



Updated June 2007

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: EJ Major
Venue: Street Level Photo Works, Glasgow
Title of Event: Try To Do Things We All Can Understand
Type of Event: Exhibition
Date of Visit: Saturday, 3rd May, 2008
Overall Rating: 5 - Excellent

(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 was a very powerful, multifaceted exhibition that had the ability to both enthrall and yet deeply disturb the visitor - replacing perhaps some commonly held assumptions and initial responses with insightful revelation. It also demonstrated artistry of a high quality that allowed and encouraged the on-lookers to question the message a particular media image may present at any given time and whether that message is at all accurate or valid or in some cases, even a violation.

‘This is the first solo show by London based artist, EJ Major. She presents four bodies of work from the past four years, all distinct yet complimentary journeys around private/public concerns. The artist trained as a photographer and social scientist, and the concerns that inform her work are rooted in questions of identity, in how we are constructed as human beings - by biology, society and circumstance - and in the lexicon of languages we must adapt to and adopt to survive.

EJ Major's materials began with the personal, letters, diary excerpts and family snapshots, and now include their public equivalents - films, books and magazine articles. The process of re-presenting these varies depending on the chosen material but is always something that emerges over time and begins with the act of collection.

... In all, the driving concerns in the artists work remain constant: an exploration of the individual as a physical and psychological collage; a study of the ways in which we are simultaneously created and self-creating, of the way our worlds and our selves entwine.’
(Taken from Exhibition publicity document, 2008)

In addition, the guided tour and customer service were excellent. It was just a pity that the inaccessibility of the temporary premises currently the home of Street Level Photo Works, prohibited disabled audiences.

Name: Rosita McKenzie Date: 01/06/2008

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.	5	I found this work extraordinary! Visiting the Exhibition was a profound and moving experience! The artwork created for this Exhibition provided tangible and impressive evidence of the Artist's questioning ability and imaginative visualisation.
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.	5	The artwork for this Event was selected and curated by Street Level Photo Works but not commissioned by the Organisation. Selection was made from the Artist's existing work and from work that she has been developing. NB: <i>The event was commissioned by the CCA for the 2008 Gi Festival and was one of the key exhibitions of the Festival. (Added by SAC).</i>
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	5	This was a highly successful Event that provided intellectual and artistic stimulus. Its themes were also challenging and provocative and in this way, met many expectations.
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

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	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	<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>		<p>A variety of different formats was used to present the pieces in this Exhibition. For instance: 'Try to do things we all can understand' used monitors showing stills of film images and text relating to each image but moving in a random sequence. 'Love is...' consisted of a display of postcards created from 7000 screen-shots of the film 'Last Tango in Paris'. 'from a distance' was created from images and text scanned directly from the original books. Finally, 'Marie Claire RIP' was inspired by a published article and police mug-shots of a female drug addict but the Artist had produced giant-size images of herself for this piece.</p> <p>This was not an exhibition suitable for children. In fact, because it had some disturbing and adult themes, no one under the age of 13 was permitted to see the Show.</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>There was good audience response to this Exhibition. For this reason, the run was extended to the 16th of May. 300 visitors attended the Opening Evening and 30 people attended each of the Artist's Talks. By the time of my visit, visitor numbers had swelled to 1000 and the Visitors' Book contained 10 pages of comments.</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>		<p>As part of the Gallery Programme, 2 Artist's Talks took place as well as a series of guided tours. The extension of the Show also incorporated extra tours. This was in direct response to requests from audiences, especially from SPIN (an organisation that arranges tours for larger groups.)</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>		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	Lack of an accessible building, greatly hampered this Event which impacted on the Organisation's ability to provide a range of improved facilities. Thus, the provision of guided tours was paramount. It was suitable for non-disabled audiences only.
Information/ interpretive material at venue - programmes, displays etc.	Standard print information only was available at the Venue with large-print available on request. However, staff are currently working hard to make interpretive material downloadable from their website.
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 was sent information about this Exhibition by Email prior to my visit. Similar information was also available on the Organisation's website.
Ease of booking and payment	I booked my visit in advance by telephone and entrance was free-of-charge.
Location of venue – eg is it easy to find? Is it on a main transport route?	The address for Street Level Photo Works is: Kings Street, Glasgow. It is located in Central Glasgow and therefore close to bus routes and railway stations.
External signage and signposting	This is not particularly distinctive or easy to read, especially for visitors with visual impairment.
Internal directional signage	Again, this is not ideal.
Access and provision for disabled people – what can you see?	The disability access at this venue is poor because of the temporary building the Organisation currently uses. However, once their original building is refurbished (April or May, 2009), Street Level Photo Works will move back to premises that will offer vastly improved facilities and accessibility for everyone.
Timing of the event – was the length appropriate? Did the start and finish time seem to be appropriate for the audience?	Yes, the timing of the Event was appropriate.
Customer service - quality and efficiency of staff (e.g. box office, front of house, bar and/or catering)	Customer service was welcoming, helpful and informative.
Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council Funding ²	The SAC logo appears generally on all written material and is displayed prominently on the Street Level Photo Works 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.