

DOUBLE TAKE

RECYCLING IN CONTEMPORARY CRAFT

CQ Gallery, Craft Queensland, Brisbane

2 June to 21 July 2001

Object galleries

18 August to 7 October 2001

Double Take is a national touring exhibition with a curatorial theme of creative re-use. But like the title itself this is an exhibition that causes a revisit, a rethink, a reassessment. For here the acts of re-use are possibly even contrary. In fact *Double Take* doubles back on recycling itself. The ethics of recycling and reassessing waste are not contestable, yet we have all experienced our own failings at it and its monumental inconsistencies. The Green Olympics is still close in this nation's memory. As designer Tejo Remy reminds us "[re]using materials is not always cheaper, does not take less time and is not necessarily cleaner for the environment".¹

Ivana Jirasek, a member of the curatorium for the exhibition, says *Double Take* was not tightly linked to issues of the environment, but it was hoped that the work would contribute to the thinking about these issues through "demonstrating different ways of thinking and making".² *Double Take* does provide such a space³ for rethinking and reassessing. For one has to look closely here, even search. Search for the practitioner's part in it as with Patsy Hely's minute insertions of blue blotches and baby kangaroo decals on op-shop cups and saucers. Search for any evidence of it as in Saul Scanlon's recycled glass lamps that look like any newly cast glass. Search for the connection in Sarah Elson's weeds cast in scrap metal. But in this search, one does double back onto life marvelling, for example, at the exquisite brilliant colours of knitting needles exposed in Dan Scurry's brooches. Or catching the glare in the eyes of Terry Summer's cardboard wild-life mounted heads, no longer endangered by the gun but the saw. Or feeling the fragility and joke of life on Valium in Caz Guiney's ring cast from the very stuff.

Recycling in some form or other has been part of age-old traditions of domestic economies. It has been significant in the art of the 20th century changing irrevocably what we think of as art, and transforming graphics, music and design

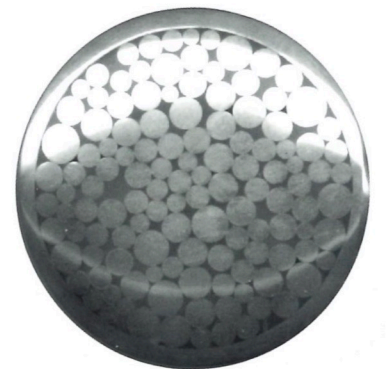
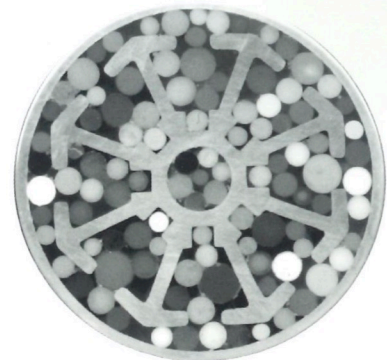
in the process. With several craft and design exhibitions currently touring with a recycling/re-use theme, one can't help ask why all this focus now. A particularly interesting explanation, I think, is the idea that we are drawn to recycled things for their very ambiguity or because, as Martina Margetts puts it, they mirror "our sense of the real and unreal world we simultaneously inhabit".⁴

endnotes

1. Tejo Remy in *Recycling Forms for the Next Century-Austerity for Posterity*, Craftspace Touring, Birmingham UK, 1996, p.78.
2. Ivana Jirasek, exhibition catalogue, *Double Take*, p.2.
3. See Suzie Attiwill's discussion on space, *ibid.* p.3.
4. Martina Margetts, 'the New Alchemists' in *Recycling Forms for the Next Century Austerity for Posterity*, Craftspace Touring, Birmingham UK, 1996, p.11.

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Object gratefully acknowledges the support of the Queensland Government through Arts Queensland towards the publishing of articles in this issue.



Dan Scurry, *Brooches*, 2000, top: aluminium tubes, knitting needles, middle: aluminium extrusions, knitting needles, epoxy resin, bottom: aluminium needles, epoxy resin, aluminium tube, 50mm diameter each.