



Artistic Evaluation – Visual Arts

Organisation/Venue: Transmission

Title of Event: *More Boots = Many Routes*: Eric Wesley, Lee O'Connor, Ryan Doolan

Type of Event: visual art exhibition

Date of Visit: Saturday 25 October 2003

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 a Council Officer 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 it 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 organisation 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:

- **Very Poor** – standard falls well below what is acceptable
- **Poor** - not attaining acceptable standards of conception or presentation
- **Competent** – routine rather than especially interesting
- **Good** – well conceived and executed.
- **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 event

1.1 Vision and Imagination:

Rating for this section (Please tick)		Comments and key reasons for rating:
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent	x	
Good		
Excellent		

It was difficult to discern the rationale for this group show; the only clues were located in the title. The work appeared largely unrelated and there was little resonance between the exhibited pieces. The strongest representation was that of O'Connor; this was greatly assisted by his showing five pieces as opposed to Wesley's three and Doolan's one.

1.2 Clarity of Communication:

Rating for this section (Please tick)		Comments and key reasons for rating:
Very Poor		
Poor	x	
Competent		
Good		
Excellent		

As above; no curatorial rationale was offered for this show. Some background information on each of the artists appeared as a hand out which was available on entry to the gallery. This gallery pursues the curatorial route of not captioning exhibits. This information was partially provided as a diagram on the back of the handout, but it could have been set out in a much more direct and helpful way. Information about dates and media was not included. The handout states that Wesley's bronze is designed '*with the traditional art buyer in mind*' – implying some, albeit ironic, engagement with the selling of work - but no prices are stated for any of the works in the show.

You are also asked to assess the **strengths and weaknesses** of the event with specific reference to the following:

1.3 Artist's Work - please include:

- quality of ideas
- skills in execution
- have you seen the work of this artist/these artists before (particularly in relation to new work, or second productions)

Rating for this section (Please tick)		Comments and key reasons for rating:
Very Poor		<p>I found the exhibition as whole very weak because of the lack of an articulated rationale for this particular work being shown together. I was particularly puzzled by the inclusion of the solitary piece by Doolan and the decision to represent the American artist, Wesley, with only three pieces, which were extremely diverse. The pieces exhibited – a drawing and a related maquette for a weak war memorial idea revisiting the work of Oldenburg through a movie title, and a Chapman Brothers-esque editioned bronze – did not seem to justify the effort which had been made by the curatorial group to introduce this work to a new audience in Glasgow. The work of O'Connor came across well; there was sufficient work to offer insight into his areas of enquiry and the pieces were interesting and well executed.</p> <p>I would therefore rate the show as whole Poor for this category, but the showing by O'Connor* as Good.</p>
Poor	x	
Competent		
Good	x*	
Excellent		

1.4 Curatorial Vision/Selection:

Rating for this section (Please tick)		Comments and key reasons for rating:
Very Poor		<p>As above. I spoke with the invigilator, who was one of the curatorial group. He said that they aimed to find new and interesting work and to provide exhibition facilities.</p>
Poor	x	
Competent		
Good		
Excellent		

Please also indicate, as far as you are aware, if the event:

has been originated by the exhibiting organisation **X**

hired a collaboration

part of a festival artist led

(Please tick above as appropriate)

1.5 Standards of presentation – please include:

- use of equipment
- use of space
- overall layout/hang

Rating for this section (Please tick)		Comments and key reasons for rating:
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent	x	
Good		
Excellent		

The gallery is spacious and well-presented. Work was displayed with plenty of space around it and well lit. There seemed to be no particular logic to the placing of the work – pieces by Wesley and O'Connor were intermixed with no apparent purpose to this placing.

1.6 Please indicate the range, quantity, clarity, tone and level of Interpretative information/material provided at the venue:

- wall panels
- labels
- catalogue
- leaflets
- artists CVs

Rating for this section (Please tick)		Comments and key reasons for rating:
Very Poor		
Poor	X	
Competent		
Good		
Excellent		

Apart from the hand out there was no interpretative material, although a range of publications and previous catalogues was available for purchase.

1.7 Please indicate the number of visitors/participants at the time of your visit:

Rating for this section (Please tick)		Comments and key reasons for rating:
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent	x	
Good		
Excellent		

Two others at the time of my visit. The invigilator said that response to the show had been good and over one hundred people had attended the opening.

1.8 Please indicate the audience reaction – to include:

- time spent
- interest
- activity

- visitors' book comments

Rating for this section (Please tick)		Comments and key reasons for rating:
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent		
Good		
Excellent		

1.9 Please indicate how appropriate you think the work was for the audience:

Rating for this section (Please tick)		Comments and key reasons for rating:
Very Poor		
Poor	x	
Competent		
Good		
Excellent		

1.10 Please indicate events available and groups targeted:

Rating for this section (Please tick)		Comments and key reasons for rating:
Very Poor		
Poor	x	
Competent		
Good		
Excellent		

- | | | | |
|-------------------|--------------------------|------------|--------------------------|
| workshops | <input type="checkbox"/> | pre-school | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| artist's talks | <input type="checkbox"/> | primary | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| discussion groups | <input type="checkbox"/> | secondary | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | | students | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | | over 18 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | | over 60 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | | other | <input type="checkbox"/> |

(Please tick above as appropriate)

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.

2.1 Was the venue suitable for the event?

Yes – reasons as stated above.

2.2 Information/Interpretative material provided at the venue (e.g. programmes, displays etc)

- range, quantity and clarity

Poor – see above. This would appear to be a conscious decision on the part of the curatorial group, but could benefit from some further consideration as part of a review of the aims, objectives and values of the gallery

2.3 Publicity/Pre-Publicity for the Event (leaflets, posters, etc)

- 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.

A poster accompanied the show but offered little information other than the names of the artists and the dates of the exhibition.

The web site was not up to date and there was no information about this exhibition. SAC was only mentioned within a list of links under the heading 'paymasters'.

2.4 Accessibility of the venue

- ease of payment (if applicable)
- location
- external signposting
- internal directional signing
- access and provision for disabled people
- opening hours/ timing of event
- attractiveness for children/families

The venue is easily accessible and benefits from being alongside other visual arts venues and artists' studios. It is totally accessible to people with disabilities. External signposting requires improvement; it is not possible to see into the gallery from the street and it would therefore be helpful to use the outside walls to provide better guidance on what is available inside. There was a display of multiple current exhibition posters in a glass case near the door, but this was not particularly eye catching or informative. Opening hours are quite good – Tuesday to Saturday 11am to 5pm. Either a later closing time or one late night opening per week may suit the nature of this venue. The venue does not seem to be aiming at provision for children or families, although I am sure that they would be welcome to attend the shows.

2.5 Customer service

- quality and efficiency of staff (eg welcoming, informed)

The invigilator was invisible behind a closed door; this does not bode well for the security of the work, or offer a positive point of contact for visitors. Once

contacted, he was friendly and helpful, and offered a considerable amount of background information about the organisation.

3. Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council Funding (if applicable)

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 and 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, and computer programmes etc. “

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

Conditions met, but only just. SAC acknowledgement half missed off the handout sheet because of faulty copying and no visible acknowledgement in gallery.

4. Scoring

Overall Rating. Please rate the event overall, taking into account your ratings for each section. Please state the key reasons for your overall ratings – that is the particular strengths and weaknesses.

Overall Rating <i>(Please tick)</i>		Comments and key reasons for rating:
Very Poor		I am sorry to have to rate this exhibition Poor, as I consider that it is wholly admirable for this artist-run gallery to have survived for twenty years. It is a good space, effectively maintained and presented and addressing a difficult but worthwhile area – the exposure and creation of audiences for new work. The rating applies more to the show reviewed than to the gallery itself, but some generic points arise which may be worthy of the curators' consideration. It is of paramount importance that a venue of this nature establish its mission and key purpose and harness whatever resources are available to the pursuit of jointly established prioritised objectives. More focus is needed on the methods and manner of achieving the group's objectives. At present the activity is over inward looking and self-referential. The issue of artist as curator is an important one; maybe this group could initiate some discussion of this issue?
Poor	x	
Competent		
Good		
Excellent		

Name: Elizabeth Lydiate
Date: 27 October 2003

Advisor **(Please tick above as appropriate)**

Scottish Arts Council Officer

