



Artistic Evaluation – Visual Arts

Organisation/Venue: **WASPS Studios, Aberdeen & WASPS Citizens Studios, Edinburgh**

Title of Event: **WASPS OPENDOORS**

Type of Event: **visual arts event**

Date of Visit: **4 & 5 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: I believe that we can distinguish between the idea of sustaining the vision of opening the doors to the public of 13 buildings across Scotland housing hundreds of artists' studios and the quality of the work on display. While the work in the two studios visited varied in its artistic quality, I do believe that the event should be celebrated for its clear message and for providing imagination stimulus and informal networking opportunities for both the specialist and the art-lover in search for a bargain gift.
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent		
Good		
Excellent	X	
		This is the second of these unique, annual visual arts events for Scotland. However, I haven't been able to visit any studios during the WASPS OPENDOORS in 2003 and can't provide a comparative analysis.

1.2 Clarity of Communication:

Rating for this section (Please tick)		Comments and key reasons for rating: The two visited artists' studios appeared as unpretentious yet very exciting places to experience. It is difficult to estimate how much design work has been put into making each visit easier to navigate as to facilitate clear communication. I find that the improvised reception area at the WASPS Studios in Aberdeen contributed further to the welcoming atmosphere.
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent		
Good	X	
Excellent	X	
		The full potential of the Internet and the well-designed leaflet have both been used to allow a hassle-free planning of the visit/s. Both served as friendly and informative introduction to the event. I was slightly disappointed that the artists listed in the leaflet haven't been paired with their studios similarly as on the website. Also, I'd welcome slightly better signage on each studio door (to be re-used year in year out), greater emphasis on artists' names on the leaflet (rather than being marginalised) and perhaps further web links for each artist if relevant.

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: Browsing through even two of the studios in two cities makes it obvious that artists engage with various ideas and subject matter in their work often considering a range of techniques and media. A fleeting visit however is not quite enough to engage in depth with individual works. Inevitably, some of the works still retained the rough and unfinished state of work-in-progress. I haven't seen any of the work before but in the process of networking and chatting to the artists realised that some of the artists have been or are involved in projects with artists I know or work with.
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent		
Good	X	
Excellent	X	

1.4 Curatorial Vision/Selection:

Rating for this section (Please tick)		Comments and key reasons for rating: The WASPS charity managerial team should be acknowledged for sustaining this event for a second year now and could perhaps only build upon the success so far for its next year event. I was interested to find out who sits behind the curatorial vision for this event but haven't been able to at any point on the website or the leaflet. Is it artists-led or entirely initiated by the WASPS charity workers? Perhaps in the future this kind of information could be made available to the public.
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent		
Good	X	
Excellent	X	

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

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

(Please tick above as appropriate)

1.5 Standards of presentation – please include:

- use of equipment
- use of space
- overall layout

Rating for this section (Please tick)		Comments and key reasons for rating: It is hardly appropriate to comment on the standards of presentation as they differed from artist to artist as opposed to any curatorial-like intervention. They reflected the restrictions of the space as well as the personal ideas for clearing enough floor and wall space for presenting, the overall layout and the exhibition equipment used. My overall impression was that the Citizens Studios in Edinburgh were far more 'dressed up' for the special weekend with seemingly fresh coat of paint and extra lighting units, while the Aberdeen Studios appeared to have kept the 'artists in action' style of presentation.
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent		
Good	X	
Excellent	X	

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

Rating for this section (Please tick)		Comments and key reasons for rating:
Very Poor		Please refer to my comments in 1.2 and 1.4
Poor		
Competent		
Good	X	
Excellent	X	

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		There was a steady stream of visitors/viewers at the time of my Saturday & Sunday afternoon visits. My 'professional' visits lasted for 30-40 min in total at each venue. It was difficult to monitor the other visitors' stay and the level of their engagement.
Poor		
Competent		
Good		I believe that a more sophisticated monitoring system has been considered including the feedback from the visitors' response form which in Aberdeen was handed over at the reception but in Edinburgh it was left to people's self-initiative.
Excellent	X	

1.8 Please indicate the audience reaction – to include:

- time spent
- interest
- activity
- **visitors' book comments: individual artists had such books with a number of entries.**

Rating for this section (Please tick)		Comments and key reasons for rating:
Very Poor		Please refer to the above comments in 1.2; 1.4 & 1.7.
Poor		
Competent		
Good	X	
Excellent	X	

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: There is hardly any better match-making between an audience curious for either professional or personal reasons in visiting artists' studios and artists who are interested in selling their work direct or making initial contacts with various members of the public. I do think that such an initiative is timely and appropriate for Scotland and could easily be staged during yet another weekend throughout the year, if this proves practical and feasible.
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent		
Good		
Excellent	X	

1.10 Please indicate events available and groups targeted:

Rating for this section (Please tick)		Comments and key reasons for rating: I would rate the range of accompanying related events: additional free activities including workshops, demos, talks and family events as excellent but I haven't been able to get involved in any or get advance information from the website. Looking forward to a clear list of events for the next edition of WASPS OPENDOORS.
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent		
Good	X	
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. Please refer to the comments in 1.9.
- 2.2 Information/Interpretive material provided at the venue (e.g. programmes, displays etc)
- range, quantity and clarity
EXCELLENT to GOOD. Please refer to the comments in 1.6.

- 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.
EXCELLENT to GOOD. Please refer to the comments in 1.6.

- 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
- EXCELLENT. Please refer to the above comments.**

- 2.5 Customer service
- quality and efficiency of staff (eg welcoming, informed)
EXCELLENT. Both reception assistants (only at WASPS Aberdeen) and artists seemed very welcoming, willing to share information and accommodate basic visitor's needs and queries.

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.

All printed leaflets/flyers and the general WASPS OPENDOORS website have had all the proper acknowledgements.

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.

My overall impression is of a well-organised and fairly well-resourced event, quite sensitive to the cultural environment of Scotland.

Despite my minor disagreements with some of the unresolved publicity issue and the venue limitations, I would give WASPS OPENDOORS show an excellent overall rating and welcome any future editions conceived and executed to such a standard and even higher.

Excellent X

Name: Iliyana Nedkova

Date: Monday: 6 October 2003

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

Scottish Arts Council Officer