

NEW ZEALAND

Crafts

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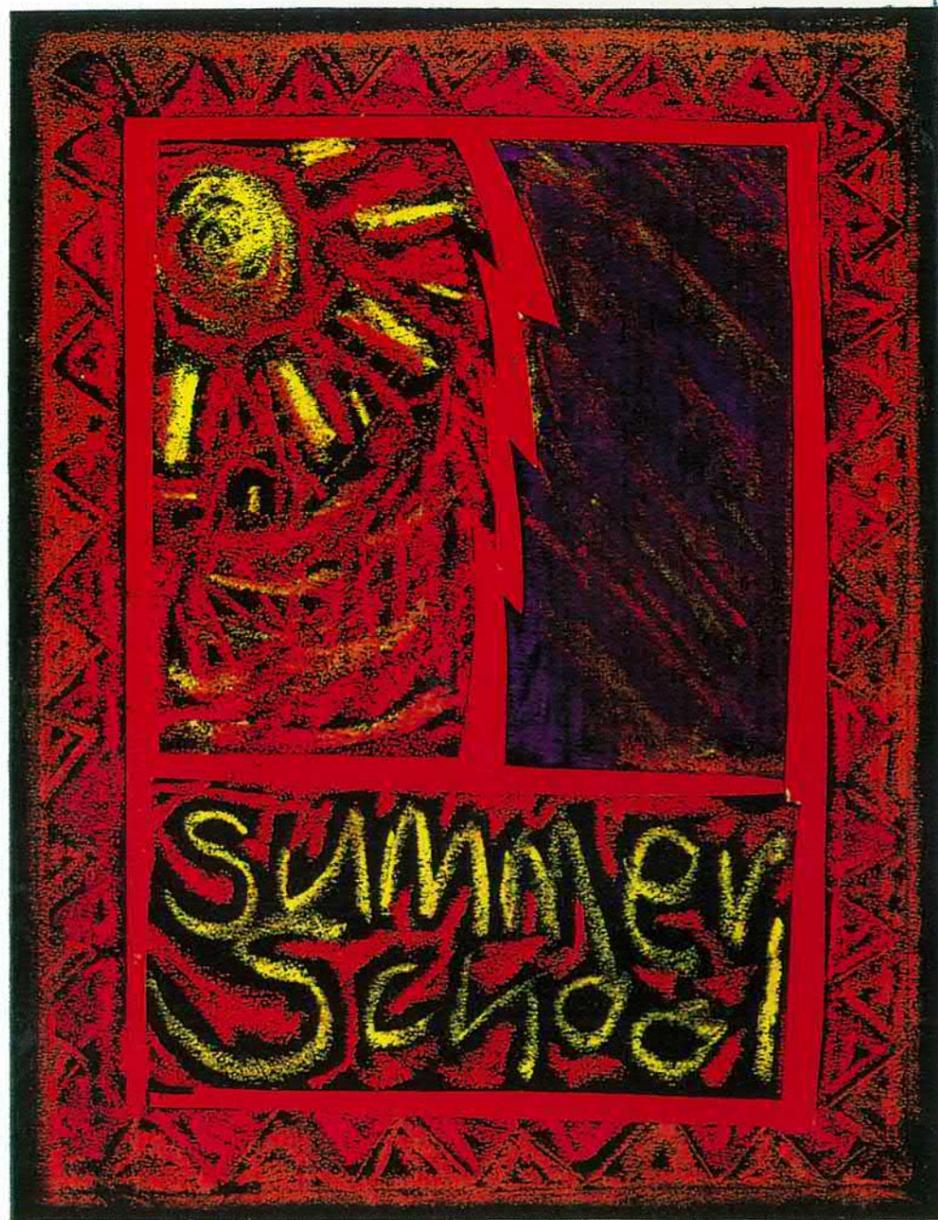


The 2nd Crafts Biennale

Hanging for the Aotea Centre

The textiles of Alison Gray

Susan Flight in Japan



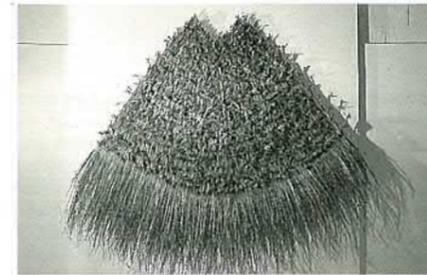
ALL ARTWORK DESIGN: J H HUGHES 89

Waikato polytechnic
8th - 12th Jan 1990

PORCELAIN POTTERY - PETER LANE U.K.
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Crafts Council of New Zealand (Inc)
 22 The Terrace Wellington
 Phone (04) 727-018 Fax (04) 727-003

President: John Scott, 101 Putiki Drive, Wanganui (064) 50-997 W, (064) 56-921 H. **Vice-President:** Dave Russell, 174 Balmoral Drive, Invercargill. (021) 89-685. **Executive Committee:** Jenny Barraud, 10 Richardson Street, Nelson. (054) 84-619. Malcolm Harrison, 2/57 Norwood Road, Bayswater, Auckland. (09) 457-243. Wally Hirsch, 9 MacPherson Street, Meadowbank, Auckland 5. (09) 547-695. Rena Jarosewitsch, P.O. Box 1874, Christchurch. (03) 662-085. David McLeod, Harrington Point Road, 2 R.D., Dunedin. (024) 780-635. Owen Mapp, 118 Ruapehu Street, Paraparaumu. (058) 88-392. Mark Piercey, 201 Bridle Path Road, Heathcote, Christchurch. (03) 849-567. Judy Wilson, 32 Butley Drive, Pakuranga, Auckland. (09) 566-340.

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Production

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Cover: Malcolm Ford. *Yellow Submarine*. Merit award, 2nd Crafts Biennale.

Editor: Alan Loney

NZ Craft Shows replies

Allow me to comment on the letter by Beverly Greig that you printed in your Spring issue. It is sad that this magazine does not even show the basic courtesy of seeking comments on allegations enclosed in letters to the editor.

1. Absolutely hundreds of craftspeople throughout New Zealand have exhibited in the New Zealand Craft Shows. As organisers we cannot be expected to keep every one of them happy all of the time, especially as we are constantly raising the standard of craftsmanship for acceptance into our shows. We are proud of this and make no apologies for it, even though it may upset some readers.

2. There are hundreds of craft shows throughout New Zealand. We actively support our exhibitors into entering most of them, and have in the past donated our exhibition stands towards some of them. For your information, a number of craftspeople have exhibited with us and then with this other company that Mrs Greig mentions. Those whose work still meets our improving standards of craftsmanship and display, continue to exhibit with us, regularly.

3. Mrs Greig was neither banned from any shows that we had accepted her into, nor reinstated by the Commerce Commission as she claims.

4. This other craft show company was ordered by the court to permit me to view and photograph their show prior to opening.

5. At about 7 or 8 shows per year we have woodturning demonstrations. Only one person has ever complained about being next to a wood turning stand, and that was for health reasons. Mrs Greig did not complain.

6. To suggest that I tried to punish Mrs Greig is both ludicrous and without foundation. In all, she has exhibited in 16 of our shows, and during part of this time she exhibited in this other show. Over the past five years she has had eight applications not accepted. If she

is so against the way we run our business, I find it difficult to understand why she continues to apply. Her vitriolic attack is not consistent with her numerous applications.

Whether Mrs Greig and the Crafts Council like it or not, since 1983, when we formulated our very successful format which enables craftspeople to earn a living from their craft, our shows have gone from strength to strength. Even Mrs Greig should be able to see the colossal contribution our craft shows have made to New Zealand's craft scene, and to the lives of hundreds of craftspeople throughout the country. Most of them find us very amicable to deal with. Perhaps my letter, if printed, may spur some of them (who still read this magazine) into confirming this.

*Toby Dunkley
for New Zealand Craft Shows Ltd*

Fortune AND fame

I, and probably many other simple craft folk out there would like some advice on how to become rich AND famous. Could you run a series of articles on how to achieve this?

I am particularly interested in the relationship between the time involved in the creative process of making an art object, and that required to market the image of the maker. Could I apply for a grant to do an in depth study, preferably in an exotic foreign location? Would I have to take a course in ART SPEAK first?

Presently I refer to myself as a potter and am delighted when the public enjoys buying my simple colourful stoneware. Will I have a better chance of becoming famous if I am called a ceramist and concentrate more on my abstract textured porcelain forms? Will this dichotomy and tension between the functional and sculptural divisions of my

work cause an interesting ambiguity of style? Should I apply for a grant to see if it does? Should I apply for a grant to build another workshop?

Incidentally I was rather miffed not to be asked to participate in the Celebratory Offerings exhibition as our latest line in coffee mugs would have been great little Christmas stocking fillers and helped the CCNZ's gallery coffers no end.

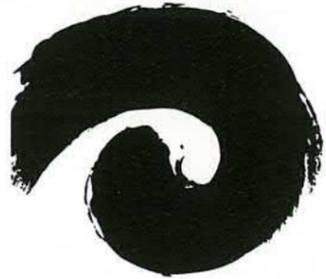
To continue. How important is location in becoming famous? Does the fact that we live on the northern tip of the South Island in remote but ever so beautiful Golden Bay have a bearing? We have yet to be discovered by TV, radio, newspapers or famous glossy magazines, much less be

visited by a representative from the Crafts Council. Should we communicate directly with any or all of the above suggesting they come and do a feature on us? If so, should my husband reveal the secrets of his special firing process for burnished blackware?

There's heaps more we'd like to know but I'll have to go now as another car has just pulled up at our gallery door.

*Diane Woods
Golden Bay*

P.S. How about a grant for a typewriter?
P.P.S. What is the correct pronunciation of ceramist?



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The Human Touch

As I have been considering applying for the New Zealand Index of Craftworkers, I thought a visit to *The Human Touch* at The Bath House, Rotorua, would be highly beneficial. I noted with interest the statement by Fran Wilde in the Foreword to the catalogue that the work was 'new or recent'. I understand that the participants were asked for 'up to 3 pieces of work'.

As an exhibiting fibre artist I see as many exhibitions as possible for stimulus and to see progress in other artists' work. Many artists have unsold works left over from exhibitions, and re-exhibit such by sending them to another city. Under certain

circumstances this is an acceptable thing to do. However my joy at seeing new developments in some fibre work at the Bath House was tainted with an overwhelming disappointment at being exposed to a fair number (about one-third) previously viewed in other major exhibitions over the last 3 years. I would suggest that this is stretching Fran Wilde's use of 'recent'.

At what point, may I ask, does re-exhibiting work become inappropriate? Should the organizers of this exhibition have been more clear in their directives to the participants? Were the participants who, in their integrity created new work, also disappointed at the number of re-runs? Did the gallery have the

word 'retrospective' in mind?

I strongly question the inclusion of any previously shown work in an exhibition of this stature, unless it is quite clearly stated that the exhibition is retrospective and viewers may see the development of an artist's work over the years. I don't believe this is what this exhibition was about. It seems to me that the objectives were unclear, and that some participants did not consider it necessary to present work not previously exhibited.

If this Craft Index is to represent an aspired-to level of artistry, application and achievement, then the selection has to be stringent. It also seems that the demands placed on these people in terms of exhibition require-

ments need to be equally stringent. There are many highly professional artists who have not applied for the Index. There needs to be good reasons for them to apply. Unless high standards are demanded of such exhibitions, the status of the Index will be diminished.

Finally let me congratulate all those artists who saw this as an opportunity, a personal challenge to stretch themselves, to move forward in some way in their work, and who approached this exhibition with the kind of personal integrity deserving of their inclusion in the Craft Index.

*Anita Berman
Auckland*

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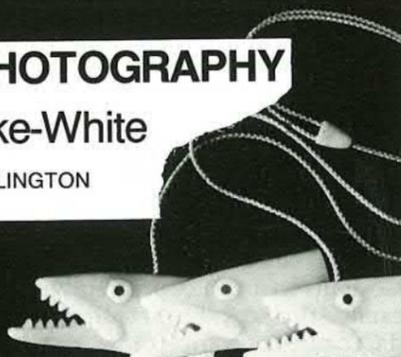
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CRAFT PHOTOGRAPHY

Julia Brooke-White

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Bone Neck Piece L.140mm Carving by Hamish Campbell

□ NZ Customs have provided the following useful information, after an enquiry by a Wellington jeweller, about sending whalebone (though it applies to all bone) carvings to Australia: it's okay if - the bone is clean; it is a finished piece of jewellery; it is a personal gift; and its value is under \$1000 NZ. Any variation from this formula needs a special visit to Customs.

□ On 25 November the new Ngaio Library in Wellington was opened. At the entrance to the library are 800 floor tiles, rolled out by Paul Winspear and Paul Wotherspoon, and decorated by students from Ngaio and Chartwell primary schools. The idea for the project came from research officer, town planning department, Lyn Chadwick, who had seen photographs of the Fitzroy Garden tiles in Melbourne and thought the idea, like any other, was transportable. The terracotta tiles, many of which went through a reduced firing and came out lighter in colour than the others, retained all the sometimes minute detail of the school students' decorations. The project took three and a half days altogether, and is a fine example of how the work of craftspeople, schoolchildren and architectural and city planners can combine for the benefit of the wider community.

□ Gill Gane and Jon Benge of the Neudorf Pottery near Nelson have been awarded a Judges Prize Award by Nino Caruso of Italy at The 2nd International Ceramics Competition Mino '89 Japan. The prize was for a porcelain coffee pot and demi-tasse cups and saucers. The three main exhibitions that run concurrently are of Ceramic Design, Ceramic Art, and Industrial Ceramics. The Ceramic Design and Ceramic Art competitions each have a quota of seven international judges and identical prizes. Gill and Jon are presently looking forward to making a trip to the Mino region in Japan, and the QEII Arts Council has already granted assistance towards their air fares.

□ Sherie Crosby has sent a note on a basket weaving competition, in which, *inter alia*, she writes: "In a surprise move by the Australian judge, Charlotte Drake-Brockman, the prize for this year's Annual Contemporary Craft Competition in Basket Weaving, held at the Compendium Gallery in Devonport, was awarded to Marie Potter of Takapuna, who submitted two baskets made of leather rather than the traditional plant fibre entries. Potter showed a new approach to shape and form. The judge commented that the winner was 'not controlled by technique', to which Potter added that she used 'basket form incorporated in sculpture rather than technique controlling the basket'. Pam Elliot of Compendium organised the event, now into its sixth year, in a bid to promote a craft that has not had

much exposure in New Zealand. The cash prize is given with no conditions, as an encouragement to craftspeople, and as a sign of appreciation from Elliot to those people for their support of the Compendium Gallery."

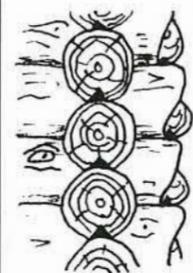
□ The National Provident Art Award: NZ Craft '89 saw two recipients of \$3000 awards at the NZ Academy of Fine Arts last October. The awards, presented by Mr John Perham, Chief Executive of National Provident, went to Lily Ng and Michael Ting, both of Wellington. Lily Ng's entries were three wool hangings, while Michael Ting's entries were three pairs of papier mâché shoes(!). Both award-winners are graduates of Wellington Polytechnic School of Design.

□ Nelson potter Darryl Robertson has had two works accepted for the world ceramics exhibition at Faenza, Italy, for 1990. 180 works from 3000 that were submitted were chosen by the nine judges from Italy, France, Greece and Trinidad. The exhibition begins in September next year, and Robertson's works are two large, colourful platters, similar to those that have appeared in the pages of this magazine. As of this moment we know of no other New Zealanders whose work has been selected.

□ Ceramicist Moira Elliott of Auckland has been awarded a Fulbright Scholarship for next year. The Fulbrights are for a period of 45 days of self-chosen study in the United States. Not many craftspeople have received Fulbrights, and it's good to know that they are in fact eligible to apply for them.

□ The additional benefits of having a craftsperson heading the QEII Arts Council became obvious at the Marketing Institute's annual Awards Presentation dinner recently.

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QEII was there to present its two awards for the 'most effective marketing of an arts project' and the 'most effective arts/business partnership' (to Mercury Theatre and Telecom-Midland/Waikato Museum of Art and History respectively). Then Jenny Patrick, newly appointed QEII Chair, decided to present a third unscheduled prize to Mike Moore for launching the NZ Trade Development report *New Horizons for the Arts Business*. The award? A Jenny Patrick brooch combining the Arts Council and Marketing Institute logo, crafted in paua, or 'opal of sea' as the delighted Moore insisted on calling it.

□ *New Horizons for the Arts Business: The Foreign Exchange Earning Potential of the Arts in New Zealand* (to give it its full title), was commissioned by the NZ Trade Development Board to examine the foreign exchange earning potential of the arts; identifying where and how foreign exchange is currently earned, the further potential in the marketplace, and how this potential can be exploited. The report identifies the Crafts Council's Marketing Plan as an appropriate base for developing a sector-wide strategy for the visual arts and crafts business as a whole. The report recommends a joint action marketing group to promote the visual arts and crafts to the overseas visitor market, a recommendation which the Crafts Council will actively pursue.

□ In the last issue of this magazine brief mention was made of a new book Arts Society which was being formed in Wellington. The Society will be launched at its first major event, an exhibition, *Art of the Book*, to be held at the NZ Academy of Fine Arts Galleries, January 8-20, 1990. Society officers are: president Alan Loney, vice-president Tony Arthur, secretary Ted White, treasurer John Quilter, with Board members Penny Griffith, Roderick Cave, Fay McAlpine and Bill Wieben. Enquiries are welcomed c/o The Secretary, Book Arts Society, Box 958, Wellington.

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Index of New Zealand Craftworkers

Submissions are invited for the 4th INDEX SELECTION - May 1990

- the purpose of the Index is to provide quality assurance in New Zealand craft
- the Index, maintained by CCNZ, provides a major crafts marketing resource both nationally and internationally
- Entries close : Monday, 7 May, 1990

Application forms:
The Information Officer
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Wellington



Crafts Council
OF NEW ZEALAND
(INC.)

EDITORIAL

End of the 1980s

This issue of NZ Crafts is the last issue to appear in the 1980s. Why we tend to look at our affairs in chunks of 10 years, I'm not too sure, but it is certain that most of us believe for instance that the 1960s were somehow different from the 1950s, and that the 1970s were something different again. Over the last few years we have been told, almost endlessly, that we all 'have to gear up for the 1990s', as if, indeed, we were in some position to know perfectly well how they are going to go.

In 1984, the Labour government decided, to the surprise of almost everyone, that the direction and character of New Zealand life shall be different, and that different values shall energise our socio-economic life than previously. There is no part or aspect of our society that has been untouched by the social changes that followed that decision. The lives and works of New Zealand artists in all fields: literature, dance, film, theatre, music, painting, sculpture, and the crafts, have all felt the impact of the 'new wave'. No one, it seems to me, in 1979, or even in 1983, could have told us how we should have 'geared up' for the rest of the 1980s. The present government has now lost the major players in the social and economic restructuring process, and there is no guarantee that the next election will see Labour return to power. There are therefore, only the flimsiest of grounds for predicting how the 1990s will 'go', what the issues will be, or what solutions we will need for whatever we meet in that time.

Throughout the 1980s, as if to compensate for hardship to individuals in the process of change, three significant shifts have occurred in the conduct of the arts and crafts. The first is an enlargement in art and craft education opportunities. The second is a vast increase in the amount of government and corporate money available to the arts and crafts. The third is the introduction of the language of marketing into everyday arts practice. Together they make up, in my view, a new puritanism in the arts and crafts in New Zealand.

Education and sponsorship have been with us for some time, and are not new. What is new is the language of marketing underpinning arts and crafts discourses. The terms 'marketing', 'innovation', and 'excellence' are, for many people,

part of a language game that parallels the language games of big business, in which only a few are going to benefit greatly. For others, it seems that accepting the new language and a new range of skills that goes with it, is the only hope of survival in a tough economic environment. For others still, it is almost totally irrelevant to their particular business of making something. The marketplace is, we are told, 'consumer driven'. The received wisdom about creativity is that it is maker driven. It is arguable whether the distinction between the two, as given, has been addressed in any depth at all.

So, what do we (whoever 'we' might be) want in the 1990s? And is it at all a sensible question? It seems to me that whatever else might or might not become the case, there is another more important question to deal with, namely, *In the 1980s, what happened?* What we need I submit is a large, full-bodied, researched, analysed, evaluated and argued-about chunk of *hindsight*.

Just where have been the benefits of enlarged funding and sponsorship? What have been the effects of stepped-up craft education procedures and their effects on sales to a population that isn't growing at the same rate? What are the current levels of job-satisfaction among craftspeople, independently of their levels of sales? Have increased sales levels brought with them increased job-satisfaction? How many craftspeople have ceased to be full-timers during this time, and why? What are craft and craft design students doing after they graduate? Are we training people for roles they cannot practice? How well have the marketeers served us? How often have they told us to make something different, instead of telling us how to sell what we already make? Of what use are terms like 'innovation' and 'excellence'? Do they provoke expectations that get in the way of reading what is actually there? Are our publishers serving us well? Have we achieved a sophistication in craft writing that matches the sophistication of the crafts themselves?

The questions posed here – and there are plenty more of them – are going to need cool heads if useful answers are to be found. The next question is: Are we going to get them?

Alan Loney

ALAN BROWN

Light – our common medium

It is one thing to be nicely tucked away in the studio doing what one knows and loves – and another to challenge oneself to express spiritual and emotional dynamics in the personal and social context of the work. In view of feedback received of late I am moved to ask, 'What's happening?'. I have the distinct impression that there was very little *real intention* communicated in works at the Challenge Crafts Biennale.

Ten thousand dollars (and guaranteed sale of work) graciously offered by Challenge warranted a little more than just the best of the current line of work. This was an opportunity, in a depressed market, which not only merited our finest effort, but much more.

Perhaps the obvious lack of inspiration to *break new ground*, to reinterpret old symbols of the land and its inhabitants into today's expression for tomorrow's appreciation, is an indication of the need to re-evaluate our whole system of art and craft education, and to broaden our vision. At the moment, the craft/art movement in New Zealand feels to me like a pyramid that neither focuses on nor has its base line with the Earth.

The breakdown in common spiritual and religious terms within our society means that there are very few ritual objects being made that are empowered by a deep understanding of tradition and meaning. We are left with the expression of bland thoughts rarely connected to this deepest reality. So I'll put myself on the line, and tell you how it is for me.

For my entry piece in the Biennale I chose an ancient theme, the Treasure Box, and reinterpreted it to convey the fact that there no longer needs to be cultural and communication boundaries. This is the age of synthesis, where knowledge is available which, I believe exists here in New Zealand.

Using the archetypal power of temple forms as the base, sinuous curves were added to give it the quality



of motion and life. Materials taken from the Earth were formed into a composite whole expressing certain aspects that are important in Human Society. On either side of the jade disc, which was rimmed with gold (indicating the power of the life-giving Sun) I placed feminine and masculine objects; the polarising force that makes manifestation possible.

The hair piece draws attention to the feminine power of sacred intuition

Biennale Award Winner Alan Brown and child, and Grace Cochrane, judge of the Awards.

2nd Crafts Biennale, Auckland Opening Address

I think, on behalf of the craftspeople involved, that I should thank both organisations, the Crafts Council of New Zealand, and the sponsor Challenge Properties Ltd, for making this important event possible.

Most artists and craftspeople work in relative isolation, usually making closest contact with people working in their own area of interest. Exhibitions like this bring these separate areas together. They also give a stimulus for working towards a major piece, and this exhibition in particular is providing an international dimension as a point of comparison.

I think it is highly appropriate for Challenge Properties to associate itself with crafts practice. This area has come to represent quality and integrity, where objects are made with intelligence and imagination combined with a concern for materials and the processes necessary to work with them. I believe crafts practice to be an attitude towards making in any medium, incorporating all these things.

As the catalogue notes, Crafts Council exhibitions have enjoyed support from various forms of this company for a number of years. Despite whatever agenda a company might have however, it is usually the continuing personal interest of people like Vanessa Gibbs and Graham Dawson who really make sure that these events continue to occur.

I would like to thank these people in particular, for making possible my own presence here. I would also like to thank the Crafts Council of New Zealand for choosing me from their list of people (provided by the Crafts Council of Australia), and especially thank Annie Porter, the co-ordinator of the exhibition, for looking after me so well.

Most of you will realise that the selection process was a little different this time. Because of the desire to include works from other countries, it was decided to ask people to submit slides, rather than the works themselves. So I received, in Sydney, a couple of months ago, from 1-3 slides from 249 people. These were accompanied by a title if there was one, dimensions, and a list of materials from which the work was made. There were no names.

There are a few observations that I would like to make about this exercise. Firstly, it is certainly the most democratic way of presenting work to a judge who might have all sorts of preferences and prejudices. It also had the desired effect of attracting work from elsewhere, because we ended up with nearly ninety of the 249 coming from overseas. This number would have been fewer if people had been asked to submit the objects for selection.

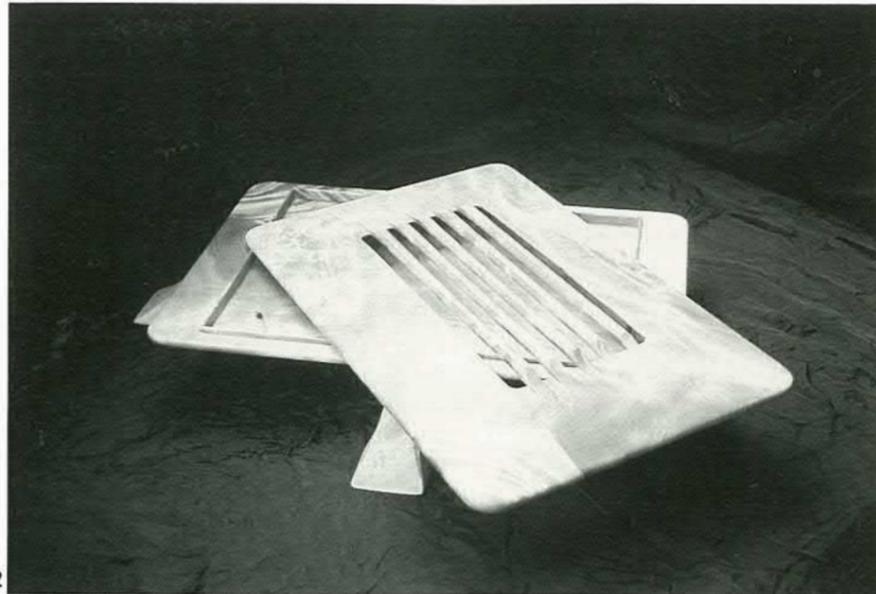
As well, in choosing as far as I could 'the best', I also felt able to develop, not necessarily deliberately, a cohesion to the show. This is of course, best able to occur in a totally curated show, where work is selected to develop some thematic concept. It is less likely to work well in this sort of exhibition, but at least this selection process does allow for

Continued on page 13



1

1. Alan Brown. *Wild Plumes Falling*. Totara bowl vase with granadillo and jade inlays.



2

2. Alan Brown. *Metaphorical Ark*. Flame kauri manuscript box.

and wisdom with its silver bands representing the moon's energy. I believe women to be the keepers of this wisdom, therefore I represented the idea through a woman's ornament. The Venusian qualities of attraction, beauty and freedom were symbolised by the jade feather.

Representing the masculine through Mars, the steel ebony and silver knife has both a predatory and utilitarian feel. This was juxtaposed with the Neptunian silence of the black jade bird form resting on a flax cord, representing knowledge and understanding.

The title of the piece gives ample indication of these things and hopefully draws the observer into a consideration of the nature of our destiny - Freedom and Expressed Joy: the capacity to go beyond the constraints of the body and the limits of time while remaining conscious of that process. If we fail to meet the process of death with an unerring maturity, it will gobble us up, only to resurface at another time to try again.

There is another discussion floating around which I would like to address. A lot of words have been written about the nature of art and craft and which is which, lately. Here is my offering -

When the medium chosen is *exalted* by the user's vision and creative capabilities, *that* is Art.

Where some part of the psyche of the artist is held and expressed in the work, that is Art.

Good craft is present in the capacity to deliver the vision with impeccable dexterity or control; and, that in itself is an art.

Objective art is always recognisable

in terms of consciousness. Its ability to convey the Primary message of Unity, Equilibrium, Health and Harmony is the test of its authenticity.

Art in its highest expression represents unified knowledge and conveys a shared impression to those of a similar attunement.

This is the 'Sacredness' of art.

Inspiration which can spring from all aspects of our lives is most highly expressed as evolutionary ideals, care for and of the Planet in the spirit of love. *Any* material will actively reflect the Spirit of Love if that is the spirit in which it was used: *any material*.

Light is the active agent that is the interface between the mind, feeling and the object. *All* of our work is reducible to this, our common medium, and it is in the field of light that spirit plays.

Now is the time to take ourselves, our students and children to this place and, through our examples give one another the confidence to step into the light of self understanding and growth. Our work is then, to chronicle this journey, making it a communicable, experiential event.

We, as artists and craftspeople, can add the gift of inspiration to the present skills of technology and design; we can transport our work to its universal conclusions: in praise and communication of the One Unsung Song - The Mystery in which we all whirl and meet ... to part ... and to meet again.

Merit awards, in alphabetical order

Paul Annear, New Zealand: necklace 'Days and Nights', carnelian, argillite, jade, greywacke, 18ct gold

One of a number of works using New Zealand natural materials, this necklace combined colours and materials well, in an understated and pleasing way. The arrangement of dark and light in each bead combination, gives the appearance of the lunar cycle.

Beatrice Cross, New Zealand: Rag rug, 'Suburbia 1935'

A familiar domestic form, remembered in front of woodstoves, rag rugs were often under-valued, with the maker rarely identified. Cross has deliberately made reference to the 1930s in her title, and has used 30s motifs, yet I feel it is a very contemporary piece. She collects old jerseys and other clothing for her works, just as our grandmothers did, and takes 10-12 months to make these enormous rugs.

Malcolm Ford, New Zealand: 'Yellow Submarine'

This wonderful work, made in manuka, defies categorisation. Carefully and quirkily made, with a great attention to detail, the wit and skill of this piece masks a serious statement about the relationship of human beings to industrialisation and progress. A harpsicord, for example replaces the nuclear missile within the submarine.

Royce McGlashan, New Zealand: Porcelain form, 'Nightcap'

This perky little pot is expressive, telling and competently made. Completely non-functional, the 'nightcap' leans back in a sleepy sort of way, almost yawning, its stripes reminiscent of night-shirts. The signature is like that of a printmaker and I discover now that McGlashan paints.

Kazu Nakagawa, New Zealand: Entrance Table

This beautifully-made strong, supple table has a feeling of both lightness and tension, through its use of light and dark wood (black walnut and white ash), and curved and straight lines. The uptilted ends were pleasing but puzzling, and it was interesting to discover Nakagawa's identity, and realise that he was probably drawing on his specific cultural background for this form.

Peter Raos, New Zealand: Lily Glass Bowl

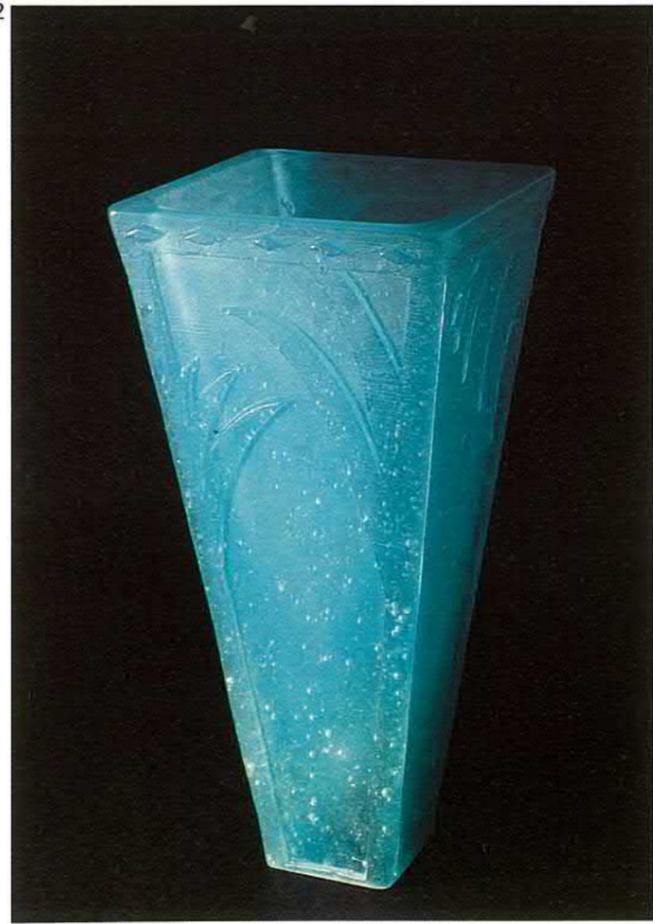
One of the things that glass does well is to provide an opportunity to work with light, colour and reflection, and in this case to use the transparent quality to imbed another image in the material. I find the shape pleasing, the colours rich while the swirling lines of the foliage complement the form. A successful and beautiful piece.

Anne Robinson, New Zealand: Nikau Vase

This vase exploits the quality of glass in a different way, where the opacity of the material responds differently to light and the relief decoration. The rising cast form is appealing, and the geometric Nikau frond decoration is appropriate to the form. It is a subtle and strong piece.

Christa and David Selkirk, Australia: Silver necklace, 'Property of the princess'

A very competent piece, with an intriguing combination of curved and rectangular forms. The clustering of these forms works well on the many strands making up the necklace. It is an ambitious piece, and very well made. The title is provocative in that it could refer to palace steps and cushions, to some earlier necklace tradition or simply to the lavishness of the piece.



Award Winner

Alan Brown, New Zealand: Papa Huia 'Leaping Temple Cat Dreams of Flight', totara burl box, ebony, silver, flax, jade, gold, damascus steel

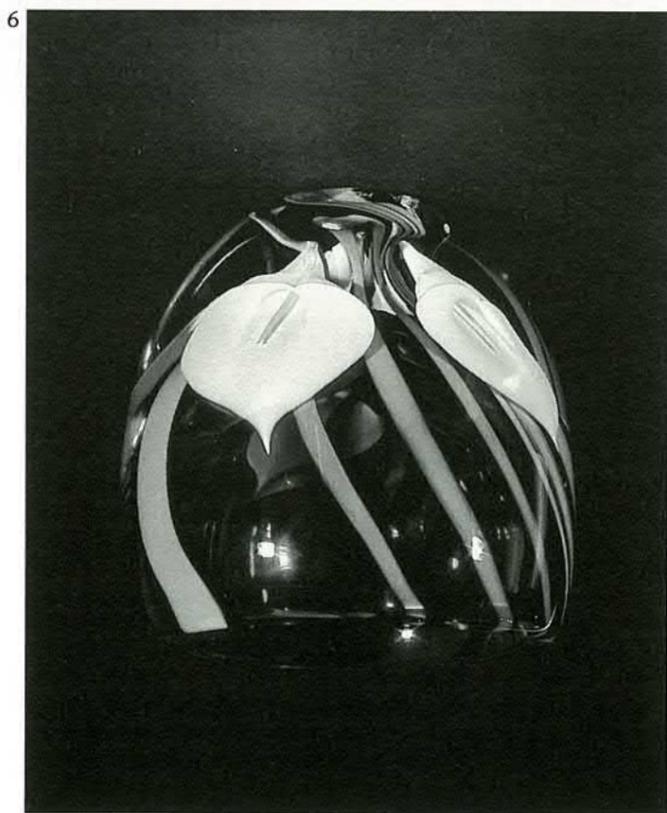
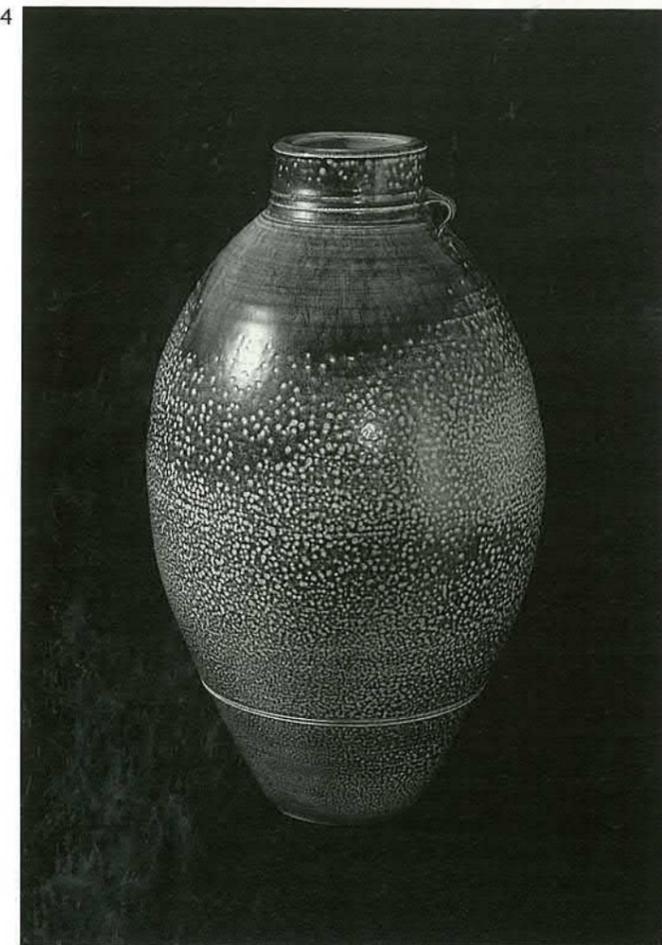
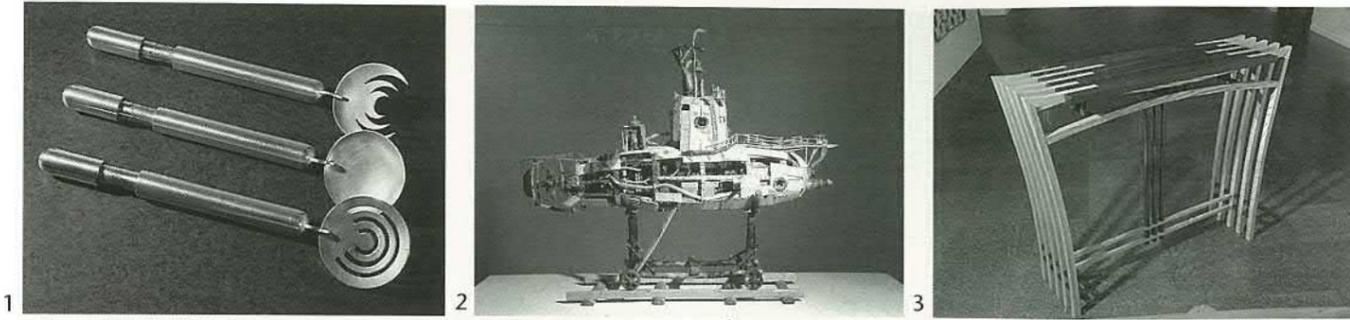
Alan Brown has taken a traditional form, the Maori treasure box waka huia, and has interpreted it in a very personal and contemporary way. This box not only has a feeling of containing treasures, but also of offering them. The title gives a clue to how he was feeling about the piece, that takes it beyond its tradition. In both the box and the small objects contained in it (an amulet, a haircomb, a pen-knife, a disc, and an ear-ring), Brown demonstrates an extraordinary affinity with a range of materials. These objects are designed with restraint and elegance, made beautifully, and the overall feeling I have is of admiration for a major work which appears to offer layers of complex meanings in everyday forms.

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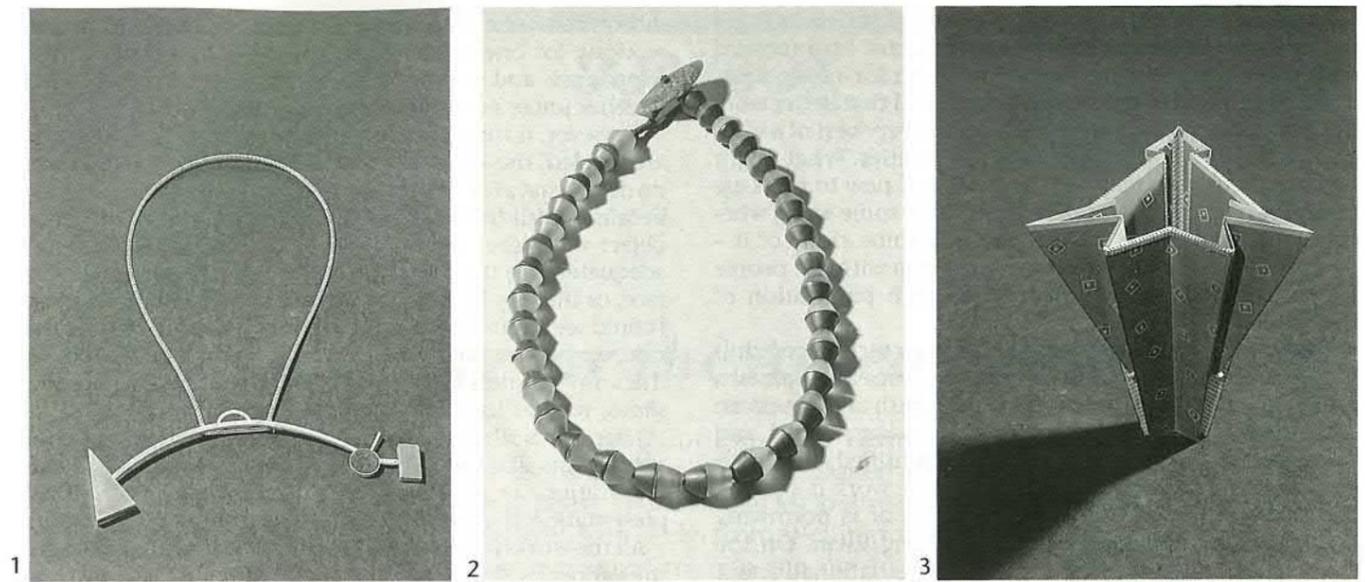
1 Alan Brown. Papa Huia Leaping Temple Cat Dreams of Flight. Totara burl box, ebony, silver, flax, jade, gold, damascus steel.
2 Ann Robinson. Nikau Vase. Lost wax casting.

Opposite page.

1 Vicki Torr. Sea Green. Kiln cast glass.
2 Christa and David Selkirk. Property of the princess. 925 silver.
3 Royce McGlashan. Nightcap. Porcelain.



1 Robert J Farrell, USA. Family Flatware: Earth, Home, Tranquility. Stg silver, 18ct gold, Shakudo, Shibuichi copper, nickel, brass, Mokume-gzne.
 2 Malcolm Ford. Yellow Submarine. Manuka.
 3 Kazu Nakagawa. Entrance table. black walnut and white ash.
 4 Peter Gibbs. Salt glazed vase.
 5 Barry Ball. Bio-rhythm 1. Earthenware.
 6 Peter Raos. Lily bowl. Glass.



1 Janis Kerman, Canada. Brooch pendant. Stg silver, bronze, slate, stainless steel.
 2 Paul Annear. Days and Nights Necklace. Carnelian, argilite, jade, greywacke and 18ct gold.
 3 Jim Hopfensperger, USA. No 17. Nickel, silver, stg silver.
 4 Beatrice Cross. Suburbia 1935. Floor rug.

such a possibility, and I was glad for this reason that there had been no pre-selection. Despite the diversity of this exhibition, there is a cohesion, which has become apparent through the various groupings and juxtapositions that Fran Hughes has developed so well in the design of the exhibition.

So it was a good way to do it. Nevertheless, there are a few other things that I would like to say – probably particularly to craftspeople.

The first is about the word 'judgement' or 'judging'. These words have tended to imply (in the same way that we have used the word 'criticism'), that there are such things as 'truths' or 'right ways'.

To a certain extent I agree with this, because aesthetic preferences are generally, in any society, a matter of consensus. Certain forms feel right because they are reinforced by social institutions, such as art schools, galleries and museums, critics, writers, historians – and awards for that matter. And they change, from society to society, age to age.

However I have to tell you that in choosing me, the Crafts Council chose someone whose preference in looking at work is somewhat different. The best way I can describe it is to say I prefer to draw on as many sources as possible to find out what the artist is on about – what they are trying to say or do, where their ideas come from, and what has influenced them. I also like to know what they have been making up to that point, and what they are still working towards, so I can then think in a more informed way about the work I am looking at.

At that point, you can match that information and understanding up with your own experiences and influences and understandings, your 'expertness', and try to form an opinion about whether the idea works or not, in the object. I do not believe, as we have so often heard, that objects 'speak for themselves'. Aesthetics alone, in the form of an image of the object with a list of materials, is in my opinion, only half the issue, in looking at a work.

In this exercise, it was unfair to try to research information about those I didn't recognise and already understand, so I didn't do that, and it was not the intent of the committee that I should. However I did of course, recognise some. That after all is my job, and you could perhaps ask whether in trying to be democratic, such an awareness works to the advantage or disadvantage of those one knows.

With only one object from an unknown person, a judge doesn't know whether this object is a giant leap forward with something that has been worked on for a long time, a run-of-the-mill of the same old form and that better work has been done or should be possible, the very best of a well-known series, or the beginning of a new series. What might be familiar to you, may well be fresh and new to me. One hazard was that I didn't really know, with some work, whether I was looking at the real thing or some clone of it – someone who may have done a workshop with the people I knew, or had been influenced through publication of their work.

There were lots of clues of course, which I couldn't ignore. Manuka, Huon pine, greenstone, paua and waratahs are fairly geographically specific, and British and American slide-mounts give some of the game away. Maori and Aboriginal imagery are also easily identified, although once again, one cannot be sure that the work is coming from within those cultural frameworks, or is borrowing from them, or sometimes even exploiting them. On the other hand, much work these days is international, and it is impossible to detect a regional characteristic.

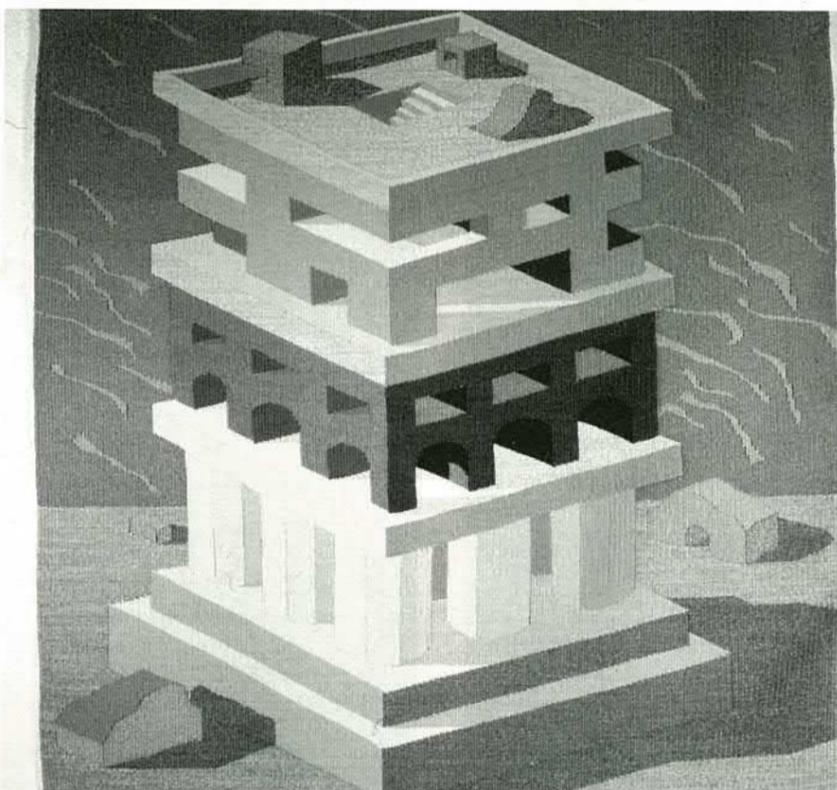
These were my problems, or maybe challenges. There was another major problem for craftspeople though, I believe. Many of the objects I rejected, I did so of course because I

didn't think the idea, as far as I could understand it, was working for one reason or another. That's a result of my experience and my preferences or even prejudices, and another judge may have felt quite differently.

However, if there is only a slide to provide the clues that are needed, the image on that slide has to be good. I have no doubt that a few very important works were not included, because I couldn't see what was going on in the work. The object was either too far away or too dark or too light to adequately see the form, the texture, the finish or the surface, or the way in which it was actually made. With some I could see the front but not the back, or the top but not the side, and with many objects it is important to have more than one point of view. It was best where there were three slides, with at least one showing detail.

These days when so much selection is done by slides for exhibitions like these, for other funding applications, for publication, or for public art commissions, professional presentation is a fact of life.

All the works in this exhibition have been chosen because they appeared to express an idea, usually through drawing one way or another on tradition associated with the material, and using the appropriate processes towards an imaginative end. The award winners in my view resolved such expression particularly well.



Christine Sawyer, England. *Tower Block*. Wool and cotton.

SOAPBOX

Hanging for the Aotea Centre

The large tapestry hanging for the Aotea Centre in Auckland has ended up being designed by a painter, Robert Ellis, and woven by the Victorian Tapestry Workshop in Melbourne. We had heard that the artist/tapestry weaver Kate Wells from Wellington had been offered the commission but at the last minute the newly appointed adviser, Hamish Keith, scrapped the previous contract.

Kate Derum, Publicity Programmes Officer of the Victorian Tapestry Workshop recently travelled throughout New Zealand, meeting with tapestry weavers and showing slides of some of the art work in the new Parliament Building in Canberra. With obvious pride she showed pieces and the building, and told how from the very beginning the artists were selected and worked on a broad theme so all tied in together.

How different from our own Aotea Centre, where committees changed ideas, advisers and artists midstream. Elizabeth Currie who showed us through the Centre stated that quite by chance some of the ideas or themes were similar between a couple of artists.

Here was a golden opportunity for the Aotea Centre committee to show some foresight and faith in supporting our own talent. We have artists with tapestry weaving experience, competent weavers, and a great sense of commitment. It only needed the support of the committee and faith in their own judgement to see the work completed within New Zealand.

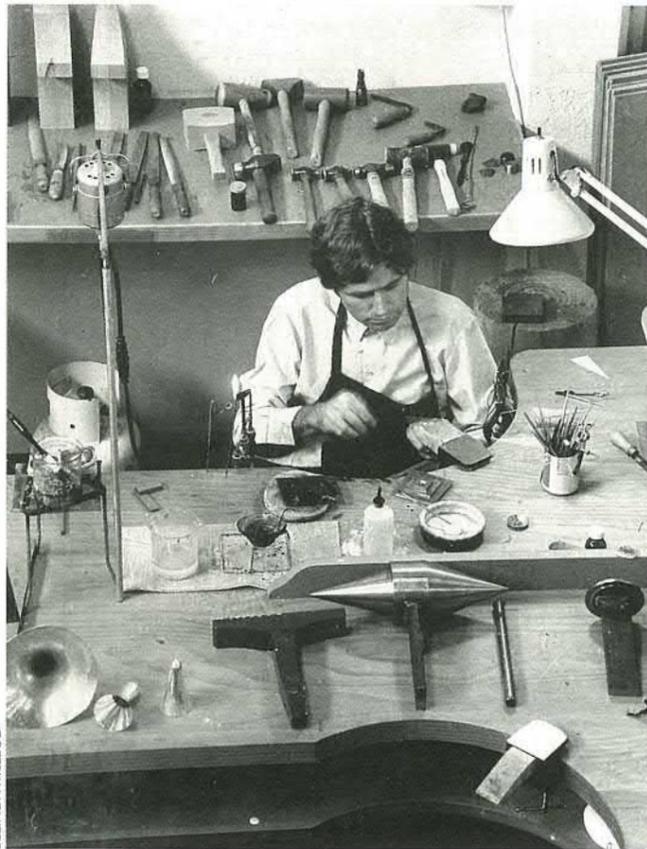
You might question our ability to handle the job. Somehow we always feel that anyone or anything from overseas is better. We do have artists with tapestry experience, tapestry weavers, wool dyers and people capable of overseeing the whole project. As it is, the Victorian Tapestry Workshop is having to borrow a loom from another country. We could have done the same.

The very large cost of such a tapestry could have been spent within New Zealand – on the loom, on the premises, and in supporting our own weavers.

The development, experience and confidence that this hanging could have brought to the New Zealand tapestry scene would have been phenomenal. The Aotea Centre should have been a cultural show place where we could take our visitors to say: Look what we have achieved.

Yvonne Sloan.

Robert Baines: artificer of the metaphysical



Robert Baines at Waikato Polytechnic. Opposite page.

- 1 brooch (top). fine gold, silver alloy 25.45 gms
- brooch (centre) " " " 21.95 gms
- brooch (bottom) " " " 21.67 gms
- 2 brooch (top). bone, fine gold, silver alloy 23.98 gms.
- brooch (centre). bone, oxidised silver, fine gold 18.95 gms.
- brooch (bottom). " " " 23.37 gms.
- 3 brooch (top). gold, silver, alloy 12.98 gms.
- brooch (centre). platinum, gold, silver alloy & bone 14.45 gms
- brooch (bottom). gold, silver alloy & bone 19.87 gms.
- 4 coffee & tea pots. sterling silver, titanium
- 5 pendant. bone, gold, silver alloy 10.95 gms

Maurizio Sarsini has a Doctorate in Architecture from the University of Rome and a Diploma in Fine Arts from the Academy of Fine Arts, Rome. He has travelled and studied extensively in the Middle East and North Africa and has a special interest in ancient Rome and classical History. He has held teaching positions at the Academy of Fine Arts in Rome and at Melbourne University. He is currently teaching Art History and Design at The Waikato Polytechnic.

Robert Baines' exhibition 'The Waikato Pieces' at the Waikato Museum of Art & History is a quest into the metaphysical and magical world created by precious sculpture. Baines, an Australian master goldsmith with an international reputation, prefers to be known by the ancient term, artificer, the one who creates mystical and religious objects by serving the community.

Ancient civilisations have always considered metalwork, and goldsmithing in particular, as a craft dealing with magical powers and eschatological properties. The shaman or priest who mastered the destructive powers of fire in melting and forging metals was the mediator between the deity and the community.

At the time of the ancient Egyptians and Etruscans, who believed in life after death, it was the goldsmith who established a link with the metaphysical world by making ceremonial pieces reflecting the deity they believed in, and conveying a high spirituality even in functional jewellery. Gold, being immune to rust and resistant to decay, carried the symbolism of eternal life. Patrons, kings and queens wore gold during their lifetimes, and after death in their tombs, as the vehicle for extending their existence beyond life and in unity with the divine.

Baines has travelled widely to study forgotten and ancient metalworking techniques, and in particular the work of the ancient Greeks and Etruscans who joined metals without soldering. Granulation is an ancient technique that allows objects to be made through successive firings rather than using solder to adhere one layer of metal to another. By using this method Baines retains the ancient significance of this process in which the surface of an object is not regarded as a superficial decoration, but an integral part and a direct expression of the whole structure.

Some of Baines' pieces are votive, ritualistic objects reaching beyond the realm of traditional jewellery. Others are intended for personal adornment, or for practical purposes, but are still imbued with conceptual meaning.

The philosophical approach Baines brings to his work draws heavily on the concepts of Theophilus, the 11th century monk who declared that the processes of designing and working in gold are an expression and function of the divine. These assumptions are reflected in the themes of plenitude and abundance used by Baines in his work, and find support in the complexity of the technical processes involved.

The Waikato exhibition contains a number of pieces made during Baines' residency at The Waikato Polytechnic from July to October this year. The miniature sculptural pieces presented are built from a complex of small icons made from geometrical forms, sophisticated 'objets trouvee', spheres, wires, triangles and plates, mounted on platforms or on stems, and achieving great unity by the use of



rhythmical juxtaposition of forms and materials. Using gold, silver, bronze, copper, stainless steel and titanium Baines emphasises the subtle colour variations between the components of his work. The gold is used either in its pure state or alloyed with silver and copper, and by using different ratios, a range of complementary colours is achieved between surfaces.

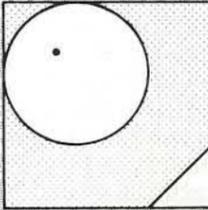
Unique to the Waikato pieces, and inspired by local tradition, is the introduction of bone, used with alloyed gold and silver, enhancing the quality of the metals and acting as a catalyst for form and content.

The vessel is represented by a teapot and coffee pot, both made in hollow-ware silver with titanium handles. The virtuosity of these refined cubist forms is underlined by the harmonious combination of metals, technique and colour.

In the art of Robert Baines there is not a particular message to be read, but there is a devotion to establishing a continuity between past, present and becoming. His work is the expression of a metaphysical dream that I believe belongs to all of us. His works are ritual instruments for measuring the 'impermanent'.

Note

Robert Baines' residency was sponsored by the Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council of New Zealand and The Waikato Polytechnic.



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SUSAN FLIGHT

Art is not a thing but a way

There is a word in Japanese for a reverberating resonance – *yoin*. It describes the peal of a bell and implies something which stimulates the imagination and causes that haunting replay of memory lingering in the mind. To me, it describes Japan. The spirit of *yoin* is embodied not least in the perfection of the beautiful gardens of stone, water, and green vegetation.

A Zen writer on gardens says 'Let a person take delight in the natural harmony of heaven and earth. Let him transplant mountains, rivers, trees and rocks to his own fireside, and let him experience the five elements within himself. Let him draw from the source of heaven and earth and savour in his mouth the taste of the wind. Pleasure in the spirit of harmony of heaven and earth'.¹

From food stall gardens to palace grounds, there is visible evidence of the natural harmonies, where the five elements combine with fish, birds, and people, to provide a sense of ultimate grace and aesthetic delight. It is a tangible expression of the unity of all things – of life, philosophy and art.

Everywhere, in the gardens, the streets, and the countryside, one cannot help but notice the richness of the textures of the Japanese environment. The traditional domestic architecture incorporates adobe, wood, curvilinear clay tiles, or two foot thick thatch raked upwards at the corners. This is equalled in texture and hue only by the curved walls of grey and beige stone which is cut to shape and assembled without mortar.

The environmental use of fibre is part of this textural richness. Functional and decorative design incorporates the use of local materials in a natural and highly satisfying manner. Fences of open lattices of bound bamboo; gates also woven in bamboo, and laced *taaniko* fashion; door accents of cane and rushes; park rubbish bins expertly woven and well designed; folded prayer papers at shrines; even suits of armour close woven with chilling individual insignia designed for inducing terror as much as protection. It is no accident that these were the source of inspiration for costumes in *Star Wars*.

So strong is the influence of natural pattern in Japanese life, they even shibori their trees. *Tsugi*, grown for 43 years, bark stripped, and encased in a shaping tight mesh jacket for three years, develop a wavy texture that enhances the special *tokanoma* area of the Japanese home. Probably the most remarkable use of fibre in practical environmental

design occurs in Shikoku – high in the mountains where a steep ravine is crossed by a suspension bridge woven entirely of vines. Maintained by the Government as important cultural property, it is a reminder of the feud between the clans of Genje and Heike of tenth century Japan. When the Heike were defeated, they fled to the natural protection of the mountainous high country with its steep ravines, where access was guarded by these bridges.

These events were recorded by Lady Murasaki in the eleventh century, in what was probably the world's first novel, *The Tale of the Genji*. It contains detailed descriptions of Japanese fibre and clothing: 'After much thought Genji selected the presents to Murasaki herself, a robe yellow without and flowered within, lightly printed with red plum blossom crest – a modern marvel of dyeing ... to the Lady of Akashi, he sent a white robe with spray of

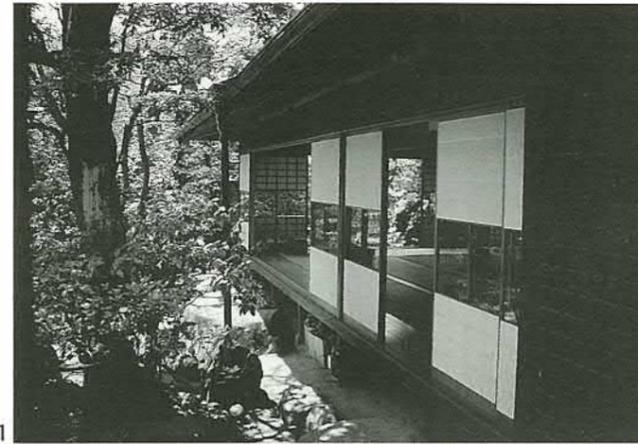
plum blossoms on it and birds and butterflies fluttering hither and thither ... with a very handsome purple lining.'

This sensitivity to cloth and decoration is a continuous quality to the present day, where the beautiful textural and environmental patterns recreate into fabric patterns. In shibori², a rock wall translates into clamped designs, pavements into stitched patterns, bamboo fences into pleating, boxed fish into reversed pleats, and so it goes on. No art form happens in a vacuum, but mirrors the life about it.

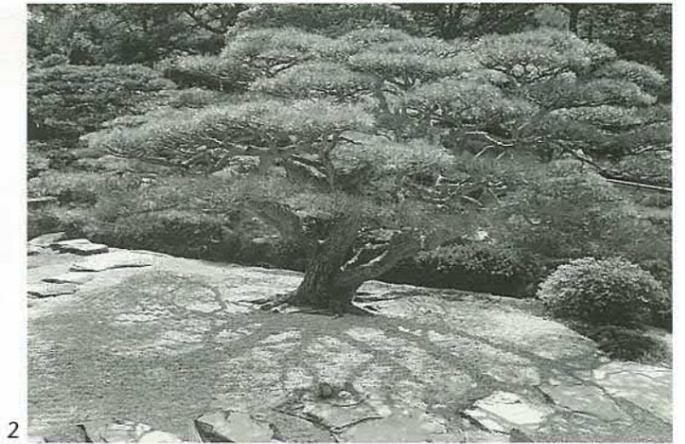
Intrinsic to the patterning of cloth is the traditional indigo blue. No comment on fibre in Japan would be complete without mention of the production and use of *ai-zome*. The dye is made from composted leaves of the indigo plant in Shikoku, where once 900 indigo producers supplied the whole of Japan, but where now only four supply the country. As an indigo farm may produce 1000 bushels of the leaf a year, and an average user will require 60 bushels, it will be seen that natural indigo is not common. This rarity raises the cost of the natural indigo to about \$100 a vat. These factors contrast with the ease and cheapness of handling the alternative synthetic dye.

Most *ai-zome* craft artists use four vats concurrently while a weaving factory may have as many as thirty-five, but the cost is lessened by the fact that, with good management, a vat may last for 20 months. These vats, enormous *Ali Baba* style amphorae, are set in concrete at ground level and are warmed by a small fire therein, to

Susan Flight thanks the QEII Arts Council of NZ for assistance with her 1989 Fibre Arts Tour of Japan. She is also grateful to Yoshiko Wada, fibre artist and author of *Shibori, the Japanese Art of Shaped Resist Dyeing*, who guided 3 weeks of this tour, and to Louisa Simons who inspired it.



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maintain a 20°C temperature. They are fed on the user's favourite mix – anything from bran to woodash and sake. Dyeing of fabric is rotated from old to new vats, as fabric is dipped up to 15 times to get a range of blues from light to full lustrous deep navy – a colour in which it is felt overtones of all other colours are concealed. This dye is very highly valued.

Many weavers use natural indigo. There is great variety in weaving, from the cotton ikat country style weaving in Shikoku, the traditional silk processes of spinning, double ikat dyeing and backstrap loom weaving, with a thread so fine that there are 1360 warp threads on a 14 inch piece, to the modern complex computer weaving of Junichi Arai used in the haute couture designs of Issey Miyake. Even decorative paper has a special line, dyed in indigo with shibori folding. Handmade paper, or *washi*, is of three main kinds: *Kozo* (produced from mulberry), *Mitsumata*, and *Gampe* (plants of the same name), all made on a fine reed screen. These papers are justly renowned for their quality, beauty and artistic versatility. Their usage ranges from drawing and calligraphy to shibori patterned gift paper, from decorative paper like kelp or sea foam, to the finest handmade paper in the world used for picture restoration. There are papers that can be woven into the silk-like fabric (*shifu*), and paper in crisp shiny coils of *mizuhika* used in celebratory sculptures.

Everywhere in Japan fibre is decoratively and practically used with the skill of centuries underlying the processes.



6

- 1 Takeda home and enclosed garden.
- 2 Ritsuin Gardens, Shikoku.
- 3 Kozo Takeda, Arimatsu.
- 4 Hiroyuki Shindo and his wife.
- 5 Mrs Takeuchi with shibori length of fabric.
- 6 Fence and gate. Bamboo. Ritsuin Gardens.



1

There are applied designs on fabric in shibori, yuzen paste resist, wax rocketsu, ikat kasuri weaving, all fabrics produced with sensitivity, care and skill, and valued, like their people, in age. There are garments made from old fabrics, re-used, overstitched in white, or smaller objects made from pieces of ancient hand-produced fabric. These are treasured samples from the past, recreated in a new form. A poem in the Okujin Weaving Museum, written two centuries ago, reflects the values placed on these antique fabrics by the Japanese. *Yesterday I went to town and I saw this beautiful cloth. It made me cry – the people did not understand how it was made and what work was in it.*

But what of the people who produce this work, and the environments that they live in? The work force has differences from ours. There are many old folk, particularly women, working in the arts. This is not a sign of exploitation of the aged, but an appreciation of their value and their skills. The elderly are active, alert and revered. There is no need for retirement villages in Japan. Among the individual artists and craftspeople associated with the Shikoku aizome production are Hiroyuki Shindo, Mrs Takeuchi and Kozo Takeda.

- 1 Rubbish basket, Ritsuin Gardens.
- 2 Shibori Panel in Arimatsu.
- 3 Door Shelter, Gion, Kyoto.
- 4 Environmental patterns, stone support.



2



3

At Arimatsu on the outskirts of Nagoya, Kozo Takeda lives in a traditional village with the original buildings and streets of three hundred years ago. The town, developed to serve nobility with gifts of precious fabrics, as they travelled to pay homage to the Emperor at Edo, still houses descendants of the same families producing and marketing the traditional shibori. Shops, galleries, a museum, demonstrations and films now complete the community's educational and economic function. Work available for sale varies from the simple shibori handkerchief to sophisticated contemporary wall panels and installations.

Takeda's home, traditional and beautiful, encloses a garden of trees and rocks with a small shrine. At the back is an ancient tea house. The tea ceremony is a meditation where tea is taken in a state of heightened consciousness. The architecture of the tea house is symbolically designed to enhance the significance of the ceremony. Beside his tea house, Takeda has a well of stones on which he poured a little water. From the depths a distant peal of bells sounded – *yoin* – echoing from the falling water as it struck the stones. About the tea house Carl Jung wrote: 'Every building, sacred or secular, can be a projection of an archetypal



4



1

image from the human unconscious into the outer world. They can be a symbol of psychic wholeness, and in this way exercise a specific influence on human beings.¹³

Many craft artists work in a non-traditional setting even while producing traditional patterns. Mrs Takeuchi lives high in the Shikoku mountains in a western style home and studio, much as a craftsman would live in the West. Using her natural indigo vats, she produces lengths of very beautiful shibori fabric.

Hiroyuki Shindo and his family, also in the mountains, live in the ancient village of Miyama, behind Kyoto. Shindo works mainly in hemp with natural indigo to create modern wall panels and environmental sculptures. Using the natural bleeding of the dye as an intrinsic part of the work, he has a great simplicity, a sense of yohaku, or space. 'Empty infinity, without beginning, without end, without past, without future. The water of the sea is smooth and mirrors the surface. The clouds disappear in blue space. The mountains shine clear. Consciousness reverts to contemplation. The moon disc rests alone.'¹⁴ That is the work of Hiroyuki Shindo.

Despite the feeling that Japanese artists in fibre have centuries of philosophy and practical tradition behind them, their contemporary statements are also about our New Zealand world. At Hiroko Watanabe's Gallery Space 21 in Tokyo, many of the artists show their work. Artists like Tanakai who has a burn-off, in more open spaces, and leaves silk remnants clinging to stakes that impaled them to the earth; or Toyasaki, who, with bundles of 20 dyed cotton work gloves, creates a field of cabbages, or with a room full of yellow tissues, an *Allergy*, or even, with 500



3



2

pairs of rainbow-painted sneakers marching over a hill, an *Over the Rainbow*.

Although these artists and craftspeople display the same variety a similar group would in the West, they seemed to me to have certain underlying factors in common. The great care they showed every aspect of their work, they also gave to other areas of their lives. They were all focused on their art form with full commitment. There was no indication of rampant materialism, but rather of simplicity and calm. Quality, rather than the marketplace, dictates standards.

Japan and its people gave me the opportunity to reflect once more on historical and philosophical sources, a sense that what is being done in fibre is part of a continuing living process, a sense too, of the unity of artists and their work across culture.

Chuang Tzu wrote: 'Heaven and earth and I live together and all things and I are one.'

References

- 1 *Zen in the Art of the Tea Ceremony*, Hammitzsch, Horst. Avon Books N.Y. 1982, p68.
- 2 Shibori is the art of stitching, folding, binding or clamping the cloth to resist dye. It is a shaped resist of great subtlety.
- 3 *Man and His Symbols*, Jung, Carl G. Doubleday & Co. Inc, N.Y. 1969, p125.
- 4 *The Secret of the Golden Flower*, Wilhelm, Richard, translator. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, N.Y. and London 1962, p77-78.

- 1 Lobsters made from paper coils or Mitzuhika.
- 2 Adobe cottage in Miyama, Honshu.
- 3 Vats of natural ai-zome or indigo dye. The 'bloom' is scooped from the surface before use.

Crafts in the Eighties

The 1980s are characterised by a confusion about what the crafts might be. This is not new; art/craft arguments have taken place for several hundred years. Similarly, comparisons between crafts and industrial design and manufacture have been made ever since industrial manufacture started. Why should there be such a discussion in the first place?

It is partly to do with our language and the ways in which some words no longer explain what we want to say; where they continue to convey a meaning when we want them to say something else. But it is mostly to do with the historical privilege that has been conferred on the 'fine arts' of painting and sculpture, and the associated status of that art, its artists and, moreover, those who commissioned or purchased it. Buyers and their associated institutions have reinforced artforms which reinforced their own status.

Painting and sculpture had power conferred upon them. It is not an intrinsic power. Value has been placed on them for social and economic reasons – portraits, investments, depictions of ownership and status. Aestheticisms are not truths. They have been reinforced as truths, through consensus, and these differ from society to society, age to age. The notion of the individual, and thus the artist as genius, is similarly an invention which supported these structures.

Those working in what have been considered non-status areas, or with non-status materials, or making non-status objects, have wanted some of that status and power. Thus they tried to adopt or duplicate the institutions, emulate the attitudes, and gain access to the same markets. To a certain extent this worked, as the artworld relaxed its rules about expression, and itself adopted some of the marginal materials and processes. A merging occurred from both ends. Similarly other crafts practitioners have teetered on the edge of industrial production, unsure of their role and attitude; feeling that this was what they should be rejecting, but sometimes designing for it, and sometimes emulating it in small scale.

Underlying all strands of actual practice in these areas has been a range of attitudes about processes, materials, function and social purpose. Because the institutions of the artworld were historically oriented towards painting in particular, but also sculpture, those working from other starting points have generally had to use, or have had used about them, the language and values and perceptions of that currency. Work has been measured in the prevailing terms of the fine art world. In recent years that world has, to a large extent, denigrated fine finish, function, enjoyment of process, interest in materials and social purpose. This does not mean that that view is right, but simply that it has been well reinforced. It may also change, because artworld views have changed before. It means though, that for some time the values associated with other practices have been

rejected, because the only way they could gain recognition was through the existing channels: those with the dominant rules. One can find parallels in the performing arts, science and sport.

We talk a lot about the way in which the term 'craft' has been devalued. But in fact there is a very positive public perception about what is meant. What does the editor of the 20th anniversary issue of *Rolling Stone* mean when he says that over the years they have tried to present the very best available in their editorial craft – the best writing, the best photography and the best layout? Or the reviewer of *The Singing Detective* who said it was the best-crafted television show last year? Their understanding, and our understanding, is that something that is crafted is made as well as possible, with care and attention, with a thorough understanding of materials and process, towards an imaginative end. Things can be made, they can be manufactured, they can be processed or they can be crafted. We all know the differences in meaning. These aspects are recognised in a very positive sense by the broadest population – that's why they are applied to everything from making bread to writing novels.

The problem in the art/craft debate has been the opposition of this attitude about process, to the importance of ideas, intelligence and intellect. These are not oppositions. Both are more or less present in all cultural activities, whether painting, potting, working with glass or singing a song. Skills, attitudes, processes and materials have never been enough on their own; nor have ideas and imagination without practical resolution. Other distinctions like the necessity of function (as we used to understand it), or roleplaying for specific media, are indeed red herrings today. But attitudes to a way of making, and an affinity for materials and necessary processes associated with them to make something well, remain the core of a crafting attitude.

At the same time, each medium, including paint, ink, stone and bronze, as well as clay, fibre, glass, leather and metal, has its own history, as have the functions they have previously performed. You see, a painting has a function too. One cannot use those media without recognising their cultural associations. Thus, reassessment and interrogation and development of the traditional social functions to do with that medium, like wearing, adornment, ritual symbolising, containing, reinforcing, representing power, defining status and value, harnessing, and so on, are valid and probably necessary notions to confront. Jewellers and potters and clothing makers in particular have been doing this for some time. I think the most interesting work is work which acknowledges these histories; not in faithful reproduction but through imaginative consideration of historical perceptions. I do not believe there is such a thing as an aesthetic value that is not culturally determined. Even Michael Cardew calls it 'consensus'.

The 1980s represent a changing society. Many people speak about them as a limbo, a transitional time of reassessment of values, a testing period in a time of confusion. It may be possible that values generally displaced in the fine art world (and in modernist architecture and design) – human social values – may be revalued and reinstated. Who knows? The rules may be changing. What does appear to be happening in the 1980s is a re-appraisal of the archaeology of the crafts; investigations of the histories and practices and attitudes to do with clay, leather, wood, glass, fibre, metal and others. Postmodernism has encouraged the validity of this exploration, with its example of raiding history for imagery and references. The crafts have always been good at that. There appears to be a more confident shift to reviewing and revaluing previous forms and uses, for both functional and sculptural production. Simultaneously there is a realisation that there are equally valid, and often more appropriate marketplaces for this work, than only the adopted fine art ones. The links with design and industry and their marketplace are being more strongly sought and reinstated. This marketplace could possibly include what has been called a sleeping giant in the form of underused and undervalued support systems through the applied arts museums.

The crafts, or designing-making practices, while emphasising the importance of the individual, have always had a closer social connection, through recognised familiarity with forms, materials, and use. It is a perceived affinity, similarly historical, often romantic. This has sometimes worked against them in that the resultant accessibility has also earned a perception of crafts practice as therapy and therefore as overall mediocrity. There has also been confusion over the expectations of critiques or measurements for achievement that have been used, and their relationship with those of the fine arts and design worlds. Craft practices have relied largely on fine arts discourses for their identification and reassurance, and have rarely sought other theoretical analysis through philosophy, psychology, sociology, archaeology, anthropology or architecture, in relation to their own histories. Many individual practitioners do but there are few places for their thoughts to be considered. The long and rich visual and intellectual histories associated with crafts practice should be discussed in social terms in a broader intellectual field. Someone wrote recently, for example, that the problem with the art/craft debate is that it is not an aesthetic or technological issue (which is the way in which it has been treated) but in fact a sociological one, and I believe this to be true.

In developing an art practice, or in making objects, it should not really matter from which position people start. Time is sure to show that all starting points are valid. It is not the starting point which is important, but how it is developed, and that development should allow a number of different histories and purposes and values about making. The problem, which is not that of art alone, is the lack of tolerance for positions other than those from a privileged vantage point. These rarely have to question themselves, or feel pressure to adapt for acceptance. Practices which are so supported tend to become removed from everyday reality and only speak to themselves.

This attitude does not matter as long as it is realised that it is only one position or one attitude about cultural practice. It does matter if these are the only positions which are reinforced. These days people write and talk about a need for a different spirituality; people search for some form of hope in a confusing world. It is time for attitudes associated with crafts practice to be reassessed, because it may be that these values (which people have persisted in

clinging to in the face of enormous international cultural and institutional opposition) are in fact necessary to people's practical and expressive and symbolic understanding of themselves.

We must be confident of these needs and their theoretical underpinnings, informed about cultural directions in the broadest social sense, and prepared to seek understanding in other cultural and theoretical disciplines or areas of thought, in order to inform our practice.

Editor's Note: Grace Cochrane has kindly given *NZ Crafts* permission to use the above article. Its usefulness to the art/craft discussion is confirmed by the fact that it has been previously published in *Craft West*, June 1988; *Ausglass*, Winter 1989; and *Craft Victoria*, August 1989 – all in Australia.

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BRENDA TENNENT

Steve Woodward's wayward bowsprits



The photographs accompanying this article are supplied by courtesy of Steve Woodward, and the Waikato Museum of Art and History.

- 1 *Skating Horse*, bronze. 1988.
- 2 *Skating Horse*, totara. 1988.
- 3 *Travelling Pukeko*, marble and totara. 1988.
- 4 *Têtes du Proue*, marble, aluminium, rimu. 1988.



Sculptor Steve Woodward has recently exhibited works in cast bronze, carved marble, wood, and stone, titled *People, Ships and Horses*, at the Waikato Museum of Art and History. A travelling Canadian, after spending several years in Italy and France, Woodward arrived in New Zealand in 1983 with his New Zealand-born wife and son, and is now living on a farm on the outskirts of Rotorua.

who never managed to leave port on board ship, Woodward's imagery materializes the transient nature of his dreams. Some of the sculptures on display are of the front of a ship, and the mast. The notion of movement, of direction, often in the form of a boat prow of V shape, is an integral part of these works, physically and conceptually.

Têtes du Proue (Boatheads) illustrates Woodward's displacement of the con-

cept of the single figurehead found on the bowsprits of antiquity, and the associated connotations of at-the-helm style leadership. This boat prow is headed with two sheep-like figures, each symbolic of different mentalities: one poses its head high, stern, and straight forward, its sloping aluminium horns suggesting a calculated alignment with a single-file movement; the second sheep has a pensive and approachable stance, its curvilinear

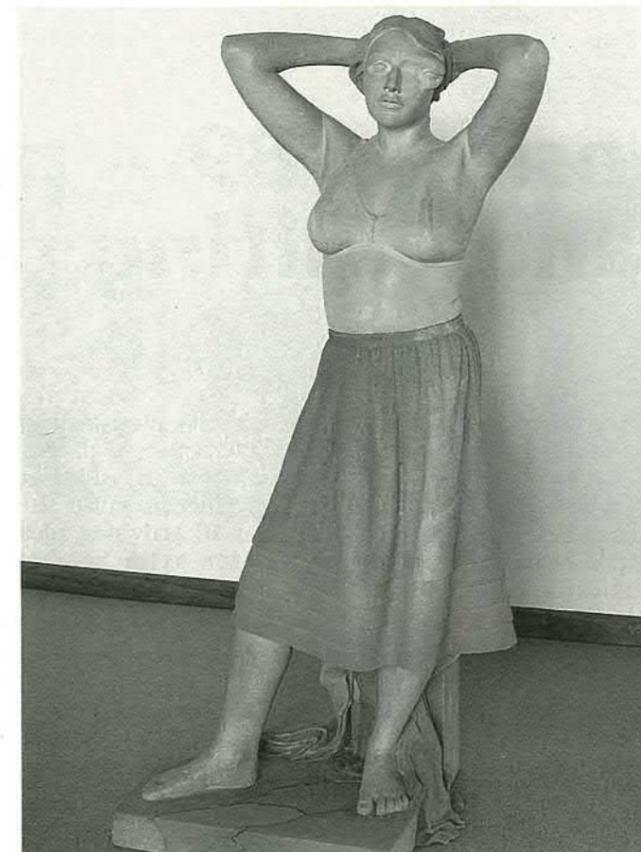
horns alert and wide to the expanse of imaginary ocean it faces.

This 'two heads are better than one' allusion could well be construed as a commentary on issues of hegemony. The patriarchal notion of 'the best way', one way, single perspective, and pyramid structures of power, is paralleled to the figureheads of the bowsprits, those decorative facades to the process of forward movement.

Yet, in a sincere attempt to demonstrate the validity of a multi-perspective stance, the artist has polarized personalities to re-construct, rather than deconstruct, standard motives of difference. The visual metaphor is based on an oppositional code: the tentative sideways hang of the smaller sheephead is positioned against the direct, forward pose of the larger sheephead. To use contrast as an artistic device in this case has produced stereotypes that allow little space for the real acceptance of difference. Instead, the contrasts become patterns for existence, and therefore as problematic as the issue of singleminded direction that the artist was originally questioning.

Another work, titled *Boat Head Boat*, implies a human independence, as carriers of our own destiny, and that of others. A factory ship, or cargo container, this work is a boat head carrying another boat head, cast in solid bronze. Along the many levels of decking are loosely hanging rope ladders that act as possible paths onto and off the ship prow. This stalwart form seems to make correlations between containment, foundation, support and direction, and the tacit analogy to human relationship (ship) is too interesting to ignore. Richard Dawkins, in *The Selfish Gene* (1976), theorized about the levels of contribution that any biological pair is prepared to give its offspring. He suggested that the smaller the investment or particular contribution, the more resources there are for other 'investments'; and the larger investment strategy ends in exploitation by the other partner. Is this sculpture addressing the traveller's dilemma, of moving on, and the eternal drive forwards? Is the factory ship allied to the quandary of partnership and parenthood and subsequent responsibilities?

Woodward is however, genuinely concerned with the notion of difference, and the subsequent development of category. Several of the works focus on the human head. *Testa* (Head) shows an emphatic use of contrast. One side of the head is a refined and 'noble' face (Woodward's description), with the



Si Tu M'Quittes, stoneware. 1987.

other side grossly disfigured, one eye jutting out beyond the cheek. Woodward is keen to draw our attention to seeming abnormalities, people who don't fit the mold; and to play on our curiosity, our urge to look, to survey.

There is also an obvious concern to arrive at some understanding of difference in relation to gender, of form at least, in the artist's questioning of cultured roles - females pose, recline, are wrapped, stand as masts, are objects of sculptural exploration of form; males move forward, look backward, have direction. However, the life-size stoneware figure of a woman titled *Si Tu M'Quittes* (If You Leave Me) illustrates the difficulty that representational images have in remaining neutral. The woman, one eye pulled outward from her face, in underclothes, with her hands behind her head, back-dropped by a pile of clothes, initially appears to pose, manneristically positioning woman as subject. This work suggests a developing awareness of the problem of the stereotype and the categorization of difference. That intention, however, is not quite realized within the issues of audience response and the existent cultural circulations of meaning attached to imagery that pertains to the female form.

The specific quality of Woodward's sculpture, its combination of serene and formal beauty within a recognizable imagery, is immediately accessible to a wide audience. The other side of the problematic of fixed reading of representational imagery is the power of the visual material. Steve Woodward's contemplative development of composition and form co-exists with an intuitive, subliminal approach to content that has the potential to challenge mainstream univocal thought by the validation of individual experience and identity.

Symposium '89 – patchwork and quilting party

At a time when all the economic indicators were against any arts gathering breaking even, let alone making a profit, Symposium '89, the 3rd national Patchwork and Quilting Symposium, organised by the Hawkes Bay Patchworkers for four days in May, broke all records.

With just under 800 registrations and a quilt show which featured over 400 exhibits and was seen by more than 5000 visitors, the organising committee were amazed to find, when all the sums were done, that they'd made a five-figure profit.

What makes for such a phenomenal success when most cautious organisers need at least a guarantee against loss, while others go for an outright grant? Convenor Kathie Furlong of Napier puts the Hawkes Bay group's success down to good financial planning. They started immediately after the previous symposium, in Christchurch in 1987, with a \$1000 cheque, a gift from the Christchurch committee. From that start the group went for sponsorship in kind, rather than asking for cash from a community which has little.

From fabric shops to printers, sponsors provided gifts for the 'goodie bags' which seem to be a feature of quilt conventions worldwide, free photocopying, and petrol vouchers to reimburse those who provided continuous transport for people arriving at the (poorly serviced) airport in Napier. The most memorable sponsorship was probably that of the Apple and Pear Board who supplied great bins of the fresh apples the region is famous for.

Hawkes Bay has always been an area where the kind of organisations which may struggle in larger centres, have flourished. The combined populations of Napier and Hastings, as well as the strong rural support, mean craft societies thrive – partly because there are not the distractions offered by larger cities. The Patchworkers were aware that the hosts of previous symposia had used university facilities, where all

the activities could take place on one campus. Their alternative, a private boarding school and an adjacent college which together provided the perfect setting for all activities, plus nearby motels for extra accommodation, covered all requirements.

Symposium

1. a meeting or conference for discussion of some subject.
 2. a collection of opinions expressed, or articles contributed, by several persons on a given subject or topic.
- symposiac, adj.*

The combined facilities at Lindisfarne School and Hastings Girls High School meant there was ample room to accommodate the 59 classes offered with 23 New Zealand and 10 overseas tutors, the 10 merchants who had supplies for anything the participants could possibly need – and much more besides. The three halls offered space for an enormous exhibition, a superb fashion show presented by local Benson and Hedges winner Min Tanh, and an inspiring lecture series.

Without doubt the tutors are, as the organisers put it, 'the most important ingredient in the Symposium cake'. People came from the United States, Germany, Great Britain and Australia, with many years of experience and often a raft of published work behind them. Covering a range of techniques, projects and design in their workshops, they taught skills, processes and new approaches. There's also the added delight of sharing the suitcase/s of work brought with them.

The choice of classes available was amazing – all the way from very basic technical sessions in the rather left-brained topic of pattern draughting

through all the traditional areas such as hexagons, applique and broderie perse, a very early technique where motifs cut from printed fabric are applied to cloth to make a new picture, to newer, quicker ways of doing old patterns. Quiltmakers in the later 19th century were quick to take up the new sewing machine, and today's practitioners continue the trend. There were classes which saw the creation of small stitched projects in one or two days, those which gave a taste of dyeing and printing methods to pursue in one's own time, and a children's class which created some exciting quilts under the exuberant supervision of Helen Webber of Auckland.

The organisers offered local teachers the opportunity to take classes with the visitors, pre-symposium, giving a double benefit. In the education of our own tutors, the chance to study under experts in any field is not always so easy. Such a gathering offers valuable access to scarce resources. The Hawkes Bay women who had given so much time and effort beforehand and during the four days were not forgotten either – they were offered the best of the overseas tutors' workshops the following weekend at the local Community College.

Exhibitions are what the general public see of the quilt conference. This one was an amazing organisational feat, co-ordinated by Rod Gillum of Havelock North, who managed to sympathetically display over 400 unselected quilts and fabric treasures. This combined with a stunning series of floral pyramids by Debbie Nott reminded out-of-towners that not all the design talent lies in the main centres. For the participants, and indeed for some visitors who arrived as the main exhibits were being dismantled so that quilters could take their work home with them, the display of tutors' quilts was the real treasure. Here were fabric works within reach which we knew from colour plates in books, looking even more stunning

than in the reproductions, keeping company with some equally wonderful pieces by New Zealand quiltmakers.

The Hawkes Bay Museum in Napier also had mounted an exhibition of old quilts from its collection and on loan. This is the one area where overseas quilt festivals, certainly the American ones, far outshine ours, but for those who are interested the opportunity to view such rare pieces is always welcome, and is yet another source of inspiration.

While the exhibition entry was open, several classes of contest offered enticing prizes. One of these, sponsored by Patches of Ponsonby, a long established Auckland quilt business, dictated 'suitcase size' to be selected to travel the country in the months remaining this year. As a result, 21 small quilts are currently touring New



Zealand, presumably in more than one suitcase! Inge Heuer of Germany was one whose participation here resulted from a meeting in Salzburg – she and her husband were to visit New Zealand about this time – and one of the United States tutors had been a teacher at the Washington DC convention to which Kathie had taken a group from New Zealand in 1987.

The Hawkes Bay Patchworkers have received over 100 letters of thanks in the months since the Symposium. A friend wrote to me at the time, summing it up: 'I keep thinking how much I enjoyed the Symposium and the people there. Full marks to all the Hawkes Bay organisers. I think I must have been on a cloud most of the time because I took hardly any photographs of the quilts and managed to buy the same piece of fabric twice!'

meeting for discussion of some topic, or 'social problem'; a drinking party with intellectual conversation – there was some of that too, with a 'happy hour' each night before the evening's lecture; a collection of scholarly contributions – the lectures by the overseas guests were certainly significant in terms of their basis in years of research, travel and practice in the artform.

Kathie Furlong was the recipient of a QEII Arts Council grant last year to go to Quilt Europa in Salzburg, Austria. The success of Symposium '89 is undoubtedly linked to that trip, and is a good example of what can come from such an investment. Such trips give a wider view of what's happening in a particular field, as well as initiate contacts which lead to later engage-

The two photographs accompanying this article are by Karen Pootjes.

A professional goes back to school

This is the second of two articles by Colin Slade which look at the Craft Design Courses in Waiariki Polytechnic, through the experiences of Prue Townsend, a mature, full time craftsperson, who is one of a number of mature crafters who are going 'back to school'.

Prue Townsend, professional weaver and dyer, enrolled in the Craft Design Course at Waiariki Polytechnic in February 1989.

In response to my request for her first impressions just two weeks after she had enrolled Prue wrote:

'This course is so incredibly demanding. I have never had to work so hard – not at University, not anywhere. I am getting very little sleep. There is so much to comprehend. I am sorry, but I am just not going to be able to write much for some time.'

Prue is no stranger to hard work but obviously, the pressure was on right from the start. To compound her difficulties, she had successfully applied for the Diploma course in Craft Design – Maori. This meant that she started alongside students who had already completed two years' study in the Design Certificate course. Though skilled in fibre and fabric, Prue was at a disadvantage when approaching assignments using media such as wood, paint on paper, clay and so on. More importantly she had to familiarise herself with the language and process of design.

Barry Dabb is the Course Supervisor and is responsible for most of Prue's tuition. He has prepared a programme for her within the Diploma option that she has chosen: i.e. Design Principles and Practice. (The other diploma options at Waiariki are: Media Specific, and Contemporary Maori Art.) But in the first term, all students are put through a series of design exercises which explore the concept of 'space'. For the students from the earlier Certificate course this is largely revision, but for Prue Townsend and one or two others new to Waiariki, it is the necessary learning of a new language and for them it is intensive learning. The students are encouraged to consider and experiment with any appropriate medium when developing a design idea. This undoubtedly has a positive effect in stimulating ideas for further development and the results are self-evident in the wide range of work that students are involved in. Indeed dwelling for too long with one material is discouraged for it is seen as inhibiting this fertile growth process.



Prue Townsend carving plaster moulds preparatory to making clay tiles, at the clay studio, Waiariki Polytechnic. Plaster moulds will also be used for bronze casting.

The other side to this open-minded approach to materials however, is that it prevents any sense of mastery over a material, or of satisfaction in the completion of a well executed job. For at this stage of the course, no design project is taken as far as the complete finished object. The design brief is a starting point for the imagination, not a set of requirements for a functional object. And this is a source of some frustration for Prue, having been used to seeing a tangible result from her day's labour at the loom: something to measure her achievement by; to assess in quality terms; a product, in fact, to present to the market. At Waiariki, the maquette, rather than the market, is the final stage in a project. There is of course too little time to develop the necessary skills for the successful completion of every project in production terms.

Prue says, 'I often have the feeling of struggling with unfamiliar media, and wondering whether I am achieving anything. It's hard to come to terms with the fact that after six months I have nothing much to show for it. Three small pieces of painted wooden constructions, a pile of drawings and paintings, but nothing that I could sell or even share with others.'

She is not alone with these doubts. Jill Nicholls, another accomplished weaver and dyer, after nearly two years of the Craft Design Certificate course at Christchurch Polytech, still experiences similar feelings.

Barry Dabb remarks that the tendency to want to make every piece a major work is common among craftspeople who undertake study. The object of the course as he sees it is for students to obtain a thorough understanding of the design process, and extensive experience in using it, so that when production work is eventually undertaken, the crafter can feel comfortable knowing that all the design options have been explored and that the work thus has greater validity.

During the second term, Prue tackled individual assignments set in consultation with her tutor. These included making maquettes for quite large scale sculptures, and small constructions using wood and painted medium density fibre-board (evidently a popular material at Waiariki for its ease of carving). Barry Dabb's own field of painting has also been investigated by Prue, though she feels she struggles with this discipline. But she is keen to advance her knowledge of colour theory and looks forward to more study in this field. After the demands of the first term, Prue found the second more enjoyable, recognizing that she was extending herself. 'My figure drawing has progressed,' she wrote in July. 'The abstract designs I created, using the "dismembered" figure (I cut the drawings up looking at the quality of the line I had made), are exciting and innovative. I am now more familiar with the design language and with my own capabilities. My work in the first term was very geometric – weaverly based. Now with the exploration of the human form, it's a lot more flowing.'

Nevertheless she enjoyed the 'geometric' work with the painted MDF. 'I like the hard, sharp edges of the material and the illusion created by the applied paint. I made (table-top) pieces that demand viewer participation – all segments are movable and interchangeable.'

In similar vein, but on a larger scale, was a maquette for a park sculpture. 'It has four panels, designed so that people can walk in and out and climb through, or just look through. The panels are painted in bright, vibrant colours of red, green and yellow.'

Prue enjoys the idea of viewer involvement. In an earlier interview she had compared her silk scarves with her weavings, pointing out that while the wallhangings were static, the scarves were worn and frequently touched, enabling the owner to enjoy the tactile quality of the silk. 'I'd love to make that park sculpture in permanent materials to full scale,' she wrote with enthusiasm, but added wistfully, 'Need a patron though.'

The abstract designs using the collaged figure drawings are currently finding expression in clay while Prue works with ceramics tutor George Andrews. 'I have been playing with porcelain, adding oxides and stains, marbling and applique. I really like this medium, though I always said I didn't want to pot.'

'Don't get stuck in the clay though,'

warns Barry Dabb, 'I want you to keep experimenting.'

Always there is the pressure to keep exploring, not to relax.

'Sometimes I worry that I will spend two years experimenting and come out with nothing concrete,' laments Prue. 'I have to keep reminding myself that all the time I am learning design skills.'

But Prue is learning other things too. The Craft Design course at Waiariki is unique in focusing on Maori art and craft.

'We see the maintenance of Maori culture as central in all our work,' says senior tutor Ross Hemera. This emphasis is reflected in the number of Maori students in the craft course, presently about 75% of the total roll. Three hours per week of Maori studies is formally included in Prue's timetable, but the culture is prominent in many of the classes and entwines the social fabric of the polytech. A working relationship exists 'with local marae, and tutors and students work on marae projects when asked. Currently a mural 10 metres by two metres is being made in response to such a request. It incorporates contemporary use of Kowhaiwhai, carving and weaving, with some elements of bone and bronze.'

Prue herself is working with a fellow student to construct a mural for the Waiariki cafeteria. It employs carved and painted wood to a contemporary Maori design.

'I am really loving the Maori emphasis,' she says. 'It has opened my eyes to a whole new way of looking at the things around me in Rotorua. I appreciate much more the art and culture, the inter-racial problems. I've talked a lot with Maoris who are trying to develop a bi-cultural society. I feel privileged to have been able to learn a little of the symbolism in the art; to learn the very basics of carving.'

Tina Wirihana's class in natural fibre is the nearest Prue has got to her own craft during the course, but she has found the flax weaving no less challenging than the other new (to her) media.

Prue had been looking forward to the vitality of class study and she was not disappointed: 'I love doing the practical work around the others in my class. It's a really nice group of people – lots of stimulus, everyone interested in what one is doing. I get a lot of feedback from other students. For example, all my classmates came to see what I was doing when I was drawing the figure. I tend to do writing and

research at home though. Our work space at Waiariki is on the mezzanine floor above the wood studio, where they might have the jig-saw, chain-saw, bench-saw, sander, planer, chisels and so on all going at once. We have to wear ear-defenders upstairs at our desks at those times. Dust and fumes can be a problem too.'

With the exception of Waiariki with its Maori emphasis, the philosophy and objectives of the Craft Design courses at polytechs around the country differ little. The way in which those objectives are pursued depends however, on the tutors involved; and obviously individual strengths and talents vary, as does the knowledge or definition of what constitutes 'craft'. In many polytechs the craft design staff are overstretched. Too often the demands of administration (which is often a skill lacking in good tutors), adversely affect tutoring time and energy. For the student this means that timetables for example, might be vague or subject to late alteration. It might mean that assessment or grading of work is not always as prompt (and therefore as useful) as it should be.

It should be stressed that these comments though well-informed, are not aimed at any one institution. It is unlikely that any of the craft design courses escapes from the problem of thinly stretched human resources, and Waiariki is no exception. Overall, it's worth noting that craft tutors (particularly course supervisors) are committed people who work very hard.

It would be inappropriate and indeed impossible to evaluate a craft design course through the experiences of one student. But after four years of running, it would undoubtedly be interesting to see a comparative survey of how the eleven polytechs are faring in this field. Perhaps the most valid way to assess performance is on the 'product', and with the first diploma students about to graduate, many people will be watching with interest their impact on the craft world.

It will be another year before Prue Townsend returns to the world of craft she left. At this half-way stage she is unsure quite how she will return to it. She confesses to feeling no urge to weave at present. But one thing Prue is sure of: she has absolutely no regrets about the commitment she has made.

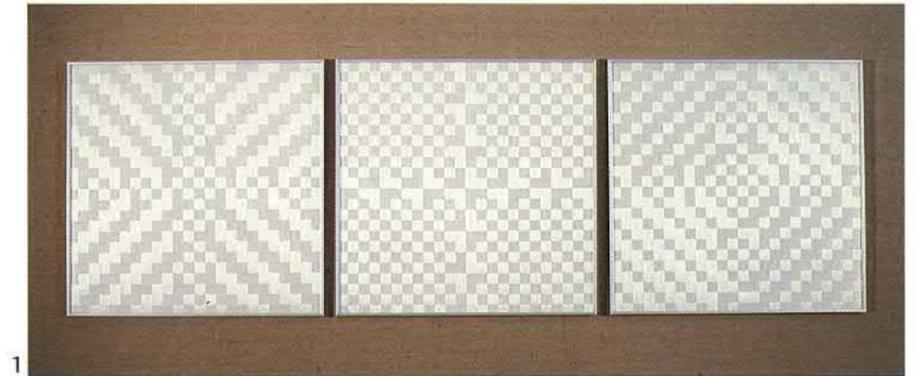
Threads across times and places



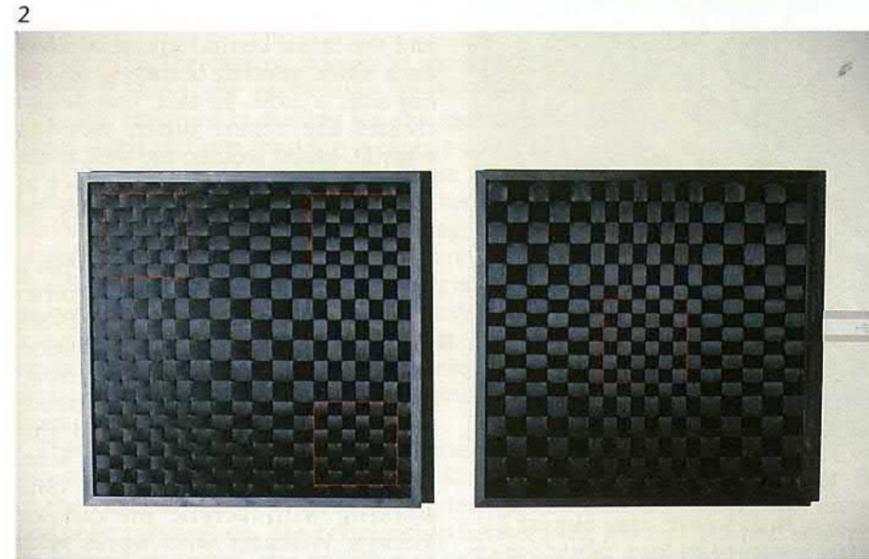
1898 Sampler, linen mends.

One hundred years ago Rotorua craft artist Alison Gray's grandmother made a sampler of tiny stitches to show ways of mending a linen sheet. Today the sampler is dulled with age and the blue velvet that forms a grid for the intricate stitches is threadbare, but its designs have taken on a new life.

A century later it has been the catalyst for Alison's development of the design possibilities of lattices and grids. The cross in the centre of the blue velvet grid and the intricate designs found their way into Alison's Wardenburg Award winning triptych, *Three Crosses*. Working with white satin ribbon, Alison magnified the threads, as if to 'see' better the tiny designs. She explains: 'Because the sampler had 4 little windows and a different weave in



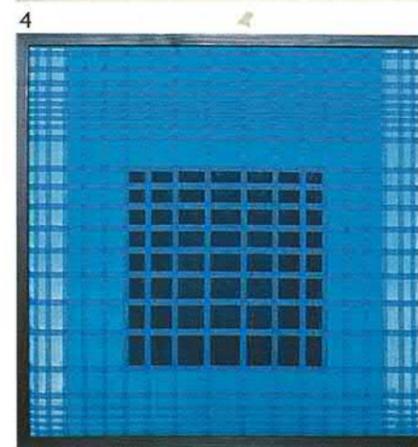
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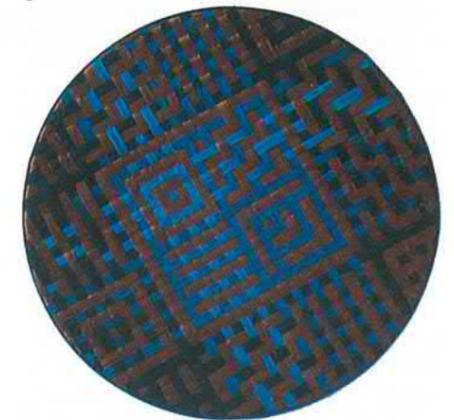
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- 1 *Three Crosses*, woven satin ribbon. 1984.
- 2 *Five (Plus Five)*, woven black satin ribbon. 1985.
- 3 *Little Prisons*, 1985.
- 4 *Empty Inside*, drawn thread and applique. 1985.
- 5 *Flow*, ribbon weaves. 1987.
- 6 *Experiments 1, Blue/Orange*. 1989.

All photographs in this article are reproduced by courtesy of Alison Gray.

Maori Weaving

by Margery Blackman

Maori Weaving, by Erenora Puketapu-Hetet. Pitman Craft Series published by Longman Paul, Auckland, 1989. ISBN 908575-77-7. \$29.95

With the current interest in the fibre crafts of the Maori any publication by the women actively involved in making kakahu (garments), whariki (floor mats) and kete (baskets) is eagerly awaited. With the exception of a book by Ngapare Hopa *The Art of Piupiu Making* published in 1971, men have been the authors of previous publications on Maori weaving, yet the crafts are largely practised by women. It was therefore good to hear that Erenora Puketapu-Hetet was writing to share something of her lifetime involvement with Maori weaving. In her introduction the author cautions that while books can create an awareness and offer guidelines, they cannot replace direct observation of women at work and instruction from an experienced teacher.

This attractively presented, well illustrated book is divided into twelve sections. The first five provide an introduction to the cultural setting of these crafts, the materials used, and their preparation. The relationship between the land, its natural resources, the people and their customs with present day changes are well presented. The information about the plants most used, their gathering, dyeing and preparation is informative and helpful with a timely reminder that 'method and tidiness reflect the mind of the weaver and the discipline of the craft'. A brief account of the Te Whare Pora (house of weaving) follows and explains that this may not literally be a place set aside for weaving, but rather a way of living.

The section on the products of the weaving house is less satisfactory. The use of the term 'weaving' when discussing Maori fabrics is misleading, but as it has been so widely adopted it would be unrealistic to expect its use to be altered. However, it is important to understand that there are two distinct types of Maori fabric making. Unfortunately the author does not use clear diagrams to demonstrate this but sub-titles both whatu and raranga as weaving. The explanation for the term whiri is also not clear. Briefly, the most commonly practised type of fabric making, raranga, interlaces strips of leaf to make the semi-flexible structure found in kete, tatua (belts) and whariki. In simple kete a sequence of over one and under one is used. By varying the colour of the strips and the sequence of interlacing a wide variety of patterns can be made. There are a number of good photographs in the book to show this in finished works.

The second type of fabric making uses muka (extracted leaf fibre) twisted or spun to form yarns. From two sets of these yarns, the whenu (warp) and aho (weft), a flexible fabric suitable for garments is made by whatu (weft twined weaving). Either two or four weft yarns are twisted around each other as they enclose successive warps. Taniko is a type of weft twined weaving which allows colour changes of the yarns to produce patterns. Erenora Puketapu-Hetet makes a plea for the use of Maori terms by scholars. I

Alison: 'One principle of design that is manipulated by artists is contrast: in line, in shape and in colour. It's the contrast in colour that I've tried to explore. Using old bicycle rims as a frame, I diminished the scale of the threads again, this time using strips of varying tones of all the complementaries.' *Red/Green Patikitiki*, *Purple/Yellow Houndstooth* and *Orange/Blue Grid* are the result.

The culmination of the recent padded thread designs are the black and silver lurex panels called *Positive/Negative*. The pattern is a variation of Patikitiki and the initial central square of silver on a black ground, becomes, on the flip side, a cross. In fact, one design creates the other. When weaving whariki, Maori women are well aware of the design forming on the back as the mat will later, with ceremony, be turned.

The use of the lattice and grid has a number of exponents among other New Zealand artists. The early 1980s Auckland City Art Gallery exhibition *The Grid: Lattice and Network* showed how ten artists of different backgrounds and temperaments approached this way of working. It included Ian Scott who began his lattice series in 1967 working with acrylic on canvas, Mervyn Williams who works with watercolour on paper (eg *Study 3*, 1977), and painter Allen Maddox who uses crosses within a grid.

Barry Dabb from Rotorua has explored the lattice and grid in his 1978 *Window Raranga* series. He numbers among his influences Maori weaving patterns and the Renaissance way of viewing a painting as a window.

The grid, as a compositional device, was used by Alison in earlier non-woven works such as *Empty Inside* (1985), in which threads are drawn out of the fabric to create the grid, and also in *Little Prisons* (1984) in which silk and satin padded shapes protrude from a grey linen grid. These also have their genesis in the nineteenth century sampler and in the grid formed by woven fibre known as 'fabrie'.

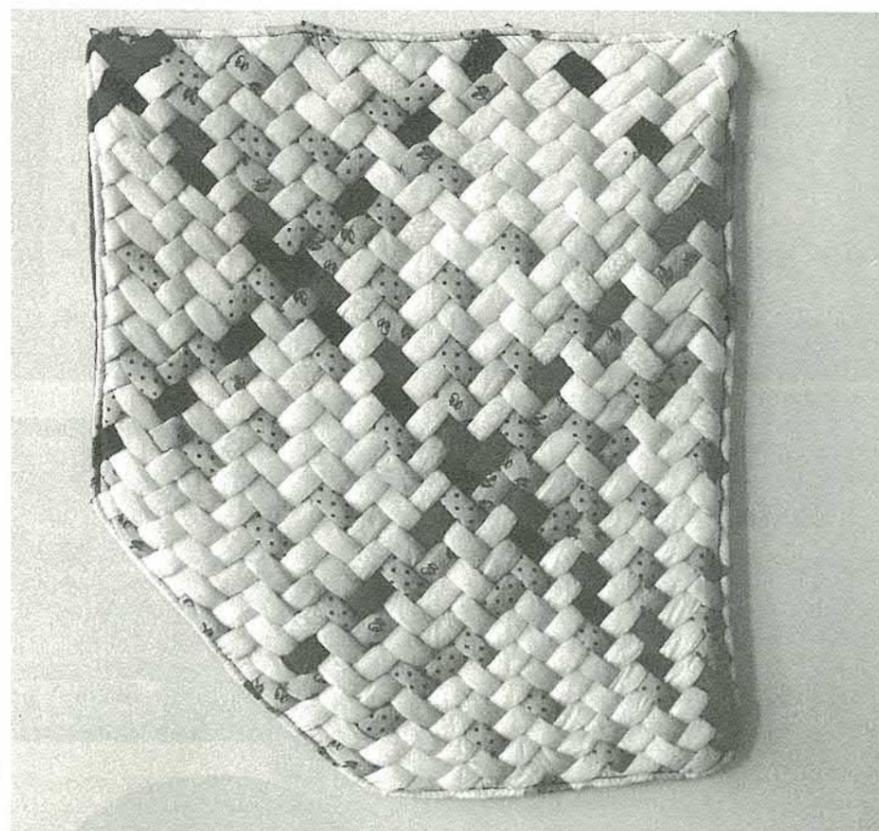
Alison Gray has taken principles of design and applied them to fibre art. Lattices and grids with connections to weaving and to design have melded with associations from Alison's past. She says, 'I think the most important discovery to come out of the whole series for me, was to discover how universal the principles and patterns of weaving are to most cultures and across cultural divides - they're a constant, like mathematical principles underlying things'.

using a twill weave, was almost 1½ metres square of padded 'fabric' which was then bound over a rope to make an edge. The first such hanging was *Flow*, 1987.

But the English sampler represents only one of the cultural influences on Alison's work. A photograph in an album dated 1955 shows three small children sitting on the floor of a Vanuatu village home. Alison is sitting beside her sister and a village friend and the coarse weaved pandanus mats cover the walls. The memory is a powerful one for Alison. 'We lived in Vanuatu for 6 years. I liked watching women weave patterns that they knew by heart. The rhythm and sense of certainty fascinated me.' Twenty years later the pandanus mats served as an inspiration for *Pastel Grey*, 1988.

The influence of traditional Maori weaving has also found its way into Alison's designs. Reading Mick Prendergast's *Raranga Whakairo* in 1985 proved inspirational. The patterns are reflected in various ways. For example, hanging the weaving diagonally and using a limited colour range along with the choice of complimentary contrasts and black and white are conscious references to *Raranga Whakairo*, seen in *Black/Cream*, 1988.

Colour also has played a big part in her design development. Explains



Cream Print, 1989.

each, I decided each panel of the white triptych would be divided into four, but with subtlety, using the weaving design to show up the cross. The nap of the satin ribbon, when woven, reflected light both vertically and horizontally.'

Later, she began working with two sizes of black satin ribbon. The result: different sized but essentially similar figures within the work. Notes Alison: 'I found I had to relieve the black ribbon with a red 'thread' to give it more emphasis'. (*Five (Plus Five)*, 1985).

Alison's exploration has led to an exhibition entitled *Recent Work* at Te Whare Te Whakaahua, Waiariki Polytechnic in June this year.

The series began with the idea of working with giant sized 'threads'. Then Alison found what she needed: a large collection of coloured synthetic fabrics in a remnant bin. Metre upon metre of padded strips, littering the floor like colourful snakes, became woven hangings with an accidental similarity to quilts. The synthetic fabrics proved successful. As Alison says, 'Light effects are reflected off the varying textures of the synthetic fabrics - they've proved more sensuous than natural fabrics in this case'.

Again the design started with a central cross. To make it work Alison put the dark tones going one way, and the light tones opposing them. The result,

Quality by design – to show or sell?



Preamble: Organisers of Southern Style, Christchurch-based alternative furniture show, now an annual event, broke new ground in mounting a national semi-invitation presentation in the Capital. The show was called Quality by Design and was held at the Michael Fowler Centre in Wellington for 3 days last July.

Formed 8 years ago (described in a 1984 issue of *NZ Crafts*) under the impetus of furniture makers Colin Slade and Iain Wilkinson in response to the need for small-run and one-off makers to present their works in the open market, the Show has attracted 50% increases annually in participating numbers.

Attendances in recent shows are in the range 6000 to 10,000 persons, with strong sales, enabling exhibitors to provide specifically tailored designs and enjoy ongoing orders.

The furniture naturally reflects individual reaction to mass-produced and derived examples, of which we are all aware, so that the emergence of 'name' designer makers has become an established, if not widely grasped phenomenon. Three years ago, the group constitution was formed, a \$10,000 bank balance achieved, and capital placed in lighting, floor tiles and public relations material. 1988 saw a change in venue, to the Christchurch town hall, which brought about divisions in the by now cumbersome and diverse group, so the prospect of co-ordinating a nationally-scaled show was both inevitable and in the nature of a 'make or break'. After false starts, shifting leadership, overall organisation for a Wellington show was undertaken by Remi Couriard, furniture maker and teacher, with assistance from key experienced members of Southern Style.

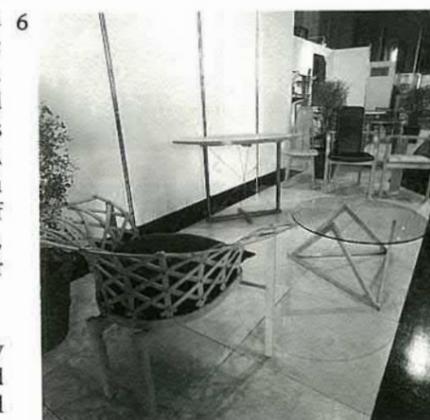
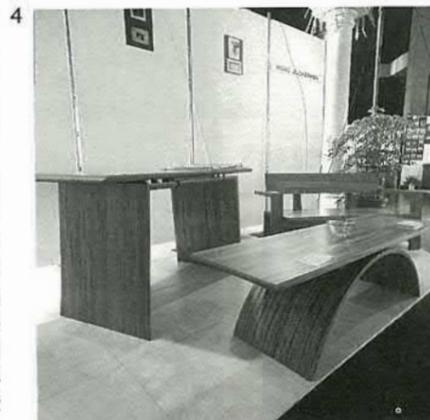
The Show: Drawn from a broad range of makers around the country, the work should have provided for the most exacting and diverse taste. Presentation was a trifle clinical, standards of finish high, and unlike the stand-off in the Auckland Museum show of '88, use of the furniture and dialogue with the makers was encouraged. A review, however should remark the notable, the adventurous, the inspiring. But how? A comment on the fine finish here, the spectacular grain or colour there? These qualities were in evidence, but what really speaks is resolute form, a truthful gesture, the breaking of new ground, and the celebration of these. But what we got in my view was a genteel pedestrian potpourri, in lieu of a spectacular.

Various observations: Graham Phipps-Black, painter, departed from the static nature of the cube with knock-down tables, frequently demonstrated, to the delight of his audience. Phil Tindall of Millenium Design, wearing the only suit in the place, had an equally elegant red settee – a ground-hugging crab-derived form. Mark Zuckerman's rimu table, a simple yet bold 'straight + curve' form, re-iterated an arm gesture he frequently made in conversation. Legendary attention to detail came from Vic Matthews, with a familiar (1988, Auckland) low table in bent timbers, and similar detail was also echoed in hand-held containers.

Dispelling popular notions of the scope of free-standing furniture, James Dowle, Kaikoura, took the gamble with a finely-wrought corner cabinet, with doors below, black-laquered frame and display surfaces above. The sole Auckland representative, Humphrey Ikin, fresh from experiences in Italy, showed a recent chair, elegantly woven from Tanekaha laths, which, if not a throne, exuded a casually exclusive air. His serving stand, a carved canoe-form above and hi-tech tensioned stainless-steel wire support system below, still presents something of a paradox. Thorough presentation embracing documentation, drawings, prospectus and catalogues marked the work of the L'etacq Studio, in stark contrast to the fragility of the tangible furniture itself.

A drop-leaf table, with an inlaid top in black German linoleum, from Ian Dawn, had a surprise in store with its bright red laquered underside, visible only with the leaves in the drop position. The simple familiar forms reflected in a stool, sculpture and settee from David Trubridge stem from his personal experiences with Pacific canoes. Jonathan Hearn showed a selection of chests, a low table and a long chest-high cabinet on thin legs; each as individual as their maker. Strong on a profusion of detail and mixed timbers, they provide clients with a wealth of future discovery. A range of domestic ware from Brian Grouden, with the principle of metamorphosis as a central theme, showed a cavalier disregard for traditional joinery techniques.

Reflections: In spite of a healthy advertising budget, which played rather lightly on the national significance of the show, and the fact that work was for sale, attendances were 25% of expectation, slightly less than the usual support for the



Wellington Guild's annual show. Sales were generally middling, so what happened? Did a coincident spate of fair weather prove to be too great a draw for 99% of the Capital's population? I'm left with the uneasy feeling that for an ice-breaking show which should have been a spectacular, with severe selection on an innovative basis, clear and consistent guidelines between selling or elite display, more accessible venue choice, and an encouraging cover charge, this show failed to draw in the innovative furniture-buying public in Wellington.



1 David Trubridge.
2 L'etacq Studio.
3 Gary Arthur
4 Marc Zuckerman.
5 A general view.
6 Humphrey Ikin.

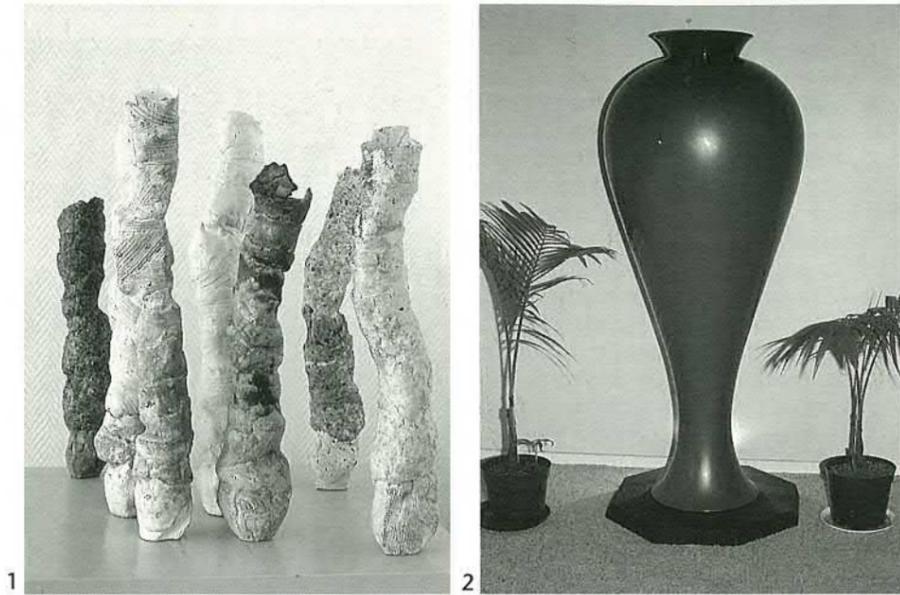
All photographs accompanying this article are taken by Annelies Vanderpoel.

RECENT WORK

In this section, the works are selected from slides sent in to the Craft Council's Resource File. The file is open to all craftspeople, and it acts as a visual resource for Council staff, researchers, and by intending commissioners of craft.

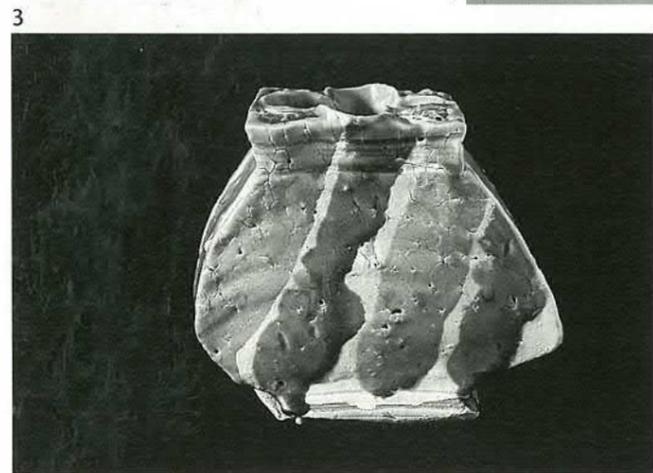
Slides, with full descriptions of the work, measurements in millimetres, date of the work, and the name of the photographer, should be sent to -

Resource Centre
Crafts Council of New Zealand Inc
PO Box 498
Wellington



1

2



1 Christine Boswijk. *Species*.

2 Tom Capey. *Tribal Urn*. Wood and metal acrylic lacquer. 1400 x 600mm.

3 Richard Parker. *Striped vase*. Ceramic.

4 Paul Mason. *Bronze bowl*.

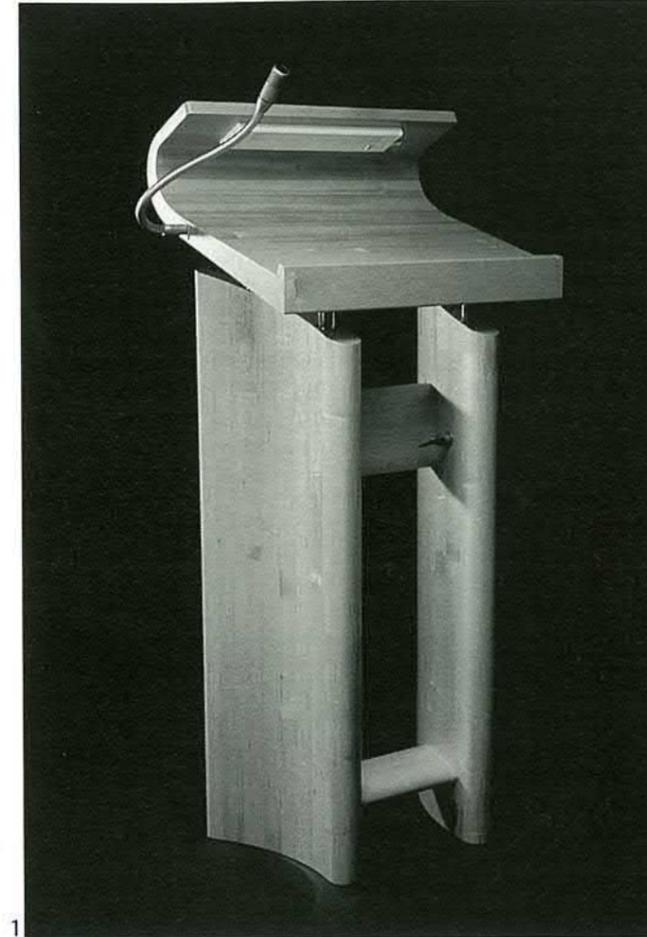
5 Ian Thorne. *Duke of Albany*. Beef bone, brass, tiger's eye. 125mm.



5



RECENT WORK

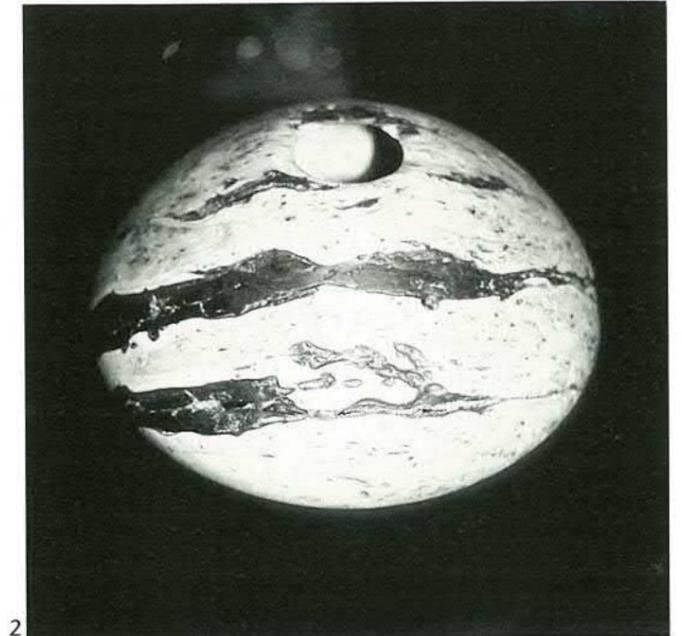


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1 Vic Matthews. *Lectern* in Tawa, Waikato Museum.

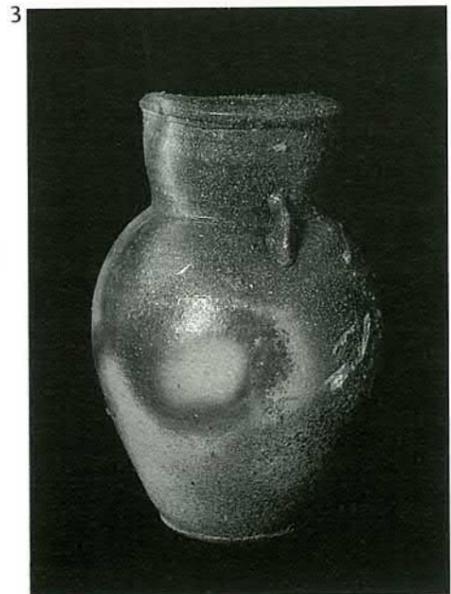
2 John Ecuyer. *Macrocarpa burl vessel*. 160 x 270 x 50mm.

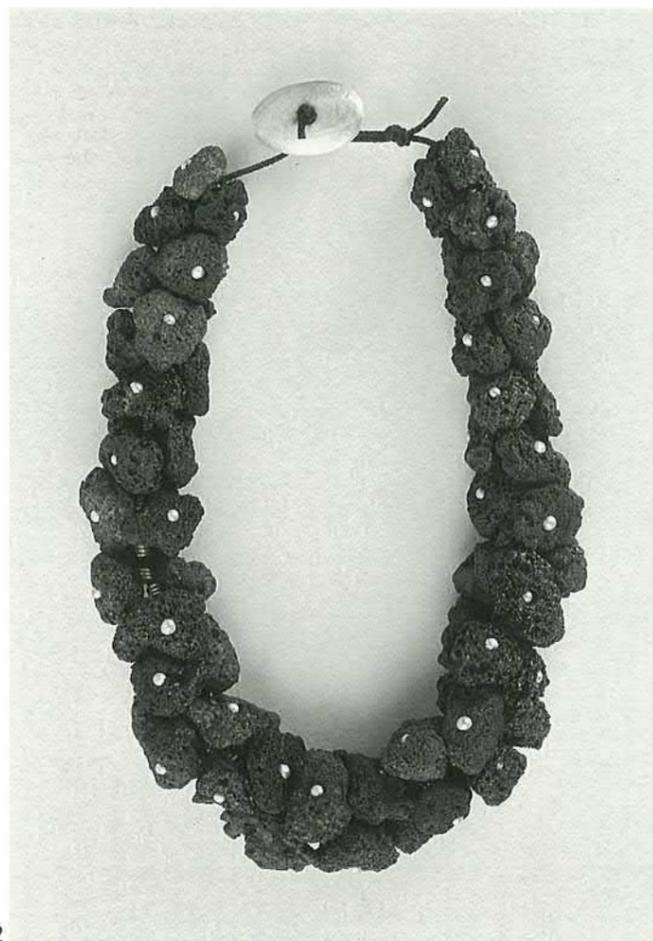
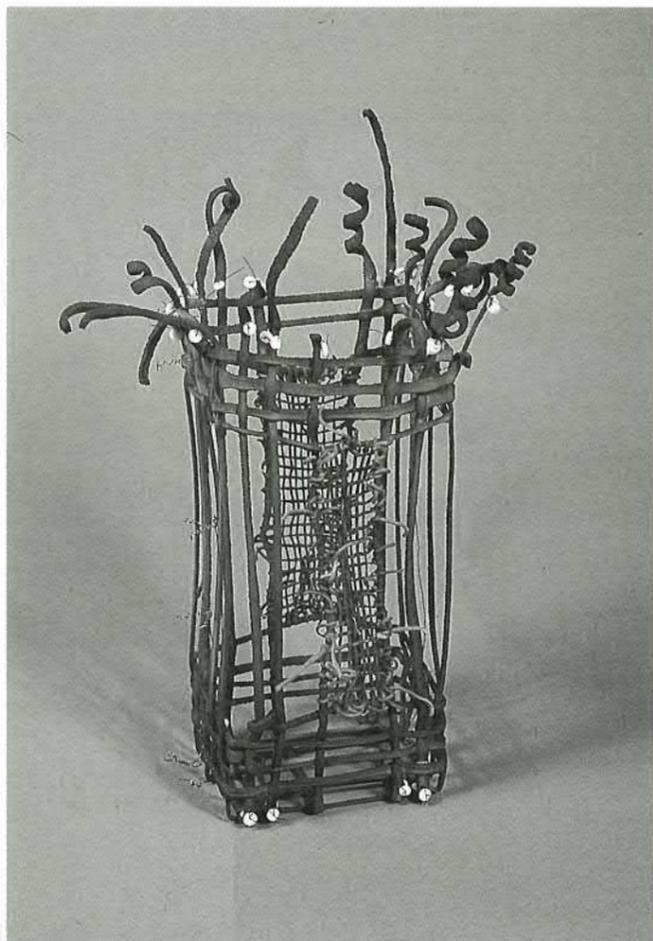
3 Chester Nealie. *Vase*. Ceramic, wood-fired.



2

3





1 Marie Potter. Fisher basket. Leather, shells, wire. Award winner, 6th Annual Contemporary Basket Competition, Compendium Gallery.
2 Warwick Freeman. Scoria Lei. Scoria, pure silver.

The following articles have appeared in journals recently received by the Resource Centre. These articles can be seen at the Resource Centre of the Crafts Council, or copies can be obtained. Requests for copies should be accompanied by payment of 25c per page plus SAE.

WOOD

Fretwork: Laying out and sawing intricate filigree, by David R Pine. 'A fret is a thin piece of wood with a decorative pattern that is created by cutting away the entire background of the design with a fine-tooth saw.' From drawing the design, to modifying a jigsaw for fretsawing, David Pine outlines the process, shows examples, and suggests further reading. *Fine Woodworking*, July/August 1989, pp68-71.

Turning Segmented Pots, by Dan L Mangold. A how-to about making decorative pots assembled from segments of woods with contrasting colour and grain. As with many such articles, there is good discussion on modifying existing equipment to tackle new tasks. Well written. *Fine Woodworking*, July/August 1989, pp57-59.

NOTE: *Fine Woodworking* is published by The Taunton Press, 63 South Main Street, Box 355, Newtown, CT 06470-9971, U.S.A. US\$22 for 6 issues (1 year), US\$40 for 12 issues (2 years), or US\$58 for 18 issues (3 years).

PAPER MAKING

To Bleach or Not to Bleach? by Kathy Nix. Here are the technical details you need to make white paper by hand with the least harmful effect on the paper, the self, or the environment. *Textile Fibre Forum*, No 25, 1989, pp13 and 17.

Grain, by Suzanne Ferris. Grain direction in paper is, and will remain a thorny problem for those who lack information about its consequences for book-making. Suzanne Ferris who, with Neal Bonham runs the well-known Sea Pen Press and Papermill in Seattle, Washington, has written a superb article on the subject. *Hand Papermaking*, Summer 1989, pp16-23.

NOTE: *Hand Papermaking* subscription information can be had from *Hand Papermaking*, PO Box 10571, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55458, U.S.A.

TEXTILES

Dyeing to Know Which Dye Does What? by Chris Jukes. A very good guide to the wide variety of fabric dyes on the NZ market for the dyeing beginner. *Craft Dyers' Guild Newsletter*, No 30, Sept 1989, pp12-14.

NOTE: The *Craft Dyers' Newsletter* is a function of membership of the *Craft Dyers' Guild*, PO Box 5528, Frankton, Hamilton. Subscription \$25.

Bead-Knitting Madness, by Alice Korach. From studying the collection of bead-knit purses at the Cooper-Hewitt Museum in New York, Ms Korach found out how to make the purses, and here passes her knowledge on. *Threads Magazine*, Aug/Sept 1989, pp24-29.

Banishing Needlepoint Bias, by Rosalie Hamer. 'If you've ever started a needlepoint project with a square piece of canvas and ended up with a parallelogram, you know how frustrating distortion can be. But biasing is easy to control if you know how'. Ms Hamer knows how, and tells it like it can be. *Threads Magazine*, Aug/Sept 1989, pp40-42.

NOTE: *Threads Magazine* is published by the Taunton Press (see address above) at the same prices as *Fine Woodworking*.

GENERAL

Hazards in the Arts (author not stated). An article in 2 parts discussing in general terms what hazards there are in arts making, and which are the high risk groups among artists. Originally published in *Craft Act*, April 1989.

Turning a Bone Lace Bobbin, by Chris Smythe. On the assumption that 'many lacemakers have a [wood]turner in their background', this article describes how to make a lace bobbin from bone. *NZ Lace Society Newsletter*, August 1989.

How to Kill Your Business in Twelve Easy Lessons, by Rick Krepela and Joseph Arkin. This is basically a list of attitudes which you should have if you want your business to fall flat on its face. Gripping tales headed 'Ignore Recurring Losses', 'Build a Family Empire', 'Fail to Keep Adequate Records', and 'Be an Egotist' and 'Don't Plan Ahead' are all designed to keep us out of touch with our daily slide into economic oblivion. *The Craft Report*, June 1989.

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SLIDE SETS

The Resource Centre has added five inspiring new slide sets to its hire collection over the past few months.

Slide Set No. 132. **Fletcher Challenge Ceramics Award 1989.** 115 Slides.

Slide Set No. 133. **The Great New Zealand Tableware Show.** Held at the Suter Art Gallery, Nelson, July 1989, in conjunction with the New Zealand Society of Potters. 68 Slides.

Slide Set No. 134. **Handcrafts in Wool Award 1989 - Art in Wool.** Sponsored by the New Zealand Wool Board in conjunction with CCNZ and the New Zealand Spinning, Weaving and Woolcrafts Society. Dunedin Public Art Gallery, May 1989. 14 Slides.

Slide Set No. 135. **2nd New Zealand Crafts Biennale 1989.** An international multi-media exhibition, sponsored by Challenge Properties Ltd in association with Winstone, organised by CCNZ. Auckland Museum, 9-24 September 1989. 60 Slides.

Slide Set No. 136. **Celebratory Offerings - 1989.** "An exhibition of important works which in some way capture a spirit of celebration, of giving ... energy expressed through material and process." A major exhibition by artists at the leading edge in their field in New Zealand today, which was held at the Crafts Council Gallery, October 1989. 40 Slides.

QEII ARTS COUNCIL CRAFT GRANTS November 1989

Access Studio Workshop

Geoff Taylor, Cambridge, jeweller, \$10,000 To assist in the costs of developing jewellery workshop.

Artist in Residence

Waikato Polytechnic, \$6,000 Residency - 3 months - Lynne Curran - Tapestry, Great Britain.
Waikato Polytechnic, \$4,000 2 month residency - Inia Taylor, bone sculptor, jeweller.

Northland Polytechnic, \$12,000 6 month residency - Stephen Taylor - glass artist, Canada.

Nelson Polytechnic, \$6,000 3 month residency - Paul Harvey, weaver, Canberra.

Otago Polytechnic, \$6000 - 3 month residency, Jens Hansen, jeweller.

Otago Polytechnic, \$12,000 - 6 month residency, Roland Munro, woodturner.

Carrington Polytechnic, \$20,000, 10 month residency - Colin Reid, glass artist, England.

Craft Short Term Project

Sue Curnow, Auckland, quilter, \$2,000, towards Quilter Conference and travel and accommodation while in USA attending quilter's conference.

Stewart Fulljames, North Auckland, ceramist, \$3,000 to extend techniques in high colour raku.

Neil Grant, ceramist, Dunedin, up to \$3,500 To travel to the 'Oslo International Ceramics Symposium' June 1990.

Bruce Haliday, ceramist, Auckland, \$5,000 to work and visit potters studios in New York, UK, and Europe, to attain new skills and information.

Heather Nicholson, knitter/embroiderer, Auckland, \$3,500 to travel to UK to study knit design skills and history. Visit

museums, galleries, study & tutor at the Bradford Textile Arts Festival.

Mark Perry, furniture maker, Gisborne, \$2,000 to meet requirements of two major upcoming furniture exhibitions.

Leonie Arnold, mixed media, Waiheke Island, \$2,500, to go to Australia to the McGregor Summer School in Toowoomba.

NZ Society of Artists in Glass, Auckland, up to \$5,000 guarantee against loss, to hold an intensive workshop with 3 world leading glass artists, Lino Tagliapietra, Dick Marquis and Dante Marioni, at Sunbeam Glassworks February 1990.

Janice Wilson, tapestry weaver, Dunedin, \$2,500 to attend Tapestry Summer School, Melbourne, February 1990.

Major Creative Development

Peter Alger, ceramist, Kaeo, \$15,000, to explore and develop the innovative quality in his work.

Wanganui Wood Symposium 1990, up to \$30,460, towards costs of holding the Wanganui Wood Symposium.

Wellington Shakespeare Society, \$30,000, towards the creation of the Globe Theatre Hangings.

New Artists Promotion Scheme

Brendan Adams, ceramist, Auckland, \$3,000 to meet the expenses incurred while working towards first solo exhibition at the Fire and Form Gallery, January 1990.

Anne-Marie Carkeek, jeweller, Hamilton, \$3,000 to work with Geoff Taylor in his access studio workshop.

Jill Gibens, woodworker, Dunedin, \$3,000 to extend existing workshop and buy some essential equipment.

David Goodin, bone stone wood carver, Haumoana, \$3,000 to purchase essential equipment and tools to set up a studio at Oatara Arts Centre, Taradale.

Stephanie King, glass artist,

Christchurch, \$3,000 to study stained glass as the pupil of Joachim Klos, West Germany.

Naida McBeath, fibre/weaving, Waikanae, \$3,000 to experiment and develop own characteristic fibre works.

John Mitchell, printer and papermaker, Hamilton, \$3,000 to purchase fibre stamper.

Marianne Schreven, jeweller, Hamilton, \$3,000 to purchase tools and equipment to continue to develop jewellery skills and design sense.

Julie Simons, weaver, Dunedin, \$3,000 to purchase a loom.

George Thomson, jade, ivory, bone carver, Auckland, \$3,000 to purchase new machinery for jade carving.

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

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- Four issues a year of our quality magazine *New Zealand Crafts*, to provide you with in-depth knowledge of the New Zealand crafts scene
- Regular CCNZ newsletters, to keep you up-to-date with the activities you are helping to promote
- The chance to have your say and participate in the biannual national crafts conference, a meeting place and forum for all craftspeople
- Additional benefits, such as special offers, discounts and concessionary rates, that we are able to associate with many of these activities

Services

- the Crafts Council Gallery, our showcase for the very best of New Zealand Crafts
- the Resource Centre, maintaining information services including a slide library, the CCNZ crafts register and the selected *Index of New Zealand Craftworkers*
- advocacy and representation on craft issues

Membership subscription rates

Individual member	\$41.00 (GST inc) per annum
Joint members*	\$56.00 (GST inc) per annum
Craft Design Student	\$31.00 (GST inc) per annum
* Designed for 2 people working together who would receive one copy of each magazine and newsletter, but all other benefits and privileges on an individual basis	

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