

THE ELAINE & JIM WOLFENSOHN GIFT

nga



THE ELAINE & JIM WOLFENSOHN GIFT

The Elaine and Jim Wolfensohn Gift travelling exhibitions comprise the *1888 Melbourne Cup* and three suitcases that thematically present a selection of art and design objects for the enjoyment of children and adults in regional, remote and metropolitan centres.

The Wolfensohn Gift consists of: *The 1888 Melbourne Cup*, Red Case: *Myths and Rituals*; Yellow Case: *Form, Space and Design* and Blue Case: *Technology*.

A key feature of the Wolfensohn Gift Suitcase Kits is that the works can be handled. The shapes, surfaces and tactile qualities of each work can be explored, examined and enjoyed.



Before You Start:

It is helpful to have several adults on hand to assist with the handling of the objects, or to work with small groups (suggested ratio of 1 to 10). Adult supervision is essential.

Condition Reporting:

Each venue is responsible for condition reporting each work in the Suitcase Kits upon arrival and dispatch. Condition reports are located within each suitcase.

Please ensure that:

- hands are clean at all times;
- works of art are handled with two hands;
- personal jewellery is removed to prevent scratching;
- indelible materials, such as inks, textas and paint are kept well away; and
- it is preferable that students are seated when handling the objects.

For bookings and further information please contact:
National Gallery of Australia Travelling Exhibitions
GPO Box 1150 Canberra ACT 2601 Tel: (02) 6240 6411
Fax: (02) 6240 6560 Email: travex@nga.gov.au

nga.gov.au





© Lionel Bawden

Lionel Bawden Brain coral 2003

coloured Staedtler pencils, araldite, Incralac National Gallery of Australia, Canberra

Artist's statement

'*Brain coral* focuses on the incredible complexity of the human brain and the idea that technology is driven by the human sense of enquiry. The form of the sculpture was inspired by a particular kind of coral structure, commonly referred to as brain coral. In our technologically advanced age, focusing on the pencil as a form of technology might seem rather backward. But the notion of the pencil and its purpose – to communicate, to work out solutions, and to create – are essential to the general drive of technology. Most of the magic of technology is in our thinking. The poetry of technology is in our minds before it is in the world. We just have to keep coming up with new ways to extend these thoughts into the physical world and keep evolving our environment.'

How was Brain coral made?

Brain coral is sculpted using hundreds of coloured pencils. After picturing the idea in my head and making sketches, I began the sculpture by selecting the coloured pencils that I wanted to use and cutting them to the desired length. Then I glued the hexagonal pencils together, one pencil at a time, forming a block with a honeycomb structure. I wanted colour to move across the work, a subtle suggestion of the changing colours of a chameleon, suggesting adaptability. So I carefully placed each different coloured pencil, gradually changing from red, through orange, to yellow amongst the pink pencils. Next, I sanded and shaped the block using a dremel rotary tool with sanding and carving attachments. The most rewarding stage is sanding the form by hand with four grades of sandpaper, determining the final shape and smoothing the form. This is usually the slowest, but most enjoyable stage of the process. Lastly I coated the work with Incralac (a lacquer) to give the work a moist, fleshy look and help to protect the surface of the form.

Activities

- Look at the colours pencils the artist has used. What difference do you think it would have made to our impression of *Brain coral* if he had used other colours?
- Many things are made by combining lots of small, similar units together to make a large, different forms and structures. What other objects also use this method of construction? Make an object by using a technique of combining small similar-shaped units.





Matthew Harding Sacred Heart

purpleheart wood National Gallery of Australia, Canberra

Artist's statement

'*Sacred Heart* was made to cheer up my mother by appealing to her good sense of humour after she had open-heart bypass surgery. The box, which opens from the back, has left and right ventricle compartments for her blood pressure and cholesterol tablets. The title of the pillbox contemplates the sacredness of all aspects of life and seeks to remind us that the physical self is an integral part of our human spirit.'

How was *Sacred Heart* made?

The heart was carved from a solid board of purpleheart, which is a hardwood originating from South America. This wood was chosen for its colour and the play on its name with the theme of the work. The profile was cut on a bandsaw and roughly shaped with chisels before the back was cut again on the bandsaw to relieve the section of wood for the pivoting back. The piece was fully shaped on the outside with chisels and sandpaper before the centre was carved and shaped for the left and right ventricles. A small hinge was made with a stainless steel pin and a brass sleeve, which was carefully drilled, glue and fitted to the box. The box has a patina finish from the oils in the hand. No other finishes were applied.

Activities

- Describe how *Sacred Heart* feels in your hand.
- Design a container for something that you use every day. Make the outside relate to what's kept inside.
- Find out how a human heart works. Does the real thing look like the heart shape with which we are familiar?





Cinnamon Lee Palmlight #2 2000

anodised aluminium, acrylic, delrin, 2.6v mini-torch globe, battery powered
National Gallery of Australia, Canberra

Artist's statement

'This work was part of a series which explored the idea of small scale portable light objects: lights which fit in the palm of your hand. The objects were designed to be used in the hand like a torch, or be placed on a table, providing illumination similar to that of a tea light candle. The palmlights were meant to be objects which were fun and playful, while remaining precious and providing function through the nature of the torch light.'

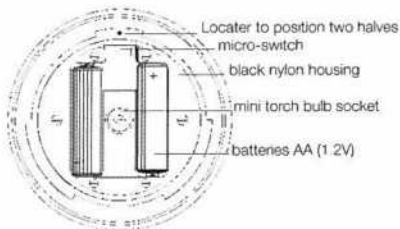
How was Palmlight #2 made?

Although *Palmlight #2*'s design lends itself to manufacturing and production, this particular piece is a one-off model where all components have been created and fitted by hand. Because of its method of hand-production, *Palmlight #2* took a long time to complete – approximately 200 hours.

The outer shell of the *Palmlight #2* has been hand-machined using a metal turning lathe and a milling machine after which the surface was anodised. The two halves of the *Palmlight #2* interlock by a clockwise twisting action which activates a micro-switch to turn on the light. It is similar to a basic flash light: inside the object a torch globe is powered by two batteries. The lens has been hand-machined from clear acrylic which was then highly polished. The speckled pattern was made by 'bead blasting', and the light enhanced by a reflector underneath it.

Activities:

- Turn on the light, what effect does the speckled pattern produce on illuminated surfaces?
- Does *Palmlight #2* work more successfully in the dark or in daylight?
- Use a torch to investigate different types of filters, their shadows and reflection. Try different materials.



Palmlight Internal ©Cinnamon Lee 2003



Karl Lawrence Millard Lizard grinder 2000

brass, bronze, copper, sterling silver, money metal, Peugeot mechanism, stainless steel screws
National Gallery of Australia, Canberra

Artist's statement

'The work was made after a six-month stay in India. It was from the vantage point of being in South India that I could see the most valuable parts of Australia. With the *Lizard grinder* I tried to bring together the sense of a harsh landscape through the depiction of the creatures that exist with it: the colours, the angles, and the robustness of the inland lizards. I value these aspects of Australia, plus I like a bit of good historical Australian. There is something that entertains me about seeing everyday objects that are unusual among everyday objects.'

How was Lizard grinder made?

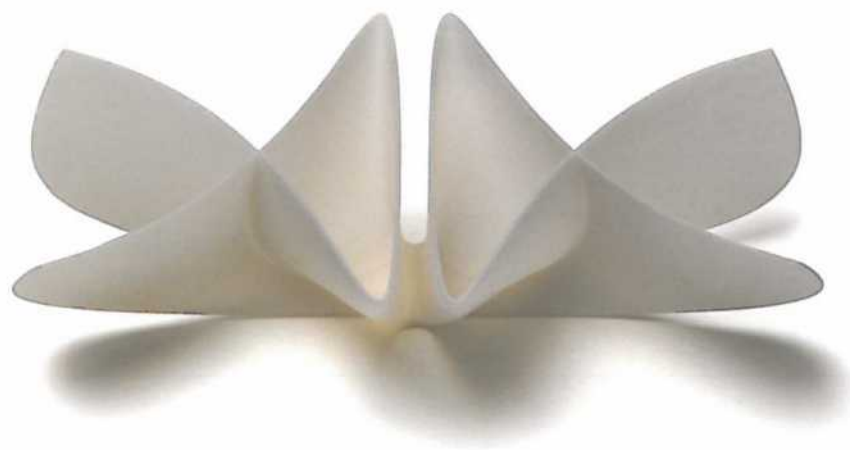
The shape of the work was first made in steel, and then shaped by welding and angle grinding. The whole piece was dipped into a plastic type of wax that can be cut up with a scalpel while still on the steel shape. The individual pieces are then placed in metal groups, copper, bronze, brass and sterling silver in preparation for casting in metal using the lost wax casting technique. The cast metal pieces are then brought together and the construction of the whole piece begins.

Each scalpel cut in the wax will become a line of silver solder that unites the two adjacent metals. The piece slowly starts to take shape. It's a bit like a jigsaw puzzle but in three dimensions. Once all the pieces have been put back together again the work is filed and polished with emery paper to achieve a smooth homogenous finish. The piece is then fitted with the grinding mechanism and the pepper inlet. It is given a final clean and emery finish, and then it is ready for heat-treating. The heat-treating rates thus achieving a painterly colour range. The work is assembled and a wax coating is applied to protect the surface.

Activities:

- Do you think *Lizard grinder* resembles a lizard? Describe in what ways is it similar or different?
- What is Australiana? Draw some images that you think relate to the concept of Australiana.
- If this is the pepper grinder, draw a picture of what you think the salt shaker looks like?





Gilbert Riedelbauch Double bowl 2000

nylon, rapid prototyping form based on a mathematical equation
National Gallery of Australia, Canberra

Artist's statement

'Since 1992 I have combined digital technologies with traditional silver smithing techniques, taking advantage of computers at the concept, making and production stage. Designing takes place in the virtual workshop of the computer, while the actual production is handed over to a machine based process, in this case Rapid Prototyping. I am drawn to the high level of symmetry and precision inherent in those combinations of techniques and processes.

By using the computer to visualise mathematical equations I am able to "see" these calculated surfaces. A gradual change to the equation will result in a slightly different shape and over time closed visual feedback-loop allows me to "control" this shape by deliberately changing the numbers and elements of the equation.'

How was Double bowl made?

'A mathematical formula describes the surface and determines the form of this object. Using mathematics software the coordinates of this surface are calculated as a wire frame in virtual 3D space. Then I shift this surface from its 2D state to become a 3D object showing a material thickness with the help of Computer Aided Design. The "real" object is then produced using Rapid Prototyping technologies. In this case nylon powder including fine glass beads, was sintered together by a laser-based process is called Selective Laser Sintering or SLS in short. Without digital technologies controlling the production inside very small tolerances this work would never be possible.'

Activities

- From what material did you think *Double bowl* was formed from?
- Can you think of any shapes or patterns that can be generated by using mathematics?
- Using a sheet of paper and a pair of scissors, see how many 3-dimensional shapes you can make. Make the tallest and longest forms possible.





Emily O'Brien Hair chairs 2004

anodised aluminium National Gallery of Australia, Canberra

Artist's statement

I am interested in exploring the context in which jewellery is created, the relationships people have with jewellery and how traditional views can be recast and questioned. To create the *Hair chairs*, I searched through old furniture catalogues and collected a wide range of images of ordinary and exotic household items. By working with familiar experiences and imagery, I am creating objects that people can easily connect with. By simulating everyday things and transforming them, I aim to alter people's understanding of contemporary jewellery and adornment. The *Hair chairs* aim to disarm the viewer by transforming familiar images into something irregular and unexpected.

How were the Hair chairs made?

The *Hair chairs* were made using old and new technologies. To start with, I cut them out from sheets of aluminium by hand using a jeweller's piercing saw and then shaped them with needle files and jewellers pliers.

After the aluminium pieces were cut, they were blasted with tiny glass beads in a process like sandblasting to create a matte finish on the metal. The *Hair chairs* were then anodised to create a protective coating and to colour the surface. The process of anodising involved exposing the objects to certain chemicals and passing electric currents through them so that the protective oxide on the surface was thickened and toughened. Artists can select specific chemical dyes in the anodising process in order to give the aluminium different coloured coatings. In this case, I have chosen a finish that creates a shadow-like form.

Activities

- What does the title *Hair chairs* tell us about these objects? What are they used for?
- Design a piece of jewellery that is inspired by an everyday object you have at home. From what kind of material would it be made? When and where would you wear it?
- What is a silhouette? Why do you think the artist made these objects to look like shadows?

