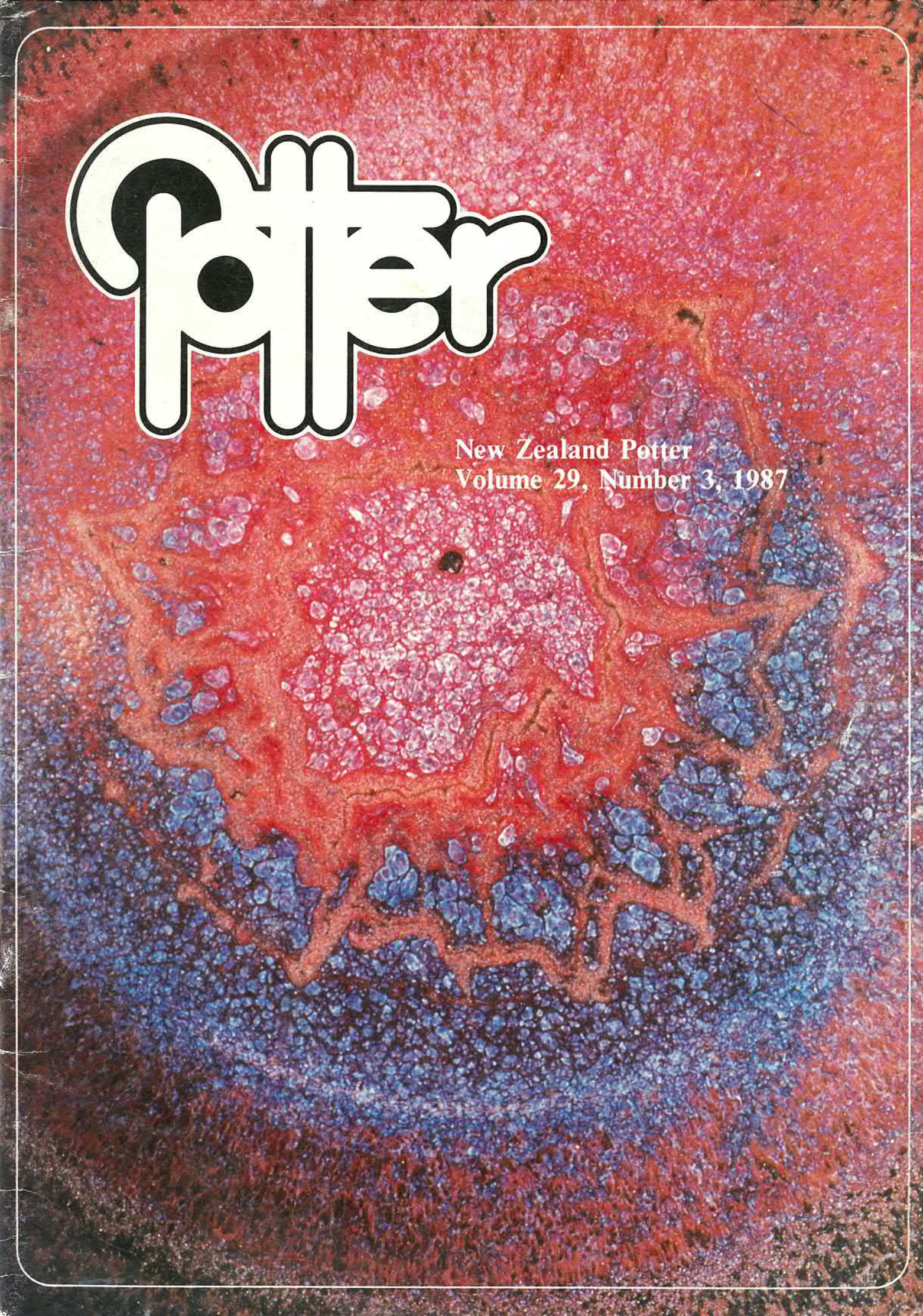


Potter

New Zealand Potter
Volume 29, Number 3, 1987



GOOD NEWS FOR NZ POTTERS

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Taken over

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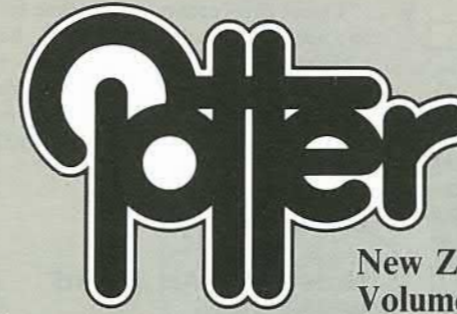
Studio 803
803 Eaton Road, Hastings.

Cobcraft Pottery Supplies Ltd
388 Montreal Street, Christchurch.

*Important, new contact
information*

KEVIN GRIFFIN
OWNER / OPERATOR

Southern Clays Limited, corner of Sturdee Street and Bauchop Street, Dunedin,
P.O. Box 6323, Dunedin. Telephone A/H (024) 774-994



New Zealand Potter
Volume 29, Number 3, 1987

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THROUGH THE FILTER PRESS

The Editor Typetalks

As I wrote in the last issue, the publishing rights to the *NZ POTTER* are now back in potters' hands after several years of being owned by a succession of commercial interests — printers and agricultural publishing companies.

New Ownership

Now a small group of potters and their business associates have formed a new company, *NZ Potter Publications Ltd*, whose primary aim is to see this magazine develop its full potential and become a professional, world-class publication, reflecting the 'state of the art' of studio pottery, ceramics and glass in New Zealand.

New Communications

We see it as important not only to give communication between craftspeople working in these fields in this country, but especially to be a showcase for them, their work and their philosophies, in overseas countries. This magazine is the only continuous instrument of public relations we have to show the rest of the world what is happening here in clay and glass — a very important role to fulfil. We know there is an enormous untapped readership 'out there'; we intend to widely publicize this magazine in order to gain that readership; starting with *Expo '88, the World Crafts Council International Conference*, and *Ceramics '88*, all in Australia next year.

New Image

The *NZ POTTER* has been put onto a self-generating spiral — the better the magazine and its promotion, the more copies it should sell; increased sales in return means more finance with which to further upgrade its contents and illustrations. Increased finance will enable us to obtain more valuable copy from professional writers and photographers, to increase the amount of colour used, and to reduce the amount of advertising copy placed in the editorial section.

New Ideas

To implement this we need more information coming in from all parts of the country — we will be pleased to receive for consideration any professionally presented material of interest to our international audience. We also need feed-back from our readers; what do you want to see in these pages? Please do not hesitate to let us know, so our ideas sub-editorial group can get to work on it. Brickbats or bouquets, let us have them!

New Service

Now that we have ultimate control of the magazine, we also intend upgrading its service to readers. No more late issues, missing captions or photos printed upside down! Since taking over, we have been appalled at the number of letters coming in complaining of past issues paid for, but not received. The 'package' we took over contained very few back copies, so we are unable to redress this state of affairs, bad though this is for our goodwill. We can only promise that as we have a very real vested interest in the magazine — and I mean other than financial considerations — we will do all we can to ensure that this situation does not occur again.

The process of recompiling our inherited subscription list and distribution service is at present under way. There are bound to be a few hitches during this operation, as our first task as the new owners was to produce this present issue on time, with a totally new team other than your potter/editor. Please bear with us as we re-align these mechanical details — 1988 should see the magazine running truly centred again, leaving out time and energy to be spent on the other important things — upgrading its content and appearance.

New Addresses

Another boring, but necessary detail; I am constantly receiving delayed mail which has been forwarded from several addresses now up to 4 years out of date. **Please note and update your own files with the addresses as below. All other previously published addresses for the *NZ POTTER* are now not applicable and correspondence sent to them can spend weeks on a grand tour of the country before reaching its intended destination.** (In my case, my studio which is a converted poultry barn — hence the portrayal by our resident cartoonist/potter, **John Green**.)

Editorial: Howard S. Williams, PO Box 147, Albany, New Zealand. Phone (09) 415-9817.

Advertising: Cecilia Parkinson, PO Box 147, Albany, New Zealand. Phone (09) 415-9373.

Subscriptions, Distribution and Accounts: NZ Potter, PO Box 881, Auckland, New Zealand. Phone (09) 798-665. Fax (09) 393-247.

Happy New Year

I trust this reaches you in time for me to wish you all a specially happy Christmas Season and if you have already paid your subscriptions, please fill in the enclosed application form for the three 1988 issues of the *NZ POTTER* as a gift for a friend.

Arohanui

Howard S. Williams

Norsewear Art Award Waipukurau

In our last issue, page 36 carried a short notice about the results of this Award Exhibition. We regret we omitted two potters' names from the list. It should have included **Lesley Robertson** and **Royce McGlashen**, both of Nelson.

Organisation is well in hand for next year's *Norsewear Art Award* which has been doubled.

Each category, painting, pottery and wool, now offers an award of \$2,000.

Financial support of over \$2,000 has also been offered by three local bodies in the area to assist with running expenses.

Last year the inaugural award attracted a nation-wide response, and organisers are hopeful of a similar response this time.

Judges for the three categories are: **Shona MacFarlane** painting, **Mirek Smisek** pottery, and **Fientje Allis-Van-Rossum** wool.

Potters' Tip

From the *Wellington Potters Newsletter* — If you have a glaze recipe which requires cobalt carbonate, but you only have the oxide, or vice versa, here is a conversion formula. It applies only to cobalt. Divide carbonate amount by 100, multiply by 63 = oxide amount. Divide oxide amount by 63, multiply by 100 = carbonate amount.

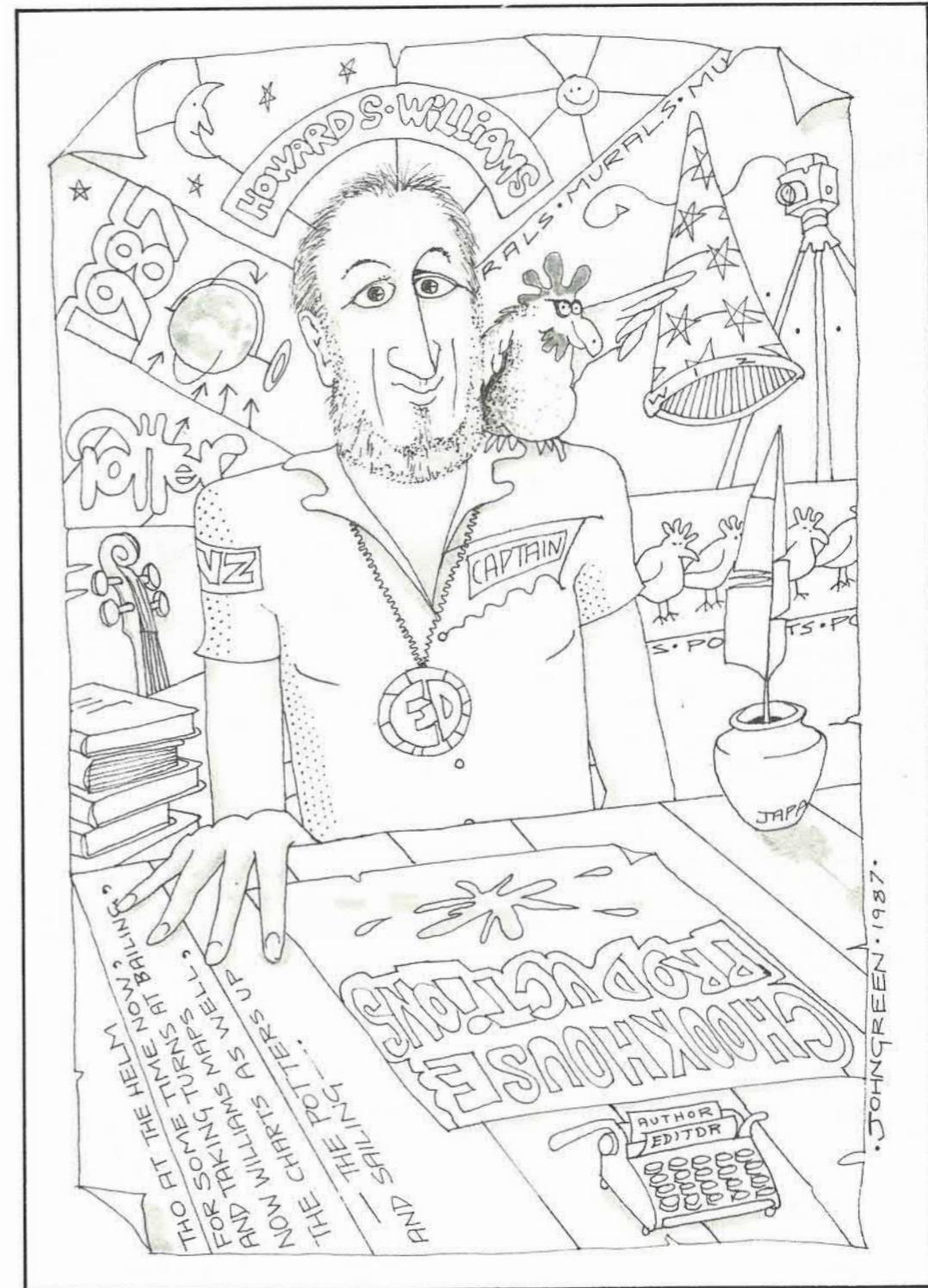
House Swap

A potter in Oregon, USA wants to swap house, workshop and car with an NZ potter, for a year. For details contact **Peter Lange**, 16 Carrick Place, Mt Eden, Auckland 3. Ph: (09) 686-699.

Competition — Ceramics in the Urban Setting

The town of Faenza, Italy, has announced the Second International Quadriennial Competition for Ceramics in the Urban Setting. There are two categories; one for proposals and designs; one for works already existing. Both categories carry several prizes, the first of which is for ten million lire. Initial closing date is 1st June, 1988.

Application forms from:
Concorse "La Ceramica nell'Arredo Urbano"
Commune di Faenza
Assessorato Urbanistica
Via Zanelli, 4
48018 Faenza Italy



NZSP Annual Exhibition and National Conference, Wellington, 13 -15 May 1988

Guest artists, Susan and Steven Kemenyffy from the USA. For Registration forms contact, **National ceramics '88**
National Ceramics '88
Wellington Potters Association
PO Box 6686
Te Aro
Wellington

Australian Diary

First International Ceramic Symposium — Canberra, April 10 — May 7
World Crafts Council Conference — Sydney, May 8 — 13
International Academy of Ceramics Meeting — Sydney, May 12 — 15
Pre-Conference Workshops, May 14 — 15
Tour de Gulong, May 14 - 15
5th National Ceramic Conference — Sydney, May 15 — 20
Sydney, May 15 — 20
Post-Conference Workshops, May 21 — 22

Registration Addresses for the above:
The Conference Secretariat
Ceramics '88
GPO Box 128
Sydney, 2001
Australia
World Crafts Council Conference
100 George Street
Sydney, 2000
Australia
For Ceramics Programme and Workshops:
Potters Society of Australia
48 Burton Street
Darlinghurst, 2010
Australia

overseazure

by Barry Brickell, Coromandel

Part III — Travel Through Spain and U.S.A.

Photos by Barry Brickell

The ceramic traditions of Spain form such a remarkable study as to make even the duller sit up with amazement. Never in my antipodean ignorance did I expect such a wealth of clay culture, every bit as magnificent as those of the orient, including Sung. I felt, at last, some corpuscles of blood pulsating, responding perhaps to recognition of my *tupuna*, my ancient Spanish ancestors.

It is entirely in earthenware — most red-bodied, some white, with lower temperature, lead-based glazes. The pottery tradition is at least 2,000 years old: the Phoenician and Greek influence can surely be seen today in the forms of *cantarilla* (urns) from certain remote rural areas, with rounded bases, twin handles and swelling forms. *Ceramica popular*, the hand-thrown pottery of the rural farming people, was certainly extant at the time of the Roman invasions (2-5th C).

Today it continues to survive, by the skin of its teeth, a superb tradition threatened as everywhere, by industrialisation and universal commerce. I will avoid describing *Ceramica popular* of Spain in detail because this is already well done in an article by *Santa Cabasa* in the *N.Z. Potter*, Vol. 27, No. 3, 1985.

A revival of interest is finally taking place; the difficult task of trying to inject confidence, enthusiasm and optimism into the last of the clingers-on to the old family traditions, mostly older men, is now being attempted. This is being done by younger, urban people who have developed an awareness through their interest and studies. Thus we at last have well illustrated and sympathetically written books such as *Ceramica Popular Espanola* by *Llorens Atigas* and *Corredor Mateos* (1974) in both English and Spanish.

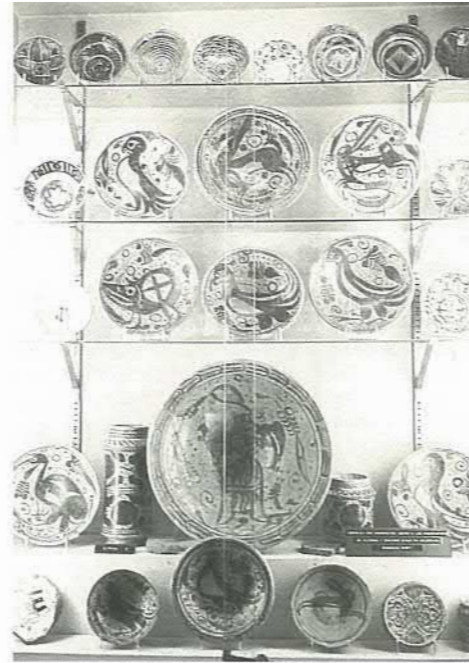
The diversity of forms within this tradition is amazing in itself; ranging from utilitarian pottery, through highly ornamental ceremonial pots and sculptures, to architectural fittings and lavatory pans, complete with siphon, in the simplest delightful style. Traditional wood or brush-fired kilns are few and far between, but do continue to be used in some of the more remote areas, varying in design according to provincial traditions.

Spain is a large, rather dry, geologically very ancient, weathered area, and pottery traditions have evolved separately to yield the amazing diversity of approaches one sees. I was fortunate to come across one kiln, 400 years old, near Barcelona. It consisted of an arched chamber with several holes in both the crown arch and the floor. Below, and of nearly equal length and width, but much squatter, was the firebox. To equalise the firing temperature the top holes were adjusted with bungs. This kiln was being revived by two young men who were learning to make plant pots for the local market. They were using one of the traditional coiling methods, with about ten low turntables, a pot being formed on each in rotation.

I was fortunate to stay with *Santi Cabasa* and *Martxe Garcia*, who had visited me in Coromandel the previous year (1985). Living at Sant Cugat near Barcelona, Santi has amassed a very fine collection of *Ceramica Popular*, including some huge section thrown and coiled fine terracotta jars over a metre high. He has a variety of the *botijo* forms (wine pourers of the agricultural farmers), and *cantaro* or *cantarillo*, jugs and urns.

In Barcelona I bought a *casuela* (shallow cooking pot) and a *puchero* (cooking pot) for an amazingly cheap price. With natural gas now widely reticulated around the more populated areas of the east (Mediterranean) coast, most of the kilns are gas-fired and of modern construction. Santi kindly took me to a local brickworks in Sant Cugat where the traditional tapered terracotta roofing tiles were being made by machine. Interestingly, the tiles are fired in a *Hoffman* type kiln, fired on what resembled fine granulated coal. In fact, it was the carbon waste product of a petroleum refinery. The ship which took the tiles across to Mexico and California returned with this fuel — a unique economic set-up.

With the arrival of the Islamic Moorish invasions from the south during the 8th to 15th centuries, began the great Hispano-Moorish



Majolica plates (17th C). Palacio dos Aguas Museum of Ceramics, Valencia



Ceramica Popular Cantaros. (Collection, Santi Cabasa)

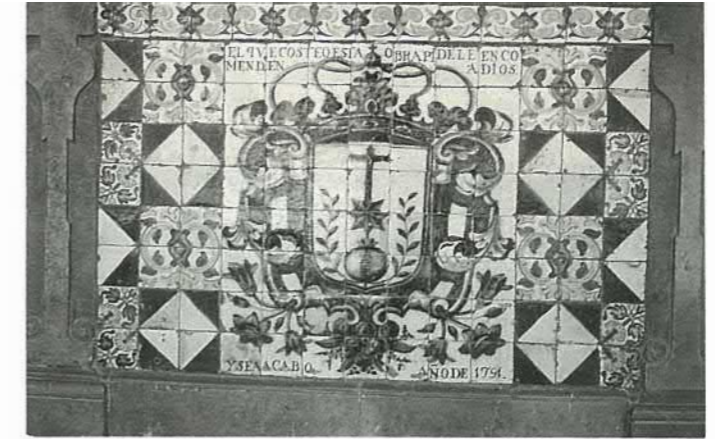
Majolica tile mural (19th C). Palacio dos Aguas Museum of Ceramics, Valencia



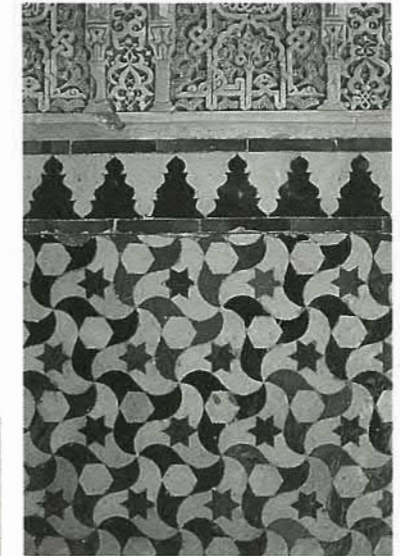
tradition of majolica pottery and tiles. It is this tradition which, in my humble opinion, eclipses the Sung stoneware in its sophistication, beauty and also folk humour. The majolica tradition climaxed perhaps one or two hundred years ago, presumably before the influence of bourgeois industrialism. The area around Valencia had some of the finest potters whose work may be seen in the *Gonzales Marti Museum*, Valencia, devoted to Spanish Ceramics. I ecstatically photographed many of the finely decorated and folk-art plates, which are displayed beautifully with reasonable lighting. The architecture of the old building is itself a delight, with sculptured porticos and lintels over the windows. The collection of majolica tiles contains earlier Islamic-inspired geometrical designs of great dexterity and cleverness, up to the purely lyrical and descriptive folk art of Spain. One can trace the influence of Italy, then lead on to the faience and delft styles of France and Holland, before coming to early industrial England where it turns into boiled cabbage. Perhaps the finest collection of all majolica is that of the *National Museum* in Barcelona. They resolutely shut the doors at 2 pm, after I had a mere hour there, as siesta time is enjoyed more by the museum staffs (sic) than overseas tourists.

My three days in Granada were perhaps the climax. There I encountered my first experience in a muslim, ceramic tiled palace of sophisticated geometric design and impeccable magnificence; about the most unlike one could conceive of, from anything Oceanic, Pacific, Polynesian, yet so beautiful in its jewel-like richness. The great Islamic majolica tile tradition, like *Ceramica Popular*, is beginning to undergo a revival. In Morocco, there is a university preserving the old traditions. The Alhambra is part of a huge stone fortress complex dating from about the 13th century. A ceramic museum contains a fine collection of early and later (Christian influenced) pottery associated with nobility.

In Granada I discovered a narrow street full of old buildings containing pottery shops. Much of the work was rather inanimate, shiny, touristy stuff, but one in particular, contained a great, informally arranged collection of early pottery and tiles. I sorted through piles of bowls, plates and tiles, unable to resist buying as many as would fit in my suitcase, at prices which seemed reasonable. A set of four majolica tiles with a brush-painted emblem in beautiful rich colours, which had been saved from the demolition of a 13th century building, took my eye. The pottery is about a hundred years old in the *Ceramica Popular* tradition using lead-based glazes, majolica and plain, with vigorous, oxide-coloured brush strokes. Many of the bowls have a lilt or delightful articulation in their thrown forms, which seemed characteristic of the Andalusian style.



Majolica tile panel, (18th C Spanish)



Mosaic tiled panels. Majolica and carved stone. Morocco-Islamic influence. The Alhambra, Granada



Majolica relief tile (16th C). Granada

The final section of my overseas trip was the two months in the U.S.A. during their fall. Most of the time was spent at Flagstaff, Northern Arizona, where I was invited to work by *Don Bendel*, a professor of ceramics, and *Joel Eide*, in charge of *Northern Arizona University's Art Gallery*. Both of these folk had visited N.Z. in 1985 and attended the *ClayAZArt* symposium at Rotorua. They wanted me to build a coal-fired salt-glaze kiln and work with the ceramic students in the well-appointed, spacious studio. Flagstaff is an attractive small city, at 7,000 ft. altitude, surrounded by pine-covered volcanic hills and the snowy San Francisco peaks. The tall fluted cactus "trees" of the Sonora Desert region gave me a new form to make in clay. They looked almost absurd, sticking up like funny people in the rich shrubscapes, with their rigid branching and dignified stance. I made three tall, coiled forms in the studio, together with a lot of wheel-thrown pots. The cactus forms dictated the size of the proposed kiln chamber, about two metres centre height. Meanwhile an all-out search for old bricks was mounted, with eventual success. The magnificent *Tozan* Japanese 4-chambered climbing kiln, which had just had its first firing a month earlier, had inadvertently gobbled up all the spare bricks. This kiln, together with the smaller *anagama* one alongside, is situated in a pleasant, pine-studded enclosure about a kilometre from the university, and covered by a huge shelter shed. We decided to build the salt-glazed kiln beside the *Tozan* stack, in a sheltered corner. Four or five students ducked out between their lectures to help me with the construction, and I also divided my time between the kiln and studio work. We were free to come and go from 7 am until 10 pm, and on many days I occupied much of this time span with work, ducking out to *Wendy's* restaurant or *Bunhuggers* for stoke-ups. There was much to do, as the 150 cu. ft. kiln had to be built and filled, ready for firing early in November.

Coiled sculptured forms based on tree cacti. Barry Brickell at Flagstaff



All previous kilns I had built had opposed fireboxes and twin bagwalls for even heating, but the space limitations dictated a fresh approach here. I settled for a pair of narrow, deep fireboxes side by side with one shared bagwall and stack opposite — a conventional enough down-draught design, but due to the altitude and the lesser oxygen content of the air, I opted for a huge, generous stack, which would really pull hard. We had a lot of fun with the crown arch — nobody expected such an informal, trouble-free method. No template was painstakingly constructed as it is quite unnecessary. Instead I pointed to my book, and said we would do it as shown, using a platform of any old wood and soil heaped over. It worked well, and we built a good arch from the plain fire bricks — arch bricks were deemed an expensive luxury after the expense of the *Tozan* kiln.

The students enjoyed the poor-man's element of makeshift, kiwi-style jack-ups, after working under the highly exacting eye of a kiln master from Japan. I made a rule that those who helped with the kiln were automatically entitled to have pots in the first firing.

About mid October, after a mere month in Flagstaff, we had the kiln built except for the top half of the stack, and our sculptures and pots were now drying out. Meanwhile, at the NZ Embassy in Washington DC, **Patricia Golden**, the Cultural Officer, had been planning three days of activities for me. I decided to combine this with other engagements in the Eastern States, so took 10 days off from the kiln job. At Denver, Colorado, the film and travelling exhibition '*Treasures of the Land*,' devoted to NZ crafts and lifestyles, was currently showing. An evening lecture/slide show was arranged for me to do as a supplement, and **Inez Pharo**, my kind hostess, arranged this at the *Colorado Gallery of Arts* at Lyttelton, near Denver. Then I wanted to re-visit New York, and finally, **Neal Townsend** of the *University of New Mexico* requested a two-day workshop at Albuquerque.

My host in Washington was **John Wood**, Deputy Chief of Mission, who took me to several important monuments concerned with American history. Patricia Golden arranged for interviews with '*Panorama*' television and with **Lydia Kleiner** of *National Public Radio*. She also kindly paved the way for my visit to the Curator of Ceramics and Glass at the *National Museum*, part of the huge *Smithsonian Institution*. Here, I found a room full of fine early salt-glazed American pots dating from 18th to early 20th century. Some had rich, lively, lyrical brush work, often with a folk-art flavour. I was interested to ascertain the fuel used, but none of the historical material I came across mentioned coal; wood being the traditional fuel. It was good in the relaxed atmosphere of the radio interview, to have a chance to describe my homeland, its people, and the state of ceramics and arts generally, down-under.

The third day was my lecture/slide show at the *Smithsonian*, in a small theatre. So high-tech was the lighting and slide projector, none of us could operate it properly, but fortunately this did not seem to worry the small audience, who preferred to ask lots of questions and promote a wide range of discussion. Our life style and state of the arts seemed to be of greatest interest.

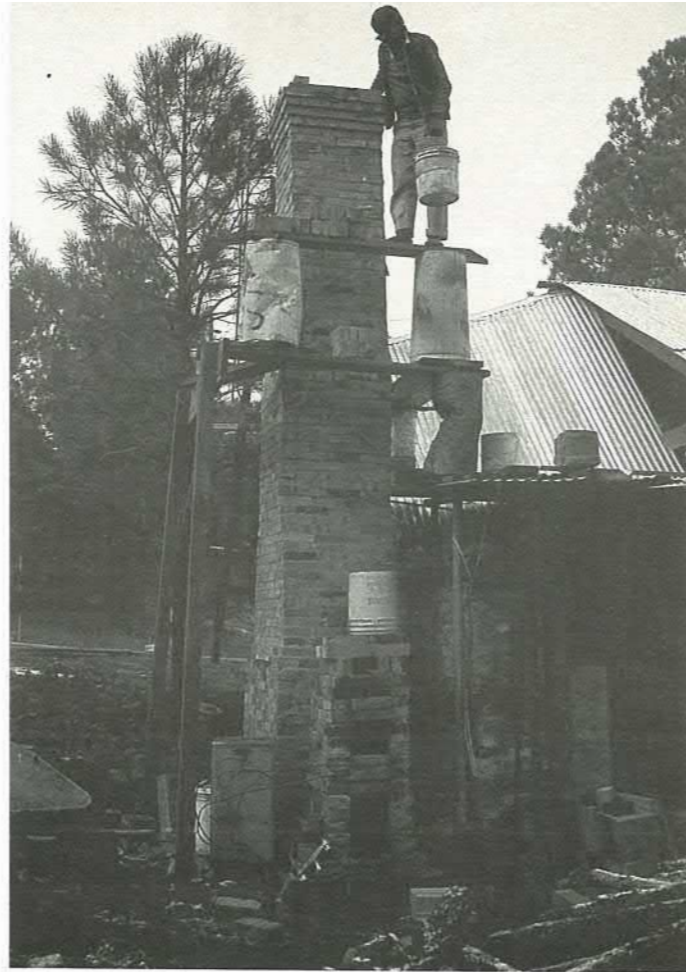
Patricia Golden introduced me to an interesting potter and his wife, **Harvey and Sue Sadow**, in nearby Maryland. Harvey has evolved a ceramic technique based on multiple raku-type firing in a gas kiln. Between firings of his fine thrown, mainly spherical forms, he uses an air-brush for applying oxides for texture and natural decorative effects. His work is highly regarded and I noted prices about the US\$3,000 range. Yet he was interested in my approach, and expressed a desire to come to NZ to work next year.

At Denver, Inez kindly drove me about, introducing me to pottery collections and potters. A collection of finest, handformed bowls, with extraordinarily beautiful, lively, sparse, strong black and white decorations, from an Indian tribe who lived in the Mimbres Valley of SW Colorado before 1200 A.D. exists at Boulder, in the *Henderson* collection of the *University of Colorado*. The *Denver Art Museum* contains pre-Columbian sculptured terracotta and Pueblo Indian pots.

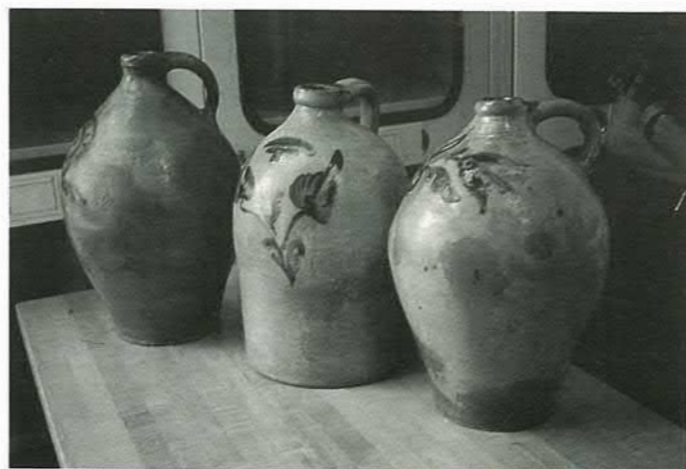
The workshop at Albuquerque was to be my last, I decided. The battle to get slides re-sorted yet again, pouring out lots of hoarse-power, demonstrating on unfamiliar wheels with toothpaste clay, rushing through the motions of coiling, is all a bit daunting. Workshops as such are a popular institution, but I often wonder if they are a truly effective teaching mode.

With my host, **Neal Townsend**, I took a ride on the Scandia Peaks tourist aerial rope-way, up the great Eastern granite escarpment. On our return, I noticed small piles of feldspar crystals on the ground. They are each brought to the surface by ant-power. I eagerly scooped some up to include into some clay back at Flagstaff. It gave a rich warty texture, and animated the salt-glaze in a shigaraki-like manner.

Back at Flagstaff, now early November, we faced a busy programme of preparing for the kiln firing. It was beginning to get cold, in the late fall, and the evening before stacking day saw me completing the big



Building the chimney on the Flagstaff kiln.
Coal testing/raku furnace in foreground



American salt-glazed jars (18th C) Smithsonian Institute,
Washington DC

chimney. I had erected a scaffolding made of planks, drums and bricks, and was putting the finishing touches to the colonial top, when a bolt of lightning cracked somewhere too close for comfort. I gritted my teeth, placed the last brick, as snow lightly fell, and climbed thankfully down to check the job. A zigzag lean and the top slightly askew, but it would work, I decided.

Stacking the kiln took all day and it was cold! Icicles hung from the tin roof over the kiln and a scattering of snow littered the ground. However, we managed to include everyone's pots and my three large forms, before bricking up in the evening. Next morning, at 4 am, I arrived by taxi to light the twin fires, a layer of ice had already formed in the clay buckets. We had obtained a truckload of the local power station coal, which was similar to most NZ coals, in that it was the lumpy, shiny, non-coking type. I fired on this most of the day, but it would clog into ash on the sloping firebars, and not burn vigorously. I had done a lot of research on American coal, thanks to Joel and his office facilities, and to the local coal company. The latter had a copy of

the massive *Keystone* manual, which gives contact details and analyses of all the coal companies and their products. I narrowed down to a selection of coals, the closest being way up in Colorado. The company executives could not believe we were being serious when we were trying to obtain samples. They had no way of sending a mere ton — it was a 1,000 tons minimum, or maybe a freight-car load. However, a mine in Colorado finally sent us six drums. It never occurred to me to open them first — we were so busy. Later in the morning we did investigate, to find to my horror that the coal was a wet, powdery mass. Six drums of the stuff. It would put out any fire! Even in the small test furnace that I built, it was not exactly lively. I began to realise how fortunate we are back in NZ with our West Coast bituminous coals. Few U.S.A. coal analyses that I saw had the low ash, high coking and volatile content of our own best coals.

The *Tozan kiln* had used over 20 cords of dry pine, and 10 days of firing, a month or two before. Such was the enthusiasm that a large pile of dry wood still remained after the firing. Well, I decided, bite the bullet and get on with it. We started stoking furiously with the wood, and by nightfall, not only was Cone 10 melted, but there was a great conical tongue of flame out the stack. We salted lightly for about two hours. Naturally there was a pleasant surprise firing party at the end; everyone was happy.

The firing was a success even if the coal thing was a faux pas and we were all pleased with the salting despite its lighter hue. The coal ash would have enriched the colours. Coal has not been abandoned so I am informed, its just a case of organisation. Meanwhile the kiln continues to be fired with whatever fuels are at hand.

One cannot visit Arizona without becoming aware of the fine Hopi Indian pottery tradition. The day of rest, after the firing, Don took me to the museum in Flagstaff, and to the Grand Canyon. We saw the black and white decorated, hand-formed pots that have been made in the general area since about 700 — 800AD. After about 1400AD colours were introduced amongst the Pueblo Indian potters, but it was the emerging Hopis who evolved the hard-fired, polychrome wares with asymmetrical decoration and life forms. They evolved a fine, burnished slip technique, then later, used a fine body clay with burnishing and



First firing of Barry Brickell's salt glaze kiln. Flagstaff, Arizona

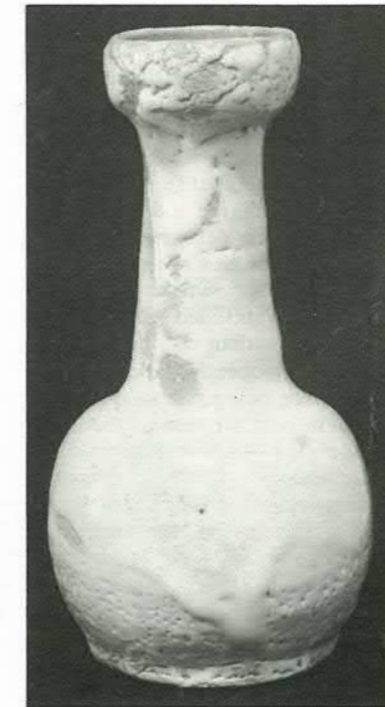
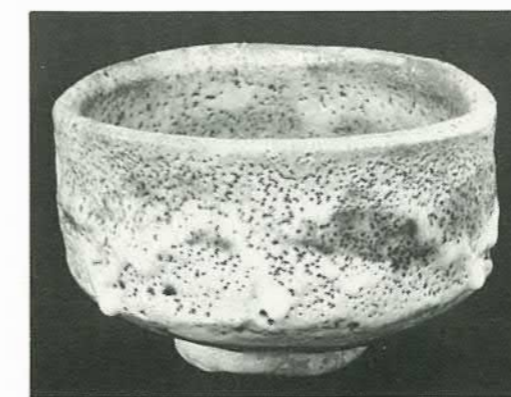
vegetable-based coloured pigments. From about 1700 the quality of the work began to decline, probably due to Spanish influence from the south. Commercial Hopi pottery has been made for the past hundred or so years, and today remains as an important trade and craft amongst the indigenous people. There are many stalls on the highways through the reservations where fine, burnished pots may be bought. We also visited a waterfall of red clay slip and collected some natural terra sigillata.

Finally I had the pleasure of seeing the collection of Contemporary American Ceramics at *Scripps College*, Claremont, in California, but this is another story.

My thanks to both *Air New Zealand* and the *QE II Arts Council*, for allowing me the *Overseazure* experience which, hopefully, I've rubbed a little off on to you.



YAMON SHINO



Exhibition of traditional Japanese Shino pottery made in Japan and New Zealand, by **Yamon Shino**.
At **Pots of Ponsonby**, Auckland

MATTHIAS OSTERMANN VISITS THE WAIKATO

By Elizabeth Woodfield, Hamilton

Matthias Ostermann blew into the Waikato like a fresh summer breeze radiating enthusiasm, confidence and professionalism. Matthias conducted an intensive one day school at the *Waikato Technical Institute* where he combined slide presentations, turning techniques (to pots prepared the previous day), lectures and decorating techniques with a flamboyant use of colour.

Born in Wangen, Germany, Matthias apprenticed to a German potter in Canada from 1970 to 1973. He then worked as a full-time production thrower in Ireland, later returning to Canada to set up his own studio in Toronto producing high-fired domestic stoneware and porcelain.

After having travelled through mainland China, South Korea and Japan, Matthias won a grant in 1981 to central Italy to research local pottery and study Italian earthenware techniques, which led to his producing majolica earthenware as well as stoneware from his next studio in Montreal, Quebec. Travels to Europe in 1985, Australia and New Zealand are further widening Matthias' horizons as well as encouraging and helping many aspiring potters with his energy and devotion.

The slides presented depicted the wonderful and stimulating environment surrounding Matthias' studio in Montreal — the brilliant colours of autumn, the early winter snows (minus 45°C mid-winter!) the fabulous architecture of the older quarters, the patisseries and delicatessens in the bilingual culture as well as his studio and studios of other Canadian clay people.

Whilst eloquently talking about his theories for doing things in a particular way — be careful not to say this is the way to do it — completely different approaches — Matthias demonstrated turning and trimming of bowls, jugs and jars, applying slip for further work, attaching handles — better a bit too thick than too thin, skimpy, tight, unhappy — unloved handles show, *give handles love* — if you don't like doing them think of goblets or something else, but *love them*.

Antelope, fish, birds and flowers appeared on the jars and bowls modelled, painted, carved, mishima and sgraffito with references to fluidity of line, practical aspects, economic and sure gestures, addition of eyes giving a definite



"Water colour" technique with the background filled in last



Sgraffito highlights through to white body glaze



Directly brushed antelope design

Photos by Elizabeth Woodfield show Matthias Ostermann demonstrating brush and sgraffito techniques on students' bisqued ware.



Clean, broad brush strokes



Colours gently smudged over



Sgraffito lines for definition.

Final clear overglazing intensifies colour

Wooden tool is used for sgraffito through slip on leatherhard clay

Brushing away burrs and dust — surface is as important as the image

Angled background carving opposes direction of leaves and antelope to impart sense of movement



personality and Gothic braces to support hollow modelled fish handles whilst drying.

Matthias' deftness with the brush was demonstrated on students' bisqueware. Using a white background glaze, layers of colour were built up from light to dark. Mix in a little yellow so the green is not duplicated, blend down to darker green then get really outrageous and get into royal blue — work carefully over the whole now in rows with a cleaned out brush to blend colours — get a complete blend of colours — wherever brush is dragged colours will connect — play with relationship of colours . . .

Three colour methods were demonstrated — the subtle wash; solid build-up of colour with sgraffito highlighting; applied colour smudged almost out of sight, with definition through sgraffito.

The large bird in blue had 3 stages of decorating. The outline can first be drawn on the body glaze with a pencil.

- 1 Broad definite clean brush strokes, laid on deftly without fussing over them.
- 2 Colours gently smudged over with a finger, giving a soft blended appearance.
- 3 Sgraffito, with a knitting needle, through to white body glaze for definition.

Matthias pointed out formal flower patterns require more careful strokes but he is not interested in exact representative line drawing — "The sgraffito lines suggest what you're drawing."

The stains Matthias uses have a frit mixed with them. Half colour and half borax frit no. 3124. The body glaze cannot be used mixed with stains as it contains tin oxide. During firing the borax in the stain mix combines with fluxes in the glaze and avoids crusting and dryness of stain.

Colours are lined up in order of intensity and tested on paper — practise on newspaper as it is absorbent. Different brushes give different strokes — this was demonstrated by simple plant patterns from one brush and water patterns from a shaped brush — create shape and pattern — use brush to create line. Trailing with slip also was demonstrated.

Our day with Matthias was rounded off with a lecture and advice to give ourselves time — have a framework to work in — be one's own best judge and not compare with someone else's time or work — be supportive to yourself — allow imagination to run ahead or your skills, running rampant, then allow yourself to be drawn towards that direction with looseness, casualness and spontaneity.

Matthias shared his recipes with us.

Basic Slip

Feldspar	30
Flint	15
Ball Clay	55

Add 2% Rutile for a cream colour.
Or add 2% Rutile and 1.5% Cobalt carbonate for blue grey.
Or add 3% Copper carbonate and 0.25% Cobalt carbonate for green.

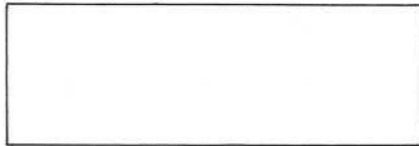
Earthenware glaze **Cone 04/05**

Frit 3124 Ferro	100
Ball Clay	10
Kaolin	10
Zircopax	15

Stoneware glaze **Cone 8 Orton**

Soda feldspar	40
Flint	30
Whiting	20
Kaolin	10

This is transparent with fine regular crazing and is best on white stoneware or porcelain body.



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Elizabeth Lissaman — Mrs Hall

"Pottery for Pleasure" by Elizabeth Lissaman, (A H & A W Reed) was reviewed by Oswald Stephens in NZ Potter Vol 11, No 2, 1969.

Photos, courtesy of the Tauranga Potters Group are of Elizabeth Lissaman's 1987 pots.



ELIZABETH LISSAMAN, OBE PIONEER POTTER

By Pat Scapens and the Tauranga Potters Group



Elizabeth Lissaman has been potting for nearly seventy years.

During that time she has generously shared her knowledge and skills through classes, weekend schools, demonstrations, lectures and — perhaps most significantly — her book *Pottery for Pleasure* published by Reed in 1969. (My copy is a 1970 edition published by Bailey Bros & Swinfen Ltd — Ed.)

Because it is written in simple terms which are easily understood, this book has been of continuing use. Now, five reprints later, with rights sold throughout the English speaking world, it is used extensively in Australia, England, Africa and America.

Elizabeth was born in Marlborough. From the family sheep station she went to *Marsden Collegiate School for Girls* in Wellington, where **Dorothy Kate Richmond** — a very competent watercolourist who had worked with **Frances Hodgkins** in the early 1900s — became an important influence in Elizabeth's creative development. It was in applied design that her real interest grew, but locally there was no opportunity in the field of wallpaper, fabric or carpet design.

Clay was, however, available locally. Near Picton, clay exposed in railway cuttings was dug, bagged and left beside the line to be taken by rail to Seddon, where it would be loaded into the buggy or car and taken the final nine miles home.

By 1920 her first pot was fired by the *Mirimar Brickworks* in Wellington. Information was difficult to find — there were no pottery-craft books and no one knew then how rich NZ was in raw materials. So *Wengers*, in England, supplied glaze materials and oxides from their extensive catalogue, though a letter to England needed at least 3-4 months to bring a reply.

Fortunately, Elizabeth's grandmother lived in Sydney: while living with her, Elizabeth was able to visit brick kilns, drainpipe makers and a teapot factory, and to watch, question and note processes and products. All her spare money was used to buy bricks and coal for a small coal-fired kiln which she built and fired successfully on her grandmother's property.

Back home in Marlborough another kiln was built, fired with Westport coal. The hard work of trial and error, with *Wenger's* information and materials 3 months away, resulted in the first exhibition of New Zealand studio pottery at the Christchurch Winter Show in 1927.

The general public liked, and bought, the pots and interest in the craft of pottery grew. When the *DIC* store was built in Wellington in 1929, Elizabeth did 'instore' demonstrations, advertised "With Wheel and Clay — two sessions daily and two on Friday nights."

Periodicals and newspapers found this pottery making to be 'news,' as shown by her collection of cuttings from the local daily papers, *Free Lance* and *Weekly News* and even the children's page of the *Christchurch Star*.

There were so many firings, but one of the most memorable happened at the time of the Murchison earthquake in 1929. A firing was finished, but not cooled; the pots were removed from the kiln, wrapped in towels and set in front of the livingroom fire to cool slowly — which they did successfully.

In 1930 an oil-fired kiln was imported from England. It was front loading with a forced air draught to atomise the oil.

During the Depression of the 30s, sales continued. One order remembered from that period was for "120 pots of Exhibition Standard at four shillings each."

By 1940, Elizabeth's individual style of earthenware was well established. With **Olive Jones** and **Elizabeth Matheson** (a pupil of Elizabeth's) she was invited to demonstrate and exhibit at the Centennial Exhibition in Wellington.

With a new baby the demonstration was not possible, but her pots were exhibited.

They were of clay from their Levin farm, decorated with flowing forms of deer and birds in clear blues, greens and yellows.

Elizabeth's life continued with the work of a farmer's wife and mother of 3 sons, potting, adult classes and lectures through University extension and the Education Department, throughout the Waikato, Levin, Wellington, Marlborough and Christchurch. Always she used the local clays and the simplest of tools. Her own potter's wheel, home built from heavy timber, is driven by an

electric motor and clutch from a *Singer* industrial sewing machine. It is operated from a standing position with the wheel head about elbow height.

Years later, when **Hamada** came to New Zealand and demonstrated his technique of throwing, Elizabeth was surprised to find that the method of throwing which she had developed in isolation here, was very similar to the traditional style which had developed in Japan.

During a trip to England in 1958 Elizabeth and her husband were able to spend a day with **Bernard Leach**, discussing his influence on New Zealand potters — particularly in stoneware. He personally showed them over his workshops and was very generous with helpful suggestions.

The family moved to the Waikato in 1953, where a fresh source of clay was found on the farm, and potting, classes and lectures continued. When **Ian Scarrow** had an exhibition of *Bonsai* in Hamilton in the 1960s, he commissioned Elizabeth to make his containers. Japanese visitors to the exhibition asked him "Where in Japan did you get your pots?"

In 1982, Elizabeth's services to pottery in New Zealand were recognised with an **OBE**.

When does a potter stop potting? Now in Tauranga, Elizabeth — Mrs Hall — would like to thank the staff of *Crathie* who cleared a sunny garage to create a pottery shed, and to her sons; **Michael** who digs the clay on his Waikato farm, and **Bligh** who prepares it and brings it to Tauranga, taking the finished pots home to fire in Elizabeth's electric kiln.

Her pots are still carefully made and decorated in her individual style of flowing, stylised natural forms in vitrified earthenware — some with underglaze decoration, some with opaque glazes decorated with oxides, similar to a highly fired majolica. She also makes microwave ovenware and there are always orders to be filled for a steady market — but there is always time to welcome visitors to the *Crathie* pottery shed. Elizabeth Lissaman, Mrs Hall, now lives and pots at *Crathie*, Tenth Avenue, Tauranga. The phone number is Tauranga 89-501 if you wish to call.

TARADALE POTTERY GROUP

Near Napier, a small band of enthusiastic potters calling themselves the *Taradale Pottery Group* have one of the most beautiful club rooms in the country — the 130 year old *St Mary's Church*, standing tall and white amidst the grape vines of the *Mission Vineyards*.

Always a superb place to make welcome their visitors, though in winter it can be a very cold place to make pots, it was last June the scene of a great deal of creative activity. About 100 potters arrived from all over Hawkes Bay to attend a two day school taken by master potter **Len Castle**. Some 18 of these from the Taradale club and the *Napier Art Gallery Group* stayed on during the following week for more intensive tutoring by Len.

A small weekend school had originally been planned, but with Len as the drawcard it escalated into a major event which proved so successful that this small membership club intends holding similar workshops in the future, calling on the country's top potters as tutors.

With such a magnificent venue, a first class visiting potter, plenty of goodwill and some hard preparation work there is obviously no need to be in a large town to present such major cultural happenings. Taradale could be a place to take note of for the future!

Len Castle Workshop

Photos by Berit Zetterman



"Couldst I ever see a pot more divine?"
Eve Anderson with Len Castle.



Club rooms — Old St Mary's Church, Meeanee Road, Taradale

Len Castle demonstrates press moulding bowls to students and a good gathering of heaters

Len Castle demonstrates the making of a wine bottle to Cheryl Losciavo



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Redwood: Very plastic, easy to throw, low shrinkage 5-6% to dry, 13-14% overall. Fires to cone 9-10. Dark grey [R]

Waihero: Very plastic, good for slabs, large pots and salt glazing. Low shrinkage 5-6%, to dry 12-13% overall. Fires to cone 9-10. Light grey [R]

Planter Body: Plastic, coarse, easy to throw, good for planters and outdoor pots. Low shrinkage 5-6%, to dry 13-14% overall. Fires to cone 9-10. Toasted brown [R] red [OX]

White Stoneware: Very plastic, good for throwing or slabwork. Shrinkage 5-6%, to dry 12-13% overall. Fires to cone 9-10. Offwhite [R] white [OX]

Porcelain: Very fine plastic throwable porcelain. Translucent. Cone 8-10. Shrinkage 5-6%, 13% overall. Translucent. White [R] & [OX]

pH level of all these clays 4. All these clays are used at Cob Cottage Pottery, Brightwater.
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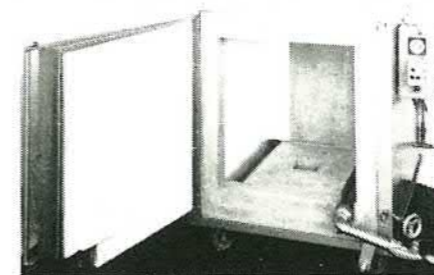
6-19 December
IAN & DIANNE HUTCHISON
"Extension to Fushia Future"

20 December — 3 January
MICHAEL POULGRAIM
Drawings on Clay based on Jean Jenet

11-23 January
DISPLAY BY DON THORNLEY

14-27 February
WORK BY MARSHALL WATT
Figurative work in Bronze and Clay

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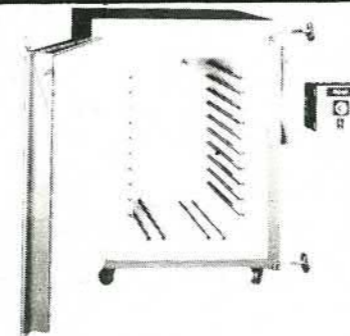


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NOT FOR FLOUR OR FLOWERS

By Don Thornley, Hamilton

When I prematurely held a 'farewell' exhibition in August '75 — having planned on going to the States — in the preface to the catalogue I wrote of going away and my work changing. I wanted a new direction: time to experiment and expose myself to the world out there.

An authoritative voice on the *QE II* funding council at the time asked me why a potter would want to go to New York? No grant eventuated: no chance to stand back and take a wider view.

Five years later, after a further period of fairly reluctant commitment to what I was making, I went 'provincial' and in early 1980 took a position as pottery tutor at *Waikato Polytechnic*: time to experiment and possibly time to change.

The late 60s and 70s were **Leach-Hamada-Yanagi** influenced days when direct perception or just looking at things without intellect clouding one's judgement was the way. Beauty had to do with functional ware made by *craftsmen unlearned* and forms were thought best derived from co-operation and working within tradition. According to one guru at the time it was the *how* of pottery and not the *why* that was all important.

But working within tradition never fitted me easily. Occasional glimpses of work by Americans **Peter Voulkos** and **John Mason** and locally, coiled sculpture by **Barry Brickell**, original forms by **Nola Barron**, **David Brokenshire** and **Len Castle**, and from Japan the innovative slab forms of **Kanjiro Kawai**, told me there were more personal and alternative ways of working.

To discover more about the *whys*, my wider view had to be through the *Interloan* library service and a few new books on my shelf. The work and writings of **Malevich**, **Mondrian** and **Kandinsky** confirmed my love of abstraction. The aesthetics, and in particular the use of colour by painters **Albers**, **Newman** and **Rothko** blew my mind; the sculpture of **David Smith**, **Tony Smith** and **Anthony Caro** among others, opened new doors; and not least, the wonderful book on ceramics by **Phillip Rawson**, that dared to analyse the structure of a pot — yes, I was going to allow the intellect to cloud my vision and judgement!

A new direction takes time. New sources require assimilation. The mind and emotion harnessed by intuition to give balance and alter perception. I believe this to be true whether making traditional or 'liberal' vessels or ceramic sculpture.

By 1983 a change of method was also of particular help. I moved off the wheel and started experimenting with semi-hard slabs of clay. Choosing not to make functional vessels (which I still love, by the way) and having very little affinity for the decorative pot that cannot contain flour or flowers, I asked myself, what if I closed the interior volume almost completely and permanently? And what if I altered the vertical axis of most pottery to a diagonal and later to more than one diagonal? And so it all began...

When I start a session, and I mean by this a period of 3 to 6 months, ideas start to tumble out. Jotting them down in diagram form and working in series, themes appear and there are not enough hours in the day!

The use of opposing diagonals makes for precarious forms — balance and imbalance, force and counterforce. Some occupy space, their weight tying them to the ground. Others are more gestural and less restricted, appearing to move in space. Then finally there is the exciting last part of the making, the potter's concern with openings that invite you to appreciate the enclosed space.

I want them to be non-referential, but sometimes they appear anthropological, architectural or machine orientated. Expressively, I hope they are contemplative and have something of the spiritual qualities of abstract form.

Timing is critical when working with slabs. The slabs are placed on fibrolite sheets to dry to the stage when they will stand freely without bending. Coils are welded to the corners inside and out, and with difficult forms extra bracing is placed inside. The metal kidney worked carefully on corner areas, gives the precision I want.

I prefer to spend time with the aesthetic questions rather than the technical ones, taking a basic alkaline matt glaze and saturating it with up to 25% low fire stains to achieve bold, bright colours that integrate and merge with the surface. Sometimes I use a commercial *Duncan* glossy glaze to give contrast, accent or visual texture. An exciting recent discovery is the use of colour to break up the surface and create illusionary effects much like shadows do when they fall on an object.

Risking life and general health, gloved and masked, extractor fan working hard, I spray on raw lead based glaze with 8% potassium dichromate added to give brilliant orange and red textures. Fired and re-fired at 920°C in an electric kiln, quite often layer upon layer of glaze is

fired on for softness, depth, colour vibration or richness. The clay is *Winstone* white slab, bisqued to 1100°C, high enough to give mechanical strength and yet absorbent enough to take glaze without preheating. Fired any higher, the complex forms would warp.

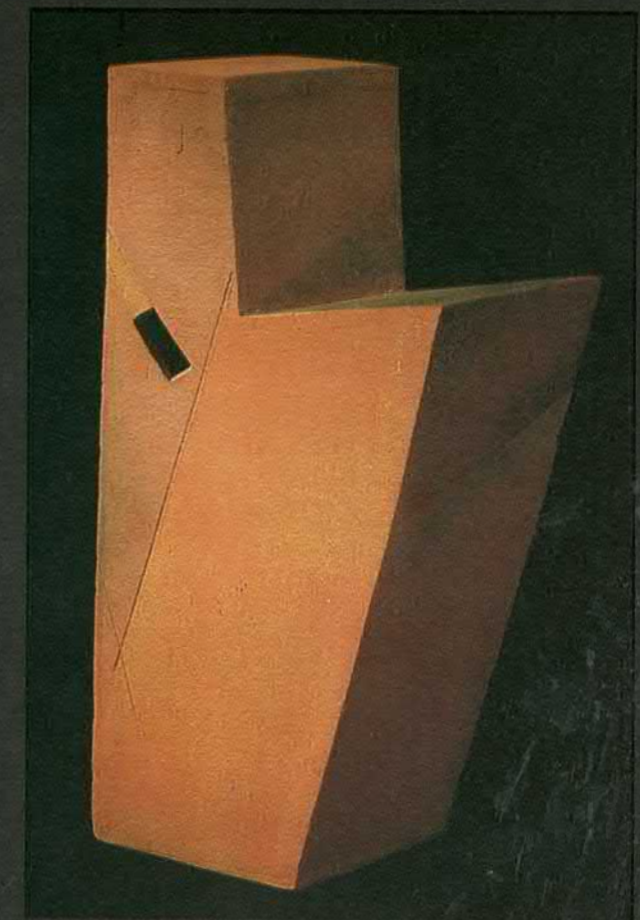
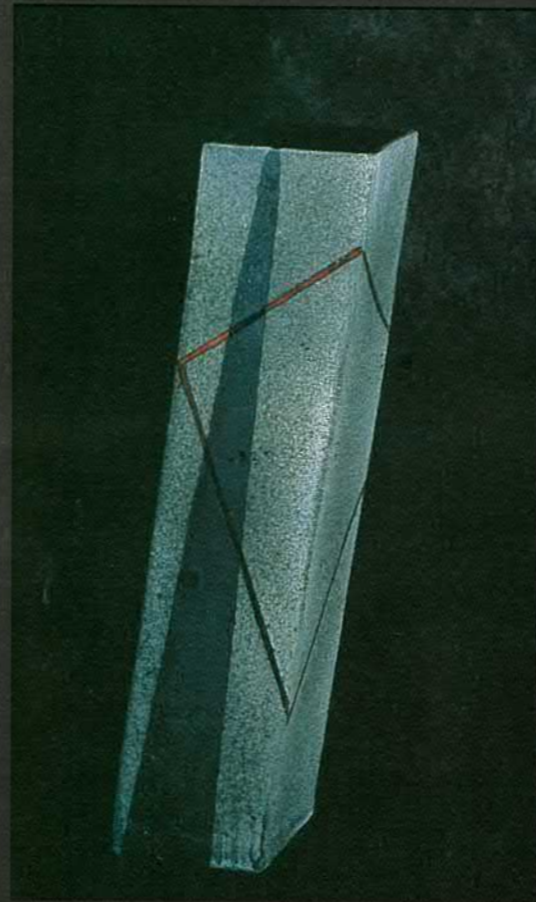
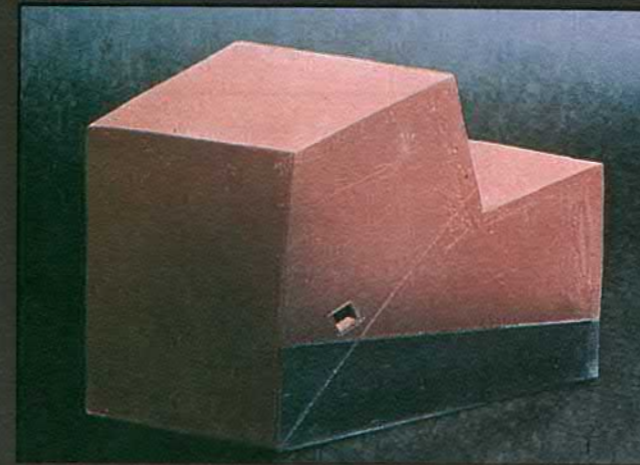
I miss at times my preoccupation of the past with informal vigorously thrown functional pottery; the relaxed repetitive cycle, the plastic movement; their inner tension, spontaneity, simplicity and directness and the very real pleasure that people said they had in using them. I don't think of what I am doing now as an advance on this work, but a move sideways, accepting a different set of criteria and making for a very different purpose.

To finish, allow me to quote a provocative statement from post-war American painter **Barnett Newman**:

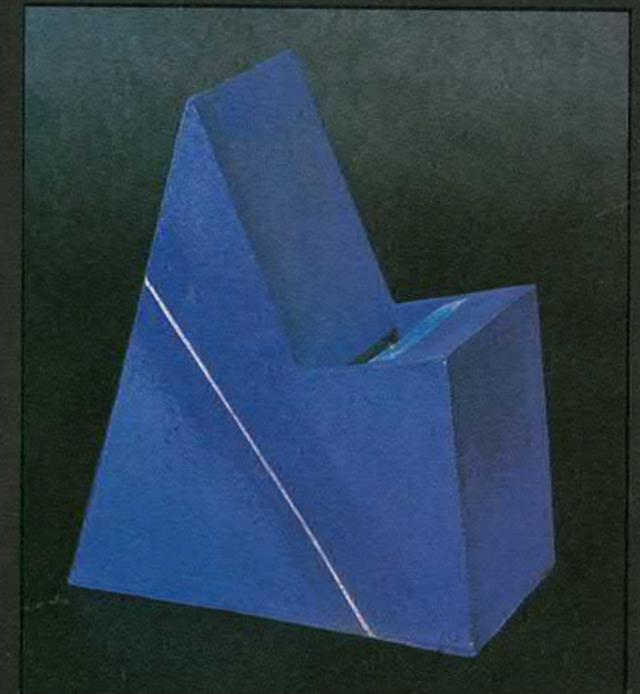
"We are asserting man's natural desire for the exalted, for a concern with our relationship to absolute emotions. We do not need the obsolete props of an outmoded and antiquated legend. We are creating images whose reality is self-evident and which are devoid of the props and crutches that evoke associations with outmoded images, both sublime and beautiful. We are freeing ourselves of the impediments of memory, association, nostalgia, legend, myth or what have you, that have been the devices of Western European painting. Instead of making cathedrals of Christ, man or 'life,' we are making it of ourselves, out of our own feeling. The image we produce is the self-evident one of revelation real and concrete, that can be understood by anyone who will look at it without the nostalgic glasses of history."

Unpopular thinking in this pluristic, so-called post-modern period? Perhaps so, but to me what he is saying still makes sense.

At the time of going to press, **Don Thornley** had just been awarded a *QE II Arts Council* grant for Senior Artists' Creative Development. He will spend 1988 at an Australian Institute yet to be decided upon, studying for a diploma in graduate level ceramics.



Hermetic Box No 2. 66cm h
Hermetic Box No 10. 30cm h
Curved Form. 52cm h
Oblique Box. 62cm h *Token Form No 7. 30cm h*



Photos by Howard S. Williams

NINO CARUSO

The Unfolding Clay

By Leo King, Auckland

This title of Nino Caruso's major exhibition at the *Ashai Gallery* in Kyoto in 1983 is perhaps a clue to a part of his personal philosophy. A concise but provocative summary of a confession which he made to me when we met last year, when he said that he liked the idea of building things and then opening them to discover their internal structures.

Nino Caruso's association with New Zealand is long standing, despite the fact that he has never been here. The Spring issue of the *New Zealand Potter* 1969 Vol. 11/2 contains an editorial advocating more contact between artist potters and the ceramics industries in order to upgrade industrial design and includes an article on Caruso, whom it describes as "a new breed of European potter," and illustrations of his work. To my knowledge his work has not been exhibited here although examples of similar slip cast modular relief work is to be seen in the work of *Giovanna Ponti*, an Italian student from Faenza who recently completed a Masters degree at the *Elam School of Art* in Auckland where some of her work is on permanent display. She also executed a commission for the *Fletcher Challenge Group (NZ Potter, Vol. 29/1, 1987)*. This kind of sculptural work and the decorative architectural relief of Caruso are of course evidence of the long history of the use of clay for decorative or structural surfaces where impermeability is often a bonus.

Caruso's personal background is colourful, born of Sicilian parents in Libya he was deported back to Sicily at the age of about 13yrs where he later worked with the British occupation forces and became acquainted with engineering and lathe work. In the late 1930s he moved to Rome where he was introduced to the clay in which he has subsequently made his career.

Lazio, the province in which Rome the capital city is situated, together with Umbria the adjacent province to the north east, originally formed part of the Etruscan empire around 2000 B.C. It was of course very important for its own artistic use of clay and bronze and for its aesthetic appreciation and collection of artifacts from other Mediterranean countries.

In such an environment and against the more recent artistic heritage of Rome itself, it is not surprising that over the last 25 years Caruso has developed as a teacher, consultant and artist of accepted international standing. His studio in Rome, until recently a recognised international centre, is situated in what was a 15th century monastery adjacent to

the Catholic church of *Santa Maria de Loreto*. The studio, which he bought about 25 years ago is very large and houses the design, prototype manufacture and the construction of individual pieces.

Because architectural wall cladding is usually on a large scale and for Caruso's designs require a multiplicity of units, Nino has close links with the ceramic industry which is responsible for the manufacture of plaster moulds, and the casting, finishing and firing of the units in accordance with his designs. As he has chosen to design his own individual sculpture using the same modular approach as the wall cladding, the pieces are naturally fabricated in the same way.

The practice of using skilled technical assistance in the preparation of large sculptured works was fairly common in the 1950s and 60s enabling the artists to produce work which was outside their own range of skills and capabilities. Today Caruso reciprocates by providing a consultative service in ceramic problems and glazes.

The essence of Caruso's designs is in the simplicity of its conception. By using a small number of individually designed modules he is able, by repetitive or seemingly random organisation, to build up areas of complex relief pattern which may be repeated as larger units of an even greater overall design. The effect is striking and dramatic. The basic modules, which often have one common dimension, have a strongly linear component which facilitates their continuous relationship and which takes the form of deeply concave or strongly convex cylindrical elements. These elements, which have varying radii, are placed in relating or opposing sets over the surface of the module, providing a deep relief which is selectively dependent upon the variations of angle and levels of ambient lighting for which they are initially designed. Much of the work is glazed with clear or a semi-matt very fine crackle for durability, but which emphasises the brilliance of the highlights.

The models from which the moulds are formed are made from wire-cut styrofoam, opening up the possibilities of surface texture which Caruso has exploited, in conjunction with the relief, in his free-standing columnar sculptures. These, which can be up to two and a half metres in height, use double sided modules, cylindrical sections bearing a fluting reminiscent of Ionic columns, or other combinations of surface form which are futuristically non uniform.

Caruso has a second studio and a home on an 18 acre property near Perugia, about 100 kilometres north of Rome, and close to the medieval village of Todi. The house which suffered much conversion used by warring factions and families in the area. The levels, which number about five, are set over a large basement, which in a previous tenancy housed the animals, but is now a well appointed kitchen and food storage area. The property is managed in Nino's absence by a local farmer and produces amongst other things a fine grape crop. The land surrounding the house, which is being prepared as an outdoor site for Caruso's sculpture, currently houses one of his horizontal works about 6 metres in length and 1.5 metres high entitled *Temple Wall*.

Quite close is the town of Spoleto which was the site of the *Festival of Two Worlds* in 1962 which included large works of international sculptors in steel such as Americans *David Smith* and *Alexander Calder*. Caruso visited the exhibition and his interest is reflected in the pieces of disused agricultural machinery set up around the property and his own welded steel and bronze pieces in his collection.

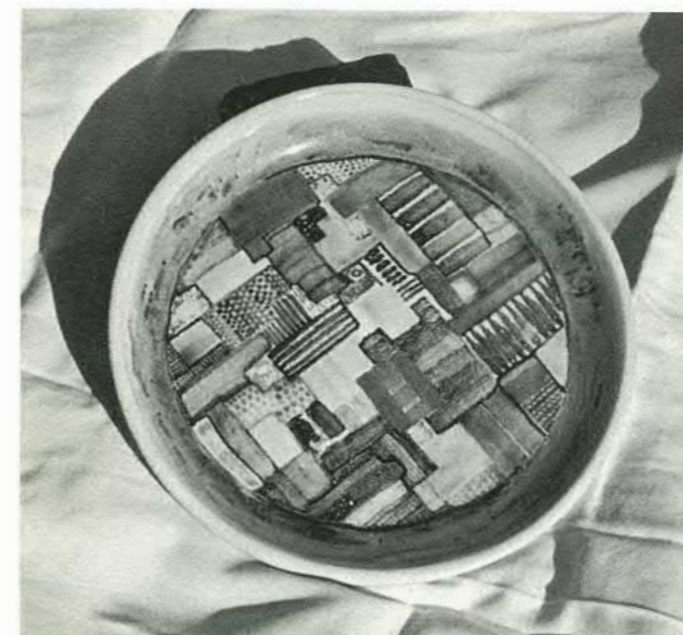
Nino's deep interest in Etruscan art is echoed in his later work and was the feature of a local exhibition at Ferrara in 1985, entitled *Homage to the Etruscans*. It was his enthusiasm which persuaded me to visit the *National Etruscan Collection* in the *Villa Giulia* in Rome. The collection, apart from bronzes which include armament and life size statuary, also contains a vast number of ceramic items including a collection of amphorae of widely differing designs collected from such ancient cities as Voltri and Civitavecchia.

The exhibition at Ferrara contained work which showed the continuing change in decorative and textural style. The tall columnar pieces were still in evidence, but the relief patterns were now in the form of tight volutes or scrolls of varying sizes and disposed in a more organic way, although still obviously organised. The architectural aspects of the work were extended to monumental architraves installed for the purpose of the exhibition into the doorways of an adjoining convent. The finish was in warm terracogillata.

On a more intimate scale were pieces which resembled Etruscan vessels about 40cms in height or others which had a ritual content. All were richly ornamented with the same stylised scroll

NORA FLEWELLEN

By Frederika Ernsten and Margaret Ryley



Majolica plate. 32cm diam



Photo courtesy Christchurch Press

Nora Flewellen celebrates her 80th birthday and 30 years of making slipware and majolica earthenware

80th Birthday Exhibition The Courtyard, Christchurch

"You don't want to photograph my hands," Nora Flewellen told the photographer from the *Christchurch Press*. "They are workman's hands."

Working hands certainly, and for 30 years they have been put to good use making pottery, culminating in Nora's first solo exhibition, to celebrate her 80th birthday, at the *Courtyard Pottery* in Christchurch.

Nora, a modest, reticent person is not really interested in going back over her past life. Potting has always been a personal and private thing, not done for money, but as an exploration of colour and pattern in that most difficult of all ceramic mediums, slipware and majolica glazed earthenware. She has never taken orders — a great interest in and love of the work and the pleasure it may give to friends and relatives is the overwhelming impression one gets from conversations with her.

Her workshop is the small wash-house at the back of her cottage. There has been no thought of expansion in spite of the complexity of the work done there. All

glazes, colouring oxides and slips are tidily stored under benches and on shelves which also house clay; a woodworking bench, wood turning tools and small electric kiln. Nora is also an accomplished woodworker, an inheritance from her grandfather who was a master cabinetmaker and builder of her cottage.

Nora's first contact with clay, which took over from her woodwork, came when she joined the *Craft Centre* group in Christchurch, after 3 lessons from the Nelson potter *Carl Vendelbosch*. At that time *Risingholme* was the only other group giving classes in pottery and the waiting lists for both were long.

Eventually Nora became the tutor for hand-building classes and still maintains that no pupil should go near a wheel until the technique of hand-building has been mastered. As there was a large mortgage to pay on the Springfield Road property of the *Craft Centre*, none of the tutors were paid for their teaching.

"We did it for love. Today, clay is prepared for use, there are craft supply

shops — it is all much easier — but then, we learned the hard way, digging clay and processing it, experimenting with everything, learning as we went along. Hard work, but I think we really had the best of it."

An inaugural member of the *Canterbury Potters Association*, Nora has recently been made a life member in recognition of her valuable and constant contribution to the organisation. She has also been an exhibiting member of the *New Zealand Society of Potters* and has examples of her work in the *Canterbury Museum* as well as in collections in the USA, Australia, Japan and Holland.

Nora's 80th birthday exhibition was of work made over the previous 8 months — the owner of the *Courtyard Pottery* gallery, *Frederika Ernsten*, began collecting pieces as they came into her shop for sale. Eventually she had to take all of Nora's pots out of the window because they would have sold long before the exhibition had been assembled.



Raku platters

Whilst watching the World Speedboat Championships at Lake Karapiro. Lyn Alves' eye was caught by the design on a t-shirt. She quickly sketched an idea forming, for decoration on one of her earthenware or raku platters. Lyn lives in Cambridge and is in her first year of the two year advanced pottery certificate course for part-time students at the Waikato Technical Institute.

Lyn has always been interested in art work and pottery, but it is only four years ago that she was able to take up clay work. The first three years she attended part-time pottery classes at the WTI doing a certificated course with Don Thornley as tutor.

As well as her Friday class, Lyn usually works on her pieces three nights a week till 2 or 3am - "I'm not a good sleeper..." and in the lounge room as it's warmer at those hours. Weekends and Summertime brings Lyn and her clay outdoors.

Four days a week Lyn works for an agricultural equipment exporting company. She rides her bike to and from work and derives great enjoyment from the wide views of the countryside and hills that surround Cambridge.

In August Lynn had an exhibition of her work at *Craft New Zealand* a converted Gothic-style church, in Cambridge. The exhibition consisted of raku and earthenware platters, wall pieces and a triangular form. Barbara Sherburd, director of *Craft New Zealand*, had seen Lyn's work and invited her to exhibit 24 pieces. Lyn was more than pleased to be exhibiting in such a nationally well-known and local gallery. She also had a raku piece accepted in the *Winstone Crafts Biennale* in Auckland.

Raku is Lyn's greater love. She says she could work with raku all day and all night if her family would let her. Geometric patterns and lacing are the dominant theme in most work. Lyn says she's always lacing things and scribbling ideas. Lacing came about when Lyn was trying to make a raku square with a disc cut out of the middle and inserting a



Tests of new glazes and effects from one firing.

LYN ALVES

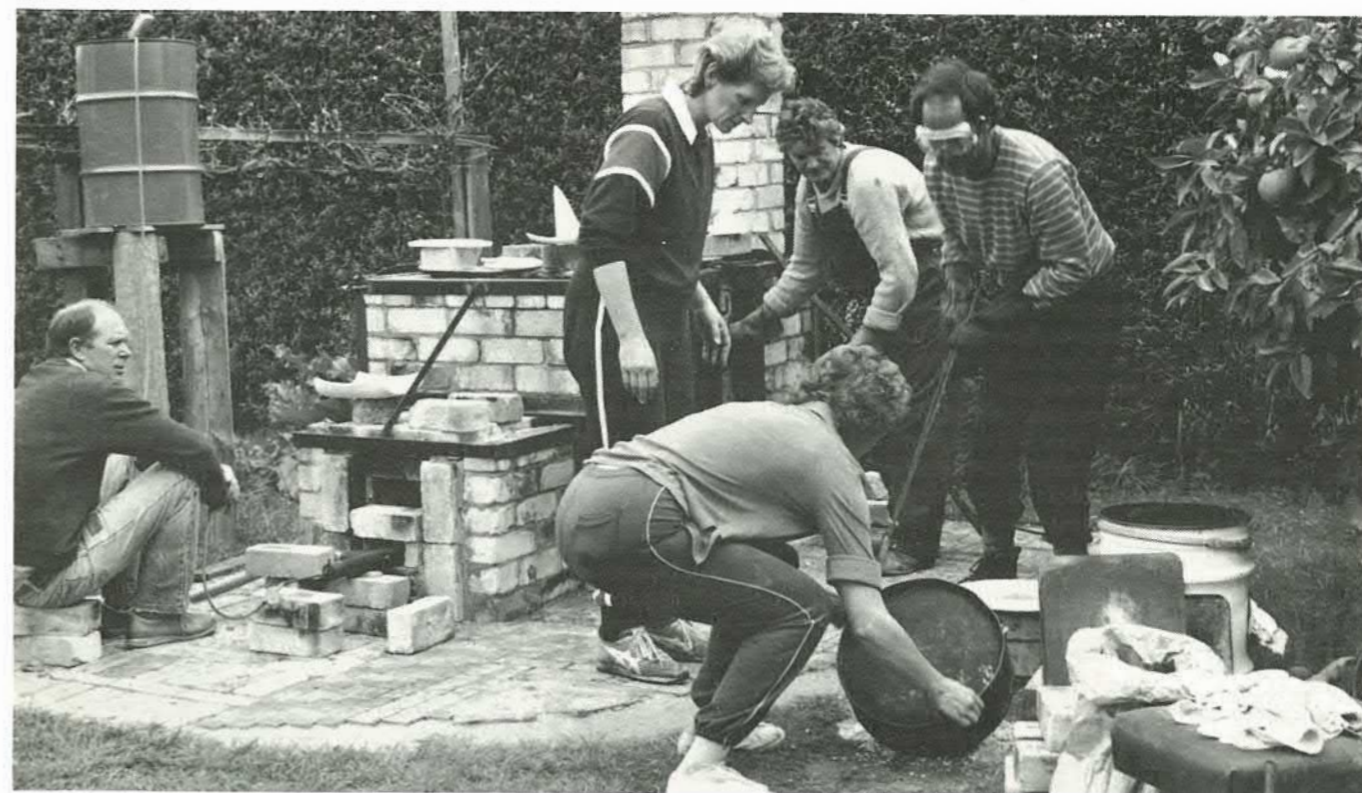
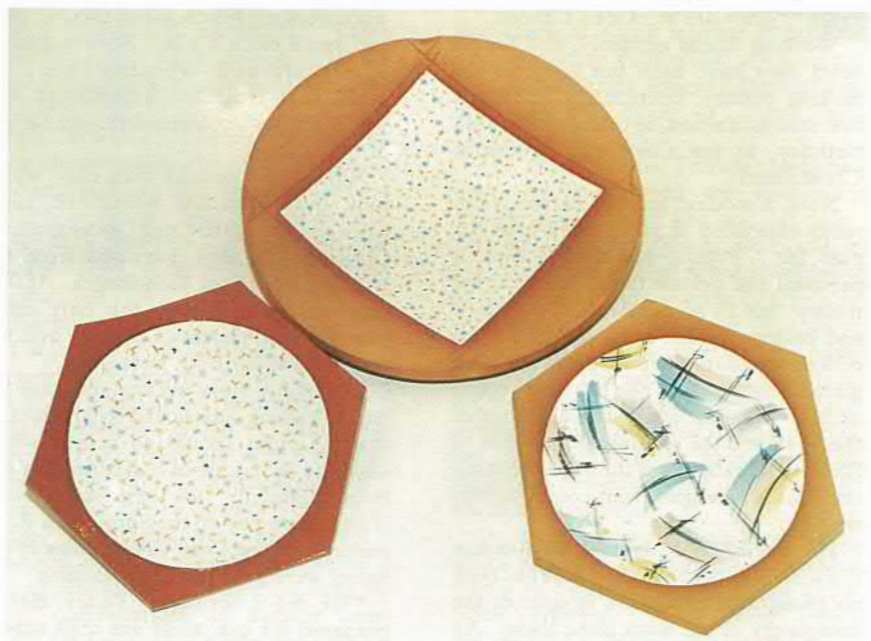
by Elizabeth Woodfield,
Hamilton



Wall piece



Earthenware platters



The raku firings are done in a diesel fired 5 cu. ft. brick kiln along with enthusiastic helpers Eunice and Graham, with Pat to open the door. Peter controls diesel and air.

Raku pieces taken straight from the red-hot kiln are nestled on top of a handful each of sawdust and leaves, then sealed in the reduction barrel to effect the beautiful black without pitting the glaze.

Graham carries a hot plate from the kiln to the reduction barrel.

suspended triangle, but the pieces kept cracking, so she decided to lace the next attempt together. Feather additions followed when she accompanied a group of Japanese students to *Hilldale Zoo Park* where the students gathered up peacock feathers and presented them to her.

Lyn uses four colours in her Raku pieces - red, yellow, white and reduced black aiming at dramatic impact. When making her pieces she works ideas through, planning around her limited palette. In every firing she experiments with a new glaze. One technique she feels could be most useful to her, is to spray the bisque piece with water then sprinkle dry glaze powder on top. "The firing gives a really neat textured finish."

Her raku firings are very hot and fast, 10 minutes being the maximum time for pieces to be in the kiln, otherwise the bright red is lost. The white glaze needed to be adjusted to work around the fast rate.

Lyn prefers to make decorative pieces

that are pleasing to look at and enjoyed for their own sake rather than making utilitarian pieces that are only justified by their use. She says her platters with the red glaze should not be used for food as the red is from cadmium. This is adapted to raku temperatures by the addition of nepheline syenite and gerstley borate. The base glaze is no longer commercially available, but Lyn has four years personal supply stashed away.

Lyn prefers working with raku as she feels she is in control and is totally involved with each piece, but she does enjoy brief sojourns into earthenware where she still is doing designs. She makes mainly slab pieces and says although she enjoys working on the wheel, she doesn't get a buzz as much as with slab work. She is now working on a series of triangular forms and a 3,000 word essay on ethnic masks and shields of Papua New Guinea for credits towards her certificate at the *Waikato Technical Institute*.



THEY'RE OK, WE'RE OK

By Peter Gibbs, Nelson

For three months during this winter, I travelled with my family in the south western states of the USA. Most of the time we were in California, where I had teaching jobs, firstly for three weeks at *Napa Valley College*, just north of San Francisco, then for five weeks at *Mesa College* in San Diego. Scattered between and after these experiences were workshops in Los Angeles and Albuquerque, New Mexico.

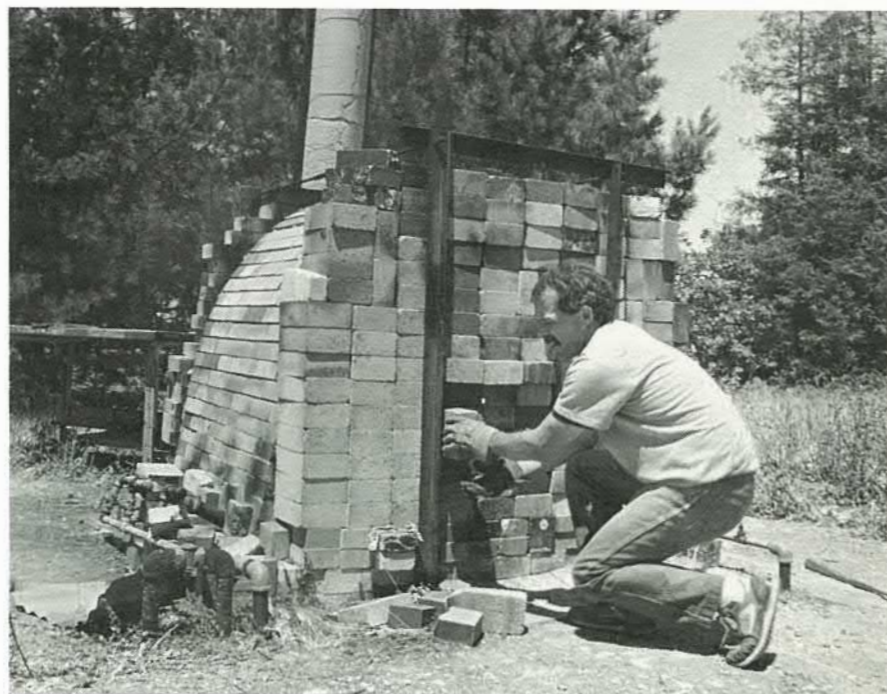
The most common request since we returned has been to give a comparison between the state of pottery here, and developments over there. It's as if New Zealanders need reassurance that what they are doing is OK, and that it doesn't suffer too much by comparison with what happens out there in THE WORLD.

Americans don't need this reassurance to the same extent. The very size of the country and its population seems to make them complacent about their standing in the international community. Only those amongst them who have travelled, or are more aware of global events have an inkling that their country is not universally regarded as the centre of the universe, and therefore immune from questioning about their foreign policy, consumerism, status of the arts, or any other of a million small facets of their life. In fact it's this very innocence of alternative techniques of getting through the minutiae of daily life that makes us so much the same.

Culture shock comes in an infinite number of ways; from knowing where to buy a filled roll, to turning on a light switch, and from learning to drive on the wrong side of the road, to knowing what time to turn up for "tea."

In considering the state of crafts in general, and pottery in particular, it's essential to consider the origins and education of the practitioners. I should also point out that three months in a classroom does not make one an expert, so these opinions are just impressions from one biased observer.

For a start, almost all the clay work and clay workers I came across were tied tightly to the education system. The very descriptions of the courses revealed the underlying attitude to the work. Always, the courses were described as *Ceramics*, not *Pottery*, and the Ceramics Department was tied to the "Fine" Art Department, along with Painting, Composition, Art History, Sculpture, and so on. Although some classes were also offered in Glass, Fibre and Jewellery, Ceramics seemed to have a far greater claim on resources.



Peter Gibbs with Napa Valley College salt kiln built by famous salt glazer Sandra Johnstone

In teaching courses labelled *Ceramics I*, *Ceramics II*, and *Ceramics III*, I was expected to cover a huge range of skills in a short period of time. As the students moved through these courses, they would be expected by implication to be familiar with all the techniques covered. In actual fact, this would be impossible, unless the students had facilities of their own. I also taught *Ceramics Special Studies*, and all these students were experienced potters with their own studios. Even these people, although highly knowledgeable in a broad range of pottery areas, had shortcomings in many basic pottery skills.

The basic attitude to education in America is one which I would regard as being more healthy than that prevailing here. Rather than ceasing upon graduation from secondary school, university, or whatever institution, as is generally the case here, Americans seem much more likely to carry on throughout their adult life picking up classes here and there for personal enrichment, satisfaction, job advancement, or any other reason. The result of this is that whether potters are still involved in the education system or not, the skills and attitudes which they bring to their work are far more likely to stem from this source than from the workshop, or from personal experience, as is the case here.

So how is all this transferred to the actual work? In general, *Art* is the goal. Function does not really come into it as a

criterion for judgement. At the top level in NZ I don't believe function is the issue either, no matter how much traditionalists here try to deny and resist this trend. The difference is that in comparing the best ceramic work from both countries, pottery in NZ is more likely to have its ancestry in functional work, and in particular, the techniques used are more likely to be the same techniques used by a professional potter. In the USA, more freedom in the use of techniques is exercised, and the goals and references lie more with art and sculpture, less in the traditional pottery area. Still this is just a matter of degree, as ceramics in both countries obviously have much in common.

In giving a purely subjective judgement, I would say that I feel more at ease with NZ pottery, and that I am more stimulated by the best work here. Before I am accused of being parochial, I should add that it is impossible in such a short space of time to partake very fully of the smorgasbord of work available throughout the US, and that I have a personal bias towards, and pride in the work of NZ potters. However, I feel that the long lonely hours which kiwi potters have put in over the years, learning their particular skills as a matter of marketplace survival, are starting to pay off, and the technical skills which have now become second nature are beginning to be used in an increasingly confident way to express ideas.



Julie Warren (Gibbs) demonstrating at Napa Valley College



Peter Gibbs (right) discusses the salt firing with student Jim Duda (doo da day)

Photos by Marilyn Hartwell

If NZ ceramics can foot it with the best over there, you would imagine that we would all be selling our work for vast prices in California right now. People like **Greg Murphy** and **Campbell Hegan** of *Craftworks International* are attempting to do just that, in fact the two *Out of NZ* shows organised by them last year in Santa Barbara and San Diego made a big impression on the American potters that saw them. The difficulty is that the country is just so BIG; craft shops are scattered all over, the good ones being a long way apart, and the huge population has such a vast number of other consumer items to eat up those discretionary dollars, that it takes more than a couple of well placed shows to make any impression on the market.

Collectors exist all right, but the hierarchy of known ceramic stars dominates, and without a continuous

presence, it verges on the impossible to make any inroads into the star ranking system. In our favour, we have only the fact that NZ is currently a very trendy country over there, but I blush to add that this is because we're perceived to be part of Australia, and they've made it to a large degree on the strength of Paul Hogan and "Crocodile Dundee." Our most visible presence in California is the large number of *Canterbury Clothing* shops, which are in many of the huge shopping malls where Mr and Mrs America go to shop.

In any case, I don't pretend to know the answers to the marketing problem. As far as the quality of the work goes, the best of NZ can easily compare with the best of theirs. The worst of NZ work is probably much better than the worst we saw in California. In fact the small amount of domestic ware we saw on sale

was pretty bad. This was a clear reflection of deficiencies in skills and in the aesthetics of the functional object.

There is a great interest amongst potters there about the work of New Zealanders, and I suspect that if we want our work to sell over there, then we first have to promote it in any way possible, perhaps through craft magazines. This probably means pinpointing just a few potters at first and endeavouring to make their work recognisable by constant exposure. As the work of just a few New Zealanders becomes known, that will in turn help pave the way for others.

Whatever happens in the future, whether we concentrate our efforts to increase awareness of NZ work here or overseas, we can have the confidence that the work of our potters is comparable to the rest of the world.



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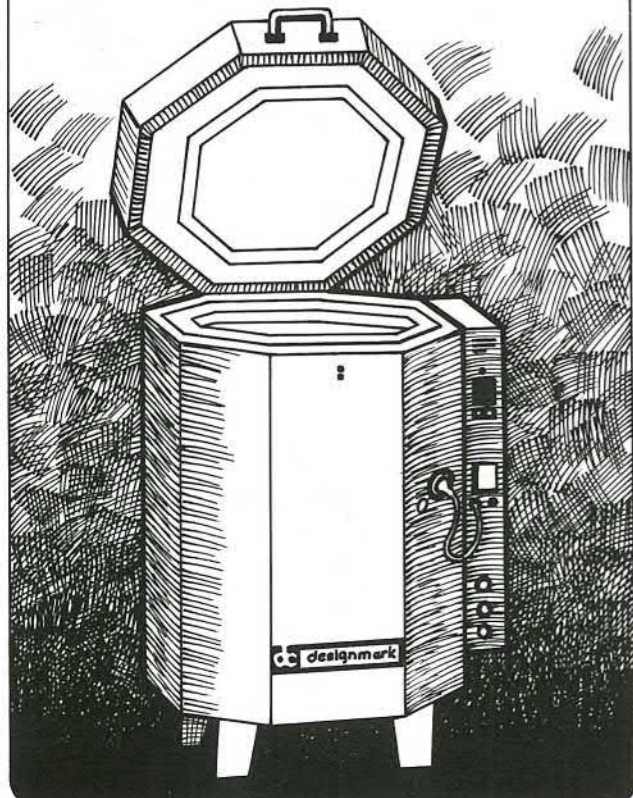
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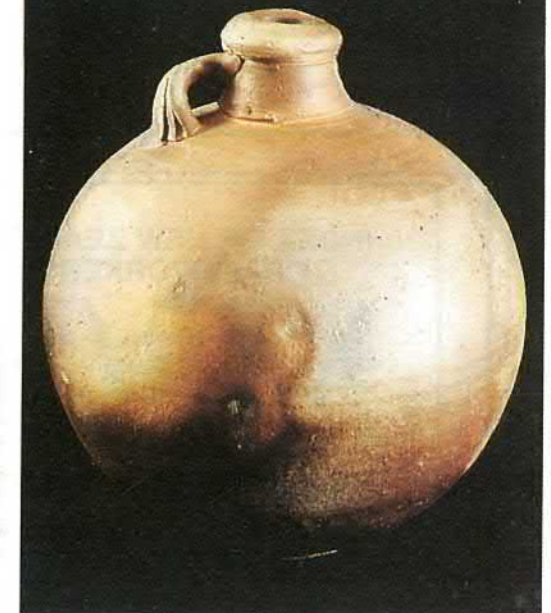
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David Trubridge, Bay of Islands. Writing Desk and Chair
in Kauri and Black Walnut



Warwick Freeman, Auckland. Paua Bead Necklace

Malcolm Harrison, Auckland. "Ballad of the Negro Sailor." Quilted Fabrics

Linley Adams, Auckland. Glass Wall Panel



Photos by Ces Thomas

INDEX OF NEW ZEALAND CRAFTWORKERS

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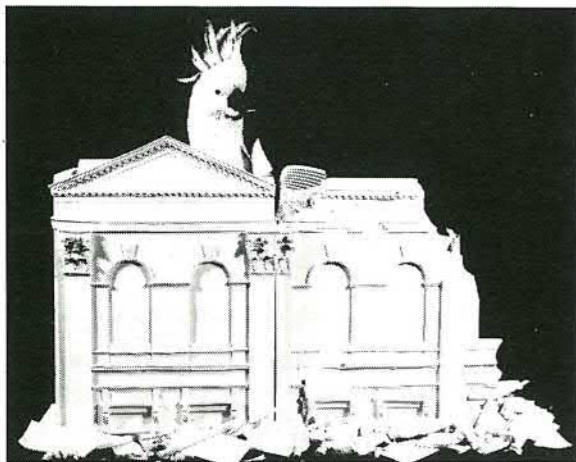
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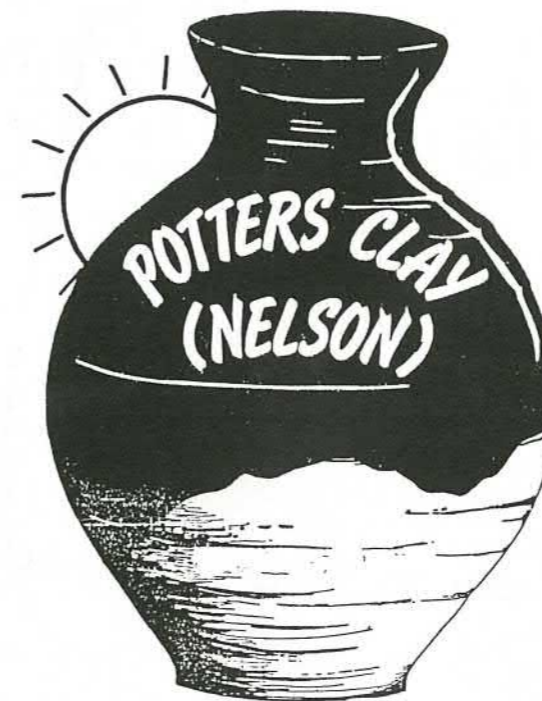


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CLIFDEN SCHOOL SOUTHLAND

Tutor, Dawn Glynn, Otautau



Clifden School, 6 year old budding potters



Clifden School in Western Southland believes in starting them young. The results shown here are from this year's REAP - Rural Education Activities Programme, from children in Primer one, to Standard four (5 - 10yr olds).

The children prepared crayon or pencil working drawings of a subject or an object. Usually I took items along for ideas, discussion and stimulation. Progression then to painting; learning brushstrokes, design, proportion, repeats and patterns and movement. They then examined established potters' work before carrying their own designs through onto clay plates, or they made pinch pots or models of fish, butterflies, witches, teddybears, guitars and dinosaurs.

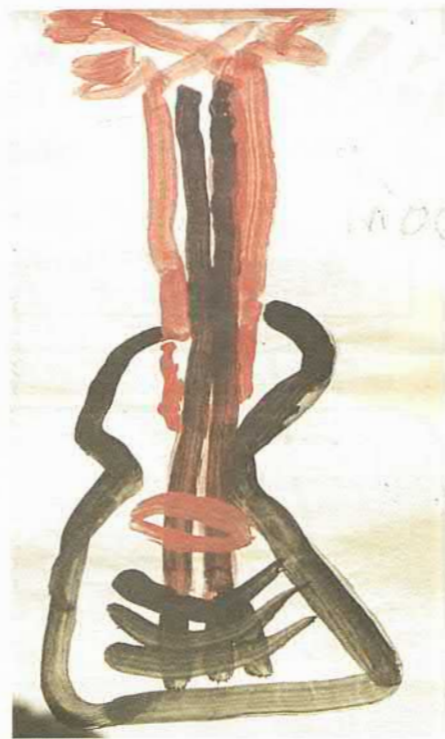
The plates, mainly by the older children, were inscribed with their designs, then washed with burnt umber, red iron and manganese.

The children's enthusiasm was boundless and the results most satisfying - perhaps we have some of our next generation of potters here in the making!

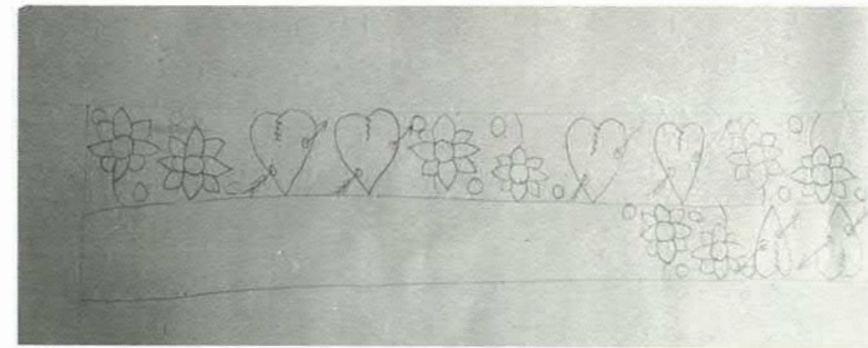
Fish, witches and butterfly by 6 yr olds



Teapots. Wade McNamara (5)



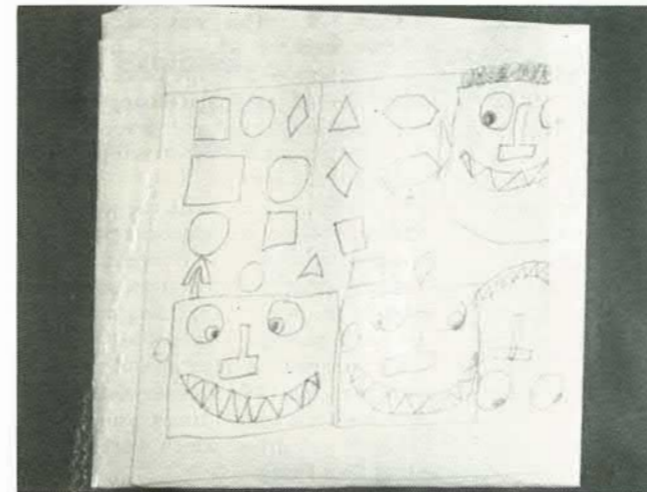
Guitar. Rachael Moore (8)



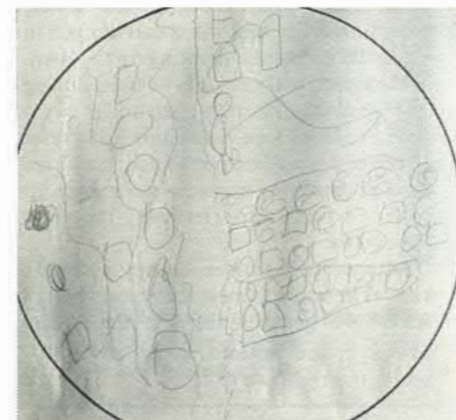
Design and plate by Gweneth Ferris (10)



Design and plate by Karl Smith (9)



Design and plate by Justin Sanford (10)



Design and plate by Kerry Green (9)

TURF KILN

By Graham Collings,
Matarangi Beach

Having fired my first pot in a hole on the beach and my second in a pile of loose bricks, it was not too surprising that I should be interested in building a turf kiln. I was very impressed and influenced by a friend who was producing fire bricks out of what looked like a compost bin with a turf wall on three sides and corrugated iron on top. I needed a small kiln which could be sealed off for heavy reduction, but had very little spare cash — a problem not unique to myself.

After discussions with Milton Hutchison (better known as Hutch) from Kuaotunu I had a trailer load of fire blocks and a firm idea of what I was going to do. I used turf from Kuaotunu because it contained more clay than the local sandy soil.

The internal measurements were made to be slightly larger than my three 300 x 400mm shelves (the only shelves I have). Timber pegs were driven into the ground to the internal measurements. The turf blocks were trimmed with an old wood saw and put into place, and a hole was formed on one side, with bricks, for the burner. The inside was plastered with a mixture of terracotta clay and sawdust similar to that used by Hutch for his fire bricks. The peep hole in one side was made by cutting the turf to leave a brick sized hole.

A 2mm steel plate with ceramic blanket insulation fixed to the underside was put on top. The steel was slightly buckled which suited me because it allows water to drain off and the supplier to take 40% off the price. The top of the kiln was formed to the shape of the steel plate so the insulation sat firmly on the rim of the chamber to form a reasonable seal. The outside of the walls were taken up to just below the steel, so that this edge could be sealed off with clay once the kiln was going. A 100 x 100mm hole was cut in the steel and insulation to let the exhaust air out. This is easily damped with a brick placed partly over the hole, and can be sealed off with some wet clay and a brick when the firing is finished.

As the pieces I produce are earthenware sculptures, tiles and pots used for decorative purposes I am not interested in high temperatures although the material used should be able to withstand stoneware temperatures without any problems. The first two firings were to 900°C and took 2½ hours without any problems. Since I "improved" the kiln it has taken me much longer, 4 hours, to reach the same temperatures. I must be doing something wrong.



Firing the turf kiln at an early stage in its development

This problem would appear to be due to my inexperience rather than the kiln design. I make a tunnel of loose bricks and start the burner away from the chamber. As things warm up I increase the air and diesel and move the burner closer until it is discharging directly into the bottom of the chamber. Fire bricks disperse the flame and stop direct contact with the shelves. I have reached the conclusion that the arrangement of these bricks has a significant effect on the time taken to heat the top of the kiln.

I tried some terracotta pieces in the first few firings but they turned out an insipid pinky colour. This again could be due to my inexperience, but as I get such good results with terracotta in my wood fired kiln I did not worry about putting any more in the turf kiln.

The main problem was that the inside walls began to break down with the heat and cavities formed when the turf dried and burnt to a red powder. Where the clay surface was cracked or punctured the red powder would run out leaving a hole. At this stage Hutch was experimenting with mixing paper fibres with clay and it was found that the fluffy wet paper/clay mixture had really good adherence with the powdery turf. A reasonable layer could be built up by sloshing handfuls of this mixture into the holes. The material which had fallen out was then mixed with clay and put back. This worked reasonably well but was soft after firing and a bit fragile to touch. There were still small cavities which were filled with a mixture of clay, sand, sawdust, grog, or whatever.

Soon the inside walls became stable and the small shrinkage cracks were filled up with fine clay. The inside was coated with borax frit and china clay which soaked into the walls giving a hard surface when fired. Any weak spots were

given a second coat before the next firing.

The outside of the kiln only gets slightly warm during firing and the kiln takes a long time to lose its heat when switched off. Cooling can be assisted by opening up the holes and taking the lid off.

There is no doubt about the good insulating qualities of the turf, but probably the most impressive thing about this kiln is the cost which was around \$70. This was made up as follows: steel for lid — \$15, insulation and fasteners — \$30, fire bricks — \$20, cement — \$5. All the other materials were local clay, sand and sawdust. The diesel burner made from bits of pipe cost an additional \$44.

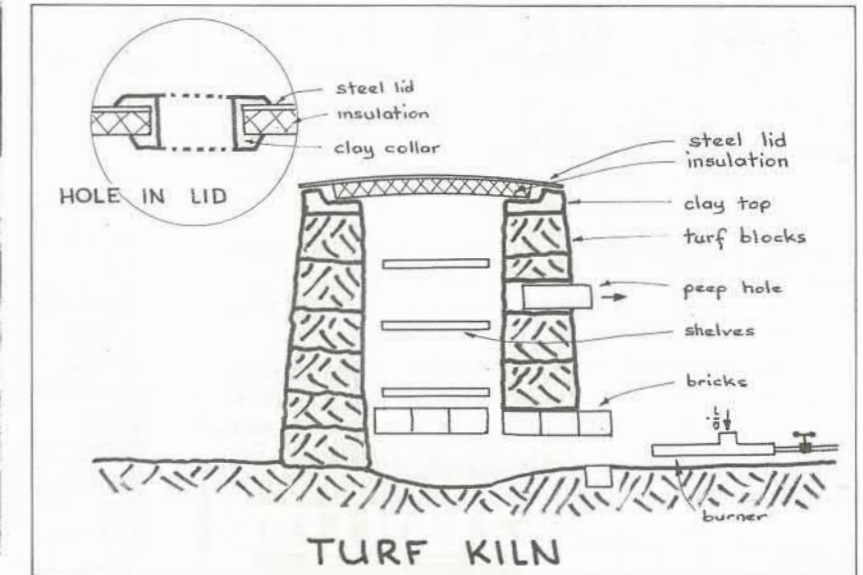
This kiln certainly does the job for a fraction of the cost I may have paid for a 4 cubic foot kiln. I intend to do earthenware glaze in it at some stage, but most of the work I am doing now does not need glazing. I have a lot to learn about ceramics in general and firing in particular. This kiln uses very little diesel — it has been fired 7 times, using about half a 44 gal. drum, which works out at about \$6 a firing.

The kiln is reasonably resistant to weather and apart from the lid rusting there is nothing much that can happen to it. At the moment it is sitting on the lawn, in the open, and can only be fired during fine weather, although once under way a shower of rain would not hurt it. I prefer to cover it up when not in use, but there would be nothing wrong in storing the lid under cover and leaving the rest uncovered.

Altogether I am very happy with this kiln. The more I fire it the better it gets. Soon I will get the hang of arranging the bricks in the bottom to get the flame going the right way.



The finished turf kiln



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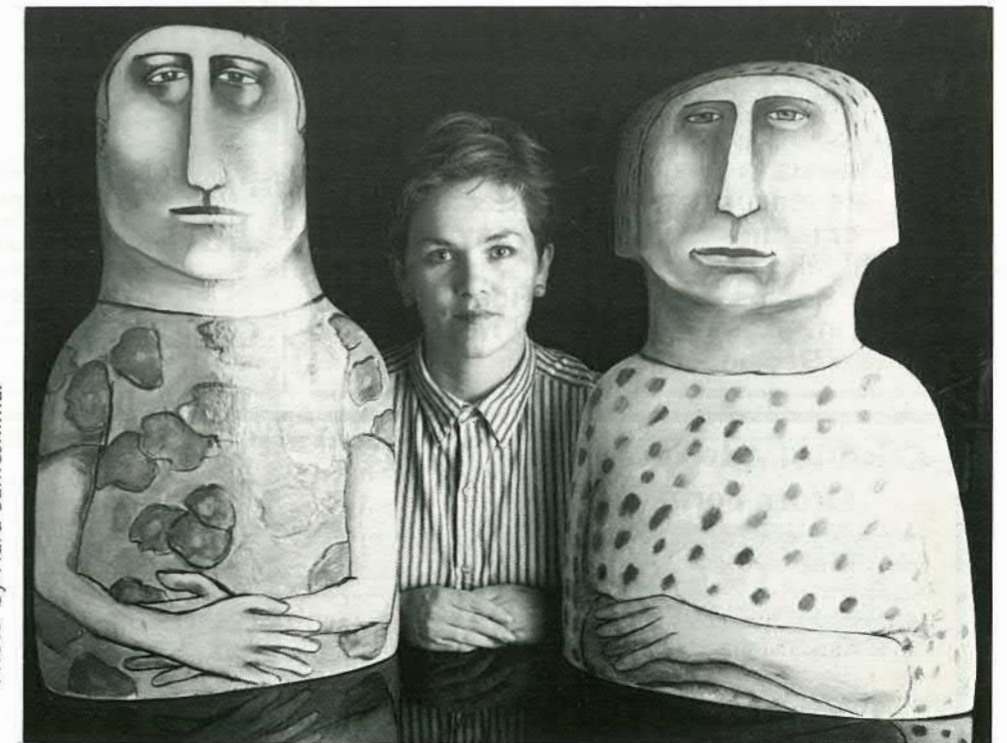


Photo by Haru Sameshima.

1988 Workshops — Mitsuya Niiyama, the well known Japanese potter who gave a successful demonstration tour of New Zealand in 1982, will be visiting this country again in 1988, holding classes in the main centres. Further information can be obtained from Auckland Studio Potters, PO Box 13-195, Onehunga, Auckland.

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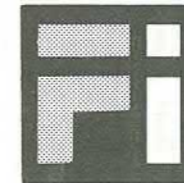
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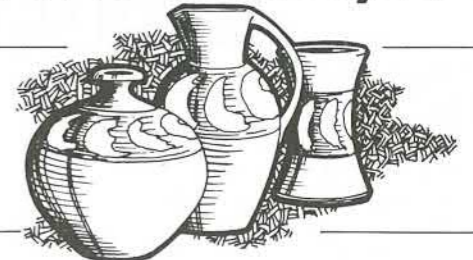
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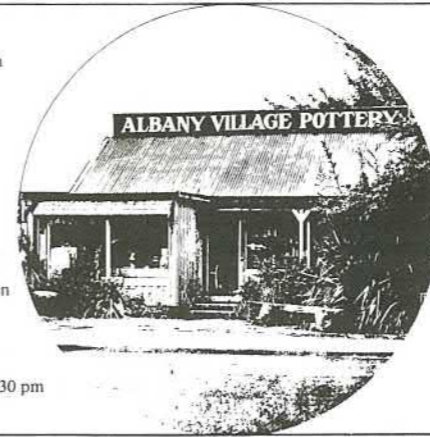
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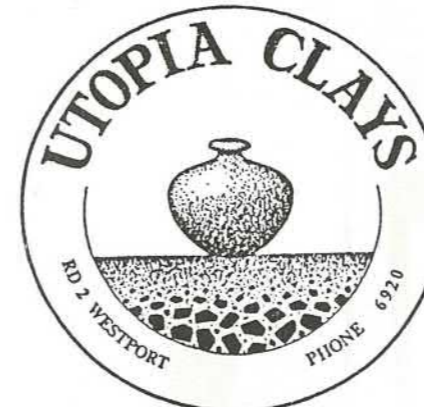


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