



ASP NEWS March 2004

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

Monday	12.30pm - 5pm
Tuesday	9am - 5pm
Wednesday	12.30pm - 5pm
Thursday	12.30pm - 5pm
Friday	12.30pm - 4pm
Saturday	10am - 4pm

Remember to pay \$2 per hour
up to a maximum of
\$6.00 per day

The Annual General Meeting

of the Auckland Studio Potters Society will take place at the ASP Centre, 96 Captain Springs Rd, Onehunga, on Sunday 4th April at 10.15am.

Coffee and croissants will be served at 10am and these items will be considered:

- Apologies
- Minutes from the 2003 AGM - Matters Arising
- Correspondence
- Centre Report
- Financial Report
- President's Report
- Election of Officers
- General Business

It would be good to see you there – we are always looking for help from our members and one way is to put yourself forward to be on our Committee; it's not arduous, it is rewarding (e.g. last year a new kitchen, Big Clay Day Out, successful exhibition) and it's enjoyable working with the team. The Committee is charged with overseeing all of the ASP activities from members' evenings, day classes and the Diploma Course. In the face of a difficult marketplace in Auckland we are always looking for ways to promote the craft of pottery and could use input from members who are professional potters and those who have some marketing and commercial skills. There's a nomination form with this newsletter.

ONE DAY WORKSHOP with John Dawson

"Porcelain – the Pleasure and the Pain"

ASP Centre 28th March, 10am – 4pm.

\$30 Shared Lunch

John started potting in his backyard in Mangere as a teenager, and 40 years on he's still potting in his backyard, but now in London. A post-graduate student from Goldsmiths College in London he is a member of the prestigious CPA group



in the UK and teaches at Holloway Women's prison. He is here taking our Diploma students for their porcelain module, and we are fortunate that he has agreed to demonstrate to our members for a day. He has two exhibitions coming up – the first at Masterworks on the 15th March (opening 5.30pm, all welcome) and the second at the Green Gallery on the 20th (3pm).

Book for this school now!!!

Members' Evening

March 18th (Thursday) 7.30pm at the Centre

"Best In Show"

Guests: John Parker and Richard Fahey, both recent ASP Exhibition Judges.

There will be general discussion and a question-and-answer session on the process of judging. Members are asked to bring at least 2 pots along to be considered by the panel – they don't have to be their own pots, they could be favourite pots from their collections, but they should be prepared to accept (a range of) opinions on the work.

There has been comment on, and interest in, the way that the ASP selects its selectors and in the way that they themselves select, so come along and find out how it all happens.

Supper will be served, and judged.

The Great Mosaic Wall

Designs have to be in this week (by 5th March). The mural will be a very prominent feature in the Onehunga community.

The free workshops for those interested in making the mural, and learning from the process, will be starting soon too. We have a list of names and we will contact you very soon. It is a BIG and exciting project. With Tom Barter as the Ringmaster and Chris Southern as the Tilemeister it will be a lot of fun too. e.g. Q: Which country makes the best tiles? A: Thailand. And they only get better folks. Incidentally the word "mosaic" comes from the Greek "to muse" and other words from this root are "mental" and "amnesia". Work that out.

The word "Mosaic" with a capital "M" relates to Moses; Mosaic Law of course is based on a series of rules that, for example, punish (by way of stoning to death) people who don't clean the grout off properly, and particularly those who leave the work tables dirty or the wet cupboard doors open.

Centre Report:

Peter Lange



Classes average 14.1 students (maximum 15 in theory), our best figures for a while, and they are keeping our tutors and firers on the ball. On top of that the Diploma class is twice the size of last year. Our Talisman wheels are driving us nuts – they're all getting on a bit and we go over them 4 times a year but every week there are a couple of breakdowns. The Pacifica wheels are so far trouble free – the price for them has come down a lot with the dollar's climb, so maybe we'll work towards bringing another couple in. If anyone's interested out there, get in touch and we'll do a cheaper shipping deal. Our slabroller has never been very reliable and we are looking at sourcing an American one or getting some custom-made here. It's cheaper to do that in quantity so there may be a chance to buy an ASP slabroller later in the year.

Curious follow-on from last month's comment in this column about the smell from Stewart Newby's firing in the salt kiln. I must admit that at the time everything pointed to it being an animal stuck in the kiln (it had been bricked up 3 days earlier but the fire ports were open) and the smell went on for a long time – we had to make a decision to keep going at an earlier stage, knowing that whatever was in there would not be alive anyway. The cones were gone, looked like they had been knocked over, but no other signs of destruction in the stack. My dog Sophie was present and correct and asleep outside the kiln. The firing was fine, the temperature guessed at and it salted well. A few days later Stewart arrived to open it ... he found numbers of little white ceramic pellets in a couple of bowls, the cones had been moved to the base of the chimney, more pellets there too. Inspector Shearer of the Yard (Serious Smells Division) was soon on the case, and (later confirmed by Inspector Nealie of Interpot) deduced that the rat(s) had taken the cones to the chimney, eaten the wadding which was one-third flour, and then crapped little ceramic pellets onto pots they didn't like. No definite sign of any fired rats but some hints of bone-ash effects.

We are delighted to have inherited some excellent press moulds from the Van Der Puttens who are moving their studio to Huia – our mould stocks are

once more respectable. Please don't take them home!

The working bee was small but efficient – 4 members showed up and got stuck in. There's still a lot to do but the working bee concept clearly doesn't excite our members, so we are going to try to find a Home Detention candidate (the last two have been very successful) or a student on a casual basis. More costs maybe, but the Centre gets a lot of use and there's always extra work to do around the place. However, if you do have any feelings of generosity to the ASP we are always grateful for your time or money.

Firing the Imagination:

Jocelyn Logan

A website that could take many visits to explore is Carol and Richard Selfridge's "Selfridge Ceramic Art". Their own work is worth a long look, whether you like brightly painted majolica, translucent porcelain, or wood-fired stoneware. The collaboration of these Canadians since 1974 has produced all of these. As an idea of the flavour, one piece is titled "Let's You & Him Fight" Chun Chicken Casserole. I was very taken with their ice crackle glazes, too.

As well as their own work, this website displays a "study collection" of international pots. Use the link to "Carol and Richard Selfridge's Ceramic Art Collection". It is further divided into US, Canada, International, & Australia & New Zealand sections. Peter & Duncan are both in there, with Rosie & Renton Murray, Barry Brickell and plenty of Harry & May Davis's work. The Selfridges worked with them in the '70s. I'm a long way from finished looking at this abundant site – find it at: www.selfridgeceramicart.ca

Member News:

Petra Molloy not only completed the Diploma in Ceramics from Canberra last year, but also received an Emerging Artist award – this will mean that she will be involved in an exhibition at Canberra at the end of 2004.



Pat Sinclair's kiln heading to the Centre



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MONDAY-FRIDAY 8:30 am-5pm

21st Century Craft

Abridged from the Guardian

I'm standing in front of a washing line hung with grey flannel gymslips embroidered with inflammatory words such as 'sissy' and 'faggot'. Long spindly legs - made from tights weighted down with flipflops - add a surreal quality. The work, *Playing With Dolls*, by Australian artist Brett Alexander is a highlight of a new exhibition: *Boys Who Sew*. Welcome to craft in the twenty-first century.

If you view it as a cosy homespun activity, think again. These days craft is cool. After all it was a potter, Grayson Perry, who won the Turner Prize in December. It is also rocketing in value. Perry's pots go for over \$70,000 each, while tableware by Carol McNicholl and Edmund de Waal, arguably the biggest stars in the world of studio ceramics, fetch four-figure sums.

Craft is the new collectable. It is a rebellion against the high street, where everything looks the same. If you walk into London galleries such as *Flow* in Notting Hill or *Contemporary Applied Arts* on Charlotte Street, you'll see actors, film directors and advertising gurus buying one-off furniture, lighting and textiles. Ditto celebrity stylists. After all, if you're dressing an actress for a premiere, the way to ensure no one wears the same jewellery is to buy a one-off piece. It also marks individuality of character (did anyone else notice Emma Thompson wearing earrings by jeweller Jane Adam throughout *Love, Actually?*).

Growing interest has been attributed to higher spending on decorative items for house and garden and the perception that contemporary works are more accessible than fine art. 'You wouldn't want to have a dead cow by Damien Hirst in your drawing room,' argues

critic Edward Lucie-Smith, 'but you might quite like to have something that was an exhibition of skill. And the crafts world is very much about virtuoso skills.'

According to Mark Prest, head of crafts at the City Gallery, Leicester, 'It's very important that Grayson Perry won the Turner because he's introduced an accessible object - a pot - to explore issues through. His work is so popular because people find it an easy medium to read.' He adds: 'We live in fairly minimalist interiors. Less is more. So the few objects that you have make a personal statement. Pots are back and so are pattern and decoration.'

There is also a snob value. 'It's like buying couturier clothes,' argues Geraldine Rudge, editor of *Crafts* magazine. 'You can go to a maker and say, "This is what I want." It's quite an intimate process. It's a bit like having your own personal trainer.'

The word 'craft' conjures up images of country folk dressed in kaftans eating mung beans. But all that's changed, argues Louise Taylor, director of the Crafts Council. 'There used to be a notion that craft had to be removed from everyday life and set in a rural context. While today there are still many practitioners who choose to be outside of the big cities, it's not with a view to completely removing themselves from what's going on. These days people are much better at using technology and websites and email to stay in touch with what's going on in the market and industry. They're just part of the freelance workforce.'

So is the term 'craft' helpful? 'The word "craftsperson" does have a demeaning sound to it,' says Prest. 'I usually use the term "artist". If you look at the ceramics of Grayson Perry and Richard Slee, or Freddie Robins, who makes mutant knitwear, they are using processes to explore current issues such as material culture and socio-economics. Their work has a subversive, darker side.'

As Rudge sees it: 'A key change came about in the 1970s when craft people started to do fine-art courses at art school. That produced the "new crafts". It was completely different from a technical training. And these artists using craft materials began to look at forms in very different ways. So the traditional basket was turned into a vast sculptural form or even an installation. Or you'd take a traditional textile form like a tablecloth and put it on the wall.

And fashion designers saw this trend and borrowed it for themselves.'

Even sculptors such as Antony Gormley, Tony Cragg and Rebecca Warren have made ceramics central to their practice. This June the Liverpool Tate has a major show entitled *A Secret History of Clay: From Gauguin to Gormley*. 'It's a really big deal,' explains Rudge. 'I can't think of another fine art gallery with a reputation like the Tate holding a ceramics exhibition.'

For years craft was seen as the poor relation to fine art (more exalted and more valuable) and design (sexier and more streamlined). One of the most condescending things you could say about an object was that it was 'decorative'. But when *Collect*, the first annual art fair for contemporary applied art and decorative objects, opens at the V&A in a fortnight, craft will have arrived. Serious international collectors are flying in from all over the world.

Meanwhile, the crafts world has its first superstar. When Grayson Perry turned up to collect his cheque in an embroidered purple dress, the image went round the world. But that was not the only shock. For the first time ever, an applied artist had won the Turner. As Perry left the stage, David Furnish handed him a mobile phone: 'Elton wants to congratulate you!'

Has he met much resistance? 'Very curiously, I'm coming up against the art-world "cool",' he laughs. 'And I have a sense that the forces of cool - which are effectively the YBA, left-brainer, conceptual art people - are thrown slightly on the defensive by my win. People always want a polemic, they want an "either/or", but never want an "and". That's something I find myself constantly doing - inserting "and" into other people's sentences. The art world goes in cycles and the trouble with the last regime, if you like, is that it's coloured everybody's idea of what art is. It's been going for 10 years and we've all got used to that aesthetic. If you go into an Indian restaurant now, it looks like an art gallery. So my interest now is to take art into a parallel universe - that is the world of emotional truth.'

Perry doesn't regard himself as a standard-bearer for the crafts. ('I'm an artist who also appreciates craft. I'm not a craftsman who has aspirations to be an artist.') But he does see the handcrafts

Continued on page 4

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Continued from page 3

as an ideological stance. 'One of the pleasures of having a pair of shoes or a dress custom-made is that it is almost a political statement. It's a way of rebelling against capitalism which makes money out of gender identity by supplying you with the consumer goods you need to support that identity.'

Arguably, the new high profile for crafts coincides with a backlash against Cool Britannia. Conceptualism is out and physicality is in. 'I think the YBA thing is over,' argues Lucie-Smith, 'and I think the Turner jury was trying to send a signal when they preferred Grayson Perry to the Chapmans. People are going back to making things and making things properly. They're not like those fine artists who say, "I'm an artist, I know about ceramics or plastics" and then go and make something that a craftsperson looks at and thinks, "Christ! What kindergarten did that come from?"'

events

The Phoenix Woodfiring

is happening on Sunday the 21st March (mentioned in the previous newsletter) and we currently have about 6 interested people. So there's room for more. We will load the kiln on the Saturday afternoon (that alone takes about 4 hours), leaving the morning free for people to glaze their work. The actual firing time is somewhere around 12 to 14 hours, and requires a dedicated team of stokers with fireproof knees. Contact the Centre now if interested.

Gulgong

I rang Ceramic Art in Sydney (0061 2 9361 5286) and they let me book the conference, dorm & bus on the phone by credit card. They will accept our ordinary students at the \$A300 student rate for the conference. The dorm is \$A110 for the whole 7 nights. (Cheaper than a backpackers!) You need to bring a sleeping bag & pillow. The dorm accommodation is in an old school in Red Hill near the venues.

A bus is going from Sydney - must book & filling fast - that's \$A80 return. The bus leaves the Ceramic Art Gallery (120 Glenmore Rd, Paddington) at 10am on Sat 1st May. It returns the next Saturday.

Hope that will encourage some more to join us there.

Jocelyn

Anagama Firing

The recent Anagama Tales evening on a couple of Thursdays ago brought out a keen group of woodfirers (about 20 all up) and also lured out into the open one of this country's finest practitioners of the art of anagama firing, although he has bolted across the ditch and now lives in an area of permanent fire ban, Chester Nealie still produces fine pots and an excellent slide show at the mere whiff of smoke. His enthusiasm is infectious and on the back of that we decided to book ourselves another firing. So we are aiming for the 28th May to 30th May. Loading will commence at the beginning of that week and requires a good number of pots to fill that kiln. Any members who are keen but couldn't get to Anagama Tales please contact the Centre and we can explain the use of clays, slip and glazes to you. We also will need a little help with the usual wood chop and stack and some more kiln maintenance in the form of adobe. So start your wheels and make some pots.

Two New Workshops

We have two more exciting schools coming up Brian Gartside is confirmed for a weekend school in August. Amazing news: Steve Heinemann from Canada, internationally recognised ceramic artist, has tentatively agreed to come here in May to do our major Winter School. Details not yet confirmed but anyone who visited the Fletcher Exhibition over the years will remember Steve's amazing bowl forms, and the prizes he took out as well. We've got our fingers crossed for this one.

exhibitions

Green Gallery

"Celadon" by John Dawson. Opening on 20th March 3 - 5pm, runs until 11th April. 20 Cory Rd, Palm Beach, Waiheke. Ph: 372 2891

Compendium

"Below the Surface" Linda Pringle (sculptor), Nigel Jamieson (painter) and Gaye Morton (potter) until 6th March.

"Fused and Cast Glass" by Jenny McLeod & Shona Firman. 8th March to 27th March. 5 Lorne St, City. Ph: 300 3212

Chelsea Crafts

(Katikati) are organising a weekend event, 27-28 March: "South Pacific Burnt Art" featuring Paula Nawalu (Fiji), Barry Brickell (NZ) and Linda Munn (NZ Maori). We have entry forms at the office. Full weekend \$35

Pots of Ponsonby

"In the Window"

Brendan Adams from 7th March - 21st March. Shelly Cartmell from 21st March - 4th April.

298 Ponsonby Rd, Ph: 376 0145

Waiheke Ceramic Award 2004

National award for innovation in ceramics 14 May - 2 June 2004

Award \$3000

Selector: Peter Lange

Closing date for entry forms is 19 April.

For further information please contact Jackie O'Brien (Manager), Waiheke Community Art Gallery, Ph 372 9907 or Email: manager@waihekeartgallery.org.nz

We have entry forms at the Centre

Two Major Exhibitions:

"Art in the Woolshed", Tawharanui Regional Park, opening March 6th and alongside that "The Mahurangi Group" at the Puhoi Hall. Both are planned so that the viewer may take in both openings at once. They feature some of New Zealand's top artists like Jeff Thomson, Barry Lett, Len Castle, Peter Oxborough, Robyn Stewart. Both run until the 14th March.

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