

Live Art in Scotland: Roddy Hunter

This interview was conducted online via Zoom on 3rd September 2021 as part of the Live Art in Scotland research project at the University of Glasgow.

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Stephen Greer (SG): I've been asking this question to a lot of different artists and practitioners and it's a question about what people's route [into the field] was. I don't know where the place to start is. I know that you studied at the University of Glasgow in Theatre Studies. I don't know if that's a good place to start or if there is an earlier encounter with performance that's more meaningful?

Roddy Hunter (RH): University is probably a good place to start. I went to the University of Glasgow and I was going to study English literature. I obviously fancied myself as some kind of poet or something. I grew up in Blantyre in South Lanarkshire so only eight miles outside the city and I was always coming into the city. I was always really attracted to Glasgow. When I came to university and thought I was studying English, I then realised you had to study other subjects and I hadn't quite understood that. When I went to see the Adviser of Studies, he went through all the possible things I could do in the faculty of arts and he kept going round and he was trying to make me do Scottish literature and, in the end, I agreed to do Scottish literature, but I still had one more subject to make up and it was Theatre Studies. He said you only have to do it for a year, and you can go and do something else. I thought okay, that's quite amusing. I remember phoning my mum and saying I'm a drama student and I thought that was quite hilarious. I'd never really been to the theatre [much except family Christmas pantomimes]. I was very interested in literature and plays, and I did

Live Art in Scotland: Roddy Hunter

sixth year English literature at high school, but I'd never been to the theatre much so it was a very unlikely thing. I was very fortunate because of the tutors at the University of Glasgow in the theatre department, and in particular, Brian Singleton. It was his first year of teaching during my first year of study. He and Claude Schumacher and Alasdair Cameron and other teachers at the time were very supportive. I obviously didn't fit in, I didn't act, I was a musician, I was drummer. Anyway, at the end of the year, everyone had to present a short, devised piece of some kind and usually there were Shakespeare skits and that kind of thing. Of course, I went out on my own and this was my first and only performance. I made a performance where I destroyed a fridge with a sledgehammer whilst playing industrial music loops on boomboxes around the drama studio that used to be upstairs in the quadrangle. I was telling myself it was a kind of parody in my black shorts, white vest, and shaved head with my sledgehammer and all that. I thought that's me, I'm out of here after that. The tutors were very interested and they were saying, no, this is interesting, it's good, and you can do this here. I had been going, because they had taken me, to the Third Eye Centre. Those tutors took me to the National Review of Live Art. The Third Eye Centre was my way in and it was there I spent most of my time watching everything, every dance piece, every video installation, every event, I was there all the time. Then I started to figure out that some of these people were coming from a place called Dartington and I thought wow. Then I found out that Dartington was a place where you could do performance art and I thought I should transfer to Dartington. That's where I should go. After conversations with the tutors, they insisted that I could do the work I wanted to do at Glasgow and not go to Dartington, so I stayed. In the end, I didn't graduate. I met Russell McEwen.

SG: They were at GSA at the time studying Environmental Art?

RH: Yes, they were studying Environmental Art. We were introduced by a mutual friend, [Douglas Hardie], and it seemed to be that Russell was having some difficulty pursuing performance, whether that was real or imagined difficulty, I don't know. Similarly, I wasn't quite getting on with what I wanted to do at Glasgow so we hooked up and I came down to the Girls' High School where he had his studio and I thought this is where I supposed to be all along, but I didn't do art at school and I didn't have much drawing facility or anything like that. He and I started to make durational street actions all around Glasgow without invitation or sanction. That kind of practice went on for some time. Of course, I was writing

Live Art in Scotland: Roddy Hunter

proposals and having them routinely rejected primarily because I was working with duration so there were always live art platforms if you could get on and off in half an hour, but I was always writing these elaborate proposals for things that would take three days and so on, so I wasn't really getting far with that. Then I saw in *artists newsletter* in the Third Eye Centre a small advert that said performances wanted for Romanian festival, modest fees. I thought right oaky, so I go to Romania, and it turned out to be Transylvania, the part of Romania with a significant Hungarian speaking minority. [Ütő Gusztáv] invited me to do a thirty-six-hour performance in the town's art gallery [in Sfântu Gheorghe or, in Hungarian, Sepsiszentgyörgy]. That was the first time anybody had ever actually asked me to do anything. By 1991—92, I was making the street actions with Russell and doing things individually, working a bit with Test Department as well doing some percussion work for some of the bigger events that they did. Then in 1994, I was invited to Romania and in the same year I was also finally invited to show work at the National Review of Live Art.

SG: [Laughs].

RH: That was at The Arches, but I'd also moved to Hull because my partner then was Julie Bacon, the academic and artist. I recall Julie was not having a good time with Glasgow, she wanted to go somewhere else, and I said well I'll go with you. Of all the universities, she went to Hull. I ended up in Hull in 1994 and went to Hull Time Based Arts (HTBA) who I knew were very active because there were often people connected to HTBA showing work at the Third Eye Centre. [I met Mike Stubbs, the founding director of HTBA and really liked his irrepressible attitude]. I could get an email address, access to computers, and a fax and things like that. I was internationally active because I was receiving invitations to other performance festivals regularly and I then started to develop ideas about organising a festival to invite those artists to the UK. Because of HTBA, I started to write Arts Council applications. I was successful in securing funding to curate the 1997 ROOT festival in Hull, which [we called 'Rootless' because it was based] around the project that I was involved in with [Richard Martel and friends at Le Lieu], Québec called the Nomad Territories which was a new country, passport-based project. We did a festival called Rootless '97 and I invited Guillermo Gomez-Pena and Roberto Sifuentes, Brian Connolly, Roland Miller, Elvira Santamaria, André Stitt, Heath Bunting, Ann Whitehurst, Istvan Kantor, a whole list of artists came for that. At the same time, I was doing my Masters at Nottingham Trent, and I was

Live Art in Scotland: Roddy Hunter

very lucky to study under the sculptor, John Newling, a wonderful artist. I did that part-time for two years. I was still travelling all the time, I was making fifteen, sixteen, seventeen performances a year and travelling everywhere. It was always site-sensitive or specific in some way, always interventionist in some way. My great fortune was I then applied for a job at Dartington teaching Visual Performance and remarkably, I was given it. I hadn't finished my Masters yet so John had to say it's okay, he'll get his Masters. I got to start teaching in 1998 down in the southwest in Dartington.

SG: So you did make it to Dartington after all.

RH: That's two things now. I made it to Dartington as a teacher rather than a student and now it would appear I've made it to Glasgow School of Art as a teacher rather than a student. I'm very fortunate in that way.

SG: There are so many threads that I'd love to pick up on there. Maybe to do it slightly in order, that era when Third Eye was there, I'm also thinking that Third Eye closed in the early nineties and reopened or was transformed and became the CCA, what do you remember of that space and the personality of that space? I'm working with the programme and the records of the Third Eye in that era through the archive in the current CCA and it feels to me like a far more diverse and exciting programme than you might imagine would exist in an art centre at that time. Maybe that's betraying all kinds of prejudices on my part.

RH: It was absolutely extraordinary and wholly formative. If I studied anywhere, it was there. At the University of Glasgow we were very fortunate because we would regularly have visiting artists to the Third Eye Centre come and talk to us. You've got to remember, and Dee [Heddon] will tell you this as well, the course that we had in live art was called 'non-text-based theatre'. That's what it was called. Isn't that a great title? Greg Gieseckam ran it and he brought Willem Dafoe in and Ron Vawter when Wooster Group were in town. One of the things I often find myself saying to students is that things that you are most resistant to in the first instance may turn out to be the things that are most important. I think for me the Third Eye Centre was about cultural experience. I walked into the Third Eye Centre. I may have been seventeen or eighteen and Derek Jarman had an exhibition, and he was giving a talk in the gallery and the place was full. I went in and I just didn't know what to do with myself. I didn't know what queer culture was. I had a provincial upbringing and I thought who are these people and what are they talking about, how are they talking about

Live Art in Scotland: Roddy Hunter

it, I don't feel like I belong. I remember those moments and then I opened up to that. At the Third Eye Centre the spaces were incredible, the gallery was bigger and there was a really affordable café, you could spend hours in there. There was a very good bookshop that always had all the catalogues from the exhibitions that they did. There was a lot of central and eastern European artists' work there which was also very interesting coming out of the eighties because of how we romanticised the east. There were Hungarian, Slovenian, Polish artists and the Russian season, *New Beginnings*, it was all fascinating. I was lapping up all of that. It was the fact that, like at Dartington they called it visual performance, whether it was theatre or dance or installation or performance, it just all seemed to be happening in a very hybrid and fluid space. Even though there was a visual arts programme and a performance programme, and I guess they were quite distinct, it was very fluid. I think we've lost that.

SG: I was going to ask just that, that sense of how the visual programme and the performance programme were sitting next to each other. There's a report, I think Lois Keidan was still working for the Arts Council of Great Britain at the time and she offers up the Third Eye as an example of a really great space, but also one in which the National Review of Live Art was sitting slightly uncomfortably because of the division of labour or the division of responsibility between the gallery spaces and the performance spaces. I've been thinking about that and the curatorial frame that comes with spaces like Third Eye and how their programme exceeds those curatorial frames but doesn't make the curatorial frames go away.

RH: In terms of curatorially, when they'd do a season, the season would comprise visual art, performance, theatre, cinema, music, and they would just get together and programme the different spaces in different ways. But you're right, the National Review of Live Art was probably one of the only times in the year when you would get performance in the gallery and by that I don't mean just turning the space into a raked seating front-on space, but actually creating the possibility for work like Alastair MacLennan's *Still Tills* in 1989. Roland Miller did extraordinary work [at the NRLA that year too and that was also when I met him for the first time]. He had the two galleries [and worked in the surrounding streets as well]. Sometimes Alastair worked in both spaces, but sometimes you'd get two durational pieces going on. It was the durational pieces that really struck me. Clearly Alastair MacLennan is an enormous influence on me. I met him in 1989 at that gig. There's a funny story, but anyway.

Live Art in Scotland: Roddy Hunter

I made myself an Alastair MacLennan T-shirt, there you go. I used to make my own T-shirts for bands that I liked that you couldn't get T-shirts for, so I made a *Human Sheep* T-shirt, [using an image he made for a photographic work in 1982 and that I saw in his 'Is No' catalogue]. When Alastair MacLennan came to do a seventy-two-hour performance or whatever it was, Russell MacEwen and I treated it like a gig and we brought a carry out in a bag, as I remember, and I had my Alastair MacLennan T-shirts on and we had skinheads and wore boots. I recall Alastair turned and saw us At one point and must have thought we looked hilarious!

SG: [Laughs]. I like that a lot.

RH: The point about that is, that's what I mean about continuum. We were interested in industrial culture, we were interested in music, in radical writing, and performance art was just another part of that. It was another manifestation of that kind of cultural interest for us.

SG: Okay. I'm also thinking around that time or other sites or spaces in the city and thinking about the programme that was coming out of Transmission and I suppose some of the early work that was coming out of The Arches, although perhaps more centred on dramatic theatre in what The Arches theatre company was doing. Were you going into any of those other spaces? Was Transmission's visual art space one that you were coming into contact with?

RH: Yes, well, there was an interesting moment when Transmission moved from Chisholm Street to King Street. Chisholm Street, which I didn't have a great deal of experience of, that was a far rough and readier space with the cobbles of the street [running through the space]. There were people like Robert King who ran an industrial record label called Cathexis Records. He had an exhibition there, which was very influential for me, called *Apocalypse Culture* after the Adam Parfray book. That was a whole exhibition of Throbbing Gristle and Coil and all sorts of cult stuff and William Burroughs and cyberpunk stuff. That was all really exciting. Shaun [Caton] also did an infamous performance in there where I think the police were called because he was using dolls and it was that time where Channel 4 did the thing on Thee Temple of Psychick Youth about alleged child abuse and that's what people thought was going on. The kind of work that Shaun did for example, and I think [Stuart] Brisley might also have pitched up [at Transmission] and Stewart Home probably did too. My perception, and I don't know if it's true, but the generation of environmental art graduates [who formed

Live Art in Scotland: Roddy Hunter

the Transmission committee in King Street] were very skilled at being able to work with a site and with a space [which gave them a different approach to setting a white cube space]. They had all sorts of different interventions and things around the city, but it felt more like an artworld space to me, and I think I may have proposed things on a couple of occasions, but nothing came of it. [I guess because I hadn't studied at GSA, I probably felt like a bit of an outsider to the scene]. There was the New Visions festival, which was very good, that Malcolm Dickson and people at Street Level put together. I would keep making proposals for performances and they weren't taken up, as happens, perhaps because I didn't go to art school, I don't know. I didn't feel like I fitted in, so I was still working on the streets.

SG: I'm going to hopefully spend some time working in the Transmission archive room, which I've been holding back from because everything is closed because of the pandemic. From what I can make out from other records, it does feel like there is an intense period where performance and performance art interventions seem to be a deeper part of the programme. Then, when they change premises, that sort of drops away. It's still there, but it doesn't have the same kind of signature or materiality actually. It feels like it is more contained within the frame of the white box gallery. I guess I'll know more about that when I actually start to look.

RH: That would be my perception and the way that they were hooking up with other artist groups like City Racing [London] and people like that. I think quite a few of them had been on the Scottish Arts Council's Amsterdam residency and they were clearly determined and ambitious to make an impact in the contemporary art world, which was a great thing because that is what I believe started up what we then see in terms of that part of the Trongate and later GI [Glasgow International] and all those things. They weren't dismissive of performance, I think many of them even did some performance work.

SG: Yes, exactly. A lot of those artists were incorporating performance in some way in their practice.

RH: Also, you can't underestimate Alastair's influence there again. He influenced a whole generation of artists with the work he was making. A fair few of the environmental art graduates went to Belfast and did the MA Fine Art when Alastair it. Certainly, performance was very much a formative part of their practice, that's for sure.

Live Art in Scotland: Roddy Hunter

SG: I've been interested in trying to trace where that influence of Alastair MacLennan's work was finding its roots. My intuition is that it is through people seeing it at spaces like the Third Eye, but also seeing it in Dundee and in other places in Scotland like Aberdeen where he was presenting durational installation work. There was a piece in *The Scotsman* not long ago, I think it was around the time of the exhibition at Summerhall, which had the headline of something like 'Alastair MacLennan is the most important Scottish artist that you've never heard of'. I sort of laughed at it as a headline, but it has been making me think about the absent tradition of performance art in Scottish art history and it's not the absence of a history but the absent history. I'm not trying to make Alastair MacLennan into the figure who exemplifies that, but it seems really striking to me that I speak to people who feel their work has been hugely influenced by him and then I'll find another pocket or generation of artists who have no point of contact with his work. I'm trying to work it out. Maybe it just is what it is and there isn't a kind of great structural reason for that. Maybe it's simply he was active in Scotland more intensively and then was based in Northern Ireland and if you didn't encounter him in that moment, you didn't encounter him.

RH: The reason why Alastair is so very significant in my view is that I genuinely can't think of another artist from Scotland who has done more to typify or define the discipline that they work in. Of course, other artists are making durational work and we've produced fantastic painters and poets, but Alastair essentially defined a discipline. He more or less created an aesthetic and discipline of performance art that wasn't there before and that's internationally known or if it's not known explicitly, it's understood implicitly because that's passed on. He's the most significant artist that Scotland has ever produced in any artform in my view. From that point, because of Scotland being the unusual nation that it is, we don't have too many people who have made such a phenomenal contribution. Obviously, the fact that Alastair was Scottish is very significant in his work. [I recall that Peter Haining remarked once that Alastair's work] was as much influenced by Calvinism as Zen. I think that's really interesting to explore further, the asceticism and the austerity of the image and the fish, these are all North-eastern Scottish, presbyterian tropes. They're not [only] zen, I really like that. As a Scottish artist trying to identify myself with a way of working, that was important. There were other people like Alex Trocchi, being a member of the Situationist International and being Scottish. Whenever you had those figures, they were very important.

Live Art in Scotland: Roddy Hunter

SG: That move to when you were based in Hull and working with Hull Time Based Arts and then that other move onto Dartington — I'm conscious that along with a few other places like Nottingham and maybe Bristol as well, that there is quite a specific network of artistic production often around artist-led groups of people — was that your sense of that period? And maybe in a different way that's still the case now.

RH: I worked very little in the UK because the system was commission based.

SG: So you were primarily working internationally at festivals and in other contexts.

RH: All the time. Every month I'd be going somewhere, and I was exceptionally fortunate because then other artists would invite me and so on and it meant that I could go to Québec when I was twenty-six and I could perform there. I then went to Toronto on the same trip and there was a group of artists waiting to host us there. I got to go to Japan because Seiji Shimoda invited me in 1999 or something like that. I was in Europe all the time and occasionally in North America and Asia as well, so I was just phenomenally fortunate. I'm very aware that I really benefitted from that period of cultural mobility. I'm also very aware that I benefitted from that as a white man. I kind of wound down the festivals when I got an invitation to go to Chile and to Buenos Aires once and my first instinct was that's fabulous, let's try and make it happen, but then I asked myself what am I doing going there, what am I making there, what am I saying, and what kind of accountability can I have to do that? There would be some occasions working in the conditions of festivals, there were a couple of times where I turned up and didn't have a performance or they wouldn't be as you'd imagine them to be. Sometimes you'd ask yourself about the quality of the work and the practice and why I was seeing the same dozen people in all the festivals across the world. Then I started noticing that you go to places and an artist there would be making northern-European American English performance art and that made me think that maybe there was a canon being developed and a set of tropes being developed that other people were beginning to inhabit and I wasn't that comfortable about that. Fair play to everybody else doing it and I was very pleased to do it and I might even go back to doing some of that.

SG: But you felt that it was a good moment to give it pause.

RH: Yes, kind of ethically in a way. You know, what's going on with the work and what's going on with the world. Why am I going to Argentina and what am I going to do when I get

Live Art in Scotland: Roddy Hunter

there? I guess the other thing is the mental health side of constantly performing and touring. If you're making quite physical work and you become known for that and people are looking for you to do things that are physical and transgressive in some way or about endurance in some way, it does take a toll on your mental health. There were some really weird examples of that when I saw people doing performances and clearly in states of poor mental health and people seemed to be enjoying it tremendously, like some really disturbing situations at times.

SG: I think I read an interview, possibly when you were working in Québec, where you were talking about performance as a set of negotiations with actualities or actual conditions. I'm interested in that as a principle of performance anyway, I'm a materialist historian, but also thinking about festivals and other curatorial or programming shapes as those sites of negotiation and trying to work out how art sits within those structures as enabling structures but also as scenes of constraint.

RH: I didn't really fit into that, just like I didn't feel that I fitted into theatre, the art school, or curatorial platforms for performance. I couldn't get an exhibition either so I always kind of felt that and that's why I ended up in the streets and in different sites. When I went to festivals, I'd do the same thing because as festivals you often had a timed slot on stage, but I don't work like that. I would always start researching the town or city before I went, and I'd find a space and a place and I'd do stuff overnight. People would often say, you're a performance artist but no one has actually seen anything that you do but we think it's really interesting.

SG: [Laughs].

RH: I'd be miles away somewhere at two in the morning doing something. That's what I did though, I'd always go out of the festival venue and work in the streets like when I did *Civil Twilight*.

SG: Yes, I was going to ask if that was running alongside or emerging from the [Civil] *Twilight* project. The last thing maybe to ask about is related to that and links back to the environmental art programme at GSA and it is about the relationship between live art and performance art and public art in Scotland because it feels like there is a really significant history and community of practice which is there. To ask something a bit more specific, I

Live Art in Scotland: Roddy Hunter

know that Ross Birrell had an exhibition called *Streetworks* which was at Street Level which involved the presentation of photographic documentation of lots of different works, but also that the invitation was for you to make new street actions in response or parallel to that documentation.

RH: Have you spoken to Ross?

SG: No, I haven't been able to yet, we've exchanged emails, but we haven't spoken.

RH: That way I remember it, and I might be misremembering, was I think I suggested to him that we did live work as well as the exhibition. That might be a complete misremembering, but that's what we did, I think. I did a piece in Glasgow Green which was about the memory of Guy Aldred, a remarkable boy preacher and socialist, Christian, temperance activist who was a conscientious objector in the Second World War and was a big part of Glasgow's radical, post-war history and involvement with the Spanish Civil War. The piece was directly relating to him. There's a fantastic book called *Come Dungeons Dark* which is a biography. Tara Babel, who I think would be great for you to talk to, went into a clothes shop and set off flares and the whole shop got evacuated and everybody was out on the street. That was quite entertaining. Alastair did *Whose Scotland?* and walked up and down the street with a briefcase with 'Whose Scotland?' written on it and I think there was a tannoy outside Street Level with two voices reading out the land register of Scotland and who owned all the different plots. Ross did his first performance with me [as I recall in 1994 at the Winterschool architecture festival in the Old Fruitmarket] because of course he was at Glasgow University doing his PhD and we had the same interests in Artaud and Claude's and Brian's teaching and he used to do the odd performance with me. There was this idea of history of performance on the streets of Glasgow, I thought that was a really good exhibition to put together because that work was definitely missing.

SG: It feels like, both more broadly and in your own practice, there's a body of work there which has developed because institutions aren't making or can't make space for it, so it's a response to institutional doors being closed. But there is also an affirmative pursuit of something which is to do with action and engagement with public spaces so it's not just a reactionary process. I suppose the point to finish up there is about that *Civil Twilight* project and I guess its response to urban, civic spaces. I'm really conscious that the history that I'm

Live Art in Scotland: Roddy Hunter

working with is often tightly located around Scotland's cities, so I suppose I'm interested in your interest in civic space.

RH: Yes, I think it's maybe because, well, there are obvious reasons in terms of population concentration and where the art schools are but there is also that thing about deindustrialisation in the central belt and the dispersal of people into new towns and the boredom of that and the fact that you then have a lot of people who have been cleared out of the centre and they've bought houses. People have grown up in really bland and boring places and they're looking for something else and that's also a generation of people who are able to go to university and art school and who have the luxury of nobody ever asking what you would do after university. Just going to university or art school was sufficient in itself and you got to do whatever you want. Our generation was entirely different from the current generation of students that I'm working with now and the students yet to come who are deeply value-driven and they've got an activist sensibility in the same way that we did, but they are also risk averse and they are concerned because we've messed everything up. We've messed the planet up; we've messed the economy up through the gratuitous way that we've enjoyed ourselves doing whatever we wanted to do and they're not going to be able to do that. That's going to produce a very different kind of work. It's very different when you're teaching in art schools trying to enable people to take the time to invest in that speculative, experimental approach. I think that's what we did, but I think also because we're from Scotland, many of us are working-class and are like I was standing in the Third Eye Centre trying to work out where I fitted in and the class dimension of that and so on. We would always have that sense of obligation towards some kind of social or cultural engagement or some kind of authenticity in terms of the cultural stance that you were taking and of course in terms of performance practices more broadly, the whole poll tax demonstrations and things like that. Then 1990 was thrown into the mix and everything else. There is always that social and cultural conscience behind the work somehow. I credit site-specific theatre, physical theatre, Tadeusz Kantor talking about the object of the lowest rank and working in spaces not reserved for art and of course, that's what Alastair was always about as well in terms of interventions in everyday life. I think that's probably why, and it still is the case now in Glasgow, in the kind of collaborative, community-based work you see happening. The grassroots are still there, it's always out of the grassroots. I was

Live Art in Scotland: Roddy Hunter

having an interesting conversation with a very good friend, Jean Cameron, a producer, about where that gap is now between what [Glasgow as a city] are going to think about doing in terms of culture and what's actually going on in the grassroots. There is a big disconnect again, so we'll have to see what comes out of that.

SG: Yes, I think so. I'm really conscious that some of the structures which enable those conversations between grassroots and more institutional contexts have just gone in the last five to ten years. One of those was in the shape of The Arches, where it felt like there were particular points of contact let's say, which were being made possible through that venue by accident if not by design, but it was a space in which it could happen. I'm not sure that the ecology of experimental theatre in Glasgow or Scotland has really quite bounced back from that. That is not to discount a lot of really exciting work that has happened since, but I don't know that the ecology has rebuilt itself or quite knows how to make it work yet.

RH: That's Thatcher, Scotland, deindustrialisation, all that chaos, the rubble, that's where the stuff I was talking about in terms of industrial culture came from and emerged from. I'm only hopeful that the kind of shock that we've had and that we're now in culture wars again – the eighties and nineties were a period of cultural wars as well – galvanises the community of live art or performance art because the counter-cultural community galvanises around that sense of building community. The international stuff was all artist-led. I was sometimes invited by museums and galleries, but it was mostly artist-led and artists who were reaching out to other artists and trying to create meetings. It was very peer-to-peer oriented. I do think that is going on in some kind of cultural formation or other, it's just I might not be able to access it or see where it is. I think the notion of formations, cultural and disciplinary formations, and the naming of things and 'things hurrying away from their names', as Octavio Paz said, I think is really important. Roland Miller was using the term live art very early on. I think he had two companies, Live Art Press and Live Art Works and I believe he registered those as companies in the 1980s. He was a very significant figure in Glasgow as well and he lived in Glasgow for a period of time. He's probably Britain's most underrated performance artist. He did an amazing piece here in Glasgow at Streetworks, and get this, how spooky is this, he stood outside the art school on Renfrew Street at the Mackintosh and he was in bare feet and it was the evening and he just drew a chalk circle [on the pavement around the building. It was part of a body of work called

Live Art in Scotland: Roddy Hunter

Incorporating] where he'd draw circles around whole buildings, usually cultural institutions, and he would indicate that on one side of the line was culture and the other side was life. It was wonderful. He drew a circle around the Mackintosh, down Scott Street, down past the O2 [ABC on Sauchiehall] and back up [Dalhousie Street to complete the circle where he began]. That whole site that then went on fire some years later, he had demarcated it in this performance which was, thinking back, quite extraordinary. That happened at the Streetworks festival. Anyway, I could obviously just blether on more.

SG: That's great.

RH: He said to me that he liked performance art because it was neither performance nor art. Live art was a kind of funding category, to me, that's really what it was, [under] 'combined arts.' Combined arts was an interesting term. If you look at the history of the Arts Council, the New Activities Committee and so on, they called it live art and then to my mind, tried to construct a kind of critical heritage that to mind didn't really exist to be honest [laughs].

SG: Before we spoke today, I was reading a bit of writing about the figure of the performance curator. There is one essay, I can't remember the person who wrote it, which offers a similar history to the development of live art and the Live Art Development Agency. This critic argues that it reflects a meeting place of aesthetics and pragmatism, and with Lois Keidan drawing on having worked inside the Arts Council of Great Britain and knowing something about what terminology and what frameworks of meaning might legitimise practices and make them accessible to arts funding.

RH: An interesting thing to look at is, there a couple of editorials in *Live Art Magazine* and I would need to try and find the dates of them, but Lois wrote an editorial in *Live Art Magazine*. I'm going to oversimplify it, but it was basically the last person out, turn out the lights, what's going to happen to all the festivals and then Roland Miller wrote a response editorial which was highly critical of arts administrators as he saw them. In the catalogue for the National Review of Live Art tenth anniversary, which was a really nice box and they had commissioned essays in that, Roland wrote an essay called 'The eighties: a decade we could have done without'. Essentially, he never worked again. He never did himself any favours.

SG: That was the parting of the ways. I read that editorial. I was sat down in Bristol a few weeks ago reading through all the back issues and came across that exchange.

Live Art in Scotland: Roddy Hunter

RH: In terms of the Live Art Development Agency, I think they've done a phenomenal job in terms of Lois's legacy in that role. I think the emergence of the very diverse performance artists and groups that we're seeing through groups like]performance space[and Bean – [who I worked with when she] was a student of mine at Dartington - and Poppy Jackson and those guys, many were students at Dartington. The way that they have been able to affirm diversity and inclusion within performance has been fantastic and I think it gives the practice longevity, sustainability, and relevance. I think a lot of the work that those guys do is exceptionally exciting. I would certainly credit the Live Art Development Agency with the development of that kind of diverse and inclusive culture and greater hybridity.