



ARTISTIC EVALUATION: Visual Art and Crafts

This evaluation is intended to represent an objective aesthetic judgement. **Specialist advisors and officers should avoid making judgements based on their own personal tastes and preferences wherever possible.**

Artist:	JOSEPH KOSUTH	
Venue:	TALBOT RICE	
Title of Event :	“AN INTERPRETATION OF THIS TITLE”: Nietzsche, Darwin & the Paradox of Content	
Type of Event:	EXHIBITION	
Date of Visit:	23rd SEPTEMBER 2009	
Overall Rating:	VERY GOOD	
<i>(Please rate the event overall, taking into account your ratings for each section. Please state the key reasons for your overall ratings – ie 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>		
Name:	FIONA JARDINE	Date: 20 th October 2009
	Scottish Arts Council Officer	Specialist Advisor

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 on 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 future 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:

- Very poor**- standard falls well below what is acceptable.
- Poor** - not well conceived and executed
- Satisfactory**
- Good** - well conceived and executed
- Very Good** – well conceived and executed to a very good standard
- Excellent** – Inspiring and executed to an exceptionally high standard

1. Artistic Assessment

Please evaluate the artistic quality of the event, with particular reference to the strengths and weaknesses of the following:

Criteria	Rating	Comments and key reasons for rating
<p>Vision and imagination of work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality of ideas, execution of work and installation if you have seen other work of this artist(s) before, please comment on any relevant comparisons 	EXCELLENT	<p>Dramatic installation – though light and airy (which worked well in contrast to Jane & Louise Wilson’s installation next door). Exciting contrast between architecture of Georgian Gallery and the neon work presented. Kosuth’s use of a familiar and hackneyed contemporary art device – the handwritten or sketched neon – in connection with philosophical musings was engaging.</p>
<p>Curatorial/ programming vision/ selection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How does it fit within the artistic vision of the organisation? If the event is part of a Festival, please say how it contributes to the overall programme. 	VERY GOOD	<p>The exhibition fits very well with the vision of the Talbot Rice as an important University gallery, and with the particular history of Edinburgh.</p> <p>This exhibition was part of a loosely connected series of International Festival exhibitions marketed under the title of “The Enlightenments”: it worked perfectly well as a stand-alone exhibition for my visit.</p> <p>It wasn’t immediately apparent at the gallery that the Kosuth exhibition was “collected” under the Enlightenments banner in a way that the Jane & Louise Wilson exhibition wasn’t.</p> <p>The exhibition appeals to international tourists visiting Edinburgh during the Festival, artists and art professionals, students and city residents.</p>
<p>Success of event against stated aims of exhibition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How does it relate to information contained in the programme, the website or other printed material? How well did it communicate the artistic themes? How did the event originate eg from the exhibiting/ producing organisation, from the artist or from commission? <p>Education events – see ¹below for definition</p>	SATISFACTORY	<p>The artist was commissioned by the Edinburgh International Festival/Talbot Rice/University of Edinburgh to make new work.</p> <p>I did find that the Edinburgh International Festival “Enlightenments” pamphlet (available at the venue) lacked design clarity and appeal. Furthermore, understanding this exhibition (and the others in the series) in the context of “The Enlightenments” would have been promoted by the inclusion of at least a short introductory essay or curator’s statement exploring the connections between the various presentations, (I appreciate that is feedback more applicable to the organisers of “The Enlightenments”).</p> <p>The introduction to Kosuth’s commission in the brochure was perfunctory in the absence of any other interpretive or contextual literature.</p>
<p>Quality of Public Engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of space and overall layout/hang? What interpretation or support materials were available? Were labels/maps available and how appropriate were 	EXCELLENT – installation POOR – Availability of interpretation materials	<p>The installation made full and effective use of the particular architecture of the Georgian gallery: it is difficult to imagine the artist’s work in a better setting. The artists’ work gained aesthetically and cognitively from the setting.</p> <p>There were no specific interpretation materials available on the day I visited, although there was a short introduction in the Festival</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, 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.

Criteria	Rating	Comments and key reasons for rating
<p>they?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was a Visitor Book available or opportunities for audiences to comment/interact? What were the comments like overall? • What activities were available to enhance the experience of the event eg workshops, artist's talks, discussion groups programmes, on line info? 		<p>"Enlightenments" brochure. The desk in the main gallery was difficult to approach as the gallery was in darkness for the Wilson twins' installation. I did feel that the lack of specific interpretation material available on the day I visited negatively affected my experience of the exhibition – I was left wanting to know more about the sources and meanings of the diagrams and texts Kosuth used.</p> <p>I did not find a Visitors book.</p> <p>The exhibition was part of "The Enlightenments" Festival presentation across 3 venues in the city, and a series of talks was organised under this umbrella. However, I did not find any listings for activities relating specifically to the Kosuth presentation.</p>

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																
Location and suitability of the venue for the event <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is it easy to find? Is it on a main transport route? Are the spaces clean? How suitable was it for the exhibition? 	<p>The venue is easy to find. The venue is on a main transport route. The venue is clean and was eminently suitable for the exhibition.</p>																
Information/ interpretive material at venue <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are there programmes, posters and displays about the event? Is there information on the venue's website? 	<p>As mentioned above, I could not find printed interpretation material at the venue on the day I attended. There was (and will be when archived) a small amount of information available on the website which was easy to access.</p>																
Publicity/ pre-publicity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What leaflets, posters, websites, did you see the event listed in? What publicity materials are produced? Is it easy to understand/appropriate to the intended audience? Where can you get the information? Is there Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council Funding²? <p>Please be alert to the publicity available prior to your visit to the event and comment on the company/organisation's website.</p>	<p>The exhibition was listed as part of the main Edinburgh International Festival. It also formed part of the collected visual art strand "The Enlightenments" (in association with the Dean Gallery and Collective gallery). The SAC was acknowledged.</p>																
Signage and signposting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the entrance clearly marked? Is there clear internal directional signage? Is there Braille signage or signage for audio loops? 	<p>The entrance is clearly marked and the gallery is easily negotiable. I did not find Braille or Audio Loops for this exhibition.</p>																
Access and provision for disabled people <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please insert yes/no in the boxes to reflect what you notice about the venue/event <p>Please add in any additional comments below the table</p>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Yes/No</th> <th></th> <th>Yes/No</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>BSL interpretation</td> <td>-</td> <td>Audio description</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Captioning</td> <td>-</td> <td>Lift/ramp</td> <td>Yes</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Accessible toilets</td> <td>Yes</td> <td>Accessible marketing materials eg website or alternative formats eg large print, Plain English</td> <td>Website</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Yes/No		Yes/No	BSL interpretation	-	Audio description	-	Captioning	-	Lift/ramp	Yes	Accessible toilets	Yes	Accessible marketing materials eg website or alternative formats eg large print, Plain English	Website
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Customer service <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How was the quality and 	<p>It is not possible for me to comment on how responsive the staff</p>																

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.

Criteria	Comment
efficiency of staff (invigilators etc) • If possible, comment on how responsive they were to the needs of disabled customers?	were to the needs of disabled customers.

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.

Thank you for this feedback on Kosuth exhibition in Talbot Rice Gallery Festival of 2009.

I refer to this section of the assessment.

'I did feel that the lack of specific interpretation material available on the day I visited negatively affected my experience of the exhibition – I was left wanting to know more about the sources and meanings of the diagrams and texts Kosuth used. I did not find a Visitors book.'

The assessor is mistaken in her comments that there were no interpretation materials available. Working as a University Gallery Talbot Rice provides research materials for all exhibitions. A table was available in the upper gallery with a large group of the artist's catalogues, a visitor's book and a full transcript of the neon text.

That the EIF curator did not provide a textual overview was, in my opinion, an appropriate response to the exhibition as it was a didactic and text based work to be 'read' by viewers.

**Pat Fisher
Principal Curator
Talbot Rice Gallery**

