



## ARTISTIC EVALUATION

It should be noted the views expressed in this evaluation are intended to represent, as far as possible, an objective aesthetic judgement. Specialist advisors and officers should avoid making judgements based on their own personal tastes and preferences.

<b>Artist/Company:</b>	<b>Jenna Watt (Arches Live)</b>
<b>Venue:</b>	<b>The Arches</b>
<b>Title of Event:</b>	<b>Little Vikings Are Never Lost</b>
<b>Type of Event:</b>	<b>Theatre</b>
<b>Date of Visit:</b>	<b>19<sup>th</sup> September 2008</b>
<b>Overall Rating:</b>	<b>Good</b>

This was an extremely engaging performance. It was quirky charming, warm and witty; and at times, really quite moving. Though described as an 'installation' it worked as a piece of narrative theatre; exploring a young person's strange world, frozen by bereavement, and the journey required to be taken to move on. It's playful and child-like design, a landscape of Scandinavian folk kitsch paraphernalia, was a delight.

Name: **Stewart Ennis** Date: 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2008 **Specialist Advisor**

This report has been commissioned by the Scottish Arts Council to evaluate the artistic quality of the production named above. It has been prepared by either a specialist Advisor, or an officer of the Scottish Arts Council, as indicated at the end of the form. The report will be circulated to the organisation which produced the work and to the management of the venue, if the venue is core funded by the Scottish Arts Council.

The report will form evidence for the Artistic Leadership and Public Engagement sections of the Quality Framework and be taken into account in assessing the work of the producing company in relation to applications for funding to the Scottish Arts Council. It may also be used by the Joint Board to report on the overall performance of its funded organisations.

**Evaluators should enter their rating under each section, explaining briefly their reason for the rating with reference to their comments under each section. Ratings should be given in accordance with the following:**

- 1 - Very Poor** – standard falls well below what is acceptable.
- 2 - Poor** – not attaining acceptable standards of conception or presentation.
- 3 - Competent** – routine rather than especially interesting.
- 4 - Good** – well conceived and executed
- 5 - Excellent** – conceived and executed to a high standard.

## 1. Artistic Assessment

Please evaluate the artistic quality of the event, with particular reference to the strengths and weaknesses of the following:

Artform	Criteria	Rating	Comments and key reasons for rating
All	Vision and imagination of work - Quality of ideas, skills in execution; if you've seen the work of this artist(s)/ company before, please comment on the comparison.	Excellent	There was real imagination and sense of collaboration at work here; with all members of the artistic team seeming to understand what the other desired. Music, design and performance were endlessly creative and nearly always confident. The piece had looseness about it, and was filled with quirky, strange and charming moments that were always in the service of the story being told.
All (if relevant)	Curatorial/ programming vision/ selection Please indicate how the event originated eg from the exhibiting/ producing organisation, artist-led or commissioned.	Excellent	This artist led piece was part of Arches Live and fitted extremely well into this event. Arches Live encourages boldness and experimentation and this production certainly feels like one that will develop and grow.
All	Success of event against stated aims - in the programme or other printed material, including how well it communicated the artistic themes.  Education events – see <sup>1</sup> below for guidance	Excellent	Watts programme describes “beautiful landscapes, somewhere that was like home but not actually home”. It talks of a desire for her “installation to be playful, inspiring and creative” and for her “characters imagination to be spilt all over the floor.” All in all, it feels that Watts knew exactly where she wanted to go; and got there. As stated above, it will be fascinating to see how this piece develops and grows.
All	Performers/tutors - technical standard, performance skills and ability to communicate and engage.	Excellent	Jemma Watt is a very warm and engaging performer. Her performance style is relaxed and charmingly conspiratorial. Her journey from child-like playground performer, groping for words and meaning, frozen by grief; to the adult who must confront and move on, was believable and moving.
Dance, Theatre	Choreography/Use of choreography - originality, use of space, number and use of dancers, length of piece, etc	N/A	
Theatre	Script – particularly in relation to new work or second productions. Relevant to classics where the original has been substantially changed.	Good	There was some lovely writing here in Watts, strange, witty and moving journey. It's initial stuttering, stumbling, awkwardness, went hand in glove with her character- fingers grasping for meaning- and her playing style; and also the design and soundscape that supported it.
Theatre, Dance	Direction - Concerns issues of interpretation, casting and presentation.	Good	In keeping with the child-like playfulness of the piece, the direction was open and free; though the later part of the piece could perhaps have been tighter. It would be interesting to see how this piece develops in the future. But for the most part, the looseness, and constant inventiveness of the piece,

<sup>1</sup> Education is a bridge between artform excellence and increased access and participation, and it is people centred. Providing opportunities for learning and progressing in an artform or using an artform to address other, non-artistic, outcomes are equally valid; in either case a high quality strategic approach is required in order to benefit the participants and the organisation. Delivery can be through workshops, post/pre-show discussions, outreach work, etc aimed at any age group.

Artform	Criteria	Rating	Comments and key reasons for rating
			worked well; and Watts pleasure in playing on her kitsch, Scandinavian landscape set, was tangible, a pleasure shared by the audience.
Dance, Theatre	Use of music – appropriateness and effect of sound or music (whole/part, live/ recorded) to the production.	Excellent	The music and sound design by Greig Sinclair was extremely effective and added enormously to the atmosphere and playfulness of the piece. The experimentation in acoustics with the toy mechanical music box movements was particularly engaging.
Dance, Theatre	Design – costume, set, lighting. Take into account how appropriate the design is in relation to the venue and, where appropriate, the touring schedule.	Excellent	The design by Katy Wilson was absolutely vital to the success of this piece. As stated above, Watt's programme describes this as an 'installation' and this is apt. The detail paid to the 'Moomin-esque' Scandinavian landscape of colour coordinated folk-kitsch paraphernalia, was extraordinary and delightful. The playfulness of the production was perfectly complimented by this charming designer playground.
All	Quality of Presentation/Engagement  Performing Arts - technical presentation of the production (eg lighting and sound cues, etc).	Good	Technically, everything seemed to be presented to a high professional level. There appeared to be a couple of odd UV lighting moments but generally this was a low tech show; and that in itself, was a source of its charm.
All	Audience  Performing Arts - appropriateness of the production for the audience/participants; estimate the size and reaction		The practice room of the Arches was full and the audience appeared completely engaged with this production throughout; responding well to its humour and warmth.
All	Additional Interpretative activity – what activities were available to enhance the experience of the event eg workshops, artist's talks, discussion groups? Please indicate age-groups targeted.	N/A	
All	Outcomes of education activity – what learning/skills development took place? What did participants take away with them? Are education resources being provided for follow up work? Is it strategically linked to the curriculum (formal or informal)?	N/A	

## 2. Management of Event

*Please evaluate the way the event was presented/organised by the organisation and the venue, with reference to the checklist below, including additional comments/observations. Please try to view the venue and the services, and interpretative material as though you had never visited it before eg if you did not know the venue's location, how easy would it be to find your way there, and to find your way around once you had arrived?*

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Suitability of the venue for the event	The practice room of the Arches was perfectly suited to this show.
Information/ interpretive material at venue - programmes, displays etc.	The Arches brochure and the accompanying A4 programme was perfectly adequate.
Publicity/ pre-publicity – leaflets, posters, websites, etc. What is produced, is it easy to understand and where can you get the information? Please be alert to the publicity available prior to your visit to the event and comment on the company/organisation's website.	Arches print and web based brochure was informative and easy to negotiate.
Ease of booking and payment	Booking at the door was not a problem.
Location of venue – eg is it easy to find? Is it on a main transport route?	Very easy to get to by a variety of means.
External signage and signposting	Adequate.
Internal directional signage	Adequate.
Access and provision for disabled people – what can you see?	From what I could see, this was adequate: lifts available and toilets on both levels.
Timing of the event – was the length appropriate? Did the start and finish time seem to be appropriate for the audience?	Seemed quite appropriate.
Customer service - quality and efficiency of staff (e.g. box office, front of house, bar and/or catering)	Good, helpful and friendly.
Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council Funding <sup>2</sup>	SAC acknowledged where appropriate.

<sup>2</sup> In press releases, at launches, on all published materials (including leaflets, brochures, programmes, posters, company's website, notices display, exhibition materials, websites and advertising, recordings, publications, video, broadcasts, computer programmes etc.) Where the event is publicised in the programme brochure of another organisation (eg venue, gallery, etc) then SAC acknowledgement should appear against the particular programme entry for this event.

**3. Organisation's Comments (optional)**

This is the organisation's opportunity to respond to points raised within this assessment. Please do not feel obliged to fill this section in. In the spirit of the Quality Framework, we would ask that any comments are self-evaluating, providing an insight as to why, if there is, a major disagreement of response between the organisation and the evaluation, in a constructive way.

This will not alter the rating given by the assessment, but will allow the organisation the opportunity to give their opinion/feedback. The Scottish Arts Council reserves the right to edit comments if they are deemed to be libellous or defamatory.

As the Scottish Arts Council implements the Quality Framework internally, we intend to publish artistic evaluations on organisations that we support regularly on our website. The final artistic evaluation, including the organisation's response will be published on a quarterly basis on our website.

Please keep your response to max 500 words. If we do not hear from you in 15 days, we will assume that you do not want to respond.