



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: Shetland Arts Development Agency

Venue: Shetland Museum and Archives, Lerwick

Title of Event: Ethel and Jeannie; twentieth century designers

Type of Event: (e.g. performance, exhibition, informal showing, work-in-progress, workshop, screening, lecture etc)

Contemporary textile exhibition, part of a wider project which included a paper presented at the conference 'A Woman's Island?' at Shetland Museum April 2007 and a dramatic dialogue written and presented by Jacqueline Clark for the same audience.

Date of Visit: 29 May 2007

Overall Rating: Good

This imaginative and well-researched partnership project is a very promising pilot for the cross-disciplinary team-working approach to programming which is being developed by Shetland Arts. For excellence, the interpretation to the wider public and hence the impact of the exhibition, could have been further developed – a situation which is less likely to recur as the new approach matures. Given the extent to which the exhibition, conference paper and dramatic dialogue together successfully challenge perceptions about this significant aspect of Shetland culture, it is recommended that thought be given to capturing them for future use.

(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.)

Name: __Helen Bennett_____ Date: _15/_06/2007_

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	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.	5	The artists chosen had very different approaches to textiles in their practice. All had responded reflectively and sensitively to the theme. This had resulted in pieces which were technically and aesthetically impressive, personal, and, in most cases, a considerable departure from their normal output.
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.	5	The exhibition was the outcome of inviting Glasgow-based textile artist Deirdre Nelson to facilitate the sharing and developing of ideas by group members based on their examination of the knitting collection in Shetland Museum. The success of the method is reflected in the coherence and imagination of the end product.
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	The intention of the exhibition was to challenge perceptions about the relationship between 'traditional knitting' in Shetland and 'contemporary textiles'. When combined with the research paper and the dramatic dialogue for the conference audience this presented a persuasive argument. As presented for showing to the general public, however, there is a question as to whether, without these other elements, it will be equally successful in meeting its aims.
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

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
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	<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>	4	The work was well-displayed and lit so that the pieces, although often quite small and detailed, were easily appreciated.
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	It was not possible to assess audience reaction directly, as I saw the exhibition two days before the building was officially opened to the public. Feedback from Shetland Museum Assistant Curator, however, indicated a very positive response from the conference audience both to the paper/dramatic presentation and to the exhibition. The level of interest raised had contributed to the decision to retain the exhibits for public exhibition over the summer after the public opening of the museum.
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>	3	The exhibition, paper and dramatic presentation provided an imaginative package to encourage the conference audience to re-assess their ideas about the relationship between 'traditional' and 'contemporary' knitting. It was planned to repeat the dramatic presentation at the festival on 24 June. Given that the venue was due to open within days it was disappointing that although there were outline plans to interpret the exhibition to the wider public - which it was hoped would include work with schools and public discussion of the ideas raised to be led by a local journalist.- these had not been fleshed out.

Artform	Criteria	Rating	Comments and key reasons for rating
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)?		Plans for work with schools not sufficiently developed at this stage to comment.

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 project was designed specifically for the Museum, linking into its collections of local textiles and related items. The exhibition itself, sited next to the archive and close to displays of Shetland life in the past and, a temporary exhibition of contemporary work by artists (including work in textiles) developed as part of the public art programme, was ideally situated.
Information/ interpretive material at venue - programmes, displays etc.	At the time of seeing it interpretive material related to the exhibition was limited to the labelling. However, please see section on Additional Interpretive Activity above for the relationship between the exhibition and conference and other plans.
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.	Information about the Museum was readily available in visitor guides and other literature available through the Tourist Information Office, and also through its website
Ease of booking and payment	N/A
Location of venue – eg is it easy to find? Is it on a main transport route?	Yes: adjacent to the main road through Lerwick and to a shopping centre with a large car park
External signage and signposting	Effective road signage both from the outskirts and in the centre of town
Internal directional signage	N/A
Access and provision for disabled people – what can you see?	As might be expected in a new building there was visible evidence of ramps, broad doorways and other facilities which take into account the needs of visitors with mobility issues. Discussion with staff indicated provision for supporting other groups eg visual aids for sight-impaired visitors, which had resulted from consultation with Disability Shetland. Advice had been against providing Braille captions for displays as only 3 people in Shetland are able to read it.
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,	N/A as venue not officially opened to the public until later that week.

Criteria	Comment
front of house, bar and/or catering)	
Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council Funding ²	

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.