

# **Springboard Tower**

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## **1.0 Artist Statement**

While exploring possible mediums for an unrelated sculptural commission in a friend's boat scrap yard, I stumbled upon a sawn off keel for an 18 foot 'trailer' sailer. The shape I considered immediately as having potential to serve as a pivot point for new work involving mixed mediums. The process of creative practice, Art, serves as a means to both express myself and communicate with others. This dialogue is encapsulated in mediums which best suit each topic, with emergent themes often a surprise and not a predetermined outcome. Sculpture enables me to orient that expression in ways which defy utilitarian premise, open critical discourse around concepts and bring about engagement with an audience much like an actor performs as a dance, a spectacle made solid, a springboard tower.

## **2.0 Sculpture Construction**

The initial prospect of using a she-oak base or marble pivot proved too costly upon investigation. Taking into account the material of the main form being aluminium, also the time required to modify the shape proved the most practical avenue to proceed. Conceptually, plan drawings assisted to articulate visually the shift in form from a keel to a 'tower' containing pit fired raku clay figures.

## **3.0 Process of Construction**

### *Step 1*

- Polish aluminium keel;
- Remove corrosion at head of keel

### *Step 2*

- Make clay figures
- Bisque fire clay figures

### *Step 3*

- Cut base
- Bolt aluminium keel to base
- Cut portholes in keel with arbitec saw
- Weld interior platforms for figures
- Polish completed structure

#### *Step 4*

- Build podium to suit sculpture
- Attach sculpture to podium
- Place clay figures inside as sketched
- Exhibit work

## **4.0 Construction**

With limited experience working with the material aluminium, I soon learned that anything related to its use must be mediated with due safety preparations, such as understanding the cost of cutting or welding this material. The process of raku firing on the other hand is relatively straightforward, also with safety concerns if considering this as an activity to conduct with children.

### **4.1 Keel**

Due to corrosion at the 'head' of the keel aesthetic judgement ruled out Removal and so it was retained as a key feature. Despite attempts to machine buff the aluminium main structure, it proved too dented to achieve a mirror like surface. The very same response was encountered when contemplating sanding the aluminium as it was deemed a better fit to embrace the 'beaten piece of nautical splendour' rather than bring it back to its original untarnished patination.

### **4.2 Ceramic Figures**

The 'head of river' sourced clay proved to be very difficult to work due to it's drying rate. This limitation led to multiple cracking in the final figure forms. By selecting and forming the most appropriate stances to convey body language, I was able to form the figures with 'feeling', an interpretation of the theme 'joy;'

### **4.3 Sculpture Base**

Difficulty in locating a piece of she-oak or heavily grained timber proved impossible, so the next alternate option of welding a 3mm thick base plate for stabilisation proved successful.

## **5.0 Carrier Project**

The idea behind a carrier project or preliminary marquette can also be applied within its own creation context - serves either as a preliminary planner or alternately serves as an extension adapted to suit different audiences. The key premise is to engage the respective audience in developing objects of 3 dimensional shape, develop skills of manipulation, develop appropriate art language and promote excitement/ learning through exploration and discovery.

### **5.1 Suggested Materials**

- Cane(Blind);
- Paper (Tissue Paper);
- Chipboard (14mm);
- Paint (Acrylic);
- Brushes;
- Thread;
- PVA Glue;
- Cardboard (Reflex Box)

### **5.2 Assembly / Construction Process**

1. Select base shape;
2. Cut out base shape (chipboard);
3. Trace template onto cardboard (cut out);
4. Drill holes 10mm apart around the outside of chipboard;
5. Measure cane to length of tissue paper;
6. Cut cane to length;
7. Insert cane pieces into pre-drilled holes and glue into place;
8. Place cut-out template on top and glue to cane;
9. Insert central rib and tie with thread to vertical cane pieces;
10. Glue paper to cane sticks exterior;
11. Dope paper with glue/water in a 50/50 mix;
12. Dry with a small hair dryer;
13. Paint as desired.

### **5.3 Problems**

Due to firing procedures at Edith Cowan University, Bunbury, clay figures were not able to be fired for final presentation and this I feel may affect the way in which the project viewed and indeed the grade with which it is allocated.

### **5.4 Location**

Transportation of the major work did not prove difficult although a podium to suit was a little harder to locate. Time proved to be the major element which was used extensively to complete this project but given the experience gained by such a venture, future projects should take half the time.

### **5.5 Assessment**

Overall I was happy with the end result, content with the knowledge that I gained through the process of its construction. The paper marquette proved to be interesting for my 3 year old daughter. I now feel confident to implement this project at a K-2 level given the experiences that I have gained. Also experience with school based Art practitioners such as Jess Parker at Cooina Primary School, Bunbury, Western Australia proved to be helpful in determining what context to use this carrier project in.

### **5.6 Extension**

Possible extensions include the possibility of the sculpture being part of an installation or exhibition piece. Children could possibly alter variables to achieve a different aesthetic appeal. Apparently this keel shaped piece of scrap is not the only one in existence but similar pieces can be obtained if needed.

### **5.7 Possible Inclusion**

The interaction and ideas of children injected at different stages of this project may have helped determine what aspects or steps children may have difficulties with. While building the paper marquette it would have been advantageous to include children's perspectives and feedback.

## 6.0 Conclusion

This type of 3 dimensional sculpture activity is recommended for K-2 art curriculum inclusion because;

- Materials used for this sculpture activity are cheap and readily available in most W.A classrooms;
- The project / carrier project develops skills and understandings in individuals and also parallels other concepts in different curriculum areas;
- All children develop at different rates and this project can be altered to suit individuals needs;
- This project promotes hands-on exploratory learning while developing artistic language;
- These towers can be iconic, and representative of different things, serving a range of purposes and symbolising different things for different people;
- These projects allow lateral creative thinking to be nurtured while achieving many objectives outlined in the Western Australian Art and Craft Syllabus;
- This project allows children to develop autonomous thinking and promotes confidence in children's own abilities.

## Appendix



Image 1.0 - Materials used in carrier project



Image 2.0 - Materials used in carrier project



Image 3.0 - Welded aluminium 'Springboard Tower'



Image 3.0 - Welded aluminium 'Springboard Tower' with ceramic figures prior to raku firing



Image 4.0 - Rubbing oil paint into 'Springboard Tower' head piece