

National Portrait Gallery

732nd MEETING

Minutes of the Meeting of the Trustees held at the National Portrait Gallery on
Thursday 15 May 2008

Present:

Professor David Cannadine (Chairman)
Ms Zeinab Badawi
Sir Nicholas Blake
Professor Robert Boucher
The Marchioness of Douro
Ms Flora Fraser
Professor Ludmilla Jordanova
Mr David Mach
Sir Christopher Ondaatje
Mr David Ross
Professor Sara Selwood
Miss Alexandra Shulman
Sir John Weston

In attendance:

Mr Sandy Nairne, Director
Mr Jacob Simon, Chief Curator

1. Chairman's business

The Chairman reported that the Secretary of State was minded to reappoint Zeinab Badawi and Lady Douro as Trustees for a second term. He expressed his gratitude to Flora Fraser for her remarkable services to the Gallery as a Trustee and in so many other ways, continuing a tradition of service to the Gallery by the Longford family over three generations. The Chairman reported that Trustees would be consulted on the performance of the Director as part of the annual review process.

The Director reported that DCMS had now taken forward the process of filling three Trustee vacancies, details of which were available on the DCMS website.

2. Apologies for absence and Declarations of interest

Apologies for absence were received from Baroness Ashton of Upholland, Ms Amelia Fawcett and Sir Nicholas Grimshaw. Professor Robert Boucher said that he had become Chair of the Sheffield Museums and Galleries Trust, and declared a potential conflict of interest. Sir Nicholas Blake declared that Anne Owers was a friend, a candidate for a commissioned portrait.

3. Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 February 2008 were approved, subject to the addition of the words 'by a majority' to the sentence relating to a work by Marc Quinn in minute 6, so that it reads, 'The Trustees approved the acquisition by a majority subject to the Director satisfying the Chairman on our ability to meet the technical requirements and on negotiations on price'.

4. Matters arising

The Director said that the report on the Cultural Olympiad would come to the next meeting of Trustees.

5. Director's report

The Director drew attention to five matters:

- the success of *Vanity Fair Portraits* which, combined with other exhibitions and displays, had led to very good visitor figures for 2007/8
- outside London, the warmth of welcome for the Gallery's contributions to the North Face project in the North-East regional hub, and the success of the launch at Montacute House of the new guidebook and display at which Lady Antonia Fraser spoke
- the award to Lucy Peltz, Curator 18th century portraits, of a Leverhulme Fellowship for research purposes
- ongoing work on the National Art Collections Centre. Tate was looking at funding sources and we were examining moving some of our works to their store while being open to considering other options if necessary
- the forthcoming loan of Pietro Annigoni's portrait of Princess Margaret

In response to a suggestion from Flora Fraser on displaying the collection at the Hockney Gallery at Saltaire Mill, the Director said that the Gallery would investigate opportunities at Saltaire.

6. Portraits on offer

The Chief Curator reported that following the death of the owner of the Dacre portrait, a reduction in the tax liabilities for the portrait meant that the net price payable by the Gallery would increase from £936,000 to £1,050,000, unless it proved possible to renegotiate the gross price. The Trustees asked that a reduction be sought from the vendor but agreed that the purchase could proceed at a higher price of £1,050,000, subject to funding.

The Chief Curator also reported on the Gallery's failed attempt to acquire a portrait of John Dryden at auction. It is hoped that it may be possible to acquire the portrait from its purchaser, Philip Mould Ltd, albeit at a potentially higher price. Trustees were particularly concerned about the relationship between the Gallery and Philip Mould Ltd. The Chief Curator said that the Gallery tries to keep its interest in particular portraits in the salerooms confidential, subject to the need to view portraits to assess them. He added that given that Philip Mould Ltd is the leading dealer in historical portraits it is not surprising that there will be occasional clashes of interest, although in acquisitions made in recent years the Gallery's good working relationship with Philip Mould has been to its advantage.

The Director reported that the owner of the portrait of Mary Seacole continued to seek a figure for the portrait at the top end of two independent valuations. The Trustees agreed that the purchase could proceed at a price of up to £130,000, subject to funding. The Director also reported on the ongoing discussions around Marc Quinn's blood-head self-portrait. There had been productive discussions with White Cube's refrigeration engineer, which led us to believe that the piece, if acquired, should be displayed for 12 months initially to allow an assessment as to whether issues such as noise were sufficiently significant to require a more elaborate approach to installation. Once The Art Fund had come to a decision on our grant application, a wider fundraising campaign would be considered.

The Chief Curator and individual curators reported on portraits now on offer. The Trustees agreed to the acquisition of the portrait of Sir Richard Arkwright jointly with the Harris Museum and Art Gallery, Preston, subject to funding.

- THE TRUSTEES agreed to the acquisition of the portraits on the appended list

7. Commissions

Sarah Howgate, Contemporary Curator, reported on current commissions. The Director said that he had been present at the first session with Princes William and Harry, and that the Gallery continued to adopt a measured approach to advancing the commission for a portrait of Tony Blair. The Chairman reported that further Trustee preferences for future commissions had been received. Following discussions, it was further agreed that portraits should be commissioned when possible of Sir Michael Holroyd.

8. Finance and Planning

Robert Boucher reported that it had been a very satisfactory year, with a surplus rather than the predicted deficit, partly due to a higher level of major donations and extra income from trading. He drew attention to the good performance in chasing debtors. Nick Hanks, Head of Finance and Planning, confirmed that it had been a good year and that we had met all our DCMS targets. The Trustees noted the Management Report for the 12 months to 31 March 2008.

The Reserves Policy had been approved by the Audit and Compliance Committee at its recent meeting. The policy had compared favourably against National Audit Office (NAO) best practice. Subject to NAO agreement, we would release £80,000 of the £250,000 earmarked currently within the Investment and Contingency Fund for potential Corporation Tax liability, now that the liability had been recalculated at around £170,000, a sum £80,000 lower than the original estimate.

- THE TRUSTEES approved the Reserves Policy for the 2007-8 Annual Report and Accounts, subject to deleting 'non-recurring' in the third paragraph of Annex A

9. Audit and Compliance Committee

David Ross, Chairman of the Audit and Compliance Committee, reported on the recent review of the High Level Risk Register, noting that the Committee was satisfied that risks were being kept under regular review. Risk B4 Funding levels and income generation had been amended from Red A to Amber A following the completion of the 2007 Comprehensive Spending Review, the receipt of the Lerner donation and the good earned income results. The Committee had reviewed progress with the implementation of internal audit recommendations, only two of which were now outstanding, both of which depended on cooperation from partner organisations. The review of trading stock had been postponed to the Committee's next meeting. David Ross drew attention to the tabled Risk Management Annual Report, which NAO had applauded as an example of good practice for the Audit and Compliance Committee to report to Trustees formally each year.

- THE TRUSTEES noted the progress made during 2007/8 in developing the effectiveness of the Gallery's risk management processes

10. National Portrait Gallery Website

José Robertson, Acting Head of Digital Programmes, made a presentation to Trustees on the development of the new website, which was due for launch in late September or early October. Trustees asked about the delivery of content for the website, maximising exposure to search engines, maximising economic benefit to the Gallery through income generating opportunities, how many priority Gallery goals would be achieved through the redevelopment and how easy it would be for website users to contact the Gallery. The Trustees welcomed progress towards the new website.

11. Making Art in Tudor Britain

Tarnya Cooper, Curator, 16th century portraits, made a presentation to Trustees in the conservation studio on the Making Art in Tudor Britain project. She explained work in progress and pointed to the success of three workshop sessions and to the Gallery's plans to publish and progress the project. The Trustees expressed their enthusiastic interest in the project.

14. Matters for report

Reports on Communications and Development, Resources, Learning and Access and Loan requests were noted, as were the minutes of the Editorial Advisory Board. The Director said that a report on the American Friends would come to the next meeting of Trustees. He reported that the external scaffold at the entrance to the Gallery was designed to give access to works to enable disabled access to the First Floor Landing.

15. Any other business

There was no other business.

Appended list of portraits on offer

MARY NEVILL, LADY DACRE and her son **GREGORY FIENES, 10th BARON DACRE**, painting by Hans Eworth, 1559

Purchase through Sotheby's at revised net price of up to £1,050,000 approved, subject to negotiations on price and contract and subject to finance

MARY SEACOLE, Jamaican nurse, adventurer and writer, painting by Albert Charles Challen, 1869

Purchase from Helen Rappaport approved at £130,000, subject to negotiations on price and subject to finance

THOMAS SHADWELL, dramatist and Poet Laureate, painting by an unknown artist, late 17th/early 18th century after a lost portrait of c.1680

Intent of bequest welcomed

SIR RICHARD ARKWRIGHT, engineer and inventor, painting by Joseph Wright of Derby, c.1783-5

Joint purchase, with the Harris Museum and Art Gallery, Preston, from Philip Mould Ltd at £420,000 approved, subject to finance

DAME ETHEL MARY SMYTH, composer, writer and suffragist, plaster bust by Gilbert Bayes, 1938

Gift from the Trustees of the Gilbert Bayes Charity approved

JAMES JOYCE, novelist, poet and playwright, photograph by Berenice Abbott, 1928, printed 1970s/1980s

Purchase from Commerce Graphics Ltd, New York, at \$4000 approved

ZAHA MOHAMMAD HADID, architect, wall mounted LCD monitor/computer with integrated software by Michael Craig-Martin, 2008

Commission from Michael Craig-Martin at £38,000 including expenses approved, with funding from JPMorgan through the Fund for New Commissions