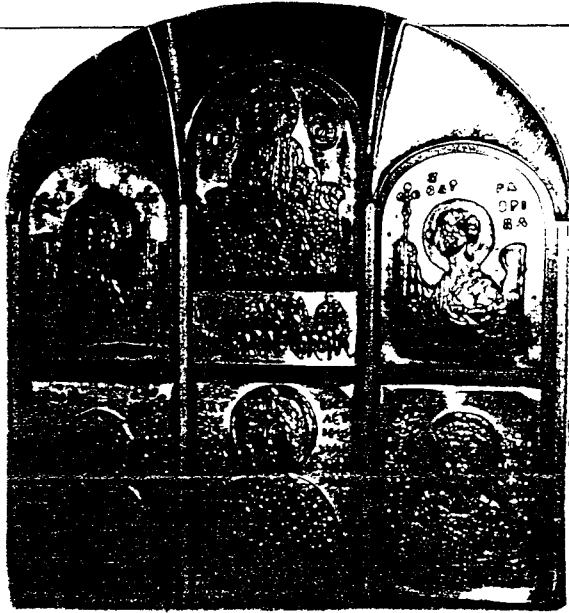


# Australian Enamel Newsletter

Issue 26

June 1995



## Enameller profile - Tibor Szakos

I arrived in Australia in 1981. For the previous 20 years I had been involved in designing and making murals and wall panels for public buildings in Hungary and Czechoslovakia. My materials were copper, steel and also silver. My wife Kamilla joined me here in 1986.

We came here full of hope, wanting to continue with my art activities but it was very difficult. Even though we were happy here, I had to find other work. In 1989, poor health meant that I had to stop full-time work, and I had to decide what to do next.

When in Hungary on holiday, we saw many art and craft galleries and exhibitions, including many fine quality enamels. So, we decided to become enamellers. Why? Because it is copper my well known material and it is painting and it can be sculpture too.

Back in Sydney, we arranged a home studio and began teaching ourselves to enamel. In 3 months we made 15-20 pieces, with plenty of mistakes, but we kept going and gradually gained more experience with enamel painting with brushes. I remembered a simple quote from Cellini from the Middle Ages - 'Enamelling is just the same as painting'. Eventually we chose to work in the traditional cloisonne techniques.

By 1990 our creative life was very full, like it had been before coming to Australia.

We have returned to Europe twice, in 1991 and 1993, and have continued to study and develop our techniques in enamel. Twice we have been able to spend 6 weeks at a live-in Symposium of Enamel in Kecskemet in Hungary. This symposium is held every summer and is supported by the government and local council. Many good enamel artists and goldsmiths from all over Europe take part. These weeks are a very hard working time, from morning to late night every day, and we learned a lot. It is very interesting to see the variety of style and techniques of all the different artists. We were also able to take a three week course with a master cloisonne artist from Tblisi in Georgia who is a specialist in replicas of old 11th and 13th Century gold cloisonne icons.

In Sydney we have made contact with the friendly and helpful people from the Enamellers Association, and have taken part in two of their National Exhibitions which have been very successful for us. Bringing 25kg of enamels and 20kg of handmade wooden frames back from Hungary for the Exhibition was interesting, with customs officers quite confused about so many colourful metals in our baggage. We had long discussions in Budapest about excess luggage too.

What about the future? We will continue to enamel but with a difference of technique and style. We have been offered an exhibition at the Holdsworth Fine Art Gallery in Sydney but the dates have not yet been set. We are already working towards the 1995 National Exhibition of Enamels in Sydney.

# News

Greetings fellow enamellers,  
I wonder does everyone have this love/hate relationship with enamel? Three days work down the drain because my enamels reacted in some way to the metal surface and turned into filthy colours in the third firing. Aaaaaurgh! It never lets you take it for granted, not even once!

Karin Luz who was the profiled enameller in the Feb issue has, true to her word, written a terrific article about the unusual technique 'drop enamel' which was developed by her teacher Richard Anke. Edmund Masow, good friend to AEN, wrote telling of his experiments with the technique and his memories of Richard Anke's retrospective exhibition in 1984. Edmund writes,  
"In the exhibition I saw some lampshades for tables and floors with a similiar technique. But he didn't really make holes in the copper, but only half-round cutouts, which he enamelled. So if the bulb in the light shines you could see a lot a little 'stars', because the light was collected in the very clear enamels like in a lens. In the example I made, I think it is very important that the enamels used all have the same melting point and viscosity, and that the openings all have the same degree of angle. I think it is also important that the direction of the copper sheet is correct in the kiln."  
Unfortunately we do not have any photographs of finished pieces, but it is not hard to imagine the glowing spots of backlit colour.  
AEN would be very interested to hear from any enamellers who have used this technique, or of experiments from Karin's notes.

The Exhibition Committee has sent a bulletin about requirements and preparations for the 1995 National Exhibition of Enamels. There's still lots of time to prepare work for submission, to be a part of this growing and successful annual survey of Australian enamelling. If you will be sending work in, please read the section about placing an advertisement in Craft Arts magazine, it is a good opportunity for promotion for your work and for the exhibition.

Best wishes,

*Carolyn Delzoppo* Editor

The deadline for material for the next issue will be July 23. Submissions are very welcome and AEN is always pleased to be informed of any enamel news and activity. Please enamellers from outside NSW, keep us informed. We love to hear what is happening with you.

Material can be faxed to 066 841 772, or mailed to PO Box 418, Mullumbimby, NSW 2482.

## Thank you

Thankyou to the following contributors to this issue - Tibor Szakos, Karin Luz, Edmund Masow, Wendy Hall, Ann Thomson, Mary Raymond, Heather Calnan, Enamellers Association, Sandra Naomi Kerr

Heather Calnan will be exhibiting her enamels in the sculpture garden at the Art Expo to be held at the Sydney Showgrounds the weekend of July 16 and 17.



Barbara Ryman exhibited a collection of her enamelled jewellery in the Michal Design Jewellery Boutique in the Elizabeth St store of David Jones during April. Barbara used Christian motifs in a range of pendants and brooches using both cloisonne and champleve techniques.



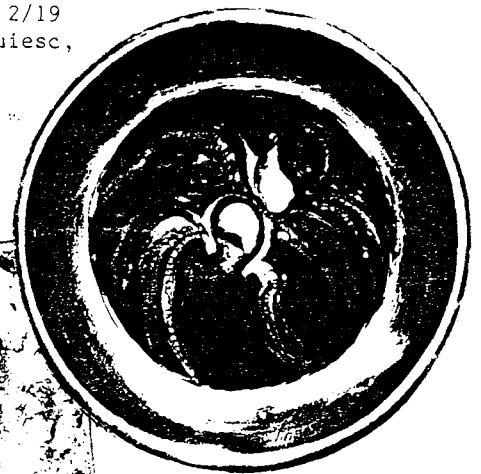
A weekend workshop on Cloisonne Enamel on Silver taught by Carolyn Delzoppo will be held at the Central Coast Lapidary Club at Ourimbah near Gosford July 23 and 24.

Anyone interested in participating should ring Ann Thomson on 043 423 423 for details of cost and accommodation. Ourimbah is about one hour north of Sydney.

## Penpal

AEN has had a letter and photographs from a Romanian enameller Gyula Elekes, telling about her life and enamelling. Gyula has studied graphic art and has been enamelling since 1980. She has participated in the International Enamel Workshop in Kecskemet in Hungary many times and has exhibited in Austria, Hungary and Romania.

If anyone would like to correspond with Gyula, (in French, English or German) her address is;  
Str. Pantofarilor Nr 2/19  
RO-4150 Odorheiu-Secuiesc,  
Rumanien.



Enamels by  
Gyula Elekes

# Bulletin from the Exhibition Committee

## 4th National Juried Exhibition of Enamels.

It's time to remind you about the 4th National Juried Exhibition of Enamels to be held at Craftspace Gallery, Sydney, from January 4-15 1995. The guidelines for last year's exhibition challenged us to create a showcase for the best and most innovative enamelled works in Australia. Participants rose to meet that challenge and the improvement in the quality of entries was immense. Around 140 pieces of sculpture, jewellery, containers and wall pieces provided for a strong, professional display and record gallery sales. To maintain this vitality new faces are encouraged to participate - even if you don't produce a lot of work, this is your chance to create that one special piece.

Guidelines for the 4th National Juried Exhibition of Enamels are as follows:

### Exhibition Requirements:

1. Machine made components will be excluded unless they show evidence of further handcrafting, eg. forming or piercing.
2. Items must be made in 1994.
3. Slides of up to 10 works may be entered for submission to a three person jury. Three (3) slides of each piece are required.
4. Closing date for slides is November 1 1994.
5. Accepted works will undergo a second jurying in December.
6. Out-of-town exhibitors wishing to submit large or sculptural works may find it difficult to deliver their work in time for the second jurying. If this occurs, the National Exhibition Committee reserves the right to consider but not necessarily exhibit all work considered.

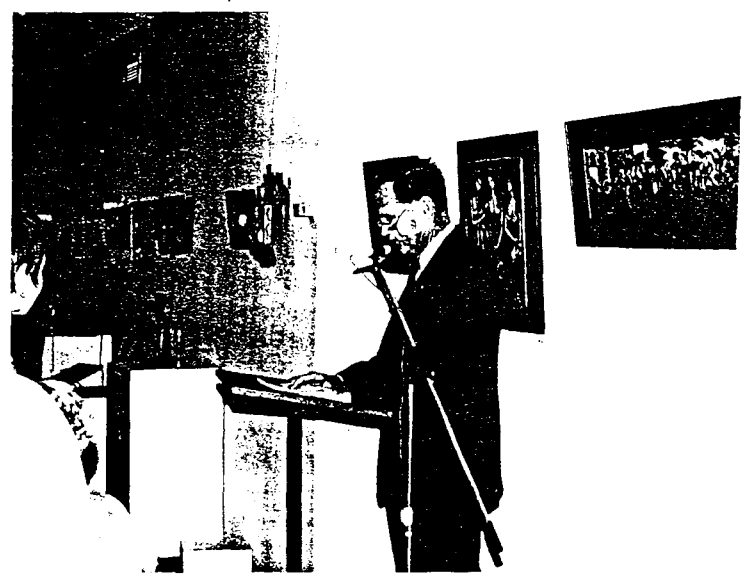
The jurors are:  
Ken Lockwood, Editor, Craft Arts International  
Robyn Tudor, craft writer and educator  
The third juror is yet to be announced.

There is an entry fee of \$25.00 for members of the Enamellers Association, and \$30.00 for non-members.

Please contact Mary Raymond on 02 416 6472 if you would like to receive an entry form. Entry forms will automatically be sent to previous exhibitors.

### Biographical Information

In 1994, biographical information about those who were exhibiting in the 3rd National Juried Exhibition of Enamels was in A4 presentation books at the Craftspace Gallery. Visitors were generally interested in the artists involved and the books were a useful resource. We would like to improve on the idea and make it more personal by perhaps including a photograph or two along with the written information. Your bio can include your qualifications, awards, exhibitions, outlets where your work can be purchased, your influences and directions, etc, or can simply be a statement about your work or why you choose to enamel. Photographs can be of yourself, your work or workshop, or things that influence your work. Words and photos can be formal or relaxed, whatever feels right and can be one page or two facing pages depending on how much you want to put in. Space is limited to two A4 pages per exhibitor.



The Governor of NSW, Peter Sinclair opening the 3rd National Exhibition of Enamels in January.

### Craft Arts Advertisement

Ken Lockwood and Craft Arts International have given great support to the National Exhibition over the years, and in return the Enamellers Association has decided to take out an advertisement to appear in the issue coinciding with the 4th National Exhibition in January 1995.

The Enamellers Association will pay for 1/4 of the cost of a full page, and they are calling for six to eight contributors to share the remainder of the cost. A full page will be approximately \$1600. Excellent quality slides are required, preferably but not necessarily, of work intended for the 4th National Exhibition. Ken Lockwood will make the final decision about which slides will reproduce best in the magazine. Profits from the 1994 Exhibition will be put towards the cost of 1000 extra run-ons of the page which will be used for promotion and sold as souvenir posters. The cost of the 1000 sheets will be \$550.00, very good value indeed.

Anyone interested in participating in this promotion should get in touch with Mary Raymond as soon as possible as the deadline for the slides is tight. Mary can be contacted at 7 Ailsa Close, East Lindfield 2070, or by phone on 02 416 6472.

### Colour Postcards of your Work

While researching costing for advertising and posters for the 4th national we found a company which prints quality postcards. At present the deal is 2500 post cards for 349.00, and the process takes about 10 days. The company will send sample cards and an order form that tells what is needed. A few craftspeople and artists have had cards printed here and the quality is good. If interested, contact Magic Instant Colour Printing, 40 Short Street, Perth WA 6000. Telephone 09 328 7822, Fax 09 328 2008.

## Supplies

Milltons (Anna Margot Originals), suppliers of Thompson enamelling products and Blythe enamels have moved. Their new premises are at:

92 Arthur Terrace, Red Hill 4059

Telephone 07 367 3266

Fax 07 367 3277

The address for mail order remains the same:

GPO Box 1850, Brisbane 4001



Metal Merchants (Sydney) are expanding their stock lines. In addition to gold, sterling and fine silver in sheet and wire, they also stock copper, brass, nickel silver and stainless steel. Also sterling silver chain by the metre and sterling findings.

Metal Merchants,

5th Floor, 104 Bathurst Street, Sydney 2000

Telephone 02 264 5211



American Metalcraft Inc stock many items of interest to the enameller.

- copper blanks in varied and unusual shapes and sizes.

- a wide range of aluminium blanks for use with special low-temperature enamels for aluminium made by Thompson Enamels.

- unusual shapes in spun and drawn copper bowls, trays, cups, ashtrays, candle holders, vases, planters, dishes and bracelets.

- stainless steel and enamelling iron circles, squares and rectangles.

- pre-coated enamelling iron tiles.

- copper, brass and aluminium foils.

- trivets, firing tools, findings.

- metal holders for enamelled tiles.

American Metalcraft Inc

2074 George Street, Melrose Park, IL 60160-1515, US

Phone 1708 345 1177 Fax 1708 345 5758

## Opportunity to exhibit

The 22nd Caloundra Art and Crafts Festival will take place at the Caloundra Civic Centre with awards this year totalling \$14,250 across several categories, including sculpture, painting, ceramics, watercolour, woodturning, fibre, glass. Jewellery and Precious Metal attracts an award of \$1000 which is to be judged by Barbara Heath.

Closing date for entries is 12 August.

For brochures and further information contact Mrs Olwyn Harding-Smith, telephone 074 925976 or fax 074 918 215.

## Around the magazines.

Class on Metal April 1994

Magazine of the US Enamelist Society

Contains:

- technical article on the use of transparent reds by Woodrow Carpenter.

- Bibliography of Byzantine Enamels

- Interview of the enamels of Toshitko Tanaka, Jenny Hellers and DX Ross.

- Article, What is a good instructor/student?

- Other sundry news, reviews and information.

Class on Metal is a colour magazine published 6 times per year. Overseas subscriptions are US\$54.00.

Enamelist Society, PO Box 310, Newport, KY 41072 USA

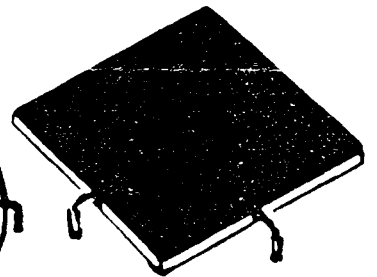
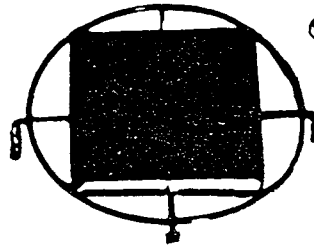
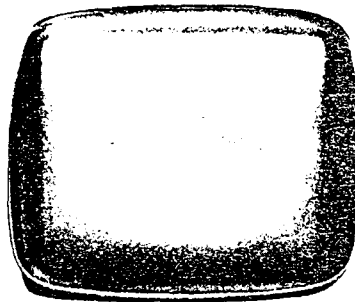


Ornament Spring 1994

Contains colour photographs of enamelled jewellery of Rebekah Laskin (p9) and Barbara McFadyen (p31).

Ornament is a luscious full-colour magazine dedicated to personal adornment of all types including fiber.

Extremely worthwhile and good value at US\$29.00 pa for four issues.



6" SQUARE - 4 legs

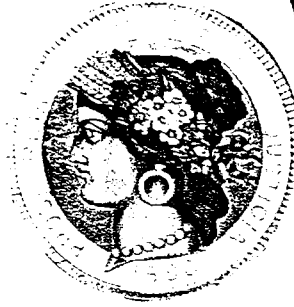


RECTANGLES - CRADLE

6" x 12" & 8" x 12"



# Beautiful Money: Enamelled Coins as Jewellery



It is an amazing fact that to the average jeweller nowadays the term 'enamelled coins' means virtually nothing and that the amount of research carried out into the history and value of these beautiful examples of delicate craftsmanship is severely limited. My own collection of enamelled coins has been amassed mainly by dint of rummaging around the many antique markets and little-known shops, where from time to time the shopkeeper may produce one or two from his silver scrap and oddments due for the melting pot and refer to them distainfully as 'good coins ruined'.

It is of course difficult to know exactly how to classify these works, for they are real coins, mostly minted during the nineteenth century, but they are also jewellery, most of them having attachments soldered on to make them adornments for the fashionable dress of Victorian ladies and gentlemen.

The basic principle of the craft is to cut out or carve from the coin either a figure or the background to one of the images and to fill the area removed with the appropriate enamelled colours. It is not difficult to imagine the degree of skill and indeed patience required, firstly to cut out and then fill such minute detail.

I have among my collection several pendants, varying in size from a crown heavy enough in its scrolled silver frame to weigh on the neck of the doughtiest dowager at a ball, to a tiny shilling in a silver pendant frame and with protective glass on both sides to guard the multi-coloured heraldic devise, which was used to hang on 'Grandad's' watch chain.

Rarely were the coins enamelled on both sides. I imagine few people were willing to sacrifice the coin and to spend money excessively on enamelling, since only one side of the coin would be seen at any one time. I have been fortunate in finding a few shillings enamelled on both sides, one in particular being a George III 1787 in superb condition.

There are among my collection coins of any denomination between five shillings and threepence, coins of many countries and coins of many colours and styles. Their value has never been assessed, but their aesthetic worth alone must surely be

great, for they are exquisite works that can be appreciated both for the skill that created them and for the objects created. In them lies a hitherto almost untapped source of Victorian art and craftsmanship and one worth exploring.

They are still to be found but one has to have a little spare time and a great deal of patience; the prices asked are not excessive and, I feel, within anyone's reach. I suggest that the collector has one or two examples to show when enquiring at jewellers, my experience being that quite a number of them have never seen or heard of enamelled coins.

To conclude, in answer to the question that has been put to me many times "Isn't it illegal to deface coins of the realm?", I can only say after much research that the enamelling of coins was not prohibited until 1920. In that year the Gold and Silver Act made it an offence to melt down, break up or use other than currency any gold or silver coin.

Editors note -

I have always been intrigued and fascinated by examples of enamelled coins that I've come across while browsing in antique shops and at markets. I've never been able to afford to buy any of these lovely pieces but have wished that I could. Recently I came across this article about enamelled coins by W G Symons in the October 1968 issue of the English magazine *Antique Dealer and Collector*, and am reprinting excerpts that are of interest.



Selection consisting entirely of half crowns dating from 1820 to 1915

# Making Your Own Enamel Lumps

Making enamel lumps in any colour is just a simple matter of filling a fireclay crucible with washed enamel powder, firing it and allowing it to cool.

Step 1. Mix a small amount of whiting powder with water to form a brushable paste and paint it as smoothly as possible into the concave area of the crucible.

Step 2. Set it on top of the warm kiln to dry out. The enamel will not usually stick to the whiting, but will stick to the unpainted crucible.

Step 3. When the crucible feels dry, this should only be a few minutes, gently rub over the whiting with your finger to smooth out any uneven areas that could make removing the fired enamel difficult.

Step 4. Fill the depression with enamel, heap it up as it tends to shrink and can develop large air bubbles.

Step 5. Place the crucible on a mesh and place it in the kiln, just like normal enamel and fire until the enamel is smooth and glossy.

Step 6. Remove the crucible from the kiln and allow it to cool as usual - the lump or lumps should drop right out of the crucible with no problems once it has cooled leaving the crucible ready for its next use.

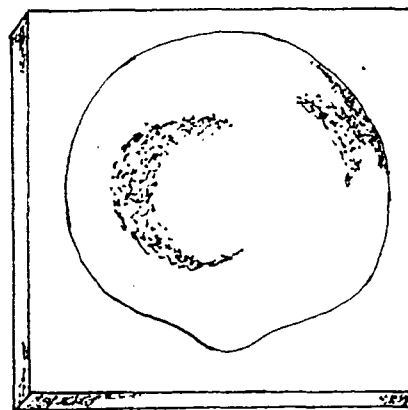
Step 7. Try to keep these large lumps intact at this stage and wash them and brush them with a stiff

brush to remove all traces of the whiting. If necessary rub the base of the lump with wet and dry paper.

Step 8. Now simply crush up the lumps as desired.

The crucibles that I use are made for melting metal for casting and are available from the House of Jewellery in Sydney, and cost about \$4.00 each.

Sandra Naomi Kerr  
Copyright March 1991



View of crucible from above  
Depth of crucible bowl is approximately 1 cm.

## Diary —

- |                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| Until June 12   | Exhibition, Alice Craft Acquisition Awards, Araluen Centre, Alice Springs.   |
| July 7          | Deadline for receipt of entry forms, 14th National Craft Acquisition Awards, N.T.<br>See previous issue for details. |
| July 21         | Deadline for receipt of works, 14th National Craft Acquisition Awards, N.T.  |
| July - August   | Biennale Internationale de L'email, Limoges, France.   |
| 12 August       | Closing date for entries Caloundra Art and Crafts Festival.<br>See this issue for details.                           |
| August 19-23    | Focus on Fire, Symposium on the fire arts, Washington State, US.<br>See previous issue for details.                  |
| Aug 30 - Sept 3 | Caloundra Arts and Crafts Festival, Caloundra Civic Centre, Qld.   |
| August 6-28     | Exhibition, 14th National Craft Acquisition Awards, Museum and Art Gallery of N.T.<br>Darwin, NT.                    |
| November 1      | Deadline for receipt of slides for 4th National Juried Exhibition of Enamels.<br>See this issue for details.         |
| Jan 4 -15       | 4th National Juried Exhibition of Enamels, Craftspace Gallery, Sydney.   |

## Subscriptions

Subscriptions 6 issues per year

Regular - \$16.00

Student - \$8.00

New Zealand Air Mail - \$18.00

Overseas Economy Airmail - \$18.00

Australian Enamel Newsletter  
PO Box 418, Mullumbimby NSW 2482.

# DROP EN.

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In the 1950's and 60's the art of enamelling had been very much in vogue and the development of a new technique had come as a natural progress. The perfect venue to introduce the latest invention 'the drop enamel' had been an international exhibition 'European Enamel' at the Deutsches Goldschmiedehaus in Hanou (Germany) in 1960. Richard Anke, lecturer in enamel at the Kunst-und Werkschule, Pforzheim, expanded the technique of plique-a-jour into drop enamel.

## WHAT IS DROP ENAMEL?

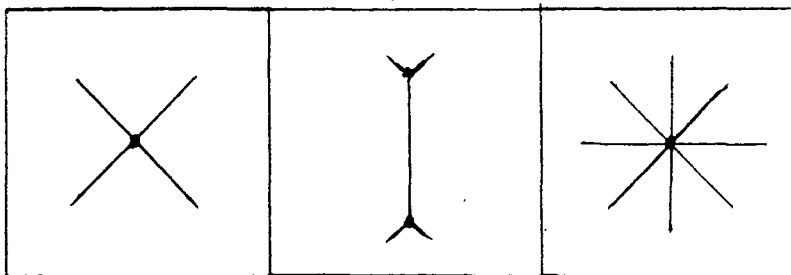
Drop Enamel is 3-dimensional plique-a-jour, when the enamel forms a drop, or the enamel takes on the form of a cabachon.

Drop enamel is opening up new dimensions in enamelling, but it also has its restrictions and limitations. The easy cracking of the enamel in plique-a-jour which is associated with the stress factors determines the actual size of the drop, however the metal support and build up towards the drop can be of a great variety in size and shape.

## METAL AND METAL PREPARATION

To use sterling silver on a big scale is a rather costly excess, however lovely jewellery can be created using wire with an enamelled drop or ball at the end. This open or free hanging drop is very limited in its size, and to produce bigger drops a metal support or setting is needed.

From a copper square 50x50mm and 1.6mm thick a setting is formed by opening up the centre, representing a four, five, six or eight pointed star. It can also be a long straight opening.



Drilled and cut plates before opening up.

The actual size for the setting is between 20 and 30mm in diameter divided into five, six or eight segments, the square 20x20mm and the narrow opening 35-40mm long. See diagram above.



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# DROP ENAMEL

BY KA

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The height of the setting depends on the opening required, the more vertical the prongs, the wider the opening. Sloping prongs produce smaller openings.

Tubing, scalloped at the top end and bent inwards is another setting for drop enamel.

It is important that drop enamel has sufficient metal support toward the top where the drop is being formed. Straight tubing is a poor choice, the side support is there, but not the build-up support.

Before starting the process of enamelling, the metal has to be annealed and pickled in the usual manner.

## ENAMEL PREPARATION

The best result in drop enamel is achieved with enamel lumps. Uneven or unsuitable lumps can be reshaped by melting them on mica prior to enamelling. If need be, some lumps can be obtained by melting together powdered enamel (thoroughly washed).

A combination of small lumps and powdered enamel is another way of achieving the correct lump size for filling the metal opening. When powdered enamel is used it goes without saying that gum arabic is a necessity. After melting a quick stoning removes any traces of mica from the enamel. As previously mentioned, thoroughly washed enamel means that all dirt has to be removed. A finely powdered enamel would not be ideal for this purpose, in the end all the enamel would end up in the counter enamel basin and nothing would remain for lumps.

The closer the metal parts are together, the easier and quicker it is to achieve a good result. For instance, the long, narrow and straight opening is wet-packed with powdered enamel, and one or two firings is all that is needed. The result will be a clear medium size cabachon.

However the star-type openings require more work. First, the gaps between the prongs are wet-packed and the prongs themselves counter-enamelled.

## ENAMELLING PROCESS

The next step is to fill the centre opening with a lump which should be big enough not to fall through but not too bulky either. Small holes between the lump and the metal are filled by wet-packing. All this can be done with one application provided the setting for the drop enamel is not too large. Higher settings are fired first after wet-packing, then the lumps, and then a second wet-packing is applied. This process is repeated until all the gaps are closed which usually takes about three or

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## LUZ

four firings. The success to fill the openings rather quickly depends on the selection of near-to-perfect sized lumps. A remelted lump has the advantage of being preformed, all edges are rounded off, the heights lowered and the base wider.

Easy to medium melting enamels are best and should be fired at around 850-900C.

All firings require careful monitoring so that no overfiring occurs.



Finished product

In the early stages of enamelling it is adequate that the enamel is just fused. The last firing is to form the drop taking care not to overfire, otherwise the drop will protrude too far out of the prongs and can easily be snapped off. Contrary to all other enamel techniques, this one is worked from the back. All enamel is applied from the rear and fired on a stand upside down.

Should the drop be lop-sided, jagged or misformed in any way it is easily rectified by refiring front side up and pushing back the drop when still in its viscous state. The next firing will bring the desired state.

With this technique there is ample room for improvement and expansion, new variations in forms and an endless play of colour combinations open to ones imagination.

## CLOSING REMARKS

The described type of enamel was used in an illuminated wall clock, the drops representing the individual numbers. This was the first exhibit of its kind and after the exhibition in Hanau the clock found its permanent place in the entrance hall of the Kunst-und Werkschule in Pforzheim.

In 1969 Richard Anke retired as lecturer from the Kunst-und Werkschule but not from enamelling. Enamelling has been for him a lifelong occupation, an interest and a passion which culminated in a retrospective exhibition in honour of his 80th birthday in 1984.

A great master indeed.