

# The Telegraph

## Mary Kelly: in the studio

The American artist Mary Kelly, 74, studied painting in Italy in the Sixties, and then taught art in Beirut, Lebanon. In 1968, she moved to London, where she began making the conceptual projects she is now renowned for. Actively involved in the women's movement of the Seventies, many of her works were informed by feminist theory. Her iconic work on the mother/child relationship, *Post-Partum Document*, 1973-79, is currently showing as part of *Conceptual Art in Britain* at the Tate. The work caused a scandal when it was first shown in London, in 1976. Since then she has made works examining topics such as war, sexuality, identity and collective memory.



*Installation view of Post-Partum Document. Analysed Markings And Diary Perspective Schema (Experimentum Mentis III: Weaning from the Dyad), 1975*

**I get up between 10am and 11am**, or as late as my schedule allows, because I work late.

**I begin the day with a kind of brunch with my partner**, Ray [Barrie, the sculptor], and then I swim. I do about 30 laps and some yoga, which takes about half an hour. We have our own pool – this is LA.

**We live on the west side, near UCLA.** One afternoon a week I teach a class there, something called the Graduate Group Critique. I'm known for my particular method, where the artist doesn't speak and everyone else does the work of reading [critiquing the artwork], which I think is very much informed by feminism. But on the days I'm not teaching, I head straight to the studio.

**My studio is at home, and that is very important to me.** Part of the reason for that is because I don't drive, and no-one walks here, but in fact even when I didn't live in LA I always had my studio at home because my ideas and processes come from everyday life and its domestic settings. For instance, at the moment I'm making work using the lint from my dryer.

**The studio is arranged over two floors.** Upstairs are my books, my drawing tables and computers and plan chests. Sometimes a large work will have to be done somewhere else, but on the ground floor I have space for assembling and displaying and a back room for storage. Both rooms are very light with lots of windows, which overlook mountains and hillsides and greenery. It's a quiet setting. I love to come back here after I've been travelling; it's very conducive to work.

**I'm quite organised, about 8 out of 10, if I had to mark myself.** That's just the way I am: I like to have a lot of space when I'm working, which is very different from Ray, who likes to pile everything up around him. I've definitely noticed there are different styles and methods of organisation for artists and for writers and musicians, too.

Jonathan Yeo: in the studio

**I prefer not to listen to music when I'm working,** apart from perhaps a little classical when I'm in the office, but Ray, when he works, likes to turn on Arcade Fire full blast. That just brings me to a complete halt. I think, "Why work at all? Let's party!" We don't work together often.

**Afternoon tea is absolutely essential.** I was in England for 20 years, after all. I work straight through until the early evening, about 7pm usually, and then I stop for dinner. I lived in Beirut, much earlier on in my life, which represented my first real encounter with food. That combination of French and Mediterranean tastes has stayed with me ever since, as well as their way of preparing food.

**I go back to work at about 9pm and stay in the studio until 3am.** I like it that way. Sometimes it's hard, but it's always when I do my best work. I think it started when I had a small child, and I got into a pattern.

**It's absolutely essential to have a routine,** at least in theory, and then you try to meet it. I try to keep regular hours, but life, family, friends intervene. My schedule is also driven by exhibitions and the demand for what they call "inventory". I keep calendars on the wall which tell me when things need to be done, framed, packed, shipped. That helps. And I have someone who comes a couple of times a week to help with admin.

Allen Jones: in the studio

**On my studio walls I have the pieces I'm working on,** and I keep the sketches, drawings and plans for the work that preceded it up on the wall, too, for about five years, so that I can see where things are going. At home I never have my own work up, but I do have pieces by my friends and artists I've exchanged works with over the years - James Welling, Catherine Opie, Victor Burgin, for example.

**I feed my work by watching the news.** I get inspired by the urgency of those issues and then I try to think, "What is it that journalism can't do or say?", and that's the basis for a visualisation of something, which I think you could say is space for reflection. Updike says that, doesn't he, that art offers breathing room. I try to create something which I think is antithetical to the speed at which the news is churning. And I try to draw on the past as it reappears in the present.

**My work is very time consuming.** I like that idea of duration in the work, and the idea of the labour. The work I've just finished has more than 200 pieces in it, is 11 x 10 ft overall and took six months to make. But I think that process gives the image another resonance, at the level of the material, something that is not simply about the photograph that it was based on. My previous works also took a long time. Post-Partum Document was six years, and Interim was over a five-year period.

Susan Hiller: in the studio

**I'm a one thing at a time person but I can focus very intensely.** I definitely don't multi-task well.

**I don't get artist's block exactly, more moments of doubt.** What I do at those times is read, and there are certain things I read, too, such as Raymond Carver, Sylvia Plath and Jean Genet. They are all very different, but they shake something loose in me. I go back to them repeatedly and that seems to get me going.

**I relax by watching old BBC productions of things,** such as adaptations of Elizabeth Gaskell and Edith Wharton novels. We also have all their Ibsen and Chekov plays, too. Ray has set up a kind of cinema here, so we can project them - it's truly a treat.

**Sleeping is not as easy as it used to be.** I aim to sleep for eight hours, but it's usually more like six.

Lucy Davies