

Lone Twin

A reason to go

In the autumn of 2003 we were in Frankfurt, for some weeks, trying to make what we were calling a 'resolving work' in a long series of performances that had to do with travel, weather and water. We, perhaps fittingly, interrupted our work in Künstlerhaus Mousonturm to journey to Midland, Perth to perform at the NRLA Australia. Presenting work at the NRLA in Midland was quite different to doing the one in Glasgow. Most mornings, just after breakfast, we'd kayak along the Swan River with Richard Layzell and long-term NRLA attendee Peter Easton. That very rarely happens in Glasgow. Another morning we walked to neighboring Guildford to try and get our minds back into the work we'd left in Germany; we would arrive back with only a few days before premiering the piece and it was still very unfinished. In tiny Guildford we found Effie's Emporium, an antique shop, and in it we found an ancient bomber-jacket covered with patches detailing the hundreds of towns visited by the jacket's previous owner. A snip at \$40, it was wrapped and we carried it home, crossing the Guildford Road Bridge over the Swan River.

We returned to Frankfurt, to a very unfinished new show, and to its premiere a few days later. We had a lot of work to do; the piece didn't have a middle. But one of us had a bomber-jacket covered in patches to wear, which we thought in terms of visual information easily filled at least five of the promised 120 minutes, which at that point was an absolute boon. *Sledge Hammer Songs* premiered at Künstlerhaus Mousonturm and some people seemed to enjoy it. The jacket did extremely well, so much so it featured in all subsequent outings of the show, often making a second visit to a town visited with its previous owner; the patches covered towns and cities across the world and we ticked them off as we went. Eventually in 2005 *Sledge Hammer Songs* made it to the NRLA Glasgow, where the jacket hadn't been before and then back to Midland, Perth, its old stomping ground for our second visit to the NRLA Australia. The jacket toured extensively for the next few years before being retired on a sad night in America where the moth, its long-term foe, finally got the upper hand.

It is unlikely that without the NRLA the jacket would have had a second go at traveling the world and it's very unlikely that we would have found ourselves floating along the Swan River with Richard and Peter. A festival like the NRLA acts like a river; it moves things, it causes any number of arrivals and departures and sets any number of things in motion. Moreover it gives things, people and ideas a place to go. Thank you Nikki and thank you Sharon Flindell in Australia, for giving us and that jacket a place and a reason to go.

Gregg and Gary

March 2009