

Handling and Care of Kostick Folding Stars

These folding stars, whether bronze or silicon bronze, are composed of wires, or rods that are fused together at the tips. The metal itself forms a drop while molten, and the resulting beams are all equivalent to each other, in effect intersecting at a common center. With a modicum of care in handling, these are very durable structures, displaying geometric form in a pleasing, tactile as well as visual way.

The star is not a rigid structure, but rather is a balance of forces. The beams can slide through the intersection. This can be done intentionally, as in the picture shown, where some of the stars have alternately long and short legs in a symmetrical fashion. Care must be taken not to slide a beam much more than about the 1/3 - 2/3 proportion as shown, otherwise it is possible to put too much strain on the metal just behind where it is welded.

Also, in the normal course of unfolding and folding these stars, the beams will tend to slide, or drift through the intersection. In order to maintain the balanced, centered display of the open star, it is necessary to occasionally adjust the lengths of the legs, or branches, so they are all about the same length. That way, it can spin nicely about any axis. This can easily be done while the star is in the open or the folded position, just by pushing the longest tips in to make them all the same length. This quickly becomes a natural part of handling.

The metal that the stars are made from is not coated. It is chemically cleaned and mechanically polished. Due to the folding action, coatings have not proved to be effective. The bare metal has been treated to inhibit tarnishing, but will change color and luster with age, depending on what handling and atmosphere it is exposed to. If desired, the stars may be rubbed with fine steel wool from time to time, or cleaned with any household cleaner recommended for brass or copper. Care must be taken, though, to rinse any such product from the star thoroughly, so that no residue is left in the narrow spaces between wires.

