

Peter McRae

Sustainability, the Green agenda, that's my current occupation, working for Aberdeenshire Council in Aberdeen, Europe's oil capital. It's a full agenda . . . on all fronts . . . family, full time job, art. This life keeps me more than occupied but I do hold on to my artistic interests and manage to maintain some activity on that front.

It's over twenty years since I performed in the National Review although I have been in the audience a few times since its moving to Glasgow. My performances were in 1985 and 1986 when I had not long come to the UK from Australia, to find a thriving and inspirational live art scene. I was pursuing performance through an alternative mime clown character, 'Tina', inspired by Pina Bausch and Tina Modotti - an artist working in revolutionary Mexico - and an interest in flags, film and female/male identity. My NRLA performances drew on these interests. The first performance was more successful. The second, less well thought out, none the less had its moment as a desk top of straw stubble on fire, reminiscent of burning fields in Oz, set off the alarms. To my lasting embarrassment, I can still picture Lois Keidan up a ladder holding the alarm hammer away from the gong, in order to let the show go on for as long as possible before the inevitable arrival of the brigade.

Aberdeen is a conservatively minded city in terms of the Arts. However, I am fortunate to have a shared studio, through WASPS, a trust providing artists' spaces in Scotland, where I find a supportive artists' community, and time and space to develop my ongoing interests. Flags and their symbolism continue to interest me. After the NRLA I spent time on beach lifesaving themed work including where the individual on a pedestal tried to "save" the people in the City of London and a major piece, 'Avenue of Heroes' which had flag waving women on pedestals, redressing the balance of men being commemorated in civic spaces.

In the seventeen years I've lived in Scotland I've turned more to conceptual painting and have deconstructed the Saltire (Scottish flag), commemorated death, 9/11, the Holocaust and have had my work performed or exhibited in local venues as well as the National Gallery and the CCA. I'm a member of Limousine Bull, a local artists' collective, and have occasionally been asked to perform at openings.

Most recently I've returned to performance with a piece called 'The Patriot Station', [YouTube](#), in which an official goes around the countryside raising the level of patriotism... In some ways it's a return to my original satirical work with flags where the individual is in a ridiculous and hopeless battle.

Having passed sixty and with the benefit of my bus pass, I'm now looking forward to getting about to seeing more of contemporary performance!