



## 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.

<b>Artist/Company:</b>	<b>Suspect Culture/NTS/Brighton Festival</b>	
<b>Venue:</b>	<b>Corn Exchange</b>	
<b>Title of Event:</b>	<b>Futurology</b>	
<b>Type of Event:</b>	<b>performance</b>	
<b>Date of Visit:</b>	<b>17/04/2007</b>	
<p><b>Overall Rating</b> (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.)</p>		
<p><b>Poor</b> This was a vastly ambitious project about issues that should be of concern and interest to everyone. The mixture of styles was unusual and the cast were obviously of high calibre. However, the piece did not live up to its potential or truly explore its subject matter. It suffered from a lack of cohesion and failed to engage.</p>		
<p>Name: Jaine Lumsden      Date: 21/05/2007</p>		
Specialist Advisor	<input type="checkbox"/>	Scottish Arts Council Officer <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Please tick 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	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.	Good	This was a vastly ambitious project that did not live up to its potential. The unusual combination of old-style revue and trying to make serious points in the context of a conference on global warming is, in my opinion, typical of Suspect Culture's creative approach.  The choice of staging a play about a conference in a conference centre seemed highly appropriate.
All	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.		Artist led, using all of Suspect Culture's associate artists. The company aims to give equal weight to text, design, music and performance (from programme). The development process outlined in the programme detailed the involvement of all of the artists.
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 <sup>1</sup> below for guidance	Poor	...”a show that tries to look at some serious global issues in an innovative and entertaining way” (from programme). Elements of the production were entertaining (for example the ventriloquist and dummy) but the revue-style humour grated at times. The approach and mixture of styles was innovative but problematic in delivery. The piece did not manage to look at the serious issues around global warming in any depth.
All	Performers/tutors - technical standard, performance skills and ability to communicate and engage.  Where performers are not trained, please reflect this in your comments.	Good	An international cast who were all obviously of a high calibre. Unfortunately the script provided most of them with very two-dimensional parts which meant that it was difficult to engage fully with the performances except on a very surface level. Angela de Castro's part was of a stereotypical simple and innocent “villager” out of touch with Westernised societal mores. This stereotype gave her no scope to develop her character
Dance, Theatre	Choreography/Use of choreography - originality, use of space, number and use of dancers, length of piece, etc	Good	By Vincent Cacialano. I assume he was responsible for the scenes depicting two delegates as a ventriloquist and his dummy? The movement in these was cleverly choreographed and these scenes were effective and amusing.  The sequence on the scaffolding/iron bars over-used some movements and in my opinion did not fully exploit the capabilities of the performer.

<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
			<p>The other dances used the set well and were professionally performed.</p> <p>The transitions between dance and text delivery were sometimes a little clumsy (see under direction.)</p>
Theatre	<p>Script – particularly in relation to new work or second productions. Relevant to classics where the original has been substantially changed.</p>	Poor	<p>Dramaturgy David Greig and Dan Rebellato. This drew on some fascinating source materials and topics that are genuinely relevant today to all of us, but the script failed to pull the many ideas together into a coherent whole. This meant that the serious issues around global warming only received a cursory exploration. The characters (with the exception of the Mayor, Patrice and to some extent the conference facilitator) were two dimensional and there was no character development. While to some extent they were representing archetypes at a conference, this made it difficult to engage with them. At times I thought Angela de Castro's part verged on the insulting as it seemed to be patronising to people from non-Westernised societies.</p>
Theatre, Dance	<p>Direction - Concerns issues of interpretation, casting and presentation.</p>	Poor	<p>By Graham Eatough. The development of the project involved many different artists and it is ultimately up to the director to pull their creative contributions together. This must have been a complex task given the issues of the piece and the ambitious and unusual mixture of styles. The piece felt fragmented and unfocussed and although there were some individual scenes that worked taken as a whole it lacked coherence. The pace dragged at times, perhaps because of the repetitive nature of individual conference delegates taking turns to address the conference. This was realistic, at times I felt I was at a conference, but not one in which I was fully engaged. The transitions between the conference and song and dance/revue were sometimes a little clumsy.</p>
Dance, Theatre	<p>Use of music – appropriateness and effect of sound or music (whole/part, live/ recorded) to the production.</p>	Good	<p>Music and sound by Nick Powell. A live band who were of good quality. Live singing by the cast on the whole of good quality.</p>
Dance, Theatre	<p>Design – costume, set, lighting. Take into account how appropriate the design is in relation to the venue and, where appropriate, the touring schedule.</p>	Competent	<p>By Patrick Macklin and Ian Scott. This provided what was necessary for the piece. The lighting design was of acceptable, if unexceptional, quality. The costumes seemed appropriate for the characters.</p>
All	<p>Quality of Presentation/Engagement</p> <p>Performing Arts - technical presentation of the production (eg lighting and</p>	Competent	<p>Professionally presented.</p>

Artform	Criteria	Rating	Comments and key reasons for rating
	<p>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>		
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>	One small group consistently seemed to find the jokes funny. Mixed reaction, mostly subdued.	
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>	Good	There was a symposium event in Glasgow which I was unable to attend. Suspect Culture's website features a "what is futurology" section with articles, games, details of related materials, public polls etc. This was interesting and easy to navigate.
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>		Can't comment on symposium.

## 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 choice of a venue that functions as a conference centre seemed entirely appropriate for the production.
Information/ interpretive material at venue - programmes, displays etc.	Informative programmes, displays.
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.	Flyers, posters, Suspect Culture and NTS websites.
Ease of booking and payment	Tickets sold through SECC who told me they were not selling them. After checking with the company I was successful with my second phone call.
Location of venue – eg is it easy to find? Is it on a main transport route?	I went with a friend who drove us there. I am unsure how I would have got there otherwise unless by taxi.
External signage and signposting	Fine
Internal directional signage	Fine
Access and provision for disabled people – what can you see?	Access to the building would have been possible and I assume that places could have been made for wheelchair users (I didn't see any the night I attended.)
Timing of the event – was the length appropriate? Did the start and finish time seem to be appropriate for the audience?	Start time seemed appropriate. The piece felt overly long to me.
Customer service - quality and efficiency of staff (e.g. box office, front of house, bar and/or catering)	Efficient
Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council Funding <sup>2</sup>	Acknowledged

<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 organisation (eg venue, gallery, etc) then SAC acknowledgement should appear against the particular programme entry for this event.

