

Screen West Midlands announce UK Film Council lottery investment

The Digital Film Archive Fund was set up by the UK Film Council to increase public access to regional screen heritage. Screen WM is pleased to announce their investment to date in three exciting new archive projects in the West Midlands.

Screen heritage encompasses moving image media, from traditional film and television to artist's film and video, animation and digital material distributed via the internet, to contextual material including scripts, designs, marketing and publicity material and documents relating to production, distribution and consumption.

The aim of the Fund is 'to support innovative programmes ensuring wider access to the UK 's screen heritage' which aligns to the vision of the strategy for UK Screen Heritage. The vision is that the public is entitled to access, learn about and enjoy its rich screen heritage wherever they live and wherever the materials are held.

Screen WM have invested in three projects which do exactly this; E-Media Archive for Central England, Vivid's Participation and Television Junction's WeVee projects

Television Junction is a highly experienced award-winning production company ambitious to develop its creative potential through digital media. The WeVee project supported through Screen WM's Digital Film Archive Fund in January 09 aims to make the huge variety of regional archive moving image as accessible as possible to as wide an audience as possible.

WeVee is targeted particularly at 14 - 25 year olds, an audience typically hard-to-reach with a regional history brief.

With this audience in mind Television Junction are developing WeVee as an interactive online site which provides an opportunity for users to say something about themselves, their identity, home and locality, and reference key past events which have resonance for today and for the future through the archive.

The aim is to provide users with the possibility of creating mash-ups to music using moving image archive clips. Users will be able to port these mash-ups via social networking sites. WeVee's work in progress will be showcased at Birmingham ArtsFest in September.

Yvonne Davies, co-Managing Director Television Junction said: "We are very excited about the way the WeVee project will fuse traditional archive footage and the new digital technologies to open up the wealth of moving image archive to a new audience. We applaud the boldness of commitment which Screen WM have shown to this innovative project. The way that users will be involved in developing the choices of clips and the exchange of mash-ups (WeVeEs) will help define the shape and direction the site takes. The possibilities for creating ways of viewing and reviewing the hidden treasures of our region's archive moving image are only limited by the imagination of the WeVee site users."

The second DFAP project Screen WM have invested in is through the Media Archive for Central England, which is the regional moving image collection for the Midlands . Screen WM will be investing £80,000 into a 2 year project to make the regions' collections more accessible. By the end of the project anyone will be able to select from 250 hours of material to view on the web, there will be a searchable catalogue of 40,000 titles from the collection which will also be available on the web and the archive will be releasing a series of DVD compilations for general sale.

MACE director James Patterson said; "Our job at MACE is not only to create the resources for the region but to find exciting ways to present them and connect people to them. This investment will make a huge difference to our ability to make our collections available to people to enjoy and to learn about their heritage."

The third project to receive DFAP investment through Screen WM is Vivid's 'Participation'. An exhibition and archive project centered on the emergence of new film forms, radical politics and practices, led by the British workshop movement, in the 1980s. Unearthing the archives of challenging, polemical and oppositional groups operating during a period of economic and social

upheaval, the works presented react to and document the rise of Thatcherism and the social and cultural events the period from 1979 engendered: inner city disturbances, the miners strike, and increasing social disparity.

Central to the archival element of the exhibition is the unearthing and digitization of the uncatalogued, little known yet groundbreaking work of the Birmingham Film and Video Workshop. The BFVW (originally the Birmingham Film Workshop) are notable for having produced the UK's first feature shot on video and were ahead of the industry in bringing work made in collaboration with young people to the mainstream through Channel 4. This project will create a new, digital archive of the best of these works and make it available to a wider public through a website and DVD resource.

Yasmeen Baig-Clifford, Director of VIVID said: VIVID itself grew out of the Birmingham workshop scene of the 80s; a time of creative ferment and challenges to the mainstream, and a scene that embraced black film makers, feminist film makers, the documentary tradition, the alternative scene and early participatory work with young people. VIVID grew out of this ferment, and we are passionate about the need to finally uncover the people and the work of this period. After seventeen years of supporting a multiplicity of moving image practice in the WM region and far beyond, this project is an important and timely one for VIVID."

Sara Clowes, Head of Education Archive and Audience Development at Screen WM said: "Screen WM are thrilled to be providing investment support to these 3 projects, all of which in their own innovative ways will ensure increased public access to our regions cultural heritage. Film Archives offer a greater understanding of our regional identity and a real insight into what makes the Heart of England so great. Whether it's film clips which recall our strong sense of community or our cultural and industrial roots, there's something for everyone. I for one am interested in our music heritage whether that's footage with Ozzy or touring visits by Dylan- Other people may be keen to watch clips which track our development into a truly multicultural region! Either way we hope that people will enjoy watching all the footage that's going to be made accessible via our Digital Film Archive Fund'