



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 Photoworks
Title of Event:	Try to do things we all can understand
Type of Event:	Exhibition
Date of Visit:	8 May 2008
Overall Rating:	4
Aspects of the exhibition were excellent including: - The communication of the artistic themes – through the exhibition the viewer was able to find a route into some highly personal and complex subject matter - The minigraph – one of an excellent series generated by Street Level Photoworks	
The areas which were very good included: -The ideas chime with the viewer - moving from social commentary to highly personal -The wide range of media used contributes to the viewer's experience -The work has been executed to a high standard and displayed sensitively	
Name: Maureen Finn_____	Date: 7/7/2008_
Specialist Advisor	Scottish Arts Council Officer <i>Please circle the relevant title</i>

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>	4	<p><i>Try to do things we all can understand</i> is the first solo exhibition of work by London-based artist EJ Major. The exhibition consists of four main bodies of works, produced over the past four years, which have not been displayed together before.</p> <p>Major's overarching reference is identity – she shares not only her own personal discoveries but also her acute observations of human life. The knowledge that the artist trained as a photographer and social scientist has an impact on the way the work is viewed. Many of the works are emotive and chime with audiences at a personal level.</p> <p>The exhibition is made all the more interesting when the viewer is subtly invited to participate in the work. For example, in <i>from a distance (2007)</i>, by having to contort to read the artist's personal annotations of William Faulkner's novel <i>As I Lay Dying</i> juxtaposed with illustrations from old Brownie Annuals. Also, in the title work <i>Try to do things we all can understand</i> a multiple, continuous displays of seemingly disconnected dialogue texts and film stills from Hollywood blockbuster movies invite the viewer to try to make their own connections. The range of media contributes to the overall success of the exhibition.</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>The exhibition has been generated by Street Level Photoworks and is part of Glasgow International 2008. The exhibition manages to complement other projects in the GI while supporting the continuing development of Street Level's individual programme.</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 Information leaflet suggests that <i>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-created, or the way our worlds and ourselves entwine</i>. These concerns are fairly evident on close interrogation of the works and the provided information prompts closer inspection. The more subtle artistic themes of identity, image and text, and participation and communication become more apparent. Also, the power of the visual and textual communication remains with the viewer long after the exhibition visit.</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,

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.	4	The work has been created and displayed in a highly professional and technically competent way.
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	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.	4	The exhibition installation was well-considered and provided a range of different experiences. The powerful film installation had the potential to dominate but its positioning created a welcome balance to by more intimate works and large-scale still photography. Details of a gallery tour were available as was information about other unrelated educational events. It appears that some of the ongoing outreach programmes/projects do not necessarily reference all temporary exhibitions. I did not feel that this was an issue.
All	Audience Performing Arts - appropriateness of the production for the audience/participants; estimate the size and reaction		I arrived at Street Level early on a weekday morning therefore there were no other visitors during the time of my visit. The comments were engaging and added to the experience. There was an excellent range of written material laid out to

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
	<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>		encourage visitors to spend more time and learn more about the artist and the gallery.
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>	5	There was an information leaflet, information about a gallery talk and a minigraph with a commissioned essay by Catherine Somze. The minigraph was one of a series – it was extremely well-designed, highly visual and provided a valuable, take-home memory of the exhibition.
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>		See above for resources. Time of year would not have been conducive to a formal education programme and there was no evidence of formal education resources or follow-up.

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	The exhibition supported Street level ethos and complemented the space.
Information/ interpretive material at venue - programmes, displays etc.	A range was available (leaflet, gallery plan, past reviews, essays), of particular significance was the minigraph produced by the gallery.
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 website was up-to-date regarding practical information. The material on the exhibition would have provided valuable pre- and post- visit information. It was also interesting to see the exhibition in the context of previous and forthcoming shows.
Ease of booking and payment	
Location of venue – eg is it easy to find? Is it on a main transport route?	Yes, it is on a street off the main shopping area and is close to other similar venues.
External signage and signposting	There is some building work outside the venue with a tunnel obscuring the main access- perhaps some temporary signage would be useful.

Criteria	Comment
Internal directional signage	The gallery is well signposted inside the stairwell.
Access and provision for disabled people – what can you see?	There are lifts.
Timing of the event – was the length appropriate? Did the start and finish time seem to be appropriate for the audience?	Opening hours are typical of this type of gallery.
Customer service - quality and efficiency of staff (e.g. box office, front of house, bar and/or catering)	
Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council Funding ²	Yes, on website, exhibition information leaflet and minigraph.

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.