



ARTISTIC EVALUATION

This evaluation is intended to represent an objective aesthetic judgement. **Specialist advisors and officers should avoid making judgements based on their own personal tastes and preferences wherever possible.**

Artist/Company: North Lands Creative Glass

Venue: North Lands Creative Glass, Lybster, Caithness

Title of Event : 13th Annual Conference 'Colour and Transparency'

Type of Event: conference

Date of Visit: 4th - 6th September 2009

Overall Rating: Excellent

Name: Elizabeth Swinburne

Date: 9th September 2009

Scottish Arts Council Officer

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 on 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 future 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:

Very poor- standard falls well below what is acceptable.

Poor - not well conceived and executed

Satisfactory

Good - well conceived and executed

Very Good – well conceived and executed to a very good standard

Excellent – Inspiring and executed to an exceptionally 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 | <p>Vision and imagination of work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality of ideas if you have seen other work of this artist(s)/ company before, please comment on any relevant comparisons | Very good | <p>This year's conference had a classic theme and was programmed with leading international practitioners. As in previous years the selected speakers came not only from the field of glass, but also provided the opportunity for the attendees to experience how 'colour' was addressed in other areas, namely textiles, fashion and fine art painting. This provided some interesting insights for the audience.</p> <p>There was a sense that perhaps the selection was a rather predictable response to the conference theme - with responses from the audience highlighting an appetite for the inclusion of input from a more scientific and or psychological background.</p> |
| All (if relevant) | <p>Curatorial/ programming vision/ selection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How does it fit within the artistic vision of the organisation? If the event is part of a Festival, please say how it contributes to the overall programme. | Exclnt. | <p>Obvious strong vision behind the programme, the selection of speakers and approach to the chosen conference theme. Absolutely inline with the organisations key aims of promoting excellence within the field</p> |
| All | <p>Success of event against stated aims of project and/or performance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How does it relate to information contained in the programme, the website or other printed material? How well did it communicate the artistic themes? How did the event originate eg from the exhibiting/ producing organisation, from the artist or from commission? <p>Education events – see ¹below for definition</p> | Exclnt. | <p>Following the death of Prof. Dan Klein, founding director and current Artistic Director, this was potentially a traumatic/difficult conference for NLCG. However, as would be expected the organisation presented an extremely professional event that delivered its usual warm and inclusive atmosphere. This was an excellent conference that stimulated lively debate and questions at every opportunity.</p> |
| All | <p>Performers/tutors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is the expertise of the performers? Where performers are amateur, please reflect this in your comments. How successfully did the performer(s) communicate with and engage the audience? In your view, was an artist as a tutor key to the success of the workshop? | Exclnt. | <p>All lecturers were from the very top of their professions, they were generous with their experience and in the most part delivered their presentations in extremely clear and stimulating ways. The audience responded well to the range of speakers, with most talks eliciting questions and debate.</p> <p>The presentations were greatly assisted by the use of a professional audio system. All speakers used microphones and further supported by a professional team. Both digital and slide presentations were almost seamlessly handled.</p> |

¹ 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 |
|----------------|--|---------|---|
| Dance, Theatre | Choreography/Use of choreography <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was the work original? • How was the space used? • How many dancers were there and how were they used? • How long was the piece? | | n/a |
| Theatre | Script Please comment on this for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • new work • second productions • classics where the original has been substantially changed | | n/a |
| Theatre, Dance | Direction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was the work well interpreted? • Was it well cast? • Was it well presented? | | n/a |
| Dance, Theatre | Use of music <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did the music/ sound used enhance the production? • Is it live or recorded? | | n/a |
| Dance, Theatre | Design <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How were the costumes, set and lighting? • How did it work in the venue? • Was it technically proficient? (eg lighting and sound cues, etc). | | n/a |
| All | Quality of Public Engagement Performing Arts/Education - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was the production/event targeted at a particular audience? • Was the production /event appropriate for the audience/participants? • Were you/ engaged/inspired? • Did the audience/ participants appear to be engaged/inspired? • What was their response? • Approximately how many people were there? • Did there appear to be a broad mix of people – age, cultural diversity or disabled? • Are BSL/captioned/audio described performances offered as part of the run/tour/? If so how many? • What activities or supporting materials were available to enhance the experience of the event eg workshops, artist's talks, discussion groups programmes, on line info? • Were these targeted at specific age groups? Education/learning events: In addition, please provide comments on the following (if appropriate): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How was it taught/led eg one to one, group, child centred? • What was the composition of the participant group – age range, gender mix? • Is it strategically linked to the | Exclnt. | <p>There were approx. 75 attendees at this year's conference, this number includes staff, board members and participating artists. General feeling was that the audience was comprised of a fairly focussed age and cultural range. It included: students, established artists, curators and other related professionals, with generally an older age profile. With many participants being regular attendees. The current economic climate is perhaps resulting in a reduced number of students and international attendees. As far as I was aware there were no disabled attendees.</p> <p>Lively, friendly discussions would attest to the engagement of the majority of the audience. For myself, I found the first day of the conference particularly interesting with the second day perhaps suffering from several rather less engaging talks.</p> <p>Attendees were presented with a conference pack that included the conference programme, questionnaire and information about local artists and attractions. Throughout the conference there were also tables at the back of the venue with additional related information i.e. catalogues, other organisations' application forms. There were also display boards in the entrance hall which showed images from the recent master classes and other information about NLCG. Glass from the collection was also displayed around the hall - it would have been interesting to know more about these works.</p> |

| Artform | Criteria | Rating | Comments and key reasons for rating |
|---------|--|--------|-------------------------------------|
| | <p>curriculum or national policy areas e.g. Early Years, Community Learning & Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What learning/skills development took place? • What was the quality of the art produced by the participants? • Did the workshop tutor have a teaching plan for the session and/or project? • How were participants recruited? • Did participants' views and choices help inform the structure and content of the project? <p>Crafts/Visual Arts Use of equipment, space and overall layout/hang?</p> | | |

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?

| Criteria | Comment |
|---|--|
| <p>Location and suitability of the venue for the event</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is it easy to find? • Is it on a main transport route? • Are the spaces clean? • What were the sight lines like? • How big was it? | <p>The major part of the conference was held in Lybster's local community hall, which I estimate could seat 100 people quite comfortably. This is a well lit, warm, clean and thoroughly adequate venue, that is in easy walking distance to accommodation and other venues. On Saturday use was also made of the hall's kitchen and small dining room with provision of an excellent lunch. Most attendees remained within the premises, which enabled good opportunity for further meetings and discussion. A further advantage was that it facilitated a prompt start after lunch and consequently an admirable sticking to the programme timetable. Sunday saw a rather more relaxed restart after lunch as participants had to make their way back from the Portland Arms Hotel.</p> <p>Opportunity was provided within the weekend programme to visit the NLGC studios and the local harbour visitors' centre and cafe both of which are excellent venues.</p> |
| <p>Information/ interpretive material at venue—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there programmes, posters and displays about the event? • Is there information on the venue's website? | <p>As before.</p> |

| Criteria | Comment | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|---|--|--------|--|--------|--------------------|----|-----------------------------------|-----|------------|-----|-----------|-----|--------------------|-----|--|----|
| <p>Publicity/ pre-publicity –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What leaflets, posters, websites, did you see the event listed in? • What publicity materials are produced? • Is it easy to understand? • Where can you get the information? • Is there Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council Funding ²? <p>Please be alert to the publicity available prior to your visit to the event and comment on the company/organisation's website.</p> | <p>The event was advertised widely within the associated national and international magazines. A coloured brochure that covers all the related master classes as well as the conference was sent to all on NLCG's extensive mailing list. The organisation would perhaps benefit from an update to their website. There also appeared to be little e-marketing than might be expected, with few links or references appearing on other organisation's sites. All publicity materials that I received or saw acknowledged SAC and other sponsors.</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <p>Ease of booking and payment</p> | <p>Straight forward, efficient. Accommodation was booked for me - all extremely effortless! Staff were helpful and thoughtful.</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <p>Timing of the event</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did the start and finish time seem to be appropriate for the audience? • Was the length appropriate? | <p>Given the remoteness of the venue this weekend format, with early start times seems to be extremely successful in making maximum use of people's time. However, the audience did seem to noticeably 'thin out' on Sunday afternoon. This could be linked to a need to make transport connections, perhaps some advantage could therefore be made of the Friday evening as it did appear that the majority of attendees were present then.</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <p>Signage and signposting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the entrance clearly marked? • Is there clear internal directional signage? • Is there Braille signage or signage for audio loops? | <p>We were provided with a very clear schematic map of the village with all relevant venues and markers indicated. The venues themselves were all clearly signposted/labelled as appropriate.</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <p>Access and provision for disabled people</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please insert yes/no in the boxes to reflect what you notice about the venue/event <p>Please add in any additional comments below the table</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How many BSL/captioned/audio described performances are there at the venue? | <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Yes/No</th> <th></th> <th>Yes/No</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>BSL interpretation</td> <td>no</td> <td>Audio description of performances</td> <td>n/a</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Captioning</td> <td>n/a</td> <td>Lift/ramp</td> <td>n/a</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Accessible toilets</td> <td>yes</td> <td>Accessible marketing materials eg website or alternative formats eg large print, Plain English</td> <td>no</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>The NLCG venues are in the main 'disability friendly' but little mention is made of this in the publicity material or website.</p> | | Yes/No | | Yes/No | BSL interpretation | no | Audio description of performances | n/a | Captioning | n/a | Lift/ramp | n/a | Accessible toilets | yes | Accessible marketing materials eg website or alternative formats eg large print, Plain English | no |
| | Yes/No | | Yes/No | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| BSL interpretation | no | Audio description of performances | n/a | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Captioning | n/a | Lift/ramp | n/a | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Accessible toilets | yes | Accessible marketing materials eg website or alternative formats eg large print, Plain English | no | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <p>Customer service</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How was the quality and | <p>All North Land's staff were extremely helpful and</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

² 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.

| Criteria | Comment |
|---|--|
| efficiency of staff (e.g. box office, front of house, bar and/or catering) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="156 241 539 358">• If possible, comment on how responsive they were to the needs of disabled customers? | efficient ensuring that the event ran seamlessly and helping to solve any individuals problems as and when they arose. |

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.