

You're part of an Arts Council scheme called Video Artists on Tour. It supports artists and venues by paying your travel and half the set fee. Like the Arts Council should. You're a video artist then. Or are you, when you talk about video performance. So that's how it comes about, a booking from The Midland Group in Nottingham. And you find yourself part of the NRLA for the first time. But maybe it goes back further to a once annual performance festival in Bracknell where you're doing this improvised piece with a deliberately sparse cluster of materials and references to ties, bookends, Wee Willie Harris and your potential namesake if you'd inherited your mother's maiden name, a New York sound poet. Nikki still mentions this piece and you're relieved because although a one or two-off you remember its transience and slightness as a success, and the essence of why you kept and keep doing it.

And the image from around that time that comes out of the page is an ad for another lost improvisation at Club Foot in San Francisco. A place name even deliberately unacceptable at the punk time of it. But he was good on fliers. And likely not a single photograph was taken. Rightly. As it happens.

So I associate the support for the risk and the raw to the unfolding relationship I've had with the NRLA since then. Thankfully. And it comes to more than that. It's a dialogue. An understanding. A collective. A forum. A part of your life. A place to make new work.

As an architect this is repeat business and you're building on your buildings. Before you know it there's a hamlet or a small village. Your houses. Or the outlines of them. On video, in Nottingham then Bristol.

And you're invited to look back over this material, these outlines, and comment on them, engaging with the archive. Unexpected, painful, revealing, particular. Stuff you wouldn't look at unless you'd been asked to. Called to account and forced to understand the connections that are obvious but for looking. Tickets you can't get refunded. Things you've said that contribute to a history that we're all a part of, audience and performer alike, a rich mix that's been held together with such determination and skill when it could have been left to drift off like Bracknell. Not only the opportunities but a place to stay.

**Richard Layzell**