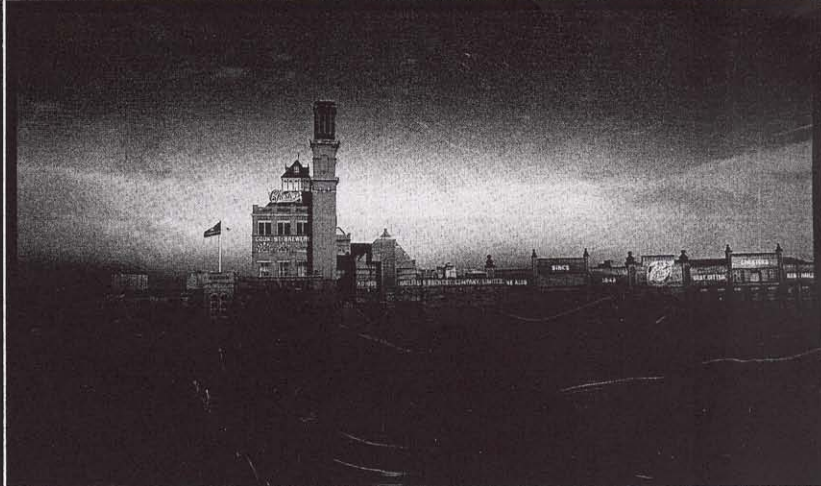
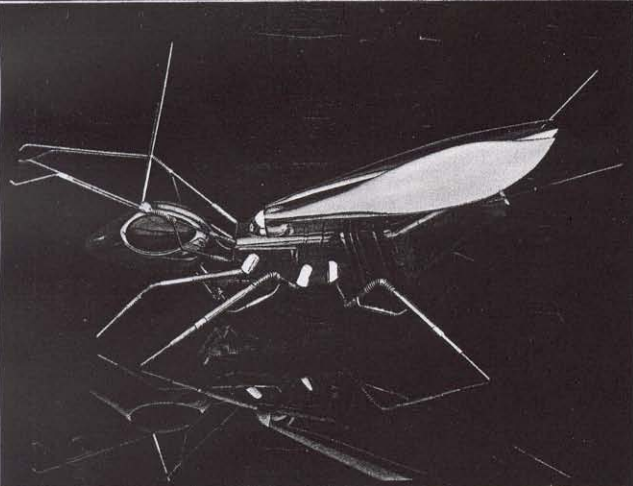
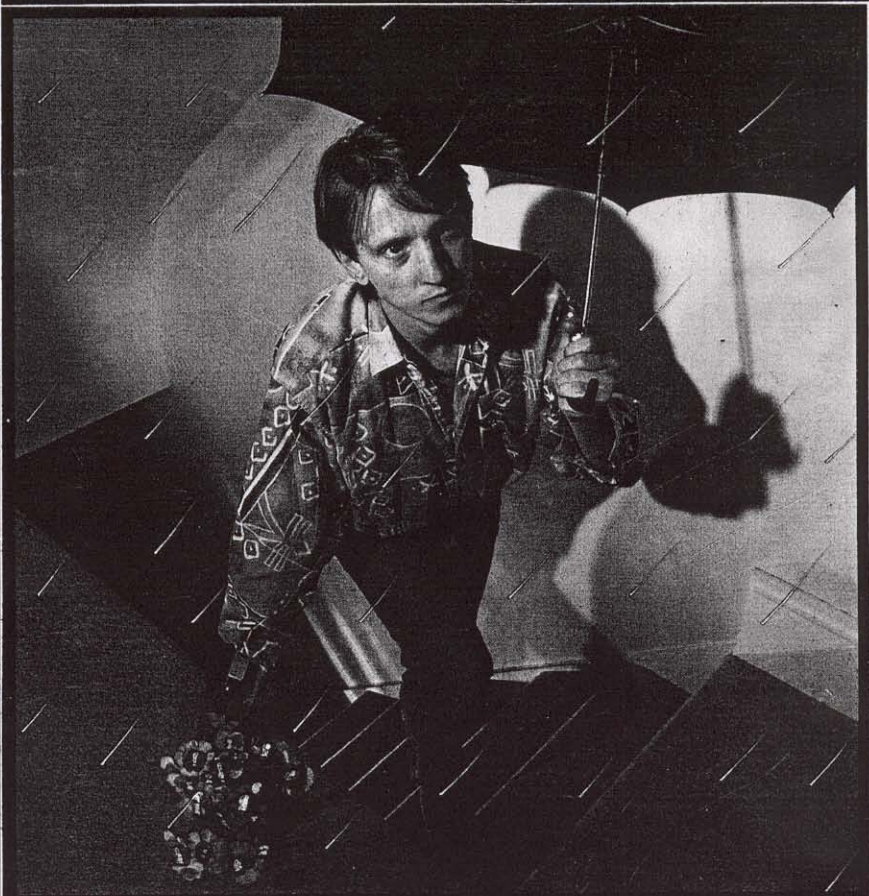
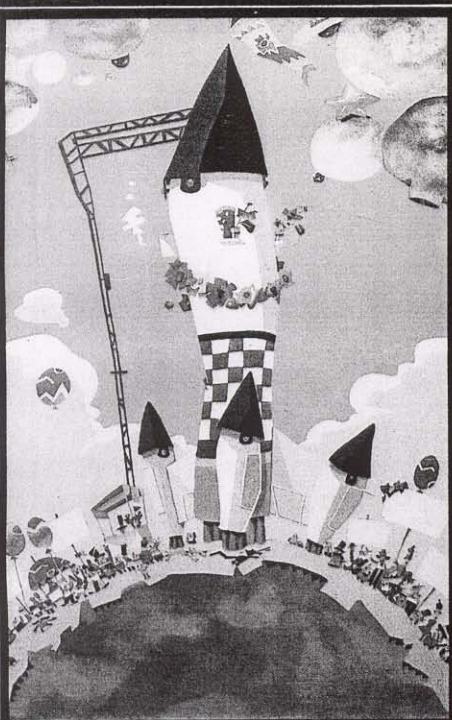


CREATIVE

REVIEW



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What is the best training for a modelmaker to undertake? Is it sculpture, graphics furniture design or engineering? Jeremy Myerson looks at the diverse backgrounds of Britain's leading modelmakers, and at some of their most inventive and unusual creations. Research by Brendan Thorpe

Modelmakers have traditionally occupied one of the more esoteric corners of the creative jungle. They come from a wide variety of backgrounds to service advertising, design, stills photography, architecture and new product development, and they bring a hybrid mixture of skills to the creation of a diverse array of objects and effects.

According to one leading practitioner in the field, "good modelmakers are found under a stone." But in an increasingly competitive industry, few modelmaking shops are taking any chances with recruitment.

A brief survey of the modelmaking business reveals that new talent is being drawn from all quarters: there are now graphic designers, sculptors, silversmiths, pattern cutters, industrial and interior designers, cabinet makers, jewellers, ex-welders and school teachers at work in the industry.

According to Phil Warren of Eagle Models, there is no set route

LEARNING CURVES

into modelmaking. Many study for photography degrees and then start in the business at the bottom, he says, adding that "all modelmakers are individuals and quite eccentric in their own way."

However it seems that different skills enhance different aspects of the modelmaker's art. For instance, many modelmakers agree that sculptors excel at more conceptual work while those with an engineering background are good at handling large-scale projects.

Michael Sinclair trained as a sculptor at Goldsmiths School of Art and specialises in making highly conceptual models for advertising. "Modelmaking falls into two categories," he says. "People either phone you up for out-of-scale objects in synthetic materials - tiny lorries or giant oranges, for instance. Or they ask you to create conceptual things that don't exist.

"It's here where the art director becomes totally dependent on the modelmaker's skills. And the

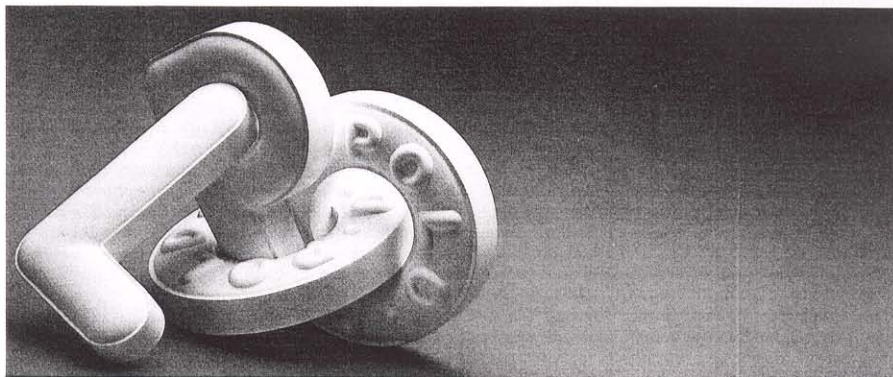
advantage of being a sculptor is that I can suggest something artistic. I've got that training."

Typical of Sinclair's highly imaginative work is his mind-

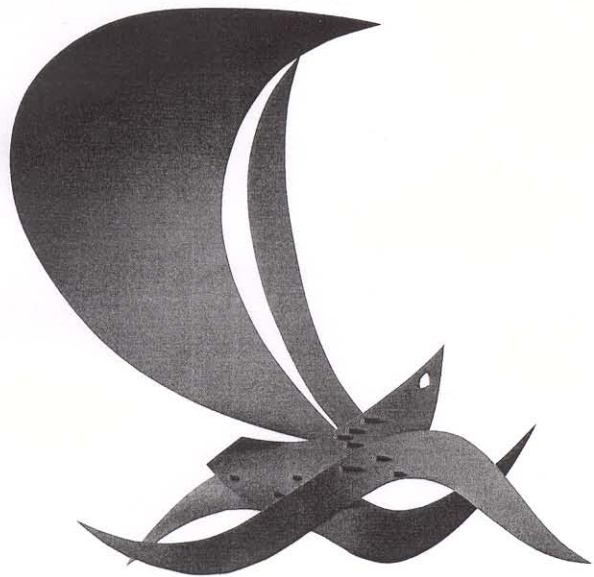
boggling Polo puzzle for JWT which goes up on a poster supersite in June, and a splendid series of Sony models for BMP. These cast old Sony products into stone



Jamie Campbell of Dynamic Innovations created giant-sized fibre glass bowls, polyurethane foam cereal and plastic spoons for a Leo Burnett commercial for Kellogg's Start, directed by Steve Barron of Barron Plumstead Fields.

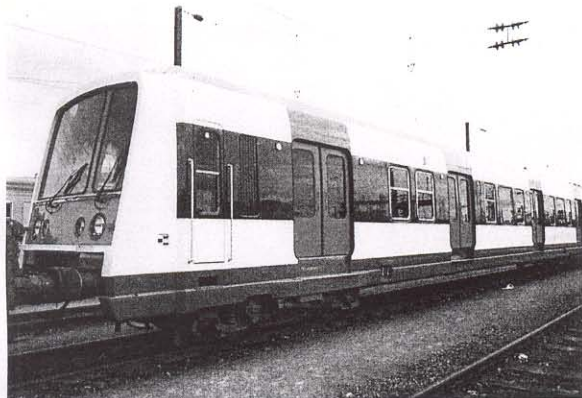
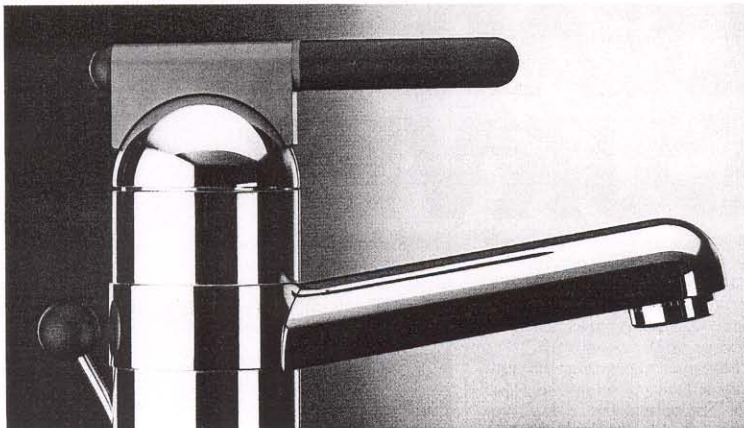


Michael Sinclair's training as a sculptor is evident in this Polo puzzler for JWT which goes up on a poster supersite in June. Art director Paul Austin and photographer Charles Settrington combined with Sinclair to create the engaging effect.



Metro Models created this boat in the style of Alexander Calder for a series of Boase Massimi Pollitt press ads for The Royal Bank of Scotland. The model was cast in brass and sprayed with paint.

PA Design's contemporary Porphyre range of taps for Porcher, designed by Lionel Fontenier. Rousseau went on to oversee the client's new look



Rolling stock for the French Railways designed while Rousseau worked for Raymond Loewy: an emphasis on sophisticated technical know-how

Rousseau a valuable hotline to the way industry works.

"Competition is now so strong, particularly from abroad, that French industrialists are very worried about what is going to happen in the years to come," explains Rousseau. "For the first time they are seeking outside help, even though it goes against tradition.

"A high proportion of French companies are family concerns where it is hard to convince the man at the top he does not necessarily know what's best for his next move."

The electronics industry is not held back in quite the same way as it tends to be the domain of

younger, self-made men. This was certainly the case with the Challenge range of micro-computers, developed in pre-micro boom days while Rousseau was with PA.

The client was a young man who had successfully broken into the scientific calculator market. Technically super-competent, he had no idea where his company should go next. Part of the appeal of Challenge was its sober, "reassuring" square design concept, which set it apart from the milk chocolate image of its competitors. Such was its success that the range was later taken over by the large CGCT group.

Another PA client, Porcher,

was part of the tap and shower fitting establishment before the company encountered Rousseau. What started off as a simple response to a government initiative - aimed at putting French tap design on its toes - ended by Porcher asking PA to give the entire company a new look.

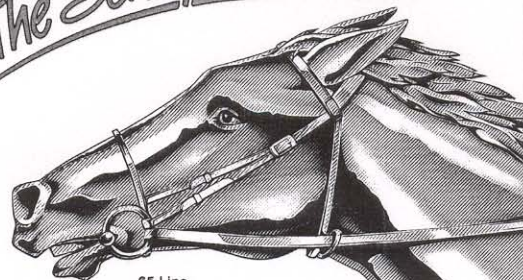
"We designed two ranges of contemporary, inexpensive taps aimed at a sector of the market Porcher had not touched before," recalls Rousseau. "At the same time we noticed the company's internal dynamism was not reflected in its external image, so we were asked to change it."

Rousseau is a rare mixture of businessman, technician and artist. He genuinely enjoys his work. "The Japanese have got it right," he says. "Their cars, hi-fi and cameras are a carefully thought out mix of looks, technology and marketing which succeeds because it strikes the right cultural chord.

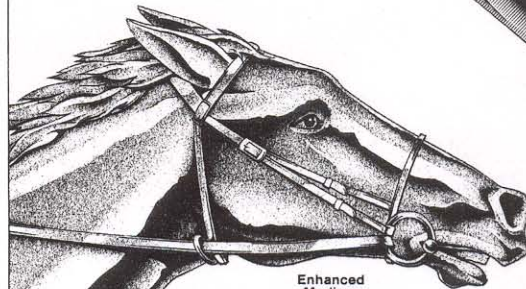
"About five years ago a range of cordless telephones were imported into France. They were very expensive and could not be connected legally into the national telephone system. But, everybody wanted one . . . that's the power of design," says Rousseau, emphasising his words with a thumbnail sketch of a free-flying handset.

Diane Hill is a freelance journalist based in Paris.

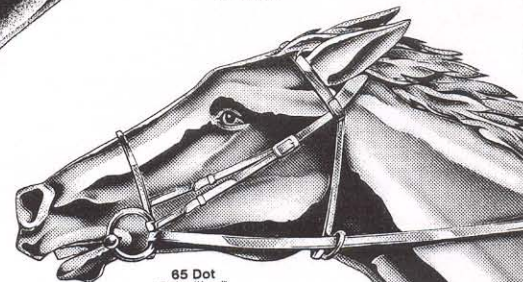
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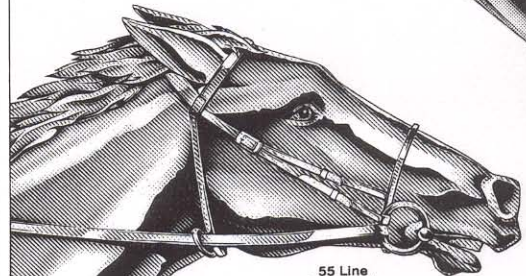
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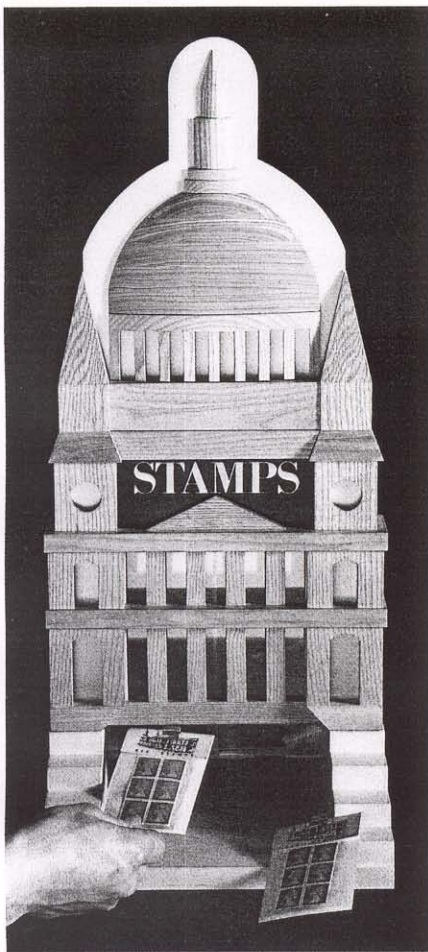
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This stamp dispenser for St Paul's, one of a series for London tourist attractions, was built by Industrial Design Models in a venture with Marketing Partnership and designer David Pocknall.

Industrial Design Models has seven full-time modelmakers. Sixty per cent of its output is prototype work for prolific product design consultancy Moggridge Associates, which is part of the same company. However it also works for external clients.

Dick Grant trained in industrial design at the Central, but says that the backgrounds of IDM staff are split evenly between industrial design and the specialist courses.

The team at Desart, mean-

while, includes a former school teacher and a welder working alongside purpose-trained modelmakers. "We like our people to be multi-skilled, not just single-skilled," says the company.

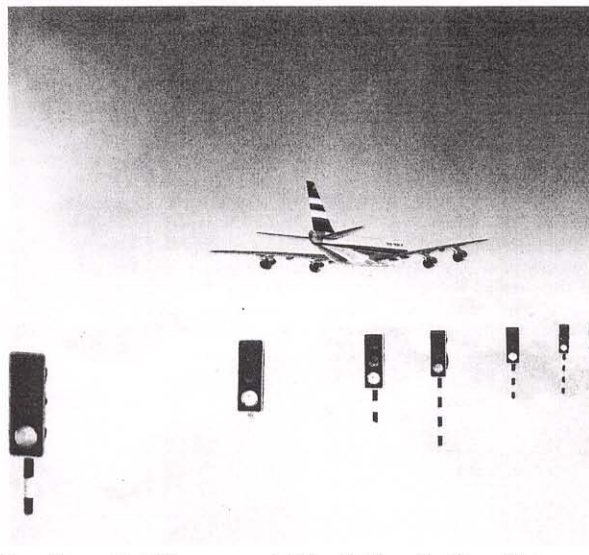
David Offin of Eagle Models trained as an interior designer and started out in architectural models. But now he prefers advertising and film modelmaking to architecture. "There's a quicker turnaround," he says. "It's less boring and more fun."

Interior and furniture design, it seems, is a popular route into modelmaking. Jamie Campbell of Dynamic Innovations studied furniture design for three years at Kingston Polytechnic before starting out as an architectural modelmaker.

His first film work was for the feature *Greystoke* and he now includes models for pop promos, TV commercials, exhibitions and industrial design in his portfolio.

"The construction techniques, attention to detail and aesthetic awareness in furniture and interior design contribute greatly to modelmaking," says Campbell.

Derek Henden of Derek Henden & Co, best known for creat-



Leo Burnett's TV commercial for Cathay Pacific called upon special reserves of modelmaking skill at Asylum. In the film, a wire-suspended jumbo jet flies across a studio-built cloudscape and through a row of green traffic lights.



The ice bucket in this ad, part of Foote Cone and Belding's Gordons Gin series, was created by Mastermodels out of clear acrylic. To make the water drops look larger than life, the model is only two thirds its true size. The colour was added by photographer Jack Bankhead, who used a green gel and green lighting.



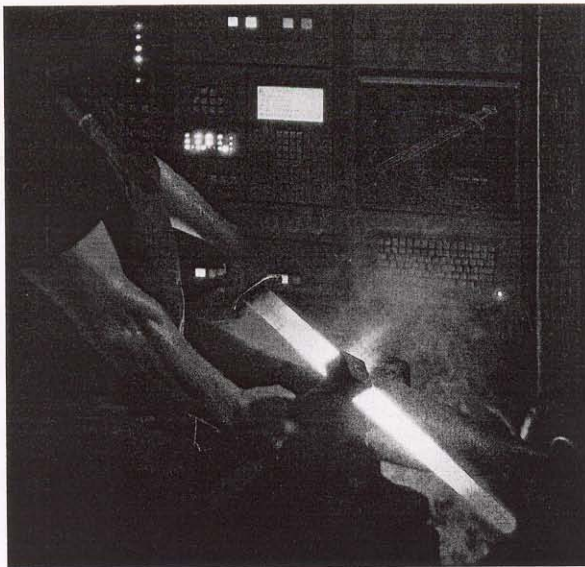
Thames Television commissioned three models for its British Beauties Award from the Desart team. English and Scottish lions were created as well as this Welsh dragon, which demonstrates the diversity of Desart work.

(in the style of Mount Rushmore) in lumbering contrast to the shiny new hardware.

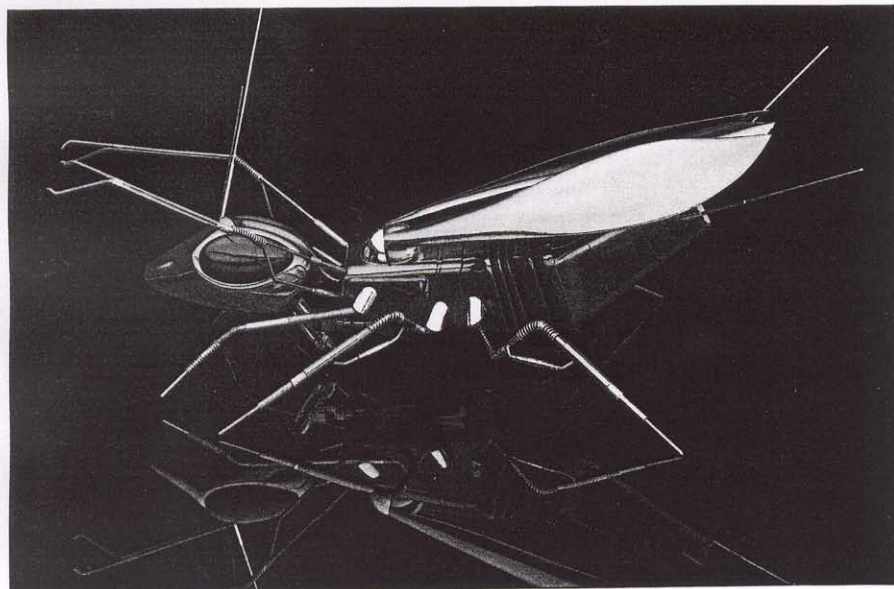
"I bring an added dimension," says Sinclair, whose first ever job was to make a penny for the Clydesdale Bank. "I know lots of modelmakers who can do perfect copies of things, but it all gets a bit anal. Modelmakers are neurotic about perfection. They have a fear of failing, of not being marked ten out of ten. I aim to be less fascist and more free in my approach."

Apart from sculpture, pattern cutting is singled out by many as a good skill to bring to modelmaking because it trains the eye so well. However the two specialist college courses in modelmaking at Medway (three years) and St Albans (two years) are also finding favour inside the industry.

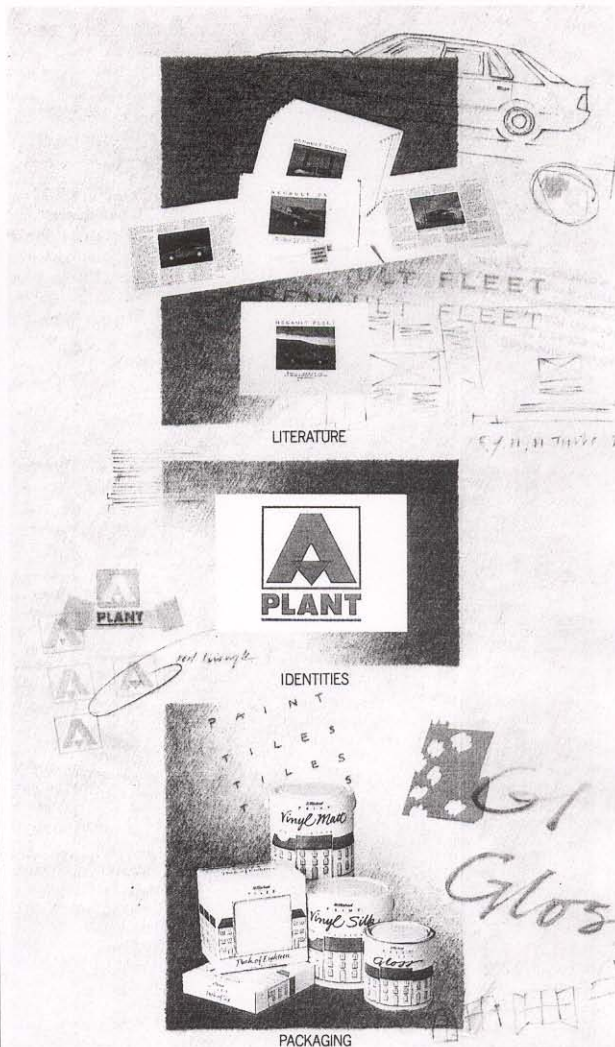
According to Dick Grant of Industrial Design Models, modelmaking courses have developed greatly. "The part of the course where students go on secondment to modelmaking companies is especially useful in giving people relevant experience," he says.



Working with photographer Jay Myrdal, the modelmakers at Parallax produced this image for a brochure promoting Royal Sword Paper. The sword is real but cold (it is coated with a special paint). The set is wood and perspex with parts from old computers.



Eagle Models created this alien and eye-catching insect purely as a way of testing the use of an epoxy glue gun made by the 3M company. The result upholds the view of Eagle's Phil Warren that "all modelmakers are quite eccentric in their own way".



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ing the Golden Egg Award gongs for *The Late, Late Breakfast Show*, also trained in design at Hornsey College of Art. He points out that a design background is useful to enable a rough idea in sketch form to be translated into a fully working model without the need to explain the entire concept in tedious detail or completely redraw it.

But whatever the training, what modelmakers apparently need most is an appetite for work. "There's a lot of hard labour involved," says Jamie Campbell. "You've got to commit your life to it. There's no such thing as weekends."

Chris Wills of Metro Models sees the vocation as a mental attitude. "There's no set way to become a modelmaker," he explains. "At the end of the day a certain discipline is required which is an ability to understand and work materials. It's a discipline of the mind, not just the hand." □



Having built up a reputation for making historical models, Freeborns was called in to make this life-size model of King William for the Domesday 900 Exhibition in Winchester. A problem was the lack of source material: the main reference for the Norman way of life is the Bayeux Tapestry and nothing much else exists. However, the look here is very authentic.

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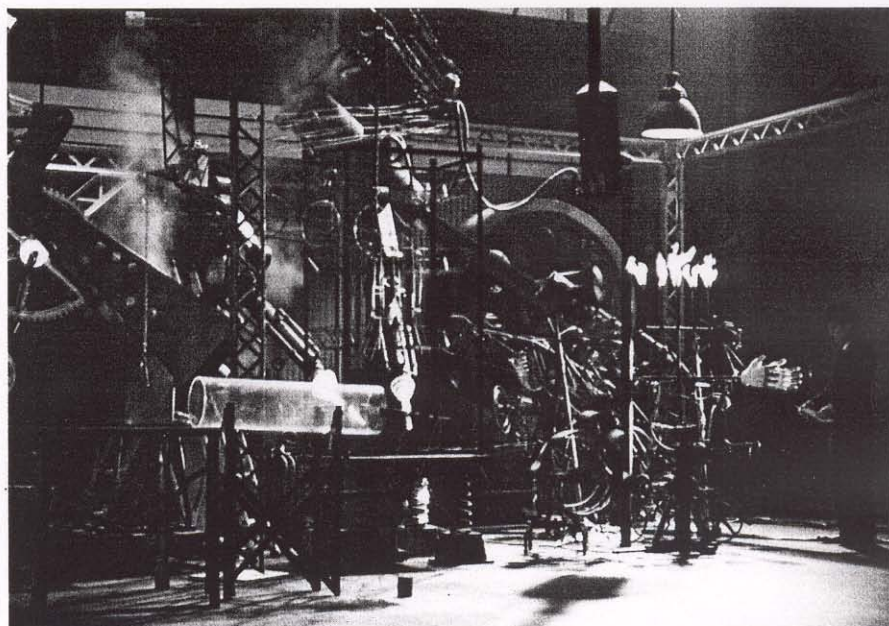
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This Heath Robinson-style machine was built by Allister Bowtell and Associates for a GG commercial for IBM International. The entire project was completed in less than 14 days and a team of between 30 and 40 modelmakers was involved in the construction of this piece of engineering ingenuity, all working on a brief that started out as a tiny scribble faxed from France to London.