

Potter



NEW ZEALAND POTTER

VOLUME 34: NUMBER 3: 1992



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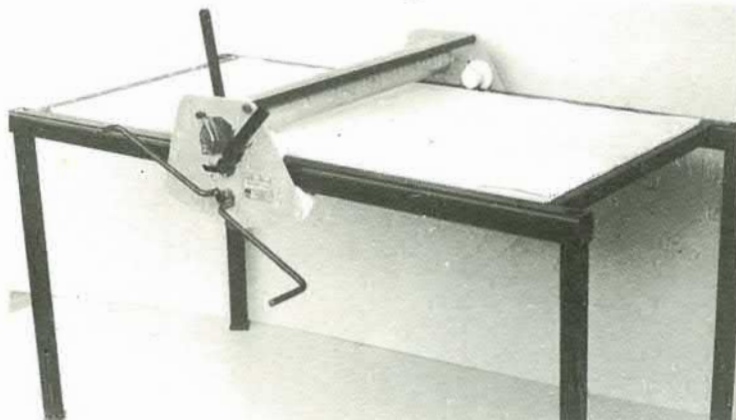
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VOLUME 34: NUMBER 3: 1992**

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## COVER PHOTO

### Clay Song

A stoneware sculpture, glazed with gold lustre and decorated with oil paints by **Louise Rive**, Auckland. Exhibited in the Auckland Studio Potters Annual Exhibition and photographed by **Howard Williams**.





# THROUGH THE FILTER PRESS

## EDITORIAL

Howard S. Williams

## CONGRATULATIONS

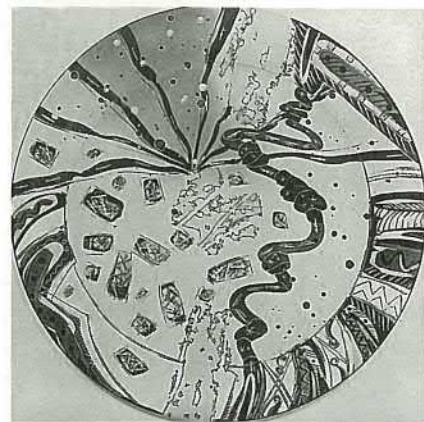
To **Rosemary Perry** of Christchurch who has been invited by the *Galerie Leonelli*, Lausanne, Switzerland to be one of about a hundred potters, each exhibiting four bowls as part of an international exhibition called *The Bowl*.

Also to **David Brokenshire** who was invited to submit work for the third *International Ceramics Competition* in Mino, Japan and in which he received an Honourable Mention in the Ceramic Arts section.

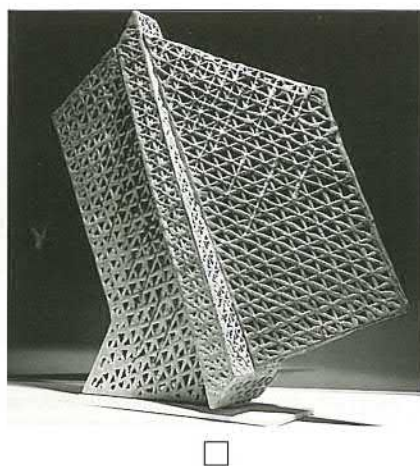
Also to **Darryl Robertson** of Nelson. The *QE II Arts Council* grant towards his major creative development enabled him to send work to the *13th Biennale Internationale of Ceramic Art* in Vallauris, Southern France. His ceramic painting *New Zealand Conservation Dream* was awarded the Gold Medal for Creative Ceramics.

Darryl was also invited to submit work for the *Triennale de la Porcelaine* in Nyon, Switzerland. He was one of only 22 artists accepted, not just the only one from New Zealand, but in fact the only one from the Southern Hemisphere. Each artist submitted a body of their work from which up to 10 pieces each were ultimately exhibited.

Having already been one of the commissioned artists for the Seville pavilion, Darryl has this year definitely made his international debut.



The photos from Nyon show Darryl Robertson's 50cm diameter plate *Southern Star '92* and *Bateaux et Vagues*, 45cm high sculpture by **Wladyslaw Garnik**, of Poland, who was awarded the *Prix Retraites Populaires*.



## 29,000 YEARS OLD

*Ceramics Monthly*, February 1992 has an interesting article by **Jayne Shatz** which documents the archaeological discovery in Czechoslovakia of the oldest yet known pottery kiln, dated at 27,000 B.C.

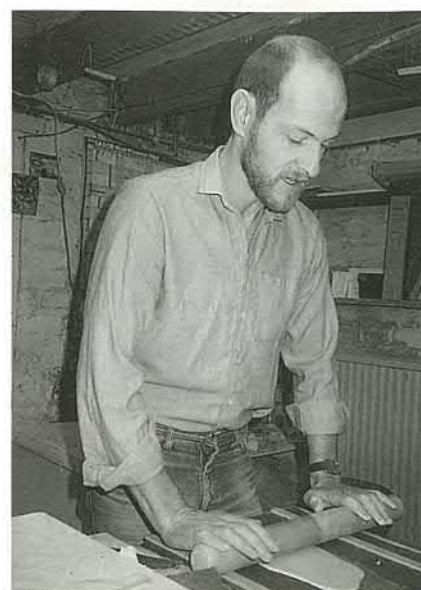
In a group of three huts, two of which were obviously communal lodges of a hunting clan... "The smaller hut was similar, but entirely closed in a wall of clay limestone. The hearth in the floor's middle provided a spectacular discovery in ceramic history — a prehistoric kiln in the shape of a beehive.

"It was surrounded by thousands of clay pellets, fragments of the heads of two bears and a fox, and some unfinished (human female) figures.

"Archaeologists believe this oldest kiln yet discovered was in the home of a Paleolithic shaman who produced, then fired figures of women and beasts. Before this finding, historians had believed the first kiln firing had occurred 15,000 years later."

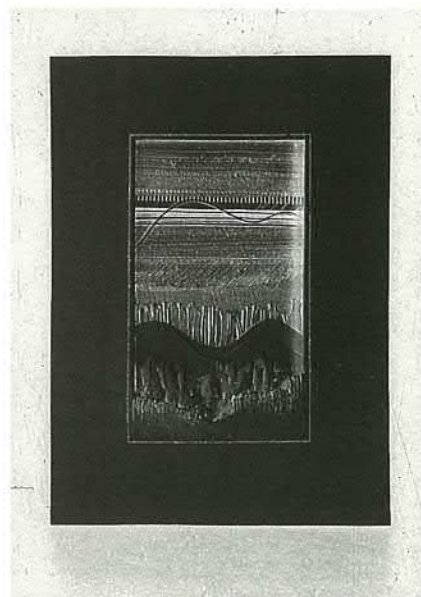
At this Dolni Vestonice kiln site one of the earliest known *Venus* figures was found intact — a small black female form modelled from clay and bone ash with... "large breasts, angular shoulders, and legs tapering down to small, rounded points. The top of the head has four holes made to hold flowers, leaves or feathers, symbolising the successful changing of the seasons, which were attributed to the goddesses' fertility."

Jayne Shatz concludes the article... "Imagining a person modeling a clay figure almost 30,000 years ago enables us to feel kinship to these early people. Their art emphasises that our art is part of human development — a part so powerful that when we discover it, kept safe throughout time for us to view and touch, we are linked through the ages."



## GORDON COOKE

This noted English potter will be visiting New Zealand and conducting a number of schools early in 1993. The photograph of Gordon was taken in his studio during a recent visit by **Fiona Thompson**. His delicate porcelain landscape picture is from her collection of his work.



## GOING, GOING, GONE...

Advert seen in *Trade and Exchange* 17/9/92  
POTTERS whl, elec, nds mtr & whl, \$15.

## ARTS COUNCIL GRANTS

Further grants awarded by the *QE II Arts Council* included:

**Contemporary Maori Visual Arts**  
**Manos Nathan**, Dargaville. \$4,000 to purchase equipment for ceramics.

## New Craft Artists Promotion

**Katrina Gold**, Nelson. \$3,000 to continue development of clay and fibre as expressive art forms.

**Hilary Kerrod**, Auckland. \$3,000 to complete a kiln shed workshop.

**Clair Neilson**, Auckland. \$3,000 to buy a secondhand kiln, with computer control.

**Alice Shaw**, Auckland. \$3,000 to develop new ceramics techniques.

## Short Term Study

**Brian Gartside**, Drury. \$7,000 towards a six month residence at the *International Ceramic Studio* at Kecskemet, Hungary. (See *Paprika with Everything*).

## PETER BEARD

**Peter Beard**, one of England's leading contemporary ceramic artists and a merit winner in the 1990 *Fletcher Challenge Ceramics Award*, has recently concluded a successful teaching tour of New Zealand thanks to the NZSP and *QE II Arts Council*. From the *Wellington Potters* newsletter we reprint the following recipes from Peter Beard's workshop.

## White Slip

Ball clay	40
China clay	5
Cornish stone	5
Flint (Silica)	5

## Black Oxide Mixture

Black Iron oxide	2
Copper oxide	1
Manganese dioxide	1

## Manganese Gold

Manganese dioxide	7
Powdered clay	2
Black iron oxide	1

1260-1280°C  
Measure this by volume (teaspoons) not by weight or it will not work.

## Barium Base Glaze, 1270°C

Barium carbonate	33.3
Nepheline Syenite	50
China clay	15.7
Copper carbonate	0.3

## Alkaline Earthenware Glaze

Alkaline frit	65
Nepheline Syenite	15
China clay	10
Calcite	5
Silica	5

Peter used the Barium Base Glaze first, waxed out some and then painted the Alkaline Glaze over the top with a brush. The Alkaline Glaze can be tinted with any colour.

**ULLI CHRISTOFFERSEN** from Germany, is a sculptor of terracotta who uses the *Driving Creek*, Coromandel kilns for firing. Her recurring theme is to show the connection between the Earth and the human female form.



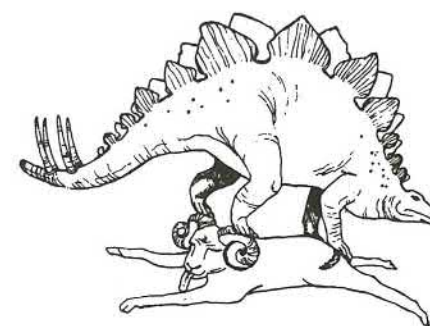
## THE DINOSAUR CLUB

Organised in 1986 in the United States at a Northeastern Craft Fair by makers of functional pottery.

On surveying the show and finding there were very few functional or domesticware pots they decided they were becoming an endangered species so they set up the *Dinosaur Club*.

There are now about 60 members; membership is by invitation and based on the potter's attitude and philosophy about making, as well as their style and quality of work.

A sense of humour is also essential. The Logo of the *Dinosaur Club* is a stegosaurus on a pressed ram.

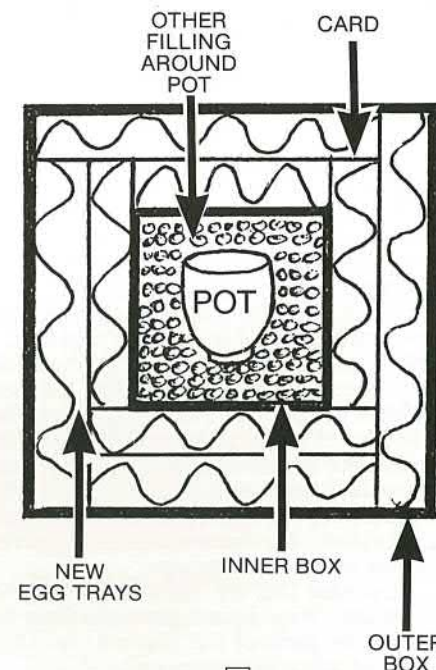


## POT PACKING

**Libby Boyd** of Thames sent in this idea for safe packing of pots. "Egg trays are very strong when weight or pressure can be dispersed — try standing on a batt on top of an egg tray, you won't dint (dunt?) or dent it.

Pack your pot in newspaper or bubblepack in an inner box, then surround this with egg trays and cardboard to tightly fill an outer carton. This package can be lightweight, strong, easy to pack. Use egg trays on all six sides.

New egg trays must be used if sending overseas, otherwise your pot may go into quarantine!



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# THE FRAGRANT PLANT

## A Laboratory at our Doorstep

Clare Anthony, Aromatherapist, Auckland

This article may seem an intriguing departure for a Potters' Journal — and so it is.

I'm about to expose you to the ancient secrets of the fragrant plant. Remember the experience of smelling a rose at dusk? It makes the world feel magical, but did you know that this fragrance contains up to 300 chemical constituents? So is its purpose to enchant our noses or has it got some deeper purpose?

Certainly it aims to enchant the nose of the bee, but even so, does it need over 300 chemical constituents to achieve this?

Plants have been the source of our evolutionary development, containing food, oxygen and healing properties for the planet's growing populations. Fundamentally though, the plant is self-sustaining and that the rose produces such a variety of constituents is to sustain its own vitality.

The fragrance of a plant occurs due to the growth of special cells about 2-3 months before fertilisation and then these cells gradually disappear over another period of 2-3 months.

The chemical constituents of the rose have been shown to be antiviral, antibacterial, analgesic; an excellent liver tonic, and it affects the area of the brain which uplifts the emotions. It is the queen among the plant healers.

How about this from **Professor Pierre Franchomme**, Director of the *Laboratory Pranarom*. "The vegetal essences contained in glandular hairs, sacs or ducts are veritable 'life essences' produced by specialised plant cells that have captured the sun's photoelectric magnetic energy and have converted it into biochemical energy in the form of infinitely varied aromatic molecules."

*Essential Oils* are the most potent healers of the plant kingdom. They are not the herb. They are the distillation of particular parts of the fragrant plant to obtain the minute yield of this precious material.

In recent times our main source for healing has become the use of antibiotics, steroids, antidepressant pills and so on. Lately the public has more and more been given opportunities to choose alternate, more natural ways of healing. As the Media exposes the many side effects which can occur with laboratory-made drugs we return to the balanced nature of the plant kingdom.

Healing with the essential oil of the fragrant plant has never died out. Every indigenous culture has used these remedies. The Aborigines would squeeze the leaf of the eucalyptus or tea tree, place it around a wound, covering this with a mudpack and letting essential oil extracted through the crushing of the leaf get on with the healing.

In the last 50 years healing with essential oils has begun a resurgence in the scientific world, first in France, then travelling to England and now in America, Australia and New Zealand.

This resurgence began during the First World War when due to an almost total lack of medical supplies, **Gattefosse**, a biochemist who had worked with the Perfumery Industry, decided to experiment with essential oils. He used them to induce healing in severe wounds of soldiers. His successes were documented in a book in the 1930s called *Aromatherapie*.

Among others, a French doctor, **Jean Valnet** continued this resurgence. He was one of the first doctors to use penicillin in the Second World War with, as he writes, miraculous results. However, ten years later he writes "Faced with a mounting toll of complications known to have been caused by aggressively synthesised chemical medications, many patients are now unwilling to be treated

except by natural therapies, foremost among which, plants and their essences have a rightful place." He himself and many of his colleagues stopped prescribing antibiotics and chose to prescribe essential oils as alternatives. In France Valnet began a post-graduate College where doctors learn about the use of plants for healing.

So how can this type of healing benefit the potter? It seems that the nature of the work done by potters exposes them to a variety of toxic materials which can affect the skin, lungs, kidneys and liver.

Perhaps in the past the only recourse was to receive drug treatment or topical steroid creams or something of this nature. These in themselves may involve the person in side effects, or simply suppress the symptom involving further application of drugs at a later date.

One of the purposes of this article is to suggest that there are alternative ways of dealing with these problems. Essential oils tend to clear the body of toxicity rather than suppress the disease. Used correctly there are no known side effects and they have been shown to work with the body by building the immune system at the same time as healing the symptoms.

Essential oils are the power house of the fragrant plant — the cell that grows larger and more potent with the approach of fertilisation. They could be called the hormone of the plant, the "life force", containing from about 28 to 300 constituents. Plants use their essential oils to keep away funguses, to prevent bacterial infection, to attract insects for fertilisation and to deter predatory plants which may take up their precious space. Their ability to strengthen the plant for fertilisation is something that all women know as their hormonal power rises at the time of ovulation.

Scientists in their quest for copying this power can isolate and reconstitute the main healing constituent of some essential oils. However, they are completely unable to reconstitute the whole of the essential oil molecular structure of any one plant.

The essential oils are stored in the plant in usually one particular place, be it the root, leaf, flower, fruit, the peel of a fruit and so on. For instance Rosemary contains its essential oil in the leaf, Rose in the flower, Lemon in the peel, Ginger in the rhizome, Lavender in the flower and leaf, Frankincense in the gum.

Sunlight destroys the essential oil and the flower will draw down the essential oil globules to a safer place for storage until the sun retreats — ever noticed how Roses or Jasmine smell more fragrant at dusk or in the early morning?

Plants are gathered with care, often dried or crushed before being distilled, at which time they release their potent product. A word of warning though; like good wine or poor wine, there are quality essential oils and poor quality essential oils. There are many synthesised or adulterated ones. It is not enough that they are called pure and smell nice, they may not be therapeutically effective unless they have been specially analysed and checked for their purity and chemical constituents.

Growing, producing, trusting your supplier, knowing that they are buying specifically for the healing market and not for food flavouring, pharmaceutical, perfume or the other myriad uses essential oils are marketed for, is the guarantee that healing will occur safely and powerfully.

We come then to how essential oils can help you, the producer of wonderful pots and artistic creations. Perhaps your work itself originating as it does from the soil, would have a particular affinity to the flower which comes also from the soil.

Some of the ailments that can occur in working with or making pottery are dermatitis, burns, asthma, conjunctivitis, cuts and abrasions, lung problems, kidney problems; toxicity causing listlessness, fatigue and sleeplessness.

Many of these problems can be prevented with care in the use and handling of your materials. However, there are times when care gets thrown out for speed or artistic endeavour.

Here are some suggestions for preventing and containing some of the possible results of the materials you use.

A fine barrier cream is available from the *Clare Anthony Aromatherapy Centre* containing essential oils which not only prevent toxicity reaching the skin, but will also clear any dermatitis symptoms which may already be occurring. There are nurses who are constantly exposed to detergent damage in hospital work, who regularly use this cream with remarkable results.

Safe, natural, powerful ways of containing other symptoms with the simple use of quality essential oils are:

- Burns can disappear with the use of Lavender.
- Asthma can be treated with Clary Sage, Marjoram and Eucalyptus.

## COBALT TREATMENT

### Middle fire oxidised glazes: Part 3.

John Park, Auckland

Cobalt is one of the simplest and most direct glaze colorants. Small percentages will literally colour any glaze base over the full temperature spectrum.

But Cobalt can also be one of the most difficult colorants to use. The effect can be very intense; unremittingly boring in some glazes. **Leach** recommended cutting the Cobalt with iron or manganese at higher stoneware temperatures for a more painterly textured build-up to blue brushwork.

Cobalt has never exactly been cheap. One of the most expensive glaze materials has become even more expensive because of civil war in Africa.

Cobalt in glazes makes the easy use of other paler glazes a problem. The blue fingerprints innocently left while loading the kiln inevitably show up exactly where they are not wanted.

Cobalt Carbonate is finer and disperses more evenly within the glaze than Cobalt Oxide which tends towards an unwanted speckle effect.

#### Tests with the 4 base glazes.

A. GLOSS NEUTRAL	
Potash Feldspar	43
Silica	24
Kaolin	2
Gerstley Borate	20
Whiting	2
Zinc Oxide	3
Barium Carbonate	6
	100

Percentage Additions	
1. Cobalt Carbonate	0.1-5
2. Wollastonite	20
Cobalt Carbonate	0.1-5
3. Rutile	5
Cobalt Carbonate	0.1-5

B. GLOSS OPACIFIED	
Potash Feldspar	43
Silica	24
Kaolin	2
Gerstley Borate	20
Whiting	2
Zinc Oxide	3
Barium Carbonate	6
Tin Oxide	10
	110

Percentage Additions	
1. Cobalt Carbonate	0.1-5

C. MATT MAGNESIA/ZINC	
Potash Feldspar	31
Whiting	20
Talc	10
Kaolin	29
Silica	10
Zinc Oxide	10
	110

Percentage Additions	
1. Cobalt Carbonate	1-10

D. MATT HIGH ALKALINE	
Barium Carbonate	27
Nepheline Syenite	58
Kaolin	6
Silica	7
Lithium Carbonate	2
Alkaline frit	10
	110

#### Percentage Additions

1. Cobalt Carbonate 0.1-5

#### The fifth significantly different glaze base

This is adapted from a Cone 11 Zinc Crystal glaze in the **Glen C. Nelson CERAMICS** manual. When fired to Cone 7 the glaze need not run and have to be ground off. Thicker layers give a glassy breakup with crystal pools. It is highly unpredictable but not as fickle as Nickel.

E. ZINC CRYSTAL	
Potash Feldspar	50
Whiting	17.5
Silica	17.5
Zinc Oxide	25
	110

#### Percentage Additions

1. Cobalt Oxide 0.1-2
2. Substitute Soda Feldspar for the potash to get more glassy crystals. I tend to use the matt version near the bases to act as a brake for the more fluid glaze.

### PART 4: "Avoid Nickel my son" said Josiah Wedgwood.



# POTTERS CLAY CELEBRATES ITS 5TH BIRTHDAY

It's five years since **Clive Glazier** and **Malcolm Newport** took over *Potters Clay* from *Winstones*.

Initially purchased by a group of four shareholders, Clive and Malcolm have been sole owners for the last two years.

An energetic, dedicated team, they have their own strengths. Clive has worked in clay production for many years, and Malcolm has a background in business.

For them, quality control is an obsession. It's hard to believe that their clean, orderly factory is producing something as messy as mud.

With the market demanding large quantities of white clays, they have to be fastidious with their equipment. The addition of extra filters and screens, along with careful maintenance and cleaning helps avoid contamination. They understand the trauma potters go through if clay doesn't live up to their expectations.

Nothing is left to chance. The clays are analysed and tested by geologists, chemists, *Mintech* and the *University of Canterbury*.

It is harder to maintain consistency when using raw materials from a country as geologically young as New Zealand, but they are committed to using as many local materials as possible and no chemicals or additives of any sort.

**Michael Banks** has joined the team as their technical adviser and is offering a free information and fault diagnostic service.

Potters are encouraged to contact Michael at *Potters Clay* regarding any enquiries they may have.

*Potters Clay* are celebrating their 5th birthday with the launching of a new clay — **LF Red**. Produced in response to market demands, and following the discovery of the new clay, this low

firing red undergoes a dramatic colour change from orange at 1060°C to dark, brick red at 1115°C. The very fine raw materials used ensure a plastic, excellent throwing clay, good also for hand-building.

Schools have their own specific requirements and *Potters Clay* are planning new, good quality, earthenware and stoneware clays — **College Earthenware** and **College Stoneware**.

They are also working on producing a new pure white clay, using as many local materials as possible to keep the cost competitive.

Keeping up with consumer demands for changing clay types is an ongoing process. From the conception of the idea to launching the product may take years, with exhaustive researching, blending and testing, leaving nothing to chance.

## INTRODUCING LOW FIRING RED

FIRING RANGE • 1060°C - CONE 04  
TO • 1137°C - CONE 01

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TO DARK RED AT 1115°C

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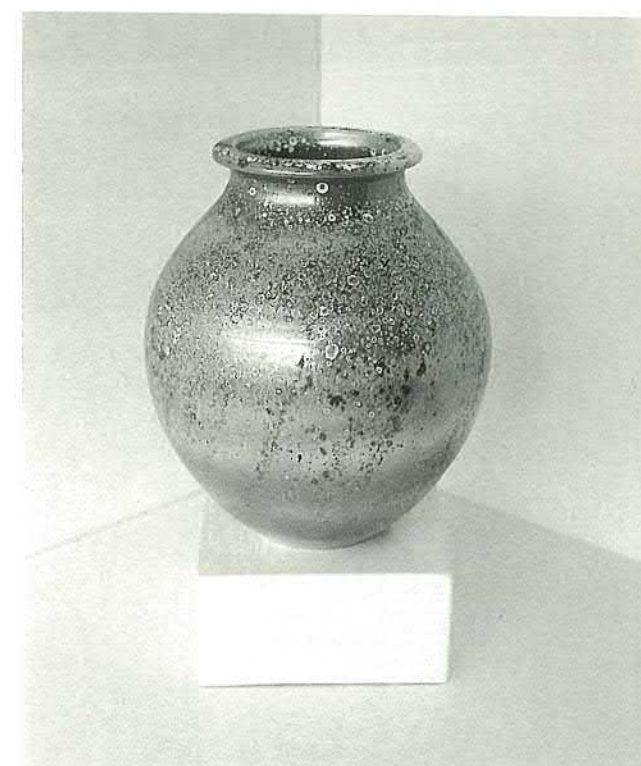
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# AOTEA GALLERY

A Gallery providing high quality individually created hand-made craft which would appeal to international tourists and the corporate sector was the concept that led to the establishment of the *Aotea Gallery*.

It opened in September and immediately began promoting its identity to the people of Auckland, to visitors and tourists. All work on display is made by New Zealand crafts people using local resources. Much of the work could fall into the category of collectables because of its uniqueness.

The gallery has been set up in a showroom of about 214 sq metres, above *Webb's* the Antique Dealers and Auctioneers at 18 Manukau Road, Epsom. Its decor and layout is designed to give the work adequate space and light for viewing. This is achieved by the placement of cubes and columns as display stands in various configurations with adequate room for people to view and appreciate the work.



*Lustre Vase by Paul Laird*

As the gallery has, as its principal objective, the facilitating and promotion of the sale of many talented New Zealanders' handcrafted work, exhibitions will be held from time to time. Its location, floor space and parking facilities are features which will assist in making this venue a popular one.

Work on display includes ceramic dragons by **Phil Spencer**, lustre bowls and vases by **Paul Laird**. Turned woodcraft includes work by **Alby Hall**, **Shane Hewitt**, **Ian Fish**, **James Hoogeveen**, **Allan Richardson**, **Bob Gibson**, **Kemp Lenihan** and **Des Blanchett**. Bone carving by **Norman Clark** using traditional Maori design concepts is a feature of the hanging pendants available.

The emphasis on New Zealand handcraft is signalled by the exceptional quality of the carving in white teak, of an adult sized Tuatara. This brilliant interpretation of a Tuatara by **Graham Pizzey** who has mounted it on a redbeech burl leads the way in this type of work.



*Raku pots by Adriana Hendel*

*Photographs by Ross Wylie*

*Aotea Gallery, Epsom.*





# NZ CERAMICS '92

## A Singapore Experience

Trudi McGlashen, Nelson



Gane and Benge. "Pod Vase", 660 mm h

We have all met those high fliers who visit the studio with a really good scheme to promote your work somewhere. They are full of enthusiasm, but if you ever hear from them again, it is you who will be taking all the risks.

Who could tell if Joy Morais and her husband David Cornwell would be any different when they visited us in 1991 with a scheme for an exhibition in Singapore in 1992.

Both David and Joy are New Zealand trained lawyers working in Singapore, David being a New Zealander. They toured the country visiting over 30 potters before inviting three to show in an exhibition that was later named *NZ Ceramics '92*.

Those invited were Royce McGlashen, Steve Fullmer and Gill Gane & Jon Benge co-incidentally, all from Nelson.

After their initial contact David and Joy returned to Singapore to organise a venue and sponsorship. Over the next few months details were finalised and the exhibition set for 27-29 August. It wasn't until tickets actually arrived from Singapore Airlines that I really believed it was going to happen.

The venue was the *Queens Room* at the *Empress Place*, a large space with two tall columns and a mosaic tiled floor.

Car cases containing the pots were delivered on the Thursday morning, with the opening scheduled for 6.30 that evening. One of the cases showed signs of monumental damage in transit, so it was with great relief all the 30 works were unpacked undamaged.

At this point the 67 new and freshly painted display stands arrived. With a quote of \$8,000 to rent stands for three days, a last minute decision was made to have them built to specifications for a third of the rental cost.

The exhibition was quickly set up with each potter responsible for their own display area. While we were arranging pots on stands, the stand-makers were touching up their paint job and the gallery staff were positioning lights. The potential for disaster was huge, but all went safely.

The patron of the exhibition was the New Zealand High Commissioner in Singapore, **His Excellency Mr Colin Bell**, and the exhibition was opened by **Professor Tommy Koe**, the chairman of the *National Arts Council* of Singapore. The opening was a glittery affair — all credit to David and Joy who put together the invitation lists.

The exhibition ran for three days, Friday to Sunday. All work was for sale at comparable prices to those in New Zealand. No commission was charged as all expenses were covered by sponsorship.

The work was very well received and over 90 per cent was sold by the conclusion of the exhibition with further sales taking place later.

I will let the individual artists speak of their own work:

**Gill Gane**, for Gane and Benge of *Neudorf Pottery*

"My aim was to achieve a comprehensive collection of exhibition pieces whilst also displaying our abilities in two areas. Hence we showed a collection of functional pieces — essentially utilitarian forms such as large platters and bowls. These were subjected to the usual intense colour and strong graphic images characteristic of my work and with a view to lifting their status into the realm of objets d'art.

Imagery in this exhibition was even more detailed with strong emphasis on the "animated jungle" theme and with reference to foliar, fruit, seed and pod forms.

The very large pieces (660mm) high, were almost all unglazed and very complex in patterning. I consider them to be a major step forward and a real achievement in terms of approaching one's goals.

With an eye on durability and functionality I'm convinced of the possibility of success in the arena of the *designer* approach to *artful* ceramics. There is a certain "decorativeness" which has as much to do with being artful, as artful has to do with being a decorator."

**Steve Fullmer**

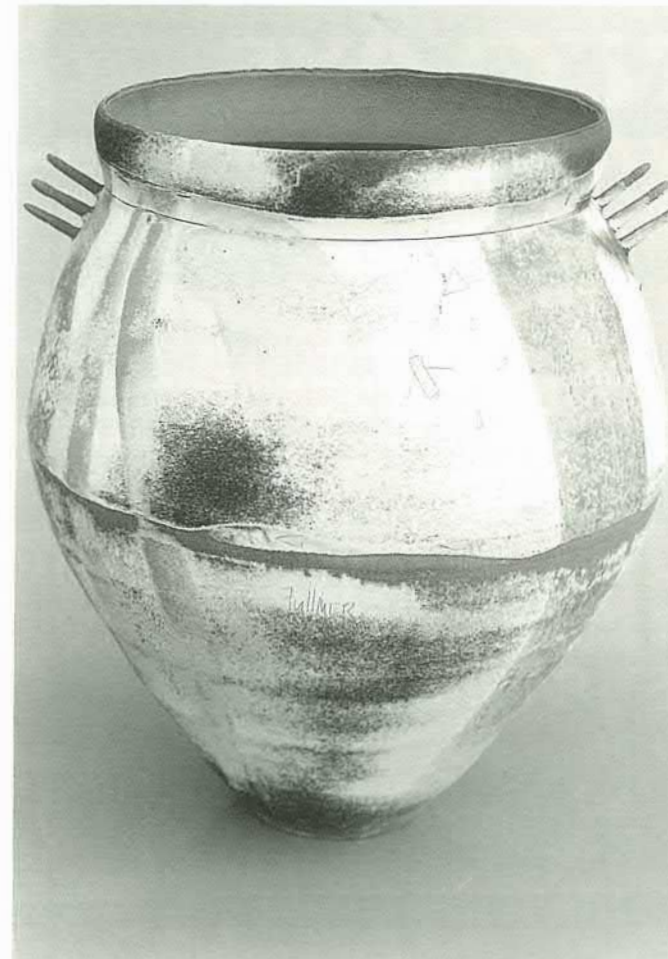
"I chose to bring a fairly conservative looking group of pots — recognisable forms, but with bold patterns applied. I brought some smaller work that was more abstract in content, just to see how it was received. I found the response to be overwhelming in both categories as soon as the show opened."

**Royce McGlashen**

"My first approach to this exhibition was to create individual sculptural items extending my teapot range and boxes, but after consideration decided to take a more conservative approach. I made a small range of individual sculptural teapots, thrown and altered, using dry slip and ceramic crayon decoration.

The main body of my exhibition was semi-domestic decorated bowls, platters and jugs made from *Mac's Mud* porcelain, with coloured slips on the clay surface, fired, and with a clear over-glaze.

The decorations were loose and free. I found it interesting working on a series of paintings for the same exhibition,

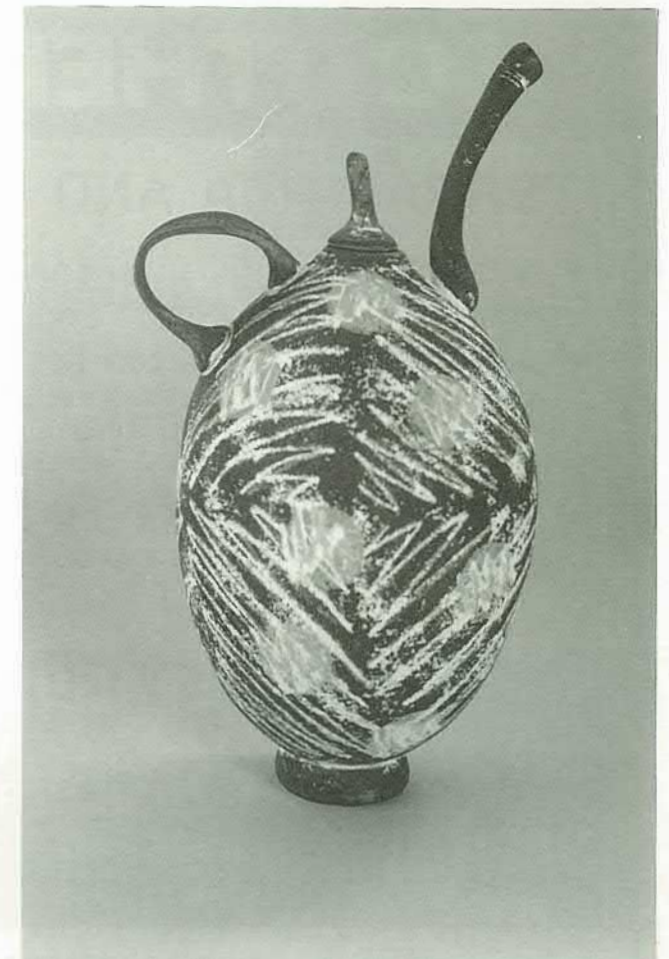


Steve Fullmer. "Impractical Instrument", 650mm h

simultaneously, using the same techniques across both clay and paper. Using the same theme of decorated surfaces I made a series of large fat forms, vases which were splendid to decorate because of the smooth, round shapes.

All the pieces were well received in Singapore. I found it interesting that the buyers were very keen to know the making details and the reasons for the making — the story was important."

Following the exhibition the exhibitors were involved in lectures and workshops at various venues including *Temasek Polytechnic*, *Nanyang Fine Arts Institute* and *Lasalle College of the Arts*. The students were open and eager to learn about both our creative skills and our



Royce McGlashen. "Teapot", 260mm h

lifestyles in New Zealand. It was good that we could repay the Singaporeans in some way.

We met many potters and visited a 57 metre Dragon kiln the day they were firing — a monthly event.

A tremendous experience, making us feel like real ambassadors for New Zealand and we were certainly treated as such.

I would like to thank the sponsors **Joy Morais** and **David Cornwell**, *Bell Gully Weir*, *Buttle Wilson*, *Ernst and Young*, *White and Case* and *Singapore Airlines* for providing this opportunity.

This December a group of potters from Singapore will be visiting New Zealand, with another group planning a trip in 1993.

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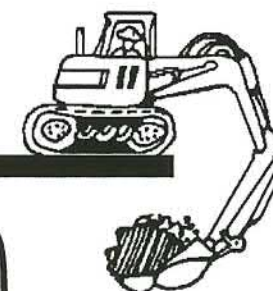
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# SICK OF SLICK?

"**Oughtism** is the most rampant epidemic on the planet today. **Oughtism** is a disease where the unfortunate victims ought-a-matically do what others tell them they ought to do. If left untreated **Oughtism** can result in a total loss of the ability to think.

Fortunately, there is an organisation called *STOP — Society to Transcend Oughtistic Practices* — which has made it their mission to end **Oughtism**.

Unfortunately, when people find out about the crusade, the first thing they ask is "What do you think I ought to do about it?"

Which all goes to show how persuasive this epidemic is."  
Swami Beyondananda

- A long time ago someone said "Clay ought to be cleaner and have no soil in it, or sand, or spiky bits of any kind.
- So people invented machines that would really pulverise this earthy material into submission. It became possible to wash, sieve and purify it to make it more perfect.
- Many, many people said "Clay ought to be white and pure." So all contamination was eliminated. Clay became de-textured, de-coloured, de-aired — sometimes de-clayed!
- And they said "Clay ought to be delivered to my door in a size and weight that is convenient. So I don't get dirty it ought to be wrapped." So now it comes in rectangular blocks wrapped in plastic. In Canada it even comes in cardboard boxes, with labels saying what it is and what temperature is needed to fire it.
- In September the outlet to my pond had to be dug, to a depth of about 50cm. It had been a wet winter with rainfall double that of the average September. Removing the top-soil was OK — then the sticky part of the proceedings began. The colour changed from yellow to orange, to white and gumboots and spade began to act like magnets. It wasn't the most enlightening experience, dragging 10kg per foot around, but somehow significant in the context of this topic.
- Ironically, four days later a large truck arrived at my workshop and unloaded a tonne of neatly stacked plastic-wrapped white clay for my pottery.

## Notes on the Photographs

Using roughly equal quantities, mixing anything into clay is likely to produce changes that are unexpected and startling, especially at temperatures above 1200°C.

1. Most potters are familiar with **Grog**, the standard additive to produce texture and a stronger body. Coarse **Grog** is shown here.
2. A liberal mixture of **Rock Salt** and **Copper Sulphate** had a violent effect on this clay. It could easily eat its way through your kiln shelf!
3. **Salt Lick Blocks**, used for cattle, can be crushed into lumps which activate areas through the clay.
4. **Iron Slag**, one of the wastes from a steel mill was used in this clay mix with volatile results.
5. West Coast **Iron Sand** is a plentiful and powerful black colorant. It pays to remember its very annoying habit, when combined with glaze, of fusing and melting its way through kiln shelves.
6. **Silicon Carbide** in different grades produces a fine grey speckled texture.

Interesting things happen when a glaze is melted upon it.

7. **Grey Stain** doesn't seem to be the most popular colour. Used with abandon up to 50% in clay, it causes a real metallic result.
8. **Waikiki River Sand**.
9. **Rice**, and other grains burn away leaving hundreds of little holes.
10. **Beach Shingle**, a mixture of shells and sand from many rock sources, makes a colourful and textured surface.
11. **Silica Gel**, used in packing to ensure dryness, performs very interesting eruptions when fired.
12. I've never understood the difference between **Pumice** and **Volcanic Ash**. This is coarse **Pumice Sand**. It has been said that pumice is a natural frit and will form a brown glaze all by itself.
13. This surface was caused by mixing **Permanganate of Potash** in equal amounts with clay.
14. **Soda Ash** is such a powerful flux it transformed this white clay into a thick white glass.

**Brian Gartside** makes pots and art at his studio in Ramarama, Drury

- Then the thought occurred that it is possible to accept both. It is not either/or, but best to remember the contrasts and maybe make a choice of using those opposites creatively and expressively.
- Next comes some thoughts on re-contaminating clay!
- I've got to admit that the most interesting material that can be mixed with clay is not illustrated on these pages.

**Abe Wagh**, a London artist, amazed everyone at *Banff Centre*, Alberta in 1990, by his use of paper pulp in liquid clay slip, in any proportion up to 50%. Spread out and dried into very large slabs it has amazing tensile strength in the 'green' stage.

Joining and constructing with these slabs of paper/clay pulp opens up many possibilities not available to users of ordinary clay. The fibres of paper hold the clay together and allow large pieces to be constructed. Coiling was a successful building method, allowing very thin, but strong walls. In the drying, there was no cracking or warping, but I've got to admit the firing was a pretty smelly business as all that paper smouldered away.

- Working with other potters at the *Auckland Studio Potters' Centre* proved to be an amazing and creative experience as we melted and mixed as many things as we could think of, over a period of six sessions. I must acknowledge the help of those people in doing the experiments that led up to the photographs being taken.
- I also want to acknowledge the ideas in the first paragraph about *Oughtism* came from a book called *Driving Your Own Karma* by **Swami Beyondananda**, and also that the idea for the title came from a single four-word sentence letter to the editor of *Ceramics Monthly*, by **Rebecca Jones** of Riverside, California.
- Just one last thought; again from **Swami**. "Cows are boring. They are very much into their own thing. And if you don't watch where you step, you are too."
- You are surely into your own thing in re-contaminating your clay and it can all turn out to be a very sticky business. This applies to the effect upon your kiln shelves especially — it can be a real 'cow'!

15. **Gorse Ash** and clay. Any ash would work.

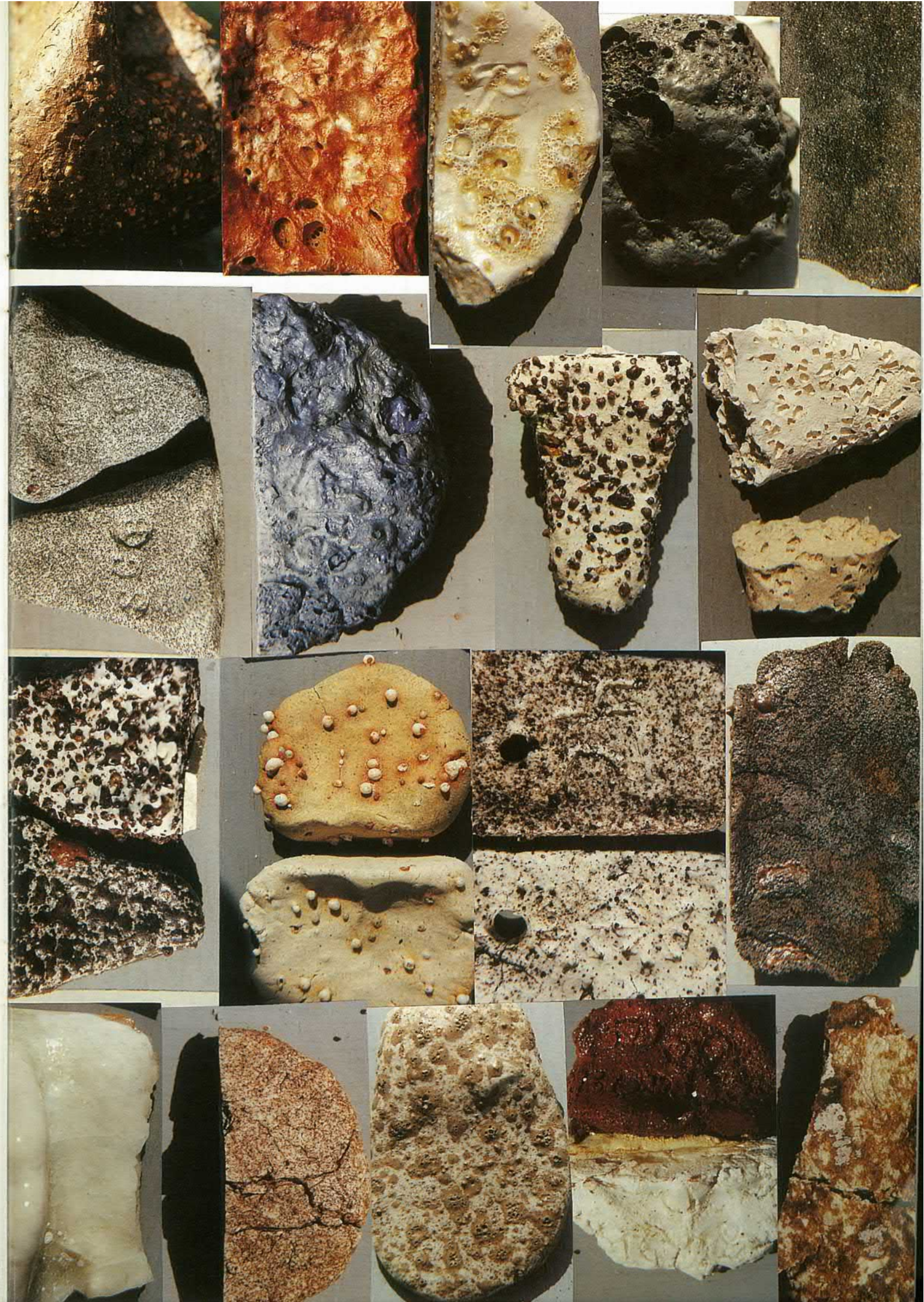
16. A mixture of **Silicon Carbide** and **Copper Sulphate** produced fluid spots on the surface.

17. **Borax** mixed with red clay produces a self-glazing body — similarly with white clay.

18. Roughly mixed **Tile Grout** or cement mixed with white clay.

- All these tests were fired in an oxidised atmosphere to 1240°C.

1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	
10	11	12	13	
14	15	16	17	18





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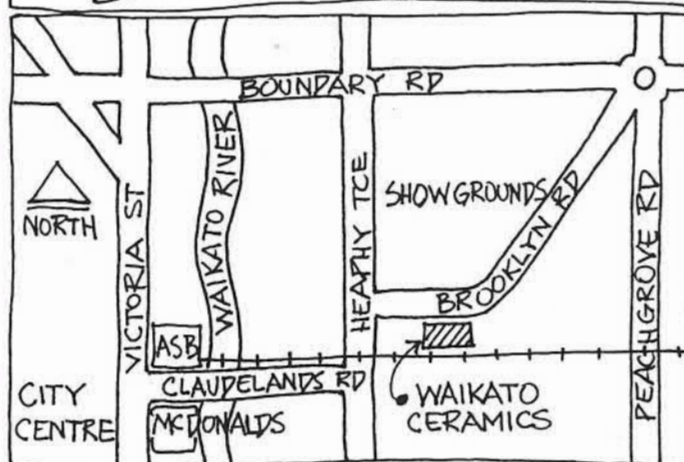
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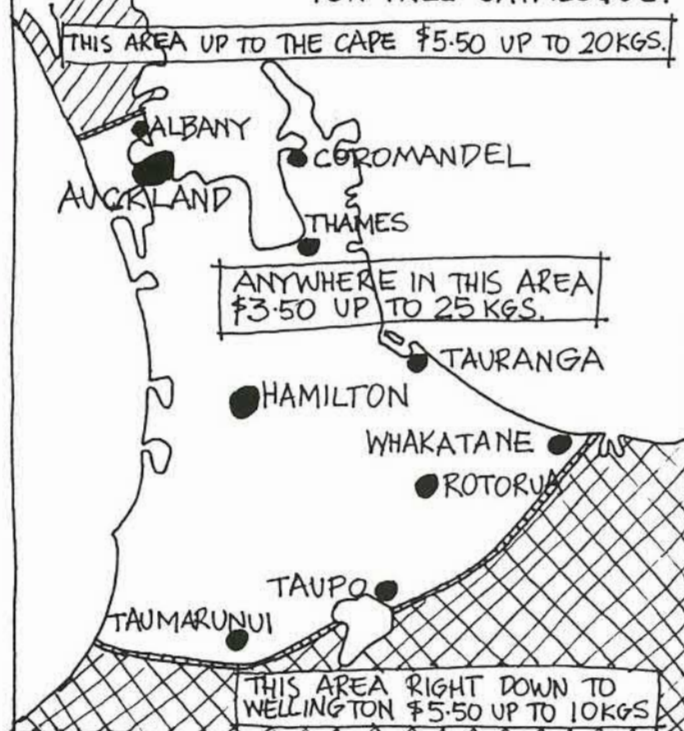
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## SEVILLE

### Seville Expo '92 has closed.

Our New Zealand Pavilion was voted one of the most popular of all with our ceramics being an important part of its success. The collection will be travelled to several other European venues before it eventually returns home where perhaps we will be able to see it at last.

With all the TV and other media coverage, we have seen the building with its rock face and waterfalls, its mechanical birds, the sea pools and pohutukawa trees.

Our much acclaimed Maori group, Kiri and the Orchestra and high-tech-multi-screen images including photos from the late Brian Brake, have all been shown as they well deserve, but has anyone yet seen any proper coverage of the work of our artists?

Perhaps they are the proverbial prophets in their own country?

With this issue we complete our series about the ceramists involved and include cast glass work by Ann Robinson, whose photo by Louise Guerin of work in situ is the only one we have so far seen of any actual installation in Seville.

I wish to thank those involved for supplying their own words and photos of their contributions to the success of the Expo pavilion, and to note the lack of any official communication about this, probably our most important-to-date overseas showing of contemporary New Zealand craft.

### ANN ROBINSON, KAREKARE

To begin with my commission for the Seville Exhibition was for five bowls, bowls addressing isolated land masses within large expanses of sea — the Pacific. Hemisphericness.

The brief was brief, loose, not at all at variance with what I already made, but rather a logical development of it.

Later, when James Mack (the exhibition curator) and I met, the brief changed. I wanted to develop my Nikau pieces further and place two, one either side at the top of the stairway leading into the exhibition space.

Nikau of Pacific; Palm of Mediterranean — Welcome and Hosanna.

The other pieces were now three bowls. I envisaged a large central Pacific Bowl with two flanking Bird Bowls or guardians, using the albatross, canary-like, an indicator of the health of the planet.

The commission came before Christmas 1990 and was to be shipped to Spain in November 1991 — one year, but I had a problem. Having only just moved to Karekare on Auckland's west coast, I had first to build a new workshop. This took 'till the end of May, leaving me five months to develop four new pieces — no mean feat using as I do, such a slow process. I thought that I could do it, but knew the work would only be first solutions to ideas that I really needed years to mature and develop adequately.

It turned out to be so — some aspects of the work I produced over that five months, didn't satisfy me. However, it was the best I could manage in the time.

Size was a major consideration. I think many of the other exhibitors were probably also pondering the same things — how to scale up in size, to hold their own in such a large space. How to make them? I began working out ways of casting larger work — one solution being to design in units that locked together.

I also needed a larger kiln in which to cast the 700mm diameter bowl. With a grant from the Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council, I commissioned W.D. McGregors to make me a 1400 x 1400 x 1000 top hat kiln with side and top loading ports. This took 10 strong men to move it into my new workshop — it was all very nerve-wracking, the building, kiln and expense, and the firing of such large work.

Actually, once started, the work proceeded remarkably well. A new base to the Nikau, a two-part piece, worked really nicely. I isolated a great green — a lovely bush green and experimented with mixing the colours, fading from light down to dark.

There just wasn't time to carve the two eels that I wanted onto the large central bowl, but in the end, the surface rippling in the wax was so great that anything extra seemed unnecessary.

The flanking Bird Bowls — well, as I said, I'll come back to that idea again.

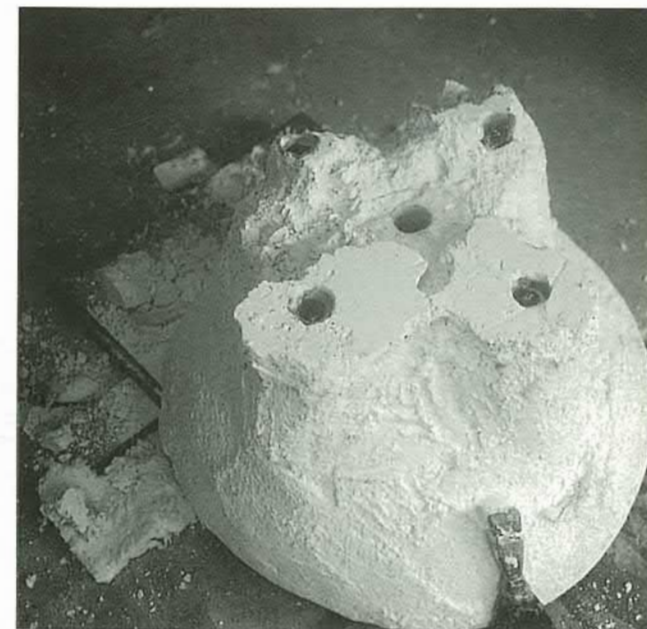
Through it all James Mack was wonderfully supportive and encouraging. He projected a faith in the ideas. I really appreciated his support and sensitivity.

Five months! Very intense. Sadly very little contact with the rest of the exhibition "family". For me a learning curve such as I've never experienced before — and a large amount of luck. Since then I've been consolidating the ideas and fine-tuning the process.



Ann Robinson with Bird Bowl

Abortive firing of first Pacific Bowl in new top-hat kiln





ANN ROBINSON



Ann Robinson making bowl mould



Two Nikau pieces



The glass-casting kiln is opened to remove a crucible



Pacific Bowl



Ann Robinson's three bowls at Seville. Photo by Louise Guerin



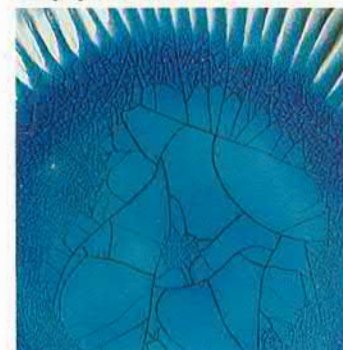
Crucible on top of mould, having cast an Antipodean Bowl



Earthenware bowl 340mm diam.



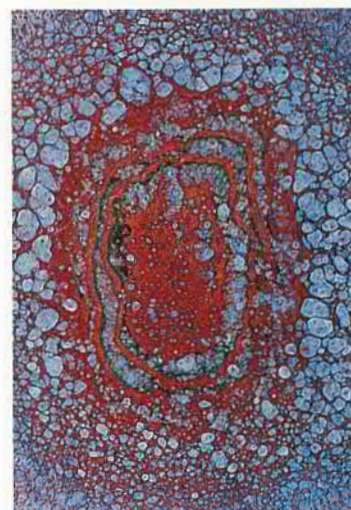
"Cooling Magma" earthenware 290 mm h



Glaze detail from bowl in "Alkaline Spring" series earthenware



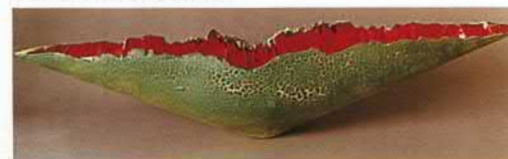
Stoneware and earthenware bowls



Glaze detail from bowl in "Mineral Separation" series



Stoneware bowl, crater glaze 355mm diam.



"Inverted, Forested Volcano" earthenware dish 920mm length



"Inverted Volcano" earthenware dish 920mm length



"Alkaline Spring" earthenware bowl 480mm diam

LEN CASTLE

JULIA VAN HELDEN



2



3



FIG 1



FIG 2

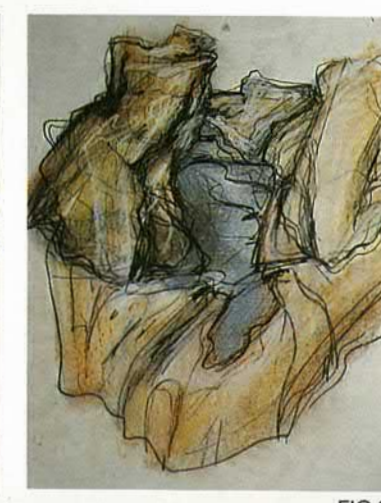


FIG 3



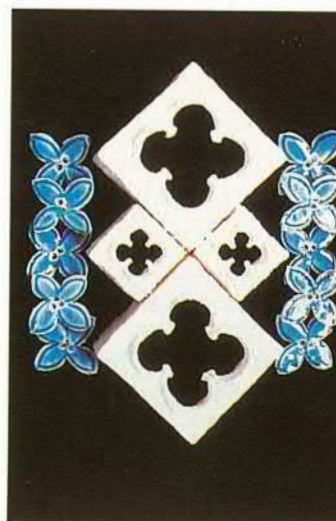
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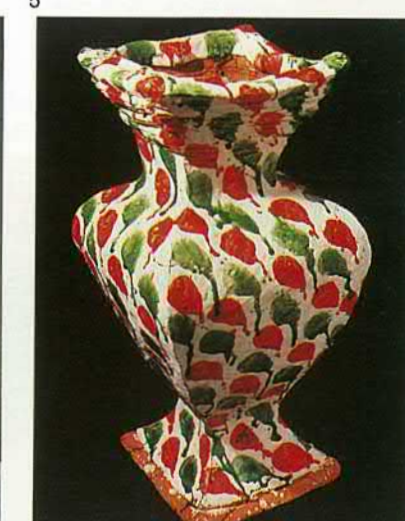
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Tiles by Richard Parker



Richard Parker vase. Photo by Julia Brooke-White



Richard Parker vase. Photo by Howard Williams

RICHARD PARKER



## LEN CASTLE, TITIRANGI

Geology, chemistry and art are all part of the one fascination for Len Castle who draws inspiration for his ceramic work from his study of nature and its forces.

Combinations of earth materials; minerals subjected to pressure and heat; erosion by acids and weathering by wind and water; leaching and dissolving; cataclysmic eruptions and slow crystal growth — all are part of the formative processes of our physical world.

These also produce patterns, textures, forms and colours to which we relate emotively, forming a part of our natural aesthetic sensibilities.

Len Castle is known for capturing these effects in his ceramics and his brief for Seville was to explore these as descriptive of New Zealand's volcanic origins and its continuing re-volution. He has always felt that a kiln is a microcosm of a volcano in its conditioning of clay and glass materials, so he set about portraying the connection between the two, bringing together science and art.

Later this year Len has a major exhibition at the *Bath House Art Gallery* in Rotorua where, by photography and ceramics he will portray in close-up the beauty of this thermal region. We hope to cover this exhibition in our next issue.



## RICHARD PARKER, KAEO

The brief I was given was simply to extend two ideas I had been working on for some time.

The first was to produce a number of large vases to go on a cantilevered stand over the edge of the mezzanine floor. They would be a sort of visual "come on" to the public, inviting them to climb the stairs to see the "treasures".

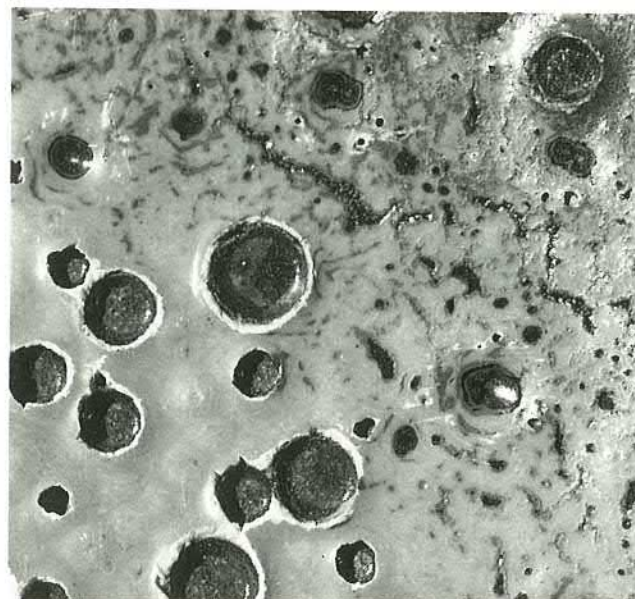
The development of these metre high vases was attended by many problems relating to their size and weight. Firing was achieved in a fibre envelope as I had seen **Philip Luxton** do at the Dunedin symposium. I'd have liked them to have been less static and to have moved like the maquettes I had earlier almost melted, and work continues on this project.

The vase is just a convenient form which refers to human figures and the way they look and move, each different and individual.

Tiles were also developed from previous work and were designed to line the edges of the mezzanine floor. From many different elements I refined the idea to two strong, deep tile forms that were tilted and glued into blocks and mounted along the rail, with dancing turquoise vases between each block.

The supposed Moorish influence in the quatrefoil piercings is interesting, because we are very familiar with trefoils and quatrefoils from Gothic influenced churches. The style probably originated in Arabia, but came to us via the Crusaders, the idea having journeyed around the Mediterranean rather than across it. From my point of view it was merely an easy solution to finish the top opening hole of the vases nicely!

James Mack with Richard Parker. Photos by Wendy Laurenson



Glaze detail from bowl in "Scoriaceous" series, stoneware.

Len Castle photos; by Len Castle and Steve Rumsey.



## JULIA VAN HELDEN, TARADALE

This year I was commissioned by the *Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council* to make two large ceramic rock pools for the New Zealand pavilion at Expo '92 in Seville.

I made these pieces while I was Craftsperson in Residence with the *Hawkes Bay Polytechnic*, living and working at the *Otatara Arts Centre*.

The works speak about New Zealand's coastal nature — the rock shelf we are part of, uplifted from the sea and moulded by wind and wave action.

To give the effect of erosion and weathering of the geological layers, I painted layers of coloured slips, drawing and scratching into the surface to emphasise the rhythms that had occurred in the making.

The base, over a metre in diameter and 400mm high was made in sections, fitting into the kiln one at a time. These sections surrounded a central pool.

Illustrations and Photos, page 17

**Figs 1 & 2** are drawings I made to help me visualise the anthropomorphic forms in space. I then built the figures from slabs, influencing their flowing rhythms in space with sweeping pressure from my fingers in much the same way as I draw.

**Fig 3** is a working drawing showing female forms in position around the ceramic rock pool.

**Photo 1** shows a model of the idea for the second of my rock pools. On this rock shelf I made anthropomorphic forms to suggest the acceptance and abandonment of the land to the forces that form.

**Photo 2** shows me painting layers of coloured clay slip onto a rock pool made from raku clay. This was then fired in an electric kiln to 1200°C.

**Photo 3** shows a reclining form — posing for the camera.

**Photo 4** is of a completed pool. Water flows from the top pool at the rear, over a ledge into the lower. I had intended cementing the two together to make one form, but it was too weighty so I had to use a different sealer. If I had built the top ledge to overlap the lower one, this would not have been necessary.

**Photo 5** is the other completed pool. I made a fibreglass liner to fit inside this base.



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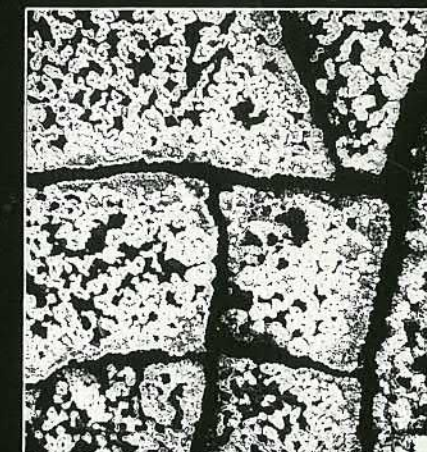
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## Len Castle



Geothermal detail

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# CLEVELAND CERAMICS AWARD

The second *Cleveland Ceramics Award* exhibition was held at *Glenfalloch*, Dunedin from 28 August to 6 September. There was a good response from artists all over New Zealand with 98 pieces selected for display. Five certificates of merit were awarded as well as the four main awards.

The Judge this year was **Linden Cowell**, ex *Victoria and Albert Museum* and Head of Display *Otago Museum* and presently lecturing in Ceramic History at *Otago Polytechnic School of Art*.

**The Cleveland Premier Award, \$3,000**  
Peter Henderson, Dunedin.

**Scottwood Award, \$1,000**  
Margaret Hunt, Upper Hutt.

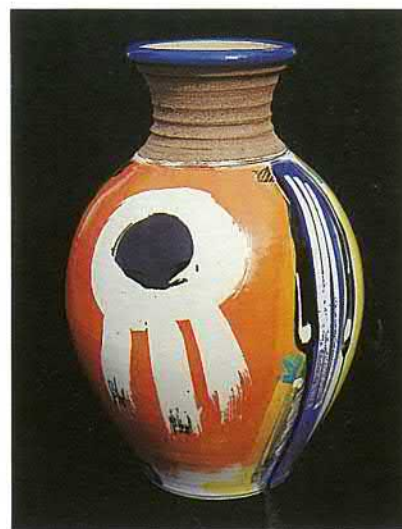
**Glenfalloch Award, \$500**  
Sue Harris, Mosgiel.

**Southern Clays Ltd Award of goods worth \$500**  
Shona Clarkson, Christchurch.

## Merit Certificates

Nancy Gisborne, Napier  
Janet Smith, Stratford  
David Walker, Akaroa  
Sheila Brown, Wellington  
Chris Fersterer, Dunedin

Photos by T. Noever



Peter Henderson, "Vessel"



Margaret Hunt, "Pair of Bowls"



Sue Harris, "Brighton Beach"



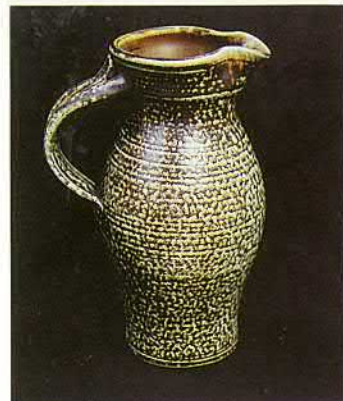
Nancy Gisborne, "Karma"



Janet Smith, "Hope"



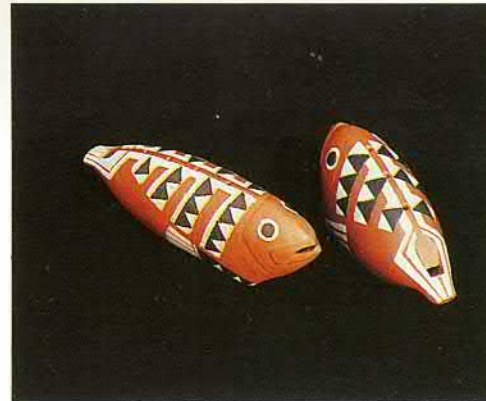
Sheila Brown, "Pacifica III"



David Walker, "Salt Fired Jug"



Shona Clarkson, "Fruit Bowl"



Chris Fersterer, "Singing Fish"

# AUCKLAND STUDIO POTTERS

28th Annual Exhibition, Auckland Museum

Selectors: Ceramic artist Marilyn Wiseman

Glass artist Ann Robinson



Photos by Howard Williams



Hilary Kerrod, "Three Mugs"



Catherine Anselmi, "Cup, Saucer and Dish"



Brendan Adams, "Spike Set"



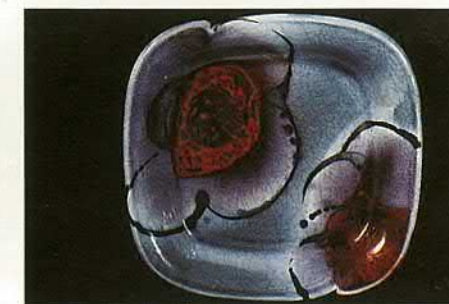
Jill Barry, "Luscious Ladies"



Renton Murray, "Farmhouse and Cottage Teapots"



Wendy Lifton, "Baker and Teaset"



David Shearer, "Banquet Dish"



Belinda Paton, "Flying Slippers"



Maureen Hitchings-Lewis, "Box"



Karen Kennedy, "Cat"



Peter Lange, "Bowl with Face"



Pamela Webster, "Migration Day"



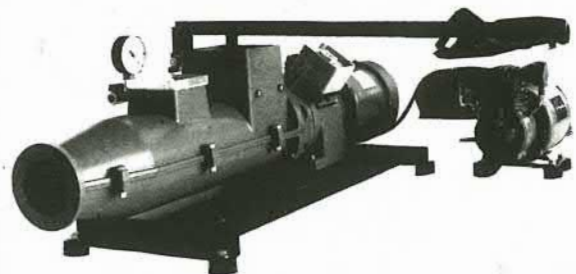
Barry Hockenhull, "Shino Vase"



Margaret Sumich, "Winged Victory Teapot Forms"



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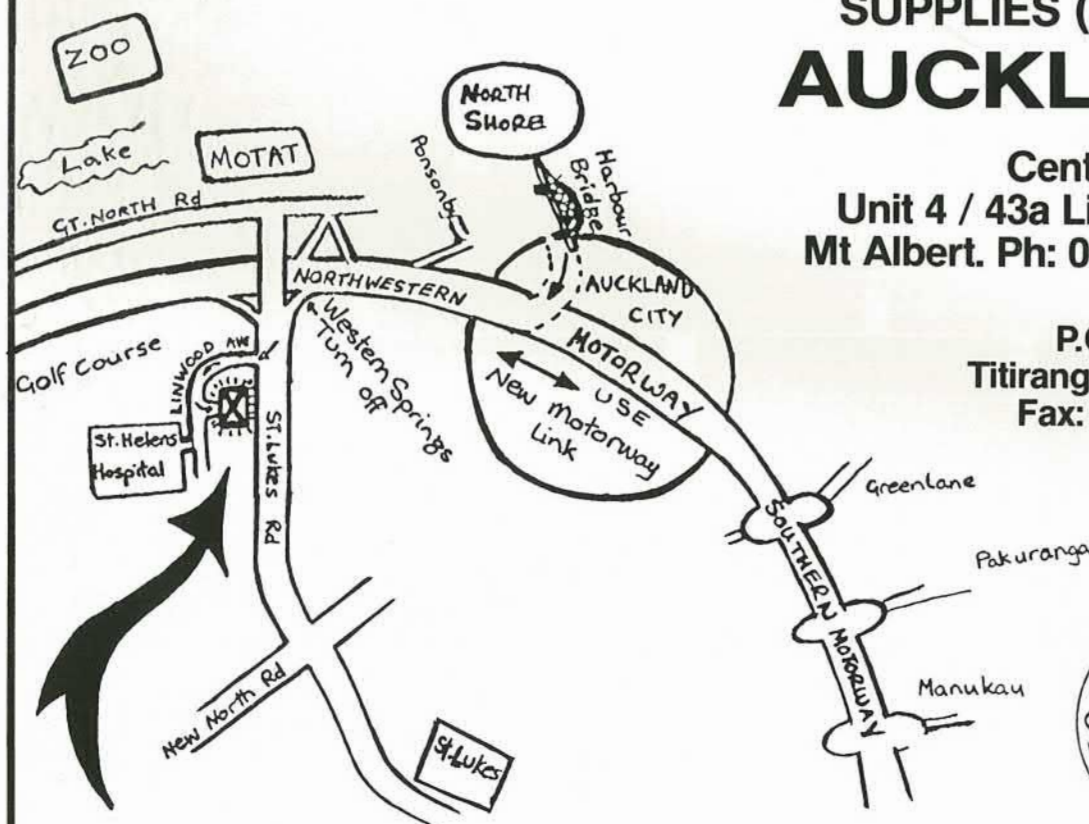
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## LYNDA HARRIS

John Parker, Auckland



Lynda has been a potter since she was five.

The country girl, with Sicilian family ties was raised on an isolated farm surrounded by native bush at Hoe-o-tainui, near Morrinsville.

"Betty Hall (Elizabeth Lissaman) one of New Zealand's earliest studio potters, farmed near our property. She came to school to teach us pottery. The pots were taken to Hamilton to be fired and brought back. The greatest disappointment to me was that there was no colour other than the terracotta clay and a transparent honey glaze.

"So I was always aware that Betty Hall was a 'potter' and made pots although I didn't meet up with her again until after I had left school. I think the possibility that this could be a career was always in the background."

Lynda remembers wanting to be in there working with clay from an early age. The family farm had clay banks, so the logical thing for a resourceful child to do was to exploit her own clay source. Her first pieces were Maori War canoes, and other items relating to whatever she was doing at school. However, trying to fire the pieces in the kitchen electric stove didn't amuse her mother.

After highschool, Lynda spent 11 years as a Research Technician in meat microbiology at the Meat Research Institute in Hamilton.

In 1975 Lynda started serious work with clay at the Art Society in Thames. Dora Connors and Val Davis, were two women sharing a workshop, but they also had that elusive treasure, a spare wheel. They made earthenware domestic ware using Elizabeth Lissaman's book *Pottery for Pleasure*,

and were instrumental in re-introducing Lynda to the world of clay.

"Most weekends were spent potting, trying everything to sort out what I really wanted to do. Having an income, you have time to buy the equipment and plan where you are going."

When the *Fire and Form* Co-op began eight years ago, she felt it was a good time to make a break from microbiology. "The co-op has proved a good base where one can usually preface one's income each month. It is a good way to test new ideas as you have your own space to put your work and display things how you wish."

Lynda's first work was undecorated brown earthenware domestic ware, but she began experimenting with raku about eight years ago. At first it was a party trick, but she enjoyed the colour aspect and the immediacy of low firing.

She met Brian Gartside and helped build kilns, making her first fibre-lined drum kiln early on. Brian encouraged her to think differently about decorating by using masking tape and exploring new and more sophisticated directions in raku.

At the last Brisbane potter's conference, Lynda was there with Joan Campbell and Brian Gartside, representing a chain of the passing on of information, as Joan had caused a resurgence of interest in raku when she tutored here in 1978. The ground had been laid by Paul Soldner in 1971.

Lynda's work maintains two ranges: slip decorated domestic earthenware and raku.

The raku pieces were built up of ideas from New Zealand imagery on boxes and then extended onto bowl and vase forms. The earlier bowl and vase forms decorated with hard-edged flora and fauna designs incorporated at first overseas parrots for the colour, but eventually concentrated on New Zealand native birds and nikau palms.

Lynda's graphic style has developed from doing a lot of drawing, watercolours and printmaking. She cuts masking tape to 1mm strips and applies this as a resist to bisque ware. The glaze is brushed on in a form of cloisonné technique. The tape is peeled off for a neat edge, but some complicated lines can only be achieved by hand painting. She uses the smoked black lines on the exposed clay to enhance the coloured glaze.

Lynda headed for Italy and the UK in 1989 studiously avoiding any possible contact with her Sicilian relatives, but seeking out instead Italian pots and potters. Her love for Italy (and dislike of housework) is inherited from her grandmother, aptly named Etna Messina, a very volatile free spirit.

Lynda returned to Italy to attend a summer school in Faenza in 1990, studying with Emidio Galassi and visiting archaeological museums to research Etruscan ceramics.

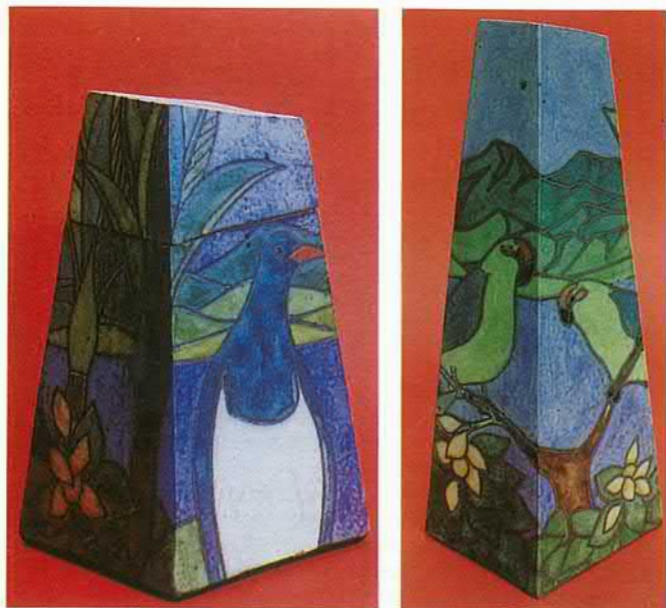
The first raku shapes to come out of this contact were decorated slab blocks made inside wooden formers. The particular care taken when joining these slab pieces pays off as the joins do not crack even with the stress that is placed on them during the rapid firing and post-firing reduction of raku.

Recently, stemmed bowl forms have taken the nikau images off the surface and into three dimensions. The nikau shape and how their fronds form are great repeated graphic elements.

The nikau vases have strong silhouettes and their surface treatment changes all the way around from flat surface glazing to unglazed textured clay in the same repeated images.

The young girl who grew up on a farm surrounded by clay and native bush has come full circle.





Raku Boxes with Woodpigeon and Parrots

Thrown Raku Domestic ware

Photos by Lynda Harris

Raku Slab Bowls and Boxes, with Nikau, Puriri and Karaka

Photos by Howard Williams



# CANTERBURY POTTERS ASSOCIATION

Annual Exhibition at the Rose Room, Canterbury Museum

Exhibition Theme: "Canterbury: from Sea to Sky"

## Selectors/Guest Exhibitors

Rosemary Perry

David Brokenshire

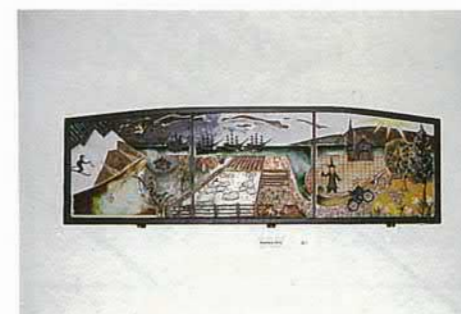
Barrie Payne

## Associate Guest Exhibitor

Fabric Artist Brenda Visser



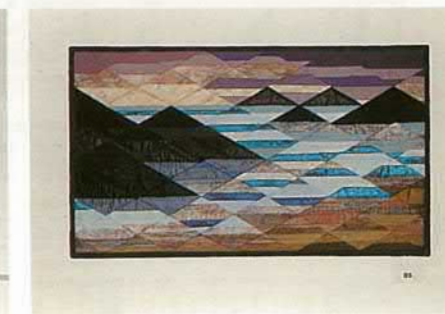
The Rose Room, Canterbury Museum



Rosemary Perry



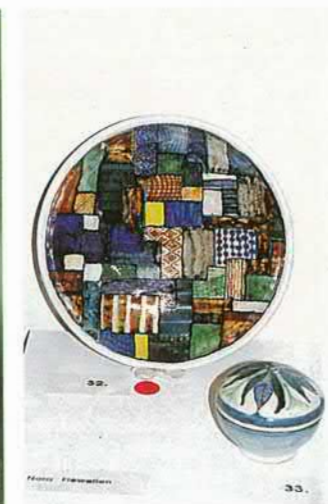
David Brokenshire



Brenda Visser



Maureen and Murray Johnstone



Nora Flewellyn



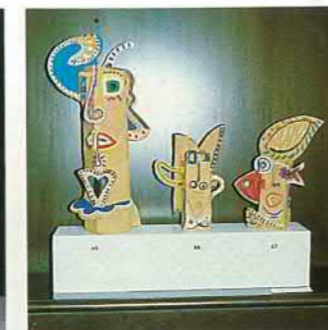
Gaynor Thacker



Barrie Payne



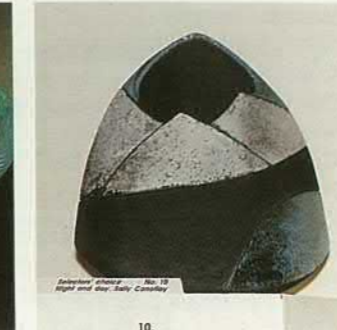
Tiffany Thornley and Paul Jenkins



Josie Jay Martin



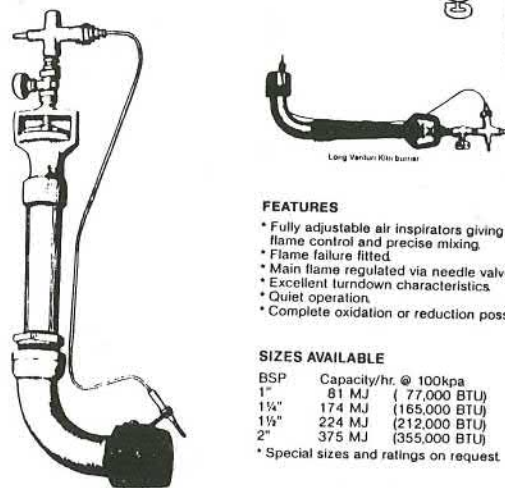
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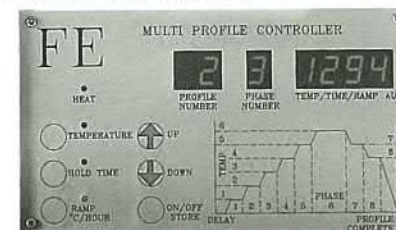
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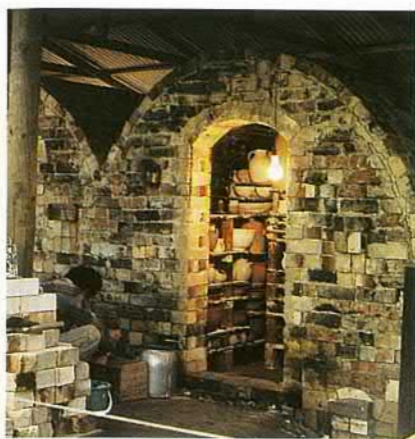
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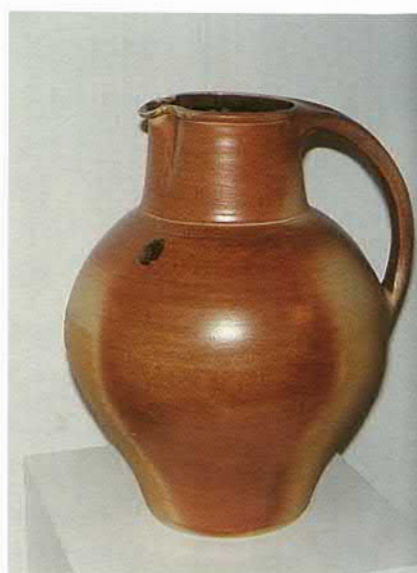




1

The jugs in these photographs vary in size from 330 to 400mm in height and 280 to 320mm in diameter. The fountain is 750mm high

Photos by Lynn Spencer



2



3



4



5



6



7



8



9

# A TESTING TIME

Lynn Spencer, Taranaki

The last two and a half years have been spent doing various experiments with clay bodies. I wanted to obtain different effects of wood ash and light salting on the clay bodies and on some glazes. I decided to make large jugs and jars — this really tests the resilience of the clay and also shows the patterning which can be created on larger pots by firing in a wood kiln.

Our kiln is affectionately called *The Monster* — although it is a very gentle one. This was built in 1983. We wanted to fire with wood, to fire larger pots, and to fire less frequently. Hence the size of the kiln (photo 1), difficult to fit into one photo as it is a large two-chambered kiln plus firebox and 7.3m high chimney. Each chamber is 200 cu ft (5.66 cu m). This results in a walk-in chamber and no knocked heads unless you happen to be above average height.

The kiln, due to luck, or superior planning and design, fires easily and beautifully. We have to hold it back in the early stages as temperature rise can be very rapid.

We fire the first chamber, which holds the majority of our domestic ware, to a very hot 1300°C plus. We put an *Orton 13* in once and flattened it for several hours at the top before *Orton 11* was over at the bottom for one hour — *11* over at the bottom for one hour is our normal signal to stop. It takes approximately 20 hours.

The second chamber we fire until *Orton 10* has been over at the top for about an hour. It takes two to four hours of side-stoking after the first chamber is finished. We begin salting the second chamber after about an hour of side-stoking and use only 5kg of salt. This chamber we use for most of our large planters/fountains/bird baths and some of my large jugs and jars.

I frequently double-fire the large jars in the second chamber for enhancement of the salt/ash effects.

Since we only fire the kiln four times a year, it is a long laborious process testing clays and glazes, and obviously, at times, immensely frustrating. However, we have found *Mac's Mud White Stoneware* on its own is a sturdy, high-firing clay which throws easily and can ash quite well. Jugs (photos 2 and 3) show results on this clay fired once in the first chamber.

Photo 3 illustrates a fairly heavy ash cover and the jug in photo 4 shows strong flame marks. The jug in photo 4 shows results using shino over *Mac's Mud White Stoneware*. This has been heavily reduced and shows a marked iron speckle.

The second clay body we use is a mixture of 6 parts *GB2* (*Potter's Clay*), 8 parts *Mintech Fireclay 150* (which is no longer being produced and we have only a precious 1½ tonnes left), 3 parts *Kaolin H* from *Hyde*. Jug (photo 5) illustrates this clay body glazed in shino and fired in the first chamber.

This is our standard clay body, used for the majority of our shino ware and for some of our saturated-iron glazed ware. Since this clay body, due to iron content, can fire very darkly in some parts of the kiln, we also use a 5 part *GB2* to 5 part *Mac's Mud White Stoneware* mix for either shino-glazed first chamber ware or unglazed in the second chamber. Jug (photo 6) is this mix, once-fired and lightly salted in the second chamber. Jug (photo 7) is also in this clay, but is twice-fired in the second chamber. Photo 8 shows a jug twice-fired in the second chamber made from *Mac's Mud White Stoneware* only.

The colour variations arise not only from the clay body, but also from atmospheric conditions.

Aside from these tests which were "successful" and have resulted in our using these clay bodies as our standard ones, I've also been doing tests with *Slab* clay from *Potter's Clay*. We mix 5 parts *Slab*, 5 parts *Mac's Mud White Slabware*, and 3 parts *150 Fireclay*. The 3 parts *150 Fireclay* can be substituted with 3 parts standard *Huntly FG Fireclay* for an even groggier body. This has proved to be a very strong body which flashes reasonably well and is used for most of the large complicated pots (photo 9 of fountain). I also use it to make very rugged looking jugs and jars (which are hopeless to sell of course).

Now for the "failures".

1. All of the above mixes were tested with 5 and 10% added *China Clay*. All results showed no change to the clay, colour, ash and salt flashing.

2. *Mac's Mud White Stoneware* had 5 and 10% *Whiting* added to it. The effects were quite dramatic — a very dry speckled surface which did not accept ash at all. Interesting, but not what I wanted.

3. A white clay mix (courtesy of *Andrew van der Putten*) of:

NZ China Clay	— 9
Aust. Ball Clay	— 8
Aust. Feldspar	— 7
Aust. Silica	— 3

This was a very white clay body. It flashed pink/gold and glossy with ash, but is extremely hard to throw and cracks easily.

Finally, this last firing, I have been testing some of the Australian white clays: *JB3* white stoneware, *TMK* white stoneware, and *SWS* porcelainous stoneware. All were tested as a 5 parts *Mac's Mud White Stoneware*/5 parts Australian clay mix as unglazed ware. All three resulted in a lighter, more ash absorbent, glossier, golden/pink body. We will use the *TMK/Mac's Mud* mix because the *JB3/Mac's Mud* pots had some cracking and the *SWS* mix a higher shrinkage.

All three clays were also tested on their own. They all had a lovely crisp gold/pink/white ash effect on unglazed ware. However, the *JB3* warped far more easily. The higher temperatures we use are not as appropriate for it. Both *TMK* and *SWS* state they fire to 1230°C whilst *JB3* fires to 1300°C.

We will use the *TMK* and *SWS* on their own on smaller pots. In the next firings I'll be testing the 5 parts *TMK*/5 parts *Mac's Mud White Stoneware* mix on larger jugs.

The Australian clays seem to be "true" white clays. It does not seem possible at the moment to find New Zealand equivalents. Even the original *SC80* and *Slab* clay (from 1985) which produced results we wanted did not have the surface reactions of the Australian clays.

Now the dilemma: How do we produce New Zealand made pots with Aussie clay? I don't want to use it because I prefer to support *Potter's Clay* (*Clive Glazier*, by the way, has been a marvellous help to us with all our various clay problems) and *Mac's Mud*.

Perhaps we must embrace (white-handed) *CER* after all! I am grateful to the *Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council* for the grant which enabled me to do some of this work.



# GALLERY GUIDE

Entries for this listing cost \$15 — boxed \$20 — (incl GST) for up to 25 words. Cash with order, to NZ Potter, PO Box 881, Auckland.

## NORTHLAND

NORTHLAND SOCIETY OF ARTS — Reyburn House Gallery, Lower Quay Street, Whangarei. Monthly exhibitions of artists, craft people and various media — Hours: Tues-Fri 10.30-4.00, Weekends 1-4.

## NORTH AUCKLAND

PALMS GALLERY, Wayby, Pottery, wood, glass. Resident potters: Barry, Barbara, Scott and Arran Hockenhuil. Open 7 days (09) 423-7125. Turn left 500m off S.H.1 15km north of Warkworth.

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CLAY FEAT, Countrywide Arcade, Level 2, 280 Queen Street. Phone (09) 358-5420. Open 6 days. Six city potters working on site — contemporary, original ceramics.

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CRIMES OF ADORNMENT (Catherine Anselmi), 19 O'Connell Street, City. Hand painted tableware, vases and objet d'art. Open Monday-Thursday 9am-5.30pm, Friday 9am-5pm. Phone (09) 358-1492.

GALLERIE LA POSTE, former Takapuna North Post Office, corner Hurstmere Rd and Earnock Ave. Excellent selection of top New Zealand artists, painting, pottery, mixed media and sculptures. Exhibitions change monthly. Phone (09) 486-1702.

GALLERY 8, Hillary Square Building, Orewa. Phone (09) 426-6971. Art with a difference. Pottery, glass, wood, jewellery, artworks.

KEITH BLIGHT GALLERY. Great Northern Arcade, cnr Queen Street & Customs Streets. Phone (09) 303-0177. Mainly ceramics and wall plaques. Also wood, fibre, precious metals, jade and small paintings.

LOPDELL HOUSE, Waitakere Arts and Cultural Centre, three galleries, two craft working studios, craft shop. Open 7 days 10am-4.30pm. Phone (09) 817-8087.

MASTERWORKS GALLERY, 8 York Street, Parnell. Phone (09) 309-5843. Ceramics, glass, fibre, wood, jewellery. Superb selection of New Zealand's best. Open Monday to Saturday.

MUDLARKS, Hunters Plaza, Papatoetoe, (behind the trees next to K Mart). Offer an extensive selection of quality stoneware, raku and pit fired pottery. Open 7 days, Phone (09) 277-6868.

PALMS GALLERY (Auckland), 57 High Street, Auckland City. Pottery, wood and glass. Barbara, Barry, Scott, and Arran Hockenhuil, also Melissa McInnes. Open Monday-Thursday 9am-5pm, Friday 9am-7pm, Saturday 9am-Midday. Phone (09) 357-6660.

POTS OF PONSONBY, 298 Ponsonby Road, Auckland. Ph (09) 760-145. Craft co-operative gallery offering a wide range of quality handmade domestic and decorative pottery and other crafts.

SUNPARK GALLERY, Main Road, RD 2 Albany. 8kms north of Albany village. Excellent selection of fine pottery and ceramics. Open 7 days. Phone (09) 415-9373.

TEXTURES CRAFT GALLERY, 31 Hurstmere Rd, Takapuna. Phone (09) 460-877. Selection of fine NZ craft concentrating on fibre, wearable art and flax. Exhibition space available to potters. Open 7 days.

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THE POTTERS GALLERY, 209 Hinemoa Street, Birkenhead. Phone (09) 418-1263. Fine range of porcelain, domestic and decorative pottery, silk scarves and kauri woodware. All by leading crafts people. Open 6 days.

F.T. WEBB DECOR SHOPPE, 1 Kent Street, Newmarket. Phone (09) 520-0268. Pottery, New Zealand handmade crafts, woodwork and skins. Open Monday to Saturday.

## WAIKATO

EXPRESSIONS — The Museum Shop, Waikato Museum of Art and History, Hamilton. The finest New Zealand pottery, glass, jewellery, silk, books, prints, cards. Phone (07) 839-5100.

FIRE & FORM, Chartwell Square, Hamilton. Eleven potters and one woodcarver. Wide range of domesticware and decorative pieces. Monthly exhibitions by NZ craftspeople in various media. Phone (07) 855-6638.

## COROMANDEL

ALAN RHODES POTTERY. Situated at Whenuakite, 23km south of Whitianga. Stoneware and pit fired pots. Studio attached to the gallery, visitors always welcome.

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## WHAKATANE

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CLAYSHAPES GALLERY, 236 Oriental Parade, Wellington. A wide selection of fine NZ crafts. Pottery, woodturning, silk scarves, jewellery, bone carving, hot glass. Open 7 days, 10am-6pm.

HYDE PARK CORNER, Te Horo. Craft Village, Museum, Garden Centre and Coffee Lounge. Sells pottery, windchimes, garden ornaments, fountains, sculptures. Holds exhibitions occasionally. Open Tuesday-Sunday, 10am-4.30pm.

MALCOLM WARR STUDIO GALLERY, 26 Parata Street, Waikanae. Ceramic Sculpture by Maree Lawrence and original prints by Malcolm Warr. Open Monday-Saturday 9am-5pm. Telephone (04) 293-5060.

MIREK SMISEK AND PAMELLA ANNSOUTH POTTERY, Main Highway, Te Horo. Open every day. Wide range of domestic, decorative and sculptural pieces in stoneware and saltglaze.

PAEKAKARIKI POTTERY, Pots by Neil Gardiner — from fine glazed planters to vases and domestic ware. Visitors welcome, 65 Wellington Rd, Paekakariki. Phone (04) 292-8396.

PARAPHENALIA CRAFT GALLERY, 22 Marine Parade, Paraparaumu Beach. Fine crafts — pottery, glass, wood turning, screen and hand painted clothing, jewellery, handmade wooden childrens toys. Phone (04) 298-4022.

REIKORANGI POTTERY and Riverside Animal Park, Ngatiawa Road, Waikanae. Jan and Wilf Wright invite you to experience a country environment. Open 7 days, 9.30am-5pm. Phone (04) 293-5146 (Tea Rooms).

THE POTTERS SHOP AND GALLERY, 14 Woodward Street, Wellington. Phone (04) 473-8803. A co-operative potters gallery offering their pots of excellence to the public.

## NELSON

WAMEA POTTERY. When in Nelson visit Wamea Pottery at Craft Habitat, Richmond, to view a fine collection of lustred and domestic ware by Paul Laird.

## WEST COAST

HOKITIKA CRAFT GALLERY CO-OPERATIVE, 25 Tancred Street, Hokitika. Multi-media gallery offering wide selection of quality craft works from top West Coast craftpersons. Open 7 days.

## CANTERBURY

COURTYARD POTTERY, 69 Rutland St, Christchurch. Ph (03) 355-5933. Specialising in quality pottery, glass and silks by New Zealand craft people. Open Mon-Thurs 9.30-5.30pm, Friday 9.30-8pm, Saturday 11-2pm.

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## OTAGO

DUNEDIN POTTERY. Specialising in locally produced domestic and decorative pottery. Plus pottery supplies, clay, glazes, tools etc. Open 7 days. 201 Stuart Street, Carnegie Centre, Dunedin. Phone (03) 477-1163.

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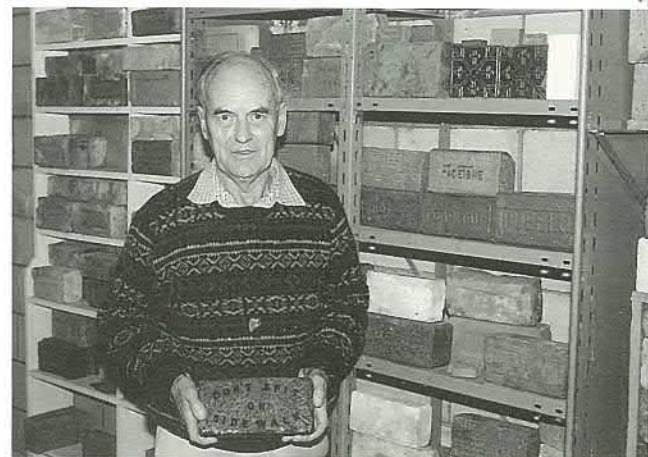
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# THESE BRICKS TELL A STORY

Neva Sinclair, Wanganui



**Ken Smith** enjoys travelling overseas, and like all tourists, returns home with mementos of the countries visited. But Ken's "souvenirs" cause more than a few raised eyebrows from customs officials as his hand luggage passes through the X-ray machine. Inside he generally has a couple of carefully wrapped bricks.

"I believe in being honest. At customs I always explain that I've got bricks in my hand luggage. And then I get this sympathetic look — as though I'm slightly demented."

Ken isn't demented. He's a brick collector, one of only two New Zealand members of the *International Brick Collectors' Association (IBCA)*. Based in the USA, the Association has 600 members worldwide.

A Wanganui accountant, Ken has attended two international "Swap Meets" for brick collectors — in Florida (1988) and Buffalo, New York State (1990). These meetings give collectors the opportunity to swap bricks with others from all over the world.

When Ken attended the first "Swap Meet" in Florida, a crate of 30 New Zealand bricks went with him.

"It was a real nightmare and took nine months to organise. The shipping company was only interested in container loads and I certainly wasn't about to ship a container load of bricks half way round the world."

So, when he attended the Buffalo meet, only two New Zealand bricks went along (in the hand luggage) and four returned. "But I was able to take orders and I'm still receiving bricks in exchange from people I met there," he said.

Brick collectors are generous types. No money ever changes hands — just bricks. But then there's the postage — *New Zealand Post* is probably lamenting the fact that only two brick collectors live in the country. It costs around \$NZ30 to send a brick to the US (surface mail of course), and the Americans pay more. Around \$NZ43 to send one back.

Brick collecting would have to be classified as one of the more unusual hobbies in this neck of the woods, but not so in the United States where collectors arrive at meets in purpose-built campervans and four-wheel drive vehicles equipped with slide out compartments, stackable trays (similar to bread trays), and fold-down tailboards to display their bricks.

Ken Smith's brick collection numbers around 300 and covers half the wall of his workshop. It all looks pretty impressive, until Ken tells of the biggest collector (an American of course) who has around 8000 bricks.

All this started almost by accident. Ken admits he had more than a passing interest in bricks, having worked in a

Christchurch brickworks in the school holidays back in the 1940s, but he acquired his first brick from a real estate agent who was showing him a house in Wanganui.

"He picked up an old brick lying in the garden, and I noticed it had the maker's name on it, so I took it home."

That was the beginning of what has become a fascinating hobby, steeped in history and with more than a touch of artistic quality.

No two bricks in Ken Smith's collection are exactly alike. They vary in density, weight, colour, texture and shape, much the same as pottery, according to the type of local clay used, the firing process and the end purpose for which the brick was made.

Many of the older bricks bear no inscription and are therefore difficult to date. When brickmaking became more mechanised, the brickwork's name was generally imprinted on each brick.

One of the oldest dated bricks in Ken's collection bears the name *W NEIGHBOURS - 1885* and came from Christchurch. There are also a couple of hand-made prison bricks from Wellington, undoubtedly made by convict labour. The brick he values the most came from Port Arthur in Tasmania. It is an extremely rough, hand-made brick, light cream colour, probably because it wasn't fired correctly. For Ken, this brick tells a cruel, historic tale, being made by convicts taken to Tasmania, taught to make bricks, forced to build the prison, then finally locked in it.

The light cream of the Port Arthur brick, is similar to one from Bornholm, an island off the coast of Denmark. However, the Bornholm brick was obviously fired properly, so the light colour must be attributed to the clay.

Ken's collection also includes an English brick from Bermuda and a Melbourne brick made by the German brickmaker **Hoffman**. One of the strongest bricks in the collection is a *NORI* brick (iron spelt backwards) from Accrington in Lancashire. Most ordinary household bricks weigh around 3kg, but the vitrified bricks in Ken's collection weigh around 5kg. These bricks, from Portsmouth, Ohio and dated 1908, were made to withstand the cold climate.

One of the more ornate bricks has an obvious ecclesiastical history, as it features a pattern of crosses and is highly glazed. An acid-proof obsidianite brick from an old Wanganui fertiliser works is a deep gravel grey and extremely heavy, while a brick picked up in Buffalo, actually has a buffalo etched into the surface.

The 1919 worldwide flu epidemic will always be



remembered by brick collectors like Ken, who have bricks inscribed *DON'T SPIT ON SIDEWALK*. These bricks were specially cast in the United States in 1919 and placed in the brick footpaths to remind pedestrians not to spit. At the time it was believed human spittle was the greatest germ carrier.

As well as historic bricks, there are commemorative and novelty bricks including ones inscribed *HAPPY BIRTHDAY*, *MERRY CHRISTMAS*, and a special perfume brick about the size of a square of chocolate, designed to be soaked in perfume and then placed in a lingerie drawer.

Hand-made bricks tend to be rougher and more coarse in texture, whereas many of the later bricks are very smooth. Shapes and sizes vary from the ordinary rectangular to very small rectangular, very thin bricks, square bricks, shaped bricks (usually purpose-made for the end or top of a construction) and even a large boulder-style brick retrieved from the ship *Port Bowen* which sank at the mouth of the Wanganui River. This brick weighs 52kg and is believed to have been part of the ship's ballast. It is possibly the heaviest brick in the world.

Those unfamiliar with brick collecting can be somewhat sceptical about the sanity of people who indulge in this unusual hobby, but Ken says brick collectors come from all walks of life, and he has stories to prove it.

"An American doctor went to a medical conference in Moscow some years back and took the opportunity to add some Russian specimens to his brick collection. Russian customs officers weren't amused. The doctor's international flight home was delayed for around two hours while he was questioned and when he finally boarded his plane he did so minus his bricks."

## BRIAR POTTERY Invercargill

Dawn Glynn, Southland



Photos by Dawn Glynn

Nestled in native bush and sunshine at Otatara, just minutes from Invercargill's airport, **Doris Rose** and her daughter **Lynette Henry** combine their ideas and potting experience in clay at *Briar Pottery*.

Doris' speciality is working in porcelain and *Abbots White* making (appropriately) roses. They both make pieces that reflect nature as they also share a love of gardening and feel an affinity to pots and plants. In fact their frequent visits to

Brick collecting has cost Ken a fortune in postage and a new pair of trousers. He once posted himself a couple of bricks from overseas (so he wouldn't have to go through the embarrassing explanations at customs), and to ensure they arrived safely, he wrapped them in a pair of trousers he'd just bought. The bricks arrived back in Wanganui in perfect condition, but the trousers had a hole worn in them where the two bricks had rubbed together.

Such are the perils of being a brick collector. ■



nursery gardens in Central Otago to collect orders of roses, usually mean reverse orders to supply the nursery with their latest range of terracotta planters.

Lynette's husband **Alan** travels to Germany taking special products, but always *Briar Pottery* pieces go with him to be presented to business clients as personal gifts. He also takes porcelain brooches and small vases to clients in the middle East and Iran. They have now started exporting — a shop in Hamburg stocks *Briar Pottery* from Invercargill. ■



# A VILLAGE POTTERY

Barn Dtorn Chai, Northern Thailand

Rosemary O'Hara, Wellington



*Coiling and thinning on a lap-turned board*

When I first prepared to go on holiday to Thailand I heard there is very little folk pottery still being produced there. Happily, in the north I found this is not the case. People are still living a traditional way of life and pottery is still the cheapest method of producing cooking wares and the most effective way of storing water. It is regarded as good hospitality to have water available at the gate or entrance to the home, in one to three lidded earthenware jars for passing human and spirit travellers.

In Barn Dtorn Chai, a small potting and farming village in the north of Thailand in Nan Province, the villagers were making wares to be sold in the provincial central town Pua, some 35km away, and for local markets. People here were throwing on hand-turned wheels, producing small braziers with cooking pots for restaurants and pot plant holders, as well as coiling and paddling.

The two potters I visited produced a range of lidded storage jars, cooking pots and woks by the coil and paddle method. A flat pad of clay is made by slapping and flipping the clay between the potter's hands, followed by rough but thin, rapid, coiling to the desired height of the pot. First the base pad of clay was placed on a square wooden board which was turned on the potter's lap during coiling. (Great for pins and needles in a kiwi potter's feet!) The coil was a rough sausage, pressed firmly on the inside of the rim with the base of the thumb, which thinned it at the same time. The lines from the coils were not smoothed off and the pot was quite asymmetrical at this stage.

The older potter working in the shade under her house, coiled half a pot at a time and worked four in a batch. The younger potter was in the sun. She coiled the full height in one go, but left the rim to firm up before working on it. The clay was heavily grogged (25%) and it dried very quickly.

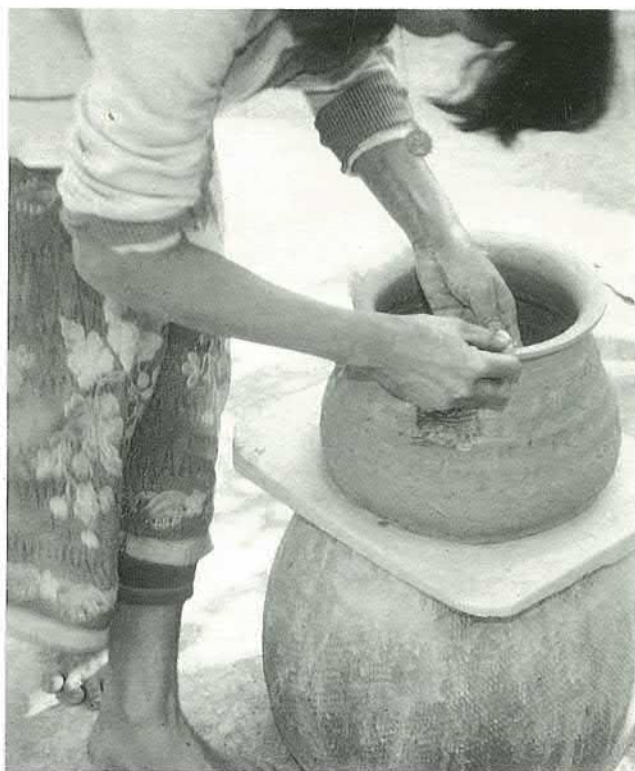
The next stage was completing the rim. The top was cut level with a fine strip of bamboo, and the top two inches coaxed vertical, by using the sharp edge of a wet curved paddle in vertical strokes, (potter's hand on the inside) and then flared outwards using curving vertical strokes. The pot usually stood on a stand for this stage, although the older woman was so adept at bending double that she left her pots on the ground.

Both potters walked around backwards in the same direction completing one or two revolutions for each different action with their paddles. This was amazing to see for the first time and never lost its fascination for me; the combination of complex precise movements, or heavy paddling with this graceful, uninterrupted movement around the outside of the pot. Of course, the clay is staying in the same relationship to the potter as it does with us at our wheels, in that always the clay is moving away from the potter's fingertips, though it took me a while to twig to that.

The final shaping of the neck was done by walking around the pot with a wet wad of soft cotton cloth held firmly in the required shape around the top edge.

The pot was left for the rim to become almost leather hard and then it was time to work on the shape. Using a stone anvil that was flat and round and about the size of an average palm (heavy too), the potter twisted it around on the inside of the pot to prevent it from sticking while she paddled hard against it on the outside. She worked in vertical lines, bottom to top as she walked extra slowly around.

*Finishing the rim with a wet cloth, the potter walking around backwards*



*Wood is stacked around the pots before adding straw*

When a good belly and shoulder was obtained, the paddled area (top two thirds of the pot) was swelled some more from the inside with a wooden tool shaped like a small banana — the convex area for the inside and the concave area for the outside. Smoothing and compacting the surface and getting rid of bulges was also done with this banana tool wet. The pot was then stood on its rim for the base to firm up.

Next the bottom corner of the base was trimmed off with a knife. The potters didn't bother trying to get symmetry between the base and the sides as it was paddled. At this stage the base was irregular and uneven.

The final stage of shaping the pot was by far the trickiest, but, I discovered, made much easier by wearing a sarong.

*The potter's tools*



The pot was turned, suspended in the potter's sarong, which was tensioned just so between her knees, and beaten into shape using the paddle and anvil as before. The base was whacked really hard with the paddle, and in two or three revolutions the thinning and shaping was finished. The same swelling and scraping with the banana tool was followed by very gentle paddling all over the base. The pot was wiped over with a wet rag and stood on its rim in the sand to dry.

The base of the pot is still relatively soft at the final paddling stage and the rim leather hard. I found it very difficult not to accidentally apply pressure to the rim while the pot was being paddled and turned, and I cracked several rims. However, with much amusement and patience all round I did succeed with a small cooking pot that joined the pile at the end of the day's work.

These potters didn't bother decorating or burnishing their pots, except by sometimes paddling with a lightly patterned paddle. Their pots were simple and utilitarian, and sold for very little money.



*Dung is tipped over to complete the clamp*

Firing at Barn Dtorn Chai was achieved by traditional clamp firing. A mound of pots has wood stacked around the sides and pieces placed between gaps into the centre and inside pots. A good covering of rice straw is placed all over the mound and five or six buckets of crumpled cow dung spread across the top of the straw and as far down the sides as it would go without falling off. The dung slows the burning down and keeps the heat in. Firing was completely over in a couple of hours. The clamp was lit last thing in the working day and emptied the following morning.

I have very fond memories of the two potters with whom I spent several days there. They extended the kinship of potters to me, they were warm and welcoming and delighted in teaching me their craft and observing my clumsy efforts to imitate them. I didn't get their names, seeing we weren't really on speaking terms it didn't seem relevant at the time, but thank you Barn Dtorn Chai and thanks to my friend **Arisala** from nearby Pua, whose family introduced me to the potters and translated my questions at the end of each day.



# STOREHOUSE

Helen Pollock, Auckland

An installation at the ASA Gallery Ponsonby, Auckland, May-June 1992.



Grinding Stones lead to the Altar

To enter the *Storehouse* is to enter your body, your temple. All comes through here to be gathered together, sorted and given out. The finest is offered in gratitude; to ensure continuity.

My journey to the *Storehouse* began in 1985 and was signified by a joint exhibition at *Pots of Ponsonby* with **Bernard Schofield** (photographer) called *Thresholds*. We quoted *Nor Hall*:

"The leaving of the familiar and the entering of something new."

"Boundary, the brink, a place or phenomenon of reversal."

"The edge of the depths of forest, water and unconscious places."

*Ritual*, my first solo show followed (1986 *Fisher Gallery* Auckland). *Ritual* as marking or intensifying value and bringing to consciousness. This exhibition of goddess masks was an exploration of some of the feminine archetypes — eg the Maiden, Mother, Crone, as in the *Moon Goddess Threefold* piece, and Mother as both nurturer and devourer in the *Kali* mask. *Solstice Reflections* (1987 *Diversions Gallery* Auckland) primarily honoured the four directions and four



Helen Pollock. Photo by Ros Spratt, courtesy *Broadsheet*

elements; North — Fire, South — Earth, East — Air, West — Water, and in *Head Hunting* (1991 *Merilyn Saville Gallery* Wellington) the concern was the head as container of the soul.

The seed for the *Storehouse* installation was sown in these years and being offered the space at the *Auckland Society of Arts Gallery* and a *QEII Arts Council* grant enabled me to bring it to fruition.

The work consisted of four parts: *A Vessel for Entering*, seven massive *Grinding Stones* placed on an axis on the floor before a 2.6m high terracotta *Altar* and the *Receptacles*, faces and hands as both containers and offerings on a wooden shelf.

The exhibit celebrates the feminine principle — not, as often stereotyped, as a yielding passive principle, but as a fierce, potent, fecund, agricultural and abundantly creative force.

Most societies have some kind of storehouse — for the tribe's sustenance, wealth, mana, sacred objects and mysteries. Our body is our personal storehouse.

In the *Storehouse* installation you are invited to enter an agricultural storehouse and a sacred space externally and internally.

The *Vessel for Entering* contains water for purification — to clear, to pause, to reflect, to focus.

*A Vessel for Entering*, 260mm diam



The seven *Grinding Stones* represent the transformative self, laid out before the *Altar*, a large terracotta archway/threshold which shelters a *Goddess*. She is earthy, big bellied, solid and grounded and reaches upwards towards a crescent moon and beyond.

In contrast with the enduring quality of these three works the *Receptacles* have a replaceable transient fragile quality. Faces and hands, they enter the *Storehouse* to offer their contents to be gathered together, counted, sorted and given out. The finest is offered in gratitude to ensure continuity. They also receive from the *Storehouse* to return, to begin again.

That this work is made from natural materials, predominantly clay, an ancient building material, and using the slow-forming and low-tech firing techniques that have been used for thousands of years, is important to me, and I think it has a significant effect on the outcome.

I began by making maquettes of the *Altar* and *Grinding Stones* and planning the layout of the installation in the gallery. Many measurements were made for the nine pieces constituting the *Altar*. Tests were done for shrinkage and colour of the clay, **Barry Brickell's** Coromandel terracotta.

Full-scale making began with the major piece, the *Altar*. It was built of slabs of terracotta approximately 1.5cm thick, 50cm long and 15cm wide, rolled out on a slab roller, cut out and firmed by standing on their edges on racks overnight. The slabs were joined in the time-honoured way of scoring, moistening with vinegar, pinching together and smoothing with a wooden rib.

Slow, even drying, by covering with plastic and then raising this progressively to allow drying from the bottom up over weeks, was essential.

Sculpting the figure was a considerable challenge. I had no model other

than my own body and had to retreat inside to a full-length mirror to check for example, how shoulders and ribcage look with arms raised and head tilted backwards.

The figure was built around a newspaper-covered steel pole fixed firmly into the concrete plinth I was working on. (A moveable plinth would have been better). The figure was separated in three places for firing purposes. Its clay walls were thickened on the inside around each join and separated during the building process by newspaper.

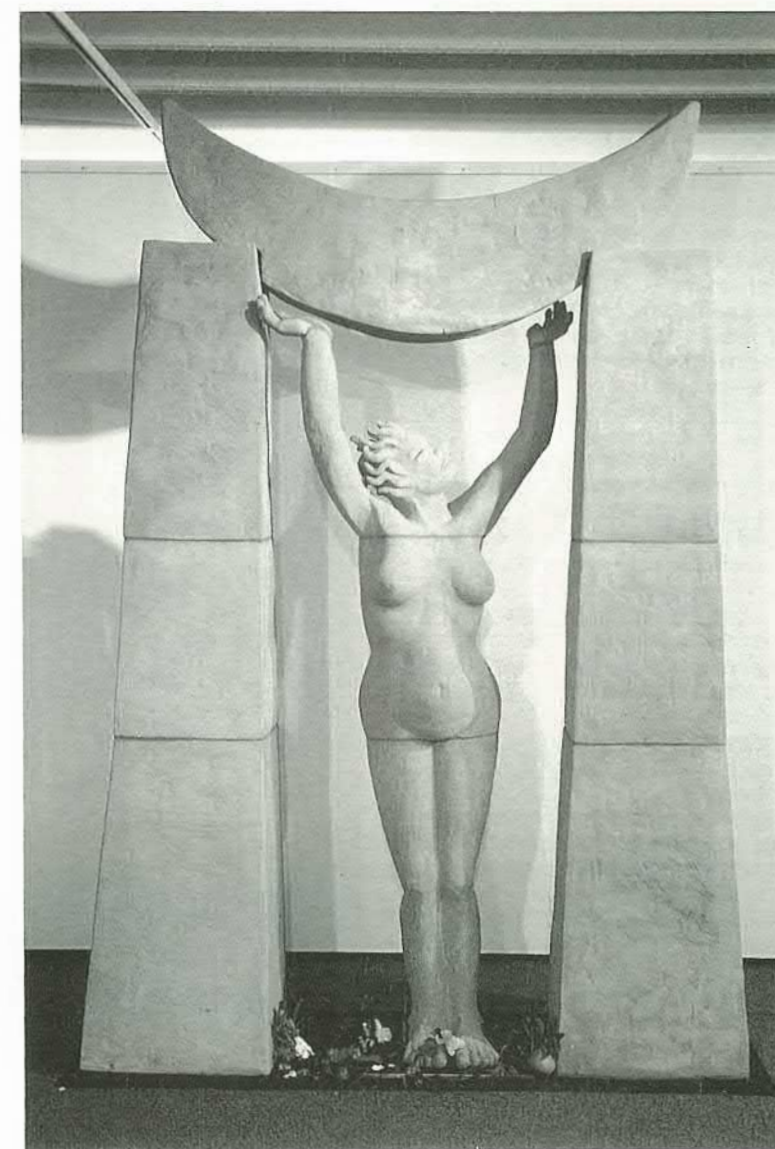
The whole figure was also supported by strips of cloth tied to a rough scaffold made of warratahs (steel fence posts) hammered into the ground. In order to support the weight of the work above, the legs and later the torso were dried to leather hard. This of course made for difficulties and some guess work in modelling the subsequent parts, due to shrinkage of the work already nearly dry. It was also something of a risk. Would the legs crack under the weight of the torso and head? Fortunately, they didn't. Because the columns had straight lines I didn't need to take this risk with them. The crescent moon was made in one piece and braced inside with clay buttresses.

The next stage was to dry slowly and then fire. Some smaller pieces were fired in my 15 cu ft gas kiln — very slowly — pre-heated over 12 hours to 100°C, then fired up to 1150°C over 16 hours, then down again over a further 12 or so hours. Temperatures to watch particularly were 500-600°C going up, and specifically 573°C and 220°C coming down. We went through those temperatures very slowly to avoid dunting.

Large pieces were fired in **Philip Luxton's** huge modular fibre kiln, which involved a 'heart in the mouth' trip from the North Shore to Manurewa with the raw clay pieces very carefully loaded and packed with large chunks of polystyrene in a van. They were then lifted and swung on a pole and rope, which gripped each piece by friction, into Philip's kiln. They just fitted, with only millimetres to spare!

More heart in the mouth stuff, bringing the kiln up to temperature and down again (not much sleep that night) the slow cooling, and then opening. Would one piece be irreparably cracked, distorted or whatever other disaster that can happen in firing? If so, the whole sculpture would be lost. There were no spare parts. All the care and precautions paid off. With a few very minor cracks all pieces came out gorgeous terracotta and intact.

While all this was going on I made a one metre diameter fibreglass-strengthened mould for the *Grinding Stones*, sculpted hands and a face and made two-part and one-part moulds



The Altar, 2.6m high

Photos by Derek Brickell

for the *Receptacles*. The *Grinding Stones* were made of a clay composite, to simulate coarse stone. I wanted these pieces to look like chunks of the subtly coloured stratified water-weathered rock, found on the West Coast around Auckland, and as if someone had roughly formed this and then inscribed symbols and colour onto it. I did this by colouring the composite with oxides, inlaying and scrunching up and roughly texturing it over the uncoloured moulded forms. Glaze and slips were painted on the raw clay and then fired to 1100°C. Most pieces were refined, some several times with different glazes to achieve the colour and texture quality each stone required:

Red-orange and inlaid spiralled serpent for the base stone: earth and groundedness.

Pink for the spleen stone: water and relatedness to each other.

Red and green for the solar plexus stone: fire, and expression of power in the world.

Yellow cross for the heart stone: air and unconditional love and connectedness with all of life.

Blue chalice for the throat stone: communicating one's truth.

Indigo for the pineal stone: intuitive knowing and psychic effect.

White and lavender for the crown stone: alignment with the soul's purpose.

The *Receptacles* were made by press-moulding white stoneware into the moulds already made. They were barely trimmed as I wanted to achieve a temporary quality, like imprints in sand. These pieces were bisqued to 1000°C and pit-fired. To make the *Receptacles* 2.5m lengths of timber were acquired from a demolition yard, trimmed and lightly oiled with tung oil thinned with meths. Treble steel legs were commissioned and 'blued' in the kiln. I learned that steel could achieve rainbow colours by heating to various temperatures. We achieved 'blue' in about half-an-hour by 'revving' the kiln



up and opening and closing the door to check the colour, at around 800°C.

Having previously made sculptures up to a maximum size of say 75cm, I have always worked using minimal drawings, preferring to keep my focus on the clay, my hands and my 'inner visioning' which I think gives the work a certain vitality. I found however, working with pieces the scale of those required for the *Altar* that also had to fit together, that detailed drawings and measurements are essential. Another time I would definitely rein in my impatience to get started, by doing this. It saves time later.

Large scale work also means bulk and weight. Space is required for working, drying and manoeuvring into the kiln, something I hadn't fully taken into account, so there was a lot of double handling requiring two of us to lift any one piece, around my tiny studio. The weight aspect required all sorts of ingenious makeshift engineering solutions. Even rotating the huge mould built for the *Grinding Stones* when it was filled with about 40kg of clay was a feat.

Perhaps the most important aspect of working on this scale is the commitment required to the original idea, over the months needed for making. It is impossible to make last minute alterations. I don't think I could have sustained this heavy work, predominantly outside through the winter months without the enormous belief I had, in the idea for this installation and commitment to that.

It was of immense value to me to work for months, right on the edge of my knowledge, understanding and capability, both conceptually and physically. The risk taking was both terrifying and exciting, but ultimately rewarding as each piece 'made it'. Solutions need to float to the surface when there is no one out there who has done *this* particular thing before and no book to consult.

The doing it, was exhilarating; the learning, phenomenal. The support of the *QEII Arts Council* for this project is gratefully acknowledged. ■

Helen Pollocks Storehouse will be installed in the Sculpture court at the Fisher Gallery, Pakuranga, from 26 February to 18 April 1993.

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*The Base Stone, 260mm diam*



*The Goddess*



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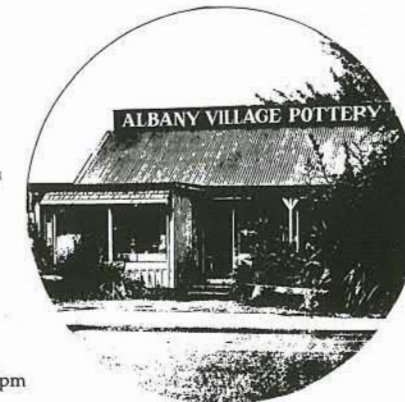
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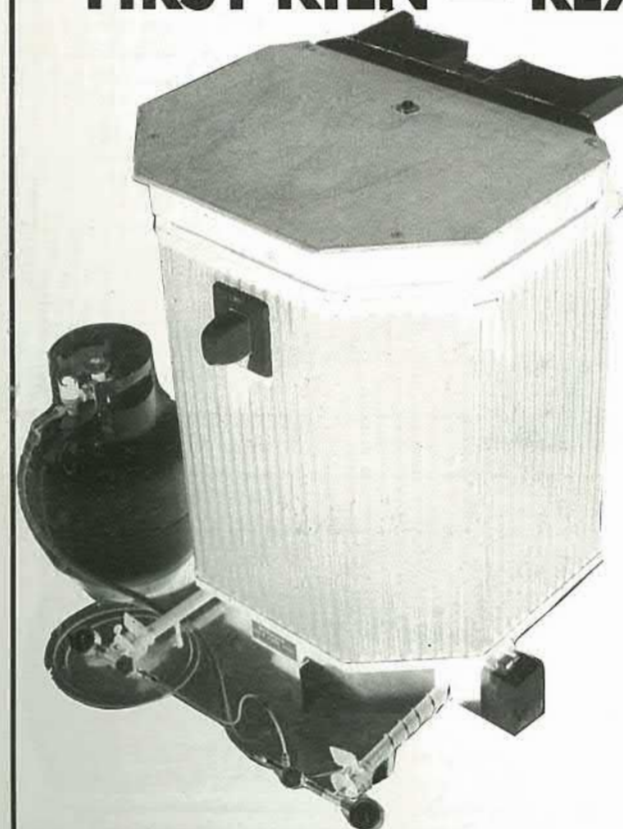
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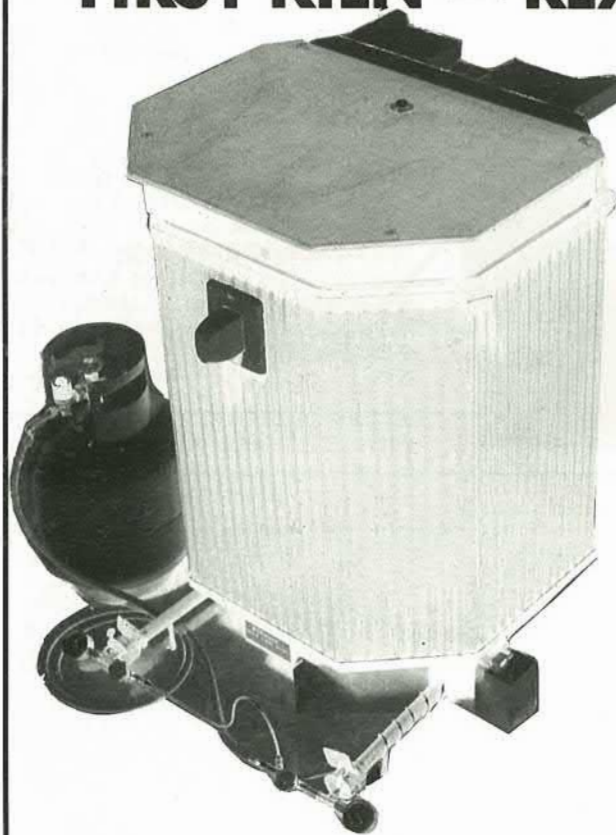
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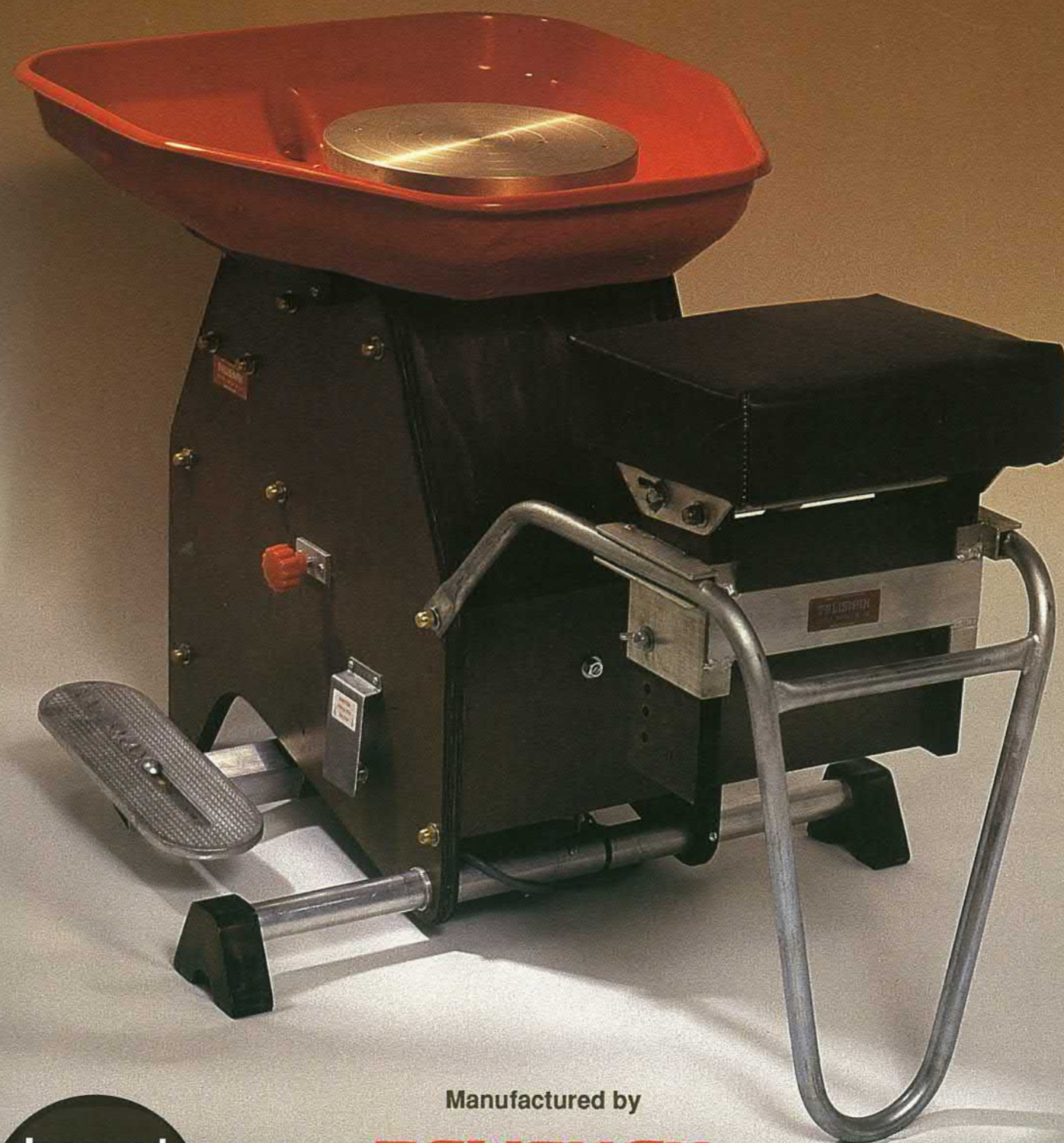
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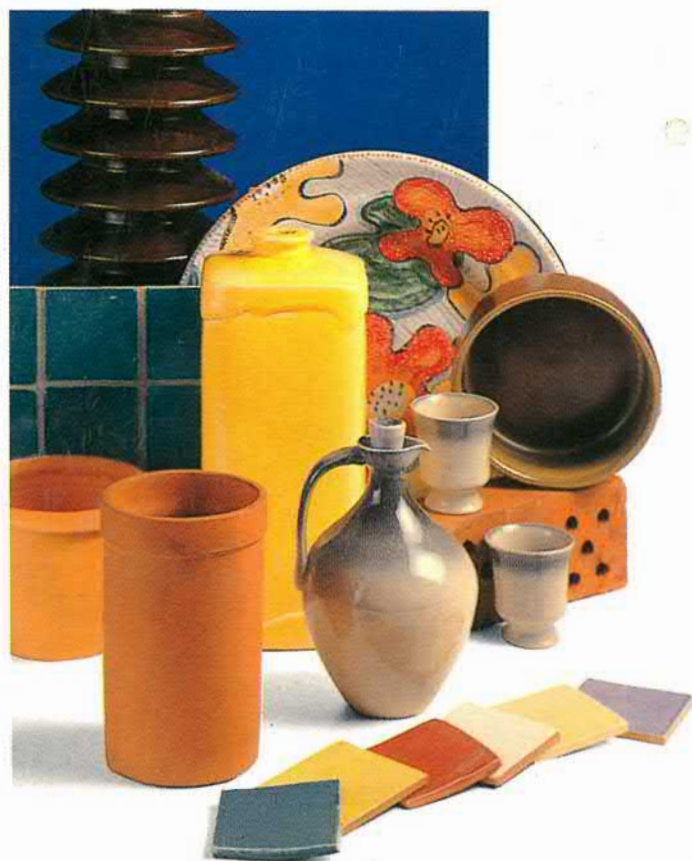
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