

## NRLA 30<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY - DONNA RUTHERFORD

1987 and our paths literally cross as I make my way South to start college life in Nottingham, The National Review of Live Art makes the reverse journey to set up home in Glasgow.

I catch up with NRLA over the next three years at Third Eye Centre: Dancing in a dodgy production about the Moors Murderers. Calming my father down after he takes a bad turn viewing Stephen Taylor Woodrow's freaky hospital ward "Going-Bye-Byes". Squashed by Derek Jarman's giant tar paintings during my placement (and saved by the man himself!). Installing yellow sofas as production manager for Dogs in Honey show "Architecture For Babies".

*"Our love was like some battlefield where passion met with pain, and now I walk the ruined streets of memory again... Ochone"*

I made my own mark at The ICA's Platform with solo performance "Ochone" (a sorrow from before that is still with you). I'm programmed alongside influential artists such as Annie Griffin and Oscar McLennan. Overwhelmed by feedback, followed by several bookings – it was the equivalent of the old black & white movies where the review front pages come spinning onscreen after the first night of a new Broadway hit! In "Ochone" I discussed ideal worlds while eating oranges injected with the happiness of Southern Comfort, followed by glass after glass of hangover powder cure Resolve. The show was also about repeating the same mistakes again and again and again.

[As any NRLA graduate will tell you – it's all about The Repetition!]

I now realise that what I was set to do was summed up in an early review of that piece *"Acute observation on love, trust and the shattering of illusions"*

The 'observations' continued with more obvious multiple personalities in NRLA commission "Every Blank Cries Shame" and with animated genetic algorithms changing my face in "If I Knew Now What I Knew Then".

*"I enjoy dancing. I enjoy watching other people dance especially when you catch them there lost in the moment. Trouble is there is no "in the moment". Inescapably we leave the trail of our past behind us."* Tramway 2006

"Ochone Ochone" still dealt with identity and difference, this time concentrating on Men, Memory and Dancing, specifically regards my near-crippled dad and friends from Glasgow's Iraqi Kurdish community.

It all adds up. It all follows on. I recently produced a DVD of artist conversations as part of an AHRC Creative Fellowship, (co-supporter New Moves International) rearranging personal realities with Bobby Baker, Robert Pacitti, Aine Phillips and Lisa Wesley.

Attending the 'Review' as a 40-year-old slight cynic as opposed to a fresh-faced, badly dressed college intern, the thing I appreciate most is the shorthand I share with so many artists whose paths have crossed over the years (see initial metaphor). Like a game of Tetris, the role-call of NRLA associated artists may have moved sideways, upwards or fallen off the screen all together, but there exists a bravery in the foundations which created freer associations, sustaining genuine faith in unique and valuable processes.