



## 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:**

**Venue:** Taigh Chearsabhagh Museum & Art Centre

**Title of Event:** *soundings/doimhneadh* by Sarah MacIntyre

**Type of Event:** (e.g. performance, exhibition, informal showing, work-in-progress, workshop, screening, lecture etc)

Exhibition

**Date of Visit:** Friday 14 September 2007

**Overall Rating:** Good - 4

*(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.)*

The exhibition by Sarah MacIntyre at Taigh Chearsabhagh was very well executed, atmospheric and communicated the artist's ideas in an inventive way. It also demonstrated Taigh Chearsabhagh's commitment to support local artists and to show innovative and challenging exhibitions. The installation was well presented but perhaps it would have been better if the space was a little darker but this is only a minor criticism. However, it was disappointing to see that there was no substantial education programme on offer but this was due to the fact that there was no one in post to run such a programme during the exhibition's run. Given the circumstances, they did offer a talk by the artist which attracted their existing audience as well as new visitors which resulted in a very interesting and thought-provoking discussion.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Helen Monaghan \_\_\_\_\_ Date: 08 / 10 / 2007 \_\_\_\_\_

**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.	Good	<p>This was a very well conceived exhibition by Sarah MacIntyre which explored themes of charting, marking and signalling in relation to the landscape and how we move within in. Strongly influenced by the area surrounding Uishinish lighthouse on South Uist, the artist created a fascinating exhibition which imaginatively investigated the landscape and its histories as well as looking at different forms of communication from the oral tradition of storytelling to the methods used in sea navigation.</p> <p>Working in a range of media, she presented two beautifully executed works on paper of lightbeams which were exhibited on the stairs leading up to the main exhibition space. The main part of the exhibition was darkly lit except for a light machine installed in the centre of the room. Like a miniature lighthouse, the source of light illuminated objects on the wall at frequent intervals. A screenprint showing the old lighthouse plans, felt hand-stitched banners which revealed place names not included on maps and a beam of light created from reflective tape were made visible as the light swept around the space. In addition, there was a sound piece which evoked sonar technology and the mechanical workings of a boat. Her clever use of light and dark and sound and text, created a very emotive installation which communicated a sense of isolation and of past technologies. It was a very enjoyable experience.</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>	Good	Taigh Chearsabhaigh invited the artist Sarah MacIntyre to create new work as part of their commitment to show work by artists from the Uist area. Sarah is from Loch Carnan in South Uist.
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 <sup>1</sup>below for guidance</p>	Good	There was information on the website and an artist's statement provided at the entrance to the exhibition which stated the artist's intentions in a clear and concise manner.

<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
All	<p>Performers/tutors - technical standard, performance skills and ability to communicate and engage.</p> <p>Where performers are not trained, please reflect this in your comments.</p>		
Dance, Theatre	<p>Choreography/Use of choreography - originality, use of space, number and use of dancers, length of piece, etc</p>		
Theatre	<p>Script – particularly in relation to new work or second productions. Relevant to classics where the original has been substantially changed.</p>		
Theatre, Dance	<p>Direction - Concerns issues of interpretation, casting and presentation.</p>		
Dance, Theatre	<p>Use of music – appropriateness and effect of sound or music (whole/part, live/recorded) to the production.</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>		
All	<p><b>Quality of Presentation/Engagement</b></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>	Good	<p>This was a very interesting installation which perhaps at first glance looked quite slight in terms of content. This, however, was not the case when you experienced the installation and looked closer at the individual artworks. My one criticism would be that the space could have been darker, which in turn, would have made the illumination of the artworks more dramatic.</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/</p>	Good	<p>There were two other people visiting at the time of my visit and they spend around 10 minutes in the exhibition. The comments book had a range of responses, most of them positive. One in particular stands out as a couple had just sailed past the Uishinish lighthouse so found the exhibition very relevant to their personal experience. There were some negative comments and it was clear that they hadn't taken time to look at the exhibition in any detail.</p>

Artform	Criteria	Rating	Comments and key reasons for rating
	schoolteachers reaction, understanding, commitment, enthusiasm, number involved, etc		
All	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.	competent	Unfortunately the education programme for the exhibition only consisted of one talk by the artist. Having said that, there was no one in post to run the education programme as they were recruiting for a new education officer. The artist was also unable to run a workshop based on her exhibition as she was on a residency in Skye.  Princess Anne also saw the exhibition and talked to the artist about her work on a visit to the Centre.
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)?		The artist talk which did take place was aimed at adults and along with the usual audience, a group of engineers who worked on the ferry came along. They were fascinated by the exhibition and there was a good discussion and debate about the exhibition and the themes it raised.

## 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? **There are Equalities<sup>2</sup> issues with several boxes eg signage, interpretation, ease of booking and publicity. Do they publicise Stagetext / BSL interpreted performances? What provision is there for visually impaired people? Is the interpretation intellectually accessible (available in Easy English)?***

Criteria	Comment
Suitability of the venue for the event	Very suitable space for the exhibition.
Information/ interpretive material at venue - programmes, displays etc.	There was a poster in the main entrance of Taigh Chearsabhagh and a room plan and artist's statement at the entrance to the exhibition. Copies of the free local paper which had details about the exhibition was also available in the cafe.
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.	There was a poster about the exhibition on the ferry from Harris to North Uist as well as details on Taigh Chearsabhagh's website. This provided sufficient information about the show and also the other aspects of the centre including its history, up-coming events, education programmes etc.
Ease of booking and payment	n/a
Location of venue – eg is it easy to find? Is it on a main transport route?	Yes it was easy to find once in Lochmaddy with signposts on the road.

<sup>2</sup> For more information look at [Getting There http://www.scottisharts.org.uk/1/information/publications/1003364.aspx](http://www.scottisharts.org.uk/1/information/publications/1003364.aspx)

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Comment</b>
External signage and signposting	No external poster about the exhibition only one in the main entrance.
Internal directional signage	Yes this was fine.
Access and provision for disabled people – what can you see?	Ramps, a lift for disabled access and toilets
Timing of the event – was the length appropriate? Did the start and finish time seem to be appropriate for the audience?	n/a
Customer service - quality and efficiency of staff (e.g. box office, front of house, bar and/or catering)	Very helpful and friendly
Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council Funding <sup>3</sup>	Logo in the venue and on their website. To the entrance to the exhibition, copies of the SAC bulletin were available.

### **3. Organisation's Reply (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 disparity of response between the organisation and the evaluator, 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, defamatory or inaccurate.

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. The Scottish Arts Council will require any response back within 15 working days of your receipt of this evaluation.

<sup>3</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.

