

## **Transcription of Enterprising Australians video Ben Gilbert – Agency of Sculpture**

The video for this transcript can be found on the Questacon YouTube channel at:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1gLxgH9vglQ&feature=youtu.be>

### **Transcription from video:**

[Images of children playing on Canberra Arboretum acorn playground, clambering on climbing frame, swinging on tyre swing etc. This is interspersed with point of view inside of a playground.]

Anneli: Playgrounds, they are everywhere. They are a place where we can be free, be truly creative, and where time doesn't seem to matter.

[Image shows Anneli, sitting on a bench in a park]

But what if they were a place that also made us want to change the world? Hi, I'm Anneli and today I'm in Yackandandah.

[Image shows the outside of Ben's workshop with metal sign]

I'm going to be talking to designer Ben Gilbert who wants his playgrounds to change the world.

[Image shows Anneli and Ben sitting side by side on a bench in front of a dam talking and laughing. Image changes to show the same scene from across the dam.]

Ben, why do you design playgrounds?

[Image shows Anneli and Ben sitting side by side at the dam.]

Ben: There is a big need for interesting playgrounds and its meaningful work to do custom and unique playgrounds. It's very rewarding. Children want to belong to a place that is unique and special.

[Montage of still images of playgrounds designed by Ben Gilbert move across the screen.]

It's not just about the physical activity of what they can do there. They like the sense of place and that being unique.

Anneli: What makes your playgrounds different to what's out there now?

[Images shows a close up of acorns being rolled over a sculpture of oak leaves and acorns. They ping off metal pieces in the sculpture]

Ben: Ben: They're responding to the place, and not just the people, but the place in itself. And possibly the history of the place.

[Montage of still images of playgrounds designed by Ben Gilbert.]

We make it from, if possible, some reclaimed materials or ethically sourced materials. They end up just being, crafted.

[Image returns to showing Anneli and Ben sitting side by side at the dam.]

They are made as pieces of architecture rather than punched out cookies.

[Image zooms in from across the dam to show Anneli and Ben sitting side by side.]

Anneli: Where would you say you get your inspiration from?

Ben: I don't believe inspiration is a very useful word. Its problem solving.

[Image shows Ben moving through his workshop, tinkering with pieces of designs he is working on]

An artist is someone that asks questions. So if you are ask weird enough questions, and you still want to end up with a result. That might appear to be inspired, but it's not, it's the process of problem solving.

[Image returns to showing Anneli and Ben sitting side by side at the dam.]

Anneli: How do you go from having a concept to having a finished product?

[Image shows Ben working on his computer and pointing out various parts of ta design.]

Ben: I'll do some rough sketches, and then I will work in 3D. Whether on a computer or with models and move between the two, depending on what problem it is.

[Image shows Anneli and Ben sitting side by side at the dam.]

Anneli: Tell me about your design for Mt Beauty.

Ben: That's quite close, we can probably go there and have a play, and tell you there.

Anneli: Yeah, lets go!

[Image zooms out from the dam-side location, showing the landscape around.]

[Image shows Anneli and Ben sitting on a merry-go-round with a playground designed by Ben in the background.]

Anneli: Here we are at Mt Beauty at one of your playgrounds. Tell me, how did you get the idea for what we have behind us?

[Image shows the mountainous landscape and lake and then zooms in to Mt Beauty foreshore, showing Ben's playground design.]

Ben: Mt Beauty was built as a hydro town, so it was to make hydroelectricity from the mountains. The water charges down the mountains, and you see these white pipes that the water runs down.

[Image returns to Anneli and Ben sitting on a merry-go-round.]

As a kid you always want to just go in the pipe as a giant slide. So I made the big drip at the top, like the lake, and then the slide. And here we have got the turbine which makes the electricity.

[Image shows point of view walking inside the climbing structure.]

And there is the eddy, the splash over there, as a climber.

[Image shows the Mt Beauty playground from above as Ben, Anneli, and others play and climb on it]

Anneli: What's it like seeing the final product, seeing your sculptures being played on or used in the community?

Ben: It really is about the life of the thing. The underlying enthusiasm for doing it is to see it activated.

[Image shows the Mt Beauty playground from the point of view of a person walking past.]

Playgrounds can be beautiful objects that I can walk past when I am 80 with my dog, and go 'There is no way I'm going to go up that slide, but I like the idea'. Conceptual merit has meaning beyond just the people playing on it.

[Image shows Anneli climbing up through the white pipes and big drip to the slide.]

Anneli: And what advice would you give to anyone who wanted to start out sculpting or designing things?

Ben: Back your own horse, and be prepared to make a lot of mistakes.

[Image shows Anneli and Ben sitting side by side at the dam.]

If you learn from your mistakes, then you are on the right way.

[Close up on the exit of the slide. Anneli appears, sliding down.]

Anneli: Wahoo!

[Anneli lands on the ground just outside the slide and grins at the camera.]

Anneli: That was a lot of fun.

[Image shifts to the Enterprising Australians logo.]