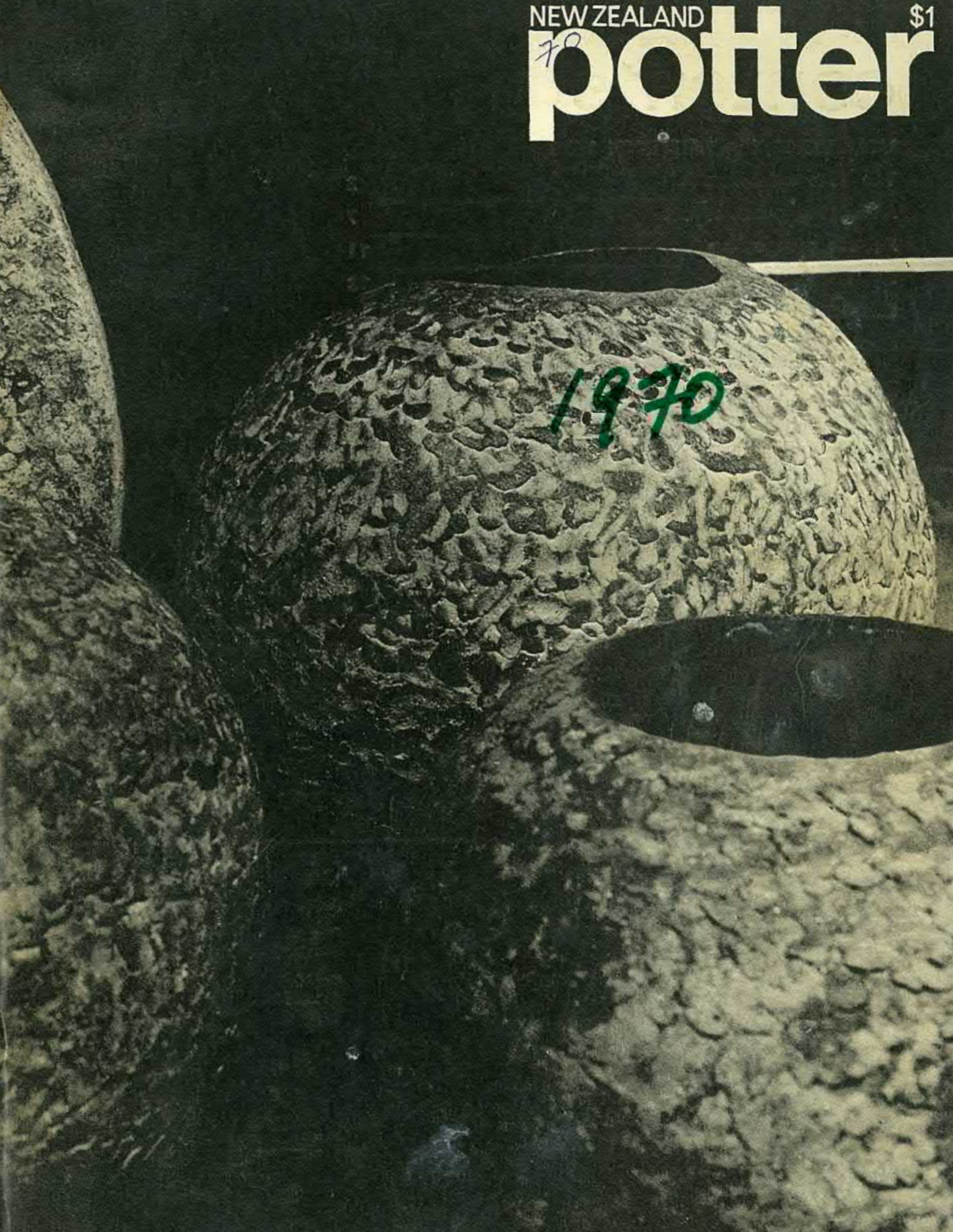


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# NEW ZEALAND potter

## editorial . . .

### 12 Year Itch!

It will be obvious from articles in this issue of the *Potter* that some conflicting opinions are held as to how the potter's association should be shaped to meet the needs of all New Zealand potters.

There will be some changes. This year no annual exhibition will be held. The New Zealand Society of Potters will be considering other ways of admitting new members and other ways of showing their work.

A strong plea is heard for a change of emphasis within the Society to lay greater stress on the work of 'professional potters'. Some potters even want a separate association to promote their interests. In this issue some of these people express their views. By examining their requirements of a potter's association it will be clear what they object to in the present Society. But who is the professional potter?

That there should be conflicting ideas concerning the direction of New Zealand pottery now—about twelve years since pottery really got under way in this country is to be expected as a healthy sign of growth. Examination of ideals and constructive criticism in the appropriate quarter can do nothing but good; so long as we recognise the stage when talk must cease so that we can get back to the essential task of making better pots.



# THE 13th EXHIBITION

by Margaret Milne

This year for the 13th exhibition of the New Zealand Society of Potters for the first time a guest selector was invited to be sole selector. There were also two guest exhibitors from Australia.

The guest selector was Ivan McMeekin, a well known Sydney potter, who trained with Michael Leach and Michael Cardew, then returned to Australia to found the Sturt Pottery at Mittagong. He now lectures in ceramic technology at the University of New South Wales. His selection was made over a period of two days and the pots chosen made up a representative exhibition of what he considered expressed the character of work being done in New Zealand today.

Two hundred and fifty pots were taken as a good number to make up an exhibition, give or take a little; in fact less than two hundred and fifty were finally selected. The first hundred pots were easily separated by their quality. The rest followed by careful consideration of the unity of design and execution, the functional design, the application of techniques used and the visual and tactile qualities. The selector was surprised at the number of entries submitted and commented favourably on the quality of the new entries.

## Critical comment

Main impressions of this bigger than ever show were: too many exhibitors, diversity defeating unity, and the future of this annual exhibition in doubt.

In very round terms there were nearly 700 entries. Two thirds of the entries were rejected. Of over 80 exhibitors, one quarter qualified as new members of the Society and one quarter displayed one entry only. Two guest exhibitors from Australia added fairly large group displays.

These new entries were pre-selected by Marjorie Leighton and Neil Grant, executive members of the N.Z. Society. Those which showed an overall standard of competence went forward for general selection by Ivan McMeekin. In this way a change was made in the method of admitting new members to the society. We consider that the system worked well and justified the experiment. Wherever possible Marjorie and Neil sent written comments to the unsuccessful applicants which they hoped might be helpful.

Entries from 116 potters came from all over the country—83 of these were accepted. Out of the total 682 entries, 231 were shown.

This display which was dramatically designed architecturally and well carried out by a capable team, was the work of Chester Nealie. His use of fibrolite modules in natural grey with some faces and the inside of the modules painted brilliant red, was striking and unusual. It could be said that the scale and the impact of the design over-shadowed some of the pots, but generally there was considerable interest in this contemporary approach to display.

Between 1200 and 1400 people viewed the exhibition which indicates its wide general appeal. □

by Dennis Hanna

The diversity of work on view will be emphasised by naming some of the items. There was a chess set, a tiled table, a large bas-relief and mosaic comic strip, many objects for contemplation and shelf filling and some domestic ware (some pieces bearing a utility label will see no such use.) Only ceramic jewelry was missing (Not eligible). To present all this in a satisfying exhibition is impossible. All the same, it must be admitted that this range in exhibits reveals

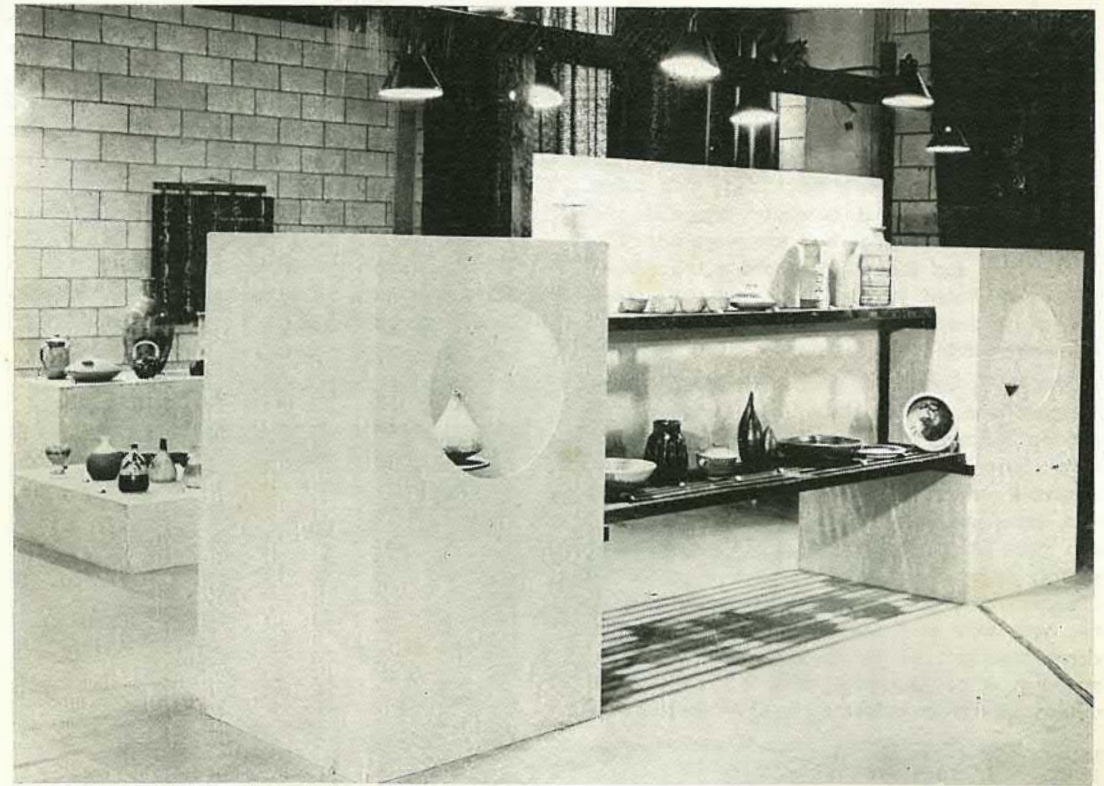


Photo: Barry McKay

the limitless possibilities for experimenting with clay which is a basic appeal of the present day pottery movement. It also reveals the restless urge for potters to create a masterpiece.

The selector, Ivan McMeekin commented on the predominance of the sculptural over the functional idiom. Many potters now seem to be avoiding the discipline and experience required for really satisfactory domestic ware. Or do they feel that there is a shorter way to exhibition success if they submit startling or precious objects to which the selector will apply fewer traditional standards? But the risk is that a despairing selector will reject them as downright ugly. Perhaps they find this type of work more personally satisfying and more applicable to their limited involvement in pottery. Perhaps they feel that the traditional views are out of date.

As usual the exhibition failed to attract entries from a number of well known established potters, and there are a number of reasons why

this should be so. The need to retain their best pieces for the nucleus of their personal shows, the unity of their work not being realised by the few entries permitted and the scattering of their pieces, and the selection system, being some of them. The need to bring the experienced potters into the exhibition has been frequently stated, but how could every potter be adequately represented?

The finish of the pots and the glaze quality have certainly improved over the years but a number of the pots looked tired and overworked. Few of the large pots were successful. The initial success of the large raw piece may not be realised in the finished pot — shrinkage, decoration and glaze failure take their toll, and the final form is often out of proportion.

With great care and thought Ivan McMeekin selected 20 pieces to form the core of the exhibition and his personal choice would provoke little argument. A few pots are chosen for comment. The finish, glaze quality and decoration of



the pots of Harry and May Davis was not surpassed. These potters have established a personal tradition without need for change of style. Estelle Martin's was the best bowl-elegant, perfectly proportioned, of even glaze with accent on the rim. Len Castle's bottle with orange-red shino-type glaze was a particularly fine piece. Neil Grant showed a carefully designed slab bottle, though the base and top were not quite in balance, and Richard Cadness a tall elegant vase with fluted top and dark, subdued glaze. David Carson-Parker's casserole was a good domestic work.

The two Australian guest exhibitors, Marea Gazzard and Milton Moon, had large uniform groups. Gazzard's pots were large free sculptural forms, mainly bowl or gourd shaped, unglazed outside, asking for a terrace and bright sun. Moon showed an interesting thin iron and ash glaze from his gas kiln, which is unlike our glazes. An experienced and travelled potter he is searching for ideas. His technique of tearing at the wet clay and ramming it together again drew reactions of excitement or violent disapproval. It could appeal more to those potters whose own work is in a state of indigestion.

The method of display chosen should serve the pots. In such exhibitions there will always be difficulties and some incompatibilities. Enthusiasm, a tremendous amount of work and an urge for originality were all ingredients of Chester Nealie's great effort in constructing his modular fibrolite display stands. Interesting indeed as objects in themselves, the cold dull surface of the material was not in sympathy with some of the pots. Some pots were decidedly ill at ease in their peep-hole cases, particularly David Brokenshire's live thrusting form, Sentinel I, and Nola Barron's Opened Form, a heavy, cleft discoid shape. Both of these pieces needed to stand aloof and unenclosed to stand judgment. Of necessity it is sinful to handle exhibition pots but when inspecting a plate or a shallow bowl, the first thing a potter will want to do is to turn it over to examine the reverse side; some method of display is needed so that both sides can be viewed.

The Society is now face to face with problems concerning future exhibitions. With the phenomenal increase in the number of potters, future exhibitions could see entries of 1000 or

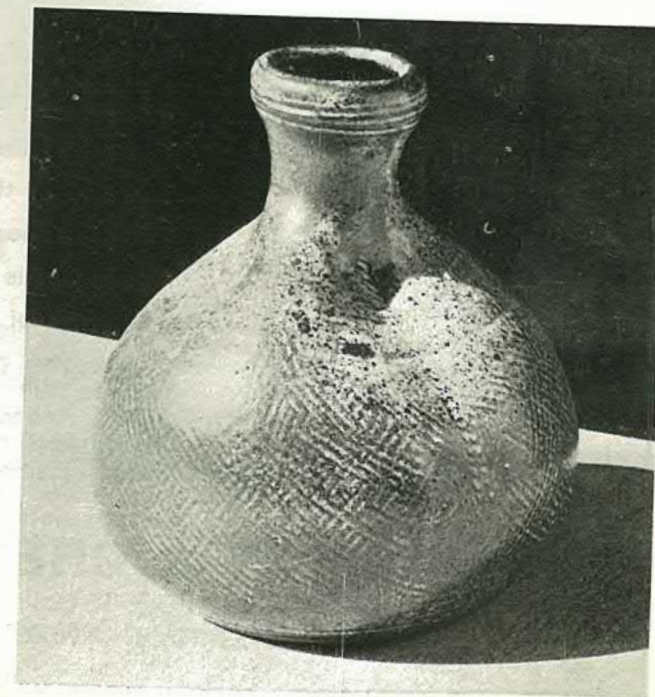
more. The problem of dealing with rejects alone is formidable, aside from dealing with the selected pots. A change of policy is inevitable. So many objects can be made of clay it would seem necessary to retain some classification for exhibition purposes and to impose some restrictions. But definitions are difficult. Sculpture and pottery are really impossible to define. The suggestion that any fired clay object should qualify for acceptance, would turn the National Exhibition into a jumble sale. Solutions to these problems must be found. □



At the 13th Exhibition

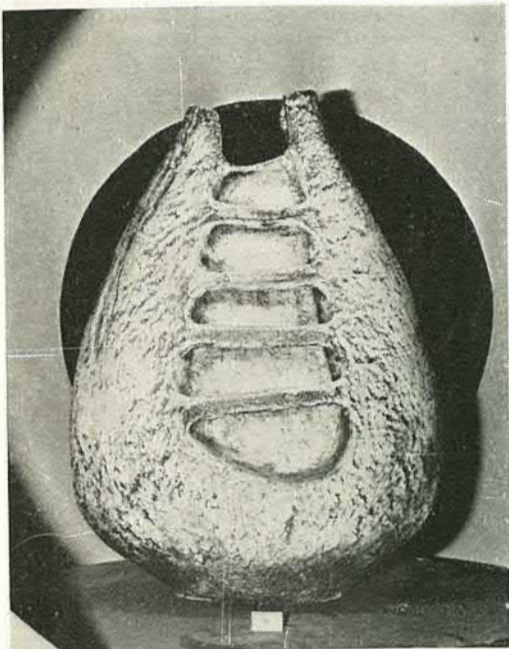
Harry and May Davis.

Left: Slab bottle, by Neil Grant



Right: Bottle, by Len Castle.





At the 13th Exhibition

Pot by John Fuller.

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## FRONT COVER

The photograph on the cover shows part of the group sent to the 13th Exhibition by guest exhibitor Marea Gazzard.



## About the Guest Artists

by Helen Mason

It is perhaps significant of broadening horizons when at the same time as a selector from another country is invited for the Thirteenth Exhibition, two of the most highly individual potters of that same country are also invited as guest artists? The fact that their work caused much discussion and controversy may also have mind-stretching possibilities, because Australia is close enough in distance and viewpoint for us to have some chance of real understanding.

Both Milton Moon and Marea Gazzard are mature potters in their early forties. Both have travelled widely, both are married with children,

and both have evolved a distinctive and forceful expression in clay.

Milton Moon is now lecturer in Ceramics at the South Australian School of Art in Adelaide, after living, teaching and potting in Brisbane for some fifteen years. Before that he had wide and varied experience, first in the Navy working round the Pacific, and then as writer and broadcaster in Australia. He has a rich and positive awareness of life and his work is an expression of this. He puts clay and glazes together and lets the kiln work on them with a spontaneity that is refreshing, and he also used

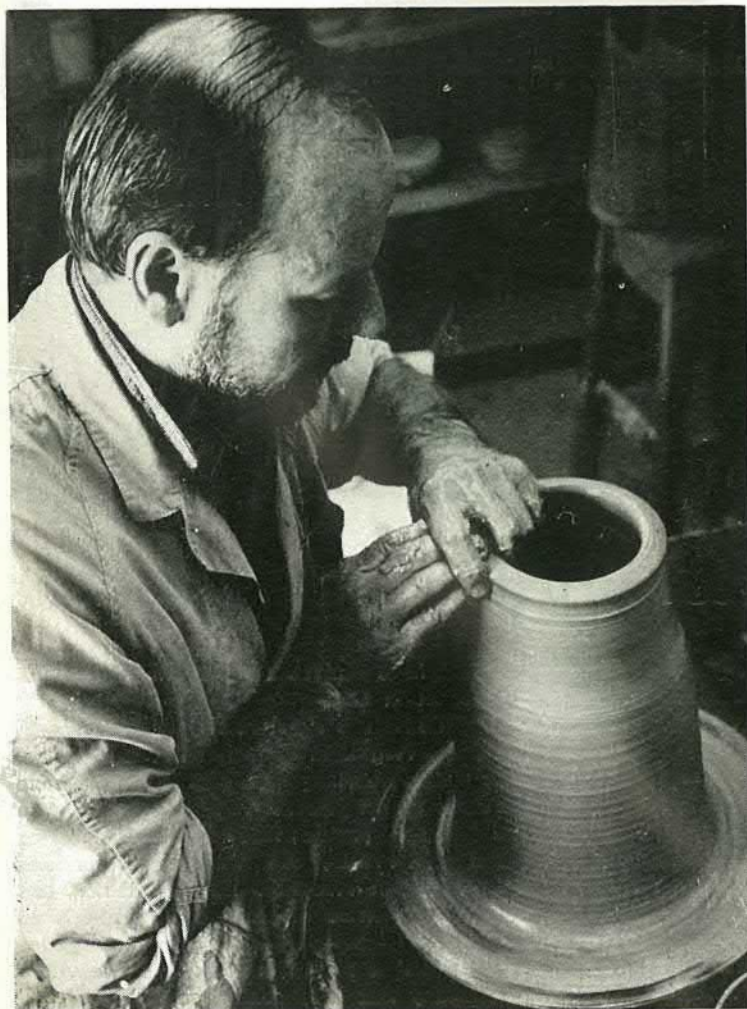


the wheel to make strong and forceful shapes.

Marea Gazzard lives with her architect husband and two children in one of those delightful terrace houses in Paddington, Sydney. She has had a formal training in ceramics at the National Art School, Sydney, and the Central School of Arts and Crafts, London. Her studio is built in the back garden, and family life and artistic life are acceptably interwoven, with the result that her pots are large, warm, rich and extremely female, with the free shapes and pleasant texture that develop naturally out

of the method of coiling.

This question of a feminine use of form is one which is only just becoming apparent, living as we have done for centuries in a world designed almost exclusively by the male. It will be interesting to see in what way environmental forms change and develop as women increasingly have the education and ability to express this in concrete form. It has been stimulating to see the work of two such vigorous potters. How much there is happening at present in our own immediate Pacific neighbourhood.



*Milton Moon*

## NEW TITLES FROM PITMAN

### KILNS AND KILN FIRING FOR THE CRAFT POTTER

H. Frazer

Since all ceramic pottery must be fired and good pottery depends directly on correct firing procedures, the problems and techniques discussed here will be of vital concern to potters at all levels. Of particular interest is the section on pottery faults and how to overcome them.

### KILNS (DESIGN, CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATION)

Daniel Rhodes

This book contains a wealth of material on ceramic kilns and firing. In concise and authoritative form, it presents information about the history of the kiln from the earliest firing methods of primitive man to the more complex and efficient kilns of today. Fuels, burners, refractories, masonry practice, construction details, temperature control and measurement, and safety precautions are all thoroughly treated. The various types of kilns are described, such as up-draft, downdraft, wood fired, chamber, electric, portable, and raku kiln designs, together with their advantages and limitations. Many original detailed kiln designs are presented with step-by-step instructions which will enable those who wish to build kilns to proceed with knowledge and confidence.

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## Potters symposium

by Bruce Martin

Many people have felt for a long time, that the National Exhibition and the Annual General Meeting of the New Zealand Society of Potters needed further stimulus—some means of getting people together. The symposium devised by Helen Mason and organised by the Auckland potters in November certainly did this. Potters and friends from all over the country attended all sessions and there was something for everybody—humour, education and entertainment — the symposium had it all.

### Like it or not

The first session on Friday was a slide and discussion evening entitled 'Pots I like' with Trevor Bayliss in the chair and the following panel: Helen Mason, David Brokenshire, Adrian Cotter, Graeme Storm and Wilf Wright. The overall standard of this session was rather lower than expected. The programmes fell down because of the lack of a co-ordinated theme amongst the panel, and the use of slides made from photographs in well known books. We have seen these pots before and as much as we might also like them, they are really someone else's choice. Without actually seeing a pot, and preferably living it with for some time, how can one really analyse it critically? I expected more than just a 'like' or 'don't like' answer from competent potters who should be able to give guidance on form, quality and aesthetic values. Not all the slides were copies of illustrations. Nor were the comments lacking in sincerity. Perhaps the title 'Pots I like' set the panel off on a shaky footing, and a similar session another time would be much better.

### Teamwork

Saturday's first session 'The team approach to pot making' was well attended. On the panel were Harry and May Davis, Jack and Peggy Laird, Simon and Tine Engelhard and Estelle and Bruce Martin with Mary Hardwick-Smith in the chair. Each person gave a short description of

their part in their team and the overall picture was of four very different working patterns evolving from different personalities, backgrounds and the family involvement of each team. The value of the discussion lay in the contrasts it showed, the diverse ways in which people can work together to make pots while still retaining their individuality.

### For sale

'Making and selling pots for a living' was the title of the third session under Neil Grant's chairmanship. The panel was John Parry, Michael Trumic, Warren Tippet and Wilf Wright. The discussion got away to a very humorous start when John Parry gave some background to his taking up pottery. The humorous theme was sustained by the other speakers, but they all failed to do much more than give case histories of the 'making' and said very little about the 'selling' of their work. They also failed to answer the only written question submitted to any panel during the symposium. Perhaps this was because the panel hadn't been shown the question beforehand. These failures could have been avoided perhaps if the chairman had kept the discussion to the point.

This should have been the most valuable panel of all, to those of us who sell our own pots. It could also have been of value to those who own craft shops and who sell pottery, but somehow the team failed to come to grips with the cold, hard facts of commerce. Entertainment was this session's highlight.

### Kilns and firing

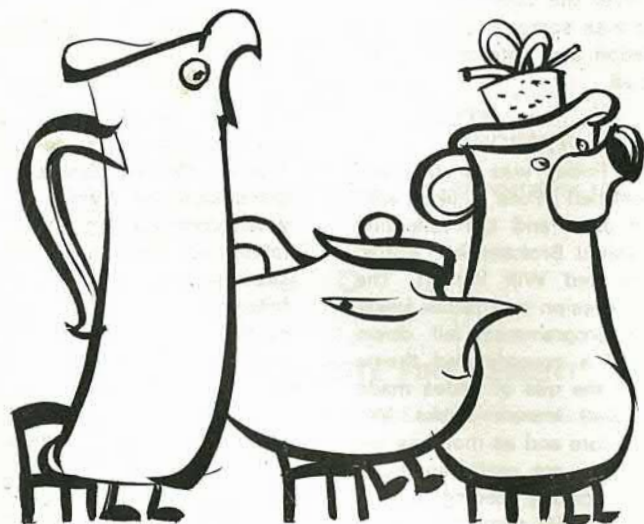
This was the subject of the last and most technical session. Ivan McMeekin, Peter Stichbury, Barry Brickell and Mirek Smisek made up the panel and were chaired by Dennis Hanna. Except for Ivan McMeekin the team were inclined towards life histories rather than technical matters, although many points were raised. This was one session where I thought audience



participation would lead the way. It didn't. An interesting fact to emerge was that each member of the team either had used or was going to build a round kiln. I wonder if there will be a rash of round kilns in New Zealand before long. Fuels were discussed—wood, coke, oil, natural gas and liquid petroleum gas. Reduction using a steam drip system was one of the interesting contributions made to the discussion by the visitor Ivan McMeekin. The audience missed a good opportunity to have some of its kiln and firing problems discussed by not asking these experts any questions. It was an opportunity that should

not have been missed.

The idea behind this symposium was excellent, and the organisation was superb. The getting together of established potters, who may not all have been expert speakers, but who nevertheless had something worthwhile to contribute was of value to those learning. For the potters themselves who participated, it was also of value to be given the chance to get to know each other and to discuss their problems and possible solutions. It is to be hoped that more symposiums will follow. □



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## ENTRAINMENT

by Roy Cowan

When something moves through a body of air, it tends to drag the adjacent air along too. The 'something' may be an aircraft or just another current of air or gas. The simple burner found on gas stoves uses this principle. The jet of gas from the nozzle entrains the air present in the burner tube and the two mix through turbulence. As the gas tap is turned up or down the rate of entrainment follows suit, but an important adjustment lies in the size of the air inlet hole in the burner tube. If this is reduced the rate of air inflow will be cut and the flame will move towards reduction, and for gas fired pottery kilns this control of air supply is needed to effect changes in the atmosphere.

Normally the flame of a gas stove burns just off the end of the burner where the mixture emerges through a number of small outlet orifices. There is a certain speed at which flame is propagated through a combustible mixture, and the dimensions of the outlets are such that the speed of emission exceeds the rate of burning. Obviously this margin will be least at very low gas settings, when a chance disturbance such a draught may cause the flame to 'pop back' into the burner body. Accordingly a gas stove must have a range of burners with differing outlet capacities. This factor must be allowed for in the making of burners for gas kilns, where the burner will have to face very hot conditions. At



1. Top, entrainment of air regulated by the rate of gas flow and the size of air inlet. Bottom, reduced mixture outlets control the flame position.



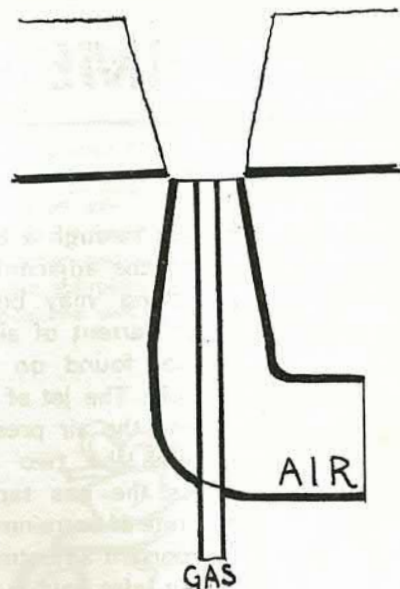
no stage should the flame develop within the metal parts of the burner.

Town gas is supplied at a low pressure and there is an upper limit to the possible rate of entrainment, but sufficient output for studio kilns is available. For larger installations, the air supply itself is pumped. When air flows through the throat of a carburettor there is a fall of pressure which draws fuel out of the bowl. When air is blasted out of a forge type nozzle gas is drawn out of the enclosed jet, that is, the air rather than the gas is now the propelling agent, and a large flame may be produced.

One of the hazards with devices such as water heaters lies in the possibility of faulty ignition, allowing the device to become filled with gas. There is little risk in the type which has a constant pilot light, the heat of which is used to hold



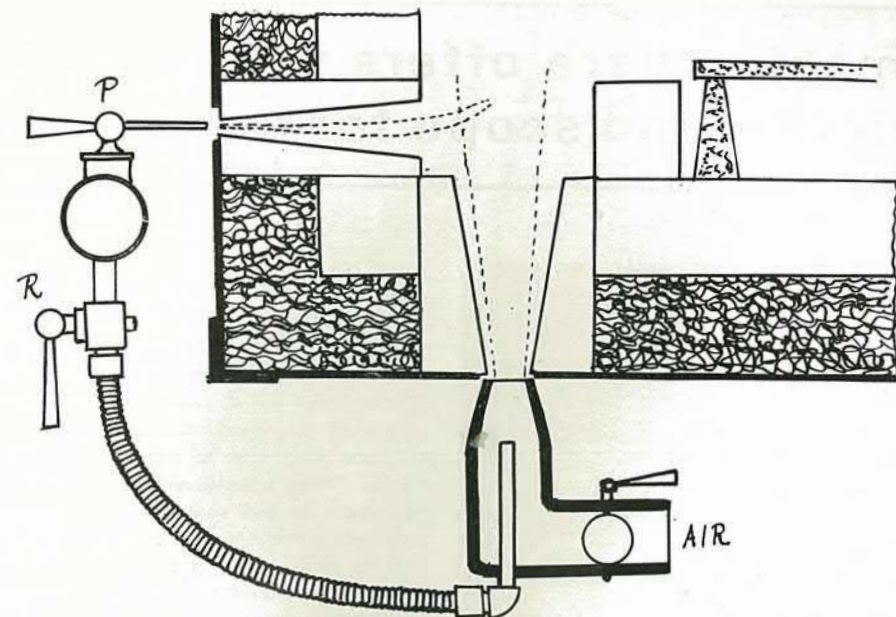
2. Petrol is entrained by the air flow in a carburettor.



3. Forge nozzle with air under pressure. Control valves on both air and gas lines.

a gas valve open, but with the geyser type of appliance where a pilot jet must be lit and swung into position, turning on the main gas flow, errors can occur leading to a minor explosion. Such an event would be infinitely more serious in a solidly built and more fully enclosed structure such as a kiln. Gas must, in this respect be treated as the most flash-prone fuel. The final sketch indicates a fuel supply layout for a small kiln with burners in each corner. The pilot jet, firing through a small quarl in the kiln side, must be turned inward to bring the main gas valve 'on', but each burner has its own control valve. A shutter or valve is fitted to the air inlet to permit atmosphere control.

As with oil fired kilns running on pot burners, gas firing systems are suited to the induction of all air requirements at the burner, and the chimney as an inducer of



4. Part of a gas kiln. P, the Pilot light forms part of the main gas valve. R is a regulator to the individual burner, and the air inflow is also controlled.

natural draught is not required. Nevertheless, it will probably be found that the production, with gas, of the long soft type of flame particularly characteristic of drip-fed kilns will require an element of natural draught and delayed introduction of some of the air to the flame.

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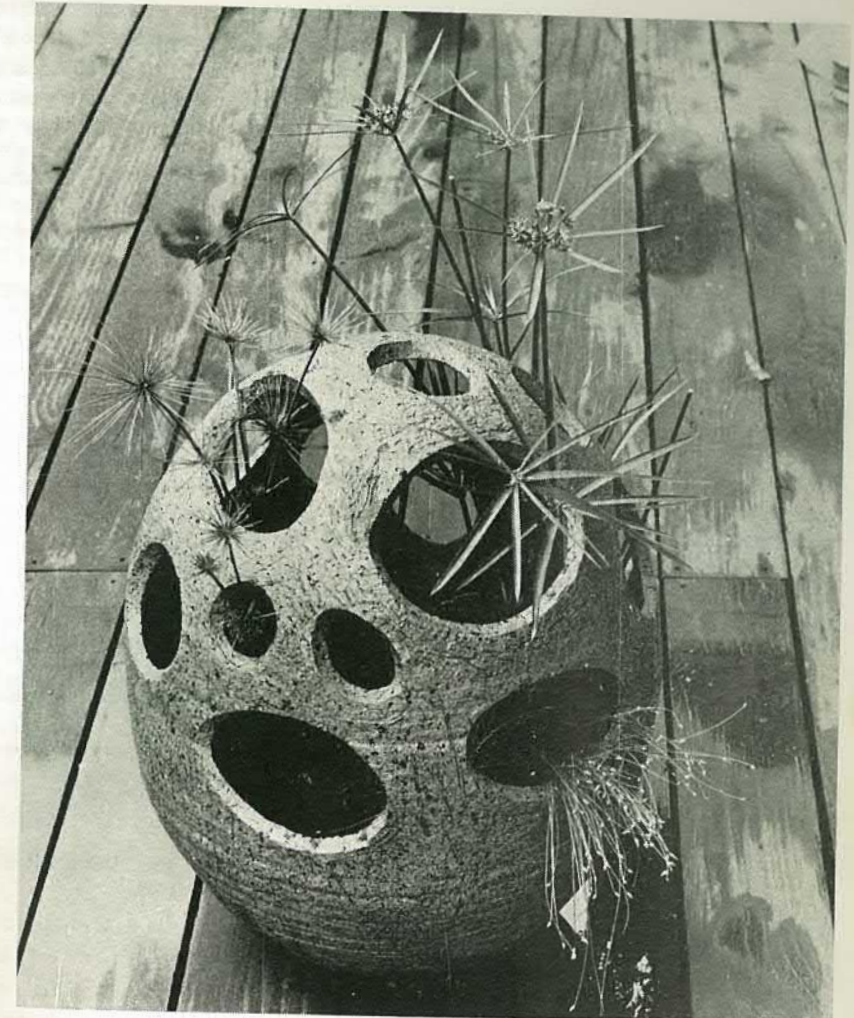
## 'Domestic ware offers the necessary discipline and scope for imagination'



There are people—mostly women—who attend pottery class once a week. Pottery for them is a useful outlet, the value being in the doing, rather than for the pots themselves; but at least they learn to appreciate a good pot and to sharpen their visual awareness. From the people who start at weekly classes there will always be some who wish to make the craft a serious hobby. These people will own their own basic equipment or will share with a group. They are prepared to devote a good deal of their leisure time to their hobby and the best of them will sell some of their output. And then there are those for whom pottery is more than a hobby. These people are not dependent on pottery for their living—they are teachers or other professional people, they are housewives whose families have grown up, or they have income from other sources. They devote as much time as they can to pottery and have professional attitudes, i.e. emphasis on quality, experiment to find new materials and new ways of expressing them, have their own workshop and sell their output. Then there are the relatively few (although numbers are growing) fully professional potters who earn their living solely by the sale of their pots. It is having potters at these different levels that makes the pottery movement in this country so vital.

Margaret Milne could be said to be a typical example of the second to last category — one for whom pottery is more than a hobby. Her beginnings and her progress are paralleled in many of our potters.

She started potting at evening classes in Auckland conducted by Patricia Perrin, to whom she says, so many potters owe their beginnings. Early enthusiasm was sustained by Guy and Jocelyn Mountain, who with their background in painting and modelling, quickly became involved in potting. These three together worked



Photos: Bernie Hill

and experimented with small electric kilns, sharing discoveries and disappointments. Then out of the blue came an unexpected order for \$600 worth of pots. Thus galvanised into action, Waterford Potters came into being. Margaret Milne says that the need to fulfil this commercial order exercised the group to their great advantage. 'I'm sure this early work in earthenware was an extremely valuable discipline. The often fortuitous glaze or flash effect which may help to redeem an indifferent form in oil-firing conditions, is not for the potter working in

earthenware and firing an electric kiln. Every result has to be earned.'

Starting at home with a variable speed electric wheel, a one and a half cubic foot electric kiln and a small workshop, she has gone through stages of different wheels, bigger electric kilns and a small oil-firing kiln to a fifty cubic foot catenary kiln which with Guy and Jocelyn Mountain is fired at Katikati. She is now setting up a new workshop in an old cottage where she says she is looking forward to working with no distractions and no telephone. A new oil-



fired kiln is taking shape there.

Most potters are subject to many influences. Margaret Milne says, 'I've been fortunate in that associations and teachers have been available at stages when I needed the particular kind of help and advice they had to offer. I learned a great deal from John Chappell, and later from Takeichi Kawai. They both stayed with us. Two years ago I went to Japan to work in Kawai's pottery. Wonderful hospitality from his family and friends and his own generosity gave me the chance to meet many Japanese craftsmen in their homes and to visit potteries and workshops of all kinds in different parts of Japan. No potter living in the midst of the Japanese working craftsmen could fail to be impressed by their sincerity. This has left a lasting impression which influences my thinking and my approach to pottery. I believe most strongly that the foundation of good potting is competent craftsmanship. While the essence of a good pot is far more than a display of manual dexterity, it is only when the potter is no longer preoccupied with the difficulties of manipulation that self expression emerges, bringing life to the clay and the desired qualities of simplicity and unselfconsciousness to the pots.

Kawai's reiterated, practice, practice, was more than a casual exhortation.'

For Margaret Milne a pot does not reach its full stature until it is in use, for she considers that pots are primarily utilitarian. For her, the making of domestic ware fulfils a basic need. 'I gain pleasure and satisfaction from some of the necessary repetitive work. Working to get the balance between a form that is good to look at and a form that is good to use, to get a balance between glazed and unglazed surfaces and the variation of the clay bodies themselves is variety enough, and I think offers unlimited scope for the imaginative and adventurous approach to the domestic pot.'

Like many of the part-time potters, Margaret Milne has taken her share of teaching and administration. She is currently the president of the Auckland Studio Potters, and was Chairman of the committee which organised the 13th Annual Exhibition (an increasingly time-consuming task.) This year she looks forward to a 'little catching upon myself' in the quiet surroundings of the new pottery. □

Margaret Harris

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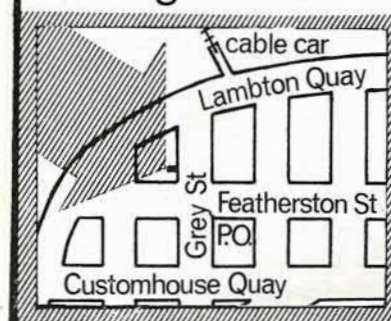
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### Federation for Wellington artists

In February the National Arts Federation of New Zealand called a meeting of Wellington artists and representatives of creative and performing arts organizations at which a provincial executive was set up to draft a constitution for the Wellington Regional Arts Federation.

The National Federation has been set up as a 'union' for all artists and arts organizations. The President of the national body, Mr. A. Hilton, has said, 'The arts need a strong voice to press appropriate issues with large bodies be it central government, the Arts Council, local bodies or business. The National

Arts Federation should be representative of all the arts and individuals concerned with the arts'.

Audrey Brodie representing the potting interests was present at this meeting to consider a regional federation for Wellington.

### Weigh your clay

A regular user of Wellington Yellow advises potters to weigh their 28 lb blocks when buying. She has found recent purchases to weigh as low as 22 lbs.



# Ceramic murals

The Postal Centre building now nearing completion in Wellington has two main sections, a podium base of several floors carrying a high tower block which houses the administrative headquarters of the New Zealand Post Office. The podium

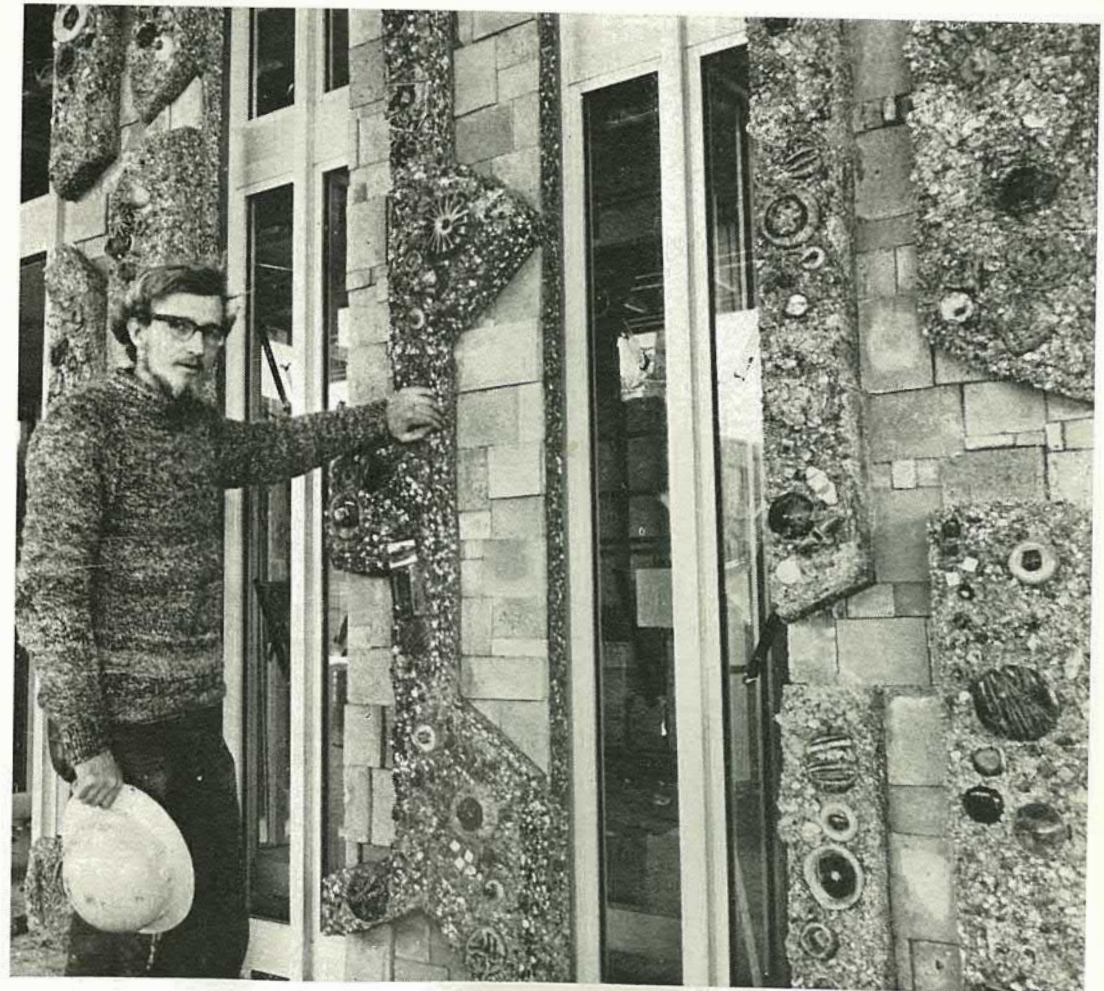
section can best be described as a vast machine for processing mail. Because of the scale and the construction standards required for earthquake resistance, the structure manifests something like a Mayan effect of massiveness.

The architects arranged for embellishments in the form of six pillars each twelve feet high and almost two feet wide in the entrance foyer and invited four potters to take part in a limited competition. When announcing their choice, the architects indicated their considerable satisfaction with the standard of entries, which may point to the growing ability of potters to undertake large projects.

The commission went to Paul Melser who produced in four months six pillars each of 15 cwt. On a sub-framing of steel a concrete base was cast, and was faced with unglazed tiling in the colour range of terra-cotta biscuit. From this rises an irregular form in high relief, produced in a range of fiery colours, exposed by scrubbing and acidifying. Scattered over this

*Transport from Featherston and emplacement in Wellington were major operations. Left, the panels on the transport. Right, in situ.*

Photos, Evening Post



Photos: Evening Post

surface are ceramic insets in a rich variety of glazes and shapes, stylised sea creatures, jellyfish and shellfish, suggesting a richly coloured beach from which the tide has just receded.

Paul aimed at a strong, striking design, one that would be noticeable from a

distance and one that would be interesting close up. The materials were chosen to contrast with the greys and whites of the glass, treated aluminium and marble finishes in the foyer. Delicate lighting at night time should contrast the clean, smooth lines of the aluminium and marble with the rugged finish of the pillars.



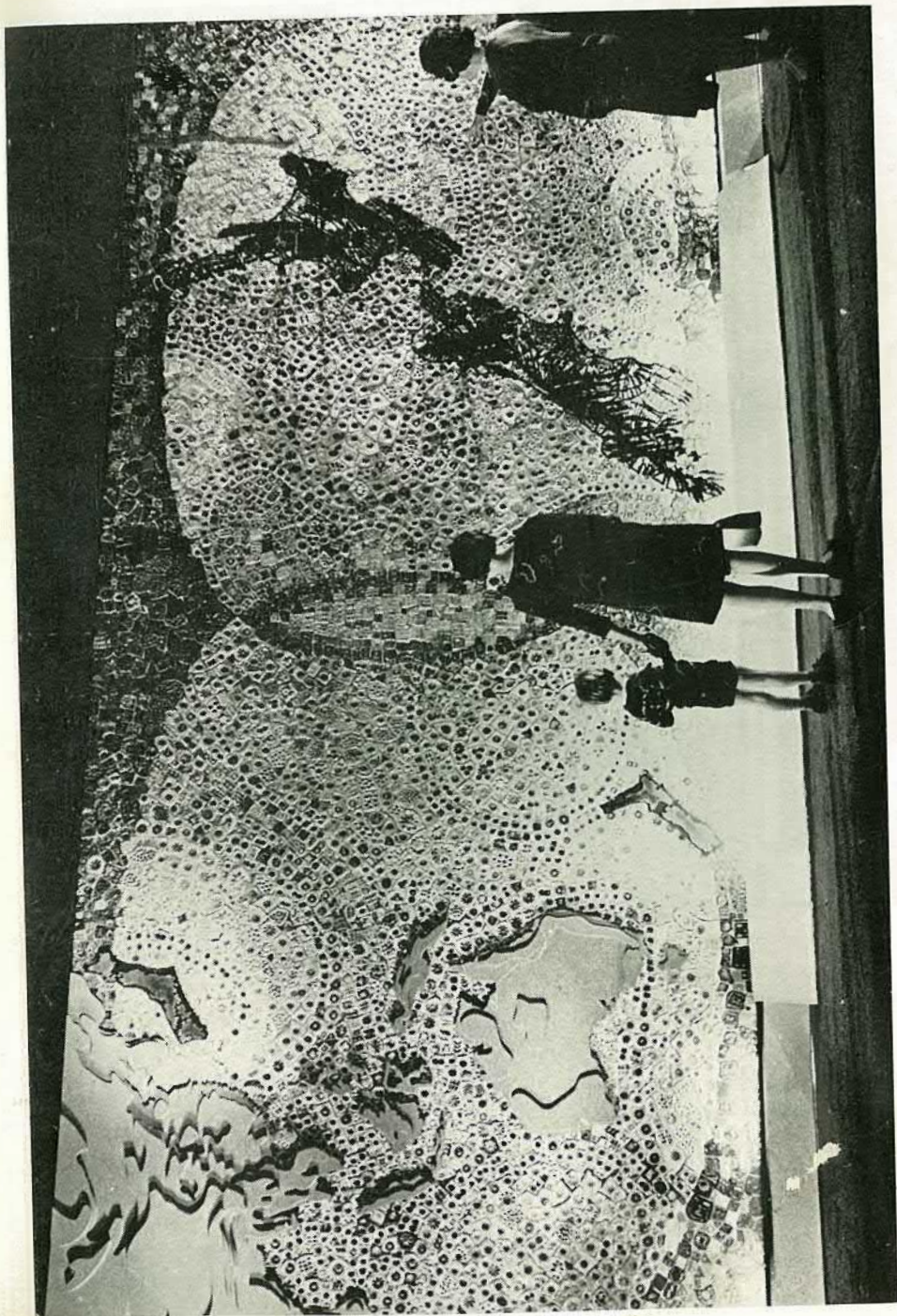


Photo: Evening Post

Roy Cowan's ceramic and steel mural for the New Zealand pavilion at Expo 70 was on view in a Wellington wool store for one day after trial assembly. About eight thousand tiles, buff and white stoneware, and porcelain bodies.

# HALL OF ASIAN ART

Auckland War Memorial Museum

by T. J. Bayliss, Curator

The recently opened Hall of Asian Art at the Auckland War Memorial Museum displays the acquisitions over the past 100 years of decorative arts from China, Japan, Korea, Annam, Thailand, Tibet and India, and Persia and Turkey. Ceramics form the largest part of this collection.

The material is set out as a teaching display with China as the mainspring and the other countries, apart perhaps from India, showing the influence of this great nation. The Chinese collection begins with Neolithic pots of modest proportions but springs to life in the engaging figures of the T'ang Dynasty 618-906 A.D.

Dancing girls, officials, priests and soldiers, parade with camels, horses, pigs and poultry. The familiar three colour lead glazes are common, with cleverly controlled running. The pots are competent but remind one more of Greek symmetry than of the free flowing forms of the next period, the Sung Dynasty. This should be the potters basic study; the mat Chun glazes, the sparkling Temmoku, the deft, sharp drawing of the T'zu Chou, the lush blue greens of the Southern celadon and the sharply incised Northern celadons, crisp and cool; finally, the delicate porcelains, Ting, and Ch'ing Pai wares; one could call the latter sky blue celadons.

The Ming collection is large, especially in those wares exported to South East Asia in the 16th and early 17th centuries; a very large collection of Swatow ware, large bowls (15") and jars swiftly drawn

and almost casually thrown and fired. Potters' porcelain this!

The collection of finer porcelains should not be ignored, white, matt glazed, sparingly decorated in soft muted grey blues.

The collection of Ch'ing dynasty (1644-1912) will not excite most potters except in the perfection of the glaze techniques and the virtuosity of reduced copper and chun effects, and the glow and vitality of all the colours, especially the greens. Do not overlook the enamelling techniques in the 'famille rose' porcelain; you can close your eyes to the design.

The Korean collection covers all the techniques, Mishima, Hakeme and later, blue and white. The pieces here are not of the quality one would see in the Cleveland Museum but tell the same story. Alongside the Koreans is the Thai pottery of the 14th and 15th centuries. These are beautiful pots in the Sung tradition (as is the Korean). One is able to compare the celadons and temmokus of these three countries. Potters will be interested in the unique method of kiln packing of the Thais. Each pot was placed on a tube or 'pontil' so that the packed kiln must have looked full of mushrooms. There are many examples of Thai kiln tragedies throughout the world's museums, including two groups in ours, lovely bunches of celadons stuck together. They must have been happy go lucky kiln stackers, and occasionally a 14th century Thai potter kicked his kiln-





*Tzu Chou brush decorated stoneware, Sung Dynasty.*

full of wasters, uttered the appropriate four letter words and left it for 20th century archaeologists to open.

Annam has mainly blue and white ware with a special charm of its own.

Cobalt was scarce so that an iron-based ore was used, and the covering glaze has a touch of opalescence to give it a blue and white effect.

Turkey is represented by the gay Iznik pottery. Potters forced to compete with the Chinese export porcelain, enamelled over a body, spruced up by a layer of white slip. The enamel is thick, like sealing wax, the design Islamic.

The Persian collection is interesting and shows many examples of local wares imitating Chinese Tang 'three colour' glazes, Sung porcelains, and Ming Blue

and Whites. This group, Persian as a whole, must, of course, bow to the wonderful Persian collection in the Dunedin Museum.

Japan is represented by a large collection of folk pottery ranging from the 18th century to the present day. A large group of these were purchased by the Auckland Studio Potters and deposited in the Museum. Those that are not on display are kept in a potters room where they may be handled, preferably by groups.

Also shown are the exquisite Kakiemon porcelains, together with Arita blue and white wares.

This is a reference library for all potters as well as a joy to the collectors and the plain admirer.

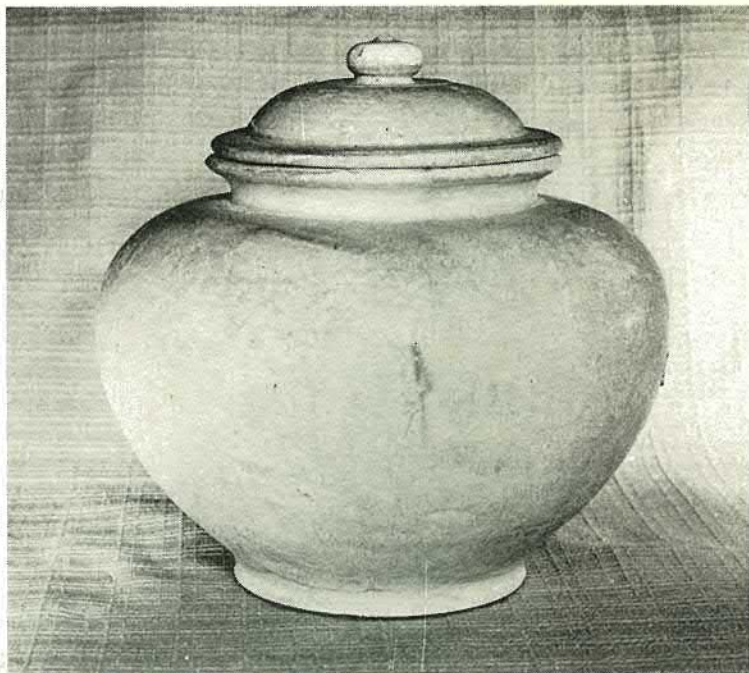


*Thai Kiln wasters, Celadon, 14th century.*

*"Swatow" blue and white porcelain, Ming Dynasty.*







*Feldspathic glazed stoneware. T'ang Dynasty.*



*Ismik earthenware: 16th, 17th Century.*



*Right: Korean Celadon, Koryo Dynasty.*



# A or P? a question of status

Curtain Raiser: by Roy Cowan

One effect of the Symposium which preceded the opening of the Annual Exhibition of the N.Z. Society of Potters in Auckland was to bring together a number of full-time potters, some of whom expressed objections to the kind of work on show, as representing a defection from the standards they held important. 'There is no place for us in this kind of exhibition' one said. The N.Z. Society was seen as an amateur-dominated organisation, fostering 'amateurism', failing to give due attention to more professional workers either through more discriminating exhibition policies, or from failing to take an interest in their special problems. There were suggestions that a separate association for professional potters should be formed.

When the N.Z. Society was formed, two points of view as to its nature emerged. One was, that membership should be open to all interested in pottery. Against this it was argued that such a society would be overweighted by lay or amateur members, and the result would be similar to the usual Art Society. There should be a test of ability for members. This point of view prevailed, and was made effective by the policy of admission for membership through selection for the Annual Exhibition. To avoid crystallisation of attitudes, the selection panel has changed each year, and full-time potters have been frequently called upon. In this form the Society has appeared to have a logical relation to the numerous regional bodies which are open to all.

It must be granted that the Auckland exhibition contained work of widely varying

standard. The explanation given by the sole selector, Ivan McMeekin, was that, coming from outside, he did not feel able to impose a standard, and he had therefore taken a 'representation', an explanation which appears to have been generally taken as quite reasonable.

Over the years, a number of the full-time potters have joined the N.Z. Society, and they have been well represented as selectors and exhibitors. Of their own choice, however, they have never been represented as office-holders, and it was a quite characteristic situation, that, after some had indicated their misgivings in the terms outlined, they went off, and the Annual General Meeting, the place where the steering wheel of the Society may be turned, and where the jobs are handed out, remained, as usual, the province of the dedicated amateur. And in those matters where the Society could take action affecting the particular interests of full-time potters, taxation for example, it has done so, in fact specific causes are elusive.

It might be agreed that the ever-growing annual exhibition has traditionally been arranged in such a way as to give the many a chance and that potters accustomed to one-man shows, or individualist by temperament should feel this no longer suited their interests. Should the Society move towards a more selective or varied exhibition policy, or should some potters form a new association? How would they select themselves; on the basis of income, or upon a sterner assessment of craftsmanship or design?

To find answers to some of these questions we approached several well-known potters, and here are the replies.

Barry Brickell

*full-time potter, Coromandel.*

*Do you think that professional potters should form an association of their own?*

I think professional potters should have their own association, guild or society for the following reasons: (a) to represent professional potters officially in matters of diplomacy or policy (government or business), (b) as an officially recognisable unit for approaching research institutions for getting analyses etc. done. (The potter requesting the job through the society would pay the larger proportion of the fee, depending on the extent to which he would wish the society to have access to the material), (c) to conceive of, organise and manage specific types of exhibitions, publicity, displays etc. (There are several ways of having exhibitions for specific purposes.)

The running of the society could be as follows: (a) ALL members should have a full say, i.e. postal voting is obligatory, (b) an independant, experienced and paid (part-time) secretary be chosen to do the rather large amount of paper work, co-ordination etc rather than a committee of over-worked volunteers. Most professional potters have limited time to attend meetings and do letter writing. All members would be kept in touch by circular letters, questionnaires etc, and if the society's action was based on response of all its members it would automatically select out the interested or keen, from those who did not bother. The cost of these services must be met by subscriptions, or commission from exhibition sales etc. Membership subscriptions would thus be necessarily high

and related to the services given. There is no cheap way around this.

*Who would be eligible to join?*

Only professional potters could be members.

*Who is a professional potter?*

What is professionalism? It is based ENTIRELY on manner of income. A professional potter is one who earns his whole income through sale of his pots. If the term 'potter' needs to be defined it could be 'one who makes and fires vessels of clay'. (This does not imply that he needs to dig or prepare clay.) For the purposes of membership, all other potters who don't fit the above definitions must be amateurs or part-time potters. There must be no confusion. Special cases would be: (a) apprentices. Full-time apprentices who work under a master are entitled to membership at a reduced fee if necessary, subject to the advice of their master. This would encourage young





people's ideas, enthusiasm and contribution to pottery—a very necessary element.

(b) Full-time potters with their own studios who teach pottery and from time to time receive a tutor's fee rather than a salary or income, would be eligible.

*Do you think that widespread amateurism has affected the standard of New Zealand pottery?*

Widespread amateurism has not necessarily affected standards in New Zealand—it has effected attitudes and behaviour towards pottery instead. True amateurism must be seen in its correct perspective as being equally important, vital and necessary as professionalism. (We seldom see it as yet.) In fact the amateur has more scope for freedom of expression than a professional, and ought to be content with this. A true amateur would not wish to seek either money or status gain through his work. It's as wrong for amateurs to try to have power over professionals as it is for professionals to look down on amateurs. The test of honesty comes via duality!

*What advantage would such an association have to those admitted?*

A society for professional potters could offer the above mentioned services (Answers a, b, c, to question one.) There is no limit on what else it could do, depending on the energy of its members and secretary. Members' suggestions should be welcomed and circulated whenever the need arises. Much of the success of the society thus leans on the quality of the secretary chosen, as well as its members, but at all costs all the official activities of the society should be presented to its members from time to

time for their active consideration. This eliminates the committee idea which is a potential source of dishonesty.

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Wilf Wright

*full-time potter, Reikorangi, Wellington.*

*Do you think that professional potters should form an association of their own?*

Professional potters need an organisation of their own, but it need not be outside the present Society, but rather a separate chapter of it. The Society as it stands is amateur based. Professional potters have different needs from amateurs who can't be expected to know the professional's problems. It would need a separate committee to run it. Perhaps the present secretary could undertake the administration (for additional payment of course).

*Who would be eligible to join? Who is a professional potter?*

A professional is one who earns his basic living from pottery—he may do other things as well, but potting is his main source of income. There would need to be some criteria as a basis for eligibility to join — some standard for entry. Perhaps making a living for a certain number of years or at any rate proof that the potter has established himself.

*Do you consider that widespread amateurism has affected the standard of New Zealand pottery?*

Yes. The feeling for form and the vitality is not what it was. Some of the

recent pots made in other countries have got the vitality that we had in the early days. And of course there are a lot of pots in the shops that shouldn't be there.

*What advantage would such an association have to those admitted?*

Perhaps the main need from a professional potter's body is to give recognition to the potter's place in the community. The value of the professional potter is not now recognised. The fact that the professional potters keep a large and steady supply of standard ware, helps to keep the interest in pottery open to development. Potters making a living from selling their pots should be encouraged.

Wilf Wright considers that the present Society is too large, a factor in itself which has contributed to the apparent loss of vitality in New Zealand pottery (as seen in recent annual exhibitions). He is critical of selection as a basis for exhibitions; he considers that a small group of established potters within the Society should be able to submit work relying on their own integrity.

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Peter Stitchbury

*full-time potter, Manurewa*

*Do you think that professional potters should form an association of their own?*

There would be no point served by an association for professional potters—there are too many variables.

*Who would be eligible to join? Who is a professional potter?*

I don't know. I think people tend to vaguely acknowledge the few 'top'

potters as professionals, but the term obviously extends further—to anybody who pots, no matter how or in what medium—earthenware or stoneware, for money. Personally I think that there would be such a wide range of different people eligible to join such an organisation, that many would not want to join—because of standards perhaps. (This happened in England in 1958.)

*Do you think that widespread amateurism has affected the standard of New Zealand pottery?*

Yes. There is a wide range of achievement in New Zealand and a lot of pottery is being sold which shouldn't be. However we have all been amateurs at some stage, so this must be tolerated and understood, and higher standards encouraged by example perhaps and by better teaching methods.

*What advantages would such an association have to those admitted?*

None that I can see at present. I think the New Zealand Society of Potters provides as much as is necessary i.e. contact with other potters, exhibition opportunities, and opportunities to meet experts in this field. When talking of the New Zealand Society, I think that some of the younger potters should now come forward and take the reins. Too many of the well known potters have had to run the Society for too long and now it's time others had a turn!

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Harry Davis

*full-time potter, Nelson. As one who has the unquestioned right to call himself a professional, Harry Davis comments —*



When asked to give a definition of a professional potter my reaction is to say that this is a largely irrelevant status however one defines it.

Prof. A. Martindale the art historian says somewhere that in every age 'Art has been made by artists; which is to say by trained professionals who paint, or carve, or build for a living'. This would seem to stress the obvious if one could assume that because someone does something for a living he ipso facto does it well, and it overlooks the fact that bad art, or non-art, is also done by trained professionals who pursue their activity for a living. In fact the expressions 'Artists' and 'Trained Professional' alas, are not interchangeable. The most precious qualities in works of art of any age owe their existence to the Artist's indifference as to whether his activity yields a living or not. So much for the stress on earning a living in this definition. If the stress is placed on training, there seem to be weaknesses in the argument again, because this presupposes an established body of practitioners who train a younger generation. If one seeks the authenticity of such a body in the guarantee of a professional group of painters and carvers, parallel to the Law Society or the Medical Association, what does one find? The answer is Academicians to censure or approve future Academicians. This, as we all know, is almost always a disaster. Alas the integrity of a painter, a sculptor or a potter is more difficult to measure than that of a doctor or a solicitor. Unless of course the intended professional association of potters proposes to vet the functional properties and working toughness of its members' work. This seems

an unlikely event, measurable though these aspects of a potters' work may be.

No—it is irrelevant whether a potter is a member of a professional association or not. What matters is whether he makes good pots, and this depends on his integrity and talent. The existence of a professional association is no guarantee that any-one will do this—in fact the indications are that there is a danger that it might encourage the making of anti-pots. Utterances from the platform at the recent Pottery Symposium in Auckland support this view, as they made it clear that a faction exists which is even a little ashamed to have to admit to making domestic pots for a living. What kind of a professional association does this portend? What can a professional association do to cope with snobs may one ask? The danger in fact seems to be that it may breed them.

The view was expressed from the same platform that it is somehow ethically reprehensible to make a run of tea cups. Quite clearly the seeds of the anti-pot are well and truly sown already. There is undoubtedly a danger that the concept of a receptacle is in the process of being dissociated from the definition of a pot.

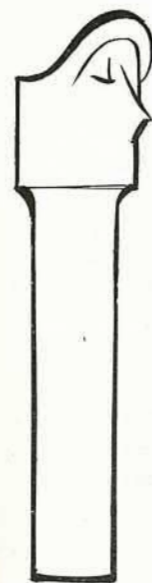
Then there is the question of whether standards have suffered in New Zealand because of widespread amateurism. Amateurs are liable to do deplorable things in any field of activity, and one regrets the many premature transitions from pure hobbyism to marketing. However it is impossible to say what the potting scene in New Zealand would be like if the amateurs of ten years ago had not pursued pottery with the enthusiasm that they did. It should be recognised that if pots are a valid and

positive cultural asset in New Zealand today, it is undoubtedly thanks to the efforts of amateurs of ten to fifteen years ago. Where one might ask would the 'professional' potters be today in New Zealand had they not been preceded by amateurs?

An attractive aspect of the New

Zealand Potters Association is the element of mutual aid which has been one of its conspicuous features. The current desire for a separate professional association implies a concern with exclusivity and privilege which obviously and sadly runs counter to this generous mood.

Harry Davis



*'I am high-fired and highly intellectual so I look down on you.'*



*'I look up to you because you are far out but I am indigenous and expressive and I look down on you.'*

*'I am only domestic ware and I know my place.'*



## The Under Thirties Exhibition

'In order to take advantage of the present high level of enthusiasm and to provide an incentive for the growing band of youthful potters, the New Zealand Society wishes to hold an 'Under 30' exhibition.' Extract from a letter from the N.Z. Society of Potters to the Arts Council, February 1966. To help the project along a young

professional potter had been asked to act as convenor and had been paid travelling costs to assist. The Arts Council agreed to provide funds in support of what was to be a national travelling exhibition.

But in the end only one (yes, one) young potter showed interest and the project had to be abandoned.



# NEWCOMERS

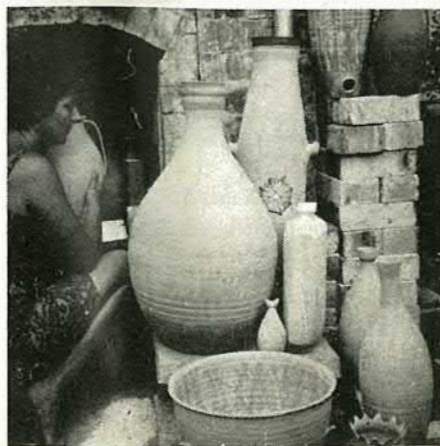
Twenty-three new potters qualified for admission to the N.Z. Society and exhibited in the 13th Exhibition held in Auckland in November. The Potter asked them for photos and comments. Here are the 19 who responded.



*Left, Jane, wife of Mirek Smisek and daughter Hana with Jane's slab built bottle and press moulded dishes.*

*Lower left, Janet Wright of Reikorangi, near Wellington, finds living and working with husband, Wilf, in the country the ideal way of life. Apart from slab and coiled pots, she enjoys making pots to be handled every day, especially jugs.*

*Below, 'Mentally, physically and financially exhausting, yet the most intensely satisfying work I have ever attempted,' Margaret Symes.*



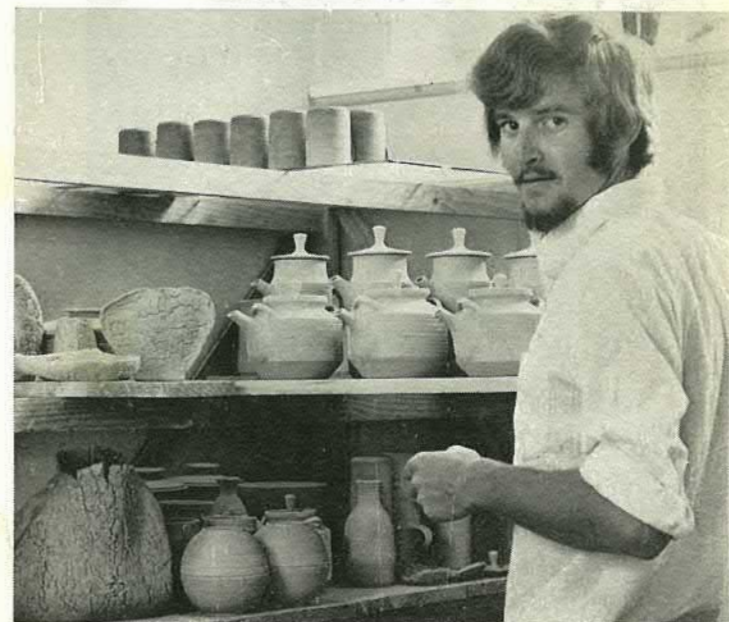
*Aims to achieve a timeless quality, not the appearance of being just out of the kiln. Allan Hedger, Auckland.*

*Bronwynne Cornish making her 'Lion Creation', Henderson, Auckland.*



*Melis Van der Sluis, full time potter, Hamilton.*

*Domestic ware mainly — enjoys experimenting with texture on slab work. John Campbell, Papakura.*







*'Form and colour in stoneware', John Parker, Auckland.*



*Gail Carlsen, Coromandel, uses coil and hand built methods. Throwing is mostly small bottles. Shares a kiln with husband (Gerald Greenwood) but works independently.*



*Tea for the family in Ian Firth's garden, Birkenhead, Auckland, out of his own pots.*



*Grant Hudson, Auckland, with salt-glazed lantern.*

*June Handley, Te Kauwhata, with her sister built an oil fired kiln. Gathers much of her own glazing material.*



*Earthenware for domestic use, Audrey Lissetti, Levin.*

*Domestic ware, but tries a few experimental pots. 'I just try to improve my work and techniques all the time.' John Mitchell, Te Awamutu, would like to try full time some day.*







*Nineteen years old, has been potting for ten years, three full time. Stephen Foster, Diamond Harbour, Bank's Peninsula, uses local rocks and clays.*



*Dorothy Ewart, Silverstream, Wellington, enjoys applying trailed slip decoration to earthenware.*

*Top left, Cliff Smith, Manurewa, specialises in domestic ware.*

## Pottery in Australia

Published by the Potters' Society of Australia, twice yearly in spring and autumn. The yearly subscription is \$A2, and the magazine may be obtained from the Editor 'Pottery in Australia', 30 Turramurra Avenue, Turramurra, N.S.W. 2074, Australia.

## AFTER THE 13th

Sole selector, Ivan McMeekin, delivered these comments to the N.Z. Society of Potters Annual Meeting, held in Auckland on November 16th.

In selection my basic idea was to select pots which represented the work of the society, rather than impose my own concepts on the exhibition, but this was difficult as no one person is sensitive and receptive to all styles and concepts, and the selector's most serious shortcomings are usually those he is least conscious of.

Selection is linked with concept of a standard, and that is easy to establish in as far as functional craftsmanship is concerned. Before this type of pottery can be considered for selection it must be adequate functionally, and the standard of craftsmanship must be high. But when the work is sculptural in concept and intent then these criteria obviously do not apply. How do you assess a work of art? By one's own total reaction?—this is limited by one's capacity and sensibility on the part of the potter to form material, scale, texture, pattern, and colour? By motive?—if a potter loves and admires something that another potter has done and because of this does likewise, is it good or bad? The answer to this depends on the value placed on originality, individuality, and it is worth noting that as great a craftsman as Hamada has always acknowledged his great debt to the traditional idiom of both Japan and Korea. Most of Hamada's shapes have their genesis in tradition. Also, that as

great a musician as Pablo Casals would not perform the Bach suites for solo 'cello until he had studied them for some twenty years — he was immersing himself — losing himself — in Bach during this time, not promoting his own individuality. I feel there is a lot to be said for this sort of humility, and that we usually overstress individuality. So the selection of this sort of pottery for an exhibition is very difficult, and if a 'way out' stand is taken then almost all values, almost every measuring stick will be found invalid.

But from a practical point of view there are some ideas worth considering. I feel, for instance, that if the art of the potter—either in its functional or sculptural idiom—is to emerge and compete on a professional basis with other arts like painting, music, ballet and drama — to claim acceptance as a valid art form—then there should be some division between the professional and the part time amateur. Each group should have its own exhibition, and the professional one should be rigorously selected in terms of agreed values.

I was surprised at the predominance of the sculptural idiom at the exhibition, and feel that this is an appropriate time to re-affirm my belief that the making of pots with a material utilitarian function is





Ivan McMeekin

no less a valid art form than is ceramic sculpture, and that as an art form it is quite distinct from sculpture.

It has perhaps more in common with music in that both music and pottery are deeply immersed in tradition, in both its technical and aesthetic aspects. Both musicians and potters are dependent also on a high skill level. Without hours of daily practice neither are fit for public appearance, nor are they able to act with the speed that is essential for their work. Both appear incessantly, the musician playing in a number of performances every week, and the potter making and selling daily, and therefore, both have repetition and dependence on tradition woven into the basic structure of their art. Neither potter nor musician can produce something 'new' every day for forty years.

Both also make very reasonable demands on their patrons, depending on wide patronage and low prices for their financing of their art activities. There is nothing disreputable about either repetition or dependance on tradition, but in both music and potting each time the form is made it must be relived, refelt in that moment if it is to be kept alive. Another difference between this sort of pottery and sculpture is the potter's deep involvement with materials and technology. His products must stand up to the demands of daily use, and this involves him with things like thermal shock resistance, hardness, porosity, texture, conductivity, qualities that must go in parallel with the aesthetic factors. This makes being a potter extremely difficult and in countries like New Zealand and Australia where we have not a living tradition to nurture us and have new and strange materials, it is particularly difficult.

I feel therefore that both here and in Australia it is necessary for the potters' society to encourage full time courses that aim to give adequate professional education to people wishing to become artist-craftsmen, and that they set up their own facilities to allow for the study and processing of their own raw-materials, as the properties of the materials processed for industry and available commercially are often not suitable.

I would like to take this opportunity of thanking the New Zealand Potters for their warm hospitality and for what has been a most interesting and enjoyable visit.

## Awards to Canterbury potters

Miss Yvonne Rust received personally the Canterbury Society of Arts silver medal at the opening of the Society's Annual Autumn exhibition in March. The medal is awarded annually (though not necessarily every year) for service to New Zealand in any field of the visual arts or in the advancement of the visual arts. Miss Rust's work for Canterbury and West Coast potters, as well as her own creative ability, has amply qualified her for this distinction. Miss Rust with

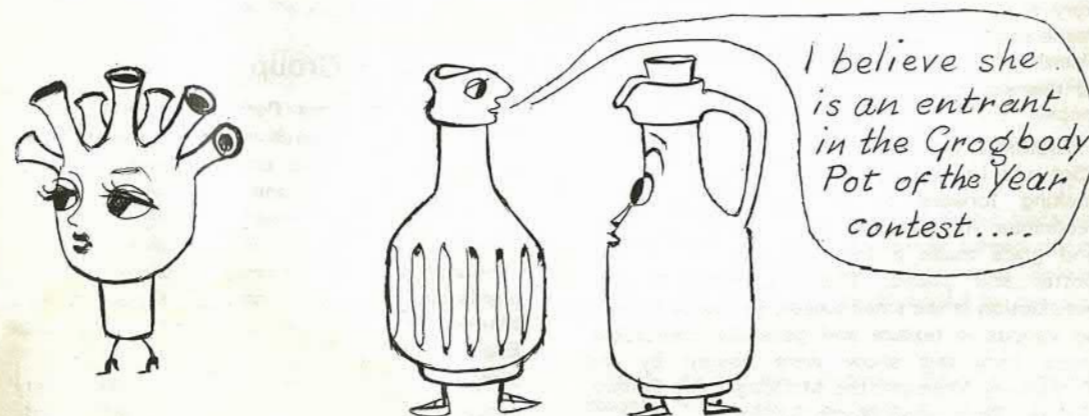
Mrs Shay Docking was guest exhibitor at the 1970 exhibition.

Mrs Doris Holland has this year won the Guthrey-Canterbury Society of Arts Travel Award which will take her to Australia for approximately 5 weeks in August. Mrs Holland, lecturer in drawing at the University of Canterbury School of Fine Arts, and President of the Canterbury Potters Association, will use her time in Australia visiting studios, galleries and schools, and though there will be no time for practical work, intends to view the contemporary scene in teaching, painting and pottery.

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The editor would welcome the views of correspondents who have something on their minds that they

would like aired. The editorial committee will be meeting in July to consider material for the spring issue of the Potter so letters will be received until then.





# NEWS OF PEOPLE, POTS & EVENTS

## Christchurch and West Coast

For a few days about mid November 1969 pottery enthusiasts in Christchurch could visit three excellent exhibitions showing simultaneously in the city. The Group Show in the main C.S.A. gallery displayed its usual small, but well chosen collection, including a fine set of pots ranging from a large blossom jar, to minute trinket boxes, sent from Coromandel by Warren Tippet. Nola Barron (new Group member) showed three impressive large ceramic forms in which the pot function was severely integrated with austere sculptural shape. Paddy Taylor (guest exhibitor) showed some of her highly personal necked and inter-related pot forms. Other members exhibiting pottery were Juliet Peter, Doris Holland and Roy Cowan (a fabulous giant slab form).

The mezzanine floor upstairs was the scene of a professional exhibition by three Christchurch women, Irene Spiller, Denise Welsford, and Fredericka Ersten, and with them Michael Trumic, with whom they had studied at his Victoria Street studio. Irene Spiller showed more confidence in shape development, and suave glazes, but both other women turned on some very neat domestic ware, and the near sell out made this exhibition a highly successful venture. Paintings by Phillip Trustram drew many people to this show.

Around at Several Arts, opening on November 23rd was Len Castle's exciting show. We were looking forward to this, and his virtuoso technique, his sense of style in shape, texture and glaze made a fascinating study for both potter and public. The writer found most satisfaction in the small pieces, so lovely to hold, so various in texture and generally irresistible. Items from this show were bought by the Canterbury Museum, the McDougal Art Gallery, and the Palmerston North Gallery.

While visiting the West Coast in January, I spent a very happy couple of hours with Yvonne Rust, sitting in the warm sun outside her old brewery studio. She gave me a report of recent events, beginning with Barry Brickell's four-month stay on the Coast in the latter part of 1969 during which he gave a week-end school, as well as supervising and advising local potters working at Yvonne's, or setting up their own studios. Roger Ewer, one of Yvonne's first students at her Christchurch studio, now has his own workshop on the Coast. The Mawhera Potters, now firmly established, gave their second Annual Exhibition in Greymouth (November), 300 pots, of which 75 per cent sold. Members include Nan Bunt, Hardy Browning (full-time potters), George Carroll, Doug Manson, Rowena Downs and Irene Jones. Guest exhibitor was Barry Brickell. In Mackay Street, Greymouth, "The Folk Shop" has been successfully functioning for three months selling pottery, weaving and painting by local artists. Craftsmen from other centres are invited to send work to this lively enterprise.

From so recent a beginning, it appears that West Coast potters are moving with pioneer determination towards maturity. □

Doris Holland

## Story of a Group

The Mount Pleasant Pottery Group has been active and progressive since its formation in 1960. It is attached to the Mount Pleasant Community Centre and in nine years the membership has increased from eight to eighty. The late Mrs Marion Mauger was the first president and teacher and several of her early pupils are now well established potters. Mrs Mauger imported the clay and glazes from England and fired the pots in her own kiln.

The Community Centre secured for the pottery group a nearby building which was formerly

used by the Water Works Department. Cleaning and patching gave three spacious rooms—a large work room with an open fire, a kiln room and a glazing and storing room. An almost new kiln and four wheels were bought over the years with money from fees and from sales tables. Leading potters from Christchurch and elsewhere spoke and demonstrated at the weekly evening meetings.

This system continued until last year when Mrs Marie Tohill, the current president, suggested having club days on Wednesday morning and Tuesday evening when all could attend and work together with the older members helping the newer ones. The system was given a trial and proved most successful. Everyone contributed twenty cents and gave something for the sales table which paid for relining the kiln, teas and firing. In this way the members got to know each other better and ideas and methods were freely exchanged. Each month on demonstration day, difficult techniques are demonstrated by members proficient in this aspect of the craft.

The quality of the work done improves all the time. Last year eight hundred pots were arranged on the display tables for the annual exhibition. It is always a popular event and most of the pots are sold.

Some of the members are now exhibiting with the New Zealand Society of Potters and in group shows. Others with wheels and kilns of their own, have no trouble in selling locally as many pots as they can make. One of the earliest members sends ceramic beads all over the country and exports to Australia.

The planned new craft room at the community centre will give the group a permanent home, but there will be some nostalgia for the days when meetings were held around a blazing log in the present building.

## Wellington News

The Potter has been so busy covering the scene elsewhere in New Zealand that there is no specific news from Wellington, this time, but a lot has been happening here all the same, and we will make up for it in the next issue.

## News from Auckland

This has been a full year for the Auckland Studio Potters. Once again we held two immensely popular beginners courses each lasting for three Saturdays, one with Len Castle demonstrating hand building techniques at Rutherford High School, and the other with Peter Stichbury at Ardmore, teaching wheel thrown pottery.

A potters evening had Trevor Bayliss showing a selection of the wonderful collection of slides they have at the Auckland Museum, featuring pots through the ages. Another evening we had an entertaining lecture by Graeme Storm on his recent visit to Canada—illustrated by slides of pots, kilns, the school in Quebec where spent the summer teaching, and some Scandinavian pots, scenery and sculpture.

During September we held a 'kiln crawl'—an amusing new venture. Three parties of 20 potters left a central meeting place at half-hour intervals. They visited five kilns in all, starting with the one I built at Rutherford High School—a two-chamber Cowan type kiln. We lit the pot burner for them and showed the jets and layout; then they went on to John Parry at Point Chevalier. He has a single chamber down draught kiln fired on both sides by big speedway burners—an interesting feature is a moulded fireclay arch which can be removed without pulling the kiln down, to renew the vulnerable area around the fire port.

After this we visited Neil Grant's catenary kiln—at that stage he still had to add the biscuit chamber, but the glost chamber is very impressive, 5' 10" high internally and 54" deep. He uses home-made burners based on the 'Major' burner, and a Cowan designed fan he built himself.

At this stage things got a bit hectic because one party got lost and 40 people turned up at Neil's together at the same time as a violent downpour of rain, but it all added to the fun of the day.

Next stop was Patricia Perrin's natural draught kiln, with its huge chimney hidden



from neighbours behind a jungle of bamboos and other exotic growth, then on to Margaret Milne, who had a firing in progress in her jet fired kiln. She pulled out a spy brick and an enormous flame roared out, to everybody's delight, then she served coffee, and all our potential kiln builders went home wondering confusedly which type of kiln they should use.

After this came the 13th N.Z. Exhibition and the Symposium, and we all thoroughly enjoyed playing host to all the visiting potters from other parts of New Zealand.

Ivan McMeekin's master classes followed almost immediately and his public lecture on 'The Establishment of a Pottery Training Unit in the Northern Territory.'

The master classes were attended by about 30 serious potters and have opened new vistas to us. We have plans to follow them up this year with a series of classes in geology by Jim Schofield—some in the form of lectures on such subjects as 'Identifying Rocks and Clays in the Field' and 'Making Use of Geological Survey Maps', and other classes in the form of field trips.

Since Christmas, things have been quiet until February 14th, when the Studio Potters had a stall at the 1970 Wine Festival. Twenty potters took part, providing 117 items or groups for sale; about half of these were sold. There were one or two breakages because some of the customers were reeling a little from all the free wine, but a small commission on sales took care of that. □

Doris Dutch

Now potting with Pat Perrin is painter John Papas, who has moved into the field of pottery, exploring methods of obtaining texture. He and Ken Chapman are preparing for an exhibition in September.

Peter Yates who until recently had his home and pottery on a barge in the Bay of Islands is now working with Adrian Cotter in Titirangi. At

present Peter's main interest is in garden sculpture. Adrian himself makes beautiful garden lanterns, but he is best known for his domestic ware.

Raku firings are popular in Auckland. Trevor and Marjorie Bayliss' lovely garden provided an ideal setting for a barbecue and raku party. The round kiln was fired with coke and a covered saggar held the pots. Mary Hardwick Smith and Peter Anderson designed their oil-fired kiln around a square pot burner (described by Roy Cowan in the 'Potter' Vol. 10, No. 1). Built originally for a children's party, this kiln proved so successful that a second firing was held for potters. A group from Gisborne were enthusiastic and returned with plans for raku firings in their area.

Peter Stitchbury is now potting full-time in Manurewa and John Campbell is building him a new workshop.

During the holidays several potters from Australia were in Auckland. Before going south Trudie Alfred and Barbara Blaxland, both from New South Wales, showed a most interesting collection of slides at Elam during the Auckland Summer School. These showed the work of modern Australian potters and also gave us a look at some murals and a sculpture garden in Israel.

## Manawatu

Twenty potters of the Manawatu Pottery Society were joined by 10 members of the Manawatu Spinners and Weavers Guild for their 4th Annual Exhibition.

## Napier

### May Mitchell

A life member of the Napier Art Gallery Pottery Group, Mrs May Mitchell, died recently, aged eighty four. Mrs Mitchell was well known to many New Zealand potters and for many years had extended hospitality to potters visiting Napier. For a long time she was a collector of pots and a tour through her house was a memorable experience. There will be many in New Zealand who will regret her passing.

## News from Dunedin

Since the last edition of the *Potter*, the Otago Potters Group has had a very stimulating programme. In September, Harry Davis came down to give us a week-end school. This proved to be a most worthwhile occasion as Mr Davis managed to cater for beginners and more experienced potters alike, and with great patience went over and over the various movements he has evolved for himself to make the centring and throwing of pots more easy. He also had many helpful tips for any of us who try to teach the techniques of throwing and turning to beginners. I think that what came through most effectively, was Mr Davis' integrity as a potter, and his insistence on quality as well as appearance. He made many of us stop and ask the questions, 'Where are we going?' And, 'What do we want to attain and why?' He appeared indefatigable and gave out enthusiasm when he talked and when he demonstrated.

Then we had a two day visit from Ivan McMeekin who gave a public lecture one evening on pottery raw materials and their uses, leaving many of us with a thirst for more. The following day he had a look round some selected spots within a reasonable distance from Dunedin and took away with him various samples for analysis. In the evening, members of the New Zealand Society of Potters met informally with Ivan McMeekin who showed some magnificent slides and listened to and answered many questions. The Dunedin potters seem divided in their attitude towards pottery making; there are those who are firmly in favour of empirical methods alone, and those who are forced into these methods through lack of knowledge, but are trying hard to find a more scientific approach. The latter group wants to produce work that appeals both aesthetically and functionally and to know how and why it happens. For these people visits from such craftsmen as Harry Davis and Ivan McMeekin are of tremendous value.

We have seen some interesting work in Dunedin over the past few months. Frances Frederick had an exhibition of domestic ware at the Connoisseur in August. This was beauti-

fully made and finished. She gained a subtle contrast of texture and tone in her dinner set by pouring the glaze inside the pots, and spraying the same glaze outside.

Barry Brickell showed us a good exhibition of his coiled work in Dawson's Gallery in September. Again this was well made, and what I enjoyed most was the humour and obvious 'joy of making' that had gone into this work. This was followed in November in Dawson's Gallery by an exhibition of pottery by Beryl Jowett, about which I obviously cannot comment! She was joined in this exhibition by Dot Staub who showed some first class weaving.

Also in November the art gallery had an exhibition of pottery, weaving and basketry. The craftsmen were Ruth and Len Castle, Roy Cowan and Juliet Peter, Mirek Smisek, Graeme Storm and Peter Stitchbury and Hank Mol. It seems presumptuous for me to comment on the work of these top notch potters, but I couldn't help feeling a little disappointed at the lack of vitality evident in their work. In vain I looked for really breathtaking pots—and came away with the feeling that makers of big pots should view their work from all angles before accepting them as satisfactory. I did however come back again and again to a large thrown and coiled bowl by Juliet Peter which I should like to own. I felt that I might have seen Graeme Storm's pots before, in books, and this seems a pity from such a gifted potter. I liked the quietness of Peter Stitchbury's domestic ware but sharp edges are dangerous for those who have to wash up!

Again in November an art and craft competition was held in the Otago Building Centre sponsored by a local fibrous plaster firm, and we are proud that Lawson Fraser won first prize in the pottery section with a very lovely oil and vinegar set. Isobel Brown and Joyce Anderson were second and third respectively.

There was a very marked improvement in the standard of work displayed at the Otago Potters Group's annual exhibition. We are always well supported by the public and there was very little unsold at the end of the week.



Ian Gray-Smith completed his commission for the New Wakari Unity Church in Dunedin. This consisted of a 4 ft x 3 ft terra cotta panel on the outside of the church depicting ecumenical symbols, and a smaller one, 18 ins x 9 ins with the same symbols on the offertory table. These were fired in the workshop kiln, and Ian's presence in the workshop and his enthusiasm over this period has been an inspiration to many.

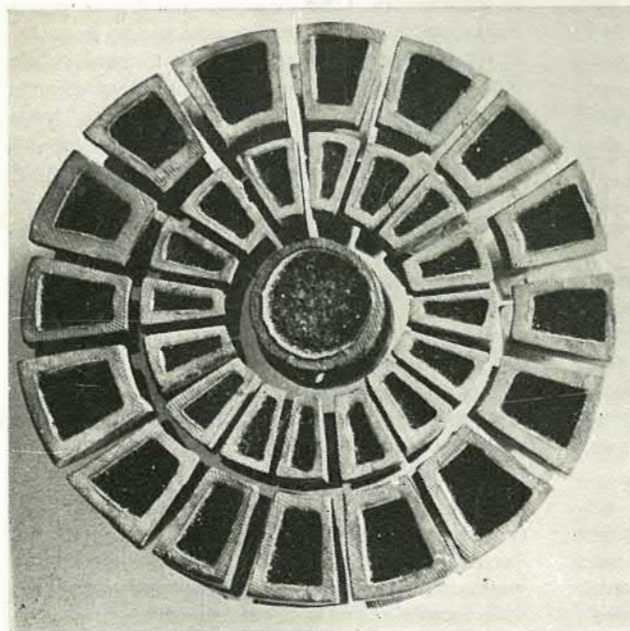
Forthcoming exhibitions will be by Bruce and Estelle Martin. They will show Ikebana containers and domestic ware at the 'Connoisseur' and a demonstration of Ikebana will be given by Mrs. Simmers of Dunedin. Ian Gray-Smith is also to show at Dawsons. □

**Beryl Jowett**

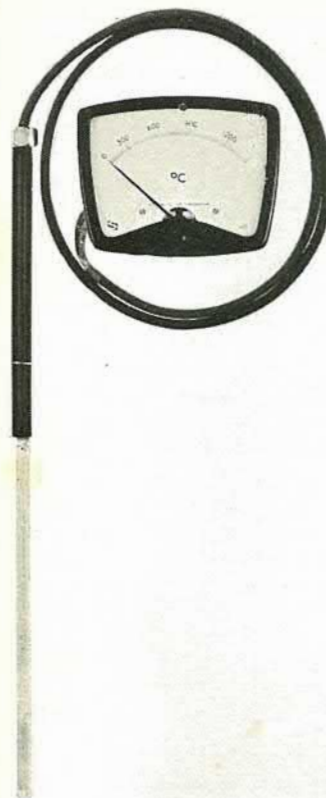
### Visiting Britain?

Potters visiting Britain who wish to see something of British studio pottery, should make an early visit to the Craft Centre in Earlham Street. As well as seeing the work of the important potters, there are on display notices advertising pottery schools and other information a visiting potter would be interested to know about. Ina Arthur of Dunedin, took advantage of these invitations during her two year stay in Britain (reported in the last issue of the *Potter*).

To any potter planning a visit she is prepared to give the addresses of English potters, and directions as to how to get to them—many live in out of the way places. She says that obviously it is easier to explain verbally and she would rather have people get in touch with her personally, nevertheless she is prepared to answer correspondants writing for this information to 59 Lee Street, Dunedin.



*Design for ceramic mural by Dennis Hadfield. An entry in the National Bank competition, held in Wellington, February, 1970.*



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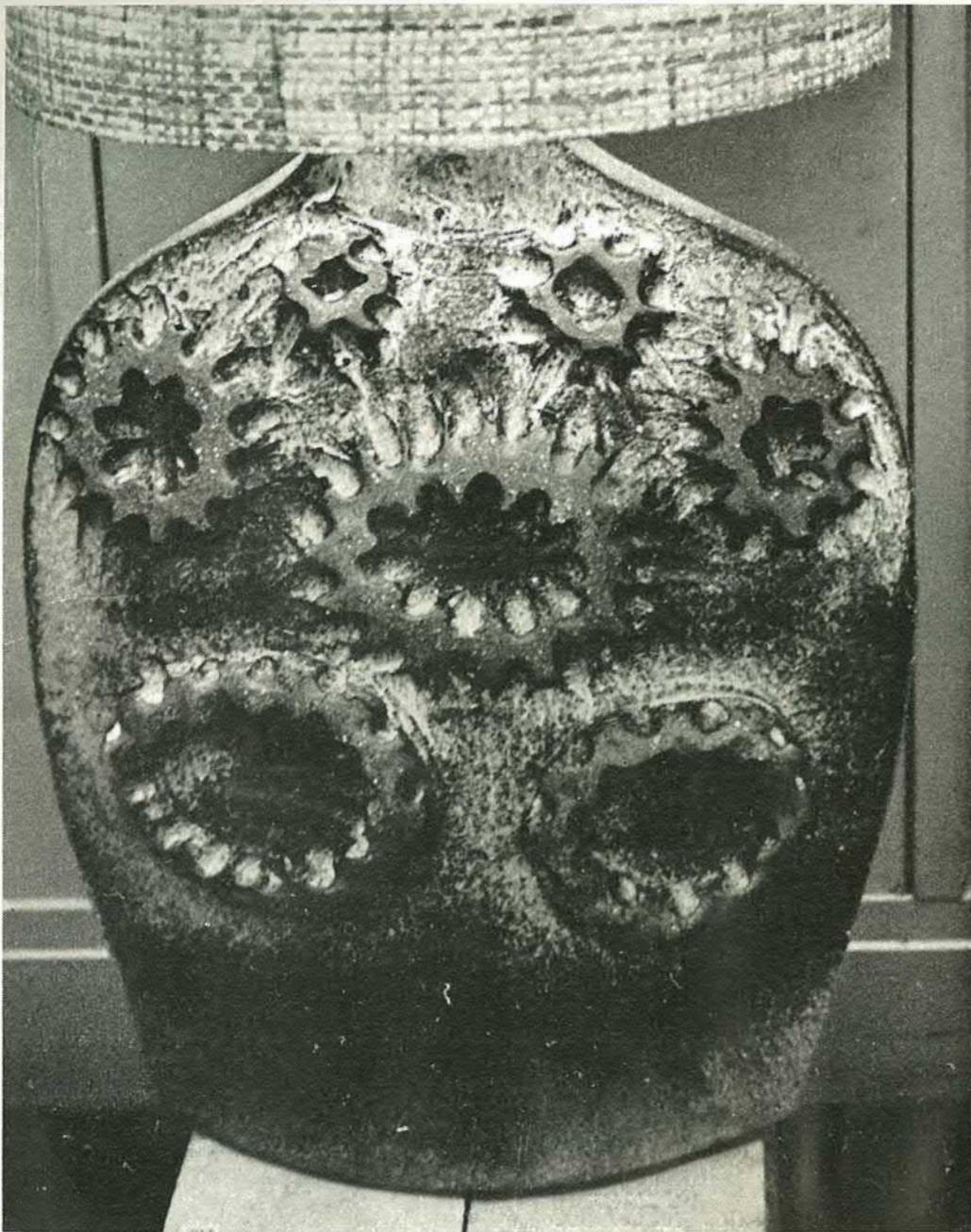
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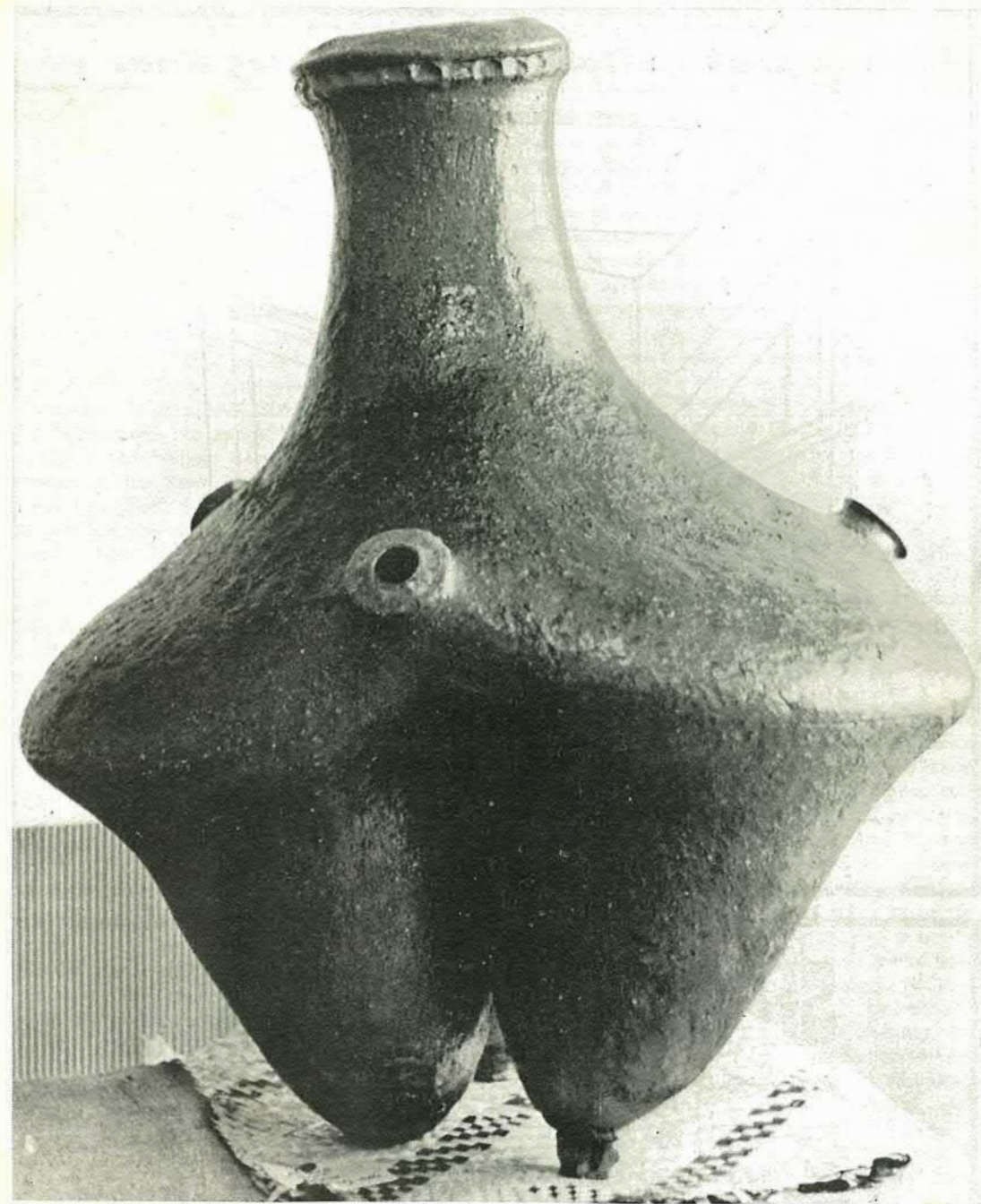
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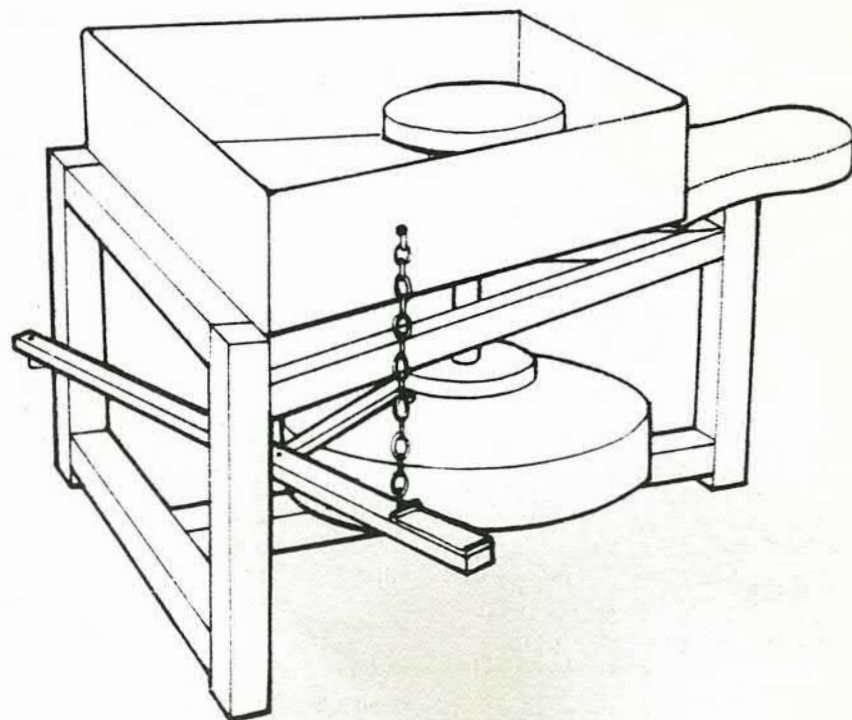
IN THE LARGER SIZES —  
*'Brutalist Lampbase' by Roy Cowan, at the  
 Academy exhibition of Sculpture, Pottery, and  
 Graphic Art, August, 1969.*



*Buxom Hipped Pot by Barry Brickell, at  
 the Peter McLeavey Gallery, November, 1969.  
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## English Studio Pottery today

Wyn Reed

We have been asked, following our recent visit to England, to give our impressions of English studio pottery today.

Our observations are derived mostly from two or three visits to each of the main shops selling pottery in London, namely The Craftsmen Potters Shop, The Craft Centre, Primavera and Heals.

The Craftsmen Potters Shop at William Blake House, Marshall Street, is a wonderful asset for members of The Craftsmen's Association, for here their work is displayed and sold on commission. It is a well planned and modern shop with plenty of space and is well lit by huge floor to ceiling windows. In the main entrance gallery there are a few dozen pieces always beautifully arranged. Behind the dividing screens are the rows of shelves bearing a potter's name. These the potter can keep filled and the buyer can wander around the shelves and handle the pots at leisure. This shop carries a big stock and work of the leading potters can generally be found.

The Craft Centre, which we visited so often fourteen years ago, has moved to Earlham Street, a narrow street close to Covent Garden fruit market. There we saw a large exhibition of pottery by Robin Welch. Upstairs were his experimental sculptural ceramics and sculptural pieces in metal and perspex. Downstairs the large gallery had a big display of well made strong looking domestic stoneware. Both his standard range of domestic stoneware and his tall, pole-like sculptures are cylindrical and upright.

Robin Welch is a young potter in his early thirties, who like his contemporaries Dan Arheid Ian Auld and Gillian Lowndes, have completely broken from the Leach tradition.

The contrast between these two British schools (The Leach and the Moderns) was seen in an exhibition at Primavera. The Primavera is a small, but very attractive gallery in Walton Street Knightsbridge, which holds several art and craft exhibitions during the year, as well as having a permanent stock in the shop. We were fortunate to see a special exhibition of the work of a small group of potters. Included were some

superb slab bottles by Bernard Leach, interesting pots by Janet Leach, some fine tawny-brown lustre earthenware by Alan Caiger-Smith, strong and vigorous slab pots by Ian Auld, elongated sculptural forms by Gillian Lowndes and some exciting stoneware by Lucie Rie. These latest works of Lucie Rie are very different from her delicate porcelains. The tall, elegant vases with wide, flaring tops were strong and sure. Flecks and spots broke through the subtly blended glazes of mauve-brown, green-grey or hazy-blue sometimes with a trace of pink. There was also a group of Hans Coper's pots. This potter's reputation is very high in Britain. We saw a lot of his work, which is impressive, especially the large sculptural forms, but many of his pots we considered a little 'cold'. His pots, like Lucie Rie's, are all for use.

Besides visiting the London shops we called on Raymond Finch at Winchcombe and were full of admiration for his work. He produces beautiful domestic stoneware at his pottery workshop and he still sells at amazingly cheap prices. Some of his large plates and platters are particularly fine.

While staying in Wiltshire with Katherine Pleydel-Bouverie it was a tremendous pleasure to be able to see and handle pots she has made at various periods in her career. This fine potter produces magnificent wood-ash glazed pots. She took us to visit two interesting young potters. Douglas Phillips lives in an ancient stone house tucked away in the depths of a wooded valley. Working on a shoestring, as so many of us do in New Zealand, he has just mastered a newly built oil-fired kiln made with old bricks and equipment. He will make good pots. Richard Batterham, who lives in Dorset, has already established himself as a potter of integrity. He has built a very modern spacious pottery which he runs alone and produces hundreds of pieces of domestic stoneware of good design and craftsmanship with beautiful and varied glazes.

Our general impression was that the average pottery on sale in London was no better than the average work being produced by members of the New Zealand Society of Potters. The top potters in England are doing superb work, but so are a few of our own top potters. □



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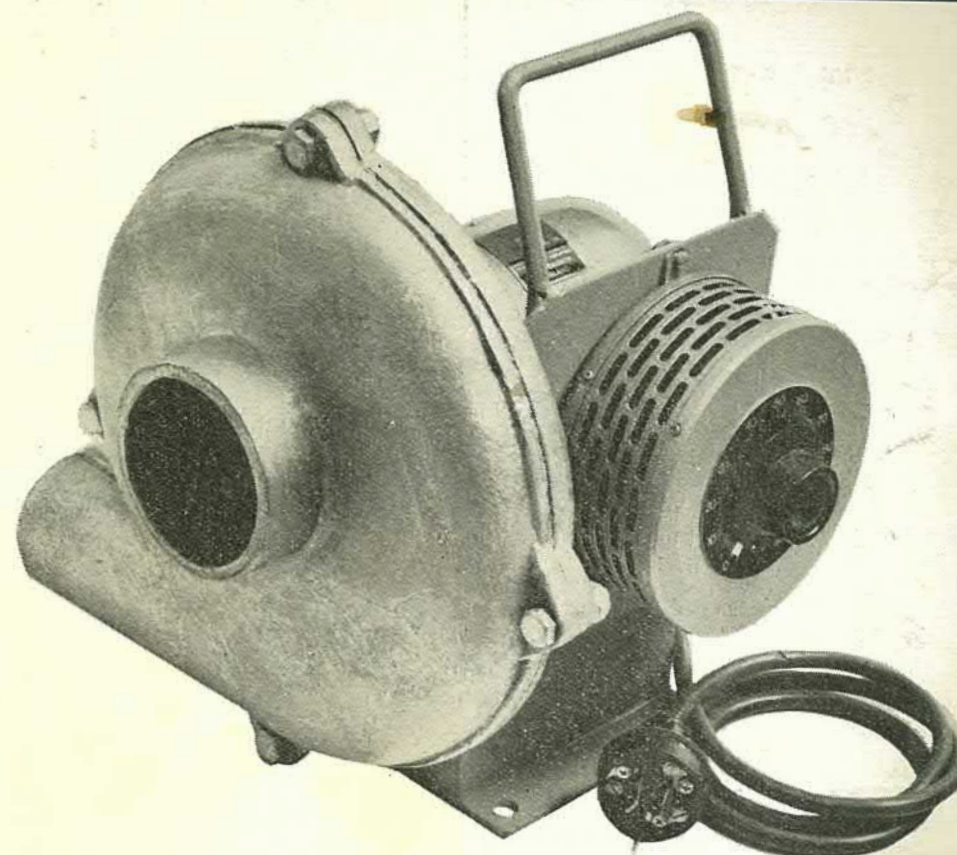
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