

# Australian Enamel Newsletter

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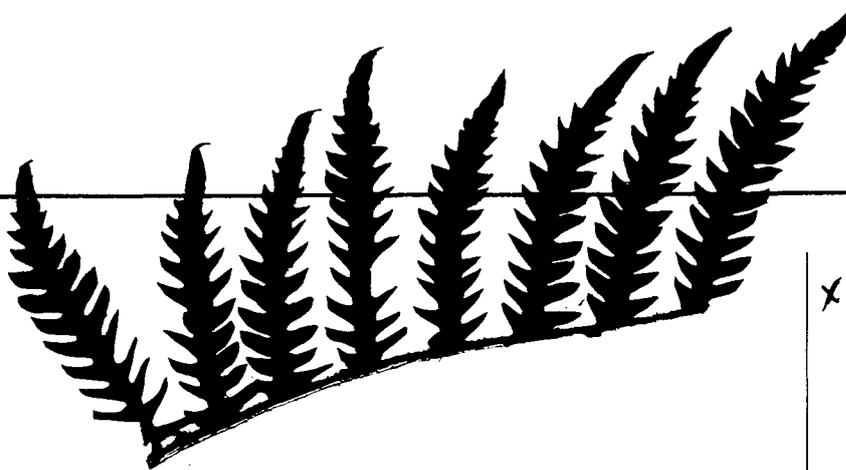
JANET BAKER

The first time I came in contact with the art of enamelling was when I was studying at RMIT. For twelve months I had Helen Aitken-Khunen for an enamelling lecturer. Her tedious methods turned me off but surprisingly, when I finally decided to have a go, I tended to use those very same techniques although I have broadened out somewhat. I never really got bitten by the bug until later in life when I mellowed a bit.

After RMIT, my children took up most of my time so I just plodded along doing small jobs and dreaming about having the time to express myself more fully. Eventually the kids left home and I went to University to do a Bachelor of Fine Arts course as I had wearied of making jewellery for unimaginative people.

Nearing the end of my course I felt myself being drawn back to metal. I hated the smell of oil paint and turps and I couldn't see myself as a printmaker even though I majored in it and did quite well. I realized I needed to be in control of the outcome of a work of art and decided to use those skills I had gained from both courses and approach my creativity in another field. I went around in circles and ended up back at metal. No other medium has ever appealed to me as the feel and lustre of metal. The addition of enamel this time added 'colour' and 'life' to those concepts floating around in my subconscious.

My art is motivated by my experiences and feelings and reflects the search for self expression and knowledge that are gained over a long period of time on the 'pathway of life'. The work itself is figurative because I've always been fascinated by the ability we humans have to express ourselves without words. I'm not trying to capture a realistic interpretation but a more spiritual and symbolic image, sometimes bordering on pattern. As an artist, something of me is reflected in each piece that I make. Each new creation expresses something from inside that becomes tangible by virtue of its two or three dimensionality.



## CLASSES/WORKSHOPS

The months gallop by and another AEN is demanding my attention. I'm running a tad behind schedule but as editor, I've given myself permission not to panic! I've been having a creative and productive time in my workshop and that always feels sooo good. Hope it's happening for you too.

*B Ryman*  
Editor

## NEWS

- Carolyn Delzoppo was one of the 16 international enamellers invited to exhibit with Spanish enamellers at the Centre Catala d'Artesania in Barcelona, March 20 - April 20, 1997. The exhibition was the first of a series the Catalan Crafts Centre will be holding to introduce different crafts. A book on enamel techniques was launched at the opening.
- Jenny Gore is having an exhibition at the 'Greenhill Galleries', North Adelaide. The show opens on the 15th June.
- BLAST - Enamel Exhibition is now open in Makers Mark Gallery, both in Sydney and in Melbourne. "You'll find a blast of wonderful colour in the middle of winter at this exhibition of work by contemporary enamellists." Exhibiting are Val Aked, Robyn Allen, Marilyn Bailey, Janet Baker, Nick Barret, Julie Carter, Tracey Clement, Deb Cocks, Carolyn Delzoppo, Michael Fletcher, Carole-Anne Fooks, Kate Forster, Wendy Hall, Catherine Large, Darani-Lewers & Helge Larsen, Glenice Matthews, Annette Mckee, Jill Parnell, Jozsef Pinter, Margaret Ramsey, Barbara Ryman, Debbie Sheezel, Jaquie Sprogoe, Robyn Wernicke and Grace Zhao. Anthony Williams from New Zealand and John Richardson from Britain are also exhibiting.
- Catherine Large, Annette Mckee, Jill Parnell and Lorna Zerbini had work in the 1997 Alice Craft Acquisition exhibition. One of Annette McKee's pieces was acquired for the gallery's collection.

X Carolyn Delzoppo will be giving two workshops at Val Aked's Silver Studio, 2/982 Victoria Rd, West Ryde. The first one is on the 5th & 6th July and is on cloisonne. The second is on the 12th & 13th July and is on cloisonne and also champleve if people are interested. Enquiries to Val Aked on fax/phone - (02) 9975 3734.

X Jenny Gore is running a workshop in Fremantle in August (ring Jill Parnell for info on (09) 385 9459

Jenny will also be giving extra workshops in America after the conference and asks if enamellers could give her 2 or three slides and a little information to fill her in on what your up to now. These will be shown at the conference and many times after that too. The slides can be returned if required. Her address is 61 Commercial Rd, Port Noarlunga 5167 SA and she needs them by early August.

X Barbara Ryman is running an enamelling class at Sydney Community College at their Technology and Design Centre campus on Victoria Rd, Rozelle. The classes start on Monday the 28th July. They run from 6.30 to 9.00pm over an 8 week term and cost \$120. The main topic will be cloisonne but we'll try out some of the other styles too. This is a great new roomy workshop set up for jewellery classes and it also has two kilns. This class will suit beginners and those who want an opportunity to develop their skills further. Phone Sydney community College on 9555 7411 to enrol or call Barbara on 042 672939 for more information

X Allan Heywood regularly runs enamelling workshops at the Meatmarket Craft Centre, Melbourne. Call him on (03) 5340 2265 for an update on his programme.

## OPPORTUNITY TO EXHIBIT

The Third Biennial JMGA NSW Inc Exhibition will be held at Makers Mark Chifley Square Gallery late August, 1997. Entry Forms due by June 30th, work due August 20th. You must be a member of JMGA and it is a juried exhibition.

## THANKS

AEN would like to thank the following contributors to this issue: Betty Wilson, Carolyn Delzoppo, Janet Baker, Jenny Gore, Heidi Wellings, Allan Heywood, Alexis Buckby, Josephine Vandeleur.

# OPEN DAY

# KILN ADVICE SOUGHT

## OPEN DAY

Heidi Wellings is having an open day on the 10th July when Stephen and Joan Millton will be visiting Sydney en route to Brisbane.

Come from 11am onwards to Heidi's house at 15 Dewrang Ave, Eleanora Heights, (02) 9913 9130) to view new materials available from Anna-Margot's Originals covering enamelling, castings & lost wax, jewellery and stone cutting supplies

## AROUND THE MAGAZINES

### OBJECT - issue 1/97 (April)

There is a review of Fire in the Heart by Judith O'Callaghan.

### Craft Arts

will have a review of Fire in the Heart in it's issue no.41 (due out in

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71 George St Thirroul NSW 2515

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The deadline for material for the next issue will be July 23rd 1997. All articles, comments and news welcome. Send to Barbara Ryman, 71 George St, Thirroul 2515, NSW



## LETTER - Glass d'or Designs

I have been operating under the name "Glass d'or Designs" as a jewellery manufacturer/enameller for just under one year. In that time I have learnt much and been frustrated much, and have managed to do some unheard of things when a lack of resources forced me to do so. The time has now come for me to upgrade my kiln as it begins to hinder my desire to to work on larger and more complex pieces

At present, I am working in a ceramic kiln, which is top loading. Despite the obvious chore of loading things from the top, it has proven sufficient for my practice up until now. However as things get larger and heavier, and the logistics of loading coupled with the creative enterprise of fashioning sculptural trivets becomes a Phd in time wasting, I have decided that it is definitely time to acquire an oh-so-coveted FRONT LOADING kiln.

Therefore, I am writing to you dear readers of AEN to assist me in my search for the dream machine. I am intending to use the kiln for bowls and platters and slumping glass, as well as enamelling jewellery items. The kind of kiln I am after would be similar in capacity to a largish microwave, and be long lasting. I have a preference for the heat-brick kilns, and an accurate temperature control unit (digital preferably). I would much appreciate it if anyone could make recommendations regarding brands, makes, models, sizes etc, and anything you may have found useful or a hindrance on your kilns over the years. The availability of the kiln through an Australian distributor would be ideal, as would the ability to acquire spare parts and service.

I am currently residing in Townsville in a far North Queensland (I suspect that I could enamel quite well on a hot tin roof up here at the height of summer, but that is limiting), and am well versed in the sometimes Herculean efforts required to acquire any specialty equipment. I shall not be deterred. Any advice imparted would be greatly appreciated as I'm sure at least one of you remember when it seemed that NO-ONE had any idea of what you were talking about when you innocently asked a kiln manufacturer "Do you guys make front loading kilns?"

Alexis Buckby.

I don't think I can even **begin** to cope with the idea of loading in enamels through the top of my kiln! Write info to me and I will pass it on straight away as well as doing an article for a future issue - Ed

# ACID ARTICLE FROM 'THE ENAMELLIST', CANADA CONT....



## HYDROFLUORIC ACID - CONTINUED



**NOTE OF WARNING:** Glass etchant creams or pastes such as Armour Etch also contain Hydrofluoric Acid. The percentage is low (less than 1%), but even this concentration is hazardous and should be handled very carefully. Remember, 0.5% Hydrofluoric Acid with prolonged exposure will cause a burn. Use the same amount of caution as if using the acid itself. In the United States, some consumer products, notably rust and scale removers contain as much as 8% Hydrofluoric Acid, read labels carefully before purchasing these products. I'd take rust stains in my bathtub over a chance accident with this acid any day of the week.

**OTHER SAFETY TIPS:** Always keep acid when not in use safely stored, ensuring that it is properly labelled and under lock and key. It is advisable to keep the acid in a closed container when in use (ie plastic container) only removing the lid to add or remove the work. To lessen the chance of splashing the acid on yourself, use a perforated basket to raise and lower the piece in and out of the acid.

If you are using Hydrofluoric Acid in your work, check with your local hospital to make sure they are familiar with the effects of exposure to Hydrofluoric acid. Make arrangements ahead of time to ensure that the trained personnel, treatment facilities and supplies are available in the hospital closest to you Speed is of the essence. Delays in first aid care or medical treatment or improper medical treatment will likely result in greater damage or may in some cases result in a fatal outcome. If your local hospital or doctor is not familiar with Hydrofluoric Acid exposure, send for a copy of "Recommended Medical Treatment for Hydrofluoric Acid Exposure" and give it to them (booklet available from Allied Signal Chemicals).

### NON TOXIC ALTERNATIVES TO HYDROFLUORIC ACID:

- For those looking for a glass etchant, time honoured hand stoning is an option.
- For those looking to remove glass altogether without risking life and limb, try one of these methods:
  - 1) Heat and quench in cold water, the thermal shock will crack the glass off the metal. May also warp the metal with repeated quenches.
  - 2) Alternatively the glass may be ground off using a diamond impregnated bur (always use a respirator mask for silica dusts when doing this).
  - 3) For small areas, the glass may be cracked off with a certain amount of pressure using a metal burnisher (always wear safety goggles when doing this).

## NITRIC ACID

Nitric acid is a corrosive, vapour producing liquid.

**USES** in the enamellists studio: metal etching.

### POTENTIAL HEALTH HAZARDS: Effects of Acute Exposure

**SKIN:** Corrosive, causes burns

**EYES:** Corrosive, can cause chemical burn, damage irreversible.

**INHALATION:** Corrosive, When nitric acid is exposed to air or comes in contact with organic matter, it decomposes to yield a mixture of oxides of nitrogen including nitric oxide and nitrogen dioxide, the latter being more hazardous than nitric acid.

**INGESTION:** Corrosive, causes severe burns to mouth, esophagus and stomach.

**Effects of Chronic Exposure:** Inhalation of mists or fumes at 2 to 2.5 p.p.m. (parts per million) over an 8 hour period may cause pulmonary irritation and symptoms of lung damage. The onset of symptoms following inhalation may be delayed for several hours. Concentrations over 200 p.p.m. can cause severe pulmonary damage and may be fatal in 5 - 10 hours after several minutes of exposure.



**NITRIC ACID - Continued**



**MEDICAL TREATMENT**

**SKIN:** Remove contaminated clothing. Wash with large amounts of running water and soap if available. Get immediate medical attention.

**EYES:** Proceed immediately to the eye wash station. Remove contact lenses. Flush eyes with large amounts of running water for at least 15 minutes. Hold eyelids apart to ensure rinsing of the entire surface of the eye and lids with water. Get immediate medical attention, preferably an eye specialist.

**INHALATION:** Remove to fresh air. If breathing is difficult, get immediate medical attention.

**INGESTION:** Give large quantities of water or milk. Do NOT induce vomiting. Get immediate medical attention.

**FIRE AND EXPLOSION HAZARDS** May generate flammable, potentially explosive hydrogen gas on contact with most metals. Do NOT store in heat or direct sunlight.

A LESS TOXIC alternative metal etching acid - see Ferric Chloride.

**SULPHURIC ACID**

**USES in the enamellists studio:** used as a pre and post enamelling metal cleaning (pickling) agent to remove firescale.

**POTENTIAL HEALTH HAZARDS:**

**SKIN:** Can cause severe burns and destruction of tissue. Repeated skin contact with dilute solutions may cause dermatitis.

**EYES:** Liquid contact can cause irritation, corneal burns and conjunctivitis. Concentrated acid causes extremely severe damage often leading to blindness. Dilute solutions produce irritation or burning where recovery may be complete.

**INHALATION:** Sulphur acid fumes or mist can cause irritation or corrosive burns to the upper respiratory system, including nose, mouth and throat. Lung irritation and pulmonary edema can also occur. Because of the hygroscopic property of sulphuric acid (it attracts water molecules), humidity directly affects particle size and hence toxicity. Corrosive effects upon teeth (dental erosion) with chronic exposure are well established. The damage characterized by etching of dental enamel followed by erosion of enamel and dentine with loss of tooth substance is limited to parts of the teeth that are exposed to direct contact of acid mist upon the surface. Etching of dental enamel occurs after years of occupational exposure.

**INGESTION:** Can cause irritation and corrosive burns to mouth, throat and stomach. Can be fatal if swallowed.

**Medical Conditions Aggravated by Exposure** Skin contact may aggravate an existing dermatitis. Overexposure to vapour, dust or mist may aggravate existing respiratory conditions such as asthma, bronchitis and inflammatory or fibrotic respiratory disease.

**MEDICAL TREATMENT**

**SKIN:** Immediately flush with large amounts of running water for at least 15 minutes. Remove contaminated clothing and shoes. Get medical attention immediately. The application of ice to skin burns (after flushing with water) will reduce scarring.



## SULPHURIC ACID - continued



**EYES:** Proceed immediately to eye wash station. Remove contact lenses. Immediately flush eyes with large amounts of running water for at least 15 minutes. Hold eyelids apart while flushing to ensure entire surface of eye and lids are irrigated. Get immediate medical attention.

**INHALATION:** Remove to fresh air. If not breathing, give artificial respiration. Get medical attention immediately.

**INGESTION:** If conscious and able to swallow give 2 glasses of water (16 oz.). Do NOT induce vomiting. Get medical attention immediately.

**FIRE AND EXPLOSION HAZARDS** - Produces flammable and explosive hydrogen gas upon contact with most metals. Toxic gases (sulphuric acid fumes, sulphur dioxide and carbon monoxide) may be released due to thermal decomposition.

**NON TOXIC ALTERNATIVE TO SULPHURIC ACID FOR PICKLING METAL** A tip from Marilyn Druin when she was our guest instructor at last summers' workshop. A non toxic pickle that will not etch enamel can be made from vinegar and kosher salt (table salt will do, but Marilyn says kosher salt works better). Add the salt to the vinegar until the vinegar won't dissolve anymore into solution. Use cold. This is a slow pickle, so be patient.

## FERRIC CHLORIDE

Also known as Iron Sesquichloride or Iron Trichloride

**USES in the enamellists studio:** Metal etchant

### POTENTIAL HEALTH HAZARDS:

**SKIN:** Prolonged contact may cause irritation which is aggravated by sweat.

**EYE:** May cause irritation, may discolour the eye.

**INHALATION:** May cause irritation to the nose and throat.

**INGESTION:** May cause severe irritation to mouth and throat, weak and rapid pulse, low blood pressure, nausea, bloody vomiting, violent diarrhea, shock, dark purple skin discolouration and coma.

**LONG TERM EXPOSURE:** Excessive intake of iron compounds may result in increased accumulation of iron in the body, especially the liver, spleen and lymphatic system. Iron chloride may reduce fertility in males and females.

### \* WARNING \*

When heated, Ferric Chloride turns into Hydrogen Chloride, a toxic, colourless nonflammable gas with an acid odour which is soluble in water and then is known as muriatic acid or hydrochloric acid.

### POTENTIAL HEALTH HAZARDS of Hydrogen Chloride

**SKIN:** Red inflamed skin, severe burns and pain.

**EYE:** Irritation, pain, swelling, corneal erosion and blindness may result.

**INHALATION:** Sneezing, hoarseness, choking, laryngitis and respiratory track infections, bleeding of nose and gums, ulceration of the nasal and oral mucosa, bronchitis, pneumonia, shortness of breath, chest pain and pulmonary edema may also occur.

J. B. cont...



I chose to use enamel not only for the addition of colour but because of the challenge. I'm never quite sure what will happen as I work my way through a piece. Bubbles appear, shards of glass fly off, metal warps; you know the routine. But when something works and the piece is finished, it's like it created itself. It has a life of its own.

I like to spend a long time working on a piece, so I don't rely on enamelling to make a living. I do it because at this point in time, this is my chosen medium. My neat habits and meticulous attention to detail have found an outlet. It is acceptable, indeed expected in enamel work, that 'no grain of enamel will appear where it is not meant to be'.

My path to enamelling was a slow one but it is a medium I feel comfortable with and I have made many new friends because of it.



Studio



# MORE TALES OF ADDICTION



When my son Peter was in his early teens, he and his friend decided to do some enamelling demonstrations at our lapidary club exhibition. They had very little experience (school) so we bought a torch and some enamels. My kitchen was a hive of industry. My three children plus several friends, myself and my friend Heather van Russel. There began a love. Although I have many interests - faceting, stonecutting, jewellery making, enamelling is my first love. I realized after the Queensland Symposium that design is something I need to give more thought to.

Val Annear

At Art School I just touched on enamelling in the early years and regarded it as just something one had to do. When I participated in a workshop arranged by JMGA in the beautiful Fremantle Art Centre, with Hiltrud Blaich, I loved the peaceful atmosphere of quietly wet packing away. Obviously there were disasters but developing the ability to control and manipulate colour is wonderful. I love the magic of watching the colours develop after firing.

Jill Parnell

Having a private theory that Genes have memories, I believe after seeing a person at our lapidary club drawing a piece of enamel from the furnace .... it hit a forgotten chord in my subconscious and I became absorbed and fascinated by the (sometimes) satisfying results of this art! Perhaps a forbear in another age was a craftsman ... a whisper from the past?

Evelyn Prokop.

Having no real knowledge of enamelling before I started my degree (except in 'Craft' lessons at school), seeing images and pieces by Helen Aitken-Khunen during my first years made me desperate to try enamelling in a jewellery/silversmithing context. It was the element of colour and the reflection of the metal through transparent enamel that really sucked me in. It's only in the last few years that I've begun to use opaque enamel, but I'm only interested in it as an adjunct to transparent enamel, to complement and enhance it. Enamelling is like an addiction - I have a real love/hate relationship with it.

Catherine Large.



SCALLY  
TREE  
FERN

CYATHEA COOPERI