

# Marshall Anderson

# Another story of art development

According to Bob McGilvray, consultant director of Dundee Public Arts Programme, the idea of an arts centre for Dundee originated in the printmakers' workshop and associated gallery organisation in the Seagate in 1986. McGilvray could not say from whose actual lips this idea sprung. It must have issued forth from the wellhead of group wisdom. An arts centre, a greater ideal, would provide them with a more prestigious stage to improve their position within the city, and most importantly, might extend the range of facilities for artists independent of the art college.

Dundee Printmakers Workshop Ltd & Seagate Gallery had little money. Its rent and running costs were paid by the District Council (DC) and Scottish Arts Council (SAC). In order to drive forward their arts centre initiative they had to interest parties with more money. Piedad, an Edinburgh-based arts consultancy, was commissioned to produce a feasibility report but, in the words of McGilvray, "It was a waste of money. They sent along some office junior who hadn't a clue."

The Scottish Development Agency was then asked to contribute to another feasibility study. This time a consultant, Tim Jacobs, did the honours. I have not been able to find a copy of what was entitled, Jacobs' Intrinsic Strategy. It was published sometime between 1989 and 1991 and cost between £15k and £25k. It was trashed. McGilvray told me that Jacobs had been asked to examine three likely sites to develop as an arts centre: A vacant building next to the Repertory Theatre, a vacant lot behind Dock Street, and the Seagate Gallery building itself. Jacobs' vision was to cost £600,000 per year to operate. As far as the DC was concerned his figures did not 'stack up'. They were certainly not prepared to invest such a sum in art at that time. The vision was impracticable and was summarily forgotten. The feasibility study was assigned to wastepaper-bins throughout the city. Hence its subsequent rarity. Maybe in years to come these products of '90s culture will be seen as works of art in their own right and become highly collectable.

Bob McGilvray was highly regarded as an artist by his peers. He painted the first two public murals in Dundee, which were commissioned by the DC under pressure from SAC who paid McGilvray's fee. He had become a part-time lecturer at Duncan of Jordanstone (DoJ) and was the director of an initiative called the Dundee Public Arts Programme. He was an obvious and popular choice of artists' leader.

Originally McGilvray was paid as the Exhibitions Organiser and shared the work of running the Seagate Gallery with Ann Ross, the part-time administrator. During this time the Board of Directors was being chaired by Jonathan Bryant whose vice-chair was Steve Grimmond. The Board was still actively pursuing the dream of an arts centre as being a natural progression of Seagate Gallery and its stablemate, the printmakers' workshop. However, it was told by SAC that in order to seriously pursue its ambition it would have to appoint a full-time director whose duties up until that point had been shared by Ross and McGilvray. The post was advertised and McGilvray encouraged an Aberdeen-based artist called Dave Jackson—who had held a successful exhibition at the Seagate—to apply. Steve Grimmond who was actively involved in the local art scene as a musician and printmaker resigned as vice chairman of the

Board in order to apply for the director's post. It was awarded to Dave Jackson in April 1993.

When Jackson assumed his post as Executive Director, McGilvray was employed as Exhibitions Consultant. The Board paid him £5,000 per annum to carry out part-time duties and when Jackson was hired on a salary of £17,000 it was obvious that McGilvray's post would be sacrificed. Obvious to most people except McGilvray that is. He accused Jackson of stealing his job and as far as I know never spoke to him again. McGilvray had been enjoying a privileged position at the Seagate from where he could run the Dundee Public Arts Programme rent free and by doubling up staff could take on three part-time jobs. He remains highly critical of Jackson who, by uniting the printmakers with the gallery under the banner, Seagate Ltd, ultimately sacrificed it to DCA Ltd.

Jackson perceived McGilvray as the 'clan chief' and was aware of the acrimony his arrival as an outsider had caused. His determination to reverse the collective apathy split the ranks and likely brought about recriminations that affected ensuing developments. The organisation had died on its feet as a result of dismissing the Jacobs' report, having no clear exhibition's policy and a lack of proper management. With complete endorsement from his Board of Directors Jackson effected a 'Nordic House' styled policy: To raise the profile of locally-based artists and the gallery while bringing in the best contemporary art he could afford. He recognised the gallery as being the interface with the public and concentrated on raising its overall profile. Live events, coupled with a policy which incorporated Dundee Photographic Society as associate members, helped treble the annual attendance figures. Jackson had been briefed by his Board to make the Seagate break even and this he did by creating a popular centre of cross media events. But there were many who mocked him within the arty cliques and pubbing huddles where historic loyalties were watered and cultivated. Dundee is a small city with a village closeness and it is all too easy to offend and to incur petty jealousies. History is the result of the cause and effect of human relationships: The colliding and denting of egos: The marrying of partners. And this is a story of such.

## Consultation 1993/4

During this time Steve Grimmond worked for Dundee Council, within the corridors of power traditionally dominated by more ruthless and corrupted characters. When I interviewed him in his office on December 9th 1998 he was distinctly on edge. His body language betraying his casual executive exterior. He had been Corporate Planning Officer since 1994. One of the first jobs he had been given was the development of the arts centre project. What he neglected to tell me was that prior to this he had been handed the Dundee Arts Strategy Consultation Document to complete and publish.

The first Consultation Document was a spiral bound A4 report of 79 pages. It clearly defined The Arts as being "set out in five generic parts: A. The Visual Arts; B. Literature; C. Music; D. Sound and Vision; and E. Performing Arts." It was an audit of every facility for the aforementioned within Dundee.

In December 1993 the DC's Chief Executive, Alex Stephen, issued an open letter 'Dundee Arts Strategy—Consultation' enclosing a "Consultation Return Form, How You Can Help," to be completed and returned by

the 14th February 1994. By completing the form arts organisations would be invited to attend an *informal* consultation meeting. This was convened in April 1994 at the McManus Galleries. Its agenda included a 'Welcome' by Alex Stephen; a 'Chairman's Introduction' by Eric Robinson, Director of SALVO (Scottish Arts Lobby); 'Outline Remarks' by Andrew Nairne, *then* Visual Arts Director, SAC; and 'Brief Statements' by spokespersons from the main local groups:

Dundee Printmakers Workshop Ltd & Seagate Gallery, Dundee Art Society, Dundee Photographic Society, the Embroiders' Guild (Dundee & East of Scotland Branch), the Saltire Society (Dundee Branch), the School of Television and Imaging (DoJ), Dundee Rep and several 'Individuals'.

The only organisation represented that advocated a City Arts Centre "with an emphasis on a facility like the Printmakers Workshop, but encompassing a broader range of media to include photography and electronic imaging" was DPW Ltd & Seagate Gallery.

SAC suggested "that a further consultation paper setting out the goals and priorities of the Arts Strategy should be issued before the District Council agrees the Strategy." SAC also included detailed comments on the proposed new City Arts Centre and suggested "that the Public Art project should continue to receive support from the District Council and other agencies and should be widely promoted to enhance the city's image both in respect of its quality of life and also its artistic and cultural aspirations."

The second Consultation Document was an Arts Strategy of 29 pages bearing the Scottish Arts Council logo. It had evidently developed from the McManus meeting and was so redolent of SAC documents that one must conclude that DC was led by the nose by SAC in its production. This is confirmed in the introduction: "The development of an Arts Strategy for Dundee compliments the Charter for the Arts in Scotland which was launched in January, 1993 by the Scottish Arts Council." At this time every Scottish city and region was undergoing similar exercises, each one subsidised and endorsed by SAC.

## A shift in emphasis

This second draft became a glossy A4 'Dundee Arts Strategy' designed for public consumption. Published in December 1994, its idiom is formulaic hyperbole. The DC refers to itself as "a listening Council" which "Aims to confirm Dundee's status as a major regional centre for the Arts." The Strategy informs us that "*no art activity is intrinsically superior to any other,*" and that as a force "*arts and cultural activities can make a major contribution to putting the heart back into the City*". A city that was disembowelled throughout the 1960s and '70s, culminating in the corrupt stewardship of Lord Provosts Moore and Charles Farquhar from '73 to '76.

The Strategy defines "the development of a City Arts Centre, primarily for the contemporary visual Arts." Under 'Strategies', we find highly questionable statements that pre-condition the City Arts Centre vision: "*It is only through experiencing the best that would-be artists will be encouraged to excel.*" Under 'Facilities', the City Arts Centre is described as being "*independent*", a description that would become even more contradictory with time. This statement is followed by 'Economic Benefits', one being that arts provision attracts tourists and prolongs their time in the

Richard Murphy Architects

City. "To capitalise upon this a longer term strategy will be to develop links between arts, tourism and economic development organisations in the City with a project driven remit to identify high profile initiatives." One presumably being the City Arts Centre. Under 'Participation', it clearly states that: "Every member of the community should have the opportunity both to practice and enjoy the arts. Access to creative self expression should not be in the preserve of a minority." This ethos is further declared under 'Access and Equal Opportunity': "Underpinning all of the specific Arts Strategies for Dundee is a commitment to ensure equality of opportunities and of access for all."

The publication concludes with an *Action Plan* and the first priority under Short Term Action is to "Establish a Steering Group to develop proposals, locations and costs for a City Arts Centre." This is to be achieved by a grouping of the Chief Executive (Alex Stephen), SAC (Andrew Nairne) and Arts Organisations (those above mentioned as operating in Dundee). Within the publication this list was extended to include a new partner, Scottish Enterprise Tayside (SET) who had obviously been encouraged, through the wording of the second edition of the Strategy, to participate as a major investor; contributing £920,000.

### 1995 to 1997

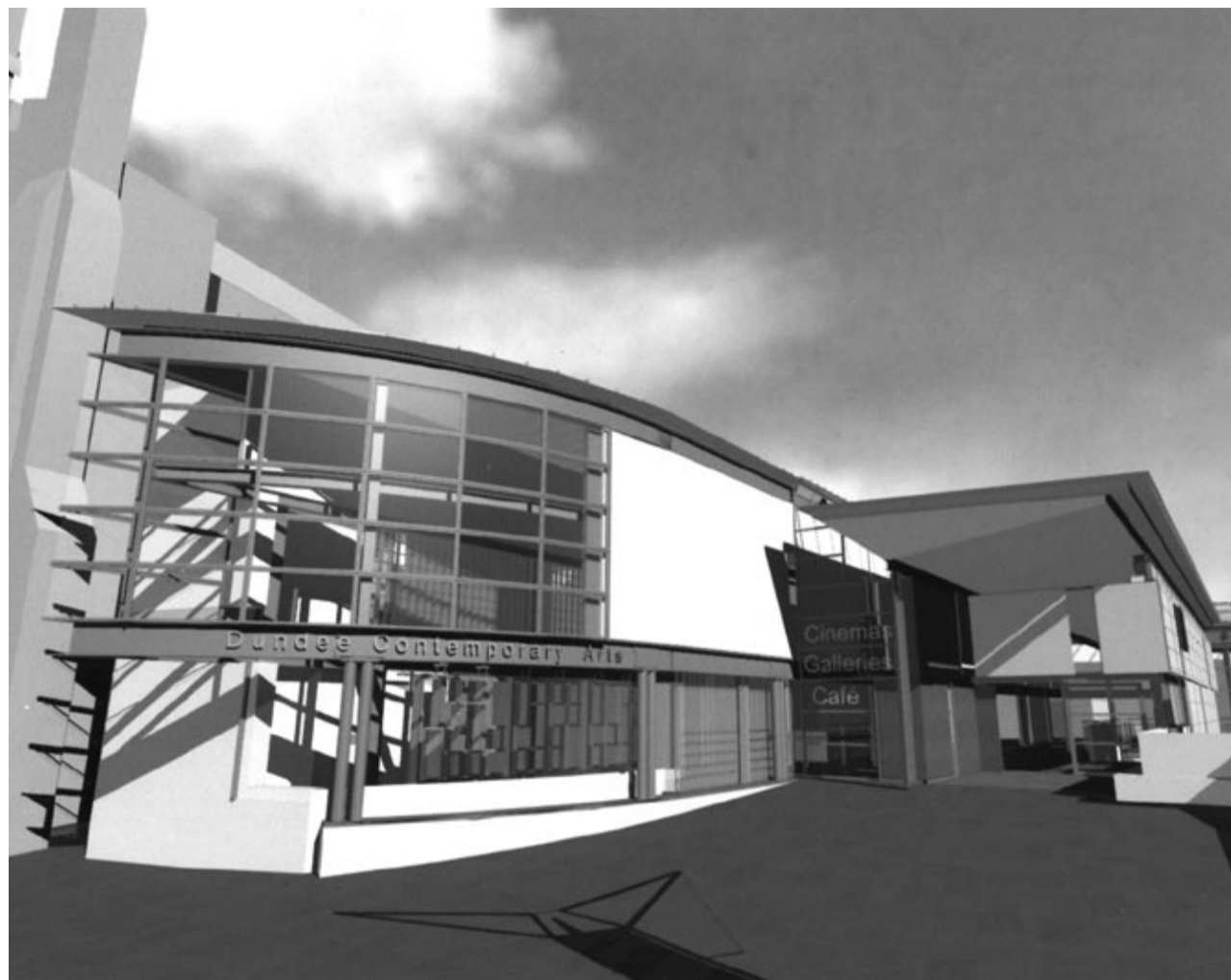
Back in Steve Grimmond's office he told me that he was placed in charge of building a partnership that could make the art centre concept work. A concept, it must be said, that was very confused in its expectations and ideology. So much so that the arts community believed that it would be independent and entirely for their benefit.

Grimmond's boss, Alex Stephen—who had been in the DC during the notorious Farquhar era and had held the post of Head of Finance and who set up the Arts Strategy—was now manipulating his officer's strings. Grimmond 'arranged' a meeting with Dr Chris Carter, the Deputy Principal at DoJ. He was very keen on the arts centre proposal from the point of view of a partnership. And, according to Grimmond, was interested in the way such a project might help the college to raise its public profile and connect more strongly with the city. This meeting served to affirm the college's role as a partner within a major investment, the costs of which could not be met by the DC or any one partner alone.

Grimmond also told me that his job entailed establishing a "greater clarity". This was achieved by "listening to the different ideas of what an arts centre might be." His general recollection was "that there wasn't a huge discrepancy between what the DC wanted and what those at Seagate wanted." Grimmond's recollections are highly suspect for although the Seagate artists expected the arts centre to be independent of DoJ the DC could not develop the project without Dundee University, DoJ's parent organisation.

"The vision," said Grimmond, "was, from the outset, that a new art centre would contain the printmakers' workshop and that the galleries would be the principal enhancement. They would have to be better than what we already had. If they weren't the whole project would be a waste of time. There were also ideas for cinemas, artists' studio space, a ceramic workshop and sculpture studio." There were even possibilities for photographers and live arts too.

These informal Steering Group meetings encouraged an open forum which included Dave Jackson and James Howie from the Seagate, Ian Howard and Charles McKeen from DoJ, and the DC's Steve Grimmond and John McDougal (Finance Dept) augmented by engineers and architects. The Steering Group discussed and examined forty potential sites within Dundee. The most significant of these, 'McLean's Garage' being a large, city centre site commanding a view of the River Tay and virtually straddling the boundary between the university campus and the city centre. From the point of view of all the major partners, DoJ, DC, SET it was the site that



offered the most spectacular economic benefits in terms of its central location and tourist potential. Such a key development would also attract significant funding from SAC and other agencies. By this stage Seagate Ltd (a brand name devised to unite the print workshop and the gallery) was being castrated. It had neither the financial muscle nor the strength of a unified community of artists with which to fight off its emasculators.

What followed was a condensed, energetic period in which the steamroller gathered a momentum that was not to ease off enough for people to take stock until the building was underway. During the spring of 1995, to prepare for single tier government, while the old DC was being shadowed by Dundee City Council (DCC), a new administrative organisation was put into place. Arts & Heritage was established in April and with it a restructuring of staffing levels was implemented. Clara Young lost her role as Keeper of Art: a role that permitted local artists direct access to the McManus Galleries in terms of talking through projects and ideas. Young was replaced by a Team Leader and a Chief Arts Officer, Andrea Stark, who was appointed in July '95 having previously held the post of Head of Arts Development with Sunderland City Council. Before relinquishing its bank account to DCC the DC purchased MacLean's Garage for £390,000. The role of the Steering Group was over. The policy of open debate was also at a close. It was time to consolidate and to develop. A private company Dundee City Arts Centre Ltd (DCAC Ltd) was set up and the major partners were invited to send representatives to attend regular meetings.

At this stage Seagate Ltd believed that it held a third stake in a new arts centre and felt confident that its reps, Sheena Bell and Douglas Black would report back to the Board all that was being discussed behind DCAC Ltd's closed doors. However, this belief was unfounded when the reps refused to inform the Board as to what was going on. No minutes were made available. Minutes that were being kept by Steve Grimmond who, when I questioned him in his office about the role of SAC and its rep, Andrew Nairne, declared quite categorically that they "were observers only. They maintained an arms length approach throughout," he said and then continued: "They never sent an observer. They received minutes ... As far as I recall they were never represented." I found his statement incredulous, for although SAC certainly do favour an arms length policy when it comes to dealing with their revenue clients they had certainly showed enough interest in the arts centre project from its first murmurings to take an active part through atten-

dances by Andrew Nairne at several meetings. I asked Grimmond if Andrew Nairne had ever attended meetings of DCAC Ltd. "My recollections are," he declared, "that he was never there."

On December 22nd '98 I met with Professor Ian Howard in his office at DoJ. Involved in the arts centre project from the outset, he had been asked by Dr Chris Carter to attend meetings as a representative of the School of Fine Art in the company of Charles McKeen from the School of Architecture. Would his memory be sharper than the man who had kept the minutes? "The SAC were observers more than advisers," he confirmed. But they did attend meetings either in the person of Sue Pirnie, Amanda Catto, or Andrew Nairne. "We met once a week or once a fortnight," he continued, "SAC came once a month."

According to Howard another feasibility study was commissioned. A number of consultants tendered for the job and it was, once again, awarded to Piedad. He referred to this as an interim report which outlined various options by which the arts centre might proceed. One option was chosen. "We built a much larger vision" he said. "Other consultants were brought in to develop the Business Plan," and "a bigger plan enabled it to be a larger project. We wanted to achieve 'critical mass,'" he explained. Originally the college investment would have been for post-graduate studios only but as the project became bigger the potential for research facilities began to look obvious. "We have no custom-built research facilities here," he explained. "Only teaching facilities. Custom-built laboratories would make for more interesting developments, different synergies and links." I was beginning to see how dreams are made, especially when they can be endorsed and supported by large, state financed institutions, corporate development and a powerful City Council.

Howard's relatively open approach to my questions confirmed one thing. Grimmond's uneasy and edgy display had been a clumsy attempt at concealment. But what was he trying to hide? From the time DCAC Ltd appeared with a controlling influence of the project all sorts of rumours about coercion and small town gangsterism began to emerge. It was alleged that Councillors and Council employees had begun a campaign to weaken the administrative structure of Seagate Ltd. Particular Board members were harassed, asked to stand down, abdicate their responsibilities. Effectively turn a blind eye to what was going on. A local guitarist with aspirations to establish an annual Guitar Festival was advised, reputedly, that the Council would not fund his event if... The past president of Dundee Photographic Society and an

employee of DCC was coerced into resigning from the Board after serving on it for ten weeks only. He believes the command filtered down from a higher authority within the Council. The bully-boy tactics of the past were still in evidence. When James Howie threatened to withdraw Seagate Ltd's support of the arts centre he received a threatening letter from Alex Stephen suggesting that he was jeopardising the future development of the city. Seagate Ltd had, by this time, taken legal action to ensure that minutes of DCAC Ltd meetings were released to the Board. Later their firm of solicitors informed the Board that they could no longer represent them. At the AGM in November 1996 it was noted that Sheena Bell and Douglas Black had resigned from the Board on the 28th November 1995 while maintaining their positions in DCAC Ltd. They wanted to preserve a continuity, but a continuity of what? Self-interest?

Grimmond had been so emphatic that he had repeated it twice. "They (Sheena Bell and Douglas Black) were representing the interests of the membership (of Seagate Ltd) which largely consisted of local artists." I had asked if local artists' interests were represented at DCAC Ltd. Clearly they were not. Local artists' only grasp of what was going on with the arts centre development was via a wilting grapevine. Seagate Ltd was effectively reduced to a scramble as Howie valiantly attempted to recruit people to sit on the Board in an attempt to hang onto threads of communication and control. The Council withdrew its financial support of £8,000 per annum and SAC likewise saved itself £80,000. And although Seagate Ltd was earning up to £30,000 a year it was evidently perceived as an organisation worth sacrificing. The one person who should have taken up their cause, Andrew Nairne, the Visual Arts Director of SAC, did not. One could be forgiven for thinking that he had set his ambition on running the new gallery now that Seagate Ltd was effectively out of the picture.

According to Steve Grimmond, however, the decision to subsume Seagate Ltd if the arts centre went ahead had been discussed during the Steering Group meetings to which those at Seagate were a party. "The revenue funders," Grimmond stated, "would not duplicate their commitment. And in terms of the Seagate reps they stuck to that principle." Dave Jackson was made redundant in March '97 despite being employed to take Seagate Ltd forward as an arts centre. He took Seagate Ltd to an industrial tribunal who found the company guilty of unfair dismissal.

Professor Ian Howard was not alone in taking the university's vision of a Research Centre for national and international collaborations forward. For not only did his colleague, Charles McKeen attend DCAC Ltd meetings but so too did Dr Ian Graham-Bryce, Dundee University's Principal, and Alex Stephen, DCC's Chief Executive. From reasonably modest beginnings a major development began to take shape. Arts & Heritage were incorporated into the vision along with the Steps Film Theatre which had occupied space within the Wellgate Public Library since 1979. The vision did include the printmaker's workshop but its membership was dismantled and it was reinvented as the Print Studio. According to Howard there will be: "A continuum from local to international." The Print Studio providing the link between the ordinary practising artist with an interest in printmaking and the international research fellow invited to work in the 'Laboratory' on cutting edge, high-tech projects. Links too will be developed between the Research Centre and local industry as well as other faculties within the university, such as the Medical School.

Howard's vision is in harmony with Dundee City Council's Economic Development Plan; while in the Council's Corporate Plan 1996 to 1999 it says that a new City Arts Centre "will be a significant focus for the development of Dundee's cultural industries which is a sector of the economy the City would need to achieve growth in." One-person and small businesses operated by artists and craftspeople, musicians and writers did not count as "cultural industries," for

the partnership that drove forward the development of the City Arts Centre did not include them. The partnership consisted of state subsidised "cultural industries" that had access to major capital funds. Nowhere is there any mention of supporting and promoting the work of local artists who, if they create outside of the medium of printmaking, will not be catered for within the arts centre.

In April 1996 an architectural competition to find a suitable design for the City Arts Centre was launched. A panel comprising DCAC Ltd, SET, DCC, SAC and the Competitions Unit of the Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland, selected Richard Murphy Architects. Dundee City Arts Centre would be their first major rebuild. The package to present to the Lottery Board was taking shape and it must be concluded that the decision to go for a major Lottery award had been taken during the early stages of DCAC Ltd because the Lottery as a capital funding source came on stream in March 1995.

Andrea Stark, Arts & Heritage's Chief Arts Officer who had begun to attend meetings of DCAC Ltd was put in charge of the application. A comprehensive Business Plan was commissioned from *Pieda*. It begins: "The Dundee City Council, in conjunction with Scottish Enterprise Tayside, is seeking Scottish Arts Council National Lottery funding to develop the Dundee City Arts Centre. The project will provide a unique experience within Scotland allowing visitors to view and participate in state of the art visual arts exhibitions and processes. The project cost amounts to £8.6m and a contribution of £4.8m is sought from the Scottish Arts Council (National Lottery)."

Interestingly, the background details say: "More recently the project has been championed by the Dundee Printmakers Workshop." No mention of Seagate Ltd as a driving force or a partner is made. No mention of Seagate Ltd as an organisation with a director and board of directors is made. Under Construction Costs it states that "the disposal costs of the Seagate Gallery, have been included." It goes on to say: "The disposal cost has been calculated to be £168,000, if the Council has to buy out the lease from 1998 to 2010." Presumably these details were being discussed at meetings of DCAC Ltd while Seagate Ltd still had a director on a salary with an understanding that he was to be responsible for taking the arts centre project forward. Dave Jackson and James Howie were quite right to feel concerned for it is obvious that Seagate Ltd as an organisation was to disappear while its 'sub brand' organisation who shared the same building would survive.

Through a misleading and confusing use of brand names *Seagate Ltd* had been divorced in people's minds from the print workshop. If the gallery was to be redundant so too was its director despite the fact that as Executive Director he was responsible for both organisations. This underhand strategy made economic sense because the new Print Studio would rely on the old DPW Ltd equipment while the gallery was simply an empty space with no material assets to carry forward. We can also assume that this strategy and the entire contents of the Business Plan were being debated and finely tuned during meetings of DCAC Ltd.

The SAC Lottery application was signed and dated on 24th August 1996 by all the partners excluding Seagate Ltd. In April of that year Laura MacDonald, acting Chairman of Seagate Ltd's Board, signed what she believed to be the final draft of the Business Plan. However, it was amended and republished in August and this version was the one that was sent to support the Lottery bid. On 29th October 1996 it was announced that a record sum of £5,380,756 had been awarded to Dundee City Arts Centre. The role of DCAC Ltd was complete.

### Dundee Contemporary Arts Ltd

DCA Ltd had been formed in May 1997 after DCAC Ltd was dissolved and three months after its director's post had been advertised. Many rumours about Andrew Nairne had preceded his appointment. It had

been a "stitch-up" according to one academic at DoJ. Allegedly he had been in a position to negotiate his own salary when, as an SAC rep., he had attended meetings of DCAC Ltd. Almost everyone in the know in Dundee will tell you how he handed in his resignation at SAC two months before the post of Director was advertised. The post was advertised in February 1997 and, according to Prof. Ian Howard who assisted with the interviews, attracted a fairly wide field of applicants. Only two, however, were deemed suitable. An anonymous person from London and Andrew Nairne. Both were interviewed by Andrea Stark, Ian Howard and Councillor Andrew Lynch, convener of Arts & Heritage. All three having attended meetings alongside Nairne throughout the planning and development of the city arts centre project. No wonder conspiracy theories multiplied.

His previous record working in an arts centre as Exhibitions Director in the Third Eye Centre is peculiar to say the least. *Stoy Hayward*, Chartered Accountants, were appointed as administrator to investigate the accounting records for the fifteen months ending June 1991. This revealed a trading loss of £242,873 which compared to a reported profit of £4,618 as shown in the Management Accounts for the year ending 31st March 1991. In a written statement Stoy Hayward's Douglas Jackson said: "During the fifteen months prior to my appointment, the company's expenditure on the centre's cultural activities significantly exceeded its grant funding. (£220,100 from SAC and £15,000 from Glasgow District Council per annum). A balance sheet prepared by me on a going concern basis at 18th June 1991 showed an insolvent position with current assets at £106,000 from which to meet current liabilities at £578,000."

Stories of deliberately concealed travel receipts and personal extravagances abounded—someone had been spending money without due concern. Six members of the Board of Directors resigned and a chorus of rumours echoed around the art community of Scotland. Astonishingly, in his report Jackson said: "Subsequent enquiries showed that the company's ledgers and bank account had not been updated or reconciled since 31st March 1990 and therefore management accounting information presented to the Board after that date could not be relied upon."

The SAC provided "a dividend fund for the benefit of unsecured creditors". This amounted to £125,000 but of course SAC had to settle other 'accounts'. An unlikely scapegoat was found in Lindsay Gordon, the Visual Arts Director of SAC. He took SAC to an industrial tribunal and won his case of unfair dismissal. In an opportunistic move, Andrew Nairne applied for and was given Gordon's vacant office. There he stayed until destiny called in Dundee, The City of Discovery.

Nairne took up his Dundee post in May 1997 and according to the *Pieda* Business Plan was to receive a salary of £21,740. But then at this time the company with responsibility for the operation of the galleries, print studio, cinemas and cafe franchise was to be named Dundee Visual Arts Ltd. Later the word 'Visual' was to be replaced by 'Contemporary', a trade name to describe a hybrid, homogenised artform that often denies its cultural origins.

### 1999

It is premature to judge how DCA Ltd might fulfil its own remit in the Business Plan because it is not scheduled to open until March of this year. However, we can assess its character on the evidence of what has emerged in this story. After a period of consultation followed by a duplicitous development (when artists were not informed as to what was being discussed behind closed doors) a partnership representing the interests of powerful organisations within Dundee, with the complicity of SAC, railroaded through a vision that failed to address the needs of local artists. The resulting institution will enhance the career prospects of those who were directly responsible for its development and further the careers and status of an exclusive minority who operate within its

studios and laboratories.

DCA's internal hierarchy is based upon the assumption that the 'best' art is produced by those with an art college training. It fails, therefore, to acknowledge that some of the 'best' art of the 20th Century was produced by artists who were outside of this self-acclaimed elite. Academic research during the last fifty years has shown that there is an equality within art which DCA's philosophy denies. Instead of commencing from the basis that all artists are equal it imposes a pyramidal power structure onto art, at the top of which are the staff of DoJ. Local artists will provide a workforce for the facilities within the institution and perform outreach and educational roles. That the exhibition policy excludes locally-based artists on the assumption that their work would not attract tourists speaks for itself.

That the welfare and interests of the local community of artists was sacrificed by DCA's perspicacious and career-blinded developers in favour of a corporate vision is obvious by the way they refused to accommodate the city's largest grouping of amateur and professional photographers (the Dundee Photographic Society) who have been promoting the medium (and the city) since 1880. The photography darkrooms are geared to service the requirements of printmakers and not necessarily individualistic photographers.

The absence of a creche is a blatant denial of the existence of women artists with young children. These artists are the most vulnerable in terms of the struggle to create. Without a caring support structure many simply give up. That the developers represented a white Christian majority within a city of a diverse

cultural blend must also be noted.

Despite all the rhetorical devices employed to secure funding the keystone to DCA's existence is its claim upon the territory of tourist and economic development. That Dundee University has 11,257 students plus staff on campus and contributes approximately £10m to the city's economy is the central reason why it was invited to join the arts centre partnership. Not only is its rent of around £70,000 per annum and its initial investment of £197,000 crucial to the building's economic viability but its staff and students will produce the art component, provide an audience for events, and help staff the facilities.

There has always been an unhealthy umbilical connection between art groups in Dundee and DoJ as mother figure. Such symbiosis has not assisted a truly independent art scene with sufficient cultural distance from 'mother' to make radical and original art. Now that DoJ has secured an even stronger position within the heart of the city and within the very citadel of art production which also houses two public art bodies, the art cinema, and the DCC's Arts and Heritage offices, there is absolutely no cultural distance whatsoever between state run institutions and art.

The state has the controlling influence on art in Dundee and this does not bode well for a culture that is taking its first steps towards independence. That the state is so firmly behind the construction of DCA as a "unique cultural institution" with links to similar hi-tech institutions in Europe reflects New Labour's millennialist vision for the 21st Century rather than a more modest and fundamental solution as proposed by Dundee-based artists. With New Labour's aspira-

tion influencing Lottery funded projects, which tend towards over-excessive schemes requiring vast sums to maintain and operate at the tax payers' expense, there is a danger that those sectors of the community most in need will be disenfranchised and alienated. This state of affairs being exemplified in Dundee where individualistic and self-taught artists will shy clear of DCA because it has little or nothing to offer them.

Not only has the original notion of an arts centre, independent of DoJ and serving, first and foremost the interests of the local community of artists, been lost but the very name 'arts centre' has gone from this new institution's corporate logo. The building is now called Dundee Contemporary Arts (DCA) and a pale, electric blue neon sign, visible from the waterfront and railway approaches to the city, advertises it as such.

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