


Education Kit

ROBERT BAINES: METAL


Living Treasures: Masters of Australian Craft

Robert Baines: Metal


Throughout the kit you will find references to symbols, they refer to:



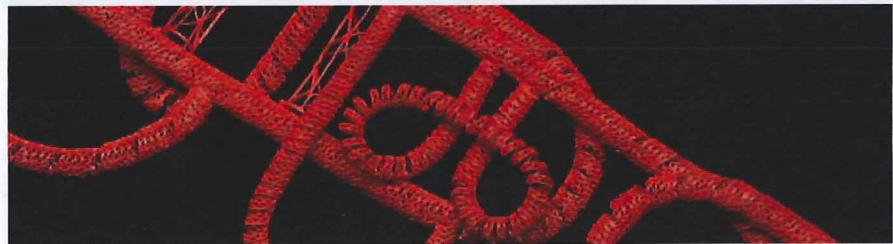
Enquire
Investigate/research
before you visit



Experience
The exhibition through
questions and activities



Extend
Your knowledge by further
research, making, creating
and designing.



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Education kit was developed by Annette Mauer, Learning Coordinator, Object: Australian Centre for Craft and Design Designer and Writer: Amy Yongsiri Photography: as credited throughout

Front cover: *Car Bracelet*, 2009-10 silver electroplate, collected objects Photo by Gary Sommerfield

Above right: *The Entropy of Red - Trumpet* 1994-95 silver, automotive laquer

Teachers Notes

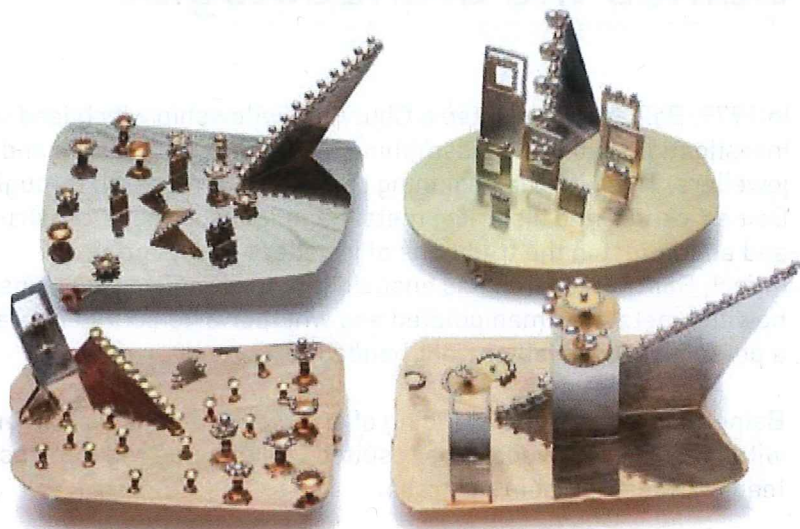
The Robert Baines education kit explores the ideas behind the work of Australia's leading goldsmith and jeweller, craftsman and teacher. The kit explores the concepts that underpin Baines' work throughout his career. This will help develop an increased understanding of the way an in depth knowledge of craft techniques and materials informs the making practice. By examining the work of Robert Baines, students can learn about jewellery traditions of the past. Some terminology that can be used by students in their discussions about the exhibition and Baines' work is included. The images in this education kit highlight pieces from the current exhibition at Object Gallery and are supported by images of artworks discussed in depth in the *Robert Baines: Metal* publication.

All the activities encourage conceptual thinking and provide opportunities for students to engage in creative and humorous possibilities in their own art and design making.

Robert Baines

With a beautifully created piece, the viewer is left in wonder. Unfortunately, if a piece is badly made, the viewer can't get past that, and the wonder is lost.

- Robert Baines



Top right: *Things Hoped For*, 1982
alloyed gold, silver, copper
Photo by Garry Sommerfield
Bottom: Robert Baines in his Melbourne Studio
Photo by Wendy Baines

Baines the archaeologist

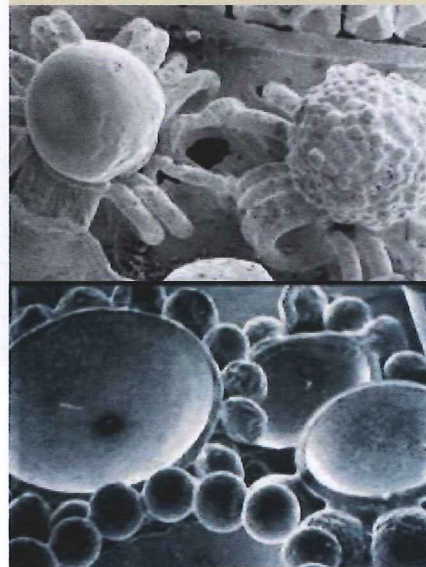
In 1979, Baines was granted a Churchill Fellowship which led to investigations into the goldsmithing techniques of Etruscan and Greek jewellers. This was the beginning of significant research throughout Baines' career into historical metal techniques in metal construction and an interest in the traditions of jewellery and its origins. In fact, Baines' research has enabled him to identify on close inspection how the metal was manipulated and whether artefacts were crafted by a person who was left or right handed!

Baines' extensive understanding of an object through experimentation with different techniques has resulted in him being regarded as a leading metallurgist in Australia.

On his many travels overseas Baines has undertaken to studying the collections from major museums around the world and has been able to recognise many fakes and forgeries (much to the dismay of the museum!) These discoveries however are not considered by Baines as a cause for disappointment. They are seen as insightful examples of mastery in combining alloys with such skill that they play with the audience allowing them to believe that the piece of jewellery is from a particular time and place in history. These discoveries have informed Baines' ideas and material explorations.



Buzz term:
METALLURGIST
A person who is trained in working with metals, particularly trained in refining and alloying metallic elements.

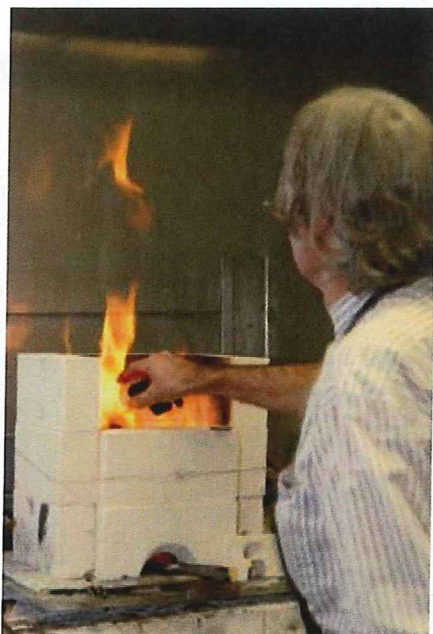


By making copies of ancient pieces, I was able to test theories of manufacture. This allowed the museums to build knowledge of the artefacts in their collection, and expanded the knowledge of authenticating art works.

- Robert Baines

Above: *Mysteries of the Antipodes - Brooches*, 1976
gold, silver, emu egg shell
Photo by Jeremy Dillon
Far Left: *Granulation and the Hearth Fireinstaller's workshop*.
Photo by Rudy Coban, courtesy of Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
Left (top to bottom)
Scanning electron photograph by Mark Wypski, courtesy of Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

Baines the archaeologist



The Adventures of Archegos was a body of work developed between 1981-1991 and included badges made from not only gold, silver, wire and granulations but also found objects such as computer parts. The found objects introduced an intense red to his palette that Baines has used in many other subsequent works. *The Adventure of Archegos* signalled his interest in combining high and low culture to create a precious whole. In the catalogue photographs of the works are accompanied by images ranging from Mantegna's *Crucifixion* to an image of an American Civil War canon. They provide each work with a context and a story.

Buzz terms:

GRANULATION

Small or minute balls/grains of precious metals used to enrich the texture of objects and/or conceal joins. These 'granules' are fused to the metal through their molecules and creates a strong join.

ALLOY

A mixture that is made up of one or more metals or a metal combined with non-metallic substances.



Above: Robert Baines working at the Research Workshop and Seminar *Granulation and the Hearth Fire* workshop Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
 Right: *Adventures of the Archegos*, 1992 exhibition catalogue

Find images of jewellery using the granulation technique. Investigate how different cultural traditions have used this technique. Are there any similarities or differences?

Watch the video on Robert Baines in the exhibition or visit www.object.com.au/watch

Design and make a piece of jewellery from pieces of discarded jewellery. Write a story to give the piece a context and find an image to support the fiction.

Cabinet of Curiosities (Schatzkammer)

Mementoes of Adventures

In Baines' work, *Travel*, the theme of a journey is explored. Small precious objects have always journeyed, sometimes over great distances. Even those which have lain undisturbed in gravesites for centuries travel to far distant places once they have been discovered, enticing visitors from other times and places to galleries.

In *Travel* small trinkets and talismans are arranged on a map suggesting not only physical journeys but those we take in our minds – the build up and scattering of memories and experiences.

There is particular emphasis on the emotional and psychological thoughts and feelings that a traveller experiences when they are in an unfamiliar place.

Top right: *Travel*, 1989
 Fine gold, 920, 750 alloyed coloured gold, fine silver, 925 silver, copper, bronze, enamel
 Photo by Enzo Sanelli



Buzz term:
SCHWARTZERKAMER

Schwartzerkamer or treasure room became popular during the Renaissance and contained precious artefacts and memorabilia, works of human ingenuity and exotic scientific specimens.

Many objects from treasure rooms told stories from past and present, from politics and modern life. These are thought to be the foundation of the modern museum.

Human beings are drawn to complexity. Repetition is very important to the human psyche. It draws the viewer in. Such artefacts can then have the power to transcend the human condition and take the viewer somewhere else.

- Robert Baines



Find some souvenirs from a journey you have made. It could be an overseas trip or even be a trip to a holiday house or the local corner shop. Write about what these souvenirs represent to you and what types of images they conjure up in your mind about that trip. You may like to try and capture that feeling again by taking a photograph based on that memory.



Select a series of works on display in the exhibition. Imagine the type of journey that would be undertaken to acquire these types of souvenirs. Closely observe the works and see whether there are any hints or clues that might refer to a specific geographic location.



Create your own souvenir based on a journey that you never made.

Refer to the artworks of Joseph Cornell. Cornell often created artworks in boxes using found materials and imagery to suggest voyages across the world when in fact he did not leave the country. You may like to begin by researching places and collecting source material from the internet and/or travel magazines and publications.

Cabinet of Curiosities (Schatzkammer)

Histories with Evidence

Is it a sin to fake the past? How can we safeguard our cultural history from sabotage?

- Robert Baines



Consider the piece titled *A Gift of the Taliban, Jewellery Panure*. It plays with the idea of creating a narrative around an artefact. The story is a plausible truth based around the story of the Taliban presenting this piece to Laura Bush. While this didn't really occur, Baines expertly crafts the pieces as evidence for a constructed story.

Using the traditions of Middle Eastern jewellery and juxtaposing them with a pink Cadillac Baines encourages us to believe this piece of historical deceit. The details in the subtle incorporation of symbols and imagery triggers a series of questions about whether this is actually true.

The truth is more important than the facts.

- Frank Lloyd Wright

Above: *A Gift of the Taliban, Jewellery Panure*, 2002-2003
silver-gilt, photographs, model car, case
Photo by Garry Sommerfield



Create an artefact to support a fictitious story that could sit in your Cabinet of Curiosities (Schatzkammer/Wunderkammer). Research a story that has had significant coverage in the media. It can be either a news item or one from popular culture. There may be theories behind the why a particular event occurred or you may like to write your own. Create a graphic page on which this artefact can be displayed. The graphic page may include words from the article and the story which makes viewer believe that the artefact is true evidence.



Investigate the use of a cabinet of curiosity in the past and the types of treasured objects that would have been in them.



Investigate the artworks of Robert Baines and select one that tells a story. What story do you think Baines is trying to communicate?

Cabinet of Curiosities (Schatzkammer)

The Official History... of the Iced Vovo



Just like the game Chinese whispers, through time stories and histories can be misinterpreted.

Baines extended this idea in his work. From a postcard image, Baines reconstructs the history of the iced vovo by using the circular forms as a basis.

There are a lot of different genres I work in – some are directly related to the history and the reinterpreting of history, playing with history and the historical artifact, authenticating the historical artifact. That's a major part of my research.

- Robert Baines

There are many mistakes that fakers make and the first is not having access to the original from which the copy is to be made. Copiers through the ages have been disadvantaged by relying on a pictorial image which has been lithographed, faxed or even photographed, lacking in any measurement, scale and material description.

The group of artefacts in this series commences with a postcard purchased from the bookshop of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. It is of a beautiful 11th century Islamic gold armlet. The postcard appears to be the primary reference for a copy made by a goldsmith; but it seems that the copier did not have access to the back of the postcard which discloses the measurements.

Further interpretations of designs followed and we see new histories evolve where an Islamic armlet became an armband, bracelets, rings, hair clip and buttons.

Perhaps the design of the marshmallow biscuit was the result of a series of misinterpretations of an 11th century armlet?



Clockwise from left:
 Armlet Copy Iran (gurgan), circa 11th Century, 2009-2010, silver-gilt.
 Amuletic finger-ring, circa 12th - 15th century, 2010, silver paint.
 Hair-clasp, circa 1970s, silver, plastic, paint.
 Photos by Jeremy Dillon

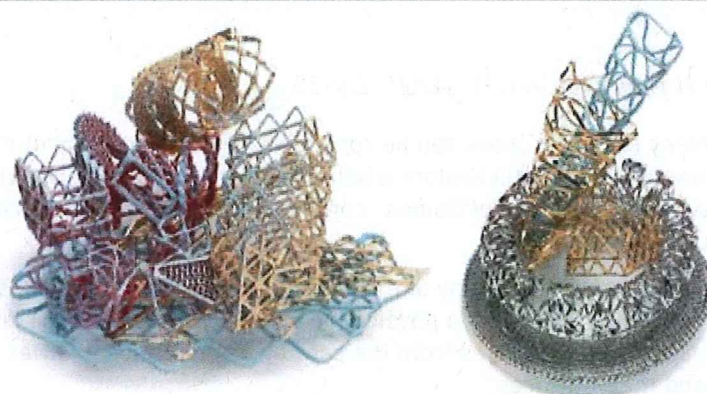
Which is the real and which is the fake Iced Vovo?

Cabinet of Curiosities (Schatzkammer)

The Official History... of the compact disc (CD)

Robert Baines suggests the evolution of the CD through a series of brooches with an unexpected lineage. All are crafted with careful consideration and study into the techniques of the time. Each form creates wonder in the viewer through its complexity and poses the question... 'what if?'

All circular in shape, each brooch suggests a different influence on the CD.



The golden disc suggest the influence from the goldsmiths of the 15th century with the technique of granulation - a link to classical times.

The series of brooches from the *Giraffe Ménagerie* circa, 1620 are playful in their notion of time. While Baines constructed them in 2010, the title refers to the 1620s in Holland and uses motifs of

animals in their natural formation on a circular disc.

The *Hey True Blue* brooches are inspired by the lines of a John Williamson song 'Are you really disappearing, Just another dying race, Hey True Blue'.

Clockwise from top:
hey True Blue - Brooches, 2010
 silver, powdercoat, electroplate, paint
Disc, circa 4th century BC Greek, 2008
 Gold, enamel
Brooch Giraffe ménagerie circa. 1620
 Flemish, 2010
 silver
Gold disc with remnant foil, granulation and enamel.
 Greek.
 Photos by Jeremy Dillon

Investigate the evolution of a designed object. You can consider items including portable music players, television and computers. Collect images of these items through time and consider the form and shape of the objects. Create a timeline of images to show their evolution.

What techniques does Baines use to make you feel that a piece of jewellery is genuine? Select a piece from the exhibition and record how motifs and symbols are used, the technique, the types of lines and shapes and even the title and how that contributes to you believing that the work is from a specific time.

Find a postcard of an object from the past. Recreate the object by carefully observing the lines, shapes, textures, creation techniques. Select a appropriate media to recreate the object. Can you tell the difference?

Cabinet of Curiosities (Schatzkammer)

Drinking with your eyes

Many of Baines' work can be considered sculpture on an intimate or miniature scale. While small and often wearable, they still explore a balance between the material and the space inside and around it. In works such as *Tea and Coffee Set* Baines' continues to draw from the vocabulary of traditional metal working techniques in unexpected ways.

The tea set offers many of the sculptural qualities that are also in the jewellery pieces. There is a visual lightness, as well as, a physical one reminiscent of antique jewellery. The lines that are created by the intricate patterns and textures from the careful manipulation of silver creates a focus on the form of each of the objects and their surfaces.

In this work, the functionality of each of the objects, the tea and coffee pots, cups and tray, is lost giving way to a poetic expression of a vessel.



Above from top to bottom:
Tea and Coffee Set, 2009 - 2010
 silver without powdercoat
 Photo by Jeremy Dillon
 Sketches for *Waikato tea and Coffee Set*, 1995,
 Photo by Gary Sommerfield
 Left: *Tea and Coffee Set*, 2009 - 2010
 silver with red powdercoat

The things that people collect are great insights into the type of people they are- their interests and what they value in an object.

Do you know a collector?

What do they collect and how does it reveal about their personality?

Select and draw a section of the *Tea and Coffee Set*. Be sure to capture the delicate lines and different quality of the lines in your drawing. You could try a continuous line drawing

Investigate the ideas behind the Michael Graves *Tea Kettle* which was manufactured by Alessi.

http://www.alessi.com/oggetti/progetti/index_en.html

<http://www.fastcompany.com/design/2009/featured-story-alberto-alessi>

Baines' Colour Interventions



Inspired by a Claes Oldenburg quote about the colour red and a piece of graffiti on the back of a toilet in an art school stating 'if it doesn't work, make it bigger, if it still doesn't work, make it red', Baines uses this colour to 'intervene' or play with a work.

The significance is an underlying theme in these works. As Baines states, 'Red is used to convey emotion – it can be love, affection, but it can also be anger and aggression. It can be a warning. This colour is able to convey multiple meanings as suggested by the Oldenburg quote.

Baines also uses the colour red to play with how an object is understood when it is replicated. In the piece *Intervention of Red-Bracelet*, the juxtaposition of red by the recycled Coke cans with the traditional intricacies of metalwork seem to question which period in time this technique belongs.

Red is redder than green, it is meaner than yellow, it is bloodier than black.

- Claes Oldenburg



Clockwise from top left:
Whiter than Red - Brooch, 2006
 silver-gilt, powdercoat
 Photo by Gary Sommerfield
Intervention of Red - Bracelet, 1995,
 silver-gilt, enamel Coke can
 Photo by Gary Sommerfield
Redder than Green - Necklace, 2009
 silver-gilt, powdercoat, paint, electroplate
 Photo by Jeremy Dillon
Intervention of Red - Bracelet, 2003
 silver-gilt, powdercoat
 Photo by Gary Sommerfield
Meaner than Yellow - Brooch (detail), 2008
 silver, powder coat, electroplate, paint
 Photo by Jeremy Dillon



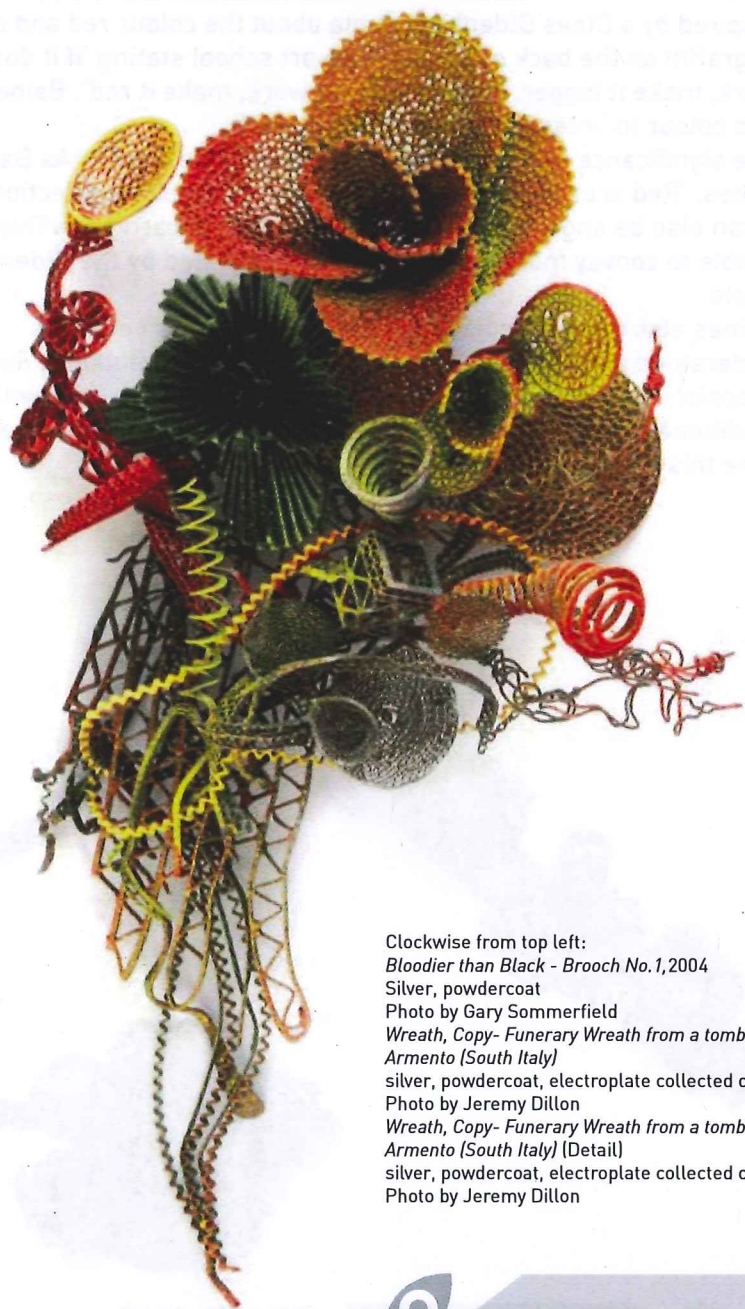
Referring to the Claes Oldenburg quote, what are some of the meanings associated with the colours green, yellow and black? Try and explain this quote to a friend.



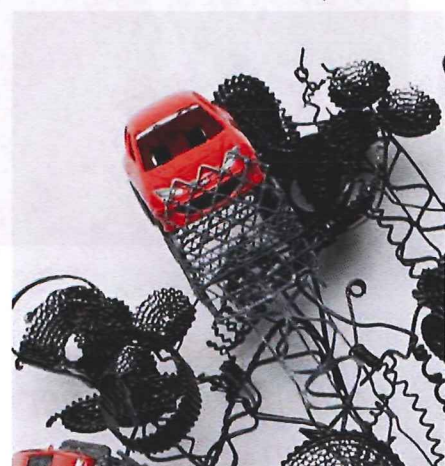
Watch the TED talk about Charles and Ray Eames. Is the design process so different from the evolution of an object?

http://www.ted.com/talks/the_design_genius_of_charles_and_ray_eames.html

Colour Interventions



Clockwise from top left:
Bloodier than Black - Brooch No.1, 2004
 Silver, powdercoat
 Photo by Gary Sommerfield
Wreath, Copy- Funerary Wreath from a tomb in Armento (South Italy)
 silver, powdercoat, electroplate collected object
 Photo by Jeremy Dillon
Wreath, Copy- Funerary Wreath from a tomb in Armento (South Italy) (Detail)
 silver, powdercoat, electroplate collected object
 Photo by Jeremy Dillon



I know what conservators look for, what curators look for, what material scientists look for in authenticating a piece. That's a knowledge base for me to build jewellery pieces that fit all those criteria for authentication.

- Robert Baines

Select a work from the exhibition that uses found objects and/or colour. Using this as a guide, design your own jewellery item/sculptural piece to fit in as part of the series. What do you think Baines would say about replicating his work to create a fictitious piece for the exhibition collection?

Baines has deliberately chosen the process of powdercoating to ensure that color can be used in these peices without losing the details of the metalwork.

Play with this idea by using wire to create a sculpture. Research some meanings of different colours (you may like to find another artist's quote on colour) and spray paint an element of the sculpture in a particular colour or mix a few colours to convey your idea.