



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: Colette Sadler
Venue: Tramway
Title of Event : The Making of Doubt
Type of Event: *Dance / performance*
Date of Visit: 09/05/2008
Overall Rating: 4 – Good

The themes of the work - alienation and lack of social connection, objectification of the body and anthropomorphism are incredibly timely. The artistic vision of the choreographer is consistently strong. The sophisticated choreography with the prosthetic limbs was highly original and a real highlight of the work and really played well with the themes of doubt, authenticity and detachment. Over time, I think there is real potential for developing the artistic themes of this piece into a significant piece of work but this would involve the choreographer rethinking and reworking some of the decisions she made as a director.

Name: Jean Cameron

Date: 02/06/2008

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.	4	<i>The Making of Doubt</i> feels very clearly part of a continuum within Colette's choreographic research, developing quite literally themes of isolation, detachment and a signature movement vocabulary which we saw in her previous solo <i>Dummy</i> at Tramway. This show develops that through the performer's interplay with prosthetic limbs and restraining devices to impair the dancer's movement. The themes of the work - alienation and lack of social connection, objectification of the body and anthropomorphism are incredibly timely. The challenge of this piece was for Colette, here in the role of director only rather than performer (as in her previous work), was to translate these ideas on stage.
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	This piece was co-commissioned by Tramway together with art centres in Germany and Belgium which is a testament to Colette's astute capabilities as an artist operating internationally. The piece premiered in Utrecht at the Springdance Festival, which is under new curatorship in 2008. Tramway's continued support of a Scottish artist's work over her career should also be acknowledged as adding credibility to Colette's endeavours and achievement in working in mainland Europe. A real plus about <i>The Making of Doubt</i> is how positive it is to see an independent Scottish choreographer "graduate" from showing work in Tramway 4 to main stage in Tramway 1 and to have the confidence to take that space on.
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	3	The artistic vision of the choreographer is consistently strong and over time, I think there is real potential for developing the artistic themes of this piece into a significant piece of work but this would involve the choreographer rethinking and reworking some of the decisions she made as a director. There is a real danger when repeatedly using deliberate devices to emphasise alienation such as stillness or performers facing away from audience or avoiding eye contact with the audience that actually you lose the tension of the piece / attention of the audience and for me an overly long opening section contributed to this. The intention of these devices weren't powerfully enough conveyed to keep me curious in the opening section and I found myself feeling disengaged from time to time. However, the sophisticated choreography with the prosthetic limbs was highly original and a real highlight of the work and really played well with the themes of doubt between what is fake or authentic, intentionally hidden or revealed to us... I wanted this teased out more. In the end, the piece finished quite abruptly and didn't offer a satisfactory resolution of the artistic ideas being explored.

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
All	<p>Performers/tutors - technical standard, performance skills and ability to communicate and engage.</p> <p>Where performers are not trained, please reflect this in your comments.</p>	4	<p>Four young dancers, three female and one male competently performed the piece. The director made very deliberate choices to emphasise anonymity and an interchange-ability between performers (and at some points between the performers and life sized faceless dolls). These choices left very little for the performers to reveal character or a sense of the individual in work, which was appropriate to the director's choices for piece. However, there were a few sections of the piece, such as a beautiful technical solo on a chair, borrowing from yoga technique and performed as a slow hypnotic human interweaving of 3 legs (one fake limb) and an arm, that allowed a performer to break out of the pedestrian narrative and for his/her individual ability to shine.</p>
Dance, Theatre	<p>Choreography/Use of choreography - originality, use of space, number and use of dancers, length of piece, etc</p>	4	<p>The choreographer employs highly original and sophisticated movement phrases in the work. However the overall shape of the piece feels as if it could be developed more by the choreographer so as to really show off the choreography and get it to work more to create a fluid cohesion and consistent pace throughout the work.</p> <p>The ideas and themes of the piece were given life when the choreography blatantly extended them. Examples to note include:</p> <p>A lovely moment of humour in a sterile opening section. Bodies huddle together facing back wall, real arm lolling round fake body: a fake head nudging into a real dancer's neck making the doubt of the title really visible on stage – what is real?</p> <p>The duets and trios between real dancers and the dummies are very effective – sometimes casual encounters and at other highly stylised waltz or tango-esque sequences that are careful and deliberate.</p> <p>The anthropomorphic themes of the piece are particularly well communicated through the male dancer's solo with chair. Through his use of words and movement roles became blurred in an effective expression of the concept: the chair became personalised and the dancer objectified.</p> <p>Solos are choreographed to suggest "struggle" on different layers – struggle of holding on / letting go of control of different body parts, internalised psychological struggles played out physically on stage.</p> <p>Sequences reinforce the lack of hope, prevalent throughout the piece. Dancers fail to connect (quite literally and deliberately) physically with each other. The isolation and lack of connection is effectively communicated through a jerky mechanistic movement vocabulary. The themes of social exclusion and lack of intimacy are illustrated well through the choreographer's attention to proximity and space between the performers.</p> <p>When the dancers morph with prop dummies or extra limbs the choreography effectively plays out the concept of how difficult it can be to relate to others and articulate the self in society.</p>

Artform	Criteria	Rating	Comments and key reasons for rating
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.	3	<p>For the opening section to have more impact either the piece has to unfurl earlier through a narrative or extended movement sequences Or the pauses that punctuate this section need to have more tension. For me the stillness lacked tension which led to a quite lethargic opening that didn't pull me in.</p> <p>Throughout the piece, the director uses action very deliberately to withhold / hide certain information from the audience then choose very specific moments to reveal things to us. This device works really successfully sometimes such as when we are shown the life sized dolls, the fake limbs or the moving scenery and emphasises the metaphor of exclusion but at other times (especially the opening section) when performers have not connected with us as an audience and instead we gaze on faceless dummies, movement sequences of dancers repeatedly facing the back of the stage or with their heads to the floor. Here there is no build up, too little is revealed and I find myself feeling ambivalent when I'd prefer to feel intrigued.</p> <p>The ideas of objectifying of people and anthropomorphism are beautifully explored towards the end of the piece when cardboard screens on stage start dancing, moved by an invisible force. The choreographer borrows really effectively here from the old-school theatrical devices akin to eastern European visual theatre.</p>
Dance, Theatre	Use of music – appropriateness and effect of sound or music (whole/part, live/recorded) to the production.	4	<p>The choreographer has pulled off a really successful collaboration with Zoviet France who produced the soundscape and mix it live during the piece.</p> <p>Their industrial tones and scratchy analogue loops complement the feel of the work and the movement sequences of the performers. The score adds momentum and contrast throughout the piece and at one point creates a really interesting visual when a performer unrolls a single amplifier cone on a lead from underneath a seat in the front row and lays it on the floor downstage next to the head of a dummy strewn out on the floor. Visually this is really intriguing, looking a bit like a body on the floor after an accident speaking to someone on the phone and makes me quite uncomfortable (in a good way!) But unfortunately the sound is muffled. I'm in the second row...how does this sound in the back row? This muffling may be deliberate – it's not clear.</p>
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.	4	<p>The stage is bare apart from "bodies" (real dancers and fake dummies) 2 chairs and a cardboard screen in the upstage in corner. This stark lo-fi design is appropriate to the work. The life size dolls and utilitarian costumes emphasise the themes of anonymity. The baggy costumes also work well to conceal how the performers manipulate the fake limbs and allow the performers to conjure up a dystopian image of sculptural "genetically modified" human forms.</p>

Artform	Criteria	Rating	Comments and key reasons for rating
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	<p>There is stark open lighting for a lot of the piece. The lights seemed to jump a wee bit from time to time in opening period. It wasn't distinct enough to know if it was deliberate or not or a technical hitch. I found it distracting on a low level.</p> <p>When the lights come up on audience it provides one of the rare connection points in this piece – we share this lighting state – this is something collective, we are all in this together.</p> <p>Because there's been so much open light over the duration of the piece, it is unclear when the lights go up at the end of the piece that this is the end. It is not strong enough a signifier but I think there is opportunity to work in a stronger end for the piece that goes beyond the lighting states.</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>The middle section of Tramway's seating bank was almost full. The audience included a real mix of ages from students though to older people. The piece seemed to attract a diverse group of people.</p> <p>Audience walk into preset 6 bodies on stage wearing hooded tops facing back of stage. Red lighting on stage before the piece starts suggests action is imminent. Combined with Zoviet France's industrial atmosphere sounding out over the speakers, there is a tangible build up of atmosphere and a sense of anticipation amongst the audience.</p> <p>I wasn't aware of any particular activity</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	I wasn't aware of any particular activity
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	I wasn't aware of any particular activity.

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	Very appropriate. The performers seemed as ease occupying the large stage in Tramway 1. The audience were encouraged to sit the middle seating bank in Tramway which created a sense of concentration for the piece in the auditorium.
Information/ interpretive material at venue - programmes, displays etc.	There was a small FOH display of posters on the immediate wall as the public enter Tramway opposite the box office. I didn't see any preview / review pieces displayed. We were handed programmes entering the auditorium by FOH staff. The programme gave sufficient background on the collaborators involved in the creation of the piece and an outline of the ideas behind the work. My only criticism is that there was no reference to Colette's company "Stammer Productions" which I think was a missed opportunity to publicise the company name, especially given the week of the show was when the company were celebrating a significant flexible funding award from SAC.
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.	I received an email from Tramway about the piece on the Wednesday of the performance week. I also received an email from Wendy Niblock, the artist's publicist via the theatre e-group SCOT NITS which is unusual for dance and I think was a useful device to attract a wider audience interested in performance. I'm aware there was a piece about the show in the Metro which I didn't see and also the List. The event was advertised well in advance via Tramway's season brochure and street poster campaign. I didn't see any print directly produced by the company.
Ease of booking and payment	I booked by telephone with Tramway's box office. The staff were helpful and well informed.
Location of venue – eg is it easy to find? Is it on a main transport route?	Easy to find
External signage and signposting	On the approach from the south of Glasgow on Pollokshaws Rd, the external signage on the hoardings around the side of Tramway display Tramway posters and a very visible sign for the Hidden Gardens.
Internal directional signage	Adequate. Sufficient numbers of FOH staff on hand to assist anyone needing directions.
Access and provision for disabled people – what can you see?	-
Timing of the event – was the length appropriate? Did the start and finish time seem to be appropriate for the audience?	Yes. The performance started at 8pm and lasted approximately an hour without an interval.
Customer service - quality and efficiency of staff (e.g. box office, front of house, bar and/or catering)	Smiley friendly Tramway box office and FOH staff.

Criteria	Comment
Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council Funding ²	SAC were credited on venue posters, brochure and the event programme.

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.