

# **National Review of Live Art 2004**

## **Notes to accompany evaluation form**

**Prepared by Mike Stubbs 26.03.04**

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### **SUMMARY**

This report accompanies my evaluation form and focuses on the NRLA exclusively, a four day event held in Glasgow focussing on live art which forms part of New Territories. New Territories consists both of a series of dance related performance works presented over a period between February 16 and March 21 and the NRLA, 18-21. I attended from Saturday evening to Sunday evening. Clearly my visit was shorter than preferred, however I got a good sense of the spirit of this years festival.

### **CONTEXT**

Historically Nikki Millican had organised two distinct festivals: New Moves and the NRLA. New moves focussed on dance and movement related work. NRLA on Live Art. Much discussion took place around defining Live Art through the eighties, primarily by the Arts Council of England and its clients who formed an informal network of Live Art Promoters. No conclusion was reached. There was a tendency for a polarisation between pure performance art and its lineage of situationalism, action and dadaism with Live Art being a catch all for everything else or as the Live Art Development Agency put it “Live art embraces live practices that are often high risk; that address the specificities of spaces, places and audiences; that are more process than product driven; and are firmly rooted in ideas of presence. For the purpose of this report we will assume Live Art is an ongoing process bringing together diverse practices within the contemporary performative arts.

My own premise for creating such a festival would be about creating space for hybridisation, experimentation and risk. NRLA states and embodies similar principles.

### **CONCLUSION**

- NRLA represents the major hub for exchange of ideas around live art practice in Scotland.
- NRLA has a strong following and is well attended.
- NRLA presents high quality International works to an audience predominantly made up of enthusiasts and practitioners.
- New Territories has a rationale and methods of selection that seem inconsistent.
- New Territories has done well in its quest to present performance theatre/new dance alongside live art – though room for further audience analysis and cross

marketing might encourage broader publics to the more 'risky' work within NRLA and equally to the more theatrical work in New Territories.

- Because of the above, the identity of New Territories is confused.
- The relationships within the festival to its media art components seems relatively arbitrary.
- Lack of clarity in signage adds to some confusion between different levels of practice and practitioners.
- Despite improved publicity materials and profile, lack of audience composition data has meant missed opportunities for cross marketing and inclusion communities and artists in Scotland and Glasgow.
- Whilst other events in the UK are developing in profile as 'national and international' festivals, Scotland might capitalise on its lead in developing the NRLA and or New Territories by building a wider partnership in Scotland with other individuals and organizations.
- Alternatively a more modest expectation of the festival might be made accepting its important role within a niche market or known community.