

# how to spend it

## Outside of the ordinary

A porcelain-thorned tree is just one of the unusual pieces at Fresh Air



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Garden art has come a long way since the era of monumental statues and stone urns. As contemporary artists explore creations made from unconventional materials and develop exciting new forms, outdoor sculpture is gaining a new wave of collectors who are looking to enliven a garden or terrace with something out of the ordinary. And one of the best places to enjoy – and buy – the latest designs is the biennial Fresh Air show held at the Gloucestershire home of art collectors Lucy and David Abel Smith.

With work by 91 international artists on display, the show offers an excellent overview of contemporary artistic directions. Among the more unusual pieces is *Thorn Tree* (first picture, £16,920) by Natalia Dias – an assemblage of 500 individual porcelain thorns covering the trunk and branches of a living tree. Tom Hackett has cast 1,000 jelly-shoe sculptures in pink silicone rubber (£25,500 or £30 each), while Taz Lovejoy and Mark Biddulph's *Metamorphosis* tree lamps (£115 each) are made from colourful silicone cupcake moulds. Extraordinary materials are similarly employed by Jennifer Norris, who combines PVC and cotton to create intricately crafted organic forms such as *Spinoza* (second picture, £310). Meanwhile, Caroline Parrott's *Damask* flower silhouettes (£55 each) are made from laser-cut, anodised aluminium and Lucy Strachan combines fibreglass, carbon fibre, Kevlar and steel in her *God Rod* (£6,500).

More conventional work includes a majestic, patinated bronze swan (£21,500) by wildlife sculptor Adam Binder; *Sitting* (£4,520), a life-size figure of a contemplative woman in bronze resin by Carol Peace; and Terence Coventry's *Couple 1* (third picture, £13,500), a limited-edition bronze for the romantically inclined. Equally engaging are the reclaimed limestone *Journey Stones* (£2,950) with hand-cut, incised lettering by Iain Cotton, and Andrew Trotman's functional *Swingseat 11* (£1,150), which is carved from English oak and is a perfect symbiosis of art with lazy summer days.