

University of Warwick Art Collection

## Family Art Activities

### White Koan

Outside the main entrance of Warwick Arts Centre

*White Koan* is a goddess sculpture by the artist Liliane Lijn (said "Linn").

Some religions have many gods, rather than one. These include female gods, known as goddesses. **Minerva** is the Ancient Roman goddess of wisdom while **Heket** is the Ancient Egyptian goddess of frogs. **Nike** is the Ancient Greek goddess of victory and **Wala** is a sun goddess for the Australian aboriginal people. They believe she keeps the sun in a bag.

Draw your own goddess. What does she do? What is her name?



Turn over for other things to do and more information

## More information

The word "Koan" sounds like the word "cone" which is the shape of the sculpture. "Koan" is a Japanese word for a riddle given to young Buddhist monks to help them empty their minds of conscious thoughts and concentrate on the present moment. An example of a koan is, *What is the sound of one hand clapping?*

Liliane Lijn was born in America but came to live in Europe. At the end of the 1960s, Liliane Lijn went to live in Greece. Here she learned about **Hestia** who is the Ancient Greek goddess of the hearth or fireside and is often represented by a small cone of white ash. In Ancient Greece, women were responsible for keeping the fire going so that the house was warm and food could be cooked. In the 1960s, many women felt that they wanted more responsibilities than looking after a house.

Liliane Lijn's goddess Koans are outside the home. They are not made from natural materials but from metals and plastics that are also used to make machines and equipment. They are often very big.

At night the sculpture slowly revolves round and round. The white shape disappears in the dark but three coloured rings of neon light appear to move up and down as the Koan turns. The viewer does not have to move round the sculpture to see it.

## More things to do

### Make a goddess sculpture

You could use old cardboard boxes and tubes, yogurt pots, Lego, wrapping paper, play dough, sheets of paper or kitchen roll that you colour. If you make a nature goddess, you could use stones, grass and leaves. Check with your family what materials you can use before you start.

### Tell the story of your Goddess

Goddesses often have exciting lives. Write a story or act a play about your goddess and what happens to her. How did she get any special powers? Is your goddess good or evil? Who is her enemy?

To find out more about the University of Warwick Art Collection, visit  
[www.warwick.ac.uk/go/art](http://www.warwick.ac.uk/go/art)