



CRAFTED

Lucy Barker's sculpture *Glittering Prize*, featured in the 2024 *Sculpture by the Sea* exhibition at Bondi, offers a striking visual experience that connects with Australian culture through material, memory, and form. With its glimmering exterior and intriguing shape, the work evokes nostalgia while exploring the power of connection—something central to Barker's artistic practice.

WITH CAPRAL

GLITTERING PRIZE

Lucy Barker's sculpture *Glittering Prize*, featured in the 2024 Sculpture by the Sea exhibition at Bondi, offers a striking visual experience that connects with Australian culture through material, memory, and form. With its glimmering exterior and intriguing shape, the work evokes nostalgia while exploring the power of connection—something central to Barker's artistic practice.



Barker has a long history of creating work that taps into personal memories and shared cultural symbols. For *Glittering Prize*, she drew inspiration from Glo Mesh, a material that became iconic in the 1970s for its use in glamorous handbags. Manufactured in Bondi in the late 1950s, Glo Mesh has remained a vivid part of Australian cultural history. For Barker, the familiarity of the material offered a way to engage viewers on a personal level, as many people have memories tied to it.

"I often draw on familiar objects or materials in my work as a point of connection with the audience," says Barker. "For me, making art is all about connecting with other people. So to draw on an iconic Australian material or brand is a way of connecting with the audience, as lots of people remember it and have personal stories and memories about it."

The Glo Mesh inspiration, however, presented a challenge. While the material's intricate, chainmail-like

design was central to her concept, Barker knew that scaling it up into a large outdoor sculpture would require careful material selection - aluminium was an ideal choice—though it was a material



she had not worked with before.

"I knew it would work best in aluminum," Barker explains. "I was aware of its malleability, strength, durability, and its ability to be worked

into intricate and complex designs."

Barker's experience with aluminium was limited, but the partnership between Sculpture by the Sea and longstanding

industry supporter Capral Aluminium made it possible for her to realise her vision. As a recipient of the Capral Artist Subsidy Prize, Barker had the support she needed to transform her

ideas into a finished piece. Capral's involvement was essential in the successful execution of the sculpture.

"The support from Capral was amazing," says Barker. "If it wasn't for them, I literally would not have been able to do it. Nigel from Capral was really enthusiastic from the get-go, and he helped me navigate every step of the process, connecting me with fabricators and helping me meet the exhibition's timeline."

The result is a work that incorporates the shimmering qualities of Glo Mesh, while also maintaining a sense of mystery. The outer blanket of the sculpture, resembling the iconic material, flows gracefully over an ambiguous form. While Barker has revealed that the figure underneath symbolises her, she delights in the many interpretations offered by viewers, who are free to see something entirely different.

"One of the joys of public art is hearing different interpretations," she adds. "I

love hearing everyone's perspectives on what they see under there."

At the heart of *Glittering Prize* is the use of aluminium, a material that plays a key role in the work's success. Aluminium is an excellent choice for public art due to its versatility, durability, and lightweight nature. It can be shaped into intricate forms, as seen in the detailed mesh design, and it resists corrosion, making it ideal for sculptures exposed to the elements. Aluminium's reflective surface also adds a dynamic element to the work, changing with the light and offering

viewers a different experience at different times of the day.

The material's strength and malleability allowed Barker to create a large-scale sculpture that is both visually striking and structurally sound. This combination of beauty and practicality is what makes aluminium such an excellent choice for outdoor art installations, where sculptures need to endure and adapt to environmental factors without compromising their artistic integrity.

Glittering Prize is a testament to



the importance of collaboration between artists and industry, with Capral Aluminium's support helping Baker achieve her vision. The piece stands as a reminder of the power of art to connect us to the past, to each other, and to the materials that shape our world. Through Glittering Prize, Baker has created a work that invites conversation, personal reflection, and connection—a true reflection of the role art plays in our lives.

In the end, Glittering Prize isn't just about its striking visual form—it's about the stories it tells and the connections it fosters, both between artist and audience and between art and industry.



Watch the Glittering Prize Crafted with Capral case study to learn more about Lucy Barker's partnership with Capral.



capral.com.au

CAPRAL
ALUMINIUM