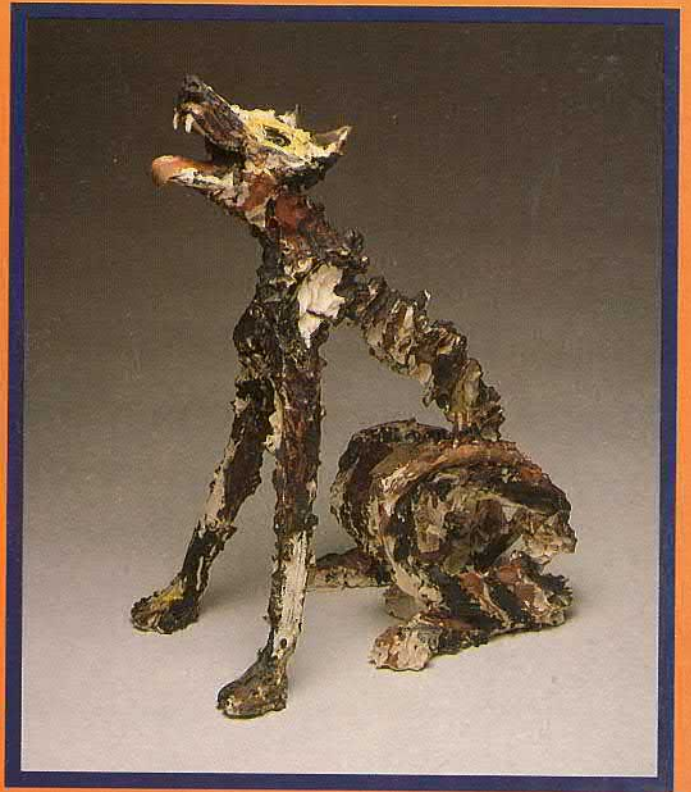


CRAFT

New Zealand

**ISSUE 44
WINTER
1993
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**Fletcher Challenge
Ceramics winner;
"Lobo California"**



**INSIDE:
EVENTS; FLETCHER CHALLENGE CERAMICS
ROYAL DOULTON EXHIBITION**

**PROFILES; PETER COLLIS
MARY BARTOS
MARK PIERCEY
KATE WELLS
ARCHIE BRENNAN**

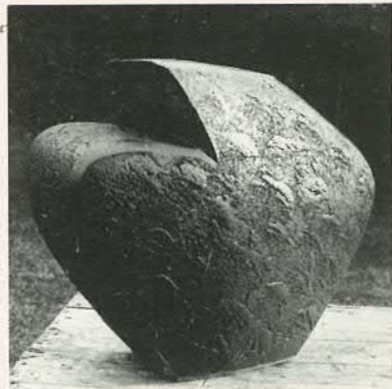
CRAFT

New Zealand

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Royal Doulton pottery is not regarded as part of the contemporary scene, but we have a lot to learn from this touring exhibition, as Mark Stocker points out.

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LETTERS

ARTS COUNCIL POLICY

I was impressed by the Autumn issue of *Craft New Zealand*. It contains commentary of substance and pertinence to the state of crafts in New Zealand and is a necessary professional voice in the field.

I take note of a stance within the editorial and from Helen Schamroth that perhaps Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council is somewhat distant from the crafts actuality and may have intentions to merge craft with visual arts.

The council is well aware of the desirability but also the difficulty of representing sectors of the arts and arts organisations on its panels which assess funding applications.

Recent controversy over the structure of the literature panel highlighted the desire of particular organisations or sectors to be represented on the panel, on the one hand, and the risk that such a form of representation may narrow or control the viewpoint of the panel representative. One important characteristic of crafts in New Zealand is the diversity and variety of activity, process, product and infrastructure under the generic of "craft". Council's policy is to appoint small panels of three or four members chaired by a member of the council. I support that policy. It makes for efficient and economic procedure. However, such small panels cannot possibly represent in person all the sectors of the crafts, and I doubt that such a form of representation is desirable. During my time as chair of the crafts panel I have been well satisfied that panel members, who have been either skilled and experienced practitioners, or who have had substantial involvement in the crafts field, have been able to give balanced and disinterested consideration to the huge variety of applications received.

It is the council which appoints panel members and it welcomes suggestions or recommendations from the arts sector for panel membership.

The make up of the Council prohibits appointments to all panels of chairs with expertise in the panel field. The task of the chairperson is to ensure that panel members give fair and proper attention to every application, and to provide the best possible summation of debate over applications. In my own case I have a very real interest in the crafts and have some reputation as a furniture maker and boat builder and as an arts educator and painter. These interests I may at times have to subdue in my role as chair of the arts panel.

The Arts Council has not debated the merging of the crafts and visual arts panels, and there is no such consolidation in mind. (The forthcoming review of the act governing the Council may require some overhaul of the Council's structures, but the bill has yet to find a place on the parliamentary agenda. The crafts industry should of course watch for the

appearance of the bill and be prepared to make submissions at the Select Committee stage.)

There has been some rationalisation of Council's programmes, for example, in publications and international travel and exchange. Council was of the view that by process of evolution and history more and more programmes had been introduced to meet needs across all the arts sectors. Duplication of purposes was evident, resulting in the division of an already inadequate budget into ineffective smaller parcels. In some instances reorganisation has given the crafts sector access to programmes not previously available.

While Council is not planning any merger of crafts and visual arts programmes, it is well aware that definition or differentiation of these sectors is increasingly difficult. It is my personal view that it would be dangerous indeed for Council to lay down prescriptive definitions of who may or may not apply in either sector, or to try to define what are the "admissible" crafts or visual arts. Indeed, I suggest that "distance looks many ways". While there is substantial, sometimes heated, but always valuable debate over the borders of craft and visual arts, there is a much less pursued debate possible (and close at hand) over the inclusion in crafts of, say, aircraft, automobile, or boat building, or of designer gardens or floral art.

Many of these appear to be areas of extraordinary inventiveness, remarkable design breakthrough, high technical skill and performance, and undoubted aesthetic and/or expressive quality. To betray one of my own enthusiasms I would claim that New Zealand's wooden boat builders are among the finest in the world, but their skills are rapidly disappearing (with age!) and are not being renewed because of major industrial and technological shift. There is a case to be made in terms of the Arts Council's stated goals, for funding to sustain this craft.

Perhaps therein lies a useful differentiation. It is not the difference in kinds of objects produced which creates a difference between 'crafts' and 'visual arts'. It is the differences in the structures within which the objects are made, distributed and consumed. There is a well-documented history of object-making, in terms of status of makers, status of distributors or marketers or dealers, status of owners, patrons, or consumers, protection systems for classes or categories of makers and distributors, and organisations and promotion of industry, a history which makes it quite clear that it is rarely the species, form or intrinsic value (whatever that means!) of the object itself which gives it market value, or social, cultural or spiritual prestige.

A current debate over the recognition of and the functions of dealer and public galler-

ies in respect of craft and visual arts illustrates my point. Usually it is the socio-cultural stance of the gallery and its clientele which demarcates, not the nature of the objects displayed.

Crafts have frequently, particularly in western world aesthetics, been 'put down' by the exercise of specious argument. One such is of functional as compared with non-functional attributes, the 'non-functional' being regarded by the visual arts industry as 'aesthetically superior' or as requiring a more developed intellect and apprehension.

The notion that a so-called 'non representational' painting is non-functional is one of the more absurd but dangerously acceptable by-products of modernist promotional strategies designed to protect that art industry.

The notion that my highly 'functional' mahogany pulling skiff can be assessed without reference to my personal (and non-functional?) biases, predilections, nostalgias and aesthetic choices is equally absurd!

The problems of definition are real; they are probably not capable of solutions that will satisfy all or any participants. The Arts Council has to struggle with the problem like everyone else. The most useful focus in my view is upon the nature of the infrastructures and how they may be moulded and shaped. What can assist the council and, I am quite sure, the crafts industry, is informed commentary, open debate, and experienced insight, and your publication has a vital role in this respect.

B.P.F. Smith, OBE.

ON PAGE 90 ARTSPACE

Having offered a critique of an exhibition for publication my usual sentiment would be to say my analysis is done and that's that. In this case, however, the exaggerated reaction of David Naylor to my criticism of *Page 90 Artspace* (I stand corrected!) and by deflected insult the heinous crime of "monocultural elitism" in which he implicates me demands a response.

I stand by my criticism that *Page 90 Artspace* - a trendy word if ever I heard one - is depressingly unaesthetic and barn-like. My view seems to have been vindicated by the fact that Porirua's new cultural officer, Darcy Nicholas, has indicated that he wishes to see the space refurbished and made more adaptable. He seems interested by my suggestions, among others during conversation. After all, Porirua owes itself a decent facility to serve not only its diverse cultural groups but the burgeoning populations of the Kapiti Coast as well. One would be hard pressed to find any architectural indication at *Page 90 Artspace* of that rich cultural diversity in what was purpose built as a factory.

Who are these "monocultural elites" by whom I seem to have been tainted? Yes, I have bustled with the crowds in the Uffizzi, the Musee D'Orsay, the National Gallery, London, MOMA, the Paul Getty Art Museum at Malibu, the National Gallery of Australia among others, but then I have also visited galleries and museums in places as non-elite as Peterborough, Gore and the Beth She'an Valley in Israel.

David Naylor is perhaps unaware that I in fact work in Porirua. I am course Co-ordinator for the Museum/Gallery course which he mentions. I would like to think that it is the strength of, and pride in my cultural heritage that I am able to contribute to my work here.

Lesleigh Salinger, Wellington.

EMBROIDERY ISSUES

I write to correct a misconception that may be perpetuated by an article written in Craft New Zealand, Issue 41, Spring 1992. The article I refer to is "National Embroiderers' Conference Exhibitions" reviewed by Noeline Brokenshire. The paragraph I refer to speaks of "an imposed trend" (to attempt to combine painting with embroidery).

Embroiderers in New Zealand and indeed the embroidery community are an enthusiastic group of people and like all communities when a new "development" occurs it ricochets around the community. All who see it want to try it. Some will feel that it is not for them, some will take this new "trend" whatever it may be and learn all that can be done with it, innovate and extend and then incorporate into their palate or discard as the case may be. However, in the privileged role of adjudicator of an exhibition, to label this as "an imposed trend", a particular style

of applying colour; to be critical of it when dyeing, colouring, in fact anything to enhance the stitchery has been encouraged, seems to me to be stifling. Yes, a good number of these works probably were presented but in the final outcome were not selected (only a few such works being displayed in the exhibition) thus enforcing Noeline Brokenshire's view that "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."

Should we then shut up shop and stop diverging in new directions?

One such work (photograph enclosed) was requested to be sent to America to be exhibited alongside the Biscayne Chapter's exhibition. This particular embroidery sat alongside 200 American (selected) works and won 1st prize as "People's Choice".

Was this trying to be "too clever"? - It's all a matter of opinion!

Robyn Tubb, Mairangi Bay, Auckland.

ABOUT CRAFT NZ

Just a note on the Craft NZ Yearbook. I personally think it is an excellent book. I found it very interesting in the range of crafts happening in New Zealand.

I have shown the Yearbook to a friend who has just recently opened a craft shop and she has taken names from it to see if they would supply her.

A couple of craftspeople in Hamilton I know have said that the \$350 cost [of inclusion] is too expensive. For advertising in such a magazine, I thought it was very cheap.

I would have liked the magazine to have come out a couple of months earlier. This would have been before the Christmas market. This is the only negative comment I can think of.

The retail cost of the book I feel is worth it. Please thank all that were involved with putting the Yearbook together.

I would like to think that there is going to be a Yearbook every year and that to be selected for it is something worth working towards.

Kim Gilby, Hamilton

It is proposed that the Yearbook be a biennial publication, the second appearing late in 1994. Ed.

I just had to write a letter to say how thrilled I was to get the Craft NZ Yearbook. I have been a [Crafts Council] member for years, in fact ever since the magazine was invented, and realise it has had its ups and downs. So with a lot of hard work by all involved, we subscribers have now got a great magazine.

Joan Hall-Jones, Invercargill

MERT came in today, waving Craft NZ Yearbook. They want work of five people in the book to send overseas. Just shows how the Yearbook is working for craftspeople.

James Bowman, Director, Accolades Gallery, The Terrace, Wellington.

I am really enjoying Craft New Zealand - I like the mix of articles in #43 from the Wearable Art to miniatures to David Tru-bridge's and other 'heavier discussion'. Hence my renewal! I try my best to encourage subscribers - but there are a lot of small minds and apathy about. For me this magazine is one of my vital lifelines to what is being done and discussed elsewhere. Sewing in my studio here in Hawkes Bay feels very isolated from the rest of the country.

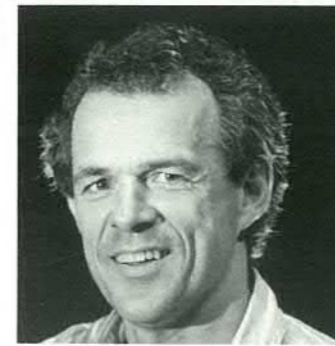
Clare Plug, Hawkes Bay

Really enjoy the magazine. Keep up the good work. Only criticism is that some print - especially under photos - is very small. I now have slightly impaired sight and this drives me mad - even with magnifying glass the print blurs! It may be that this only affects me - if so - so be it!

Mina Thomas

What do other readers think? Ed.

EDITORIAL



Finally the Arts Council of New Zealand Bill has had its introduction to parliament. There are no surprises in the bill. The introductory note explains: "This Bill provides for the dissolution of the Queen Elizabeth the Second Arts Council of New Zealand, and provides for a new Arts Council of New Zealand..." The first of two main features of the bill seems to provide for equal status for Maori and non-Maori by establishing two boards, one called Te Waka Toi, the other simply the Arts Board. Funding will not necessarily be the same, with the six member Council allocating the funds for each.

Secondly, introduction of the bill will see the abolition of the Regional and Community Arts Councils. The Arts Council will have responsibility: "To ensure that the arts boards allocate funding to community arts." However, community groups will have to be better versed in the art of applying for money and will need a greater awareness of the Art Council's operation than they do at present. To balance this, there will presumably be more money available to them, as Doug Graham has made some mileage of the fact that of the 3 million dollars currently allocated to the Regional Councils, 25% is used for administration. This money is in fact only a small part of the total budget currently allocated to QEII.

In practice, Community Arts Councils have become a part of the support system for community arts, particularly in provincial areas, and the introduction of the bill may well mean that small groups flounder without the expertise and assistance of friendly community faces.

Craftspeople should be assured that very early on in the document, "Arts" is defined and "includes creative and interpretative expression through theatre, music, visual arts, literature and crafts." We may have cause to refer back to this clause over the next few years.

Closer to home, *Craft New Zealand* magazine has been grappling with the business realities of establishing a very small publication in a very small country. It's now a year since the magazine was purchased from the Crafts Council of New Zealand. In that time, a company has been formed, with a very modest shareholding. About thirty craftspeople, companies, and organisations involved in craft have purchased shares to the value of about \$13,000. However, we are still under-capitalised and shares of \$100 are still available.

Why do we need more capital? In the past year, subscriptions have doubled. However, there has been no appreciable improvement in retail sales, except for the Yearbook, which sold exceptionally well. We have produced four issues with a steadily decreasing loss per issue as subscription sales slowly improved. However, we have only survived through the support of the QEII Arts Council by means of one grant to establish a base for critical writing in craft and another for audience development, specifically for the Yearbook. We need capital to put in place the strategies which will bring us into profit.

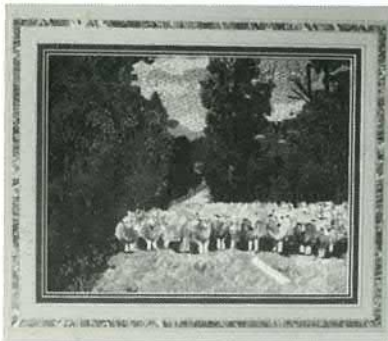
The period immediately ahead is critical for the magazine's survival. We need to continue to increase subscriptions, but more importantly, we need to increase retail sales. Two strategies should help.

Firstly, the magazine must focus on the prime concern for craft - the objects which are made. A wider public audience is not as interested in craft events which have taken place, so we will cut back retrospective reporting and reviewing to concentrate on showing fine craft, profiling the people who make it and the venues where it is available. The new *Itinerary* section will allow readers to see at a glance what's on in the forthcoming period.

Secondly, *Network Distributors* will take over retail distribution (and will also henceforth handle our subscriptions). *Propaganda* will continue to service galleries and other specialist craft outlets.

The immediate future will bring some financial tightrope-walking for the magazine, but with your support we'll grow from here.

Peter Gibbs, Editor.



NZ embroidery in American exhibition - too clever?

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New Zealand

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FLETCHER CHALLENGE CERAMICS

AWARD, 1993

BY PETER GIBBS

Fletcher Challenge Ceramics Award shows invariably take on the imprint of the sole selector - in this case Norway's Kari Christensen. This year the exhibition seemed to be more sculptural. Fewer pieces had their roots in the normal potter's grab bag of references. As a result, I found the show took longer to get to grips with. An understanding of individual pieces often required a long hard look. In the process of such deep analysis, it was easy to overlook more simple works.

The selection of the winning piece was in keeping with the judge's wide-ranging selection. *Lobo California*, by Susannah Israel of the United States won the \$10,000 Premier Award. While not exactly controversial, it did upset some, who found such a radical departure from the conventional to be more than a little unsettling.

798 pieces were entered this year (157 from NZ) and Kari Christensen narrowed this down to 151 (23 from NZ) for the show. New Zealanders did well in the prize list, taking two of the five \$2000 merit awards and three of the eleven commendations (see page 6 for list).

Ross Mitchell-Anyon and Bronwynne Cornish took the two NZ merit awards, and in doing so encapsulated the two consistent threads identified by organiser Moyra Elliott in her address at the opening. The ceremonial object and the vessel were singled out by Elliott as themes which ran through the show. Mitchell-Anyon's teapot and jug were a direct and honest expression of the domestic-ware tradition, but with infinite individuality. These common objects bore the unmistakable imprint of the maker - to some eyes, too casual, not enough attention to finishing details; but to quibble about such things is to completely miss the point. These pieces were also talking about the nature of clay and the fire and of one person's interpretation of those things. This undoubtedly makes them potters' pieces.

Bronwynne Cornish's piece has the same appeal. The treatment of the clay and surface take it beyond the rather gauche sculptural statement which many found it to be. For me, decisions like this by the judge were a confirmation that the system used to judge the Fletcher show is the right one.

The rest of the merits and commendations were a mixed bag. As always, I particularly liked those which drew on my own preoccupations. In this category fell Richard Dewar's *Saltglazed Teapot and Platter* with its rich salted surface although the application of slips was a bit heavy handed. Torbjorn Kvasbo's *Chest - Houseform* had a rich surface - the result of the firing. Greg Pitts' teapot leaned on the peculiarities of the teapot form. Although very individualistically interpreted, the basic structure and the appendages of handle and spout received sound traditional treatment. The bold brushwork further emphasised the maker's personality.

The very painterly bowl entitled *Orchestra*, by Jitka Palmer, took the loose proficient handling of

clay as its starting point. The equally relaxed brushwork was the perfect foil to the basic form.

ARIRANG (earth - water - sun), by Seung-Ho Yang leaned heavily (and successfully) on the benevolence of the clay's nature and of the fire itself. The potter's skill here was in providing the canvas for the materials and techniques to be able to do their work.

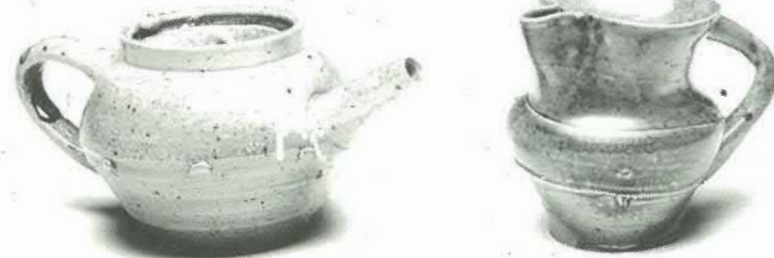
As always, there were plenty of other pieces which could equally have taken the awards. Hanne Matthiesen's *Bowl With Green Men* was a humorous spherical form. *Box* by Johannes Peters (really a lidded jar) was ever so casually decorated. Lara Scobie's *Vessel for the Sea* was tighter, more precise than her winning piece from last year. Arthur Vermeiren's *Decorated Pot - Raku* stuck to good basic form, but with quirky brushwork. Kevin White's *Jug and Two Cups* (I could have sworn they were from Japan, not Australia, until I saw the catalogue) combined lightness and delicacy with cobalt brushwork. Lana Wilson's *Artifact Teapot* was aggressive and tight, loosened by a variegated glaze. Brendan Adam's *Boxed Obsession* would only have revealed a fraction of itself to the viewer. It wasn't until you pulled out all the pieces that the multitude of little messages were revealed.

As usual, the Fletcher show was thought provoking and stimulating. The serious student of pottery would have needed several days to get to grips with the whole show in depth.

Above; *Lobo California*, by Susannah Israel. 813 x 711 x 508mm
Below; *ARIRANG*, by Seung-Ho Yang. 220 x 560 x 510mm.

Facing page, top; *Teapot and Jug* by Ross Mitchell-Anyon. 130 x 150 x 120mm.
Bottom; *Sphinx Box*, by Bronwynne Cornish. 520 x 310 x 160mm

Photos by Haru Sameshima, courtesy Fletcher Challenge Ceramics Award





**FLETCHER CHALLENGE
CERAMICS AWARD
PRIZE LIST, 1993.**

Winner, \$10,000 premier award

Lobo California, by Susannah Israel, USA, 813x711x518mm, \$2250.

Merit Awards, \$2000

Sphinx Box, by Bronwynne Cornish, NZ, 520x310x160mm, \$1500.

Water is..., by Kyoko Hori, Japan, 510x550x140mm, \$1800.

Teapot and Jug, by Ross Mitchell-Anyon, NZ, 130x150x120mm, \$350.

Covered Container, by Gary Schlappal, USA, 550x240x230mm, \$900.

ARIRANG (earth-water-sun), by Seung-Ho Yang, Switzerland, 220x560x510mm, \$5630.

Judge's Commendation

Closed Vessel, by Stephen Bradbourne, NZ, 620x430mm, \$650.

Upholding Hidden Truths, by Helene Czernay, Australia, 580x200x200mm, \$390.

Saltglazed Teapot and Platter, by Richard Dewar, France, 290x450x450mm, \$1290.

Jyo Kei (Streaks Scene), by Hideo Kobayashi, 240x660x220mm, \$2810.

Chest-Houseform, by Torbjorn Kvasbo, Norway, 500x350x200mm, \$1690

Out of Bounds, by Matt McLean, NZ, 1000x1000x320mm, \$4000.

Color Striped Bowl, by Ryo Mikami, Japan, 100x140x85mm, \$2860.

Cats Cradle, by Susan Milne, Australia, 500x4700x750mm, \$4500.

Orchestra, by Jitka Palmer, England, 450x400mm, \$720.

Teapot, by Greg Pitts, USA, 178x229x127mm, \$560.

Ceremonial Elbow, by Ann Verd-court, NZ, 500x200x350mm, \$800.

Above;
Water is... by Kyoko Hori. 510 x 550 x 140mm.

Left;
Covered Container, by Gary Schlappal. 550 x 240 x 230mm.

Photos by Haru Sameshima, courtesy Fletcher Challenge Ceramics Award



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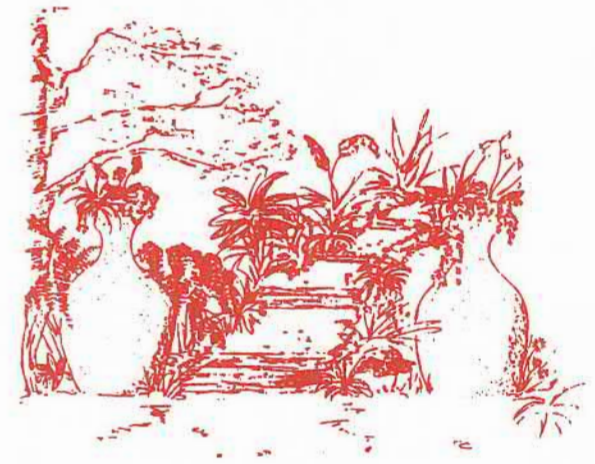
The Dunedin Crafts Council seeks entries for this year's exhibition which offers for the first time two \$1000 awards.

A further 10 prizes of Craft New Zealand subscriptions will also be awarded at the judge's discretion.

Information and entry forms from:

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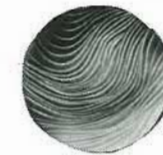
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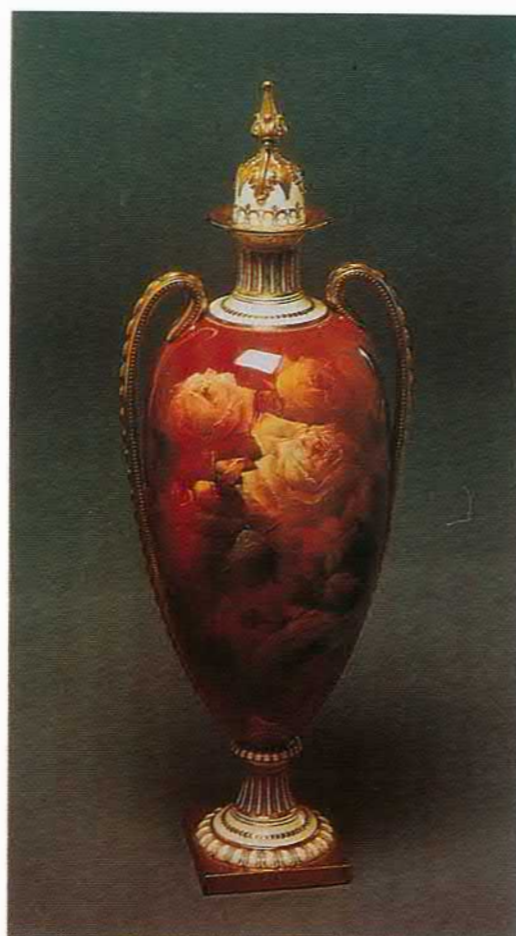
FROM SEWAGE TO SUNG

THE ROYAL DOULTON CERAMICS EXHIBITION

BY MARK STOCKER



Above; Robert Allen, Charles Noke and Leslie Johnson, *The Dante Vase*, 1902-5. Bone china, 710mm. Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, Sydney



Above: Left; Edward Raby, bone china vase, handpainted, 1902-5, 795mm. Canterbury Museum, Christchurch. Right; Edward Raby, bone china vase, handpainted, 1902-5, 660mm. Private collection.
Below: Left; Charles Noke and Harry Dixon, Chang vase, c.1925-30s, 320mm, earthenware, transmutation glazes. Museum of New Zealand, Te Papa Tongarewa. Right; A collection of Chang wares, signed by Noke and Dixon, c. 1925-30s. Private collection.



“I don’t like Doulton!” is the standard excuse for avoiding the Courier Post Royal Doulton Ceramics Exhibition currently on tour.

Anyone saying this should turn rouge flambé with shame. Since “Te Maori”, few exhibitions have made such an impact on me. In turn, Doulton movingly affirms “Taha Pakeha”, the European, more specifically the very English, cultural heritage of many New Zealanders. We have grown up with Bunnykins, washed our hands in ceramic basins and have grimaced at Toby Jugs. Doulton is part of our bloodstream. We are, moreover, Doulton collectors bar none; hence the remarkable quality and quantity of the items, mostly drawn from private collections.

**“I don’t like Doulton!” -
Anyone saying this should turn rouge flambé with shame.**

The accessibility and affordability of Doulton arouses the art mafia’s contempt. Initially I approached a major art periodical to commission this article - without success. Arguments explaining the crucial role of Doulton’s women artists cut no ice. Nor did the view that art history should embrace the so-called “decorative arts”. Clearly opinions have changed little since the time when Henry Doulton noted: “There is a great deal of dogmatism on what is or is not fine art. In art there are many mansions.” Then there is an image problem. Doulton is unsexy and unintellectual. It is dogged with the twee, bourgeois image of certain collectors. It is thought hideously over-ornate. Tastes which digest contemporary New Zealand art choke over china.

I myself dislike some Doulton items. Toby Jugs, Character Jugs and many figurines leave me cold. But the sheer diversity, indeed, the manic eclecticism of Doulton demands admiration of some exhibits. With 780 items, the curatorial philosophy is “Big is beautiful” - and it works. This applied especially to the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa where the room

containing handpainted Burslem vases was the highlight. It does not matter whether *Rubaiyat of Omar Khyyam* or neo-Rococo *fête galante* scenes, portraits of Emma Hamilton or Edwardian orchids and roses are to everyone’s taste. Technically the vases are masterpieces and collectively, their emotional impact is awesome.

Praise must go to Jennifer Quérée of the Canterbury Museum who has spent three years curating the exhibition. Her contribution will endure in two publications, the souvenir guide and her handsomely illustrated book, *Royal Doulton: Illustrated with Treasures from New Zealand and Australia* (Canterbury Museum, \$39.95). The latter, a major addition to Doulton literature, admirably combines a history of the firm, a

discussion of the many different wares and an account of Doulton exhibitions and marketing in New Zealand. Here I can only offer a sip of Doulton; may it persuade readers to visit the exhibition during the remainder of its tour (Hawkes Bay Exhibition Centre, 3 July-15 August; Auckland Museum, 4 September-31 October).

Accounts often relate how the great self-made Victorian, Sir Henry Doulton, made a fortune out of drainpipes and spent it on art. His Art Studios, founded in 1866, were never financially profitable. Yet they soon became his passion and from the early Lambeth items alone we see why. Being thrown on the potter’s wheel lends them a robustness which *The Times* contrasted with “the somewhat namby-pamby prettiness” of ornamental porcelain. Robustness was, however, often complemented by charm and ingenuity of design. These are apparent in works by the Lambeth Art Studio’s first employee, George Tinworth, admired as “a Rembrandt in terra-cotta”. Tinworth is enjoyed today for his mischievous stoneware mice but in his lifetime his religious panel reliefs drew greater admiration. Their powerfully intense modelling shows how Tinworth, a



Left; George Tinworth *The Last Supper*, c. 1882. Terra Cotta panel. 185x365mm. Hawkes Bay Museum, Napier.



devout Evangelical, was a conviction artist. Central to his impact is the Word, inscribed with semi-literate crudity on the panels. "So that's where McCahon got his inspiration!" a colleague humorously exclaimed: While Colin McCahon's ignorance of Victorian ceramics makes this improbable, the primitivism and spirituality of both artists means the link is less far-fetched than it first appears.

In 1877 the business expanded with the acquisition of the firm that became Doulton & Co, Burslem, in the heart of the English ceramics region. After initial resistance - Henry Doulton smashed some Limoges ware with his umbrella - the emphasis at Burslem was soon on bone-china. At the 1893 Chicago World's Columbian Exposition, the display of over 1500 items was seen by Sir Philip Cunliffe-Owen, Director of the Victoria and Albert Museum, as "Henry Doulton's greatest triumph."

A major Chicago exhibit was the *Dante* vase (see p8). A later version, gold-medal winner at the New Zealand International Exhibition, Christchurch (1906), is in the current show. An entire article could focus on this remarkable creation, its vellum glaze mounts, *pâte*

sur pâte gilding and hand-painted decorations. It epitomises the Victorian exhibition philosophy of technical perfection, eclecticism and sheer ornateness. Multiple styles are fused: a Neo-classical Jupiter at the top, Art Nouveau reliefs on the stem, Rococo *fête galante* scenes hand-painted by Leslie Johnson below, and the medieval Dante and Beatrice at the base.

Easier for current tastes to enjoy are vases with hand-painted sprays of roses by Edward Raby (see p8), also shown at Christchurch in 1906. Raby's prowess was admired by W. Turner in *The Connoisseur*: "The brush with the finest point was the only one used for finish. In this style, however, the richness, the breadth, the atmosphere and the colour are all obtained with the broad, flat wash. The colours are all transparent and can only be obtained by continued refiring of one thin glaze over the other."

From Raby roses to rabid misogyny: a vital inclusion in any 1993 exhibition is Leslie Harradine's *The Virago*, a salt-glazed inkwell of a grumpy woman inscribed "Votes for Women". She dates from the

upsurge in Suffragette activity, c.1905-8. Another inkwell of a baby is sometimes found similarly inscribed and symbolises women's proper responsibilities or else their perceived political maturity! The hinged heads surely boosted the lord and master's sense of patriarchal hegemony as he opened them to dip his pen.

Doulton cannot, of course, be equated with these male chauvinist values. The major role of women artists in the Doulton story is given feminist analysis in Cheryl Buckley's book, *Potters and Paintresses* (1990). By 19th century standards, Henry Doulton's employment policies were progressive, if qualified by Victorian chivalry: "I still feel that women's work should be as far as possible restricted to occupations not involving severe labour, and as much as practicable to the Arts that beautify and adorn life." Employment at the Lambeth studios was a lifeline for women from the middle and artisan classes. This was recognised in an illuminated address presented to Doulton in 1881 by his "Lady Artists and Assistants". At the time, 229 of the 249 designers, artists and assistants were female. Among the best-known were Hannah Barlow and her sister Florence who applied *scraffito* (incised) depictions of animals and birds to stoneware. Eliza Simmance was a more stylistically adventurous artist whose works responded to Japan and Art Nouveau. Important nursery rhyme tile patterns of 1912 by Margaret Thompson in Wellington Children's Hospital and Christchurch Public Hospital are undergoing restoration and reinstatement. Phoebe Stabler, a prolific exhibitor at the Royal Academy (1911-46) and, more recently, Peggy Davies, designed many Burslem figurines.

Unlike most Doulton designers, Davies attempted to address Modernism in her work. Her sculpture, *The Marriage of Art and Industry*, won the Grand Prix at the 1958 Brussels International Exhibition. Dubbed "Young love in Brussels" by the then youthful Duke of Edinburgh, its elegantly attenuated forms are reminiscent of sculpture by Elie Nadelman. Davies also admired the Art Deco of Paul Manship and claimed "the early work of Barbara Hepworth made a deep impression on me." Regrettably her hopes that Doulton would launch "completely abstract pieces suitable for modern interiors, using coloured bodies and relying on texture for decoration" remained unfulfilled when she died in 1989.

Doulton today seems unashamedly conservative, with the Royal Family looming large, together with recently released figures based on paintings by James Tissot and Thomas Lawrence. Doulton Character Jugs portray Groucho Marx but not Karl, and Lennon and McCartney but not the more "jugular" Jagger! The best-known early 20th-century British artists and designers associated with Doulton - Frank Brangwyn, Gilbert Bayes, Richard Garbe, Reco Capey - are not noted for commitment to modern art. Yet to damn Doulton's conservatism is futile. In the Post-Modern era of the 1980s and 1990s critics no longer regard Modernism as the yardstick of all significant 20th-century art. Alternative styles and individuals find new respect. While studio potters like Bernard Leach and William Staite Murray are still admired, there is a place in any history of pottery for Charles Noke as well. Noke, longtime Art Director at Burslem, spearheaded all that is interesting, important and innovative in Doulton between 1890 and 1940. His work varies from series-ware plates to Character Jugs, the figures on the *Dante* vase to the experimental wares mentioned below.

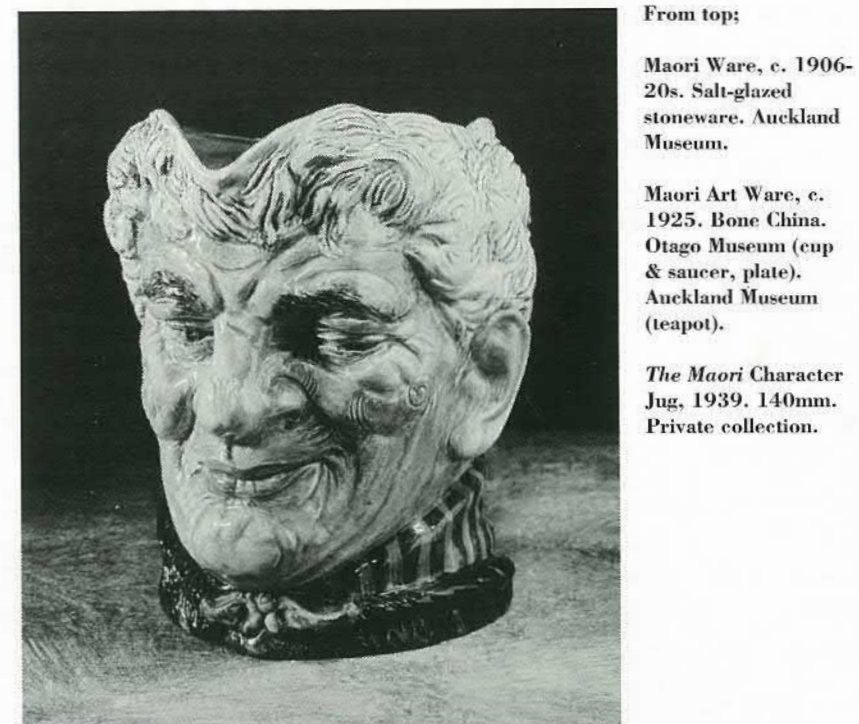
"It is surely better to bear with singularity than to crush originality" claimed Henry Doulton, and the superb array of wares from Noke's reign shows this:

Hyperion, Luscian, Lustre, Holbein, Rembrandt, Rouge Flambé, Crystalline, Titanian, Sung, Chinese Jade and Chang. All are in the current exhibition and their only common trait is their sheer diversity. Two very different wares introduced by Noke impressed me most. The marl clay body of Rembrandt Ware has a rustic economy yet the multiple glazes lend it richness. Designs influenced by 17th-century painting, hence the name, are combined with Art Nouveau lettering and the fusion works. The bogusly named Chang Wares (see p8) are loved or loathed; the public dislike them but connoisseurs prize them. Chang is unmistakable for what Jennifer Quérée calls "the characteristic layers of glutinous, iridescent and brightly coloured glazes", often deliberately cracked, which run in tongues down the sides. Not for nothing is one such effect called "mutton fat".

New Zealand Wares are less artistically remarkable but are of obvious fascination. John Bates, the Christchurch china shop, mounted a spectacular Doulton display at the 1906 Exhibition. Introduced for the occasion was the salt-glazed Maori stoneware, later known as Kia Ora Ware after its scroll inscriptions. Motifs of tiki, tattooed faces and scrolls were derived from illustrations to Augustus Hamilton's *Maori Art*. A Doulton catalogue description claimed "the peculiar style of decoration, severely conventional as it is, that may be seen on the utensils, weapons and dwellings of the Maori, can so easily be applied to Pottery forms now in use that one wonders it has not been attempted to any extent."

More commonly encountered is Maori Art Ware, whose introduction in 1907 coincided with New Zealand's new dominion status. The tableware is decorated with kowhaiwai patterns which look as fresh today as they did when introduced. Especially attractive is the earthenware teapot (1928), with its yellow ground; the Art Deco brashness of the colour effectively matches the pattern. While it would break all the rules to reissue Maori Art Ware (the very thought would appal collectors!), from the feedback at the current exhibition, its success would be certain. Its reissue is unlikely to offend cultural sensitivity: "We want a bigger piece of the action!" claimed a Maori colleague, who admired the pattern. Far less acceptable, however, is the Maori Character Jug, which only survives as a 1939 prototype; war prevented its production. Jennifer Quérée likens the Maori to a weather-beaten English yokel with a moko. It is so politically incorrect today as to arouse much bicultural mirth. Also comical is the earthenware teapot commissioned by John Bates in 1924. It has a crazed ground and a frieze of quaint, strawberry-like kiwis. New Zealand landscapes, a Maori mother and child, a sheep farmer and flock are depicted on rack plates; there are items of transfer-printed thematic ware and a World War One figure, *The Digger*. As Louise Irvine stated in *The Magazine of the Royal Doulton International Collectors Club*, these pieces "could form a fascinating theme collection encompassing local history, geography, art and ethnography."

Should we prefer the piety of Tinworth, the technique of Raby, the elegance of Davies, the creativity of Chang or the local fascination of New Zealand Wares? To adapt a quotation of Samuel Johnson, the subject of the series-ware plate, *Dr. Johnson at the Cheshire Cheese*, "when a man is tired of Doulton, he is tired of life." The Royal Doulton Ceramics Exhibition proves just that.



From top;

Maori Ware, c. 1906-20s. Salt-glazed stoneware. Auckland Museum.

Maori Art Ware, c. 1925. Bone China. Otago Museum (cup & saucer, plate). Auckland Museum (teapot).

The Maori Character Jug, 1939. 140mm. Private collection.

JAMES GREIG

Avid Gallery in Wellington recently hosted a small exhibition of the works of James Greig, now rarely available. The Wairarapa potter died in 1986 just prior to the opening of his third major exhibition in Japan at the Tachikichi Gallery, Kyoto. The six works on show were from the collection of Rhondda Greig.

Writing in the NZ Potter in 1967 Helen Mason asked, "What particular blend of mysticism and practicality is it that makes a person spend his days fashioning things of clay and then putting them to the test of fire? Suffice to know that there are people like this completely dedicated to the potter's way of life. Jim Greig is such a one."

Introduced to pottery while studying architecture at Auckland University he learned his craft from Len Castle and set up as a full-time domestic potter in 1962.

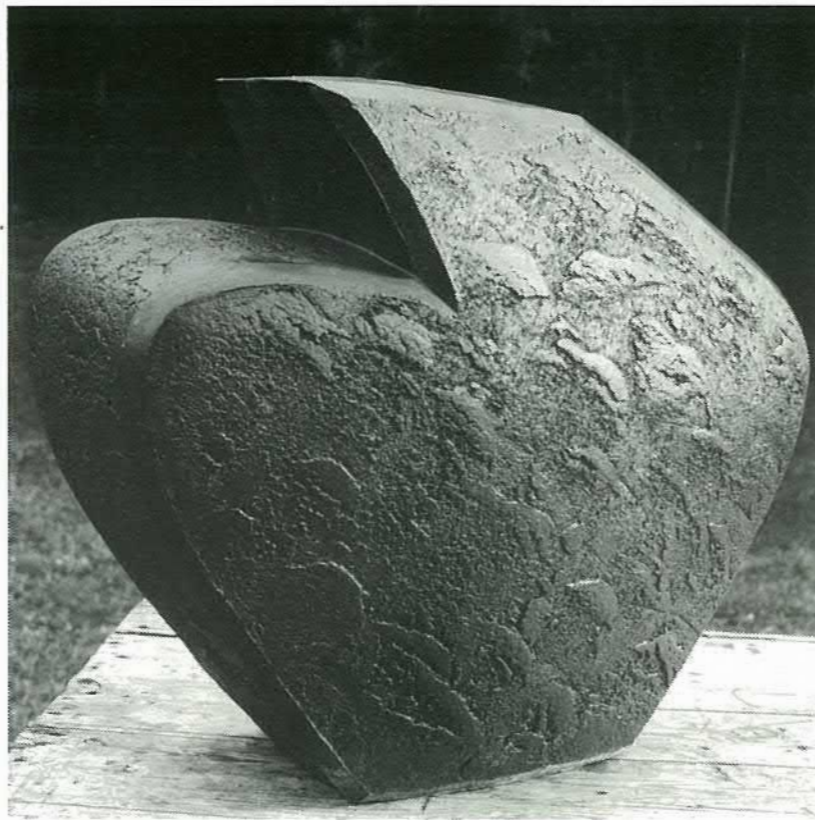
A visit to Japan in 1978 led to the discovery of an art form that extended beyond the naturalism and vitality of the Western concept. Attracted to the work of Kanjiro Kawai (master potter and co-founder with Shoji Hamada and Soetsu Yanagi of the Mingei craft movement which revitalised Japanese pottery early this century) he returned in 1982-83 as a Japan Foundation fellow to research his life.

During this time Greig visited the Fujiwara Pottery in Bizen. Work he produced there was selected for exhibition in the "Tachibana-Ten: 100 Best Potters," (the only foreign potter to be included) which toured Tokyo, Osaka and Kyoto. Invitations to hold two exhibitions at the Osaka Green gallery, one of Tokyo's most prestigious ceramic dealer galleries followed, again a first for a Western potter.

James Greig's work is held in collections worldwide. The list is long and ranges from the United Nations Headquarters (New York), to the Victoria and Albert Museum London, to many other important Royal Collections and numerous influential private collectors.

CERAMICS PANELS FOR NEW HAMILTON PUBLIC LIBRARY

An old department store in the centre of Hamilton has been totally transformed into a contemporary city library with the art of Hamilton people incorporated into the design. Hamilton ceramic artist Lynda Harris was commissioned to design and make ceramic tile panels to be installed onto five pillars at the entrance to the library. A total of 14 panels, each 1.65m high, feature landmarks of the Waikato, as well as its flora and fauna, using strong colours which reflect the intensity of the blues and greens of the region.



Above: Work by James Greig, on show at Avid Gallery. Photo: courtesy Rhondda Greig.

Below: Hamilton Library commission by Lynda Harris; central column with native bird and foliage images



EDWARD LUCIE-SMITH VISITS NZ

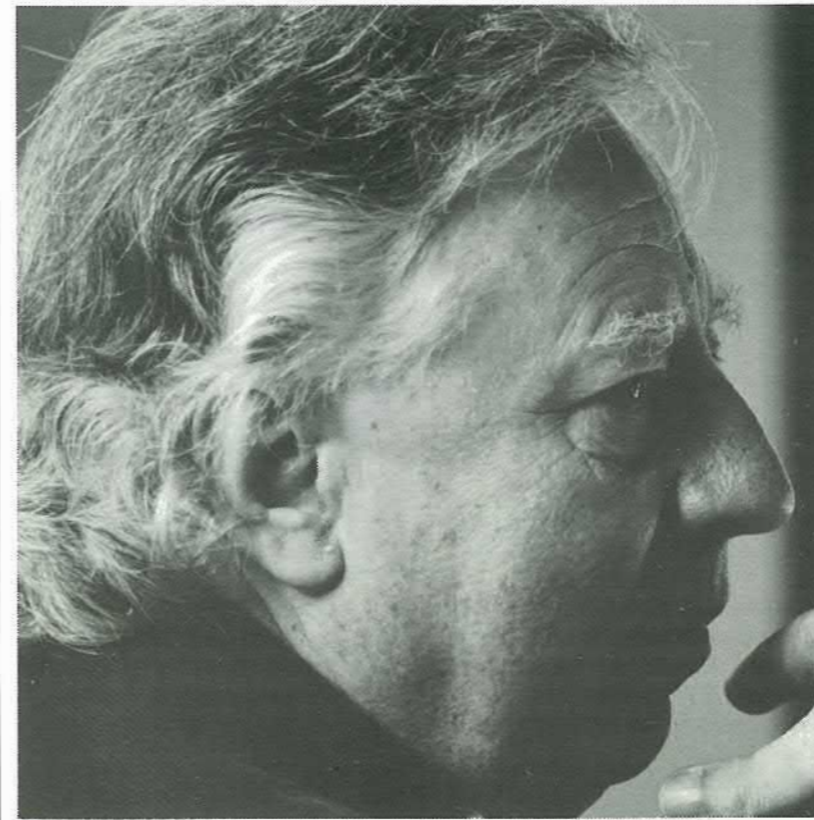
By Julie Warren

Edward Lucie-Smith, British author and art critic, visited New Zealand during March and April, supported by the QEII Arts Council and The British Council. His itinerary was full. Around 3,500 people attended his 30 lectures in Polytechnics, Universities and Art Galleries from Whangarei to Dunedin.

A catalogue produced by the Atrium Bookshop Ltd of books by Edward Lucie-Smith on the occasion of his 60th birthday (1993), lists a total of 85, an astonishing 58 titles written alone, and a further 27 produced in collaboration. Since then his *Art and Civilisation* has been published, he's just finished a book on Twentieth Century Latin American Art and further titles are planned, including a history of Twentieth Century Art. He has chosen to write broadly, rather than specialise, and encapsulates vast amounts of information in his books, wanting to present an easily understandable guide for the general reader. If they are interested beyond that, he recommends they seek out specialist titles.

Edward Lucie-Smith travels frequently, believing that as an art critic he needs both an overview of modern art and life and an understanding of the history of art and society in order to see how art work and art itself interact with society. In his view people are obsessed with the idea that art needs to be explained and that the critic's job is as spokesman for the artist, making up for the inefficiency of modern art in communicating its own meanings.

Lectures were targeted at two specific audiences. "Race, Sex and Gender in Contemporary Art" was delivered mainly in Art Galleries and Universities, and the other, "Is Design the Enemy of Craft", in the Polytech-



Left: Edward Lucie-Smith. Photo: Peter Gibbs.

nic. The most successful sessions in the Polytechnics were those where there was plenty of time for informal discussion afterwards. His lectures were very polished, but students were keen to seek clarification of his ideas, or to challenge them.

He believes craftspeople today have developed an obsession with process, and can end up making hideous objects in order to break the boundaries. Objects designed ergonomically are more likely to stand the test of time, even if they are initially unappealing to the untrained eye. He sees many handcrafted objects which have become parodies of de-based design, and believes craft needs to have more contact with designers, because the weakness of so much craft (not only here) is that it's well made but badly designed.

He was struck by the links with our relative recent pioneer past:

"This is a very hands-on society, rather unlike Britain and quite like America, especially parts of the west coast, in that subliminally people retain this pioneer thing. If you want a particular thing in New Zealand as likely as not you go out and do it yourself. I think that's a rather attractive aspect of the society here and it gives a duality to the way in which people live.

"Also, a lot of people class making things as a satisfying way of life and there are many who are on the cusp of being simple recreational craftspeople and those who make crafts to sell, that is they hope to sell some of what they make, but they make it primarily for personal satisfaction.

"I think one of the things that would help the craft world is intelligent exhibition planning. This is a country which clearly likes didactic exhibitions, as practically every exhibition I've seen here has been didactic. Some of them have been so didactic they've hardly

had any art in them at all. I think if there is a problem over the whole area of useful crafts then that would be a good thematic basis for an exploratory touring show to flush the problem out. And similarly I think that another good thematic would be to talk about using native New Zealand materials for a show where everything in the exhibition was absolutely from New Zealand, and as far as possible be absolutely made from the beginning to encourage people to work even with quite primitive techniques. I think that would probably arouse a great deal of interest because it would lock you into the ecological thing in New Zealand society which is very strong here.

"Since you are a bicultural society, and since this is such a hot issue at the moment, dialogue exhibitions between Maori and pakeha would be another good thing. Biculturalism is a myth in a sense in that New Zealand is a multicultural rather than a purely bicultural society. It has a strong Pacific element coming in, as well as people from all over the world coming in here, and an exhibition which explored what they brought with them in the way of craft ideas would also be a good thing to do. I think all these things help to raise awareness."

Edward Lucie-Smith believes contemporary art and craft is regionalising itself all around the world and it's not possible any more to talk about one contemporary art. In New Zealand he noted the feeding in of Maori ideas to Pakeha culture, while the more innovative Maori artists were taking on board notions that were basically European.

In Auckland, a number of craft writers had the opportunity to take part in a short workshop with Edward Lucie-Smith. A vociferous critic of "Artspeak", (pretentious gobbledegook), Lucie-Smith believes the duty of the

critic is to communicate accurately and quickly with as many people as possible. He believes that criticism is improved by having some guiding basis in theory, and that judgements can't be absolute, as people will be changed, even a little, by every new work of art they see.

He had visited a number of galleries on his trip down the country, and had seen the Women's Suffrage exhibition, *No Man's Land* at the Dowse. He commented on the number of craft shops, and the quality of the work in them.

"The healthiest crafts here often seem to be the ones which are linked through to some aspect of New Zealand life. This is actually true for jewellery. The jewellery appears to flourish because people have an actual kind of feel for New Zealand adornment. Women wear slightly different things. They treat jewellery slightly differently, they dress slightly differently, and quite a lot of women, I've noticed, do wear craft jewellery and it's clear from the quantity of craft shops that there must be a demand for it."

Edward Lucie-Smith's five weeks in New Zealand gave him a grounding in the diversity of the arts and crafts here. He was a valuable visitor in many ways and is keen to follow up leads established this visit and take up the invitations to return.

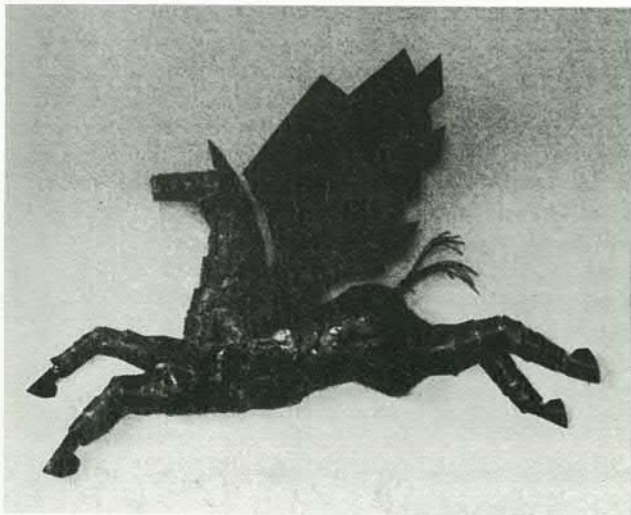
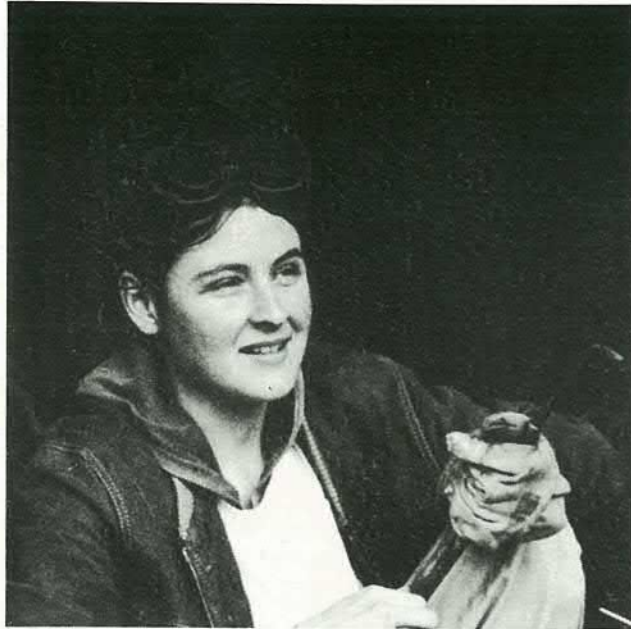
LOUISE PURVIS AT MASTER WORKS

By Carol Bucknell

A menagerie of metal creatures will soon descend on the Master Works gallery in Parnell, Auckland. Working out of a garage in a friend's garden, multi-media artist Louise Purvis is preparing for the show (July 20 - August 7), constructing a range of bizarre and beautiful figures from welded metal pieces - stalking birds, a copper tongued lizard, a toothsome crocodile, a crab with outstretched talons and a larger than life weta.

The only cast piece in this metallic Noah's Ark is a delightful bronze horse with very mule-like proportions sitting with his legs splayed out beneath him. Most of the animals are armed with a formidable set of jaws, teeth, spine or talons - demonstrating the idea of self-protection says Purvis. Two large fish bristle with spines and teeth in a composition entitled "Fishing for a Compliment."

Protection is one of the overall themes of the show, she explains. The idea began to first emerge in several smaller pieces featuring guardian angels, whimsical figures with copper hair designed to hang on the wall like crucifixes. This developed into the concept of self-protection and ultimately, anguish - vividly realised in a large copper figure of a howling dog.



Above: Louise Purvis and work for her forthcoming show at Master Works Gallery. Photos: Peter Gibbs.

Lizards are the inspiration for two striking pieces, one a skeletal "line drawing" in metal, the other fully fleshed with a delightfully curved copper tongue. "I've been doing lizards since I was at 'tech," Purvis explains. "It's a form I keep coming back to."

She keeps coming back to animals also, understandably, since she grew up on a farm in Kaitawa, just out of Pahiataua. So strong was her feeling for animals that she was determined to become a vet. or a jockey. Art was something she enjoyed at school but did not envisage as a career. "I didn't realise it would get this out of hand," she says with a rueful smile.

In the three years since she graduated from Hawkes Bay and Wairariki Polytechnics, Purvis has already held one solo show at the Bowen Gallery in Wellington and her work is sold through a number of galleries. Last year she was awarded a Queen Elizabeth II grant for emergent artists. In November she will be staging another solo show in Wellington after which she hopes to travel overseas.

Although her career might have developed differently than she expected, work has become "an addiction" for the 24 year old Purvis. "If I don't work I feel frustrated. It's

hard work and coming up with ideas can take six months."

Purvis is exacting in her standards. The copper bird in the Master Works show has taken three attempts, each around 40 hours work plus design time. If a piece has "an essence" she will persevere. "If it doesn't grab me, it's not right so I throw it."

She usually begins by sketching the figure, sometimes using a photo or an actual object as a triggering device. She tries not to pay too much attention to the physical reality of the figure, preferring instead to "capture its essence". Construction is a fluid process, decided in advance or as she works. "Sometimes things change. They start out as something and end up being quite different. I'm quite open as I work."

Purvis has experimented with a variety of different mediums - clay, bronze, marble - in her short career. "I have a fetish for learning new mediums," she admits. But metal is her favourite and the medium in which she feels she has been able to establish her own style.

"I love the process of working with metal. It's sharp and cold, and you have to work it with fire, to heat it to get what you want from it. I really like that.

"But you have to treat it with respect. I wear a lot of safety equipment. There's a stigma attached to welding, that it's dangerous. But I find using a kitchen whizz more dangerous, particularly if you leave the top off.



Above: Vase by Ann Verdcourt from "Active Lives" at the Dowse Art Museum.

in painting and sculpture has continued to manifest itself in her chosen medium of ceramics. Three dimensional, modelled 'still lives' re-invented after the paintings of Morandi, figurative pieces based on the works of Magritte and New Zealand's Colin McCahon will be exhibited side by side giving insight into the tremendous vision (and wit) of Ann Verdcourt.

Over sixty works by this artist will be displayed in the most comprehensive exhibition of her work ever held in this country.

The exhibition closes on September 26.

DOWSE SHOWS

Crowds Form, by Christine Thacker is currently on show at the Dowse Art Museum in Lower Hutt. The exhibition explores the structure, texture and nature of clay, and at the same time explores hands, legs, figures, groups and gathering crowds.

"Much of the work I make in clay is figurative, but it is seldom about anatomy. I use the figure as an anchor to examine ideas about human behaviour, and sometimes just to examine ideas about form."

The highly textured ceramic works, including larger than life size legs, a hand and small figure are all pinch built using textured gritty clay. They are then fired several times with repeated colour glazes to produce a soft painterly quality and depth of colour.

Crowds Form features at the Dowse until August 1.

Another prominent ceramic artist opens at the Dowse on July 30. *Active Lives* features works by Ann Verdcourt made over the past twelve years.

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QUIET COMMISSIONS

By Julie Warren

Earlier this year, ceramic artist Christine Boswijk received a commission to make state gifts for the Prime Minister of Japan, the Premier of South Korea and the Premier of China. The commission came through Celia Kennedy, who has established herself as an independent dealer, specialising in the area of diplomatic gifts.

Christine's work had attracted great attention from north Asian visitors at the New Zealand pavillion at Expo in Seville and it was to her benefit that the Prime Minister had also seen, and remembered her work there.

Artworks are commonly used for state gifts, but because of transport problems, these have previously been small. This time, however, the Prime Minister was travelling with the RNZAF and was able to take large pieces.

Christine submitted a brief which depicted her work from Seville and other exhibitions, and suggested what she would like to do. Celia finalised details of the commission through the Prime Minister's department.

Strict protocol is followed in the presenta-

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tion of state gifts. The work must be superbly wrapped and presented. These pieces (pictured), were swathed in handpainted silk and encased in boxes specially made by Trace Murdoch.

Normal procedure in the exchange of state gifts is for the work to be delivered with little fanfare to the residence of the head of state. News of the gifts is embargoed, so it meant nothing was heard within New Zealand of this important commission.

NATIONAL FIBRE EVENTS

By Ann Packer

This May Wellington has hosted both the biennial national Quilt Symposium and the annual National Woolcrafts Festival. The number of supporting exhibitions has offered locals as well as visitors a marvellous chance to see some outstanding work, not only from the overseas tutors and lecturers involved, but also from New Zealand's top quilters, spinners, knitters, weavers and feltmakers.

QEII's Wae Wae Tapu scheme has been used to bring some talented practitioners in the fibre field: Archie Brennan - tapestry weaver, Beth Beede - feltmaker, and Caryl Bryer Fallert - quiltermaker are among those who have conducted workshops and given lectures and guided tours.

It's been interesting to see the same fibre artists' names appearing in different roles in different places: Diana Parkes' embroidery features in *Cook Strait Stitches* at Marilyn Savill Gallery, in the *Romance of Embroidery* exhibition at Turnbull House (Central Regional Arts Council's touring exhibition) and as an award winner in the Quilt Symposium exhibition, which she also designed. Jocelyn Seccombe's exquisite small felted quilts are in both the CRAC exhibition and the Woolcraft one at the NZ Academy of Fine Arts. Shirley Dixon, who has written the introduction to the *Romance of Embroidery* catalogue (and reviewed it for *Craft NZ*, page 35 this issue - Ed), was one of the selectors for the Quilt Symposium exhibition.

The quilt exhibition was the first such na-

tional occasion for two years. The gymnasium at CIT is not the easiest place to hang such a collection, nor is it the most accessible, but it turned out to be enormously popular, with thousands of visitors most days. There's no doubt that quilting continues to be a source of great personal satisfaction for many women. But as an art form it has a long way to go in this country. The work in this exhibition shows the continuing influence of the American tradition and the work of particular teachers and styles. The standard of some pieces is particularly high, surpassing the craftsmanship of the originals. Yet there is still very little truly original work, nothing much that differentiates our work from its American origins. There are the beginnings of a definition of landscape and some pieces which show individuality: Heather Harding's "Stokes Valley School Fire Quilt" is one, and Mary McCrossin Metcalf's "Silver Fern" another.

In the tutor's exhibition, unfortunately hung in a low-ceilinged side room with no opportunity for distance viewing, one New Zealander's work surpassed even the overseas contributors'. Gwen Wanigasekera is without doubt a quiltermaker of international excellence. Stylishly designed and impeccably executed, her quilts combine fabric of diverse texture and weight with apparent ease, to stunning visual effect.

The National Woolcrafts Festival at the Academy was notable for its diversity. As well as work from the NZ Spinning Weaving and Woolcrafts Society's members, and the work of fibre artists Archie Brennan and Beth Beede. In contrast to the homogeneity of the quilts, there was almost too much variety for the viewer this time. The work of the feltmakers was particularly exciting. Some wonderful colour effects were evident in work of consistently high standard. Jeannette Green's award winning entitled "Sky Walkers Celebrate Every Gorgeous Moment (Three Pairs of Boots for Astral Family Travel)" were literally fantastic. There were other wonderful wearable artworks; coats, capes and vests, and woven fabric fit for Paris or Rome catwalks. And the very best of fine handspun knitwear, maintaining traditions.

The tapestry weaving was surprising in its diversity. It's the first national exhibition and an appropriate gesture on the part of the woolcraft people to offer it space. Many of these artists have come from the embroidery tradition. The range of technique, presentation and subject matter is too large to cover in any detail, but I found pieces both charming and thought-provoking, restful and challenging. The medium is exciting in its possibilities and I look forward to a more cohesive, better lit exhibition next time.

Archie Brennan's pieces were a brilliant example of what tapestry weaving is capable of. Supremely ironic, these works are full of social comment, but some are also connected to the past through the use of historical subject matter. Many of the pieces use tapestry weaving to bring together other woven textile forms - a table cloth, curtain and floor rug, for example.

The *Romance of Embroidery* is a selection



from the Wairarapa Embroiderer's Guild's national competition, which will tour the Central Region over the next few months. The selection is small - just 31 pieces - but it's good, and it will be accessible to many as it travels the region in the coming months. There's a really lavish catalogue which does credit to the embroiderers represented, most of whom have only one piece in the collection.

There's also a thought-provoking essay by Shirley Dixon which provides a New Zealand context for the craft of embroidery, and offers alternative ways of evaluating what is predominantly women's work. Her challenge is one for all fibre artists: to be "expressive of the colours, forms, images, events, ideas and emotions of this country - of the realities of our land and our people."

Above:
"Silver Fern", quilt
by Mary
McCrossin Metcalf.

Above left; gift for
overseas by
Christine Boswijk.

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WELLINGTON EXHIBITION

Woodturner Alan Neilsen joins with Quilter Jas Norton and Tapestry Weaver Elizabeth Arnold for a joint exhibition at *The Potters Shop* in central Wellington from August 8-18.

Neilsen was the winner of the Pinex Timber Products Award of \$2500 and of the Teknatool Award for Innovatin at the Nationwide Woodturning Exhibition in Putaruru last year.

Above:
"Continuation of
Form", winner of the
Pinex Timber
Products award at the
National
Woodturners
Awards.

WAIKANAE SCULPTURE GARDEN

BY BIDDY FRASER-DAVIES

Perhaps the greatest difference between towns and cities in Europe and New Zealand is that there are lots of statues and public sculpture in the former and a distinct lack of them in the latter. The Kapiti Coast District is no exception. Bronze effigies with guano decorated hats come expensive these days and the tendency is for less flamboyant gestures to celebrate the memory or egos of civic worthies. Also, in these hard economic times, there is probably a dearth of affluent public-spirited folk willing to commission such art works rather than a general disinclination to have them about the place.

However we do have the monumental 74.6 foot high concrete statue of Mary, in traditional pose, poised on the hill above Paraparaumu. It comes complete with electric halo and anti-earthquake stay wires. The statue, believed to be one of the largest of its type in the world, (the face alone is as tall as a large man) was built by a Dutch artist, Martin Roestenburg, in 1958 and was erected and paid for by devout Catholics. The irreverent in the district have been known to refer to it as the giant suppository. Planning permission for it was never sought (or granted) but it has become such a landmark over the years that few would be brave enough to complain of the dereliction of civic duty on the part of the Catholic Priest who was instrumental in getting the project off the ground. A public walkway to the statue starts next to the Statue Bargain Barn in Tongariro Street, for those wishing to view the sacred monolith at close quarters.

Below;
White Heron by
Doug Marsden at
Nga Manu Bird
Sanctuary.



A few years ago, the Nga Manu Bird Sanctuary at Waikanae commissioned an excellent sandstone sculpture from Doug Marsden. It depicts a white heron and stands at the entrance of the Sanctuary. These two pieces were, until recently, the sum total of Public Sculpture in a district well known for its impressive number of artist-per-capita.

"Wouldn't it be nice to commission a major art work to commemorate 1990" somebody suggested at a meeting to organise happenings for this event. "What a good idea. We might even be able to persuade the

local council to fund (or at least support) such a project," said another, somewhat optimistically. The idea gathered momentum and an organising committee was set up, headed by a local councillor, Harold Thomas with Jo Gilkison as secretary to arrange the fundraising. Four well-known local sculptors gathered together to thrash out ideas. It was decided to make the project a joint one with the local Tangata Whenua and involve the general public, as would befit the spirit of a 1990 project. The artists concerned felt it was important that what was ultimately produced should be something that the general public would enjoy and feel involved with; a project that would provide a place of harmony and delight, to which they too would be able to make a meaningful and practical contribution.

The four artists were: Pamella Annsouth of Te Horo, Isobel McBeath, Bob Gibbs and Maree Lawrence of Waikanae. Wi Te Tau Pirika Taepa with Tracy Huxford and Eric Ngan represented the Tangata Whenua in consultation with representatives from Whakarongotai Marae.

Initially the project was envisioned as a water garden sculpture set in some park-like or natural surroundings. The Russell Reserve near the Waikanae River was one such site suggested, although it was postulated that vandalism might be a problem as it was an isolated and accessible spot. In the event, permission to build the project there was refused. Further difficulties were raised about the wisdom of spending money on the "luxury" of Art Works when local money was tight... Pro Bono Publico and his/her relatives started writing letters to the local press about the state of the footpaths and irresponsible use of public money... "Look at the mess Wellington City got itself into with Pigeon Park," said the Philistines of Kapiti bent on fresh mischief. The whole project looked as if it was in danger of collapsing until an allocation of \$50,000 from the Waikanae Cultural Levy made the project financially feasible and serious work could begin in making it a reality.

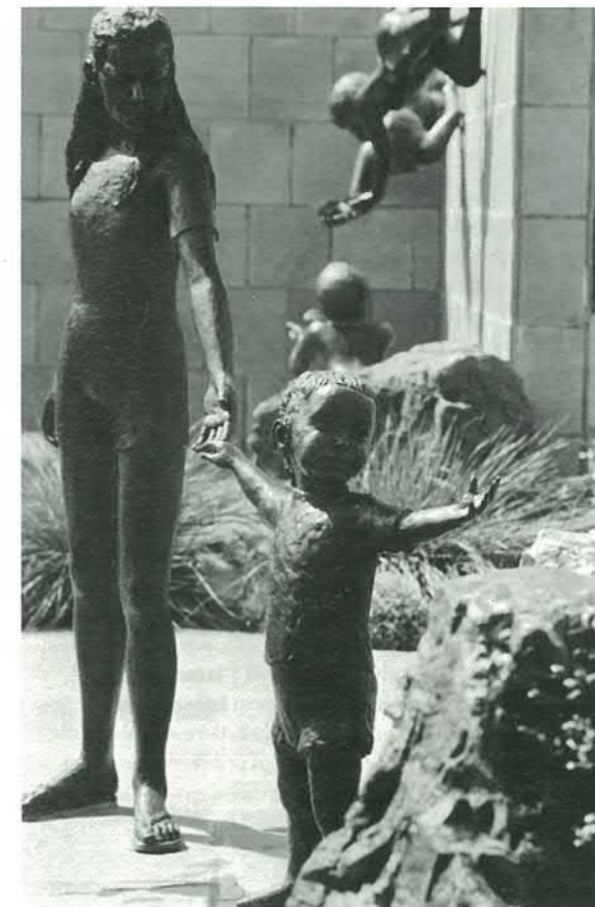
After a lot of discussion, the initial rather splendid ideas were scaled down and a site in Mahara Place, the hub of the shopping precinct in Waikanae, was suggested as a venue and later agreed upon. Each artist's work was designed as an entity in itself, unified by water which trickles through connecting ponds between each piece. Water was chosen as the universal element and each artist has portrayed their own response to it, each within their allotted area. These areas are delineated by six foot high block walls covered in Malibu slate (constructed by local tradesmen, Peter Russell and Dave Funnell). The slate is a lovely warm blush beige colour which harmonizes beautifully with the bronze figures; the walls ensure that the work of each artist can be enjoyed separately, even though paradoxically they remain connected. Vertical tiled components were contributed by members of the public, who worked on clay either in the wet or leather-hard stage. For those intimidated by their own lack of design sense, a variety of suitable stamps and other objects were provided. Pamella Annsouth supervised this part of the project at the studio she shares with the potter Mirek Smisek. A small fee was charged to cover the cost of materials and



firing. A similar section was also used for the Tangata Whenua contribution which was also constructed at the Smisek-Annsouth workshop. The artists concerned explain their work: Pamella Annsouth: "As I travel the highway north of Waikanae, the heavily wooded hilltops behind Hemi Matenga never fail to enchant me. The more so whenever they are veiled in curtains of mist which often lie heavily on the top and feather down the slopes... I wanted to depict the connectedness of life, and thought of representing the spirits of Gaia; three female forms embodying the purity of air, land and water in my piece... In the actual sculpture, I used glass reinforced cement with marble-dust as the aggregate to obtain the lustrous smoothness I needed for the Gaia figures. The "public tile" part of the sculpture was also very important for me. I got a real high from the fact that I could be an instrument to help others to creativity. It was a very humbling experience too, and marvellous to see how people responded to making the tiles and the pleasure they gained from this."

Bob Gibbs: "My work shows 'Mahara Aroha' -the water carrying maiden who has just emerged from the bush to a private place to contemplate and to collect water for her family. My ahua or personal image is that of woman and I hope it will reveal that special magic, which is part of every woman; that she will retain her dignity, her allure and her mystery. A woman's unique sensuality lies in her power to project subtle almost indiscernible nuances. I hope my sculpture will capture that special essence which is the fascination she holds for men and women alike."

Isobel McBeath: "Since childhood I have often dreamt of the joy and freedom of flight. For this reason I have chosen children in flight to depict the passage of the spirit, unencumbered by the physical realities of this Earth plane. These children carry the gifts of the universe... A chalice with a small flame of awareness, a lotus flower representing joy and the oyster or pearl



Far left;
Spirit of Gaia by
Pamella Annsouth.

Left;
Bronze figures by
Maree Lawrence.

representing the wisdom that comes with enlightenment and the beauty found in simplicity... A true art object... produced by creative efforts... expands the consciousness. It brings changes within the soul, enabling greater meaning and beauty in life."

Maree Lawrence: "My theme is based on children; on observing how they react to and near this element [water]. I have chosen a 10 year old female and two year old toddler. In the figure of the toddler I want to express the pure innocence and complete openness of a young human relating to his environment. Everything is new and interesting. The most natural way to experiment and understand at this age is to touch. Thus I have portrayed the toddler with his hand outstretched towards the source of the water. His other hand is swung back, seeking reassurance from the older child. The ten year old girl is of the age of wakening responses also. She has left the age of childhood but is not yet a young woman. She knows some caution but is still not sure of her position. Thus I have portrayed her with her hand also outstretched but towards the toddler. The link between the two are their hands. The water is what they are both concerned and involved with."

This was a project that would have foundered had it not been for the drive, initiative and tenacity of the participants. A "trust" was set up by them to raise funds for the project. Much dedicated work went into fundraising schemes and the artists themselves provided free labour to keep the costs within budget. The result is a construction that allows several different styles to be displayed without overwhelming any particular one. Children and amateur artists who participated in the public tile construction can enjoy the permanency of their own individual tiles, inset in the wall for all to enjoy and admire. The whole edifice is softened with plants, pools and softly flowing water which makes it truly a water garden of pleasure for the community by the community.

FIBRE FUSIONS

BY SALLY VINSON

Coromandel township is very lucky and privileged to have its own independent gallery. Housed in an old historic school building which is also home to art, weaving, drama and youth groups, the spacious Hauraki House Gallery is run by the Coromandel Community Arts Council. There are very few periods in the year when the gallery is not being used by one or other local painter or artisan, either singly or in groups. Dispersed through these shows are touring exhibitions by courtesy of the QEII Arts Council's regional organisations. The result is a veritable feast of visual and tactile experience for residents and tourists from the ho-hum to the positively wow-ccc!

On show this February was an exciting exhibition of work by two local fibre artists, Lynda Green and Jackie Campbell. When I say local, they both live and work in Colville, the most northerly civilised place on the Peninsula. Both the very famous general store there and Lynda and Jackie's workshop and showroom "Eclectic Collections" should not be missed if one is in the area.



Above: Lynda Green (left) and Jackie Campbell (right) at Eclectic Collections, Colville.

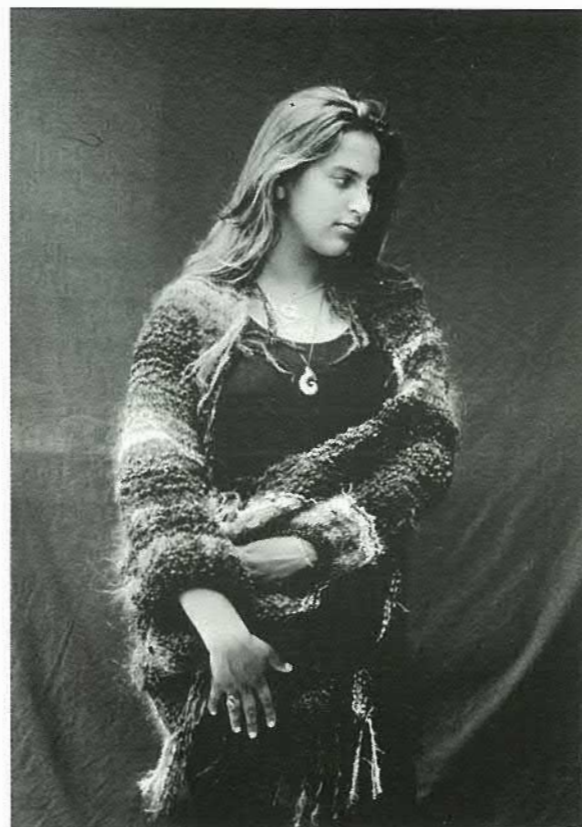
Above right: Garment by Lynda Green, including a selection of yarns including chenille, lurex and mohair. Photo: Graeme Fraser.

We know that Coromandel's image is set in the 60s. Most of the hippies left here are balding and middle-aged. But there is nothing hippy, brown or hairy about the work of these two women. Lynda Green's detailed use of the knitting process results in highly sophisticated garments, and Jackie Campbell's brilliant primary colours in her very fine woven lengths of fabric show that these two have more in mind than the local market. Indeed, it would have been great to pick up this whole well-presented show and drop it down again in the middle of one of our main cities, because the work deserves a wider audience.

As Lynda observes, tourists have been known to put their heads around the door of "Eclectic Collections" and before leaving very quickly remark. "Oh, it's just wool." Just wool the work may well be, but talking to these two women reveals that they have ambitions and visions for their work beyond our local scene. Their determination, together with their skills, will stand them in good stead to succeed in their chosen lifestyle.

Lynda Green

I guess it's fair to say I'm rather obsessed by my work. Knitting (and its extracurricular activities) is as much a necessity to my life as breathing and eating. For years I agreed with people when they suggested that good as my work was it would never be possible to support myself by it. About 18 months ago, when I was 34, I had a change of attitude about the aforementioned belief. In fact my work had supported me. It was a matter of redefining the word "support". Spiritually,



creatively and emotionally knitting has supported and sustained me quite faithfully over the last 20 years. With this in mind, I have set about ways to make it financially supportive as well. I refuse to compromise on a creative level, just to make a commercial product. In the last year, I have been doing lots of test samples for ideas that may work financially. I have enrolled for a month-long course on how to become your own boss, to give myself information and skills needed to know if my ideas will work business-wise.

Last year I gained a Certificate in Adult Tutoring which was a neat chance to test myself (I had thought I was a good teacher - and I am) about what I knew in terms of physical knitting skills as well as knitting philosophy and social history. It was great! Teaching and passing on skills is necessary to keep craft alive and a way for seasoned craftspeople to earn money from their skills.

For the next two years or so I am putting time aside to do a Diploma of Manufacturing Textiles. The aim of

this is to gain some insight as to how the industry works with a view to becoming a freelance yarn designer - possibly on an international basis, and extending the skills I use presently designing yarns for my own use.

So, by altering my view of the word "support", I am slowly but surely on my way to making it possible to create the kind of "knitting works" that I want to make for the sheer pleasure and love of making for its own sake - not financial reward.



Jackie Campbell

My weaving career began six years ago when I was 19. Maureen Lorimer taught me to weave on a Job Opportunities Scheme here in Coromandel and although until that time I had never had any particular interest in weaving, I really wanted a job! I was "good with my hands" and Maureen gave me a chance!

I found weaving exciting, challenging and not too difficult. I was inspired by its endless possibilities, in fact bought my first loom within three months, and it became my hobby as well as my job.

I spent two and a half years with Maureen Lorimer learning many different dyeing and weaving techniques, and following an urge to try something new I branched out into floor rugs. By utilizing some of the new dyeing skills I had acquired these rugs were unusual and very successful. I even sold some through local group exhibitions.

Then followed a three year period in Auckland when I worked in an office and weaving had to be reduced to a hobby. It was during this time that I decided I wanted to weave fine woollen fabrics and I thought that I could market these wholesale. As a natural extension of this activity the designing and making of garments from my fabric was an obvious next step. Knowing that this is a specialist area in itself, I teamed up with Marilyn Jones of Auckland who now designs and makes garments with my fabric. Together we had an outfit accepted for the 1992 Benson & Hedges Fashion Awards and are now developing our partnership and our range of garments.

I take every opportunity and follow every lead to extend my growing clientele for both the wholesale fabrics and shawls that I make, and the garments that Marilyn and I together produce. This exhibition at Hauraki House marks a serious attempt at making my work known, and it has increased people's awareness of the wide variety that is possible with hand-weaving. One of my aims in fact is to revolutionise the general concept that most people have of hand-woven fabric. I want people to see that they can be soft and very beautiful; suitable for fine hats and garments.

My ultimate goal is to build a solid sound business by designing and hand-weaving unique fabrics of high quality, to continue to live and work in a pleasant environment here in the country.

Left: Jacket and shirt; fabric by Jackie Campbell. Jacket made by Bronwyn Mathieson, shirt made by Ngaire Evans. Photo: Graeme Fraser.

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PETER COLLIS - PERFECTING FORM

BY JESS TOOKER

Working from home can be isolating, but not for Peter Collis, one of New Zealand's high-profile potters. Living, as he does, in Auckland, this genial potter often has buyers, collectors, others potters dropping into the studio attached to his house. At times apprentice potters or other professionals share his space. "I like company" he says. "That's why I built a big studio!"



Above; Peter Collis demonstrating the craft of making large vessels.

Below; The Collis studio in Auckland. Peter's brief to the architect employed to incorporate a studio into his existing house was for a design "visually exciting as well as functional." Photo; Peter Collis.

Peter enjoys working with other potters for the exchange of ideas. "Even if they're developing styles and techniques different from mine, it's good to examine them. I certainly find it stimulating."

At the moment his fellow potter is wife Julie, a former art teacher/fabric artist, lured into pottery with her own line in plates featuring zany designs from NZ wildlife. Despite instant success with these she is finding an incipient acting career even more exciting.

Peter, on the other hand, has been fully committed to pottery for 20 years, with many exhibitions and one-man shows to his credit. Now, as president of the NZ Society of Potters, he has a wide perspective on the craft he believes has arrived at a new crossroads; his personal development as a potter has also reached a significant stage.



Linking Peter's studio and house is a small gallery where the pieces on display indicate both sides of this development: concentration on flowing form, clean line and well-balanced shape combined with an obvious readiness to experiment with various styles and textures.

Peter is sensitive to criticism that his work is too diverse. Recognised as a master thrower, he knows full well that his strength lies in creating strong form, classical in style. "My main aim is always to achieve perfection of form, no matter what surface treatment I use," he says seriously. Then he breaks into a wry grin. "But I have lots of ideas, so I enjoy a little diversion now and then. There's got to be room for some fun. And who knows what could result!"

Peter's versatility is revealed in his surface treatments. In the gallery highly sophisticated black and gold lustreware gleams sleekly alongside white, decorated stoneware, mainly domestic pieces. Both serve as vivid contrast to his new lines - rough-surfaced, multi-coloured bowls, cones and urns that look as though they have been weathered by time and the elements; and the latest work - textured and elegant monochrome black and white forms, set on plinths.

Like most successful NZ potters Peter relies on domestic and lounge ware to make a living, although he balks at taking orders. "But you've got to accept the fact," he maintains, "that our market is just too small to support the artist potter who deals exclusively in one-off pieces."

These new lines, especially the latest, are, however, a conscious personal statement. "They're not made for other people, they're made for me." Although the surface treatment (terracotta, multi-fired with engobe) may be viewed as "fashionable", Peter feels that he will still be exploring the artistic possibilities of this line for years to come.

Inventive in the sources for his ideas, Peter was inspired to try this surface treatment after giving a lime-wash finish to the block wall round his property. "It gave the wall an old Mediterranean feel, and I felt I wanted to achieve that timeless, weathered patina look in my pots."

Initially a "weathered" look suggested the outdoors and the architectural scale that that implies, and so Peter returned to making large vessels, an old love, for these heavily textured surfaces. Over 1.5m in height, they lend themselves impressively to atrium, courtyard or spacious foyer. Size being immaterial in expressing the form, however, smaller pieces soon came out of the kiln. But Peter was not totally satisfied with the glazing.

"Because you're concentrating so heavily on shape and form, it (the glazing) becomes a real problem - you can kill the pots. A heavy texture on a pure form is fine - it brings an added dimension, but when you start adding lots of different colours as well, you actually start taking it away."

This dissatisfaction is possibly what led to his latest line. Pure forms in matt black or white are each set on a plinth which is an integral part of the piece but serves to isolate it at the same time. The ten simple but perfectly balanced forms (a year in the making) were influenced by the works of Brancusi and Hans Coper, as well as John Parker, who studied under Coper in London.



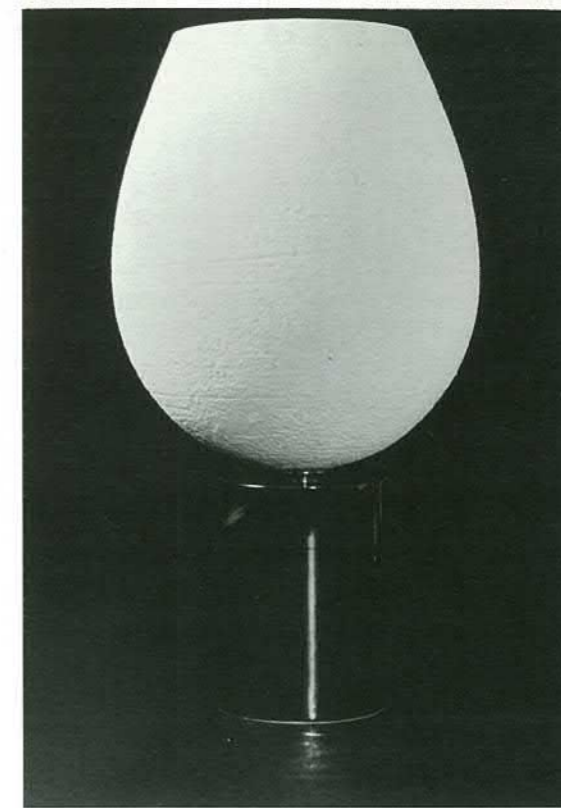
"The thing that I like about Brancusi and Coper is that they used the plinth to isolate the work. When you make a piece and it's put down on a table, it tends to get swallowed up a little bit - the form changes from your intention. The piece of Brancusi's I really like is *The Fish* where the fish is raised off the plinth by a washer, so that he got a lovely shadow underneath. I've used that idea in my pieces, and I've tried to follow the way Coper used the plinth, making its proportions an integral part of the piece. For maximum impact my pieces need to be viewed at eye level.

"What you make today is a response to what has come before you and how you've come through it," muses Peter, reflecting that although he has been reading about Coper for 20 years, the strong influence of Leach and Hamada on NZ potters prevented Coper's ideas affecting his work till now. He suspects it may take some time yet before they are accepted, but he's used to putting ideas on hold till the public are ready.

Meanwhile Peter continues to produce the work which has been well received over the last few years and is represented in international private collections and museums. His lustreware with its perfected brushwork, stylish form and graceful line has a particular appeal. To date his most successful "image" has been the combination of stipple with lustre, using four or five layers of glaze to give rich visual depth to his vases, bowls and platters. These pieces, linking back to the Islamic pottery of Spain and Italy, also contain Polynesian elements, in both form and decoration.

Some purists have demurred. "They seem to think that if you use the kava bowl form, or basket weave or Pacific Island prints for decoration, you must use traditional materials, else you're not staying true to the original. That's nonsense," says Peter, blunt as ever. "Why can't you use a Polynesian pattern in a European context? Why not introduce cross-cultural elements in whatever craft you pursue?"

As he points out, the bowl, the cone and the cube are the basis of any design. "Anyway, New Zealand pottery



Far left; These three urns, varying in height from 1100mm to 1500mm, particularly suit an outdoor setting. The rough surface treatment (terracotta multi-fired with engobe) lends them a softly weathered look. Photo; Gisela Lange.

Left; The purity of the form and the use of the plinth show the influence of Brancusi and Hans Coper. While serving to isolate the 700mm high piece, the plinth still remains an integral part of the whole. Photo; Howard Williams.

has always borrowed elements off other cultures, whether it be Japanese, British or whatever. At the Fletcher Challenge Show, half the time you can't identify the New Zealand pots because they can fit into any category. We're such a culturally diverse country it's very difficult to come up with a "New Zealand" identity. The truth is," he concludes, "the only tradition in New Zealand pottery, is that it's vessel-oriented."

But change is taking place. In the New Zealand fashion of having a go at anything, pottery has always had a grassroots base, with proportionately more full-time potters than any other country; and because the best make good quality pots at an affordable price the public has supported them. Most have learned it as a craft by attending night class, and/or workshops or through apprenticeship. Only recently have the craft and visual art departments of polytechnics introduced the overseas practice of instructing on pottery.

The new breed of potters are looking on it as an art form, and so the whole thrust of NZ pottery may change. Peter sees it as an exciting development, but fears that because they have little chance of making a living by selling one-offs exclusively, these new potters may opt out. So, in his view, the traditional learning method has a lot to commend it. "It teaches us the basic skills, while allowing us to develop our creative side. Still, I'd love to have done the craft design course if it had been available 20 years ago," he admits.

Peter himself is an experienced teacher, more than willing to share his skills. Since 1979 he has been invited to run frequent workshops for local pottery societies and community colleges throughout New Zealand. But this is a means to an end, for he is passionate about ensuring high standards, and that has become even more of an obsession since he became president of the NZ Society of Potters.

"Potting is a very skilful craft, but like any craft it can be learned. The more people know about what they're doing, the better their pots will be... and the better it will be for craft pottery as a whole."

MARY BARTOS - WOODTURNER

BY ADRIENNE REWI

Christchurch woodturner Mary Bartos has never felt "held back" as a woman in a male dominated craft. Her determination and love of wood have consistently inspired her to persevere and she has come a long way from "those days of 1956 when girls didn't do those things."

Mary had always "muddled with wood" as a child and her introduction to wood carving at a London Polytech course in 1956 was just enough to whet her appetite. It was not until 1968 though, back in Christchurch, NZ, that she rejoined carving classes (with Pat Mulcahy); and not until 1972 that she met a woodturner, who introduced her to the fascination of a craft that has since taken her over.

A lot can change in 20 years and Mary's approach to wood turning is certainly no exception. Her latest works are a result of an evolutionary process that has focussed on the exploration of wood itself, rather than on leaps and bounds in technical advancement.

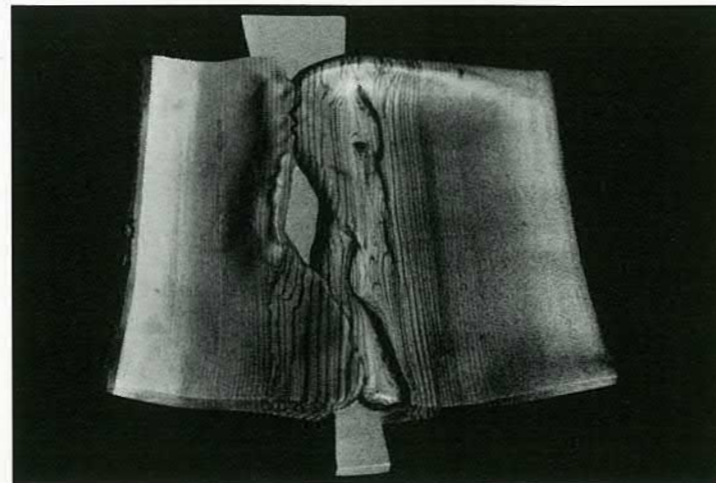
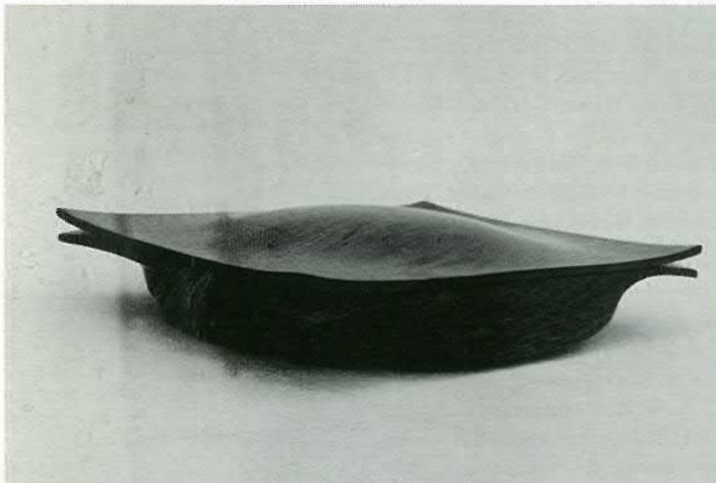
"I'm addicted to the excitement of what I can find in a piece of wood - there's that wonderful sense of discovery every time you cut into something," she says.

The wood comes first for Mary and she has allowed the warm, colourful idiosyncracies of each piece to have their say as much as possible. Learning to read the grain, the texture and the colours and making them work to her advantage has always been a primary concern.

As a woodturner, she has gone way beyond the traditional salad bowl of her early days and she is quite prepared to break rules to see her inspirations realised.



Far right;
Mary Bartos
Lower left;
Large walnut box.
Lower right;
Ash, incorporating
blue-painted wood.
Photos;
Adrienne Rewi.



"The whole wood scene has changed enormously from when I began nearly 21 years ago," she says. "People are much freer and more willing to challenge traditional methods and forms. They are doing things that have never been done before and it's very exciting to be involved in that."

Mary reflects on her first bowl - "round and straightforward" - and says she was "almost too terrified to touch it."

Today her work is characterised by her freer attitudes and a continual desire to experiment, to push out, to challenge and to take herself and her skills "somewhere different again and again."

Current works reflect Mary's interest in highlighting contrasts - round bowls have become square-edged; long, thin, linear detail is set against circular form; rough, natural bark edges butt against smooth finishes; light woods "play" with dark in the same bowl; lids curl cheekily open at the edges; and plain colours, or metals - flat, grainless and simple - are juxtaposed with the natural textural beauty of the wood.

She uses a mixture of European hardwoods that are readily available in Canterbury - walnut, ash, yew, sycamore, cherry and apricot to name a few; and the frequent inclusion of the bark edge follows her intention to maximise the full character of the wood.

Right;
Sycamore and walnut bowl.
Lower;
Walnut bowl with sycamore insets.
Photos;
Adrienne Rewi.

Ideas are still forming and working intuitively, Mary has yet to find a clear path to her next stage. She is enamoured by the experimental process though, and she finds continual interest in exploring the full potential of a piece of wood - doing her utmost to enhance its natural beauty while maintaining acceptable form, shape and balance.

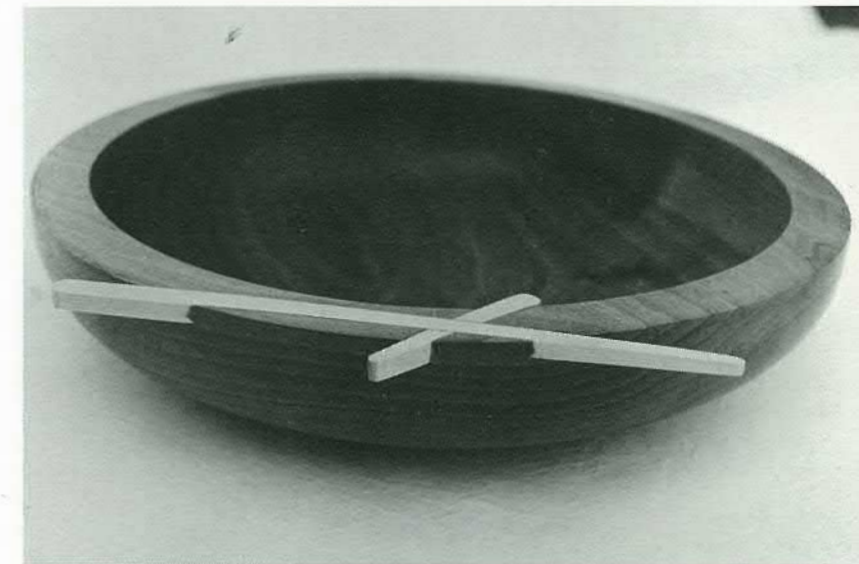
At the same time she enjoys working on a large scale. "Little dishes don't somehow gel with me. I seem to work better on big pieces of wood - the "canvas" has much more happening on a larger scale. There's simply more to work with and I enjoy that."

Her large works tend to be more sculptural and more "free-flowing", rather than precise and structural; and the emphasis is heavily on the natural character of the wood itself.

"Some are specific things - heads, tortoise or fish forms - but overall, this area of my work is about letting the wood speak louder and making its inherent nature more visible.

"I enjoy wood having its own way. I like the challenge of imposing my own will, or making my ideas work, but every so often it's important for me to let the wood be itself.

"I feel good about where I'm at; it's a nice balance for me personally. But there is a heap more out there to do yet," she concludes.



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MARK PIERCEY - WOODTURNER

BY ADRIENNE REWI



Right; Mark Piercey.
Photo; Adrienne Rewi

Five generations of Mark Piercey's English family have worked with wood, although Mark's discovery of his own woodturning talents has been somewhat circuitous.

Mark emigrated to New Zealand in 1977 as a qualified laboratory technician and although the link to wood is tenuous, he was first employed here by NZ Forest Products in that role.

Sometime in that year he had an urge to build a lathe and he fashioned an effective tool from an old washing machine motor and 6x2 pine.

He remembers his first bowl with a wry smile. It was made over a period of two weeks, squatting on the kitchen floor with his improvised lathe. It may not have been an exhibition piece, but it was enough to inspire him a year later, to give up his job as a laboratory technician and become a fulltime woodturner in Lyttelton.

As a self-taught craftsman he was often frustrated, but a burgeoning interest in woodwork in Canterbury in the late seventies/early eighties made it a stimulating environment for a beginner.

Mark was enthusiastically involved in the Canterbury branch of the Guild of Woodworkers and he gained a lot from shared knowledge.

But it was a visit from Tasmanian woodworker Merv Grey in 1982 that triggered Mark's interest in working with wet wood, defects and natural edges. "I was doing mostly domestic lines and he opened up a whole new area of challenge for me," says Mark.

Today Mark's woodturning is still strongly linked to that earlier challenge. Like Grey, he prefers to work with wet wood, finding that its ability to change shape as it dries produces interesting distortions that he finds exciting to work with.



The wood has usually been drying for six months to a year and still has enough moisture to enable large pieces to turn more easily without cracking.

In 1991 Mark further explored the possibilities of wet wood during three months of a Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council grant. He focused on different technical approaches and on the use of various burs for texture, and the incorporation of other materials.

He describes his work as "quite defined and precise" and admits to an inner freedom that he "needs to play with". "I am very much a craftsman rather than a raging artist, but I want to break free a little after fourteen years at the lathe," he says. "I want to challenge traditions more and explore my potential to make people think."

In the production of domestic lines he works in a structured way, following favoured patterns and rhythms. The period of complete freedom that came with his QEII grant was a big change, but a welcome one that he extended to maximise his experimental work.

Using locally-grown European woods - plain-grained sycamore, yew, walnut, oak, ash and smokebush - he creates forms that are light and floating. Hollow vases are tall and elegant; bowls are raised on small legs to give a sense of space beneath, and there is a strong reference to the tribal and ceremonial bowls that Mark draws upon for ethnic inspiration.

"I try to make pieces with a nice, simple design, flowing lines and crisp details - bowls with a nice lift - and I'm moving toward freer pieces," he says.

He believes the end product has got to be well made and if there is detail, it must be clearly defined - "but how you get that is immaterial. Technique is only a means to an end," he says.

Mark has recently employed burning to achieve interesting effects. Faced with a bowl that was heavily burred on one side and plain on the other, he decided to



burn the surface to balance the design and tie the two areas together. This has led to further experimenting that plays upon the textural and colour contrasts of rough burned exteriors and highly finished, smooth interiors.

He is also interested in the use of other materials, but says works in this area are still very much in the developmental stage; and he is keen to challenge people's expectations with titles and works that play on words and materials.

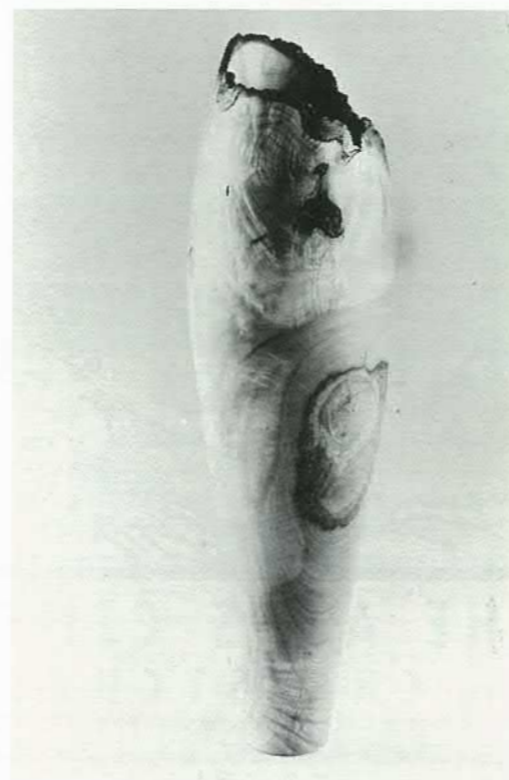
Odd Ball - Screw Bowl and *Screwed Up and Strung Out* are typical and are a humorous pun reference to the school of thought that says there should be no evidence of screw attachments to the base of bowls.

Mark's lighthearted response is typical of his overall philosophy that quality of finish is important, but "rules shouldn't be a religion."

Top; *Screwed Up and Strung Out* - Oak, 350x250x125mm.
Lower; *Body & Soul* - Elm Burr 350x140mm.
Photos; Lloyd Park.



Above; Raised bowl - ash, 320x165mm.
Right; Hollow vase - ngaio, 400mm high.
Photos; Lloyd Park.



KATE WELLS - FISH OUT OF WATER

BY MARGO MENSING

Kate Wells understands the possibilities of tapestry and she pursues its nuances relentlessly. Much contemporary tapestry is boring. Static images are nailed down in a fixed spatial plane. A well-executed tapestry either looks like a pallid painting or a design exercise. It depends on the allure of the tactile surface and sacrifices the visual.

Surefire imagery sparks Kate Wells's tapestries. Although they are graphically exceptional, her weavings cannot be reduced to designs. She determines key images - geometric shapes and pictorial elements - and repeats them sporadically to establish a narrative thread. Each one in the series has a single readable idea. Yet the sequence of tapestries is arbitrary. Seen together, the narrative does not follow a direct course.

Often a newspaper article offers an idea for a tapestry. The impetus for *Fish out of water* (1989-90) came from a story Kate Wells read about a woman in a desert in Australia looking for a lost sea. She takes the prosaic and bends it into fantasy. For her, narrative opens a dialogue with the viewer. It is not a personal self-indulgent expression but a free-flowing communication. It is the conceptual base of her tapestry weaving, why she finds real freedom within this very exacting medium.

The individual tapestries in the series belong together because of their formal properties. *Fish out of Water* is unified through colour, line, shape and repeating images - fish, woman, bowl, landscape, architecture. Seizing on what she calls the "wonderful monotony of sand and heat of the desert," she settled on muted colours - salmon, yellow, beige, and granite - to dominate the palette. Though the overall impression is that of the desert not water, great splashes of blue appear in two tapestries, *Flight out of the Desert* and *The Fish that got away - a tall story*, activating the space of all of the tapestries. The fish that wanders through the tapestries is always out of water, floating or flying through air. The woman also assumes a number of stances, from standing at rigid attention to a mermaid floating gleefully through the sky.

The graphic organization of the tapestries centres on line and shape. Drawing is important in the planning and layout, but the tapestries would not be as imaginative if they were drawings. The woven surface is essential to shifting planes, the interaction of flat and perspective. She utilizes the curvilinear possibilities of tapestry weaving and opposes them to the grid inherent in loom structured weaving. In *The Garden Encroaches while I Fish*, the green arcs suggesting the garden soften the large lattice grid and the straight figure. On the right two thin deep red bars arc upwards in an opposite swoop to the foliage and point directly to the free swimming fish, framing it the upper, almost colourless space. These simple, integrated elements unify all the elements and emphasize the figure.

The final tapestry in the series, *The Witch Fish is too thin to be of Edible Value*, is dominated by the large witch fish. Another newspaper item was the source for this caption. It is more than strange facts that motivate her narratives. Her weavings gravitate to human interaction with the environment. Living in New Zealand is vital to her particular awareness of landscape, and the isolation within landscape. She finds in the ruggedness,

the individualism of the human landscape a correspondence to shapes that distinctly evoke the New Zealand landscape.

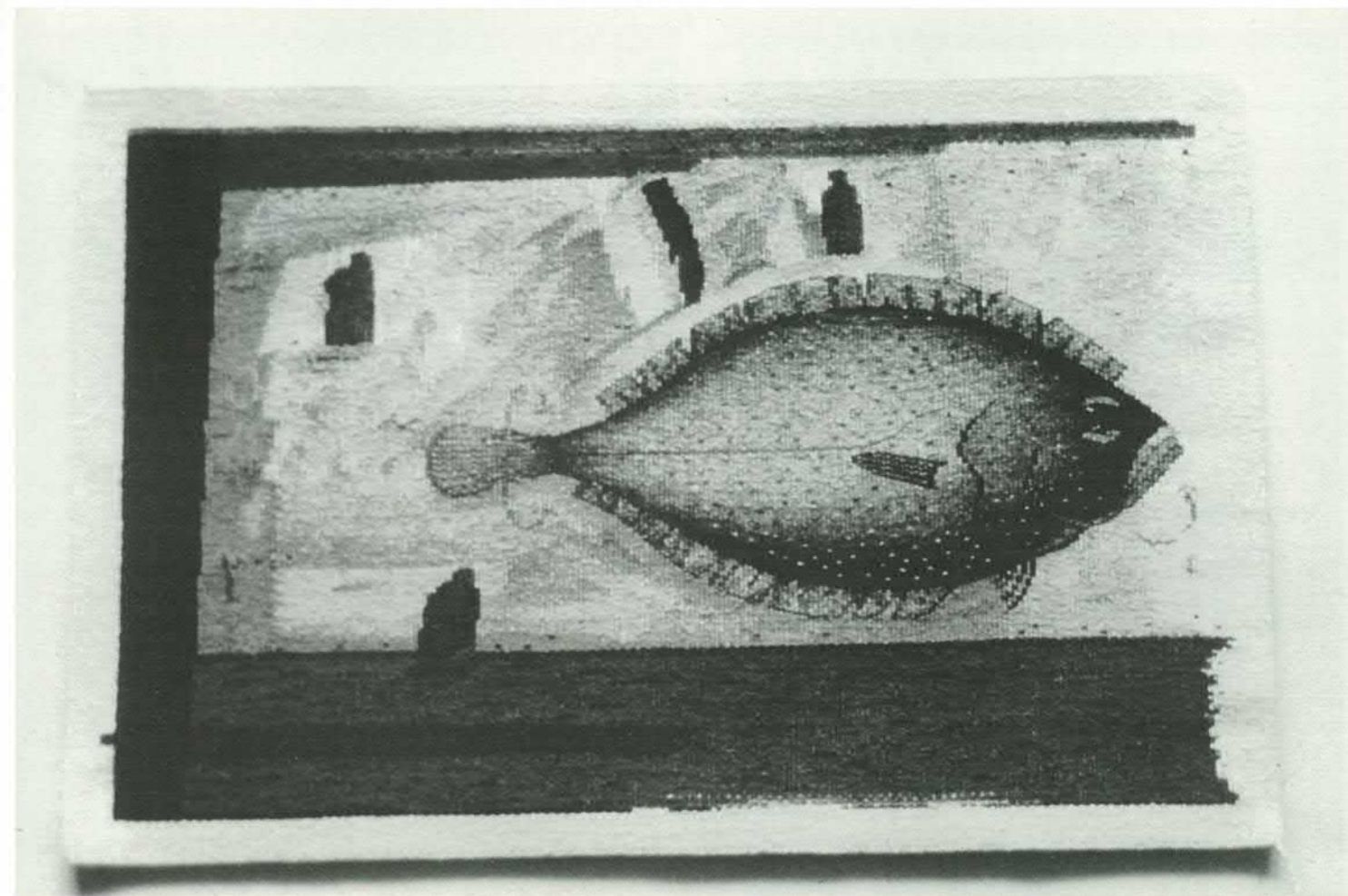
While *The Fish out of Water* series is playful, in the recent series exhibited in *No Man's Land* at the Dowse Art Museum, there is an edge, a definite tension in the human relationship to the physical environment. Wells incorporates words as components in her sign and symbol system. Her reading of "No Man's Land" is not so much feminist as it is humanistic; she is interested in how man has used and abused the land. The theme gives continuity, but each tapestry is discrete. Each one is a geographic site with a specific geologic property, *Headland* and *Volcanic Chill*. There is no continuous storyline, except the obvious notation of man's mark on the land.

Many of the sites depicted are islands. Islands are characterized by assumptions of smallness and isolation, even inadequacy. Such restrictive labelling is dismantled in *Ward Makora Island* where island is divided, and *Ward Makora* becomes land, "ward makora is land." Her sketch for the tapestry appears in the exhibition catalogue with more word play. "Ward" is defined - "to look after, to protect" and the irony is clear in the context of the series. She inserts a linear black and white gauge, another constant variable in these tapestries, and calls it "measurement of chance: noughts & crosses, land ownership/ or guardianship". "Antarctica free-for-all" is even more pointed - not only is the free-for-all open to all nations to seize a piece of the prize, but the entire enterprise is a rape of the land. In her sketch for this one she notes the pot of gold with an arrow and writes "surely there must be a pot of gold there like at the end of a rainbow...sadly there is and every country wants to plunder the pot...to claim its slice of ice. The shadowy ground where the A and the n, as well as the pot, sit is the hole in the ozone layer.

This information is not present in the text of the tapestry, instead sporadic arrangement of the letters of Antarctica perambulate the surface. Her politics are not didactic, and surely humorous in places - in "Headland" a head appears. In addition to the splintered text, coded signs appear. One is the gauge laid out somewhere as a sign of impossible measuring.

Most of the tapestries in this series depend on a framing structure, a central image with irregular borders. This device fortifies the idea of a picture within a picture, it isolates the representation of the geographic feature, and it heightens the flatness of the tapestry. The erratic rather than regulated border continues the disjunctive alignment in the central picture, reinforcing the context of precarious balance in the formal elements of the tapestries. As with the earlier sets, in seeing the tapestries together it is clear how Wells works and how the works fit together and still remain spontaneous.

A year's study at the Victorian Tapestry Workshop in Melbourne in 1983 equipped her to establish a weaving studio. For now, she prefers to do her own weaving. Kate Wells's gift for design is plain. Recently she has branched into other arenas with other projects. Certainly tapestry is tedious business. It is also her real love.



Opposite page:
The Witch Fish is too Thin to be of Edible Value. 690x460mm.
Tapestry by Kate Wells, 1990.

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ARCHIE BRENNAN - MAKING MARKS

BY KATE BATTEN

Archie Brennan is perched in front of his weaving loom, his grey bushy eyebrows a stark contrast with his black hair. He has spent 45 of his 61 years in this position, patiently creating the tapestries that have made him famous in weaving circles around the world.

Tapestry weaver Archie Brennan is in Timaru on a two month artist-in-residency at Aoraki Polytechnic. He is Scottish, but now lives in Maui with his partner and fellow weaver, Susan Maffei.

Archie does not understand why he is involved in such a medieval process as tapestry weaving in this modern age of technology when "it takes a pencil a split second to make a mark but to make that same mark in tapestry, it takes 500 times as long." He questioned whether it was all worth it in 1969 when he was weaving a plain black piece of tapestry. He began the piece as the NASA rocket took off, taking the first men to the moon. Archie carried on weaving through the night, watching the rocket's progress on his television. But Neil Armstrong took his first lunar steps before Archie had finished his woven piece.

"It made me really ask if it was all worthwhile. But I decided that yes, for me, it was." Archie wishes there were many more working hours in his day. "It takes long hours to get anywhere in tapestry."

Having an art school half an hour from his home in Scotland helped Archie get into tapestry. As a young boy,

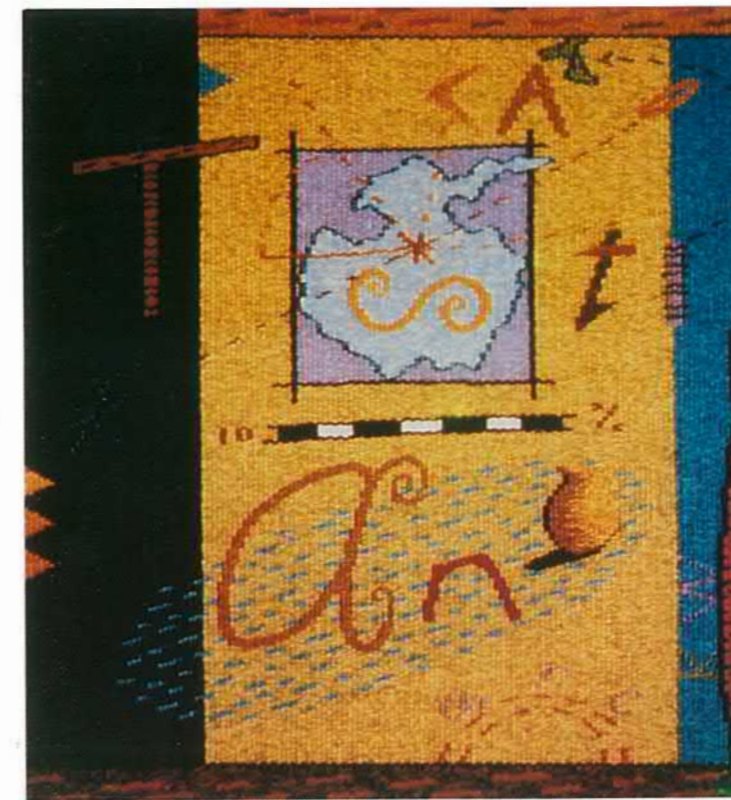
Archie would go to drawing lessons at the school. It was there that he met tapestry apprentices and at 17 became an apprentice himself. His parents knew of his interest in the arts and all his family were creatively minded in some way. "I knew I would either be an artist or a cowboy."

Tapestry itself has its origin in the medieval castles and manor houses where tapestries were hung as a form of very expensive wallpaper. The beauty of that was, when winter demanded the family move to somewhere with a warmer climate, the tapestries could be rolled up and taken with them.

Archie still enjoys that transportability of his art work. "There is something happily perverse about travelling with a roll of tapestries under your arm."

In the 16th century, it was quite odd for women to weave - most often it was the nuns in convents. Even when Archie began his seven year apprenticeship, there were more men than women weaving. But now, male weavers are the exception in the tapestry world, with approximately one man to ten women.

Archie thinks there are a few hundred people in New Zealand doing tapestry. They are pretty isolated here and probably do not know that each other exists. For many artists they are just experimenting in the medium and for others it is a hobby. Fibre arts became popular in the 1970s and tapestry was part of that. As with any craze, such as skateboards or BMX bikes, it was short lived and tapestry sank back into being a minor craft in



Above;
Antarctic Free For All.
420x460mm.
Tapestry by Kate Wells.
Right;
Splint, Split; Words, Words.
Tapestry by Archie Brennan.
Photo; Kate Batten.
Below;
Dersu Uzala.
Tapestry by Archie Brennan.
Photo; Kate Batten.



Below;
Susan Maffei and
Archie Brennan with
one of Susan's
tapestries.
Photo; Kate Batten.



our society. Archie thinks that it is "lovely that it is a minor craft. Gregorian chants are the musical equivalent to where tapestry is in the art world." He says that tapestry has the strange characteristic of growing linearly, and in that way it mirrors life. "Once yesterday is done, you have to get on. You can't wipe out what is already done."

Archie uses natural wool and cotton in his weaving. He gets his materials from all over the world and enjoys playing the differences between the fibres side by side. The qualities of wool that appeal for clothing, such as insulation and waterproofing, are not what appeal to a tapestry weaver. The way that the wool takes on colour is of more interest to Archie.

A challenging experience in France helped to get the "hand-done" urge out of Archie's system. He was handed a fleece straight from the sheep to weave into a tapestry. He was not allowed to spin or dye it - he had to spend long hours laboriously blending the wool to match the colours.

He has no objections to those who do enjoy spinning or dying by hand, but suggests it is the process they enjoy, rather than the final product. He sees no virtue in doing things by hand if it can be done just as well by technology. That seems to be a contradiction when he spends so much time weaving. But perhaps the argument is whether tapestry could be done as well by technological means.

Perhaps one reason for Archie's commitment is his self-confessed obsession with art. He visits galleries regularly and can not imagine life without art. He is fortunate to share that and other interests with Susan and they spend all their time together, weaving and travelling. They do not, however, share the same personalities. A keen tennis player, Archie found himself becoming obsessed with the game, whereas for Susan, it is purely exercise. He is careful not to get involved with

some hobbies now, knowing his tendency to become fixated with the activity.

Archie would prefer to work more physically than weaving requires him to. He gets mentally tired but often thinks he would prefer to be a sculptor to get more physical activity. Tapestry is varied with moments of intense focus and then the relaxed "wool pushing" where the weaving does not require much thought. He finds this part quite boring but considers it to be like sawing wood and just "gets on with it."

His contribution to the arts community was recognised in 1981 when Archie was awarded an OBE. He is very modest about it and sees it as a bit of a token gesture to the arts. Although he is grateful to have the award, it has no recognition in the United States where he now lives. In the United Kingdom, he gets respect from the art world as people seem to think he has earned it, as opposed to the military where it is more an award for long service.

Archie thinks that artists are very peripheral in modern society. "Traditionally, life was unimaginable without art. Now society views it like Christmas cake - it is nice while you have it, but you can do without it."

People can be made to feel guilty for being full time artists. When he was in his 30s, his mother suggested he should get a haircut because he "looked like an artist or something." Susan's father is still waiting for her to get a 'real job.'

Archie gets his inspiration from the world as it is. Tapestry has always been a vehicle to make political and social statements and Archie uses the tapestry, rather than the colours and textures, to make the impact.

At the end of his artist-in-residency, Archie and Susan will be travelling around New Zealand conducting workshops and exhibiting Archie's tapestries in Wellington, Hamilton and Auckland.

REVIEWS

AFFIRMATION AND CHALLENGE

The 4th National Embroidery Exhibition
Reviewed by Shirley Dixon.

Embroidery, as Rozsika Parker* pointed out, is a subversive medium - and this exhibition is wonderfully so - gently but insistently extending the bounds of embroidery. While the works were selected under five categories: innovative, original work in traditional techniques, charted work, lace, and junior work, there are no disrupting divisions in the exhibition - the categories flow into and complement each other making an integrated statement about the diversity, the versatility and the energy of contemporary New Zealand embroidery. While the degree of innovation varies between categories, all pieces show the input of the maker into the design process, and the emphasis of the exhibition is on the use of stitch to make an original statement.

Seventy-seven works from the adult categories plus sixty-three in the junior section are exhibited. Most of the pieces are designed to be hung on the wall, though it is a pleasure to see innovative embroidery also being applied to hats, covers, clothes and work basket accessories. The works reflect an exploration of the wide range of hand and machine embroidery techniques available to today's embroiderers, and the diversity of moods - the subtlety and blatancy, the softness and crispness, the whimsical and the serious social commentary, that embroidery is so capable of producing.

As embroidery is a predominantly female occupation Women's Suffrage Year is an appropriate time to both celebrate and evaluate embroidery which has been, and still is, an important part of so many women's lives. The strength of this exhibition is that it both affirms and challenges embroidery and embroiderers.

The exhibition affirms the essential qualities of embroidery - of stitch on fabric, of the richness and variety of effects that it is possible to achieve with embroidery more successfully than with any other medium.

The exhibition affirms the continuing use of embroidery for the embellishment of items that will be a joy to use in the home as well as the contemporary use of embroidery as a medium of individual expression. In New Zealand, as overseas, embroidery is increasingly being used and accepted as a means of making an artistic statement, though as Audrey Walker, a leading British embroiderer says, "Embroidery as a serious art form can still be a difficult concept for some people".**

The exhibition also challenges. It challenges the very definition of embroidery - are works where stitchery has been consigned to a minor role still embroidery? The exhibition includes several works in which embroidery is

combined with other media, and in some cases the actual stitchery, while essential to the work, has become a minor part. Are these embroideries, or do they more appropriately belong in the wider field of 'fabric and fibre arts'? It challenges embroiderers to consider which are the most appropriate modes for expressive embroidery - is the framed wall panel the most suitable, or are the special qualities of embellished textiles - which is what even the most innovative embroidery is about, better served in other forms?

The exhibition challenges embroiderers to consider the directions New Zealand embroidery should take in the future. It raises questions about the development of a specifically New Zealand content and feel in embroidery; even within the life-time of many of the exhibitors, embroidery has moved from a total reliance not only on the materials of Europe but also on the forms, to an exploration of ways of expressing our reality as New Zealanders - to looking to our own environment and experiences as the source of ideas for our work. And this challenges embroiderers to undertake the art and design training necessary for the development of expressive skills.

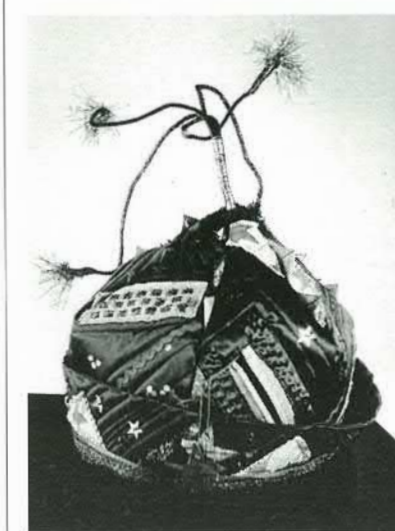
The exhibition raises questions of whether embroidery's prime purpose should be as a medium of artistic expression, or as a means of producing beautiful functional items for the home. Or should diversity be the prime concern - to use embroidery for all possible purposes - to both maintain tradition and to push the bounds?

If the mark of a successful exhibition is to provide the viewer with a satisfying visual experience as well as to stimulate thought, then this exhibition is most successful, and I look forward to seeing what the exhibition organisers and New Zealand's embroiderers come up with for the next exhibition in two years time.

Meanwhile, people living in many towns in the Arts Council's Central Region (which extends over the lower half of the North Island and the upper part of the South Island) will



Above:
"Liaisons" by Kirsten Haworth, Wellington; canvas work. Winner in the "Original work in traditional technique" category. Naif style drawing, bright colours and a multi-patterned surface are combined in this happy, expressive and episodic narrative.



Left:
"The Starcatchers Hat", by Laura Hudson, Palmerston North; rayon acetate, hand printed and painted, applied duck, linen and Fimo. This is one of a wonderful pair of hats in which the whimsical, the humorous and the prosaic are combined to express the diverse personalities of their 'wearers'.

have the opportunity to see thirty-two works selected from this exhibition, which are being toured under the title "The Romance of Embroidery", by the Arts Council, with the sponsorship of Janome sewing machines, over the next two years.

* Parker, Rozsika *The Subversive Stitch*, Women's Press (London, 1983)

**Walker, Audrey *The Stitched Image* in *International Textile* magazine 1992

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PU MANAWA

Reviewed by Lesleigh Salinger

The traditional work of Maori women craftspeople has often been second-bested to that of men in that universal time (dis)honoured custom of attributing less value, and therefore power, to what women produce.

The ground-breaking *Te Maori* for example had no weaving on exhibition.

In the process of reclaiming mana for weaving, *Pu Manawa* a celebration of *whatu*, *raranga* and *taniko* on exhibition at Museum of New Zealand/Te Papa Tongarewa until 15 August can claim to be a fine vehicle. Its premise is that these artists are part of a continuum in which the transmission of classic techniques, skills and forms passes from age

to youth, whilst in turn youth feeds back to age, new materials, perceptions and methods of interpretation.

It is a compact exhibition comprising a range of cloaks, kete, tukutuku panels, poi, mats and skirts along side paintings, sculpture and installations. The interface between works traditional both in expression, material and method and works contemporary in expression and material, but with reference to traditional Maori forms or methods, compels the viewer to engage in the subtlety of the medium and by extension its infinite possibilities.

The accompanying catalogue features 21 craftspeople and artists. They present us with a visual feast. The word to describe the range of work which springs immediately to mind is,

delicacy. To many artists this has been part of the lexicon used to down-grade and diminish women's work and yet the work on display reasserts the refinement and strength of women's traditional medium (weaving) and its expressive power.

The catalogue definition explains Pu Manawa as - "a heart, source or inspiration and refers to a concept central to the practice and philosophy of weaving. This concept, based on the rito and awhi rito - the three middle shoots of the flax plant - is used as a basis for the selection, grouping and arrangement of the exhibition and publication."

The display of the exhibition is complementary. Alternate surfaces on the gallery walls and partitions are painted in subtle tones of green and white which form an harmonious environment for the work and mirror the appearance of the flax fronds. The partitions intersect the large back gallery at the Museum so as to lead the viewer on a circuitous path, "weaving" through the material.

The presentation of the exhibition is careful with good notices, examples for touching, music and historical photos by the noted photographer of Maori, James McDonald 1865-1935. It merits a visit from any craftsperson interested in seeing the holistic incorporation of techniques, the aesthetic, meanings and context. These women have earned their place in amongst the best of New Zealand art and craft.

Exhibition closes August 15.

CLEVELAND CERAMICS AWARD

Reviewed by Julie Warren

This year, in a break with tradition, the NZ Society of Potters decided not hold its annual exhibition, electing instead to support the Cleveland Ceramics Award. The current policy of public art galleries and museums to exclude sales meant the preferred venue, the Dunedin Public Art Gallery, was no longer suitable. For the last two years the Cleveland Ceramic Award has been attracting entries from all around the country, and it suited both the NZSP and the Otago Peninsula Trust, who run the exhibition, to work together. The exhibition was held to co-incide with the potters' annual convention, organised by Neil Grant, head of the Ceramics Department at Otago Polytechnic's School of Art. The venue for the Cleveland Award has previously been at Glenfalloch, some distance from the centre of Dunedin, but for the convenience of the convention goes it was this time shifted into the Carnegie Centre, a large gallery, just off the Octagon.

Selector was Tony Rubino, sculptor from New York. Brought over by the Polytech as Artist-in-Residence, he had worked with the students to put together an installation as part of the convention. Rubino co-opted fellow American Bruce Denhart, colleague in the Ceramics Department, to help him with the selection. As a sculptor he felt that as many of the entries were vessels he was more comfortable working with the assistance of a clay

specialist.

It was interesting to view the show through the eyes of someone unfamiliar with New Zealand pottery. A gregarious person, his enthusiasm was infectious. He loved the work. "It was so exciting opening up the boxes. The pieces were very different, there was a real diversity of exploration and no one style. We decided to go for diversity and for interesting things." Generous by nature, and finding it difficult to differentiate between such differing works, he split up all the Awards. He was keen to encourage as many people as he could and to spread the prize money as far as possible, rewarding what he thought was important. 130 pieces were accepted from 170 entries. The selection was much broader than is usual for a National Exhibition, but for Rubino and Denhart, the excitement of the work was that it was all unknown - they had no preconceptions to bother them. Technique and function often seemed less important than style and effect.

At a cursory glance the show was slightly disconcerting. There were the expected high quality pots from the veteran exhibitors, but there was a lot of unfamiliar work. Fortunately a long slow inspection revealed many unexpected gems and promises of work to look out for from emerging potters. The surprises all came from graduates or students in Polytechnic Craft Design Courses, where several of the award winners had trained.

The proximity of the exhibition was no doubt the reason for the proliferation of students and graduates from Otago Polytechnic Ceramics Course, but I'm optimistic that it's a reflection of what's happening in other parts of the country. Many of these students have a different commitment to those who became potters in the 70s. They are more likely to be multi-skilled as a result of their training, and to see pottery as just one part of their life, not a lifestyle. They may take time out to do other things, and return to clay after a break, enthused again. There's no doubting that their intentions are serious though - fees are high and living expensive, and many of them graduate with huge student loans. That so many of them are willing to take that on is a tribute to their commitment and good news for the continued growth and exciting diversity of ceramics in New Zealand.

Cleveland Ceramic Award Prize List.

Cleveland Award, \$3,000. Shared: Raewyn Atkinson, Lynda Harris, Chris Weaver
The Scottwood Award, \$1,000. Shared: Anthony Bond, Jim Cooper, Mirek Smisek
Southern Clays Award, \$500 goods. Shared: Steve James, Gaeleen Morley
Glenfalloch Award, \$500. Shared: Anne Powell, Bruce Martin
Merit Awards:
Peter Alger, Gretyl Doo



Editors note. Because of space requirements, the reviews of Pu Manawa and the Cleveland Awards have both been shortened, leaving out discussion of individual works. The full texts are available and will be dispatched on receipt of \$2 for each review to cover copying, post, etc.

COMBINED TEXTILE GUILDS

Auckland A&P Easter Show

Reviewed by Sue Curnow

The first point to make about this show - and it's important - is that it was the first of its kind. The first exhibition of work by the combined national textile guilds, and the first comprehensive exhibition of textiles at the Easter Show.

The organisers of the 150th A&P Easter Show wanted to recreate the spirit of the old A&P shows, where handwork, crafts, domestic arts, took proud and confident place among the other attractions. (The Adelaide and Sydney Easter Shows are still live-and-kicking proof of the widespread engagement in these activities. Both recreational and professional groups and individuals mount displays of visual delight and often breathtaking virtuosity).

An approach to the Weavers Guild to suggest the inclusion of textiles (following the highly successful first inclusion of the potters last year) led to the appointment of Judy Wilson as coordinator, with the aim of forming a combined textile guild in order to receive Arts Council funding for an exhibition and of encouraging membership of the various guilds.

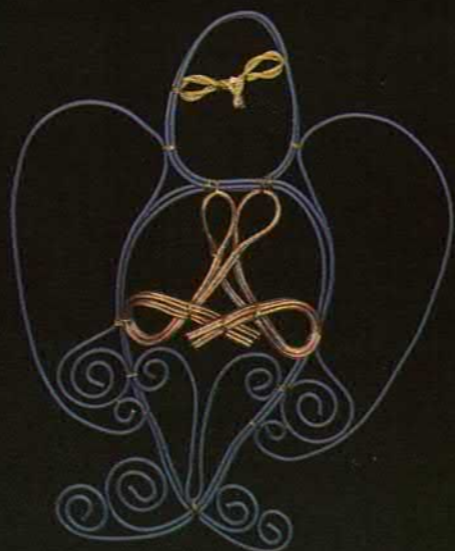
With the exception of the Patchworkers and Quilters, who are so far opposed to forming a national body, each of the seven textile guilds was represented by selected work from around the country (The former, from Auckland only). One of the benefits of the combination has been increased co-oper-

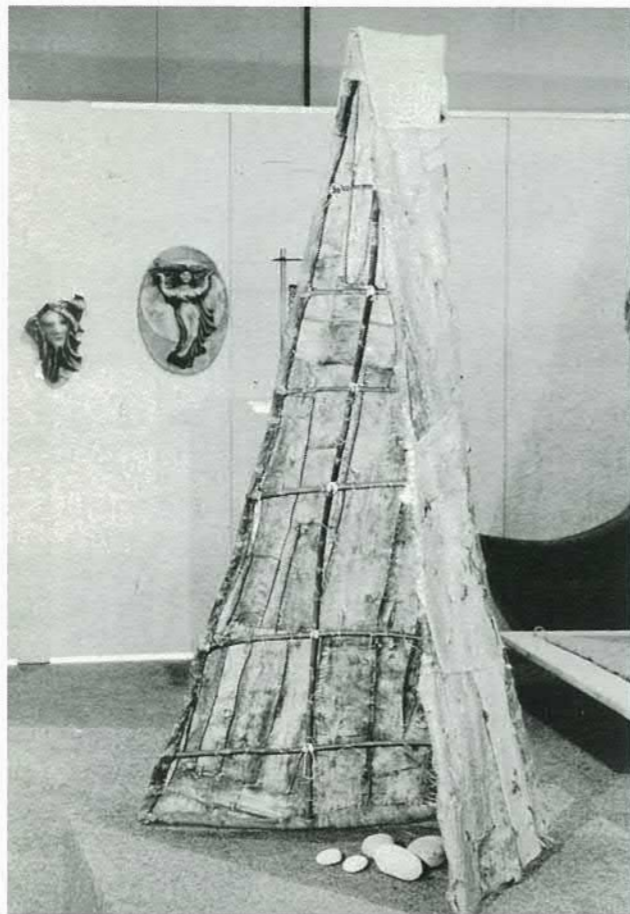
Above: Teapot by Chris Weaver. This piece was selected for the Fletcher Challenge Ceramics Award. A similar piece was the joint winner of the Cleveland Award. See also Norsewear Award coverage, p18 this issue.

Photo: courtesy, Fletcher Challenge Ceramics Award.

Right: Arabian Influence, machine knitting by Anne Baxter, Gore. From Combined Textile Guild Exhibition.

Below: Te Ao Tawhiti, by Jacqueline Fraser. From Pu Manawa.





Above; "A Shelter for the Journey", bark and fibre, by Jeanette Green, Auckland

and to improve public awareness and understanding. Such a phenomenal wealth of materials, techniques and their products, coming together in one place could create an atmosphere of delight for all and inspiration for many. In future, more attention should be given to good labelling; it's not enough to state name and price. Materials and technique, perhaps a little background information, and certainly the guild represented, are essential.

There's an unfortunate tendency for the textile genre to attract adherents to the "wild and wacky" school; characteristically there is unbridled enthusiasm for strong bright colours and harsh or obvious contrasts. The problem is exacerbated by scale; there is difficulty, especially with fabric, in achieving finesse and appropriateness of scale to image. At the other extreme, there are those - particularly spinners and weavers - who use natural dyes or soft colours and produce sometimes wonderfully subtle and sometimes excessively understated work. Somewhere in between is the quiet, well-integrated or excitingly integrated work which waits to reward the patient viewer. A silk and wool fringed woven scarf by Ian Baker; a small modest tapestry by Monika Vance; embroideries by Jenny Bain and Clare Plug; tiny fragile inverted cones of netted wire and silk by Helen Schamroth, for example; and a jacket by weaver Jean Erikson in which skill and imagination combine to embody the delights of her craft.

Quilts were lively but restrained and pleasing; Juliet Taylor's unaffected quilts have grace, charm, and integrity of concept, materials, and execution. In many ways they epitomise the successful continuation of old skills through new times.

It would be churlish in this context to argue the merits or otherwise of the award winners; award-giving always attracts dissension. However, it does provide a benchmark, both a means of setting a standard and a measure of the quality of a collection of work. In my view, Catrina Sutter's "Freedom" weaving (winner of the Supreme Award) exemplifies one dilemma which faces most craft/artists, especially in the textile field. That is; how to straddle those two stools of art and craft without falling between. Maybe it emphasises the general mediocrity of a first, tentative foray into uncharted territory; maybe it reflects personal preference. Certainly it overlooks the precious few works of quality and integrity which in the end stood out like beacons of hope.

This is an exciting new opportunity for textile guilds and individuals (recreational and professional) to work together for mutual benefit; they can lose nothing and gain strength, cohesion, and confidence through wider recognition.

ation and sharing of tutors and information; since, as an exhibition like this indicates very clearly, their activities overlap to a large degree. This is a clear bonus which can only lead to greater vitality.

Interest in the various demonstrations was at times overwhelming, proving that there are many people in "middle New Zealand" who might not have previously had an opportunity to observe craft in action.

Membership of some guilds has increased as a result, and by exhibiting in a venue other than a gallery or craft fair, textile craft/artists are able to reach a wider viewing public. The exhibition's location alongside that of the NZ Society of Potters both validated it and highlighted the relative confidence and cohesion of the latter - a well-established and consistently well-represented genre.

My response to this first show was one of anticipation and hope for future years. It was hard to shake off a small feeling of disappointment, a sense that the energy and commitment of the organisers was not matched by that of the participants. It was as if the exhibitors were wary - unsure about the purpose of such a show, and thus about the type of work to submit. A major exception was the contribution by the NZ Machine Knitters Society, whose prolific and zesty display dominated the hall. While their taste in colour might have been questionable, their energy seemed boundless. Most, however, were safe choices, tried and true pieces which have been around a while, or less-than-best work.

Future years are sure to see greater energy and certainty - after all, this is one of few opportunities to reach that elusive market,

ITINERARY

EXHIBITIONS

- Reyburn House**, Whangarei
Creative Clay, open potters exhibition. October 5-27.
- Warkworth Craft Gallery**, cnr Baxter & Neville Sts, Warkworth
Invited local women celebrate 100 years. September 17-October 1.
- Gallery-on-One**, Waiwera (1km north of Wenderholm Regional Park).
Was Ever Woman, new works in mixed media/machine embroidery, by Freda Brierley and Maggie Gresson. September 2-30.
- Compendium Gallery**, 49 Victoria Rd, Devonport, Auckland.
Annual Contemporary Craft Competition, 1993. Contemporary furniture, judged and selected by Wayne Hudson, Tasmania.
- Lopdell Gallery**, Titirangi, Auckland
Calico Company, July 9 - 23.
- Generation '93*, Waitakere City High School Students. July 9 - August 8.
- Eileen Bambury**, July 29 - August 9.
- Primary and local Intermediates*, August 12 - September 12.
- Aotea Centre**, Auckland.
Artiture. Opens September 20.
- Auckland Maritime Museum**, Auckland
Exhibition by Peter Oxborough, four months from August 20.
- Fingers**, 2 Kitchener St, Auckland.
Ann Culy. July 12 - August 7.
- Kobi Bosshard**. August 2 - 21
- Georg Beer**. August 23 - September 11.
- Brian Adam**. September 13 - October 2.
- Master Works Gallery**, York St, Parnell, Auckland.
Sidetracked - A One Man Group Show. New ceramics by Brendan Adams, June 22 - July 4.
- Early Endeavours*, the first six months in New Zealand, by Christine Hafermalz-Wheeler, July 6 - 17.
- Cu**, new works by Louise Purvis, July 20 - August 7.
- Ceramics from John Green*, August 10-28.
- Fisher Gallery**, Reeves Rd, Pakuranga, Auckland.
The Studio Ceramics Dinner Service Show. An exhibition supported by the Interior Design Guild and QEII Arts Council. September 17 - October 17.
- Installation* by Carole Shephard. October 22 - November 21.
- The Vault Gallery**, 13 High St, Auckland.
The Annual Hat Exhibition, June 29 - August 10
- Fire & Form Gallery**, Chartwell Square, Hamilton.
Women's Images, NZ Society of Potters exhibition, September 6 - October 3.
- Fingerprints Gallery**, Eleventh Ave, Tauranga.
Breadpots, recipes and home-made bread, through July.
- The Bath-House**, Rotorua.
No Distractions. The work of five women artists, curated by Helen Cooper. July 2 - September 20

Daughters of the Land. A look at the lives of rural women in the immediate Bay of Plenty area from 1890 to 1990. July 30 - November 1994.

Needleworkers - "Women of the Land". An exhibition by the Waikato/Bay of Plenty Embroiderers Guild. September 3 - October 2

Hawkes Bay Museum, Napier
Outside of Function, Contemporary silver work by Tanya Zoe Robinson, June 19 - July 18.

Luk Luk Gen! Look Again! Contemporary art from New Guinea. July 14 - September 19

Chipao Chansan, Chinese Robes, August 2.

Hawkes Bay Review, annual exhibition of painting, sculpture, photography and print-making, October 2 - November 7.

Hawkes Bay Exhibition Centre, Hastings.
The Courier Post Royal Doulton Ceramics Exhibition. July 3 - August 5.

Myriad Arts Centre, Maniaia, South Taranaki
Pottery, Pamela Annsouth.

New works, Maria Lee, Fabric Art; Alastair Sorley, Leadlight; Marilyn Dreaver, Pottery; October.

Work from workshops, (see workshop entries), November.

Art Attack, exhibition and art auction, November 27 - December 3.

Sarjeant Gallery, Wanganui.
Women Artists from the Sarjeant Collection. June - October.

Issues in Common. July - September.

Robertson Art Award, 1993. School art & craft. August - September.

Dowse Art Museum, Lower Hutt.
Crowds Form, ceramics by Christine Thacker. May 29 - August 1.

No Man's Land - extending the boundaries of women and art in Aotearoa. Marking the centennial of Women's Suffrage in New Zealand. 45 contemporary women artists are participating with works in the exhibition and



"A Garden of Unearthly Delights," by Mayra Elliott. From "No Man's Land", an exhibition at the Dowse Art Museum, until January 1994.

commentaries in the exhibition catalogue. Until January 1994.

Active Life. A major survey of the past ten years of work by Ann Verdcourt. July 31 - September 26.

Wearable felt head hats and head dresses by Hilary Eade. July 10 - September 5.

NZ Academy of Fine Arts, Wellington
Winter Show, art and craft works. June 26 - July 18.

New Views of Wellington. August 7 - September 5.

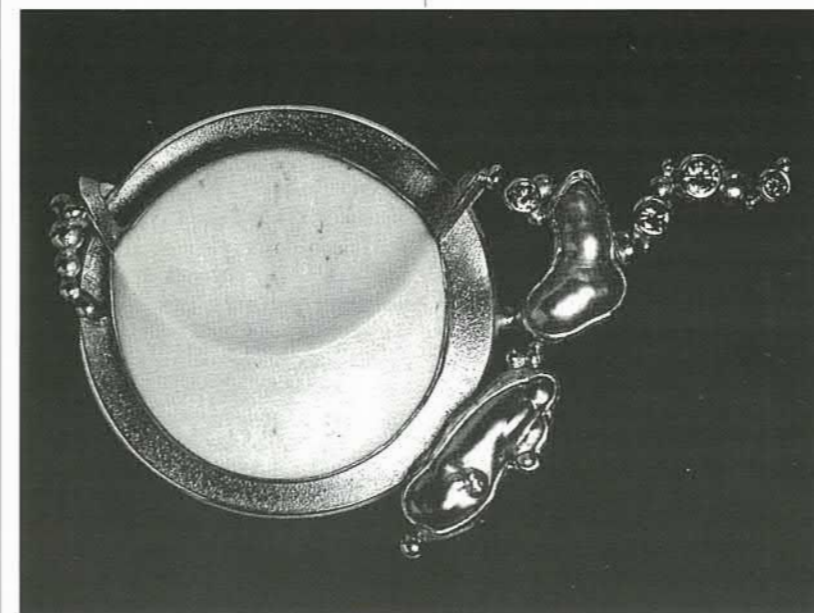
Academy Women - A Century of Inspiration. Historical and contemporary artworks and craft. September 25 - October 25.

The Potters Shop, Woodward St, Wellington.
Paintings, by Jan Chaffey, *Greenstone Jewellery* by Clem Mellish, *Bonecarving* by Brian Flintoff, July.

Patchwork by Jas Norton, *Woodwork* by Alan Neilson, *Tapestry and Weaving* by Elizabeth Arnold, August.

The Coromandel Potters, Barry Brickell, Tom and Wailin Elliot, Deidre Airey and Mike O'Donnell, September.

Silk by Mary Fyfe, *Jewellery* by Megan Young, *Paintings* by Beth Sutherland, October.



Above; "Immigration" by Christine Hafermalz-Wheeler. Beef bone (the World), freshwater pearls (North & South Islands), coloured diamonds (the family), silver and gold. From "Early Endeavours" Masterworks Gallery, Auckland.

The Craft Art Company, 284 Lambton Quay (Sun Alliance Centre), Wellington.
On-going exhibition, including pottery, jewellery, tapestry weaving, glass, wood, silk, paintings and mixed media.

The Vault Gallery, 6 Willis St, Wellington.
The Annual Hat Exhibition, June 1 - July 20.

Furniture and Sculpture by Ian Key, From July 21.

Accolades Gallery, 22 The Terrace, Wellington.
Diversity - 9 Weavers' Work, September 9 - 30.

Bronze Bowls by John Tullett and *Hot Glass* by Mandy Angus, October 4 - 22.

Suter Gallery, Nelson
Young Contemporaries Exhibition, June 23 - July 18.

Women's Art from the North of the South Island, July 21 - August 15.

Romance of Embroidery, August 18 - September 12.

NZ Society of Potters, September 9 - 26.

Craft Dyers 4th Exhibition. September 26 - October 17.

Cave Rock Gallery, Arts Centre, Christchurch.
Glass from Punakaiki, Greg Smith, Caroline Hewlett & Robert Reedy. July 5 - 18.

Wood & Wool, Charles Boyle and Margaret Stove. August 2 - 15.

Basketry, Willa Rogers and Ruth Castle. August 30 - September 19.

Thread by Thread, Jenny Bain, Pippa Davies and Janet Swanson. September 20 - October 3.

Fabric Artists, 5 Options Group, Dunedin. October 4 - 17

Sailing South, Ceramics by Peter Oxborough. November 8 - 21.

Mixed Feelings. Exhibition of the Professional Weavers Network. November 29 - December 19.

CSA Gallery, Christchurch
Textiles, Lesley Sales and Annette Rose, July 6-18.

Open exhibition, Associate Members show, July 6-25.

Fluxus, Dunedin
Jewellery, Georg Beer, July 3 - 24.

Jewellery, Susan Cohn, Australia, August 7-28.

Handwoven Textiles, Patricia Bosshard-Browne, September 4-24.

Eastern Southland Gallery, Gore.
Mystic Motion, by NZ Society of Potters members throughout NZ. August 7 - 29.

COMPETITIONS/AWARDS/EXHIBITIONS

Academy Women. A century of inspiration. Open only to women members of the Academy. Receiving days, August 23,24. Enquiries; NZ Academy of Fine Arts, PO Box 4647, Wellington. Ph 04 385 92647.

A Century of Inspiration. Essay competition. Subject of essay to be a living woman artist working in any medium. Open to school pupils - regional winners and runners up as well as overall winners. *Craft New Zealand* may publish successful entries. Entries due,

August 6. Enquiries; NZ Academy of Fine Arts, P O Box 4647, Wellington. Ph 04 385 92647.

The Art of Tattoo. The Dowse Art Museum plans an exhibition looking at the art of tattoo. It is the aim of the exhibition to present tattooing as a serious art form and present it in a positive light. The organisers would like to make contact with men and women who have tattoos. Contact Dowse, P O Box 30396, Lower Hutt, 04 570 6500.

Commonwealth Foundation Arts and Crafts Scholarships.

Ten promising artists and craftspeople will have the chance to learn from the best artists in another Commonwealth country. Open to anyone aged 22-35. £6000 fellowships cover travel, accommodation, subsistence and costs of mounting an exhibition in the host country. Deadline for applications, October 1 1993. Enquiries; Gloria Maddy, Fellowship Co-ordinator, Commonwealth Institute, Kensington High St, London W8 6NQ. Ph (UK) 071 603 4535.

International Art & Craft Competition - 1993. US\$25,000 in awards. Top 60 "Winners Exhibition", Art 54 Gallery, Soho, New York, December 8-26, 1993. Deadline to request entry forms, July 31, 1993: ARTFOLIO, Dept C, 500 Summer St, Suite 206, Stamford, Connecticut, USA. Ph (203) 359 4422, fax (203) 975 0266

NZ Society of Potters. Three national, selected exhibitions open to members:

Women's Images. Exhibits should reflect or image women's lives. Entries due August 16. Enquiries to Lynda Harris, 8A Wymer Tce, Hamilton, ph 07 854 7248.

Mystic Motion. August 7-29, Gore. Enquiries, NZSP, 31 Tizard Rd, Birkenhead, Auckland.

The Best Things Come in Small Packages. Enquiries, Box 3065, Richmond, Nelson

Creative Clay. Northland Society of Arts, open to all potters, \$500 award. Entries due September 21-24. Enquiries to Reyburn House Gallery, Whangarei.

Real Craft '93. Otago Museum Gallery, Dunedin. Exhibition: Sept 25-Oct 10. For the first time, the Cleveland Awards for Excel-

lence will be awarded - two awards of \$1000 each. Also 10 subscriptions to *CRAFT New Zealand* to selected entrants. Organised by the Dunedin Crafts Council. More information and entry forms from: Mary Miller, 15 McMillan St, Maori Hill, Dunedin. Ph 03 464 0601.

17th National Gold Coast Ceramics Award. Acquisition award, \$3000, exhibition starts October 15, judge Greg Daly. Entry forms, Gold Coast City Art Gallery, P O Box 6615, Gold Coast Mail Centre, Queensland 4217, or phone 00 61 75 816154.

Visions 1994 "Quilts: Layers of Excellence". An international juried quilt exhibition, July 2 - Sept 4, 1994. Entry deadline, October 18, 1993. Entry form, send SAE to Quilt San Diego, 9747 Business Park Ave. #228, San Diego, CA, USA

Art Attack. Exhibition open to all artists & craftspeople, Manaia Town Hall, Taranaki. Enquiries; M Dreaver, 78 Karaka St, Manaia, Taranaki.

CONFERENCES/EVENTS

Stitches & Craft Show. NZ Expo Centre, June 16 - 20.

Celebrating the Maker. 7th National Ceramics Conference, Adelaide, South Australia, July 11-17. Registration forms: P O Box 234, Stepney, South Australia 5069, ph 61 8 410 1822

ARTEX. Art & Interior Expo. Wellington (Overseas Terminal) September 23-26. Christchurch, November 11-14.

International Ceramics Symposium/Workshop. New Delhi, late 1993 or early 1994. Hosted by Indian Studio Potters Association and The International Symposiums Association. Workshop activities will be in red clay, participants will be welcome to work and contribute in raku and other firing techniques. The approach could also be rural development and use of red clay in shelter. Enquiries; Primula Pandit, Indian Studio Potters Association, Silver Oaks Estate, 45A Bhulabhai Desai Rd, Bombay 400 026.

WORKSHOPS/COURSES

Learn to Pot with professional potters. Auckland Studio Potters offer regular classes and short specialist workshops. Phone ASP Centre, 09 634 3622.

International Weaving School Courses. Variety of topics and tutors - between 2 and 6 days duration. For full brochure/programme contact: International Weaving School, P O Box 313, Picton, ph 03 573 6966, fax 03 573 7735

International Seminar on Textile Arts. 5 workshops conducted by internationally renowned textile artists, August 7-15. Also a major exhibition by

guest lecturers, August 7-October 10. Featuring Marian Bijlenga (Holland), Michael Brenand Wood (Great Britain), Catherine De Launoit (Belgium), Maggie Henton (Great Britain), Nancy O'Banion (USA). Information: Alden Biesen C/- Mr Ludo Thijs, Kasteelstraat 6, B-3740 Bilzen (Belgium). Ph 32 89 41 39 14.

Akaroa Spring School. Courses in craft, painting and leisure activities. Enquiries; Akaroa Community Arts Council, P O Box 46, Akaroa.

Women and Art Workshops. Myriad Arts Centre, Manaia.

1. Clay. Tutor Jan Cockell, October 9 - 10.
2. Weaving (flax). Tutor Pare Bennett, October 16, 17.
3. Fabric Art. Tutor Maria Lee, October 23-24.

ORGANISATIONS

Calligraphy Society of New Zealand, P O Box 3799, Christchurch.

Craft Dyers' Guild of NZ, P O Box 13 856, Onehunga, Auckland 6.

New Zealand Lace Society. Secretary Pauline Pease, 10 Lingard St, Christchurch 5.

New Zealand Society of Artists in Glass. Subscriptions - \$15.

Secretary; Sheryl King, 48 Cromwell St, Mt Eden, Auckland.

New Zealand Society of Potters. Secretary Robin Paul, 145 Eskdale Rd, Birkenhead, Auckland, Ph 09 480 6369.

The Professional Weavers Network is a group who hope to give help to each other in various fields - marketing, advertising, etc. Seminar is planned for late Feb, 1993. Yvonne Sloan, ph 09 524 7937 is happy to collect names of anyone interested in joining.

Southern Hemisphere Feltmakers. Contact: Marion Valentine, 78 Long Melford Rd, Palmerston North.

Craft Promotions NZ Ltd, P O Box 30 359, Lower Hutt.

Fairs of NZ, P O Box 68 011, Newton, Auckland.

NZ Craft Shows, P O Box 2199, Christchurch. **Stitches and Craft Show,** C/- XPO, P O Box 9682, Newmarket, Auckland

The Studio Potter Network. A growing international membership organisation of potters' groups in the US, Canada, Europe and the Far East. Services include a semi-annual Studio Potters Network Newsletter, exhibition opportunities, interaction on a personal level through an established bed and breakfast network, other philanthropic goals. Enquiries; Studio Potters Network, 69 High St, Exeter, NH 03833, USA. Ph 603 774 3582.

Entries/notices for *ITINERARY* are welcome (and free). Copy for issue 45 (which may include good quality prints of work) should cover the period October - December and should be received at Craft NZ, Box 1110, Nelson, by July 31.

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The programme for January 1994 includes four overseas tutors:

Patricia Black (Australia), fabric artist and recent winner in the Suter Wearable Art Awards

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Marion Marshall (Australia), jeweller/designer specialising in repousse techniques

Jack Thompson (USA), ceramicist and expert in light sensitive decoration techniques

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WRITING

David Hill

FIBRE/FABRIC

Patricia Black
Willa Rogers
Sue Spigel

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Elizabeth McLure

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BOOK ARTS

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Brooch by Blair Smith. Photo: Josephine Nisbet

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"Seahorse" by Robert Reedy