



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:	John Stezaker
Venue:	Stills, Edinburgh
Title of Event:	John Stezaker
Type of Event: (e.g. performance, exhibition, informal showing, work-in-progress, workshop, screening, lecture etc)	Exhibition
Date of Visit:	26 July & 19 September 2007
Overall Rating:	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.)

This exhibition of John Stezaker's work was of the highest calibre and most appropriately presented by Stills, the premier venue for lens-based work in Scotland, as part of their programme.

Stezaker employs the medium of collage to play with our fascination with the human face and the subconscious. The ideas were clear and yet subtle and led to some quite extraordinary images. The exhibition was beautifully presented.

Stills has a lively education programme. This was an important exhibition for Stills and would have benefited from a talk or discussion focused exclusively on Stezaker's work.

Stills' programme is dedicated to lens-based work. It is therefore highly appropriate to have presented this exhibition of a British artist whose use of the photographic found image has been pioneering and hugely influential.

Moyna Flannigan **19/10/07**
Name: _____ Date: ___/___/____

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	<p>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.</p>	5	<p>John Stezaker is a significant British artist with a long established national and international reputation. He was one of the pioneers of the first generation of British Conceptual artists in the late '60's, becoming renowned for his use of photographic found images and collage. His work has been, and continues to be, hugely influential. This exhibition presents three recent series of collages from 2007, titled Mask, Portrait, and Marriage (Film Portrait Collage), and the series Tree from 2001. The Film Portrait Collages consist of two film portraits spliced together on a diagonal creating a strange symmetry and an unexpected marriage of physiognomy as well as gender. In the series Mask Stezaker begins with a portrait onto which he transplants a postcard of a landscape. The face is not so much altered as in the Marriage series as replaced by another image - a double image. The astute juxtaposition of different images create unexpectedly witty and haunting meanings. The source material, portraits of '40's and 50's movie stars, have an inherent glamour. But Stezker's transformation of the material takes us out of that obsolete world into temporal place which is much harder to define, and which reveals his interest in the uncanny and Surrealist ideas. This was one of the most impressive exhibitions presented during the Edinburgh Festival.</p>
All (if relevant)	<p>Curatorial/ programming vision/ selection Please indicate how the event originated eg from the exhibiting/ producing organisation, artist-led or commissioned.</p> <p>If the event is part of a Festival, please say how it contributes to the overall programme.</p>	5	<p>The exhibition was presented in partnership with The Approach gallery in London where an exhibition of Stezaker works from the same series ran in parallel with the Stills exhibition. Stills showed ambition and vision in securing an exhibition of the current work of such a major British artist. This exhibition made an important contribution to the Edinburgh Art Festival and was highly regarded by the Festival audience. The selection and presentation of the works was impressive and appealing to a wide audience.</p>
All	<p>Success of event against stated aims - in the programme or other printed material, including how well it communicated the artistic themes.</p> <p>Education events – see ¹below for guidance</p>	5	<p>The exhibition was highly successful in both its installation and in the accompanying printed material. The work plays with our fascination with the human face, the subconscious and the manipulation of both. The small folding catalogue contained a thoughtful and erudite text, which was highly accessible. Overall the exhibition was of such a high standard and the ideas are presented so clearly that this exhibition is compelling and engaging to a very wide audience. Education is discussed later in this evaluation.</p>

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

Artform	Criteria	Rating	Comments and key reasons for rating
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
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	Quality of Presentation/Engagement Performing Arts - technical presentation of the production (eg lighting and sound cues, etc). Crafts/Visual Arts - Use of equipment, space and overall layout/hang Education events - relevance/appropriateness of presentation and teaching methodology (one to one, group, child centred); details of participant group and activity, including genre.	5	The exhibition consisted of 27 framed works from four series of works: Mask, Tree (2 nd series), Portrait 2007, and Film Portrait Collage. Works from each series were hung together in groups, making for a coherent and well-conceived installation. The presentation was faultless.
All	Audience Performing Arts - appropriateness of the production for the audience/participants; estimate the size and reaction Crafts/Visual Arts – time spent, interest, activity, and visitors'	4	I visited the exhibition twice and spent an hour in total at Stills. The opening was extremely busy with an enthusiastic and attentive audience. During my second visit to the gallery there was one other visitor. The visitors' book was well-maintained and full of considered and appreciative comments.

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
	<p>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>		
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	<p>The activities connected to this exhibition (according to a member of Stills staff) were: WALK Graham Domke Pop into Art Galleries on 29 July/11Aug/26 Aug (all ages); Interactive Story Tour- The Cat’s Whiskers 1/8 August (aimed at children). There were a number of other activities taking place throughout the duration of the exhibition including talks by John Calcutt and Richard West, Stills courses and the use of Stills production facilities. Stills was also the venue for the Edinburgh Art Festival Information Station. However, it was disappointing that there were not more events specifically related to the Stezaker show. If he was not willing to give a talk, there could have been a discussion or a talk about this exhibition by someone else.</p>
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>	4	<p>The aim of education activities is to increase knowledge and confidence in contemporary visual art, photography, Stills and John Stezaker through discussion, skills development, peer critique and networking. The participants were provided with exhibition information, information about Stills’ activities and events and related organisations and networks.</p> <p>Stills has no permanent staff dedicated to Education, activities are not linked to the curriculum and there is no follow up work. However, Stills does provide a comprehensive programme of skills development activities and hosts the Cultural Enterprise Office in order to facilitate Professional Development for artists.</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? **There are Equalities² issues with several boxes eg signage, interpretation, ease of booking and publicity. Do they publicise Stagetext / BSL interpreted performances? What provision is there for visually impaired people? Is the interpretation intellectually accessible (available in Easy English)?**

Criteria	Comment
Suitability of the venue for the event	Stills is the leading venue in Scotland for lens-based work, and it is highly appropriate that they chose an artist with a distinguished reputation in the field of photography for their EAF exhibition.
Information/ interpretive material at venue - programmes, displays etc.	Stills produced a colour invitation card for the exhibition which featured a short text about Stezaker's work. The card also doubles as an information leaflet about their events. A poster was also produced and widely distributed. There was a free leaflet with a brief introduction to the exhibition and current events. An excellent colour, folding brochure (£1) was produced with a number of reproductions and an informative text by David Green.
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.	Listings in a number of newspapers, magazines and in the EAF brochure. The website is informative and very user-friendly.
Ease of booking and payment	The exhibition was free.
Location of venue – eg is it easy to find? Is it on a main transport route?	Stills is located in Cockburn Street in the centre of Edinburgh in an area well-known for its art venues.
External signage and signposting	Large, clear signs.
Internal directional signage	Large, clear signs.
Access and provision for disabled people – what can you see?	Full disabled access.
Timing of the event – was the length appropriate? Did the start and finish time seem to be appropriate for the audience?	Open Daily 11am- 6pm
Customer service - quality and efficiency of staff (e.g. box office, front of house, bar and/or catering)	The staff were extremely friendly, welcoming and helpful.

² For more information look at Getting There <http://www.scottisharts.org.uk/1/information/publications/1003364.aspx>

Criteria	Comment
Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council Funding ³	SAC funding was acknowledged on the invitation card, poster, the folding leaflet/catalogue of the exhibition and on the webpage about the exhibition.

3. Organisation's Reply (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 disparity of response between the organisation and the evaluator, 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, defamatory or inaccurate.

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. The Scottish Arts Council will require any response back within 15 working days of your receipt of this evaluation.

³ 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.