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NEW
POTTER

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NEW ZEALAND POTTER

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Volume Four Number Two December 1961

Pioneering is a word full of meaning for most New Zealanders. In the pottery world there is much new ground to be developed, and on the breadth of our vision and the wisdom of the traditions we establish will depend the future value of pottery making in our country.

With this fifth year our Annual Exhibition appears firmly established, but it seems necessary at this stage to examine where it is leading us. As our only national show it would seem that its function should be three-fold: To embody the ruling standard of good craftsmanship; to provide the norm to which new potters can aspire; and to give the point of departure for the more unorthodox elements which we hope will develop.

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Editor: 29 Everest Street, Khandallah, Wellington

POTTERY IN UGANDA

Michael Gill

Uganda's natural resources make it an ideal country for potters. The clay, which is best suited to stoneware, is to be had for the digging almost anywhere; the geological variety in the country provides an astonishing range of glaze possibilities; wood and water abound. All that is missing are the potters and their equipment.

When I came to this country three years ago, I had a vague idea that the job I had undertaken was the setting up of potters in small workshops throughout the country. The aim of the Uganda Development Corporation in employing me is to produce an artisan-craftsman class of workers to bridge the gap between the peasant farmers and the new industrialist-technicians. In my mind also is the hope that we shall not be too late to reduce the flow of Stoke-on-Trent made pottery to this country. I discovered, however, on my arrival, that everyone else's idea of what I had come here to do was even vaguer than my own. Nothing had been done since I had built a wheel in the basement of the Education Department when passing through the country five years previously.

First of all I had to have some potters, so I was seconded to the Kampala Technical Institute - where I was assured there was a pottery - to teach some. To start my course, would-be students of the Institute who had failed to get into any other course were sent along to me. From among them I selected the best dozen or so thumb-pot makers, and told them that the course would not lead to any certificate. The Africans are at the moment even keener, if possible, than their U.K. counterparts on "bits of paper", so that this proved effective, and I was left

with five students still prepared to embark on the new and strange course: George, Nicholas, John, Edward and Jonathan. Education is the key to personal advancement in a rapidly developing country such as this, so that in fairness to those who come to me and to the scheme, it is important to make clear from the outset that this training is intended to produce potters and potters only, not budding politicians or administrators. I cannot afford to have students who hope to use the course as a stepping stone to higher things.

The ultimate aim of the scheme is to produce, if you like, a new stratum in this society. Students who follow the course must have more than a skill in pottery. They must show themselves responsible enough to start a business of their own, and possess sufficient initiative to cope with the difficulties inherent in the production of pottery where materials and conditions will not always be the same, and where there is no tradition of craftsmanship to fall back on for support. They will have to earn their livelihood by selling pots to a public untrained in such matters, competing with cheap importations of "china" and enamelware. They will not be able to afford the ivory tower approach to their work as they do not live in a society prepared to pay ten pounds for a single pot.

Now, normally, when students have a background, outlook and language so totally different from one's own, it takes a long time to understand them and assess character, but the pottery teacher has great advantages. My students are not cursed with English inhibitions, nor are they preoccupied by problems of artist status, so that from the start their pots are themselves translated directly into clay. George, for example, is solid, hard-working and dependable. His father was a carpenter, although not self-employed, and so he does already in

a certain sense belong to the class which we are aiming to inoculate into this society. His pots have "breadth" and convey the very definite and direct appeal of efficiency and commonsense. Nicholas' pots are classically elegant if occasionally bizarre. Far from the take-it-or-leave-it attitude of George's pots, his work has an originality which catches the public eye without lacking taste. He, of them all, is most capable of catering for the tourist market, but his innate good sense, on the whole, prevents this tendency from going too far. John, on the other hand, is rather unsure of himself, but at times his pots show considerable poise, which we hope will develop as the years pass. Edward is younger, and this immaturity shows itself in an imitative vein. Occasionally he hits it off, but his shapes are often weak and he sometimes finds it difficult to assimilate what he is in fact imitating without comprehension. Aboko had been assigned to the place as a sweeper. He has had no education at all, but he is a natural potter. He assimilates and digests by instinct; having once seen a design from Pennsylvania Dutch, Chinese or Persian art, he is able to absorb the new elements and produce from them something completely integrated and personal. He is illiterate in the sense that he knows no English and can write very little of any language, but he has an untutored dignity and balance which make him perhaps the best of the potters we have had so far. He has now left me and has gone to help establish a pottery for Lango Charities in a different part of Uganda. We were very sorry to lose him, but we hope that this will lead him to greater opportunities than would have been open to him at the Institute, where his lack of formal education made it impossible for him to become a student and therefore qualify for a loan from the Uganda Development Corporation.

So much for my first students, but what of the equipment? The pottery had cost about ten shillings

to build, being a roof of leaky, second-hand asbestos supported by twenty-four old railway lines on a mud floor. There were two treadle wheels, strongly reminiscent of sewing machines, but rather less stable - the wheel I had built previously was lying outside apparently of interest only to the termites, who found it most appetising - two tanks made of brick and cement sunk in the ground for clay preparation, one long wooden table for wedging, and an up-draught kiln about eight cubic feet in capacity. This fine structure had no place on the official maps of the Institute, nor the course a place in the Institute's financial estimates. In fact, we did not exist.

What did exist was plenty of clay. We make stoneware here, not for reasons of snobbery, but simply because the clays lend themselves to it rather than to earthenware. Widely found in swampy pockets of low-lying ground, they are barely secondary in character as they are formed by the decomposition of various granites and schists when decomposition products collect in these swamps. The latter, in consequence, are alkaline, which is unusual and precludes the formation of peats. The clay is very sandy, often having up to 25% coarse sand, which has to be washed out. The alkalinity is troublesome in washing as even with relatively little water it makes a suspension "thin" due to deflocculation, and a sludge of clay and 200 mesh sand tends to settle out. However, the best clay never settles after sieving and the whole quantity of water must be lost by evaporation. This calls for a large area of efficient drying troughs. The resulting clay is very fat indeed and to make it usable, and to cut the 10% shrinkage, about 30% grog must be added. (The grog I prepare in a roller crusher from discarded pots and some bricks or tiles and then sieve through 30 mesh.) This body is good for biscuitware, but will never fit earthenware glazes because of the high silica content which

invariably results in crazed glazes. There is also rather too much silica for stoneware, but the addition of a small quantity of kaolin to boost the alumina, and some woodash (Ca + K) to introduce some flux, seems to give a good body for working up to 1400°C. An alternative is to import calcined Kayanite from Kenya, which boosts the alumina content even better. As kaolin occurs in narrow seams of very pure primary kaolin on most hills in Uganda the first is more practical for my students. The clay itself is sufficiently plastic to take up to 50% foreign matter and still throw easily, so that these additions are quite feasible.

We started off with hand-built pots, and as I did not feel myself expert I took the students to visit the Kabaka's potters. These are the Banyoro as the Baganda are not potters themselves. Legend says that they came originally as prisoners and have remained since then as the Kabaka's potters. They use no wheels, of course, and the shapes they produce inevitably follow that of the gourd. We took with us our version of an nsumbi (water-pot) and a jug or two to show what the wheel can do. Things were progressing well until a sub-chief appeared angrily in our midst. We had offended protocol by not asking permission to make the visit. However, the impression was a cordial one, and we extended an invitation to come and visit us in our pottery some day - an invitation which has, up till now at least, not been taken up.

The first essentials in the pottery were some wedging tables, which I made of concrete to replace the wooden table. I rescued my wheel, gave it new bearings, and had a copy made. (This last is not as easy as it sounds. The wheel was never invented in this country and the craft of the wheelwright is unknown. Eventually the apprentice carpenters at the

Institute produced one for me.) Firings were rather an ordeal. They were of necessity all-night affairs, and the first obstacle was the permission from the Institute to have my potters up at night. Since there was no electricity, and lamps were difficult to find as the Institute's were all broken beyond repair, everything had to be done in the dark. As may be imagined, the most difficult part was the sitting down doing nothing between stokings. The spy-hole of the kiln was strategically placed over the fire-mouth, thus ensuring the maximum whisker and hair singeing. The pottery, as may be deduced from the description above, had no walls so that on a wet night the physical discomfort was considerable. We had resigned ourselves to the temporarily rudimentary nature of our workshop when the first rains came. The morning following the first night's real rain saw the floor awash in ankle-deep mud and more than half our production to date shovelled back into the clay tanks. In desperation we moved a set of peculiar wooden pigeon holes, inherited with the original shed, to form a half-wall on the side of the prevailing wind and rain, and I planted a fast-growing vine to fill in the gap between this and the roof.

Despite all this, morale for the most part remained high. The students learned fairly rapidly as the number of class hours spent in the pottery was twenty a week. This does not count the time spent there outside class hours, which was considerable, and which first gave rise to the particular reputation of the potters in the Institute. They were looked on first with astonishment and then with something approaching envy. Originally the potters, when the course started at the Institute, were considered the lowest of the low, and my potters complained to me frequently of the insults and leg-pulling which they had to endure in the dormitory at night from the would-be clerks who were also in the dormitory. They considered themselves much superior to the



New clay preparing tanks



Samwiri decorating nsumbi while Michael Gill looks on

POTTERY IN UGANDA - MICHAEL GILL

Nicholas throwing nsumbi on boy wheel

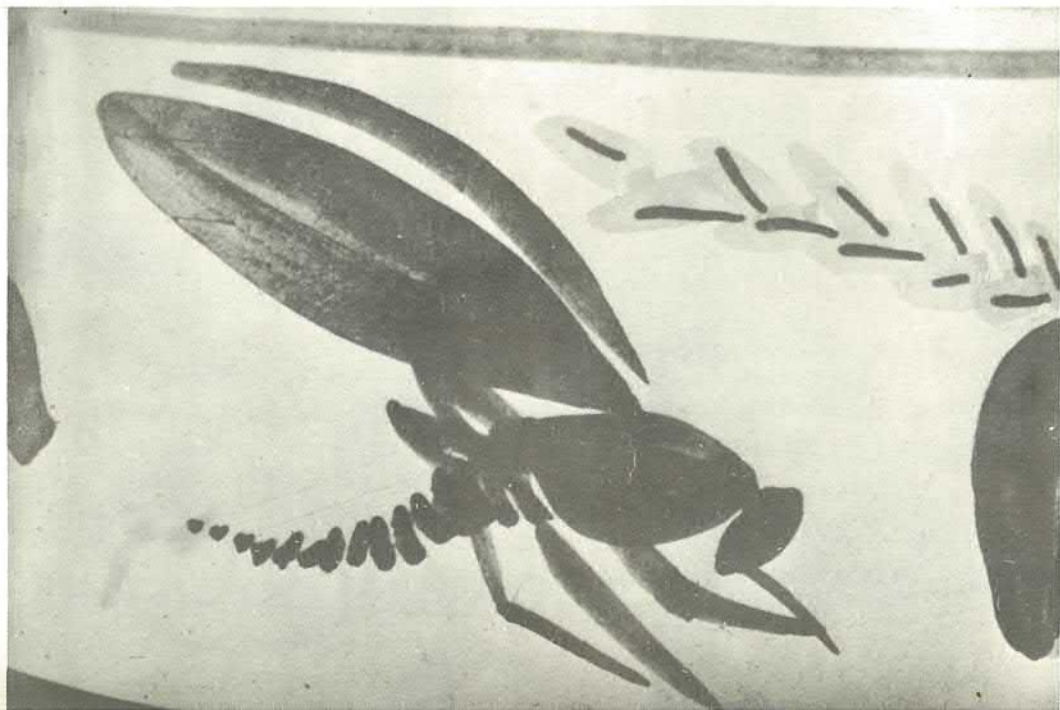


Nicholas finishing nsumbi



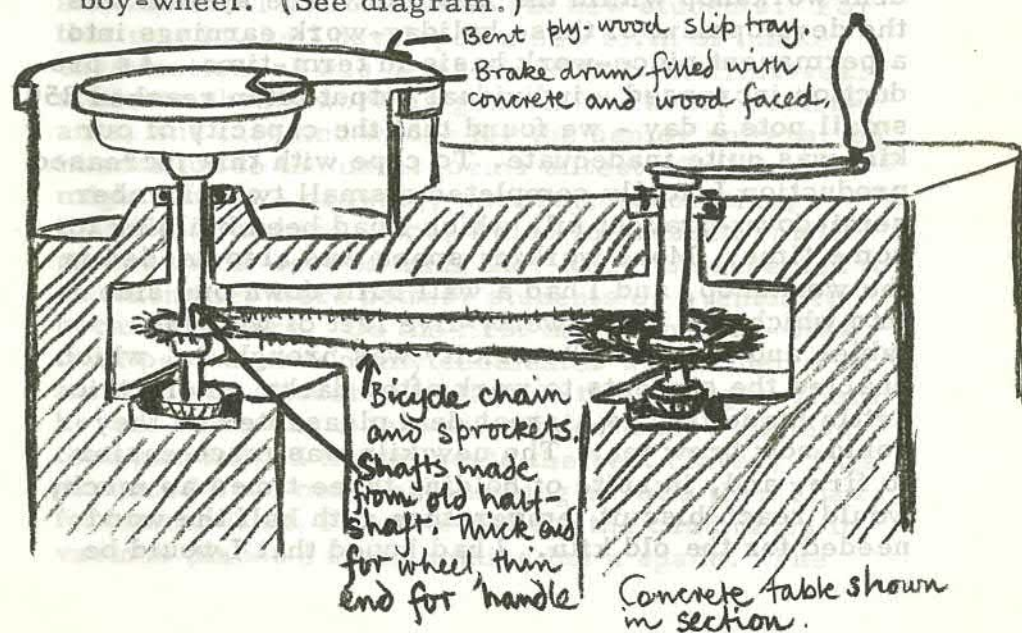


Brushwork decoration. A buck. George Sempagala
POTTERY IN UGANDA - MICHAEL GILL
 Insect decoration in black iron on white slip biscuit
 by Samwiri Rwemi



potters because they did not have to do manual labour. This situation, however, was completely reversed when the potters were given a share of the proceeds, and in this way earned money. Money here is a matter of great social importance, particularly among students. The fees at the Institute are fairly high, and it is only the pottery course which enables its students to pay their way. The extra money they earn allows my students, who do not necessarily have rich fathers behind them, to rattle a little money in their pockets. As they work together all day and sleep in the same dormitory at night, they have developed a strong community spirit, and have succeeded in getting up their own teams for football and other sports - they won the football cup last year; they have shone particularly in boxing, which is a high prestige sport at the Institute. They have, in short, come to hold quite a respected place in the community.

Towards the end of the first year I completed the boy-wheel. (See diagram.)



The boy-wheel speeded up production enormously, and the students were throwing well enough so that when I was asked to produce flowerpots I decided that they could spend their last holidays making pots on a piece-work basis. I sell these pots in town to various people: the student is allowed one third of the price, one third returns to the pottery to help develop it and to pay for the running of it, and the remaining third, of course, goes to the retailer.

During the next year I found a limited but eager demand for these flowerpots, and with the money obtained by the sale of these I was able to make further improvements to the pottery. Jonathan had to go, having failed in all his other three subjects, and although a new intake was not allowed I did take on Samwiri to fit into the group. Samwiri has turned out to be Aboko's only real rival in decoration because, although his brushwork is perhaps not quite as fluent as George's, it is far more creative. We slowly evolved a system and established an independent workshop within the Institute. The system was the development of these holiday-work earnings into a permanent piece-work basis in term-time. As production increased - individual output often reached 250 small pots a day - we found that the capacity of our kiln was quite inadequate. To cope with this increased production I finally completed a small two-chamber semi-down-draught kiln which I had been building for some time. More working space was also needed in the workshop, and I had a wall built down one side into which was built twenty-five feet of wedging tables and a sink. Electricity was brought in, which enabled the students to work after dark; an electric kettle made firings a great deal pleasanter as they could now brew tea. The new kiln was much easier to fire, and, in spite of holding three times as much, would reach biscuit temperature with half the wood needed for the old kiln. I had hoped that I would be

able to reach stoneware temperatures and do some glazing, but it was built of ordinary bricks at a cost of only twenty-five pounds, and it was not up to the task. We tried several times, but on each occasion at about 1200°C. something always gave way - the bag wall would collapse, the throat would get closed up, or bricks would drop from the arch - so that although we did have some interesting glaze tests, I decided to pull down the wall dividing the two chambers, thus nearly doubling its biscuit capacity. At about this time our production outran the demand for flowerpots, and the increased capacity of the kiln greatly assisted us with the production work of nsumbis, as we could now pack seventy at a firing. These nsumbis are porous waterpots decorated in red and black over a white slip, with long twisted stoppers. They require both more skill to throw and more space to fire than flowerpots as they cannot be packed as closely.

At the beginning of the third year a new intake was allowed and I had to choose six new students. For this new intake I developed a new form of intake examination. I was determined that the first-year students should work as general workshop assistants, and turn and wedge for the senior potters, so in addition to the usual forms of test which one might expect - drawing, painting, decorating, thumb-pot making, etc., I also introduced small pieces of the sort of thing they would be expected to do when they were pottery students or eventually became potters. On the first day of the two-week trial period each of my candidates was armed with a spade and allocated a place in the swamp. There he was set to dig a test-pit six feet deep. (These test-pits helped me to locate the best clays.) This produced even more astonishing results than I had foreseen. When I went to collect the candidates in various places I found nothing but a spade. The

faintest-hearted had decided that this course was not for them. During evening discussions which followed, others of them were discouraged by the amount of manual labour involved in the course and they also departed. We have come to name this form of examination natural selection as it left me with six new students and no need for any deciding.

We were fairly affluent now, and to add space for the six new students we made ourselves a bigger and better roof. First we replaced the upended railway lines by five 30' span trusses made of 2" x 1" timber which we placed over the old roof. It meant that four or five people were continually engaged in carpentry overhead while the rest continued their normal work below, except that the structure of the drying racks had to be taken apart and reassembled as the particular part of the roof under which they stood was taken down and replaced. The second-hand asbestos is now third-hand, as we used it again as we went along to form part of the new roof. The whole operation in fact was rather like pulling oneself up by the bootlaces.

As the year wore on the pattern of the course began to be defined. In the first year the students have their fees at the Institute paid out of workshop funds. They are given all the hack-work and odd jobs around the workshop to do. They learn how to prepare clay, which they bring from the swamp, to grind grog from the sub-standard flowerpots and bricks, and to make white slip from the most plastic portion of the swamp clay and kaolin. They are assigned to the senior potters as wheel turners, for wedging and as firing assistants. What they learn of pottery, apart from this in the first year, is purely incidental. However, they do have the opportunity when the wheels are free to practise on their own. In the second year they start straight

away on production throwing of flowerpots. They start with a fairly small size and work up to 12" x 12" on the kickwheels. Towards the end of the second year they can make water-pots and plates as well. From the beginning of this year they manage their own firings. After each firing I ruthlessly sort out those pots which are acceptable and for which they are paid: the rest go straight back into grog. The third and fourth year students, who by this time have been weeded down to three or four, have a new student to do all the heavy work and they produce anything that is in demand. With luck this earns them rather more than £2.10.0 a month in pocket money after paying their school fees. At the end of this time, if the money is available, they may go off on a scholarship for six months or a year to another part of the world. We hope that one may possibly go to Michael Cardew in Nigeria, another to Japan - if the authorities permit - and one other to England. The aim of this is to give them experience in the sort of workshop which they will themselves set up. On their return to Uganda they will receive a loan from the Uganda Development Corporation which will enable them, with my assistance, to build their own pottery. The U.D.C. will then allow them to pay off the loan in small amounts over a period of ten years or so. Those of them who for any reason - mostly of character - I do not think suitable to set up on their own will either go out as junior partners to potters who have already established themselves in a workshop, or - if I decide in the third year that they are unlikely to qualify for a loan - I hope to arrange a teacher-training for them so that they will become qualified pottery teachers.

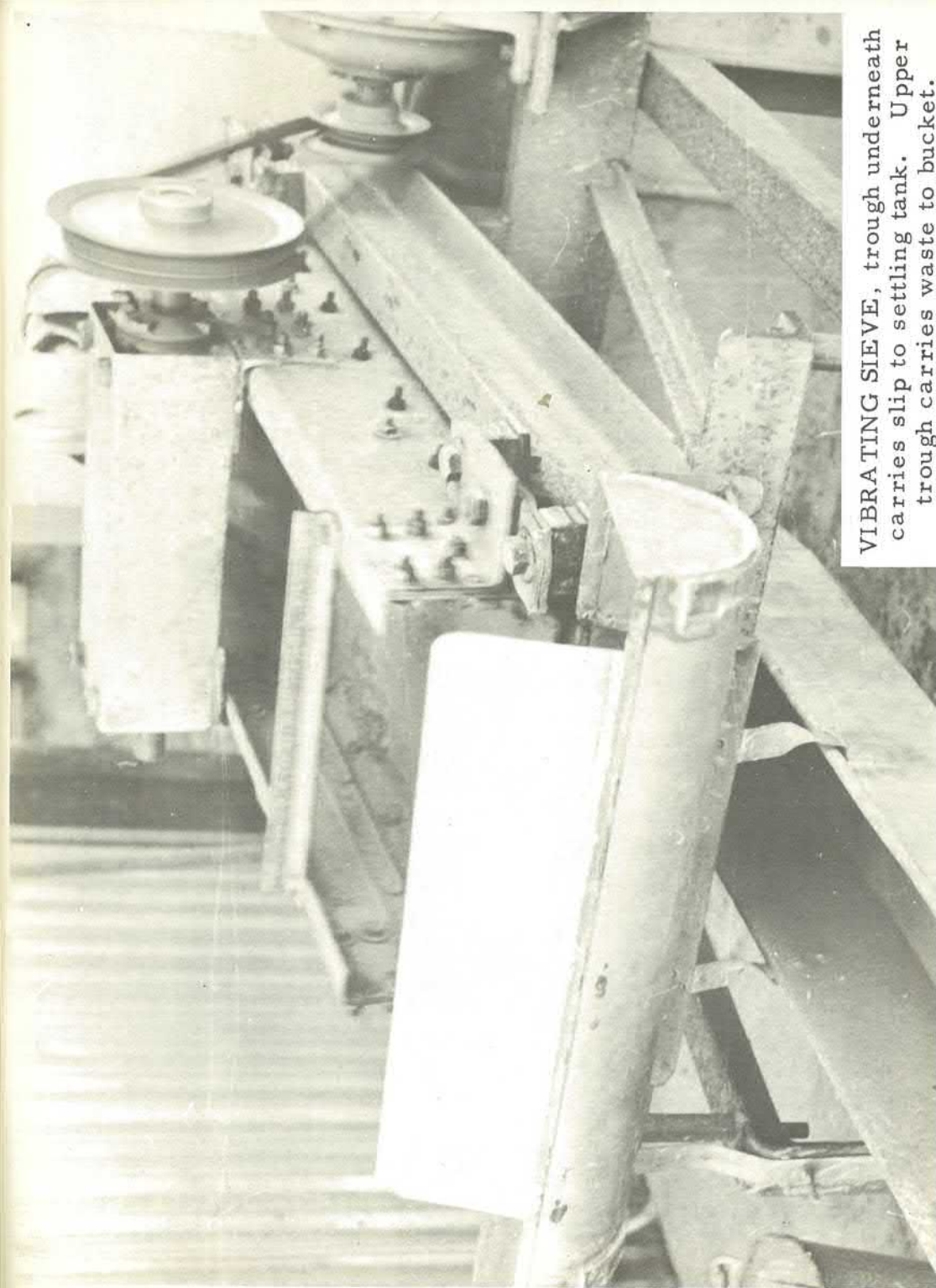
Meanwhile, towards the end of my second year in Uganda, the long drawn-out negotiations for land for the new pottery training workshop were at last completed. Those of you who have never been caught

up in the involutions of government can have little conception of the frustrations of such negotiations. At one point when the piece of land I first chose was very nearly allocated to me, some obscure person in some equally obscure Ministry vetoed it because of kiln-smoke. There was no way of having this decision reversed as there was no way of finding who had made it in the first place. We therefore gave up that piece of land and found one a few hundred yards further along the road. This is in Institute property and has now been leased to the Uganda Development Corporation. As soon as I knew that the land was finally and indisputably mine, I hastened to have the pottery I had designed built on it. Work on it is very nearly completed, and it will officially be opened at the end of this month.

In this new workshop we shall be able to glaze as the new kiln is built of firebrick imported from England and South Africa. This pottery will be one of the few I have known designed as a pottery, so that I hope all will run fairly smoothly from the start. I shall then be ready to leave it in the care of someone else while I move on to the next job of starting each of the student's workshops, which is, of course, what I came here to do more than three years ago.

Kampala
May, 1961.

(We have a copy of the plan of this pottery, which may be borrowed on application to the Editor.)



VIBRATING SIEVE, trough underneath carries slip to settling tank. Upper trough carries waste to bucket.


CLAYWORKING PLANT AT STURT POTTERY, MITTAGONG, N.S.W.

Les Blakebrough

In October, 1959, I was asked by the Sturt Association to manage their pottery. Until this time, all clay used at the pottery and also that supplied to the classes run for the school children and adult education evening classes had been made by hand. As the pottery had been in a developmental stage since it was built in 1954, this arrangement was fairly satisfactory except from an economic point of view. It had proved impossible for the workshop to run and pay its way from the sale of pots alone. The pottery had been subsidised mainly by the other craftsmen at Sturt - the weavers and carpenters.

The problem of mechanising part of the process was tied up with the question I seemed to be confronted with: "Can a potter earn, what is by contemporary definition a living, selling pots in a normal trading way at non-precious prices?" With existing arrangements, this was not possible. I felt a responsibility to the other craftsmen at Sturt and also did not want to fall into a subsidised "ivory tower" existence.

Making one's own clay is indeed desirable for studio and small workshop potters, and in many cases the only way of doing it is by hand. Bernard Leach in his book records hand methods, but as his workshop developed, a less time-consuming method of preparing clay was needed, and so some machinery was installed to make the job easier and quicker. This is what we have done at Sturt, and there is nothing revolutionary about it, but I hope this article may be of use to some of you who feel the need of doing away with one of the many arduous jobs involved in potting.



HEATED DRYER, with gas burners
at bottom. Clay pit in background.

With the help of an engineering friend, I designed a blunger using a ten H.P. differential from a wrecked car. This course of action was taken after we discovered that for the price of one commercially supplied "blunger" we could equip our workshop not only with a blunger, but also a vibrating sieve, settling tanks and troughs, and a heated dryer, if we were prepared to some extent to "do it ourselves".

The blunger is a hexagonal tank with a capacity of one hundred and forty gallons. The hexagon shape is used in preference to a round tank because the turbulence set up by the changes in direction help to disperse the clay more quickly into a slip. In a round tank the clay tends to move round en masse. A shaft was made to extend from one of the axle housings and extends to within 2" of the bottom of the tank. The differential is mounted on a cross beam at the top of the tank. On the shaft we bolted four blades with a sweep of 31" and a clearance of 2" from the walls of the tank. On the pinion shaft is mounted a vee belt pulley and this is driven by a 3 H.P. electric motor. Gearing is designed to give one hundred r.p.m.; this is slow but very powerful. An inspection plate was made, big enough to get hand and arm inside, at the bottom of the tank to rake out solid material left after the slip had been discharged. Opposite this is a 2" outlet tap. The top is covered and a lid on one side is used for loading. The method of operating adopted so far has been to fill the tank with one hundred gallons of water, setting the machine in motion and gradually adding the dry clay. The amount of clay that can be loaded in will vary from clay to clay. Less very plastic clay would be taken up by a given amount of water than a more open clay. Clay generally will go into suspension quicker if blunged in warm water. From the blunger, the slip passes over and through

a vibrating sieve. The sieve is a metal frame, into which slide mesh of any given size; we use a 30 mesh and 120 mesh for most of our slips. The mesh itself is on a light frame and slides into the main upper frame and is made in such a way that side leverage on the screen makes it taut. This upper part of the machinery is quite independent of the lower mounting except at each corner where it is attached to a flexible strip of heavy duty belting anchored at each side to the lower framework. (See photograph.) Across the centre of the upper frame is mounted an eccentric shaft which is driven by a half H.P. motor; the speed of the motor causes the upper and moving frame to vibrate and to do the job of sieving. The fine slip goes through the sieve into a trough underneath which carries it to settling tanks inside the main shed, and the coarse waste material works its way to the bottom of the mesh and into a trough which carries it away. The lower framework is bolted to the concrete floor.

The slope where the pottery stands determined where the machinery should be. The clay storage bays, mixing area, blunger and vibrating sieve, in this order, have been placed above the pottery where the natural fall carries the slip down into the settling tanks.

The settling tanks were built of common brick $4\frac{1}{2}$ " thick, with a strand of fencing wire for reinforcing, set into the mortar between courses in the upper sections of the tanks. A dividing wall makes a small tank at one end for tests or earthenware clay. This holds one hundred gallons, the main tank two hundred and fifty gallons. Both tanks have been lined with waterproof cement. The floor has a slope to the front and centre of each tank, where there is set in cement 2" treacle taps. This type of tap is ideal for use with slips and can be adjusted to

flow at any given velocity simply by pulling up or pushing down. The floor needs a steep rake towards the outlet tap; slip if allowed to settle for any length of time becomes very viscous and the last few gallons will not flow easily if the floor has a shallow fall. When the tanks were completed I measured in water through a water meter borrowed from the local plumber. With the simple arrangement of a length of wood across the tank, through which passes, at right angles, a dip stick held in any given position by a locking screw, it was possible to record the level of each five gallon amount on the dip stick where it passes through the cross beam. In this way, once the stick has been marked it is an easy matter to determine any given amount of liquid in the tank.

After sieving, the slip is allowed to settle in the tanks for a few days when the clear water is siphoned off. Our clay is a very plastic weathered shale and needs opening to make it a good throwing clay. I add 20/25% of 80 - 100 mesh milled silica which makes a good standard stoneware body for pots up to twelve pounds weight of plastic clay; larger than this I use the same body with an addition of firebrick grog.

When additions have been made, in slip form, the whole batch is given a good mix, then put out on drying pans. We have several of these; most are a simple brick structure with a shallow trough $4\frac{1}{2}$ " deep. The porosity of the bricks helps to absorb the excess water from the clay slip. I have just completed a dryer which is heated underneath with town gas. The three flues run from front to back and a 24" gas "ribbon burner" is set at the front of each flue. The heat from these dispels the water taken up by the bricks, from the slip, and speeds up the process in the winter months. It is important

not to let the clay slip boil - excessive heat destroys the organic life in clay and will reduce plasticity.

If a clay is available locally so much the better. A local clay can uniquely characterise the place from whence it comes, particularly if local rocks or other glaze forming substances are used in conjunction with the clay.

Respect and love of clay are necessary if one's pots are to "live" and no amount of technical perfection will give life to dead forms. This is also true at the end process of pot making when the finished pots are trusted to the hazards and uncertainties of flame and heat. It is not man, but the fire itself that really completes the pots. It is important to know as much as you can about the clay you use, and one should be capable of making an intelligent guess about its virtues or faults without attempting to become a ceramic chemist.

Book List:

- Bourry: "Treatise on Ceramic Industries"
(Very old - 1916 - but still a good reference book).
- Norton: "Elements of Ceramics"
(An informative chapter on machinery).
- Searle: "The Clay-worker's Handbook"
(A good general book).

A NEW ZEALAND POTTERS' COUNCIL?

Auckland Studio Potters

An idea which has been under consideration for some time by a number of potters seems to be worth further discussion now that provincial group activity is growing so rapidly.

The suggestion, now put forward officially by the Auckland Studio Potters, is for a National Council to be formed by one representative from the Editorial Committee of the New Zealand Potter and one each from all city or provincial groups who wish to nominate representatives, and pay a small levy to cover incidental expenses.

The Council would then be in a position to represent and make decisions on major issues affecting all potters throughout New Zealand. Such issues may include the allocating of exhibitions within New Zealand, organising overseas exhibitions, overseas visits, dealing with Arts Advisory Council, etc., all of which should be on a national basis.

Most of the organisation could be done by the local representative/correspondents by mail, but it is also envisaged that each group may be able to send its representative to an Annual Meeting at the time and place of the annual New Zealand Potters' Exhibition.

For obvious reasons the Auckland group suggests that the Headquarters of a National Council be based in Wellington.

PLEASE LET US HAVE YOUR OPINIONS

Would all potters' organisations please consider at their next meeting this proposal put forward by the Auckland Studio Potters. Would all Secretaries then please communicate the results of these discussions to the Editor, New Zealand Potter, 29 Everest Street, Khandallah, Wellington.

If potters are in favour of this proposal it should then be possible to have a National Council organised and ready to function by the time of the Sixth New Zealand Potters' Exhibition in 1962.

SIXTH NEW ZEALAND POTTERS' EXHIBITION

In our last issue it was stated that as both Dunedin and Palmerston North had requested the Sixth Exhibition the matter would be decided by vote. However, the issue has resolved itself. We have received a letter from the Director of the Otago Museum, Dr. Forster, as follows:-

"We hope that if the New Zealand Potters' Exhibition is held in Dunedin we will have the opportunity again of housing it. . . . Although we could no doubt arrange for the Exhibition to be displayed in the new wing in the second half of 1962 it would perhaps be more advantageous to ourselves and to your organisation if it were to be coincided with the official opening of the Otago Museum which it is expected will be held in the early second half of 1963."

It has therefore been decided that the Sixth Exhibition will be held at Palmerston North in 1962.

SYDNEY EXHIBITION - 1961

Mollie Douglas,
Teacher of Ceramics,
National Art School,
Sydney.

In Sydney, Australia, during the first ten days of June, an exhibition of Studio and Pre-Industrial Pottery was arranged by The Potters' Society of New South Wales at the East Sydney Technical College. Mr. L. Roy Davies, Principal of the National Art School, opened this exhibition held in the new pottery building.

An explanation of the exhibition by Mr. Peter Rushforth, President of the Potters' Society of N.S.W., was included in the invitations:

"In recent years in Australia there has been an increasing interest in studio pottery, but until now a representative collection of overseas contemporary work and examples of historical pottery which have influenced potters has not been readily accessible to local pottery students. It is because of this that the Potters' Society of N.S.W. with the co-operation of private collectors, the Museum of Applied Art and Sciences and the National Art School have arranged an exhibition of Pre-Industrial Pottery and Studio Pottery.

It is also considered that this exhibition should provoke some thought as to the value of art in the community. Our present age is one of extraordinary scientific advances which are re-shaping our environment and our way of life. Whether we also advance culturally, will depend on how successfully we integrate the humanities and the arts into our community and into everyday living. Educationalists,



SYDNEY EXHIBITION 1961

New Zealand pots in front, Australian pots behind



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artists, and scientists are not unaware of these problems, and more thought is now being given by many people as to how we can transmute qualities of good design into the products of our technological age and how we can bring creativity into the lives of people.

In the field of ceramics a revitalisation of some types of pottery making has come from artists working either singly or in small groups and the workshops of some of these potters, intentionally or otherwise, have become experimental studios for design in industry. Apart from these aspects, however, individual pottery making has always been a source of creative activity and for this reason it has an important role to play in education.

The pottery to be exhibited has been chosen for its historical and aesthetic importance, and consists of examples of primitive pottery, tin-glazed and slip trailed earthenware, stoneware and porcelain and examples of work from fifty contemporary potters."

The response to the exhibition, in spite of little publicity at first, both from potters and the public, showed the need for such a display.

One room contained the Pre-Industrial pottery, starting with a group of primitive pots from Egypt, Greece, China, Persia and Peru, one of the most interesting being a neolithic Kansu jar painted in black. The Chinese group had, as a nucleus, the Elinor M. Hinder loan collection (a gift to the Pottery Section this year) - one a grey Han pot showing the beginnings of high temperature glazes where ash had settled during the fire on the flaring lip and shoulders, leaving unglazed the underneath of the rim and the lower part of the pot. From private collectors there was a group of very fine celadons of

the Sung and Ming Dynasties, a large Tz'u Chou jar with a finely yet freely painted dragon pattern in iron over white slip. Also well represented were Chun blue and Sang de boeuf glazes, and blue and white porcelain.

Amongst the folk pottery from Europe was a large English slip trailed oven dish of the 17th Century beside modern examples from England, Switzerland and Japan. Near these were majolica pots from Portugal, Spain and Italy.

In the contemporary room the main stand showed the work of Bernard Leach, the Leach pottery, Michael Cardew and Harry Davis. Amongst these were some bowls and honey jars with lovely Leach brushwork, a casserole from the Leach pottery with a mellow unglazed exterior. A large cider jar by Cardew was freely incised and a little jug also by Cardew from Abuja in Africa had a dark glaze with beautiful blue areas.

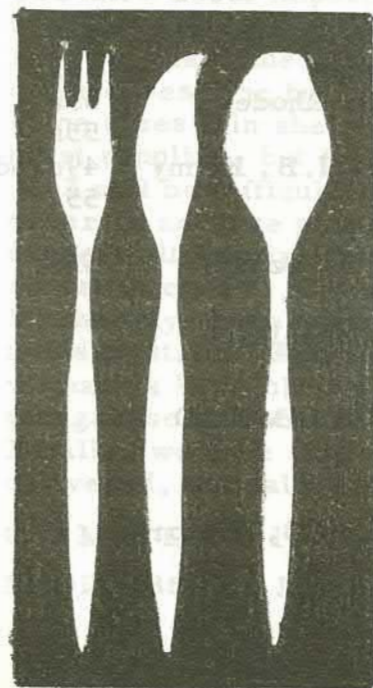
Hans Coper pots unglazed outside, stood beside Lucie Rie bowls of almost classic design delicately potted and decorated. In the same case were Swedish pots perfectly made and glazed by double glazing. These contrasted sharply with confidently thrown and freely trailed cider jars and jugs by Raymond Finch.

The work of Australian potters was arranged along one wall of this room with the New Zealand pots on long tables in front. The Australian work was both earthenware and stoneware and came from Victoria, Queensland, Canberra as well as N.S.W. There were large coiled pots, panels of tiles and boldly executed majolica designs, stoneware glazes of all types, and a great diversity of form and decoration. Robert Hughan of Victoria, the first stoneware potter in Australia, sent a collection of his pots including a fine tenmoku jar and smaller pots with celadons, iron reds or unctuous crackle glazes.

The New Zealand pots were mainly stoneware; up till now very little has been known about the work done in New Zealand, so this large group of pots attracted great attention, especially the salt-glazed ware, as potters here are not glazing in this manner.

Amongst potters here and in New Zealand there has been much experimenting, and this is evident in the work produced. As potters we are young and growing, and although only occasionally the outstanding or mature pot appears, nevertheless good and sensitive pots were here. This exhibition showed a marked advance on the last one held by the Potters' Society of N.S.W. in 1958, and from our community which shows a growing love of good pots will come further development as potters find their direction.

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EXTRACT FROM THE FOREWORD BY JOHN WOOD
TO THE CATALOGUE OF THE NEW ZEALAND
POTTERS' FIFTH EXHIBITION

"Made by individual potters throughout New Zealand (the pots in this Exhibition) aim, not to mimic or rival the factory wares in the hardware stores but to complement them, to fill a gap, to re-state the worth of other types of ware and other ways of making them At the same time it would be a mistake to assume that all such pottery is intended purely for the display shelf. The further these wares penetrate into our daily lives, in use in our homes, the more fully do they fulfil their true function. For a potter's creativeness flourishes best, not in the vacuum of 'self-expression', but in response to the needs and demands of the life of the people around him, and a pottery-sensitive people begets good potters."

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	10	11	12	13	14	15

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2. Cat.No. 64 Bottle - Winifred Dunn
3. Cat.No.118 Lidded Jar - Hillsborough Group
4. Cat.No.103 Coffee Set - Mary Hardwick-Smith
5. Cat.No. 42 Coiled Cereal Jar - Barry Brickell
6. Cat.Nos. 49,50 Coffee and Tea Pots - Roy Cowan
7. Cat.No.270 Vase - Lee Thomson
8. Cat.No.188 Pot - Helen Mason
9. Cat.No. 36 Casserole - Doreen Blumhardt
10. Cat.No. 56 Lampbase - Roy Cowan
11. Cat.No. 45 Set Kitchen Jars - Barry Brickell
12. Cat.No.209 Coffee Set - Juliet Peter
13. Cat.No.130 Blue Lidded Vase - Doris Holland
14. Cat.No.137 Jug - Doris Holland
15. Cat.No. 37 Coffee Pot - Doreen Blumhardt

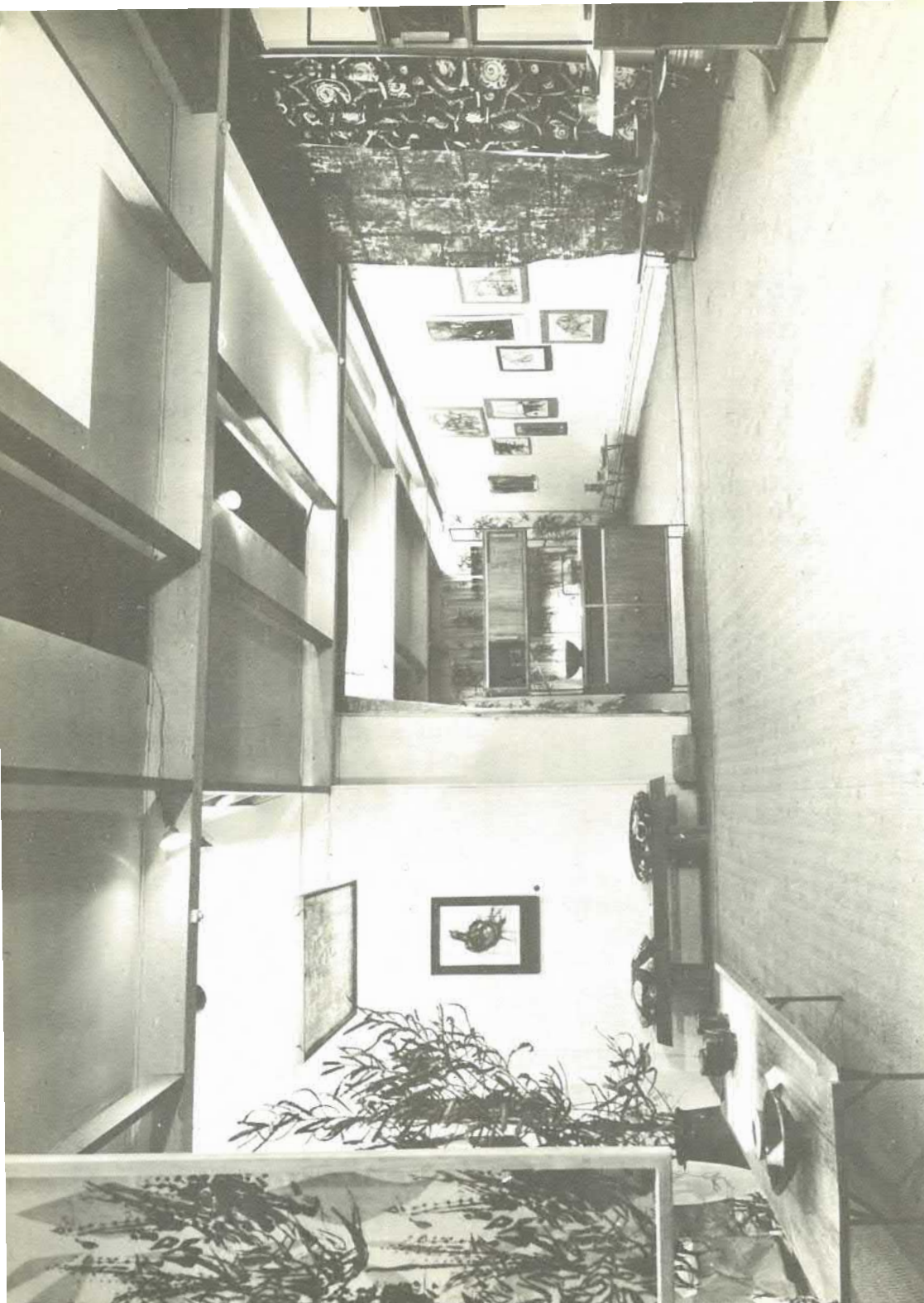
Other pages:

- Cat. No. 182 Bowl - Helen Mason
- Cat. No. 27 Vase - Martin Beck
- Cat. No. 34 Lampbase - Doreen Blumhardt
- Cat. No. 108 Plate - Mary Hardwick-Smith
- Cat. No. 26 Bottle - Nancy Beck
- Cat. Nos. 187, 189 Ash pots - Helen Mason
- Cat. No. 162 Bowl - Jack Laird
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- Cat. No. 298 Teapot - John Wood
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- Cat. No. 169 Stem dish - Hazel McCaughern
- Cat. No. 129 Salt-glazed Flagon - Doris Holland

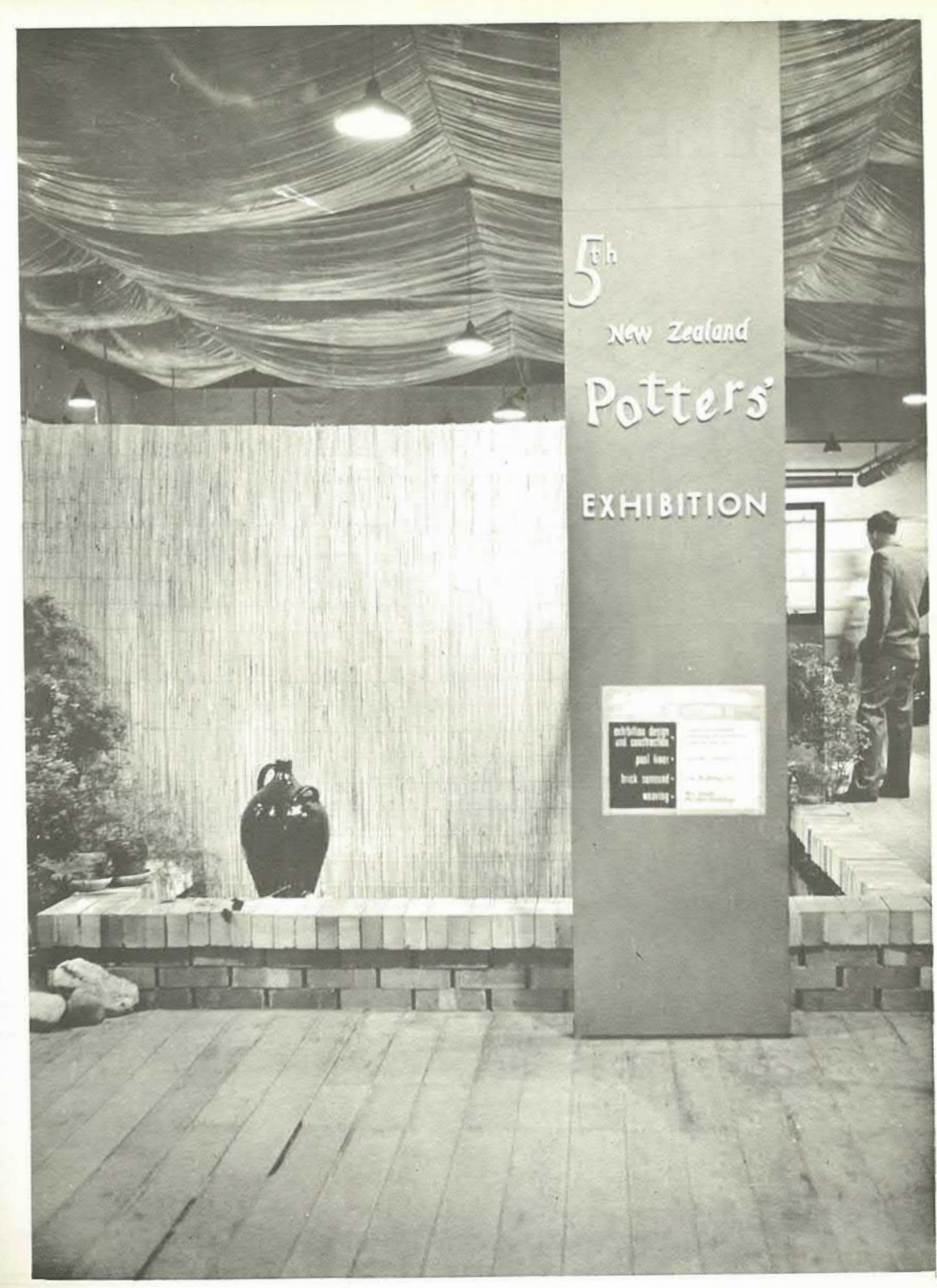
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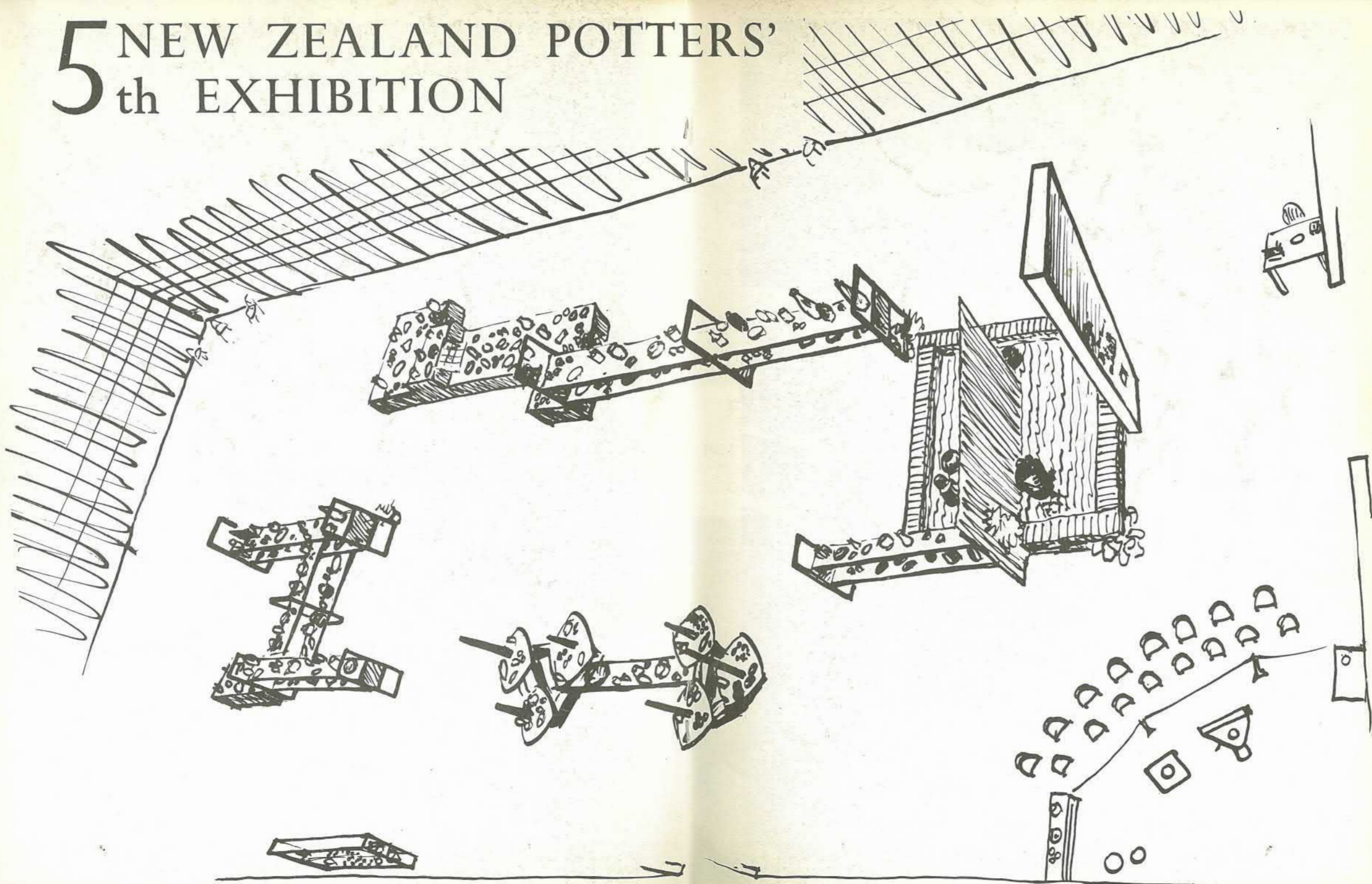




HELEN MASON - Pottery: SUSAN SKERMAN - Fabrics: MARTIN HILL - Furniture
Centre Gallery, Wellington, 1 - 13 October.
Photo: Gordon Wiles



5 NEW ZEALAND POTTERS' 5th EXHIBITION





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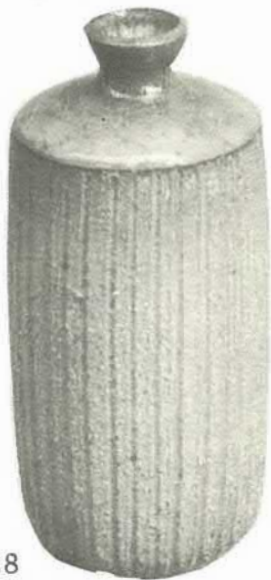


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FIFTH NEW ZEALAND POTTERS' EXHIBITION
Art Gallery Durham Street Christchurch

23 September - 4 October 1961

As a function and as an occasion this Fifth Exhibition was an outstanding success. Firmly guided by an excellent Committee the show was well-run, the layout ambitious and interesting, and the publicity was good. The public flocked in and stayed to watch the demonstrations, and altogether a tremendous interest in potters and in pottery was created.

Mechanics: Jean Morland, Chairman of the Committee set up to plan the Exhibition, reports as follows: "As there is no central potters' organisation in Christchurch, the committee was formed of representatives of each known group of potters in the city. These were Mesdames B. Brooke (Secretary), W. Dunn, M. Hill, D. Holland, M. Mauger, W. Reed, Misses J. Edgar, R. Horrell, J. Morland, Y. Rust; Messrs. A. Brooke, A.A.G. Reed, R. Riccalton, J. Wood and Prof. J. Simpson. This Committee met at approximately monthly intervals from April onwards, and sub-committees were formed to concentrate on specialised areas of preparation, e.g. selection, finance, design of catalogue, layout of Exhibition, advertising.

The Selection Panel, elected by the full Committee, had several practising potters on it, and consisted of Mesdames Holland and Reed, Mr. J. Wood and Professor Simpson, Mr. Courtney Archer being unable to act as he had not returned from an overseas trip.

The effective layout of the Exhibition was designed under the guidance of Professor Simpson, Director of

the School of Fine Arts of Canterbury University whose students prepared models for the perusal of the Committee. From these, the Committee chose the general plan they preferred, and noted features from all the models submitted that they would like incorporated in the final design. The students then went to work on unifying the chosen scheme, and the final design emerged. To Professor Simpson and his assistant Mr. T. Taylor, and to Warren Smith of the student group, the Committee is greatly indebted for their undertaking responsibility for the construction, setting-up, and later dismantling of the fine stands that added such interest to the display as a whole.

The Committee especially thanks the potters throughout the country who backed up their efforts by sending generously from the best pots of the year's work. Upon them, of course, the success of the Exhibition basically depended, and the nature of their response meant that the very large hall of the Durham Street Art Gallery was not an embarrassment.

The problem of paying for the Gallery and for the rather costly layout was a very real one all through the planning stages; another problem was who to invite to the Opening Function. These problems were solved by the decision to sell tickets for the opening night at Ten Shillings a head, purchasers to have the privilege of first choice of buying the pots on sale. The number of tickets for sale was limited to 200, and all exhibiting potters received a free invitation. This scheme worked very well, and the whole opening was a most exciting affair. So much so that Mr. A.A.G. Reed's opening speech had to be delayed until after 9 o'clock, when things calmed down a little. The only pots allowed to be sold beforehand were the four pots purchased by the Canterbury Museum. A representative from the Department of Industries and Commerce attended the opening and purchased several pieces for use in New Zealand Trade Commissioners' offices overseas.

For the rest of the Exhibition an entrance fee of 1/- was charged (6d for students and school children) and catalogues were sold at 1/6d each. For the whole 11 days of the exhibition it was kept open from 10 a.m. until 9 p.m., with a break between 6 - 7 p.m. only. Three times a day demonstrations of throwing were given by a team of local potters. These people were happy to answer the innumerable questions indicative of a rapidly-growing interest in pottery-making.

Attractively-worded posters were used freely about the town, displays were arranged in many of the shops, the newspapers ran several reports, photographs and criticisms, and a demonstration was even given on television. Several radio broadcasts from both stations added to the mounting interest.

The Committee met finally at the end of October and this brought to a close an extremely exhilarating experience."

From the above it is obvious that the most capable Committee ran the Exhibition with zest and enthusiasm. But what of the pots themselves? Here are some comments from two of the Selection Committee:

Selector Doris Holland: "The amount of work submitted was most gratifying to the Committee, and the ratio of accepted pots to the rejects was approximately two to one. Owing mainly to the large amount of space available for display, the selection tended to be on the lenient side, only two or three potters having none accepted. The best of both the stoneware and earthenware was of very high standard, especially in the field of domestic ware, such as beaker and jug sets, casserole and coffee sets. Teapots were disappointing with one or two exceptions, being faulty in such elementary points as badly adjusted spouts, handles and lugs. This was particularly noticeable with the side handled pots, which did nothing to convince one of

their superiority to the conventional pulled handle. For good or ill, no attempts were made to achieve highly original or eccentric forms, but a few intriguing large stoneware jars certainly heightened the display interest.

The pots purchased by the Museum, where they can now be seen without the distraction of the Exhibition, can without doubt give the selectors the credit of a job well done, even if mistakes were made in the more general selection of the show, which was made somewhat difficult through the cramped space available at the time. One point was obvious: stoneware from the North Island, earthenware in the South - we hope the division will be less noticeable at the Sixth New Zealand Potters' Exhibition."

Selector John Wood: "First a look at some facts and figures. There were 318 exhibits, totalling over 500 pieces, from 55 exhibitors. Of these exhibits 170 or so were earthenware, 140 or so stoneware, and two were porcelain. There was one exhibitor from Warkworth and one from Dunedin; two from KatiKati and two from Palmerston North; six from Napier; ten from Wellington; eleven from Auckland; and twenty-one from Christchurch.

The last figure accounts for the surprising earthenware majority, since Christchurch potters are almost exclusively makers of earthenware. A most interesting aspect of this was that, contrary to expectations, there was no very obvious demarcation line that could be drawn between the two wares, much being marginal in character. However, with one or two exceptions the outstanding pieces were all stoneware, and certainly the worst pots included were earthenware, as were the majority of those rejected.

My main criticism must be levelled squarely at the surprisingly low standard of much of the actual

potting. Mary Hardwick-Smith, Juliet Peter, Doreen Blumhardt, Helen Mason, Peter Stichbury and one or two others quite obviously know what they are doing and possess the skill to do it, but from a very careful handling and examination of all the pieces exhibited it was all too clear that only about a dozen of the exhibitors have really begun to master the basic clay techniques involved in the pots they have tried to produce. Far too often the outside shape of a pot bore only the faintest relationship to the inside shape as thrown. Time and time again a completely false profile had been 'carved from the solid' in the lower half of a pot, and the whole weight, the 'heft' of the pot, was clumsily out of balance. Now this is just not good enough. If you let yourself away with that kind of sharp practice and pretence your integrity as an artist or a craftsman is seriously open to question - however much you may delude yourself that you are following in the steps of the master-potters of Japan or any other country. You aren't.

Handles - again one or two beautifully conceived and executed - quite obviously the products of much practice and sensitive appraisal by potters who know what a vital part the handle plays on a pot. But many were just dreadful: stiff, lifeless, strappy, droopy, mean, or out of proportion, lacking altogether the spring and vitality that comes from the easy mastery of a skilled hand. They were fought and struggled for - and showed the scars of the battle.

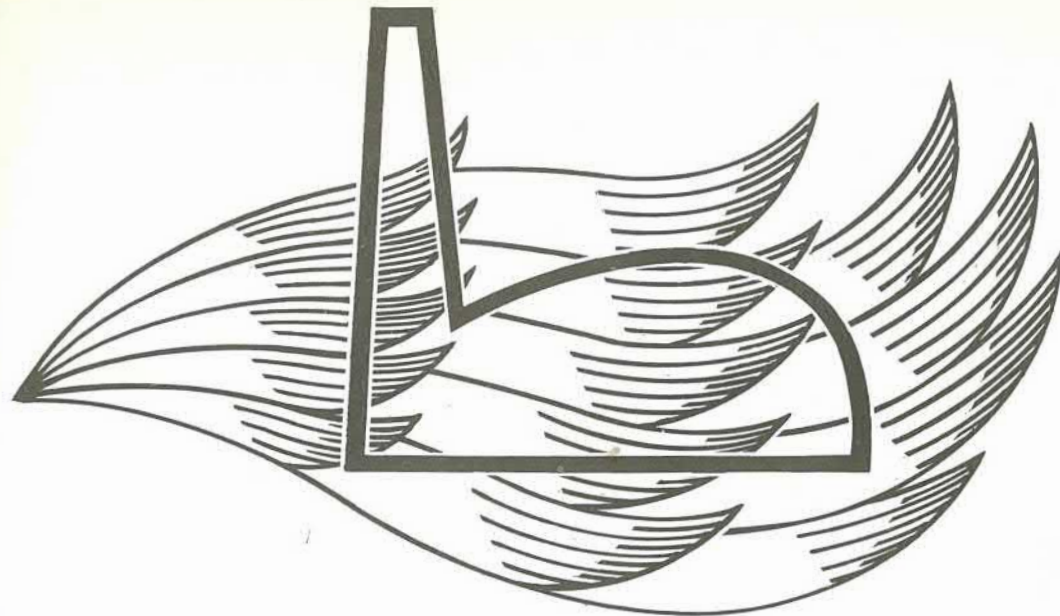
The scars of battle showed again in quite a number of the forms achieved. They had not grown rhythmically out of fluent throwing, but had been worked at with too much difficulty, and quite a few potters still seem unaware that the foot and the rim are the two master-statements of a pot around which the rest of the story is told. Perhaps three or four dozen pieces in the whole exhibition looked as if they had been born of truly skilled and knowledgeable hands.

As was to be expected, by far the finest glazes were on the stoneware pots, and the best among them were very lovely indeed. There was, however, a strong tendency in both earthenware and stoneware to go all splashy. This is a technique that calls for the utmost restraint and very sensitive handling. The fact that Shoji Hamada, out of his many years of skill and sensitive integrity, can take a ladle of glaze and splash it across a pot successfully, does not mean that you have only to splash glazes about to make masterpieces.

By and large, the impression left is one of too much striving for effects from too limited a level of skill. In other words many potters seem to be over-reaching themselves seriously in their eagerness - they are trying too hard to produce 'exhibition' pots instead of working hard on the business of becoming good skilful potters.

However, may I remind you that I enjoyed every minute I spent among your pots, and felt quite a pang of regret when the day came for the disbandment of the Exhibition.

Our own criticism is that the few pots of quality were overwhelmed by the quantity of inept pots, more suitable for a provincial Exhibition where the keynote is encouragement and guidance. The reasons for this were undoubtedly the rather intimidating size of the gallery and the fact that until now Christchurch has had no local Exhibition of its own. However, now that it has been proved that the annual New Zealand Exhibition can be made an established institution we must insist on absolute standards.



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But here is an impression of the Fifth Exhibition from an onlooker who visited the show a number of times, and, not being a potter, was able to view it dispassionately.

Valerie Heinz, Art Mistress at Christchurch Girls' High School:

"If the success of an exhibition can be measured by the crowds which attend and the amount of work sold, the Fifth Annual Potters' Exhibition was the most successful ever to be held in Christchurch. The two hundred people at the private view wasted no time in greeting friends or chatting. They had gone to look at pots and they did so with an enthusiasm and perception which was ample tribute to the integrity of the potters whose work was shown. By nine o'clock two thirds of the work was sold, and after the following day there were many people who could tell tales of their having joined the queues too late to get the pots they wanted.

Whether it was stoneware from the North Island or earthenware from the South, one was struck first by the sensitive proportion and simplicity of form evident in much of the work, indicative of a mature judgment and a true understanding of the nature of the medium.

The variety in the pots shown should reassure the public that pottery is not to be mistaken for a method of making bowls for ornamental use. Juliet Peter's coffee set with its fine lustre avoided the clumsiness sometimes met in small pots with handles and throughout the exhibition one discovered cruet sets, beakers, casseroles, lampstands, a punch bowl set well designed and suitable for everyday use.

It is in the glazes that one can see a marked development in our pottery. The subtlety of colouring and the satisfying textures were not the least of the pleasing aspects of the exhibition. One could appreciate the smooth deep richness of Mary Hardwick-Smith's

plates with ironsand decoration, the fine celadon glazes of Lee Thomson, and the satisfying surface qualities of Doreen Blumhardt's lampbase with oatmeal glaze and tenmoku decoration. In many other pieces there was successful experimentation with poured glazes, a discerning use of sands and wood ash, not to mention an increasing use of colour wedged into clay. Some may feel that the recent visit of John Chappell has had a beneficial influence on the study of glazes.

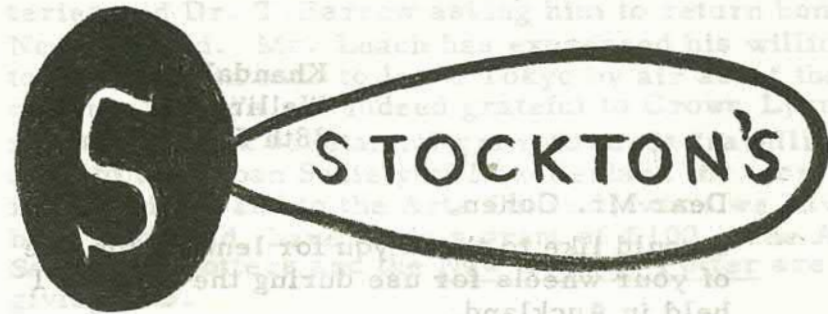
To Professor Simpson and the students of the School of Art goes the credit for designing the stands and arranging the layout. The shelves and tables of Japanese simplicity and the pond in which Jack Laird's cider jar and Barry Brickell's coiled pots were reflected, formed a unity pleasing from a distance and unobtrusive when one inspected the pots at close quarters.

To potters and public alike this was an inspiring exhibition, and one hopes that the hundreds of visitors who felt its impact will not have to wait another five years for the next pottery show."

Congratulations, Christchurch!

You have set a very high standard for all those who follow.

Editor



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POTTERS

Bernard Leach: Mr. Leach is at present visiting Japan and representations have been made by Crown Lyn Potteries and Dr. T. Barrow asking him to return home via New Zealand. Mr. Leach has expressed his willingness to come and intends to leave Tokyo by air about the middle of January. We are indeed grateful to Crown Lynn Potteries for giving a substantial grant towards travelling expenses, to the Japan Society of New Zealand Inc. for sponsoring his visit, and to the Arts Council, who, we have just been informed, have made a grant of £100. The Auckland Society of Potters and the New Zealand Potter are each giving £25.

It is expected that Bernard Leach will be in our country for about six weeks, and that he will lecture to Japan Societies and to potters in the main centres only. Organisations and individuals outside of these centres wishing to arrange or to attend lectures should get in touch with Dr. T. Barrow, Dominion Museum, Wellington, who will send them a copy of the itinerary when arranged.

Michael Cardew: Some months ago we approached Mr. Cardew to see if there would be any possibility of his visiting us and working among us in much the same way that John Chappell did. He replies: "I should like very much to accept your invitation and come; but please don't build any plans definitely on it yet, because my coming to New Zealand can only be after I leave West Africa, and I don't even know, even now, when that will be! I have just asked the N. Nigerian Government to take me on again for one more contract when the present one expires, so I don't really expect to leave Nigeria until late 1963. I still feel it would be a great mistake from the point of view of my own personal production, and almost a crime from the point of view of West African potters, to abandon the Abuja place at least until there is some prospect of someone being able to take over.

But there's no doubt that I shall have to leave Nigeria before very long - I begin to feel I have had enough of the Tropics. So I think it is fairly safe to forecast that (health and other factors allowing) I should be ready for New Zealand by early 1964."

Peter Bruce-Dick: Peter has arrived at Abuja and is thoroughly enjoying being there and working with Michael Cardew.

John Chappell: Has just staged a New Zealand Exhibition at the Matsuya Department Store, Tokyo. In this he showed pots made by himself while here, together with pots made by New Zealanders, as well as photos and Maori carvings. The Exhibition was visited by Shoji Hamada and Bernard Leach, who offered constructive criticism.

Mirek Smisek: Is now settled down in Kyoto with his wife and family. He now spends all his time at the Industrial Arts and Textile University Faculty of Industrial Arts where he has been given free use of all the facilities of the place and has been encouraged to rebuild one of their kilns into a dripfeed oilburner for salt glazing. In this he has had two successful firings and is working towards an exhibition he will hold in the Takashimaya Department Store in Tokyo in November, with Mr. Tashiro (a Mingei folk art potter and friend of Dr. Barrow). The exhibition has been arranged by Mr. Kawai and sponsored by Mr. Hamada. Dr. Horiuchi, friend of Bernard Leach, has also been most helpful. Nona, Mirek's wife, is teaching English conversation at the Dashisha University, and their two sons are enjoying life immensely at a Japanese school. They are all delighted at the kindness and consideration they have met with everywhere.

Nancy Patterson: Is an American potter who was at the World Design Conference. After a thorough ground-

ing in ceramic techniques in Los Angeles, Nancy went to the Royal Copenhagen Porcelain Works where she was the first American on the staff with the title of Guest Artist. From there she moved to the Arabia Ceramic Factory, Helsinki, Finland. In 1958, during the course of an observation tour of potteries and museums in South East Asia, she landed in Taiwan. Here there was a desperate need for a woman of her knowledge and experience to help get the struggling ceramic industry on to its feet, and here she stayed, in all the heat and crudity, training unskilled workers to make dinner-ware suitable for export to the U.S.A., using local materials as much as possible, and adapting the traditional Chinese shapes to modern usage. At present she is back in the United States, and we have some hopes of being able to persuade her to come and tutor us in New Zealand. A pleasant, unassuming person with great knowledge and good taste, we would benefit greatly from any contact we could have with her.

John Kingston: Still in America, at Kennebunkport, Maine, John built his fourth kiln, a 240 cu. ft. gas fired draught, last July, with the help of Teruo Hara from Kyoto. But the long, hard winter has set in early this year and John is about to set off to New Mexico to an Indian School, or possibly to Pennsylvania where Teruo Hara works at Design Technics. However, he plans to be back in New Zealand before the end of next year.

Cecily Gibson: She says: "How glad I am that I chose Japan in which to study. Being the first Australian to study here, I am certainly being very lucky, and everything is progressing wonderfully well for me. After those first seven months at Mashiko, spent mostly at Tsukamoto's factory, I had four months at the University of Fine Arts, Ueno, Tokyo, and have been in Kyoto ever since. I think I will be here for the rest of the year at least. Here I live en famille with the

Haras, and it's a very happy set up for us all, and a fine way of getting to really know each other. Tomoko's husband, Teruo, is a potter, and a leader of the Modern Art Group of Kyoto. He is now in America. I use his workshop here at the house. This is excellent as I work completely alone, experimenting with clays and glazes and ideas, and have to rely entirely on myself - even going to the shops to buy some of my ingredients and having to ask for them in Japanese - only one mistake so far made due to wrong pronunciation! When my pots are glazed, I arrange them simply on boards and a man with a riyaka - a go-cart type of thing, comes for them, and just places the boards on the bars of his cart and off he pushes, weaving in and out the traffic and over the uneven roads, and rarely does anything get broken. I fire at a semi-communal kiln and hire a space there. I stack and unpack myself, and when possible go and watch the firing. It is a merigama - a six-chambered one. First two reduction, others oxidation.

Two or three times a week I go to Tomimoto Kenkichi's workshop, to which I had been invited some weeks ago. Here I am learning to work in porcelain and to paint. At present I find porcelain not nearly so responsive as my lovely old clay bodies, but doubtless, with time and practice, I will learn to feel this medium too. Tomimoto asked me what I thought of it and I answered that it was too cold and impersonal for me at the moment, but that I was open to change. One has to be, I feel, in order to be able to appreciate all that is going on. So much in Japanese pottery that is awful and so much that is wonderful too, and to come with preconceived ideas is useless, as I feel it is necessary to know and understand the Japanese themselves and the way they think of things in order to really know and appreciate their pots."



NANCY PATTERSON and some V. I. P's at Peitou Ceramic Works. Tableware designed by NANCY PATTERSON and produced at Peitou Ceramic Works Taipei, Taiwan



Pot by CECILY GIBSON - Oribe Glaze with red clay showing through in places, about 7" high. CECILY GIBSON by the Noborigama communal Japanese climbing kiln of six chambers - first two reduction





PETER STICHBURY - WILLESTON GALLERIES, WELLINGTON - NOVEMBER 1961



Helen Dawson: Has just returned from a six-months visit to Europe this time. One of her most exciting experiences was a morning spent at the Leach Pottery, where Bernard Leach spent some time showing her his treasures in his upstairs room. Another day to be remembered was spent with Katherine Pleydell-Bouverie. A visit was paid to Raymond Finch's pottery, and to the neighbouring Exhibition of the Gloucestershire Guild of Craftsmen, where Helen, absorbedly studying pots, found she had been filmed for television. Together with those taken in Japan, Helen's collection of colour slides is now of great value to potters and gardeners alike.

Barry Brickell: Has given up teaching and is now leading the potter's life, alternating between his old house at Coromandel and his early colonial one at Tadmor, Nelson (lent to him by the weaver Katherine Phillips, now Mrs. Blows). He has been given commissions in the architectural field, and now that his creativity has no limits set by the forty hour week we can expect to see more of his original and interesting work.

We acknowledge with gratitude the gift of Five Pounds from the Wellington Potters' Association (Inc.) It is always touch and go as to whether we can make each issue pay for itself, and a gift like this means we can add more pages and photographs.

POTTERY AT MOUNT PLEASANT, CHRISTCHURCH

Betty Wright

In 1959 the Adult Education of Canterbury University College organised a series of classes in pottery. These were held with the approval of the Mt. Pleasant Committee of the Community Centre.

The pupils were very enthusiastic, but the facilities were not very good as the only space available was the Plunket Room, and this had to be washed out after each class. However, in 1960 the membership increased, and two classes per week were held. After having been taught the coil method, slab building, the making of moulds, casting, etc., pupils now began throwing on the wheel. They were limited to the use of one wheel. Many pupils availed themselves of extra practice on the wheel at the tutor's own studio on Clifton Hill.

A very successful exhibition of their pottery was held at Mt. Pleasant towards the end of the year.

Great strides have been made in this, the third year. The pupils numbered up to fifty, so yet another class was formed. The Committee of the Centre has rented a disused water-works building for us, on the opposite side of the road. This was given several coats of paint inside, the roof mended, and shelves and benches put in by willing workers. The Centre bought a second wheel, and another three have been added by the classes. The classes are large and certainly very busy and enthusiastic, even if rather noisy at times. Especially in the advanced class, much experimental work is done with oxides, etc., in slips and in the making of various glazes for earthenware. A few of the pupils have their own kilns. The majority of the firing is done by Mrs. Mauger. The pupils, mostly from the advanced class, help with the glazing (using

glazes they have made during the lessons) and the packing of the kiln.

Many of the local clays are used, and a second Field Day is to be held in the near future. Also the second local Exhibition will take place in mid-November.

Several visits to the New Zealand Potters' Exhibition have stimulated the members to further efforts. Two pupils had pots exhibited in Christchurch.

They have been fortunate in having Mrs. Marion Mauger as tutor of their craft. Mrs. Mauger, who has considerable teaching experience, was one of the tutors at the Pottery School held in Christchurch in 1957. This school was directed by Miss Yvonne Rust and organised by the Adult Education Branch of the Canterbury University College.

Mrs. Mauger has also been fortunate in obtaining licences to import oxides and materials, which are passed on to the pupils at practically cost price. This has encouraged pupils to work and experiment on their own and many have either bought or made wheels of their own.

There is certainly a very active and happy band of potters at the Mt. Pleasant classes.

There are a few copies left of books published by the New Zealand Potter:

New Zealand Rock Glazes - M. Bondy 5/-

Bernard Leach - Essays edited by
Dr. T. Barrow 10/-

Available 29 Everest Street, Khandallah, Wellington.

E X H I B I T I O N S

Auckland Provincial Potters' Exhibition

Held at Auckland Museum and opened by Mr. Vernon Brown on 29th August, 1961.

The Auckland Studio Potters first met as a group early in 1961 and meet about every six weeks at the Auckland Museum. The present membership is over eighty.

It was decided to hold an exhibition towards the end of the year but, unfortunately, the only suitable time was very close to that of the New Zealand Studio Potters' Annual Exhibition and the show may have suffered a little in consequence. The general standard was good with 150 entries from 27 potters. The display was quite the best we have seen locally, each potter's work being shown as a group. Table arrangement and lighting were excellent.

Thanks are due to Dr. Archey for his generous co-operation in allowing the use of the Museum facilities, and also to Mrs. Betty Brookes and Mr. Trevor Bayliss, both of the Museum staff and also keen potters who were responsible for the arrangement of the display. Demonstrations of throwing, coiling, etc. were given daily from 2 - 4 p.m. by well known potters, these proving very popular with the public.

Most of the better known potters contributed but it was gratifying to welcome newcomers, some exhibiting for the first time.

(The catalogue of this exhibition was an excellent production. - Ed.)

Wellington Potters, August 21 - 25. This fourth annual show was held in Stockton's Pottery Shop with Patricia Perrin of Auckland as guest exhibitor. Some 18 potters exhibited 124 pots, and Mr. J.L. Stewart was the selector. It was good to welcome some new potters.

June Black - Pottery, Ceramic Sculpture, Paintings and Jewellery - At the Centre Gallery, Wellington, 4 - 15 September.

Dr. Endedus and the Search Party presented their First Report in this unusual and interesting show.

Doreen Blumhardt - Pottery and Fabrics - in the Hawke's Bay Art Gallery, Napier - 30 September to 15 October. Over 200 stoneware pots ranging from coffee pots and casseroles to large pots eighteen inches high were well received by the gallery-goers of Napier.

Helen Mason, Susan Skerman, Martin Hill - Pottery, Fabrics and Furniture - At the Centre Gallery, Wellington, 1 - 13 October.

The aim of the Exhibition was to take a fresh look at the design of everyday items using New Zealand materials and our landscape as an inspiration. It was also an attempt to show that the work of the craftsman still has value and the three media were used to make an harmonious frame for daily living.

Jack Laird - Pottery, Palmerston North, 2 - 6 October.

A new idea for this Exhibition was initiated by the hiring of an empty shop in a recently built arcade in the centre of the city. The pottery, mostly stoneware with Bristol and Cornish stone glazes, was in the main domestic ware. This was the first pottery exhibition to be held in Palmerston North. It created much interest and attendances and sales were good.

Noeline Thompson - Pottery, 28 October - 3 November.
46 Queen Street, Masterton.

Another pioneer pottery exhibition in an empty shop in the main street has stimulated interest in pottery in a new centre. Noeline Thompson is the first of Jack Laird's pupils to reach the status of having her own Exhibition.

Peter Stichbury, Pottery, Philip Barclay, Photographs.
The Willeston Galleries, Wellington, 29 October - 10 November.

The value of a professional training is shown in this most craftsmanlike exhibition. The influence of both Leach and Cardew is evident, but has been assimilated into Peter's own style.

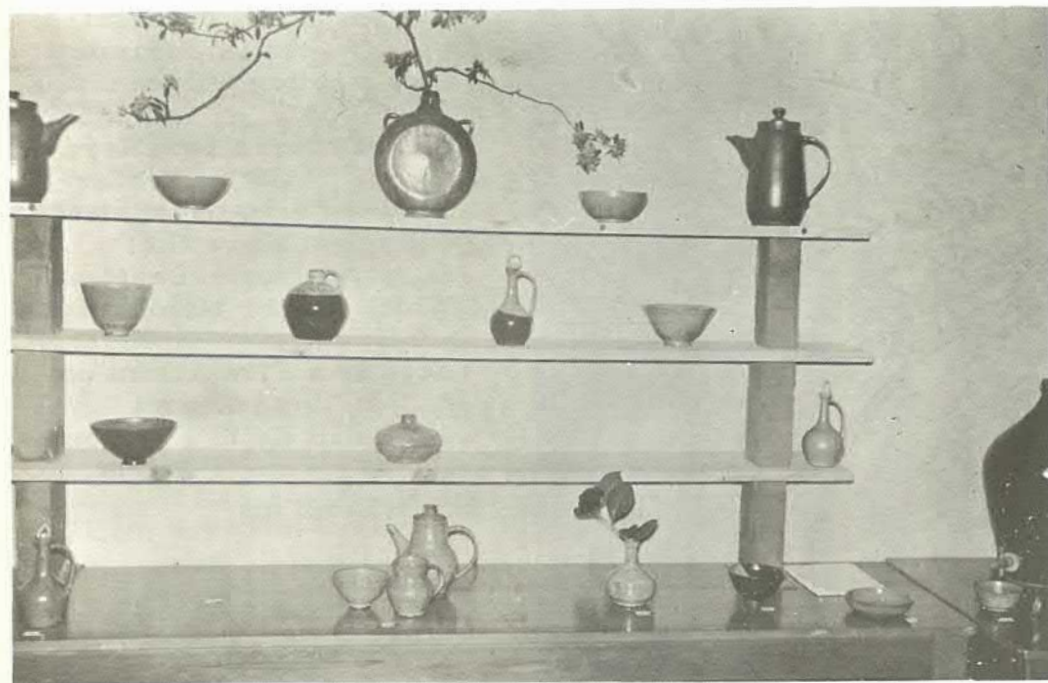
Juliet Peter, Roy Cowan, Pottery and Lithographs.
Centre Gallery, Wellington. 26 November - 8 December.

Muriel Moody, Ceramic Sculpture, Lou Theakstone, Painting.
Hastings, 23rd November.

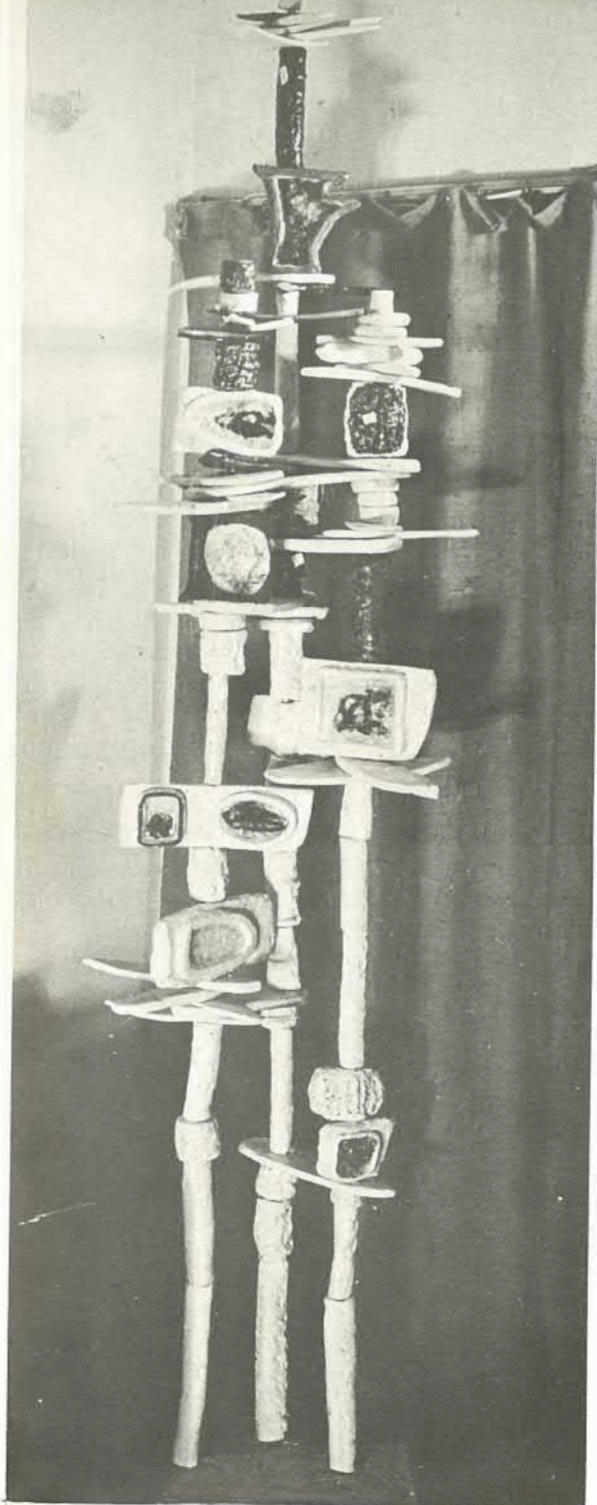
These two exhibitions were not set up at the time of going to press, but knowing the quality of work produced by all these artists they should be of high standard.



NOELINE THOMPSON'S EXHIBITION - MASTERTON - NOVEMBER 1961



JACK LAIRD'S EXHIBITION - PALMERSTON NORTH - OCTOBER 1961



OPENING AN EXHIBITION

Denis Glover

Sometimes I have wondered
muchly
Whether I should exhibit
myself
Or Sutchly.
All the Things I Know
Only Going to Show.

I don't feel Modiste or
Demure
But if what I really know
Was certain or Sure
I honestly don't know
If it would suit a Plant
That needed Manure.

For instance, I thought
that a Ceramic
Was a Sailor's Dream in a
Hammock;
And of course Jewellery a
lot of Foolery
Because even the Niciest
Sliciest Slave Girl
Is apt to Jangle-Bangle;
Which, in the Middle of the
Night,
Acts as a Fire Alarm not
a Charm
And is likely to give some-
one a Fright.

But Ceramics are so All Right
That you can jump into a Jug
You Mug or make
Muggery Juggery,
June Black's being nearly Unbreakable
And quite Unmistakable.

But up what Trail is June Black
Trying to lead us?

Or is it indeed up the Entrail
Of Doctor Endedus?

Is her painting as Tough as Hickory
Or just deliberate Slap-Stickery?

Is it Trickery
Or Mouse-Down-the-Clock Dickory?

Or in June's invited Search
Are we invited to hop off our Perch
And follow our own Rainbow Trail
Only to find that the answer is GUESS!
In a self-addressed envelope in the mail?

Yes, I hope this Feast
Of a Lot of the Arts
Will mean a Lot of Something
To us Blokes and you Tarts.
If we don't know which way to Go
It's for lack of a June Black

So!
Not to go another Lap of the Track
I say, "Glover, stand Back!
Let the Punters see what's to be Seen
On the Win and Place Machine!"

N E W S

We are exchanging magazines with the Adelaide Potters Club, Inc., South Australia. This Club has over 200 members and has been in existence for ten years. Four years ago they decided to buy their own premises, and now the final payment has been made on their cottage at 15 Liston Street, Parkside, Adelaide. They have two electric kilns and three electric wheels, and there are classes at the Club as well as work rooms for members. As well, many members have their own equipment at home. They publish a monthly magazine, *The Ceramist*. Copies of this may be borrowed from us by any New Zealand group who might find it stimulating. Any New Zealand potters finding their way to Adelaide would be warmly welcomed.

Margeurit Brickell, now Infant Mistress at the Public School, Levuka, Fiji, says the locality abounds in clay which looks favourable, but she had not tested it yet. She quotes from a local publication: "Fijian potters evolved an interesting method of producing a glazed article by applying kauri gum to the hot surface after firing. These pots are used for liquid storage. This art is apparently peculiar to Fiji."

In Gisborne there is great interest in pottery, and a group has been formed at the Gisborne Girls' High School under the guidance of Mrs. E.H. Middlebrook.

In Auckland the North Shore Group recently conducted a most successful "kiln crawl" when about twelve members visited the home of Mr. and Mrs. Len Castle and Mr. and Mrs. T. Bayliss, who were good enough to throw open their pottery and kiln facilities for a most informative discussion. Mr. Castle also took the group on an inspection of a Waitakere clay pit and the

kilns of Amalgamated Brick Co. A most enjoyable day, with many thanks to the hosts.

The Napier Pottery Group has had a busy year. Their new President is Ennis Oliver, and Secretary Hilary Thurston. Their role now stands at 40. At the Tara-dale Festival they had a sales table and made a clear profit of £25, and at the Spring Show in October they also demonstrated and sold pots, and they intend to buy more wheels with the profits. They have been well reported in the Hawkes Bay Photo News, and six of their members took part in the New Zealand Potters' Show.

Mrs. Claire Dickson now has a well-set-up studio with electric wheel and kiln in Masterton. She gives a lot of instruction in pottery for therapy purposes, and has helped a number of people to take a new interest in life through the medium of clay.

Gwen Keyes of Warkworth says: "The notes on clay preparation by Mary Hardwick-Smith* fired most of us with enthusiasm. At the time, I was all set to acquire a washing machine, when my husband bought a new gadget for concrete-mixing, and before it was spirited away to the foundations of the new house we were able to try it out - for only one afternoon - as a clay blunger. It is known as the 'Rotomix' portable do-it-yourself concrete mixer. With it, one man can load, mix and haul eight cubic feet of cement per hour. It runs on a quarter-horse-power electric motor, and no wheelbarrow is needed as the mixing is done in the whirling bucket with a mix paddle, the bucket is lifted out and the cement poured . . . The clay was tried out in only 10 lb. lots with feldspar added . . . Several different clay mixes, 50 lb. in all, were successfully blunged." It seems that there may be possibilities in using concrete mixers as clay blungers. Further particulars of this mixer may be obtained from the

* Vol. 4 No. 1, p. 7

Editor, who would be glad to hear of other experiments in this field.

The Arts Advisory Council has set aside the sum of Two hundred and fifty Pounds to be spent on the purchase of pots over a period of five years. We are glad that we are being taken seriously to this extent and feel that over the years a worthwhile collection could be built up if the money is spent with knowledge and understanding.

We have had a photostat copy of an article on "How to Build an Inexpensive Kiln" sent to us by Dr. Swindale of the Pottery and Ceramics Research Association. The kiln is electric, 13" across from angle to angle in the hexagon, and 15" high. With nichrome wire it can be fired to Cone 04 (1060°C). This article may be borrowed from the Editor by anyone interested.

COUNCIL OF ADULT EDUCATION

The University of Auckland

ART AND DESIGN SCHOOL

January 15 - 26, 1962

This Summer School will provide tuition (with full board and accommodation if required) for adult students who wish to learn the basic skills required for the satisfactory practice of the following arts: painting, pottery and wood sculpture. The tutors will be Louise Henderson, Kees Hos and Peter Smith (painting); Graeme Storm and Barry Brickell (pottery); Arnold Wilson (wood sculpture). All tutors are experts in their fields and skilled teachers.

Enquiries to Adult Education Centre, P.O. Box 3457
Auckland, C.1.

HAY'S LTD.

ART COMPETITION, 1962.

This time the competition has been extended to Craft Work, and ONE ENTRY ONLY may be submitted under the heading of Craft Work of original design, e.g. ceramics, weaving, pottery, woodwork, basketry, hand-made jewellery, silverware, embroidery, leatherwork, bookbinding, etc.

Entries close 31st January, 1962

Works to be submitted by 9th February, 1962

Entry Fee: 15/- for each work submitted.

Entry Forms may be obtained from any branch of Hay's Ltd., or from Art Galleries and Art Societies throughout New Zealand.

NEW ZEALAND ACADEMY OF FINE ARTS

EXHIBITION OF SCULPTURE, POTTERY AND GRAPHIC ART

to be held in Wellington, 4th to 26th August, 1962.

Potters are reminded of the Receiving day for Works -
3rd July, 1962.

The maximum number of works which may be submitted is: Pottery, Six pieces or groups of pieces.

The Academy will pay freight both ways on accepted works.

A PLEA TO POTTERS

Charles Fearnley
A.N.Z.A.I.

Although not a potter myself I can claim to be related by profession and persuasion. By profession, as I claim that architecture and pottery are, or ought to be, very closely akin when considered as creative arts. This is of course the only way they should be considered, although it is doubtful how many practitioners of either craft really consider them in that light. I claim relationship by persuasion, as any relative of any potter will tell you there is no one more persuasive than an enthusiastic clay-worshipper.

Having presented my credentials, I will now discuss what I consider to be a serious deviation from the paths of truth by most New Zealand and probably most potters of the Western world. I refer to the way in which Japanese forms are used almost without exception. And not only the forms but decoration and glazing are copied in a way that makes one wonder if the rugged individualism and general inventiveness of the Kiwi are indeed a myth.

No doubt what I have written will at this stage appear as rank heresy to many, particularly those who know of my interest in Japanese architecture, but I claim that the two go hand in hand. In a paper entitled "Japan's Place in Modern Architecture", I tried to show that Japan found the need to study European architectural principles, and having studied, proceeded to produce modern architecture that can hold its own in the best of company, largely because it has become something typically Japanese. Architecturally Japan has much to teach us but not to the extent of creating buildings that look as if they belong

to Tokyo, but rather as a refining influence on New Zealand structures.

To continue the architectural analogy, the early settlers in New Zealand, when they considered themselves pioneers, were content (or at least put up with) a simplicity which often produced a highly satisfactory type of dwelling suited to the climate and conditions. Once this stage of pioneering was over, and the settlers felt that their hold on the new country was consolidated, they wanted culture. Not the culture of the Maori, or anything they could build up themselves, but something remembered with nostalgia, something they had had to leave behind, something to be found only in England, and which it was therefore necessary to import. The late Gordon Wilson, who at the time of his death was Government Architect, was keenly interested in the history of New Zealand architecture, and has written several articles on the subject; the National Historic Places Trust, the Canterbury Museum, the Turnbull Library, have masses of material that all cry out the same message. Through this obsession, this fixed idea that we must import our prototypes from overseas, we have lost between fifty and one hundred years of progress in the development of New Zealand architecture. I agree that there is value in studying overseas, and that there are lessons to be learnt, but these are for the purpose of improving our own efforts rather than reproducing the efforts of other countries.

To get back from architecture to the sister art of pottery, it seems that we are going even further astray in the source of our inspiration. Although fortunately nobody has started a self-conscious search for a New Zealand style of pottery, something should evolve that is of New Zealand, and this cannot happen while we worship at the shrine of the sake bottle and the tea bowl. And for the surface decoration of our

pottery our work should be characterised by the fact that we have not been taught from the age of five to write with the aid of a brush in a series of decorative pictographs. The tea ceremony demands a type of handleless bowl instead of a cup, and handles as we know them for cups or teapots seem unknown in Japan; traditions probably centuries old, but does that make them a basis of our work in New Zealand? Methods and materials, and such technical information as we are lacking in a country where pottery is such a new art, must either be found the hard way by working them out for ourselves, or more realistically by going to the places where these things are known and bringing home the knowledge to adapt to our own local conditions. I think that in all the arts a trip overseas to observe can do so much to stimulate the imagination and to show us what may perhaps be lacking in this remote and recently settled little island. This provides a comparison with work overseas, prevents complacency, and helps us to improve our work when we return. Used intelligently, I claim that trips abroad or study of overseas techniques pinpoints our own weakness, but also shows that where a particularly strong tradition occurs it owes little if anything to imported culture. Can we say that about our work in New Zealand? Asked again in ten year's time the answer to that question would be a valuable indication as to whether we are strong enough to stand on our own feet, and mould something of New Zealand from our native clay, or whether we are to be despised as a mob of second rate copyists without an original thought in our heads. As far as pottery is concerned the answer must remain in the hands of every potter in the country. I have made the plea but cannot dictate the answer. That is up to you. Is the challenge one you can meet?

