



Simon  
GILBY

Simon Gilby's work has an openness and optimism that reflects his youth. He is a figurative sculptor who combines techniques of modelling and welding in most of his pieces.

Many of Gilby's most successful works have been based on the idea of duality, where a simplified and solid human figure is surmounted by a contrasting cage-like welded representation of another element - a fish, a boat, a cloud of letters from the alphabet, etc.

Because his welded forms are usually made from delicate and thin-gauge wire, they tend to dematerialise and resemble outline drawings in space. Frequently constructed as grids with cross-bracing for strength and durability, Gilby's sculptures have a striking affinity with technical diagrams and working plans that seems to parallel a youthful passion for model-making. In this scheme the artist establishes an elegant and tantalising balance between transparent volume and opaque mass. The spatial dialogue that he creates can also be identified as a narrative differentiating the tangible from the immaterial.

It is as though Gilby's figures project their thoughts and ideas around them in a visible aura, or otherwise are shadowed by ghosts and guardians from another dimension.

Due to their featureless anonymity, Gilby's figures stand like metaphors for humankind in general rather than specific individuals. The secondary elements with which they are combined are similarly simplified and schematic, functioning as archetypes for their genus and invested with the rich associations of purpose and meaning that accompany such symbols. Despite their tangible form, Gilby's sculptures seem very much involved with intangible ideas.

The alphabetical letters which so often emanate from his figures are jumbled and do not spell out specific words but confirm a curiosity in the processes of thought and the powers of the human intellect.

Left: Simon Gilby at Swanbourne beach with his welded sculpture *God I* 1995.

Above: *Remembering the Titanic* 1992, plaster, wood and welded wire, height 100 cm, University of Western Australia Art Collection.

