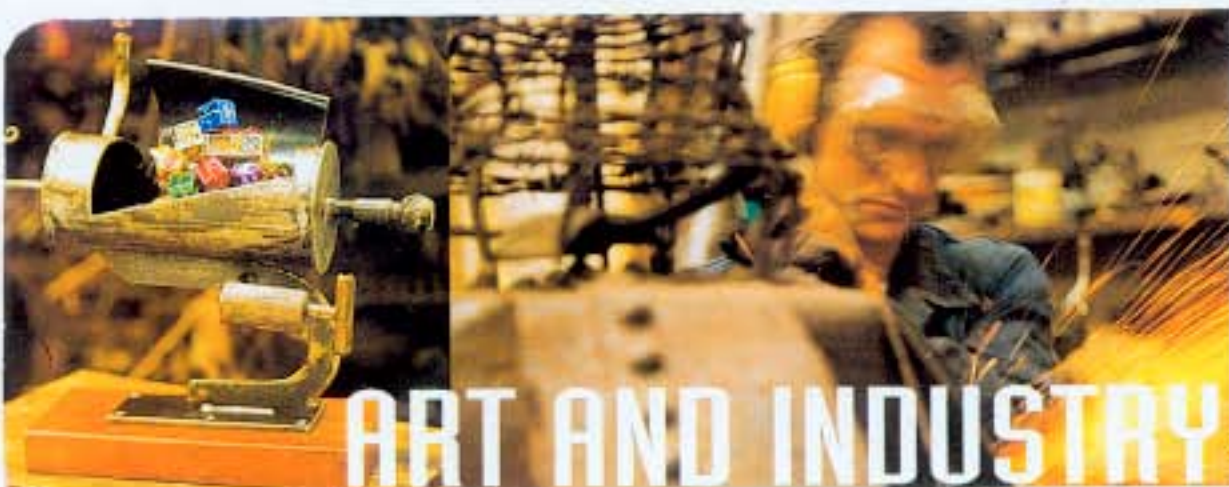


HOUSE & GARDEN



ART AND INDUSTRY

in profile Jos Van Hulsen turns trash into treasure – it's a talent that's getting him noticed

When Jos Van Hulsen graduated with a Bachelor of Fine Arts from the Melbourne Institute of Technology, he was determined to make a living from his sculptures and paintings. Ten years later he is doing just that, but his career path has been more diverse than originally planned.

Concentrating on sculpture, Jos has exhibited widely and sold well, but as every young artist knows, your income between exhibitions is minimal. The challenge is to survive between shows yet continue creating art. Jos and his partner Mary Long found the answer to the challenge; they decided to go into business.

Just 18 months ago, they opened a shop called Post Industrial Design in the inner Melbourne suburb of Richmond. Most of the items have been made by Jos – sculptural but functional pieces made from old industrial components.

Both Jos and Mary are passionate about saving and reusing industrial cast-offs. The nature of the stock is determined by what they find in their regular visits to old factories, junkyards, clearing sales and friends' backyards. Jos looks at the material

and envisages what it could become with a bit of reshaping and modification. An old copper boiler has been made into a storage cupboard, and irregular lengths of steel piping and obsolete electrical fittings have been welded together to create a stand for a reading light. A handstand is formed out of twisted metal. All the pieces have a sculptural aspect that transcends the uniformity of mass production.

"The ongoing debate in the art world about the dividing lines between art, craft and furniture making will probably never be fully resolved," says Jos. "In many ways I have found making functional pieces as satisfying as creating purely sculptural works. Once I decide what I am going to create, be it a table, stool or a wall piece, it evolves rather quickly.

"We're offering something very different and at affordable prices. We've even been told by some people that our prices are too low, but we don't intend to charge more than what we think is a fair price."

Post Industrial Design is at 262 Church Street, Richmond, Vic, phone (03) 9429 5199. □

