

# ART + SPACE

A British photographer has turned his lens on Queensland artists in their own habitats – the artists are the works of art

BY SALLY BROWNE

PHOTOGRAPHY RICHARD NOLAN-NEYLAN

Artists are used to creating works for others to look at. They're not so used to being the object of artwork themselves.

But a British photographer, Richard Nolan-Neylan, has decided to turn the tables and shine the spotlight on these creative individuals at work in a new exhibition.

The series is called *Going Public* and it is on display at the Queensland Centre for Photography this month.

Nolan-Neylan, who recently moved to Australia after a 15-year career as a fashion photographer in London, took his lens inside the private studios of many of Queensland's best-known artists, including Barbara Heath, Bruce Reynolds, Debra Porch, Donna Marcus, Ian Smith, Judy Watson, June Tupicoff, Laurie Nilsen, Lisa Adams, Marian Drew, Mona Ryder, Rebecca McIntosh, Richard Bell, Sebastian Di Mauro and Simone Eisler.

It's a different stride from his usual photographic background, snapping models for some of the UK's top magazines, including *Marie Claire*, *Glamour* and *The Sunday Times*.

Nolan-Neylan was inspired to move to Queensland for the lifestyle, and inspired to undertake the project after seeing a picture of Picasso's studio.

"I saw a picture of Picasso in his studio and it was kind of fun," he says. "It was intriguing to see his other paintings that were around the studio and the way he worked. That's kind of where I got the idea."

As the project unfolded, Nolan-Neylan worked closely with curator Jacqueline Armitstead, who put him in touch with many of the artists.

Stepping inside their studios was revealing. Sculptor Donna Marcus, who created the giant metallic spheres in Brisbane Square and a new work at Eagle St, worked within a treasure trove of pots, pans, cake tins and jelly moulds ready to be reclaimed into works of art.

Installation artist Bruce Reynolds had just completed a new mixed-media work, using his trademark reclaimed linoleum, which now has a new home at the Brisbane Convention Centre.

Some artists, such as Mona Ryder and Debra Porch, worked within their old Queenslanders, their homes a work of art in themselves with all sorts of collections proudly displayed.

Prominent indigenous artists Richard Bell and Judy Watson had set up a temporary space in a shopfront at South Brisbane, just around the corner from the Gallery of Modern Art.

"I would say that there's no set rule about how to work and how people generate their ideas," Nolan-Neylan says.

"Ian Smith's studio was quite cluttered. He was very interesting to talk to. He has a couple of art books that he always has open and he turns a new page every day.

"He recently won the Tattersall's \$25,000 award for his landscape. It was actually in the background.

"He had some great stories to tell.







**Natural talent:**  
Lisa Adams has an  
eye for detail.





**Come inside:** Richard Bell (above) in his temporary studio in a South Brisbane shopfront; Mona Ryder (below right) works near her kitchen "so she can make herself a cup of tea"; Ian Smith (below) in his cluttered studio with his award-winning landscape in the background.



"We had a beer and a block of cheese," Nolan-Neylan says. "Mona Ryder, she works close to her kitchen, in her dining room. She has a studio as well but she likes to be close to the kitchen so she can make herself a cup of tea. She kind of takes over the dining room tabletop while she's making her installations and things."  
 "Richard Bell was quite reserved to begin with, in terms of just seeing what sort of character that you are and observing you a little bit."  
 "But there's a very warm side to him. Once he trusted what I was doing, he became more open."  
 "He pokes everybody for their reaction – you often kind

of laugh initially and then you don't know whether you should be laughing."  
 "His artwork really makes you think, with the text that he uses – it's quite strong and it does leave you thinking about his perspective and the perspective of Aboriginal people."  
 "Lisa Adams, her studio was up on the Sunshine Coast. Her work is very detailed and she was almost quite detailed in herself and in the way she dressed. The studio was quite clean and it looked out over a lovely view of the rolling hills and trees."  
 Nolan-Neylan approached each photograph as he would

a painting, he says. And he spent time with each artist, getting to know them, to make sure they felt comfortable. This being his first exhibition in Australia, he now hopes to undertake a project photographing regional Queensland artists as well.  
 "If you treat your subject with respect then they can feel that and respect that."  
 "They were all really lovely to me and helpful and interesting. It's been a great thing for me to be able to do."

*Going Public, The Queensland Centre for Photography, until October 21.*