

# Australian Enamel Newsletter

Issue No 1

April 1990

## Why?

When recently I wrote to Australian enamellers asking for slides to include in an enamel presentation in the USSR, I received many responses expressing feelings of isolation caused both by the great distances between us and by the lack of information and communication about our chosen medium.

These letters have prompted me to begin this newsletter, - a modest bi-monthly effort (6 per year), modelled on newsletters in UK and USA. I believe there is a great need in Australia for a network between enamellers, to keep us informed about each other and to provide information of interest only to enamellers.

I envisage this newsletter to be a forum for that purpose, and myself to be a compiler of information.

An important role for this newsletter will be to print a regular diary of opportunities to exhibit both nationally and internationally. Dates, deadlines and requirements. Our enamel is innovative and interesting, but is often created and exhibited in isolation from other enamellers and from international enamel events. By participating in exhibitions and competitions we help promote ourselves and our medium to the greater benefit of all.

We can be proud of the level of achievement attained in this country. Australian enamels are being accepted into prestigious collections and exhibitions, but we seldom hear about these achievements as we have no group means of communication. I hope this newsletter will become that communicator. To this end I need enamellers to keep us informed, just a brief line or two for the news column. Exhibitions solo and group, prizes, commissions, grants, work accepted into juried shows and collections, are all of interest.

There are several problems facing Australian enamellers now, - the most pressing of which is the increasing difficulty in obtaining supplies. The situation has become worse in the last few months with the imminent closure of Handcraft Metals/Australian Silvercraft in Sydney. They have been our sole supplier of Thompson Enamel and many other basic requirements. Some time ago we lost our only supplier of Schauer enamel. Issue No 2 will be as complete a listing of suppliers, local and international as I can muster. I ask for assistance to let me know of reliable suppliers in each state, especially SA, WA, and Qld. The list will include tools, copper, precious metal, foil, enamel, kilns and anything else of interest.

The list will be a double page suitable for display in workshops and colleges as a resource for all enamellers and students. Please help, this is a problem that concerns us all and we can benefit from a pooling of our information.

Another problem is the lack of enamelling tuition in our tertiary art colleges. Due to funding cut-backs, most cannot employ specialist enamel instructors for any length of time, if at all. Students easily become discouraged due to lack of follow up tuition when problems arise. I hope that this newsletter can give students access to a network of experienced enamellers who are willing to help. A future issue of the newsletter will include a listing of names and addresses of enamellers working in Australia, which can be used as a resource for anyone wanting to contact us. When sending subscriptions please give a brief description of the type of enamel done, for example, large scale enamel on steel, jeweller/enameller, cloisonne enamel on precious metal.

It is important to the long term vitality of enamelling in Australia that young enamellers are encouraged.

Issue No 2 will also begin a series of enameller profiles, so we can get to know more of each other. A brief background and description of what, how and why. By introducing ourselves in this newsletter, we can make the distances between us smaller, prompting communication and perhaps contact also when we are in each others cities or states. We dont need to feel so isolated.

This newsletter has the potential to become whatever Australian enamellers need it to be - it can review exhibitions, report on workshops, advertise to sell or buy equipment, report on health and safety matters, ask and receive help with enamel problems, advertise tuition opportunities, etc,etc. It is an open forum that I hope will be received and used enthusiastically. I welcome comments and feedback on the thoughts expressed in this first and I hope last editorial.

Please keep the information coming.

Carolyn DeZoppo

Editor

# Enamelling in the USSR



Late last year I was invited to participate in the International Symposium of Enamelling held in Palanga, Lithuania for two months from January till March this year. I was invited for four weeks. Twenty-four enamellers from many national regions and states of the USSR as well as twenty-five international guests participated for various lengths of time. Enamellers from the UK, USA, France, Spain, Germany, Denmark and Australia were present.

The symposium has been held annually for Soviet enamellers since 1983, when metal artists first came together in Palanga to experiment and explore the medium of enamel and to prepare work for inclusion in the 1984 International Enamel Exhibition in Limoge, France. This year was the first truly international symposium.

The symposium is held at a daile (house of creation), a five story building comprising ground floor dining room, library and games room and a wing of medical facilities. Above, there are three floors of individual rooms (ateliers) with private bathrooms. The top floor holds three large rooms, a metal working room, a kiln room and a conference room for meeting and late night parties. The daile hosts many groups of artists throughout the year who come to work, rest and socialise. The individual rooms serve as studios for living and working, with the two larger areas on the top floor for larger metal-work, soldering and firing of enamel.

My room on the third floor was tiny but very comfortable and adequate. I had a sofa/day bed, a table, lamp, chair and cupboard. Large windows onto a balcony allowed plenty of light. All interiors were warm and cosy, we were very well fed and there was much visiting between rooms for tea, coffee, to look at progress of work and for late night gatherings. There was a wonderful feeling of camaraderie and companionship that transcended the difficulties and limitations of language.

On arrival, all enamellers were issued with a quantity of Soviet Dulova enamel, two large sheets of copper and two grinding stones. Jewellery quality enamel is not available to Soviet enamellers. Apart from small amounts of jewellery enamel obtained through international contact, Soviet enamellers are confined to using Dulova industrial enamels, or the liquid grund enamels for steel that are used in industry. There were also pastel coloured Hungarian liquid enamels available in limited quantities.

The Dulova enamel was supplied in ten colours, including a good strong opaque red, an opaque soft turquoise, a bright light green, an opalescent white, a clean hard white and a couple of transparent blues. The Enamel was coarsely crushed and required further grinding. It also contained iron filings, residue from the crushing, which had to be removed with a magnet

before use. I found the Dulova good to use, though limited in colour choice and time consuming to prepare.

Grund, a base-coat enamel for steel, when fired on to copper at high temperatures for many minutes will become transparent in a range of colours from soft grey violet to deep turquoise. Controlling the colour with time and temperature is a great skill. On steel these grunds fire to a rich and beautiful range of blacks and a few enamellers specialise in this technique. Steel was not available for general use, though some enamellers had supplied their own.

Drawing and painting materials were also supplied, and we were encouraged to decorate the door and walls of our ateliers so that each space took on the personality of the artist/occupier.

During the four weeks I was able to visit the ateliers of all the participants to see the work in progress as well as be shown examples and slides of previous work. It was particularly interesting for this jeweller/enameller to see this medium through the eyes of painters and sculptors. The enamel work manifested within the narrow confines of available materials and facilities is very powerful and expressive. The artists use great material inventiveness with political and social content to produce work that has personal and national individuality. This was the most rewarding part of the Symposium for me - the opportunity to observe the progress and 'how' of so many different enamellers with such different and strong artistic concerns.

At the end of the Symposium we displayed our work in our ateliers for viewing by officials from the Soviet Artists Union who came from Moscow to Palanga to view and assess the work of the Soviet enamellers. The next day the work was put on display in a building across the road where speeches were made, spring tulips presented to the women artists, and the work received a great deal of attention from the crowds, including artists and craftpeople from the district who came to see the exhibition.

I would like to thank Australian enamellers who responded to my request for slides. I was able to show these to members of the British Society of Enamellers in London, to Soviet and international participants of the Symposium and to Soviet museum curators and arts writers to enthusiastic and positive response. At the end of the Symposium I presented a kit containing the slides and details of the artists to the director of the Symposium, Indulus Urbans, as a goodwill gift to Soviet enamellers from Australian enamellers.

I would also like to thank the Visual Arts/Crafts Board of the Australia Council for their financial assistance with this project.

Carolyn Delzoppo

# News & Views

## First National Juried Exhibition of Enamels

Following the tremendous success of the International and Australian Exhibition of Enamels held at David Jones Adelaide store earlier this year, David Jones has expressed an interest in holding an exhibition of enamels in Sydney.

It has been decided to make this the First National Juried Exhibition of Enamels. The aim of the exhibition is to promote enamels as a fine art and to demonstrate that we have many excellent exponents of that art form in Australia.

The exhibition will be held during the two weeks prior to Mothers Day which means that there will be many people in the store. The exhibition

will be Monday 29th April to Saturday 11th May 1991 and David Jones would prefer that most of the items be for sale.

Ken Lockwood of Crafts Arts International magazine is very enthusiastic and will give the exhibition a write-up in the March 1991 issue.

At this stage there are two jurors:

Robyn Tudor, a practising contemporary jeweller, lecturer in art, craft and history, curatorial specialist in jewellery, enamel and precious objects and freelance writer.

Ian Were, a Programme Officer with the Visual Arts Crafts Board of the Australia Council, previously lecturer in enamels at San Diego University, USA.

A third juror is yet to be announced.

Entries for the exhibition will be limited to six items per entrant, with a fee of \$15 per person. Closing date for entry of slides for jury - Friday 15th February 1991.

For further information and entry forms contact Raymond Ailsa Close, East Lindfield, NSW 2070.

## 10th National Craft Acquisition Award Exhibition 1990

This is a multi-media exhibition sponsored by the Museums and Art Galleries of the Northern Territory and organised by the Crafts Council of the NT.

It aims to promote excellence in crafts and invites participation from Australian craftspeople.

\$10,000 is available for acquisition of exhibits.

Entry forms are due 13 July 1990.  
Works must be delivered by 9 August 1990.

Entry forms are available from  
The Executive Director  
Crafts Council of the Northern Territory Inc.  
PO Box 1479  
Darwin NT 0801 Telephone 089 81 6615

## First International Enamelling Exhibition Adelaide 1990

See Craft Arts International magazine Issue 18 for a comprehensive revue of this major enamel exhibition, including several colour reproductions of exhibits.

The show was a great success, with more than 3000 visitors over the duration of the exhibition which was opened by the Honourable Carolyn Pickles MLC. Carolyn was an excellent choice, as she is not only interested in enamel but is a purchaser too.

Apart from the sponsorship of David Jones, the exhibition attracted patronage from The Hardy Wine Company and Anset Air Freight.

Enamelling visitors came from Japan, USA, West Germany and in Australia from NSW, WA and Victoria.

The exhibition received good coverage on local television and in the press, and was mentioned in the 6 o'clock news as one of the best exhibitions of the festival.

Two supporting exhibitions of enamels in Adelaide galleries were also well attended.

Margaret Warwick Clarke, the organiser of this exhibition would like to thank all who participated and made this show a success.

## 10th International Biennale of Limoges 'L'art de L'email'

Breaking from the traditional method of selection of enamel works by submission of slides, this year the 10th anniversary of this international exhibition is to be an invitation only. Sixty-three artists from seventeen countries have been invited to exhibit five pieces each. In addition, each invitee has been asked to sponsor another artist of his/her choice to exhibit one piece.

Australian enameller Helen Aitken-Muhen has been invited to exhibit five pieces. She has chosen NSW enameller Carolyn Delzoppo as her sponsored artist, and Jenny Gore from SA is being sponsored by US enameller Colette.

## Slides wanted

South Australian enameller Jenny Gore will possibly be in Europe in June to conduct an 8 day workshop in Germany, and to visit the 10th Biennale de L'email in Limoges, France. She also hopes to visit workshops of enamellers in Spain. Jenny is requesting slides of recent work so she can update her collection. If this project goes ahead, she will need slides by the 20th May at the latest. Please send to: 61 Commercial Rd, Port Noarlunga South, South Australia 5167.