

Interview at National review of Live Art, by Writing from Live Art - Feb 2008

Tell me a bit about the piece you're presenting. What are you trying to do with it?

This is very much a theatre performance, or a performance about theatre, and spectacle. By that I mean that it is constructed so as to focus the spectator's attention on the conditions that underlie performance in general: what makes it possible, how it comes about. I am working with theatre as an age old institution, and what makes performance possible in this case (and at the same time what constrains it) is the system of lights, curtains, of "on" and "off" spaces, the separation of stage and auditorium, etc: there are deeply problematic ways of seeing (the stage) which are still at the basis of performance today, and which I think say a lot about how we view and interact with the world in general.

What does it mean for you for your work to be categorised as 'live art'?

I may be wrong, but I don't see live art as being a category in the same way that dance, theatre, cabaret, etc could be seen as categories. I think live art is more about a certain approach to performance work, which draws a lot on the 20th century avant-gard and performance art. I feel very close to this kind of work and its evolving tradition.

Otherwise, I think live art is a terribly ambiguous word, very misleading for both artists and the public: live art is not a "thing", it's rather an umbrella term for an approach... which needs to be defined each time, we can't just take for granted what it means, once and for all.

How long have you been working on this piece? Did you create it for NRLA 08 or have you presented it before?

This solo piece, entitled *Quartet (for Anna Akhmatova)*, began in early 2006, and was developed throughout the whole of that year; so it has very much had a life before being presented at NRLA 08... it's also constantly changing. In 2007 I made its sequel, *Quartet #2*: it is exactly the same as the first version, but it is performed by Donna Shilling, not by myself...

What does it mean to you to be an 'Elevator Artist' at NRLA?

I hope this is a chance for some people to connect to the work: people who may find some personal spark in there... this is really important for me, to know that there may be some people who are understanding the work, that it "makes sense" in some way, which perhaps needn't be wholly explained; it's also important to meet people who can articulate something about the work, perhaps through reference to other theoretical ideas... things I hadn't thought about.

Which artists are you planning to see while you're there?

There are a few people, of a similar age to mine, that I am keen to see, like Search Party. Mostly though, looking at the programme I don't recognise any names... which is perhaps the best way to meet new work.