



Scottish **Arts** Council

Artistic Evaluation – Visual Arts

Organisation/Venue; Talbot Rice Gallery

Title; Merlin James

Type of Event: *Exhibition*

Date of Visit: 13 March '04

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)*

Competent

Academic show with a potentially interesting link to the permanent collections, which could have merited further investigation. Installation was not helped by the dated nature of the space.

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
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>	Good	First time I had seen the artist work first hand –very eclectic range. Very Art Historical in nature.
Curatorial Vision/Selection	Good	Art Historical aspect of the show gave curatorial link to the Talbot Rice collections.
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		Curated by Talbot Rice

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>	Competent	In exhibition space wall panels and handouts were provided to guide around works. This was complemented by a small cased display on the upper level containing archive material. Although referred to in the gallery handout, there was no information regarding the curatorial rationale for including the Teniers' work in the main gallery area ie who's decision was this- artist or curator? What does the transaction say about James' work or academic collections?
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>	Poor	At the time of my visit the gallery staff were unable to tell me of any educational activity which had been organised in addition to the publicised lunchtime talk on 31 March. Unable to comment on groups targeted.

1.3 Quality of production

Suitability of the venue for the exhibition/event	Good	Resonance with permanent collections. Interesting overview of established artist's practice
Standard of presentation <i>(include use of equipment, use of space and overall layout/hang)</i>	Competent	A lot of work accommodated across the gallery spaces which themselves are looking a bit tired.
Please indicate the number of visitors/participants at the time of your visit	Good	Around four visitors to the gallery space at the time of my visit.
Please indicate the audience reaction <i>(please include time spent, interest, activity and visitors' book comments)</i>	Good	People were taking time to go around the works and reading available material.

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 ¹	Competent	Didn't see any material prior to visit.
Accessibility of venue	Competent	Set within Edinburgh University campus, with no on street presence. Limited signage from bridge entrance. Some signage from concourse area. Gallery on upper floor – access by stair or lift
Ease of payment (if applicable)		N/A Free entrance to exhibition
Location of venue	Competent	Not visible from main thoroughfares. Could benefit from additional signage to attract visitors unfamiliar with the university location.

¹ 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

External signposting and signage	Poor	Not visible from main thoroughfares. Could benefit from additional signage to attract visitors unfamiliar with the university location.
Internal directional signage	Competent	Adequate signage referring visitors to upper floor.
Access and provision for disabled people	Competent	Lift available for wheelchair users, although access from street and quadrangle poor
Opening times/timing of the event	Competent	Standard opening hours (closed Mon) 10am-5pm
Attractiveness for children/families	Competent	Academic nature of show would not lend itself to family visits. No info on educational/outreach work for kids, so can't say whether families have been targeted.
Customer service - quality and efficiency of staff (eg welcoming/informed)	Competent	Front of house Staff not informed of educational programme – asked me to call back on Monday
Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council Funding ²	Good	SAC acknowledged on all print material. SAC is listed as a funder on the Talbot Rice website.

Name: Lorraine Grant

Date: 17 March '03

Advisor x

Scottish Arts Council Officer

² 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.