Questionnaire prepared by Clare Thornton and Dr. Paul Clarke and completed by Nikki Milican, Artistic Director, New Moves International. August 2008.

Do you recall why you programmed *I Never Done Enough Weird Stuff*’ in 1996?

You also expressed a preference for this work to become the nominated work for an in-depth case study. Why was this?

Richard is a long time collaborator of the festival & I seem to have presented his work quite a few times, it’s not planned like that, it’s just the way it has turned out. It wasn’t that I asked for 'INDEWS' in particular, it could have been any of Richard’s works chosen as a case study but the name of the piece was distinctive and best describes his work overall I think.

Do you remember the conversations that you had with Richard about this work in the run up to the 1996 National Review of Live Art (NRLA)?

There are some artists I trust to deliver, Richard happens to be one of them. I never feel it necessary to delve too deeply into what he is likely to do for a particular edition of the festival unless there are site issues; too much advanced planning would go against the nature of the work.

Why was this space and time slot chosen for *I Never Done Enough Weird Stuff*?

In the earlier days of the festival there were considered to be prime programming days/slots – I was only made aware of this when certain artists would ask to be programmed on Friday night for instance (I never listen to this kind of demand) – so in this regard it could be considered a prime slot that we gave Richard but I wasn’t thinking of it in those terms. These days it doesn’t really matter where in the programme an artist is placed because all performances sell out, so unless a work demands by its very nature a particular time of day due to light etc. I don’t give it much concern other than making sure the rhythm and balance of the whole day is working. Site preference is a more relevant issue and in the Arches (as it was then in ’96) a work of this nature required one of the “closed” rooms, not that that helped with the sound of the trains passing overhead, which Richard alluded to of course and was one of the venue’s ‘charms’. I like the fact that Richard is comfortable with improvising incidents that occur in the moment.

How does this piece fit in with the other work shown at NRLA in 1996?

I don’t really think this is a relevant question in terms of the structure of the NRLA, I never programme thematically if that is what you are asking, that would be far too restraining. There are, however, serendipitous connecting strands that always occur as the five days progress and it is interesting for me to learn how an audience member discovers these as their own individual journey through the programme unfolds.

Could you say something about the performance context at the time? How was Richard’s work/this piece positioned in relation to the performance art/experimental theatre/live art milieu at that time?

Richard’s work is what it is, timeless. I would be surprised if he told me he took much note of current trends whenever he was creating a new performance.

The brochure copy doesn’t describe the work directly – do you remember whether the work was as you expected, or if it diverged from the piece you’d anticipated seeing?

It doesn’t really bother me as much as it seems to bother other people; the brochure is really just a tempter, which then becomes another piece of documentation after the event. Few artists can write good copy far in advance of their performance, much of it sounds pretentious but I try and keep to the artist’s statement as much as possible. Personally I am not thinking about the copy that was written when I am watching a performance, in this instance I was watching an artist who certainly lived up to my expectations based on my previous experiences of his work. You could get into a more involved “marketing” discussion about what the brochure should be doing for new audiences – but lets not, as you were asking about my own experience.

Can you describe any memorable moments from the piece? What affected/moved you or has stayed with you about this piece? When I watch the work it is like a continuing discussion I feel I have been having with Richard over many years. It feels like I have been privy to someone’s very private thoughts and this can take me through different emotions from pure joy and laughter to somewhere that is a little more sober. I find the work often funny because he is picking up on those weird compulsions and obsessions that we surely must all confess to. Dancing in front of the mirror, or dancing in the middle of your living room with just the cat watching, making funny faces and weird sounds with your voice like you were 10-years old again but remembering how cathartic that can often feel.

I like the fact that Richard wears a suit on stage - it makes his actions appear all the more off the wall somehow. Having come from a generation of performance artists where the boiler-suit was de-rigueur I liked the first impression I had of Richard in his suit back in the 80’s – and on this occasion with no shoes of course. There are repeated actions in the work that reflect other pieces I had seen before, or since, the obsessive cleaning, the idiosyncratic ticks, the mutterings to himself, which is so obviously for our consumption as we listen in on the edges of his space. I like the fact that his aesthetic comes from visual art brought into performance, the almost ritualistic removing of a brick for instance, to create a shadow of itself set at a sharp angle, and objects dissecting a landscape (was this a dig at Richard Long?), such simplicity in performance is often the most beautiful. He uses the film of himself in another time to demonstrate this very well and we are made aware that his obsessions have always been there. I liked the way we are watching him in real time watching him from another time - and now I am here watching it removed still further in time. He, like I, uses the film to remind himself of something in a performance whilst feeling slightly removed from it.

Do you recall where you sat and which night you saw it? If you saw it on both nights, was there a difference between the two performances?

We are not speaking of theatre, no two nights are ever the same. Richard is one of those artists where you do hope to catch each performance for that very reason. I sat front left for a quick escape at the end of the show.

Do you remember anything about the relationship between the video and performance (for example in terms of movement either of camera or performer)?

Sometimes Richard does play to the (documenting) camera but I can’t remember whether he did here. This is unusual in performance art because it wouldn’t normally be considered ‘true’ to performance but with Richard he uses the camera like all the objects he brings into play that happen to be in the space, or he has placed there. In terms of the film as a deliberate component of the performance it works very well. I feel he has always used video well and was one of the first artists to convince me of its worth back in the days when I was very suspicious of it.

Do you remember anything about the audience response?

Extremely well received I believe, as Richard’s performances so often are.

Do you remember who documented this piece and how?

It was a local company called 'Left and Right' and they documented it very badly on evidence of this tape.

How does this video document perform for you?

Not as well as the live performance but a useful tool to unlock the memories