



Scottish Arts Council

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: Stephen Healy

Venue: Street Level Photoworks

Title of Event: *Ethereal*

Type of Event: Exhibition

Date of Visit: 9 February 2008

Overall Rating: Excellent

Summary

Catholicism meets tourism and an illuminated sense of place and promotion of natural landscape in Stephen Healy's very powerful series of large format photographs that depict light interventions in remote locations. With grant assistance from the Scottish Arts Council, the artist spent eighteen months preparing for the exhibition and finally selected six images for presentation at Street Level.

The exhibition is complemented by an excellent publication which reproduces all works in colour with a foreword by Mitch Miller to interpret and give a playful context as background in order to enhance hidden ironies ingrained in a visually surreal collection of photographs.

Name: Alastair Snow

Date: 27.02.2008

Specialist Advisor

Scottish Arts Council

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.	Excellent	It is the ambiguous, spiritual versus surreal visual qualities that radiate from large format photographs of topographical, scenic and mountain landscapes that make this such a compelling installation of works; from <i>close encounters</i> to the plains of heaven via the trickery of theatrical lighting. They are technically accomplished photographs but as with much of Healy's work promote so much more than the formal pictorial qualities of subject matter. In this show the superficial romance of landscape is as uncertain or as potentially dangerous as mongrel dogs from Royston as depicted in previous projects.
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.	Excellent	<i>Ethereal</i> in its use of light in a rural context, complements the urban focus of <i>Radiance</i> , a major Festival of Light presented in Glasgow city centre 23-25 November last year. It continues the ongoing series of exhibitions and publications profiling new work from established and emergent artists, promoting the creative use of photomedia.
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	Excellent	The content and focus of the exhibition continued to meet to a high standard, stated aims and expectations of Street Level Photoworks exhibition's policy. <i>Ethereal</i> was visually 'arresting' but challenging – with a spiritual tension interpreted in a range of accompanying texts and information material available for public scrutiny.
All dance/theatre?	Performers/tutors - technical standard, performance skills and ability to communicate and engage. Where performers are not trained, please reflect this in your comments.		
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.		

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.		
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>	Excellent	<p>Within a relatively spacious but contained, temporary, transient gallery at first floor level, behind and above a locked front door, six mysteriously elegant, large format photographs are presented to considerable dramatic effect; with the added bonus of good natural light and an excellent range of background information and support material. An ascent via stairs or by lift adds to a certain sense of arrival in bright white space in which the illuminated ravines of mountain landscapes or even a sort of Garden of Eden welcomes the intrepid traveller.</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>At the end of week three of the exhibition's run, visitor numbers have been 'reasonable'. There are 'not many passers-by'. Visitor's comments have been positive and very encouraging. The exhibition continues until the 22 March 2008.</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>	Good	<p>Stephen Healy gave a talk at Street Level Photoworks on 23 February attended by about twelve people (a mixture of artists/photographers/general public) 'quite good for a Saturday afternoon.'</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>		

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 suitable – which met main exhibition criteria and expectation.
Information/ interpretive material at venue - programmes, displays etc.	Excellent and of an impressive high standard in terms of the range of readable, informative, interpretative material; well designed, in colour and format; and able to be kept by each visitor if required.
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.	Excellent printed/promotional material and website. Readable, accessible and easy to find. No reviews published as yet – coverage and comment anticipated soon in The List.
Ease of booking and payment	
Location of venue – eg is it easy to find? Is it on a main transport route?	Relatively easy to find on King Street in Glasgow city centre; easier with the aid of directions from other creative organisations on the street.
External signage and signposting	Could be improved.
Internal directional signage	OK once inside 48 King Street via intercom access with voice instruction/direction to first floor level.
Access and provision for disabled people – what can you see?	Current (temporary) premises on the first floor of 48 King Street are not fully accessible. There is disabled access at the rear of the building and a lift is available from ground to first floor. Disabled people (and their carers) are welcome to visit Street Level and are asked to contact the gallery in advance of a visit.
Timing of the event – was the length appropriate? Did the start and finish time seem to be appropriate for the audience?	
Customer service - quality and efficiency of staff (e.g. box office, front of house, bar and/or catering)	Excellent – of a very high standard.
Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council Funding ²	Visible on all main exhibition material and publications.

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.