



LUXO LAMP

When this cleverly functional task light was chosen as the Pixar mascot, it became instantly iconic – and controversial.

In 1937, Norway's Jac Jacobsen designed the award-winning Luxo L-1 lamp, an industrial task light. But in 1986, CGI animation studio Pixar gave it a second life as a cartoon. Before *Toy Story* and *Finding Nemo* were hit movies, the studio released what was then a ground-breaking 3D computer-animated short called *Luxo Jr.* It was a simple two-minute tale of father-and-son lamps playing with a ball. Director John Lasseter had looked no further than the architect's lamp on his desk for inspiration and had imbued the inanimate objects with emotion. At its premiere, the short scored a standing ovation and *Luxo Jr.* went on to receive an Oscar nomination before the lamp cemented its place as Pixar's mascot, hopping onto the screen before every movie as part of its logo.

For years, the relationship between lighting company Luxo and Pixar was amicable – until 2009, when Pixar started making knock-off Luxo Jr. lamps to go with its special-edition Blu-ray package of the movie *Up*. Luxo's lawyers swung into action, claiming trademark infringement, and the matter was settled out of court. Not only that, the 1.8-metre-high animatronic Luxo lamps that greeted Walt Disney World visitors were pulled.

Still, the Luxo lamp lives on. With its flexible, spring-balanced arm and crane-like look, it remains in production (the L-1 is available with a lamp base or table clamp at Finnish Design Shop, from \$358, finnishdesignshop.com) and 25 million have been sold worldwide. "It's the original workstation lamp," says interior designer Amanda Ayres from Melbourne's Studio Husk. "People like it for the aesthetic but it's a functional light designed to hang over your workspace so you've got this direct illumination of what you're drawing or reading – you don't have any shade or shadow."

Practical, timeless and a pop-culture icon, the Luxo lamp has come to symbolise creativity and innovation. And maybe even a lightbulb moment. ●