



Scottish Arts Council

## ARTISTIC EVALUATION – VISUAL ARTS

**Organisation/Venue:** The Modern Institute  
**Title of Event:** Victoria Morton  
**Type of Event:** one-person exhibition  
**Date of Visit:** Saturday, 28 May 2004

**Overall Rating** (Please rate the production 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 resorting to the language of statistics the overall rating for Vitoria Morton's exhibition at the Modern Institute is very good. Out of 85 possible points, I have rated this individual show with 63 points. It was reassuring to see that this solo show featured the latest of Morton's signature style paintings displaying the vibrancy and symbolism of internalised landscapes.**

**The only few constructive comments and recommendations are directed to the practice of acknowledging the curatorial vision; the Scottish Arts Council contribution; the information design, the contextual public events and the external/internal/accessibility signage.**

**Name:** Iliyana Nedkova  
**Specialist Advisor**

**Date:** 29/06/2004

This report has been commissioned by the Scottish Arts Council to evaluate the artistic quality of the production named below. 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 may be made available to Scottish Arts Council Officers, Council and Committee members, and specialist advisors as appropriate. It will 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 Council to report on the overall performance of its Core 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:

Criteria	Rating	Comments and key reasons for rating
Vision and imagination of artist's work <sup>1</sup>	5	This solo show featured the latest of Morton's signature style paintings of half-abstract, half-figuration. One could find the artist's characteristic vivid colours, solid almost organic shapes, vigorously painted or smooth textures and large-scale formats. All works exhibited the vibrancy and symbolism of internalised landscapes.
Curatorial vision/ selection – also indicate if the event has originated from the exhibiting organisation, part of a festival, artist-led, or commissioned	4	There was no explicit reference that I could find to a curator/s and selector/s behind this solo exhibition. One could only assume that the exhibition was curated by the Modern Institute staff as Victoria Morton is one of stable of artists. I was privileged to be given a guided tour by Toby Webster who indicated that he was involved in selecting the works on display alongside with the artist.
Events available/ groups targeted – workshops, artist's talks, discussion groups, pre-school/ primary/ secondary students, >18,>60 etc	4	I wasn't aware of any public events accompanying this solo exhibition which could be seen as a missed opportunity to contextualise the show. On the other hand, the need for such events is probably not as justified if the Modern Institute is to be considered primarily as a commercial gallery representing a roster of artists. Victoria Morton's show at a publicly funded, non-commercial gallery might have benefited more from a range of discursive activities open to the public and targeted to specific group.
Standard of Presentation – use of equipment, space and overall layout/hang	4	The exhibition design was of very good standards aided by the fact that there was no reliance on high-tech equipment. The highly visual presence of Victoria Morton's work and the different scale also contributed to the excellent layout. The only information available on site was a floor plan as a basic navigation tool indicating the title, size and medium of each work but with no reference to the gallery or the show duration. There was no further information to be found online, either. It may be worth considering if this minimal approach towards the information design is appropriate.
Foot Traffic – number of visitors/ participants at the time of visit	4	It is Saturdays that normally attract most of the gallery goers. My visit coincided with the last Saturday of the show and I have had to arrange to see the Modern Institute Director by appointment. Therefore there was no one else at the time of my visit and I have enjoyed a personalised tour. I would like to think that the foot traffic is otherwise carefully monitored with regards the gallery's core activities.

<sup>1</sup> Quality of ideas, skills in execution, if you've seen the work of this artist(s) before – particularly in relation to new work or second productions

Audience Reaction – time spent, interest, activity, and visitors' books comments	4	It will be difficult to give a first-hand comment on any of the visitors' reactions but apparently most of Morton's clients have been delighted with her latest works. However, I couldn't see any visitors' comments book or any audience data which was being collected and processed. This may be due to the Modern Institute's focus on developing a clients' base of the so called 'super shoppers'.
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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.*

Criteria	Rating	Comment and key reasons for rating
Suitability of the venue for the event	5	The Modern Institute premises are quite well positioned for staging one person exhibitions.
Information/ interpretive material at venue <sup>2</sup>	4	As stated earlier the exhibition information design was kept to a minimum which doesn't facilitate the interpretation of the works for the general public. I can assume that private clients are given personalised guided experience.
Publicity/ pre-publicity <sup>3</sup>	4	I wasn't aware of any effort to publicise Victoria Morton's exhibition.
Ease of booking and payment	5	I was very pleased about the ease of booking and the opportunity to meet the Modern Institute Director.
Location of venue	5	The Modern Institute can probably take further advantage of its central Glasgow location.
External signage and signposting	3	I would rate this as quite poor but it seems that neither the external nor internal signage and signposting are high on the Modern Institute priorities list.
Internal directional signage	3	Please see above.
Access and provision for disabled people	3	The access and provision for disabled people wasn't indicated on any of the publicity or information sheets available. The website also doesn't appear to have any details.
Opening times/ timing of the event	4	Victoria Morton's show seemed to have been timed very well with regards of her latest works and her clients. However, the opening times of the gallery weren't indicated neither in print nor online.
Customer service - quality and efficiency of staff (e.g. welcoming/ informed)	5	To be given a tour by a very welcoming and knowledgeable staff makes all the difference to gallery reception services staffed by volunteers with little to no involvement in the exhibition process.

<sup>2</sup> These include wall panels, labels, catalogues, leaflets, artists CVs etc., assessing the range, quality and clarity

<sup>3</sup> Publicity/pre-publicity (leaflets, posters, etc), including the range, content, and when and where available. Please be alert to the publicity available prior to your visit to the event. Please also view and comment on the company's website where one is advertised. Comment on the ease of use, and quality of content and presentation, and currency of information

Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council Funding <sup>4</sup>	3	There was no acknowledgement on any of the exhibition publicity and publications, both off- and on-line. This may leave people with the wrong impression that there is no support provided by the Scottish Arts Council towards any of the activities undertaken by The Modern Institute. It may be advisable to include an acknowledgement even on past events and exhibitions especially on the website. It may also help to be more transparent and indicate to which particular area of activities has the support been channelled.
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<sup>4</sup> The following is an extract from the Scottish Arts Council's conditions of grant for funded organisations:

“The company should acknowledge Scottish Arts Council funding in press releases, at launches, on all published materials (including leaflets, brochures, programmes, posters, notices display, exhibition materials, websites and advertising). Acknowledgement of the Scottish Arts Council grant must also be made in any secondary or indirect products arising from the revenue funding such as recordings, publications, video, broadcasts, computer programmes etc.”

Please comment on whether these conditions of grant were met, including use and prominence of the Scottish Arts Council logo on the company's website.