



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: Portfolio Magazine (Contemporary Photography in Britain)

Venue: n/a

Title of Event: Magazine issue number 45

Type of Event: Review of magazine

Date of Visit: n/a

Overall Rating: 4 - Good

(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.)

This is a publication of the highest quality, focussing on innovative photographic practice by UK and other artists from around the world. The reproduction of the photographic work is of the highest quality and the related writing and criticism is informative, engaging and accessible. The layout and typography of the magazine is clean and crisp and is reminiscent of an exhibition catalogue/monograph, making it a pleasure to read and return to many times over. It's also refreshing to read and look at a high quality art publication such as this without having to delve through reams of adverts for designer handbags and sunglasses. An art magazine about art, not 'lifestyle'. Now that is refreshing.

Whilst not explicitly requested to review the related Portfolio website, I do feel that there could be a marked improvement in the website. This could bring significant 'added value' to the content, marketing and credibility of the printed publication.

Name: Stephen Beddoe **Date:** 9 September 2007

Specialist Advisor 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	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.	4	High quality of photography showcased, reviewed and critiqued in this publication. In-depth, critical and enjoyable related written pieces that do not seem inaccessible to the 'general' reader, whilst being useful to the specialist reader.
All (if relevant)	Curatorial/ programming vision/ selection Please indicate how the event originated eg from the exhibiting/ producing organisation, artist-led or commissioned. If the event is part of a Festival, please say how it contributes to the overall programme.	4	The editorial/curatorial approach is rigorous and wide-ranging, incorporating and highlighting current issues and ideas in lens-based practice in both the UK and internationally. Reproduction and design values of the highest standard, to reflect the detail and complexity of the work on show and written about.
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	4	A critical and crucial specialist publication which should be applauded and supported when many such specialist art publications resort to a peripheral engagement with pop culture issues.
All	Performers/tutors - technical standard, performance skills and ability to communicate and engage. Where performers are not trained, please reflect this in your comments.	4	Impressively high reproduction in this publication, enhancing the quality of work shown and written about.
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

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	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	<p>Quality of Presentation/Engagement</p> <p>Performing Arts - technical presentation of the production (eg lighting and sound cues, etc).</p> <p>Crafts/Visual Arts - Use of 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>	5	Extremely high quality of design, print, presentation, reproduction and writing. All together enhances this specialist publication for contemporary photographers in the UK and internationally.
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>	4	A publication to engage, enjoy and revisit for academic and professional reasons. No information has been supplied as to circulation numbers, but a publication such as this is important to artists, academics and writers.
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.		See comments below regarding Portfolio website.
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)?		Not applicable.

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	n/a
Information/ interpretive material at venue - programmes, displays etc.	n/a
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.	Website After the quality of the publication, I was disappointed with the layout and content of the website. Navigation was difficult (i.e. the 'Home' button is located at the bottom of very long pages). At the moment, the website seems little more than a sales point for current and back issues and the artists' archive. There is scope to improve the related website offer beyond the current basic information/subscription and artist/article archive (i.e.user-generated content and comment etc). This may be due to lack of resources. However, whilst the photographic images online are reproduced as well as possible (online), a publication of this quality should really have an online presence to complement (and enhance) the high quality of its printed matter.
Ease of booking and payment	n/a
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?	n/a
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	yes

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.