



ARTISTIC EVALUATION

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/Company: 2Faced Dance
Venue: Macrobert, Stirling
Title of Event: Still Breathing
Type of Event: Dance
Date of Visit: 9th October 2009

Overall Rating: Very Good

(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 Macrobert was an excellent venue for this performance and managed the event very well, creating a vibrant atmosphere for its audience. The company's work was of a very high standard and appealed to the younger members of the audience.

Name: James MacGillivray
Specialist Advisor

Date: 15th October 2009

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:

Artform	Criteria	Rating	Comments and key reasons for rating
All	<p>Vision and imagination of work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality of ideas if you have seen other work of this artist(s)/ company before, please comment on any relevant comparisons 	Excellent	<p>The work did not describe a narrative of such, but was an 'exploration of the space we occupy in a world that is ever decreasing'. It was billed as 'an hour of highly charged physical dance'. Both ideas were clearly portrayed – the narrative through the use of set, and the highly charged physicality through the use of the various dance styles and music.</p> <p>The work of the company is clearly designed to attract the attention and interest of a younger audience, thus helping to build and educate the audience of the future. I understand that workshops were held for young people in the run up to the performance, for which I heard great feedback when speaking to one participant/audience member.</p>
All (if relevant)	<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. 	Good	<p>The company and the work seemed to appeal extremely well to what I imagine was the target audience, made up mostly of school groups, and fits in extremely well to the artistic vision of the Macrobert.</p> <p>It possibly did not appeal to other members of the public (single ticket buyers) – I overheard very negative comments from one couple who were probably much older than the target audience, vowing not to return to a contemporary dance performance, and another vocal audience member who did not seem enthused by the work.</p>
All	<p>Success of event against stated aims of project and/or performance</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>	Very Good	<p>The work mostly achieved its stated aims, and whilst the fusion of dance styles was not terribly successful, all styles – street, break and contemporary dance - were individually presented to a high standard.</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.

All	Performers/tutors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the expertise of the performers? Where performers are amateur, please reflect this in your comments. • How successfully did the performer(s) communicate with and engage the audience? • In your view, was an artist as a tutor key to the success of the workshop? 	Very Good	There were some excellent street/break dancers, and some very good contemporary dancers in this work. Two dancers in particular stood out, performing stunning solos. All of the dancers gave 100% effort. However I did not feel they were entirely comfortable as performers on stage. I missed the sense of power that a large group of men on stage could create and felt detached from the world they were 'living' in. I feel this is possibly due to a lack of direction than lack of dancers' skills.
Dance, Theatre	Choreography/Use of choreography <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was the work original? • How was the space used? • How many dancers were there and how were they used? • How long was the piece? 	Good	<p>Overall the ideas of the work were clearly communicated, starting with a free, liberating solo, and working through to confined and restricted group movement by the end. However the choreography sometimes drifted and lacked intention. Although there were some beautiful solos and combinations, the 'fusion' of styles did not always work for me. I felt the work was often rather fragmented into break dance sections and contemporary dance sections with messy transitions.</p> <p>The performance space was reduced throughout the work through the use of the encroaching side lights, ultimately confining the dancers into tight cage.</p> <p>At one hour in length, I felt the work was long enough to explore all of the intended themes and ideas.</p>
Theatre	Script Please comment on this for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • new work • second productions • classics where the original has been substantially changed 		N/A
Theatre, Dance	Direction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was the work well interpreted? • Was it well cast? • Was it well presented? 	Good	The theme – 'an exploration of the space we occupy in a world that is ever decreasing' – was simple but clear. The dancers were all of a very high standard and suited their roles. I felt that the dancers needed more direction in their interpretation of the work, and in how to present this 'fusion' of styles as one unified piece of work.
Dance, Theatre	Use of music <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did the music/ sound used enhance the production? • Is it live or recorded? 	Excellent	The work used an original recorded score by Anthony Murphy. The fusion of hip-hop and contemporary styles helped to create shifts in mood throughout the work and was appropriate for the style of work. Using such an established composer clearly has an appeal to the target audience
Dance, Theatre	Design <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How were the costumes, set and lighting? • How did it work in the venue? 	Very Good	The work was performed in a traditional 'black box' setting. The side lights were incorporated into the narrative of the work, being manoeuvred to create an ever decreasing performance space and

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Was it technically proficient? (eg lighting and sound cues, etc). 		effectively 'caging' the dancers. They also acted as platforms to climb on and jump from. Costumes were simple 'urban' clothes, with several seemingly unnecessary changes throughout the piece. The performance was of a very high technical standard
All	<p>Quality of Public Engagement</p> <p>Performing Arts/Education -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Was the production/event targeted at a particular audience? Was the production /event appropriate for the audience/participants? Were you/engaged/inspired? Did the audience/participants appear to be engaged/inspired? What was their response? Approximately how many people were there? Did there appear to be a broad mix of people – age, cultural diversity or disabled? Are BSL/captioned/audio described performances offered as part of the run/tour/? If so how many? What activities or supporting materials were available to enhance the experience of the event eg workshops, artist's talks, discussion groups programmes, on line info? Were these targeted at specific age groups? <p>Education/learning events: In addition, please provide comments on the following (if appropriate):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How was it taught/led eg one to one, group, child centred? What was the composition of the participant group – age range, gender mix? Is it strategically linked to the curriculum or national policy areas e.g. Early Years, Community Learning & Development What learning/skills development took place? What was the quality of the art produced by the participants? Did the workshop tutor have a teaching plan for the session and/or project? How were participants recruited? Did participants' views and 	Very Good	<p>Although the advertising did not recommend a specific age group, the work was clearly directed toward a younger audience. In this sense, with many school groups attending, I think the work was effective and successful. The response by this audience base was overwhelmingly positive.</p> <p>Apart from the usual fidgeting and talking expected with an audience of this young age – which was almost a distraction to myself and other audience members – I feel that everyone stayed engaged throughout most of the performance, and there was a good buzz in the foyer areas both pre and post show.</p> <p>The auditorium appeared to be about ¾ full, with mostly school groups. There did appear to be a range of other age groups, etc amongst the few individual ticket buyers. There was at least one large group of disabled customers. This was one of the largest dance audiences I have seen at the Macrobert.</p> <p>BSL/captioned/audio described performances do not appear to be advertised by either Macrobert or 2Faced Dance.</p> <p>I understand that the company had led workshops in schools in the lead up to the performance.</p> <p>Inevitably, not all work appeals to everyone, but I was surprised at how vocal a couple of audience members were immediately after the show in their dislike of the work. I have also mentioned this above.</p>

	<p>choices help inform the structure and content of the project?</p> <p>Crafts/Visual Arts Use of equipment, space and overall layout/hang?</p>		
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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? • What were the sight lines like? • How big was it? 	<p>Macrobert is located on the Stirling University Campus. There appears to be good public transport links. However the signage on the university campus does not appear to lead audience members clearly to the venue. Once parked in the car parking areas, there are no signs for directing customers to the theatre building.</p> <p>The theatre was clean and has a great sized stage with excellent sight lines.</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>There were posters at the venue, although I struggled to find a venue brochure. This gave a description of the performance, as did the website. Programmes were not readily available before the performance, but were being handed out as the audience left the auditorium. The programmes were free double-sided A4 sheets listing biographies and tour dates, but gave no more insight to the company or the work. The company had a manned stand selling merchandise, and also handing out company newsletters which gave more information about the company.</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? • Where can you get the information? • Is there Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council Funding ²? <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>Living some distance from Stirling I had not been aware of any pre-publicity.</p> <p>The venue brochure and website were very clear, and both clearly display upcoming events. The foyer has television screens and posters clearly promoting future performances, although I struggled to find a venue brochure to read.</p> <p>Acknowledgement of SAC funding is clear and adequate.</p>
<p>Ease of booking and payment</p>	<p>I booked online. The process was very easy, although I did incur a £1.20 booking fee. It was not clear to me until quite late into the booking process that there would be a charge.</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																
Timing of the event <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Did the start and finish time seem to be appropriate for the audience? Was the length appropriate? 	<p>The performance began at 8pm and ran for one hour. This seemed to be an appropriate start time and length.</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 to the building is clearly marked, and internal signage is adequate. I was not aware of Braille signage or signage for audio loops</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> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How many BSL/captioned/audio described performances are there at the venue? 	<table border="1" data-bbox="571 510 1251 1032"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Yes/No</th> <th></th> <th>Yes/No</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>BSL interpretation</td> <td>no</td> <td>Audio description of performances</td> <td>no</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Captioning</td> <td>no</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>no</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>This performance had attracted a large number of disabled people, and was adequate provision for them.</p>		Yes/No		Yes/No	BSL interpretation	no	Audio description of performances	no	Captioning	no	Lift/ramp	yes	Accessible toilets	yes	Accessible marketing materials eg website or alternative formats eg large print, Plain English	no
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Customer service <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How was the quality and efficiency of staff (e.g. box office, front of house, bar and/or catering) If possible, comment on how responsive they were to the needs of disabled customers? 	<p>Box office and bar staff were efficient and friendly. It was easy to pick up my ticket, and there were plenty of staff working at the bar. I am not sure whether it was the fault of the venue or the visiting company, or even a deliberate choice that the programmes were not handed out prior to the performance.</p> <p>Staff appeared to have been fully responsive to the needs of disabled customers</p>																

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.