

Enameller profile — Jill Parnell



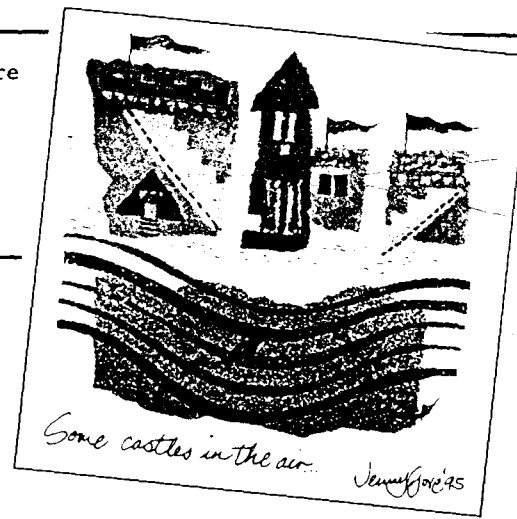
I have been studying part time for Art and Design Diplomas for about 12 years. Originally the jewellery units included enamelling. The facilities were primitive and the enamels very old and anonymous. My first piece of enamel would have been my last if it hadn't been for Hiltrud Blaich. I attended Hiltrud's first workshop in Fremantle and loved the atmosphere of calm that prevailed with a dozen people quietly bending wires and wet packing. I have been to all Hiltrud's workshops and between her visits I have tried many applications of the cloisonné technique on beads, on the surface of bowls, and in association with champleve.

1995 has been a big year. I was thrilled to have a copper cloisonné box accepted at Coburg and four champleve and cloisonné brooches at Wolnzach in Germany. As the timing fitted in with my studies, I went to Germany and met many wonderful people and was overwhelmed by their generous hospitality. Just talking with other artists prompted me on my return, to try plique-a-jour with soldered wires in a bowl shape, and raising some copper bowls and enamelling them with silver cloisonné wires. Also this year I have sent brooches to the 1995 International Enamel Exhibition and the Shippo Conference 9th Cloisonné Jewellery Contest in Japan. I was also a finalist in the recent Western Australian Training Excellence Awards, and have just put together my Graduate Exhibition (finally) held at the Perth Mint. Eight of the fourteen pieces in the exhibition are enamelled.

I have been experimenting this year to achieve different surfaces on enamel. I have found that the addition of a splash of methylated spirits to a lidded container of sawdust and newspaper gives a great raku finish. And to get two different matte surfaces, sieve borax over unfired enamel, fire, and place in ten percent sulphuric acid for a few minutes or put a finished piece in Sparex solution for hours. I left one piece for 12 hours. It will return to normal if glass brushed and fired again.

I like to use transparent enamels and usually in soft subtle colours. I have Thompson, Ball, and recently acquired Blythe colours and test them for compatibility if mixing them. I am pursuing a theme of water birds that I can photograph and draw near my home.





Christmas season again!

Best wishes to all esubscribers for a happy holiday season.

This issue is just 2 sheets again due to lack of time and the busy-ness of the season. I hope to have a bumper issue in the new year.

Keep cool. Keep it coming.

Merry Christmas

Carolyn Delzoppo
Editor

The deadline for material for the next issue, No 36 will be January 23 1996. Articles, commentary, information and gripes are welcome, and can be faxed or mailed to the editor Carolyn Delzoppo, Australian Enamel Newsletter, PO Box 418, Mullumbimby 2482, Ph/Fax 066 841 772.

Thank you

Thankyou to Jill Parnell, Bill Laidler, Sandra Kerr, Don Ross, Irene McGuckin, Noella Jacquemot, Heidi Wellings, Anna Margot Collins, Catherine Large, Karin Luz, Pat Johnson, Edmund Masow, Kyle Pearson, Hiltrud Blaich, and Dorothy Stephenson for their contributions to this issue.

News

Congratulations to Catherine Large who has had a neckpiece acquired by the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory from the 15th National Craft Acquisition Award Exhibition.

Carolyn Delzoppo has received a Creative Fellowship Grant from the Visual Arts/Craft Board of the Australia Council. The grant will allow Carolyn to take a year off to produce a body of work for a solo exhibition sometime in 1997.

Sandra Kerr will be exhibiting enamel jewellery as part of an exhibition of nine glass artists at the Centre Art Space at Chatswood Council in Sydney, 4th - 16 December.

Barbara Ryman and Carolyn Delzoppo are among 14 craftspersons exhibiting in the Savode Gallery Christmas Exhibition 'The Ultimate Gift'. Barbara is exhibiting enamelled spoons, and Carolyn has brooches and earrings.

Several enamellers have work included in the Makers Mark Christmas Collection catalogue: cufflinks and rings by Kate Forster, enamelled heart earrings by Julie Carter, silver and enamel tea caddy spoons by Barbara Ryman and a gold, diamond and enamel ring by Barbara Heath. These and work by other enamellers can be seen at Makers Mark galleries in Melbourne, Toorak and Sydney.

The Annual Exhibition of Enamels at Prouds Gallery in Sydney is on again for December. Contact Margaret Siddal on 02 918 6878 for details.

News from WA -

Recent exhibitions in Perth have included enamel pieces. Heather Jones, a painter and jeweller, included some torch fired works in her exhibition at Stafford galleries. Some of these, brooches, were detachable from the lids of patinated boxes. A great idea for displaying jewellery when not being worn. The JMGA 3rd Biennial Exhibition included enamel works from Jacquie Sprogoe, Jill Parnell and Jenny Whitmore. Jenny's pieces are bezel set into sterling silver with cutouts in the backing sheet revealing the counter enamel and echoing the main design.

Jacquie Sprogoe has enamelled jewellery from her Lichen Series at the Craft Council and Arica Gallery. Some little gems among the jewels at the Artisans of the Sea at Fremantle are the works by Jenny Gore. An extensive show of recent enamel paintings all associated with the sea, each is a little story inviting close perusal. All are precisely executed with carefully cut foil highlights and some use of gold leaf giving an oriental touch.

Jill Parnell

Sandra Kerr reports that work she had sent to the Annual Caloundra Art and Craft Festival was returned to her badly damaged due to very poor packing. Out of 11 enamelled bowls returned, only three arrived undamaged. Some had sides so dented in that the enamel on both sides had shattered off. The bowls had been put in a box with no paper between them and only one sheet of newspaper to fill the empty 3" at the top of the box. Jewellery sent separately was packaged well and arrived safely.

English enameller/jeweller Fred Rich will be in Sydney late in December. Due to it being holiday season it has been difficult to organise a slide show and lecture, however the Enamellers Association will try to organise a show of slides at a private residence for those interested in meeting Fred. To be advised about times and venue, leave a contact number with Barbara or Wendy on 02 660 1316.



'Tree Frogs' Vase by Fred Rich silver and enamel

Supplies

Anna Margot Originals now stock millifiore in bulk. Customers at the shop can choose their own mix, and mail order customers can request large or small pieces. The price is \$3.00 for 10 grams.

Anna Margot Originals
92 Arthur Terrace, Red Hill 4059. Ph 07 367 3266

Due to overwhelming response to Reactive Studio Metal products, Metal Merchants have extended their range of shakudo, mokume gane and shibuichi alloys.

Other new products in stock:

- Pre-coloured niobium wires, pink, blue and green, .5mm and .8mm diameter.
- Miniature nuts and bolts
- Oval Sterling silver wire
- Range of sterling, rolled gold and 14ct gold beads
- Extended range of 9ct and 18ct gold sheet; round, $\frac{1}{2}$ round, rectangular and square wires; bezel strip, granules and solder.

Metal Merchants
Suite 59, 5th Floor, 104 Bathurst St, Sydney 2000
Ph 02 264 5211 Fax 02 264 7370

WG Ball, manufacturers of lead-free enamels in England have a catalogue which includes new enamels, new blanks, new transfers, tools, findings, and a colour chart with colour working instructions. They request stamps to the value of 75p to be sent with enquiries for catalogues within England. More would be needed for international postage. English currency can be purchased at airports and tourist locations.

W G Ball
Dept 6, Anchor Rd, Longton, Stoke-on Trent ST3 1JW
England.

New products from Thompson Enamel:
- Enamel Marking Crayons, for drawing on any vitreous surface. Use as either an underglaze or overglaze.
- Brushable Water Colours, for brushing on any clean vitreous, surface. Colours are mixable to achieve many different shades.

Seminar

In September 1996, Australia's 1st Biannual Enamelist Seminar will be held, in conjunction with workshops and two exhibitions. The Seminar will be held at Sommerville House Private Girls School and accommodation will be available in the boarding school. Double rooms or dorm style rooms to take four to six people will be available. The cost of the seminar will be \$330.00, and includes morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea on all three days, as well as dinner on Friday and Saturday nights. Two exhibitions will run in conjunction with the seminar. One will be a student show for all enamellers who are not professional enamellers, and a professional enamellers exhibition titled 'Expressions in Glass'. Workshops will also be held.

For further information contact:
Anna Margot Collins
GPO Box 1850, Brisbane Qld 4001.
Ph 07 3367 3266 Fax 07 3367 3277



In the October AEN Heidi Wellings wrote about using Vaseline Petroleum Jelly as a holding agent for enamel. The picture show some Arum Lillies Heidi made using this technique.

She writes "I found Vaseline ideal to get into the throat of the lillies and for the shading of the tips of the lillies for a more blended colour, and also where the flower joined onto the stems. The stems were a real headache in as much as the copper had too many impurities and would not hold the enamel. I counter enamelled by pouring liquid enamel down the tubing several times, and I enamelled the outside at least a dozen times. After hours the enamel still popped off. It makes one wonder what we drink coming through our water system."

Around the Magazines

Glass on Metal Volume 14, No 5 October 1995

This issue contains:

- Pictorial Basse Taille of the 13th - 16th Century by Erica Speel.
- Biography, 'Maurice Heaton - An Innovative Craftsman' by Vivian Kline
- 5th Enamelist Society International Conference and Exhibition - An Overview, by Audrey Komrad.
- Pictorial review of Enamelist Society Student Awards.
- Technical Article on the new Thompson Enamel Drawing Crayons, by John Killmaster.
- Report on 1995 German Enamel Exhibitions, by June Jason.
- various other exhibition reviews, news and info.

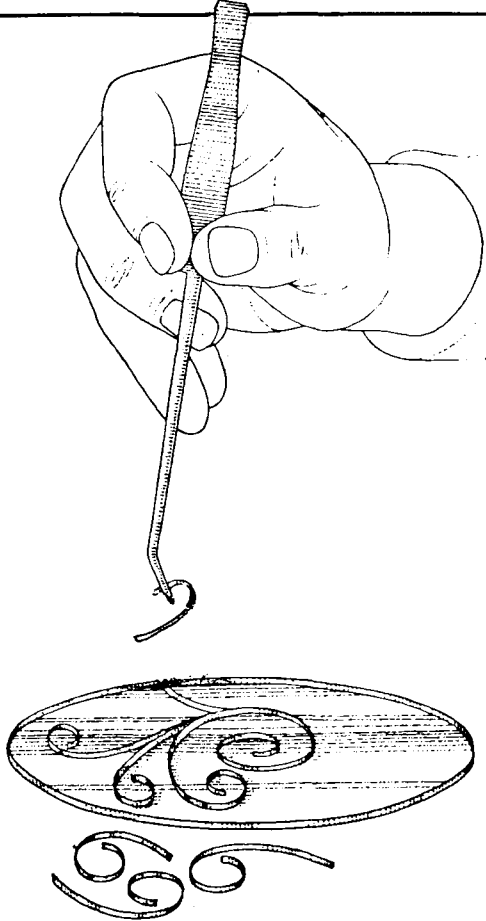
Glass on Metal also contains a listing of all back issues and contents. All are available for purchase either per issue or per volume (6 issues). Prices vary from \$US3.00 for early B&W issues, \$US5.00 for colour issues and \$US8.00 for exhibition catalogue issues. Postage is \$US5.00 for 6 issues. AEN has a copy of the back issue contents sheets and will send photocopies to interested subscribers on receipt of 4 x 45c stamps and a large stamped envelope. Or, contact Enamelist Society, PO Box 310, Newport, Ky 41072 USA.

Change of address

Irene Garran
PO Box 47, Terrey Hills, NSW 2084

Cover

Jill Parnell can be contacted at
18 Challenger Pde, City Beach, WA 6015



10
most often
asked
questions in a
cloisonne workshop

by Carolyn Delzoppo

*Important. These questions and answers all relate to cloisonne enamel on fine silver for jewellery. Answers to the questions may be different when using copper. The answers are my opinions only. Ask another enameller and you could get a different reply. Enamel is like that.

What thickness should the metal be?

When planning an enamel, jewellers need to be aware of the weight of the piece and also its strength and durability. The thickness of the base metal is a compromise between these two factors. The metal needs to be strong enough so that the enamel isn't easily damaged, but also light enough so that it is comfortable to wear. A basic tenet of enamel is that the thicker the metal, the thinner the enamel, the more stable the enamel is. For brooches I usually use .7mm or .8mm, and .6mm for smaller items such as earrings. I only ever use a thinner gauge if its a very tiny piece.

Are lead-free or leaded enamels best?

Both are very good, and both have a lot to offer. There can be problems with using them together however. I find that it is best to avoid mixing them. I haven't had much experience with lead-free but I do know that if using them together, always layer the lead-bearing enamel over the lead-free. Never the other way around. It can be impossible to grade colours from LF to LB, some colours actually repel each other. Thompson and Ball Enamels are lead-free, Soyer, Blythe, Latham Schauer and the Japanese enamels are all leaded.

Some say that the lead in the enamel gives greater clarity and brilliance to the colours, but I've seen really sparkling cloisonne using Thompson lead-free, so I don't think this is necessarily so. It may depend on the technical skill of the enameller.

Are leaded enamels safe?

If used safely, yes. As cloisonne enamellers use their enamels wet, there is little danger of breathing in enamel dust. Care should of course be taken when handling dry enamel, so that the fine dust does not become airborne. Use the blunt end of tweezers to gently scoop out enamel from bulk container, never just pour it out. Also avoid overfiring leaded enamels.

Should counter-enamel always be used?

I think it's essential! Some enamellers, if using thick metal and thin enamel, claim not to need counter enamel, but I think this is a little short-sighted. The maker can never know what stresses the piece of jewellery will undergo once it leaves the workshop. Counter enamel makes the enamel more stable and able to withstand things like knocks and thermal shock. A piece of enamel taken from a hot room, out into the cold, can crack from the shock even years later. Of course counter enamel can be a bit of a nuisance for jewellery. It adds extra unwanted weight, but I strongly recommend that it always be used. Some books say that it should be the same thickness as the enamel on the front of the piece, but in my experience this is not necessary. One good even layer usually does the job adequately.

Can different brands of enamel be used in the same work?

Yes and no. Some brands and some colours are perfectly compatible with each other and some create problems. Only experience can tell. This is why it's such a good idea, to keep a notebook of all tests and experiments with colours if you're using many brands. There's too much to remember. In the beginning, it's probably best to stick to just one brand and introduce other gradually until a palette of trusted colours is built up. Some different brands of enamel actually stress each other and will repeatedly crack in the same place. As well as this, some enamels are high firing and some are softer firing. If wanting to use two different brand colours it's best to do some comparative tests on a scrap of metal first. Experienced enamellers often use several brands in the same piece.

Should I wash opaque enamels for cloisonne?

Yes. All pre-ground enamels have a percentage of 'fines' (very fine particles of enamel dust) in them. If not washed away these fines 'pool' on the top of the wet-packed enamel causing blotchiness and colour changes. If transparent enamels are used in the same piece, this dirty water can contaminate the clean enamels. Opaque enamels should be washed just as carefully as transparents.

How long are enamels fired?

How long is a piece of string? The firing time depends on several factors - the temperature of the kiln, the size of the work, the thickness of the glass, the firing temperature of the enamel. If unsure about firing time check in the kiln every 20 or 30 seconds, by quickly opening the door just enough to glance in before shutting it again. Never watch the firing through a bung hole in the kiln door! The bung hole emits concentrated infra-red rays that can damage the eyes. When glancing at the enamel you are watching for the surface to change from matte/grainy to a shiny reflective smoothness. It is ready to take out when this happens. As additional layers are added, a little more time is needed to achieve a vitreous surface. Take care not to overfire the enamel. Take it out as soon as it is shiny, don't leave it there.

What temperature should the kiln be?

To some extent this is a personal preference. I like a hot kiln myself - around 820 degrees, though I do know enamellers who fire even hotter. I have noticed that American enamellers seem to recommend firing longer and lower - 750-780. Although some books do have fairly rigid recommendations about firing times, I think that enamel is reasonably flexible - hot and fast, or cooler slower and cautious, all seems to work the same. If you enjoy a thrill, a hot kiln keeps you hopping. Not recommended for the forgetful enameller though. Do whatever suits your character.

How can I get a matte finish on my enamels?

The slow way is to gradually grind the surface smooth and scratch free with a variety of stones and polishing compounds. This can be a laborious process recommended only for masochists. The easier way is to grind the surface smooth with diamond files and carborundum stones, and then refire it to a vitreous surface, and then work back to a soft matte finish with fine wet and dry papers. Another way is to use a product such as Armor Etch to matte/etch the surface. It should be noted though that some colours are more resistant to acid than others. Some are absolutely impervious. I always have trouble with my opaque black. To use Armor-Etch, apply the paste to the surface for about 5 minutes, wash to remove acid and neutralise in bicarbonate of soda. Armor-Etch is available from glass artist's suppliers. Sandblasting with a fine grit also works, sand leaves a very coarse surface.

Can unmarked enamels that my aunt/neighbour/cousin left in the garage 20/30 years ago be used?

It is tempting to use free enamels, as purchasing new ones has become quite expensive. My advice is don't. Or at least don't unless absolutely essential, or you've done a bit of homework with them. You need to think about how much time you have invested in your piece and if it's worth risking all that to save a tiny amount of enamel. On tiny intricate jewellery, small faults in colour clarity can so easily spoil a piece. Fresh enamel is better. You know what it is, what its firing range is, and most importantly that you can buy some more if it turns out to be a fantastic colour. Having said this, if necessary, old enamel can be used if you are prepared to work on them a bit. Pre-ground enamels do deteriorate over time, and transparents enamels will benefit from being reground in a mortar and pestle so that they may fire clear. Some will be unsalvageable though. It is also a good idea to do comparative tests with them to find out if they are hard or soft firing. Fire small amounts on a scrap of metal or mica with some enamels of known hardness. I generally use old opaque enamels when I have children in my workshop and results are not so crucial. Give old enamels to an enameller who works on a larger scale who will be able to use them for counter enamel.

Carolyn Delzoppo is a specialist in cloisonne enamel. She regularly holds cloisonne workshops in Brisbane and Sydney.

If you have an interesting different answer to these questions, please feel free to contribute to the discussion. All knowledge and experience is valuable.

In the September 1995 issue of the newsletter of the US Enamel Guild West, Kyle Pearson, in an article titled 'Go Figure', investigates the cost of running a kiln. She writes

"Most kilns have a metal tag imprinted with the number of amps and volts. These numbers are needed to complete the formula for electricity cost.

- Step 1/ Multiply amps times volts to equal watts.
- Step 2/ Divide the number of watts by 1000. This equals the amount of kilowatts used per hour.
- Step 3/ Multiply the number of kilowatts by the local rate. This number equals the cost per hour of operation.
- Step 4/ Cost per hour times the number of hours used on a given day equals the cost for the day."

Kyle calculated that a small kiln with 120 volts and 15 amps costs .20 cents per hour to run in San Diego, and a large kiln with 240 volts and 16 amps costs .42 cents per hour.

All these calculations got my curiosity going. I use my kiln all day about 5 days a week, and I had no idea what that cost. So, carrying my latest power bill (which states the local rate), the necessary numbers from the back of my Neycraft, and the article, I asked my father-in-law to do the calculations. I'm a bit of a twit with mathematics.

Bill calculated that my kiln uses 1.1 kilowatts per hour to maintain 1000degrees, and up to 15 kw/hour heating up. After the first 300 kilowatt hours my local power supplier charges 12.06 cents per kw, so to maintain the furnace at 1000C costs
 $1.1\text{kw} \times 12.06 \text{ cents per hour} = 13.27 \text{ cents per hour}$

Initial heating up is not constant in consumption, varying from 1.1 to 1.5 kw. As a rough estimate using the average kws (1.3kw), cost per hour to heat up would be 15.68 cents per hour.

The surprise is that its so cheap to run!
I must add that I never run my kiln at 1000C, this was just what Bill calculated, but even if I did, and even if it was heating up all day, which of course it never is, the cost per day would only be \$1.25.

Doesn't that make you feel better about all the time you spend with your kiln? It costs practically nothing to use it!



Northern California Enamel Guild Newsletter

From a review by Sandie Bradshaw of the Irene McGuckin workshop in Cloisonne enamelling.

"She also demonstrated how to make your own fine gold cloisonne wire from 24 gauge, 24ct wire and a rolling mill. Twelve inches of 24 gauge equals approximately 47 inches of cloisonne wire."

"Irene also cautioned everyone to be sure of compatibility of front and counter enamels. If the chosen counter enamel is too brittle, it will cause the front cloisonne to pop off and all sorts of grief. Especially bad choices in the old Thompson leaded range were Copen blue, Shamrock and Bluebird."

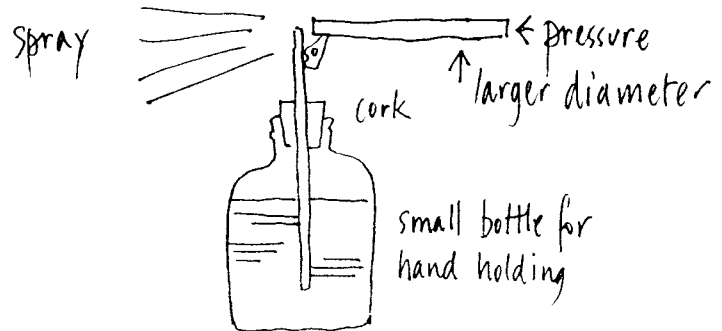
"She cautioned that if you need to fill low spots at the end after stoning, work with pretty dry enamel, blotting right away, otherwise you can get waterlines when you refire"

In the August issue of AEN I asked a couple of technical questions hoping subscribers may have answers. Thank you to Heidi Wellings, Don Ross and Sandra Kerr for the following information.

Q. Does anyone know of a sprayer that will give a fine even mist without big drops?

A. Heidi Wellings recommends a used Alberto V05 container with a finger press pump action, or a pump spray container from Aqueous Nasal Spray which has a very soft mist ideal for holding agent.

Don Ross recommends "a gadget that is ages old. A hand held atomiser which creates mist with pressure from the lungs! It consists of 2 metal tubes of different bore articulated at the centre for folding away. A bottle with a cork is filled with the medium and held in one hand while the piece being sprayed is held in the other. By blowing in the larger tube a fine mist is formed. The gadgets used to be available at art supply shops for spraying fixative on charcoal drawings."



Q. What is the medium used to mix dry fine line black into a liquid?

A. Heidi Wellings says "I have used pine oil in a proportion of 1 part pine oil to 2 parts turpentine, added to the dry fine line black drop by drop until the right consistency is reached. This ratio can also be used with the fines from 300 mesh enamel screenings as a painting medium. To my knowledge pine oil is squeegee oil as told to me by Vivienne Binns some 15 years ago. I have also used China Painters Pen Black Powder mixed with Pen Oil Medium. Very good for fine lines and does not spread. Pen Black Powder, Pen Oil Medium are available from Mona Vale Pottery Supplies, Bungan and Waratah Sts, Mona Vale NSW 2103. Ph 02 9997 2112."

Sandra Kerr recommends thinning fine line black with gum turpentine.

Q. How to repair an enamel cook pot?

A. Heidi suggests that the subscriber contact a member of the Enamellers Association whose family do commercial enamelling - stoves, refrigerators, etc. Perhaps they have a service for respraying and can refire small objects. The sprayed enamel pieces go through a timed conveyor type kiln and come out baked the other end. The contact is:

Mr Carl Bierbaum, 17 Belview Rd, Wentworth Falls, NSW 2782. Ph 047 57 4045

CONTEMPORARY ENAMELLING
PROBLEMS WITHIN AND WITHOUT

BY PAT JOHNSON

This article is reprinted from the Autumn 1995 issue
of the Journal of the UK Guild of Craft Enamellers

When it comes to a discussion of enamelling, one thing is clear; to treat the full range of enamelling as one subject is doing a dis-service to the medium. Since the process of enamelling is capable of producing both great, bold statements of opaque colours on sheets of steel, and the exquisite delicacy of a drop of clear enamel on a plique-a-jour earring, the technique of melting glass on to a metal surface implies virtually no limitations on the resulting work. Therefore the range and diversity of enamelling needs to be emphasised and it should be demonstrated that the criteria for judging one type of enamelling do not need to apply to another.

The confusion caused by assuming that one set of standards applies to all enamelling can be appreciated if the situation occurred in painting. Imagine trying to combine interior decorators, house painters, artists in oils, artists in watercolours, miniaturists, etc, into one discipline. That is the situation which arises when jewellery enamellers, enamel painters, enamellers who explore over-firing effects or create abstractions on steel are compared, one to the other. Enamellers suffer this fate, not only from those who know nothing from enamelling but even more from other enamellers. Far too often enamellers distain each others work due to a lack of respect for alternative objectives and techniques. The result is spurious criticisms and defensive attitudes ie, no good whatsoever. Enamellers themselves need to be the first to realise that there are distinctions between their various types of work.

Technical perfection is often cited as the cornerstone of any judgement of all types of enamelling. Obviously the attainment of a flawless surface, a pure transparency, and a brilliance of colours, provide definable goals. Often a failure to achieve these goals can lead to distractions and misstatements. However, the very search for perfection is a pitfall in itself. It is so easy for the enameller to postpone the creative confrontation with the medium, thinking that technical mastery is the end rather than the means.

At all times during the years of learning, great gains will be made if the enameller never ceases to try to operate as an artist. In a sense, a temporary blindness to current technical faults, a cocoon of artistic confidence, is necessary to protect a developing enameller from over reliance on technical achievement or despair caused by the problems yet to be overcome.

Given that the technicalities of enamelling operate as a siren on the rocks for many enamellers, it is also true that the medium can be rejected by artists because of the very technical difficulties involved. Inspiration is not enough in enamelling since faults lead to the masking of art intentions of the artist. An artist working in enamels faces the endless need to practice control while simultaneously experimenting to find appropriate effects. The constant operation of control and discovery is the dynamic dialectic which leads to the evolution of a personal statement, a process completed only with the expenditure of time.

It must be said that all enamel artists suffer from a prejudice against their work which has a common historical root. Although the craft of enamelling has existed for over 3000 years, its practitioners have, until the last 100 years, been confined to working as groups in firms. They have often used

enamel as a substitute for other materials ie for paint, where paint would decay in damp churches, and for gems, when buyers could not afford the more expensive types of colour. Enamels produced by Rene Lalique and Faberge, while supreme as objects of beauty, had a decorative purpose and were not designed with content in mind. In general, enamellers of the past confined themselves to the production of decorative objects. No one thought to use enamels to express an idea unique to the medium or the time. This situation stands in great contrast to the uses and achievements of painting.

With the advent of electricity, enamelling has at last become the province of the individual. Electric kilns, small gas kilns, and commercial suppliers of enamels free the enameller from overwhelming technical restraints. But enamelling as an art form is a medium without a past - no tradition of original masterpieces exists to support the new artists in their efforts to tame this newly loosed, unruly substance. It would seem that the first fumbling enamels produced by individuals repelled other artists who meant to attempt serious work. As a result, in this century, enamelling as an art form has largely fallen to the lot of the amateur or the semi-professional at best. Thousands of people now enamel in Great Britain, people who love colours and the interactions of the enamels and who enjoy confronting the technical processes. Although they discover unique and original effects and styles, these enamellers have enjoyment as their main goal rather than a concern about the content of their work.

Everyone accepts that there are Sunday painters, serious amateurs in oil and watercolour. Their efforts in no way cast the works of professional artists into disrepute. Enamel artists, however, do not escape so easily. In addition, the lack of a prestigious past denies a frame of reference for the serious enameller and hinders efforts to gain acceptance for the work.

Therefore, enamelling at the present time is in a very ambiguous position. Widely practiced throughout the country, in kitchens and in graduate schools, enamelling is a medium without stature and without place. Many enamellers of international repute live and work in Great Britain, but are virtually unacknowledged. Several teach in art colleges, many sell work privately or in small exhibitions. But on the whole they remain unrecognised by the conventional artistic channels. The Royal Academy will look at enamels only if presented as sculpture. The Crafts Council Index has no section for enamellers, although that is actually due to the lack of success of applicants. Most professional enamel artists work alone and exhibit alone.

Every artistic statement must be produced by a controlled use of the medium. Since every medium has its own unique form and texture, each has its individual statement to make, enamelling included. Since there are no restrictions due to lack of flexibility, enamelling can ultimately stand beside painting and sculpture as a fitting vehicle for ideas. A greater understanding and appreciation of the efforts of enamellers now attempting to develop this vast virtually overrich medium would benefit everyone involved, including those who will see the resulting work as well as those who create it.



Workshop Reports

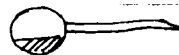
Hiltrud Blaich Workshop in San Diego by Dorothy Stephenson

Participants of Hiltrud Blaich's workshop wasted no time getting started with their 7" copper plates because three days was a short time to complete such a project. The plates were thoroughly cleaned with cleanser, the back especially because it was to be the first to be enamelled. After rinsing well, the back was brushed with klyrefire and liberally coated with opaque enamel and fired to an immature stage. The cooled plate was immersed in pickle (Sparex) and the front cleaned to remove firescale. The first coat was of medium flux, which was fired to maturity. Design and colour were next using a combination of thick and thin copper cloisonne wires. The design was drawn, and annealed wires folded and placed on the plate, adhered by A3 holding agent. Upon removing the hot plate from the kiln, a hammer was used to gently press the wires down like you would a burnisher. Wires and edges were always cleaned of firescale before proceeding. The enamel colours were then wet packed in an brought up to the top of the wires. Tissue was used to remove excess moisture. When the wires were filled evenly, stoning began; using a coarse stone to begin with and a finer one to finish up. All low shiny spots should be filled with enamel before continuing, making sure the stoned enamel is cleaned thoroughly before adding more enamel. Areas of matte and stoned can be used in the same piece. This may be planned ahead. To accomplish this finish, shiny areas were covered with masking tape as the planned matte surface is stoned with fine grit stone or sandpaper. The clean finished surface was then ready for the final coat. The plates were warmed on top of the kiln and beeswax was gently rubbed into the matte areas with the palm of the hand. There you have the secret to Hiltrud's fabulous highly creative enamels.

Phil Barnes Workshop on Engraving for Champleve by Noella Jacquemot (Canada)

Phil is very knowledgeable and generous with his information. He grinds transparent enamel lumps in a mortar and pestle with distilled water until the powder is very fine, so fine that if you touch it with your fingers it can hardly be felt. He then fires very quickly at a very high temperature. He enamel three (rarely four) very thin coats so as to have clearer enamel.

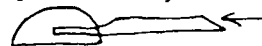
Phil taught us how to adjust the engravers to our own hand - firstly you take a wooden handle, preferably $\frac{1}{2}$ round, if you don't have one then cut the



bottom from a round one. The closer the handle is cut to the engraver, the more horizontal the engraver will be to the work and the better control you will have. The engraver needs to be adjusted - firstly put the handle against the palm of the hand, then put the engraver in the same hand, and bend the fingers lightly so that half of the metal protrudes from the end of the fingers. Cut the surplus metal from the engraver in a bevel. The top and bottom must be flat to go perfectly in the handle. Place the engraver horizontally in a vice and tap with a small mallet on the handle to fix the engraver solidly. Evident-



ally to make this adjustment you must grind the surplus metal away but take care not to grind all the way through or the piece will fly off. When you have ground $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way through press the end on the table and it will snap off easily. Fix the engraver



in the handle with the bevel up. As for engraving remember not to use too much pressure.

The three main engravers are:
Half round for outlines and large and small textures.
Flat scraper for metal texture.
Spit stick for trimming up.

Catalogue

Australian enamellers who participated in the 3rd International Exhibition in Coburg Germany have been receiving their complimentary exhibition catalogues this month. And what a catalogue! Over 500 images of exceptional work, one piece per exhibitor. It's one of the best I've seen, and is highly recommended. Copies can be obtained from:

Kurt Neun, Hans Holbein Weg 10, D-95450, Germany
The cost is DM 29.00 plus postage. It is difficult to estimate how much to allow for postage, but I do know that it is expensive in Germany, I imagine around the same as here, about \$20.00 surface mail.

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