

Start at home

Character Car



**“So much goes on in and around and on cars...
it’s the ability to get away, to escape to the country
and live another life.”**

– Margaret Dodd, 2018

About the artist

In the 1940s and 50s, being an artist wasn’t considered a ‘proper’ career path for a small-town girl from the South Australian Riverland. So Margaret Dodd became a high school art teacher instead. But in the 1960s she travelled to the USA and was deeply inspired by the progressive political, feminist and artistic landscape that she found there. Taking classes with Robert Arneson, founder of the expressive and humorous Funk Ceramics movement, Margaret began to develop her own artistic voice.

About the work

Returning from the USA to the Adelaide suburbs, Margaret initially felt trapped. She was a young mother without a car of her own to get around. She noticed that women had less access to cars than men and how this represented status and freedom at the time. Margaret created ceramic sculptures of iconic Holden cars sporting ‘feminine’ features such as a bridal veil, a wedding cake or hair curlers. These bold, character-filled objects challenged and poked fun at the gender norms of Australian culture.

Presented by





Materials you need

- a cardboard toilet roll
- a matchbox
- four round plastic lids (from milk or juice bottles etc.)
- scissors
- glue
- poster paint or acrylic paint
- a paintbrush
- extra cardboard (cereal box or similar)
- craft odds and ends (wool, fabric scraps, glitter)

Take it further

How would you make a character aeroplane, bus or train?

Make real spinning wheels for your next car, using a chopstick as an axel.

Get inspired by National Science Week (15 – 23 August 2020) and look online for ways to make a kinetic car powered by a battery, a balloon, or a rubber band!

Create your own Character Car

- 1 Glue the matchbox to the top of the toilet roll. Craft glue or hot glue will hold the best, but glue stick will work as well. Use hot glue only with adult supervision. If you use craft glue, wait for it to completely dry. This is your basic car shape.
- 2 Glue the four plastic bottle tops to the toilet roll, one at each corner. These are your wheels.
- 3 Now imagine your car as a character. Is it a person? If so, are they a kid or a grown-up? Do they have a job? What do they do for fun? Or perhaps your car is an animal, or another sort of creature...
- 4 Use the extra cardboard to make features for your character (a hat, ears or a tail, etc.) and glue them on securely.
- 5 Paint your car and let it dry. Then decorate it with your craft odds and ends. You could make hair, clothes, fur or scales - anything you like! Your character car is complete.

Holden with hair curlers is part of our online Collection, and also on display in Gallery 17 as part of the 2020 SALA Festival: <https://bit.ly/3jSCNhI>

We would love to see your work! Ask your parent or carer to post a photo on Instagram and tag the Art Gallery of South Australia. Or you can email your photo to us at public.programs@artgallery.sa.gov.au

@agsa.adelaide #agsastart