



NEW ZEALAND  
Crafts

# Soapbox

*It's a fact that many craftspeople have difficulty selling their work. It's considered impolite to tell them that it's just not very good, that they're aiming at the wrong market, the presentation is no good, the price is not right, and that nobody really wants it anyway. Too often, the solution is to offer an alternative marketing system, which doesn't ultimately help the person's sales, but gives them hope for a little longer.*

*One such alternative is the Crafts Fair. There's no doubt that this system brings many benefits. The retailer can shop around with great ease, members of the public can swap the price of admission for the opportunity to see a lot of work in a short space of time. The organisers have an interesting job, with probably a modest profit. The craftspeople have the opportunity to be introduced to this potential market, but is it worth it? The cost is an entrance fee, the expense of travelling — sometimes a large distance, lost production time — maybe up to a week, for what? The level of sales is generally no greater than can be achieved through a couple of good retail outlets making their regular visits, and each taking no more than an hour or two of your time. Probably the sort of shops you hoped to contact haven't come to the fair anyway. Let's examine our existing marketing structure before we undermine its effectiveness with an alternative.*

*Firstly, take a look at retail outlets and zero in on half a dozen who stock the kind of work you aspire to make. If you don't have the time to visit other centres, ask about. Everyone knows something about good and bad craft shops. Look out specially for shops which travel to your area. Next, visit, or write them a business-like letter. Convince them that your work is suitable for them and say why you think their shop will be good for you. Take samples, or send good photos.*

*If you're equipped to sell from home, and your sales area looks good, advertise. There are plenty of free services you can use to promote special events like open days, demonstrations, exhibitions.*

*Community notices in local newspaper and radio exist in many areas. Get a good card printed, have a nice sign outside, and down the road. Think about the possibilities. Make your name known further afield. Exhibit in other centres. There are many exhibitions every year which only require a few pieces.*

*Instead of waiting to be offered sales opportunities, get out there and look for them.*

*The most basic hindrance is the quality of your work. If it's good quality, then there is a market for it, but you have to find it. Instead of asking arts and crafts organisations to help us sell work, ask them to help improve the quality. It's a fact that we have more than enough good craft shops. It's up to you to produce better work to put in them.*

*Peter Gilber.*

In this issue we feature three lesser known crafts in New Zealand basketweaving, blacksmithing and chairmaking. Denis O'Connor is the first person working in clay to be awarded a Frances Hodgkins Fellowship. Denis spoke of the major piece of work with Louise Guerin. We introduce the first of a new regular series on leading craft shops and their owner/operators. John Edgar writes of his Argillite Expedition and Bob Bassett acknowledges John's great respect for the stone and reviews his recent exhibition at the Janne Land Gallery. Jenny Patrick writes of the high calibre of applicants for the 1984-85 craft grants and the frustration of having too little money to go around.

The Executive and Staff of The Crafts Council of NZ would like to wish its members a very Merry Xmas and Prosperous New Year.

#### ERRATUM

Apologies to President Campbell Hegan for omitting his name as Reviewer of the Fletcher Brownbuilt Award in the last issue of New Zealand Crafts. Editors.

## Contents

Letters

Letter From The President

What's Happening At The Craft Council

Withies In The Wairarapa —  
David Kelly, Basketmaker

Colin Slade — Chairmaker, Craftsman

Iron Man — Christchurch Blacksmith  
Noel Cross

Going Stoning — Hard Stone Carving  
With John Edgar

Amulets And Alchemy — A Review Of  
John Edgar's Recent Exhibition

Denis O'Connor — Working In Clay

Hot Sunbeams — A Hot Glass Review

Craft Shops

Penny Read At Compendium Gallery

Review — Contemporary German  
Jewellery

Craft Notes

Events

Craft Market

David Kelly, grower of  
s and basketmaker.  
by: Michael Langford.



Robert McDougall Art Gallery  
P.O. Box 237 Christchurch  
New Zealand.

# Soapbox

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*Peter Gilchrist*

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## Page

## Contents

|    |   |
|----|---|
| 2  | Letters   |
| 3  | Letter From The President   |
| 4  | What's Happening At The Craft Council                               |
| 6  | Withies In The Wairarapa —<br>David Kelly, Basketmaker              |
| 10 | Colin Slade — Chairmaker, Craftsman                                 |
| 13 | Iron Man — Christchurch Blacksmith<br>Noel Cross                    |
| 17 | Going Stoning — Hard Stone Carving<br>With John Edgar               |
| 20 | Amulets And Alchemy — A Review Of<br>John Edgar's Recent Exhibition |
| 23 | Denis O'Connor — Working In Clay                                    |
| 26 | Hot Sunbeams — A Hot Glass Review                                   |
| 28 | Craft Shops   |
| 29 | Penny Read At Compendium Gallery                                    |
| 31 | Review — Contemporary German<br>Jewellery                           |
| 33 | Craft Notes   |
| 36 | Events  |
| 37 | Craft Market  |

Cover: David Kelly, grower of  
willows and basketmaker.  
Photograph: Michael Langford.



Robert McDougall Art Gallery  
P.O. Box 237 Christchurch  
New Zealand.

## LETTERS

### Dear Editor

I welcome Carin Wilson's announcement of the new proposals for craft education. Yet I find myself dissatisfied with the "strong orientation towards the practical". (NZ Crafts, Spring 1984, pg 31.) This practical emphasis has been a failing, I believe, of the training available hitherto. Listed, in order, are these objectives:

"(1) a comprehensive knowledge of manipulative skills; (2) adequate design and graphic skills" . . . Can these modest aims foster the daring acts of imagination we need to vitalize our work, down to the humblest coffee mug or tablemat?

Nothing could be more "practical" than architecture. Yet we assess the value of the built form, of itself, as it satisfied criteria other than solely functional ones. The erection of truly great buildings does not begin with laying the foundations.

It is agreed that the strength of the crafts is that they are rooted in the mechanics of day-to-day living. In former times, these everyday realities were intermixed with other values; indeed, we have seen how the material culture of the Maori is interpenetrated by spiritual meanings. But in an industrialised, secular society, when we choose a hand-crafted article, rather than a factory product, we make a conscious aesthetic and philosophical decision. We seek an object which resonates at a deeper level. The expression of those values is a concern, in the twentieth century, of art, and thus craft is inseparable from art.

We should recognise this necessary fact by locating craft study courses in a variety of situations, including the art schools. (The present vigour of jewellery and the glass movement suffered no damage from this policy.) This would stimulate fruitful exchange between disciplines, and offer an expanded environment for crafts . . . but to isolate crafts training in a segregated institution must surely perpetuate an outdated and unrealistic schism between art and craft.

Joan Clouston

### Dear Editor

I am writing on behalf of the Craft Teachers Certificate Committee in support of the Craft College, following the article written by Carin Wilson in the latest magazine. It is certainly a move that should have the support of crafts people, as individuals have been struggling for years to reach a professional standard, without any help from educational institutions. Considering this, the standard of present work is surprisingly high, but it could be improved so much with a college such as that suggested in the article.

The C T C committee has found that the technical assessment of candidate's work has been the hardest part of our course to organise. Many of the weavers and spinners taught themselves, and the standard is very variable. It has been difficult to set a satisfactory standard of technical competence, and a recognized course in a Craft College would set such a standard, and also give established weavers and spinners something to measure themselves against. The C T C began with an awareness of the lack of trained teachers in our craft, and we feel that competent teachers can be trained, once they have the necessary technical skills in their craft.

I was in Australia in May, as winner of the Guthrie Travel Art Award, to study the teaching of weaving and spinning in tertiary institutions, and much of what I learnt was covered in Carin's article. In Australia, the Universities and Colleges of Advanced Education do provide the crafts with the leaders and innovators and I feel there is a great need for such a system here in N Z. In the fibre field, which is the only one I am familiar with, the N Z scene is very 'bottom heavy', with thousands of hobby weavers and spinners. There are very few opportunities for these people to advance beyond this level, and those who do, have usually done their training overseas. This does not help us to form a type of weaving that is New Zealand in origin, and with an ethnic N Z background.

The Craft Teachers Certificate course has now moved from a local pilot scheme in Canterbury, to a national course, supported by the Woolcraft Society, and we hope this move will add another aspect and dimension to our craft. It does give qualifications to those who aim beyond the hobby level, and we feel this is another step in improving the standard of our craft.

If any further information or support is required please let us know.

Mrs Anne Field  
Convener

### Dear Editor,

On reading again Campbell Hegan's SOAPBOX on criticism in the arts in the June-July issue of NZ Crafts, I feel spurred to putting pen to paper, and adding some thoughts.

Thank you Campbell for bringing up the subject. Yes I agree to some extent friends and fellow artists can be very helpful, and such criticism can bring marvellous blessings if one is willing to accept the opportunity for growth in one's work. The big question is how can artists get informed and sympathetic critical opinion?

Constant reading in major art journals prompts me to ask why so much of today's writing on art is self-defeating. It would seem that there's an insistence that the ambiguities of our society be imposed on the naturally affirmative and life-giving nature of the creative act. Only too frequently the critic's attitude and analytical way of doing things undermines the creative process by attempting to enhance their own importance. Most I suspect are not aware of how negative their influence is. I wonder how many artists fall under their spell, and clip their own creative wings because a few fast talking individuals (non artists) try to influence everyone into believing that the qualities that made greatness in the past, no longer apply in contemporary terms. And so we find artists, not to be left behind, keep changing, to try and keep pace with what the critic demands.

Too frequently a critic is hoodwinked into identifying with great and important works of art, whatever is biggest, fastest, most expensive or even most applauded. I have noticed when wandering through many of the world's great museums that contemporary works tend to equate with power, volume and glory, but lacking in quality, discretion, ethics and morality. So often works in all media strain to gain the critics attention through sheer size or sensationalism, and are intended to stun or overwhelm. I believe the critics are largely to blame for this, and have succeeded in thoroughly misleading not only the creators but those who have come to see, to learn and to appreciate.

The artist's talent is crucial, for it is the spark that generates art

and gives it life, and must be present if there is to be art. The ability to be true to himself and to transmit his own sense of life through form, line and colour is the most precious thing an artist has and it establishes his creative identity. All techniques and everything else about art can be learned but not that. For a critic to tamper with this, and so intimidate the artist into curbing or diverting his talent for purely theoretic or non-art purposes is the critic's ego trip.

For any artist's expression to soar above the mundane it must free itself from fashion often imposed by self-styled critics. Only by retaining his integrity, is the artist able to move, challenge or inspire the viewer to see and experience more clearly than he or she could before. To be of real value there should be dialogue between artist and critic, then there is the opportunity of lifting art above the merely ideosyncratic and self-expressive. To achieve this I believe that artist and critic must be fully aware of the nature and limitations of their particular contributions and what constitutes a work of art.

We have artists in New Zealand bursting with creativity and self-expression, but where are the informed critics who understand their role. What one presents the other confronts and examines, and he should then return to the creator for further clarification and elaboration. It is rather a matter of attitude and humility on the part of the critic, who could be of immeasurable value. It is he who could help art to become more truly representative of the full range and depth of our culture's ideals, than would be the case if left strictly to individual effort on the artist's part. Mutual respect, understanding, integrity, humility on both sides and above all a real love of art is what we all need.

In Campbell Hegan's words "Where are the critics?" may I suggest that the Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council considers giving substantial grants for the training of art and craft critics. Part of this training could be historical, some practical, and the holding of seminars and discussions, together with the artists themselves. The development of a sound partnership between artist and critic seems to be an area which has been given too little encouragement, and the self-styled attention getting critic has too often succeeded in profoundly affecting what our artists produce.

Doreen Blumhardt, C.B.E.

## Letter from THE PRESIDENT

Now that the Council executive has been decided for another year and I commence my term as President I would like to share my thoughts about some of the directions that we are likely to be taking in the next year or so.

The single issue that's occupied more of the Council's time and energy than any other in the recent past, is that of education. Some recent initiatives with the Education Dept are about to take a new turn. A short time ago, we met with the Director-General, Bill Renwick, and the decision was made to hold a one day seminar with the appropriate members of his department, to try and make some real progress in the area of vocational craft training. He is certainly aware of some of the difficulties that we face and I believe he has a willingness to try to rectify some of the problems facing those who are really serious about pursuing careers as craftspeople.

The gallery has been receiving a lot of attention of late. The improvement in both the space itself and the works on show have been quite dramatic. This is the result of a lot of hard work on the part of the staff and the gallery committee and a generally more rigorous selection policy. It's our responsibility to constantly promote the image of fine craft and one of the most effective ways that we can do this is by focusing on work of the highest possible quality and showing it off for all that it is worth.

Another project which I hope will provide a focus on excellence is the compilation of a register of selected craftspeople whose work is considered to be of consistently high standard. As an adjunct to this, it is hoped to publish a book of the best of their work with information on each craftsperson. Both of these are complex undertakings and would involve the setting up of an independent selection panel which would need to be widely representative and fairly eclectic to properly and sensitively evaluate work in all craft disciplines. Any such register, I feel, should be completely reassessed at least biennially. I know that for some this concept will smack of "elitism". I believe that it is just part of the process of coming to terms with excellence.

The marketing issue is a very complex one. What is needed now, is a coordinated strategy that takes account

of our resources, which are stretched pretty thin right now, and our priorities. I hope that, with some assistance in the near future, we will be in a position to actively promote the best of NZ crafts at some selected venues in other countries. I don't see us becoming involved in any large scale marketing project in NZ in the immediate future but I think that we do have a role in helping some of our more geographically disadvantaged craftspeople. I think that this is all part of the educative role that we should play in the marketing arena.

Good comprehensive communication is ultimately the reason for the Crafts Council existence. Of course we have a responsibility to use every avenue available to promote crafts and the interests of craftspeople amongst the public at large. But I see us as having a primary responsibility to the members of the Council, to communicate with them (you) as effectively as possible so that we may stay properly in touch with the changing needs of our craftspeople. To this end, the executive have a commitment to getting involved in regional activity. The Christchurch members have always been active as a regional body and consequently their representation has always been a strong one.

To keep everyone more current with our activities, the office is now producing a newsletter between magazines. (You may already have received the first.) Hopefully, this will also serve in bringing the office and gallery a little closer to everyone. This is **your** crafts centre and it's a bit difficult for those of you who don't live near Wellington to get a feeling of that.

Finally, whatever the executive's commitment to communication is, the very best kind of communication is a two way active process. It is not passive. The more of us that participate, the better. You've got this wonderful magazine. Why not use it to communicate? Maybe you don't think that it's so wonderful. Why not write and say why you think that and what you'd like to see. Maybe you could get really involved in the setting up of a regional group? Whether to be a participant or just an observer is a choice each individual makes. Ultimately though, it's that level of active participation that will determine the real vitality of the Crafts Council.

Campbell Hegan

## WHAT'S HAPPENING AT THE CRAFTS COUNCIL

### POLITICS

Campbell Hegan, Carin Wilson and John Schiff called on several Ministers in October as a means of introducing the Crafts Council and discussing specific issues of concern. The major points coming from the meetings are as follows:

#### The Minister for the Arts — Hon Peter Tapsell

The Minister heard our concerns on a range of topics relating to the crafts and asked for us to provide him with detailed papers on Craft Education, the Sales Tax regulations, Crafts and Tourism, organisation of the arts and ways in which the Government could encourage art/craft in public buildings.

The Minister explained that while the Government is unable to make any major financial concessions at the present time, it was the wish of the Government to see that arts play a bigger role in New Zealand Society in the future and that he intended to work in that direction. The Minister is considering calling a meeting sometime next year of representatives of organisations involved in the arts.

#### Minister of Customs — Hon Margaret Shields

In response to our request that certain aspects of the Sales Tax regulations relating to the crafts be reviewed, the Minister suggested a restructuring of the Crafts Council so that craftspeople wanting exemption under the sales tax regulations would be required to be members of the Crafts Council and accept a formal Code of Conduct. She said there had been allegations of craftspeople breaching the Sales Tax regulations and considered it important that the Crafts Council play a role in helping to ensure that the regulations are adhered to. Her suggestion was discussed at the Executive Committee meeting and the Executive considered such a proposal whereby a small committee comprising representatives of the Crafts Council, the Customs Department and the Manufacturers Federation or Chamber of Commerce be set up with two major functions:

1. To investigate allegations of breaches of the Sales Tax Regulations by craftspeople
2. To consider exceptional applications for exemption from licensing under the Sales Tax regulations from craftspeople wishing to expand their operations beyond the level allowable under the regulations.

The Executive agreed that this proposal would not only help to allay the fears of the Minister of Customs that the regulations are being breached, but it would also offer an opportunity to expand production by those craftspeople who are up against the \$50,000 ceiling. This proposal has now been conveyed to the Minister and we are awaiting her reply.

#### Minister of Employment — Hon Terry Burke

The Minister reflected Margaret Shield's concerns about breaches of the regulations and considered this to be an issue that needed urgent attention. He heard our views on the potential for employment of the crafts area and asked the Crafts Council to follow up on suggestions for employment in the crafts.

#### Minister of Trade and Industry — Hon David Caygill

The Minister gave a sympathetic hearing to our concerns about the marketing of NZ crafts and expressed optimism about the potential for the export of our top quality crafts. In developing a project on crafts marketing, the Minister suggested that the Crafts Council approach the Development Finance Corporation for assistance. He invited us to contact him again in the event that the DFC were unable to help support a craft marketing project. We will be meeting with the DFC shortly.

#### The Minister of Overseas Trade and Marketing — Hon Mike Moore

As a means of facilitating the export of NZ crafts, we explained that the Crafts Council could play an important role by bringing together selections of top quality NZ craft which could be sent to a limited number of specialist trade fairs overseas. The Minister was sympathetic to the idea and suggested that we develop a detailed proposal for discussion with both himself and the Minister of Trade and Industry later this year. We agreed that we should aim at having a selection of NZ crafts at an overseas trade fair in 1986.

We also called on the Opposition Spokesman on Arts, Mr Douglas Graham. Mr Graham asked to be kept informed of our activities and was interested to find out more information on employment in the crafts. He also suggested we consider the viability of holding an annual crafts exhibition either of New Zealand works or possibly works from the South Pacific region as a whole.

### CRAFT EDUCATION

The Director General of Education, Bill Renwick, agreed to meet with Campbell Hegan, Carin Wilson and John Schiff to discuss craft training. It was a particularly fruitful meeting and led the way to co-operation on the development of a comprehensive programme of vocational craft education. Bill Renwick suggested that the Crafts Council Education Sub-Committee spend a full day together with the Department of Education to thrash out areas of differences in our approaches. The Education Department have agreed to bring the sub-committee (Carin Wilson, Campbell Hegan, Carole Davis) to Wellington for a meeting on 27 November. In the meantime the sub-committee has finalised a detailed proposal for a craft training institute and has sent it to the Education Department for their consideration. The Director General was hopeful that we could get a policy before the government in 1985 for implementation beginning 1986.

At a meeting with the Vocational Training Council, Internal Affairs, Education Department and Maori Affairs it was suggested that we employ a research assistant to help the Education Sub-committee develop its proposal, interview craftspeople about successful programmes that they have been involved in overseas etc. The Department of Internal Affairs will provide a salary for the research assistant, VTC will provide accommodation and expenses, the Department of Education will fly the person to the meeting in Wellington, Maori Affairs will send officials to Auckland to meet with the Education sub-group at a suitable time — happily, everyone seems to be coming to the party!

### CRAFT MARKETING

A number of organisations were invited to submit proposals for a craft marketing project and these were due by the end of October. We will then carefully analyse the proposals and bring together the most suitable means of getting the craft marketing project under way.

### NEWSLETTER

The first newsletter completed mid November has hopefully helped fill the information gap between issues of the magazine. We are looking to a greater input of information from members for future issues of the newsletter. The second issue will be with you late January.

### CORPORATE MEMBERSHIP

As mentioned in the newsletter we signed up our first Corporate Member, General Bills Ltd, in September. We will be approaching other potential corporate members soon. In the meantime we are asking craftspeople to provide us with slides of works which could be suitable for display in Executive Suites under the Corporate Membership scheme.

### CRAFTS COUNCIL ACCOUNTS

For the past three years, Hazel Moffitt of Kirk Barclay & Co, Chartered Accountants, has looked after the Crafts Council accounts and prepared the annual financial statements. She has decided that it is now time to hand over this rather onerous task. We will now do the basic accounting work in the office and are in the process of setting up a new accounting system so that we can have greater control over the budget process. Hazel has put an enormous amount of effort into our accounts and we are very grateful for her time and commitment — many thanks Hazel.

Many thanks too, to Kirk Barclay & Co, for providing Hazel's services at very favourable rates.

At the same time, our auditor, John Kerr has decided to stand down and we are now looking for a replacement auditor. John has been the auditor since the early Crafts Council days and has seen his task grow from a simple and quick one to a very much more time-consuming job, given the growth in the activities of the Council in the past few years. He has put many hours of his own time into the audits, usually under considerable time-pressure because of the need to have the accounts finalised in time for the Annual General Meeting. Many thanks John for all your help.

### CRAFTS COUNCIL GALLERY

The gallery has formulated its exhibition programme for 1985. It will be in two parts consisting of 4 major exhibitions interspersed with media focus exhibitions.

|                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| February         | Focus on Silk                          |
| March            | Focus on Porcelain                     |
| April 16 — May 3 | <b>Maori Influence*</b>                |
| May              | Focus on Glass                         |
| June 4 — 21      | <b>Woodware*</b>                       |
| June & July      | Focus on Bone/Jade/Shell               |
| Aug 6 — 23       | <b>Firing — Pit, Anagama and Raku*</b> |
| September        | Focus on jewellery                     |
| Oct 1 - 18       | <b>New Faces*</b>                      |
| November         | Focus on Bold Imagery                  |
| December         | Christmas Crackers                     |

\* denotes major exhibitions; others will be small exhibitions with a variety of stock on sale at the same time.

Crafts Council Members are invited to participate in both the major and focus exhibitions. In all cases a selection policy will be maintained to ensure only highest quality work is displayed. Those wishing to participate in exhibitions can do so by submitting slides with details of the work or by submitting the work itself. Focus exhibitions will show a range of work in the named medium and displayed with complementary work currently in gallery stock. The major exhibitions will be wider ranging, occupying all the gallery space, with a major opening function featuring an opening speaker and more comprehensive media coverage.

"Maori Influences" will include craftwork of both traditional and contemporary forms, style and techniques. Non-traditional Maori craft such as pottery, which uses Maori motifs designs, or patterns in a sympathetic and sensitive form will be considered as will work which uses traditional techniques such as weaving or carving to create contemporary work.

"New Faces" is an exhibition to encourage craftspeople not yet fully established on the crafts scene. It is open to craftspeople who have not had a solo exhibition in any of the main centres and is especially aimed at those who have recently completed a full-time tertiary craft or design course or apprenticeship.

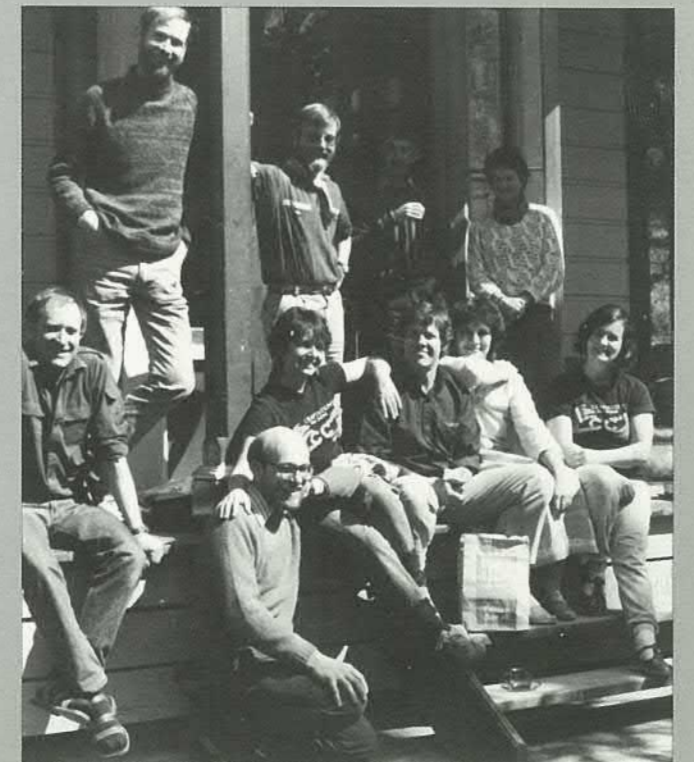
Although no "regional" show has been scheduled for 1985 any region wishing to organise an exhibition of the work from their area may approach the Gallery Management Committee with a suitable proposal.

### New Executive 1984/85

Back row Left to right:

Colin Slade, Gavin Hitchings, Anthony Williams, Fiona Thompson.

Front row: Noel Gregg, James Walker, Carole Davis (Vice President), Campbell Hegan (President), Lani Morris (Vice President), Jenny Shearer.



# WITHIES IN WAIRARAPA

*Dee Wilson profiles David Kelly, basketmaker, who makes his basketware from willows grown and prepared on his own farm.*

David Kelly, is one of only a handful of willow basket makers in the southern hemisphere and should be producing all the articles he makes from willows grown on his 16 acre Kahutara farmlet in south Wairarapa by next winter.

Already about one quarter of his furniture is made from his own willow stock. For the rest he uses imported willow from England.

Since establishing his willow basket-making enterprise in Kahutara, two and a half years ago, David has planted 30,000 willows and he feels the extra work is well worth the effort.

Although he probably won't be able to produce articles any more cheaply than he does using imported willow, he has no doubts about the venture.

"My affiliation has always been with the land and this means I can combine the two things. It also enables me to guarantee the quantity and quality of the willow I work with."

The varieties he grows are specifically suited for furniture making which is taking up more of his time.

"The smaller things must be done sometimes, but I would sooner work on a piece that takes one day to a week to complete than make three to five things a day," he says.

## CHAIRS

Crafting chairs enables Wairarapa basketmaker, David Kelly, to put his basic philosophy of wanting to "build articles from the land" into practice.

The most popular of the larger items are chairs. David has six main designs and "a million variations" on these themes.

"It's like having five different types of mug or bowl but within that range each one is different."

He says the concept of building chairs from basket willow is different in almost every way from building in a material like timber.

"When building a wooden chair one cuts all the pieces of timber first and then assembles them to form the final product.

"This often leads to square shapes

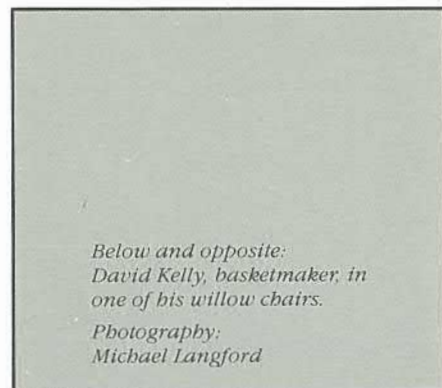
because wood basically comes in straight pieces."

In contrast, the basket willow when wet, is so flexible that a chair can be made to almost any shape imaginable.

"I find that the round shapes are the most sympathetic to the material and the individual, as with the human form some shapes are more well rounded than others!"

Another difference is that the chairs are constructed painstakingly inch by inch rather than being assembled from pre-cut pieces.

Because the chair is built this way, the final shape and size is not evident until the final rod is woven in. Only then is the surplus material cut off.



*Below and opposite:  
David Kelly, basketmaker, in  
one of his willow chairs.*

*Photography:  
Michael Langford*



Most of the chairs are built in this order: seat, skirt and top. The seat and skirt are made upside down and the chair is turned over to put on the arms and back.

David uses no framework at all and the strength of the chair relies solely on opposing stresses inside the weave rather than on nails or glue.

The lack of frame means the chair will bend and retain its resilience.

Another building method he uses involves making a complete tube with the back a lot longer than the front. This rather unusually shaped tube has the seat slung in last — the reverse of the first technique.

According to David the beauty of the chairs is that they can be designed to fit individual needs. For this reason most of his furniture is made to order.

One design is even recommended by a New Zealand doctor for patients with back problems because of its good lumbar support.

David's designs are either strictly traditional, his own design or a mixture of the two.

Two of his patterns are based on the concept of Edwardian wicker chairs.

Preparation is vital to the successful completion of the chairs.

Everything is a matter of forward planning, from designing the piece of furniture to preparing the willow to ensure the rods are all ready at the same time.

"You must know exactly where each rod starts and finishes before you begin.

"Basically it's a numbers racket and this means you are always counting the numbers of stakes and uprights."

David says being self taught has meant having to throw away thousands of dollars worth of furniture.

"The chairs cost anywhere between \$250 and \$500 and you can't really repair a mistake once it's woven into the lattice work you just can't get it out so must start from the beginning again."

Getting the willow rods prepared at the right time also involves forward planning.

"Some are soaked for three to four days and others for two days and they must all be ready to work with at the same time."



Once work starts on the chairs it must continue before the willow dries out.

The intricacy of the work and the concentration required make it very demanding, David says.

"Chairmaking wears me out, not from boredom but from concentration, because you just can't afford to make a mistake."

Demand for the furniture — especially chairs — is constant and heavy.

David feels this is because the chairs are designed for each person and because people like their lightness and durability.

"An important aspect of their high acceptability comes from their extreme lightness. Although they're light enough to blow away in a decent wind — a chair can weigh as little as four kilos — their very lightness allows people to be much more flexible with living arrangements, and one family I know of follows the sun around the house during the day by moving the willow furniture to the appropriate places."

#### THE WILLOWS

When he is not working on basketry, his time is spent husbanding the willows.

The trees which grow on the river bank are thriving and the rural atmosphere and landscape of the district — particularly the river — have had a similar effect on David.

"The fact that the chairs and baskets I make are products from the land makes the whole thing very worthwhile for me, and if it wasn't for this I would probably build from some material that didn't require so much preparation or time as the willow."

The willow cuttings are planted at close spacings which then grow straight unbranched shoots to reach a height of up to eight feet. The rods are cut at ground level and processed each winter in one of two ways according to the product.

In the first method, cut rods are stood in permanent running water until spring and then stripped of their bark. This gives white rods which are used for items like basinet and washing baskets.

The second method is more com-

plex and involves boiling the rods in an open vat for about three hours. The rods — still warm from boiling — are then stripped-yielding a buff colour. Both kinds of rod are then graded into different heights and sun dried before being used.



Photograph: Frank Fyfe

Today, David is almost completely self-sufficient, and with the installation of a boiler just after Christmas will have all the facilities necessary for processing and stripping the willow.

Of the twenty varieties of willow he has planted he presently uses a mixture of four in his chairs, depending what characteristics he wants from each rod.

"Some are stronger but less flexible and some of the strong ones aren't smooth enough and can't be used in places where you don't want clothing like stockings to catch."

While the different varieties of willow are used more for their strength, visual texture is dependent on the weave, for example, fitching, randing, waling and plaiting.

According to David there is a whole world in plaiting.

An old Frenchman he knew once said that there were only 100 plaits that he knew of!

David normally uses about five different plaits in one chair.

Originally from a farm in Methven, Canterbury, David first became interested in basketmaking and rearing willows while he was working in Wellington after attaining a Masters Degree in Agricultural Science.

Although he read extensively about growing basket willows and continued trying his hand at basket making he did not become involved in the craft full-time for several years.

After a chance meeting with one of the country's oldest basketmakers in Christchurch, David obtained some imported willow stock which he grew on family land at Methven.

In 1978, he shifted to Wellington where he and several other craftsmen worked in a crafts shop co-operative.

One of the major problems he faced then and still faces was the lack of other basketmakers to talk with and consult about the craft.

On these grounds he managed to obtain a rare Arts Council grant to study basketmaking and willow growing overseas for eight months. This proved to be a big break through in his career.

In England he spent some time around Somerset working on the willow farms and the "withies" — basket willow.

"We'd go into the fields with the old hands, armed with cider and bread and it was here that I gathered valuable information."

He also spent four months in France in Villaines Les Rochers in the Loire Valley living with a French basketmaker and his family.

"When I entered the village I couldn't believe the vast number of basketmakers and baskets I saw."

He says the quality of the basketry was excellent and the practical experience of working in the village was invaluable.

"In the end I just had to come home because I was bursting with knowledge that I had to get out of my head and put into practice."

On his return he left the co-operative and bought land in Kahutara.

David says his biggest drawback still is the isolation of the craft.

"Two English basketmakers called earlier this year and I realised afterwards that it was the first time for ages that I'd actually used words associated with basketmaking — only because there is no one else to talk with about the craft."

So, does he feel he is still on the right track?

"I think the right track is whether you're driven by the dollar or by artistry, and for me it has to be a combination of the two because at the end of the week I have to think whether I have enough money to pay the mortgage."

David can see a lot of potential in the chairmaking and still has many things he is keen to try.

"Most of the chairs I'm making at the moment are designed for sitting upright and I really want to make more things for lounging on like the chaises longues," he says.



Top: White Fitch Hand Basket 250 mm ht. x 340 mm length.

Bottom: Fishing Creel — 240 mm ht. x 300 mm length.

Photos: Michael Lanford

# COLIN SLADE: CHAIRMAKER CRAFTSMAN

Colin Slade has been a chairmaker for nineteen years. He says his most important concern is to be a chairmaker rather than a craftsman or artist. His chairs must have fitness for their purpose — to be strong, comfortable and look good. The comfort aspect is simple he says. Humans have curved bodies and where a body comes in contact with a chair it must have a curved surface. Colin says when he has a new design he can't wait to get it standing and try it out (his working 'from the seat of his pants' technique).

Colin began his chairmaking in a four year apprenticeship in High Wycombe, England. This was an apprenticeship into industry but it happened to be a firm producing high quality limited production furniture.

As time passed Colin says he realised the special aspect of this firm — even at this time few firms were making high quality furniture with a high hand content.

Most of the work was in reproduction furniture — Chippendale etc. 'fine chairs but two hundred years old in design terms'. Colin remembers particularly that his teachers who were so accomplished, considered themselves more tradesmen than craftsmen and seemed unaware of the special nature of themselves and their skills.

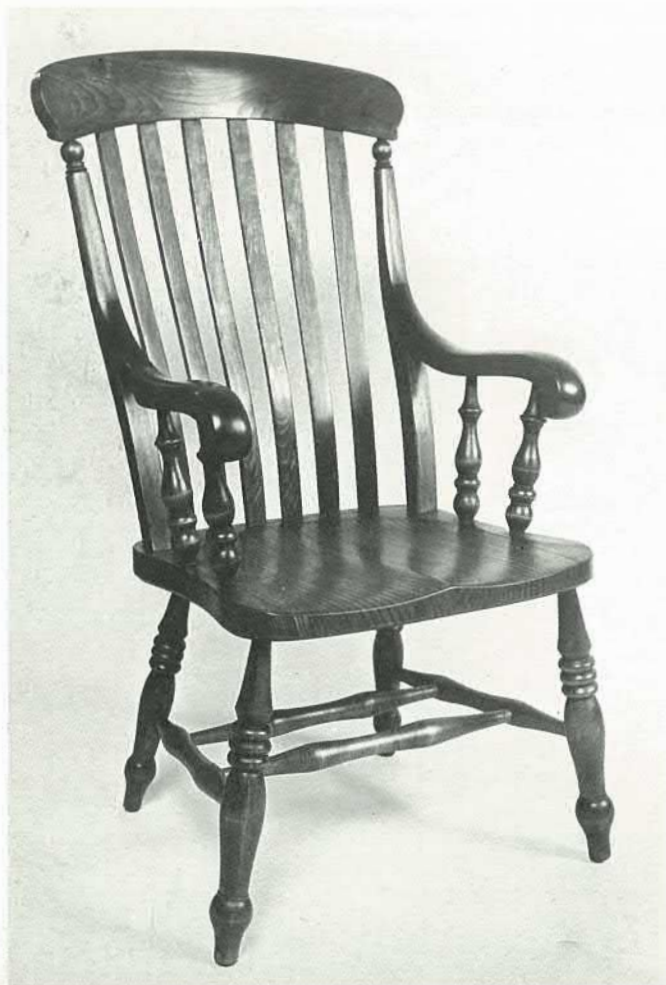
After working for five years in High Wycombe Colin tired of being inside and took a job on a farm, but winter came and he was back working in furniture — this time in London, for a firm of antique restorers who also did high class cabinet work for the 'nobility and rich Americans'. For the first time he was working on his own as a chairmaker which he found interesting and demanding.

In London Colin met some New Zealanders and decided to come out for a while. He spent a couple of years as a herd tester in the North Island — but he'd brought his tools along and was doing repairs and small jobs in his spare time.

Then in 1976 Colin came to the South Island for a visit. He couldn't find a job but there was a vacancy for someone to do 'old English Furniture' in a craft co-op in Christchurch. Six months there was enough to revive his interest in chairmaking. Colin set up his own workshop. At first there was a lot of repair and restoration work (out of necessity) but gradually a trade developed.

Initially Colin had to adjust to New Zealand timbers. He tried using pine with the result that the first three chairs cracked and one ended up being thrown against the wall in disgust. After this he tried native beech which he found far superior. These days Colin uses mainly English hardwoods locally grown — ash, oak, English beech, walnut and native beech.

He chooses these timbers for their strength as, "A chair has to accommodate a human being: all the stresses of weight, leaning back and so on, so whatever the thing is to look like, it has to be strong. The visual or aesthetic



Windsor Armchair — Ash/Native Beech  
Photograph: William Wallace





aspect is dependent on the choice of grain. Elm for example has a very prominent grain and suggests an earthy appearance whereas beech is more subtle and suits a more elegant form."

Colin considers that his present "cottagey" style of furniture is well accepted in New Zealand as it fits our open-air, casual life-style. He is making the kind of furniture he likes — something you can, "come in from the garden and sit in without having to change your pants." He wants his furniture to be used and enjoyed. "Seeing people getting pleasure out of what I make, seeing them recognise something a little bit different and really appreciating it, that's the ultimate satisfaction."

He has a range of chairs which he changes from time to time. These are not specific chairs, more of a feeling or style — each set is a little different from the last. Some of his range are his own designs and some are English traditional. Colin says he is moving gradually from purely traditional designs to his own interpretations. His taste is for simpler, clean lines — rather than the richly adorned chairs of his apprenticeship.

Colin also makes tables but considers them incidental, as complements to his chairs. He considers the chairs much more interesting to construct, their complexity of angles and profiles posing welcome challenges.

Colin is one of the founding members of the Canterbury Guild of Woodworkers. Up until his involvement with the Guild (beginning in 1978) he says he didn't really consider himself a "craftsperson". The Guild, therefore as well as being a valuable source of contacts and shared wood supplies, stimulated his interest in his own

craft and prompted his involvement with the Crafts Council.

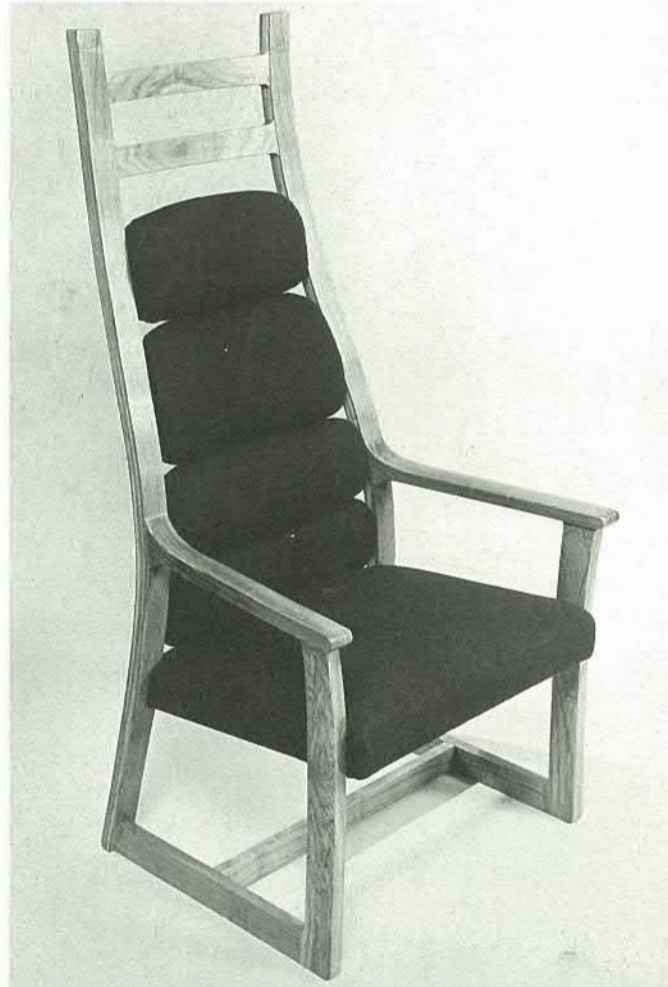
Another one of Colin's ventures which he considers important is the Alternative Furniture Show, held in Christchurch at the end of May for the last two years. He sees this as a way of bridging the gap between homemaker and furniture maker. The big problem he sees is that craftspersons may have wonderful skills but so often find themselves quite separated from the real market. "Your typical craft patron comes from a fairly narrow section of society — which is bad for craft and not particularly good for society either," says Colin. "If craft is of value to society, and I believe it can be, then it's important that it reaches the whole of society. And there is no good reason why it shouldn't."

After all, Colin points out, what he is making is just an everyday product, the only difference between his own, (or any other craftsperson's) product and a factory product is that it's made by a person rather than a machine and (hopefully) is better designed and better made.

Colin wonders about the current trend for craft objects not to be functional but to be artistic or, "make a statement." He believes that craft is a tradition whatever its exponents think, and not primarily an expression of our culture today. He suggests that craft is in fact a protest against that culture. "A sort of refuge if you like, from the high-tech jungle out there," he adds.

And what of his own stance? Is he making statements or simply taking refuge? "Me? I'm just making things to sit on, that's all."

Holly Blair



Chairman's chair for North Canterbury Hospital Board. Designer David Thornley. Asb/Wool. Photograph: William Wallace



Arts and Crafts' style chair: American Oak — Japanese Oak. One of a set of 6. Photograph: William Wallace

# IRON MAN

Jenny Pattrick talks to Christchurch Blacksmith Noel Gregg



Gate made for Miles Warren's garden, Governors Bay, Christchurch.

# IRON MAN

Noel Gregg is an uncompromising craftsman. A note at the front of his photographic record bluntly informs would-be customers that he will only do craft work and only to his own designs.

"Some people will take on any old thing to earn a crust," he says. "I won't do that and never have done since the day I set up on my own."

Noel is a blacksmith. One of an increasingly rare breed in New Zealand. I ask him why there are so few.

"It's strange, that," he says. "Overseas it's the fastest growing craft in the world. In the United States, there are thousands of them. Here we need some kind of stimulus, I suppose, to get us going... someone coming here from outside to stir up interest."

Noel Gregg seems to have managed pretty well without much outside stimulus. His fine dramatic gates, weather vanes, screens and churchware are installed all over New Zealand. His designs in forged iron are serious and alive, deriving from plant and animal forms.

"That's my Celtic background," says Noel. "All over the world you can see the Celtic tradition in ironwork — in Austria, Ireland, America, here with me. A free style based on plant forms. The English style is ornate and formal. The modern German and Italian schools are strong and heavy — using the power-hammer to get a beaten textured look.

Not many New Zealand craftspeople have a formal apprenticeship. Noel is one of the most thoroughly trained craftsmen I know — as far as his skills that is. His design training he's had to do himself. Noel spent 5½ years apprenticed to a "tough" Scottish blacksmith in Culberden near Hamner. For 3½ more years he worked in the forge doing every kind of agricultural ironwork. His apprenticeship trained him in blacksmithing, agricultural engineering, as a wheelwright, a farrier, (including a bit of veterinarian work) a coachbuilder (horsefloats and that sort of thing) ploughsmithing and a certain amount of drainage work.

"We did everything," says Noel. "And whenever I had time of my own I made my own designs. There's a lot of crazy gates around Culberden."

Sixteen years ago, Noel left all that behind, came to Christchurch, and set up his own smithy in the Artists Quarter. He was a founder of this craft co-operative and has been central to it ever since. From that day he has adamantly held to his decision to stick to craft work exclusively.

"Nobody wanted handcrafted ironwork in those days," he says. "I had to bloody browbeat them into accepting my work." I imagine Noel, in his leather cap and apron and his black singlet laying into the people of Christchurch with his forging hammer. "I carted armfuls of my pokers round shops; I put letters in people's boxes; I looked for public and private



Iron Gate

spaces that needed gates and ironwork and suggested to the owners I was the man to do it. It worked all right. I've got steady commission work on my books now."

## COMMISSIONS

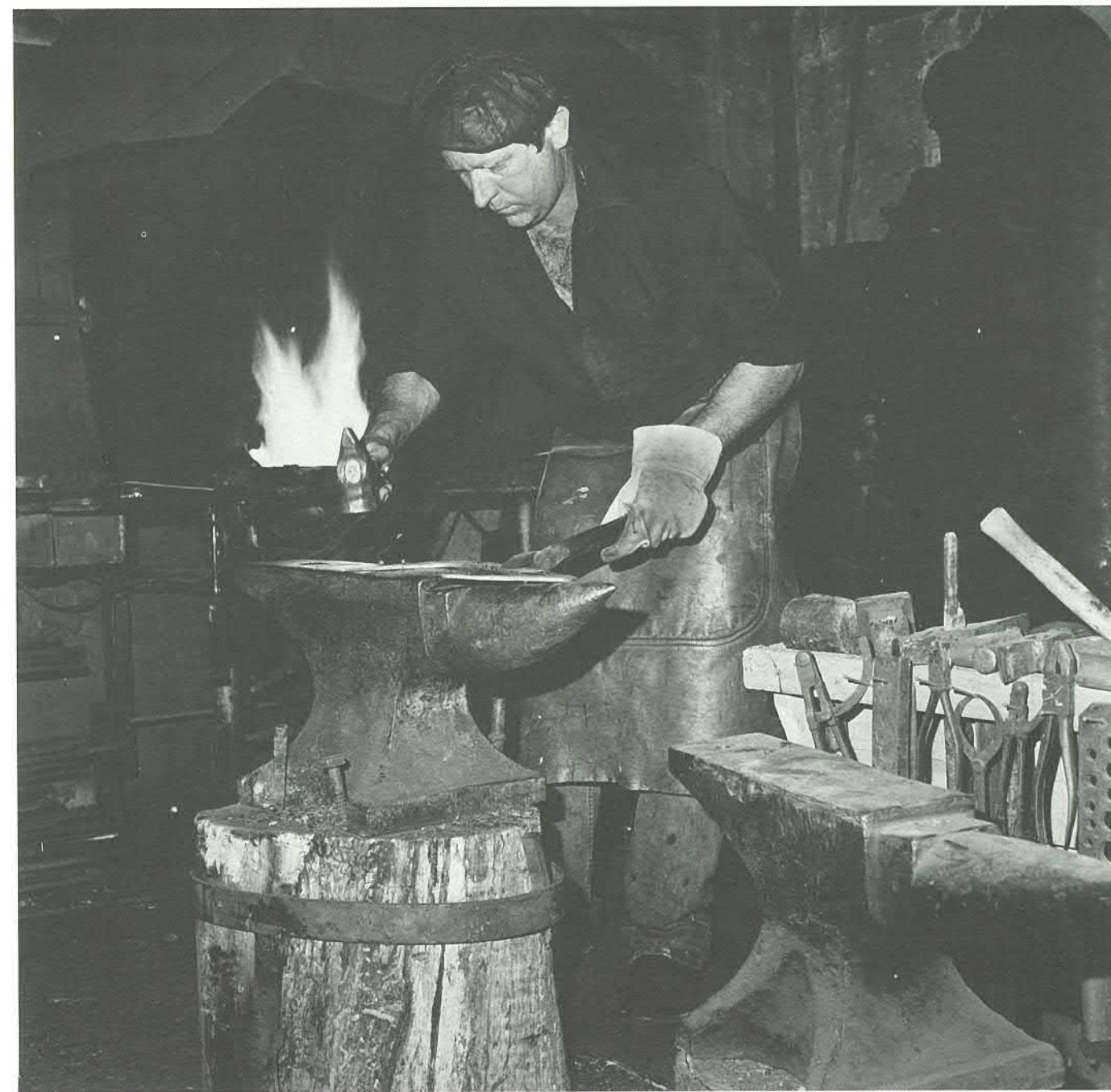
All of Noel's work is now either commissioned or for exhibition.

"I take pride," says Noel, "in being able to design work that will suit the customer. He or she comes into the forge and after a few minutes of talk I reckon I've got them summed up and I can make a gate or whatever that both of us will like."

One of Noel's garden gates sells for around six or seven hundred dollars up to a thousand or more as the work becomes more elaborate or the space larger. Well known gates around Christchurch are the ones he made for artist Philip Trushum and the recent garden gate for architect Miles Warren.

## BLACKSMITHS' CONFERENCE

In 1980 Noel Gregg received an Arts Council grant to visit the first World Conference of Blacksmiths. This event, organised by the British Crafts Council, attracted blacksmiths from all over.



Noel Gregg, Blacksmith. Artists Quarter, Christchurch. Photograph: Glenn Bush/icom

"From Africa, Czechoslovakia, Japan — me from New Zealand — it was an incredible mixture. Some of the work I just don't relate to — like the Japanese work — there's a lot of blacksmithing done in Japan but I don't get on their wavelength as far as design goes. But being as I am here, more or less on my own, it was interesting to find out how I stood up."

He stood up pretty well it seems. "I'd been well taught. I was as skilled as any. In design I related well to the Celtic school but it was really interesting to see the different schools and trends."

Another aspect that interested Noel was that the "signals" of the trade —

the signs one blacksmith makes to another when they were working together and needed assistance — these signals were absolutely international. He could work with an African or a German and not understand a word of the language but communicate accurately by hand signs.

I asked Noel how this "language" might have spread.

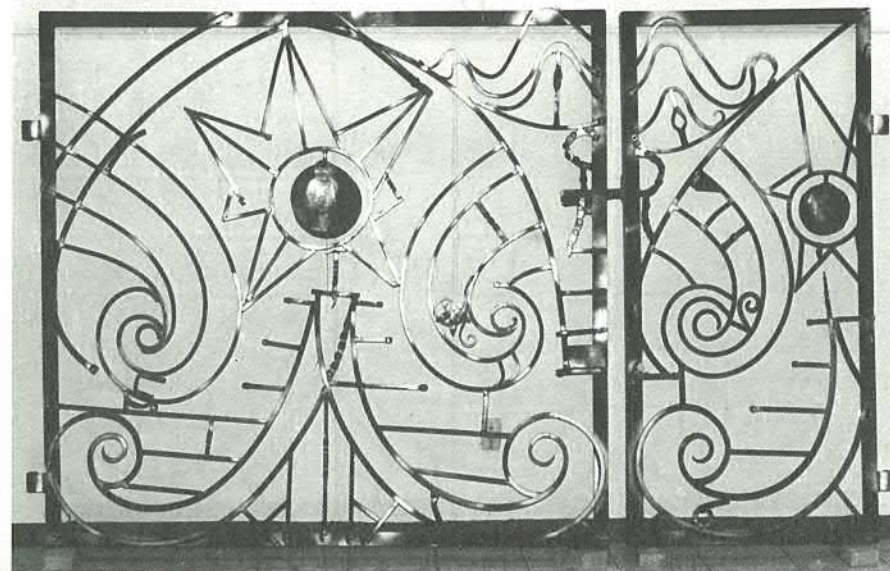
"I don't really know," he says. "Perhaps it all originated in middle Europe with the gypsies, and spread as they travelled."

For all his fine decorative pieces, Noel uses iron. Today, it seems, nearly all blacksmiths use mild steel.

"Iron is slightly harder but it be-

comes beautifully. Some things you just can't do with steel. The trouble is they don't make iron any more. The process is too expensive and labour intensive. Back in 1975 Noel pulled off a well planned scoop. He heard that the last foundry in Britain making traditional iron was closing down. This was before the recent boom in craft blacksmithing. Noel negotiated to buy the factory's whole stock.

"I pulled it out under their noses," he says with his quiet grin, "and shipped it over here. This lot," he waves his hand at a wall stacked with long black rods, "will see me out I reckon. Overseas, now, they treat this stuff like gold. You just can't get it.



Gate for Philip Trushum.

Except on the rubbish dumps of course. If you're prepared to look for it, there's all the material you could want on the rubbish dumps of the world."

#### ARTS STUDENTS

This year Noel Gregg has turned art lecturer. But on his own patch. Third year sculpture students from the Canterbury School of Fine Arts came to him for a block course.

"There were six of them," says Noel. "All here at once. I gave them an exercise or two to do and then they made something of their own. They were all at it at once. Somebody striking sparks at the anvil, a couple around the fire, a slip of a girl working the big power hammer. Hot iron everywhere. I was just waiting for someone to burn a hole in someone else. But we all came through unscathed and they reckoned it was a great course."

Artists Bing Dawe and Philip Trustrum are often in the forge working on pieces. Next year Noel hopes to work with them and others in a combined exhibition in Auckland.

Noel believes that the ideal training for a craftsman is to start, as he did, with the hand skills. He would like the



'Iron Gate'

Education Department to hand pick two third formers who would come to his forge two days a week and do normal curriculum the other three. This would continue through secondary school. Then they would go on to art school with a well developed

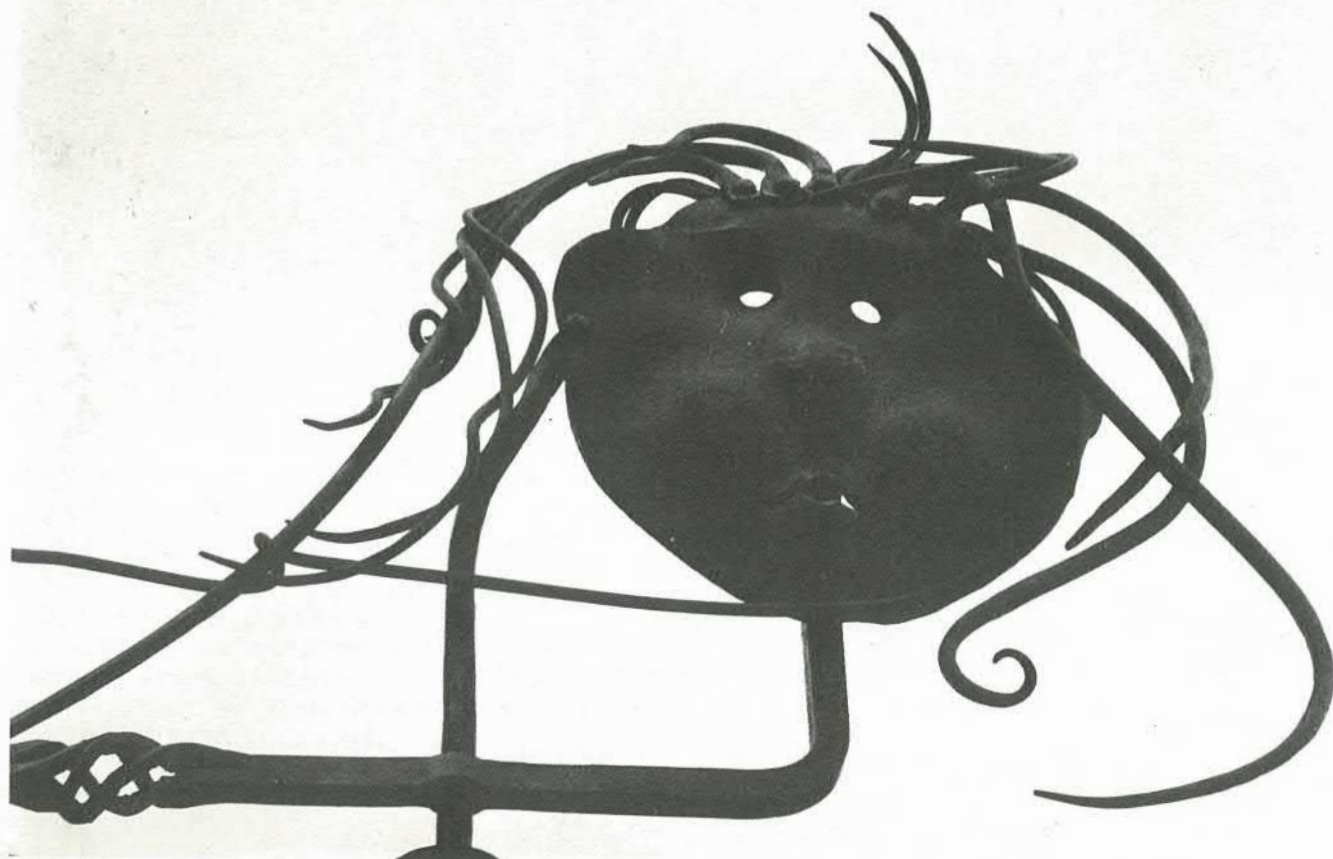
hand skill which they could apply to the design training they received.

"You'd have kids who'd worked with potters, weavers, jewellers, all coming together with a high degree of skill which they could share and strike sparks off others with. You'd have to pay the craftsman — say two hundred dollars a week — to do the training. And this would help the craftsmen have some stability in their life too. I'll just have to go persuade the Education Department to get it going. I'm working on it."

I could believe it. Noel Gregg is a quiet spoken man, but there's a toughness and an uncompromising quality in his attitudes that comes perhaps from working with metal. We have been sitting on stools in his big black shed, drinking coffee round the pot belly while the big coal fire dies out. Now it's time to go. Noel climbs out of his heavy work pants and leathers and into jeans and jersey. We drive off in his new red truck. He gives it a pat.

"I'm taking this off fishing now," he says. "That's where you'll find me if I'm not at the forge — off up some river with a brown trout." It seems a good combination.

Jenny Patrick



Weather vane.

# GOING STONING

Hard Stone Carving in New Zealand  
by John Edgar

With the arrival of the first Europeans in this country came iron nails and steel tools and within a short time the highly developed stone-age culture of the Maori was destroyed. The wood carvers found the new tools superbly efficient and a lively tourist trade began. As the pakeha concepts of time and religion were imposed on the Maori, their specialised and sophisticated schools of knowledge were forced underground and the exquisite hard-stone carving arts of the tohunga-carvers were soon lost.

It was not until the 1960s that the experiments of a few isolated carvers, notably Russell Beck, Theo Schoon, Donn Salt and Peter Hughson, revived the lost arts and produced independently the first true hard-stone carvings to be made here for 150 years. These carvers worked by a combination of the Maori and Chinese techniques, using silicon carbide and diamond abrasives. The carvings they made were an expression of growing self-knowledge, rediscovered techniques and the power of the creative. They had access to the finest jade fields in the world at present (since the Chinese worked-out their sources in Sinkiang and Burma).

Tourist thirst for greenstone led inevitably to its exploitation and the emphasis on *green* resulted in other fine carving stones being ignored. But in the last few years some lateral thinking has renewed interest in argillite, greywacke and basalt, fine hard stones with many characteristics unique to this land. These are the stones that were worked by the Maori into tools — adzes, chisels, grinders, scrapers — with such wonderful understanding of function and such loving attention to the aesthetic. The best examples of these artefacts are powerful and magical expressions of the stone-age culture that was so recently

flourishing in this land. We might well weep for our lost heritage.

About three years ago James Mack asked me to curate an exhibition of argillite carvings at the Dowse Gallery in 1985. Preparations are well advanced and this exhibition will show the contemporary work of 15 carvers complemented with a small selection of Maori artefacts. It is hoped that this show will define and clarify some new directions in hard-stone carving in this country and will establish new regard for argillite as a unique and subtle stone of our land.

#### ARGILLITE EXPEDITION: MARCH 1984

Over the past few years there have been a number of prospecting expeditions to various parts of the South Island and the main sources of high-grade stone have been identified. In order to ensure a good supply of stone for the carvers in the exhibition next year we decided to make a major trip to the South Island and collect enough stone to distribute amongst ourselves.

On March 1st Alan Williams (driving his Mercedes 190B and trailer), Donn Salt and myself left Auckland. We carried camping gear, quarry tools such as hammers, bars and chisels, sacks to move the stones in and cameras. We covered about 5,500 kilometres and arrived back in Auckland at the end of the month with a trailer full of various grades of argillite, jade and soapstone. The expedition was in part funded with a grant from the Arts Council. Along the way we were joined by other carvers, Alan Brown and Bill Mathieson coming to Durville Island and Ross Arkle and Mick Collins coming to Cobb Lake and Taipo River respectively.

Prior to leaving I had informed the Ngati Koata people of our intentions on Durville Island and we also had the permission of the current land holders at the localities we wished to prospect. As some of the areas we visited were Maori quarries and workshops, we felt strongly that we would not collect either artefacts or stones that the Maori had quarried but would rather use the knowledge that we gained by studying their quarries to find our own deposits and establish our own quarries. This is not so difficult due to farming activities such as road and fence cuttings which have uncovered deposits unknown to the Maori.

The 1975 amendment to the Historic Places Act is designed to provide for the protection and preservation of archaeological sites throughout New Zealand. The Act makes it unlawful for any person to destroy, damage or modify the whole or any part of an archaeological site, whether the site has been registered or not.

## PETROLOGY

Argillite in its common form is widespread in both Islands. It is usually a compacted, fine-grained sedimentary stone, a silt or mud stone as compared to a coarser-grained sandstone or greywacke. Normally it is too soft and flawed for use as tools or carving stone. A similar soft form of argillite is carved by the North American Indians in Canada where the stone is very black, free of faults and easily carved with hand tools into quite large totems.

However the rock that we are carving and calling argillite is the result of an intense and prolonged contact between this soft sedimentary argillite and a group of rare intrusive rocks known as the ultramafics miles deep in the fault line, high pressures and temperatures for millions of years result in a much-altered argillite that exhibits the original fine-grain structure of the sediment interspersed by a faulted grid of darker ultramafic material. Ultramafic rocks rise from deep in the mantle under extreme tectonic forces. They are themselves much altered in their passage and the pressures force them to intrude on the surrounding rocks resulting in considerable metamorphism. Ultramafics contain many useful minerals and are the source of nephrite jade, serpentine, asbestos, talc and magnesite, together with chromium, nickel, cobalt, copper and the platinoids. As ultramafics rocks will support virtually no vegetation, their occurrence as barren, rock-strewn, red-coloured hills is in striking contrast with the heavily forested hills. They occur in New Zealand in small

distinct areas, the largest being the Red Hills, near Top-house in the Wairau Valley which covers about 50 sq.ml. Further deposits follow the Nelson Fault north via Dun Mountain, Mangatapu, Whangamoia to Durville Island. The other main area of interest on this trip was in South Otago, from Te Anau to Bluff.

Comparison of the rocks in these two areas has led to the well-documented theory that lateral movement of the alpine fault in the South Island has resulted in the separation of the Mineral Belts of Nelson and Otago that were once juxtaposed.

The altered argillites have some quite unique properties that make them very fine carving stones. When struck lightly the rock clicks like porcelain. It will fracture under a hammer blow with a well defined, sub-concoidal percussion bulb, similar but less perfect than the concoidal fracture of flint or obsidian. It is as hard as tool steel and has a specific gravity of 2.7. The colour varies from the common charcoal black to greys, egg-shell blue and a variety of green and red hues. There are rare examples of cream and bone white. It is the properties of toughness, hardness and ease of knapping (hammer forming) that led to its widespread use by the Maori.

And while the name argillite is hardly specific enough for such a unique rock it is this altered argillite that is being sought by contemporary carvers in New Zealand.

## DURVILLE ISLAND

We crossed to the island on the French Pass ferry and landed in the north at Waitai. We spent a week there in the Mt Ears area which is a major contact area between sedimentary argillites to the north and serpentine intrusives to the south. Mt Ears bristles with lens-shaped argillite outcrops up to 40ft. high over an area of about 10 hectares. On the northern side the land is littered with fractured rocks and flakes and there is scarcely a stone that has not been hammer-chipped to ascertain its quality. All exposed argillite weathers to a light chalky-grey surface as a result of dehydration. On surfaces flaked by the Maori this seldom amounts to more than a millimetre, while on artefacts that have been handled the oiled and polished surfaces prevents dehydration and there is rarely any weathering.

But some of the outcrops are weathered inches thick hiding the grade of stone and this necessitates digging or hammering of the surface rind to reveal unweathered

stone. Owing to the hardness of the stone and the tightly packed lenses, exposing fresh stone is hard work with hand tools and we preferred to take advantage of a farm road which cut through a number of argillite lenses. The majority of the stone here is charcoal black (we camped at Black Beach!). It was especially favoured by the moa hunters and Mt Ears is certainly one of the largest and finest deposits in New Zealand. We also found some fine egg-shell blues and light grey with black volcanic tracers.

Durville Island has been occupied for three distinct periods. The first inhabitants came from Polynesia and lived on the island from about 1000AD. They were masters of adze making and traded their adzes throughout the country. In the fine-grained argillites they were able to express the most specialised and subtle adze forms which their culture had developed from the fine-grained basalts of Polynesia. They worked the argillite with granite hammer stones to produce the lens-shaped percussion flakes that could be further refined to adze blanks with small hammers of indurated sand-

stone. These blanks were then hammer bruised to a near-true surface ready for final grinding on wet sandstone to produce a strong sharp cutting edge and smooth contours. Often the blanks were removed from the inhospitable quarry sites to more favourable workshops near water. They lived in most choice localities on the coast. They made their amulets from bird bones, whale ivory, serpentine but rarely jade. They were great fishermen as shown by the lures and hooks found in their camps. But their main food source was the Moa. And when they had eaten this wondrous bird (in a land of trees and birds) to extinction the moa-hunter culture came to an abrupt end. (Just as well they didn't fancy tuatara and there are still a few colonies on the island.)

The island was next inhabited by a new wave about 1500AD. These people were sophisticated Polynesians who used the moa-hunter quarries for the argillite to make fully functional but less aesthetic adzes. As a stone-age culture their passion was for pounamu (nephrite jade) which they worked into fine carving tools and amulets in the image of Tiki. Their diet was kumara and sea-foods. These people over-ran the remnants of the moa-hunter culture and became expert in the arts of war. They built hill-top fortresses throughout the land.

Photography: John Salt & John Edgar

And they were over-run by the modern age, the pakeha, the steel tools and the sheep.

## FURTHER SOUTH

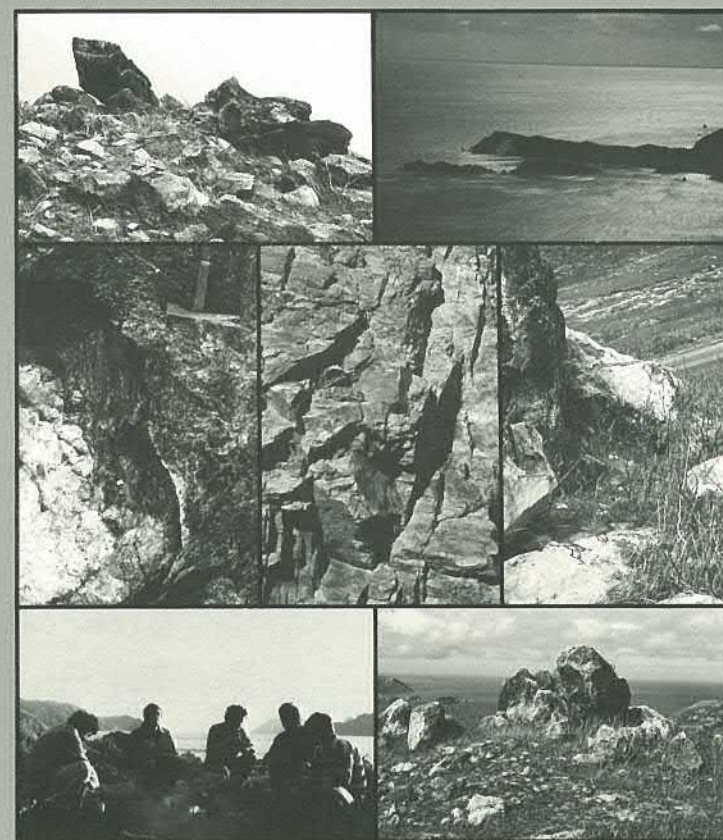
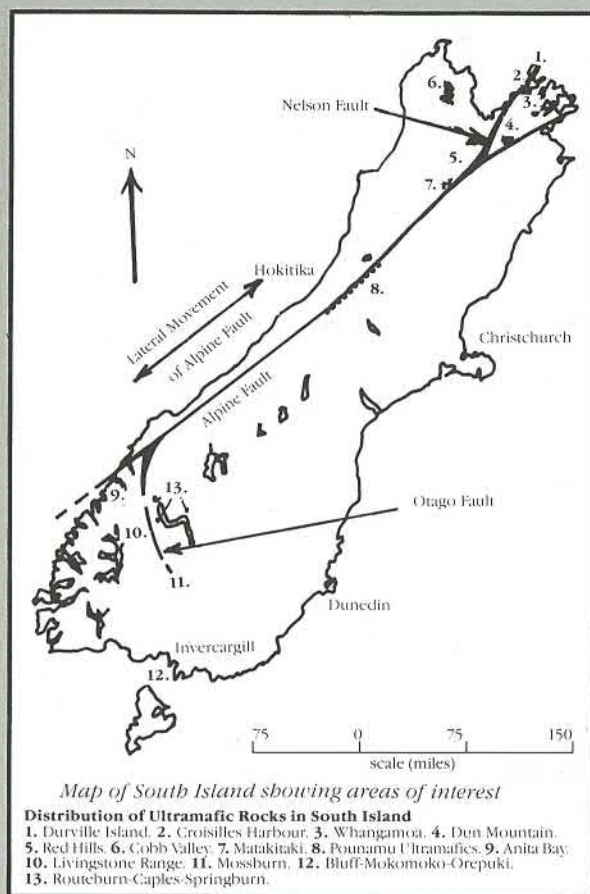
We made a cache of the stones from Durville Island ('you boys must be mad!') and drove south via Maitai (grey alluvial argillite) and Cobb Lake (the oldest rocks in New Zealand and a source of soapstone) arriving at Greymouth in time for a Full-Moon Rage at Barrytown Hall when the spontaneously formed Durville Island Blues Band performed outrageously.

In the few days on the West Coast we had a good day up the Taipo and carried out some green and black soapstone. The alpine fault crosses the Taipo near the point where the Pounamu Ultramafics begin. These are a narrow, 60 mile long series of ultramafic lenses, which contain high quality serpentines and are the main source of nephrite jade in New Zealand. But this was an argillite trip and we had only one day to walk in the Arahura, looking for alluvial jade. Whether or not one finds any jade in the Arahura is

irrelevant if one has only one day, and it is sufficient to walk out in the torrent on the lower beaches and be refreshed at the source of the stone in the home of Pou-tini the green fish of Ngahue.

From the West Coast we crossed Haast Pass (running out of petrol twice) and after a few days reached Invercargill. With the help of some maps drawn by Russell Black we spent a good few days visiting some easily accessible argillite deposits. One could spend a lifetime. The stone here is exquisite colours and seems a little harder than the northern stone perhaps due to a higher silica content. Some samples had metallic crystal inclusions on a jet black ground. At Mokomoko a black-green meta basalt was being quarried by blasting for road metal and the story is that argillites from the bluff deposits were used as part of the Ti Wai Point breakwater. (Q. 'What's this rock?' . . . A. 'Ah . . . basically granite'). There are some beautiful carving stones at Murihiku. And a thousand miles to Auckland.

We hauled some southern stones to Christchurch and railed them back north while we drove via Westland in case a jade had turned up. At Maddman corner we picked up the cache from Durville and drove as fast as we could home.





## John Edgar: Amulets & Alchemy

Walking around John Edgar's exhibition at the Janne Land Gallery is like entering into a very private world — The apparent remoteness and abstract quality of the work on display gives little away — in fact it is re-inforced and further emphasised by the immaculately constructed transparent display cubes containing that which one would love to touch, to hold up to the light and yes — to admire —

Admire the design integrity as it were — the use of materials — copper; glass and the mysterious surfaces of Black Jade and Argillite — the transparent ever-changing quality of Green Jade — those ancient stones.

Admire the single mindedness with which a creative individualist's pursuit of excellence refuses to make concessions to popular craft-imagery —

For John Edgar not the easy path to fame and fortune by catering for the lucrative tourist trade, through mainly Pakeha revived and promoted Maori Artforms.

Not that Edgar is not influenced by, and indeed has borrowed from, Maori culture, his involvements and affinity with the land, the spiritual resources and the physical ones, are strong and deeply felt.

This affinity, this being rooted in the history of the land, the immense respect for the materials he works with, his absolute refusal to impose marks on that which through its own intrinsic beauty and power makes its presence felt, shines through in the works on display —

I wanted to talk to John Edgar because I felt that here was an artist who had obviously established his cultural/historical and (yes) philosophical frames of reference far and wide.

In his "coins of the realm" but more particularly in his superb "Black Beach Disc" one perceives a summary of his personal philosophy — his private world.

The visual connotations with the Yang and Ying symbol in Eastern philosophy is overt — in Confucian and Taoist philosophies Yang and Ying are the two basic forces in the cosmos, symbolising the Great Ultimate or absolute.

Yang representing the positive, masculine force, inherent in everything active.

Ying is the negative or feminine principle and through their eternal interaction all things have come into being — including Heaven which is predominantly Yang in

character, and Earth which is predominantly Ying.

Everything in the Universe — the Five Elements — Men and Women; Dark and Light; Earth and Sky; Flowering and Decay; Success and Failure contain within themselves these primeval energy modes.

In other classic-philosophical dualisms i.e. Good and Evil — Light and Darkness, the latter are involved in eternal conflict, whereas Ying and Yang are basically in accord; *both* are necessary and complementary to the order of the Universe.

Western man seeks to conquer nature for his material gains — in Confucian and Taoist philosophies man aspires to attain harmony with nature for his spiritual satisfaction.

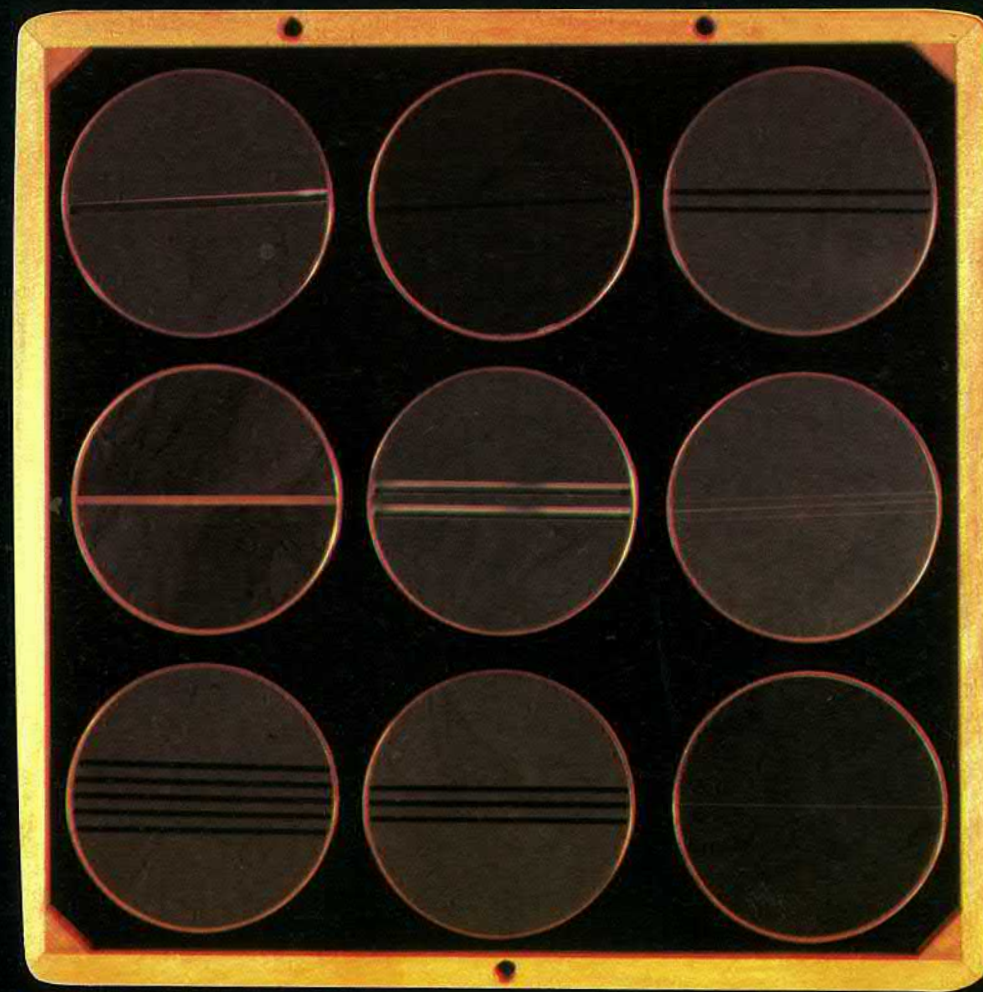
I felt that reverence for the natural order also underlies John Edgar's work.

**Q:**  
*"I see in your work, apart from the philosophical influences, the influences of some of our foremost painters e.g. Hotere, with its stillness, its graphic elegance — Murkusich comes also to mind, his linearity more allied to internationalism in painting — McCahon perhaps? Gordon Walters?"*

**A:**  
 "Yes, after obtaining a B.Sc. in Chemistry (hence my deeper interest in materials) I started to paint, sparked off by this feeling for the land — everything flows from the land — the energy — the harmony — it echoes in the work of the painters I admire and respect, hopefully it echoes back in the work I do —

Paul Mason influenced me — looking for accents in the materials used, making it work to its advantage. This affinity stretches much further, — Philosophy — Literature — Janet Frame's "Owls Do Cry" affected me tremendously and — obviously — James Baxter, I just have to open his works — any page at all — and I am away.

The Russians — Tolstoy — Dostoejevski, their humanity sustained me and my beliefs. Although universal as writers, they also had this thing about the land I felt — It all flows over and in and around."



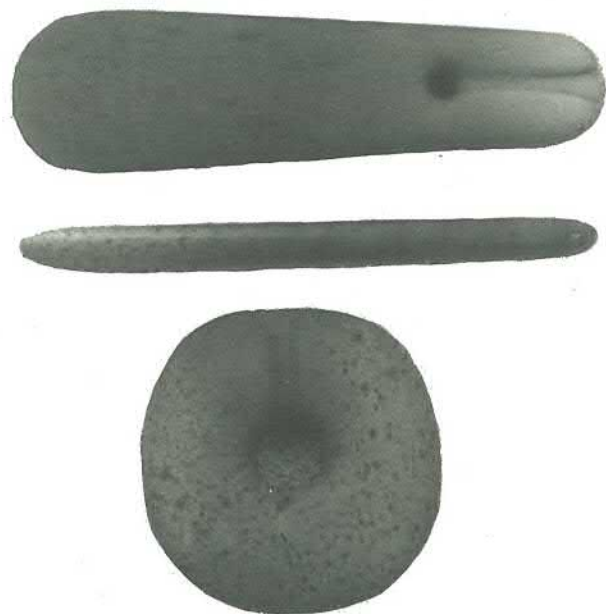
'Coins of the Realm' Argillite — Collection of the Douse Gallery

● ● I work the raw stone to the point where it reveals something about itself. ● ●

**Q:**  
"Your work conveys a remoteness usually not associated with craftwork of that nature —

Is there a conditioning process necessary to be able to begin to appreciate the reality of your work beyond the beautifully crafted form and immaculate surfaces?

**A:**  
"I am glad you're asking me that, because it seems to echo similar sorts of questions people have asked me about my work — My work does not reveal itself easily, because



when you see it in an exhibition — the worst place imaginable! — it is still in the process of becoming — a state of transition as it were.

Let me explain: there is a no-mans land in which, or within which a work of art exists, the transitional period between change of ownership from Artist to Buyer. My Coins and Amulets in particular will be absorbing this change of environment through change of ownership, and so will finally arrive at a state of being — being complete, when you (who owns it) gives it its meaning. The work then begins to act as a kind of Spiritual thermometer by absorbing, reflecting and stating, creating its very own energy — So, as an artist I don't impose my ego — I allow my work this state of becoming, which will be different from person to person, affirming its own uniqueness, through transmutation.

**Q:**  
"You are obviously very concerned about the meaning of your work, — your kind of reality as it were, does it concern you that maybe that particular aspect of your work is not fully comprehended?"

**A:**  
"As I said, I don't want to impose my ego or any overt meaning — I believe stone has power, Chemistry — Alchemy — a kind of magic which is self-perpetuating — Stone should be around people, to be handled, to be carried, to be worn but not as costume jewellery, I dislike that —

the attitude towards a piece of work should not be governed entirely by the precious or semi-precious material from which it is made, but the stone I am using is the finest to be had and in the process of "becoming" through handling and absorption by the owner (it) will acquire a physical and spiritual mana, like the true amulet or coin of the realm."

**Q:**  
"Where do you go from here?"

**A:**  
"I plan to complete an edition of my Coins of the Realm;

and Amulets — I am not really interested in the tourist trade, in fact I would prefer these editions to stay in the country — exporting doesn't interest me either for the same reason.

Then there are bigger things in the making. Marble — Sandstone — I am building up my engineering workshop full of machinery to make ready for the future — There's lots of things I would like to do —"

Thank you John Edgar; if the measure of success for any article should be underpinned by an all-sustaining philosophy, engineering elegance, design integrity and the use of a personal language — you have it there.

Also for your belief in and commitment to intrinsic values —

In a land of passionless (craft) people for whom the activity of work is all important, it's refreshing to come across someone for whom the reality of a well-made article is incidental to the dignity of his philosophy.

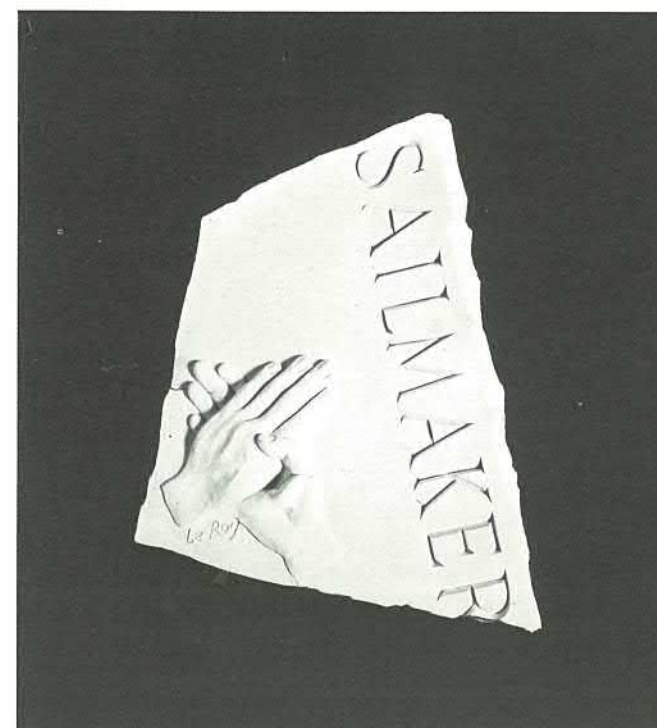
In fact it's not just refreshing, it's a consolation, I am looking forward to seeing much more of your work. —

\*Amulet :  
Something worn on the body because of its supposed magic power. —

\*Alchemy :  
An early form of Chemistry with Philosophical and Mystical Associations. A method or power of transmutation, esp. the seemingly miraculous change of a thing into something better. —

Bob Bassent

# DENIS O'CONNOR



*ivadestone Sailmaker, 415 x 355 x 50.  
Dedicated to Captain Emilius Le Roy,  
founder of Auckland's biggest Canvas  
Products Company.*

Denis O'Connor has never visited the South Island, so it's just as well he's been awarded a Frances Hodgkins Fellowship which will take him to Dunedin for the 1985 academic year. The first person working in clay to be so honoured, he expects the new environment to provide fresh stimulus to his work. "I got interested in the South Island a couple of years ago. Something has attracted me there — I'm not sure quite what — but it feels as though I'm off on a hunt."

The awarding of the fellowship and the fact that the Auckland City Art Gallery has for the first time mounted a major exhibition of clay work, Denis' **Songs of the Gulf**, are important signals. "I think it means that the craft scene in New Zealand has matured that much more when something like this happens", says Denis. "It's breaking new ground. Clay has always been seen as a potter's medium and now it's becoming acceptable as something more than just a material for domestic pottery.

"It's only just happening, but what were once very much craft areas are now being accepted professionally as worthwhile, art-related pursuits. Up until now the line has been clearly drawn, but it's starting to be broken down.

"It makes it easier for people like myself — you don't have to struggle against your potter peers not accepting you because you're not making pots or against the art world who have felt that clay work is craft and therefore not very high up the ladder of creative pursuits."

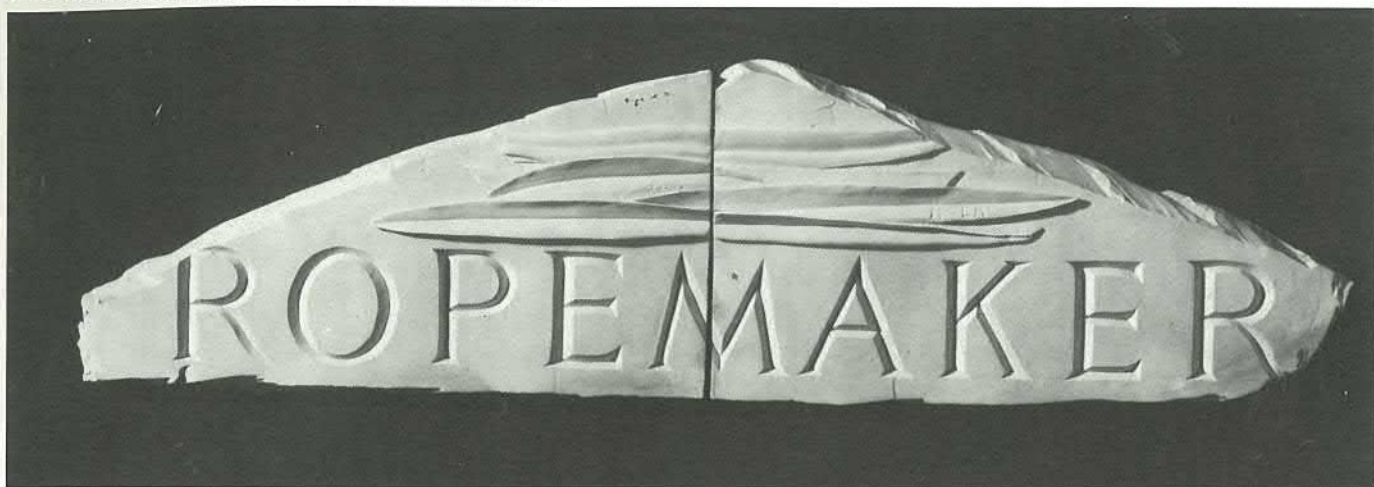
There is a strong sense of place about Denis' work. As he puts it: "**Songs of the Gulf** is an expression of having spent most of my life in a coastal environment and being drawn to certain sentinels, if you like . . . coastal landmarks . . . and using them as symbols of emotional feelings and inner states. So it's a sort of visionary attitude towards the environment.

"This work encompasses a lot of ideas that I've had both about objects and about your relationship to the place you live in. It's also the result basically of my attitude to clay and what I'm bringing to it.

"A lot of the imagery is New Zealand coastal imagery, though it can be read in a wider context. I've spent a hell of a lot of time observing coastal rituals and being pretty involved with what I call coastal mythology. That's when your thoughts and the way you feel are shaped by spending a lot of your time looking over the water!"

The symbols are often man-made ones and much is drawn from architecture. Boats obviously play a large part too in what he calls the encyclopaedia of coastal objects. Another body of work explores the word vessel in its widest context, with small boats, nautical fittings and bottles all finding a place. For these he has used porcelain imported from Stoke on Trent. Some of the pieces he has

Tradestone: Ropemaker, wood-fired porcelain, 1130 x 307 x 54.



mounted, not unlike the ships in bottles so favoured by sailors. He has also developed a body of work around what he calls the lore of stones, and yet another around his love of tools.

Denis began making domestic pottery, if in an eccentric fashion, in the early 1970's, but was soon drawn to using clay more expressively and over the last five or six years his sculptural work has become a far larger part of his output. Initially it was difficult to sell, but that was not important to him. "I'm driven to do it, regardless of the acceptance of others, but it just makes it so much easier when you don't have to battle with those kindergarten concepts of what is acceptable.

"If you keep doing it, people sooner or later accept the fact that it's not a shot in the dark and they start taking it a bit seriously. That's what's happening now."

He says one of the strongest themes in his work comes from an exploration of the sense of balance. "this whole thing about balance in your life — balance as a person and of the forces which are going on in each of us. I don't know how successful I've been in getting across those ideas, but they seem to be the ones I go back to."

His larger pieces, such as **Fish Lintel** are made from a local Waiheke Island clay Denis digs from a mangrove swamp. "It involves me getting into it up to my waist and scooping it out. It's brought home and hand-wedged and slab moulded into pieces. Then it's wood fired by the most primitive method and so all the natural qualities of the clay are brought out.

"There's an antique quality that appeals to me too. I'm after creating a mythology that isn't going to disappear

next year when a new trend hits the craft world. It's going to stand strongly on it's merits from here on so I like to get the feel of a solid, antiques quality.

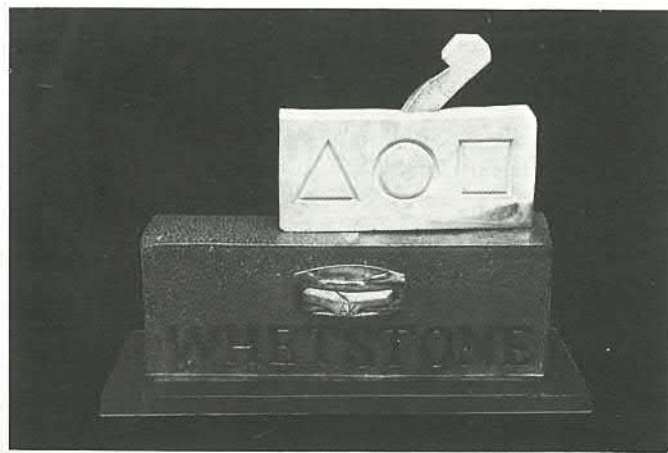
Another of his lintels he calls **The Divining Line**. "Presumably you are different when you walk through the other side of the door. It's thinking about that concept that with every step we take we are a different person. I used a rope here and it was based on the idea of skipping — each time the rope comes over you're making your own arch for yourself. It's actually more like a divining stick which was the idea in my head, but I stuck to the rope concept because I liked the idea of making something out of clay that is usually flexible."

Calligraphy also forms an important part of Denis's work. When he left school he trained as a sign writer. "I love lettering and am very interested in incised lettering, especially on buildings. The use of lettering in architecture seems to be a dying art and I would like to do something about that."

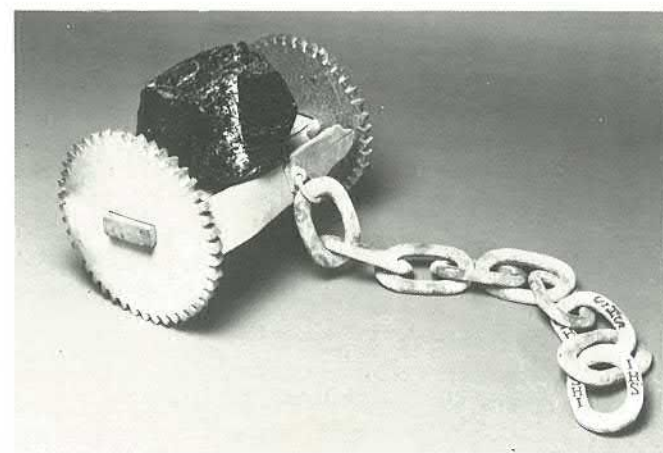
**Songs of the Gulf** was originally intended to be wider than ceramic work. Denis had also collected together over the years a vast amount of folk material which he had hoped would form a large part of the current exhibition. But space restrictions have ruled this out. Detailed pictorial documentation, raw materials, geological specimens, fired clay shards and souvenirs were all to have had a place. But, as he says, "We'll just have to leave that till another time."

**Louise Guerin**

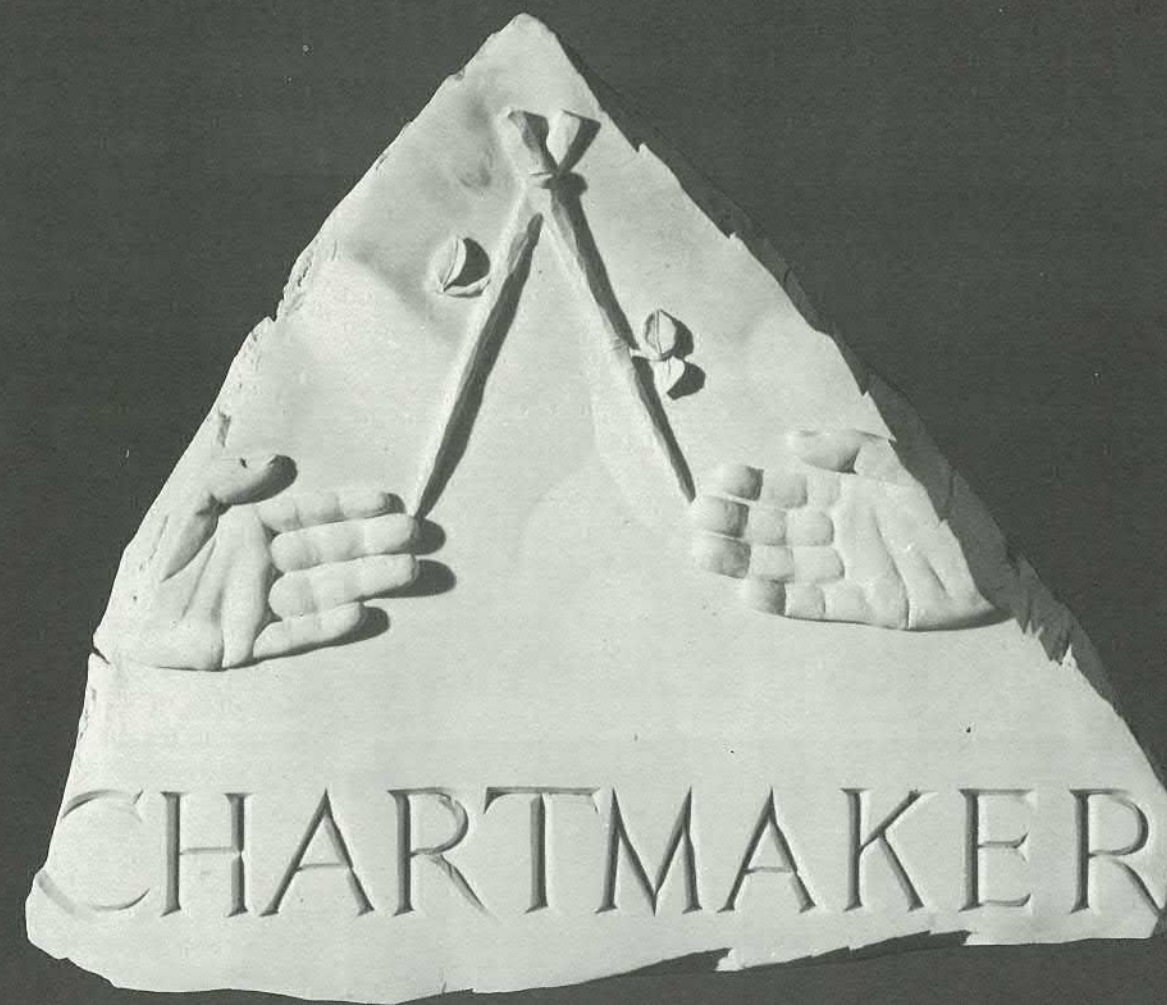
**Songs of the Gulf** shows at the Auckland City Art Gallery until 20 January 1985, then at the Dowse Art Museum, Lower Hutt, from 1 February until 3 March.



Whetstone: saltglaze swampday porcelain, slate, 364 x 320 x 100.



Cargo: Swamp clay slabware, Totara Obsiateum, 1735 x 527 x 405.



Tradestone: Chart maker, wood-fired porcelain, 470 x 550 x 50.

# HOT SUNBEAMS

*Review and Criticism of "HOT SUNBEAMS", an exhibition of hot glass by Sunbeam Workshop at Compendium Gallery (Devonport), Oct. 29 - Nov. 10*

In spite of the fact that this exhibition's title smacked me with feeling of "post hippie" images for the second time in as many years, I confidently predicted another wonderful edition of Sunbeam work. However, I walked away a bit disappointed . . . not that there was anything wrong with the work. Taken one at a time, virtually all of the pieces in one way or another could only be considered way out front relative to New Zealand's studio glass movement at large. The main problems had to do with how the exhibition came across **collectively**.

First of all, there was too much. The seventy-four pieces required a lot more space than Compendium Gallery was able to provide. Furthermore, the weight of this being an "exhibition" was tremendously diminished by the gallery's inability to vacate other stock from the space as opposed to simply pushing it to the rear. Practically speaking, basic commercial realities perhaps enter con-

sideration. Nevertheless, important visual impact was sacrificed by having the other works present. With the allotted space, there was essentially enough work for two shows. This was a pity, as I'm sure there is no shortage of willing venues to host an additional and quite likely (and justifiably) "sold out" Sunbeam exhibition.

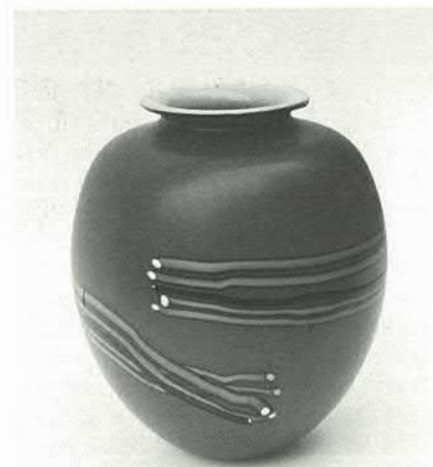
Another problem had to do with a lack of variation in scale, as well as variation in the nature of the work en masse. The reality is that this talented trio are producing remarkably large and well executed pieces . . . even in an international context. However, the virtual absence of anything small effectively removed the yardstick by which the viewer could measure this bold aspect of size. Were it not for Gary Nash's three rather small and high-tech looking sculptures and Ann Robinson's group of twisted canes graphically presented on a cast glass slab, there would have been no departure from LARGE ROUND objects inside the gallery. Still, there was a certain honesty presented that was consistent with John Croucher's dismay at the emergence of what he describes as an almost desperate effort within the international studio glass movement to evolve into some sort of "bizarre object cult". These three

craftspeople have persevered with their belief that the vessel can provide a valid position from which they can articulate.

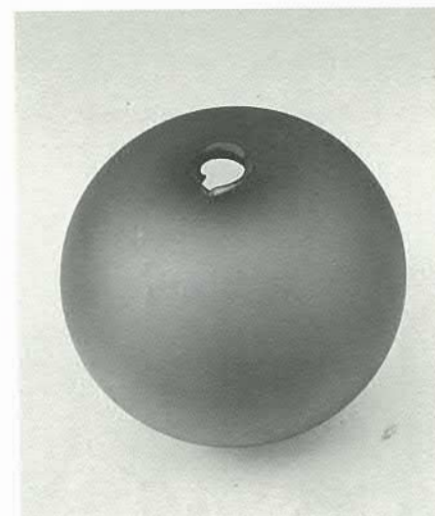
Within the "functional vessel" zone, the work of John Croucher definitely comes to the fore. His bowls stand out. They succeed especially well by integrating decoration with form. Furthermore, his forms are refined to that wonderful place where they work harmoniously with their function. That is the point which vessel makers must strive to reach. The only place where he seemed to miss the mark was with a somewhat overstated yellow and blue colour combination. Those colours would have been a lot happier on a more outrageous, perhaps Marquis-like\*, form. However, these two bright pieces did successfully demonstrate his increasingly proficient command of the latticino\*\* process . . . this time with graphically matched, pretwisted canes.

Ann Robinson extended her decorative language by using applied canes horizontally, instead of the very submarine-like vertical dangling ones. The somewhat less organic and more graphic effect was most successful. I do, however, feel that a lot of her blown pieces would improve with a bit less plumpness in their bottoms. Meanwhile, her pâte-de-verre bowls manage to get off the ground nicely with an almost floating quality.

The most successful forms which depart from those of an explicitly functional nature are found in Gary Nash's "Orbs". Particularly worthy of mention are the ones with the deliciously sensual, but wonderfully subtle, carved openings. They possess a magical "up close" presence, as opposed to the others where he has employed the somewhat cute and cliched tree/flora/or whatevertheyare representational motifs on the sides. Nevertheless, they all have a powerfully commanding and glowing presence when viewed from afar. Croucher's stoppered bottle with its partial gathers on opposing sides is so absolutely massive that it starts to enter this somewhat nonfunctional area, at least in the practical sense. This piece has an almost



*Cane decorated vase. Ann Robinson. 240 x 190 mm.*



*Frosted "orb" with carved entrance. Garry Nash. 260 mm dia.*



*Black vases & bowl with white trailings. John Croucher. Vase 450 mm high, bowl 335 diameter.*

sitting-Buddha quality about it that made me chuckle a bit. However, the residual water left inside was a bit slack. A quick slosh of acetone might have helped.

There was one bit of geography in this show which did manage to rise above my initially registered complaints. The smaller of the two window displays featured one of Robinson's best efforts. A simple sheet of finely ribbed white glass with a couple of long and slightly bent white canes laying across its surface, cut a beautifully uncluttered and graphic image. This was confused slightly by the presence of a flared out black bowl sitting on the white surface, as they were meant to be two pieces insofar as sales were concerned. Nevertheless, it worked visually, with or without the bowl.

Of particular note was the fact that this was the first exhibition of Sunbeam's work where I mistook more than a couple of pieces as having been made by the wrong person. This strongly suggests that their studio is a place of mutual support and transfer of concepts, techniques and aesthetic sensitivities . . . all the makings of an environment conducive to creative growth.

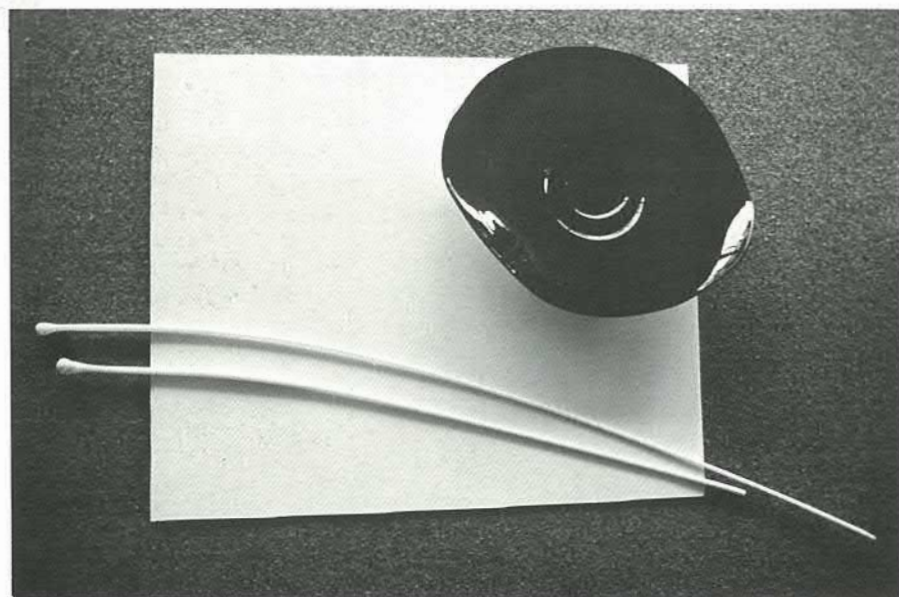
I attended the opening with an artist friend who quoted one of his colleagues by saying, "Art is art," as he gesticulated towards Nash's three small sculptures. Then turning the other way, he continued, "and everything else is everything else." I was glad to hear those works received some acknowledgement. Nash's efforts here are particularly worthy of merit in this medium where I've known others to

sometimes get a bit too obsessed with banging out the work to merely turn a buck. I gained great respect for his obvious willingness to go to the other extreme merely to further his artistic exploration. I sincerely hope to see more such efforts, but not to the point of aping that "bizarre object" scene. Rather, a bit of balance would seem the best way to go. As well as I can tell, this group of artisans have turned in that direction.

**James Walker**

\* Reference to Richard Marquis, American artist who taught here in NZ in 1981 . . . creator of the somewhat infamous teapots with their zany slant on folk art.

\*\* Ancient Italian technique of incorporating thread like patterns by use of glass canes.



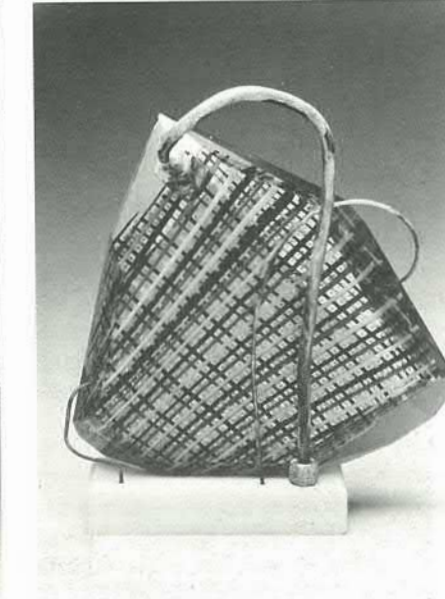
*White Sheet (1150 x 930 mm) with glass canes and flared bowl. Ann Robinson. Photo: James Walker*



*Stoppered bottle. 350 mm x 220 mm. John Croucher.*



*Latticino Cylinder from matched, pretwisted canes. John Croucher.*



*'Crystal Converter I'. Garry Nash. 190 mm x 220 mm.*



## CRAFT SHOPS

*Craft shops and their owners are the all important link between the craft maker and the craft buyer. Most shops are owner operated and embody the particular philosophy of their owner. In this new regular feature in NZ Crafts we will meet the owner operators of some of New Zealand's leading craft shops.*



Pamela Elliott, director in Compendium Gallery

## COMPENDIUM GALLERY – AUCKLAND

Pamela Elliott opened her new Compendium Gallery in September 1983. Immediately it was recognised by members of the craft community and the public as one of New Zealand's leading and innovative craft galleries. Philip Clarke met with Pamela Elliott to talk about Compendium Gallery.

**Q.** *After operating a successful craft gallery elsewhere in Devonport why did you move to this new site?*

**P.E.** We needed a bigger and new space in which to create a truly quality contemporary image.

**Q.** *When I came to the Sunbeam Glass Show last year which was the first show here I really was overwhelmed by the interior and especially the display furniture.*

**P.E.** Lee (Lee Elliott, Pamela's husband is a craft furniture maker and designer) designed and made the display units. We really wanted to get away from standard cubes and shelves which are flexible only to a certain point. Our units are triangular and all have storage space in them. They're on casters so we can make squares, hexagons and other shapes. The fur-

niture is quintessentially what the gallery is all about — contemporary, flexible and well made. We employed a carpenter for somethings but a lot of the work was done by Lee. It was a partnership between us.

**Q.** *I can't really imagine a more sympathetic environment for showing craft. Grey fabric covered walls, grey carpet and paintwork, exposed kauri ceiling and woodwork. Did you employ a designer to design the interior?*

**P.E.** We asked for advice from two or three people — either professional designers or those whose taste we admired and trusted. The ideas which emerged ranged from a very dramatic and extreme light and dark interior, to exposing every square inch of woodwork back to its natural state. After intense soul-searching and facing the practicality of exhibiting the very wide range of craft we have, we followed our intuition and a combination of both was achieved. Certainly, a professional designer was given a fairly free hand with logo and stationery design.

**Q.** *Do you think an attractive and exciting setting makes a difference to the public?*

**P.E.** Well obviously good work looks its best when it's displayed well, and it deserves the best setting I can offer. When craftspeople exhibit in Compendium they are being offered a large space, which is attractive, practical and commercially well-situated. As well, the two people involved give of their utmost to make an exhibition an aesthetic and commercial success. Both Lee and I have theatre, television and film experience so are aware of atmosphere, audience participation and "stage" ambience that an environment can achieve.

**Q.** *Is there ever a conflict between the two functions of gallery and shop?*

**P.E.** I don't, and don't want to operate two separate spaces for security reasons. I'm the only one who can help people whether they're looking at stock or an exhibition because I'm the one who has talked to all the craftspeople about their work, materials and methods.

**Q.** *What do you show in the gallery?*

**P.E.** We have a number of exhibitions each year. They aren't all blockbusters because there isn't enough high quality craft available to maintain that sort of programme. Our criteria is quality contemporary work and within that we show established people as well as trying to foster and encourage new people.

**Q.** *You've had two successful Wearable Art Shows.*

**P.E.** Yes. We've organised two exhibitions. It's such an exciting area . . . because it cuts across defined boundaries. We want to give this new area a regular annual focus. We're expecting a couple of overseas participants next year.

**Q.** *You organised the First of an Annual Craft Competition earlier this year with Alan Peters (Furnituremaker) as judge.*

**P.E.** Yes, I felt that if we were really trying to promote the finest contemporary craft being made in New Zealand, then the encouragement a competition stimulates would be one way of doing this. I decided to have the first one on Furniture and Cabinet-making because Alan Peters was coming to New Zealand, and I will always have an overseas judge. Alan Peters was marvellous. He spent three days looking at the work and deciding on a winner. Then at the opening, after the announcements, he gave a critique

to all the entrants of all the work exhibited. This provoked a real dialogue between him as a judge and all the entrants and amongst other woodworkers.

**Q.** *Who sponsored the competition and is it going to continue?*

**P.E.** We put up the prize money ourselves, there isn't a private sponsor. I believe that by offering an annual competition and prize we are positively contributing to raising the standard of craft made in the country.

**Q.** *What sort of response has the new gallery received from craftspeople?*

**P.E.** Well a couple of groups, including Sunbeam Glass who've got their second show coming up want a regular show here. That's nice. We're finding that we don't have to chase people up so much now. More people are coming to us, but I am constantly aware that due to lack of time and opportunity there are many whose work I would love to exhibit and haven't yet arranged to.

**Q.** *Very briefly what do you think are one or two of the more important issues facing craft retailers?*

**P.E.** One recent trend is craftspeople selling from home and undercutting their own retail priced work held in shops and the work the retailer has bought. Selling and displaying craft work well requires a lot of creativity. It really is a partnership between the craftspeople and the retailer. Both need to support the other. By selling wholesale to the public from their studios craftspeople are confusing their own retail market and damaging their relationships with retailers. I'm not talking about annual open days or selling seconds or selling a mug to the person down-the-road but people going to the craftspeople's studio for a cheap buy. A lot of craftspeople are realising how much productive time this sort of thing takes up and are saying that people coming to the door have to pay retail prices. It's been an issue for a while but a number of craftspeople just won't do it anymore because they find themselves and their retailer worse off.

The other issue is that old one of standards. I feel that as we have invested so much in establishing this outlet, the responsibility of submitting quality work for exhibitions and for sale in Galleries has got to be borne more by the craftspeople. Occasionally I have been let down and disappointed by the standard or number of works submitted.



## PENNY READ COLLECTIVE CULTURES

*at Compendium Gallery, Devonport*

“Penny believes that every piece of fabric has a history and therefore a future. She believes in the magic of sewing and creation . . . (she) works with fabric, plays with it, thinks about it, collects it, repairs it, recycles it and teaches some of the crafts associated with it, about sixty hours a week. To create a lifestyle as a craftspeople is never easy, for fabric and fibre artists it is extremely difficult.”

**Philip Clarke, PENNY READ, A LIFE BOUND UP IN FABRIC. NZ Crafts 9 1984**

“Art History views the art of the past from certain perspectives and organises art into categories and classifications based on a stratified system of values which leads to a hierarchy of art forms. In this hierarchy that arts of painting and sculpture enjoy an elevated status while other arts that adorn people, homes or utensils are relegated to a lesser cultural sphere under such terms as 'applied', 'decorative' or 'lesser' arts. This hierarchy is maintained by attributing to the decorative arts a lesser degree of intellectual effort or appeal and a greater concern with manual skill and dexterity.”

**R Parker & G Pollock, OLD MISTRESSES: WOMEN, ART & IDEOLOGY**

“For women, the arts most highly valued by male society have been closed to them for just that reason. They have put their creativity instead into needlework arts which exist in a fantastic variety wherever there are women and which are in fact a universal art form transcending race, class national borders.”

**Patricia Mainardi, QUILTS: THE GREAT AMERICAN ART Feminist Art Journal Winter 1973**

“Fabric Art can be useful, indeed it can be worn and still be totally within the realm of art.”

**Peter Selz, KNOTS AND BOLTS. Art in America Feb. 1982**

*Left: North African costume, made up of Somali and Kenyan Kikois and Kelim from Turkey.  
Centre: Bedouin, based on Bedouin marriage dress.  
Right: Himba Fertility dancing Skirt and Breastplate — Leather, Shells and Fishbones.  
Fertility Necklace around neck.*

It seemed a good idea before starting on this review to provide some of the context of ideas in which, and from which, I saw the show. No art is static; all art works gain meaning not from a one-way process in which the viewer grapples with the art work to discover the artists' intention from a posture of impossible neutrality, but rather from an interaction in which the viewer's perspectives, prejudices, experiences have a status in the ever shifting meaning the work can demonstrate. These works by Penny Read for me had the status of art works, in terms of the attitudes quoted, and from that point of recognition, the encounter was to do with my art historical perceptions meeting the products of a person consciously, and effectively, performing her craft.

It was clear from the start that the artist's attitude to her work and mine might not coincide very significantly. However there seems to me to be common ground at least in this area: a recognition that utility does not preclude artistry; a sense of the heritage of fabric and needle arts, and a recognition of the part played by those art forms in cultures other than our contemporary western one; and an assertion of the status of craft.

The show was packed with objects, and wideranging in the use of derivation of the objects displayed. It had a narrative dimension, a suggestion of travelling from one culture to another and recording that progress by the creation of artefacts. The costumes, masks, jewellery, kits and baskets, ritual objects, derived from cultural sources as far removed as Blackfoot



Red & White mask — Easter Island.  
Leather and cotton.

Indian, Australian Aboriginal, Bedouin, Eastern European, Japanese and Maori. However none were conceived as replicas: they were composites, a reaction to ethnic art, on a level the artist herself has described as 'sophisticated'.

This 'sophistication' is not an element which can be ignored. The works, in that they are not replicas but transformations, have a strength deriving from the artist's individuality, and the marriage of her sense of design and colour ('sophisticated') with the uses and appearances of ethnic art ('primitive').

But this sort of appropriation can be seen as insensitive, even commercial in other contexts; perhaps these accusations are anthropological rather than aesthetic, but no art that treads, however warily, where Gauguin, Picasso and other 'primitives' have trod can afford not to ask itself questions about the morality of such appropriations.

On the positive side, the show gave a clear impression of a sensitive reaction to the fabric/fibre based arts of the peoples Penny Read has encountered. Her works, besides this sensitivity, are beautifully executed and generally very striking, with imaginative combinations of 'found' materials and contemporary fabrics, fabrics made by artists of those cultures and fabrics made by the artist using traditional methods. The result is often an object which has both value and aesthetic appeal, as in the North African costume, containing handwoven Turkish fabric and cloth from Somaliland, or the Maori costume which includes in the bodice a 50 year old piece of woven cloth, or the East European peasant dress with its handmade lace.

This inclusion of fabric artefacts, as well as the meticulous, almost ceremonial care with which the clothes are made, makes it impossible to see them as costumes, in the popular sense, things to wear to a fancy dress party. I cannot see that the artist, with her attitude to fabric art, her sense of the history of the art as well as of the materials she uses, regards them in this way either, although it appears that the wearability of the costumes is an important element in her intentions. They do also have a sculptural element, especially as presented in the show, on stiff and stylised wooden figures, but all the objects in the show, with the exception of the masks, perhaps, retain a strong emphasis on utility. That utility may be

to do with adornment and decoration (the jewellery) as well as comfort (cushions and quilts) and transportation of things (kits and baskets), and it always co-exists with attention to the aesthetic appeal of the object being made. Penny Read does not however take this as far as, for example, the feminist artist Miriam Schapiro, in her art works based on the kimono. Read commented on her choice of this garment that it was 'the simplest wearable art form to make'; Miriam Schapiro on the other hand by using the kimono in works which retained the cultural references of that form of ceremonial dress while abandoning the utility or 'wearability' of the art, is heading in a different direction. While Penny Read has much in common with artists like Schapiro in the common desire to validate aspects of art materials and processes involving fabric. I do not see her as making political statements in her work. Her deliberate retention of the 'wearable' dimension, the useful aspect of her objects, and her firm and unapologetic alignment with craft confirms that. However in terms of the interaction of the art work with the viewer, there is at least by implication much to link this exhibition with the wider context of the women's art movement.

Penny Read is a magnificent member of the group called, by Griselda Pollock and Rosizka Parker, 'crafty women', and her work here makes it increasingly hard to relegate fabric art, and increasingly easy and pleasurable to recognise its richness and scope.

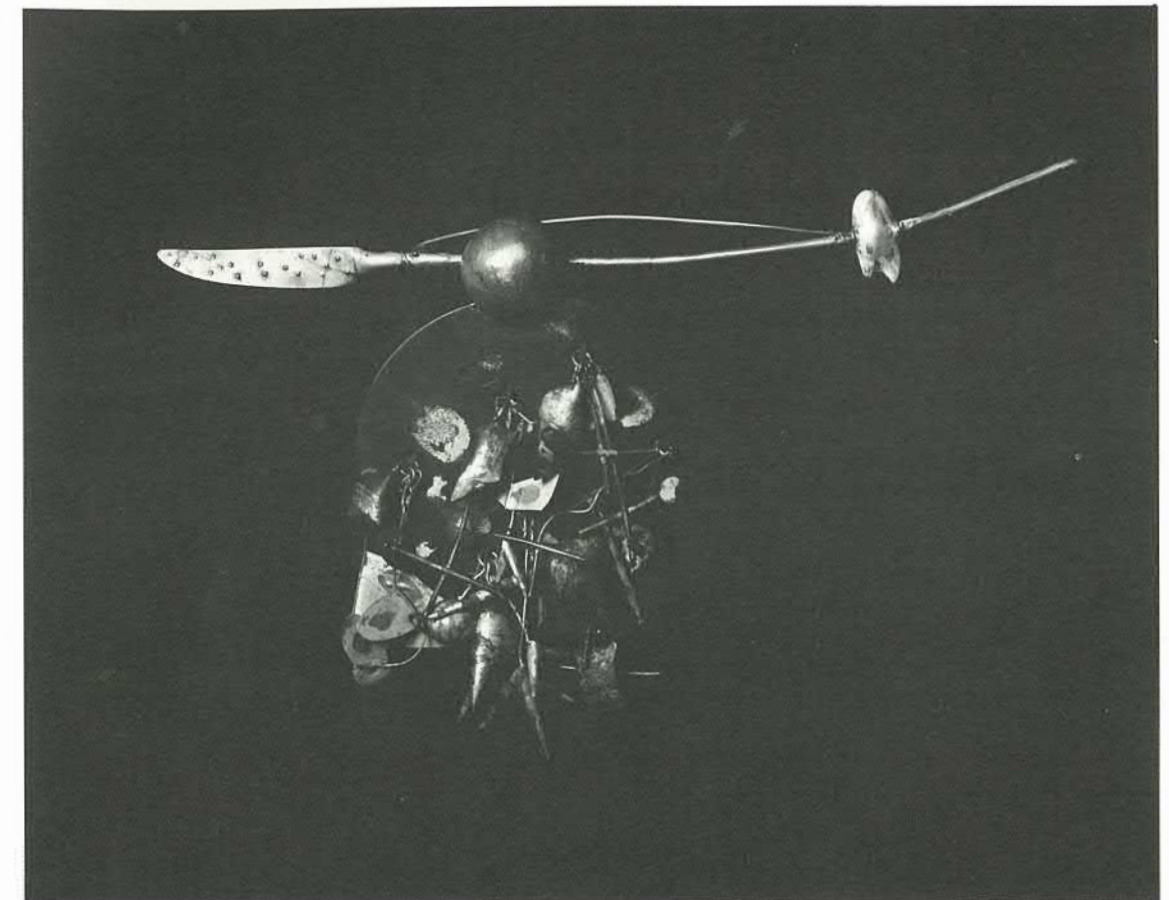
#### Cheryll Southeran



Brown, black and beige mask.

## REVIEW

# Contemporary German Jewellery



This is an exhibition of the work of 20 contemporary German jewellers. It was assembled to be exhibited in Japan as part of a German cultural exposition accompanying a trade fair. It is now being toured throughout New Zealand by the Goethe Institute in association with the NZ Art Gallery Directors Council.

The show represents a wide range of jewellers. Some are very experienced, being top names in jewellery and other are recently out of colleges. This work is very different from NZ jewellery. The immediate impression is of more subdued colours and a delicacy in appearance, in spite of the large size of many pieces. They appear to have been developed very directly from line drawings and negative space is as important as positive space. The influence of contemporary European painting and sculpture is very noticeable. There is also some borrowing of forms from machinery parts and other metal objects. Unlike NZ, ethnic art has only a small impact. Here, jewellery tends to be much bolder with less detail, designed in terms of mass rather than line, and with a closer relationship to the human body.

Most of the pieces in this exhibition are brooches, which is unusual by NZ standards. They seem to be more amenable to being made as art objects than are other types of jewellery. One person whose work particularly illustrates the line element is Georg Dobler. His brooches look like geometric drawings in coloured steel wire. These pieces have the largest dimensions in the show, though some just consist of a curved steel pin impaling several colour blocks. They are worn by the unusual device of inserting both pointed ends into the clothing.

Manfred Bischoff has a strong style of work. Virtually drawings translated directly into jewellery. They are lively doodles on cardboard, or in wire, worn as brooches.

The work of Anderl Kammermeier features on the very striking poster for the exhibition. His brooches have a primitive strength in spite of the almost excessive multiplicity of images involved.

Anderl Kammermeier 'Contemporary German Jewellery Exhibition'. Photographer: Brian Davis

They appear to owe something to expressionist painting, most consisting of many small mobile forms attached to one larger shape, the small objects massed like a miniature junk-treasure heap. There is also a similarity to the baroque American style of jewellery of the early seventies especially in the horned-skull fibula shaped pieces. The oxidized unpolished finish of these brooches illustrates something else about all this German work. There is no mechanical polishing. Pieces are left oxidized or are hand worked to give a soft matt appearance. The gold treated this way has an especially warm colour. There seems to be a reaction against the overly shiny surfaces in traditional work.

The very fine brooches of Wilhelm Reister are like small interestingly shaped canvases, the background of white oxidized silver with small patches of copper alloys laid in like paint. The use of inlaid and laminated metals is very characteristic of German work generally.

Eriko Nagai, a Japanese jeweller living in Germany, also has small canvases, two being oblong shapes in black steel, folded diagonally to form a V. These are inlaid with stripes of pure gold but using a quite different Japanese technique. Her style combines both German and Japanese elements.

A display of 22 obsessively two dimensional rings, all designed from the side, come from Norbert Muerrle. They are oblongs of thin sheet metal with geometric inclusions in a contrasting metal. This series works through a basic idea in a variety of metals and with slightly differing shapes. Some of the rings are intended to be worn in groups but they would be likely to lose any appeal when actually taken from the showcase and worn as they are reduced to a line when viewed from above.

Wilhelm Mattar uses the lens shape, which is popular in German work, only his small lenses are made from the laquered metal of coca cola cans. Coca cola metal is also used in his amazingly inventive ear jewellery, stretched around the ear rather than worn from the lobe. His pieces manage to look precious regardless of the material used. Mattar's work is an example of a recent trend overseas and in NZ. Not only is the preciousness of materials becoming irrelevant but also the exercise of skill. There is now a large number of overseas jewellers who have come through colleges, (in the case of the Germans serving apprenticeships beforehand) and worked for a number of years. They have reached a high level of skill and have no need to continuously prove themselves in this area.

One of the most interesting exhibitors for us is Gerhard Rothman. He shows fragments cast from different parts of a real hand. The position and part of hand chosen is important, the rosette of a curled fist and a thumb resting dreamily over a finger are the most satisfying shapes, with other hand positions having more symbolic content. These pieces are very simple in concept but less so in appearance as the lines and wrinkles, which are more obvious in the silver, give a very decorative texture. They are superficially similar to the work of Italian jeweller Bruno Martinazzi, who also made large finger pieces. In his case the finished product was very simple, smooth unlined fingers as perfect as machine parts. But the original concept of constructing them from the metal was not so simple. These objects of Rothman's are quite the opposite. Very organic in appearance, almost more so than a real hand they show the ornamental potential of the human body itself.

Another person with cast work is Gisela Seibert-Philippen, with four very large, strong pieces in gold and silver with diamond accents. She is fascinated by clothing; clothing in human form but eerily unoccupied. Ulrike Bahrs has done some excellent work in the past but her collection here is disjointed with little unity. Some work is Egyptian inspired and a couple of pieces continue her theme of threatened, enclosed people. An especially beautiful large brooch has a long conical shell set in gold and mounted by an ivory human head carved in low relief.

Marie Hassenplug has simple but integrated pieces with what appears to be a slight African influence. Her work and that of Wilhelm Buchert and Franz Josef Bette show a blend of modern and more traditional jewellery. Their work has a warm rounded appearance and they are more concerned with the wearability of their jewellery.

Much of the work in this exhibition could give the impression on first sight of being almost unwearable, but this is deceptive. It is more durable than it looks, especially as brooches receive little wear and tear. Total comfort should not be necessary for all jewellery when people are prepared to accept the discomfort and care necessary to wear items like high-heels, nylons and ties. A piece of jewellery which requires care in wearing can even make its owner feel special in the same way that fine clothing does.

This exhibition is certainly the most fascinating collection ever to be seen in NZ. It should not be missed by anyone interested in jewellery. The NZ Goethe Institute is to be commended for overcoming the difficulties involved in bringing the show to NZ.

**Eléna Gee**  
**Andrea Kimmel**

*The exhibition will be at Manawatu Art Gallery 11 December — 27 January  
Gisborne Museum and Art Gallery 5 — 24 February  
National Art Gallery 1 March — 28 April*

## NOTES

### CORPORATE MEMBERSHIP

The Crafts Council has recently implemented a Corporate Membership Scheme. We outline below the objectives, benefits and the workings of this scheme:

#### Objectives

- to develop an increasing awareness of the potential for and use of crafts in the enhancement of office space
- to open a new market for crafts thereby improving the financial position of members of the Crafts Council
- to improve the financial position of the Crafts Council and reduce dependence on New Zealand Lottery Board funding
- to educate Corporations about their responsibilities to another dimension of New Zealand society

#### Benefits to Crafts Council

- source of funding
- potential for closer working relationship with Corporations which could lead to sponsoring of exhibitions, increased advertising and other forms of assistance to the Crafts Council
- increased sales through the Crafts Council Gallery
- increased exposure to the Crafts Council and crafts in general

#### Benefits to Craftspeople

- source of income through loan fee
- increased market for presentation items and crafts for office interiors
- potential commissions
- exposure through publicity associated with the loan of works to Corporate Members

#### How it Works

- we will present a portfolio of selected work to potential Corporate Members considered suitable for placement in their Executive office space.
- they will be given the opportunity to select one major item (eg a large wall hanging) and one smaller item from the portfolio to be taken on loan. The Crafts Council will assist in the selection, with every possible effort being made to ensure that a suitable work is available.
- we will liaise with the craftspeople and arrange for transport, insurance and the placement of the work on the Corporate Member's premises. Assistance will be given to ensure that the work is properly displayed.
- each craft work will be on loan for a six month period.
- Corporate Members will be asked to display the name of the craftspeople together with an acknowledgement that the loan has been made possible through their (Corporate) Membership of the Crafts Council. The Council will provide an information sheet on each craftspeople.

Over the next few months the office will be approaching Craftspeople and seeking slides of suitable works from those who are interested in participating in the scheme, however, anyone who is particularly interested in forwarding slides of work they consider suitable should do so to the Information Officer.

### The Silversmiths Guild of Canterbury — Annual Exhibition

The Silversmiths Guild of Canterbury was formed two years ago in an effort to call together those craftspeople in the Canterbury area who worked with precious metal, gem stones and other related media to produce craft, jewellery and sculpture. Our aims are to promote technical skill in this area, to hold exhibitions and to generally enhance public awareness of contemporary jewellery and craft metalsmithing. Our group includes about 30 members living in and around Christchurch.

The Guild organises workshops regularly throughout the year. These are taken mostly by local members, but also include well-known N.Z. Metalsmiths from outside Christchurch, as well as foreign craftworkers such as Lysbeth Teding von Berkhout and Aya Nakayama. We have sponsored public slide lectures on contemporary jewellery. The latest of these was presented by Anthony Williams, coincidentally with his exhibition of gold and silver pieces of the CSA Gallery, both of which complemented each other beautifully.

We also make use of the Craft Council's slide collection to design meetings around viewing contemporary jewellery from other countries.

One of our major activities during the year is to present an Annual Exhibition. Last year we held a joint exhibition with the Woodworkers Guild of Canterbury and had a

record attendance by the public. I find it interesting that Christchurch tastes in jewellery items almost always tend to be conservative. Some of our members displayed exciting designs incorporating ceramics, fabric, exotic hardwoods, resin and shell, but these didn't appeal as much as conventional jewellery. It would be good to have an injection of cosmopolitan awareness of contemporary jewellery design in this city. Perhaps towards this end, we could arrange with Details members to have pieces displayed in Christchurch if exhibitions are travelling between Dunedin, Wellington and Auckland. We would happily pursue the arrangements if this idea got off the ground.

This year our Annual Exhibition was in the G.E.F.N. Craft Gallery, and it attracted much interest. It featured forged pieces, including hollow-ware, castings, constructed jewellery with turquoise, opals, agates and other minerals, hand-made chains, mokume pendants and pierced silver pieces. Some interesting pendants with polyester resin, carved greenstone and carved bone added colours to the exhibition, as did three large free-form silver pendants hung on silk.

A total of 120 pieces, submitted by nine Guild members, presented a wide variety of ideas and techniques. However, I feel that there is ample room for the kind of exploration that is evident with the full-time craft jewellers in Dunedin, Nelson, Wellington and Auckland.

**Larry Field**



*'Guild Workshop'*

## STRENGTH IN NUMBERS

Our Potters Co-op opened in August 1983.

It has been for me a learning experience — as various alternative skills have emerged from the 14 of us. Some are marvellous with balancing the books, others might prefer displaying, selling, printing. This pooling of talents seems to be the sum of a co-operative; plus most of us sell the bulk of our work through the shop now.

We have recently been granted seven day a week trading after not inconsiderable hassle and expense. A good lawyer before you open and not after is the lesson we learnt from that.

Our shop is near the Beehive and the Botanical Gardens but not in the mainstream of shopping. We are surrounded by restaurants, a few shops and restored cottages built about the turn of the century. Obliquely opposite is the old ex-Thorndon Post Office (now a dress shop) where I imagine Katherine Mansfield once posted her letters. For this reason, we feel the location to be 'rather special'. It means our weekends tend to be more lively than weekdays when strollers and sightseers abound.

Our window displays feature "The Potter of the Week" (one of us) or else a theme such as "Hot Stuff" for winter or "Flower Containers" for spring etc.

The main thrust of our work is in the useful domestic line but each of our members has a different approach and something that they excel at:

Beryl Buchanan — wide range of domestic ware  
Paul Winspear — dinner sets and large pots  
Judith White — whimsical plant containers  
Flora Christeller — salt-glaze crocks & plates  
Raeburn Laird — lustre ware and bright galactic platters  
Margaret Beckett — dainty handpinched porcelain  
Murray Clayton — champagne-shaped planters & classic bowls  
Craig Hall — brightly coloured related domestic ware  
Gwynne Bright — Fluid frogs and immaculate ovenware  
Jenny Shearer — Porcelain

tea-sets and apples  
Isobel Martin — decorative thrown and carved porcelain  
Julie Palmer — spice-trees and wine sets in stoneware  
Maureen Hunter — hand-built raku forms  
Mary Smith — sagger-fired vessels and teapots.

Jenny Shearer

The Potters Shop is situated in Tinakori Road, Thorndon, Wellington.

## Directory of Design Expertise;

Few companies employ on their staff all the design experts they need to develop new products or improve existing ones. Fewer still can keep pace with today's increasingly rapid developments in all fields of technology on the off chance that somewhere, somehow, a specific breakthrough will be of direct benefit to them. Often, designers struggle to solve an unexpected problem for themselves, not realising that a solution may already exist elsewhere — or, if not, that expert knowledge is available to them if they know where to look. To this end, the New Zealand Industrial Design Council will shortly be publishing a document similar to the Registry of Design Expertise produced by the British Design Council.

Anyone wishing to be included in this Directory should note the following information:

The first 2 1/2 centimetres allowing for a simple address statement will cost \$10, the next 5 centimetres \$10 per centimetre and any further amount at \$7.50 per centimetre. All advertisements must be in word form excepting company logos. They should advise the **N.Z. Industrial Design Council, Box 26282, Epsom, Auckland (ph: 607-855)** of their name and address and the Council will furnish them with a single company matrix sheet on which they can advise their expertise and their advertisement requirements.

## BOOK REVIEWS

**EARNING A LIVING IN THE VISUAL ARTS AND CRAFTS IN AUSTRALIA** James F. Stokes. Published

by Hale & Ironmonger \$14.95.

Earning a Living in the Visual Arts and Crafts in Australia is as relevant to New Zealand and as an introduction to the intricacies of establishing and maintaining a small business and earning your livelihood from your craft this book should be considered mandatory reading. It is a comprehensive and practical book written specifically for the crafts person and contains numerous detailed practical examples of the business management of individuals, co-operatives and groups.

The book is divided into four main sections:

**The Legal Framework** deals with contract law, forms of business organisation, business names and copyright. **The Financial Framework** explains accounting and record keeping, financial management, taxation, insurance and grants. **The Marketing Framework** discusses the difficulties of making a living from your craftwork, of costing, pricing and selling, commission and the craftsman/gallery relationship. The concluding section, **the Supporting Framework** deals with such problems as photographing your work, health hazards and getting help.

The author, James Stokes, is a lecturer in Arts Business and Business Studies at the Newcastle College of Advanced Education.

**Electric Kiln Pottery — The Complete Guide by Emmanuel Cooper** Published by Batsford \$40.45.

Emmanuel Cooper is one of Britain's leading potters and is a member of The Craftsmen Potters Association. He teaches ceramics at Middlesex Polytech and is co-editor of Ceramic Review. He is also the author of "Glazes for the Studio Potter", "The Potter's Book of Glaze Recipes" and "A History of World Pottery". All his own work is fired in an electric kiln.

Here is a book which I suspect will become the Bible of potters who choose to fire with electric kilns. Limited information has been available in the past — how many of us started with an electric kiln and after indifferent results fled to the

magic world of reduction firings with oil, gas or wood? And yet electric kilns are so convenient, so compact and cheap to run.

Almost all schools, many amateurs and a fair proportion of professionals now use electric kilns. They will welcome this treatment of the processes and aesthetic considerations needed to achieve work of the very highest standard. Chapters deal with many aspects of pottery making — understanding the kiln, philosophy on production wares and most importantly a wealth of material on glazing. This has always been the number one hitch with oxidation firings — no kiln magic! — all the work must be done before the pot ever reaches the kiln. Some good photographs both in colour and black and white illustrate the lovely effects that can be achieved. Lucie Rie, Val Barry, Elizabeth Fritsch, Richard Shaw to name but a few use this medium.

In NZ a lack of understanding about the interaction between clay body and glaze has caused a large number of unattractive yellow and porous clay bodies to come onto the market. How to get the richer roasted look is described. I felt the chapter on medium-range stoneware would be so useful to high schools and institutions teaching hobby potters; effects at this temperature (1200°C — 1240°C.) can be very colourful and a dramatic reduction of wear and tear on the kiln is apparent below 1250° Centigrade.

For those who still hanker after the elusive pinks and purples of reduced copper there is advice on how to achieve these unusual effects. It seems there has been much research done in this field and almost anything is possible in an electric kiln. I enjoyed the quote on the first page —

"I sing the body electric"  
"I sing the flame that grows" Walt Whitman.

If you haven't got this book already — I'd go out and get it.

Jenny Shearer

**CRAFT AUSTRALIA Year Book 1984**

An analytical overview of the influences, trends and

current developments across various media in the contemporary crafts movement in Australia. A first for Craft Australia, this large illustrated volume is divided into 12 sections each dealing with a particular medium with the text for each section written by an experienced and knowledgeable authority on the subject of; Studio Ceramics, Leatherwork, Glass, hot and flat, Book Arts, Paperwork, Fibre and Thread (covering weaving, embroidery, fibre sculpture, felting applique and tapestry) Fabric and Art Fashion (covering knitting, dyeing, batik, punting and clothing) Large-scale tapestries, Fine Woodcraft, Jewellery and Metalwork, Mixed-Media and Metal Sculpture.

**BRITISH CRAFT COUNCIL SURVEY Working in Crafts, 1983** 225 pp.

The British Crafts Council has published the results of a survey they commissioned in 1983 to investigate crafts in England and Wales. The research not only covers "Who is doing what" but explores the socio-economic conditions of crafts people, financial considerations and the character and adequacy of crafts training. It is well presented and clearly has relevance to the crafts community here. The quotes from crafts people are illuminating and closely echo those we hear from our members.

*All of the above publications are available for hire from the Resource Centre for a period of two weeks.*

The following books have all recently been reviewed in magazines and have received good reviews.

**A WEAVERS LIFE: Ethel Mairet 1872-1952 Margot Coatts Bath, U.K. Crafts Study Centre, 1983.**

A pioneer of modern craft Ethel Mairet had a very productive career; active in spinning, weaving and dyeing and made an important contribution to textile education in Britain. This book with colour illustrations is

considered to be a very readable account of her life and work.

**TWENTIETH-CENTURY EMBROIDERY IN GREAT BRITAIN 1940-1963 Constance Howard (Batsford £25)**

Constance Howard charts the development of embroidery in relation to changing social forces from rationing of the war years through the influence of the fifties to the acceptance of embroidery on a level with fine art in the early sixties over 150 photographs illustrate the changes from 1940-1963.

**FINE WOODWORKING DESIGN. Book Three, The Taunton Press \$US17.50.**

An excellent overview of mainly, American contemporary woodwork with 20,000 readers of Fine Woodworking magazine submitting for publication — one in forty were chosen. An essential reference book for the woodworker and an eye-opener for anyone about to furnish or accessorize their home.

*A copy of this book is available for loan from the Resource Library for a period of up to 2 weeks.*

**HAND TOOLS, THEIR WAYS AND WORKINGS by A.A. Watson. W.W. Norton & Co. \$US24.95**

A very good book for those who have no experience, want to learn how wood-working hand tools should be used, sharpened and kept in order. The book is illustrated by drawings (clearer than photographs).

**THE POTTER'S MANUAL by Kenneth Clark (Macdonald \$39.95)**

An excellent reference book for potters at all levels of competence being clearly and concisely written and illustrated; simple enough in its basic approach to the subject to be invaluable to beginners, yet full of detailed technical information to please the most experienced full-time potter. Good, also for anyone involved in the teaching of pottery.

**RARANGA WHAKAIRO: Maori Plaiting Patterns by Mick Pendergrast. Cormandel Press, 1984 \$29.**

A comprehensive study of raranga or Maori plaitwork. More than 200 patterns are drawn, classified and given their exact source. The drawings are so large, clear and accurate that they serve not only for theoretical scholars, but as patterns for those who wish to attempt or extend this art.

**FEATHERS AND FIBRE by Mick Pendergrast. Penguin \$18.95.**

The book follows an exhibition of the same name held at Rotorua Art Gallery in 1982. A comprehensive range of fibre items are illustrated in the form of a pictorial catalogue with each illustration indexed at the back of the book.

## ARTICLES

The following articles have appeared in journals recently received by the Resource Centre. These articles can be seen in the Resource Centre or copies can be obtained. Requests for copies should be accompanied by payment of 20 cents per page and a large stamped addressed envelope.

**BOOKBINDING Craft Australia Winter 1984/2, p 37-44**

An article by Edgar Mansfield on the creative artist/designer craftsman issue.

**STUDIO GLASS American Crafts.**

**Aug/Sept. 84 p 50-54**

An article on Maurice Heaton, design pioneer who introduced modern alternatives to the revival styles dominant in American decorative arts of the 1920's and 30's

**LACE American Crafts**

**Aug/Sept 84 p 35-40**

Several European exhibitions suggest there is a strong renewal of interest in lace.

**HANDWEAVING Fibre Forum Winter 1984 p 20 and 21.**

An article with Gudde Moller, talking about her work.

## CATALOGUES

The following new catalogues are available for loan. Borrowers are requested to return catalogues within 14 days of receiving them.

## JEWELLERY

**Contemporary Jewellery** A large glossy all colour catalogue featuring the work of 150 jewellers from twenty-two nations in Oceania, Europe, the Americas and Japan.

"Once upon a time the word "jewellery" referred simply to adornments of the human body using gem stones and precious metals and largely related to the history of costume.

Today, however, jewellery has internationally taken on another dimension. Though jewellery is still used most as a form of creative ornamentation, the artists involved now do not depend upon the use of rare, costly and beautiful gems and metals, but employ more familiar; mundane and modestly priced materials like iron, aluminium, plastics and paper. They also use titanium or electric components or "found" elements that are closer in feeling to the life our time."

## WOOD

### Bentwood

An informative introductory essay to the History of Bentwood and a shorter statement on Bentwood today prologize this catalogue for the Bentwood Exhibition at the Museum of Art Rhode Island School of Design. Photographs of work and statements by the 14 contributing craftsmen.

## TEXTILES

**Indigo Textiles. Japan — Laos — Nigeria**

The Catalogue of the above exhibition organised by the Crafts Council of New South Wales with three historical and informed essays on the cultural and social relevance of indigo to Japan, Laos and Nigeria.

"Each culture has its unique characteristics and diversities but significant cross-references can be observed such as the relative symbolic meanings and values of the indigo plant itself, of the colour blue, surface image and pattern, rites and ritual processes in preparation and making, and the cultural values associated with weaving and using the cloth."

## EVENTS



Autumn Garden  
41 x 32 inches  
M Spanjerdt

### EMBROIDERY

Marion Spanjerdt well-known Canadian applique and machine embroidery artist will be visiting New Zealand in April. Workshops covering fabric collage for the wall hangings or panels, applique and embroidery and machine, embroidery are being organised under the auspices of the Association of New Zealand Embroiderers Guilds.

Maorion studied full-time at the Royal Academy of Art & Design in the Netherlands and later pursued careers as both a dress designer and graphic designer. She now works on commissions of large hangings for public buildings, small hangings to celebrate life and teaches internationally.

Anyone interested in these workshops should contact Andrea Miller (09-4181638) in order that the Association might have an indication of numbers.

### Itinerary

13-14 April — Workshop Whangarei  
16-17 April — Workshop Auckland

18 April — Lecture in Waikato

25-28 April — Workshop and lecture Wellington  
4-5 May — Workshop Dunedin

6 May — Lecture Christchurch

### 2nd NATIONAL WOOD CONFERENCE — Living with Wood. Aug 31 — Sept 1&2 1985.

The Wood Conference Working Party are yet to publish a final itinerary; but proposals for topics covered are:—

#### (1) Crafting a Living with

- **Wood,**  
The Carvers  
The Turners  
The Sculptors  
The Furniture Makers  
Trends in Design and Development.

#### (2) Living with Wood Supply

- Various Timbers and Supply  
Timber Samples  
Health Factors and Wood.

#### (3) Making a Living with Wood.

- Estimating  
Marketing  
Galleries.

#### (4) Australasian Living with Wood.

- Need for national Wood Association. Need for Wood Craft Magazine.

We will publish further information as it comes to hand, alternatively direct communication can be made to South Australian Woodgroup, PO Box 191 Stepney, South Australia 5069.

### LACE EXHIBITION

For 1985 Mrs Betty Boulez-Cuykx, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Betonac Ltd, at Sint-Truiden (Belgium) has organised with the co-operation of the "World Crafts Council-Flanders" an international lace-competition "Lace as an Art" to promote the creation of lace-work as an original and independent work of art.

The planned competition is a new initiative to encourage lace-artists to put lace techniques at

the service of present day artistic expression.

The organisers believed that, if modern art refuses to accept restrictions of any kind, it is also free to impose severe discipline on itself. In a work of art the medium plays a secondary role: it is the content which is determining. This competition and exhibition aims at putting lace-techniques at the service of present-day expressions of art.

The organisers are looking for works of art that deliberately break with the traditional lace-design in order to reach an expression that uses lace-techniques in an automatic way.

The jury is composed of: Mr J Walgrave Critic of Arts — Antwerp; Mrs M Coppens, Curator of the Museums of Arts and History, Department "Lace" — Brussels; Mr L Raskin, Cultural Attache — Hasselt; Mr A Daniels — Artist — Oud Heverlee.

The pre-selection will be done on the basis of colour slides. The prize amounts to 50,000 BF. Besides, two consolidation prizes of 10,000 BF each are available.

The exhibition of the works selected by the jury will be held in the buildings of Betonac Ltd at Sint-Truiden, Hazzelsteeweg 172, from April 13th till 28th, 1985.

The competition is open to all lace-artists and lace-workers from Belgium and abroad.

The lace-creations have to be tissues designed and carried out by the competitor with thread on bobbins: bobbin-lace as it is called. Any other technique is excluded from the competition. Registration forms and competition rules can be obtained from Mrs B Boulez-Cuykx, N V Betonac, Hasselsteeweg 172, B 3800 Sint-Truiden (Belgium). Registrations are accepted until 31st January 1985.

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### World Crafts Council — Asian Regional Conference

Further details have been furnished and as mentioned in the newsletter it is hoped that a large New Zealand contingent will attend this conference.

Date: 20-25 August 1985

Place: Hotel Borabudur — Jakarta

Concurrent with the Conference, and a major focus for it, is planned an Exhibition entitled TEXTILES. It is intended that an international jury be appointed to judge this exhibition.

We will provide invitation-to-exhibition notices as they come to hand.

The Crafts Council of NZ has written to the Indonesian Crafts Council requesting a Programme of visits to Craftspeople, Museums, Galleries etc.

Meanwhile price of a charter excursion has been sought, and to date the best quote received is \$1,750; includes return airfare and medium standard accommodation for a 14 day excursion.

We are requiring an indication of numbers interested in attending this Conference. Please inform the Information Officer of your interest.

### Events

#### December 3-21

Christmas Collection, garments by Wellington Textile Artists. Batik, handweaving and dye-painting. Fibre Arts Co., Willis St, Wellington.

#### Dec 9-Jan 6

Weaving with a difference — Grace Rushton and Norma Wheeler. Compendium Gallery, 49 Victoria Road, Devonport, Auckland.

#### December 9-31

A Christmas Display — Pots of Ponsonby, 124 Ponsonby Road, Auckland.

#### Dec 11-Jan 27

German Jewellery, Manawatu Art Gallery, Palmerston North.

#### January 18-20

New Zealand Society Potters Convention. Herewith School Hawkes Bay.

#### January 20-February 10

New Zealand Society Potters 27th National Exhibition.

Hawkes Bay Art Gallery and Museum. Guest Potter Alan Peascod.

#### February 5-24

German Jewellery, Gisborne Museum and Art Centre.

#### March 24-April 12

Spirit & Skin — Pauline Swain, textile artist. Fibre Art Gallery, 155 Willis Street, Wellington.

#### April 24-27

'Create in Colour' Woolcrafts Festival, Hawkes Bay.

### Awards

#### March 19

Last receiving day for BNZ Art Award 1985 for Pottery Sculpture & Prints. NZ Academy of Fine Arts, Museum Building, Buckle Street, Wellington.

### International

#### May 20-24

2nd Australian Leather Conference, North Adelaide School of Art. Write to Mr I. White, P.O. Box 182, Stepney S.A. 5069.

#### June 11-16

4th Annual Pacific Friendship Fibre Arts Conference, Honolulu, Hawaii. Workshops, lectures, tours and exhibitions. For registration brochure write to Elaine Zinn, Director P77AE, 47-449 Ai'ai Place, Kaneohe, HI 967-44.

#### October 17-20

4th International Ceramics Symposium — Toronto. Contact address: 878 Yonge Street, Toronto, Ontario, M4W 2J1.

### Workshops

#### January 12-20

Len Castle & Peter Johnson — 7th Pottery School — Borland Lodge. Enquiries: Audrey Simmons, Heddon Bush, No.1 R.D., Winton. Tel. South Hilland 877.

#### January 16-21

Royce McGlashen Summer School. Send S.A.E. to Cob Cottage Pottery, 126 Ellis Street, Brightwater, Nelson,

for more information.

#### January 14-19

Moyra Elliott Summer School. Throwing, Finishing, Raw Pot Decorating.

#### January 21-25

Decorative Glazing and On Glaze Decoration. Auckland Studio Potters Centre, P.O. Box 13-195, Onehunga, Auckland 6, for more information.

#### Colour Workshops Canterbury

Four workshops are offered in Christchurch in January employing Chemical Dyes and using percentage and random dye techniques on yarns and fibres. Suitable for beginner and more advanced participants. Tutor: Maxine Lovegrove.

#### Workshops:

January 24 — Basic Workshop using percentage dyes. Cost \$40.00.

January 27 — Advanced Workshop using percentage dyes. Cost \$40.00.

January 25 & 26 — Fibre Reactive and Direct Dye Workshop. Cost \$78.00  
The above classes will be held at Hagley High School.

January 29 — Spinning Day to show how to spin fibres dyed in 3 into feature threads. Cost \$18.00 at Christchurch Guild Room.

Enquiries to: Jean Double, 42 Arlington Street, Christchurch, 5. Tel. (03) 584-758.

### CRAFT MARKET

A new classified advertising section. Minimum size 3cm, \$7.50.

Thereafter \$2.50 a column cm. Volume reduction for booking 3cm in five consecutive issues \$30. Thereafter \$2.00 a column cm.

Copy to be received one month prior to publication.

Advertising Editor  
New Zealand Crafts  
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### Craftspeople

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Crafts Council OF NEW ZEALAND (INC)

The Craft & Architecture Exhibition is to be held at the Auckland Museum again from March 23th April 14th 1985, to give craftspeople the opportunity to display craft suitable for architectural space, to those who commission and design public buildings.

It will be selected by a panel from slides and they would appreciate it if those

interested in submitting work would notify them by February 1st, 1985 and slides sent in by March 1st; to give time for work to be sent to Auckland by 18th March. The exhibition opens on Friday, March 22nd.

Contact: Fiona Thompson  
14 Waitati Place  
Avondale  
Auckland 7

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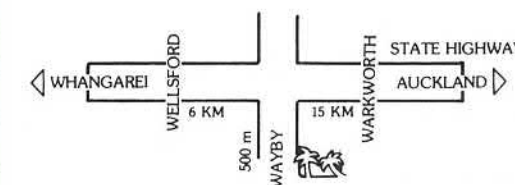
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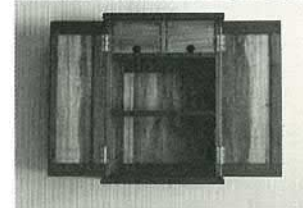
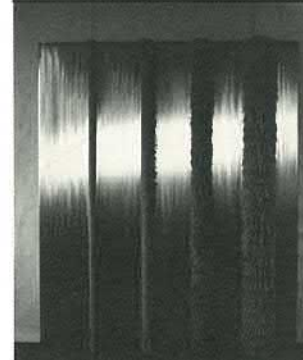
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## 1984 ARTS COUNCIL GRANTS



The 1984-85 Craft Grants to Individuals were announced in November. Acting as adjudication panel for the QEII Arts Council were Jenny Patrick, jeweller, Margery Blackman, weaver and Barry Brickell, potter. After 4 days of looking at slides, interviewing and visiting, the panel felt a very real frustration at the task they faced.

Quality of work is always the first consideration. This year the calibre of the applicants was high. The panel was faced with eliminating those they felt were valid contenders for a grant or cutting down individual amounts requested in order to share the cake further. In the end both methods were adopted but the panel was still left with the feeling that they had not been able to function as they wished.

In establishing their priorities the panel decided to assist those working to establish themselves rather than those who already had a solid reputation. In view of the lack of craft training facilities in NZ a high priority was given to those with a record of sharing their skills. A special priority was towards young people wishing to train full-time, as almost no tertiary education is available to young craftspeople in NZ.

Travel grants were, however, given to established craftspeople who, it was felt, had reached a stage in their career where overseas experience was necessary. In all three cases the grant allowed was a pale shadow of the amount requested.

**Top to bottom:**  
Necklace — Elena Gee  
Ceramic helmet — Moyra Elliott  
Wool & Steel II 1982 — Judy Wilson  
Ceramics — Katherine Sanderson  
Cupboard — Lee Elliott

### GRANTS

Fifty-two craftspeople applied for a total of \$266,500.00. There was \$60,000 available. This represented almost twice the number of applicants and well over twice the amount of money asked for last year.

### Full-Time Study

Four young applicants requested \$16,000  
Three applicants received \$9,000

Emma Foot — \$3,000 to work for one year with fabric artist Carole Davis

Phillipa Gee — \$3,000 to study jewellery at RMIT in Melbourne

Murray Hill — \$3,000 to work one year with hot glass artist, Tony Kuepfer.

### Travel

Five applicants requested \$39,360  
Three applicants received \$16,000

Paul Mason, mixed media artist — \$4,000 to establish markets in USA and visit galleries and workshops in Italy

Jane White, ceramic sculptor — \$5,000 for study in USA

Judy Wilson, fibre artist — \$7,000 for study in USA and Europe.

### Special Projects including time for creative development

Eight applicants requested \$37,500  
One applicant received \$5,000

Peter Lange, potter — \$5,000 towards time off from production work to develop creative ideas and present an exhibition.

### Workshop Development

Fifteen people requested \$72,000  
Five people received \$17,000

Carole Davis, fabric artist — \$3,000 to establish a workshop and teaching facility, with apprentice, in Artworks Foundry premises, Auckland.

Elena Gee, jeweller — \$4,000 towards establishing and equipping a workshop.

Lani Morris, fabric artist — \$3,000 towards establishing a workshop and teaching facility in Wellington

Colin Slade, woodworker — \$4,000 towards establishing a workshop and teaching facility in Akaroa

Julia van Helden, ceramic artist — \$3,000 towards establishing a painting/designing area

### Equipment

Twenty people requested \$102,000  
Four people received \$13,000

Lee Elliott, woodworker — \$4,000 towards machinery

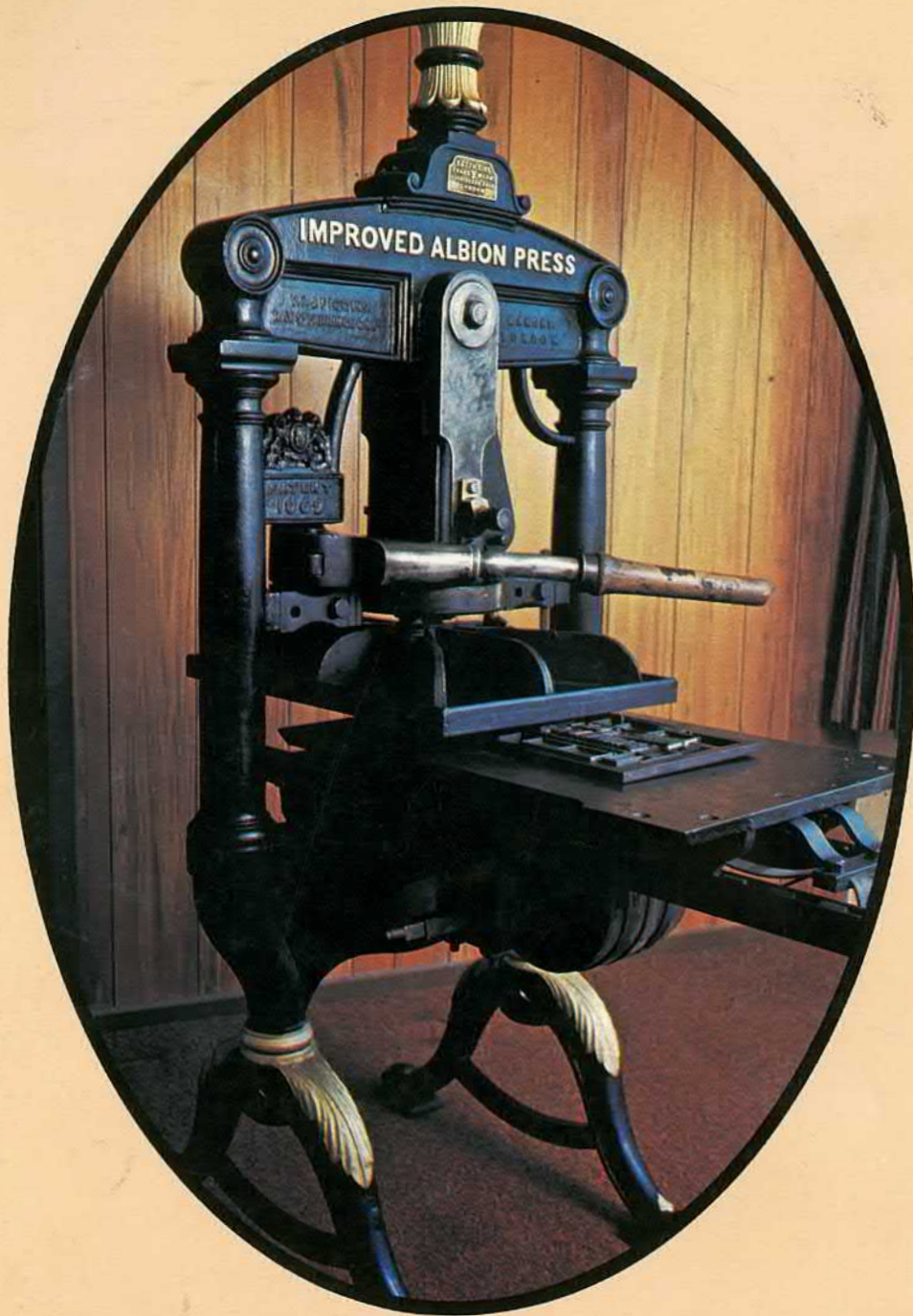
Moyra Elliot, potter — \$3,000 towards a kiln

Katherine Sanderson, potter — \$2,000 towards kiln conversion

Roland Seibertz, woodworker — \$4,000 towards machinery

### Jenny Patrick





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