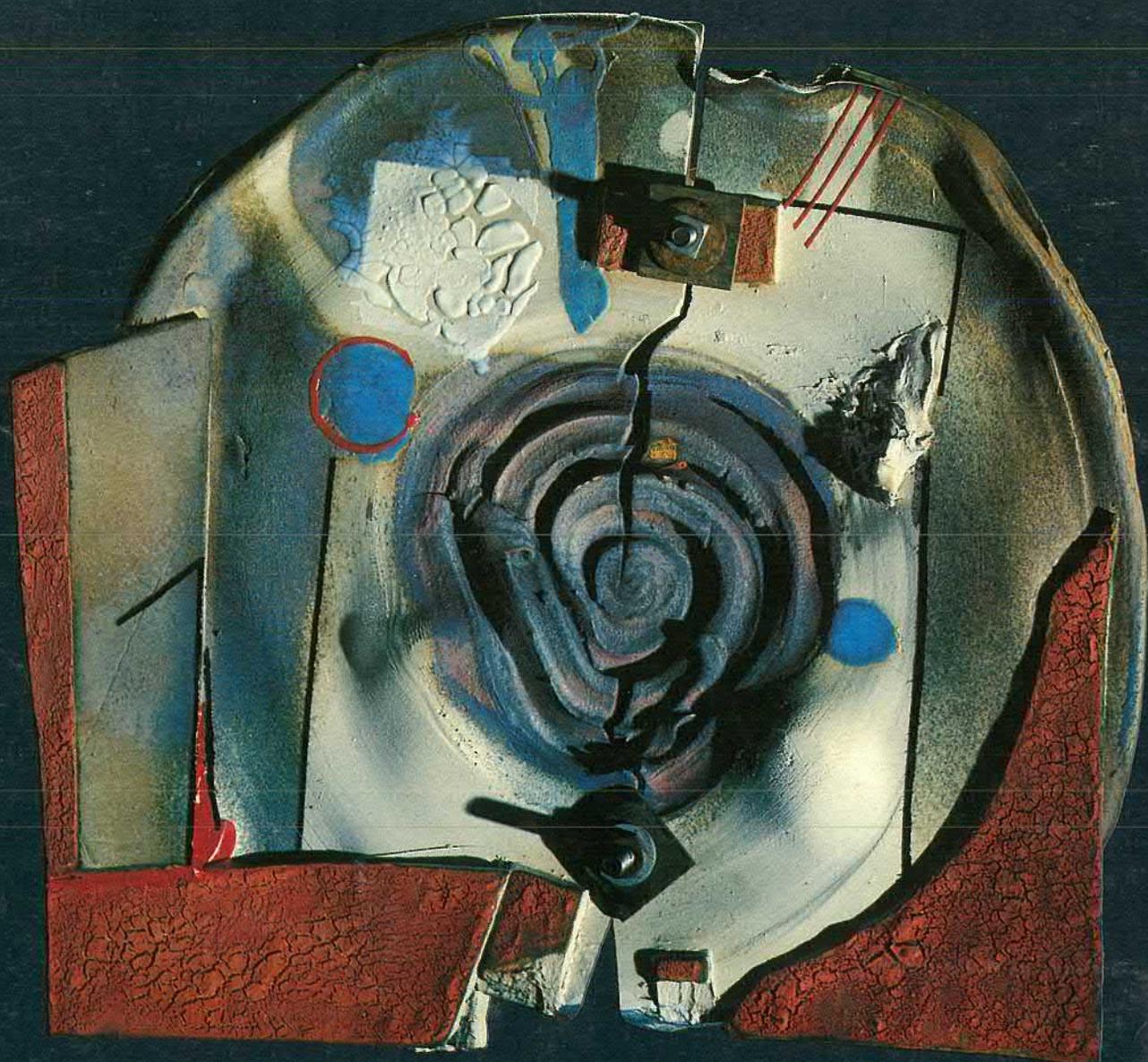
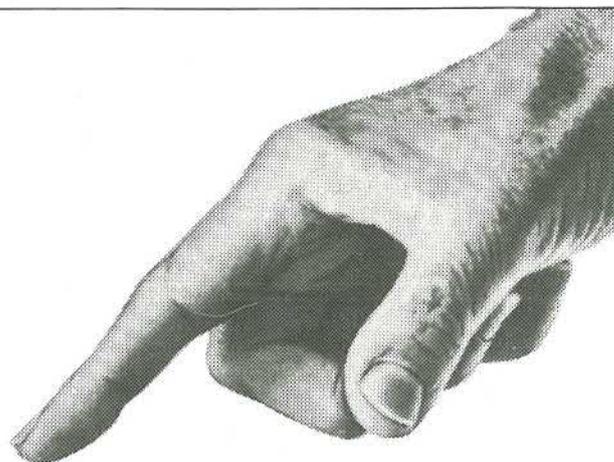


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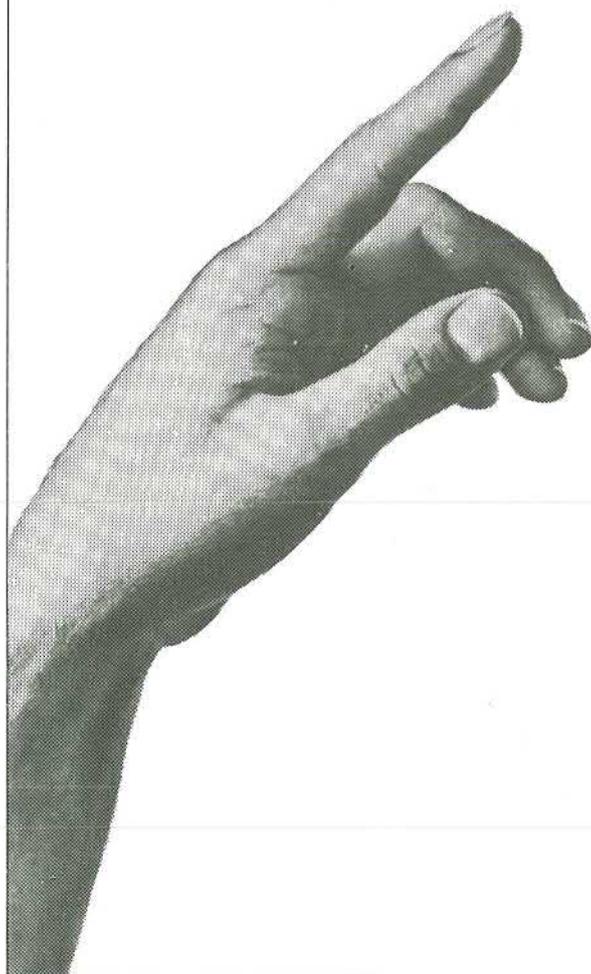
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NEW ZEALAND
Crafts

Craft Council Magazine No. 15 Spring 1985.

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Front Cover: Square Edge Plate Brian Gartside Mixed Media 430 x 450 x 80 From the "Winstone Ties that Bind" Photograph: Todd Crawford

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New Crafts Advisory Officer

The QEII Arts Council has recently appointed Edith Ryan as Advisory Officer for Crafts, replacing Catherine Lomas who has left for a position at the Auckland Museum.

Edith Ryan is already known to many craftspeople as co-director of the widely respected Villas Gallery in Wellington. Formerly a Senior Lecturer in Education at Hamilton Teachers' College, Edith has established a reputation over the years as an art connoisseur, and a friend of craftspeople.

If you wish to apply for funding in the craft area, consult the *Funding Guide* first. (Community Arts Councils and Regional Arts Councils, and the Crafts Council have them, also most Arts Institutions.) If you have any problems or queries contact Edith Ryan at the QEII Arts Council in Wellington. She will provide the answers!

Soapbox

As the co-owner of an exhibition gallery, I have given much thought to the notion of dealer galleries.

I would guess that in New Zealand there are more top notch craft artists than there are fine art artists. Yet, in Wellington for example, there are five dealer galleries handling the works of the best of New Zealand painters, and not one dealer gallery for craft. (Is there one in the country anywhere?)

I don't believe the craft workers will ever 'come of age', be completely professional, until their business is handled in a professional way by dealer galleries.

When one is an embryonic art worker, one needs to engage in swapping, house door sales, putting one's work up for sale in a craft shop to be displayed alongside all

standards of work.

However, as one achieves great skill, resulting in beauty of design, and a unique and clearly identifiable style and approach one needs to give up amateur behaviour and join the ranks of the professionals.

For those who have reached this level of performance it would be appropriate to approach a craft dealer gallery.

What would this entail? I suppose a contract between the gallery and the artist. A contract that committed both the gallery and the artist to each other.

The gallery would have the responsibility of promoting artists and their work, of arranging exhibitions, exposing their work to the public and explaining the processes involved. The dealer would hold stocks of its

exhibitors' work and should have a finger on the market pulse to obtain commissions and contracts for those represented.

The artists would be committed to the gallery. All their work would pass through their gallery. There would be no more grappling for sales, spending time promoting oneself and ones work, having work badly displayed or crammed up against mediocre items.

This partnership could only be rewarding for both — the artist relieved of the sales and promotion side could concentrate solely on creating works, while the gallery would expend energy on the support and promotion of a select group of excellent artisans.

All in all — a good idea?

Edith Ryan

Ida Lough

1903-1985

In our last magazine we featured Ida Lough as a pioneer in the development of weaving and crafts in New Zealand. She died just days before the magazine was published.

The article outlines her tremendous contribution to the New Zealand craft scene. Here, we would like to add a final note of love and respect from Crafts Council members and in particular the members of the Christchurch branch of the CCNZ.

Ida Lough was a founder member of the New Zealand Chapter of the World Crafts Council (forerunner of the CCNZ) and an Honorary Life Member of the Crafts Council of New Zealand.

We will sorely miss her.

Published below are excerpts from a letter to Frederika Ersten by Ida Lough, in which she outlines events in the early days of the New Zealand chapter of the World Crafts Council.

The Beginnings of the World Crafts Council

The WCC was founded in New York in 1964, at a meeting in Columbia University. It was the concept of Mrs Vanderbilt Webb, a woman of great vision, who had worked for 30 years for the recognition of the hand crafter as a national asset, especially in the poorer countries of South America, Africa and Asia. The hand crafter must be adequately rewarded for his best work, and not be forced to debase his standards through tourism's demands or economic conditions, said Mrs Vanderbilt Webb. Representatives of 46 nations present joined at that inaugural meeting.

Also present at that meeting was a New Zealander, Mrs Nan Berkeley of Wellington, then President of the N.Z. Potters' Society. She returned to New Zealand, called a meeting of craftsmen, explained the noble aims of the new world body, and immediately formed The N.Z. Chapter of World Crafts Council. The following officers were elected: President, Mrs Nan Berkeley; Secty., Miss E. Archdall; Committee, Lady Turner, Mrs Jenny Pain, Mrs Mae Hodge, Mr G.W. Tarrant and Mr Peter Janssen.

This was in 1965. Hundreds of handcrafters from up and down the country joined the newly-born WCC, and we were away. All our subs went in toto to New York H.Q. but later on Nan was permitted to hold back something for postages. Members received illustrated bulletins direct from New York.

Immediately we were launched into the international scene. We had scarcely joined up when we found ourselves involved in an exhibition in Germany. Nan collected the work of 18 handcrafters and sent it off to the "Internationales Kunsthandwerk 1966" exhibition in Stuttgart. There we were in the catalogue, among 30 other countries — 18 New Zealanders with 22 entires — pottery (stoneware and ceramics), weaving (including Taniko) in wool, raw silk, cotton, linen and flax; also jewellery; iron work; enamels and

embroidery. Each of us received, direct from Stuttgart, an acknowledgment, an illustrated catalogue and, at close of exhibition one of two things — a letter stating how one's work was being returned and by which company insured, *or* a cheque for work sold.

My entry, a small tapestry, was sold. Words cannot express my delight. Here was I, exhibiting for the very first time overseas, and someone in that great world had pounced on my piece and bought it! I was told the name of the buyer — Frau Doktor Erna? (How could I have forgotten her name, even after nearly 20 years?). I just loved this unknown person who had unwittingly launched me on the road to international fame as a tapestry weaver — or so I thought. Alas for unrealised hopes! At the time I would have done anything at all for my first overseas buyer.

(Liebe Frau Doktor Something, I thought, you need not have *bought* that pale tapestry of mine. I would have given it to you. The fact that you, in that beautiful city of Stuttgart, with 2000 years of art and culture in your genes, would even stop and look at my "Wintermorgen", 51cm x 51cm, of trees in Hagley Park, fog-bound and bleak with no bird singing, woven in Romney wool, handspun but not too well scoured because I had run out of that neutral detergent we buy from PGG — this thought fills me with delight. Shall I do you another tapestry, bigger and better than that one, with more trees and less fog — "Frühlingsmorgen" perhaps — made of wool properly washed with the real thing, mounted on a mahogany stick with a silken hanging cord, delivered to you by special courier who will hang it for you and depart with a smile, taking all wrappings and mess with him?) That was how I felt. No cloud was rosy enough, swift enough or bright enough to carry my affection to Frau Doktor Something . . .

LETTERS TO THE EDITORS

“Winstone Ties That Bind”

There is a multitude of situations in life that are, one way or another, unpleasant, few are entered into voluntarily. Judging and being judged, as in exhibitions, is one situation where we are able to exercise free will, to take part or not.

A decision to be involved carries a commitment to accept the outcome, hopefully learning from the experience and coming through with a positive change. Both for the judge and judged. An idealistic concept perhaps.

A judge should be able to impartially evaluate the works presented and make intelligent, critical, complementary remarks concerning each piece, both accepted and rejected. Also learning from the exposure to a variety of individual works, the influences crossing over from one to the other.

However, the recent judging of “Winstone Ties That Bind” by Marlise Staehelin has aroused considerable negative feeling through the NZ craft community, with many questions being asked.

The wisdom of the Crafts Council is also under suspicion because of their decision to import a European intellect into NZ to judge a culture that is as far from her understanding as our respective countries are geographically apart.

Did the Crafts Council possess any knowledge beforehand of this person's attitudes to the bi-cultural influences of our society, or are they as surprised as everyone else?

During a radio interview on Wellington's National station, Marlise talked about the centuries-old influences on artists in Switzerland then finished with the following comment. Quote . . . “There are probably more artists in Basel than all of NZ” . . . unquote. Of interest, Basel is a city in Switzerland with a population of approximately 500,000, roughly half that of Auckland. This opinion being formed after entering NZ only a few days beforehand.

Her strong aversion to work of Maori origin executed by Europeans obviously stems from an ignorance of our society. The interchange of cultural influences goes back over one and a half centuries. This is demonstrated by an

example found in the Rongopai Meeting House, Gisborne, where ancestors are illustrated on wall panels wearing European clothes etc, and we are all familiar with the influence of ethnic design found in the contemporary work we see today.

This ignorance of Marlise Staehelin is evident in the comment on the rejection slip returned to Alan Brown, “I do not understand this piece”. Although not covered in spirals and curls it nevertheless has ethnic content. Alan's sensitivity and quality of workmanship are of a high standard and need not be questioned. Comments here come back that it is an excellent sculpture. So presumably the ethnic flavour was the major factor in its exclusion. Or maybe it was the English sounding name in connection with a Maori influenced concept.

Owen Mapp and Doug Marsden, two bone and ivory carvers, had their work rejected. These two are extremely capable with their chosen medium, and ironically both received the same obtuse comment, “Though I'm Swiss I don't yodel”. Not a particularly constructive criticism, especially when translated it reads “If you are not Maori, don't carve Maori”. Brian Flintoff's piece, which was accepted, is an ingenious example of workmanship, a carved walnut which when opened reveals two small carvings contained inside, one being a 'leko.

Because of this ethnic influence this piece was displayed closed. The Maori shut off and hidden away! Thus depriving the viewer full appreciation of this work.

The comments from Marlise during an interview on Kaleidoscope concerning this piece admirably illustrates her attitude. After talking at some length about the walnut and its significance the interviewer asked:

Q. “Had this piece been carved by a Maori would it have been displayed open?”

A. “Maybe.”

Q. “Would it have won had a Maori carved it?”

A. “Perhaps.”

These are pretty ambiguous answers, and suggest she had knowledge prior to judging of each person's racial origins. Or at least an indication of such because as English as the name

Alan Brown sounds, the man himself has Maori ancestry.

Although in Owen and Doug's case the comment is definitely racial in its message.

How can the Crafts Council and City Art Gallery hope to present a balanced exhibition when the judge is influenced by the ethnic extraction of each participant? Is a judge not employed to judge a piece on its own merits rather than be concerned about the racial origins of its maker.

Were any pieces rejected because they were European influenced Maori art?

Worth noting at this point are inconsistencies in the judging pattern. If works were rejected because the maker is not of the race that the design source originates from, what of Steven Myhre's shell bracelet? It is an exceptional example of the Pacific Island practice of binding small, shell, money discs into bracelet form. When Marlise accepted this for the exhibition was she aware of where this type of work comes from or is it another example of her ignorance about this part of the world?

Another rejected work of high standard was returned with the comment “I cannot see the tie”. On this piece the tie was an abstract idea between the design elements of two separate pieces which together made up the whole. Perhaps the slightly Maori overtones made yet another work unacceptable.

Strangely, one of the winning works was made up of two separate, interlocking parts with no physical connection.

All judged shows are themselves judged by those who view them and the quality of such an exhibition is only a reflection of the person acting in authority as judge.

The “Winstone Ties That Bind” exhibition was advertised as a challenge to NZ artists, unfortunately this show displays very little that could be determined as NZ.

Donn Salt
Auckland

New Zealand Bi-Cultural Art versus Ethnic Art

According to the Concise Oxford Dictionary, *ethnic* is that pertaining to race; *ethnikos* — *ethnos* (Greek): nation, characteristic spirit of community, people or system.

European, also according to the C.O. Dictionary, is a native

of Europe, happening in, extending over.

Pakeha, according to H.W. Williams' Dictionary of the Maori Language, is a person of predominantly European descent and the meaning of the word **Maori**, though of recent origins (1850, Williams) is worth looking up, especially considering the physical mixing of blood in New Zealand (again, Williams Dictionary of Maori Language).

I am a New Zealander, born in this country. My ancestors have lived here for 140 years. Not only was I born here, I grew up with the influences of both Maori and Pakeha cultures around me, as well as the physical aspects of land, bush, architecture and elements. By chance, I don't have any Maori blood, though I do have relatives who, by chance, have Maori blood.

The conclusion I'm forced to accept is that I must be an Ethnic Pakeha of New Zealand. I certainly wasn't born in Europe and have felt a total foreigner when there.

My work involvement is carving and design and I draw from my background for inspiration. So, people recognize something in it as being of this place. This agrees with my own belief, as I know my influences are of this country and cultures. Elements I use are drawn from my surroundings — *koru*, *miha*, *manaia* and *taniwha*. These are developed to suit new concepts.

At different times my work has been exhibited, on request from Maori Artist groups and associations, presumably because we have something in common. At other times my work has been represented in New Zealand touring exhibitions overseas and again I conclude that this represents some ethnic image for New Zealand.

Ethnic Art by definition, must be that which pertains to those people born in their own land at any time past or present. I'm quite sure that contemporary carving being done in New Zealand now is of ethnic quality, no matter whether the carver has Maori or non-Maori blood or a mixture.

Recently I was rejected from the art show “Winstone Ties That Bind” on racial grounds, by a foreign judge, Marlise Staehelin, who was unfamiliar with New Zealand's ethnic background and bi-cultural

LETTERS

growth. She made the statement that anything "looking Maori" and made by a non-Maori was not selected. On my rejection slip is the comment, "Though I'm Swiss I don't yodel". The selection was by this one person, yet how could she know my racial background and that of others, without the help of the Wellington City Art Gallery. What right did any member of the W.C.A.G. have, to inform the judge, of details of the submitting exhibitor's race or colour? I strongly question the responsibility of the director Anne Philbin, in allowing this to happen.

At the opening of "Winstone Ties That Bind" one of the highly commended prizes went to a European who uses Maori weaving techniques in flax. Obviously before a person can judge what is ethnic, that person has to be able to recognise the physical ethnic images of that land first. In fact an ethnic bi-culture.

Ironically, if Staehelin had judged the carved box I submitted, in Europe, she may have found it to be of European Art Nouveau influence. Both Maori and Art Nouveau use similar design elements.

At a time when New Zealand is moving closer to a more balanced bi-cultural situation are we, Maori and Pakeha, going to tolerate this type of behaviour from judges, selectors and art gallery staff? Are artists not permitted to explore all aspects of their own country? Are we to look over our shoulders to check whether our influences are "permissible" before we put paint to canvas or tool to wood? Now that Maoris are working in the field of ceramics are we to make the statement "Sorry you are not accepted using clay, it's not of your ethnic background"? Are Pakeha potters going to be told "Sorry you can't use any Japanese ethnic content"? And when will New Zealand Museums start recognising that what is happening in the contemporary carving, of wood, jade, bone and ivory is not a separate movement but a natural, blended, continuation from pre-European New Zealand, to our present period by the mixed blood, bi-cultural, state of the New Zealand population.

Owen Mapp
Paraparamu

1985 New Zealand Craft Show

As a member of the Crafts Council of New Zealand, I'm not happy about the way Fiona Dunkley of "The 1985 New Zealand Craft Show" high handedly refunds your deposit on a stall after doing a Show. She said that my workmanship and stall wasn't up to "their" standard. That's fine, but they should back it up with constructive recommendations on what was wrong and how to improve! I have written to her stating this, but received no reply. What are their qualifications in the craft world?

I've worked seven years in flat glass using only lead for my lampshades, windows etc, not using any copperfoil. I've exhibited at the Auckland Museum twice, with the NZSAG of which I'm a member. I've also exhibited at many other shows.

I wonder if there were other reasons — because I wouldn't fill in their form on how much I sold in dollars and also the same in dollar terms for orders?

Raewyn Osborn
Auckland

New Zealand Crafts Magazine

I would like to say how much I am enjoying *New Zealand Crafts* in its present form. It seems to improve each time.

It is interesting to read about other craftspeople, telling the story of their work, their ideas and thoughts on their subject.

The photographs too, are good and clean which is most important.

Congratulations.

Ruth Coyle
Auckland
P.S. Please don't ever start using heavy black lines as in the English "Crafts" magazine!

Leather worker

Having just received my copy of the latest Crafts Council magazine I feel I must write and congratulate you and the Crafts Council of New Zealand on including the long awaited article on leather.

I have worked with leather in both functional and art forms for eleven years, always feeling an enigma, but carrying on, due to a great love of leather.

Four years ago I didn't know one leather worker in New Zealand.

Now I could travel the length of New Zealand and visit numerous fellow craftsmen and women.

Through the formation of the Association of New Zealand Leatherworkers and the driving force of James Bowman, leather has at long last arrived.

Sincere thanks.

Marie Potter
Takapuna

The Vernacular of Style

"No poet, no artists of any art, has his complete meaning alone. His significance, his appreciation is the appreciation of his relation to the dead poets and artists . . . What happens when a new work of art is created is something that happens simultaneously to all works of art which precede it. The existing monuments form an ideal order among themselves, which is modified by the introduction of the new (the really new) work of art among them . . . whoever has approved this idea of order . . . will not find it preposterous that the past should be altered by the present as much as the present is directed by the past. And the poet who is aware of this will be aware of great difficulties and responsibilities." T.S. Eliot, *Tradition and the Individual Talent*.

There is good cause for a moments pondering over some of Klaus Moje's ideas, especially views like: "An artist if he works true, is working just for himself, he never works for other people. He is the biggest egocentric in the whole world. If he has reached a point where he can satisfy his egocentricity, he is happy. So that reflects also my feeling about the style born in a country. I think there are a very low number of innovative artists, a very low number of artists who form the style, and possibly you must wait for this artist in this country who forms the style, who does get it through and then it possibly will continue. Coming back to this egocentric, what the artist is — if he does live that way and keeps true, then automatically there is a uniqueness in his work that can't be destroyed through international modernism or whatever — it is there. So it is a question of a strong personality." *NZ Crafts Winter 1985 p23*.

Surely we are not going to sit

back and wait for some kind of artistic messiah to appear and lead us to the light?

Mr Moje's line of thinking and what happened in architecture in the last 50 to 60 years makes for an interesting parallel. Three very "strong personalities" in the form of Walter Gropius, Le Corbusier, Mies van der Rohe, began designing factories and multi-storey housing blocks for workers in Europe around 1910-1920. These buildings were quite successful — they were innovative, functional and different.

Unfortunately this style was "pushed through" all the way, so much so that hardly anything else has appeared in architecture until the last decade. It is only now that people have begun to realize what can happen if a few really "big egocentrics" get together. The horrors of the Modern style, a style based on factory design, is really beginning to be felt in the large cities of Europe and America. There, whole sections of cities have become like war-zones. People don't like living their whole lives in "factories" — they have taken to vandalizing, smashing, graffiti painting, etc: revolting against a style of architecture developed by architects who "worked just for themselves, never for other people."

Hopefully we are not doomed to repeat the mistakes of others. Is egocentric art art at all?

A style isn't just born, it's a combination of many things — the times, the needs, the opportunities, as well as the artists themselves. It's like a conversation that's continually going on — a buzzing and humming — each one adds on a bit more and builds on from the last thing said.

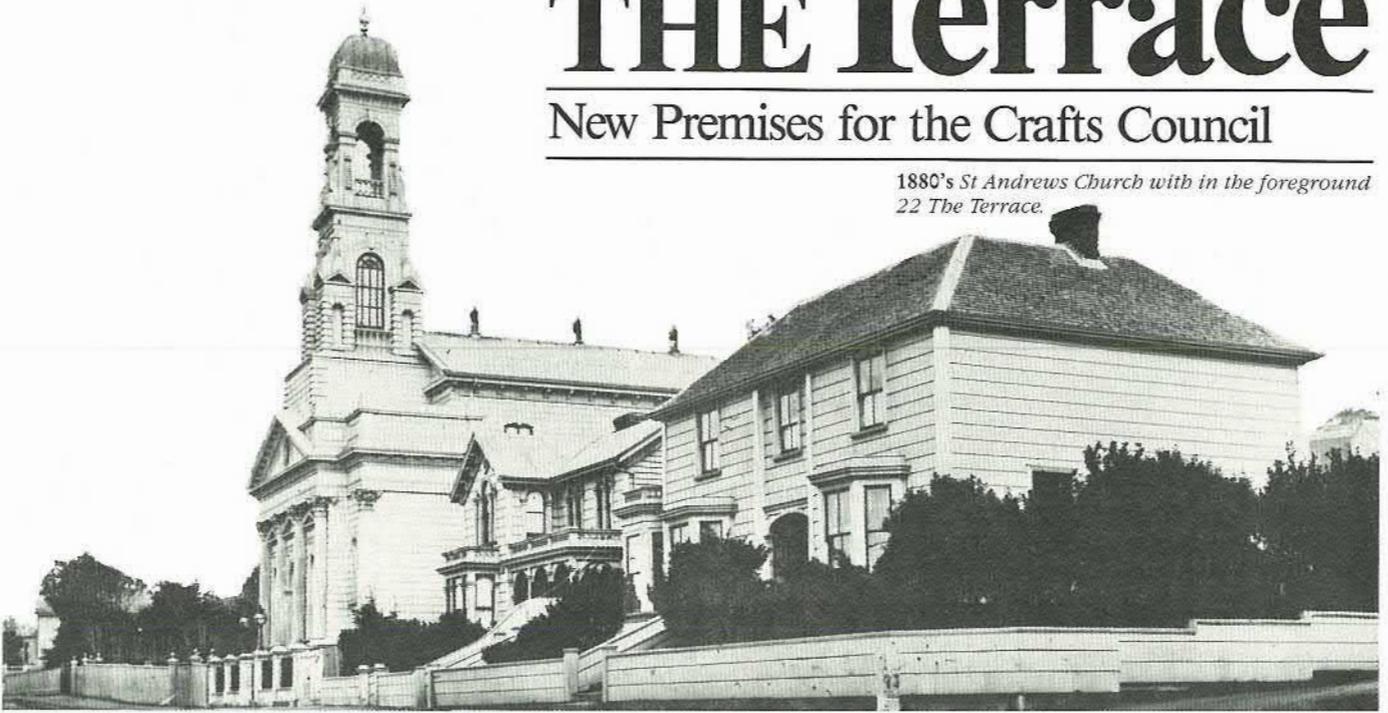
Klaus Moje's thoughts seen in this light begin to make sense.

"Each man's lifework is also a work in a series extending beyond him in either or both directions depending upon his position in the track he occupies . . . By this view, the great differences between artists are not so much those of talent as of entrance and position in sequence . . . talent itself is only a relatively common predisposition for visual order, without a wide range of differentiation. Times and opportunities differ more than the degree of talent." George Kubler, *The Shape of Time*

22 THE Terrace

New Premises for the Crafts Council

1880's St Andrews Church with in the foreground
22 The Terrace.



Vivienne White reports on the scoop of the decade

Photo courtesy Alexander Turnbull Library.

The Crafts Council's new home is to be found at the corner of Bolton Street and The Terrace. It is settled right in the heart of Wellington's business community. Apart from the high rise commercial buildings which line each side of The Terrace, Parliament Buildings, Treasury, The Reserve Bank and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs all lie at the Crafts Council's doorstep. Rising up directly behind the house is the office block of New Zealand Line. Together with its close neighbour, St Andrews on the Terrace, 22 The Terrace forms a pleasant oasis of calm amid big city hustle. It is the perfect place from which to introduce craft to the business community and to the many hundreds of people who walk along the Terrace every day.

The Crafts Council had found itself forced to seek new accommodation when it was advised in December 1984 that the rent on its James Cook Arcade premises had increased by 50%. This level of rent was deemed unsupportable, particularly as the James Cook Arcade site, being off ground level and tucked away from the main flow of passers-by and lunchtime shoppers, was far from the best possible position for a Gallery. So, the task of finding new premises began. Many different options were explored but it became increasingly obvious that the perfect solution to the Craft Council's accommodation problems lay at 22 The Terrace.

Obtaining the lease of the house was not to be a simple task, however. The Wellington City Council had granted a plot ratio bonus for the office tower which had been built at

the back of the site in return for the assurance that the historic house would be used as a public amenity. Not only, therefore, did the owners have to be convinced that the Crafts Council would be the most suitable tenant, so did the City Council. Competition to rent the house, with its considerable value as a historical landmark and its high public profile due to efforts to save it from demolition, was fierce. Early in 1985 the Wellington City Council turned down two other applications for the house on the grounds that they would not provide public amenities. One application was for a restaurant and the other was for the Royal New Zealand College of General Practitioners' Offices and Medical Museum.

Throughout this time the Crafts Council continued, undaunted, to lobby for use of the house. Letters were sent to the Mayor, Mr I W Lawrence, The City Planner, The Chairman of the Town Planning Committee, The Chairman of the Cultural Affairs Committee and a number of other city councillors, The Shipping Corporation (now New Zealand Line) and Shell Pensions Fund — owners of the building, the Property and Development Consultant for 22 The Terrace and many others. When no firm response to the Craft Council's proposal to lease the building was forthcoming the round of letter writing and discussions began again. Gradually people sat up and took notice, the Crafts Council's application was accepted by the owners and, on July 10, 1985, the Wellington City Council confirmed that the Craft

Council's proposed use of the historic house at 22 The Terrace fulfilled the obligation to use the building as a public amenity.

And why 22 The Terrace? To begin with, its history is fascinating. It was built in 1866 as the surgery and residence of Dr Leonard George Boor. While other houses which remain from this era are simple cottages, built on a small scale and "designed" by their owners, it is likely that an architect, C J Toxwood, was involved in the formal, classical design of 22 The Terrace. It was obviously designed to reflect the success and relative wealth of its owner. The house is Wellington's last remaining example of a townhouse designed to fulfil the needs of a professional colonial gentleman.

The house is important, architecturally, for two technical innovations. The first is the use of the wide, 12" rusticated weatherboards which enhance the classical design. This type of weatherboard is said to have been invented by C J Toxwood and it is possible that they were first used at 22 The Terrace. The second innovation is the use of large windows with sashes divided into two instead of six panes.

Dr Boor was the first of four doctors to live in the house. Having been used as a doctor's residence for 64 years the building was sold in 1930, to be turned into a private hotel. Due to the effects of the depression this never eventuated. 1977 saw the threatened destruction of the house when the Christian Science Church, which had purchased the building in 1941, sought to demolish it or have it moved. A committee was set up to save the house and soon the strength of public opinion, combined with the efforts of the Historic Places Trust, caused the Church Board of Trustees to review the situation.

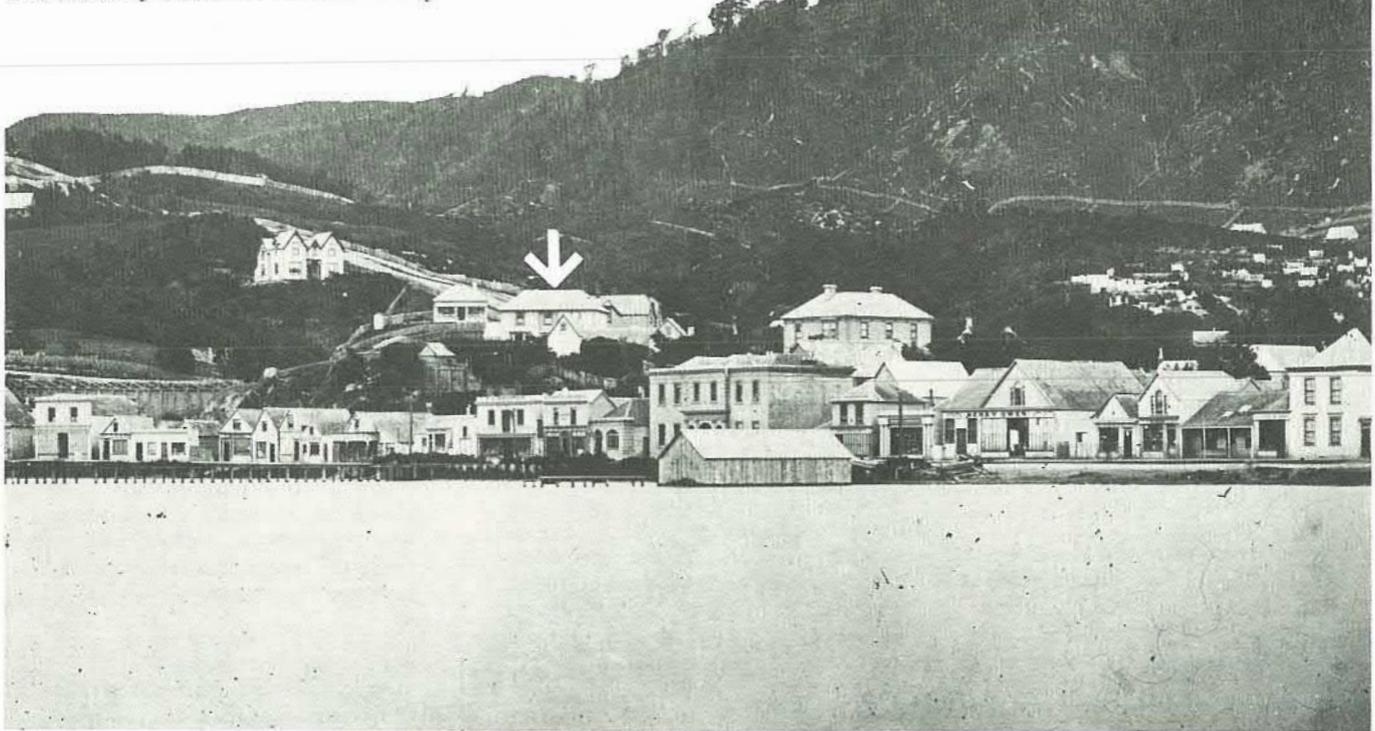
In December 1980 Fletcher Development and Construction Ltd purchased the property, so finally saving the house from destruction. It was then that the Wellington City Council allowed an office block to be built provided the house was retained for use as a public amenity.

Throughout its varied history the essential character of the house has remained intact. Minor changes have not detracted from the original design. The house has become, over the years, an important and well known part of Wellington's townscape. It was the subject of considerable publicity

Lambton Quay 1868

Below arrow: 22 The Terrace.

Photo courtesy: Alexander Turnbull Library



during the days when a committee, headed by the Rev. John Murray of St Andrews on The Terrace and Wellington architect, Mr Alastair Scott-Mitchell, was set up to fight against its demolition and this publicity has been revived as applications have been made to lease the building. This has resulted in increased news coverage for the Crafts Council. Moving to 22 The Terrace has already assisted the Crafts Council in placing its name before a far wider audience.

The house lends itself graciously to use as a Gallery. A gallery designer was employed to custom design the interior and to ensure that maximum benefit was derived from the classical exterior of the building. The large windows form a perfect setting for the display of crafts. Viewed from The Terrace, these windows beckon to all who pass by, tempting them to pause a moment, to enter and see what is within. Within doors the visitor will find a spacious ground floor, divided into a foyer, in which are displayed large, visually arresting craft-works, and two galleries. Major exhibitions will continue to be held in the main Gallery. The opening exhibition is Showcase II in which the finest of New Zealand crafts are brought together to enable the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to select craft works for overseas embassies and ambassadorial residences. The smaller Gallery will be used to highlight the works of one craftsman per month. Both Galleries are open during the week and at weekends to ensure that everyone, locals and visitors, has the opportunity to visit the Gallery. Public access is also available at all times to the Resource Centre, situated upstairs with the Crafts Council offices.

It is hoped that at 22 The Terrace the Crafts Council has found a permanent home. Certainly it seems hard to imagine a finer setting for the Crafts Council offices and galleries than this house which combines historical importance, an appealing exterior and a high public profile with the loveliest of interiors, custom designed for the display of crafts.

An article detailing the Crafts Council's use of 22 The Terrace will be featured in the next magazine. □

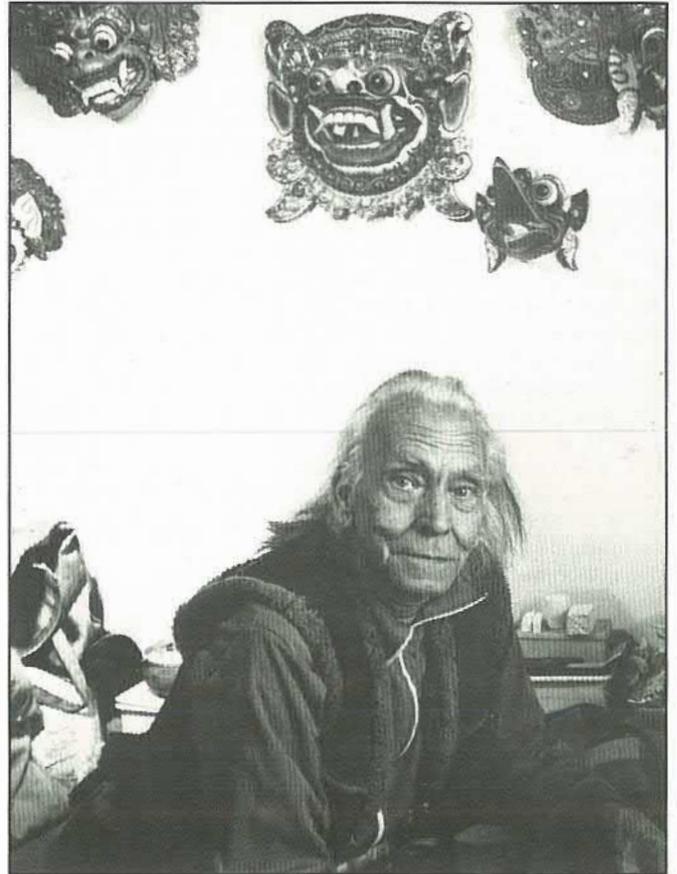
CRAFT PIONEERS

We continue our series on those who made significant contributions to the development of New Zealand crafts. Theo Schoon had a seminal influence in many fields: Maori design and rock drawings, jade carving, growing and carving gourds and ceramics.

Theo Schoon

1915-1985

Gerhard Rosenberg and Helen Mason write about this important craft pioneer



Photograph: Jill Carlyle

On 14 July 1985, the year of the multi-million dollar New Zealand art auctions, Theo Schoon died in Sydney in the Prince of Wales public hospital in Randwick, where he was taken from the boardinghouse across the road, in which he had to share a room with another old man. This was the lonely end of his second attempt, begun in March 1985, to make a new life in Australia. He had come back to New Zealand in 1982 after a first long spell overseas, an absence of over ten years. At that time Peter Waaka wrote an article in the Listener (31 July 1982) under the title THE GRAND PATTERN OF LIFE. It was the time of an exhibition of some of Theo Schoon's work in the Rotorua Art Gallery. Peter Waaka said that while Theo Schoon's name may not be familiar to the general public, his influence, particularly on Maori art, had been considerable, and that his role as an instigator and educator had given direction to many artists. He ended his article with the prediction that Theo Schoon had a lot more to offer New Zealand.

Now that his life has come to its lonely end, we are left to unravel its Grand Pattern, tangled and warped as it may have been.

These are Theo Schoon's own words which describe his endeavours, (from his book on greenstone JADE COUNTRY, p.96):

"to meet another culture, on its own ground with adequate understanding, a warm heart and sympathetic hands."

Even in his last years in New Zealand from 1982 to 1985, and dogged by obstacles — often of his own making — and by the ill-health not unconnected with his heavy smoking, he still had many diverse things to contribute: the Kaleidoscope programme directed by Kathy Findley on the Waiotapu thermal region, talks to on the YA Maori Radio broadcast (of which tapes should still be available), the germination and cultivation of Peruvian gourd seeds, of a species known to the Incas, a mural for

the Rotorua Post Office, and a set of carved stamps which he developed in collaboration with the potter Len Castle. In 1985 he had to go and live in a home for old people, because he was no longer able to look after the daily chores of living, and he sorely resented the restrictions common to such places, even the best of them. The last straw was that the Australian pension which he received was going to be stopped, unless he returned to Australia. Presumably the New Zealand superannuation was even less. The escape seemed to have been successful to start with. In a letter from Sydney he wrote:

"I am living with a French-Canadian writer I have known a long time who lives close to the centre of the city. It is a set-up where I can function again."

For a while he enjoyed the cosmopolitan atmosphere of Sydney: better books, magazines, delicatessens,

information and interesting people — but when he fell out with the Canadian, his last refuge became the boardinghouse in Randwick, and death.

Theo's passion for "meeting another culture on its own ground — not on European ground" was linked to his own life history. His family came to New Zealand in 1939, when he was 25, from Indonesia, after the Dutch rule in Java had ended. He had been greatly influenced by two schools: the school in Java and spells of life in Bali, and the Dutch Academy of Fine Arts in Holland, where his father sent him as a young man. His father was trained as an architect, but became an official in the prison service in the Dutch Colonial administration. There was not much love lost between father and son, but both shared a belief in 'thorough' education. In Holland he was not only taught to paint 'properly', i.e. in the manner of the old masters, but he was also exposed to the influence of the spirited German BAUHAUS movement including their dedication to genuine craftsmanship.

Every artist's training in the Bauhaus included a proper trade apprenticeship. Where others might be content with becoming skilled in one craft, Theo apprenticed himself with equal singlemindedness to one craft after another, for many years. He was a professional photographer during the war years; he was a print-maker — working with Kes Hos among others. He was a skilled potter, contributing even in his last years to the state of the art. He taught himself to carve greenstone and wrote a book on it. He learnt how to grow and incise gourds, studied and discovered the system of Maori decorative patterns, and extended his study to the art of facial tattooing; moko. He learnt the essence of Balinese art; dancing and costume, masks and music, and he believed from his expertise in Balinese art that a mutual knowledge of Balinese and Maori artists and art would be of great value to both of them. "Meeting another culture on its own ground" linked the areas where he really felt at home: modern cosmopolitan art, Maori art, Balinese art. He tried to bring this message to the New Zealand scene, which he found much less responsive than the Australian set-up, although he had many good friends here. However, it may be that we are less guilty than he made us feel, because he admitted that he "quite liked being a cantankerous old bastard," with all his enthusiasms and rages.

He remained poor but free, by working at badly paid menial jobs, such as living in the single men's camp and working at Waipa Saw Mill. Opportunities for more congenial work seemed within reach from time to time,

such as the Hamilton Waikato Arts Centre, where Whetu Tirikatene-Sullivan asked him to apply. They never materialised.

Theo Schoon spent ten years of field work exploring and recording New Zealand Maori rock drawings. He literally went to ground, camping in caves or in the open, drawing and photographing work that had not been accessible before. The academic ethnologists were horrified at his artistic licence in making the original designs visible and understandable so that they could be photographed, but the result is that these cave drawings became an inspiration to many New Zealand artists. It took him:

"three years and fifty paintings, to produce visible evidence that the Maori design tradition, far from being obsolete, could be the very source for a rich and contemporary art."
(From a letter by Theo Schoon to the N.Z. Herald, June 1955)

In the study of Balinese and Maori folk art he discovered the very abstract elements of design which were the basis of the Bauhaus tradition in the crafts, especially in textiles design, typography, and industrial design, and, lastly but importantly, in architecture.

He found these qualities in his approach to the volcanic phenomena in the Rotorua area, especially in the mud pools of Waioatapu. He used the camera to serve his artistic eye. In a personal letter he wrote:

"I demanded that every shot should be equivalent to a work of art. On a more prosaic level it can also be regarded as a documentation of what heat, steam, mineral chemicals and the weather have fashioned. It has an uncanny resemblance to very good modern abstract paintings. As a painter and designer I know what is good or what is really special. I found this particularly amusing whenever I thought of the uneasiness and discomfort of New Zealanders in the presence of abstract art. Here at least they can't splutter and waffle' nature is a modern artist."

Le Corbusier, the architect, describes the abstract element in architecture as

"a thought which reveals itself without word or sound, but solely by the means of shapes which stand in a certain relationship to one another. These shapes are such that they are clearly revealed in light. The relationships between them have not necessarily anything to do with what is practical or descriptive. They are mathematical creations of the mind. They are the language of architecture." (Towards a New Architecture)

Again, quoting from one of Theo's letters:

"You shift something, suddenly: a design."

A great joy floods through him, an understanding of the abstract language of art.

The experience of the contemporary European design movement convinced Theo Schoon that

"the unprejudiced designer emerges with a deep respect for the achievements of many primitive art forms, and is invariably inspired by them" (from JADE COUNTRY)

Growing acquaintance with Maori work and Maori artists bore out his belief that

"(The Maori's) skill was such as to class him among the world's artists. These designs seem to me to contain a mine of wealth for the modern student."

"The more I have learnt from Maori art, the more I have become convinced of its importance, viability and potential in New Zealand's contemporary art."

"The sophisticated Maori artist of the future will regard his heritage in a new light and will see its potential quite clearly."

Roger Duff wrote a report on Theo Schoon's work on the koru design in Arts Yearbook No.6/1950, which explains the artistic use of the positive-negative design tension between drawing and ground, the koru emerging as the negative ground between black spirals, all part of figures of magical significance. Theo had spent six years exploring such designs, mostly in cave drawings. Others — Denis Knight-Turner and Gordon Walters among the most prominent — took a great interest in this work. His friendship with Pine Taiapa of Tikitiki, who was one of the last carvers of gourds, was part of Theo Schoon's initiation into the system of Maori designs on convex surfaces:

"The moment I realised that they were tattoo patterns, every scrap, every broken fragment (of gourds) became of importance, and from these grew the desire to restore patterns of full splendour on to a perfect gourd."

The pioneering work on Maori tattoo designs was done by Major General Robley in the 1890s, but Robley only recorded the patterns, whereas Schoon discovered the rule underlying the patterns both of facial tattoo (or moko), and of any other convex surface designs, so that he could himself develop new designs arising from the Maori tradition.



Watery Wobble. Theo Schoon '64

"Watery Wobble" Indian ink 1964

He achieved the same independence of design in greenstone, based on the discovery of the design principles of the Maori artifacts which he studied. When he worked in a greenstone factory in Hokitika he wrote: "I lay designs as a prize hen lays eggs." For a while he was jubilant, because he could see a way of lifting the entire greenstone industry out of the doldrums of repetitively mediocre design, and the waste of a unique resource.

Then he was told by the management that "he was paid to *produce* carvings, not to design them", and that, if he wanted to design them, he should do so in his own time and at his own expense.

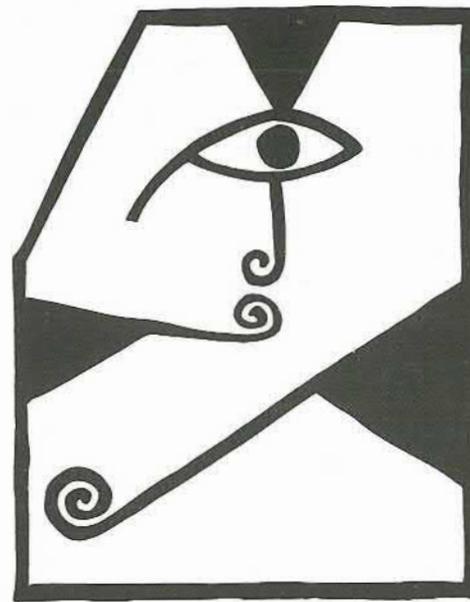
Just at this point when he was threatened by a future of "dead and repetitive craftsmanship" which had overwhelmed so many of his Maori friends, Theo Schoon decided to leave New Zealand after 30 years of intense involvement. He had found much comfort in his friendship with some Maori people, who understood and appreciated his work and personality. Some were even able to pay appropriately for his work. In a letter he wrote:

"I have made a new friend, a prominent Maori woman, elderly, who has purchased my work at a staggering rate, many hundreds of dollars worth ... I made her a special mere which was good enough to be given an ancestor's name, and I am very proud of it." (From Hokitika).

At that time he also received news of a grant from the Arts Council for a journey to Hong Kong, Tokyo and Taiwan to study jade carvings. As was to

be expected, he did not stick strictly to the schedule laid down for him by the Council, and incurred official displeasure, although he certainly studied the methods of Chinese and Japanese carvers and the wide variety of jade which they used. Theo Schoon had always advocated the use of many types of nephrite jade which were not strictly of the accepted greenstone variety. He found a publisher, in Australia, for his notes on greenstone carving and his many excellent photographs made in his time on the West Coast, in Hokitika, but this remained his only book. He never published the bulk of his Waitapu studies of volcanic phenomena.

He could not accept the reasons for the puny payments made by the Ministry of Works for the use of some of his finest photographs, which were blown up into huge transparencies to be displayed in the New Zealand pavilion at the International Trade Fair in Osaka, Japan. His photos remain mostly unpublished. It is the potential loss of this unique collection of slides — which have even at the commercial level great significance for New Zealand — that ought to have been a good reason to retain Theo Schoon by a more generous attitude of the Arts Council and the government — down to the Tourist Department. In fact, it would not have come amiss if he had been named in one of the Queen's Honours Lists and been given the sort of help that Denis Glover and other older and impoverished citizens of distinction had received. Peter Waaka's opinion that Theo Schoon had still much to offer New Zealand was certainly borne out by the work he had done in his last New Zealand years, and he might have lived a lot longer, having regained much of his



"The eye" Lincout 1961. Photographs: Rotorua Art Gallery.

physical strength with good care in the home in Mangere where he had been placed. What he needed was freedom and space, in a modest measure, additional to the standard provisions for old people who are past being able to look after themselves. We are the poorer, as a nation, for not providing this modest additional measure of support to old artists.

It is impossible to do justice to Theo Schoon's many-faceted life, work and character in a short essay. His enormous letter-writing work alone deserves to be recorded, not the least because of his great talent for invective. He was certainly a stropky individual. "T" was a grievous fault, and grievously has Caesar answered it." The official establishment had never forgiven him that he had 'interfered' with some of the Maori cave drawings which he reproduced or photographed away back in the forties and fifties, forgetting that he also saved some of these same caves from flood and oblivion, and he did this single handed. He may have offended many people, but he was consistent in his efforts

"To meet another culture on its own ground with adequate understanding, a warm heart and sympathetic hands, a rare experience where so much alienation and confusion prevails." (Jade Country).

"I have only one certainty, and that is whatever I choose to tackle, I do that intensely and well. Whether this is appreciated or not has little meaning. I know its worth." (letter from Bali to G.R.)

Gerhard Rosenberg

Theo Schoon — artist

That was Theo — art was his life, people were mostly held at arm's length unless they passed his stringent quality test as an artist, and even then they were only allowed the approach to a certain distance. Yet his friends meant a great deal to him and he spent much of his time writing letters in a strong black spikey hand.

I first met him in Auckland many years ago when he was living alone in the house at Grey Lynn given him by Martin Pharaayn, who had recognised the depth of his talent. Len Castle took me to see him. It was an incredible environment — almost no furniture, the main feature being his bed which was like a bird's nest. Every book, pen, paper, object that was necessary for his current line of thought was there, together with all his voluminous correspondence, plus odd items of food within easy reach. His conversation was penetrating — like a rapier, darting from one acid observation to another. He was earning his living at that time by drumming at a night club, an art he had learnt in Java where he grew up, and he was incredibly good. One night Len Castle persuaded him to come to a party of mostly middle aged women who were in the Pottery Group at the current Summer School. Theo arrived, looking like an exotic bird — tall, bony, greying hair swept back from an aquiline face. He got us all drumming and we had a wonderful night.

Another visit I made was when Theo was in the gourd phase. Anything he did was with intensity and a desire to find out all there was to know about the chosen subject. Gourds filled his life at that time and they also filled his front yard, the vines growing over strings and wooden supports and making a ceiling of leaves. We found him sitting in the lotus position beside the biggest gourd, it was evening and a light was hanging beside it to encourage it to grow. He showed us a gourd he was carving for Elvis Presley to use as a musical instrument. It was magnificent. Theo's knowledge of design and clarity of line which distinguished all his work had found a vital expression.

It was some ten years before I saw him again. This time I was living in Auckland and had a stall selling pottery at The Mill. Theo had moved to Rotorua where he was living in a bach behind Emily Schuster's mother's house, and he was deeply immersed in studying the amazing patterns produced by thermal activity. A skilled photographer, he was building up a detailed record of these. One crowded Saturday morning at The Mill I suddenly saw the puckish figure of Theo coming towards me, photographs in hand. They were superb, I could only marvel at the

artistic vision which had seen such patterns. As usual, he was so wrapped up in this quest that he could think and talk of nothing else.

Another ten years later, in July 1982, I was living in the old Harbourmaster's house at Tokomaru Bay on the East Coast, and preparing to go over to the Rotorua Art Gallery for the opening of the Feathers and Fibre exhibition there. I wanted to see it, it seemed to me to be the beginning of the true appreciation of indigenous art from the woman's point of view. Someone called in and told me that the current Exhibition at the Gallery was a Retrospective of the work of Theo Schoon, so I left earlier and managed to get there in time to spend a day with this before it was taken down. I found it extremely interesting. I had no idea before of the range of his work. So many germinal ideas that he had tossed off in early prints and paintings had been picked up and developed by other, now well established artists. There was pottery too, in which he had always been interested, as his father had been manager of a brick and ceramic factory in Java.

I learnt that John Perry, Director of the Gallery, was about to go over to Sydney to see Theo and try to bring him back together with what had survived of his art. I sent him a note via John to say that if ever he needed a break from Rotorua I had a large old house by the sea and would be glad to have him to stay.

Theo duly arrived in Rotorua and stayed with John Perry, designing while there the mural in the Philatelic Bureau. I visited him several times and found him suffering from emphysema and very frail. The climate in Rotorua did not suit him and in January 83 I got an SOS from John Perry to ask if I could have him as they feared for his life. It was a somewhat strenuous time for us at Waima, as Barry Brickell was due to arrive with two boys from Vauatu who were going to help Bay Riddell build a woodfired kiln at his new pottery by the wharf. However, I went and got Theo, who survived the journey quite well, and Barry was a great help in getting him settled in to the large front bedroom overlooking the sea. It was altogether a stimulating time with much good conversation. Two weeks later the carrier arrived with some 25 tea chests full of all Theo's worldly possessions. He wanted them stored in his own room where he could keep an eye on them. Fortunately a friend offered him a lot of shop shelves which she had bought from Dalgety's clearing sale in Ruatoria: these saved the day. We had only just got everything stowed away when another 8 tea chests arrived full of his Balinese exhibition (which I had

thought were safely stored at the Rotorua Art Gallery, but Theo had sent for them). This nearly cracked me, but fortunately some old friends were here at the time and they dealt with the situation. By this time the room and his bed were taking on the bird's nest appearance I remembered from Grey Lynn days. Any wall space not taken up with shelves was now covered with Balinese dancing masks, shadow puppets and the like. I will leave someone else to tell the story of those Balinese years in the 70's when Theo had spent all the money inherited from his parents on reviving the traditional Balinese ballet, and had amassed thousands of colour slides of artists and craftsmen (which were all in boxes round his room and in desperate need of sorting and cataloguing).

Theo soon settled in and with his usual intensity read every pottery book in the house and embarked on a series of glaze experiments as my glazes did not suit him. He ordered packets of nearly every raw material in the pottery supply catalogues, applied to Len Castle for glaze recipes, and proceeded to mix up glazes (all in his bedroom) which he put into well-labelled preserving jars — more shelves were squeezed in.

But he was really very frail, and his emphysema was not helped by his insistence on chain smoking unfiltered Camel cigarettes. It was hard for him to find the energy to deal with the demands of pottery. I did what I could to help, but anything I did was always wrong — he needed something he could control himself right through.

I watched while he searched for something he could work at within his own limits. He finally found it and then began those series of intricately carved interlocking plaster stamps with which he could work out sets of designs for pressing into moulded clay dishes. He sent for some florist's plasticine so that he could test them out himself. At last he had something to exercise that artistic intelligence of his. I would hear a crow of delight as yet another pattern worked out to his satisfaction. One could only admire the spirit of this true artist which remained determinedly alive despite all the physical onslaughts that beset him.

By June 1984 he had had enough of us and our country ways. A friend with a truck was found and once more all the worldly goods were packed into boxes and taken to Auckland. The house seemed very bare when he had gone. Difficult and cantankerous as he was he had talent which one could only respect, and he had devoted a lifetime to its development. He remained true to the vision, and had never compromised. I hope on his tombstone they put THEO SCHOON — ARTIST.

Helen Mason

Ties that Bind

A Juror's View

Louise Guerin talks to **Marlise Staehelin**, judge and selector for this major craft exhibition



Marlise Staehelin hesitated when she was first asked to judge *Winstone Ties That Bind*. "I once swore to myself that I would never be on a jury again in my life. But being sole selector is a different situation because it's your own personal judgement. I can give my opinion for what it's worth and nobody else has to be of the same opinion."

She feels the result makes for an interesting exhibition but found the choosing an energy and time consuming task. "It took a lot of concentration and some pieces are very difficult to select if they are in a foreign environment. One thing I am really happy about is the other first prize. I was very apprehensive about having to give only one first prize, but we got Winstones to award another. Even then I can't say these two are so much better than the others. This hierarchy is not something I feel comfortable with."

Staehelin selected over half of the entries submitted and every piece discarded was sent away with a sentence explaining why it wasn't chosen. She tried hard to see the pieces in isolation. "I didn't look at the people who had made things, I just looked at the objects. I was very embarrassed if I found a name I knew."

"I have been asked whether I would find the same situation in another country and I think I would have done because it was an open entry and so everybody who heard about it could enter a piece. Everybody is allowed to think that he is an artist because every child is, and there is art in everything. But to make a statement strong enough to go in to an exhibition takes a certain attitude."

"The place where work is done is part of it, but we've all got television and telephones and our world is getting smaller. If I had been put in the same situation in Europe there would have been the same pieces."

So just what was she looking for? The feeling you get is that elements of ambivalence, paradox, magic, humour and wit were all required in some combination, if not in that order, along with a definite sense of integrity.

"It wasn't enough to be well done. There were lots of beautifully crafted pieces I didn't include. And it wasn't enough to make a very obvious message. What I wanted was a visual statement that keeps a secret between the viewer and the maker. I don't want to see a piece that I have 'seen' after I've seen it once. I would want to look again and again. Some of them were just too obvious — it was terrible!

"A lot of pieces I really loved but it was sad — I had to throw them out. They were overdone. They were so beautiful and had such marvellous qualities, but then all of a sudden — probably because you had to follow a theme — the theme became huge and the nice piece became very small. There were all these things about bondage and family ties and very literal statements."

"Lots of pieces were talking about other peoples' miseries and that was very difficult. They usually didn't work because the makers didn't dare talk about their own miseries. I think if you have enough food to eat you might have other needs to express than hunger. Even in a terrible situation you find people to sustain you. Even in the midst of tragedy there is a smile somewhere."

"Quite a few pieces I couldn't deal with because they had a Maori influence. They were dealing with Maori subjects but I could feel that they were not Maori. It's as if when I say I am Swiss, somebody might ask if I yodel. Yodelling is a very special thing. It is an art that comes out of a particular way of life: people who live up in the mountains in secluded valleys under the threat of avalanche. Yodelling comes out of that experience. So, if I walk in the city and yodel . . ." So much for the broad themes, what of the entries themselves?

One of the first awards I loved from the beginning because it is very serious and yet it has a circus quality to it. If you stop looking at life like that it's going to be terribly dull and awful. The interesting thing is that it is made by a physics professor — it is almost fantasy — and also has a very deep philosophy. It's very well made and the maker gave a lot of thought to the fact that it had to

travel. You don't have to wrap it or pack it, you can leave it closed or you can open it up. You can play with it too — I enjoy the sense of humour.

"The second first award is about the same theme. It's tecny. I think it's called 'The Lovers' but it shouldn't really have a title. It's really unobtrusive. It's two pieces that fit together and they have something like a quality of a backbone when they are locked together. There was also a marvellous basket which has the same qualities. In fact there are lots of pieces I could talk and talk about."

"There was one medium I was worried about and that was wood. There was marvellous wood work and marvellous craftsmanship but somehow I wished those pieces had been functional. The other medium I have a hard time with in any place is textiles. Everybody wants to make a masterpiece and it allows itself to be overdone so easily. You can add a bit here and add a bit there and lose yourself and get sidetracked all the time."

Staehelin was keen for people to see her own work and that of some Swiss colleagues so that people would have an idea of her background and working context. To this end she brought with her a portable exhibition of the work of 8 Swiss artists — each person was allowed the space inside a small perspex box, all of which then packed into an old Japanese basket for travelling. A video was made of the moment when Staehelin went to each person's house to collect their particular offering, which gave a tiny glimpse into their respective lives.

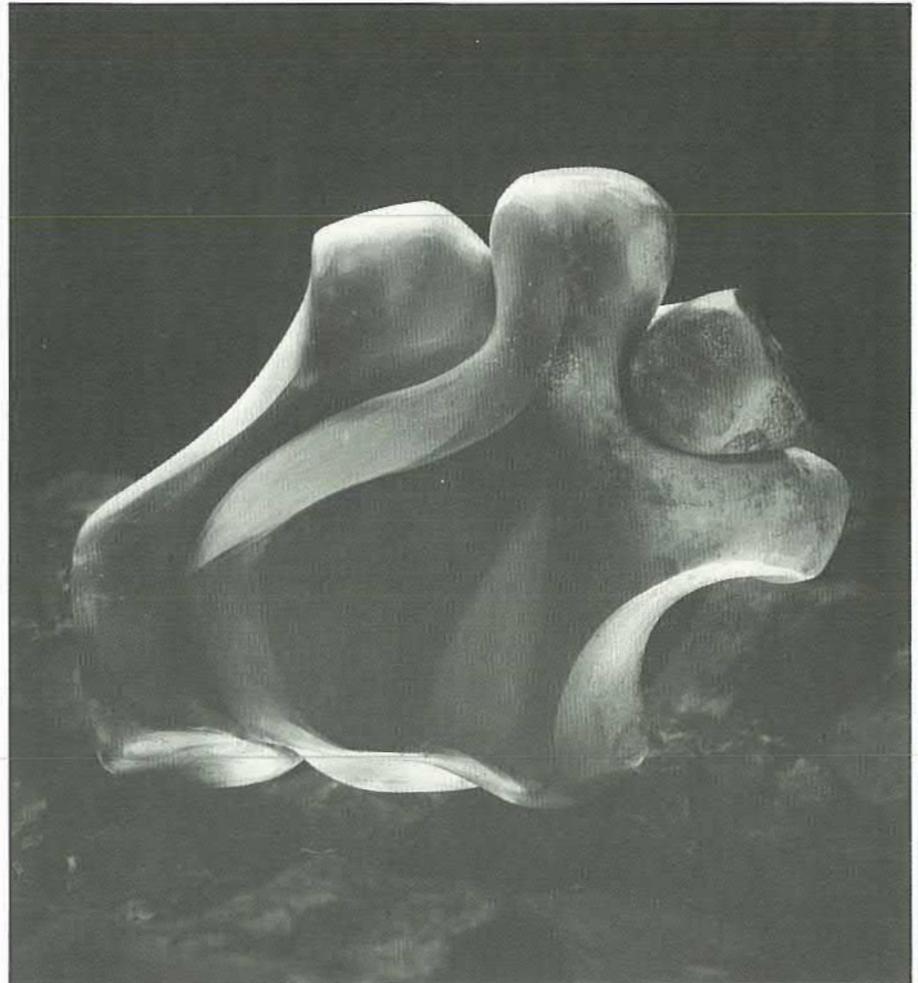
"It was important to me to show that we are not great experts when we come from Europe. It's sometimes really embarrassing when you are treated as such. Mind you, the same thing often happens to visitors to Switzerland."

"I'm an expert in so far as I have lived my own life. I've made my mistakes and I'm going to make more! But I've always had an intense time — bad times, good times — but I can enjoy the good ones because I have had the bad. Nobody is god."



Bob Bassant looked at the third in a series of Wellington City Art Gallery/Crafts Council of New Zealand collaborative exhibitions.

Winstone Ties that Bind



Helen Pollocks award winning piece: Lovers. Stoneware 40 x 80 x 10

The third in a series of Wellington City Art Gallery — Craft Council of New Zealand collaborative exhibitions ("The Bowl", "The Great New Zealand Box Show"), "Winstone Ties That Bind" invited artists and craftspeople "to create a work of two or more units which are knotted, bolted, tethered, chained, laced, hinged or bound together". The resulting 156 submissions presented Swiss artist Marlise Staehelin with an arduous task of adjudication. While many excellent submissions were rejected for subjective reasons, revealed by Marlise to each entrant, her catholic taste (and that of

many of the artists) was revealed in her choice of award winning pieces — the one, serious both in content and craftsmanship, the other, a wildly amusing presentation of the physical laws which govern symbiosis.

Following the exhibition, the 52 works will tour 10 New Zealand venues. A video programme, documenting the exhibition, will accompany the show.

According to the Wellington Evening Post art critic, Ian Wedde, this was an un-reviewable show, and in many ways I would have to agree with him, and for Marlise Staehelin, the adjudicating must have been a particularly daunting task; a



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1. Jenny Patrick — Silver and Paua Headpiece

2. "And wisdom Transcends Them All" Carin Wilson/Mixed Media.

3. "Family Ties" Nora West/Fabric sculpture.

3



task that was only accomplished with much courage and a willingness to back her decisions with a determination to face up to the individual entrant. Without that attitude the cries of anguish from the rejected would have reverberated within the walls of the Wellington City Gallery for many a day! It brings to mind (as history has it) a remark made by Franz Lizst to one of his pupils:

"You have played for me many new and many beautiful pieces — the problem is: the beautiful pieces are not new and the new pieces are not beautiful."

Presumably something like that must also have been in Marlise's mind when she made her final decisions.

No doubt many of the works had considerable novelty value — but novelty for its own sake belongs to the tools-in-trade of the designers in the

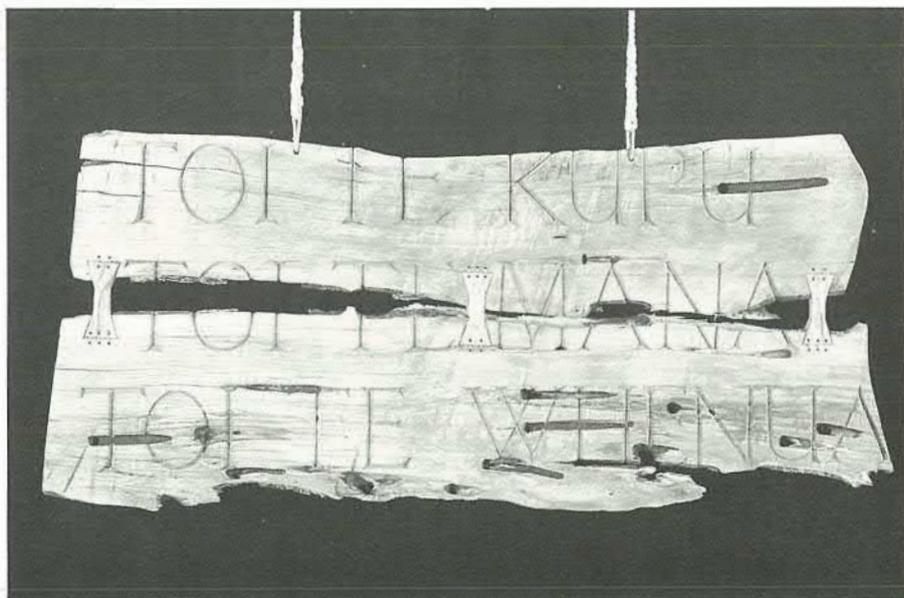
to a number of artists and craftspeople.

'A Toy That Shows A Curious Motion' by Wellington's **Norman Barber** was one of Marlise Staehelin's first choices — and bound to be controversial!

The fact that retired physics professor, Norman Barber, was totally unknown in the arts and crafts circles and his highly original interpretation of the physical laws governing symbiosis was also totally devoid of any art or craft sophistication, raised many a well-established eyebrow.

His own particular brand of intellectual and visual "primitivism" obviously took many by surprise, coupled with the fact of the almost ruthless dismissal of the "obvious" by the adjudicator, not only raised eyebrows, but also made some establishment wag tongues in anger — oh dear!

Aucklander **Helen Pollock** was to



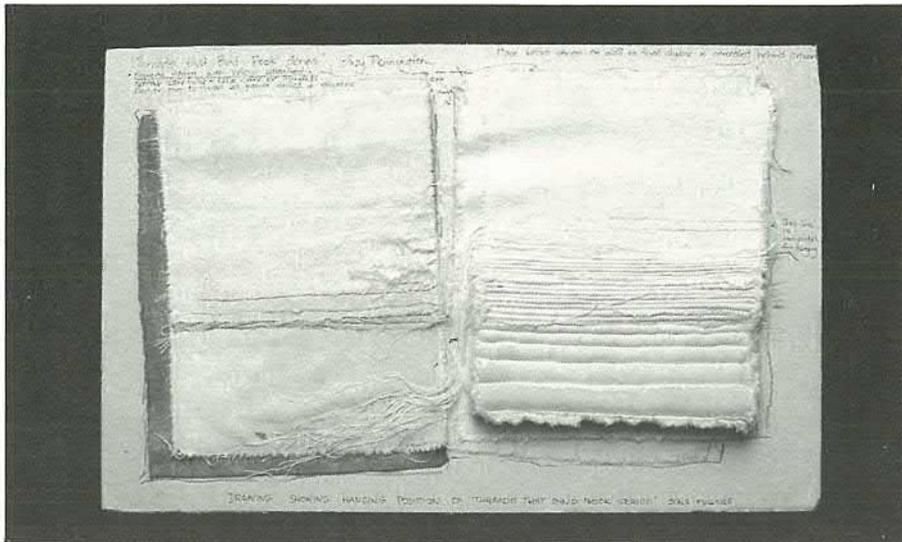
visual communication and fashion industries, to whom the word "new" is the supreme creative demand. Indeed much of the work on show in the exhibition could have been firmly placed in another novelty category e.g. the novelty of being urged on, if not pushed, by the theme of the exhibition to extend a usually safe and predictable medium or mode of working beyond its known aesthetic and practical dimensions. It also makes one question pre-conceived ideas of how certain materials should be used and how the final results should look — because technical virtuosity alone *can* provide a basis for critical evaluation but it is insufficient if it does not occur in context of design and intellectual meaning.

The realisation that a usually mere decorative piece had to be produced within the forementioned context no doubt provided a formidable challenge

share, together with Norman Barber, the Winstone Award for Excellence, with a smallish snug-fitting two-piece; very smooth, very personal and introverted. Helen Pollock describes her work as starting with her own feelings and then allowing those feelings to be turned into an "essence" — a tangible form finally.

Her piece in "Winstone Ties That Bind" was already in progress before she read about the show, so it started out and remained an authentic statement rather than a response (to a theme).

During the 60's Helen did a Home Science course at Otago. Part of the course was a design component which mainly concentrated on design relative to the home environment. The course, which also included aspects of history of art and architecture, has been important to her and the work she's doing. After evening classes and occasionally some workshop



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experience mainly as a recreational potter, Helen has with this, her first entry ever, taken a leap forward to becoming a professional potter. Her mostly hand thrown, handbuilt pieces are all non-functional and are to be perceived as statements about herself and her own situation.

The rest of the exhibition was an incredibly mixed lot, most of the works however skillfully and intelligently resolved within the limitations of a medium familiar to the artist.

And that was exactly the strength and the weakness of most of the works on show; the thought that for once — inspired by a given theme — a different medium could have been tried, may have entered a few heads but not many had the courage to do so.

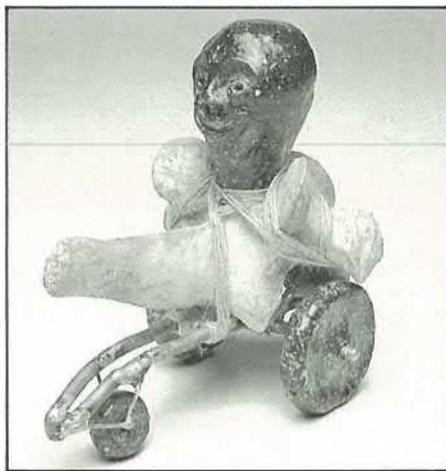
Bodhi Vincent — locally known for his superb drawing, made a sincere departure into 3 dimensionality with his mixed media structure titled "Polarity".

Symbolism and apparent influences of Eastern philosophy seemed however strangely astray within this rather complex structure. Basically an elongated pyramid some 1500mm high and interrupted half-way to be connected only by a barred cage containing an agonised humanoid form trying to break free from its bonds, its rather overt intentions remained unresolved sculpturally and merely decorative from a graphic point of view.

Works with the inevitable "domestic" connotations with the theme were several:

Susan Naylor's "untitled porcelain" was totally self evident and could as usual be relied upon to provide us with one of her amusing yet rather touching pieces, this one another variation on the theme of the suburban housewife, complete with steam iron, lost in her dreams of lost youth and romance.

Nora West's fabric sculpture entitled "Family Ties" showed a closely bound group of people (\pm 57mm high) their



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faces completely anonymous and all strung up together in a tightly packaged little group of humanity. The perfect supermarket family — vulnerable consumerists. What sets this piece apart from what must have been dozens of similar attempts is that "the ties that bind" are almost imperceptible, and that, combined with the loss of individuality of the characters involved, gave the completed work a certain poignancy.

Then there were the works about the land and Maoridom, several strong works amongst which in particular **Carin Wilson's** carved message stood out. His carving of "Toi te Kupu — Toi te Mana — Toi te Whenna" (And Wisdom Transcends Them All), i.e. Roman lettering on irregularly shaped planks of wood joined together by 3 locking pieces reminds us of our social, cultural and emotional obligations. A simple, straightforward message, through its choice of lettering emphasising the bi-culturality of our society without any further intellectual pretences, skillfully executed.

I particularly liked **Graeme North's** little, but delightfully determined sculptured assemblage, or mixed media piece according to the catalogue. North



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treats the theme in a straightforward visual/physical manner with overt phallic symbolism and racial identification. Titled "Forwards on the Bones of Our Ancestors" and made up of metal, bone and bits of ceramic, the result is wholly convincing. This little ancestral chariot is aggressive and finally oddly disturbing.

These are just some of the 52 works that drew my attention by their uniqueness and personal strength. Among them I must also mention the more subtle and rather lovely entries by **Carole Davis** and **Suzy Pennington**.

Davis's triptych "Rebound — Sandy Bay Artifacts" deals with aspects of the sea and the land similarly to Pennington's "Threads That Bind". Both works succeed through a kind of contemplative stillness, rather than force and exuberance.

Make sure to see the show when it comes your way, there's much there to delight the heart and the mind, and yes do take the children, they'd love it!

1-23 February, Southland Museum & Art Gallery, Invercargill.

10-31 March, Suter Art Gallery, Nelson.

19 April-4 May, Canterbury Society of Arts, Christchurch.

26 May-26 June, Carnegie Centre, Dunedin.

11-25 July, Baycourt, Tauranga.

3 August-3 September, Fisher Gallery, Pakuranga.

13 October-9 November, Rotorua Art Gallery, Rotorua.

26 November-14 December, Gisborne Museum & Arts Centre, Gisborne.

* 24 December 1986- end January 1987, Hawkes Bay Gallery & Museum, Napier.

(* Exhibition dates to be confirmed)

1. "Threads that bind" Suzy Pennington/Mixed Media.
2. Untitled. Sue Naylor/Porcelain.
3. "Forwards on the bones of our Ancestors". Graeme North/Mixed Media.

INTERVIEW

Bob Bassant interviews Dr Norman Barber, one of the award winners in the "Winstone Ties That Bind" exhibition (elsewhere reviewed in this issue), and found unexpectedly a fascinating human story.

A toy that shows a curious motion



Norman Frederick Barber, Scientist, Physicist, lecturer, now retired, lives high above the city of Wellington in the hills of Brooklyn. After the long steep drive up, there are still steps to be taken to the front door of the boxlike, unassuming flat, one in a block of ten. The door opens and the fragrance of freshly made coffee awaits — as welcoming as the candid Yorkshireman himself. Setting into a conversation with Norman Barber is a breeze. He has lived — intensively enough and long enough to have no longer any pretences about himself and about life in general.

Born in 1909 as the only son of a Yorkshire schoolteacher from a working class background — he was brought up on, in his words, "A diet of fried cod's liver and lack of affection".

To the former he attributes his continuing good health, to the latter his ongoing search for happiness and domestic bliss.

After attending Leeds University, where in 1934 he graduated with a science degree, he was fortunate enough, in those difficult pre-war years, to obtain a secondary school teaching post until the opportunity presented

itself to join the Admiralty as a Junior Research Officer.

That was in 1937 with war clouds gathering over Europe and defence preparations hotting up.

BB "When did you come out from England and what exactly prompted you to come out to New Zealand?"

NB "My wife and I (we were married in 1934) came out in 1950 — and I sometimes wonder myself — why — if I went back now — I would remember what or why it was —"

Momentarily there is silence — the

room is still and with the sun streaming in it is getting very warm and then:

NB "I was quite mixed up in a sense — although successful in my profession by then — research and recognition and all that — I had some difficulty relating to certain people and my then domestic situation also prompted a desire to make a new start — to fling myself at the other end of the world.

"So at the age of 40 and by then a well-established member of the Royal Navy Scientific Pool — I moved to New Zealand in 1950."

BB "I would like to know something about your working life with the D.S.I.R. here in New Zealand — how different was working with them from working with the Royal Navy in England as a well established member of their scientific pool?"

Hesitates obviously reflecting and, somewhat guardedly:

NB "Well — very soon after I started with the D.S.I.R. it became apparent that there was considerable misunderstanding about the kind of things I was able to do. They obviously had the message from my former employer — The Royal Navy — that I was a very good experimental physicist, but what they wanted me to do, having decided what they wanted to do, was to do a survey of the sea-wall around Auckland. But to me that was a misunderstanding, because they had done the research deciding what needed to be measured already, so I became the dogsbody doing exactly that; measuring — hardly an appropriate occupation for an experimental physicist.

"They finally sent me onto a job classified as 'Top Secret' and after a couple of years, although I know little about the basic kind of science of geology, 'sound in the ground' as they called it, the suppositions that were made seemed utterly ridiculous to me, so I went on strike — I then wrote a report saying there was no future for this kind of research and that I just had a real breakthrough of an idea dealing with the direction of the seawaves — a new way of recording where they came from. Until now we had only been able to record the distances they travelled.

"But in the end it became embarrassing not to be valued for the things I used to be valued for during my time with the Admiralty."

BB "At the age of 54 you took up a position at Victoria University as Professor of Theoretical Physics — how did you adapt to your new professional circumstances in an academic environment?"

NB "I had had much satisfaction through successful research work with the D.S.I.R. and the Admiralty in England, but when I began to lack

originality in research it was exciting to get the post of Professor of Theoretical Physics. Being a D.S.C. of course also meant I was treated and regarded with due respect. People remember me as an amusing lecturer (to large stage one classes at least). I had eleven years there. It gratified me to be made a Fellow of the Royal Society of New Zealand in 1964 after being given the Doctor of Science from Leeds University in 1962."

At that we pause, Norman tells me about the death of his wife five years after moving to New Zealand and the tragic death of their only adopted son in Auckland in 1972. His second marriage ended in divorce. My eyes keep wandering around the walls of his living room/study crammed literally from floor to ceiling with paintings by the late Leonard Mitchell. Noticing my interest, he showed me some more, in the kitchen, in the bedrooms, Mitchell's paintings everywhere. Norman Barber met Leonard Mitchell's widow, Patricia, in 1980.

NB "Since my retirement from university I had been teaching at the Correspondence School in Wellington and when in 1981 it seemed the School had decided it did not want me I thought Patricia and I could look after one another — things are like that still and I am grateful to Patricia."

There's a candid gracefulness about Norman Barber's admissions of success and failure — I steer the conversation towards the main objective of the interview.

BB "Can we look back on your Award winning entry in the 'Winstone Ties That Bind' exhibition — why did you decide to enter and how did you know about it?"

NB "Patricia, who's into fibre and wool and things, pointed it out to me — then I started thinking about how, whenever I go to a museum or whatever — how nice it would be if things moved. Looking at all those static stuffed birds is quite boring. So I set out to think about motion and to my mind came this particular principle which had been pointed out to me when I was a student — from there it simply took a leap of the imagination to visualise the concept. Then — I like to entertain — to amuse and please is part of my nature, so I set out to find components that would fit in with the final concept of an amusing and entertaining piece."

BB "How then did you finally decide to do what you did? Did you make a work drawing?"

NB "I decided to call it a toy, because that way you can get away with much more in a non-craftsmanlike sense. Because of lack of room I have my Black & Decker 'Workmate' set up against the end of my bed. (!) So — when it was a matter of two things tied together my

question was, how to make it move — how to dress it up was also a big question. The first thing that came to my mind was using two dolls. I went around all the toy and doll shops in the city — but found nothing I really liked. Then I wandered into 'Crazy Rick's' place in Cuba Street and he had these delightful Mexican pepper and salt dolls. I really loved them. Then you start off with trying to make it work, with various 'tie' materials for hanging the two creatures and making them move without loss of energy in the transfer of motion. I decided after that to include the whole thing in a double-lidded box and to make it easy for the gallery-going public to participate I wrote 'instructions for use' on the outside."

BB "You did set out to invite audience participation which seems contrary to the conventional way of displaying things in art galleries. Did the public reaction please you in the end?"

NB "Yes indeed — as I said, I like happy things and for anyone to be able to actively participate in making my toy perform makes me happy. Success in my profession has kept me happy. My father told me more than once that in his opinion it was hard work that kept one happy. We were similar persons, rather introverted, hard working and anxious — well intentioned and academically able.

"Marlise Stachelin mentioned to me that I might become a fashionable Australasian celebrity but I really can't see how and why."

BB "Were you surprised when you were given an award for your entry in the 'Winstone Ties That Bind' exhibition?"

NB "Yes — very much so — they kept ringing me up because of some of the sequins I used to decorate had fallen off, so I had to come and glue them back on again, so I used Araldite because I really like sequins and they are important for the all-over effect I was after — they're fun really! It was then that I had an inkling of something about to happen — but my main worry was, will they accept it — after all it doesn't show the craftsman's skill that I think was required.

"It was very nice to get the cheque though — it helped my wife to buy a car."

BB "And is Norman Barber having any future plans in this new direction?"

NB "Indeed — look at this," pointing to some delightful little creatures made of sheet lead — 'amazingly expressive,' (but that's another story —).

I think it was Picasso who said "To know what I know now and to be a child again".

I couldn't get that phrase out of my mind as I descended from Brooklyn Heights back into the city. □

New Zealand Ceramics 1985

A review by Peter Gibbs

A feature of craft shows at Nelson's Suter Gallery is the increasing degree of commercial involvement which is now creeping into the organisation of such exhibitions. Although it is not safe to generalise, it seems that many craftspeople began their craft careers as post-sixties rebels from the ordered society of nine-to-five office jobs which offered so much security and status to their parents. The delights of independence and a less structured lifestyle are now giving way to the financial responsibilities of supporting fast growing families, and the realities of receiving proper rewards for the increasingly sophisticated craft objects from an ever more reluctant marketplace.

The solution is to woo a more affluent clientele. The aim of a cheap handmade mug in every kitchen or a similarly cheap woven rug before every fireplace has had to come to terms with the reality that not only does your average householder have a fondness for plastic or synthetic goods, but your average craftsperson is getting a little bored with producing repetition items at a low price. In short, we're all becoming more and more sophisticated.

A mark of this change of attitude away from the mother-earth approach is the

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1. John Crawford
2. Peter Gibb

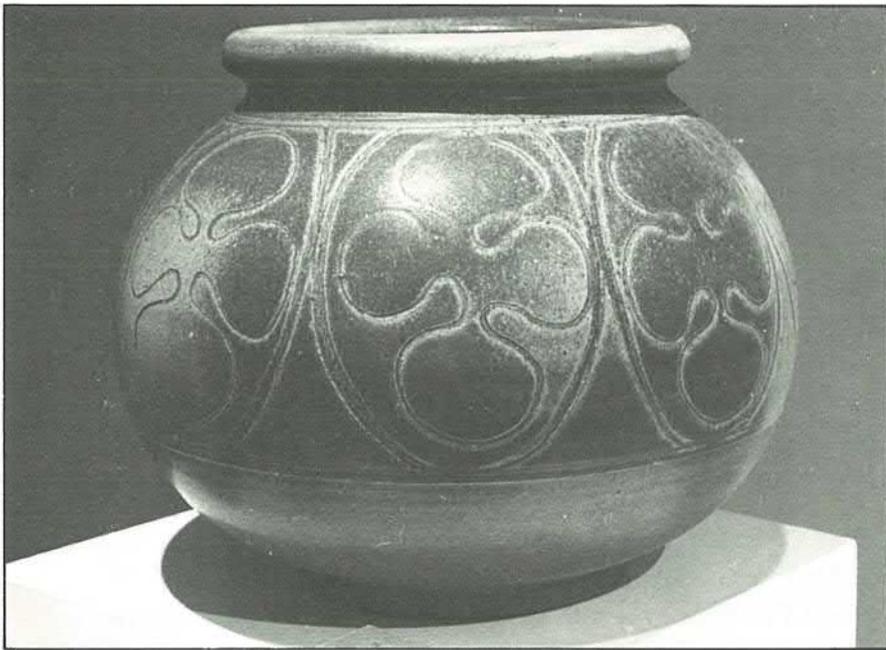
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bias of pottery exhibitions away from the domestic ware from which the work of many potters has sprung, towards more creative, one-off pieces. Inevitably, prices are higher, and many former buyers of domestic ware are not so keen to part with their hard earned dollars when prices begin to climb into the three figure zone, although they may have no such inhibitions when it comes to the purchase of a similarly priced piece of two-dimensional art. This is a problem of education, and while it is the role of those who organise exhibitions to encourage this learning process, a more aggressive marketing strategy is part of the game.

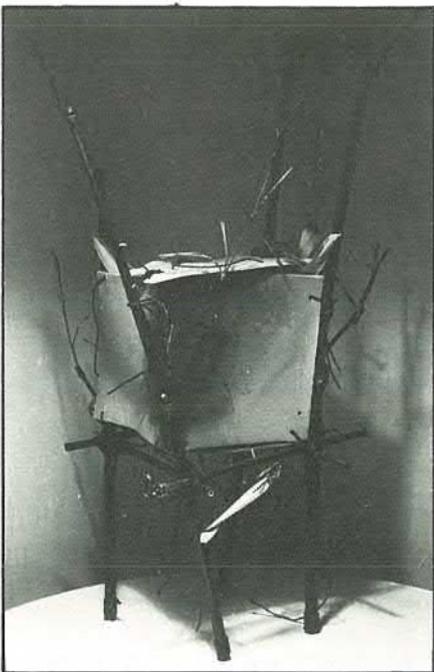
With this in mind, the Suter Gallery initiated a corporate preview for NZ Ceramics 1985. The plan was to lure local businesses to the gallery by appealing to their better natures with emotive words like "exclusive" and "discerning", and then ply them with wine and the promise of their name beside the piece as the discerning purchaser of the work, for all to see for the duration of the exhibition. Having got them used to the idea of craft purchases for display in public areas,

waiting rooms and so on, the next logical step is into more ambitious purchases and potential sponsorship. But that is in the future. The immediate effect of these purchases, amounting to 10% of the work on show, was that one hour later when NZSP President John Crawford declared the exhibition open, there was a degree of urgency in the normal opening night sales.

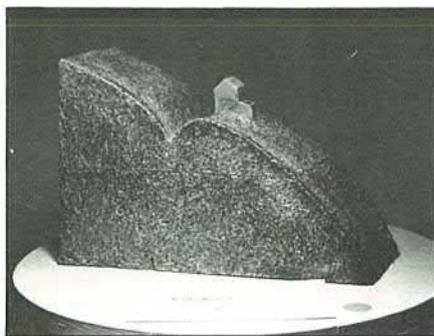
Enough about filthy money. How did it look? Well to tell the truth, when describing that, it's necessary to go back to the business world. Winstones had been involved in the setting up, through the donation of hard plastic sewer pipes. Sliced up into lengths, then bolted together in groups of three of differing heights, these enabled individual pieces to be seen in isolation without taking up a great amount of space. In fact one of the problems of setting up 99 such powerful statements within a small space is the dominating nature of many of the pieces. To bring the display into three dimensions rather than the two dimensional layout so often seen in pottery exhibitions, white muslin curtains divided the room into more intimate spaces, creating an ethereal



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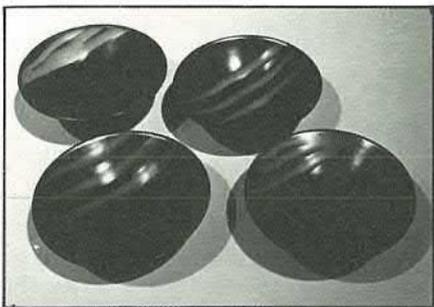
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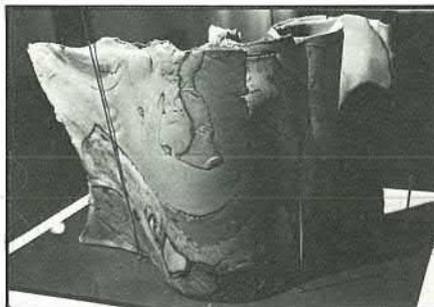
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filminess and a feeling of calm throughout the gallery.

The work was impressive. Over 100 of the country's top potters had been invited to submit one piece, with no further selection taking place. Perhaps if it had, some of the exhibitors would have exercised a little more responsibility in their choice of entry. A handful of pots could only be regarded as mediocre. The rest were a celebration



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- 1. Ross Richards
- 2. Debbie Pointon
- 3. Roger King
- 4. Wendy Masters
- 5. Jean McKinnon

of the skills accumulated over years of hard slog. All the best work came from potters who have served their time, sometimes working in a variety of techniques, sometimes narrowing that down to a particular small area. Such fluent work was that of Leo King, Rick Rudd, Jean McKinnon, Neil Grant, Keith Blight, Cecilia Parkinson, in fact such a wealth of talent that to catalogue them would produce a list as long as your arm. In any such show, some work just leaps out and plugs you between the eyes. Two such pieces greeted you on entering the room. Nelson's own Steve Fullmer had to steal the show. His piece, "Tabasco Canyon" fairly vibrated at you in an explosion of colour and texture decorated with incised symbols of freedom and movement. Shouting right back was the large round form of Brian Gartside. Joyous with movement and colour, this confident exposition left no doubt that this artist is no beginner.

Chester Nealie showed a piece of leaner profile. Tall, but well balanced, this work had a luscious green glaze draped across it with the fire markings we have come to expect being visible only near the base. On an altogether smaller scale, the procelain bowl of Tui Morse, while delicate and finely worked, showed none of the fragility of much work of this nature.

John Crawford continued his exploration of the human form with a multi-media piece combining sculptural form and bright coloured fibre. Just alongside was the painterly treatment of a humble bowl, confidently handled on a large scale by Christine Boswijk.

All in all, the exhibition contained no surprises. It satisfied some of the Nelson region's geographically induced cultural hunger by bringing in some outside stimulation. As well it gave Nelson potters the first real chance they have ever had to see their work in a national context, and reassured them that they can still foot it with the best. Probably most important, and time alone will tell, it brought a degree of commercial involvement which we have not previously seen, and which we are going to have to embrace with vigour even if we do think it has bad breath.

Photographs by Bob Heatherbell



Healthy New Zealand Identity?

A critical look at the New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts' selection process and review of the ANZ Bank Fabric and Fibre Art Award at the Academy by Bob Bassant

In reviewing an exhibition of one-off craftworks such as the recently held ANZ Bank Art Award, the reviewer has the choice of wearing one or more of several hats.

The "general appraisal" hat can be expediently dealt with and in the absence of plentiful photographic reference it needs to be no more than lucidly descriptive; with faint praise here and there for preferred choices. The "critical appraisal" hat requires some of the above, plus comparative analysis — which in view of the widely divergent nature of the exhibited works, comes down to how well informed, perceptive and objective the reviewer may be. The third hat, and that's the one I'll be wearing mainly this time, could be called the "enquiring-investigative" one. It's not my intention to do an exposé piece of journalism so I take as a point of departure no more than a quote from a recent publication by the organisers of the exhibition, the New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts:

"Award winning recipients are selected on a basis which will **enable exceptionally promising** exhibitors to work towards further development within their chosen medium."

Questions: Selected by whom? Who decides on the exceptionally promising exhibitor? And what are the criteria?

Further on in the same publication: "Over 90% of work exhibited is from New Zealand artists. The Academy encourages them to develop and to consolidate a **healthy New Zealand identity** within their chosen medium."

Question: What constitutes a healthy New Zealand identity?

Such lofty statements of intent are inclined to present and foster a whole series of ambiguous sentiments and presumptions, particularly in the

apparent absence of a more firmly stated clear and comprehensive selection and judging policy.

At the moment decisions seem to be based on the misguided belief that opinions drawn and resulting from group consensus are preferable to the individually formed opinion based on knowledge, perception, experience and constructive critical evaluation.

The situation as it exists is undoubtedly at the root of the problem, the problem being the highly questionable criteria and downright baffling choices the Academy selection panel, an anonymous body, keeps on making in their selection of "exceptionally promising exhibitors" in pursuit of a "healthy New Zealand identity".

When the majority of the awards with great regularity seem to be going to the established and establishment artists and craftspeople and when the pursuit and development of this mystical entity, "a healthy New Zealand identity", remains a term shrouded in covertly emotive veils (the third Reich had a fairly similar nationalistic art promotion policy, remember?) then the accusation that the Academy's selection and judging processes are secretive, non-professional and in terms of some of their stated objectives un-democratic, can be squarely placed at the feet of the Academy Mandarins.

Presumably, and judging by the academy's award winning choices in the ANZ exhibition, a healthy New Zealand identity means first and foremost an identity determined by group consensus.

The criteria for a group consensus seems to be as follows:

Any work of art or craft must give

evidence of how well the rules have been observed (the particular set of rules the Academy Mandarins themselves conform to), rules which are determined by the status-quo state of mind; unwilling and unable to venture out into the uncharted territory of a more lateral kind of seeing and thinking.

How else could an explanation be put forward to justify the absence of almost any truly innovative and creative fabric and fibre works?

Remember when the ANZ Art Award exhibition was first instituted several years ago? The excitement of seeing some really splendid works on display?

Where have all the exciting fibre constructions, weavings and fabric works gone?

Where's youthful freshness, vigour and invention — so much in evidence then?

Before going any further let's consider what really needs to be done to develop and consolidate this mystical entity: "the healthy New Zealand identity".

For that you need to believe in excellence — creative invention and the right of the individual to proclaim his/her uniqueness in their chosen craft. First and foremost, unhampered by the rules of convention or the shackles of the status-quo.

Secondly you have to have the courage to proclaim these beliefs loudly and repeatedly — particularly when you, like the New Zealand Academy, are in a position of being heard, if not seen.

At the moment neither the artists nor the sponsors are getting the deal they deserve — witness the rather dismal display at the exhibition here under review. As a result of the Academy's lamentable attitudes many New Zealand



Jan van de Klundert
 "HARAKEKE" Flax weaving

— there will be a continuing alienation of creative and skilled human resources, particularly among the young, to the detriment of the whole arts and crafts movement in New Zealand.

I am not suggesting the disbandment of such organisations in favour of an all-embracing Arts and Crafts Council Colossus. Regional and local diversifications have a lot to offer in terms of organisational and administrative abilities and structure in support of local talent. But when it comes to inputs such as professional judgement and selection of work the doors should be opened wide to qualified people from outside the local interest sphere in a fair, democratic and impartial manner. Sponsoring bodies, such as the ANZ Bank themselves, need to look more closely at selection procedures for award winners as well. Sponsors are often seen by participating exhibitors as having the final responsibility in appointing judges and/or selectors for their exhibitions — but in practise this is not always so — in fact these decisions are usually left to the organising body.

In the pursuit of excellence I believe that a single judge or selector should be appointed. All judgements and selections are to a degree subjective; that's simply inevitable. But it's preferable to a choice by group consensus which always results in mediocre, common denominator selections. It's preferable for any artist therefore to be judge by:— someone who is competent and able to perceive those works which, by virtue of their singular creative strength, exert presence and authority.

That's no mean task I know, but the crafts movement in general has arrived at the transitory stage from being dilettante and amateurish to a healthy (!) striving for professionalism, and as such it is desperately in need of input by people of a broad ranging and lateral perception as to the **real** needs and aesthetic demands, instead of the ever watchful eyes of the Guardians of the Golden Rule in their bell bottomed trousers!

Finally the exhibition:

The award winning weaving by **Marilyn Rea Menzies** is a totally justifiable and unsurprising choice. It conforms to all the forementioned rules — thus it is competent, conventional and boringly obvious. As a design it is reminiscent of a 1950's decorative technique originating in basic 2D exercise classes so much in evidence in the majority of art schools in the Western World. To put that particular

artists, and here I mention in particular the painters-printmakers and sculptors, are no longer willing to exhibit with the Academy-organised exhibitions. It seems to me, judging by the gradual decline in excellence in recent fabric and fibre exhibitions, many craftspeople have now decided to follow suit.

Some rather pertinent remarks related to the above but in a different context were made by the Australian weaver Rhonda O'Meara during a recent visit to this country. In an interview published in the N.Z. Listener she expressed her concern about the attitude of the New Zealand Woolcraft Society. "They (the Woolcraft Society) are a small group of people who started out with honourable intentions but they are alienating the professionals and frustrating a lot of other people — their competitions for example are designed to keep people small."

For Woolcraft Society, read New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts!

I had the privilege of viewing Rhonda

O'Meara's exhibition at enterprising Edith Ryan's Villas Gallery in Wellington. **There** was weaving of a sophistication and strength seldom seen in this country — weaving with colours shining and vibrating and with textures of an amazing subtlety — the whole was a celebration of the art of weaving — yes art!

Says Rhonda O'Meara:

"The great advantage is that I am not tied to any tradition — which enables me to have quite a different approach." Surely it must also be an advantage for every practising craftsperson in the land, not to be tied to any tradition, because traditions impose sets of rules which suit the perpetrators of the status-quo just fine.

There's a lesson to be learned here for all the Mandarins, and all the art and craft societies for that matter — that unless the search for a New Zealand identity, healthy or otherwise, is pushed and conducted outside the boundaries of conservatism and small group interests



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weaving in the category “exceptionally promising” would alone evoke disbelief in the credibility of the selectors.

Not that Marilyn Rea Menzies is not able to produce much more refined work, refined in a perceptual sense, not technical. Her 1984-85 “Sea and Sky” series are splendidly evocative and convincing works.

Perhaps the exhibition as a whole should have been named “The Great New Zealand Quilt Show” because the majority of works on show were quilts and some of them fine works indeed.

For instance, the second Award winner, **Jo Cornwall**, had a bold colourful quilt on display which, within the boundaries of the patchwork quilt making technique, came across as a Vasarely inspired but imaginative and confident work — Jo Cornwall’s obvious skills and experience as a painter are evident in the interaction between shape and colour, resulting in an all over design creating its own radiance — a lovely work and a worthy award winner.

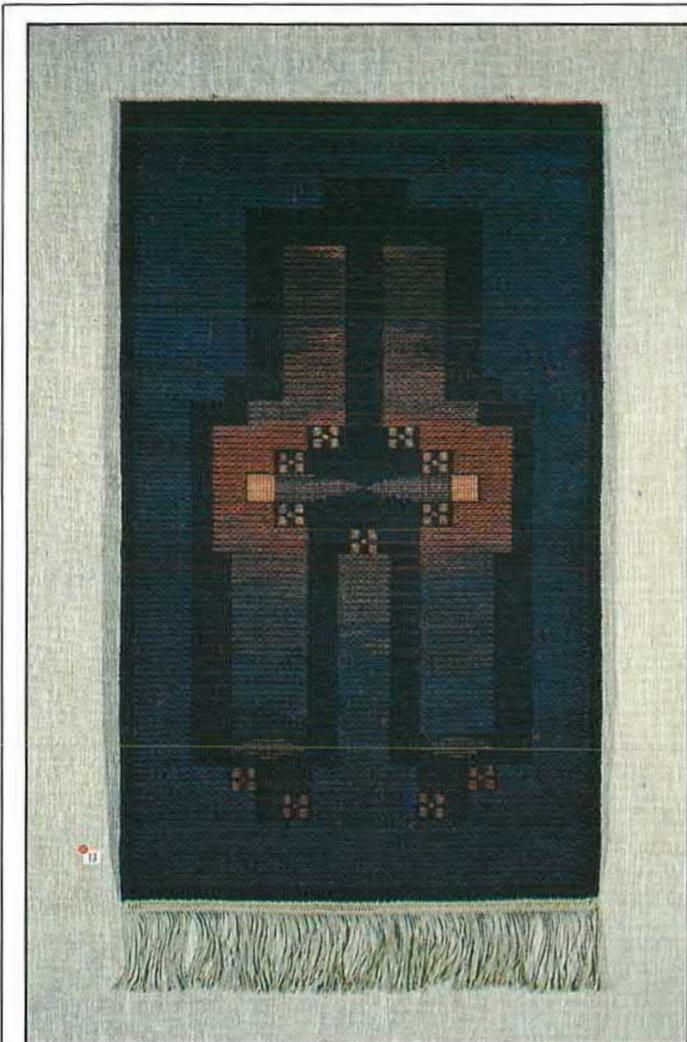
Robyn Royd’s braided fabric work based on a leaf shape was easily one of the most powerfully arresting on display. Alone, outside the conventions of the rectangular shape, this carefully crafted creation reflected an authority and exuberance rare amongst the collective works.

Both artists display a finely-tuned sense of texture and colour allowing them a great degree of flexibility in their chosen medium.

A silkscreen wallhanging by **Lynda Robinson**, huge in size and owing much of its inspiration to contemporary graphics with a Richard Killeen input to boot, was nevertheless refreshing and showed by virtue of its proximity to the award winner, just how dated and conventional that weaving concept was.

My choice would have been instead for **Marie Abbott’s** rather small weaving titled “Reflections”. Exactly the kind of work likely to be overlooked in the presence of the much larger and much louder neighbouring works, there is nevertheless great strength in this beautifully resolved weaving, owing much to the subtle use and control of only two complementary colour values, blue and burnt orange.

The tonal transitions were handled expertly and with sensitivity. Keeping the deep blue background alive and shot through with subtle variations of its complementary orange. But displayed next to some weavings reminiscent of bargain basement floor mats, Marie Abbott’s had little chance of exerting itself. This brings me to the hanging of works in relation to each other. There again the Academy’s reputation in displaying works is far from enviable, and has come in for criticism, and justifiably so, more than



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once in the past. For instance **Jan van de Klundert's** "Harakeke", potentially one of the most original and authoritative entries, was hanging inside an archway connecting one exhibition area with another, presumably because it fitted the gap next to a fire extinguisher admirably!

Apparently the Academy pays more attention to a healthy balance sheet at the end of the financial year rather than to such trivialities as artistic integrity. Hence the clutterings of every available bit of wall space — primarily seen as selling space like a supermarket — rather than space to give works on display their rightful due in relation to each other.

The final straw was the inclusion in this exhibition of some of the obvious rejects from the Wellington City Gallery/Crafts Council's combined exhibition "Winstone Ties That Bind" elsewhere referred to in this issue.

With talent being plentiful and commercial sponsorship at a premium the ANZ Bank in particular and artists and craftspeople in general deserve a better deal than they have been getting from the New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts. □



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1. Robyn Royd — Braided Fabric.
2. Jo Cornwall — Quilting.
3. Marie Abbott — Weaving.
4. Audrey Cooper — Handpressed Wool.
5. Patricia Hewitt — Quilting.
6. Lynda Robinson — Screenprint.

Living with Wood

Michael Penck comments on the second Australian Wood Conference recently held in Adelaide

The message that came across most clearly from the Conference was that if you come up with a **good design**, well executed and well presented, then you will have a chance to sell and live. To do this you must have a **sound education** and be design oriented. It became obvious that very few of the New Zealanders could claim to have/be this. The "emotional" type of woodworker, still all too present in New Zealand, was extremely ill-placed when set against the Australian drive to improve and get things going. The Australians refused to recognise red tape or obstacles to achievement.

An extremely interesting element of the Conference was Professor Akioka, a professor of industrial design, who had come up with an idea to revive old, traditional Japanese craft. He had sought and won a study grant from Toyota to research the project, had then created a demand for those crafts and had set the people in the North of Japan to working on really interesting things. The Japanese items were beautifully executed, though not typically Japanese — they could also have been Scandinavian. It was the way they were designed, their simplicity and the chosen material that made them Japanese.

The exhibition at the design centre was very good. Certain items were very expensive — top pieces were priced between \$8,000 and \$17,000. Again the most interesting aspect was offered by the Japanese. New Zealand could easily follow the Japanese example for we have the talent to compete with the rest of the world if things are done the right way. At present they are not being done to New Zealand's advantage. It is time to co-ordinate some interesting thoughts — in a professional way — directed to the highest standards. This must be done in the next few years if we are to avoid mediocrity. □

Resource Centre Note:
Association of Designers and Furniture Makers NZ

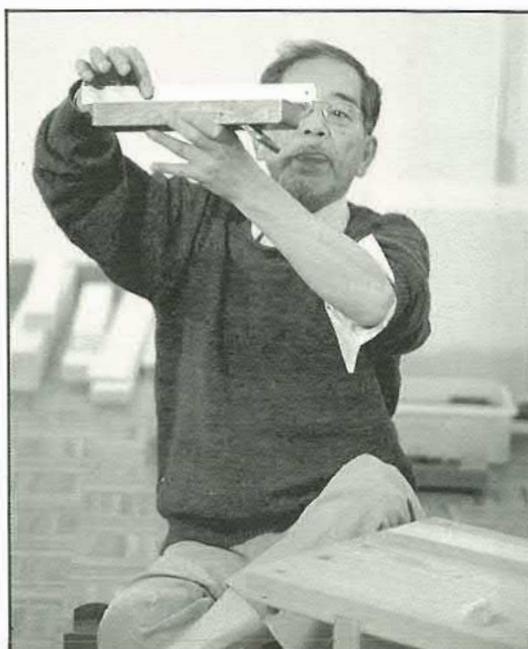
A Steering Committee has been elected to co-ordinate the formation of this association.

The association is intending to be a professional body to which members are elected and through which a code of practise will be established to maintain good standard of design and construction. In this way it will foster the interests of both its members and consumers.

Those involved would like to encourage comments and participation from throughout N.Z. before things are formalised at a foundation meeting proposed for early in the New Year.

Membership submissions are invited including slides of work, C.V. and general information on the designer/maker and their work.

Comments and submissions to be forwarded to the Steering Committee. P.O. Box 10-258, Christchurch.



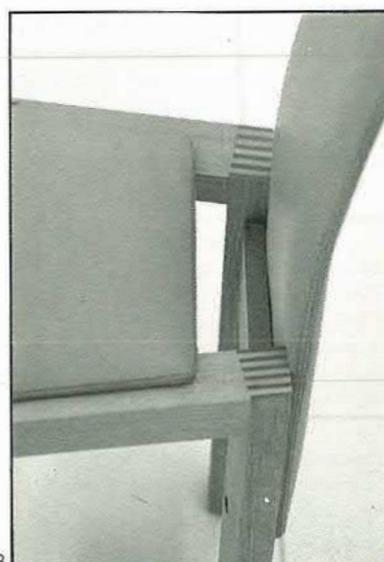
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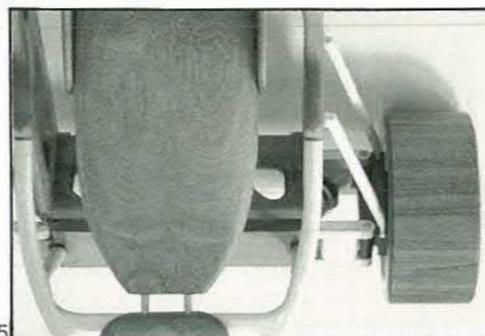
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1. Professor Akioka
2. Bowls
3. Chair Detail
4. Go-Cart
5. Detail Go-Cart

The use of Stencils

In this article I want to discuss the use of Stencils in enamelling.

Unfortunately this technique is often used to reduce enamelling to the lowest common denominator; nasty dull and tedious examples of repetitive designs on small dishes and coasters are often to be found in gift and craft shops. They frequently compound the insult to good enamelling by being extremely badly executed as well! I want to show you that it is possible to produce good, exciting and innovative work in this technique, and that it can give great scope for individual creative effort.

All Art work, no matter what the medium or technique used, must have a solid base of good honest design to be effective. Enamellists often run the risk of having the lucent quality of their medium mask inadequate design and it is this, more than anything, that has brought the art of enamelling into disrepute. It is perfectly possible and reasonable with this technique to select a simple well designed motif, and by thoughtful use of colours and the appropriate enamels, produce a charming and valid piece of work. This is as capable of being produced by a schoolchild as by an experienced craftsperson.

As in any art, it is the quality of the designwork which marks it out as being good, pedestrian or downright bad. If I seem to be labouring this point about design, it is because I believe passionately in the possibilities of enamelling and become distressed when I see pieces that fail to do justice to the state of the art!

Before you can reasonably begin to think about designs in enamel, you have to have a comprehensive range of fired colour test pieces, showing the different effects enamel colours have with one another, and the different ways they react with one another depending on the order in which they are fired. Suppose you fired a base coat of transparent flux (colourless enamel) and subsequently added a further coat of transparent dark green, you would find that the test would give you a beautiful translucent green. If you reversed the

firing order of the same two enamels you would get an amazing speckled effect quite unlike the former test. Frequently the unfired enamel bears no relation to its fired colour, so fired samples are necessary to make colour judgements in a given design. Fired colour samples of all the enamels, singly and in various combinations need to be made. Kiln temperature is important too, as there will be great colour variations according to the temperature used in firing the piece and its position in the kiln. This is particularly so when opaque enamels are used, for instance, a low-fired opaque ivory will produce a lovely creamy colour and when the same enamel is high fired it will become quite green. Some of the opaque blues become turquoise in overfiring, and the opaque yellow, grey, opaque orange and red are easily overfired and turn black, so a low kiln temperature is essential for these enamels.

Different enamel manufacturers' enamels will have different properties as they are often made to different chemical formulae. The enamels I am referring to in this and subsequent articles are the enamels made by the firm of W.G. Ball Ltd of Stoke-on-Trent, England. A studio notebook is useful for keeping detailed information on the various test pieces fired when you have forgotten how and when you fired them months later!

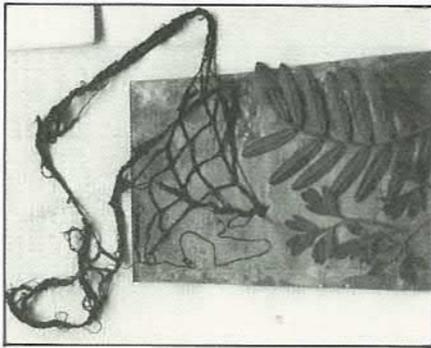
To make a test piece, cut a piece of copper about 1½ inches x 1 inch, make a hole in it, clean the reverse side with metal cleaner, as per instructions given in the previous article (NZ Crafts Autumn 1985), gum and dust the counter-enamel, place the piece on a suitable trivet and fire. When cool, clean off the firescale and prepare for the next firing. For the transparent enamels, mask half the area and dust transparent clear flux over the exposed copper with enough enamel to cover the copper without making it too thick — if any enamel is too thick it will fire cloudy — remove the paper mask and fire the test piece. When cool, clean the exposed copper area, and dust a transparent enamel over the whole surface and fire.

This will now give you a test piece showing the effect with a given transparent enamel on bare copper and over flux. In some enamels, notably the transparent red, orange and olive green, there is a very marked difference in the appearance. The transparent red will be a dark maroon over the bare copper and a bright luminous colour over the flux; the olive green is pale gold over flux and dark khaki brown over the bare copper. When the piece is cool, make out a sticky label with information about the enamel used and firing conditions then fix it firmly on the back. The whole will enable you to either hang it on a board or wire it with other test pieces of similar types.

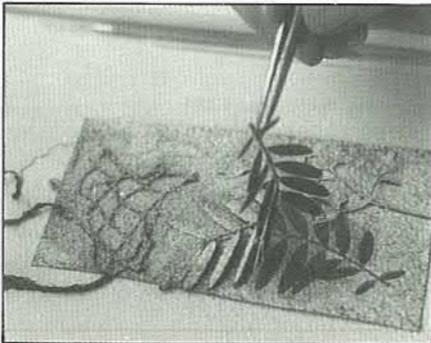
Make opaque colour enamel test pieces in a similar manner, with the exception that, in the second firing, dust the opaque enamel over the entire surface and high fire it. When it is cool, mask half the area and reapply the same enamel, only this time low fire it and this will give you the different colour values of a given opaque colour on high and low fire. As before, make sure you label it so that you can identify it later.

When you have made a satisfactory range of opaque and transparent colour tests, you can make additional tests showing what each transparent colour looks like over the other opaque and transparent colours. In fact, if you had the time and a private income to keep you, you could easily spend a lifetime making colour tests with endless permutations of colours one upon another . . . Seriously though, do take the time to make a good selection of sample test pieces. You will find them enormously helpful in selecting the colours to use in your work to make the most effective use of your designs.

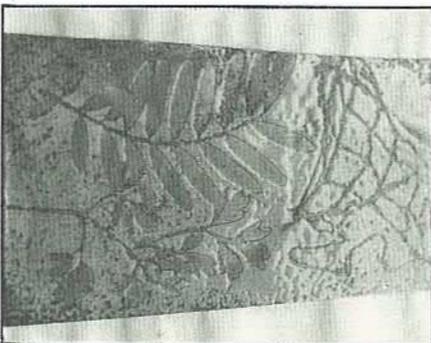
One of the advantages of using copper as a base for enamel is that it oxidizes and changes colour on firing. This can be used to great advantage in stencil work, in fact oxidation plus just one transparent colour can be used to good effect in the following manner:— Prepare a small test piece of copper, clean the reverse side, dust and fire the



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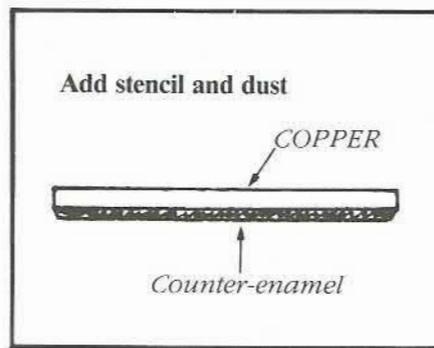


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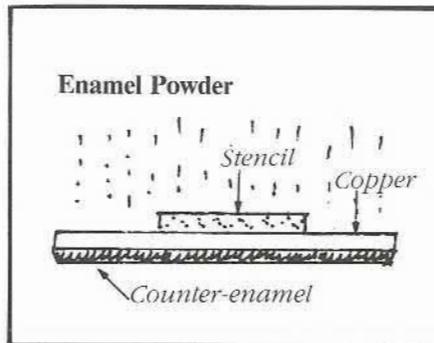


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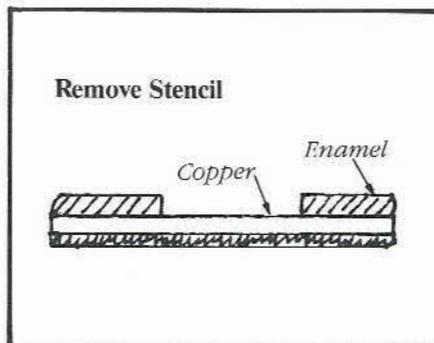
counter-enamel. When cool, using the special metal cleaner (see previous article), thoroughly clean the top surface of the copper until it is shiny bright. Rinse with clean water and dry. Using a variety of found stencils (in this case I have used leaves from the weed fumitory, another from the virginium tree and a piece from an old rayon hair net which has been dampened to make it easier to shape), arrange the composition in a satisfactory manner (fig. 1), using gum tragacanth to stick the stencils down on the bare copper. Dust the entire surface evenly with a thin layer of enamel, just sufficient to cover the copper. A good enamel to use in a test of single colour design like this is a transparent amber or, alternatively, transparent clear flux. Next, carefully remove the stencil using jeweller's tweezers, steadily lifting from one end being careful not to let any enamel adhering to the stencil fall onto the impression left by the stencil (fig. 2). Make sure you have removed all the stencils — it is good policy to count all the bits of stencil you have used in a piece and then make sure you have lifted off the correct number — thin



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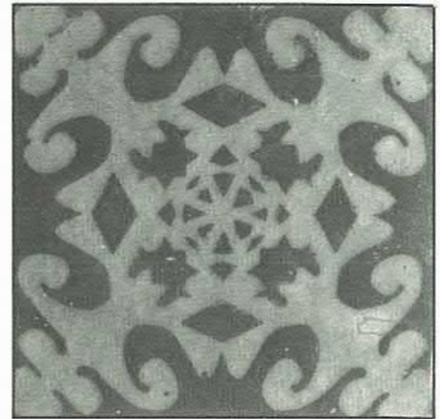


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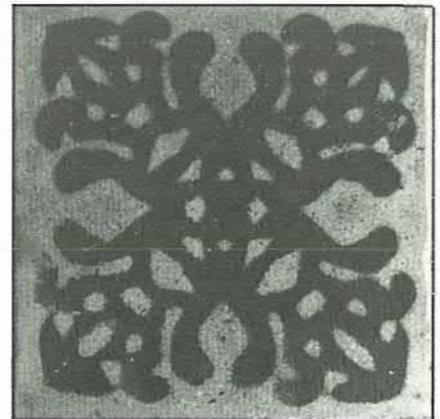


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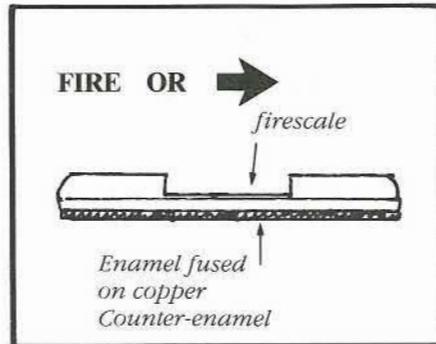
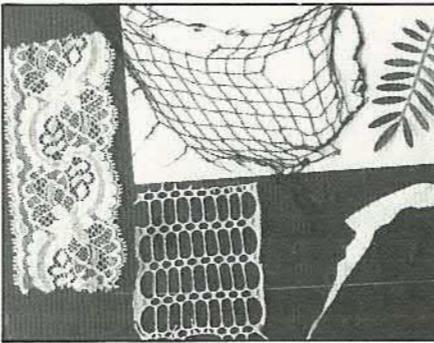
stencils are not easy to see once they have been covered with a layer of powdered enamel. If stencils are inadvertently left and fired with the piece, a nasty black carbon blob will be left in the middle of your enamel, which will fall off later, so you can't pretend you did it intentionally "for texture"! With all the stencils removed, place the piece on a trivet and fire, removing from the kiln when the surface is smooth and glossy. When you are using transparent enamels on copper the kiln temperature can be very hot, about 900-950 degrees celsius or higher — the higher you fire, the brighter and clearer your enamel colour will be. Kiln temperature only becomes critical when you are using opaque enamels (which might burn out and change colour) and silver wire (which will also burn out with disastrous results) if you exceed the melting point of silver. The sequence of the firing and fusing of enamel is that at first it will look powdery, gradually changing its colour till it looks like black powder. This will change and produce a shiny-ish lumpy look, a bit like the surface of an orange. These lumps will smooth out and the surface will look



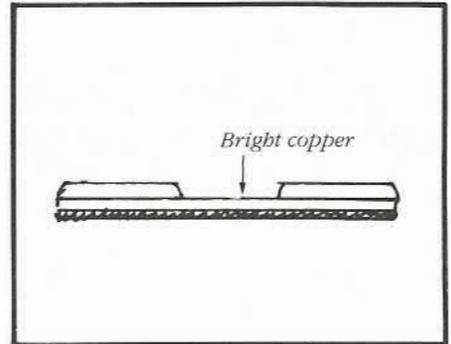
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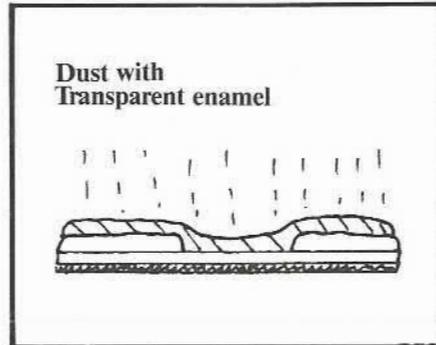
wavy — at this point the work can be removed from the kiln if it is to receive a further firing, but the enamel, at this stage, is not perfectly fused to the metal, so it is inadvisable to leave it at this stage for a final fire — and finally, when it is completely fused, the enamel surface will be bright red and utterly smooth and glossy. This is when the enamel should be removed from the kiln and allowed to cool naturally on a fireproof surface near the kiln. As the piece cools you will see the firescale forming on the bare copper areas (fig. 3). When the piece is cool enough to handle, clean off the loose firescale flakes, and then apply the same transparent enamel you used before, dusting it evenly over the entire piece, again making sure not to apply the enamel too thickly, or it will fire cloudy. Place on a trivet and high fire. When the piece is cool you will see the pattern made by the oxidized copper in the stencil impression (fig. 4). If you wished to make a rather more delicate tracery of the outline of the stencil, all the firescale on the copper made by the stencil impression should be cleaned off with metal cleaner before the final firing (fig. 5). Both these tests have been



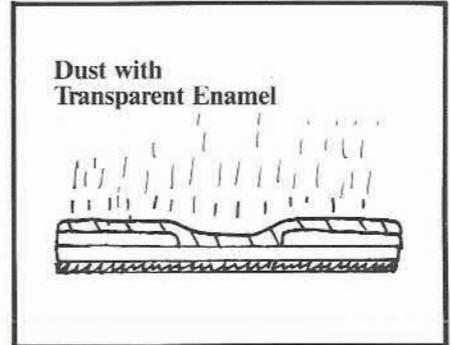
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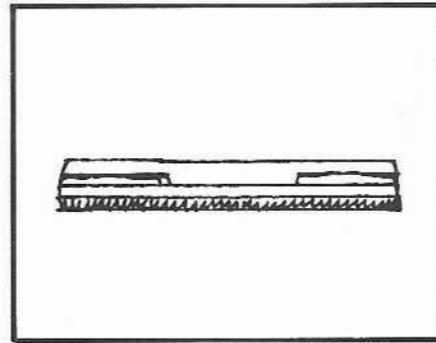
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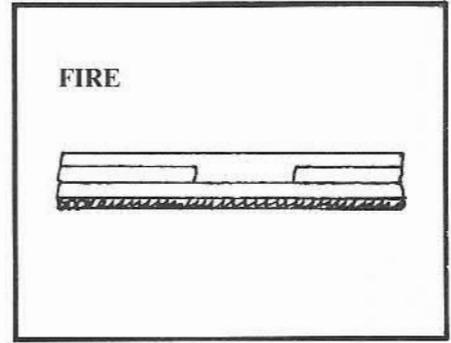
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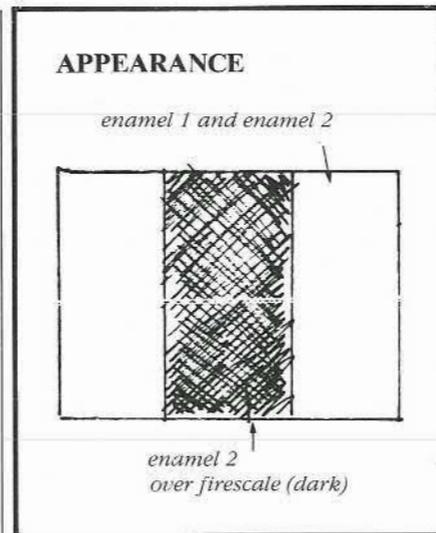


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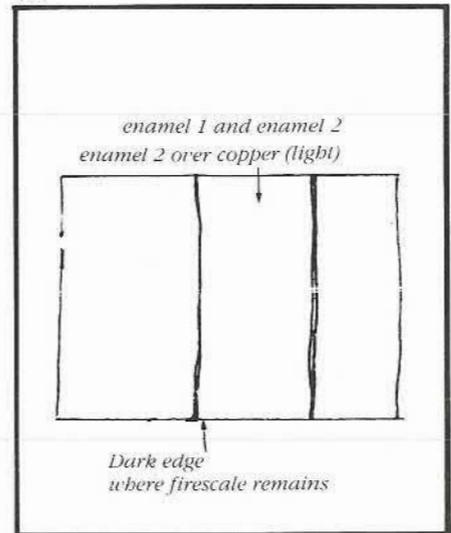
summarized in the diagrams.

With a complete collection of colour tests you will be able to see the possibilities of layering one colour upon another, using a variety of stencils, either made or found, and combining them with either opaque or transparent enamels. **Fig. 6** shows a selection of stencils using such items as manufactured lace, netting, plant leaves and paper cut-outs. **Fig. 7** shows two enamel test pieces using a cut-out paper stencil. The quality of the work will depend to a large extent on the effectiveness of the design as a whole. The scale of the work can be anything from a small item of jewellery to a large mural decorating a public building, with the added advantage that enamelled metal is completely weather resistant and will probably outlast the building by about 2,000 years!

Please feel free to write to me if you have any queries about enamelling and I will do my best to help you. Colin and I have decided to combine our surnames since our marriage hence the new name for both of us with the credit of this article!



Queries can be directed through the Information Officer.



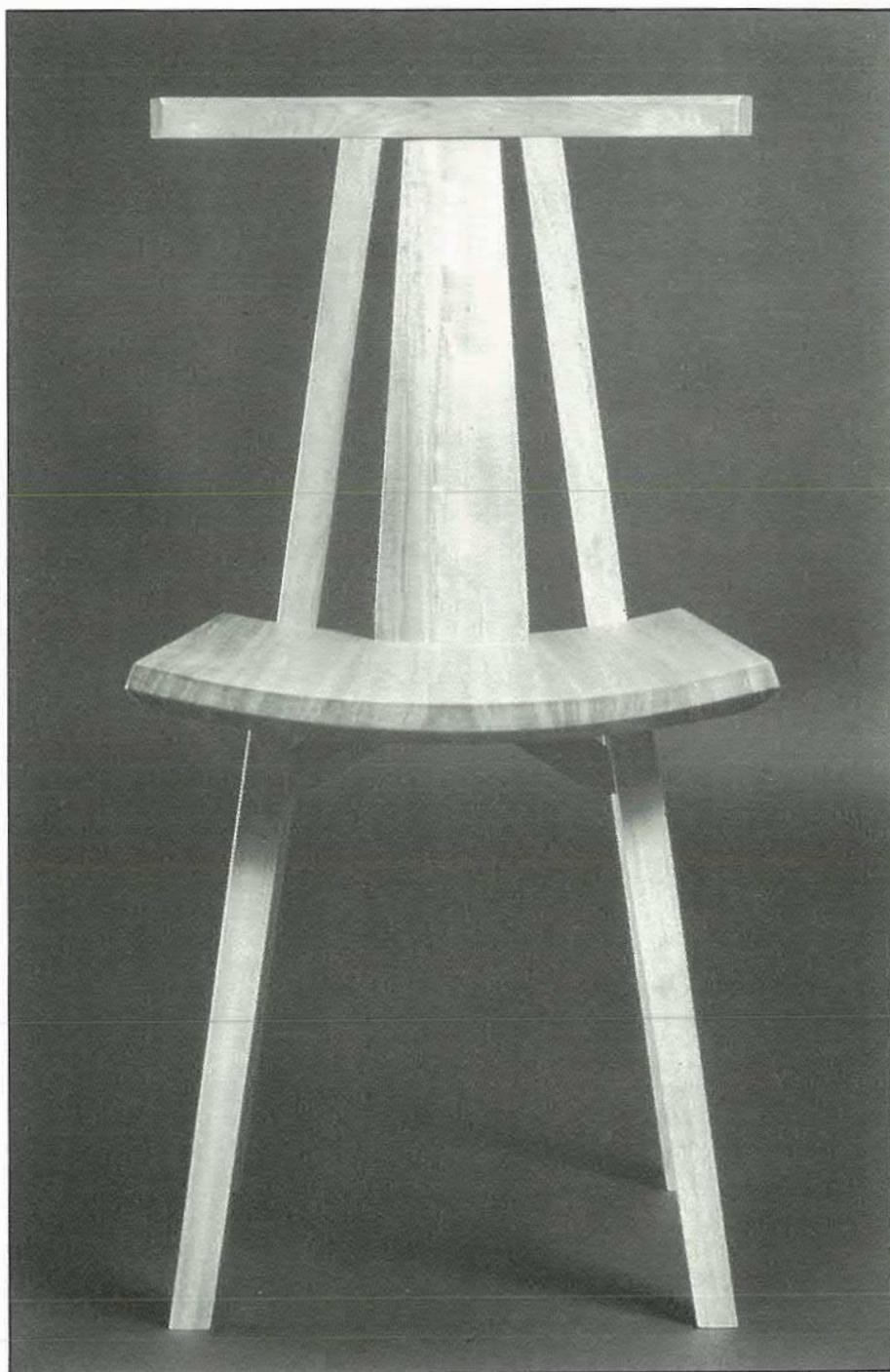
Photographs by Colin R. Fraser-Davies

PROFILE

Humphrey Ikin, contemporary furniture designer and craftsman, utilises machinery as an extension of his hand skills to create fine individual furniture.

Humphrey Ikin

FURNITURE MAKER



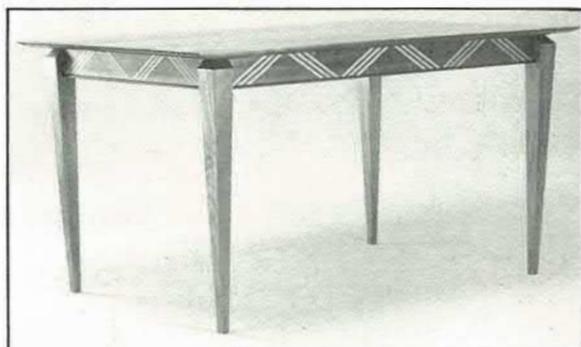
Dining Chair (1985)
Matai
850 mm high at back

Ikin's focus in recent times has been on the Pacific content of our culture. He makes a conscious rejection of an international style of designer-made furniture, which apart from a few exceptions, does not move him greatly.

He views furniture in terms of two fundamental contexts, that of function and the aesthetic. In terms of function

he feels "a responsibility to make useful objects." He goes on to state that "each piece should meet an acceptable cultural notion as to its function, though it should also challenge and extend people's attitudes in terms of what that piece should deliver."

The aesthetic qualities of each piece rely on the intellectual and formal



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2 Dining Table (1984) New Zealand Kauri, inlays of Tawa.
1400 mm long, 920 mm wide, 740 mm high.
3 Coffee Table (1985) Tanekaha and Kwila.
1530 mm long, 350 mm wide, 375 mm high at centre.
4 Coffee Table (1985) Matai, inlays of Tanekaha.
800 mm long, 525 mm wide, 420 mm high at centre.

elements of line, form and controlled motion. Looking specifically at Ikin's work in terms of its Pacific references he says, "Over a period of time we all build up a bank of sources of inspiration. I do not consciously set out to utilise so-called Pacific imagery, but due to exposure this has strongly influenced my design." Ikin speaks of the singular beauty of certain wooden and stone artifacts: the Maori canoe in the Auckland Museum with its commanding presence. The Pacific, however is not his only point of reference . . . he acknowledges influence from ancient Egyptian furniture and Japanese architecture.

"I also keep a watchful eye on 1985 Italian design, as well as the work of a few contemporary English and American makers." Another area of interest for him is New Zealand-made furniture from the 1950's and 60's. However, Victoriana "leaves me cold".

The influence of the Scandinavian furniture maker James Krenov is acknowledged by Ikin. "I had been very strongly influenced by his books." He also feels that "it's very easy for an identification with his (Krenov's) philosophical approach to carry over to one's design as well".

Ikin seldom uses detailed drawings or maquettes, preferring to sketch around the idea then move directly into the wood. An example of this would be the gently curved tops of the coffee tables illustrated. "The 'weight' given to the tops in terms of visual thickness and radius of curve is crucial to the success of these pieces. I finalised the shape by drawing and re-drawing directly onto the surface of the plank before committing it to the bandsaw." So in a

sense Ikin is using his eye to feel a form and is thus composing directly with wood.

Ikin believes in "laws of wood" with every piece he undertakes, right from the selection of wood in terms of cut, size and stress factors to the aesthetic configuration and colour. "This process of selection is made difficult due to there being few merchants geared to selling wood that meets the requirements of users such as myself." — Ikin often buys logs and has the wood milled to the cuts he requires. Moreover it is obvious that these 'laws of wood' can become complex — "the importance of the drying of the wood, allowing for changes in humidity levels, must never be underestimated."

Tolerance of working parts (such as drawers and doors) must always be considered in relation to these factors. Ikin also stresses that "though it is easy to get bogged down in technical concepts, these must not be allowed to detract from one's sense of adventure and enjoyment in the work".

Many woodworkers often use the 'historical content' to justify the piece they have made — (this piece of furniture was made from the last Kauri tree felled in 1900, 'a common sales patter'). Though the history of wood is interesting the quality of the work should not be hung on that alone. Ikin firmly believes that "in the end one must be true to oneself. Every maker has different standards — 'beautifully made' means something different to everyone".

One piece that particularly took my attention was the Matai dining chair. While much of his work is commissioned furniture — "acts of

faith" as he puts it, this chair was designed for limited batch production. Ikin's foremost concerns in designing the chair were comfort and strength. However, the simple strong lines do show the subtle Polynesian influences. Ikin states, "It's a perfect example of all influences coming together to create an indigenous chair."

"New Zealanders are quick to knock New Zealand design — when you get into the area of modern chairs, the challenge to create a wooden chair that stands its ground beside a 1985 European counterpart is very real. With this piece I enjoyed aiming to meet that challenge."

Ikin sees the final hurdle, in terms of the public's recognition of his work, is for a member of the public to actually take a piece home.

"New Zealanders seem most conservative about furniture, possibly because we lack a history of having furniture of quality and aesthetic individuality. It is not like buying a pot or a painting. People have to rearrange their homes to accept a new piece of furniture."

Ikin works from his studio in Mount Eden, and his work can often be seen at Compendium Gallery. With his commissioned work he enjoys both the challenges and restraints of meeting and extending the brief. In working on these pieces he aims always to extend his client's horizons.

Humphrey Ikin as a craftsman brings meaning to his work to match the integrity of the making. □

Murray Kennedy

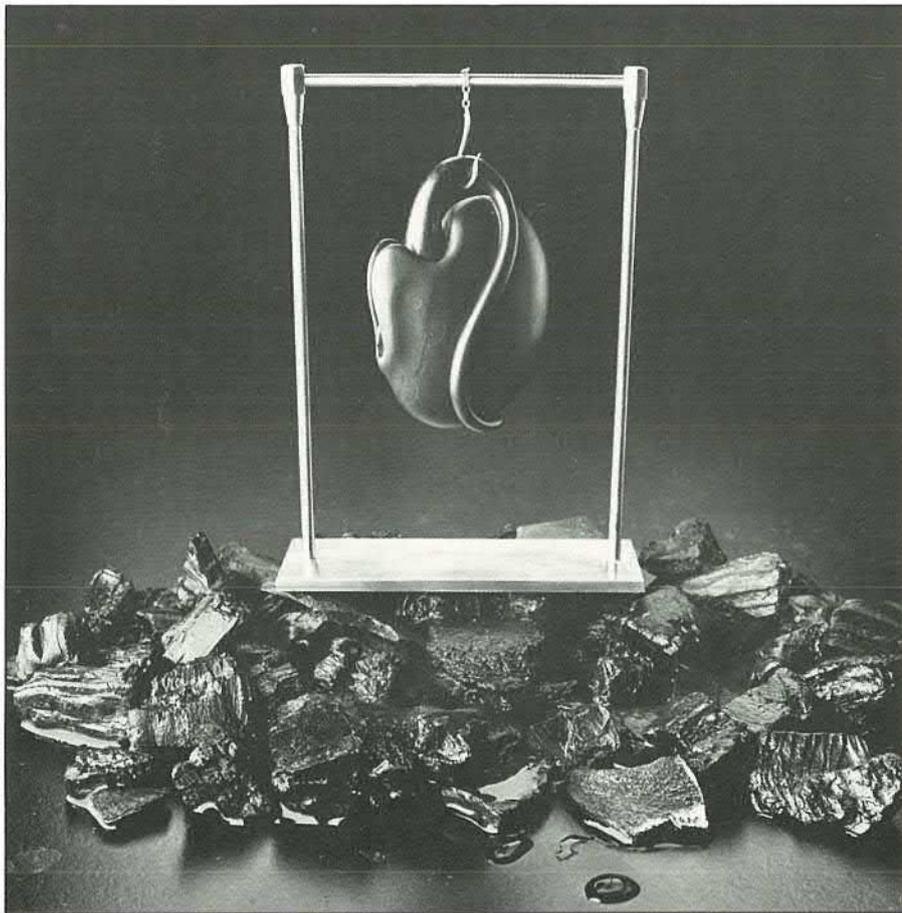
Photographs by Roy Emerson

FIRST NATIONAL JEWELLERY EXHIBITION

New Zealand Jewellers, Silversmiths, Bone and Stone Carvers are finally uniting to present a nationwide view of their work

Compendium Gallery

held the first National Show by New Zealand Jewellers. The exhibition was juried by visiting Californian jeweller David La Plantz; NZ-US Educational Foundation Fulbright Scholar whose workshops and itinerary were organised by the Crafts Council and Details Group. Winner of the award was Donn Salt, jade carver. Featured here are works from the Exhibition.

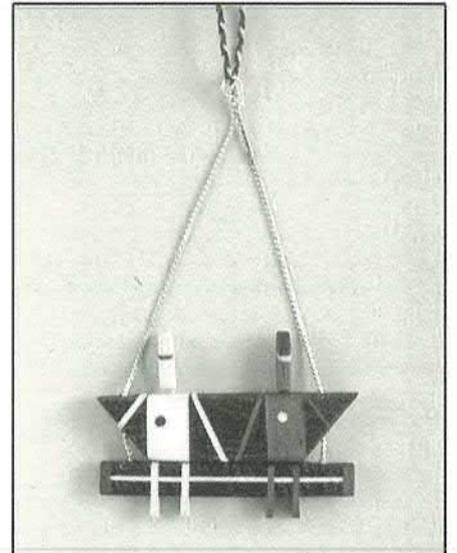


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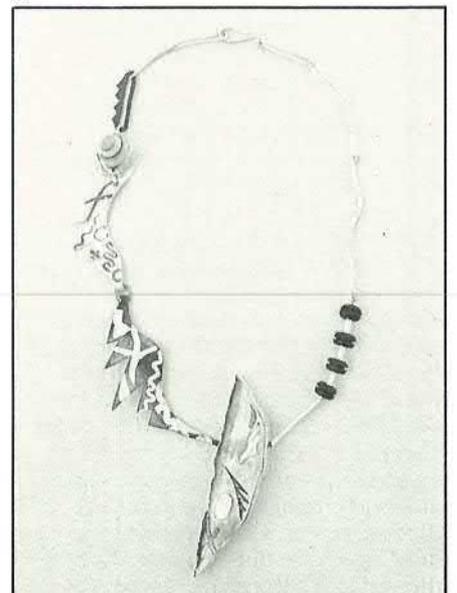
- 1 Donn Salt, Pendant in Argillite. "Tendril"
2 Merv Miller, Necklace. Silver, wood, copper & silk. Width 13cm
3 Richard Foote, Pendant. Wood. Width 5cm.
4 Elena Gee, Necklace. Silver, enamelled titanium, mixed metals, rubber & shell. Length of pendant 11cm.



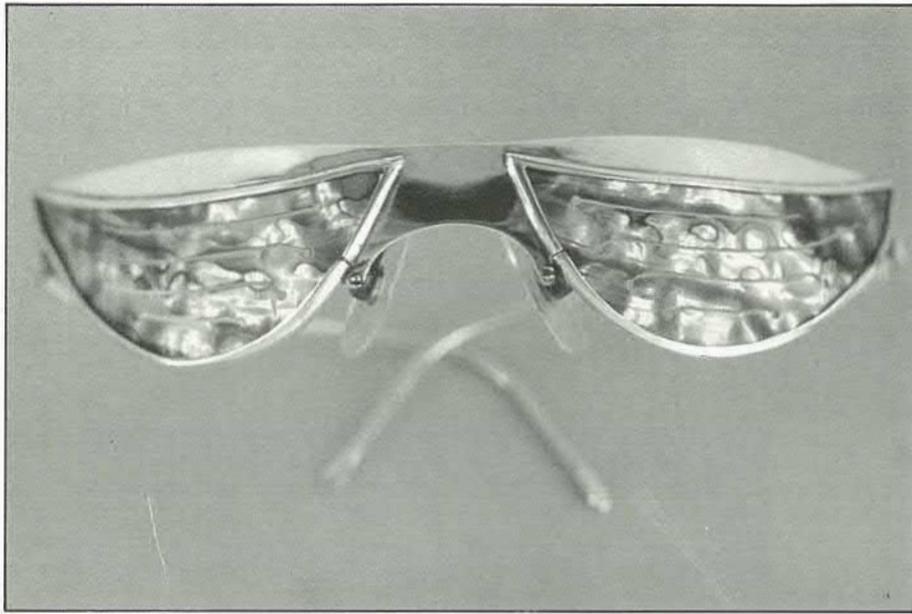
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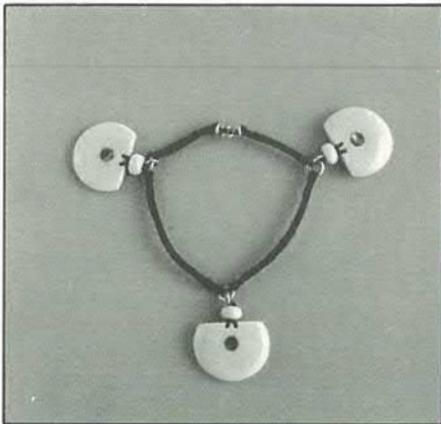
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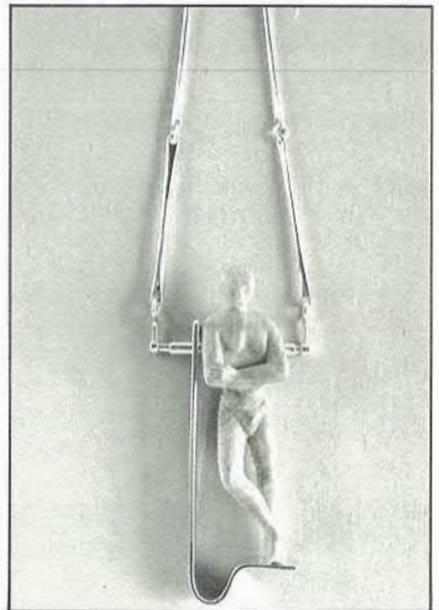
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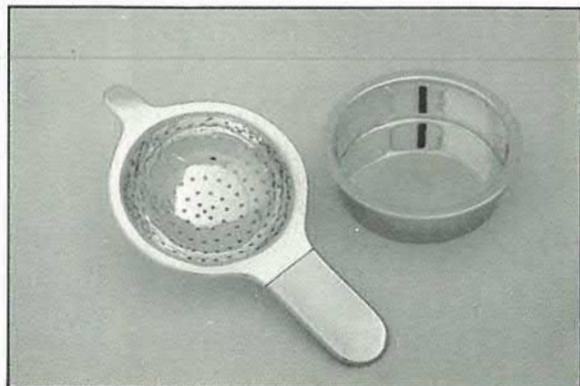
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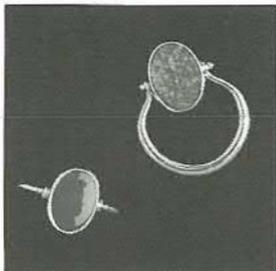
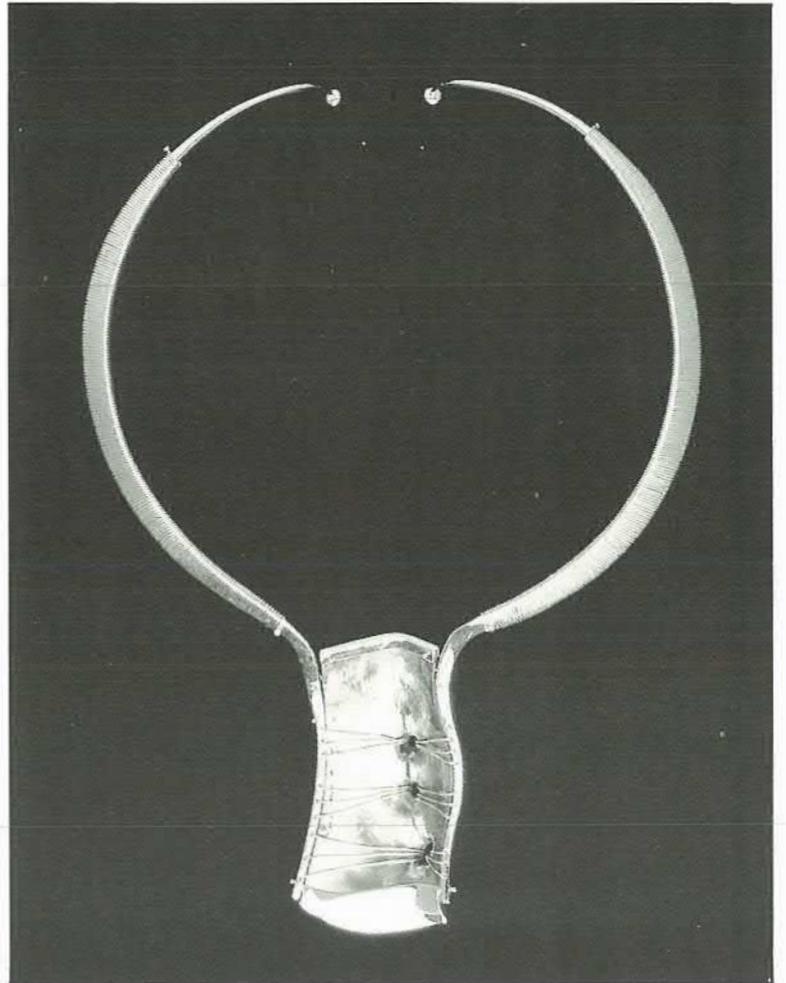
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1. Brian Adam. Sunglasses. Silver & paua. Width 12cm.
2. Hepi Maxwell. Pendant. Jade. Length 8cm.
3. Ray Mitchell. Bracelet, Bone, paua & cotton. Width 9cm.
4. Gavin Hitchings. Brooch. Silver, painted wood & gold leaf. Length 7cm.
5. Katherine Stammers. Necklace. Silver — boxwood. Figure 7cm.
6. Brian Flintoff. "Tauibu". Whalebone & soapstone. Width 14cm.
7. Peter Woods. Tea Strainer & Stand. Silver & copper. Width 8cm. □

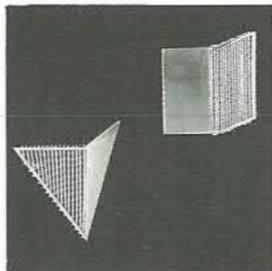
Stephen Mulqueen

JEWELLER

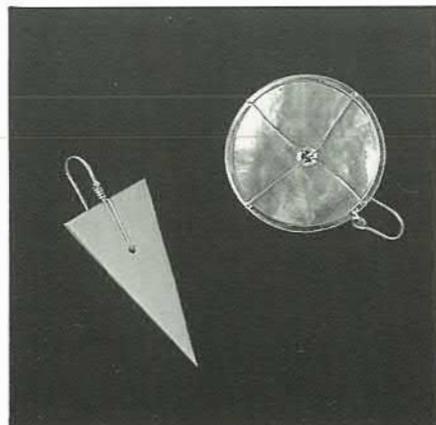
- 1953** Born — Invercargill
- 1974** Completed five year jewellery apprenticeship
- 1975** 6 months working in Nelson at Jens Hansen workshop
- 1979** DFA School of Art Otago Polytechnic
- 1980** Set up own workshop at home
- 1983** Amalgamated workshops with Kobi Bosshard and together formed 'FLUXUS' Gallery/workshop for Contemporary Jewellery in Dunedin.



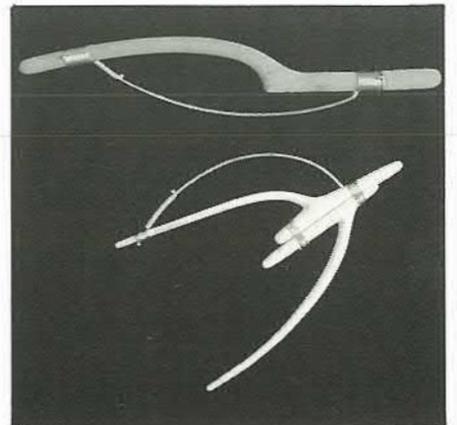
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- 1. Swivel Rings
- 2. Brooches
- 3. Paua and Silver Necklace
- 4. Silver Arrowhead and Paua Disc Earrings
- 5. Brooches — colourdyed wood & silver wire

Craft Habitat – Nelson

One year on Peter Gibbs reports on progress in this unique venture

Habitat means "the natural environment for an animal or plant", according to my dictionary, so it's a fairly appropriate place for a group of young, developing craftspeople to be inhabiting. The premises have had a chequered career. The initial buildings went up to accommodate an overflow of activity from the burgeoning Waimea Pottery. Back in the early seventies, the handcrafted pottery business set up by Jack and Peggy Laird could not handle the demand for flatware, mainly plates, so this expansion aimed to satisfy this demand in a modest way, and to provide some much needed local employment. Over the years this became too much of an industry for the Lairds, and Richmond Ceramics came into being, leasing the buildings from Jack and Peggy. Like the dinosaurs, this business became too big for the marketplace, and in 1984, soon after being taken over by Teal Ceramics, it folded, leaving the Lairds with some large empty buildings and bitter disappointment.

Unlike the dinosaur, the buildings did not become submerged by the sand and mud of the nearby Waimea Estuary. Thanks to some speedy lateral thinking and yet another period of expenditure and uncertainty, the present evolution shows little sign of the radical changes of a year ago.

Briefly, the concept has been to offer craftspeople a workshop and sales area offering mutual support for mutual benefit. It means that they can get straight to work in pleasant surroundings without the inevitable hassles of town planning, buildings, neighbours and so on, that plague most of us when starting out. The layout that has evolved is of a clear roofed pathway with the various workshops opening off to left and right. Inside each workshop, the front area is generally devoted to sales, with the work being carried out right behind. The customer can see what's being made, without having to get right in the thick of it — quite a consideration when busy summer crowds start to arrive.

The first workshop is that of weaver Beth Meikle. The impression gained when you step in the door is of incredible industry. Wool and finished work are absolutely everywhere. Few weavers in this country are able to achieve a reasonable income from their business. In order to make this a viable

goal, Beth has taken on an assistant on a government subsidised work scheme. In addition she pays another worker contract rates to beef up the output. Her chosen target area is fabric for fashion clothing and furniture. To gain the necessary sales skills to make the volume of sales, she is currently attending a marketing course run at Nelson Polytech by the Export Institute.

Woodworkers Maxine Roberts and Colin Wragg have a much more laid-back approach. For the past five years they have operated a gift shop in Mt Maunganui. Part of their stock then was their own bread bins and other small wooden pieces. Last summer they holidayed in the South Island, finishing up in the Nelson area during the peak season, and having a great time following the numerous local craft fairs, flea markets and wine festivals. A chance conversation with Jack Laird led to their occupying their current workshop. Their production is strictly limited to coping with door sales, which are already brisk. They have a number of smaller stock items, generally fairly original adaptations of objects seen elsewhere. A best-seller is the Kubel, a wooden bucket constructed much like a straight sided barrel, and used for anything from sewing gear to food storage. In addition, they have increasing demand for Colin's furniture, roll top desks, chairs, tables and so on. Between coping with production, building themselves a house in order to get out of their caravan before their first child arrives at Christmas, and stock-piling for the January holiday season, life is not dull.

In contrast to the Wragg's visually busy workshop, that of artist Margaret Maloney is a much more open and elegant space. Margaret works in two dimensions using a variety of media. As well as more conventional paintings, she is best known for her work with dyes on fabric. Having previously worked from a small home workshop, she finds the pressures of a more complicated environment, as well as a longer working week, stimulating but very hard work.

Ricky Dasler is quick to point out that he is a jeweller, not a silversmith. At least not *just* a silversmith. His background is a rigorous five year apprenticeship as a jeweller in Christchurch. During this time, most of

work was repairs, requiring a high input of discipline and ingenuity. Assisted by his wife Celia, Ricky has spent his first few weeks building up a stock of smaller items such as rings, earrings and bracelets. His particular interest is in making one-off pieces, mainly sculptural, and in using the various other media from Craft Habitat in conjunction with his own work.

From the most recent arrivals at Craft Habitat, cross the walkway to one of the original workshops — that of glassworkers Ola and Marie Hoglund. Echoing the trend towards more formal craft educations, Ola spent a total of seven years training at the Swedish glassworks of Boda and Orrefors before spending a further three in Swaziland working on a Swedish aid project setting up a small craft co-operative. Marie learned her engraving skills at Orrefors, where she met Ola, and the two now use their complimentary skills in a prolific output. As in any mixed craft venture, glass is always one of the best selling items so the couple are kept hard at production to satisfy demand.

One year on, Craft Habitat has had its share of growing pains. The determination of Jack and Peggy Laird to people the area with sympathetic and competent craftspeople has meant that growth has come gradually, and there is still space for a leatherworker, an ironworker or blacksmith, someone working in skins or hides, a printer, or anyone else who turns up with the right skills and attitudes. Sue James is shortly to open a coffee shop on the premises to provide on the spot sustenance, or something more transportable in hand-crafted food.

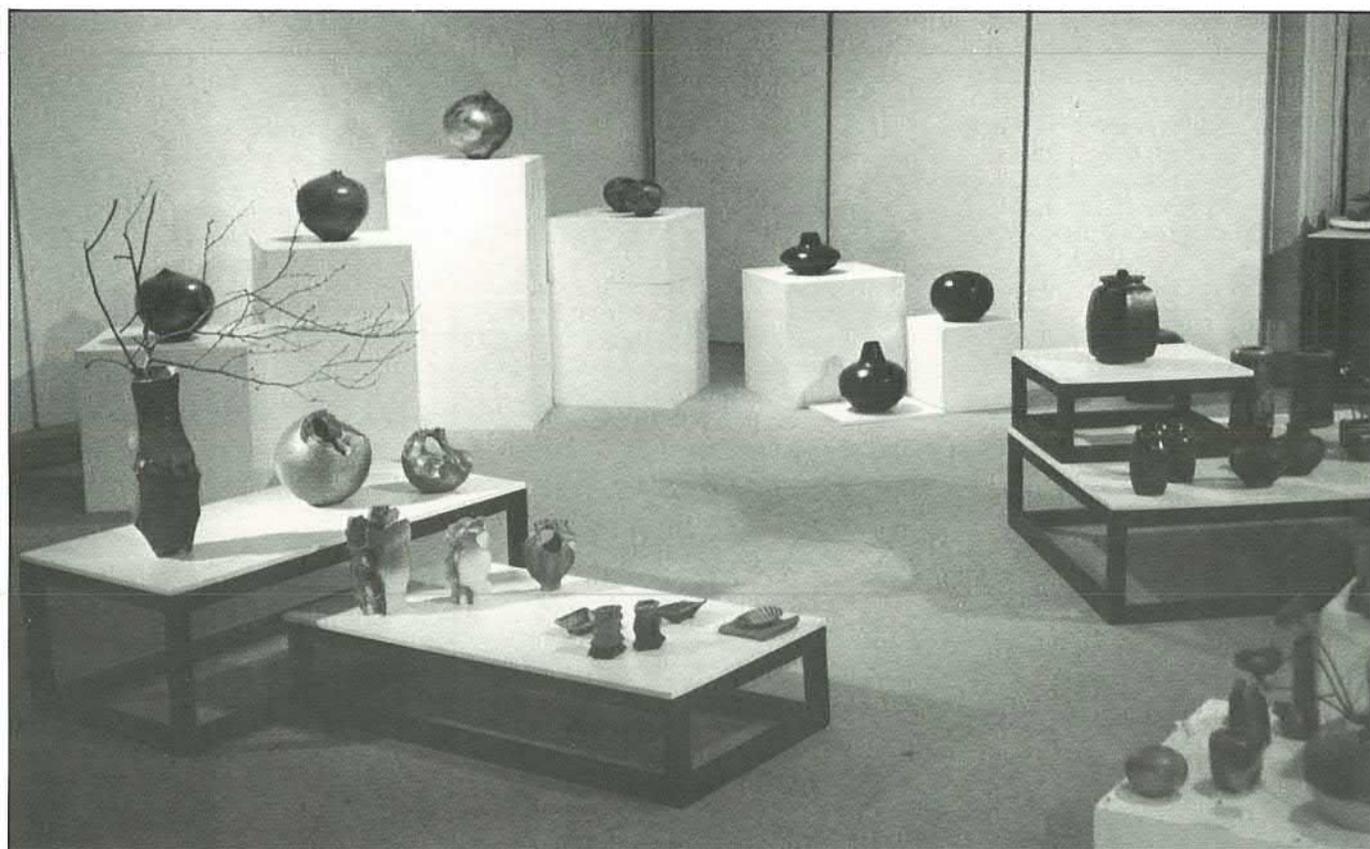
The lessons of evolution have provided knowledge of how best to manage the complex. Like any living organism the needs and aspirations of the participants are fluid, so the dynamics of coping with growth so far have forced everyone to continually evaluate their requirements from the area. Jack and Peggy currently see their role as being part of the scenery, available for advice, but not pushing it, while the individual craftspeople retain their autonomy without being forced into co-operative ventures simply through weight of numbers. The overriding factor is not the needs of Craft Habitat, but the needs of the human beings that work there. □

REVIEW

Roy Cowan reviewed an exhibition of Anagama, Raku, Saggar and pit fired pots at the Crafts Council Gallery, August 7-23 1985.

“Fire Marked Pottery”

Clockwise from Centre Front
Richard Parker — Kaeo
Gita Berzins — Christchurch
Jo Minto — Lower Hutt
Barry Woods — Nelson



In the good/bad old days of the heavy oil drip-feed kilns fire or carbon marks indicated unevenly heated, stressed ware or failure to reach temperature, but progress eliminated these troubles.

A handful of New Zealand potters have continued the style of massive applications of heat work in an enriched and varying atmosphere but the major trend has been towards electric and gas fired kilns with fewer hassles, fewer losses and more bland results. The resurrection of 'primitive firings first in Laku then with other ancient practises

with or without kiln, following the appearance of the high-tech kiln, suggests a reaction towards freedom, and a certain inbuilt randomness as a way of looking to the flames for creativity.

'Firemarked Pottery' attracted 120 entries from twenty-one potters who showed a fascinating range of results, ranging from process-as-design, to design-controlled works.

GRAEME HASKELL, Anagama Kiln, had simple cylindrical forms, with fire burns and encrustations — fired and bombarded. RICHARD PARKER,

Anagama Kiln, showed a "Dark fire-scarred vase" aptly describing the effect. Colours mid to dark brown.

MAUREEN HUNTER exhibited spheres and open forms in dark colours with matte surfaces, contrasting with lusted areas and PENNY EVANS had bottles, cylinders and a bowl in shades of sienna brown.

This first group represent the basic lower temperature range reduction process embodying carbon black, and red, purple or black oxides of iron or copper for colour.

*Gita Berzins
Christchurch
"Erosion Forms"*



PETER GIBBS' forms arise from an expanded sphere in light-coloured or white body. The tonality is lighter than the first group. There is a localised dark or black area providing the base note but most of the surface bears cloud like drifts of colours, reddish, blue, fawn and grey, the whole burnished or lightly glazed. The effect is painterly, and one can see that controls of form and surface are at work.

JO MUNRO had five entries listed as organic forms, — spheres with informal openings on top, saggar fired. The dominant colour is a strong orange to russet shade with a subsidiary black area, as from a local reducing agent, suggesting, as for Gibbs, a by-choice placement of the black area. This comment also applies to the entries of CECILIA PARKINSON and HELEN POLLOCK. Parkinson, working with totally enclosed saggar, makes simple forms with prepared surfaces and local reduction, and Pollock makes small Branwian forms with drifts of grey and light brown on a fawn to ivory base, with no blacks. The effect resembles the surface of travertine, a variety of marble.

GITA BERZINS, Anagama, had a group of small but monumental sculptures, breached spheres and laminar structures, suggesting eroded rock forms, in light warm tones with partial ash glaze.

SALLY CONNOLLY provided slab works, fluted coralline forms, and bottles, in warm tones. The tallest bottle had an orange-red flashing of great luminosity. Ceramic surfaces at fusion point and sensitive to elements in the Kiln plasma; fluxes, colourants or mobilised glazes, — an area open to further research.

STEVE FULLMER, modified pit firing. Two bottles, within ceramic tradition, two discoid forms with attachments, styled as of metal with sharp edges and welded on bits, dry surfaced, highly colouristic, wafts

of copper carbonate greens and blues, orange-yellows. Like metal sculptures, not unreasonably. Silicon is a mexal, and the domains of mexal and ceramic formation overlap.

ESTELLE and BRUCE MARTIN, Anagama. An earlier group shown at Albany had examples of the accidents, variations and adventures are aspects of anagama firings. The present group suggest a greater control of the slowfiring in a glazy atmosphere of a wood fired kiln. Two small flower containers in modified cubes, the sides exhibiting "iron-foot" type reddening, with light glazing on the rims, from clear to honey colour, provided traditional excellences, approaching Bizen.

With the next three exhibitors the place of flare as a visible factor declines.

ADRIANA HENDEL and ANITA THOMPSON employ figured design upon a black raku base. In differing conventions they engrave the leather-hard pieces, defining zones which later receive glazes or lustres. Hendel's figuration emerges as miniature landscapes, Thompson's works have strong abstract designs, with shapes and tonal steps clearly defined and working with the pattern. So, a process generally used to produce happenings is here used to produce completely planned art works. A photo album supplied by Adriana Hendel shows the full process. No magic formulae, the simplest of kilns, — it's all in the design.

RICK RUDD, Raku. Precise bottle forms in a grainy matt black body, formed with cut facets, with spiralling ledge like a mountain-side path, defined by polishing or a pale neutral glaze. No trace of flame effect. These are simply black body works which could have been made by other means, strictly outside the terms of this exhibition.

The same resenation must be made with the otherwise attractive works of BARRY WOODS whose spheroidal jars are inlaid with bands of coloured beads,

a visual link with ancient Peruvian work, and DIANE WOODS, who has small spheres, bottles, and a disc in black body with engraved decoration.

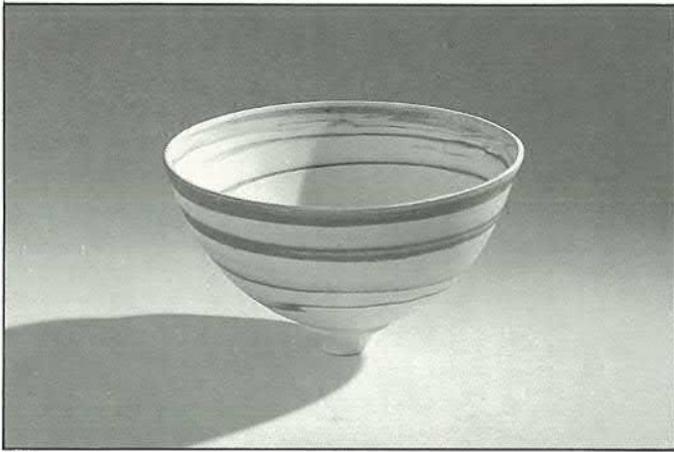
These days all major movements have their kit of dissidents, notably politics and the arts, whose dissidents may resort to ANTI-ART to debunk the establishment, and attract attention. So we have a potters establishment and of course an ANTI-POTTERS, who are apt to tear up bowls and do dreadful things to teapots. Perhaps the most radical ANTI-POT was advanced by Australian Milton Moon, guest-exhibitor at an earlier N.Z.S.P. annual exhibition. He sent a box of shards. Doubtless, ANTI-CRAFT will appear.

BRIAN GARTSIDE takes his stance upon a plate (well made), ruled with exquisite lines contra to the plate shape, which has been fired with scattered bursts of stains and globules of glaze. In the middle is the classic spiral crack (plate dried too fast), an accident of making, the use thereof, no accident. To show that even the most inspired potter can be caught by the potters demon. RUSHANBUST? The work is not notably fire marked, it could have come from an electric kiln. Rather, marked by Gartside.

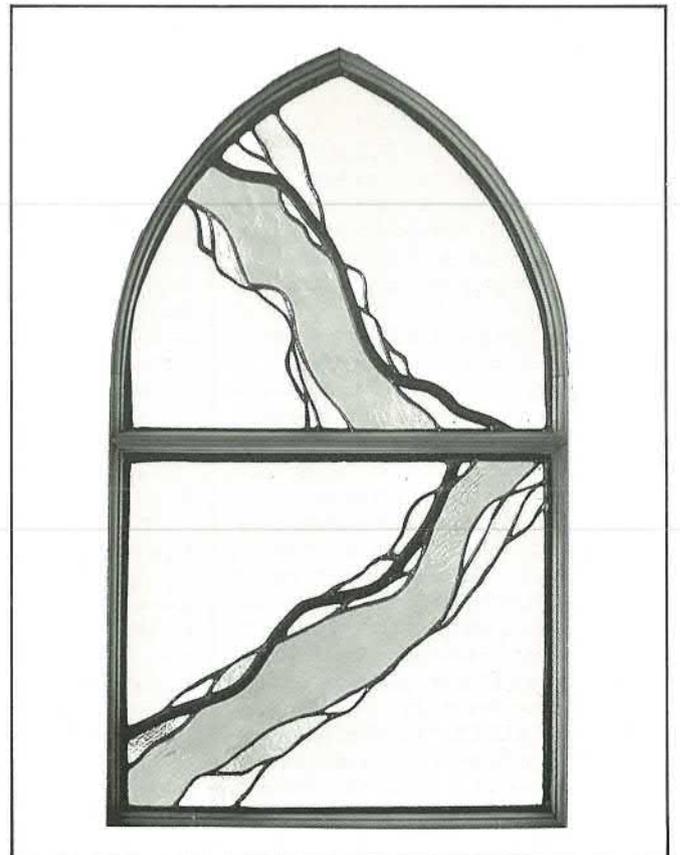
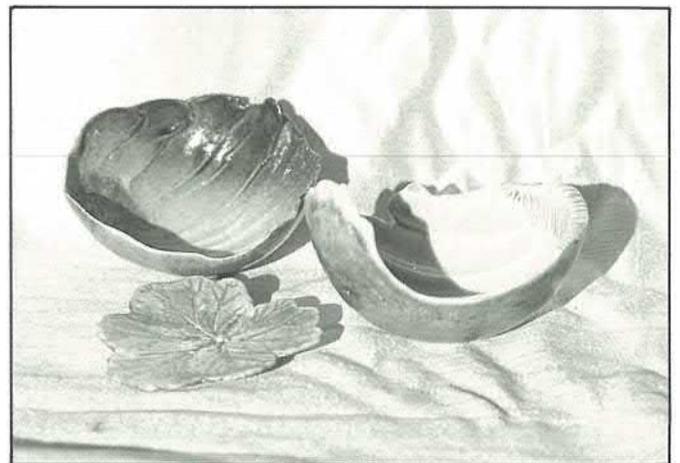
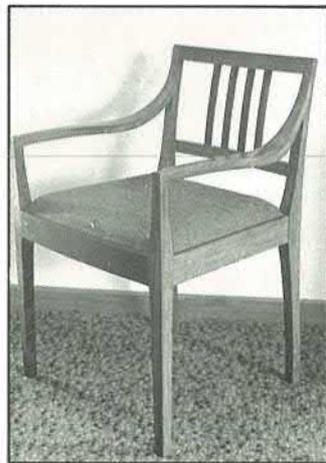
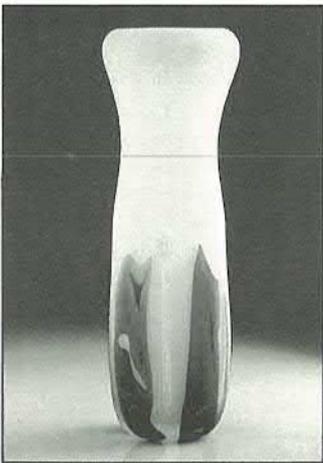
And what happens to all the Anti-Artists, the Dada painters and poets and the Surrealists (in pottery too)? The definition of Art just widens to include them too, they become respectable, part of the establishment, part of art history.

"Firemarked Pottery" was an excellent theme which resulted in a first-rate exhibition with a small but fascinating photo supplement. Sales were low. No fault of the organisers. Winter bit fiercely at the opening, on top of an economic undertow, still intensifying, which is affecting craft shops and galleries, along with many other enterprises. □

RECENT WORK



1. Robin Paul — Porcelain Agate
2. Peter Viesnik — Sbard Vase
3. Vic Matthews — Carver Chair
4. Judith Horrocks
5. Chris Dunn — Grey Valley Platter
6. Alan Skates — Window



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- * **To represent craftspeople on a national basis**
- * **To lobby for and negotiate on issues affecting craftspeople**
- * **To provide a comprehensive information service of resource material on all aspects of the crafts**
- * **To facilitate communication between craftspeople**
- * **To promote the image of New Zealand craft**
- * **To ensure the availability of appropriate craft training and education**
- * **To arrange discussions, lectures, workshops and other activities to instruct and stimulate craftspeople and the general public**

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- * *Participate in the Gallery's exhibition programme*
- * *Participate in the Crafts Council's Corporate Membership Scheme*
- * *Provide slides and information on your work for inclusion in the Resource Centre's slide library for use by architects, designers, Government Departments and Corporations*
- * *Submit slides and/or photos of your work for inclusion in the Crafts Council's "Architectural Commissions" Portfolio*
- * *Receive information on workshops/lectures organised for visiting craftspeople*

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- * *Bi-monthly "Crafts Council Newsletter"*

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RESOURCE CENTRE

The Resource Centre operates a catalogue, book, periodical and slide library.

The catalogues and books are available for hire for 2 weeks at a cost of \$2.00.

The slide sets are available for hire at the cost of \$6.00 to members and \$8.00 to non-members.

The periodicals are subscribed to or received on exchange. All periodicals are indexed and articles thought to be of interest to members are mentioned in this section of the magazine. Periodicals are not available for loan, however members are most welcome to peruse them and articles can be photocopied at the cost of 20c a page.

Copies of the catalogue, book, periodical and slide library catalogues are available on request.

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.

ENAMELLING AND METALSMITHING

AUSTRALIAN ENAMELLING

Craft Australia 1985/1 p 18-23

HYDRAULIC DIE FORMING FOR THE ARTIST/METALSMITH

Metalsmith Vol 5 No 3 p28-35

EDUCATION

EDUCATION SUPPLEMENT:

Illustrated article on 18 Australian institutions; with information on the courses

*offered at each institution
Craft Australia 1985/1 p58-88*

CERAMICS

HAND CRAFT POTTERY

Whence and Wither, Harry Davis

Harry Davis gives an overview of craft revivalism. He refers to social issues that have crossed the art/craft movement throughout history and interweaves with this his own experiences from the days of working for Bernard Leach. He is critical of the present emphasis on aesthetics over and above that of skills and other practical concerns; however, he argues that this current direction in the making and marketing of pots can be explained by the values and motives inherent in the formation years of the handcraft movement.

*A lecture given at Macquarie University, Sydney 1984
Pottery in Australia Vol 24 No 1 p18-24*

MARIA KUCZYNSKA CERAMIC SCULPTURE

*Illustrated article on 1985
Fletcher Brownbuilt Award
Judge. Pottery in Australia Vol 24 No 3 p4-6*

ARCHITECTURAL CERAMICS: EIGHT CONCEPTS

*Art about architecture at the
American Craft Museum
American Craft June/July
p46-51*

WOOD

TAGE FRID - A TALK WITH THE OLD MASTER

*An illustrated article on Tage
Frid retiring as professor*

*emeritus at Rhode Island
School of Design after a career
that has shaped contemporary
woodworking in America.
Fine Woodworking No 52
p66-77*

**TURNING MOSTLY AIR —
FINDING THE HIDDEN
SHAPES IN ROTTED LOGS**
*Illustrated article plus diagram
of special scraping tools used to
turn spalted wood "mostly
air" shapes.
Fine Woodworking No 52
p54-57*

A CLASSIC BENCH
*A detailed plan of a joiners
workbench
Fine Woodworking No 53
p62-67*

GLASS

THE LEGACY OF JOHAN THORN PRIKKER

*Homage to the early 20th
century German glass artist
who shaped modern directions
in the medium.
American Craft April/May
1985 p26-31*

The following slide sets have recently been received in the Resource Centre and are available for hire at the cost of \$6.00 members and \$8.00 non-members.

WINSTONE TIES THAT BIND 1985

FLETCHER BROWNBUILT AWARD 1985

PHILIPS GLASS AWARD 1985

**JEWELLERY, BONE AND
STONE CARVING AND
METALSMITHING**
Compendium Gallery 1985.

Selected by David La Plantz

The following catalogues have recently been received in the Resource Centre and are available for hire at the cost of \$2.00 for up to 2 weeks.

**JEWELLERY
INTERNATIONAL:
CONTEMPORARY TRENDS**
*American Craft Museum
Museum 1984. Colour and
B & W*

JEWELLERY USA
*National Competition
Sponsored by the Society of
North American Goldsmiths
and the American Craft
Museum 1984. Colour and B&W*

AMERICANS IN GLASS
*An exhibition organised by the
Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art
Museum 1984. 152 pages
Colour and B & W*

The following books have recently been received in the Resource Centre and are available for hire at the cost of \$2.00 for up to 2 weeks.

**HAND WOOLCOMBING
AND SPINNING — A Guide
to Worsteds from the
Spinning-Wheel**
*Peter Teal. Blandford Press
1976*

**MAORI ARTISTS OF THE
SOUTH PACIFIC**
*Katerina Mataira.
Photography, Kees Sprengers
Nga Puna Waibunga 1984*

**WOODWORKING WITH
NEW ZEALAND TIMBERS**
*Mike McDermott. Reed
Methuen 1985*

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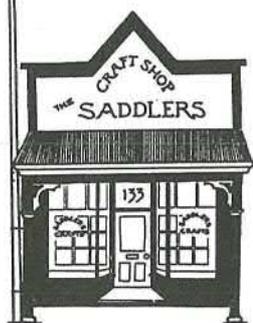
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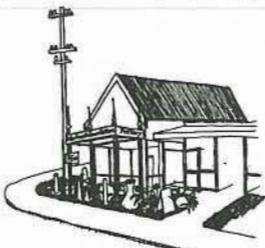
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A limited number of catalogues from the exhibition, which opened 15 November 1985 at the Renwick Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington D.C. and thereafter touring the United States, are available for general sale.

The catalogue contains an introductory essay on the history of New Zealand crafts and individual essays on each craftperson. It has 12 colour and 22 black and white plates with photography by Tony Kellaway. There is also a full catalogue of the 73 exhibition items.

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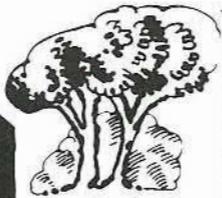
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WANGANUI REGIONAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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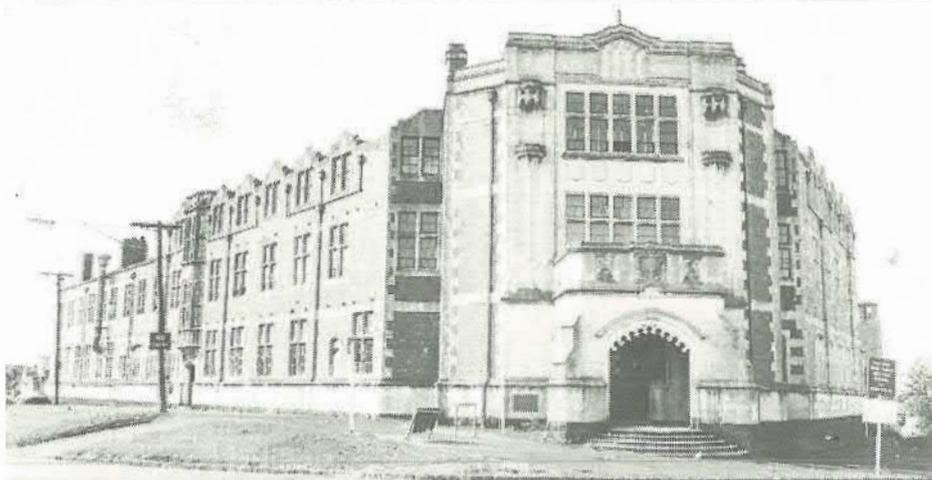
Friday 3rd January-Sunday 12th January 1986

| | | | | |
|----------------------------|---|---|---|--|
| DESIGN STUDIES | | Carole Shephard Brian Gartside Kate Coolahan Phillip Trusttum | \$33.00 | 3rd/4th/5th |
| PRINTMAKING | | Brian Gartside Rodney Fumpston | \$66.00 \$44.00 | 3rd-8th 4th-12th |
| PAINTING | | John Crump Phillip Trusttum Jens Hansen | \$33.00 \$66.50 \$77.00 | 9th-11th 6th-10th 3rd-9th |
| FIBRE ART | Advanced Paper Making Stuffed Stuff – Wellington Fabric Co Mixed Media Maori Flax Weaving Fabric Dying & Experimental Batik | Kate Coolahan Carole Shephard Aromea Te Maipi | \$87.00 \$54.00 \$87.00 \$54.00 | 3rd-10th 6th-10th 3rd-10th 6th-10th |
| CRAFTS | Kite Making Leather Craft Stained Glass Wood Carving Hot Glass Jewellery | Carole Davis Peter Lynn David Russell David Clegg Howard Tuffrey Tony Kuepfer Gavin Hitchings | \$87.00 \$44.00 \$54.00 \$62.50 \$54.00 \$66.50 \$58.00 | 6th-12th 9th-12th 6th-10th 6th-10th 6th-10th 8th-12th 6th-10th |
| SCULPTURE | Modelling Bronze Casting Sculpture | Paul Dibble David Mune Andrew Drummond | \$43.00 \$94.00 \$62.50 | 6th-8th 9th-12th 6th-10th |
| PHOTOGRAPHY | | Lawrence Aberhart | \$134.00 | 6th-10th |
| CERAMICS | Wheelwork, Handbuilding Slip Casting and Creative Firing | John Crawford Rick Rudd Robert Shay (US) | \$75.00 \$54.00 \$44.00 | 6th-10th 6th-10th 9th-12th |
| MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS | Strings Woodwind Piano Organ Choral | Clace Shwabe Alton Rogers Helen Collier Bryce Mason Vincent James | \$33.00 \$27.00 \$27.00 \$18.00 \$33.00 | 4th-6th 8th-10th 6th-8th 9th-10th 7th/8th/9th |
| MUSIC AND DRAMA | Dance, Acting Speech Music Education Writing Prose for Pleasure Modern Jazz Dance | Christina Asher Helen Moulder & one other Helen Willberg David Hill Christina Asher | \$54.00 \$21.00 \$21.00 \$9.00 | 6th-10th 10th-11th 6th-7th 6th-10th |

If you are interested in a Registration Form Plus Brochure on this Summer School Please Contact: —
Mr Paul Johnson, Course Supervisor
Department of Arts & Community Studies
WANGANUI REGIONAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE
P.O. Box 7040, Wanganui, Telephone 50-997, ext 817

FEES: (Include course materials)
Plus \$8.00 Registration Fee Payable only once.
Dates all inclusive
Registration closes 13th December

ART & CRAFT CAREERS FOR 1986



ONE-YEAR FULL TIME DIPLOMA OF ART COURSE TWO-YEAR FULL TIME DIPLOMA OF ART & DESIGN

DIPLOMA OF ART COURSE — ONE YEAR

February 1986 will be the 2nd year for intake to the DIPLOMA OF ART, one-year full-time course. This course is registered with the Department of Education under section 186A of the Education Act 1964.

The course includes 18 compulsory term classes in DRAWING, PAINTING, DESIGN, LANDSCAPE, PORTRAITURE, LIFE STUDY, WATER COLOUR, PRINTMAKING, PHOTOGRAPHY, SCULPTURE, GRAPHICS, ART BUSINESS, GLASS, TEXTILES (FIBRE ART), EXPRESSIONIST PAINTING AND ART HISTORY (3) as well as elective classes (3) in a specific discipline. Duration of 21.5 hours per week over the three terms including compulsory workshops assignments and group projects.

No academic prerequisite is required, an entrance folio (or secondary school folder) is necessary. Applications only on the forms provided, closing in February. Inquiries must be directed to the secretary. The course has limited places for 1986.

DIPLOMA OF ART & DESIGN — TWO YEARS

February 1986 will be the first intake for a two-year, full-time Diploma of Art Design. This course is registered with the Department of Education under section 186A of the Education Act 1964.

This course is limited to fifteen students only. The first year is a common course of study with 21 term classes and workshop and assignment projects, including: DRAWING, PAINTING, GRAPHIC ARTS, PRINTMAKING, CALLIGRAPHY, 3D and 2D PROJECT MATERIAL, FIBRE ART, ART MANAGEMENT, MODEL MAKING, TECHNICAL DRAWING, and 6 DESIGN Sections. The Second year will include: ERGONOMICS, PHOTOGRAPHY, FABRIC DESIGN, FILM MAKING, MANUFACTURING and INDUSTRIAL ART DESIGN, EXHIBITION & INTERIOR ART DESIGN and other PROJECT and ART DESIGN sections. No academic prerequisite is required, an entrance folio of a prescribed content is necessary. Applications and conditions only on the forms provided.

PART TIME SPECIALIZED CRAFT DIPLOMA COURSES

DIPLOMA OF GLASS ARTS (Dip. G.A.) — 6 term classes in hot or flat glass. The course includes drawing and design classes, as well as Art Business, Sculpture and Printmaking options. Hot glass includes BLOWN GLASS and KILNWORK: Flat glass includes leadlighting, cop-perfoiling, kilnwork and design classes.

The diplomas are awarded after an assessed submission folio is judged satisfactory and attendance is fulfilled in all classes.

DIPLOMA OF TEXTILE ARTS (Dip. T.A.) — 6 term classes in Batik or Textiles (FIBRE ART). The course includes drawing and design classes, as well as Art Business, Sculpture and Graphic options. Fibre Art and Batik classes are in stage progressions and some classes have beginner prerequisites.

The diplomas are awarded after an assessed submission folio is judged satisfactory and attendance is fulfilled in all classes.

Both part time Craft Diploma courses are registered with the Department of Education under Section 186A of the Education Act 1964.

ALL INFORMATION AND APPLICATION FORMS ARE PUBLISHED IN THE 1986 PROSPECTUS. CALL OR WRITE FOR A FREE COPY.

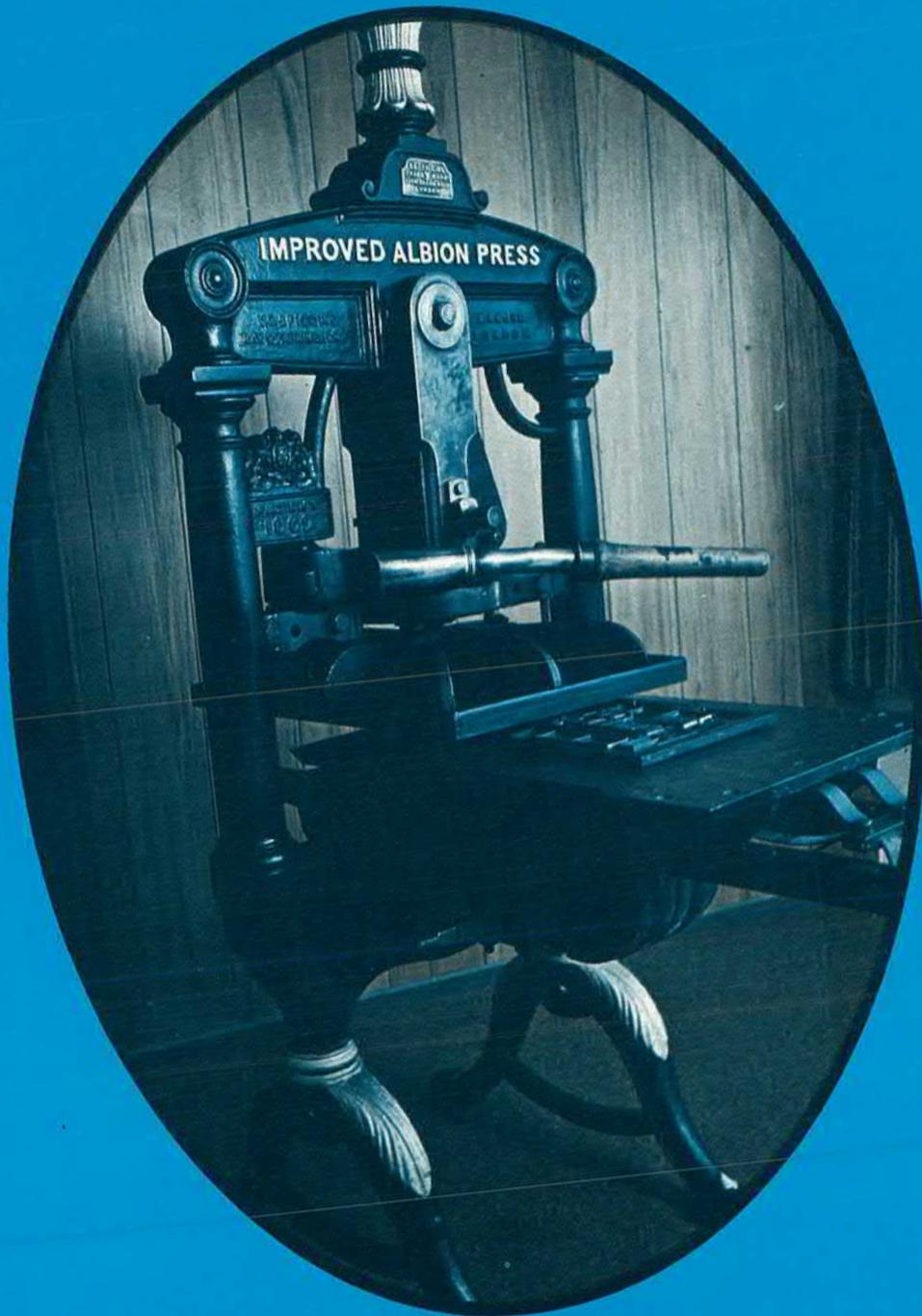


THE NEW ZEALAND SUGAR COMPANY ART SCHOLARSHIP 1986

One Scholarship to cover the full course fee for the DIPLOMA OF ART course will be given by the NZ Sugar Co. All applicants accepted for the course will be eligible; assessments for the award made from the entrance folios. The scholarship will be presented after the commencement of the Term on February 17, 1986.

WHITECLIFFE ART SCHOOL
P.O. BOX 37-036 PARNELL, AUCKLAND, N.Z.
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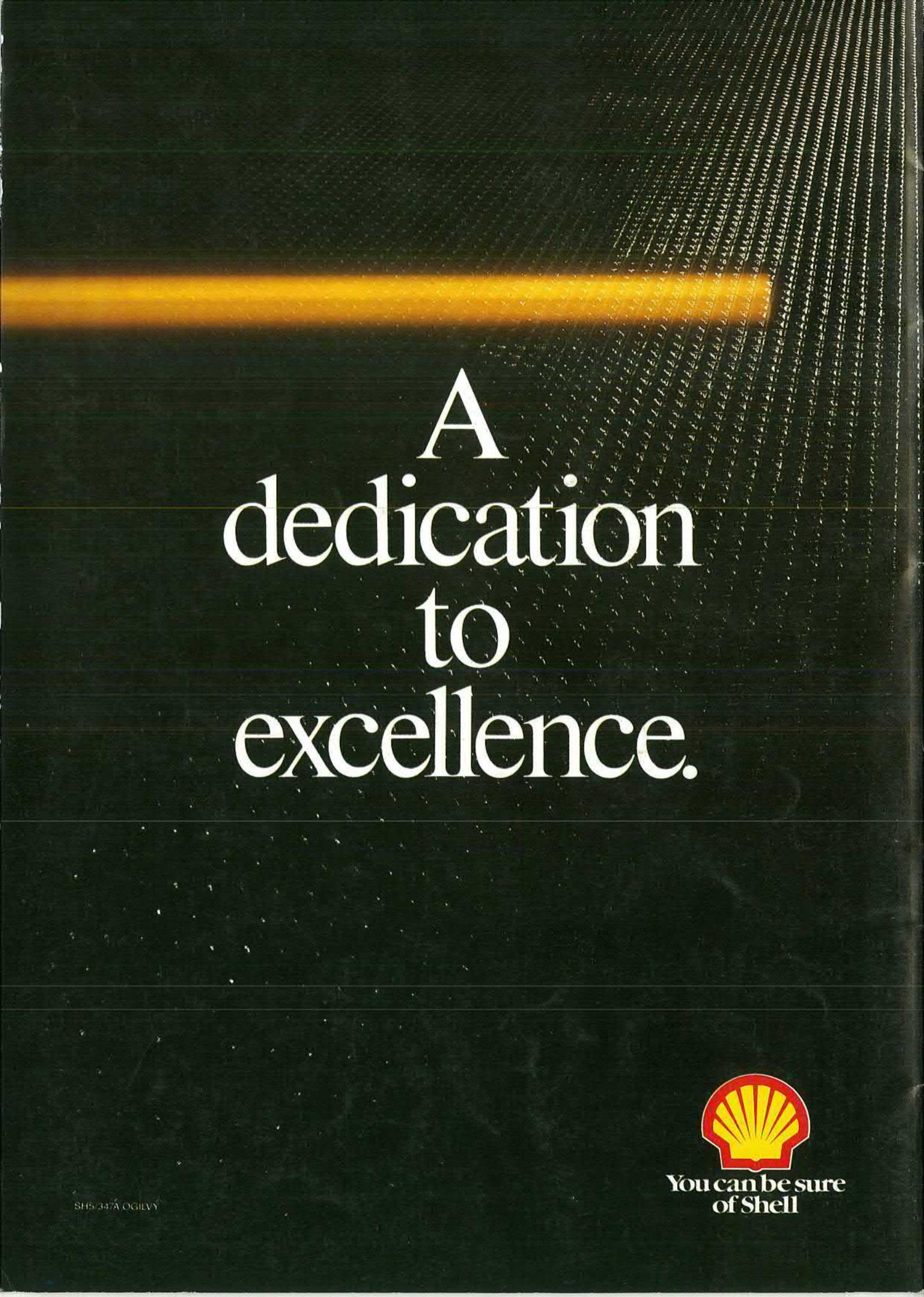


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