Interview with Lois Kiedan

Sun, 8/22 12:50PM • 48:47

**SUMMARY KEYWORDS**

artists, lada, archive, histories, people, kinds, performance, art, study, materials, programme, cultural sector, bit, london, document, questions, curatorial, ica, work, commissioned

**SPEAKERS**

Lois Keidan, Sarah Wishart, Sean

**Sarah Wishart 00:15**

And so, this just to kind of give a bit of an overview, this is a podcast project for the war Conservatoire. And they've commissioned a number of artists to do different kinds of podcasts around different kinds of stuff. And one of the things that I was really interested in is an idea under COVID, of how we get stuck, and how we might get out of stuck. And one of the things that I was looking at is that I did a PhD, Jordan and I did it for a very long time, we did it part time. And it was very much involved with interviewing a whole bunch of different artists and makers to look at how artwork is made. And so, I was digging around, and I've got a massive archive myself of someone that interviews that kind of like, actually longer than the actual PhD. So, I've got like 92,000 words of interviews with different people through from a whole different bunch of likes, our organization's like Artangel, and Artsadmin, and all this kind of stuff. So, I'm, I've been interested in going back to the archive to kind of make some work to do with this project. But I'm also then wanting to talk about archives. And like that documentation of light work for a couple of reasons, one to introduce you to students to different kinds of archives that you can access that you might not know about, and the importance of like documenting your own work. So, if you're artists like to create the opportunity to make your own archives, but then like, also, perhaps, to think about stuff technically, because I know that there's some students on this course that are interested in the technical aspects of recording and compiling and documenting. So, because it's a performance course, as well, like, to me, the most important archive is, like, hugely for live art is the Live Art Development Agency in terms of like, what it's got in its archives, and as a space and as a space to thinking about live art and artwork. And so, I wanted to talk to Lois, and wants to talk to LADA and we're kind of lucky, because like Lois has just finished working at LADA. So, she's in a space where she can really look back at, like, you know, the whole thing and talk to her. So, I feel particularly fortunate that we are able to talk to you today. And so that's my introduction. And could you Lois, tell us a bit about loader and your role in it just a bit of a, like, not necessarily that specific about the archive? I'll get to that in a minute. But just a little like, background.

**Lois Keidan 02:54**

Yeah, I'll try to, it's difficult to do histories of LADA quickly. Because that because, because, because it raises sort of so many questions, but I'm sort of just over 20 years ago, let's put it like that. Live Art was in a very sort of different place culture in the UK was in a very, very kind of diff different place sort of post Thatcherism sort of new types of artistic practices, new types of sort of identities of artists are sort of emerging new sort of cultural context. And since myself and my colleague, Katherine Ugwu, we're in a very privileged position to be running the live arts programme at the ICA in London, the institute contemporary arts, and we left the ICA at the end of the 90s all the creative staff left because new directors came in with a very different sort of cultural agenda. But we left and started to work independently, but the Arts Council in London were very excited and inspired by the sort of the live art scene, and how it was emerging and what it was doing to the cultural landscape of London and what kinds of artists it was giving voice to and giving visibility to and they were interested in, in developing that scene. And they're also very much aware of, of that of what had happened at the ICA and the worry that that kind of Hi, Sean, we're just I'm just very briefly giving you a history of the Live Art Development Agency to get to a point of talking about archives. So, the Arts Council of London were interested in the development of the live art scene in London and the different types of attention and resources that would need so they made money available to set up a Live Art Development Agency. It was kind of blank piece of paper and they put out a call for tenders and we applied and we got it we're very lucky. There was absolutely no intention of setting up an archive or setting up what we have what LADA has now which is called the study room. But we we'd been documenting all of the work we'd been putting on at the ICA for a number of reasons, the most important reason and this will come on to the to the technical issues that Sarah wants to talk about was that we could, the technology existed, you know, you didn't need a sort of a kind of, you know, a sort of full sort of crew to document work anymore. cameras were portable, it could all be done. And so we weren't, we were documenting that other programme, we were doing at the ICA one, because it was a really important programme too, because we wanted to put the performance work on the same type of

**Lois Keidan 05:33**

level as the visual arts programme, there still is very kind of hierarchical relationships between, you know, the high artificial arts and the sort of the study world of performance in the in the UK. And we wanted to try and sort of shift that hierarchy a bit to say this work is as significant as the work that's in the galleries and we want to record it as such. And so, we collaborated with the British Library. And so, everything that happens at the ICA was sort of documented by the British Library and deposited in the British Library. But also, we had copies. And when we left the ICA, we took copies, we took those copies with us, obviously the ICA had copies for that. But we took it with us because we didn't trust the ICA to be looking after those materials. So, we brought a VHS tape and neither Sean nor Jordan will be too young to even know what to believe what a VHS tape was but we brought all those with us just to keep them safe. And so, the Arts Council London you know, sort of put out this tender for a Live Art Development Agency, it's completely blank piece of paper as to what it would do. So, we sort of proposed what it would do, which was sort of looking at the different elements that artists would need sort of professional development opportunities, curatorial opportunities, all kinds of opportunities focused on live art slash performance, that hadn't really been there before, because there hadn't been the resources to offer those kinds of things. Before most of the work that had been done around performance art before that had been around curatorial initiatives, festivals, and publishing through the performance magazine. But anyway, so we set up the live art Development Agency. And we just, um, it was it was a, you know, an office with a couple of desks and some shelves, and we put the VHS copies on the shelves. And then we started getting phone calls from people and visitors saying, can we come a look at these materials, and it was like, well, I suppose so if you want, you know. And then we realised that actually we were sitting on a bit of a sort of goldmine of a sort of a very particular history of the UK scene and the US scene, in that particular period in the 1990s, which was a real kind of critical time for the development of UK performance scene. And the scene in the States, it was at the height of the culture wars, and they were presenting a lot of those artists who were sort of, at the forefront of the culture wars at the ICA. And so, people wanted to see that material. So, from that the study room, our study room grew, artists started giving us their materials to, to catalogue in the study room, because it meant that people could come and see their work in within the context of other work, you know, within the kind of context of sort of contemporary histories and historical histories. And we also brought sort of various publications with us that we'd had at the ICA, sort of artists catalogues, and stuff like that there really wasn't a lot of publishing around live art around that time or performance, are you really, to have a book published about you, you had to be dead. Any other sort of books that were more kind of anthologies weren't necessarily you know, about, sort of what was going on in the contemporary scene. So, we sort of started gathering these resources, more books, more documentation. And people more and more people kind of came to see those works. And then somebody wonderfully invented DVDs, and that sort of changed everything in terms of how work was documented, and how, with a VHS, you just see what the camera saw. But with a DVD, you've got all kinds of menus and different ways of you know, exploring the sort of content and stuff like that. And then more and more, you know, publishing started happening, including our own sort of publishing work at LADA. So, the study room at LADA started off with about maybe 200 VHS tapes and about 10 books, and it's now got over eight and a half 1000 probably bout 9000 titles or materials in there. And that just sort of reflects the scale of documentation, the scale of publishing, but also that recognition of the value of the archive, why it's an important sort of an important resource. So, one thing that sort of important about that, so slightly longer history than Sarah was, none of this was, was planned. When we set up LADA we had discussions, we can have organised all kinds of focus groups with all kinds of different constituencies about what live art needed. What do artists need? What do young artists need? What do mid-career artists need? What to, you know, old artists need?

**Lois Keidan 10:06**

What about archive? What about documentation? All of those kinds of questions are all kinds of different focus groups. And some people say we should set up a National Archive of live art, I'm not sure about that. That seems like an awful lot of, you know, resource and energy, let's just map what archives there are out there. And then people can navigate their own sort of territories and all of those kinds of things. So, we had lots of conversations about what you know, like the sector would need and archiving and access to sort of histories came out as a very kind of clear need, you know, younger artists wanted to know whose, whose shoulders they were sitting on, they wanted to know what had gone before. Older artists wanted to know that their work was registered in some way that wouldn't be forgotten. And so yeah, the Study Room grew from that, and I've sort of never referred to it as an archive. Because it wasn't it wasn't. Because we don't have good archival practices by any shape, or form. And one, look, our catalogue will reflect that. But also, it's not comprehensive. You know, LADA represents very particular types of practices and approaches. So, we didn't go out to sort of set up, you know, we will never claim that the LADA study room was a comprehensive archive of the history of live art in the UK. If it's an archive of anything \*email ding\*. It's an archive of LADA, I guess, unlike a larger sort of histories and experiences, but people are increasingly referring to it as an archive, and they increasingly refer to LADA as an institution, which is something I've always resisted as well. So, I'm okay for now to say that the institution of the live art Development Agency holds the largest publicly accessible archive of performance art in the world.

**Sarah Wishart 11:50**

And, okay, so we've answered loads of the questions that I kind of I had and was gonna kind of like put to you but and that's really interesting that it was never kind of set out like that. And I guess my early experience of the archive was coming to watch the Battle of Orgreave for the very first time, and you were at Rochelle circus was that. And, um, I remember coming in, and I remember you going, here it is, but also, you should think about looking at this, have you looked at this and have you gotten so it was amazing to me to kind of not just be in a space, like a library, but actually isn't like a library, actually, it was kind of much more of a discursive sort of place, and that you were sort of like, you know, keyed into different things. And also, from what I remember, there was like three videos, like three sort of places, you could sit and watch things in the library. And they were quite near to each other and so you could watch what other people were watching. So, I was watching the Battle of Orgreave. And the person next to me was watching Ron Athi. So, like, you know, you guys won't know who Ron it is that this is a very big kind of like contrast, you know, like, between these two, kind of like, things, and that was amazing, because it just opens you up, if you hadn't come across that word before, then because it was. So, sort of, you know, there was an interpersonal relationship in just coming to the space that was like, really incredible. And but

**Lois Keidan 13:13**

I mean, one of the things that was that was in relation to that was because we were aware that a lot of people that were coming to us, we're sort of discovering a lot of the you know, the work for the on the histories, and the scale of the scene, really discovering for the first time so that we felt we had a really responsibility to say, if you're interested in that you might be interested in this, you because you possibly not heard about this, because you wouldn't have been taught about it. Nobody's written about that, you know, there's no way for you to know about this artist. So that was a really important thing. And we just took that we upped the ante on that by, because we found that people were coming into the study when they were asking us about, you know, I want to see about, the body and performance. And we found that we're always pointing people in the same direction. And we just thought would be interesting if somebody else was pointing them in different directions. So, we commissioned Franko B the artist, to do a study room guide on the body in performance. Who would Franko who would you recommend that people would look at, you know, should look at for instance? And Franko pointed people towards all kinds of things that we wouldn't have necessarily thought of. And so, we thought this was a great way for people to discover artists and works and histories that they might not know about. And so, we sort of started commissioning, more and more study guides, and I think it's about 30 or 40 of those on different thematics. And so, we found if people you know, if the same questions were coming up a few times, we kinda think obviously, there's, you know, there's, we need to commission a study room guide around this issue. And those guys then throw up all kinds of all kinds of work. And we also, so there's sort of research tools for people using the study room. But they also became research tools for us because the people we commissioned to write the guides would also recommend materials that we needed to acquire for the study room. So, it was ways of sort of plugging the gaps in the study. Hear him as well.

**Sarah Wishart 15:01**

And can you talk? I'm sorry, go Sean. Like,

**Sean 15:06**

firstly, just saying, hi, sorry, I missed the very start of that this my first-time meeting all of you so lovely to meet you all

**Sarah Wishart 15:14**

Hello.

**Sean 15:16**

I'm just really curious. Is it mostly video footage that is the recorded material or the document? Or do you have different kinds of materials? Or like what because obviously performance happens live? Like what kind of things do you keep in an archive? Are your collection?

**Lois Keidan 15:38**

Well, that I mean, that's a really interesting question. That's a really important question goes to the heart of archives and stuff. Because, you know, for me, what's really important is that the sort of the way that that performance is documented and archived isn't just photographic or video, it's all kinds of other stuff. It's writings, it's, it's reliquary. It's traces, it's, um, and it's, and it's anecdotal, as well, you know, for me, the history of performance is sort of part record and part recall, you know, it's kind of its sort of like oral histories as well as kind of art historical histories. And so, we try and most of the material we have though, is video, we actually don't have much photographic record, we made also a sort of a conscious decision a long time ago, not to keep flyers, posters, programmes, and stuff like that. I mean, at one point, we, when we first started LADA, we had kind of files on loads of artists, like the kind of CIA and but it was just like, this is yeah, it really was, it really was filing cabinets shit. But it was like kind of crazy, because it was, you know, taking up so much room, and we and it just wasn't stuff that we could manage, effectively, really. And if we again, these things, if you're going to do it, you got to do it properly, in a way. And so, we donated all those materials to the Live Art archive in Bristol and the live art archive in Bristol is a very different type of archive, it's much more formal, institutional. And they do have all you know, different kinds of records in the ways that you're talking about. And we've just decided with LADA that that really make it manageable. Our focus should be on sort of books, journals, and documentation.

**Sarah Wishart 17:36**

What do you think? Um, you know, like, we've talked a little bit about artists coming in, like young artists kind of like accessing stuff they might not have seen before. But what do you think, is the importance of the archive, to artists in general?

**Lois Keidan 17:51**

Well, it's an understanding a history, and understanding a history that you can find your own sort of path through in a way that is not, you know, somebody imposing a sort of narrative or a dominant cultural history on it really, you can sort of negotiate your own way through that. The Internet technology is enabled artists to do all kinds of research to uncover all kinds of histories that nobody's told them about, for all kinds of for all kinds of reasons. So, it enables that, it enables artists, I think, to construct their own histories, their own sort of context in which they're operating, to understand those histories to understand what's gone before to understand what's not gone before, really. And to sort of build built to build on those histories as well. And then to construct their own archives, around their own work and their own practice as well. And also, just also to say because another really, for me, another really important thing about performance live art archives is that they've also become material for artist’s work. So, lots of artists, for example, particularly an artist called Anne Bean uses the archive her own archive, but also other people's archives as material for new work.

**Sarah Wishart 19:14**

That iteration isn't it like feels like it's that sort of, you know, moving on aspect. And what's your favourite thing in LADA's archive?

**Lois Keidan 19:27**

Ah, well, that's impossible question. Some things that I'm really proud we've got that I'm not sure - probably me and one other person is aware of their value in that sense. We did a lot of work with China in the early noughties, but 2004 onwards, when the sort of the Chinese Performance scene really sort of beginning to sort of come into its own in all kinds of ways. The Chinese performance scene was really important in the late 90s East Beijing village artists group of artists who worked Zhang Hua people like that. Zhang Huan, sorry. And we do quite a lot of the because the British Council would do with what the British Council is sort of an arm of the Foreign Office and the foreign offices was wanting to open up China for trade. And so, you know, use the sort of culture as the lever and stuff like that. And we were kind of, well, we'll, you know, we'll use that lever to find our own, you know, to go through the doors they've opened, but find, sort of more interesting stuff that's going on. So, we did quite a lot of work with China. And so, we've got a lot of materials of that time that probably were the only place in the UK, probably the only place outside of China that's got a lot of those materials. So, things like we've got the catalogue for "Fuck Off", which was a really important exhibition that happened that might have happened in Shanghai but I think possibly happened in Beijing and Ai Weiwei was involved in all of that, you know, that that sort of generation of Chinese artists were involved. And it was one of the first exhibitions that included performance in it and stuff like that, as well as huge amounts of documentation. Some very, very troubling difficult work from that from that period. So that's a real kind of like special kind of collection of stuff. So that's one of the things that I'm that's sort of one of my one of my favourites so much sort of as for the things I'm most I'm gonna miss most and most regret leaving, actually, yeah. But so yeah, so things, things like that. And I think the other thing I'm most proud of is the that I most might, in terms of favourites are the study guides, I think they're, I'm not aware of other sort of places doing things like that. And so, they're kind of quite good records of a particular history.

**Sarah Wishart 21:59**

And one of the things I really, I appreciate about LADA is your programming, which like, it feels like every now and then your kind of like go in and go, right, let's like watch this stuff, let's make this stuff available and having the public events to share that with people like, you know, you know, in that sort of aspect. And

**Lois Keidan 22:22**

yeah, we will try - any sort of programming that we did at LADA was always very, with sort of very programmed things, it was very strategic reasons, (email ping) there's a reason for doing it, rather than just, you know, we want to do a festival and celebrate all this kind of stuff. It was very strategic reasons for doing that. But whenever we did do programmes, they would 1. generate new materials for the archive, but also be opportunities to sort of represent and show and curate materials from the archive as well, to sort of contextualise the contemporary work. And then also, you know, another thing that that's happened if the first place to do it was the Spill festival in Ipswich. They say, sets invited us to do a to curate a study room for their sort of cafe that they were setting up for the Spill Festival. So, we did do, we worked with them on a series of study room boxes, and each box on a different theme. And there was about 10, or 12 videos or publications in each box around that particular theme. And then there was a sort of menu for the boxes as part of the sort of cafes' offerings. And that was a really cute thing. And they're after quite a lot of sorts of festivals on a regular basis do study room boxes, which we sort of CO curate with them, what are the kinds of things that your audiences might want to know more about? And then we kind of pull materials in the study room, stick in the box and send it off?

**Sarah Wishart 23:57**

And can you talk about like, I mean, do you feel that the LADA team have a technical side of like knowledge? Or do you feel like the knowledge is that that your team bring are more curatorial or supportive of, you know, getting artists to think about tech, but you're not necessarily the specialists in that in that in that area?

**Lois Keidan 24:23**

No, no. No, I'd say we're not. But I put a caveat on that we sort of we realised, I mean, there's a real kind of irony that actually technology, you know, for an area of practice, it's all about liveness. And as technology has made all the difference in it to everything, you know, it's enabled. It's enabled people to bypass the gatekeepers of culture and all kinds of way to publish themselves to archives themselves to document themselves to you know, it's just changed everything really, to connect really, that people can connect to all around the world, you know, and create some kind of communities all around the world. Because of technology, but we were aware that that increasingly everything we're doing had some technological aspects really, in terms of creativity or, or as a resource, or it's just as a sort of admin tool. And so, we created a digital post, in the sort of late, I think it was probably about 2010, something like that, to sort of take care of all of that, but also to think about our relationship to the digital sphere and what we need to do. So, it's not necessarily presenting sort of digital expertise, well, actually, it is, to a certain extent, because somebody in the first post holder was Alex Eisenberg, and they were had sort of web skills and all of that, so we could, but it wasn't, we weren't offering that as a resource to artists. But it was more about how we would negotiate our own sort of technical needs and, and look at things like documentation and curating and, and building sort of project specific websites and stuff, which, again, are sort of, are also sort of archival projects in a way. So um, so we do have that expertise. But it's not an expertise. We don't offer to go and document and stuff like that with film, film, film work for on behalf of people, we don't build people's websites for them and stuff.

**Sarah Wishart 26:21**

Yeah, great. And what, is there any performance across time that you wished was in? larger? But isn't it

**Sarah Wishart 26:31**

Oh, my God, oh, I wish you'd prepared with these.

**Sarah Wishart 26:35**

I did say I'd send you the question.

**Lois Keidan 26:37**

Yes sorry. Woof. I honestly, don't know, I'll need to think about that a little bit more. I mean, we've got most stuff. And of course, there's always worked up, you know, because lots of artists refused to document their work for many years, you know, one of the sorts of prime You know, one of the primary concerns for so many artists was 'you have to be there', that the work is all about liveness, about that moment. And so refused to document and then Peggy feeling the sort of performance scholar, you know, her big thing was that the work is the work and anything else is not the work, which was, of course, all of our mantra for many years. And now I completely disagree with it, because things have moved on. And often times, it is the work of you know, it's part of the work. And artists increasingly think about this aspect of their practices being part of the work as well. There's people like Pyotr Pavlensky, the Russian artist. But having said that, I do think we actually now do have some stuff on Pyotr

**Sarah Wishart 27:57**

Look at Sean's got a question which might save you from that.

**Sean 28:02**

Yeah, I just thought, you know, if you need a second, how I can distract you with another question. You might find your way. And I guess it was wondering, because it's, I am, I don't know, loads about LADA so this is really interesting. But it sounds like it's quite an open archive that people can come and experiencing it. And do you feel a certain responsibility with how you display or open up, like the archive in terms of where do you do you give context to work that existed in a particular scene is the work and the work? They see it. And they can draw from themselves what it is they want?

**Lois Keidan 28:42**

Yeah, I mean, the work is, we, we don't provide any details of how the works catalogue, we provide keywords and stuff like that. So, people can, you know, and we try to provide as much information as possible. But you know, LADA is a tiny team and the study of should be a department and it's actually it's an nth of somebody else's job, you know, it's so there's no time to do all of that, you know, everything should have huge catalogue record records and stuff, you know, and that's something I would love to have done, just sat there and write the catalogue records. Terrific. So, there isn't that, but the study guides try and provide that context. And also, us as a team, you know, so when people come and use the study room and we ask them, what they're looking for why, you know, what, what they're interested in, we point them in all kinds of directions, or some people come in and they know exactly what they're looking for. And we might suggest other stuff, or just sort of just sort of let them let them get up, get on with get on with things.

**Sarah Wishart 29:40**

So I mean, it's a really beautiful room, like I said, it's an old church and you can go in and you can just wander so you know, the British Library, you have to have all this, you know stuff and you have to ask for things and somebody goes away and gets into a little truck and drives down and picks it up and brings it back to you and then you can have it three hours later and like, it's not like that in LADA, you can go in sit down, you can go and have a wander,

**Lois Keidan 30:04**

like, you know, anybody can walk in, you don't have to be studying performance, you know, or anything like that there's no vetting, and anybody can, can use the space and actually, you know, we, we used to have a sort of, you have to leave your bags outside the study room, because quite a few things have been nicked and stuff like that, which is really, you know, unfair and selfish. And you can tell exactly who did what, because you knew who was researching what and then what disappeared. So, but it's, we don't even kind of police it, place it now. You know, and the other thing that's really kind of can be really lovely is that, you know, people are in studying particular artists, and then those artists walk in, you know, there's some beautiful moments, people who study Franko B and then Franko B walks in to come and see me or something like that. So that that's a sort of a really, really kind of cute thing. Something I was just about to say, but I can't remember what oh, yeah, was just the space itself is really important that, um, that it's a space that does feel conducive. But it's also that why I don't want everything to get digitised. Because there's something about walking in and seeing that mass of stuff that you can think of, there's a huge history here. You know, there is a huge history to this area of work, this area of work, obviously has legitimacy has a history has it, you know, all kinds of kind of generative aspects to it. So, there's something about you know, and some people I mean, now, what's you know, what's really interesting when we first started LADA, all of the students who came to a lot of founders themselves, they felt themselves, they weren't being taught this stuff, apart from maybe a couple of courses, they found us themselves, and they made the study on their own curriculum. And now a lot of the people that are students that come, you know, directed by their tutors, that there's lots of student groups, most of the London colleges and most of the colleges beyond London as well, send students are bringing student groups in, and that just sort of reflects the shift in awareness of live art that this happens. And that things like I mean, I hope that things like the Study Room have contributed to, you know, I've contributed to building those histories, that sense of a, of an area of practice, and that sense of practice that needs to be studied and taught.

**Sarah Wishart 32:30**

And just to kind of, like, finish off from me, obviously, if you guys have got any questions do come in at the end. But um, obviously, you finished at LADA now. And what do you hope for its next stages?

**Lois Keidan 32:44**

Yeah, lots. One thing is just going back to Shawn's question that I should have said as well, is that the Study Room is also constant process of what's not in the Study Room and why. So that's one of the things I was saying about Study Room guides, is when we commissioned people to write study Room guides, it's kind of to look at the materials that's in there, but also to look at the materials and the artists that aren't in there and do that. And so, one of the projects, there's all kinds of things that, you know, massive changes that have happened in the cultural sector over the last 18 months or so, partly, obviously, because of COVID. But more importantly, because of because of Black Lives Matters. And what happened last summer in the cultural sector is, you know, issues of sort of representation live art live art has always been a sort of space that offers a sort of a platform for issues of representation and under-representation for sort of voices that aren't heard. And that's always been a sort of priority of LADA, to make sure that we're representing the unrepresented, because the margins are the most interesting, the most interesting places most interesting ideas, most interesting and urgent ideas are sort of happening there. And the most interesting art is happening there. So, as well as being the most neglected space. So that's always been sort of LADA's sort of priority, but also aware that the study itself is a, you know, a space of all kinds of remissions, and that's partly because that, because there's no knowledge about certain kinds of histories or other materials or uncertain kind of history. So one things that we sort of, have commissioned and we're just waiting to hear about some funding for it as a sort of De-colonizing the Study Room project and we've commissioned some curators, Jade Foster and Adelaide Bannerman, to do a sort of decolonizing the study room project to look at what's, what's not there, and why it's not there, and how those materials could be got in there or how those materials could be generated to be sort of replaced to be placed in there. Um, and one of the reasons that I, you know, I would be I was sort of, you know, planning to leave LADA in the next couple of years anyways, as a process of succession of my retirement and all of those kinds of things, but (email ping) we accelerated those plans last summer, I decided to sort of step aside earlier than intended to really make space for diverse leadership really in the cultural sector and just looking across the cultural sector and just how much it had failed over many years, all kinds of schemes and initiatives around diversity and they will consistently fail, the leadership in the cultural sector is predominantly white, and middle class, and able bodied and straight and everything else. And so just kind of felt that if we, you know, that change has got to come from all kinds of places, one of the main places got to come from the top. And so, sort of made the decision to step aside earlier than planned to make space for new diverse leadership and to take the organisation through a process of organisational change to sort of get it in a fit state for new, you know, new leadership to come in. So, what I'm hoping on, the new leadership has been appointed, and the announcement will be made in the, in the next couple of weeks, I hope, and it's very, it's really great, great news. It's really (email ping) exciting. So, what I hope is that is that the sort of the new leadership of LADA and that LADA and live art will be very much in the vanguard of trying to sort of create the future, we all want to see, you know. One of the things that I've been sort of saying for the last year is, as the whole world's been going through this crisis, and the UK has been going through all kinds of different crises, and particularly kind of crisis around race and representation. And we're seeing all that coming out this week, and the fallout from the England match, and all of that. I'm a big England fan, some big football fan. So, I'm sort of horrified by all of this, but I'm, you know, been sort of saying, Now, if we want to make, you know, make our mark on the future that we want to see, we have to do it now. Now, now is the time to start to create the future, we want to see because everything's up in the air, everything's up for grabs, really. And so, I'm hoping that the new that some the new leadership of LADA will sort of lead, you know, LADA and live art into the future that we all want to see a future that's much more equitable. A future that's, that pays more attention to the needs of, of artists in all kinds of ways. That's less hierarchical, that's less sort of grounded in the old, dominant cultural narratives. And, and that we have a completely different sense of leadership, you know, of what lead of what leadership is and can be and why it's sort of needed, really. So that's why I'm sort of hoping that, you know, because live art, when we started, LADA 20 or so years ago, live art was in a very, you know, different place, it was just, it was emerging, it was becoming and now live art, you know, in a position of real strength, I would say that, you know, that the sector is quite robust. There's lots of different festivals and organisations, we've also just, we've been sort of banging on at the Arts Council for years to undertake a review of the live arts sector, because most other sort of cultural sectors have had reviews. And we just sort of felt it would be really useful for LADA to have this sort of, you know, to have this sort of this sort of snapshot of where the sector's out and stuff like that. And a couple of years ago, the Arts Council said that he agreed to do that research, and but asked us to do it. So, we commissioned independent researchers, and that research - there's a real sort of timeliness of that because it began in 2019. And so, it has been able to, to sort of respond to the events of last year, the seismic events of last year, so it's been able to respond to the fallout of Brexit, COVID and the implications of that for cultural sector, and most importantly, sort of Black Lives Matters. And that sort of momentum, that movement for sort of social, social, and racial sort of change in society. So, this research projects being able to respond to that and sort of point to a future and so that sort of being you know, that's going to be launched this this autumn as well. So hopefully, it's a really great moment for live art to be looking at the future and how live art can help shape that future.

**Sarah Wishart 39:17**

Great, thank you. Have you guys got Any other questions? Just like below and any questions that reminded just afterward.

**Lois Keidan 39:34**

Lot of websites and there's loads of information on the website, and there's lots of sort of thing called 'live online'. There's lots of documentation of events and stuff like that talks and stuff like that. So, there's loads of material on the website and like, particularly in COVID, for us, it was really important to, to try and create as many resources and opportunities for artists and audiences as possible. So, there's, you know, there's loads of stuff There, and if you ever wanted to come visit Lada

**Sean 40:04**

I did actually have another question which I don't know if it's been kind of recovered. But I was wondering, how does Lada have? How does LADA's archive factor into the other work that it does, like

**Lois Keidan 40:21**

Oh, it all joins up in a way, for me, the most exciting projects are where all elements of our work come together. Where the sort of research and programmes and resources and professional development opportunities and they all sort of feed into each other. So, but you know, so it might be that we, you know, we do an event, we document it, and then that documentation goes in the study room as I said, you know, that's the sort of most basic example or we do other events. We did a huge project between 2009-2012 called Performance Matters, and it was a AHRC funded collaboration with University of Roehampton and Goldsmith's, and it was looking at why performance matters, sort of cultural values around performance and around different sort of thematic questions. But that involved, you know, symposia with sort of, you know, the world's leading performance scholars, artists run workshops, resources, talks, all kinds of things. And then that all of that was documented. And then that was with from that we've created a thing called the performance matters archive. And that's an archive box, that archive of that project with additional contextualised material, and that archive is obviously within LADA's archive. But it's also been strategically placed in sort of public archives around the world. So, it's a sort of archive within an archive that was generated as an archival project or project. So, they all feed it feed each other.

**Sarah Wishart 42:03**

I'll make sure that when I'm putting all the resources together, that we have lots of links to like larger stuff, so you can all kind of like access it. We don't have to, you know, worry about digging out now unless you want to go and have a bit of a mooch. But yeah, it'll all be available.

**Lois Keidan 42:17**

That'd be brilliant Sarah things, definitely.

**Sarah Wishart 42:20**

And I'll include, I'll include it for the students, but also kind of like when we're building the podcast, I'll make sure there's like links in that website page that when we do that, so yeah, that's great. That'd be brilliant. Thank you very much Lois.

**Lois Keidan 42:33**

Great Well, it's lovely to see you. It's lovely. Thank you, Jordan. And Sean. Good luck with it all.

**Sarah Wishart 42:39**

Thank you very much. Take care have a have a relaxing summer, hopefully. Well, without the building work.

**Lois Keidan 42:47**

Yeah, that's true. Let's see. Let's see what i'm saying with the sun shining here. Which is amazing. So lovely to meet you this lovely to see you Sarah and see you around. Be around. Bye. Bye.

**Sarah Wishart 43:02**

so, Guys. We've obviously got a meeting this Thursday evening, which I hope you can both kind of like come along to. And, and yeah, well, we'll hopefully have another interview. I'm talking to Louise Lawson from Tate Modern, who deals with the curatorial should know, conservative stills. She's a conservator. So, she looks at conserving live art and time-based media as they kind of I call it so. But yeah, but we'll can talk a bit more on Thursday. But thanks, john, for coming along. Cuz, I know you didn't know that you could make it today. But hopefully Yeah, thanks, sir. I'm glad I was able to so thanks for that. This is a bit of a kind of like tour divorce. So yeah. And like literally, this might be the last interview she does in relation to Lada because literally she retired like last week, so I know. Yeah, it was like so I was really hoping that a couple of years to come along because I know you might not know much about her now. But if you do any poking into this stuff, you will start to get a bit like oh my God, because when I first started hanging out with her, I was I didn't really understand her importance in the live art scene. And now that I do, I'm constantly amazed that she knows me and that I've worked with her and like you know, she is she's like a real godmother of our performance aren't really and

**Sean 44:23**

even through the course of this conversation, I was just thinking through Oh gosh, I think I've actually I've actually used some of this archive like digital archive stuff and research I've done Oh, wait, I have this thing. Oh, okay. It's all connected. Yeah.

**Sarah Wishart 44:37**

She's got an amazing because she definitely did. Like when I've met her she's very much like, bring people together and get people talking and I've done projects like I had a I had an art desk space that at larder which is really weird because my practice isn't really live art in the way that they sort of like deal with life art but and she's put me in touch with so many people like Franco be I don't know if anyone I don't know if you know Frank Kobe, but he's, he's like a huge name and performance art. And yeah, through lowest, I've interviewed him for a different project. So, it's kind of like She's incredible about being that person that brings people together, you know, she's a bit like, let me introduce you to this idea. And this idea, and this person and Lord has been such a place of, of that mixing it up and bringing you into different kinds of ideas. I was really keen to show you guys like you know it. And if you go out to London, you should definitely go and check it out. But yeah, let's talk on Thursday. I hope you have a nice match the rest of the day, if anyone's got any questions at any time, hit me up. And we can have a bit more of a random waffle on Thursday to see what you're up to and what you do. But it's lovely to meet you, Shawn, like, met Jordan. But yeah, the return, which is on put some faces, well, we'll try as well, to see whether we can maybe get a sort of a meeting in person. I think that might be really nice. And now that things are opening up a little bit. So, I'm down in London, from next week for fortnight. And I know that the I think the more conservative I want this sort of finished off by the end of August, but maybe we could try and get a sort of evening meeting somewhere. I don't know, not the CCA or somewhere in the middle of town tonight. I mean, just go for a drink and have a bit of a chat about different kinds of stuff is that's if that's useful to people.

**Sean 46:30**

I’m the reason why I was latest. I've just come and travelled back to Ireland. Yeah, it's actually

**Sarah Wishart 46:37**

the right okay.

**Sean 46:39**

It was it was yesterday. But I just arrived at my parents’ place in like middle of the countryside. So, I was like, I don't even know the habit today. But yeah, I've only talked for a fortnight myself right now. Okay.

**Sarah Wishart 46:53**

Okay. Well, like we would early August be kind of brilliant. back late July. Okay, then let's like, on Thursday, what we'll do is we'll have a bit of a discussion to see what might work for people and get a date. And because it'd be nice to, to do some in person stuff. I think that'd be good.

**Sean 47:13**

Yeah. And great to have that I can join this as well.

**Sarah Wishart 47:19**

Yeah, I'm really glad. I'm really glad. Like, you know, I think the more the merrier, really, I mean, I basically, people don't have to like you can still kind of like get involved and do things and we can still kind of like do fun things without having meetings, but I think it really helps. And I think both of you have given me suggestions to the National Library as well. Haven't we, have you? You've done that Jordan? No. Yeah. Yeah. Have a look at that list. Is it like there's a spreadsheet? Haven't been, it's fine. I'll just pick something for you if you don't, but like, have a look at the list today. It's like It's like a spreadsheet and it's just got these different recording.

**Sean 47:58**

It's kind of it's kind of ridiculous. Like I was really amused by it. so vague. So weird. It's so weird. I just found this one that said something about Granny's remedies. And I was like, that sounds hilarious. I think that but yeah, it's a funny one. Obviously. You can't listen just like this might be interesting.

**Sarah Wishart 48:16**

Yeah, exactly. Just pick something if you know if it sounds ridiculous, doesn't have to find the spreadsheet to okay. I'm very confused. Okay. No problem. Okay, I will send it to you and have a look at Yeah. But yeah, great. Okay. I will send I'll send that over to you today. And we'll see you on Thursday. Have a nice day.