



Press Release

For immediate release

Film and photography heritage of East London revealed thanks to National Lottery support

Four Corners is delighted to announce its new archive project, which is made possible by a generous grant of £100,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF).

The project will explore and document the heritage of film and photographic work of Four Corners and Camerawork that flourished in Bethnal Green, East London from the 1970s.

An extensive public programme will provide access to this history for the first time, offering screenings, talks, study days and a final exhibition. Volunteers will gain skills in archive research, digitization and oral history techniques; record the memories of early participants and help collate archival material.

This project marks the 40th anniversary of Four Corners in East London, and 40 years since the first issue of *Camerawork* magazine. It will create a lasting account of Four Corners' early work within independent filmmaking, and Camerawork's unique contribution to photographic practice; bringing unique archival resources into the public realm to make this important contribution to British cultural history widely accessible.

Lorraine Leeson, Chair of Four Corners said: *"I am delighted that this significant work will at last be documented and made available to the wider public. The impact that Four Corners and Camerawork had on the UK's independent film and photography sectors cannot be underestimated."*

Stuart Hopley, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund London, said: *"Thanks to National Lottery players, this exciting project will explore and digitise an archive of work relating to 1970s and 1980s East End film and photography. HLF is pleased to support Four Corners as it strives to make the British history of community-arts movements more accessible to audiences."*

Notes for editors

About Four Corners

Background

Four Corners was founded by four filmmakers - Joanna Davis, Mary Pat Leece, Ronald Peck and Wilf Thust, who came together to develop a new kind of independent filmmaking, to “bring films and filmmaking to those who had previously been excluded from the whole practice”. In Roman Road in 1976 they set up a film workshop and cinema, screening films to local audiences. Early films documented diverse communities: East End, working-class women, first generation Bangladeshis, people from London’s gay community. One of the earliest film workshops in Britain, it was part of a broad oppositional film culture that promoted ‘independent’ filmmaking.

The Half Moon Photography Workshop (later Camerawork) was created in East London by a cooperative of photographers in 1972. Wendy Ewald, Ron McCormick, Julia Meadows, Paul Trevor, Mike Goldwater, Tom Picton, Jo Spence and Terry Dennett, set up a gallery and workshop project with a strong emphasis on social documentary. They began publishing the highly influential *Camerawork* magazine in 1976, whose aim was to “demystify the process” of photography, and its innovative approach drew on the social and political upheavals of the time. HMPW also brought an extraordinary range of photography to UK and worldwide audiences through the use of innovative laminated touring shows.

From 1978 both organisations were based on Roman Road, just two doors apart. When Camerawork closed in 2000, Four Corners extended its remit to cover photography, with a successful tender to the Arts Council to run the photographic resource. Today Four Corners supports community-based learning, production and exhibition in both film and photography.

Project

The project runs over two years from autumn 2016, comprising:

1. Public programme of screenings, talks, study days, and exhibition.
2. Oral history project with early participants.
3. Online archive including digitization of the *Camerawork* magazine.
4. Volunteer programme with skills training in research, oral history, and darkroom printing.
5. Physical archive to be lodged at the Bishopsgate Institute.

Call out for material and oral history interviewees

Four Corners is seeking to meet and interview practitioners and participants who would be willing to share their memories, as well as offer access to collections of archival material for digitization and potential deposit at the Bishopsgate Institute.

Volunteers

Four Corners is looking for volunteers who would be interested in participating in the project at many levels, including research, cataloguing, oral history recording, and a wide range of related activities.

Further information contact: info@fourcornersfilm.co.uk

About the Heritage Lottery Fund

Thanks to National Lottery players, we invest money to help people across the UK explore, enjoy and protect the heritage they care about - from the archaeology under our feet to the historic parks and buildings we love, from precious memories and collections to rare wildlife. www.hlf.org.uk @heritagelottery

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