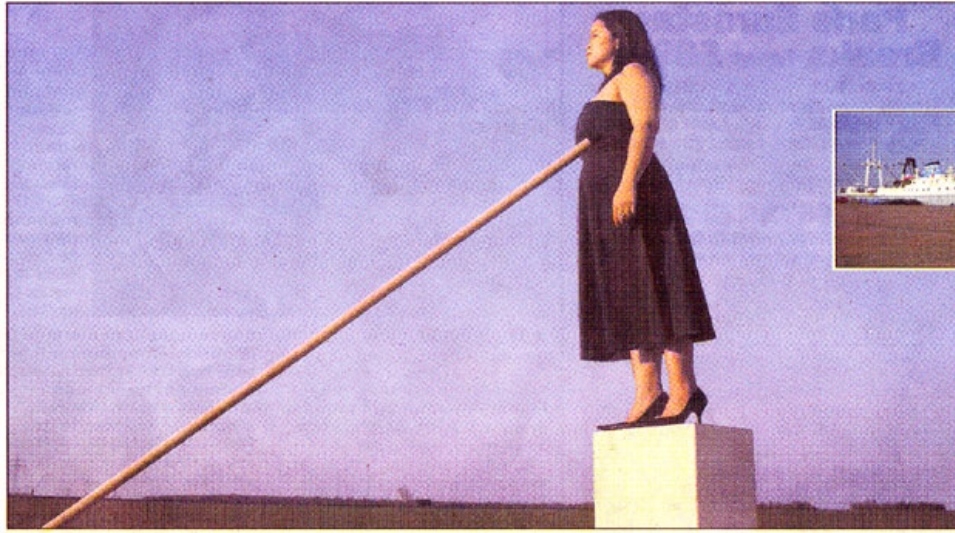


# METROLIFE

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Diverse and intriguing: Melati Suryodarmo spends two-hour stretches leaning against a long spear and the former East German trawler Stubnitz (inset) is one of the festival's three venues

## Quirk experience

Pointing out that Navigate, a four-day festival of live art, takes place over three venues doesn't really do justice to its scale. One of those venues is the cavernous BALTIC, while another is the ship Stubnitz (a former East German factory trawler) and the third will be a bus. Or, more specifically, a bus tour - conducted at night through the slumbering streets of Newcastle and Gateshead to the accompaniment of a highly unusual soundtrack. Visitors to Tyneside this weekend could be forgiven for thinking the region is permanently devoted to surreal performance. Stroll around the Quayside from Thursday onwards and it's odds-on you'll bump into one of 17 performers and collectives from around the world here to engage in antics as diverse and intriguing as

**ART**  
The Navigate festival brings an extended air of surreality to Newcastle and Gateshead

paper-shredding (the obsession of artist Sachiko Abe), dancing with salt while leaning against a long spear (Melati Suryodarmo). The question that inevitably arises is: 'Why?' 'The idea for the festival came from an Arts Council initiative to increase the profile of live and performance art in England,' explains Ben Pontin from Amino, one of the four organisations collaborating in the production of Navigate. 'The original

plan was that it should all take place in BALTIC but we quickly realised the event would be bigger than one venue could accommodate. Rather than scatter it around Newcastle-Gateshead in static venues, we wanted to keep it around the river. From that came the idea of bringing the Stubnitz from the continent and mooring it on the Tyne.' Co-curator Nicola Hood from BALTIC believes the festival, two years in the pipeline, is both an organisational coup and a major celebration of an art form often dismissed as bewildering. 'It's really international: we've got artists from the States and Japan alongside regional artists. The festival is grounded in live performance so there's no chance of it transferring elsewhere. It's unique to the region.'

All participating artists were given a very loose brief - 'navigation'. 'The ones we're really intrigued by are the new commissions,' says Hood. 'Two works are going to be made on the Stubnitz's voyage over from Holland, so the results are still completely unknown. And we have no idea yet where the coach tour is going to take people.' So would somebody stumbling across Navigate be engaged or find it esoteric and intimidating? 'They'll find it appealing,' Hood promises. 'Our motivation was to make the public more interested in this area of practice, so loads of ushers are going to be clued up on the works and give out more information. We wanted to make the festival attention-grabbing, so works will be visible on the deck of the ship as you approach, and one artist called Eve Dent is going to hide herself within the architecture of both the BALTIC and the Stubnitz. It's almost like a game of hide and seek.' That real-life staging of Where's Wally? included, Pontin is confident Navigate will succeed in boosting the accessibility of live art. 'But at the same time we're not trying to dumb it down,' he stresses. 'It's intelligent work; it's all interesting and a lot of it will provoke people to consider things. Audiences are hungry for that kind of thought-provoking art.'

### Five highlights of the Navigate festival

- 1** Five older members of the Newcastle and Gateshead communities were interviewed on a boat at dusk for *Twilight*. They speak of their hopes and fears in an unusual film that its makers - Anglo-Irish digital artists *Desperate Optimists* - hope reflects the ebb and flow of local life.
- 2** New York performance artist Karen Finley is known for her challenging work. The piece commissioned for Navigate is cheekily entitled *The Dreams Of Laura Bush*. Finley will develop the project over the course of the festival, using drawings and experimental theatre monologues to second-guess the First Lady.

- 3** Tim Miller is an American gay man whose partner is Australian. Delving the nature of travel, separation and bureaucracy, *Glory Box* (pictured) is a performance-based exploration of same-sex marriage and immigration rights, based on Miller's international struggle to live with his lover.
- 4** Lending physical reality to notions of emotional distance



- and estrangement, *VIEW* will involve marks being made on artist Kira O'Reilly's skin in order to produce a map in the form of a body.
- 5** Using a specially-built wall to say something about power, for three hours each day André Stitt will engage in a 'dialogue' with the wall in *Nostalgia* - inscribing it with text and imagery, embedding objects in it, moving around it and just listening to it. *HD*

### IN TOWN TONIGHT



**THEATRE**  
The Complete Works Of William Shakespeare (Abridged)  
See all of Shakespeare's 37 plays in 97 minutes - including *Hamlet* in reverse  
Until Sat, Theatre Royal, Grey Street, Newcastle upon Tyne, 7.30pm, mats Thu 2pm and Sat 2.30pm, £7.50 to £17.50, concs available. Tel: 0870 905 5060. Metro: Monument. www.reducedshakespeare.co.uk



**FILM**  
The Chorus (12A)  
Astrid Bergès-Fabrice stars as a teacher who wins the friendship of his unruly pupils  
Tonight, Alnwick Playhouse, Bondgate Without, Alnwick, Northumberland, 7.30pm, £4.50, £3.50, concs available. Tel: 01665 510785. www.alnwickplayhouse.co.uk

**CLUB**  
Trashed  
New indie rock night with resident DJ Maru on the decks  
Tonight, Revolution, Collingwood Street, Newcastle upon Tyne, 8pm to 1am, free. Tel: 0191 261 5774. Metro: Central Station

### BOOKING NOW



**The Black Dyke Band**  
Celebrating its 150th anniversary this year, The Black Dyke Band is one of Britain's most acclaimed brass ensembles with an illustrious history that includes Grammy and Oscar nominations. Its only North-East date this year will include a broad range of works with all proceeds from the event going to the charity National Children's Homes  
Aug 27, Hall 1, The Sage Gateshead, St Mary's Square, Gateshead Quays, Gateshead, 7.30pm, £8 to £16. Tel: 0191 443 4661. Metro: Gateshead. www.blackdykeband.co.uk

RATINGS GUIDE	
Excellent.....	★★★★
Very good.....	★★★½
Good.....	★★★
Adequate.....	★★★½
Poor.....	★★★

**Start The Day** Catch up with cartoons This Life and Nemi, exercise your mind with our brain teasers and check your horoscope **32**