

# Coca Bossa Nova

# Ann Carrington



At the turn of this century avant-garde artists created ideological tidal waves, by demonstrating the use of mass-produced elements within their work. This dramatically altered the way we interpret representation, as it overtly acknowledges that artists are always influenced by that which is outside themselves, the codes and languages of their particular culture in a particular time. This knowledge dispelled the myth of genius, and has enabled us to appreciate that our reality is shaped by our culture. This is an empowering way in which to view ourselves and the world.

Ann Carrington's coconut husks sculptures evoke their horsey, flamenco characters both visually and audibly, triggering echoes of meanings which bounce from the gallery walls. All objects are saturated with cultural meaning, and some of these are unravelled and explored by Ann Carrington, as her pieces are frequently self-referential, producing witty visual puns. Her sketch books reveal a fascination with our documentation of the world: a paper world where: 'Mexican beer labels and restaurant calling cards rub shoulders with the Venus de Milos and matchbox Mona Lisas'. These are snippets of ideologically charged messages, which may gain new meanings when freed from their original contexts. The transference of these concepts into three-dimensional assemblages determines Ann's choice of objects, as they too, contain their own meanings and histories. For example, the essence of seemingly mundane objects such as knives, has been expanded into their spear-like predatory associations, and then returned, in form, to hunting trophies; just as the journey from shoe to hide and back again, may be wryly hinting at the previous wearer's personalities. These works, therefore, take conceptual leaps, reflecting on authenticity and

originality, whilst producing aesthetically complete circles. The sculptures use materials, which have no intrinsic value other than their new 'art' value, and the ability to reveal their fascinating stratifications of histories and meanings.

Some of Ann's sculptures have involved the use of discarded objects, and her sponsored visits to Southern Africa (1992 & 95) enabled her to study the creative enterprise, which children display when deprived of ready-made toys. The questions arising from such an exercise are highly pertinent as the values of all Western consumer societies are now so thoroughly absorbed and accepted by us. Exactly what constitutes junk, and when do we bestow that status of uselessness on our waste. By wittily merging material with form, the journeys taken by raw materials seem mapped out for us here, inviting our participation.

**Rosalind Vall, text**  
**Curator, Linda Fredericks**