



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:	Keith McIntyre and Karen Wimhurst
Venue:	Taigh Chearsabhagh
Title of Event:	Fragility of Flight
Type of Event:	Exhibition
Date of Visit:	28 April 2008
Overall Rating:	4
<i>(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.)</i>	
The exhibition consisted of new work commissioned by the venue. The work developed the organisation's 'environmental' remit in an interesting way. It succeeded in providing a local perspective on global environmental concerns - at the same time the work was original, humorous, engaging and irreverent.	
Name: Kate Tregaskis	Date: 20/ 5/ 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	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	Artist Keith McIntyre and composer Karen Wimhurst were commissioned by the gallery to produce an installation that consisted of a film /performance by McIntyre with an improvised woodwind and birdsong composition by Wimhurst and a number of large ink drawings and cut-outs. Outside the gallery space a DVD showed documentation of an earlier event, related to the exhibition, involving school groups from the Uists visiting a RSPB reserve before making Origami birds and planes with Japanese artist Hiroko Oshimi The starting point for the installation and workshops was the suspected decline in bird populations in the Uists as a result of climate change. 'Fragility of Flight' was described by the gallery as 'an anthropomorphic tragi-comedy in visual art, music, film and origami'. The work was well executed, original, surprising and funny. The irreverence and humour involved in the anthropomorphism (the artist dressed up as various birds) gave a poignant twist to issues which can often make people feel helpless.
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 exhibition and workshops, originated by the gallery, took an important and serious issue (climate change) and gave it local significance. The exhibition - and the linked workshops the previous year - were programmed to coincide with migratory birds visiting the Uists and with the influx of ornithologist visitors that this brings. The exhibition is intended to tour to An Tober on Mull and An Lanntair in Stornoway later in the year.
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	Taigh Chearsabhair's publicity states that: 'Our arts programme seeks to showcase the highest quality of contemporary visual art and crafts, from the traditional to digital media, from Scotland and the rest of the world.' In addition it states that: '... we have developed an environmental approach to our commissioning and general practice. Our long-term goal is to create a Centre of Excellence in Environmental Arts'. The 'environmental approach' seems to be an intelligent and considered way to capitalise on the uniqueness of the venue and its setting and the interests and concerns of locals and visitors. I was impressed that this commissioned work fitted the 'environmental approach' but at the same remained unpredictable, irreverent and surprising.
All	Performers/tutors - technical standard, performance skills and ability to communicate and engage. Where performers are not trained, please reflect this in your comments.	5	The performance aspects of the exhibition were engaging and professional.

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		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
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	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 was well presented. The film was, for me, the highlight of the exhibition. I felt the drawings were superfluous, although they probably helped to attract people into the space and to keep them there long enough to engage with the film.
All	Audience Performing Arts - appropriateness of the production for the audience/participants; estimate the size and reaction Crafts/Visual Arts — time spent, interest, activity, and visitors' books comments, number of visitors/ participants at the time of visit Education/learning – pre-event involvement, participants/ schoolteachers reaction, understanding, commitment, enthusiasm, number involved, etc		I spent approximately an hour in the show. During my visit another two people visited the exhibition, they looked at the drawings but did not watch the film. The comments book had a number of appreciative comments; visitors seemed to particularly enjoy the quirky humour.
All	Additional Interpretative activity – what activities were available to enhance the experience of the event eg workshops, artist's talks, discussion groups?	4	The workshops involving primary school children, the RSPB ranger and making origami introduced groups and audiences to the ideas behind the show, prior to the show opening. Karen Wimhurst, the musician, held a recital in the arts centre and Keith McIntyre gave an informal talk at the opening.
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)?	4	The education activity involved 6 primary schools (all but two of the schools in the Uists) and made links between the work of contemporary artists and global environmental concerns.

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 work was made for the venue and its environmental/geographic context.
Information/ interpretive material at venue - programmes, displays etc.	Press cuttings from the local paper were laminated and available to read in the gallery café. Information about bird populations was also available. Internet access is available in the café.
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.	Just prior to my visit there was no information about this exhibition on the organisation's website.
Ease of booking and payment	n/a
Location of venue – eg is it easy to find? Is it on a main transport route?	The venue is well situated near to the ferry port.
External signage and signposting	The venue relies on road signs, rather than having much in the way of its own signage. 'Taigh Chearsabhaigh' is clearly written across the side of the building facing the road from the ferry – the addition of the words 'Museum and Art Gallery' actually on the building would help people who did not know what 'Taigh Chearsabhaigh' was. It also may be difficult for people to find the front door. More signage indicating that the building was open or closed and opening times would be useful for first –time visitors. Even when the building is open it looks closed.
Internal directional signage	The internal signage seemed less of a problem as the visitor is encouraged through the building by the shop and the café.
Access and provision for disabled people – what can you see?	There was a stair lift to the gallery.
Timing of the event – was the length appropriate? Did the start and finish time seem to be appropriate for the audience?	Opening times were good.
Customer service - quality and efficiency of staff (e.g. box office, front of house, bar and/or catering)	Staff were very friendly and helpful.
Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council Funding ²	The SAC was acknowledged in the building and on the publicity I saw.

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.