



ASP NEWS April 2005

The Newsletter of the
Auckland Studio Potters
Society Inc.
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Studio Opening Hours

Monday	12.30pm - 5pm
Tuesday	12.30pm - 5pm
Wednesday	12.30pm - 5pm
Thursday	12.30pm - 5pm
Friday	12.30pm - 4pm
Saturday	10am - 4pm

**STUDIO CLOSED ON
FRIDAY 8th APRIL**

A Few Words from the Prez.

Wally Hirsh

Wow another big success.... almost 50 members took part in the March members' event...the bus tour up north. From all accounts it was a great day and I am really sorry that I was away and missed it. But it is good to know that we are getting such a good response to the activities which Peter and Duncan plan for us.

The April event is perhaps less exciting but it is an important function of an organisation like ours.

I refer of course to the AGM which begins with breakfast croissants et al and coffee at 9.30 a.m. on Sunday the 17th of April followed by the Annual General meeting. It is not a long meeting but it is important and we try to make a social event of it too, so do come along and better still let the office know if you would be willing to stand for election to the committee. The committee consists of a President, Treasurer, Secretary and 9 committee members.

A couple of months ago I commented on the anonymous generosity of a member who donated almost \$3,000 so that we could all enjoy the use of a wonderful slab roller. It has arrived from the US of A, has been assembled and is now in place for all to use. I again acknowledge this very generous gift from a member who asked not what ASP could do for him but what he could do for ASP. I am sure that I express the thoughts of every member when I say to our benefactor, "thank you so very much!"

This brings me to the point where I remind you all again that our Society depends on the goodwill of many people in order to create and maintain the wonderful place that our Centre is! Many people have commented to me in the last couple of years in particular on just how warm, welcoming, and effective our Centre really is. Members have commented on the constantly improved

facilities and equipment be it the kitchen, the courtyard, the new kilns, the new veranda, the Diploma programme, the monthly outings, the workshops or what ever. And more is planned. May I suggest once again that you consider the Auckland Studio Potters Society when drawing up your will. Leaving a part of your estate to enhance the future of studio ceramics in our region seems like a very worthwhile thing to do. It is an easy thing to do. Don't just think about it, please do it! There is a change being made to our rules at the AGM. We have taken legal advice and the resolution which is mentioned in this newsletter and in the notice of the meeting is designed to do two things:

1. to streamline and formalise the executive's powers and responsibilities in the appointment of staff, both directors and casual staff such as caretaker/cleaner, office assistants and

2. to bring us into line and up to date with current practices in regards to rules that other, similar, not for profit societies use.

See you at the Centre and hopefully at the AGM.



Paul Heroux

Double Banger Workshop

Have we got a surprise you! Not one but two of America's finest potters are soon on their way to New Zealand. Paul Heroux and Scott Goldberg will be here for about 3 weeks and we've managed to grab both of them to give a workshop on the 7th and 8th May. It will be a weekend to remember, as both potters are masters of functional pottery. Paul has a Masters degree from the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston and resides in Maine. To quote from *Ceramics Art and Perception* (issue 49) "On the one hand, he is a draftsman and painter who has eschewed two dimensional canvas for the curved surfaces of thrown vessels; on the other, he is a functional craftsman who steadfastly preserves the utilitarian aspect of his work."

Scott Goldberg is no stranger to Auckland; he shared a residency at UNITEC with Jeff Oestreich in 1996 and exhibited the finished pots at Albany. His work has elements from the Minnesota traditions of Warren McKenzie, but also a lively use of traditional glazes. His handles alone are worth the cost of attending.

We are running the two potters simultaneously at each end of the studio, so you'll be free to wander between them. We also hope to have a small display of their work here at the Centre (courtesy of Renton Murray). The cost of the weekend is \$90, plus a shared lunch. Book now.



Scott Goldberg

The Magical Mystery tour

Teresa Watson

Two tickets please Peter for the Near North tour. "Who are you bringing?" "Danny! But he doesn't know it yet." "Don't tell him" says Peter. I don't.

The mystery begins. Sunday 20th March 9am. What will I wear? What you wear to work (no suits here). All set with food and drink, we head off to Northcote Shopping Centre and the bus with 45 potters and friends. Where are we going? The mystery unfolded, not before discussing every type of kiln we could make ... ice, stone, tree trunks. What about bricks? Came the cry from the back seat.

First stop Terry Stringer's "Zealandia". The whole place is a work of art; every corner you turn a piece of Terry's work is sitting just perfectly. Terry explained to us the piece he is working on - it is over 6 feet tall and well balanced, though it looks as though it might fall at any time. The sculpture is moulded over wire mesh and the clay is layered on the top to get the final shaping. The clay is reused many, many times, over and over again, for each different sculpture that he is working on. Imagine if the clay could talk - all the stories it would tell. The story it was telling us today was the face of Michelangelo and his hand sculpting the female body, so when viewed from three different angles you get three different pictures. "Thank you for sculpting pieces that show how my mind works".

The mystery organist ... who was that? The mystery continues.

Next stop at Len Castle's in Warkworth, who displayed work from throughout the years, some made well before I was born! While he spoke to everyone, Trien and I spent some time working out where he connected his gas pipes, and where the flame went into his kiln. The gas bottles are out the back and the line is cemented under the kiln room floor. Nothing like a challenge. 80 years of age and standing in the hot sun, he did better than most of us half his age. We found shelter under the trees and rested our bodies, discussing storage, the chemist's mind and nut trees.

Daylight saving and an entertaining morning heard our bodies rumbling well before a stop in Warkworth. A great place to stop. Antique shops, cafes, art galleries - we were all in our element. Talented people discussing how a chair is constructed and the type of timber

used, what type of glaze was on the pot, paintings on walls argued about, photos taken and prices given, but did anyone buy?

We all managed to meet up again to be driven down gravel roads and narrow steep concrete drives. I would never have come here, let alone know how to get there. What an amazing surprise. A beautifully constructed eco-friendly environment we arrived at ... the Mahurangi Estate Wine Cellar. A greeting by the talented Robyn Stewart (burnished dung-fired anchor stones) and Terry. The exhibition by the Mahurangi Group was world class, red dots everywhere. Photos taken of sliding doors and beautiful large beams. Robyn explained that the cows on canvas were painted in six minutes with Indian ink - can't see the feet on the cows because they are standing in grass all the time. Wine was consumed and more could have been, but time pushed us on. Ransom wines - another place I would drive past without looking left. Many bottles purchased after many tastings - which is the best Duncan? Two bottles of Pinot Gris please!

A perfect end to a wonderful day. Well educated and tired bodies fell off the bus (nothing to do with the amount consumed) and reflected on what a wonderful group we belong to and how lucky we are to be surrounded by people who are talented and love a challenge.

The magic and the mystery and two rolls of film tour ended. Thank you Peter and Duncan.



John Dawson at the organ

AGM

The 2005 AGM for the Auckland Studio Potters will take place at the ASP Centre on Sunday 17th April starting at 10am. There will be coffee and croissants before the meeting at 9.30am. The agenda will be:

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of 2004 AGM
3. Correspondence
4. President's Report
5. Financial Report
6. NZSP Report
7. Centre Report
8. Election of Officers
9. General Business.

The office of the ASP has received two Notices of Motion. One involves Life Membership and the other relates to the ASP Constitution. The latter results from the Committee's wish to clarify and amend the present constitution to bring it in line with current practice. We wanted to be able to pay our Treasurer for the work done every week and found that our constitution did not allow much flexibility in this area, and rather than do a small patch-up job, we decided it was easier to rewrite the rules in a co-ordinated way.

If you are interested in either of these two issues please get in touch with the office - the information will be sent to you. If you intend to come to the AGM and want to discuss either of these, it would be helpful to us if you were informed about the issues before the meeting so that no time is wasted on the day.

We're hoping there will be a good turnout for the meeting and that there are members prepared to come forward and help out on the 2005-6 committee. We are losing a couple this year, and it will be good to have a fresh intake getting stuck in. The duties are not great - mainly around the time of the exhibition and the BCDO.

Compliments:

To John Dawson our "mystery organist" at Zealandia - lying on the grass in the sun listening to him playing a pipe organ in the bush was a great experience.

To Graham our bus driver from Hanhams ... very friendly and ready to take his bus to places where people had never before seen a bus, his choice of music Billy Bragg, and prepared to test the weight limit on the small bridges by empirical methods.

A refuge for artists who play it safe

Grayson Perry - from *The Guardian*

I see the craft world as a kind of lagoon and the art world in general as the ocean. Some artists shelter in this lagoon, because their imagination isn't robust enough to go out into the wider sea. Although there are some very good things being made, the craft world at the moment is set up to preserve something that can't look after itself.

Perhaps our modern western emphasis on the individual has distorted our idea of the crafts. People want a direct contact with the maker, want something that hasn't got the impersonal perfection of the manufactured. Often what we call character or spirit in an object, especially a functional one, are basically mistakes. I've recently had a Saville Row suit made, and what sets it apart are the things you might call mistakes. It is softer round the edges.

And yet, the traditional craft areas have dried up. The last bastions of hand-made work - Saville Row tailoring, high-end car manufacture and bespoke furniture - are disappearing because they are so expensive and the mass-produced is so good in some fields. There's no need for humble tableware or woven hand-made rugs: there's always a manufactured design alternative. The hand-made has become an expensive indulgence.

But craft isn't just a synonym for the hand-made. It is about technical skill but there must be a good idea guiding it, either traditional or innovative. I love craft objects to look at, but for me the best thing is a combination of its meaning, its beauty and its craftsmanship. It is all these things combined that make art exciting.

The essential distinction between art and craft is that art has an emphasis on

feelings and ideas and the crafts have an emphasis on technique. I always give things the Antiques Roadshow test: would an object be interesting if it came up on the programme? Can I imagine a Sarah Lucas tin can cropping up on Antiques Roadshow and us looking at it in awe? It has to have something of quality about it, either the craftsmanship or rigorous ideas or strong feelings. My least favourite outcome is the beautifully crafted ugly thing.

But the history of the handmade is littered with some very profound objects, and what is beautiful about them is that this profundity is not as self-conscious as a lot of contemporary art. When people ask me who inspires me, who my favourite artist is, I say it is an anonymous artist working before 1800 - ancient antique ceramics, prints, embroidery, folk art. Great craft objects once seemed to have sprung out of the culture spontaneously, to have been refined by tradition.

Craft has lost its way and become precious; self-consciousness is one of its great cankers. Sometimes there are peevish voices in the craft world demanding respect from the contemporary art world. It is a bit like an Englishman in France shouting in English. If you want to be accepted in the contemporary art world, you have to accept its culture and speak its language. I see the craft world as the pretentious next-door neighbour. It is failed ambition: you either are an artist or you aren't. Don't train yourself as a crafts person, exhibit in the crafts world and then complain.

One of the major difficulties crafts people face today is a definition of what they do. Nowadays craft overlaps with design and contemporary arts, and there

is little territory that is actually crafts. Are websites crafted? Is craft making a TV programme, or writing an article? They all have a craft aspect. To call something craft is just to say it is physical.

But craft is a hot word in the art world at the moment, because people are tired of conceptual art where the ideas aren't even that good, ideas that wouldn't stand up outside the flimsy theatre of the gallery. Once people saw art as a career, it attracted a lot of chancers. A lot of painting I see would probably qualify as craft.

Although I use the emotional and intellectual framework of a craft medium, as a potter, I see myself as an artist, not as part of the crafts movement. Pottery is older than painting, with just as venerable a history, but if you look at the big prices in auction houses, if that is any measure of worth, paintings get the big sums. The crafts have an audience of people who make crafts, in the same way as the theatre has an audience of out-of-work actors. There aren't any superstar crafts people, any Sam Taylor-Woods. And there aren't the high-profile collectors in the world of crafts. The craft world has become a refuge for the less challenging artists.

Firing at the Centre:

There's been a lot of pressure growing over the last year for kiln firings. We get calls almost every day from members of the public wanting pots fired and we have become quite good at putting them off. The fact is we are pretty stretched already with up to 5 kilns firing in a day and all the work that goes with that of loading and unloading, plus trying to fit extra work in limited rack space. Quite a few people with no real interest in the ASP are joining just to use the kilns, and the only thing we can do is give low priority and charge them more than those who make the work here - the holiday period is an obvious time for this sort of firing. The best help to us is for the kiln users to make a booking, drive in on the day, take the pots straight from their car and into the kiln, turn the kiln on and turn up immediately it is cool to put the pots straight back into their car. That way we don't lose precious rack space and we don't have to handle (or break) the pots. We've used this system a couple of times recently and it's worked well.

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In Memory of Margaret Milne

Grant Hudson

I first met Margaret Milne in 1967 when her son Andrew and I were school mates, and he introduced us after I developed a passion for working on the potters wheel when only 17 years old. That first summer she let me use her workshop while she was holidaying with her family at Katikati. Later we built a workshop together at Remuera after Leon Cohen had seen a deserted cottage in the bush from Marua Rd. I then met John Parker and the three of us seem to hit it off, going to Raku firings at Ardmore Teachers College with Barry Brickell and the Perrin sisters and generally having the time of our lives; well to me it was, and of course there was her favourite catch phrase “ hasten slowly” when the impetuosity of my youth needed restraining. She taught me the skills of producing well designed domestic pottery and always made me welcome in her home where we shared many views on modern aesthetics which have been a benefit to me as an artist-craftsperson. I will always remember her for her laugh, wisdom and as a great friend to everyone. Potting in New Zealand has lost one of the best we will ever have.



Enjoying the music

events

Rroaring Forties, NZSP convention

There's still time to book for "Rroaring Forties" the NZSP National Conference and exhibition featuring Marianne Cole (Adelaide), Michael Michaels (Rangiora) Yi-Ming Lin (Christchurch) and others including a couple of experimental kilns by Peter Lange. Glazing with Lawrence Ewing and salt-glazing with Neil Hey. Check out the NZSP website (www.nzpotters.com) or contact NZSP Box 31141, Christchurch. These conferences are a lot of fun and educational too; there is a group booked from Auckland but there's room for more.

Invitation: To exhibit in "the most important tile event in the world" contact www.elitile.net. Sponsored by the Museum of Modern Art, Dominican Republic



Joe Finch at our recent workshop

exhibitions

The Ron Sang Selection,

works from the collection of Ron Sang . also on show -The Top of the Pots - the best of Waikato Museum's collection Saturday April 9 - Sunday July 10, Waikato Museum, 1 Grantham Street, Hamilton. The Ron Sang Selection celebrates Ron Sang as a prolific collector of top New Zealand Ceramic artists and potters and as a patron of the arts.

Waikato Museum is proud to exhibit a huge selection of Ron's collection for the first time in a public exhibition. Don't miss out on the many works including Len Castle, Graeme Storm, Graham Ambrose, Ray Rogers, Linda Forrest, Lawrence Ewing and many more. Accompanying this exhibition is TOP OF THE POTTS the best of Waikato Museum's ceramic collection Starring Barry Brickell's 'Lord, Save this town's climax'. Catalogues will be for sale on the occasion of this exhibition.

Helen Schamroth: "Reflective Perspective"

Survey and new work 1985 - 2005 curated by Dr Carole Sheppard
31 March - 17 April Opening: Sunday 3 April 5.30pm Meet the artist: Sunday 10 April 2pm. Northart Community Arts Centre, Norman King Square, Ernie Mays Street, Northcote

Green Gallery

"Honouring Helen Mason" a celebration in honour of Helen's 90th birthday. An exhibition featuring Helen (who will be in the gallery on the 30th April), Barry Brickell, Bronwynne Cornish, Hilary Kerrod, Mike O'Donnell and Baye Riddell. 30th April - 22nd May. Cory Rd, Waiheke.



Faenza winner this year by Sylvia Zotta

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