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New Zealand

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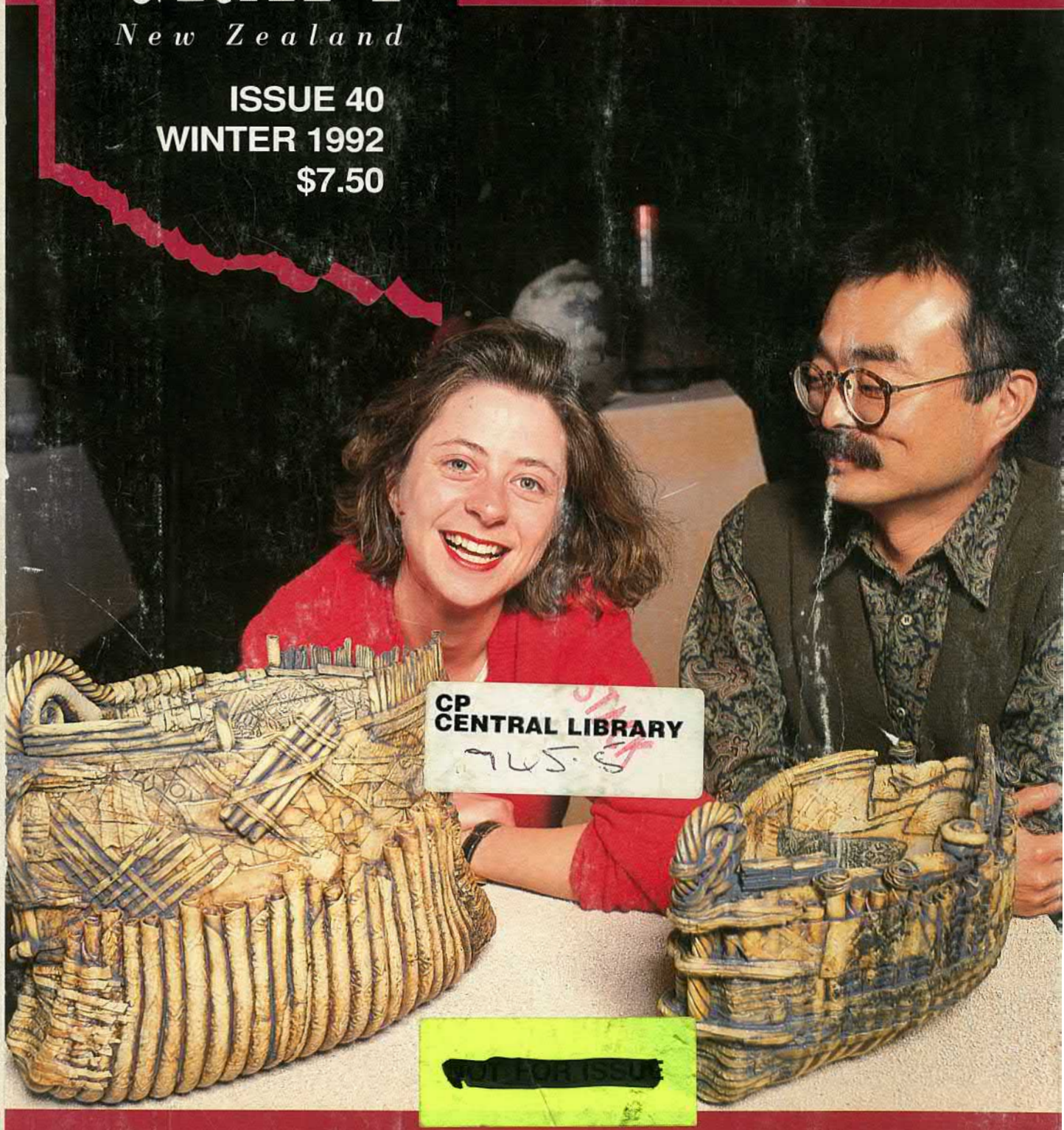

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New Zealand

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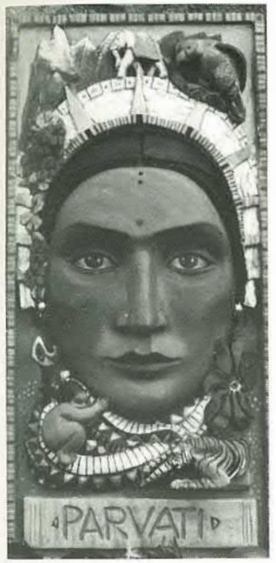

"Parvati", carved demolition kauri with mother of pearl inlay, paint and gold leaf, by Dianna Firth. Page 4.

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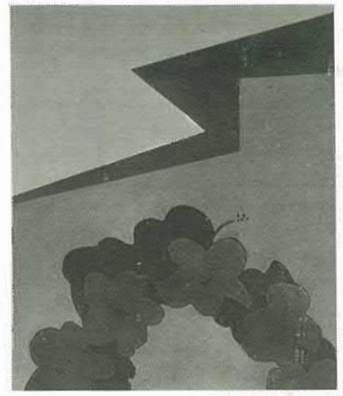

"Tropical Garden II" by Rodney Fumpston.

Lara Scobie, Scottish winner of the Fletcher Challenge Ceramics Award 1992.

LETTERS

SHOW GROWS

Just a quick note to put the record straight re the article on ARTEX, page 16, Autumn issue. ARTEX started as an Art Fair primarily in 1986 not as a Craft Fair. It has evolved mainly through demand and exhibitor response to now encompass all forms of New Zealand and imported art, craft and interior design. We've come a long way from 1986 when 2 months from the show we could only persuade 8 exhibitors to "give it a go". On opening night we had managed another 30 exhibitors.

For Auckland this year we have over 100 exhibitors and for the first time needed three pavilions.

The arts continue to grow from strength to strength in New Zealand and will play a big part in New Zealand's future.

CRAFT NZ magazine also indicates this with each issue. The magazine and its contents are a positive and great advertisement for New Zealand.

Keep up the good work!

Warwick Henderson

MARKETING OUR IMAGE

I have been a potter for 30 years now and am just beginning to appreciate the good fortune of finding a career that suits me well and has unlimited depth.

To be a potter these days is to be part of one of the most exciting and creative movements in the history of visual art. There are more galleries and shops than ever displaying an increasing variety of clay products. Never before has there been so much written by so many people who have similar interests in the world of clay. I am constantly amazed by the number of parallel thoughts found in the many publications that concern themselves with ceramics.

There is a problem however, and it needs our attention. If I was to conduct a survey in my neighbourhood I would find few hand made objects, even fewer made of clay. As potters we are practically invisible to the great majority of our society. I have felt alone most of my life, out of step, odd, different.

A friend referred to me as having iconoclastic ideas. What a pleasant surprise to find the literal explanation was *Icon Breaker*. As I read the synonyms - *rebel, dissident, agitator, defector, heretic, malcontent, misfit, non-conformist, renegade,* a feeling of pride began to replace the puzzlement that went with being constantly out of stepwith the values of our time. This proclivity for independent thought is part of the reason so many of us find it difficult to put aside our differences in order to work together.

A further insight came while reading Tom Wolfe's *The Painted Word*. He deals with the image of the artist as bohemian. He writes, "Today there is a peculiarly modern reward that the avant-garde artist can give his benefactor: namely, the feeling that he, like his mate the artist, is separate from and aloof from the bourgeoisie, the middle classes." It occurs to me that we may have cut ourselves off from those with conventional standards of behaviour to the point that we cannot be a positive and constructive example to our society.

Doris Lessing in *Prisons We Choose To Live Inside*, writes about the value of independent minded people and their ability to influence events. I am sure she is correct in her assessment and yet I feel alienated because my standards are so different from the norm.That fact remains that we potters, perhaps even more than the fine artist, are on the periphery of the society with our example mostly unnoticed.

Many of our values are important and vital to our culture. Certainly the willingness to take full responsibility for one's actions and to think independently are desirable qualities. So are craftsmanship and creativity. Katherine McCoy, one of the jurors for the design section of the 2nd International Ceramics Competition in Mino, Japan, writes about the result of the separation between art and design. I find part of her statement particularly important as it helps me to understand my disappointment in the manufactured objects available around us. She writes, "The result is a material culture of practical artifacts that contribute little to the cultural values of our society." Reading this helped me to understand my disappointment in most manufactured objects and my attempt to help remedy the situation.

Why are we and the work we produce not given more attention? We tend to be fiercely independent. We compete for the same small group. We feel more comfortable allowing others to present our work to the public. I have the feeling, after observing the situation for such a long time, that we makers, along with those that support us, have failed to adopt the attitudes that will give us a higher standing in our culture.

Doris Lessing is more incisive. She talks about the apparent horror that altruistic groups have of those "soft sciences" including psychology, sociology, etc that explore why people act the way they do. They help us to understand that human behaviour is predictable and the urge to conform intense. We know that we are judged on appearance to a large extent. The clothes we wear and the cars we drive all say something about us. These symbols of our status in fact say more about us than our words. Groups within our societies use our tendency to conform to their own advantage. Advertisers have been able to make even destructive ideas popular. Lessing points out that we would do well to understand this world of persuasion so that we, at least, will not be subject to its excesses. This understanding can be used to advocate positive and constructive values that will enrich the world we all must live and work in. I feel that potters, committed individuals, provide a positive model for a society in desperate need of such example.

As potters we share an incredible medium. Our work carries expression, function, and tactile qualites with it easily. The capacity of our material to carry vitality is unequalled. Clay is, however, so versatile it may be confusing to those who are unaware of the countless ways that it has been and can be used. There are those who insist they know how it *should* be used. They pick the leaders, winners and those who will succeed in social terms. We let that happen, relying on others to make the decisions affecting our lives. We are individuals first and find it difficult to work together on projects that could change our lot in life. We complain because we and our work are generally unknown. We need to find those who are willing and able to convince more individuals in our society of our positive contributions and we must pool our resources to support them and get the job done. That we are, collectively, an asset to our societies is certain. The question is; what are we willing to do to ensure our example is noticed and of value to the society in which we live ?

Ron Roy, Ontario, Canada

EDITORIAL

A LETTER FROM THE NEW OWNER

The Crafts Council of New Zealand has published 39 issues of *Craft New Zealand*. With issue 40, the magazine moves into a new era. To protect the magazine for craftspeople, I have purchased it from CCNZ. This is hardly an investment I can afford, and I am currently preparing the prospectus for a new company to be called *Craft Print Limited*. Shares will be held by craftspeople and supporters of craft in New Zealand and the business of the company will be the publication of a magazine and associated profile raising activities for the craftspeople of New Zealand.

What is the background to the change of ownership? CCNZ was a membership organisation, funded for the past few years by the QEII Arts Council. Two crucial events conspired to bring about its demise. Either could have been managed alone, but their combination was too great a burden.

Firstly, CCNZ carried a considerable debt, due in large part to the 1990 exhibition *Mau Mahara*. Secondly, the QEII Arts Council decided at their December 1991 meeting to terminate CCNZ's funding.

The Crafts Council Gallery at 22 The Terrace in Wellington was a highly successful business under the directorship of Jenny Rowland. The indications are that it may be possible to sell the gallery, just as the magazine has been sold. Subject to negotiations to secure the lease of 22 The Terrace, there is some optimism that the gallery may continue.

What will happen to the $290,000 a year which was formerly given to CCNZ? Some was used in setting up an investigatory group to look at craft marketing. Their report has been considered by QEII, who felt that it was too ambitious; too expensive. Director Peter Quinn is reassuring about the money however. Provided QEII's budget remains static, the amount will remain earmarked for the crafts infrastructure. Eventually, a marketing board is still planned.

What does the future hold for *Craft New Zealand*? As a membership publication, the magazine has run at a loss, felt justifiable by CCNZ because of its promotional value. As a privately owned magazine, that can't go on. Advertising and subscription levels are on the rise, but if the magazine is to survive it needs the support of the crafts community. *Craft New Zealand* is not a charity, but if you agree with me that it's value for money, subscribe now. Encourage your friends; your club, school, public library to do likewise. I intend *Craft New Zealand* to grow from here on. Give me and the future shareholders the chance. Don't wait and see - the commitment is needed now.

Peter Gibbs, Editor.

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New Zealand

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ACTION IN AUCKLAND

All over the country, graduates from the Design Courses are making their presence felt. At the same time, established artists are moving on, exploring new territory. Three writers interviewed six Aucklanders who are taking new directions.

CHRISTINE THACKER

By Helen Schamroth

Living on Waiheke, working with clay, and earning a living working for the *NZ Herald* in downtown Auckland are two distinct and separate aspects of Christine Thacker's life. She has been working in clay for sixteen years, as a means of self expression rather than as a means of supporting herself, taking risks with her work she might avoid if she were financially dependent on it. Her newest work is a compelling and mature development.

Selection for the *Pottery Symposium* in Dunedin in 1988 was inspirational for Christine. This time gave her a sense of context for her work as well as a sense of community, a complete contrast from the solitude she finds necessary for her creative development.

Her intention in her work remains constant - to express contrasts, of people being very fragile, and at the same time driven, and to express both the life force and the self-destructive force of humanity.

Christine's sculptures have been very figurative with a strong graphic quality. A change to more detail came about from her need to consider 'where next'. By shifting her stance from figurative to abstract, Christine created a breathing space for herself, and at the same time set new challenges that allowed her to progress. What she liked about making this shift was the innocent quality of the newer work, and it is this desire to retain the innocence of the figures that has kept her work fresh.

The current works appear to be emerging from their abstracted swaddled exterior, an outer casing protecting the figures within, and always expressing the life-force present in all of nature. The theme of her work is change, what initiates and motivates change. While she might set the direction for her work, it seems that often something will occur randomly, dictating compulsively what she will do next.

Christine's love of manipulating clay remains as always, although she expresses disquieting thoughts about the permanence of human impact on the planet, of clay losing its plasticity on firing, which she acknowledges is a sign of the times. Nonetheless it is philosophical concerns such as these that she knows help her work to develop. (Shortly before Craft NZ went to press, Christie Thacker gained a Merit Award in the Fletcher Challenge Ceramics Award - the only New Zealander to gain this honour.)

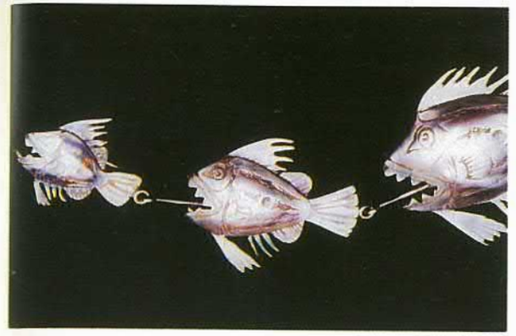
Right; recent work by Christine Thacker

TANIA PATTERSON

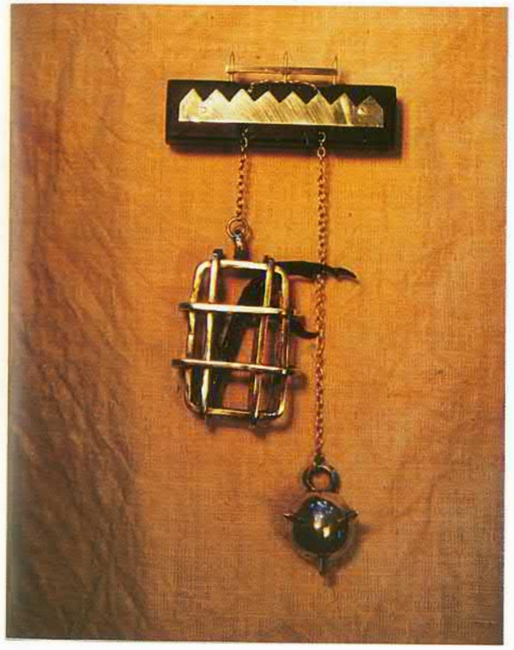
By Judy Wilson Goode

It is two years since Tania Patterson completed the Craft Design course at Carrington Polytechnic. She now supports herself by her craft, and her particular style of jewellery is developing, becoming distinctive and gaining recognition. It is reassuring that the courses are producing people who use craft alone as their livelihood, although this may be with the initial help of other support systems - Tania used an *Enterprise* subsidy to begin her independent life, and has just received a workshop development grant from the QEII Arts Council. Now, well sited at Zig Zag Studio in Titirangi, she is working on a range of exhibition pieces.

She works on a small scale, creating intricate detail with great dexterity and expertise. The brooch form is her usual means of expression. The delicately built structures with pivoted moving parts operated by pull



Above; *John Dory Fish*, silver, by Tania Patterson
Below; *Left Hanging On*, ebony, silver bird claws, by Tania Patterson.
Photos by Marcus Williams.



cords or interlocked cogs, have become a trademark of Tania's work. The challenge of solving technical design problems gives the pieces an intellectual approach, possibly influenced by her father's fascination for kinetic art. Some pieces have tiny bird or possum bones inlaid into such materials as silver, titanium, ebony and totara burr.

It is an intriguing antithesis of maker versus product, that such a gentle person could also make a compelling set of brooches which were all torture apparatus - cute and appealing, but quite workable and capable of causing pain. Her approach to individuality and self expression is a key to her success - working on her own in jewellery, but surrounded by other craftspeople at the studio, Tania is refreshingly free to make choices.

Tania Patterson's work is authentic and innovative; it fascinates. Her pieces are disciplined and clearly designed. Pauline Bern, her tutor at Carrington should be well pleased with her development as the result of a sound basis of teaching.

JUDE GRAVESON

By Carole Shepheard

"My experience in Nepal in 1990 gave me a sense of the vastness and might of the land, and in my experience of people, I felt I was witnessing a quality of spirit I had been previously unaware of."

Jude Graveson is primarily concerned with human existence and its effects on a less than supportive landscape. She searches for signs, for scratched marks, for coded messages, for indications of a human presence that gives insight into past cultures and past lives. This creates a framework in which she can understand and value her own position as a fibre artist in this country and also establishes a much wider connection to an emerging art direction that is cross-cultural and cross-disciplinary.

By working in an area demanding much re-evaluation and an understanding of the existing flexible boundaries within fibre, Jude has retained a sensitivity to her materials and her processes while consolidating her content. The grid format in which she often works is one which can be broken and reconstructed, an ideal structure for showing tension and conflict but also order. The beautifully worked and manipulated surfaces of her large canvas and paper hangings belie their true meanings as the formal nature of their construction also explores areas of emotive content, of intuition, and also of personal symbolism. These works depend heavily on embellishment, not as pure adornment but as a way of empowering meaning. The layering, the stratification, the obvious physicality of works such as "Pilgrim - Soul Territory" where transient material such as paste, dye, paper and wax have been used, all suggest a journey of discovery.

Left;
Detail from *Pilgrim Soul Territory, 1990*, by Jude Graveson. Paste, dye, silk, paper, wax, 920x1850mm

This work draws not only from a traditional past, but also seeks identification with spirituality, philosophy, archeaology, anthropology and sociology. It is in this realm of investigation that the work holds much interest and meaning. Jude's personal position is established within this context and is a way of facing the world and being involved with an area that provides her and us with a sense of place.

HILARY KERROD

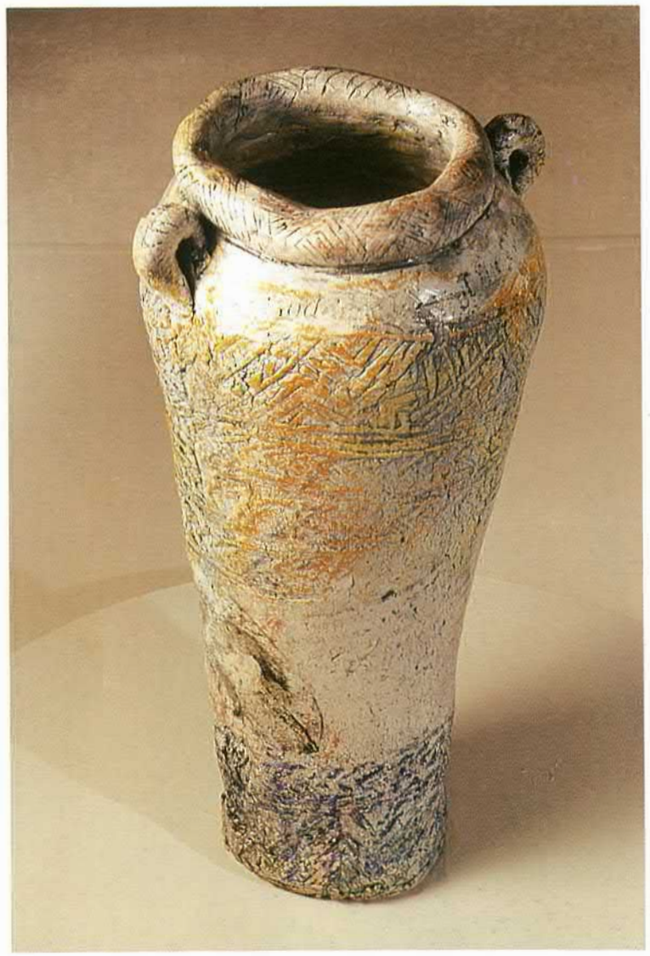
By Carole Shepheard

In ecologically balanced societies, the distinction between art and life was meaningless. For Hilary Kerrod, this is probably still true. This Waiheke Island clay artist saturates her work with the sacramental, the metaphysical, while establishing an accessible visual language giving glimpses into the past, into a matriarchal lineage and into an area that has a pluralistic approach, a diversity of expression and attitude.

Hilary's work has the distinct "mark of the maker". A rawness of execution well integrated with the powerful direction of her research into Stone Age artefacts, the Goddess, archetypal images and the way clay can be used to "decode" and interpret the markings and signs of past cultures. Ideas and content have always been the driving passion for her work and while it may be useful to have some prior knowledge when viewing this work, it is also possible to respond to the exquisitely marked surfaces that hold many layers of interest. They are scratched, stained, erased, incised, layered, rubbed, and imbued with a sense of attachment, of connection, of presence. The works like "Neolithic Vessel" have all this physical involvement and sensitivity but much, much more. The form alone relates to the past, to early clay receptacles, to containers that hold the spirit and the essence of past people's lives. Hilary's concern with rejecting the superficial, the inane and the cliche, has allowed her to explore individual concerns with intelligence and depth. There are not many clay artists in this country prepared to work content alongside aesthetic concerns especially in this personal and vulnerable way.

Only time will tell if these works, dragged from the mud to be given form, articulated by the hands of Hilary Kerrod, will eventually return to a buried state and lie waiting for some scavenging human to unearth them, retain them and display them. The stories that may arise from this discovery of marked and coded fragments may well become part of our culture and tell a less biased and exclusive part of history.

Below; *Neolithic Vessel*, by Hilary Kerrod. (This piece was a merit award winner in the 1992 Norsewear Art Award. See story pages 18, 19) Photo; Howard Williams



DIANNA FIRTH

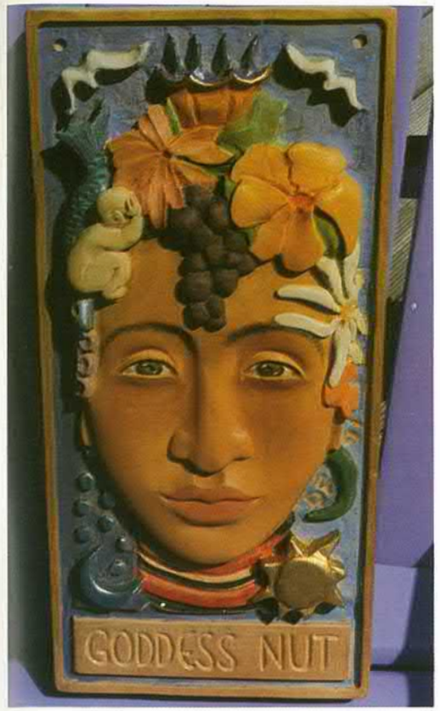
By Judy Wilson Goode

Five years ago Di Firth was widely acclaimed for her birdhouses and letter-boxes which were such a feature of the 1987 Artiture exhibition. Her furniture constructions showed the skills learned from an Industrial Design course - the knowledge and understanding of balance and stress as well as good design. The earlier skills gained at Elam have more significance now, as although a canvas doesn't present enough texture for Di, her present work has a strong sculptural element.

It is worthwhile noting that the efforts by our galleries to provide a forum for the development of artists is effective and appreciated. The challenge offered by the *Gate, Door, Lintel* exhibition at the Fisher Gallery in 1990 became important in forming new directions for Di. Incorporated into the door she designed for that show, were elements of sculptural carving and a goddess image which presided over it. Now a cogent series of goddesses, where folk lore and mystical themes have a strong influence, are part of her present work. Some goddesses are delicately carved and painted, others are made from ceramic materials.

Moving into clay is also a new direction. Using slab work, her trays and tiles bear her distinctive mark with their colour and bold designs. Using wax resists, glazes and coloured slips, the surfaces are strongly textured. The tiles are set in metal tables and look wonderful in a garden setting, as did her earlier furniture.

Part of Di's professionalism is due to the high standard of her support craftspeople. The furniture is made by Bryan Heighton and her metal is the work of Micky Allen. Her present furniture pieces are a stunning series of corner cabinets using a variety of images and techniques - metalwork, wood, carving, goddess and madonna images - it seems her ideas are endless and her development progresses on many fronts.



Top; *Goddess Nut*, by Dianna Firth, carved and painted demolition kauri 350x200x80mm
Below; *He Whare Taonga*, by Dianna Firth, carved demolition kauri with mother of pearl, paua and butterfly inlay. Paint, gold leaf, silverleaf, copper. 800x450mm

Left, *Plant/Transplant*, from *A Garden of Unearthly Delights*, by Moyra Elliott. Photo; Howard Williams.

MOYRA ELLIOTT

By Helen Schamroth

Taking exciting fresh directions is not just the prerogative of the newly graduated. Moyra Elliott, who is well-known as the Administrator for the Fletcher Challenge Ceramics Exhibition, is also actively developing a new series of sculptures called "Plant/Transplant - A Garden of Unearthly Delights". This work will be the starting point for her when she attends the proposed Clay Symposium in Wroclaw, Poland later this year, although it is a considerable shift from the work she exhibited at the 5th International Triennial of Ceramics in Warsaw in 1991.

Her new work is visually about structured organic shapes with strong outlines, the well-defined outline arising from considerable use of drawing in exploring her ideas. The defined profile, the linear aspect, has been an important element for much of her work since making domestic ware, and Moyra's work has always been figurative in one sense or another. Now the exaggeration of these aspects, and particularly the scale of the elements makes for a potent statement.

The catalyst for these pieces was a trip to the USA in 1990, where the exuberance of the work she saw was inspirational, but the real inspiration has come from Moyra's garden - leaves and buds developed to voluptuous three dimensions, supported on fragmented vertebrae-like pedestals that refer to volcanic Mt Eden.

These generous, lush works have a depth and richness of colour born of multiple firings, the variety of colour achieved by varying slips, glazes and the thickness of their application, with astonishing combinations of chromatic opposites appearing on a single surface.

Technically Moyra is stretching her limits, and the clay statement is an integral part of her work. But equally important is the social statement, her garden being a metaphor for the area in which she lives, with its lively cultural mix. In her garden the strong Anglo-Saxon streak is reflected in the cottage plants, jostling with native plants and exotics.

These sculptures are a dynamic presence, erect leaves taking on monumentality as they celebrate the beauty and cyclical nature of life in the garden. They are the survivors in the garden.

From May 25, the work of over 100 fibre artists from over 30 countries will be on show at *The Seventh International Triennale of Tapestry*, to be held in Lodz, Poland. Three New Zealanders will be represented there. Pat Baskett interviewed Carole Shepheard and Malcolm Harrison in Auckland, while Adrienne Rewi talked to Christchurch's Mark Lander.

THE AUCKLAND ARTISTS

By Pat Baskett

Originally a national exhibition, *The Seventh International Triennale of Tapestry* became international in 1975 and three years later changes were introduced to the rules and classifications, allowing such a broad interpretation of the work "tapestry" that it is now a misnomer.

The calalogue for the 1988 exhibition explained the ethos behind the shows: "They are still essentially though not strictly surveys of fibreworks... the common ground should be sought elsewhere, for instance, in the sphere of imagination, especially symbolic imagination implying thinking in terms of images..."

Below; *A Code of Elegance*, Transfer print on canvas, 3300x2040mm, by Carole Shepheard

POLISH TAPESTRY TRIENNALE

Even "fibreworks" appears too restrictive, given the media of the three New Zealanders who were invited to participate this year. Mark Lander is a Christchurch papermaker and Aucklander Carole Shepheard works variously as a printmaker, painter and, more rarely, fibre artist. Malcolm Harrison is the only one who consistently uses fabric.

In fact, says Carole, the sole parameters for the show seem to be the scale of the work - a minimum of three square metres.

Her contribution consists of 40 canvas panels of about A3 size, some of which will have stitched edges, others raw, which will be pinned directly onto the wall. It is a complex work issuing from Carole's "thinking in terms of images" and requiring a similar response.

Its terms of reference are socio-art historical. The medium - canvas - allows Carole to explore print-making techniques and express the satisfaction ink-saturated surfaces give her. Each panel has a transfer print on it, sealed with acrylic or shellac.

The work is called *A Code of Elegance* and belongs to a series called *Troubled Histories*. Its centrepiece is a near life-size image of the *Winged Victory of Samothrace*. Carole took a 7cm photo of the headless goddess and progressively enlarged it in sections. When she reached the required size, she printed each photocopy onto the canvas panels by dipping them in a solvent which absorbed the ink of the print when passed through a press.

What attracts her about this complex process is the graphic decomposition the image progressively undergoes. Originally clean lines become, she says, beautiful graphic marks.

It also allows her to work on the scale demanded by the Lodz exhibition, and gives her a texture which is more akin to etching in the way the ink is absorbed by rather than lying on the surface as in screen prints or lithographs.

Surrounding the goddess are panels with the repeated image of a romantic woman's profile, her gaze looking inward, or beyond the viewer, and panels with the ornate frame of a mirror.

Carole says of the work: "Interpretation of classical imagery takes little account of what the figure represented. But this was important to the people of Samothrace. The goddess stood for power and victory but art historians talk about the sculptural qualities and the formal aspects. There are a lot of sexual connotations here.

"I'm interested in establishing a new dialogue and a different interpretation based on how my own position is affected or altered by experiencing the work."

Malcolm Harrison is known as quiltmaker: his medium is cloth and stitching provides much of the surface texture but his works transcend their fibre origins. What does one call them?

Harrison has a laugh. When asked what he does he often replies: "I'm a visual..." Like an interruped cadence.

He did start off making quilts for beds, in a very traditional, Victorian manner, but continuing to work in fibre has meant he has had to get over the barrier that exists in other people's minds - that quiltmakers produce things Laura Ashley would be proud of.

If you want to be realistic, he says with a humorous snort, they're stitched fabric collages, or, if you like, low relief sculpture.

Suddenly he is serious: "I don't feel overly pompous in saying some of my works are very important as visual art."

One of these is going to the Lodz Triennale. Called *Eclipse*, it consists of two overlapping hemispherical pieces, one dark and the other mostly white. The lighter hemisphere overlaps the darker - contradicting what happens in an eclipse. It reflects Harrison's emergence from M.E. which plagued him for most of two years.

The lighter hemisphere is an airy work with a Polynesian feel about it. It has criss-crossing lines like the rigging of an outrigger canoe and blue shapes flitting across like birds. Harrison says it is about sleep and awakening. Each half has a figure crouched in a foetal, protective posture. In the centre of the dark hemisphere is a figure emerging from an Egyptian tomb.

Symbols are important to him, though he is amused when they are misread by the overzealous.

Harrison's way of working is that of the creative artist in any medium

"I hold an idea in my head and the images through which the idea is realised are worked out as I go.

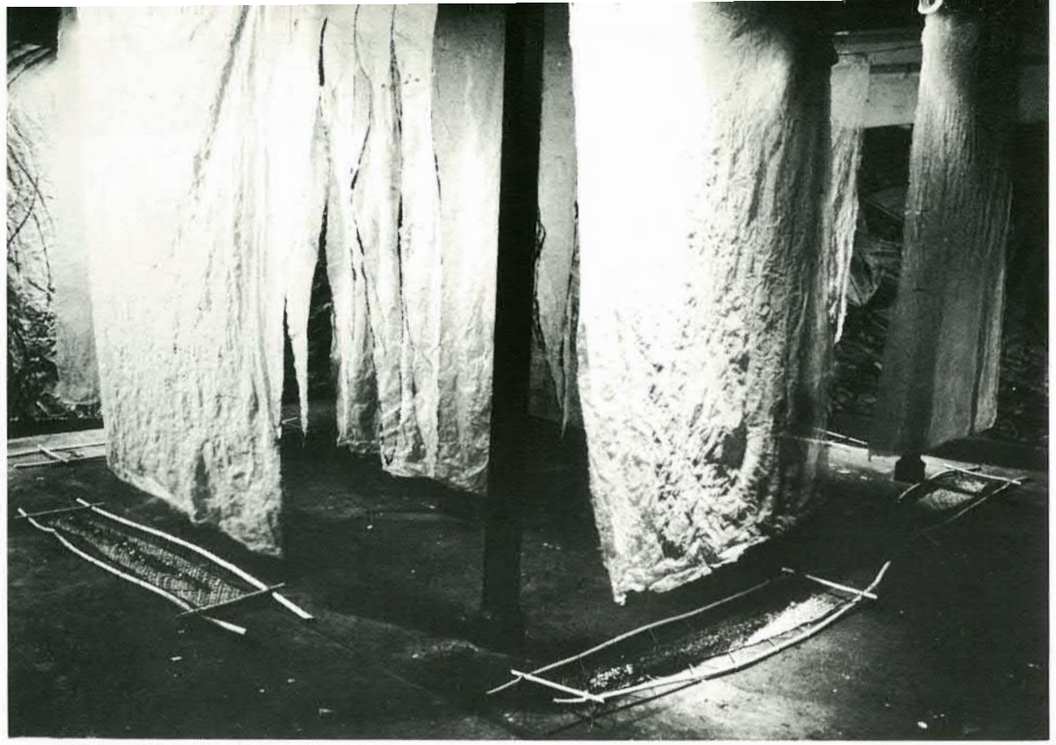
"I've drawn all my life, but now I don't draw out my ideas first. I cut straight into the material - this keeps the spontaneity going."

His sewing machine is a commercial one. The lengths of backing cloth are rolled up and folded while the area being worked on is fed under the needle. It's heavy work. The space, the size of a smallish living room, doesn't allow the larger works to be spread out - his first viewing of them is sometimes on a gallery wall.

Harrison has no fetishes about fabric; synthetic or natural fibre is not important. It's mostly colour he goes for, buying metre lengths wherever he finds them. The more off-beat come from remainder sales.

"I love parka nylon, fabrics that look hand-made but aren't, and the glitzy ones and the glazed chinzes. The texture doesn't matter because I can work on that."

Rarely, a small piece of the fabric design is cut out and appliqued on. Similarly, the Elizabethans embroidered flowers which they cut out and appliqued on to fabric. Harrison gets a buzz out of considering the long tradition he's part of, the greatest of whom he considers are the tapestry makers of the Middle Ages.



Mark Lander's work in Poland will be a similar installation to this work, depending on the facilities and space available there.

MARK LANDER

By Adrienne Rewi

Christchurch artist Mark Lander sees the 7th Triennial of Fibre and Tapestry at Lodz, Poland as an opportunity to consolidate his personal expression about being a New Zealander, and in doing so he will call upon elements of his last four years of work.

After what he describes as "four years of continual, incredible, back-breaking experimental work with handmade papers and natural clays, the Polish piece will be a culmination."

Lander has made 40 sheets of transparent handmade flax paper, each 3 metres by 2 metres, in preparation for the show and "with an armful of rope and tripped willow and woven flax stretchers, he will arrive in Poland to create an installation in his allotted 15 square metres.

Apart from some loosely formed ideas, Lander's concept will not be finalised until he sees the space. "I always work toward the space itself and although it is a little more risky, I can then make use of available light, air movement and raw materials that are already there," he says.

He plans to make an installation using very large, mobile sheets of handmade paper "that breathes with the wind and draughts of the building". On the ground below, woven flax stretchers, which have been part of his vocabulary for several years, will symbolise "the earthy part of the installation". He also plans to incorporate soils, stones and other elements of the Polish landscape.

"The paper to me, represents the spirit - the free, floating, alive part of us as human beings. The stretchers symbolise pain and human suffering. Poland has had a very sad and bloody history. A lot of Hitler's camps were on Polish soil, so the stretchers will also symbolise that.

"The willow itself is of European origin and has been transplanted here, just as, as New Zealanders were originally; so the stretchers can also be seen as the body, as the indigenous part of us."

The stretcher can also be seen as a pun on the artist's stretcher. Lander has "killed off" all the traditional and modern trappings of the artist's studio and has developed his expression using only natural materials.

"Getting rid of all the paraphernalia of art was like a death of all the comfortable things, but it also liberated me. Now I feel I can use the whole world," he says.

And in Poland - his first international experience - he is keen to create a piece of work that is "alive"; that people can move and walk through; that they can experience and enjoy.

"I haven't resolved the concept fully - and it won't be until the day I put it up. I don't like to think things out too clearly. An installation is about using the space. Nothing is finite. Who knows what I am going to find there.

"I've been known to paint a whole show and then throw it all away three days before the opening and start again.

"For me it's a process of harvesting, gathering, thinking, making paper and clays and then "whoosh", suddenly it all goes up - it's an explosive thing," he concludes.

It is clear though that Lander's work will be very much a Pacific expression. It is where he is most comfortable in his work.

GALLERY NEWS

CLAYFEAT

Clayfeat began trading in early December, after a two week setting-up period.

Situated in the heart of Auckland city, the Countrywide Centre offers a classy, light, open walkway for pedestrians between Lorne and Queen Streets.

The six members of this co-operative have turned their shop space into something quite out of the ordinary, benefiting themselves and the public. About half the space they occupy consists of a workshop area, complete with a recently installed three phase kiln. This unique operation enables the potters to produce work on site; the public can watch and buy finished products.

The potters involved are Brendan Adams, Catharine Dawson, Philip Leake, Jeff Scholes, Jeannie and Andrew van der Putten. With the exception of Philip, who works from home on the North Shore, the potters have their own workshops and showrooms in the city area too. Jeff and Andrew are members of the Albany Village Pottery, and Catharine a member of Pots of Ponsonby.

All six potters produce brightly coloured earthenware, in their own very personal styles, giving Clayfeat a very definite identity and sense of unity. The work has an uplifting, positive feel echoing the energy of these creators, who look beyond the depressed late 80s with fresh vigour in the 90s.

GREYMOUTH ART GALLERY

The Greymouth Art Gallery officially opened during May. This is the first permanent public art gallery on the West Coast.

To mark the opening, Graham Bennett's sculpture Sea/Sky/Stone was installed onthe Greymouth Floodwall (the gallery building, the former Bank of New Zealand, is seen reflected in the sculpture).

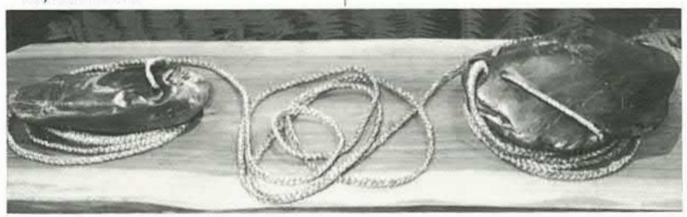
The gallery, named "The Left Bank", has 3 exhibition spaces - one each for paintings, installations and craft.

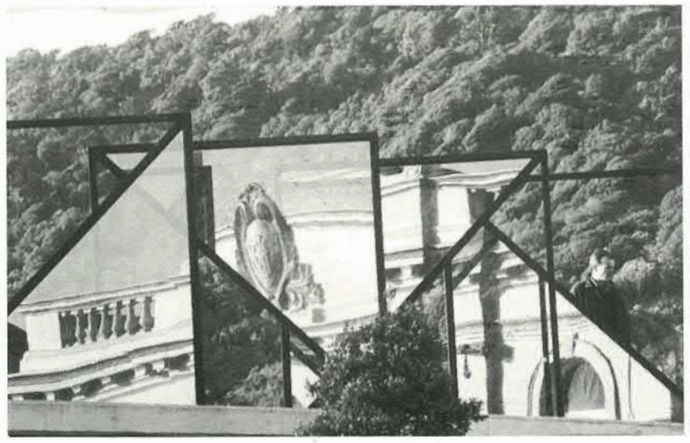
Part of the celebration was a ceremony to mark the completion of the "1990 Jade Project". Two large pounamu boulders were purchased and nine artists were invited to collaborate in their carving. In 1990, the then Governor-General Sir Paul Reeves blessed the stones. One stone travelled north to be worked on by Paul Annear, John Edgar, Hepi Maxwell and Donn Salt.

The other stone remained in the South Island to be carved by Russell Beck, Robyn Barclay, Ian Boustridge , Brian Robinson and Peter Tennant.

The stones were woven together by Danté Bonica.

Below;
Top; "1990 Jade Project" Pounamu boulders tied together by Danté Bonica.
Bottom, "Sea/Sky/Stone" by Graham Bennett on the Greymouth Floodwall.





V & A VISITOR

By Margery Blackman

Mrs Elizabeth Esteve-Coll, director of the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, visited the Otago Museum in Dunedin earlier this year. She spent some time in the gallery of the Dunedin Chapter of the Crafts Council. This forms a part of the Museum Shop. She was most enthusiastic about the quality of the craft work which she saw there and made a number of purchases. Mrs Esteve-Coll is a council member of the British Crafts Council.

Below; Mrs Elizabeth Esteve-Coll, pictured in the Dunedin CCNZ Gallery with ceramics by Gaynor Thacker, Mike Searle and Paul Fisher. Photo Otago Daily Times

MASTER WORKS

Paul Mason - "The Collection" - May 1992

Paul Mason's recent exhibition at Master Works created a good deal of interest among collectors and public institutions. "The Collection" was Paul's historical collection of his own work over fifteen years. The work demonstrated successive development in his usage of wood, stone and metal - with a wonderful variety of exotic materials contributing to inlays and decoration. Size of pieces ranged from small exquisite inlaid tablets and discs - some of which may be worn as jewellery - to large classical bowls, bronze platters and stone vessels.

His most recent work - large bowls in granite - have a monumental presence, their ovoid forms a strong reference to ritual and celebration. These pieces balance the smaller meticulous work and show a current direction for the artist.

The range includes containers, inlaid paperweights in wood, bracelets in lignum vitae and stone - and his production pieces. These comprise a selection of bronze and aluminium paperweights and knives inlaid with coloured marble and granite, and smaller bronze platters and vases handsomely boxed in cedar.

All in all it was a show to remember; a festival of Paul Mason's unique talents.

Below;
Inlaid paperweight by Paul Mason.

THE VAULT GALLERY

By Judy Wilson Goode

The Vault Gallery opened in August 1991 in High St Auckland and functions both as a design gallery and a design retail outlet.

Exhibitions are changed every seven weeks and to date most of these have been of design furniture, with much of the work being done by students at the School of Architecture, Elam, or Carrington Polytechnic Design School.

A collection of hats and sculpture by Peter Brierley Millman is currently on display.

Work by sociology PhD Nigel Clarke, is a regular feature at the gallery and currently forms a small focus exhibition. His quirky wooden ties provide ironic comment on the Auckland suit brigade. The idea was developed during the stock market boom when buying another silk tie was a symbol of the week's success.

Though sculpturally effective as wall pieces, they can be worn normally, secured around the neck with a leather strap. Made from demolition timber, they provide comment on art, fashion and home renovation, being shaped by the same tools Nigel is currently using to renovate his home.

Below;
Wooden tie by Nigel Clarke.

IN BRIEF

NGA PUNA WAIHANGA HUI

Maori Artists and Writers Conference.
By Ray Heta

THE BUILDUP

Over the week prior to Queens Birthday, artists, craftspeople and performers exhibited, worked on and performed in a build up the the annual hui - held this year at Omaka Marae in Blenheim.

Shaping, carving and fine tuning a pahu (log drum) by John Collins and Reg Thompsett was a truly historic event. But even more amazing to most was its final shaping with an argillite adze made from traditional methods during the hui. Under the guidance of Dante Bonica and assistant Mary Anne Turner, many people tried this ancient craft of flaking, dressing and grinding stone tools.

Over the walls of the Kohanga Reo, Ross Hemera and Diedre Gardiner constructed and painted a vividly descriptive mural depicting some of the major exploits of Maui Potiki.

Florrie Berghan, Eva Andersen, Te Aue Davis, Puti Rare, Eddie Maxwell, Mate Lawless, Ruhia Oketopa and Reihana Parata led a team of weavers working with harakeke (flax) neinei and kiekie. Their creations and assistance to visiting locals will leave lasting influences.

Some 20-30 visiting experts joined local craftspeople and encouraged others to work with them, watch them and learn from them. Great interest was shown by local visitors in all work, the intricate and delicate items of weavers, stoneworkers, bone and wood carvers, potters and painters. These artists worked long hours into early morning, under very trying weather conditions to leave behind contemporary works from local materials.

Perhaps the centrepiece was the sculpting of a large Takaka marble block donated by Canterbury Stone Co Ltd. This was transformed to depict Maui the infant being released by his mother Taranga into the cover of bull kelp. Winter weather didn't deter Dave Hegglun, Clem Mellish and Dave Goodin from completing the job.

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Small clay treasures and a large clay mural showing local happenings were created under impossible conditions by Baye Riddell and Wi Taepa.

From various sizes of whale vertebrae, Brian Flintoff, Bill McIntyre and others carved and assembled a totem pole-like "Pou Tinihanga a Maui".

Of great interest, especially to schools from Motueka, Nelson, Blenheim, Picton and Kaikoura were the performances of Hirini Melbourne, Apirana Taylor and Chocky Keefe, occasionally backed up by Richard Nunns and traditional instruments. Both teachers and pupils reacted with enthusiasm.

THE EVENT

On Friday, May 29, the actual Nga Puna Waihanga Hui opened with the arrival of Te Ariki Nui Te Ata I Rangi Kahu and her Waikato entourage, plus delegates and participants from all regions - some 600-700 members.

Saturday May 30 was set aside for dedications and unveilings of taonga. These were duly carried out by Dame Te Ata and her reopu (group). The Minister in attendance was Rua Anderson. Kaumata expounded and displayed their taonga throughout the day. The book "Weaving A Kakahu", by Digger Te Kanawa, was launched in the wharenui later in the day (to be reviewed in issue 41 of *Craft NZ*).

Music, drama, dancing (modern and not so modern), plays and waiata were the order of the day for Sunday May 31.

Monday brought tears, laughter and sadness at losing contact once more as the Poroporoaki ended a wonderful week of workshops, exhibitions, performances and mana.

Far Left;
Above; Eddie Maxwell weaving.
Below; Diggeress Te Kanawa at the launching of her book.
Centre;
"Taraga", carved in Takaka marble.
Right;
Te Arikinui Te Ata I Rangi Kahu leading her group onto Omaka Marae at the beginning of the Hui.

Left; Jenny Sears.
Centre; Sue Cooke and Rick Rudd.
Right; Ruth-Mary Beach.

MAKING MARKETING PAY

A realistic approach to marketing has been pivotal in the development of the woodturning of Jenny Sears. Work as a trade representative in Automotive Parts hardened her to the push and shove of sales. Four years ago she moved from Tauranga to Hawkes Bay to set up *The Craft Source* at Te Awanga in partnership with Shirley Boivin. Shirley produced wood carving and Jenny was reponsible for marketing.

A meeting with a woodturner motivated her to buy a lathe. With the demise of *The Craft Source* she began turning seriously and opened *Turncraft* in Hastings during 1991. Following an early preoccupation with driftwood and natural tree branches she has moved to wood which has been windblown or died naturally and now concentrates on the enhancement of shape and grain.

She supplies outlets throughout the North Island from her workshop-studio, which is situated in an old chicken hatchery four minutes from central Hastings.

MANAWATU SHOW

Rick Rudd and Sue Cooke held a joint exhibition of pottery and etchings at the International Pacific College earlier this year. The exhibition, sponsored jointly by IPC and the Japan Society, resulted in purchases destined for Japan, Bermuda and California as well as New Zealand. The college purchased one of Rick Rudd's pieces for its collection.

Sue Cooke, formerly from the South Island, settled in Wanganui following a period as artist in residence there during 1990-91.

Rick Rudd, a leading New Zealand potter for the past two decades is known for his minimally glazed black raku work which explores sculptural forms based around the Mobius Strip.

THE BUSINESS OF CRAFT

By Judith Doyle

From Latin teacher to craft businesswoman has been a long but fascinating learning process for Ruth-Mary Beach who markets embroidery yarns, embroidery kitsets, crewel and tapestry thread from her home in Wellington's Ohariu Valley.

Selling well now in Australia, Strand Natural Fibres will also be seen in dramatic fashion in London's Globe Theatre where they were used to anchor the separate pieces worked by kiwi embroiderers that made up the hangings. Soon, Strand Natural Fibres will be available here by direct selling which will take over as the main marketing method.

The embroidery yarns are in 174 colours. Samples of the colours were created, the recipes for the dyes worked out, the colours then developed and selected. The final shades reflect the sort of colours that you see in the New Zealand landscape. Green has the widest variation of tints.

The embroidery kitsets are increasingly popular with tourists as they use New Zealand motifs, are eminently packable and reasonably prices. The kitsets produced from themes on the Globe hangings are providing New Zealanders with vivid reminders of the generous gift made by so many of the country's embroiderers.

Strand Natural Fibres grew from a farmlet operation after Ruth-Mary Beach retired from teaching. She and her husband, Neville, bought land in the valley 17 years ago where they grazed 50 Coopworth sheep and 50 goats. They aimed to market an acceptable mohair product for spinners - it was not a popular yarn back then.

After success with the resulting lustrous yarn for which they blended Coopworth wool and mohair, they decided to tackle crewel yarn which is much lighter. For this they mixed the merino-based Corriedale because it is finer than Coopworth.

Later, they took this lighter yarn further and mixed kid mohair with wool for a semi-worsted yarn.

Strand Natural Fibres is a combined effort. Neville does the books for the business and he also measures and mixes the different chemicals each morning for the desired dye.

Then fibre and dye go into a large preserving pan on the kitchen stove, up to heat to stabilise the colour and Ruth-Mary monitors its slow boil for one and a half hours. It then cools down overnight and is later rinsed in rainwater and hung out on the line to dry.

FAIRFIELD FIBRE

New Zealand fibre artists are involved in two forthcoming events in America. *Statements,* an annual exhibition opening in Portland Oregon will tour for one year. *The Fairfield-Concord Fashion Parade* features invited artists from 25 countries in a collection called *International Diamond.* Rotorua quiltmaker Shari Cole has completed outfits for both.

"Frog Printses of Day and Night Forest" was her response to the brief for *Statements;* to produce an ensemble using a package of eight fabrics from the sponsor, P&B Textiles.

Garments for the *Fairfield-Concord* event must have impact from the runway. The only sponsor's stipulation was that Fairfield batting (quilt filling) must be used with the artist's own materials in an outfit compact enough to travel for a year.

Cole's "Sunset of the Weaver-Wizards" refers to the evolution of traditional crafts with changes in applications and materials and works from the principles of Polynesian mat and basket plaiting. The coat's Niuean-style horizontal plait in solid colours is stabilised with tied tags and reverses to a complex pattern of overdyed prints. This is her second time in the show.

Dana Pratt, from Nelson, was also invited to contribute a garment. "Gift of the Sea God" is based on a Maori legend. The colours of the hand painted silk are based on the colours of paua shell. The cape over one shoulder is repesentative of a Maori cloak, and the quilt and painted designs are based on Maori rafter patterns. The garment is made in separate sections, laced together with rouleaux. Paua pieces are used for adornment.

The event, which opens at the Houston Quilt Festival in November, will appear at 15 venues in the USA. As well, its 12 month season will take it all over the world. In the previous 12 years of the show's existence it has appeared in many of the world's major capitals.

MEETING MIREK

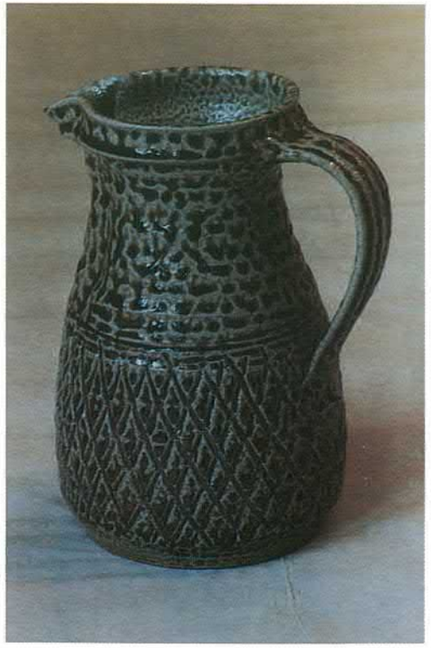
By Peter Gibbs

What do a couple of dedicated salt glaze potters talk about when they meet at an exhibition? Salt has a way of getting back into your veins, so Mirek Smisek and I had no trouble in passing an hour one Sunday morning in Wellington in April.

The venue was Turnbull House, where Mirek was sharing a show with painter Jeanne McCaskill. The show had opened a couple of days earlier with Doreen Blumhardt performing the honours for her old friend. Mirek's partner Pamela Annsouth confided that she was a bit worried sales were going so well. "If he's becoming collectable maybe that means people don't think he's going to last forever." That Sunday, it looked to me as if he would.

My favourite pieces were the carved porcelain, not just the salt glazed pieces which were a bit dryer surfaced than in the past, but some of the more conventional glazes too. Mirek's favourites are the bowls with undulating lines and altered rims. After several years he thinks he's beginning to get the hang of them. For him they echoed the New Zealand landscape, bringing his surroundings into his work.

Mirek's work has mellowed and softened over the years. He's happier now to take chances and have fun with the clay.



Above; Pots from Mirek Smisek's recent Wellington exhibition

Above: Top; "Gift of the Sea Gods" by Dana Pratt (modelled by Blanche Pratt)
Centre; Dana Pratt painting the fabric for the garment.
Bottom; "Frog Printses", by Shari Cole.

Above: Left; Vic Evans and pupils from Wakefield School. Centre; "Fountains Abbey", by Marjorie Cattell (Darfield), winner of the Wool Board Award for the best article in wool- $750 Right; "Ride the Night Winds", by Ailie Snow (Auckland), winner of the NZSWWS Creative Fibre Award - $300. Lower; "Light", by Gudde Moller (Hamilton), winner of the Bayer Colour Award - $750. Photos; Peter Gibbs.

EDUCATING ABOUT ART

The new art curriculum aims to show children that art is a valid career option, and that artists are real people too. A film crew from *Learning Media* recently visited Nelson, filming classes from nearby schools at the studios of painter Venetia Hill and potter Vic Evans.

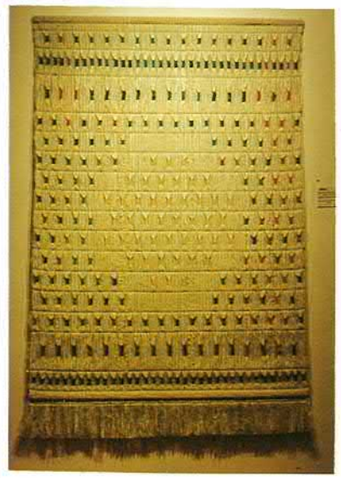
The resulting video will be distributed to all schools. Not only teachers will benefit from seeing how practising artists deal with groups of children. Their classes will also have the opportunity to see the filmand to realise that artists are no different from the rest of the community.

ARTIST IN RESIDENCE

Fibre artist Kahu Toi Mere Te Kanawa is artist-in-residence at Auckland's Carrington Polytechnic until the end of the year. Her recent exhibition *He Taonga Tuku Iho* (The Inheritance) took place at the Lopdell Gallery during May. While exhibiting her own work, Kahu acknowledged her teachers by including articles by them in the exhibition.

Below; Recent work by Kahu Te Kanawa. Photo courtesy Lopdell Gallery.

These include her grandmother, Dame Rangimarie Hetet, and her mother Digger Te Kanawa. During the show, Kahu demonstrated the techniques through which muka flax is stripped, beaten and turned into fibre.



Following her residence at Carrington, she will travel to the South Pacific Festival of the Arts in Rarotonga.

WOOLCRAFT WORK

The New Zealand Spinning, Weaving and Woolcrafts Society held their annual gathering in Nelson at the end of March. *Textile Talents* attracted hundreds of fibre enthusiasts from all over the country.

For the first time, the associated exhibition was held in a public gallery and extended beyond the weekend activities in a two week season at the Suter Art Gallery.

Long time president Margaret Stove stood down over the weekend. Her successor is Aucklander Jay Venables.

NORSEWEAR ART AWARD

Northland craftspeople took two of the three prizes at the 1992 Norsewear Art Award. The annual show, at the Civic Theatre in Waipukurau is one of the few rural based exhibitions to successfully match those inthe main population centres.

Peter Alger from Whangarei won the $2500 pottery award with *Elemental Bowl*, a rugged, simple form, showing the character of the clay and firing process.

Fibre section judge Ruth Lorentz, from Havelock North, selected *Jazz Scene*, by Kaitaia artist Vanessa O'Neill for the award in this section, also $2500. She also gave merit awards to Jeanette Green, Auckland; Louise Ludlow, Napier; and Diana Parkes, Lower Hutt.

Although no directives on style or content are given to the judges, the organisers insist on restricting the number of acceptances for the show in order to present a good exhibition in the available space.

For the pottery judge, *Craft NZ* editor Peter Gibbs, it was no simple task culling many high quality entries. But in the end it was worth it to see the uniformly excellent quality of the show.

Merit awards in this section went to Christine Black, Wanganui; John Crawford, Ngakawau (Westport); and Hilary Kerrod, Auckland (Hilary Kerrod is featured on page 6 of this issue).

An interesting aspect of this group was the equal division between long established potters Peter Alger and John Crawford, and new graduates Christine Black (Wanganui Polytechnic) and Hilary Kerrod (Carrington Polytechnic).

Crafts Council President John Scott selected the painting section. Dunedin painter Lindsay Crooks took the $2500 prize with *St Clair Beach*. Christine Bell-Pearson, Nelson (*Past*) ; Kalvin Collins, Auckland (*We spend more time analysing the cover than what's inside*); and Gregory Sims, Hastings (*Tomoana: This Sky Rubs the Earth*) were given merit awards.

In conjunction with the awards is the artist-in-residence exchange between the Norsewear Art Award and the Fresno Art Museum. Auckland artist Jenny Dolezel will complete her one month residency with an exhibition in the Fresno Art Museum.

James H. Shepard and Suzanne Sloan Lewis will work in clay and paint in Hawkes Bay from June.

Norsewear has confirmed its ongoing support for the awards and will increase its contribution from $7500 to $10,000 by 1994. The Central Hawkes Bay District Council is also a major supporter of the award, contributing $3750 this year.

Award winners from the Norsewear Art award; From top left, clockwise; Jeanette Green, "Earth Cloak". Vanessa O'Neill, "Jazz Scene" (Winner Wool & Fibre Section). John Crawford, "Green Goddess". Peter Alger, "Elemental Bowl" (Winner Pottery section). Diana Parkes, "Winter Shawl Series". Louise Ludlow, "My Summer of Moonlight Dancing". Christine Black, "Ceramic Pillow". Photos; Howard Williams. NB: The other merit award winner in the Pottery Section , "Neolithic Vessel", by Hilary Kerrod, is pictured on page 6.

Above; Re-shaping the image of Whangarei. Photo by Kelly Turfrey

STUDENT PROJECT

Photography students at Northland Polytechnic are required to submit a photograph to a magazine of interest as part of their course requirements.

Kelly Turfrey chose *Craft New Zealand,* and sent this photo (above) of local artist Richard Coldicutt working on a mural on one of the gateways to the city. Coldicutt was the tutor for this community project, undertaken by 11 students.

Kelly says: "Because this mural is under constant public scrutiny, the theme had to reflect a strong Northland influence. The final visual consisted of several Maori motifs, the richness of the countryside and finally the breathtaking coasts.

"The photograph I have included is of Richard Coldicutt with much emphasis on the mural's size. I decided that the angle was appropriate to convey Richard's experience in this field by the way he looms above the pedestrians."

EMBROIDERERS EVENTS

The Canterbury Embroiderers' Guild hosted a number of national and international events at the beginning of July.

The conference of the Association of NZ Embroiders is the focus for a series of workshops led by local and overseas tutors and five exhibitions dotted around Christchurch.

Threadworks, at the Robert McDougall Art Gallery runs from June 24 to July 26. 37 works from NZ and 28 from overseas have been selected for the show.

Embroiderers Guild members will feature in *Celebrating Stitch* at the CSA Gallery. At Cave Rock Gallery, *Small is Beautiful* will focus on miniature textiles. Young embroiderers have their work on show at the Merivale Mall in *Needlework-Needleplay,* and the *Globe Theatre Hangings* are on display at the Canterbury Museum.

Workshop topics at the conference include Costume Decoration (Anne Baker, Sydney), Japanese Silk Embroidery (Mary-Dick Digges and Dolly Fehd (Atlanta, USA), Sculptural Forms (Sandra Heffernan and Philippa Steel, Wellington)Rich and Exotic Canvas Embroidery (Effie Mitrofanis, Sydney) and Mountmellick Embroidery (Judith Ross, Christchurch).

CONE CLAY

Cone City Clay was the conference staged for the NZ Society of Potters by Auckland potters over Queens Birthday weekend. The cones of the title were a double word play on the small pyrometric cones used by potters to measure temperature and the much larger volcanic cones dotting the Auckland landscape. An imitation of the most famous of those cones was constructed as a kiln under the guidance of Peter Lange and fired during the weekend. Inside were a number of pieces by Bronwynne Cornish which formed an installation during the final days of the convention.

Many Auckland potters gave presentations of their work and discussed topical issues. Demonstrators included Fletcher Challenge Ceramics Award judge Akio Takamori and the winner of the award Lara Scobie of Scotland.

The National Exhibition of NZ Society of Potters members opened during the convention at Master Works Gallery in Parnell.The Fletcher Challenge exhibition opened the previous night. Both exhibitions are reviewed in this issue of *Craft NZ.*

Below; "Jewelry Roll", by Pippa Davies, tutor at the embroiderers conference. Right day and night photos of the volcano kiln at the NZ Society of Potters convention. Photos; Peter Gibbs and Dawn Glynn.

REVIEWS

NZ SOCIETY OF POTTERS

Reviewed by Julie Warren

In a departure from tradition, the 34th National Exhibition of the New Zealand Society of Potters was held in a private Auckland gallery, Master Works, at Parnell. The 83 piece show was tightly selected by potters Meg Latham and Rosemarie McClay, and gallery owner Sara Sadd.

The work was displayed in the back gallery. Given more room, the pots would have had the chance to make stronger individual statements and left viewers with the opportunity to see them from all angles.

This exhibition held few surprises, but reaffirmed the continuing progression of ceramics in New Zealand. Little domesticware was shown; not much was offered for selection. Traditionally New Zealanders have been great producers of functional work. Why wasn't that reflected in this show? Is it because potters now believe that only "art" pieces will be selected for exhibition, or is it just that there is not a lot of really high quality domesticware being produced any more? Is there less need, or opportunity, to sell vast quantities of useable pots, or is the generation of potters which flourished in the 1970s looking for new challenges and directions in the 1990s?

The show was held at the same time as the international Fletcher Challenge Ceramics Award. Bound to invite comparisons, each exhibition must ultimately be judged alone. The Fletcher Challenge offers a world vision, an excitement which comes from new exposures to ways of dealing with familiar materials. The New Zealand show generally lacked that element of surprise, or shock. Perhaps it didn't stun the senses, but it was nevertheless a strong, cohesive statement of the work currently being produced in New Zealand.

A cursory glance revealed little unfamiliar work. A close inspection showed the subtle changes evolving in individual works - variations on trusted themes, new ways of enhancing the surfaces, of stretching the boundaries with new materials.

Moyra Elliott was one of the few to have moved in a different direction. She showed for the first time her garden series with lichen-like glazes and bold, stylized plant forms. It was a response to her environment, her "knee-jerk reaction" to what was going on around her.

Well executed pots with a strong element of design abounded. Many also satisfied on an emotional level. Peter Alger's box was one such pot. Using age-old techniques to produce and fire it, it stood out as a powerful piece, simple but substantial. Not relying on applied decoration, the work seems to attract, almost it seems, by sheer force of personality.

New Zealand's longest serving studio potter, Ian Firth continues to make work which seems to be the product of an endlessly fertile imagination. His teapot forms are loose and lively, the glaze fresh and appealing, a delight. Long may he continue to be an inspiration.

Exhibitions stimulate, surprise, puzzle and disturb; they may strengthen our prejudices, bolster our egos, or touch our hearts. The 34th National Exhibition of the New Zealand Society of Potters could well have evoked all these responses.

EARTH, FIRE AND LIGHT

CAST GLASS SCULPTURE BY COLIN REID

Auckland Museum April 1992

Reviewed by Peter Viesnik

First impressions are powerful, and even though familiar with Colin Reid's work through personal contact with him during his year as artist in residence at Carrington Polytechnic, when I walked into the Auckland Museum's exhibition hall I was stunned by the power and beauty of the sculptural forms arrayed before me.

The presentation of only ten pieces in eight cases in a large hall provided a dramatic sight, an almost Zen like setting and a rare opportunity to study the individual forms and textures of each piece in detail.

Precise geometrical angles contrasted with curves and circles, flowing and pitted surfaces next to smooth and polished facets acted as windows to swirling veils and entrapped air bubbles within. One of the many aspects of glass is its ability to portray arrested movement and Reid captures this aspect uniquely.

Another impressive feature of this array of cast glass is the richness and boldness of colour, deep cobalt blues, glowing yellows and oranges contrasted with the clarity of the transparent and polished surfaces of the clear glass and with the white matt textures of the finely sandblasted surfaces.

In this exhibition Reid also explores an interplay of the contrasting materials of glass and basalt, with the rough black surfaces of the basalt fitting tightly against the velvety smoothness of the translucent glass. The basalt texture and colour is duplicated in glass in some of the pieces, the edges of which show the sand moulds from which they have been cast.

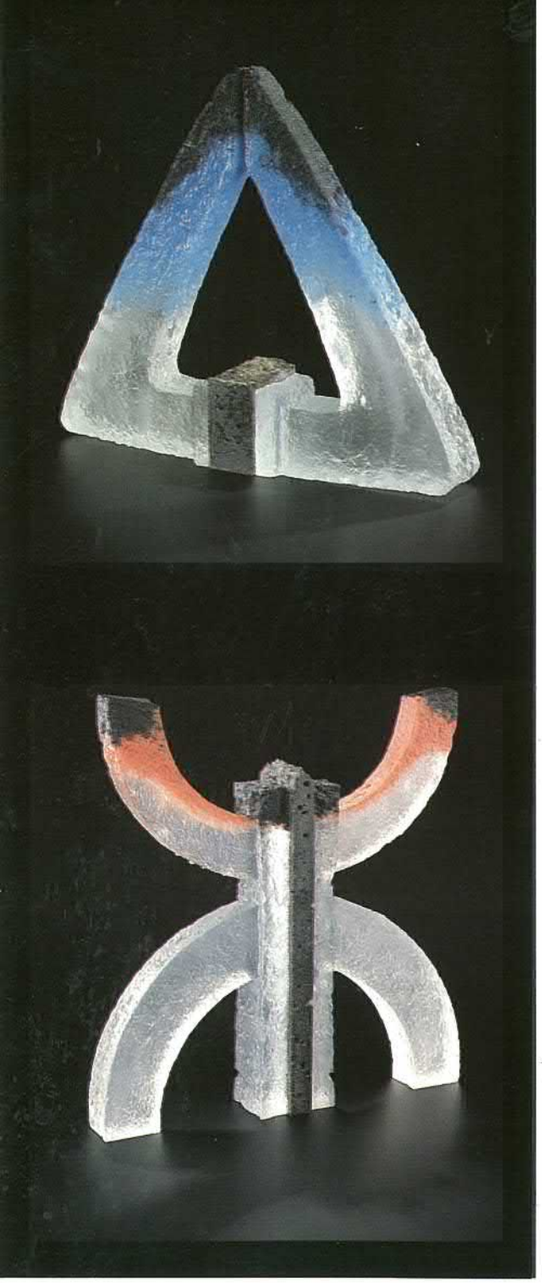
A piece I felt particularly drawn to was Cat.8 with its precise angled surfaces. It spoke of the mysterious depths of a lake. A dark and impenetrable base murk rising upwards to subtle green, organic weed-like substances blending in to a rising brilliant transparent clarity with veiled encased bubbles. The whole piece appeared to be cleft down the centre like an underground chasm.

Another exhibit I admired was Cat.10 a deceptively simple and stark cross form. It was composed by contrasting transparent polished and opaque sections at its base, and these were transformed as they rose into a dark blue upper section peaking into rich edible looking tips.

The New Zealand influence is very noticeable in Cat.5 which clearly presents the koru symbol, and there is extensive use of our indigenous basalt rock. Reid himself acknowledges the Pacific influence in his work, symbols, designs and materials.

Technical wizardry is demonstrated in the large circle with sandwiched alternating layers of clear and blue glass clamped tightly together as in a vice, whilst an arch like form of green, black and clear glass reminds the viewer of Cathedral Gap near the Poor Knights island group, even though it is dated before the artist's arrival in New Zealand.

Above; From the National Exhibition of the New Zealand Society of Potters.
Left; "Maomao Uprising", by Peter Alger.
Top; "An Abundance of Golden Apples", by Louise Rive.
Bottom; "Porcelain Teapot" by Ian Firth.
Photos; Howard Williams.



Left; Cast glass by Colin Reid. Photos; courtesy **Exhibitour**

The forms are created using a lost wax casting technique. Each piece is worked out first as a model in plaster or wax, a rubber mould is then made from the plaster model and a wax duplicate is formed from the rubber mould. The duplicate is encased in a high firing refractory mould mix and the wax steamed out. High quality glass blocks, or crushed glass and ceramic under-glazes to colour the glass are strategically placed in the refractory mould, which is then fired to 850-900°C and annealed for two to seven days.

My contacts with Colin Reid whilst resident at Carrington Polytechnic were a real pleasure. A quiet, modest and charming man with great patience, which was particularly noticeable during a casting workshop I attended. To my great alarm at one point one of my casting moulds sprang a leak, gushing wet plaster mix over the floor, Just at that moment Colin walked past and, calmly noting his workshop floor being soiled, merely smiled and strolled on.

His period of residency is having an ongoing effect on the work of the students, which is observable in works shown at the open days and other venues.

FLETCHER CHALLENGE CERAMICS AWARD

Reviewed by Marie Nicholls

The Fletcher Challenge Ceramics Award has for 16 years given the public the opportunity to view not only the best of New Zealand ceramics but also international ceramic work usually only seen on the pages of glossy publications. The 1992 award continued that tradition of excellence.

The introduction of slide selection has meant the largest number of entries so far with 645 pieces from 38 countries being submitted. Judge Akio Takamori selected 182 pieces for the show. The slide selection process seems to have been successful in giving us the most diverse show we have seen with an increase not only in the calibre of the oversas entries but also an increase in scale.

The combination of Fletcher Challenge's generous sponsorship, the vision of award administrator Moyra Elliott and the dedication of the Auckland Studio Potters deserve awards of their own. The Auckland War Memorial Museum who provided the exhibition space and the dramatic exhibition design should also be commended.

Also deserving an award is photographer Haru Sameshima whose wonderful photographs bring the work to life in the catalogue and provide an historical reference for the future.

The design of the show this year was somewhat unusual. The use of Egyptian inspired ziggurat shaped cubes of various heights arranged in aisles made viewing a joy, even with the large crowds present on the opening weekend. Fifteen thousand viewers were expected during the show's season.

This year there were ten Merit Certificates, five Awards of Merit ($1000 each) and the $10,000 Premier award.

The Merit Certificate winners came from countries as diverse as Denmark, The Netherlands and Japan. Auckland potter Matt McLean was one of the recipients with a large interlocking terracotta sculpture. On the various planes of the work were subtle earthy slip colours; a piece more suited to an outdoor environment than the sophisticated surrounds of this year's show.

Of the other Merit Certificate winners, Karen Karnes' (USA) "Winged Vessel" was strangely compelling with a restrained surface of greenish golden brown, sensuous opening and beak-like wings; a piece to contemplate.

The Merit Award winners' work focused on the sculptural possibilities of clay. Vilma Villaverde's (Argentina) "El Juguete", a wall piece, had the feel of a surreal jigsaw puzzle. Christine Thacker's (New Zealand) "Some Southern Tree", with its subtle use of colour and surface treatment, showed a confident handling of clay. This piece has a vitality, a feeling of growth.

The winner of the $10,000 Premier Award was Lara Scobie from Edinburgh, a recent art school graduate. The work was chosen by Akio Takamori for its freshness and energy. Scobie's handbuilt entry had a timeless presence, a feeling of antiquity. Subtle use of oxides and textures added to the completeness of the piece.

Of the other work shown it was the domestic ware that had some wonderful surprises. Ross Mitchell-Anyon's (New Zealand) "Cooking Pot" had a quiet simplicity. Jane Hamlyn's (England) "Grand Casserole" with its luscious salt glazed surface just begged to be used. Renton Murray's (New Zealand) "Beaten Salt Glazed Jar" and Phil Rogers' (Wales) "Salt Glazed Stoneware Teapot" had the qualities essential to functional pottery - accessability and pure tactile and visual pleasure.

As the Fletcher Challenge Award goes from strength to strength the ceramics shown continue to provide New Zealand potters with a chance to measure their pots with the best from overseas. Perhaps with this stimulation and the competitive nature of New Zealanders, we might see an increase in the number of award winners coming from New Zealand in the future.

WHO ARE JACK AND JILL ANYWAY?

Reviewed by Peter Gibbs

The state's role as a patron for the arts may inadvertantly be met by the use of public money to employ tutors at our Design Departments and Schools of Art. That's not to say that staff are provided with a lot of time to work on original ideas, but the opportunity to collaborate, discuss, and develop professionally can result in some powerful work.

Who are Jack and Jill Anyway? was an exhibition at the Suter Gallery of the work of eight tutors from the Nelson Polytechnic Craft Design Department.

Ronette Pickering said in her statement: "The work in this exhibition is in memory of my father Warrant Officer Ronald Cunnold-Cook. His greatest worry in leaving New Zealand was that he would be forgotten and that he would leave nothing of himself behind. Well he left me, Ronette. Although I never knew him, I felt his influence and I will never forget him.

"This work is a memorial to all those who left 40 years ago and never returned."

Her work, from dyed, painted, tapa cloth used photographs and clippings in a delicate salute to the past. The ethereal nature of the cylinders, which constantly moved in the faint air currents through the gallery, gave a feeling of spirits and of the fragile nature of memories which cannot be pinned down.

Megan Huffadine used the words of Susan Griffin from *Women and Nature:* "We are dark like the soil and wild like animals." Her Female forms, "...reflect truths about the nature of being female which have been used as a basis for the persecution of women over the centuries..." Although she is not specific about what those truths are, one is left with the feeling that if they are positive and strong, perceived masculine attributes, then they are likely to be seen as a threat.

"Female Masks" continue the theme. The notion is that the wearer of the mask "...becomes and is the being of the mask..." The wearer in this case would then take on those positive female attributes, "...reclaiming of female forces, of ourselves."

Vicki Mathison showed her strongest work yet. It's as if she has moved out from the shadow of previous influences and is more confident of herself and what she is expressing through these works compared to the more fragile, tentatively pasteled airbrushed forms of the past. She shares the preoccupation with spiritual matters of the past, stating only: "These pieces are about Glaciers, Equus, Boundary Stones and temples."

Others in the show have equally weighty concerns. Errol Shaw deals with abstract art referring to other abstract artists using deliberately limiting restrictions in colour and technique. Gavin Hitchings creates small sculptural pieces which take further the collaboration with Graham Bennett on Nelson's Boulder Bank. Design tutor Nick Channon uses Cibachrome prints, establishing a resource of images and references, many of which relate again to the Graham Bennett collaboration which had such an influence during and following Bennett's residency in Nelson.

Rose Griffin's introverted works refer to her "...personal history of domestic sewing ; to acknowledging the tangata whenua; to the holistic nature of concepts which are interpreted according to the culture and context of the user."

It was refreshing to see the playfulness in the jewellery of Ray Mitchell. His statement made clear that he wanted to appeal to the average kiwi joker and jokeress using inventiveness and improvisation. His non-precious exuberance was a welcome end to a show which was immensely impressive, but oh, so serious.

Above; *From the Fletcher Challenge Award, 1992. Left; Christine Thacker, NZ, "Some Southern Tree". Top; Vilma Villaverde, Argentina, "El Juguete". Bottom; Lara Scobie, Scotland, " Hand-built Stoneware Vessels". Photos; Haru Sameshima.*

Below; *From "Who Are Jack & Jill Anyway". Left; Megan Huffadine "Female Mask". Top; Ray Mitchell, two brooches, Coconut shell, stirling siolver and Polyester resin. Bottom; Ronette Pickering, "Establishing a Relationship". Photos; Peter Gibbs.*

Above ; Leather and mixed media sculpture by Ian White, Australia. Photo; David Russell.

Right; Top; cast glass by Ann Robinson. Bottom, ceramic work by Brian Gartside. Photos; Peter Gibbs.

NEW ZEALAND CONTEMPORARY LEATHER

Reviewed by Sally J. Cantwell

The water borne vessel has a number of interesting reference points throughout history. It evokes the notion of exploration and the discovery of distant lands. The protective role of the biblical Ark has been a recurring theme, as has the importance of the waka within Maori history and mythology. There is also a certain romanticism associated with wind driven vessels. To be part of the marine landscape is an exhilarating experience but there is always a sense of exposure and vulnerability. Ian White, a guest exhibitor in the Crafts Council's recent *Contemporary Leather* exhibition, used the vessel both as form and meaning in his three mixed media sculptures. Impressively displayed these works explored the vessel as a metaphor for human consciousness. Constructed in three different sizes each form was primarily a "hull" made of leather. Although varying in degree the forms were enclosed. This was perhaps a reference to their role as the carriers of things that are hidden, intangible even sacred. The smallest of the three most strongly emphasized this with a tear drop shaped opening covered over with a small relief design. This design consisted of a fabric layer upon which was placed a cross shape covered in obscured text and held in place by string. In combining the cross (symbolic of belief and ritual), text (symbolic of interpretation and knowledge) and vessel, White has been able to make a succinct and subtle point. White, a prominent Australian leather artist, was invited to participate in this otherwise New Zealand exhibition of contemporary leather work. The show was a joint commemoration of the Association of New Zealand Leatherworkers' first decade and the Second National ANZL Conference. Thirteen other artists were invited to submit work for selection. It was therefore a relatively small number of works which represented the diversity of current leather practice. This included traditional containers such as boxes and bowls, abstract sculptural pieces and body adornment. Artists such as Tim Meagher showed an interest in the decorative treatment of the surface. Using a conventional box form which he manipulated to produce irregularly shaped lids Meagher's bold and graphic use of colour was an effective contrast against the dark leather. Dave Russell's leather boxes also had decorative lids which were more painterly and reflected a concern for the environmental protection of the Pacific region. The use of leather to explore the human form was seen in work by Janis McKenzie and Donald Paterson. McKenzie's "Child of Poseidon" placed a human head with a textured head dress as if it were metamorphosing into the tree stump that it sits on. Leather as flesh as bark suggests an interest in altered states. Other artists concentrated on forms derived from domestic objects. Grant Finch's "Rock bowl" was an attractive, free flowing piece which like the previous example simulated another material. In Finch's case the effects of texture and colour were strongly reminiscent of timber. John D. Craig's containers harked back to early English leather work which he has a strong interest in. The small containers by Marie Potter and Marion Chasteau were influenced by other cultures. Potter's dainty "Tribal Pots" were secured at the neck with decorative ties made of painted toothpicks, thread, beads and feathers. The final comment returns to Ian White's theme of the sacred vessel/container also seen in Chasteau's "Dilly Bags". These were inspired by the "dhilla" worn by Australian Aborigines during the dreamtime and which held sacred objects. Decorated with plaited ties, beads and pierced copper pieces these works go beyond adornment and suggest a wider role of protection.

(Further photographs from this exhibition will appear in Craft NZ issue 41)

EXPO TREASURES

Reviewed by Helen Schamroth

Last year twelve ceramic artists and glass artist Ann Robinson were commissioned by James Mack, formerly of the National Museum, to produce work for Expo in Seville.

For those of us in Auckland unlikely to get to Seville there was an opportunity to see very similar work at Master Works Gallery. Although there were fewer pieces on show, and two of the exhibitors chose not to be part of this exhibition, viewers were able to appreciate the flavour of the Expo work.

Any choice of artists must inevitably be a personal one, and to Mack's credit he did present a diversity of approaches, with some unexpected links between works, in particular the similarity of form of Len Castle's volcanic crater bowls and Paerau Corneal's delicately marked *Wakahuia* supported on twin wooden pedestals.

A significant requirement was to reflect something of this country: in geography, geology, fresh air, green paradise and a unique culture, with the emphasis here on Pakeha culture. James made specific requests of exhibitors, which is what differentiated this work from most other exhibition situations.

Working to a commissioned brief that included working larger than ever for some, proved to be a challenge to which most exhibitors responded well, and for some, acted as a catalyst for exploring new work.

Ann Robinson continued her development of cast glass with pieces that thrilled by their ambitious size, magical translucence and intensity of colour, in particular a striking *Nikau Vase* with a dynamic ridged pedestal and the most glorious greens of the bush.

All was not just bigger and bolder, although that seemed to be the case with a massive, voluminous pot by Barry Brickell. Julia van Helden created rock-like fragments, *Coastal Forms*, unlike any work I have seen of hers before. Close scrutiny of seemingly random markings on the surface revealed sgraffito figures, the imprint of humanity captured like fossils on the surface. The sensitivity and subtlety of this work gave the exhibition a dimension beyond the merely dramatic and eye-catching.

Richard Parker played it both ways. His familiar coiled pots, covered in white slip and playful dancing red and green markings, were larger than ever, gaining stature by scale but losing an element of spontaneity. The newer work was the group of wall tiles, the first of which were recently seen at Lopdell House. These tiles may have been inspired by their Spanish destination, or the universality of their motif, but they also captured the essence of Richard's way of working. They were like the tops of his pots, energetic, expressing the plasticity of clay and the mark of his hand, consistent with his way of working yet refreshingly innovative and well resolved.

Robyn Stewart also moved into new territory showing a very large bowl with a constructed interior. The earthy brown surfaces seemed to refer to the excavated landscape, and the only weakness was the contrived point of connection of the layered textured elements, which needed further resolution.

Humour in the Master Works exhibition was provided by Steve Fullmer's impudent tuatara and Christine Boswijk's small quirky *Xenoliths*. The latter, supported on metal tripods were like small demons with jaunty horns piercing their hat brims. Both artists worked with a light touch, notable in several other works, which was one of the most satisfying qualities of an impressive, substantial exhibition that expressed the delight of design in large doses.

THE ART OF THE GOLDSMITH - ROBERT BAINES

Reviewed by Peter Woods

Many New Zealanders are being given the opportunity of viewing this collection of jewellery and holloware by Melbourne jeweller, tutor and historian, Robert Baines.

Exhibi*tour*, a subsidiary of the Museum Directors' Federation, and the QEII Arts Council, have provided an itinerary covering the country including Timaru, Christchurch, Nelson, Wellington, Masterton, Napier and Auckland venues.

Baines' contribution to contemporary jewellery comes from his interpretation of the role of the goldsmith today. This vision is based on his examination of the earliest recorded usage of metals for making objects of personal adornment. Motivated by his own spirituality and depth of feeling, Baines has immersed himself in 4000 years of goldsmithing history. He has travelled and studied widely throughout the world researching archaeological works and ancient practices.

In 1989 Robert Baines took up the position of Artist in Residence at Waikato Polytechnic. Several jewellery works and three holloware objects in *The Art of the Goldsmith* exhibition were made at this time.

Apart from the use of bone in some jewellery works, the New Zealand made pieces do not contain any different visual information from the Australian made objects.

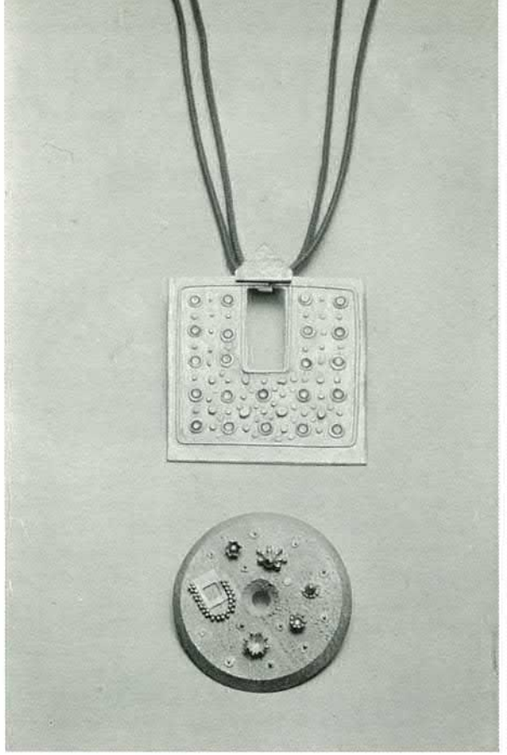
Bone is the only non-metallic material used in the entire exhibition, and the manner in which it is worked does little to serve as a comment on the works' geographical origin.

Whereas Baines' knowledge of metallurgy and the use of precious metals is profound, his use of bone is tokenism in a country where past and present working of this material is so inspired.

In all other respects the exhibition offers a visual synthesis of ancient and modern themes, propounded as an international viewpoint. This approach stands in stark contrast to the majority of New Zealand contemporary jewellery.

The 1988 exhibition *Stone, Bone and Shell - New Jewellery,* exemplified New Zealand jewellers' concern with identity, on both a social and environmental level. The Baines exhibition therefore has an air of remoteness when viewed in the personal and lively atmosphere of jewellery in New Zealand.

Baines displays consummate skill as a jeweller. His early training in traditional gold and diamond work has provided a level of discipline and a breadth of skill not commonly found in the contemporary jewellery field. For example, brooch pins are work hardened after soldering into place by twisting the pin along its length. The tension thus created gives the pin spring, and is therefore more effective as a holding device. This simple practice was common in nineteenth century work.



Above; Jewellery by Robert Baines. Photo; courtesy **Exhibi*tour***

The three holloware objects do not resound with the same mastery. A coffee pot and tea pot pairing contain a number of unresolved design issues. Even when empty the pots are heavy and the edges of the titanium plate handles are uncomfortably sharp. The "Waikato Vase" purchased by the Waikato Museum of Art and History similarly has problems. Two fabricated wing forms attached by rivets to the body of the vase have a precarious existence. Some movement off their original axis is already evident. Despite the vases' lack of apparent function, the less than sound construction methods undercut the work's presence.

Baines is at his best when preparing the many small units that collectively form each piece of jewellery. A vast range of processes are used to provide a rich variation in surface texture and colour. With each jewellery piece, the sum of its parts is somehow greater than the whole. The design process appears to develop along a linear path from the component to the assemblage.

The exhibition offers a range of experiences to the New Zealand public. All who see the show will enjoy the contrast to our own jewellers' output. The appreciation of Baines' work shown by New Zealand jewellers is likely to be mixed. Those who are able to keep an open mind will profit from the considerable achievements of Robert Baines, goldsmith.

SIMPLICITY IN WOOD

By Adrienne Rewi

Eight years ago Joe Tanner of Christchurch was inspired by a Canterbury Guild of Woodworkers show. Although he had built houses and carried out alterations, he had never turned his hand to finer wood craftsmanship.

But with a lifelong interest in visual arts and building, he gave himself ten years to set up as a fulltime woodworker - something of a change from his 17 years as a proofreader for the Christchurch Press.

Today Joe is producing top quality, finely crafted cabinets and chests strongly influenced by American country furniture and traditional Japanese cabinetry - "both commonsense, simple styles making good use of materials," he says.

Joe makes it clear that he is making a virtue of simplicity.

"Simple furniture allows the wood to speak and it requires subtle proportions and details. I see furniture as a kind of minimalist sculpture in which art, function and technique are all equal."

Starting from sketches, Joe designs furniture as he makes it, trying to compose the elements into a harmonious whole. He sees the initial design as a vital component of the process and his work evolves very slowly. Over the past five years he has made only one piece of furniture a year; although he is now working fulltime with wood and says he feels as if he is "sitting on a volcano of ideas".

As a self-taught craftsman, he feels he has served his basic apprenticeship and he is now keen to move into carved details, colour and small amounts of inlay.

But while he believes attention to detail is important "it has got to be the right detail, or it is all meaningless," he says.

He is primarily interested in cabinets, and chests to a lesser degree, and says he likes things with an intimate domestic scale. Cabinet handles are often intricate in their design and a feature of the piece, but they also relate very closely to the entire structure - "they have got to grow out of each other," says Joe, "or they simply become decorative techniques".

He uses mainly traditional joints which, although laborious to make, have been proven strong and reliable over hundreds of years. Most surfaces are worked by planing and scraping rather than sanding, (except for a final wet sanding with very fine paper), because he believes finishing with a blade produces livelier and cleaner surfaces.

Joe purchases most of his wood as logs and cuts them into slabs, either at a sawmill, or in his own chainsaw mill. After sawing, the wood is dried outside, under cover for two years and then in the workshop for 6-12 months. It is then cut into preliminary planks about two months before final use - a total of three years from log to furniture.

He prefers locally-grown exotics such as ash, elm, oak, walnut, sycamore, acacia and cedar and completes his finished works with a rubbed out finish of oil and resin, then wax, which is related to the finishes of the classic pre-French polish era.

Joe is committed to producing high quality work of unique and subtle design, using the best traditional methods and he is enthusiastic about the potential for new design within an ancient craft.

"Ultimately I would like to think I am building the antiques of the future - sound, well-crafted pieces that will still be around two to three hundred years from now."

BOOKBINDER IN THE BUSH

By Judith Doyle

In a bush hideaway deep in the Akatarawas, just out of Upper Hutt, north of Wellington, Bill Tito has a bookbinding business which, if not exactly lucrative, has at least proved financially viable in the three years it's been operating.

Of Te Atiawa descent, Bill Tito was apprenticed as a book binder at Wellington's Parliamentary Library and then at Government Print. He left after his apprenticeship was completed and worked in all sorts of jobs.

After many years of driving buses and working in the energy fields in Taranaki, interspersed with periods on the dole - he decided to take up his initial training, even after so long a gap. In a studio built on his Akatarawa property, he bought binding machines, some a century old, and an equally ancient guillotine which can cut a pile of telephone directories, no trouble. He's still looking for a gold blocking machine.

Helped by his son, John, and guarded by two Great Danes of dubious temperament, he renovates and binds old books - by hand, using this old equipment. Starting up on his own has not been easy but by dint of never turning down work - even if the battered books are just old school textbooks - he is building up the work, slowly but steadily.

In fact, rebinding school books has proved a good little earner for him - while costing the school a fraction of replacement costs in the case of both tatty textbooks and library reference books.

Many books that are brought to him are Bibles, venerable in age. He has had one dated 1761. Some of the Bibles have family trees written inside them and were brought out by pioneering families in New Zealand's early years. The pages inside these old Bibles often need replacing, which Bill Tito does with acid-free paper.

Other old books that he's tackled are Victorian or Edwardian photo albums with illustrations around the oval photo spaces. And dictionaries - one he renovated recently was more than 200 years old.

These old volumes are re-bound in New Zealand leather, often with a flat surface contrasting with a roughed-up suede surface over the spine of the book. Sometimes buckram is used. He has found goatskin particularly good - soft yet durable.

DEBBIE POINTON

BY ELIZABETH FRASER-DAVIES

There is a delightful cottage in Paraparaumu, filled with homely and lovely artifacts, many of them made by the equally delightful Debbie Pointon, whose home it is. It is a house full of nooks and crannies, furnished with love like an enchanted grotto filled with secret treasures. It admirably reflects the fey and ethereal quality of Debbie herself, a talented artist of many mediums. Some readers indeed, might well be the fortunate owners of one of her paintings or a piece of pottery and

wonder why her work has so unaccountably been missing from exhibitions since her last one held at the Molesworth Gallery in 1987.

The years following 1987 were times of personal retrenchment for Debbie and she feels she has emerged after the slow rearrangement of her life, stronger now and more focused than before. Debbie was born in 1948 and grew up in Lower Hutt. Two years study at Wellington Polytechnic Graphic Design course were followed by marriage and motherhood. In 1974 she moved with her husband and young family to the Kapiti coast.

Starting her artistic career, she won, in 1976, the National Bank Award. Then in 1979 Debbie was able to share studio space with Jean Hastedt at Otaihanga until 1981, continuing her multi-faceted career of potter, watercolour painter, print and papermaker. In 1980 Debbie won the Fletcher Brownbuilt Pottery Award and the Bank of New Zealand Pottery award the following year. In 1982 she was awarded a Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council Grant to build her own studio and in 1983 she won a Merit Award in the Fletcher Brownbuilt Pottery Award.

Latterly the desire to give something back to the community and the necessity of earning a living wage (sadly not always possible as a self-employed artist!) led to a full time appointment as the community Arts and Recreation Officer for the Wellington Hospital Board at Porirua Psychiatric Hospital early in 1990. This post was subsequently commuted to the "Artist in Residence" scheme at the same Hospital from July 1990.

Debbie now spends one and a half days a week in practical sessions with patients, a few of them day patients, helping them with their therapeutic art work, which includes painting, claywork, fibre and paper. This work, as can be imagined, is both rewarding and extremely demanding. It was to mitigate the stress and learn a totally new skill that Debbie decided, quite by chance, to enrol in a local dollmaking class tutored by Rona Walker, a 'Goldseal' dollmaker from Otaki.

She spent a year learning the techniques of making reproduction porcelain dolls using commercially produced parts before launching out to develop her own moulds for her first totally original dolls, based on children of around 3 to 4 years. Debbie describes this creative process as feeding the inner child of her adult self and the challenge has quite carried her away on a cloud of productive enthusiasm. The technical process involves sculpting the head and body parts from clay, making plaster moulds and casting the porcelain slipware. After the greenware stage the pieces are bisque fired to 1200 °C. Next the figures are painstakingly coloured over several firings of 760 °C using china paints and china painting techniques. Handmade

Below; "Danielle"; prize winning doll by Debbie Pointon. Photo; Colin Fraser-Davies.

"Poppy"; by Debbie Pointon. Photo; Colin Fraser-Davies.

glass eyes are inserted and the laborious process of making a wig begins. The soft body is constructed and the various parts attached. Finally the clothes are designed and stitched and with the style of dress comes the final characterization of the particular doll. The doll is dressed and has by now acquired a name and, by an almost magical process of osmosis, a personality as well.

"Poppy" one of the first three dolls, an enchanting redheaded tomboy doll in modern dress, complete with freckles is particularly successful and "Danielle" a wistful blonde child dressed in white broderie anglaise won Debbie a 'Best in Category' award in a recent National Doll-makers show called "Hallo Dolly" in Auckland.

Ideas for the next dolls to be constructed are pouring into Debbie Pointon's fertile mind, possibly taking the doll into the realm of sculpture and beyond. In the next edition, Debbie has in mind taking the dolls into the spirit theme, concepts evolving directly from her former 'Flame Spirit' pots and constructions. Findhorne mythology of nature spirits and fantasy are slowly taking shape in her subconscious. Gestated, these pieces will, possibly, have more fabric components, all of which Debbie will make herself. Swirls of hand-dyed silks and trailing threads will bring an embroidered element into the clothes and therefore into the creations. They are sure to be marvellous visions of a world and art that will be essentially and uniquely Debbie Pointon.

WOODWORKING WOMEN

BY SARAH HUNTER

Woodworkers Gael Montgomerie and Jill Gibens are a couple whose directions move way ahead of mere technical ability.

Gael, who began woodturning full time in 1985, concentrates on adding almost planetary dimensions through spacious synthesis of colour, pattern and sculptural elements. She calls herself an "artistic woodturner".

Jill is a contemporary woodcarver shaping fantastic birds and fascinating animal figures as integral components of a variety of spoons, bowls and scoops.

Above ; Jill Gibens (left) and Gael Montgomerie (right). Photo; Sarah Hunter.

Dunedin based woodturner Simon King has observed the two human woodworms refining strong individual styles. Woodturning is predominately a male domain and largely judged on technique and he believes Gael's colour experiments are an "exciting development".

Jill, he says grinning, "has carved out quite a niche".

During the seventies Gael used her brain in government departments, started an architecture degree then found she was more attracted to a hand-on approach to wood.

Making simple furniture progressed to woodturning; she was particularly fond of the speed but after five years Gael decided her mainly domestic ware was stagnating in a "round brown phase".

She explains "you spend time learning a craft and getting good at the technique and then I started to get bored with just searching for the most beautiful piece of wood to make something that was infinitely polished and so on. I wanted to have fun with it and I really envied people working in media that had colour involved".

"I started investigating ways of introducing colour and pretty much where I am at the moment is colour and surface decoration on turning."

Gael has adapted artists acrylic paint in thin washes. The colours evoke a rich vitality on bowls that often have wide rims covered in dremel scribblings or vines and twigs wound on top.

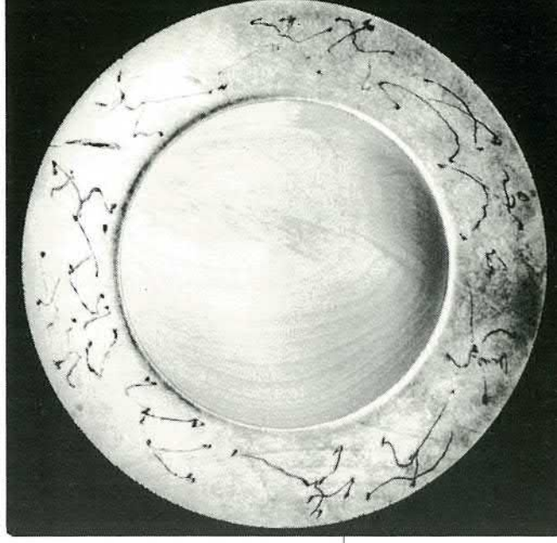
Traditionally there are various stains and dyes, ebonising or fuming processes. Overseas woodturners have been expanding the idea for years but Gael's determination has resulted in a singular design.

"I'm developing my own technique in that I haven't seen anyone else doing the particular work with acrylic that I do using it as a wash."

Simon King believes Gael has a good sense of underlying form and proportion. She says the beauty of the acrylic wash added to this enhances the properties of wood cells without obliterating the grain or lustre.

Her work has been exhibited throughout Aotearoa, New Zealand and since 1991 in Boston, Philadelphia and Los Angeles. Gael says American woodturners treat her as an expert which is "a real buzz".

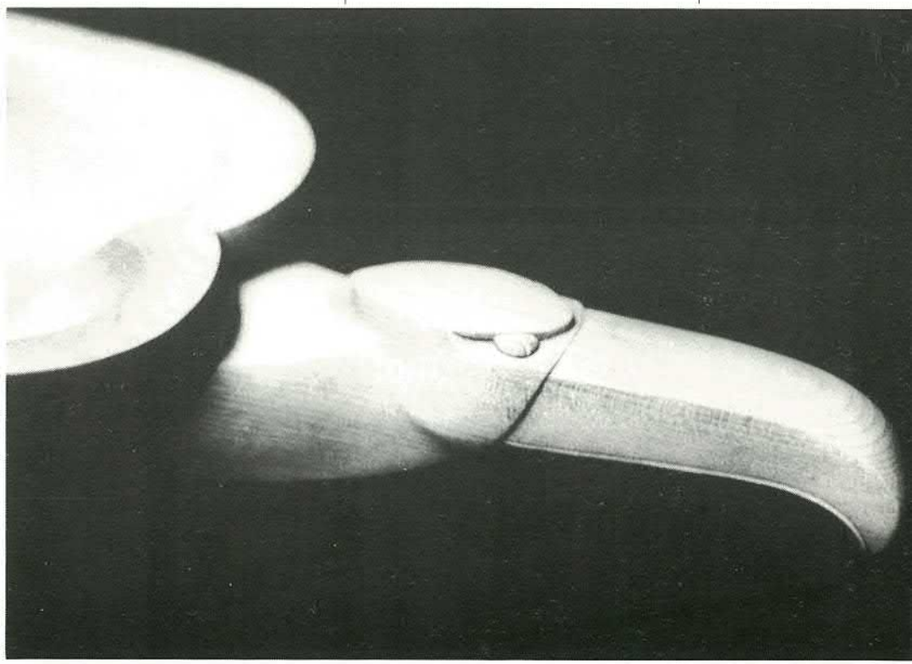
Jill has invented things from an early age, teaching herself leather work at 13 and taking to welding and working on old cars at 19. She's trapped possums, learnt about carpentry and taught herself relief carving but it wasn't until meeting Gael that Jill began specialising in woodcarving.



Above; "The Dance" by Gael Montgomerie, sycamore bowl with dremel carving. Below; Detail of "Ceremonial Bird Bowl" (1100mm long) by Jill Gibens. Photos; Sarah Hunter.

The contrast to welding, the warmth and liveliness of wood and the subtraction process of carving have absorbed her attention for four and a half years. The key to her success, notes Simon King, is an enormous amount of natural talent and the ability to be extremely self critical.

She's carved three dimensional fantasy figures and, a major commission in 1990, the crozier for Bishop Penny Jamieson's ordination. Jill's ease with machinery has enabled her to fine tune the time spent carving. She's made her own knives and has a chainsaw and arbitech chainsaw carver to cut away big rough material.



ROSEMARY TOMERY

BY JUDY WILSON GOODE

"I need the machinery to minimise the wear and tear on my body but the actual hand work and the use of gouges, chisels and knives is the really important aspect for me" she says.

It is a relatively isolated field of work as Jill rarely sees other contemporary carving that has her "jumping up and down". She generally dislikes the traditions that English woodcarving is bound by and it is to early Polynesian carving and art that Jill owes a debt.

She's inspired by their connection with land and use of animal, bird and fish decorations as well as older North American totem carvings that incorporate animals too.

The couple emphasise a respect for trees and prefer to chase around for logs to salvage. Although they share a home and workshop in Dunedin - Gael built the house in 1978 - Jill has a place on the South Island's rugged West Coast where she spends part of each year intensely working and scouring beaches for native timber. Red beech, silver beech, kahikatea and rata are mentioned and she'll use exotics such as fruit and walnut.

Gael usually turns sycamore, using the crotch of the pale wood that has a hard grain which acts as a foil for colour and decorations. She says it's a tree that's constantly being chopped down.

"I consciously try and give some use to it because it really is a beautiful wood but I will use others when they are available."

The two support each other through the joys and despair of their work and later this year are moving to Nelson to live and establish a workshop and studio space.

"The beginning of bigger and better things," promises Gael.

She considers her work personal, well designed and is keen to share the pleasure she gets from exploring new dimensions.

"I wanted to add this, stretch it a bit but I didn't know how for a while. Now that I have, that was basically the underlying thing because I wanted to enjoy what I had chosen to do for the rest of my life."

Jill is currently working on a commission to carve a double bed head. She relishes the chance the have a go at anything different, there's a possibility of mixing welding and woodcarving, and she speaks confidently of her multi-media talents.

"I feel like I have a hugely expansive range of ideas to come no matter what medium they might be in or combinations or whatever but I know that I'm going to be making things for the rest of my life."

It's a long way from New York to Te Koporu, and it's a very different lifestyle from restoring old books in a metropolitan city, to making kete alone beside the Kaipara.

Rosemary Tomery is a gentle, self contained, self sufficient woman, passionately involved in her present development, but she doesn't undervalue her past experience, and still gets obvious pleasure and excitement from her achievements with bookbinding and paper marbling. However, none of that compares with her present love affair with flax - a development which took her from teaching bookbinding at ATI, to exploring the world of flax while living in Matakohe on the Kaipara and later to her full time commitment to flax in Te Koporu.

Rosemary's first kete were made while working with Don Solomon at Outreach in 1984, and it was then she planted her first flax plant. She was told that after10 kete she'd be able to consider herself a flax weaver; she's more inclined to think that after 10 000 there will still be new things to learn.

During the next two years, further experience was quietly gained while working with weavers on the Otara marae and from days spent with Jan Van der Klundit, followed by many hours of working through her own ideas, reading and researching. In 1987, she fell under the spell of a small isolated village on the Kaipara harbour and her whole life changed. Renting out her Auckland home, Rosemary sold off all her bookbinding equipment and moved to Matakohe where her life revolved intensely around the Kaipara and Harakeke.

In 1990, Rosemary spent a month at Waiariki Polytech. Here she found great rapport with the fulltime students and tutor, Tina Wirihana. It was here she learnt to weave Kete Whakairo. These finer kete require quite a different approach and it was a great challenge learning a new intricate way of making a kete plus a fresh weaving technique.

Rosemary feels she has two lives - one before flax and one after. "While in Rotorua I was given eight good weaving flax plants and I had nowhere to plant these special plants I felt so protective, even possessive, about. The idea of cultivating weaving flaxes and growing them around me became very important and somehow the next thing to do."

This involved selling both her Auckland home and her tiny rural retreat in Northland, and moving to Te Koporu. Here with the Northern Wairoa River at the bottom of the garden, on an acre of land, Rosemary now has 30 beautiful healthy flax plants growing which will be ready to use in 2-3 years. Till then, she makes trips to the west coast which is only a short distance away, to gather her flax. It may be a labour intensive way of getting the materials needed for her craft, but it is this availability which helped prompt the move away from bookbinding. How much more preferable it is, to be able to gather flax and use it within days, compared with having to write off to suppliers in New York and wait three months for them to arrive.

Of her response to making kete Rosemary says, "I like working green, gathering only the necessary flax to make three or four kete at a time". Using maybe 88 strips of flax for one kete, she will gather 50 leaves into one bundle, and make three trips back over the sand dunes to the van to load successive bundles. The collection is a ritual and a labour of love, but to be enjoyed and shared with her constant companion Meg, a long legged energetic English pointer.

The good coast flax is interesting to prepare. Initially hard, it is easily softened and Rosemary enjoys the salty taste on her fingers. The colour changes from green to gold, and then to paler gold much more quickly than inland flax. There is an immense respect for the traditional ways of cutting and nurturing the material which is part of her whole ceremony. It is the constant learning about different types of flax and its behaviour that is so joyous - a whole existence revolving around growing, gathering, making and understanding both the fibre and oneself. The serenity of the person, the purpose and the setting - it is hard to separate one from the other.

Ritual in preparation is a powerful part of the making. Following cutting, the flax is stripped to 125mm wide lengths and left to dry out. The softening - hapene - which follows using a metal band, also helps prevent shrinking later. Next comes boiling to stop curling and staining, and Rosemary also dyes some of the fibres. While keeping some strips damp using towels, she then weaves the flax and since it is malleable she has time to concentrate on her design. The finished kete hang for three weeks in her studio, giving it a wonderful smell of flax. It is fascinating watching the colours change as the fibre dries out. All in all a lengthy process, but the results are wonderful.

There are, at times, challenges about the cultural appropriateness of a pakeha weaving kete. But her acceptance by Maori weavers is proof that it is sensitivity, respect, passion and understanding which are important. Few people could question the integrity of Rosemary's feeling for flax, and the beautiful kete she makes are proof of that love.

Right; Rosemary Tomery, flax and river. Photo; Judy Wilson Goode.

Below; Kete by Rosemary Tomery, pictured at Clay Feat, Auckland. Photo; Judy Wilson Goode.

RODNEY FUMPSTON - PRINTMAKER

BY LINDA GILL

Rodney Fumpston has been making prints for over twenty years, one of the few artists in New Zealand to focus on the print medium, to find it uniquely suitable for the expression of his ideas and to remain physically engaged with every stage of its painstaking processes. Nine years ago, the Sarjeant Gallery in Wanganui mounted a substantial survey exhibition of a decade of Fumpston's work. Marking the respect accorded the artist, the exhibition travelled throughout New Zealand and drew attention to printmaking as a serious art form.

Below; Rodney Fumpston in his studio. *NZ Flora* is a recent lithograph. Photograph courtesy Lane Gallery, Auckland.

Many artists make prints, but the act of print-making is not bound into the meaning of their work as it is with Fumpston. For them the print may be a variation on a theme worked out in paint or some other medium and the making of it will probably rely on the technical skills of other people. Occasionally Fumpston finds in drawing and painting a welcome relief from the meticulous intensity of printing. He has made pastel drawings, some oil paintings, and has worked in collage. But these are seen as diversions, almost a holiday from his dedication to the traditional disciplines of his craft.

For most of the twenty years Fumpston has made etchings, achieving an astonishing mastery of every aspect of this method. He is a perfectionist. He relishes the clarity and precision of thought that must precede the creation of a successful image and makes the most of the paradoxes that may be found in the etching process. 'My prints look simple. Often, the more simple and spontaneous they look, the more I have had to labour.' His technical virtuosity is intimately linked to the meaning of his work which is about elegance, fastidiousness, sensuous passion refined and controlled. He is very much in earnest about his chosen medium, but there is nothing in the least earnest about the work he produces. On the contrary it is lyrical, often witty, commenting, with an ironic lightness of touch, on life in suburbia, on the visual culture of New Zealand, on contemporary art and also on the tradition of printmaking to which it belongs.

Etching has a quality of detachment, a one degree remove from the artist's hand, that makes it particularly suitable for the expression of ideas of this sort. Fumpston says, 'Etching is about biting with acid after all - it's not surprising if there is an edge to what I have to say.' The edge is sometimes that of self-mockery, a finely tuned sense of parody, even when Fumpston is, on the surface, rhapsodical, revelling in glorious colour, the 'beauty of nature' or the 'refinement of culture'.

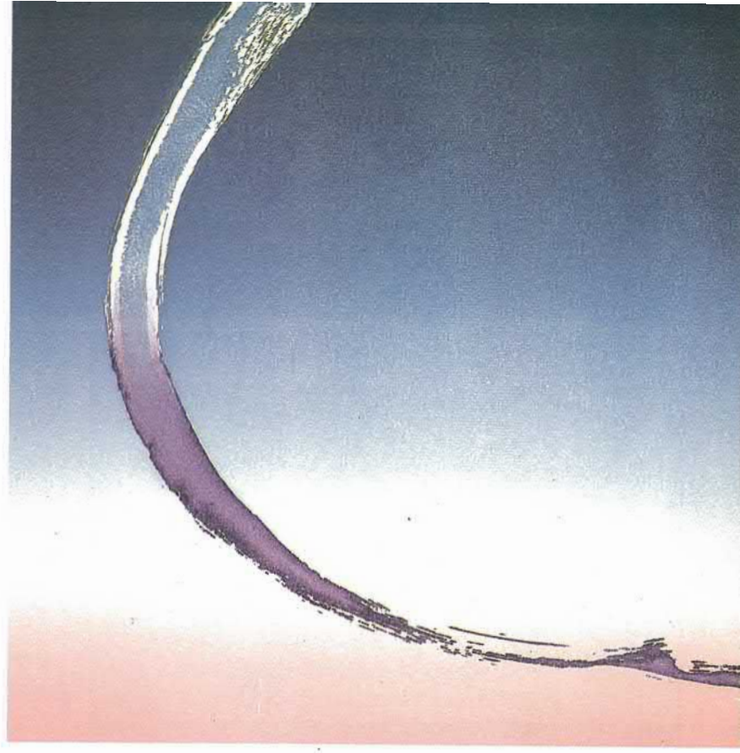
There were other elements in the etching process that appealed to Fumpston. Because they are printed in editions etchings are not expensive and bring good art within the reach of the less wealthy. The work has a satisfying level of manual involvement. The incising of the zinc or copper plate from which an intaglio print is made is a delicate sculptural process, and the print that emerges from the rollers of the printing press is a subtle three-dimensional object. In the press, the inked plate and damp paper are forced together at such high pressure that the paper is pushed into the marks and lines bitten into the plate. An embossed replica of even the finest of lines appears on the surface of the paper. The pressure exerted also forces the printing ink into the fibre of the paper, drenching it, and the fusion of ink and paper gives a special quality of colour surface unobtainable in any other way.

Some of the enjoyment of an etching is lost when it is framed, put behind glass and hung on the wall. It is rewarding to take the work into the hands, turn it over, scrutinise it up close. The Japanese, with their rich tradition of printmaking, store prints in boxes for concentrated viewing and Fumpston would be glad if more New Zealanders adopted this practice.

At the heart of Fumpston's aesthetic is an exquisite responsiveness to colour and it is just possible that he would not have found such satisfaction in etching when he was a student at Elam Art School if Rachel Miller, his teacher, had not been to Stanley William Hayter's *Atelier 17* in Paris and brought back with her the idea of using the colour roll-up as part of the etching process. The roll-up is the traditional method of inking a relief print, for example a linocut or a woodcut, where the artist lays a film of colour over the surface of the printing block. Etching is an intaglio technique and here, by contrast, colour is traditionally obtained by rubbing ink into marks bitten into the surface, while the surface itself is wiped clean. Fumpston combined the two methods and added enormously to the colouristic resources of the etching. The roll-up enabled him to modulate from dark to light, or move from warm to cool hues - a rich apricot at the bottom of the paper undergoing an imperceptible prismatic evolution into a deep velvet blue at the top. It is ironic that the production of these subtle colour progressions, as apparently insubstantial as light refracted through a film of moisture, involves arduous physical labour akin to weightlifting as the heavy roller is inked and manoeuvred. Fumpston talks ruefully about putting his back out in the making of these airy objects.

The roll-up was particularly suited to the suggestion of atmospheric effects, the endlessly varying luminous colours of the sky. Fumpston derives his imagery from the physical world, setting up a relationship between the world of nature and the objects made by human beings. In many of his etchings the sky is a dominating motif. While living in London he made in 1975-76 a series of twelve prints titled *Sky - Marble Arch*. The works were linked to his appreciation of Turner's romantic skyscapes but it is Turner seen through the eyes of someone who can no longer subscribe to the old romantic ethos, much as he would like to. So there is artificiality in the hues, an over-the-top intensity not to be taken too literally or too seriously. Like Turner, who painted the steam from a speeding railway train, Fumpston added the vapour trail of a jet plane. These prints acknowledge the colour field painters of the 1960s in America, particularly Jules Olitski, who in a sense modernised Turner's preoccupation with atmosphere, stating that his ideal would be to spray droplets of paint into the air and leave them hanging there. The gestural marks of abstract impressionism are the source for Fumpston's vapour trail, except of course that Fumpston's marks are made very slowly and thoughtfully, calculating the number of seconds the acid must bite in order to obtain the required depth of tone. Fumpston's nod in the direction of international modernism is offset by the specificity of his title, which labels the prints as the work of a New Zealander abroad, the 'Kiwi tourist' of Fumpston's own mockingly affectionate designation, selecting the Marble Arch, prime London site, for his subject, as one might buy a postcard.

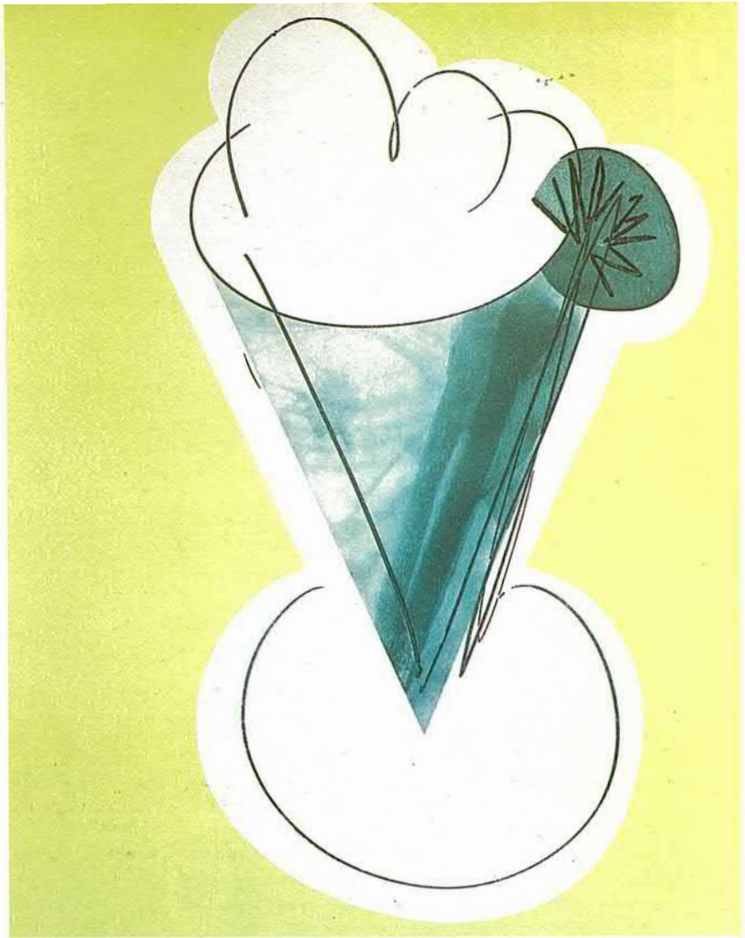
One of the traditional functions of the etching has been to depict the exotic scene, to be a source of pleasant memory for the traveller and vicarious enjoyment for those who remained at home. Fumpston's etchings pay regular homage to this tradition, sometimes putting an ironic twist into the process. He travelled to Egypt in 1980 because he wanted to make a series of etchings on the theme of the pyramids. Here was the exotic scene par excellence, redolent of antique mystery and romance. One of Fumpston's pleasures is to infuse new personal meaning into themes so familiar that they verge on the cliché, to reverse the process whereby the extraordinary becomes the ordinary. The Egypt of the pyramids offered him an austere landscape dominated by an empty sky and monumental geometry. Fumpston made skies of sumptuous pink, or bright deep blue and the pyramids themselves formed triangular planes of gold.



Above; *Sky - Marble Arch 11*, etching, 1975-76. Architecture is minimally suggested by the sloping edge of the right hand side.

The expressive range of Fumpston's colour may be gauged by comparing these prints with a series made in 1983 in response to the invitation to exhibit at the Sarjeant Gallery. Here the colours are cool and suave, greys, ochres, blue-greys, the tone set by the Sarjeant Gallery itself, an elegant neo-classical building. The 'human' element in Fumpston's work is frequently architecture, and here again he looks back to a traditional use of etching.

Fumpston says: "My work over the last ten years seems to fall into a sort of *At Home and Abroad* framework. Like most New Zealanders I love to travel, but I have also become a home-owner, a Kiwi do-it-yourself builder and decorator." Fumpston lives in the Auckland suburb of Western Springs. His house is a small bungalow built in the 1920s, with the main room given over to two printing presses, work benches, tables and storage cabinets. The garden is an inspiration to all owners of small rectangular suburban plots. A skilful combination of formal design with romantic planting, its central vista



Above; Kiwi Ice Cream, from Fourteen Days in Japan, 1986; etching. Ironically, the ice cream, a favourite flavour, is not connected with New Zealand in most Japanese minds.

(there's no other word for it) slopes gently down to a neo-classical corrugated iron folly. From the pains and pleasures ('the folly!') of home ownership, a long sequence of etchings emerged, *Home Decorating* (1983). Here Fumpston plays with ideas about what one puts on the wall (N.Z. contemporary art or wallpaper?) and offers a grid design, courtesy of Alan Maddox, or a dead fish (Barry Cleavin). He dreams of building a folly and draws up the design. He thinks about different ways of living as reflected in décor. Or makes the most ambitious colour roll-up in his career to convey something of the beauty of sunset in the western skies over Auckland.

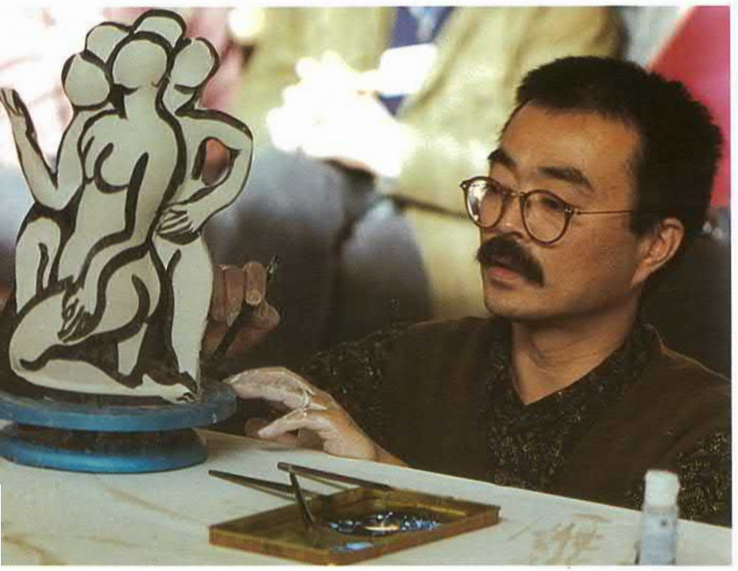
Fumpston travelled to Japan in 1986. *Fourteen Days in Japan* is a *tour de force*, in which he set out to honour the Japanese *ukiyo-e* tradition of woodblock printing, but in his own medium. He combined as many different intaglio printing techniques as possible so that the suite could act as a sort of textbook. His images were based on themes from Japanese prints, the sequence in time first of all and then images called *Volcano*, *Wet Season*, *Paddy Fields*, and, to add a modern urban note, *Kiwi Ice Cream*. These prints delighted the Japanese and Fumpston was in turn delighted by an environment that was so well-informed about the printer's art.

From a two month stay in India in 1990 came an edition of five small mezzotints, a distillation in a new

and demanding medium of the overwhelming sensuo
experience that India offers the European traveller.
mezzotint is a type of intaglio printing where the me
plate is first scored all over with minute indentations
using a tooth-edged curved 'rocker'. The pitted surf
can hold a lot of ink which gives a richer depth of co
than is unobtainable with other intaglio techniques.
Lighter tones are made by smoothing down parts of t
pitted surface, which, being less heavily inked, allow
more of the paper to show through thus reducing the
intensity of colour. The crisp clean lines typical of th
etching are replaced in the mezzotint by soft transiti
between areas of colour. With this technique Fumps
created a dreamy, nostalgic sequence of images, evo
the architecture, landscape, skies, rituals and fabric
India, all on a small scale reminiscent of the miniatur
These prints are everyone's dream of India, richly
decorative, Fumpston at his most lyrical.

In New Zealand, Fumpston was looking at popul
imagery: early etchings of coastal profiles, lithograp
flora and fauna in which settlers responded to the
particularities of a new country, modern tourist post
of Rangitoto where the island is as emblematic of
Auckland as the pyramids are of Egypt. From these
thoughts have come etchings of Wellington and Auck
land Harbours, and a longer series that Fumpston
affectionately calls his *Kiwiana*. These last refer dir
to old lithographs because Fumpston has, for the fir
time, used lithography, taking advantage of the fine
lithographic workshops available in Auckland and
Christchurch. 'I wanted them to look completely
different from my etchings, to look as much like lith
graphs as possible, really exploiting the soft watery
washes, the flat painterly look. It is a completely
different technique.' Fumpston's lithographs are la
and expansive, emblematic, informal, more represe
tional than abstract, selecting subjects that are pecu
to New Zealand. There is a vase of native flowers; s
blooms, the pohutukawa and the kowhai; a weta, a
a pukapuka leaf and a fern frond; a Victorian scrap
book of pressed plants.

At present Fumpston is setting up a four year co
as Head of the Printing Department at the ASA Sch
of Art. He is exploring the woodcut and may set him
the challenge of mastering a new technique if he feel
that it would more suitably express the ideas that
interest him. He is thinking about the Pacific, abou
childhood in Fiji. He is quietly preparing to make t
next sequence of prints.



Top; Boat form by Lara Scobie Lower and right; Akio Takamori and Lara Scobie at the NZ Society of Potters Conference. Photos; Howard Williams.

LARA SCOBIE

A 24 year old Scottish woman recently became the youngest potter yet to win the premier prize in the Fletcher Challenge Ceramics Award. Lara Scobie couldn't believe the news when she had the phone call asking her to travel to the other side of the world to collect the $10,000 prize.

Her boat forms are part of an ongoing investigation into finding out what clay can do.

"I'm really still discovering clay. When I started doing these pieces, I was concerned with pushing clay to its absolute limits and using it in an unconventional way. The layering is like turning the actual making of the form inside out and showing every layer, every wall, exactly how its been constructed, rather than making a very slick, slip cast piece where you don't see the joins and eveything is very smooth. I don't feel happy with pieces like that - I feel more secure when you can see that something is banged on or you can see the join. It's really about construction, making and my discovering what I can do with clay

"They're very complicated pieces to get to stick together and keep together. I do use slip because often I have to let the clay get to leather hard stage before I put it together. Otherwise it would just collapse, but I don't use slip a lot. I work quite quickly. It's a challenge to me. While I'm working I constantly move it around and

move on to different sections. That's what I want people to do, to just move around the pot and I want their eyes to be taken from one section to another.

"You have to have some form in mind - you can't just make a form - a shape - because it's going to be something to someone - predominantly it's surface that I'm concerned with, but the boat shapes, they did evolve. I used to work quite tall with tripod pieces. I was concerned with lifting the vessel shape up and making it very sacred- I wanted to get away from doing that, change the format, so I tried to work the other way - work longways, horizontal, and this is what evolved. The more I looked at it the more I could see a boat form. It just seemed to work so well with what I was doing. And then as I looked back I thought of all the influences that I've had in my life. I've spent many holidays up in the west coast of Scotland - in fishing villages - I just felt comfortable doing boats. But they're really more a vehicle for me to do the texture and the surfaces."

As a child, Lara Scobie went to a Rudolf Steiner school in Edinburgh

"That's where I was introduced to pottery. They had a very good pottery teacher and that's what I was good at. I was there all my school years. When I was eighteen (in 1985) I went to London. I did a foundation year at Camberwell. For a while I was going to do painting. But I kept coming back to ceramics and clay. I re-applied to Camberwell to do the ceramics degree course and was there for three years. I worked very flat - I did large wall murals, working with surfaces and texture in two dimensions.

"When I finished at Camberwell I had to make the decision whether to stay down in London, or move away - I missed Scotland a lot - I thought that was a sign. I couldn't breath in London - it was just too oppressive. I knew it would be hard financially doing ceramics. I actually applied to Glasgow to do post graduate, but I couldn't get the money. Once you've had the money for your foundation and degree course, it's very hard to get more money.

"Everybody gets a grant from the Scottish Education Department for further education (following secondary school). I got a grant to go to London because they didn't do the same course in Scotland. It's quite hard to move away, you have to prove that there's a reason.

"My further post-graduate, I eventually did in Edinburgh. I couldn't get any money for Glasgow, I couldn't get any for Edinburgh either - but I could stay at home. I managed to get some sponsorship to help me and I worked in a supermarket.

"The sponsorship was from my uncle who's a very successful businessman - he sponsored me £1000- the course was £2000 and an art gallery gave me money - a couple of hundred - there was no commitment to exhibit, so it was very generous. The Reyne Foundation - a trust fund in London - also gave me money. That helped tremendously.

"Working in a supermarket about three nights a week and then Saturday and sometimes Sunday, is tiring, but it actually paid me the most money. The normal restaurant or bar job is more tiring, because you have to work late, and also you don't get paid as much. It was quite hard, I wanted to have a badge saying 'I've got a degree'; people treat you as if you're really stupid because you work in a supermarket.

"That was for a year and was really good because I didn't have contacts in Scotland - ceramic contacts - because I had been in London for such a long time. So I had to re-establish myself. Going into another college was a pressure because I'd come from a London College, people seemed to be peering over my shoulder the whole time to see what I would produce. Because I was changing completely from the flat panels to hand building, my work went through a period where it was up and down a lot - I felt pressurised to produce something good. It was a hard time. I was expecting things of myself as well - I'd managed to get myself a degree, I'd had a show already, and suddenly it was like going back to the beginning. I was in many ways because I was changing my work."

Fletcher judge Akio Takamori said of Lara Scobie's winning entry - "...this work with it's many levels has a structure like a basket, looks like a boat, looks like architecture. I like the freshness of handling. Every part of this work shows an intense kind of care - so energetic."

Lara now shares a workshop in Edinburgh with other craftspeople.

AKIO TAKAMORI

The judge of the Fletcher Challenge Ceramics Award 1992 was born in Japan, but now lives in Seattle in the USA, where he teaches part time. His interest is in the human form, particularly in the erotic.

In judging the Fletcher exhibition he looked for messages and meaning, not only in the work, but in the trappings surrounding it. "How the work is packed, packing materials, tell you about different countries and their economies. When I look at these pieces and think that shipping is so expensive, it shows how seriously people treat this exhibition and how they want others to treat their work.

"In looking, I realise how certain cultural conditions show in the work - especially Eastern European countries. They have such limited facilities and materials. It's interesting to see that everyone is an individual artist, they try to express their own feelings, they're pretty successful with that.

"At the same time, the cultural background of each person is contained within them, become a part of them."

BOOK REVIEWS

NEW ZEALAND TIMBER

BY N.C. CLIFTON - REVISED EDITION

Reviewed by David Haig

New Zealand Timbers by Norm Clifton, first published in 1989 and now reprinted in a revised edition, is no doubt already on the bookshelves of most committed wood lovers. For those unfamiliar with the original, the book really is one of those rare compilations that successfully combines comprehensive technical information with enough fascinating historical and anecdotal material to have appeal to anyone remotely interested in wood (and I have yet to meet anyone professing to have no interest).

The book divides neatly and naturally into two main parts. The first, entitled "Understanding Wood" covers a wide spectrum of the various properties and peculiarities of wood, indispensible to anyone aspiring to serious use of timber. It covers the more obvious areas, such as the differences between hardwoods and softwoods, and how and why timber shrinks, as well as some excellent and concise explanations of areas that had foxed me for some time, such as the phenomenum of timber collapse and reaction wood.

The second part, entitled simply "The Timbers", has probably the most universal appeal. Mr Clifton again divides the subject logically enough into major and minor, as well as exotic and indigenous species. All the individual species are described using the same basic format and it is in this section that the fund of Mr Clifton's anecdotal and historical material really comes into its own - the fruit of a long and obviously much enjoyed career in forestry. The information on the uses to which Maori and early settlers put some of the more arcane timbers makes for fascinating reading. For the serious woodworker, the information on such things as relative shrinkage rates, elasticity, durability, etc of the various species is a goldmine too.

So should owners of the original buy the revised edition? Most of the minor but irritating errors have been corrected - things such as upside down photos and blurred colour prints. The gallery section, which includes a wide range of colour photos of NZ woodwork, certainly looks better, and the binding seems to be of a superior standard - welcome, as some of the pages in my original copy are already loose. The text, though, remains unchanged - and rightly so.

DECORATIVE ARTS AND DESIGN FROM THE POWERHOUSE MUSEUM

Published by Powerhouse Publishing 1991

Reviewed by Helen Schamroth

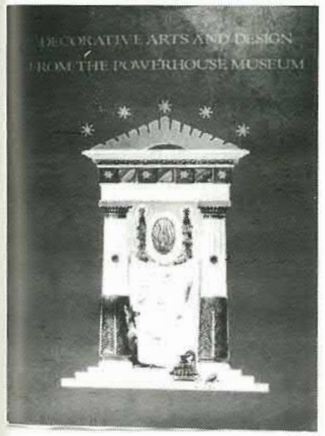
The Powerhouse Museum in Sydney is an exciting place to visit, the architecture, interior design and collected items enriching the lives of locals and visitors alike.

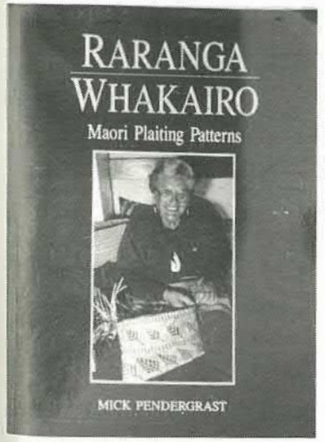
This book tells the story of the Powerhouse Museum and its comprehensive collection of decorative arts and design. The material is arranged chronologically; it is lavishly illustrated in colour, and is divided into five manageable sections starting with the 18th century and going through to the 1990s. Short essays about significant works are incorporated into the main text, the whole being written by the museum's curators.

Well written and informative, the book gives fresh insight into Australia's history, with parallels able to be drawn in New Zealand. There is a token reference to craft of New Zealand (of course I looked for more), with an illustration of a recent vase (1990) by Richard Parker. Christopher Thompson outlines a little of the story of the studio pottery tradition, giving context to the work and supplying just enough information to satisfy, yet leading the reader on to want to discover more.

The gaps in the collection are acknowledged, and the examples illustrated are a scattered sample of the treasures on offer. Yet in no sense is this fragmented information, for the text skilfully weaves the tale, the colour images indicating the scope of the exhibits.

The book is much more than a souvenir for visitors to the museum. It is lively, intelligent reading and a valuable addition to the library of anyone interested in the history of the decorative arts and design in Australia - a history which has such great bearing on that of New Zealand.





RARANGA WHAKAIRO - MAORI PLAITING PATTERNS

BY MICK PENDERGRAST

Reviewed by Toi Te Rito Maihi

The first edition of this book was treasured by Maori weavers from one end of the country to the other. Copies sold as soon as they appeared on bookseller's shelves. This edition with its more attractive cover is certain to be equally popular.

Again, in the Pendergrast style, we have an admirable text, informative photographs and impeccable diagrams assembled in a manner that together make a book both a visual pleasure and a wonderful resource demonstrating past and still achievable excellence.

He has allowed the beauty and diversity of the patterns to speak for themselves following an excellent introduction whose text is as much a delight to read as the photographs are to view.

Reed Books. Retail price; $34.95.

THE ASHFORD BOOK OF DYEING

BY ANNE MILNER

Reviewed by Judy Wilson Goode in consultation with Amy Brown, Belinda Curnow, Elizabeth Ellett, Louisa Simons, Ailie Snow, & Rosemary Stewart

The Ashford Book of Dyeing by Anne Milner is a useful addition to a collection of books on dyeing, and certainly shows Anne's in depth knowledge of natural dyeing woollen yarns. It could be used with confidence by anyone contemplating dyeing with natural materials and also with acid wool dyes.

There could be some problems however, for a novice dyer of other than woollen yarns. While the recipes for fibre reactive dyes are more or less correct, the information is sketchy and could lead to disappointment. In fairness, Anne does say in the introduction that it isn't intended to be a work manual on these subjects, but a lot of vital information is missing.

The book contains a good index and bibliography, but could well have also included a list of suppliers. The photo illustrations are not very inspiring and it would have been good to use some work by some of New Zealand's specialist dyers to demonstrate such sophisticated techniques as shibori, batik and silk painting.

PLEASURES AND DANGERS

Reviewed by Peter Gibbs

Eight Artists - thirteen writers, a luxuriously stimulating look at a segment of the art scene in New Zealand.

Luxurious, because in a country of this size - limited readership base - low budgets - it's just not possible in the normal course of events to take a chance with raw talent and expose it to close scrutiny.

Stimulating because this book dwells on the artists' work, challenging you to follow their rationale, to see and appreciate the history and influences which cause it to come about. Sometimes too, the writers introduce their own riddles and creative processes, challenging you to interpret how the art impacted on the writer and what this means to you. Do you care? Is it pretension?

If you don't care, you won't read it. You need to want to know about these artists. The writing is too challenging to read for idle curiousity. You could leaf through it as a coffee table book. You'd be amused, impressed, disgusted, entertained, maybe you'd be stimulated enough to be drawn into the text.

For this is not a conventional art book of images and biographical text. It's a challenging examination of some fringe artists, some who are entering the mainstream, but not a sample of well exposed names.

How has the book come about? From the introduction by Shirley Horrocks: "The ideas for this book came out of the research I was doing for a one-hour documentary film. I discovered that my interests could mesh happily with Susan Davis at Longman Paul and those of Trish Clark and the Moët & Chandon Art Foundation. Clark and the Foundation who had already been considering a series on contemporary New Zealand art decided to produce this first book in tandem with the film."

The editors, Wystan Curnow & Trish Clark state that this is a "...book about contemporary art." "Contemporary means this year...and the five or so years before." The chosen artists are New Zealanders, but not all of them live or work here, and even more of them exhibit their work outside this country.

Preoccupations with the body are immediately obvious. Maybe it's a reflection of coming to terms with ourselves and who we are. Although the book avoids dealing with gender issues, it's obvious that all the women featured (the featured artists *are* all women) are seeking to state their positions and that involves questioning some basic truths about men/women/bodies/body functions.

The resulting book is lavishly presented, plenty of white space, room for points to be made and considered, room to be impressed by what you see, not just as information, but as stimulation, an art in its own right.

Could we do books like this in the craft field? Do we have the writers? (Do we have the craft artists?) Surveys tell us we have the public to support such ventures, but this public may just be interested in mugs and woven rugs (what is craft?) In the end, for craft to flourish and gain respect, we may have to do as Shirley Horrocks did with the film "Pleasures and Dangers" - start the job and go out and look for backers and funders.

Published by Moët & Chandon and Longman Paul; $34.95

CELEBRATING THE STITCH CONTEMPORARY EMBROIDERY OF NORTH AMERICA

BY BARBARA LEE SMITH
Reviewed by Pene Williamson.

A guest speaker at the 1990 Crafts Council Annual Meeting, Barbara Lee Smith presented a slide viewing of many of the works in this book. Now Barbara tells us more about the artists themselves, their working process and their ability to bring "art out of needle, thread and fabric" in so many differing ways.

The 51 essays have been grouped under chapter headings, Light and Shadow, Poems and Portraits, Mysterious Messages, Within and Without and Celebrating the Stitch. A section is then followed by further statements from the artists who give advice on "Trying out..." of "Thinking about..." some aspect in the creative process. Many more artists, including men throughout, have works in the Gallery at the end of each chapter. Here and there the placing of insets illuminate a particular technique or solution as in B J Adams "curving a right angle". In these, as with the Stitch Glossary, diagrams are faultless.

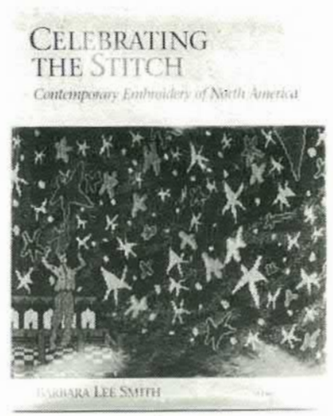
Barbara attributes the growth of embroidery as an art form to its inclusion in the art curriculum of some colleges. She pinpoints the influences on students at Indiana University in the last 20 years who "meshed with an innovative faculty to produce extraordinary results". Three former students Tom Lundberg, Renie Breskin Adams and Susan Wilchins are represented in the book and now teach in University Departments in the United States. Another influence seems to be that many of the artists have travelled and bring a rich experience of life to their work. The impressions of youth in a rural environment and seeing vestments and altar frontals in his own church are impressions recalled in the work of Tom Lundberg. Many of these artists were lead to embroider through other art forms - weaving, graphic arts or painting.

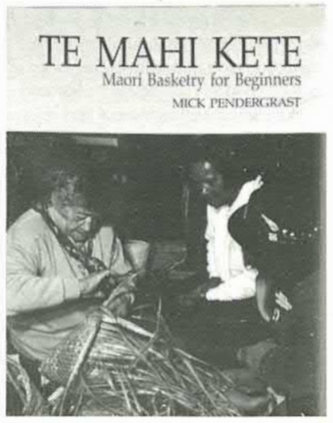
Many more common themes run through the essays. Enjoyment of the meditative time the working process offers, love of colour, using stitches as brush strokes, care and inventiveness with final presentation and a lot of very hard work. It is good to read about this inventiveness for effect as in Renie Breaskin Adams' use of needleweaving and detached buttonhole to recreate woven fabric in a unique blending of colour. A portrait of her husband *David* used 20 values of neutral, warm and cool grey sewing thread. It is one piece where a detail would have been appreciated.

The use of modern materials such as Mylar, microfilm, and the cyanotype photographic process are all clearly explained within the author's easy descriptive style. Patricia Malarcher uses Mylar, a metalized polyester film developed for the skin of the lunar space module, and believes art is the process of discovery so lets the material guide her.

This is a beautifully printed, historically important volume! There can be no argument with Barbara Lee Smith's statement that the ancient craft of embroidery has been transformed in the late 20th century to an "innovative, imaginative and inspiring art form".

Taunton Press, PO Box 5506,
Newtown, CT, USA.
Fax (203) 426 3434. US$34.95





TE MAHI KETE

BASKETRY FOR BEGINNERS
BY MICK PENDERGRAST

Reviewed by Toi Te Rito Maihi

Practical tributes are made to Mick Pendergrast every time those interested in working in traditional ways with Maori fibre open one of his books.

He compiles his books from the viewpoint of one who is totally involved with, rather than an observer, of his topic.

All his books are well organised and laid out with sincere acknowledgements to those who have helped him in his pursuit of the skills of raranga and the associated cultural significance of working with the fibres - harakeke in particular.

The text is so lucid and so well accompanied with equally explicit photographs augmented by his beautifully drawn diagrams, that it is possible to make both the kete described, using only the book.

Another welcome addition to the "special" shelf.

Reed Books. Retail price; $19.95

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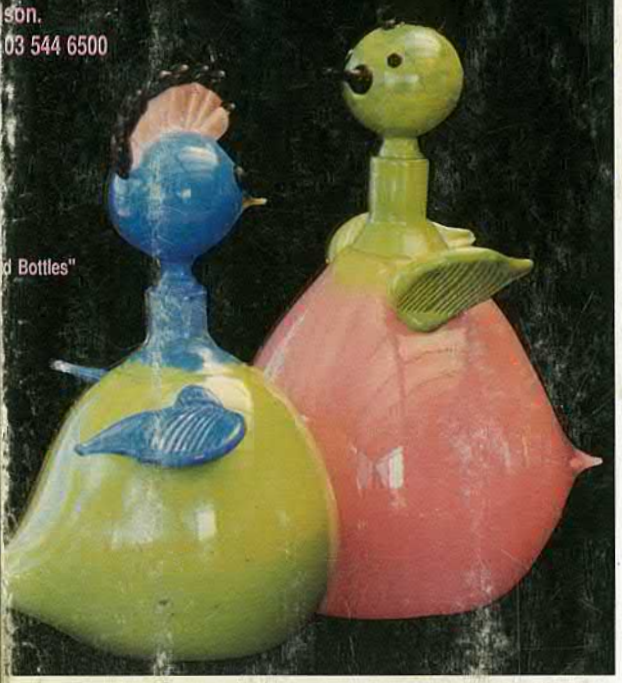

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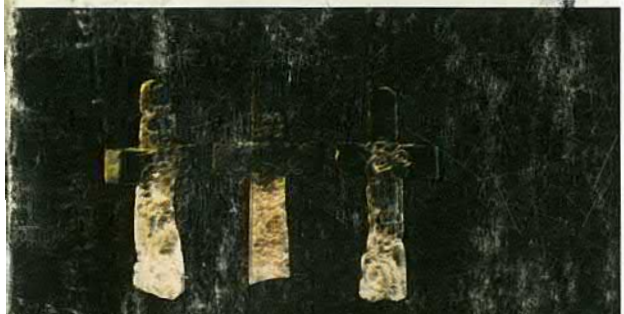

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