

Australian Enamel Newsletter

Issue 9

August 1991

Enameller profile — Mary Raymond

About twenty plus years ago a friend of mine showed me some pieces of enamel that she was working on at evening classes. I had never seen enamel before and knew instantly that it was a medium I wanted to work with, little realising how involved I would become with enamel.

In the early days I produced pendants, earrings and small bowls which I sold at local craft shows.

When I remarried ten years ago I had not been enamelling for some years. My husband decided to remedy this and went to Australian Silvercraft and bought me a kiln and enamels for my birthday. Arch is a keen photographer, and I still say that he bought me the kiln so that he could spend more time in the darkroom. But seriously, he has given me tremendous support and encouragement.

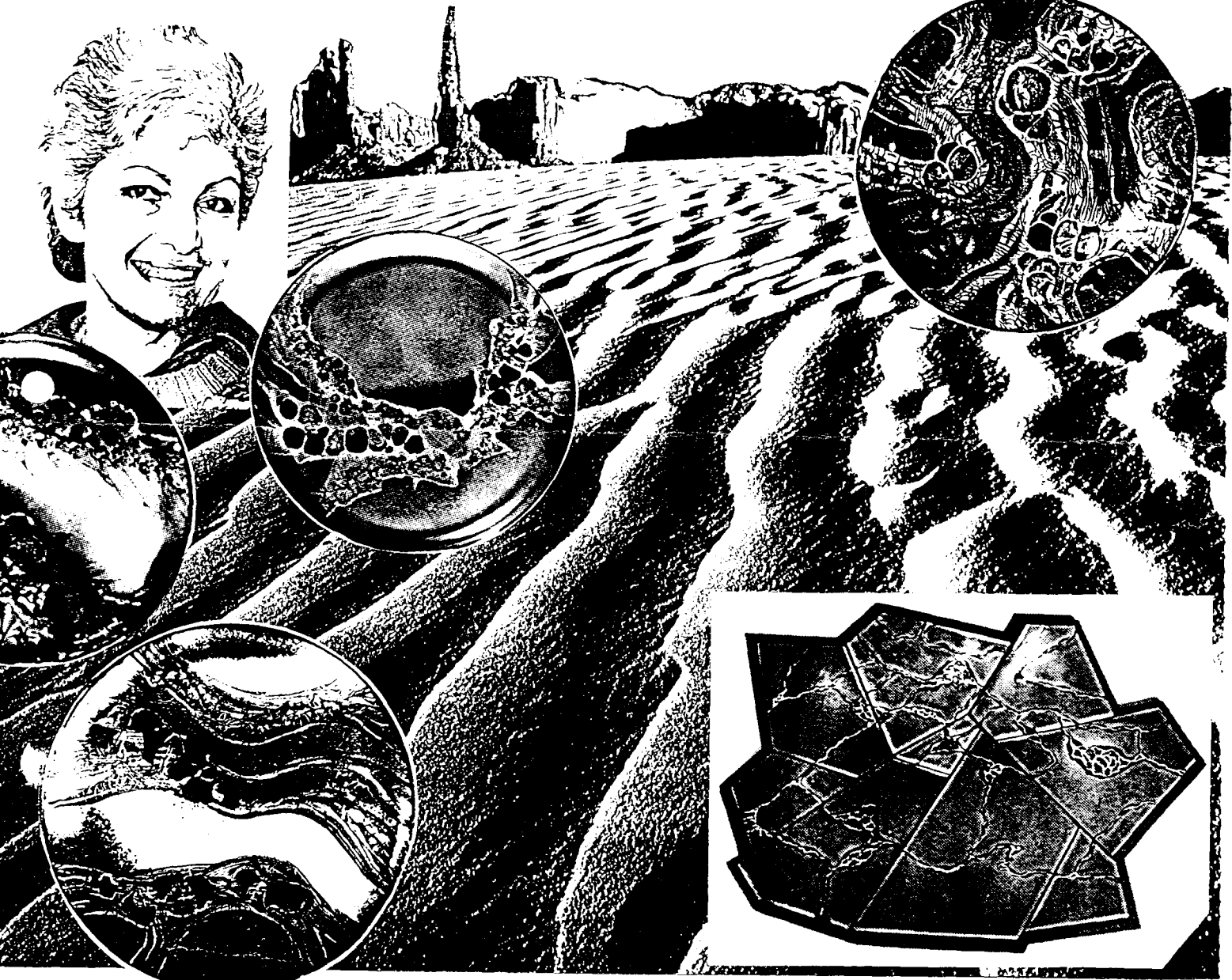
He has also taught me to take good photographs and it is this more than anything else that has influenced my work.

Over the past few years we have travelled quite a bit, but it is the Australian outback landscape that inspires me most. I photograph nature in all its forms - beautiful landscapes, sand dunes, craggy rocks, minute patterns in a rock ledge, wildflowers, trees, bark patterns - there is a wealth of source material all around us.

In my work I use the flowing, organic lines of nature and the clear glowing light of the outback. I experiment constantly with different enamel combinations - if the colour doesn't glow then I don't use it again. I build up layers of colour using both lead-free and lead bearing enamels which in combination have properties which neither possess on their own.

My only training has been a two-year course at the School of Colour and Design, the rest just 'happened' over the years.

I simply love playing with colour, and for me enamel is the perfect medium.



Editorial

News

Well, its that time of year when enamellers are envied for their cosy workshops, kilns blazing forth warmth and cheer. My cat likes me, and spends all day curled up beside the kiln. I'm not so popular in summer though.

In this issue, the new series of double-page technical articles continues with information on concave enamelling by Sandra Kerr.

I'm off to the US Enamellers Convention in a few days time and hope to bring back lots of news, workshop reports and tips. I'll be giving a short slide presentation on recent Australian enamels while there.

The next issue will contain a comprehensive supplies and suppliers supplement, updated from the first one printed in Issue 2, June 1990. I am interested to hear from enamellers who have found new sources for supplies.

Happy enamelling,

Editor



The following is part of a press release from the Adelaide Advertiser.

The deadline for material for the next issue is 22 September 1991. Please send by fax to myself, C/- Forbes Solicitors, Mullumbimby, 066 841 422, or to the AEN postal address.

'A service was held at St Peter's Girl's College Chapel on Sunday June 30th for the dedication of a new cruet set for communion which has been created by Allan Clarke and Margaret Warwick-Clarke.

The cruet set is a memorial for the late Sister Jessica, who had been Head of School for many years. It was commissioned by Father Graeme Kaines and donated by a former parent and the St Peter's Old Scholars Association.

Allan Clarke and Margaret Warwick-Clarke designed and created the set in enamel on copper with the details in 24ct gold and fine silver foil.

This was Allan and Margaret's last joint commission. Allan struggled with failing health through cancer and died in February this year. Margaret created the design of the set but it was Allan's great skill with metals which produced the pieces'.

Margaret reports that she is hoping to start enamelling again on a more regular basis soon.

Colourful opinion

Of all the cheek!

Seen in the Aug 22 Review pages of The Australian newspaper. Phillip Adams printed a readers letter about the film 'In Bed with Madonna' -

... meets the Nuremberg
Stop press. I just received a relevant letter from a young woman in Queensland. "After seeing generally benign reviews of Madonna's film, I was beginning to doubt my sanity. I thought I must be the only one who found the movie grim and threatening. It was like being trapped at a party where drunken slob were talking filth for your benefit. It had all the charm of a technical college lavatory wall. The entertainment value of a vitreous enamel catalogue. It could only appeal to people whose idea of sex involved lots of rubber tubing.

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Those who and beyond of eating! Obligatory and super work and lants and Gantee the!

"Madonna has the coldness of the true narcissist. She has missed her calling. She belongs in stag movies, or maybe the Roller Derby.

"In Bed with Madonna is really a telling documentary as it shows how cold, vulgar, humourless, pompous, remote, self-absorbed, witless and sexless its stars is." Amen to that.

With the success of the First National Enamel Exhibition, the Enamellers Association has announced that the Second National Exhibition will be held in 1993. As yet a venue has not been arranged.

Unfortunately some entries from the exhibition were returned to exhibitors in a damaged state due to poor packaging by David Jones. Mary Raymond had labelled all boxes and packaging for use in returning unsold enamels, but these were lost by David Jones.

The Annual Christmas Exhibition of the Enamellers Association will again be held in Prouds Gallery, Sydney, from Thursday 5 December until 24 December.

There will be another International Symposium of Enamel Art in the USSR, this time to be held in Riga, Latvia, from 31 August 1991 - 15 September 1991.

US Convention

Three Australian enamellers have had work accepted into the US Enamelist Society Juried Exhibition being held in conjunction with the Convention. Of more than eight hundred entries submitted by two hundred and twenty artists, only two hundred works were selected.

Mary Raymond, Sydney. Primitive Forms - wall piece, liquid flux and enamels, sgraffito, dusted. 28cm diam, 2cm d.

Barbara Ryman, Sydney. Brooch - cloisonne, paua shell and moonstone. 54mm x 54mm.

Barbara Ryman, Sydney. Brooch - cloisonne, pebble and shells. 40mm x 62mm.

Carolyn Delzoppo, Mullumbimby. Miniature - cloisonne enamel on fine silver, framed. 82mm x 75mm.

Carolyn Delzoppo, Mullumbimby. Miniature - cloisonne enamel on fine silver, framed. 80mm x 75mm.

A colour catalogue of the exhibition will be published in August. Details on how to obtain copies in the next issue of AEN.

So far three registrations to attend the Convention have been received from Australians. They are - Heather and Irving Calnan, and Carolyn Delzoppo. Carolyn will be giving a 35 minute presentation on Recent Australian Enamels, including selected slides from the recent First National Juried Exhibition.

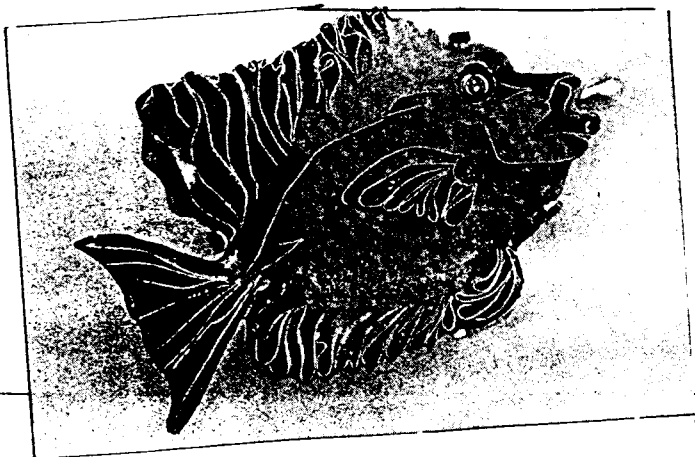
Exhibitions

Mornington Peninsular Craft Event Invitation Exhibition
Non-aquisitive awards in ceramics, glass, metalcraft (including jewellery). A Student Encouragement Award is also made selected from one of these categories.

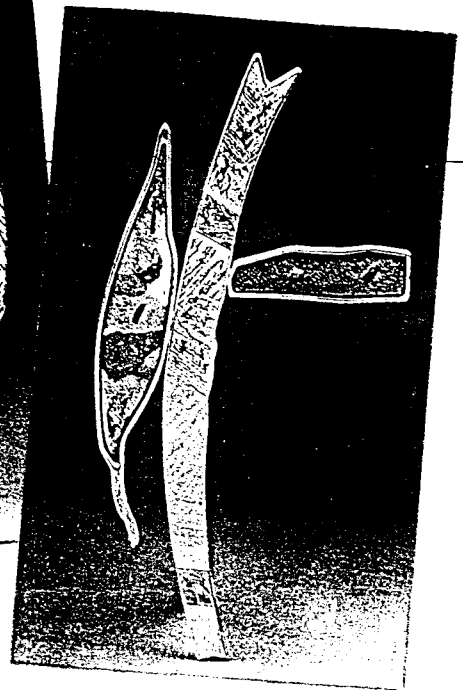
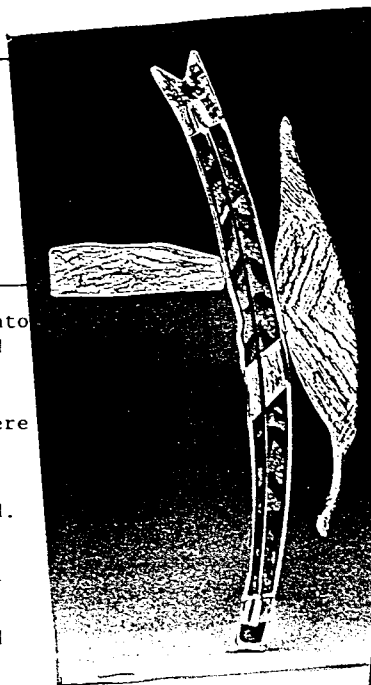
Craftspeople wishing to be considered for invitation submit a brief resume and four clearly labelled slides of recent work. Closing date for applications is 30th August 1991. Send to:

Leisa Coleman,
Peppermint Tree Farm,
Hunts Road, Bittern, Victoria 3918.
(059) 83 8404

Unfortunately entry details arrived too late to inform enamellers of this years Annual Pearl Jewellery Design Awards held in Broome. Glenice Matthews won this award last year with an enamelled brooch - "Northwest Coastal Fish Series - Surgeon Fish." Visitors to the National Juried Exhibition in May had a chance to see this piece. AEN hopes to publish details in time next year.



brooches - Jamie Bennett



Well known US enamelist Jamie Bennett will be an overseas guest at the 7th Jewellers and Metalsmiths Group of Australia Conference to be held in Perth on the 15th and 16th August 1992. The conference will be held in conjunction with the Second International Craft Triennial and The Crafts Council of Australia Biennial Conference.

It is expected that workshops will be held from 10th to 14th August. Further details in AEN as they become available. The organisers would be interested in hearing from anyone interested in attending the conference or workshops as soon as possible.

Contact: Felicity Peters,
20 Newbery Road,
Wembley Downs, 6019, WA.
(09) 341 8238

The Spring 1990 (Volume 10 No2) issue of Metalsmith has a cover story on the recent work of Jamie Bennett.

Supplies

Duncan Ceramic Products still have some lead-bearing Thompson enamels in stock.
7 Wanda Ave, Findon, 5023 SA.
Telephone (08) 353 3932

Milltons in Brisbane also have stocks of some leaded colours.

Two Sydney companies will supply copper sheet uncut in 6'x3' sheets.

Wright & Co Pty. Ltd.
32-36 Maddox Street, Alexandria. 2015
(02) 5165044

Noyes Bros, Pty. Ltd.
120 Silverwater Rd, Silverwater, 2141.
(02) 741 9000

Thank you

Thankyou to the following contributors to this issue - Mary Raymond, Sandra Kerr, Phyllis Wallen, Tom Ellis, Margaret Warwick Clarke, The Enamellers Association, Lemel,

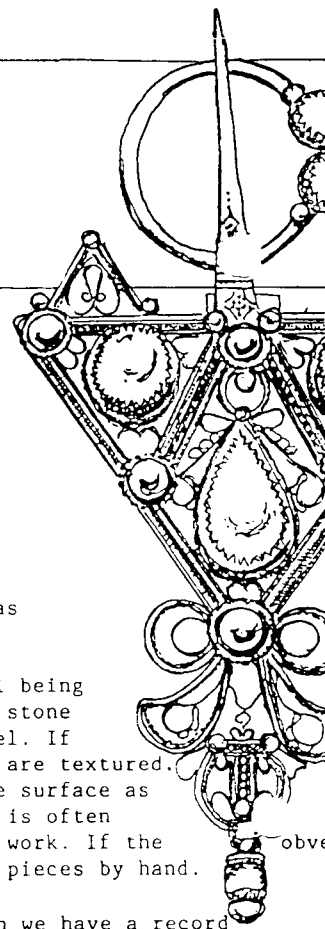
Concave Enamelling by Sandra Kerr

I have been enamelling for twenty-five years, using a wide variety of techniques and experimenting on copper and silver. Since about 1975 I have often used the concave versions of the techniques of champleve and cloisonne in my work. Recently, I have heard comments that lead me to believe that there is a serious gap in understanding these techniques.

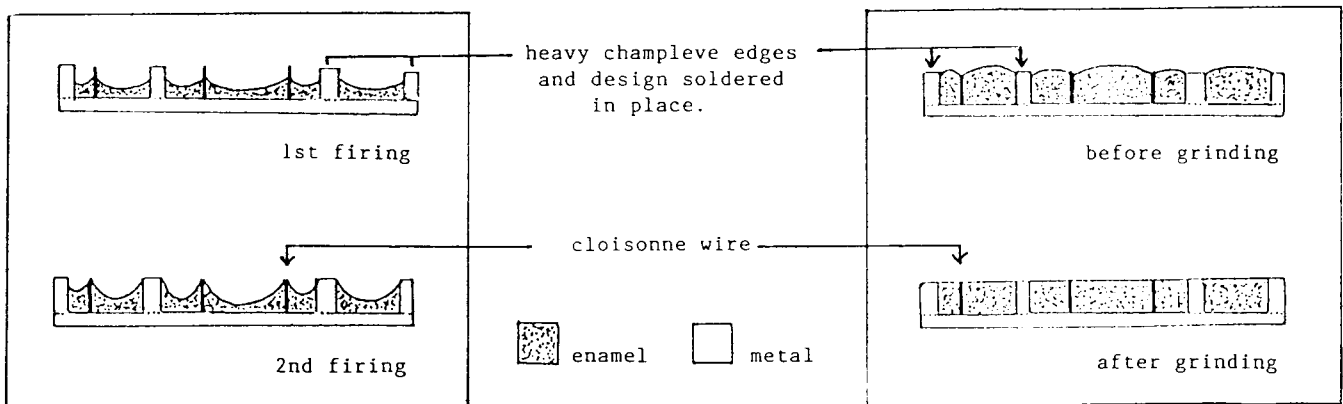
The impression seems to be that champleve and cloisonne techniques come in only one form ie. a piece must have a level, shiny or matte surface right across the work, metal and enamel both. Concave enamelling, which is seen less often, is being greeted with comments that suggest that it is in some way inferior, a sign of unresolved technical problems, rather than a deliberate technical choice.

In concave enamelling, extremely thin layers of enamel are applied to the recessed areas and capillary attraction causes it to rise up the sides of the cells and remain thinner, jewel-like and reflecting in the centre. At least three or four firings will be needed to gain the required effect, with the enamel being packed more heavily near edges and thinner towards the centre. It may not be necessary to stone the piece if you are very careful but the metal must be completely free of specks of enamel. If not it must be stoned. No enamel can be allowed to flow over the wires especially if they are textured. If stoning is necessary extra care must be taken that the wires do not get broken from the surface as they are not as well anchored by fired enamel as in a flat cloisonne piece. The wire used is often heavier, or twisted and beaded and for these reasons it is necessary to counterenamel the work. If the bare metal areas are extensive they can be polished on the buff, but I prefer to do small pieces by hand.

Concave cloisonne enamelling has an excellent pedigree. Many of the first enamels of which we have a record are concave in form but this can be difficult to determine due to the poor state of preservation. The first examples of cloisonne enamel we have are Mycenaean and are from Kourion on Cyprus, dated to the 12th century BC. One piece is a sceptre topped by two hawks on a sphere set with cloisons of white, green and mauve enamel. Such a sceptre was described by Aristophanes in his play, *The Clouds*, as belonging to Agamemnon. Contemporary with the sceptre are two rings from a tomb on Cyprus. These have bezel set cloisonne. Such elaborate work does not appear again in the archaeological record until the Byzantine era. The first real concentrated development of enamels is credited to Greece and dated to the 6th century, these were exported as far away as Etruria and Russia. Ionia was a centre for their production. These enamels, usually blue or green, are concave and often appear matte or granular in appearance. They take the form of rosettes or petals set in elaborate gold filigree and it is because of the delicacy and the textures used in their setting that they were not ground flat. The one example brought to Australia for the Civilisation exhibition from the British Museum was a Hellenistic piece. A Greek diadem with a knot of Herakles with a centre garnet and enamel on either side in two shades of blue in cloisons of twisted wire.



concave — comparison profiles — standard



The Celtic world gave us the innovation of champleve enamelling on bronze. This began in the 5th century BC and until the first century the enamel was mainly red. Later blues and millefiore were introduced. The Celtic pieces seem to vary in appearance with examples that seem to be flat often used on horse trappings, brooches that are concave, and others that are round smooth and convex and set in bezels. The Celts may have been among the first to begin to polish the enamel down level with its cloisons or setting, their 'heavier' style of metalwork would have made this possible. To the Celts we can credit the first extensive use of enamel in its own right, not as an imitation for gemstones or for 'touches of colour' amongst gold filigree.

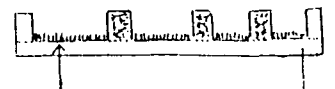
In the Byzantine era the love of colour developed so far that goldwork suffered and became only a setting for precious stones and enamels which developed to an extent not seen before or since. Cloisonne enamel underwent a sudden development in the 9th century and became the medium for religious imagery. The colours were strong and opaque, and the enamel was groundlevel with the cloisons.

gilded, textured background

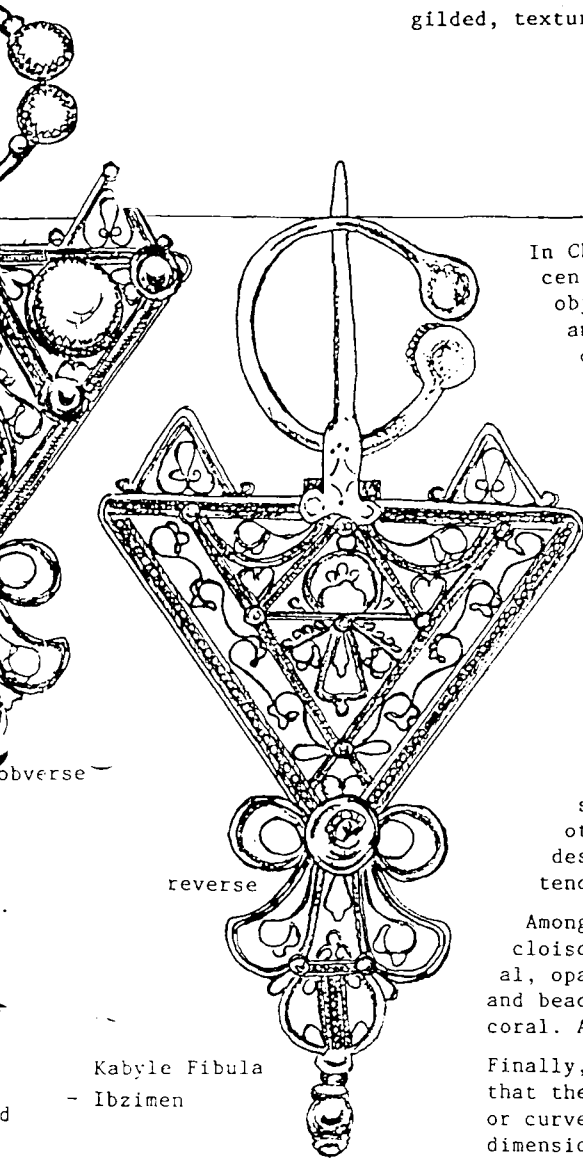


cloisonne wire and enamel in relief

cloisonne enamel in relief



gilded background metal



reverse

reverse

Kabyle Fibula

- Ibzimen

The wires are all textured and all small cloisons are filled with enamel. The front also has five large coral cabachons and silver balls as decoration. Kabyle women receive these and other jewellery from their pare when they marry.

In China, enamelling did not really begin to develop until about the 15th century, brought from the West by Persians and Arabians. However, glass objects are known from about 600BC but were considered inferior to porcelain and used only for imitation. More frequently we see smooth surfaced cloisonne, and also a type which is known as 'openwork'. The enamel is applied in cloisons to a relief design above a background which is left unenamelled but may be gilded. In about 1903 the Japanese developed a technique called 'moriage' where some areas of enamel are built up above the overall design surface, and there are occasional pieces of concave enamel amongst what are termed standard.

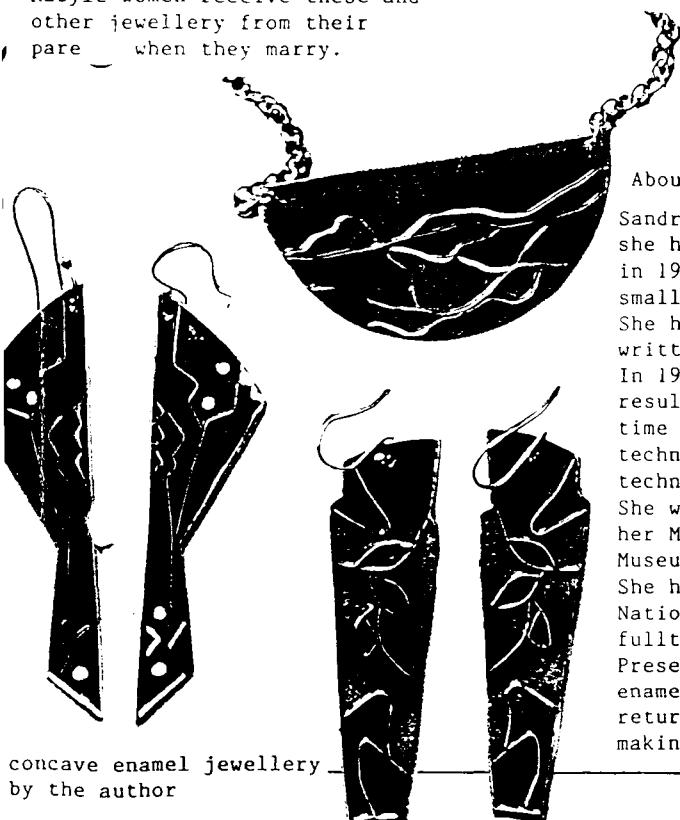
Concave cloisonne was used in Imperial Russia by the firm of Faberge and his peers. There, twisted or braided wire was used as an added accent and is still the prevailing cloisonne method there today.

In the 20th century, concave techniques have enjoyed a healthy following in America where William Harper has combined it with electroforming to add an entirely new dimension. Glenice Matthews, in her book, discusses convex cloisonne and illustrates it with 'Sweet Pea', a beautiful piece of her own work. This is a technique of which I was unaware and it would appear to be the most delicate and exacting type of all. The smooth surface appears to have developed when the entire surface of the object was covered in enamel and not embellished in any other way. It suits our modern trends towards minimalism and simplicity of design as opposed to the ancient and ethnographic cultures whose tastes tended towards more elaborate styles and textures.

Amongst the ethnographic examples, some of the most beautiful concave cloisonne enamels are worn by Kabyle women (Algeria). The colours are traditional, opaque green, yellow and blue and set like gems, often edged with twisted and beaded wire in elaborate textured backgrounds in combination with cabachon coral. A feature of Kabyle work is the attention given to the back of the work.

Finally, whilst looking hard at photos of historical examples, I began to realise that the Art Nouveau era saw a great development in what could be termed a concave or curved plique-a-jour, often on wings or petals on jewellery that is three dimensional in form. Definitely not flat, with enamel and metal level as most of us work today.

Concave enamelling opens up quite a few possibilities for variations, especially of cloisonne where the wires can be handmade from sheet, twisted, granulated, bead and reel, or of any section you can think of. It lends itself to the use of granules, foils, textured metal surfaces and electroforming.



concave enamel jewellery
by the author

About the author -

Sandra Kerr began enamelling in 1966 and she is self-taught. In 1975-76 she had her only formal jewellery training at Randwick Technical College, in 1976 winning the Sarah Coventry Design Award. She has run her own small gallery and was a member of NSW Society of Arts & Crafts until 1986. She has taught and demonstrated jewellery making and enamelling and has written a number of how-to articles on making fashion jewellery. In 1980-84 she returned to full-time study at the University of Sydney resulting in a BA, with Honours in Archaeology and Fine Arts. At the same time she began seriously collecting bibliography on ancient metalworking technology, especially jewellery and wrote several papers on metal technology or history including a major study of goldwork for her degree. She worked on the Bronze and Iron Age metalwork from Pella in Jordan for her MA but discontinued when she accepted fulltime work at the Powerhouse Museum. She has exhibited in many group shows, most recently this years First National Juried Exhibition of Enamels. Since 1988 she has returned to fulltime enamelling and researching. Presently she is experimenting with developing new colours of liquid enamels, transparent and opaque. For the future, she is considering returning to university to do her MA researching enamelling and jewellery making.

More on ThermoScreens

The following information has been taken from workshop notes generously supplied by San Diego screen enameller Phyllis Wallen and gives more information on Riso screens and Thermofax machines as mentioned by JoAnn Tanzer in her June AEN article on Screen Printing.

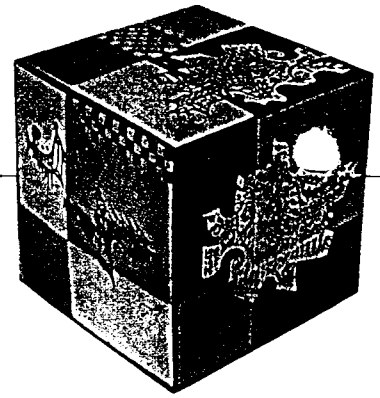
Phyllis writes - "I was first introduced to thermals in a quickie demonstration by JoAnn Tanzer. I watched her slide her xeroxed design under a blank screen, feed it into the Thermofax machine and VOILA! out comes the completely cut screen instantly! It is very impressive, almost magical. Nothing like the laborious and lengthy processes for stencil cutting and adhering to fabric demanded by other types of screens.....I was beginning to see the marvellous possibilities now opening up. Of course there is a catch. You have to have access to a Thermofax machine."

Thermofax machines are old-fashioned copiers now being phased out by schools and businesses and replaced by newer technology. They were developed as an inexpensive way to duplicate typed or hand-drawn materials. Some schools still use them and may permit access to them. There are a lot of used ones around, often very cheap. Sometimes they've turned up at auctions and in classified ads. If they need new belts, these are available at Welsh Products Co, who supply the Riso screen material (address below). There are many different models of the old 3M machines, all with minor differences. Get instructions for the one you plan to use, -dial setting, number of run throughs recommended, length of warm-up time, etc.

Riso thermal screens have the emulsion already embedded in a mesh fabric and come lightly tacked to a sheet of paper top and bottom. The design is burned through the film by the heat of the machine. The screen is instantly ready for use after sewing onto a square of fabric and cutting away the centre part covering the design. The screen can then be clipped into an embroidery frame. Being waterproof they can be printed with water solvent enamel or dry enamels.

Riso screens are sold by Welsh Products Co, PO Box 845, Benicia, Ca 94510 US, in packages of 20 for around US\$42.00.

Other Galaxies -
small object, limoges
and screened enamel.
6" square
by Phyllis Wallen



Phyllis concludes - "So why screens at all?. Why should an enamellist concern himself with learning a lot of new procedures and investing in new tools and materials that he has no need for? The answer is that he probably should not ... unless he is a little bit intrigued by what follows here:

1. Screens in general open up a new enamelling world which may be refreshing to those weary of bending little wires, or hammering out bowls, or doing controlled breathing with that sgraffito tool.
2. Screens offer a way to use pattern in enamelling, a way to get repeat designs and delicate details that would be impractical or tedious to do in other techniques.
3. Thermal screens, in particular, provide a quick way of laying out a design on the background, which can then be developed in colour with stencil, sgraffito, wet-pack, pailons, or whatever.
4. Thermal screens are very quick and easy to make, once you have your design.
5. They are a joy to the artist who can draw, and a boon to the one who is dependant on books, photographs, magazines, etc.
6. The screens can be used over and over in many different ways. They are fun to play with. They may lead an enameller to be creative in new and exciting directions!

Anyone interested in more information on the use of thermoscreens can obtain copies of Phyllis Wallen's workshop notes and instructions by sending 6 x 43¢ stamps to AEN. The stamps are to cover photocopy costs.

Concave enamelling continued.

For more about these techniques refer to:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Fisher, Angela | - Africa Adorned - Collins 1984 |
| Becker, Vivienne | - Art Nouveau Jewellery - Thames and Hudson 1985 |
| Harper, William | - Step by Step Enamelling - Golden Press 1973 |
| Landis, Ann | - Art of the Enameller - Australian Collectors Quarterly 1990 |
| Matthews, Glenice L. | - Enamels, Enameling, Enamelists - Chilton Book Co 1984 |
| Megaw, R and V | - Celtic Art: From its Beginnings to the Book of Kells
Thames and Hudson 1989 |
| Seeler, Margaret | - The Art of Enamelling - Van Nostrand Reinhold 1969 |
| Strosahl JP and JL and
Barnhart CL | A Manual of Cloisonne and Champléve Enamelling
Thames and Hudson 1982 |

Tips

To make sharp stencil edges, cut design from paper towel. Lay towel on pre-enamelled surface. Dampen the towel with water so that it will cling to the surface. Sift dry enamel over wet stencil. After a minute or so, lift paper towel. Dry enamel thoroughly and fire.

Silver foil can be covered with pink transparent enamel to get an attractive gold colour.

Clean copper with salt and vinegar. Depending on the copper size, pour $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ cup vinegar and teaspoon salt into a flat plastic tray. Scrub with Scotch-Brite pad. The salt and vinegar form a mild acid.

When using a rolling mill to print texture onto metal, sandwich the metal and texture material between thin sheets of plexiglass so it won't damage the rollers and the metal will remain flat.

Attach labels to enamel jars not lids. Lids can get mixed up, but confusion is avoided if container is labeled.

A useful tool for bending and shaping cloisonne wires can be simply made from a sewing needle and a short length of dowel.

File half the eye from the end of the needle, leaving two short prongs. Glue the sharp end of the needle into the dowel to make a handle. The dowel should be short to fit inside the hand. The tool is now ready for use.

Lay well-annealed cloisonne wire over the line design and use the tool to twist/bend the wire to follow the shapes. Especially good for intricate figure work.

As demonstrated by Josef Zangaladze, enameller from Georgia, USSR.

To make a quick colour test of enamels, fire a small amount onto mica. The sample can then be glued into a notebook for easy reference.

To use fine line black - stir it well, then stir some more. After applying lines dry under a heat lamp for 2-3 minutes. Refine lines by scratching with a dry nib. Brush surface lightly and just once with oil and give a very light dusting of soft flux over the lines. The soft flux seems to eliminate most of the fracture lines that can develop during firing. If the oil smears the fine line, it wasn't stirred or dried enough.

Johnson's Baby Oil can be used to thin fine line black. It makes the fine line slightly thinner and helps it to flow more easily. Simply pour off the oil in the jar and replace with the same amount of baby oil.

Never fire in the evening after an intense working day. Fire first thing in the morning when concentration is greatest.

A bamboo skewer is an excellent tool for sgriffito as it can be sharpened on fine sandpaper to a fine or wide point.

Sift enamel a little heavier around edges of panels and bowls, as it burns out more quickly there.



- 8 August 1991 Third Enamelist Society Convention, Kentucky, opens.
- 9 August 1991 Entries close, 19th Annual Caloundra Art and Craft Festival.
See Issue 8 for details.
- 15 August - 11 Sept. 11th National Craft Acquisition Award Exhibition.
Northern Territory.
- 22 August 1991 Deadline for receipt of work, Caloundra Art and Craft Festival, as above.
- 30 August 1991 Deadline for submissions from craftspeople wishing to be invited to
enter the Mornington Peninsular Craft Event Invitation Exhibition.
See this issue for details.
- 23 - 28 September International Exhibition of Enamelling Art, Tokyo, Japan.
See Issue 8 for details.