



### 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:** Ori Gersht  
**Venue:** Stills Gallery  
**Title of Event:** Ori Gersht  
**Type of Event:** Exhibition  
**Date of Visit:** 28 November 2007  
**Overall Rating:** Good - 4

*(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.)*

Solid work, professionally presented. Investment in the new resource area downstairs has been valuable, even if it poses new problems in terms of exhibiting there. I was surprised not to see more talks and workshops relating to the exhibition, but I suspect this may be due to staffing changes at the present time.

Name: Kirstie Skinner Date: 30/11/2007

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	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	<p>This is a highly professional presentation by an artist with a growing reputation. The film piece <i>The Forest</i> was exceptional, and the photographic pieces were beautifully executed.</p> <p>I have never been sure why, but Gersht's photographs have always left me a little cold. The distancing effect - blurring and softening the image to the point of near obliteration – is an important part of the artist's strategy, and the concept is not an uninteresting one by any means. It produces an enigmatic, painterly ghost of an image which is intriguing, but maybe not that compelling. There is certainly reward in sustained looking, particularly as new details and possible meanings gradually emerge, and I did appreciate them more once I knew how and where they were taken; but overall I found the film made more of an impact – not just because it was more dramatic and immediate, but because I felt more excited by the complex phenomenological sensations and philosophical proposals that it introduced.</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>	4	<p>In this exhibition an acclaimed pre-existing work, <i>The Forest</i>, is brought to Scotland, and is shown alongside new photographs. One series of photos is shown upstairs, and two from a different series hang in the basement gallery/resource area. Although there is quite a startling difference in style, there is a clear thematic link between the film and the photographs, and this is elaborated in the accompanying text. I quite liked the fact that the thundering sound of the trees crashing to the ground permeated the viewing of the photographs which are almost morbidly still and silent.</p> <p>The only unfortunate thing is that it invites comparisons about the relative quality of each side of his practice.</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 <sup>1</sup>below for guidance</p>	5	<p>Although the artist is reluctant to dwell too much on the personal historical motivations behind his work (the Ukrainian forest served as a haven for his family fleeing the Nazis), the gallery managed to convey these embedded meanings and metaphors both in conversation and in the gallery guide.</p>
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>	n/a	

<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
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	<p>Upstairs, the photographs were executed beautifully and hung well and <i>The Forest</i> was screened in the secluded fashion that it required. The sound, which was such an important element in the work, was clear and well amplified.</p> <p>I suspect that it is always going to be difficult to continue an exhibition in the room downstairs – the area is so successful as a resource and context area, and for me, the ambience is very differentiated from the gallery. That said, finding the extra works was welcome – it helped, I think, that they were from a different series.</p>
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>		<p>The visitor's book was full of praise – there were 11 or so entries, all of them very positive. Many people mentioned the film, and a lot of them picked up on the poetry of the works and the menacing history behind them. More than one person wrote that they were going to go and learn more (about the history, about the technique etc).</p> <p>Two couples, one older, one younger, came in during the 45 minutes I was there. They looked quite carefully, but I am not sure they both made it downstairs. Downstairs, there were several people, possibly resident at Stills, using the resources.</p>
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>	2	<p>Although there are two book launches planned at Stills during the exhibition, they are not directly related to it. I tried to check the website for any other events that might be planned, but this is under reconstruction at present. I know that there are staff changes in this area and this has perhaps had an impact on programming for this exhibition.</p> <p>Although not strictly formal activity, the discussion I had with attendant was helpful.</p>
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>	n/a	

## 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	Ideal
Information/ interpretive material at venue - programmes, displays etc.	Photocopied handout contained a useful intro, and files with comprehensive press etc in the exhibition. There was also an excellent resource area with several catalogues and books with Ori Gersht articles marked, and a comfortable environment to read them in, as well as an extensive art library, internet access and the latest magazines and journals. This section is now much more welcoming and fit for purpose.
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 the List and online diaries  Stills website currently under reconstruction.
Ease of booking and payment	n/a
Location of venue – eg is it easy to find? Is it on a main transport route?	Yes
External signage and signposting	Very clear
Internal directional signage	There used to be an 'exhibition continues' sign pointing downstairs, but not this time. I only knew to go downstairs because the attendant told me there was more to see. Even then, I was a bit shy going into the office area, (the works can't be seen from the door) and had to ask for guidance. The staff were extremely friendly and helpful though.
Access and provision for disabled people – what can you see?	There is a lift next to the steps in the gallery, and wheelchair users and sight-impaired people would need help to negotiate the installation curtains.
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, front of house, bar and/or catering)	Very helpful and knowledgeable
Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council Funding <sup>2</sup>	Yes

<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.