

BOOTH
BOWAK
FOSTER

F!NK: fostering

KELLY
NICOL
RIDDIFORD
SMITH
VERCHOT

EXHIBITION CATALOGUE

DESIGN

A retrospective exhibition of F!NK + CO. featuring the collaborative works
of 8 artists and designer makers.

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FOSTERING TALENT

FINK: Fostering Design represents the talent and originality of Canberra based company F!NK + Co. in an illuminating exhibition curated by Merryn Gates. Here in Australia's purpose-built capital city the machinations of heavy industry are seemingly remote, yet in the workshops of Robert Foster's company F!NK + Co, aluminium products are being forged that are the height of one key industry that is alive and well in this city — the creative industries.

Robert Foster emerged from the Canberra School of Art, now the Australian National University School of Art, a place where the craft arts flourished and established a legacy of creative culture in Canberra. Foster built a business based on a similar collegiate form of working that he first experienced at the ANU School of Art, making and creating with a material that he loves, aluminium. Foster's belief in the potential of the highly malleable and versatile properties of aluminium (also known as alumina), married with his entrepreneurial vision is a truly innovative approach. As an artist he has created a viable Australian business by collaborating with other designers and becoming a centre of ideas and experimentation, realising products that are full of energy, reinvention, and originality.

Craft ACT: Craft and Design Centre marvels at the talent resident in this city and finds that the most exciting projects and riveting practices are right here on our doorstep. Emerging from the European skilled crafts

people and artisans of Canberra's history, F!NK + Co. continue to renew this tradition. Craft ACT: Craft and Design Centre are committed to bridging links with as many audiences as possible and putting Canberra on the map in new ways. This exhibition acknowledges the spirit of all involved with F!NK + Co., exposes the wonderful applications of aluminium as one of Australia's important resources, and through Merryn Gates' passionate eye for detail, recognises this original Australian company.

Craft ACT: Craft and Design Centre is delighted to be working alongside F!NK + Co., the designers and artists showcased in this exhibition, Merryn Gates, and the Australian Embassy Washington DC USA, in telling the story of this unique company, its signature material — aluminium, and its vision.

Barbara McConchie
Executive Director
Craft ACT: Craft and Design Centre
Canberra, Australia

that jug...

YOU RECOGNISE IT IMMEDIATELY. You probably know it is made in Australia. You might know it is designed by Robert Foster for F!NK + Co. You find it in restaurants around the world, from the Australian National Museum in Canberra to MoMA in New York. Gallery shops love it; the Powerhouse Museum has collected it.

But where did this Australian design icon come from?

The *F!NK Water Jug* was originally a commission for a Canberra restaurant in 1993. It was a small edition made with a simple press, old pieces of steel and wood from a fence post, typical of the designer known for his physical strength and determination.

Robert Foster (b. 1962) had experimented with anodised aluminium while still studying with hollow-ware master, and first major influence, Ragnar Hansen at the Canberra School of Art (1978–1985). While Foster's one-off works are idiosyncratic, his 'technical facility', it was noted, 'remains deeply within hollow-ware traditions'.¹ Aluminium offered an alternative to the expensive metals, such as silver, with which he was making curvaceous and quirky teapots. The jug owes its highly resolved form to these hand-beaten vessels, a side of Foster's practice

for which he is equally well known and which continues to feed into the F!NK + Co. production range. 'I don't draw an ideological line between my one-off works and F!NK,' he states. 'I have learned to see them as notions of operation, that dwell on a sliding scale between objects only made possible via hand-making, through to the objects only made possible by manufacturing technology'.²

Foster immediately saw aluminium's potential for production processes. The aluminium tubing from which the *Jug* is formed, he realised, already contains the volume, minimising the work traditionally needed for hollow-ware vessels. After further development, the *Jug* became the first F!NK product, and is still the mainstay of the company. It encapsulates the qualities of F!NK + Co. that have distinguished it since it was established in 1994: distinctive design, rethinking function and technical innovation.

There are now 29 items in the F!NK range, all of which have been gathered together for the first time in this exhibition. Some products have been discontinued, and a few have been limited editions. The first F!NK + Co. collaboration happened in 1995 when Robert designed The *F!NK Large Bowl* with Scott Chaseling (b. 1962). Chaseling is a highly-regarded glass artist, who undertook graduate studies with Klaus Moje at the Canberra School of Art 1990–91. His early reputation was based on bravura glass blowing, but in recent years he has combined his glass blowing skills with wheel-cut and fused glass to produce highly narrative pieces. The *Large Bowl*, with its innovative combination of materials and design largesse reflects well the combined interests of the two artists. There was only a

small production made of the bowl and Chaseling has not collaborated with F!NK + Co. since, preferring instead to develop his work exclusively in glass. In the past decade he has become known internationally for 'the great Australian roll-up', a technique of using Bullseye glass in a fused and blown combination that he and colleague Kirstie Rea demonstrated around the world.³

As it developed, the F!NK range resurrected the use of anodised aluminium for quality designer tableware. After a brief moment of glory in the 1950s, the material was put to more utilitarian use in building and industry. Foster, who calls aluminium a 'harlequin of metals',⁴ has exploited its unique properties, shaping the raw material through pressing and folding, and developing innovations in forming. For example, the *F!NK Blast Vase*, 1999, was formed using high explosives and the *F!NK Antipasto Set*, 2001, designed by sculptor Rachel Bowak (b. 1964), is made through hydro-forming.

Bowak brought to this work the inspiration she derives from landscape, in particular the flat Tanami desert. She worked in a Tanami gold mine during the 1990s and the region still fascinates her. The tray adopts the slight raised edge typical of a tailings pan that holds the mineral residue from the mining process. The artist made a series of 'tango' performance images in just such a place in the Tanami in 2007.

Since the collaboration in 2001, Bowak has incorporated into her own work some of the techniques and materials used in the manufacture of F!NK products. Her large-scale wire 'drawings' and forged objects are characterised by a kind of symbolic alphabet she derives from domestic items, forming what she calls a metaphor for energy and relationships.⁵ *Synapse* makes a departure from this iconography with the inclusion of organic shapes, made by pressing worked pieces of polyurethane into the soft lead sheet.

His colleagues admire the way Foster works on the verge of what is possible with industry, pushing manufacturers to their limits.

Reliable anodising was always difficult to source. For many years, inconsistent quality led to high attrition rates. F!NK + Co. has now set up its own anodising facility, and in fact provides precision work for scientific equipment and satellite components. Foster is amused that 'the same degree of precision is required for tableware and space exploration'.

From the outset, F!NK + Co., as the name suggests, was intended to support a network of people: other Australian designers, as well as providers of outsourced work, graphic designers, photographers, printers and interested students.

Rohan Nicol's (b. 1970) design for the *F!NK Bracelet* was introduced in 1998. Since then he has developed several of his own designs for other personal accessories, such as a spectacle case, tote bags and wallets in aluminium. His continued use of industrial processes, as successfully applied by F!NK + Co., underlies a keen interest in limited production. In his hometown of Wagga Wagga in regional New South Wales he has teamed up with a local signage company to make the vacuum-formed plastic *Stretchlight*.

Nicol's goal is a sustainable creative practice business, driven by the dual imperatives of manufacture and marketing.⁶ Product development is part of that and is evidenced in his return to the *F!NK Bracelet* after ten years. His *F!NK Bracelet MK II — Developmental Prototype*, 2008, as the title suggests, responds to consumer feedback about his original bracelet.

Sean Booth (b. 1977) first worked with F!NK + Co. on a commission to make tableware for the Hyatt's three restaurants at the National Museum of Australia when it opened in 2001. Students from the Canberra School of Art Gold and Silversmithing Workshop were brought in to cope with the increased workload. 'We've all been grunts,' says Booth with a laugh, but highly specialised skills are required of all those who work at F!NK + Co. Booth's connection was continued through an Australia Council Mentorship in 2003, so that 'there was a direct dialogue between us about my work'.⁷ A Craft ACT exhibition⁸ celebrated the mentorship, and Booth has since designed a candelabra for the F!NK range. Like flatware designer-maker Oliver Smith (b. 1974), another graduate of the workshop who has worked for F!NK + Co., Booth valued Foster's experience with industry and his approach to tooling for production. Tooling takes up a large percentage of Foster's time, as he remains closely connected to this part of the process to 'maintain the sensitivity and integrity of the design'.⁹ The eye, he believes, is more sophisticated than machines. By keeping his hand in the making of the tools, more personality and humanness — the subtle characteristics of Foster's design — is retained in the multiple.

Foster realised that his hesitations about production processes 'were really issues about integrity'.¹⁰ He does not, in fact, draw a distinction between his one-off exhibition works and the production lines. This is a model from which

emerging designers can draw inspiration — it finds a way for craft and design to meet, without denying either tradition. The training they all had in craft has given Smith and Booth a 'hands-on material understanding that informs the design of the tooling'.¹¹

Booth has written that, during his mentorship, the discussions he had with Foster about the 'motivation and discipline of a full-time practice'¹² were the most valuable.

Booth, who works with F!NK production quite regularly, brings lessons learnt on the manufacturing floor into his studio. He designs for economic use of materials and efficient time-management.¹³ His work constructs volume through the manipulation of flat planes: multiples of cut aluminium sheet bent and secured with rivets. This creates an interplay of line, tone and form as seen in both his light fitting, *A.05*, and *Production Bowl*.

For Smith, whose *F!NK Fatware* joined the F!NK range in 2005, the development period was the most exciting. He remembers 'the explosion of ideas, all the fun of playing and pulling these things together into making a product', adding, 'the discipline of making multiples means that you have to design a consistent production system — a system that is built on solid research into functional and aesthetic questions, combined with an understanding of the commercial market'.

The chief inspiration Smith retains from his collaboration with F!NK + Co. is the nurturing of a creative dialogue between hand-built works and product development. Smith's recent prototypes for his *Gen III* tableware, and the *Wings* servers featured in this exhibition, begin life as hand-formed, hand-finished objects. They are now designed, however, with the intention to produce them using both unique and limited edition production techniques (as in the *Gen II* stainless steel series), and in a range of materials (from plastic to silver). Smith credits the F!NK + Co. model with liberating him from thinking exclusively in silver¹⁴, although it remains the cornerstone of his work — his expertise in working silver can be seen in the *Arc* cheese knife, 2004–06. The *Wings* series also explores a heat-anodised surface on the titanium, a finish distinct from the signature bold, matte colours of F!NK.

Foster, too, enjoys the cross-fertilisation of collaboration. He is generous with his experience and willing to share, whether it is in formal mentorships, collaborations, or by inviting others to design for F!NK.¹⁵ The experience benefits everyone, he says with satisfaction. It 'gives emerging designers credibility and some income from royalties', while it also allows 'a meeting of my production and commercial experience with different ways of seeing things'.¹⁶ For instance, Foster invited Adelaide-based Bronwen Riddiford (b. 1973) to F!NK + Co. She saw the new rotation-moulded plastic bowls, the *F!NK Feature Bowl*, 2002, designed by Remi Verchot (b. 1980) with Foster, and immediately realised its potential for an ice bucket. A new product was born, the *F!NK Wine Chiller*, 2003.

Remi Verchot originally learned the art of woodturning from his father in France. Though classically trained, his work exhibits a strong contemporary feel. His preference is to use wood without a decorative grain, and he almost works against the skill of turning by a predilection for asymmetry. The wooden bowl that inspired the *F!NK Feature Bowl*, is turned from a block of laminated sheets of ply. The resulting linear pattern emphasises the orbital pull of the bowl. Both bowls have an elegance that comes from this sense of unexpected balance and proportion, characteristics that sit well with the unconventional F!NK range.

Verchot recently changed career direction, and is now re-training to work in the building industry.¹⁷

Bronwen Riddiford has kept refining her interest in folded metal that developed while she was studying. Design efficiency, maximising the intrinsic strength of the material and practicality are key elements of the designs she has undertaken for F!NK + Co. The *F!NK Wine Chiller* holds a cooling-agent filled rotation-moulded plastic puck at the base, formed as the press tapers the body. A single cut in the metal creates a handle when the unit is crushed, a technique later brought to bear on the 'squashed' *F!NK Storage Vessels*, 2007.

Her own neckpieces and light fittings are designed, she explains, as if from a flat sheet of paper, cut and folded to create volume, movement and strength.¹⁸ The *F!NK Neckpiece* that joined the range in 2007 introduces the added drama of a powder-coated interior to the folded pendant.

Elizabeth Kelly (b. 1960) collaborated with Foster on the *The F!NK Citrus Squeezer* (F!NK + Co's second product, launched in 1994) while she was researching coloured glass and lecturing at the Sydney College of the Arts. Kelly credits Foster with initiating an interest in the largely forgotten method of hand-pressed glass. 'Working with Rob initially brought toolmaking into my thinking, and through further collaboration with Michael Wilson, it has entered my practice,' she acknowledges.¹⁹

The shot glass set was the first of Kelly's designs successfully generated and marketed as part of the F!NK range. It took four years of material research (1995–1998) and technical support to resolve the product, and can be directly credited to Kelly's collaborative research with Wilson, a toolmaker and design engineer–glassmaker currently living in New Zealand. Some of the early prototypes for the shot glass are shown in this exhibition for the first time.

Kelly and Wilson paid particular attention to the form of the shot glasses, so that the colour deepened through the continual curve of the base and was highlighted through the lip, with an edge that is crisp yet tactile on the lips.

Through her research into coloured glass, Kelly has been able to offer an exclusive range of colours for the F!NK designs. 'The colours I have used are specially for those products, to compliment an anodised surface colour. They share a chromatic density — both surfaces are about refracting light,' she explains.

The commercial production of the shot glasses commenced in Adelaide, where Kelly was head of the glass studio at the JamFactory Craft and Design Centre.²⁰ This production was concurrent with further research and development into industrially-designed processes of pressed, centrifuged and direct cast objects.

Unlike other F!NK products, the pressed and blow-moulded glass is made by Kelly and a team of skilled assistants in her Studio Tangerine.²¹ Kelly later developed a glass version of Foster's *Blast Vase*, 2004.

A 2006 exhibition by Kelly, *City of Glass*,²² featured an installation of blown and cast glass blocks, some with painted surfaces, others with glowing coloured interiors glimpsed through tiny apertures. This model glass cityscape has given way to a desire to place architectural-scale glass works within the fabric of a city. She constructed a tower of custom coloured and cast glass bricks in January 2008, and the concept still absorbs her. A prototype for a second tower is in this show. Weight, strength, colour and light play in these forms, which resonate with the simple, early structures of civilization.

For his part, Foster has sought mentors among his international colleagues. In 2000 he produced a prototype teapot for Italian design giant Alessi. In that year, he also spent three months in the studio of Munich-based lighting designer Ingo Maurer. Maurer had expressed interest in Foster's lighting designs²³ and invited him to work with his twelve-strong design team. Foster's lights were, ironically, too similar to Maurer designs already in development to be taken up,²⁴ but he revelled in the company of the designers and engineers who worked with Maurer. The studio takes on large installations, such as the 2005 UNICEF snowflake in New York.²⁵ Despite Maurer's frenetic pace, Foster was able to spend some time with him, and forged a professional friendship. Foster values Maurer's frank and perceptive feedback on his work, and assisted Maurer with the installation of his exhibition at the 2005 Milan Furniture Fair.

One can detect the influence of this European design-studio model in the way that F!NK + Co. engages with other designers. They retain copyright in their designs, and their name remains associated with the product (all advertising actually highlights the designer's name). They continue to receive royalties on their designs. There is an ongoing connection with the company, so that while their designs are distinct from their own individual practice, Booth, Smith and Kelly all agree that they are very conscious of their professional reputation being attached to the F!NK product. As Smith also noted, 'what is justifiable in a one-off piece may need to be taken to another level of resolution as a multiple — in this sense, design makes you lift your game'.²⁶

Ideally, F!NK + Co. supports Foster as an artist. 'The business allows him to concentrate on commission work, product development and tooling, while giving him time to make his own one-off pieces,' explains partner Gretel Harrison, who joined F!NK + Co. in 1997. Foster has major pieces in all significant public collections in Australia, and in several international museums including the Victoria & Albert Museum, UK and the Alessi Museum, Italy. In that arena he is celebrated for his hollow-ware, in particular his distinctive teapots and vessels. He continues to test his

ingenuity and skills on this basic but demanding form, while exploring larger objects such as tables and sculptural lighting. These allow his creativity to leave the table top and engage with architectural space.

Harrison's background in marketing has built a strong visual identity for the company, which sends the right message about F!NK + Co.: quality, Australian-made and designed, innovative, about people and with a sense of quirkiness.

F!NK + Co.'s suite of promotional material is supervised by Harrison, working with long-time associates graphic designer Louise Scrivener (who designed this catalogue) and photographer Damian McDonald (whose portraits of the designers are featured in the exhibition). The impact of their work can be seen on the F!NK + Co. website: there are graphically strong product shots, with people holding or using the product, all of which gives scale and personality to the site. The design continues through all the branding such as packaging, advertising, brochures and point of sale signage, some of which has been included in the exhibition.

'Gretel is the frontline of the business,' Kelly notes.²⁷ It is Harrison who deals with clients and retailers, and attends international trade fairs such as the International Contemporary Furniture Fair (ICFF) in New York each May. 'Maintaining a presence at the international fairs is an investment, particularly in the US market,' Harrison stresses, 'as it builds commercial confidence. Buyers are not interested unless they know you are in it for the long term.'

She uses her contact with buyers for market research, product development and customer feedback, which is a vital part of the process that gives F!NK + Co. a competitive advantage in the marketplace. She identifies gaps in the market, so that innovative products can be placed to greatest effect, such as the *F!NK Candelabra*, 2005, brief, which was given to Booth, and the *F!NK Cream and Sugar Set*, 2001, which was designed by Foster.

About 30 per cent of F!NK's business is in exporting. Client MoMA, who run the biggest giftware mail-order catalogue in the United States, need to be able to take the item off the shelf and post it anywhere. Harrison turned this to an advantage, cross-selling by including information about the F!NK range with every product. F!NK + Co. places high importance on quality packaging. Harrison's research has revealed that many of their products are, in fact, given as gifts.

In 2005, F!NK + Co. won the Small to Medium Manufacturer Award in the ACT Chief Minister's Export Awards, and was a finalist in the 2005 Austrade Australian Export Awards. Hopefully, this valuable exposure will encourage potential investment capital to the company. The F!NK product range is carefully expanding, with each new addition requiring expensive research and development. F!NK + Co.'s commitment to innovation drives the growth of the company and underwrites this costly investment in research. The unique profile F!NK + Co. has established, its high-calibre design and technical bravura all set it apart from other manufacturers.

In the fourteen years since F!NK + Co. was established, it has realised Foster's vision of being truly a 'company of designers'.

Merryn Gates

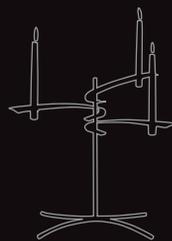
This essay is based on an article that originally appeared in Object #49, April 2006. Object Australian Centre for Craft and Design, Sydney has generously granted permission to reprint.

1. Judith O'Callaghan, *The Eloquent Vessel*, exhibition catalogue, Museum for Angewandte Kunst, Germany, 1992, p.7
2. *Vast Terrain: Design and Aluminium*, exhibition catalogue, FORM Gallery, Perth, 2005, u.p.
3. 'The Great Australian Roll-Up' workshops were held in many countries by Kirstie Rea and Scott Chaseling c2000–2004. See <http://www.bullseye-glass.com>
4. *Vast Terrain*, op. cit.
5. Rachel Bowak, in conversation with the author, March 2008
6. Rohan Nicol, in conversation with the author, March 2008
7. Sean Booth, in conversation with the author, 18 January 2006
8. *A New Mark*, Craft ACT, Canberra, 23 April – 30 May 2004
9. Robert Foster, in conversation with the author, 29 December 2005
10. *ibid.*
11. Sean Booth and Oliver Smith, in conversation with the author, 18 January 2006
12. Sean Booth, Craft ACT report, www.craftaustralia.com.au/articles/20050222.php, Articles, 22 February 2005
13. Sean Booth, in conversation with the author, March 2008. See also <http://seanbooth.com>
14. Oliver Smith, in conversation with the author, March 2008
15. Foster has been partnered in three Australia Council/Craft ACT Mentor-ships to date: with Aidan McDonald, 1997–1998; Sean Booth, 2003; and Marcelo Zavala-Baeza in 2006
16. Robert Foster, op. cit., 29 December 2005
17. Remi Verchot, in conversation with the author, March 2008
18. Bronwen Riddiford, in conversation with the author, March 2008
19. Elizabeth Kelly, in conversation with the author, 18 January 2006
20. Elizabeth Kelly was Head of the JamFactory Glass Studio from 1997 to 2000
21. Studio Tangerine, established in 2004 at ANCA Studios, Mitchell, ACT. Sean Booth and Oliver Smith share another studio in this complex, and it was where Robert Foster started FINK. ANCA (Australian National Capital Artists) studios are artist-run, purpose-built studios in Canberra, established through an innovative ACT government and arts community initiative. Two complexes (in Dickson and Mitchell) provide tenancy for over 40 artists. These studios encourage artists to stay in Canberra, a city without the vacant factories or shops that are the traditional sources of low rent studio space.
22. *City of Glass*, Craft ACT, Canberra, 14 July – 20 August, 2006
23. Readers may remember *Visions Combined*, Foster's solo exhibition of lighting prototypes at Object Gallery in 1998. The designs featured innovative ball-bearing joints and magnetic switches.
24. Ingo Maurer's designers were developing magnetic switch and ball joints in lighting designs at the same time. Foster made a group of prototypes, *Dinky Di I, II and III*, while working in the studio.
25. See <http://www.ingo-maurer.com>. The seventeen-foot structure, which replaces a nineteen-year-old snowflake, contains 462 LED and strobe fittings and 12,000 faceted prismatic Baccarat crystals.
26. Oliver Smith, op. cit., 18 January 2006
27. Elizabeth Kelly, in conversation with the author, 18 January 2006

collaborations

candelabra

SEAN BOOTH



The unlimited palette and freedom of working with metal as a material allows me to create at a lively rate. My aesthetic draws from architecture, sculpture and nature.

My practice is diverse with two main threads of investigation. One focuses on the more traditional use of silver and hammerwork within a contemporary context, while the other challenges geometry and the structures that can be built with a sense of fluidity. My exhibition work is often 'research and development' for more production-style works.



A.05 2005
Stainless steel, 12V light
440 x 250 x 300 mm



antipasto set

RACHEL BOWAK



I predominately work with steel using construction, forging and forming processes. The conceptual basis of my work often relates to the Australian landscape.

I am interested in the dialogue we create with landscape and domestic space as we continue to inhabit and form the land, and it, in turn, shapes our individual and collective realities and inwardly informs our personal psychological space.

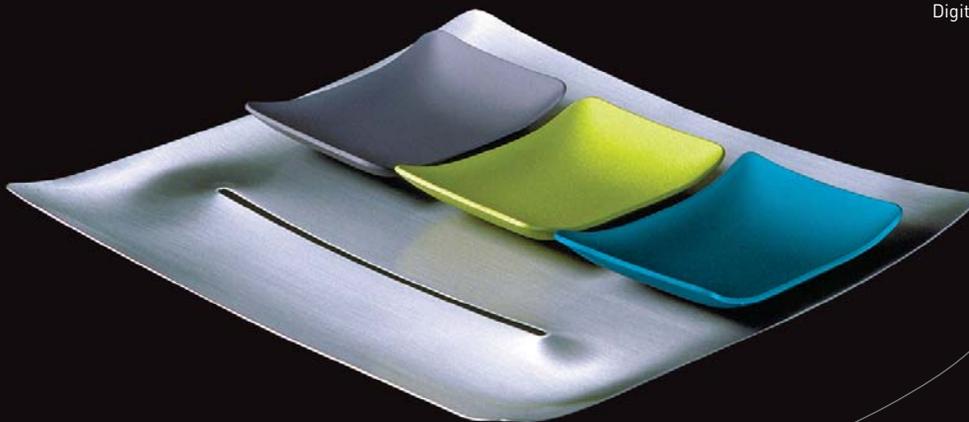


Waiting on Tailings — Tanami Gold Mine, NT 2007

Digital print on adhesive vinyl on mild steel

500 x 500 mm

Photo: Pam Lofts





water jug

ROBERT FOSTER



I predominately work in hollow-ware, sculptural lighting, and furniture. I bring to my work the inquisitiveness of an engineer and the creativity of a designer — demonstrating a broad understanding of process as well as an inclination to challenge visual language.

I primarily use aluminium, titanium and stainless steel, and combine such untraditional alloys with other materials as diverse as resin, plastics, stone, ceramics, glass and, occasionally, quirky and unusual objects such as snooker balls.



Yes Sir, Please Sir 2008
Stainless steel, resin
370 x 180 x 110 mm



glass vases



ELIZABETH KELLY



My concerns in art and design cross many materials and are constantly linked to the desire for the well-crafted object. Resolution of idea runs as the central strand teamed with an ongoing enquiry of process application and material exploration.

The establishment of Studio Tangerine in Canberra, 2004, further enabled me to engage in sculpture and client-initiated projects, although the studio bias remains toward hot glass applications featuring a specific and unique colour range I have developed.



Maquette for Tower 2008
Cast, coloured glass
120 x 160 x 300mm



bracelet

ROHAN NICOL



Stretch Light 2008

Vacuum-formed thermo plastic, anodised aluminium, 12 volt halogen ball lamp, transformer, electrical wiring, stainless wire, stainless steel springs
950 mm length



I work in a variety of craft and design disciplines. Jewellery, silversmithing and industrial design are my familiar reference points. I am interested in making work that is one-off, and equally likely to make pieces that explore limited production.

I find it important to work from a variety of angles, and find that developments in one aspect of my practice benefit my work as a whole. Recent works in jewellery have provided me with new knowledge in terms of techniques and aesthetic development.



wine chiller

BRONWEN RIDDIFORD



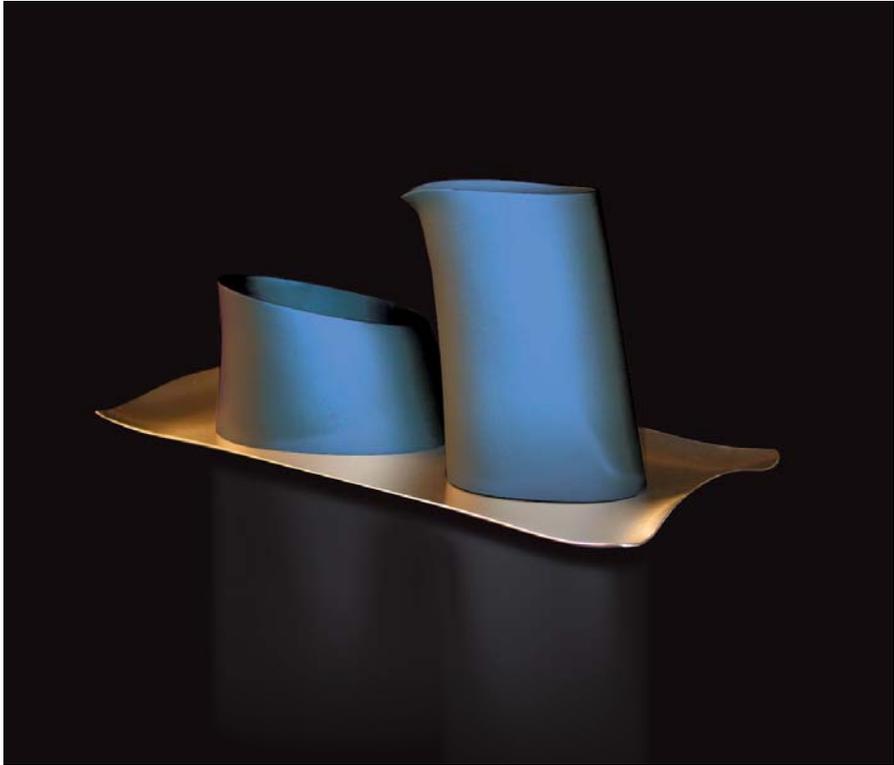
Lotus Light 2000
Powder-coated mild steel, polypropylene
500 x 500 x 30 mm



I design and make jewellery, objects, and furniture. Many of my ideas begin with simple paper templates and are translated into sheet materials such as metal or plastic.

The objects are given life and form through simple folding or manipulations. By using this design process I try to achieve a sense of economy and purity in my designs.

Although trained in traditional silversmithing techniques I prefer to use modern industrial materials and manufacturing processes which allow me to utilise processes such as laser cutting and industrial finishes such as anodising.



OLIVER SMITH



I am a silversmith with a particular interest in hammerwork techniques and a passion for hot-forging. The production of flatware and hollowware using traditional materials and techniques is the foundation of my practice and is the source of much of my creative thinking. My work is guided by the principle of 'the best of craft and industry'.

My experience exemplifies the dynamic role of the contemporary craftsman and designer today. Each of my projects can fall into one or many of the following categories: unique hand-crafted objects, commissions, exhibition work, collaborative projects and designs for production.



Wings-Harlequin serving utensil 2008

Hand-forged anodised titanium
280 x 75 x 12 mm





feature bowl

REMI VERCHOT

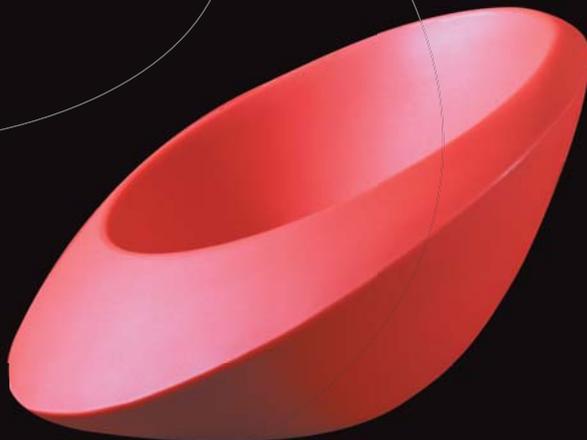


Wooden Bowl 2002
Hand-turned laminated plywood
190 x 400 x 330 mm
Private Collection, Canberra



My background includes working with wood sculptors as well as traditional craft people. Those diverse influences have led me to think of the technical aspect of my work as much as the reasons beyond making and designing.

My objects are both functional and sculptural. I like to break away from symmetry and keep looking at new ways of shaping the materials. The wood that I choose is of plain grain so that the form can stand out. The focus is on crisp lines and clean surfaces to achieve maximum definition.



catalogue of works

All works designed by Robert Foster unless otherwise indicated.
All works courtesy F!NK + Co. or the designer unless otherwise noted.



THE F!NK JUG 1993

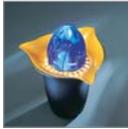
Pressed anodised aluminium,
powder-coated cast aluminium handle
300 x 180 x 100 mm

Original 1993

Production line 1994

Limited Edition 1999

New colour 2008



Robert Foster + Elizabeth Kelly

THE F!NK CITRUS SQUEEZER 1994

Pressed powder-coated anodised
aluminium; pressed glass
top: 70 x 123 mm; base 125 x 115 mm
Discontinued

Failed pressed aluminium blanks
3 @ 30 x 200 x 200 mm



THE F!NK BEAKERS + TRAY 1995

Spun, pressed anodised aluminium
8 @ 105 x 75 mm
2 @ 20 x 240 x 350 x mm

Packaging tube



Robert Foster + Scott Chaseling

THE F!NK LARGE BOWL 1995

Spun, powder-coated aluminium with
thermo-formed acrylic
480 x 150 x 150 mm

Discontinued

Private collection, Canberra



THE F!NK EGG CUP 1995

Powder-coated cast aluminium
30 x 90 x 90 mm

Discontinued

Private collection, Canberra



THE F!NK TEA STRAINER + BOX 1994

Chrome-plated brass, drop-forged
aluminium, stainless steel

Strainer: 25 x 123 mm; stand 15 x 75 mm

Discontinued

Private collection, Canberra



THE F!NK BLINK LAMP 1997

Pressed nickel-plated brass and steel,
porcelain ceramic, rare earth magnet, felt,
low voltage halogen globe

430 x 100 x 70 mm

Discontinued

Private collection, Canberra



Robert Foster + Elizabeth Kelly

THE F!NK SHOT GLASSES 1999

Pressed glass, pressed aluminium
Discontinued

Glasses: 2 @ 85 x 50 x 50 mm;

stand: 50 x 120 x 60 mm

Private collection, Canberra

Postcard



THE F!NK EXPLOSIVE VASE 1999

Prototype [silver]

Explosively formed aluminium

300 x 130 x 100 mm

Discontinued

Private collection, Canberra

Images of the process



THE F!NK STORAGE POD 1996

Hydro-formed anodised aluminium,
acrylic

165 x 200 x 90 mm

Discontinued

Private collection, Canberra

**THE F!NK COCKTAIL SHAKER 1998**

Pressed anodised aluminium,
 machined aluminium
 250 x 80 x 80 mm
 Discontinued
 Initial commission for Bombay Sapphire,
 also sold as a production piece
 Private collection, Canberra

**Rohan Nicol
THE F!NK BRACELET 1998**

Press cut, jig-formed hard-anodised
 aluminium
 2 @ 70 x 85 x 25 mm

**THE F!NK BOWLS 2000**

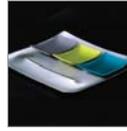
Pressed anodised aluminium
 Large: 80 x 300 x 270 mm
 Pressed anodised aluminium
 Medium: 60 x 220 x 200 mm
 Pressed anodised aluminium
 Small: 70 x 170 x 160 mm

**THE F!NK CREAM + SUGAR SET 2000**

Pressed anodised aluminium, food grade
 plastic, stainless steel
 Creamer: 120 x 50 x 80 mm
 Sugar bowl: 60 x 70 x 110 mm
 Tray: 250 x 150 mm
 Prototype
 155 x 90 x 70 mm

**THE F!NK SUSHI SET 2001**

Pressed anodised aluminium
 Sushi tray: 235 x 140mm
 Wasabi dishes: 100 x 58 mm

**Rachel Bowak
THE F!NK ANTIPASTO SET 2002**

Pressed anodised aluminium,
 stainless steel
 Platter: 25 x 340 x 300 mm;
 Condiment trays 25 x 100 x 120 mm
 Hand-formed experimental tray
 aluminium
 15 x 265 x 347 mm
 Courtesy Rachel Bowak

**Remi Verchot + Robert Foster
THE F!NK FEATURE BOWL 2002**

Rotation-moulded plastic
 200 x 340 x 300 mm
 Mould with ceramic surface
 (ACT only)

**THE F!NK SWIVEL LAMP 2003
[aka PLINK]**

Nickel-plated brass, steel and aluminium,
 silver ball, injection moulded plastic, rare
 earth magnet, 20 watt 12 volt halogen globe
 Base plate 150 x 90 mm; lighting arm 540 mm
 Discontinued
 Private collection, Canberra

**Bronwen Riddiford + Robert Foster
THE F!NK WINE CHILLER 2003**

Laser-cut pressed anodised aluminium,
 rotation-moulded plastic
 245 x 170 x 160 mm
 Puck
 3 @ 50 x 120 mm

**Robert Foster + Elizabeth Kelly
GLASS VASE 2004**

Hand-blown glass into aluminium mould
 330 x 140 x 70 mm
 Discontinued
 Private collection, Canberra
 Photos of process



Sean Booth
THE F!NK CANDELABRA 2005

Pressed stainless steel and
anodised aluminium
450 x 380 mm



Oliver Smith
THE F!NK FATWARE +TRAY 2005

Drop-forged, hard-anodised aluminium,
food-grade polyethylene,
Acetal blade: 170 mm long;
Board: 12 x 300 x 260 mm

Process display
Raw pressed aluminium 20 x 290 x 70 mm
Aluminium bar; photos of process



THE F!NK WALL LIGHT 2005

Perforated anodised aluminium, acrylic,
fluorescent tube
400 x 400 x 100 mm
Discontinued
Private collection, Canberra



THE F!NK BROOCH 2006

Pressed anodised aluminium;
stainless steel
3 @ 58 x 52 mm

Card
Red for love, purple for
bravery, silver for honour



THE F!NK STAR
(special Christmas edition 2006)

Anodised aluminium
52 x 56 mm
Discontinued
Private collection, Canberra



Bronwen Riddiford + Robert Foster
THE F!NK NECKPIECE 2007

Red leaf
Black leaf
Pressed, folded anodised aluminium,
neoprene, cast silver
2 @ 45 x 42 x 7 mm

Black and white oblong
Pressed, folded, powder-coated anodised
aluminium, neoprene, cast silver
55 x 23 x 4 mm

Charcoal and black cube
Pressed, folded, powder-coated anodised
aluminium, neoprene, cast silver
48 x 42 x 4 mm

Flat blanks
Aluminium
3 @ 85 x 46 x 1 mm

Packaging



THE F!NK STORAGE VESSELS 2007

Mr Squash
Pressed anodised aluminium,
press-formed acrylic, plastic
260 x 160 x 160 mm

Mrs Squash
Pressed anodised aluminium,
press-formed acrylic, plastic
225 x 145 x 145 mm

Junior Squash
Pressed and anodised aluminium,
press-formed acrylic, plastic
175 x 145 x 145 mm



THE F!NK POURER 2007

Prototype
Pressed anodised
aluminium, resin
360 x 80 x 190 mm



THE F!NK VAXIS VASE 2007

Pressed anodised aluminium, plastic
3 @ 200 x 170 x 90 mm

**Sean Booth****A.05 2005**

Stainless steel, 12v light
440 x 250 x 300 mm

PRODUCTION BOWL 2006

Stainless steel, anodised aluminium
Master prototype
280 x 300 x 200 mm

**Rachel Bowak****SYNAPSE 2004**

lead, mdf
4 @ 150 x 150 x 25 mm

**WAITING ON TAILINGS –
TANAMI GOLD MINE, NT 2007**

Digital print on adhesive vinyl on mild steel
500 x 500 mm
Photo: Pam Loftis

**Robert Foster****UNICORN STANDING LIGHT 2008**

Anodised aluminium, steel and acrylic
1600 x 250 x 250 mm

YES SIR, PLEASE SIR TEAPOT 2008

Stainless steel, resin
370 x 180 x 110 mm

**Elizabeth Kelly****PROTOTYPES FOR SHOT GLASS**

Pressed, coloured glass
75 x 50 x 50 mm

MAQUETTE FOR TOWER 2008

Cast, coloured glass
120 x 160 x 300 mm

**Rohan Nicol****STRETCH LIGHT 2008**

Vacuum-formed thermo plastic, anodised aluminium, 12 volt halogen ball lamp, transformer, electrical wiring, stainless wire, stainless steel springs
950 mm length

**F!NK BRACELET MK II
DEVELOPMENTAL PROTOTYPE 2008**

Anodised aluminium, stainless steel
2 @ 80 mm diameter [variable]

**Bronwen Riddiford****LOTUS LIGHT 2000**

Powder-coated mild steel, polypropylene
500 x 500 x 30 mm

Technical drawing for Lotus light

PENDANT 2000

Stainless steel, neoprene
2 @ 50 mm diameter

**Oliver Smith****ARC CHEESE KNIFE, 'GENERATION II'
SERIES 2006**

Hand-finished, cast 316 marine grade stainless steel
Cast by Hycast Metals, NSW; industrially rumbled by Mass Finish, NSW
230 x 32 x 11 mm

ARC CHEESE KNIFE 2004-06

Hand-forged silver
230 x 32 x 11 mm

**WINGS-HARLEQUIN SERVING
UTENSIL 2008**

Hand-forged anodised titanium
280 x 75 x 12 mm

WINGS-DAPPLE SERVING UTENSIL 2008

Hand-forged anodised titanium
275 x 68 x 14 mm

WINGS-NEON SERVING UTENSIL 2008

Hand-forged anodised titanium
260 x 73 x 20 mm

**Remi Verchot****WOODEN BOWL 2002**

Hand-turned laminated plywood
190 x 400 x 330 mm



This project is an initiative of curator Merryn Gates and F!NK + Co. and is supported by Craft ACT: Craft and Design Centre.

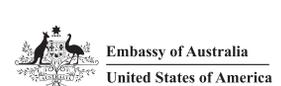
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