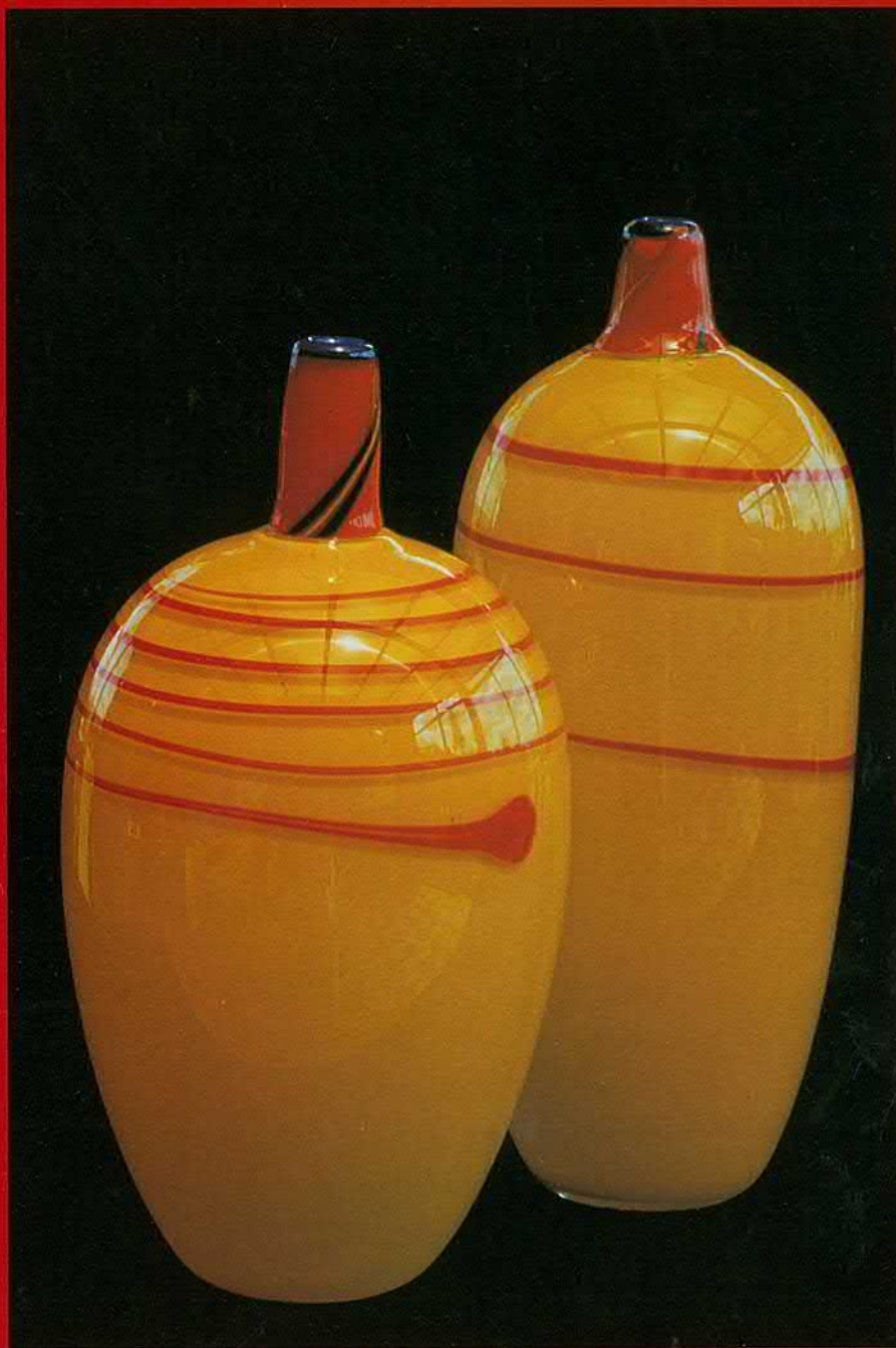


CRAFT

New Zealand

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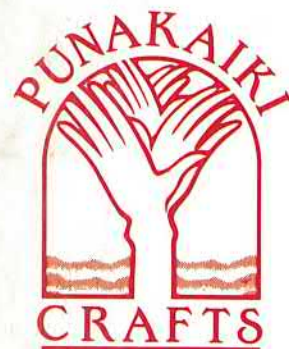
Detail; "Evening Gatha", by Jenny Barraud.

Nelson Suter Art Society Spring Exhibition

Suter Gallery, Nelson
October 14 - November 1

Guest artists:

Jenny Barraud (Small works in mixed media)
Christopher Braddock (Sculpture)
Ray Jennings (Paintings)
David Russell (Leatherwork, masks, boxes)



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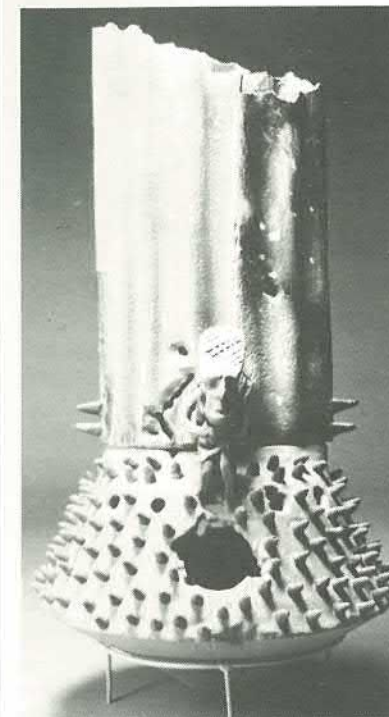
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CRAFT New Zealand

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Art schools and exhibitions, commissions and new businesses, residencies and visits from prominent craftspeople, the New Zealand craft community is a busy place to be in.



Patrick Crabb was a recent visitor to New Zealand.
"Kiln Relic" (above) is an example of his reaction to
other cultures and to his environment.

13 TWO HANDS

Margaret Milne has been a focus and an inspiration for a generation of New Zealand potters. Cathy Kenkel traces her path over the past three decades.



Above; Margaret Milne's workshop has been home to
many potters over the years.

Cover photo:
Bottles by Ola & Marie Hoglund.
Photo; Lynne Griffith

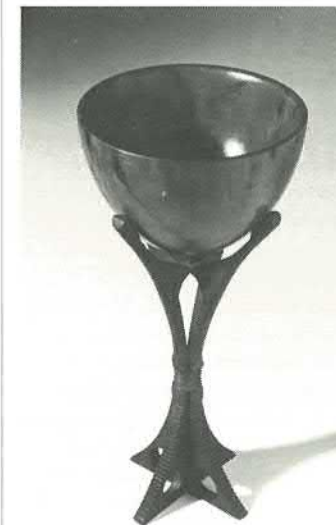


16 GLORIOUS GLASS

A Swedish couple are among New Zealand's most prolific makers of glass. Julie Warren talked to Ola (pictured above) and Marie Hoglund in Nelson.

18 REVIEWS

A plethora of "Folk Craft" shows may enable us to smirk at the nation's kitsch, but Douglas Lloyd-Jenkins questions this use of our gallery resources. Howard Williams looks at what Alan Brown, winner of the 1989 Craft Biennale, is doing now. Noeline Brokenshire reviews a clutch of embroidery shows.



Above; "Translation Chalice", by Alan Brown.
Photo; Howard Williams.

Master Works Gallery in Auckland invited two guest curators to give an alternative viewpoint and Helen Schamroth compares their success.

Whitireia Polytechnic held a huge show in Porirua, so their students and staff could examine a range of cultural alternatives. Lesleigh Salinger reviews *Origins*.

Once, the *Alternative Furniture Show* questioned the boundaries. Does it still? Colin Slade has seen them all.

28 CRAFT WRITING RULES

An August seminar in Auckland questioned whether art/craft have a valid existence without the words which describe and position them in the minds of others. The meeting tried to get inside the editorial mind to find what determines what type of writing about craft we get.

Michael Smythe recorded the discussion and made some conclusions.

31 GALLERY NEWS

Is it a sign of an upswing in the economy that new galleries are opening, particularly in Wellington. *Avid* and *Indicator Gallery* are new on the scene and Auckland's *Vault* will soon open in Wellington too.

As well, some established galleries all over the country have increasingly exciting programmes. This issue looks at a few.



Above; "The Gallery", at Northland Polytechnic,
gives students and graduates a taste of the
operation of a commercial gallery venture. Pictured
is a cup in chrome plated brass, anodised
aluminium and rubber, by Meg Black.

35 PEOPLE

A closer look at the motivation and methods of potters Peter Oxborough and Gretyl Doo, and glassworker Garry Nash. Wallace Sutherland is a maker of medallions. Judy Wilson talked to him about his work and the NZ Contemporary Medallion Group.

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Hazel Walls reviews *Weaving a Kakahu*, by Diggeress Te Kanawa.

LETTERS

MARKETING OUR IMAGE

Dear Editor,

Ron Roy's thoughtful letter (Craft NZ 40) is timely, its final sentences aptly and passionately justifying the need for a national organisation to represent craft to the world at large. The failure of our own Crafts Council sadly serves to emphasise both that need and the difficulties in fulfilling it.

The Crafts Council was born out of the vision and commitment of a few people representing the many who shared and who still share Ron Roy's convictions. I pay tribute to the work of those pioneers and to the many equally committed people who have carried on that work over the last 27 years. The last executive and staff, who struggled at the end to save the Crafts Council, were no less aware of the vital place craft holds in our society than were those pioneers. And I express with equal sincerity my gratitude to them for their work on our behalf.

As well as the obvious debts and withdrawal of funding that ultimately caused the death of CCNZ, I believe there is another less tangible reason. The clue to it is contained in Ron Roy's statement that "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." We are indeed an infuriatingly independent bunch. Ask anyone who has tried to professionally and collectively market craftspeople! The task of the QEII Arts Council's proposed Craft Marketing Board is therefore formidable and experienced observers will not be holding their breath in anticipation of early success. The parallel task that Craft New Zealand/Mahi A Ringa O Aotearoa has, of uniting the craft movement and promoting its wider interests, is hardly easier. But this is no reason to abandon either attempt, for the need is as real in New Zealand as Ron Roy describes it in Canada.

Adversity unites craftspeople like nothing else. The solidarity inspired by the infamous 1979 Sales Tax issue left the Crafts Council with enough steam, later re-charged by the highly successful 1984 Lincoln Conference, to move into its new flagship at 22 The Terrace and sail right up to the then Department of Education with the resulting huge achievements in craft education. Somehow though, that collective energy and support gradually evaporated. How and why did this happen?

I believe that the Crafts Council had two distinct responsibilities: to sell the image of craft to the world at large, and to sell itself to the craft community. In steadily increasing its

professional staff in Wellington it enjoyed considerable success at the former. The increased personal and professional contact with government departments, corporate buyers and so on resulted in significant advancement for the profile and image of New Zealand craft. During the same period there was a growing perception by much of the craft movement that CCNZ had become remote from their concerns and influence. Justified or not, this perception developed into apathy and even ignorance about the work of the organisation. Craftspeople were either unaware of its existence or felt it had little to do with them.

The most effective form of selling is by direct contact; the most effective form of advertising is by word of mouth. The success of the Crafts Council in marketing the image of New Zealand craft is proof of this. Its failure to sell itself to the wider craft community demonstrates its much lesser degree of personal activity in that field. All of us who have served on recent CCNZ executives share in this responsibility, though it would be wrong to say that executive members have been unaware of that need, or have not tried to address it. Getting out and talking to guilds and gatherings of craftspeople takes a great deal of time, time that self-supporting craftspeople have too little of.

In finding myself interim president of Craft New Zealand/Mahi A Ringa O Aotearoa (call it Craft Aotearoa if you prefer a smaller mouthful), I am deeply conscious of this need for us to consult directly and personally with the craft movement and to market the organisation in the same way. To appropriate and paraphrase another of Ron Roy's statements for this particular cause: "We need to find those who are willing and able to convince more individuals in our movement of (the) positive contributions (we can make on behalf of the crafts community.)" Craft Aotearoa's prime objective in this formative year is to get out and identify such key people in the crafts. It must consult with its constituency and consolidate its support if it wishes to rebuild any sort of structure which is to be of real use to craft. And if it gains that support it must take care never to lose it.

I live and work in a small rural community whose members exist by a wide variety of livelihoods. One of the mixed blessings of being part of such a society is that everyone's life and work is visible. Perhaps I am fortunate, but unlike Ron Roy, I don't feel alone or significantly out of step. True, my livelihood is different from all others in my community, but my experience is that I am valued because of that. True, you won't find much of my work in

the homes of neighbours (few of them could afford it anyway), but they are interested in what I do. Sometimes they proudly bring their visitors to meet me and see what I do. I would like to think this is the New Zealand experience compared to Ron Roy's Canadian one. The vast majority of visitors to my workshop express appreciation for my work; many of them confide their wish to be pursuing a similar livelihood (I try not to disillusion these!). Occasionally I have to explain patiently what it is that makes my work different and sometimes (fortunately rarely) a visitor will go away totally mystified as to why my chairs seem so expensive compared to mass-manufactured furniture. "How much is it without the gold plating?" asked one wag recently before driving off in his icon which cost far more than my annual turnover. Well, you can't win 'em all.

I mention my personal experience to emphasise my belief in the importance of personal contact in our cause, in any marketing venture. We are all individuals, whatever livelihood we pursue, and we need to seek out that individuality when talking to others. We live in a society drugged and weighed down by an ever-increasing quantity of impersonal objects, imagery and communication. Its threat to craft is not as obvious as iniquitous sales tax but it is just as real. I shouldn't need to repeat that the great value of craft and art and the people who practice it is their ability to counteract the stultifying effect of this dead weight. We must however ensure that in uniting our energies to promote our cause, we don't fall into the trap of adopting those same impersonal values and methods of communication. No amount of printed material or newsletters from the oracle will stimulate and unite. Newsletters and magazines may supplement personal interaction. They cannot substitute for it.

Craft Aotearoa's task then is to build up a nationwide network of active and communicative people in craft. People who are prepared to identify local needs and to communicate those needs to the national body and to help co-ordinate activities such as marketing seminars, design workshops and so on. There is no limit to what can be achieved when people work together. There never has been. All that is needed is the will to co-operate. The coming year will determine if that will exists or not. My colleagues and I will be doing our best to inspire it. We'll welcome wholeheartedly all offers of assistance and support.

Colin Slade, Interim President, Craft New Zealand/Mahi A Ringa O Aotearoa.

EDITORIAL

Craft New Zealand magazine lives on! Over twenty craftspeople and supporters of craft have invested in a new company - Craft Print Limited. Ownership of the magazine will shortly pass to the company, putting it back in the hands of the craft community.

The Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council has invested too, with \$10,000 of seeding finance. The capital now available should stake the magazine for a year, but after that time the future depends on the level of income from advertising and sales. More people are reading Craft New Zealand than ever before - paid subscriptions are now at their highest level for many years - but financial viability requires twice this number. There's plenty of hard work ahead.

The Craft Council's gallery on The Terrace in Wellington still lies empty, but negotiations are at an advanced stage and hopes are high that by the time you read this a new gallery will have opened on that site.

The Arts Council has announced plans to set up a marketing board, with staff appointments beginning late this year.

Craft Aotearoa is working with limited resources to consult with the craft community about its need for a membership organisation. What should such an organisation do? Lobbying and advocacy, event organisation, liaison between national craft groups and dissemination of information are obvious requirements. How is it best to do these things? Who pays, and how? The organisation has limited time to find the answers to these questions. Craft New Zealand magazine welcomes input to this debate.

So from the ashes of the Crafts Council of New Zealand, new bodies have arisen; organisations which are reshaping the services which the crafts community needs. These new structures are facing the chilly breeze of economic reality, and that reality is being felt by craftspeople more and more too. The recognition that crafts must be marketed better has been apparent for some time. Craft New Zealand will supply a valuable marketing tool with its next issue - the 1992 Craft New Zealand Yearbook. The realisation that such marketing must be paid for has not been universally well received by craftspeople. However, part of the poverty of craftspeople is due to this very lack of self promotion - in advertising you get what you pay for.

Individually, the craftspeople of New Zealand have no clout. Our only strength is in co-operative action. Until we learn to work together on projects like the yearbook - and until we realise that we have to find the resources with which to do it ourselves - we will not present a professional image to the public.

Fortunately, plenty of top craftspeople are not deterred by the investment needed to prepare an application for the yearbook. Early signs show good support and I will be joining craft writer and fibre artist Amy Brown and woodworker and sculptor Humphrey Ikin in mid-October to evaluate the applications.

Response to the yearbook by retailers, tourism operators, and others who may commission or purchase craft are also good. This is the sort of document which has been needed for years - to see at a glance who is making what - and where it can be obtained.

The writing is on the wall. Professional marketing, through initiatives like the yearbook, is essential for our survival. Look for it early in December.

Peter Gibbs, Editor.

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CRAFT

New Zealand

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IN BRIEF

DESIGN BUSINESS

Two recent graduates of Waikariki Polytech have established *Pohutu Prints*, a small design business in a prime Rotorua tourist spot close to Whakarewarewa. June Grant and Mereana Hall graduated in 1989 and 1990. June did some part-time tutoring at first, but needed a more secure future and the pair looked for something involved in tourism.

The polytech backed them up with an eight week business course and they started printing T-shirts and placemats, emphasizing distinctive NZ designs.

Support also came from the Maori Women's Welfare League, who were willing to lend money for them to buy equipment.

The business initially relied on tourists, but now sends custom-designed T-shirts to hui all over the country during the winter. Their designs for tourists incorporate universal designs from Maori artists. The images are often of the Pacific, but not directly Maori. They say their T-shirts appeal to a wide age group, but competition is fierce.



Above: Mereana Hall and June Grant.
Photo: Peter Gibbs.

Below: "Water's Edge",
by Helen Schamroth.

HEWLETT PACKARD COMMISSION

Two works were commissioned by Athfield Architects for Hewlett Packard's new Auckland office and were recently installed in the *Ports of Auckland* building.

"Water's Edge" by Helen Schamroth is in the form of two sails, one floating over the end of the prow shaped reception desk, the other providing a sweeping vertical element that resolves a difficult corner. The challenge was to work with the strong maritime theme of the interior and its robust high-tech elements, yet retain some of the characteristics of fibre. The work, mainly in stainless steel and brass mesh, filters a view of the harbour, and is assembled with fibre techniques of stichery and wrapping in wire. The maritime theme is also taken up in Malcolm Ford's work, "Gothic Revival", a manuka construction in his inimitable quirky style, located at the opposite end of the entrance near the lift and providing a visual focus at the entry.

WELLINGTON PRINT STUDIO

By Judith Doyle

A recently established craft studio in Wellington is *Limited Edition Etchings* where Jenny Murray, printmaker, has a studio over-

looking the sweeping beach of Lyall Bay.

Still teaching locally, Jenny hopes her printmaking will be a fulltime job in the not too distant future. She is pictured with an antique printmaking machine which she uses for her popular small square prints.

"These small prints showing New Zealand wildlife and landscapes are beginning to sell well in tourist outlets," she said.



PORIRUA COMMISSIONS

Whitireia Polytechnic has a strong policy of involving their students with the community and of preparing them in a practical way for the problems they will meet as working artist/craftspeople following their graduation. As a result, commissions executed by students are dotted about the region.

The Porirua City Council wanted their administration building to be sensitive to local people. Four diploma students worked together to put in a submission for a mural in the reception area. Their successful design incorporates images of hills and community housing.

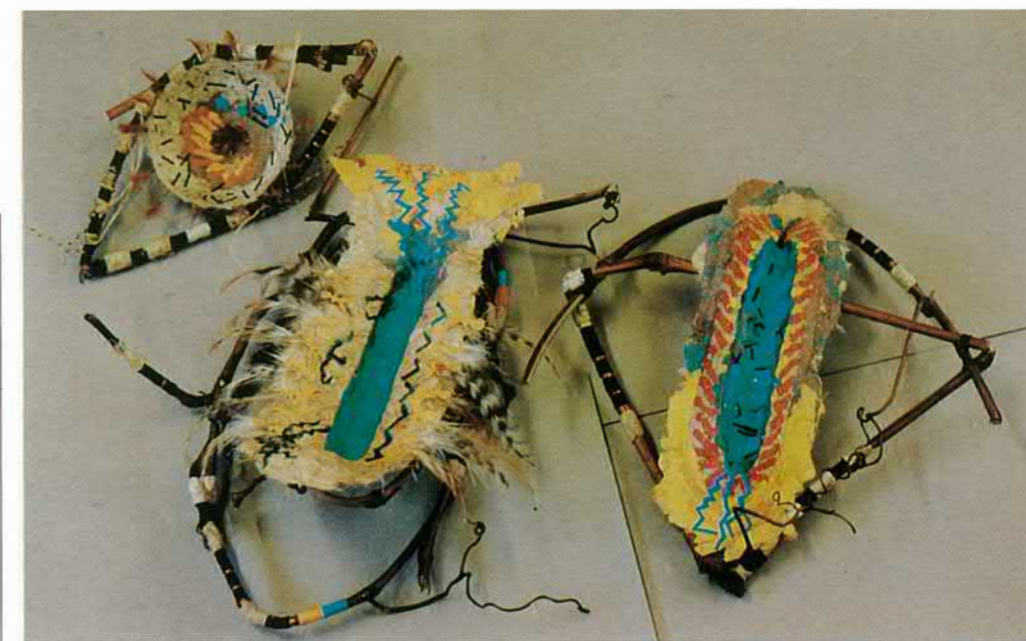


When Ohio artist Barry Gunderson was artist-in-residence at the polytech, the City Council, with financial assistance from Mitsubishi Motors NZ Ltd, commissioned an outdoor sculpture for the lawn outside Page 90, the city art gallery.



Above:
Top: Commission by Whitireia Polytechnic students for Porirua City Council administration building.
Lower: Outdoor sculpture by Barry Gunderson.

Right: Student work from the Nelson Winter Art School.
Top: Paper sculpture by Jackie Margaret.
Left: Paper assemblage by Marilyn Andrews.
Right: Cupboard by Ilo Na.
Lower: Stool by Philip Osborne.
Photos: Peter Gibbs.



WINTER ART SCHOOL

While Summer Schools are a common venue for creative holidays and a bit of personal growth, Nelson Polytech has taken advantage of the winter to run a series of workshops with New Zealand and international tutors.

Californians Betz Salmont (paper) and Patrick Crabb (ceramics) were joined by tutors Humphrey Ikin, Carole Shephard, Andrea Daly, Philippa Blair and Toi Maihi from Auckland, Philip and Lee Trustt from Christchurch and many others covering areas as diverse as hat-making (Di Powell), and found wood sculpture (Grant Corbishley).



Above: Dr Clarence Beeby.
Photo: courtesy NZ Academy
of Fine Arts.

BEEBY THE ENLIGHTENED YEARS

By Lesleigh Salinger

1992 has been the year of "Beeb" - otherwise known as Dr Clarence Beeby, noted New Zealand pioneering educationalist. As Director General of Education from 1940-60 he instituted and oversaw a revolution in the system by which young people in this country were educated. In particular the commitment



to a revitalised method of teaching art and craft was seen as the foundation on which a nation's creativity was unleashed. The study and practice of art and crafts were in fact made compulsory in the curricula of all schools throughout the country and in this New Zealand led the way internationally.

Appointed by the then Minister of Education Peter Fraser, Beeby, stimulated by his awareness of the thinking of educational philosophers such as the Austrian, Professor Cizek, Sir Herbert Read in England and Arthur Lister in Canada, set to work. He chose Doreen Blumhardt to put his vision for the arts into practice in primary schools from 1942-49, and in 1944 James Coe was appointed to tackle secondary schools in the Hutt Valley. It was also during this time that the Art Advisory network was established. Selected art specialist students from the Teachers Colleges were given an extra year's training in art.

This group of specialist advisers then toured the schools supporting the work that Doreen Blumhardt had been doing with her instruction courses for teachers. A whole network of change was instituted and the growth of the scheme led to the creation of a new position



in 1946 - that of Supervisor of Art and Craft for New Zealand. Gordon Tovey was the first incumbent. He was also responsible for setting up the Maori Schools Project in Northland, and in 1960 the first Maori Art and Crafts Course was held in Ruatoria for art specialists.

The Academy of Fine Arts in Wellington recently honoured Beeby with an exhibition entitled *Beeby the Enlightened Years*, curated by Blumhardt and former art adviser, Brian Carmody. They called upon adviser colleagues to contribute their own work to the exhibition and the list of contributors reads like a "who's who" of New Zealand arts education and practice.

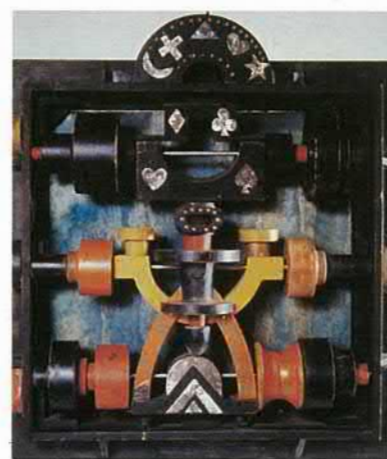
With 72 people involved it is not possible to name them all, but leading artists included; Sandy Adsett, John Drawbridge, John Bevan Ford, Ralph Hotere, Para Matchitt, Stanley Palmer, Cliff Whiting, Auriel Shearer and Marilyn Webb.

Noted craftspeople exhibiting were Roy Cowan, Grace Rushton, Peter Stichbury, Yvonne Sloan and Graeme Storm.

As Beeby admitted, a particular strength he has is the ability to pick the right person at the right moment to give expression to his vision and then to trust that person to get on with the job!

The legacy of what was set in train 50 years ago is ours to enjoy today. An enriched visual arts scene with both practitioners and appreciators educated through art into a wider awareness of the richness of New Zealand's fin-de-siecle bi-cultural heritage.

Photos: Above centre: Stoneware pot by Peter Stichbury.
Above right: "Coromandel Mystique" (Woven, dyed
tapestry) by Grace Rushton.
Left: Abacus (wood), by Para Matchitt.
Far left: "Whaka Oho Nga Tupuna" (Wood), by Cliff
Whiting



LEATHERWORKERS MEET

By Marie Potter

In May of this year, the Association of NZ Leatherworkers held its second national conference at the Central Institute of Technology in Upper Hutt. The four day event was attend-



ed by New Zealand members as well as thirteen Australians from as far away as Perth. It was followed by a five day master workshop.

This was the first Australasian leather conference since 1989 (Australia held their last one in 1988).



Financial backing came from the QEII Arts Council and the Australia/New Zealand Foundation. Special guest was Ian White, a leather artisan from the Canberra School of Art.

Nine New Zealand tanneries donated \$3000 worth of awards. These went to both sides of the Tasman. In conjunction with the conference, a public display of leather was held at C.I.T. A contemporary leathercraft exhibition was held simultaneously at the Crafts Council Gallery in Wellington with Ian White as guest artist.



From the Contemporary Leather
exhibition at the Crafts Council
Gallery in May.
Top; from left: "Dilly Bag", by
Marion Chasteau; Box in leather
and mixed media, by David
Russell; "Child of Poseidon", by
Janis McKenzie; "Human Form
by Donald Paterson.
Below; from left: Earrings, by
Judith Winton; "Aztec West
Box, by Tim Meagher; Jewellery
Boxes, by Margaret Cordo.
Photos: David Russell.

EXPO PRAISE

Sean Murray, the Regional Manager of the New Zealand Tourism Board in London gave some very personal service to Nelson's South St Gallery owner Mike Rogers recently. On a visit to the Seville Expo site, he took some photos of the New Zealand ceramic work to satisfy Mike's curiosity about what the display looked like.

He obviously liked the work, saying; "I must say that the ceramics display is absolutely stunning and has become a major highlight of the New Zealand pavilion, which in itself has also become a focal point of the total Expo experience."





Above: Hannah Toye works on a beaded skullcap.
Below: Willie Calvin - weaver.

CONTEMPORARY CRAFT STUDIOS

By Judy Wilson Goode

Things happen quietly in the craft world, supposedly due to lack of advertising dollars. It's a shame, as it often takes the informed crafties a few months to catch up with events - for the public it can take years.

One relatively unknown enterprise is the *Contemporary Craft Studios*. Housed in the airy, bright rooms of the former *Rehabilitation League* on the corner of Dominion Rd and Horopito St in Auckland it provides studio space for many top level craftspeople. The public may buy their products, or just browse and watch them work.

A craft trail around the premises is a wonderfully colourful visual journey. It begins at a very good bookshop specialising in craft books and leads on to a variety of textile based workshops. These include felting, bookbinding, traditional and bead weaving, fabric printing and silk painting. Visitors can see an imagist, flame worked and fused glass, or watch cabinet making and slip cast ceramics. A sculptor and a photographer complete the line-up.

For information about the studios, phone 09 623 0481.



Above: Not balloons, but blown glass. An installation by Dale Chihuly at the Seattle Art Museum.

SUMMER GLASS

By Peter Viesnik

A somewhat cool mid summer in the Pacific North West coast of America, and a light misty rain falls over the Skagit Woods, as I arrive at the Pilchuk Glass School.

Founded twenty years ago by Dale Chihuly, a leading American hot glass artist, on land donated by a wealthy benefactor, the school is ideally situated amongst sylvan meadows and woods with distant views of the Puget Sound. Pilchuk has in this time consistently attracted top glass artists and technicians from all over the world as well as from the United States.

The entire breadth of glass working is offered here, from blowing and casting, fusing, flameworking, neon, painting and engraving to mixed media sculpture. As far as I am aware, I am only the fifth New Zealander to come here and be immersed in this incredibly intensive two and a half week session, where the pace only really lets up at mealtimes or the early hours of the morning, when the exhausted participants stagger off to bed to snatch a few hours sleep.



The session I attended was taught by Paul Stankard, famous for his much sought after, meticulously detailed botanical paperweights, made by the flameworking process using techniques not practised in New Zealand. I have had a long standing interest in flameworking techniques, sometimes known as lampworking, a hot glass process using a bench torch or burner.

Approximately half of the students are enrolled in colleges of art or university art departments and I think of how our own art or craft design students could benefit and be inspired by these influences. An observation expressed to me previously by Ann Robinson, who taught a kiln casting session here a few weeks ago. Following this up, I engage in several conversations with Marge Levy,

the director of the school. Firstly an initial quarter scholarship is offered, increasing later, as my enthusiasm increases, to a yearly half scholarship funding - an excellent basis to start from.

We already have a glass programme incorporated in the craft design programmes of three of our leading Poytechnics. Blowing, casting, fusing, and slumping is practised, albeit on a much smaller scale, leaving vast potential to have the mind and vision of at least one student expanded by attendance at one of these summer sessions.

During the course of the workshop, Paul Stankard arranges for us to visit Dale Chihuly's spacious studio situated along the banks of the Seattle River. Quite a privilege, as it is not usually open to visitors. It turns out to be a visually stunning experience. Chihuly is a unique phenomenon, a trail blazing, big thinking, almost corporate glass artist and designer employing the best glassworkers in the business. Right now he is being honoured in his home city by a huge retrospective exhibition of his installations from 1964 to 1992 at the new Seattle Art Museum.

This is a superb exhibition covering an entire floor of this spacious museum and I am stunned by the magnificent breadth of his glass art.

Attention Tutors!

Tutors are invited to submit proposals for workshops to be held at the A.N.Z.E.G. Conference in New Plymouth, June/July, 1994. Classes may be from one to four days in duration.

Please send course outline with application by March 31, 1992 to:

**Mrs A Reeves,
P O Box 804,
New Plymouth.**

MOSAIC MAKER

Margaret Coupe is one of New Zealand's few mosaicists. She talks about her work.

In 1980 I was invited to join the *Associazione Internazionale Mosaicisti Contemporanei* based in Ravenna, Italy.

In 1984 I was one of seven people chosen by art professors in Europe to make a mosaic for a Peace Park in Ravenna, Italy. The others chosen came from France, USA, Austria, Russia, Italy and Belgium. I was the only person from the southern hemisphere.

Beside my mosaics throughout New Zealand, there are examples of my work

in the USA, Britain and Italy. Most are made for indoor decoration and unlike traditional mosaics are able to be moved. They vary in size from 600mm to 3 metres.

A variety of commissions over the years included a map and sundial (pictured above) situated at the summit of a hill adjacent to Flagstaff Hill, Russell. This mosaic is 5 metres in diameter.

In 1991 the present owner of "Onoke" (F E Manning's property in the Hokianga) commissioned a mosaic depicting the life of Manning, the author of "Old New Zealand", to be sited in his original courthouse.



The Pacific First Centre in downtown Seattle also houses an impressive Government-bought collection of leading hot glass artists and it is obvious that the United States is certainly the big time in glass - both in scale and in prices.

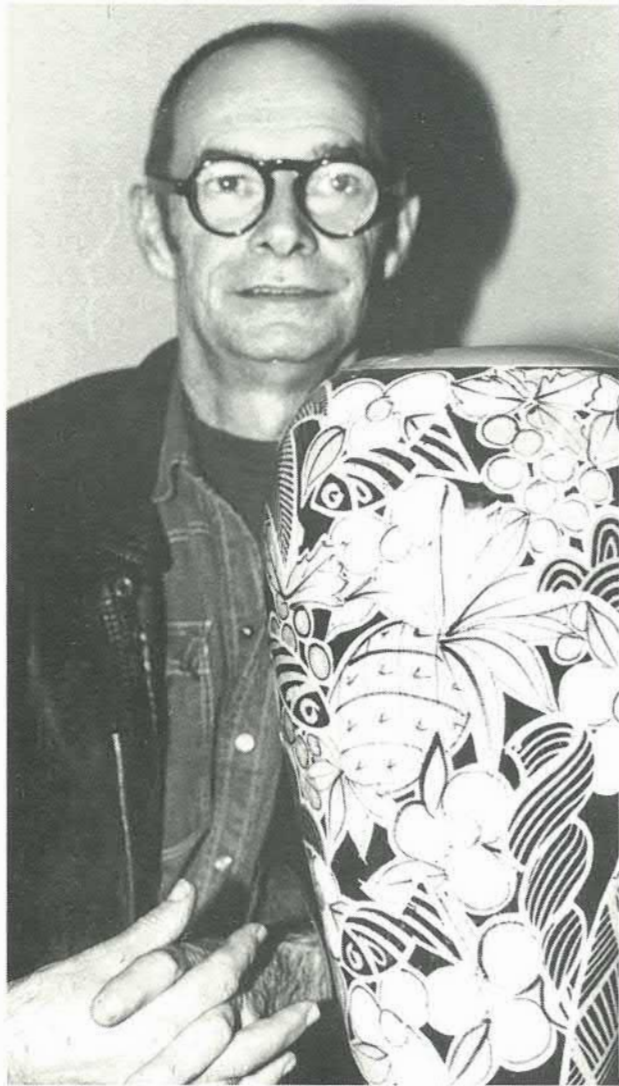
Next on my programme is a visit to San Francisco to view some of the galleries and a trip down the coast to Santa Cruz to visit the factory of Lundberg Studios who produce high quality paperweights and vases, using different types of flameworking techniques.

I wish to acknowledge the QEII Arts Council for their generous funding assistance for this study trip.



Top left: Pilchuk gallery Randy Walker at work.
Below: Peter Viesnik sharpens up his techniques back in Auckland at the Contemporary Craft Studios.

EDUCATION



Above: Warren Tippet.
Photo: courtesy
Carrington Polytechnic.
Top right:
Robin White.
Photo courtesy
Christchurch Polytechnic.

CARRINGTON RESIDENCY

Potter Warren Tippet recently began a period as Artist in Residence at Carrington Polytechnic under a QEII Arts Council sponsorship. Warren Tippet has been a full-time potter for 30 years and for much of that time has been at the cutting edge of innovation in New Zealand ceramics.

Southland born, Tippet describes himself as a vessel maker. He served part of his apprenticeship in Christchurch with Yvonne Rust. In about 1969, Warren began to move through New Zealand, staying and working with some of the handful of people then making pots. This experience brought him in

contact with a wide variety of styles and people, including influential Japanese potters visiting New Zealand for various craft festivals.

Warren was eventually drawn to Coromandel where he set up his own workshop for many years. However, as he puts it: "When the hippies moved in, Warren moved out".

Warren's work has always been with functional vessels. With the move to Grey Lynn in Auckland, he was forced to adapt to smaller kilns, fired with electricity. But there were other influences at work too. The environment of Grey Lynn and the support he received from the Pacific Islanders living there brought a new tranquillity to his work. "In Grey Lynn I was living among people who had no traditional thought of what a pot should be. For them, my kind of pottery invoked new feelings, their response came directly from the heart."

Warren also also enjoyed that period because he felt it broke down the isolation that artists, especially potters, seem to suffer. I felt the city was good for me. People seemed to like what I was doing and were taking my pots because they wanted to use them to serve food. It was a case of the country potter coming to town."

Warren Tippet currently spends a lot of time in Sydney, where he has had a workshop for the past four years. He enjoys having a base there because he feels it is still close to New Zealand but is a very good stepping off point for new directions. He is still very much influenced by Japanese ceramics, especially now that he sees a lot of young people starting out in the craft there, then moving away from the rigid disciplines of the past.

His current interest, which extends from extensive visits to Japan, is in developing the use of overglaze enamels. He hopes to use his time at Carrington to experiment with a white clay he has not used before.

Warren says: "After 30 years as a potter I now feel that I'm old enough to come to somewhere like Carrington Polytechnic and benefit from it". The support of the QEII Arts Council means that students and staff will be exposed to Warren Tippet's skills until the end of October 1992.



ROBIN WHITE RESIDENCY

By Graham Bennett

Robin White arrived from Kiribati during July to take up a three month residency at Christchurch Polytechnic Department of Art & Design. Robin, a prominent NZ printmaker and painter has been living with her 2 children and partner for the past 10 years in a Baha'i village on the atoll of Tarawa.

Robin's residency at Christchurch will be mainly linked with the printmaking section, which is strong at Christchurch Polytechnic with artists Michael Reed, Denise Copeland, Sandra Thompson, Barry Cleavin, Marian Maguire and Graham Bennett all contributing.

Christchurch Polytechnic has parallel diploma courses in Craft Design and Visual Communications, both of which study printmaking (mainly silkscreen printing), fabric printing, wood block and etching (senior students can work at nearby Limeworks Lithographic Studio).

The department has also a foundation course in Visual Arts and this year saw the introduction of a full time course in Professional Photography.

Robin has been living with her family on campus and ran a national workshop for tutors in August.

Christchurch Polytechnic is currently seeking interest for a 1993 mid term residency.



PETER BEARD

By Julie Warren

One of Britain's leading contemporary artists in ceramics recently visited New Zealand. Peter Beard studied industrial and furniture design at Ravensbourne College of Art, where his fascination for ceramics grew. On completion of his studies, he helped establish a pottery in Scotland specialising in household stoneware where the pottery concept gave him the chance to round off his basic craftsmanship. Continuous striving for perfection and careful craftsmanship remain his dominant criteria. A frequent traveller, and in demand as a lecturer, he had recently completed a six week travelling scholarship to Egypt, before making his first visit here. Reports from those attending the workshops he took around the country stress the breadth of his knowledge, and his ability and willingness to share his techniques. New Zealanders have been able to see his work in the Fletcher Ceramics exhibitions, where he gained a merit award in 1991.



JEFF OESTREICH

Jeff Oestreich was awarded a special double merit award at the 1991 Fletcher Challenge exhibition in Auckland. He used his prize money to travel to New Zealand, but because of teaching commitments could only stay briefly at that time. There has been great interest in having him return and he will be in this country during October.

Oestreich has an international reputation as a maker of fine domestic ware. He has been working in clay for 23 years and his original commitment to utility remains a strong influence in his work. He finds the challenge in making work that functions on both a visual and physical level a consuming interest.

He was introduced to ceramics by Warren MacKenzie while at the University of Minnesota in 1967 and was apprenticed to Bernard Leach in St Ives, England from 1969-1971. The philosophies of these teachers have enabled him to critically examine the functional aspect of art in contemporary ceramics; he has moved beyond ceramics as repetition.

He maintains a rural studio at Taylors Falls, Minnesota and is an instructor at the School of Art at Alfred University, New York.

STUDENT VISIT

Five Wanganui Polytechnic glass students and two tutors made the trip to Nelson to visit the studio of Ola and Marie Hoglund during August. The students are in the third semester of a Certificate/Diploma in Glassblowing and Production - a six semester (three year) course. Their visit was part of a practical section in building equipment and examining the workings of established glass studios.

Four of the students are funded in Wanganui by the Malaysian government (another 16 are enrolled in computer graphics courses at Wanganui).



PATRICK CRABB

By Julie Warren

Patrick Crabb, ceramic artist and teacher from Los Angeles, recently completed a national workshop tour, with the assistance of a Fulbright Cultural Grant. During his six week stay, Patrick worked with Polytechnic students and community groups from Invercargill to Auckland. He visited many potters and was impressed with their ability to produce a wide range from functional to contemporary artworks. A fascination with earlier cultures influences his own work which has always been sculptural. He seeks to link the past and present with his decorative use of ancient and modern pictographs and the implication of a utilitarian aspect to his vessels. His visit has opened up opportunities for New Zealand potters to spend time teaching or studying at his community college in Southern California, and for exchange exhibitions.

Top left: Peter Beard.
Photo: Peter Gibbs.
Above: Wanganui
students at the Hoglund
glass studio.
Photo: Tony Kuepfer.
Left: Patrick Crabb.
Below: Jeff Oestreich.
Photo: Peter Gibbs.

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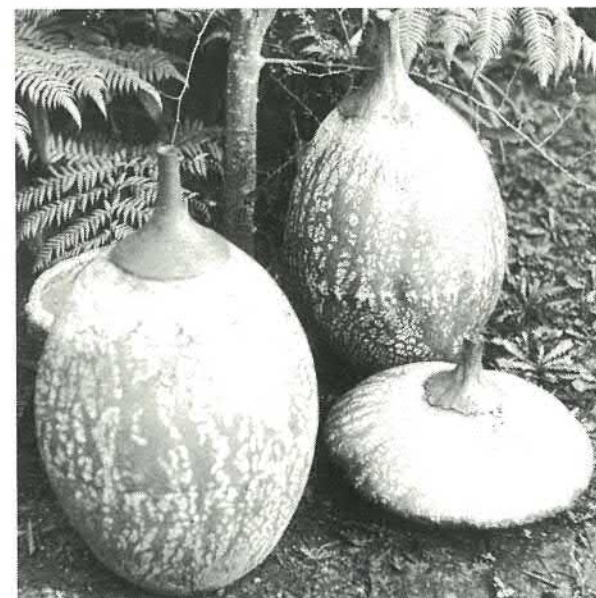
TWO HANDS

BY CATHY KENKEL

Even before we meet, Margaret Milne is trying to erase herself from this article, emphasising that many, many people are important in the development of New Zealand pottery. Whilst agreeing entirely, I did want to record the influence and achievements of a woman acknowledged by many as an important catalyst and teacher. On talking with her, it is reinforced that, even as I am honouring her, she is intent on honouring those who travelled the road with her.



Many people have been involved with Margaret in her capacity as potter and teacher in Auckland. Far too many to include in a short article - perhaps a "History of New Zealand Pottery" would be more appropriate, I slyly suggest. Some, however, simply must be acknowledged, even knowing that by mentioning a few, the many are excluded.



We start with Leon Cohen - "a good friend to the potters", and maker of Bernard Leach kick wheels. Leon found the cottage and site of Margaret's most important working and teaching studio, and then went on to supply materials such as windows, in order to turn it into a working studio. This cottage was destined to set off a whole series of events.

But before the cottage, there were the years of preparation, with exposure to and influence from potters and teachers as diverse as Pat Perrin, (Otahuhu College), John Chappell, (travelling British potter), and later, Japanese potter and close friend, Takeichi Kawai.

In 1967, Len Castle, who had recently been in Japan, said "why don't you go now?" and within a month she was there. She planned to go for travel and observation, but on her first time in his workshop, her friend Kawai showed her a wheel and said, "this is where you will work". Surprise! She lived for four months in Japan, travelling and studying alone at a time when it was unusual for a woman to do so. This time gave her a rare insight into both cultural and ceramic processes in Japan.

Coming back from Japan, Margaret was determined to continue with pottery, and needed a place to work. So in 1969, the very important workshop on the side of a Remuera hill was put into motion, complete with pheasants, sheep and later, two fat cats. This cottage was in itself a collaborative effort. A driveway was bulldozed, windows given, water put on, bricks brought on site and kilns built. It became an important nurturing ground for many potters, including some from overseas. Soot, smoke, vapours, dirty, heavy work and long hours firing.

One of those people sitting around the flaming kiln during the long hours of firing, was Ruth Court. And one of the subjects of discussion was the need for a centre which would provide a teaching environment.



Left, Margaret Milne;
Photo Cathy Kenkel.



Above:
Afternoon tea by the workshop,
1979. Photo: Steve Rumsey.

Ruth, at that time a committee member of the Auckland Studio Potters, pursued this idea. With the assistance of the Onehunga Borough Council, many generous businessmen, and much work from many ASP members, the centre became a reality.

As the general interest in pottery grew, so did the need to encourage sponsorship. Encouraged by Ruth, Trevor Hunt, the general manager of the firm of Fletcher Brownbuilt became interested and sponsored what became known as the Fletcher Brownbuilt Pottery Award. This has developed into a prestigious international ceramics award event under the name of Fletcher Challenge.

Margaret was a founder member of the "12 Potters", probably the first co-operative gallery in the country. For 28 years, it provided a selling and display space. There was a potent and fruitful connection between Margaret's group workshop, the Auckland Studio Potters centre and the "12 Potters". Over the years, many who worked at the workshop also taught at the centre, including Margaret, and some became members of the staff.

The current days of easy access to books, people, information and supplies had not yet arrived. There were years of experimentation, learning from people like geologist Jim Schofield, who gave a series of lectures at the ASP. Sourcing clay and glazes often involved travelling to Maramarua to an open cast coal mine and hacking out clay. Crum Potteries in New Lynn was a source of broken clay pipes that were soaked and used as the basis for many clay mixtures. The change from earthenware to stoneware meant new techniques; diesel firing, high temperature, reduction and other processes arcane to the uninitiated.

Work on the committee and executive of the Auckland Studio Potters led to enriching contacts and correspondence. Many potters travelling through New Zealand stayed at her family home, and some became personal friends. Takeichi Kawai; Tomiko Hatta, who learnt at the cottage, had a baby while in New Zealand, and eventually established her own studio in Japan; the Itoh family with whom Margaret stayed while in Japan, and whose son Itsumi later stayed with Margaret in New Zealand. He worked at the cottage before going back to Japan and working as a potter there. He has exhibited here at the "12 Potters", and in what was the Fletcher

Brownbuilt Pottery Award. He is still exhibiting here in the Fletcher Challenge Ceramics Award.

And through it all, her own work. I see photos of large vessels, small containers, intimate pieces. Of them all, only a few, the cracked and imperfect, are in her possession. There were some, she says smiling, that she would have liked to have kept. Her first jug-with-a-handle sits high on a kitchen shelf, ranged beside other work from herself and others. There are photos of work from a group exhibition that went to the Victoria and Albert Museum, and other photos of vessels and plates. A small inlaid porcelain container of hers sits quietly on a table, next to a shelf full of small containers from a who's who of New Zealand pottery. I am shown a platter thrown by one potter, decorated by another, and so the delicious interaction goes on.

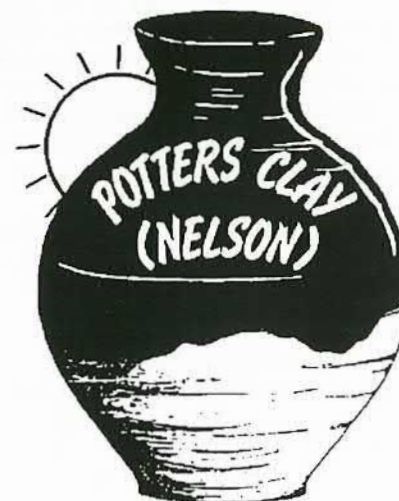
The personal supports of any craftsperson are vitally important. Her husband built her her first electric wheel, and together with their son, built her first workshop at home. She hand built pots on the kitchen table in the evening. Family holidays for 30 years were spent in the good company of artist friends farming in the country, holidaying in an old barn converted to a cottage.

In 1974, Margaret was part of a delegation of five potters that travelled to China, on a cultural tour which included South Korea and Japan. A fascinating journey, the impression remains for Margaret that perhaps the Chinese thought they were an industrially orientated delegation as factory after factory was shown to them. She did notice that often, within the factory situation, there were potters working individually alongside the industrial production. Her travels include attendance at the World Craft Conference in Vienna in 1980, and she has also visited the UK and Scandinavia.

In response to my query, she lists her design sources as coming from the organic world. Making things and gathering have always been important. As a "process" orientated maker, she emphasises that willingness to change is very much part of her working method. Margaret draws a mental picture for me of herself, very much younger, making pathways and birdbaths in the gardens of the houses where she lived. I remember her front doorway - a generous place to stand - with stones, winter leaves, and pottery in comfortable disarray, set with a practised hand. At this point, a hungry husband comes in search of food, and adds a delightful story of finding Margaret's work, quite by chance, in the Fijian Museum. Her work is held in collections and museums throughout New Zealand, the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, and elsewhere. She has exhibited in group shows in Brussels, USA, Japan, and Australia.

With the cottage studio finishing in the mid-80s, Margaret returned to working at home. She talks of electric kilns, "not as exciting as diesel", and of working with porcelain. She takes me to see her studio, sheds and garages extended in honourable New Zealand fashion, where pots and moulds are stacked, waiting. Small porcelain containers with delicately inlaid lids wait on the benches. In the main work area, somebody else's work is in progress on the bench ("so exciting to see work so different from mine"), clay dries in the doorway, pleasant in the winter sun with a tree casting a little shade over the warm studio. Margaret pats the kiln as we go by.

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GLORIOUS GLASS

BY JULIE WARREN

It's now ten years since Ola and Marie Hoglund arrived from Sweden to experience a year or two of yet another culture, different from their Scandinavian heritage. They had just spent three years in Africa, teaching glassblowing and engraving to the indigenous people of Swaziland.



Above: Ola and Marie Hoglund.
Below left: a section of the
Richmond showroom.
Photos: Ola and Marie Hoglund.
Below right: vase form, 1992.
Photo: Lynne Griffith

Ola and Marie first spent two years in Hokitika, on the West Coast, before they established their glass studio on the outskirts of Nelson, where they are today firmly settled in the New Zealand way of life.

Arriving from Sweden, a country steeped in a long tradition of craft glass, and with extensive training at Kosta Boda and the Orrefors Glass School, the Hoglunds were to add a new dimension to the New Zealand glass scene. They were a challenge to the small, competitive studio glass market being established here, and after equipping their studio at Craft Habitat they were able to quickly begin producing their own wide range of high quality, contemporary, hand crafted glass.

The craft glass movement came into existence relatively recently in New Zealand. Following an established glass industry it was inspired by the North American studio glass of the late 60s, which had evolved through the art school system.

Unlike many crafts, hot glass workers are relatively few in number. It's an expensive operation, and takes a good deal of commitment. There is no place for the

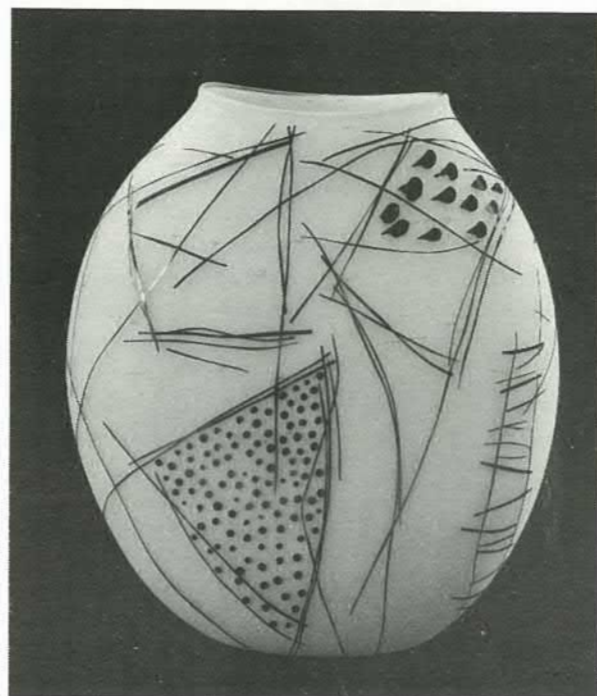
recreational hot glass worker and few opportunities for training. Wanganui and Northland Polytechnics, and Elam Art School have hot glass facilities, but the chances to work in established studios are limited. In spite of this, Ola and Marie's attempts to train an apprentice have been largely unsuccessful. A number of young workers have been taken on. All have moved on before becoming proficient - either disillusioned by the lack of long term opportunities, or unwilling to spend so many years training.

The Hoglund's work 6 days a week and their large gas fired kiln hasn't been turned off for three years. Overheads are high. Setting up their facilities 8 years ago meant much ingenuity and hard work. Their innovations have paid off, and their business is well established but with their commitment to professionalism, the long hours continue.

Their glass studio is a popular place for visitors to linger and watch the glass blowing taking place. It's a fascinating process. The studio is set on the edge of an estuary, with a view across to the mountains. The metamorphosis of the glowing, fluid, glass into a recognisable object, against a backdrop of sea and distant snow, is compelling.

The studio has grown over the years into two large, bright showrooms and an adjoining work space. The showrooms are a delight. Always attractively displayed, and constantly changing, the work seduces with its range of colours and styles. The scale varies from small bottles and bowls to impressively large platters, and caters for everyone from tourists to collectors.

They sell around 60% of their work here, most of the rest going to galleries around New Zealand, and over-



seas. Overseas tourists, attracted by the quality of the work, and the favourable exchange rate, buy a good portion of it, and help is needed to keep up with the packing and postage service offered.

Initially both Ola and Marie blew the glass, then in 1989 they took on another glass blower, Ken Johanson. Also from Sweden, Ken began working at Crown Crystal Glass in Christchurch in 1969. Now Ola and Ken blow six days a week - 3 full days and 3 half days, with the rest of those days being taken up by melting a new batch of glass.

They do runs of individual items, spending several days on each, and repeating them only 3 or 4 times a year. Ola's favourite form is the goblet. "It takes a bit of time to get into them. I need to do them every day to make them really good. I make up to 50 goblets of the same colour at a time. I experiment with a lot of different shapes and sometimes only make one but that's OK - people collect them."

Recently they've started using more opaque colours. Still keeping their designs and forms to a minimum of simplicity, with strong clear cut lines and shapes, often only using two opposing colours in each piece.

The opaque colours look stunning, very strong and nothing is overworked. Ola, however, has mixed feelings about them. He feels that opaque colours are often used by less skilful blowers to hide bad design and unsuccessful forms - "Colour can be very seductive. To me the ultimate challenge is to succeed with a form in translucent, colourless glass. The next challenge is to get gallery owners to see that glass has qualities no other material has. Glass reflects light, but it also absorbs light."

As demand has increased and the business has grown, Marie has had to give up glass blowing and finds it increasingly hard to keep up with her specialist area of applied decoration. She has lately been spending a lot of time developing the graal technique which she brought to New Zealand from Orrefors. It was first invented in Sweden in 1917 and was originally a secret to Orrefors, but as more people learnt it there, it has become more widely known.

It's a demanding and time consuming process. An initial bubble of clear glass is blown which is encased with one or more layers of coloured glass. The bubble is then annealed and the decoration is achieved by either cutting or sandblasting through the surface layers of glass. The initial bubble, now decorated, is prewarmed,

attached to the blowing pipe and finished to the desired form. The restriction imposed by the technique encourages a simplification of shapes, and a strong design.

Ola sees the strengthening of the studio glass movement overseas as radically changing the glass industry. "This has really shown up in the last four or five years where the really big glass works are now copying studio workers. It's a bit sad as it's not as well done. In Sweden they used to have a small number of old designers, (Ola's father was among them) but for the last 15 years they've been getting younger people from the art schools. But it hasn't improved the quality of the glass there - it was best from the 50s to the 70s.

"The quality of glass in New Zealand is improving all the time though. People are going to workshops and have travelled overseas and gained experience."

Ola and Marie have had little contact with most New Zealand glassworkers, but they watch what is happening from a distance. It seems a pity that their excellent facilities and extensive experience are so little utilised by others. They were pleased recently to have a visit from Tony Keupfer and his students from Wanganui Community Polytechnic.

However, Ola and Marie don't feel isolated. They are a close, self-sufficient couple who enjoy working together. "It's good being here, there's nothing much to influence us." They aren't pressured by trends, but have the technical skills and training to keep moving on and experimenting as they want. The quality of their work is constantly reflected in the awards they win and commissions they are offered.

Ola sees also the increase in the number of students training in glass, particularly in Australia and Japan, as bringing change to the glass movement here in New Zealand.

The trend not only there, but also in Europe and the USA, is to go back to the old values of learned skills. Without skills the quality of glass and glass design cannot improve.



REVIEWS

DRAWING THE LINE

"DECORATIVE ALTERNATIVES" AT THE HAWKE'S BAY EXHIBITION CENTRE

Reviewed by Douglas Lloyd-Jenkins

Decorative Alternatives at the Hawke's Bay Exhibition Centre from May 12 - June 28th is the most recent gallery-led assault on the boundaries of craft. The exhibition aligns itself strongly with recent exhibitions that have looked at the existence of folk tradition in New Zealand craft. The list is an impressive one: *Homage to the Handmade and Humble* at the Bath House, Rotorua, *The Innocent Eye* at the Dowse, Lower Hutt, and the touring *Mau Mahara*.

Unlike these exhibitions it is initially difficult to understand what *Decorative Alternatives* sets out to achieve. On closer analysis it appears almost as if the intention is not to

Right; Wall hangings in corrugated iron, by Jeff Thompson.
Below; Ferro-cement Bulldog, by Harry Osborne.
Photos; Douglas Lloyd-Jenkins.



explore the boundaries of craft, but to seriously undermine the status of craft in the Hawke's Bay.

The Hawke's Bay Exhibition Centre, recently refurbished for the 1990s, is for six weeks home to the craft of local residents. Items exhibited include matchboxes decorated with bread dough flowers, and arrangements inside walnut shells, a veritable landslide of painted rocks ranging from *Beach Stone Critters* through decorated doorstops and paperweights to *Pockets Pets*. All this is eyed hungrily by an assortment of beings, pottery pixies, a paper tiger, owls and roosters themselves made in dough, and the now near compulsory swans cut from abandoned car tyres.



The gallery is filled with what you might reasonably expect to find at a local church fair or handicraft market, and like any church fair there are pieces of genuine worth to be found on the fold out tables (or in this case catalogue entries) of tastefully arranged synthetic flowers.

The Jeff Thompson wall hangings utilize the forms of corrugated iron to simulate the heavily patterned drapes found in the homes of maiden aunts, whose attention is here permanently trained on the neighbours. While their display adds an element of humour to the exhibition one can't help but wish they did indeed frame a window, so like the aunts in question we could at least look out.

One of the real pleasures of the exhibition are the garden sculptures of Hastings resident Harry Osborne. Built from ferro-cement, these assertive little figures are visiting the gallery in the company of a cement bulldog, from their home in Mr Osborne's garden. Their apparently deeply depressed canine companion is wearing an expression similar to that of several opening night visitors, a number of whom expressed the opinion that they were simply too good to deserve inclusion in this show.

Mr Osborne is a true discovery and a real part of a well established New Zealand folk tradition. He is a natural artist of great skill and originality who took up his craft on retirement and now has a garden full to overflowing with figures of great appeal and real worth.

On loan from the Bath House are the carved works of Jane Brenkly; naive interpretations of Maori meeting houses, and ca-

noes. Produced in the 1940s these pieces have a great deal of charm. Here one must stop and consider whether it is in fact time that transforms the apparently mundane into good folk art. While some of the other pieces in the exhibition will gain in interest the longer they survive, it is not this alone that makes them good pieces. This is the work of two ingredients too often missing from the work exhibited here: originality and quality.

This is underscored by the inclusion among the catalogue notes of "Using Your Loaf" a "How-To-Do-It" guide to varnished bread dough jewellery, lifted from the pages of the Australian Women's Weekly. The simple following of instructions issued on a weekly basis by popular magazines is not the source of good folk art, nor is an assemblage of commercially prepared kits. It is this that most undermines the credibility of this exhibition.

The Hawke's Bay is one of the most focussed and appealing centres of the arts in New Zealand. It is the home of some of this country's most important painters, sculptors and architects. It also supports a large community of highly professional craftspeople of all ages and disciplines. However Napier and Hastings are not always well served for the promotion of work and the exchange of ideas, so it is distressing that the Hawke's Bay Cultural Trust chooses to throw energy and resources behind such an exhibition, one that creates such ambiguity in the minds of the New Zealand public as to the state of New Zealand craft.

It is particularly difficult to understand the Trust's approach when graduates of the highly

professional Hawke's Bay Polytechnic Craft School were unable to use the same space for their excellent 1991 exhibition, having to resort instead to the basement of a local coffee shop.

In opening the show John Perry spoke of the need for defining art, of knowing where to draw the line. In the interests of professional craftspeople everywhere that line should be drawn at the front entrance of *Decorative Alternatives*.

ALAN BROWN

EXHIBITION AT MASTERWORKS GALLERY, PARNELL, JULY 1992

Reviewed by Howard Williams

Alan Brown won the premier award in the Crafts Council's 2nd Crafts' Biennale three years ago with his multi-media treasure box *Papa Huia - Leaping Temple Cat Dreams of Flight*. (See New Zealand Crafts, No. 30, Summer 1989.)

This piece intrigued Auckland viewers with the range of craft skills shown in the one piece. The arched lidded box of totara burl contained five "treasures" made variously of ebony, silver, flax, jade, gold and damascus steel, showing the extraordinary affinity the artist has with such differing materials.

Brown's solo exhibition here continued this versatility, of simple, elegant design translated with an intimate knowledge of materials, tools and processes into pieces deserving quiet contemplation.

There were no strong colours applied, no clever textural effects, no overt decoration.



Wood was used to explore the natural beauty of its grain pattern, dull silver used to frame jade polished softly to a satin sheen, bronze machined into an interlocking stem to carry a simple wooden bowl. Natural beauty of material was its own decoration.

Though detailing was meticulous, a look and feel of the hand-crafted was still there, giving these pieces a warmth sometimes missing in similar works where almost instrument-maker's precision can machine away a sense of the maker's hands.

All Brown's pieces invited touch. Visual balance and grace was reinforced by phys-

ical balance, weight and surface finish. Pieces felt as right as they looked, giving the viewer a rounded satisfaction with their handling.

His square cushion-shaped boxes of birdseye matai and rewa rewa were deceptively simple, perfect in proportion, with fair curves and inlays of softly contrasting timber. One had subtle decoration in the form of a pattern of slightly raised domes, almost more readily perceived by fingertips than eyes; sensual, gratifying.

Jade earrings and pendants of cloudy green, or Inanga blue, were simple geometric shapes set in handworked silver, or carved into suggestions of fish, feathers of scarabs. *Ruby Jade Moon Disc* though simply a polished disc of jade standing in a notched bridge of wood was one of the most commanding pieces. With light on its surface, or shining through from behind, it glowed with rich veins of colour; a real treasure.

The rimu burl handle of a folding pocket-knife was secured with brass rivets to hold its steel blade, the whole kept in an almost roughly sewn leather sheath with a paua shell button. Interesting; as an obviously hand-made tool for use in the making-by-hand of other artifacts, the use of this tool would feel a close physical connection with its maker.

Inlaid wooden picture frames, displaying dramatically lit photographs of some of Brown's work were not as successful. Though from a distance they were fine, close inspection showed the corner mitre cuts were not as satisfyingly accurate as those on the wakahuia boxes.

Brown shows a sympathy for his materials and a concern for their traditional use, yet these are expressed in a particularly personal way. A very satisfying combination.

Above; "Matai Birdseye Wakahuia" by Alan Brown.
Left; "Ruby Jade Moon Disc" by Alan Brown.
Photos; Howard Williams.



NATIONAL EMBROIDERERS' CONFERENCE EXHIBITIONS

THREADWORKS AT THE MCDUGALL ART GALLERY

CELEBRATING STITCH AT THE C.S.A.

SMALL IS BEAUTIFUL AT CAVE ROCK GALLERY

Reviewed by Noeline Brokenshire

Celebrating Stitch, Threadworks, Small is Beautiful - evocative titles for the Embroiderers' Guild National Exhibitions. Add to that an exhibition of work for young people and the Globe hangings at the Museum and you

have a rare feast for Christchurch during July.

Embroidery for those of us over 60 drums up memories of the dreary Agricultural and Pastoral shows that used to occur up and down the country and indeed for some, those endless examples of smocked frocks, embroidered tablecloths and trousseau treasures are still their view of "embroidery". Embroidery for the 1990s as seen in Christchurch was everything that a national exhibition should be - showing the best of traditional stitchery, the exuberance and joy of new trends, the skill of small fine stitchery and the encouraging promise of an exciting future for the young.

In all three major exhibitions there was opportunity to show the growing fascination of embroiderers to experiment and explore with a wide range of stitchery techniques and combine this with other elements. The results were extraordinary - a kaleidoscope of colour and design. These exhibitions proved a testing ground for combining embroidery techniques; the selectors, in each exhibition were very demanding of quality and presentation and in the pieces chosen they have set a daunting standard for future exhibitions.

THREADWORKS

This was an international award exhibition which drew more than a handful of overseas artists from Europe, America and Australia. These did not necessarily transcend the New Zealand submissions. In the final selection three awards went to overseas embroiderers and two to New Zealanders. The premier award went to Karen Fleming of the United Kingdom: this work was an

exquisite hanging using the chemical lace technique which left a technicoloured gossamer free hanging "curtain". Personally, I was not happy with the colour combinations whose strength rather outweighed the delicacy of the final fabric. Be that as it may, it was a fascinating, superb and glowing piece. Pauline Hunt's (N.Z.) *Act IV, the Homecoming* gave us a bold wall hanging in kimono shape - a lovely welcoming cloak that had an enfolding symbolism and a joyousness made evocative in the brilliance of colour. Suzy Pennington (N.Z.) in one sense took pride of selection with five works included in this show of 66 works. Her large works *Paths of the Ancestors - Limestone Land* and *Paths of the Boulders - Moeraki* were brilliant collages using paint, paper and stitch - large canvases - two spanning almost the whole of the end wall of the gallery. Her other three works, much smaller in scale, did not have the magnificence of the larger pieces. The very titles and subject matter, land mass and sea needed the expanse of canvas to truly depict the natural areas.

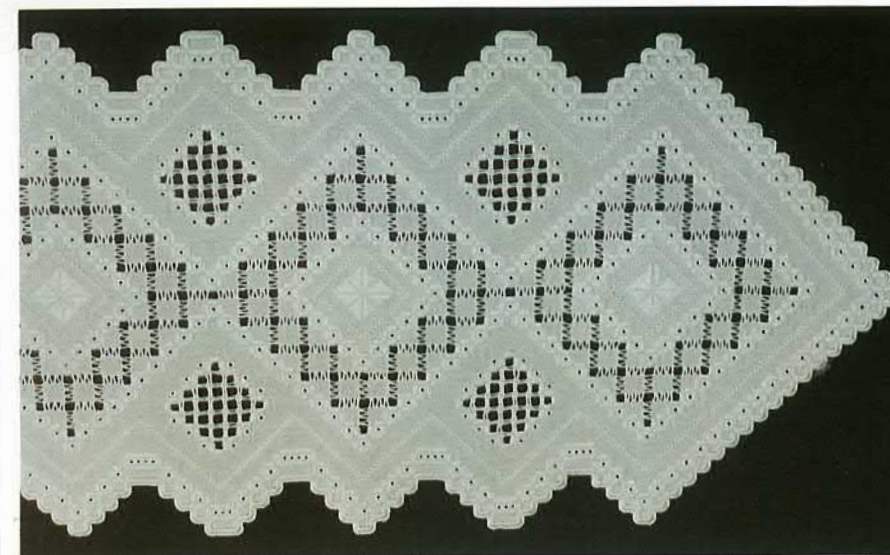
Lynda Stewart (Northern Ireland) presented a small framed work *Carousel Cow*. Somehow it was lost amongst the larger big scale works and its heavy framing detracted from the preciousness of the fine stitchery. Framing aside, the textural quality gained through the actual hand and machine stitchery was quite brilliant and it was a very discerning act of the selectors to give this an award. This is as good an exhibition of the embroiderers' craft as I have seen anywhere. It had such a tremendous impact that it deserved to be exhibited throughout the country.

CELEBRATING STITCH

This was a fine quality but small exhibition and came more within the realm of traditional work. The pure white hardanger table runner, by Joan Burrow of Canterbury, was near perfection - it demonstrated hardanger in a most sensitive and well executed way and fully deserved the top award. Patricia Davis' brilliantly coloured patchwork and embroidered bobbin roll was a joyous creation and made a delightful package for the lace maker. Well thought through was the placing of her brilliant colours.

Ann Lamont's *Cathedral Window* was a lovely abstracted colour pattern in vertical broken lines that had all the brilliance and melody of a stained glass window executed with very clever applique and machine embroidery. It truly glowed yet gave a sense of tranquillity. This sense of peace and quiet was also found in *Counterpoint*, by Jean Cameron of Wairarapa, where the gold work on canvas was a subdued but harmonious whole.

This exhibition showed such a wide variation of techniques, themes and subject matter. There was a preponderance of the "garden scenes" presented and I am rather critical of what appears to be an imposed trend amongst embroiderers to attempt to combine painting



with embroidery; unless the painting aspect is first class the pieces fail. More successful were those where the whole effect was gained by total stitchery - doing what one does best - and not trying to be too clever. Two smaller works which appealed were *From Tambou*; sampler mats taken from Russian work. These were admirably worked with well balanced pattern and colours. *Celebrating Stitch* was a somewhat subdued exhibition in that only in one or two instances had the embroiderers



taken heed of the title of the exhibition - somehow a "celebration" should sing, should be ecstatic. I think that where organisers trouble to find evocative titles then these should be expressed in the works themselves.

SMALL IS BEAUTIFUL:

These small works were quite exquisite but again showed a tremendous variation of theme and subject matter from whimsy animals (*Cardigan Bay* and *Polo Neck*) to a petite miniature christening gown. Embroidered brooches from Zoe Hill and Marian Hargreaves added a touch of colour but Jenny Bain's embroidered "saddlebags" were a joyous riot of colour, beautifully stitched and presented. I found the small scale left me with a sense of wonder, particularly in the garden scenes where the whole was worked in French knots (*Lavender Path* and *Gateby* Kath Byrnes, Auckland) and it was a truly real "floral garden". These were so much more successful than similar approaches in *Celebrating Stitch* where a combination of painting, and stitchery and painting had been used. (Sometimes smacking of contrivance.)

Embroidery on this small scale can never fail to appeal and it is a challenge to the embroiderers to produce a work that is totally in scale - in stitch and in title.



WORK FROM YOUNG PEOPLE AT MERIVALE

The idea for this exhibition was a tremendous encouragement for young people and the response merited better mounting. The young had responded well and the number of pieces sent in must have pleased the organisers. However, I think some sort of guidance should be given here. Many of the pieces were obviously commercial canvases which leave nothing for the embroiderer to show his or her own initiative. I know that children have to start somewhere but they should be encouraged to be more creative, more self expressive. These works showed off the mastery of stitch but little else. Perhaps the error lies with those people teaching embroidery who apparently impose ideas and methods on to people instead of guiding them. This was still evident in *Celebrating Stitch*.

COMMENT

These exhibitions were exciting. There are some who would criticise and say "they are trying to emulate painting and art work". I believe that these were "artworks" in their own right and within the realms of their own chosen medium; displaying the limitations of technique and finding ways to explore the use of material and those same techniques offers challenges to the apparent boundaries. *Threadworks* certainly shows that these challenges are quite advanced. Here is an art/craft form that has excelled. The pieces chosen in all exhibitions were of the highest calibre and I have seen little elsewhere to compare.

Above: "Homecoming" by Pauline Hunt.
Below: "Paths of the Ancestors" by Suzy Pennington.
Photos: Noeline Brokenshire.



Top left: Hardanger table runner, by Joan Burrow.
Above: "Cathedral Window", by Ann Lamont.
Below far left: "Saddlebags", by Jenny Bain.
Below centre: Brooches by Marian Hargreaves.
Photos: Noeline Brokenshire.



Above: "Labyrinth", 2500 x 2500mm, loop and cut pile woolen rug by Elly van de Wijdeven.

MASTERWORKS - TWO EXHIBITIONS BY INVITED CURATORS

Reviewed by Helen Schamroth

COLOUR: AN EXHIBITION OF FIBRE WORKS CURATED BY MALCOLM HARRISON.

Inviting an outside curator provides a wonderful opportunity to present fresh perspectives to a public used to group exhibitions. Masterworks Gallery was the venue in July and August this year for two exhibitions that illustrated the risks and rich results possible.

'Colour', curated by Malcolm Harrison, brought together the work of thirteen fibre artists - Maori, Pakeha and Pacific Island - in a way that gave the artists considerable latitude. This was not an exhibition that particularly questioned or even deepened our perceptions of colour - rather it illustrated several ways colour could be used, a *raison d'être* that bordered on the banal. Despite the lack of curatorial challenge there were some delights in this exhibition.

The most direct response to the theme was a large floor rug *Labyrinth* by Elly van de Wijdeven. Its vibrant, pure colour expressed in a path of raised, chromatic progressions of colour blocks, floating over a modulated grey background. As in the more traditional Pacific Island work by Matarena George - two gloriously coloured *Tivaevae* - the use of colour was joyous and uncomplicated.

A much more subtle approach to colour was employed by Rose Griffin, whose trio of canvas wallpieces, *Colour Chords*, rewarded the viewer with rhythms of pencil marks, pinpricks and threads moving in and out of a bed of paint like faint sounds of music. Stephanie Powell didn't let the theme of the exhibition curb her exploration of content in *A New Place*, and the result was a whimsical

more traditionally with the range of tones available in harakeke, as well as brilliant yellow pingao and creamy kiekie. Christina Hurihia Wirihana's free-hanging harakeke *Taniwairua* and *Poutama O Te Ao Hou* were synthetically dyed, and the organic material provided differing tones and dramatic detail in the way it took up the dye. Toi Te Rito Maihi, too, worked with natural materials, the wings of her *Manu Kanikani* (Flying Bird) sprouting a multiplicity of combinations of coloured leaves and grasses.

Some artists like Suzy Pennington and Marie Potter showed work that appeared very familiar. Although by no means insignificant, these works gave few new insights into the use of colour.

A SENSE OF PRESENCE: SHRINES, ICONS, ALTARS AND TEMPLES CURATED BY CAROLE SHEPHEARD.

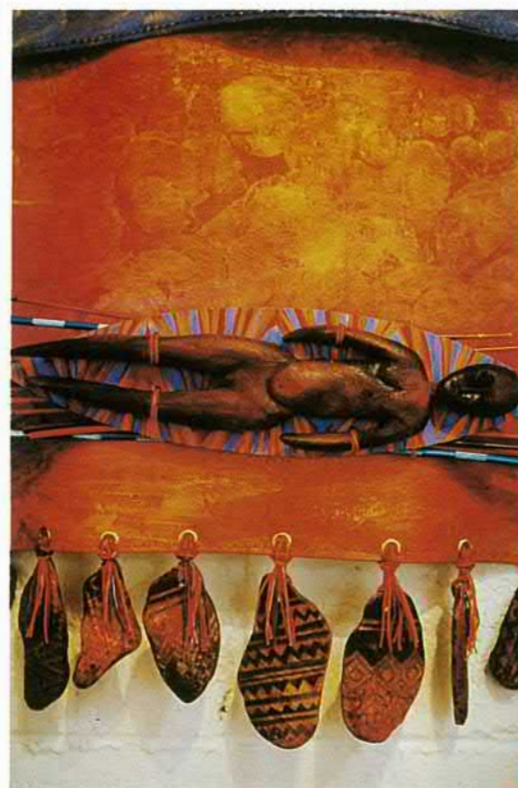
This exhibition, curated by Carole Shephard, was one of the most challenging I have seen in a craft context. While 'Colour' exposed the art/craft debate ever so gently, this exhibition tackled it full on, obliterating barriers by juxtaposing respected artists like Terry Stringer with those who had come from the craft movement.

The essence of this exhibition was its exploration of spirituality and sacredness. Eighteen artists, predominantly Pakeha, offered a range of views that eloquently illustrated the diversity of approaches to claiming and re-claiming spirituality in a manner appropriate to our times.

Looking to one's culture was the obvious approach, and Fatu Feu'u presented *Manaia*, images of Samoan culture. While the nuances may not

fragile structure sheltering a pair of fabric shoes, celebrating domestic materials and techniques.

Contemporary Maori fibre work was represented by Eddie Maxwell, whose animated reinterpretations of Maori weaving were enchanting in their humour. Rangi Hiu worked



Right: "May Angels Guard Us While We Sleep" by Nick White.
Above: detail.



have been obvious to a palagi audience the sacredness of the images was. Working in two and three dimensions - a lithograph and a sculpture in Hinuera stone - Fatu gave viewers an opportunity to share his personal view.

Nick White expressed his place in the Pacific in a very different way. He used the interpretations of others like writer Paul Theroux to access his own viewpoint. While the inspiration was from outside his own experience, the search for understanding of universal issues like mortality was a personal journey, and the visual results were striking in their use of colour and motifs.

Joan Atkinson's painted icon, *Protect Me*, also confronted mortality, in a very personal and poignant manner, its frame of thorns fiercely defending the life within.

Susan Jowsey's icons looked to the women in her family, and she built up two delicate collaged images that drew the viewer in, thereby sharing the intimacy of the relationships.

Less intensely personal, Moyra Elliott drew on her environment for metaphoric icons in a continuation of her stunning *A Garden of Unearthly Delights Plant Transplant* series. Also looking to the land, Judy L Wilson created a series of icons in the form of seven untitled, gutsy, cubic, elm bark baskets. These works were skilfully made and paid close attention to content and detail. By contrast, Toi Te Rito Maihi's relationship with elements of the land, expressed simply with flax, stones, shell and water, was surprisingly and disappointingly undeveloped as an image.

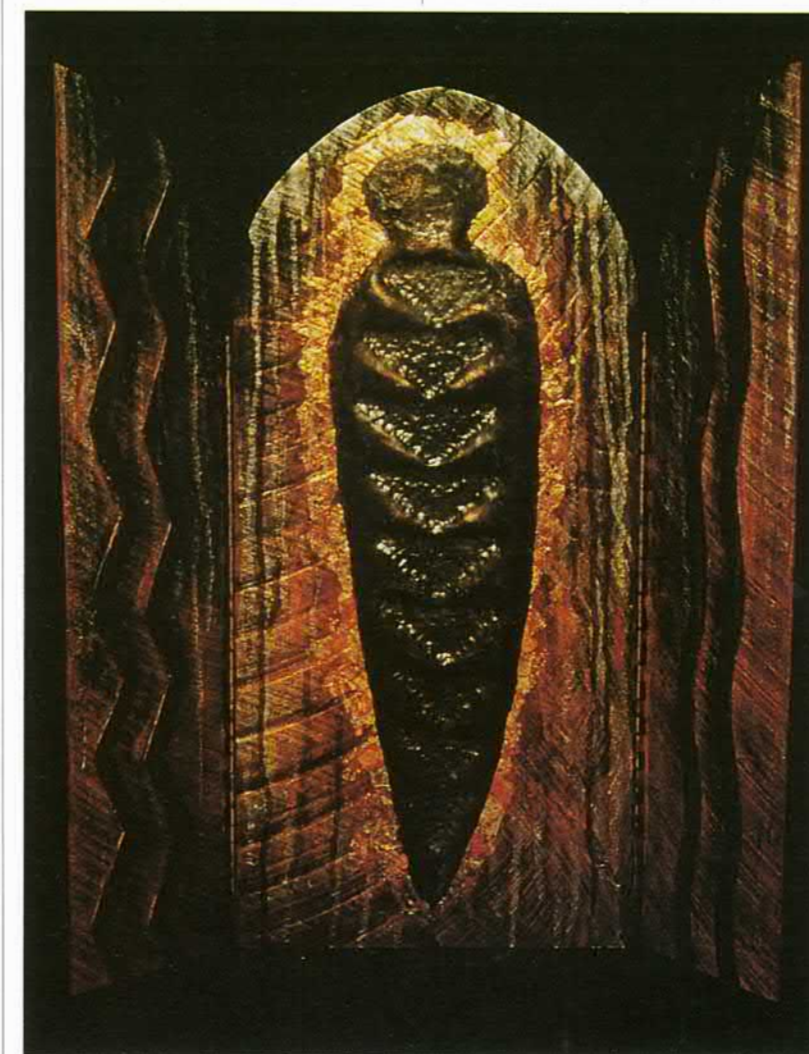
A sense of ritual was established with Ann Robinson's breathtakingly beautiful colourless *Water Bowl*, designed to fill with rainwater and to reflect the changing weather

patterns. John Edgar's imposing granite sculptures, dark grey interrupted by red intrusions, abstracted the theme, and his minimal explanation - each exhibitor provided an artist's statement - was refreshingly succinct and unpretentious, as was that of Louise Purvis.

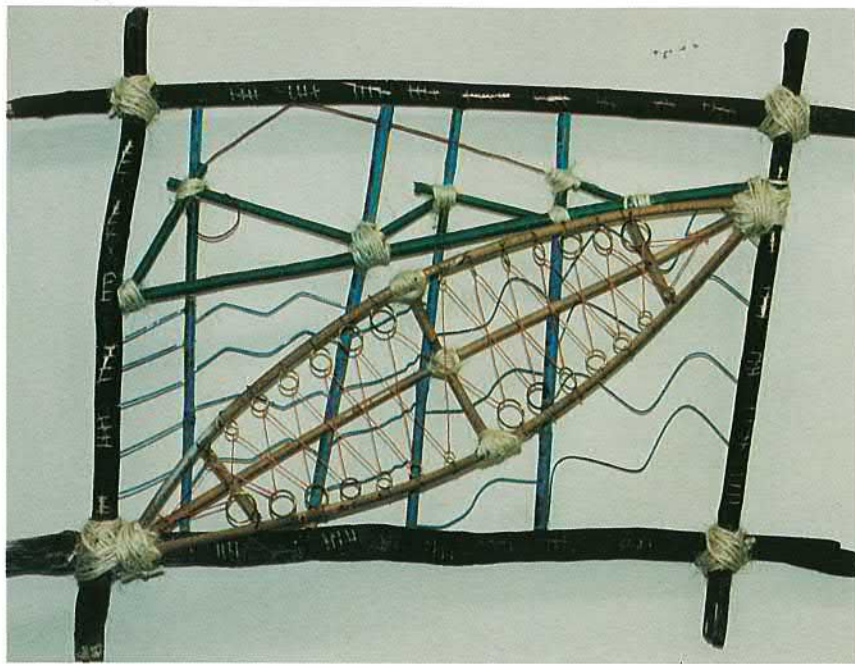
The almost universal rejection of traditional patriarchal religion as the source of imagery was to be expected. One result of this was the borrowing of a multiplicity of images to fill the vacuum, as well as romanticising the sources of these images. Given that religious belief systems as we know them have always been built on fragments borrowed from others, it concerns me when this borrowing of images seems superficial. I would like to believe that Frances Battersby's *Japan Influenced Sculpture* goes beyond merely borrowing Japanese imagery for its sacred beauty and power. Otherwise she is falling into the same questionable

path as the Primitivist artists of the early twentieth century, who paid scant attention to the cultural context of those from whom they borrowed. For me the accompanying artist's statement diluted the impact of these bronze images. Words too were superfluous to Malcolm Ford's charming constructions, the images holding sufficient clues to stimulate the viewer.

Looking to mythology and historical belief systems provided rich pickings for artists like Helen Pollock and Diana Firth, with their figurative works. The most successful of this genre of work were *Two Icons* expressing the universality of the theme of the tree as symbol, by sculptor Virginia King. The pieces stood like ceremonial arks, with doors closing over their central images, and their exquisitely crafted surfaces added credence to their sacredness. These pieces could be seen as a metaphor for the many threads of inspiration artists in New Zealand look to in a renewed search for spirituality.



Above left: "Hand and Heart", mixed media by Susan Jowsey.
Left: "Icon" by Virginia King.



Above left: "From the Past to the Present", wood, by Binh Nguyen.
Above right: "Dress Jacket", textile ink, cotton duck, by Tuaine Teiti Jnr.

Below left: "Mahi Ringa Ringa", harakeke and silk, by Tangi Robinson.
Below right: "I'm all Heart (Prophecy)", oil by Benjamin Bloomer. Photos: Peter Gibbs.

ORIGINS

WHITIREIA POLYTECHNIC ART EXHIBITION AT PAGE 90 ARTSPACE

Reviewed by Lesleigh Salinger

An annual exhibition of the work of students and tutors at Whitireia Polytechnic's Art Department is held at Page 90 Gallery in Porirua. The exhibition is a showcase for work done throughout the year and also reflects the underlying *raison d'être* of the courses run by the department; ie. to direct students to research and explore their cultural heritage and to use the revelations as the building blocks for their development as artists.

The two major cultural threads expressed in the work are the Polynesian and the Celtic, but there are one or two surprises, reflecting Porirua's rich multi-cultural diversity, and giving explanation to the Exhibition's by-line: *Celebrating our Ancestors*.

The inclusion of the work of the tutors is good for a number of reasons. It allows the viewer to discern influences on the students;

to see what strengths the department has in terms of the quality of artists and craftspeople on the teaching staff and it creates a democratic spirit throughout the exhibition as students' and tutors' work jostle side-by-side.

The department is led by the dynamic and committed Anne Philbin (former director of the Wellington City Gallery), whose particular flair is in drawing into her teaching web



leading New Zealand talent. Permanent full and parttime staff include Rozel Phrazyn, Owen Mapp, Prue Townsend, Nick White, Michael Tuffrey, Tangi Robinson, Biddy Frazier-Davies and Anneke Borren. Workshops are also conducted by invited tutors such as Robyn Stewart, Peter Deckers and Peter Woods among other leading craftspeople.

The gallery space at Page 90 although large is depressingly unaesthetic and barn-like. Nevertheless the multi-media exhibition makes the best of what is available with islands of display space created with screens, pedestals and cases. The quality of the work shown, however, gives one heart.

Each year the standard of the exhibits gets better and even if only a percentage of these students develop into professional artists, New Zealand will be better for it. Given the standing of the tutors it is not surprising that the strength of the exhibition lies in the crafts.

Billee Mutton exhibits some interesting jewellery including *Druids Oak* earrings and brooch, each the shape of an oak leaf, delicately coloured, and *Dragon Eye* earrings, pyramid forms which are elegant in their simplicity. Daisy Wood's *Journey* and *Jib* brooches reflect the sea-going cultures of Polynesia with references to sails, outriggers and journeys. A particular skill is required to transform jewellery's inherent decorativeness into an expression of wider meaning.

Gerome Brother Mills' *The Scab that Endures* is a convex enamelled shell "stitched" with wire from which a reversed-out pattern is cut - a strong piece. Matthew Wilson's sterling silver and copper headdress is fun with its nikau palm cockade. Victoria Pound's work is worth noting. Kern's *Crest*, is a bold circular pendant of polished brass cut and curved with reference to her Celtic roots. She also features a series of works on paper, *Relics I-IV* which caught the imagination with their rather enigmatic drawings - a hint of Tanguy or Arp. Victoria will be someone to watch for.

Ceramics also feature well. Rebecca Spinks is working prolifically and has produced a number of small Celtic boxes, pots and jars. She has taken up Robyn Stewart's own technique and is obviously very influenced by her, but must be careful not to "paint" herself into the copyist-corner. Whether Rebecca can claim her chosen markings as "Celtic" is not clear - Robyn after all claims that her symbols are universal.

Another student revealing heaps of talent is mature-age student Wi Taepa. His *Clay Box* series I-VII are richly textured and "tattooed", but he too is obviously influenced in his forms by ceramicist, George Kojis. Wi's copious imagination and creativity must be harnessed to a disciplined centred focus or he will run the risk of falling into eclecticism.

Huirua Whiu and Erueti Tutaki are both stone carvers. Their works styled and named

from their Polynesian cultures. Erueti's *Rongoa* appealed; lyrical in expression it avoided heavy overstatement. Faiva Setefano Mikaio has three pieces *Toki Matua*, *Tau Matua* and *Agavale* which are traditional weapons - clubs hand-etched and bound.

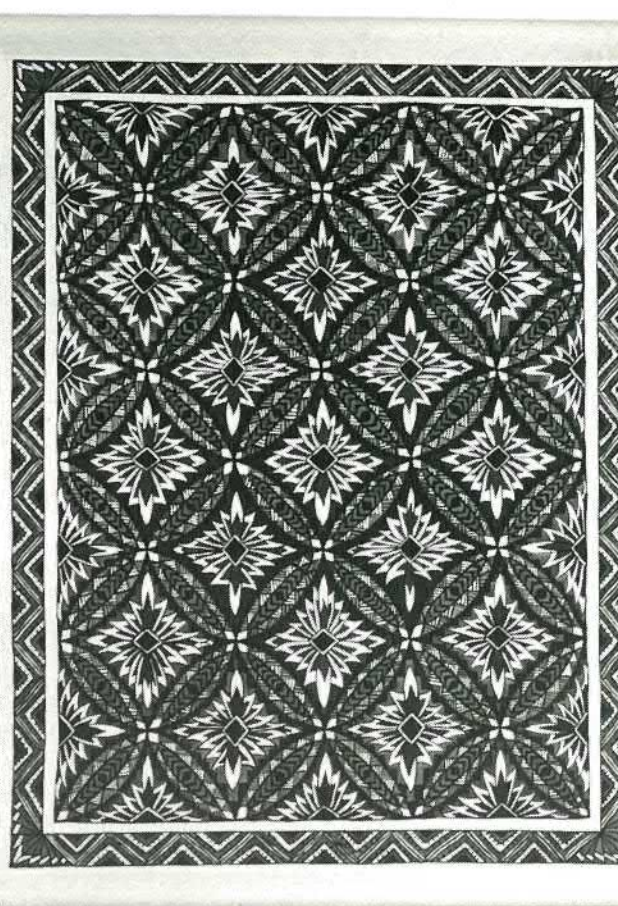
The wide field of textiles is ideal for seeking out "origins" as every culture on earth has its own fabrics and patterns. Gwenda Martin shows adapted *Seton Tartan*, Rebecca Spinks, felting and weaving and there are some examples of Maori weaving. Kyleigh Adrian's leather cape is a handsome piece as is Tuaine Teiti Junior's dress jacket, with textile ink on cotton duck in richly patterned traditional Polynesian colours of tan, cream and black.

Joanne Densley's work refers to Australian Aboriginal culture, with *Dreamtime Quilt* and the delightful *Harry the Lounge Lizard*; an "adult's" soft toy patterned with dot painting. Paper making and dyed fabric are featured by Lise Shaw in a photo-album, keepsake box, notebook and folio.

Tutor Nick White has been working with the students in the cross-over area of painting and sculpture. Binh Nguyen absorbs his influence but gives individual interpretation to two works entitled, *From the Past to the Present* - one a wall sculpture of boat and sail forms symbolic of navigation and the journeys of the Vietnamese boatpeople. The second work is a sturdy *papier mache* figure painted across with images of land and rivers. A good starting point for this student, it will be interesting to see him try a more substantial medium like carving or clay modelling. John Richardson's *Full Revolution*, *Magic's Eye* and *From Day to Day* are wooden wheels interestingly decorated in acrylic and ink with Celtic calendars.

Most impressive is an untitled installation by Christine Szabados. A subtle well balanced series of larger coloured oils on canvas interposed with smaller monochromatic works. The frames are finely worked copper, beaten or punched. Linking the works together is a repeated motif of the bulb-shaped female symbol, which in her hands has also the explosive form of a bomb. Also incorporated are a Robert Motherwell poem and a Polynesian proverb.

The students also study painting and print-making. Traditional Polynesian patterns and motifs lend themselves to strong graphic imagery and examples include; Solomon Daniel with *Manu Fou* an ink and acrylic on canvas; the patterned canoe shapes of James Molnar's prints entitled *Journey Through Life* and Jack Kirifi's acrylic *the Navigators* which uses images of sails, turtles, waves and fran-

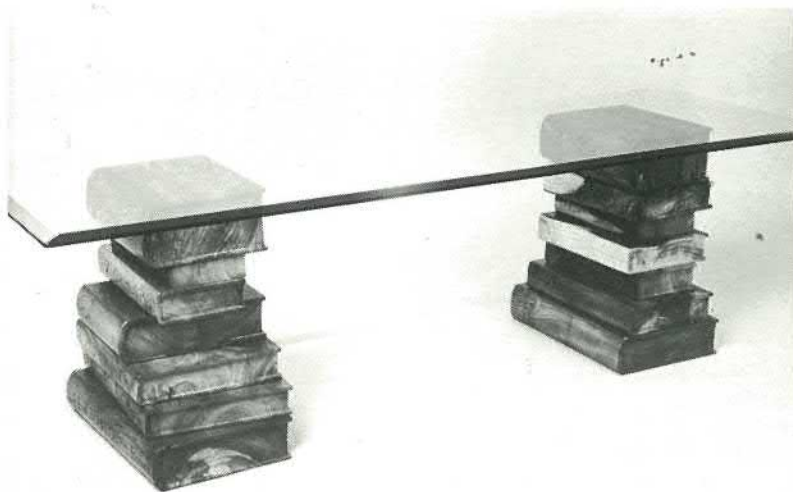


Above: "Manu Fou", ink, acrylic on canvas, by Solomon Daniel. Photo: Peter Gibbs.

gipane blossom. In *My Family Album*, Rachel Felise features a large triptych form with acrylic painting and photocopied images of family photographs. The left hand panel representing the family in the Samoa and the right hand panel, the family in New Zealand. The central panel is a unifying theme of patterns. The idea is imaginative and the work evocative.

Particularly strong is Selotama Solouota's *Peau Wave* a large confidently structured painting. Benjamin Bloomer's *I'm all heart (prophecy)* - a well executed abstract painting suggests, with its scattered *Stars of David*, a different cultural heritage. *Laura* by Stephen Ruscoe has a compelling rustic charm and is reminiscent of pioneer photographs of those determined women who arrived here last century. The detail of *Laura's* lace hanky and fresh rose pinned to her breast is delicately painted.

Several students have exhibited both craft and paintings and generally their skill levels are more advanced in their crafts. Perhaps because becoming a painter has the longest gestation and requires the development of a painterly vision, it is understandable that this is the weaker area of the exhibition. In reflecting their "origins" students must work to express sentiment and avoid sentimentality. By taking part in the exhibition however they are learning a most invaluable lesson, which is to put their work on the line for public scrutiny and in thus doing make their claim to the status of artist.



THE ALTERNATIVE FURNITURE SHOW

Reviewed by Colin Slade

In 1983 the *Alternative Furniture Show's* innovative formula of design co-ordinated individual booths, with makers present to discuss their work throughout the event and an ambitious advertising budget, set an example which has been successfully followed by many subsequent craft marketing enterprises. Its quality of presentation has grown steadily and this year's 10th anniversary show looked as crisply designed as any. Credit for this goes to design consultant Anna Thomas, an enthusiastic participant since the show's inception.

Sadly, the show's content has not overall kept pace with its presentation. From a high point of 22 exhibitors showing an excitingly wide variety of work in 1988, the numbers have dwindled and only 12 exhibited this year, two of them being newcomers.

As the title indicates, the show aims to present an alternative to the mass produced furniture generally available. The more indi-

vidual work displayed certainly meets this claim but a large part of the show consists of batch produced conventional, mainly reproduction furniture available to individual order and specification. Since many commercial manufacturers now offer a similar product and service in to-

day's competitive market, these exhibitors offer no real alternative and might appear to the educated viewer to be there merely to make up the numbers.

Of the more genuinely individual work on show, there was little to excite or challenge the viewer. Marc Zuckerman continues to develop and diversify his designs, extending his range of impeccably crafted tables and seating to include smaller pieces such as clocks, candle holders and other innovative gift items, highlighting the increasing difficulty of surviving by making only higher priced furniture pieces.

Garry Arthur's stand was one of the more attractive, his whimsical approach to furniture-cum-sculpture coaxing chuckles from a steady stream of viewers. His glass table top mounted on two piles of carved wooden books (with an intriguing range of titles) offered a new definition for the term "Coffee Table Books".

David Haig's trademark rocking chair was here further refined in gleaming sycamore, so white that many thought it was painted. This was perhaps the purest and most beau-

tiful version of the design so far. Its design and execution is undoubtedly world class, but ironically looks almost too pristine to sit in. He also showed a very attractive walnut chest in simply understated oriental style.

Newcomers *Karabuk Design*, a team of three woodworkers from Karamea, showed promise with a well made and pleasantly designed dining set, the product of only two years in the craft.

The work of others showed little development other than increasing quality of execution, leaving an overall impression of the show as a small mixed presentation of mainly well made, well proportioned, but unremarkable furniture, and one which must now be asking questions of its future.

Once Auckland's *Artiture* show had laid claim to the mantle of New Zealand's showcase for innovative furniture design, the Christchurch event seemed content to consolidate its original image of fine individual craftsmanship. However, the attrition of many of its better craftsmen has called this image into question. Helen Schamroth's NZ Herald review of *Artiture* indicates that it appears to be leaving behind its furniture identity to become "just another mixed media, multi-disciplinary show". That one of the best pieces in the Christchurch show had earlier been rejected by the *Artiture* selectors seems to confirm this view.

But if both these shows are disappearing in opposite directions, one must wonder what the future holds for the presentation and consequent survival of the mainstream craft furniture movement.

greg welch

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CRAFT WRITING RULES

By Michael Smythe

Given that our reality only exists as an interpretation, which only exists through language, a focus on craft writing is essential for those interested in increasing the awareness and value of craft work. It is the discourse of art that creates the perception that establishes the position and price of an artist's work. It is time to generate some powerful conversations about craft. How? Who? Where?

In August, at an evening seminar organised as a follow-up to the February *Craft Writers Weekend*, craft/art practitioners, students, teachers, curators, dealers, critics, writers and editors gathered at the ASA to address these questions. The attention was on editorial policy. The intention was to demystify and empower. In spite of the non representation of some key publications it was a great success - it raised more questions than it answered. Please use this documentation of that debate as a starting point for your own.

The scene is set by a display of art/craft works and a slide presentation in which

Helen Schamroth explores the clear distinctions as well as the increasingly fuzzy line between craft and art. What is exhibited in art galleries or craft galleries? Which exhibitions are allocated to the craft reviewer and which to the art critic? Why are they separate?

With the context established Alan Loney, Literary Fellow at University of Auckland, past editor of *Craft NZ*, chairs a panel comprising Linda Herrick, arts writer, *Sunday Star*; Gavin Ellis features editor and deputy editor, *New Zealand Herald*, and Elizabeth Grierson, editor, *Art News*. Alan leads with a deceptively bland question:

What is the ideal condition for craft in New Zealand?

Linda suggests a world in which all readers are interested in craft, all journalists are capable of writing about it and limitless money is available.

Gavin reminds us that the realities are far from ideal. Everyone in the country is competing for the media space. He wants craft to stop distinguishing itself from art. The craft community must join the art community in

creating self-sustaining tensions and constructive criticism.

Elizabeth's ideal is good writers producing good articles in clear language published in quality magazines with editors who are aware of the politics, social context, aesthetics and practicalities of art/craft. Judy Chicago's 1978 *Dinner Party* project was a major catalyst for debate. It was writers who interpreted the work and debated the issues that Chicago raised. (See story in box). Does the work exist as an object or as the debate it generates?

As an example of how not to write about craft, Elizabeth quoted Ralph Pomeroy writing in *Art and Artists* about a 1975 exhibition of blankets woven by Navajo Indian women: "I am going to forget, in order to really see them, that a group of Navajo blankets are not only that. In order to consider them as I feel they ought to be considered - as Art with a capital A - I am going to look at them as paintings - created with dye instead of pigment, on unstretched fabric instead of canvas - by several nameless masters of abstract art." Elizabeth sees this as a critic maneuvering the craft, and himself, in order to read it



in his frame of reference, thus negating the craft and its creators. She quotes Parker and Pollock's response in their book *Old Mistress*: "The geometric becomes abstract, woven blankets become paintings and women weavers become nameless masters." Is Elizabeth's comment that "that's the sort of writer we don't want" stifling the debate, contributing to it, or establishing the ground rules?

What is the purpose of craft writing?

Elizabeth says it's to educate and inform (not only the already aware), to help the artist and to create an historical reference.

Gavin sees the craft review as a conduit between the artist and the reader, an expression of firmly held opinion, not just a journal of record nor an invitation to tear the artist to pieces "to get one's own back". Writing about an artist, without reference to a specific exhibition, should provide an insight into the artist. He suggested that the interest of the general public was more likely to be attracted when the writing is about people.

Linda reinforces the human interest approach as the most viable for papers like the *Sunday Star* as they are "not in a position to make judgment about works".

Who are they writing for - artist or public?

Linda opts for a balance. If they feel the person is interesting they want to provide exposure and they believe the readers will be interested.

The reader is the object of Gavin's attention. He is not asking "will this help a struggling artist?" To the suggestion that giving readers what you know they want will only perpetuate the status quo, Gavin asks us to credit the reader with innate curiosity. He suggests that changes to craft writing have been evolutionary rather than revolutionary and that we should recognise the big shift that has occurred over the last 20 years.

Pam Elliott, Compendium Gallery, says it's the craft work rather than the writing that has progressed. And educating and informing is a bit boring - what about exciting and stim-

ulating? Are we talking honest enthusiasm here or stepping into the realm of promotion, PR and even advertorial? The dialogue does not head down that track.

Elizabeth is all for exciting and stimulating - and challenging the readers. She wants magazines to bring "a bit of Lenin" to their commitment to lead and create a shift. She wants writers who can read the politics of a work rather than indulging in human interest trivia.

Alan observes that it's hard to find writers who can address the subtleties of craft/art work, which leads him to his next question:

How can craft practitioners prepare themselves for writing about crafts in general?

Apply the principles of journalism including familiarisation with the subject, says Gavin. Craft writing is most likely to be done by free-lancers. He relies on them to have the depth of knowledge required. It soon becomes apparent if they don't.

Linda explains that the *Sunday Star* cannot afford to pay for critical writing. They go for a strong photo with tight copy. Not enough time/money to explore the politics.

"That's where the magazines come in," says Elizabeth. "We can deal in depth." And she refers to an *Art News* article about a portraiture exhibition as an example.

Jude Graveson, fibre artist, raises "networking" and asks about sending in copy.

Linda says it's never a problem to find a story. They have a steady supply of press releases, provided by professional publicists, to use as a starting point. They go back to the source to check the credentials.

Gavin tells us that the *Herald* is inundated with unsolicited material, but luckily he has two staff writers with a keen interest in the arts and they will know if an artist is important enough.

Simon Smythe, ASA student, says it's up to the artist to be good enough.

"And who says they're good enough?" asks Elizabeth.



"That's between the artist and the viewer," says Simon.

The course of the discourse avoids the loss of innocence. How naive to think that the intimate communication between an artist's work and its viewer can exist unencumbered by the opinion or ignorance of "expert" writers. Is the pen mightier than the brush - or is the brush made mighty by the pen? Are they friend or foe?

Alan gets back to the agenda:

We need writers who follow the work of an artist - we don't have a history of documenting.

Elizabeth explains how the documentation of the renaissance established the hierarchy of value that we have inherited. The class distinctions of the 19th century placed women's work at the bottom. "As long as the art/craft division is maintained craft will not be documented fully," she claims.

Gavin is at a loss to understand why the division still exists. He wants craft writers to establish a climate of critical debate. He recalls publishing an article by Dennis Dutton in February 1989 claiming that pottery was not art. The *Herald* received no response. They printed Gordon McLauchlan tearing into QEII criteria for funding writers. There was a vociferous reaction in writing.

"They were writers", points out Pam.

Linda reminds us that New Zealand writers have only emerged from the effects of

Sylvia Siddell's drawings and paintings of the life of the suburban housewife (above right) is definitely art - all drawings and paintings are, aren't they? But does our art community accept Val Griffiths-Jones' *Stuffing Off* (above left) as art - it's non-functional, innovative and says something political. Or is it devalued by 19th century perceptions of the value of "women's work"? Does that make it even more politically challenging and therefore even more of an artwork?

Paul Annear's carved stone body adornments are clearly craft. Dennis O'Connor's carved stone is unquestionably art - because it's non-functional, because it says something, because it is innovative?



cultural cringe in the last 20-30 years. Maybe craft is just a generation or two behind.

"What, for you, would be the ideal craft writer?" asks John Daly-Peoples, *NBR* arts writer.

Linda calls for clear, concise communicators.

Gavin wants them to translate complex issues into clearly understood language. He is not interested in arts pages that pander to the elite. The Herald wants the populist view.

Elizabeth says artists and writers should challenge the populist view. She wants writers to understand and debate the context, as well as the content, as a document of our society.

What responsibility do you have to freelance writers?

"None," says Linda.

Gavin is moved to quote the Greek philosopher, Juvenal: "An incurable itch for scribbling takes possession of many and grows inveterate in their insane breasts," to explain the steady stream of unsolicited copy. He regrets not having the luxury of time to provide an honest, detailed response to the

unsolicited work he rejects.

Elizabeth is very indebted to free-lance writers, but frustrated if their work is not tough, hard, on the nail and political.

Where do we go from here? asks Alan of the seminarians.

A consensus emerges in favour of workshops and courses to develop the writing skills of those already knowledgeable about, and deeply interested in, the craft arts - next year.

Someone looks forward to the elevation of craft design courses to degree level so that a percentage of graduates who have learned to write essays and theses become professional craft arts writers.

Christine Thacker, ceramic sculptor, proof reader for the *Herald*, thinks that's all back to front - we should start with professional writers and increase their awareness of the craft arts. The lack of debate reflected an appetite for supper rather than agreement on this issue.

Questions left unanswered, or even unasked, for me were:

Does anyone actually want to resolve the art/craft debate - or is it too valuable as a

going concern?

If most newspapers can fill pages with expert and even opinionated journalism on sport, business, politics, rock music, films and books why can't/won't they find some space/money for the visual arts? No readers? No writers? No relevant advertisers? No exciting stories? How do we break the catch 22?

It's bad enough being invisible, but is it worse to be the subject of controversy and debate? Does the debate have to be bitter before the media are interested? Do debates enhance the stature of a profession or demean it? Look at how we respond to politicians "infighting".

If the media wants informed, in depth, contextual writing are they willing to pay for it? Or must writers find other rewards for their effort, eg: increasing their own knowledge and awareness. Do artists become better artists when they write as a result of the research and critical observation involved? Should salaried academics do the writing?

Should/can artists write about their own work? Should the employment of a writer or publicist become part of the artist's overheads? Who should pay - the artist, the gallery or the publication? If publications don't pay well, how can they expect independent journalism? Writing about craft is essential to the process of informing, educating, exciting, stimulating and challenging our community and thereby increasing the visibility and value of craft art. Comprehensive documentation of present/past work is a prerequisite for future progress. The craft community must process its passion, expertise and self-interest and initiate a quantum leap in quality craft writing. For these reasons one thing became abundantly clear to me as a result of this seminar:

It's time to get off the fence and demonstrate our long term commitment to New Zealand craft by investing in the future of our principal journal of record - *Craft New Zealand*. Its survival is fundamental to our future.

GALLERY NEWS



AVID

Avid is a new retail space in Wellington designed to meet the needs of the market place by bringing together the leading proponents of applied art/craft design in New Zealand. Caryl McKirdy and Jan McDonald bring to this new venture a considerable range of skills, with seven years combined

experience at the Craft Council Gallery, 22 The Terrace, Wellington. Both have a solid background in applied arts (architectural stained glass and weaving knitwear).

Caryl describes it as not just another craft shop - but a venue for the very best in New Zealand design run by people with a sound background in this field.

PUNAKAIKI CRAFTS

By Greg Smith

Situated opposite the Pancake Rocks and Blowholes at the gateway to the Paparoa National Park, is the Punakaiki Craft Shop. Surrounded by lush nikau, naturally sculptured limestone rocks and the acclaimed Nikau Palms Café, the Craft Shop is a treasure house of fine New Zealand craft.

In 1986, from initiatives by the West Coast Craft Marketing Co-op, 35 craftspeople came together, each pledging \$1,000. With the assistance of the Lotteries Board, Regional Development Council and a \$60,000 mortgage, they were able to purchase the vacant premises at Punakaiki.

They adopted an incorporated society structure with a constitution aimed broadly at benefiting the West Coast and its craftspeople. The initial "shares" evolved into the purchase price of membership which gave the craftspeople a retail outlet where they had control of the way their work was displayed and a favourable commission rate of 20%. Members work four days a year as weekend shop staff and regularly rotate positions of responsibility.

Some members, who were former recipients of unemployment benefits have gained greater financial independence. Many are now totally self-supporting from their craft.

There has also been cross pollination of ideas and styles with members moving into new mediums, some sharing facilities.

With the mortgage almost paid off, plans are being developed for shop extensions and craft workshop space, the latter being in line with the educational and community development aims and objectives stated in the Society's constitution.

The Society is proud of its achievements, the foremost being the successful consensus of the wide range of ideas and emotions amongst its membership and the growing spiritual development that draws them together to make their efforts and dreams a reality.



INDICATOR GALLERY

By Sarah Hunter

It's a sign of confidence in the work of young New Zealand artists, as well as the economy, that new galleries continue to open. Latest in Wellington is a furniture and design gallery specialising in contemporary pieces. Since opening in May at 101 Vivian Street, Indicator Design and Furniture Gallery has already displayed the work of several new craft designers and has some exciting shows lined up.

Mike Gibson is a graduate of Wellington Polytechnic's Industrial Design course and has since gathered a wide range of experience in skills which enhance his sculptural pieces. He uses recycled junk to create exciting assemblages with practical functions - lamps, tables, chairs. The *See you in Heaven* chair which started off as a '50s armchair becomes positively angelic with the addition of winglike aluminium sides. The Beacon lamp constructed from a hubcap, plastic mesh, a tacky 60s lightshade and other flotsam - "beachy stuff" Gibson calls it.

The piece that stole film-maker Jane Campion's heart, however, was the *Aroha* table, bearing an uncanny resemblance to greenstone but actually formica - heart-shaped, lethal-looking spirals of sharp steel wrapped round steel legs mounted on industrial castors.

Above:
"Aroha", by Mike Gibson.
Left:
Avid on opening night.

Below:
Punakaiki Craft Shop



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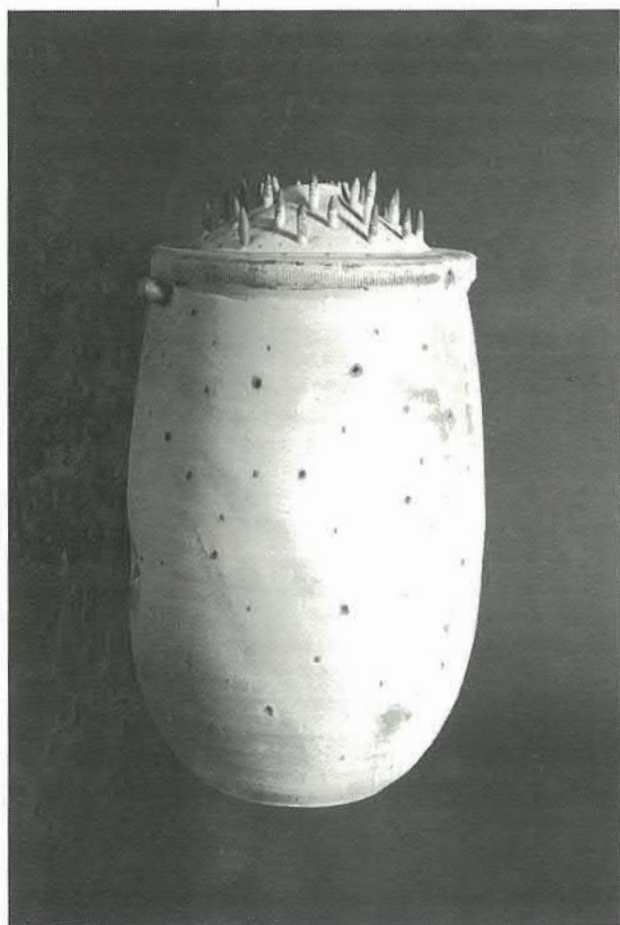
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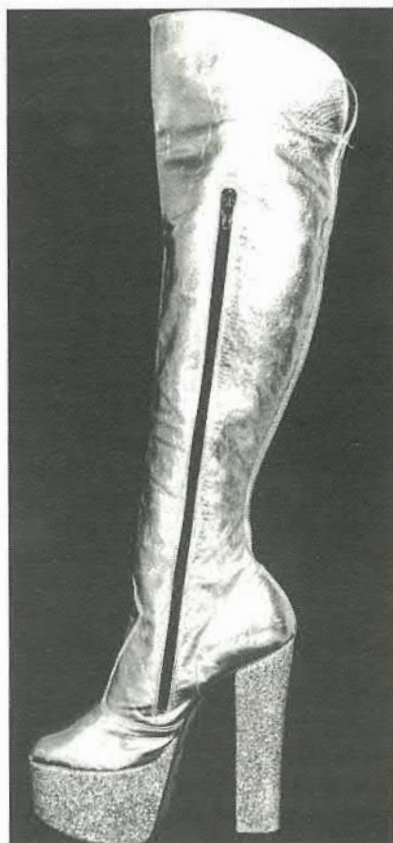
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Top; View of Rena Jarosewitsch exhibition "Steel and Glass". Photo: Ralph Cook.
Above left; "Pleasant Dream 1992", Photo: Tony Kellaway.
Above right; Silver Space Boots, loaned by Julie Philips. Photo: Ralph Cook. Photos courtesy Dowse Art Museum.

AT THE DOWSE

Recent exhibitions at the Dowse Art Museum in Lower Hutt continue to blur the boundaries between art and craft. Shows over the winter included *Te Ata Tuarua X*, *The Second Reflection*, architectural sculpture by Bob Jahnke; *Xenoliths*, ceramic sculpture by Christine Boswijk; and *Freedom and*



Exoticism, new ceramic works by Steve Fullmer. Fullmer's often zany work camouflages the fact that he is a consummate technician and thrower with a clear vision of design and form. His technique of layering slips, then hosing them back to reveal variegated textures, has been widely copied by others, as have some of his more extreme firing methods.

The *Fantasy Shoe Show* continues the *Body Adornment* theme which has been ongoing



THE GALLERY - NORTHLAND POLYTECHNIC

By Jay Thorburn

The Gallery opened at the Northland Polytechnic on September 23rd last year. Unfortunately the Tai Tokerau area has had very few venues that exhibit professional art and craft regularly, and so the Gallery's policy is to show only work of a high quality.

It also serves as a teaching facility; students take part in its administration, and help with designing and setting up the exhibitions. And the Gallery provides a sympathetic forum for the students' graduation shows, where the public can see the best of the work produced at the Polytechnic. It is the Applied Art centre's 'flagship', its main point of contact with the rest of the community.

This month the Gallery is holding a group show which includes the work of Meg Black, Roberta Coppelino, and David Pullen, all of whom are graduates of the Northland Polytechnic, and are now members of the recently-formed 'Third Arm' group.

After she graduated, Meg Black went on to study at the Queensland College of Art, gaining a B.A in Design after majoring in Gold and Silversmithing. Her work incorpo-

over the past two years. During the opening weeks of the show, attendance at the Dowse increased by 250%, with 10,240 visiting the gallery over the first two weeks.

Currently at the Dowse are *Stories From the Hinterland*, recent bronze sculpture by Paul Dibble (until November 1); *Vessels of Coloured Light*, Garry Nash glassworks (until November 1 - see story elsewhere this issue); and *Glass and Steel*, new sculpture by Rena Jarosewitsch.



rates a variety of media, including plastic, anodised aluminium, and rubber.

She exploits the polished and highly reflective surfaces of her materials, especially in her chrome-plated 'cup', a brass cone which stands in a small tripod; it has a faceted interior, and the handle's reflection in the side of the cone becomes part of the design. Meg Black uses deep, saturated colour, very intense in her anodised work - for instance, the sharp red of her large and rather aggressive-looking brooch, which can also be worn as a bracelet and a belt-buckle. All of the pieces have a clean, linear sense of design.

After leaving the Polytechnic, Roberta Coppelino majored in Gold and Silversmithing at the Canberra Institute of Art, receiving a B.A in Visual Arts. Roberta works mainly with anodised aluminium.

The style of Roberta's work is very distinctive; she bends and hammers the aluminium into intricate, undulating forms which have an air of spontaneity, although the basic design is carefully drawn beforehand. She builds layer upon layer of colour, and so her pieces possess a wealth of colour variation. She prefers bright, vivid colours which create a striking effect. Each of the pieces can be worn, but they are also always visually interesting in their own right.

David Pullen graduated from the Polytechnic only last year with a Diploma in Applied Arts, having majored in Jewellery. His work



uses mainly simple, natural materials: small pieces of coconut shell, which are used in a few of his necklaces and earrings; wood; and particularly stone, such as sodalite and jade.

He prefers rounded shapes and curved forms, kept simple and avoiding any excess embellishment; his designs are always self-contained. His use of colour is also low-key, even sedate, not wanting to distract from a



piece's basic form. The effects of his work are subtle, contemplative, and unpretentious.

The Gallery Shop sells the work of local craft-artists.

Facing page, right; Anodised aluminium bracelet by Roberta Coppelino.
Top left; Brooch/bracelet, stg silver, anodised aluminium and rubber, by Meg Black.
Lower left; Cup, chrome plated brass, anodised aluminium and rubber, by Meg Black.
Centre, top to bottom; Meg Black, Roberta Coppelino and David Pullen.
Top right; Bracelets, anodised aluminium, by Roberta Coppelino.
Centre right; Bracelets, copper, wood, stainless steel, argalite, greenstone & silver, by David Pullen.
Bottom right; Brooches, silver, copper, shark's tooth, paua shell, by David Pullen.



Above: "Art Decko", by Peter Lange at Fire and Form. Photo: Lynda Harris.

FIRE AND FORM GALLERY

Albany Village Pottery members were the guest exhibitors at Fire and Form Gallery in Hamilton during August.

Marie Nicholls reports:

The show contained the work of some of New Zealand's most experienced potters including Marilyn Wiseman, Renton Murray, Jeff Scholes, Andrew van der Putten, Barbara Hockenull, Peter Oxborough, Peter Lange and Robyn Stewart.

While these are some of New Zealand's leading potters, the price of their work was very modest, making these clay works a bargain for buyers of New Zealand ceramics.

Below: Knitted painting by Lois Perry. Bottom left: "Gown of Memories" (detail), by Helen Schamroth. Bottom right: "Ginkgo Necklace", silver and niobium, by Ruth Baird.

K3tog AT MASTER WORKS

(Knit three together, until October 3)

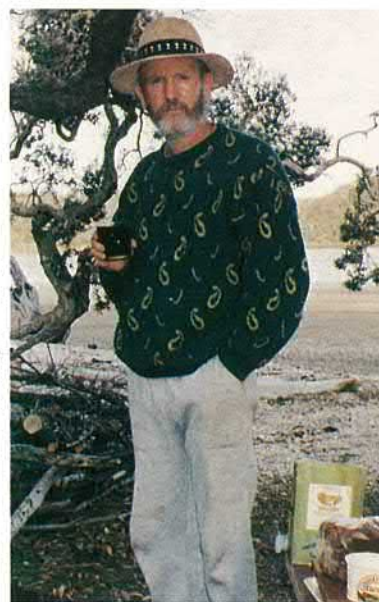
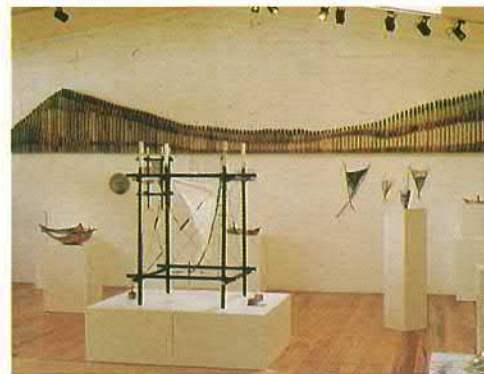
Three women exhibit precious, domestic and industrial threads to create a unique exhibition. For all three, the knitted stitch is an integral component of their art which honours the traditional domestic craft of their forebears. The bond between them is process, learnt from their mothers. All their work is

about re-presenting the craft medium as an art form, respecting the notion that knitted and crocheted objects were primarily for protection.

Ruth Baird makes jewellery, delicate looking webs of silver or niobium wire, adorned with motifs from nature, worn as necklaces.

Lois Perry knits fabric - lace, bandages, cotton - then develops the surfaces with layers of paint, and occasionally elaborates them with wire.

Helen Schamroth knits sculptural textiles in very fine electronic or fuse wire, some to be suspended, others supported on fragments of granite or marble.



PETER OXBOROUGH ROMANCING THE GULF

Beachcombing is probably one of the activities most New Zealanders associate with their childhood. Those pieces of driftwood, shells and old bottles we discovered on the beach were admired for a day or two and then forgotten.

But artist Peter Oxborough has never lost this childlike pleasure in objects from the sea. His exhibition at Master Works (18-29 August) is a celebration of this fascination. Objects resurrected from the sea - driftwood, scraps of canvas - are combined with ceramic shapes to fashion non functional boats, sails, islands and images of sky and water.

"It's a fine balancing act combining natural materials and treating them sympathetically without being too simplistic," he explains. "I am showing that items which are apparently worthless can be interesting and delightful. The humble becomes beautiful."

Oxborough's love of boats is perhaps the dominant theme to this work. Commodore of the Mahurangi Cruising Club and the owner of *Vanita* a classic 25 foot short end keeler designed by Bert Woollacott, he expresses his joy in sailing symbolically through such pieces as *Topsil*, his entry for the 1992 Fletcher Challenge Ceramics Award.

Peter Oxborough first began *Romancing*

the Gulf when he arrived in New Zealand in 1957 from a town in the British Midlands that was "as far away as you can possibly get from the sea".

He was immediately attracted to Auckland's marine environment, boats in particular. He would spend hours watching the ferries picking up passengers from Murrays Bay where he lived (prior to the construction of the Harbour Bridge) or the young boys down on the beach in their P & Z class yachts.

Although he knew little about sailing it wasn't long before he bought his first boat *Outlaw* a Z110 which had previously won the Cornwall Cup. From this initial contact Oxborough's fascination with boats and the sea has continued to grow.

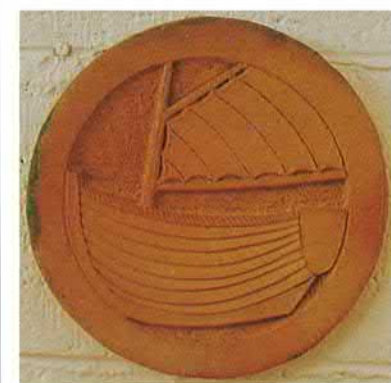
Ten years ago he moved to Scotts Landing on the Mahurangi Peninsula. With the sea at his back gate, and the Hauraki Gulf a short sail down the estuary Oxborough was truly in paradise.

But the influence of his marine environment was not to emerge in his work until long after Oxborough had become established as a potter. The first expression of a nautical mythology was in a small show in 1989 called *Gulf Winds* at Albany Village Pottery (which he helped found).

Romancing the Gulf is however, the first

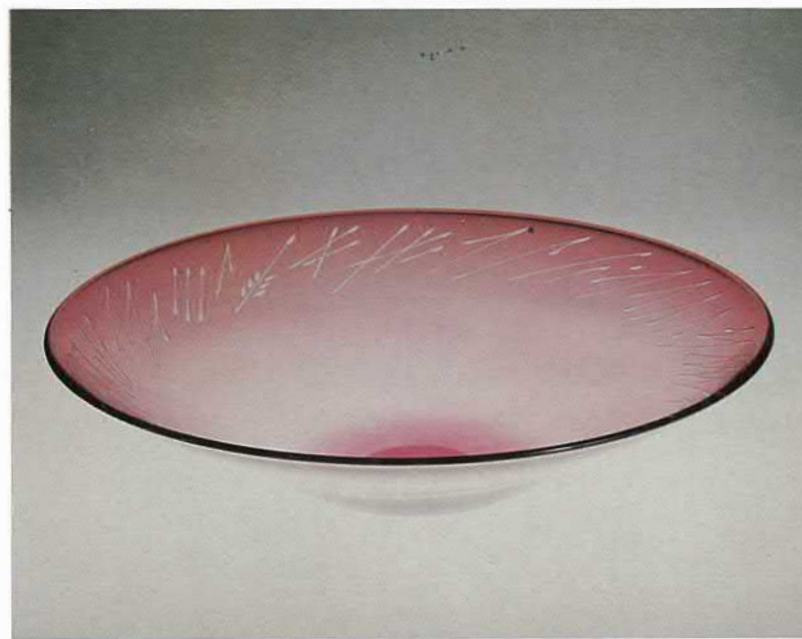
major exhibition to encapsulate Oxborough's absorption with his Mahurangi environment in any depth. Images of Te Haupa (Saddle Island) at the mouth of Mahurangi, of *Dawdle* his old dinghy, of sails and of sea are conveyed through deliberately contrasting materials - rough and smooth, old and new, precious and common.

While terracotta and clay are predominant in each piece, Oxborough sees fire - the kiln, scorched wood - as a unifying force: "I am at play, in my dreamtime collecting bits of 'junk', mucking around with clay, tying sticks and bits together with string and silver or copper wire, burning and smoking and staining with fire and flame."



Left: "Apricot Dawdle", terracotta, 230mm diam. Bottom left: "Albert McCarthy's Boat", terracotta, wood, silk, silver, fibre, 1100x1100mm. Bottom right: "Dawdle Racing", stoneware tile, wooden pegs, 400x200mm. Photos: Peter Oxborough





GARRY NASH: PROCESSES AND MATERIALS

New Blown Glass, Dowse Art Museum, September 5 - November 1.

By Iain Buchanan

Perhaps best known for his large blown-glass sculptures with applied pictorial imagery, Garry Nash also makes more functional studio glass forms such as the bowls and vases in this exhibition. His consistent involvement with the vessel form dates back to a major symposium entitled *Architecture of*

the Vessel held at the Rochester Institute of Technology in 1986. The Rochester symposium focused on a growing concern among glass and ceramic artists to reassert the importance of the vessel. In studio glass the vessel is a fundamental form, its shape determined by the blown-glass process. A return to the vessel meant a new emphasis on process: the way in which the glass is blown and worked, the basic vessel shape changed and modified.

Like most studio glass artists, Nash employs two distinct processes; he creates the form

initially by working the hot glass which he later modifies by cold-working techniques. In hot-working the glass is free-blown as a globe or bubble. The resultant shape is determined by the artist through blowing, spinning on the pipe, letting the glass run and controlling the form through different levels of heat. At this stage, wet newspaper can also be used to shape the form of the vessel. Nash's work is distinctive in its large scale, where the difficulty lies in controlling the medium to combine great size with lightness of form. Such scale has been possible only in recent years with the introduction of large gas fired furnaces and many leading glass artists now work in quite monumental forms.

Nash is particularly concerned with colour and, unlike most glass artists, he makes all his own glass and colours. He favours blue, green and red, made from metallic oxides such as gold, cobalt, copper and chrome. The colours though pure are sometimes uneven, accounting for the swirls and striations of such pieces as the cobalt blue platter. One of his specialities is gold-ruby, formed by dissolving pure gold in aqua regia, which is then mixed with the raw ingredients to make the glass.

CERAMICS - AN INTEGRATED APPROACH

By Gretyl Doo

Two years of experimental study at Otago Polytechnic culminated in an additional Honours Year during 1991. The subsequent

works were exhibited at the Fletcher Challenge Ceramics Award and The Royal Easter Show 1992, as well as several smaller shows locally. A traditional craft background spanning 15 years gave valuable technical expertise and experience, but didn't inhibit the exploration of sculptural possibilities. I

launched off last year into a series of clay-works which I titled collectively *Vessels From Dreamtime*, and these evolved in continuum.

The imagery, centred mainly around natural phenomena especially the effects of time and weather upon nature, reaches back into geological time but also forwards into the future, through which my "dream repertoire" glided. The vessels began as rather shy boxes; places for sea creatures to inhabit or hide within. Structurally these then adopted a diagonal dynamic, which evolved into boat forms or modes of space exploration - these being the winged *Celestial Vessels*. Recently the ceramic works have taken on forms which could be found on other planets - exotic plant and rock forms incorporating senses other than the visual.

As an artist I try to achieve a balance between clay nature and human concept. This can be expressed through a contrast between the inner and outer aspect of the piece. Often I make the outer surface very textural, showing evidence of reduction, with the iron/earth colour burning through from the clay. The inner vessel is masked with thick layers of porcelain slip, smooth and skin-like, this can then be tinted with



The white and blue platter is made by the opalino technique, in which the glass is built up in a series of layers. Nash begins with a lump of solid glass on the pipe to which is added a gather of opalescent glass and two or more layers of clear glass. The vessel form is then blown. This is one of the few techniques using applied colours which does not distort the form when the glass is blown. The colour remains an integral element, fused into the form of the vessel.

Glass is pre-eminently a transparent material but through his cold-working techniques Nash is very concerned to stress its surface

qualities. Within studio glass in general there is a revived interest in surface treatment by methods such as enamelling, painting, etching or electroforming. To create the frosted milky colour of the starry green platter, Nash modifies the glass blank by sand-blasting and acid etching. The clear glass pattern on the frosted blue orb is made by direct intaglio diamond cutting. A drill was used on the blue opalino platter in a sgraffito

technique to expose the underlying white colour and form the starry pattern. By combining these relatively simple effects with the pure or diffuse colours of the glass, Nash creates a vessel which is controlled in form and classical in feeling. Nash's work has an introspective coolness in contrast to the neo-baroque exuberance of most contemporary studio glass. This quality is still present in his large glass sculptures which though more subjective in their imagery retain the blues and greens of his sombre colouration.

delicate shades of apricot, blues and greens. At other times the two aspects are brought into harmony, with lines and etchings on the inside, ghosting the dynamics of the outer form.

When I am confronted with large slab surfaces, I start with an overall concept which is free enough for the form to unfold intuitively. The loosely shaped wet slabs are thrown onto wet sand moulds. These support them, and also can be used for pressing additional material into the surface as I work. Cut facets are brought up and draped, rather like fabric around imaginary mannequins, embellished and transformed simultaneously with texture, colour and visual algebra, as they are being force dried with a heat gun.

I hope that the precious nature of my sculptures promotes an awareness of the relatively precarious nature of all objects of

beauty and also moments of human emotion. Their delicacy, however, partly belies the true substance of the vessels. They are made of stoneware clay fired up to 1300°C, strong and durable. I like to envisage them in an outdoor setting as garden pools under trees or humanised rocks poised in landscapes or perhaps as containers for flowers in a church. The shell forms are ideal for displaying and serving New Zealand seafood. The lidded boxes could be used for the ashes of a loved one or to store treasured memories and objects.

Gretyl Doo lives with her three children in Dunedin, and at present works from her home studio which overlooks the Otago Harbour. She also conducts workshops and does freelance tutoring.

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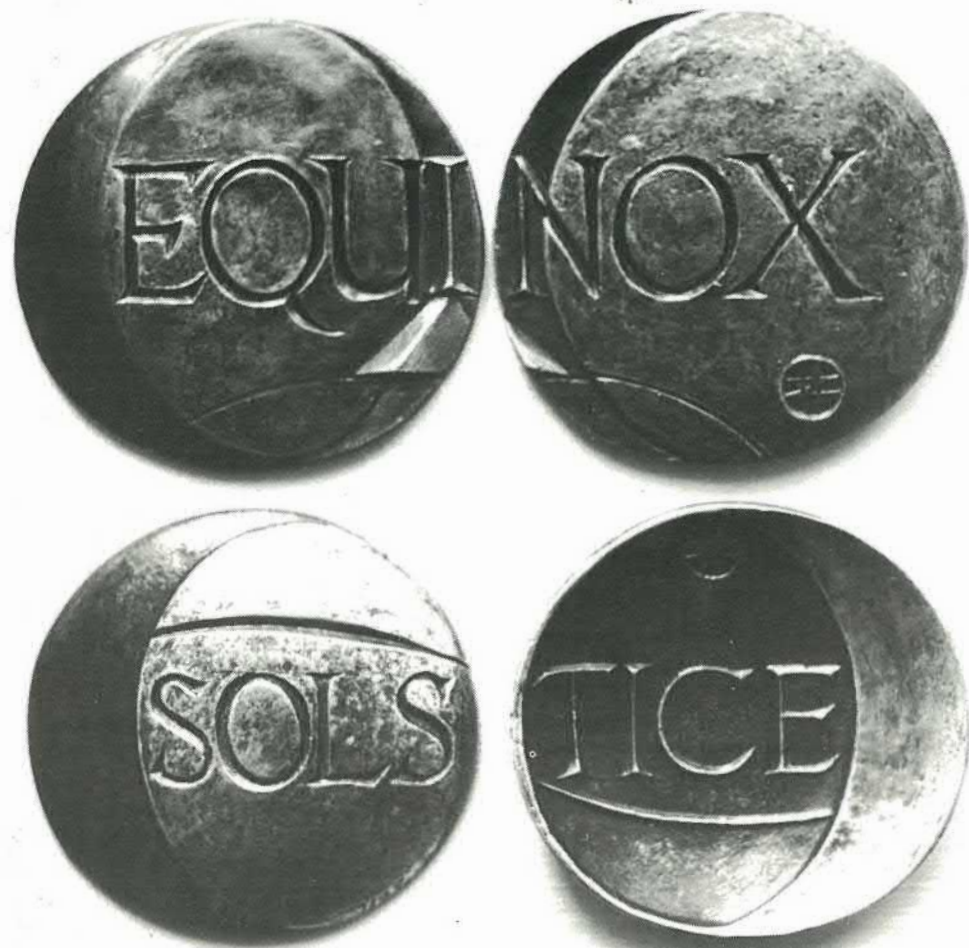
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Above: "The seasons", 4 medallions, bronze and pewter, diam 55mm, 1991, by Jim Wheeler.
Right, from top: "NZ Artists No 2 - Tony Fomison, 1939-1990", by Betty Beadle.
"Manaia II" (Edition 9), by Christine Massey.
"Embryonic Fern Frond II", (cast bronze or silver, 1992, diam 100mm), by Marté Szirmay.
"Workbench" (sandcast bronze, for FIDEM Exhibition, 1992), by Peter Woods

CONTEMPORARY MEDALLIONS

By Judy Wilson Goode

Over the past century, medallion art has emerged with a new sense of purpose. New Zealand artists have joined this revival of interest and the *New Zealand Contemporary Medallion Group* is a dynamic, close-knit collection of artists, whose backgrounds vary from jewellers and silversmiths to sculptors and painters.

Inspired by the work of Paul Beadle, Foundation Professor of Fine Arts at Elam, and initiated by his wife Betty, the group was formed in 1989 with eight members - Betty Beadle, Robert Ellis, Christine Massey, Terry Stringer, Wallace Sutherland, Marté Szirmay, Jim Wheeler and Peter Woods.

In 1990, they were invited by FIDEM, the International Medal Foundation, to exhibit in Helsinki at the 22nd Congress of International Medallion Art and received acclaim from Mark Jones, Curator of Coins and Medals at the British Museum who wrote, "An exciting innovation was the presence of eight New Zealanders whose varied and energetic work is a tribute to the creative excitement generated by Betty Beadle and her recently created NZCMG." The group is due to exhibit again with FIDEM at the British Museum in September 1992.

Contemporary though this group's medals may be, they take pride and interest from their place in medallion history. The word medal is derived from the Latin "medallum", meaning a Roman coin of little value. The characteristics of these early coins became the basis for the development of the medal - not without exceptions of course.

The characteristics of medals - round, metal, two sided and with low relief - set the scene for their development. Historically, medals were used commemoratively and became a portrait medium, being used both for propaganda and reward. With an obverse and reverse side, the medal, alone of art forms can convey the essence of duality of



existence, of outward appearance and inner reality, of individual and event. The low relief gives three dimensions and provides the challenge for a painter to model or a sculptor to think pictorially. The inscriptions provide a meeting point between literature and art. Given the fact that metal endures, the medal becomes a pocket work of art of a highly personal and spiritual nature.



The crafting of these increasingly desirable objects is a procedure achieved with considerable skill and technical knowledge. Attention to detail and the challenge of creating good design within the confines of a small circle are brought to bear.

Lost wax casting by ceramic shell method is the process used by Wallace Sutherland. Idiosyncratic effects are possible and may be consciously contrived by building into the initial pouring the chance for the hot wax to flow with irregularities to the limits of a clay wall which defines the finished shape and size. Shallow wax lines develop on setting, and these characteristics become part of Wallace's overall design. This initial wax disc is then moulded and built up or reduced using the basic principles of relief sculpture. Very intricate or fine detail can be added at the next stage, when a two piece plaster mould of the initial wax is made. Into this reversed image, words can be inscribed backwards using fine dental tools. This mould is then used to produce four to six more wax castings, which become the master copies for

the final metal casting.

Wallace's experience of working in a metal foundry for some years is invaluable in the next step - spruing. A wax tree is built with sprus (wax bars) supporting the wax in a branched effect. Bars or vents leading from the wax medallions complete a circuit. Co-operation from the *Auckland Art Work Studio Foundry* is essential for the rest of the process whereby the wax tree is dipped in ceramic slurry, sprinkled with molochite and zircon sand, dried and redipped, building up several layers. The ceramic tree is then refired in a low temperature kiln and the wax drips out, leaving a fine, very hard ceramic shell which becomes the mould for the molten bronze pour.

As with all craft, the finishing is as important as the creating, and fettling or cleaning up of the metal needs plenty of care and attention. The initial appeal of a medal may be the patina of the finished surface. Many variations can be achieved by spraying on different compounds which react with the bronze. Varying colours can result, depend-



ing on whether copper, ferric, or sulphur compounds are used. The colouring process is halted and held by waxing the finished medal.

Quite a process, but the result is like a rediscovered treasure - a joy to touch and feel. Friedensreich Hundertwasser explains so well what medals mean to him, and it rings true.

"It is really incredible to be able to carry such a picture in the pocket of your trousers without it getting worn or ugly. On the contrary, it becomes always better and more beautiful. From time to time, you touch it with your fingers, you take it out of your pocket and look at it all wet in the pouring rain or in the bath under water, or in the sun, or it shines at candlelight when you turn it about. And when night comes you feel the forms with your hands. At night, under the blanket when you are lonely, or when you lie sick in a hospital bed, or when you die alone, I think it is beautiful to have something like this in your hand...It is like entrance money into paradise."

Above left: "Final Spinal", (obverse side, bronze, 120mm diam, 1990), by Wallace Sutherland.
Photo: Christine Massey.
Above right: "Night & Day" (bronze version, 120mm diam, 1992), by Terry Stringer.

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WEAVING A KAKAHU

By Diggeress Te Kanawa

Reviewed by Hazel Walls

Weaving a Kakahu by Diggeress Te Kanawa was launched appropriately at Te Puna Waihangā Maori Artists' and Writers' Conference held at Omaka on Queen's Birthday weekend.

Once a quick glance at the cover, and inside, reveals what a kakahu actually is, this book should hold a fascination for those who have marvelled at Maori cloaks whenever they have been lucky enough to get a close look at one, whether it be at a tangi, where it elevates the deceased, at exhibitions in the nature of Te Aho Tapu, which complemented Te Maori in Auckland, or in museums.

These symbols of rangatira embody a unique craft form which extends well into the realm of art. In her book, the mystery of the age-old skills contributing to the creation of such beautiful garments is revealed by Diggeress Te Kanawa in a straightforward manner.

From the harvesting of blades of the pa harakeke (flax clump), to the extraction of muka (fibre) to form whenu (warp) and aho (weft) threads, to the whatu (finger weav-

ing process) it is apt that we are lead through at least 25 steps in a systematic fashion using Maori terms as well as English.

Diggeress Te Kanawa tells us that it takes an average of eight months to weave a kakahu, three of which are spent in preparation. Anyone with access to a great amount of suitable harakeke, large quantities of decorative bird feathers, unlimited time and possessed of prodigious skill in the fingertips and infinite patience could be inspired to use the book as a guide to making a kakahu. Each technique is so clearly explained, the miro twining of fibres for instance, that weavers of a more modest stature will find them useful too.

Gil Hanley's abundant photographs, together with Cath Brown's illustrations, explicit as ever, bring the written descriptions vividly to life.

In the foreword Diggeress explains that she is descended from a line Ngāti Kīno Haku, Maniapoto, women weavers who, encouraged by their menfolk have managed to maintain the art of weaving garments from harakeke fibre at a time when it was in grave danger of becoming lost. Now, thanks to the author's endeavour, the precious knowledge expanded and handed on by her renowned mother, Dame Rangimarie Hetet, has been fully recorded to be preserved and enjoyed by all.

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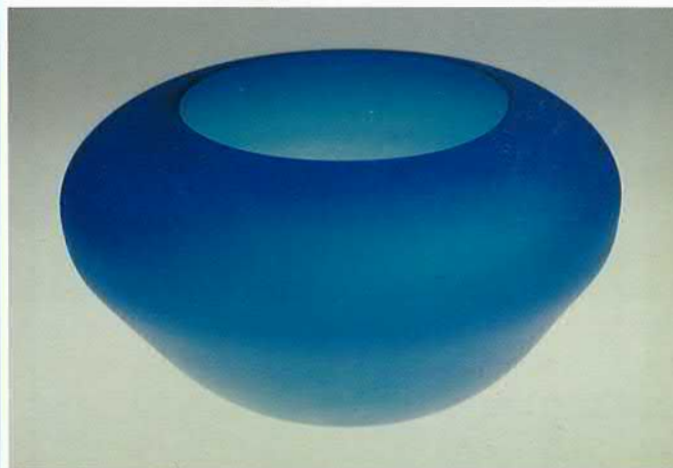


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