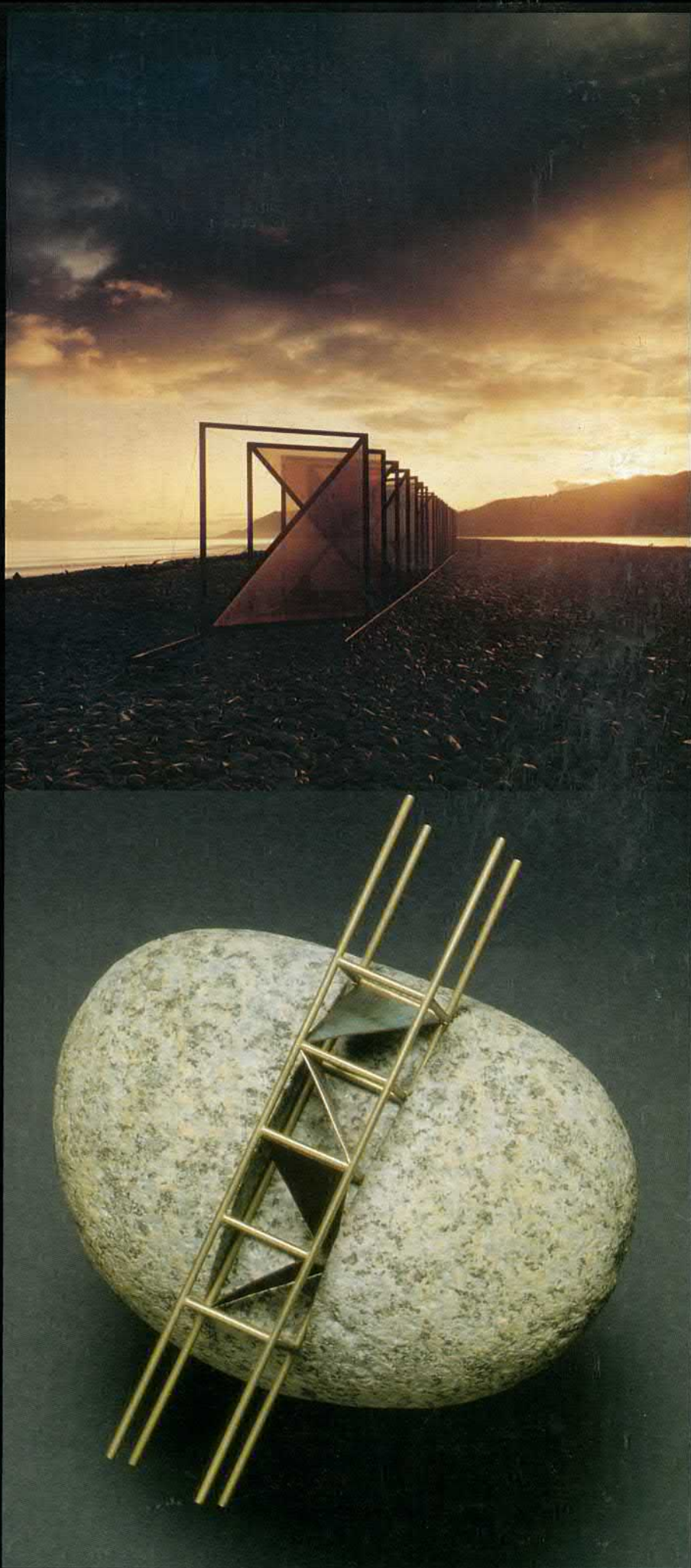


CRAFT

New Zealand

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"BOLD"

Bowls to look at.
Bowls to wear and eat from.
Bowls to buy.



March 3-22, 1992.

A multi-media exhibition presented by the
Crafts Council gallery featuring bowls from
craftspeople throughout New Zealand.
A Festival Occasion!

Gallery open 7 days per week
22 The Terrace, Wellington.

Pictured; Bowl, by Ann Robinson



The Crafts Council
of New Zealand Inc
extends best wishes
to you all
for a happy holiday
and successful year in 1992

Pictured; Light Flower by Lyndsay Handy

CRAFT

New Zealand

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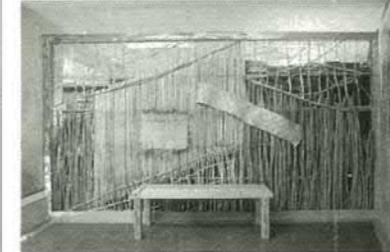
Kiwi culture - where is it and what is it?
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This Wellington designer incorporates New
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the opportunity arises. Lesleigh Salinger takes
a look at her work.



*Department of Labour interior, designed by Clare
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variety of natural and man-made venues.
John Freeman-Moir has seen them all.



*Sculpture by Graham Bennett on the natural environ-
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*Functional work by Wanganui potter Ross Mitchell-
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There is intense activity in galleries
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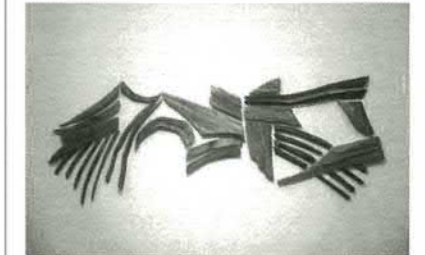
One of the country's most innovative events
takes place in Nelson every year or so.
Aucklander Helen Schamroth made the jour-
ney to see the show. Julie Warren and Peter
Gibbs profile some of the key individuals.



*"Pallas Athene" by Donna Dementé-Ogilvy, the winning
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she revisited New Zealand recently and liked
what she saw.

COVER

Pictured; sculpture by Graham Bennett on
Nelson's Boulder Bank and a miniature, col-
laborative piece by Gavin Hitchings. Photo-
graphs; Murray Hedwig. Cover design;
Graham Bennett and Murray Hedwig.

New Zealand
designer
Jewellery

*Hanne
Andersen*

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Gresham Plaza
226 Lambton Quay Wellington
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PO Box 27064



Brooch by Blair Smith. Photo; Josephine Nisbet

JULIA BROOKE-WHITE PHOTOGRAPHY



Alan Preston - Fish Necklace

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COMMENT

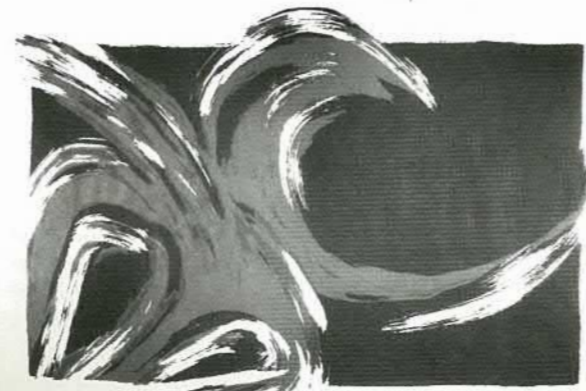
REAL CRAFT

What is meant by *Real Craft*? For whatever clarity that term might bear is lost in the accompanying gestural graphics of poster and invitation that has its roots more in the lineage of abstract artistic expression than any craft tradition. The tension and confusion between art and craft is reinforced by the criteria for selection. "The selectors have been asked to look for pieces which achieve the difficult balance between the art object and the functional item." The promotional catalogue alerts us to contradictions and misunderstandings that are well worth exploring within the exhibition itself.

Darryl Frost's ceramics *Yes This Is Me* and *Gone Fishing* reflect a captivity to the art object that is almost complete. The fact that they are a vase (does it hold water?) and a platter (for fruit perhaps?) are peripheral. It is the exhibition environs of catalogue and pedestal that provides the validity for such work and draws our attention to the titles (and the price).

Surely real craft is not achieved with some balancing act between function and borrowed idea of art as object. Leave the artists to save themselves from their own uselessness. The craftsman has no reason to "meander towards the 21st century" as expressed by Rosalie Ann Matheson but an obligation to an aesthetic that is a given. It emerges out of the material itself as it is manipulated through the design process. There is no need to apply either a decorative gloss as in the Handysides' mythological bowls or pretentious names of Heather McLeod paying homage to the arts and philosophy. There is enough in this exhibition to encourage some more real craft. But there is clearly division and that required some hard decisive thinking as to what side you are going to take. The *Real Craft* exhibition is an opportunity to look at the options.

Robert Thompson, Dunedin.



Right: Graphic from *Real Crafts* invitation and poster. Designed by Jen U'ren. Artistic abstract impressionism or craft?

WHERE IS ART?

Decades of disputatious dialogue have echoed across the hallowed walls of every art gallery in the world as to what is or is not art.

Glimpsed emerging from this verbiage, shy as a bird, is the simple proposition that perhaps art is not an activity or process, any more than it is digging a trench or mending a fence. People, it appears, occupy themselves with many things, all of which involve skills or good crafting - whether it be digging, mending, weaving, writing, drawing, welding, painting, composing, cooking, gardening or even balancing on a wire. A good trench well dug with sheer sides arguably takes as much skill as does a good pot or baking a good loaf. They may be different skills, but anyone can learn them and do well given motivation. Anyone can learn to paint, to sculpt, to write, to draw, to pot or to etch - so where's the art?

The bird which we see emerging so timorously dances about on its little twig like all the others - but this particular bird is dancing a new dance to make its tiny contribution to evolution - it's being innovative. Dawning slowly is the startling heresy, in itself a liberation of the spirit of dynamic proportions, that painting and sculpture are not necessarily art. Dawning slowly is the realisation that skills alone never made art and whatever form it takes or media it inhabits, if it is to merit the term art it must be innovative, and must transport us into new levels of experience - it must surprise and delight.

Austin Davies, Director, Suter Art Gallery, Nelson. (From the catalogue of *The Clay Connection*, a recent exhibition of ceramics from the Wanganui and Nelson areas.)

WHAT IS NZ CULTURE?

Culture for Siddig El'nigoumi is not the preserve of the privileged few, it is the ordinary things that ordinary people do - cave drawing, shooting a crocodile, protesting at Greenham Common, doing the Guardian Crossword, celebrating the Great Royal Wedding, finding their way around the arrows in a car park and, most recently for Siddig, coming to New Zealand. This is summed up in a kiwi and a scorpion eyeing each other uncertainly.

Siddig has something to tell us about the New Zealand Pot that still seems to elude the New Zealand potter. Our uniquely New Zealand culture is not made up of snow covered mountains, kiwis and unwinding fern fronds, we did not create them they were here when we came. They are now a part of us but they are not of us. Closer to the mark are jandals and marching girls, wide roads and surf carnivals, hangis and beer out of hoses, gumboots and black singlets, protests against nuclear warships and leaders we no longer trust.

Why don't we abstract these onto our pots as Siddig would? Is it because we know them so well we can't see them - that they can be seen only by someone from another culture? Or is it that we see them perfectly well but we are ashamed of them? If Siddig lived in New Zealand some of these images would appear on his pots. Why don't they appear on ours? Perhaps because that would take the talent and the humility of a Siddig El'nigoumi.

Jim Pollard, Christchurch. (A review of Siddig El'nigoumi's Auckland exhibition appears later in this issue.)

(More Comment on page 48.)

EDITORIAL

In a political environment which has seen millions of dollars spent on consultants' fees in producing reviews of this or that, the current review of craft and the Crafts Council must surely be the most minuscule drop in an ocean of accumulated paper. The QEII Arts Council happily committed thousands of tagged Crafts Council of NZ funds to a review of craft and the Crafts Council knowing that a similar review process was already underway within the Crafts Council at no cost!

Whatever the merits or outcomes (and I'm confident there is much of one and that there will be many of the other) of either review, the circumstances demand a critical appraisal of craft and the Crafts Council's role. While ostensibly, funding accountability is the justification for QEII, the debate on where craft fits into the directions and philosophy of the Arts Council is far more significant. The Arts Council has never been able to comfortably articulate the place of craft in the New Zealand arts culture and given the number of participants in craft activities, has never been prepared to commit a level of resourcing in dollar terms, to reflect that craft in New Zealand has the highest participation level of any of our arts based cultural activities.

I believe the reasons are complex. Craft is accessible to all New Zealanders in price and in the way it relates to everyday life and as such fails to capture the high ground of innovation and cultural elitism. Craft is about skill and making objects and as such has an implicit expectation of quality and function. Our comfort with these aspects of craft has ensured a "commonplace" approach to where craft fits in. The delusion that the arts are something more than the "usual", the "commonplace", overlooks the opinion that much of what is currently funded as art is barely well crafted (and that's not always so!) painting, plays, theatre, music and dance.

I support the funding of activities which bring to our country access to great historical art, to contemporary artistic expression and to the experimentation needed to find new ways of expressing our culture, but I do not agree with limiting that expression to outmoded and culturally insensitive criteria.

The New Zealand culture manifests itself more actively, clearly and visually in craftmaking and innovative art craft than the current QEII Arts Council funding reflects. Perhaps our new Ministry of Culture will redress the imbalance but whatever the outcomes of the current craft reviews, I hope preconceived notions can be put aside as we redefine crafts in its rightful place in our cultural identity.

By John Scott, President, Crafts Council of NZ.



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CLARE ATHFIELD

BY LESLEIGH SALINGER

Clare Athfield is a creative, unashamed idealist. She is also a true nationalist. Not in any jingoistic sense, rather in her avowed and well-demonstrated commitment to indigenous New Zealand design.



Above: Clare Athfield. Photo Bruce Foster, courtesy Central Institute of Technology.

Although an artist in her own right, it is through her work as a designer for Athfield Architects that she presently gives expression to her considerable talents. This role enables her to incorporate the work of many artists and craftspeople into her commissions.

Now formally established as resident designer specialising in interiors, Clare's early involvement with the firm was informal. It began with a request to find

suitable bric-a-brac for Wellington's Greta Point Tavern.

Until this point, Clare's experiences were typical of many women growing up in post-war New Zealand: from a happy childhood on the family farm at Kawakawa where she scribbled crayon drawings on her father's sheds, made clay pots to sell at the side of the road, lovingly decorated the horses and tried copying her mother's flower arrangements - she was sent to boarding school in Auckland to extend her musical abilities in the "blue-stockings" tradition then espoused by private girls' schools. Here she was introduced to art history, learnt to love El Greco and Rouault and had her "eyes opened" to Impressionism, Expressionism and Modernism.

Teaching training followed and a much valued experience was working with Hamish Keith at the Auckland City Gallery on workshop programmes. Clare acknowledges Keith as a mentor who encouraged her awareness of New Zealand art and architecture, allowing her to develop her own vision.

A brief spell as a commercial artist followed before she returned to teaching as an art specialist.

Settling in Wellington after marriage, her energies were diffused into homemaking, childrearing, neighbourhood tasks and an active commitment to her husband's work and philosophies. Doubtless overshadowed by Ian Athfield's powerful talents, Clare nevertheless continued to meet regularly in a painting group and to make stage sets for a community theatre. She met Julia van Helden, another important mentor, whom she describes as having "a fine eye and superb vision". She also began working in clay with tilemaker, Neville Porteous.

The request to find bric-a-brac for the Greta Point Tavern was the stimulation she needed - "one's thoughts were vast". Extending a net from Wainuiomata to Nelson, she foraged. "I got bits of flotsam and jetsam - I just needed to see what was around and so I went right through the waterfront."

Discovering a huge anchor, she envisaged it as the focal point of the bar (an idea abandoned on learning that the cost of moving it amounted to more than that of the entire bar!). The bar and leaners are constructed from old pylons dragged up from the sea wonderfully patinated with copper bands and nails.

She started searching for talented craftspeople. Photographers who could make sepia enlargements of archival photos; Neville Porteous for tiles; someone to handcut glass and a manufacturer of good wicker chairs. It was an organic process: "Basically what started as a hunt for bric-a-brac turned into doing an interior. That was the beginning of my interior design, and I ended up selecting carpets and furniture and designing chairs".

Ian's next request of Clare was for dentils for the *Weddell Crown Building*. Ideas arose and were discarded, and finally she settled for the ramsheads which



Above: From Dept of Labour refit. Woven walls by Ngapine Allen, Kauri seats by her husband; furniture and fittings to Athfield designs. Photo: Julia Brooke-White

adorn the building today. Whimsically modelled on the face of the family's pet sheep Jack (in collaboration with Neville Porteous), they sport some handsome Asian fighting rams' horns for posterity!

A new Athfield commission, *the Church of Christ Scientist*, Wellington, allowed her to gain knowledge and to experience the frustration of having her ideas rejected. She made the ceramic capitals for the columns and although she describes them as a design compromise, she is nevertheless happy with the result. Her design for the carpet - "to this day I still reckon it's one of the best things I've done" - was rejected by the Church. James Walker did the glasswork, Jenny Hunt the weaving and into the garden design she incorporated Doreen Blumhardt's ceramics.

Her involvement in the Athfield practice now formalised, Clare works in various capacities on projects. She is involved, generally, with building exteriors and garden areas, and specifically, with interior design, colour and art selections and signage. Her design responsibilities range from the small - a hairdressing salon and an accounting practice - to a major client, the *Bank of New Zealand* for which she oversaw the total design approach.

Projects on which she was involved include *Appraisal House*, *Lavelles*, *Hannah's Head Office*, *Hewlett Packard* (for which Athfield Architects won an architectural award) and *Zealcorp* (NZ Wool Interior Award) among others. Called on to retrofit the Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council suite in the old *Public Trust Building*, Clare insisted it was particularly fitting for this client to have their furniture made by New Zealand craftspeople.

Recent major schemes have included *Telecom House*, redesigning and refitting the ferries for NZ Rail, The Department of Labour refit in *Aurora House* and the Public Library in the new *Wellington Civic Centre*.

Clare stresses that no two design processes are the same, but generally the following course is pursued. Once Athfield Architects have a building on the drawing boards, she contributes to the discussion on its final appearance:

"In consultation with the architects I discuss finishes and then organise the materials into a presentation design." This is presented to the client and a more specific brief is received with numbers of people, their needs and appropriate space allocations. At this stage layouts are prepared with suggested finishes and furniture samples.



shipping world map, and perhaps to create a new industry i.e. to offer internationally, the skills for refitting ships. (A German shipsfitters was interested in the innovations.) The Athfields were intimately acquainted with the ferries, viewing them daily from their hilltop home and using them for regular forays to their holiday home. Captured by the romance of shipboard life they had long speculated on how the boats could work. Their goal, to remove the notion of stock-carriers with people herded like animals. They wanted to make the trip enjoyable!

Recalling the grandeur of old ships with their palmcourts, rocking chairs and art, Clare set out to recapture the spirit and excitement in a new streamlined mode, using fibreglass technology and bold, contemporary art.

Noting that visitors comment on the qualities of light, colour and energy here, she used these as a starting point for the design. The thematic colours were NZ Rail's green and blue (the sky, land and sea). It was important too to reflect the unique bicultural nature of the country. Seeking to express the creative energy in this society, she turned to artists, craftspeople, artisans and innovators of indigenous materials - local leathers were dyed in lively colours and new furniture designed.

Stylistically there is something for everyone from Realism to Abstraction. Columns and murals by Bodhi Vincent speak of the country from top to toe - of land, sea and air. Fane Flaws incorporated native mythology and culture into glass tables. Kura Te Waru Rewiri was commissioned for entrance ways and points of welcome. Tom Scott's cartoons feature as a mural on the subject of ferry travel, as do John Papas' ceramic tiles. (This time they didn't get torn down!) Painters selected were Catherine Bagnall, Eion Stevens, Wayne Seyb, Pamela Woolfe and Melvin Day - his painting for the boardroom is of the Makara Coast.

And how does Clare rate the success? Sadly much less than she had envisaged. Despite the confident brief she felt undermined by employee factions resistant to change. She found new approaches rejected and new materials mishandled: "there was just endless negative knocking". The scheme, and the image of New Zealand-

ers as a seagoing people was a lost opportunity, she believes; a very bitter pill for a designer committed to excellence.

Commissions are proscribed by competing factors, the clients, budgetary constraints, workers' skills, but practicalities can frustrate needlessly. She states: "I don't find it frustrating trying to relate an ideal to a practical end - I think that's part of the creative process, but when you've related it and think you've got the answer - then to have some other person come in and go... "not having that!"...that's when it's very frustrating even though it's possible".

In her design for the retrofit of *Aurora House*, for the Department of Labour, Clare saw her concept fulfilled, and received the 1991 NZ Wool Interior Award. A timely recognition!

A thoroughly intelligent brief received from the client, she surveyed the scene. *Aurora House*, one of the first highrise buildings on the Terrace, is characterised by huge floor areas - and her initial reaction?... "dismal...terrible...ghastly!" Advised by Ian Athfield to find the pathway through, she repeatedly walked the spaces, establishing the scale and returning to greens, blues and soft colours to sink the spaces back, allowing the focus to rest on the dazzling path. Avoiding the trap of "a bit of built vernacular", artworks have been "hinged" along the path, forming visual exclamation points.

Each section's meeting room has a major artist's portal. Unframed installations designate public spaces with artists chosen for the appropriateness of style for the space. The country's multi-cultural nature shows in the artists who include, for the portals: Fergus Collinson, Bodhi Vincent, Fane Flaws, Kingley Baird, Ngapine Allen, Pippa Lee, Basia Smolnicki, Eion Stevens, Kura Rewiri, Jeff Brown and Peter Gibson-Smith. For sculptural walls, murals and paintings: Jeff Thompson and Lily Laita. Keen to support good printmakers, Clare has placed a set of Muka prints in the office areas.

Essential to a successful completion are capable and enthusiastic builders and craftspeople. Doug Simpson created various painterly techniques on the walls and furniture was designed by the Athfield team and made by local manufacturers.

Criteria for choosing an artist vary. For a public building with a long life expectancy, senior artists will be chosen whilst an interior which may last 7-10 years provides an opportunity to experiment with young artists "on the move". Visits to galleries and studios throughout the country update the visual database she carries in her head.

Clare's philosophy is simple: "firstly find the ground of your design and the simpler the better!". She concentrates on colour, form, humour, the unexpected and a strong sense of the spirit of New Zealand. Her method of working is experimental. She values the contribution of



This process allows for the incorporation of artworks into the very structure of the buildings as portals, wall divides, windows etc. On other occasions her work begins once the rooms are set and she completes colour schemes, wall and floor finishes, furniture and artworks.

Clare's ideal is to work "in conversation" with the architectural team in order to establish a good relationship between interior and exterior, believing that this co-operative process leads to happy design resolution. Yet whilst rejecting the modernist notion of individual male "genius" creating ideal pure spaces, she would not want total practicality to outweigh the excitement of space! "I would actually rather have something look and feel beautiful than be absolutely practical - I can be very happy sitting on a rock gazing at a lovely view, rather than be seated on a perfect chair in a sterile environment!"

Her place in New Zealand design has been confirmed in two recent large commissions.

A brief offered by NZ Rail to create a new image for the *Inter-Island Ferries* seemed to answer a dream. Here was a wonderful opportunity to put the country on the

personality, that of the designer, of the client and even, that of the building.

In conclusion, to substantiate the opening claim that Clare Athfield is a true nationalist, it only remains to allow her to speak:

"We have opportunities here, we have innovative people here, we can see clearly here, we are away from the rest of the world, we can admire the rest of the world and we have enough intelligence, I think, to make a statement - quite a clear statement."

Above; Interior, Barefoot Originals, Wellington. Photo; Julia Brooke-White.

Top; 6th floor, Department of Labour, Wellington. Painting; Lily Laita, furniture to Athfield designs. Photo; Julia Brooke-White.

Above; Department of Labour. Wall sculpture, corrugated iron, Jeff Thompson. Photo Julia Brooke-White.

Top right; Weddell Crown Building. Detailing Sheep's Head. Photo; Lesleigh Salinger.

OBJECTS IN LANDSCAPE, LANDSCAPE IN OBJECTS

RECENT WORKS BY GRAHAM BENNETT

WRITTEN BY JOHN FREEMAN-MOIR

Art is at its most effective and scientific when expressed with a question mark.

Joseph Beuys

Sea and stone
send reflections
to angles of steel
set on rounded granite,
350,000,000 years old and
painted with lichen.

Sea/Sky/Stone—a sculpture in glass and steel—was sited on the Boulder Bank (Nelson) between June 15 and August 15 1991.¹ This landform, located at the centre of Aotearoa, is a thirteen kilometre elongated curve of granite boulders and stones, attached to the hillside at one end and running parallel with the coast to Nelson. Hundreds of years ago the Maori used hammer stones from the bank to split argillite for toolmaking. More recently the stone has been used for building, ballast and roads, and a cut through the bank at the Nelson end forms a harbour entrance.

LIGHT
projected through frozen glass,
makes patterns
in condensation,
of complexity and contradiction.
Strict forms, soft images,
set within margins of orange rust.

LIGHT
and temperature change our seeing
through the hours
as we walk the Bank,
measure space,
and draw lines to California
and Japan.
A Pacific prism
to catch the sun
and fragments of hope.

The isolation of this installation was intended to express the fragility of our island existence and the loneliness of ocean distances. The steel-framed panels of bronze and grey glass hint at aspects of culture and work within our islands, the elements of Maori weaving patterns and the structures of our built environment; bridges, factories, skyscrapers.

Cold, blue
LIGHT.
Flames.
Steel plates
ring against steel on metal decks.
Motors rumble and
loud speakers announce
machinery on the move.
Can a silent, lingering moon
compete with this quartz halogen glare?
Or the stumbled gathering
of wood by primitives with a real economy?
Utopians in the night and
easily laughed at I think.
Embers grey.
An evening fades to solstice day.

Elements of stone, steel and woven flax symbolise a continuous search for wellbeing. Thus the sculpture asks us to look again at our environment, at its naturally occurring shapes, at its human solutions, at its textures and spaces, its questions and answers and, finally, at its further questions.

LIGHT.
Not painting,
not sculpture,
not architecture,

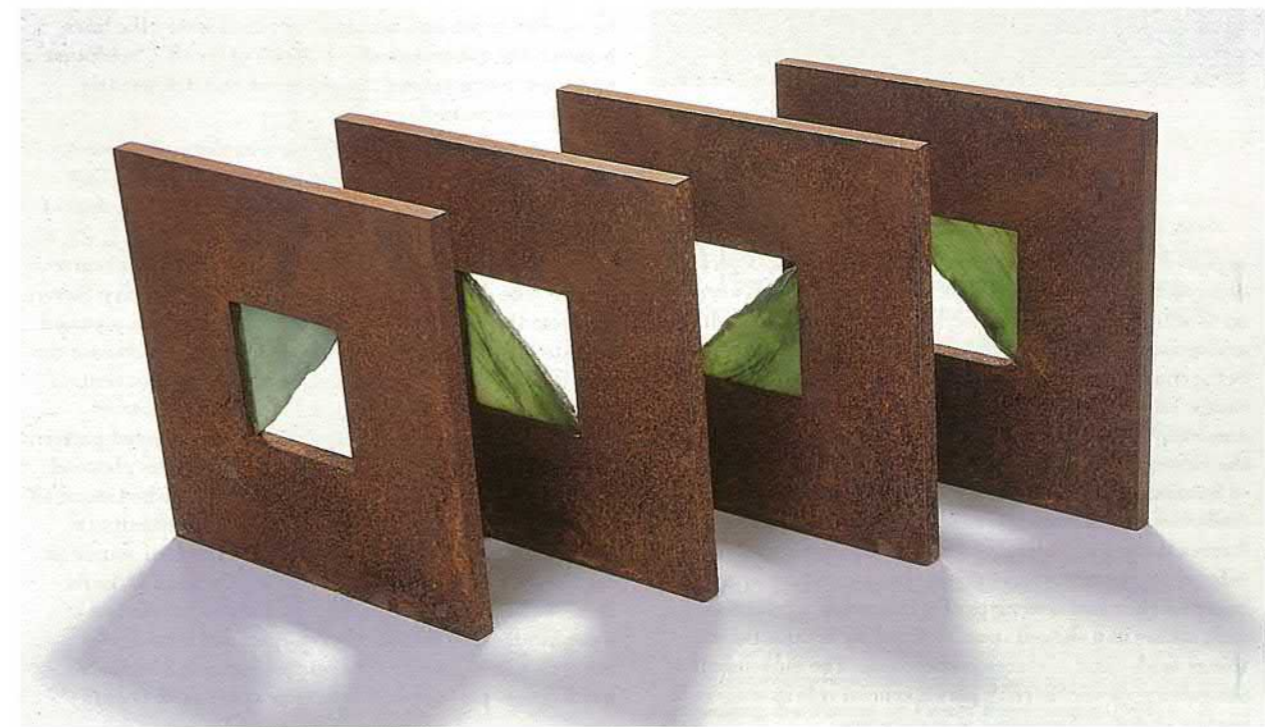
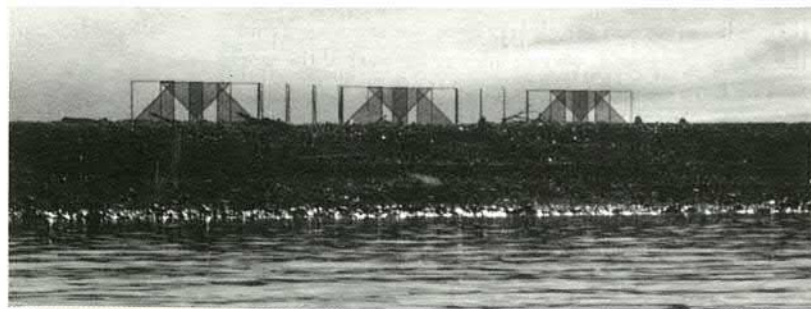
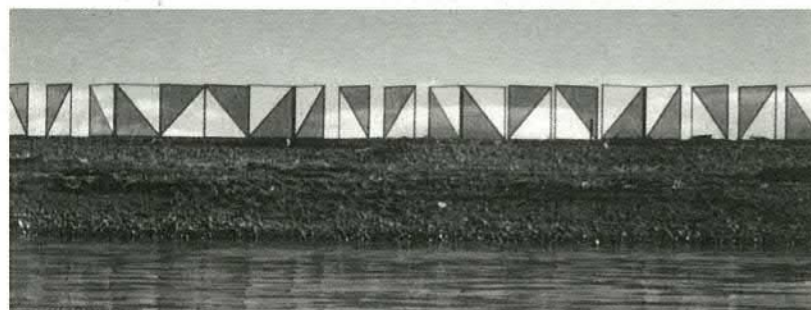
not landscape.
It's there though,
the repetition of simple elements.
Actions and perceptions,
frames of understanding and interest.
The world we know and
the world we speak of
refracted in
LIGHT
and woven together
between glass panels.

The real-space of the environment as opposed to the art-space of the gallery, the continuity between the work itself and the landscape, removal from the city which gives always the illusion that the earth does not exist, the linkages made between the viewer and the several kinds of time, the silences and sounds of the coastline; these are some of the reasons the sculpture was placed in a landscape of stone, marked by industry and a certain neglect.

Sea/Sky/Stone was also installed on the Archery Lawn at the Christchurch Botanic Garden during October. But why in a garden landscape? Like the sculpture the garden is also a cultural artifact; ordered, manicured and lovely. In the garden the geometry of glass and steel lay within a carefully crafted vista of lines formed by a brick fence, a magnificent herbaceous border, paths, trees and lawn. All of this creates a space within which nature is controlled and monitored, a place for children to play and for Sunday walking.

Reflections caught in the glass invited the viewer to move about the sculpture, through it and along its length. In this way the garden visitor was enticed into an active exploration of the architectural landscape of which the sculpture was now, for a short time, a part. Like the iron gate to the gardens and the stone entrance to the lawn, *Sea/Sky/Stone* is also an example of an architectural frame; a set of boundaries, edges, planes, and surfaces through which a viewer can investigate movement and

Below; *Sea/Sky/Stone* view facing South West, view facing West, View facing North West. Photo; Dale Cross.



Above; *Sea/Sky/Stone*, steel and laminated glass. 40mx2.1mx2.1m. Photo; Murray Hedwig.

Left; Restructure #1, oxidised plate steel with polished pounamu (green stone). 200x140x300mm. Photo; Maurice Lye.

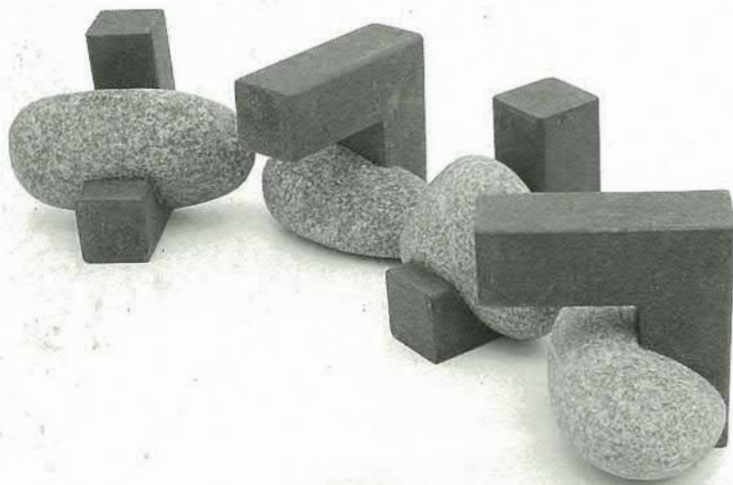
perception. Movement in relation to the sculpture changed the relative positions of the frames and, consequently, emphases shifted and reflections altered. The man made landscape of the Botanic Garden was thereby reconstructed and questioned.

Sea/Sky/Stone is also the context for understanding other works shown at the Jonathon Jenson Gallery in Christchurch.² In various ways these works explore relations between the natural and the human, object and land, outside and inside, large and small.

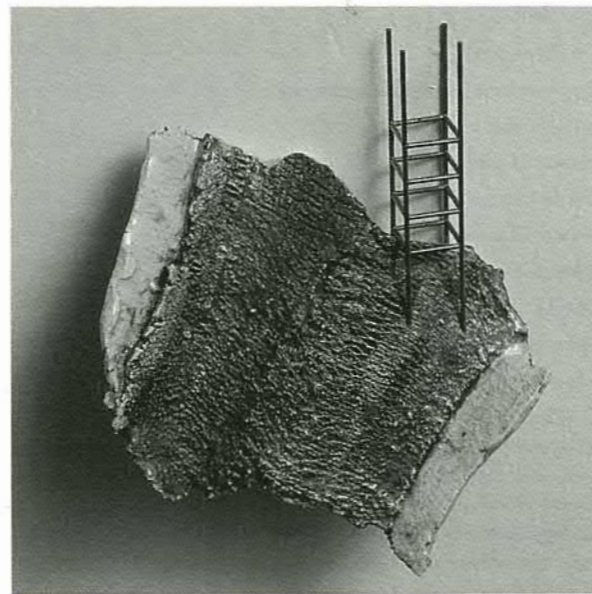
Five Verticals (subjects and contexts), an aerial perspective echoing the original work, consists of five diagonal steel boxes, partitioned into three with each partition containing a stone from the Boulder Bank. While the land is very definitely contained and ordered within the boxes, the placement of the work high on the gallery wall gave it a sense of instability, or perhaps of impending collapse, of the land reasserting itself against the structures of steel and the intrusions of industry. The division of each box into three is also meant to be suggestive of the Occidental concepts of Potential, Being and Becoming and the Maori concepts of Te Kore (the void), Te Po (the dark), and Te Aomarama (the world of light). Together, these concepts from two cultural traditions speak of evolution, progression and of history not yet completed.

Right; *Subject/Context*, ceramic with mild steel. 135x115x80mm. Photo; Maurice Lye.

Below; *Internal/External References (land/object-object/land)* oxidised steel with granodiorite boulders. 500x150x500mm. Photo; Maurice Lye.



The dialectic of steel and stone is more ambiguously explored in *Internal/External References (land/object-object/land)*. Each component is an identical steel corner on to which a granite boulder has been fitted. Now what is ambiguous about this work is whether the steel is seen as being shaped to the stone or the stone to the steel. Perceptually either reading is plausible but the impossibility of resolving the interpretation creates an unsettling effect in the viewer. Insofar as sculptural expression raises issues of human capacity, the ambiguity of object and land embodies a permanent question regarding the relation of human nature to wider nature. The minimalist solution offered by Bennett surely rejects human nature as an inner essence and conceives of it instead as a relationship with others in a shared space defined by actions taken, things made, and surfaces juxtaposed. The movements of the gallery viewer thereby play a crucial role in constructing the sculptural meaning of experience.



This theme of the human and the natural is also expressed with beautiful economy in a collaborative piece, *Establishing a Relationship*, with Gavin Hitchings, the Nelson jeweller.³ Three boulders placed in a vertical line on the wall are each cut in a definite way. The first has a simple channel cut through its outward facing surface. The second boulder has what looks like a miniature version of *Sea/Sky/Stone* fitted into the cut channel. In the third boulder the bronze structure is more simplified, containing no diagonals of triangular copper, as in the second, but it is also sunk more deeply into the boulder.

Once again the sense of a conflict, a battle, an unresolved dialectic of land and object is placed before the viewer. In addition this work (of jewellery?) raises the interesting question of scale for while *Sea/Sky/Stone* is 40 metres long and weighs 2 tonnes, it was, nevertheless, dwarfed by the Boulder Bank; a tiny piece of crafted jewellery worn on a stone arm. By comparison, *Establishing a Relationship* shows the sculptural potential of jewellery when conceived on a monumental scale, for here the structure completely transcends the land, extends beyond its reach and horizon line. In this way the lines between the conventional categories of 'craft', 'sculpture', and even 'architecture', are blurred and deliberately made problematic.⁴

In several other works Bennett explores the more architectural aspects of object and land, the sense that objects in the land are also places of habitation, points of rest and shelter. A series entitled *Restructure* (#1, #2, #3, #4) are each constructed from four panels with a centre 50mm² (the dimensions of the steel used in *Sea/Sky/Stone*) cut from the centre. The panels are either steel, plywood flotsam or board laminated with steel and in each case the panels are placed parallel though offset. The cut centres are fitted with diagonals of steel, polished granite or pounamu. The rust in the steel pieces, the stepped pattern of the panels, the small patches of lichen on the plywood surfaces and the rough diagonal edges of polished stone all convey aspects of the environment and our attempts to tame it, use it, live in it and survive. The four panels in each work can also be understood as elements of buildings, walls ready to be constructed into a habitation of some kind. Looking into these works one feels drawn towards a safe interior, the centres forming a series of windows or passageways from one space to the next.



Far left; *Five Verticals (subjects and contexts)*, oxidised steel with granodiorite pebbles. 70x1400x50mm. Photo; Maurice Lye.

Left; *Establishing a Relationship*. Granodiorite boulder with bronze and oxidised copper. A collaborative work with Gavin Hitchings. 110x380x60mm. Photo; Maurice Lye.

Landscape can only be approached, as it were, by means of an entranceway or gate. Viewed in this way a made object is simultaneously a frame of perception and a part of the landscape through which we move. This is the simple but effective idea which lies behind this body of work. These objects in the land and the land in these objects are memories tempered by production and daily life, another way of seeing and walking.

Notes

1. This work was supported by a major creative development grant from the QE II Arts Council.
2. In this exhibition there were 11 works on paper, including 3 photographs and the 10 3-dimensional works.
3. There was a further collaborative work (in wood) with John Shaw which was shown in an exhibition of *Sea/Sky/Stone* at the Suter Gallery.
4. For a very clear discussion of these issues with particular reference to stained glass see Robert Sowers, *Rethinking the Forms of Visual Expression*, 1990.



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THREADWORKS

A stitched multi-media exhibition at the
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We are seeking work original in concept and design with a considerable component of stitch - hand or machine. Work to be received by May 23 1992. Entry forms available from: Margaret Austin, 4/71 Office Road, Christchurch, New Zealand.

IN BRIEF

CRAFT TALENTS COMBINE

By Adrienne Rewi

Tucked away in south Wairarapa, Dennis and Andre Handysides are combining their talents to produce a distinctive look in turned wood.

Andre, who graduated from Canterbury University with a Diploma of Fine Arts in the seventies, has had her hand in creative pursuits throughout her marriage - designing and painting t-shirts, painting black swans' eggs in intricate, interwoven patterns, and carving and polishing a myriad of home-grown gourd shapes.

Three years ago she presented her husband Dennis with a wood lathe for his fortieth birthday. He had had a deep interest in trees since childhood and as a farmer, has been committed to extensive tree planting on his own property. Working with wood as a craft seemed to be a natural extension. Both are adamant that they are "very much beginners", but their joint attention to detail and fine-tuning of skills and design is already producing striking collaborative pieces.

Initially Andre concentrated on the painting and engraving of swan's eggs and gourds, creating eye-catching decorative items with a strong sense of design. From the outset they were in demand and she has had to work hard between family and farming commitments to keep up with demand.

For Dennis, woodturning is still very much a learning process, but it is a process that has brought a new dimension to his farming life. He is still a fulltime farmer and woodturning activities are allocated to evenings and weekends - and he often works through to the early

hours of the morning.

Now combining Dennis's passion for wood and Andre's enthusiasm for colourful surface decoration, the pair are adding a creative dimension to the time-worn bowl form - enhancing surfaces with elaborate, poker-worked and dyed designs with a strong Byzantine mood. Andre is very strongly influenced by tribal, primitive and naive art and pattern. She sees each bowl as a sculptural item and they're often sold "with contents".

For both there is an important link between the functional, utilitarian aspects of the bowl and the fact they are also one-off art pieces. "Contents" vary from painted swans' eggs - whether in an intricate design, or a rich gold, or shiny silver - to coloured marbles, or a simple, painted and bound stone.

"What has emerged from our collaboration is a growing process for both of us. We work separately in our own studios, and spend one day a week together, discussing plans, ideas, designs and processes. There's a spin-off for both of us - I'm learning about wood and turning processes and Dennis is becoming more aware of design and decorative aspects," Andre said. "It's made an interesting partnership."

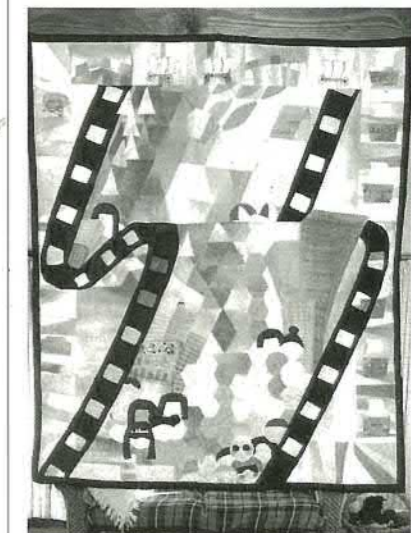
The new bowls are "just the beginning", they say. Ideas are "endless" and they see themselves moving more and more in sculptural directions, incorporating metals, fibres and timber inlays in unexpected ways.

"At the same time though, all this is secondary to family and farming - but it's a wonderful complement to these things. The last two years have been especially exciting and challenging."



Bowl with gold. Diameter 280mm, height 140mm.
Photo: Adrienne Rewi.

DISCOVER AMERICA



"Discover America", by Janet Grey.

Taupo fibre artist Janet Grey recently had a piece accepted in an international exhibition in New York. Forty three wall quilts were chosen in a section entitled *Discover America*, thirteen from countries other than the United States.

The exhibition, which opened in May at the American Folk Art Museum as part of the *Great American Festival*, will travel extensively throughout the USA until May 1994.

NEW ZEALAND NETSUKE IN TOKYO

By Owen Mapp

A netsuke is a three dimensional miniature sculpture used as a toggle which is secured behind the obi (waist sash) and is joined to a small box (inro), by a double cord. The netsuke stops the inro box from pulling free from the obi. It originated at least 1000 years ago, probably in northern China or south eastern Soviet.

Since 1989, Owen Mapp and Doug Marsden have been invited to exhibit their work in Tokyo, Japan. This year Donn Salt joined them, with three exquisite jade carvings. To have New Zealand netsuke accepted, alongside the top Japanese netsuke artists, is a major breakthrough for New Zealand carvers.

The annual "Netsuke Exhibition" is held in Seibu Department Store of Ikebukuro, Tokyo; organised by Yamada Company, a long time sponsor of contemporary netsuke and carvers. Usually there are about 60 artists, of



"A Cuddle" (Nesting Sparrows). Karo wood, stained, horn inlay, 45mm. By Doug Marsden. Photo; Helen Mitchell.

which about 10 are non-Japanese. Each person has 2-3 works exhibited.

Contact with the Tokyo dealers and netsuke carvers was first made in 1989 by Doug and in 1990 by Owen. Both were assisted by travel grants from the Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council. Introductions were arranged and eventually meetings took place between the New Zealanders and two prominent dealer/sponsors, Mr Hirokazu Nakayama of Yamato Bros and Mrs Aiko Yamada of Yamada Co, Ltd.

Through these two people other meetings were arranged so that local netsuke artists could be met and studios visited.

The Japanese artists and the dealers were most interested to know that there were makers of netsuke working in New Zealand with such a wide range of materials. Today in Japan the most common materials for netsuke are box wood, ice age mammoth ivory and antler or horn. Standards of design are high, with particular regard to detail, finish and originality. The best Japanese contemporary netsuke have reached heights that surpass most antique examples.

The annual netsuke exhibition catalogue, in colour, is circulated internationally to dealers and collectors alike. This helps to promote the individual artists. Most of the works are sold through Tokyo dealers to others in North America and Europe, eventually selling to collectors.

Hopefully the New Zealand contact with the netsuke world of Japan will grow and blossom with continuing friendships amongst carvers and even higher standards of work.

CRAFTS IN JAPAN

The Museum of Kyoto, in Japan, is the venue for the *Asia Pacific Crafts Exhibition*, held in conjunction with the *15th Asian Assembly of World Crafts Council and Asia Pacific Crafts Conference '91*.

Crafts from all over the Asian-Pacific region will be featured under the theme "The Expression of Nature and Life".

The Crafts Council of New Zealand was asked to recommend craft items, and undertook to dispatch the work to Japan. Running for just a week, from November 23 to December 1, the New Zealand entries were selected at short notice and will arrive just in time for the show's opening.

New Zealand's representatives were Michael Armstrong (designer of a rug made by Dilana), Raewyn Atkinson, Anita Berman, Alan Brown, Adrienne Carthew, Naida McBeath, Gael Montgomerie, Alan Preston, Helen Schamroth, Blair Smith, Peter Viesnik, and Matthew von Sturmer.

Below: "Nikaus", by Raewyn Atkinson. Photo; Haru Sameshima. Two of these forms, which were chosen for their relevance to the exhibition theme, were sent. (From the Crafts Council of NZ Resource Centre)



DESK FOR LONDON

A London client recently commissioned this writing desk (pictured right) from Nelson woodworker David Haig. The frame and legs are made from white ash, the drawer fronts and side panels of European walnut. Black hide leather covers the writing surface and the drawer pulls are of ebony. The drawer sides are oak and the bottoms are of cedar of Lebanon, which is richly scented. The client's brief was very open, although he required a large and functional desk with plenty of drawer space. The front three drawers can accommodate A2 paper and the side pigeon holes A4. Seven weeks were taken in designing and making the piece.



Above: Writing Desk by David Haig (1400mm wide, 750mm deep, 1000mm high). Photo; Redfern Photographics.

CARVING THE NUT

The Great Nut Show was held in the Dunedin Chapter Crafts Council Gallery at the Otago Museum in early June. The exhibition had its beginnings in the distribution of Tagua Nuts (vegetable ivory) amongst nine carvers, one jeweller and two woodworkers. Each exhibitor was invited to send the results of their efforts, along with two other pieces of their usual work. The result was a rich collection of predominantly Netsuke style carvings.

The nut is a seed from the South American palm *Phytelephas Macrocarpus*. Each tree may produce up to 300 nuts a year. Recorded history of the use of the nuts extends back at least 250 years and includes their use as a substitute for animal ivory and extensive use as buttons prior to the availability of suitable plastics in the 1930s.

The exhibition was curated by David McLeod for the Dunedin Chapter of CCNZ.

Below: "Fledgling in Feathers", carved from Tagua Nut by Owen Mapp. Photo; David McLeod.



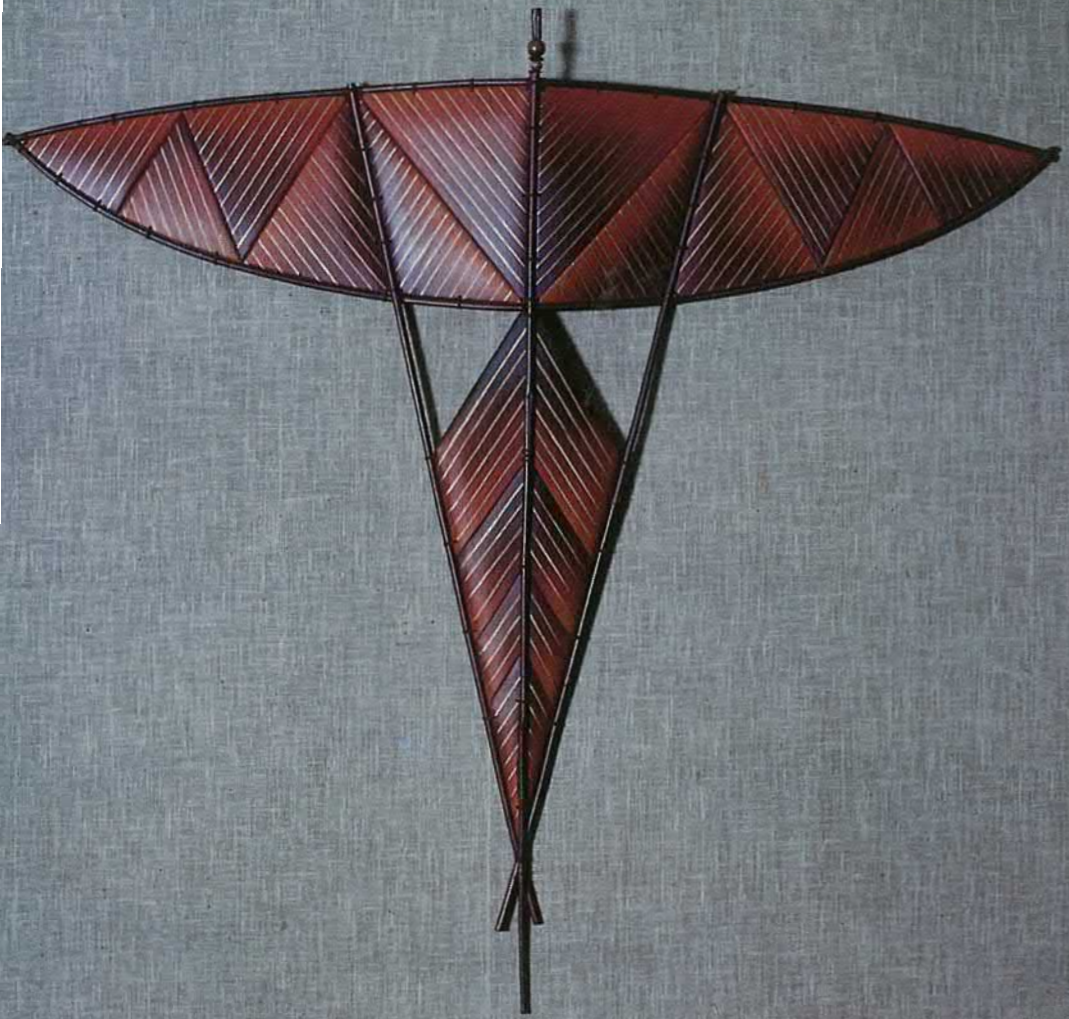
SHOWING THE FLAG

Stitching the Royal New Zealand Navy's Queen's Colours took Wellington embroiderer Diana Parkes 160 hours. The new colours (not called a flag) were commissioned by the navy for their recent 50th anniversary celebrations. Normally made from banner silk by the British firm Hobson & Sons, a shortness of time and some patriotic preference for the home grown article resulted in the special silk being sent from England for the job to be done in New Zealand.

Since early times, warriors have carried standards or flags as a distinguishing mark. They served as a rallying point during battles and, since loss of the standard often spelled defeat, protection of the banner was vital to the cause and tradition of whoever carried it. Presentation of Queen's Colours to units of the armed services grew from this tradition.



Right: Queen's Colours for Royal New Zealand Navy, by Diana Parkes. (From the Crafts Council of NZ Resource Centre.)



Above: "Kite for the Last Navigator", by Nick White. Oil, cane on wood. 1600mmx1500mm. Photo: Robert Cross.
 "The old, dying navigator, Tevake, bade formal farewell to his family and friends on Nuholo and, seating himself in his canoe, paddled out into the ocean he loved, on a voyage of no return. The spirit of Tevake, the dying tropic bird could not be confined but must soar one more time to ultimate freedom."
 "The Voyaging Stars", David Lewis, 1970.

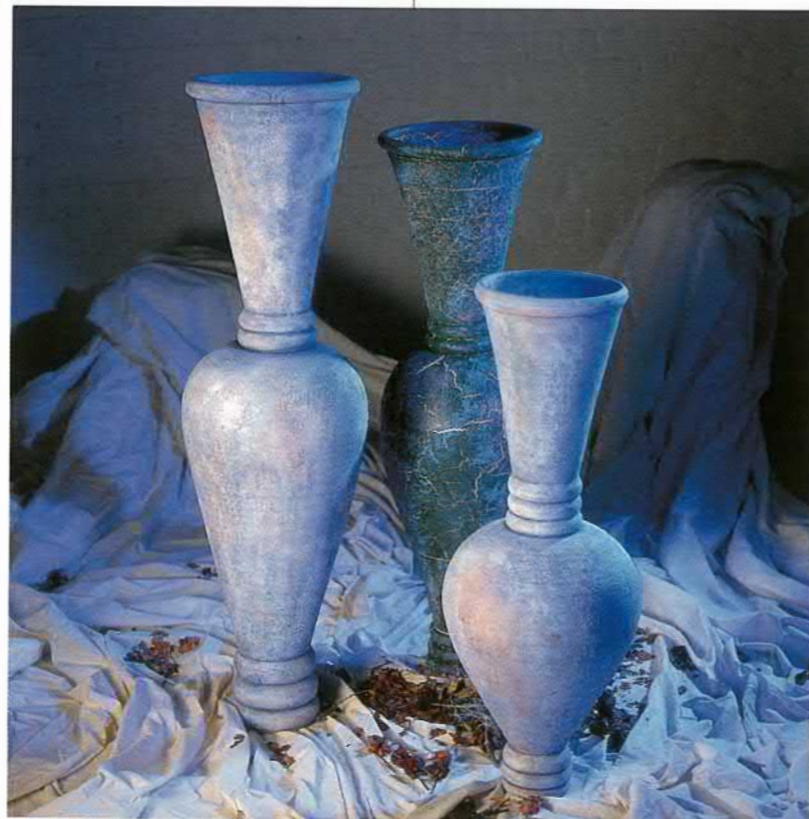
PHOTOGRAPHING CRAFT WORK

Contemporary wisdom has craft objects generally photographed in isolation - on a neutral, non-distracting background. Auckland potter Peter Collis has taken a different approach. His black lustred work presents plenty of problems for the would-be photographer. He lists a few; "photos of blue lustred pots, black with no lustre, or pots nicely reflecting the photographer and surroundings back from their surface".

Collis wanted photos that did more than record, photos that reflected the qualities of the pots, but which were also creative works in their own right.

He took a selection of recent work to photographer Gisela Lange. "She lived with my pots for about a month while getting to know me and the process involved in the work. The resultant series of photographs, I found extremely exciting. They contained all the elements that I had asked for - colour true surfaces, full detail lustres and clear shapes and forms. Now people don't just admire the pot, they're filled with admiration for the photograph too."

Right: Vases by Peter Collis. Heights 1500mm, 1300mm, 800mm. Photo: Gisela Lange.



NICK WHITE

By Lesleigh Salinger

Winning the 1991 BP Art Award has provided just the confidence booster that Wellington multi-media artist Nick White needed. Associated with the Award have been some "firsts" for Nick - encouraged by his mentor, artist Carol Shephard, this was the first time he had entered a competition and the first time he received press coverage! To heighten the achievement BP New Zealand Ltd has purchased for their corporate headquarters two of the award winning entries.

"Multi-media" well describes Nick's talents. In a career which has included work in advertising, training as a carpenter, painting, sculpting, set design and video and film direction, Nick has embraced a rich diversity of experience. Above all he enjoys "doing things".

His current work strongly reflects Pacific Cultures. The intense graphic quality of the patterning, the carved figures, simple abstraction of forms, weaving and binding techniques are coupled with a contemporary interest in vibrant colour. The Pacific environment has interested him since school and he considers it his own.

Nick's diary is booked months ahead and the work is as varied as ever; tutoring at Whitireia Polytechnic, designing an installation for the Fruitgrowers' Federation's November conference, preparing for an exhibition and contemplating a new commission (thanks to the Award!) and, if true to form, doubtless there are several other schemes on the drawing board!



CERAMICS TO SEVILLE

Ceramics and glass which will form an integral part of the New Zealand pavilion at Expo 92 in Seville have now been completed. During November, the finished work was assembled and it is now being photographed and preparations for shipment to Spain are taking place.

One of the fifteen participants is Nelson potter Steve Fullmer. Part of his contribution will be three "Pilots". The pieces depict "future voyages" and pay homage to the initial voyages of Christopher Columbus with his three ships. Each piece will measure approximately 1700mm overall and will be finished in a variety of heavily textured slips.

As well, Fullmer will be depicting New Zealand images of eels and tuataras. The long finned eels are unique to New Zealand. Tuataras which are one of the oldest life forms in the world will be balanced on ceramic rocks.

PRISON ART

By Mary Donald

TE PUKE: Images From Within was an exhibition of art, craft, poetry and performance produced by inmates while serving time at New Plymouth Prison.



The austere environment within the prison hardly seems the place to nurture creativity. Yet within these harsh stone walls, numerous men explore their creative talents. Some attend Polytechnic classes, while some prefer to work on their own.

Conditions are far from plush or extravagant. An amenities block is situated in one of the old exercise yards. Its lack of facilities leaves a visitor wondering how anyone could be creative in such an environment. Some inmates are able to use the School Room, which is far more comfortable. Outside the couple of hours per week that these areas are available, the men work in their cells or out in the long corridors which lead off the central living area. Here they work on improvised benches set against half metre thick stone walls, over 100 years old.

Within the last twelve months, additions to the prison buildings have covered much of the prison gardens. Coupled with the closure of the tailor's shop, there has been a void of meaningful work. Arts and crafts give a sense of purpose and a welcome relief from the boredom of prison life.

Residents in prison tend to be transient by nature. Depending on the length of sentence, some are 'stayers', while others are residents for a short time, being either transferred to another prison or released. Consequently, levels of creativity and the type of work produced is in a constant state of flux. This was a complicating factor in curating the exhibition but was shadowed by the difficulty of moving through the bureaucracy - of getting materials and equipment for those wishing to contribute to the exhibition.

Inmates receive an average wage of \$2.60 per week. From this they may buy tobacco, toiletries, and any other items they wish to purchase. While some items are subsidised, their wages must also cover the purchase of clothing, art supplies etc. If the artist has permission to attend classes, materials are supplied. However the quality is not high and there is often a delay of up to two months between ordering and delivery.

One of the main objectives of the exhibition was to provide a venue for the sale of

work, supplementing the inmates meagre income. As the exhibition came to fruition, many exhibitors decided against selling. It became obvious that while the exhibition primarily showed work produced by *The Boys on the Hill*, it also illustrated the internal monetary system within the prison - the trade items used as barter.

The exhibition opened at the Taranaki Museum on August 23. The Prison Culture Group arranged the powhiri and gave an impressive performance. The Prison Music Group produced a tape, as did one inmate who composed and recorded his own material. Family, friends and members of the public viewed the wide range of works on display; bone and wood carvings, painting on paper, canvas and glass, soft toys, a patchwork quilt and wood joinery. When one wanted a rest there were comfortable chairs and three collections of poetry to read.

It was an exciting exhibition in which one third of the inmates participated, either through art, craft or performance. Some pieces were soft and sentimental. Others illustrated the harsh environment in which they were created. All show the dedication of the men who made them and the need to fill a void until they can once again mingle with society.

BIRD EXOTICA

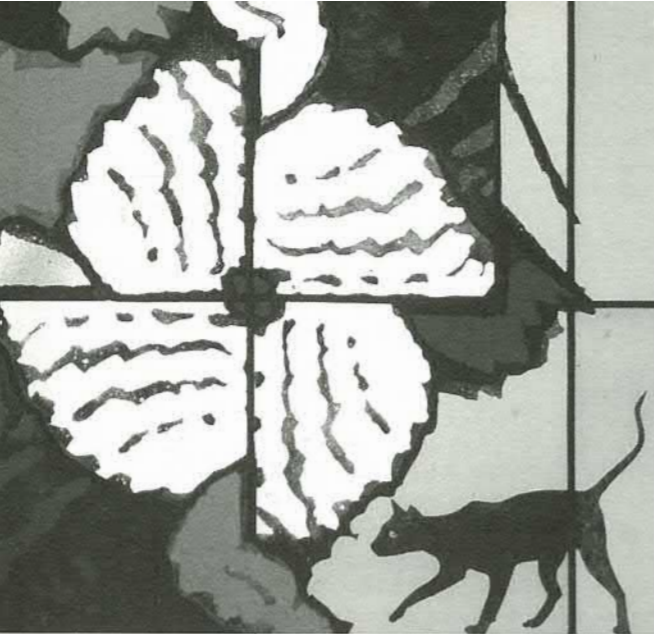
The magazine *New Zealand Wool Exporter* recently featured *Bird Exotica*, (18x20mm) by Anita Berman as its cover photo. Winner of the 1989 Crafts Council of New Zealand organised *Art in Wool* award, the work was chosen "because it was such a superb image". Featured in the same issue was an article about the work of Dilana Rugs, showing innovative use of wool. *NZ Wool Exporter* is distributed in 54 countries and is also published in Chinese and Russian.



Far left: "Pilot" by Steve Fullmer. Larger versions of this piece, up to 1700mm overall, will be going to Seville. Photo: Steve Fullmer.

Left: "Bird Exotica" by Anita Berman. Recent cover photo of "NZ Exporter". Photo: P.Soury. (From the Crafts Council of NZ Resource Centre.)

Far left: Flute, bamboo and matchsticks. Anonymous. From New Plymouth Prison Exhibition.



Above: "Tropic of Mango", panel by Holly Sanford. Photo: Holly Sanford

ICE IN OUR LUGGAGE

Adapted from a report by Holly Sanford.

Bremen, Germany, 1986 - Helga Reay-Young, a glass artist from Cologne organised with Bremen gallery owner Monica Trujen an international glass exhibition called "36 Women - 12 Countries". Auckland flat glass artist Holly Sanford attended the opening of the exhibition, and there it was decided to keep these contacts alive by meeting in the future.

In 1989, invitations were sent to several women from the Bremen show to attend a workshop in Iceland. Catrin Jones from Wales was one:

"The journey to Iceland was a journey into the unimagined. I had deliberately denied myself foreknowledge of the country in order that I might experience the land unencumbered by any burden of preconception. I need not have feared - my first glimpses of the place were outside my visual vocabulary."

Holly Sanford couldn't attend, but two years later, she was one of fourteen people invited by Catrin Jones and colleague Amber Hiscott to yet another gathering - this time in Swansea, Wales.

The plan was for a 10 day workshop with participants sharing ideas, an introduction to Welsh culture and countryside, and trips to view medieval and contemporary stained glass. An exhibition of participants work called "Ice in our Luggage, IA YN Y CWD" would run concurrently and be comprised of pieces inspired by Iceland - for those who had been - and recent works by the others.

Holly Sanford was able to attend, with the assistance of the QEII Arts Council, and set off with a huge suitcase.

The show was impressive, with a wide variety of works, some on paper as well as glass, and some sculptural. Sanford's panels attempted to bring the South Pacific to Wales.

Swansea is a centre for stained glass. As part of the West Glamorgan Institute, a three

year Architectural Stained Glass Course is taught (and has been since 1935).

Holly Sanford sums up her experience: "My impression of those times, places and people are vivid. Will they serve me as well as I have seen others so inspired by Iceland? Someday perhaps I will know the results. I look forward to meeting my friends and colleagues again. They have added much to my life and work."

MOTHERS OF INVENTION

By Sarah Hunter

Visible images of motherhood came together in a Dunedin exhibition *Mothers of Invention*.

The brainchild of artist Gail Webster, the November exhibition provided a platform for mothering to be expressed in all areas of the arts.

Fellow co-ordinator Kerry Loughrey says the inspiration for *Mothers of Invention* came to Gail after the birth of a second child left her feeling personally invisible.

Mothers of Invention also redefined the politics of "birth mother status". According to Kerry mothering now more and more involves men as well as women who can't or don't have children. Although this was encouraged in the exhibition, natural mothers still dominated the event.

"This is a nice change from exhibitions or performances where the mother is an oddity".

Sculptures, pots and traditional women's arts like patchwork adorned the walls of the city's newest art space, the underground O'opps Gallery.

The Southern Regional Arts Council funded the event, which included poetry and theatre performance. Several workshops on drama and painting were run in conjunction at the YWCA.

Australian born poet Kerry believes motherhood does strange things to the brain and much of the artwork reflected the philosophy of getting through life one day at a time.

"We had a grandmother doing a six foot knitted Buckingham Palace guard...she said making it got her through the winter."

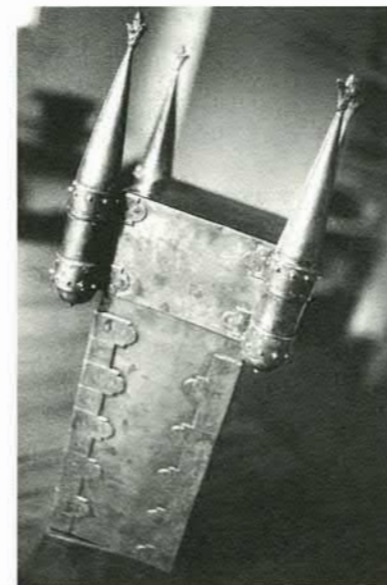
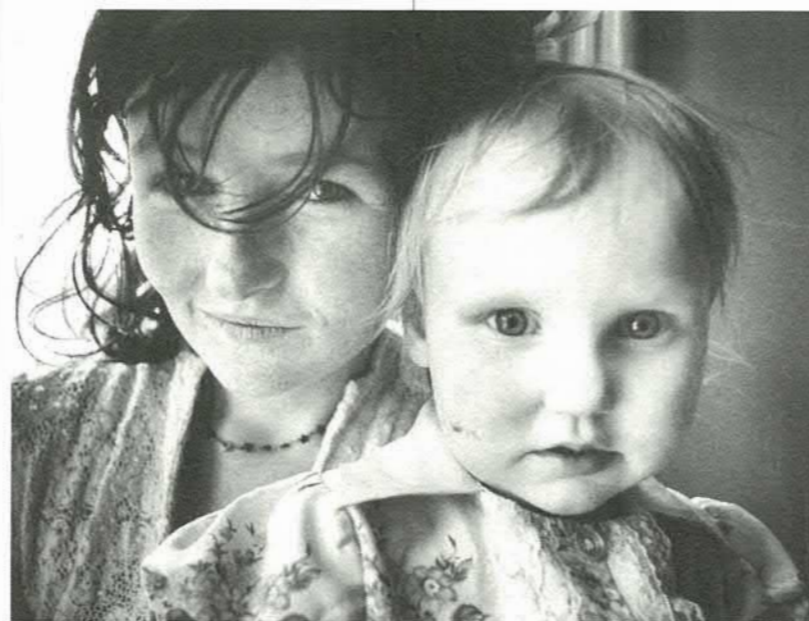
There was no pretence either to portray a supermother. The intensity of some of the art works displayed the determined manner in which a mother must operate to express herself - squeezing in the process between her daily routine or battling the audible demands of children.

A postcard from a Nelson woman who heard about *Mothers of Invention* indicates the impact the exhibition has had. She is enthusiastic about organising a similar event under the same name.

Kerry says her involvement has proved motherhood is not all about tragedy.

"It's been like somebody said I'm allowed to write about it - and be positive."

Below: Mother of invention Kerry Loughrey and daughter Hayley. Photo: Sarah Hunter.



METAL MAVERICKS

By Sarah Hunter

Mary McFarlane and Stephanie Lambert attracted fans to their show of metal work at Wellington's 33 1/3 gallery in September. Mary says their work "...has substance rather than sterility".

Left: "Tower Box", by Mary McFarlane. Photo: Sarah Hunter.



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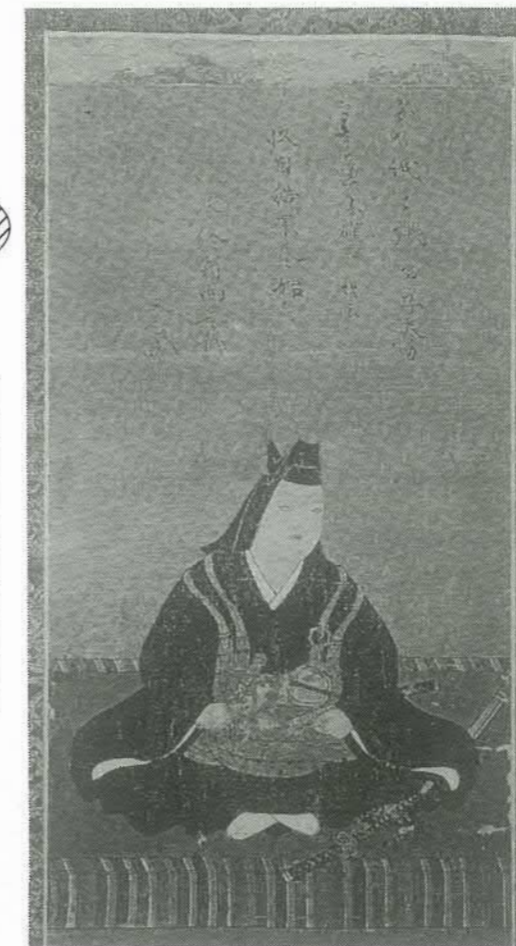
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ROSS MITCHELL-ANYON, CRAFTSMAN POTTER

BY PAT BASKETT

The archway above the gate to Ross Mitchell-Anyon's home and studio is a little startling in suburban Wanganui. Its supports consist of wooden beams and chimney pots which Ross has made, with a tall planter on top of each. On one side, the planter sits askew, tempting newcomers to reach up and shove it back into line.

It's as solid as a rock. Ross has a quiet smirk, he meant it that way.

Down by the river, where he lives with his wife Heather and their four children, he collects logs that float by and keeps an eye on a city sewage outlet along the bank from his kiln.

The gateway is a metaphor in more ways than one. In the craft world where clay has increasingly become a medium for the sculptural object, Ross pursues a pretty non-aligned existence. He thinks in terms of a hundred coffee mugs a day, fifty teapots a week, shelves filled with neat lines of bowls, casseroles, flour crocks and the large stoneware planters people cross the country to buy from him.

The philistines glance at the rows of identical pots and comment: "You really churn them out, just like a

factory!" Then they amble back through the gateway, their newspaper-wrapped parcels under their arms.

Ross has long ceased to try and explain. It remains a mystery how, in the making, each one of those hundred mugs is separate, yet they all end up the same...but different.

A couple of years ago at a show at the Fisher Gallery in Auckland he refused to exhibit individual pots on little stands.

"I'm a production potter. I didn't want to show the freak occurrence wood firing can give you. Yeah, that's sometimes wonderful, but I'm more interested in the run of pots.

"I used to be always seeking the exemplary pot, but now I like the qualities in a whole range of surfaces the firing gives me. I can see things a lot more clearly now."

Like the stained teapot he's used for years - a grey shino he rejected when he took it out of the kiln. Then he came to admire its unspectacular hues.

"I like surfaces which take on a patina of use. If they're too great at the beginning they don't get nicer with age."

He feels unhappy with what he calls "a certain myopia" about anagama firing, looking for "the big splash", the clinker on the side of the pot. Japanese pots, on the other hand, have, he says, "an extreme ordinariness about them, all the qualities of quietness."

The impact is very different from the immediacy of colourful brush decoration. To me, Ross's pots have that now seldom seen quality of wood-fired stoneware with all its beautiful subtleties - and something more. This "something" is the sum of his approach to his craft.

He digs his own clay from a secret spot near Pahiatua which he discovered fifteen-odd years ago when he was at Training College in Palmerston North. One trip with a hired truck, two or three days hard digging and another two or three pugging and bagging it, give him a year's supply. The clay is extremely strong - he reckons he can tip his bat 45 degrees without a wet pot collapsing - and so fine its fired appearance is almost burnished. Whatever its problems, Ross lives with them. It's part of his philosophy to use a material as it arrives and work around its difficulties. Any tampering spoils its very special qualities and he makes only one, pragmatic, compromise. I am obliged, he says, to add slab clay to improve the resistance to thermal shock for ovenware.

In the best stoneware tradition, his palette is limited to three glazes. The dozen or so covered buckets along the window overlooking the river have been there so long they've almost dried up. Anyway, they've lost their labels. It's strictly: one shino-type, one made of ash and clay, and one consisting of nothing but pumice silt he digs out of the veggie garden. Wonderful, he says, to make something totally out of your own materials.

His kiln has two chambers, moderately and imprecisely large (Ross is tall and can stand up in them), both fired to stoneware temperatures. After eight years, the inside is beginning to look precariously ripe. Firing it with pine slabs from a local mill takes 24 firing hours. Ross does this with a little help from Heather, about six times a year.

Everything gets raw-glazed and fired once only - except the small pieces like mugs which quickly dry beyond the stage of taking a raw glaze and are therefore bisqued in a gas kiln. Sometimes he tosses in a small amount of salt. It's typical of his liking of understatement that he finds heavy salting "too fruity." But a little picks up the edges and the lines with which he defines a rim or a foot. On his paler, ovenware body, the light salting has a particularly quiet beauty.

The vicissitudes of the flame, licking parts of a pot and leaving others (the effects of oxidation and reduction: the words are as anathema as "cubic capacity") suit the laid-back mobility of Ross's forms. His pots have a directness; one senses his hands know when to leave them alone. Each conventional domestic item has his unconventional mark. Mug handles, for example, look like the bent branch of a tree pushed into place. Why wait for the precise leatherhard moment, when you can



Teapots by Ross Mitchell-Anyon. Photo: Anne Noble.



stick them in wet and leave an interesting nodule on the inside to put your seal on?

The big planters are made in two pieces, of 5 or 6 kg each. The bottom is allowed to firm up just a little before the top is added thickly so that the throwing can continue and the pot regains its unity. Ross says he's not really interested in big pots, and in the next breath confesses to loving the process of making them. They play a necessary role in the firing cycle because they fill the kiln. (A week's worth of 50 teapots takes up a mere 10% of the space.) They also exemplify what is extremely important to him - they need to be used.

Sitting at the back of his display room for finished work are half a dozen chimney pots he made at somebody's bidding...and got carried away and made a few more...They're small giants, made in four pieces added wet and they look as if they never even thought of slumping.

Don't search for them, or any of his ware in your local craft shop. He's always intended to be a good marketer, he says without a trace of wistfulness, but somehow it's something he's never got around to. If the truth's known, he hates that side of the business and anyway his stuff sells "abysmally" in such places. All

Top; Ross Mitchell-Anyon with chimney pots. Photo: Anne Noble.

Lower; Jugs. Photo: Anne Noble.



Above: Mug by Ross Mitchell-Anyon. Photo Richard Wotton, courtesy Sarjeant Gallery, Wanganui.

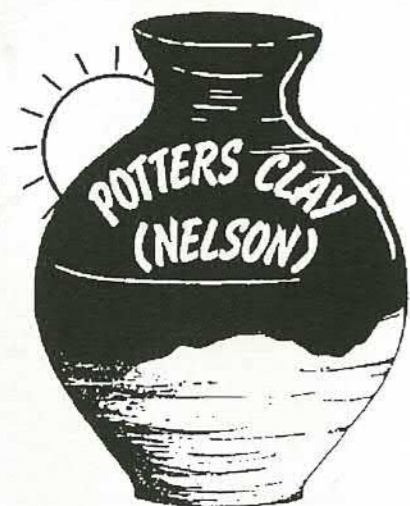
that he makes he sells from home to people he knows, or somebody else knows, who come from up and down the country. That way, if there's a teapot he's especially fond of, he'll know where it's gone.

One such fine specimen ended up in the Fletcher Challenge exhibition at the Auckland Museum this year. Along with a vase of Cecilia Parkinson's, it shared the fame of being the cheapest pot in the show. It was the first time he's submitted anything for six or seven years and getting it accepted warmed a few of the spots which are susceptible to the southerly that blows across the river.

"I'm pleased to see a lot of people working in different ways now. We needed a bit of colour. But I wouldn't dream of painting a design on a pot. I haven't got the skills. I let the kiln and the body do it for me."

Ross is secure in what he is - a maker of things to be used, a craftsman-potter.

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REVIEWS

GERRY KING, SCULPTURE IN GLASS

Masterworks Gallery, Auckland, September 1991

Reviewed by Peter Viesnik

Gerry King, a South Australian glass artist and teacher, is at present using the medium of kiln fused glass to make sociological and cultural comments on the current Aboriginal situation in Australia. His art has a message which brings observers' attention to their plight.

The title of many of the works is *Cicatrix*, referring to scarring, which has the dual meaning of cultural scarring from colonial settlement, and body scarring from initiation ceremonies.

When viewed from this perspective the mind takes on a serious mood and seeks the meanings of these works. Is this doorway with its aboriginal-like motifs, simulated corrugated iron surfaces and attendant shadow, a statement of the poverty and desolation of the aboriginal people on the fringes of community? Are the pedestalled bowls based on the traditional aboriginal wooden bowl, piti or wirra, referring to the destruction of their culture by being deliberately deformed and twisted?

King's earlier series depicted a ravished room corner destroyed by nuclear holocaust titled *Room for a Nuclear Family* and a neat and tidy kitchen corner of a suburban home titled *For the Term of her Natural Life*. His art is disquieting, statements of the present condition of the world with more than just a touch of despair colouring them.

Which brings us to the word colour and an exact contrast to these dark observations. The works on display are alive with vibrantly rich depths of colour which express the heat and power of the outback and the boldness of the primary colours of aboriginal art.

To my mind colour and form work best in the shield series, long and graceful forms, based on the aboriginal warrior shield with a free interpretation of the traditional symbols of dots, circles and figures. These forms have a separate base of clear glass which in themselves are constructional and sculptural statements. Their austerity contrasts well with the depths of colour suspended above them.

Clear glass forms the basis of the *Steps to a View* and *Climbing the Ladder* pieces, with the clear patterns and symbols sharply delineated in the flat and clear sand blasted and etched surfaces.

Part of the construction of the *Cicatrix Shadow* series and forming the bases of



Above: "Room for a Nuclear Family", by Gerry King.

some pieces, is coral cement, made by a process recently developed at the University of South Australia, in which normal cement is mixed with a colourant and protein-covered styrene to form a lightweight, strong mix to be used in moulds. The surface is then wet ground to provide the flat texture.

The use of kiln formed glass, both fused and slumped is still in its infancy in this country, but rapidly gaining popularity and recognition overseas. The glass used in this exhibition is mostly American, specially made for kiln work. Unfortunately it is hard to obtain here and therefore expensive, but other types of compatible glass may be used

as demonstrated in the clear glass pieces. Gerry King has had some considerable experience in this field, being co-ordinator of Glass Studies, School of Design, University of South Australia, and the NZ Society of Artists in Glass (SAG) with the assistance of Carrington Polytechnic were able to avail some members of this expertise by holding two workshops at the Polytech.

It will be interesting to see the influences in the coming years and what indigenous content may emerge from our own glass artists. Work from this exhibition may be viewed at present both at Masterworks, Auckland and the Crafts Council Gallery, Wellington.



Top; "Paua Necklace", by Chris Charters. Photo; Margery Blackman.



Lower; "Banana Palm Basket", by Willa Rogers. Photo; Margery Blackman.

REAL CRAFT

Reviewed by David McLeod

Real Craft was an open entry, selected exhibition, curated by the Dunedin Chapter of CCNZ. This is the third consecutive year the exhibition has been staged at the Otago Museum.

The selectors were Kate Wells - tapestry weaver, textile designer and tutor, and Michael Findlay, - curator of the Technical and domestic collection at the Otago Early Settlers Museum. They were asked to base their selection on the criteria which accompanied the invitation to submit. The criteria were: "originality of design, creative use of the medium, suitability of materials, professional finish, technique, and construction for the intended use"; criteria which aimed at achieving the "difficult balance between the art object and the functional item".

The resultant exhibition highlights the difficulties in an open entry craft show: to achieve as little as possible disparity between the best in each media and to avoid the tendency to end up with a fragmented display.

Entries were limited to "the three best, most exciting pieces that you have made recently". It was unfortunate that they were not displayed in reasonable proximity in the gallery. With the diversity of materials, the decision to display the exhibits by colour and form meant that those craftspeople whose work made a cohesive group were more clearly represented to the audience.

Where crafts were associated by colour there was a tendency for the viewer to presume a link of standard or quality which was often not the case. This, however, is not a criticism of the quality of the presentation, which achieved a high standard.

In spite of these concerns Real Craft celebrates the wealth and diversity of media used by the 84 exhibitors represented from submissions by 99 craftspeople.

It is discouraging to see many craftspeople undervaluing their time and skills; that work is of a smaller scale perhaps also reflects the economic climate. A quality venue and display, and a fresh audience seems not enough to attract support from a wider pool of professional craftspeople, or are financial awards or prizes needed as an incentive?

It is encouraging to see the standard of work submitted by recent graduates of Craft Design and Ceramic courses, along with other new first time exhibitors.

The question of unity of the exhibition could be overcome by introducing a theme to future exhibitions, or restricting the range of media and alternating this each year. Perhaps the title *Real Craft* and the mixed message of "art object and functional item" discouraged some potential exhibitors who might submit to a tighter contextual show. Whatever the outcome of this debate, the Dunedin Chapter is committed to organising an annual National Craft Exhibition, however, the format and emphasis will be reviewed to further meet the stated aim of showing the top craft produced throughout New Zealand.

For further views on *Real Craft*, see "Comment", page 2 this issue.

CHRISTINE THACKER AT LOPDELL HOUSE

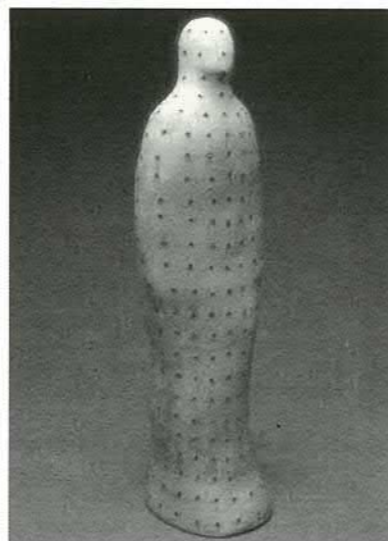
Reviewed by Leo King

In three discrete groups Christine Thacker offers recent work, extending her continuing divergence from figuratively identifiable studies towards abstracted forms. While life is the common ingredient, the groups, softly and definitively modelled in terra cotta and decorated with slips and oxides, divide between human and organic.

Seven Astronomers, are in human form and although there were two groups of seven available, only one from one group and six from another are shown. By excluding detailed visible reference to arms, legs or other predominant features Thacker ensures that the head is the focus of attention. The avoidance of facial relief or hair suggests age (or youth and innocence) and hence wisdom, an inference supported by the fluid impressions of medieval drapery concealing a body which finds some difficulty in supporting itself. These are men of vision, ideas, astronomers who stare upwards with a questing intelligence.

The use of a regular lattice of surface marks which has been a feature of Thacker's work for some time operates in this case as a device which draws attention to the surface of the work and away from its outline. However, its major advantage here seems to be its unifying effect upon the series as it is displayed.

Trees and *Stems*, as the other two groups are separately entitled, are forms which "grow" from relatively massive bases. These anchor them firmly and are reflective of the upward and inward curving "arms" in the *Tree* forms but contrast sharply in the *Stems*. The *Trees*, which are elegantly coiled and dark in colour, are surreal and while making



Right; One from "7 Astronomers". Far right; "Blue Stem", both by Christine Thacker. Photos by Haru Sameshima.

reference to forms which exist in nature, on the land or in the sea (Thacker suggests coral), they have an aura of menace, the hard sharp unfoliated members generating a feeling of defence and protection seemingly poised to expand and attack. Despite this the *Trees*, probably the most tentative and self challenging of the departures, have an inherent looseness which unites them with the body of the work.

By comparison the *Stems* are gentle, uneven and irregular; they echo in form the undulating surfaces of the *Astronomers*, but are clearly organic. While the cylindrical bases are at formal variance with the sinuous configurations they support, Thacker has used both smooth surfaces and regular surface ridging, resulting from the coils of clay from which they are built, together with gradings of soft colour to integrate them. The ridging contributes more to their strength and movement of individual works when compared to those which have smooth surfaces as in *Blue Stem*, and where the employment of surface perforations is, in this context, inhibiting.

Grouping, in a show of this kind where a number of basically similar forms are displayed, can be of major importance allowing an expressive and moving interaction of the subtle nuances of individual forms. It is likely that the *Astronomers* would have benefited from such organisation.

The contemporary work of Christine Thacker indicates an ongoing exploration in directions which are at the same time diverse and complementary. The increasing formlessness, while exploiting a natural quality of the material, allows the perception of the object to be widened and to range, as in this collection, over ideological interpretations evoked by the *Astronomers* to the earthy qualities of the *Stems*.



Above; "Personal Altar", by Humphrey Ikin.

HUMPHREY IKIN AT RKS

Reviewed by Dugald Page

Can we call furniture, furniture when function follows form, instead of traditionally that form follows function. Humphrey Ikin's exhibition appears as a revelation of the subconscious and conscious conflict of intuition and rational thinking. The expectation of familiar, if sometimes eccentric or extreme designs, of functional objects to grace purposely our homes is somewhat shattered by the forms on show.

What purports to be furniture, in our preconception of what the exhibition might offer, is initially halted by the appearance of the large masses, of uncompromising forms, their size and patinated gold surfaces. The *raison d'être* that form follows function is given a severe and significant jolt.

From what do we take our bearings to appreciate and understand these works. A "serving table" offers a sense of security through familiarity of self evident function. Graceful, a balance of line, a subtle curve of the serving surface, but by comparison with the other exhibits it is tensile and does not share their organic mass characteristics which evoke a sense of gravity and locale. The mass pieces of oak would be daunting to some to carve, or others might make a ruthless decision to cut into smaller functional, economical planks for construction purposes, but Ikin has had the courage and sensitivity to respect their aged size and retained their chronometric status.

If the form of an object is an indicator of the forces employed to shape that form, then these works certainly epitomize that axiom. The surfaces reveal a variety of techniques and tool applications to achieve the desired form. An integration of the craftsperson tech-

nician and the artist is very evident. A number of analogies come to mind, not to be mistaken as conscious influences, which have through our calvinistic society connotations of derivitiveness which are looked upon negatively, but the fullness and fecundity of the forms relate to Jean Arp's sculpture and the intrinsic contextual humour to Claes Oldenburg.

The similarity is purely visual for the concept of the forms express a Pacific dimension on a number of levels, whether conscious or unconscious in that ships of oak carried adventurers on search of landforms and gold, and the Pacific Peoples renowned for their formmaking of ritual objects which were to them as precious as gold.

The progression in Ikin's work from structural concepts to formmaker has projected some very uncompromising works of power. To use the gold patination of such historically revered wood brings up feelings of purism to materials, but here 'function follows form'. The shakes in the timber are accepted whether narrow or wide, the roughly hewn surfaces suggestive of spontaneous vigorous work remain to contrast symbolically polished areas which allude to the timelessness of archetypal objects and their use.

The most complex form in terms of shape is the "personal altar". Treads or kneeling stations, form a plinth to this horizontally balanced banana-like form with a polished central resting place. Similarly the *South Pacific Throne*, a mighty oak piece resting like a fallen forest log, but most comfortable to experience, while *Black Squab*, presents a charred matt obsidian black stone-like seat, which rocks therapeutically when sat upon.

These works command their own space and have integrated function and sculptural form in a challenging idiosyncratic mode.



Above, "Greenham Common" by Siddig El'nigoumi

SIDDIG EL'NIGOUMI AT POTS OF PONSONBY

Reviewed by Penny Evans

The visit of Siddig El'nigoumi, scheduled for January 1991, was suddenly cancelled due to his serious illness. Happily it was rescheduled for September and October when this most charming man toured New Zealand giving schools and workshops up and down the country from Auckland to Dunedin.

At Pots of Ponsonby it was possible to see a wonderful collection of Siddig's recent work. The pots were displayed in the front part of the Gallery, and each given its own space. Some were arranged in groups decided on by the potter. Each piece of beautifully burnished terracotta glowed with its own warmth.

Siddig was born and educated in the Sudan. He trained as a teacher, and in 1949 he moved to Khartoum to be an apprentice Arabic Calligrapher. He followed this with

two years at the Khartoum Art School, and was sent to study ceramics at the Central School of Arts and Crafts, London. He has lived in England now for more than 20 years, and is married to an English woman, Vicky, a textile designer. He now teaches at the West Surrey College of Art and Design.

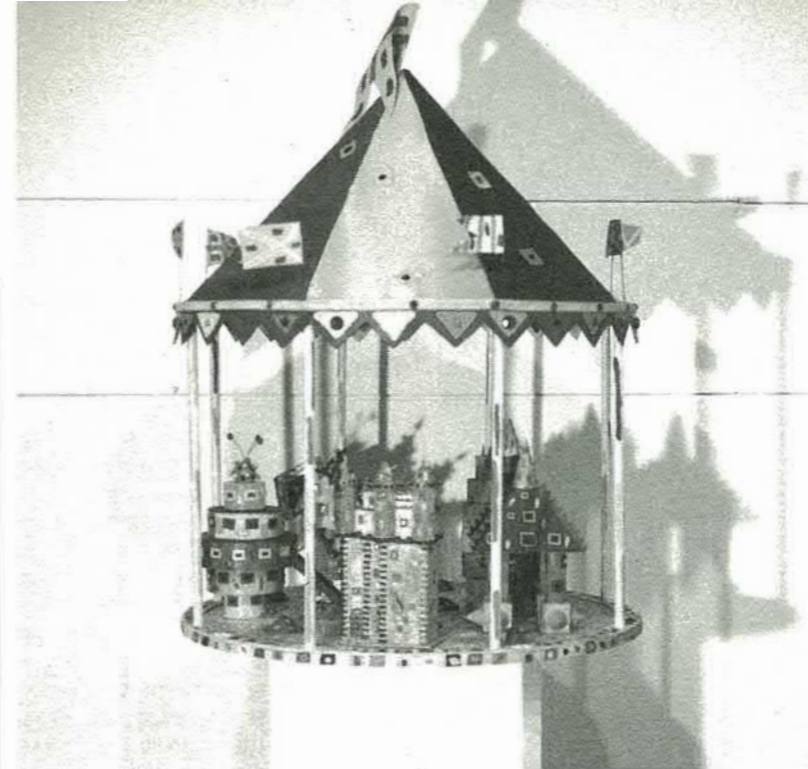
As Siddig explained in a slide show organised by the Auckland Studio Potters, the Sudan is a meeting place of two cultures, Arabic from the north, and African from the south. His work shows both these cultures, and also that of Europe, as seen through his eyes. These three influences have produced his imaginative and sometimes whimsical designs.

The exhibition contained pieces from small pendants to a large coiled pot. They are mostly derived from traditional shapes, such as the calabash - a gourd - and included the *lbreeq* - the water jug. Four small bowls were scaled-down versions of the "gaddah" - the large wooden eating bowl of the Sudanese

villagers. There were large curved slab platters, and smaller bowls - all rounded and without a foot. The designs though were what made the pieces. They varied from the purely decorative scraffito repeat design, to a *Guardian Crossword!* There was one stunning piece showing the famous chalk horse carved in the downs near where Siddig lives. He said that he had always wanted to use the horse, but could not reconcile a design using it. Then he suddenly realised he could make a whole herd of horses - and there they are - painted with white and red slip and looking more like hot dusty Africa, than cool damp Surrey!

The plain undecorated pieces - mostly small calabash shaped bottles and vases - have cunningly placed carbon smudges. As Siddig fires in an electric kiln, the carbon from burning wood is hard to find - so he uses black slip to fake the "carbon" marks.

His personal marks on the pieces are a scorpion - the African mark, and a bird - from



England. The scorpion was from a series of patterns derived from the houses now lost under Lake Nasser behind the Aswan Dam. The villagers used to paint the sun-baked mud houses with white clay in the most amazing designs. It never rained there so the designs were only sometimes removed by sandstorms. Siddig has collected many slides of these unique houses. The owners were rehoused in prefabricated houses, and sadly no longer make these decorations. The bird developed from a plate he made for his mother in the Sudan when he was homesick in England. The bird was flying home to the Sudan for him.

He obviously has great delight in the animal world, and when he knew he was coming to New Zealand he produced two pieces featuring the kiwi. There are also three animal shapes. One a glowing stylised hyaena, and the other two *Zeppos* - hybrid zebra/hippos. Siddig explained that he had always wanted to make the beautifully marked zebra, but its legs are too fragile - so he made zebra-striped hippos instead!

Another totally African design comes from the cave paintings in Nubia. These platters with a free design of warriors and women are quite stunning. The figures have such movement. Yet another design derived from Africa is the *Crossed Crocodiles Dish*. The "Crossed Crocodiles" was a weight for gold on the Gold Coast.

This was a beautiful exhibition, well mounted by Pots of Ponsonby, with a fascinating story behind each piece. Everyone enjoyed meeting and talking to Siddig. He was such a warm and amusing person, and obviously enjoyed his work so much. His enthusiasm was infectious - a true artist and teacher.

THE MERRY ROUND OF GOING

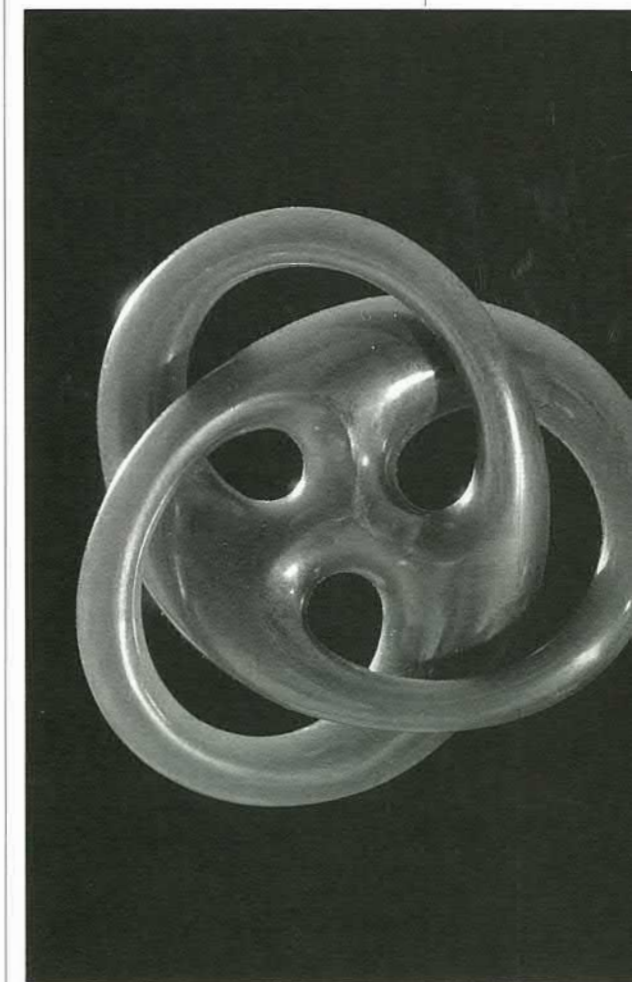
Tracy Collins at the RKS Gallery, August 1991

Reviewed by Dugald Page

The initial visual response to this exhibition could vary from thinking it was a confectioner's shop to that of a Lilliputian fairground. Fantastic constructions of icing like decorated castles, merry-go-rounds or "merry round of going" objects, in garish, raw and beautifully innocent colours. Intricate structures in whatever is suitable and appropriate to form this fantasy world, of wit, charm and perceptive observations through a theatrical setting.

People are given permission to mentally fantasize as they did as a child, playing with images, ideas and dreams. This participation is extended to the viewer being able to rotate some structures. For me they would have had an added wonderment if motorised and played suitable music to enhance the fantasy.

These superbly crafted structures indicate an imaginative and highly intuitive mind which has an edge of anxiety and tension associated with the theatre. These deceptively simple child like forms also make us think and be aware of our technological progress, as in *The Cutting Edge of Human Civilisation*, a painting questioning the progress made and the future directions of mankind. The opportunity to project our fantasies, experience a make-believe or is it a reality world, explore the bizarre or simply the secure world of the naive.



GREEN WITH ENVY AT THE CRAFTS COUNCIL

By Ann Packer

This collection of the work of ten jade carvers was impressive in its scope. A small display of only 25 works, including pieces by two women, it nonetheless managed to cover a wide variety, from functional to purely decorative objects. There were simple classic works such as Paul Annear's earring and disc, and the elaborate intertwined figures of Robyn Barclay's *Hoanga* (The Lovers). Prices varied from amazingly undervalued - Alfred Poole's pendant and box for \$180 - to Hepi Maxwell's *Taku Kiwi Whakama* (contentment) at \$6,400. An exhibition for all tastes and all pockets.

Far left; "Merry Round of Going with Castles", by Tracey Collins.

Below; "Tirune" by Donn Salt. Photo; Donn Salt.



Above; Bowl by John Parker. Photo; Howard Williams.

JOHN PARKER AT MASTERWORKS

Reviewed by Pat Baskett

It is fitting acknowledgement of John Parker's devotion to clay and to the wider circle of the craft world that his was the opening exhibition at Masterworks Gallery new Auckland premises. Formerly a director of Auckland Studio Pottery, John designed the first ten Fletcher Challenge exhibitions and was a selector for the New Zealand Society of Potters for three years.

His opening night show was an event rather than a static display of 24 pots. For the occasion he used his skills in stage design. John was head of design at Theatre Corporate for four years and resident designer with the Mercury Theatre for three years. He got together with Tim Dowson, the Aotea Centre's lighting director, to devise a sequence lighting system to play upon the pots, using hired equipment. It consists of four colours and a series of metal stencils, called gobos, which are placed in front of the bulbs and cast different shaped shadows.

The result is to change not only the colour and texture of the pots but to highlight them in different ways, emphasising the foot or the rim of a bowl. To appreciate this aspect of the show, night or a dull day is better. In brighter, natural light the effects on the pots are inevitably minimised.

There has always been a starkness about this potter's work, a restraint in both the decorative covering and the form, as if his prime concern is to reduce them to their most fundamental elements: perfection of shape and uniformity of glaze. This approach lends, at its best, a statuesque nature to each piece, and at the other end of the scale, to a lifelessness devoid of warmth.

Nothing, in John Parker's method of working, is left to chance. He has always turned his bowls both inside and out and it is this tooled rather than a hands-on approach which they bespeak. He uses one glaze with a variation of ingredients in either the clay body, a slip

used over the body or in the glaze itself, to make it bubbly or smooth. The glaze requires a precision in temperature and time to achieve the exact degree of frothiness.

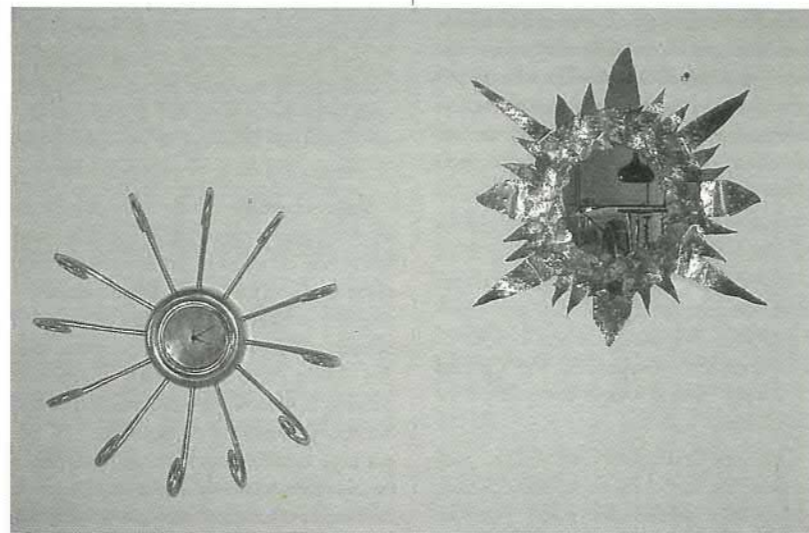
The pieces at Masterworks show his virtuosity in the fields of both form and glaze. They are larger than his earlier works. Their elegance comes from their imposing simplicity and an unfailing sense of proportion. It lets him down only once, I think, in a tall "zig zag" bottle which sits on a composite foot. I find this form too complicated.

More successful are similar shapes without the foot, especially a beautiful sphere which rises effortlessly from the ground.

It is this feeling the weightlessness which determines my preference amongst the bowls. The sensitivity at the foot of the two ridged bowls and the large stemmed bowl give them a lift of which the flared dish and bowl are devoid.

I admire the consistency of the glaze in these works, but find myself drawn to the surface of the two pieces which show the glaze in its unadulterated, uncratered form. Their satiny sheen is quite breathtaking, particularly in the tall vase which sat removed from the rest and held lilies.

Below; Left, "Fronde of You" by Duncan Sargent, cast aluminium. Right, "Sunburst Mirror", by Helen Holmes, brass. Photo; Louise Guerin.



INNER VISIONS

Reviewed by Louise Guerin

Visual overload was my first symptom upon visiting *Inner Visions* at the Crafts Council Gallery in Wellington (8 - 27 October 1991). I could be telling you more about the interior set of my head than about the exhibition when I say that, but I did wish curator Caryl McKirdy had had two enormous rooms at her disposal, with several metres of water in front of them, as a transition state from gallery - business-as-usual, to the two small worlds she had created. It was all too much for me to compute at one sitting. However, she was very gracious, and talked me through my misgivings. She was pleased with the jostling effects she had put together and enthusiastically outlined why. She had accepted the grave limitations of the space available and chosen to flower exuberantly within them.

Caryl: "Although I had a concept of how I wanted things to fit together and I saw very much that there was a responsibility as far as co-ordinating work goes, to make sure the whole thing hung together, I didn't actually want to take a leading role, I wanted to be a bit more background." So she largely allowed the 11 exhibitors' work to come together of its own accord. The courtyard room, for example, evolved through allowing Patricia Morgan to do what she wanted on the walls, while arranging her painted fabric on the floor. Wonderfully disgusting

colour combinations it has, I suggested.

Caryl laughed: "It's not geared towards the fastidious. It demands a response. There is a sort of humour there, but the responses are more gutsy really. These people in a way are exploring their own emotional responses to things. It's a positive statement. The approach is even kind of innocent. It's not heavily conceptual and intellectual or about making beautiful, tasteful works of art. It's expressionist, really - the interaction is direct - which is not to say it's unintelligent. Rather than being a one-pointed directional approach, it's more an unfolding - a peeling back of layers and for that reason maybe the approach is even messier. There's no imposition of order." (That's what I didn't like!)

So much for the overall effect. To the individual pieces: Ralph Hershell-Levy's steel and concrete cabinet *Homage to Freda Kahlo* and his garden centrepiece were the most authoritative in feeling, anchoring much of the other work, upon reflection. Enjoyed Toby Twiss's pedestal bowl and particularly taken with Duncan Sargent's nasty *Fronde of You* cast aluminium clock, which looked great alongside Helen Holmes' lovely crumpled sunburst mirror. (Was refused permission to sit in her metal chair on grounds of possible fragility. A visual treat.) Liked Myffy Rees's understated planters but didn't feel they fitted well with everything else. Favourite of Matthew von Sturmer was his fabulously wonky table; would like to see Lyndsey Handy's flower lights with more substantial stems; find Ali Bramwell's jewellery haunting; and would happily live with Sally Campbell's hand screenprinted and painted cotton velvet.

All in all a very satisfying group to look at in detail and I'm sorry if you missed it!

SKAIN/SKIN

Lopdell House, Titirangi, Auckland, August 23 - September 22, 1991.

Reviewed by Sue Curnow

Ten fibre artists from around New Zealand were invited to respond to the concept *Skein/Skin*, with new or existing work. The resulting exhibition, well-presented and uncluttered, consisted mainly of multi-media work. It's always interesting and useful, in a theme show, to see how (or whether) the works relate to the given theme and to each other. In this instance, the many disparate approaches, and the fact that several pieces



were not made specifically with the concept in mind, made for a high degree of visual interest tempered by an overall thinness of content and uneven quality.

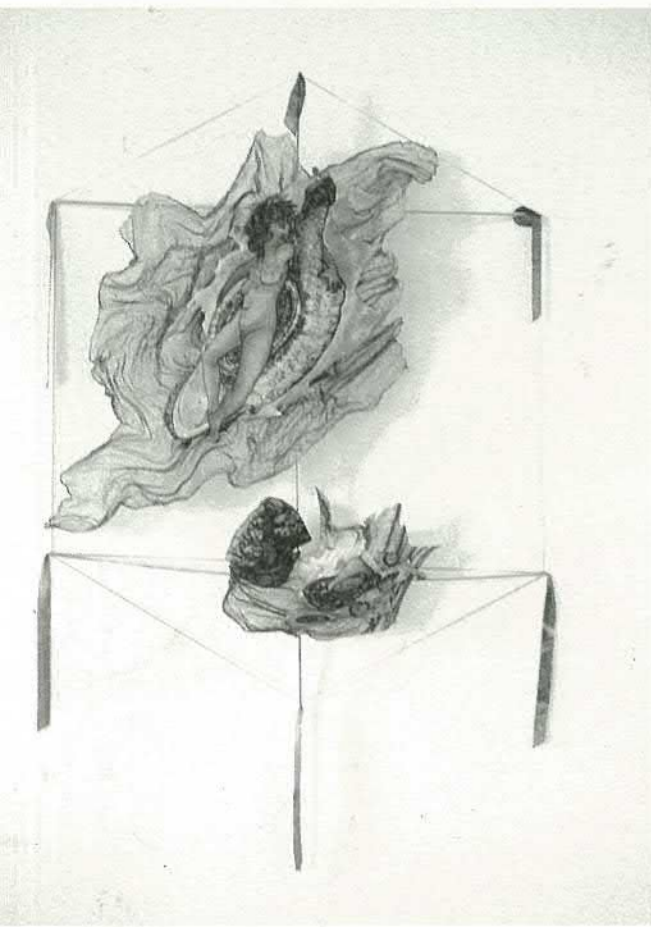
Jeanette Gilbert's three hanging kite shapes *What Beneath the Surface Lies*, containing skin (leather, membrane) held together by lacing and knitting, were reminders of the frailty of life - a simple message, in simple terms. I found Helen Schamroth's equally frail-looking knitted copper-wire hanging far more evocative and subtle, working on different levels to achieve its effect; its shadow on the wall, moving with the light and with the work itself, added another dimension, as a double image and as a colour complement to its

metallic brown-to-copper-to-red shadings: this was a deceptively delicate skin.

Frailly characterised *Toi te Rito Maihi's* wakahuia, too. The symbolic puns rumoured to be contained in the work were not made clear, but it was curious to observe that the three "treasure boxes" were in the form of ethereal canoe-shapes, of harakeke paper, hanging from finely plaited cords, and that the treasures contained therein were simple natural items like kauri leaves, feathers, and shells. Perhaps this playful challenge to the male right to carve wakahuia also contained a challenge as to what constitutes "treasure".

Ruth Castle's baskets explore the balance and tension between lightness and strength;

Above; "Skein/Skin" by Jenny Barraud. Photo; Tim Renner.



Above: "Rakaku Kite with Cloud", Susan Flight.
Below: "Whaka Taurira", dyed flax, Aromea Tahiwī. Photos; Tim Renner.



her contributions to the show, demonstrating her mastery with her materials, effectively suggested open and closed form, skein and skin.

One work was outstanding; in terms of concept, realisation, and presentation, Jenny Barraud's mixed-media assemblage was in a class of its own. Comprising five pieces - a large, deep-framed arrangement, flanked by four small framed etchings - it related to the power of the four basic elements. We were presented with a riddle:

Earth/Water/Fire/Air
Met together in a garden fair
Put in a basket bound with skin
If you answer this riddle
you'll never begin.

The ways in which we were invited to explore the puzzle offered many delights. The arrangement was focused on a skein of embroidery silk - that which had been used to stitch and tie the other elements of the composition to one another: shell, feather, wood, crystal, in a container formed by a loop of vine and a loose membrane, secured by cross-stitches to parchment-like paper, etched with the elemental symbols. This had been treated with shellac, giving it an "antique" appearance, and surrounded by folds of shibori-dyed silk. The assured and confident handling of materials and resolution of this with the idea should set a new standard for craftworkers who make mixed-media assemblage.

Helen Schamroth's work in the same genre, *Pacific Memories - Fragments I - XII*, worked well as a narrative group; an economy and spareness of material elements, repeated in slightly varying configurations, gained strength through continuity. The narrative related to the sea, through colour, form, and materials, suggesting nets, ropes, and shoreline objects.

Susan Flight and Malcolm Harrison are both storytellers whose engagement and familiarity with their materials and methods enable them to communicate with their viewers by pictorial and symbolic means. Both, too, frequently imbue their work with whimsy or humour - and so it was in this show. But Harrison is further along the track; nothing in his work is superfluous or unintended - every mark counts, one feels, even if the surface is rich with stitchery, colour, and images. Flight's exuberant and lively mix of Baroque and comic-book styles is a bit on the self-indulgent side, which is not say that it isn't amusing, or technically admirable, but it does make it easy to dismiss, or not take seriously.

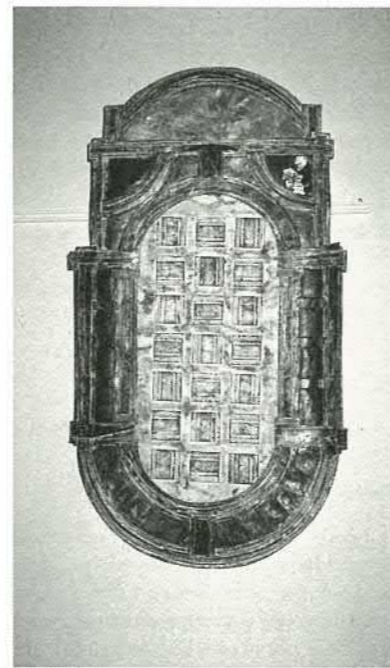
An experimental abstract-expressionist painting by Phillipa Steel, a small woven hanging by Aromea Tahiwī, and a quilt with the theme of clothing, by Judy Wilson, were also exhibited in this uneven but enjoyable show.

HELYNE JENNINGS

Reviewed by Ann Packer

Helyne Jennings' New Zealand connection is in Nelson, where her parents live. Her show at the Marilyn Savill Gallery follows exhibitions in Japan and Singapore, though she works from a studio in London. The work in this show covered several of her recent techniques: mixed media on stitched paper, several prints and three enchanting card and oil paint constructions based on the basilican shapes of some medieval cathedrals.

The stitched and pleated works seemed somewhat lifeless to me, but the basilican constructions were superb. So evocative are they, one sensed a God's eye view of a real cathedral. In colours reflecting the traditional church palette of deep purples through reds and tinged with gold, they presented, in spite of their small size, an aura of majesty.



Above: "Basilican Study II", oil and paint, by Helyne Jennings

WEARABLE ART

BY HELEN SCHAMROTH

The Nelson Wearable Art Awards have rapidly become an institution, capturing imaginations and talent, and putting Nelson on the creative map in a wonderful, unique way.

Credit must go to Suzie Moncrieff, producer and director of this vital energetic spectacle, the fourth since 1986, which brought together many more talents than just the creators of wearable art. Rather it involved various sectors of the community starting with business- es, notably Chez Eelco, with Trust Bank Canterbury in particular this year, for sponsorship, through to those involved in drama and dance, as well as modelling, music and set design.

The theme this year was "This Precious Earth", which, combined with Nelson's 150th anniversary celebrations, provided the focus for the production. Awards were given for silk, wool, children's wear, conservation, an open section and a section celebrating Nelson's 150th birthday. Exhibits included work from Australia and from all over New Zealand, with a very strong Nelson presence.

The mood was set on entering the Trafalgar Centre, as spectators stepped into a dark cave-like entrance. And the show, which was seen by over 5,000 people on two nights, involved stilt walkers, roller skaters, gymnasts, skateboard riders, and sound and light effects, as well as the more expected dance troupes. The show culminated in a giant birthday cake on stage, balloons and euphoric presentations of awards. What a celebration!

However, what happens when you step to one side of the hype, the energy and the production? How do the exhibits stack up on real analysis? Is the success of the Wearable Art Awards just to do with the presentation, or are these really examples of excellence in wearable art?

The four judges were Patricia Black, a designer from Sydney, Robert Gormack, a designer for Expozay, Tauranga, Susan Holmes, a designer and fibre artist from Auckland and Jane Evans, an artist from Nelson. Of particular interest was seeing works by the first three of these, setting standards rarely met by the exhibitors.

Their task was to select worthy entries, 280 out of over 500, and the winners of the awards. The criteria, of necessity, had to include how the garments looked from a distance on the catwalk as much as conception and execution of the garments. Consequently there were many "big" statements, with lots of flowing and exaggerated forms. Just how good the crafting was really had to be ascertained on closer examination in the subsequent exhibitions. A hint of intricate and sophisticated surface design could be glimpsed on many a garment as models swept past spectators at what seems like breakneck speed.

There were glorious, and humorous, concoctions of traditional and unconventional materials (including plastic shopping bags, aluminium cans and licorice),



eminently wearable items, distinctly uncomfortable looking ones, political statements (especially about the environment) and garments designed to outrage.

But what distinguished this show from other wearable art parades and exhibitions was the participation of artists working in mixed media, using the moving body as a base for their creations. Their participation expanded the definition of the exhibition beyond "fashion" and "wearability", to art supported by the human body.

It was no real surprise then that the overall winning work was *Pallas Athene* by Donna Dementé-Ogilvy of Dunedin. Her creation, dominated by papier mache masks, had a mobile sculptural quality that had little to do with wearable, and much to do with art (or is this

Top: "Wool Goddess", by Greer Taylor (Australia). Lower: "Tane's Revenge", by Deborah McFarlane (Nelson). Photos; Tim Fitzgerald.

Far Left; Wearable Arts Producer/Director. Suzie Moncrieff. Photo; Marion van Dijk, courtesy Nelson Evening Mail.

Left; "Out of the Land" by Willa Rogers. Photo Tim Fitzgerald.



craft?). The body was the vehicle for transporting the idea, the image having a strong identity of its own. It summed up well the energetic direction and witty commentaries of the more experimental work.

More than any of the worthy winners in other sections this entry reinforced the breadth of the definition of Wearable Art, which has in recent times been developing into an exciting art form.

Picking favourites was a difficult task, but I found that those that stayed with me long after the event included *Out of the Land* by Willa Rogers (Nelson), *Wool Goddess* and *Aspects to Geometry* by Greer Taylor (Australia), *Flaming Fungus* by Janina Amberger (Nelson), *Tane's Revenge* by Deborah McFarlane (Nelson), *Medieval* by Susie Crooks (Napier), *Valiant* by Sarah Hornibrooke (Takaka), *Firebird* by Heather Pashby (Nelson), *Pounamu Cloak* by Kristin Leek (Christchurch) and *Nature of Love* by Mark Raynor (Kaikoura).

The list of memorable work could continue, which suggests that the work in the Wearable Art Awards does go beyond the merely spectacular, although it is difficult to appreciate subtleties in this kind of presentation. I observed a good deal of substance in the entries, and the initiative taken by Nelsonians to stage the show is to be applauded and supported.

And an interesting observation that many of the notable entries originated in Nelson, suggests that major events like this give impetus for talents to flourish where they might not have otherwise. Sounds like the Porter Project in Action!

SUZIE MONCRIEFF

By Julie Warren

Suzie Moncrieff, originator and organiser of the Wearable Art Awards, has a passion for sculpture. She was always drawn to it: "When I see sculpture my hands tingle, it seems a natural thing to do." That she has missed out on a couple of years sculpting because of the demands of the show has been a real regret.

Raised on a farm in the back blocks of Nelson, Suzie draws heavily on the support of her family, who are still living there. After a spell at Teachers' College in Christchurch and a year in Western Australia, she returned to Nelson and settled on a portion of the family farm.

She found herself helping out over the summer at the gallery of potters Royce and Trudi McGlashen in Brightwater. Royce encouraged her to make things out of clay; Suzie responded, her natural talent emerged and she was soon selling everything she could produce. She worked with porcelain - handmade figures, expressive and whimsical, lecherous dragons, voluptuous women, sometimes making wry social comments.

Carrying on with her work at home, she moved into larger figures, then got a block of Oamaru stone and some chisels and worked out what to do. She is still entirely self-taught and finds working in isolation suits her best.

After her first exhibition in Wellington she was startled to find that she had to pay the gallery so much commission, and decided to set up an outlet of her own.

Suzie had often driven past a derelict cob house, on the main road south of Nelson, and discovered it belonged to the Nelson timber firm of Baigents. The fates were smiling on her the day she went to see them.

Baigents had themselves just been approached by the Historic Places Trust about the old house and seized Suzie's suggestion. They provided builders, a co-op was formed and laboured for them, and the William Higgins Gallery was born.

To attract visitors to the gallery, Suzie staged two successful sculpture awards with the financial assistance of Baigents, but lost that sponsorship when the old established company underwent restructuring. However, her tenacity saw her out seeking more money, this time for another dream - a wearable art award.

Eelco Boswijk, coffee house owner and long time patron of the arts in Nelson, liked the idea and has been an ardent supporter of the project from the beginning. The first two Wearable Art shows were held in marquees in the countryside near the gallery. They were organised on a shoe-string budget, relying on the enthusiasm of friends and increasingly on Suzie's sister, Heather, for help. The flair and panache with which they were presented and the motivation of everyone involved made it obvious that it had to be seen by more people. The show moved to a large central venue - Nelson's Trafalgar Centre.

Many people would have been content to have made such a success, but Suzie's determination continues. As well as plans to tour the show within New Zealand, she wants to see it on the catwalks of Paris, and is putting her energy into that.

Her recent move into Nelson city has meant major changes, but she still returns frequently to the family farm to unwind and recharge her batteries.

JANINA AMBERGER

By Julie Warren

It's been a natural progression, rather than a radical change of direction, which has turned Janina Amberger into a textile artist. Her mother went to Art School, and has painted since, and Janina enjoyed art at school in Nelson.

By chance, her first job was in textiles - she worked with a friend screenprinting for some time, before moving into commercial art for a prominent Nelson department store.

Five years in partnership with her husband in a photography studio followed, before she decided that it was her turn to concentrate on extending her talents.

The Polytech Craft Design Courses, then not long established, suited her needs, rather than following in her mother's footsteps and going to an Art School. "I wanted a design based training, rather than skills' based, and it seemed to me that the Craft Design courses offered that." She hasn't been disappointed, speaking especially highly of the life drawing classes offered at Nelson Polytech, which she sees as giving her a strong base for all her design work.

Janina had been urged for a couple of years to enter the Wearable Art Awards. This year she decided to give it a try. Her entry evolved from a brief by a tutor to design a personal support system. She went to Pelorus



and took photos and did drawings of mushrooms and came back and made organic, loosely formed cushions. Like mushrooms, the idea kept growing and the drawings became more 3 dimensional, eventually turning into her spectacular creation *Flaming Fungus*.

The garment was a perfect melding of what she has been taught. She was able to combine aspects of design with techniques of silk dyeing (the garment took 22m of the fabric) and the skills of putting it together to produce this outstanding piece of work.

Janina has no firm plans yet for when she finishes the Diploma course at the end of next year. She would most like to do a post graduate year in textiles overseas, but if that doesn't come off it's likely that she will initially try to establish herself in a workshop with other craft design graduates.

Above; Janina Amberger models "Flaming Fungus", her winning entry in the silk section.



Above; "Pallas Athene" by Donna Dementé-Ogilvy, the winning entry in the Wearable Art Award. Photo; Tim Fitzgerald.

DONNA DEMENTÉ-OGILVIE

By Peter Gibbs

The Wearable Art show might have been tailor-made for overall winner Donna Dementé-Ogilvy. The performance aspects of the show, coupled with her recent work with papier-mâché, combined her main interests perfectly.

A period at Elam in Auckland during 1986-87 enabled her to study photography and printmaking, but she found the art school environment too confining - it didn't allow her to do enough at once. Since moving to Dunedin, she's been involved with *Super8*, an arts collective combining eight different art forms, the title also having a reference to film, one of their important activities. While *Super8* may continue, Dementé-Ogilvy is becoming increasingly involved in the planning of *Moonscream*, which will focus on a gallery area, with some smaller work spaces for a woodcarver, a ceramic artist, music, and her own papier-mâché.

Plans for the gallery, which will be in High St, Dunedin, include monthly exhibitions, interspersed with periods where the area will be used as a dynamic work space for performance. The new gallery is anxious to promote new, or fringe talent, but has plans to show the work of well established artists as well.

Donna plans a trip to Sydney during April 1992. Workshops there will combine the making of all the props, masks and sets with the choreographing and carrying out of performances. A video is currently being made by film maker John Harvey in two parts; one of a recent show, the other a documentary showing how it was put together.

She doesn't reject the idea of returning to art school, but currently finds it far too limiting an option.

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SUZIE CROOKS

By Peter Gibbs

Suzie Crooks was the winner of the Wool Section. A 1982 sculpture graduate of East Sydney Tech, Crooks became involved in knitting before moving to Napier to set up a studio on her father's farm. A grant from the Napier City Council helped her get started, but she has taken a number of initiatives to enhance her income and to ensure that her business expands.

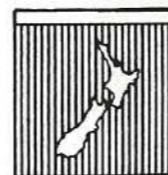
Three or four times a year she teaches courses through the Hawkes Bay Polytechnic. A number of strategies get people into the studio; and keep them coming back. After initially advertising through the local newspaper, she now relies on word of mouth. Bus tours have now started to call as well. A free Saturday knitwear advisory programme brings keen knitters, who then find they can rent out pattern graphs and will in the

future be able to buy specialist fibres and buttons as well. She can often give people ideas for pattern design or teach creative tricks to those without drawing skills.

Annual fashion parades introduce her new collections. She finds her work getting more commercial with limited editions rather than one-off originals. She likes to take her influences from the symbols of daily life rather than delving into the national psyche for inspiration. The book *New Zealand New Zealand- In Praise of Kiwiana* provoked a series of garments with brightly coloured motifs. One of her best selling lines are jerseys emblazoned with hearts - a big hit with sentimental Japanese honeymooners in Queenstown.

Her most recent exhibition opened at the Aigantighe Gallery in Timaru on November 22.

Above; Suzie Crooks models one of her knitted garments.



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Right; Toi Maihi.
Photo; Deborah
Smith.



TOI MAIHI

By Louise Leggett

Toi Maihi is a member of the Craft Panel of the QEII Arts Council, a role recognising her achievements and skills in many different creative areas. Toi has no formal qualifications in this field, but says that her education has its roots in "my parents, two of my school teachers and life."

"Everything is based on my life, really, I've always been extremely curious about natural things, and always fascinated with patterns, the business of reading the patterns, and re-using them, and seeing whether others can read them or totally miss what's going on..."

Toi's family background provides patterns for her to follow and stories for her to use in both her art and her life. Her tribal affiliations include Ngai Te Ipu, Ngai Te Apatu o Ngati Kahunguna, and Ngati Hao o Tai Tokerau, while on the maternal side there is a Yorkshire connection.

Toi Maihi is not the type of person to actively seek to involve herself with administrative matters - "I never

wanted to be on committees...I wanted to do things". However, she feels that as a woman, and especially as a Maori woman, she has a responsibility to do whatever she can to assist other Maori craftspeople, particularly women, many of whom are disadvantaged in craft. This led to her involvement in 1985 in organising the Auckland showing of the Karanga Exhibition. Organisational roles such as this have too long been the domain of men who have accepted women's help in cleaning, hanging, and "preparing the kai" but neglected to invite the contemporary women artists to exhibit with them. So although Toi feels that "it would be lovely to be retired off all the committees, I feel it is necessary. I keep looking for others coming up who can do the job so I foster them. Until I find someone who can fill the gap I don't feel in all conscience that I should allow the gap to develop".

Toi derives particular pleasure from her involvement with the Weavers Committee, as much of her work, especially her paintings, derive from weaving. "The elements creep in - I didn't consciously put them in, they just appeared." The other source of inspiration is simply nature itself - "I realised that if the forms came from nature you should be able to portray the form that they actually came from - that's what started me off on the water patterns". These water patterns are a recurring theme in Toi's paintings, as are birds. "Birds write these patterns in the sky in their flight. They fly visual songs and sign patterns and to me they symbolise freedom."

Toi's interests cover a wide spectrum of creativity. One of her current projects is the writing of a book, one which began "as a child's story, a multi-level one. It's based on a true family story. My father's father's hapu used to sing the whale ashore and it started from that." Toi comes from a family which always encouraged the telling of stories - in her view, an essential part of education. She considers the ritual of storytelling necessary to help in forming some of the spiritual values which our current education system ignores.

The differences between her ideal type of education and the system which actually exists are shown in two paintings which she has done. One contains a strongly coloured, plaited plastic cord which separates out into its individual hollow strands, each becoming grey, diminishing in strength and terminating in a small box. This shows the effect of specialisation. Each subject is taught within a very narrow context, and life is seen not as a series of interacting processes, but as consisting of skills which are acquired and utilised in a vacuum. The square cord does not have the strength of the round harakeke "time tunnel" woven into the other painting whose colours reflect those of nature rather than the harsh artificial colours of the first painting.

For Toi, one of the most enjoyable things about being a member of the Craft Panel is the variety of work that she gets to consider, the fact that there are always surprises. "That's what I enjoy about it - you never know what's going to come up."

ROLLY MUNRO

By Leigh Henderson

Nestled beside a bush reserve, within sight of the pounding surf of Whiritoa beach, at the base of the Coromandel Peninsula, is the home of woodworker Rolly Munro. The setting seems appropriate, shavings spill from the workshop onto the driveway and large slabs of timber are piled haphazardly in every available shady spot. Suspended from the workshop ceiling is a large wooden sculpture, soon to be installed in the Ministry of Forestry's head office reception area.

During July 1990, Rolly was in Dunedin working as Artist-in-Residence at Otago polytechnic, when the Ministry of Forestry asked him to submit a design for a sculpture dealing with the idea of sustainability in forestry, and using radiata pine.

"I was probably chosen because of my recent experience working on a large commissioned sculpture in pine. Before arriving in Dunedin I installed a work in five sections totalling about 9 metres in length in the South Waikato District Council chambers in Tokoroa."

This sculpture was based on the hollow volcanic quality of landforms in that area, and on Tokoroa's major industry - the forest. Like much of Rolly's work, it has an organic, sensual quality which invites caresses of the smooth exterior surfaces and exploration of the interior revealed by cut away areas.

"Pine is an excellent timber for large sculptural pieces. It's light, making large sections easier to handle. The size of the growth rings are in harmony with the size of the work and its pale colour allows the form to dominate. Pine's strength enables it to be carved very thinly, yet remain stable once dry."

Most of Rolly's smaller sculptures and more functional works utilise native timbers, whatever he can recover from beaches and farms, or is occasionally washed down hillsides during heavy rain. Rolly never purchases native timber, so his supplies are not always reliable.

"My work is governed by whatever materials are available. Luckily people often come and offer me logs which would otherwise rot or become firewood. That's another advantage of using pine; quality timber is available in large quantities. And of course it's a renewable resource."

While considering ideas for the Ministry of Forestry commission, Rolly visited the Forest Research Institute in Rotorua.

"I was particularly interested in tissue culture, and how generations of trees are produced according to genetic requirements, sixty or more trees from one seed. This is very much tied in with the concept of sustainability."

Rolly returned home with samples of cones and seeds and began sketching various configurations of these structures.

"Working on ideas for a commission is quite different from my normal creative process. I usually begin

working with the wood from an initial idea or sketch, but during the course of the production of the piece, either the wood or the form begins to dominate, and I modify as I go along."

Occasionally Rolly finds a piece of wood so dramatic that it dictates completely and demands a pure and simple form which allows the splendour of the grain to be displayed.

With a commissioned piece the design must be completely resolved at the planning stage, so it can be approved by the agency commissioning the work. All exploration and modification happens on paper or via marquettes."

The Ministry of Forestry sculpture is derived from a pine seed, nestled into its aerodynamic "wing". The sculpted wing is truncated, the hollow seed form cut open, revealing internal structures based on cone segments, each with inset seeds and wings. These spiral along a central column in a manner reminiscent of the structure of DNA. This "seed within" a seed design conveys an idea of the enormous future potential of a single seed.

As the eye travels from right to left along the column, the cone segments become less representational, suggesting the transition from seed to pine product. Within the central column, which is itself partly cut away, emerges a spike, a symbol of the germination process.

Rolly graduated from Otago Art School in 1978, having specialised in sculpture, then travelled to Perth, Western Australia, where he eventually found work as a woodturner for a furniture factory. After returning to New Zealand at the end of 1979, he began to explore the possibilities of woodturning as a craft medium.

"Woodturning necessarily results in symmetrical forms, so it wasn't long before the sculptor in me began to find ways to destroy the symmetry and to create interesting rhythms and movement. I began laminating different turned sections, then carving these back to create voids and to reveal the interior. Usually when turning, you aim for walls of even thickness, but I've found that when making objects which are opened up, a change in thickness allows the cut line to become an expressive element."

He often emphasises these lines by applying a dark stain or lacquer in contrast to the highly polished wood.

As a child, Rolly's happiest hours were spent fishing from rocks, swimming and exploring beaches and rockpools.

"This probably accounts for the fact that my main artistic inspiration derives from natural forms, sea creatures, shells, skeletal forms. I'm particularly interested in the way these structures display the effects of the forces of nature, such as driftwood, beached and abraded, with the softwood worn away from the harder tissues or the interior forms of shells exposed after being worn and battered by the sea and sand."

The titles of Rolly's recent works reveal this preoccupation; "Flotsam", "Flight of the Anemone", "Intertidal Reminiscence" and "Kina".



Above; Rolly Munro at work.

Rolly has found the process of turning reflects the underlying symmetry of natural forms and the carving acts in a similar way to that of the elements wearing them away. While working at Otago Polytechnic, he began experimenting with sandblasting timber, and this has rapidly become a major element in his work.

“Sandblasting reproduces the effects of nature, it gave the timber a dry, weathered, bone-like quality, which fits perfectly with what I try to achieve in my work. Sometimes I sandblast a piece entirely, at other times I enjoy the contrast between the dry and the polished surfaces.”

Until recently, economic constraints forced Rolly to divide his time between sculpting and teaching, but since last year has been able to devote all his time to working in wood, and has found the demand for his work increasing steadily in spite of the recession. Last December he and his wife, a painter and art teacher at Thames High School, opened a small gallery at their home.

Many of Rolly’s works are purchased by overseas visitors and eventually he would like to explore the possibility of marketing his work through galleries in Europe, Japan and the USA.

JEANETTE GILBERT

By Judy Wilson

At many of the recent prestige exhibitions featuring multi-media pieces, Jeanette’s work has started to attract attention and it’s satisfying to watch her steady development. Recognition of her good crafting and innovative approach came with her winning the major award at the recent Creative Dyeing III exhibition.

For Jeanette, like many fibre artists, the growth of her craft is closely tied to her growth as a person, and the realization that her own self-expression is as valid as anyone else’s. The confidence with which she can now create her craft work comes from a sound background of study at adult education classes with our leading fibre motivators Susan Flight and Carole Shephard. Susan has provided countless artists with excellent knowledge of dyeing techniques such as batik and shibori, not to mention her graphic art skills, and Carole’s ability with installation and assemblages using natural and found objects has inspired many people. For Jeanette, with this background, the chance to work with other top fibre artists under the guidance of Inga Hunter, was a turning point.

Both being a mother and living on a farm are positive factors in her life. “I like using my hands; it helps me think in a positive way about myself and my life. I like



Far left; Jeanette Gilbert. Photo; Judy Wilson.



Left; David Trubridge; Photo; Peter Gibbs.

living on a farm and having many natural objects readily available.”

Jeanette uses bowls made of paper and moulded to lovely forms in an introspective way. She likes putting things in, taking them out, can question why she does it, why she wants objects to relate one way and not another. In fact using fibre and form in a totally satisfying and nurturing way is what she’s good at and what she is - supportive, gently, sensitive and true to herself.

At the recent workshops with Tori de Mestre where the class was encouraged to “Explore the Third Dimension”, Jeanette found the new direction she’d been looking for, working with dyes, material, sticks, gesso, and stretching ideas. I’m looking forward to seeing her “healing platforms” and we can all expect to gain from her subjective development.

MAKING CONTACT

By David Trubridge

Out in the rugged country north of Napier on Raupunga Marae I made the unlikely acquaintance of Mike Kabotie (who is a Hopi Indian from America). Mike talked about how he strives to maintain a balance between his rational and his spiritual creativity. When we concentrate too much on the former, the pressure creates stress. At this point he recommends that we go out and feel close to trees. He even likens himself to a tree: a symmetrical spreading of branches (intellect) up into the air and of roots down into the earth. The earth is the source of his spiritual sustenance and the tree the link.

I have recently been aware of my own need to remake contact with the earth and with the emotional and expressive side of my creativity. Being artist-in-residence at Hawkes Bay Polytechnic has given me the opportunity to do that. I am grateful to both the Queen Elizabeth the Second Arts Council and the polytech for their trust in allowing me to follow my own inner directives. During my time here, I have tried to feel deep down through my roots into the landscape and into the human form.

In Hawkes Bay, thoughts of earthquakes are never far away, and one is very aware of the moving crust we sit on. The effects of these upheavals are very apparent in the landscape. This landscape has a powerful and clearly evident inner structure and I have tried to express my feelings for it in a series of wall sculptures.

These sculptures started off being made from small pieces of shaped customwood which were painted with acrylic and fastened directly to the wall. Then I moved to using pieces of split timber painted with bitumen or acrylic washes. Fastened to the wall, the wood could be taken for the fractured surface of rock, the pieces poised in a floating constellation.

Through life drawing classes, I learned to feel what I see and to express that with hand on paper. I made some figurative pieces with overlapping layers of plastic shade cloth.

As artist-in-residence, I have tried to feed back into the community something of what I have learned, through slide talks and workshops. I also held an exhibition of the work I have done here in the Napier Museum and Art Gallery. At the polytech I taught a session in designing with wood, and take a regular class in History of Modern Art. Studying History of Art, one soon comes to see that this same rational/emotional division runs right through art from the 19th century Classical/Romantic conflict to the present day.

The course of art development weaves between these two extremes, trying to find an acceptable balance. Occasionally it runs into a dead end (such as analytical cubism) when one extreme (classical-intellectual) becomes too dominant and then new directions arise elsewhere.

Present day art and craft face the same dilemmas. With all the commercial demands of earning a living and the allure of technology and sophisticated techniques or ideas, it is all too easy to lose contact with the other half of our creativity. I see that people like the Hopi Indians are an invaluable counterbalance to all that. Each part needs the other in the mutually beneficial conflict.

My six months here has been spent concentrating on the artistic side, as I continually weave between the poles of my own creativity: the rational and ordered logic of design, and the personal expressiveness of art.

POTS OF PONSONBY - TEN YEARS OLD IN 1991

By Penny Evans

Back in 1981 a group of Auckland potters got together and started a selling co-operative: Pots of Ponsonby. Now ten years later, and with five of the original members still involved, *Pots* is going from strength to strength.

It has been interesting for the regular visitor to observe over the years the maturing skills and changing styles of the co-operative members. Started in an old colonial shop at the east end of Ponsonby Road, the turn-of-the-century style and atmosphere of the old building was well complemented with the mainly domestic-ware then being produced by the members.

In mid 1989 the *Pots* co-operative moved to a new shop at the Three Lamps end of Ponsonby Road. As members come and go the accent of the shop changes slightly. In 1987 a basket-maker, Viv Wright, joined the group and provided yet another facet of craftwork.

Over the years *Pots* has hosted solo and group exhibitions from New Zealand's most revered potters - Margaret Milne, Len Castle, John Crawford, Chester Nealie, Rick Rudd, Beverley Luxton, Richard Parker, Moyra Elliott and many more. Now we are seeing exciting work from new-wave potters including Brendan Adams, Stewart Fulljames and Kevin Kilsby. Several exhibitions by invited potters are organised each year, and include work from all over New Zealand.



Right; Fisher Gallery, Pakuranga, Auckland.

Current members are: Penny Evans, Sue Lorimer, Helen Pollock, Joy Wheeler, Robin Paul, Lee Le Grice, Mary Mahon, Bob Steiner, Jean Baker, Viv Wright, Tony Bacon, Barbara Skelton and Catharine Dawson.

This group of co-workers and friends have together formed one of the most successful craft galleries in Auckland. Through hard work and talent, and support and encouragement of each other, they have succeeded where many have failed in these harder economic times. Sometimes it has been touch and go as rents and rates rise, with a corresponding rise in prices almost impossible. But the potters - and basket maker - of *Pots* have battled along and succeeded in proudly maintaining this excellent gallery in Ponsonby.

FISHER GALLERY

By Judy Wilson

The Fisher Gallery was built six years ago and is administered by the Pakuranga Arts Society. During this time, the Auckland public have had access to touring exhibitions of note, such as Evelyn Page, Olivia Spencer-Bower, Cartier-Bresson and Herbert List's photographs, and Mana Tiriti. The Fisher's annual programme of exhibitions reflects a balance of bicultural awareness and a desire to educate. As a community gallery, they work with local schools at both primary and secondary levels and the Youth Works exhibition each year offers many young people their first opportunity to have work displayed in a public gallery.

High quality craft has also been part of the programme at the Fisher and this is a role they hope to continue - notably with the Auckland Regional Craft Council exhibition, *FUNCTIONONFUNCTION*, which presented a challenge of interpretation to all craftspeople.

Editor's note: A review of this exhibition will appear in issue 39 of Craft NZ.



Right; Interior of Pots of Ponsonby, Auckland. Photo: Roger Paul.



MASTERWORKS

By Pat Baskett

Masterworks lives up to its name. It goes, in fact, from strength to strength. Undaunted by the creaking economy, Sara Sadd and Anne Porter, partners in this Auckland gallery, have moved from one room off a cobble Parnell courtyard to a revamped former warehouse.

The move is a credit not only to their business acumen and to their canny eye for quality. It is also a measure of their faith in the craft/art object. Yes, they have noticed the economic downturn but they say there are still discerning people who spend substantial amounts on applied art.

The two met when both were potters, members of the Artisan co-operative. Sara is modest about their abilities. "We're much better at selling other people's work."

They opened Masterworks nearly six years ago. From the start, they were interested in only "top notch" works. Eighteen months after opening they began holding exhibitions and it is largely the proliferation of this aspect of the gallery function that prompted them to look for new quarters when their lease came up for renewal.

The new gallery has a street frontage of elegant arched windows giving good visual access to the large works displayed on white cubes inside. Smaller pieces sit in individual places on glass or wooden shelving, in an area which leads to the large exhibition space not visible from the road. This is a satisfyingly open rectangular room with high ceilings - intimidating, perhaps, for the maker of fine, small things.

For the opening in August, a grand occasion of 200 guests who drank white bubbly and ate slices of smoked tuna, Masterworks sported a very discreet range of some of New Zealand's finest craftware: glass, ceramics, a tiny selection of woodwork, iron, silver-smithing and three pieces of fibre art.

In case this all sounds too earnest, a high class light touch also flits amongst the shelves. A John Green mermaid waves a jaunty smile. Above her sit two admirably comic animalistic creations of Malcolm Ford made of tiny wooden components, one a dog with a wind-up mechanism and small clock. Then there is a the funny-sad farmer leaning on master blacksmith Noel Gregg's *Giddy Gate*.

The Masterworks stable has a core of 40 or 50 people, and intermittently can swell to up to 80.

"We work hard to give a good service, with personal contact. We're always happy to work in with people, but the most important thing is that we enjoy it so much - and have such solid support from our clients."

TE TAUMATA GALLERY

By Pat Baskett

Te Taumata means "to rest the eyes on excellence". It is the name of a new gallery which opened in Auckland in September showing painting, sculpture and craftwork by Maori artists and craftspeople.

It consists of three generously proportioned spaces in the Finance Plaza. One of these is devoted to painting and sculpture. The other two adjoining galleries show traditional and non-traditional work. Part of one of these contains the first Maori bookshop, selling books by 40 Maori fiction writers and including works of non-fiction and history.

More than 20 craft workers have contributed items for sale. These were assessed by the gallery's kakaitea, or guardians - Selwyn Muru, Fred Graham, Georgina Kirby and Witi Ihimaera. Their selection is guided by the gallery's policy of giving young people the opportunity of exhibiting their work with that of established craftspeople.

Alongside kete from Te Hapua and Tokomaru Bay and greenstone jewellery are the works of several master carvers. Adrian Peeni has contributed a finely carved pare. On the wall inside the entrance is a large carving by Gordon Hatfield. It's called *Aotea Poupou* and at \$8,000 is the craft gallery's most expensive item. Hatfield is from Ngapuhi but has carved this work in the Taranaki style.

A tokotoko, or walking stick, held upright in its own stand, is the work of Tupare Te Whata. It is elaborately carved over most of its length, from a branch which was prepared for carving years before by being especially bound.

Alex Nathan has made small boxes of bone with ends of kamahi and kauri.

Special exhibitions of carving and of weaving are planned for early in 1992 and negotiations are underway with Paki Harrison, representing the carvers, and Emily Schuster, of the weavers' committee.

The gallery showing non-traditional crafts has a display of earthenware pottery by Tanya Ulrich, Baye Riddell and Manos Nathan.

It also includes shirts and t-shirts, silk scarves, woven wall hangings by Maude Cook, and hand blocked and printed duvet covers and pillowslips by Trish Eruera. An unusual item is a cotton altar cloth made by Mere Knight which has an embroidered border of taniko.

One of the functions of Te Taumata is to provide a showcase of high quality Maori craft items for tourists.

Left; Masterworks new premises, Parnell, Auckland. Photo: Howard Williams.

ARTITURE

BY CARIN WILSON

Photographs; Patrick Reynolds.

"Do you call this furniture or what?" The truckie summed up his own silent reaction as we struggled to fit one of the last pieces into the truck before shifting the exhibits to the Museum.

(How do I deal with this. Do I take him head on and launch into the furniture-as-art/furniture-as-function dichotomy or do I quickly pass it off and get back to work? Snap decision: "Every opening is an opportunity. Let's see what he says when I try it on him".)

"What we're trying to do is to redefine furniture in New Zealand. These pieces are all made by people who are playing with the idea that furniture is not just for sitting on or eating at but it can also add some fun to our lives and start us thinking about a more Pacific sense of style."

Long pause. "What for?"

(Uh oh. I chose the wrong one here. But don't give up yet! Hang in there.)

"Well basically it's to see whether the idea can grow. To find out what other people think about making things in New Zealand that give a more distinctive feeling of our background and how we live, you know, culturally."

"Like, see the reason this one's been upholstered in Tapa cloth is not because it's comfortable or hard wearing or anything like that but it is a kind of fabric that's only found in the Pacific and some of us still haven't recognised that it is unique. There are lots of little references like that in these pieces."

"Can everyone go and have a look?"

What followed is a long conversation, and with every exhibition the discussion is revived and an interesting new dimension added to it. After five annual exhibitions Artiture has stamped itself as the prevailing public expression of a growing group of artists exploring furniture design in New Zealand.

It's a small part of a welcome shift towards developing some distinctive geocultural style in this country, with every creative activity now reflecting on once-hidden or ignored aspects of our cultural identity. From package design to flapping wings on a national pavilion on the other side of the world, we've succeeded in peeling back some layers, and what's being revealed no longer has us cringing with the extreme embarrassment we once felt as an isolate from our first-world peers.

Artiture can't yet claim to give a wholly comprehensive view of what is emerging in new furniture design. Its

contributors represent a certain edge that is not shared by all of the players. It has gathered the support of a group from diverse backgrounds - architecture, design, craft, sculpture but not necessarily furniture - who are united by the common objective of discovering a new paradigm for furniture design and working along that path.

This is an unfamiliar territory with few signposts or clues for those who are attached to more conventional associations. There's scant acknowledgement in Artiture of the traditional practical objectives of furniture-making. Carefully preserved considerations like comfort and use have given way to a primary acceptance of the will to art; to explore the purpose of furniture in our lives, redefine our social responses, find new applications for technological developments in materials.

Furniture is such a fundamental utility in our daily existence that it needs a provocative challenge like this. The entrenched attitudes of the manufacturing industry have driven the two most important inputs - design and craftsmanship - into a deep coma. The broadest view has to be that a tremendous potential is inert, moribund. All that timber from the world's best grower and we export it for processing elsewhere! What logic is that?

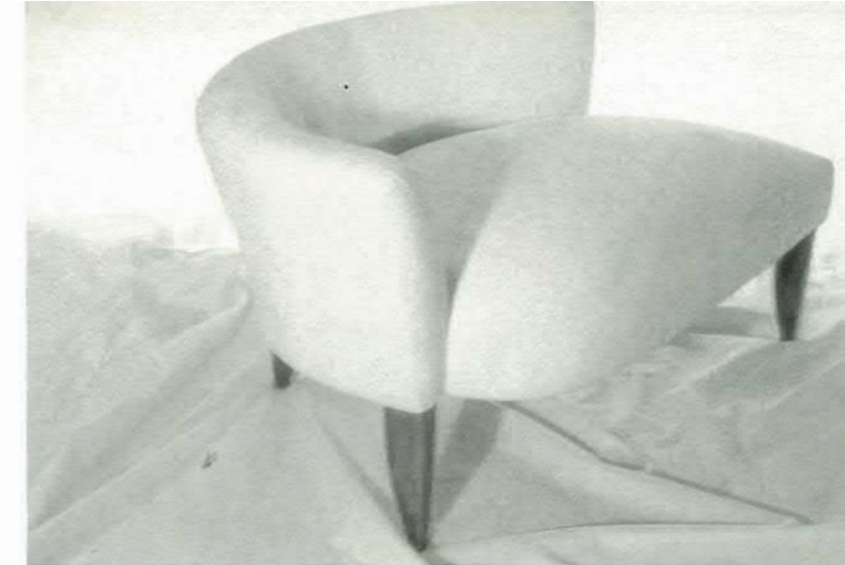
The exhibition this year showed bold progress in experimentation with different materials - from Toby Twiss' bizarre blue fibreglass stage-set table to the Tapa upholstery on Andrew Patterson's *Siren* chair. Some interesting forms achieved from casting aluminium and bronze provide interesting possibilities for limited edition reproduction: an important step in meeting a wider market. Flirting with the possibilities of new materials is an essential step in the drive to bring a new definition to the activity.

This year Artiture had a curator and a sponsor. What a difference to have some of those pressures of organisation and cost relieved! Both have measured the results of their input positively, although Nicola Horwood is considering using the interval before the next exhibition writing a manual on professionalism as a guidebook for would-be exhibitors.

What Artiture has managed very effectively in five years is good for design, artistic expression, craftsmanship and the furniture industry as a whole. At the Auckland Museum, it rates as a high-profile exhibition, drawing large numbers. Competition for a place in this year's event drew the highest number of entries in five years although only 30 were ultimately selected to exhibit.

More importantly, it is an endorsement of the Design Institute's national objective to have New Zealand established as a major focus in design by the year 2000. The more opportunities available to our artists and craftspeople to articulate and work toward this objective, the better our prospects of reaching it. The slogan for next year's Call for Entries is "Make a Piece of Furniture for Artiture". Will you be there?

Below; *Blue Flap*, by Tobias Twiss; natural fibre, glass and closed cell foam board.



Above; *Siren*, by Andrew Patterson; natural tapa cover, legs baked enamel over cast bronze.



Left; *Nevada*, by Greg Smith; polished cast aluminium, leather upholstery.



Left; *Bodgers*, macrocapa and pohutukawa, finished with paint, copper and beeswax.



Below; *Tête-à-tête suite*, by Peter Rogers; hand-bent steel, copper, patinated brass, cotton upholstery.

COLLECTORS

LESLEIGH SALINGER

ANNEKE BORREN AND OWEN MAPP

"The basis of how we collected arose out of our work - out of what we were interested in ourselves." - Anneke Borren

A handmade house on Wellington's Kapiti Coast seems an unlikely home for one of New Zealand's most important collections. The development of the Borren/Mapp collections has in some senses not been a conscious effort, in fact at times it has been totally random. What a review of the collections does reveal clearly is their total integration into Anneke and Owen's daily lives. This is symptomatic of their philosophy of collecting. A philosophy which in its essence sees artifacts not as rare precious pieces gathered purely for their aesthetic pleasure, but rather as functional items, be they contemporary or antique, which speak of their context and embody place, time and society. By looking to the everyday lifestyle of various early cultures these collectors find they are constantly bringing the past into the present.

As established craftspeople themselves (Owen as a carver, Anneke as a potter) it is understandable that they each started collecting in their particular sphere of



Above; Ban Chiang pot, Thailand, 2000BC.

Below; Ivory carving, Zaire, 1860; daggers, harpoon & arrow points, 10,000BC-500AD



interest i.e. related to their own work. Owen was already interested in archeology as a teenager and worked as a volunteer on digs where an interest in stone artifacts developed. Anneke's early training at the experimental studio of de Porcelyne Fles (one of the Delft Potteries) sent her exploring in the huge field of ceramics.

The edges quickly blurred and with no particular preconceived pattern of collection, their separate fields have interwoven from present into past, from stone artifacts to weaponry to ceramics and on, the ripples of interest widening the pools of items. When Anneke was doing research along the Ecuador/Peru coastline, Owen was equally interested in the archaeological opportunities. They were in tune.

Today the total collection ranges from pieces some 25,000 years old to the most recent. The major areas of their collection are:

Ceramics: this is the largest collection and ranges from a Ban Chiang pot from BC 2,000 and a Bolivian Tiahuanaco pot BC 1,000 to pieces by contemporaries, Robyn Stewart, Marilyn Wiseman, Chester Nealie et al.

Stone Artifacts: extending from Owen's early interest in Maori pieces the collection of some 1,000 specimens includes arrow and spear points, scrapers, adzes, axes, drills, files and saws. These in turn led to -

Weapons: ethnic weapons, spears, blades, knives.

Jade and Bone carvings

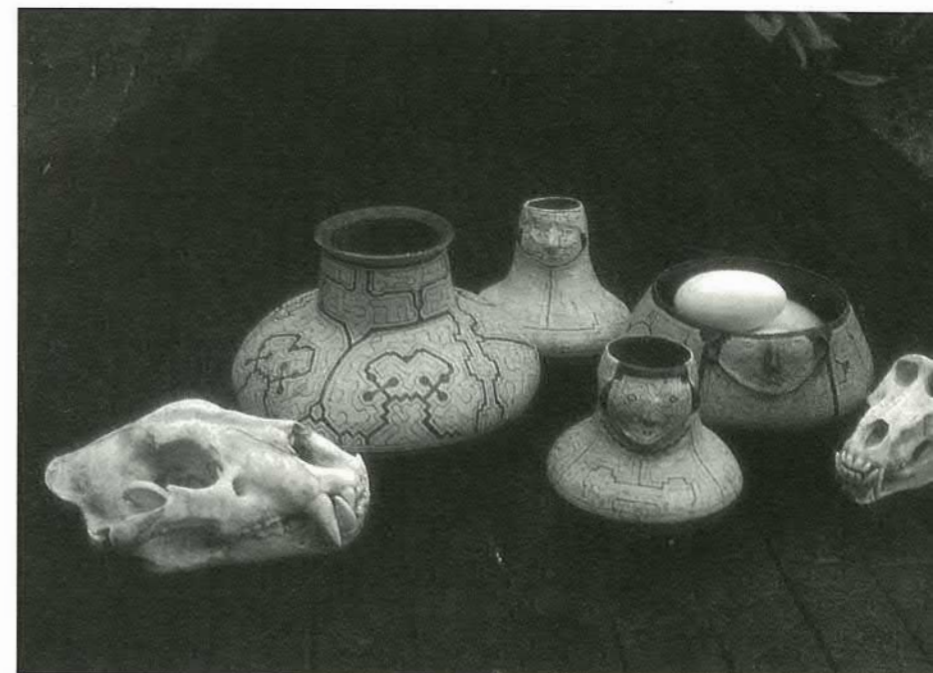
Prints and Paintings: Japanese Hokusai and Toyokuni III prints, a small collection of Barry Cleavin prints and paintings by friends and colleagues.

There are also plenty of art books vital for research both for the collections and for their own work, and a collection of unusual exotic plants inhabiting their sheltered garden.

In describing the fascination of tools and weaponry Owen expresses an interest in handforged African blades, swords and daggers. Their appeal he says is "that they have been made around small charcoal fires with skin bellows, out in the bush in some African village, by the blacksmith." Such things act as a catalyst to know more about the vast field of weaponry - he even owns a scale model miniature cannon from the period of the Battle of Trafalgar!

Sometimes the outcome can be disappointing. A particular interest of Anneke is the work of North American Indians but their work, she believes, has been ruined by slick commercialism.

The roles played by the collections are diverse. They inhabit the home, are used, lent, visited and act as a source of constant renewal to their owners. Anneke and Owen do not collect for resale so the works are not seen as a pecuniary investment. Yet as an educational resource the investment is vast and a way in which they



believe they can repay their debt to society. Anneke and Owen are custodians of a treasure from which pieces are lent for exhibition, to which students visit to study, as do museum professionals from throughout the world and friends, acquaintances, dignitaries and politicians.

A role which has arisen for Owen from this collecting knowledge is that of professional advisor and specialist curator. When viewing museum collections he is constantly finding misinformation, in particular in the identification of ivory and bone. This he feels arises from the difference in approach which he has as a carver handling such materials to the more academic priorities of resident curators.

The extension of their interest into more varied fields has led to Anneke and Owen belonging to over a dozen associations such as: AGMANZ; World Crafts Council; NZ Society of Potters; Antique Arms Association; and the Japanese Kenyuki Association. The information exchanged is vital to the ongoing development of their specialist knowledge. Both their interests and their own work have drawn them, somewhat reluctantly, into the teaching field and both tutor at the local polytech.

Does it require a handsome income to be a collector? Not necessarily - judicious hunting in second-hand shops and exchange and bartering are how much of this collection has been gathered. For example, a continual process of exchange with peers, Donn Salt, Doug Marsden, Steve Myhre and Alan Brown has boosted their collection of jade and bone carving.

It has taken some twenty years to build what may be justifiably called a rich cultural asset - which works to educate and inspire both themselves and a wider public. And their feelings about future collecting? Are they tempted to quit themselves of such a responsibility? In Anneke's words, "You won't stop, you'll continually find objects which relate to the area you're interested in, that have a direct impact on your consciousness, that you'd like to live with and keep - and so that process will never stop - for that reason you don't want to get rid of any of the older ones either because they are an explanatory journey."

Above; Shipibo culture pots, Amazon, 1970s. Lion & baboon skulls.

PAPIER MÂCHÉ - BY SUSANNE HAINES

Reviewed by Debra Bustin

The craft of creating objects from papier mâché has been known since paper was invented in China in the 2nd century A.D. It has been used throughout the world to create diverse objects such as warrior masks, snuff boxes, furniture, architectural mouldings, boats and a village. It has been used in carnivals, theatres, festivals and circuses to create large and small ephemeral objects, extravagant structures, masks and props - in fact it seems it could be used to make anything. And so the wonderful facts of papier mâché are unfolded in the introduction of the book.

Although it unfortunately goes no further to elaborate or illustrate these fascinating things, it is an inspiring book on the contemporary use of papier mâché by three English women.

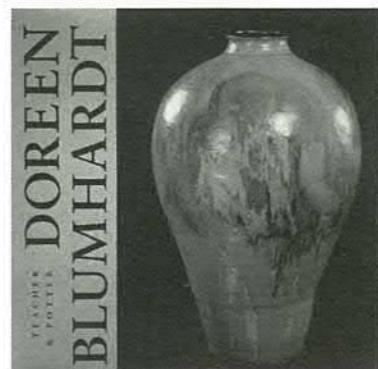
The book is in several sections - **Materials**, equipment and technique of papier mâché - **Gallery**, photos of work by these women, and **Projects**. The projects section takes up most of the book - each artist takes you step by step through the whole process of making a good variety of things of their own design - bowls, vase, doll, mobile, jewellery, dolls' house, mask and more. The clear instructions and photos illustrating the process makes this craft accessible to everyone including young children. There are great ideas in here for presents and anyone wanting an outlet for The Creative Force will find this book inspirational.

Published by Letts Contemporary Crafts, distributed in New Zealand by Heinemann Reed, a division of Octopus Publishing group (NZ) Ltd. \$29.95.



DOREEN BLUMHARDT: TEACHER & POTTER.

Reviewed by Peter Gibbs



On October 31, Doreen Blumhardt received the Academy of Fine Arts' Governor General's Award. At the same time, the book *Doreen Blumhardt: teacher and potter* was launched. The 64 page book was published by Daphne Brassell Associates Press. 32 pages are taken up with a biographical essay by Marion McLeod. A portfolio of luscious colour photographs of Doreen Blumhardt's work follows.

The essay is an absorbing historical account of the life of one of our most influential craftspeople. It will not be for her work that Doreen Blumhardt is remembered, but for her deeds. The story begins with her forbears in Germany, then moves to Whangarei, New Zealand, where the young Doreen was born in 1914 and remained until she left school.

In Christchurch with her Tante (Aunt) Eleonore (to whom, with Brian Brake, the book is dedicated), she spent time at Canterbury College School of Art and eventually at Teachers Training College. Her talent for teaching craft was discovered by Dr C.E. Beeby, the Director General of Education. In the introduction to the book Beeby says: "Exactly 50 years ago I had the good fortune to meet Doreen at the Christchurch Training College, when the Department of Education was looking for someone to head up a new programme in the teaching of crafts, which, with the wartime shortage of materials and no trained staff, was in a sorry state in most schools. Having seen Doreen at work, I knew my search was ended. We brought her to Wellington where, in two or three schools, she proved that, with proper planning, real crafts, messy as they are, could be taught without disrupting the ordinary classroom... Under her as national adviser on crafts, the subject sprang to life throughout the country."

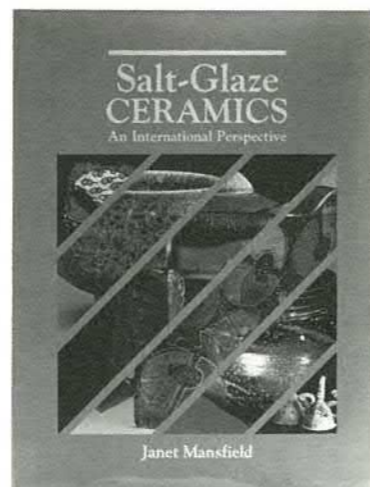
She went on to become head of the art department at Wellington Teachers' College in 1951, a position she held for 21 years.

The essay goes on to detail the more recent part of Doreen Blumhardt's life, her involvement with organisations, magazines, books, people, and her own pottery. The portfolio of photographs by Brian Brake, Brian Enting and Doreen herself contains work from as far back as 1954. Beautifully reproduced, these pages illustrate a lifetime of devotion to a style of pot which is timeless.

The printers, GP Print Ltd have done a great job on the book, which is a superb, soft covered production. Priced at \$21.95, it is available from normal retail outlets.

SALT GLAZE CERAMICS - AN INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE BY JANET MANSFIELD

Reviewed by Julie Warren



It comes as no surprise that Janet Mansfield has produced this book. Her credentials to do so are sound. A lengthy personal involvement with salt glazing, abundant travel and a lifetime of contacts with potters internationally, and her extensive experience in writing and editing have been brought together to produce this impressive publication.

It is a book about ceramists currently using salt glaze, concentrating on their motivation and the development of their ideas. Written in an easily read narrative style, individuals tell of their particular devotion to salt glazing. Many important techniques and recipes are

included, as a part of the salt glaze story, rather than as itemized lists.

The ways salt is used are diverse and the effects achieved vary from the stereotypical glossy high fired orange peel, to matt low fired slipped surfaces; from surfaces with a mere blush or sheen, to luscious oozing drips.

Janet Mansfield considers the traditions of Germany, France and Japan, and links them to the potters of today who are extending these traditions. Bente Hansen of Denmark comments: "I'm creating but not without tradition in mind. Is that a progression or a digression, or is progress mostly a digression?"

Much valuable information can be gleaned from these experts - firing schedules, slip and clay formulas, soda vapour firings, silk screen processes, fuming, and more. Everything you ever wanted to know about salt glazing, and encouragement to experiment.

Many New Zealanders will be familiar with a number of the people profiled - Mirek Smisek features in the chapter on domestic ware, just ahead of Byron Temple, a visitor from the USA last year. The work of the late Sandra Johnstone will be recognised by those who met her here. Tatsuzo Shimaoka, a recent distinguished Japanese visitor, has two beautiful photos accompanying his philosophy in "The Importance of Tradition".

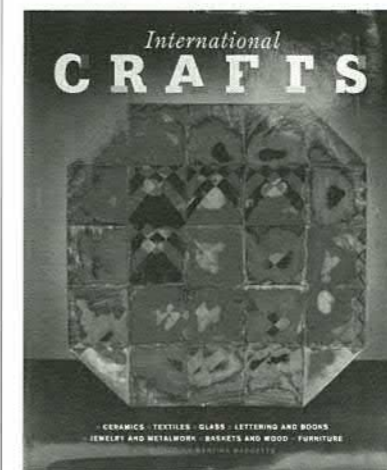
Jeff Oestreich of Minnesota, USA, has a consuming interest in form and uses salt glaze as a means to enhance, rather than interfere with this element. He will be teaching in New Zealand next October. Other well-known names and works are featured. Michael Casson, Jane Hamlyn, Walter Keeler, John Neely, and Peter Meanley are all familiar through other publications, or perhaps seen at the Fletcher exhibitions.

Salt Glaze Ceramics is a book that can be read at many levels. It's not too long for the devotee to read cover to cover, it's easy to browse through and selectively pick out names or techniques of interest, and the excellent photos (at least one large one on most pages) will be a constant source of inspiration.

Available from Craftsman House, PO Box 480, Roseville, NSW 2069, Australia, A\$65.

INTERNATIONAL CRAFTS - EDITED BY MARTINA MARGETTS

Reviewed by Peter Gibbs



For a British viewpoint of the international craft movement, you can't go past this brilliantly presented volume, edited by Martina Margetts. To be on the safe side, Margetts defines the catchment area very early on in her foreword as... "principally from North America, Japan, Australia and all the countries of Europe". Just as well, for there are only four examples of New Zealand work amongst the 460 colour illustrations. Works by Puti Rare, Tina Wirihana, Eddie Maxwell and Daisy Cameron all show traditional Maori woven objects; korowai, whariki, paki and kete respectively. What does this tell us about our promotional pitch and international reputation beyond these shores?

Local pique aside, there is plenty to think about in this book. Both Martina Margetts' foreword and the introduction by Alison Britton make good points about the position of crafts in our current cultural framework. Britton's makes the comparison between the Morris/Ruskin view, which saw "...crafts as a bastion against dehumanising industry" and the Modern Movement on the continent, which thought that; "...by engaging with it [industry], and harnessing craft practice to it, they could make things in mass-production which contained the values of beauty, utility, etc and which really were available to everyone". From the former came the eventual view of the crafts as an "alternative" lifestyle, which to some extent still prevails. The

European position has led to a more ready acceptance of craft and design as valid adjuncts to more conventional lifestyles and as tools of industry.

Both foreword and introduction need to be referred to from time to time. Our own viewpoints on the position of crafts must inevitably change as time goes by, and it is interesting to occasionally reassess our position in the light of such intelligent essays.

The bulk of the book is taken up with pictorial essays outlining the various craft areas under media headings. In each chapter, a brief introduction is followed by pages of sumptuous illustrations. Phrases, dotted like poetic stanzas amongst these pages attempt to outline particular relevant points. I found these bald statements irritating. They seemed to be trying for some educative purpose, but on the whole were too brief to be meaningful, and too randomly scattered to form a coherent pattern. Distinguished from the caption text by a different type font, they conflicted with each other and disturbed the continuity of the book.

The reference section at the back has some useful biographical information about the craftspeople represented. The lists of museums/galleries/publications would also be useful for the traveller or researcher, but only as a starting off point, being necessarily sketchy and prone to rapid dating.

Such minor criticisms aside, the book forms an invaluable resource to important craft-artists. Sides are not taken in the craft/art debate. This is a book of contemporary work, so new work predominates. Reflecting current preoccupations, there is less functional/skill based work than creative/cerebral, but the editor is careful to stress the equal validity of all approaches.

Publishers Thames & Hudson. NZ distributors David Bateman. Normal retail \$170.

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COMMENT

NEW ZEALAND REVISITED

By Maria Tippett

When I first came to New Zealand in 1974 the rustic New Zealand pot was in fashion. During my recent visit I was astonished to see how very much things had changed. Bright colours had replaced earth-close tones. High gloss surfaces were favoured over ash glazes. And few potters adhered to the classical forms of the Japanese masters.

My trip was ostensibly to look at paintings and sculptures and to interview writers. I certainly enjoyed discovering the work of two Auckland painters, Gretchen Albrecht and James Ross, and renewing my friendship with New Zealand's man of letters E.H. McCormick. But during the course of my travels around the North Island I found myself drawn again and again to what was being produced in the field of ceramics.

My search began at Mary Dryden's shop in St Heliers Bay. At first glance Carl's Fine Crafts appears to offer a jumble of discordant objects. But a closer look will reveal that Mary Dryden has a keen eye for what is both finest and most unusual among New Zealand craftmakers. The work ranged from Rosemarie Brittain's vividly coloured and funky windowsill vases, to Diana Poor's brilliant slip cast cups and saucers, to Chris Gaelic's crystalline glazed porcelain jars. This was a splendid introduction to what I later saw at the Masterworks Gallery in trendy Parnell, the Albany Village Pottery a few kilometres north of Auckland, and at the studio of Jeannie and Andrew van der Putten in Grey Lynn.

But the highlight of my Auckland visit was meeting Len Castle. I had admired his work on that trip in 1974; made all the obvious comparisons between what Castle was doing and what Bernard Leach and Shoji Hamada had done earlier. Suddenly I was exposed to the eloquent way in which Castle talks about his work: his concern for the quest of beauty; the obvious attention he gives to glaze behaviour, to what fire will do, and above all to the properties of the clay itself. Then there was the opportunity to view his work which is still largely muted in tone - though by no means exclusively - and folded back and forth upon itself with exquisite care and sensitivity.

I suppose I should have travelled to some of the studios which are located north of Auckland and taken a flight to Nelson. But since part of my trip was being devoted to tasting New Zealand wines I found myself in one of the best wine producing areas of the

country: Poverty Bay and Hawkes Bay on the east coast. This didn't stop me from seeking out potters wherever I went. In Gisborne, for example, I met Ann de la Tour who showed me her studio - located in a garage at the side of her house - the kiln that she built for herself, and told me about the amazing system of night school craft courses and the Fletcher Challenge pottery award which draws some 300 competitors from around the world. Viewing Ann's work I was struck by the broad range of styles and techniques in which she, along with so many other potters I had met, were working.

I was to encounter the most impressive example of this characteristic of New Zealand craftmaking at the women's exhibition at the Crafts Council Gallery in Wellington. It is impossible to forget the translucent glass bowls of glassmaker Ann Robinson - the sheer size is impressive enough. Or Frances Jackson's witty display of hats. Or the restrained work of Gulielma Dowrick. Here also was evidence once again that New Zealand's potters were going more and more in the direction of the multi-media arts and that they were not afraid to experiment with a wide variety of forms, materials, and glazes. That New Zealand's official contribution to the arts section of the 1992 World Exposition in Spain is being made by potters and, finally, that the last craftsman I met, the remarkable potter Doreen Blumhardt, is being given a much deserved retrospective exhibition at the Academy of Fine Arts was further evidence of the extent to which New Zealanders take their craftworkers seriously.

Maria Tippett is a prominent Canadian writer who divides her time between Bowen Island in British Columbia, Canada, and Clare Hall, Cambridge University, England.

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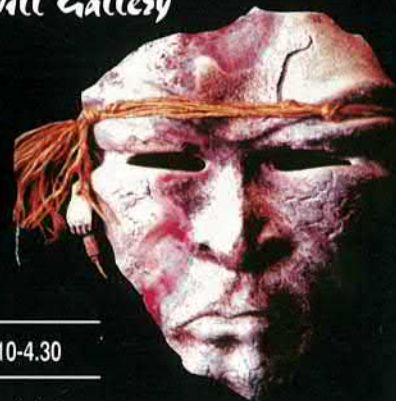
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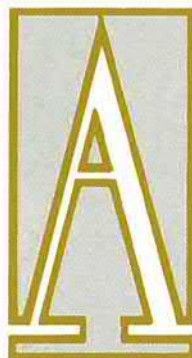


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