

### Artistic Evaluation – Visual Arts (Live Art)

**Organisation/Venue:** New Moves/The Arches

**Title of Event:** National Review of Live Art (NRLA)  
Part of New Territories

**Type of Event:** International Festival

**Date of Visit:** 20/21 March 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)*

#### 4 - Good

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.

This form is available electronically. Please word process/type response.

Assessment will depend of nature of event/exhibition reviewed but we anticipate it should take between 30 - 45 minutes to fill this form in.

## 1. Artistic Assessment

Please evaluate the **artistic quality** of the exhibition/event and assess the strengths and weaknesses with specific reference to the following:

### 1.1 Vision and imagination

	Rating	Comment and key reasons for rating
<p>Artist's Work <i>(include quality of ideas, skills in execution, if you seen the work of this artist/ artists before - particularly in relation to new work, or second productions)</i></p>	3	<p>Variable. NRLA shows a range of work including large sections of student or recently graduated artists productions (...some 1s), combined with some excellent productions and presentations by exemplary artists such as COOL (one audience member described being able to focus on the minimal and non-sensational experience within COOL as a "luxury of time", Tim Etchells and Tehching Hsieh (some 5s), giving this an average rating of 3. Clearly NRLA shows excellent work. This is also the problem of lack of clear delineation between the premises or contexts for different sections of the festival as a whole – be it from the overall umbrella of New Territories programmed and on what basis. This appears at a number of levels. With prior knowledge one might recognise the origins / heritages of each programme stream – but one is either faced with going with a 'mixed bag' of work or suffering if wanting traditionally clear interpretation. Too the newcomer, this could be a very mixed experience, ultimately letting down the quality of the very best work and (without adopting an exclusive position on 'premier league' artists) not doing full justice to the best artists work.</p> <p>Largely I would say that of the best work I got to see it fitted into a category of pure performance and the experience involved the shared occupation of time and witnessing direct experience. Observation, the incidental and duration all contributed to the strongest work I experienced, much of which fell into a formalist tradition.</p> <p>On the other had the media work on view was mostly analogue interpretation of performance on screen and surprised me in not exploring any of the new areas of distributed performance, electronic theatre or multi user work. Perhaps with the exception of Rosie Wards installation and Young-Hae Chang Heavy Industries/Candy Factory/NMS commissioned website.</p>
<p>Curatorial Vision/Selection</p>	3	<p>Inconsistent rationale for selection within different segments of the festival. Cherry picked exemplary works displayed the Artistic Directors desire for both subversion and risk (4), international work in New Territories, whilst non-rigorous attention to inclusive selection processes left sections feeling vague and not thought out thoroughly (2 video work and some of Elevator). The curatorial vision is unclear. Perhaps too broad a spread of aims</p>

		<p>leading to lip service to media art and confusion between Review and Festival. One regular visitor described the event as an annual gathering of the clans.</p> <p>The Platform Events provided clear rationale for the overall event. Somehow the event has lost focus since previous years. Elevator seemed very mixed and is no longer the open submission process, which historically allowed many people to participate. The whole process of cultural arbitration and selection process might benefit from some review. The NRLA continues showing 'fresh' work by younger artists or students but from fairly predictable sources, but this should not diminish the importance to the individual practitioners development and opportunity to show in a major event.</p>
Please indicate, as far as you are aware, if the event has been originated by the exhibiting organisation, hired, a collaboration, part of a festival, artist led	4	<p>There was a fair split of productions ranging from newly commissioned for and touring to NRLA – excellent new works by COOL and Richard Layzell, commissioned by NRLA through their artists residencies. Many of the artists working within a discipline of pure performance art make work using improvisational techniques, which are ongoing developments (Lee Wen). New Territories appears to include many British Premieres, but no new commissions.</p>

## 1.2 Clarity of communication

	Rating	Comment and key reasons for rating
Please indicate range, quantity, clarity, tone and level of Interpretative information/ material provided at the venue ( <i>wall panels, labels, catalogue, leaflets, artists CVs</i> )	3	<p>Good vocal links from the compere between performances. Whilst I tend to side on the side of keeping interpretation to the minimum and let the art do the talking I must note poor signage on exhibition spaces (sellotaped torn out pages from the catalogue on the doors....). No individual notes on individual exhibitions or performance notes (other than the ones provided ad hoc by the artists).</p> <p>Each day a running order sheet was distributed.</p>
Please indicate events available and groups targeted ( <i>workshops, artist's talks, discussion groups, primary, pre-school, secondary, students, over 18, over 60, other</i> )	4	<p>Participants of Richard Layzell's workshop considered it excellent. Challenging and constructive – leading to a collective work and future meetings. 2 participants who had done another workshop apparently had not found it as good. The range of other educational events and targeted groups - I would not like to comment on.</p>

## 1.3 Quality of production

Suitability of the venue for the	4	The Arches is very central. It has improved its infrastructure and fabric (which has the down side of
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exhibition/event		losing some of its architectural character). It suffers badly from audio interference caused by the trains running overhead and PA/techno sound checks (yet elegantly accommodated by all performers I witnessed suffer the intrusions!). The venue is very enclosed and forms a potboilers urban clubbish atmosphere. During a discussion on future venue (Tramway or Arches) as part of the Sunday morning artists breakfast/talk, comments were fed back by artists complimenting the Arches for: Centrality Social space Roughness Concerns raised included: Capacity (in response to comments on queuing) were Size of spaces (one well respected international artist who felt the spaces available too small for him to present his work) Lack of peripheral spaces for site-specific work. I personally think that the 'archness' of the spaces does not always provide the neutrality some artists might need.
Standard of presentation <i>(include use of equipment, use of space and overall layout/hang)</i>	4	Artists needs within the festival are generally technically light. However the classic racing around for a vhs player and laptop/data-projector adaptor were observed. Overall performances were well presented. Rosie Ward might have benefited from a brighter clearer projector.
Please indicate the number of visitors/participants at the time of your visit	4	Saturday evening, on arrival I could not get in! Sold out. I do not know the capacity but estimate that on Saturday night up to 400 were present. The Sunday somewhere between 100 (morning) and 300 (late afternoon).
Please indicate the audience reaction <i>(please include time spent, interest, activity and visitors' book comments)</i>	5	Mostly very positive and favourable. I would describe the audience as mature and 'complicit'. Much prolonged applause. They have a sense of ownership and need the event.

## 2. Management of Event

Please evaluate the way the event was presented/organised by the organisation and by the venue. Please answer, where relevant, with reference to the checklist below adding any other comments/observations you may have.

	Rating	Comment and key reasons for rating
Publicity/ pre-publicity <sup>1</sup>	4	Good new brochure provided in good time along with website.

<sup>1</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

Accessibility of venue	3	No stairs and good reception area. Not particularly inviting to a non-live art/club oriented audience (and not much public / street intervention to counter this).
Ease of payment (if applicable)	4	Reception area well staffed to do this.
Location of venue	5	Very central and adjacent to train station.
External signposting and signage	3	Discreet signage for Arches and 2 entrances could be difficult for newcomers.
Internal directional signage	4	New illuminated sign made entrance to NRLA easy. A map provided by NRLA indicated allocation of internal spaces. Daily programme included internal diagrammatic map, friendly staff and fellow festival attendees.
Access and provision for disabled people	3	Good show of staff that probably would have dealt at some level with individual needs. Good levels of physical access and build – but would have been a nightmare for wheelchair user having to queue round corners when it got busy. No audio loop for deafness or signers.
Opening times/ timing of the event	3	Timing within the live art/new media annual calendar – no major conflicts. At times too close proximity of finish/start times of individual events (combined with full capacity) led to some unnecessary queuing and some people not getting into every event.
Attractiveness for children/families	1	It's easy to generalise about families and might open up a debate on what is acceptable in our current society for children to witness. ...But I reckon this was mostly not so suitable for children. And then this begs the question why should it be? One or two kids present but certainly much content might have been deemed disturbing and the durational aspects of much of the work hard going for a generation raised on post modern kids telly. As a father it would have been good to have a crèche but overall would rather have the facility of the festival with its risk factor – than a sanitised 'family friendly' version.
Customer service - quality and efficiency of staff (e.g. welcoming/ informed)	4	Arches staff and NRLA team friendly and helpful. Seemed well informed and in touch with the nature of the event.

Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council Funding <sup>2</sup>	4	In printed electronically published material very clear. No stings in media work for any sponsors.
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**Name: Mike Stubbs**

**Date: 21/03/04**

**Advisor**      ✓

**Scottish Arts Council Officer**     

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<sup>2</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.