

NRLA

PAVES: An Ongoing Conversation

The emails from 2008 to 2010

Artist Anne Bean to Cheryl Pierce at Arts admin:

here are my first thoughts around the applications for Creative collaborations and visiting arts ---

I grew up during the 1950s in the colonial system of North Rhodesia now Zambia, as part of a small Jewish community comprising many holocaust survivors and European refugees. Subsequently I attended Cape Town University in the late '60s during the depths of the apartheid system of S Africa. Even as a child, possibly especially as a child, I was aware of the surrounding warped realities.

Recently, having visited Iraq and Croatia and having set up interactive performance events, as well as having worked with a younger artist Sinead O'Donnell from Belfast, I have been struck by the different ways in which recent political upheavals have directly or indirectly informed the practice, particularly of many women. These women have all used their bodies in their work to make strong, powerful and passionate works where the interplay of personal and political meet and have vivid 'conversations.'

RITES

I have given much thought to the notion of this meeting point of the inner and outer 'landscape' and the very different responses artists can have to it.

Artists, particularly women, speak of tender and personal pieces that are interpreted in the wide context, making it impossible to simply explore an intimate reality. The contemporary push for contextualization exacerbates this and often takes away more impenetrable, intangible and inarticulatable communications.

These thoughts have led to a desire to work with, or alongside, these women and to debate these issues, researching ways in which we could create a programme of work that has both collaborative and individual elements. The women I am interested in bringing together are all different ages, the youngest being 19 years old, so this would have an additional bearing on perceptions.

The four women I would like to invite to initiate this research are Vlasta Delimar from Croatia, Efi ben David from Israel, Sinead O'Donnell from Belfast and Poshya Kakl from Kurdistan/Iraq.

I would like to invite Poshya Kakl because I was impressed and moved beyond words, that this nineteen year old woman, operating as a unique and lone voice in a culture mostly opposed to explorative ideas and women's actions, was passionately and courageously continuing with her radical and thought-provoking practice in Iraq.

The future intention would be to find venues in the home countries of all the artists involved and for the work to parallel the life process

Anne to Poshya:

I want to make work here in London with you and other women artists. I know you will feel strong connections with their work. We will apply for funding and we will help with all the practical issues involved. I returned from Vlasta Delimar's wonderful festival where really committed artists came together in a small Croatian village. She did a work called *WE DEMAND ART*—we all held the words, in Croatian up and shouted loudly. I shouted all the way to you in Iraq

Poshya to Anne:

..

it is one of the great my dream..

FANTASTIC... FANTASTIC.... FANTASTIC...

It is a wonderful news..! it is my favourite dream...!!! I am so so glad now...

I am dancing with guitar flamenco...

If you can, help me for my visa, thank you so much!, I need my father to help me and come with me to Beirut for get a visa later if I am go to the London...

Anne to Poshya:

Artrole and visiting arts will fund you and organise for you and your father to go to Beirut for 2 weeks to get the visa. They have been told the correct procedures for you to get the visa but you have to wait there. They will pay flights and hotels and spending money. I am overjoyed at all the support.

Poshya to Anne:

I fear for not getting visa here now in Lebanon. I wait with father in hotel. Consular make problems for us

Manick Govinda at Artsadmin to Anne:

Cheryl just informed me that Poshya was refused a visa/permit of entry by the UKBA. I am dismayed, and surprised as Visiting Arts were her sponsors.

I am sorry to hear about this.

We'd really like to flag this up in the manifesto club campaign as a testimonial on the website - Would you and Poshya be willing to share this experience to others?

The petition has over 4,000 signatories, we want to reach a target of 10,000 before we hand it to parliament. We will also be stepping up the campaign urging people to write to their MPs.

Will keep you in touch.

Best wishes and let's fight this pernicious system.

Manick x

BEACH

Anne to Cheryl:

I am really gutted by the visa refusal--- do you think there is anything to be done?--- Poshya must be so devastated-- i hardly know what to write to her-- the reason for refusal seems spurious -- i can't really work it out--it brings one so much face to face with the troubled realities people live with constantly

Anne to Andrew Mitchelson at Live Art Development Agency:

Please can you help as I have just heard that Poshya's visa has been refused.— I can hardly bear to think about it so she must be inconsolable BUT she will be with us we will make sure her work is present throughout PAVES-- could you liaise with her when you get to Erbil about a skype piece live or when we work in Toynbee hall when we present our first shared notebook ideas

Andrew to Anne;

Poysha arrived back from Beirut when we arrived back in Erbil and I have only had brief moments with her since. She has suggested that she has had a few ideas. One very strong thought was to make a video about hunger and thirst. I think she wanted to film herself by the sea in the UK with an empty glass repeating how thirsty she is, and likewise film herself with an empty plate outside a supermarket or restaurant.

EFI BOTTLES

Anne to Andrew:

if the idea with hunger/thirst could be done and filmed that would be great and if you could email a few stills and a statement from Poshya to include on Saturday, it would be wonderful. Could this be done in relation to a time slot with us doing something in the next few days? We can arrange Skype on Friday-- give us a time slot and if Adalet could be there to help language wise. We will also work with ideas of hunger and thirst and emptiness

PAVES to Poshya:

Tomorrow (Thurs) at 11am Iraqi time we will do an action in response to your idea about hunger and thirst. Your concept is so strong this is your walk and our walk: your and our thirst for art, for peace, for loving, for openness, for feelings, for shared understandings and finding ways to make us truly feel that globally we share and cherish the earth It is inspired by you and we are very happy that we will be working together in the event later today
warmest wishes to you all out there from us all PAVES here in London
Anne, Sinead, Vlasta, Efi

Poshya to PAVES:

I, I like sea, the walking. Also about idea so perfect exactly I thinking of it ... truly our work's wonderful.. yesterday we are waiting for you on skype I was very painstaking at my performance when made it before a two hours.. It was about burning women, I tie up my body like as a women's burn, I sit in front of hospital of burning and I wrote the number data of death by burn on problem of honor killing in Kurdistan from 1999 to 2008 nearly more than 12000 ..

And I made a dialogue with the women and man there who were kindreds of women's burn and I asked them about it all really I am so sad because so tragedy My work successful ..

Anne Bean to Poshya:

I showed everyone's past work on televisions in the space--- one for each of us---your breaking FANCIES IN IRAQ, Vlasta's Lady Godiva in Croatia, Efi's Romanian work with her parents in Israel, Sinead in Moldavia and my work with you and the women in Iraq. Each of these works is a response against inhumanity of different kinds. I covered all of the work in an action with thick blue paint on top of the moving image on the television screen so that you could see them emerging from a heavy blue darkness – a darkness of night, of the sea. Of time, of sorrow. I saw your images in the hospital with the women and knowing that this action was happening at the same time as our actions was so powerful for me. My heart was so heavy and questioning I feel like I must wrap up my computer in bandages

Anne to PAVES:

Crossing Frontiers: working together through time

I would like to suggest a day that we work together in time.

I think of it as 'Crossing Zones' because wherever we are and whatever our circumstances there is a way of being very close to each other by sharing the space of time.

I am choosing Friday May 15th as the first possible date at these times:

UK	11am	to	4pm
Croatia	12pm	to	5pm
Israel and Iraq	1 pm	to	6pm

This will give us 5 hours during which we know that we are together Whatever we do in that time has to do with the concept of how one shares work, thoughts, ideas and contexts in ways that we have yet to explore. I would really like one high resolution still image from each of us to be emailed to me and which i will print large.

I would like these large prints to then be put together in a space in Croatia

Our contact together and the content of the work will be our consciousness of all of us working together in time even though we are in different places. This will allow us to make work that tries to discover how we can experience each other across the world and make works that reach out to each other.

Anne to Poshya:

The refusal of your visa affected much of the work we did in London in terms of how political and social rules restrict each of us. It made us think about how we can include you even though you were not present. Now we will all equally be absent from each other in location but we will all be together in our focussed thoughts on that day. I want this to be a new kind of work that none of us have done before.

show details 5/15/09 Poshya to PAVES:

greeting to all of you...! really we are together today... I will tie up my body by coloured piece of cloth and joined it of the fan. I made it in my bedroom.. I CAN SEE YOU AND YOUR WORK I FEEL YOU SAW ME, TOO...

Anne Bean to PAVES 5/16/09

I am on water and in water.

This is very salty water where you float and you are inside a container and close the lid and you are floating in blackness.

It is strange that being isolated like that actually makes one feel very much in touch with the world and I could feel you all around our planet like my head was endless and my physical body disappeared outside this place is a very busy market but i felt in a big bubble floating between everyone and i looked at the sky and i thought the same sky covers you all It felt like the sky was our connection

Sinead to PAVES 5/15/09

didn't think so much about time at the moment i live in a shoe box sized flat it makes me crazy but does inform a work called 'domestic engineering' this head space is what i feel i am in right now i use the bath to cleanse in many different ways to take out negativity and place it into the water and hope that it all drains away head space during these works is about mental abuse an abuse that is passed on from one to another it can also be termed psychological warfare when applied in war or through dictatorships onto populations

I got into the bath in my pyjamas and pulled my body back and forward continuously

Efi to PAVES:

It was so mystical yesterday ... I felt you all and your actions moving under my eye lids
I worked for 5 hours in the beach 20 people wrote Sinead's answer on my back (one person one word) I painted my lower half of my body – pink... I walked into the water holding the tip of a white ribbon... trying to find the vanishing point...

It is so so great to see the images all together and it is so amazing how Sinead was in the tub and Anne in the water isolation tank.... and me in the sea... so small space so grand space ... both with such great power and strength and border less and so much more

Anne to Cheryl:

The attached images and this text are for the PAVES web

'Crossing Zones' 15th May 2009

A day of working together in time.

For 5 hours, on 15th May, in each of our countries we simultaneously worked with the awareness of a shared conscious space. Frontiers, borders, demarcations, boundaries, barriers, bureaucracy, officialdom, laws, regulations and rules all became irrelevant to the fact that we were making a collaborative piece.

PAVES has proved an incredible arena for the exploration of edges of being, edges of places, edges of identities, edges of definitions.

Sinead O'Donnell to PAVES:

The unionist and loyalist paramilitary's have decommissioned in N.Ireland.
We have two sides at peace now

Poshya to Sinead:

Thank you for your explain it is good for me. My energy so high some time I have raining face but constantly my conscience are crying with high voice As like performance art ..if I didn't it maybe I burned my body as like as all the girls in here.. and it was a first my performance art in Kurdistan, I performed it in my college without of any advertisement and it was activity on all of audiences some of them cried and they never Sew the performance art or as my real art .. after a week anne come to my college and and she saw video of my performance and I am very loved her because she she was a first one understand my performance art .many think I am actor and I made theatre but indeed I am not actor..

Sinead to Poshya:

When I started to make performance, I didn't actually know that what I was doing was performance...I was just doing it.... and my work can be very punching and aggressive in actions...so I had problems in Ireland with my work and lack of support from other artists. I think now since a little bit of travel and support from lot international performance art network I have been able to find a freedom, I could also then have a voice and try to organise performance events so that other people could have an opportunity.

What or why do the other artists in Kurdistan have in attitude towards you? I know that my friends in eastern europe had a of problems during the communist regime before 1989 because the dictatorship decided what art was and they banned performance art in the way that we make it because they saw it as a threat against the government. So for a long time these artists worked underground and in secret with the hope that some day they would be free, be free artists. For me I spent a long time in eastern europe and I researched the archives and the documents that recorded this period of performance art.

I very much enjoyed how you made performance in two situations, the action at the burns hospital was an exterior space, a public space, and a very direct context to work with, I liked how when you emailed us, I could forward it on to a big performance art network so that your work and life in Kurdistan could be know, not only known but at that time the 'guerilla girls' where also in belfast and they are feminist movement, so I wrote to the Belfast artists, yes the guerilla girls have finally made it to Belfast but what about Poshya Kakl in Iraq?

The second performance was inside in your bedroom, all wrapped in clothes,,,,quite like the burns hospital action, except yout body was wrapped in clothes and not bandages....
I am still thinking about my deep friendships in eastern europe and how transylvanian action artists made work in secret so sometimes the camera was the only witness to the performances.

I am constructing the 'paves' movement in Belfast.

Poshya to Sinead:

your action with my paper face cut out is so amazing .. make the feeling of traveling for me with out my body as like traveling of my delution with you indeed I think I was so freedom... when I saw your photo with my face I asking my self what am I doing in here ? it is true you are going to any where I am with you ,, you are with me ,too . but tell me how you could walked on the street ? by my eyes you were saw? it is great for me,,...

Two day ago we had election to chief of canton with

> > parliament of Kurdistan's government. I was one of the invigilator civic
> > on the process. So hard if you wont to make democracy and freedom in
> > country that was have a dictatorship in past it was efflorescence with their
> > thinking we can' t change soon , but it is a one of my great dream to
> > attain freedom of my self at first and afterwards to art to all women to love and to my country because if I couldn't freedom I cant do any thing of it.

Sinead to Poshya 7/28/09

You make me so happy with all your words and explaining about you and your life!! I have a picture now and my understanding of you is opening and opening!! One action that I thought that we could make together would be to make your emails and words onto large paper and exhibit them in the gallery in Belfast?

The British government have made a new law that restricts artist visa's and artists all over the world are protesting and signing papers to send to government to ask them to change the law. Do not be sad, be strong about this remember that borders may restrict us but love has no barrier.

My friends in Transylvania and Romania during the dictatorship thought that they would never see the world or have the chance to meet and perform with other artists,,, but actions and performance helped them like it helps you....and now they have freedom, they are free artists....you are also a free artists and you will travel the world Poshya. And with your energy and strength we will meet at a different time and in a different context.... you just be strong and keep making the work, ok?

Love

Sineadxxxxxx

p.s write to you more soon, we have a lot in common, my family made the same curfews with me also.....they just think that they are doing their best for you....and it was hard for me too.....!! my grandmother was cool, she always helped me when they were to hard on me, her name was 'Rose' and my other grandmothers name was 'Tresa' she was older of the two and both could read the tea leafs and also rad the ashes from the fire.....
love again

Anne to Sinead:

you have set up such a brilliant communication with Poshya--- she is really flowing I was also thinking that we should work with Poshya's emails at some point so i think it would be great for you to do that in your performance if she is cool about it. it will push a whole further dimension on when we all then meet. I had thought of Efi embroidering a sentence from them

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onto our clothes and vlasta writing ----bits on our bodies and me choking on the words as I eat them and you doing a skype action

Poshya to Efi:

Wow ..! What are you doing ? it is an amazing action you did ,, it was so effective for me..! I feel my really availability through your action .. it was so great... how you knew I was so cried from this lately distance ? really our feeling so hard combined together ..your feeling so great for me ,, I am so glad when I am only in my small room with out some body knew me in here but my bearing is so expansion with world with another town when never I don't saw its and I don't saw you too it is so astonish bearing ..! EFI really I am so like to come to the Esrail and I will do action in there, my believe is we can take PEACE between our ENMITY country by our art action .. we will meet we will do an action about our taboo of red boundary between detachable country , cult, policy, apartheid .. BRAVO EFI for your daring action... it is so great I feel momentum with you

..and I saw you sing song my dear Efy, really it is so nice and you are so honey it is great for me you can sing song by arabic for me thank you so much I hope we can one day listning it together,, big hug of love to all

Sinead to PAVES:

I was so curious to know how I would feel working in another Eastern European country or ex-Yugoslavia. I think the most memorable experience was making our 'PAVES' action, all four of us sat under a tree and as women before us in Croatia would crack walnuts to bake, Vlasta Delimar invited us to do this very thing. Sharing started as we talked and worked at cracking the walnuts, and after a while I felt settled. The shift in context was amazing, 'PAVES' being this big project was brought back down to earth, back to a feeling of female ancestry. Funnily enough the police turned up to question Vlasta about a Japanese artist called Sakiko, this artist had been wandering around the locality researching her performance and a local person called the police to report a stranger or crazy woman in town. Sadly the police in their macho stances (slightly erotic in uniform) ended our beautiful sharing time and demanded our passports to prove our identity and nationality.

Poshya to Anne:

I cannot wait to see you. When you will arrive to Slaymanya tell me about the address of yourself now I think of the place which is compatible of our work I have some artist friend in there may be ask them to help us if we will need ..i think aram gallery is perfect , you saw this place when you were show some of your work in there for audience it was in the basement of aram's house .. it is just my suggestion for place may be not , and red bastille is good ,too Anne we will do amazing PAVES work together. I have an idea with my mother **and plaiting our hair to twine** us together

Efi to Anne 8/8/09

I'm thinking about our stay in Tel Aviv together and I have such a strong feeling that it will be really a shame if we will miss the opportunity to meet Poshya. The easiest way is to meet her in Jordan, in Amman. we can take a bus there and get back the next day... It shouldn't cost so much. Do you think I should ask Poshya If she think she could come to Jordan in the week we are all in Tel Aviv?

Anne to Cheryl:

I have been discussing with Efi the possibility of Poshya meeting us in Jordan when we go to Israel. I have asked Efi to ascertain the situation financially and officially. Do you think there would be anywhere to go to for a little funding on this ?- it just feels like the most possible moment for PAVES to BE in the same geographical space—

Anne to Poshya Dec 2009

tonight we are in Nazareth and tomorrow we are in Amman with you. We will wait at the hotel with greetings in our out stretched arms and excitement in our out stretched hearts

Poshya to PAVES

Seemingly I haven't luck for the visa to see you all ..! really the police of Amman was so bad I think never they couldn't understanding aesthetics of our burning .. I was arrived Amman airport at 3:10 afternoon , then they were don't let us to come in to Amman because they hadn't our names in home office we don't come in my father had mobile they clutched us in a jail at the airport until 1:00 midnight with out let us to go out even to bring food at once they come-back us for Erbil at that time they bring simple food to us and let us to buy food and water ..when I was waiting for the aeroplane to Erbil I was spoke with passenger in there his name is (chance) and he was so kind with me, he was tried to found the number of hotel for contacting with you , later than we called for another Cheryl's phone number I was spoke with her , and then with you .. I was better after your calling with me because I was so worried about your awaiting for me ..

And I have so thanks for Chance' s helping past night our excursion was behind time until morn , we weren't sleep we were so spoke about my art action and the women problem in Kurdistan and you I showed some of our action to him , he was so imposing man ..

Some times I was accessioned to who paves is---in realities artist or only they are group of artist in my delusive and I have spirit contact with them...!?

Anne to Poshya:

I agree, even though you and I have met and spent time on several occasions together, that there is a sense of a spirit contact between us all and not earthly contact. Maybe even if we had all met in Jordan it would continue to have the feeling of illusion and,like our beautiful ghostly white doves in the jail, there is something real and unreal that makes it possible to do incredible things together unrestrained by normal ways of working. The fact that someone called Chance helped you and was inspired makes it all feel like strange destinies are with us. BUT as i wrote to you on the night that we were all in Amman, the sadness was so strong. There is an emptiness after coming back from the airport. It was such a primal feeling sensing you through the few walls separating us—this is not the way our planet should be--- so harsh and angry and suspicious and separating and then the same people who make it clear that they could hurt us go home and cuddle their own children and hold them close and pray for their children's safety from harm. On top of everything the bright, open and innovative thinking people in the art gallery in Amman where we were about to work said Efi is not welcome there because she is from Israel. In the airport I thought of a work in which Efi is at the Jordanian border with iraq and you Poshya at the iraqi border with Jordan and I would walk between you with a piece of ribbon connecting them and the would tug on it and feel each other.

We were sitting in the airport feeling how close we were to you. Just some walls between us. But walls can be very harsh and separating so different to the thought of our entwined hair. Efi was so wanting to sing out your song through the airport so that the sound travelled to you. Sinead and I felt a lot better and in touch with you after talking to you on the phone and making a strong contact. Efi was very sad we did not wake her up. She very much wanted to talk with you. It was such an intense night. We were longing to embrace you, waiting for your arrival at the hotel and ready to jump up and hold you close. There were so many ideas for actions. Vlasta had brought photographic paper for us all to lie on and make a life-size print from that—shadows of shadows. It is so hard to think of your time held by the police in Amman. The police at the airport were very aggressive with us saying they could not help if we could not speak Arabic even though a very nice man helped us and said he would translate everything. The police refused. Our hearts were reaching out to you. You must thank your father so much for all his support and tell him how much we appreciate that he has helped us even though it has not worked out how we wanted. We all reach out to you with our love,

Anne to Carlyle ?

It is really a desperate night here in Amman Jordan.

All these underlying fears of other ways and other cultures, often primitive feelings of apprehension, strongly bring back to me that piece I mentioned to you ages ago that I wrote as a teenager about my conflicted feelings in relation to Virginia Woolf--- called V W's daughter. Virginia has a daughter with Leonard Woolf and this little girl looks very like his family with her obviously semitic features. This nagging feeling of the baby's otherness slowly muddies Virginia's great outpourings of sensual love and unbounded joy on first seeing her tiny daughter. The very being who has finally given her a connection to flesh in the world also inhabits a painfully mistrusted space. Virginia's bond and love is tainted and there is caution about who this small being is and that this little girl possesses something Virginia cannot access. She has terrifying misgivings about her half Jewish baby.

It is so easy to see these misgivings within families so the bigger picture is overwhelming

Poshya to PAVES:

PAVES is so great for me all my big hoping with you.. I think when we couldn't see each other but it makes deeper feeling for us and more enthusiasm for action .. also I was so regret about your coming to airport at that late time with this bad treatment in there.. but really after your calling with me when I listened you I taken very big energy at once turned on my lap computer and I was speaking about you and our action with some of the passenger in there but one police came and asked about my name and my father but I was asked him why but he was don't answer me I thought some things was de facto now I knew you were so near with me but he was don't let me to see you..so alas...! Through your emails and Ann's talking about WALLS tomorrow I will do mobility action about PAVES with me if to go to any where I will write PAVES on the every walls because (some little walls don't let me to see you but our feeling afford to go even through the thickness walls ..)

Now is 5 o'clock at night I don't sleep yet through this night I am with you I hope I will come in you dreams tomorrow I have college at 8 o'clock I am tired but glad to spend this night with writing to you all because I hadn't times at day,,

Poshya to PAVES:

The children are become very nice part in the actions of walls ,, they were so glad with me when I was let them to writing with me for you they were repeat wrote letter of my sentences and wrote paves by kurdish language then they were drawing some nice things for you at the end they all greeting for you with me and laughed they screamed PAVES.. So wonderful Efi was doing also PAVES action on Israel walls

Vlasta to PAVES Date: Thursday, December 24, 2009, 5:35

After Tel Aviv and our Performance Art Platform performing place and incredibly travelling to Jordan I just feeling new power what we have got. Yes, Jordan it was injustice for all of us, but we are an artists and we should make this ugly moment transfer to our work. That is the point from the beginning of our work together, artists from the problematically countries.

Performing in Tel Aviv just showed how strong should be an artwork together against of injustice. I believe that is important way to make good artwork to be sincere like PAVES. Sincerity is our successfulness, sincerity is our power. Yes, PAVES is a big experience.

Thank you to all of you PAVES for that experience. Thank you Poshya Kakl, thank you Anne Bean, thank you Efi ben David, thank you Sined O'Donnell.

Anne to PAVES:

It is a very brutal night of big winds and snow and i am sitting hear reading and reading again all the emails of the last week and thinking what incredible journeys everyone has made inside and outside and i feel very connected to you all on our many quests and the way in which we have made a language that we understand between us. Also, it seems to fit my feeling that the only images i have in my camera from the whole Jordan journey is an image from my coffee cup at the airport which looks like Poshya waiting there for us and a warning sign in 3 language. It seems to reflect the strong sense of realities and unrealities that have been part of the project--- shadows, masks, dreams, chance, possibilities, closeness and distance. I love the idea of PAVES written on walls in Erbil -- it would be great to have some photos of this- As Vlasta said so well----'Jordan was injustice for all of us, but we are an artists and we should make this ugly moment transfer to our work. Thank you Efi for that image of you and your mum and me with the video of Poshya and her mum and me-- it feels even stronger and more tender sitting here looking at both the actions israel and Iraq inter-twined and inter-woven just like all our hair is inter-twined and like our humanness holds us close together and the connections through thousands of years of mothers and daughters.

Poshya to PAVES March 2010

I HOPE YOU ARE WELL AND HAPPY TOGETHER In GLASGOW.. LAST NIGHT I WAS SO GLAD TO SEE YOU.. IT IS ABOUT OF MY TALKING AND MY IDEA OF MY ACTION BY SKYPE:

- (I am a Tiny Light in the much of blackout . my eyes can see every frequent in this darkness abysmal. my eyes are see top secret of all the colour in the blackout.

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- Wish every one in here are sleeping. Iraq is sleeping now only I am wake up and talking with you, I want to tell you : I am hungry ... I am thirsty... I am thirsty for My freedom I am hungry for my civil rights..) MY AIM IS ABOUT OF WOMAN IN IRAQ ..
- I HOPE WE WILL DO IT TONIGHT..

It's over. And not just for another year. Over forever. This, after a 30-year span, was the last National Review of Live Art. Initially NRLA wasn't made to last, but under Nikki Milican's guardian care it continued and evolved: moved city, moved venue and now, in 2010, it has run its course. This final programme positively embraced the past: everyone in its lists had been here before. At every turn, history met itself. It could have been a cocktail of navel-gazing nostalgia. Instead, the five-day event emerged as a celebration of performance in all its shape-shifting aspects and a salute to artists who continue to be both an honest mirror and a probing searchlight in society worldwide.

And maybe that role was most inspiringly reflected by Poshya Kaki. This 19-year-old art student was part of PAVES, a year-long creative collaboration between five women artists working in the UK, Croatia, Israel, Northern Ireland and Kaki's own country, Kurdistan-Iraq. Kaki never made it to any of the other locations: visas were always refused. But a web-link brought her into the PAVES presentation in the Arches, her on-screen face a beacon of determined hope as she sat in her darkened bedroom with a light in her mouth, her muffled voice speaking of her hunger and thirst for freedom. Elsewhere in the Arches, dozens of young artists and students milled around. Their most pressing restrictions? Choosing whether to stay with a durational piece, opt for a live performance, watch videos or have a drink in the bar. Nothing in Kaki's performance begrudged them any of that, but her communicated joy in being a virtual part of NRLA, her resilience in the face of no-go borders and isolating circumstances, was perfect witness to the belief that art can reach out across cultures and oppressive controls.