



SOFT SCULPTURE

Lucina Ward

■ national gallery of **australia**



Foreword

It is a great pleasure to present such an interesting array of sculptures to the public in this strikingly original exhibition. From Surrealist experiments with felt and fur to contemporary artists using foam-stuffed fabrics and plastic shopping bags, soft sculpture is an intriguing development in modern art. Artists replaced traditional techniques—expensive cast bronze and carved stone and wood—instead employing cheap domestic and industrial materials. The ambiguities of ‘softness’ can be seen here in many guises.

The National Gallery of Australia’s collection boasts many intriguing soft sculptures, dating from 1920 to the twenty-first century, and made in Europe, America, Australia and Asia. Several works have rarely been displayed before. Others are great favourites, and may change as we see them in a new context. This publication, and the website for *Soft sculpture* (www.nga.gov.au/softsculpture) will ensure the works reach new audiences. The Gallery’s commitment to the medium of sculpture is evident in this project.

My thanks go to the directors and staff of the Art Gallery of New South Wales and the National Gallery of Victoria, to the artists and the private collectors, all of whom have helped by lending their works. We extend our gratitude to our Exhibition Partners, ‘the apARTments at NewActon’, a joint venture between Canberra developers Molonglo Group and Macquarie Group. Along with their support of our exhibition, they are presenting an innovative program of events at NewActon, including *Spooky action at a distance*. We also acknowledge the support of our Sponsors Circle: ZOO, WIN TV, The Canberra Times, Diamant Hotel, Threesides Marketing and Gallagher Wines, whose contribution and support of the National Gallery of Australia is greatly appreciated. Congratulations to the curator of *Soft sculpture*, Lucina Ward, and my thanks to everybody at the Gallery who has contributed to this exciting project.



Ron Radford AM
Director, National Gallery of Australia

Claes Oldenburg

Ice bag—scale B 1971

plastic sheet, synthetic fabric,
electric motor



SOFT sculpture

modernity, minimalism and the body

Soft sculpture surveys the use of non-traditional art materials over a period of almost nine decades—from Man Ray’s enigmatic object made in 1920 (p 8), through the challenges of the sixties and seventies, to the proliferation of soft sculpture in the 1990s and early years of the new millennium. Inspired by organic and inorganic forms, new materials and synthetic substances, sculpture has been transformed.

Richard Serra

Prop 1968

lead

When American artist Richard Serra began to work with lead in the 1960s, he famously described his process: ‘I wrote down a list of transitive verbs—to split, to splash, to spread, to roll, to heap ... —and applied the infinitives ...’¹ He made *Splashing*, his first lead ‘casting’, in 1968, spilling molten lead along the junction where the floor meets the wall. This work, like that of many of Serra’s contemporaries, draws attention to the implicit nature of materials, giving priority to process over product. Eva Hesse similarly exploited latex’s visceral, painterly qualities, while Robert Morris ‘sculpted’ with gravity. By making works using liquid substances or pliant materials—forms that are persistent rather than rigid or permanent, and objects that are soft to the touch or evoke the visceral qualities of the body—these artists challenged the conditions of sculpture. As critic Douglas Crimp points out, the temporary notion of Serra’s approach is the opposite of what’s expected of traditional sculpture generally, and monuments in particular.²

The 1960s saw a fundamental shift in thinking about sculpture. Unlike the parallel case of painting, these changes are now comparatively little discussed. Anti-form as a tendency, and soft sculpture as a continuing development in art, have received less attention still. Historically, sculpture meant carved wood or stone, or bronze cast from clay or wax models. In the early twentieth century, artists began to make constructions, incorporate found objects, and designate everyday items as art. Materials were increasingly diverse after the development of mass-produced synthetic polymer products in the 1950s. The works artists produced do the sorts of things that sculpture really ought not to do. Andy Warhol, for example, exhibited a room of floating helium-filled aluminium-foil pillows³; Claes Oldenburg set up shop selling food and clothing made of plaster; Lynda Benglis strutted her stuff flinging polyurethane foam in the manner of Jackson Pollock; while Joseph Beuys developed a mythology around his use of fat and felt, iron and copper. Sculpture went from being an exclusively material practice, to encompassing a much wider range of activity: sculpture could be a three-dimensional ‘drawing’ in welded metal, but also an intervention in the landscape, an action in a warehouse, a film or performance, or a set of instructions in a box.



Joseph Beuys
Stripes from the house of the shaman 1964–72 1980
 felt, wood, coats, animal skin, rubber tube, pamphlets, copper, quartz and ground minerals, pigments

The credo of 'truth to materials' held that neither tinted marble statues parading as human flesh, nor the pictorial illusionism of oil paint, had any place in modern art. The condition of flatness is unique to painting. According to Clement Greenberg's ideas about Modernism, painting sought to rid itself of non-essential elements and become more 'pure'. It became more about the condition of paint on a surface.⁴ The denial of 'the illusion of the three-dimension[all]' is paralleled by the repudiation of traditional expectations of sculpture: durability, monumentality and the artist's control of materials. The distinction in the plastic arts between painting's appeal to the eye, and sculpture's references to other bodily senses, is self-evident when dealing with figurative sculpture. But as sculpture became increasingly abstract, shape and materials were emphasised. Colour, previously considered indulgent or overly sensuous in sculpture, also became a key element.

Soft sculpture explores these ideas, and their subsequent impact, via wall works and freestanding sculpture, objects housed in vitrines, and environments which the viewer enters. Some works have installation instructions, or specific spaces built for them, others interrupt the idea that they should be shown anywhere in particular. Richard Serra's *Prop* 1968 (p 4)—like the mixed-media works by Jim Dine, Colin Lanceley and Giselle Antmann, or Angela de la Cruz's *Loose fit (blue)* 2002—occupies the wall but also extends into the viewer's space beyond the place expected of a painting. It confounds distinctions between the two disciplines. Other works, such as those by Les Kossatz (p 11), Ivan Durrant (p 7), Ricky Swallow (inside back cover) and Nell (title page), counter the principle of sculptural solidity by sinking or melting



into the floor, oozing onto a plinth or dripping from the ceiling. The changing nature of Eva Hesse's elegiac, hybrid works or the extraordinary potency of Joseph Beuys' *Stripes from the house of the shaman* 1964–72 1980 have resonances for other installations. Lauren Berkowitz's oeuvre demonstrates the continuing importance of anti-form and minimalist tendencies in the 1990s. Annette Messenger's use of body and ritual, and the consistency of her symbolism, overlaps with Beuys.

Key themes recur in soft sculpture. Works incline to anthropomorphism, and play with the idea that a work of art can come to life, or might somehow physically interact with the viewer. We could—were it allowed—tweak the nipple on *Le Surréalisme en 1947* or lounge in Ewa Pachucka's jute and hemp landscape (p 16), or rearrange Christopher Langton's vinyl pills (cover). Marcel Duchamp and the tradition of the readymade⁵ are omnipresent in soft sculpture, via a range of mixed-media works that are a constant reminder of the everyday. Man Ray wraps a sewing machine (so we are told) in felt and ties it with string, reprising the poet Lautréamont's fabled chance encounter (p 8).⁶ Meret Oppenheim (p 9) and John Armstrong each manage some extraordinary juxtapositions—fur and beer, fur and chains—while Rosalie Gascoigne's inventive assemblage, *Feathered fence* 1979, evokes landscape, contrasting the delicate softness of feathers with harsh wire netting. Serra's *Prop* is made in lead. Michelle Stuart's *Breezy Point, New York* 1976 is created with earth, rag paper and muslin. Mikala Dwyer uses polystyrene and heat-shrunk plastic. As audiences we are delighted and astounded by the material inventiveness of soft sculpture and the experimental nature of art practice.

Marcel Duchamp

Please touch 1947

foam and rubber on velvet on cardboard, printed book

Ivan Durrant

245-T 1980

oil and enamel varnish on synthetic polymer resin, perspex, composition board

Man Ray
The enigma of Isidore
Ducasse 1920/1971
 object wrapped in felt and string



Edgar Degas
Little dancer aged fourteen
 1878–81
 (not in exhibition)

I mean soft in the literal sense of easily yielding to physical pressure. A soft thing can be poked, molded, squeezed, scrunched. In a word, its surface is elastic, and its densities are scandalously rearrangeable.

Max Kozloff 1967⁷

If modern sculpture begins with Auguste Rodin, then his work also marks a turning point for ideas about the role of the sculptor. Rodin almost single-handedly reinvented the discipline, imbuing sculpture with new emotion. He insisted that a monument need not be structured hierarchically nor a figure be complete: a fragment of a body could convey gesture, and was even sometimes more effective at relaying emotional states than a complete figure. In order to more carefully consider nuances of gesture and expressions, when working on his *St John the Baptist preaching* c1880 he made separate studies of the head, torso and limbs—a way of working that became part of his creative process from this point forward. Fragmentation, viscera and individual peculiarities, as opposed to idealised form, would also become key considerations for artists in the 1980s and 90s.

The late nineteenth-century sculptor was no longer content to simply manufacture decorative architectural elements nor to produce bombastic, narrative monuments for the state. Rather, the sculptor claimed a role for the expression of universal concerns—from an art of form, sculpture becomes an art of emotion. Another figure also challenged traditional conceptions: Edgar Degas' *Little dancer aged fourteen* 1878–81 caused a sensation at the Impressionist exhibition of 1881. Critics objected



to the naturalism of the figure, its complete lack of idealism and absence of narrative. Three-quarter life-size, made of wax tinted to the colour of skin, dressed in a wig of real hair tied with a real ribbon and wearing a real tutu and ballet shoes, Degas' dancer is a statue infused with modernity. In the twentieth century the work has been discussed as a precursor to Cubism and Surrealism, as well as Pop art and *Arte Povera*.

As sculpture relinquished many of the religious, commemorative, instructive and decorative functions of previous centuries, it also became almost relentlessly experimental. In the early twentieth century, the Cubists incorporated textiles, wallpaper, fragments of wood and other materials into their paintings, opening the way to abstraction. Dada broke radically with modes of fine art and traditional aesthetics, to become manifesto, spectacle, collage, photomontage, assemblage and whole environments. Man Ray's *The enigma of Isidore Ducasse* 1920 was originally assembled to provide an unusual subject for a photograph, but was subsequently issued in an edition, contesting assumptions about uniqueness. If Dada passed the baton to the Surrealists, many of its intentions remained the same, especially the desire to confront and confound. Salvador Dalí, in one of his most famous paintings, *The persistence of memory* 1931, captures the riddles of dreams in an illusionistic, quasi-academic style; the melted watches would later appear in three-dimensional form. Meret Oppenheim's objects in fur, such as *Squirrel* 1969, and Hans Bellmer's dolls, such as *The half doll* 1971, encapsulate the eroticism and implicit violence of Surrealism.⁸



Hans Bellmer
The half doll 1971
wood, paint and assemblage

Meret Oppenheim
Squirrel 1969
fur, glass, plastic foam

Salvador Dalí
The persistence of memory
1931
(not in exhibition)



Claes Oldenburg
Soft alphabet 1978
 cloth, sand, wood, stencil

Colin Lanceley
Altar 1967
 painted wood, synthetic
 polymer paint on canvas



Claes Oldenburg 1965⁹

I want the object to have its own existence.

Turning things upside-down or changing 'hard' into 'soft' defies gravity and liberates things from the stress that people exert upon them. The weight is shifted, and the weightiness that people attribute to material things is undermined. The object receives a neutral significance and can proceed to lead its own life.

Cossje van Bruggen 1966¹⁰

Claes Oldenburg is central to any discussion of soft sculpture. His renditions of familiar items—in paint-covered plaster, canvas, fabrics, vinyl or fake fur filled with kapok or foam rubber—are wry comments on the surprising ordinariness of everyday life. He made oversized hamburgers, ice-creams and pieces of cake, drooping light switches, a collapsible drum-set and giant motorised ice bags—even a whole bedroom ensemble. His objects are often issued in editions, thus echoing the mass production of the real world items. Many of the objects sag, bulge or appear distinctly relaxed; often they look as if they're just having a little rest. *Ice bag-scale B* 1971 (p 2) actually moves, although slowly. Its quiet 'breathing', and its twists and turns, aren't always immediately apparent. Therefore the oversized object's uncanny ability to follow the viewer around the room is doubly disconcerting. The alphabet is another of the artist's fascinations, but Oldenburg's letters are not static, functional identities for conveying an idea on a page. Rather they are cute, slightly wicked-looking creatures that need to be kept in a box. Oldenburg draws attention to aspects that should be self-evident: the differences between the



letters, the flatness of the M and the simplicity of the I, the whereabouts of the E and the F: *Soft alphabet* 1978 captures the acute observation and whimsy of Oldenburg's oeuvre.

The proliferation of television and other forms of mass media made aspects of popular culture, American in particular, increasingly the subject of art. Pop art methods were adopted—or arrived at by independent routes—by artists all over the Western world. By incorporating three-dimensional objects into their paintings, by constructing assemblages that resemble soft furniture items, artists such as Oldenburg, Jim Dine, John Armstrong, Colin Lanceley, Les Kossatz and Barry Flanagan engineer a clash between art and everyday objects. Dine's *An animal* 1961 combines an old fur coat with the lush, painterly and turbulent surface of an Abstract Expressionist canvas. The coat, spread flat, resembles a pelt or rug, but Dine goes one step further, to remind us that it was once a live being, inscribing his work 'An animal'. Lanceley's moulds and machine dies become a tangle of alien lifeforms, while Kossatz's sheep struggles against a session of psychoanalysis. The juxtaposition of objects, the relationship between painted and textured surfaces, the use of linguistic and other symbols, produce some delightful and startling results.

Les Kossatz

Sheep on a couch 1972–73
sheep skin, stainless steel,
dyed leather



Robert Morris
Untitled 1969
felt

Giselle Antmann
Genetic glimpse 1978
synthetic polymer paint on
canvas, sisal, nylon, pine



While in painting the ‘modernist reduction’ has thrown emphasis on the flatness and shape of the picture-surface, it has left sculpture as three-dimensional as it was before. This additional dimension of physical existence is vitally important—not because it allows sculpture to continue to suggest recognisable images, or gives it a large range of formal possibilities—but because the three-dimensionality of sculpture corresponds to the phenomenological framework in which we exist, move, perceive, experience, and communicate with others. The corporeality of sculpture, even at its most abstract, and our own corporeality, are the same.

Michael Fried 1963¹¹

Fried’s writing was prompted by Anthony Caro’s welded steel works. But he raises interesting issues about sculptural practice generally, and soft sculpture in particular. The contrasts between Caro’s hard structures and Robert Morris’s anti-form—their divergent critical positions on what sculpture should be—received a great deal of attention in the late 1960s. For many people these artists represented the two paths of modern sculpture at the time.¹² Initially, Morris’s use of felt was opportunistic (he had access to large quantities of it), but it became his preferred medium: its capacity to adapt to humidity, weight or random mishap, provided him

with an ideal substance in which to explore three dimensions. The 'passing form'¹³ of Morris's untitled work of 1969 is typical of his working methods, which use gravity instead of the sculptor's conventional tools.

... sculpture in general is an incurably alert production, stressing fixity, endurance, and power—all that man himself cannot maintain except in intermittent defiance of gravity. On the other hand, a soft sculpture, in various propositions, might suggest fatigue, deterioration or inertia. It mimes a kind of surrender to the natural condition that pulls bodies down.

Max Kozloff 1967¹⁴

Eva Hesse, Robert Rauschenberg and Joseph Beuys emphasise persistent over permanent forms—producing works with a certain unfixed quality, or which incorporate the memory of other forms. The delicate construction of Rauschenberg's silken *Reef (Jammer)* 1976 sets up a tension between materials and gravity. Not only is silk an unexpected medium for sculpture—its lack of physical mass being emphasised by the surrounding air—but Rauschenberg also incorporates the viewer into the work: their physical presence influences the shape of the sculpture. To hang a work of art, whether against a wall or suspended from the ceiling, tends to draw attention to its material properties and often has a very direct relationship to the viewer's body. Giselle Antmann's *Genetic glimpse* 1978 is a lively melange of canvas, sisal and netting but its tangle of rope knots overlays the pretty-little-girl colours with a sinister element. The coats in Joseph Beuys' *Stripes from the house of the shaman* 1964–72 (p 6) retain the form of their wearer, and like his other materials are emotionally and symbolically charged—by notions of alchemy, by history, by the artist's own psyche. As viewers of such sculptures we no longer respond to visual imagery as portrayed three-dimensionally, but rather we sense it empathically—'feeling in it some vestigial abstract bodiliness'.¹⁵

Clement Greenberg felt that sculpture had been handicapped by its closeness to the figurative, particularly to the human form. Clay, plaster and other traditional materials approximate the physicality of the human body, whereas paint retains its own distinctness. Traditional sculpture for Greenberg was too literal and too immediate, but in the new sculpture—which had appropriated ideas from modernist painting—he found a 'new concern for visual image in place of the physical illusion of bodily presence'.¹⁶ The materials used by Caro, David Smith and later Minimalists had their own distinctive, typically industrial properties. Their radical abstraction, geometry and apparent lack of content were regarded as an absolute split from figurative sculpture. For artists such as Donald Judd, Carl Andre and others, however, the modular nature of industrial forms—scaled for ease of use and portability by the average worker—frequently meant that the dimensions of resultant works of art, or the negative spaces between components, retained a proportional relationship to the viewer's body.



Eva Hesse
Contingent 1969
 cheesecloth, latex, fiberglass

In greatest abundance are materials which are soft, pliable, and with technological virtuosity these are used in a myriad of forms. Why is SOFT so all persuasive in the transitional world of art? Is this a reaction to the last decade when we experienced in the arts movements such as hard edge geometric painting, hard structural materials for primary sculpture? Is this a reaction to the Brutalist school of architecture which surrounds us?

Mildred Constantine 1979¹⁷

Just as Rodin represents a break in nineteenth-century sculpture, so too the introduction of pliable, organic and petroleum-based substances has had a remarkable impact on art of the last 60 years. The idea of chance as a tool and an element of creation, or as forming part of the artist's decision-making process, has dramatic implications when working with fluid or semi-liquid substances. Each of the components of *Contingent* 1969—one of Eva Hesse's last major works before her death at the age of 34—is a large rectangular stretch of latex-covered cheesecloth, embedded at each end in a translucent field of fiberglass.



Hesse was attracted to the liquidity, responsiveness and neutrality of latex, even while expressing misgivings about the material's deterioration over time. In *Contingent*, and throughout her oeuvre, latex, combined with the less yielding fibreglass, or polyester resin, sets up a distinct tension between rigidity and malleability, continuity and change. Using equally diverse substances, other artists such as Lynda Benglis or Richard Van Buren actively exploit the 'performative' aspect in their work—pouring, spilling or flinging their materials—making sculptures that embrace seemingly accidental forms.

Perhaps I am the bones of the body of sculpture, and perhaps Richard Serra is the muscle, but Eva Hesse is the brain and nervous system extending far into the future.

Carl Andre 1996¹⁸

As noted by critics Michael Fried, Rosalind Kraus, Lucy Lippard and others, many of the debates about sculpture became polarised in the mid 1960s, between objectivity and a new subjectivity. There was also a radical re-gendering of sculpture and sculptural studies—still evident in contemporary practice. *Eccentric abstraction*, an exhibition organised by Lippard for Fischbach Gallery, New York in 1966, brought together new work by Hesse, Louise Bourgeois, Bruce Naumann, Keith Sonnier and others, signalling an alternative mode of working to 'dead-set' Minimalism. The materials used—leather, rubber, fibreglass, vinyl, polythene—were pliant, somewhat reflective and at times fetish-like, as Richard Williams points out.¹⁹ Bourgeois' organic, often sexually-explicit bodily forms, and the apparently biographical aspects of both her and Hesse's work, remain highly influential. Lippard noted that the works in *Eccentric abstraction* shared common ground with Minimalism, but also had some of Pop's perversity, and a fundamentally Surrealist concern with the 'reconciliation of distant realities'.²⁰



Lynda Benglis
Untitled (Polly's pie II) 1968
pigmented polyurethane
foam

Louise Bourgeois
The destruction of the father
1974
(not in exhibition)



Ewa Pachucka
Landscape and bodies 1972
jute, hemp, wire

It took the feminist art movement, and the re-evaluation of categories of fine art in the late 1960s and early 1970s, for textile traditions such as weaving and knitting to be considered appropriate vehicles for sculpture. Magdalena Abakanowicz's giant three-dimensional woven *Abakan Brunne* c 1970 proclaims the relevance and physicality of the act of making. The colours, texture and shape of the work recall elements of the natural world—large hanging cocoons, bark and mud-encrusted structures—and perhaps even geological time. Likewise, the sheer monumentality of Ewa Pachucka's project, the way in which her figures seem to emerge from their surrounds, suggest grand ideals of humans living in harmony with the environment. Knots, stitching and other evidence of the artist's hand punctuate the overall quality of the work. On a much smaller scale, Jenny Christmann's *20 woollen books* 1977–78 have pages but no images or text, leaving viewers free to inscribe their own stories on the bands of colour.



The introduction of new forms of art in the 1960s—artists books, multiples²¹ and hybrid portfolios—expresses a theoretical standpoint: the desire to democratise art, to break the hierarchy of genres, and for avant-garde artists to reach beyond specialist audiences. From 1965, editioned works became an intrinsic part of Joseph Beuys' practice. These multiples mark his opposition to easel painting and conventional sculpture, while also enabling distribution of his work to a broader public. Some of his multiples are relics from performances or actions, others are elaborately planned objects with a complex genesis in earlier works. For this exhibition, two examples, *Ja, ja, ja, ja, ja, nee, nee, nee, nee, nee* 1969 and *Noiseless blackboard eraser* 1974, are brought together with multiples by Claes Oldenburg, John Chamberlain, Rosemarie Trockel and others. Displayed within a boutique-like space, alongside other objects and small-scale sculpture, they celebrate elements of Surrealism, Pop and mass culture.

Boxes and cases can be metaphors for absence and loss, implying a sense of narrative or progression, the act of discovery or even concealing something forbidden. Marilyn Levine's Funk ceramics are characterised by an illusion of reality and an attention to detail. Her suitcases—*Johnston satchel* 1975 (p 18) is stained and partially glazed ceramic, modelled by hand—achieve a startling facsimile of soft leather almost indistinguishable from the real thing. Hilary Archer's combine object, *Tubeseed (A)* 1972 (p18), brings together a rubber inner tube, acrylic and metal fittings. Sandwiched but visible between the two clear sheets, the rubber tube is wound in the overall shape of a seed or bean, and seems to push out of its 'shell'. Lucas Samaras's pin-and stone-encrusted box (p19) incorporates a similar sense of anticipation: the object invites touch but, like a Venus-fly trap or some poisonous insect, we know we should be wary. Tony Coleing's boxes—stamped 'produce of

Jenny Christmann
20 woollen books 1977–78
 wool and acrylic



Marilyn Levine

Johnston satchel 1975
stoneware

Hilary Archer

Tubeseed (A) 1972
synthetic polymer, moulded
rubber tube, steel nuts and
bolts

Australia, export only, danger / poison, C.O.D'—contain mock pieces of radioactive uranium oxide made of polystyrene foam and metallic glitter. His objects adopt the playful jokiness of Oldenburg's food items, but the humour here is black.

Boxes, multiples and other 'contained' forms recur throughout the 1980s and 90s. Rosemarie Trockel's *Balaklava* 1986 is a readymade, its distinctive black and grey wave pattern derived from Op art painting. Unlike other knitted and crocheted works, Trockel's object is designed and manufactured with the aid of a computerised knitting machine, thus giving a contemporary twist to the designation 'women's work'. Sylvie Fleury uses fur for many of her objects and throughout her multimedia installations, exploring notions of gender, ambivalence and consumerism. Lined with snow-white fur, and stamped with gold upper-case lettering, *Vital perfection* 1993 suggests an expensive, branded fashion item, perhaps with an element of fetishism. It hints at luxury and fulfilment but is, ultimately, empty. Peter Vandermark's forms, made in plaster with belts, refer to Man Ray's bound object (p 8), but this time express an obvious joy in the act of making. In *Kiddie-car* 1998–2009, Shaelene Murray adapts an old-fashioned pram and invests a baby's layette set with all the obsessive affection and care of a vintage car enthusiast.

Rosalind Krauss's notion of sculpture as existing in an expanded field is pertinent for the 1980s and 90s.²² Sculpture, it seemed, then and now, can only be defined by its negative condition: being 'not-landscape', 'not-architecture'. This is demonstrated by the dominance of installation, site-specific, temporary and virtual work existing



alongside continuing traditions of large-scale metal, direct carving, land and concept art, performance, assemblage, multiples, public and domestic sculpture. The fact that so much sculpture was and continues to be seen in public spaces—installation art in particular usually requires institutional infrastructure—paradoxically focuses attention on the nature of the viewer’s perception of that work.²³ Although both freestanding and wall-bound figurative and abstract works with soft sculpture tendencies were produced during the 1980s, the decade was again dominated by painting, and the ‘commodity sculpture’ of artists such as Jeff Koons and Haim Steinbach.

Soft sculpture often works by means of bodily connection. As Briony Fer points out, it invites a ‘language of anthropomorphism, of bodily projection and empathy. Bulbous forms, organic forms, [seem] deliberately to inscribe an erotics of the body.’²⁴ In *Puddles* 1992 (p 22), for instance, Sadie Chandler uses human hair in a range of shades tastefully framed within biomorphic shapes that suggest the relief work of Jean Arp or the semi-abstract figures of Constantin Brancusi. Chandler draws upon Dada and Surrealism, and Freudian theories of fetishism and castration, but there is also a sly, ironic dig at generic Modernism, décor-coordinated abstract painting and domestic sculpture of the ‘flying duck’ type. By contrast, in *Penetration* 1993–94, Annette Messenger has us examine the body’s internal organs—101 brightly coloured sewn and stuffed-fabric intestines, hearts, lungs, spines, penises, even foetuses. The lights dangling amongst the body parts serve to illuminate their forms, but also draw attention to their irregularity, the roughness of the stitching and the apparently casual nature in which they are hung with wool from the ceiling.

Lucas Samaras
Box no 85 1973
pins and stones on cardboard

Sylvie Fleury
Vital perfection 1993
synthetic fur and cardboard



Annette Messenger
Penetration 1993–94 (detail)
cotton stuffed with polyester,
angora wool, nylon,
electric lights

Messenger is concerned with the ways in which sex and science make use of the body. Each of the components of *Penetration* is based on diagrams from a biology textbook. As well as a tendency to catalogue and to fragment, there is an element of play in much of Messenger's work. In *Penetration* we may be repelled by the likeness to an abattoir or the results of a post-mortem, but there is also the suggestion of a child's mobile, or a play space to explore. Lauren Berkowitz also constructs equivocal spaces. Initially we approach *Bags* 1994 (p 22) lured by its repeated forms, its feeling of preciousness and apparent fragility; perhaps we see also the promise of comfort and protection. Once within the work, however, we become aware of its claustrophobic qualities and its potential to induce anxiety. This is solid yet ethereal space, in which sound is muffled but light can permeate. The hybrid nature of installation art—part theatre, part environment, partly ephemeral—incorporates notions of time, space and time passing.



Berkowitz extends the traditional *memento mori* to warn of the dangers of over-consumption. Many hundreds of carefully cleaned and arranged bottles, used newspapers and collected bags formed the stuff of her three-part exhibition *Bags, bottles and newspapers* 1994. She reminds us of the prevalence of non-perishable materials and single-use objects in our lives, and of the obsessive accumulators inside us all. Luke Roberts's collecting is of a different kind. He reinvents the traditional 'cabinet of curiosities' with conquests from op-shops, museum storage, antiquarian markets and even from outer space. *All souls of the revolution* 1976–94 was originally part of his *Wunderkammer/Kunstkamera* project. These toys, special friends now rejected or lost, serve to commemorate the loss of childhood innocence, and of lives lost to AIDS and other scourges of the twentieth century.

The objects in Hany Armanious's *Snake oil* 1994 seem to be moving, multiplying, destroying themselves—or even us. By casting in water, the artist has incorporated an element of chance into his experiments with hot melt (a commercially produced synthetic latex). The colour and condition of the once-liquid substance and the associative quality of the forms—entrails or secretions? or some newly discovered creature from the ocean depths?—make for a highly disconcerting work. On an apparently temporary folding table, these dubious elixirs present as a sly, quick-fix cure-all. In *Sculpture* 2002, made of polystyrene and heat-shrunk plastic, Mikala Dwyer likewise turns over some of her creative decisions to temperature. In both works, the use of liquid or semi-transient mediums make interesting references



Hany Armanious
Snake oil 1994
oil and enamel paint on
thermoplastic adhesive,
composition board, steel rods

Roxy Paine
*SCUMAK (Auto sculpture
maker) no 2* 2001
(not in exhibition)



Sadie Chandler

Puddles 1992

human and synthetic hair,
perspex, wood

Lauren Berkowitz

Bags 1994

polyethylene bags



to the 'performative' elements of soft sculpture, evoking Jean Tinguely, Jackson Pollock, Lynda Benglis and others, but they also look forward, to elaborate projects like Roxy Paine's *SCUMAK (Auto sculpture maker) No 2* 2001 (p 21).

During sleep we are reduced to nature and, as Ulf Linde points out, this reduction occurs in soft sculpture too.²⁵ In *High bed* 1998 and *Sonambulinos* 1999, Rosslynd Piggott and Ernesto Neto respectively use a range of fabrics and soft fillings to make works whose materials complement their subjects. The minimalist aesthetic of Piggott's bed recalls institutional settings, while the oversized form suggests the dislocation of dreams, anxiety, even the weight of European culture. Neto is best known for his large biomorphic sculptural forms and room-sized installations incorporating spices or subtle stain-like colour, but all his work has a formal harmony derived from his shapes and the monochrome simplicity of his materials. By its absence, attention is drawn to the human body. In another work, *Hanging eyes* 1999, from Mikala Dwyer's four-part installation *iffytown*, the brightly coloured, disembodied forms refer to Oldenburg's anthropomorphism, but this time have a sinister twist.

Pop and Oldenburg-like humour, visual jokes and absurdist disregard for scale continue to govern soft sculpture. Kathy Temin's *Duck-rabbit problem* 1991 is an example of the ability of the human brain to oscillate between equally plausible perceptions rendered in bright, happy fake fur. Christopher Langton's oversized inflatable pills were originally installed in the basement of a building that was an



apothecary's shop in the nineteenth century, and were arranged as if tumbling out of a dispensary. In an age when any range of substances is available via capsule form, the architectural setting of *Sugar the pill* (cover) may be imagined as standing in for the body. Kitsch, sugary and spooky, irresistibly consumerist and undeniably desirable, looking at Langton's work, we can't help but want to join in. Ricky Swallow's *Model for a sunken monument* 1999 (inside back cover) echoes ideas raised by the Surrealists' melting objects, combined with references to contemporary science fiction and film culture. Is this our vanquished hero, melting into the floor? Will he rise up to fight again?

Nell's massive, stylised droplet, *The perfect drip* 1999 (title page) has the viscosity of oil, and the mirror finish of a finely polished automobile. Its amorphous, slightly surreal and space-age quality suggests origins in a computer-generated, action-packed sci-fi film, and we wait for the drip to fall while knowing perfectly well that it cannot. The spiralling, doughnut shape of David Jenz's *Continuum* 2003 hints at mathematical order and Encode theories: rubber tubes and compressed air, the elements of its making, create a sensation of movement and compressed energy—refuting concepts of solidity, mass and weight. Air is also a key component of the oeuvre of Choi Jeong Hwa. His giant flowers, such as *Clear lotus* 2009, are reminiscent of Oldenburg's work—and use a construction method similar to Langton's pills²⁶—but to very different ends. Choi questions ideas of disposability in modern society, and posits a new kind of nature in art.

Rosslynd Piggott

High bed 1998

cotton, dacron, satin, perspex, wood, metal, painted walls

Ernesto Neto

Sonambulinos 1999

lycra tulle and polystyrene



Choi Jeong Hwa
Clear lotus 2009
 vinyl, motor

For an astonishingly long period in the West—from dynastic Egypt until about 1930—sculpture was synonymous with statue ... Things were undoubtedly a lot simpler when all one had to contend with were statues, but they were also a lot less interesting.

Karen Wilkin 2005²⁷

Looking at the historical relationship between soft sculpture and anti-form works of the 1960s and 1970s, and later categories of art up to the present day, we realise the many diverse ways in which artists exploit substances to make works of art. Using an array of natural and synthetic materials—cloth, rope, wool, paper, felt, ceramics, leather, fur, rubber, fibreglass and all range of plastics—these forms suggest transition, emphasising natural forces such as gravity or heat, and in many cases having metaphorical or metaphysical implications. Works droop, ooze or splash. They are fluffy, squishy or bent. They surround us, suffocate us or tie us up—and in many cases make us laugh. But why *does* soft sculpture remain all-persuasive in the transitional world of art? It began as a reaction, perhaps: against reason, against the hard geometric forms of Modernism, against a perceived lack of raw emotion in sculpture. Later, a plethora of new synthetic materials and industrial techniques encouraged artists to experiment further. Could it be, nowadays, that one of the reasons we find soft sculpture so compelling is because of its actual substance? Is the reality of touch and texture a counterpoint to the virtual, bodiless world of video images and endless digital files? In any case, soft sculpture is *not* something for sitting on while looking at paintings!²⁸

notes

- 1 Interview with Richard Serra by Bernard Lamarche-Vidal, taped in New York City in May 1980; reprinted in *Richard Serra: Interviews, Etc. 1970–1980*, Hudson River Museum, Trevor Park on the Hudson, 1980, Yonkers, New York, p. 142. *Splashing's* first public showing was in Leo Castelli Gallery's warehouse, on New York's upper west side, in December 1968;
- 2 *Richard Serra: interviews, Etc. 1970–1980...* (above), p. 171.
- 3 Andy Warhol's *Silver cloud* 1966 was first produced for an exhibition at the Leo Castelli Gallery, New York, and was seen recently in Australia at the Queensland Art Gallery, 7 December 2007 – 13 April 2008.
- 4 See Clement Greenberg's essay, 'The new sculpture' in *Partisan Review*, June 1949, reprinted in *Art and culture: critical essays*, Thames & Hudson, London, 1973, pp. 139–45; revised and republished as 'Sculpture in our time' in *Arts Magazine* (June 1958); see also John O'Brian (ed), *Clement Greenberg: the collected essays and criticism*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1986, pp. 55–61.
- 5 Marcel Duchamp's readymades—a bicycle wheel upended on a stool, a bottle or hat rack, or urinal—are ordinary manufactured items. By the mere act of choosing, or modifying these objects, the artist designates them as art.
- 6 Comte de Lautréamont was the pseudonym of the French writer Isidore Ducasse (1846–1870) whose poetry, with its strategy of dislocation, was much admired by André Breton and the other Surrealists. Man Ray's *The enigma of Isidore Ducasse* refers to a famous line in *Les chants de Maldoror* 1869–70, where Ducasse describes a young boy as being as 'beautiful as the chance meeting on a dissecting table of a sewing-machine and an umbrella'.
- 7 Max Kozloff, 'The poetics of softness', in *American sculpture of the Sixties*, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, 1967, p. 26; reprinted in Max Kozloff, *Renderings: critical essays on a century of modern art*, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1969, p. 223.
- 8 As Rosalind Krauss points out in *Passages in modern sculpture* (Thames & Hudson, London, 1977, p. 131), by the 1930s 'the surrealists had established a kind of sculptural object that seemed to incorporate psychological qualities by bearing on its surface the imprint of sexuality, or, more often, pain'.
- 9 Claes Oldenburg quoted by Jan McDevitt in 'Object: still life; interview', *Craft Horizons* vol 25, no 5, September 1965, pp. 31–32, 55–56 at p. 31; see also Germano Celant, 'Claes Oldenburg and the feeling of things', in *Claes Oldenburg: an anthology*, Guggenheim Museum/National Gallery of Art, New York, 1995, pp. 12–31, at p. 12.
- 10 Cossje van Bruggen, quoted in 'The realistic imagination and imaginary reality of Claes Oldenburg', *Claes Oldenburg*, Moderna Museet, Stockholm, 1966, p. 6.
- 11 Michael Fried, *Anthony Caro: sculpture 1960–1963*, Whitechapel Art Gallery, London, 1963, np, [14]; also Fried's *Art and objecthood: essays and reviews*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1998, p. 274.
- 12 See especially, Richard J Williams, 'Form and anti-form', in *After modern sculpture: art in the United States and Europe, 1965–1970*, Manchester University Press, Manchester/New York, 2000, pp. 18–38.
- 13 Robert Morris, 'Anti-form', *Artforum*, vol 6, no 8, April 1968, p. 34, and quoted by Williams in *After modern sculpture: art in the United States and Europe, 1965–1970* (details n 12, above), at p. 31. Morris concludes: 'Random piling, loose stacking, hanging giving passing form to the material. Chance is accepted and indeterminacy is implied as replacing will result in another combination.'
- 14 Max Kozloff, 'The poetics of softness', in *American sculpture of the Sixties...* (details n 7), p. 26.
- 15 The phrase is Richard J Williams's, summarising Michael Fried's approach to viewing sculpture, Caro's in particular; see *After modern sculpture: art in the United States and Europe...* (details n 12), p. 26.
- 16 Richard J. Williams, 'Form and anti-form', in *After modern sculpture...* (details n 12), p. 22.
- 17 Mildred Constantine, 'Statement about soft materials', in *Weich und Plastisch: Soft-Art*, Kunsthau Zürich, Zürich, 1979, p. 51.
- 18 Carl Andre, in *Tate: the Art Magazine*, no 9, summer 1996, p. 41; and quoted by Arthur C Danto in 'All about Eva', www.thenation.com/doc/20060717/danto (accessed February 2009).
- 19 Richard J Williams, 'A new subjectivity', in *After modern sculpture...* (details n 12), at p. 42.
- 20 Lucy Lippard, 'Eccentric Abstraction', *Art International*, vol 10, no 9, November 1996, p. 28; and quoted by Briony Fer, 'Objects beyond objecthood', *Oxford Art Journal*, vol 22, no 2, 1999, pp. 27–36.
- 21 Like installation, the multiple is a twentieth-century hybrid art form, difficult to define. In simplest terms, a multiple is a three-dimensional object issued in an edition, but it represents an approach to production, an attack on concepts of originality or uniqueness in art, in short an expression of the artist's attitude, rather any common stylistic or artistic characteristics.
- 22 Rosalind Krauss, 'Sculpture in the expanded field', *October*, vol 8, Spring, 1979, pp. 30–44.
- 23 Alex Potts, *The sculptural imagination: figurative, modernist, minimalist*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 2000, p. 22.
- 24 In 'Objects beyond objecthood', *Oxford Art Journal*, vol 22, no 2, 1999, pp. 27–36, at p. 29.
- 25 Ulf Linde, in *Claes Oldenburg: skulpturer och teckningar*, Moderna Museet, Stockholm, 1966; see also Max Kozloff, in 'The poetics of softness', *American sculpture of the Sixties...* (details n 7), p. 27.
- 26 These works hark back to advances in plastics technology during the 1950s, which allowed forms to be produced using air as the prime material. Initially developed for the aeronautics industry, in the 1960s and 1970s inflatable structures increasingly had design applications; see, for example, *Blow*, the chair designed by Gionatan de Pas, Donato D'Urbino, Paolo Lomazzi and Carla Scolari in 1967, and manufactured by Zanotta s.p.a., Nova Milanese, from 1968.
- 27 Karen Wilkin, quoted in Glenn Harper and Twylene Moyer (eds), *A sculpture reader: contemporary sculpture since 1980*, ISC Press, Hamilton, NJ, and University of Washington Press, Seattle, 2006, pp. 10 and 12.
- 28 In variation to the classic put-down of sculpture as being 'something you bump into when you back up to look at a painting'. The comment is variously attributed to Ad Reinhardt or Barnett Newman: see Lippard, *American sculpture of the Sixties...* (details n 14), p. 32; or Rosalind Krauss, 'Sculpture in the expanded field', in *October*, vol 8, Spring, 1979, and *The originality of the Avant-garde and other Modernist myths*, MIT Press, Massachusetts, 1986, pp. 281–82.

List of works

Compiled by Lisa McDonald and Niki van den Heuval

Measurements are given in centimetres, in order of height, width, depth

Parentheses () indicate curator-designated dates

Unless otherwise indicated, all works are in the collection of the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra

Magdalena Abakanowicz

Poland born 1930

Abakan Brunne c 1970

dyed sisal

A: 309 x 306 x 46 cm

B: 299 x 278 x 46 cm

Purchased 1976 76.1318.A–B

Giselle Antmann

Germany born 1946

Australia from 1955

Genetic glimpse (1978)

synthetic polymer paint on canvas, sisal,
nylon, pine

236 x 187.5 x 86 cm

Purchased 1979 79.84

Hilary Archer

India born 1934

Australia from 1949

Tube seed (A) 1972

synthetic polymer, moulded rubber tube,
steel nuts and bolts

32.2 x 51.2 x 52 cm

Gift of the Philip Morris Arts Grant 1982
83.1599

Hany Armanious

Egypt born 1962

Australia from 1969

Snake oil 1994

synthetic polymer resin, bound pigment,
composition board, steel rods

120 x 240 x 120 cm (approx)

Purchased 1994 94.1247.A–P

John Armstrong

Australia born 1948

1,2,3, fur (1972)

hardwood, fur, chains

32 x 101.4 x 18 cm

Purchased 1972 72.312

Hans Bellmer

Germany 1902 – France 1975

The half doll (La demie poupée) 1971

wood, paint and assemblage

installation dimensions variable

90 cm (height)

Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney

Purchased 1996 89.1996

© Hans Bellmer. Licensed by VISCOPY,
Australia, 2009

Lynda Benglis

United States of America born 1941

Untitled (Polly's pie II) 1968

pigmented polyurethane foam

15.2 x 139.7 x 83.8 cm

Courtesy of the artist and Cheim & Read,
New York

Lauren Berkowitz

Australia born 1965

Bags 1994

polyethylene bags

400 x 600 x 100 cm (variable)

Collection of the artist

Installed at The Ian Potter Museum of Art,

The University of Melbourne, 1998

© Lauren Berkowitz

Photographer: John Gollings

Joseph Beuys

Germany 1921–1986

Stripes from the house of the shaman

1964–72 1980

felt, wood, coats, animal skin, rubber
tube, pamphlets, copper, quartz, ground
minerals, pigments

installation 340 x 655 x 1530 cm (overall)

Purchased 1981 81.2110.A–K

© Joseph Beuys. Licensed by Bild-Kunst,
Germany and VISCOPY, Australia, 2009

*Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, no, no, no, no,
no (Ja, ja, ja, ja, ja, nee, nee, nee, nee,
nee)* 1969

felt and 32 minute audiotape

no 45 from an edition of 100

15 x 25 x 25 cm

Gift of Dr K David G Edwards (Ret.), from
the David and Margery Edwards New

York Art Collection, 2005 2005.428.A–T

Noiseless blackboard eraser 1974

felt, paper, ink

no 306 from an edition of 550

12.8 x 5 x 2.6 cm

Gift of Murray Bail 1978 78.1225

John Chamberlain

United States of America born 1927

Le molé 1971

cast polyester resin, aluminium and
silicon oxide

printer's proof 1 from an edition of 56
plus 3 artist's proofs and 3 printer's
proofs

17 x 20.8 x 19 cm

Purchased 1973 73.965

Sadie Chandler

Australia born 1963

Puddles 1992

human and synthetic hair, perspex, wood

100 x 120 x 2.1 cm (variable)

Purchased 1993 93.1486.A–E

Choi Jeong Hwa

South Korea born 1961

Clear lotus 2009

vinyl, motor

230 x 400 cm

The Gene and Brian Sherman

Contemporary Asian Art Fund 2009

2009.51

Image: courtesy the artist and Pekin Fine
Arts, Beijing

Jenny Christmann

Germany 1929 – Australia 2005

20 woollen books 1977–78

wool and acrylic

140 x 24.4 x 54.6 cm (overall)

Gift of the Philip Morris Arts Grant 1982
83.2822.1–21

Tony Coleing

Australia born 1942

Yellow cake 1977

polystyrene foam, metallic glitter, paper,
plastic, tissue paper, cardboard, ink

11.2 x 25.5 x 25.5 cm (each box)

Gift of Ray Hughes 1981 81.17.A–B

Angela de la Cruz

Spain born 1965

Great Britain from 1989

Loose fit (blue) 2002

oil on canvas

111.3 x 112.5 cm

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

Purchased through the NGV Foundation
with the assistance of Michael Buxton,
Governor, and Anna Schwartz, Governor,
2003 2003.479

Jim Dine

United States of America born 1935

An animal 1961

oil and pelt on canvas

183 x 153 cm

Purchased 1980 80.3926

Marcel Duchamp

France 1887–1968

worked United States of America
1915–68

Please touch (Prière de toucher) 1947
cover of *Le Surréalisme en 1947*, Maeght,
Paris, 1947

foam and rubber on velvet on cardboard,
printed book

no. 89 from an edition of 999

25 x 22.8 cm

The Poynton Bequest 2009 2009.52

© Marcel Duchamp. Licensed by VISCOPY,
Australia, 2009

Ivan Durrant

Australia born 1947

245-7 1980

oil and enamel varnish on synthetic
polymer resin, perspex, composition
board

23.5 x 35.7 x 35.7 cm

Gift of Ivan Durrant 1994 94.3

Mikala Dwyer

Australia born 1959

Hanging eyes

from the series *iffytown* 1999

vinyl, canvas, synthetic polymer paint

220 x 400 cm (approx, overall)

Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney

Gift of the artist 2002 129.2002A–I

Sculpture 2002

polystyrene and heat-shrunk plastic

155 x 110 x 80 cm

Gift of Peter Fay 2005 2005.840

Sylvie Fleury

Switzerland born 1961

Vital perfection 1993

synthetic fur and cardboard

no 53 from an edition of 100

27.5 x 17 x 9 cm

Purchased 1995 95.124

Rosalie Gascoigne

New Zealand 1917 – Australia 1999

Feathered fence 1979

white swan feathers, galvanised wire

netting, synthetic polymer paint on wood

64 x 750 x 45 cm

Gift of the artist 1994 94.256.A–R

Eva Hesse

Germany 1936 – United States of
America 1970

Contingent 1969

cheesecloth, latex, fibreglass

350 x 630 x 109 cm (overall)

Purchased 1973 74.395.A–H

Photograph courtesy the Estate of Eva
Hesse, Galerie Hauser & Wirth, Zürich

David Jenz

Australia born 1957

Continuum 2003

rubber, steel, compressed air

90 x 250 x 250 cm

Purchased 2003 2003.421

Les Kossatz

Australia born 1943

Sheep on a couch 1972–73

sheepskin, stainless steel, dyed leather,

91 x 203 x 91 cm (overall)

Purchased 1975 75.35.A–B

© Les Kossatz. Licensed by VISCOPY,
Australia, 2009

Colin Lanceley

New Zealand born 1938

Australia from 1940, worked Great Britain
1965–81

Altar 1967

painted wood, synthetic polymer paint
on canvas

183 x 249 x 33 cm

Purchased 1976 76.552

© Colin Lanceley. Licensed by VISCOPY,
Australia, 2009

Christopher Langton

South Africa born 1954

Australia from 1973

Sugar the pill 1995/2009

polyvinyl chloride

smallest: 30 x 30 x 20 cm;

largest: 70 x 70 x 150 cm

Collection of the artist

Marilyn Levine

Canada 1935 – United States of America
2005

Johnston satchel 1975

stoneware

25.4 x 51.9 x 34.2 cm

Purchased 1975 75.657

Man Ray

United States of America 1890 – France
1976

The enigma of Isidore Ducasse 1920,

reconstructed 1971

object wrapped in felt and string

no 8 from an edition of 10

40.5 x 57.5 x 21.5 cm

Purchased 1973 73.15

© Man Ray. Licensed by ARS, New York and
VISCOPY, Australia, 2009

Annette Messenger

France born 1943

Penetration (Pénétration) 1993–94

cotton stuffed with polyester, angora

wool, nylon, electric lights

500 x 500 x 1100 cm (overall)

Purchased 1996 96.681

© Annette Messenger. Licensed by ADAGP,
France and VISCOPY, Australia, 2009

Robert Morris

United States of America born 1931

Untitled 1969

felt

284 x 363.2 x 111.8 cm

Purchased 1975 75.152

© Robert Morris. Licensed by ARS, New York
and VISCOPY, Australia, 2009

Shaelene Murray

Australia born 1960

Kiddie-car 1998–2009

steel, stainless steel mesh, plastic, wood,
glass

97 x 56 x 127 cm

Collection of the artist

Nell

Australia born 1975

The perfect drip 1999

enamel on fibreglass, polyurethane foam,

wood, polyvinyl chloride pipe

237 x 150 cm (approx)

Collection of Catherine Lezer and Kevin

Mclsaac, Sydney

Photograph courtesy of the artist and Roslyn
Oxley9 Gallery

Ernesto Neto

Brazil born 1964

Sonambulinos 1999

lycra tulle and polystyrene

110 x 130 x 70 cm (overall)

Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney

Gift of Geoff and Vicki Ainsworth 2001

333.2001

© Ernesto Neto

Claes Oldenburg

Sweden born 1929

United States of America from 1936

Soft alphabet 1978

cloth, sand, wood, stencil

no 16 from an edition of 16 (plus 11 proofs)

74.4 x 56.2 x 7.2 cm

Purchased 1982 82.1270

© Claes Oldenburg and Coosje Van Bruggen

Ice bag—scale B 1971

moulded plastic, synthetic fabric, electric
motor

from an edition of 25

101.5 x 122 (diam) cm

Purchased 1975 75.602

© Claes Oldenburg and Coosje Van Bruggen

Miniature soft drum set 1969
printed canvas, rope, wood
no 23 from an edition of 200 plus 18
artist's proofs
31 x 44.7 x 33.1 cm (variable)
Purchased 1979 80.746
© Claes Oldenburg and Coosje Van Bruggen

Meret Oppenheim
Germany 1913 – Switzerland 1985
Squirrel (Eichhörnchen) 1969
fur, glass, plastic foam
no 38 from an edition of 100
23 x 17.5 x 8 cm
Purchased 2008 2008.931
© Meret Oppenheim. Licensed by VISCOPY,
Australia, 2009

Ewa Pachucka
Poland born 1936
worked Australia 1971–90s, France from
late 1990s
Landscape and bodies 1972
jute, hemp, wire
202 x 308 x 302 cm (overall)
Purchased 1973 73.306.A–P

Rosslynd Piggott
Australia born 1958
High bed 1998
cotton, dacron, satin, perspex, wood,
metal, painted walls
370 x 200 x 230 cm
Purchased 2000 2000.231.A–I

Robert Rauschenberg
United States of America 1925–2008
Reef (Jammer) 1976
silk
233 x 632 x 60 cm (overall)
Purchased 1979 80.224.A–E

Luke Roberts
Australia born 1952
All souls of the revolution 1976–94
mixed media
dimensions variable
Purchased 1996 96.730.1–346

Lucas Samaras
Greece born 1936
United States of America from 1948
Box no 85 1973
pins and stones on cardboard
27.1 x 44.8 x 28.6 cm
Purchased 1981 81.3049
© Lucas Samaras, Courtesy Pace
Wildenstein

Richard Serra
United States of America born 1939
Prop 1968
lead
from an edition of 6
252.7 x 151.8 x 109.2 cm (variable)
Purchased 1973 75.670.A–B
© Richard Serra. Licensed by ARS, New York
and VISCOPY, Australia, 2009

Michelle Stuart
United States of America born 1938
Breezy Point, New York 1976
earth, rag paper, muslin
311.3 x 158.5 cm
Purchased 1978 78.384

Ricky Swallow
Australia born 1974
Model for a sunken monument 1999
synthetic polymer paint on composition
board
108.2 x 222 x 242.2 cm
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Purchased through The Art Foundation of
Victoria with the assistance of the Joan
Clemenger Endowment, Governor, 1999
DC3.A–L1999
© Ricky Swallow, courtesy Darren Knight
Gallery, Sydney

Kathy Temin
Australia born 1968
Duck-rabbit problem 1991
synthetic fur, synthetic stuffing, wood,
polystyrene ball, enamel paint
52.5 x 187.8 x 124 cm
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Purchased through The Art Foundation
of Victoria with the assistance of the
Rudy Komon Fund, Governor, 1998
98.282.A–C

Rosemarie Trockel
Germany born 1952
Balaklava 1986
knitted wool
no 6 from an edition of 10
34 x 23.7 x 2.2 cm (variable)
Purchased 1995 95.123.1–2

Unknown artist
working Australia 1960s
Ginger Meggs doll c 1960
wool and acrylic
43.2 x 27.4 x 9.1 cm
Gift of Diana Cameron 1988 88.452

Richard Van Buren
United States of America born 1937
For Najeeb 1972
polyester resin, fibreglass, pigments,
glitter
350 x 600 x 15 cm (overall)
Purchased 1974 74.388.A–E

Peter Vandermark
Australia born 1960
Fattish I 1997
plaster and leather
12 x 27 x 18 cm
Collection of the artist

Fattish VI 1997
plaster and leather
12 x 23 x 19 cm
Collection of the artist

Fattish VII 1998
plaster and leather
15 x 30 x 28 cm
Collection of the artist

Supplementary images

Louise Bourgeois
The destruction of the father 1974
plaster, latex, wood, fabric and red light
237.8 x 362.2 x 248.6 cm
Courtesy Cheim & Read, Galerie Karsten
Greve, and Hauser & Wirth
Photograph: Rafael Lobato

Salvador Dalí
The persistence of memory 1931
oil on canvas
24.1 x 33 cm
Museum of Modern Art, New York
Given anonymously
Digital image © 2009 The Museum of
Modern Art/Scala, Florence
© Salvador Dalí. Licensed by VISCOPY,
Australia, 2009

Edgar Degas
Little dancer aged fourteen 1878–81
yellow wax, hair, ribbon, linen bodice,
satin shoes, muslin tutu, wood base
98.9 x 34.7 x 35.2 cm
National Gallery of Art, Washington
Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon
Image © 2009 Board of Trustees,
National Gallery of Art, Washington

Roxy Paine
SCUMAK (Auto sculpture maker) no 2 2001
aluminium, computer, conveyor,
electronics, extruder, stainless steel,
polyethylene, Teflon
228.6 x 701 x 185.4 cm
© the artist Courtesy James Cohan Gallery,
New York