

Enameller profile -

Robyn Wernicke



I have always believed that I was one of the lucky ones. Very early on I was given the opportunity to work with a jeweller for work experience through a school careers programme. I also experienced a fortnight in the laboratory of a dental technician. From that day on I always knew what I wanted to do. Teeth just didn't grab me in the same way as the process of creating something in metal.

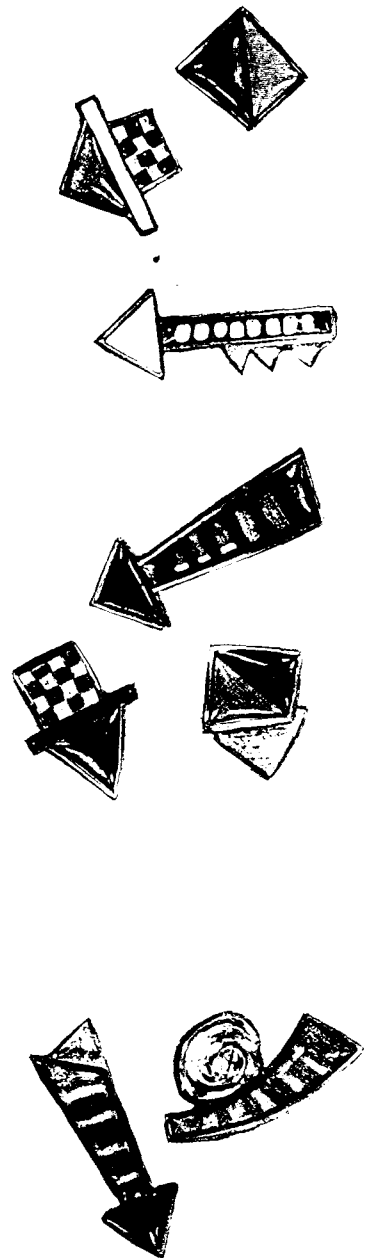
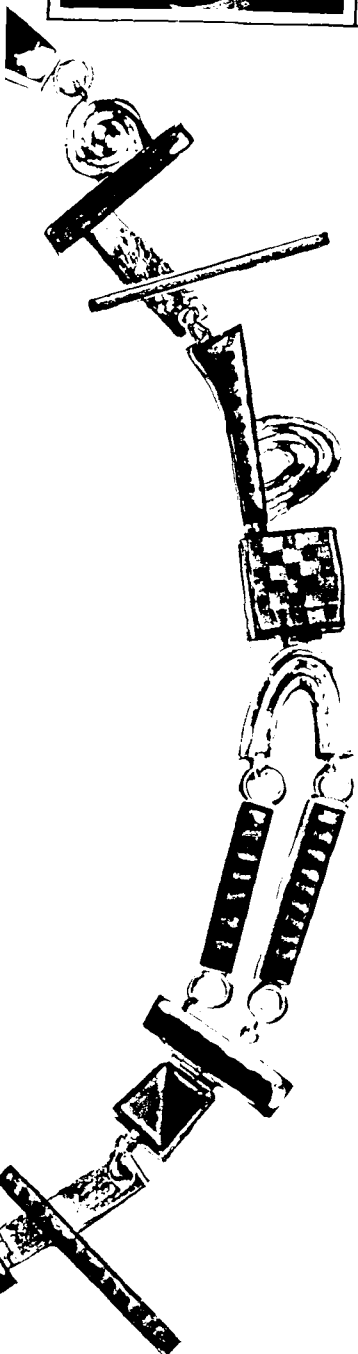
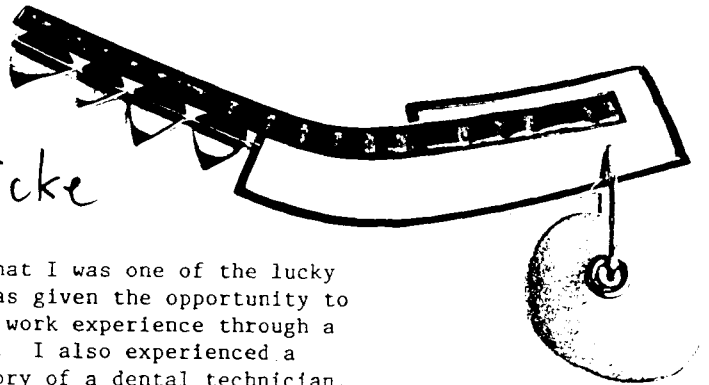
I pursued this career path by way of apprenticeship. A system of training which is perhaps now losing favour. My first year was spent cleaning castings. Kangaroo after koala after kangaroo. I have since had an aversion to charm bracelets. The next 8 years were an improvement. I moved into the realm of the hand-made and one-offs, a far more exciting prospect. With Marion Marshall I spent my time not only making, but dealing with customers and designing. It was a relatively carefree time in my life interspersed with trips overseas to exotic places like South America and India.

However, I am the kind of person who never sits still, especially if there is something new to learn. This led me to complete a Bachelor of Fine Art (Gold and Silversmithing) at RMIT. It was here that I first began to flourish in the midst of my very own creativity, not dictated by customer whims or employer demands. How quickly I worked or how much it cost became irrelevant and I began to revel in experimentation and exploration of ideas and concepts or if you like, art for arts sake.

It wasn't until this time that I tried my hand at enamelling. I was introduced to it in a very slapdash way, and I remember 12 students with enamel flying all around the studio at RMIT.

My work is mainly concerned with colour and movement, achieved through many mediums. I use refractory metals such as niobium and I often blacken a silver piece totally to contrast against other elements such as broken glass collected from around cemeteries and found objects. Enamel was a new way for me to incorporate colour into my work. When I was recently accepted to participate in the enamelling exhibition in Coburg, Germany, I couldn't quite believe it as I felt my skills in this area to be very new and still quite unrefined. However it is a new challenge to me, yet another step in the learning process.

I now work for myself and am currently gobbling up all the information, practise and technique that I can find. The enamellers newsletter has been very informative for me, yet I view myself first and foremost as a jeweller/gold and silversmith. The process of enamelling is one of many which I use to convey my ideas.



STOP PRESS!

Not much to say this editorial. It's been a busy year for exhibitions and enamel activities, and the recent lull has been very welcome in the lead up to summer and Christmas.

Allan Heywood has supplied a colour insert to accompany his excellent technical article on 'Enamel on Silver Castings'. Allan has recently acquired a whiz bang state-of-the-art computer printing system, and he tells me that that some of the pieces on the sheet were scanned directly into the computer without the need for photographic reproduction. It's all new and exciting to me, and I look forward to this service being generally available for enamellers and artists. It's going to make marketing and promotion so much easier and affordable too.

Best wishes to all

Carolyn Delzoppo
Editor

Thankyou to the following contributors to this issue of AEN:

Allan Heywood, Robyn Wernicke, Debbie Sheezel, Jenny Gore, Barbara Ryman, Catherine Large, Mary Raymond, Doreen Sinclair, newsletter of the Arizona Enamelist Guild and Linda Gebert, Heidi Wellings.



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The deadline for material for the next issue, No35, will be November 23 1995. Articles, news and information about enamel events are always very welcome, and can be mailed or faxed to the editor Carolyn Delzoppo, Australian Enamel Newsletter, PO Box 418, Mullumbimby NSW 2482. Phone/fax 066 841 772.

The 5th National Exhibition of Enamels, to have been held at Craftspace in Sydney in January 1996, has been cancelled.

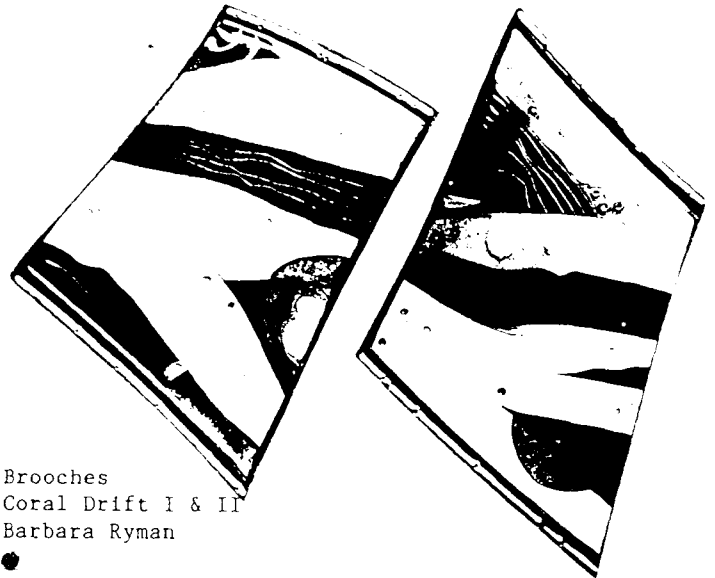
The Exhibition Committee felt that this decision was necessary as many enamellers have indicated that this year, due to personal circumstances, they would be unable to participate, and that there would be insufficient work to fill the enlarged new gallery.

The Committee is reviewing the situation and will be meeting with the Craft Council this month to discuss the future direction of the National.

The Committee apologises for any inconvenience to enamellers who may have already prepared works.

News

Congratulations to Barbara Ryman whose brooch titled Coral Drift I has received an 'Award for Artistic Work' at the biannual International Exhibition of Enamelling Art in Japan. The exhibition was held at the Ueno Museum in Tokyo September 24-30. 74 pieces from 15 countries (other than Japan) were selected. Catherine Large, Wendy Hall, Norma Alce and Carolyn Delzoppo also had work accepted.



Brooches
Coral Drift I & II
Barbara Ryman

Enameller and jeweller Glenice Matthews is the general manager of a new pearl jewellery shop and showroom in Fremantle called 'Artisans of the Sea'. Jenny Gore will be exhibiting small enamel panels on the theme of the sea at the new venue in November. Artisans of the Sea
The Bank, Cnr Marine Tce and Collie St, Fremantle.
Ph 09 336 3633

Several enamellers have had work selected for the 4th annual Contemporary Wearables Award Exhibition of the Toowoomba Regional Art Gallery, held 23 September - 29 October. They are: Sandra Kerr (two pendants), Jill Parnell (pendant and brooch), Barbara Ryman (two brooches), Jacque Sprogoe (brooch), Wal Van Heecheren (shoulder bag), Carolyn Delzoppo (two brooches).

Bits and pieces



The Day the Fishes Flew
Jenny Gore

Jenny Gore is participating in the First International Show of Enamelling in Mexico City in October, with a framed panel titled 'The Day the Fishes Flew'.

An enamelled oval neckpiece titled 'C Symphony' by Doreen Sinclair has been chosen for the cover of 'Vivace', the magazine celebrating the 50th Anniversary of Musica Viva in Australia. Doreen made four pieces to celebrate Musica Viva's anniversary and exhibited them as part of the JMGA-NSW 'Celebration' exhibition in Sydney in August.

Opportunities to Exhibit

The Japan Shippo Conference invites cloisonne enamellers to take part in the 9th Cloisonne Jewellery Contest to be held in Tokyo, Jan 23-27 1996.

The deadline for receipt of works and entry form is November 10 1995. Up to 5 pieces may be entered. For a copy of the entry form and details, send a business size stamped addressed envelope to AEN.

Q & A

AEN did not get any responses to the questions posed in the previous issue regarding repair of enamel cookware, fine mist sprayers and fine line black oil. However, in the meantime I did come across an explanation of the different types of oils used in enamelling that may also be of interest to fellow enamellers. It was written by Linda Gebert, and printed in the Arizona Enamelist Guild Newsletter October 1992.

Squeegee Oil - is a thick, sticky oil, takes a long time to dry, disperses considerably, so is not so good for elaborate small details. It is the oil used for screen printing.

Thinning Oil (Thompson No 5) - is very fluid. Good for grisaille and miniature painting techniques.

Lavender Oil - is fast drying, spreads out so is good for blending for a smooth look, but spreads too much for miniatures.

Clove Oil - is slow drying, stays in place, ie lets the brush strokes be seen for a painterly look, (similar to thinning oil #5)

Answers still needed for questions. Anyone?

Carolyn Delzoppo

Cover

Robyn Wernicke can be contacted at:
72a Southernhay Street, Reservoir, Victoria 3073.

Jenny Gore has sent this report of her experiments with using Carefree Lustres as written about in the last couple of issues:

I have tried the Carefree Lustres, thanks to a parcel of them from Skip Allison.

I find them easy to use and readily mixed with cheap hairspray. I think the results would be more interesting on a curved surface, as on my flat panels the lustre colours only show up when viewed obliquely - not straight on. On larger areas, the brush strokes and the flat colour are very obvious also. But, - I like using them for marks and line drawing especially on a dark background. I find that I can use them quite normally as with enamel, and the same temperatures - much less 'fragile' than conventional lustre - but without their optical qualities.

Jenny Gore

From the National Enamelist Guild (US) Newsletter, from a report on the Enamelist Society Convention by Gwen Anderson - this tip from a demonstration by Marilyn Druin:

"Best of all was Marilyn Druin. Using acetone (nail polish remover) on a small cotton wad, she rubbed it over the back of a fresh Xerox (one hour old) onto cleaned copper, a drawing, photo, whatever. This transfers the ink to the metal, brass works as well. Resist has been put on the back and sides of the metal so the piece can be immersed into ferric chloride or nitric acid and etched. If brass is used, the etched surface can be rolled in a rolling mill over annealed clean copper or silver, resulting in an embossed image."

An article on Carefree Lustres by Pat Diacca Topp in the June 1995 issue of Glass on Metal (page 67, under Screening), mentions that Vaseline can be squeegeed through a screen onto glass for a sharp image.

I did not try the vaseline with a screen, but instead cut paper stencils which held very well to this medium. The Vaseline, applied very thinly, does not flow out of the stencil area. Vaseline works well straight onto copper and over fired enamel layers very satisfactorily.

To counter-enamel and enamel the front in one firing is a bonus and best of all enables you to get into tight areas such as into the folds of shim work. Only the faintest suggestion of Vaseline should be applied. I used my finger and a small brush to apply the Vaseline and then dusted with enamel. Excess enamel powder is shaken off. I have also sprayed over the unfired enamel with a holding medium for a second dusting. Excess areas of Vaseline are wiped away carefully before firing.

The piece is warmed on top of the kiln and fired at normal temperature and time for the particular piece, and the process is repeated for subsequent layers. There has not been any discolouration or ash in the colours, whites or fluxes that I have used. If the Vaseline is applied too thickly it will 'pop' or catch alight. If in doubt it is advisable to fume the piece before firing.

I found this a very rewarding exercise.

Heidi Wellings

ENAMELLING ON STERLING SILVER CASTINGS

Sterling silver, as most enamellers and all jewellers would know, is an alloy of 925 parts of pure silver, with 75 parts of pure copper. This relatively small (7.5%) addition of copper gives the silver, which is very soft and malleable in the pure or 'fine' state, a hardness and rigidity which allows it to resist wear and deformation in functional items such as hollow-ware and jewellery. Sterling silver is an excellent casting alloy.

The actual casting process is not covered here - that information is readily available from standard reference works such as Oppi Untracht's 'Jewellery - Concepts & Technology' ISBN 0-385-04185-3. It's also assumed that the reader has a working knowledge of enamelling.

The success or failure of my attempts to enamel sterling silver castings has depended on a number of variables - many, as responsibilities of the caster, are beyond my direct control. Important among these variables are porosity, crystal size and orientation, and metal purity. To minimise their effects:

Firstly - use only virgin sterling silver, ie. new, unadulterated metal (no sprues or other offcuts), smelted at the right temperature in an uncontaminated crucible. Make sure your caster understands the importance of this. Find a reliable professional - it's cheaper in the long run.

Secondly - a simple process known as 'Depletion Enrichment' is essential to the satisfactory preparation of sterling silver and similar alloy surfaces for enamelling. Regardless of whether they have been cast, stamped, rolled or otherwise fabricated, these alloys, unlike pure silver, form a tenacious dark surface firescale during firing. The surface must be treated to remove existing firescale and prevent the formation of further firescale under the enamel.

- 1/ Engrave or otherwise work any sub-enamel areas if required.
- 2/ Depletion enrichment of the surface - to produce (by oxidation of surface copper, zinc, etcetera, and subsequent removal by acid digestion of those firescale oxides) a substantial layer of pure silver on the surface of the alloy, to which a layer of enamel will be fused.
 - b/ Heat the piece to be enamelled to a dull redness, allow to cool until no radiance is visible. It will probably now show the characteristic dark firescale referred to previously.
 - c/ Pickle in an appropriate acid pickle (10% HNO_3 , Sparex No 2 or equivalent) in a covered heat and acid-proof container until all the dark surface oxides have been dissolved. The metal should appear dull and white.
 - d/ Remove the work from the acid using acid-proof tongs, rinse under running water, wash with warm water and detergent and then burnish with a glass brush or equivalent (domestic fibreglass insulation, used with rubber gloves is cheap!) under running water. Rinse and dry again.
 - e/ Repeat these operations until no further oxidation of the surface occurs in the annealing stage, generally about three times.
 - f/ Repeat one final time, taking care to burnish the surfaces with an appropriate toll or glass brush.

Depletion Enrichment is critical to the success of coating sterling silver and similar silver alloys with not only transparent enamels, but some opalescent and opaque enamels.

It is not generally possible to salvage a piece with deteriorated enamel caused by inadequate enrichment, other than by grinding off all the enamel and starting the process again from scratch. Various literature suggests that the work may be salvaged by Hydrofluoric Acid dissolution of the enamel - a stupid and dangerous suggestion, unless the individual is familiar with the use of HF, and has ready access to the appropriate facilities and equipment necessary for the safe handling of this particularly reactive, hazardous reagent.

Thirdly - don't overheat the casting - either during depletion enrichment or when firing the enamel. The solidus point (melting-point is the equivalent in a pure metal) of sterling silver is 893 deg C, and its degradation point, (the temperature at which the alloy begins to deteriorate) is about 770 deg C.

To provide a safety margin, select enamels with maturation points in the range 700 deg C to 760/770 deg C (soft to medium). Enamels do not have single well defined melting points; their viscosity decreases exponentially with increases in temperature. What might be for convenience called the maturation temperature of an enamel is reached when the enamel has been heated to redness and its viscosity is sufficiently reduced to allow the surface of the enamel to flow out and become shiny and smooth.

The maturation temperatures of most contemporary jewellery enamels fall in the range 700 deg C to 850 deg C. It is generally accepted that within that range, enamels with maturation points in the area from 700 to 730 deg C are called 'soft' or 'low-firing'; in the area from 730 to 770 deg C they are called 'medium' or 'medium firing'; and in the area from 770 to about 850 they are called 'hard' or 'high-firing' enamels.

I check the progress of the firing process visually. The thermocouple is measuring only the current flowing at the bimetal junction - at best a measure of the temperature at that position in the kiln, and not necessarily related to the actual temperature of all or any parts of some pieces.

Visual Temperature Assessment:

| | | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Dark Red | about 700 deg C | Bright Cherry Red | about 1000 deg C |
| Dull Cherry Red | about 800 deg C | Orange Red | about 1100 deg C |
| Cherry Red | about 900 deg C | Orange Yellow | about 1200 deg C |



Allan Heywood

Fourthly - plan to have the piece to be enamelled undergo the minimum number of firings at the lowest practicable temperature that will ensure complete maturation of the enamels. Although the degradation point can be (and often is) exceeded by up to 50 deg C without visible deterioration, the alloy's grain structure alters, and it becomes porous and hydrogen embrittled. The alloy and often the enamel will have deteriorated to an unacceptable degree.

Fifthly - test fire all the enamels you plan to use on scraps of sterling silver. If necessary, use a suitable flux formulated for use on silver as an undercoat. Gold-oxide reds and many other warm colours - oranges, yellows, etc cannot be successfully applied directly onto a silver or silver alloy base because of adverse chemical reaction with the silver which causes the enamel to become muddy and opaque.

Finally - after surface enrichment has been carried out, the procedures for enamelling are the same as for 999 fine silver except that the enriched surface should not be disturbed. Removal of or damage to the pure silver layer will allow firescale or firestain to again form during firing. It is nevertheless possible to remove most firescales by judicious pickling after the final firing, if the enamels used are acid-resistant or can be masked off.

Following is an extract from Woodrow Carpenter's enlightening article about "Metals which are suitable for Enamelling", which goes some way to explaining why, after we've religiously adhered to all the preceding commandments, the enamel still sometimes refuses to stay on the piece. Mr Carpenter, writing in 'Glass on Metal' magazine, confirms that engraving or otherwise working the sub-enamel areas does not (contrary to popular belief) provide the key between the glass and the metal base. The adhesion of the enamel to the metal substrate is dependant on a variety of other factors.

"The enamel, technique of application, and firing conditions must be carefully selected for each metal, based on the following properties of the metal:

- 1/ melting or solidus point.
- 2/ coefficient of thermal expansion.
- 3/ modulus of elasticity.
- 4/ porosity.
- 5/ the solubility of its oxide in enamel.
- 6/ strength at enamelling temperature.
- 7/ oxidation characteristics.
- 8/ ability to absorb and release gases at enamelling temperature."

(ref. Glass on Metal Vol 5, No 6, Dec 1986, Metals Suitable for Enamelling by Woodrow Carpenter, pp 81-83: reprinted G.O.M. Vol 11, No 1, Feb 1992.)

To these variables one can add a couple more doozies, The shape of the piece and differing wall thicknesses.

Composite pieces

Pieces assembled from more than one component are usually soldered together with I.T. silver solder, (sometimes called enamelling solder), if the joint is to be enamelled over. If the joint is not to receive enamel then it may be constructed in some other way.

IT extra hard solder flows at 810 deg C, ie above the degradation point of sterling silver, which according to Oppi Untracht, begins to break down at 770 deg C. However, with careful attention to soldering temperatures, IT solder may be successfully used to join sterling components. The soldering and any joint cleanup will of course need to be completed prior to depletion enrichment.

Just as importantly, the soldered piece must be supported at all critical points during firing. This will minimise stress on the soldered joints which will move or collapse if the temperature is too high, or the piece is inadequately supported. It is worth making a special trivet for the job from stainless steel.

Once again it is important to select enamels with characteristics best suited to the metals used in the construction of the piece, and with the solidus point of the IT solder in mind.

'Daintree' Mural



Debbie Sheezel's huge enamelled mural (16m x 3m) portraying the splendour of the Daintree Rainforest is an outstanding feature of the new International Airport in Brisbane which opened in September.

I met Debbie Sheezel for the first time in June this year, though I have been aware of her enamel work for more than a decade. Debbie generously invited me to visit the Airport while she was installing her mural. You don't pass up an opportunity like that! I saw the mural when it was complete, but because the scaffolding was still in place I was able to clamber around and see the enamel panels at close quarters. This was a wonderful privilege that few other observers will have, because the mural is way up on a wall above the international arrivals doors and out of reach. It's a shame because even though the mural is truly breathtaking viewed from a distance, each panel is wonderfully detailed and tactile up close too.

I interviewed Debbie about the mural just days after she had finished installing it and had only herself been able to view it as one unit, such is its scale. I asked "How does it feel to have finished it and see it on the wall?"

DS "Elation. (laughs) I'm really happy because it came out better than I expected. I hadn't seen it vertically the whole time I was working on it, I saw only compartmentalised sections, a section at a time, but I couldn't see what it would look like from a distance. That's what I was anticipating, and it does work together."

CD "What was your original brief and why enamel?"

DS "Jean Batterby who commissioned the work knew that I'd done other large projects and she knew my tropical reef themes in enamel. The mural was to reflect tropical Queensland, either coral reef or rainforest. I knew it was to be that size, which didn't really frighten me because I like working large. In fact it was really exciting because I had so much scope and room to move with ideas."

CD "So, the Rainforest theme was your choice?"

DS "No, another artist was incorporating coral into his work so I was asked to use the Rainforest. I wasn't quite sure how I was going to go about it. I went up to the Daintree for a week and had a private guide who took me right off the beaten track and showed me places I would never have seen on my own. Fungi, seed pods, leaved, vines and creatures were all very interesting. I did a lot of drawing and took a lot of photos. When I came back I was still unsure. I had three months to come up with a concept presentation and maquette. I came up with one after another but wasn't happy with them and felt I wasn't finding my way. I became very frustrated because I knew what I didn't want it to be, but I didn't know what I wanted it to be. When I decided that I wanted it to be like an adventure, it came together. I wanted something that people would be able to look at and see exciting things in, and then look again and see something they hadn't noticed before - just like walking through the forest where you don't see everything at once. You could see it as a whole but not really take it in until you'd studied it. As soon as I did the last concept drawing I knew that it was right. I just knew it. I could see it in my head and I went with it."

It was quite realist in the beginning, but the more concepts I did the more abstract it became. I wanted it to be contemporary and colourful, neither too abstract, nor too stylised, something that would show the splendour of the forest and the beauty of enamel. I hope I have achieved that."

CD "Did you see the site at the concept stage?"

DS "No. I had no idea of the site. I knew that it would be seen from the first level as well as the ground level."

Interview with Debbie Sheezel



CD "A question enamellers always ask - what enamels did you use?"

DS "In this mural I've used mainly lead-bearing, though some parts are lead-free. It's mainly Schauer, Christellerie and Blythe. I did use Thompson colours here and there but I wasn't sure of their lead-free colours and didn't have time to experiment. I had to go straight into it and rely on what I'd used in the past. I didn't want any uncertainty."

CD "Tell me about the making of the mural."

DS "The mural is made up of about 40 panels and every panel is different, there are no two alike. The weight of them was horrific, because some were huge, as well as the heavy stainless steel trivets and meshes. Lifting the whole lot in and out of the kiln really took a tremendous amount out of me. We were working all through that hot summer and the heat was tremendous. I had to get air conditioning put into the workshop because I couldn't work up there. The air-conditioning only made it bearable, it was still very hot. I drank gallons and gallons of water. Each heavy piece had to be kept steady going in and out of the kiln, and because of the heat I would wrap my arms with wet matting and use a head cover apart from the heavy gloves, 3 or 4 layers of clothing and leather apron."

CD "How many of these firings would you do in a day?"

DS "I would have done maybe 30-40 firings in a day. I worked on one section at a time, and each section would have anything from 15 to 23 panels. Each section would need to be prepared together, dusted and fired together. I couldn't stop until all were done. I couldn't leave prepared sections overnight. I would only start what I could finish before 6pm. There was a lot of physical hardship in all stages of the making of the mural, from the bandsawing of the copper sheet to the washing of huge quantities of enamel."

CD "That's the part of large artworks that no viewer can ever see or understand. No-one knows the physical achievement of it. So...would you do it again?"

DS "Oh, you bet! Though maybe I'd do it a little differently, physically do less and get more help. But maybe I'm just saying this now and I'd end up doing it all myself because I wouldn't trust anyone else to do it."

Facts about the mural:

- 38 sheets of half hard copper just under 2 metres each were cut into 420 panels which make up the mural.
- 300-400 kilograms of enamel powder in a range of over 80 colours were washed and dried.
- Each panel required many firings, in all over 2500 firings were done.
- Sheets of fine silver foils were used between the layers of transparent enamels. Each of these was hand perforated with hundreds of holes.
- In planning the support structure, an engineer and timber expert were consulted to work out the weight, stress and safety precautions, and the positioning and shape of the laminated hardwood that could withstand the expansion and contraction of the frame in Brisbane's tropical climate. The background is a frame of marine ply and steel.
- 160 support blocks were shaped and painted, scattered throughout the installation to support the overlay of enamel panels which create the rainforest's dimensions.
- Approximately 1700 stainless steel wood screws and 400 coach screws and toggle bolts secure the enamel panels to the frame. Each panel had to be carefully drilled for 100% perfect placement of these connections.
- The completed mural weighs around 1½ to 1¾ tonnes.

Report - US Enamelist Society Convention

The Fifth Biennial Convention of the Enamelist Society was held at the Radisson Hotel, Hampton, Virginia from 18-20 August this year.

The convention got off to a stormy start (literally) with the approach of Hurricane Felix directly onto the coast where we were. The weather channel was closely watched for a couple of days while dire warnings were broadcast but luckily for us the hurricane stalled off the coast and then changed direction and went back out to sea.

There was much sadness as enamellers met and spoke of the sudden death the week before of Mel Somerowski who was to have been the next president of the Enamelist Society. Also, a few weeks earlier, the untimely death of Bill Helwig's wife Lenore. This certainly put a damper on at the beginning, but with so many friends to catch up with and so much information to absorb, the pace soon became as hectic as usual.

The first day was devoted to registration and settling in with a bus tour round all the exhibitions in the afternoon. The Juried Exhibition was split up between the D'Art Centre at Norfolk (about 25 minutes drive south of Hampton) and the Charles Taylor Art Centre at Hampton where the Student Exhibition could also be seen. The jurors this year chose very different kind of pieces with many well-known names not appearing. It was good to see a really strong body of work from the students, and to know that there is a lot of talent out there to keep the art of enamelling alive. Apart from the juried show there was also a magnificent exhibition of works by Fay Rooke and Valeri Timofeev at the Peninsular Arts Centre. I was able to enjoy this exhibition at leisure because both the workshops I attended were at Peninsular.

The next day James Doran of Canada gave the keynote address and spoke of the development of crafts since the Renaissance at which time artists chose painting and sculpture instead of apprenticeships in crafts which were looked down upon and also poorly paid. Also during the 'Dark Ages' guilds were formed and specialisation became a barrier to collaboration. Today there is a great deal of collaborative work being done (there was a group of pieces in the exhibition made by three different people working together) and more people are coming to enamel because of its versatility in applications from jewellery to architectural work.

Later that morning Dr Andreu Vilasis Fernandez-Capelleja spoke of the art of enamelling in Spain and showed slides of the Salou Museum of Contemporary Enamels in Barcelona. It was great to see a brooch of Barbara Ryman on display there! Nuria Lopez Ribalta followed with a talk on the Enamelling Programme of the Llotja

School of Art and Design. How wonderful to be able to participate in such studies.

The workshop tutors all gave very interesting slide shows and talks, and made me wish that I could have attended all the workshops and not just two.

An interesting innovation this year was the Poster Session where we were divided into groups and moved around a large room from one display to another when a bell rang every 15 minutes. Marian Slepian showed us pictures and diagrams of how to mount enamels and was particularly helpful when I asked questions pertaining to current problems. Deanna Robb spoke about Large Scale Enamelling at Kent State University and Vivian Kline showed us a very effective home video she had made to help promote her enamels. June Jason showed us how to pack and ship enamels to ensure their safe arrival. Howard Eisman spoke of safety and ventilation considerations with enamelling, and Marilyn Druin demonstrated a Xerox Resist for etching metals for enamelling. You can no doubt imagine that we were all exhausted after this very intense information session but it was marvellous.

On the Saturday night there was a Silent Auction where members donated pieces of their work, books, tools, enamels etc. To make it a bit more lively, they selected a few items to take up to the front for further bidding with Howard Eisman doing a great job as Auctioneer. Altogether \$5500 was raised for the Enamelist Society. What a wonderful result!

All in all the convention was a great success. This was also due to the enthusiastic participation of local business people who not only hosted the pocket exhibitions but who also attended the auction and made purchases there. The Australian exhibit was in a florist/antique shop and the owner couldn't have been more helpful. The display looked really good and I was told that viewers enjoyed the quality and diversity of the work. Other pocket exhibitions were in dress shops, galleries and gift shops. The local deli put together his own display of enamels, apparently collected from friends and included a baby's bath, a chamber pot, a bedpan, saucepans and colanders of some antiquity. More modern items were bright mugs and bowls. It was wonderful to see the local participation in our event!

I thoroughly enjoyed the workshops I attended, rounding off my stay in Virginia with Fay Rooke's workshop on surface finishes such as foils and other textures. I am hoping I have managed to persuade her to come to Australia!

Mary Raymond
Sydney

