



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:	Group show of works by eight artists
Venue:	The Travelling Gallery at Queensferry High School, Edinburgh
Title of Event :	Paint Can
Type of Event:	Art Exhibition
Date of Visit:	25 November 2009
Overall Rating:	Excellent

(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.)

The Travelling Gallery is a self-contained, mobile gallery space: a custom built 'bus' that presents exhibitions of contemporary art for schools and public audiences across Scotland. The Paint Can exhibition presented work at 89 venues, of which 17 dates were open to the public, between 24 August and 11 December 2009.

The Travelling Gallery is a remarkable initiative – a simple idea, ambitiously realised without compromise. Paint Show confounded the challenges of presenting work in a mobile space, for a broad audience, including a large schools audience; it was a very strong exhibition of contemporary art – the experience was thought -provoking, and a pleasure.

Name: Gary Thomas

Date: 15 January 2009

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 	<p>excellent</p>	<p>Paint Can was an exhibition of work by eight artists, looking at “how contemporary artists are currently using paint”. The curatorial approach was open and reflective, with works by artists representing a broad range of approach and a variety of media, including animation, video and a specially commissioned site-specific work, painted on the gallery wall. The diversity of work - abstract, representational, conceptual and narrative works – was made coherent in the installation, allowing contrasts and connections to be made – with subject matter as well as technique and materials.</p> <p>As well as being a thought provoking show about artists, the materials they use for particular ends, the exhibition also addressed process, through the inclusion of a site-specific work, presenting a study for a work as well as the painting itself, and including several sketchbooks and research materials from recent graduates from Scottish art schools.</p> <p>The exhibition was exceptionally well put together. It confounded the limitations of the size and shape of the space - to include video work, and a relatively large painting.</p> <p>I was particularly struck by how, in ensuring that the exhibition was engaging and broad in its appeal, this was nevertheless achieved without compromise to curatorial integrity.</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. 	<p>excellent</p>	<p>The exhibition was exemplary, fulfilling in The Travelling Gallery’s stated purpose to bring “cutting edge contemporary art to rural and urban communities.” It also met the aims to create “highly engaging exhibitions (with) high quality artworks...representative of the international arts scene.”</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>	<p>excellent</p>	<p>Paint Can looks at how contemporary artists are currently using paint, and how the seductive qualities of paint can be used within other media, including film, animation, drawing and performance. The website and printed materials provide good written and visual information, giving a clear, accurate and engaging introduction to the exhibition.</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

Criteria	Rating	Comments and key reasons for rating
<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 they? • 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>excellent</p>	<p>Gallery staff were very well informed, friendly, enthusiastic, and engaging.</p> <p>I visited the Gallery at one of its school dates, and joined a group of pupils given a 'tour' by a Gallery volunteer, providing an excellent summary of the themes of the exhibition, individual artists' practice, and exploring questions raised by specific works. This did not patronise, and provoked comment and discussion. "Teachers' responses" quoted on the website attest to the value and success of the programme.</p> <p>Interpretive material included a well designed and clearly written, eight page, colour, illustrated leaflet. An 'educational resource pack' provided substantial background information on the theme and individual artists, including interviews, additional images and reference.</p> <p>Attendance figures (from the website) for Paint Can were 8146 up to 20 November. A comments book had many very positive comments.</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																
<p>Location and suitability of the venue for the event</p> <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>I visited the exhibition at one of its school dates, with the Gallery parked in the school grounds, and groups of students visiting throughout the day. One might think that a bus isn't suitable for an exhibition of contemporary art, but any such thought was confounded by the inclusion of large paintings, and moving image work. Artworks are fragile and valuable, but the design of the space/bus, and the maintenance and care taken, make it an unusual but not inappropriate space. It is, obviously, appropriate for the purpose of getting art to people, as opposed to getting people to art.</p>																
<p>Information/ interpretive material at venue</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are there programmes, posters and displays about the event? Is there information on the venue's website? 	<p>The website provides clear and sufficient information, including images of work, and details of venues and dates well in advance. The printed gallery guide was well designed, attractive and informative.</p>																
<p>Publicity/ pre-publicity</p> <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 website is well designed, easy to navigate, with clear and appropriate information about the organisation, exhibition and other activities.</p> <p>The Scottish Arts Council logo is prominent on printed material and on every page of the website.</p>																
<p>Signage and signposting</p> <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 bus has a striking and attractive paint job, making it hard to miss.</p>																
<p>Access and provision for disabled people</p> <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>n/a</td> <td>Audio description</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Captioning</td> <td>n/a</td> <td>Lift/ramp</td> <td>Yes</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Accessible toilets</td> <td>n/a</td> <td>Accessible marketing materials eg website or alternative formats</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Yes/No		Yes/No	BSL interpretation	n/a	Audio description		Captioning	n/a	Lift/ramp	Yes	Accessible toilets	n/a	Accessible marketing materials eg website or alternative formats	
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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			
			eg large print, Plain English	
Customer service <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How was the quality and efficiency of staff (invigilators etc) • If possible, comment on how responsive they were to the needs of disabled customers? 	I met two members of staff and a volunteer. They were welcoming and informative, and managed the 'tour' very effectively.			

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.