



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.

Artist/Company: n/a

Venue: Portfolio

Title of Event: Portfolio contemporary photography in Britain No. 45

Type of Event: *magazine*

Date of Visit: n/a

Overall Rating: 5 - excellent

(Please rate the event overall, taking into account your ratings for each section. Please state the key reasons for your overall ratings – i.e. the particular strengths and weaknesses. If the management of the event affects the overall enjoyment of the event, please comment, but the overall rating should be based on the artistic merit of the event.)

My overall rating is a 5. Portfolio has a superb quality of production from the reproduction of the photographs to the standard of writing.

Name: Jenny Brownrigg
Specialist Advisor

Date: 01 September 2007
Scottish Arts Council Officer

Please circle the relevant title

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	<p>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.</p>	5	<p>Fifteen practices are featured in Portfolio's Issue no.45, including Sze Tsung Leong, Paul Seawright, Susan Tragmar, Jane Brettle, Allora and Calzadilla and Peter Kennard and Cat Picton Phillipps. The high quality production of their images in this magazine does justice to the excellent quality of the work. I particularly enjoyed the variety of subject matter in this issue which for example, ranged from the re-presentation of the female form as viewed in key historical works is subverted by Jane Brettle in her series 'Beyond Black', where the appropriation of the pose and the viewer's gaze is countered by the figure's dress in a black niqab to the beauty of the luscious colour in Keith Arnatt's 'Pictures from a Rubbish Tip' which is at odds with the photographed subject matter of mouldy bread and a discarded half-eaten Victoria Sponge slice.</p>
All (if relevant)	<p>Curatorial/ programming vision/ selection Please indicate how the event originated eg from the exhibiting/ producing organisation, artist-led or commissioned.</p> <p>If the event is part of a Festival, please say how it contributes to the overall programme.</p>	5	<p>The diverse stable of writers that Portfolio has built makes for in-depth, informed essays and reviews on contemporary photography either made or shown in Britain. The balance of established and emerging artists is excellent. The promotion in this issue of Jerwood Photography Awards is also key to showing Portfolio's involvement in this project and their commitment to supporting emerging artists at an early stage. I also found it interesting that aswell as photography, the essays covered installation, video and performance that incorporates photography, with an essay on Jennifer Allora and Guillermo Calzadilla's video works and a text on the outcome of Steve McQueen's role as Uks official war artist with the artwork 'Queen and Country'. The breadth of choice in the artists covered in this issue is keenly attuned to what artists are relevant in this area of practice today, making it a highly desirable and relevant purchase in keeping up with this field. The pacing of the magazine articles overall made for a rewarding read – for example I enjoyed the segway of the first essay on Sze Tsung Leong who records the eradication of past histories of a city through the destruction of its architecture by those in power, moving into an essay on Paul Seawright's work which focuses on the changes made by people to the city through unplanned settlements. The extension of this theme into the choice of other artists in this issue who examine the debris of environments such as Tania Coates and her series of photographs 'Transient Topography', or Keith Arnatt's 'Pictures' from a Rubbish Tip, 1988', is nicely juxtaposed with the different kind of aesthetic beauty provided in the sequences of Liz Dracup's Sharpe's Wood or the topography of the top of the head in Veronika Spierenburg's MA Fine Art Class 2006.</p>

Artform	Criteria	Rating	Comments and key reasons for rating
			Portfolio is originated by the organisation.
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 ¹ below for guidance		n/a
All	Performers/tutors - technical standard, performance skills and ability to communicate and engage. Where performers are not trained, please reflect this in your comments.		n/a
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.		n/a
Theatre, Dance	Direction - Concerns issues of interpretation, casting and presentation.		n/a
Dance, Theatre	Use of music – appropriateness and effect of sound or music (whole/part, live/recorded) to the production.		n/a
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.		n/a
All	Quality of Presentation/Engagement Performing Arts - technical presentation of the production (eg lighting and sound cues, etc). Crafts/Visual Arts - Use of	5	Portfolio's high quality production does the artists' work justice with exhibition quality full colour and duotone reproductions of photographs. The magazine's distinctive design generously allows for an image a page for the main artists featured. Portfolio's flexible layout for example, in the case of the essay 'Susan Trangmar: A Question of Distance', allows for a sequence of stills to

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
	<p>equipment, space and overall layout/hang</p> <p>Education events - relevance/ appropriateness of presentation and teaching methodology (one to one, group, child centred); details of participant group and activity, including genre.</p>		<p>be juxtaposed with corresponding text from the scripted performance, and in doing so allows this section to resemble artists pages without disrupting the flow of the rest of the layout.</p>
All	<p>Audience</p> <p>Performing Arts - appropriateness of the production for the audience/participants; estimate the size and reaction</p> <p>Crafts/Visual Arts – time spent, interest, activity, and visitors' books comments, number of visitors/ participants at the time of visit</p> <p>Education/learning – pre-event involvement, participants/ schoolteachers reaction, understanding, commitment, enthusiasm, number involved, etc</p>		<p>Portfolio is targeted at a national and international market of arts professionals, artists and those interested in contemporary photography.</p>
All	<p>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.</p>		n/a
All	<p>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)?</p>		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?

Criteria	Comment
Suitability of the venue for the event	Portfolio is highly suitable as a magazine for contemporary art photography, from its choice of writers, analysis of current practice in the field, and high-spec production values.
Information/ interpretive material at venue - programmes, displays etc.	The writers for Issue 45- Nigel Warburton, Christopher Pinney, Susan Butler, Catherine Grant, Martin Parr, John Slyce and Stella Santacatterina all provide excellent analysis and insight on the artists covered in their essays and reviews. I particularly enjoyed Nigel Warburton's informative text on Sze Tsung Leong, who's work records the erasure of architectural histories of China's cities in the drive for redevelopment. The analysis of the works moves from inciteful description to a subtle examination of the wider issues of power, human cost, development of a society and erasure of history. Warburton also allows for the voice of the artist himself to have a place in the essay. Martin Parr revisiting Keith Arnatt's 'Pictures from a rubbish tip, 1988', acts as an intriguing re-visitation of an important series.
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.	Portfolio launched this issue at Photo London on 31 May, with full page advertisement in the Photo London catalogue. We also produced 30,000 copies of a new subscription leaflet (4pp size A5 in full colour) which carries coverage of the new issue, plus back issues. In addition, Rhubarb, Rhubarb (the international meeting place for photographers each year) distributes these leaflets to participants as well as on the weekend itself.
Ease of booking and payment	Subscription information is clear on page 2 of magazine and on the website.
Location of venue – eg is it easy to find? Is it on a main transport route?	n/a
External signage and signposting	n/a
Internal directional signage	n/a
Access and provision for disabled people – what can you see?	n/a
Timing of the event – was the length appropriate? Did the start and finish time seem to be appropriate for the audience?	Portfolio is a bi-annual publication which is appropriate for the market and for the nature of the publication.
Customer service - quality and efficiency of staff (e.g. box office, front of house, bar and/or catering)	n/a
Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council Funding ²	Scottish Arts Council is acknowledged on all print

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.

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.