

Artistic Evaluation – Crafts/Visual Arts

Organisation/Venue: Travelling Gallery at Muirkirk (as part of the Ayrshire and Arran Tour)

Title of Event: Jack Cunningham

Type of Event: Exhibition

Date of Visit: 23 October 2003

This report has been commissioned by the Scottish Arts Council to evaluate the artistic quality of the event named above. 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 event 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 on the nature of the event reviewed but we anticipate it should take between 30 - 45 minutes to fill in this form.

1. Artistic Assessment (Please evaluate the **artistic quality** of the event):

1.1 Vision and Imagination:

Rating for this section (*Please tick*)

Very Poor Poor Competent Good Excellent

Comments and key reasons for rating:

This was an imaginative curatorial choice for the context. While studio jewellers have been challenging perceptions of the nature of jewellery for over 30 years, public awareness of this is still very limited. The work of Jack Cunningham expands ideas about what 'the brooch' is about, but its narrative nature enables it to be understood and enjoyed at different levels and by a range of audiences. The impact goes beyond the one-man show, providing a starting point for thought about a whole range of jewellery/badges/labels worn on the person

1.2 Clarity of Communication:

Rating for this section (*Please tick*)

Very Poor Poor Competent Good Excellent

Comments and key reasons for rating:

Presentation was admirably straightforward, allowing the work, supplemented by original sketchbooks (which could be handled – a strong plus) and brief introductions from gallery staff, to speak for itself. It was less clear how the strips of 35mm slides fitted into the presentation (see below)

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
- use of materials

Rating for this section (*Please tick*)

Very Poor Poor Competent Good Excellent

Comments and key reasons for rating:

This is craftwork of a very high standard: a deep knowledge of materials and techniques used as the basis for creating intensely personal and thoughtful pieces with a range of expression.

1.4 Curatorial Vision/Selection:

Rating for this section (*Please tick*)

Very Poor Poor Competent Good Excellent

Comments and key reasons for rating:

See 1.1 above

Please also indicate, as far as you are aware, if the event has been;

originated by the organisation 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 arrangement

Rating for this section *(Please tick)*

Very Poor Poor Competent Good Excellent

Comments and key reasons for rating:

The scale of work was well suited to the environment and the exhibition formed an aesthetically pleasing and accessible whole. The less successful aspect was the strips of 35mm slides to demonstrate sources of inspiration which were difficult to see and probably did not work effectively with a group in the bus. Similarly the video (22 minutes long), although a very suitable component in the education pack, required more space, calm and time than would normally be available to visitors on the bus and would have been more effective in a conventional gallery setting.

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

Rating for this section *(Please tick)*

Very Poor Poor Competent Good Excellent

Comments and key reasons for rating:

I have not rated this, as it is unfair to judge on the basis of a spot visit when the Gallery was only present in the location for one day. There were no visitors during the time I was there (2.00-3.00pm). Advance publicity had clearly had some effect as there had been around 15 visitors and a photographer earlier in the day. This said it was surprising the local school claimed to be unaware of the visit. Similarly I was surprised by a passing comment from the curator of a significant venue in Ayrshire, which might have been considered an obvious location for leaflets (the McLaurin Gallery) that they had not been aware in advance of the tour. This raises questions about contacts and lines of communication within the hiring authorities which in this case appear to need more thought.

1.7 Please indicate the audience reaction. For example;

- time spent
- feedback
- interest
- participation

Rating for this section *(Please tick)*

Very Poor Poor Competent Good Excellent

Comments and key reasons for rating:

No evidence – see 1.6 above

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

Rating for this section (*Please tick*)

Very Poor Poor Competent Good Excellent

Comments and key reasons for rating:

As noted in 1.1 above, a very suitable choice of work - which challenges perceptions yet is accessible to a range of audiences and is an ideal starting point for outreach.

1.9 Please indicate events available and groups targeted:

(*Please tick as appropriate*)

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

Rating for this section (*Please tick*)

Very Poor Poor Competent Good Excellent

Comments and key reasons for rating:

This tour (and associated workshops) has a heavy emphasis on schools (although I understand that elsewhere a workshop had been provided for arts development workers). Although not present at one myself, the description of the structure sounded most appropriate, especially when taken in conjunction with the education pack which I thought excellent.

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?

Rating for this section (*Please tick*)

Very Poor Poor Competent Good Excellent

Comments and key reasons for rating:

Visiting Muirkirk – a relatively isolated community with very limited access to cultural provision - would in principle certainly contribute to fulfilling the objectives of the Travelling Gallery and the hiring authority, even if actual attendance was very small on this occasion. Situated at the back of the car park, the bus was less obvious than I had expected and the sign on the pavement was too small and lacked impact.

2.2 Please indicate the range, quantity, clarity, tone and level of Interpretative information/material provided at the venue. For example:

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

Rating for this section (*Please tick*)

Very Poor Poor Competent Good Excellent

Comments and key reasons for rating:

The catalogue was beautifully thought through and, perhaps because small, had a sense of preciousness (in the positive sense) appropriate to the subject. Language in this, the labels etc was generally accessible, although I did wonder whether a short introductory panel (did I miss this?) might have been useful

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. Rating for this section (*Please tick*)

Very Poor Poor Competent Good Excellent

Comments and key reasons for rating:

Difficult to obtain an overall picture in this case, hence no rating but see issues raised in 1.6 above

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

Rating for this section (*Please tick*)

Very Poor Poor Competent Good Excellent

Comments and key reasons for rating:

see 2.1 above

2.5 Customer service

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

Rating for this section (*Please tick*)

Very Poor Poor Competent Good Excellent

