



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: STILLS

Venue: Stills, Cockburn Street, Edinburgh

Title of Event: Cockburn Street Cinema

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

Showing of animated films in open air setting.

Date of Visit: 6th January 2008

Overall Rating: 3

(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.)

The strength was in the artists selected, their ideas, and the quality of their work. The weakness lay in the lack of carry through on the curatorial side, and in the quality of presentation and audience engagement.

Name: Jane Jeffrey Date: 30 / Jan / 2008

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 showing of animated films by Katy Dove and Sarah Pucill was curated by Seonaid Frame. 3 short film pieces were back projected in the window of the Stills Gallery on a continuous loop for the benefit of passers-by in Cockburn Street. The showings were every evening during the Christmas & New Year period when the gallery was closed. The pieces shown were not new work and have been seen previously in other venues. Katy Dove's pieces <i>Motor Head</i> and <i>Gondla</i> were made in 2002 and 2005 respectively, and Sarah Pucill's <i>You Be Mother</i> in 1999. Both are well known artists who continue to make work of experimental and artistic quality. Katy Dove's work is an uncomfortable combination of the sentimental and the edgy. Seemingly very basic animated drawing intricately connected to the music of both her pieces creates an incongruity that is gripping and evocative without ever losing its integrity as raw mark-making. Sarah Pucill's work conjures a world of subconscious meaning through a classical aesthetic. Still life, composition, and animation layer and combine to create complexity and visual plenty.
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.	3	The curator's juxtaposition of the 2 artists was interesting in that their processes and presentation are very different, one drawn and one photographic, and yet their works are linked by a surreal quality. Both have an implicit hallucinatory narrative that came across as a strong connection in the short showing. It would have been more exciting for anyone who already knows the work of these artists to have seen new pieces, but also quite valid to show selected older pieces together in this way and to invite a passing public to stop for a while and think about them.
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	There were flyers about the works in a box on the door which succinctly described the curatorial rationale for the show itself but gave little context about the artists or their subsequent work. I felt a lack of stated aim in relation to the audience experience. i.e if my interest was engaged by this brief encounter, what could I do with it?
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	

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
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.		
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>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>	2	The impact of the showing in the busy setting of Cockburn Street was quite low key. Many people passed without glancing. The screen size was modest within the confines of the window, and by the time I viewed on the last day there were signs of wear on the screen itself. which detracted from the impression of technical quality.
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>		I saw the sequence of films through twice – around 30 minutes. It would be hard to spend longer standing on Cockburn Street on a cold evening. The street was busy with constant groups of passers-by. Most people passed with no more than a glance, quite a few appeared not to notice at all. Of those that stopped, maybe 10 in the 30 minutes I was there, none saw the sequence right through. The longest anyone viewed was about 3 minutes, and only one person took the printed information to read.

Artform	Criteria	Rating	Comments and key reasons for rating
All	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.	n/a	None available
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)?	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	Depends on the objective, I think. If it is to keep the front of the Stills gallery active during the closed period, it is appropriate but could possibly be better presented and have more impact. If the primary purpose is to present the work in the best possible way to new audiences in an open public space, more effective venues might be found where people can more naturally pause and contemplate the work.
Information/ interpretive material at venue - programmes, displays etc.	Flyers in box at the door as described, between 3pm and 9pm . Not easily seen in the dark. No other display.
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.	The publicity I found was on the website. This gave dates and times but no further details about the artists or the work being shown. Flyers as already described were one side of A5 with info about other events to follow on the other side.
Ease of booking and payment	n/a
Location of venue – eg is it easy to find? Is it on a main transport route?	A well known location. Central and in proximity to other galleries. Not so easily seen on the street itself until right in front of it.
External signage and signposting	Discreet. The frontage is restrained and painted black. No signage to be seen at all when it is shuttered, and nothing on a dark evening to indicate its purpose, even when the films were showing..
Internal directional signage	n/a
Access and provision for disabled people – what can you see?	n/a – on the street showing.
Timing of the event – was the length appropriate? Did the start and finish time seem to be appropriate for the audience?	3pm to 9pm provides a period of dark for projection while people are out and about on the street. 15 minute loop is probably viewable if other presentation and audience engagement factors were addressed
Customer service - quality and efficiency of staff (e.g. box office, front of house, bar and/or catering)	n/a
Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council Funding ²	On flyer and on website.

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.