

COMMENT IS FREE

## Conversation with Lyndall Milani

**Marysia Lewandowska:** Lyndall, what's the beginning of your involvement with art, where did you study? What were you doing in 1975 when the Institute of Modern Art (IMA) formed?

**Lyndall Milani:** I didn't study art at tertiary level until much later—1990. My parents wanted to educate me, and being an artist was not within their parameters of what it meant to be educated.

**ML:** They were in Brisbane?

**LM:** They were in Brisbane; actually, they made sure they were in Brisbane. When I started to look a bit flighty at one stage, they came back from Leslie Dam (near Warwick). My mum was an anxious person and hadn't really come to terms with the idea that I had 'grown up' while at boarding school and uni. My father was an engineer. I grew up on construction camps, so the fact that I now produce huge art works is not an accident; the fact that there is often a conflict between the cultural and the natural is not an accident. I lived it. I watched these huge trucks roll through pristine rainforests, and the little campsite where we lived was like a scar in the landscape.

So, I was witness to this enormous, perpetual activity that was perceived to be a very grand project for the future of Australia and Queensland. We were producing hydro-electricity, or irrigation, for the nation. My parents sent me to boarding school, where I studied art as well as doing a complete science course. And at the end when I was interested in theatre and set design, or just studying art, they weren't at all keen, because you had to go south to do anything like that.

I studied physiotherapy at university, and by 1973, I had married and had three children: Josh, Marcello and Alida. In the early 1970s, I decided to get back to my art. The big floods in 1974 reinforced that decision. All that money on a designer house only to have it ravaged by forces you could not control; it put our material possessions into a new perspective.

**CONVERSATION**

**Date: 21 April 2015**

**Location: Spring Hill, Brisbane**

I started producing sculpture around 1971 or '72 and exhibited with the Sculpture Society in 1973 in King George Square. In 1979, I had an exhibition in conjunction with Dixie Lambert at a Gold Coast Gallery, and out of that came a commission for some architects. Some sculpture friends (Len Shillam and George Wilson-Cooper) were working at the Queensland College of Art (QCA), Seven Hills—Len was in charge of the Sculpture Department—and they said that I should become a miscellaneous student there (because, with the three kids, I didn't want to do the formal course). They were happy to have me produce the commission within the student area at QCA.

**ML:** I'm trying to relate this to the establishing of the IMA. So you were raising a young family just as the IMA was being established?

**LM:** No, I had Josh, the youngest, in 1973, and recommenced my art practice around 1971 after we moved into the house on the river at Chelmer.

**ML:** Was your ex-husband Gino already part of the art scene? Or how did you and he become connected to art?

**LM:** My connection to art never waned. I was passionate about it. Gino, with his Italian background, was interested in all things cultural. He actually liked art, which was an early mutual interest. He was always very supportive of my art practice. I had joined the Sculpture Society in 1971, and through this I met others in the scene. I had also begun life-drawing classes at 111 Musgrave Rd under (the old) Gallery One Eleven at Red Hill where Roy Churcher oversaw the drawing group. He was part of the group with Joy Schoenheimer and Ray Hughes, who initiated the IMA and were past members of the Contemporary Art Society. We also knew another early IMA board member, Alan Shield. We met through mutual friends who were interested in art, wine, and food. Alan was a big wine buff. He was also a friend of Roy and Betty Churcher. So there were a number of ways we knew about the inception of the IMA. We attended the inaugural meeting crammed in at the stairwell, along with Philip Bacon.

**ML:** Had you both started collecting art around that time?

**LM:** As I said, Gino was interested in art before I met him. He began collecting in a small way in 1967 while we were still going out, and later through Phillip Bacon in the 1970s.

**ML:** Tell me more about you becoming a practicing artist.

**LM:** I had difficulties in realising how best to exist in the art ecology as a woman. Gino's expectations of what it was to be a wife were a little bit constraining as well, due to cultural differences. During this time, I became aware of the feminist movement, as it was in 1970 that Germaine Greer's book *The Female Eunuch*, came out. Gino's attitude to our marriage breakdown was that 'feminism got her', and to some extent he's right—in the sense that I realised I didn't want to be the kind of woman I was brought up to be. The art industry offered me a way out of the stereotype.

**ML:** What was the impact of Greer's book on you?

**LM:** It actually transpired a number of years later, particularly the 'I don't want to be a woman' sentiment. But I think by this time, I'd been working on my artwork out of QCA, and I'd become associated with a particular group of students, a number of whom were fairly radical. My world of artist's friends was expanding, the provocation to think was expanding, and one of my best friends, Glenda Nalder, was studying feminism. So I was inadvertently coming to contact with this material, and it wasn't just Germaine Greer, it was a progression of things taking place from the mid-1970s until the early '80s. Then I was then hit with another problem, which was that I'd been working with plastics and I had actually become allergic to them. My immune system collapsed. And so that was another 'taking away'. I could no longer work with the sort of materials I had been working with. And I became sensitive to multiple foods and chemicals. It effectively re-socialised me, and forced me to rethink who I was and what I was doing.

**ML:** Could you say something more about your circle of friends; what kind of activities were you undertaking? What was the social scene like? Did you attend talks, exhibitions?

**LM:** I suppose the main person who was extending my sense of what it was to understand the feminist position was my friend Glenda Nalder. She worked on some of my works as well, and she oversaw the production of a video that accompanied my work at the Queensland Art Gallery (QAG) in 1985. While I was at QCA, John Elliot became Head of Sculpture, and some of the students found him very difficult to follow. However, his input was very important for me. The previous Head of Department had been Len Shillam, a wonderful man. He gave support to the students who were more object-based, and didn't pressure them to become conceptually based. The really big thing that happened for me was the first Australian Sculpture Triennial in Melbourne, which I went to see in 1981 with the third-year sculpture students. While I was at college, I was able

to sit in on lectures and able to mix with a group of students, so it was almost like being one of that crowd. This was the group of students who did not leave Brisbane and head south. They stayed in Brisbane and started up a number of radical artist-run spaces. This was going on 'in cahoots' with what was taking place at the IMA.

**ML:** What are your recollections of the beginnings of the IMA?

**LM:** The very early recollections are probably not so intense because I had three children, and I was trying to produce work as well. I was at the original meeting when the IMA was being formed. Phillip Bacon was there and Gino was there. Ray Hughes, Joy Schoenheimer, Roy Churcher and Alan Shield were on the committee, among others; they'll be in the IMA archive. I can't remember when I became a member, but I wasn't heavily involved in the IMA at that stage. What was important was that they were bringing out performance artists, and I was seeing the work whenever I could. So the early IMA at Market Street really had a big impact on the whole scene in Brisbane.

**ML:** Was this under the directorship of John Buckley?

**LM:** Yes, he was the one who brought out some performance artists who did some fairly radical things, such as roll on the floor, which, you know, for Brisbane was pretty 'out there'. It was just brilliant to see this in Brisbane. John Nixon took over from Buckley. The period that I became most engaged in the IMA was a little bit later, I suppose, when it shifted from Market Street to 106 Edward Street. Gino and I owned that building with another person, and so the IMA was able to get reasonable rent because we were supporters.

**ML:** So you were benefactors?

**LM:** Well... sort of. The IMA was at 106 Edward Street for ten years from 1982. Gino was very generous with the IMA at various other times. Francesco Conz came out to Australia with a Fluxus exhibition for the IMA, and Gino organised the Italian community to make all the frames for the work. You know, things like that. I think they made him a life member. Conz subsequently left a whole lot of work to the QAG. He's passed away now, unfortunately, but he worked with Fluxus in the sense that he was a great supporter of Fluxus, a publisher of Fluxus and he collected the collectable parts of Fluxus.

**ML:** And what happened to this collection?

**LM:** Some of it went to the QAG.

**ML:** You said performance art was something that you were introduced to at the IMA. Did you already have interest in more ephemeral or spontaneous activities? What was the audience for these new art forms that were emerging? Was it just people like you who already had an interest in them, or was there a more general public that would have not come across these kinds of expressions? Was the IMA able to attract a wider audience or was it more of an in-crowd, family affair?

**LM:** I think at QCA, there was definitely a kind of a circle of people [interested in these forms of art] with whom I was increasingly becoming involved as my children got older, but as for how many were outside of art, I don't know. I know people on the board were actually people like Gino who were both professionals and also very supportive of the IMA. So it had a firm basis. I can't honestly say how many of them were just passersby that might not have come there [anyway] because I was always coming in with a group of people who were interested in being provoked.

**ML:** What would you say were the numbers that the performance evenings attracted?

**LM:** Not large, I think thirty, maybe more. I know that at the original setting up of the IMA, the place was absolutely 'packed to the rafters'. There were people all the way up the stairs.

**ML:** This was at Market Street?

**LM:** Yeah, this was the first meeting, forming it; there was a really large attendance.

**ML:** What was the most memorable and active period for you being part of the IMA scene?

**LM:** In the 1980s and early '90s. In the 1980s, I also started going to some of the other events like the Sculpture Triennial in Melbourne, which I spoke about before, where there was a lot of performance and installation work. So my experience of these things was broadening as well; so it wasn't just the IMA, it was other events that I attended with the QCA students. Sculpture was the only department where students could come to if they wanted to do installation or performance or sound—or, for that matter, anything at all. I was having my

mind exposed to work that wouldn't normally be available. The College and the IMA were very strongly part of that.

**ML:** What would you say was the importance of the IMA in relation to the institutions such as the QUT Art Museum, the University of Queensland (UQ) Art Museum, or any other artist-run spaces?

**LM:** It was unique. In 1984, I did a work called *Mandala*, which became an IMA Annex show. This was a site-specific installation in a building called John Mills Himself, which was at the centre of where some of the artist-run spaces were occurring at the time. John Mills was a building leased by some QUT architecture students, which they sublet to others. In 1982, my friend Wendy [Mills] received a grant to rent a studio space for a year. She came across John Mills and rented the front space in Charlotte Street. It was an old printery, a bit messy. She cleaned it up, and produced a series of installations. In 1983, Wendy suggested I follow her into the space, and I did.

And I should say that the main reason *Mandala* became an IMA Annex show was because of Joan Sheriff, the secretary of the IMA. She'd loved my evolving installation/performance at Festival '82 at the Community Arts Centre. When Barbara [Campbell] and Ted [Riggs] curated the *No Names* show, Joan encouraged me to work with a beam of light that passed through the gallery space each day, and I did. Joan followed the progress of *Mandala* in 1984, and she approached Peter Cripps, the new director, to support the work as an Annex show. In relation to other institutions, Wendy's final work in John Mills was exhibited at the end of 1983 and resulted in her being awarded an Artist's Residency and a Gallery 14 exhibition at QAG. *Mandala*'s success likewise resulted in my being awarded a QAG Residency and Gallery 14 show in 1985. Gallery 14 was a specially designed space for contemporary, experimental art in the new QAG [building]. This initiative was a fabulous opportunity and previously the domain of the IMA, and the ARIs [artist-run initiatives], so I think it's fair to say the ongoing impact of the IMA was probably amplified and challenged by the proliferation of the ARIs and the new QAG.

While *Mandala* was still being produced, a new artist-run contemporary art space, THAT Space, was being proposed, and they rented a space just next door, down a little laneway at 20 Charlotte Street. Paul Andrews was one of the people to start THAT, along with Jay Younger, Leanne Ramsay, and John Waller (among others). Paul invited me to join them, but by that stage, Gino had bought 83 St Paul's [Terrace], which was being transformed into a studio space for me. And so I wasn't interested in joining THAT Space, although I was firmly



interested in what they were doing.

The other three people who were absolutely central to the emergence of the artist-run scene in Brisbane in the early 1980s were Jeanelle Hurst, Russell Lake, and Adam Boyd. They were among the students who elected not to relocate south after graduating from QCA. They stayed and initiated a series of radical artist-run spaces, which catalysed and helped transform the Brisbane art scene. Interestingly, Adam ended up working at the IMA later in the mid-1990s as an administrator.

**ML:** Are you still in touch with any of these people? Josh has also mentioned Jeanelle Hurst.

**LM:** No, not now. Jeanelle did a lot of edgy, interesting work. She would be a great person if you could get to talk to her.

**ML:** I think you mentioned that she was involved with a lot of documentary and video work?

**LM:** Yes, she collaborated with me on one of my early projects. She filmed a family dinner at home, Alida was probably about twelve or thirteen, something like that. Then after the [One Flat] trio disbanded, she instigated a project for Queensland for the Australian Bicentennial celebrations (1988), 'City As a Work of Art'. There were large projections onto walls, and an orchestrated lighting 'performance' where the lights on different floors of high-rises were switched on and off to a set score, and she oversaw all that.

And in 1982, after we came back from the Melbourne Sculpture Triennial, and the Sydney Biennale, she and Russell, we then... Well, we had all attended a talk at the Sydney College of the Arts by British performance artist Anthony Howell, who was represented in the Biennale. Plus I had been billeted with one of Adrian Hall's (SCA) students, Marie Larson, a feminist whose performance work was pretty risky and edgy. When we got back, I decided I wanted to produce a performance. As a result, I collaborated with Jeanelle Hurst, Russell Lake, Linda Wilson, and a number of QCA students on a performance, *Rites*, which was presented in a programme, *4 Performances*, running over three evenings in [August] 1982 in the theatre of the Community Arts Centre [now Metro Arts] in Edward St. Jeanelle produced the video of the event, Russell the sound, Linda the floor design, while Linda and Cameron Whighton were key performers, along with myself and my young son, Josh. *4 Performances* also included *3 Pieces* by Barbara Campbell. David Whyte, who was working at the print department of QCA, then

at Seven Hills, produced really stunning poster advertising the event. They were perhaps too successful, as they were unashamedly souvenired by one and all. Nancy Underhill, a big supporter of the IMA, who was then Head of the Art History Department at UQ, attended one of the performance evenings and brought along visiting feminist art critic and historian, Lucy Lippard.

Barbara [Campbell] was acting director of the IMA (1982–1984) at a point at which Gino and I were becoming more and more involved, and when a few really important things happened, one being the *No Names* show. Barbara was also linked with A ROOM, which was one of the artist-run spaces in George Street; another was The Observatory. These emerged after One Flat Exhibit (1981–1983), which was Jeanelle and friends, and it was near Musgrave Park at West End, and she eventually moved into an old bank in George Street [around 1983–1984], which was renamed One Flat Office. Jeanelle organised exhibitions there. One night, Gino and I were part of a performance there, *Edible Art*, which was a dinner as a work of art. The old bank had a fully glassed façade fronting onto George Street, which made this a perfect venue for a public performance. A sculptor friend of mine, Maurie Maunsell, would make sculptures out of food, and Jeanelle invited him to produce a dinner to coincide with a visit from Ross Wolf, who was then director of the Australia Council. She organised for Gino and myself to come along, as well as artists Hilary and Martin Boscott, from memory. Maurie produced the food, and we were on display for the public to see. Russell [Lake], who was one of the One Flat trio, performed as professional waiter for the occasion, and Jeanelle videoed the whole thing.

**ML:** When was that?

**LM:** I can't remember what date that was, but it would have been in the early 1980s—probably 1983 or '84. Janelle went from One Flat at West End to George Street in 1983, I think. THAT Space was up and running by, say, 1984 or '85. And A ROOM and The Observatory came into existence around that time [editor's note: 1984 and 1985 respectively]. So there was this proliferation of artist-run spaces around the same time that ran in parallel with the IMA. The IMA was considered a catalyst, a generator, in this. What was also important—particularly for the IMA—was that we had a number of 'refugees' from Thatcher's Britain, two of whom were very influential. One was Urszula Szulakowska, who began working at Art History at UQ. She got very involved with supporting the performance scene. Virginia Barratt, from Toowoomba College of Art, moved to Brisbane and was really into performance, and she was working for me as an assistant in the 1980s. She and her collaborator Adam Boyd eventually took over the front space in John Mills Himself (where I had that big exhibition, which



was an IMA Annex show) and they set up an artist-run gallery and performance space called John Mills National. The other ‘refugee’ was Nick Zurbrugg; he lectured in Humanities at Griffith University, and was editor of a famous concrete poetry magazine called *Stereo Headphones*.

**ML:** Did you know Malcolm Enright back then?

**LM:** Yes, Malcolm [Enright] was very much part of the scene, very much part of the IMA. He was on the board and he was part of *No Names* [held in May 1983]. It was an important exhibition because it brought together artists who have remained key people in the Brisbane art scene, but all of us were ‘not names’ at this stage.

Plus Barbara [Campbell] and Ted [Riggs] supported the Artworkers Union (later the Artworkers Alliance) in its very early days, making the IMA available as a base for its meetings. I have some minutes from one of those early meetings. And Brian Doherty ran film nights there, and Barbara organised reading groups. It was democratic and inclusive. It was great. Barbara was in charge when Anthony Howell had his workshops (1982) and Mike Parr too, later on in 1983. I attended both.

**ML:** What would you say was the role of women in the IMA’s activities? I believe apart from Barbara Campbell, there were only male directors.

**LM:** Well, there was Sue Cramer for a few years [1987–1989], and Barbara was an acting director from 1982 to 1984, and in between was Peter Cripps [1984–1986]. Nick Tsoutas came in 1990 and he expanded everything. I became involved with the board of the IMA in 1990/91 and then again from 1993 to 1995; in 1992, I was away with an Australia Council Overseas Residency. Anyway, Nick Tsoutas came...

**ML:** Where from?

**LM:** ...from Sydney, I think it was Performance Space. And he was very supportive of local artists, and the IMA was still at 106 Edward Street, which was ours, and he and Gino got on very well because Nick’s background was Greek, so they spoke the same language, they had much in common...

**ML:** Greeks and Romans...

**LM:** Yeah, their cultural backgrounds were Mediterranean; that sense of the patronage to the arts was just somehow part of their DNA. When [Francesco]

Conz was coming out here and bringing an exhibition of Fluxus artefacts, Nick organised a party in my studio for him, and all the IMA people were invited. As I said earlier, the Italian community supported the Fluxus exhibition at the IMA, which Gino organised. There was a back lift as well as a front lift [at 106 Edward St], and so the goods lift at the back became not only for shifting stuff up and down, but it also often became a gallery space for local artists. The international artists would probably be in the front two rooms, and then Nick started curating us into those spaces. I had an exhibition at the IMA at that stage [*Evolution*, 1990], and this came about because when Nick came to Brisbane, he went around everybody's studio...

**ML:** Was he the first director who actually visited artists in their studios?

**LM:** To my knowledge, yes. Mind you, Peter Cripps supported my IMA Annex show. So I suppose, it did occur, and Bob MacPherson was a local who was supported by the IMA. However, Nick made a point of coming around to the studios, and then he'd make a point of not only having international people or southern people there, but bringing also local people into the IMA, and for that he was much loved. And this brought back the sense of Barbara and Ted's inclusiveness, so that generated a lot of excitement, and of course Nick was very supportive of all the artist-run spaces. He would go and watch what was going on there, and there was a lot of cross feeding. His wife Peggy [Wallach] was a performance artist, and Nick had been running Performance Space in Sydney, and he was also very supportive of installation practice.

**ML:** I was just looking through the documentation yesterday, and it struck me that as part of the exhibition program, quite a few of the shows were by artists brought from elsewhere—quite a lot of British sculptors, some Americans. But in addition to the international profile, there was also something very local about the IMA ...cake-icing competitions took place there, after-parties with wine and cheese, as well as lectures, performances, screenings. A truly eclectic set of events; what more can you say about this?

**LM:** This is why I said it was really important that Urszula [Szulakowska] and Nick Zurbrugg came out from the UK. Later on, Rex Butler joined the UQ Art History department, so when Nick Tsoutas arrived, they all started supporting each other. I called them the triumvirate—the two Nicks and Rex—and they were responsible for a lot of publications and innovative events. Nick encouraged me to become a member of the board as an artist representative, but also I think he saw me as someone who would support his ideas. And I think that was strategic, because he knew what my work was, what I was interested in,

and he figured that I would support some of the collaborative projects that he set up with Kick Arts and various other people and not be overly conservative about that sort of thing. So I think you get on a board for strategic reasons. It was an exciting time because the three of them worked together very well. Nick Zurbrugg was a concrete poet as well as a lecturer, and he was into Robert Wilson and postmodernism, and he spent all his holidays interviewing artists and writers. He organised a project in 1995 that I became part of called *Eye-Phonics* (where sound meets the eye), where he brought various international vocal performers, artists—people like John Giorno, Bernard Heidsieck, Kathy Acker and Ellen Zweig, Joan La Barbara—and Sydney-based performance artists like Barbara Campbell to do workshops with local people, and the whole idea was to bring the best into Queensland. This was funded and set up over a year, but that was set up at Metro Arts, a more community-based venue, but these guys [the two Nicks and Rex] were producing events for the IMA. They brought [Jean] Baudrillard out because he was a friend of Nick Zurbrugg. From working on *Stereo Headphones*, Nick Zurbrugg had a lot of contacts—people like Henri Chopin, Paul Virilio, Orlan—and he was able to entice a few of them out here to Brisbane, which we benefitted from. Rex Butler would support him, and so did Nick Tsoutas, who was really interested in this process. Conz and, of course, Fluxus fit into that same sort of category, and, as I was saying, Nick Tsoutas organised a big party here to introduce Conz to the art scene, with wine and cheese, of course—great food—and I think this was very much part of that Mediterranean ethic of community and sociability. It was about bringing people into the IMA.

**ML:** So this period is really more about alternative event-based practices. What happens later on; when did you lose interest in the IMA?

**LM:** It wasn't that I lost interest in the IMA, it was that I couldn't keep up my involvement with the IMA because I started my doctorate in about 1995. I saw *Eye-Phonics* as being allied to my doctoral research. Barbara Campbell was one of the installation/performance artists I interviewed for my PhD.

**ML:** Would you agree that the beginnings, let's say the first five years, seemed interesting in a way of consolidating people and opening up a space for experimentation? Then there were 1980s, which you described as a kind of an eruption, and then come the 1990s—would you say this is when things started to stagnate at the IMA?

**LM:** Well, the early 1990s with Nick were very exciting and inclusive. What happened was that in the early 1990s, the IMA had moved from being at 106

[Edward St], to Gipps Street in the [Fortitude] Valley. That was a big expansion. There were three floors of galleries; I think it was an [overly] ambitious project. Nick had wanted to be able to bring out international artists, and Baudrillard came out when we were at Gipps Street, so that would have been early 1990s. I'm not exactly sure when they moved there. It think it must have been in 1992 while I was away and wasn't on the board.

The financial cost of running the three floors of the gallery [was too great], with what was a financial close down going on... one of the reasons that I did my doctorate was that there was a shift in government attitude toward the arts and a closing down on grants and a lot more boxes you had to be able to tick to be able to get a grant. Eventually, it had to be industry connected... all this sort of thing. So the writing was on the wall as to whether you were able to get the sort of support that had been there during that earlier period. And I think that Nick (and the board) had overstretched, and so, the stagnation was actually really to do with [that]. When Nick's tenure finished (I was still on the board), there was a financial crisis, and Rex and I did the interviews for the next lot of people, and we brought in... Michael Snelling. He had been director of the equivalent of the IMA in Adelaide, and then (I think) he'd been with the Australia Council in Sydney. He was far more financially conservative [than Nick Tsoutas]. Anyway, of the people that applied, we felt that he was the one who was going to be most fiscally responsible.

**ML:** Was the stagnation related to the financial constraints?

**LM:** Yes, being financially pulled back—not to be so grandiose in schemes.

**ML:** So what impact did this scaling down have on the actual program? Did the programming suffer or did it adjust?

**LM:** I was not so involved by then; I was focussed on my doctoral studies, not the IMA. And by then the writing was on the wall in regards to everyone in the art scene. Also, Gino and I decided to separate in 1993, so I also had to think of how I was financially going to survive and so I...

**ML:** It's interesting that the crisis, which hits the professional community, also has a personal resonance for you. That moment coincides with your decision to invest more in yourself as an artist than your role as a wife to Gino.

**LM:** Yeah, although I've just realised that in early 1994, Nick Tsoutas was still at the IMA, because I did a project for the IMA. I was employed to work with a

group of rural artists called Jump-Up-Arts out at Goondiwindi to produce an art installation in a big shed at the Show Grounds, and then to bring it down to the IMA and to show it down here. We also produced work for another IMA show, *Knowing The Sensorium*. And that was a fairly intense period and I took that on partly because I would still be working at art but I would be getting paid for it, and this was 1994, which was after Gino and I had separated.

In 1995, I began my doctorate, but then I got involved in public art, which paid well. I was also awarded a residency in 1998 with some architects [BVN], so I spent a couple of years doing the doctorate on a part-time basis. I finished my doctorate in 2003.

**ML:** What about ephemeral archives; have you been saving and collecting invitation cards or things that would be related to the art scene in those years, or did you lose them all in the flood?

**LM:** When Josh mentioned you, I rang him and I said “Oh, last week I binned a huge hoard of all the stuff that was related to the IMA and me.”

**ML:** What? You binned it?!

**LM:** Yeah, I’ve just got too much...

**ML:** Why didn’t you give it all to the IMA?

**LM:** Well, I thought they would have it all. You know, it was minutes from meetings and...

**ML:** But they are *your* minutes so they might have not kept those.

**LM:** I just needed to...

**ML:** Can you go back to that bin?

**LM:** No, no, I put it out last week. I’m a bit of a hoarder, and I have to be ruthless every now and again. I try to be normal and get rid of stuff reasonably, but I can’t, it’s all or nothing. And this IMA stuff had been sitting here for so long, and I thought, the IMA is doing their archive, they don’t need this.

**ML:** Quite the opposite! Coming originally from Poland, I have an interest in traces in what is kept and what is lost and why, whether it’s in Brisbane, London,

Warsaw; material things that have been attached to people's lives are so culturally significant.

**LM:** Yes, unfortunately I pulled the plug last week. But I still I have a lot. Some of the key stuff I mentioned before, like being at that meeting for what became the Queensland Artworkers Alliance. It was the Queensland Artworkers Union at the beginning, it was very union based, and then it turned into the Artworkers Alliance. And now it doesn't exist at all.

**ML:** Tell me one more thing, this is a later story, but it seems to be emotionally difficult for Malcolm [Enright] to talk about, the sale of his collection in 1999. So he was a collector, a designer and a curator at the IMA. He played all these different roles and seemed to have been very much embedded within the community, close to many of the artists I suppose, there was such a big outcry when he decided to auction his collection of thirty years.

**LM:** Okay, yeah, I wasn't aware. So when did he sell that?

**ML:** 1999. Did he buy any of your pieces?

**LM:** I doubt it. Most of my work wasn't really easy to buy.

**ML:** Most of your work was installation art and performance.

**LM:** Yeah, and a lot of it was rather epic in scale. Also, I didn't have a dealer; I had to try and find my own way behind closed doors. This began as an ideological strategy on my behalf, a feminist strategy. I did not want to be bought and sold.

**ML:** Was that true for other women artists? What about Barbara Campbell?

**LM:** Barbara is not really into putting more objects out into the world, yet she created some really beautiful objects as part of her work and she has sold her work or parts of it to galleries. She's not focused on that though. I know she's done her postdoctoral work down in Sydney and I would imagine that she's still trying to fund things from grants and in various other ways.

**ML:** Just to go back for a minute to the archiving, while you decided that you didn't want to, or you had no reason to, hold on to the IMA-related stuff, you kept the archives of your own work, because a lot of it sounds like it was ephemeral. Did you secure all of that?



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A project by Marysia Lewandowska

**LM:** Yes. I have slides and photographs, and some big drawings from some of the installations. A few demountable structures are stored. A lot has been digitised and is stored on my computer and some is online on my (still under construction) website. I have a large video archive of news and documentaries dating from 2006 till now, which I have drawn upon for artwork. My artwork *Tangent* (2013) drew on a lot of this material.

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