

BARBARA RYMAN —

I'd like to show you some photographs of the work I've been doing lately .....but I haven't done any! Well not enough to get excited about 1996! What a different sort of year for me. I've moved out of the big bad city to a beautiful place called Thirroul which is a mere hour and a quarter south of Sydney. Just to the south again is Wollongong and the big industrial landscape of Port Kembla. The communities on my part of the coast hang onto the edge of the continent and directly behind them is the Illawarra Escarpment whose cliffs totally dominate the western skyline.

It is here that I have had the good fortune to fulfil a fantasy. I have built a studio. If any of you have been through the building process, you'll know that things don't always go as smoothly as anticipated. In consultation with an old friend, who is a builder carpenter/musician/artist, I plotted and planned the workshop. We looked at the site, the path of the sun, the view and drew up the plans. I was owner/builder which made me the one to see Council, get reports done, get licences, organise insurance, purchase materials and write cheques.

I had mentally prepared myself to deal with Council. After all one can understand where they are coming from, doing the best for the community, public safety, covering their legal soft spots etc. But...it was hell! Suffice to say I was helped and hindered, misinformed and aided, accepted and rejected, jumped through hoops, dug my heels in and argued, spent lots of unexpected money and in the end I triumphed. Mind you, I finally had to go in and wrest the approval document from the buggers because for about three weeks they forgot to post it! I was not going to order even a nail until I had the approval in writing and in my hand.

It was so exciting to start work. I took photos of the first foundation holes, photos of the brick piers. We were on our way. Its funny how a building progresses. It does so in stages. First the foundations. Then the floor beams and joists. Next, the frame. Then the roof and cladding. Finally floors, decking, windows and doors. But until each stage is done time moves excruciatingly slowly

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# NEWS

I'd like to acknowledge how much the Australian Enamelling Newsletter has meant to me and thank Carolyn sincerely for her unstinting efforts and enthusiasm over the years.

I, like every other subscriber looked forward to the arrival of AEN. I got into the habit of highlighting all the exhibitions dates and deadlines first thing. I know that before the newsletter we often received exhibition details way too late to be able to participate.

AEN has introduced so many of our far flung enamelling community to each other. News of enamellers, their exhibitions and successes, struggles and failures, reminded me that I am part of a special band of people working in an ancient and exacting craft, and encouraged me to push on.

AEN has provided me with access to hard to track down materials and supplies and given me information on new and old products and drawn together so much knowledge that has been gathered from years of experience amongst our enamellers and delightedly passed on for all to benefit by.

It is quite daunting to be taking over from Carolyn. She assures me I'm up to it and I know with your help (and I really mean help! - all hand holding accepted) I will be doing my utmost to keep AEN a meeting place and a network of information and support for us all.

Thanks Carolyn ... happy enamelling and I hope we'll soon hear about life after AEN.

Best wishes from us all.

  
Editor

## LETTER

Having enjoyed and learnt so much from the views and articles of endless research featured in the AEN, I would like to pay tribute to Carolyn DeZoppo.

Carolyn's enthusiasm and willingness to pass on her experience and knowledge made the AEN a pleasure to look forward to and read. Personally it was like keeping in touch with a friend.

Many readers have appreciated the National and International information 'put in our laps' as it were to do with what we may.

Cheers to Carolyn - how fortunate we are to have such a dedicated Silversmith and Enamellist to take on this stupendous job. Thank you Barbara Ryman

Doreen Sinclair.

● Congratulations to Carolyn DeZoppo who was awarded the "City Council Award" at the 9th International Exh. of Enamelling Art in Japan.

● Catherine Large has some work featured in the "June" page of the Makers Mark calendar.

● Doreen Sinclair writes that Jina Maroski has arranged for thirty people to put in 4 pieces each in a small exhibition at the Waverly Library at 14-26 Ebley St, Bondi Junction. The runs from the 7th to the 16th Feb. Silver work and some enamel on show.

● Jill Parnell of W.A. writes that two recent graduate exhibitions featured enamel.

In "Presence" Jenny Whitmore, Post Graduate Diploma student (Curtin Uni of Technology) displayed an installation of 25 plaques many which were wearable pieces in the form of brooches. These were on formed copper or silver enamelled in animal patterns using PnP paper - some were gold plated and a final secret process was used to induce an iridescence to the enamel.

In "Nebula" some pieces in the form of earrings, neckpiece, bowl and ladle using cloisonne technique were displayed by Helen Beurteaux in the Graduate exhibition (Carine College of TAFE).

● I was pleased to see some enamel work in the exhibitions by NSW Uni. St George Campus graduating students in "one body many parts" and Enmore Design students in "we're where wear ware". Work by Grace Zhao and Jinhee Ahn stood out.

● The opening of National Enamelling Exhibition, titled "Fire in the Heart" is fast approaching (14thFeb-16th March) and I'm pleased to hear that we'll have the pleasure of seeing some out of town enamellers. No doubt we'll see you at the opening but probably an even better chance to natter is being provided by Mary Raymond who is having open house from 5pm, on Saturday the 15th for all enamellers at 7 Ailsa Close, East Lindfield. We might just bring a plate, but let Mary know if your coming and she'll fill you in on details. Phone:(02) 9416 6472.

# OPPORTUNITIES TO EXHIBIT

## Alice Craft Acquisition 1997

Entry forms - 16th April. If you want an entry form write to Crafts Officer, Crafts Council of the NT 0871 or phone (08) 8952 4417

This is 23rd Alice Craft exhibition and the Craft Council has \$4,500 for acquisitions

## Contemporary Wearables '97 Award Exhibition- Toowoomba, Qld.

This well established exhibition has substantial prizes on offer as well up to \$7,000 for acquisitions. For entry form and information contact Mrs Diane Baker, PO Box 2352, Toowoomba Qld 4350.

Entry forms and slides due 16th May 1997.

## \*Painting with Fire\*

This is the 1997 exhibition organised by Anna-Margot Originals of Brisbane as a follow on from the first Australian Enamelling Symposium. Anna-Margot feels that for an appreciation of the art of enamelling to firmly develop in Brisbane it is important to exhibit on a regular basis. A new venue has been found. It's called Michel Sourney Gallery, Stevenson St, Ascot, QLD. Michel knows something of enamel and this is always helpful. This will help keep enamelling on the agenda until the next Symposium to be held in 1998 with its accompanying show.

Those who exhibited last time will be sent an entry form and if you would like to participate, please let Anna-Margot know and forms and information will be sent to you.

Write to GPO Box 1850, Brisbane, Qld 4001 or phone (07) 3367 3266.

## South African Guild of Craft Enamellers, International Exhibition

The Guild is based in Capetown, South Africa and is proposing an international exhibition of enamelling art in November '97. The exhibition will be housed at "Bertsan House", a charming old Georgian house which is now part of the Cultural History Museum Complex in the city centre. Workshops and demonstrations are to be held.

This has been mentioned a couple of times but the information seems to be more comprehensive now. If you want to participate, write to Margaret Fairhurst, 13 Graaff Ave., Milnerton, 7441, Cape Town, R.S. Africa. Oh dear; **latest news** is that the show has been held off indefinitely because of lack of financial support. What a shame, just when things seemed to be coming together.

## The Enamelist Society's Juried Exhibition.

"Tradition and Transformation" - International Enamels '97. The enamelling conference and exhibition will be held

at the Arrowmont School of Arts and Crafts, Gatlinburg TN U.S.A. Entry forms and slides due 7th July 1997. Forms available from The Enamelist Society' PO Box 631704, Cincinnati, OH 45263-1704, USA.

In conjunction with conference, the Society will again sponsor the Student Enamelling Exhibition and Awards and it is open to those currently enrolled in a degree or diploma program (1996 graduates eligible). There is \$1,000 in awards and the winning enamel will join the juried exhibition and grace the front cover of Glass on Metal in December '97. To obtain application and more details, send a self addressed, stamped envelope to Maureen Cole, 3182 Tallmadge RD, Kent, OH 44240 U.S.A.

## AROUND THE MAGAZINES

Glass on Metal - magazine of the Enamelist Society, volume 15, no 15, Dec'96.

Contains:

-a five page report by Tom Ellis on his trip to Australia, including the Brisbane Enamel Symposium.

-Enamelling on Precious Metal Clay- a report by Woodrow Carpenter.

-Details of 1997 International Enamelling Conference to be held in Gatlinburg in October.

-Painting with enamel - a new journey. Practical article on the new Thompson acrylic painting enamels, by Bill Helwig.

Subscriptions for Glass on Metal are US\$62.62 per year and are available from The Enamelist Society' PO Box 631704, Cincinnati, OH 45263-1704, USA. Visa and Mastercard accepted.

## THANK YOU

AEN would like to thank the following contributors to this issue:

Carolyn DeZoppo, Norma Alice, Mary Raymond, Doreen Sinclair, Jill Parnell, Heidi Wellings, Loraine Larter, Heather Calnan.

The deadline for material for the next issue will be March 23rd 1997. All articles, comments and news welcome. Send to Barbara Ryman, 71 George St, Thirroul 2515, NSW.



## VISIT TO JAPAN

Norma Alice has visited Japan five times. Even as a little girl she was drawn to the country because the culture was so very different to her own. Her first trips were to get to know the country and her last three trips have coincided with enamelling events.

Her latest was to attend the 9th International Exhibition of Enamelling Art and seminar which took place in Musashi-Sakai from the 23rd to the 30th October 1996. Musashi-Sakai is one of the many small towns making up Tokyo and is about 45 minutes east from central Tokyo station by electric train.

"The exhibition was held in a new building this time in a different part of Tokyo. In the past it has been in five large rooms at the Ueno University. Apparently the council of Musashi-Sakai wanted a colourful display to open the building and this was the reason for the change.

The opening was well attended and the Award Ceremony was very good. Plenty translators were there so we "foreigners" could understand. English, German and Spanish were most catered for. I was lucky in that I had met one of the translators beforehand who remembered me from the last two times I had been there and was treated like an old friend.

The group of people other than the Japanese who received awards each spoke a little of the work being done in their countries and all seemed to be better of in their teaching arrangements than we are in Australia, that is enamelling is a major subject and is taught comprehensively and in some countries can be pursued into the realm of university studies. I can't remember what each award was given for but most were abstract pieces and included Patricia Schlepper-Jones of the UK, Solange Lerervre from Canada and our own Carolyn Dezoppo. Others in the group were three Korean girls, Forgo Gabor from Switzerland, and a Belgian man - whose name I can't recall.

The Exhibition was well set up except for not having quite enough wall space to show some of the mighty works that come from Japan. Small pieces were rather crowded together in some sections of the wall but there could be no complaints about the work. Jewellery and small pieces were in well lit showcases in the middle of the room and the bowls and vases were on a few tables

along the window side of the room and caught the light well. It was wonderful to get close to these. My pick of the exhibition was a bowl by Valeri Timofeev of USA. It was magnificent!

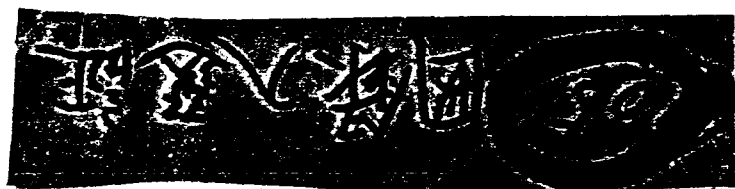
For the first time I was disappointed in the catalogue. Only one piece of each persons work was photographed also the colours of some of the pieces didn't well represent the article. I suppose costs may have been an issue but it's a very good catalogue compared to most.

I spent some time at the workshops and unfortunately the one I most wanted to see was discontinued half way through due to an accident to the demonstrator. Asako Fuller's demonstration on Torch Lustre was very well attended and the workshop a lot of fun. Andre Vilasis spent a long afternoon demonstrating his technique of Grisaille. He had everyone mesmerised with his patience and was forced to fire the piece he was working on after three hours explaining he would not normally have done so if time was not getting away.

The time spent at these workshops was very enjoyable and informative and friendships were made. To finish of our time there we had the usual bus tour of Tokyo where with some free time enjoyed a terrific social time together."

Norma Alice

Overseas visitors were provided with billeted accommodation and Norma also stays with some of the friends she has made and gets to experience Japanese life first hand including raw seafood and an earthquake or two!



# REVIEW

The following is a review and discussion of Fred Ball's book on "Experimental Techniques in Enameling" written by Judy Stone. It is reprinted from the January 1997 issue of the newsletter of the Northern California Enamel Guild.

## Experimental Enamelling Techniques and the Influence of Fred Uhl Ball

Although Fred Ball's book has been out of print for a long time, and the author is no longer alive to comment on the recent changes in enamelling, the influence of his life and work persists, and his ideas seem to be increasing in popularity. When "Experimental Techniques in Enamelling" was published in 1972, Ball was proposing an easier and more spontaneous way to work the medium. He wanted to expand on traditional techniques so that enamel could finally become a tool of personal expression. He wanted the enamelist to see what marvellous art could be created if orthodoxy was tossed aside.

In essence, there should be no "don't's" in enameling - surfaces can be manipulated, reduced, smoked, overfired, fumed, or any combination used to record the effect of the process of flame, heat, the elements interacting - the thesis being that enamel does not have to be flawless, nor necessarily jewel-like in color, nor have any of the usually-associated attributes. In sum, respect it, but don't be afraid of it; the media need not dominate the aesthetic (Ball, from the catalog to the Fred Uhl Ball Retrospective Exhibition, 1987)

The term "experimental" refers to Ball's use of materials and techniques fairly new to the art of enameling, but actually borrowed from ceramic technology. Liquid enamel (developed in the last century as a way of coating metals for industry and sold previously through the Thompson catalog as crackle enamel) became the vehicle whereby he was able to introduce some ideas from ceramics such as different ways to apply a liquid glaze (slip-trailing, sponging, etc) and different ways of firing (raku, torch firing, etc). He wanted to achieve a textured enamel surface, not only by texturing metal but by melting textured and texturising substances into the enamel. The book is full of ideas on how to use wire meshes, manipulated copper and aluminium foils, fibreglass, glass pieces, dried organic substances, salt, borax, etc on fired and pre-fired enamel surfaces. He also encouraged a greater awareness of the

interrelationship of enamel and the metal being enameled. Ball did not advocate lack of control, only less control to release creativity. In principle, what he advocated in "Experimental techniques" was refreshing and easily accessible to anyone wanting ways to render in the medium.

Almost 25 years later it is time to put Ball, his work and his writing, into some perspective. Enamelists today, if they are lucky enough to read the book, which has long been out of print, may not find Ball's techniques very experimental, perhaps because his way of working has gradually entered the enamel mainstream. Among the recent enamelists who have adapted and incorporated some of the techniques described by Ball into their own work are Deborah Lozier, Sally Aplin, Gretchin Goss, Maureen Carswell, and Elizabeth Turrell.

In retrospect, I realise that the book has its shortcomings. Ball is sometimes sloppy when it comes to specifics. He tends to repeat misconceptions about enamelling without explaining the why's of what he is doing; that is, he neglects a firm scientific foundation. For example, in his chapter on basic procedures, he tells us that the surface of the metal must be clean for the enamel to adhere. That is not true: Dry-sifted enamel can adhere to a dirty surface. He also neglects to place his techniques in some sort of historical context. This is not a problem unique to Ball but is pervasive in most books about enameling. Perhaps the major problem with the book is that Ball comes across as extremely laid back and loose, which in our enamel world, made up of a lot of people who might be called control freaks, is hard to accept. We could easily question his standards of excellence and craftsmanship.

Despite these shortcomings, his book is worth reviewing for the new paths it might suggest. I find some inspiration each time I look through it.

Judy Stone.

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## STUDIO CONT .....

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with weekends and rainy days eating up the time and summer drifts to autumn. I finished a patchwork quilt I'd been working on for years. I spent hours and hours in the garden making new garden beds, clearing weeds from the creek and dreaming of future rain forests and vegie gardens. I became a person adrift from normal time.

Money. Not enough of it! Hidden and forgotten costs mount and I become a labourer to save funds and carry all the floorboards and decking from the front, over the bridge and up the hill to the site. Thank God the suppliers carry the huge sheets of plaster board to the building. Now I become a plasterer and my friend and I wrestle enormous sections of board onto walls and ceilings. We mark in power points and fittings and are relieved to be able to hand the electricals over to a professional. At this point my exhausted mate retires to the Southern Highlands and soon I get on with the plastering. I've done it before but had forgotten what a rotten and painful task it is. I thought I would go mad with frustration. I have sworn never to touch the evil stuff again!

Is this wearing you out? It is me for until now I had managed to push all those memories into a misty corner of my mind. There is more but I won't torture you or myself too much. Painting, sanding and estapoling floors, having big front stairs built. I move all my gear in all that furniture and boxes of who knows what that we've been falling over or shuffling around into there proper places at last! This is such an enjoyable time as I know that setting up and organising your work space allows thoughts of work to enter into my mind. A commercial job comes through I look around and panic. A fixed work bench! I need to bolt my lapidary wheel, grinder and rolling mill down! Aaaargh! Builder rushes down from the mountain and installs bench. I scrape together some funds.

Fortunately the final council inspection doesn't have any particular time limit. I have a feeling that the gutters will stay under the studio and the exterior won't be painted for a very, very long time. The challenge now is to get going again. It's surprisingly hard to start work but there are some exciting exhibition opportunities coming up this year and the challenge of AEN. I know both will fuel my creative energies and "look out world!"



# SUPPLIES

Two new products are arriving at Anna-Margots in Brisbane

The first is the 9000 series of opaque enamels for Effetre (Moretti) Glass, used on Moretti Glass for bead making. They have the full range coming.

The second is the Acrylic painting colours from Thompsons (fully developed and problems sorted - see last AEN) are soon to arrive and information on them should appear next issue.

Supplies of PnP paper are also coming in.

## TIPS

Useful enamelling hints collected from the contributors to the Coburg Art Society news letters. These were translated from the Coburg Exhibition catalogue by Jill Parnell.

Preparation of the plate:

- We all know the problem of keeping large plates flat through repeated firings. As you counter enamel your plate, thin out the enamel towards the edges of the plate so that only a very thin layer remains.
- If you use a steel plate to press the enamel work after firing, heat in kiln beforehand. This prevents a temperature shock.
- Protecting the edge of the plate: With a burnisher rub a slight lip around the edge of the plate. The lip protects the thin layer of enamel around the edge.

Stencils:

- X-ray film makes an excellent stencil.
- Photocopier transparencies also make good stencils. (would that be overhead projector transparencies? - Ed)
- To make removal easier, use little loops of sticky tape to stick down the film. This way you don't get dog ears on your stencils.
- Stencils made from newspaper or crepe paper leave a clean outline. If you wet the stencil, it will also fit a curved surface snugly. You can add a bit of glue to the water to help it stick. Sift the enamel over the stencil before it dries.

Working with Foil:

- Small pieces of silver foil or coarse filings mixed into transparent enamel and applied wet gives an interesting effect after polishing.
- Gold and silver foil is more easily cut or torn to shape if placed between two pieces of strong transparent paper. Firstly this allows you to see the foil easily and secondly, the transparent paper has no grain and can be torn in any direction.
- Silver foil pressed between two sheets of sandpaper (grade 400 or coarser) creates sufficient small holes to avoid buckling of the foil in the firing process.
- Silver foil between two sheets of silk paper formed (crushed?-Ed) into a ball creates a multi-faceted effect. Tiny holes in the foil prevent buckling.

Miscellaneous:

- Almost all marking pens (whether permanent or not) leave a gold line under the fondant after firing.
- Enamel used for the sides of bowls should be very finely ground so you can apply the enamel densely thereby reducing the risk of it slipping off during firing.
- You can easily make your own sieves. Cut off the spout of a plastic bottle and then take a piece of metal mesh slightly larger than the mouth of the bottle. Heat the mesh to 150C and press the plastic spout onto the hot mesh and it will stick together. If you like you can add a handle made from wire.
- Refillable hair spray bottles (pump action bottles) are suitable to spray shaped surfaces. The water-glue solution spray is very fine and the pressure is not sufficient to blow the enamel away.
- Glycerine mixed with a little ink can be used to draw or write on enamel surfaces. Fill a fountain pen with the solution and write or draw on the fired surface that has been cleaned of any traces of grease. While the drawing is still wet sift some fine enamel over it (eg craquelé enamel( crackle enamel?-Ed)). Leave a moment then invert the piece and shake off the excess enamel. Let the glycerine evaporate in front of a warm oven then fire the work again.

Vacuum your kiln every now and then to remove dust and soot.

MORE NEXT ISSUE . . . . .

# TALES OF ADDICTION

When at the Enamelling Symposium in Brisbane last year I was interested to hear how often enamellers talked about getting "hooked" by enamelling; one look or try and "that was it!" so here are some of their sorry tales.

- Enamel has been "around" in our house since I was born and always treated as objects of admiration. There were two large plates C18th or C19th enamel from my grand parents in India, one a lovely cerulean blue with white cranes. There was also a ten inch box enamelled inside and out with cloisonne.

My first purchase was a guilloche enamel brooch in 1959 and later, a large tray by Bernard Hesling in 1970. Probably the Hesling exhibition first opened my eyes to possibilities. From then on it's been a search for new techniques and delights.


Heather Calnan, Sydney NSW.

- I have always been a maker and a fiddler and when my children both grew up and left home I decided to learn how to make jewellery. I was lucky enough to be accepted into Griffith University (Queensland College of Art) BVA degree course in gold and silver smithing. During my time at the Uni I studiously did everything possible to avoid enamels and enamelling - I used resins to obtain colour in my work.

In my final year at Uni I got heavily involved in granulation and resin seemed inappropriate to add colour to these works, so I went to visit Lorna Greasley, a Queensland enameller of many years experience. She gave me a rapid workshopping in enamels and enamelling and generally introduced me to the thrills and mysteries of the medium.

I was instantly entranced and beguiled have had an expensive addiction ever since.

Lorraine Larier, Brisbane Q.



BLEEDING HEART TREE

Australian Enamelling Newsletter  
71 George St Thirroul NSW 2515

Subscriptions - 6 issues per year

Regular - \$20.00

Student - \$10.00

New Zealand - \$25.00

International Economy Air mail - \$25.00



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