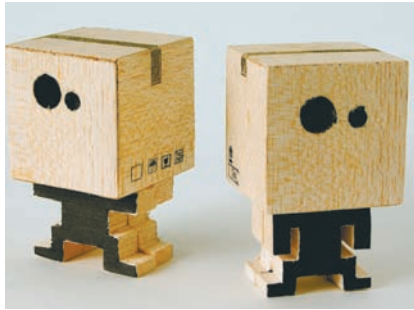


David Potts

“The best thing I like about people looking at the Stoby pole is that they find the humour in my work. They understand it”



Models for *Yours and Mine*, 2008 Photograph: Mick Bradley

unique to South Australia.* When he exhibited his *Stoby* series interstate he needed to call them ‘telegraph poles’ so that viewers would make the connection. As he took photographs he noticed that there were lots of variations on the basic model. Further research revealed that the cult of hanging or throwing shoes is a global phenomenon and may have its roots in ancient customs. Opinion is divided over whether the trend is sinister or just crazy.

Visualisation

“I ride a bike so I’m on the streets a lot and just riding and looking around... I always carry a camera because there’s something I might see... the side of a building, or something that’s different... things that people take for granted.”

Process

Sheets of ply and mdf (medium density fibre) board have an ‘industrial’ character which suits the artist’s ‘street art’ style. Cutting from flat sheets allows the artist to maintain a strong link between graphic concepts and images and the finished design. The remaining part of the sheet provided the support base. Making this work initially involved

taking a series of photographs of a Stobie pole from different angles. A line tracing was taken from one photograph and this tracing was then fine-tuned using the computer application Illustrator. A (final) full size version was printed onto a set of A3 sheets of paper. These sheets were then fixed onto a wall to compose a full size outline drawing (2400 x 1200 mm) of the Stoby Pole (for final visual and technical assessment). From this point the ‘pole’ was cut from a single piece of mdf board using a computerized router.

Realisation

“Basically all the Stoby poles originated from a stencil art type of view I’d really liked for that flat 3D look.

“I came up with the idea of the Stobie pole looking like it’s on an angle”. While standing on the floor the viewer is also ‘looking up’ to the top of the pole.’ The artist’s *Stoby Pole* motif has a number of variations to date. The original model was cut from structural ply board and has painted green edges, an ironical reference to the fact that the Stobie pole was devised because of a

diminishing source of suitable

trees. *The Hook Ups* (featuring shoes caught in the cross beams) has a companion piece in *Birds on Patrol* featuring two (South Australian) crows. A related concept *Stoby Light*, (a pole with cantilevered street lamp attached) is undergoing investigation which may involve production in moulded plastic.

* The Stobie pole is considered a South Australian design icon. It was invented by the Adelaide Electricity Supply Company design engineer James Stobie (1895 – 1953). It was patented in 1924 and is in use to the present day (2008). It is a power line pole made of two steel joists (originally two lengths of railway line) with cement in the middle. David Potts deliberately uses ‘Stoby’ for his series title.



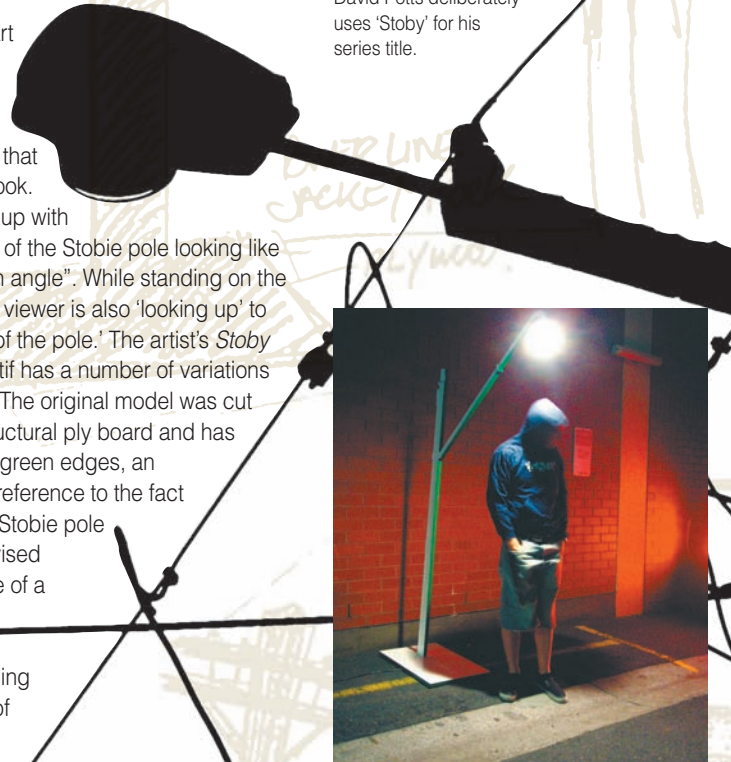
Stoby Pole: The Hook Ups and Birds on Patrol, 2007, medium density fibre (mdf), satin black paint, 1950 x 900 x 25 (vertical unit) 570 x 570 x 25 (base)

David Potts considers that his background in graphic design plays a part in being able to visualize things in a visual style that has a ‘bold contemporary feel.’ His potential client base is seen as interior designers and architects interested in pieces that can make eye-catching statements in corporate and civic environments. Works such as his *Stoby Poles* series have attracted significant interest on this basis. Parallel to the pole series, the artist has continued to explore options, many based on the possibility of using found industrial objects or recycled materials. The models for a bedside cabinet set (*Yours and Mine*) demonstrate a blend of science fiction fantasy and packing crate chic.

Inspiration

“I think I’m just pushing the boundaries for myself. I’m really trying to find something new. ... I’m really trying to find something that I enjoy that I’d like to see in any part of my house.”

Potts picked up on Stobie poles as



Stoby Light, 2007, street installation Photograph: David Potts



Stobie pole graffiti, 2007 Photograph: David Potts