



## 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>Project Ability</b>
<b>Venue:</b>	<b>Project Ability</b>
<b>Title of Event:</b>	<b>Mental Image</b>
<b>Type of Event:</b>	<b>International open submission exhibition, exploring mental health, with work by 44 artists.</b>
<b>Date of Visit:</b>	<b>17 October 2007</b>
<b>Overall Rating:</b>	<b>Excellent - 5</b>

*(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 an exhibition exploring mental health, with 56 works in various media, selected from an international open submission. Some of the work is by artists who have been supported by Project Ability's workshop and studio programme. There are clearly challenges in creating a coherent sense from any open submission, and some of the work is naive, and might elsewhere be judged 'outsider', while other works are by professional artists, confident with the language of contemporary art practice. The exhibition capitalises on the diversity of artists and work, and offers a provocative and emotional experience. There could have been more information about the selection process, and about some of the artists and the works; I thought there was some very interesting work, that I'd have liked to read more about, considered as 'art', and not simply as reflecting the theme.

Name: Gary ThomasDate: 5 / 11 / 2007

Specialist Advisor

*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	The 56 works were selected from an open submission, and includes work by experienced and emergent artists, alongside self-taught artists who have never exhibited. There is inevitably a wide range of approach, and varying skills and quality of execution. The impact, however, was, consistently high.
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	It feels as though selection has been made with criteria that address each work on its own terms, and I think the exhibition very successfully avoids the pitfalls of categorisation. It's a non-hierarchical, open approach, and the result is a strong, diverse and provocative selection of work. The hang made sense, and there were some interesting juxtapositions.
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	4	It's a strong show, and achieves the ambition to explore its theme of mental health. But it could perhaps communicate its 'artistic' themes more effectively, maybe through more detailed captioning or an exhibition guide, with information about the artists, and some interpretation. I realise that this is partly dependent on resources, but even as an open submission show, there has been a curatorial process, and I'd be interested in what the curator had to say about their selection.
All	Performers/tutors - technical standard, performance skills and ability to communicate and engage.  Where performers are not trained, please reflect this in your comments.		
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.		

<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
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><b>Quality of Presentation/Engagement</b></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>	4	The exhibition is very well presented and installed. There are several video works, well presented, on good quality monitors, and everything was working when I attended.
All	<p><b>Audience</b></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>	3	This was the fourth day after opening, and a visitors' book had three pages of very enthusiastic comments. There was no one else viewing the exhibition when I was there (a Wednesday afternoon).
All	<p><b>Additional Interpretative activity</b> – what activities were available to enhance the experience of the event eg workshops, artist's talks, discussion groups? Please indicate age-groups targeted.</p>	3	Four artist talks/screenings are being presented during the exhibition, and a series of four writing workshops, in response to work in the show, plus a public reading event. I think they must be targeted at adults.
All	<p><b>Outcomes of education activity</b> – 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>		

## 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	The exhibition is in two spaces – a delineated space within Project Ability's reception/office space, and a gallery room at the studio/workshop premises across the hall. The contextual value that comes from staging the exhibition alongside the CDA administration space is a bit offset by making the context feel slightly institutional, especially when the second space benefits from being in Trongate Studios.
Information/ interpretive material at venue - programmes, displays etc.	A 26 minute video, with interviews with several of the artists in the exhibition, was playing on a monitor in Gallery 2. It's well made and interesting; a couple of chairs might encourage people to stay and watch. The only writing about the exhibition is the press release. This doesn't do the project justice – it describes the call and response, and quotes one of the artists, but only in relation to the show as being useful in conveying something of the experience of mental health problems. Whereas I think the exhibition is a good example of a project that goes beyond just representing experience.
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.	There is readily accessible information about the exhibition and related activities on the Project Ability website. The site is somewhat functional, and I think there's scope for some thought as to its design and function, particularly in relation to the exhibition programme. Images of work, for example, aren't captioned.
Ease of booking and payment	n/a
Location of venue – eg is it easy to find? Is it on a main transport route?	You need to know which street it's on, but once on the street, it's easy to locate the entrance.
External signage and signposting	The gallery is within Project Ability's premises/studios, on the 3rd floor of a shared building. There isn't large signage outside, but there is clear signage at the door, that can be seen from across the street.
Internal directional signage	Inside, though it's just A4 photocopies, the signage directs you efficiently enough.
Access and provision for disabled people – what can you see?	There's flat access and a lift.
Timing of the event – was the length appropriate? Did the start and finish time seem to be appropriate for the audience?	It's open 10 – 5, weekdays.
Customer service - quality and efficiency of staff (e.g. box office, front of house, bar and/or catering)	There was no one around, but it's easy to find your way around.
Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council Funding <sup>2</sup>	Logo on leaflets and prominent on website.

<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

### 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.

**When artists submitted works for the exhibition we asked them to also submit a statement about the work. We thought this might be useful in both the selection of the works for the show and also for possible inclusion and display in the exhibition. In the end we decided that we would not include these as part of the show as we felt that the work did not need this assistance and also we wanted to give viewers the opportunity to give their own interpretation to the work.**

**We did decide that the show would benefit from an objective piece of writing and invited an artist and writer to write a review of the show. This was made available to visitors to read in the gallery and also as printed out sheets for visitors to take away.**

