

Stephen Partridge

I first went to the National Review of Live Art at its original venue in Nottingham at the Midland Group to help Steve Littman with video documentation of *The Long Search for the Necessary Tool* – an orchestral work by Jeremy Peyton-Jones combined with his video stage installation. I had only a vague idea of the NRLA before I went, and was amazed with the variety of the works, and the buzz and energy. Although I was not a performance-based artist I had always been interested in a form whose history and practice had become entwined with video practice from the early 1970s. My tutors ten years before had included Marc Chaimovitch and Stuart Brisley and I had also been involved with 2B Butlers Wharf with my peers, including Charlie Hooker, Kevin Atherton, David Critchley, John Bewley and many more.* The NRLA recalled the spirit of 2B Butlers Wharf: artist-led, impromptu, exciting, demanding and challenging. Throughout the few days I met many new friends including of course Nikki Milican and Lois Keidan but had no idea that these, and my visit would result in a partnership with Nikki and the NRLA that would resonate for the next two decades with my involvement through video curation and documentation for the event.

The great thing for me about the NRLA is the access it always gave me to new names and ideas, and discussion and debate with undoubted 'giants', such as Lloyd Newson, Derek Jarman, Alastair MacLennan, Neil Bartlett, Anne Bean, Anne Seagrave and Bobby Baker. When NRLA moved to Glasgow and Nikki championed dance with New Moves and later New Territories I also followed and thus experienced many outstanding performances by the world's most exciting companies such as Anna Teresa de Keersmaeker and Wim Vandekeybus. I am so glad I made that first trip to Nottingham in 1986.