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New Zealand Potter
Volume 27, Number 2, 1985



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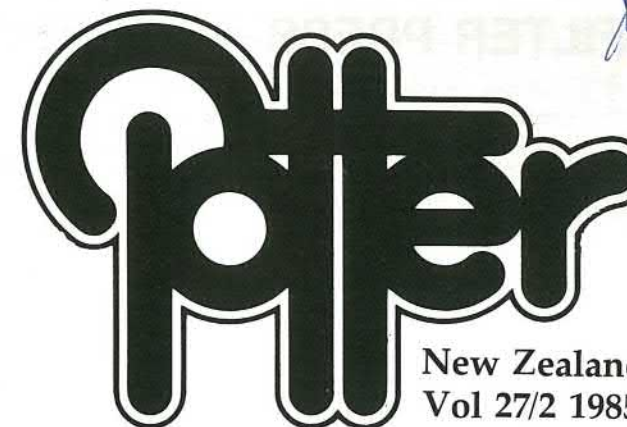
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THROUGH THE FILTER PRESS

By John Crawford, President,
New Zealand Society of Potters.

Being Professional — to a potter, what should this mean?

Is it simply doing a job well for remuneration? I hope not!

Professionalism should encompass all aspects of your approach to clay, such as commitment to technique, materials and design expression. Clay has the amazing ability to be worked in so many different ways, enabling the craftsman to create works that express something of themselves and eventually create a ceramic language all their own, whether it be domestic or sculptural pieces.

Until recently there has been a reluctance to accept craft as an art form by a majority of our established public galleries. An example of this would be the Auckland City Art Gallery who still will not allow craft through its doors. (Except for installations such as those recently seen, by Bronwynne Cornish and Denis O'Connor. This I believe is more a policy of the City Council than of the Art Gallery — Ed.)

The art versus craft argument has been bandied about in New Zealand quite long enough, perhaps it has something to do with the fact that we somehow still consider that art works must come from Europe, Asia or North America.

Maria Kuczynska, an internationally acclaimed ceramic artist from Poland, on her recent visit to judge the Fletcher Brownbuilt Award exhibition said, "In Poland we do not have Art separate from Craft, there is only Art or Non-Art".

I am pleased to say that the NZ Society of Potters has begun a positive and constructive dialogue with the Art Gallery Directors Association of New Zealand in an effort to establish a mechanism through which NZ pottery will be given its deserved place in public galleries. We found the Art Gallery Directors Association do wish to show pottery and would like to collate properly the information on the pots they show, and the potters who make the work. Their approach has been entirely professional.

If we as potters wish to have our work considered as a viable art-form we will have to be more professional, keeping working drawings, visual records of past works, making commitments to personal aesthetic goals.

Alan Peascod, our Australian guest at the recently held convention in Hawkes Bay, had one over-riding message for New Zealand potters. We must as individuals strive to create something of our own. Potters here have a real opportunity to take the best from long established pottery traditions and create something uniquely NZ.

After having seen both of New Zealand's most prominent exhibitions this year, the National and Fletcher Brownbuilt, I feel this is just beginning to happen and the thought of that is very exciting.

Quote from James Mack, Director of the Dowse Art Museum, from the NZ Listener of 15 June 1985.

"In very simple ways the visual arts might embellish television. Let's do away with those ghastly things that backdrop the continuity announcers. What about a different New Zealand painting every week and an accompanying piece of craft from New Zealand public collections? This could be programmed, and a small picture reproduced in the pertinent Listener."

"Earth, Air, Water, Fire. These are the ingredients of pots and human beings alike, and each formula contains also the element of chance. Do not seek perfection in pots or people, for your search will go unrewarded, and you will miss knowing many good pots and many good people." Ross Murphy, USA.

EXHIBITION CALENDAR

Pottery and Friends, Christchurch
September 12-25. Richard Parker and Scott Hockenhuil
October 10-24. Chester Nealie and Marilyn Wiseman
November 14-28. Margaret Milne and Chris Cockell

Artisan Centre, Newmarket
October 7-19. Ruth Castle

Albany Village Pottery
October 5-16. Anneke Borren and Owen Mapp
November 10-20. Chester Nealie

Pots of Ponsonby
October 6-20. Penny Evans
November 17-24. Campbell Hegan and Andrea Barrett

The Potters Gallery, New Plymouth
September 29-October 12. Cecilia Parkinson and John Parker

12 Potters, Remuera
September 22-October 5. John Parker

Gallery 5, Invercargill
September 14-28. Rosemarie Brittain

APOLOGIES

In POTTER '85/1 in the article on the exhibition Water/Clay I omitted the name of Wellington potter Flora Christeller who was co-organiser of the exhibition as well as an exhibitor. The photograph of Peter Collis' pots on page 10 was taken at Pots of Ponsonby. The three photos on page 4 should have been credited from the top to: Flora Christeller, David Shearer, Gulielma Dowrick. Didn't I do well! — Ed.

Editorial copy for The New Zealand Potter 1985 Issue No. 3 must be in the hands of the Editor, PO Box 79, Albany, by September 30.

Editor's rejection slip: "Dear contributor. Your story was good and original. Unfortunately that which was good was not original and that which was original was not good."

BOOKS

Reviewed by
Howard S Williams

CLAY STATEMENTS

Edited by Bruce Anderson and John Hoare (Darling Downs Institute Press)

This excellent book is a catalogue of the Darling Downs First National Ceramics Award held in Toowoomba, Queensland, Australia. Clay Statements is destined to become the authoritative publication on the study of contemporary ceramics in Australia. It consists of full page colour photographs of pots from 46 of Australia's leading ceramists, each one accompanied by details of the artist's background, their understanding, their work and their philosophy. The top quality photographs are by John Ball.

The works for this exhibition were selected by Janet Mansfield, Glen Cooke, John McPhee and Mitsuo Shoji. It is an excellent representation of new developments and directions — a survey of the "state of the art" of ceramics in Australia, and is an essential addition to the libraries of all who are interested in this field.

It will retail for \$A19.95 and can be obtained directly from the publishers...

Darling Downs Institute Press
PO Darling Heights
Toowoomba
Queensland 4350
Australia.

Please enclose an extra \$A10 for air-mail, or \$A4 for surface mail.

THE KILN BOOK

By Frederick L Olsen (A & C Black, \$44.60)

This is the second edition of a book already widely known by potters as being one of the most comprehensive manuals dealing with kilns. It is a practical guide to the construction, maintenance and repair of electric and fuel burning kilns.

The text is revised and expanded from the first edition and includes new problem-solving sections on fibre and modular construction. It includes detailed plans and working drawings for 22 different types of kilns and exten-

sive notes on fuels, combustion and firing systems.

With its excellent diagrams and tables this book is essential for anyone intending to build a kiln of any type and should really be read by all potters in order that they more fully understand one of the most important pieces of equipment in their pottery workshops.

SALZBRAND '86

Salt Glaze Competition

A magnificent catalogue of Salzbrand '83 has just arrived from Koblenz in the Federal Republic of Germany. This was from an international exhibition and competition of salt glaze pottery from 15 countries. It included work from 3 New Zealand potters, Madeleine Findley, Philippa O'Connor and Valerie Wright, all from Canterbury.

Salzbrand '86 is the second of these competitions and will be held in Koblenz at the Galerie Handwerk about May 1986. Several prizes will be awarded, the first being 6,000 DM. All applicants must submit at least 3 pieces of salt glazed work, domestic or sculptural. The work must arrive in Koblenz by the end of December next. Full information and entry forms can be obtained from:

The Editor
NZ Potter
PO Box 79
Albany

Please enclose a stamped addressed envelope and 50c in stamps for photocopying.

CLAY — IN THE BEGINNING

Scientists in California have reported a major discovery that supports the emerging theory life on Earth began in clay rather than the sea.

The discovery showed that ordinary clay contains two basic properties essential to life: The capacities to store and transfer energy.

With such energy, coming from radioactive decay and other sources, the early clays could have acted as "chemical factories" for processing inorganic raw materials into the more complex molecules from which the first life arose some 4000 million years ago.

In their analysis of common ceramic clay, the scientists said they had found evidence that "mistakes" made normally and repeatedly in the formation of clay crystals, presumably create the conditions by which the material traps energy and holds it for perhaps thousands of years.

Such defects in the clay microstructure could also be sites for storing information necessary to direct the chemical reactions and organise the eventual proto-organisms.

So, if the theory can be confirmed, it seems an accumulation of chemical mistakes led to life on Earth.

The theory is also evocative of the biblical account of the creation. In Genesis, it is written "And the Lord God formed man of dust of the ground." In common usage this primordial dust is called clay.

Auckland Star.

"No significant pot can be made apart from one's living. Therefore you should not expect your work to be of great importance until your life is what you want your work to be." Shoji Hamada.

People who play with words
get up to semantics.



Fletcher Brownbuilt

New Zealand Potter is grateful for a generous grant from
Fletcher Brownbuilt towards publication costs.

POTTERY IN VANUATU

By Barry Brickell, Coromandel.

Early in 1982, Ken and Betty Rabarts of Coromandel persuaded me to take time off to spend a month at Luganville, a small town on the island of Santo, the largest island of the independent republic of Vanuatu (formerly known as New Hebrides), to establish a pottery workshop there. This project was being funded by an American-based aid group called *Codel*, with the aim of creating employment and assisting small business establishment for the young people of the area.

The vision behind the pottery scheme originated from Ken while he was administering the affairs of the Anglican Diocese of Vanuatu on previous visits, and we discussed it at some length over the years. As working members of the *Vanuatu Association Inc.*, the Rabarts arranged for me to visit the country for the month of June 1982 as a member of the annual work party from NZ.

On my arrival at Vila, the capital on the island of Efate, I contacted Ken Calvert a New Zealander on a work permit in the Central Planning Office of this newly independent country, to find out all I could about the geology and clays as well as the attitudes and customs of the people. To my pleasure there was some interest in the pottery project, but nobody had done any work with the local raw materials in the sense of proper testing and suitability for a craft approach. There was abundant geological information of an academic type with economic geology studies of such things as mineral deposits (manganese, pozzolan etc.) and remarkably full sets of coloured geological maps, but typically, not a mention of suitable pottery materials, let alone clay.

The small plane trip to Santo, about an hour's flight, included a landing at a grass airstrip to pick up an unwell lady from a remote village bound for the hospital at Santo. The coconut and palm trees lent the landscape a very distinctive appearance which I had never seen before, it being my first trip to the tropics. At Santo, about the size of Taupo, I was met by Bishop Harry Tevi and two of the anglican priests from the local church community. The town of Luganville is the site of an American World War II camp and much evidence remains in the form of corrugated iron buildings in various



Barry Brickell at the Wheel at Luganville, Vanuatu

stages of repair. I was given a spartan but sufficient room with an electric light and communal cooking and ablution area situated in the church grounds. The church is comparatively new, a fine hexagonal structure in concrete block. The trees scattered about are very handsome and give shelter to the population about their very humble huts and sheds. The people are very attractive, smiling and welcoming and walk in large numbers around the old laid-out streets of the town. There is a very large proportion of young people; one is continually offering greetings all the way along the streets.

The next day, the Bishop introduced me to the 8 pottery students, all young men between 13 to 21, selected from among the church community. In the well-built pottery room of the young people's communal centre (built by the French before Independence) there were four electric wheels, of various odd designs. None of them seemed to work properly, but after some attention, I was able to demonstrate on one of the standard commercial models. It was clear that we would have to build a simple kick or foot-treadle wheel to be of any real use to the students.

Sylvester Bulesa, a young man who had been trained in pottery craft at an Australian Polytech (sponsored by *Lions International*) was attempting to tutor the students. He had returned a short time before with a small electric kiln, an electric wheel, a ton of white Australian earthenware clay, some made-up glazes and dozens of small jars of bright underglaze stains. This placed him at a disadvantage in that his training was thoroughly alien to the real needs of the students which was to create as much basic, usable pottery as possible with minimum cost (there is very little money about) and maximum use of local raw materials. The valuable *Codel* funds should, in my opinion, be used for this approach so that the thing could become self-reliant as there was not another chance. Sylvester kindly agreed however, to my using his kiln and some of his clay for tests in order to get things started. Electricity costs were very high, the power being generated by diesel engines burning imported fuel.

I soon formed a plan of action which had to be compressed into less than a month. We would build a small wood-fired kiln, test local materials

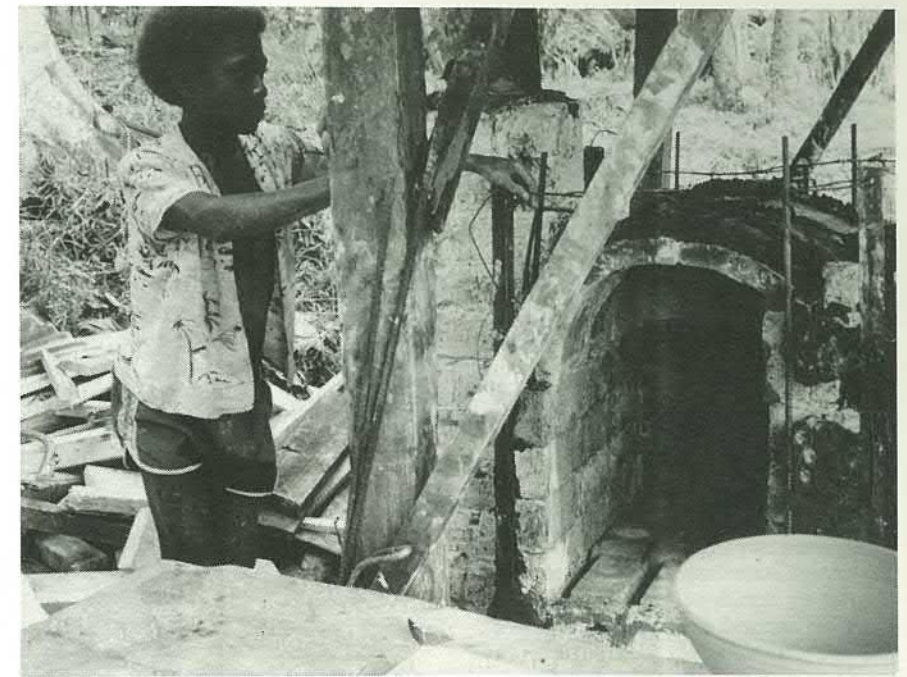
and make the simplest of useful pots. This all proved difficult as firebricks were unobtainable at the start. The word went out and gradually the clay samples started coming in, also the news that there may be a few bricks left buried under the remains of the huge American bread oven in a nearby coconut plantation. We unearthed enough full and half-bricks to build part of the kiln only. I therefore set to and made some simple wooden tile-sized moulds (250 by 250 by 60 mm) into which the students were shown how to press the clay mix, wire cut and obtain kiln building tiles.

As the only clay with any refractory ability at all was Sylvester's white earthenware, I had to use this mixed with sawdust from the local joinery factory. I showed the boys how to foot-wedge this. My kiln plan required 30 odd tiles, some bent to form the crown and firebox arches and the others straight for the floor and walls. We saved the precious bricks for the bagwall, firewall, setting pieces and the door and stack base. The power station people relinquished a short length of steel pipe for the top of the stack. We had to force-dry the tiles by warming in the electric kiln to maintain schedule.

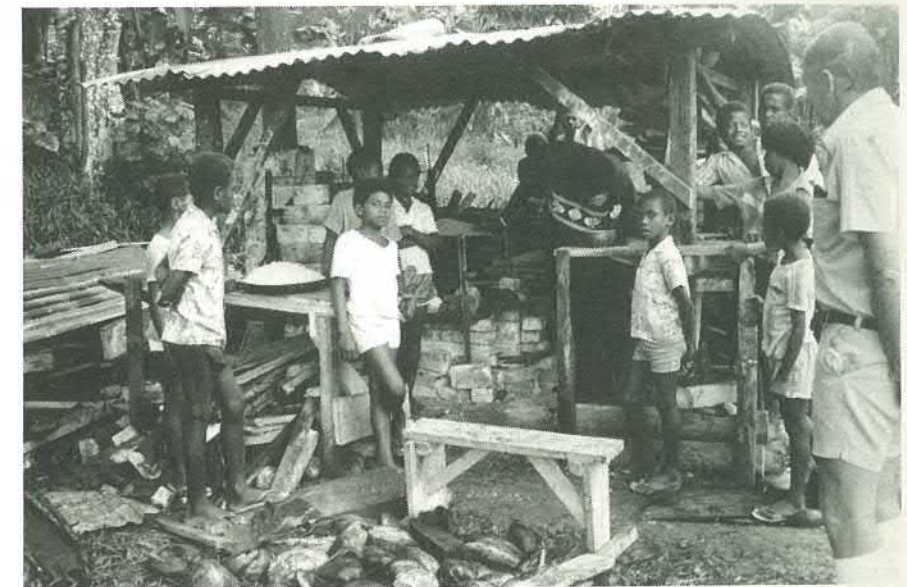
Meanwhile, I had the added responsibility of trying to maintain enthusiasm and stimulus as a pottery tutor with energetic, charming but scatty students trying to do claywork (coiling, pinching and moulding) in some semblance of order. They all wanted to become instant skilled throwers and I did pine for a fellow tutor with good patience while I battled on with the kiln and testing, and the various errands that this entailed. The humid heat did not lend me as much energy as I needed at times.

Using the bricks, I built a very crude vertical "chimney" updraught kiln in the side of a bank into which we placed the now dry tiles. The firing went quite smoothly and all the tiles were satisfactory. The municipality showed us a kiln site nearby (one has to be very careful with land rights) and with the help of the boys, we took only a day to build the kiln. As the walls were less than 3 inches (50 to 70 mm) thick, it was necessary to plaster the outside with a mixture of local red clay and sawdust. Using salvaged timber and roofing iron, we built a crude shelter over the kiln. A local metal worker let us have old rods and pipe for kiln bracing and he also made a very simple kick wheel to my design. This was installed against one of the posts of the kiln shed and a timber-slab wedging bench erected against the other.

I was fortunate to be taken for one or two exploratory trips in the local area, but as it is almost entirely of coral (calcium carbonate) the only clay nearby



Building the wood fired kiln, Luganville



was that formed from the rapid weathering of "recent" basaltic ash, probably deposited aerially from volcanic eruptions within the past few thousand years. The central and western bulk of Santo Island is volcanic in structure, but fine secondary clays will be very difficult to find. The weathered ash clay of red to chocolate, and occasionally yellow colour, forming a layer over the coral substrate is high in the clay mineral montmorillonite and has a fired shrinkage of about 20% at 1,100°C. It can be very smooth, plastic and pleasant to work with.

Pottery has been made in Vanuatu for perhaps thousands of years. It is similar to the traditional pottery of Fiji and Papua New Guinea in that the hand-beaten and formed wares were

fired in open fires (no kiln) then "glazed" with vegetable gums or extracts to help make them waterproof. I was fortunate in being taken for a speedboat trip around the open south-west coast of Santo to the village of Wusi, where some of the women continue to make traditional pots. We were amazed at the almost unplastic earthy nature of the clay used, it being a weathered volcanic tuff of light colour. Before firing, a fine red slip is applied and after firing a sealing "glaze" made from grated arrowroot and seawater is applied to the hot pot. (In Fiji, a true red body clay and glaze made from "kauri" gum is used). The museum in Port Vila contains a cabinet display of the local traditional pottery techniques. The pots have a simple

form with rich ornamentation built into the surface and are mostly used for slow cooking of the staple foods on smouldering charcoal fires.

Meanwhile, we were building up a fair collection of pots by the students and myself. Shrinkage and texture test bars fired in the electric kiln showed that approximately equal proportions of white earthenware and local "hospital hill" red volcanic clays produced a very satisfactory body at about 1,050°C and a total shrinkage of 15%, which is acceptable.

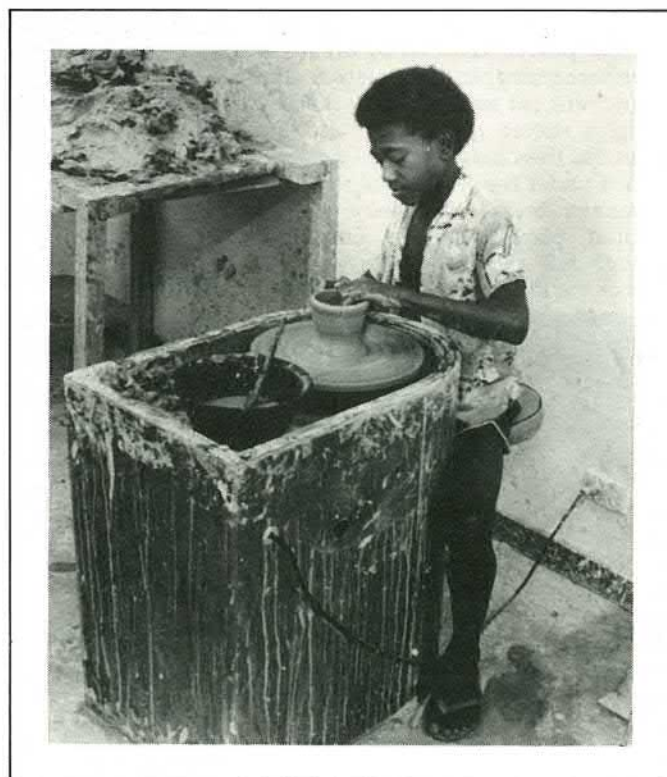
My geological map indicated a river flowing through volcanic country towards the west, which should provide a coral-free grog or sand. Indeed, the Adson River sand and some finer material forming cliffs on its south bank were our main source of tempering grogs. Another source, discovered almost by accident, was from the insulation around the kiln. After firing, the red clay/sawdust mix shrank and tended to fall away. It was burned to a rich red and we could easily powder and sieve it for grog. The addition of the maximum amount of grog to not inhibit workability of the body too much, allowed us to reduce the proportion of Australian white clay to about 35% to 40%. My experiments showed that fired shrinkage of the local red clay was not reduced as much by the grog as by the white clay addition.

Before the first firing of the home-made wood-fired kiln, excitement was mounting. We scoured the town for demolition oregon wood from old army buildings and a local man kindly lent his truck for us to collect old slab-wood from a nearby sawmill. Here I had to monitor the wood being so enthusiastically collected as the boys did not understand that it had to be old and dry, not still "green". The first (biscuit) firing drew crowds of young people and children from the district and the nearby Catholic school and was attended by boys climbing the coconut trees over the kiln then breaking out and roasting the resulting edible lining, on the top of the firebox. Apart from the odd "boomph" from inside — some of the coiled pots were rather thick — the firing was a success.

A suitable glaze, was the next problem. Fortunately, I had brought some gerstley borate and feldspar with me and managed to make up a crude raku type glaze. The thixotropic nature of the borate did not make for easy glaze application, and I wished I had brought some made-up glaze. However, it did work by the test kiln results so we prepared for the first glaze firing in our new kiln. The month was coming near to an end and I had time only for two firings in quick succession.

Meanwhile of course, our kiln shed was the centre of attention — faces and

William practices throwing, Luganville



eyes behind every blade of grass. I gave countless throwing demonstrations on the kick wheel especially to the throngs of children from school classes. The little kiln shed with its wheel, bench, kiln and now properly stacked firing wood was a useful, compact entity which the local people could accept and later, enjoy.

I entrusted the firing to Sylvester who soon blew up a pot by diligent stoking. "Something wrong with kiln" said Sylvester. "Something wrong with your fire" I humoured to him. The firing was a success, Heaven's blessings. The pots were actually glazed if but rather thinly. Also the copper and cobalt brush strokes showed up well much to the delight of the students. Apart from the kiln insulation having to be continually patched up, the kiln worked well enough up to 1,050°C, although a longer pipe on the stack would have improved the draught.

Because the church was the centre of the community (there being several different Christian denominations in Luganville), I tried to encourage the making of pottery items for the church as well as popular use. We made carved plaster letter sets and printed clay tablets with biblical extracts on them. Some of the students showed a real flare for this. They also became adept at printing each other's and friends' names on their pots, some complimentary others maybe not quite so

much so. The fun aspects of decoration, design and form appealed to them. The stricter business of learning to throw became absorbing to only about three of the students. I resolved to select two of them for training visits to NZ for the next year.

On reflection, I am still learning from the Vanuatu experience; I think I learned an awful lot more than I tried to teach. From time to time letters come from one or two of the students requesting information or materials. One must never assume, however, that once started, things will continue as one would wish. However, as the Codel funds provided for a visit to NZ for advanced training, we discussed this matter by letter after my return to NZ. I suggested that the two older boys who showed a strong interest in their throwing be invited to come. It was agreed that Matthias Tevi (a son of the Bishop) and Manly Christopher be invited. They arrived about mid March, 1983, for a two and a half months stay.

At this time, Baye Riddell, a potter at Tokomaru Bay, north of Gisborne, was planning to build a fairly large wood-fired down-draught kiln. He keenly accepted my suggestion that the two Vanuatu boys help him build the kiln and gain valuable experience in this. Baye and his wife Gemeaux kindly accommodated them and they also met Helen Mason whose collection of pots was interesting and instructive for them.

Back at Coromandel two weeks later, after the kiln was built, Matthias and Manly worked daily at my place and Betty Rabarts hosted them. I was beginning my work on earthenware then, which was, in fact stimulated by the trip to Vanuatu. With volcanic clays of the type so prevalent in the South Pacific, earthenware seemed a more logical choice than stoneware, the kiln and firing problems also being simpler.

The gas-fired kiln kindly lent to me by Rosemary McFarlane of Coromandel, was a great asset in that the students' pots could be fired often enough for us all to experiment with a new range of earthenware glazes and slips. We prepared my local terracotta clay bodies in the ball mill and by hand and foot wedging and I was able to borrow another potter's wheel. We used Hyde ball clay as the essential "imported" body ingredient and lead bisilicate frit for the glaze base. I was also experimenting with cheaper glaze materials such as borax frits and cullet (ground glass).

We tried to keep foremost in mind the various problems the boys would have after their return home, when planning their work here. To my delight, they showed their excellent and free sense of design and enjoyed doing sgraffito in the white slip over the red body. Although a little more than two months was not long, their potting showed steady improvement and a sale of their work organised by the Rabarts and local church people gave them some much appreciated pocket money. We arranged to send them the money from their pots that we sold after they returned home.

About a week before the boys were due to depart, I asked them if they would like to build another kiln, similar to that which they would be advised to build in Vanuatu. They were very keen and with a great flourish, we demolished my old small two-chamber kiln and in its place, built an "economic" type kiln (somewhat like the "fast-fire" or "Phoenix" design) with dutch oven firebox underneath. I designed it to use 800 bricks (two pallets) and standard kiln shelves. The day before the boys left, they fired the still wet kiln and were very pleased indeed with the wood-flame effects on the clay. It was a good climax, and Baye, Gemeaux and their baby son Kahu turned up just in time to enjoy it all.

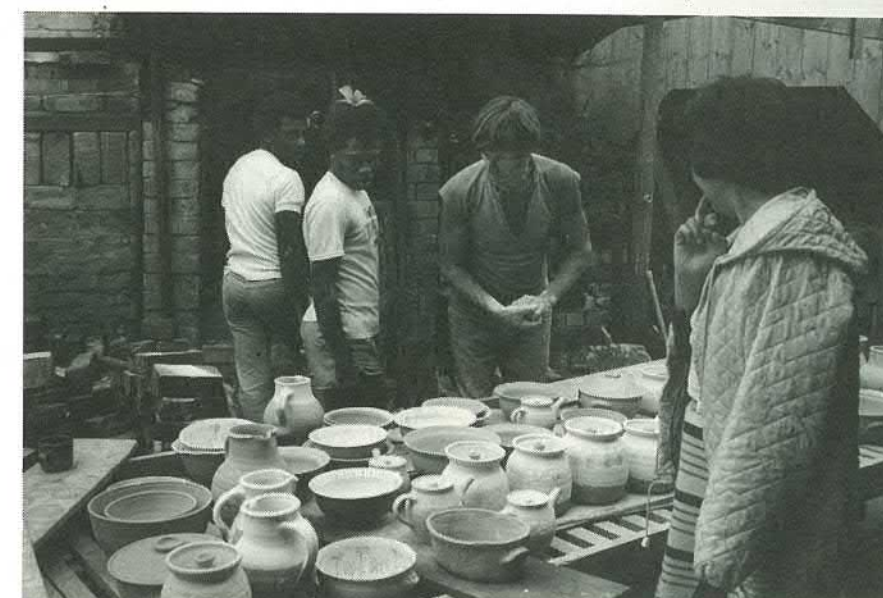
Progress over the past year or so is rather difficult to determine as communication by letter or even phone is not easy. There is certainly no substitute for actually being there in person; despite books, photos, or any other form of help *non persona*, Island



Photos: Gil Hanley

Throwing room at Driving Creek, Coromandel

Barry Brickell with students from Vanuata at Driving Creek, Coromandel



peoples react intuitively and earnestly to one's face. It must be regarded as two-way traffic, any sharing of technology or ideas.

One day, I visited a Catholic Mission station on the Island of Malekula and the Sisters there were very interested in the idea of clay bread-making ovens and pots. Sister Patrice (from NZ) had been doing some experiments with local clays and she later visited us in Luganville to meet the students and compare notes. Another form of pot which the local people wanted was a "loo" for sitting over a hole and having a specific shape. After some experiments, I came up with a form which seemed to appeal but I do not know whether or not it has proved useful.

In both Vila and Santo, there are shops selling local crafts and the government is cautiously encouraging tourism. There is certainly the po-

tential for a handcraft pottery outlet, but the ware must have a distinctiveness befitting the country of origin if the craft is to succeed. The local people have abundant access to cheap imported manufactured pottery and enamelled tinware etc, so for them, handcraft pottery would have little appeal unless it totally suited their needs and limited ability to buy it. The indigenous handcrafts of Vanuatu are principally woven items and hand-carved kava bowls but a limited amount of native pottery from Wusi can be found. We do hope that a pottery craft industry will eventually become established, albeit that some imported materials have to be used, but the spirit of the people and their sensitive appreciation of design might one day combine to yield a type of pottery which the South Pacific would very much love to see.

WANGANUI



By Grace Alp

One of the most fascinating *Community College* workshops in 1984 was Michael Dee's on ceramic sculpture. Course members ranged from interested beginners and sculptors with little or no clay experience, to skilled potters with little experience of free-form abstract sculpture.

Using heavily grogged clay, Michael demonstrated two main methods of construction.

Firstly large fat coils eased and pinched on, with sharp changes of direction or with a spiral effect — like an asymmetrical Tower of Babel or a soaring cliff. The walls grew by three or four coils before being scraped and paddled for strength. Particular care is needed at the corners to make a strong join while avoiding extra thickness. The piece must flow and look interesting from all angles.

The second type of sculpture did not have a continuous surface or definite container-type inside/outside — a greater challenge to those of us who usually do wheelwork and make pots.

On the first day textured "building blocks" were prepared, either with a slab roller or by beating on the table and stretching like thick apfel-strudel pastry. These slabs need not be used flat, but can be draped, wrinkled, curved. When hard enough to hold shape the assembling and the fun begins. Rolls of softer clay are used as buffers to join slabs and absorb any tension caused by uneven drying.

The class became so involved during the initial demonstration, we were all deluging Michael with our differing advice — which piece to add, what to cut off, the angles, when to stop. He showed us how to follow imaginary lines meeting in space, how a detail added to one aspect needs a balance elsewhere. We learned a great deal about three dimensional composition.

Then our turn. Traps for beginners — too many differing textures; concentrating on one side instead of working in the round; unwillingness to cut up a nicely patterned slab to get

the shape needed; letting the piece get too busy — some plain surfaces work wonders. Wheelworkers at first felt guilty about the thickness of the clay, then later enjoyed their guilt. Cracks, fissures and surface flaws became interesting accents instead of horrible disasters. We were finding a much less stressful way of enjoying clay. True, it is difficult to get started with an infinity of possible choices of what to make, but each piece gradually takes on its own life and makes its own demands, while suggesting all sorts of variations for future sculptures.

Time stood still. Absorbed, we pursued our ideas and explored with immense satisfaction, lines and rhythms and the different relationships in these more open pieces. The traditional potters still harboured doubts. "But will they fire?" They did, magnificently.

Michael Dee stresses the usefulness of this free-form experience even for those aiming to make conventional pots — especially if they are feeling stale or formula-ridden. We certainly gained a new awareness of form and movement and a renewed joy in handling clay, a new vigour.

One thing the course could not cover in the time was how to finish the bisqued sculpture — a whole new study especially for the non-potters with no experience of oxides or glazing. Apart from George Koji's monoliths and Rick Rudd's black raku pieces, most of our acquaintance with abstract ceramic sculpture came from pictures.

As well as using oxides, how to manage gradations of colour and texture, how to emphasise or highlight some areas, how to get reflected highlights in hollows, exits and entrances? How to exploit the inside/outside dichotomy or the relationship and tensions between planes?

So much to explore, so many experiments to try — with this stimulating and most fruitful course Michael Dee opened up a whole new world of art and ceramics to us.

EDGES:

In Thought.
In History.
In Clay.

The Fourth International Ceramics Symposium of the *Institute for Ceramic History* will be held in Toronto, Canada from October 17 to 20, 1985. Five hundred participants will come together to probe the state of ceramic art through attendance at lectures by leading ceramists, historians and critics. There will be special presentations and tours of the city's public collections and contemporary exhibitions of ceramic art at over forty of the leading public art galleries, museums and private galleries.

The program is directed towards the recognition of ceramic artists past, present and future, who have challenged and changed the format of the vessel and the figure. The presentations will have an international focus. The general registration fee is \$165 Canadian. For application forms write to:

Ann Mortimer
The Fourth International
Ceramics Symposium
878 Yonge Street
Third Floor
Toronto, Ontario
Canada. M4W 2J1.



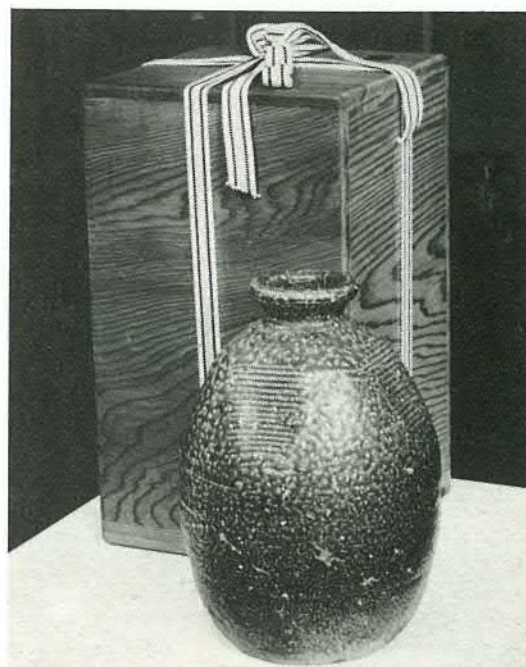
Peter Shearer at Pots of Ponsonby.
Photo: Ces Thomas.



Jeff Mincham
Fletcher Brownbuilt
Pottery Award
1985



A UNIQUE EXHIBITION



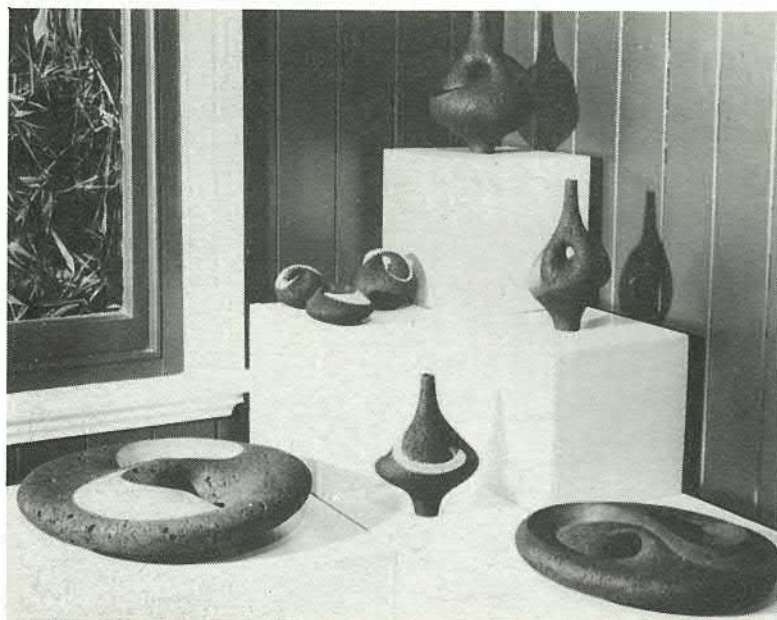
Ray Rogers

Carl McConnell



Beverley Luxton

Photos: Ces Thomas



Rick Rudd

Chester Nealie



NEW ZEALAND POTTER No. 2, 1985

AT POTS OF PONSONBY

The Fletcher Brownbuilt Award is undeniably New Zealand's and arguably one of the world's most valuable pottery awards. Concurrent with this year's exhibition at the Auckland War Memorial Museum, *Pots of Ponsonby* mounted an exhibition of current work from all the past winners of the Award.

They are John Anderson of Wellsford, 1977; Rick Rudd of Auckland, 1978; Carl Phillip McConnell of Queensland, 1979; Debbie Pointon of Wellington, 1980; Beverley Luxton of Auckland, 1981; Chester Nealie of South Kaipara Heads, 1982; Ray Rogers of Auckland, 1983 and Marilyn Wiseman of Auckland, 1984.

The list of exhibitors says something about New Zealand pottery. In an exhibition where entries are received from all over the world and are selected quite anonymously by a non-New Zealand judge, all but two of the nine winners have come from this country, and six of them from the Auckland/Northland region. This demonstrates a depth of talent of which we can be rightfully proud.

John Anderson

Debbie Pointon

Marilyn Wiseman

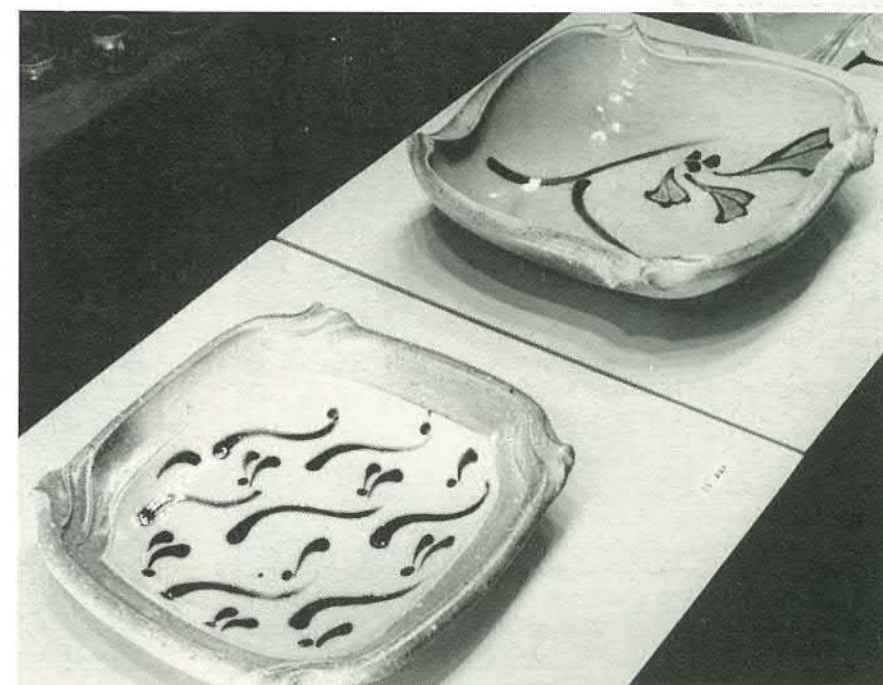
This exhibition also represents a significant milestone for *Pots of Ponsonby*.

Started in 1981 by a group of potters who wished to establish an outlet for their work and an environment where exhibitions could be held in sympathetic surroundings, the co-operative now enjoys an international reputation as a place to go for fine pottery. It is a measure of that reputation that they were able to mount this exhibition with the enthusiastic support of exhibitors of such prestige.

With 10 original members, the group now numbers 13 — 11 women and 2 men. Some members rely entirely on pottery for a living, others less so, but for all, the group is a means of sharing the challenges, disappointments and excitement that comes from working with earth, water, fire and air.

Members' work is represented in collections in New Zealand and overseas, including the contemporary NZ Pottery collection of the Auckland War Memorial Museum.

NEW ZEALAND POTTER No. 2, 1985



11

MOYRA ELLIOTT

High in the Waitakeres, Moyra's workshop blends in with the house and the surrounding bush — dark stained walls, cobble and brick paths and rhododendrons. Inside, it is "a pleasure to work in", spacious, light and airy, and with a gleaming hexagonal stainless steel kiln.

Here Moyra "when I can" works on the burnished pieces that have occupied her for the past 2-3 years. These first started after a visit to the south-west of the United States where she watched the Pueblo Indian women making pots and caring for their babies simultaneously.

"I had a six month old infant and was stuck in the groove of being a production potter up to my elbows in slurry. I was suffering withdrawal symptoms from a lack of exciting clay work. Then I realised these women coped magnificently with all the domestic side as well as making good pots. I decided that theirs was the way to feed my habit — dry hands you see."

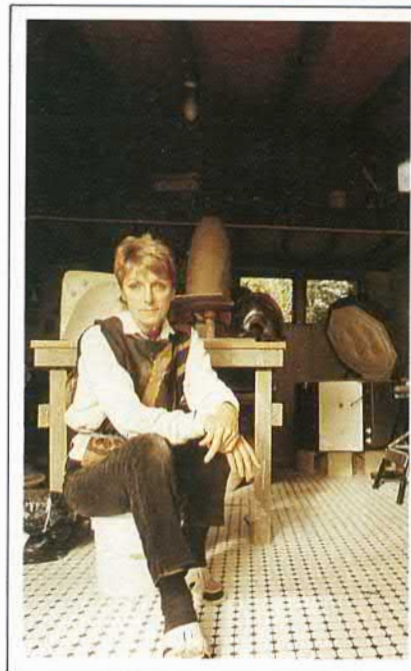
On returning to NZ the early pieces were very much Moyra-and-the-Navajos until a deliberate change in pot profile from rounded shapes to straight-sided severe bowls, meant that the colours and decoration virtually altered themselves. A further change occurred when a bowl, drying upside down, suddenly looked like a helmet. This form has since been her main interest.

Originally thrown and altered, the helmets are now press-moulded using SC80 and although 3 basic moulds are used, every helmet is different. They are burnished as they dry, using a variety of polished agates. Moyra thinks the timing of the burnishing is probably more important than what tool is used.

Terra Sigillata is applied. "I'm only using two colourants now, chrome and iron, the other colours I was using didn't feel right for the helmets and they made the pots dry very slowly."

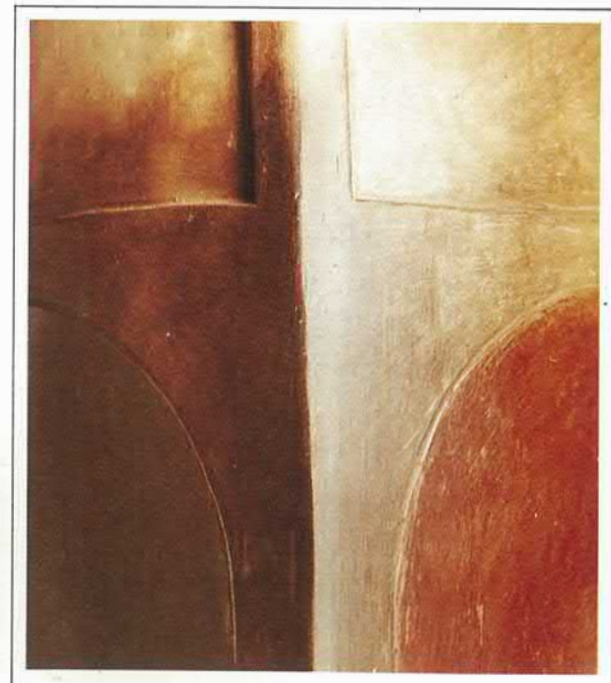
They are bisqued sitting in bowls of silica sand. The bisque temperature has varied and is still experimental. Arbitrarily at 1,000°C initially, the high mirror shine of the burnished surface was lost and firing temperature has been steadily reduced to its current 750°C. "This maintains the surface, but the softness means the clay is highly absorbent and I'm not so happy with the amount of black produced in the subsequent smoke fire as it obscures areas I'd prefer were more subtle. I intend gradually increasing temperature again to try for the right balance of surface shine with colour flashing."

By
Francis Turner,
Auckland



Moyra Elliott, and
her burnished helmet
forms, 26-28cms high.

Photos: H Sameshima



The smoking fire is done with sawdust in a loose brick box. This is another area of trial, finding the right sawdust. Too fine and the fire it engenders means a high risk of cracking; too coarse and the flashing isn't sufficiently subtle. The source and type of wood seems to matter a lot also. Highly resinous woods or that from furniture factories, which include glue, sometimes leave a sticky deposit.

Following the smoke firing the pieces are dusted off and, if the smoking has been satisfactory, treated with a polish. Otherwise they are rebisqued and the smoking repeated, though a few are lost this way through cracking during the re-firing. Output is presently small, but moulds for new shapes are in preparation and glaze tests are being made for different effects of surface.

EVOCATION

Ann Ambler at the Albany Village Pottery

By Shona Scott, NZ Herald

Photo: Howard S Williams

Ann Ambler's recent exhibition *Evocation* at Albany Village Pottery celebrates her assimilation of many Japanese ceramic traditions experienced last year during her second visit to Japan. During part of this return visit, Ann was privileged to be able to work briefly in the studio of master potter Takashi Nakazato in Karatsu. (see Potter 1984/2.)

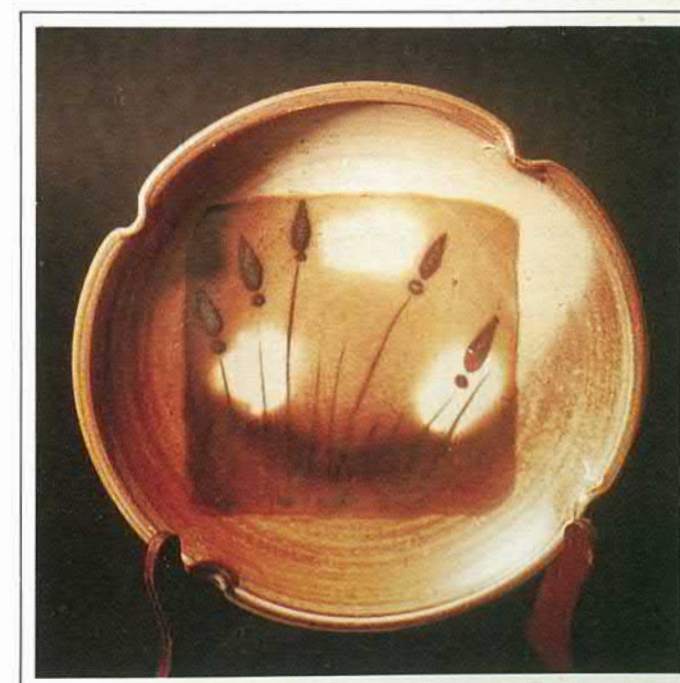
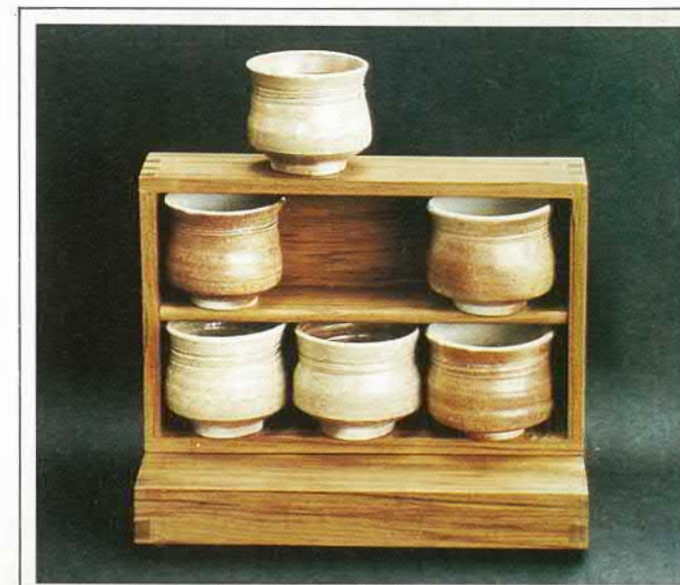
Wood firing is Ann's earthy, traditional and tiring method of producing a broad range of plates, bowls, lanterns, containers, vases and platters in soft, warm shades of great subtlety. Individual pieces do not compete for attention; each one will stand comfortably on its own or with company.

In a step that moves to incorporate elements of the Japanese culture of packaging, Ann has sought the skill of professional wood-crafter Robin Pendred of Warkworth to design and craft fine lidded boxes for a range of ceramic items.

The Japanese art of packaging, now a vanishing art, is one aspect of that country's cultural heritage that rivals its ceramic traditions. In earlier times the act of packaging had important meaning in itself, with symbolic value quite distinct from its practical function. For those imbued with the Japanese cultural traditions, packaging of precious objects becomes a ritual of purification, of distinguishing the contents of a package from all similar objects that have not been thus purified.

Thus, in this exhibition finely wrought presentation boxes of oak, rimu, kauri, totara or macrocarpa are matched with heavy moss-green silk and hand made paper to heighten and complete the value of the ceramic items they contain. On each plate the lip of the rim is slightly flattened at one edge to indicate a base, then a small design is impressed under the rim. (Cover photo.)

In this exhibition Ann has confirmed her position as one of our leading ceramists while offering new concepts of presentation that elevate her craft to art. Her belief, that the New Zealand potter can learn the Japanese traditions then enhance and extend those styles and techniques into new forms, is confirmed in *Evocation*.



OF COURSE YOU CAN MAKE YOUR OWN CLAY

By Royce McGlashen, Brightwater

Clay has always been a high interest for me right from the beginning of my career. I remember when I was quite young going for Sunday drives in the Nelson area with my father, finding this marvellous plastic material which we took home, dried, broke up, sieved and dried to the right consistency on plaster moulds.

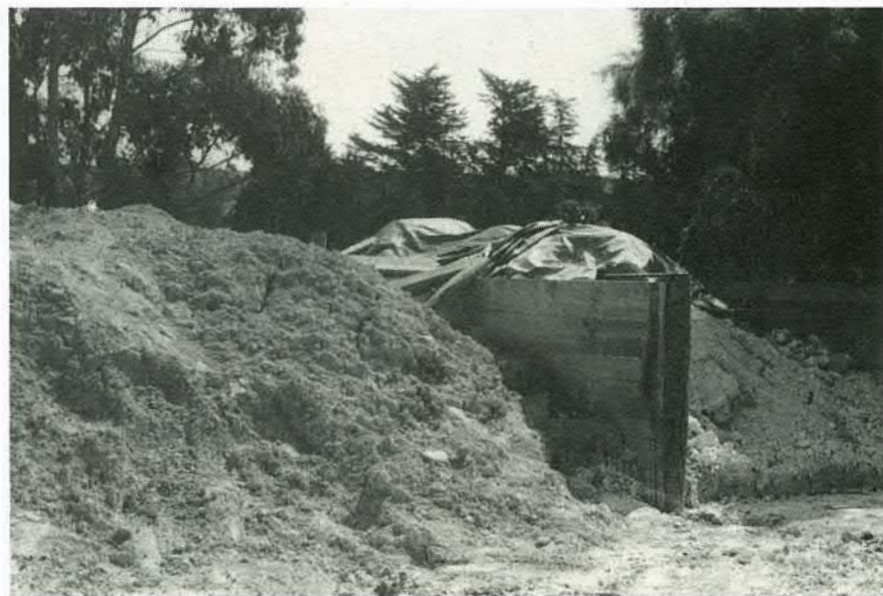
Since that time the pottery industry has developed and with it the associated industry of clay manufacture. Many potters today buy clay, using it from plastic bags with no understanding of its actual creation.

My early enjoyment of discovering clay has finally led to the production of clay at *Cob Cottage Pottery* in Brightwater. With this idea in mind I have bought equipment from various sources — it is difficult to obtain as the New Zealand ceramic industry is not very large. While I was gathering the equipment my interest in exploring the geological make-up of the Nelson area was continuing. I spent time investigating the possibilities of various materials.

This all changed my approach to my work. I considered more the type of clay I required for a particular pot, rather than compromising with what was available. You could decide on the properties required, dig the clay from the ground and process it to meet your particular needs.

In 1982 we built a clay shed at the back of the pottery and concrete floored clay bins for storing raw materials. We installed and extended the filter press, constructed a blunger and sieve and bought pumps and motors. After investigating the reliability of raw material sources and testing clay properties we were ready to begin.

The procedure involves weighing proportions of each clay in the formula, into a front-end loader to a prescribed ratio totalling 200 kgs. The loader is then tipped into the blunger which is half filled with water, and 15 - 30 minutes later the high speed blade (like an egg beater) has mixed it to a slurry. The slurry is run through a vibrating sieve to remove gravel, sticks and sand and then pumped into a 1,000



gallon storage tank with an agitator to hold the clay in suspension. From here it is pumped into a pressure tank and into the filter press.

The filter press is mounted on legs and consists of rails holding a series of plates (50 to 100 depending on the amount of clay required). Each filter plate is hollow, to receive a portion of slurry, and covered with a filter cloth. At one end is a queen plate, at the other, a large king plate which is screwed inwards to clamp all the plates together. Slurry is fed in through the centres of the plates, the water being forced out through the cloths leaving the clay behind. When the pump is started it takes a few minutes to fill the press with slurry and then the pressure builds up to 100 lbs/sq.inch. It takes 3 to 4 hours to press 1/2 tonne of clay, depending on the amount of pressure used and the water content of the slurry.

At the end of the pressing the pump is switched off and the valve at the queen end of the press is closed — the king plate is then unwound and the slabs of clay removed from between the filter plates. These slabs are pugged through a de-airing pugmill and bagged in 8.5 or 25 kg lots which are then stacked on pallets — 40 bags to the tonne.

Clay Bins. Raw clay is stored in these and can be kept dry so as all materials have similar water content.

Blungers tank and self cleaning sieve.



The clay body is quite dense with a low water content and relatively low iron content. It matures at cone 9-10 Shrinkage is 14% overall. Our glazes fit well and the body is durable in everyday use — an important factor for the consumer. At present we have one person employed to operate the clay plant — mixing and processing the clay to the finished state ready for sale. We produce two types of clay in line with our original purpose of supplying our own needs for a stoneware and a porcelain body. Recently we obtained a pan-mill which gives us a good range of equipment for manufacturing a variety of clay bodies for special purposes, in small or large quantities.

Many potters may consider this an expensive and complicated process, but there are other methods of drying clay which use little equipment, though they do require more time.

A shallow trench in the ground lined with synthetic cloth into which you pour your slip and leave it to dry in the summer sun is effective, taking 1 - 2 weeks.

Alternatively, a metre of synthetic cloth into which you pour a gallon or two of slip can be hung like a cheese in an airy place. This method may be a little uneven, but is effective for smaller quantities.



Filter press.

An article by Chris du Fresne in the *Potter* 12/2, 1970, *Make your own Filter Press*, is worth reading if you are interested in making your own clay. I am always happy to talk with anyone interested in clay making.

I hope that potters will attempt to make their own clay at some stage in their careers — it gives a greater understanding of the materials and a terrific feeling of satisfaction.

Filter press plate, showing centre hole for slurry feed, filter cloth and gasket cloth, backing grooves and water outlet. Pressed cakes of clay at bottom.

Filter, pug mill and bagged clay.



The Philips Studio Glass Award 1985

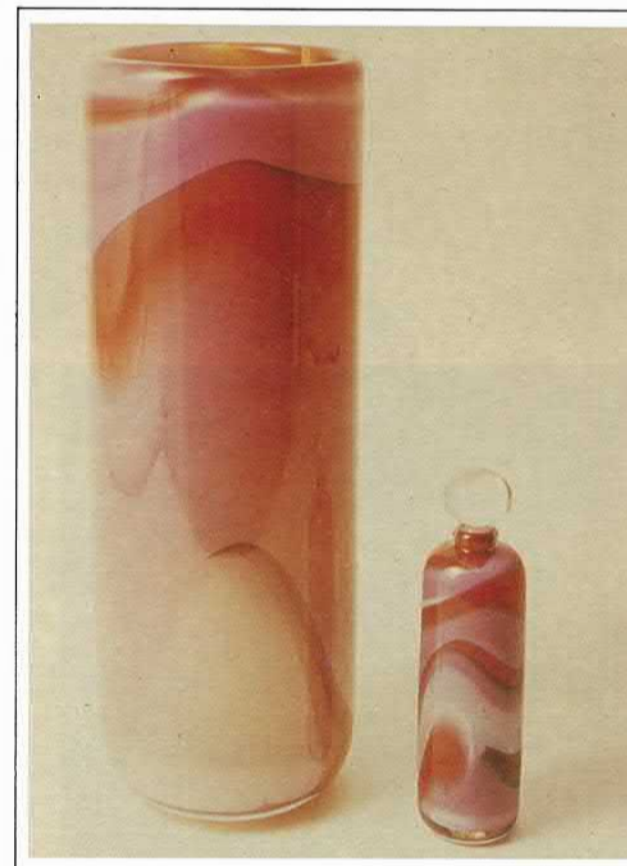
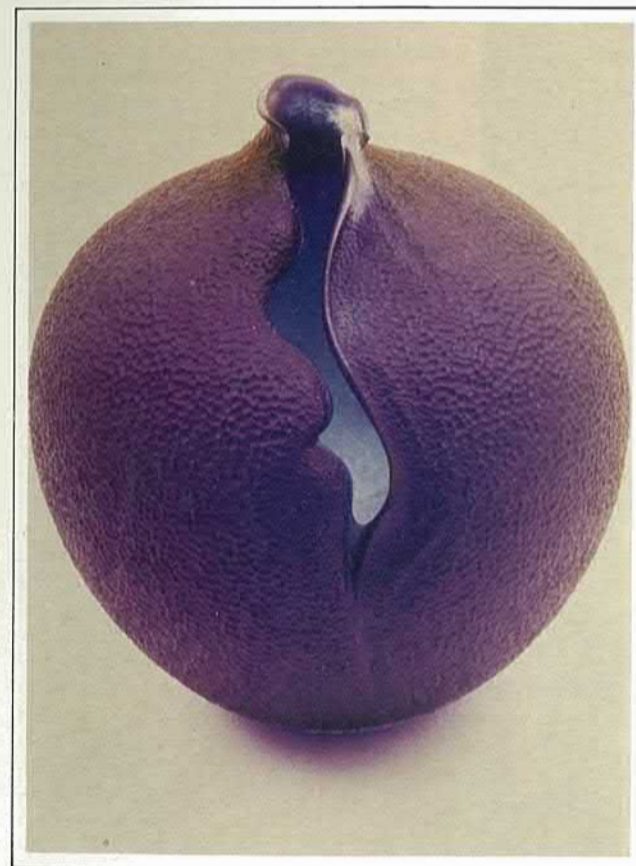
Auckland War Memorial Museum

Photos: George Kolap

"Variations", Award Winner,
John Abramczyk, Auckland

Highly Commended, John Abbott, Auckland

"Dragon Skin Vessel", Highly Commended,
Gary Nash, Auckland



New Zealand Potter is grateful for a generous grant
from Winstone Quarries Ltd towards publication costs.



PHILIPS STUDIO GLASS AWARD 1985.

By Sam Halstead, Albany.

Many readers of this magazine will either have been to, or been in *Studio Glass '83*. It was this country's first major glass exhibition and is still considered by many to have been the best. The show was staged in the *Auckland Museum Exhibition Hall* which had been remodelled by NZSAG (Society of Artists in Glass) members into a t-shaped gallery. The flat glass was hung in made-to-measure holes in the walls and each panel lit from behind. The hot glass was arranged over white boxes and spot lit from all angles. The first *Philips Award* show was in 1984 at the same venue and with a similar layout.

The *Philips Studio Glass Award 1985* was sort of "Son of *Studio Glass '83*" in that the success of that first show encouraged *Philips NZ Ltd* to enter into a reviewable deal to sponsor similar annual events.

Because many people were somewhat disappointed with this year's show, a look back to the successful '83 show would be useful for comparison.

The first difference is the obvious one of quantity. The 1983 show was a free-for-all on which any NZSAG member could exhibit. There were 146 works from 31 craftspeople on display and it was almost impossible to take it all in. The 1984 show, selected and judged by guest artist Maureen Cahill, boasted 73 pieces from 39 artists and this year's selection was down to 43 works from 29 artists.

The second difference is that the 1983 show bowled everyone over because it dramatically showed what amazing technical and artistic advances had been made in the medium in the preceding few months. The greater proportion of the work was for the first time, of international quality. Individual differences of style were more marked than before and there was celebration amongst exhibitors, of each other's achievements, especially in hot glass with Garry Nash, John Croucher, Ann Robinson and Peter Raos displaying unforgettable work. It is unfair to expect that degree of advancement in subsequent shows, because that was really the end of a developmental phase after which the craft could be expected to maintain its new found high standards.

Thirdly, I would have to go for the presence (or absence) of preselection and judging as being another major difference. Normally judges, selectors and reviewers are answerable to nobody and are hardly ever publicly questioned about their decisions. Al-

though their activities are subsidiary to the creative act, they collectively and singly hold considerable influence over exhibition content, exhibition patronage and most importantly, the careers and reputations of artists. Because the process of selection and judging is a huge factor in the appearance and success of an exhibition it should also be up for review along with the creative content.

The *Philips Studio Glass Award 1985* was preselected by James Mack, Director of the *Dowse Art Museum* in Lower Hutt, and judged by Klaus Moje who is currently Head of the glass department at *Canberra School of Art*.

The criteria for selection and judging were "originality, innovation and artistic merit". Personally, I don't see how a piece could have artistic merit without being original or innovative. There is not much more than a subtle difference between these last two qualities anyway. Does a selector really look at a work and say "Hmmm, This certainly scores high for artistic merit and originality, but I will have to discard it — it's only 40% innovative."? I think not.

Some people feel that these sorts of guidelines encourage novelties. It is fine to give criteria for theme shows like *The Great New Zealand Box Show*, but for an annual single-medium show like this, craftspeople should be encouraged to do what they like doing most. For instance, one glassblower has been working for months at refining a very fluid vase shape to the point where he is finding expression in small variations on a theme. The work is subtle and he is known for it. Given the demand to be "Innovative" he appears to have hedged his bets and manufactured up a tongue-in-cheek sculpture which was selected for the show, while the work of his heart was relegated back to the cardboard box. I hope it is not possible that he could have missed selection, had he not made something novel.

A follow-on problem is that glass patrons will have seen his piece on display and drawn wrong conclusions about the directions in his work. In this system an artist of stature is good enough to create original works, but allowed no say as to which of them is exhibited. We don't get to see the pieces that were rejected, which makes us realise that there are quite a few disappointed glass artists out there. Will they try harder next year or not try

at all? And if they do try harder, what will they be trying harder to do?

By their nature true works of art are honest, autobiographical and divergent expressions or communications. If original, expressive works of art must be compared to each other they can only really be judged on their artistic merit and that is almost impossible to quantify or prove. Doesn't Art transcend all formulae? What we really expect a selector to do is weed out the amateurish, the badly made, the badly designed, the derivative and the trite, while putting his or her own taste on hold. Then it's over to the judge.

An annual show like this is a useful chance to review the development of individual glass artists as well as to gauge the progress of the craft in NZ. This show can not deliver that opportunity while there is a chance that some good artists and some good work could be excluded. The alternative, which is to open it up to all-comers, could prove embarrassing because some obviously substandard, archaic or derivative work could claim space alongside works of real merit. There must be a sieve somewhere and I can't help feeling that the answer lies with the glass artists themselves. Collectively their knowledge is second to none. Surely the members or executive of NZSAG could be trusted to nominate a small selection panel from within their ranks and either give them some meaningful criteria that remain the same every year, or just leave them to it. It would also be interesting to discover what the Artists' choice is in each exhibition. The judgement of one's peers is likely to be the toughest and best informed and therefore the most meaningful.

In summary, this was a good but not a great show. It could have been bigger, but the absence for various reasons, of some of the more adventurous stalwarts of the glass scene is partly to blame for that. The contributions from John Croucher, Ann Robinson, David Clegg, James Walker and Ken Cooke could all have been exciting.

Not all exhibitors were in their best form and some of those who were may be wondering if anyone noticed. We should be able to expect that in lots of different ways this show will provoke and motivate the glass artists of NZ.

All credit to *Philips NZ* for the slick presentation of the show and the Award, and most of all, as they say on Oscar night, for making it all possible. Don't miss the 1986 show — it could be a beaut.

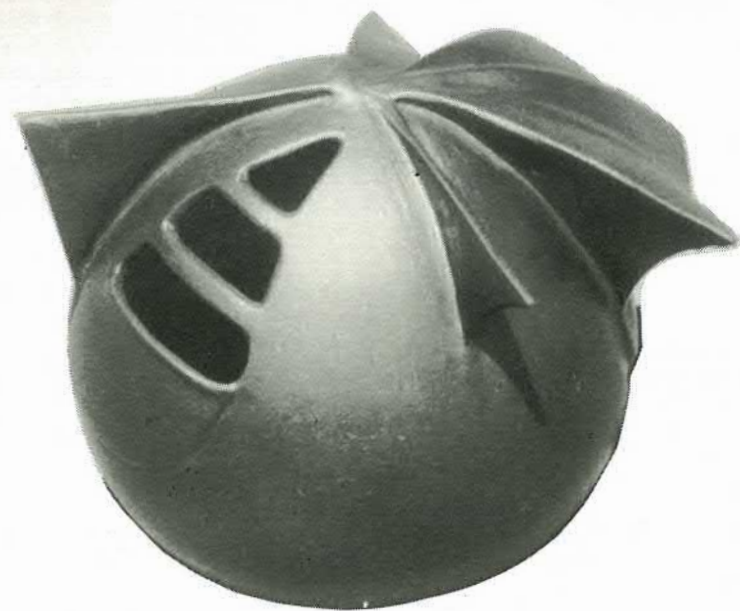
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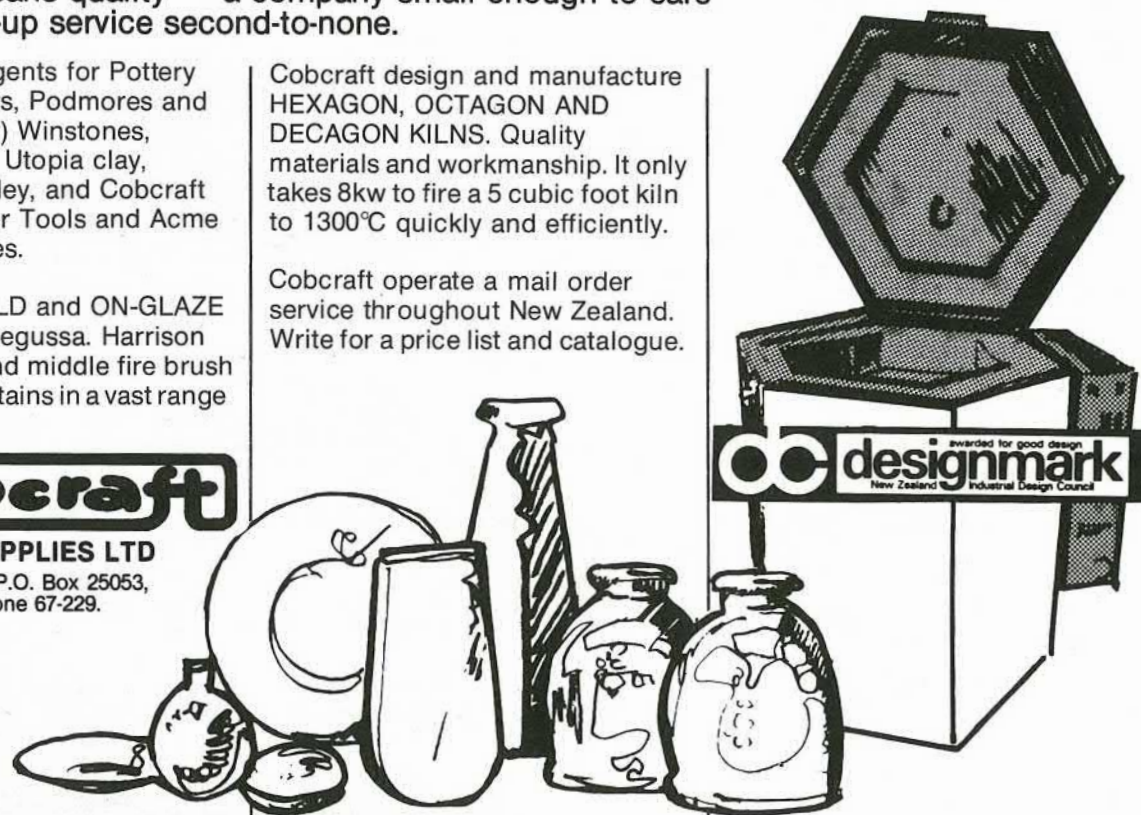
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THEO SCHOON

IMPRESSED DECORATION OF CLAY

Introduction and photographs by Steve Rumsey, Auckland.

Theo Schoon came to New Zealand from Indonesia in 1937.

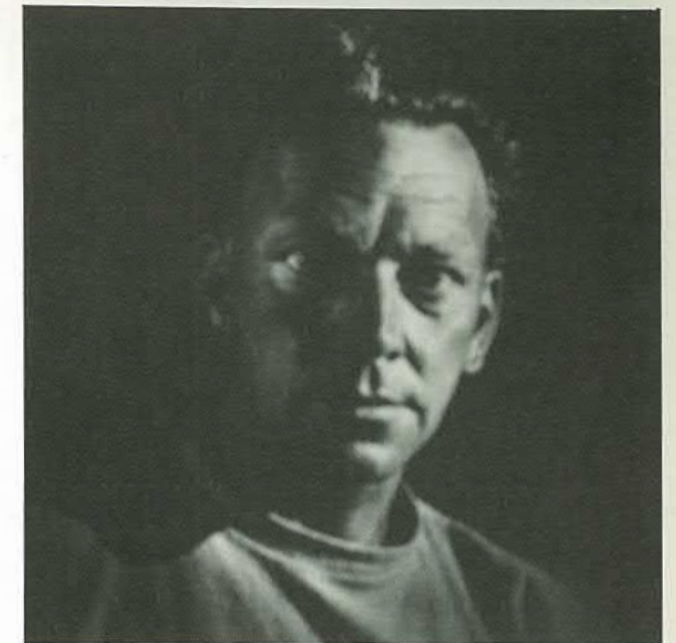
To his surprise he discovered here a fascinating Maori culture. Its heritage of art was also its main permanent means of historic record — there was traditionally no written Maori language. This "art-language", rich in abstract symbolism and highly developed sense of design excited the young artist, who had been born among the aesthetic exuberance of Javanese and Balinese cultures, educated in Europe and significantly influenced by the teachings and activities of the Bauhaus.

He subsequently spent the best part of a lifetime seeking out Maori art (public awareness of Maori cave drawings is largely due to his dedication and enthusiasm) studying it, unravelling its underlying structure and finally developing his own unique sense of abstract design in relation to it. His impact of the New Zealand art scene during the 1950s and '60s was considerable and our art heritage is the richer for it.

This article on impressed decoration of clay deals with but one small aspect of his many-faceted activities in a variety of art media, and for a more rounded view I have included some photos not directly related to this present pottery theme.

Though better known as a painter, print maker and master of graphic design; as a carver of gourds, as a superlative sculptor in greenstone, as an exponent of Balinese dance and costuming, as a perceptive photographer ... his activity in ceramics is perhaps less well known. However, his life-long interest in this area is not altogether surprising as pottery had been the family business — his father built up thriving industrial potteries in both Java and Bali before the Second World War.

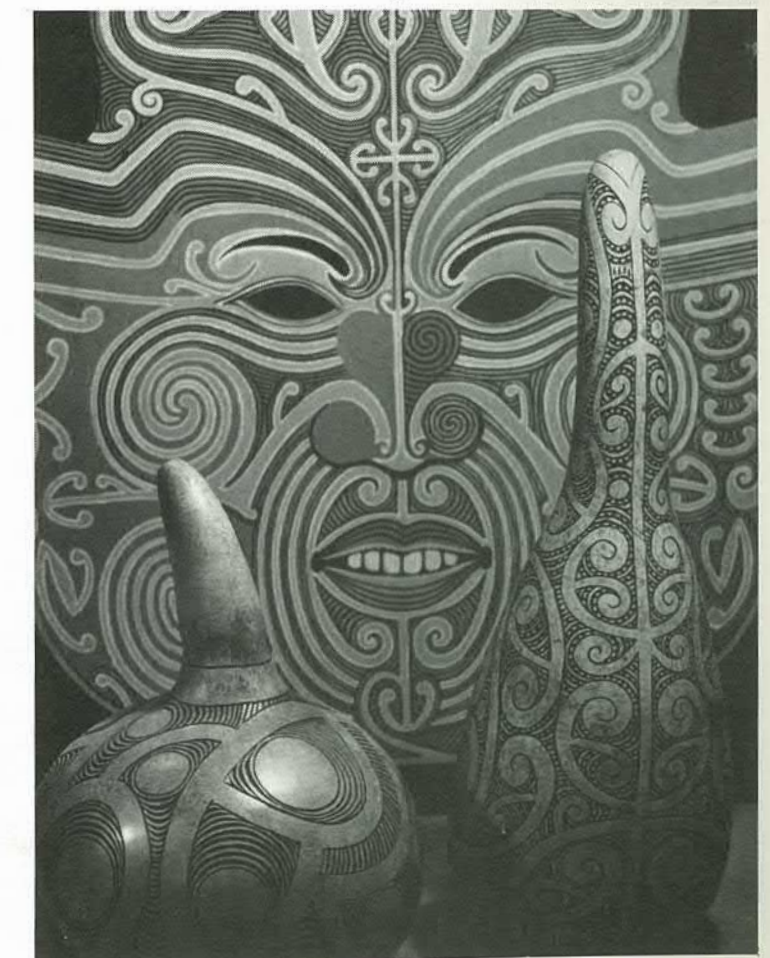
In recent years Theo has returned to clay as a medium of aesthetic expression. The following comments are in his own words.



Theo Schoon, 1952.



A study of the design structure of Maori tattoo, with carved gourds — right, koru motif; left, Schoon motif.



My Work with Plaster Stamps. Theo Schoon.

There were two factors which determined the nature and character of my recent work with plaster stamps in ceramics. The first was a training in Holland in graphic design, the second was a strong influence by the legacy of the *Bauhaus*.

All arts and crafts of any consequence of the last fifty years owe a debt to this legacy. Among its many major contributions to modern art has been a process of incisive analysis and synthesis which brings real understanding and clarity to the study of the structure of art. Without this event in art, the exploration of the art of mankind on a global scale, would have been impossible. The art of other races and cultures can only be assimilated intelligently with the tools the *Bauhaus* provided.

Practising artists and designers are ill-served by the babble of those art historians who have remained totally ignorant of this all-important revolution in art.

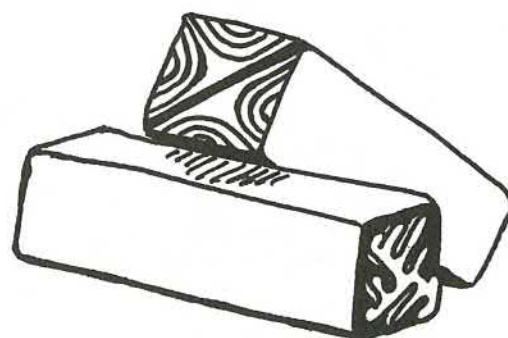
For many modern designers — and myself — these dual factors of analysis and synthesis have played a major role in the study and assimilation of many art forms which have so far remained outside the realm of academic European art. Only the strictly formal abstract artists have been able to crack the codes of this wide range of man's art, geographically as well as in the context of time. The *Bauhaus* approach brings a sharper understanding of this thing called style, as well as aesthetics. Whenever art forms, trends or theories of the last few decades have ignored these fundamental and universal factors in art, they have been sawing off the crutch they stand on!

I have digested and absorbed many forms of primitive art, not in order to become a pseudo primitive (that would only be another form of plagiarism), but to gain understanding. It is the understanding gained that really matters, so that some or all of it can be given new life in one way or another, in a really valid and coherent way. All art forms that have gone into decline can be re-vitalised if and when desired.

It is from this background that I arrived at a systematic design for stamp decoration. An ever growing number of patterns evolved which would be related in such a way that they could be used in any number of combinations, so that each composition would be one of a kind.



Stamping the clay with carved plaster block.

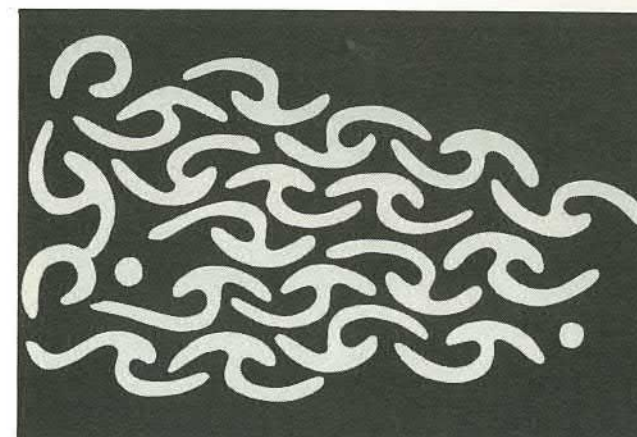


Photos: Steve Rumsey

Things have to be learned at every stage of their making, from the first pencil drawings on paper, to their carving in plaster blocks, and then finally what they do when pushed into the clay. To use the positive aspect of a design or the negative, or both. Only practise can reveal the potential of what you have. When I say this work was done systematically, it does not mean that it was in any way pre-conceived. Some combinations or patterns work, and others don't. It is a matter of finding out why they work or why they don't. When this is carefully analysed there emerges what I call a systematic law. Once you grasp its implications, you can build or enlarge upon it. It has evolved to its present form intermittently, over a period of two decades; most of my early designs were discarded.

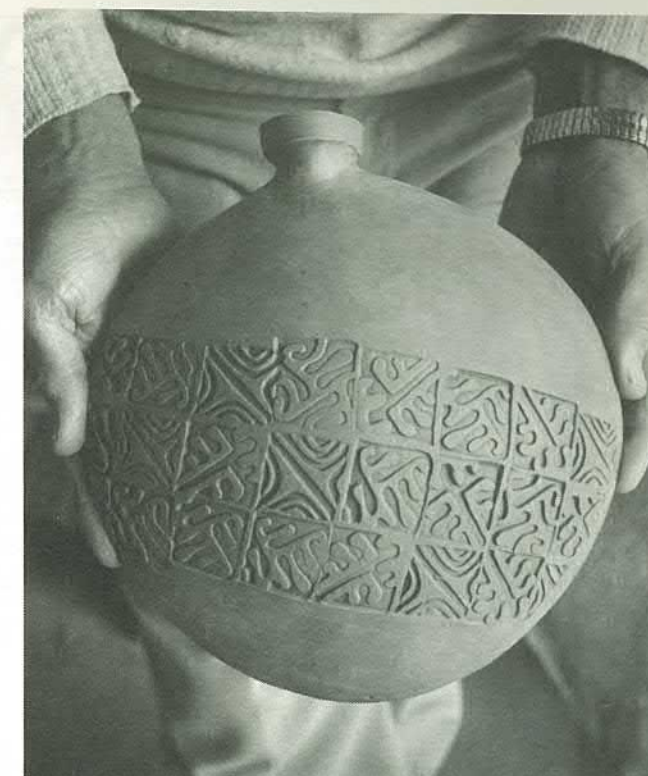
In painting or graphic design I usually proceed with the simplest fundamental design ingredients, whereas my stamp decorations are conceived according to the principles of their physical structure. After gaining an understanding of design structure in Maori tattoo, I could evolve some sort of richly textured tattoo style of my own, which owed nothing to its original source. Something old has been made new, in a legitimate and authentically creative adventure.

In my lifetime I have gravitated more to potters than to my own tribe of painters, because I liked their earthy sanity and unpretentious aesthetics. They seem to have a better instinctive taste, which helps to sift and sort the superb from the ridiculous.



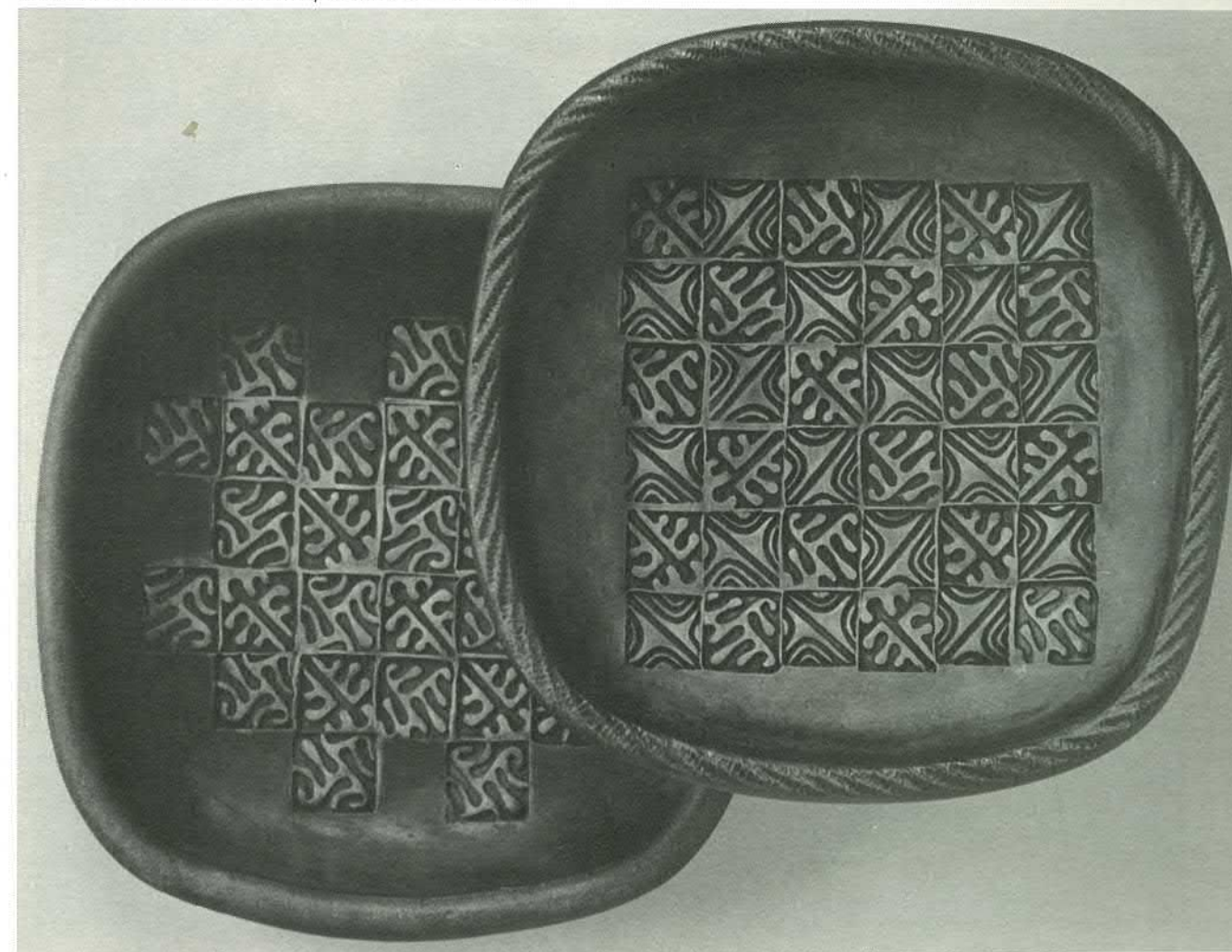
Schoon pattern based on the design structure of Maori tattoo.

TAO SCHOON DIED IN SYDNEY, 14TH JULY 1985



Stamped slab incorporated in press-moulded bottle.

Press-moulded dishes were stamped while in the mould.



New Zealand Pottery makes it in London

by Nicola Holmes, London

The quality and originality of New Zealand pottery is fast becoming a popular drawcard in the heart of London. The reason is *Kiwifruits*, a craft shop dedicated to New Zealand-made products, located in London's Covent Garden.

Under the guiding hand of Lyn Milne, formerly of Christchurch, *Kiwifruits* has been operating just 15 months. Lyn reports she is very optimistic about the reception New Zealand pottery, woollen goods, native timberware and foods have received. Souvenirs are out — all the emphasis is on high quality, hand-crafted originals.

"My aim is to highlight the artistic side of New Zealand which is so little known in the UK because sporting achievements, lamb and butter usually take the headlines over here," says Lyn.

Already she has a group of 'regulars' who pop in to check up on the latest arrivals. Some are New Zealanders residing in London who are keen to keep up with new developments at home, while others are English fans who have been delighted by the originality displayed by New Zealand potters. New Zealanders travelling through have also found *Kiwifruits* a popular location to choose distinctively New Zealand gifts for their British hosts.

Amongst her line-up, Lyn displays a wide range of domestic and decorative pottery, selected by her Auckland agent, Peter Thomas. Work by Patti Meads, Anneke Borren, Keith Blight, Cecilia Parkinson, David Brokenshire, Alan Kestle, Rick Rudd, Jill Totty and Michael Lucas are just some of the potters whose craft and style now has a following in London.

Initially, British buyers were reluctant to think of pottery as a quality product. Lyn believes this is because the English have a long history of associating quality with fine porcelain and bone china. On the other hand, she is also aware of a definite trend to individual crafts which are not mass produced. Customers want quality, originality and value for money, and the variety of New Zealand pottery — in all price ranges — seems to fill that bill.



Subtle colourings common in porcelain and china have been remarked upon in the glazes of New Zealand-produced items. Sea greens, blues and dusky pinks are three popular tonings and recently Lyn had silk scarves of similar shades displayed in tandem with pottery items.

Part of Lyn's welcome to new customers is a 'Browsers Welcome' sign in the front window. "Many people feel inhibited about entering a small shop and I make an effort to reach out to them so they'll feel comfortable about browsing. It's really the only way customers can find out more about the varied range of pottery New Zealand

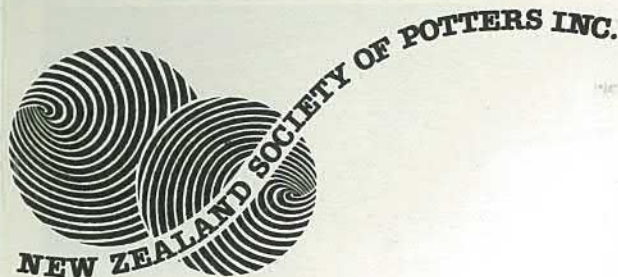
has to offer."

The *Kiwifruits* foray is Lyn's first solo venture into the world of business and some eight months were spent in organising the opening in July 1983. Plenty of advice and support has come from Fiona Thompson of the New Zealand Crafts Council, and Trade and Industry officials at New Zealand House, London. Enthusiasm is almost too tame a word to describe Lyn's feelings about making *Kiwifruits* succeed: "Having faith in hand-made products from my own home country is half the battle and I believe New Zealand potters should step out and be proud of their craftsmanship."



Photographs: Lyn Milne and New Zealand crafts in her shop *Kiwifruits*, Covent Garden, London.





Goods and Services Tax

The Society's submission on Goods and Services Tax produced by the standing committee has been accepted and considered by the Governments Brash committee. The Brash committee's recommendations to government have been for a \$25,000 exemption level. This fell in the middle of the Society's recommendations and will perpetuate the worst features of the sales tax regulations now in effect. The society will be making another submission on your behalf later this year. Your local delegate has a copy of the society's submission, so it is important that you contact them with any comment you may have. After all GST will effect all of us. John Crawford, President. P.O. Box 619, Nelson.

John's new phone number is Granity 28-107



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Exhibition Season: 13-28 October

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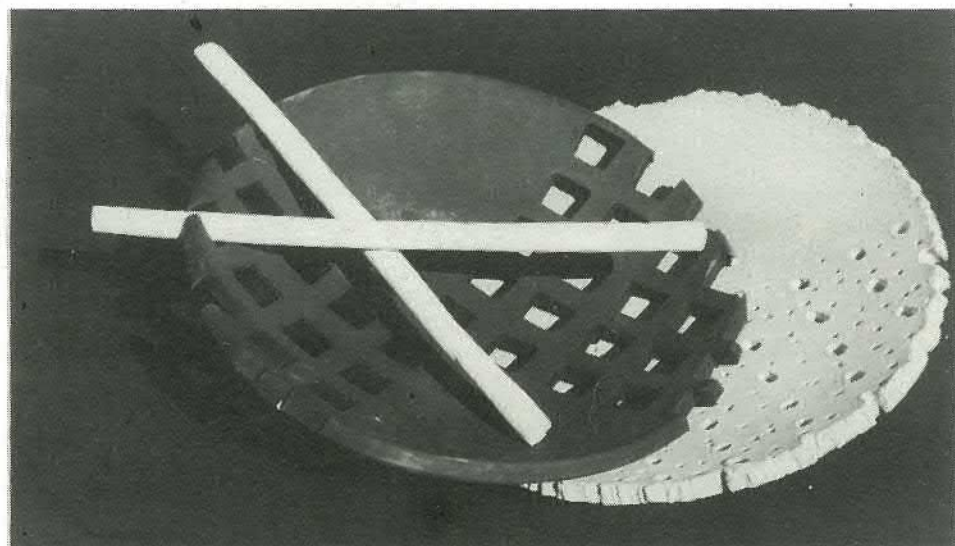
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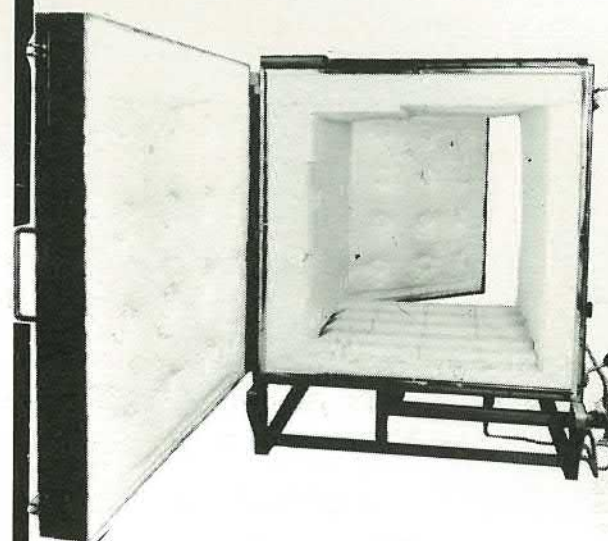
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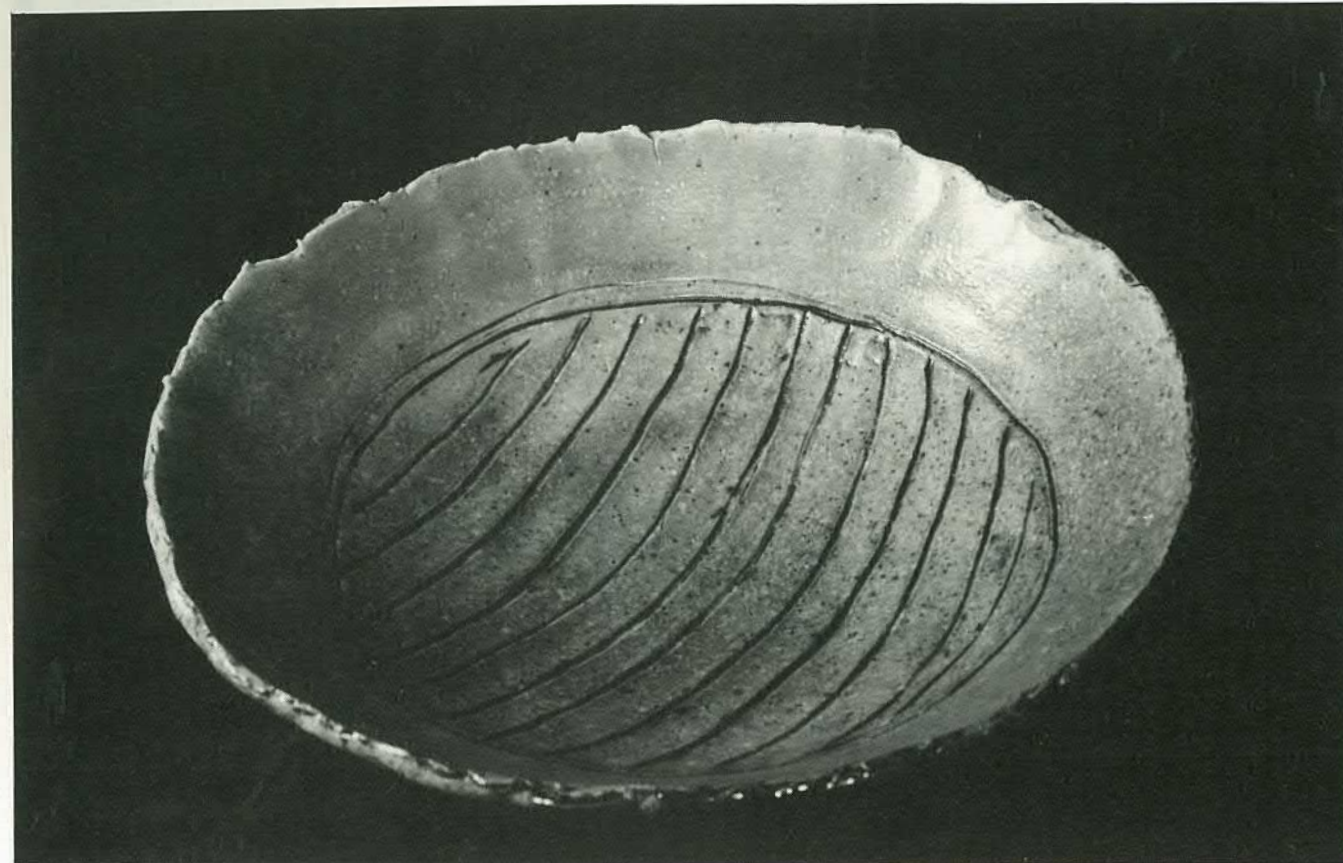
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The Suter Gallery, Nelson

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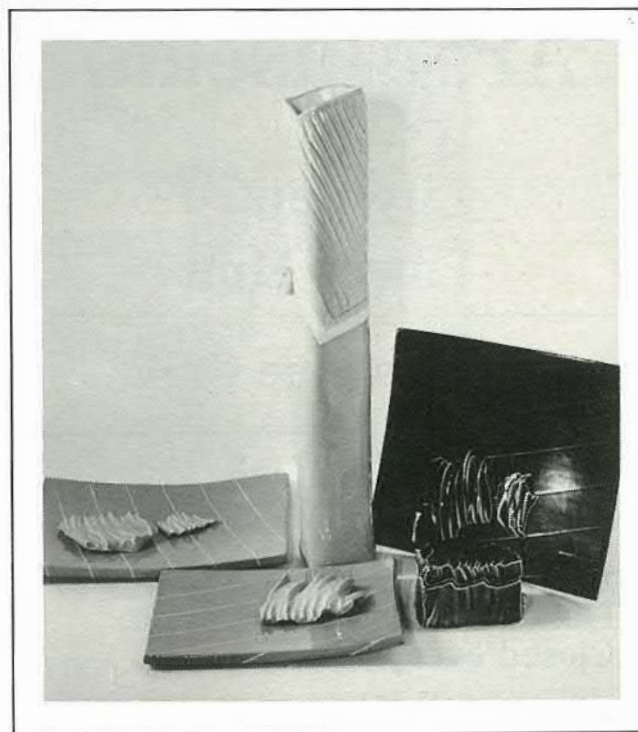


Winner: Carol Crombie. Press moulded, brine soaked and wood fired bowl

Photos: Michael McArthur

David Griffith

Royce McGlashen, Teapots, porcelain

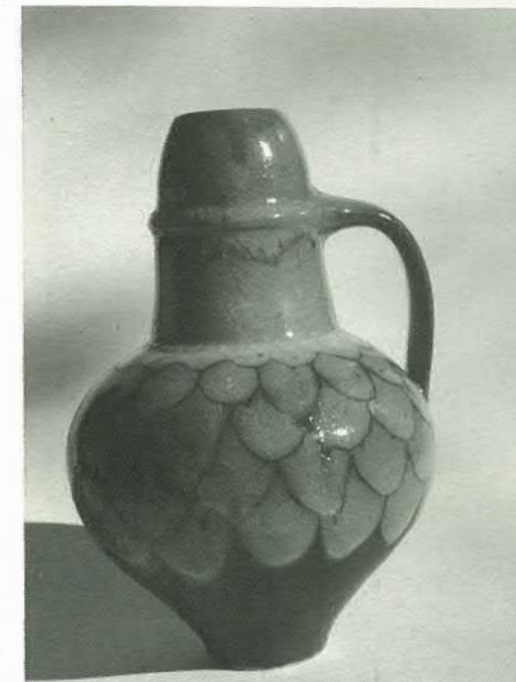


NEW ZEALAND POTTER No. 2, 1985

AWARD EXHIBITION,

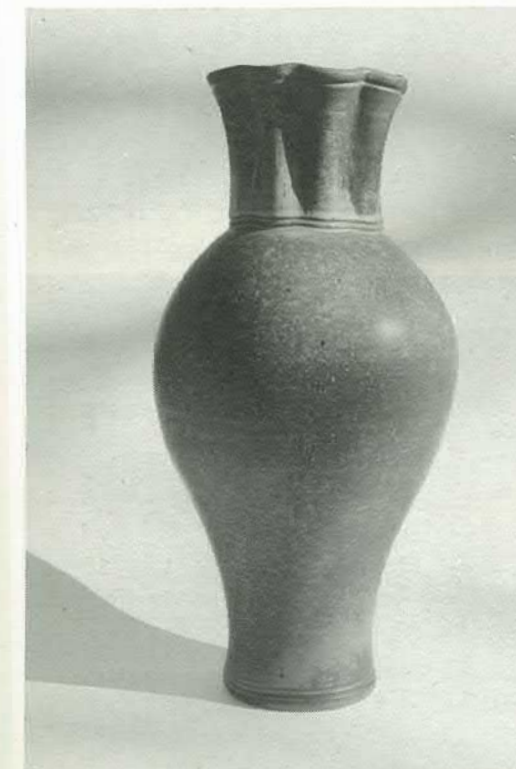
A further \$200 award was sponsored by the Suter Art Gallery.

Photos: Julian Bowron

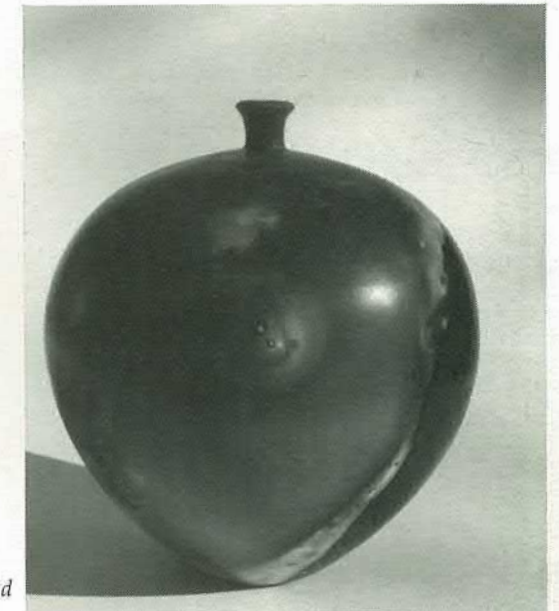


Vic Evans

Ross Richards, \$200 merit award



NEW ZEALAND POTTER No. 2, 1985



Peter Gibbs, Pit fired

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LYNNE AND DAVID GRIFFITH

By Peter Gibbs, Nelson

Lynne and David Griffith live in suburban Nelson, perched on a hillside overlooking Tahunu Beach and Tasman Bay. The story of their development is fairly typical of dozens of potters throughout the country. When Lynne Griffith began making pots in 1974, her husband David undertook a few furtive raids to investigate the pottery equipment before he too jumped in. The couple commuted across Nelson to *Craft Potters*, Nelson's first workshop group, before joining the steering committee setting up the city-based *Community Potters* group in 1977.

Soon after, David got out from behind his office desk and began producing a range of domestic ware. In 1981, two major influences caused him to move into different areas. Marc Sauvage, an Australian potter who worked in Nelson during 1981 introduced him to strictly ordered geometric forms, with strong colour in the form of low temperature commercial glazes. In the same year, Len Castle visited Nelson, demonstrating direct and rapid hand building techniques.

For some time David experimented with applying the glaze in precise stripes and geometric patterns then firing a third time in sawdust — contrasting the rigidly imposed designs with the random effects of sawdust firing. His recent pieces have relied on solid areas of glaze with the geometric contrasts much less dominant. This work uses white clay (SC80) bisqued to 1150°C, then glazed at 970°C, with bright, vibrant, commercially mixed glazes.

Although this work is the most exciting area he works in, David still gains satisfaction from seeing rows of mugs and casseroles, and this work still occupies over 90% of his production. This domestic ware is fired at 1280°C in two electric kilns which operate almost constantly.

Lynne's involvement in pottery has declined in favour of photography. Her work, particularly craft photographs, has appeared in a number of New Zealand publications.

When not seated behind a wheel, David is involved in *Venturer Scouts*, and is currently president of the *Nelson Potters Association*.



David and Lynne with William and Oliver. Photo: Jim Harding

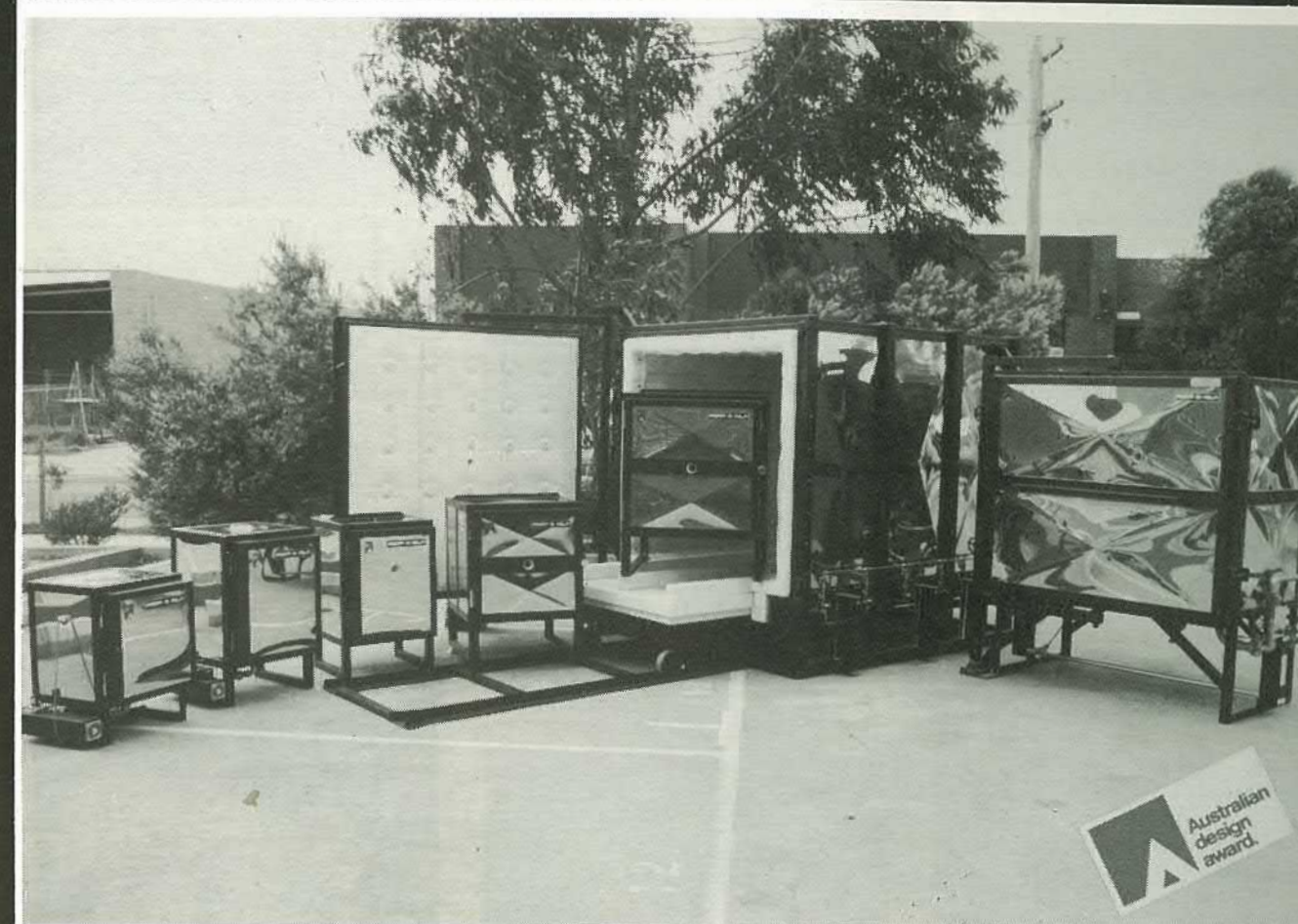


David's pots, Lynne's photographs.



NEW ZEALAND POTTER No. 2, 1985

PORT-O-KILN COMES TO NEW ZEALAND!



From left to right: China Painter; Model 2000 Ceramics Kiln; Chameleon (approx. 2 c.f. Stoneware Kiln) Model 40 (Stoneware); Model 80 (Stoneware); 72 c.f. trolley; 18 c.f. model.

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WAIRAU VALLEY SPECIAL SCHOOL

By Howard S Williams

Photos: Howard S Williams

"A real success story" is the way Glenfield College people describe their special pottery class of IHC children brought in by bus once a week from the Wairau Valley Special School. This class was started as an experiment for one term at the beginning of 1984, but due largely to the dedication of its pottery tutor Jill Dunn, and the obvious enthusiasm of the students, it has continued ever since. Unfortunately lack of money has cut back the operation to some extent.



Bill

The 15 children are aged between 14-19; when they turn 20 they leave the special school and most find employment at the Sheltered Workshop. Two of their tutors come with them each week for a 1 1/4 hour clay session with Jill Dunn, after which they go to a wood-working class.

Half the costs are paid by the government and half by those of the parents who are able — or willing. Jill's time is paid by Glenfield College. The class was started as a pilot scheme and from its success it should be extended to at least 2 hours, twice a week and starting with younger children.

The children enjoy it thoroughly, right from the moment they step off the bus — excited to be attending a normal school and being allowed to queue with ordinary children to buy their lunches. In return, the Glenfield College students accept these special entrants readily and show real interest in what goes on in the pottery rooms.

The students talk about their next



Jill Dunn



Lawrence



Mark



Mark

pottery class all week, planning what they will make and what went wrong the last time. Children who at most times have a concentration span of perhaps ten minutes will become totally absorbed in their clay work for the whole 1 1/4 hours, even if working on only one piece.

Contrary to some initial concern there have been few of the clay/child problems often expected in ordinary schools — no clay has ever been used as missiles and the room remains re-



Debra

markably clean and tidy. Lack of physical co-ordination does provide some frustration for the students, and at times good-natured chaffing when no-so-nimble fingers and clay with a mind of its own provide some humorous situations. Jill has become adept at solving problems most pottery teachers never encounter, often with the help of Paulus Behrenson's book *Play with Clay*. Because of these problems the wheel is not often used, though all students are encouraged to try; most of the work is handbuilt.

"Glazing time can be an experience," says Jill. "I asked one boy to stir a pot of glaze and he would have happily stirred for 7 hours. We wax the bases of bisqued pieces and the glaze is often dripped on with a stick. Dipping or brushing on glaze can be a problem, as even dextrous potters well know. We use only 2 glazes, a white and an iron brown. More often we use oxide-coloured clays and once-fire in the electric kiln."

At the beginning the students had great difficulty in visualising the end product — when pieces came out of the kiln they could not remember what their own looked like and sometimes a "neat" pot would be claimed by everyone in the class. Every piece is now checked for its maker's mark as soon as it is made, but another way around this was for the class to produce a joint effort and a mural for the school was the result. "Our mural", proudly, with no concern for who made which individual part.

At the end of the year many of the students had developed a good grasp of what was happening and started to pre-plan what they wanted to make, taking into consideration their own limitations. Now, they often break up their finished work if they are not satisfied with their own evaluation of the result.

Enthusiasm runs high. For last Christmas Jill decided to have the class roll out clay and using biscuit cutters, make decorations for a Christmas tree. She went out for 20 minutes to load the kiln and on her return found the classroom rapidly disappearing under mountains of "biscuits" — the clay store almost empty!

Coiling is usually done around some sort of found former. With some students new pots are coiled around half dried ones, or a third coiled around yet again — the *doing* is more important than the finished object. Others are totally concerned with the object and must have successfully completed pots to proudly take home.

Once a double pot almost came through the firing unscathed. The metal ring being used as a former had been totally covered by meticulous coil work inside as well as out. "Must admit, I thought it felt heavy when I placed it in the kiln!"

Whatever the results, the therapy of clay work has proved invaluable to these students. The thrill of creating is there. Their caring for each other is spectacular and they each help the even less able, whenever physical difficulties become too obstructive. A successful pot or sculpture to take home is a real achievement and the students' unbounded delight makes all the effort Jill puts into her classes very rewarding. She and her helpers from the special school just wish the Education Department's money would stretch further to augment the time and materials available for this most worthwhile venture.

"You don't own land. The land owns you and replaces you when you are worn out." Old Gaelic proverb.



Jill Dunn with Richard



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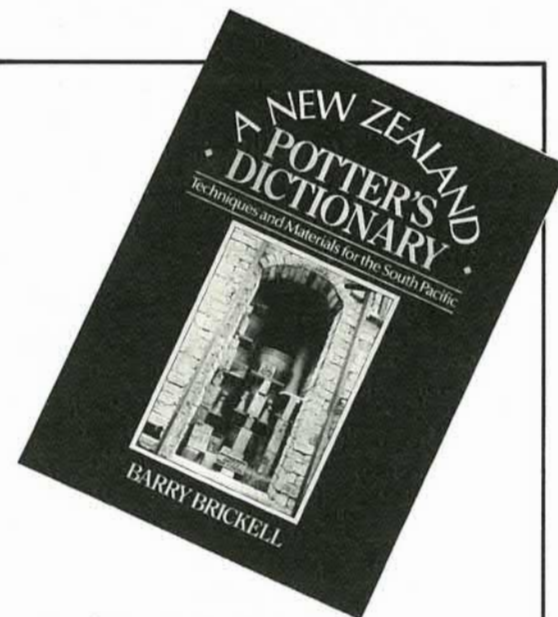
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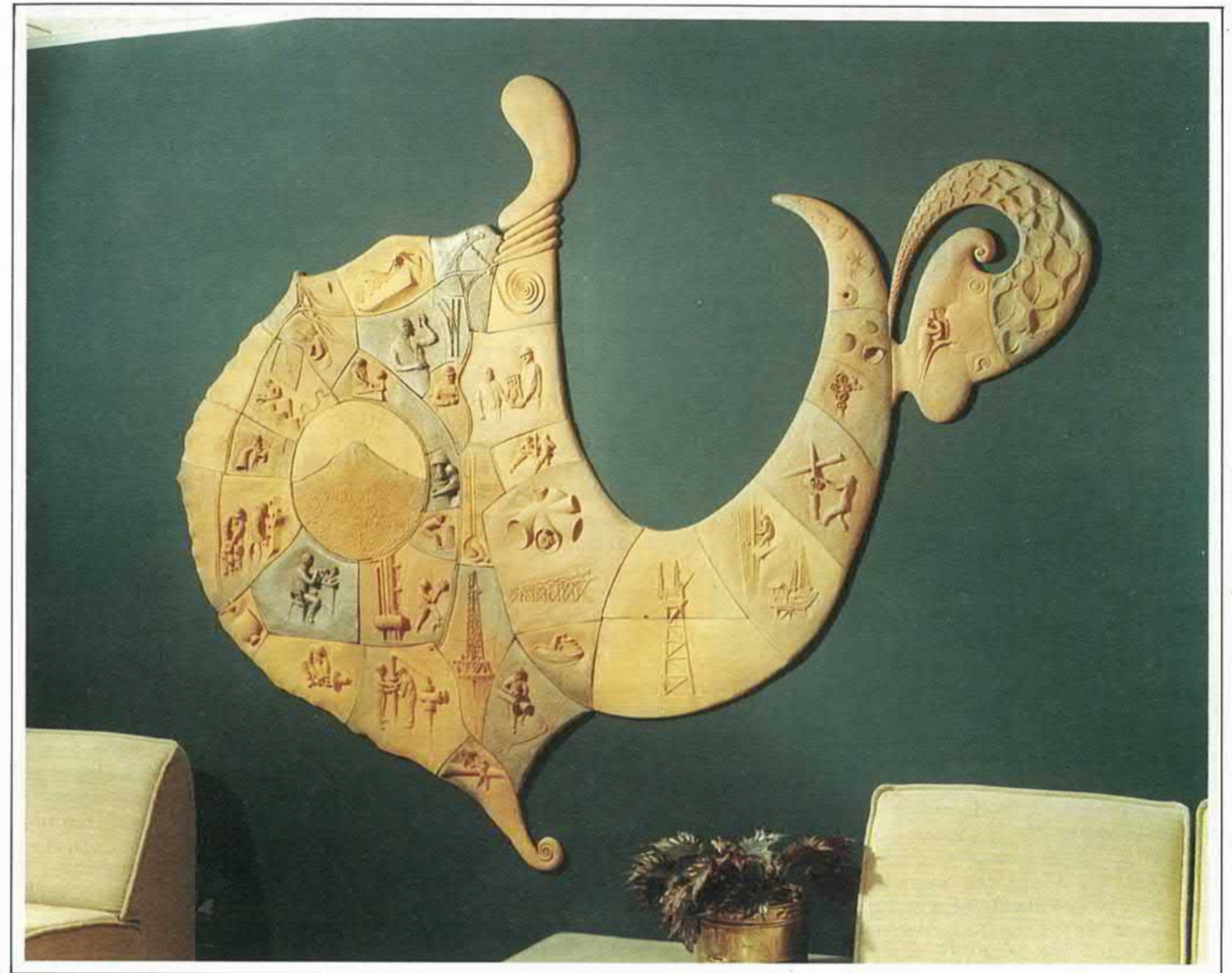
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NEW ZEALAND POTTER No. 2, 1985



Ceramic tile mural for Shell BP & Todd Oil Services Ltd, New Plymouth

BARRY BRICKELL

I replied to a notice in the NZ Society of Potters newsletter (1982) asking for submissions for a mural for the entrance foyer of the new "tower block" office complex in New Plymouth of the natural gas developing consortium Shell BP Todd Oil Services Ltd. I submitted a preliminary sketch and some notes after calling in to see the premises late in 1983, to try to get some feedback from the firm as to the kind of philosophical approach they might have towards a mural. I wanted some dialogue as a basis for a design. Early in 1984, the firm requested a formal drawing and application with the result that I spent some time on preliminary research and came up with an outline drawing and written description of what I proposed to do. I had changed and refined the basic design quite substantially.

The company had set an upper limit on the payment fee for the mural but asked each applicant for their quote. I felt it impossible to give a definite quote and offered to work towards a specific figure which I asked them to give me. We later agreed that this was a better approach as it would not bind up the artist but allow him/her some latitude in terms of finer detail and expression. In May I was informed of the success of my application, and soon after visited the company's operations in order to gain a fuller insight into their work.

The publicity manager arranged a tour of the works for me with access to their archives and kindly lent me various publications which I used as sources for the visual impressions modelled into the tiles.

In the written contract which the

company drew up, a preliminary fee was paid after receipt of my material, and subject to its full acceptance a further, smaller sum was paid, totalling about a third of the agreed price of the job. I must say that in various ways, outside the formal contract, the company was generous in meeting my costs for travel and for transport of the mural.

I have mentioned all this approach work, because I feel it is necessary to establish a far better relationship between client and artist than has been customary with so many artwork commissions. Here, the company has had the guts to make a decision (with or without professional advice) without recourse to the "art-competition" system. (see my article "A Discussion on Murals", NZ Crafts magazine, Autumn 1985). It is my opinion that a

NEW ZEALAND POTTER No. 2, 1985

one, two or even three-stage selection system could be the best way of choosing the final artist for a major artwork, with a scale of drawing fees accompanying each stage. This would not commit either party to too much work or expense at the early stages, yet allow for adequate dialogue and artistic flexibility.

The mural consists of hand-modelled terracotta tiles fired in a wood-fired kiln and glued to a customwood background. A full-sized outline with proposed tile boundary lines was drawn out on thick paper then carefully cut out to form templates to which each tile was made. (I had used this method before for the two *Waitaki Refrigerating Co.* murals). This gives the opportunity for repeating a tile in the event of technical problems later on. I keep the cut-out templates in an "archive", even after the mural is installed. In gluing the tiles to the backing material, I used an engineering adhesive, *Epiglass 195*, in the centre of the tile to locate it then a rubber-based one toward the edges to support it fully yet allow for a little flexibility. The modelling is depictory (realistic) in nature and thus "accessible" to those who view it, in keeping with the philosophical principles behind it.

In the design, it is clear that the *matau* (Maori traditional bone or stone fishhook) is married to a map-based "plan" of Taranaki. The legend of Maui, after which the offshore gasfield was named, embraces the rich mysticism of a magic fish hook by which the North Island *Te Ika a Maui* — the fish of Maui, was created by capturing. In the mural, the particular fish hook form adopted is a ceremonial one with simple barbless tail and sacred, unadorned head. The gas pipeline to Auckland has taken on the position of the cord. The device on the right of the tail represents the outwelling and expanding of the crude gas from the well, suggesting its fossil origin from marine organisms as according to some theorists. The expanding gas releases its condensates (LPG etc) into a receiver and, in the case of Kapuni, is re-cycled by a turbine pump back into the gasfield. It is this condensate which is marketed. On the tail of *tenei matau* is depicted seafood which, as natural hydrocarbons are to industry, are feedstock to the *tangata whenua*, the tribal people of the land of the local area. There is a harmony without pollution indicated by equal, diverging directions. Below the neck of the *matau*, a scene depicting the donation of a Maori carving to the company is included. Carved by Hikairo Herangi of Ngaruawahia, this work is installed on the *Maui* offshore platform as a sign of goodwill.

The colonial history of Taranaki has

been richly and often bitterly textured with settlement conflicts and land wars, it being a fertile and desirable farming prospect for the European settlers. No humane reference to Taranaki could be historically complete without the acts and prophecies of pacifist leader and chief Te Whiti o Rongomai whose pa was besieged by British troops in a bloodless coup in November 1881, but whose stature transcended the shores of this country to take on a position close to that of Mahatma Gandhi in the philosophy of peace for mankind. His four prophetic stages in the spiritual evolution of mankind are indicated in the words stamped into the title above Mt Taranaki.* The position of Parihaka Pa is indicated by Te Whiti's three-feather symbol. It is indeed a wonderful thought that the oil-gas products of Taranaki might ultimately lead to peace within prosperity.

Most of the tiles depict working activities and scenes in which the company's employees are involved in their day-by-day jobs. I worked from photographs of my own or other sources but could not hope to cover all of the diverse operations, especially the dramatic and magnificent technical achievement of the giant *Maui* platform and its undersea pipelines.**

It was interesting to have the opportunity of dialogue with the various staff and management people to whom the world of art seems a rather foreign experience. Concepts of social harmony, conservation of resources, cultural values as well as more personalised things like aesthetics come into the picture and one comes to the realisation that art appreciation is a dormant but born-in quality in virtually all those who do not come into contact with it by education. During the creation of this mural, I became aware of the need to take a more cultural and less materialistic view of life in my own country. Our history, resources and aspirations are sufficiently unique to require our own solutions, and our art thus has no need to follow slavishly, the popular international styles. I am grateful to *Shell BP & Todd Oil Services* for their co-operation and their acceptance of my rather unusual approach.

References: * *Ask That Mountain*, Dick Scott, Heinemann (1975)
** *The Story of Maui*, Maui Development Ltd, (1979, 1980).

Assistance with content of the mural for which I am grateful:

Mr Don Sharp, Shell BP & Todd Oil Services,
Mr Boy Mangu, Te Awamutu
Mr John Hovell, Te Aute College
Mr James Rickard, Waahi
Dr Deirdre Airey, Coromandel.

THE WHITCOULLS AWARD

New Zealand's first ever national competition for both sculpture and drawing was launched in Wellington early June.

Offering prizes totalling nearly \$3,000 *The Whitcoulls Award for Sculpture and Drawing* is open to all artists and sculptors resident in New Zealand.

At least 65 drawings and 45 free-standing sculptures will be selected for final judging on 31 August and will be displayed from 8 - 20 September at the *Turnbull House Galleries* in Wellington.

The judging panel will comprise author and art critic Elva Bett, sculptor and artist Chris Booth, Helen Hitchings, New Zealand's first commercial art dealer, Para Matchitt and Peter Nicholls, both lecturer-sculptors.

In announcing the Award, Michael Pope, Marketing Manager of Whitcoulls Limited, said "It will benefit the arts in several ways. Commission on works sold during the exhibition will go partly to the Community Arts Council to help stage future exhibitions and partly to the historic Turnbull House. Whitcoulls recognises that sculpture and drawing are areas of the arts which do not benefit from major competition in this country. The award will give both the exhibitors and their work valuable recognition. It is structured to encourage maximum participation by artists and sculptors of all levels, thus tapping a wide cross-section of New Zealand's artistic talent."

The top Award of minimum \$750 (plus \$250 for materials) will be presented to the best entry in the sculpture section, while the drawing section will attract a first prize of minimum \$750. A further award of \$500 will be offered in each section.

The Award is being co-ordinated by June Martin of Wellington who has spent the last ten years working in international arts management, mainly in Great Britain.

The Concise Oxford Dictionary:

pottery (1), n. Maker of earthenware vessels; ---'s wheel, horizontal revolving disk in ---'s lathe (machine for moulding clay); ---'s asthma, bronchitis, etc. (caused by dust in the pottery industry).

potter (2), v.i. & t. Work in feeble or desultory manner (at, in, subject or occupation); dawdle, loiter, (about etc.); trifle away (one's time etc.).

If you are an n, do you v.i. & t?

FLETCHER BROWNBUILT POTTERY AWARD 1985

Auckland War Memorial Museum

For only the second time in its nine year history, an overseas entry has won the prestigious *Fletcher Brownbuilt Pottery Award*.

The \$5,000 1985 award was won by **Jeff Mincham** of Adelaide, South Australia, with a large raku jar.

The judge, **Maria Kuczynska** of Poland, made 13 merit awards, 10 of which went to New Zealand craftspeople. The three overseas merit awards went to American, Japanese and Australian entries. Of the more than 330 entries submitted (30 from overseas) for the annual award, 103 were selected by the judge for the exhibition at the Auckland War Memorial Museum.

Merit award winners.
David Brokenshire, Christchurch.
Steve Fullmer, Nelson.
Yasuta Hashigami, Japan.
Campbell Hegan, Auckland.
John Hopkins, USA.
Leo King, Auckland.
Lesley LeGrove, Stratford.
Frank Light, Carterton.
John Parker, Auckland.
Richard Parker, Kaero.
Lynette Persson, Manurewa.
Julia van Helden, Eastbourne.
Penny Walker, Australia.

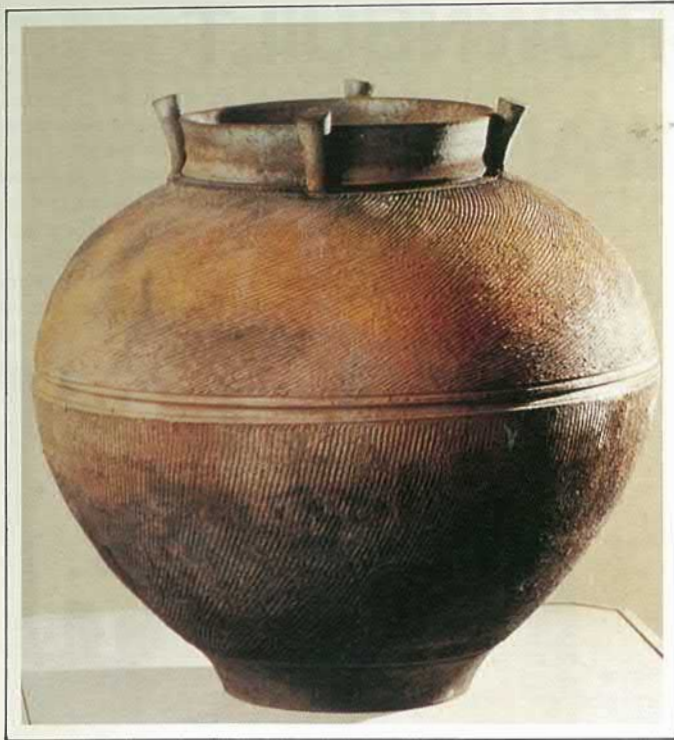


Maria Kuczynska demonstrating at Auckland Studio Potters' Centre. Photo: Tui Morse



From left: The Prime Minister, David Lange; the managing director of Fletcher Brownbuilt, Trevor Hunt; the judge, Maria Kuczynska and the award winner Jeff Mincham.

Photo: courtesy of Bretts DCA Ltd.

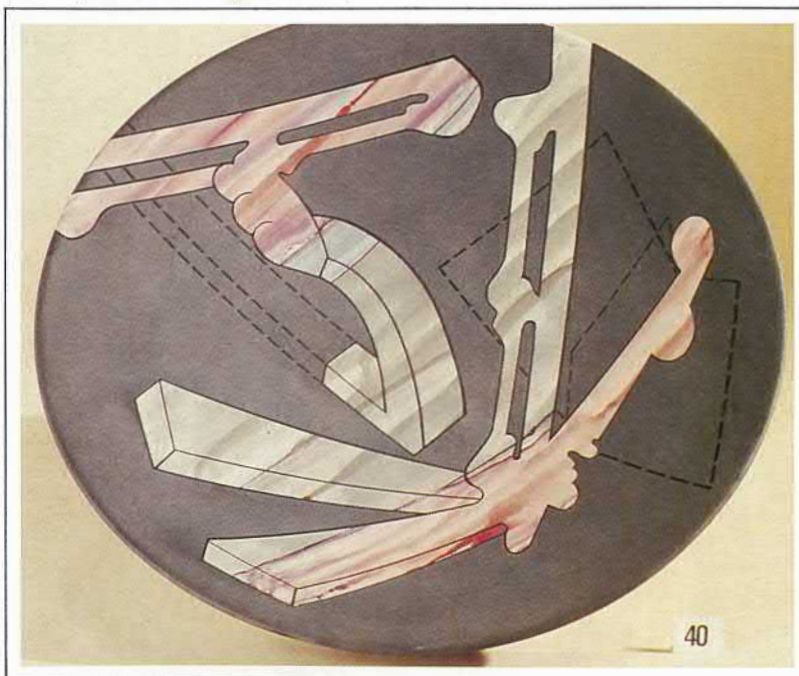


Jeff Mincham, Australia. Raku Jar
AWARD WINNER

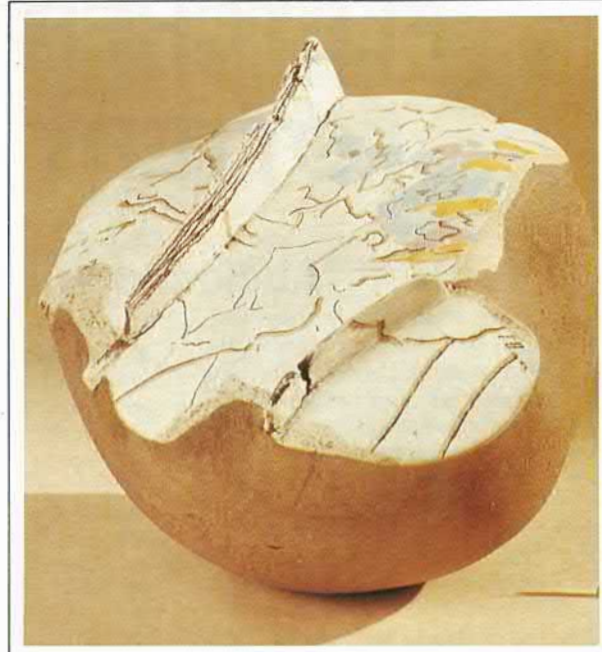
FLETCHER BROWNBUILT 1985 MERIT WINNERS

Photos: Ces Thomas.
All other photos are of merit winning pots.

John Hopkins, USA. "Spatial Composition No. 4"

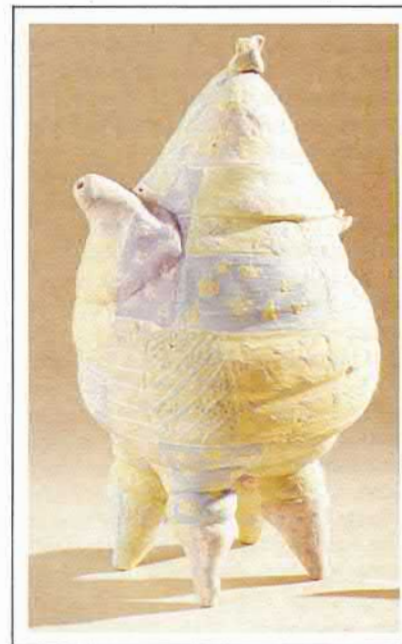


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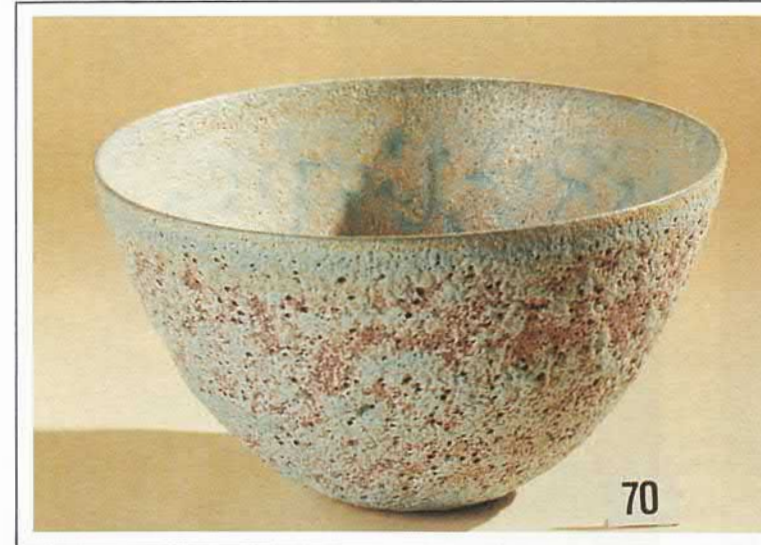


Julia van Helden, Wellington. "Passing the Time of Day"

Penny Walker, Australia. Teapot Form

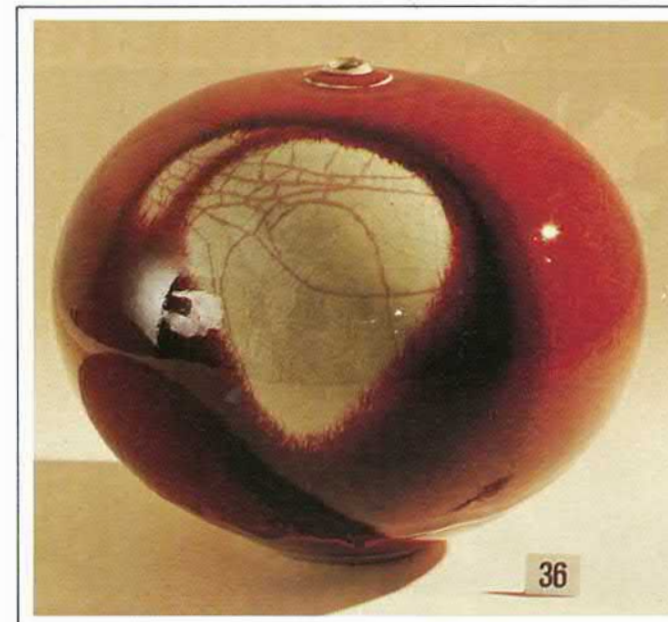


David Brokenshire, Christchurch.
"Great Wave" Porcelain



70

John Parker, Auckland. Stoneware bowl



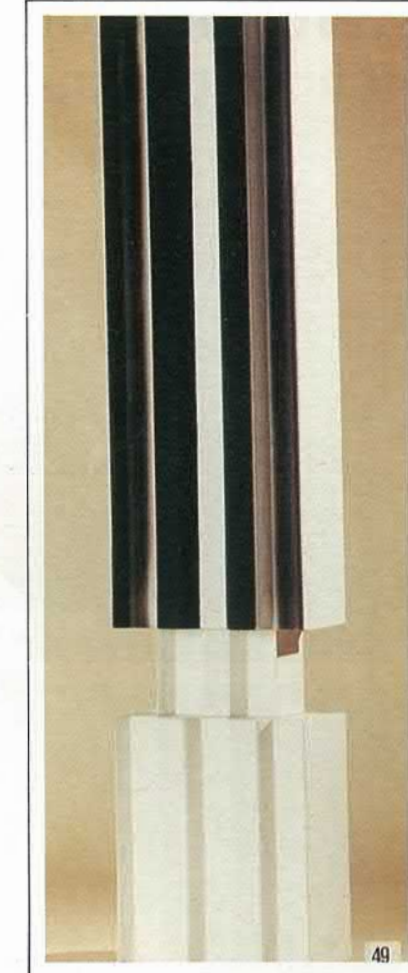
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Campbell Hegan, Auckland.
"Ovoid with Window"

Steve Fullmer, Nelson. "Pilot" Low Temperature



27



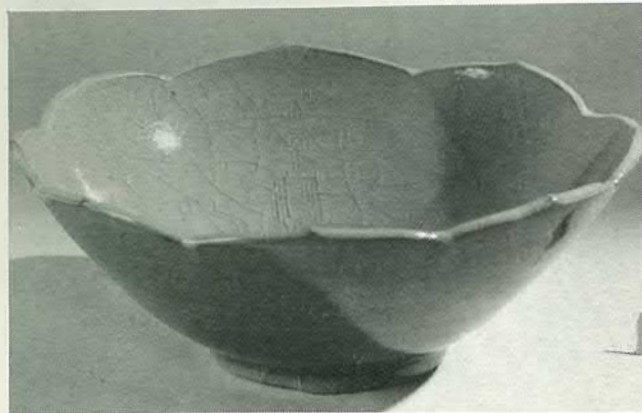
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Leo King, Auckland. "Citta"

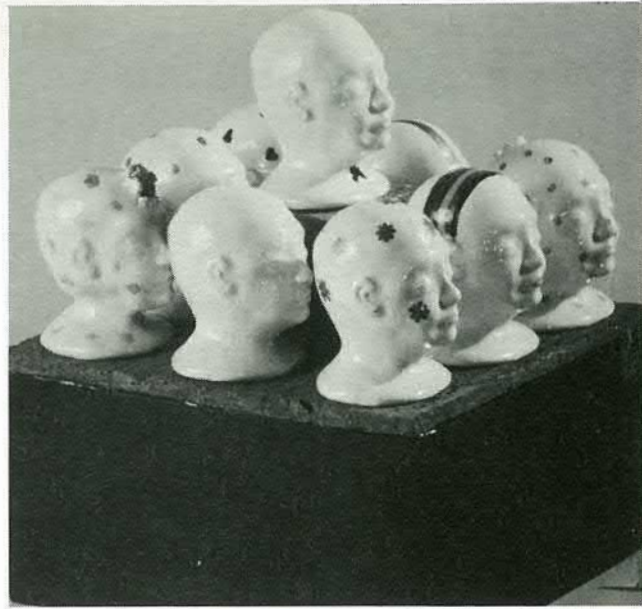
Richard Parker, Kaero. Vase



FLETCHER BROWNBUILT MERIT WINNERS 1985



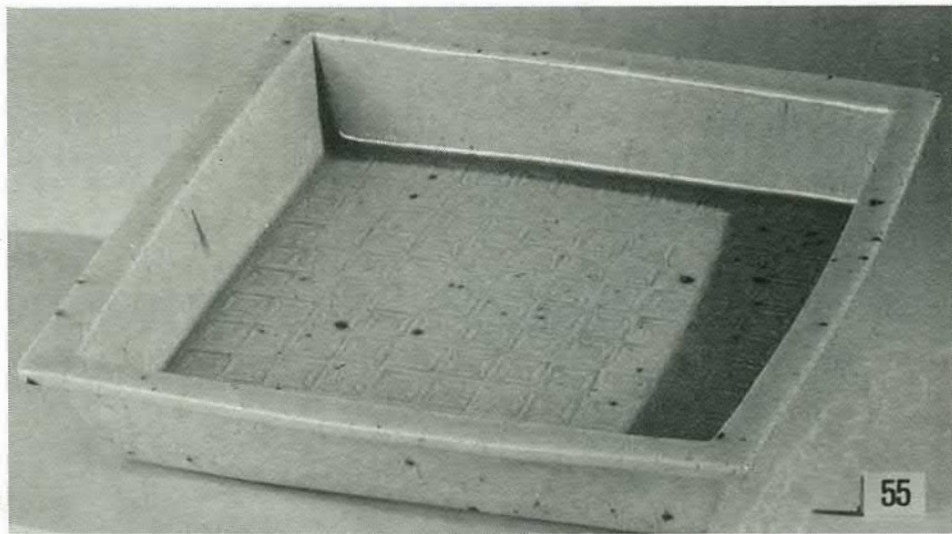
Yasuta Hashigami, Japan. "The Depth of the Fresh Water"



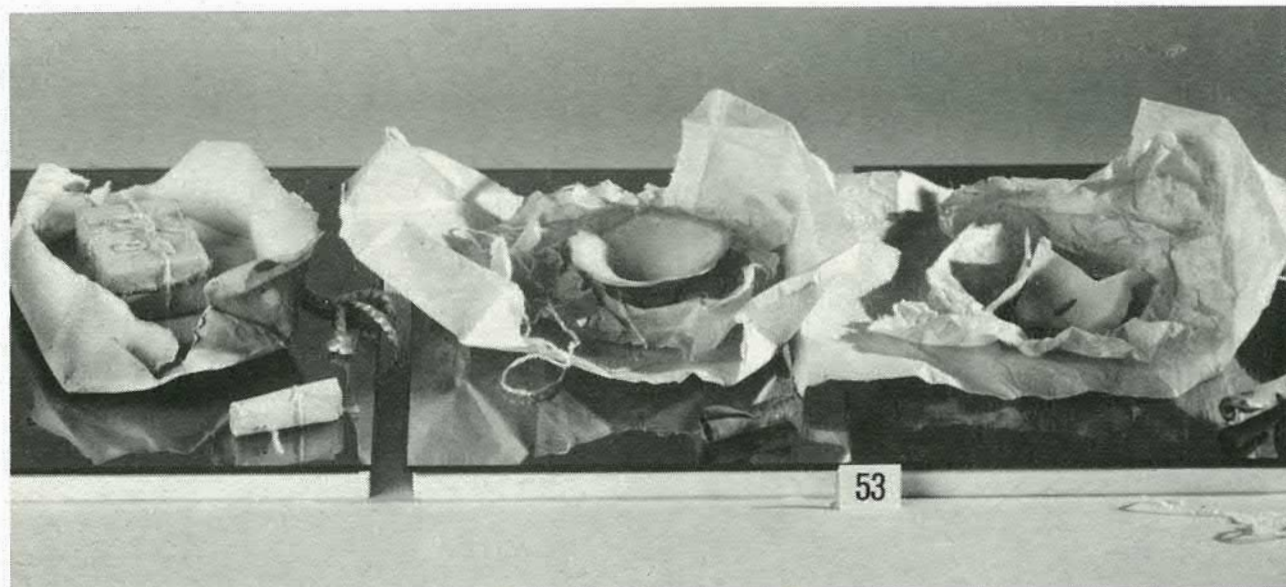
Lynette Persson, Auckland. "A Head above the Rest"

Photos: Ces Thomas

Frank Light, Carterton.
Celadon Trough



Lesley Le Grove, Stratford. "Fragile"



MAUREEN HUNTER — MAINLY RAKU

By Daphnie Hendrie, Wellington

Some 14 years ago, Maureen Hunter wanted to make six coffee mugs, so she enrolled in a pottery class at the *Petone Technical*. Sounds simple enough, but wheels were at a premium so one had to arrive early, which Maureen never managed to do, so she settled for handbuilding which she grew to love. It wasn't until 3 years later that she managed to throw those coffee mugs, but by then the handbuilding had become her forte and she became serious in her work, making a variety of stoneware both domestic and decorative.

Maureen's first glimpse into the realms of raku began about 9 years ago when participating in an outing with the Wellington Potters in the Ohariu Valley. There they built a large bonfire around their raw pots, set it alight and before long the sound of pots exploding and popping was heard. Miraculously Maureen's five pots survived and were then raked, three of them being "quite nice, but very low fired". She could see the possibilities and worked away perfecting this method of firing, leaving out the bonfire prelude.

Today Maureen is Wellington's leading exponent in the art of raku firing. She has taken it beyond what we with lesser understanding would dare and creates amazing results, in vibrant tones of red, green and blue shading into black.

Maureen has a 5 cu ft fibre-lined LPG raku kiln which is portable in order to accommodate weather conditions. Pots can be bisqued in this kiln in 3 hours with minimal loss and raked within 40 to 50 minutes. She uses well grogged stoneware clay and also porcelain, although the latter is best for small pieces as even grogged large pieces crack in the cooling.

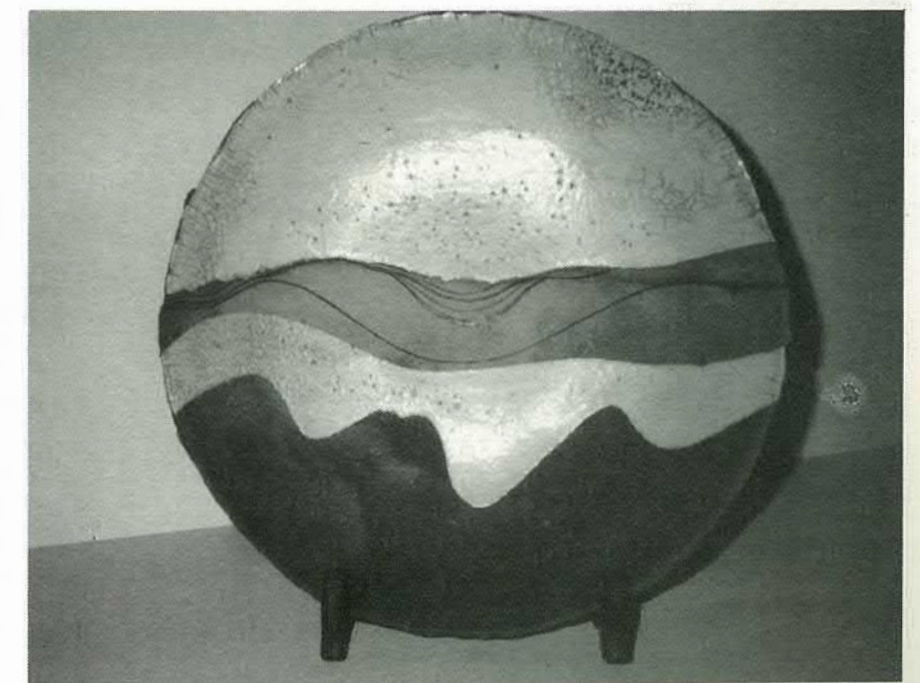
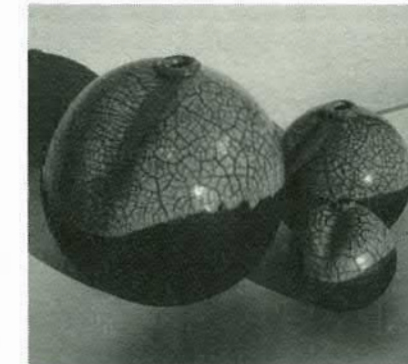
Maureen works in an incredibly small area given the size of her pots. The potting shed lined with shelves is about 10 by 6 ft with an even smaller addition housing her wheel and doubling as a spray booth. In another outbuilding is a 45 cu ft oil fired kiln which hasn't been receiving much use for the past 3 years as Maureen's potting has been dominated by raku, working up to eighteen hours a day at times to keep up with demand. Losses in each firing can be great.

Two years ago Maureen joined with 13 other Wellington potters to form a co-operative which has a shop in up-market Tinakori Road, known as *The Potters Shop*. It is fast becoming one of the right places to purchase excellent pots in Wellington.

McDougal Art Gallery in Christchurch and the Suter Gallery in Nelson have each purchased a pot of Maureen's for their permanent collections.

Maureen hopes to eventually return to her original potting, but as she wants to explore more avenues and glaze techniques in raku, it may take some time yet.

Photos: Gulielma Dowrick



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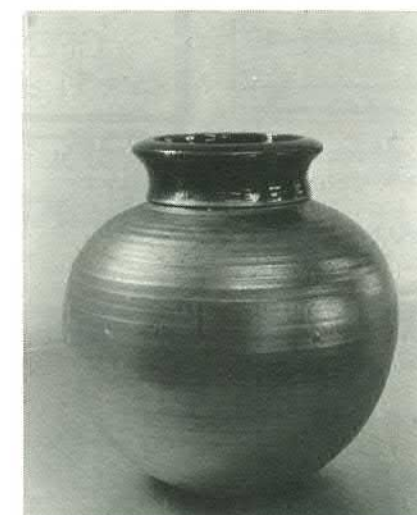
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Tutor: Don Thornley. Examples of work from Student Exhibition.



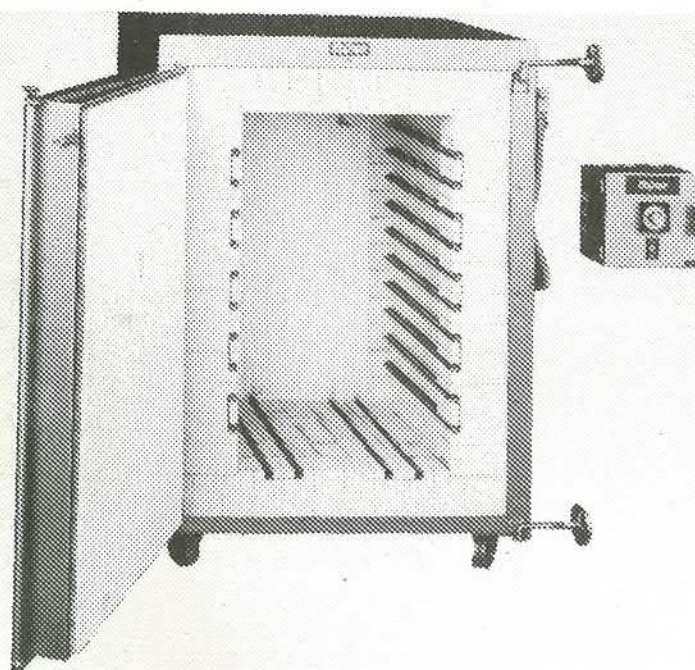
Annette Leach. Bottle, fly ash glaze, Bizen stoneware firing



Muriel Adams. Unglazed woodfired jar



Jean Judson. Press moulded form, raku



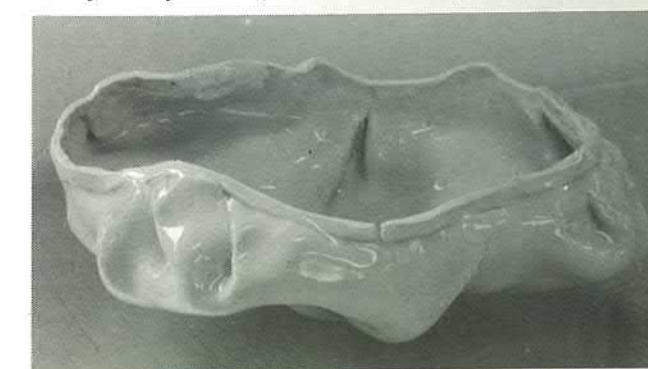
Shirley Barker. Slab built, onglaze decoration, stoneware



Muriel Adams. Terra Sigillata slips on woodfired earthenware



Nancy Shirley. Folded porcelain, celadon glaze



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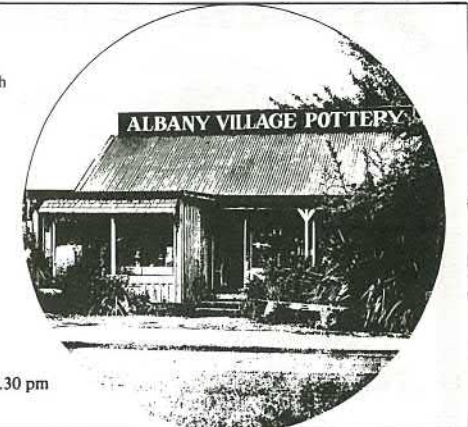
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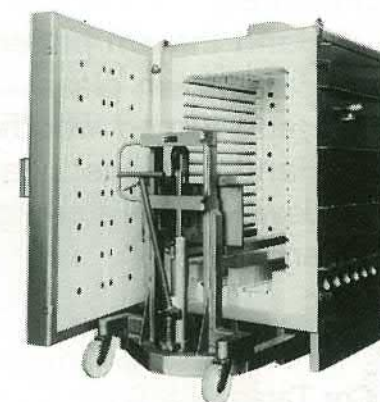
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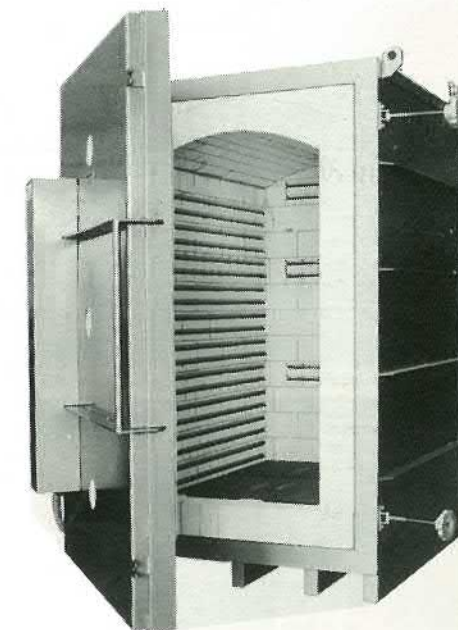
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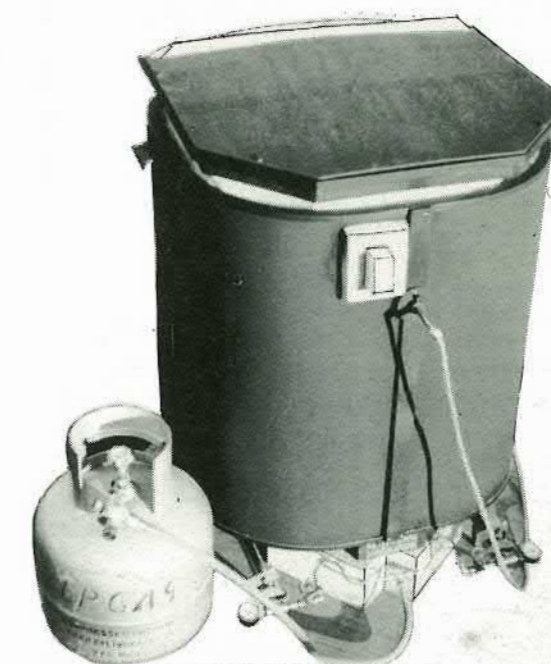
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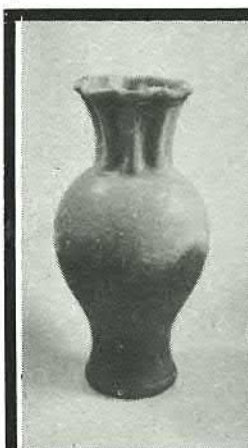
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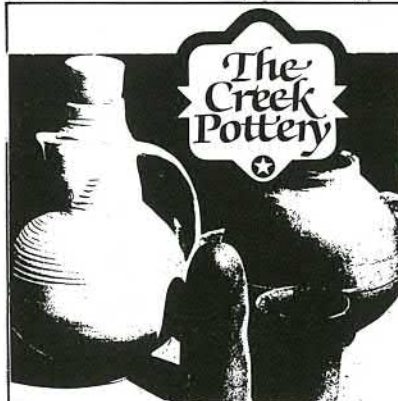
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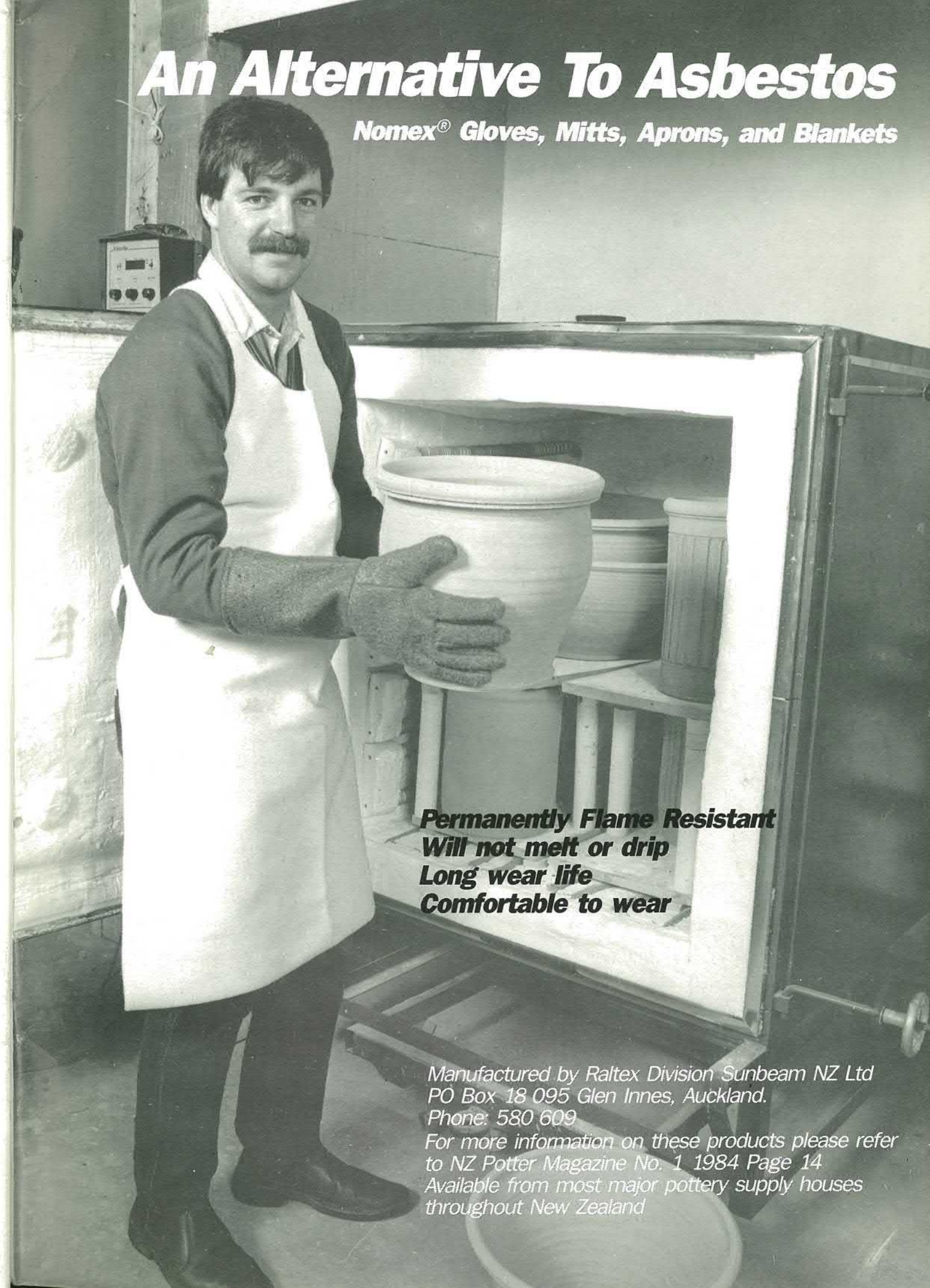
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