

Australian Enamel Newsletter

Issue 16
October 1992

Enamelling is a means to express my creativity.

My first enamelled pieces, made around 1973 were miniature 'paintings' about 40-50mm diameter.

These led to enamelled lids for silver boxes and then to sterling silver boxes entirely enamelled. perfume flasks followed with threaded and O-ring sealed stoppers. Spherical shapes were the most difficult.

During the seventies, I applied enamel to brooches, pendants, bracelets and necklaces, made from sterling silver, as exhibition pieces and for sale.

Since 1980 I have operated the manufacturing business at which I originally trained. During that time I have applied enamel to a range of sterling silver spoons depicting some of the colourful wildflowers that grow in Western Australia.

Recently I have refined and reworked some of my earlier designs.

At present I am developing a small scale production range of jewellery depicting some of the colourful fish, birds and insects that occur in the Australian environment.

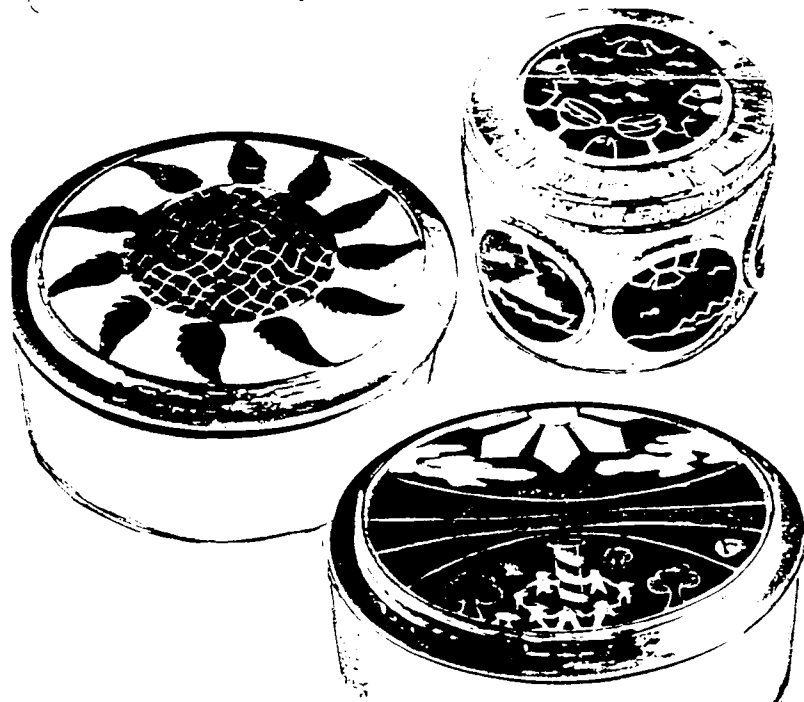
My current project is to design and make 20 miniatures for an exhibition in December 1992, showing people and images of Western Australia.

This is a return to my creative origins which I see as the beginning of a new cycle similar to the first twenty years, but far more exciting because I am now able to bring a more mature creative ability and more sophisticated technical skills to my work.

Ross Williams has exhibited widely in Australia and has work in the collection of the Curtin University and in private collections.



Enameller profile - Ross Williams



Editorial

Yes, its a bumper issue this time, swelled out with reports from the 1992 JMGA Conference and Jamie Bennett workshops. And lots more.

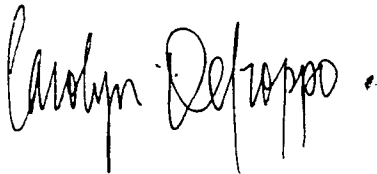
A couple of enamellers have written asking for information from enamellers involved with plique-a-jour. In response to these I wrote to Alex Raphael in London who has recommended the article by Helen Worrall which is reprinted in the middle pages. I hope the technical information so generously shared in this article will inspire enamellers to attempt this alluring and challenging technique. AEN would be pleased to hear from anyone who has had a try and who would like to tell of successes or frustrations with this most difficult of enamelling procedures.

I look forward also to seeing work that develops as a result of the unique techniques taught by Jamie Bennett in his enamel workshops in Perth. Jenny Williams and Janine Tanzer have both written reports sharing the insights they gained there. I'm hoping that the Second National Enamel Exhibition in Sydney in January will be an exciting opportunity for workshop participants to exhibit their individual responses and developments with these techniques. The important thing is not to make work like his, but to take away the experiences gained and turn them to your own creative ends, so that they become just another tool of personal expression. Enamel in Australia has had a much needed boost from Jamie's visit and perhaps we will see many new enamellers exhibiting with us as a result. I certainly hope so.

The Travellers Guide to Enamel has again been held over to the next issue, and will now be just in time for the holiday season when so many of us are on the move. Responses from enamellers until now has been limited, so I am again asking enamellers to send in their information. Inclusion in the listing is good promotion and of benefit to all of us who love to look at enamels. See Issues 14 and 15 for more details.

Remember, slides for entry into the Second National Enamel Exhibition are due in November, - time is slipping away - keep it in mind.

Regards and all,



Editor

Deadline for material for the next issue is 23 November 1992. Submissions are very welcome, especially news from states other than NSW. News from NSW is of course also welcome!

Send to Australian Enamel Newsletter
or fax to Carolyn Delzoppo,
C/- Forbes Solicitors 066 841 422.

News - national

Many Sydney enamellers will be participating in the 1992 Australian Craft Show at the Sydney Showgrounds in November.

Helen Parker, Heidi Wellings, Norma Alce, Sandra Kerr and Doreen Sinclair will be sharing a booth. Mary Raymond and Heather Calnan will each share booths with artists in other media.

THE AUSTRALIAN CRAFT SHOW

Show Dates Nov 25-29

10am-4pm & Weekend 10am-5pm

Royal Hall of Industries

R.A.S. Showground

Sydney

Barbara Ryman has had a brooch from her recent exhibition at Crawford Gallery selected into the permanent collection of the Powerhouse Museum in Sydney.

The brooch, evocative of the shoreline and marine forms, features soft textured opaque and transparent cloisonne enamel surrounding a delicate water-washed pebble.

Queensland enameller Jozsef Pinter has won first prize in the Craft Section of the Caloundra Art and Craft Festival 1992, with a hand-raised enamelled copper vessel.

Sydney enameller Heather Calnan will be exhibiting her work at her 19th Annual Home Exhibition, November 20, 21 and 22, 10am - 6pm. The exhibition will include enamel beads, wall plaques, sculpture and jewellery. 184 Tryon Rd, East Lindfield. Telephone 416 5425.

Supplies

For those not wanting to use lead-free enamels, Miltons will in future be stocking Blythe leaded enamels. At present they have sample kits with the full range of opaque and transparent colours. Colour charts are available on request. There will be a three week supply time for some colours until the full range is stocked.

Miltons also have ceramic pigment and painting kits, as recommended for use in the recent Jamie Bennett workshops in Perth.

Miltons Telephone 07 268 5998
Fax 07 268 5047

News - international

Workshop

Sydney jeweller Alice Whish is currently taking bookings for a variety of workshops she will be holding at her Annandale studio.
For further details contact Alice on 02 692 0889.

Change of address

Linda McGuire - 1/28 Quinton Road, Manly NSW 2095

Pat Stephen - 24 Third Street, Klemzig, SA 5087

Glenice L Matthews
2 Greenville Street, Swanbourne 6010 WA

Thank you

The list of people who contributed material to Issue No 15 was inadvertently omitted from that issue, so, a big thankyou to those who contributed then and now -

Heidi Wellings, Stacey Allen, Sandra Kerr, Jenny Gore, Hiltrud Blaich, Wendy Hall, Barbara Ryman, Gillian Palmer, Helen Worrall, Robert Worrall, Ceramics Monthly magazine, Mary Raymond, Jenny Williams, Glenice Matthews, Janine Tanzer, Jozsef Pinter, Ross Williams,

Also a special thanks to Mary and Bill Laidler who have generously volunteered for folding duties.

International Exhibition of Arts and Crafts
Creativkreis International Japan Fair 1993

Creativ-Kreis is an international organisation dedicated to the promotion of arts and crafts with the aim of improving and enriching cultural life and fostering international cultural exchange.

This exhibition, which takes place annually was held in Adelaide in 1990, and many local and international enamellers participated.

The 1993 exhibition will be held in Tokyo from April 2 to 7.

Enamellers are invited to submit work in the enamel category of the exhibition.

Various awards will be given to 10 entries in total.

Requirements -

- 2D works should be no larger than 1 metre in height or width, and 3D works no larger than .5 metre in any dimension.
- Transport costs will be borne by the exhibitor.
- A set of personal ornaments will be counted as one entry.

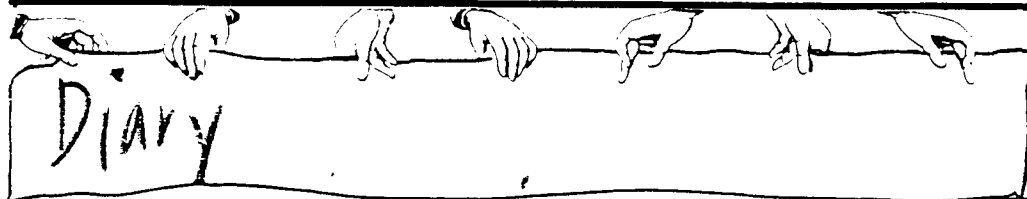
To apply send -

- one colour slide and colour photograph of each work
- entry fee of Y10,000 (approx \$A116.00) for up to two entries. No fees apply to students.
- two photographs of the artist.
- written application and resume as per entry form.
- painting or drawing on the subject 'Nature and Love' which is the general theme of the exhibition. To also be exhibited.

Entries need to be received in Tokyo by December 31.
Works to be delivered by February 15 1993.

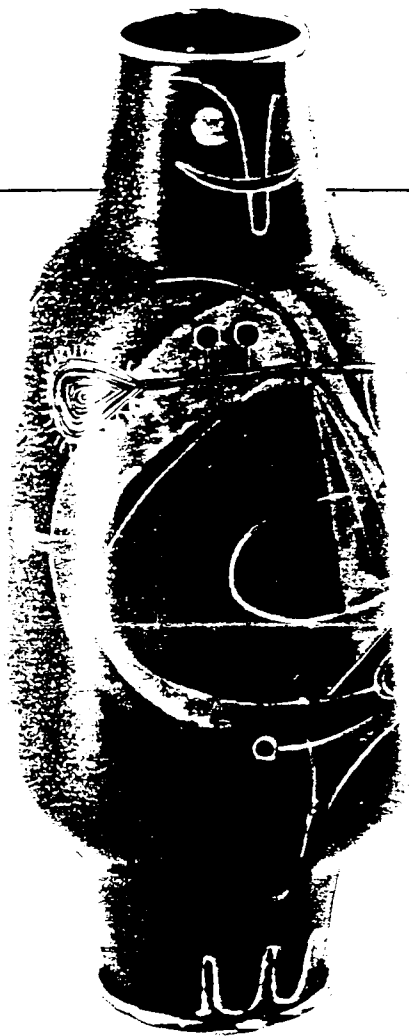
Secretariat for the CKI Japan Fair
Room 302, 1-12-2 Yanagibashi,
Taito-ku, Tokyo, Japan. Phone 03 5820-9794
Fax 03 3865-6418

For entry forms and further details, send 2 x 45¢ stamps (to cover photocopies) and a SAE to Australian Enamel Newsletter.



- | | |
|----------------|---|
| October 3 | National Craft Acquisition Award Exhibition, Northern Territory, opens. |
| October 3 - 10 | Diamond Valley Art Award Exhibition, Greensborough, Victoria. |
| November 2 | Deadline for entry, slides and fees, Second National Juried Exhibition of Enamels, Sydney. See issues 14 and 15 for details, or contact the convenor Mary Raymond on 02 416 6472. |
| December 31 | Deadline for receipt of entry forms, resume and fees, Creativkreis International Fair, Japan, 1993. Exhibition of Arts and Crafts. See this issue for details. |
| January 5 - 17 | Second National Juried Exhibition of Enamels, Sydney. |

Limoges report



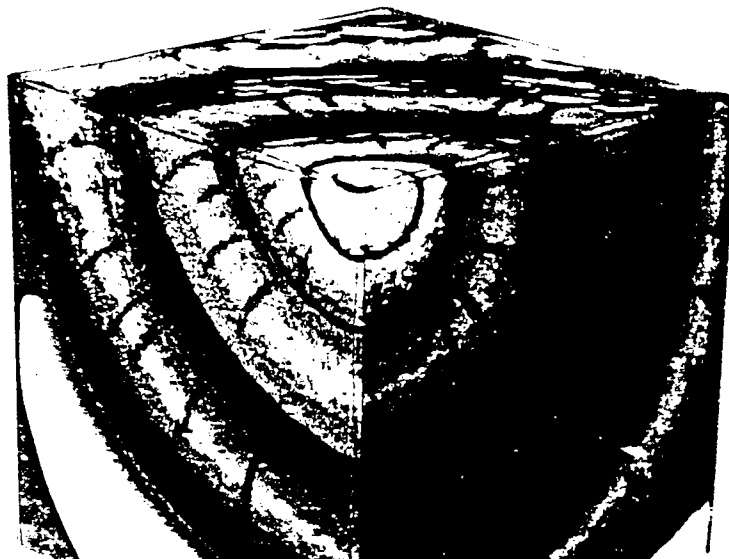
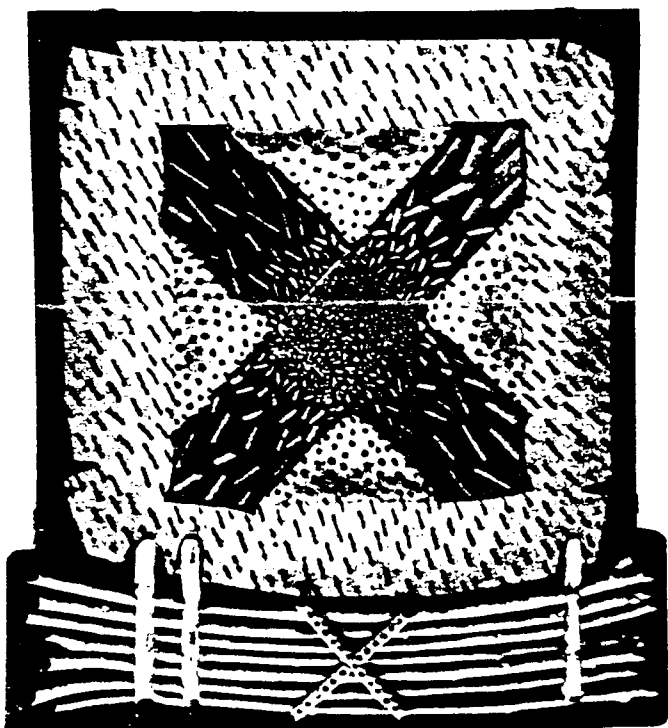
This year I was lucky enough to be able to attend the 11th Biennale of enamels in Limoges. It was an unforgettable experience to walk through the streets of the city and find one enamel studio/shop after another. I knew that Limoges is the centre for enamels, but I had never imagined to what extent!

The Biennale exhibition was smaller this year than previously but most of the pieces on display were of a very high standard. Strangely, some inferior pieces were on display which had been rejected by the jury! At least this is what I was told by one of the jurors. The Biennale was surrounded by controversy, firstly because many well-known enamellers refused to submit their work to a jury, and secondly, because of the way the whole thing was organised.

The committee decided to save all the entrants a lot of time and money by making the first jury selection by drawings submitted. The idea was that if the drawing was accepted, then the enameller could go ahead and make the piece and then send it to Limoges for a second jurying process. I spoke at length to one of the jurors who said that trying to decide the merits of a piece from a drawing was well nigh impossible. Apart from that, it was clear that the enamellers did not really know what was wanted of them. This became even more evident at the second jurying when it was found that many pieces bore little or no resemblance to the original drawings. I believe that the members of the jury begged the committee not to run the exhibition this way again.

All this having been stated, the exhibition was wonderful! In the centre of the display area, so to speak within the juried exhibition, was an exhibition of design in enamel. These pieces were created by the collaboration of designers and enamellers in France. The catalogue for this section shows the name of the designer and the enameller, plus drawings and dimensions of the pieces, and often how the piece was created.

The exhibition space was all in black with large glass cubic display cases, each one lit with a small spotlight on a long thin stem. For most pieces this



was very effective lighting, but some sculptural pieces needed light from more than one angle. The over-all effect was to focus the attention on each individual item, which after all is what an exhibition is about. I went back several times to have another look and each time saw something I had not noticed before.

As an adjunct to the the Biennale, the Musée de l'Eveché had a special display of their permanent collection of contemporary enamels which has been increased considerably in the last two years. It was a very exciting collection of work and I brought back many images of those wonderful pieces. Flash photography and tripods were not permitted in the museum so I had to resort to 1000 ISO film and holding my breath in a few places where the light was a bit dim!

In a separate pavillion of the museum there was a fantastic exhibition of Art Deco enamels, among them works by Camille Fauré in brilliant colours with a thick, carved overlay of opalescent enamel. Unfortunately photography was not allowed at all in this section as all the exhibits were on loan from private collections. I felt very privileged to have been able to see them.

All in all the visit to Limoges was a very rich experience for me and I left there wishing that I could go straight back home to my kiln. Now that I'm home again I find the ideas somewhat elusive, but perhaps they'll come back eventually!

Mary Raymond

Riso Screening - 2

This is part two of the report on a recent Enamellers Association Workshop 'Riso Printmaster Screening'. Part 1 appeared in Issue 15 of AEN.

requirements

photocopied subject
print Gocco
100 mesh screenmaster and frame.
a pre-enamelled piece of fired enamel
extra standard grain enamel (80 mesh)

procedure

To image Screenmaster

- position blue filter in the lid of the Print Gocco.
- tape or hold back the red button so the lamp housing will fit in the top.
- place two globes into lamp housing.
- the lamp housing must fit evenly all around (arrow to arrow)
- remove protective plastic from sticky printing

- place a sheet of paper on pad, then place the photocopy image on sticky pad face up.
- place screenmaster, glossy side down against the artwork and line up.
- press the lid down firmly to flash and image print onto screenmaster.
- imaged screen can now be attached to frame with double-sided tape - stretch carefully and position screen onto frame.
- remember to replace protective sheet onto sticky pad.

enamelling

Using Dry Enamels.

Your enamel can be part finished and fired, screened, fired and again screened and fired using opaque or transparent enamels. A stencil can be superimposed over the first image if fired between, or your enamel can be completely finished and then screened.

- spray enamel surface
- position screen over enamelled piece, dull side up
- raise screen with cardboard pieces all around so that the screen does not touch the enamel (off contact printing).
- apply dry enamel with sieve and draw the enamel across the screen with a piece of plastic or cardboard.
- lift corner carefully to see if the image has transferred to the enamel surface.
- remove carefully and wipe any excess powder from the enamel surface.
- dry and fire.
- dust off excess enamel powder from the screen.

Using Wet Enamels

This method uses a paste mix of Fabric Printing Reducer (Permaset) and enamel 'fines' - enamel which has gone through 300 mesh screen.

- mix 200 to 300 mesh enamel with fabric printing reducer using a spatula until it has the consistency of toothpaste.
- position the screen with clearance over the dry enamelled surface.
- apply the paste at one end along the edge and squeegee gently towards the opposite edge and then back across.
- your image should have a blank area over the enamel to accept the enamel paste as a storage area.
- check to see that the image has transferred to the enamel surface and lift off gently.
- dry and fire the enamel.
- clean screen with a rolled card if necessary and with turpentine and damp cotton wool or kleenex.
- if stencil is to be used again within a few days, cover with waxpaper and gladwrap and refrigerate.
- if not required, clean, let dry, remove from frame and let roll naturally.
- cover with waxpaper and store.

A Special Plique-A-Jour Technique -

Plique-a-jour is an enamelling technique in which transparent areas of enamel exist suspended in space.

The most prevalent type of plique-a-jour is that in which a myriad of small openings in metal are filled with transparent enamel, allowing light from behind to reveal the splendour of colour. The effect is not unlike a miniature stained-glass window.

A second type of plique-a-jour is one in which the entire piece is a shell of enamel without a supporting metal form. The decoration is a linear design of silver wires embedded in the enamel. The function of the wire is to add structural strength to the form, and to create walls to separate colours into cells. While this technique is not new, it has been produced extensively and, until recent times, was seldom seen outside museums because of its fragility. Today however, it is being produced commercially in small handcraft production centres in Japan, as well as by the occasional adventurous craftsman.

For the advanced enamelist who has tried everything else and is ready for an exciting adventure, I recommend what we shall call 'acid disintegrated plique-a-jour'. This can best be described as cloisonne enamel on copper which has had the supporting metal form removed with acid, leaving the enamel shell to stand on its own.

For the initial experience, it would be well to try a very small piece. Select either a spun copper form or a hand-formed one in 18 or 20 gauge sheet. Clean

the copper, and enamel the outside with a thin coat of medium or hard fusing flux. The reverse side is to remain unenamelled and therefore must be coated with Scalex to retard the formation of firescale during firing.

Prepare the line design involving a cellular type of organisation. This provides for the separation of the colours. The design can have isolated motifs floating in open enamel areas, however a more closely meshed organisation of lines, as in the author's piece shown would seem to give greater wall strength. The design might suggest the intricacy of a piece of lace.

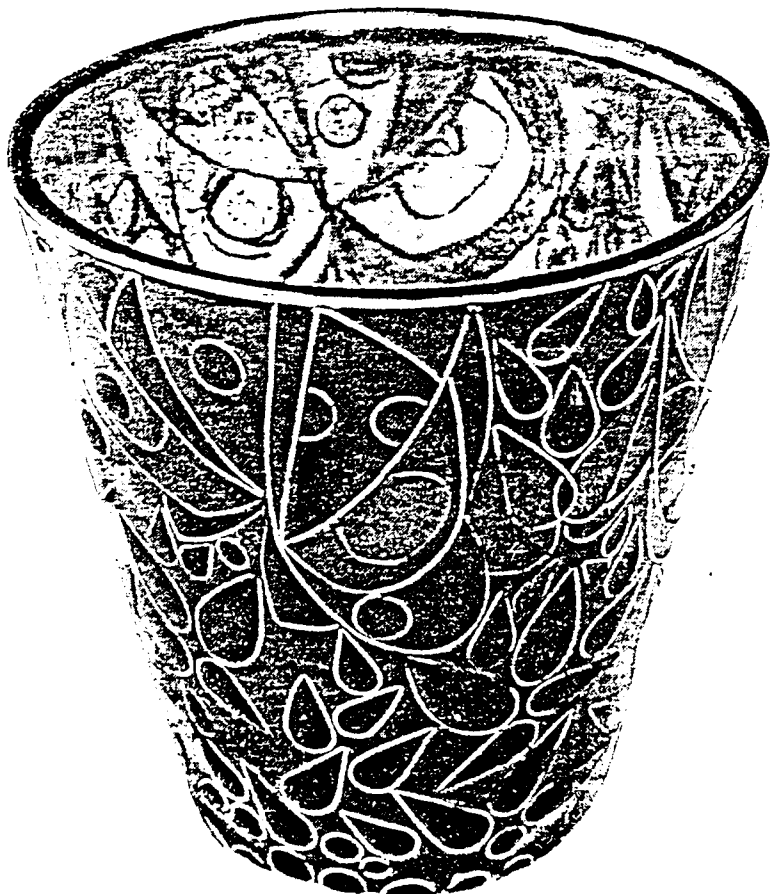
Cut and form cloisonne wires to duplicate the design. Attach these to the fluxed surface with full strength Klyre-fire or other gum. With closely-spaced cellular shapes, the wires will tend to be held in tension as each new shape touches a previous one. When all the wires are in place, dry and fire the piece gently until the wires settle into the flux just enough to be seated securely. Try to keep the wires from becoming buried in the flux, or to penetrate it until they make contact with the copper.

Should there be occasional gaps between the wires and the enamel after firing, these can be closed and the wires seated by applying light pressure with the broad side of a clean spatula as soon as the piece comes from the kiln. There is a space of a few seconds in which the enamel remains soft enough to accomplish this. At this time and with subsequent firings, clean and recoat the unenamelled side with Scalex.

The height of the cloisonne wire used will determine the wall thickness of the finished piece. In the author's example shown, 18 by 30 gauge wire was used. This produced an 18 gauge wall thickness which is extremely delicate. Wire of increased height is suggested if a less fragile piece is desired.

Great care should be taken in the selection and preparation of the enamels. It is desirable to select a palette of colours with a similar fusing point. This can be determined by making a test firing. Place sample patches of all the colours under consideration on a piece of copper and fire it. Observe the colours closely during firing to determine the comparative fusing points. An additional test is desirable to determine the value and intensity properties of the various colours, since they will look different when suspended in space without the copper base. For this test, drill largish holes in a scrap of copper, place the copper on a sheet of mica, put the enamels into the openings and fire. Repeat the filling and firing operations until the holes are filled.

Select the colours to be used, and wash small amount until the water is perfectly clear. Place the wet washed colours in a painter's palette or in a series of small labelled containers. Using the wet-inlay method, fill the cloisons (wire cells) to the height of the wires until the entire surface is covered. Pack the colours well into the corners. Absorb the residual water with a clean cloth, and spray the surface with gum. This will hold the enamel in place as it dries. Each cell may be filled with a single colour, but it is possible to create graded effects. Repeat the



Helen Worrall's fragile plique-a-jour cup,

enamel mounds are slightly higher than the wires. In the demonstration piece, the vertical sides proved to be somewhat of a problem during firing in that the colours had a tendency to slide. This was helped by first firing the piece right side up and then upside down. Using enamels of similiar melting point is of advantage, because soft-fusing colours will mature and slide before the harder-fusing colours become mature.

When firing is completed, the next step is to refine the surface. This is accomplished by hand grinding with a carborundum stone. The stoning should be done under running water in order to keep the piece cool, and to wash away the grindings. Stone the piece until the enamel surface and the wires are flush. It will be noted that stoning opens small pores in the surface which will tend to collect grindings. A vigorous scrub with a glass brush will remove most of this and will improve the clarity of the colours. Refire the piece in a fast hot kiln to reglaze the dulled surface. Since the wires will have been dulled by the stoning, the finish can be returned to them by polishing the piece on a buffing motor with White Diamond compound. This will not damage the enamel surface. Use care that the piece does not become too hot during buffing.

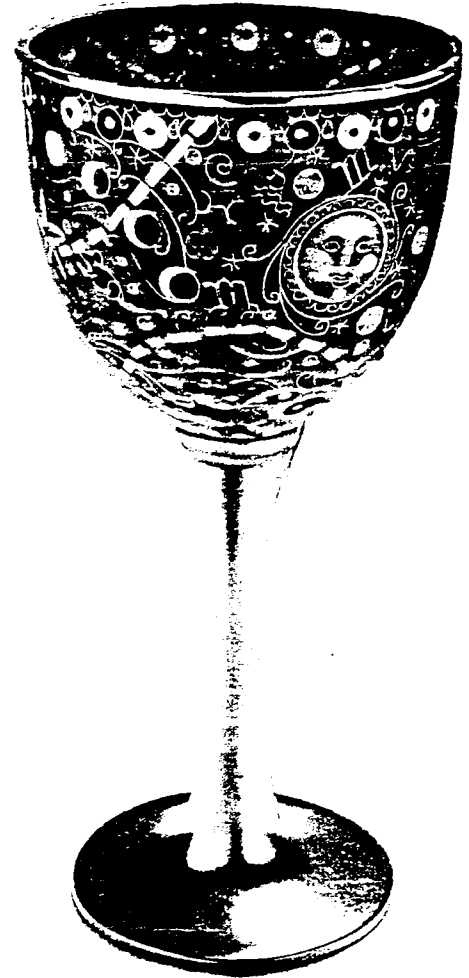
The next step is to remove the copper form. This is accomplished by etching it away with a strong solution of nitric acid. Since silver is also readily attacked by nitric acid, the outside of the piece must be protected with an acid-resistant material. Asphaltum varnish can be used. Paint this over the entire enamelled surface and carry it over the edge 1/8 inch onto the copper. The reason for covering the copper edge is to leave a strengthening rim of metal attached to the enamel. It will be noted that a silver rim was used at the edge of the demonstration piece to give a more attractive finish. This was attached with IT solder before the piece was enamelled. The edges on Japanese pieces are finished with a channel-type of bezel after the copper is removed.

Prepare a solution of one part nitric acid and three parts water (always pour acid into the water), and fill the piece. Allow the acid to remain until all of the copper has been eaten away. This may take several hours. The acid solution will probably need to be replaced from time to time, as its strength diminishes. A stronger solution may be used if desired. Frequent stirring with a feather will disperse the bubbles that form during the etching. When all the copper has gone into the solution and disappeared, the acid is poured out and disposed of. All that then remains to be done is to clean the asphaltum away with kerosene or turpentine, and scrub the piece with detergent and water.

What a rewarding thrill is in store for you as the piece emerges, and you view for the first time the finality of your labour in all its glory! Needless to say, treat it as the most precious of gems. It cannot be refired.

Please note - metal gauge sizes in this article are American, not the same as in use in Australia.

This article is reprinted with the kind permission of the author Helen Worrall, and the editor of Ceramics Monthly where it was first published in December 1972.



Plique-a-jour goblet by Alexandra Raphael, UK



detail of Plique-a-jour work.

Connections '92 - Jewellers & Metalsmith Group of Australia

First Prize Award
Julie Blyfield SA
'Stratigraphy of Chance'
Cement, oxide, steel cable, sterling silver
and brass. 30mm cubes.



The following is a report on the JMGA Conference written for the US Enamelists Newsletter by Glenice Matthews.

I looked around the room and thought 'Dorothy, this isn't Kansas anymore!' ... It was truly hard to believe. As Master of Ceremonies I had just introduced Jamie Bennett and then Helen Shirk as special guest speakers at the Biennial Conference of the Jewellers and Metalsmiths Group of Australia.

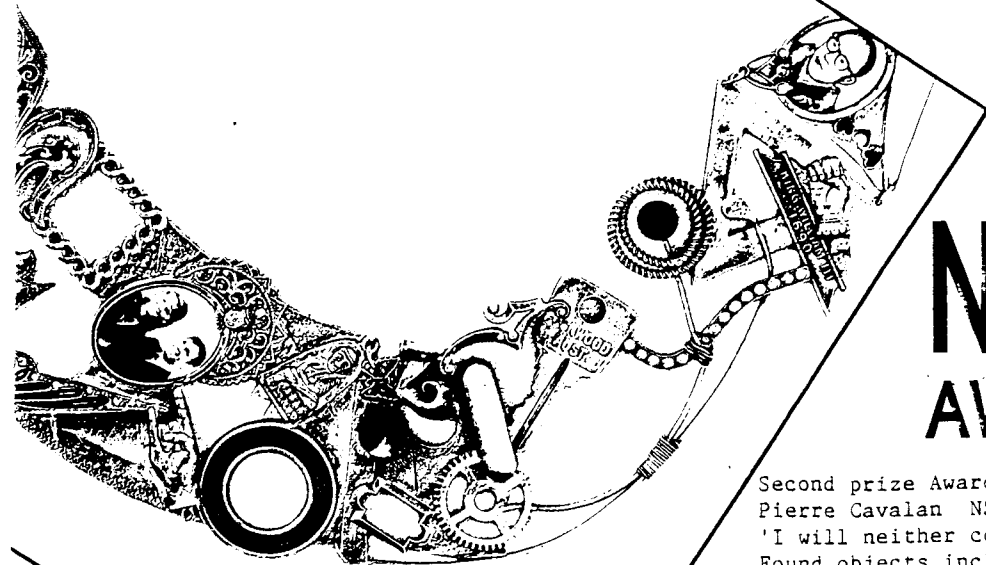
Three years ago when I decided to pack up my lead-free enamels, trivets, sifters, studio and household goods and chattles to return to my roots, most of my friends and colleagues expounded on "What would I find back in Perth, Australia?". Especially after spending so much time in the cultural craft environment of the US of A.

Well, Perth, Australia has just hosted an incredible crafts event that will take a long while to equal - even on an international basis.

For the layman (it took several years of organisation) it all commenced on August 12 with the opening of the 1992 design Visions Exhibition at the Art gallery of Western Australia. This second biennial exhibition curated by Robert Bell brings a confluence of craft mediums focusing on selected disciplines. Included in this year's mammoth exhibition was metal from the U.S.A. Albert Paley was guest of honour and gave the opening keynote address. Exhibiting and present in the audience were Jamie Bennett, Helen Shirk, Marjorie Schlick and Billie-Jean Thiedes from the U.S.A. along with many prominent Australian identities.

August 15-16 was scheduled for the jewellers and Metalsmiths Group of Australia Conference at which Jamie, Helen and Marjorie gave slide presentations of their own development and that of their colleagues. And there before my eyes came visions of friend's work - familiar names, familiar pieces, it was all overwhelmingly familiar.

190 delegates attended the Conference. Prior to the weekend activities, hands on workshop were scheduled. Jamie conducted two, four day workshops at Curtin University with



The West Australian

NECKWORKS AWARD EXHIBITION

Second prize Award
Pierre Cavalan NSW
'I will neither confirm or deny my convictions'
Found objects including: medallions, badges,

Conference and 'Neckworks' Exhibition

students from all over Australia. Helen Shirk also held a workshop and Birgit Laken from Holland, another presenter, gave a four day workshop on Mokume-Gane.

Just to help with the stimulae, three other exhibitions opened in conjunction with these mammoth artistic events. The Craft Council of Western Australia opened its annual City of Perth Craft Awards (for which I was a juror). Graduate Metal V - a competitive Exhibition for graduate metal students throughout Australia; and the 'Neckworks' competitive exhibition sponsored by West Australian Newspapers. These three exhibitions along with several other jewellery displays in private galleries contributes to a very high profile. One week later, the Shinju Matsuri Pearl jewellery design competition also opened, and two weeks later the Treasures of Russia Exhibition followed at the Art Gallery of Western Australia.

The workshop leaders had a small display of their work at the Fremantle Art Centre adjacent to the Neckworks exhibition. This gave the delegates to the events an opportunity to view extra pieces, as both Helen and Jamie had work in Design visions.

Back to the Conference, it was a stimulating two days. The results of the workshop were exciting. A display of the participants endeavours showed the development of experiments conducted during the courses. I was particularly impressed by the exploration of thought and idea in Jamie's class, using enamel in a three-dimensional way, with textured surfaces and layered colours. The folk who participated enjoyed this alternative approach and much sharing of information was given.

So, it all happened in far away Perth - so far away, if you keep going, you start to come back.

Personally, I was very pleased that I again live in Perth and that I could offer hospitality to the U.S.A. connection for this spectacular 'metal month'.

Lenice Lesley Matthews
Western Australia

Six enamelled pieces were exhibited among the many entries in the West Australian 'Neckworks' Award Exhibition.

Enamellers exhibiting were -

Marguerite Andel WA
Carolyn Delzoppo NSW
Annette Gerritse WA
Sally Laney WA
Catherine Large NSW
Barbara Ryman NSW

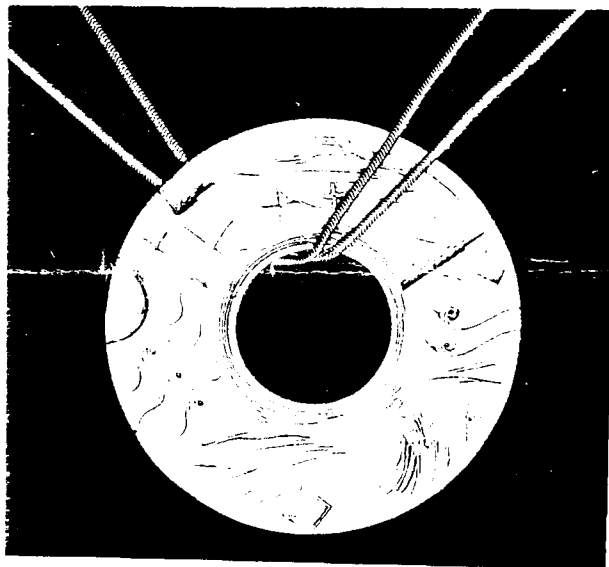
Rather a disappointing turnout. Where are the enamellers from states other than WA and NSW? And so few of those.

Photographs reproduced here are from the catalogue 'Neckworks Award Exhibition' which is available from JMGA in each state.

In NSW, send cheque or money order for \$8.00 plus \$5.00 p&p to

Liz Paul, Secretary JMGA NSW
43 Murtle Street, Chippendale NSW 2008

Carolyn Delzoppo NSW
Double-sided Pendant
Cloisonne enamel on fine silver.
75mm diameter.



Catherine Large NSW
Discords
Fine silver, enamel, linen thread.
750 x 50mm



Jamie Bennett Enamel Workshop

Jamie Bennett is an enamellist whose work I have admired for several years. When I heard he was coming to Australia to do a four-day workshop in conjunction with the Perth conference, there was no question or hesitation - I put my name down.

Felicity Peters had generously offered me accommodation in her home for the duration of the conference. I arrived on a Sunday night, heavy suitcase and toolbox in hand, into the midst of a busy social gathering.

I was introduced to all the workshop lecturers and many jewellers whose work I had often admired but whom I had never met in person. It was a delightful start to my week at the conference - thanks, Felicity!.

The first day was largely informative. I was able to meet Phil Mason after numerous telephone conversations. There was a little bit of hesitation between new faces, but that had all disappeared by the afternoon, believe me!

Many of the techniques we learned over the four days were common knowledge to established enamellists and there were also many new ideas. I would have to produce a book if I were to publish all my notes, but fortunately that is not necessary as Glenice Lesley Matthews has already written a book called 'Enamels, Enameling, Enamellists (published by Chilton) which is the only volume on the subject that Jamie recommends.

Central to the theme of the workshop was Jamie's method of producing his enamel pieces. He starts by carving into a hard, dense wax (eg. bee's wax) and then uses electroforming on the resulting shapes until the copper is about .3mm thick. By gently heating the copper to remove the wax, he is left with a multi-textured surface on material that is consistent in its thickness (in contrast to repousse).

The lightness of Jamie's pieces is incredible, and before they are enamelled they are very delicate. He takes fittings into account during the electroforming stage by setting pin anchors into the wax so he is able to bring the brooch closer to the body. He will eventually 'tap and die' the fitting and anything else he wants to adhere to the piece.

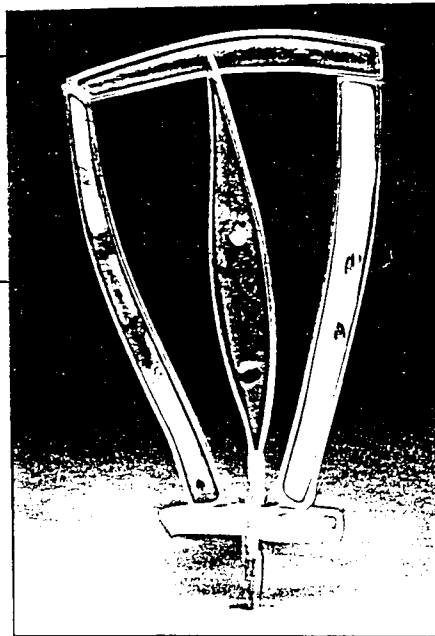
Jamie uses Thompsons lead enamels at home, but we used lead-free in the workshop. He anneals, then cleans his metal with a salt and vinegar solution and glass brushes so that water will run evenly over the surface of the metal. He applies Klyre-fire (from Thompson Enamel) to the piece and sifts 2020 transparent dry enamel flux through 150-200 grain mesh onto the under surface and fires, then repeats this for the top surface. After that it is a matter of applying enamel colours or using different tricks to get certain effects such as stencilling. He watches carefully to see that the enamel does not become thicker than the base metal.

He usually keeps his kiln at 800 degrees, which is safe for enamels, but when he uses ceramic pigment glazes and ceramic pencils, the temperature must not exceed 650 degrees. This is especially true with red glazes as the colour would burn out in about ten minutes at a higher temperature.

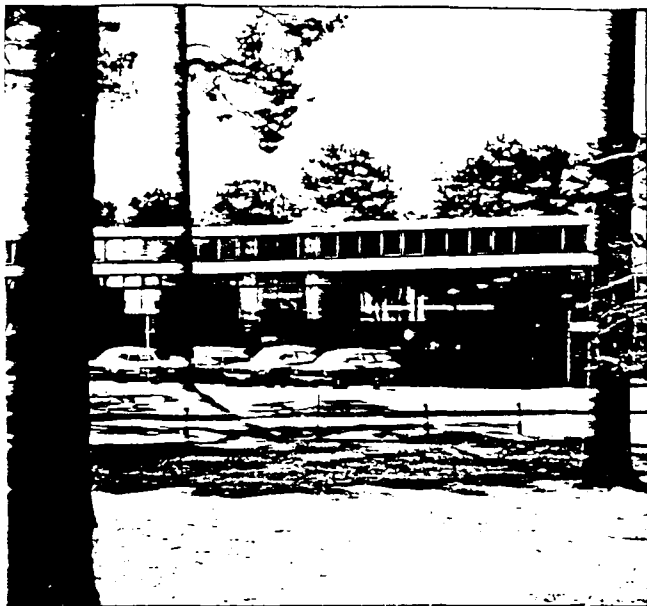
When Jamie gave a lecture in Melbourne a few days later, he let the audience handle some of his work, and many people were amazed at the near weightlessness of the pieces.

Jamie poened a whole new approach to enamelling that took him years to develop, but was kind and generous enough to reveal his secrets to us.

Janine Tanzer



Jamie Bennett demonstrating mixing and



The Jamie Bennett workshop held in Perth in conjunction with the JMGA Conference was attended by 2 Tasmanians, 3 West Australians, 4 Victorians, 1 Queensland and 2 from NSW.

The objectives of the workshop were to use enamelling as a technique rather than a process and to understand it as a material. It was to be a time of experimentation for us, gaining an understanding of working on formed pieces.

For some of us, the first morning was spent renewing acquaintances from previous conferences, and by the end of the workshop it was like parting from a lot of friends. The mood of the workshop was one of absolute delight at the learning experience and I personally felt that even if I had had to leave after only one day, it would have been worthwhile.

Jamie was a wonderful lecturer, very generous with information, including historical background to most aspects of the techniques. Information was spaced out evenly over the four days, often needing to be repeated time and again. The sharing of three kilns between us all also led to a sharing of all our experiments, successful and otherwise.

Jamie began by explaining the traditional enamelling techniques and then spent some time on the details of metal preparation.

For his own work all he does is anneal, quench, pickle, neutralize and dry the piece! The enamel adheres to the ions of the surface oxides, so there is no need to bright clean the metal, unless that finish is particularly wanted. Obviously, opaque do not need a bright surface.

The metal thickness we used was only .3mm - .5mm, and we spent some time the first day making sample shapes by forming, doming, forging, fold forming etc our metal pieces to enamel.

The main technique used for applying the enamels was sifting with 80, 100, 150 and 200 mesh screens. We made our own screens using plastic cups or yogurt pots with the bottoms cut out. Stainless steel mesh was heated, either on a hot plate or with a heated steel tool and melted into the plastic base, and then trimmed close to the rim.

The temperature of the kiln and the firing times were not critical, though a longer, slower firing was recommended. The timing was done by watching the colour of the trivets and the changes in the enamel.

Each day we were introduced to new techniques, - sifting, applying foils, paper stencilling, painting with ceramic pigments and overglazes, and use of ceramic overglaze pencils, chalks and crayons over a matte opaque surface.

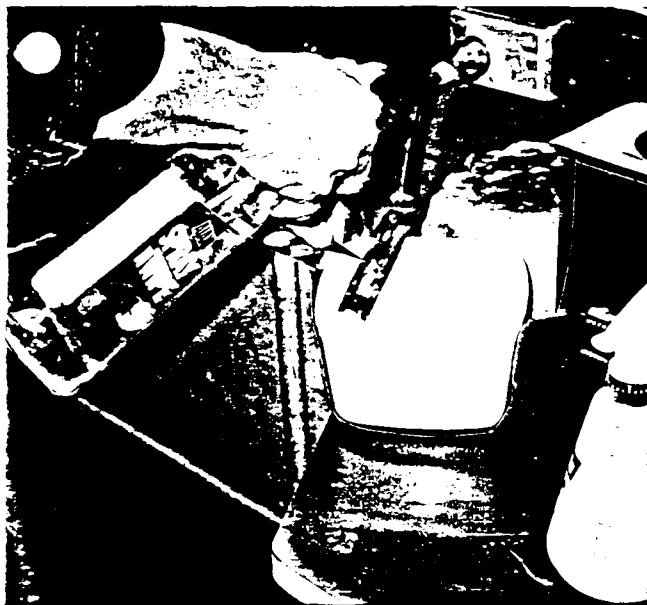
Bi-carbonate of soda was used to create surface texture, either mixed with water and mist sprayed onto the piece hot from the kiln, or ground with the enamel and wet packed. The spray technique gave an effect a little like lichen on a rock.

The cloisonne technique was covered briefly, and we were shown how to achieve a free-standing straight line, to use wires of differing thickness and how to attach the wires to the work.

Our days were well occupied with experimenting with all the techniques, and the evenings with wine tastings, gallery openings and dinners so that by the end of the workshop a general mind-boggled exhaustion was felt by all!

It was certainly a worthwhile experience!

Jenny Willaims
N.S.W.



Bi carb of soda mix being mist sprayed into piece straight from the kiln.

Dorothy Dwyer, Phil Mason, Pierre Cavalan and Marjorie Schick.

