likely to have a wider range of skills and ideas. This in turn nurtures the art form and sector. As the diversity manifesto from EQ (a national equality and diversity agency for the creative industries) and National Campaign for the Arts says:

‘Creativity is inextricably linked to diversity. However, trained in a certain aesthetic tradition, some people in the arts sector are unwilling to judge or engage with work from a different culture. Artists do not have to compromise their own vision when they recognise the creative potential of diversity. Rather, they can broaden this vision, looking at well-known works in new ways. An understanding of diversity can help artists to innovate, to challenge, inspire and move audiences and to retain their international reputation.’¹⁷

It has been shown several times over within the business/ organisational context that increasing diversity among employees/ workforce has several tangible benefits. For further reading see Appendix 2. While commissioning or programming artists is not the same as employing people many of these benefits are transferable, such as building competitive edge and sharing a wider range of tools, skills and approaches. This would require the fostering of dialogue between practitioners – something that a format like Dance for Camera Nights could address. (See section 6)

One of the current developments within screen dance is that many people are calling for more critical language in discussing the art form. For example, a report from Videodance notes: ‘I wish to reiterate the desire to develop a language for talking about screen dance work. Screen dance has reached a levelthat suggests the time is right to create a language or a system of analysis that will take the level of discourse on the genre to another level.’¹⁸

¹⁷ http://www.thinkeq.net/diversity_manifesto/. Web page accessed 18.12.2006

¹⁸ Report to Scottish Arts Council – Open source Videodance symposium 2006.

Bob Lockyer, chair of South East Dance emphasised this point too, both at the Nightingale Nights event and in discussion with this consultancy¹⁹. This presents an opportunity to develop awareness, knowledge and discussion around diversity as part of such critiquing language. Rather than the small size of the sector being a hindrance to diversity, it becomes a strength. Indeed, screen dance has the opportunity to set good practice for other art forms by making diversity an inherent aspect of art form critique.

There are certainly examples of good practice within the sector and the most significant that were shared with this consultancy are given here:

Jan Younghusband, Commissioning Editor, Arts & Performance at Channel 4 says:

‘Cultural Diversity is key to Channel 4. We use positive action to achieve it. We seek out the best talent and choose a good cultural mix. Now, positive action is integrated – unlike ten years ago. This is a very important issue and its important that people are called to account on it.’²⁰

From a programmer/ producer’s point of view, Emma Gladstone at MORE from Sadlers Wells says that, ‘In programming I actively look for work made by a diverse range of artists – ethnicity, gender, age and geography. Its part of our responsibility to seek it out. Its refreshing and necessary – you want life up there!’²¹ The key phrase in this statement is ‘I actively look’. It is not enough to support diversity in principle, it is necessary actively to create it. This links in with the previous quote that noted the importance of people being called to account on this matter.

In terms of South East Dance’s own practice the recent YD’Screen commissions mentioned above represents a conscious contribution to

¹⁹ Discussion 16.11.2006

²⁰ Discussion 16.11.2006 and email correspondence 20.12.2006

²¹ Discussion and email correspondence 18.12.2006

increasing diversity in the practice of the organisation and the sector. They also represent 'a very different.... aesthetic from anything we've produced before'.²² This is a model of practice that the organisation can build on in the future.

5.2 *Statistics*

One of the important points that became apparent during the consultancy was the relative lack of (availability of) monitoring information within the screen dance sector – both in relation to artists and audiences. Key organisations – both nationally and internationally were asked to provide monitoring statistics if possible. There was very little information forthcoming. One reason for this was that very few of such records have been kept. Confidentiality was cited as another reason; however collated data are easily shared anonymously, as the examples below demonstrate. A third factor in the case of joint projects was that no one knew where such data had been recorded. To date there is little meaningful legacy being created with regard to cultural diversity in screen dance. There is a clear awareness of the need for action to be taken in this regard and a willingness to do so. There are also examples of good practice. However, without creating records such as data from monitoring forms it will be impossible to track progress. At this stage in the sector's development such tracking is necessary. One of the main points to come out of the consultancy was the paucity of statistics.

In order to begin to address this the consultancy collected statistics on South East Dance's own commissioned strand of work to date. These were analysed and the findings are presented here.

²² Mairead Turner, Chief Executive, South East Dance.

South East Dance has commissioned 30 artists over 16 films between 1998 and 2006. There were no contact details for 4 of them. 26 artists were contacted. They were asked:

‘How would you describe your ethnicity, gender and age?’

The consultancy chose to ask an open question rather than limiting/ suggesting a particular set of choices. This was to allow respondents to self define. Out of 26 people contacted, 21 (81%) responded.

Once the data was collected, it was analysed and grouped as follows. The ethnicities were put into categories that the respondents chose. The ages were grouped between 18-29, 30-40 and 41-60. Ages below or above these figures did not appear in the responses. All respondents described their gender as either male or female so these were the categories used to group gender. The groupings are shown below. The percentages are worked out on the basis of those who responded, with the figure of 21 respondents representing 100%.

Age: (ages at time of commission)

<u>Age</u>	<u>No. of respondents</u>
18-29:	8 (just over 38%)
30-40:	11 (just over 52%)
41-50:	1 (nearly 5%)

One respondent described themselves as middle aged, eluding easy categorisation.

Gender :

Male 3 (just over 14%)
 Female 18 (nearly 86%)

Ethnicity:

<u>Category</u>	<u>No. of respondents</u>
White/ Caucasian/ White British	8
White European	6
White Scottish	1
White British (some gypsy blood)	1
Welsh	1
Scandinavian	1
British Asian	1
Indian	1
Mixed (Ashkenazi Jewish, Scottish, English)	1

16 respondents (just over 76%) used the term 'white' or 'Caucasian' to describe themselves. Of these 1 (nearly 5%) described themselves as white British but stated gypsy blood as part of their ethnicity. The 2 (nearly 10%) who described themselves as 'Welsh' and 'Scandinavian' chose to substitute a geographical area for an ethnicity. The geographical areas to which they refer both have majority white populations. If they belong to these majority populations (which is likely as they did not identify any other 'mix'), the total number of respondents who are white/ Caucasian would be 18 (nearly 86%). 2 (nearly 10%) are of Asian background, of which 1 specifically described

themselves as Indian. 1 (nearly 5%) chose the term 'mixed' and specified what that mix was.

Bearing in mind the relatively small number of commissions, the distribution of age range is relatively well spread between the ages of 18-40, with only 1 (5%) above 40 years. The predominance of younger artists may reflect the fact that to date the funding attached to each commission has been comparatively little and that more established or experienced artists are not attracted to this source of funding with other larger commissions available.

The statistics for gender and ethnicity indicate an imbalance in both areas. The majority of artists commissioned have been white and female. It could be argued that this is representative of the dance world at large. However, with dance film makers increasingly coming from other disciplines there is an opportunity to shift this. Importantly, if South East Dance wishes to lead the way in the sector, it has a responsibility to redress the balance. Again, this would be a model not only for screen dance but also for wider artistic practice.

Videoworks at the Place was able to provide statistics mainly relating to audiences for its Dance on Screen festival. The collection and collation of this data is part of the cultural diversity policy for The Place as a whole.²³ The information is given below and comes with the caveat, 'In the 2003 and 2004 festivals, the quantitative questionnaires were filled in by around 10-12% of the audience. While the response encouraged us to pursue the gathering of data in this way, it meant we had to be restrained about drawing firm conclusions from the information. Conducting qualitative interviews and focus groups alongside helped to underpin findings.'²⁴

²³ Many thanks to Gitta Wigro, programmer, Dance on Screen for sharing the relevant information.

²⁴ Email correspondence from Gitta Wigro

In 2001, 9% of respondents to an audience survey described themselves as BME. By 2003 this had increased to 14%. In 2004, a total of 24% of the survey respondents categorised themselves as BME or Mixed.

(Cf. census data 2001: BME residents 26.9% for Camden and 24.7% for Islington boroughs).

In 2004:

- 13% of attenders were BME and 11% were Mixed (against a target of 12%).
- No BME artists took part in the Masterclass, compared to one in 2003 and three in 2002 (against a target of 2).

Information on the 2006 festival was still being analysed, but the following statistics were available from it:

75% of the respondents are aged 20-44

- Ethnic origin: 54% White British/Other, 13% Black/Black British, 6% Mixed, 5% Chinese, 3% Asian/Asian British, 1% Other, 18% didn't respond
- Negligible percentage of disabled respondents

While the caveat indicates one of the difficulties of getting audience feedback, this process is undertaken by several venues, programmers and arts support organisations – in different art forms – in order to get a better picture of audiences. The use of focus or discussion groups to underpin the findings, makes meaningful use of such data.

The statistics provided by SHOOT – Dance for Screen festival in Sweden are included here. These are included as a point of information. There would have to be significantly more data to draw meaningful comparative conclusions. The presence of statistic gathering is significant insofar as it indicates a commitment to monitoring the profile of the sector.

Programming; 2005 Nordic film 80 % European film 10% English film 10%

2006 Nordic film 60% European film 20% Asian film 10% English film 10%

2005/2006 Audience; 80% Nordic 20% rest of the world Commissioning; 60% nordic/baltic 40% English

6 Recommendations

This section focuses on the recommendations made specifically for South East Dance's Open Frame programme.

6.1 Principles

With its history as a leading agency for screen dance in England, South East Dance is well placed to be at the forefront of building diversity within the sector. It is recommended South East Dance continue to build diversity through its own programme of activity as well as through opportunities and partnerships with other key organisations.

From the discussion above, it is recommended that South East Dance undertake positive action and methods of actively increasing the diversity of participants. The principle is that it is not enough to be open to participants from all backgrounds, but that it is necessary actively to seek them out and thus to create diversity within and through *Open Frame*. Positive action is a strategy, not an end in itself. It is not about diversity for the sake of box ticking, but about making visible and measurable changes. In order to do this effectively it is necessary to identify areas for change. It is recommended that South East Dance take specific actions in terms of artists. In relation to audiences it is recommended that South East Dance target new audiences – those who have not witnessed screen dance previously. Specific suggestions are given for both of these in the next section.

In terms of artists, the following groups are recommended for focus in terms of positive action:

1. BME participants
2. Disabled participants
3. Disadvantaged young people (14-19) and those above the age of 40
4. Male participants

These groups have been prioritised for the following reasons:

1. BME groups have long been identified as being underrepresented in the arts. For example, increasing ethnic diversity has been on the agenda of the Arts Council for some time. This is an area that needs addressing within screen dance.
2. The Arts Council is now targeting disability, and a disability equality scheme was published in December 2006. This is to be implemented over the following 2 years. As a regularly funded organisation South East Dance has a responsibility to reflect the aims of the Arts Council. It is also an opportunity to contribute to the ongoing dialogue on and shift in the arts and the social landscape of this country. This dialogue relates not only to the Arts Council, but in the broader cultural landscape. South East Dance has the opportunity to contribute meaningfully to this as part of its national remit.
3. While many people responding to this consultancy noted class as a significant barrier they all inevitably linked it to economic disadvantage. This consultancy suggests that the barrier of 'class' is more usefully seen in terms of economics rather than being approached in terms of social status. By focusing on disadvantaged people South East Dance will be directly addressing the issue of class barrier. Also, as South East Dance already works with disadvantaged young people, this approach builds on and maximises current initiatives. In response to the statistics on South East

Dance commissions to date, it is also recommended that the organisation targets artists above the age of 40.

4. It is suggested that male participants are targeted in response to the statistics from South East Dance's previous commissions.

This consultancy recognises that making screen dance is a collaborative process with many artists involved in each production. It is recommended that future statistics are taken at the time of the commission/ project and that they include all participants, noting their roles – not only the directors/ commissioned artists. This would build a fuller picture of those involved with screen dance.

South East Dance should consider setting targets for artist participation and audiences. While targets can seem reductive they are useful in progressing the type of change South East Dance wishes to achieve – to increase diversity within the sector, both in terms of audiences and participants. It is suggested that South East Dance chooses their targets based on the plan for *Open Frame* and the recommendations of this consultancy. For example: Given the lack of profile monitoring, the next twelve to eighteen months of *Open Frame* could focus on gathering as much of this data as possible within the events and artist opportunities on offer. Targets can be set for the remainder of *Open Frame* and beyond.

With regard to excellence: it is recommended that the principle adopted by Open Frame is that greater diversity will foster excellence by having a greater pool of talent available, thus enhancing competitive edge and increasing approaches, ideas and skills. Excellence and diversity ought not to be seen as being in competition with each other, but as two core elements in South East Dance's work. In discussion on this Vicky Bloor said, 'If we can implement strategies to reach new audiences and talent in screen dance by engaging interest in the art form from a much wider group of people, we may also be

able to raise standards by developing a much broader pool of people making the work. We of course want to continue fostering the talent and audiences that we already know about, but broadening this pool will have significant implications on the growth and development of the art form.²⁵

In terms of relating to the rest of the organisation the principle should be to integrate the Screen Dance diversity work with the rest of the organisation. Link up with the Community and Learning department at South East Dance where possible, for example.

Share good practice and information with the screen dance community. There are a number of ways in which this could be approached. One of the points that was reiterated by several people at the aforementioned Bristol Watershed showcase event was that partnerships, collaborations and working together was a key aspect of sustaining screen dance regionally. This principle can be extended nationally. The sector is relatively small and isolation could be a real danger to its development. On the other hand partnerships and sharing good practice will nurture the art form.

It is recommended that South East Dance embed the cultivation of diversity with other aspects of its screen dance initiatives. One way in which this could be done creatively and with multiple benefits is to link the development of cultural diversity with artist development. This would bring shared benefit among existing and new participants. South East Dance could engage existing artists in new initiatives where possible. Bob Lockyer suggested bringing senior artists into cultural diversity initiatives as mentors.²⁶ It would also help to create a legacy for the art form.

²⁵ Discussion with author April 2007.

²⁶ Discussion 16.11.2006.

Another area in which South East Dance could contribute is to encourage awareness among artists of the political issues involved in making screen dance. A number of artist responses indicated that this would be desirable. They noted that it is a small world – the word ‘ghetto’ was used. However, the consensus is that cultural diversity is important in screen dance and needs to be encouraged. While it is recognised that the views of individual artists are not the responsibility of South East Dance, fostering awareness and dialogue would be a very useful contribution and has the potential to have far reaching effects.

6.2 *Actions*

- ❖ State South East Dance’s commitment to diversity on all advertising material/ call for artist applications etc. Below is a suggested statement that could be modified as necessary.

‘As part of its commitment to excellence South East Dance cultivates diversity among practitioners and audiences for screen dance.’

- ❖ Monitor the profile of audiences and artists beyond Arts Council England requirements – South East Dance already has monitoring forms that can be used for this purpose.
- ❖ Use monitoring to collect data for twelve months activity. Then set targets for the remainder of Open Frame (and beyond). This will allow the organisation to monitor its progress in achieving greater diversity within the sector.
- ❖ Forward Motion curation: make this process – of selection of films etc. one that is informed by commitment to diversity. Link up with British

Council's practice on this. Cathy Gomez, the lead contact for The British Council on this project says, 'In general, the British Council seeks to represent an accurate image of today's UK in all its diversity and to challenge outdated stereotypes. We do this through our arts work partly by showcasing work of exceptional quality, and also by highlighting artistic and social issues around diversity with which the UK is currently engaging and which other countries will relate to, encouraging positive debate. In relation to Forward Motion, we'd expect to showcase outstanding work while recognising that dance film is a small genre and that, like many other art forms, UK culturally diverse artists are currently under-represented. When film programming is underway, we hope there will be specific effort put into finding outstanding work from culturally diverse artists including those from all across the UK: (e.g. consultation with specialists, researching areas other than dance film that might have relevant films). We hope to produce an accompanying website with newly commissioned one minute films from established and emerging artists, which will provide an additional platform for new work.'²⁷

- ❖ Artist Fellowships: commit to cultivating diversity by actively seeking applications from artists from a range of backgrounds.

- ❖ Commissioning: make diversity an integral part of any commissioning schemes, from the advertising stage onwards. Link with marketing department to find forums for advertising that will reach the target groups of: BME participants, disabled participants, disadvantaged young people and participants over 40, and male participants.

²⁷ Email correspondence 23.01.2007. For further information on the British Council diversity work see <http://www.britishcouncil.org/home-diversity.htm>

- ❖ Take 7 Sales: to advise and work with South East Dance marketing department to take account of and encourage audience diversity by seeking new target audiences.
- ❖ Dance for Camera Nights: Put diversity on the agenda for discussion at Dance for Camera Nights. Decide on a format – perhaps dedicate one session in year 2 to diversity, focusing the discussion on embedding diversity into practice. In year 3, take this further by embedding discussion on diversity in all sessions.
- ❖ Artists as champions for diversity and ambassadors. Recruit existing artists as Ambassadors for the target groups: BME participants, disabled participants, disadvantaged young people and participants over 40, and male participants. Set up a film screening/ discussion for potential new artists to see work and speak with existing artists. Offer an incentive such as free tickets to Cinecity. This could be a national initiative involving for example, Dance South West, Constellation Change or The Place Videoworks in London. Pay the artists who are Ambassadors.
- ❖ Experienced artists mentoring for new artists: This is budget dependent. Potentially it could be a useful tool for new artists of all backgrounds – including ‘mainstream’ artists. It would provide another source of income for existing artists and develop a legacy for the art form.
- ❖ New Audiences: identify local businesses and take films to them. American Express and EDF Energy were both identified by Vicky Bloor as potential businesses for this.²⁸ These businesses are likely to

²⁸ Conversation with author 13.12.06

employ people from all sections of the community so this is an excellent way of reaching a wide range of people who are new audiences for screen dance. Link with community and learning department to create an eflyer incentive for Cinecity. This will create returning audiences.

- ❖ Raising awareness among disadvantaged young people: Look into developing a project with the community and learning department that involved sending clips of existing commissioned work to mobile devices of their existing participants.

- ❖ Share good practice with other organisations working in screen dance through physical and virtual networking. During the consultancy several organisations showed interest in this process. Key organisations include Dance South West, The Place Videoworks and LCDS, CAPTURE, Live Screen (MORE from Sadlers Wells), and the Videodance website.

- ❖ Use Dance for Camera Nights as a format to encourage awareness and discussion among artists of issues around cultural diversity in screen dance. A number of artist responses indicated that this would be desirable. One artist said that one way of encouraging diversity within the sector would be by 'generally encouraging a level of critical debate within screen dance that moves beyond the practical, technical and anecdotal, towards the philosophical or political significance of the ideas and ambitions expressed (consciously or unconsciously) through the work.'²⁹ As noted above, one starting point could be around representations of the body. This has been discussed widely in screen/film and in dance.

²⁹ Miranda Pennell, email correspondence 07.11.2006

Appendix 1

List of organisations and individuals contacted for consultancy

Dance South West, Kate Castle, Executive Director & Jane Webster, Creative Producer

BBC, Ross MacGibbon, Executive Producer, Dance

CAPTURE, Portland Green, Interim Director

Channel 4, Jan Younghusband, Commissioning Editor, Arts & Performance

Live Screen (MORE from Sadlers Wells), Emma Gladstone

The Place Videoworks, Gitta Wigro, Programmer, Dance on Screen Film Festival

Chair of South East Dance, Bob Lockyer

Videodance, Simon Fildes

Arts Council England South East, Dan Bernstein, Development Officer – Cultural Diversity

British Council, Cathy Gomez, Special Projects Manager - Drama & Dance

Arts Council England, Tony Panayiotou, Diversity Strategy Director

Arts Council England South East, Jamie Watton, Dance Officer

MAD network (Media and Dance) of which two responded:

Christina Molander/ Paloma Madrid, SHOOT – Dance for Screen, Sweden

Kathleen Smith, Moving Pictures Festival, Toronto

Artists on South East Dance database. There were 26 artists of which the following 9 responded:

Alex Rueben

Rajyashree Ramamurthi

Liz Aggiss

Silke Mansholt

Miranda Pennell

Miriam King

Maria Lloyd

Rosemary Lee

Nicola Ashmore

Appendix 2

Resources and Events

Bibliography:

Brah, Avtar *Cartographies of Diaspora: Contesting Identities* London and New York: Routledge 1996.

Khan, Naseem *The Arts Britain Ignores*, CRC 1976.

Resources:

For an example of a study of the benefits of diversity in the business context see:

<http://www.businesslink.gov.uk/bdotg/action/detail?type=RESOURCES&itemId=1074421939>

<http://www.britishcouncil.org/home-diversity.htm> for information on the British Council's diversity work

www.developingaudiences.com a South East regional site with useful information and links on audience development.

Events:

Dance for Camera Nights (formerly Nightingale Nights): a quarterly networking, debate and feedback forum for screen dance artists, managed by South East Dance

Peer to Peer: a South East regional skills and good practice event