

NEW ZEALAND
Crafts



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Message from the Executive Director

Kia Ora

Having recently returned from a four year stint in Vancouver, Canada, I was impressed to see how the crafts in New Zealand are flourishing.

The superb works which greeted me were a far cry from the more conservative work with which I had become familiar in the late seventies.

Was it really the lifting of import licences which gave craftspeople access to a wider spectrum of products? Maybe it was, but I also suspect that all that had gone before provided the groundwork for the surge of creativity into new and exciting areas. I believe in large part that the Crafts Council of New Zealand too, has had an enormous impact on encouraging excellence and innovation, through its activities and initiatives.

No doubt there are still boundaries to be pushed, and it is areas such as presentation, packaging, pricing and distribution that need to be addressed with the same care as that which has gone into the craft piece.

These are areas which I am particularly interested in and I believe the Crafts Council has much to do in ensuring New Zealand crafts are marketed, both within New Zealand and overseas, in the best possible way.

While we all derive enormous pleasure from the beautiful work which is produced here, it is I think, important that we appreciate that the activity has a business orientation. It is, as a consequence, subject to the same vagaries of the market place as any other product, and it is the responsibility of the Crafts Council to ensure that standards of excellence and innovation are encouraged and developed at all levels of activity — from production to point of purchase.

The Crafts Council has a well established profile, however, there is still a requirement to attract more individuals and corporations to the organisation. The progress of the Crafts Council in achieving its objectives can only be advanced if we have more support.

These are indeed times of change and I have every confidence that the Council has the ability to maximise these opportunities in a way which will benefit all craft in New Zealand.

I am looking forward to identifying these opportunities and assisting the Crafts Council of New Zealand to meet its objectives.

R. Shannon

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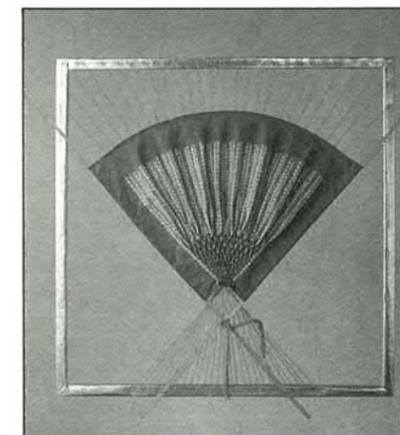
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NEW ZEALAND Crafts

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LETTERS

Index concerns

I am writing to you to voice my concern over the matter of the New Zealand Craft Index. Undoubtedly many an established artist's ego took a battering at the selection panel's hand, and very possibly this will be quite good for us in the long term.

However my concern is that the judgement of the selection panel should be seen to be completely objective in its decisions. I suggest that it is therefore a little inappropriate for the selection panel themselves to consider their own applications while they are serving on the panel, however meritorious their work. In the metal section for instance, two of the selection panel voted themselves onto the index. I am sure both Eléna Gee and John Edgar are, undoubtedly, entirely worthy of the honour, I merely suggest that it doesn't look very professional that it appears they publicly came to this decision about their own work!

Elizabeth Fraser-Davies

The panel members did not sit in on the assessment of their own work. They removed themselves from the proceedings and their place was taken by another independent expert. Ed.

I strongly object to the secrecy and elitism surrounding the selection of the Crafts Council Index. I think it is dangerous and totalitarian.

Having offered my work for selection I discovered that the work was to be divided into three tiers but we were not to be told about this yet. People are sensitive about such matters and need to be told by letter. I was surprised, because one of the selectors in our area is known to dislike competitions, and angry because the rules had been changed. Eventually a letter arrived telling me I had not been selected. There was no mention of three tiers. I naively assumed I was on level two but discovered weeks later that level two people got a different letter entitling them to grants or something like that.

I would not have applied for this index had I known it would be so restrictive, particularly as the chosen elite, an elite of none in some cases, now become the next orchestra to play as their colleagues are sent to the cultural gas chambers. I don't say this lightly. Attempts to discuss the matter with selectors meet with defensiveness and evasion and that's not right.

Your use of an image of mine on the cover of the magazine

makes no sense to me in the light of this index. Does this make the magazine level three? Someone has seen fit to blank out the silver toggle and convert it to paua. It does make me wonder. The Dowse Art Museum and the Auckland Museum and Institute both have work in their permanent collections from 'rejected' crafts people. Where does that place them in the scheme of things?

Alan Preston

The Index of New Zealand Craftworkers has had its initial round of selection and it is apparent that the process has failed to produce anything like the result that most members of the Crafts Council would have expected. The information sheet for applicants gave as one of the purposes of the index: "(b) to facilitate communication between clients wishing to buy or commission craftwork, and the appropriate artist". Perhaps the key to what has happened is in the last word, "artist". When one rejection states that the craftsman has demonstrated extremely high standards of professionalism and technical skills, it becomes obvious that some panels saw this not as an index of craftspeople, but of artists. The president suggests in Newsletter 12 that we should congratulate the panel on their courage. I suggest on the contrary, they should accept some of the blame for the index failing to meet its stated purpose. An architect seeking to commission a tapestry shortly after the index was selected, was referred to at least three tapestry weavers, all of whom were rejected from the index. So much for the final product.

The Crafts Council has devoted a large amount of time and resources to this project which seems to be of little benefit to the members. I see the results of the exercise as indicative of a disturbing trend in the activities of the Crafts Council. The nature of work which comes under the broad heading of craft covers an extremely wide spectrum and the Crafts Council needs to be correspondingly broad in its outlook. The council should be devoting equal energy to the craftsman producing high quality willow baskets woven in traditional designs as it does to the craftsman producing non-functional, sculptural works. (Perhaps, as one member suggested to me, we need to promote the formation of a membership based organisation for artists as it is apparent that they feel the need to belong to something.)

If you are as disturbed as I am about the philosophical direction of the Crafts Council, I suggest you talk or write to your favourite executive

member asking them to raise the issue and put your point of view at the next executive meeting. Don't just complain, seek action.

Simon King

I do support the concept of an index, my comments only relate to woodturnings and I wish to be constructive.

I do not consider a woodturning can be accurately judged solely from a colour slide. Neither scratch marks, end grain roughness or finish can be seen in a photograph. How can it be decided if there are screw holes, dovetail chuck marks etc. under the final product? I would strongly recommend and urge that a random selection of say three pieces be made from the slides and these be forwarded to the council for the next part of the judging. Actual handling and viewing of each piece is the only practical, satisfactory and fair way to make a reasonable assessment.

I would also make the point that when the panel decline to accept work, the reasons for so doing should be very fully explained to the craftsman. After all, the judges must have reasons, so let them be stated. It is of no assistance to a young, up and coming turner to be told, baldly, your photography is not good; or your design is not good; or that finish needs improving. Why is it not good? Where is it wrong? In what direction? There is no value in flat, negative statements. Constructive reasons must be forthcoming.

I fear that without the adoption of these or similar points there is a distinct possibility of the index becoming a non event and certainly a questionable reference point for overseas visitors. This would be a pity.

Ken Sager

I make a living building musical instruments and applied for inclusion in the Index of N.Z. Craftworkers. Unfortunately the panelists were unable to assess the musical quality of my recordings or testimonials of musicians, including internationally known performers. Of course I realise this was only the first time, and I am sure the next time they will be prepared for this type of problem.

This unfortunate episode does however highlight a much more serious problem: that of boundaries. The Index will give five categories: glass; jewellery/metal; wood; textile and ceramics. This, sadly, reflects the thinking even of many of our craftsmen. Yet a top craftsman MUST also be a good artist and many artists

need to explore, break or ignore boundaries. I, for one, refuse to be pigeonholed.

Take for instance what many laymen see as an easily defined class: jewellery. In addition to metal, precious stones and other minerals, the jeweller/craftsman may use glass, shells, bone, ivory, coral, enamel, wood, ceramics, plastics, leather, human hair, etc. And yes, I have even seen particularly fine jewellery incorporating embroidery!

The Index may well help us to market our work, but how many craftsmen are there, whose work cannot be classified in just one of its five categories? And how many craftsmen find themselves excluded altogether because their craft is not even mentioned?

The Index should help, not hamper. So please, don't restrict us so, and scrap the pigeonholes!

Leo J. Cappel

What happened with the selection of the Index of New Zealand Craftworkers? I have heard the flak of discontent from various craftspeople around the country, and in this letter I would like to voice some of the concern that I, with others, feel.

This is not a case of sour grapes. There is no question that selection must be rigorous to maintain a high international level of NZ crafts, and those of us who were not accepted on the index must bow graciously to the selectors' decisions, assuming that their judgements were made with genuine and well considered concerns for a first rate index. Any professional craftsman knows that putting work up for judgement automatically places him or her in a potentially painful position of seeing work rejected. This is the way of the world.

One of the comments that arises from this selection procedure, however, is that the numbers of craftspeople selected for the index is so minimal as to be insulting to the credibility of creative craft in New Zealand. How did it happen that so few of our New Zealand talent went on file? This present index obviously represents only the minute tip of a splendid iceberg and tends to jeopardize the purposes of the index which are: "a) To promote the work of individual craftworkers and to promote New Zealand nationally and internationally; b) To facilitate communication between clients wishing to buy or commission craftwork, and the appropriate artist, c) To provide a representative and up to date slide library of New Zealand craftspeople." The index is obviously meant to be

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a positive undertaking to represent NZ craftspeople. It means to encourage artists to submit regularly for the index. It means to "promote", "provide", "facilitate", but seems to have failed by discouraging more people than it encouraged. How many people will bother to submit in future?

And what of the plight of the selectors? They have been put in the untenable and most awkward position of being the judges and the judged. This is totally unacceptable. Must those of the selectors who have been chosen for the index submit themselves to the understandable scepticism of peers who question how that selection was made. Were they judged by different people with different criteria, since they certainly didn't select themselves? It is unfair on the selectors to have to go through this. Perhaps the Crafts Council has learned that in future those who select must NOT be in the running to be selected themselves. Since selection is achieved through slides, there must be a way of finding qualified selectors from the various crafts outside this country.

It is important to discuss these matters. The index has great potential for our NZ craftworkers and deserves our time and input. Without certain changes, however, its credibility and, hence, its future seems questionable. Goodwill is as important as promotion amongst all of us. Can't the index address itself to both and still fulfil its stated aims?

Holly Sanford

As both an executive member of the CCNZ and as a member of the Leather Media Selection Panel, I feel compelled to submit a personal viewpoint on the craft index.

There are no leatherworkers on the 1986 index. This should not be construed as there being no leatherworkers of standard. On the contrary there are many craftworkers who in the field of leather, have attained regional, national and even international levels. The guidelines for the index, though, precluded all of the leather applicants, as they precluded many others in the various media. Many of these are professional craftspeople with years of commissions, exhibition and craft experiences behind them, and who currently represent the strength, depth and breadth of New Zealand crafts.

I accept responsibility for the current craft index, but must admit personal reservations about the way such an index can best serve the New Zealand

craft scene. While the current guidelines are excellent, they are extremely elite and necessarily subjective through the necessary 100% vote required.

I believe a broadening of the index guidelines will allow for a wider representation of New Zealand craftworkers on the index. The role of the Crafts Council is to promote standards and professionalism in the crafts. The role includes representing all Crafts Council members, and the Council must be wary of representing the interests of a few at the expense of the majority. A broader set of index guidelines on the other hand will provide access for work currently excluded, not because of professional standards, but on the basis of labels applied to the work: 'production run', 'domestic', or 'fashion oriented' are examples. Perhaps we are defining the purpose and function of the index too narrowly? In order to promote the New Zealand crafts, we must be seen to promote the professional arena in all its richness of expression. The index should therefore be a promotional directory. As such a directory, it must provide excellent visual examples of the highest level of craft performance. But the definition of 'craft' it advocates must also be broad.

The richness of the New Zealand crafts phenomena is an international story, and it deserves promotion in full. Each member capable of consistently producing work at a professional level ought to be able to count on their elected body for support. The question of standards is frequently discussed. My thoughts are that if a craftsman has work acceptable for exhibition at the CCNZ Gallery, or if the CCNZ is prepared to make recommendations for commissions, then their work is worth showing on the slide index. If 20% of New Zealand craftspeople can eventually make it onto the index, then the return for New Zealand crafts will be a richer reward. More people will use the directory for a wider range of purposes. The directory will cater for a broader range of tastes and needs. The selective use of the index is always guaranteed. Individuals drawing on the index files, be they gallery owner, tourist, craft writer, craftsman or student, will ultimately draw their own conclusions. Therefore for panels to prejudice beyond technical excellence will provide an incomplete overview of the richness and variety found in New Zealand crafts.

Hiccoughs aside, the crafts index is an important step forward. Let us not make the mistakes made by the British Crafts Council. The work of one leather crafter I met there

was good enough to front the British Shoe Show, curated international travelling exhibition. Thea Cadabra was not, however, good enough for their slide index. Result? Thea Cadabra was planning to emigrate to either America or Australia — by craft invitation. I am certain that ultimately the index will be an enriching national experience, and our professional standard craftspeople will be represented in its files.

David Russell

Amy Brown Replies

I agree with the criticism that black and white photographs were a poor choice to accompany the review of the Knitting Awards at Compendium, especially as colour photographs were supplied by Compendium at their own expense.

I stand by my review of the award and would make the following comments.

1. There were no incorrect facts in the article, and while the choice of sub-head was not mine, I was indeed reviewing Kaffe Fassett's selection, but not all of it.
2. Perhaps David Barratt's interpretation of "named knitters" is different from mine. I saw no work by nationally known knitters like Lee Anderson or Roz Mexted to "name" but two. This was a national award and within that category only Adams & Thornton are nationally known although there may still be people who have never heard of them.
3. Craft reviews are not just written for craftspeople. Other readers may require a little more in review terms than lists of names and honeyed phrases; which appear to be many people's belief of what a review ought to be. A look in the dictionary at the meaning of "review" may be enlightening.
4. If you care to go back and reread the article you will come to the sentence "So in that context, what really worked?". Having already written at length about De Graff's winning entry, the names that followed were mentioned in connection with the criteria laid down by both Kaffe Fassett, Compendium and myself as reviewer. Of course the review is personal and subjective, aided by the reviewer's knowledge of the subject. That is one of the things that reviewing is all about.
5. Given more space I could have gone on at length and discussed each and every garment and knitter. That may have been more hurtful to some than to others, Kaffe Fassett's selection notwithstanding.

Nobody said I had to agree with his choices.

6. Of course Betty Barratt's jersey was lovely; so were some of the others *not* mentioned, but if you lay down criteria, and look at the entries with that in mind, then you have to leave some out.

7. You can't please everyone. That's not what you're there for.

8. I shouldn't really allow myself to be drawn into this. It may appear that I'm trying to justify my review which I very definitely am not.

Learning Experience

After viewing the last Fletcher Brownbuilt Exhibition, then reading Campbell Hegan's review on it and Adrienne Matthews' letter (Spring 87 and Autumn 87) I am left with the thought of how we can look, then come away expressing different facets on the same subject.

Hegan's review, I felt, expressed his deep concern and feeling for pottery. And, for me, pulled this exhibition into an order and form I had not seen when viewing it.

The first impact of this show filled me with nostalgia. It had the look of a crafts bazaar from the nineteen-sixties. The exhibits tumbled and crammed together, so much so that things like techniques and styles were lost in a sea of clay confusion. There was little space to see what those selected had created. Mediocre, gross and superb sat beside one another in what has to be called an exhibition which covered the market!

Hegan saw all this in a more charitable light. But Hegan's and Matthews' views on plagiarism are of greater interest. For myself, after looking at the exhibits, I came away with the rather naive thinking of — 'Well, if one potter put so many works in under different names, no wonder he won'.

Subsequent knowledge has rectified that laxity on my part. It is to be hoped that this, the last of the Fletcher Brownbuilts, has been a learning experience, not only for the potters of New Zealand, but for all craftspeople. In exhibitions of the high standing which the Brownbuilt has enjoyed, it should not be the bulk of productions, styles, nor techniques which carry the day. We are now catering for a more sophisticated public who demand quality and forward thinking in the crafts. And we have come to a point when we must set new demands upon ourselves to meet this market, or fall in a backward wimper of preciousness.

Malcolm Harrison.

LETTERS

The Govett-Brewster Art Gallery staff were very pleased to read Anneke Borren's enthusiastic response to our Ceramics 86 exhibition, reviewed in the New Zealand Crafts number 20 issue.

We were also glad to see her appreciation for the exhibition catalogue, and agree with her that it provides very attractive and appropriate promotional material for those artists included. However I'd like to re-direct some of that praise where it's really due; while Roger King did help the Gallery exhibition officer of the time considerably with the facilitating of the exhibition, and the arrangement of a small amount of sponsorship, he did not 'prepare the catalogue'. The catalogue material was edited and prepared by myself, with the help of Anna Bibby and the Gallery Registrar, Louis Johnston. The most effective and attractive design work was carried out by the Gallery Graphic Designer, Verne Barrell, and the black and white photography was done by the Gallery photographer Dennis Feaver. In the absence of grant money from any other source than the sponsorship referred to earlier, the Gallery in fact picked up the tab for a very substantial part of the exhibition's cost. Of course we were happy to do so.

The matter of the number of catalogues printed needs clarification: a large number of the 300 print runs still languish in our Gallery Shop, despite our strenuous attempts to market them. We hope your readers will indeed take your excellent advice, and purchase them in large quantities. As you will be aware, reprints are very easily arranged should public demand justify them; so far, in this case, it regrettably hasn't.

Finally, while we welcome the acknowledgement that traditional art/craft boundaries are being broken down in many institutions (the article elsewhere in the issue on one of our pioneers in this field, James Mack, makes this even more clear), surely your reviewer is somewhat behind the times in making it. The Govett-Brewster isn't all that "hallowed", and has throughout its twenty odd year history had revealed on many occasions the sort of flexible approach to art/craft boundaries that Ceramics 86 illustrated.

Nor are we alone in this: the Sarjeant Art Gallery, Wanganui, the Dowse Art Museum, Waikato Museum of Art & History, Rotorua Art Gallery and the Suter Art Gallery, Nelson are among the galleries who share this flexibility of attitude.

Cheryll Sotheran

The letter below has been published with the permission of the Hon. David Lange, Prime Minister of New Zealand and Rhonda Greig, wife of the late James Greig.

Dear New Zealand Prime Minister David Lange,

This letter is being written by a Japanese art lover to express our deepest condolence for your loss of James Greig as your national "treasure", and show our deepest sorrow for his passing away and our sincerest gratitude to you for helping Jim to come to Japan. We feel ourselves really blessed to see Jim and his greatest work here in Japan.

As you already know, Jim's art has in itself such a great universality that Japanese art circle has allowed him to enter their own "market" with a mixed feeling. Why do Japanese feel mixed, facing his art? It is because they feel it containing quite a new impulse in spite of its graceful manifestation of Beauty by which they are enchanted. Japanese feel in a dreamy consciousness: we have to accept James Greig's art as wonderful revelation of Beauty. His art has something essential in common with our own Great Masters such as KAWAI Kanjiro. But how did he climb up to the highest mountain at whose top is an ever-young Fountain of Creation? We know our Great Artists managed to succeed by 'instinctively' following the 'traditional' 'conventional': the Old Path on which our ancestors trod. (I think you know Eastern pottery tradition has an old an origin as our own civilisation has.)

Then, how did James Greig make his way? He seems to have attained the Fountain of Creation in a "new" way. UMEHARA Takeshi, a renowned Japanese philosopher, described this vague, but honest feeling as follows:

James Greig strives to express Cosmic Metaphysics he has grasped through the art of pottery. Just as Japanese pottery (for example, primeval "Jomon" straw-rope pattern pots) has once been the revelation of a kind of Cosmic Metaphysics, so this New Zealand potter artist seems to be trying to create "Metaphysics for the 21st century" by manipulating pottery art as his dear instrument.

Japanese are first struck by his penetrating creative quality. I imagine New Zealanders marvel first at his "refined" colour and form. If it is not the case, you have to stand before his work for a long time, pondering over why Japan has accepted his entry with passion when she tries hard to reject New Zealand products, building barriers both visible and invisible. (I say so with the knowledge that Japan is your biggest partner in trade.) I would like to give you a riddle as if I were a Zen priest:

Meditation over James Greig's art is the best key to your economic success in Japan. But why did he make a success here?

This riddle is for Japanese, too. Because for further development Japanese must grasp in consciousness the reason why James Greig is so appealing to them (for the present Japanese just "feel" it.) As a friend of Jim, I know I have still a lot more to learn from him. I beseech you to keep on going the work he had to stop: building a bridge between New Zealand and Japan.

Jim came here to bring "rejuvenation" to Japanese Art. I am sure you have shared a great role in fulfilling his mission. Helping his work to be introduced to us is nothing other than putting forth your own political stance to us in an artistic way. Through appreciation of Jim's art, I've got a fundamental understanding and sympathy for your peace policy.

Now I close this letter by showing my deepest gratitude to New Zealand Embassy and Consulate for their help at the funeral service for Jim in Japan, and my profoundest respect and awe to "my dear" Jim for his Greatest Sacrifice: his death in Japan.

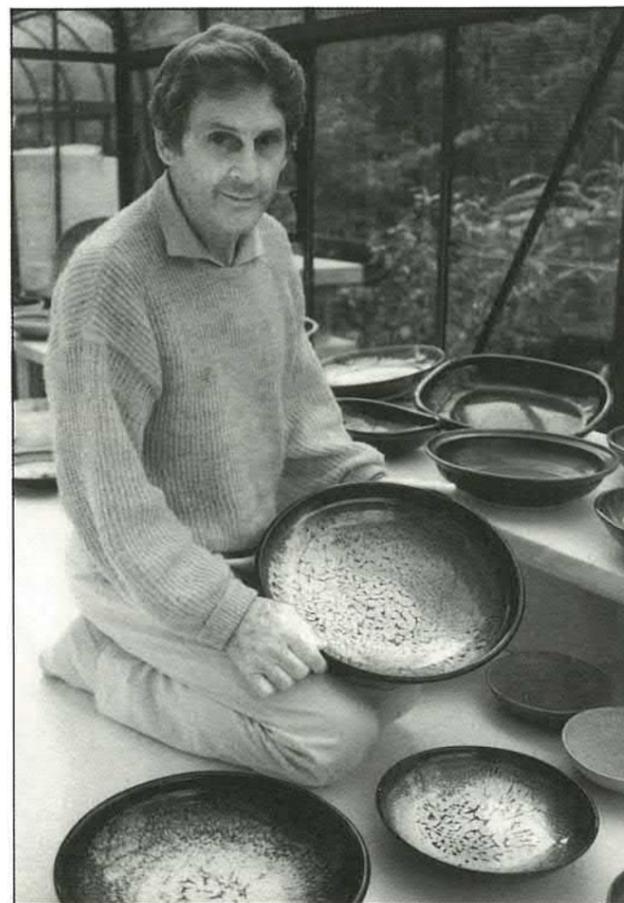
Sincerely yours,

SATO Kimitoshi

CRAFT PIONEERS

Continuing the series of profiles on New Zealand Craft Pioneers.

Len Castle



Photograph: Bext Zetterman.

The jet black of the asphalt driveway was patterned with a golden scatter of Kauri leaves, just as Len had said it would be. I remember his planning the house on the headland to the west of Titirangi beach. It was to be sited on a sunny knoll near the cliff tops with views down the harbour, and set against a backdrop of forest parkland. Behind the house and thrusting up between the trees was to be the steep pitch of the pottery roof, which would also house the elegant curve of a gigantic catenary arch kiln. And it all came about. Nature and environment has always been important to Len and this marriage of sea and sun, abode and workplace, sheltered by the native bush, was a perfect setting for him. He has moved now — circumstances change — but has re-established himself on a bushland property, with a high perched studio looking out over the tops of the trees.

His association with clay has been a long one. Having been somewhat 'chilled' by the discipline of science during the gaining of a science degree he completed in 1946, he was delighted when he moved on to Auckland Teachers College to find in the art department there a cranky old potter's wheel that possessed the warmth and eccentricities of a very human being (the plastic arts lecturer Hilary Clark exhibited many of the same characteristics!) This was the beginning of a great pottery adventure, along with R N Field's pottery evening classes at Avondale College. Involvement with pottery bodies brought back boyhood memories of sticky plastic clays that had intrigued him at Westmere beach. A few hundred metres below his home. These same clays were soon to become his stoneware body for throwing pots, which were then taken to Crum Brick and Pipe Works in New Lynn to be fired in the commercial salt glaze pipe kilns. There were successes and failures but enthusiasm always burned bright, and a strong bond developed between the potter and his clay.

Field loaned Len *A Potter's Book* by Bernard Leach (at that time the only copy in New Zealand) which not only provided a practical guide to the making of high temperature stoneware, but was also infused with the oriental philosophy of pot making which became very important to Len. Secondary school science teaching became his occupation (1948), but every spare moment was spent potting.

After many pyromaniac experiments with coal and coke fired 'kilnettes' in oil drums, he succeeded in building his own reliable oil fired

Sorting pots after a firing. Len, Briar and Ruth at their Titirangi headland home among the kauris, 1975.

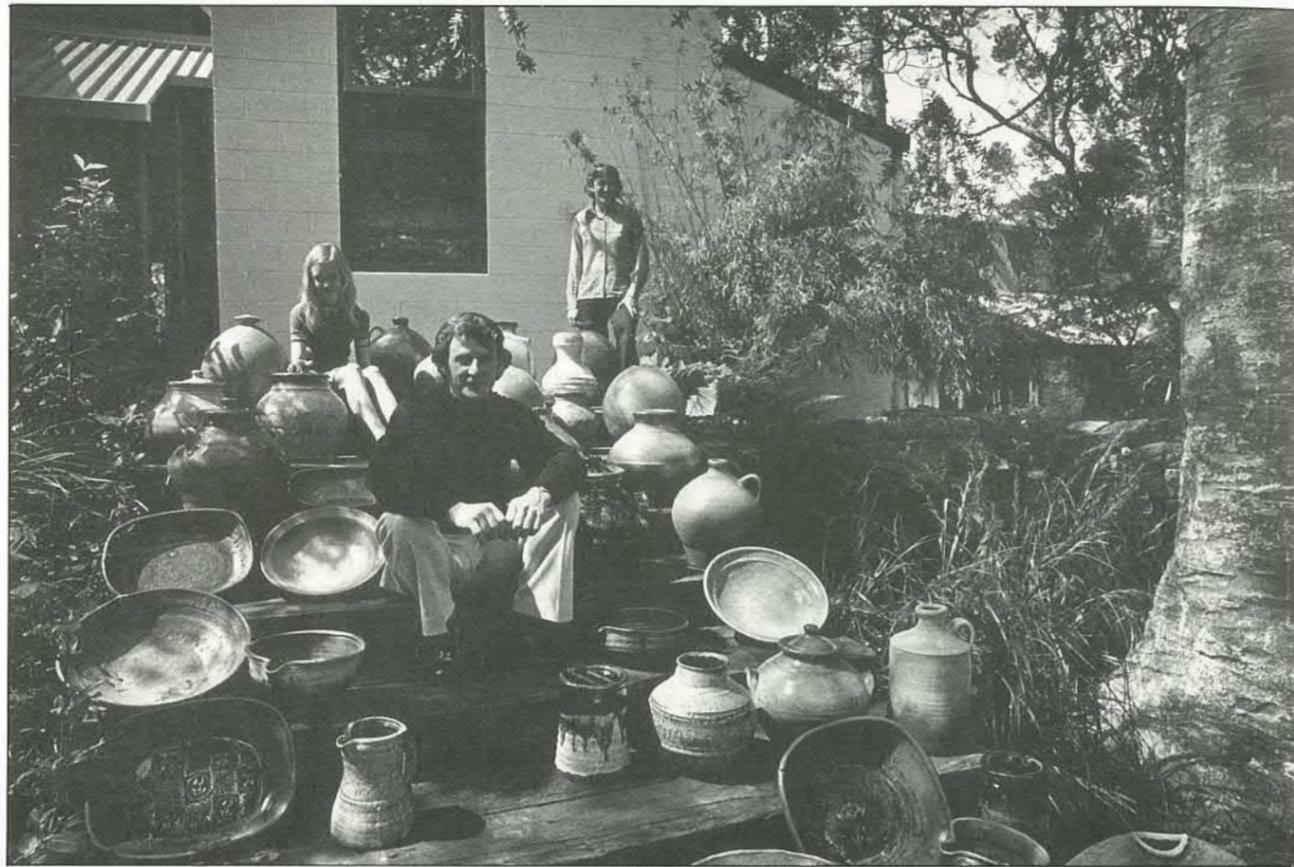


Photo: Steve Rumsey.

brick kiln reaching stoneware temperatures. There was no stopping him. He produced an extensive range of pottery forms, domestic ware and individual pieces, inspired by the writings of Bernard Leach and the work of Shoji Hamada. The fowlhouse became the pottery and the Westmere back yard became an Aladdin's cave bejewelled with multiglazed pots.

In 1949 he met Barry Brickell, and later collaborated for two years with Theo Schoon, making pots that Schoon then decorated. In the mid 50's he taught the late Jim Greig the basics of pottery making. The Associated Art Societies of New Zealand awarded him a scholarship (1956-57) to study and work with Bernard Leach at St Ives, and examine important pottery collections in England, and on his return to New Zealand, he went back to Auckland Teachers' College as lecturer in science and continued potting part time. However the demand for his work became so great that by 1962 he resigned to become a full time professional potter, establishing his workshop and kiln in the Titirangi bush.

It was here that Len started developing hand modelled pots imbued with organic qualities of form and strong textural effects. Being sensitive to the geology of landscape, and with an understanding of botanical and zoological structure. He has always been fascinated by the mechanics of plastic clay: how it folds or fractures as it bends, depending on the water content of the body; how abrasion produces interesting textures or patterning with different grog content; how it dries and surface cracks in association with powdered clay; what happens when it is stretched or compressed, rolled, hammered, dropped or thrown.

Armed with this understanding and a wire cutter, he will cut a roughly formed ball of grogged clay with a zig-zag action. Taking one half of this clay with its fluted cut surface uppermost, he gently applies pressure from the back, so a swelling form develops with the stretched fluting tending to break up into secondary textures. A high point on the shape suggests a natural place for an opening. By this stage the shell-like piece is reminiscent, to Len, of a Brachiopod, a primitive shellfish. At this point he stops, only adding a back to complete the hanging wall pot.

Any allusion to an object from nature is almost subconscious and never more than an oblique reference. While the creation of the form is under the conscious and intuitive control of the potter, the clay behaves in its own way to the physical forces applied, and it swells and moves, folds and faults, breaks into textures or undulates in waves like the wings of a manta ray. The clay is allowed to say what it wants to say, without interference, and in this way the pot possesses a vitality and integrity of its own, and an empathy with other forms found in nature.

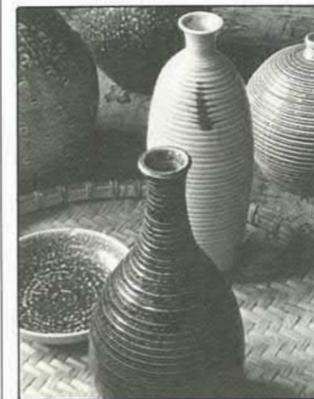
From the curiosity of his early boyhood discoveries of the sticky Westmere clays, there has developed a mature respect and understanding for this remarkably cohesive and plastic material. No two clays are alike and range from tough, recalcitrant, heavily grogged bodies which take the utmost physical strength to bend to human will, to highly plastic clays requiring sensitive touch, understanding and co-operation to achieve the desired form. For Len this has become a partnership between potter and clay — and a real love affair. He 'sees' with his fingers and each hand plays its role. On the wheel the

'inside' left hand is the intuitive, feeling hand that thrusts outward to create the form. The 'outside' right hand is the correcting hand to modify the form. This is a very direct experience. It develops a high degree of sensitivity for the qualities of the clay, and at the same time a sensitivity for the feel of form which can be intuitively assessed in the making — without the need for looking!

But Len is also a superlative glaze potter making use of a remarkable range of glazes and application techniques to produce a stunning spectrum of subtle and beautiful effects. In the 1970's he was away overseas for some time and when he returned he started making up glazes to get back into production. At one point he had 32 glazes on hand and was making more! His understanding of chemistry gives him control over some very characteristic effects. He has a beautiful waxy talc/feldspar glaze in which he has replaced some of the china clay with a high shrinking ball clay, so when it is applied to large bowls over a saturated iron glaze, the drainage

from the sides accumulates thickly in the middle, to shrink and crack on drying. When fired, these cracks crawl in a striking pattern to reveal the rich red glaze beneath.

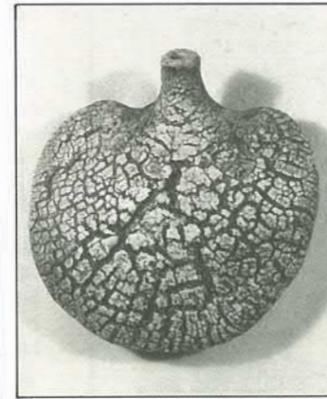
Reduction celadons have an especial attraction for him, in that their depth and muted colours have much in common with nature, while semi-mat glazes are reminiscent of polished stones. He much admires black iron glazes, tenmoku, for their nobility and warmth, while their brown edge enhances the form of the pot. The 'thick' quality of feldspathic glazes has kept Len in the stoneware line, yet at the same time such glazes raise a dilemma: the character of a pot achieved by the forming and turning processes is largely obliterated by their all-enveloping character. (Len's greatest pleasure in pottery is seeing the thrown and assembled pot in the green state, still with a sheen of dampness on it; at this stage the naked essential form is revealed.) The problem is, how to glaze and fire the pot without hiding the essential form? Len has long considered that Bizen and



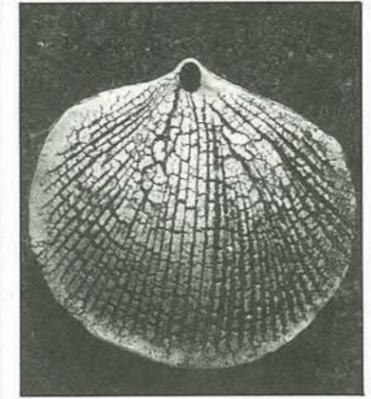
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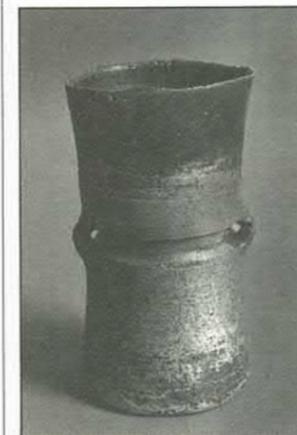
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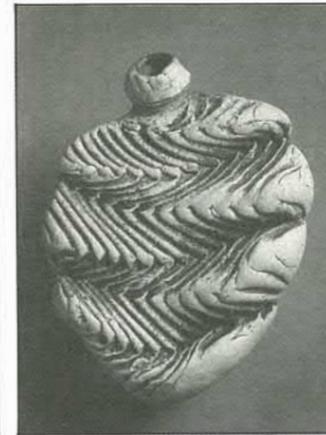
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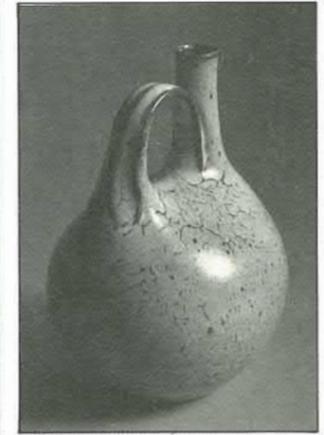
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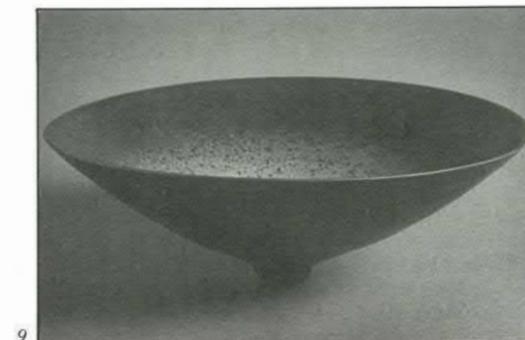
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1 Salt glazed stoneware - 1948-52. Height 36cm.

2 Holder for Fern Fronds - 1966. Unglazed surface, pigmented with Manganese Dioxide. Height 15cm.

3 Hanging Bottle - 1968. Unglazed surface pigmented with Burnt Umber. 19cm.

4 Hanging Form - 1982. Wire cut decoration. Unglazed. Pigmented with Burnt Umber. Height 18cm.

5 Stoneware Vase 1982. Height 26cm.

6 Hanging Vase 1982. Waiotapu Series. Height 17cm.

7 Hanging Bottle 1985. Waiotapu Series. Height 16cm.

8 Stoneware wine bottle 1985. Height 20cm.

9 Stoneware Bowl 1985. Diameter 34cm.

Photographs: Steve Rumsey

Shigaraki wares show a more ideal way to fire, giving colour and texture enhancement without obscuring the form. This is an area he is working toward at present. In his earlier days Len made great use of ash, clay, pumice and volcanic rock glazes, and is still especially interested in silicious ashes giving white and optical blue.

While a large number of Castle pots depend on textural or glaze effects for surface interest, Len will frequently execute a sweeping graphic design, usually in wax resist with such boldness and vigour as to considerably enliven the pot, yet without dominating the overall form. This ultimate restraint used to infuriate Theo Schoon, but in the final analysis Theo had to admit that Len was right.

As a 'clay potter', 'texture potter' and 'glaze potter' Len is quietly confident, so it is rather surprising to learn that he has some reservations with regard to form. There are qualities Len sees in the work of other potters that stirs a 'divine discontent' for aspects of his own work. For example, the 'spontaneous gesture' and unresolved form of Shoji Hamada that glazing and firing brings to completion; the intuitive undulatory line escribed by the throwing of some other other Japanese potters, that delineates aspects of form by a sort of harmonic implication.

However, this longing only shows how acutely aware Len is in his feeling for form. There are a great number of perceptive people who gain pleasure from contemplating the originality, vitality and subtleties of form to be found in a Castle pot — and Shoji Hamada was one of them!

Steve Rumsey

Len Castle is a potter of international reputation and since 1965 has held regular one man exhibitions in New Zealand, Australia, Japan and the U.S.A. He was the first New Zealand potter to hold a one man exhibition in Japan (Tokyo 1967).

He has worked and studied in the workshops of some of the world's great potters: Bernard Leach, Shoji Hamada, Kanjiro Kawai, and has travelled and studied in China and South Korea.

He has taught or lectured in pottery in New Zealand, Australia, U.S.A. and Japan, and has been an invited judge of international pottery exhibitions.

From 1981-84 he was a member of the Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council of N.Z. and in 1986 was awarded a C.B.E. in the Queen's Birthday Honours List.

His work illustrates many books and publications, and has been selected to tour overseas in exhibitions sponsored by the N.Z. Dept of Foreign Affairs and the Arts Council of N.Z.

Works by Len Castle are held in the permanent collections of the following museums and art galleries:

New Zealand: Auckland War Memorial Museum
Waikato Art Museum
Hawkes Bay Museum
Sarjeant Art Gallery, Wanganui
Dowse Art Museum, Wellington
Canterbury Museum
McDougall Art Gallery, Christchurch
Aigantighe Art Gallery, Timaru
Otago Museum

Australia: State Gallery of Victoria,
Castleford Art Gallery, Victoria
Museum of Applied Arts, Sydney
Manly Art Gallery, Sydney

Japan: Mingei-kan Museum, Tokyo

Italy: Ceramic Museum, Faenza

His work is displayed in many New Zealand embassies and has on several occasions been selected by the New Zealand Government as gifts for the British Royal Family.

The straight line is a stranger to furniture maker Cam Wilson.

Humour and surprises

He doesn't have a machine workshop. He doesn't go to seminars. And he doesn't work with straight pieces of timber. Not only does Cam Wilson break the rules, he is not quite sure just what they are. Yet he makes furniture that sells throughout New Zealand as well as to Australia, the United States and Europe.

His work comes from the heart. "Form is all. The piece has to look beautiful. It has to excite me, and if it does, I know it will sell. Cam acknowledges that his furniture doesn't appeal to everyone, but that those attracted to it love it as a work of art. Humour is evident in many of his pieces and symmetry is no-where to be seen.

He lives and works from his seven acre property in a remote valley behind Taipa in Northland where he and his wife Clare are building a house, studio and showroom. The buildings too are handmade and unconventional; full of colour, life, and visual surprises.

The key to Cam's free form furniture is his selection of raw materials. He uses only native woods and he finds them not in timber yards, but on beaches, in the bush and on farmland. The range he uses extends well beyond the more usual kauri, rimu, and totara, to lancewood, mangrove, pohutukawa, kowhai, puriri, kohukohu, rewarewa, taraire, hinau and hohere. He says he never cuts a tree or branch down. They are all logs or fallen branches.

Although his timber is "free", it is in fact one of his biggest costs. It takes time, a landrover, timber jacks, friends, winches, patience, and storage and drying space, but Cam isn't complaining. The unique finds give him his inspiration, and give his work its sculptural form. He doesn't believe that a straight edge can be successfully naturalised or sculptured into a flowing form, so his table pedestals echo the lines of branches, and burls become table tops. A knarled log can wait in the drying shed for years before ideas for its use are consolidated.

Cam's furniture making started almost accidentally. After farming for some years, he got a casual carpentry job in Auckland, but was laid off when the building industry retrenched. It was the impetus he needed. With a pohutukawa branch and a small chainsaw he built his first coffee table. He took it to Durham Arts in Auckland. It sold. He made another one. It sold. Cam had his entree into the furniture making business as coffee table sales matured into dining table sales.

But it wasn't easy. Initially he was unsure about what he was making, and sales were inconsistent. Many still find his work too colourful, too weird, or too free. But when it does appeal, it appeals strongly. He finds that more of the buying public now follow the



Cam Wilson: Dining Suite.

strength of their convictions. "In the past people have tended to be insecure about their purchases. They needed confirmation from their friends, neighbours, that it's OK to like what they like, that their selection is somehow acceptable. Now the buying public is getting more brave. They will love a piece, buy it, and continue to love it irrespective of feedback."

The consistent element in his design is surprise, using ideas that present themselves. A carved lizard is likely to be trying to crawl up a chair leg; a dried daisy will float in a pool of clear resin in the corner of a table; an internal stairway lies hidden amid a table pedestal; bright red, green, or blue islands of epoxy resin glow in the base of a chair seat. Cam says one of his most satisfying sales was a dining table to a blind couple. "It was made of a knotted up pohutukawa log, and they came in to a shop and stroked it. They crawled underneath it and ran their hands in over and through the base, and swore they could feel the colour of it."

Design decisions are not dictated by the market. "I make my work for myself and then try and sell it, rather than making to commission. With the odd order I do get, I take no deposit, and let the customer know they have the right of refusal. They stipulate perhaps the size and the timber they want and I ask that they then leave me free to make what I want. It works. Very few are refused and any that are, seem to sell anyway." Cam doesn't work set hours. He usually has two or three things going concurrently in the workshop then finds he will get totally immersed in just one. "It gets to a point where it's too exciting to leave so I then just go with it until it's finished." Creativity comes easily but there are blockages too — times when he can't or won't produce and turns to diving, walking, gardening, or visiting friends. But there is a point at which he can procrastinate no longer and Clare is usually the one to recognise that point and push him through. She is also the money manager of the household and helps organise marketing and pricing as well as teaching at a nearby school.

Until recently, the Wilsons lived right on the main road in Mangonui which brought a constant flow of people through the house and workshop. Though this was good for business, constant interruptions made production very inefficient, and this was part of the reason for their decision to move onto their land, the isolation of which has brought its own marketing problems. An outlet in Auckland, Cam says, is particularly good for overseas sales and one of theirs was responsible for numerous purchases going to Australia and Europe, and for constant exposure to the public. It is vital that the proprietor of a sales outlet, likes the work, and has sufficient space in which to display it without smothering it. This year the Wilsons hope to set up the showroom on their property and to spend what they can on promotion and advertising.

Prices depend on each piece, the aesthetic value, the timber, and storage and drying time. Recently prices were increased significantly, to allow for the fact that Cam may make only 4 major tables a year, because they are physically big, complicated and literally hand made. Hand held tools only are used — a drill, a chainsaw, and a planer. Major work is done with a big chainsaw and timber jack, but Cam finds the finishing work most satisfying. Smooth surfaces are repeatedly belt sanded with a drill attachment, often contrasting with adjoining rough features or holes.

Cam describes himself as floating on the outside of the New Zealand furniture making scene. In the past he has occasionally attended seminars by international master craftsmen, but found that though their work appealed to him their methods had little relevance. His energy and results come from somewhere inside him, not from advice, fashion, or market demands. Because of this he says his work is probably regarded as refreshing and liberating by those who like it or as a sacrilege and waste of native wood by those who don't. He doesn't mind. "If just one person falls in love with a piece, I'm happy."

Louisa Simon: The Fates that Bind

Arashi means storm in Japanese. It is also the name for a method of resist-dyeing whereby cloth is wrapped around a pole, thread is wound around the cloth, compressing it into folds and dyeing it. It's a long, meticulous and involved process which produces lengths of cloth of extraordinarily subtle beauty, the diagonal patterns produced sometimes suggesting rain driven by strong winds.



Looking at the pictorial record of Louisa Simon's involvement with cloth since the late 60's is slightly akin to the unwrapping of the pole wrapped fabric to discover what has been achieved; some irregularities, some reflective periods, some high spots, some sections of great beauty — but through it all the continuing thread of a dedicated craftsman, learning, experimenting, refining and mastering techniques that occasionally take the craft into an art form.

Louisa Simon's present dedication to shibori the Japanese word for various ways of embellishing textiles by shaping cloth and securing it before dyeing is no sudden deviation. Having worked with batik she began a different manipulation of fabric and dye in the USA in the 60's after seeing a Time-Life feature of vibrantly dyed clothes. She says she was mesmerised by it and taught herself largely by studying those magazine photographs and the work of American fibre artist, Marian Clayden.

Back in New Zealand she continued the process of learning by constant experimentation, trial and error, looking and learning. Her desire for more control and less randomness led her into block printing and handpainting on silk, her favoured medium which she then translated into beautiful garments. Using clamp and block techniques and the uses of bindings in her work led her into the realisation that what she was doing was shibori. Louisa researched the Japanese art of shaped resist-dyeing and discovered that with agonising attention she could, like the Japanese, control her work, and achieve the patterns of the Japanese art form by stitching, folding, tying,

wrapping and binding, aided by the magical effects of dye. A tranquil and reflective period followed where she spent the major part of her time painting beautiful designs on hand-dyed silk. Her under-garments were bought by many, not only women who could revel in the secret beauty with which they adorned their bodies, but also by men buying for women. Perhaps these men had a more romantic appreciation of their partners in these beautiful and gently erotic wrappings. Louisa says of her work at this stage that it reflected her own growth in life at that time, which was very spiritual and inwardly rewarding.

On one of her frequent trips overseas she went to a Fortuny exhibition at Liberty's. Mariano Fortuny who died in 1949 had perfected and patented a process of crush-pleating which was utterly beautiful and which graced the bodies of women like Isadora Duncan, Sarah Bernhardt and Lady Diana Cooper. His dresses are collectors' items and his secret process has remained that way, until Louisa Simon, seized by the beauty of the Fortuny exhibition, determined to work out a similar process. She did, and her exquisitely permanently pleated silk garments flow and ripple over the body of the wearer in a sensuous way. Whoever is lucky enough to possess one of these Louisa Simon creations possesses an example of wearable art at a high point.

To Louisa Simon wearable art must be a perfect balance in construction and design, which contains a decorative element that makes it a unique and exciting statement. She could make a small fortune continuing to create these desirable garments, but she's decided to move

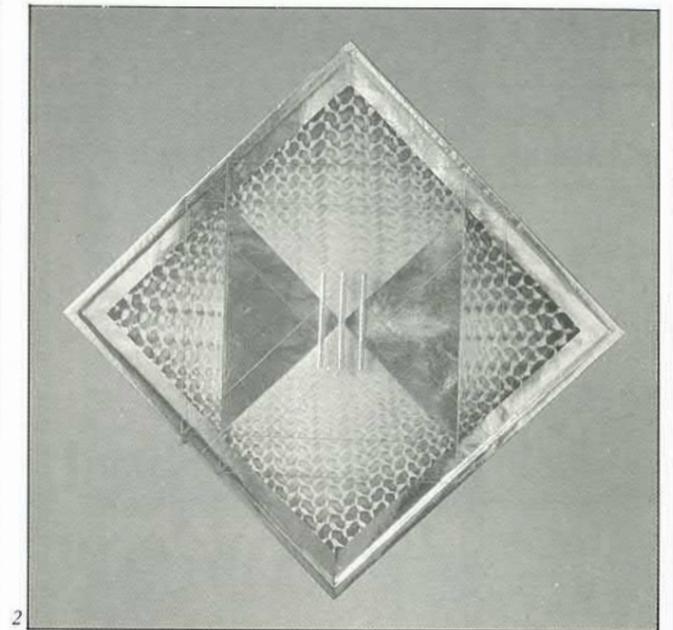
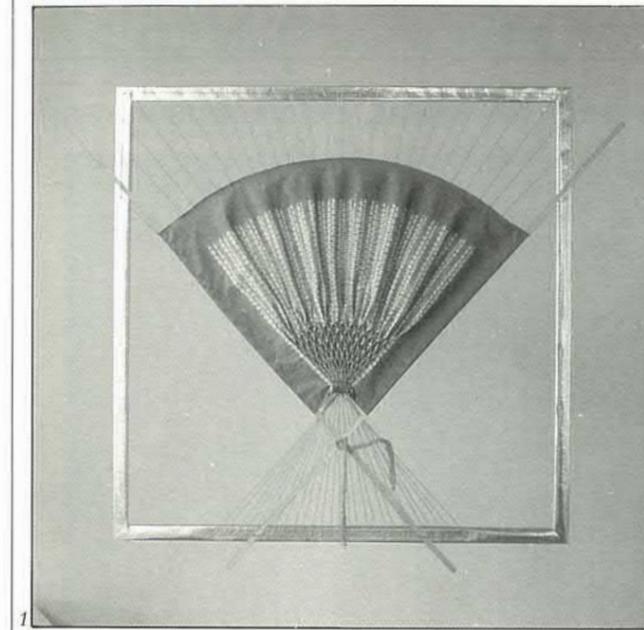
onwards and work with shibori as an art form: "I haven't lost my love for beautifully designed clothes. I'll always be fascinated by it and I'll always do some, but I'm just so tired of sewing. I've done all my stretching with clothing over 20 years. I want to spend my time differently and extend myself much more. What I'm doing now is working with pieces of cloth in the dye bath. I'm fascinated by the way the patterns form, the way the cloth retains its memory of the process, and of letting that say something to me. When I undo a piece of cloth out of the bath, my mind goes mad, and I start working it. I lie it down and see how it wants to go."

Instancing the piece that she was working on, she said that when finished it would have a jewelled cobweb background with the sticks that cross it wrapped in dark blue silk. She wanted a contrast between the earth element and a floating feeling. The piece of silk organza is a wonderful shade of turquoise with minute areas of dark blue. She has achieved this by using two different dyes, a fibre-reactive for the turquoise and a direct dye for the braided hemp with which the cloth was tied. Her intention had been that the braided hemp, dyed blue, would give off its dye while the fabric was in the turquoise dye bath. This it did with the dark blue creeping up the warp threads and giving her the ethereal, translucent effect that she'd been after. Some of the fabrics that Louisa used for pieces in her recent Villas Gallery (Wellington) exhibition have been with her for 5 years. She says that they had to be kept and then given centre stage so that they could tell her what to do.

Shibori in its purest form is laborious and time consuming which is limiting for clothing. Many of the techniques require more than two hands to manipulate in rolling, binding or tying. In Arashi, the winding of the thread around the cloth, creasing it, twisting it and trying to keep it balanced, can take up to 5 or 6 hours to get a small piece of cloth. For example, a shibori artist from the USA said that it had taken her and an assistant 10 hours to wrap a 5 metre piece of silk, which Louisa considered rather fast.

"There's no way you can hold the drum, twist thread and crease the fabric on your own. Add to that the fibre-reactive or indigo process. Some indigo processes take up to twenty dippings with oxidation time between each one. It's a labour of love. I'm besotted by it and like people who do a lot of crafts, I do it because I must."

When Louisa first started with the



traditional technique she used a synthetic indigo because the shibori patterns seemed to want it. "I was fascinated with the patterning as the dye reached its destination. So my work became very monochromatic, like much of the work in the exhibition. I felt that that was how it needed to be for the beauty of the patterns to say what they had to say. Now I'm experimenting with more colour, subtly, so that the colour does not take over the beauty of the pattern." Louisa says of the piece that she was working on that a Japanese expert might consider it had far too many variables. "It's okay to experiment but you have to be very careful to honour the tradition. They are so incredibly fastidious that it's a miracle that anything new or experimental ever gets absorbed into the whole. This is true of the Japanese throughout all their art forms. Tradition is the god of the high altar. They have this amazing skill for absorbing all sorts of things from outside and perfecting it. It's an unbelievable attention to detail and that manifests itself throughout the social structure of the society. There are many thou shalts and many more thou shalt nots. It's a terrific limitation in one way but a firm basis on which experimentation can then take place."

"There's a degree of patience required that a lot of people simply don't have. I've had Japanese students from time to time. They are almost in meditation as they fold and stitch the work, with each edge even. When they dye the edges in the dye their piece will come out absolutely immaculate. Others, including New Zealanders, are quick, quick, quick. They lose their lines or some are thicker than others and they can't understand when they don't get the results that the Japanese students did. They want instant gratification."

Louisa Simon used to be insecure about her lack of formal training. "I was easily impressed by other people's opinions of me and my work and very ready to modify it. But I'm now beginning to appreciate the fact that I haven't had art school training. I don't have any ideas about how it should be. I do it my way and that's why working in solitude is good for me."

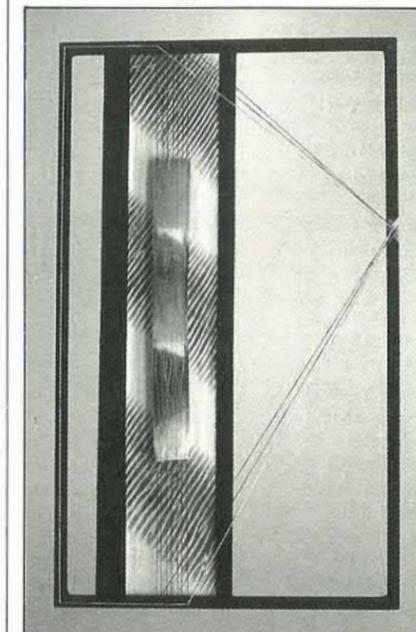
Her ambition is to do more and more of what she's doing. She says that great work comes from connection with it and that the sacrifices that it involves are worth it.

Amy Brown

Shibori — verb root shiboru; to wring, squeeze, press. Shibori is the Japanese word for various ways of embellishing textiles by shaping cloth and securing it before dyeing. Rather than treating cloth as a two-dimensional surface, with shibori it is given a

three-dimensional form by folding, crumpling, stitching, plaiting, or plucking and twisting. Cloth shaped by these methods is secured in various ways, such as binding or knotting. It is the pliancy of a textile and its potential for creating a multitude of shape-resisted designs that the Japanese concept of shibori recognises and explores. The shibori techniques include numerous resist processes which have recognised international usage: *planti* — the Malay-Indonesian word for gathering and binding cloth; *banda* — the Indian term for the same process; and *tritik* — the Malay-Indonesian word for stitch-resist. But these three terms represent only two of the major shibori techniques. The English equivalent for these individual methods is incorrectly lumped together as tie-and-dye. Shibori's special characteristic is a soft or blurry-eyed pattern, quite different from the sharp-edged resists obtained with stencil, wax or paste. Shibori allows the dyer to work in concert with the materials, not in an effort to overcome their limitations but to allow them full expression. An element of the unexpected is always present, and this is its special magic and gives it strong appeal.

From: *Shibori — The Inventive Art of Japanese Shaped Resist Dyeing* by Yoshiko Wada, Mary Kellogg Rice, and Jane Barton.



- 1 "Fan"
Fibre reactive dyes on cotton. Ori nui shibori, linen thread, bamboo and foil.
- 2 "Talisman"
Fibre reactive dyes on cotton lawn, flexible core shibori, linen thread, foil.
- 3 "Mars Conjunction Mercury"
Fibre reactive dyes on cotton Arashi. Shibori linen thread.

Photographs: Ian Hutchison

To establish a career as a craftsman calls for talent, determination and planning. Joan Clouston profiles one who has deployed all these

Philippa Steel, Embroiderer



... "although there are competent workers (in needlework, embroidery and lacemaking) there has not yet occurred that marriage of skill, design and aesthetic awareness that produces the great craft work," wrote Trevor Bayliss in 1978 in the catalogue for 'Craft New Zealand'. Since then, (and even at that time) embroiderers have indeed made some bold steps forward. Their difficulty has often been that no one noticed. A break-through occurred with the celebrated 'Stuffed Stuff' show. No one could fail to sense the impact of that droll, funny, brilliant circus, although the Fabric Art Company submerged individuality in a group identity. And their wit, like Jewish or Irish humour, was at their own expense. The well-tryed expedient to deflect the hostility of a majority culture. Thus no threat was offered to Real Art.

Today there are a number of embroiderers (let us not be afraid to use that loaded term) who are fully committed to their profession and who are taking the necessary measures for success. Such a one is Philippa Steel, recently returned from overseas study, whose work showed recently at the Dowse Art Museum.

Philippa has always enjoyed working with fabric, and in her school days discovered the satisfaction of producing tangible results. (Confirmation came at age 10, on a very wet holiday at Taupo spent with friends. After a trying week, her hosts took all the children to the local craft supplier and provided every one of the children with a 'tapestry' kit of their choice. There followed the rapt tranquility of total involvement.

It was when she was fully involved in a class of handicapped children, and attending Diana Parkes' embroidery classes, that Philippa reconsidered her career. Much as she loved teaching, she missed that immediate, palpable satisfaction she had drawn from fabric and thread. Firm action was required if embroidery was not just to remain marginal to her life.

She set about, with utmost thoroughness, to research what full-time training was available and how she could manage to undertake it. She

meditated over prospectuses from all over, applied, and was accepted for a year's intensive study at Loughborough College in UK and she organised supporting finance, even a modest grant from Otago University, given biennially to a New Zealand woman seeking to pursue 'any aspect of home science'!

The course at Loughborough alternated intensive 3-week periods in class, working night and day, with 3-week periods of solitary study, working on the ideas developed in the studio. "It was enormously stimulating" she says; "we were all highly motivated, and I gained a lot from the other students." The course covered business aspects of practice, with established artists as guest lecturers. There was no disguising the difficulties of professional survival — even there, where embroidery is much more accepted by the public", she says. Having gained her certificate, Philippa set about establishing her career; with three fellow students she organised an exhibition at Clare College, Cambridge, arranging publicity and securing reviews in the local press and in "Embroidery".

But at this stage, she decided, she had better come back to New Zealand, where she feels committed to found her career. An English reputation is not transferable, she realised. So on her return she now sought exposure here, building on an exhibition of "Wearables" at Bowen Galleries before her overseas experience. A successful show at the Villas Gallery in Kelburn led to an opportunity to exhibit at the Dowse, and her successful application to the Arts Council for a grant to enable her to do so. The show involved working on a series of collages reflecting the "floating world" of the jet-spiced traveller: Wellington (where the journey began), Nebraska, London, Paris, Venice, Bali, etcetera. There are echoes of Klimpt's sumptuous patterning — "several of us took a vacation trip to see a big exhibition of the Art of the Sezession in Vienna" — and Gaudi's sinuous line and mosaic surfaces from Barcelona. Something of an Edwardian album is suggested by the tender watercolour tonalities. "That must be the effect

1. "A beginning"
Free standing machine embroidery incorporating acetate packages and kite fabric manipulation
2. "With thanks to Sarah"
Photo stitchery. Detail
Photographs, hand painted vilene (textile inks) incorporating machine embroidery and appliqué



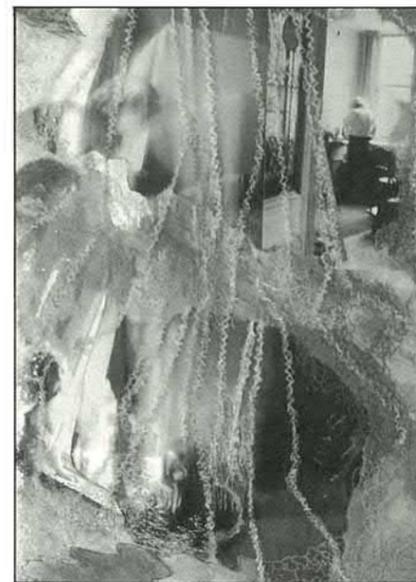
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3. "Shadows and Light"
Photo stitchery
Photographs, hand painted vilene (textile inks) beading machine embroidery
4. "Myriad"
Freestanding machine embroidery incorporating acetate package, kite fabric silk fringes, beading fabric manipulation

Photographs: Ian Hutchison

of the hazy European atmosphere — I am really conscious of the New Zealand light and my colour is getting much stronger now."

Fragments of photographs are incorporated with shreds of silk, acetate film and metallic kite fabric. "I used to be an absolute purist about natural materials but I'm very open now to all sorts of synthetics . . . sometimes a design arises spontaneously out of the fabrics I've chosen, at other times it's much more consciously controlled . . . starting from my photographs, or a certain idea, I keep the intended texture in mind all the time", Philippa explains. Whether smooth, precisely detailed, or puckered and distorted, by not using a hoop for machine stitching I allow the fabric to show its true nature, its undulating movement. Otherwise you might as well work on paper."

She has strong hopes for the future. "I want to become known, so as to have freedom to do what I want. I'm past the need for confirmation by others (I'm very self critical and able to assess my work. My training has given me that confidence. People are impressed by a qualification, so long as your work is up to standard, but there is no tradition here of respect for textiles. People know about buying Persian rugs, but not stitched works. I hope to break down the negative stereotype of "embroidery". "It's going to be tough, but I'm determined to have a go."

Art and Industry

In the last issue of Craft Magazine Barry Brickell in his article on Finland made the statement that "having a policy of inviting artists to collaborate with industry represents a cross fertilisation which is very much needed".

Two New Zealand furniture craftsmen, Carin Wilson and Roland Seibertz, are already putting this philosophy into practice.

Carin Wilson

Carin Wilson is a name that has been linked with crafted, timber furniture for the last decade or so. During this period his style and his achievements in woodwork became well recognised; so too did his contribution to the whole industry of crafted furniture. When he first seriously started out on his career it was during the 1970's, a period he refers to as the 'deco revolt' when a kind of post-and-rail style had become synonymous with handcrafted furniture.

It was Wilson's efforts, together with a handful of others, that lifted the craft of furniture making in New Zealand out of that image to become a more definite art form, where a well-designed and handmade piece was seen as a form of expression.

"I was also one of the instigators of the Woodworkers Guild," said Wilson, "which was the first social co-operative of furniture makers who worked together to achieve better results in the practical aspects of their craft."

Working mostly alone in a small studio at home, he learnt, he said, self-reliance and gained enormous insight into the design of good furniture and the practical aspects of

making it.

"I had to uncover the whole lot — from elementary constructional details about solid timber furniture right through to balance, line and proportion."

Initially, working on his own had a lot to offer. He was free to pursue any direction without the influence of anyone else; but towards the end of this successful, twelve-year period, his thinking began to change. Looking back he now believes he had begun to exhaust the value of working by himself — had drawn as much as he was able out of it and now needed the benefits of a broader interaction with others.

"I became aware," he said, "that there is a great deal of enjoyment in the experience of being exposed to alternative points of view and that you don't necessarily come up with the best design solutions on your own. It was, I suppose, a letting go process — having the confidence to allow others to have an input into my work and recognising that it was valuable."

He also joined the Crafts Council and this too was a major influence on his career.

"Through access to the World Craft Movement I saw that, in some countries, craft was not just an alternative activity but something that referred to the very roots of the country. There was an influence working that was purposely supported by the industries. Creative craftspeople were taken out of their own context to work among groups of people who did not have the advantage of that background. These were often manufacturers.

"Pooling their skills stimulated and

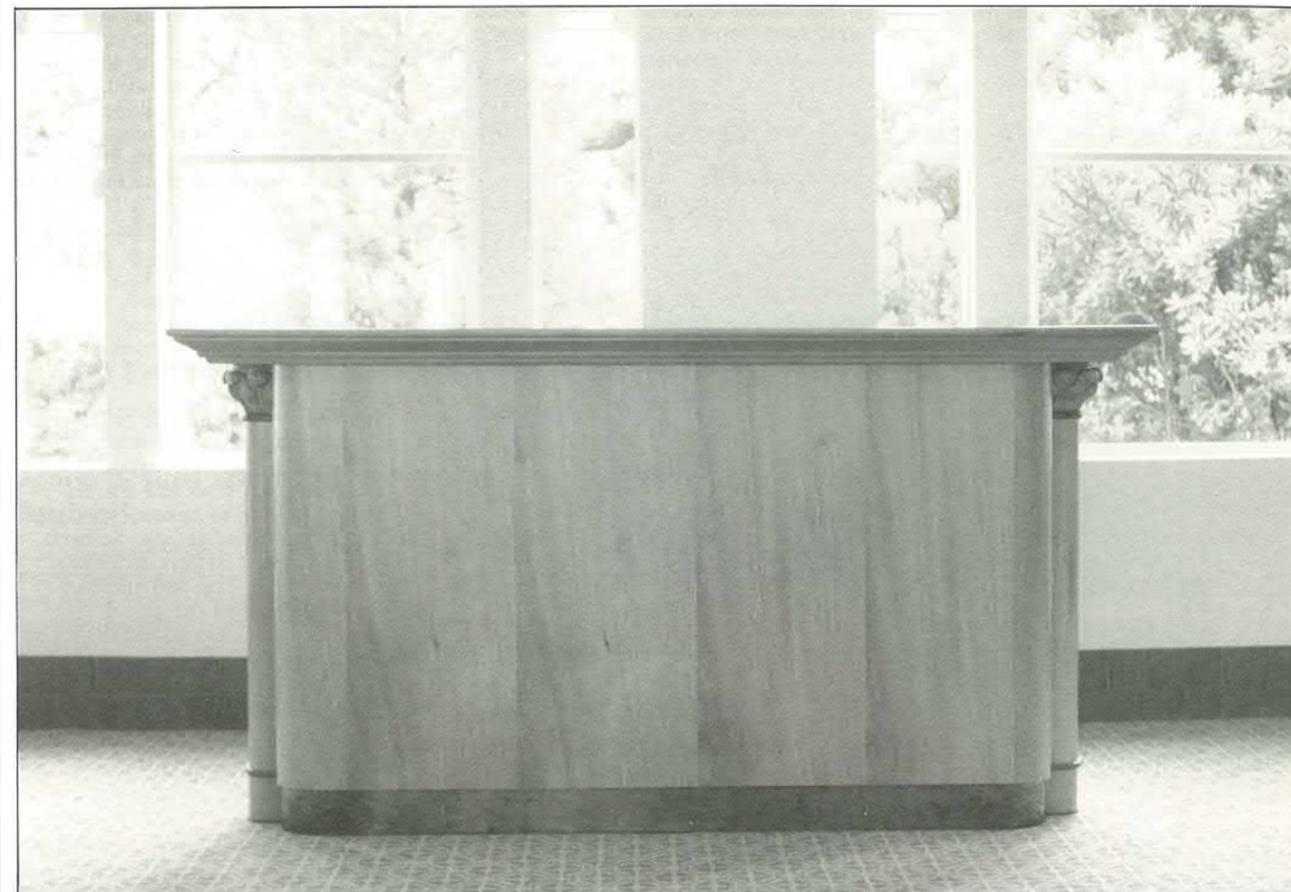
developed the production of good, better or excellent furniture for a broader market which, in turn, altered public perception of what good design is."

This has tremendous advantages both ways. The craftsman gets to see through interaction with industry, that what was achieved in the workshop or studio has greater implications than they ever imagined; that their innovative and hard-won results in technical areas, in making designs work, in harmony, balance and flow and their experimentations with new materials can open up new possibilities for large-scale manufacture.

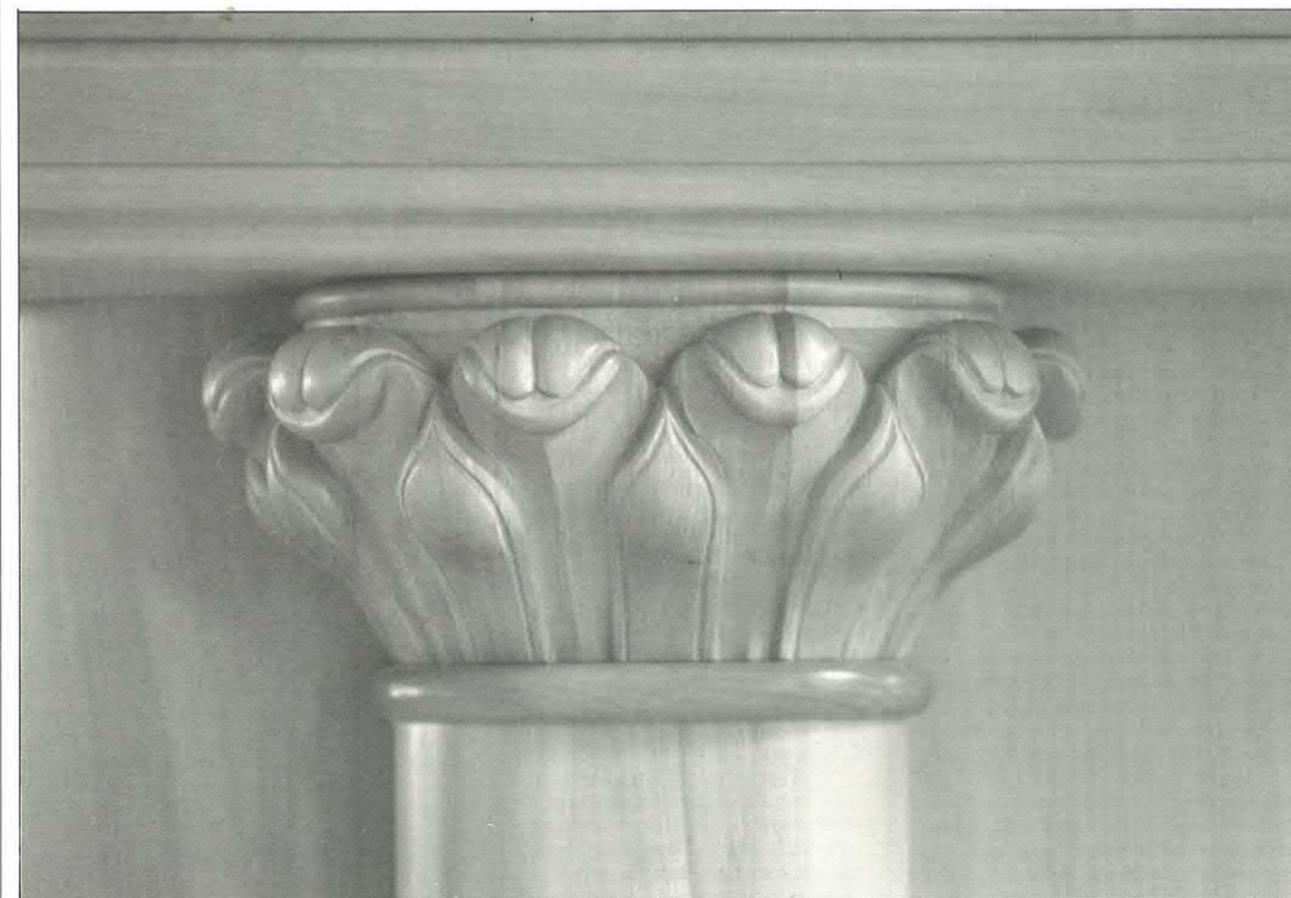
Observing all this Wilson made a conscious decision about two years ago to change direction. This was catalysed by his experience as craftsman-in-residence at Gippsland School of Art during September 1985 where, he said, he saw the broad width of opportunities that were available to him.

Back in New Zealand he looked for an opening in industry where he could contribute his skills, and found it in the position of Auckland manager of Backhouse Interiors who are local manufacturers of commercial furniture using mainly Italian designs. "Their requirement from me might seem on the surface to have little to do with the designing or making of furniture," he said. "They wanted an administrator to run their business in Auckland efficiently and profitably.

"My long range view, however, contains a lot more possibilities. There is the probability for instance, that Backhouse will be able to draw on my unique skills and feed them into their own industry to influence the direction it will take."



Roland Seibertz: Bar Counter, Matai Steel Auckland University Foyer



Close Up: Capital Bar Counter Auckland University Foyer

Since he began the task in May 1986 Wilson says he has already observed and learnt a lot.

He has realised, for instance that the reason that many craftspeople in general have so often stumbled during their time as makers is because they have been slow to recognise how important it is to market their products correctly.

Amongst his peers it has become obvious that those who are recognised are those who have a good grasp of what it is to market well.

"It has become apparent," he said, "that we have had a tendency to put too much energy into creativity without realising that it is only one element of being a maker — a part of the process but not the whole. We have been stretching the boundaries of our own endeavours without producing enough of the sort of thing that people can hang on to."

And is he happy with the changes he has made?

"It's been a big step. As yet I can't give an unequivocal answer. It's too early; but I'm enjoying the challenge and the change of environment. Occasionally I miss the relaxed ambience of the studio. Although, weighing it all up this is where I would rather be."

Roland Seibertz

Roland Seibertz has not been involved with the New Zealand craft scene for a long period of time but his work in the area of fine arts furniture has quickly been recognised as intelligent, sensitive and unique.

At 34 years of age, Seibertz has already trodden a varied path. As a young man in West Germany he completed his degree in architecture but was so 'fed up' with the direction European architecture was taking at that time that, once qualified, he never practised. From the rather dry environment of architectural school he became immediately absorbed in archaeological restoration and worked on a large set of drawings for the excavation of Roman churches in the south of Baden-Wurtemberg. The drawings were later published in book form.

In 1979 he first came to New Zealand, keen now to pursue fine arts. He found, he said, a conducive and healthy environment and determined to come back to experience and work amongst it.

Architects and artists however, are not on the list of acceptable immigrants; and so, on his return to Germany, he began an apprenticeship as a cabinet maker. He was lucky, he said, to spend this three-year period in an old, established and well-known workshop in Munich where he received a fascinating and educational training in the craft of furniture making.

For the first year he worked with only hand tools learning traditional methods of construction. In his second year he came to understand the precise knowledge of machine skills and it was, during this time that he realised his own capabilities as a craftsman.

Siebertz finally got the go ahead to emigrate to New Zealand in 1980 and on Waiheke Island began a period of work as a fine artist. He enjoyed success for his rather enigmatic water colour paintings but after three years was ready to move on to something that could earn him a steadier income.

Crafted furniture had a great deal of appeal. He entered a workshop studio in Devonport, rented machines and space and began work in solid timbers building domestic and office furniture for private commissions. In a remarkably short time he became a significant and respected name in the local craft world.

In November 1985 Siebertz submitted a design which won him the commission to furnish the director's office of the new QEII offices in Wellington. This gave him his first chance of carrying out extended work in solid timber furniture. It also gave him an opportunity, in a wider sense, to put into practise one of his strongest design philosophies — that the creation of a piece of furniture should be influenced by the room or building that it is placed in and by the people who use it.

"The Arts Council offices," said Seibertz, "was the first time I had really built anything in close context with a room and was therefore an opportunity to express my conviction that one must apply a sense of interior design to furniture; must look at a space and devise something that is completely compatible with it."

In 1984 he became a member of The Works which is a co-operative of craftspeople in Devonport. He had confidence and firm plans to establish his own workshop and produce his own style in design and cabinet making. Another craftsman joined him and later three more to make a team that he values highly.

But, in the same way that Carin Wilson had, he came to feel the need to make contact with other people. The studio full-time was becoming claustrophobic.

And then in the strange way that things often happen when one is ready for them, he won a commission to design the interior of the lecture hall, its stage, seating and tables, and the old art building of the University of Auckland.

This was no simple commission. "It is one thing," said Seibertz, "to design with shape and material. It is quite another to design furniture with moveable parts. Designing then becomes an engineering and construction task which requires the skill of industrial designers. Working

with their particular abilities and mine to produce something that, not only functions well, but refers to the building in its design and awakens in an observer a spontaneous interest, was exceptionally rewarding. It was also good to be involved in the creation of something that could be mass produced and doing it from the point of view of an artist not a tradesman.

In a way this was something along the lines of the consolidated workshops of Europe where woodworkers, metal workers and painters together create the interior of a building.

This discovery, through his efforts at the university, was a catalyst for another shift in Seibertz' work.

Unlike Wilson who had left his workshop behind to become involved with marketing and selling, Seibertz still spends about 50 percent of his time in his workshop and studio.

There are aspects of the actual making, he says, that fascinate him so much he will probably never get away from them. But the other half of his working life is now spent on the road talking to manufacturers and discovering the satisfaction of having the help of other mediums and skills to achieve a more interesting or different result.

He works with industry whenever he can and is moving away from pure woodcraft to work with those that specialise in metal. One thing is certain, Seibertz' work is unlikely to remain static. In everything he has so far undertaken to do he has displayed a heightened sensitivity and response to shape, colour, texture and space and an understanding of what is exactly appropriate for a particular situation.

His future will be worth keeping an eye on.

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Jade of the Pacific

Russell Beck backgrounds the setting up of this exhibition, a selection from which is now touring New Zealand.

Jade is an expression of the active forces within this unique plant, providing humans with the most durable medium to record their presence.

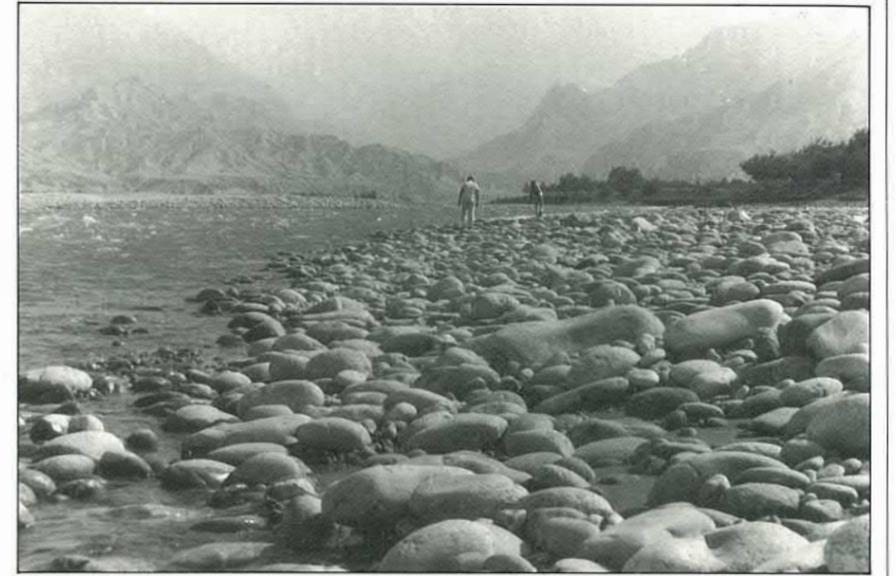
In New Zealand many call jade "greenstone" a term others feel which understates such a beautiful medium used and appreciated by other cultures for thousands of years. So what is jade? Briefly it is a group term for two separate but similar minerals, nephrite and jadeite. Jadeite is rare and is found in Burma and Central America whereas nephrite occurs in several countries, especially on the Pacific rim. New Zealand jade is nephrite — the toughest and most durable natural material known. The Maori people who came to New Zealand over 1000 years ago soon found and utilised jade (pounamu) for many purposes. It became an important part of their culture and today contemporary New Zealand carvers have an advantage in that they draw on this rich legacy established by the Maori people long ago.

In April at the Southland Museum and Art Gallery, Edith Ryan, QEII Arts Council Crafts Manager, officially opened "Jade of the Pacific", an exhibition of contemporary jade carving from artists in New Zealand and countries bordering the Pacific. Included with the 350 guests at the opening function was a South Australian geologist and a delegation of Chinese geologists from the Ministry of Geology and Mineral Resources in China. Their presence was the culmination of events which had their beginnings several years earlier.

In 1980 Alf Poole and I gave a jade carving demonstration at the World Craft Council Conference in Vienna. En route we took the opportunity to visit jade sources and carvers in the USA, Canada and Germany. We spent an interesting week in California on the Monterey coast looking for jade, then another week in Vancouver BC visiting many of the carvers and jade suppliers. Bad weather prevented us from flying to the jade mines in the mountains. We then travelled north to Alaska and spent 10 days in perpetual sunshine

Kiwi's prospecting for Jade on the Karakax River in China.

Photo R. J. Beck.



near Kobuk, an Eskimo village inside the Arctic Circle and the source of Alaskan jade. Under the watchful eye of some brown bears we found the in situ source and numerous stream pieces. I even stumbled across a 45 kg jade boulder on the airstrip which had been bulldozed out of the tundra. Although jade was used by the Eskimos and North West Coast Indians for a very long time, the work of contemporary carvers which we saw did not draw on this rich art heritage and unfortunately this still appears to be the case.

A few years later and our thoughts once again turned to visiting jade sources in the Pacific, especially Asia and Australia. This time it was Australia. Jade occurs in Australia near Tamworth in New South Wales and at Cowell, South Australia — the latter being the most important area. In April 1986 Alf Poole, John Edgar and I visited Cowell where thousands of tonnes of jade outcrop in the semi-desert of the Eyre Peninsula. The stone is renowned for its deep green to black colour and is sought after by carvers all over the world. We also visited the few carvers in Adelaide and Melbourne. The potential for Australian jade is high, however at the moment it has to compete with opal and other brightly coloured gem materials and it will take some time before an appreciation for jade, similar to that which we enjoy in New Zealand, is established.

The jade story began in China some 6000 years ago and no study of jade is complete without the inclusion of China. The famous Chinese source for nephrite jade is the mountains and rivers in the Hotan region of Xinjiang, a huge province on the western side of China. The region is mountainous, remote and closed to foreign visitors. After about a year and a half of negotiations with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Chinese Embassy and organisations in China for a visit to study jade our request was accepted

by the Chinese Ministry of Geology and Mineral Resources who arranged a comprehensive itinerary to Hotan and other places of interest. Our group had now grown in size to six — Alf Poole and myself from Invercargill, Brian Ahern, Glenorchy; John Edgar and Murray Gray, Auckland, and Stan Leaming of British Columbia.

We spent a week in the Beijing area visiting museums, historic buildings, jade collections, carving factories and the Great Wall, and then flew 2500km west across China to Urumqi, then across the Taklamakan Desert to the Hotan Oasis. For the next week we went on field excursions up the Yurungkax and Karakax Rivers looking for jade. The rivers have been the main collecting grounds for thousands of years yet we all found pieces; some quite large and a range of colours, including the most precious white jade. Hotan is an exotic place at the base of the Kunlun Mountains and the friendliness of the Uygur and Chinese people made our stay so pleasant. For jade lovers, Hotan is the Mecca and we were privileged to be among the few Europeans to visit this region in a long time. The feeling of being there alone was deep and rewarding. We made many friends with our hosts and the local people and were reluctant to leave.

We returned to the east coast via Urumqi and Shanghai. A treat in Shanghai was to visit the Museum and actually hold some fabulous 3000-year-old jade artefacts recently recovered from archaeological sites. The workmanship and design were superb and although humbling gave us carvers renewed inspiration. We travelled by train and barge to Yangzhou, a beautiful city near the Yangtze River. It was here that jade carving had a special significance being for a long time a centre for carvers. Many famous carvings were produced, especially the carved whole boulders. We saw several at the



1 Kevin Baker - Frog Fondle piece. N.Z. Jade.

2 Richard Cotgrove - Ram's head. N.Z. Jade.



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3 Tim Thomson (Australia). Tortoise. Cowell Jade. Australia.

4 Neil Hanna. Bangle and Ring. Jade from many sources.

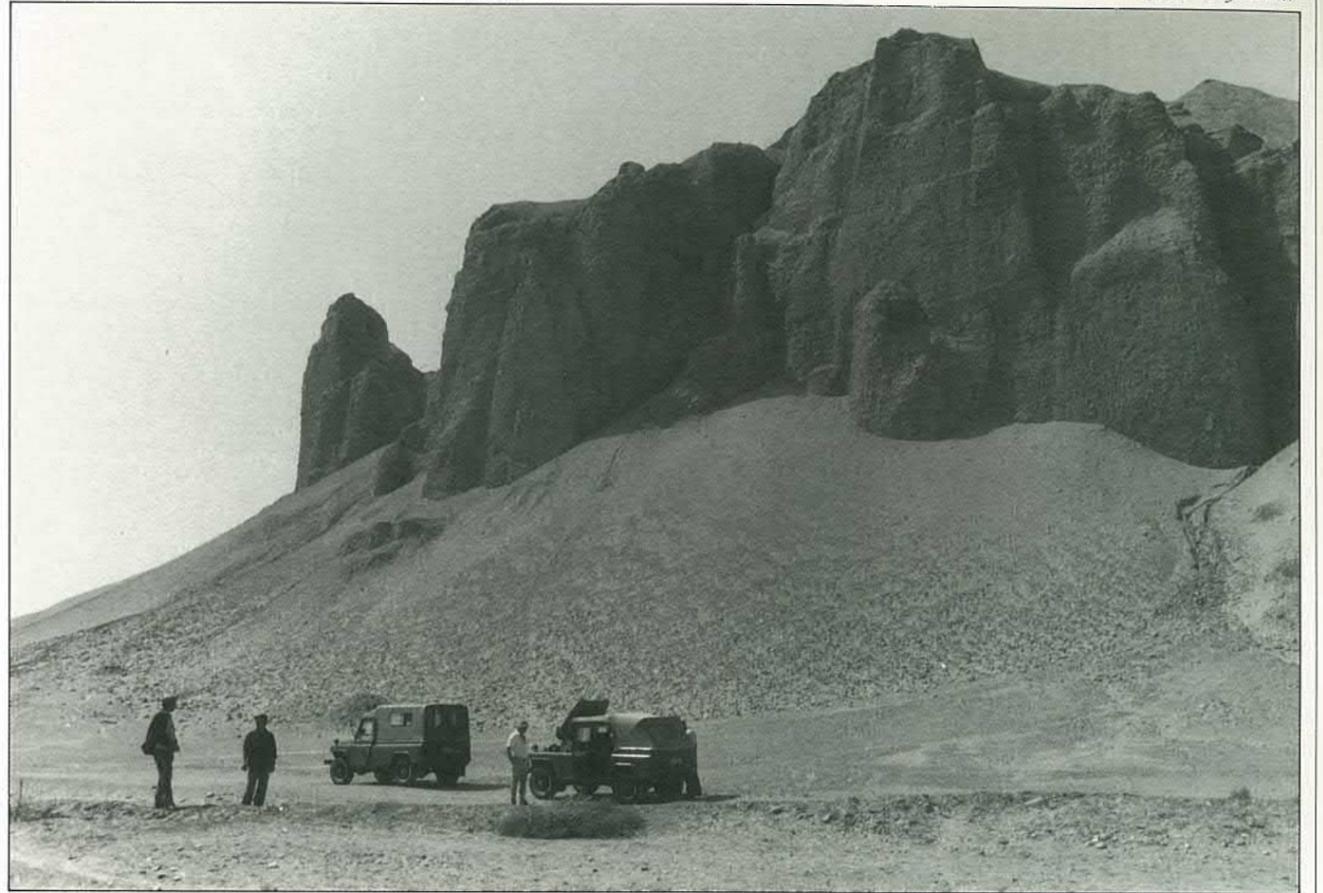
5 Korean Jade. Natural Jade with chain carved from one piece.



3

Resting the jeeps in the desert near the Karakax River, China.

Photo: R. J. Beck.



Forbidden City in Beijing, including one which weighed over five tonnes. The factory still specialised in this work and we saw many examples from large to small being carved. These were very good and outshone the more detailed designs generally produced by the jade factories. We had spent three amazing weeks in China with our hosts from the Ministry of Geology and Mineral Resources and when we parted invited them to visit New Zealand sometime. Little did we realize that they would attend the opening of our jade show only seven months later.

From China we visited Taiwan and Korea, both with deposits and a long history of jade appreciation. Taiwan is a small island but mountainous with similar scenery and geology to the South Island of New Zealand. We were driven by jeep up steep mountain tracks to the jade mines and prospected the rivers with rewarding results. Many Taiwanese family lapidary businesses manufacture nephrite jewellery and some carve, but mostly copies of earlier Chinese designs, but one artist we visited did large modern sculptural pieces in jade. On the whole, Taiwanese stone is very similar to New Zealand jade. The National Palace Museum at Taipei houses a fantastic collection of Chinese jades and is beautifully presented. Again we were fortunate to see first hand some early neolithic Taiwanese jade artefacts over 3000

years old that were recently excavated.

The group continued on to South Korea, a country with beautiful scenery especially in Autumn. Our objective there was a jade mine near Chuncheon not too far from the border with North Korea. We were not disappointed, Mr Kim the mine owner had pumped it out especially for us and we had a most enthusiastic morning with him exploring the many tunnels of the mine. The quality of the stone is excellent, being white to pale green with brown zones, making a very attractive material for carving. Contemporary carving in Korea is in its infancy and we saw some interesting work based on chain designs.

Having visited the countries in the Pacific rim with jade, the idea of an exhibition featuring carving from this region developed inevitably and was sponsored by the Trust Bank Southland Art Foundation in association with the Southland Museum and Art Gallery.

The exhibition features 56 pieces, mainly from 11 invited New Zealand artists — John Edgar, Donn Salt, Richard Cotgrove, Ross Arkle, Neil Hanna, Glenys Parry, Robyn Barclay, Ian Boustridge, Ray Ansin, Kevin Baker, Alan Brown, plus carvings from Claudine Top and Tim Thomson, Australia; Lyle Sopel, Canada; Don Wobber, USA; with representative pieces from Korea and

China. The exhibition is supported with large colour cibachrome photographs of jade occurrences and the environment in which it is found in New Zealand, Australia, Canada, California, Alaska, China, Taiwan and Korea.

Several styles of work are represented which in many ways states the present position of carving. Much of the New Zealand and Asian work shows a maturity and an understanding of the medium which undoubtedly stems from the indigenous appreciation. Jade has many qualities and a sensitive carver will explore and develop these within the design but yet retain simplicity and the integrity of the stone.

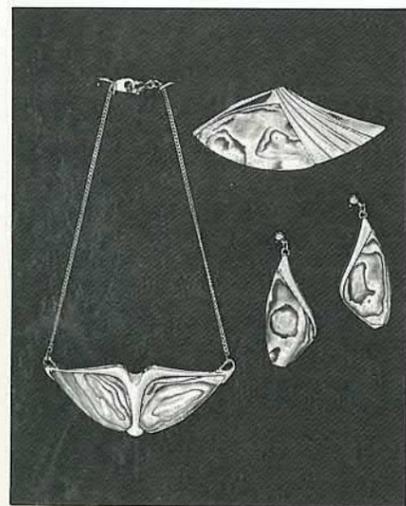
Our Chinese friends from the Ministry of Geology and Mineral Resources came to New Zealand last month. They spent two weeks with us looking at our jade deposits and speaking with fellow New Zealand carvers and geologists. The opportunity to share this experience with them here was the sequel or bonus to the China visit and emphasised the unique relationships between people and jade.

Russell J. Beck

A reduced selection of the Exhibition "Jade of the Pacific" will tour New Zealand throughout 1987. This has been made possible by a grant from the QEII Arts Council of New Zealand.

Craft/Design/ Industry

A partnership between the craftspeople and industry has often been seen as a production ideal. From the Morris led British crafts revival it was commonly supposed that in such a partnership all virtue lay with the craftspeople. That in fact the craftspeople's mission was to transform industry so that somehow it was no longer industry. Well that's the commonly held view of what happens when the craftspeople and industry get together. But what actually happens when one of New Zealand's leading craftsman/jewellers, Nick Charlton, joins forces with a leader in what most New Zealanders would call the 'souvenir trade', Ariki Industries, is quite another story. "In January this year, Philip Clarke visited the Auckland office of Ariki Industries to speak to Nick Charlton and general manager Cathy Bellamy."



The Company

The story of Ariki Industries and Nick Charlton starts with the appointment of Cathy Bellamy as General Manager in 1984. She says "no one knows of Ariki, for forty-five of its fifty-five years it had consciously had a low profile. Yet it is in fact the largest jewellery company in Australasia producing a wide range of paua jewellery, it employs about one hundred and fifty people most of whom work at the Blenheim production plant. After taking up the position of General Manager Bellamy took the entire Ariki range, about six hundred pieces, to Europe where fifty per cent of Ariki's annual production is sold. Belgian, British and French contacts told her that for the most part the range was of solid middle of the road design and that all of it was very well made. But there were items in the range that weren't good. Everyone agreed that the range needed some new designs to revitalise it. The last professionally designed pieces had been "designed" in house. Not quite sure of where to go for design skills Bellamy rang Jolyon Saunders, Dean of Elam School of Fine Arts to suggest that some students might be interested in one or two design projects. Saunders mentioned the approach to Nick Charlton who was a part-time design tutor. He was very interested. It was the start of the relationship.

The Designer

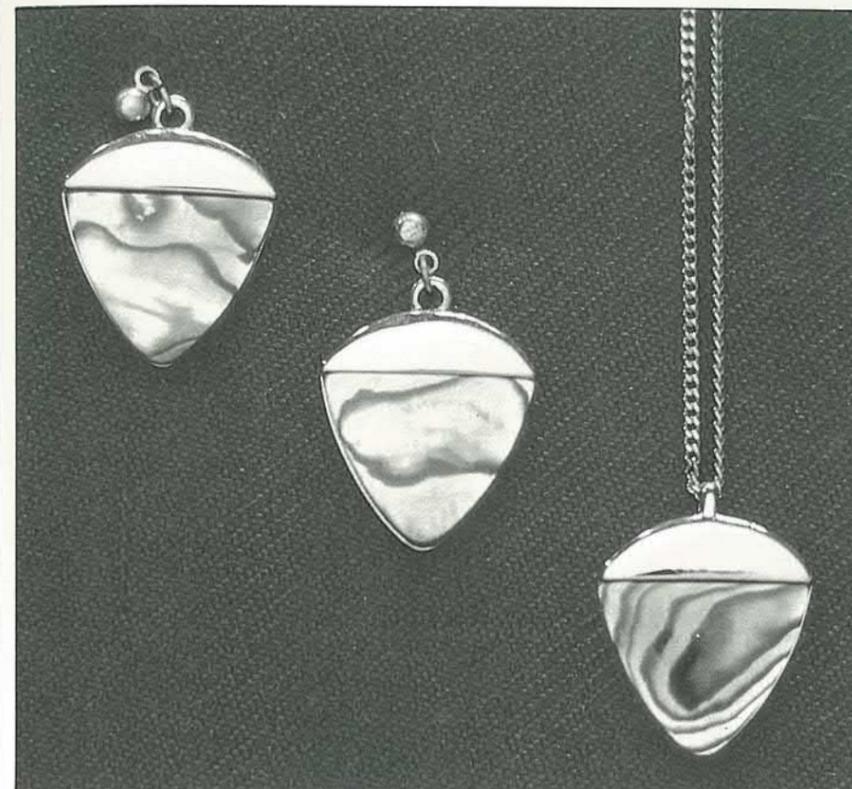
Nick Charlton, when he heard of Ariki's need for a designer, was a full-time member of Fingers, Auckland's retail jewellery co-operative. He had graduated from Elam in 1979 where he had specialised in jewellery but also studied industrial design under Peter Haythornthwaite. Despite majoring in jewellery he wasn't keen to sell his own work and found himself employed at Fisher & Paykel as an industrial designer. Accepted he says "on the strength of my jewellery . . . working with Phil Kitchings in the design department was a very good experience. It was an introduction to industry via a very sympathetic commercial environment. Phil made it into a real learning experience". But with itchy feet he didn't stay long and headed for Europe. On his return he enrolled for a Masters course at Elam, 'to get back

into serious jewellery making. Elam provided facilities and an academic or formal environment in which I could work with two years accumulation of ideas". He brought back to New Zealand an enthusiasm for titanium which in 1982 wasn't commonly used by New Zealand jewellers. In his final year Warwick Freeman had suggested that he become a partner in Fingers or sell through them. After completing his M.F.A. he joined 'this awe-inspiring circle of people successful in making jewellery'. It is ironic given his present involvement with paua that when he joined Fingers he decided not to work with paua. His work was mostly with titanium, works which he describes as 'harder, planar and perhaps more formal than most of the work sold at Fingers'.

Cathy Bellamy's approach came at a good time for Charlton, "it coincided with a point in my career most satisfactorily. I'd been through a phase of making one-off pieces and spending between two and five days on them. I was developing an interest in producing works at a greater speed and was becoming bored with the ponderous nature of spending days and days on one piece. No longer was technique a challenge. I was interested in fast production to make for a fast turnover of ideas.

The Job

Ariki was looking for some new designs for their range. After an initial meeting Charlton went away to produce some designs for a set fee. He came back with a series of sketches which Bellamy and other staff considered. For the next six months he worked as a consultant for 15 hours a week. After six months Bellamy said that he was "too much out on a limb". So he was asked to join the company. That was fine with him because he was finding himself more and more involved with the work and was having trouble disengaging himself from his only part-time consultancy. He was finding the concept of designing paua jewellery for a largely international market — the fifty per cent of Ariki's jewellery sold in New Zealand is almost all sold to overseas visitors — both challenging and exciting. His job was now not only designing new pieces but seeing them through production and being responsible for the design of packaging and



promotional materials.

"It is necessary to make compromises and to do the best job within the existing constraints. Extremely set limitations are challenges to all aspects of design. In each new range I've tried to tackle a new problem and come up with a solution that extends the whole commercial process. A lot of mainstream commercial jewellery is designed for the expedience of production rather than any concern with the final appearance." In his first range Charlton designed pieces that were not completely enclosed by a metal surround. This imposed greater requirements on the shell cutting because there was no tolerance for imperfectly sized shell when used in this way. The second range Charlton designed features pierced surrounds which required him to have a closer than usual involvement with the patternmakers, in order to overcome some production difficulties. But being adventurous does pay off. It provides an impetus and ultimately a solution for improving the works themselves. It also gives Charlton a chance to work very closely with the patternmakers and for them to work toward solving problems together. The building of a strong relationship in this way means that the next time he proposes a design that's different the staff will bend over backwards to actualize those designs because they've got confidence in him.

A third as yet unreleased range is of sterling silver and paua which in terms of price and size is a new departure for the company. Bellamy as General Manager is adamant that

risks need to be taken, "if everything in each range works it means we aren't being adventurous". Charlton's approach is quiet but he's looking at the longterm. He believes that it's not appropriate for a "designer to lead a crusade in any company. It's a matter of building confidences and relationships and having that confidence carried down the line to the retailer. We've started with work that has a built in success factor. Each new range has something that the salesmen can talk about with enthusiasm. And with a confidence base established we can introduce more and more innovative ideas. The large paua and silver neckpiece is radical for Ariki in terms of price and size. But already the response to it from retailers is very positive". Obviously Bellamy is confident about the course charted so far because a decision has been made to keep the range as big as it presently is. So from now on whenever a piece is added to the range one existing design will be dropped.

When Charlton became full-time at Ariki he withdrew as a working member from Fingers. He took time to explain that this was not a rejection of what Fingers was but him following his own interest. The reaction to his decision within Fingers he believes was "accepting but there were some raised eyebrows . . . basically I think they wondered what the hell I did at Ariki". Since joining Ariki full-time his own work has taken a back seat. However Ariki have stated that part of his brief is to design one-off competition pieces for overseas jewellery exhibitions. In this

last year he has created a small number of pieces in titanium and paua which will be shown in three European shows. The opportunity to work on competition pieces gives him a chance to step back from the constraints of commercial production and play with a few ideas. There is definitely no expectation that the competition pieces are prototypes for commercial production. Increasingly these shows are attracting designer craftspeople so participation and attendance provide Charlton with an opportunity to see what is happening across a broad spectrum of European jewellery. And of course his participation is good for the profile of paua in Europe and the profile of the company.

Both Bellamy and Charlton have one long term goal in common. To see New Zealanders wear paua jewellery. Most New Zealanders never see Ariki's products because it is principally souvenir shops that stock Ariki jewellery. Because of its middle of the road appeal it isn't yet acceptable to fashion outlets and the more conservative outlets have still to discover paua as acceptable to New Zealanders. Bellamy believes that Ariki's products are as well made as many handcrafted pieces of jewellery and because of their commercial production, available to a far wider market than any handmade pieces of jewellery. She insists Ariki and craft jewellers have common cause since March 1986 when the government freed up the export of paua shell.

From now on in New Zealand the hand and commercially made product will be competing with badly made products from Asia, occasionally using pirated Ariki designs made from New Zealand paua. Bellamy perceives a close relationship between the hand made and machine made piece of jewellery. To strengthen this relationship Ariki have become Crafts Council of New Zealand corporate members and are sponsoring a display cabinet in the Crafts Council Gallery which will show jewellery featuring indigenous materials.

Ariki's sponsorship of a cabinet for New Zealand jewellers illuminates how successful the relationship between Charlton and Ariki has been and how it works. For a start its built on confidence and creativity — Bellamy was runner up for 1986 Business Woman of the Year. It's established common ground and aspirations for both hand craft and commercial jewellery worlds. It has also opened an avenue for permanent interaction between two areas which people would deem polar opposites.

Following the February resignation of Cathy Bellamy, Nick Charlton felt that the emphasis on new design would be reduced, and has also resigned from the company to pursue other design activities, some of which will be in industry.



Photographs – Ian Hutchison.

Richard Parker

An update on the work plans of this Kaeo potter.

Richard Parker is certainly not a shy person and often has a lot to say in promoting the work of friends. He doesn't mind discussing his own work processes but doesn't too much savour talking at length about the detailed meanings of it. However, he is prepared to offer a partial explanation and doesn't really need to add that his inspiration has much to do with living near Kaeo in Northland, with his wife Nan and children in a fairly isolated spot he feels totally identified with.

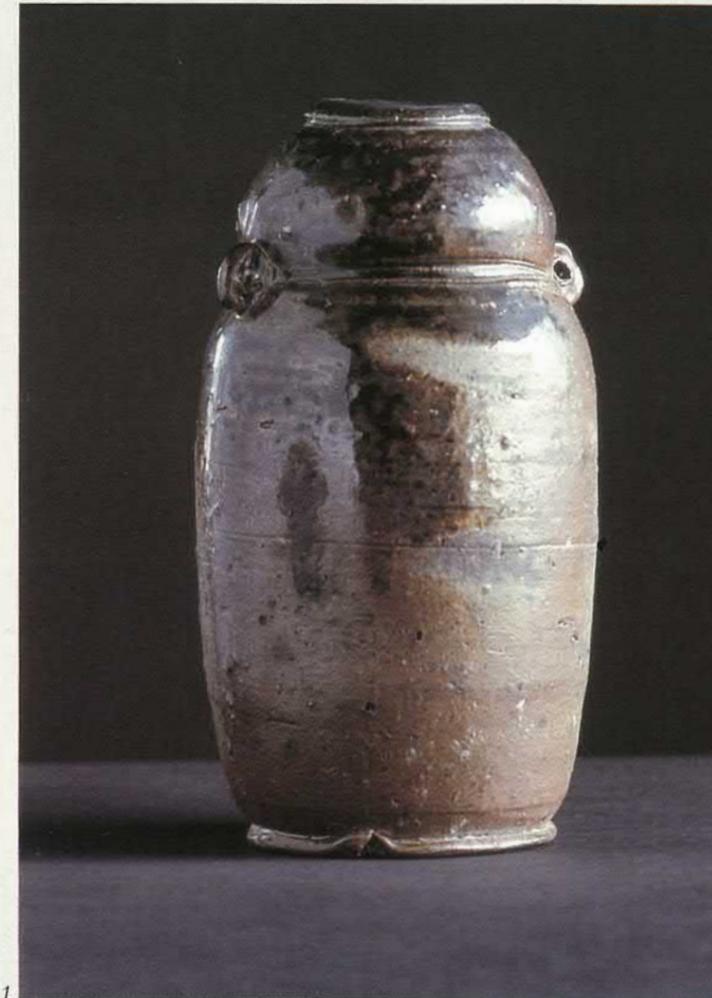
He is talking about his collections of things. "They often have a lot to do with writing, but it's a different language — a natural language — I suppose it's really a language of symbols. I've been picking things up and collecting them and arranging them into sequences for a long time, but I haven't been presenting them till quite recently because I didn't think anybody was interested." His installation, presented in a joint exhibition, *Journeys*, with artist Shona Davies at Bowen Galleries in Wellington in April, was full of all

sorts of personal and environmental memorabilia, both found and made: dishes and pottery shards, old puriri piles, a mat and kete, nikau fronds, shells, leaves, rocks, photographs, seaweed and a cracked old blue and white cup.

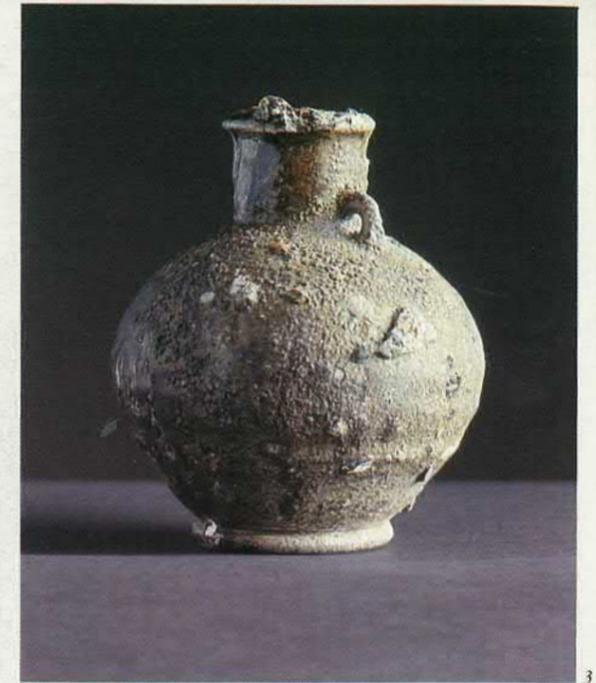
"Bits and pieces from around the place and in the bush — a bit like collecting shells on the sea shore and I'm trying to do things with those now — all the found objects. They always come from fairly wild sorts of areas — collecting them is the sort of thing I don't think I could do if I lived in town and it is something I have been doing for far longer than I have been potting.

"Their language has spread to the decoration of pots but it's the sort of thing that's never fully explained and I don't really aim to explain it to anybody. I think where they connect with people is somewhere subconsciously. People seem to understand and they just relate naturally to them — if they don't let their twentieth century need to know everything interfere — then they can

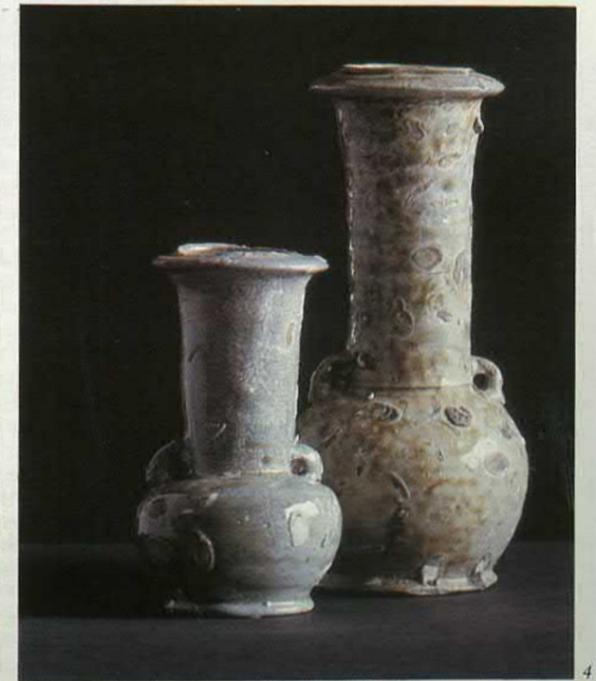
1. Lugged vase – leather finish.
2. Boat Dishes
3. Lugged vase
4. Long-necked vases
5. Dish with Pipi markings (dishes are held apart during firing by pipi shells)
6. Signal dishes (2 piece) (Collection Dowse Art Museum)
7. Tiles



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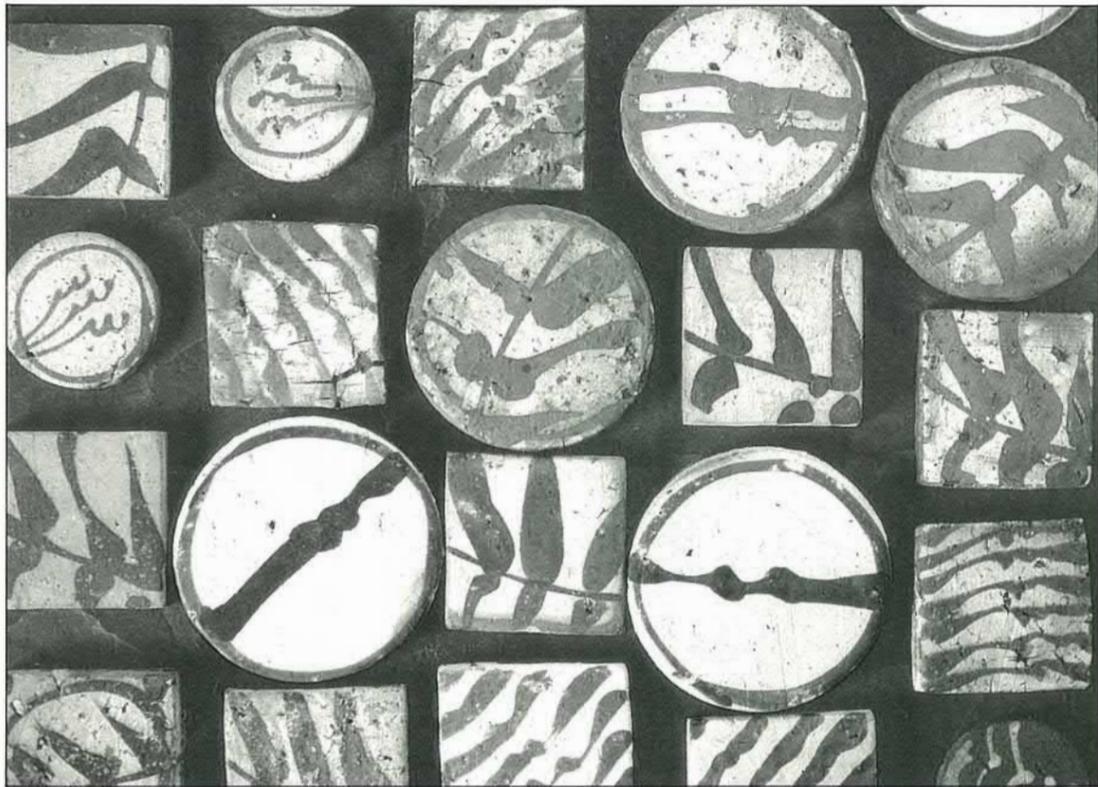
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understand quite clearly.

"The symbols relate very, very closely to our country. It's very difficult to actually say but I feel they're all life encouraging signals. They don't come from me — they come through the work. I sort of feel like a medium passing them on which makes talking about them very difficult.

"Like I'm painting tiles tomorrow and I don't know what the patterns are till I pick up the brush. I shouldn't say any more because I don't put them into words for myself — I just put them down."

Changes are however in the offing, stimulated by his return to working at home in Kaeo full-time. In January Parker moved back there from a part-time existence in Whangarei where he was involved with the Kauri Crafts Trust for just over two years. This trust was originally set up by potter Yvonne Rust, among others, and she was an early Parker friend, teacher and mentor. At the beginning of his time there Parker was the scheme's administrator, "managing the outfit" and working with young unemployed people attached to the trust. In the last 10 months he was given a QEII Arts Council artist in residence grant.

"That residency was the best thing that happened but it was extremely difficult too because it was very public — that's the idea of those things. There was a constant stream of visitors and you had to be constantly explaining yourself which can be very hard when you're developing an idea — you don't get time to fully explain things to

yourself when other people are asking you to explain it to them.

"But it was good for discipline and that sort of thing, working like that, and it was really good preparation for coming home. I was going like a cut cat and I've been working really hard since I got back.

"It's the quietness here. The city's got all sorts of distractions and at home the whole day is in front of you and you just work through it. I really find Kaeo is fabulous for that. Some people could get bored — it's lonely and it's so quiet, which I notice much more now than when I worked here before — but it's good too. You don't have constant interruptions — the phone doesn't go — but it was great to have that Whangarei time as a contrast to this.

"Having lived in town I think probably the work will get a lot bigger." Parker has recently rebuilt his simple earth tunnel kiln to accommodate larger pieces. "I used to see things in quite a small sort of way — for small houses I suppose — but all of a sudden I'm aware of city spaces that are much bigger surprisingly enough — you'd think the feel of the country would be bigger. It's very difficult to know where it's all going — I'm just aware that there are more jobs that have to be done.

"There are different times of the day when I find I can do different things. I work virtually every day and I find early on is when all the physical work gets done and all the repetitive aspects of it. That sort of thing happens and when all the nervous energy's burnt off later in the day, then I can come to the really delicate

parts like all the painting and that sort of thing.

"I'm getting back into the old rhythms again and getting the workshop open again so things are happening in large rhythms. I want to make larger and fire for longer periods — up to 8 days." He uses roughly grogged local clays for his work, often repeating the colours and some forms found in the scarred and eroding landscape round him.

"Also the type of things I'm making are screaming out to be made of other things as well — like bronze — so I'm looking forward to that too. I've got a series of things that have absolutely got to be made in bronze now! I suspect I'll probably get a crucible together here, all the knowhow is in this district with Chris Booth and Peter Yates but I don't really know yet — it's still a little way off."

The functions of his pieces "are usually to do with modifying interiors and making them a bit easier to live in. The thing I notice particularly in modern buildings is that there's a great lack of texture — a lot of hard lines — that's where this sort of work really comes in to its own.

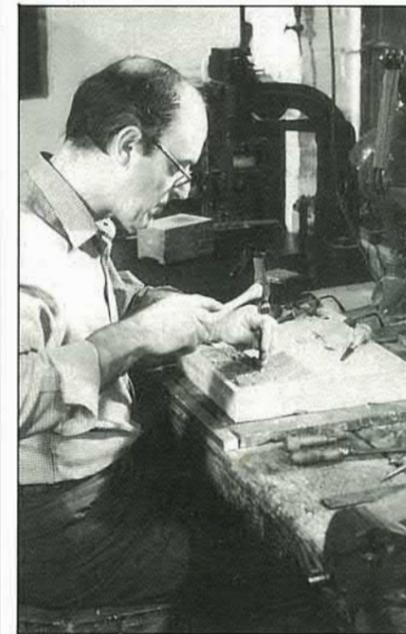
"I'm not sure how it will be presented in future but I certainly work in collections all the time, though I find it difficult to show them. The financial aspects of showing from where I live are very demanding — costs I find difficult to reconcile with family spending — but I think it's got to be done all the same.

Louise Guerin

Once used to print fine quality silks for the world's most elite markets, the handcarved printblocks comprising the Cantrol Collection are now treasured collector items. Richard Stephens explains why.

Handcarved Printblocks

Carving a wood block at David Evans.



The saying 'old soldiers never die, they simply fade away', applies with equal force to some old industries.

The realisation that an historic industry has ceased to exist generally comes long after the workforce has gone and the equipment has been broken up or destroyed. At that point a sense of nostalgia develops and a rush to find mementos begins — a collector's item is born.

One of the most venerable industries of all is handblock printing, which traces its pedigree to China and the pre-Christian era when letterpress printing started. Now, over 2,000 years later, handblock printing as an industry in Europe is fading into oblivion, its skills largely forgotten and its beautiful, handcarved printing blocks virtually destroyed. Fortunately, a remarkable collection of old 19th century European printblocks, assembled by an English textile company over a period of 150 years, has recently come to light.

Recession, a company takeover and a chance encounter created the opportunity for two collectors, keen to expand their meagre collection, to

acquire what is now considered to be the last great library of silk-printing blocks left in the world.

Over the centuries different kinds of printblocks have been made for different fabrics but, not surprisingly, the finest of all were those made for silk. The Chinese Empress Hsi Ling Shih (2 600 BC) discovered the strength and resilience of a filemanet 0.002 mm thick and up to 900 metres in length, which is produced by the silkworm when spinning its cocoon.

Spun into thread and woven, it creates a textile material without peer. Since that time succeeding generations have employed all the vices and some of the virtues in the quest for silk. Meticulously carved by master craftsmen from woods such as sycamore, pearwood, walnut and lime and frequently inset with strips of copper or brass or cast pewter, silkprinting blocks reflect the splendid quality of the material.

Childhood experiments with potatoes and lino cuts are as far as most people ever get to learning about the intricacies of handblock printing and the results, when compared with handblocked silk, are as far removed as a rustic bench is from a Chippendale chair. No printer can be better than the quality of the block with which he prints, but few printers are capable of doing full justice to the quality of the best blocks.

It took more than seven years apprenticeship to become a journeyman blockmaker and a similar time to become a journeyman printer. It took many more years to become a master of either craft.

A master blockmaker had to work with equal facility in wood and metal to produce a diverse range of designs. Not only had he to be a supremely skilled and versatile craftsman but, also, he had to possess a well-developed sense of artistry.

No two sets of handblocks in the library known as the Cantrol Collection are identical, but each conforms to one or a combination of four methods of construction. These are: woodblocks, felted woodblocks, copper blocks and cast or stereo blocks.

The oldest and most widely used

were relief designs intricately handcarved from wood. The technique was the same as that developed for letterpress and has remained unchanged for over 2,000 years.

Felted woodblocks were developed because water-based textile colours do not always spread evenly on smooth wood more than 5 mm wide. Blocks required to print broader bands of colour were therefore infilled with felt. Copper blocks were introduced in the latter part of the 18th century when fine details began to be executed with brass pins (picotage) and brass/copper strips inset into the wood blocks.

Cast or stereo blocks were developed at the end of the 18th century to cater for larger printing runs where several repeats of the same motif were required. A cast or stereo block is one whereby a mould of the pattern was carefully burnt into the end grain of a block of limewood.

Separate blocks had to be cut to add each colour in design; for example, "line" blocks were used to print the overall pattern and "ground" or "peg" blocks to infill colour within and without the outline. A set of handblocks might require the use of all the methods described above and the more elaborate and detailed handblocks could take weeks to fashion. Pitch pins were inserted at the corners of each block to enable the printer to "pitch" or register the pattern in accurate repeat position on the cloth. Fingerholds were also cut into the backs of the blocks to facilitate handling. The end result was a block that, in the skilled hands of a master printer, could be used to impress a design on silk so deeply and with such fidelity that it was said to be "rooted" in the fabric. The block was also a work of art in itself.

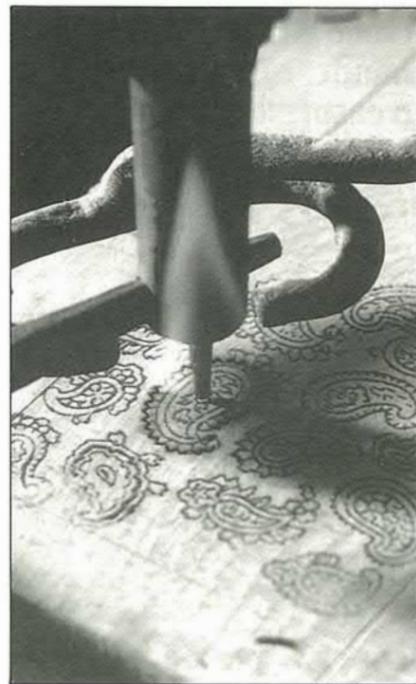
The earliest known English book on textile printing was published in 1791 under the title *The British Manufacturers' Companion and Calico Printers' Assistant*. Its detailed instructions remained virtually unchanged for the next 140 years until blockmaking ceased in Europe.

A master printer required years of practice to get the best out of the blocks and the table on which he worked. The table had to be very

strong to withstand blows from the printer's mallet or maul and had a top of metal or slate covered by a layer of woollen felt and a waterproof cover.

Every printer needed a sensitive appreciation of design and fabric, superb co-ordination, great concentration and physical stamina. The handblocks, measuring, on average, 25.4 cm square by 5 cm deep and weighing some 2 kg, had to be placed freehand, without tremor and with great precision, using variable pressure to work the design deep into the fabric. A printer working to the exacting standards needed for silk might print up to 3.6 metres per day and would make some 60 impressions per hour with no margin for error (a "joey" printers' parlance). Each impression required the printer to charge the printface of the block with colour from an impregnated pad and place it with unerring accuracy on the silk in such a way to ensure even distribution and depth of colour. The ability of the printer to adjust his technique to meet the needs of each design, the blocks, and the slightest irregularity in the surface of individual tables, was such that the precision of handblock printing has never been fully matched by other means. It was an extremely skilful and demanding craft which earned the bowler-hatted figure of a master printer great respect and prestige.

Although blockprinting as a craft has been known and practised for more than 2,000 years, its widespread use on textiles depended on the ability to fix colours. It was in India that knowledge and use of effective mordants really developed. Prior to the 17th century in Europe, some handblock printing of textiles had been practised and fragments of linen and silk cloth exist which were blockprinted by monks in the lower Rhineland of Germany in the years AD 900-1300. The rich and fashionable, however, during the Middle Ages in Europe, favoured heavy silks, brocades, velvets and damasks and it was not until merchant adventurers



TOP LEFT: A 19th century wooden print block with brass insets.

ABOVE: A mould of the pattern being carefully burnt into the end grain of a block of linewood to produce a matrix from which stereotypes are made.

LEFT: A cast or stereo block, developed at the end of the 18th century to cater for larger printing runs where several repeats of the same motif were required.

BOTTOM LEFT: A typical coppered block in which strips of brass/copper were inset into the wood.



from Portugal, England, France and Holland brought back handpainted cottons from India that this attitude changed.

The India cottons or chints (the Hindu word for "colour" or "variegated") created a sensation when they were first seen in England – the result of an Elizabethan corsair relieving a Portuguese ship, homeward bound from India, of her cargo! In 1631 the East India Company was granted the right to import chints into England and, by the end of the century, burgeoning demand resulted in handpainting being replaced by handblock printing to allow speedier production, and printworks were established for the first time in England, France and Holland.

Originally, the European trading companies used the handpainted India

cottons to obtain spices from the East Indies and these cottons inspired batik. The silkprint handblocks in the Cantrol Collection and the batik tjap block, therefore, have a common ancestry.

The outstanding popularity of Indian chint designs in the 17th century provoked the silk and woollen weavers of France (1686) and England (1701) to secure a ban on the import and wearing of Indian cottons, the suppression of all blocks. The ban was only partially successful and in the middle of the 18th century, shortly after a Jesuit missionary, Father Coeurdoux, recorded in great detail the composition and use of Indian dyes and sent them to France (an early instance of industrial espionage), the ban was lifted in both countries.

Over the centuries the privileged

rights of the few became the expectation of the many and increased demand led to automated methods of production that ultimately superseded the role of handcrafts. In the 17th century handpainting gave way to handblock printing and in the 19th century handblock printing was largely displaced by engraved roller printing. Handblock printing, however, continued to be used for the most exclusive and expensive materials and its pure craftsmanship captured the imagination of William Morris and the Arts and Crafts Movement. His aversion to mechanisation and the use of synthetic dyes led him to establish his own blockprinting enterprise with its own blockmaking workshop. At one time, William Morris lived close to the printworks where the Cantrol Collection was found and it is probable that he was well acquainted with the quality of the blocks in the Collection, many of which predate the period when William Morris was working (1860-1890).

Between 1840 and 1850 the number of blockprinting tables in England declined from 8,234 to 3,939 and, thereafter, every decade saw a further decline in numbers until, in the 1960s, blockprinting virtually ceased as an industry. As each company went out of business the finest blocks in its possession were acquired by rival companies and the rest were burnt to recover the value of the copper, brass and pewter insets. In France the process was accelerated by war and numbers of handblocks made by the great French blockmakers Maillaut, Le Heu and Olivier, were bought by English companies at the time of the Franco-Prussian war in 1870-1871.

Until recently it had been assumed that this steady process of attrition had destroyed all the major libraries of European silk-printing blocks and, significantly, a few museums had well-preserved examples in their collections. It was with some surprise, therefore, that two collectors of 19th century silk-print handblocks heard that one such library had survived intact. Their enquiries eventually led them to a remarkable English company that had quietly carried on its trade as dyers and commission printers of silk at Crayford, outside London, for over 150 years.

Throughout its existence the David Evans Company has printed silk of the highest quality for customers in Europe, America and the Far East. They exhibited at the Great Exhibition in 1851. It was only after the Second World War that, with improved precision, silk-screen began to displace blockprinting as the company's principal activity. In a treatise published in *Textile History* in 1983, the company was described by Dr Stanley Chapman of Nottingham University as 'the last of the old London textile printers.' He traces the origins of the company back to 1843, when a London silk merchant, David

Evans, took over an ailing textile printing company founded in 1825 by Augustus Applegarth, an inventor of genius responsible for the development of the presses for the *Times* newspaper.

The present site of the David Evans Company has been a textile printworks at least since 1740 but, as the history of Crayford as a textile centre dates back to 1681, when it was established to avoid the dirty water and polluted atmosphere of London, the date may have been even earlier. At that time, printworks were set up in the outbuildings of manors and large farmhouses and, at David Evans an old 18th century cowshed is still preserved within the complex of more modern buildings.

From its earliest days the David Evans Company acquired handblocks from firms that went out of business. Consequently their library included blocks from most of the blockmaking workshops that existed in the 19th century; workshops such as Larking, Knight and Lawrence of London, the great French blockmakers Maillaut and Le Heu of Paris and Olivier of Rouen. There are also Austrian blocks from Voralberg. David Evans received many handblocks from great libraries such as Swaiziland (1893), the famous Mertin Library (1940) and Brocklehurst Whistance (1963). The fact that throughout its long history David Evans acquired a selection of the finest blocks from other great collections meant that it had assembled under one roof all that was best of the European blockmaking industry at its peak. As such, it constituted an outstanding design archive, stretching back to the late 18th century and covering each period and style from then until the 1930s.

What has distinguished David Evans has been its ability to move with the times while retaining the best traditions of a craft company. Today David Evans remains one of the foremost dyers and printers of silk in the world, and the value placed on the high skills of the old blockmakers and printers on which its reputation was founded, has not been forgotten. If it had not been for recession and takeover, the unique library of old printblocks, which the company assembled from so many sources over so many years, would never have come onto the market but would have continued to lie in an old Victorian warehouse, covered in dust and cobwebs, as a treasured legacy and as a virtually indestructible design archive.

There can be no doubting the value of the handblocks as a design archive. The quality, range and diversity (classical, Art Nouveau, Art Deco) of the designs are such that it ranks as one of Europe's great textile legacies. Sadly, the handblocks may have been displaced by mechanical processes offering greater productivity, but the designs they carry are of great quality and remain commercially highly competitive and usable.

How close the handblock industry came to disappearing, leaving little trace of the marvellous craftsmanship it engendered, can be measured by the worldwide dream of handblocks of good quality. Museums in Europe (including the Victoria and Albert Museum in London), in America and Australia, have seized the opportunity to buy sets of handblocks from the Cantrol Collection to fill this gap.

It is expected that a number of these irreplaceable handblocks will be used by skilled entrepreneurs to revive interest in handblock printing so that its exclusive quality character and refreshing lack of uniformity will not be lost; much as William Morris and the Arts and Crafts Movement, reacting against encroaching mechanisation and mass-production methods more than a century ago, found inspiration and artistic fulfilment in this ancient craft.

The finding of the David Evans Library, now the Cantrol Collection, has attracted widespread interest. In particular, Mrs Joyce Storey, Associate Professor at the Philadelphia College of Textiles and Science in the United States, author of *Textile Printing* and an international authority on handblock printing and handblock-making, has drawn on the accumulated wisdom and experience of David Evans and the examples of handblocks contained in the Cantrol Collection, to publish a very informative treatise entitled *The Art of the Blockmaker*. In addition a 60-minute film, jointly financed by television companies in England and Ireland, has been made by the award-winning Irish director, David Shaw-Smith. The first public showing was on 4 March 1985.

It is appropriate that the visual arts should take notice of a craft that spans more than 2,000 years of creative history from the dawn of Christianity to the start of the computer age. Having all the hallmarks of true collectors' items, the handblocks in the Cantrol Collection are a notable addition to the finite stock from which the worldwide demand for decorative old artefacts has to be met. A demand which reflects the growing appreciation and interest being shown in the skill, patience and artistic sensitivity of generations of craftsmen who lived and worked long before time became part of a cost-effective equation and robotics a fact of everyday life.

A comprehensive selection of printblocks from the Cantrol Collection at Crayford in the UK is now available in Australia. Enquiries: Michael Cooper, Pascal Management Services Pty Limited, 67 Kulgoa Road, Pymble, Sydney NSW 2073. Telephone (02) 440 8051.

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The Art in Wool Award in Context

We have all at some point experienced tests, examinations, competitions, or been put into a situation where we are judged against our peers.

The experience can often be emotionally harrowing, but in a society which places value on the competitive performance the selection process becomes a method of education, of instructing us where we should improve our performance.

In every aspect of our lives we make judgements about products and it is up to manufacturers to convince consumers of the superiority of their product. Choices are made on the grounds of standards whether the standard be price, quality, service, availability or a combination of all these elements.

The philosophy of competition is then, to select the very best according to a set of standards. The competitor makes an assessment in entering a competition, and that assessment is the willingness to be judged against others and an implicit acceptance of winning or losing. The important factor in entering any competition must surely be to separate the emotional involvement with the product, from the facts surrounding standards and the criteria within those standards.

Approximately two years ago the NZ Wool Board approached the Crafts Council of NZ and the NZ Spinners Weavers and Woolcrafts Society to discuss how the Wool Board could achieve its aim of creating a national awareness of the need to raise standards of excellence and design in woolcrafts. These aims sat comfortably with all three organisations so with this unanimity of objective it was only natural that a creative approach to achieving these aims would be developed. The 'package' which developed included the creation of the Wool Board Design Award for Handcrafts in Wool, to be administered jointly by the NZ Spinners Weavers and Woolcrafts Society and the Crafts Council and to alternate each year between an award for 'Fashion in Wool' and 'Art in Wool' so that equal recognition could be given to these two distinct but equally important craft forms.

In addition to the award the NZ Wool Board also agreed to provide an annual grant of \$5,000 to the NZ Spinners Weavers & Woolcrafts Society with the understanding that this money would be used in some way to advance the interests of woolcrafts. It may be used to bring

successful and innovative overseas woolcraft artists to New Zealand as was done this year with Solvig Baas-Becking and Elizabeth Zimmerman. It may also be used to professionally prepare slides to demonstrate principles of design, especially useful for those craftspeople who have limited access to educational facilities. Other initiatives on how this grant is used are developed by the Spinners Weavers & Woolcrafts Soc.

The Wool Boards vision in developing this comprehensive package must be seen as a constructive approach towards enhancing the growth and creativity in New Zealand woolcrafts.

With this long term strategy and implicit objective of attracting New Zealand craftspeople to submit entries for the Art in Wool Award it was necessary to ensure that all three organisations were satisfied that the judging panel included those people whose national standing and integrity in terms of their knowledge of design and wool could not be questioned. All organisations were therefore in complete agreement that the judges; Margery Blackman, Judy Wilson, Graham Bennett and Shelley Marie Wilson, were unquestionably the most appropriate for the task.

The judges having clear knowledge of the aims and objectives of the Award were unanimous in their conclusion that in general the works submitted did not reach the standards of design and excellence that warranted the presentation of an award, nor indeed the mounting of an exhibition. To take this decision in the full knowledge that it would be controversial to all of those who submitted work, is indeed a courageous decision. What it says though, is that these judges were not prepared to compromise the objectives of the award. Too often in New Zealand we tend to accept mediocrity. To preserve our standard of living and expectations for quality of life we must as a nation trade internationally and increase the number of tourists from other nations. We must therefore ensure that we can compete for international markets and tourist dollars. To do that we have to develop a critical awareness of what we produce and what this panel of judges were saying in this instance was 'we haven't made it yet'.

The NZ Wool Board, Crafts Council and NZ Spinners Weavers and Woolcrafts Society see this as a challenge, — it is a challenge to all

craftspeople to become better informed about design and the production of high quality items. The selection criteria for awards and exhibition of excellence in design, which the judges agreed entries should show were:

- a thinking, innovative and original approach which extended the boundaries of tradition
- a sympathy for, and understanding of, materials (some entries used wool to imitate art-painted landscapes and were framed behind glass). There was little evidence of effort to interpret the visual and tactile qualities of wool with imagination and sensitivity.
- an informed use of colour that demonstrated a familiarity and ease with harmony, contrast, value and proportion.
- a sensitivity to the weight, direction, texture and dynamics of line as an abstract element.
- a feeling for the edge of a work and the relationship between internal statements and external boundaries.
- professional, well-constructed presentation.
- technical competence. A confidence in the techniques and their appropriateness to the design.

So where does this leave the woolcrafts person?

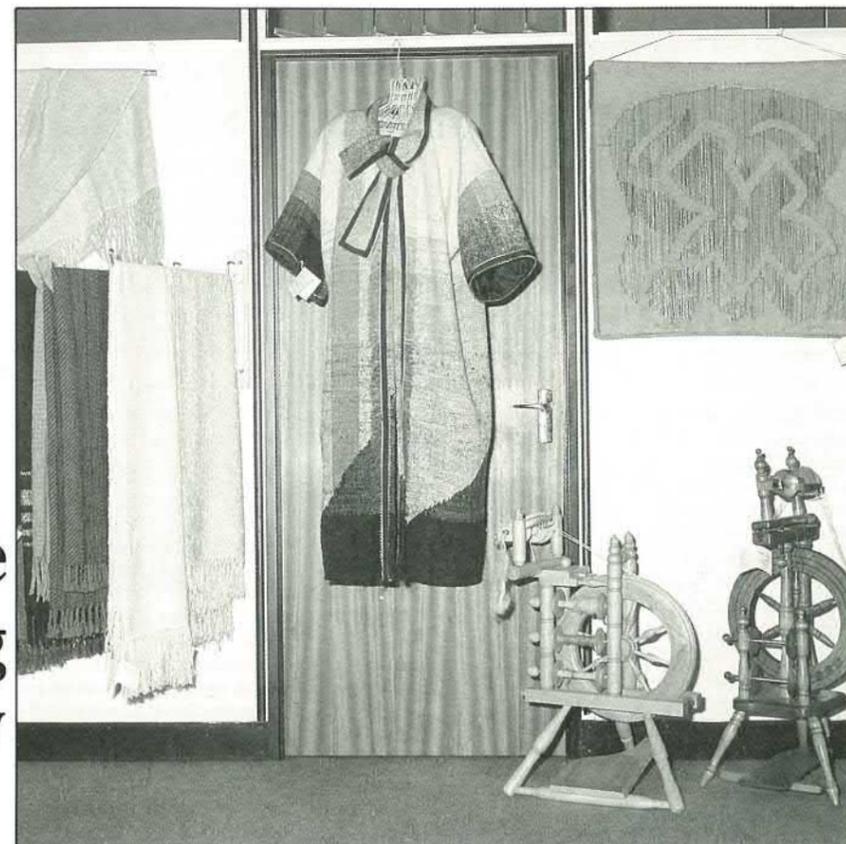
While many people will feel disappointed and let down it should not deter the individual from pursuing with increased energy the willingness to look towards new creative dimensions, to explore further aspects of design and innovation, where possible take advantage of visiting craftspeople; join a crafts Design Course, access libraries, the Crafts Council Resource Centre and keep an eye on what is happening elsewhere. View the decision as a challenge.

The NZ Wool Board, Crafts Council of NZ and the NZ Spinners, Weavers and Woolcrafts Society will continue to work together with the woolcrafts community to develop an awareness of design and excellence in woolcrafts. If we are to succeed in this endeavour we need the challenge of high standards — the judges of the Art in Wool Award provided that challenge. Out of this will come an awareness to achieve higher standards and this can only be seen as positive for New Zealand as a whole and woolcrafts in particular.

GALLERY

A much needed asset has its problems reports Amy Brown.

The Handweaving Gallery



The Handweaving Gallery at 35 Albert Street, Auckland has now been in existence for 18 months. In what some might consider a prime position with the plush Regent Hotel close by, the fact that it is still in existence is in itself an achievement.

Fabric or fibre galleries are not exactly two a penny in any area. While some craftshop/galleries devoted to weaving and knitting do flourish in particular sites the fact of their successes is often attributable to the sheepskin products and natural wool sweaters that provides their greatest source of income. The Handweaving Gallery relies more on weaving oriented products and endeavours to fill a gap in the market with fibre wall hangings and art related weavings, rather than in the sheepskin and knitting categories. The 14 to the Inch Handweaving Co-operative Society Ltd to give it its full title was the brainchild of Karin Wakeley, a well known weaver who has been working in fibres for some 30 years.

The co-operative consists of four members and a further small number of probationary members. There were previously eight members and ideally the number of committed members could be up to fourteen, hence the name. A sojourn in Victoria Park Market prior to the Albert St. shift

was unsatisfactory, particularly in time commitment. Running a shop for seven days a week is no easy task, and also the rents were high with little return for input.

The Albert St. gallery has its own particular problems however, the greatest being a lack of capital, with no money to fall back on when times are difficult or for advertising. Nor is there a street front window. Wakeley also suggests that weaving needs more public acceptance. It is after all one of the oldest and most basic of crafts. She cites the difference between Europe and New Zealand in the acceptance of weaving. In Europe the craft is recognised and the high prices are acceptable. Here they are not. Weaving is a solitary and time consuming craft and an acceptable return of income for the labour intensive hours spent, needs to be much higher than the apparent willingness of New Zealanders to offer. She is appalled at the number of people who come into the gallery and prepare to bargain for works with a set price.

However The Handweaving Gallery, which accepts work from weavers all over New Zealand has to decide whether it wants to fulfill that educative role by accepting only the best offered. At present the gallery is overfull of work, much of which

does not fit into a quality area, but which may still carry a hefty price tag.

There is an almost overwhelming movement at work in New Zealand which puts weaving into a strange category, though it's also true of knitting, and to a lesser extent, pottery . . . it is almost as if the weaving itself is the most important thing, and any consideration of design, structure and usefulness is unnecessary. If it happens to be good it's an accident and not something that is achieved by design. You would have to ask why a great number of spinners and weavers bother at all to produce work, and unfortunately there is too much work of that kind at the Handweaving Gallery.

To succeed it needs to completely revise its standards and attitudes. Learning to say NO to a lot of work would be the first and most important step. The great advantage that it has is that it *does* exist. It's not a non-event. And with its position and juxtaposition it has great potential. If it sorts out the mediocre and only displays the quality, more of New Zealand's superb weavers, of whom a number live in Auckland may be delighted to show their work in an intriguing inner city showcase.

Barry Brickell's tour continues

The second part of Barry's very personal traveller's tales, in this section through the UK and Spain to the United States.

After leaving Finland I travelled by train around the top of the Sea of Bothnia (change of rail gauge at the border) through north Sweden then over that marvellous scenic iron ore rail route from Kiruna (near the mountain summit) to the port of Narvik on the Norwegian coast. Scandinavian trains are without exception comfortable, very clean, moderately fast and reasonably punctual. Seldom did I have to endure crowded trains.

I would be too much to describe my trip in detail here, but scenery, engineering, architecture and crafts aside, it was the woodcraft tradition of the early Norwegian vikings and the medieval wooden stave churches that perhaps made the deepest impression. The quality of wood carving in the stave churches is unique in Europe; oddly enough, it carries a parallel with Maori carving, if not exactly in spirit then certainly in the treatment of curved linear designs, carving techniques (e.g. perforated lintels) and great boldness of figurative reliefs. The traditional Maori meeting house and the Norwegian stave church are to my mind classics in wooden architecture. They are awe inspiring. A stave is the term given to a method of construction where made-up panels are set into place between massive vertical supporting poles. Everything is made of wood from the massive cross-braced framing down to the intensely detailed roof shingles. The entire outer workmanship is preserved against rot and decay by regular wood tar application which lends the structure a dark, mellow tone, contrasting among the trees. I visited three stave churches of which Heddal, built in about 1250, is the largest in Norway. For those interested, I have brought back detailed descriptive material on stave churches. In passing however, I must say that to this day, Norwegian woodcraft survives as perhaps the finest I have seen anywhere from contemporary house construction to

toy and furniture crafts. It seems to have had its roots in the Viking period and a visit to Viking museums is very worthwhile.

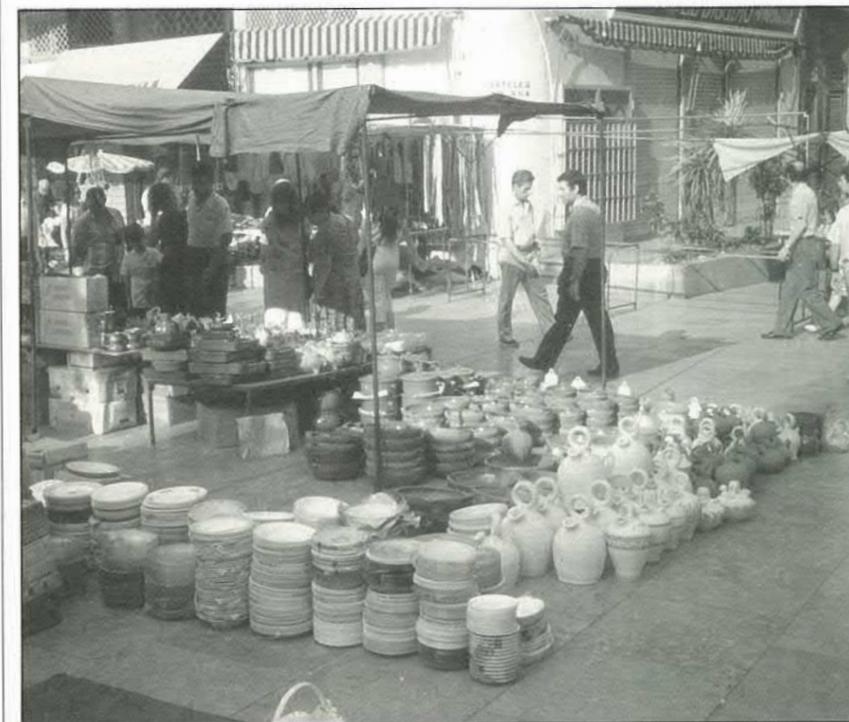
My Britrail pass gave me unlimited train travel throughout the United Kingdom for the whole month of July. I hired a bicycle in London and served my apprenticeship by negotiating Hyde Park corner and other traffic nightmares before putting it into the guard's van of the express from that tricky-place-to-find, Paddington Station. I loved the train trip; very fast, beautiful tame countryside in summer, mild weather for at least two weeks. From the aspect of my own craft, the highlight of my visit to Cornwall was checking out the old St Ives pottery and meeting Peter Smith and his coal-fired terracotta kiln at Pendeen. Only Janet Leach and a local man presently work at St. Ives pottery, which was started by the legendary Bernard Leach in 1920. After his death in 1973, Janet was in charge of the pottery and continues to make her own personal pots using a relatively modern kiln. The pottery buildings and original kiln are virtually a 'cobweb' museum now and real estate development seems to be crowding out this historic corner section. There is an interesting museum room there, containing a collection of Bernard Leach's work, and that of his Japanese associates.

In Surrey, I visited an ex New Zealander Kenneth Clark and his wife Ann, who have set up their pottery in a fine stone stables in the delightful, historic town of Lewes. Kenneth and his sons work at coloured earthenware tile painting, decorating and glazing; they buy the raw tiles from a manufacturer. There is a steady demand for interior tile panels and some mural work which is pleasing to see, especially from the hands of artisans rather than from stereotyped commercial designs. Kenneth directed me to one of the number of small tile works in the vicinity, the Keymer tile works near

Burges Hill, where traditional English rectangular, flat terracotta roofing tiles are made by hand. This thoroughly commercial operation can compete with machine tile manufacturers and I was fortunate enough to be shown about the works and given a demonstration. The former flower pot workshop of the company, in a separate building, now houses a couple of young men who are making hand-formed decorative terrace tiles and thrown plant pots from the company's clay. I was given the opportunity to get my hands back into terracotta clay and they kindly allowed me to spend a few days there making plant pots as "appeasement gestures" for all those kind folk who accommodated me in the UK. There is a scotch brick kiln (a very early type of traditional kiln) a few miles away where brick moulders still turn out special shaped bricks for architectural use. I was delighted to see this. It is a lesson for New Zealand, which did have a colonial craft industry of building and architectural bricks years ago. However, there, as in New Zealand, it seems that imported machine-moulded terracotta products of high technical quality but stereotyped designs from Italy are posing a threat to the viability of these small local industries.

I visited countless museums throughout the UK; the bicycle/train combination proving ideal, and the bed and breakfast accommodation as well as serving one's bodily needs also provided a communication link for a roving "cultural ambassador". Several museums dealing with industry archaeology had working craft studios, in which a kind of symbiotic survival system operated. I spoke with several potters, mainly young people who were making a living from their craft while contributing to the museum attractions. It is in some of these museums that the age-old prejudice of engineering skills being inferior to the "artistic" skills is slowly being

Pottery and Craft Stalls - Valencia, Spain.



exposed. It is only by communication across the whole spectrum of the crafts, whether it be welding and fitting, weaving and basketry, portrait and landscape painting, pottery and furnace engineering, woodwork and gardening that an intelligent new lifestyle can be injected into the ailing western industrialised, employment-threatened situation we may find ourselves in.

While train/cycling through Scotland, (including the Isle of Skye between railheads on the lochs), I learned of the efforts being made in Scotland by the Scottish Development Agency and the Scottish Tourist Board, to promote the crafts and to get them firmly established into the core of Scottish life. This very go-ahead, government-assisted programme results from real problems of unemployment and commercial stagnation as people and jobs continue their south-bound trend; the same kind of movement that is happening here in the reverse direction. The visitor's guide to Scottish craft workshops is a well-produced and very informative booklet, from which we could take some lessons. It lists some 300 of the 1800 craft workshops now operating in Scotland. The most significant craft and training institution that I came across was Highland Craftpoint in Beaulieu, Inverness-shire. Highland Craftpoint is a limited liability company incorporated in 1979 and has been operating from a very impressive headquarters building since 1981. This contains a pleasant and spacious display gallery where the craft products of many workshops are exhibited, and where customers can make purchase arrangements. The

(especially vernacular and peasant) pottery, of which there is a long and proud tradition going back very many centuries. Santi's large collection contains the classic wheel-thrown varieties of the botijo (wine containers) and cantaro (bottles). He also has some examples of the very large coiled and thrown storage jars now seldom made.

The austerity of the geologically ancient Spanish landscape is, to my green eye, softened by the muted reds of the old sandstone and clays which are so abundant. We visited a local potter who makes terracotta plant pots and he let me use his wheel. The red clay is fine and beautiful to throw, and fires to a ringing hard pot at a mere 850 degrees. We have little such material in NZ; our geology being very different. One can still buy glazed terracotta cooking pots and dishes of lovely simple form for very little in the cities. Although this tradition was almost extinguished by the universal effects of the industrial revolution, there is now some concern to revive it.

Spanish history shows us a land of various indigenous, regional cultures as expressed by the varieties of basic pottery forms, but due to its central geographic position, strong external influences have hit and knocked it about over the centuries forming "showers of sparks" which we can now see in the museums. For instance, the Morocco Arabian (Muslim) influence in the form of metallic oxide designs and pictures on majolica pottery equals anything I have seen from the Orient in terms of porcelain and stoneware. For these artists of the 9th and 16th centuries, their work was a kind of illustrated commentary on the life of the times, often done with a rare refinement. Certainly, I have never before seen such work in our museums, as for instance can be seen in the National Museum at Barcelona, or the Gonzales Marti Museum in Valencia. In this work as well as in architecture, there is also the remarkable result of Fusion of Christian influences from the north. It is breathtaking, the beauty and austerity of much of the work. The great majolica tradition includes floor and wall tiling and while in Granada I received many a lesson in design, patterning and the importance of enriching architecture with a taste of exuberantia. Some day, I said to myself, it must be done in NZ. I felt a curious affinity with Spain.

building also contains a variety of equipped workshops for training, for the company offers a wide range of courses and tuition. A glance at their education and training leaflet for 1986 shows that they have staged over ninety courses, seminars and related events with over 1000 enrolments, at subsidised rates. The funding for this enterprise, which must be seen as quite distinct from art school-type training, comes from grants-in-aid (94%) and earned income. The objective of providing a comprehensive development, marketing and training service to Scottish craft industries reflects this balance. The grants-in-aid came mainly from the Highlands and Island Development Board while the Scottish Development Agency contributed the balance. I am not sure where these agencies are funded from but it would suggest that both government and industry are involved. I was kindly shown over the centre by Mr Gordon Young, head of the Fine Arts Department.

I could go on at length about many interesting experiences while in the UK, but for the purpose of this article, had better draw the line and move to Spain, then the USA before returning home, very enriched. Perhaps I should say that going overseas in search of inspiration is foolhardy; the whole point of the exercise is to chase those things which your own work-experience has told you are important. You are then in a position to give as well as to receive.

Last year (1986) I was visited by Santi Cabasa Calpe and Mertxe Garcia Conde, from Sant Cugat near Barcelona, Spain. Santi is an enthusiastic collector of traditional

The final leg of my trip, two months in the USA, was mainly work; not all gaping, gasping and staring, but some down-to-earth. We all enjoyed the kiln-building project at Flagstaff and it worked well, despite the grovelling for second hand bricks, the snowstorm at the end of the chimney construction and the icicles forming on the end of my nose during the stacking day. I was invited

1 Antonio Gaudi - Barcelona, Spain. Early 20th Century Architecture.



2 Barry Brickell - Coiled Cactus Forms made for salt glazing trials in the new kiln at the Northern Arizona University. Sept. Oct. 1986.



3 Earthenware lettered tiles, announcing Clive Bowen's Pottery "Shebbear", Kent - England.



4 Bardon Mills coal-fired, salt glazed plant pots, hand thrown.



to do a few "workshops" and was surprised that so many of the people were interested in the kind of things I was demonstrating. I really suspect that basic craft-type training is not often given in American ceramic courses; it is left to those who have a capacity for expression to pass on their skills, enthusiasm and energy to their students. There is a vast range of equipment, raw materials and tools that ceramic students have ready access to, both at Universities and in the home studio, but I sometimes wonder if this causes a certain lack of inventiveness and clay-discipline. There is pressure to succeed, this being in terms of "advancement" rather than refinement, which is not good for the disciplined and natural encouragement of the finer skills. The system requires provable qualifications in its tutors, a problem which plagues the "civilised" art training world, rather than merit and experienced-based tutelage. Yet for all this, there is a healthy and energetic

national desire to learn and apply the crafts to everyday life, and I seem to detect a swing of the pendulum away from mechanisation and the artificial and a pioneering urge towards an exciting, humane international style. Clay-violence has been well explored in the USA; recognition of it is perhaps the greatest stepping stone to the next thing, clay language. The existence of magnificent museum and private collections of traditional ceramics, both indigenous and foreign, in the USA is something of a legend. It is only a matter of time before the younger generation begin to piece together the letters of the clay alphabet which surround them; some studio ceramists are already doing this. I was fortunate to be shown a collection of contemporary American ceramic sculpture at the Scripps College, Claremont, California. Many "letters", wonderful energy, a bewildering multiplicity of sources, sometimes a synthesis, not necessarily teachable let alone

describable.

I found that the semi-dry (brush) throwing technique, the use of local material additives and my method of coiling (form-building) were things that seemed interesting to the students, as always, but the manner in which one approaches clay was the most topical of all. At my Smithsonian "workshop" day, this matter became more important than the slides. Scandinavian respect, American audacity and Kiwi ingenuity might form good feet for a pot to stand on. In the world of the crafts, nationalism evaporates in a magical way with diligent application of the human skills; it is replaced by not an international style but by an international language.

The first section of Barry's lively observations appeared in NZ Crafts 20.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMISSIONS

Taupo Post Office Commission

Set of 5 panels "People" 1200 x 1200;
"Mountains" 1200 x 1200;
"Forests" 1400 x 1200;
"Thermal" 1200 x 1200;
"Lake" 1200 x 1200.
Chrome - Stainless Steel - Plastic.

From this issue NZ Crafts will publish information on completed commissions and welcomes submissions for inclusion in this new slot. Information on the commissioning architect or organisation; the venue; the design brief; materials used, dimensions; etc., are required together with a quality photograph which will reproduce well. Send to the Editor, NZ Crafts, PO Box 498, Wellington.



Fientje Allis-van Rossum Designer-Fibre Artist

When approval was given for a new post office in Taupo in 1984, Maori businessman Max Whaanga took the initiative to get local art work represented in the building. As owner of a Maori art and crafts centre his thoughts were along the lines of traditional Maori art. However, in a discussion with architects Gary Denniston and Dean Hodgson (Tauranga) it became evident that traditional Maori work was neither acceptable to the architects nor suitable for the building.

At this point I became involved as designer-fibre artist. The task was to design something that was acceptable to the architects, NZ Post Office and local (Maori and Pakeha) people.

After studying the architect's plans for the building and a further talk with them, it was obvious why traditional Maori art was ruled out. The building was designed in art deco style with little or no visible use of natural fibres and materials (except from the wool carpet). A very exciting and innovative interior showed extensive use of stainless steel and mirrors (on ceilings, pillars and general trim), vinyl and plastic. Great emphasis was furthermore placed on the play of (natural) light from the

numerous skylights with reflective surfaces of stainless steel.

Finding inspiration in the traditional craft of the Maori women I arrived at the idea of a modern version and interpretation of tukutuku work for the post office.

Geometric patterns not only were very much in keeping with the lines used in art deco, but also lent themselves perfectly to be reflected upwards in the mirrored ceilings in a continuous design.

As materials I chose chrome, stainless steel and plastic, with the designs executed in modified tukutuku techniques.

Analogous to traditional tukutuku panels in a meeting house, the 5 designs represent and describe 5 aspects of importance to Taupo and its people:

1. "People"
2. "Mountains" (Tauhara)
3. "Forests"
4. "Thermal activity"
5. "Lake"

Guidance and consultation was by Maori elder Queeny King. The work was executed by myself and 5 assistants (Maori and Pakeha).

I thoroughly enjoyed working within the limitations and challenges

set. In terms of design I have a natural (or should I say cultural?) affinity with geometric patterns which provided me with yet another avenue to explore with my interest in the confusion of, and play between positive and negative spaces — this time in both design and materials. Depending on how the light reflects off the chrome surfaces as one walks along the panels, one suddenly sees a complete reversal of image and ground in terms of light and dark. The Taupo Post Office was opened on 9 June last year by the Postmaster General Johnathon Hunt in a special ceremony for a special building. As far as the NZ Post Office was concerned Taupo's new Post Office was of national importance in view of the town's growing stature as an international tourist centre and had therefore allowed an unusually large budget. In turn architects Denniston and Hodgson allocated a fair amount for art work in the building.

The artwork itself was an attempt to recognise and reconcile the blend of cultures present in Taupo in a statement of today.

Edited highlights from the transcript of an address to a recent Sydney seminar by the editor of the British 'Crafts' Magazine, Martina Margetts, who was in Australia as a guest of the Crafts Board of the Australia Council.

Craft and the Writer

The importance of both a sense of craft history and of context emerge as key features in *Crafts* editor Martin Margetts' thoughtful review of aspects of craft writing. She began by discussing links between craft practitioners and craft writers, a long established tradition in Britain. "Some of our greatest writers have also been practitioners and I find that quite interesting because usually the idea is that if you are a maker you are totally illiterate and inarticulate and I think that William Morris and Bernard Leach disproved that."

David Pye, a wood turner and carver now in his 70's, she regards as one of the key writers attempting to create craft definitions, warmly recommending his book *The Nature and Art of Workmanship*. Pye: "If you consider all making as a continuum, a continuous series of elements passing into each other, you arrive at something more or less like this. . . First you have at one end of the series, the Fine Arts, which make strictly useless things. Next you have those craftsmen who also make useless things but using media which the Arts Council in Britain presumably does not recognise. Next you have the makers of useful things — one offs, such as cabinet makers, letter cutters, wooden boat builders, calligraphers, thatchers possibly, and so on. Next you have the makers of useful things to sell but still in small numbers and of their own design — some potters, some weavers, jewellers and chair makers and so on. Then you have small makers of useful things, either of traditional design or of other people's design — dressmakers, violinmakers, bricklayers, some basketmakers, cutlers and so on. Next you have small scale production industries, making partly by the workmanship of risk and partly by the workmanship of certainty. These are the half and half industries which used to be called the craft-based industry. They make furniture, clothing, some building, some ships and yachts and so forth. Then at the far end of the series you have full blown industry making by the workmanship of certainty and sometimes automated. True mass production, making cars

and other vehicles, electric motors, computers, micro circuit machines and tools, cameras, plastic mouldings and so on and so on. Embedded in this last definition you have the craftsman on whom our civilisation by industry wholly depends. These are the toolmakers, jig makers, model makers, prototype makers, instrument makers, and others, everything depends on them. They work largely by the workmanship of risk and often make things of great beauty.

"The crafts ought to provide the salt and the pepper to make the visible environment more palatable. . . let us have nothing to do with the idea that the crafts are in some way superior to the workmanship of certainty or a means of protection against it. That is paranoia. Crafts ought to be a complement to industry."

Margetts says John Packer, formerly editor of *Design* magazine feels that there is a difficulty if crafts disassociate themselves entirely from industry and adds that much writing in Britain at the moment is concerning itself with trying to position craftspeople and their work in relation to industrial production. John Packer wrote recently, "Most discussion of craft boil down to sophistry of the 'is it art or is it kitsch' variety. Frankly what does it matter. Such debate provides harmless entertainment for art critics but does nothing to bridge the chasm that separates industrial production from the tacit appreciation most of us have of fine workmanship and hand finishing."

Peter Dormer, another craft writer who has worked on *Crafts* magazine and has written *The New Jewellery*:

"In the past, the ornamental, religious, mystical and aesthetic aspects of crafts were a response to demands of religious institutions or a very small class of wealthy patrons who knew what they wanted. Today's large constituency of craft as art is diverse and uncertain about the criteria involved and so too are many of the craftsmen. For if the revival of the crafts is to establish itself into a firm and genuinely modern movement, critical evaluation and debate

have to be encouraged. The crafts world internationally is beginning to take stock of itself and there is a lot of stocktaking to do. There is much to be done in simply writing the history of craft to see how we arrive at the point where we find ourselves now.

"Makers are healthily sceptical about intellectualising the crafts but their scepticism becomes extreme when it rules out all serious discussion."

Margetts herself continues: "There again, without getting over complicated and intellectualising for its own sake, I think it is vital to try to introduce some formal ranges of criteria that one can actually use in discussion. One of the things that Peter Dormer talks about is that in helping craftspeople to understand what is going on, helping the general public to understand what craftsmen are doing, is this idea of decoding what objects are."

Dormer: "Indicating the new crafts, the critic also serves who only stands and asks again and again what the maker thinks she/he is doing. It is very easy for the maker (as many bad fine artists discovered) to produce baffling work of small consequence which is disguised by saying. . . "well, really, this work is challenging your assumption, if you don't like it, the fault is with you". Neat, shallow and cynical. The developing role for the critic is to be alert to the con artist. I can imagine a potter who cannot make a teapot pour properly, seeing that a neat move is to exaggerate his incompetence and make the pot utterly useless and call it "a comment on and redefinition of the domestic object".

Margetts warns against the danger of critics becoming interested only in performing their own art forms, quoting Barry Targen, writing in *American Craft*.

Targen: It seems rather that criticism has become much like the art it examines, pluralistic, highly ideosyncratic, discursive, often argumentative, and alas, frequently arrogant. Indeed art criticism in this era has assumed the mantle of art itself. Handmaidens no longer, criticism has become its own art form, free to pursue its own way for its own sake: Relying

as much or more on intuition, as upon rational and tested process, and the danger is quite clear in that in the end if the critic sees his or her role as simply a self referential activity, rather than caring about setting things in a larger context, it does deteriorate into nothingness. Is this criticism, like the art it looks at, or the public it serves, concerned with the work itself or is it more interested in detecting shifts of fashion, sniffing foreseen change. Is criticism no longer searching what is good or why it is good but only for what is new? Has the truly new become our definition of good?" Margetts feels that "this absurd emphasis on the neophilic vision of the crafts is quite, and I see it, a disturbing development."

"I am more sure whether we have got out of this feeling of this post modernist era as one of trash and nothing valuable. This idea of trying to establish what William Morris and John Ruskin tried to put forward as craft values and the moral stance of craftspeople in society is something that needs to be discussed at the moment. The politics are difficult. No one really understands the politics of the New Wave, no one knows whether it has any, or whether radical politics have simply been liquidised in the Style machine. Those who deny a political content, like those who emphasise it, sound a false note." She goes on to quote poet and craft writer Christopher Reed:

"Our present condition encourages eclecticism. This has its own dangers and one of these is a sort of glib illiveness is too often called upon to disguise deficiencies arising from lack of cultural depth. The smattering of information that a mediocre student picks up at art school, enables him or her to cover thoughtless work with a referential gloss. Styles are worn like badges. If a Chinese or Mexican or Art Deco or Spaceage motif is identifiable in a piece of work then that is taken to be its own excuse and no further attention need be paid to the question either by the maker or for the person for whom it is being made. Cultural reference is thereby

reduced to the level of slogan swapping. Travesty prevails as the current mode".

Margetts again on informed choices: "As craft writers I think we have got a very serious role to try to actually discriminate between what kind of work can be consigned to the junk heap and what sort of work we want to see as part of our civilisation and culture." And further: "I think there is a danger that if you can say. . . all craftspeople are artists and artists can do anything, then there are no boundaries and we are really very stuck about how to actually discuss the subject."

There is also 'this worrying theme of people like Peter Fuller, and Christopher Reed, that if you don't look ahead, if you get obsessed with fashion and what is new, you can't really stand back and take an objective view as to what really is valuable in our society." As Margetts noted later this warning is "just a reminder that people can go hell for leather for the new simply because it is new and it is different and maybe overrate the pudding in that they forget that certain traditions are also worth preserving."

Another important function of craft writing "which craft writers find so difficult is trying to establish the intention of the maker", Margetts says. "If the artists intention was not to create a utilitarian object as such well then it is important to state that, if he/she is prepared to give you that information but in the end we need to make some sort of critical comment about whether you find the work interesting or not."

And finally a brief comment from her on the qualities required of a writer on craft: "I think the imagination of the writer is important. Often great works of art and craft comes out of rather remarkable individuals and the same is true of writers. Perhaps the most fascinating and illuminating writers are the ones with very well developed imaginations, ability to communicate and articulate in what they say, so we can add or complement what the maker originally said."

Note:

Martina Margetts survey of craft writing was so comprehensive only small parts of the transcript of her address could be quoted here. It is hoped that the drastic abridgement required has not caused any unintentional distortion of her case. Ed.

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 \$2.20.

The slide sets are available for hire at the cost of \$6.60 to members and \$8.80 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 25¢ a page.

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

ARTICLES

The following articles have appeared in journals recently received by the Resource Centre. These articles can be seen in the Resource Centre or copies can be obtained. Request for copies should be accompanied by payment of 25c. per page.

TEXTILES

Patchwork - Women's Art?

A look at the wide-ranging work going on in Scotland in this ever more popular craft. *Craft Arts No 5 pp. 73-78.*

3D Felting.

Jennifer Crisp makes large 2 and 3 dimensional felted works using a technique she has developed herself through the forming of clay models and plaster moulds. The felting then takes place in the mould. The result is a replica of the original clay model in felt. Her working methods are described. *Fibre Forum Vol. 15, no. 17 pp. 15-16.*

New twist on Resist -

Western dye artists try Japanese methods of arashi shibori - the process where the artist creates fine, overall patterns by wrapping a long, narrow cloth diagonally around a pole, winding a thread around it at measured intervals, compressing the cloth into tiny tight folds and dyeing it. *Threads Magazine no. 5 pp. 20-27.*

Threads magazine is published by the Taunton Press Inc. who also published amongst others, *Fine Woodworking*. *Fine Woodworking* is considered by many woodworkers to be the best periodical (of its type) available. Informed, technically explicit and abundantly supported by diagrams and photographs. On first viewing of this new addition to the Resource Library it would appear that *Fine Woodworking's* sister magazine 'Threads' is equally comprehensively informative and illustrated.

FAIR ISLE KNITTING

The versatile, traditional methods of stranded-colour knitting in the round. Fair Isle

and Gansey knitting are discussed and illustrated. *Threads No. 8, pp. 44-51.*

Cut Paste and Copy. A textile artist discusses the development of textile designs taking inspiration from exhibitions. *Threads No. 8 pp. 52-55.*

Banners - The Revival. The spectacle of trade union banners in street processions are once again part of Australian city life. An article describing how this revival came about. *Craft Arts No 5 pp. 73-78.*

Bringing Tapestry into the 20th Century. A look at the Scheuer Tapestry Studio, New York. *Threads (USA) Oct/Nov. 1985 pp 48-51.*

Making a gobelins style tapestry. *Threads (USA) Oct/Nov. 1985 pp. 52.*

Chilkat Spinning. Two strands of mountain goat wool are spun between the hand and leg along with twisted strips of the inner bark of the yellow cedar tree to make warp yarns. *Threads (USA) Oct/Nov. 1985, pp 55-59.*

Bobbinlace on a grand scale.

Three huge bobbin lace panels, each 32 ft high are created for a public space. The lace pillow was a 12 foot board, wooden reels were used for the bobbins and steel bolts for pins. *Threads (USA) Feb/Mar. 1987 pp 54-57.*

What People Ask Before They Buy Handmade Fashions. A shop owner advises weavers, knitters and sewers. *Threads (USA) Feb/Mar. 1987 p. 58-61.*

Imagery is Personal in Tapestry Today. This article examines an exhibition of British, Canadian and American weavers/designers who are fusing powerful modern images and ideas with techniques and working methods that date back to the middle ages.

WOOD

Carving a Scallop Shell - Gorge's sweep determines the curves. *Fine Woodworking No. 61 pp. 47-51.*

Twisted Dovetail Joint - Japanese Puzzler Explained *Fine Woodworking No. 61 pp. 86-91.*

A decade of Parnham. An evaluation of the School for Craftsmen in Wood founded by John Makepeace. *Crafts No. 83 pp., 50-51.*

Making a Chippendale Chair. *Fine Woodworking No. 60 pp. 38-45.*

Hammer Veneering - Hammer veneering is a technique for laying veneer without clamps or a press. *Fine Woodworking No. 61 pp. 86-91.*

Chasing Large Wooden Threads. An alternative to tap and die. Chasing is an old technique for cutting any size wooden thread by hand on the lathe using simple shop-made tools. *Fine Woodworking No. 60 pp. 53-56.*

A useful listing of Guilds: local and national American guilds and various international guilds, including Australia, UK, Canada, NZ. *Fine Woodworking No. 60 pp. 85-87.*

Mortising Machine A shop-built combination of router and precision sliding table. *Fine Woodworking No. 60 pp. 77-80.*

Natural Baskets. Useful information from two Australian basketmakers on gathering, drying, storage, preparation and care of a finished basket. *Fibre Forum, Vol. 6 Issue 1, No 18 pp. 34-35.*

User Report of Woodworking Equipment. *Australian Woodworker, Mar/April 1987 pp. 52-56.*

Some Experiences with Carbowax - an article by Ian Lambert. *Touchwood No. 11 pp. 7-8.*

Wrapping Edges. How to wrap a veneered panel around a bull-nosed edge. *Fine Woodworking, Jan/Feb. 1987 pp. 60-63.*

GLASS

The Waterford Mystique. The name of Waterford is synonymous with fine, cut crystal the world over. An outline of the history and traditional processes behind this thriving Irish institution. *Craft Arts No. 5 pp. 79-93.*

Scandinavian Art Glass. Allowing artists and designer crafts people to express their creative imagination in close fellowship with highly skilled technicians has been a respected tradition at Orrefors for more than half a century. *Craft Arts No. 4 pp. 73-80.*

BICYCLES

Thomas Eisl discusses the hand-building of bicycles. *Crafts No. 84 pp. 34-37.*

The Crafts Report No. 129 pp. 1, 16 & 17.

STONE SCULPTURE

Contemporary Stone Sculpture from Zimbabwe. The recent flowering of Stone Sculpture on the international art scene has its roots in the folklore and mythology of an ancient African civilisation. *Craft Arts No. 5 pp. 65-72.*

CERAMICS

A history of the famous Finnish Ceramic Studio, Arabia, and an insight into the supportive role the studio plays where the firms studio ceramists pursue their individual lines of artistic development backed by the resources and technical know-how of Europe's largest porcelain manufacturer. *Craft Arts No. 4 pp. 220-26.*

BOOK ARTS

Calligraphy - The work of talented NZ Calligrapher reflects the world-wide resurgence of interest in the art of beautiful writing. *Craft Arts No. 4 pp. 30-34.*

BOOKBINDING

A look at the work of one of the UK's leading designer-binders James Brockman. *Craft Arts No. 4 pp. 85-88.*

SLIDES

Fletcher Brownbuilt Award 1986

Phillips Glass Award 1986

American Jewellery Now

The above slide sets are recent acquisitions and are available for hire for a period of 2 weeks at a cost of \$6.60 members \$8.80 non-members.

BOOKS

The following books, catalogues and reports are recent acquisitions and are available for hire for a period of 2 weeks at a cost of \$2.20.

The New Jewellery, trends and traditions. Peter Dormer & Ralph Turner. *Thames & Hudson. 231 illustrations, 115 in colour. 192 pp.*

Jewellery has come alive again. Less than 20 years ago a mere handful of jewellers in Europe and America were fighting the tired clichés of conventional design. Today, as Ralph Turner writes, there has been a "dazzling burgeoning of many kinds of ornament, to excite a wide variety of tastes". The aesthetic aspiration of jewellers, and levels of workmanship, have been enhanced. Craft skills have been transferred to plastics and other non-precious materials, resulting in creative, personalized jewellery displaying considerable technical virtuosity.

Each of the three main divisions into which the books is organised reveals the inventiveness of contemporary makers: the section on mainstream abstract jewellery presents the diversity of modern ornament in materials ranging from gold to plastics; its counterpart on figurative jewellery includes artists who sculpt and model with precious metals as well as those who turn everyday materials and objects into fun ornaments; and jewellery as theatre crosses into the world of the radical jewellers whose 'wearables' have created such controversy. What emerges is the growth not so much of an international style, as of international variety, in which ideas and themes rather than national cultures provide the common threads.

Complete with jeweller biographies, detailed information on galleries, museums, publications and exhibitions.

The Asford Book of Spinning. Anne Field. *Published by Reed Methuen. Illustrated. 152 pp.*

The Ashford Book of Spinning is a comprehensive spinner primer. Written by Anne Field, her clear and concise instructions are illustrated by over one hundred step-by-step diagrams. In addition to advice on spinning wool with a variety of techniques she offers chapters on the use of other fibres and novelty yarns and dyeing. There is also an introduction to the craft of felting and a useful selection of patterns for knitting, crocheting and weaving your own hand spun yarn.

TEXSTYLES - Report of the *Texstyles Conference, October 1984. Organised by the Crafts Council (UK).*

In July 1983, the Crafts Council set up ten experimental teams. These teams - of makers, fashion or interior designers, manufacturers and retailers - worked together for just over a year to produce new fabrics and new products in weave, print, knit, felt, embroidery and a new form of constructed textiles.

This conference report describes the Council's pilot scheme 'Texstyles' relates it to the broader context of the textiles industry in the UK and abroad and links it with the current technical innovation and social change.

- Contents:
- The Texstyles Project
 - Work in Progress I: woven Cotton Furnishings
 - Work in Progress II: Fashion Felt
 - The Realities of Small-Scale Production
 - The Importance of Merchandising
 - The Importance of Craftsmanship
 - A response to Tradition: the work of Issey Miyake
 - Making Fashion through Fabric
 - Computers for Craftspeople

CRAFTS CONFERENCE FOR TEACHERS 1982 REPORT - A conference to explore and discuss the work and ideas of 20th Century craftsmen and the teaching profession.

- Some of the contents:
- The Growing Significance of Craftsmanship
 - Furniture: The Developing Role of the Craftsman as Designer/Maker
 - The Educational Value of Creativity
 - Design in Dress, Making, Technique and the Need for Good Practice
 - Some Perspectives of the Crafts Revival in the 20th Century
 - Lucinda Leech. A Furniture Maker in an Oxford School
 - Developments in 20th Century Studio Ceramics
 - New Approaches to the Use of Metal
 - Expressive work in Textiles

YEARBOOK OF SOUTH AUSTRALIAN CRAFTS 1986. Published by the Crafts Council of South Australia, this years edition combines feature articles with promotional material and colour presentation, reflecting the high standards of craftsmanship in South Australia today.

ART FACTS A STATISTICAL PROFILE ON THE ARTS IN NEW ZEALAND

- Crafts content includes:
- Participation
 - Employment
 - Training
 - Associations and Organisations
 - Funding
 - Awards

BOOK REVIEW

LYN LE GRICE: "Lyn Le Grice's Art of Stencilling" *Viking, London 1986. Price \$53.85 Published 1 April 1987. 159 pp. All colour.*

Lois Sullivan, 1892: "... Ornament . . . a luxury, not a necessary . . . (sic) we should refrain entirely from the use of ornament for a few years."

Charles Voysey, 1893 . . . "discarding the mass of useless ornaments would be healthy and desirable."

Walter Crane, 1898: "Plain materials and surfaces are infinitely preferable to inorganic and inappropriate ornament."

Otto Wagner, 1896: "Nothing that is not practical can be beautiful."

Henry James, 1900: "... a great, square, fair chamber all beautiful by omissions."

Friedrich Naumann, 1904: "... no application of art to construction, no stuck-on decoration, no frills."

So it developed, the wholly necessary revulsion against "the perfectly absurd orgies of brocade, plush, and gilt" in 19th century decoration, and the languorous decadence of Art Nouveau. Reforming zeal grew into righteous Calvinism (Adolf Loos equating ornament and crime) and even sexism (Corb. concluding one of his manifestoes "Why? Because we are men!")

The Modern movement which arose from these attitudes has itself bequeathed a reaction; architects may now permit themselves subjective, Romantic, even irrational statements. In such a climate, it is at last OK to hail "Lyn Le Grice's Art of Stencilling" as "delightful", enchanting, even "feminine". Note, however, that her decoration is never just "stuck-on". Scores of inspiring photographs demonstrate her respectful regard for the built forms she emphasises and enhances with her (decidedly "organic" and "appropriate") scrolls and garlands.

Isabelle Ancombe (in "A Women's Touch") has written of how earlier female decorators like Syrie Maugham used social contacts to obtain commissions (when these were only forthcoming from wealthy clients). That Le Grice often works for such patrons is clear from some of the elegant interiors shown. Mellow oak and immemorial stone call forth harmonious treatments. It would be fascinating to see how this ancient medium can be applied to drabber textures and shapes of most NZ buildings. Lyn Le Grice has most expertly and generously detailed how it might be done.

Joan Clouston

CATALOGUES

American Jewellery Now. Catalogue accompanying the touring Exhibition of the same name, and showing the work of 57 contemporary jewellers, in colour. Introductory essay by Arline M. Fisch, jeweller and President of the Society of North American Goldsmiths and Professor of Art at San Diego State University.

CERAMICS 86. Contemporary work in clay. Catalogue of the exhibition curated by Chester Neale for the Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, New Plymouth, NZ in association with the NZ Society of Potters.

CRAFTFOCUS 2 81 pieces of craft work selected from approximately 900 slides are represented in this catalogue published by the Ontario Crafts Council, Canada.

The following books have been favourably reviewed in recent periodicals received in the Resource Centre.

ART TO WEAR by Julie Schaffer Dale. Abbeville Press, 505 Park Ave, NYC 10022; 1986, US\$95.00. A historical document of the wearable art movement, and although the history is brief, it certainly is rich. This book sets a standard for what is truly wearable art - art to be worn on the human body that goes beyond fashion and theatrical costume - artist's statements.

THE MANUAL OF BRAIDING. Naomi Speiser. Self published 1983. Obtain from N. Speiser, 40-27191, Augustinerasse 3, CH-4051 Basel, Switzerland. Soft Cover. 239 pp. many diagrams and some black and white photographs.

Price on application. Not a beginners book, but a professional work manual covering a wide range of technique from all over the world in a subject which has not hitherto been explored as fully as it deserves. The result of twelve years of research, the book is an attempt to understand braiding on its own merits and not just as adjunct to weaving.

NEEDLEWORK: A Comprehensive Guide to decorative Embroidery by the Embroiderers Guild Study Group. 192 pp. 435 colour pages. Photos and Diagrams on every page. A QED Book. The book offers a structured course in embroidery and chapters cover basic equipment, designing with stitches, looking at fabrics, machine embroidery and an excellent section on Themes and Developments.

SILK IN NEW ZEALAND. by Joan Fletcher. Published by the NZ Spinning Weaving and Woolcraft Society (Inc) Havelock North. \$5.50 plus \$1.00 postage. A valuable information packed booklet written in clear, concise step by step terms. It comprehensively covers the cultivation of the silk worm to producing the final filament ready for the craftperson's personal creation.

THE ARTIST AND THE QUILT. Edited by Charlotte Robinson. Columbus Books, Bromly, Kent, UK. 1984. The result of a unique collaboration between 18 prominent American female artists and many equally prominent quilters. The major part of the book describes the collaboration between the artist and the quilter with large photographs of the original artwork and the final quilt. As well as detailed biographies of artist and quilter there is, in addition an excellent design and construction section which details some of the many unusual techniques used in creating the quilts.

BASKETRY. (PROJECTS FROM BASKETS TO GRASS SLIPPERS). Hisako Sekijima. Kodansha. ISBN 77-017515. 142 pp. plus index. 12 pages col. illustrations and photos. Rather than presenting a survey of traditional instruction methods and hard-and-fast rules for preparing and using materials the author has tried to discover what lies behind the rules and traditions. Her analysis of the basic aspects of basketry examines the interplay of material and method with the form of the finished basket. By adopting this approach Sekijima gives us a vocabulary of basketry that goes far beyond instructions. She gives a way of thinking about any given basket. In looking at them in terms of basic methods of making the "transformational factor" you can extract the important design elements, the relationship between form and function and how the work was made.

KOREA - JAPAN ARTS & CRAFTS TOUR OCT 03-31 1987

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Ph: 558-586



The Dowse Art Museum collects the fine arts in materials traditionally associated with the crafts.

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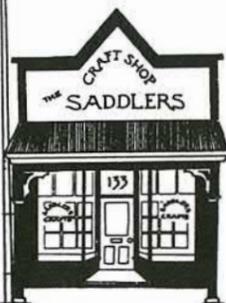


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- * To represent craftspeople on a national basis
- * To lobby for and negotiate on issues affecting craftspeople
- * To provide a comprehensive information service of resource material on all aspects of the crafts
- * To facilitate communication between 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

**Become a member of the
Crafts Council and you
will benefit from the
opportunity to:**

- * Submit work for sale in the Crafts Council Gallery — the showcase for the very best of New Zealand craft — on favourable terms
- * 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

As well you will receive:

- * Four issues of the "New Zealand Crafts" magazine.
- * "New Zealand Crafts" is the only New Zealand publication which covers all the crafts and keeps people in touch with what is happening in other crafts. It carries feature articles, profiles, reviews of exhibitions, Crafts Council news and views.
- * Bi-monthly "Crafts Council Newsletter"

And you will also benefit from:

- * All the developments which the Crafts Council are pressing for; for example craft education at an advanced level
- * The stimulation, support and inspiration that comes from belonging to a body with a variety of members who share common ideals

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BODY ADORNMENT BONE STONE & SHELL

(Working title)

Stone & Bone Carvers, Jewellers and metalsmiths are invited to submit for inclusion in this exhibition.

- funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Managed by the Crafts Council of New Zealand
- Selected by a panel of experts
- Curated by Master Stone Carver, John Edgar

The aim of the exhibition is to present a clear and powerful statement of the state of New Zealand jewellery. This should be made through the predominance though not exclusively, of material of New Zealand and the Pacific.

The work will have to stand up to examination by an international audience in an international setting as well as communicate our uniqueness and New Zealandness.

The exhibition will be touring to Australia in 1988 and Asia 1988/89.
All work will be purchased and hired.

Closing date for submission for inclusion 26 June 1987.

Selection of exhibitors 1 and 2 July 1987.

Date for receipt of work 30 October 1987.

Exhibition Wellington early 1988.

All applicants can be accepted on official forms only.

Further details and application forms are available from the Information Officer,
Crafts Council of New Zealand, PO Box 498, Wellington.

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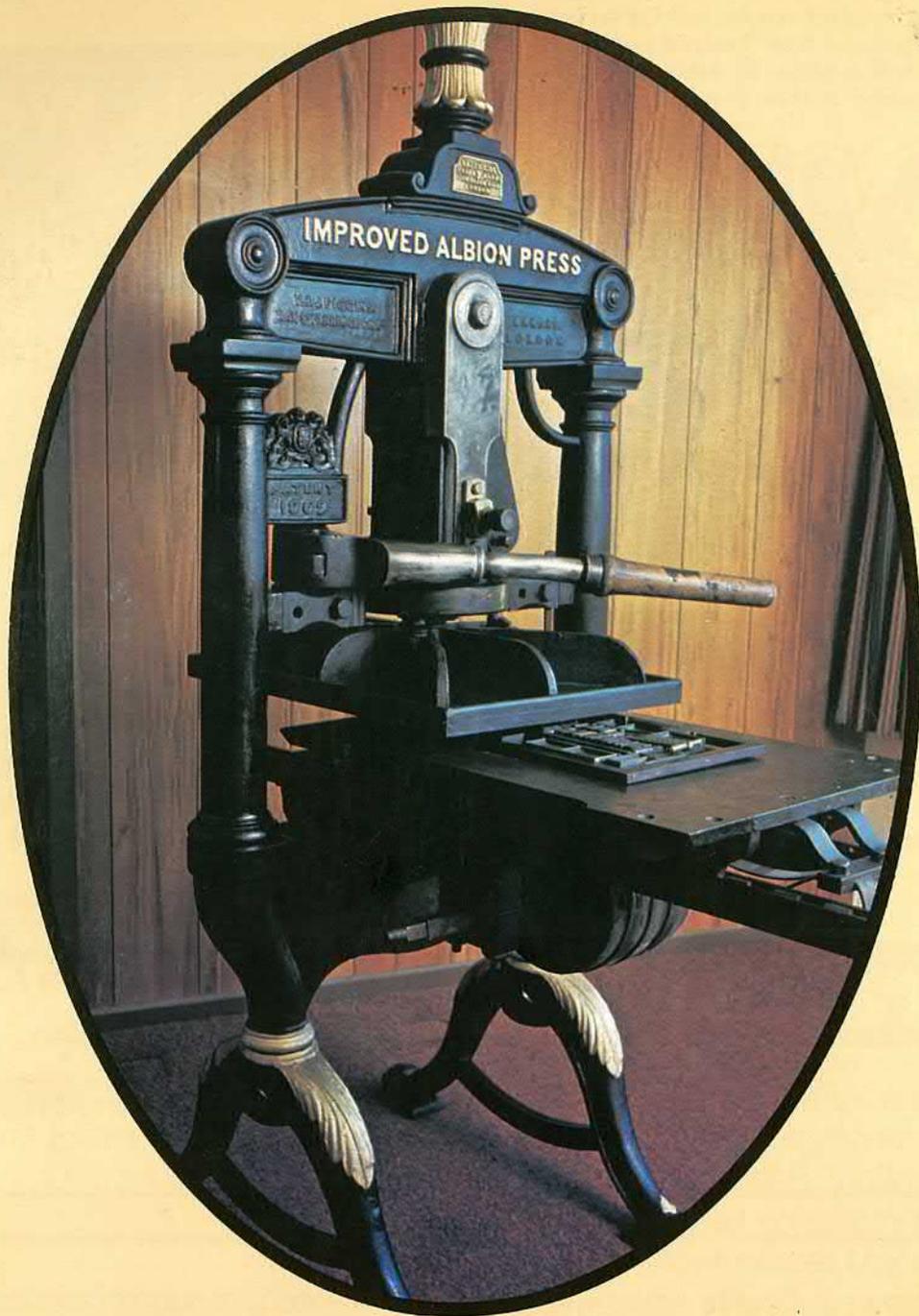
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