

“

Why do you need stories?
Everyone needs stories
Adults watch the telly
When children go to bed
And fathers read the papers
And everyone likes movies
And mothers buy the magazines
To see what people said ”

-The Land where Stories End, David Foster

Education Kit

Stories in Form

stories in form

Stories in Form is an exhibition based on the research of, Rina Bernabei and Kelly Freeman (Bernabeifreeman) and Jacqueline Power. It presents products by Australian designers that reveal the way stories can create a bond between product and end-user. All the products are designed and made with a consideration of longevity and the potential to become a part of someone's life and perhaps passed on to future generations.

Product design is generally associated with functionality, aesthetics and the commercial environment. The majority of products are manufactured on a mass scale and generally result in standardisation and a lack of personalisation. The consequence for the end-user is that there is less chance of developing an attachment to the product and the greater likelihood of disposing of it. The implications range from the environmental impact to the way we store memories and value what we own.

In their research Bernabei, Freeman and Power, suggest that a product can be designed to encourage reminiscence and allow stories to be attached to them over time by the end user. Academic researchers Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi and Francesca Rocheberg- Halton stated that 'Past memories, present experiences and future dreams of each person are inextricably linked to the objects that comprise his or her environment.' A number of contemporary designers and commentators are recognising that stories play an important role in human behaviour and that a successful product designer may embed metaphor, simile and personification to trigger a story or memory.

The researchers have identified four storytelling categories: Narrative; Manufacture; History and Interaction in the work of contemporary designers. The works in the exhibition exemplify to a greater or lesser extent all four categories.

NARRATIVES are the stories or historical references the designer seeks to refer

MANUFACTURE techniques are the stories that can be told from the physical making of the product

HISTORY is the personal stories that the product may conjure up in the mind of the end user

INTERACTION is the physical changes that may occur to the product over its lifetime in its contact with the end user.



Photo: Jamie Williams
Cover image: Jamie Williams



The *Stories in Form* education kit discusses the underlying concepts of the exhibition, exploring the work in the show by the Australian designers Rina Bernabei and Kelly Freeman (bernabeifreeman), Cinnamon Lee, Ben McCarthy, Elliot Rich and Henry Wilson. It also examines examples of work from four international designers that exemplify and support the concepts.

The *Stories in Form* education kit supports the teaching of the Visual Design in secondary schools.

NSW Visual Design Syllabus Stage 5

- Practice 5.7 applies their understanding of aspects of practice to critically and historically interpret visual design artworks.
- Conceptual framework 5.8 uses their understanding of the function of and relationships between artist – artwork – world – audience in critical and historical interpretations of visual design artworks
- Frames 5.9 uses the frames to make different interpretations of visual design artworks
- Representation 5.10 constructs different critical and historical accounts of visual design artworks

NSW Visual Design Syllabus 6

- DM2: explores concepts of artist/designer, kinds of designed works, and interpretations of the world and audience/consumer response in their making of designed works
- DM3: investigates different points of view in the making of designed works
- DM5: develops different techniques suited to artistic and design intentions in the making of a range of works
- CH1: generates in their critical and historical practice ways to interpret and explain design
- CH2: investigates the roles and relationships among the concepts of artist/designer, work, world and audience/consumer in critical and historical investigations
- CH3: distinguishes between different points of view, using the frames in their critical and historical investigations
- CH4: explores ways in which histories, narratives and other accounts can be built to explain practices and interests in the fields of design.

The content in this education kit was taken from

- *Stories in Form* catalogue essay by Jacqueline Power
- *The Value of Storytelling in Product Design in Handbook of Research on Trends in Product Design and Development: Technological and Organisational Perspectives* by Rina Bernabei, Kelly Freeman, Jacqueline Power (University of New South Wales, Australia).

OTHER REFERENCES

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HENRY WILSON

Anglepoise Project



Henry Wilson
LED Glass Anglepoise (2010)
Photo: Geoff Boccalatte



Henry Wilson
Ceramic Anglepoise (2011)
Photo: Geoff Boccalatte

Henry Wilson is a designer who is firmly committed to responsible design practice. He not only creates new work but also revisits design classics, to which he provides renewed life with additions and alterations.

The *Anglepoise* project started with the idea of subtly updating the original Anglepoise task light with the new standard of technological lighting available today. The *Anglepoise* triptych is the third and final installment of this design story. Henry removed the original shades and replaced them with '*LED Glass*' (2010) and '*Ceramic*' (2011) versions of the lights. He has now used one of the original tin shades on a new timber armature and base in the latest '*Timber*' (2011/2012) version.

ABOUT THE ANGLEPOISE LAMP

- The *Anglepoise* lamp is a balanced-arm lamp designed in 1932 by British designer George Carwardine.
- British spring manufacturer Herbert Terry & Sons bought a license for Carwardine's work light design in 1934
- The original four-spring design was intended for industrial use, but Carwardine and Terry developed a three-spring version. Model 1227 became a great commercial success and used in offices.
- In 1936 a Norwegian textile machinery importer called Jacobsen obtained a license for the Anglepoise light. He modified the design and created the Luxo light. Luxo is now an international group.

Luxo Jr. is the first film produced in 1986 by Pixar Animation Studios, following its establishment as an independent film studio. It is a computer-animated short film demonstrating the kind of things the newly-established company was capable of producing. It was the first Pixar short to release within a Pixar film. The only characters are two *Anglepoise* desk lamps, one large and one small, inspired by a Luxo brand task-light on John Lasseter's desk (hence the title).

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qGxoui3IFS0>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=70qqukHZTA&feature=related>

CINNAMON LEE *Chameleon Series*



Photo: Jamie Williams

The *Chameleon Series* by metal smith Cinnamon Lee presents a range of interactive pendant lamps with the unique ability to change colour like a chameleon. The colour change responds to the proximity of a person rather than physical contact. You can hold your hands under the lights and they will continue to change colour. The wire forms are painstakingly laser cut and the final lights are assembled and finished by hand. Lee claims that 'The manufacturing process should be a reciprocal relationship between idea, process and material. The truly successful production of any object relies on each being reflected by the other. This provides story a in itself.' Lee embraces classic forms evoking old school craftsmanship combined with the latest in lighting technology and she tells a story about many of the ideals that designers from the 20th century tried to attain.

ELLIAT RICH *Decennia Chair*



Elliat Rich is a designer, inventor and part-time explorer based in Alice Springs. Her design philosophy is encapsulated by the phrase `Ex Animo`, which translates as `from the heart.` The *Decennia Chair* has a past life as a pre-loved dining chair but is now a new product with the potential for fresh memories to be created. The *Decennia Chair* speaks of both the craft of the original creators of the timber chair, and the slow application of layers of lime paint to adapt it for a new life. As the chair is continually sat on areas of paint are gradually worn away revealing new colour combinations. The glossy off white chair exposes magenta, yellow, pink blue and grey patternation that has been applied layer upon layer to the chair.

The *Decennia Chair* celebrates not only the interaction with the user but the ageing process, storing the history of past users, which are revealed by subtle indicators such as scratches and other tell tale marks.



Photo: Geoff Sumner

