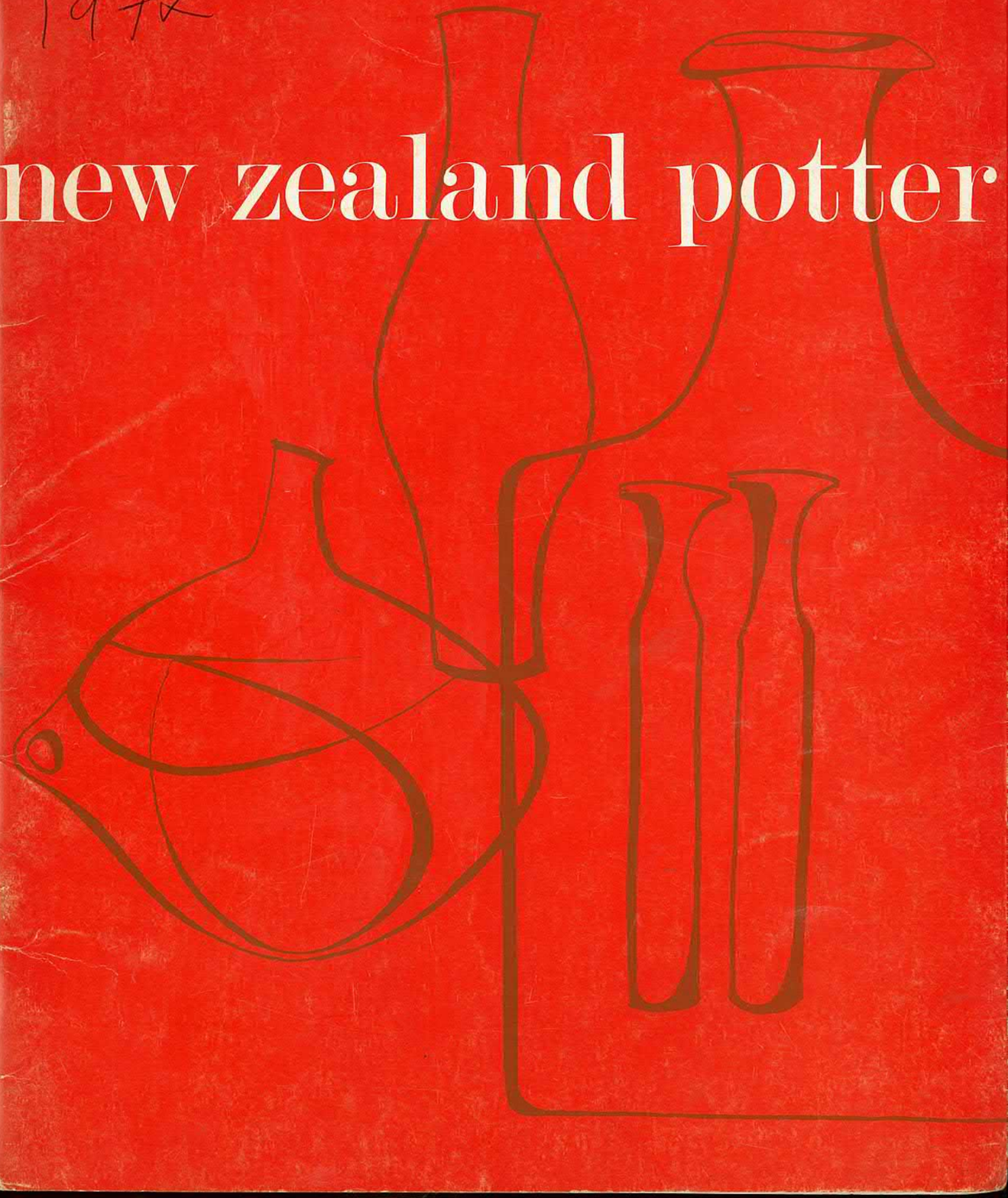
1972

new zealand potter



NEW ZEALAND potter

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As others see us

AUSTRALIAN POTTERS ON TOUR

by Janet Mansfield

Janet Mansfield, who arranged the tour for the Ceramic Study Group of Australia, is a full time potter working in Turramurra, New South Wales.

The generosity of New Zealand potters in giving of their knowledge was surprising to potters brought up to discover things for themselves. This combination of friendliness and information made our New Zealand tour an overwhelming success.

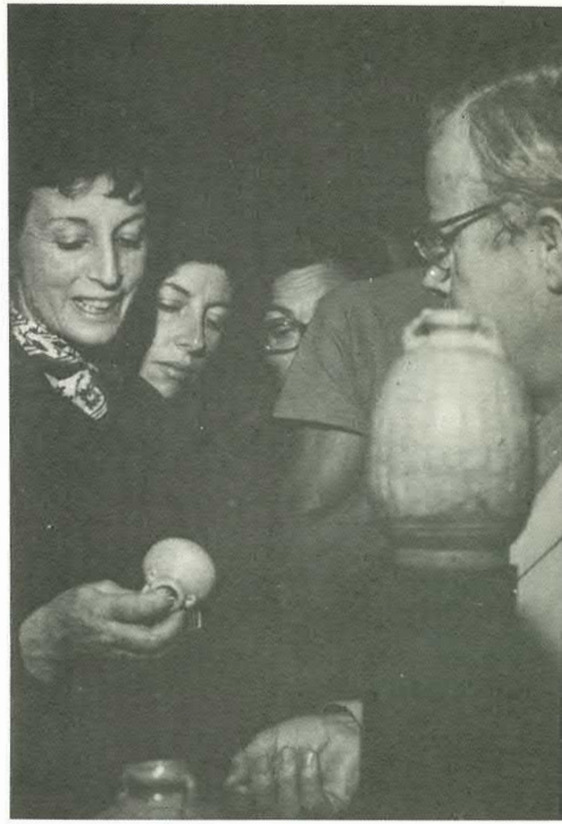
Travelling the thousand odd miles between Christchurch and Auckland with the sole purpose of meeting potters and seeing their work afforded a unique opportunity of assessment and comparison.

We were impressed. One of our strongest memories was the hospitality, the friendliness and obvious goodwill extended to us by our "rivals" as an Auckland newspaper reported the touring group.

From each of the potters we visited we learnt a considerable amount. A two-day school with Michael Trumic made us more aware of some of the basic design principles to be applied in both looking at and in making a pot. We learnt of the differences of pottery forms that give life and character to a potter's work, and of the importance of line, balance and spirit. This school, together with David Brokenshire's stimulating lecture on the work of New Zealand's potters made an excellent foundation for the tour.

Two days with Harry Davis in Nelson having talks on raw materials used by the potters was most informative and the field excursions which included the Baton Saddle and the Dart and Wangapeka Rivers proved rewarding in scenery as well as samples. It would be hard also not to be impressed with the efficiency and sincerity of the Crewenna workshop and ware.

Mirek Smisek was known to some of us who had attended classes he gave in Sydney about five years ago. During the two days we had with him at Te Horo he made many pieces similar in shape and technique to those he used in Sydney. Perhaps the spirit and life that he puts into his pots makes them always fresh and sought after and he has no need to experiment with new ideas. His kilns were a source of admiration and envy.



Janet Mansfield examines pots at the Auckland Museum.

While in Wellington we visited the home of Roy Cowan and Juliet Peter, and we were interested to see kilns, murals and sculptural pots. Wherever we went in New Zealand acknowledgement was made to Roy for his work in kiln design and indeed practical help given by Roy to potters with kiln problems.

Short visits were also made to Christopher Vine and Jack Laird while we were in Nelson and to Flora Christeller and Wilf and Janet Wright on our way to Otaki. Everywhere we were made most welcome.

Doreen Blumhardt gave us a talk on her recent overseas trip and we saw, with the aid of her excellent slides, pots and potteries from all over the world. We also visited Doreen's exhibition where she displayed some imaginative hand built pieces possibly influenced by growing forms of nature.

Our first contact in Auckland was with Peter Stichbury who, through a whole day and evening talked, demonstrated, unloaded kilns and showed films. Peter's straight, serious and professional approach, which is reflected in his pots, gave us yet another aspect of pottery when we were at a stage

of saturation, wondering if we could still see something different.

Visiting Barry Brickell was another new experience that will be appreciated for a long time. The sight of hundreds of superb pots was our first impression at Len Castle's home and though our baggage had doubled since leaving home and many of us were jettisoning clothes to carry more pots, the beauty and variety of Len's pottery proved irresistible.

A short time, not enough, was spent at the Auckland Museum where Trevor Bayliss gave us a tour around the galleries of pots. New Zealand potters are lucky to have such a collection available for study and such a knowledgeable historian as Trevor. Sydney, even Australia, has nothing to compare in number, quality or scope, a project on which we should embark.

We came to learn, and learn we did. At "get-togethers" with Christchurch, Wellington, Hamilton and Auckland potters we exchanged information on kilns, clays, glazes and so on. Between visits to potteries we saw magnificent scenery, angular mountains and lush valleys quite different from our own.

So what did we learn? That some New Zealand potters were making a living solely from selling pots without recourse to either teaching or another job was the most impressive fact. Such dedication, not only of thought but of strength and energy was an inspiration. Only a few potters in Australia are relying on pottery sales for their total income. There is another side to this argument, of course, in that a part-time potter has not the financial stresses, which leave him no time to experiment or develop creatively. Conversely, I believe the New Zealand potters are proving that inspiration comes out of the work.

Technically, we found the standard of New Zealand pottery extremely high—no doubt the result of much time and experience at the craft. Curiously, however, there was a certain similarity seen in mixed exhibitions that is not so evident in a mixed exhibition of the work of Australian potters. Perhaps the influence of leading potters is greater in New Zealand. Perhaps the New Zealand potters work closer together, exchanging technical information and ideas. Or is it that the New Zealand public has come to expect and now demands certain conformities in the potter's product?

The New Zealand public is a much greater supporter of the potter's ideals and a greater buyer of his wares than is the Australian public. Australian potters seem more inclined to wait for the public to appreciate what it is the potters are saying, whilst muttering off-hand about artistic integrity. However, these are generalisations and a visit to the Potters' Gallery in Sydney could perhaps convince a New Zealand potter that there is a certain overall characteristic evident in Australian pots. I have heard the remark from both sides of the Tasman that "potters on the other side are twenty years behind."

Potters on both sides are technically proficient, having similar stimulations and ideals; the differences are possibly individual and not national. Potters on both sides of the Tasman however are totally involved in what they are doing, a prerequisite of the craft and not a national characteristic.

I hope there will be more commuting of potters between New Zealand and Australia. The travelling time is short, only 180 minutes and the fare is just the equivalent of 100 or so mugs; I can only hope the Australians will be as generous and hospitable in return. □

Theo Schoon writes from Australia

I've been seeing a great deal of Australian ceramic art and find it interesting. It contrasts strongly with New Zealand pottery. in the sense that there is more individuality and less of the deja about the work. Len Castle's work is the best known and most appreciated here. One potter is imitating Len's manner in clay, and does it quite well, to the extent that I believed I was looking at a good Len Castle pot.

There is a great deal of constructive decorative work being done of a rather predictable symmetrical nature, but well done for all that. More arty than art in the sense that experiment and exploring is not sustained, and it remains stuck in simple plagiarism.

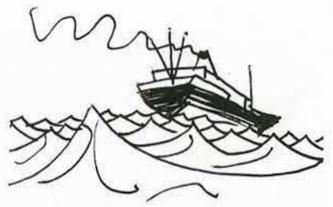
Some interesting ceramic sculpture is being done, but is essentially geared to the typical British Taste—and is therefore doomed to nothingness. Most of the creative work seen is imported — from Scandinavia, Germany, Italy and Israel. The imports have an immediate effect on the local potters.

Since the staggering number of art shops and small galleries pump a quantity of international art into Sydney, they outperform the country's official art galleries which are an utter bore by comparison, and make the New Zealand art galleries seem like mausoleums.

It is obvious to me that Australian ceramics outdistance those in New Zealand and will increasingly do so in the future.

Australia is a much happier hunting ground for those talents interested in 'doing something in Bali.' Australians are more conscious of these arts anyway. The flow of Balinese and New Guinea art into Australia is stronger than its ever been, but that it was kid's play compared to what you can see here now. It is staggering. Very fine primitive art can be bought in seedy second hand shops. So imagine what splendours the major stores offer. Sydney is plugged in on the international world of culture.

By contrast New Zealand continues to be served by the severely limited mind and eye. I have always been surprised at the smugness of New Zealanders returning from visits overseas. Closed minds will bug New Zealand destiny for a long time yet. My own resolution, never to return, is hardening every day.



New Korean collection at Auckland Museum

by Peter Rule

Squadron Leader Peter Rule, RNZAF, has made several trips to Korea where he served with the United Nations Command. Over the years he has assembled a collection of Korean ceramics, bronzes, and other antiquities that have made a substantial addition to the oriental section of the Auckland Museum.

Lidded Bowl, Silla Dynasty. Unglazed.

Seoul haunts

Insadong, or Mary's Alley, is the Seoul Mecca for the antique hunter. Mary Woo, one of the original dealers after whom the alley has been nick-named, still operates.

Typically, in the city of Seoul and unlike our own shopping areas, great clusters of traders are located in specific geographic areas. For instance, for car parts you make tracks to the area where for two city blocks there is nothing else but rows of open fronted shops overflowing their conglomerate of spare parts. That wing-mirror or sea of hub caps you lost last night is probably there—somewhere. And so it is with antiques. Although there are traders throughout the city the interesting, often dust-ridden collections have for many years been concentrated around Insadong. This crooked, narrow, one-way traffic lane, where the pedestrian has to be on guard for the audacious driver coming the wrong way, was formerly the location of numerous marriage parlours. These have been displaced to the nearby grander marriage halls. Just as the area saw a transition from its marriage functions, so today we see the emerging of boutiques and fashionable art galleries amongst the quainter shops with their characteristic sliding doors beckoning the true browser to their dusty bowels.

All year people casually explore. Those short of time make a frantic dash for an impulsive purchase.

Wine Cup, Silla Dynasty. Unglazed.

But this is not the place for hasty decision. Fortunate indeed is the one who can tarry and linger, for only with patience will a shopkeeper be tempted to dive into the hidden depths of his stock. He will bring forth almost casually, though with an air of ceremony, a treasure, as the lid of the carefully tailored pawlonia wood box is untied to reveal a creation of an early craftsman.

Personally I preferred the winter for browsing. The rigorous cold tended to keep all but the most hardy at home. Anyway, it was preferable to linger beside the warmth of the small oil burner with its kettle simmering rather than dribble sweat in the confines of the rather small cluttered shop on an uncomfortably hot summer's day.

A particular haunt of mine was a place known as Song Chun Song. Mr Kim So Hwan became both a friend and adviser. He was the acknowledged expert on celadons in the alley and although a businessman at heart, he was quick to discern between the sharp collector out for profit and the real admirer of his wares. Many hours on a Sunday afternoon were spent sitting beside his roaring stove as piece by piece we learnt the joys that a beautiful pot can bring. Although his shop is now more spacious, I preferred his former one further down the alley. It was here that he was nick-named "shoes off Kim"—it is a Korean custom to leave one's shoes at the door and walk in stockinged feet on the polished wooden floor. It was a bit horrifying however to find that the floor of the new establishment being concrete was not going to be as forgiving to the careless as the aged polished boards. At least in the new shop there was not so much need to step nimbly round the wares that littered the floor, and stacked the walls.

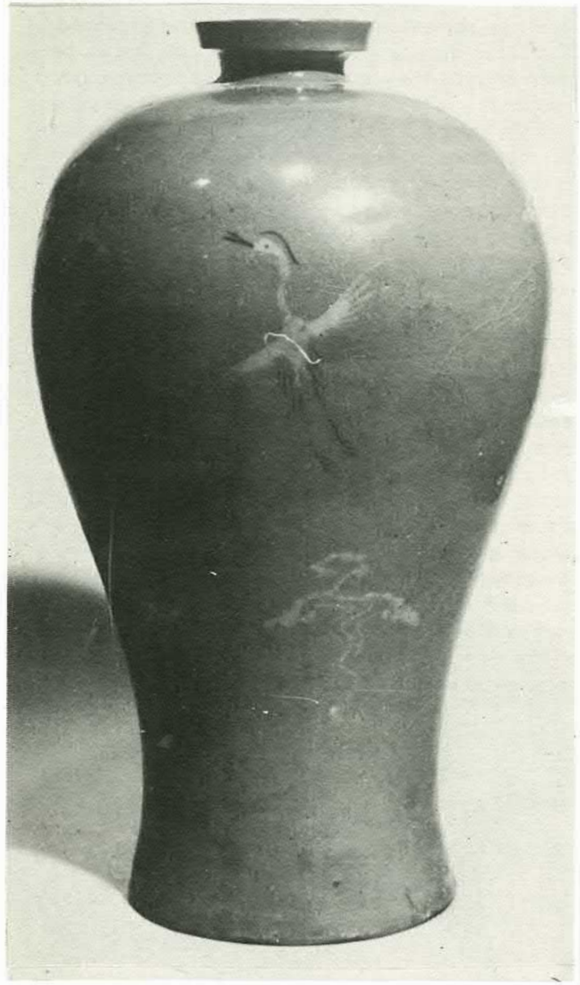
It was here that unlike the detached feeling of a museum, one could come to intimate terms with the great treasures of earlier times—the stone grey majestic shapes of the Silla dynasty, the fabulous celadons of the Koryo and the blue and brown decorated porcelains of the Yi dynasties.

Koryo techniques

The fascination of Korean pottery is not instant. It does not always appeal at first glance. As one comes back to it however, its allure emerges and one becomes attracted to the peculiarities that characterise so many examples of the ceramics of this country.

Many of the pieces of the early Koryo period bear decoration of lotus leaves, chrysanthemum and peony flowers skilfully incised prior to glazing which leaves a discreet effect. These earlier designs may well have been reflecting the tastes and techniques borrowed from China. The Yueh state through its ports near Shanghai communicated easily with Korea's western border and it is in this locality that the great pottery centres of Kanjin and Puan were found. These kilns were famed for their productions for the royal households and aristocracy of Korea, and it is in this area that some of the pots now shown in Auckland Museum were found. These 11th and 12th Century pieces exhibit one of Korea's greatest secrets that still baffles modern science to reproduce—the famed "Kingfisher" celadon glaze that was undoubtedly one of the greatest triumphs.

As the Koryo period advanced perhaps the restlessness of the Korean potter surfaced and promoted a dissatisfaction with the type of ware being produced. Always a practical and ingenious race they produced a method now well known but founded by their inventive minds—the unique technique of inlay. The first datable example of this Koryo invention came from the tomb of a noble who died in 1159. The method used was for the design to be incised either by stamping or carving the leather-hard clay, and then to inlay the impression with a lighter or darker material. When covered with a celadon glaze the white and black effects highlighted the dominant blue-green.



Vase, Koryo Dynasty.

Celadon, inlaid with flying cranes.

Wine ewer, Koryo Dynasty. Inlaid celadon.

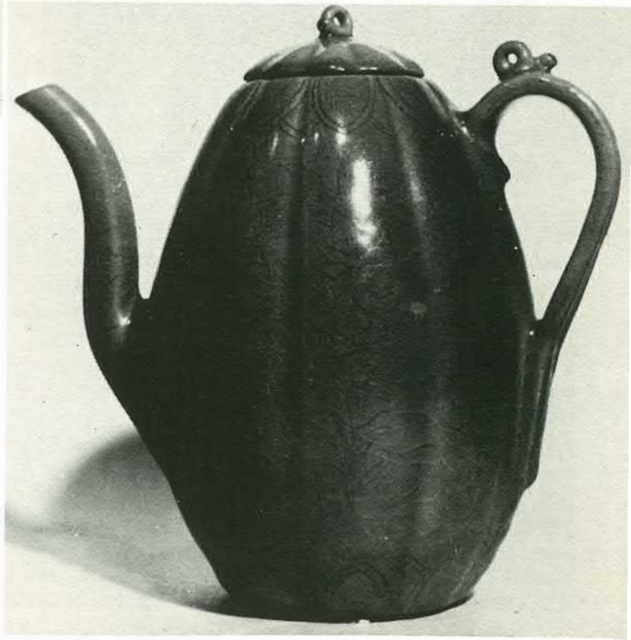
Auckland collection

The collection at the Auckland Museum displays many examples of this technique—one of the more striking pieces being the large maebyong with its inlays of cranes and clouds. This piece from a kiln near Kaesong, in North Korea, is an example of the early days of the perfecting of the art. The positioning of the cranes is particularly interesting in that instead of the more usual horizontal flying position, these birds are ascending vertically. This, it is believed symbolises the dominant emergence of the Koryo dynasty over the competing Silla and Paekche Kingdoms.

A very beautiful 12th century melon-shaped wine pot is an example of a slightly earlier period. This well proportioned piece was made before the invention of inlay and has a carefully incised pattern of peony flowers and lotus down the side panels. One can well imagine this striking pot from the Cholla Namdo Province gracing the table of one of the royal households.

In a later 15th century example, a finely proportioned, well waisted, prunus vase of the mid Yi period is inlaid with a pattern of willow trees and traditional lotus. Though more intricate, less attention has been paid to fineness of detail and perfection.

Some of these pieces will appeal to the discerning eye immediately while the attraction of others will grow with time and appreciation. The sometimes rough finish on the base of an otherwise finely



crafted piece reflects a characteristic sometimes seen in the people — a spirited urgency and impetuosity. Perhaps a lopsided bowl or pot with an unexpected bulge or tilt will take the eye. Was it just carelessness or a perception by the craftsman that all that is good is not perfect? The Japanese inveterate collectors of the tea bowls have long favoured the Korean product that to our western eyes may often seem imperfect, erratic in shape and finish and sometimes even clumsy. What is the appeal? Perhaps the crafty Korean knew more of his fellow man than time has given him credit for.

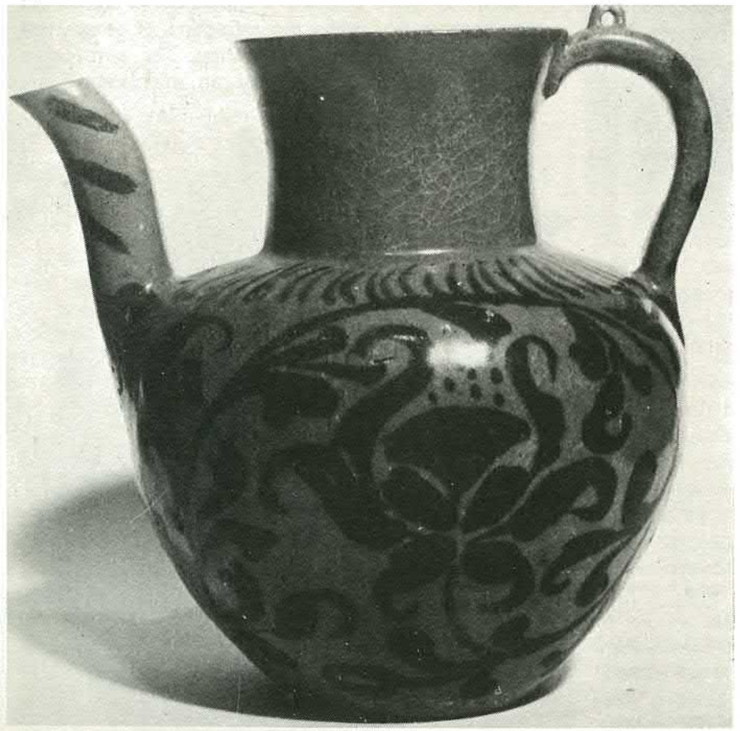
Present day folk pottery

Korean folk pottery today is still essentially utilitarian. Kilns are found in isolated areas throughout the country producing wares whose basic patterns date back many centuries. This domestic ware is in the characteristic brown shiny glaze with only shades of differences in colouring from one kiln to another. This slip glaze, made from clays similar to those found round the Wellington area is high in iron content and is prepared in a large hole dug into the ground. Decoration, particularly on the larger pots, is usually a simple flourish done with the thumbs on the wet glaze or a broad bold curve done with a wooden paddle.

The Korean diet has over the centuries influenced both the domestic and ceremonial wares produced. Enormous storage jars of "kimchi" pots are to be seen everywhere—on the roofs of the cramped city dwellings, in the carefully swept yards of the country thatched cottage and even on the verandah of the more prosperous businessman's home. It is in these pots, produced in a great variety of sizes, that vast quantities of the pickled fermented spiced cabbage (kimchi) is prepared and stored. In winter these jars provide natural refrigeration either through exposure to the biting winds from Mongolia as they cut across the Korean Peninsula or by their being buried just before winter freezes the ground.

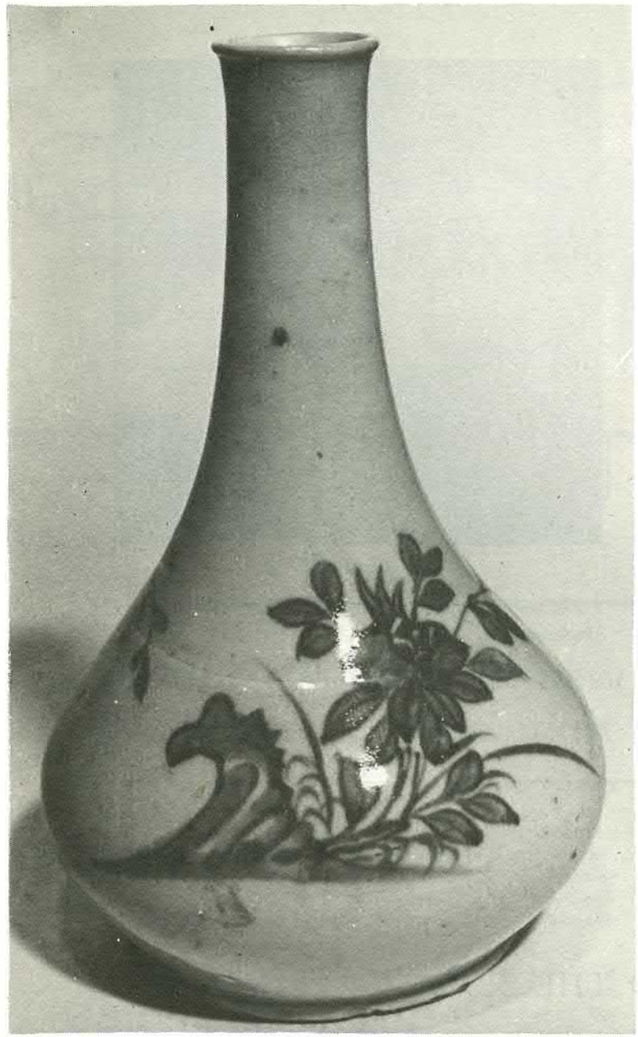
Today's modern country kiln area shows little sign of advanced techniques. Laid out in an inconspicuous manner it is most easily identified by the climbing kiln. This is usually a dilapidated looking structure with either a thatched roof or a rusty scrap iron shelted over the kiln tube that slants up the slope of the ground. These kilns are wood fired which is interesting in itself in a country that is so critically short of natural wood and lacks any form of gadegtry that we might associate with such a technical operation.

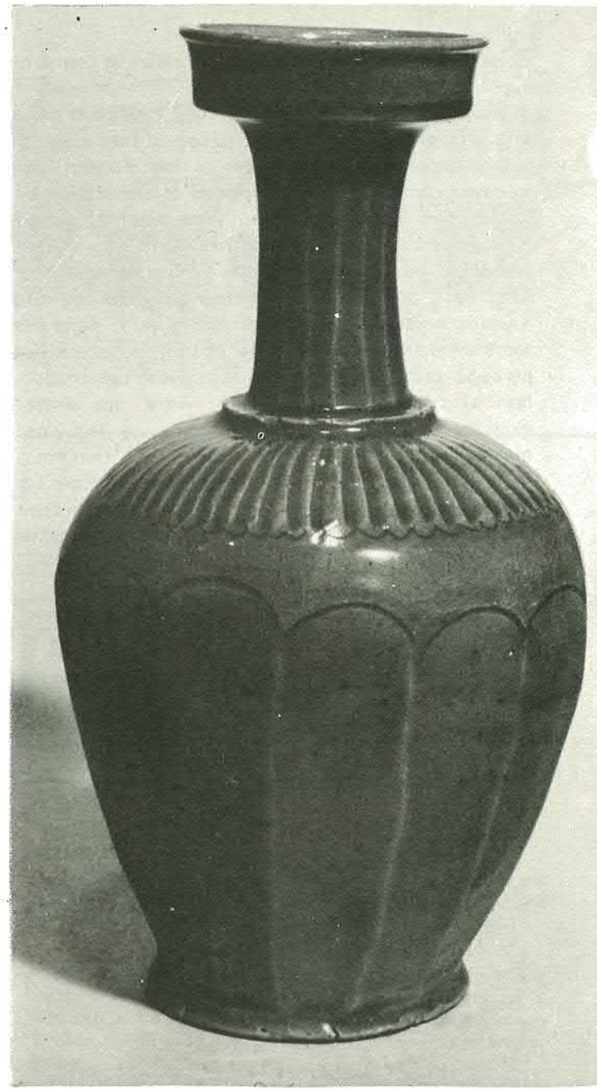
The success of a firing rests on the skill and experience of the potter who has learnt his art from



Wine ewer, Koryo Dynasty. Celadon, with iron brushed decoration.

Opposite page:
Left:
Vase, Yi Dynasty. Underglaze blue porcelain.
Right:
Vase, Koryo Dynasty. Celadon.



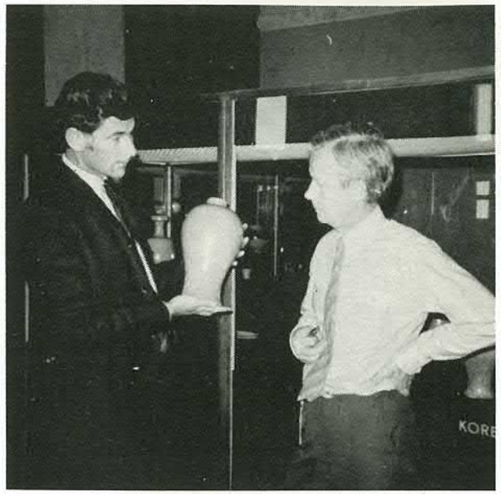


a long line of ancestors. Close by the kiln there are some low thatched huts. All is quiet inside except for the sound of damp slapping of clay. As one peers into the interior gloom you will see the potters at work on their simple kick wheels recessed into a hole in the ground. The surroundings are made more ethereal by the dim natural lighting. A strategically positioned low slit in the otherwise windowless wall directs a slant of outside light precisely on the potters work area. The setting is peaceful and quiet and the atmosphere relaxing and cool. Here the kimchi wares of Korea are created —large pots, many varieties of bowls, platters and bottles. The firing takes 3 days and immediately afterwards the pots will be wrapped loosely in rice straw, piled perilously high on ox carts, or wartime trucks and transported to the city and village markets.

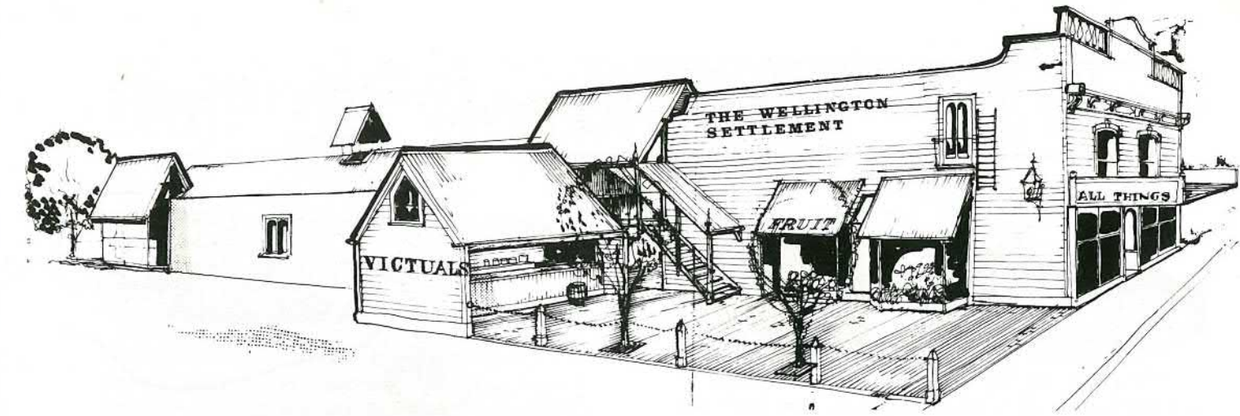
Perhaps more than any other nation, the Korean potters' ware reflects the history of this much buffered nation. The early three kingdoms period saw the Silla and Paekche wares with their beautiful bowls and stands. The Auckland collection illustrates the transition through the later Koryo period when the mongols invaded from the North. From its peak of excellence in the 12th century one can see the influence of this race—the arabesques, the heavier handling of design, and the decline in kiln performance that produced more mediocre wares. Without the control of earlier times, however, perhaps the

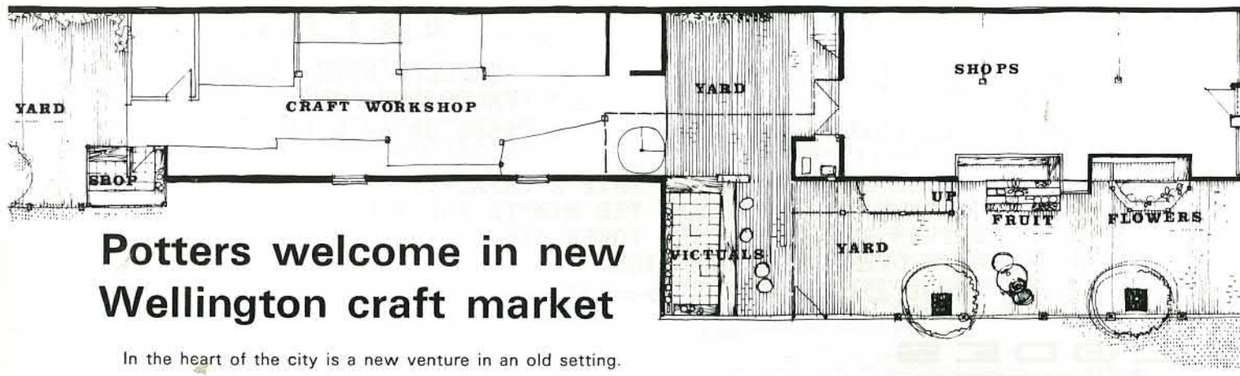
potter was able to branch out into differing forms of expression.

Using their own imagination they produced more folk wares which have a fascination of their own. In recent times the devastation of the Korean war followed on from a lengthy period of annexation by Japan. The finest craftsmen were sent to Japan and formed a basis for the ceramic industry of that country. The prevalence today of the surnames of Kim, Park and Lees in the Imari, Kagoshima and Karatsu areas is evidence of this. The Yi period is represented by a wide range of original wares but perhaps sadly, today's kilns apart from the production of the utilitarian domestic ware, are almost exclusively producing reproductions of the past masterpieces. It is to be hoped that the small nucleus of craftsmen seeking a fresh outlook for their creative ability will, in the future (as with their forefathers) leave an indelible mark on the ceramic history of Korea. □



Peter Rule talks to Trevor Bayliss at the Auckland Museum.





Potters welcome in new Wellington craft market

In the heart of the city is a new venture in an old setting.

The Wellington Settlement will be an environment for people. It is a village complex consisting of a craft market, coffee house, music centre, exhibition gallery, fashion boutiques, bookshop and other kiosks. For the facilities it provides for pottery it could be a real asset to beginner potters.

The pottery market and workshop is in the rear of the building. It extends into a garden where the kiln is. Seats and tables are provided so people can drink coffee as they watch the kiln being loaded and unloaded.

The kiln will be a small gas-fired down-draught single chamber, about 20 cubic feet, with four natural draught burners. Potters can have their pots bisque or glost fired here. There will also be wheels for hire by the hour. Everything necessary will be supplied. The whole pottery process will be done in the workshop area and people can wander through and watch.

The Settlement resident potter is Ian McClymont who for the last seven years has been teaching pottery at Wellington High School. He has been a member of the New Zealand Society of Potters since its inception. All potters and intending potters are welcome.

The complex is situated in and around two old Willis Street buildings and adjoining open space, at present used for car parking. At the back there is more undeveloped land with a northern aspect and sun. Old red brick buildings are all around. And a few trees. Part of the car park is garden court with outdoor seating in summer. A small cottage kitchen serves indoor and outdoor coffee areas.

A central glass roofed winter garden linking the front and rear buildings has a raised deck with more seating. It can also be used by performing musicians.

The exhibition gallery is for displays, films, recitals and poetry readings. It may be used as a music workshop and will be available for lectures and special functions.

Some part of The Settlement will be open at all times.

The craft market has been planned to become part of The Settlement which will be used by Wellington craftsmen of different skills in much the same way that Auckand's Browns Mill is used—for working and displaying as well as selling.

The people mainly responsible for creating The Wellington Settlement are Val Svendsen and Harry Seresin.

Mrs Svendsen, one of New Zealand's outstanding fashion designers, came to Wellington from Christchurch in 1966. Since then she has designed costumes for The New Zealand Opera Company, New Zealand Ballet Company, the N.Z. Maori Theatre World Tour Company and Downstage Theatre. Last year Mrs. Svendsen opened her own fashion boutique in Wellington. 'Memsahib' has been described by overseas visitors as good as anything that can be seen in London or New York. Another 'Memsahib' will be found behind The Settlement's early colonial facade.

Harry Seresin has lived in Wellington most of his life. One of the founders of Downstage and, until recently, the theatre's executive director, his earlier ventures include the original Stockton's in Woodward Street and The Coffee Gallery in Lambton Quay.

The Wellington Settlement was designed by Christchurch architect Peter Beaven.

Harry Seresin

Roll on Revolution

by Paul Melser

Pottery in New Zealand is in a bad way. The Pottery Movement has ground to a halt. Our potters have grown old, tired, entrenched and conservative.

There is little original experimentation on which to base continued development and bad habits are being passed on. So called standards have been established which are inflexibly based on imported bourgeois and industrial values and the drive to establish a new and unique tradition has been thwarted by conformism and arrogance.

Potters, pottery organisations, exhibitions and pots all reflect this stagnation and need to be roused and revitalised if they are to survive.

Energetic pioneers

The beginnings of the craft movement in New Zealand gave rise to optimism for the future. Potters had access to an enormous variety of materials, fuels and techniques. Because they were starting from scratch they could do exactly what they wanted. The potters themselves came from widely differing backgrounds.

A completely new technology had to be developed to suit our country and conditions. We started fresh without the usual encumbrances of an established hierarchy or industry. Each potter had to discover all the factors involved. He wasn't simply taught a few of them.

A movement is alive only when it is vigorously changing and developing—when there is wide experiment and exploration of new ideas and materials. Initially experiment in pottery in New Zealand was widely based and enthusiastic. Intending potters, often the 'masters' of the future, didn't even know the questions—let along the answers they were seeking. There was some revolutionary potential in this first chaotic phase. It was at this stage that New Zealand potters did earn some distinction. They learned together quickly. They shared ideas and information freely which made possible the very rapid advance that pottery in this country experienced. The public too, had no established values since hand-made pottery was quite new to them. Potters and their organisations were in a position to educate public awareness.

Adherents to the pottery cult, as it almost was in those early days, developed many ways to share their experiences. Probably chief among these, the most grandiose anyway, was the annual exhibition of the New Zealand Society of Potters. For a long time these exhibitions stood like milestones. They were the sum total of the pottery achievements of that year—to be ceremoniously surpassed in the next. Each new achievement would be endlessly applauded and each new contributor 'confirmed' with evangelical zeal.

Technical skill becomes the goal

Having one's pots, accepted for exhibition, thus gaining the publicity and tumultous praise at the opening, became an essential prerequisite for professional success. Since the pots had to be approved by a selection panel, and since there were often too many pots submitted for exhibition, there was a tendency for pots to be made for approval —if not by the judges, then at least by one's cohorts.

The easiest way to win this approval was through a display of technical expertise. Since there was a scarcity of this around, the consciousness of the material or process as important in themselves lapsed. (Possibly the material would manifest itself too often in a way that obviously conflicted with the intention). Vague ideas like honesty towards the material or process were at any rate far too hard to evaluate to make them a safe bet for public or a judge's scrutiny. There were progressively more and more attempts at brutalising materials into submission. The **intention** became paramount and the technical feats which allowed these intentions to be revealed were worshipped and pursued. Free exploratory experiment was abandoned in favour of controlled conditions.

Since these exhibitions as well as being opportunities for a comparison of work, were also serious and successful publicity manoeuvres, they had a substantial effect on public taste. The public had no dampening effect on the preoccupation with expertise, since like the potters, it had no means by which to judge any other element. Expertise became the basis of comparison.

Now after 15 years of education, public taste is no longer just ignorant. It is bigoted. The public obviously has a big effect on the pots made in New Zealand. Though earlier on it couldn't be said to

be responsible for its effect on pot makers and their work, it now holds back any possibility of development and change. The potters were, and still are, responsible for the bigotry of public taste.

Liking pots for the wrong reasons

We don't have a significant group of people in this country who know pottery. Though we are, as a nation, purportedly interested in pottery, our interest is more as a form of social currency than in understanding. There is little interest in individual pots and therefore little understanding of what the individuality of a single pot means. The sorts of pots that sell best are certainly not the most absorbing or stimulating ones. They are more likely to be those adhering most closely to the established stereotype. In spite of the lack of differentiation, in intent at least, between well-designed industrial pottery and that produced by our 'individual' craftsmen, hand-made pots command a higher price because they are to some extent exclusive.

New Zealand pots have the pretensions of 'art objects' with an accompanying uncertainty about their purpose or intent. Craft pottery seems to be bought mostly as gifts for others (even the Government finds it a reliably uncontroversial way to make gifts overseas). Pottery is always a safe buy, almost always guaranteed to satisfy any status-seeking recipient, regardless of its quality. Pottery is at the centre of New Zealand's gift industry and most pots are made for this market. The pot is signed, preferably with a well-known mark. It is unblemished, predictable and uncontroversial. People still buy sets of pots. They demand that these sets be made up of identical pieces. The pots must have no defect, whether or not it has any bearing on the function or the beauty of the pot. The pot must be decorated—quite essential to conform to the pretentions of both the buyer and maker. Few buyers buy for themselves. Few buyers look at and feel the pot closely. Their purchase is dictated most of all by their rigid idea of what a pot should be.

While pottery is bought and valued mainly for status improving reasons by a conservative and insensitive clientele, and potters are prepared to keep supplying the sort of pot demanded of them, the pottery movement must subside. It has become corrupted by its own acceptability and is prevented from taking its own direction. It must eventually die.

When craft pottery was first made in this country it was relatively free of extraneous influences. As it has become more fashionable and popular its drive has been thwarted by the complacence and arrogance of its makers. Its direction has been dictated by buyer's overseas standards and the disciplines of industry. Most New Zealand pottery is made by individuals working separately in widely differing locations and having access to greatly differing materials. (Its worth remembering this when looking into the craft shop.) Yet the work of this divergent group is tedious, conformist and affected. Professional's pots adhere to a pattern, become more and more sophisticated and remote from their origins. The pots have an affinity with industrial ware. Both are mass-produced, standardised in shape, colour and techniques of manufacture. Both are equally divorced from their materials. Both are dominated by imported standards and lack uniquely New Zealand characteristics.

Keeping to the pattern

As more potters become adept enough to pot professionally, the object of any experiment becomes more and more restricted. It was directed towards consolidating techniques in order to control the end. The effect of this trend is now obvious. The work of our potters has a uniformity and sameness about it and there is no evidence of individual or collective development. These potters have endlessly exploited a limited range of experiment which is common to them all so their pots only change in one direction. Even this change is slow and cautious since they have everything to lose by wild forays into the unknown. The old idea of our potters as adventurers and pioneers can be forgotten. Dynamic searching and discovery is no longer valued.

Most of the responsibility for the stagnation in quality of both the work and the buyer lies with our group of 'master potters'. The elevated position of these 'masters' has been earned not so much by the quality of their work, as by their length of service. They were our first proficient potters and as such they formed and conditioned public taste. Though perhaps initially some compromise in their ideals to assist the earning of a living may have been necessary, their present financial and social security makes it unnecessary now.

Our 'master' potters accepted without question a wide range of values that do not necessarily have any validity in this country, then imposed these on the public and the second generation of potters by setting standards. Most of these standards are conservative and restrictive; they tend to lead to

conformity rather than to diversity. These standards are unnecessary and an encumbrance. The 'masters' accepted practices of craft industries, though they were working as individuals. They mass-produced and standardised particular designed shapes and put a lot of energy into making large batches of identical pots. This was a direct transference of the Leach idea and points to the tremendous impact of his "A Potter's Book." They failed to place the Leach pottery in the context of its time and its competition with an established and powerful pottery industry in Britain.

Similarly Japanese pottery was badly assimiliated. Some potters through direct experience, others through reading, tried to absorb and become part of another culture. It is healthier to learn about the nature of stoneware by firing a pot till it melts, than by accepting standards of beauty and form from a place as far distant as Japan. Perhaps we may be led to a similar conclusion (by our bubbly and warped pot), but we must get there by our own efforts.

Our 'masters' took their approach to materials more directly from industry itself. Clays particularly are standardised. They are often even bought directly from an individual manufacturer and they seldom vary from potter to potter or pot to pot for years on end. Industries need guaranteed access to vast reserves of specific materials because of the difficulty and expense of stabilising new ones. Individual potters need not have these problems. They can utilise small pockets of clays with minimal changes. By constantly varying their materials potters can avoid the pitfalls of boring repetition. Furthermore if the materials have fundamental variations it is a source of inspiration to use them to best effect. At present, however, our 'masters' have a tendency to make them conform to a single ideal. A naturally groggy clay will be either bashed or ball-milled into submission. A fine deposit will have artificial iron grots or grogs added. As well as these more obvious attempts at dominating the materials there are other more subtle ones. Some clays will belly easily on the wheel. Others easy to throw as tall and light cylinders, will split when they are bellied. Some clays will warp readily on fusion. Others will remain stable. In making clays our potters usually manufacture one which will do **everything.** Their pots become so easy to make they lose any awareness of making them. They become so predictable in the kiln the potters lose the awareness of the heat from which they are born. These pots are **unaware** pots. Almost all clays used in this country have an overpoweringly synthetic feel. They hold no surprises or interest.

Perhaps because of the early race for expertise or because of the complete acceptance of the standards of a highly developed tradition (Japan's) our potters became preoccupied early on with the finished pot. It has classical proportions and a cliched sureness. It is tight, formal, neat and clean. The making process leaves no mark on the finished result. A pot must never show the blood and guts of its birth, no cracks, no warps, no discolouration. The glaze will not run (or even shine). The pot must be seen to be professionally made. The bourgeoisie put covers over their rolls of lavatory paper. Similarly a potter masks with platitudes whatever majesty may be left of his combination of clay and fire. His result has to be intended and foreseen. He makes sure nothing disturbs the uninterrupted banality of his creation. His hands and his mind work mechanically. His tools comply meekly with his intention.

Factory-made pots are characterised by general uniformity. They show no individual quirks of either maker or material. The processes are directed towards increasing control with the aim of complete standardisation. The individuality of a piece can only develop through the failure of that control. Whenever a potter seeks to standardise and control to the extent that these quirks are eliminated, tedious, synthetic, work follows. Often the individuality of the craftsman's pots can only be established on academic grounds. It is often not clearly obvious, even under close examination. When a potter starts limiting himself and his pots in the way that industries are forced to he loses all he had. He becomes simply a one-man industry producing expensive expendable consumer goods without value. He ceases to contribute anything. The only judgement that needs to be made about pots is whether they show energy and vital innovation. A craft potter who becomes entrenched is worthless. The work of a fascinated incompetent is of more value than that of a bored though adept professional.

Exhibitions not exciting

Our current exhibitions and pottery institutions probably best show the lack of development and change in the pottery scene. When the Society of Potters was formed it had a definite social and administrative function. Its annual exhibition was a significant event in the early days, even if later it had negative effects. It served to co-ordinate and distribute information and new discoveries to some extent. It was also largely run and supported by the potters themselves. Now it has been virtually deserted by most the more serious of our

professionals; it represents amateurs and is run by administrators. It has been degraded to the point where it suggests it should continue to function merely because of its reputation (New Zealand Potter Vol. 14/1). New Zealand Potters Guild, supposedly made up of pure professionals, is in a similar predicament. Apart from the object of protecting and furthering their own interests as an elite(that may become vital for their survival if they get any more complacent), the group shows its lack of real purpose in its exhibitions. The recent guild showing in Wellington had no new elements —the congratulations were still rife, though perhaps less sincerely accorded. The pots showed the same tedious preoccupations. Still no original work. Still no fire. No guts. No enthusiasm. Even debate and discussion was lacking. The potters of the radical organisations merely rejoiced in their collective radiance and confirmed all the prejudices of themselves and their public.

But it is not just the exhibitions of the organisations that are tedious. The old enthusiasm is no longer present in one-man shows either. We have the familiar faces of the faithful saying familiar things, but there is no longer a justification for enthusiasm. The pots are not exciting. The potters are not excited. They have tied themselves up and become so bored by their lack of activity they can't untie themselves.

Having limited the range of expression open to them as makers of domestic ware, many potters have sought to escape into a realm of art unrestrained by practicalities—sculpture. In ceramic sculpture ideas are given free reign. The qualities of the material are either completely subverted in pursuit of the idea, or the material (perhaps one characteristic of it), becomes the idea itself. In the second case the work is usually so overstated it becomes unnatural and absurd—a parody of itself. Clays are often so stuffed with grog they become more like stone. Particular glaze colours or effects are transferred onto all sorts of unlikely or sterile forms. Clays may be textured synthetically in the same way and endlessly imposed on forms designed purely as vehicles for them. Too frequently the ideas and the materials are at loggerheads or the material and process become subservient so the work lacks substance.

Being a sculptor carries more prestige than being a mere craftsman potter and maybe this is why the ceramic sculpture trend has developed. Sculpture possibly is the only way open for new discovery, potters having lost the capacity to discover through pots. The experiment necessary for making sculpture demands the same freedom of thought and openness of mind as for domestic ware. In our ceramic sculpture we can see all the characteristics of our most pretentious pottery magnified. Sculpture is not an escape. It is a trap.

Perhaps either the 'masters' (through a supreme effort of will) will manage to untie themselves, or younger potters will discover free experiment. At present it looks as though neither will happen. The 'masters' are becoming more sure of themselves as their age and their mana increases. The younger potters are being welcomed into schools or apprenticeships which will deprive them of the only real assets they have—curiosity and ingenuity. These will be replaced with a dependence on pre-digested knowledge passed out by 'teachers'. With knowledge, like food the end product of digestion is valueless and must be discarded. It is the digesting that is the learning. If a formal pottery school is established or if a greater proportion of new potters take up apprenticeships as their basic source of knowledge (they may get some benefit from a month or two with a 'master' in learning what not to do), then we will have lost all we initially gained. We will have acquired the characteristics of an established tradition without any of its substance. We've got many more years of casting about aimlessly before we can call ourselves established. If a movement is to be restarted, most of what has already been done will have to be abandoned and cleared away. We will have to go back almost to the beginning and start again.

Roll on revolution. Comments welcomed by those having contrary or supporting views to Paul Melser's.

Harry and **May Davis** of Crewenna are hoping to be able to go to Peru to start a village pottery in the Andes. It is not yet certain that this will be possible. If it does eventuate —the next issue of the Potter will carry an article about the project—the why and the how of it. It is expected that Crewenna will close down for a few years—how many years will depend on how long it takes to get the Andean propect to the point where it can be handed over to the Peruvians themselves.

MARKETING

by May Davis

There are three main channels for selling pottery. Through retail shops, direct to the customer (either at the workshop or by mail order) and through exhibitions. All have their advantages and disadvantages.

To take the most common one first, through shops. This is relatively easy on the paperwork, and also on the packing front. The disadvantages seem to be twofold. First the obvious one that the potter only receives a percentage of the value of the article. Most shops add 60% to the wholesale price. This is the equivalent of taking 37.5% off the retail price. (Taking a 33⅓% commission is the equivalent of a 50% mark up on the wholesale price.) The other disadvantage is the lack of direct personal contact with the customer.

Direct sales to consumers is the system we use at Crewenna, where we have a showroom open for six months of the year, and orders from this, and preparing for the next season, keep us busy for the other six months. The direct contact with customers is an advantage to both parties. It becomes possible to fulfill special requests, a thing it is difficult to do if a third party has to act as an intermediary. Also it is good for the potter to hear the reactions of people; one can learn this way. The most obvious advantage is of course that there is no commission to be paid, though this is partly offset by other expenses. These are the time involved in serving, or, if the showroom is closed and we are working on orders, the extra time needed for increased office work and packing. At Crewenna we send out over five hundred parcels a year. Our breakages are about one pot a year, i.e. less than .01% as each parcel contains several pots. We pack in cartons, obtained free from local shops, and we use our own hay for inland parcels and wood-wool for overseas ones. The wood-wool is also a product which is being thrown away by local traders. The little extra trouble involved in collecting this in small amounts is easily offset by the satisfaction of being able to use something which would otherwise have been wasted.

The whole art of safe packing is (a) to have a large enough container, there should be a clear 1" all round the contents in a small parcel and 2" in a large one, and (b) to wrap each article separately in packing material, and then to ram the packing material between the articles and the sides of the container till it is absolutely impossible to get any more in. When tied up the parcel should be as tight as a football. Done this way the strength of the outer container is of no importance, and we send even larger pots in cartons this way, and we do not use the Fragile Rate either.

One trouble we often run into at Crewenna, with the direct sales system, is the unscrupulous shop owner who pretends to be buying for him or herself. There seems to be no legal redress, though we lose when this happens, for (a) our showroom is depleted (we are often sold out as it is) so that our regular customers have to be disappointed, and we lose goodwill and trade, (b) the pots are then sold at a higher price elsewhere, a price which we could perfectly well charge ourselves, were it not our wish to try and keep our prices as low as possible. Thus we get neither the satisfaction of putting a reasonably priced pot on the market, nor the financial reward of selling at a higher price. One can only publicise the warning to others, that any shop selling Crewenna Pottery has an owner who puts profit before honesty.

The third avenue for sales, exhibitions, has only limited usefulness. Its chief value, particularly in the case of joint exhibitions, lies not in a sales outlet so much as in its advertisement value. Indeed this very fact, that it is largely advertisement is a measure of its inadequacy as a sales outlet, because one does not advertise a thing unless one has something new to say or show. So that the standard lines of a pottery are not acceptable to exhibiting organizations, who need novelty to attract their public, or at least if not novelty then certainly something other than standard domestic lines. □

Out of a different tradition

Lawrence Verdcourt potters

"Potting in New Zealand has been a great contrast to the art school scene we left in England," say John and Ann Lawrence. "There the clay came in plastic bags and technicians were on call if the kilns did not go at a touch of a switch."

In New Zealand they have developed their own clay bodies, and they fire with oil. They feel that their work has matured accordingly.

John says the experience he gained by working on the continent in factories and studios was broadening for the character, but "I needed the isolation of a New Zealand rural workshop to really develop a style."

Getting experience

John left the overcrowded London art world in 1952 for an apprenticeship with Harry and Thelma Clark in Portsmouth. "I thought pottery was all decorating until then. I had never savoured physical labour, but found myself hard at it learning to throw at night and scrubbing seaside deck chairs for the corporation by day."

When he could throw a little he earned 12 cents an hour making egg-cups and one cent a piece for salts and peppers. He thought he was a real production man. It was so cold in the winter that he wore his dufflecoat for throwing except when the big kiln was going. When a burner became clogged he was the right shape to crawl underneath and was glad of the chance for a warm-up. "I would spend the day practising on 5 lb vases, and return in the evening to find my efforts halved with wire and **one** marked as being suitable to keep."

He worked in other English potteries—choosing each one for a particular experience. In one place in London he packed electric kilns with raw glazed earthenware. They used cigarette paper to feel if the pots were touching. There were five five-cubic-foot kilns and they were packed and fired every 24 hours.

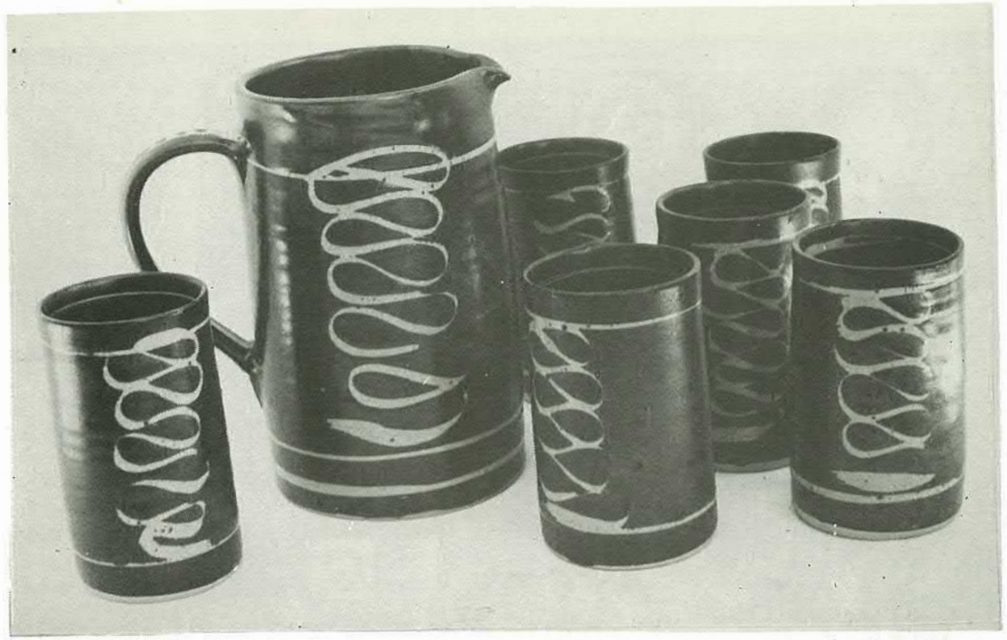
At another bigger pottery in Guildford he decorated hand-thrown earthenware. The round, oil-fired kiln was some 15 feet in diameter and all the ware was packed in saggers." When we had urgent orders to get out, we would go into the kiln with wet towels around our heads. The loft of the pottery was full of pots made by preceding potters and we were always finding little gems by famous potters including Michael Cardew."

Then he went to France where he did the same sort of thing but had to register as an agricultural worker to get his work permit. France presumably had its full quota of potters.

"In France I saw some of the greatest technical throwing in my experience. There is an unbroken tradition of hand-throwing in the country potteries. The potters at Accolay work at power wheels; no water; no troughs; just a towel across their knees. I saw one potter here make five dozen vases, all identical. The boss came and said they were the wrong shape, and with suitable adjectives the potter re-centred them and altered them in an hour or so."

He also worked in France with a potter called Monsieur Geoff whose main interest was ceramic modelling.

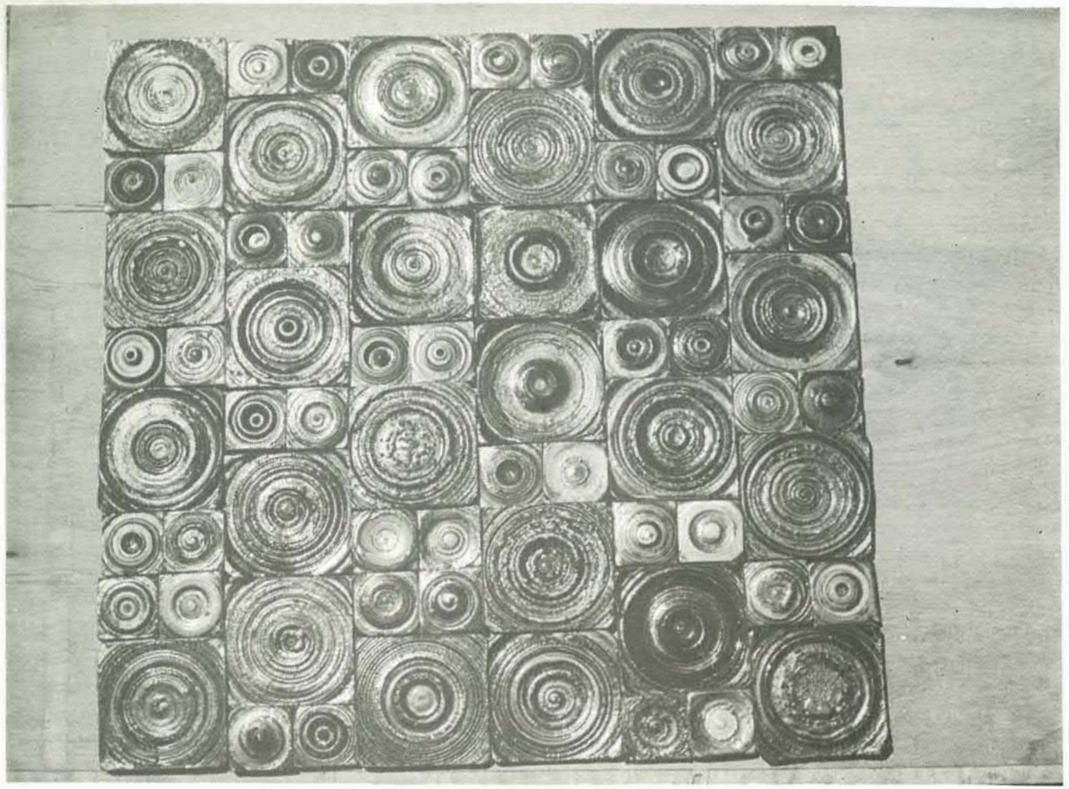
After two years in France he went to art school in Britain to get a teaching qualification. He says this turned out to be a backward step.

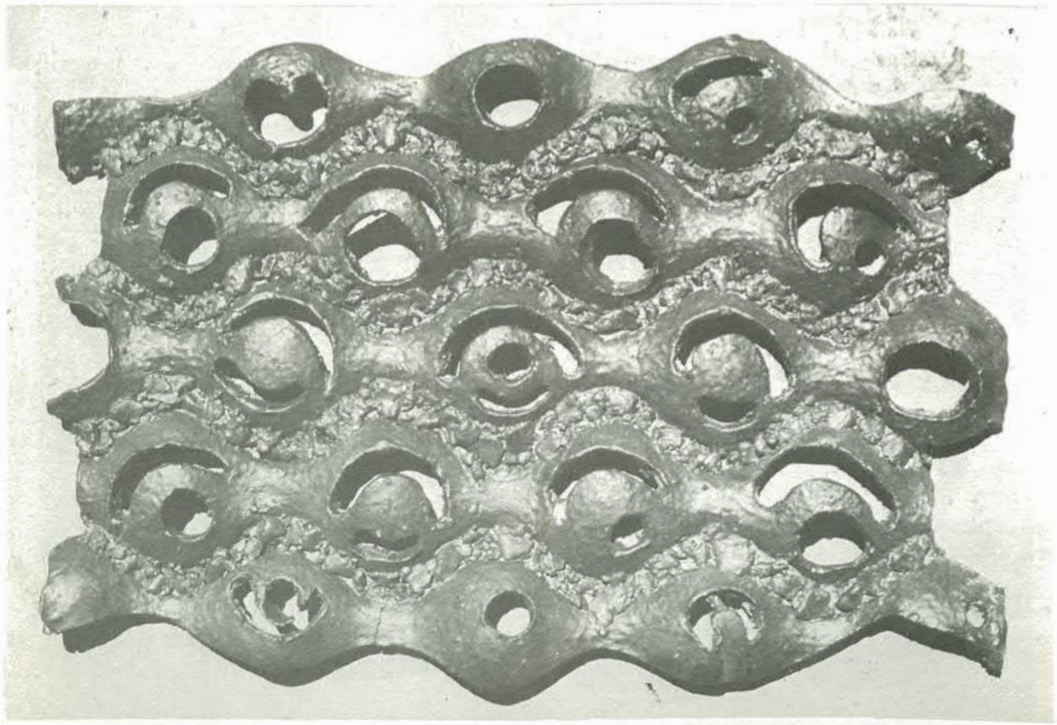


Michael Cassin's courses at Harrow School of Art hadn't started then so he took the National Diploma of Design in industrial pottery which he thought would stand him in good stead for setting up his own pottery later. One aspect of the National Diploma Course was making copies of historic originals correct to size.

When he finished his course he opened a new pottery department at Luton College of Technology. This was when he married Ann Verdcourt, bought a 13th century cottage, started the Lawrence Verdcourt Pottery, worked for three months in Finland and started their family in that order.

Domestic ware by John Lawrence





Ann had trained at Hornsey School of Art mainly in sculpture, but with a special interest in ceramics. After graduating she worked with architects specialising in interiors and made sculptures for television studio props. Ann also did portrait commissions in bronze and exhibited with the Society of Portrait Sculptors.

John went to Finland on the offchance of getting a job at Arabia. But found the factory closed for the summer. In the old capital Turku, he got a job at Kuppittaan Savi Oy, a very old factory. "I was back at decorating again which is the same in any language. I was asked if I would like to do some throwing. I would. We went into the throwing room and there was a blackboard. All we had to do was draw a shape and the thrower threw it. Two things intrigued me about the place. The old salt glaze kilns were like a row of small cathedrals. As it was summer they had to be cooled with fans though I never found out why. And the modern "tophat" electric kilns. The cars came slowly out of the roof coming to rest on a railway and going off to be unpacked and reloaded."

After this England started to feel crowded and some helpful letters from Helen Mason and Jack Laird encouraged the Lawrences to come to New Zealand with Mathew, aged four, and Kathryn, who they had adopted from Hong Kong, aged three.

After a while John built a 40 cubic foot kiln. He then built a 90 cubic foot kiln, and 20 cubic foot oil kiln to replace the two small electric kilns brought from England. At the same time he developed some ovenware bodies based on local white and orange clays.

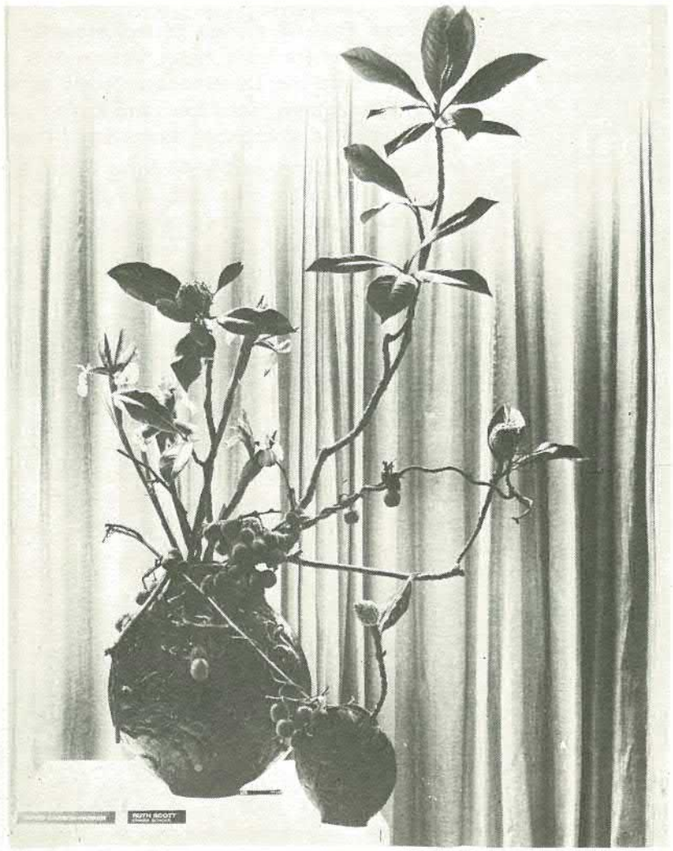
He says, where else in the world could you find all the steel and firebricks you require at the local dump, and all the clay you need only a step away as you can at Pahiatua?

Ann has gradually squeezed in more time for pottery as the children have grown older and now she and John are very much committed potters with an output of some 700 pieces every five weeks which are sent all over New Zealand. □

Left above: Thrown tile panel by John Lawrence.
Lower: Apple pack panel by Ann Verdcourt.

Right: Hair people. Ann Verdcourt.

Pottery seals—John Lawrence. Ann Verdcourt.



Arrangement by Ruth Scott, pottery by David Carson-Parker.

Ikebana—the art of Japanese flower arrangement. For most people this means something like one flower and one leaf arranged with care in a small container.

A visit to the Ikebana exhibition held in Rothman's Gallery, Wellington, in June, would have changed these preconceptions. Most of the displays were big—very big. In fact one centre piece could have been five feet square. The trend is towards bigger arrangements according to Mrs Ruth Scott, president of the Wellington chapter of Ikebana International which arranged this exhibition.

Pottery containers provide very suitable vessels for Ikebana, and for this exhibition members of the New Zealand Society of Potters were invited to make them.

Ikebana

by Ruth Scott, president of the Wellington Chapter of Ikebana International, and a past world president when resident in Japan.

IKEBANA is an art conceived to capture, interpret and enhance the beauty of the living flowers.

If we look at ancient pictures of Japan we see the grand kuge (floral offering to Buddha) maidens holding lotus flowers in a keban, figures holding vases of lotus, flowers arranged in a symmetrical pattern. From these it is clear that the offering followed various designs and inclinations.

Historical records of ikebana as an established art go back to the middle of the 15th century in Japan beginning with the rikka (standing arrangement). Its origin is said to be a floral offering to Buddha, a custom brought to Japan in the 6th century with the introduction of Buddhism. The oldest chronicles of Japan record that 'every plant can well express itself,' so the idea of offering flowers was readily accepted by the people.

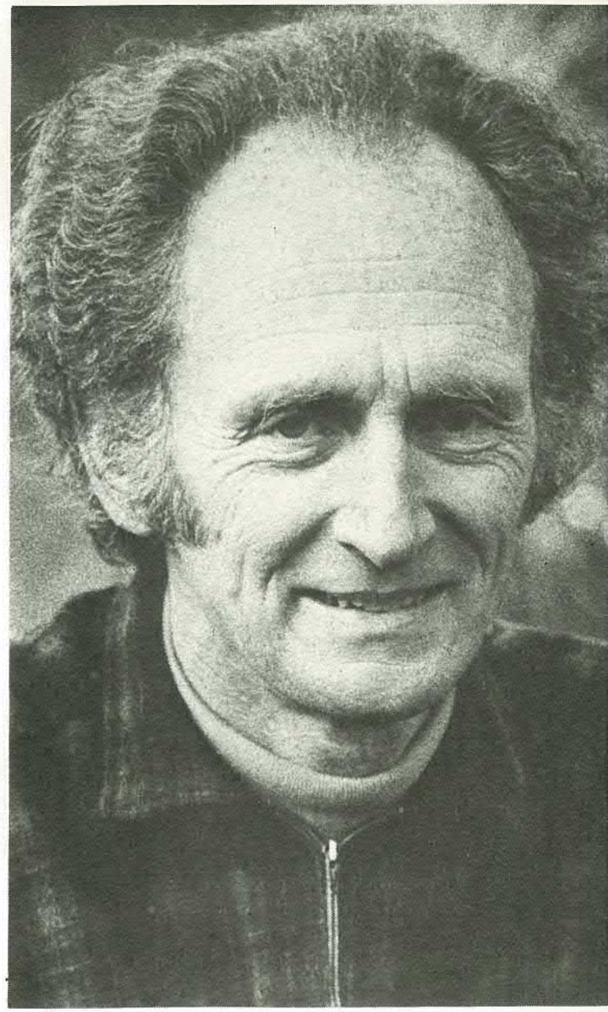
In the Kamakura period (1192-1333) there are scrolls showing gilded bronze vases with lotus flowers in a firm design. The main lotus stem in the centre, with complimentary flowers symmetrically on either side. Among the aristocratic celadon vases imported into Japan were some highly prized for flower arrangements. Some of these vases were so large that only large plants could be arranged in them. Cherry blossom branches or big pine branches together with flowers were often used. The flower arrangements which were mostly of religious origin gradually came to be arranged for the enjoyment of the people, and when this became a popular custom, flower arrangement began to develop as an art.

In the period 1358-1408 when the Star Festival was an annual event flowers played an important part, with the noblemen, priests and samurais enjoying themselves. In the middle of the 15th century the rikka (standing arrangement) established the art. The rikka arrangements were executed by noblemen, priests and court retainers. As the floral art developed texts were written further establishing the art—instructions for wedding arrangements, samuraiis departure for battle, celebration of boy's coming of age and so on. Flower arrangement became an expression of human feelings. Through each era a change took place, the styles and methods changing with the change in the history of Japan. Cha-bana (tea ceremony arrangements), Issiki-rikka (one colour arrangements) mori-bana (low bowl arrangements), nageire (thrown-in style).

The thread that runs through all ikebana is the desire to strive for the perfect combination of nature and art that will enhance the beauty of the flowers.

Background for a potter

by Margaret Harris



To be taught by either Bernard Leach or Michael Cardew is a privilege few potters have experienced. Auckland potter Peter Stichbury is lucky enough to have been the pupil of both.

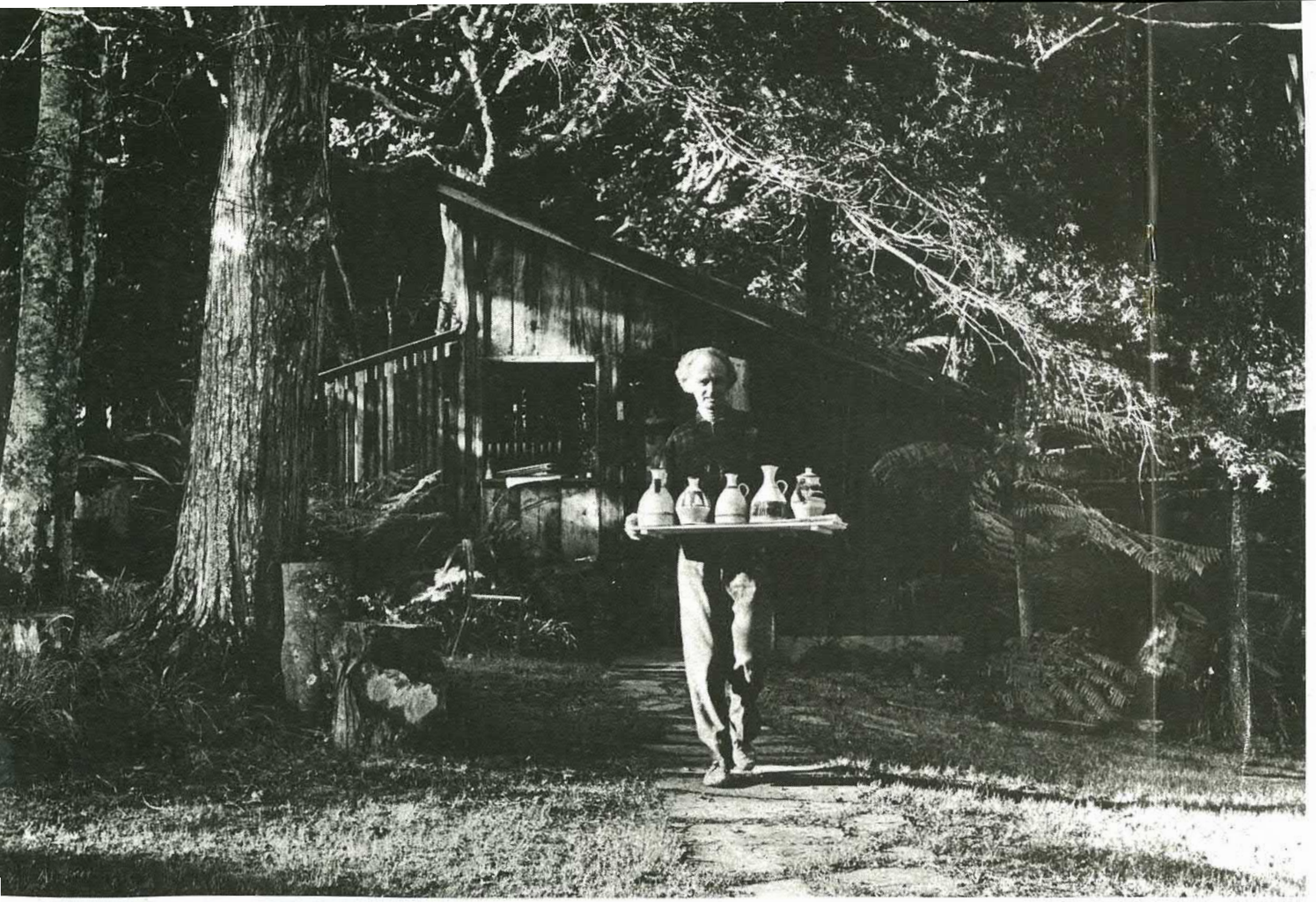
A scholarship from the Asscciation of New Zealand Art Societies in 1957 gave him two years to study abroad. Taking his wife with him he worked for seven months at St. Ives with Bernard Leach, then went on to Michael Cardew's Pottery Training Centre at Abuja, in Nigeria.

This period away understandably made a tremendous impact on a budding potter. He speaks of the unforgettable Cornish countryside in winter—the colour and shape of bare earth and bare trees. Perhaps an experience new to an Aucklander? At the pottery he "tried to throw standard Leach ware and finally succeeded in producing some pots worthy of keeping."

The Nigerian period was even more formative. He responded to the atmosphere at the pottery and was inspired by the pots made by local men and women in the northern Nigerian villages. He says the vitality of the place had the effect of making him more free in his own work. Thirty two-cubic-foot boxes of pots—his own and Nigerian, came back to Auckland with him.

As one of our potters most widely educated in the craft, Peter Stichbury probably has potential yet unrealised. His pottery began as early as 1948 at Auckland Teachers' College while he was on a specialist year in art. He threw his first pot (with a lid) with Hilary Clarke, who he says was about two steps ahead of his students in throwing technique. Then followed about eighteen months of evening classes under Robert Field at Avondale Technical College. Peter Stichbury became Lecturer in art and craft at Ardmore and found a special interest in pottery. With the help of a sympathetic principal he was able to build up this side of the course and establish a studio. And so pottery became a dominating inffuence on his life.

Back at Ardmore after his experience abroad he further developed the pottery side of the art course, and his influence has been felt by many young Auckland potters. One ex pupil, Carrick Oliver, is potting full-time and other students are keen to try to make a living at it as they become established. Peter Stichbury's work has been shown here and abroad as early as the first New Zealand exhibition in 1957. □



Peter Stichbury's thoughts on becoming a full time potter

by Margaret Harris

Peter Stichbury gave up the security of a professional job (after eighteen years at Ardmore Teachers' College), to take up the challenge of making a living from pottery. He says the initial mental strain over the rightness of the decision was soon overcome when he got into the rhythm of regular making and firing of pots. He has no regrets.

Although he is still basically a maker of domestic ware, believing that the fundamental task of a potter is to produce well-designed, lively ware for use, he now has time to develop other lines such as wall pots and hanging and high-standing planters. He sees further possibilities in this direction.

In some ways he feels he has just started potting, and plenty lies ahead. 'I'm very content—I hope not smug, with my way of life. I think it's important to make pots in as creative and intelligent a way as possible—mainly to satisfy oneself, but hoping that others will appreciate them too. I have no desire for fame, but I'm pleased to be sufficiently well-known to have a good demand for my work.'

Peter Stichbury has been encouraged in this venture by his wife, Diane. She assists in the workshop and runs the showroom, which is absorbing more and more of the output, although the bulk of sales is still through shops and galleries. Work is not strictly timetabled but it tends to follow a cycle of throwing in the early morning or later afternoon—the needs of the work shaping the day's activities.

Finding the right kind of place to live was the precursor to Peter Stichbury's decision to make pottery his sole means of livelihood. Eight years ago the family were lucky enough to find a magnificent old house on the Great South Road at Manurewa. With three quarters of an acre of ground, a bordering bush reserve of puriris, totaras, kahikateas and treeferns, two thousand square feet of floorspace and four sheds, it had the lot. One enlarged shed soon became the throwing studio, another a material store. A modified version of the Cowan four shelf (16" x 13") plan kiln with five burners came next. "An additional fifth burner made the kiln so even it's hard to believe."

After years of planning, at last the house had its turn for treatment and the inside was stripped. "At one stage the whole house was open to stray cats and winter cold. I spent my cashed superannuation on plumbing, the bathroom and a wheelbarrow."

The Stichburys have planted out ferns, cabbage trees and some rimu and kauri on the land backing onto the reserve and have kept the front for the exotics like flowering gum, oak, melia and magnolia. They set great store on family life and three lively and creative daughters thrive in this environment among the clay and the paints and on the water in the sailing dinghy their father built for them at evening woodwork class at Ardmore before he left. It seems that careful planning and hard work are now paying off for the Stichbburys.

Peter hasn't lost contact with teaching altogether, since he is often called on to tutor at pottery schools around the North Island. He looks back to his teaching career at Ardmore as a grand experience and values the contact with young minds. Now, as he gets into his stride in a new career, he looks forward to developing the creative side of his own work which has necessarily been restricted in the past.

Bisque ware.

Peter and Diane Stichbury with their three daughters in the throwing room.

Open kiln showing bisque and glost.

Left: Wine set.

Right: Pot and bantam.

Photos by Steve Rumsey

5 from Otago potters group

by Flora Robinson

BERYL JOWETT

Fourteen years ago, in England, when the last of her five children was born Beryl Jowett asked herself, 'What on earth will I do with myself when they all grow up and leave home?'

Pottery was her choice, and with the wish to become proficient while the family were still with her she began at once. A second-hand wheel and electric kiln were bought and Beryl began on her own.

It was an on and off affair for some years, but armed with a textbook by the potter Murray Fieldhouse, she worked when she could and later, when living in Australia she was able to attend Hatton and Lucy Beck's classes where she made earthenware. The fire risk being high in the area Beryl retained her electric kiln.

After moving to New Zealand the potential of rocks, grits, and stones as material for glazes became apparent. Collecting material for bodies and glazes became part of family picnics. The four plastic dustbins which she asked for as a birthday present went along too as storage for their finds.

Almost every pot these days has some rock glaze on it. She loves throwing large bowls, has a fondness for jugs of all kinds, she likes her pots to be used. Coiling large pots is also a favourite occupation.

Sometimes she has urges to comment through ceramics on social problems like racial discrimination and overcrowded populations. The result of one of these urges hangs in the Dunedin Y.W.C.A. building. Entitled 'The Host' it symbolises by an ear of wheat. It deals with overpopulation, empty spaces and the sharing out of food.

Her greatest ambition is to make at least one pot which is so beautiful that she could never bear to part with it.

The Jowetts live in the country at Outram in a setting which reflects their philosophy of life. They have a large cheerful garden and keep hens, ducks, sheep, goats and at the right time a pig, whose destiny lies in the deep freeze.

At present Beryl uses a $4\frac{1}{2}$ cu. ft. electric kiln and has yet to re-assemble her oil-fired one which was moved from their previous home. She plans to use it for salt glazing eventually.

"Pottery is disposable and functional and it's a pity to make it permanent by photographs." Beryl Jowett. *Photos by Michael de Hamel*

Beryl is an enthusiastic teacher and enjoys getting people started in pottery, especially when a beginner shows a potential which she considers is greater than her own.

Her pottery is straight forward and natural looking. Her shapes are clean and unpretentious and her glazes are a constant surprise. It is much loved by people who appreciate an earthy natural look and the ability of a pot to do the job for which it is intended.

Recently, on seeing her work for the first time, somebody commented, 'I like that: it's a sincere pot.'

She has been helped and encouraged all along by her husband Geoff. With his help her oil fired kilns have been constructed and maintained and at times dismantled. He has made her a ball mill and numerous small tools and pieces of equipment which in spite of a "Heath Robinson" appearance always work.

She has exhibited twice at the Globe Theatre, once at Dawson's Gallery, with the Otago Potters Group, Otago Art Society and in various small towns outside Dunedin.

Photo by Stuart Briggs

LILA COKER

Lila Coker has the ambition of all good potters to make the perfect pot and alleges that she will retire from pottery if she ever does this. Nobody, of course, believes her.

She first started potting in 1957 when she attended a course at the Christchurch Craft Centre and was taught to throw by Jim Nelson.

He taught her well for Lila is a powerful thrower, and in spite of being rather small is not in the least intimidated by 10 lbs of clay from which she produces an enormous, shapely, classical pot with apparently no effort.

For family reasons pottery was a spasmodic business until about eight years ago when she developed her own studio in the large basement of her house. Her first kiln, with which she made earthenware, was coked fired. After a while she changed to oil and began to experiment in stoneware.

She now has two kilns in Dunedin—one electric and one oil-fired. She also has an oil fired one in Alexandra. All are used at different times.

For bodies she uses local materials, the proportions mixed herself. Ash glazes are her favourite for experiment. She still does some earthenware but most of her work is in stoneware.

Her main interest is in domestic ware and she likes her pots to be used for the purpose for which they were made. They are strong looking, well shaped and balanced, and impeccably made. She is a rapid thrower and a lucid lecturer and demonstrator.

Bert, her husband, has always been a tremendous help to her on the practical side. He also pots when he has time.

They plan to visit Britain in a year or two where Lila will work in her brother, Val Hunt's studio, for a while before returning to New Zealand to settle in Alexandra.

LAWSON and THELMA FRASER

Lawson and Thelma Fraser share a kiln but are individual about what is fired in it.

Lawson is, above all, a teacher whose foremost interest is in creative education and on returning from overseas service during the war become aware of a highly stimulating attitude to art education. Instead of the usual object drawing there was a move towards expressive art which was encouraged in Dunedin by Murray Stevenson at the Teachers Training College.

Later, when he was living in Nelson, he was helped and inspired by Mirek Smisek, whose curiosity about ceramic materials and knowledge of kilns was extremely valuable. Between them they constructed between thirty and forty kilns in that area.

Because of his experience and knowledge of materials, Lawson spent a year in Gambia under the auspices of UNESCO, where he started a programme of expressive education.

He returned to New Zealand to an appointment as District Advisor in Arts and Crafts for Hawkes Bay and lived in Napier for three and a half years. He is now Head of the Art Department at Dunedin Teachers Training College.

Lawson Fraser is an effortless thrower. His work is masculine, purposeful, often large and is greatly in demand whenever it becomes available. Because of a heavy work load he pots only in the holidays, but he is never too busy to demonstrate when asked and is generous with advice and information.

Thelma Fraser found that bringing up five children ruled out much in the way of hobbies when they were small. At times she became exasperated by the smears of clay on door-handles around the house and eventually adopted the attitude of 'If you can't beat 'em, join 'em!' and began making ceramic jewellery. She now makes tiles, plaques and wall hangings, slab dishes, Ikebana containers and other things constructed without a wheel; all of a very high standard.

Thelma has suffered a health set-back this year but is now improving and we are looking forward to her soon returning to the work in which she is showing so much talent.

Lawson has just built a tunnel kiln for the use of them both and Dunedin potters are waiting with anticipation to see what it produces.

IAN GRAY-SMITH

Ian Gray-Smith is Otago's most versatile potter. He has exhibited many times, sometimes alone and at other times with groups such as Otago Potters Group, Otago Art Society, The New Zealand Academy and the New Zealand Society of Potters.

Each time his theme is different, bringing in new ideas and materials. He has used mythological and biblical motifs in wall hangings of stained glass and ceramics, mounted in wrought iron. His containers for dried grasses are so rock-like as to be deceptive and his medieval money-bags made a unique exhibition.

Ian's foremost interest is in the display of ceramics and he has mounted many local exhibitions with outstanding success.

He is at heart an artist potter, preferring relief ceramic sculpture above all, and during the past few years he has undertaken commissioned works for new buildings in Dunedin. These include a wall panel for the Synagogue,, fibreglass windows for the Union Church in Wakari which he designed and supervised and Terracotta panels for inside and outside which he designed and constructed himself.

Ian likes teaching. He enjoys big classes and responds to enthusiasm in his pupils. He is widely travelled, is interested in many things other than artistic ones and is a music teacher by profession. He attributes much of his success to help given him in the past by Lila Coker.

At the moment he is working on long week-ends in the century-old school at Whare Flat where he holds open house throughout the summer. The garden is full of mature trees and it is an ideal spot to take the family for a picnic. There is always something going on and Ian is never put off by visitors.

Ian Gray-Smith
Photo: Otago Daily Times

Oswald Stephens
New Zealand Potter 1965.

OSWALD STEPHENS

Oswald Stephens disclaims the title of Otago's Pioneer Potter. In this he is correct as Mr. H. V. Miller actually started pottery in Dunedin in 1929 with primary school children, firing their pots in a wood-burning kiln.

Oswald Stephens bought his first kiln in 1935 and has been potting ever since. He has until recently rejected the title of potter and preferred ceramic chemist. For many years the pot itself was just a vehicle for his earthenware glazes which are well known throughout New Zealand.

In the '40's the Roxburgh Health Camp mothers started pottery to keep them occupied while their children were being cared for and on their return to Dunedin Oswald fired their work for them. Their delight in the results made the job very worth while for him.

Many were the trials of the early potters and Oswald had his ups and downs, even losing some rods for his electric kiln when they went to the bottom of the Pacific in a submarine. And who amongst us has not forgotten to switch off the kiln at cone-drop? Only Oswald has recorded in a note book the pyrometer reading, the state of the cone and then forgotten to switch off.

He began experimenting with stoneware in 1962 and has long been taking new interest in the pots themselves. He uses Hyde and Hedgehope clays in equal quantities as a body and is experimenting with Chun and Celadon glazes.

His two-storey studio would house a family, and contains everything. Upstairs is the laboratory where he has experimented for so long and it is in this building that he has for many years given encouragement and advice to potters in various stages of their craft.

He has carried out many commissions and when Lord Freyburg was Governor General he ordered a set of six urns, 2 small, 2 medium and 2 large for the dining tibe in Government house. This commission was carried out in 1948.

In 1957 Oswald Stephens staged the first Annual Exhibition of the New Zealand Society of Potters in the Otago Museum and soon after this he brought the local potters together to form the Otago Potters Group. They began with 30 members and nowhere in particular to meet, but thanks to Oswald Stephens, Beryl Jowett, Ina Arthur and others, Otago Potters Group is now an incorporated society, has its own workshop/clubrooms and an enthusiastic membership of 166 plus seven group memberships.

Oswald Stephens studied at Canterbury Agricultural College where he was awarded a gold medal and afterwards went to Otago University, graduating with First Class honours in Chemistry.

He was elected a life member of the New Zealand Society of Potters at their first Annual Meeting and is also a life member of the Otago Potters Group.

The rapid glaze calculator

report by Frank Hamer

I understand that the Rapid Glaze Calculator will soon be available in New Zealand. This is a type of slide rule, but, unlike the usual slide rule, this is circular. The idea was conceived by Colin Pearson, the well-known English craftsman-potter, and he and Dennis Healing have co-operated in bringing it on to the market. It comes with full instructions, but what does it do?

The Calculator saves all the tiresome multiplication and division sums involved in calculating glaze recipes when one is using molecular (Seger) formulae. In an evening's consideration of glazes, one could very easily get through 100 individual sums. Obviously this speeds up the process and one is able to get on with the thinking instead of getting bogged down in calculations. But, one still needs to be able to read molecular formulae and compare one glaze formula with another on the basis of its molecular equivalents, e.g. whether to use Pb0 or Mg0 as the flux, and what an increase in flux will do. Of course, no-one is going to simplify this part of glaze calculations for you. This is the personal interpretation of glaze behaviour and part of the fascination of glaze research. No calculator can think for you but it can give you more time to do it yourself. The Rapid Glaze Calculator gives you the opportunity to compare more recipes at one time and this is valuable experience.

The operation of the Calculator is simple and one soon grasps the basic movements that are required to calculate glazes rapidly. Rapid Glaze Calculator is a good name. From a recipe, whether percentage or not, one can quickly convert to molecular equivalents, e.g. 0.215 K_20, 0.61 Ca0, 0.175 Pb0, 0.45 $A1_20_3$, 2.15 $Si0_3$. This is easily compared with other glazes for the same temperature and alterations made, e.g. more flux to make it melt. Then by reversing the process one converts the molecular formula equivalents back into a recipe and finally one makes this recipe into a percentage or other convenient form.

To test the Calculator, I produced a recipe from a molecular formula and tried it. It worked. So I decided to be more awkward and set myself the task of using a recipe for a matt glaze which fires at 1250°C and recalculate it to fire at 1200°C. The answer was so incredible that I checked it twice in different ways. I just couldn't believe it because it defied my normal reasoning. So I put the new recipe to the test. It worked! Now, after two years, I wonder how I managed to do the calculations long-hand. The Calculator has saved hours of tedious work. □

To make interesting teapots and coffee pots

The second of a series
by Roy Cowan

First step, teach yourself to throw.

'But I've learned how to throw!' you may say.

In my experience most potters manage clay well enough on the wheel to produce the relatively massive forms of 'art' pottery or the rugged type of ware for use, but very few throw to the standard required to produce fine domestic ware.

Tea pots and coffee pots provide a special challenge. With their several parts to make and assemble to produce a unity and success in function, they demand skill in design and an ultimate use of clay to obtain the best combination of lightness and strength. Attitudes favouring the massive in pottery are quite well served by the kick wheel with the associated tendency to operate at low and falling speeds, and it is very difficult to combine the kicking action with undisturbed concentration on fine throwing.

The quite different approach to throwing suggested below is more readily established with a power wheel, fitted with a quick stop and start so that instant checks on the stationary pot can be made—it looks surprisingly different when it's standing still, but, for throwing, the wheel will generally be running at high speed. The throwing style rests upon a quite light, rapidly passing touch in which, following the firmer touch needed for centring and opening out, the tip only of one finger inside and one outside the cylinder, or the even smaller contact area of throwing tools, produce the form.

Take a ball of clay* of 2¾ lb. (1.2 Kg.), and, after centering and opening out, take time to secure a flat interior base, parallel to the wheel head, 2¾" to 3" across, and turning up to the wall in a small radius of about ⅛"—a sharp angle here introduces structural weakness, a large radius, unwanted clay. The depth of the base to the bat or wheel head is an exact amount. Allowing 1/16" loss on cutting off, the thrown base should be, for the directly cut off type, ¼", leaving 3/16" or 4mm after cutting. For a base with turned footring, ¼" plus say ⅛", representing the depth of foot.

*MacPherson's 50/50 was used by the writer.

Fig. 1
Base interior radius, correct, too sharp, too slack.

The correct radius between foot and wall can be produced using a square-ended tool shaped from wood or plastic, and this may also be used to dress and compact the foot. To be quite sure that the foot is of the designed thickness, stop the wheel and probe with a pin set in small stem. This probe can similarly be used to check wall thickness. Once the potter has settled in to making reasonable numbers of these pots the fingers will become accustomed to sensing the thickness of clay.

Now a straight cylinder is raised to 9" to 10" height, wall thickness ⅜" below, tapering evenly to 3/16" above, with the finishing half inch at ¼" thickness. The throwing should be smooth and free from those famous deep finger grooves. The final form results from adjustments to this cylinder, and in the way wall thickness is carried up there is anticipation of the thinning which will occur as the pot is expanded. For an essentially cylindrical tall coffee pot the basal ⅜" can be thinned away to 3/16", or 4mm, rapidly, but for a spherical form or one with a large diameter high up a thicker cylinder wall is retained to a higher level. As mentioned, a ¼" section has been left at the top. This provides the material for forming the gallery, the moulding which accepts the lid.

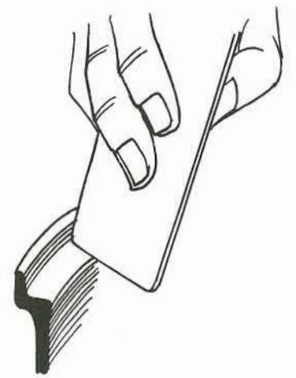


Fig. 3 Forming the gallery.

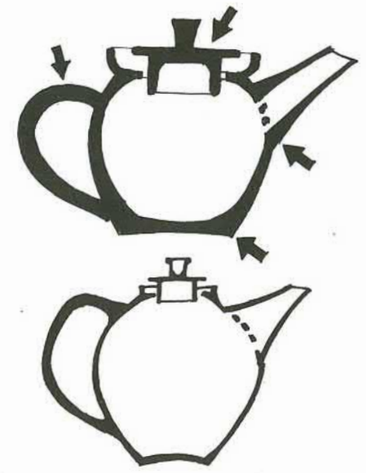


Fig. 2 Where surplus weight is found in tea pots. The slimmed example has less clay but more capacity.

A common fault observed is that of excessively large lid and gallery—some tea pots look more like casseroles, usually look clumsy and are subject to excess weight and heat loss. So reduce the diameter at the cylinder top by light necking to about 2" to 2½". When the ultimate form is to be greatly expanded, the clay will be near its limit of wet strength, and it is therefore better to do most of the forming of the gallery on the straight cylinder, simply by bringing a suitable tool down on the rapidly

Fig. 4 The development of different cylinder profiles.

turning rim. But the profile which is so formed must relate to the whole form of the pot and the style of lid, so we move to that topic.

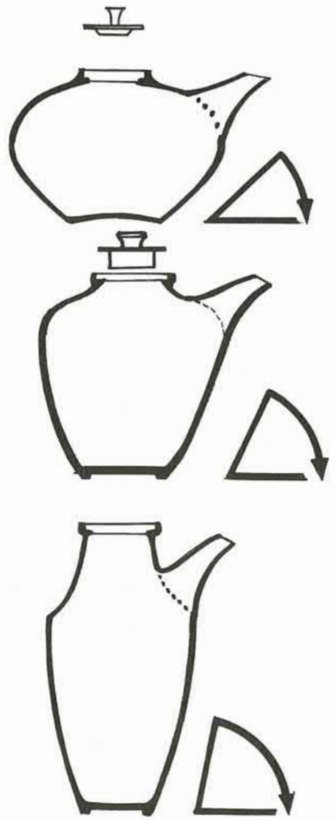
As the cylinder top is now too small to admit the hand, throwing continues with tools. A suitable form for the interior is shaped like a drumstick with slightly flattened head, very smooth, or wound with fine leather or muslin. For the outside, employ the blade tool already used to shape the foot. The cylinder is expanded to the final form by runs of light pressure from within, with a very light counter pressure outside to cure the stretching surface.

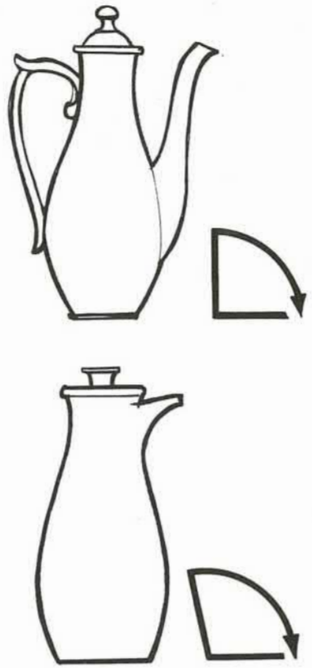
To pour all contents, the flattened tea pot (Fig. 5) will have to be tipped only 45° at which angle the lid is unlikely to slip, and it could be of the sit-on type, formed by a single throwing operation. The gallery may be one of the open types shown.

As the form rises to the sphere (the shape which has greatest capacity to weight ratio), and beyond to the tall cylinder, the full pouring angle increases, reaching about 90° for the Rococo style coffee pot, while some examples require even more. In all these the lid should be fitted so as to stay, without needing to be held in.

The answer is a skirted type lid, and a gallery form which allows the lid to tip slightly and then lock against the rising rim of the gallery, which must be vertical, and a slight inward set of the wall opposite. Note that this inward set should appear as a tapered run out of the wall,not a sharp overhanging ledge which will make difficulty in swilling out tea leaves, grounds and so on.

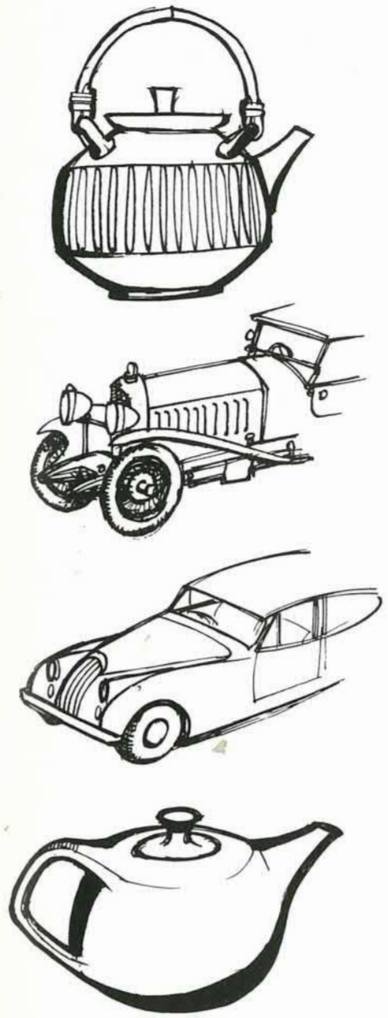
Fig. 5 The relation of shape, pouring angle and lid type.





Of course, there must be an exact size for a lid which will pop in easily but lock when the pot is tipped, so it's a good idea to make spare lids in slight diameter advances. Lids should be of $\frac{1}{8}$" thickness.

Fig. 6 The self-retaining lid touches at the arrows when the pot is inverted.



As for bodies and lids, so for handles and spouts there is a science and an art: the fascination of discovering what these may be I will leave to you,for after all the real subject of these notes is not How to Make a Tea Pot, so much as how to discover the challenges of making them. One point each about handles and spouts. The conventional arabesque type handle is an art form rather than a use form. Try grasping a handle freshly attached to a cylinder. The resultant odd shape is a record of your grip. Look at other types of handles in which security of grip has been studied. Is there a way in which the property of really fitting the hand can be realised with a sense of style? And for spouts, the usual fault is excessive size and bore, some resemble the funnel of a ship, so they must be made finely tapered.

The great difficulty facing learners (and others), is securing designed co-ordination of the parts. The problem is lessened by the making of a batch of pots in varied forms and with these a graded series of parts, with spares, then discrimination is practised in the assembly. Most potters who do make these forms evolve a single shape and keep to it. An alternative and I suggest more living way is to consider the personal differences of all those who will use the things, the kinds of hands (usually feminine), an approach possible only for the studio potter.

Even when control of the process of assembly has been secured, there is a common style in which the fact of the pot being made from separate pieces is expressed (Fig. 7). The cane handled teapot is like the vintage car in which there has been a separate solution to all the problems—wheel, radiator, headlight, mudguard and so on, and the vehicle is the assembly of these solutions. In the modern design illustrated all the same parts are there and usually working more efficiently, but all are swept into the single conception of the style. So, a second tea pot, adapted from one by Geoffrey Whiting, in which the parts are fused into a single form clearly expressing the dynamic of the act of pouring.

One of the preoccupations of the modern craft movement is the search for the new creative concept (currently expressed in ceramics by ripping clay), and very commonly this elevated aim is considered as at variance with the making of domestic ware. In fact the 'new' the 'creative' and all that does not yield to the wilful assault, and these qualities cannot be poured on like a glaze. They emerge as incidentals of some purposeful activity, and the making of fine domestic ware is certainly such and not a second class activity.

Some examples weighed:

	Pot ounces	Contents ounces	Total
Teapot I	16	30	46
Teapot II	22	25	47
Teapot III	28	40	68
Coffee I	32	45	77
Coffee II	48	70	118

PUTTING GLAZES TO THE TEST

The Editor,
New Zealand Potter,

As a maker of earthenware pottery I have been concerned about recent discussions on the possibility of poisoning from lead-glazed pots. After reading the article by Nigel Harris in the New Zealand Potter (Spring 1971) I carried out the tests suggested at the conclusion of that article and thought the results may interest your readers.

I tested three of the glazes I use, which are made to a basic recipe containing 70% to 75% lead bisilicate and fired to 1080°C to 1100°C.

All the results were negative showing no contamination by "heavy metals."

One word of caution—the testing material, liver of sulphur, is cheap and readily available from pharmacies, but it has a most unpleasant and penetrating smell, and it would be a good idea to conduct the final stages of this experiment well away from the house.

JUDY HEWETT

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.

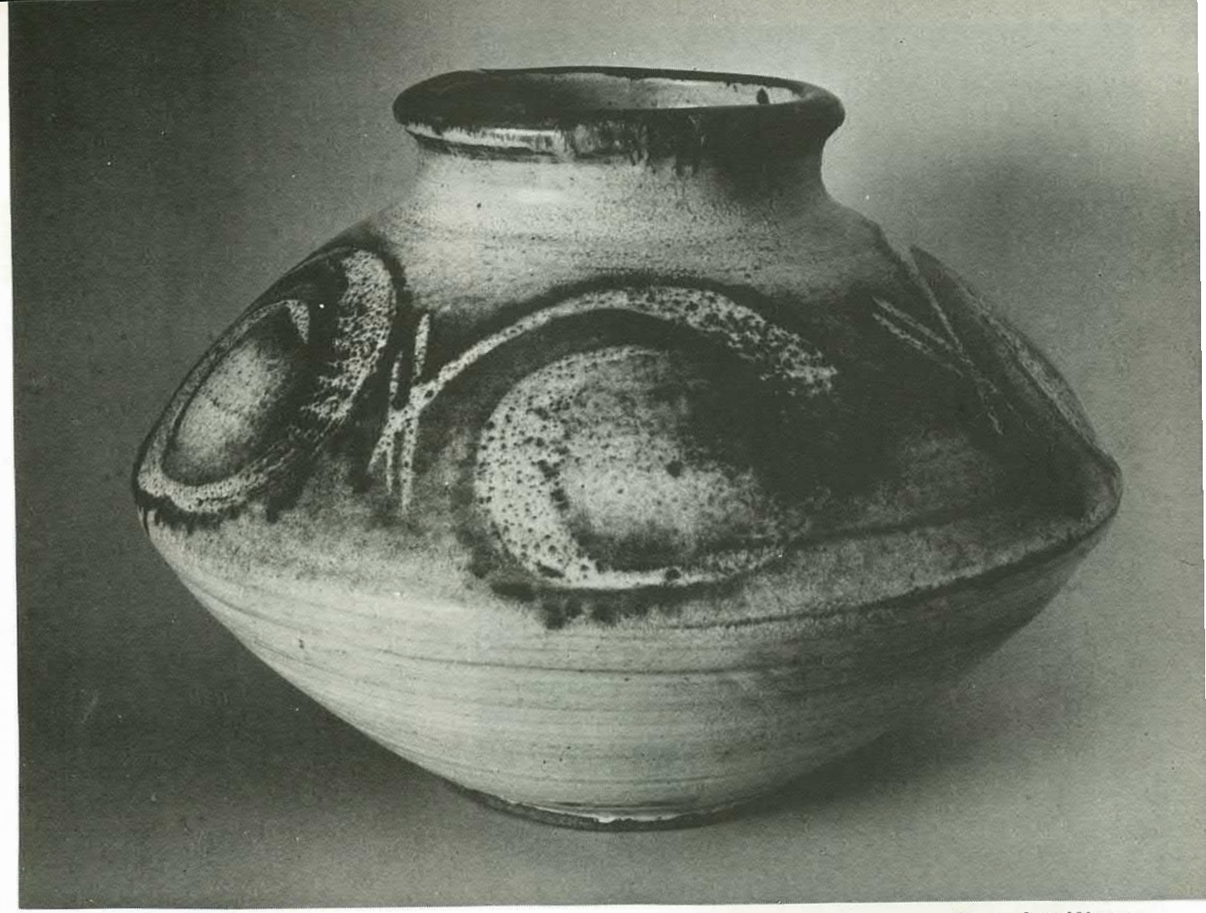


photo: Ans Westra

Pot from Doreen Blumhardt's exhibition at Rothman's Gallery in June.

EXHIBITIONS

WANTED — critics

The POTTER is very aware that the presentation of fine photographs is not the whole story. But N.Z. has few people with the background and ability to assume the demanding role of critic to the visual arts.

So we come back to DO IT YOURSELF. As Barry Brickell once said to J.R.C. in the latter's own workshop, "Now Roy—we must criticise one another's pots—must we not?"

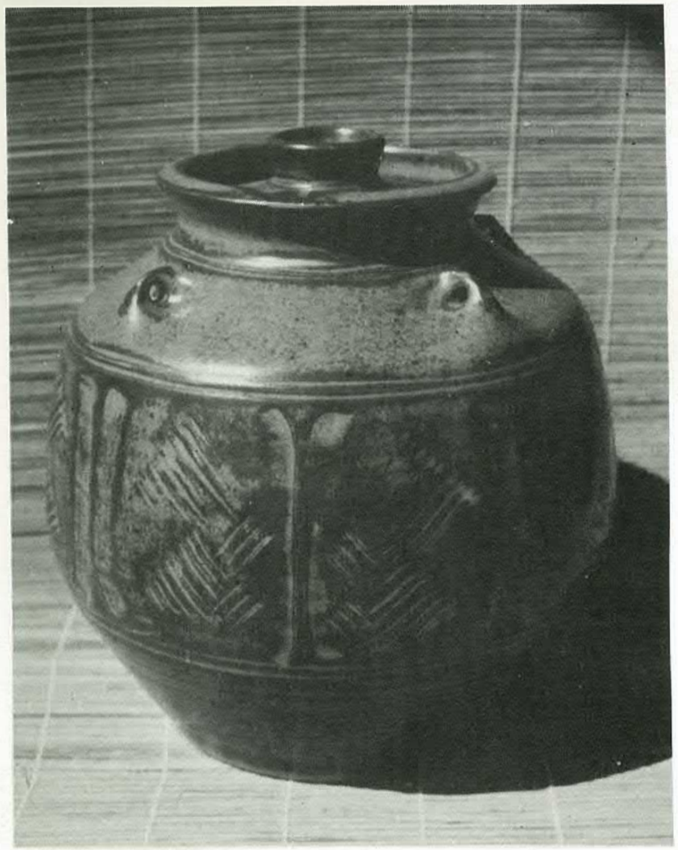
Our pots down to earth

Work of the New Zealand exhibitors impressed at the recent international exhibition of contemporary ceramics held at the Victoria and Albert Museum. Mr David Coachworth, one of the organisers, said the pots from New Zealand had a strong sense of their medium. "They have real meaning themselves and lead right back to natural forms." He pointed to the baked earth effect of Margaret Milne's fissued pot and the roughened surface of Brian Gartside's floor pot.

The pot as such was in the minority in this exhibition. The majority of exhibits from 38 countries were ceramic pieces ranging from American pop art, to strong social comment from Sweden. Britt-Ingrid Person's sculpture shows a man's head with a hand raising a homburg to reveal a brain stuffed with money and crawling with flies. Spanish artists also had a strong political message.

An interesting aspect of the exhibition has been that the pots from New Zealand, Australia, South Africa and Ireland represented in the main, usable objects—dishes, jugs, water bottles and containers. They seldom ventured in the field of art objects.

The work of the six New Zealand exhibitors was shown in the last Potter (Autumn 1972).



Large lidded pot from an exhibition of Crewenna pottery in Sydney last May. This exhibition was staged in connection with a lecture/demonstration tour of Australia by Harry Davis, undertaken at the invitation of Australian potters.

ARRANGING TO FIT THE POT

We have grown accustomed to seeing painting, pottery and sculpture on show in Rothmans' Gallery and the layouts are nearly all similar. This show was an exception.

Ten Wellington potters were invited by the Wellington chapter of Ikebana International to provide containers.

The potters were given complete freedom of design. They were asked to make up to eight containers. Later an arranger was assigned to each potter and chose two or three of the pots for arrangement. The rest went on display for sale.

The tremendous variety of design of the pots gave the Ikebana exponents scope for their art and the opening night was an exciting occasion with the potters delighted by the clever creations in their pots, and the public impressed by the beauty of the whole display.

The arrangements were each set on pedestals of varying heights. There were short fat pots, large urns, tall cylinders, sculptured heads and even a set of stones sprouting nandiri and supplejack vines. The ingenuity shown by the Ikebana exponants matched that of the potters.

I visited the gallery several times and always experienced the same sense of serenity. Flowers, interesting foliage and exotic branch forms all so simply displayed within the varied forms of the pots, was a satisfying sight which we hope will be repeated again.

Patti Meads

WELLINGTON POTTERS WORK EVALUATED

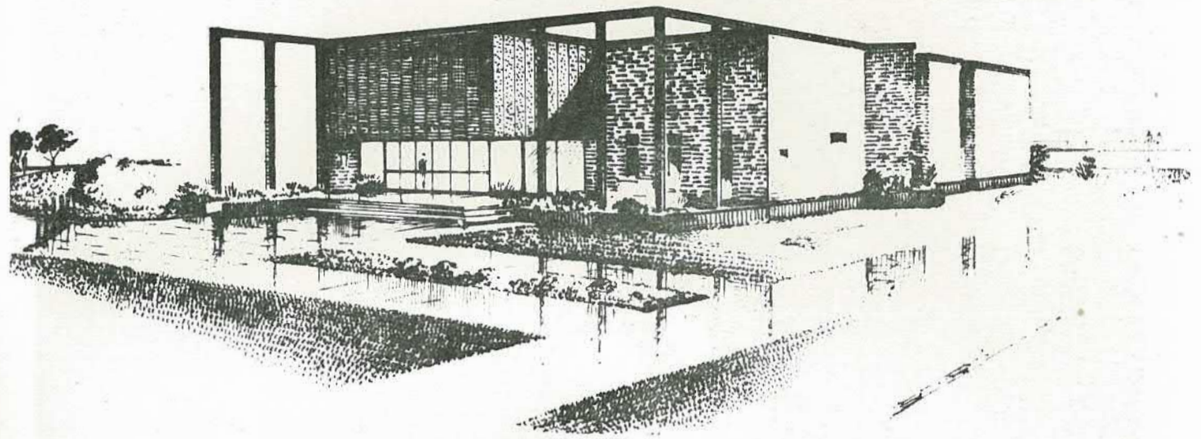
Muriel Moody and Mirek Smisek, selectors for the Wellington Potters Association's annual exhibition were asked to give their reasons for selecting and rejecting pots submitted. An evening given to discussion and criticism gave potters a most valuable and stimulating evening.

The rejected pots were shown for criticism. Where the trouble was with the handle (a major fault amongst entries), a demonstration handle was attached to show the fault more clearly.

Design in relation to function came in for scrutiny and by the end of the evening both exhibitors and non-exhibitors were viewing the entire exhibition from newly observant and more critical eyes.

The session did more in its brief span to improve standards and self criticism than we would have believed possible and we are grateful to Muriel and Mirek for such constructive help.

Patti Meads



Go ahead gallery

by Margaret Harris

Twelve potters invited to the Dowse. Put like this its like saying invited to the V and A or the Tate. It's to be hoped that the new Dowse Art Gallery at Lower Hutt will become a familiar name—at least within New Zealand. It deserves to. It has a good building and a forward-looking policy.

A year after opening, the gallery is in full swing with its exhibition programme. And the exhibits in this gallery are seen to the best advantage. The aim was to provide interesting vistas from all viewing positions to give a sense of space and discovery. The green/grey colours in carpets and walls have been kept in low key for a quiet atmosphere where the works of art can be viewed in steady light in comfort and quiet. Lighting is artificial with spot lights and special floods.

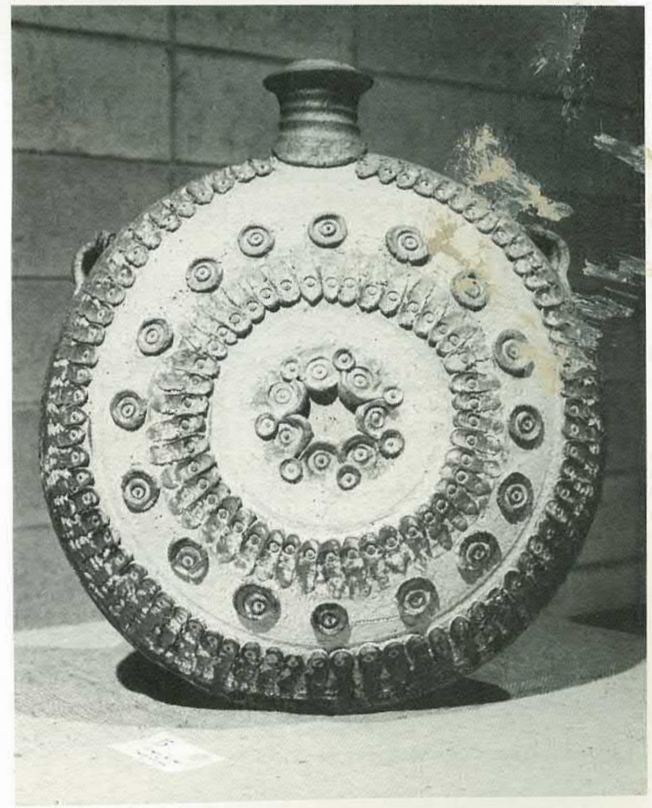
The main entrance opens into the sculpture hall. Above the main entrance are two mezzanine galleries. There's a display area with two major galleries on each side and smaller print galleries. Then the main exhibition area. The building is designed for additional wings later.

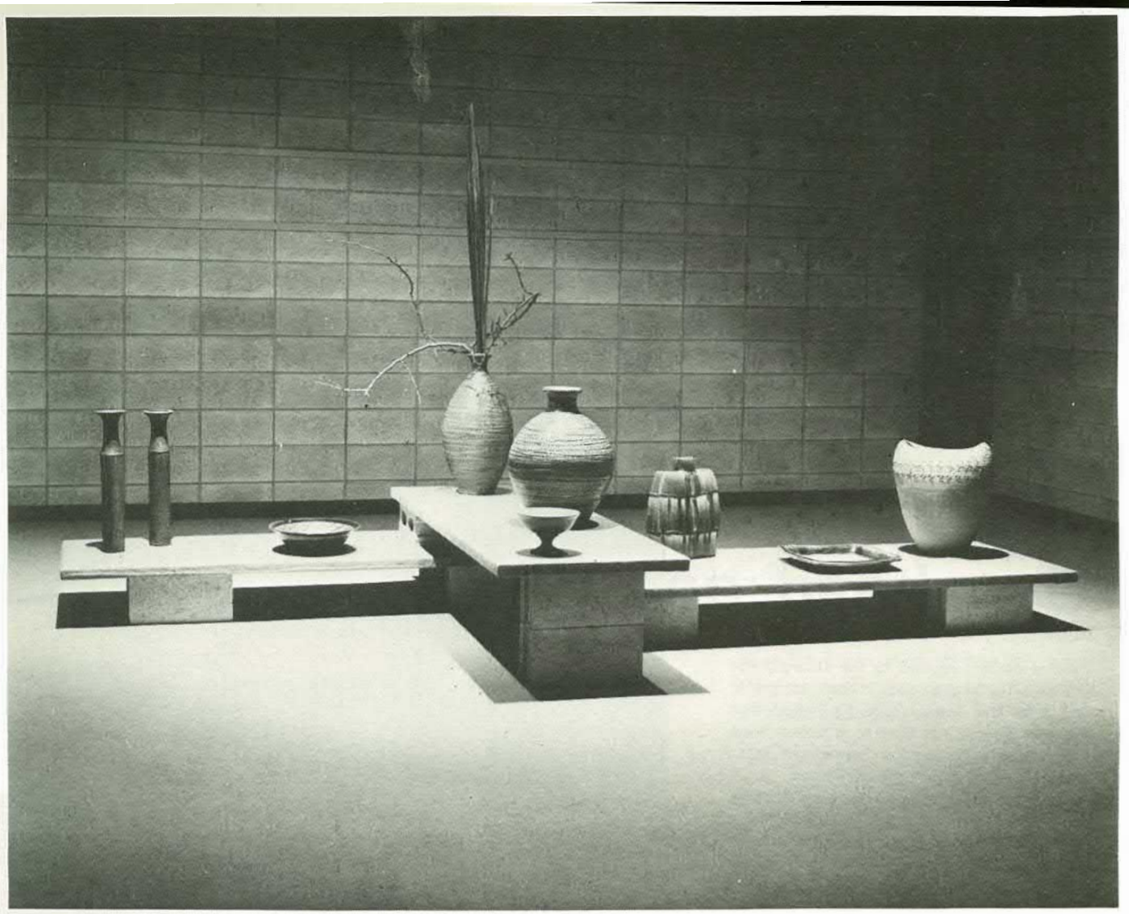
The Director, David Millar, is keen to make the gallery a lively place in Lower Hutt. Already there have been children's activities and a series of popular Sunday afternoon concerts with programmes as varied as music from the 6th to 18th centuries played on spinet and clavichord, to the 60 voice choir from St. Mary of the Angels singing music of the polyphonic period, to the N.Z.B.C. symphony trainees. Already there is the nucleus of a pottery collection.

This gallery is making its mark.

Bottle by Peter Stichbury from the Dowse exhibition.

photo: Ans Westra





"The pots are still pots."

12 potters invited to the Dowse

by D. P. Millar, Director, Dowse Art Gallery, Lower Hutt

It was a cold winter's evening and Wellington had already had several recent pottery exhibitions. Despite this, over two hundred people came to the opening of the gallery's first pottery exhibition. And four thousand visited the exhibition over three weeks.

The aims of this exhibition and its method of display were different from many others.
At first I met frank amazement when I told regular gallery patrons that only thirty-six pieces would be displayed in gallery A—a large carpeted area 40' x 160'. But this meant that a few good pieces could be displayed without the usual confusion that so often attends pottery exhibitions. To add to the impact of only a few pieces, the gallery was darkened, and the spots in the ceiling picked out the exhibits, bathing them in pools of warm light.

Two of the pots—Juliet Peter's branch pot and Mirek Smisek's salt-glazed branch pot — were chosen to hold greenery. Mrs N. V. Dobson, who did the arranging, achieved a commendable result with the minimum of fuss and foliage. When she was finished, the pots were still pots.

All the small pieces were placed on four units with cantilevered platforms. Potters were given a platform to themselves. Exhibits too big for the stands were grouped in their own area. Patricia Perrin's cider jar stood on a wine butt. Roy Cowan's two large ceramic sculptures were put on blocks and internally lit. David Brokenshire's anchor stones squatted like a miniature stonehenge on a hesian covered platform.

The overall result was of spaciousness. Every piece demanded and received individual attention.

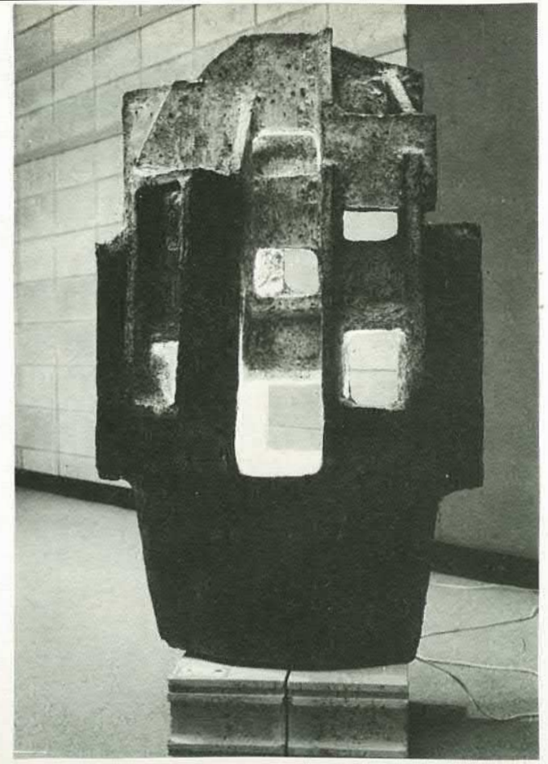
The 'humblest' piece in the exhibition, Crewenna's tea-pot, was subjected to so much attention by viewers on opening night that it is a wonder it didn't disappear in a blush of embarrassment.

The aims of the exhibition was twofold. First, it was formally to inaugurate a policy of securing a fully representative collection of New Zealand pottery. Once this collection is underway, it is hoped to add examples of pottery from other countries.

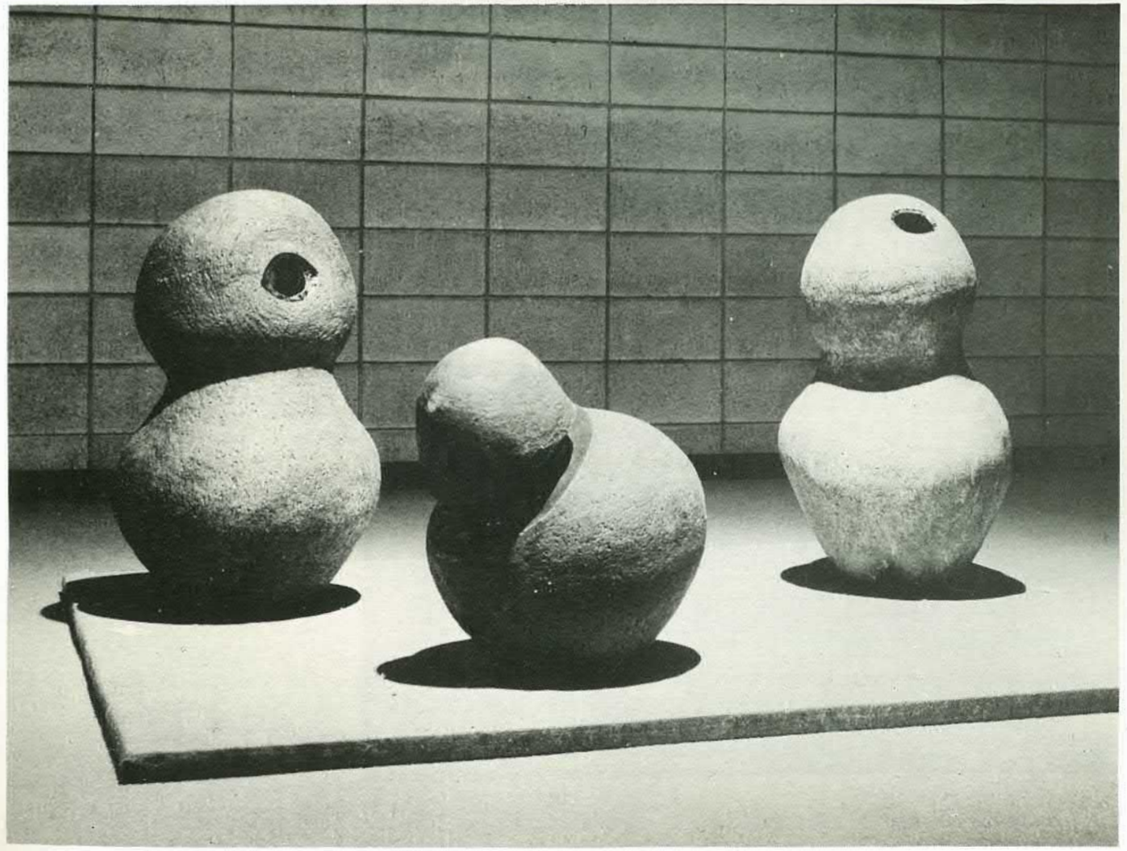
Secondly it was intended that this exhibition would give the gallery an unrivalled opportunity to purchase work for its own collection. This intention was easily fulfilled. The gallery bought $900 worth of pottery—a third of the exhibits.

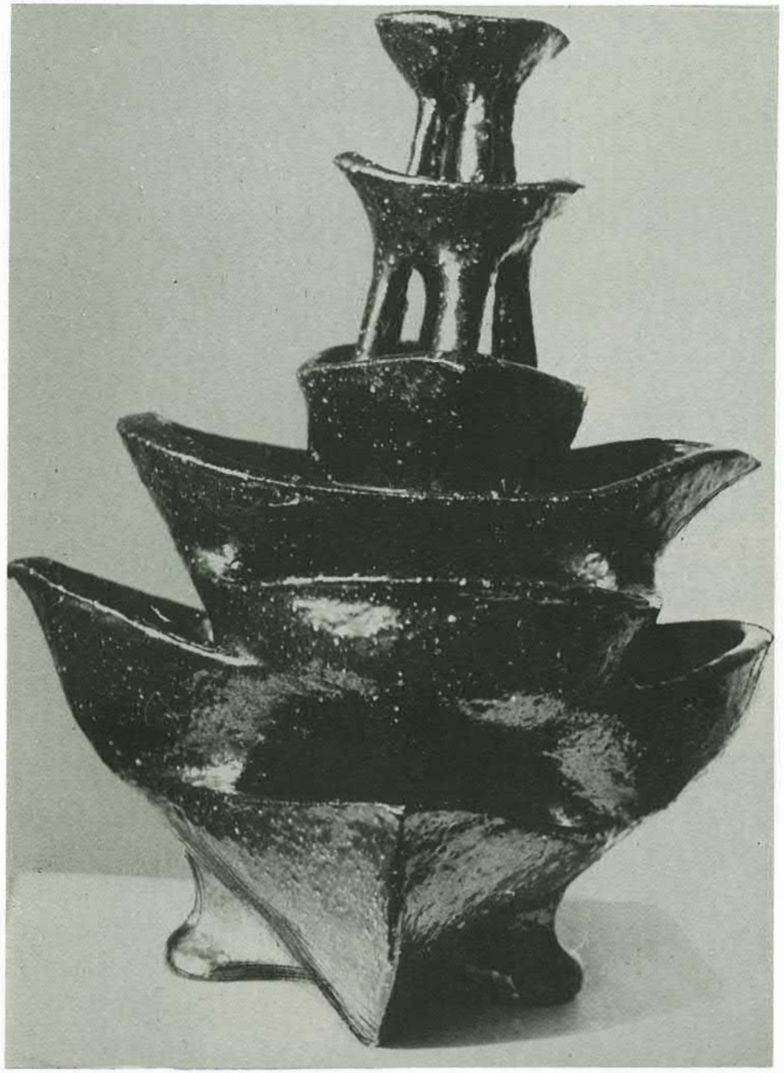
Those exhibiting were: John Fuller, Mirek Smisek, Roy Cowan, Juliet Peter, David Brokenshire, Peter Stichbury, Graeme Storm, Len Castle, Crewenna, Barry Brickell, Doreen Blumhardt, Patricia Perrin.

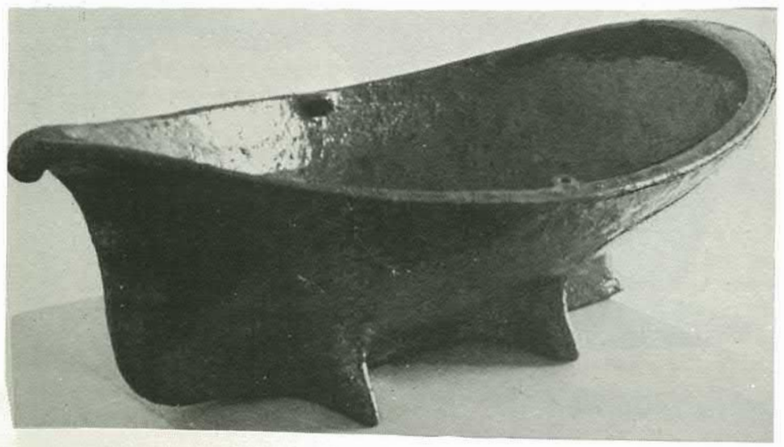
A pleasant by-product of the exhibition was the generous offer by the Wellington Potters' Association, who gave their collection of work by twelve noted New Zealand and overseas potters to the Dowse Art Gallery on permanent loan. □



Anchor stones by David Brokenshire.
Lantern by Roy Cowan.
photos: Ans Westra

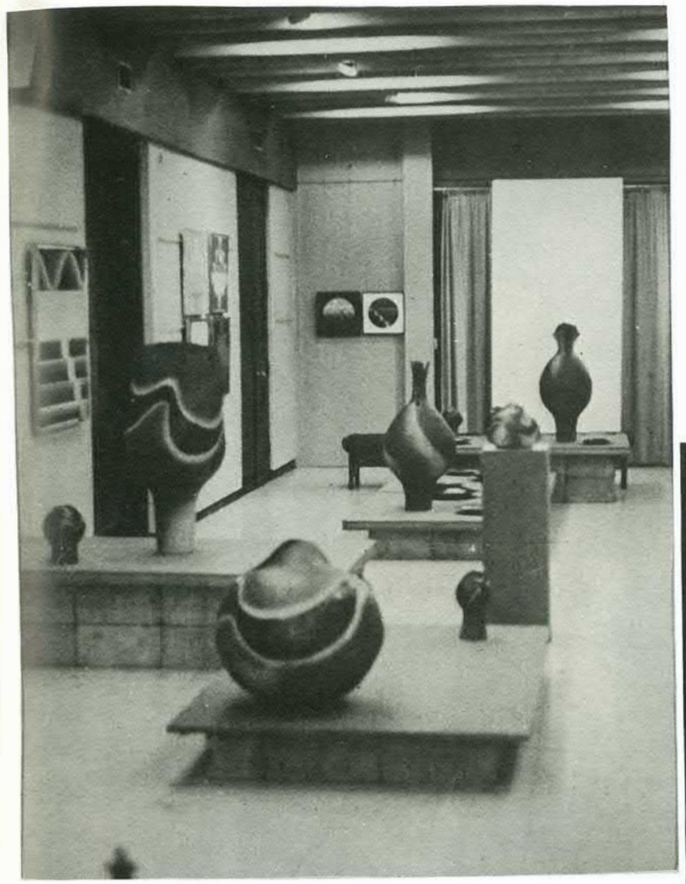






Hull pots by Barry Brickell shown at the Peter McLeavey Gallery, Wellington, in August.

photos: Robin Ormerod



Neil Grant exhibition at the Christchurch Society of Arts Gallery in September.

Pot by Neil Grant from his exhibition at the New Vision Gallery in August.

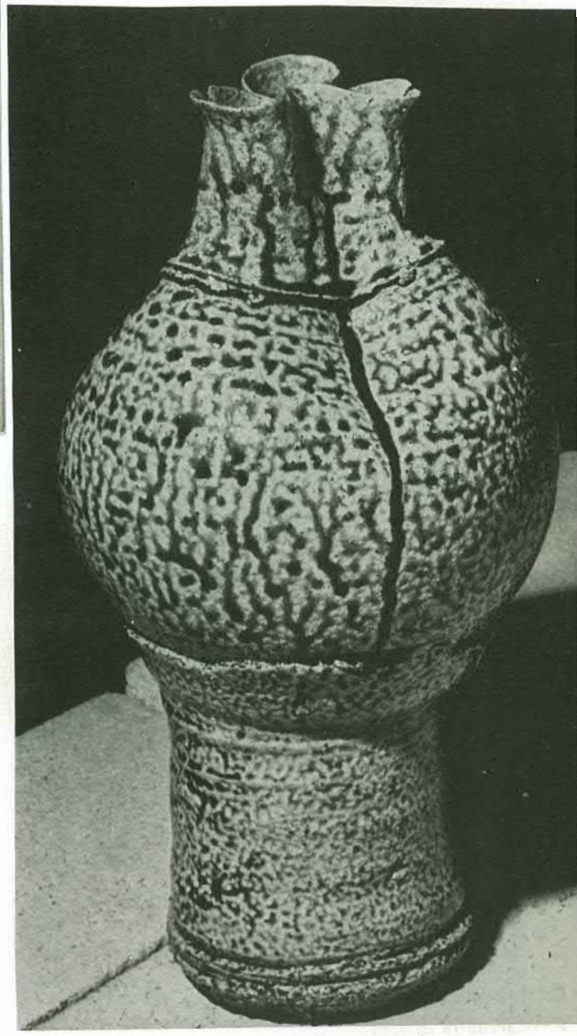
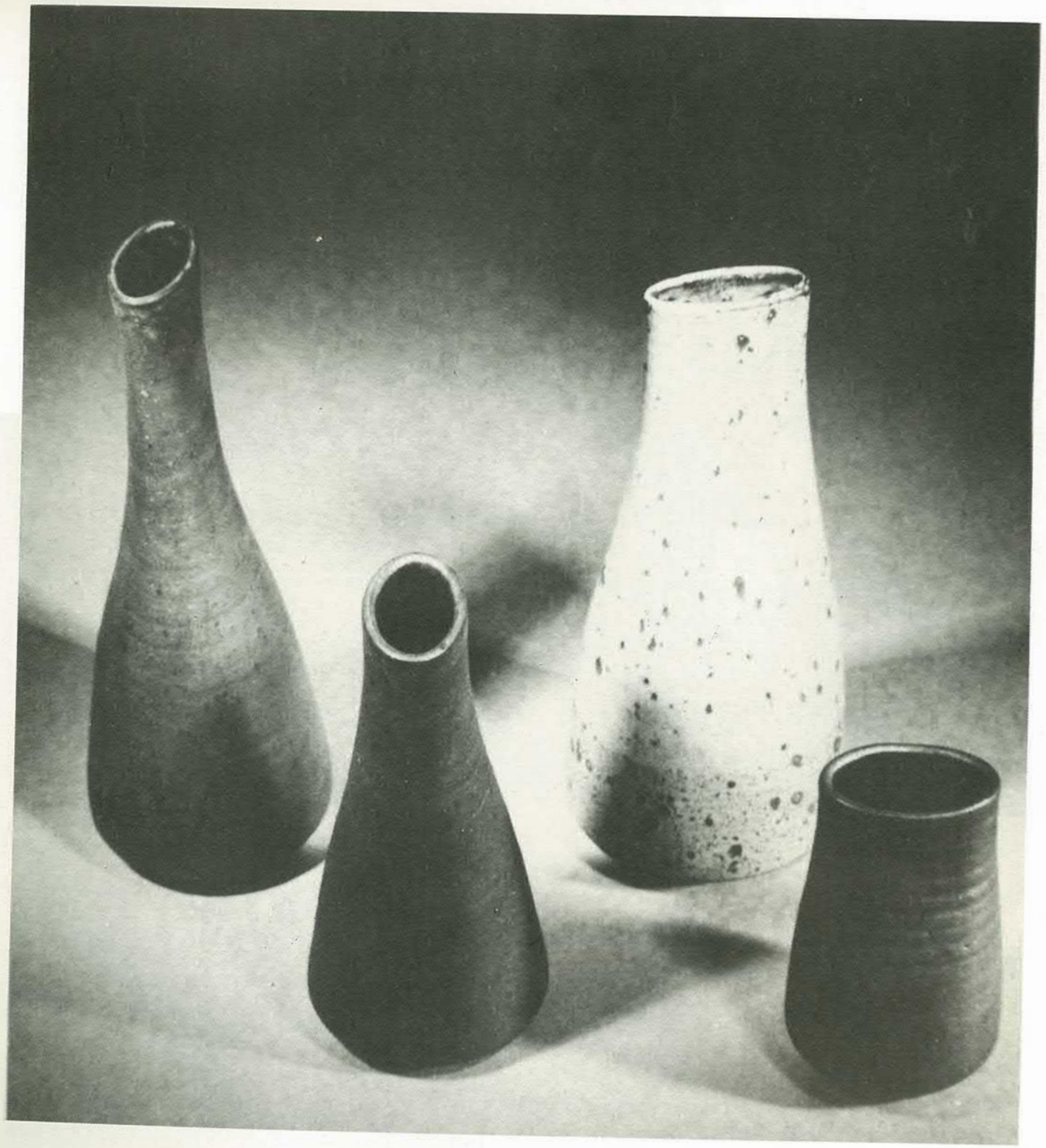
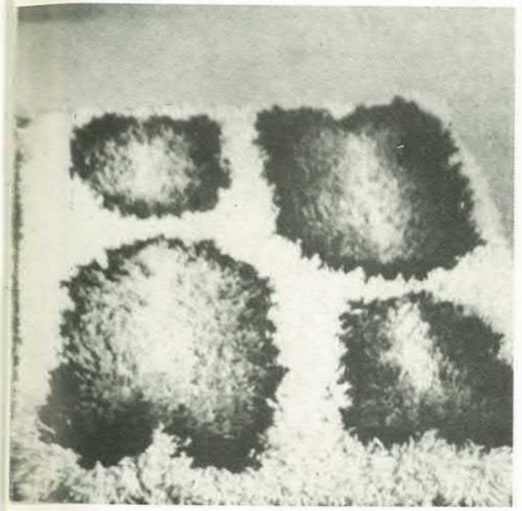


photo: Auckland Star



Quartet of squashed bottles, the tallest about 9" high, by John Parker.

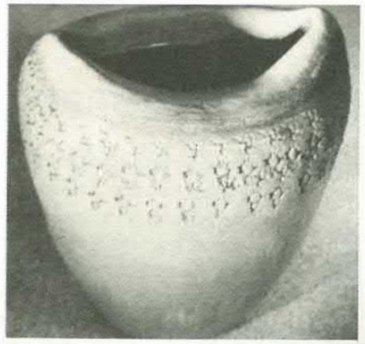
Exhibits from the World Craft Council exhibition in Wellington in the autumn, from Designscape 37/5, the publication of the Industrial Design Council.



Above, rya rug, hand and millspun, by Kathleen Low.

Right, large wall hanging (approximately 5' deep) in wool and flax by Jenny Hunt.

Below, impressed pot by Doreen Blumhardt, about 15" high.



The World Craft Council was founded in New York in 1964, and has since been admitted to membership of UNESCO as an affiliated non-governmental organisation. Forty-eight countries joined the WCC in its first year, and the New Zealand Chapter was formed in 1965. The New Zealand Chapter is made up of about 150 individuals and 15 groups covering over 2,000 crafts people. As well as arranging exhibitions in New Zealand, the WCC is active in promoting our craftwork abroad by participating in other countries' exhibitions, and it plans to send a comprehensive selection of work to the first World Exhibition of craft which will be held in Toronto in 1974.

Potters on the prowl in Java

Djakarta's streets are lined with stalls selling food and goods; prominent amongst them is the thieves market where you can buy assorted antiques, your own second best shoes and an array of Chinese pottery of all ages and varieties.

Indonesian market men have a keen sense of values and in this market in particular, bargaining will not produce bargains. There is a firm limit below which the seller will not go and this limit is still high.

On the stalls are the products of Chinese potteries from the present back to about 1800. Magnificent large blue and white earthenware plates about 20 in. diameter are the most prominent item. Though not in the earlier classical tradition, these naturalistic free form decorations of fruit, flowers and birds, perpetuate a continuing production of attractive bold brush designs that have flowed unbroken from the kilns of southern China as trade goods to the South East Asia Archipelago.

As well as cobalt decorated white flat ware, the stalls have a range of impressed muddy brown green celadon dominantly in dinner plate sizes.

Much of the ware bears evidence of long use, with the glaze scored by knife cuts. However some of the smaller lidded blue pots still contained the original alumina around the lips and flanges used to stop the lids sticking during firing.

The most refreshing aspect of this age of Chinese export ware is the continuity of supply and the conservatism of design and decoration that make today's products largely indistinguishable from their predecessors of a century ago.

THE RICH RED WARE OF THE COUNTRY

Java has a standard specification for the length of a billet of firing wood—2 feet (0.62 metres). Clumps of wood, all of this size can be seen swaying beneath the carrying bar of a **tukang** on the road, stacked at way stations in orderly heaps, or piled up at kilns, either lime or pottery.

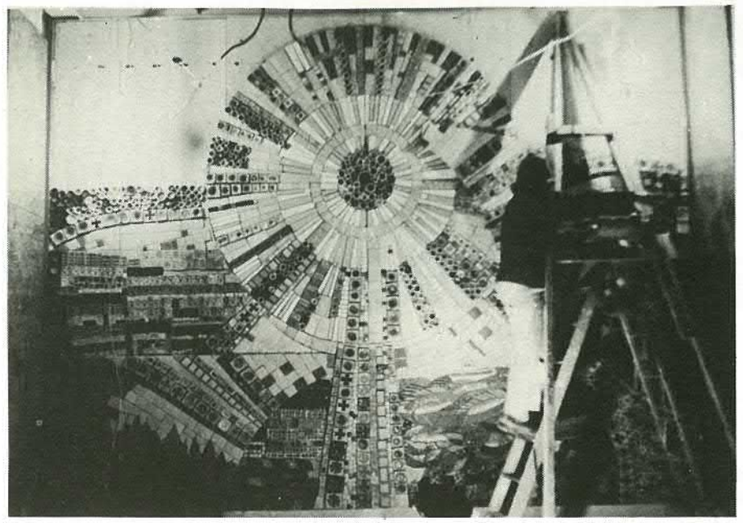
Applied to the native clay, this combustible produces a low fired (about 6-700°C) porous red ware that appears in a multitude of forms. Commonest is the roof tile. Even the flimsiest wooden structure in all Java has a tiled roof. Next in importance come bricks—for walls, for grates, for pillars, for shrines, even for whole buildings especially religious edifices—then come pots of all shapes and sizes with and without necks, bowls, and charcoal burners.

In the fields on the north coast road from Djakarta to Bandung low-tiled roofed structures perform the function of drying sheds and kilns for bricks and tiles. In the flat countryside, they dominate the landscape as far as the eye can see. A fortunate outcrop of clay provides their reason for being and they consume the first batch of their products in handsome tiled roofs. There is no doubt of the subsequent ready market for their wares. Viewed from one of the relatively few high buildings in Djakarta, the city is a sea of brick red tile!

Glazing is an almost unknown art in present-day Javanese pottery. However the instinctive awareness of the need for life and colour expresses itself in painted biscuit ware of all hues—black and white, green, red, blue and silver-painted pots adorn the road-side stalls.

The truth inherent in the indigenous pots is almost wholly expressed by the fitness of form to purpose. Braziers of slight terra cotta, function as efficient charcoal stoves. Semi-porous waterpots cool the varied liquid contents and the glowing black cooking pots about 1 foot diameter with a short neck exhibit a patina compounded of smoke, soot, grease and polishing.

Audrey and Jim Brodie



Hoisting operations at Europa House, Featherston Street, Wellington. The 160 sq. ft. mural, containing a ton of porcelain and stoneware tiles, was raised in several sections. For the same building a sculptural garden complex with large forms made in ferro-cement, was constructed by Stephen McCarthy and Roy Cowan.

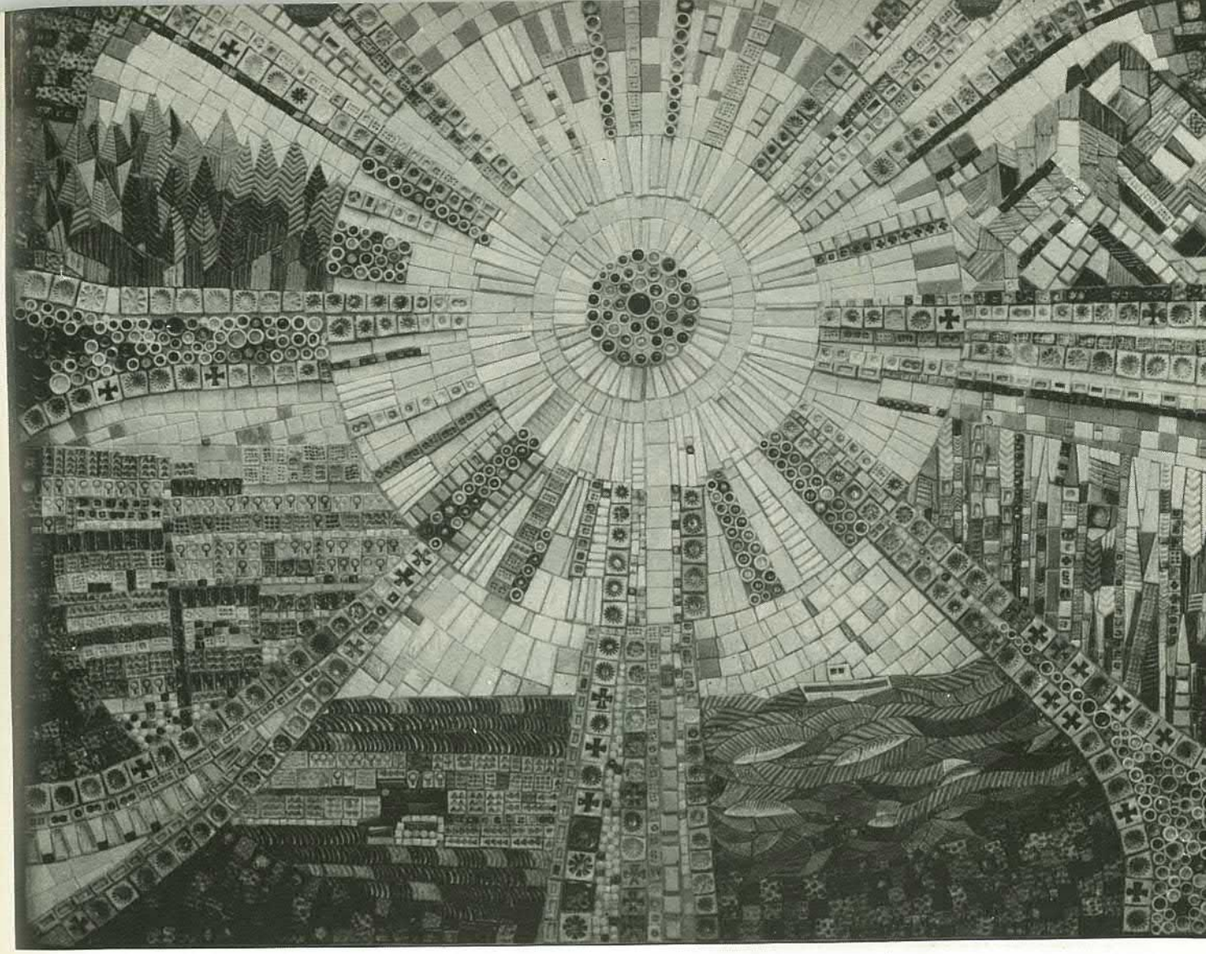


Photo Ans Westra

On assembling a mural in a public building

by Roy Cowan

WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?

What's it made of?

You mean you do that for a job?

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN DOING THAT SORT OF THING?

Did you have to draw it out first?
You mean it was all made here?

Gee they must be spending a packet on this building.

LOOK, MUMMY, JUST LIKE WE MAKE AT SCHOOL!

How long did it take to make it all?

Are you on your own?
Where did you import the tiles from?
Is that pottery?
How did you get all the colours?

HOW DID YOU PUT THE GLASS IN THERE?
HOW MANY BITS TO IT?

Who do you work for mate?
Do you do it in your spare time?
Where did you make the bits?

WHAT'S IT SUPPOSED TO MEAN?

How long have you been doing that sort of thing?
Does this part show the sea?

WHO DESIGNED IT?
WHAT'S YOUR FIRM, EH?
WHERE DID YOU GET ALL THOSE BITS?

Building construction force, New Zealand style, attired for combat in freezing winter winds.

On assembling a mural

ACCEPTANCE

She's coming on all right now, eh?

ARE YOU GOING TO PUT A TILE IN THERE?
I LIKE THAT TILE, I'LL TAKE IT WHEN YOU'RE NOT LOOKING.

It doesn't look much like a tractor to me!
Does the glass melt easy?

It's a long job isn't it?
I reckon it won't look too bad when it's all there.

ARE YOU GOING TO DO UP ALL THOSE JOINTS?

Isn't it wunnerful, Liz?

Py Crize, she's some job!
Never seen anything like that in a building before!

1300 DEGREES—THAT'S PRETTY HOT!

A ton of tiles?
Would you do me one for my bathroom?
I bet that took some doing!

Well I suppose you done your best.

Repeat about fifty times during final weeks of turmoil while another tower block approaches completion. Outwardly they seem to rise so easily, everything falls into place, an example of the harmonious working of Art, Architecture and Construction.

The first odd thing I noticed was that there didn't seem to be an ordinary Pakeha Kiwi about. Plenty of Maoris and other Polynesians, an apparent Eskimo, a Chinese, assorted Scots, Picts, Celts, Norsemen, a Teuton or two, definitely Romans on the marble work, and with them some early Christian martyrs in robes and beards.

I have come to the conclusion that all those ancient tribes which were supposed to have vanished never did so, they simply ceased to be newsworthy, and here they all were, building this Tower Block. And with them have come their ancient gods, upon whom they call loudly for assistance in their struggles with a whole underworld of ill-disposed spirits which have to be exorcised.

There is a subtle race of them which interfere with levels so that the flooring won't fit, and they have to drive out with deafening electric hammers. There was a particularly determined Kobeld that got into the self-opening doors, so that they either refuse, or spring out and 'clobber you,' I was warned.

As for the lifts—an army of Orcs had moved in. Driven out of one lift shaft, they would appear in another. So there were calls to the ancient Sumerian deity Pissht, or Shitt, and frequent appeals to the Nordic Fookin, and in moments of extremity to Fookinell, obviously a dreaded consort. Sensing one day that someone was looking as I worked I turned and there was a young Maori with classic features, eyes like paua shells. He slowly raised his two hands in the gesture of a Votary, as seen in ancient Mesopotamia, and uttered the one-word invocation 'Sheezes'. Obviously a Canaanite.

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