



Scottish Arts Council

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: Art Trek Artists Ltd.

Venue: Projects Ability, Glasgow

Title of Event: *Magical Landscapes* an exhibition of new work by Art Trek Artists

Type of Event: Exhibition

Date of Visit: 21 September 2007

Overall Rating: Excellent - 5

(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.)

summary

The *Magical Landscapes* project is providing a high level of creative achievement for Art Trek artists. Individual care and tutorial guidance from Project Ability staff and freelance artists enables Art Trek to take part in drawing projects and research visits to a number of external locations in Glasgow. This helps the artists further develop professional experience and promotes Project Ability's work and programme with other arts organisations and social agencies. Project Ability's move to Trongate 103 in 2009 will give further opportunity to develop this programme in association with other 'mainstream' arts providers.

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Date: 26.09.2007

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	Art Trek Artists Ltd. is a charitable visual arts enterprise set up in 1997 in association with Project Ability by five artists with learning disabilities: John Coccozza, Edward Henry, Tommy Mason, Cameron Morgan and Steven Reilly. The exhibition presented works painted at wasps studios following a series of drawing/research visits to urban, architectural and natural landscapes in Glasgow. The power and presence of the work was complemented by the enthusiasm, pride and high level of achievement recognised when talking with the artists about the project during the evaluation visit. The strength of the work was aided by serious and site-specific objective study within Glasgow University, the Botanic Gardens, Kelvin Walkway, Kibble Palace or <i>Not the Garden of Eden</i> . Observed, collected drawings and sketches were later developed into acrylic or oil paintings on canvas to promote for example architectural form, horticultural vitality, the tracery and structure of glass house ferns, the graphic growth pattern of cacti spikes and a few remembered memories of travelling on the number 37 bus.
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.	Excellent	Paintings for the exhibition were selected by the artists assisted by Elizabeth Gibson, Project Ability's Artistic Director with project support by freelance artist Valerie O'Regan. Additional works in (limited edition) print and postcard form could be seen and purchased in the entrance foyer. The link with wasps studios enabled the artists to further develop professional experience. This was achieved also with Glasgow Print Studio and Transmission Gallery. Project Ability's planned move to Trongate 103 will further integrate the work of special interest groups into 'mainstream' arts provision and facilities. <i>Magical Landscapes</i> is recognised as an important part of Project Ability's exhibition, workshop, studio and outreach programme. Project Ability provides Art Trek with artistic and administrative support and access to studio space. Art Trek artists create, exhibit and sell work and have extensive experience as workshop facilitators. The artists are regularly invited to show their artwork in different exhibition venues for example at Theatre Workshop in Edinburgh, at ICI in London and to talk at conferences in the UK and throughout Europe.
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	Excellent	<i>Art Trek demonstrates how people with learning disabilities can succeed in a professional arts environment and contribute to the cultural and social life of their community.</i> In conversation with three of the five Art Trek artists during the evaluation visit it was very evident that the partnership of care and support provided by Project Ability and other visual arts organisations in Glasgow is enabling the artists to gain a high level of personal creative achievement. The natural and built environmental theme of the <i>Magical Landscapes</i> project provides an external reference point for research and enquiry and gives opportunity for each artist to explore individual association with places near to where they live.
All	Performers/tutors - technical standard, performance skills and ability to communicate and engage. Where performers are not trained, please reflect this in your comments.	Excellent	The care network with Project Ability staff and freelance artists is acknowledged here by way of report and to recognise how each Art Trek artist is helped to develop their own artistic ability, benefit from professional tuition and gain confidence in expressing themselves from taking part in collaborative projects.

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 - originality, use of space, number and use of dancers, length of piece, etc		
Theatre	Script – particularly in relation to new work or second productions. Relevant to classics where the original has been substantially changed.		
Theatre, Dance	Direction - Concerns issues of interpretation, casting and presentation.		
Dance, Theatre	Use of music – appropriateness and effect of sound or music (whole/part, live/recorded) to the production.		
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.		
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>	Good	Project Ability's offices, workshops, studios and exhibition spaces are situated on the third floor of the Centre for Developmental Arts on Albion Street in the Merchants City district of Glasgow city centre. This upper level, on one level is accessible by lift and main staircase. <i>Magical Landscapes</i> was presented in Gallery 1 immediately adjacent to the entrance, reception and foyer areas. This open, welcoming, accessible, adjustable exhibition space, is well lit by both natural and display spotlight. Good sized and proportioned display walls offer a direct fix method of presentation of large paintings; a few structural support columns interrupt certain sight lines. A small, edited collection of wall-based works was professionally well hung and presented.
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>		208 people visited the exhibition in Glasgow between 3 August and 22 September. <i>Magical Landscapes 2</i> was presented in Edinburgh from 9-26 August during Theatre Workshop's 'degenerate4 Festival' as part of the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. A third <i>Magical Landscape</i> exhibition will open in the Linthouse Urban Village Gallery in Govan from 12 to 26 October 2007. Very few comments had been written in the visitor's book at the time of visit.
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.	Good	Art Trek Artists work regularly in the studios and workshops at Project Ability. This gives good and regular opportunity for inter-action between Art Trek Artists and other artists using the studios, participating in weekly workshop events and also visitors from other countries – a group of clients and their carers from Denmark were visiting Project Ability on 21.09.07.

Artform	Criteria	Rating	Comments and key reasons for rating
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>	Good	<p>A distinction of the <i>Magical Landscapes</i> project is the opportunity it gives to Art Trek artists to take part in organised drawing/research visits to places of historic, cultural and landscape interest. It gives tuition, care provision, access and a supported itinerary to enable artists to take part in local, national and international arts events, meet and share skills with other people and groups e.g. the Phoenix Resource Centre in Rothesay, a project focused on creating artwork inspired by the landscape, historical landmarks and cultural resources on the Isle of Bute.</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
Suitability of the venue for the event	Project Ability was a suitable and appropriate venue for the exhibition. It is the main studio and workshop base of the five artist members of Art Trek Ltd and in terms of artistic production, the principle support network to assist in the making of artworks.
Information/ interpretive material at venue - programmes, displays etc.	Full colour posters and leaflets with background information about the exhibition and Art Trek were available and on display at Project Ability together with postcards and prints.
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.	<p>The exhibition <i>Magical Landscapes</i> has high profile on Project Ability's website with background information and illustrations. The development of Art Trek from 1997 is profiled on the website with a broad range of programme detail, corporate information and annual reviews posted from 2005-2007. This gives a helpful context to the status and objectives of the organisation which <i>strives to create a more equal society by changing public perceptions of disabled people</i>.</p> <p>The range and quality of Project Ability's printed publicity material, the clarity of the organisation's strategic objectives, its' external profile and outreach programme, the 'marketing' of its work in partnership with a range of cultural, educational and social agencies can be acknowledged from information on this website. It can be judged also from recognising the profile given to the <i>Magical Landscapes</i> exhibition in (mainstream) events, for example the Merchant City Festival held in September 2007 as promoted in the Festival Guide.</p> <p>A review feature about the exhibition <i>Magical Landscapes</i> appeared in the 16 August edition of <i>The Glaswegian</i>.</p>
Ease of booking and payment	
Location of venue – eg is it easy to find? Is it on a main transport route?	Project Ability is located in the centre of Glasgow, within the Merchant City and (growing) cultural quarter. It will re-locate to Trongate 103 in 2009.
External signage and signposting	Visible at street level on Albion Street.
Internal directional signage	Good
Access and provision for disabled people – what can you see?	Good
Timing of the event – was the length appropriate? Did the start and finish time seem to be appropriate for the audience?	
Customer service - quality and efficiency of staff (e.g. box office, front of house, bar and/or catering)	Excellent
Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council Funding ²	Visible on all main exhibition material, guides and website.

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.