

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: 4DArt

Venue: Mac Robert, Stirling.

Title of Event: Norman: A Tribute to Norman McLaren

Type of Event: PERFORMANCE

Date of Visit: 19/04/08

Overall Rating: EXCELLENT

This was a stunning marriage of theatre, dance and animation; a delightful, loving tribute and personal response to the work of film maker Norman McLaren, full of dreamlike memorable moments. Technically it was remarkable, but it never lost sight of the often innovative low tech and very humane and child like style of McLarens animation. Very moving. Very magical. The MacRobert should be congratulated for being the only venue in Scotland to house this production.

Name: **Stewart Ennis** Date: **20/04/08**

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 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.	Excellent	The MacRobert are now showing the kind of ambitious and groundbreaking international work that was associated with the Tramway. With <i>The Kurdish Garden</i> by TPO last year and now "Norman" by Canadian 4Dart, this venue is programming some really exciting work. Norman was technically stunning and extremely moving; a beautiful tribute and personal response to the work of this innovative and humane film maker. Though previous knowledge of McLaren's work was necessary.
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.	Excellent	'Norman' was a Canadian production brought to Scotland by the MacRobert. This is partly due to the fact the film maker Norman McLaren was born in Stirling. Indeed the MacRobert film theatre has now been renamed The Norman McLaren Film Theatre. An excellent exhibition runs alongside this production.
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	Excellent	"Norman" (a tribute to Norman McLaren). This was very much a personal tribute to the film maker's work. But for those familiar with McLaren's work it opened up new ways of seeing it while offering a sheer delight to those who were new to the work.
All	Performers/tutors - technical standard, performance skills and ability to communicate and engage. Where performers are not trained, please reflect this in your comments.	Excellent	"Norman" was performed by dancer Peter Troszmer. His beautiful physical interaction and response to McLaren's work was perfectly complimented by an informal and witty conversation with the audience and with projected images of academics who knew McLaren.
Dance, Theatre	Choreography/Use of choreography - originality, use of space, number and use of dancers, length of piece, etc	Excellent	The piece was choreographed by Peter Troszmer and Thea Patterson. This felt like a very personal response to McLaren's animation. It was a beautiful often dream-like piece of choreography which revelled in the film maker's work and constantly reminded the audience of its parenthesised title (<i>a tribute to Norman McLaren</i>)
Theatre	Script – particularly in relation to new work or second productions. Relevant to classics where the original has been substantially changed.	Good	A lot of text was based on recorded/projected interviews with academics who knew McLaren as well as some witty and conversational 'fictional text' by Thea Patterson, Michel Lemieux, Victor Pilon and Peter Troszmer. It felt entirely appropriate the style of the piece.

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
Theatre, Dance	Direction - Concerns issues of interpretation, casting and presentation.	Excellent	Direction/ Choreography and Design were really inseparable here. The "concept, media design, staging and editing" were credited to Michel and Victor Pilon, known for their work with Cirque Du Soleil. A remarkable marriage of movement and projected animation.
Dance, Theatre	Use of music – appropriateness and effect of sound or music (whole/part, live/recorded) to the production.	Excellent	.A lot of the music was from the animated sequences of McLaren's own films such as the Ravi Shankar sequence in <i>A Chairy Tale</i> . Additional music was seamlessly interwoven and written by Michel Smith.
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.	Excellent	The design aspect of this show as mentioned above was integral to the entire performance and cannot really be separated. Projected footage from McLaren's films were projected onto invisible screens giving the impression that of 3 dimensionality and allowing Trozmer to interact and respond to McLaren's projected objects and characters
All	Quality of Presentation/Engagement Performing Arts - technical presentation of the production (eg lighting and sound cues, etc).	Excellent	This was an exceptionally technical show and it appeared perfectly fluid throughout.
All	Audience Performing Arts - appropriateness of the production for the audience/participants; estimate the size and reaction		The audience were held throughout and extremely enthusiastic at the end.
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.	N/A	An excellent and informative exhibition of McLaren's work accompanied the show.
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)?	N/A	

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 show worked very well here.
Information/ interpretive material at venue - programmes, displays etc.	Programme was full of appropriate and useful information and exhibition also added to appreciation of the show.
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.	Web and brochure information was useful, easily understood and appropriate
Ease of booking and payment	No problems.
Location of venue – eg is it easy to find? Is it on a main transport route?	Local bus from Stirling centre. Easy to find by bus, train or car.
External signage and signposting	Appropriate.
Internal directional signage	Appropriate.
Access and provision for disabled people – what can you see?	Appropriate.
Timing of the event – was the length appropriate? Did the start and finish time seem to be appropriate for the audience?	Timing seemed about right.
Customer service - quality and efficiency of staff (e.g. box office, front of house, bar and/or catering)	Very good and helpful.
Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council Funding ²	SAC acknowledged where appropriate.

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.