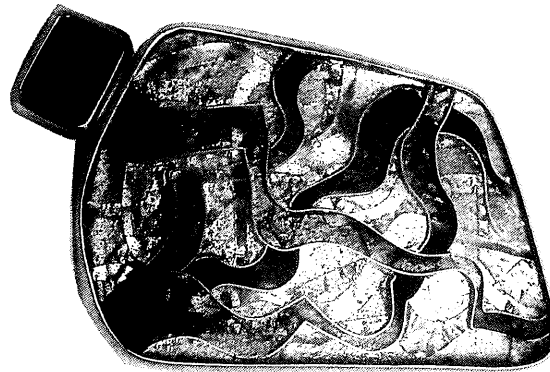
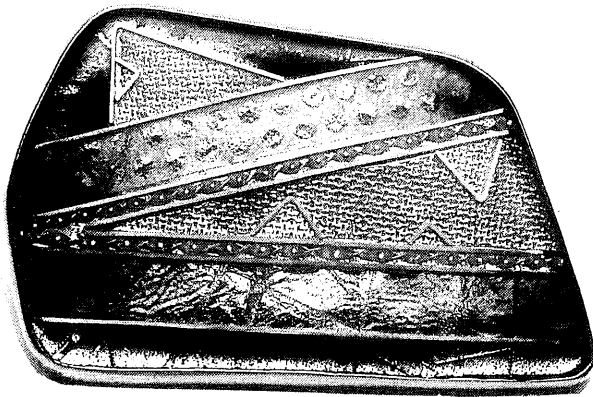


# Australian Enamel Newsletter

Issue 54 - February 1999



## DEBBIE SHEEZEL

It's a good few years since I finished the mural for the Brisbane International Airport, and I realised how much my work has changed! Not only in the size of the pieces I've attempted in the past, but the style as well. The only thing about my work that has stayed the same is the strong use of colour.

I have always been drawn to making large things. As a painter, my canvases were 6ft. x 4ft., watercolours, the largest paper I could get my hands on. Attempting large projects was always a challenge to me, so of course when I began to teach myself enamelling, there was no-one to tell me that you can't do this or that because it's very difficult. I just did what I thought were the most logical steps to take, and if this didn't work I would modify the steps until I achieved what I set out to do. I learnt an awful lot along the way. . . . . and, I ruined an awful lot along the way! However, I did master the technique of enamelling extra large bowls and panels.

In some respects working alone in this field with no outside contact helped me achieve my individuality and technique, but in other respects held me back. Making contact with Jenny Gore all those years ago was a great gift and another beginning for me. At last I had met someone who knew what I was talking about! We developed a great friendship, which has lasted many years.

Over the years of enamelling lots of large and extra large bowls and panels I began to feel that my work was so repetitive and uninspired. I felt I needed the knowledge of metals so I could spread my wings and experiment. I did a year at R.M.I.T. doing small jewellery projects and loved every minute of it, but the course was interrupted with me accepting the commission for the 16 x 14 metre mural.

Loving a challenge, I threw myself into this project with logic, great advice, fabulous help, great friends and a very understanding family and husband. Over the 21 months this project took, I was plunged back into the "extra large" and "huge" bracket. Designing for this size is quite different than designing for small pieces. On finishing the mural, it took me quite a long time to get back into work. I felt mentally drained and I suppose I was physically tired too, but when I eventually did start enamelling again, I was happier making smaller pieces, then smaller pieces again, and smaller again.

(cont...back page)

It takes a while to get going again after really unwinding over Christmas and summer holidays!

Every time I start another issue of AEN my interest and enthusiasm for enamelling is rekindled by all the news and events and exhibitions that are happening around the world. By the way, did anyone notice that the last issue had August on it? Well it was supposed to be October/December; a double issue. I'd hate you to think you missed a couple of issues. As editor, there's always some odd mistake that you only ever spot after it's too late.

Got any news or information? I'm sure there's lots of stuff your just dying to pass on. All will be happily and gratefully received.

Happy 1999 to you all and here's to another year of adventure in the realm of Enamelling.

Editor

## NEWS

- Carolyn Delzoppo will again be teaching at the McGregor Summer School at the University of Southern Queensland, Toowoomba in 10th - 21st Jan 2000). For more information; PO Box 220 Darling Heights 4350 Q. Ph: 07 4631 2755
- Barbara Ryman will be teaching a Cloisonne Enamel class at Sydney Community College in term 2. Term 2 commences ..... For more details or a college brochure, ring 9555 7411.
- Barbara Ryman is also setting up an enamelling classes in Mittagong at the Sturt Workshops. They will run on four consecutive Saturdays in second term. The dates are to finalised but you can ring her on 0242 67 2939, in a while, for more information.
- Debbie Sheezel participated in "An Exhibition of Contemporary Jewellery" at Catanach's Antiques and Art Gallery in Melbourne this Dec/Jan just passed.
- A new book, "Contemporary Jewellery in Australia and New Zealand" by Patricia Anderson has recently been published. In it you will find work by Val Aked, Pierre Cavalan, Carolyn Delzoppo, Wendy Hall and Barbara Ryman.
- Cath Large draws our attention to a new gallery called Brilliant Facets owned by Mary Kios. Cath says that she hasn't seen the gallery yet but has been asked to supply enamel work so she feels there could be a definite interest for enamel there. The Gallery is at 127 Margaret St Brisbane. Ph:(07) 300 30064. It describes itself as "being in the heart of the city, showing both antique and modern jewellery, always fine craftsmanship and changing exhibitions."

## OPPORTUNITIES TO EXHIBIT

☞ **Kay Whitcomb** is currently working in an exhibition "A Millenium of Enamel" for the Boston Public Library for Sept 1999. Architectural enamels are the focus and she wants photographs which will be blown up as colour copies.

If you want to participate, write or send information to Kay Whitcomb, Box 96 Rockport, MA. 01966 USA.

Call for Entries for the

### ☞ 4th International Juried Enamel Exhibition.

The Northern California Enamel Guild invites all artists and craftspeople working in the medium of vitreous enamel to apply for entry in its 4<sup>th</sup> International Juried Enamel Exhibition.

The entry deadline is April 24, 1999.

The exhibition will be held from September 18, 1999 through November 13, 1999, at the Richmond Art Center, Richmond, CA.

A prospectus is available by sending a self addressed stamped envelope (SASE) to: NCEG Juried Show P.O. Box 254, E1 Cerrito, CA 94530. USA

CONTACT: Alana Clearlake or Judy Stone  
For further information please call (510) 450-0556 or (510) 526-3668 or fax (510) 652- 5543 or e-mail [jstone.c.cw.net.com](mailto:jstone.c.cw.net.com).

### ☞ 3rd INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION "WORLD OF ENAMELLING"

SALOU 26 June to 25 July 1999

Organized by: Municipal Museum of Contemporary Enamelling Sponsored by: Town Hall of Salou.  
Exhibition Commissioner: Andreu Vilasis.

"Dear Friends,

On behalf of MECS (Municipal Museum of Contemporary Enamelling) the organisers, and of the TOWN HALL OF SALOU, the co-sponsors, along with Cidae de Barcelona we wish to announce the holding of the Third International "World of Enamelling" Exhibition in the Torre Vella in Salou (Tarragona) during the months of June and July 1999.

This competition is a continuation of the Biennials exhibitions of enamelling art held in Salou since 1985.

The fruits of these events was the founding in 1991 by Town Hall of Salou of the Municipal Museum of Contemporary Enamelling of Salou, following an initiative of Andreu Vilasis. The collection of the this Museum has gradually enlarged and become one of

the most important collections of enamelling art of the 20th century.

Now, with this exhibition, we are trying to bring together and demonstrate the diversity of concepts and techniques used as a means of artistic expression by enamellers throughout the world. We have, therefore, unified the format of participation to encourage these aspects, emphasizing the importance of the enamelling itself by eliminating mounting and complements, in an endeavour to put on out-of-the-ordinary exhibition where the enamel is the sole participant.

Moderate size, too, is a feature that suits most enamellers and will help relaunch this kind of event by reducing all costs, especially those of the participants.

We, therefore, encourage you to use enamel techniques express your aspirations, your creativity and your fantasy in plaques which are like little windows onto the world. We hope for a massive, enthusiastic response to further this marvellous art of enamelling, which we all esteem so much.

a cordial greeting."

- The exhibition is open to all enamellers worldwide.
- The theme of the exhibition is SELF PORTRAIT. Format, however, has to be 16,5 cm. x 11,5 cm. either vertical or horizontal Works must be without frame or support, in other words, the enamelled metal plaque alone.
- The works must be original, recent and the enameller's own creation. Copies and exclusive use of mechanical processes are automatically excluded, as is any material other than enamel on metal, fired at a minimum temperature of over 500<sup>o</sup> Celsius.
- \*For entry form and information send SAE to Barbara Ryman at AENs address.

## ☞CREATIV-KREIS-INTERNATIONAL e.V.

CREATIV-KREIS-INTERNATIONAL is planning its 1999 international workshops and exhibition. It will be held in the area of the abbey of Himmerod at the renovated "Old Mill". The area sounds very beautiful and inspiring." As participants in the workshops you have the possibility to meet artists and people interested in art, teachers who will give you an impression of the cultural world of enamel in other countries by different techniques." Many workshops are on offer and include ones on scraffito, enamel workshop for beginners, cloisonné and different enamel techniques for people with experience in enamel.

"Ladies and Gentlemen:

We take the liberty of attaching hereto our leaflet with the program for 1999 for information and publication.

We would be pleased to welcome any interested party in a workshop here in Himmerod. The professors are well-known and specialists in the techniques offered.

Furthermore we like to draw you attention to our international exhibition in Milano, Italy in October/ November 1999. The topic is

### **fired arts in the light of the 21<sup>st</sup> saeculum**

Interested people will receive the registration forms upon request and we would be happy to have a large international participation in this exhibition - as well as in the exhibition planned for the year 2000 are in South Africa.

Write to Gertrud Rittmann-Fischer :President,  
Himmerod 4  
D-54534 Grosslittgen  
Germany  
FAX: 0015 49 6575 8747

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you want to have further information about the Creativ-Kreis International."

## ☞CONTEMPORARY WEARABLES 1999 AWARD EXHIBITION - TOOWOOMBA.

Entries are being called for this annual exhibition that has up to \$7,000 available for acquisitions for its collection.

Application and slides are due 14th May. Accepted work is due in early August.

\*For entry form and information send SAE to Barbara Ryman at AENs address.

## AROUND THE MAGAZINES

### Metal Stone & Glass. Vol 5 Summer1998

-an article on acid etching a copper bowl by Anna-Margot Collins.

-Making a loop-in-loop chain

-using an hydraulic press by Christopher Collins.

### glass on metal - vol 17, no 5 Dec 98.

-some interesting 3D work by Sarah Perkins.

-painting with Opaque Enamels by Freidrich Schegk.

-workshop information on the upcoming "Crossing Boundaries" conference and exhibition in Canada.

-an extensive article on Creativ-Kreis International; its origins, aims and activities.

-Inview is on Nuria L. Ribalta of Spain showing some interesting new work using brilliant luminous colours on copper forms.

## NEW PRODUCTS

### From Anna Margot Originals.

"Hi, the Japanese enamels are here, at this time we have 77 colours and the clear flux in 10 gram sample sizes, we also have the clear flux in 50 and 100 gram packages. We will have a new catalogue and price list covering all the enamel products we supply and will have these available for post by January 31st, the catalogue will include colour charts for all 3 brands of enamels and will cost \$5.00 which is refundable with first order over \$100.00. I will be sending some catalogues out to teachers etc which includes yourself, about January 31st.

We now have available the diamond cloth sets as used in Valeri's workshop in sets of 4 pieces at \$90.00 each piece is 100mm x 25mm and the 4 grades are in the package."

### A & E Metal Merchants

can supply enamellers with Fine silver wires suitable for Pliquinour enamelling. Talk to Adam to discuss your requirements. He already knows some of the dimensions and can draw down wires to meet your needs.

## HINTS

Acrylic Enamels work very well over Thompson's leaded 1000 White - Eileen Gately

The following is from The Vitreous Voice, Enamel Guild West: Newsletter.

- Transparent Beige and Carnation mixed makes a nice pink.
- Try using Plastic Wrap over water-colour enamels on a base coated piece. Scrunch the plastic around till you are pleased with the pattern. Put a little weight on it, let dry and remove the plastic before firing. Or use liquid foundation white and Plastic Wrap for starters.

### ☆NEW NAME (Reprinted with permission from The Guild of enamellers, Winter 1998 Journal)

The British Society of Enamellers has changed the title of their society to: "GLASS ON METAL ARTISTS - BRITISH SOCIETY OF ENAMELLERS".

The reasons for this change were explained in their recent newsletter as follows:

"Founded in 1985 as the British Society of Enamellers, the main reason for the existence of the society was to promote excellence in British

enamelling and professional enamellers in this country and abroad. Although these aims have been achieved in many ways, we still find that the general public has no idea about what enamel is. To address this problem the members at the 1998 AGM felt that including the words 'Glass On Metal' in our title would clarify the nature of enamelling. The addition of the word 'Artist' expressed the fact that members who work with enamel feel that they are artists as well as makers and that taken together, the four words 'Glass On Metal Artists' set out a very positive image."

## **BOOK REVIEW** by MARILYN TENDRICH

"ENAMEL PRIMER", written by noted enamellists Diane Montag and Jo Ann Tanzer is a neat little book.

It's not for 90% of you, but if you are a beginner, or have students, you might want to keep this on your shelf. Bound as a spiral notebook, with hard covers so that you may stand it up and read as you work, the authors have printed only one side of each page so that you may take notes on the opposing page. This is certainly user-friendly.

The book is very readable and covers the basics: What is Enamel: Information to Know About Enamel; What Equipment is Used in Enameling; Information About Tools and Essentials; A Space for Enameling; What Should We Know About Metal; How Do We Clean Metal Before Enameling; Setting up a Table Work Surface; How to Apply Dry Powdered Enamel; How to Fire a Piece of Enamel; What if Something Goes Wrong When Firing; How to Finish a Piece of Enamel; An Enamel Record; Where Do We Go From Here; Personal Safety; Some Reference Hooks and Sources. It is not specifically scientific, but the above questions are answered in very clear language.

I especially liked the chapters that dealt with accidents in firing, making samples, and keeping an account of each piece you make. However, I thought the chapter on firing was a little vague for a novice. Although the steps were laid out just as they should be, despite suggesting using a timer for one to three minutes of firing, it implies that you should keep the kiln door open during firing so that you could watch the piece as it matures. I know that isn't the author's intent, but I am concerned it could be misconstrued in this manner.

Other than a difference of opinion, (I personally believe that a piece should be stoned in a circular motion and they recommend a "rhythmic back and forth motion"), I found this book to be a fine primer for anyone wanting to start enameling.

The illustrations by Kimberly Montag must be mentioned since they are very clear and accurate, as are the black and white photographs. Easily read within a half hour, you can be enameling in no time.

## WORKSHOP REVIEW by Thelma Doyle

In the last few months I have been fortunate to attend two wonderful workshops. The first, with Debbie Sheezel-Edwards, in Brisbane - which Betty Wilson described in your last edition. The second was the McGregor Summer School, with Carolyn Delzoppo, for Cloisonné Enamelling, from the 4th to the 15th January. It is the latter one which I will describe for your readers.

There was a class of eighteen - drawn from a wide area of Qld and NSW, many of whom had experience with silver-smithing. Probably few had enamelling skills. Some had arts degrees and some ran good businesses designing and making jewellery - all were very committed to making the most of the two weeks.

From the beginning Carolyn gave clear and express instructions and by the end of day one each person had commenced their first piece of cloisonné. Working at their own pace, most had completed at least one piece by the end of the third day. During this time each step was explained and finishing discussed. Some people had commenced their first champlève work and many clever designs were produced incorporating the two techniques.

To relax the pace a little, Carolyn produced some P3, and encouraged everyone to try its use by covering clean copper with P3, drying and removing areas, dusting with transparents, and firing. A few interesting pieces evolved - particularly one nude female figure. Later this technique was used in a champlève piece with cloisonné and gold foil to produce one timeless and exquisite pendant - star of the collection! (my opinion).

The days were flying and they were tiring, but Carolyn remained unflappable and invariably painstaking with all problems, eg: kiln failure and some trouble setting up areas for cleaning/ buffing. Some more light-relief was introduced with 'paint-on' enamel, used on enamelled mugs and bowls. Like pre-schoolers with finger-paint, everyone involved themselves, and the silversmiths from the class next door couldn't be denied. There are lots of grandkids/friends/relations about to be surprised by not-so mundane pannikins coming their way!

Carolyn had brought a wonderful collection of slides which we viewed and marvelled at. Some from overseas artists and many from Australia (including our editor's work). They were a source of inspiration to try the different, and seemingly impossible.

At the end of the school there was a display where all classes do so with their work created during the two weeks. The enamelling evoked tremendous interest and many complementary remarks. It was wonderful to see all the beautiful pieces the class had produced. Credit must go to Carolyn who insisted on the

workmanship being of high standard and for all her help and encouragement to all. Everyone in the class felt very fortunate to have taken part in it - it was indeed a great experience. Thank you Carolyn.

## A NEW RENAISSANCE

by Audrey B Komrad

( Reprinted with permission from the E N A M E L  
G U I L D S O U T H Volume xx, No. 2, Dec 1998 )

In my various travels around the world, one of the things I've identified, both at home and abroad, has been a new Renaissance, this time in the realm of craftsmanship. The advent of modern technology rapidly and inexpensively produces and reproduces artistic endeavours. The individual craftsmanship produced by artisans, which introduces a personal artistic element into the final product, making each finished product a little different from all others, has for many years been de-emphasized. It is only recently that we are beginning to see prominent displays of individual craftsmanship. In the United States this is probably related to a re-awakening of the desire for the warmth that human-created artefacts bring to the product, as opposed to machine-made. It is as if the Industrial Revolution so overwhelmingly occupied our society, we lost track of the human element in art which rounds out our lives.

In other areas of the world, however, hand craftsmanship has never been as de-emphasized as it has been in America. In many European countries, for example, craft guilds and private workshops have flourished throughout the years. In Africa, which has never completed the Industrial Revolution, individual craftsmanship still remains the dominant artistic endeavour, as it is in Asia and Asia Minor. There are many areas in Europe and North Africa that have numerous ancient architectural edifices, many of which have eroded or been destroyed by time, which they choose to preserve and restore. In order to have the restoration blend appropriately, with the original, it has been necessary to teach the old techniques to new young artisans. Since too many years have passed for this to be a father-to-son learning experience, it has been necessary to develop new schools for this purpose. For example, in Morocco, a school has been started to train craftsmen in ancient Islamic building techniques which include the sort of intricate stucco filigree which is one of Islam's great contributions to art. In Fez, city planners have hired local artisans, people from the city's walled centre, or medina, who are being strictly trained in an old craft tradition, to fix up the decorated facades of ruined monuments. Some of the techniques were nearly forgotten there. Instructors frequently had to be imported from Spain, where restoration revival had already begun. The monuments are being restored in keeping with the original designs, but creatively,

where original decorations on painted tiles or carved stucco have been lost. Aside from providing jobs for the local craftsmen in many techniques, it provides a means of incorporating ancient designs and crafts into modern communities. Often the expertise of other countries must be utilized, such as the recent restoration of the famous Minbar or pulpit from one of the ancient mosques in Marrakesh by a team of American and Moroccan experts. Hence, modern conservation, like almost every other issue in art is a matter of relative values and parochial aesthetics. The utilization of hand craftsmanship in the restoration process allows a certain objective rightness based upon scientific devotion to a work's historical integrity.

Not only architectural restoration is the driver in the new Renaissance of craftsmanship, with the worldwide rebirth of appreciation of hand-work, this has become an important commodity for the tourist industry throughout the world. Hand made lace, for example, is being taught in special schools in Belgium where lace continues to be a major product. In LePuy, France, most country homes produce lace as taught from mother-to-daughter. In China and Thailand, artists are making cloisonné enamels, wood sculptures, stone carvings, silk embroidery, porcelains, etc.'

Those of us who are engaged in crafts as a fine art form in America are part of this Renaissance. This is a reminder that culture is part of public identity and of local or national self-worth. It is inseparable from the people who create it and it defines them. It remains, as the first Renaissance was, an intimate and inevitable connection with our ancestors - a touch of the past with a modern twist in today's sophisticated society.

## **HIGH FIRING** by Pat Johnson

Reading Veronica Matthew's article in the last issue of the Journal, I was pleased that she had found working with the soft white enamels so rewarding. I first came across these enamels when I was researching for Gudde Skyrme her entire range of whites. One of the first tasks was to put the thirteen whites in order of hardness and it was then that I found Soyer 159, Soyer 615 and C100 to be at the extreme soft end of the range.

Immediately my personal interest was focused on these enamels because previously I had made much use of high firing the soft Thompson opaques, most of them being whites, creams and greys. When Thompson ceased producing lead-bearing enamels, a whole area of my work was destroyed, so my happiness in finding possible replacement colours can be imagined. Once I had completed the tests on the full range of Gudde's whites, I turned my attention to 159, 615 and C100 and began a long period of

experimentation which is still continuing. In the process I made hundreds of small test pieces, brooches, bowls, medium sized and larger sized panels, up to ten inches square. During this time the firing characteristics of Soyer 615 changed and I had to begin all over again with this enamel, but I managed to make up for the differences by introducing some soft and hard fluxes and paying particular attention to the role of copper oxides on the experiments with the soft whites.

All this was amazingly absorbing, but I have to say that satisfactory results were achieved only half of the time. High firing techniques depend on the amount of enamel used. Too thin a coat and the enamel burns out; too thick and the high firing effect does not take place. The height of the temperature and the length of the firing are also of vital importance and since these are affected by the size of the piece and the weight of the copper, the actual firing process is as much a matter of luck and judgement as is the application of the enamel. In fact I would say that where high firing of enamels is concerned, sheer inspiration comes into it.

There was the time when I spent three weeks trying to get a certain combination of enamels, applied in a certain order, to interact and produce the wonderful effect I knew they could achieve together. Then suddenly, in one afternoon, I turned out five successful pieces in a row, each one five inches square, and after that I have never again been successful with that particular recipe. I call these procedures recipes because I write down my notes in recipe form and even think of the process as rather like cooking. Probably everyone has had the experience of finding a cake or a casserole slightly underdone and after giving the food just ten minutes longer in the oven, a transformation has taken place, the ingredients have combined to produce tastes and textures completely different from their individual characteristics and the dish is a success. High firing procedures are exactly the same and when successful, results are produced as appetising as a glowing sizzling pizza.

One thing I have discovered, which may be true for me but not for someone else, is that if I include enamels in a high fired piece that are not themselves transformed in the heat, then these colours look discordant and the work is ruined. This is particularly the case with black. I like to have some of this colour in my pictures, but straightforward black does not seem to fit in with other enamels which have been high fired. 'The only way to get the right effect is to use enamels which themselves turn black in high heat. Fortunately I have found that Post Office Red and Soyer 159, when fired over copper oxide, will produce a wonderful darkness. Lying next to a white which has been transformed into a transparent green or gold, the new black gives strength to the composition and sets off the golds and greens to make them look even more beautiful

This is all very exciting, but as mentioned above, good results cannot always be reliably achieved, even after much experimentation and practice. The enameller who takes up with high firing has to be prepared for the destruction of many pieces of copper and ounces of colour. The trick is not to lose heart, which fortunately is not too hard since glimpses of the glories to come appear in test after test. And when success is achieved, nothing can be more satisfying.

## A WATER-COLOUR EFFECT WITH ENAMELS by MARJORIE BUFFUM

( Reprinted with permission from the E N A M E L G U I L D S O U T H Volume xx, No. 3, Feb 1999 )

For those enamellists who enjoy making wall panels or shallow dishes with designs derived from nature, I'd like to introduce a technique I call, "direct printing with oil". A piece done by this method takes on a water-colour appearance, with an unfinished or incomplete design character reminiscent of Japanese brush painting. Depending upon the number of firings and choice of colours, the project will have a feeling of depth and a kind of halation around certain areas, giving it a glow rarely achieved by other techniques.

Select a copper shape and fire a coat of enamel on the back. Choose a fairly stable colour related to one you will use on the front. Cool, clean with Sparex and rinse with water. Apply an even coat of transparent enamel to the top surface. Spray and sift in 3 or 4 thin layers. This transparent base may be a single colour or a blended background. If a single colour is used, it may be a medium or dark brown (perhaps to be followed later with opaque orange, yellow and chartreuse) , or a medium or dark green (with aqua and blue-green opaques used later). The blended background is achieved by sifting 2 or 3 related transparent colours in a cloud-like pattern. Another method is to sift a complete coat of one colour and apply other transparents in irregular shapes over it. Dry and fire to maturity.

Choose several fresh leaves of interesting shapes. Some house plant leaves make good choices. Arrange them on the fired surface till you have a pleasing pattern. Then place the leaves on a sheet of wax paper and use a good brush to coat the back ( vein side) with a generous covering of squeegee oil. Next, pick up the leaf, invert it and place oil side down on the transparent enamel surface in the planned location. Do not move the leaf around. You want the oil imprint to be as sharp as possible. You have several options now. You may carefully press all parts of the first leaf against the enamel and leave it there while you do the same with the others, or you may do one leaf at a time, pressing it down and lifting it straight up and off with fingers or tweezers. After the oil is transferred from the leaves to the enamelled surface, pour a generous amount of opaque enamel

into a sifter and sift thickly onto the oil print; allow to set a minute till the enamel has absorbed the oil, then tip the plate or panel and shake it or tap the edge on the table to remove the loose enamel. When a leaf has been removed, you can shade another colour around the edges or you may have left some oiled areas without enamel so another colour may be sifted on at this time. Tendrils or stems may be suggested by pen or brush lines done in oil, then sifted with different colours of opaque enamels. Other materials such as thread or coarse netting may be used in the same manner.

It is unnecessary to dry the enamel in the usual way, but it is important to smoke off the oil in the kiln. Place the piece on a firing rack, open the kiln door and hold the piece inside the hot kiln for 6 to 8 seconds. When removed, you will see smoke rising. Repeat this till there is no more smoke. Fire at 1450 - 1500<sup>o</sup> until it is just shiny.

The project may be considered complete at this time, or you may wish to make additional overlapping designs by overprinting with other plant forms in contrasting colour values. Be careful not to overfire these opaque colours. If you should do so and they become transparent, you can bring them back to their original opacity by firing them again at a much lower temperature. Actually, you must try many combinations of colours and firing temperatures to reap the rewards of this technique.

### More Notes from the Studio - Jean F. Jenkins (reprinted with permission of The Northern California Enamel Guild)

Once more to the business of leaded enamels. The lead in leaded enamels is *fritted*; that means it has been pre-fired into the enamel batch, and it will not escape or leach out with ordinary usage. Your Orrefors, Lenox, and Waterford crystal are all LEAD GLASS. The lead in enamels will be released in two ways: either by exposure to corrosive chemicals such as acid, or exposure to heat well in excess of 2000<sup>o</sup>F. (No, one should not store orange juice in an enameled container.) The danger in the studio is essentially nil, at least from lead. (Unleaded ground glass is no better to breathe.) The danger of leaded enamels is in the manufacture of them, where workmen are combining raw lead oxide with silica, feldspar, and colorants in preparation for the fritting furnace, which probably exudes fumes. Our country does get carried away with safety regulations, sometimes.

I recently had a lot of trouble with ground coats flaking off steel when I put the first color over the ground. I just learned from Woody Carpenter that I should NOT have been placing my heavy steel plate on the steel tile to keep it flat, as I do with copper. Steel needs to cool slowly, the slower the better. I had

not had the problem with small tiles, up to 6", but I wasted two 9"x12" tiles and a lot of time and enamel. Woody also told me that one should try to limit the total number of firings to about 6. Upon reflection, I realized that I was using glass designed for the expansion-contraction of non-ferrous metals onto the

steel, and it is bound not to fit quite as well on ferrous metal. As for keeping steel flat, it does not pose the problem copper does. The counter enamel will equalize any stretching. Perhaps you already knew about cooling steel slowly, but I thought I'd better share it.

Another turning point in my odyssey was spending time with another very special and giving person, Carolyn Delzoppo. She taught me the cloisonné technique, and I thought at the time that anyone willing to sit for hours and bend tiny wires and fill cells for hours was a complete idiot. Sore neck, sore back, streaming eyes..who needs it! But I was hooked. I've been at it for only a few years, and I'm really enjoying the smaller size. Firing is a breeze! No huge trivets, no burning arms and face, no unbelievable weights to manoeuvre. . . . . an absolute breeze. If I'd started with small work I may not have ever made a mural!

There seems to be a revival in enamelling. Are there more practitioners expounding the virtues of this fabulous craft? I know for sure that the young Gold and Silversmiths of to-day are looking to embellish their work with enamel. Over the last year I have been teaching enamelling at R.M.I.T. in the gold and silversmithing department, and the students are pushing the limits of the medium. We all know that there is just so far you can go without respecting the basic rules, but it's great to see the experimentation and the different views and application of each student really enjoy teaching and find it very rewarding. I hope it continues for quite some time.

I'm not too sure where I'm going with my own work. Smaller is definitely better for me at the moment, but my work is constantly changing and I'm never really sure what I'll be doing next. This is how I seem to be with everything I undertake and what makes life so interesting for me.



"DAINTREE"

## THANKYOU TO

Debbie Sheezel, Thelma Doyle, Carolyn Delzoppo, Cath Large.

☞ **The deadline for material** for the next issue will be March 23rd, 1999. All articles, comments and news are welcome. Send to Barbara Ryman, 71 George St, Thirroul 2515 NSW.

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