

# LUX

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**“Being bored is something people don’t do anymore. They just scroll through Instagram instead. But it’s essential, because then you work out how not to be bored, and open up a creativity in your mind”**

An interview with Rachel Whiteread,  
Whitechapel Gallery Art Icon 2019



## 6 QUESTIONS

## LARRY BELL

Artist Larry Bell's work has always been about light, from the Light and Space movement of the 1960s to the glass cubes he makes today. He tells Maryam Eisler about life as an artist

**1 You're clearly drawn to light with all its might! Are you drawn to shadows, too?**

Did you know that Lux is my A.K.A.? Lux, son of light! As to shadows, yes, I like them. My work *The Iceberg and Its Shadow* was a huge glass project, half in clear glass and half in grey, with 56 panels with an infinite number of configurations. Half of it was in shadow.

**2 Why does scale attract you?**

I like the idea of condensing space in such a way that light is captured inside a structure itself, so the composition is made out of this contained light. I think of my media as the interface of light and surface.

**3 Tell me about the artist Robert Irwin. You like to call him your teacher.**

I still think of him as my teacher. He's 90-plus now and still pretty vigorous. He's got his wits together better than anybody I know. He's my dear friend and mentor.

**4 You work in LA and Taos, New Mexico. What do you seek in these places?**

I seek the control of my distractions. The distractions in Venice Beach are the crowds. Taos is a very rural area and generally speaking it's quiet. I have my family there and my four grandchildren, a different kind of distraction. In any case, a distraction is a distraction. Being an artist is a very selfish and self-indulgent activity and artists can't let any kind of distraction overwhelm their studio activities.

**5 Do you think that in every artist's life there's a Lazarus moment?**

That's been the story of my life. I've been at this a long time. I'm almost 80 and I've been working since I was 19. There were exciting early years which established my studio activity and gave me an audience, and then there were the less popular years after I moved to New Mexico. There are times when you have no money. I learned a lot by moving out there. It was a good place to live and think and what it didn't give me financially, it gave me spiritually. Now I'm in a good place.

**6 Does art reflect life, or vice versa?**

I see art as a teacher, not as an object; it is the work that teaches the artist how to proceed with the next step.



Larry Bell wearing his signature trilby and (below) his studio in Taos, New Mexico with his *Time Machine* (2002) on the floor and collages and vapour drawings on the walls

