



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/s:	Jala Toufic. Ayah Bdeir. Others.
Venue:	Peacock Visual Arts, Aberdeen.
Title of Event/s:	CRUEL WEATHER. ARAB MIDDLE EAST FILM FESTIVAL. 02 October - 14 November, 2009 1) Ashura: This Blood Spilled in My Veins. Film screening. 2) Identities in Motion, accompanying visual art exhibition.
Type of Events:	FESTIVAL: Film Screening/s. Exhibition.
Date of Visit/s:	4th November 2009
Overall Rating:	Excellent
<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: Rose Frain	Date: November 20th 2009
Scottish Arts Council Officer	<u>Specialist Advisor</u> ✓

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

Criteria	Rating	Comments and key reasons for rating
		<p>A commemoration of 'Āshûrâ' takes place yearly in Lebanon.</p> <p>Documentary footage of the commemorative rituals are intercut with related blessings and prayers and also by lamentations and elegiac music. All presented in extended takes with no commentary.</p> <p>In a final scene, at the end of a ten-day ceremony, the participants lacerate themselves with swords. This act, it is claimed "helps maintain the memory not only of the past, but of the future, in particular the promise to await the redeemer, the twelfth Imam"</p> <p>The narrative is intercut with parallel footage of the philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Jacques Derrida commenting on notions of ritual, lamentation and elegy and with a related classroom philosophy lecture by Jala Toufic (the maker of the film).</p> <p>Ashura: This Blood Spilled in My Veins is to my mind, a compelling work in which experiences of the historic Ashura commemoration and its relationship to male Arabic cultural bonding and collective grief across time are opened up by a range of strategies to recruit the viewer as a possible sympathetic witness.</p> <p>The film was screened in the Peacock gallery space, in the presence of the exhibition Identities in Motion by Ayah Bdeir.</p> <p>Peacock director Lindsay Gordon and Festival curator Jay Murphy were present at the screening.</p> <p>2) Identities in Motion by Ayah Bdeir : a solo visual art exhibition accompanying the Cruel Weather, Arab Middle East Film Festival.</p> <p>Identities in motion is part of a series of visual art works by Ayah Bdeir "that looks to contemporarise images of Arab identity, raising questions around complex life in the Arab world, its sexuality, social relations, political instabilities, economic disparities and memories.... "</p> <p>Bdeir, born 1982 in Montreal grew up in Beirut. In much of her work she plays with western cultural expectations of and about Arabic women and aims to facilitate individual and collective agency- the capacity to act, as well as to subvert 'western media' homogenising of Arabic female identity.</p> <p>Teta Haniya's secrets: a series of electronic devices including lingerie inspired by the Syrian Souk el Hamidiya (or el Hamideya). Electronic devices have been inserted into items from</p>

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		<p>Victoria's Secret (a brand of glamorous US lingerie), aiming to import Arabic pleasures to North American women.</p> <p>The work Arabiia, in collaboration with Luma Eldin, aims to be a caricature of media stereotypes of Arabic Women. It is a series of visually arresting images- large format photographic prints centrally suspended from the gallery ceiling, subverting both 'black burka' and 'seven veils' clothing. "the convertible outfit is equipped with two servo motors and a switch. It enables its wearer to voluntarily choose which of two extreme representations fits her mood and audience"</p> <p>A film The way we were, hauntingly referencing memories of Lebanon, is shown looped on a bigger screen.</p> <p>Les Années Lumiere: 22 x 30 inches. Electronics on Canvas. in collaboration with Rouba Khalil. In this wall-based installation the prolonged bombings of Lebanon between 2005- 2008 are referenced in conceptual format.</p> <p>"A bird's eye view of a little over 3 years of violence, strife, and very bright lights rocking Lebanon, remembered and replayed in 45 minutes of proportionally timed light display."</p> <p>-----</p> <p>Of course the degree to which expectations are subverted is dependent upon the preconceptions of particular viewer/s and some of these works could also be experienced as gender reductive. But judging from the comments in the visitors book Bdier has succeeded in subverting doubly.</p> <p>The Lebanon piece Les Années Lumiere was particularly apt in parallel with the screenings, forming a counterpoint to the film Ashura which is set in Lebanon, and to its (masculine) narrative culminating in blood ritual. Interrelated contexts of conflict, human rights and social justice are highlighted by other films in the programme.</p> <p>It seems probable that these points and more were raised during the discussion opportunities provided by the Cruel Weather Festival programme.</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>Very well</p> <p>Excellently. Appropriate .</p>

Criteria	Rating	Comments and key reasons for rating
<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>	Excellent	<p>Excellently.</p> <p>Excellently.</p> <p>From the originating organisation Peacock Visual Arts with Jay Murphy, the Department of Modern Thought, the University of Aberdeen. Connections with academia and to wider constituencies have thus been forged.</p> <p>See below.</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 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? 	Excellent	<p>Very good hang: video monitors to the left, photographic works suspended centrally from the ceiling. A big screen at the far wall. Light box installation to the right hand wall.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Booklet publication, well designed, with images and text . • A photographic light box in the entry space and visible from outside. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A4 sheet synopsis and guide. • Large format Postcards (the programme). All free. <p>Appropriate, clear, non reductive labels and signs. A Visitors book is prominently displayed in the entry space and visible from outside the venue. Variety of positive comments e.g.: "Thought provoking". "Opens new horizons of experience". "Layered". "Lingered longer than expected".</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FILM MAKING MASTERCLASS with Video Maker Roy Samaha] aimed at independent filmmakers and video artists, film students and recent graduates. • WORKSHOP with Jackie Salloum, film director. • PANEL DISCUSSION: Curator Jay Murphy in conversation with director Jackie Salloum. All free. <p>Peacocks website homepage carries the following statement of aims :</p> <p>"To play a leading role in nurturing a culture of creativity in Aberdeen and the North East of Scotland.</p> <p>To be renowned internationally as a centre of excellence and innovation where artists and public engage to share and explore ideas and to make and present art in exciting, stimulating and</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.

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		<p>challenging ways.</p> <p>We passionately believe that art offers empowerment, increases understanding and improves communication. All our collaborative projects, residencies and learning opportunities are about increasing participation.</p> <p>We organise an annual programme of national and international contemporary art exhibitions, as well as talks, critical debates and workshops.</p> <p>We also provide the widest range of media openly available anywhere in Scotland. These facilities include the hire of video equipment and the use of our printmaking workshops and photography darkroom.</p> <p>In our shop we have a wide range of artworks for sale by local, regional and international artists, many of which are editioned by Peacock printmakers. Our framing department offers a specialist, tailored public service of handcrafted, high quality frames."</p> <p>(Peacock offers the purchase scheme Own Art)</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
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes. Peacock website provides a map, but like most venues, it would benefit from a simple "landmarks" map showing the route from the Rail Station to the venue for first time visitors, as streets (in most places) often don't have clear signage. <p>Yes. Yes. Easy walking distance, 10mins from Rail station. Very suitable</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>Yes, all of these things and more. See below.</p> <p>Yes</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>All the usual listings and journals eg Art Monthly; website/s; leaflets; range of other. Press and web discussion links. Poster, booklet, postcards, A4 guide. etc. all free.</p> <p>Yes, accessible to range of visitor constituencies without being reductive.</p> <p>At the venue; at other venues; Website; journals and press/media. (etc) Website very clear visually -good navigation, informative.</p> <p>Yes. A dedicated (Cruel Weather Festival) website within the main Peacock website is exceptionally well designed and maintained, being visually clear and informative and offering good intra (and inter) page navigation. * Each page shows venue contact details and opening hours. * Programme video clickable on the website. * Link to press interview on Website. * Listings on Website, each title with clickable further information. * Film stills. * Exhibition images. * All clickable back to both the Cruel Weather and the main Peacock website/s. Peacock website is exemplary and other venues would do well to refer to it as a model.</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>Very :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wall signs at the entrance to the venue lane; large freestanding signs in the lane near the entrance. Internal directional signage is fine- the venue has an uncomplicated layout. ≥

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.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Glass doors to the venue with clear information lettering: Venue name; event opening times; access terms (ie welcome/free); event title/s; facilities; website address; telephone numbers. • Venue interior and publicity materials are invitingly visible from outside. All crystal clear. No braille, no audio loop, but apparently they "are looking into it".																			
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 Please add in any additional comments below the table	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="566 434 842 468"></th> <th data-bbox="847 434 995 468">Yes/No</th> <th data-bbox="1000 434 1260 468"></th> <th data-bbox="1265 434 1394 468">Yes/No</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="566 474 842 530">BSL interpretation</td> <td data-bbox="847 474 995 530">N/A</td> <td data-bbox="1000 474 1260 530">Audio description</td> <td data-bbox="1265 474 1394 530">N/A</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="566 537 842 701">Captioning</td> <td data-bbox="847 537 995 701">Yes. Both Film and exhibition</td> <td data-bbox="1000 537 1260 701">Lift/ramp</td> <td data-bbox="1265 537 1394 701">N/A</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="566 707 842 1097">Accessible toilets</td> <td data-bbox="847 707 995 1097">yes</td> <td data-bbox="1000 707 1260 1097">Accessible marketing materials eg website or alternative formats eg large print, Plain English</td> <td data-bbox="1265 707 1394 1097">Yes. excellent Website. + Social Media: Twitter, Flickr Facebook.</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>					Yes/No		Yes/No	BSL interpretation	N/A	Audio description	N/A	Captioning	Yes. Both Film and exhibition	Lift/ramp	N/A	Accessible toilets	yes	Accessible marketing materials eg website or alternative formats eg large print, Plain English	Yes. excellent Website. + Social Media: Twitter, Flickr Facebook.
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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? 	Very good , very helpful,																			

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.