



ASP NEWS

August 2006

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

Remember to pay \$2 per hour
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President's Report

Michael Billington

Salt Kiln:

The new salt kiln is all but complete. With a few more 'tweaks' from the experts and it will be ready to be fired up. The seemingly unending rain in Auckland this winter has meant it has been hard to keep the pace up with this. I have to attest to the hardiness of our many members who helped with this job as they were not fazed by rain or anything else the climate seemed to want to throw at us. Last Saturday saw the co-con-



Photo taken with the CCG camera

struction of the 'brick bank' (aka Great Wall of ASP), which now protects the salt kiln from the wind. The criteria for the construction of this wall were, that it "look good from the road" (as always), provide enough support for leaning on while ruminating over the state of the glazes and provide some shelter from airbourne cricket balls crossing the other great wall. Success to say the criterion is satisfied. The inaugural firing will be in about 3 weeks.

Garth Clarke:

Unfortunately I was unable to attend the Garth Clark lecture at the museum because of other commitments. I would like to extend my sincere thanks to Peter Lange who stood in for me. I have heard nothing but accolades from people I have talked to who attended making me even sorrier that I was unable to attend. You will find in this newsletter comments from other who attended this event so I will leave it there. Well done ASP for facilitating such a high calibre event.

On Going Development:

Every time I turn up at ASP (which is frequently), I never cease to marvel at the on going development that occurs. We now have a new stainless steel bench top and bat storage (round and infrequently flying type) area. Thanks to Renton and his scientific approach

the drainage of this high use area should now be down the drain instead of into the wall cavity.

Lois's New Cleaning Machine:

Lois has a new Dalek style vacuum cleaner which has the power to suck up all manner of solid objects (be warned).

This new machine will also cope with liquid spillage if necessary. It replaces an older failing machine which I think Duncan has his eyes on for purposes other than cleaning (we can only surmise). I witnessed a test firing of the new machine and know that Lois's job will be made easier. On that note I would like to say how much I appreciate Lois's dedication to the job of mak-

ing the centre a clean and tidy place for everyone. The job of regularly returning the centre to its pristine state must be daunting to say the least.

Exhibition:

Things are well underway for our annual exhibition with the roster for Sunday opening being created and invitations and posters going out. Just a general reminder to all potters to get started with entries so as to avoid last minute stresses. This message is also for professional potters to start preparing also. The exhibition is nothing without participation from all our potters. I must make sure I heed my own message here.

Exhibition news

We still need some volunteers to help with the usual painting of plinths, helping on receiving day and of course cleaning up at the end of the exhibition. We also need volunteers on Sunday to keep the exhibition open; the Sunday in question is the 17th August from 11am to 3pm for 2 people. Please let us know as soon as possible if you can help. Please distribute the enclosed flyers far and wide - we also have an email friendly version on our website.



Photo taken with the CCG camera

Centre report

Duncan Shearer

e near completion of the new salt kiln is anticipated with much joy. But before we can fire it up and see if works we need to give it a name. Something evocative of its' function and construction would be good. e winner will be chosen by vote from the 14 people who built the kiln and the prize is to o ciate the christening of the kiln and take part in the first firing. Given that we are only a couple of weeks away from firing it up it doesn't give you much time to contemplate your ideas, think quick and email your ideas in.

CCG Industries has donated to the ASP a new digital camera. is will allow us to be up to the minute in adding pictures to our newsletters and website. It also allows us to keep better records of student work. A big thank you to CCG.

Garth Clark Review

Peter Lange

Perhaps we should have called the seminar "How to Make a Dragon out of a Lump of Clay" - maybe a lot more of our members would have turned up. But then all of those potters from places like Dunedin, Christchurch, Wellington, Nelson and Kaeo wouldn't have bothered. It was fantastic to see so many of New Zealand's best potters and ceramic artists making the effort to get to this provocative afternoon. We had hoped for 150 people, got over a hundred and almost ran out of chairs anyway, but sadly lost a large lump of money - in hindsight perhaps a bigger entry fee would have been sensible but we deliberately set the amount so that our members would enjoy an affordable afternoon - and then most of them stayed away anyway while others paid big money to fly here.

Garth Clark and Mark Del Vecchio brought a glimpse of another planet to Auckland - a strange place where clay is well regarded as a sculptural medium, where Leach and his disciples like Warren Mackenzie are blamed for stultifying the ceramic movement and barricading the doors of their crumbling hand-built fortress against the pressure of the ceramic motorway outside, and where those who are most successful (and whose pieces sell for the highest prices) do not touch clay at all but use existing industrial processes and factory workers to realise their concepts.

It was a bit like watching one of those "Robin Snobface takes you through the

Homes of the Rich and Famous" programmes. We are sure, given the chance and that amount of money, that we could design and build something just as good or better - our enviometer turns bright green while the frustratometer heads for red. But we also have to admit that a lot of what we are shown is great work, if not to our own excellent taste. Could any New Zealand ceramic artist make it through the Garth Clark filter process (add on a 10,000km handicap) and enter this exclusive and precious New York scene where noughts are added to the price willy-nilly? I can think of two or three who could, and would exhibit strongly there, if the gallery's current stable is an indication of their standard. Quite how to join their stable was left unclear, and there was little encouragement.

ey came to put the cat among the pigeons. But most of the pigeons are already well gone and so the response was not as outraged as perhaps anticipated - the audience sat more encouraged than provoked (and untickled by the weak jokes), and in fact many, the risk-takers and iconoclasts, enjoyed the criticism of our imposed ceramic traditions and felt comforted, validated in their approach by a couple of overseas experts and from New York no less. But then Renton's question "what plates do you eat o ?" brought a softening and an admission of a range of options and favourites, from elemental wood-fired wrist-strainers to ram-pressed crockery.

An excellent afternoon - to those ASP members who came, good to see you; to those who didn't here's my advice: take a large lump of clay and take o all the bits that don't look like a dragon.

I still believe the Mad Potter of Biloxi is an elaborate hoax.

My View on Garth Clark

Charade Honey

I sacrificed going fishing to return to Auckland to go and see Garth Clark talk at the Auckland Museum. Having recently read Garth's book of essays called 'Shards' I was curious what he would have to say. I enjoyed his writing, as well as being artistically interesting it was funny.

So out came the star attraction, I coughed my way through American pottery history, Hans Coper and Grayson Perry - who is now doing the talk show circuit in England, larger than life. e main thing I was left mulling over was

Je Koons' 'Michael Jackson' sculptures. I guess it's the designer versus the maker. To me, you make it yourself, I don't know; Je has the luxury of other people making his art for him.

And our old mate Bernard Leach suffered a bit of bashing. Good for him (Bernard) keeps him honest. Not everyone was happy about this, but hey, last time I saw old Berny he was ascending the stairway to heaven in the arms of a large black transvestite on K Rd. Moral to me: always have fun with your pottery.

Garth Clark and Mark Del Vecchio

Suzy Dünser

I came to the talk at the museum only a few weeks after I'd been to visit Warren Mackenzie at his studio in Minnesota. In conversation, Warren had made the comment that he was a "midwestern potter." I think mostly he appreciated that the midwest is straightforward, without the frenetic pace and changing trends of the coasts.

Enter the king of the coasts. Garth Clark is obviously fully in tune with the cutting edge of ceramic art, and lives in a world most of us will only experience secondhand. His talk laid out that world in front of us, and more or less told us we were living in the past, that it was time to move on, and that ceramics would not wait for the craft potter.

Garth's assertion was that the "Craft vs. Art" debate is over, and that art had won. But what does that mean? at there is no longer ceramic craft? I wonder why all things made of clay have to be judged by the same criteria. Can there not be both pure art objects (non-functional) and craft objects (functional) without one diminishing the other?

Mark Del Vecchio's talk was a somewhat reassuring follow-up: ere is still space for the vessel, and therefore at least the implication of function, in the world of ceramics. e images he showed were to a good extent ones we are more familiar with, and could relate to easily.

ere were objects that could exist in our own homes, not only in the futuristic apartment Garth showed (where pottery with a texture would, apparently, be sacrilege).

As it turns out, Garth and Mark do still own and use pottery that one could, without argument, define as craft. I was relieved to hear this, because it put the talk into perspective - they were present-

ing an argument in the extreme to make their point. ere were a few practical points made in the talks, though, as well. One was that, if you are attempting to present your work as art rather than craft, you are best to approach art dealers and galleries rather than ceramics-specific ones. A second point, shown by many examples, is that "multiples," or work in a group as opposed to individual pieces, carry more of the meaning necessary to allow work to identify as art.

For me, Garth's perspective was interesting, but not offensive, because I recognise that it comes from his particular position as a New York art dealer. Must we all abandon what we're doing and focus on creating art that will sell for hundreds of thousands of dollars? I would say: no more than every architect should aspire to be Frank Gehry. Yet it is good to know that ceramics is commanding that level of respect in the art world. We can all only benefit from that.

Some of my thoughts on Garth Clark's talk.

Duncan Shearer

It seems a some what luxurious idea to have the prestigious dealer Garth Clark actively selling your work for you around the world, but that's what you get once ensconced into his stable of artists. is idea of a managed career – more along the lines of performance artists and their agents - seems on the face of it a god send. No more haggling with galleries over exhibitions, a structured 5 year plan to increase exposure and wealth and a great line on the C.V. But it may need more than those benefits to convince me that the loss of freedom to simply not work, or to utterly change direction is worth it. Record companies tie their artists down in multi record deals and it often results in albums made more to fulfil a contract than to make new

interesting music.

It also smacks of a US solution to a US problem. I think we're big enough to have our own problems that require our solutions. Sure we can look at overseas examples, but lets look everywhere overseas and see what other countries do. How do Canada, Ireland, Norway and Slovakia deal with this issue? I also think that it requires more work from the support industries than is currently done. By that I mean the critical and curatorial work that helps to define the issues and give everyone the confidence that quality work is occurring and where the most interesting work is coming from.

he most common complaint I hear from art school graduates and other potters is the vacuum they encounter once leaving their institution. And although their own sense of direction seems sure enough at the beginning – how long is it before their doubts set in and then the guesswork about what they're making arises. I applaud Garth for his writing in this area and hope that we can fashion our own debate about NZ ceramics here.

Mid Winter feast review

Gael Baldock

he Members' Evening was certainly a chance to enjoy good pots and good company. A hard core of the dedicated brought along good food, because it is what potters do best. e major hit of the evening was Peter's chicken casserole for which he has promised the recipe. A close second was Aylex's orzo and roast vegetable salad with lemon dressing.

anks to Kim's lemons I made 6 eggs of lemon honey microwave version and it all got demolished. Al bought along marshmallows and sprats on a stick so there was debate and sampling to determine if starting with a pink or a white marshmallow was the best combination. Michael amused everyone with topics of conversation from face massagers to lederhosen. Renton had decided that his culinary skills were best demonstrated with tea making and stories of his famous chef ex-girlfriend. He had two famous American and English potters' teapots. In the English 5 teapot he made Earl Grey tea and it poured beautifully. In the US\$900 teapot he made gumboot tea and it dribbled down the spout. e mulled wine was extremely bad due to the fact that it was made from Velutto Rosso and included cinnamon powder it still sits in a stainless steel pot on the stove and will either meet its' demise down the drain or in coq au vin. All in all a great evening. anks to the organisers.

We would like to encourage more debate about Garth Clark's talk in our newsletter and publish these responses on the web (under our web page and hopefully the NZ Potters page). So please write in with what you thought about the event. We hope to have the DVD of the talk ready for viewing in our library soon and for sale as well on a cost recovery basis, along with the transcripts from the two speeches.

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Photo taken with the CCG camera

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All phone numbers in these sections are in the Auckland free-calling area unless an area code is explicitly stated.

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exhibitions

Pots of Ponsonby

"BAD Window" Clocks by Brendan Adams Design. 30th July -13th August
Margaret Sumich "Outside the Square" Raku Figures. 13th August - 27th August.
David Mason "Collective Vessels". 27th August - 10th September
298 Ponsonby Rd, Ponsonby.
Ph 376 0145

Masterworks

Ceramics by Richard Stratton and Michael Tannock. Opening 20th July to 5th August
77 Ponsonby Rd, Ponsonby. Ph: 3781256

Objectspace

Growing Up: 20 Years of the Unitec Jewellery Studio curated by Karl Chitham
22 July – 19 August.
2006 will be the Unitec Jewellery Studio's 20th anniversary. The exhibition has been curated by Karl Chitham in association with Pauline Bern and Alan Preston. This is a significant exhibition of Jewellery practice and brings together a collection of works which will likely not be shown together again. Growing Up will feature commercial, exhibition and commission pieces as well as never before viewed works from the movie productions of The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe and Lord of the Rings, The Fellowship of the Ring. Growing Up

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will feature 13 contemporary jewellery makers, including Areta Wilkinson, Jane Dodd, Jasmine Watson, Joanna Campbell, Tania Patterson, Octavia Cook, Anna Whitley, Anna Ward, Tatjana Panyoczki, Joe Sheehan, Jonathan Hopcroft, Ilse-Marie Erl and Gina Matchitt. Each maker will be represented in the exhibition by multiple bodies of works from throughout their careers, which exemplify the innovation and diversity of each individual's practice. Objectspace is at 8 Ponsonby Rd Auckland. Open Tuesday to Saturday 10 to 5. Ph: 3766216

Italian competition for ceramic artists

Applications to Italy's 55th International Competition of Contemporary Ceramic Arts, open to artists under 40 years of age as of 31 December 2006, close on 20 August. The International Competition of Contemporary Ceramic Arts aims to promote young ceramic artists. It will bring together the most innovative, technical, linguistic and artistic expressions in the field of ceramic art for the public to enjoy during events organised by the Fondazione Museo Internazionale della Ceramiche in Faenza from 25 May to 19 August 2007. The overall winner of the Premio Faenza will receive 26,000 Euros and the work will become part of the collections of the Fondazione Museo Internazionale della Ceramiche. <http://www.micfaenza.org/en/index.htm>

NorthArt Gallery

"BEYOND THE PALE"

A Contemporary Ceramics Exhibition.
Ande Barrett-Hegan, Bronwyn Cornish, John Crawford, Steve Fullmer, Campbell Hegan, Peter Lange, John Lawrence, John Parker, Richard Parker, Christine Thacker, Anne Verdcourt, Chris Weaver, Merilyn Wiseman.

Exhibition July 24 –August 20

Norman King Square, Northcote Shopping Centre. Ph:4809633

Portage Ceramic Award 2006

Deadline for entries is 21st August. Once again digital only entry and this time it costs \$30 to enter. The prize money has also gone up to \$12,000 first prize and \$6,000 total for the merits. Ph: 817 8087

Obituary

Barry Hockenhuil

The news of Barry Hockenhuil's tragic death came as a huge shock and has brought feelings of disbelief and sadness for his family and friends.

I was looking at an old Super-8 movie only a week or two ago which Warwick Lidgard had taken in 1975 or so, showing the building of the Albany Village Pottery shop, where Barry featured strongly – mainly because he was the only member of the group who actually knew what he was doing and the rest of us tagged along behind his whirlwind with varying degrees of competence and usefulness. He had been a professional builder until the mid-70s when he slowly shifted from helping his wife Barbara fire kilns, to teaching himself how to throw and building kilns for his own work. He quickly became a very good thrower and a great passion developed for traditional Oriental glazes – shino, tenmoku, celadon, with a fair bit of salt glazing in the mix too. Soon the whole family including the three kids Scott, Melissa and Arran, like the Waltons of the Albany Hills, were making a wide range of thrown and hand-built ceramic work. It has continued through various periods – Albany, Wayby and finally Mangawhai where the Hockenhuils have become a popular and busy part of the life of this town with their gallery, workshop and restaurant.

I called in only a couple of weeks ago and had a chance to have a good chat with Barry. He was looking as fit as I had seen him for a while, couldn't believe he was 70, and full of beans – in the last decade or so he and Barbara have travelled a lot – especially to Japan and most recently to Turkey, and their lives have, as ever, been incredibly full; grandchildren, pottery, fishing, building – this family has always made most of us feel a little unproductive; but Barry was always hospitable and generous and had time for you; he was straightforward, uncomplicated and didn't mess about, and he knew the subtleties of good pots and glazes.

He was one of our most important potters; he had huge energy and talent and because of this, along with working with Barbara and the kids, together they created one of the most successful businesses based on clay we have seen and at a time when most potters have been struggling. We send Barbara and her family our heartfelt sympathy and love and hope that her many memories of Barry, right back to their schooldays, as a very special person, salt of the earth, will give her comfort.

Peter Lange

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