

# Piper

Volume 30, Number 3, 1988

## New Zealand Potter

Rona Barrett — WANGANUI

Alice Smith — CARRINGTON



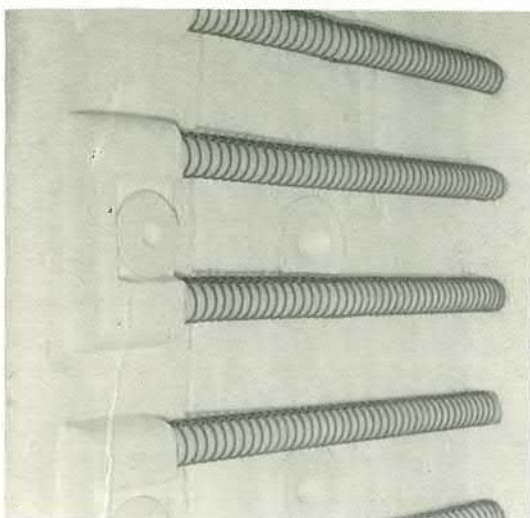
Jody Stevens — WAIKATO

Graham Rose — OTAGO





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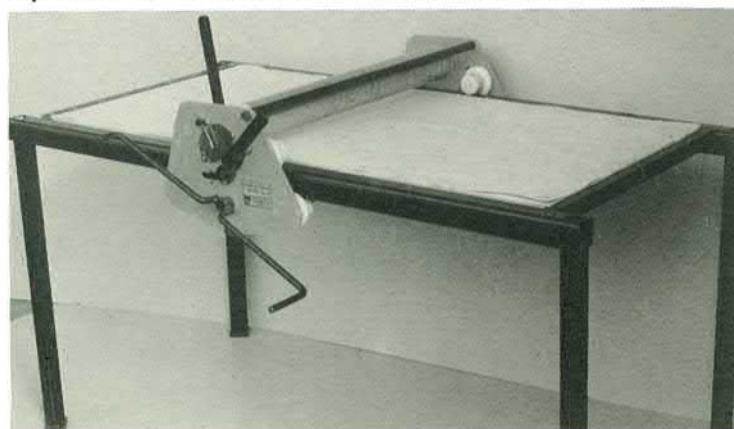
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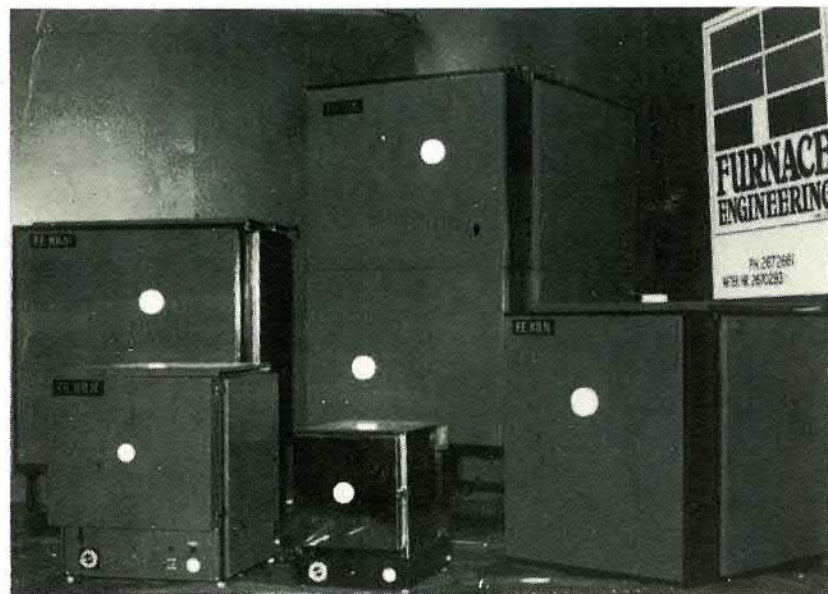


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# THROUGH THE FILTER PRESS

## COMMONWEALTH GAMES FESTIVAL EXHIBITIONS

In January and February 1990, New Zealand will play host to the world when the Commonwealth Games are held in Auckland. Concurrent with this sporting event a cultural festival is going to take place, encompassing performing and visual arts in all types of venues, from *Aotea Centre* (if it's ready!) to the streets and parks of Auckland.

A major emphasis of the exhibition calendar is going to be on clay. Working with the *Auckland Studio Potters*, the *Games Festival Organisation* is currently engaged on forward planning. The program is threefold and comprises:

1. *Pots of the Commonwealth* exhibition where we hope to see ceramic work from as many Commonwealth countries as possible. This could consist of current work produced by practising artists, potters and artisans in that country, or possibly historical work, if the clay tradition of that culture is no longer viable. This will be a large exhibition of several hundred pots and will obviously cover an enormous variety.

Imagine work of artists from sophisticated societies such as the UK and Canada juxtaposed with Nigerian, Caribbean or Papua New Guinea work. We will be able to see what sort of work is currently being done where there is an extraordinarily rich tradition of pottery, such as Cyprus. This exhibition will hopefully be a grand overview of a large part of the ceramics produced in many of the countries of the Commonwealth.

2. Alongside this a *New Zealand Ceramics* exhibition will be held. A representative selection of the best work from every region of the country. Work that is fresh and new alongside our traditional work in a major show which will be seen by thousands of visitors from New Zealand and overseas.

3. In addition, we can invite two potters from anywhere in the Commonwealth to be our guests for a month or so. These potters can show slides and films, give workshops or demonstrations, lecture, or do whatever they are best at, in Auckland or other centres.

Whilst we in Auckland are hosts for these events, we hope that potters all over the country will regard them as **theirs**; that nationally we are hosts for our Commonwealth guests.

To this end we are interested to hear from anyone who may have suggestions or information on potters from elsewhere in the Commonwealth, who would make interesting guests, or useful information on areas of interest as sources of work for the exhibitions.

If you have any ideas or suggestions then please write to:

**The Organiser**  
**Commonwealth Games Exhibitions**  
**ASP Centre**  
**P.O. Box 13-195**  
**Onehunga**  
**Auckland**  
We'd love to hear from you!

## NZSP. OVERSEAS POTTERS TOURS

The October tours of New Zealand by **Sandy Brown** and **Sandra Black** are the culmination of the first year of operation of the NZSP's tours coordination programme. The aims of the scheme have been to take overseas potters of repute who are going to be in NZ at their own expense anyway, to circularise all interested groups and institutions with the information about who is coming and when, and to coordinate the tours when they happen.

In this, the society has received the backing of the *QEII Arts Council*. Sandy Brown has also received support from the *British Council*, who have substantially funded her return air fare from Australia, where she has been Artist-in-Residence at the *Gippsland Institute of Advanced Education* in Victoria since April.

Sandra Black needs no introduction. Long before she won the 1988 *Fletcher Challenge Award*, negotiations were in hand for her show at *Masterworks Gallery* and her subsequent tour of NZ.

Sandy Brown is a British potter of high reputation. A review of her show *The Complete Picture* in 1987 said: "Here is a potter bursting with spontaneity, boundless energy, and childlike playfulness. The whole exhibition shouts for joy, with a rich colourful exuberance so pronounced it is difficult to imagine it has any boundaries. Yet Sandy's work retains an important element of self discipline and direction which creates pieces powerful in design and decoration."

The 1989 programme of tours includes **Les Lawrence** from San Diego, USA, **Mitsuya Niiyama** from Japan, and **Ian Currie** from Australia, with English potter and writer **Peter Lane** a probable visitor in 1990. With all the activity from overseas, the NZSP has not lost sight of the fact New Zealand potters rank with the best in the world, and is preparing to compile a list of Kiwi potters who are available to travel and teach within this country.

## PATRICIA PERRIN

It is with great sadness that we announce the unexpected death of **Pat Perrin** at Auckland Hospital on Saturday 12 November. Our deepest sympathies go to her sisters, **Yvonne** and **Phyllis**. Pat will be missed by us all.

## NZSP — TUTORS WANTED

At present, as a service to members, the *New Zealand Society of Potters* co-ordinates the visits of overseas potters throughout New Zealand. Regular information is sent to a wide range of potters groups. The society now intends to extend this service, by compiling a list of N.Z. people willing to tutor at workshops. Local groups will be able to use this list to organise workshops independently. It may also be that groups can work together to defray the travel costs of particular tutors.

The society currently suggests that overseas potters are paid \$200 per day and this figure could be used as a guide for our local potters also.

The list will not contain recommendations — it will simply be compiled from those people who have sent in relevant information.

If you would like to be included in this list as a tutor, please send the following information: Name, address, phone number, tutoring offered, availability, and background — work experience, recent exhibitions, tutoring undertaken, etc. to:

**Julie Warren**  
**RD 1**  
**Brightwater**  
**Nelson.**

## CAN YOU HELP?

The *Otago Potters Group Inc* are in the process of writing a book recording the history of the club since its inception over 25 years ago. This of course requires a great deal of archival and photographic research as well as personal interviews with founding and present day members of the club.

To this end they are seeking information from any potters who are ex-members of the *Otago Potters Group*, or perhaps lived and potted in the Otago region and may have knowledge of the early days of the club's existence.

There is some urgency associated with this request, as part of their funding is dependent on the manuscript being in draft form within a given time from the beginning of last August. If you can be of any assistance at all in this project, please contact, as soon as possible:

**The Secretary**  
**Otago Potters Group Inc.**  
**6 Neville Street**  
**Dunedin**  
**New Zealand**

## APOLOGY

To **Colin Underdown** of Whangarei who was awarded a merit for his entry in the 1988 *Norsewear Art Award*. In our last issue we incorrectly named him *Underwood*, as did the *NZ Crafts* magazine — the press release from the venue at Waipukurau must have given birth to this error.

## COTTER KILNS

*Arcadia Developments Ltd* of Auckland, previously known as *Ceramic Services* and a regular advertiser in this magazine, took over the manufacture and full after-sales service of *Cotter Kilns*, about 18 months ago. In order to more fully cover the needs of the country's potters they are establishing a network of agents from among our known ceramic supply houses.

To date these include: **Ray Parker**, *Courtyard Pottery Supplies*, Dunedin; **John Shearer**, *Cobcraft*, Christchurch; **Justin Gardiner**, *South St Gallery*,

Nelson: **John Meyer**, *Coastal Ceramics*, Paraparaumu; **Bernadette Lawson**, *Bay Potters*, Hastings; and **Ray Hill**, *Arcadia Developments Ltd*, Auckland.

## SCEPTICS

According to the *Sunday Star* of 21 August, the sceptics society, called the *Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal*, was set up three years ago by **Dr Marks** and now has about 170 members. Their recent conference was attended by some 50 people, including doctors, academics, journalists and potters.

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

Potters might be interested in the following note on the healthiness of copper glazes.

Years ago **Brian Gartside** introduced me to a slip of equal parts of red clay, red iron oxide and copper oxide. I use it,

with wax resist over a whitish glaze to produce a variable bronze, patterned with pink where the copper has moved into the waxed areas. 1300°C firing.

Was this safe used on domestic ware?

I held ¼ strength vinegar or lemon juice in copper glazed pots for 44 hours at a cool temperature — in my potting shed. Later analysis showed 8 parts per million of copper in the vinegar and 6 in the lemon juice. *Massey University Food Technology Department* told me that the allowable copper intake is 0.5mg per day per kg of body weight. The normal USA total intake is about 2-3 mg per day.

Now I weigh 74kg so am allowed 37mg copper per day. Supposing I eat with say beetroot, 150ml (about ½ cup) of my copperised vinegar, then I shall take in 1.2mg of copper.

Conclusion: no problem — the glaze is healthy, though I still would not use it on pots such as casseroles which will be strongly heated.

*Dick Jackman*  
*Palmerston North.*

with **Maurice Shadbolt**, published by *Whitcombe and Tombs* in 1963; his last being *Readers Digest Guide to New Zealand*, also with **Maurice Shadbolt**, published this year.

Potters will know Brian's work partly by the photos he took of craft work for exhibition catalogues and posters, but mainly for his involvement, again in books, with **Doreen Blumhardt CBE**. These two were life-long friends who had a profound though probably unquantifiable influence on each other's work and philosophies. Together they produced two of our most important books to date — *New Zealand Potters — Their Work and Words* (Reeds, 1976 and the *Wattie Book Award* winner *Craft New Zealand — The Art of the Craftsman* (Reeds, 1981).

Many professional photographers take technically accurate photos of pots and other craft works, but the results are as if they were for product advertising brochures. Brian Brake was one of those few who also understood the nature of a pot and what it meant to its maker — he photographed craft objects with technical expertise, but also was able to capture the essential spirit contained within.

Apart from his photos and his magnificent collection of art and craft from around the world, Brian leaves with us the culmination of one of his cherished dreams, the recently opened *New Zealand Centre for Photography*. A memorial to his vast contribution not only to New Zealand, but to all the world.

## OBITUARY

**Brian Brake OBE**. Arguably this country's finest photographer, Brian was also recognised as one of the world's great photographers, much sought after by governments and Heads of State, by magazines and by directors of many overseas museums and art galleries. He was for many years a member of *Magnum* working with other great camera artists such as **Henri Cartier-Bresson**. He did many assignments for *Time/Life*, *National Geographic*, *Epoca*, *Queen* and *Paris-Match*, and also made a series of films and audio-visuals.

Books as well — his first being *New Zealand, Gift of the Sea*, which he did

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## TO THE PATRON SAINT OF POTTERS

On the 25th of August, more than eighty people attended a special dinner to celebrate the 25th Anniversary of the *Canterbury Potters Association*. The president of the Association, **Jim Pollard** gave the following Toast.

It seemed appropriate at this 25th Anniversary celebration to honour the patron Saint of Potters — especially when there is a growing tendency for members to erect kiln gods to protect the firings — and these are invariably *pagan*.

So I wrote a nice letter to the Bishop in Barbadoes Street to ask just who is our patron Saint, but I haven't had a reply.

I went to consult the *Lives of the Saints* in the university library and found to my horror it consisted of fifteen volumes with accounts of the virtuous lives and horrible ends of more than six hundred saints. No wonder the bishop hasn't replied.

So as a short cut I went to the encyclopaedia and finally found one with a list of professions and their patron saints. And they've all got one. Basketmakers are looked after by St Anthony of Egypt, plasterers by Saint Bartholemew, sculptors by Saint Claude, and painters by Saint Luke. Even dieticians have Saint Martha, stenographers, Saint Cassian, and travel hostesses Saint Bona. You name it, there's a patron Saint for it. But there was no one to look after potters, not even a minor Church of England martyr to intercede for us.

This is curious, for potters were so abundant in early Christian and mediaeval times, that purely statistically one would have expected at least a few of them to have been martyred for their faith.

Since they weren't, we must suppose that the early potters were generally smug people, well satisfied with their lot, who found little reason even to convert to the new religion, let alone die for it. More likely though, potters who had been martyred, usually by exhibition selectors, were not able to meet the other prerequisite — virginity.

In the absence of an officially prescribed Saint of potters, we have no option but to promote our own. Now it's never been the practise to canonise *Old Testament* characters which seems a pity, for it abounds with references to potters and pottery and there is a surfeit of suitable candidates. Even the Lord God fancied himself, both as a handbuilder and a thrower. In Genesis we find He formed man from the dust of the ground — clearly the earliest example of handbuilding.

And Jeremiah recounts being sent to the house of the potter to hear the word of the Lord. The potter threw a pot which Jeremiah reports was "marred in the hand of the potter." The potter then threw another one, correcting the fault, whereupon the Lord God spoke to Jeremiah saying: "Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in My hand."

Promoting the cause of the Lord God himself as our patron saint seems a bit presumptuous, so we need to look to the lower echelons. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego from the Book of Daniel, would make excellent candidates. Cast into the fiery furnace, they wandered around inside quite happily before coming out. Anyone who could wander around inside a kiln during the firing would be absolutely invaluable: identifying the cool spots, poking sagging elements back into place and yelling "shut down" when the glaze was exactly right.

Job is another possible, for he used a potsherd in the ash heap to scrape his boils. But perhaps someone who finds a use for broken pots should be discouraged — we need someone to promote the use of new pots. Which leaves Ruth, who broke the pitcher at the well. I think anyone who breaks pots is bound to be good for potters in the long run. But in the short term I think she showed an insensitivity which disbars her as a sympathetic intercessionary.

I then received technical advice that it's much easier to adopt an existing saint than to bring a case for canonisation from

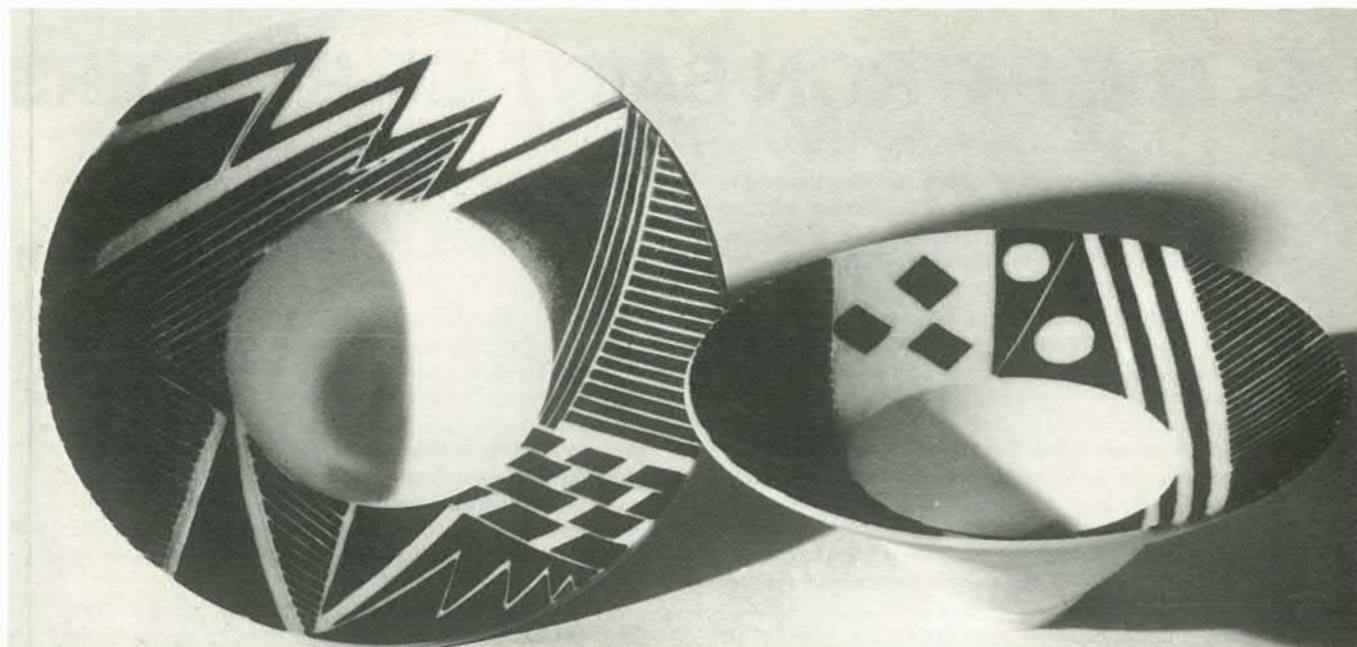
scratch — that can take over a hundred years. So I turned reluctantly back to the *Lives of the Saints* — all fifteen volumes of them. To make matters more difficult, they were indexed, not alphabetically but chronologically, in order of their Saints' days. Having read all through January and February, I finally came to the first of March which is the day of Saint Antonina, virgin, and martyr from the fourth century. In Nicaea in the reign of Maxentius, in the year three hundred and four, Antonina refused to offer incense to the Roman gods. She was thrust into an earthen vessel and drowned in a lake near the city.

Antonina seems an excellent candidate, particularly for the Canterbury Potters, for her refusal to offer incense to the gods is clearly symbolic of our refusal to offer art pots to the selectors at the *Fletcher Challenge*. Unfortunately, there is a catch. For according to Dr Baring Gould who wrote the *Lives of the Saints*, it is uncertain whether Antonina was really thrust into an earthen vessel or whether it was instead, a sack. And if it was a sack, of course she obviously belongs to the weavers and not to us.

So I cannot propose a toast to an authentic patron Saint of Potters.







Lee Le Grice. Porcelain bowls. 12cm diam

## AUCKLAND STUDIO POTTERS

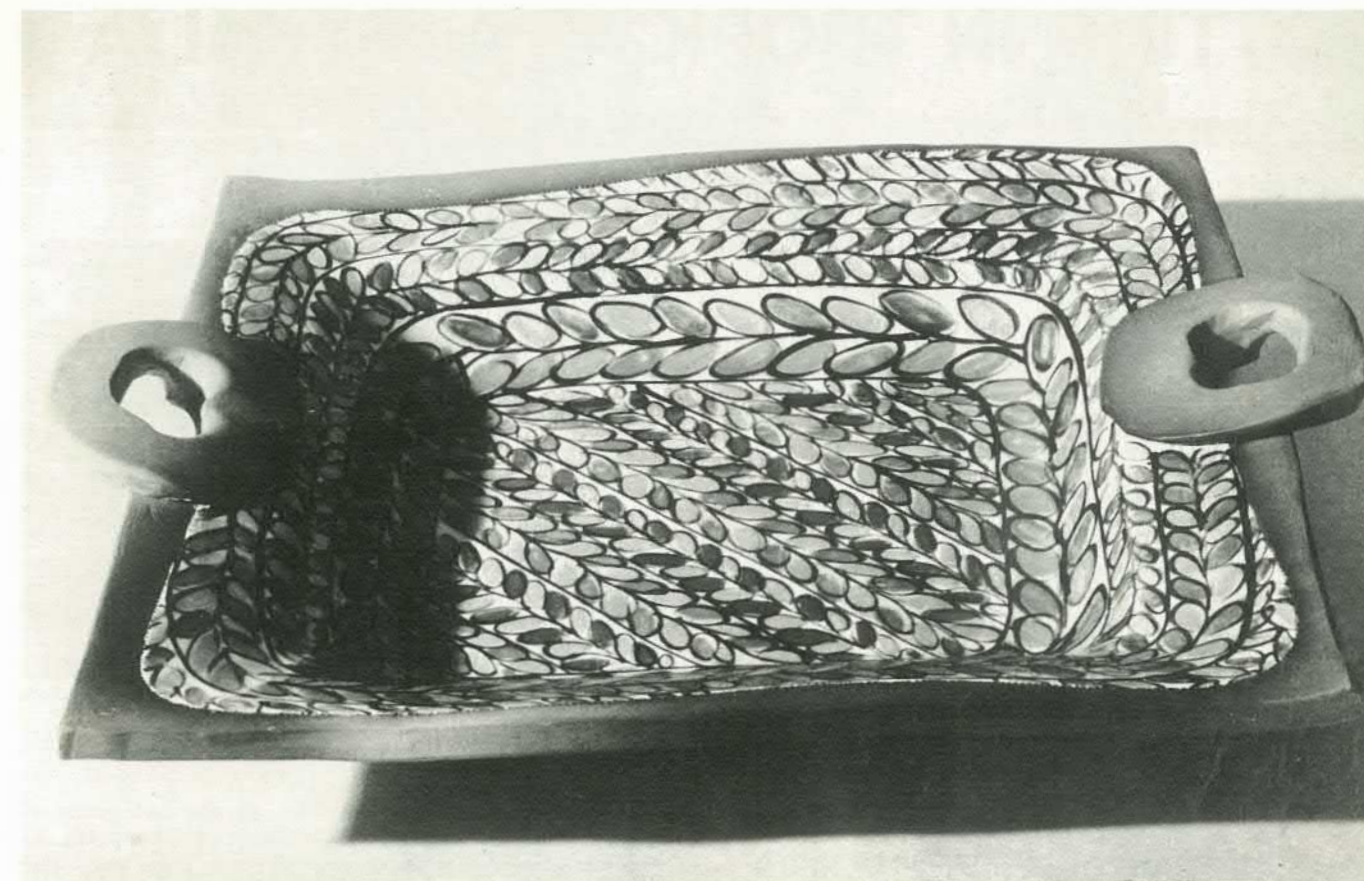
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Selector; Richard Parker

Photos by Howard Williams

Jeannie van der Putten. Slipcast "Mantle Pieces". 39cm h

Gaeleen Morley. "Otatarā Black and Redcliffe Red" Teapots. 23cm h



Moyra Elliott. Terracotta "Wisteria Dish" 33cm sq



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# POTTING IN TROPICAL AUSTRALIA

## Ten Years in the Heat!

### Steve Bishopric, Australia

After five years potting in Auckland, I came to Australia in 1977 for a safari around 'The Island'.

Arriving in Brisbane I found the potting scene quite different from that in New Zealand. My impression then was of a pottery climate dominated by a very few 'acknowledged master potters' producing 'collectable' pots. These pots were shown at a few elite galleries, were highly priced and were not intended for use. A potter seemed to be either an offshoot of the art world or art school, or a part time potter struggling to develop in a society not yet looking for handmade objects. Potters, as we knew them, were quite scarce and few people had pots of any sort in their homes.

This was quite in contrast to the New Zealand scene, where a vast network of night-school classes had taught many people to 'have-a-go', or at least to give up trying, but keep on buying everyday pots. My huge wood kiln at Whitford had belched forth truckloads of mediocre pots which I had carefully rationed to nearby suburban craft shops — if there were any left after a whirlwind visit by *Alicat's* Peter Sinclair and his cheque book. (Thank you, Peter!)

Whilst in Brisbane, **Ruth Benson** offered me her workshop and kiln and I produced a load of domestic pots. I couldn't find a craft shop in Brisbane, so I attended a huge Saturday fleamarket in the suburbs on the Surfers Paradise highway. The crowds there had no idea what handmade pots were! (1977)

I headed off around Australia — sunshine, cheap living, surf, miles of gum trees, and John and Gill's Range Rover — but after a few months in Queensland and the Northern Territory, I came to know this area is not only huge, but has a different lifestyle; it is very beautiful, 'laid back', with a unique flavour bred from remoteness, heat, tranquillity, self-reliance and slow change.

August 1977 I hitched the 3500kms from Darwin to Yeppoon via the Gulf of Carpentaria and the Barclay Tablelands. **Beth** lived in Yeppoon — and we're still here in 1988.

Yeppoon 1977. A small beach town, traditionally pineapples and fishing; a holiday town to western graziers, grain growers and coal miners. "A potter? Watzat mate?" You can only take so much sun, sand and Great Barrier Reef so I started potting again, diesel kiln, temporary set-up, but sold pots off the front lawn and at local markets.

1978. Back in New Zealand, we built a dome and woodfired kiln at Waipu, but during that winter Beth decided NZ winters were just not on. We returned to Queensland for the 1979 winter, built another kiln — and then discovered Byfield. Half an hour out of Yeppoon we found an old high stumped Queensland house, 2 huge sheds, a truck, a Landrover, 2 tractors, 600 orange trees, 2000 mature pine trees, 80 year old established grounds on 25 acres of tropical rainforest — for \$29,000. I told my friends in NZ — did you all hear me?

The day we saw our Byfield property, we bought it. Six months later we had sold our place in New Zealand and permanently relocated to *Nob Creek Pottery*. It wasn't all easy — eight years later we're still working seven days a week, but we love it and are continually evolving the pottery as a production workshop, gallery, tourist destination and live-in workshop venue.

Our initial project here was building a two-chambered Dutch Oven woodfired kiln (100 plus 60 cu. ft) to utilize the plentiful wood supply. Our mostly domesticware pots were initially sold at the Yeppoon fleamarket. Sales were slow, but it was our only option, there being no local craft shop and nothing until



Steve Bishopric



Beth Bishopric

Brisbane, 800 kms south. However, we also had plenty of oranges to sell. Slowly people got to know us and our pots until we were able to start selling direct from home. There was — and still is — very little competition, so we were able eventually to sell exclusively from our *Nob Creek Gallery* at Byfield. Now we have established a regular local and holiday-maker clientele and we draw tourists from motels and the huge *Capricorn Iwasaki* resort complex at Yeppoon.

We enjoy dealing with the public and sharing our tropical paradise — huge old palms and mango trees, rainforested creeks and over 100 varieties of tropical fruit trees. In 1986 we built facilities for holding regular 'live-in' workshops. **Chester** (chainsaw) **Nealie** from Auckland tutored the first school and we have held numerous others since. Our aim is to teach, stimulate and inspire potters to strive for quality while having a lot of fun. They make pots, fire kilns, go canoeing, swim with the crocs, (?-Ed) eat good food, laugh a lot and make new friends. The accommodation block is a timber barracks set in the bush; the old fruit packing shed is the school room.

The distance from other potters is still a major influence on our work. We are insulated from the ebbs and flows of mainstream fashion, which we feel is good, but inspiration through interaction is limited — the nearest potters doing what we are doing, are 500kms away.

Beth has now been potting for 10 years, in between producing our two children, Renton, aged 7, Cedar aged 6, and she enjoys making fine domestic ware, using ferns from the bush to decorate her bowls, platters and trinket boxes. The soft woodfired shinos suit her feminine pots. We both make some pots specifically to fire in our sawdust and charcoal kiln and enjoy the spontaneously decorated copper-flashed results.

My main interest is in producing pots that retain evidence of the process — the soft throwing rings, slip lines, folded edges, warts-and-all approach. A growing reluctance to cover these process marks — the essential clayiness — has led to an appreciation of the flame and ash decoration available using wood. The kiln has evolved to the stage where there is no bag wall — all the better to flash with! Experiments with clay types, stacking and firing methods indicate possible years of fun ahead. Our next project is to build a large anagama kiln.

1988. The potting scene in Queensland has developed greatly in the last ten years, with continued support from the *Flying*

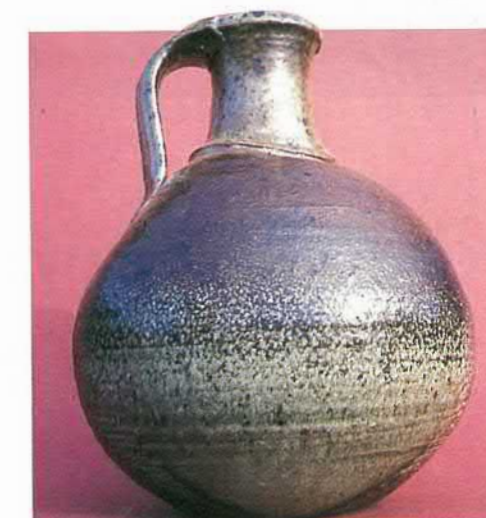


Nob Creek. House under Royal palms

*Arts School* and colleges of Technical and Further Education. Many more people have taken up potting, community awareness has grown and the standard of pottery has improved dramatically. We have become somewhat more involved with the national scene lately, and find great enthusiasm, Australia-wide. My impression is that the Australian pottery field is healthy and growing, especially so with woodfiring. The Japanese influence, an abundance of wood and an interest in the aesthetics available to woodfirers have all contributed.

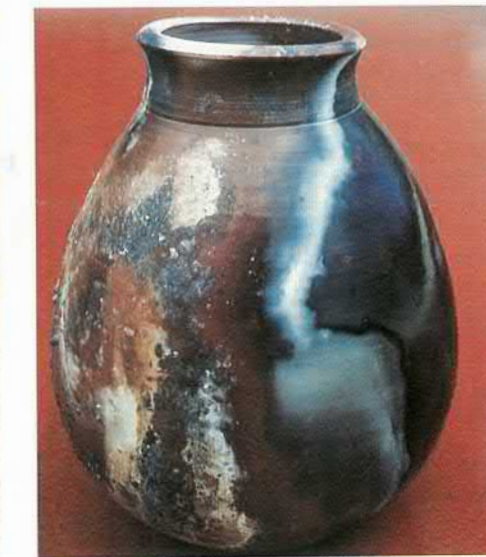
We have developed a large gallery now at *Nob Creek*, selling all our pots and the work of others. Drop in if you are passing through Yeppoon on the Tropic of Capricorn, but be warned — I only came here for the day!

*Nob Creek Gallery. Woodfired kiln in background. Ironbark table by Steve Bishopric and Glen Stickley.*



Steve Bishopric. Woodfired bottle, 210mm

Beth Bishopric. Sawdust/charcoal fired pot. 175mm.







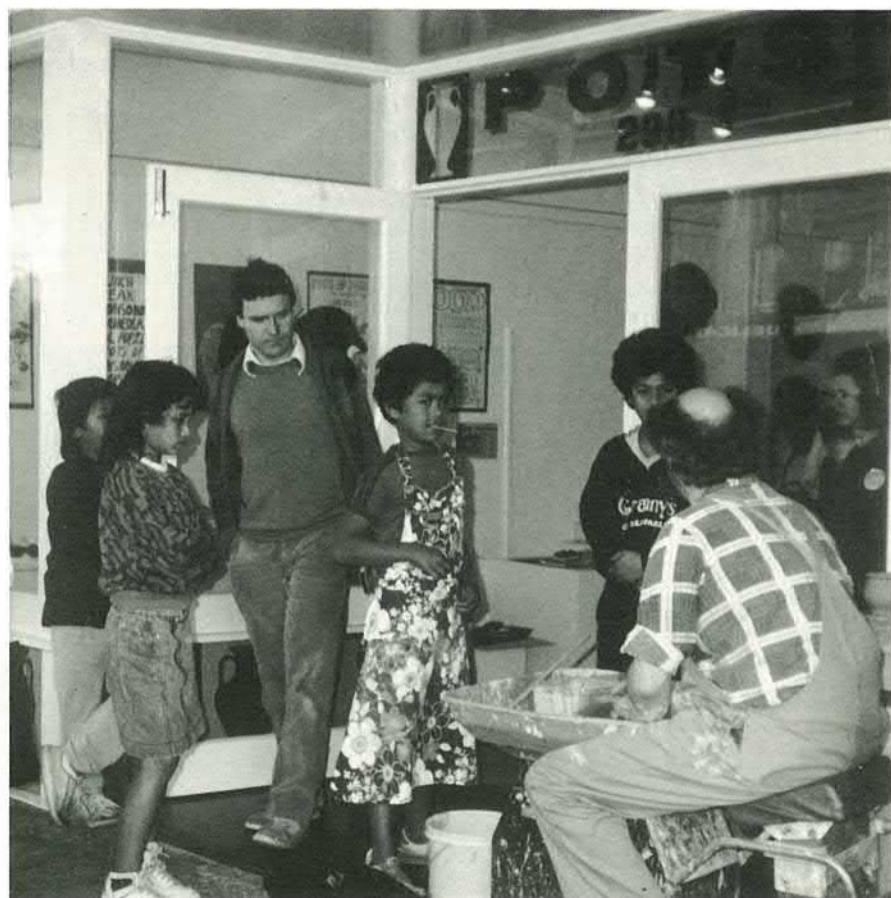
## POTS ON THE MOVE

**Pots of Ponsonby's** image is changing with a move to new premises, and an influx of new members bringing other craft skills.

At a grand opening day members of the public were invited to throw a pot, with a helping hand from Tony sitting at his wheel on the pavement in front of the shop. In the parking lot behind, Robin, Wendy and Sue led an intrepid team of raku firers in glazing and producing some 'interesting' mementoes for all and sundry. The visitors who came throughout the day — and there were many — felt it was a splendid innovation that should be repeated every weekend!

New members include two basket makers. **Viv Wright** makes traditional willow and palembang baskets, and **Philippa Jones** produces exciting shapes in bright colours. **Angela Fraser's** beautiful bags and purses are well known, and will be complemented with cushions and painted floor mats. **Judith Horrocks** also joined the co-op at the time of the move, and it is a pleasure to see her colourful hand-formed porcelain vases in the shop.

So if you are visiting the *Three Lamps* area of Ponsonby, Auckland, do come and see the new co-operative Gallery.



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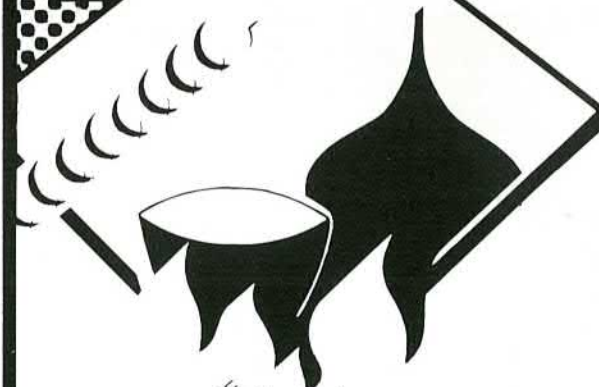
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All entries must be in the hands of the Competition organisers by 5pm Thursday 18th May 1989. Overseas entries by 5pm Friday 5th May 1989.

This award is being made annually to encourage excellence in ceramics in New Zealand by Fletcher Challenge in association with the Auckland Studio Potters (Inc.).

### ★ The Work

This year each potter is invited to submit one entry for the 1989 Potter Award. There will be no category or theme. Each entry will be judged on excellence.

### ★ The Award

The Judge will seek one outstanding winning entry for which an award of \$NZ10,000 cash will be made. A limited number of Certificates of Merit will be awarded at the Judges discretion.

All communications relating to the Award to:

### FLETCHER CHALLENGE POTTERY AWARD,

P.O. Box 881, Auckland 1,  
New Zealand.  
Telephone (09) 798-665.

OR

### Auckland Studio Potters

95 Captain Springs Rd,  
Te Papapa, Auckland 6, N.Z.  
Ph. 643-622.





Danny Doggo and the Bow Wow Brothers

Tea Time



Beth — a three light Candelabraphant

Chook chook, chook chook chook.



## GREENYOLOGY

An Exhibition by John Green at Albany Village Gallery

Photos by Howard Williams



## ARTISAN CENTRE

Jenny Clay, Auckland.

*Artisan Centre* is a co-operative shop in Newmarket, which was started eight years ago by a group of six potters, and a weaver.

Margaret Sumich was one of the original members who, in 1980 went and sat on the suggested site in Broadway Plaza and contemplated the possibilities.

"The shop at that stage was just a concrete floor. They hadn't actually built the building," she says.

Initially the group had meetings once a month at which all aspects of the co-operative had to be decided. Gradually these were sorted out by trial and error. In recent times they have found having meetings every 3 months is all that is necessary for the shop to run smoothly.

Apart from Margaret Sumich, only Per Eliassen and Lanny McLeay remain from the original people who formed the co-operative, although Robyn Wynyard joined within 6 weeks of the shop opening and Barbara Corballis, a year later.

The co-operative now has 9 members ranging in age from about 30 to 70, each with their own style expressed in pottery from domestic ware to handbuilt elephants.

Margaret says that in the beginning of the co-operative the potters probably had an influence on each other's work, but that has changed.

"Now we're all established along our own paths, and we've all got our own ideas. There may be some influence, but mainly we are too established in our own individual directions."

If a member of the group has technical problems, she finds other members of the group can be consulted, even though they work in different ways.

"One of the great things with a co-operative, if you have a problem you can ring up and have a chat to someone about it."

The members who joined *Artisan Centre* most recently are Pamela Webster and Stewart Fulljames.

"This particular co-operative is extremely well-organised. I don't know if they're all as well-organised, but I'm impressed here by the way people work in so harmoniously," Pamela says.

Margaret Sumich. Pit fired jar



Work in the shop is rostered and rotates every week. As there are 9 members, each person is in the shop about once every two weeks. Positions of pots are also rotated, though every two months rather than weekly. Each person has four shelves, two in the window and two in other parts of the shop. These positions are gradually rotated through the year, around and up and down. This means that no-one has the best position.

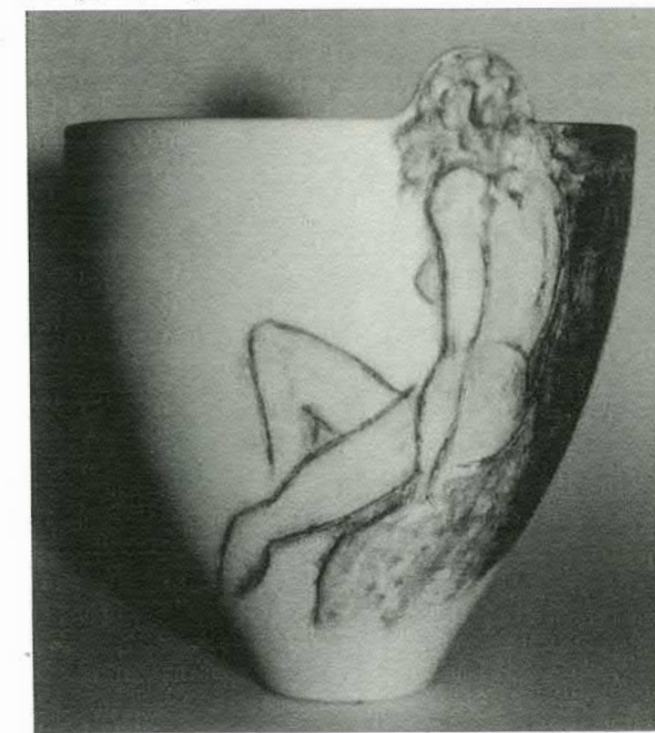
For seven years before she helped *Artisan Centre* come into existence, Margaret Sumich was working with clay. She has mainly produced domestic ware in her 15 years of potting, but in the last five years an interest in wood-firing and textural pots has led her into raku and pit-fired decorative work.

Last year she had a piece in the *2nd World Triennial of Small Ceramics* in Zagreb, Yugoslavia, but when Margaret first began potting she had problems. These arose from being left-handed. The problems only started to be resolved when a friend told her, "There are no rules. If you can use your elbow, use it." She started to turn the wheel anti-clockwise, the reverse of other potters and was happier with the results. She says that pottery itself has moved away from rigid guidelines since she started potting and has become more of an art than a craft, more visual than strictly utilitarian.

Brightly coloured raku fired pieces are produced by Pamela Webster and Stewart Fulljames. "I make things that often make people laugh," Pamela says, "parrots and elephants and things like that." She had a piece in the 1988 *Fletcher Challenge* exhibition, a waisted torso form, with flowers and dragonflies painted on it. This was the first piece she made on returning from a trip to Europe last year.

Stewart produces thrown bowls and cylinders with faces, birds and fish inside or around them. His work was also represented in the *Fletcher Challenge* exhibition — a piece which had three tiers of faces on three pots placed on top of each other. He is one of the younger members of the group. He started potting ten years ago and attended a ceramics course at

Raewyn McElroy. Porcelain bowl





Otago Polytechnic in 1984. He currently lives and works at Mangawhai, where an associate member of the group, **Matu Beeline**, also lives.

The third member of the co-operative who was represented in the *Fletcher Challenge* exhibition was **Raewyn McElroy**. After *Titirangi Community House* introduced Raewyn to clay in 1980, she developed a preference for porcelain, and experimented with saggar-firing techniques. Her more recent work uses high-fired glazes in conjunction with bright low-fired enamels.

Two other members of the co-operative that work mainly in porcelain are **John Fenton** and **Robyn Wynyard**. John started potting in Japan, where he lived for several years. He has worked as a full-time potter for 15 years and now works out of the *Matakana Dairy Factory*. He produces thrown and slipcast porcelain bowls, and tea and coffee sets, which he decorates with brushwork.

The delicate, handmade porcelain fruit and flowers of Robyn Wynyard echo the wooded garden situation of her studio. It differs from her early pottery which was strictly disciplined and concentrated in domestic ware.

Lanny McLeay, one of the original members of the group, left the co-operative for a year to sell real-estate, but found she preferred to return to potting. She worked in fabric design before becoming a potter and this has influenced the sculptural forms she makes from clay.

Also involved in the nine member co-operative are Per Eliassen and Barbara Corballis. Per has worked as a full-time potter for 15 years, and taught for 4 years at *Pakuranga College*. He makes a range of planters, bowls, vases and slab bottles.

Domestic stoneware is what Barbara prefers to produce, as she likes to know her pieces are used, but she also spends some time working in porcelain.

Each person in the co-operative has an exhibition at *Artisan Centre* once a year. The centre stand, with its eleven glass surfaces, is used for exhibitions in the shop. Guests, who are chosen at the co-operative meetings, are also invited to exhibit.

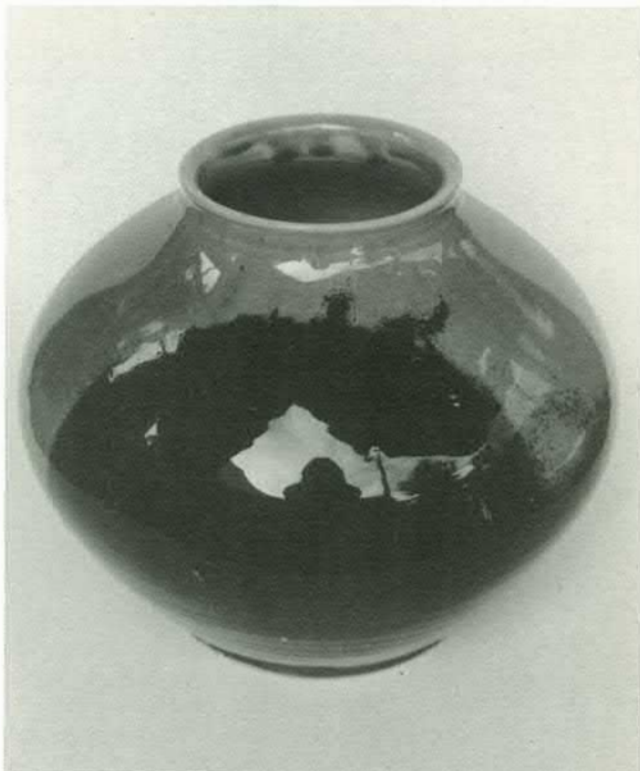
Margaret feels that having the potters themselves working in the shop is advantageous to the clients, who often have questions about pottery they have bought, or potting in general. "We like to feel it is something extra we offer to the buying public," she says. "It makes people feel quite special to buy something that somebody has made and maybe meet that person and talk about it to them. They feel they have a personal contact."

Stewart Fulljames. Bowl



Lanny McLeay. Sculptural form

John Fenton. Porcelain vase



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# RED HOT

Brian Gartside, Auckland

## The Only Certainty In Pottery

— is that one person's glaze recipe doesn't necessarily work for another.

"We tested your glaze thoroughly" said Gail, "and it didn't work!"

"There were no guarantees that it would work," I said. "I didn't leave out an ingredient either — except the amount of water, but then I've never seen a glaze recipe that includes that detail."

I suppose you're not using my kiln setting, kiln shelves, firing schedule; not using my clay — to my thickness — to my bisque temperature. Also not using my glazing tongs, working at my speed, living my life.

Considering all that, there's not much chance of the results being the same."

• There are three kinds of heat — **Red Hot**, white hot, and transcendental heat.

• **Red Hot** is what you get in the pot-belly stove at full blast with lots of air. A good performing raku kiln glows with **Red Hot** shelves and bricks.

• **Red Hot** is about 900°C say the books, but that doesn't mean a thing if you haven't experienced it through a glass door or 'in the flesh'.

• **Red Hot plus**, is not always possible, but if it is you get more of an orange colour.

• I have to think about Borax because they tell me that lead will kill me. I don't believe all that people tell me, but **everyone** says lead is **bad**. Borax probably kills too, but for the time being I don't feel so threatened. Common salt is also **bad** for you, but it is useful at **Red Hot**.

• The trouble with pottery is that every single material seems to have a dozen different names. Borax - Boron - Borate - Boracic - Boric - Colemanite.

And then there are added labels — carbonates, oxides, silicates, chlorates, nitrates, sulphates. And more.

The same applies to salt, soda, sodium. They are further disguised as household cleaners, scourers, water softeners, food and sauces.

Soya sauce leaves warm coloured marks after firing.

Rustic brown acrylic paint is loaded with iron and titanium and makes a matt glaze at **Red Hot**. Borax mixed in helps it to melt even better.



Flames

Borax Frit globules

• Brian Gartside, who has recently opened his new studio and gallery in Manurewa, is an intermittent contributor to the NZ Potter. This article is the first in a series on glazing.

• For the innocent/ignorant it probably pays not to bother too much about the names. What is important is the ability to acquire **Red Heat**, one way or another! Any fuel will be OK — wood, coke, dung, LPG, natural gas, electricity, diesel.

Something is needed to contain the heat — a fireplace, wood burning stove, dustbin, incinerator, a hole in the ground or even a pottery kiln.

• Anna Marie Klausen of Rotorua makes really interesting surfaces in pit firing using coloured slip and glaze. She writes:

Dear B, About this borax: what you have to do is to make a **saturated** solution with it. I use (a rough guide) 100mls of **boiling** H<sub>2</sub>O to 5 heaped teaspoons of borax (sodium borate, from the chemist). Sprinkle borax over water and mix until it just begins to settle on the bottom; adding more if necessary. Use this mixture by brushing it onto the bisqued pot — usually several times until a layer of it can be seen on the pot. It can be dipped or poured, but I only make up small quantities.

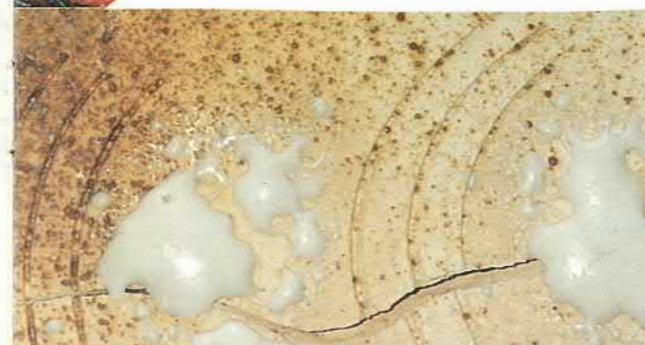
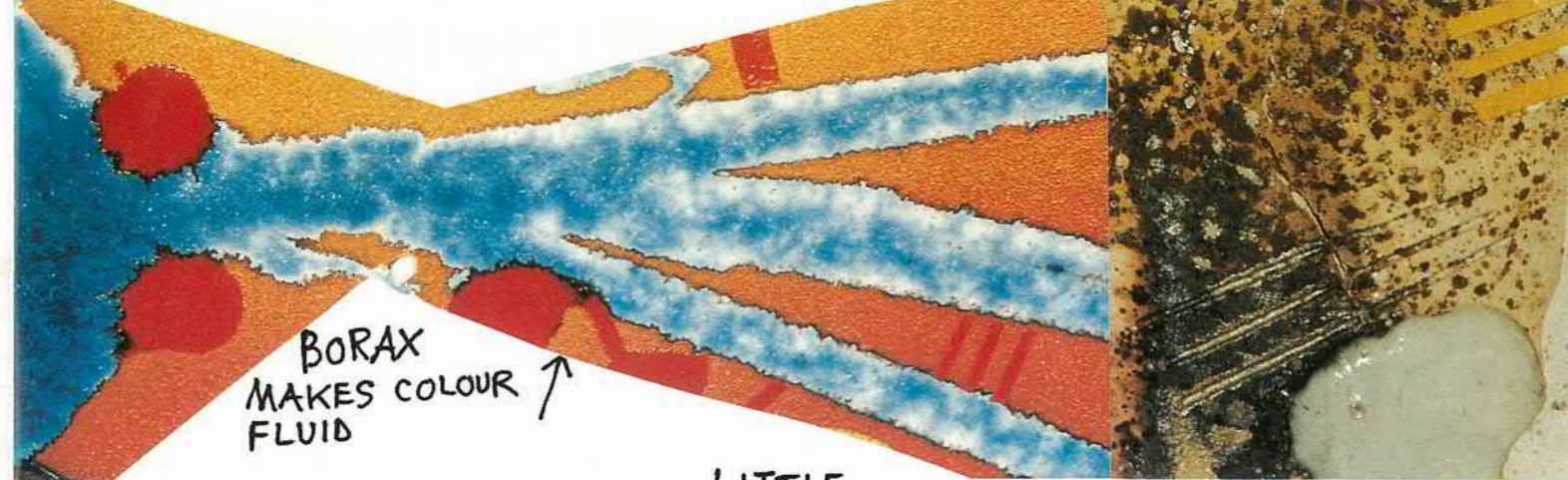
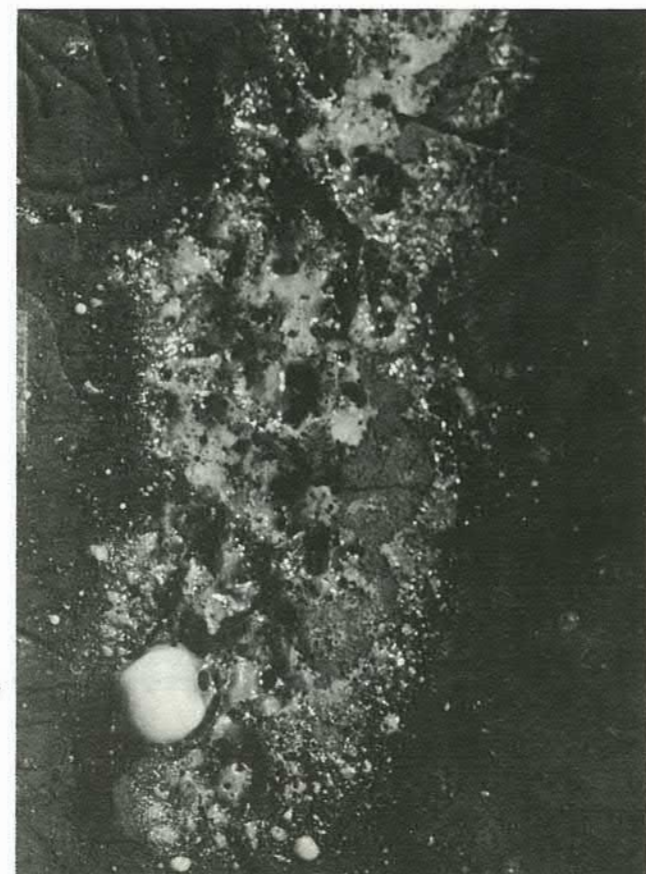
As the mixture cools it tends to start going lumpy, crystallizes and settles quickly making it difficult to brush on. The remainder is 'unusable' — I have tried re-heating it, but it usually doesn't perform the same.

I find borax 'touchy' stuff and it requires several times of using it, until you get the feel of it and the effect wanted from it. (Like everything else I suppose!)

• The other day I was buying some fence stain at the local paint store. I wandered around the shelves 'just looking' when I came upon a rack of aerosol spray cans. They seemed to be for special effects and most of them contained some form of metal. There was *Mint Copper*, *Mint Silver*, *Mint Gold* and *Mint Brass*.

Sprayed on or under a glaze these would certainly have an effect. Even used alone on the clay they might offer interesting surfaces. Other cans had names like *Metal Tone*, *Red Oxide Primer*, *Zinc Coat* and *Zinc Chromate*.

I really enjoy reading **Robin Hopper's** *Ceramic Spectrum* — his theme song is "Try it and See!"



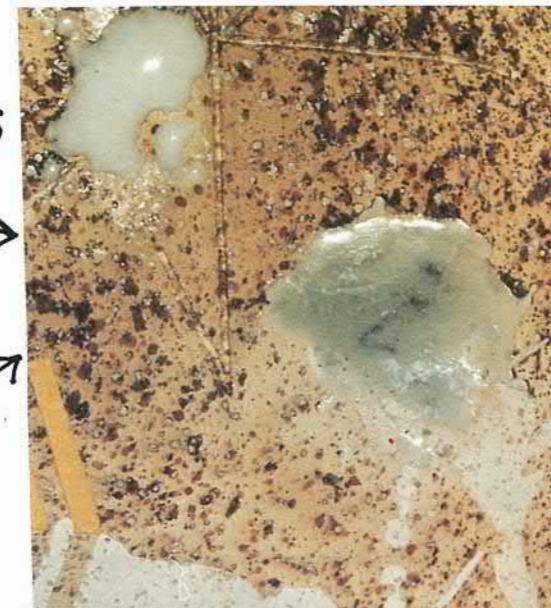
LITTLE  
HEAPS OF  
SODA ASH  
BORAX, SALT  
AND MIXTURES  
THEREOF

SALT FREELY  
SPRINKLED  
EQUALS SPOTS



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FUME AND  
BLUSH FROM  
VOLATILE  
BORAX







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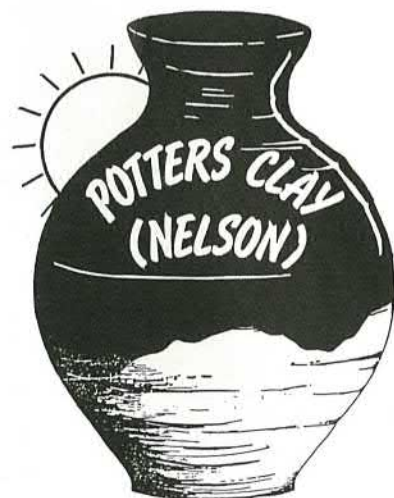
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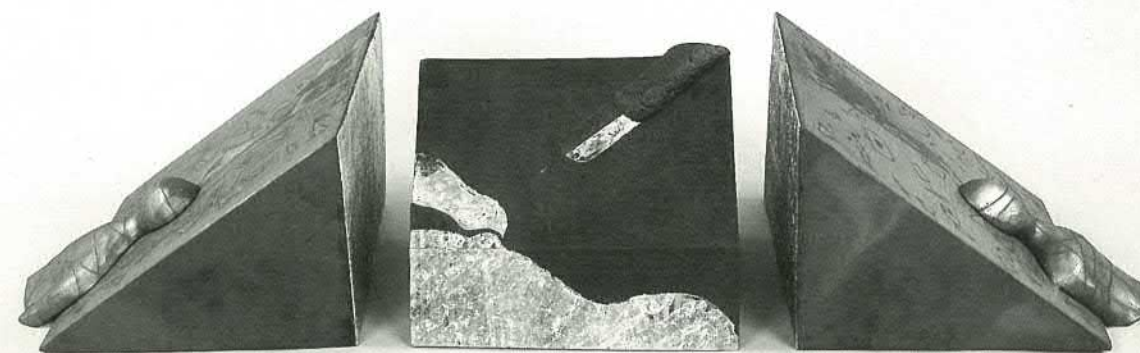
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Black fired objects "Antagonists". 29cm h, 130cm l. Mitsuo Shoji

## MITSUO SHOJI

Joanne Kilsby, Hamilton

I have travelled in Western Cultures  
Now I am travelling into myself  
If black and white are my base world  
Colours are my Emotions  
Forms are the essential territory of my  
Mind  
Clay is my Body  
Fire is my Spirit

Mitsuo Shoji



Mitsuo Shoji, Japanese ceramic artist, presently teaching and living in Australia, will be the guest teacher and exhibitor at the 1989 New Zealand Society of Potters convention which is to be held in Hamilton, hosted by the Waikato Society of Potters.

Mitsuo's work has been described as vibrating with richness, power and energy. He shows great diversity with his domestic ware, black fired objects, inlaid vases, lustred porcelain, two-dimensional pictures, three-dimensional stoneware components which are smoked and covered with gold and silver leaf, and the unusual massive monolithic pieces which change throughout the duration of his exhibitions.

These monoliths change because they are covered with a thick coating of slip which dries, shrinks, cracks and falls away, producing unexpectedly beautiful results.

Mitsuo has both a Bachelor of Arts and Master of Fine Arts from Kyoto City University of Arts. He has taught at Caulfield Institute of Technology, Melbourne, National Art School, Sydney, California State University and Sydney College of Arts. He has had 17 solo exhibitions from 1977-87 and taken part in 48 major group exhibitions between 1970-86, one of these being our Fletcher Brownbuilt in 1982. He has also gained 4 major pottery awards.

Some of Mitsuo's work and techniques are unusual and unique — doubtless some of our preconceived ideas of Japanese pottery will be challenged and we should not try to put him into a national pigeon-hole.

Mitsuo is a skilled and talented artist and teacher who will provide a very interesting and diverse workshop for all those wishing to extend themselves. Some of the highlights of his workshop in Hamilton will be the application of gold and silver leaf, and Black Firing, *Kokuto*, which produces beautiful black patina or rich textured charred surfaces.

Other events worth attending at the NZSP convention will be; demonstrations by Rosie and Renton Murray from Auckland who are highly skilled potters of salt glazed domestic ware and who will be sharing their throwing and decorating techniques; classes by Jan White of Coromandel, known for her simple, strong handbuilt sculptures, who will be taking drawing classes using the right side or creative side of the brain; Barry Brickell also from Coromandel, who will be giving an informative slide show.

Arrangements are shaping up well for an interesting and varied NZSP convention in Hamilton in 1989. The dates are May 19 to 21, 1989.

Further information regarding the convention can be had by writing to:

Lynn Alves  
295 Shakespeare Street  
Cambridge





**Stephen Bradbourne**, 1st year. Stoneware jug. Wax resist and slip. 35cm h.



**Adam Petry**, 1st year. Oxidized earthenware. "Nuclear Sunbathers". 30cm h.

## CARRINGTON POLYTECHNIC

*Photos by Stephen Bradbourne*

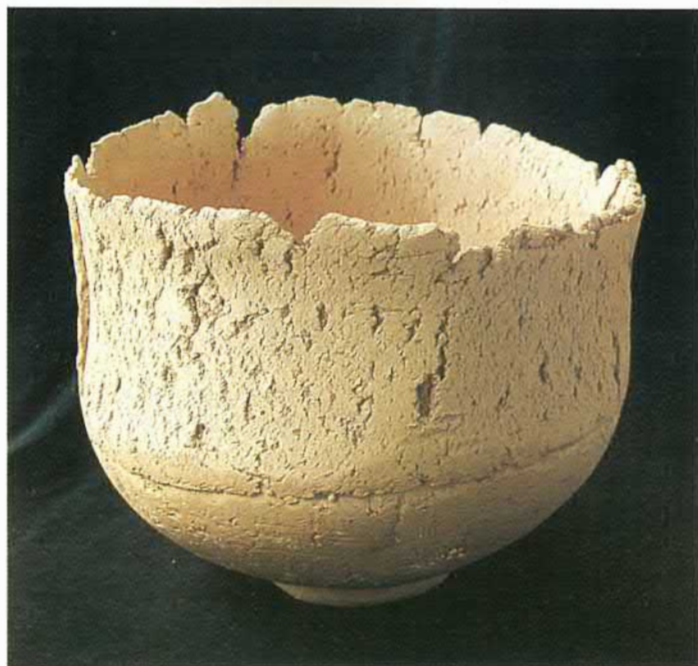


## OTAGO POLYTECHNIC

**Marion Campbell**. Earthenware. 30cm h.

*Photos by Lawrence Ewing*

**Jo Howard**. Slab-built bowl, Terracotta. 40cm h.



**Martin Kelly**. 1st year Craft Certificate student. Raku fired jar with silk. 18cm h.



**Te Kuratini o Waikato**



**Anne Holmes**. 1st year Diploma student. Thrown jar, woodfired shino glaze. 25cm h.

## THE WAIKATO POLYTECHNIC

*Photographs by Diploma Students, courtesy Design Dept., Waikato Polytech*



**Jonna Gibson**. Stoneware with slip glazes, cone 6 oxidation. 26cm diam.



*Photos by Jonna Gibson*

## WANGANUI REGIONAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE

**Rona Barrett**. Stoneware, ash glaze, wood frame and rawhide. 60cm h.





# CRAFT EDUCATION:

## DO WE KNOW WHERE IT'S GOING?

Peter Gibbs, Nelson

Craft education has hit New Zealand in a big way. It's turned out to be a creature with more tentacles than we first imagined. Most practising potters in their workshops probably imagined that the Polytechs would produce more of the same, maybe a little smarter and with more technical knowledge, but basically dedicated to the same ideals and doing it in the same way. That doesn't seem to be the way it's heading at all.

For a start, many of the tutors have never been practising craftspeople, but have had their training in *Design or Fine Arts* courses. Secondly, the students generally don't have the sort of expectations that we expected them to. As a potter sitting in a workshop throwing all day, I guess I just assumed that the students would aspire to do that too. Of course, to have a viable living doing that, one needs skills — the ability to throw fast and accurately, to pull handles, fire kilns, sell pots, get into exhibitions, and generally do the things that potters do. Many other potters thought that was what the Polytechs would produce too, and it wasn't just potters, but craftspeople of all persuasions.

It was a pretty unreal expectation when you think about it. Generalising again, a large proportion of the country's craftspeople are in their mid-thirties or older. They had time to get going while the economic system was a lot more benevolent than it is now, and while the buying public was, relatively speaking, starved for choice and unsophisticated.

Increasingly now, the public has a much wider choice with the freeing up of imports and the huge range of materials in use for functional and aesthetic ornaments in their homes. The fact that works of craft and art are just that — aesthetic ornaments — is probably the biggest stumbling block for the aspiring craftspeople. When the chips are down financially, the first thing to go in people's lives is the non-essential, and that's what we make.

I recently had the opportunity to work for a few days at *Wanganui Regional Community College*, the only institution in the country offering craft courses to shun the name *Polytech*. It soon became clear that the aspirations of the students were not what I expected them to be. I spoke to 70 or 80 students, all enrolled in art or craft related courses, and could only find one who was aiming towards being a full time craftspeople, in his case a potter, and who wholeheartedly believed he would achieve that.

In these days of high unemployment, it is inevitable that many students find themselves doing craft related courses by default, that is to say that they may have pursued some other career, but the opportunity just wasn't there. On the other hand, there were many students who chose to enroll in craft courses in order to find out what possibilities existed, maybe leading to future employment, but equally just for personal enrichment. It was as if some of these students accepted that possibilities may never exist for employment, so they may as well make good use of their time anyway.

Given the variety of expectations of the students, it wasn't surprising that the college's impressive staff have problems defining where they are going. It's not as simple as aiming to produce graduates with the skills and knowledge to become full time craftspeople. Like it or not, the college is offering a social service to many of its students. This involves giving them a sense of self worth as much as teaching them to throw pots.

1st Polytechnic Ceramics/Glass Tutors' Workshop, held at the Wanganui Regional Community College and sponsored by QEII Arts Council. July 1988.



In the end, instead of leaving *Wanganui* with the answers I had expected to find about the direction of craft education, I finished up with an even greater number of unanswered questions. I had tried to find out from the tutors where they thought craft courses were heading. Many of them thought that question could not be answered for many years, until a group of students had been through the whole four year system of Certificate and Diploma, and been out in the workforce a while. I think that's a cop-out. Although an education system has to meet the needs of students, it also has a lot to do with changing student perceptions and giving them goals. Although there won't be room out there for every student to become a full time craftspeople, other possibilities exist which it is the job of the system to identify.

**George Kojis** (pottery tutor at W.R.C.C.) is in no doubt that pottery students need more than knowledge about skills and techniques. That knowledge has to be transformed into habit and hard ability before the students hit the streets. **Paul Johnson** is another. "Students need to have work potential at the end."

If craft courses do produce well motivated and trained graduates another problem may lie ahead. There is no doubt that the emphasis at *Wanganui*, and probably at most other craft schools is in the creative aspect of craft. Function is a long way down the track. While the public are getting used to the idea that art may be created from clay, glass, fibre, and so on, they are certainly not accepting that idea at the same rapid rate that craft students are. Director of *Wanganui's Sargeant Art Gallery*, **Bill Millbank**; "There is a danger that the community will be flooded with a lot of mediocre artists."

Director of *Wanganui Regional Community College* and *Crafts Council* president, **John Scott** has been in the forefront of developments in craft education. It is his belief that "the neglect of various media by the various fine art schools has left gaps in the educational process which craft schools have moved into." So are craft courses going to become art courses which utilise a wider variety of media and techniques than their university cousins? That seems a very likely scenario.

In the meantime, the only thing that seems certain is that tertiary craft courses will never reinforce the status quo that existed in the craft community at the time of its inauguration. Change is under way, but we don't know exactly where it's leading. That uncertainty is the most disconcerting aspect of craft education.

Top to bottom:  
CARRINGTON POLYTECHNIC  
**Marea Timoko**, 2nd year. Hand coiled teaset.

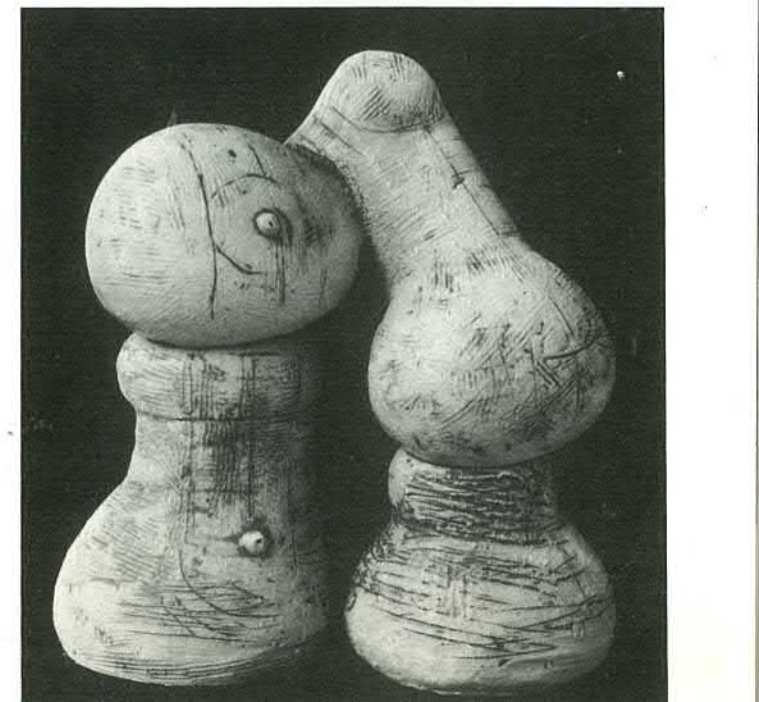
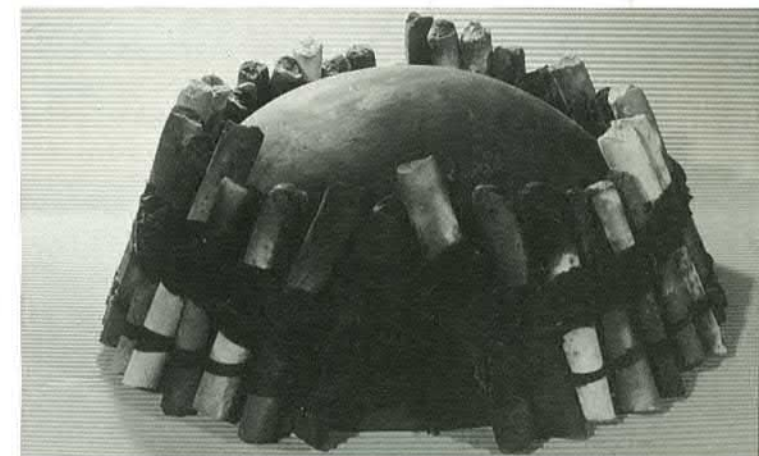
WAIKATO POLYTECHNIC  
**Cathy Wells**, 1st year Craft Certificate student. Handbuilt box, stoneware with porcelain inlay. Clear glaze outside, celadon inside, gas fired. 15cm h, 25cm l.

WANGANUI REGIONAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE  
**Kari Shadwell**. 'Cat's Cradle' series, Raku fired with soluble salts. Ceramic and calico. 20 x 30cm.

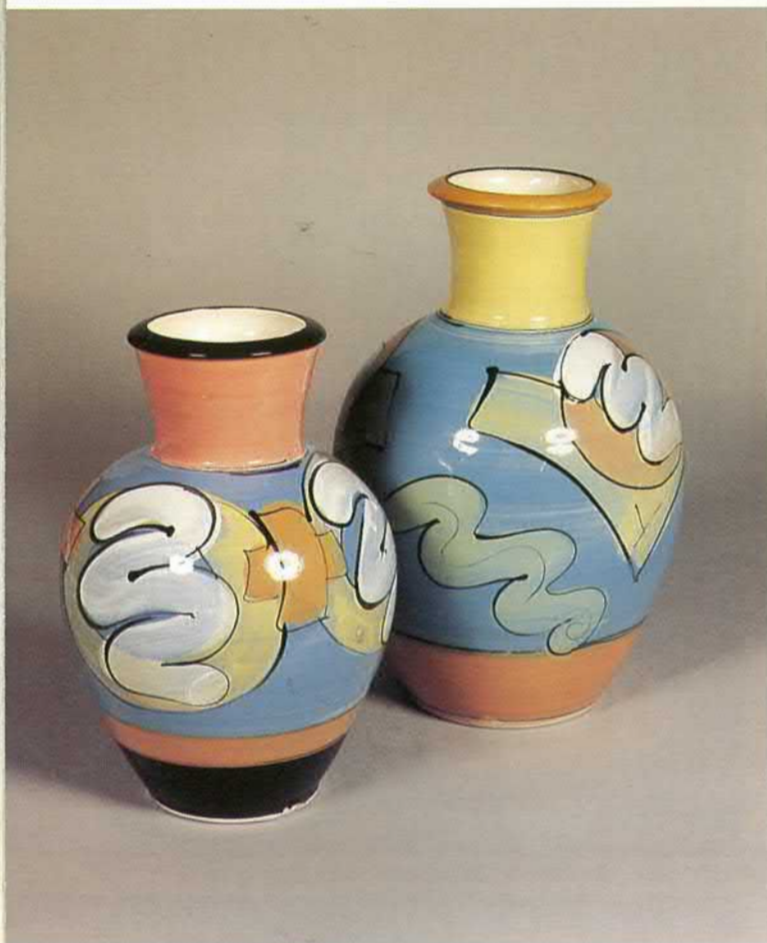
OTAGO POLYTECHNIC  
**John Lovering**. Stoneware forms. 30cm h.

### Footnote:

Two year Certificate of Craft Design courses commenced in Polytechs throughout NZ in 1986. In 1988, graduates were able to continue studying by enrolling in Diploma courses in only four approved Polytechs. An *Education Department* directive specifically forbade other institutions from offering further craft education. In spite of this, many others have enrolled Certificate graduates who continue to study. At the end of 1989 the first full graduates of both Certificate and Diploma (or equivalent) will move into the workforce.







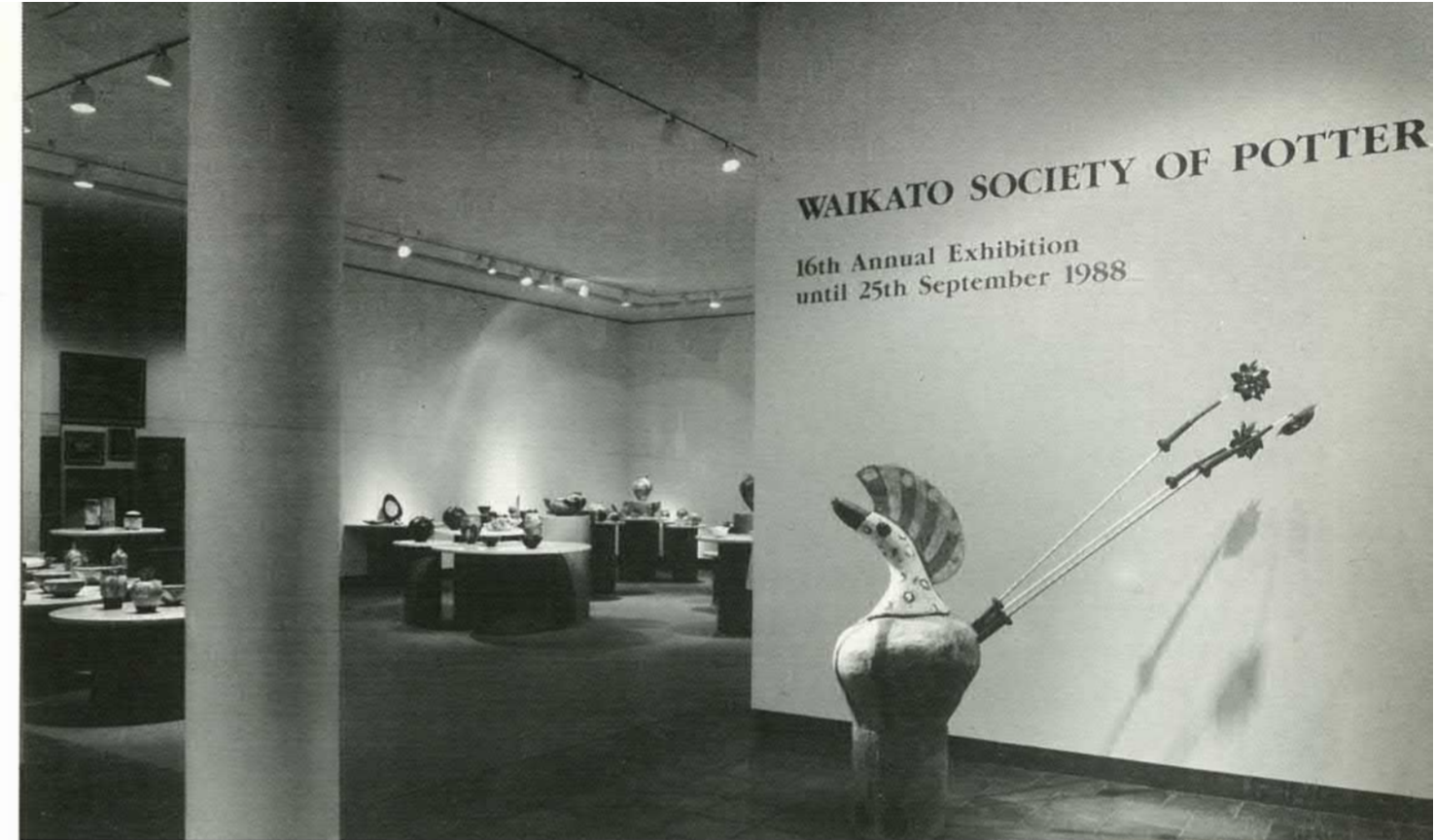
Guest potter Andrew van der Putten. Thrown stoneware vases. 31cm h.



Joanne Kilsby. Low fired, salt-fumed, hand built vessels. 20cm h.



Kevin Kilsby. Hand built inlaid porcelain teapots. 9-14cm h.



Entrance to the exhibition featuring 'Dawky', a painted clay sculpture by Gary Nevin. 2m h.

Photographs by David Cook

## WAIKATO SOCIETY OF POTTERS

16th Annual Exhibition — Waikato Museum of  
Art and History  
Guest Selector and Exhibitor, Andrew van der Putten







Peter Collis adding coil detail to thrown pillar capital

## COMMISSIONED — LARGE POTS!

Peter Collis, Auckland

During the past year I was fortunate enough to receive some interesting commissions. They were all large pots, but due to the clients' and consequently my requirements, each pot differed technically from the others. However, there were still factors that were common to all commissions. These included: what the client had in mind, the site, fittings (what the pots were to sit on or in) studio space, kiln space, time allowed for completion and the price.

The first commission was for the new architectural office of *Seton-Morgan Architects* in Birkenhead. The office was formerly a shop and the client required some way of breaking the long narrow area into work and reception areas, without using solid partitions. The architects decided to use three large pillars with capitals on top that went floor to almost ceiling height to separate the space. My commission was to make the capitals.

The office walls were painted by a ragging technique with soft terracotta, peach, pink and gold colours by artist **Paul Radford**. Therefore, I chose *Abbotts Red* terracotta clay. This clay is fine and smooth, but still retains a high degree of throwing strength and plasticity. It also has a lovely colour response through the temperature range, whether oxidised or reduced. To match the colours of the new office I fired this clay to 950°C in soft reduction, producing a lovely peach terracotta colour.

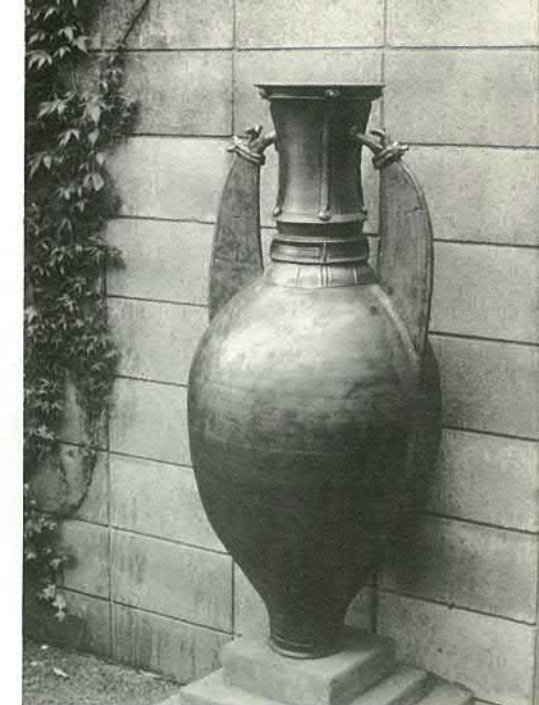
The capitals had to be large enough to look balanced and in proportion to the pillars they were being placed upon, which were 2.4m high and 450mm wide. The controlling factor on how wide I could make them was the 800mm width of my kiln and the type of wheel I owned. My wheel was designed to throw only 20lbs of clay, so I threw a pad of clay on a bat and then added soft coils, throwing them to desired thickness, drying with a gas burner, then adding more coils until the basic shape was finished. This was put aside and the second one thrown, then the third. The coils and bottom flanges were added at the leatherhard stage, as were the smiling lion heads, made by my wife Julie.

When all three were finished they were draped with soft plastic and allowed to dry slowly. The dry capitals were then manoeuvred into the kiln one at a time. A thick layer of coarse grog on the kiln shelf helped to slide them in, as well as enabling them to move easily whilst shrinking during the firing. The kiln was preheated to 100°C over a day and then fired to 950°C in eight hours and left to cool overnight. The process was repeated for the other two. A small amount of grinding around the bottom flanges to make sure they fitted on to the pipes, and they were ready to be installed.

Julie Collis adds the smiling lions



Pots commissioned for TVNZ's 'Gloss'. 90cm h.



Completed urn sited in courtyard garden. 1.3m h.

The second commission came through *Masterworks* — an Auckland gallery. Again this was extremely challenging. It was for TVNZ's programme *Gloss* and I worked closely with **Sandra Arnet**, the programme's set designer. The pots required were to be placed in a new bar setting. The bar was very glossy indeed — lots of gold and Italian furniture. I felt that the pots needed to be sophisticated, highly glazed, with a gold lustre decoration. Again I had to make three matching pots, or in this case urns.

The size and shape of these urns was also dictated by their siting — they were to be 900mm high and 450mm wide. I decided to use *Adrian Cotter* stoneware clay as it has a very good throwing strength, stands up well and holds its shape throughout all stages of making. I do not use grog in the clay when making large pots — I find that adding grog to throwing clays opens them up and weakens their throwing strength.

When throwing large pots I firstly throw a series of tubes; for each of these urns I threw four — a small one of about 15lbs of clay for the top and three others of about 30-40lbs. On the last one I leave the bottom in and this is obviously the bottom of the pot. I add the next tube to it by making a tongue and groove join, using no slip (the tubes were very thick — up to 5cm). Then I throw these two tubes into the shape of the bottom half of the plan, dry it with a gas burner, add the third tube the same way, then the fourth, making sure that the pot is finished at each stage while my arm will still reach down inside.

After obtaining leatherhard state the urns were turned a little, taking the excess thickness off the bottom. They were left to dry slowly and bisque to 900°C. I find that throwing by the tube method enables me to have greater control of shape and the form of the pots. I have tried most other methods but this one suits me best.

The urns were sprayed with a black glaze and fired to 1300°C reduction in a natural gas kiln. The Mirror Black glaze is:

- 85 Cornish stone
- 15 Calcite
- 10 Blythes black stain

Lustering the urns could now begin. It became a long process because firstly, the resinate lustre is black, and painting black on black does funny things to your eyes (double-crossing them etc). Secondly, the fumes these lustres give out are such that glue sniffing is not required to get high and thirdly, because of the type of decoration I did — a combination of broad and thin brush strokes, pen lines, wipeout and sgraffito techniques to give a wide range of soft and hard edges in the repeating patterns. They took 30 hours to decorate before being fired in an oxidizing atmosphere to 790°C.

I used both bronze lustres available from *Affiliated Industries* and *Western Potters* because they have different tones; one being more gold in tone, the other more coppery. I did this to try to get depth into the brush patterns instead of the look of bronze laid on top of the glaze which is common to resinate lustres. Another way to achieve a variation in tonal quality is to slightly reduce the kiln atmosphere to bring the copper colour through. Reduction has only to be slight and for a short time at 790°C to give tonal variation. Good lighting and ventilation is essential when working with lustres.

The third commission was for a private home. The brief for this commission was that the pot had to be as large as possible and have a bronze patina finish. These were the only constraints the clients placed upon me, consequently I had free rein.

The pot I decided to make was thrown basically the same way as the urns except that it was turned upside down and placed in a bucket to enable the narrow foot ring to be thrown. The neck was thrown separately and the wings and applied decoration added at leatherhard stage. After bisqueing the pot over two days it was decorated using an engobe stained black. This was applied by stippling with a sponge to give a soft overall texture. The engobe looks the same fired as it does when applied so it enables a wide range of textural finishes. The engobe recipe is:

- 20 China Clay
- 20 Australian Potash Feldspar
- 20 Molochite
- 20 Silica
- 10 Lead Bisilicate
- 5 Zirconium Silicate
- 5 Nepheline Syenite

The pot was fired 1300°C in reduction. Bronze lustre was then ragged and stippled on and the pot re-fired to 790°C in oxidation. The lustre fired with a dull bronze patina finish due to it having been applied on a dull background.

The finished pot is 1.3m high and 600mm wide. It was designed to be mounted on a concrete plinth because of the small foot ring and also, as it is the focal point in the house's inner courtyard, it needed to be lifted on a formal pedestal.

I enjoy making large pots enormously, and the purchase of an American *Brent* wheel, with its durability and strength has made throwing them somewhat easier. I intend to continue making large pots and urns. Commission work does finance the more unusual and often exciting extensions of one's own ideas, with the added input of the particular job's restrictions and demands.



# GLAZE TESTING An Intuitive Approach

Vic Evans, Nelson

I am sure many potters/ceramic artists have something of a mental block when it comes to glaze technology; a left side, right side brain conflict I suppose. Despite this conflict it is obvious that many of these people are able to produce some very exciting glazes. How do they do it?

The following is simply my experience of a period of experimentation that really has no definite starting point and at the time of writing no final destination. I did know that I was becoming more and more interested in what was becoming known as the *low temperature* glazes which seemed to be a way of describing those glazes that fell into the 1000°C to 1150°C temperature range. I was also aware that for many, the mere mention of the words *glaze technology* was a turn off and so I began to analyse the methods I have used to study glazes.

The introduction of the now ubiquitous **Otto Natzler Red** (*New Zealand Potter* Vol. 28 No. 1 1986) was for me a turning point. My work had for some time been dominated by aesthetic considerations, function was taking a back seat. High temperatures were no longer an important consideration. As well as the nature of change that was occurring in my work I had just taken possession of a second hand electric kiln which meant I could experiment to my heart's content without placing my family's very existence in jeopardy. The smaller kiln enabled me to carry out my testing programme, while the income of my pottery continued with the work that was produced from my larger, stoneware kiln.

The first step was to test the glaze and an important part of that process was to remove any colouring agents. (See #1 below) The action of taking an existing glaze and removing the colouring agents has subsequently become an important part of all my glaze testing and has resulted in some of my most exciting discoveries.

The 'new' *Otto*'s texture, fired between 1000°C and 1020°C, produced a bright yellow glaze with a very narrow firing range and potential problems. Materials such as red lead and barium carbonate are **very toxic**, particularly in the powder form. As well, I had to be mindful of my own health, and that of my family, any future owners of my property and future owners of my work; a tremendous responsibility. Despite some good results when using chrome oxide as a wash for brush work, I eventually abandoned this glaze not only for the reasons already stated, but because I was becoming increasingly dissatisfied with the fragile nature of the glaze/clay combination.

I was convinced a glaze could be produced in the 1000°C to 1050°C, range that would be durable, with an interesting surface and able to accept a wide range of glaze stains. I was aware of the majolica tradition but I did not make a study of the history of majolica glazes except in a most cursory way. However I was interested in the colour capacity of these glazes and so started to carry out some tests.

Starting with the glaze recipe introduced to New Zealand by **Matthias Ostermann** (see #2 below) I progressively added a white slip (see #3 below) to the glaze to see if the glaze could be altered to give it a more matt appearance. The method used was quite primitive; 9 cups of glaze to 1 cup of slip, followed by 8 cups of glaze to 2 cups of slip and so on. The most satisfying result was at the two thirds glaze to one third slip stage and thus a new glaze was formed (see #4 below).

The glaze was durable, accepted stains well and had the matt texture I was seeking. An added bonus was that although ideally either *Ferro Frit 3124* or *Frit 3600* could have been added to the stains on a 50/50 basis, in this case it was not essential. The stains were added to water and painted onto the

glazed surface. Often the background was painted first with a diluted mix of stains and water with the dominant decoration painted on top with a stronger mixture.

Although satisfying, this glaze was not quite meeting the needs I had set for my work. Two problems became apparent. The first had to do with the decoration I was developing on the pots. I wanted a surface I could paint on, but the painting had to be carried out very rapidly to achieve a primitive or intuitive effect. The surface of my new glaze was too smooth; too sophisticated. The solution was simple. A stoneware glaze was sprayed thinly over the unfired, or once fired piece and then fired, or refired, in the low temperature range. The result was interesting and exactly what I was looking for. Taking a lower firing stoneware glaze (see #5 below) I added 5% of yellow stain and then sprayed a previously fired piece; highlighted some of the earlier brushwork (it could be easily seen through the second coating) with a black stain and then refired the piece to 1025°C.

The second problem was that the abundance of choices presented to me by the white surface and the almost limitless range of glaze stains, was now distracting my perception of my work. I decided that it would be better to limit my choice so that the form and line of my work could be more clearly stated. Once more I returned to some earlier tests of the glazes in the *New Zealand Potter* article mentioned above.

Of all the glazes *Lichens* (see #6 below) seemed the most promising. Following a series of tests with the colouring oxides removed and then gradually replaced, the original proportions seemed quite satisfactory, although there existed a wide tolerance range. A first testing produced only results that could be classed as interesting. However, as the temperature range was adjusted, the thickness increased, and the reaction to different clay bodies observed, the glaze showed more and more of its more appealing qualities. It had a considerable depth of character in such areas as colour and texture and included particles that in a good light, would almost shine.

The glaze was also reacting well to the limited range of stains I was using. The brushed-on stains blurred slightly giving the line drawings a soft quality. To judge the possible effects of adding other colourants to the glaze at a later stage, I brushed the oxide or stain onto the glaze (minus the cobalt and copper). At the time of writing some of the most promising future prospects are red iron oxide and refractory orange stain.

The glaze was not perfect in every respect; few glazes are. In the case of this glaze, time was the factor that showed up any problems. The first to become evident was the fact that it did not re-fire well, which was quite a handicap as this was one of the qualities I had set as important in defining the nature of my work. The second difficulty was a minor one. The glaze formed crystals when left to stand for a period of time, which meant it had to be sieved regularly. The testing goes on.

The emphasis of this article has been on the empirical approach to glaze study. Many factors are involved when a glaze is being investigated: the temperature, temperature range, kiln atmosphere, clay body; the effect of colouring oxides, carbonates and stains; the intention of the potter, the relationship between the form and the glaze, the result of added decoration and its effect on the glaze — plus many others.

It is impossible to recommend a definitive approach to glaze study, with the possible exception being the formula method of glaze calculation. However, it would be fair to say that no matter which side of your brain dominates your thinking, good observational skills and an abundance of curiosity will prove to be your most valuable tools.

## GLAZES:

### #1 1000°C Oxidation

Red Lead	62.1%
Potash Feldspar	20.0
Barium Carbonate	9.5
NZ China Clay	4.2
Cornish Stone	4.2

NOTE: See above for warning on lead.

### #2 1020°C Oxidation

Ferro Frit 3124	74.07%
White Ball Clay	7.40
NZ China Clay	7.40
Zirconium Flour	11.11

### #3 White Slip (Wide range of uses)

White Ball Clay	75%
NZ China Clay	10
Silica	10
Feldspar	10

### #4 1025°C Oxidation

Ferro Frit 3124	49.38%
White Ball Clay	29.93
NZ China Clay	8.26
Silica	3.33
Feldspar	1.66
Zirconium Flour	7.40

### #5 1190-1250°C Oxidation or Reduction

Nepheline Syenite	40%
Dolomite	18
Silica	18
NZ China Clay	12
Bone Ash	6
Lithium Carbonate	2
Zinc Oxide	4

### #6 1025°C Oxidation

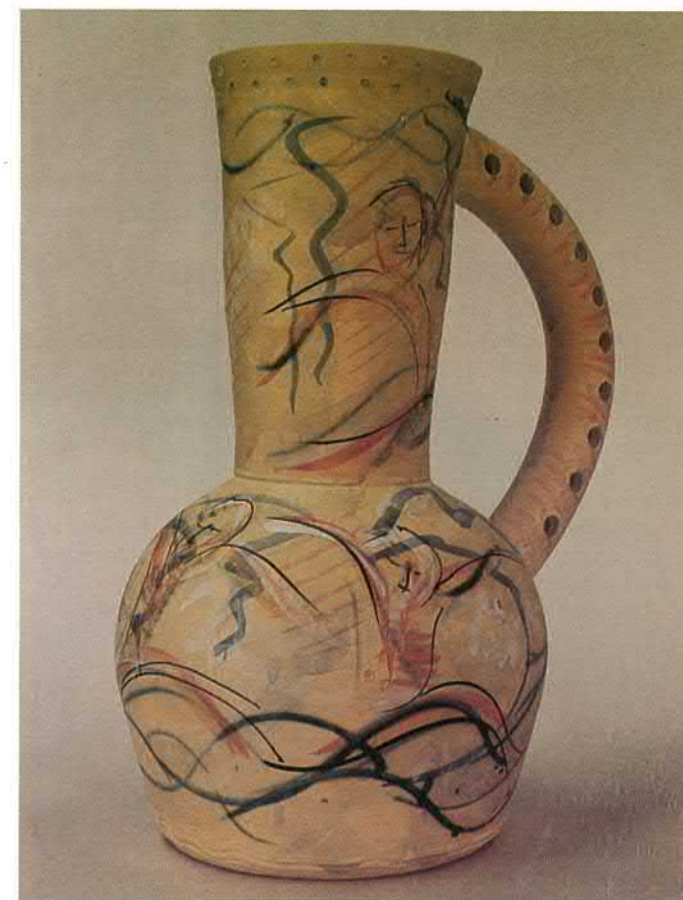
Magnesium Carbonate	34.63%
Lithium Carbonate	6.93
Ferro Frit 3124	34.63
Gerstley Borate	20.78

Best with	
Copper Carbonate	2.77
Cobalt Carbonate	.28

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I would like to thank the *Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council* for the grant that enabled me to undertake the research necessary to prepare this article.



Glaze #4 was applied first and the piece was decorated with glaze stains. The pot was then sprayed lightly with glaze #5 and parts highlighted with stains, then refired.

Example of glaze #6 with copper carbonate and cobalt carbonate added to the glaze. Black and white stains have been used to brush on the simple lines that form the decoration.





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# STUDIO POTTERY IN ARGENTINA

Ana Tosca, Sante Fe, Argentina

Translated by Susana Sabatte

Firstly, I am going to tell you about Argentina today.

Our country is suffering an economic crisis which has affected nearly all the medium class of our citizens, one of the most important group which is formed in its greater part by artisans and other workers. So the logical consequence is that many groups of artists have disappeared. I'm speaking about the general situation of the country.

Here in Sante Fe, the capital of our province, we have our own reality; we are the result of an ethnic immigration of young people with great capacity, but suffering bad economic conditions.

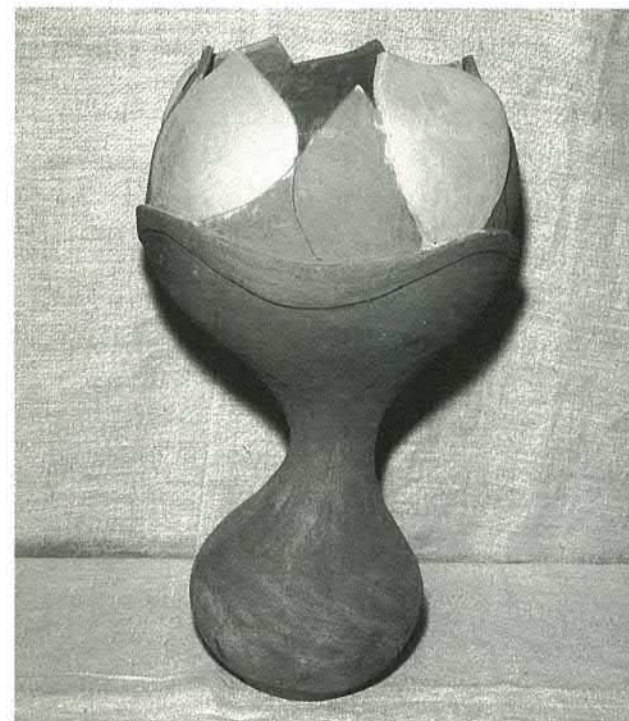
Students' level in arts is high — with 11 to 18 years old at the School of Arts — and the same happens with the cultural coefficient.

The art of pottery, you know, began here in South America a long time ago, that is to say, its origins are with the tribes of Indians belonging to the pre-Colombian culture (before the discovery of South America by Europeans). From this time onwards it has increased its level as regards quality and quantity, showing us different expressions and a great variety of ceramic works.

There are sculptors who faithfully represent the city because their expressions are the result of their academic level. On the other hand, we also have sculptors who represent ideas which are closely connected to our folk, our national and regional customs. Among our population, there are artisans who produce ceramic of low quality in order to be sold immediately.

Speaking about our technology — we have plastic land-zones here which are used by people who work regional (littoral) expressions, while others work manufactured white clay, using colour as a compliment to shape. In this order there is a great development, if we consider the creations of each artist, as well as the different types of colourific pastes.

Coloured pastes "Alice in the Marvels' World"



Colourific pastes and opaque smalts (slips and glazes) are the two expressions which represent us in a better way, as South American people according to the history of our country.

Telling you about our association (of potters) we are working on this project now, joining people and ideas to form it (a national society of studio potters) as soon as possible.

What you offer us is really valuable (contact with NZ potters, exchange of information and ideas, possible exchange of exhibitions of pottery — Ed). It would be very interesting to show our ceramic works to foreign countries and look for the market possibilities — these being very difficult here at the moment, for all Argentinian people.

We can exchange with you all our ceramic techniques, a lot about smalts of our creations and show you how we play with pastes.

Best wishes, Ana Tosca.

Ana Tosca is a 61 year old Chemical Engineer. She has taught for 30 years at the University of Santa Fe, Argentina. She has also spent 10 years doing research work at the Balseiro Institute subordinated to Argentina Atomic Energy. She has had a mechanic professorship at the Hydraulic Engineering University.

As an artisan and sculptor Ana has studied art in France and ceramics in Buenos Aires, with Mireya Baglietto as her tutor.

At the moment Ana is professor of the high students' level at the School of Art in Sante Fe. She has participated in many exhibitions in Argentina and makes architectural work in ceramics for buildings. She creates and produces her own smalts (glazes) and is continually researching in the ceramic system. Many of her works have been published in Argentinian magazines.

Susana Sabatte is a 39 year old English teacher. She has studied sculpture at the School of Art, Sante Fe and has attended courses in Buenos Aires with Jorge Fernandez Chiti as her professor. Some of her works have been published in books on ceramics by Chiti.

Susana has worked in clay and metal since her childhood in her father's workshop, and has exhibited widely in Argentina. She has also won several prizes in sculpture competitions. She creates and produces her own pastes and smalts.

Patch technique sculpture, 1040° C.







Photos by Elizabeth Woodfield.



The pit is opened.

Pots are washed to remove ash.

Jenny Russell's pit fired bottle forms, 35 cm high.



## PIT FIRING IN THE WAIKATO

Elizabeth F. Woodfield, Hamilton



From left, Jenni Dredge, Jenny Russell, Janet Faulkner and Bryce Stevens load the pit at Riverlea Arts Centre.



Jenni Dredge lifts pots from the ashes. Note how the pipes have bent with the heat.

It occurred to me as I drove in to take photographs of the pit firing at Riverlea Arts Centre for the Waikato Society of Potters, why am I doing this? So many pit firings have already been recorded in New Zealand. Is it the pull of our roots that constantly draws us to the earthiness of clay, the primitiveness of firing, the simplicity of life this all represents in the fast track of the late 1980s, or is it really a sophistication in primitive disguise?

I look at the pots that are being loaded into the 4 by 8 foot pit. (That's simpler than 1.216 by 2.432 metres, isn't it?) They are being passed down to Jenni Dredge who is selectively placing them in the 3½ foot deep pit — oops, I mean 1.064 metres.

What's that there? A well rounded pot with amusing handles. And that? Was that an unpractised hand searching its way in this age old medium? How much pleasure was drawn from that experience and what potential is stirring in the touch. Look at that — now that surface has surely demanded oceans of patience — rub, rub, rubbing away to compress and polish the whole outer layer of the

form. It reminds me of pictures of Mexican pots with their painted motifs and the black ware of the Pueblo Indians.

Sawdust is going in now and Jenni sprinkles copper sulphate from the garden shop and table salt around the pots of 20 WSP members. "Fumes from these sprinklings go naturally with the shape of the pot. You get more natural effects than with directly applied colour," said Jenni. Copper sulphate gives purple and salt helps the copper to fume. Chrome also was added but Jenni did not know what it does except that it makes shiny bumpers.

Off-cuts from a joinery factory, sawdust and demolition timber are then placed over the pots, filling the pit to its brim. Two sheets of tin are moved into place on top leaving the centre uncovered. Two newspaper bonfires are lit at each end of the pit and when they are fully alight the tin is slid right across to contain the fire. The firing is checked several times over the next seven hours and then left to smoulder away overnight.

The firing is to be lifted at the 'Open Day' the following weekend. Members wish the public to know there is an active pottery movement in the Waikato and work towards promoting pottery and giving the public an understanding how pottery is made. They can try their hand on a wheel, experience Raku as well see pots made and fired by various methods.

Jenni takes a surreptitious peek under the tin several days later as the pit cools. She says, "I'm always terrified I'll find everything broken." But she need not have worried — out of the hundred pots, only two had slight cracks.

Was there anything different or new about this firing? Oh yes, there was. There were new thoughts, new experiences, new hands exploring the soft clay world, new faces seeing this art for the first time. Will they sometime get hooked on wet clay, the 'mud-pie dilemma' or will they be the new ones who will help assuage our hunger with their purses? Perhaps they'll just pass on by. . . but I think they still have some specks of clay on their hands.



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- Le Brain:** Putting l'artistique half to use — Jan White
- L'Artistry:** Life drawing with Monsieur Batten
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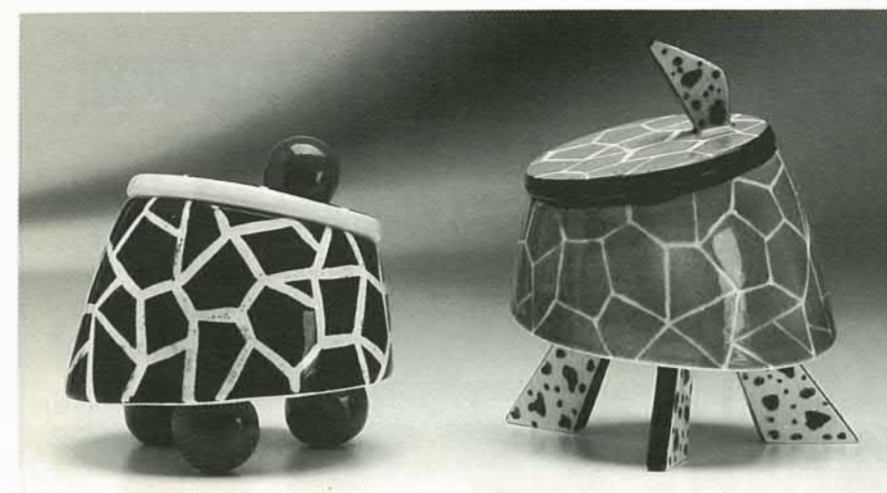
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## VALESKA CAMPION

At Compendium Gallery, Devonport

Photos by Valeska Campion



Valeska Campion, born in New Zealand in 1951, studied art and ceramics from 1973 to 1975 at the North Shore Teachers College, Auckland. The next two years saw her working by herself in Golden Bay, Nelson, where she built her own catenary arch oil-fired kiln, dug her own clay from one of New Zealand's best clay pits and produced stoneware.

She moved to Waiheke Island in 1978 to work with Dennis O'Connor making salt-glazed porcelain for two years, after which she established her own studio and house on the island's Palm Beach. Here Valeska started experimenting with low fired earthenware using an electric kiln.

A move to Glebe, Sydney, came in 1984 as well as a visit to Japan to study contemporary ceramics there. She established a studio in Glebe the next year, having received an Australian Crafts Board grant to develop slip-cast earthenware — and to employ an assistant. 1987 saw her in Europe for 2 months visiting galleries, making contact with artists and studying the architectural work of Antoni Gaudi in Spain.

She then returned to Waiheke Island where she now lives and works. During these years Valeska has been exhibiting her ceramics and sculptural work in cold glass in many galleries both in this country and in Australia. This 1988 exhibition in the Compendium Gallery, Devonport showed her latest works in slip cast earthenware.

## Masks and Dolls by Leonie Arnold, at Compendium Gallery, Devonport

Photos by Pamela Elliott







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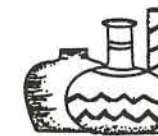
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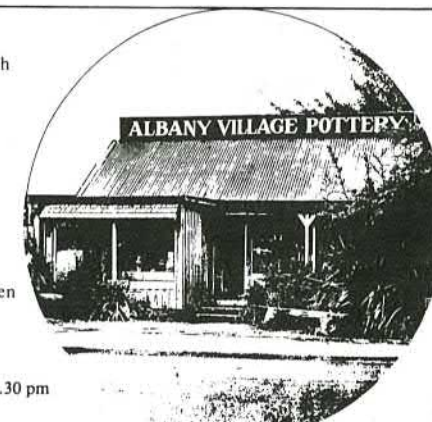
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