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# Constructing Craft: Harmony and Conflict within the New Zealand Studio Craft Movement 1949 – 1992

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When asked to describe his life as a historian Eric Hobsbawm quoted Pierre Bourdieu: "I see intellectual life as something closer to the artist's life ... the trade of sociologist is without doubt the one practice of which has given me happiness, in every sense of the word." Hobsbawm asked the reader to 'substitute "historian" for sociologist'.<sup>1</sup> In my case I have practised two trades: pottery and history. Both have given me a great deal of happiness. This thesis is the culmination of my 'apprenticeship' in history and would not have been possible without the support and assistance of the following people.

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<sup>1</sup> Pierre Bourdieu in Eric Hobsbawm, *Eric Hobsbawm: Interesting Times: A Twentieth-Century Life*, New York, 2002, p.296.

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# ABSTRACT

This thesis examines different constructions of studio craft in New Zealand between 1949 and 1992. Initially, most craftspeople were amateurs who shared similar ideas about craft and worked cooperatively to establish a movement. As the movement developed some craftspeople began earning part or all of their income from craft while others believed the quality of their work lifted them above the amateur ranks. Conflicts developed between amateurs and professionals and between craftspeople who held different ideas about what it meant to be a professional. Some crafts, most notably ceramics and the fibre crafts, established strong craft-specific organisations and dominated these discussions. The thesis investigates the many reasons for the growing interest in craft and why conflicts arose between competing groups.

The romanticising of the studio craft movement has, the thesis contends, obscured many of the factors that explain its development and the issues that created conflict. To identify the dominant influences the research has investigated ideas from a number of intellectual disciplines, calling on theories which assert that economic, cultural, symbolic and social capital influenced the decisions made by craftspeople and others. It examines the craft structures that emerged as a result of these decisions and investigates how people interacted with them and with existing structures that direct society. The research is presented in a thematic form that recognises the most important influences, including: the relationship between art and craft; the meaning of professionalism and amateurism in relation to craft; the idea that craft was a vehicle for protest; how craft and industry interacted; how craft influenced the lives of women and Māori; and how attempts were made to control the movement.

The thesis argues that as studio craft developed it changed, becoming more professional in both economic and cultural terms. Conflicts arose over which form of professionalism would dominate. Economic professionalism was linked to traditional craft and was financially rewarding, while cultural professionalism was believed to be more aligned with art and was symbolically rewarding. Furthermore, the capacity of some crafts, such as ceramics and fibre, to function as independent entities within the wider movement created additional divisions. The conflicting aims of these groups divided the movement as each struggled to assert their version of studio craft. The demise of the Craft Council of New Zealand in 1992 represented for many craftspeople the end of a united movement.



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# ABBREVIATIONS

ACDB	Arts and Crafts Development Board
AMBA	Arts Marketing Board of Aotearoa
Arts Council	Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council
ASP	Auckland Society of Potters
BoT	Board of Trade (UK)
CAC	Craft Advisory Committee (UK)
CAST	Craftspeople against Sales Tax Committee
CCGB	Crafts Council of Great Britain
CCNZ	Crafts Council of New Zealand
CCUK	Crafts Council (England and Wales)
CER	Closer Economic Relations
CoID	College of Industrial Design (UK)
CoSIRA	Council for Small Industries in Rural Areas (UK)
Craft Potters	Craft Potters Incorporated
Crown Lynn	Crown Lynn Potteries Limited
HBAP	Hawke's Bay Association of Potters
NCES	Nelson Community Education Service
NDD	National Diploma in Design (UK)
NEF	New Education Fellowship
NZCER	New Zealand Council for Educational Research
NZCS	New Zealand Craft Shows Ltd
NZEG	Association of New Zealand Embroiders Guild
NZP	New Zealand Potters
NZSP	New Zealand Society of Potters
NZSWWS	New Zealand Spinning, Weaving and Woolcrafts Society
NZWCC	New Zealand Chapter of the WCC
NAFAM	North American Feminist Art Movement
OFF	Onekaka Feminist Front
RDC	Rural Development Commission (UK)
Real GDP	Real per Capita gross Domestic Product
RIB	Rural Industries Bureau (UK)
TINA	There Is No Alternative
V & A	Victoria and Albert Museum
WCC	World Crafts Council



# INTRODUCTION

The popularity of hand-made crafts peaked in the halcyon hippie days of the 1960s and 70s. Driven by a worldwide folk art revival and the Kiwi do-it-yourself ethic, the time was ripe to drop out, buy a potter's wheel and become self-sufficient.<sup>1</sup>

In a 1994 article in the *New Zealand Listener* magazine headed 'Craft Art Crossroads', Peter Gibbs, potter and influential craft writer, was presenting the received version of the history of the studio craft movement. It was a romanticised narrative that privileged a nostalgic construction. Gibbs' discourse was an attempt to communicate, in colloquial language, a commonly held understanding of the renewed interest in craft after the Second World War. The statement was factual in that interest in craft had expanded dramatically, however, the article did not adequately explain why this had happened. It continued with a discussion about the changes that had occurred between the 1970s and the early 1990s and noted that:

This generation of potters, weavers and furniture makers weren't happy with mindless repetition, and Eastern humility didn't sit well on Western shoulders. The work became more creative and expressive. There arose a difference between teapots and pieces which can be references to teapots. The term "craft art" came into use.

It became obvious that the aims of this next generation of craftspeople had more in common with the fine arts than with traditional views of craft.<sup>2</sup>

Gibbs was describing a paradigm shift in craft that took place in the 1980s. Craft was moving from a predominantly tradition-based practice towards craft as a form of Modernism that would place it in the same field as art – if the art

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<sup>1</sup> Peter Gibbs, 'Craft Art Crossroads', *New Zealand Listener*, 13 August 1994, p.42. Gibbs was at different times: a writer for a number of craft magazines in New Zealand and overseas, a feature writer for the *New Zealand Listener*, an editor of *New Zealand Craft*, editor and owner of *Craft New Zealand* and, from the mid-1970s, a professional potter.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.* Gibbs is referring to the generation that followed him. See Peter Gibbs, email to the author, 6 June 2011.

world would permit it.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, Gibbs' earlier description of craft in the 1960s and 1970s remained the enduring image of the studio craft movement in the minds of many.

As a professional craftsman, Gibbs was undoubtedly aware that the developments he was describing were far more complex than his explanation suggested, but any attempt to explain the complexities of the movement would have required far more space than he was allocated. Furthermore, he may also have been aware that serious analysis was not what New Zealanders wanted to read. However, historians have a duty to question received versions and in this thesis it is my intention to do that.

Within the two sets of quotations above is the kernel of an idea that forms the central debate in this thesis. The 'folk art revival' was a post-Second World War phenomenon where predominantly middle-class<sup>4</sup> groups and individuals challenged previously held understandings about the role of art and craft in society. The sentences also suggest a link between craftspeople and wider societal issues. As the 'folk art revival' unfolded changes occurred, leading to

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<sup>3</sup> Modernism, in the broadest sense, was a set of cultural movements that arose in reaction to conservative values and changes to Western society in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. A unifying tenet was the rejection of tradition. See Peter Childs, *Modernism*, 2nd edn, London, 2008, p.17. Mark Pennings locates Modernism in the period 1830 to 1950 and characterised it 'as a pervasive set of ideologies which responded to the conditions of industrial capitalism with accompanying theories or grand (meta) narratives'. See Mark Pennings, 'Modernism and Ceramics' in, Garth Clark, ed., *Ceramic Millennium: Critical Writings on Ceramic History, Theory, and Art*, Halifax, 2006, p.116. Discussion on Modernism in relation to craft in New Zealand was muted and only began to take place after a small number of European immigrants arrived in the mid-1930s. See Christopher Thompson, 'Confronting Design: Case Studies in the Design of Ceramics in New Zealand', MA thesis, Auckland University of Technology, 2003, p.101. For a study of studio pottery and Modernism in Britain see Jeffrey Charles Jones, 'Studio Pottery in the Age of Modernism', PhD thesis, University of Wales Aberystwyth, 1999.

<sup>4</sup> In its classification of 'middle-class' this thesis is informed by a 1984 study undertaken by Chris Wilkes, Peter Davis, David Tait and Peter Chrisp. In the executive summary of the report on the demographics of class structure in New Zealand the authors, having surveyed 'main income earners and their cohabitants,' concluded that 34.7% of the working population fell within the 'working class' while the 'owning classes' made up 10.9%. Of the remaining 54.4%, who constitute the middle-class, 9% were self-employed. See Chris Wilkes, et al., *The New Zealand Class Structure: The Demographics of Class Structure, Working Paper / Sociology Dept., Massey University; 1.*, Palmerston North, 1985, p.3. A 1985 study of sixty-seven 'full-time' studio potters noted that the sample members tended to be well-educated and to have had 'middle-class' occupations before becoming potters. See Kerr Inkson, 'The Craft Ideal and the Integration of Work: A Study of Potters', *Human Relations*, 40, 3, 1987, p.168. Class in this thesis is also informed by Pierre Bourdieu's ideas on *habitus* in relationship to social, cultural, symbolic and economic capital.

divisions between craftspeople and between craftspeople and others. By the 1980s some craftspeople had determined they were craft artists rather than craftsmen or craftswomen and this changed the movement irrevocably. This thesis investigates the relationship between this central theme and wider social, economic and political issues that influenced the movement and its participants. It emphasises some crafts more than others. Gibbs' selection of pottery and weaving was not arbitrary. These crafts played a major role in the movement and discussion was frequently framed in terms of ceramics and the fibre crafts. Running through this text is a narrative about the struggle between the supporters of an egalitarian art/craft movement and the people and institutions that detected a threat to the established role of art in New Zealand society and attempted to manipulate the movement to re-establish the traditional relationship between art and craft.

The words 'studio', 'movement' and 'craft' are key terms in this thesis. Therefore, the three following sections consider how they were understood at the time, and since, and examine some of the wider interpretations of the words employed in this thesis.

## Studio

The word 'studio', in the first instance, distinguishes the small-scale operations that were a feature of the post-Second World War resurgence of interest in craft from craft associated with larger scale operations such as the manufacturing industry. But it also distinguishes between people involved with craft that had an 'artistic' component from those associated with the manufacturing of objects within industry or in smaller trade workshops. However, even these distinctions are problematic. Some writers have narrowly framed 'studio craft' as 'craft in which the artist controls the creative process from conception to execution.'<sup>5</sup> Such descriptions however, do not fully cover the variety of ways craft was produced and do not accurately explain 'studios', such as Waimea Pottery, where craftspeople worked in factory-like conditions, sometimes working on one aspect of the process and

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<sup>5</sup> Jeanette Cook, *Crafted by Design: Inside New Zealand Craft Artist's Studios*, Auckland, 2005, p.9.

at other times being encouraged to 'develop' their own work from conception to completion.<sup>6</sup>

Some commentators associated 'studio' with the changing social and cultural position of craft. For instance, the potter Harry Davis believed the replacement of 'workshop' with 'studio' signalled the changes taking place within the craft movement as some craftspeople began to call themselves artist-craftspeople.<sup>7</sup> They were using the word as a form of class distinction – middle-class craftspeople worked in studios while working-class craftspeople (usually men) laboured in workshops. 'Studio' therefore, was a signifier of social and cultural advancement.

'Studio' had associations with the forerunner to the post-war craft movement, the Arts and Crafts movement, and helps establish connections to it. For instance, the most influential magazine of the earlier movement was *The Studio: Illustrated Magazine of Fine and Applied Art* which began publication in London in 1893 and was read in New Zealand.<sup>8</sup> New Zealanders involved in the Arts and Crafts Movement also used the term to describe where craftspeople produced their work and in this sense 'studio' connects the two movements.

However, there is a need to also separate the two movements, which had different aims, attracted different followers and participants and followed different paths. 'Studio' is therefore employed here to contextualise the studio craft movement – to locate it in time and space and differentiate it from its predecessor. This was not a revival of the Arts and Crafts Movement, although its leaders and ideals were referred to by later craft commentators, but a renewal of interest in craft that reflected the ideas of the craftspeople – and craft artists – of the second half of the twentieth century and in this sense it reconceptualises the meaning of the term 'craft'. Therefore, this

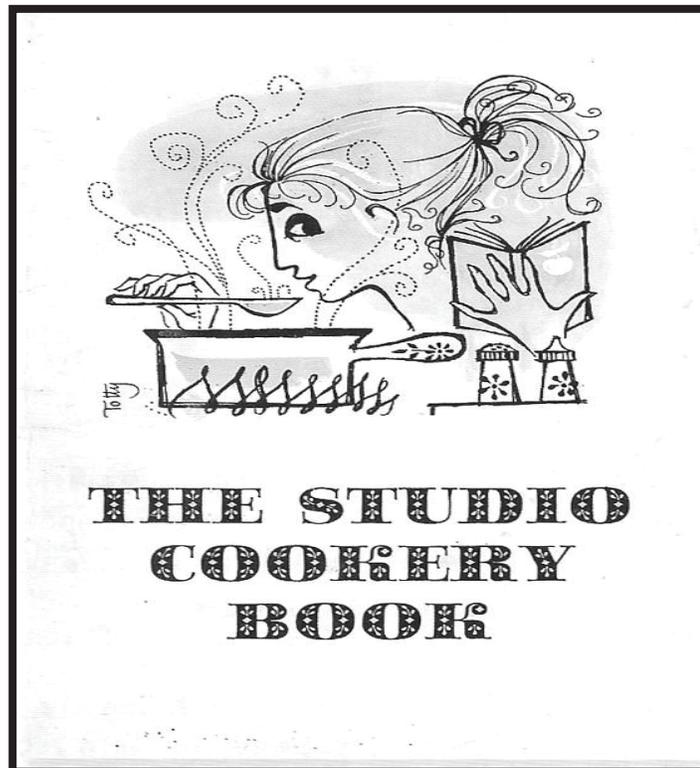
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<sup>6</sup> Jack Laird, 'Waimea Pottery', *New Zealand Potter*, 9, 1, 1966, p.33.

<sup>7</sup> Harry Davis, 'Hand Craft Pottery, Whence and Whither', *New Zealand Potter*, 28, 1, 1986, p.29.

<sup>8</sup> Ann Calhoun, *The Arts & Crafts Movement in New Zealand 1870 – 1940*, Auckland, 2000, pp.66-9.

thesis employs a term that was being combined with craft in New Zealand from at least the 1950s and possibly earlier.<sup>9</sup> The pervasiveness of the word is evident from the title, *The Studio Cookery Book*, given to a recipe book compiled by the potter Yvonne Rust in 1964<sup>10</sup> but was also found in the magazines and books that were published by craftspeople and those interested in studio craft.



**Figure 1:** Recipe book compiled by Yvonne Rust (drawing by Jill Totty). The title suggests a link between 'studio craft' and domesticity in the 1960s.<sup>11</sup>

## Movement

'Movement' implies a grouping of people dedicated to a common purpose, but the term can also place people and events within a particular timeframe

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<sup>9</sup> For example, see Mavis Jack, 'A Studio Potter's Point of View', *New Zealand Potter*, 2, 1, 1959, p.35.

<sup>10</sup> Yvonne Rust, ed., *The Studio Cookery Book*, Christchurch, 1964. Studio was used in the title because Rust was raising funds for the Studio of Design in Christchurch – a centre for both artists and craftspeople to work in.

<sup>11</sup> Book Cover: David Veart, *First Catch Your Weka: A Story of New Zealand Cooking*, Auckland, 2008, p.250. See also Yvonne Rust, et al., *Yvonne Rust: Instruction & Vision*, Christchurch. unpaginated.

and location. For instance, the Arts and Crafts ‘movement’ defines the renewed interest in handmade crafts that took place, initially in Britain and later in many other Western countries (including New Zealand), in the late-nineteenth and early twentieth century. The studio craft ‘movement’ is employed here to describe the revival of interest in handmade crafts that occurred across the Western world after the Second World War, but defines it as distinctively different from the Arts and Crafts movement. Like the earlier movement the ‘handcrafted objects’ were usually referenced to earlier times when all objects were handmade but, as the ‘movement’ grew, those involved also looked to contemporary understandings of aesthetics usually associated with Modernism.

Between 1949 and 1992 the notion of ‘craft’ changed and as some craftspeople redefined craft the ‘movement’ changed. The ‘movement’ was both regressive and progressive, with some craftspeople remaining ‘true’ to their original ideals whilst others sought new directions. The conflict that ensued was a microcosm of a larger disagreement between the forces of Modernism and anti-Modernism. Modernism advocated an “international style” which expressed a “truth to materials” idea’ while anti-Modernists sought a ‘return to an organic relationship with the making’ of craft.<sup>12</sup> The different craft ‘communities’ that formed produced ‘factions’ within the ‘movement’. Therefore, the term ‘movement’ does not mean that those involved necessarily subscribed to a unified vision or to a set of egalitarian principles, although the ‘movement’ was initially portrayed as unified and inclusive. As the craft writer, Peter Timms, observed: ‘It is salutary to note that the crafts movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s, for all that it loudly espoused commonality and a sense of community, was at times deeply authoritarian and hierarchical in nature.’<sup>13</sup> The conflict between the two values – one based on skill and tradition, the other on creativity and innovation – disrupted the harmony that the ‘movement’ initially possessed,

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<sup>12</sup> Mark Pennings in Clark, ed., pp.123-4.

<sup>13</sup> Peter Timms, ‘Introduction’, in Peter Timms, et al., *The Nature of the Beast: Writings on Craft*, Fitzroy, Vic., 1993, p.4.

but the term 'movement' retained its currency, up until 1992 at least, as a means of locating the events and the people in time and space.

## Craft

Defining the word 'craft' is difficult because the post-war craft environment was complex and contested terrain and craft became, as Andrew King, a craft writer, described it, 'a word bulging with semi-conscious associations and unexamined assumptions'. Furthermore, he noted, '... it appears to contain at its heart an extraordinary contradiction.'<sup>14</sup> That contradiction, as will be seen later, was the art/craft debate. In this sense 'craft' had different meanings during the studio craft movement than at other times. Therefore, rather than produce a definition of 'craft' *per se*, I will examine how the term was discussed and debated during the studio craft movement and attempt to present a meaning around which this enquiry can proceed in an informed manner.

### Craft as a Historical Marker

In 1981, British art historian, Edward Lucie-Smith, in his history of craft from prehistoric times to the 1980s, spoke

of the difficulties which one encounters in trying to tell the story of craft, which becomes as much the story of man's reaction to a word – a word which encapsulates a whole intricate complex of ideas – as it is the story of what man's hands and man's ingenuity have been able to do with both organic and inorganic materials.<sup>15</sup>

Almost thirty years later, when much craft had become indistinguishable from art, another author was convinced that craft had changed entirely. Paul

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<sup>14</sup> Craft writers in the twenty-first century have concluded that the term 'craft' has become so value-loaded that the alternative, 'object' is preferable. See M. Anna Fariello and Paula Owen, eds, *Objects and Meaning: New Perspectives on Art and Craft*, Lanham, Maryland, 2004, p.19. note 1. This thesis will continue to use 'craft' because of its association with the studio craft movement of the mid to late twentieth century, but will also employ the word 'object' when appropriate. See also Andrew J. King, 'The Lost Continent of Craft: Historical Myth of Vision of the Future?', in Tanya Harrod and Helen Clifford, eds, *Obscure Objects of Desire: Reviewing the Crafts in the Twentieth Century*, London, 1997, p.177. 'Reviewing the Crafts in the 20th Century', was a conference held at the University of East Anglia, England, from January 10 to 12, 1997.

<sup>15</sup> Edward Lucie-Smith, *The Story of Craft. The Craftsman's Role in Society*, Oxford, 1981, p.280. All quotations that are gender-specific have been left unchanged to avoid the intrusion of bracketed alternatives.

Greenhalgh, Director of the Corcoran Museum in Washington DC and editor of *The Persistence of Craft*,<sup>16</sup> when asked to say what craft meant to him wrote:

Craft has changed its meaning fundamentally at least three times in the last two centuries, and it means fundamentally different things from nation to nation even in the Western world. So there can be no one-liner that identifies larger single meanings, as it doesn't have one. If it is of use in the current context, it is to recognize the significance of genre-based practice in the arts. It should also be a useful category in a global cultural environment. It might even have meaning as a signifier of a socio-political outlook. But it should have nothing to do with aesthetics, and less to do with negative approaches to technology.<sup>17</sup>

Greenhalgh's determination to separate craft from art reflected the new position that craft was located in by the beginning of the twenty-first century. Aesthetics were a part of the 'modern' craft art and the anti-technology phobia had associations with the 'anti-modern' craft (mostly utilitarian craft). The position the new craft artists aspired to in New Zealand was closely related to the development of tertiary courses in polytechnics that blossomed in the 1980s, and these taught 'modern' craft. The problem of clearly saying what craft is must be located within a chronological framework as will become evident in this thesis.

### **Craft in a Socio-Historical Context**

At the 1988 World Crafts Council (WCC) conference in Sydney Janet Wolff argued, 'that craft, if its meaning is not [to] be misunderstood, must be seen in its social and historical perspective.'<sup>18</sup> She identified three specific aspects of craft she thought should be discussed in socio-historical terms. First was the division between art and craft. Second was the role of women in craft.

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<sup>16</sup> Paul Greenhalgh, ed., *The Persistence of Craft. The Applied Arts Today*, London, 2002.

<sup>17</sup> Victoria and Albert Museum, *What Is Craft?*, available at:

[http://www.vam.ac.uk/collections/contemporary/crafts/what\\_is\\_craft/index.html](http://www.vam.ac.uk/collections/contemporary/crafts/what_is_craft/index.html) (30 May 2008). Also see Paul Greenhalgh, 'The History of Craft', in Peter Dormer, ed., *The Culture of Craft: Status and Future*, Manchester, 1996, pp.20-52. Greenhalgh uses the term 'genre-based' to describe the range of specific materials such as clay, fibre, metal, etc. that craft artists (and craftspeople) employed in their work.

<sup>18</sup> 1988 World Crafts Council. International Conference and 11th General Assembly. Sydney, 'The Crafts : Theory and Practice in the Late 20th Century. Report of Proceedings of the Conference Held at the Powerhouse Museum, 9-13 May 1988,' Sydney, 1988, p.6.

And third, the relationship between craft and mass production. To these can be added aspects of craft such as: education; professionalism and amateurism; Māori art and craft; the economy and craft; and issues relating to craft administration. Within each of these areas craft was often understood in different ways.

### **Craft, Money and Status**

Tanya Harrod, in a comprehensive survey of British craft that encompassed most of the twentieth century, boldly claimed that, 'The process of defining is a part of the history of the twentieth century crafts movement.'<sup>19</sup> Harrod claimed that arguments over the definition of craft were related to funding and status.

In order to make craft persuasive and meaningful in the twentieth century, worthy of funding and of the interest of private and public collectors and patrons, both writers and practitioners have sought to create boundaries, arguing over the definition of handmade, examining why objects of craft are different from fine art or design or why they are just as important and should be seen as part of a continuum embracing all the visual arts. Status is important here. Definitions can confer status.<sup>20</sup>

Peter Dormer, another British craft writer, also argued that the debate was bound up in the question of money and status although the two might not necessarily be directly linked. '[A]nything with the status of art is potentially more valuable than a thing without that status.' But he added: 'Being an "artist" may not make you wealthy but it enables you to be considered for more important exhibitions and public collections, as well as mainstream news media coverage and consideration by the critics.'<sup>21</sup> The link between funding and the word 'craft' was also made in the education field. Jane Burns, the founding Director of the Crafts Council of Australia, claimed that: 'Funding bodies arbitrarily link the word *craft* with other words which radically change its meaning and thus tilt the funding application in particular

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<sup>19</sup> Tanya Harrod, *The Crafts in Britain in the 20th Century*, New Haven, 1999, p.9. Harrod's survey concluded in 1980.

<sup>20</sup> *ibid.*, pp.9-10.

<sup>21</sup> Dormer, ed., p.6.

directions.<sup>22</sup> All these writers realised that money often defined status in the art world. Craft, initially at least, was usually less expensive than art. But as the craft movement developed, some craft 'art' achieved higher prices. Craft organisations and individuals improved their chances of receiving grants if they could emulate art organisations and artists in the way they presented themselves and their work. As the craft movement in New Zealand followed overseas leads these issues became increasingly important.

### **Craft as Superior to Technology**

In another interpretation of the word 'craft' Andrew King is quoted in *Obscure Objects of Desire* suggesting that the modern use of the word resulted from a redefining of craft by John Ruskin, who along with William Morris was one of the founders of the Arts and Crafts movement of the nineteenth century. Ruskin attempted to set the contemporary understanding of craft in opposition to the use of the word in the industrial context of nineteenth century Britain. Craft therefore became 'a political construct and not the prescription for materials and processes it is often viewed today.'<sup>23</sup> Philip Wood, in his 1996 PhD thesis on craft in Britain, also believed that: 'The notion of craft in late twentieth century, industrial society is an ideological construct.'<sup>24</sup> King and Wood may not have been attempting to raise the standing of craft but the notion that craft is an idea rather than a description of materials used or skills employed is convenient when the status of art and craft is debated. The idea of craft in opposition to technology eventually became a weapon to use against earlier ideas about craft and became one of the fissures that divided craft in New Zealand.

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<sup>22</sup> Jane Burns, *Reflections on Contemporary Crafts Crossroads – or Can Public Policy Be Misplaced on a Word?* 2006; available at: <http://www.craftculture.org/archive/burns1.htm> (11 July 2008). Burns' italics.

<sup>23</sup> Andrew J. King, 'The Lost Continent of Craft?', in Harrod and Clifford, eds, *Obscure Objects of Desire: Reviewing the Crafts in the Twentieth Century*, p.177.

<sup>24</sup> Philip Wood, 'Craft in Britain, 1971 to the Present: A Critical and Ideological Study', PhD thesis, Keele University, 1996, Abstract.

## Craft and Class

John Carey, in *What Good Are the Arts*, was scathing about the way that art had been elevated to a higher level. Projecting his own ideas through the words of anonymous commentators he stated:

People in the West have made extravagant claims about the arts for two and a half centuries.' The arts, ..., are "sacred", they "unite us with the Supreme Being" they are "the visible appearance of God's kingdom on earth", they "breathe spiritual disposition" into us, they "inspire love in the highest parts of the soul", they have "a higher reality and more veritable existence" than ordinary life, they express the "eternal" and "infinite", and they "reveal the innermost nature of the world".<sup>25</sup>

Carey's criticism was linked to his working-class background and the association of art with the British class structure that 'privilege[d] the opinion of the educated few over that of the masses'.<sup>26</sup> Craft in this sense was a form of protest – it was more honest than art. Studio craft in New Zealand was largely a middle-class occupation. Peter and Dianne Beatson, in a 1994 report on a survey of New Zealand arts, divided the middle-class in New Zealand into the petty bourgeoisie (small-scale, self-employed businesspeople like dairy farmers and owners of corner stores) and the professional, technical and managerial middle-class (salaried and well-educated white collar workers like teachers, civil servants, managers and social workers).<sup>27</sup> These people considered formal qualification (certificates, diplomas and degrees from recognised institutions) as a sign of competency and status. As the studio craft movement matured many middle-class participants sought formal tertiary craft qualifications and many of them hoped that craft would move into the realm of art.<sup>28</sup> Craft artists would have been quite comfortable using the terms that Carey disparaged to describe what they did. Aspects of protest briefly flourished – for instance the 'alternative living' ideals of the 1960s and 70s – but these were rarely

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<sup>25</sup> John Carey, *What Good Are the Arts?*, London, 2005, p.ix.

<sup>26</sup> Claire Allfree, 'Honest John', *New Zealand Listener*, 1 May 2010, p.36.

<sup>27</sup> Peter Beatson and Dianne Beatson, *The Arts in Aotearoa New Zealand. Themes and Issues*, Palmerston North, 1994, p.56.

<sup>28</sup> The Beatsons believed that the working-class were underrepresented amongst artists. This statement is a projection from their observations. See *ibid*.

expressed in terms of class conflict. This is not to say that class was not an issue within the craft movement, but class and protest in this thesis is largely confined to the relationship between craft, art and education. This argument is informed predominantly by the theories of the French sociologist and cultural economist,<sup>29</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, who proposed 'a theory for the dialectical analysis of practical life'.<sup>30</sup>

## **Craft as Cultural Production**

Craft is also the cultural production of craftspeople. Tanya Harrod offers a framework by defining where craft resides rather than unequivocally stating what it is. She contradicts King, in part, when she states that the idea of craft is constructed by the means by which items are made, by where the work was exhibited, and by who wrote about it and where that writing appeared.<sup>31</sup> In accordance with Harrod's formula, craft after the Second World War was the cultural production of people who: designed and produced their own work, with a minimum of machinery, for their own consumption or for sale; whose work was seen in craft shops, at craft fairs and in art galleries and who were the subjects, and sometimes the authors, of books and articles that located them within British culture.

Harrod's formula reinforced Lucie-Smith's 'intricate complex of ideas' and was applicable to New Zealand. Within this framework there could be considerable movement. Makers of craft were referred to by titles ranging from hobbyist to craft-worker to craft-artist or artist. Sometimes they were part-time or full-time practitioners of their craft while at other times they combined their craft with teaching or other work. Craftspeople exhibited their work in shops, fairs, galleries and numerous other locations at different times during their careers. Craftwork was written about in speciality craft books and

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<sup>29</sup> The term 'cultural economist' refers to Bourdieu's theories based on social, symbolic, cultural and economic capital and is employed by Sarah Hinde and Jane Dixon as well as other sociologists. See Sarah Hinde and Jane Dixon, 'Reinstating Pierre Bourdieu's Contribution to Cultural Economy Theorizing', *Journal of Sociology*, 43, 4, 2007, p.407. See also 'The Intellectual Framework' below.

<sup>30</sup> Richard Harker, Cheleen Mahar, and Chris Wilkes, eds, *An Introduction to the Work of Pierre Bourdieu*, Basingstoke, 1990, p.1.

<sup>31</sup> Harrod, *The Crafts in Britain in the 20th Century*, p.10.

craft magazines, general books about the arts and books and magazines looking at culture, lifestyle and history. In addition, individuals who were not necessarily practising any craft were involved in the organisation and administration of the movement – they also form part of this history. Furthermore, New Zealand had an indigenous population who, as will be seen in Chapters One and Six, offered an entirely different approach to craft as cultural production.

## **Craft in New Zealand**

Dianne and Peter Beatson appeared to apply Harrod's description of craftspeople in their 1994 report on New Zealand art. Describing craft, the Beatsons distinguished between the 'technical component of all labour' and "[c]raft" ... not as a constitutive element of all hand production but as a certain type of object'.<sup>32</sup> They also linked the object to the person. Their 'composite portrait of a typical craftspeople'<sup>33</sup> and craft included some, or all, of the following factors. A craftspeople was defined by the raw materials they used – clay, fibre, glass, wood, metal or other material – Greenhalgh's genres. Craft was defined by the end use the product was designed for – 'Craft work is more intimately associated with the routines of everyday and domestic life than art'.<sup>34</sup> How work was marketed and displayed was a third factor. Art was generally sold through dealer galleries while craft was sold in more humble arts and crafts shops, often collectively run.<sup>35</sup> The Beatsons went on to place craft in a socio-historical setting. Artists and craftspeople occupied separate social spaces and specific craft groups had their 'own traditions, professional journals, awards, institutional structures, prestige hierarchies and international connections'.<sup>36</sup> The Beatsons, in their characterization of craft in the early 1990s, may have been too close to the period to recognise that major changes had taken place within the movement, and that some craft had moved much closer to art, but their description, along with Harrod's, will help this thesis anchor its focus.

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<sup>32</sup> Beatson and Beatson, p.17.

<sup>33</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>34</sup> *ibid.*, pp.17-18.

<sup>35</sup> *ibid.*, p.18.

<sup>36</sup> *ibid.*, pp.18-19.

The first part of the Beatsons' description of craft seemed to be referring to a report produced in 1983.<sup>37</sup> The report, *Craft New Zealand, A Study of the Craft Industry, Craftspeople and Their Training Needs*, commissioned by the Vocational Training Council, defined craft rather than craftspeople saying that craftspeople were people who made the following:

A New Zealand craft item is one which is made predominantly by hand, to a craftsperson's own design. It is generally made from raw materials (eg clay or wood), but partially processed materials (eg wool or silver) may also be used. It may be made in the style of European, Maori, Pacific Island or any other craft tradition, but it must be made in New Zealand.<sup>38</sup>

The authors may have been aware that even this extended description was not complete – for instance, the potters at Waimea Pottery, as noted above, produced pottery designed by one of the owners, Jack Laird, but it was still considered a 'New Zealand craft item'. Nevertheless, it was an attempt to provide some boundaries. Of course, as this thesis will show, the boundaries changed over time and therefore the meaning of the word 'craft' was very fluid.

## The Intellectual Framework

### Why a Thesis on Craft?

This thesis has been undertaken for three major reasons. The first is the call from craft writers and academics, nationally and internationally, for an in-depth look at the studio craft movement. In 1992, at a visual arts forum at Wanganui Regional Community Polytechnic: Kareti A Iwi, Peter Gibbs, as the editor of *Craft New Zealand*, the only magazine being published at the time that attempted to represent all crafts, expressed his frustration with craft writing when he stated that 'a real difficulty in writing about craft is there is no

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<sup>37</sup> Although there is no evidence that the Beatsons consulted the report when researching their book.

<sup>38</sup> Neil Scotts and Peter Mounsey, 'Craft New Zealand. A Study of the Craft Industry, Craftspeople and Their Training Needs', Wellington, 1983, p.4. Part 1, 1.3.

history of it taking place.’ He added, ‘In the absence of institutional acceptance, craft has not had a framework for critical or historical writing to develop within.’<sup>39</sup> In her 1996 art history thesis on the *Craft New Zealand* magazine, Robin Gardner-Gee wrote: ‘Grace Cochrane’s text *The Crafts Movement in Australia* provides a wide ranging social history of the contemporary craft movement. [I]n New Zealand the equivalent social history remains unwritten.’<sup>40</sup> Later, she suggested that the reason for this was the absence of craft in New Zealand’s education system: ‘[T]here has not been extensive support for craft research, craft theorising, craft writing or for the teaching of craft history’.<sup>41</sup> The lack of research and the lack of writing have been linked. One arts writer in 1998 believed that ‘the dearth of craft-related publications’ was why the genre was not taken seriously.<sup>42</sup> This appears to be an international problem. Glen Adamson observed in his 2001 art history thesis that:

For the past fifty years, an increasingly large body of literature has been generated to service crafts. Much of it is promotional, some is critical, and a small percentage of it is historical. Yet the task of enfranchising the studio craft movement within the larger panorama of art history remains largely to be done.<sup>43</sup>

This thesis will argue that the lack of critical writing from within the craft community opened the door for a range of writers and critics to fill the gap. Attempts were made to establish a legitimating power that might have sanctioned more authoritative writing about craft. The Crafts Council of New

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<sup>39</sup> ‘Visual Arts Forum’, Wanganui, January, 1992. Gibbs’ speech was printed in a report produced after the forum.

<sup>40</sup> Robin Gardner-Gee, ‘A Practice Called Craft in a Country Called New Zealand: Readings of Craft New Zealand 1982 – 1993’, MA thesis, University of Auckland, 1996, p.20. In a review of Cochrane’s book Judy Wilson said that a similar book in New Zealand was unlikely to receive funding. See Judy Wilson, ‘Book Review: The Crafts Movement in Australia - a History’, *Craft New Zealand*, Autumn 1993, p.45.

<sup>41</sup> Gardner-Gee, p.92. It is assumed here that Gardner-Gee is referring to tertiary education. Grace Cochrane also called for the teaching of craft history. See Grace Cochrane, ‘Craft, History and Curatorship’, in Sue Rowley, ed., *Craft and Contemporary Theory*, St Leonards, Australia, 1997, p.57.

<sup>42</sup> ‘The Fine Line: New Zealand Craft and Its Place within the Arts Filament’, *Art News*, Summer, 1998, p.24.

<sup>43</sup> Glenn D. Adamson, ‘Craft Paradigms: The Studio Craft Movement and the Avant-Garde, 1966 -1972’, PhD thesis, Yale University, 2001, p.1. For a recent British example of the criticism of the lack of research and writing on craft see Emma Shaw, ‘Re-Locating Ceramics: Art, Craft, Design? A Practice-Based, Critical Exploration of Ceramics Which Relocates the Discipline in the Context of Consumption, the Home and the Everyday.’, PhD thesis, University of Westminster, 2007, pp.46-51.

Zealand (CCNZ), for instance, was partially successful in achieving this, but craftspeople largely refused to submit to a self-ordained 'higher' authority.

The second purpose of this thesis is to expand the stock of more general social and cultural history through a study of craft. In examining the studio craft movement in New Zealand in this way the thesis adds to the growing body of social and cultural history written in recent times. Bronwyn Dalley and Bronwyn Labrum noted in the introduction to *Fragments*, their survey of New Zealand social and cultural history, that, 'a marked absence has been in the scholarly – as opposed to more popular – examination of cultural history.'<sup>44</sup> Interestingly, the introduction makes no mention of the social or cultural history of craft – or art, although that can be explained to some extent by the absence of any essays on these subjects in the book.

The third reason for investigating the movement – and also an explanation for the prominence given pottery in the thesis – is my own role as a participant/observer. In this thesis I attempt to understand the movement I was a small part of for over thirty years as a studio potter/ceramic artist, administrator and occasional writer. Pottery is featured extensively in the text in part because of it being my chosen craft, but also because, according to the 1983 survey mentioned above, approximately half of all craftspeople (in the survey) earned their living at that date as potters.<sup>45</sup> Studio pottery, while never providing the largest number of craftspeople in a specific craft, nevertheless was the most prominent craft in terms of public profile.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Bronwyn Dalley and Bronwyn Labrum, eds, *Fragments: New Zealand Social and Cultural History*, Auckland, 2000, p.3.

<sup>45</sup> Scotts and Mounsey, p.11. Part 3, 2.3. 600 craftspeople responded to the survey questions. A 1979 memorandum on sales tax prepared for the Cabinet estimated that 45,000 craftspeople earned some income from craft but it cannot be assumed half of them were potters. See Interdepartmental Committee on Sales Tax on Craft Activities, Crafts Council of New Zealand (CCNZ) Records, AALR, 873, W5427, Box/Item 1911, Part 2, Archives New Zealand (ANZ), Wellington.

<sup>46</sup> The number of potters in New Zealand during the studio craft movement has been the subject of endless speculation. In July 2009 it was asserted that: 'In 1979 it was officially estimated there were around 44,000 people actively engaged in pottery'. See Peter Stichbury, 'Foreword' in Neil Grant, Howard Williams, and New Zealand Society of Potters, eds, *Then & Now: New Zealand Society of Potters Inc*, Christchurch, 2009, p.6. Where this figure came from is unknown but the similarity to the cabinet memorandum suggests that estimates were based on anecdotal evidence and often became confused. Another means of estimating how many people were involved with craft more generally was by the

Therefore, I call on my experience as a potter and observer and combine it with evidence, weighted by examples from the most prominent crafts, in an attempt to understand why handcrafts experienced a resurgence in popularity between 1949 and 1992 and why a movement that appeared united fractured.

## The Timeframe

1949 has been selected as starting point for this thesis as it was a year which saw the opening of one of the first art galleries in New Zealand to sell craftwork along with artwork and the year in which the Auckland Art Society began to display craft in its annual exhibition.<sup>47</sup> The thesis concludes in 1992 with the demise of the CCNZ, the organisation that purported to represent the collective ambitions of the movement. The studio craft movement initially developed slowly, but by the 1970s had become such a social and cultural phenomenon that there were few New Zealanders who did not own a 'handcrafted' object or who were unaware of someone who 'did craft'.<sup>48</sup> Having reached a peak in the 1970s, it slowly faded. Nonetheless, it left a legacy, albeit in a different form, that persists today.

## The Methodology

This thesis spans a forty-three year period, refers to a range of crafts – with a particular emphasis on pottery as noted earlier – and discusses aspects of the lives of scores of craftspeople. To search out the underlying causes and reasons for what took place I have chosen to examine the ideas and writings

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membership numbers of craft organisations. In the 1980s it was estimated that 40,000 people were members of craft organisations. See Howard Williams to CCNZ, 24 August 1984, 'Appendix 3 (1) the Crafts Council of New Zealand', (CCNZ) Records, 92-278, 10/01, Alexander Turnbull Library (ATL), Wellington. Of the twelve groups these numbers were sourced from, three groups dominated. As a percentage of the total membership of all the organisations the New Zealand Spinning, Weaving and Woolcrafts Society (NZSWWS) formed 56% of the total, the Association of New Zealand Embroiders Guild (NZEG) 27.7% and the New Zealand Society of Potters, (NZSP) 5.1%, leaving 11.2% amongst all other craft organisations. See CCNZ Records, 92-278, Box 35, ATL.

<sup>47</sup> See Janet Paul, 'The Helen Hitchings Gallery in Wellington', *Landfall*, December, 12, 1949, p.359; Jane Vial, *The Gallery of Helen Hitchings: From Fretful Sleeper to Art World Giant*, Wellington, 2008 and Len Castle, *Making the Molecules Dance: A Retrospective Exhibition of Ceramics, 1947-1994*, Lower Hutt, 1994, p.9.

<sup>48</sup> Douglas Lloyd-Jenkins noted that an article in *Thursday* magazine called it the 'New Zealand theme'. See Douglas Lloyd-Jenkins, *At Home: A Century of New Zealand Design*, Auckland, 2004, p.243.

of a wide range of philosophers, sociologists, political thinkers, economists and educators who advanced theories and explanations about the central issues this thesis is concerned with – craft, art, work, technology, education, economics and social structures. These ideas were then tested by examining what craftspeople, craft writers, critics, craft administrators and educators had to say in magazines and books they published or wrote in, as well as the records of the organisations that became a feature of the movement. Some craftspeople have also contributed to the oral archives. Of the known oral records, three are used in this thesis: first, the interviews of potters and gallery owners undertaken by Moyra Elliot and Damian Skinner between 1999 and 2004 for a book on studio pottery in New Zealand;<sup>49</sup> second, interviews of Nelson potters by Karen Patterson made in the early-1980s to record the history of pottery in the region;<sup>50</sup> and third, interviews of pottery club members I recorded for my MA thesis between 2006 and 2007.<sup>51</sup> In the analysis of this evidence I also reflect on my own involvement in the movement and attempt to locate the theories and ideas in my own experience as a participant/observer. As scholarly research into the studio craft movement in New Zealand has not been extensive it has been necessary to extend the search for material across a number of Western countries to compare events and trends overseas with similar events and trends in New Zealand. The focus of the thesis is on the writings and ideas of the studio craft movement and the debates they engendered. The thesis is not intended as a social and cultural history of the movement itself, although it illuminates aspects of the history of the movement.

## Influences

Scholars and writers from a range of disciplines have influenced the research and writing of this thesis. The intellectual framework therefore owes much to the approach to history introduced by French historians of the *Annales*

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<sup>49</sup> Moyra Elliott and Damian Skinner, interviews with Studio Potters and Gallery Owners. CA000801, Museum of New Zealand/Te Papa Tongarewa (Te Papa), Wellington. The book is discussed in the literature review below.

<sup>50</sup> Karen Patterson, Nelson Ceramics, oral history interviews. Tasman Bays Heritage Trust/The Nelson Provincial Museum, Nelson.

<sup>51</sup> Vic Evans, Pottery Club Members, oral history interviews. Tasman Bays Heritage Trust/The Nelson Provincial Museum, Nelson.

School, and in particular Marc Bloch, who argued that historians needed to consider a range of intellectual disciplines when writing history.<sup>52</sup> The philosophers, sociologists, art theorists and others I engaged with emerge as the thesis progresses, but particular mention should be made at this juncture of Pierre Bourdieu, as his influence has been central to the intellectual framework of the thesis. Bourdieu's theories have been applied to a range of scholarly studies but very little use of the structures he devised to explain social and cultural interaction in relation to the arts has been employed in the study of the history of craft.

Bourdieu's most important contribution has been to demonstrate that works of art (and craft) and cultural producers 'do not exist independently of a network of institutions that consecrate, authorize, and legitimate them'.<sup>53</sup> Craft is socially, culturally and historically constituted, therefore craftspeople existed in a social, cultural and economic environment that influenced what they did. He employed an economic analogy to explain the internal dynamics, structural principles and processes that occur within specific fields such as art and craft.<sup>54</sup> Bourdieu's ideas are dispersed throughout this document, but the kernel of his ideas in relation to the studio craft movement are most fully examined in Chapter Two because it is here, within the art/craft debate, that his explanation of the relationship between craft and society first becomes most relevant. I also refer to Bourdieu so that I might reflect on my own experiences within the studio craft movement and within the field of education as a former teacher and a student of history.

## Narrative

This is an interpretative and thematic history that employs narrative to present its arguments. Margaret Somers, who works in the field of historical sociology, described narratives as 'constellations of *relationships* (connected parts) embedded in *time and space*, constituted by ... *causal emplotment* (an

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<sup>52</sup> Marc Bloch, *The Historian's Craft*, trans. Peter Putnam, Manchester, 1992, p.ix.

<sup>53</sup> Elissa Auther, *String, Felt, Thread: The Hierarchy of Art and Craft in American Art*, Minneapolis, c2010, p.xxvii.

<sup>54</sup> John Horne, David Jary, and Alan Tomlinson, eds, *Sport, Leisure, and Social Relations, Sociological Review Monograph*, London, 1987, p.121.

explanatory plot).<sup>55</sup> This thesis does not attempt to provide a detailed ‘blow by blow’ account of events or even the ‘minutiae of any specific area’.<sup>56</sup> It is my role, as a participant/observer and a historian, to explain the meaning of events or to do, as the historian Golo Mann explains, “two different things simultaneously” – to “swim with the stream of events” and to “analyze these events from the position of a later, better-informed observer”. He also noted that to combine the two methods successfully would provide “a semblance of homogeneity without the narrative falling apart.”<sup>57</sup> The themes that this narrative examines are explained in the chapter outline below. They reflect the issues that impacted on the lives of craftspeople and influenced the growth and decline of the movement. A number of case studies appear throughout the thesis. These are, in effect, ‘mini-narratives’ that support the themes being examined. The individuals featured in them have been selected because they have left us records that are relevant to the arguments, not because they were the most well-known or ‘best’ craftspeople.

In recognition of the diversity of crafts associated with the history of craft, this thesis will, in a similar approach taken by the craft historian, Edward Lucie-Smith, concern itself ‘with the craftsman in his context, not with trying to give an exhaustive history of techniques’.<sup>58</sup> It will attempt to construct a narrative that expands on the approach normally employed in the realm of cultural production. Philip Wood, in his examination of British craft, noted: ‘The form of writing that has traditionally discussed the world of visual production is an art historical mode which consistently supports the status quo of a cultural elite’, and advised that his ‘dissertation ... approache[d] the subject with a social remit, from the standpoint that a study of the wider world of craft would

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<sup>55</sup> Margaret R. Somers, ‘Narrativity, Narrative Identity, and Social Action: Rethinking English working-class formation’, in Geoffrey Roberts, ed., *The History and Narrative Reader*, London, 2001, p.360. Somers’ italics. According to Somers, casual employment, rather than chronological or categorical order, gives significance to independent instances. The temporal dimension refines rather than replaces the analytical dimension.

<sup>56</sup> Matthew Wright, *Old South: Life and Times in the Nineteenth-Century Mainland*, Auckland, 2009, p.9.

<sup>57</sup> Golo Mann quoted by Peter Burke, *History of Events and the Revival of Narrative*, in Roberts, ed., p.310.

<sup>58</sup> Lucie-Smith, p.7.

reveal much more than hitherto about the nature of craft'.<sup>59</sup> This narrative recognises the power of a dominant cultural élite and will therefore survey a wider horizon in its investigation of the social, cultural, economic and political factors that influenced the craft movement in New Zealand and the impact the craft movement had on New Zealanders.<sup>60</sup>

## Different Approaches to History

The narrative approach to the writing of history has been challenged over the last three or four decades, most notably by historians influenced by postmodernism/poststructuralism.<sup>61</sup> Narrative history has been linked with 'scientific' history and the search for objectivity,<sup>62</sup> and as postmodern/poststructural historians have questioned whether objectivity is obtainable, the philosophical basis of the narrative approach is also questioned.<sup>63</sup> Before the writing of this thesis began I was acutely aware that a definitive history of the studio craft movement in New Zealand was not a realistic goal. Therefore, I set out to present the aspects of the history of the movement that, in my opinion, best explained its development and ultimate demise. When the deconstruction of texts was thought the most appropriate method to achieve this goal postmodernism/poststructuralism methodology was used.

The thesis recognises that even the most prominent critics of postmodernism have conceded historians need to acknowledge its strengths.

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<sup>59</sup> Wood, p.4.

<sup>60</sup> The term 'culture' is applied in its widest sense in this thesis: "culture" encompasses the whole way of life of a society'. 'Political' refers to the 'distribution of power, the right to make decisions and established patterns of domination and subordination.' See Peter Beatson and Shelagh Cox, 'The Arts', in Paul Spoonley, David G. Pearson, and Ian Shirley, eds, *New Zealand: Sociological Perspectives*, Palmerston North, 1982, pp.353, 370.

<sup>61</sup> Both terms have been used here although postmodern is primarily a movement within the arts and poststructuralism a movement within the humanities and social sciences. The term 'linguistic turn' has also been used to describe the postmodern/poststructural approach. See Hsu-Ming Teo and Richard White, eds, *Cultural History in Australia*, Sydney, 2003, p.53 and p.12.

<sup>62</sup> For a summary of historians and objectivity see Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: The "Objectivity Question" And the American Historical Profession*, Cambridge, 1988, pp.1-2.

<sup>63</sup> For an example of this debate see Patrick Joyce, 'The Return of History: Postmodernism and the Politics of Academic History in Britain', *Past and Present*, 158, 1998, pp.207-35 and Perez Zagorin, 'History, the Referent, and Narrative: Reflections on Postmodernism Now', *History and Theory*, 38, 1, 1999, pp.1-24.

Postmodernism in its more constructive modes has encouraged historians to look more closely at documents, to take their surface patina more seriously, and to think about texts and narratives in new ways ... It has led to a greater emphasis on open acknowledgment of the historians' own subjectivity, which can only help the reader engaged in a critical assessment of historical work.<sup>64</sup>

Craftspeople and craft commentators have told their stories in a particular way, guided by a variety of motivating factors, as we will see in the review of the literature. It is the historian's task to study this discourse and evaluate its relevance. In this thesis, the narrative approach plays a dominant role but poststructural ideas about discourse have had an influence. 'There is more than one way to tell a story, and more than one story to be told.'<sup>65</sup>

### **The Narrative Problem and Craft**

Over the period this thesis examines many books and articles romanticised craft and craftspeople and avoided discussion of the more prosaic reasons for the exponential growth and eventual decline of the studio craft movement. The romantic narrative appealed to readers in New Zealand because it contrasted with the dull, colourless narrative that some authors liked to believe was a 'true' picture of New Zealand society.<sup>66</sup> Romanticised images can be more appealing than the empirical revelations of economic facts or sociological discussions of taste and style, work and leisure but they offer a diffused narrative that obscures scholarly analysis. In the following review of the literature I will attempt to distinguish between works that offered an appealing image of craft and those that attempted to seriously explain studio craft in the second half of the twentieth century.

## **The Literature**

Craft is rarely controversial in the eyes of the wider community and the literature of craft has, by and large, not disturbed this perception. This review of the literature is primarily concerned with how craft history in New Zealand

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<sup>64</sup> Richard J. Evans, *In Defence of History*, London, 1997, p.248.

<sup>65</sup> J. A. Pagano, 'Moral fictions: the dilemma of theory and practice' in C. Witherell and N. Noddings, eds, *Stories Tell Lives: Narratives and Dialogue in Education*, New York, 1991, p.197.

<sup>66</sup> For example see Bill Pearson, 'Fretful Sleepers,' in *Great New Zealand Argument: Ideas About Ourselves*, Russell Brown, ed., Auckland, 2005, pp.47-96.

has been presented and the place of craft in New Zealand history. Therefore I examine craft-specific histories and more general histories where craft can be found. The review also considers how the history of craft has been approached overseas. Other literature, such as New Zealand and Australian theses in disciplines as diverse as art history, anthropology, sociology and museum studies that investigate different aspects of craft, and the writings of philosophers, sociologists, historians and others concerned with art, work and leisure, although referred to, will be examined in more detail in chapters that are informed by such work. Craft in New Zealand literature is located in a number of diverse areas. Here I position them under headings that I believe reflect the scope of the writing and the intent of the authors.

### **General Histories of New Zealand**

Grace Cochrane, in her history of the Australian craft movement, maintained that craft existed on the periphery of society. Her contention is given some validity when craft as a part of New Zealand general histories is examined – although it must be acknowledged that general histories by their very nature rarely discuss topics in any detail. General histories normally reflect the prevailing understanding of the role of craft in New Zealand society. Usually writing about craft was appended to the author’s commentary on the place and impact of art on New Zealand society and culture.

The explanation for the growth of interest in craft often only told part of the story. Tom Brooking for instance, in the 1988 edition of *Milestones* credited, the ‘radical and searching thrust of the late 1960s and the growth in tertiary education’ with giving ‘a real boost to every form of artistic endeavour’ including the thousands who took up ‘pottery, ceramics, weaving and other crafts on a full- and part-time basis.’<sup>67</sup> Education, as this thesis will demonstrate, was only one of a number of factors that encouraged the growth of the movement. Some authors however, went further and suggested that the crafts had become more important than the arts in New Zealand. Colin James for instance, claimed that ‘[t]he arts [were]

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<sup>67</sup> Tom Brooking, *Milestones: Turning Points in New Zealand History*, Lower Hutt, 1988, p.184.

overshadowed by the crafts' in the 1980s, although he supplied no evidence to support the claim.<sup>68</sup>

No mention is made of craft in the 1981 edition of *The Oxford History of New Zealand*, or in subsequent reprints in 1987 and 1988. The 1992 edition had more information on craft and claimed pottery was 'probably the area of craft which has the most practitioners, most support from the public, and the greatest recognition for its accomplishment'.<sup>69</sup> It was another statement that was only partially correct. As will be seen in this thesis, pottery may have been one of the most prominent crafts but it did not have the most practitioners – weaving and spinning were numerically far more popular. Nevertheless, the appearance of craft in a general history indicated it now had been accorded some historical significance.

While it is not the task of general histories to provide for minority interests<sup>70</sup> it is surprising that an area of culture that so many New Zealanders showed interest in (thousands according to Brooking) has received such limited attention. James Belich, although he did not mention craft in his own general histories of New Zealand, may have been issuing a challenge to historians of material culture when he stated that:

The few New Zealand studies of [folk culture] either postmodernise it into forms unrecognisable to most of us, or trivialise it into twee nostalgia ... Both approaches do have their virtues, but in the end folk culture is too important to be left entirely to postmodernism or nostalgia.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Colin James, *The Quiet Revolution: Turbulence and Transition in Contemporary New Zealand*, Wellington, 1986, p.43.

<sup>69</sup> Peter Simpson, 'The Recognition of Difference', in Geoffrey W. Rice, ed., *The Oxford History of New Zealand*, 2nd edn, Auckland, 1992, p.584.

<sup>70</sup> For an account of who general histories are written for see Jacob Pollock, 'Cultural Colonization and Textual Biculturalism: James Belich and Michael King's General Histories of New Zealand', *New Zealand Journal of History*, 41, 2, 2007, pp.180-98.

<sup>71</sup> James Belich, *Paradise Reforged: A History of the New Zealanders from the 1880s to the Year 2000*, Auckland, 2001, p.346. It should be noted that Belich is referring to Pākehā (European) folk culture. Also James Belich, *Making Peoples: A History of the New Zealanders: From Polynesian Settlement to the End of the Nineteenth Century*, London, 1996.

Despite Belich's defence of this aspect of cultural history, the use of the term 'folk culture' would have been considered a belittling of their craft by some craftspeople. Furthermore, those who could have been expected to have carried out a more in-depth analysis of craft – craft historians – have, in the main, ignored Belich's oblique call for more substantial studies of the craft movement. A few notable exceptions follow.

### **General Craft Histories**

Peter Cape, perhaps more than any other writer in New Zealand at the time or since, was prepared to offer a more comprehensive explanation as to why the interest in craft in New Zealand grew so dramatically after the Second World War. His first book, *Artists and Craftsmen in New Zealand*,<sup>72</sup> featured no painters and nine potters amongst the twenty-three artists and craftspeople.<sup>73</sup> The introduction begins by discussing the craft 'revival'. Cape, a little diffidently, suggested that the craft movement, along with developments in art, did follow the world-wide revival of interest in craft 'logically as part of our process of development'. He approved of the renewed interest in the crafts but with a warning.

As we grow from the relative simplicities of post-pioneer living into a more complex and sophisticated society, and as we grow more positively aware of our national identity, we will become more willing to accept the expression of these things in the arts. (Though the true expression of what we are may well be a long way away from the obviously New Zealand themes that we have been used to in the past – certainly, mercifully, very far removed from tuis in kowhai, whares under pungas, and the irrelevant use of Maori design.)<sup>74</sup>

His statement demonstrated his certainty, as early as 1969, that he was writing about an 'art' form and foreshadowed the debate that entranced and irritated craft writers in the 1980s and 1990s.

By 1973 Cape was suggesting that crafts had a role to play in defining the national character, or even an epoch in New Zealand's history. Furthermore,

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<sup>72</sup> Peter Cape, *Artists and Craftsmen in New Zealand*, Auckland, 1969.

<sup>73</sup> Six women and one married couple feature.

<sup>74</sup> Cape, p.9.

his linking of poetry (an art form) with pottery projected the crafts as an art form also. In the periodical, *New Zealand's Heritage*, he referred to this in an article devoted to pottery.<sup>75</sup>

[T]he poet Allen Curnow was reported as saying: "The good poem is something we may in time come to recognise New Zealand by, not something in which we need to recognise obvious traces of New Zealand we know." This may have been Curnow's hope for New Zealand poetry in the 1940s but in the 1970s it has been realised in New Zealand pots.<sup>76</sup>

Cape's second book on craft, *Please Touch: A Survey of the Three-Dimensional Arts in New Zealand*,<sup>77</sup> demonstrated in its title that the author was very confident that his earlier claims that craft was an art form were proven. In the first chapter of the new book he reflected on his comments ten years earlier when he believed that during the 1960s the crafts had 'offered a convenient duality which meant that their purpose could be justified on either functional or aesthetic grounds.'<sup>78</sup> Cape was convinced that the gap between art and craft had almost disappeared because of 'the greater certainty in taste which has developed among the viewing and buying public.'<sup>79</sup> Cape died in 1979, just before his book was published. His writings on craft demonstrate, however, his hope that craft would somehow help define New Zealand as a modern sophisticated nation with a unique character.

Books on New Zealand's material and cultural history increased significantly during the first decade of the twenty-first century but most remained largely uncritical or even flippant in their analysis and writing. Some were concerned with specific aspects of the history of New Zealand's material culture but also incorporated sections on craft. In doing so, they acknowledged the importance of craft in New Zealand, but they also aligned aspects of craft with the conservatism and anti-intellectualism that some cultural historians

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<sup>75</sup> Cape is referring to one craft form but his statement implies that, in general, craft was becoming influential in New Zealand culture.

<sup>76</sup> Peter Cape, 'Pots and Potters,' in *New Zealand's Heritage: The Making of a Nation*, Auckland 1978, p.2821. *New Zealand's Heritage* was later published as a bound series.

<sup>77</sup> Peter Cape, *Please Touch. A Survey of the Three-Dimensional Arts in New Zealand*, Auckland, 1980.

<sup>78</sup> *ibid.*, p.11.

<sup>79</sup> *ibid.*

believed was a feature of New Zealand life. In *At Home: A Century of New Zealand Design*,<sup>80</sup> Douglas Lloyd-Jenkins interspersed a history of craft in New Zealand throughout a book that is predominantly about architecture. He acknowledged Cape's singular contribution to the analysis of the craft movement, but is far more disparaging about why New Zealanders were enthusiastic about craft.

Many other factors [beyond those put forward by Cape] might explain the success of studio ceramic, and of basketry, weaving and woodturning, all of which made rapid advances in both quality and popularity through the 1950s and 1960s. The revival of crafts was an international phenomenon. In New Zealand, as in the rest of the world, the crafts took on a new mystique as primitive and unchanged artforms. Accessible intellectually and financially, they connected back to something familiar in a world where other artforms were changing rapidly.<sup>81</sup>

Furthermore, in what appears to be an attempt to appeal to the widest possible audience, he connected crafts with both nostalgia and modern ideas.

At the same time the "primitivist" aspects of the crafts fitted closely with a fascination for the primitive that was being explored by many advanced visual artists of the day. The crafts could therefore also be seen as progressive and forward looking, able to be linked to the wider arts practices.<sup>82</sup>

Lloyd-Jenkins firmly locates craft as an important part of the domestic environment in New Zealand and is one of the few writers in recent times to attempt to explain the popularity of crafts.

Lloyd-Jenkins also contributed to international literature on craft. In a book edited by Grace Cochrane,<sup>83</sup> he contributed a chapter entitled 'Old habits

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<sup>80</sup> Lloyd-Jenkins.

<sup>81</sup> *ibid.*, p.197. See also Athol McCredie, 'Going Public: New Zealand Art Museums in the 1970s', MA thesis, Massey University, 1999, p.92. McCredie labelled books such as those written by Cape as 'not books that extended the critical interpretation of New Zealand art in any serious way ... Their real contribution was to proselytise New Zealand art to a wide audience.'

<sup>82</sup> Lloyd-Jenkins. Primitivism was a component of some nineteenth and twentieth century art movements.

<sup>83</sup> Grace Cochrane, ed., *Smart Works: Design and the Handmade*, Sydney, 2007.

new hobbits: a New Zealand perspective',<sup>84</sup> that, while commenting on contemporary culture, particularly in the field of film, largely restated earlier histories of the craft movement. Nevertheless, he was able to add to the article insights that had not appeared earlier. One suggestion was that the renewed interest in craft after the Second World War 'was more to do with the revival of audiences and markets rather than with the revival of skills.'<sup>85</sup> This observation is important to understanding the movement, although it is rarely the subject of detailed analysis. Generally, analysis of the craft movement as a social phenomenon has not attracted the attention of historians in New Zealand to the same extent as in Britain, America and Australia. In my thesis I hope to rectify this deficit.

### **The Supporters**

The lack of serious writing about craft in New Zealand has placed more importance on overseas histories to explain what took place and why. Grace Cochrane, in her wide-ranging history of the craft movement in Australia stated:

Histories tend to reflect the values of dominant groups, and the selective views of historians. Those on the margins, like those in the crafts movement, have not always been in a position to articulate their differing views or experiences, or be heard or taken seriously when they have.<sup>86</sup>

Cochrane's advocacy is not uncommon among craft writers. In the wider sense it is true that the crafts have not had a high profile and many craftspeople felt dominated or intimidated by art historians and critics or neglected by the authors of more general histories. Writers like Cochrane have demonstrated an understanding of, and sympathy for, the craftsmen and women they have written about. Craftspeople, as we will discover in Chapter Two, possessed less social, cultural and symbolic capital than artists, and therefore craft was not considered by many writers as worthy of

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<sup>84</sup> Douglas Lloyd-Jenkins, 'Old habits new hobbits: a New Zealand perspective', in *ibid.*, pp.24-9.

<sup>85</sup> *ibid.*, p.26.

<sup>86</sup> Grace Cochrane, *The Crafts Movement in Australia: A History*, Kensington NSW, 1992, p.409.

serious analysis as art. Furthermore, some writers have been reluctant, or unable, to accurately describe or explain aspects of the movement that do not portray it as a unified and harmonious whole. They have sometimes omitted wider social, cultural, political and economic factors that played an important role in its development. Sue Rowley, an Australian cultural historian, has suggested that this has created a 'siege mentality' that has had a conservative effect producing a 'hegemonic position of a specific rhetoric that establishes what craft is and how it should be written about.'<sup>87</sup>

Craftspeople were also reluctant to examine the movement in depth. One explanation for the lack of in-depth analysis by craftspeople was their need to concentrate on their craft, leaving little time for writing and even less for scholarly research. Another explanation is that craftspeople, particularly craftsmen, often thought of themselves, or were seen by others, as 'rugged individualists' who 'made things' and were distrustful of art and scholarship that appeared removed from the community. According to Kai Jensen, anti-intellectualism was closely linked to masculinism which feared rejection by the community.<sup>88</sup>

### **Different Forms of Writing**

The range of craft literature was initially quite restricted – even amongst those who specialised in the field. In the mid-1970s Edward Lucie-Smith, was able to identify three types of books on craft.

First and rarest (though perhaps the most influential) are the books which are "inspirational" in character. Second, and more numerous, are the "how to" books ... Finally, there are books which illustrate the work of leading contemporary craftsmen ... [which] seem designed to serve either as catalogues to exhibitions, or as guides for collectors of crafts.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> Sue Rowley, 'Warping the Loom: Theoretical Frameworks for Craft Writing,' in *Craft in Society: An Anthology of Perspectives*, Noris Ioannou, ed., South Fremantle, 1992, p.167.

<sup>88</sup> Kai Jensen, *Whole Men: The Masculine Tradition in New Zealand Literature*, Auckland, N.Z., 1996, p.171.

<sup>89</sup> Edward Lucie-Smith, *World of the Makers: Today's Master Craftsmen and Craftswomen*, New York, 1975, p.8.

Two other important categories can be added to this list. First are books concerned with the social and cultural history of craft and craftspeople. The craftsmen and women of the second half of the twentieth century stood on the shoulders of millions of craftspeople and a history dating back thousands of years. This history was important to craftspeople and the wider audience as it placed the new craft movement in context. Lucie-Smith himself wrote such a book in 1981.<sup>90</sup> Many 'how to' books did refer to the history of craft, but usually only as brief introductions to the instructional text, and with little analytical comment.

Second are scholarly books on craft theory and books that contain sections which discuss craft theory and which analyse craft – often in relation to art. The relationship between craft and fine art has been an ongoing debate for art and craft theorists throughout the twentieth century. One of the most prominent before the Second World War was the philosopher, Robin George Collingwood, who had no doubts that craft was defined by functionality, planning and skill while art was concerned with the expression of ideas. Collingwood's ideas are examined in Chapter Two.

Bernard Leach's ideas on craft were published in 1940 in a book titled '*A Potter's Book*'.<sup>91</sup> The art critic, Rosemary Hill claimed that: 'Writing about studio crafts, as we understand them today, begins with Bernard Leach, who established the intellectual and artistic status of pottery in a single octavo page.'<sup>92</sup> Leach has been described as both modernist and anti-modernist<sup>93</sup> and Hill accused him of deception in his attempt to confirm pottery as an art form – and in so doing claim status as an artist: 'It is Leach the artist-potter – and hence the artist-potter as a species – [who] inhabits the higher cultural ground.'<sup>94</sup> Leach was an outstanding marketer<sup>95</sup> and his method of status-

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<sup>90</sup> Lucie-Smith, *The Story of Craft. The Craftsman's Role in Society*.

<sup>91</sup> Bernard Leach, *A Potter's Book*, London, 1940.

<sup>92</sup> Rosemary Hill, 'Writing about the Studio Crafts', in Dormer, ed., p.190. In the page Hill is referring to Leach made the claim that: 'The potter ... is by force of circumstances an artist-craftsman'. See Leach, p.1.

<sup>93</sup> Mark Pennings in Clark, ed., p.123.

<sup>94</sup> Hill in Dormer, ed., p.191.

<sup>95</sup> Julian F. Stair, 'Critical Writing on English Studio Pottery 1910 – 1940', PhD thesis, The Royal College of Art, 2002, p.424.

raising was subsequently employed by many craftspeople. The book was extremely successful, not merely as a technical manual about one specific craft but 'it offered the promise of a spiritually fulfilling way of life'.<sup>96</sup> By 1995 it was in its sixteenth edition, had never been out of print and had sold over 130,000 copies.<sup>97</sup> Both professional and amateur craftspeople in New Zealand revered *A Potter's Book*.<sup>98</sup>

Attempts to define craft became an endless source of discussion for craft theorists after the war. Rose Slivka, an American writer, for example, used a system of elimination when she stated '[something] is indeed craft unless "all links with the idea of function have been severed, [then] it leaves the field of craft."' <sup>99</sup> Slivka's comment, now dated in light of the later developments in craft that drew craft much closer to art, is but one example of the many used by art and craft theorists to support a particular argument. Art theory is a separate field of study and it is beyond the scope of this thesis to explain the intricacies of the arguments involved. However, many of the issues at the centre of the debates that took place in the craft world will be linked to aspects of art and craft theory.

### **Participant/Observers in New Zealand**

Participant/writers and those close to craft generally wrote supportively of craft and craftspeople. However, the mixing of 'making' craft and 'writing about' craft, as noted earlier, limited critical analysis and prevented the development of a legitimating tradition within which the writing could be framed. Edward Said described the integration of criticism and practice as a "filial" relationship'.<sup>100</sup> Rowley added that it 'imparts an intimacy to the relationship between writing and practice, and enhances the sense of solidarity amongst craft practitioners and writers' but 'also tends to contain

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<sup>96</sup> Tanya Harrod, quoted in Gareth Clark, *The Potter's Art*, New York, 1995, p.151.

<sup>97</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>98</sup> For a fuller assessment of Leach's contribution to the craft movement see Vic Evans, 'Head, Heart and Hand: Studio Pottery in Nelson 1956 - 1976', MA thesis, Massey University, 2007, Chapter One. See also Damon Moon, 'In the Beginning was the Word: Bernard Leach and Australian Studio Pottery from 1940 - 1964', PhD thesis, University of South Australia, 2006.

<sup>99</sup> Rose Slivka, quoted in Howard Anthony Risatti, *A Theory of Craft: Function and Aesthetic Expression*, Chapel Hill, 2007, p.1.

<sup>100</sup> Edward W. Said, *The World, the Text and the Critic*, London, 1984, pp.16-24.

the writing within clearly defined parameters, encourages critical consensus and resists alternative approaches.<sup>101</sup> This consensus was formed by the pioneers of the post-war movement. The following generation of participant/observers, including this author, reinforced the consensus because of their filial relationship to the earlier generation.

Books about craftspeople were, almost without exception, uncritical. This form of writing portrayed craftspeople as, 'sensitive and creative people, [whose] thinking [was] often in advance of that of society taken as a whole'<sup>102</sup> In New Zealand for instance, Doreen Blumhardt, a teacher of craft, an art advisor, potter and author, in conjunction with Brian Brake, an internationally renowned photographer, produced *New Zealand Potters: Their Work and Words*<sup>103</sup> in 1976 and *Craft New Zealand: The Art of the Craftsman*<sup>104</sup> in 1981. *Craft New Zealand*, in particular, was a large (240mm x 300mm) beautifully laid out book endorsed by Lord Reilly, the President of the WCC and Dr Clarence Beeby, former Director of Education and a long-time colleague of Blumhardt. The book was a flattering endorsement of the value of craft to New Zealand and through the title emphasised the increasing desire by some craftspeople to be recognised as artists. To write such books or feature in them was a signal that a craftsperson had reached the top of their profession. The book won the Wattie's Book of the Year award in 1981<sup>105</sup> and Blumhardt was awarded an honorary doctorate in literature, in part for producing the books, but also for her pioneering work in craft education.<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> Rowley, 'Warping the Loom: Theoretical Frameworks for Craft Writing,' pp.166-7.

<sup>102</sup> Lucie-Smith, *World of the Makers: Today's Master Craftsmen and Craftswomen*, p.11.

<sup>103</sup> Doreen Blumhardt and Brian Brake, *New Zealand Potters: Their Work and Words* Wellington, 1976.

<sup>104</sup> Doreen Blumhardt and Brian Brake, *Craft New Zealand: The Art of the Craftsman*, Wellington, 1981.

<sup>105</sup> *Department of the Prime Minister, New Zealand Honours*, available at: <http://www.dPMC.govt.nz/honours/lists/onzbio.html> (16 June 2008).

<sup>106</sup> Alister Taylor, ed., *New Zealand Who's Who Aotearoa*, Auckland, 2001, p.150. See also Peter Gibbs, 'Profile', *New Zealand Listener*, 11 – 17 Nov 1991, p.46.

More recently books by participant/observers have been more reflective. An example is *Cone Ten Down: Studio Pottery in New Zealand, 1945 – 1980*<sup>107</sup> by former potter Moyra Elliott in collaboration with arts writer Damian Skinner. The book presented a comprehensive history of the craft based on thorough research – the authors interviewed over fifty potters, educators and gallery owners.<sup>108</sup> Furthermore, the use of words such as ‘pottery’ in the title demonstrated they were prepared to use terms more relevant to the times being written about – prior to the 1980s craftspeople working with clay generally referred to themselves as ‘potters’ rather than ‘ceramic artists’. The changing emphasis suggests that the passage of time has allowed for a more critical approach by writers intimately involved with the movement.

### **Promotion and Self-Promotion**

The books and articles with glossy pictures but very little analysis were greatly admired by the public but came in for criticism from those who believed they presented a false picture. One particularly harsh judgement stated: ‘Glossy, friendly, but dishonest, the books and magazines that peddle this view of the studio crafts ... are the worst kind of writing on the subject.’<sup>109</sup> The claim of dishonesty may have been proposing that these writers were offering a romanticised version of craft. The criticism by Rosemary Hill was a challenge for craft to be examined in a more scholarly manner rather than being packaged as a ‘gift’ destined to sit on a coffee table.

The glossy picture books that appeared in larger numbers once the craft movement had achieved greater momentum in the late 1960s and early 1970s tended to have a set format. The introduction would present a synopsis of the craft movement to date while the body of the text would be divided into speciality fields usually associated with a particular medium –

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<sup>107</sup> Moyra Elliott and Damian Skinner, *Cone Ten Down: Studio Pottery in New Zealand, 1945 - 1980*, Auckland, 2009.

<sup>108</sup> *ibid.* See also Vic Evans, *Nelson Mail* (Book Review: Cone Ten Down: Studio Pottery in New Zealand, 1945 - 1980), 26 August 2009, p.18 and Bryan James, *Otago Daily Times* (Book Review: Cone Ten Down: Studio Pottery in New Zealand, 1945 - 1980), 5 September 2009. The author of this thesis called on Elliott and Skinner’s interviews, see above.

<sup>109</sup> Rosemary Hill in Dormer, ed., p.196.

clay, fibre, glass, wood and metal being the most prevalent.<sup>110</sup> Within these fields individual craftspeople would be featured, often detailing how they came to their craft and outlining their philosophy.<sup>111</sup> Frequently the written material was supplied by those featured. Such self-promotion suggests a degree of selection by the authors or editors, although how this was done was rarely stated. In 1988 for instance, Cecilia Parkinson and John Parker, two Auckland potters, produced a book called *Profiles: 24 New Zealand Potters*.<sup>112</sup> The book had the obligatory brief history with the potters listed alphabetically – including the authors themselves – but with no explanation of how the potters were selected although a sphere of legitimacy (an informal network) appears to have been operating. Books on specific crafts or on crafts more generally have, by and large, maintained this format up to the present day.<sup>113</sup>

Catalogues for exhibitions also presented an opportunity for promotion or remembrance. In the case of retrospective exhibitions,<sup>114</sup> particularly posthumous ones, the literature takes on a reverential tone. An example of this genre is *The Greatest Show*,<sup>115</sup> the catalogue for a retrospective exhibition of the work of the potter Warren Tippett who died in 1994. Moyra Elliott, a potter who had established an international reputation as director of the Fletcher Challenge Ceramic awards/exhibitions,<sup>116</sup> curated the exhibition and commissioned a number of friends and associates of Tippett to contribute essays for a booklet to accompany it. Not unexpectedly, the writing could be colourful, as is shown in the tribute entitled ‘Good Mischief’ that introduced the booklet. Tippett’s friend, Peter Wells, writes: ‘This really

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<sup>110</sup> For an alternative opinion on the validity of this form of classification see John Perreault, ‘Crafts is Art: Tampering with Power’ in Fariello and Owen, eds, pp.80-1. Note 6.

<sup>111</sup> New Zealand publications probably followed an international format. For instance see Tony Birks, *The Art of the Modern Potter*, London, 1967.

<sup>112</sup> John Parker and Cecilia Parkinson, *Profiles: 24 New Zealand Potters*, Auckland, 1988.

<sup>113</sup> Two examples are: Anne Nicholas, *Fabrications: Works by Forty New Zealand Fibre Artists*, Auckland, 1990 and Cook, *Crafted by Design*.

<sup>114</sup> For an example of such an exhibition see Ren Kempthorne, ed., *Ignite: New Zealand Society of Potters 44th National Exhibition Catalogue*, Nelson, 2003, p.4.

<sup>115</sup> Damian Skinner, ed., *The Greatest Show: Warren Tippett's Pots from a Life Less Ordinary*, Auckland, 2005. Moyra Elliott co-authored *Cone Ten Down: Studio Pottery in New Zealand, 1945 -- 1980* with Skinner, see above.

<sup>116</sup> *The Fletcher Trust Collection*; available at: <http://www.fletchercollection.co.nz/ceramics.php> (27 June 2008).

was what Warren was. A multihued, strikingly celebratory character, full of mystery and strangeness, hardly an earthling at all.<sup>117</sup> Catalogues such as these provide a useful source of historical information but do not offer contrasting views.

A landmark booklet, in many ways, was *Mau Mahara: Our Stories in Craft*.<sup>118</sup> The CCNZ produced the booklet in 1990 to accompany an eclectic exhibition of the same name that sought to present a history of craft in New Zealand. The booklet was notable for the range and eccentric nature of some of the crafts featured<sup>119</sup> and for the extended historical overview of craft it produced.<sup>120</sup> Along with cost overruns associated with the exhibition, it was also notable for its contribution to the demise of the CCNZ.<sup>121</sup> Booklets of varying quality produced to accompany exhibitions were numerous, but they rarely attempted to explain the growth of the movement and its relationship with the wider community and were almost always uncritical.

Magazines, such as the *New Zealand Potter*<sup>122</sup> and *The Web*,<sup>123</sup> started out as the mouthpiece of craft organisations – essentially newsletters. The magazines appeared in huge numbers – almost always concerned with a single medium.<sup>124</sup> Magazines concerned with one craft were dominated by technical information or ‘promotional’ articles and occasional articles discussing the underlying principles behind the work of craftspeople.

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<sup>117</sup> Skinner, ed., p.4.

<sup>118</sup> Justine Olsen, John Parker, and Cliff Whiting, eds, *Mau Mahara: Our Stories in Craft* Auckland, 1990.

<sup>119</sup> For a critical review of the exhibition and, by extension, the booklet, see Louise Guerin, 'Mau Mahara', *New Zealand Crafts*, Autumn 1991, p.17.

<sup>120</sup> Gardner-Gee, p.73.

<sup>121</sup> For more on the part played by the *Mau Mahara* exhibition in the demise of the CCNZ see Chapter Seven.

<sup>122</sup> *New Zealand Potter*, 1958 – 1994 started as the magazine of the New Zealand Society of Potters.

<sup>123</sup> The Handweavers Guild, an Auckland based organisation was founded in 1954 and published the *Three Crafts Journal* in 1958. In April 1969, not wishing to become a national organisation, it handed over its magazine, renamed *The Web*, to a new national organisation called the New Zealand Spinning, Weaving and Woolcrafts Society (NZSWWS). See *The Handweavers and Spinners Guild Auckland Inc*; available at: <http://www.handweavers.org.nz/> (3 July 2008) and *New Zealand Spinning, Weaving and Woolcrafts Society*; available at: <http://www.creativefibre.org.nz/> (3 July 2008).

<sup>124</sup> 190 New Zealand newsletters and magazines are referenced in *The New Dowse* catalogue. See Craft Resource Library Catalogue, February 1997, Dowse Art Museum.

Sometimes 'outside' writers and reviewers would present alternative views. The *New Zealand Potter* is one such magazine and one I occasionally wrote for. It was popular – in 1984, the editor stated it had eight hundred subscribers and claimed it was seen by six thousand readers<sup>125</sup> – and usually consisted of the type of articles described earlier and very occasionally more in-depth debates about the meaning of craft.<sup>126</sup>

A rare example of a craft magazine that offered critical reviews and more scholarly articles was *Craft New Zealand*.<sup>127</sup> Beginning in 1982, it claimed to be the recognised voice of the wider craft movement. But unlike its art counterpart, *Art New Zealand*,<sup>128</sup> which began in 1975 and continues today, it only survived for eleven financially precarious years.<sup>129</sup> *Craft New Zealand*, like many of the books, called on individuals known to the Board of the CCNZ to provide articles and in this sense was influenced by particular spheres of influence and legitimacy. *Craft New Zealand*, and to a lesser extent some of the medium based magazines, became the instruments through which groups and individuals sought to control the craft movement.

The issues raised in the literature discussed above have informed this thesis and are reflected in the chapters outlined below. The issues have been grouped thematically and the chapters have been sequenced accordingly.

## The Chapters

The first chapter considers the traditions that influenced the studio craft movement through three strands: British and European craft traditions; New Zealand's trade and domestic-based craft practices; and Māori arts and

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<sup>125</sup> Howard Williams to the Crafts Council of New Zealand, CCNZ Records, 92-278, 10/01, Appendix 3(1).

<sup>126</sup> For instance, see Harry Davis, 'Hand Craft Pottery, Whence and Whither', *New Zealand Potter*, 28, 1, 1986, pp.28-31.

<sup>127</sup> *Craft New Zealand*, 1982 – 1993, started as the magazine of the CCNZ. Issues 1–35 were known as *New Zealand Crafts* and issues 36 – 46 *Craft New Zealand*. In this thesis the magazine will be called *Craft New Zealand* although footnotes and the bibliography will follow standard referencing.

<sup>128</sup> *Art New Zealand*; available at: <http://www.art-newzealand.com/> (3 July 2008).

<sup>129</sup> For a cross-textual analysis of the two publications see Gardner-Gee, pp.32-47. Gardner-Gee believed that the demise of *Craft New Zealand* and the success of *Art New Zealand* was closely linked to the different status accorded to craft and art.

crafts. I briefly examine the history of craft with particular emphasis on the period between the two World Wars and immediately after the Second World War to determine the part they played in the later development of craft in New Zealand.

Chapter Two examines the relationship between craft and art. This discussion is presented in two sections: first, the aesthetic and technical arguments and second, the social and cultural divisions between art and craft. The debate influenced how craft was understood, both in New Zealand and internationally; therefore the geographical scope of the chapter is extensive.

Chapter Three considers the relationship between amateur and professional craftspeople and is linked to Chapter Two. Both economic viability and craft training form a major part of this chapter. Craftspeople initially defined themselves by their ability to earn a living from craft but education later became increasingly important as craftspeople redefined what craft was. Both issues also influenced where craftspeople located themselves in an increasingly divided craft world.

Chapter Four discusses how craft was employed by some as a means of protest in the second half of the twentieth century. Craft was seen as a bulwark against the materialism and pressures of the modern world. For many craftspeople their craft provided them with an opportunity to lead a more fulfilling life. Others in their society also believed craftspeople could be looked to for examples of how society might be improved. The chapter examines the rural/urban environment, work, and technology and how craftspeople interacted with them.

In the fifth chapter the relationship between related industries and craft and the impact of economic changes and government policies is examined. Craftspeople made a point of distancing themselves from 'industry', but a symbiotic relationship developed between some crafts and some manufacturers. Craftspeople often both feared and embraced these

relationships. There has been some reluctance amongst craft writers to acknowledge the important role that economic issues had on craft, but the ability of some craftspeople to generate an income was a pivotal factor in the growth of the movement.

Chapter Six focuses on the place of women and Māori in the craft world. Women and Māori often differed to Pākehā<sup>130</sup> men in the way they approached craft. Their emphasis on cooperation and sharing, and the role of women in particular in the administration of craft had a profound effect on how the movement developed and was defined. As the movement grew and evolved both groups found their beliefs were challenged by the new position craft was located in.

The final chapter, Chapter Seven, takes a comparative approach to the discussion on why the national craft organisation of New Zealand, the CCNZ collapsed in 1992, while craft councils, such as the Crafts Council in Britain, continued to thrive. The demise of the CCNZ symbolised the end of the studio craft movement in the form that it had been defined for over forty years.

## The Challenge

Craft and craftspeople have been the subject of a considerable quantity of writing, as can be seen above, but a persistent criticism of much of the literature is the lack of intellectual depth. In 1992, the American craft writer, Bruce Metcalf was convinced that a 'pervasive anti-intellectual bias' existed in the literature.<sup>131</sup> His argument, like mine, is based on the format of books on craft, on the publicising nature of them and on the self-promoting quality of many of them. He quoted a statement by a jeweller/teacher in a craft magazine to illustrate his point. "Metalsmith' [magazine] ... has been boring,

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<sup>130</sup> Michael King noted that in the early stages of the colonisation of New Zealand the term 'pakeha' was 'simply a necessary descriptive word to distinguish European from Maori'. See Michael King, *The Penguin History of New Zealand*, Auckland, 2003, p.169. Pākehā is employed in a similar fashion in this thesis to distinguish between non-Māori and Māori.

<sup>131</sup> Bruce Metcalf, 'Replacing the Myth of Modernism', *American Craft*, 53, 1, February, 1993, p.41. The ideas in this article were first presented at the American Craft Council Southeast Regional Conference in June 1992.

uninteresting and filled with ... pieces that once read I did not understand or even care to understand. Actually, I have stopped reading 'Metalsmith' and now skim the pages for interesting images and advertising."<sup>132</sup> Metcalf's example is, I believe, unnecessarily harsh, but it illustrates the frustration scholars feel about the lack of interest shown by craft practitioners in studying their own field. I also believe that the lack of scholarly historical analysis of the studio craft movement is a problem. The central task of this thesis therefore, is to challenge the received narrative that has portrayed the studio craft movement in a romantic light and to do so in a scholarly fashion.

A feature of the studio craft movement from the 1950s onward was the ability of many craftspeople to earn a living from their craft or at least sell their work to supplement their income. Many operated small businesses that were little different from the thousands of other small businesses that existed in New Zealand at that time. However, because the discourse on craft located craftspeople in a different category to other businesspeople, many craftspeople believed they existed in two very different worlds – the world of commerce and the world of art. For instance, an anonymous potter called 'Potter Y', told a researcher in 1985: 'We now have an educated public, and they won't accept anything ... Pottery is very much a business to me. But don't tell the public that. The public don't like to hear that, they like to think you are dedicated to your Art'.<sup>133</sup> This thesis sets out to explain why Potter Y felt the need to make this distinction and why Peter Gibbs' comments at the beginning of this introduction were phrased in the way they were and whether both comments were valid summations of the period and what happened.

Craftspeople existed in a complex world of competing ideas and values – some established by craftspeople themselves based on earlier craft traditions and some, as we have seen above, by society's perceptions of craft and craftspeople. Craft's history lay in a long tradition of producing

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<sup>132</sup> David LaPlantz quoted in *ibid.*

<sup>133</sup> Potter Y in Kerr Inkson, 'Working Paper No 16, Craftsmanship and Job Satisfaction: A Study of Potters', Auckland, 1985, p.40. All respondents were anonymous.

items for people to use. But craft was also linked with art in the minds of some within the craft community and in the wider community. This was often reflected in the terms 'craftsperson' and 'craft artist' – both of which people involved in the movement might use themselves or have applied to them.

During the period in which this thesis is set craft changed. Between 1949 and the 1970s craft mimicked its traditional role – craft was largely functional, handmade and often rustic. Craftspeople often lived in rural settings and were sometimes considered a little eccentric, or at least 'different'. To some extent, the 'handmade brown mug' became a metaphor for this period. Gradually however, as craftspeople became more divorced from the movement's beginnings and as they explored the boundaries of their craft, 'craft art' began to appear and many craftspeople began to call themselves 'craft artists' – and they were now as likely to be found in an urban environment as a rural one. It is the intention of this thesis to examine these changes and show that because some craftspeople became craft artists and others remained, in the traditional sense, simple craftspeople, tensions and conflicts increased. The divergent groups of craftspeople and craft artists looked at aspects of their lives to define who they were and what they did. As a result of the changes and how they defined themselves an initially united movement splintered and became a world divided.

# Chapter One: Foundations and Beginnings

For many of us involved in the practice of crafts the craft movement proper started in the 1950s and 1960s. It was almost as if we had newly discovered a philosophy of life: working with the dignity of the handmade and with the joy of designing and making a work of one's own individual expression. These precepts held out a promise of a satisfying and interesting life.<sup>1</sup>

In the opening paragraph of an essay on the history of craft in Australia and New Zealand, Janet Mansfield, an Australian potter and writer, was expressing the sense of 'newness' that many Australian and New Zealand post-Second World War studio potters felt about 'their craft movement'. She continued by explaining the links between craft and the needs of everyday life in colonial Australia and New Zealand and how new migrants transformed the objects they made into 'personal expressions of functional art'.<sup>2</sup> The title of her essay, 'Plurality and Necessity', spoke about a variety of influences. In the case of New Zealand, these included Māori arts and crafts and the perceived 'number eight wire' adaptability – the term used by Peter Gibbs in a *New Zealand Listener* article<sup>3</sup> – that many New Zealanders believed was a defining national characteristic. Mansfield, by projecting mid-twentieth century notions about craft as a vehicle for personal expression onto earlier craft traditions, was attempting to link these traditions with the contemporary studio craft movement she was part of. Her use of the word 'proper' appeared to be suggesting that 'her movement' was unique or earlier developments in craft were merely precursors to the real movement that emerged after the Second World War. However, the rise and fall of interest in craft has been a recurring feature of craft history from the mid-nineteenth century through the first half of the twentieth century and each renewal of interest has built on earlier traditions.<sup>4</sup> Grace Cochrane, in her explanation of

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<sup>1</sup> Janet Mansfield, 'Plurality and Necessity: An Antipodean Case Study,' in *The Persistence of Craft. The Applied Arts Today*, Paul Greenhalgh, ed., London, 2002, p.149.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Peter Gibbs, 'Craft Art Crossroads', *New Zealand Listener*, 13 August 1994, p.42 .

<sup>4</sup> Tradition here is defined as, 'a set of practises, a constellation of beliefs, or a mode of thinking that exists in the present, but was inherited from the past.' See David Gross, *The*

why this happened, postulated that: 'We seem to have to experience things ourselves in order to believe in them; we will not accept the discoveries of our parents and grandparents.'<sup>5</sup>

In this chapter I examine the traditions that influenced the growth of interest in craft after the Second World War that evolved into what Mansfield believed was 'the craft movement proper' and which I have described as the 'studio craft movement'. The chapter presents an overview of three strands that fed into the movement in New Zealand and, in essence, established the traditions from which it grew. The first strand, and by far the dominant one, relates to British and European craft – which extends from pre-industrial craft traditions through to the twentieth century – and links this history to the movement in New Zealand. The second is New Zealand's own trade-based and domestic-based craft practices as well as attempts by the pioneers to pursue their interest in an environment that had a different understanding of the place of craft in society.<sup>6</sup> Finally, the chapter presents an overview of Māori arts and crafts (mahī toi).<sup>7</sup> The traditional arts and crafts of the original inhabitants (Tangata Whenua)<sup>8</sup> of New Zealand formed an integral part of their everyday life for hundreds of years and had their foundation in spirituality and functionality. The underlying theme of this chapter is the attempt by those within the studio craft movement to understand the significance of the developments that had taken place earlier, both in New Zealand and overseas, and relate them to the new craft environment. By the early 1990s a clearly defined separation had emerged within the movement in New Zealand. The movement became divided between those who looked to earlier traditions and the skills that had been passed down and those who believed that the development of conceptual skills should have primacy. Another group, predominantly amateurs, had little interest in this distinction.

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*Past in Ruins: Tradition and the Critique of Modernity, Critical Perspectives on Modern Culture*, Amherst, 1992, p.8.

<sup>5</sup> Grace Cochrane, 'Said and Done? Writing a history of the crafts movement', in Peter Timms, et al., *The Nature of the Beast: Writings on Craft*, Fitzroy, Vic., 1993, p.8.

<sup>6</sup> The word 'pioneer' is used in this chapter to refer to the craftspeople of the inter-war period and the immediate post-war period.

<sup>7</sup> The term 'mahī toi' is discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

<sup>8</sup> 'People of the Land' refers to New Zealand's first human inhabitants.

Pottery again forms a large part of this chapter because, as previously explained, it dominated the movement in terms of the number of people able to earn their living from their work and also because of my involvement in the movement as a studio potter/ceramic artist.

## British and European Influences

Before examining the first strand – the influence of British and European craft practices – it will be helpful to examine an early-1960s New Zealand exhibition catalogue as an example of how craftspeople in the mid-twentieth century located their work within the framework of those traditions. In 1961 fifty-four individual potters and one pottery group took part in the fifth exhibition of the 'New Zealand Potters (NZP)'<sup>9</sup> in Christchurch. With one exception – a potter who was employed in the ceramics industry – all were amateurs in the sense they did not depend on their craft for their livelihood. The group – a pottery club known as the Hillsborough Group – did not have their individual names in the catalogue and worked together in a communal workshop, largely on a part-time, amateur basis.<sup>10</sup>

John Wood, one of the exhibitors, representing the orthodox view of the place of handcraft in New Zealand, summed up the place of craft in the early-1960s in the catalogue introduction: 'The Industrial Revolution,<sup>11</sup> ... put an end to many forms of individual skill and craftsmanship which had flourished and matured during thousands of years, producing most of the outstandingly

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<sup>9</sup> The national association of potters, The New Zealand Society of Potters (NZSP), which was incorporated in 1965, developed out of these annual exhibitions and the publication of the *New Zealand Potter* magazine. See Vic Evans, 'Head, Heart and Hand: Studio Pottery in Nelson 1956 - 1976', MA thesis, Massey University, 2007, pp.89-92; Heather Stirling, 'A History of the Development of the New Zealand Studio Potters Movement as Reflected in the New Zealand Potter Magazine, Special Study', Brighton, 1979, p.5; and Helen Mason, *Helen Mason's Scrapbook: Fifty Years as a Backyard Potter, a Memoir*, 2nd edn, Waipukurau, 2005, p.8.

<sup>10</sup> The exhibiting group consisted of five friends - two in paid employment and three full-time housewives, see Jean L. Morland, 'The Hillsborough Group', *New Zealand Potter*, 3, 1, 1960, pp.39-41.

<sup>11</sup> 'New Zealand Potters 5th Exhibition' Catalogue, Christchurch, 1961, p.1. Wood's use of the term 'Industrial Revolution' is a reference to the major changes that took place in agriculture, manufacturing, mining, transportation and technology in Western Europe in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The Industrial Revolution has been divided into the First Industrial Revolution (18<sup>th</sup> century – c.1850) and the Second Industrial Revolution (c.1850 – 20<sup>th</sup> century) but Wood's use of the term may have covered both.

beautiful objects of the world.’ Wood recognised that the disappearance of craftspeople had taken place predominantly ‘in the more highly developed countries of the world’ and that the large industrial potteries produced ‘technically brilliant’ work. However, he stated that ‘no-one with any real knowledge of pottery ... can fail to feel in the factory products the dead hand of the machine, or to regret the price that has been paid.’<sup>12</sup> Having presented the subordinate and precarious position craftspeople were in he attempted to find a more secure place for them by linking function and beauty.

The past fifty years have seen the rapid growth in many countries of an “antidote” pottery – inspired primarily by the work of one or two men such as Bernard Leach, Shōji Hamada, Staite Murray and Michael Cardew, and made widely by men and women, often part-time amateurs, who deliberately return to the individual hand-techniques of the past in search of that elusive quality of beauty and delight which seemed to wither in the mass-production of the factories.<sup>13</sup>

Referring to the potters whose work was on display he wrote:

[T]hey aim, not to mimic or rival the factory wares in the hardware stores ... but to complement them, to fill a gap, to re-state the worth of other types of ware and other ways of making them. The objective [was] not the technical perfection ... Each pot ... is ... a personal creation and should be looked at as such [but] it would be a mistake to assume that all such pottery is intended purely for the display shelf. The further these wares penetrate into our daily lives, in use in our homes, the more fully do they fulfil their true function. For a potter’s creativeness flourishes best, not in the vacuum of “self-expression”, but in response to the needs and demands of life of the people around him ...<sup>14</sup>

Wood’s summary of craft in New Zealand in the 1960s, although not explicitly calling on notions that the British Arts and Crafts movement of the mid to late nineteenth century and early twentieth century had promulgated, appeared to be influenced by similar concerns about the functionality and beauty of craft and the role of craft as a bulwark in an increasingly impersonal and

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<sup>12</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> *ibid.* Of the four potters mentioned three were British.

<sup>14</sup> *ibid.*, p.2.

mechanised society. The new craftspeople were in one, the protectors of ancient traditions, the leaders in taste, and the providers of functional, if not necessarily perfect, personalised home-ware. The catalogue was both an introduction to an art (of sorts) exhibition and a brochure for a department store. It was because of this sometimes conflicting role that the craft community looked to Britain and Europe with its long craft tradition for guidance – and continued to take direction well into the late twentieth century.

The British influences arrived through a variety of channels. Many of the pioneers of the studio craft movement came from Britain and Europe; most received their training in Britain or Europe and those born in New Zealand were heavily influenced by British and European developments and history. The books and articles that New Zealand craftspeople read, and were most influenced by, were British and a number of influential craftspeople from Britain, Europe and America immigrated to New Zealand or made visits after the Second World War. Geoff Lealand, in 1988, for instance, was able to claim that New Zealanders ‘judge our artistic achievements by British standards (and submit them for judgement to British critics).’<sup>15</sup> Other influences were evident, for example Oriental traditions, but usually they were filtered through the writings of British, and to a lesser degree European and American, authors. Therefore, to understand the foundation of the craft movement in New Zealand the history of craft in Europe, and in particular Britain, must be examined in some detail.

### **European Craft Traditions: Manipulating the Market**

The British craft historian, Edward Lucie-Smith, identified three stages in the history of craft in Europe. First was the time when everything was craft. ‘All processes of making are hand processes, everything made, whether utilitarian, ritual or merely decorative (and often one cannot separate these functions), is essentially a craft object.’<sup>16</sup> Second was the Renaissance when

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<sup>15</sup> G. R. Lealand, *A Foreign Egg in Our Nest?: American Popular Culture in New Zealand*, Wellington, 1988, p.28.

<sup>16</sup> Edward Lucie-Smith, *The Story of Craft. The Craftsman’s Role in Society*, Oxford, 1981, p.11.

art and craft became intellectually separated and art assumed a superior role.<sup>17</sup> Finally, Lucie-Smith identified the gradual separation between craft objects and mass-produced items after the Industrial Revolution. He warned that to understand craft in the twentieth century one could not glorify one period and condemn another: '... it is mistaken, in many crafts, to talk of an innocent pre-industrial age followed by a corrupt industrial one.'<sup>18</sup> The divide between art and craft is discussed in Chapter Two, but the craft object/industrial product divide is important here in understanding the relationship between consumers and the objects marketed in a capitalist society, and the relationship between craftspeople and the society they live in. Often the conflict was presented as a contest between traditional craft methods and ideals and the making of art objects or designs based on Modernist ideas. Modernism was the twentieth century art and design movement that emphasised simplicity in the design of everyday objects and was best encapsulated in the expression first used by the architect Mies van der Rohe, 'Less is More'.<sup>19</sup> It was in these conflicting fields that craftspeople later struggled to define craft in the second half of the twentieth century.

The Second Industrial Revolution brought about major changes in the relationship between people and objects. Consumers were manipulated by the state and by capitalists – including business-minded craftspeople. In the late nineteenth century, when a glut of mass-produced objects replaced traditional ones in people's lives, objects began to be seen in a different way.<sup>20</sup> The historian, David Gross noted: 'For perhaps the first time in history ... people had the option of eliminating what seemed to be out of date.' He also observed that this development had challenged the value of tradition to the extent that 'the symbolic meanings attached to enduring things tended to be discredited.'<sup>21</sup> This implied that the objects that people had used in everyday life held recollections of 'long-standing traditions or collective

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<sup>17</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> *ibid.*, p.13. See also David Pye, *The Nature and Art of Workmanship*, London, 1995, pp.11-12.

<sup>19</sup> See Peter Gay, *Modernism: The Lure of Heresy: From Baudelaire to Beckett and Beyond*, London, 2007, p.298.

<sup>20</sup> Gross, p.44.

<sup>21</sup> *ibid.*

memories' and their loss disassociated these people from their past.<sup>22</sup> Gross called this 'a culture of forgetting', which was used by capitalists to promote obsolescence.<sup>23</sup> Alternatively, if there was a profit to be made, capitalists could harness tradition. Gross noted that: 'If ... the yearning for stability or continuity could be converted into the longing for the "good old days", and if the good old days could be identified with certain marketable products, then the need for tradition could be successfully drawn into the sphere of consumption.'<sup>24</sup>

Many twentieth century craftspeople were aware that the objects they created had only a tenuous link with the past, and were often used as decoration rather than employed for the purpose for which they had been designed. But they were encouraged by customer expectation, public perception and the need to prosper in a capitalist economy to promote the image of the (possibly rustic) artisan producing time-honoured objects to be used in the home.

They [craftspeople] depend on clients who may be "reacting against" mass-produced goods by investing in well-made, well-designed, scarce domestic objects; these clients may also be reacting against the wilder excesses of Modernism when they decide to own a piece of art which they understand and which is *tangible*.<sup>25</sup>

The craft industry could manipulate the market as successfully as any other capitalist enterprise.

### **The Pervasive Craftsman Myth**

Craftspeople also called on perceptions of earlier working environments. In Britain, in the second half of the nineteenth century, the founders of the Arts and Crafts movement – a group of upper-middle class intellectuals – revered medieval craft and made assumptions about how the artefacts that survived were produced and consumed. A set of contrasting images developed

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<sup>22</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> *ibid.*, p.73. See also Matthew B. Crawford, *Shop Class as Soulcraft: An Inquiry into the Value of Work*, New York, 2009, p.29.

<sup>25</sup> Christopher Frayling and Helen Snowden, 'The Myth of the Happy Artisan', *Crafts*, 54 Jan-Feb, 1982. Frayling and Snowden's italics.

between ‘the craftsman and the industrial worker’: one a happy artisan and the other an unhappy machine-minder.<sup>26</sup> In fact, craftspeople, ‘far from being typical workers of the past era, accounted for less than ten per cent of the medieval labour force,’ – peasant labourers formed the vast majority of the workers in those earlier societies.<sup>27</sup> The myth that most working people in medieval Britain practised some form of craft persisted through to the twentieth century. Educationalist and writer Christopher Frayling and MA student Helen Snowden observed that, ‘although craft pottery is today the most popular of handicrafts, it played a negligible part in the urban economy of Merrie England.’<sup>28</sup> They added:

Only in the countryside, where neither the work nor the products were subject to Guild inspection, did potters spend a significant proportion of their time serving the domestic needs of the local community by making vessels for the kitchen or the peasant’s hut. From the sixteenth century onwards, this kind of production was mainly based in small workshops and rural households.<sup>29</sup>

Frayling and Snowden were attempting to show that the image of the average pre-industrial worker, urban or rural, as a skilled craftsman was misleading.<sup>30</sup> The supposed contrast between a pre-industrial society, where high quality functional objects were lovingly made by hand and a satanic, post-industrial working environment became even more evident in the nineteenth century when a perceptible decline in handcraft skills was becoming evident. Frayling and Snowden, rather lyrically, describe how the social causes of this deterioration in quality were portrayed pictorially.

If we place a plate from Diderot and d’Alembert’s mid-eighteenth century Encyclopedia of a textile manufactory next to a late nineteenth century print of a textile machinofactory, the main difference is obvious. In the Encyclopedia plate, the weaver’s relationship to the loom

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<sup>26</sup> *ibid.*, p.17.

<sup>27</sup> Robert Blauner, ‘Work Satisfaction and Industrial Trends in Modern Society’, in Walter Galenson and Seymour Martin Lipset, eds, *Labor and Trade Unionism: An Interdisciplinary Reader*, New York, 1960, pp.352-5. See also Peter Dormer, ‘Wishful Thinking: A Thesis on Skill and the Studio Crafts’, PhD thesis, Royal College of Art, 1992, p.17.

<sup>28</sup> Frayling and Snowden, p.17. The term ‘Merrie England’ is used here in the ironic sense. Frayling and Snowden were suggesting that medieval England was not the ideal society that many people in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries believed it to be.

<sup>29</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> For example, see Alasdair Clayre, *Work and Play; Ideas and Experience of Work and Leisure*, London, 1974, p.155.

is that of a musician to a musical instrument; in the Victorian print, the weaver's relationship to the power loom is that of a cog or lever to the machine being operated.<sup>31</sup>

They also tried to show that notions about pre-industrial craftspeople being simple folk who used skills passed down from generation to generation to achieve beautiful results were exaggerated. However, they did acknowledge that there had been a loss of craft knowledge.<sup>32</sup>

The eighteenth century craftsmen were “not on the whole unlettered tinkers of historical mythology. Even the ordinary millwright was usually a fair mathematician, knew something of geometry, levelling and mensuration, and in some cases possessed a very competent knowledge of practical mathematics ...”<sup>33</sup>

Nevertheless, the notion that life for craftspeople in earlier times was, if not idyllic, then at least tranquil, and that the objects of the past were better in quality, remained strong well into the twentieth century – largely sustained by the writings of the founders of the Arts and Crafts movement. Frayling and Snowden observed: ‘[T]he myth of the happy artisan ... became part of a romantic reaction against the spread of industrial capitalism.’<sup>34</sup>

## **The Arts and Crafts Movement**

The founders of the Arts and Crafts movement wished to provide examples of everyday objects of beauty made by hand and to demonstrate how the working environment could be made more dignified for working-class craftsmen. The movement linked the apparent deterioration in people's lives with the loss of craft skills. Ann Calhoun summarized the romantic visions of work and life in pre-industrial Britain held by the founders of the movement:

[It] was not an art movement in which artists sought to display the world in new ways, but one that sought fundamental changes to the organisation of Victorian

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<sup>31</sup> Christopher Frayling and Helen Snowden, 'Skill – a Word to Start and Argument', *Crafts*, May-June, 1982, p.21.

<sup>32</sup> Craft 'knowledge' is employed here to refer to 'theoretical information' about craft, while 'skill' is used to refer to the ability of craftspeople to manipulate the materials they use – although 'knowledge' and 'skill' can both be employed in the theoretical and practical understanding of a subject. See John Simpson and Edmund Weiner, eds, *Official Oxford English Dictionary*, Oxford, 1989.

<sup>33</sup> Frayling and Snowden, 'Skill – a Word to Start and Argument'. Quote from David Landres, *The Unbound Prometheus*, Cambridge, 1969, pp.63, 104.

<sup>34</sup> Frayling and Snowden, 'The Myth of the Happy Artisan ', p.17.

society. The masses, “the people”, must be rescued from sub-human living and working conditions created by the Industrial Revolution. The movement developed a golden-tinged view of medieval life as simple, uncluttered and country-based, with the economy centred on the household as the dominant production unit. Handcraft was heralded as the ultimate redemptive mode of production and the restoration and preservation of medieval handicrafts became a national cause.<sup>35</sup>

John Ruskin and William Morris were two of the founders and the most prominent figures in the movement. Ruskin was the movement’s philosopher and visionary. Morris was one of those who picked up and amplified Ruskin’s ideas and later adapted them to his socialist ideals.<sup>36</sup> Morris was a talented designer who believed that hand-made crafts could provide happiness for both the maker and the user.<sup>37</sup> Unfortunately, during his lifetime, his aim was limited to a small number of working class craftspeople and only the rich could afford the craft produced in his workshop.<sup>38</sup>

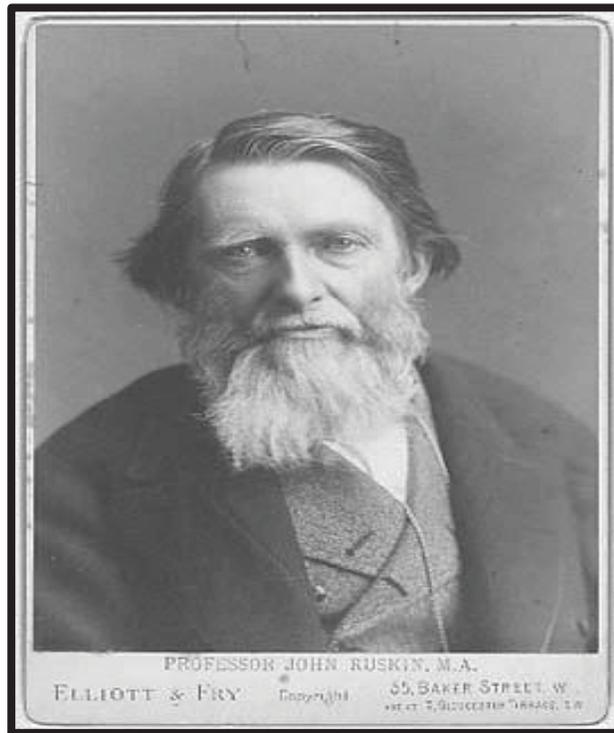
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<sup>35</sup> Ann Calhoun, *The Arts & Crafts Movement in New Zealand 1870 – 1940*, Auckland, 2000, p.16.

<sup>36</sup> Morris’s socialism had little influence in Australia and New Zealand because the movement was dominated by the middle class, see Grace Cochrane, *The Crafts Movement in Australia: A History*, Kensington NSW, 1992, pp.15-16.

<sup>37</sup> Philip Wood, 'Craft in Britain, 1971 to the Present: A Critical and Ideological Study', PhD thesis, Keele University, 1996, p.101.

<sup>38</sup> Diane Waggoner, ed., *The Beauty of Life: William Morris and the Art of Design*, London, 2003, p.167.



**Figure 1:** John Ruskin (1819 – 1900).<sup>39</sup>



**Figure 2:** William Morris (1834 – 1896).<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Photo: Elliot & Fry, London.

<sup>40</sup> Photo: *Marxist Writers: A Library of the Marxists Internet Archive*, 2009; available at: <http://www.marxists.org/archive/morris/photo/index.htm> (8 December 2009).

## Post-Arts and Crafts

By 1920 the Arts and Crafts movement in Britain had lost much of its sense of social reform and vision. But notions about craft supporting a more fulfilling life retained currency and ideas about how craft workshops might meet those needs had not completely disappeared. However, the professional craft workshop model, with individual craftspeople controlling the making process from design to completion, appeared to have succumbed to industrialisation.<sup>41</sup> As these types of workshops declined in number there had been a growth in interest in home-based hobbies amongst the expanding middle class. In this sense, there was a boom in handcrafts between the wars, but much of the socialist idealism that had inspired the founders of the Arts and Crafts movement had disappeared. The craft ideals that were a key component of the Arts and Crafts movement could no longer be found in the workplace environment – craft was no longer associated with ‘work’ – it was now mostly ‘leisure’.<sup>42</sup> Moreover, the objects made in the few remaining workshops producing Arts and Crafts inspired designs had not adapted to changing taste. In urbanised Britain, the public embraced Modernism which, in addition to radically altering the design of household items, may have replaced the social goals of the Arts and Crafts movement with a commitment to ‘harnessing industrialisation to the cause of social equality’.<sup>43</sup> A number of new art movements emerged from the Northern Hemisphere during the twentieth century but none influenced the development of studio craft in Britain or New Zealand to the same extent as the Arts and Crafts movement had with its linking of craft to the past and a formula for improving worker’s lives.<sup>44</sup>

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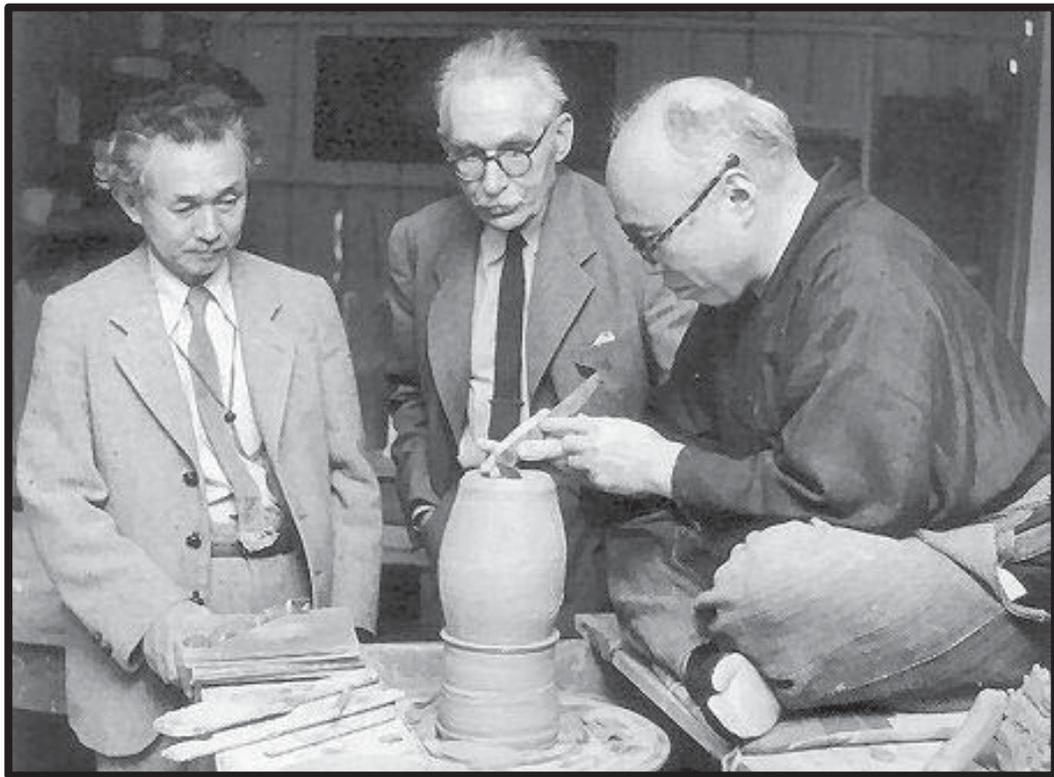
<sup>41</sup> Emmanuel Cooper, *A History of World Pottery*, 2nd. edn, London, 1981, p.177.

<sup>42</sup> Pat Kirkham, ‘Women and the Inter-war Handcrafts Revival’, in Judy Attfield and Pat Kirkham, eds, *A View from the Interior: Women and Design*, London, 1995, p.174.

<sup>43</sup> Julian Holder, ‘Design in Everyday Things’: Promoting Modernism in Britain’, in Paul Greenhalgh, ed., *Modernism in Design* London, 1990, p.125.

<sup>44</sup> The New Zealand International Exhibition of Arts and Industry held in Hagley Park in Christchurch during the summer of 1906 – 7 attracted nearly two million visitors. The collection of British Arts and Crafts on display was considered the best ever seen outside Britain. See Ann Calhoun, *Simplicity and Splendour: The Canterbury Arts & Crafts Movement from 1882*, Christchurch, 2004, p.8.

The movement may have lost its way and energy by the First World War, but its influence had not completely disappeared.<sup>45</sup> Rather, the idea lingered as a confused, nostalgic dream rather than a working movement.<sup>46</sup> For instance, Bernard Leach's association with Japanese ceramics saw a variation of the Arts and Crafts concept appear in Britain after 1952 when Shōji Hamada, a famous Japanese potter, began working at Leach's pottery in Cornwall and was introduced to the Arts and Crafts-inspired artistic community at Ditchling in Sussex.<sup>47</sup> The Arts and Crafts idea had survived much longer in Japan, becoming merged with the *Mingei* (Folk Crafts) movement – the original concept had mutated into a philosophy that idolised the anonymous craftsman.<sup>48</sup>



**Figure 3:** Sōetsu Yanagi (1889 – 1961) and Bernard Leach (1887 – 1979) watching Shōji Hamada (1894 – 1978) at work, c. 1950s.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>45</sup> Tanya Harrod, *The Crafts in Britain in the 20th Century*, New Haven, 1999, p.9.

<sup>46</sup> Pye, pp.62-3.

<sup>47</sup> Karen Livingstone and Linda Parry, eds, *International Arts and Crafts*, London, 2005, p.36.

<sup>48</sup> *ibid.*, p.296.

<sup>49</sup> Photo: Mike Sanderson, *Ceramike 2009*; available at: <http://www.ceramike.com/ceramike.asp> (10 December 2009). Sōetsu Yanagi provided the philosophical foundation of the *Mingei* movement, see Evans, 'Head, Heart and Hand', Chapter One.

## A Blending of Influences in New Zealand

In New Zealand, in a less urbanised environment with more moderate social divisions, Arts and Crafts ideas continued to influence some aspects of thinking on craft well into the twentieth century. In addition, the desire for simplicity of design and practical functionalism that was associated with Modernism in Britain was beginning to infiltrate art circles – although its acceptance was slow.<sup>50</sup> After the Second World War the studio craft movement in New Zealand formed around six major features that this blending produced. They included: craftspeople working collectively, sharing information and producing work based on their own designs;<sup>51</sup> Modernist ideas about the balancing of form and function; involving a wide section of the community including the establishment of clubs and societies;<sup>52</sup> a rural focus; traditions that came from England – a sense of ‘Englishness’;<sup>53</sup> and the foundation of both the Arts and Crafts movement and the studio crafts movement in times of prosperity.<sup>54</sup> However, within these features lay the seeds of later disputes between craftspeople in New Zealand. In Britain, the struggle for control of the craft movement and the future direction of craft began earlier than in New Zealand and was generally argued in a more informed – and acrimonious – manner. Here I discuss the arguments used by the protagonists because they show how craft was divided between those who looked to the Arts and Craft movement for guidance and those who believed that Modernism was where the future of craft lay. The discussion also establishes a framework for the debate in New Zealand.

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<sup>50</sup> Douglas Lloyd-Jenkins, *At Home: A Century of New Zealand Design*, Auckland, 2004, pp.164-211.

<sup>51</sup> Livingstone and Parry, eds, p.17.

<sup>52</sup> Anthea Callen, *Women Artists of the Arts and Crafts Movement 1870 – 1914*, New York, 1979, p.1.

<sup>53</sup> Lloyd-Jenkins, p.15. Many New Zealanders considered themselves British rather than English. ‘Britishness’ could be substituted for ‘Englishness’ in this sentence.

<sup>54</sup> Elizabeth Cumming and Wendy Kaplan, *The Arts and Crafts Movement*, London, 1991, p.7. See also Cooper, p.164.

## **The Struggle for Control in Britain: The Traditionalists and the *Avant-garde*<sup>55</sup>**

In Volume Nine of *The Cambridge Guide to the Arts in Britain*, and repeated in an article in the *Journal of Art and Design Education*, Christopher Frayling showed that while Arts and Crafts notions lingered on in Britain the concept of craft began to change after the Second World War. Frayling compared the experiences of an imaginary visitor to the Country Pavilion at the Festival of Britain in 1951 and the same visitor to the *Craftsmen's Art* exhibition at the Victoria and Albert Museum in 1973. At the first venue the visitor 'would have found nothing to challenge the popular definition of the crafts, derived distantly and not always accurately, from the thinking of John Ruskin, William Morris and the Arts and Crafts movement of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.'<sup>56</sup> The 1973 exhibition was described by Frayling as 'a celebration of craftsmen's *art* rather than the craftsmen's craft.'<sup>57</sup> Nevertheless, the catalogue introduction by the Vice-President (Europe) of the World Crafts Council (WCC), James Noel White, still acknowledged the importance of the Arts and Crafts movement.<sup>58</sup> The link with the past was still there, but the change over twenty years was significant – if not always welcome. It was the beginning of the conflict between what some British commentators called the 'traditionalists' and the '*avant-garde*' that would be repeated in New Zealand in the 1980s and 1990s.<sup>59</sup> What Frayling had observed and White had tried to contextualise was the encroachment of Modernism into the world of craft.

In Britain, at the beginning of the 1960s, the crafts community faced a crisis that was linked to the same conflicting interests that Wood had alluded to in

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<sup>55</sup> The term '*avant-garde*', described by Bruce Metcalf as a 'silly military metaphor', has been employed here because it was the term most commonly used by the protagonists. See Bruce Metcalf, 'Replacing the Myth of Modernism', *American Craft*, 53, 1, February, 1993, p.43. The term is generally employed as a means of distinguishing between progressive and innovative artists and craftspeople and those they considered reactionary, old-fashioned or bourgeois.

<sup>56</sup> Christopher Frayling, 'The Crafts', in Boris Ford, ed., *The Cambridge Guide to the Arts in Britain*, vol. 9, Cambridge, 1988, pp.169-70. See also Christopher Frayling, 'The Crafts in the 1990s', *Journal of Art and Design Education*, 9, 1, 1990, p.93.

<sup>57</sup> Ford, ed., p.170 and Frayling, 'The Crafts in the 1990s', p.94.

<sup>58</sup> Advisory Committee Crafts, 'The Craftsman's Art: Published on the Occasion of an Exhibition of New Work by British Craftsmen at the Victoria & Albert Museum', London, 1973, pp.7-12.

<sup>59</sup> Frayling claimed that in the 1970s, for the first time in the history of craft, an *avant-garde* [Frayling's expression] developed. Frayling, 'The Crafts in the 1990s', p.96.

his catalogue introduction. After the Second World War the Crafts Centre of Great Britain (Crafts Centre) gave the studio craft movement an organisation and a shop around which it could establish itself.<sup>60</sup> However, the Crafts Centre's representation of the crafts was restricted to work of 'fine craftsmanship'; it excluded 'rural and vernacular crafts' and 'trade crafts such as saddlery, watch-making or tool making'.<sup>61</sup> Furthermore, the Crafts Centre was required by the Board of Trade (BoT) and advisors from the Council of Industrial Design (CoID) to show that craft had a role in improving industrial design if it was to receive government funding.<sup>62</sup> This was an attempt to take the Modernist ideas that Walter Gropius had promoted at the Bauhaus in Germany between 1919 and 1933 and translate them into a practical example of art, craft and industry working together.<sup>63</sup> Gropius had stated that "the teaching of craft is meant to prepare for designing for mass-production."<sup>64</sup> This aspect of Gropius's philosophy did not eventuate at the Bauhaus – most of the work produced was 'marketed in small numbers at high prices'.<sup>65</sup> The craftspeople of the Arts and Crafts period had experienced the same problem – as did the Crafts Centre – but the notion of craftspeople and industry working together had a strong attraction for politicians who wanted to see a financial return for government support.

In 1961 an attempt was made to expand the role of the Crafts Centre, but the withdrawal of funding by the BoT in 1962 eventually led to a merging with the Crafts Advisory Committee (CAC), later renamed the Crafts Council (CCUK), in May 1972.<sup>66</sup> The CAC had been founded on 28 July 1971 by Lord David Eccles who used the term 'artist craftsman' in his speech, describing these individuals as those 'whose work really equals that of any artist in what one might describe as fine art; there are others who are really very nearly

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<sup>60</sup> The Crafts Centre of Great Britain was founded in 1948. See Tanya Harrod, *Factfile on the History of the Crafts Council*, ed., Charles Bourne, vol. 3, *Factfiles*, London, 1994, p.1.

<sup>61</sup> Harrod, *The Crafts in Britain in the 20th Century*, p.211.

<sup>62</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>63</sup> Cochrane, pp.31-2.

<sup>64</sup> Walter Gropius quoted in *ibid.*, p.32.

<sup>65</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>66</sup> Harrod, *The Crafts in Britain in the 20th Century*, p.381. The abbreviation CCUK has been used to distinguish this crafts council from the Crafts Council of New Zealand (CCNZ). The CCUK constituency however, covered only England and Wales.

industrial producers.<sup>67</sup> The term caused confusion, which the CAC tried to clarify in its first report: “Artist craftsman” describe[s] makers whose work “although often rooted in traditional techniques, has an aim which extends beyond the reproduction of past styles and methods.”<sup>68</sup> However, this did not clarify the role of craftspeople in relation to industry – an area where Modernism had had a major influence. In 1971 the CAC decided craft in Britain would cease ‘to be “officially” seen as part of industry but [would now become] a branch of the visual arts.’<sup>69</sup> There really was no going back. To have the support of the CAC a craftsperson was more likely to be producing art than functional craft, and industrial design was left to the CoID.



**Figure 4:** Lord David Eccles (1904 – 1999) was a supporter of ‘craft artists’. Having a powerful supporter such as Eccles could influence the future direction of craft.<sup>70</sup>

This change impacted on all areas of craft. Education in crafts in the 1960s had been based on traditional methods of training. The accomplished potter Michael Casson for instance, ‘insisted on the primacy of skill and technical

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<sup>67</sup> *ibid.*, p.369. Eccles later claimed that the use of the term was a mistake: ‘I overlooked it in the civil servants’ draft.’, see Dormer, p.19.

<sup>68</sup> Harrod, *The Crafts in Britain in the 20th Century*.

<sup>69</sup> Wood, p.3 and p.104.

<sup>70</sup> Photo: Phil Sayer, in Harrod, *Factfile on the History of the Crafts Council*, p.6. This photograph was first published in *Crafts*.

knowledge' in his course at Harrow School of Art.<sup>71</sup> However, by the 1970s and 1980s the term 'contemporary craftspeople' almost certainly meant that the holder of the title possessed a degree in art or design awarded by a tertiary institution that placed more emphasis on conceptual skills than craft skills. This 'transformed the activity [making craft] from being the province of the technically skilled ... to the realm of the intellectually and visually creative.'<sup>72</sup> For many new graduates this meant they were unlikely and unwilling to work in workshops producing function craft objects in a repetitive manner – coffee mugs, for instance. The change marked a paradigm shift in the way that craftspeople earned their living. In Britain, and to a lesser extent later in New Zealand, these changes in education had encouraged new crafts graduates to seek non-traditional sources of income, such as Arts Council grants, or to find work within tertiary education institutions. Peter Dormer called them 'quasi-traditional' – craftspeople who employed craft processes and designs that could be traced back to ancient history but were supported by an economic infrastructure that bore little resemblance to earlier times.<sup>73</sup>

Both sides in the traditional/*avant-garde* debate developed entrenched positions in the defence of the notion of craft they supported. Traditionalists spoke of continuity and solace in a changing world, while those supporting the *avant-garde* emphasised creative expression.<sup>74</sup> Both groups tended to locate their position within a static world and refused to acknowledge that all forms of cultural production are 'conditioned by wider social conditions operative at particular moments in history.'<sup>75</sup> For instance, those who believed that the future of craft lay with the craft artist portrayed traditional understanding of craft as contradictory: 'To enthusiasts of the city and the machine age [supporters of Modernism], the taste for crafts appear[ed]' both

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<sup>71</sup> Wood, p.122.

<sup>72</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>73</sup> Peter Dormer, 'The Appearance of Craft', *Craft History*, No. 1, 1988, p.73.

<sup>74</sup> Wood, p.3.

<sup>75</sup> *ibid.*

'regressive and elitist.'<sup>76</sup> The traditionalists, of course, also accused the supporters of the *avant-garde* of elitism because of their art school training.

### **The Frayling/Fuller Debate**

The debate between the two sides became increasingly acrimonious. An attempt was made to settle it in the mid-1980s in a series of debates held over three days in April and May 1985 at the Institute of Contemporary Arts in London. Collectively called 'The Crafts in Question', the debates were, according to the one commentator, well attended and lively but, reflecting the prevailing intransigence, ultimately disappointing.<sup>77</sup> Christopher Frayling was critical of the public's understanding of what craft was and blamed the way that it had been portrayed by those who supported the traditional view. He separated this image of craft into projections<sup>78</sup> and realities:

[The projections are] handmade by individuals in natural materials, are functional, rural, easily understood, affordable [and] wholesome. But, in reality they can be: machine-made in synthetic materials, non-functional, limited production, urban, high-fashion, transient [and] expensive.<sup>79</sup>

Frayling, somewhat sarcastically, amplified these definitions in a tongue-in-cheek list in a 1988 book.<sup>80</sup> He believed that the divisions were related to reactionary attitudes towards the CCUK and art school training and they were holding back craft in Britain. Projections, he said:

survive in the realm of the non-art school-trained, in 'Morriland' and the 'complete works of Peter Fuller.' The realities were the Crafts Council and the art school-trained. Both views spring from the inherited nineteenth century values: the former clings to the tradition, the latter is released from it.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> John Walker, *Design History and the History of Design*, London, 1989, p.42.

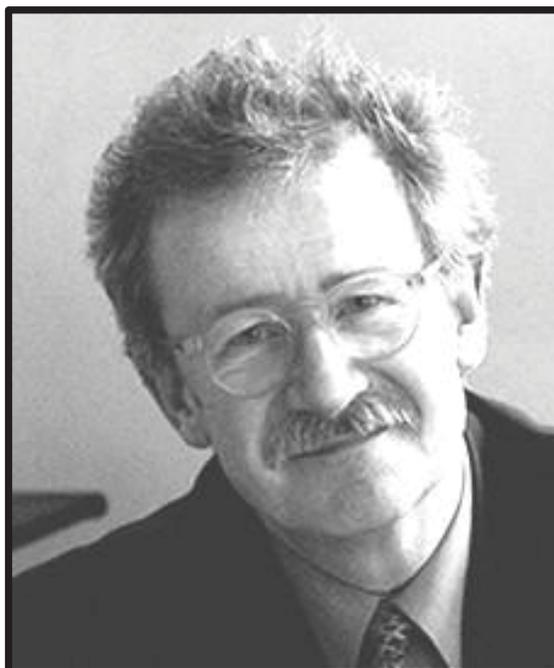
<sup>77</sup> Pamela Johnson, 'The Crafts in Question', *Crafts*, July / August 1985, p.12.

<sup>78</sup> Sir Christopher Frayling defined 'projections' as, 'the tendency of critics and journalists from outside the craft world to "project" values onto the processes of making. Ethical values, political and social values, historical assumptions etc.' He added: 'I felt that the crafts were being "used" in ways most makers would not and did not recognise – usually as a way of bashing developments in contemporary art.' Sir Christopher Frayling, email to the author, 9 February 2010.

<sup>79</sup> Pamela Johnson, 'The Crafts in Question', *Crafts*, July/August, 1985.

<sup>80</sup> For the full list see Appendix 1 and Ford, ed., pp.169-70.

<sup>81</sup> Johnson, 'The Crafts in Question'.



**Figure 5:** Professor Sir Christopher Frayling was critical of the nostalgia that surrounded craft in Britain.<sup>82</sup>

Peter Fuller, an art critic, magazine editor and ‘champion of the Arts and Crafts creed’,<sup>83</sup> did not respond directly to Frayling at the meeting but defended ‘projections’ in a book in 1985.<sup>84</sup> Looking back over the previous ten years of the studio craft movement, he wrote that ‘the problem which all craftsmen and women face is that ... there is no shared symbolic order.’<sup>85</sup> It was the same criticism Leach had made in the 1940s,<sup>86</sup> but by the 1980s, in Fuller’s opinion, it had taken a new and disturbing direction. He believed that many craftspeople were lapsing ‘into whims, fancies and novelties of extreme and unrestrained subjectivity.’<sup>87</sup> He blamed the CCUK for creating:

the category of ‘The Artist-Crafts Person’ ... [who] are encouraged to spend slender public resources for craft work on ‘experimental productions’ (e.g. ‘embroidery’ on wooden play-frames; ‘jewellery’, which is not even intended to be worn, made in ugly synthetic materials; and

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<sup>82</sup> Photo: Copyright Royal College of Art. University of Brighton, 2009; available at: <http://www.brighton.ac.uk/news/2009/090724honorarygraduates.php?PageId=804> (6 December 2009).

<sup>83</sup> Wood, p.152.

<sup>84</sup> Peter Fuller, *Images of God: The Consolations of Lost Illusions*, London, 1985.

<sup>85</sup> *ibid.*, p.232. Fuller, an atheist, was referring to Christianity and used the building of cathedrals as an example of the benefits of shared symbolic order.

<sup>86</sup> Bernard Leach, *A Potter’s Book*, London, 1940, p.1.

<sup>87</sup> Fuller, p.232.

monstrously distorted ‘ceramic sculpture’, in place of pottery) which serve no practical or aesthetic needs whatever.<sup>88</sup>

He also condemned the art school education of the 1970s for undermining both skill and spirituality in art.<sup>89</sup> He called for a national policy that encouraged craft traditions and workshop production, although he acknowledged that some way needed to be found to support ‘*convincing*’ craftwork ‘which went beyond the practically functional.’<sup>90</sup> His solution to the conflict harked back to Morris – an overlapping of the aesthetic and the functional “‘within appropriate industrial process’”.<sup>91</sup>

Fuller had become disillusioned with conceptual art and was hoping that craft would provide the skill and continuity that appeared to him to have been lost by the *avant-garde* of fine art.<sup>92</sup> He was disappointed to find that craft appeared to be heading in the same direction – ‘Morrisland’ was beginning to look like the last line of defence.

Frayling was aware that the ideas of the Arts and Crafts movement had long ago disappeared from the minds of the general public who had supported the traditional crafts and his appeal was to the small number of influential middle-class people, many of whom had been educated in art schools.<sup>93</sup> He suggested that anyone not trained in an art school could not appreciate the new role that craft had in British society and would not buy the craft art the graduate created. Therefore the *avant-garde* would need government support. This was an ironic statement by Frayling given the claims that this group would ‘challenge’ the British public. Both Frayling and Fuller were speaking to a very small audience. Frayling’s view appeared to dominate and seemed complete – in the education sector at least – when the Education

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<sup>88</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>89</sup> Harrod, *The Crafts in Britain in the 20th Century*, p.422.

<sup>90</sup> Fuller, p.232. Fuller’s italics

<sup>91</sup> *ibid.*, p.233.

<sup>92</sup> Harrod, *The Crafts in Britain in the 20th Century*, p.409.

<sup>93</sup> Wood, pp.151-2.

Reform Act of 1988 removed the term 'craft' from Craft, Design and Technology classes in schools.<sup>94</sup>



**Figure 6:** Peter Fuller (1947 – 1990) became disillusioned with conceptual art<sup>95</sup>

### The Craft Community Responds

In the studios of Britain however, support for the CCUK's initiative, as advanced by Frayling, was much more limited. Two years before 'The Crafts in Question' debate the CCUK had carried out a survey of 20,000 independent professional craftspeople called *Working in Crafts*.<sup>96</sup> In response to the statement 'The Crafts Council is too arts-minded', 58 percent agreed. Furthermore, a similar number supported the statement, 'Carrying on a tradition is important to me'.<sup>97</sup> Part-timers were less supportive and Frayling attributed that to their position within the education community – 26 percent of the respondents were categorised as teachers.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> *ibid.*, pp.127-8.

<sup>95</sup> Photo: *Art Influence: The Peter Fuller Memorial Foundation*, 2009; available at: <http://www.artinfluence.com/PeterFuller.html> (6 December 2009).

<sup>96</sup> 'Working in Crafts: An Independent Socio-Economic Study of Craftsmen and Women in England and Wales, prepared for the Crafts Council', 1983.

<sup>97</sup> Frayling in Ford, ed., p.172.

<sup>98</sup> *ibid.*

The threat to craft may have been more wide-spread than the two squabbling groups realised and the CCUK, rather than favouring one form of craft over another, may have been fighting to stave off a greater threat. Terry Smith, a professor of Contemporary Art at the University of Sydney, for instance, suggested that the ‘basic drives of mass production/consumption modernity [were] not simply craft-indifferent, they [were] anti-craft.’<sup>99</sup> He wrote that attacks on craft were seen as the triumph of:

mass production/consumption modernity ... which left craft as the obvious signifier of modernity’s opposite: tradition. All the basic elements of craft – learning through apprenticeships, accumulated knowledges of past practice, individual conception, ingenious adaptation, adjustments between utility and decoration, fashioning by hand, tooling skills, close community of taste – were displaced from the centres of our working, public, domestic and private lives.<sup>100</sup>

Smith dated the start of this displacement from the 1920s and identified the public success of craft councils in Britain and Australia in the 1970s as a sign of resistance.<sup>101</sup> Crafts councils, the same group that Fuller believed were destroying craft, represented, according to Smith, ‘truly marginalised craftwork’.<sup>102</sup>

Frayling’s promotion of the *avant-garde*, ironically, may have also been a form of defence against a larger threat. His advocacy of a change of direction was a means of ensuring the survival of crafts against the flood of well-designed, competitively priced, factory produced items from Europe – particularly Scandinavia – that appealed to an increasingly urbanised population. Modernism, with its emphasis on minimal decoration and clean lines, may have had the ‘dead hand of the machine’ according to John Wood, but in Europe at least, products for the home were created by some of the most talented designers in the world. The idea of high quality, mass-produced items for the home, originally proposed by Gropius at the Bauhaus,

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<sup>99</sup> Terry Smith, ‘Craft, Modernity and Postmodernity’, in Sue Rowley, ed., *Craft and Contemporary Theory*, St. Leonards, Australia, 1997, p.18.

<sup>100</sup> *ibid.*, pp.19-20.

<sup>101</sup> *ibid.*, p.24.

<sup>102</sup> *ibid.*

had supporters amongst post-Second World War craft theorists as well. David Pye, Professor of Furniture Design at the Royal College of Art in London, could confidently say in 1968 that whereas, in the past, “mass-production”, generally made things of worse quality than the best that could be done by ... [hand] ... That is far from true now. ... [hand-made] has no exclusive prerogative of quality.’<sup>103</sup> The high quality products of Europe’s factories were a threat to handcraft. Frayling’s suggested form of defence was *not* to compete but to launch craft in a completely different direction – as a branch of art.

### **Conflicting Influences and Ideas**

Most of the people who became involved in making handcraft after the Second World War were not producing objects that would have been indistinguishable from Arts and Crafts designs; nor were they replicating the minimalist objects that were created in the Modernist art schools of Europe. New Zealand potters, weavers and other craftspeople looked to the local environment for materials – often because they could not be imported – and looked to famous craftspeople such as Bernard Leach for inspiration. Their work was often rough and imperfect, which, according to Peter Cape, was a reaction to the ‘dehumanising process of the machine’.<sup>104</sup> To some extent then, this was the beginnings of a movement that looked back to earlier ideas about the role of craft in society, but was also looking to how it might develop in the future – and develop a uniquely New Zealand quality. When John Wood wrote the opening remarks to the 1961 catalogue his observations were based on the influences I have discussed above – and they were predominantly British.

## **New Zealand Craft Traditions**

The second strand that influenced the studio craft movement were the skills that lingered on in industry and in the rural environment from earlier times and the craft skills used in the homes and hobby workshops of New

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<sup>103</sup> Pye, p.7.

<sup>104</sup> Peter Cape, *Artists and Craftsmen in New Zealand*, Auckland, 1969, p.10.

Zealand.<sup>105</sup> In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, craft in New Zealand was understood to be a part of two distinct social locations – work and leisure. In industry and agriculture the skills that were most valuable were those that contributed to the productivity of the particular business. At home skills often were centred on product substitution or repairs and were not measured in financial terms. Hobbyists usually did not expect a financial reward for their work. Later craftspeople in their attempts to understand where they were located in society in relation to the trades and the arts had to determine where the studio crafts had emerged from.

### **Craft and Work**

In industry or agriculture, craft was associated with a high level of skill or as a form of demarcation between workers. In this environment craft was an occupation that had a semi-formal structure of training and a hierarchy based on skill and experience. Furthermore, a craftspeople's position in society could be categorised by their working relationships. For instance, when a skilled person worked for themselves or hired staff they, 'left the working class'.<sup>106</sup> Higher levels of skill became a signifier of greater social standing and could lead to self-employment and the title 'employer' – although economic circumstances tended to make these positions very fluid. To ensure that this system was not degraded within the workplace, communities of skilled workers formed craft unions, sometimes called guilds.<sup>107</sup> These generally consisted of workers who had served an apprenticeship or, through many years of practical experience, had gained a high level of skill.<sup>108</sup> The union's (guild's) role was to protect the status of their members against all other workers. This type of demarcation existed from the 1880s through to

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<sup>105</sup> Douglas Lloyd-Jenkins has suggested that this is where most craftwork took place. See Lloyd-Jenkins, p.58.

<sup>106</sup> Judi Boyd and Erik Olssen, 'The Skilled Workers: Journeymen and the Masters in Caversham, 1880 – 1914', *New Zealand Journal of History*, 22, 2, 1988, p.124.

<sup>107</sup> The use of the word 'guild' was evident in both the Arts and Crafts movement and the studio craft movement. For instance see NZP, 5, 2, 1962, p. 56. It has been suggested that it was based on the romanticised view these groups had of medieval craft associations. See Susan G. Wood, 'Creative Embroidery in New South Wales, 1960 – 1975', PhD thesis, Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology University, 2006, p.74. Also see Lucie-Smith, pp.264-5.

<sup>108</sup> James Belich, *Paradise Reforged: A History of the New Zealanders from the 1880s to the Year 2000*, Auckland, 2001, p.134.

the 1920s.<sup>109</sup> It is beyond the scope of this thesis to detail the many layers of demarcation that existed from the 1880s but it is relevant to note that craftsmen were not only politically active in protecting workers' rights, they were also very adaptable to changing economic circumstances. When industrialisation and 'scientific management' threatened their working environment craftsmen often became factory owners or became privileged workers or managers.<sup>110</sup>

By the 1920s, larger industries in New Zealand had become departmentalised although, of course, many small craft workshops had employed some form of division of labour since medieval times.<sup>111</sup> It was this aspect of industrial organisation, on a large scale, that hastened the downgrading of craft skills to the greatest extent. Some businesses did retain the old craft skills – even if they sometimes could not be justified in economic terms – often to add a sense of tradition to their enterprise or to suggest a level of quality through the use of the term 'handmade' in advertising. For instance, 'throwers', as the craftspeople that made pottery by hand on a wheel were called, were still employed at industrial potteries such as Timaru Pottery and Crown Lynn Pottery for as long as the businesses existed.<sup>112</sup> It was generally these skilled craftspeople that kept old knowledge alive. Few craftspeople working independently in clay, fibre, glass, wood and metal, producing individually designed items, could earn a living between the wars therefore their skills were often not fully developed. The future studio craftspeople sought out the few remaining trade craftspeople to learn the skills they needed – as was the case for the pioneer potter Briar Gardner who watched the British potter William Speer make pottery at her family's brickworks.<sup>113</sup> Some crafts continued to be practised in homes and workshops and in a few tertiary training institutions, such as teachers'

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<sup>109</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>110</sup> *ibid.*, pp.134-5.

<sup>111</sup> Lucie-Smith, p.264.

<sup>112</sup> Gail Henry, *New Zealand Pottery: Commercial and Collectable*, Auckland, 1999, p.75 and p.197. For more on the production of hand-made pottery by commercial potteries see Chapter Five.

<sup>113</sup> Justine Olsen in Charlotte Macdonald, Merimeri Penfold, and Bridget Williams, eds, *The Book of New Zealand Women. Ko Kui Ma Te Kaupapa*, Wellington, 1991, p.226.

colleges where basic courses were taught, but rarely by the skilled craftspeople who worked in industry.

## Craft and Leisure

Leisure was, for working people at least, from the end of the nineteenth century a by-product of the reorganisation of work.<sup>114</sup> The move from craft as work to craft as leisure brought with it questions of morality. William Morris proposed that leisure could be considered in two ways. One was as non-work or free time, and another as an extension of work, or voluntary labour. In both cases leisure was a form of rest, but in the first it implied inactivity or, more precisely, any pastime which did not have a manual component. In the second, by contrast, leisure was productive. In Victorian society work was considered morally uplifting and Morris preferred the second form of leisure – voluntary labour – to the first. Free time spent inactively, he claimed, ‘was work’s least important reward.’<sup>115</sup> After the First World War crafts were still evolving from work to leisure activities. Leisure-time used productively, even if it was only filling ‘empty spaces’, was preferable to bored and disaffected people getting up to mischief such as fermenting social or political unrest.<sup>116</sup>

The approval of work as a form of leisure persisted throughout the twentieth century. American historian, Steven M. Gelber, observed that hobbies ‘appear[ed] to ... experience an unprecedented growth in public acceptance in the United States during the great depression.’<sup>117</sup> It is reasonable to expect, given the similarity of the two societies, that a growth of interest in hobbies occurred in New Zealand between the wars as well, although there has been little research into the subject and certainly craft hobbies are amongst the lacuna.<sup>118</sup> Gelber suggested that the two main reasons for the growth during the depression were that people, if they were unemployed or

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<sup>114</sup> Kenneth Roberts, *Leisure in Contemporary Society*, 2nd edn, Wallingford, 2006, p.1.

<sup>115</sup> Ruth Kinna, 'William Morris: Art, Work, and Leisure', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 61, 3, 2000, pp.495-6.

<sup>116</sup> Attfield and Kirkham, eds, p.176.

<sup>117</sup> Steven M. Gelber, 'A Job You Can't Lose: Work and Hobbies in the Great Depression', *Journal of Social History*, 24, 4, 1991, p.741. Craft in America could include craft kits – pre-made items often assembled and decorated by amateurs – that do not appear to have been a feature of craft in New Zealand. Steven Gelber, email to the author, 20 August 2008.

<sup>118</sup> Harvey Perkins and Bob Gidlow, 'Leisure Research in New Zealand: Patterns, Problems and Prospects', *Leisure Studies*, 10, 1991, pp.93-100.

underemployed, had more time and, even if employed, had less money and had to make do.<sup>119</sup> At a deeper level he suggested that with declining hours being worked throughout the century, because of technological advances, those in authority, as in Britain, believed that hobbies were preferable to people filling their time 'with useless and morally dangerous activity. Hobbies were recommended [because] they allowed participants to exercise and/or learn a variety of skills and attitudes that would make them more fulfilled and more productive.'<sup>120</sup> Furthermore he noted that:

It was not merely that successful hobbyists needed attitudes similar to successful workers, although it was assumed that they did, but that hobbies brought the best part of the world of work into the world of leisure, thereby blurring the boundary between the two categories.<sup>121</sup>

In New Zealand hobbies were recommended as a means of relaxation. It was even suggested that women could learn from men:

It is a duty to yourself to spend some time each day in doing something which is not really **necessary**, but which you enjoy. Nearly all men have their hobbies. After a weary day full of strain and worry, our brothers and husbands rest by doing something quite different – something demanding a fresh mental outlook and varied actions. Therefore, men are more tranquil as a rule, far calmer and more philosophical than we are.<sup>122</sup>

By the 1950s hobbies had been a part of Western culture for over a hundred years. They were productive and relaxing and therefore were an accepted means of filling in spare time. For some who 'took up crafts' as a hobby, such as this writer, they evolved into full-time work.

## **Craft and Necessity**

Running in parallel with work as leisure was a type of craftwork of necessity<sup>123</sup> – a hidden world of craft.<sup>124</sup> The 'making do' approach to

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<sup>119</sup> Gelber, p.742.

<sup>120</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>121</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>122</sup> Sheila G. Marshall, 'Leisure Hours', *The New Zealand Railways Magazine*, 6, 7, 1 February 1932, p.58. Marshall's bold font.

<sup>123</sup> Rosemary McLeod, *Thrifty to Fantasy: Home Textile Crafts of the 1930s – 1950s*, Auckland, 2005, pp.30-2.

handwork became an important aspect of the home, particularly during the depression of the 1930s.<sup>125</sup> Manufactured goods were expensive in New Zealand and the productive function of the family retained some importance.<sup>126</sup> The production of supplementary items for the household did not include such materials as clay, metal or glass but items produced in fabric, made almost always by women, and wood, usually by men, freed up funds for imported ware or to meet other family needs while leather workers were required to produce and maintain farm equipment. Many items made in the home were exchanged in barter arrangements and would often be sold at fairs to raise funds for schools, churches and welfare organisations. Furthermore, there was the possibility of earning at least part of the family income from this source or for women to gain some financial independence.

The idea of women from all sections of society, and not only working-class women, earning a living in this way was not new. Susan Wood, in a PhD thesis, noted that in England, in the late nineteenth century numerous organisations provided 'impoverished gentlewomen' with employment as needleworkers.<sup>127</sup> The intention of these organisations was to assist women in earning an income by working in their own homes or in sympathetic company.<sup>128</sup> In some cases this work was displayed, leading to the belief that this was a precursor to the exhibition of women's craft after the Second World War. Lyn Walker believed that Arts and Crafts organisations offered a way for women, especially single, middle-class women, to participate in the public sphere and that for many women this led to personal and financial independence of a kind that had not been possible before.<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> Jennifer Isaacs in Ruth Lorna Lee, 'Our Fingers Were Never Idle: Women and Domestic Craft in the Geelong Region, 1900-1960', MA thesis, Deakin University 1993, p.2.

<sup>125</sup> Eve Ebbett, *Victoria's Daughters: New Zealand Women of the Thirties*, Wellington, 1981, pp.1-3 and pp.68-73.

<sup>126</sup> Jock Phillips, *A Man's Country?: The Image of the Pakeha Male, a History*, Auckland, 1996, pp.222-27. Also see Gary S. Cross, *A Social History of Leisure since 1600*, Pennsylvania, 1990, p.205.

<sup>127</sup> Working-class women were more likely to be called seamstresses.

<sup>128</sup> Wood, 'Creative Embroidery in New South Wales, 1960 – 1975', p.71.

<sup>129</sup> Lyn Walker, 'The Arts and Crafts Alternative', in Attfield and Kirkham, eds, p.166.

## More than just a Hobby

In New Zealand, the association of craft with productive work and hobbies afforded it a respectability that made it acceptable for people to take up craft – particularly when interest became more widespread after the Second World War. But first we look at craftspeople who practised their craft between the wars. Amongst these people were a small number of individuals who demonstrated a dedication to their craft that suggested it was more than a casual leisure-time interest. Robert A. Stebbins defined ‘serious leisure’ in the following way.

Serious leisure is the systematic pursuit of an amateur, hobbyist, or volunteer core activity that people find so substantial, interesting and fulfilling that, in the typical case, they launch themselves on a (leisure) career centered on acquiring and expressing a combination of its special skills, knowledge, and experience.<sup>130</sup>

In some cases – possibly because so few made this level of commitment or because, in the case of women, their role within one particular craft was unusual – they achieved recognition after the Second World War as the forerunners of the studio craft movement. Furthermore, because they were identified in later articles and books as ‘pioneers’,<sup>131</sup> they came to represent the founding faces of the studio craft movement for later craftspeople who were searching for a New Zealand craft tradition. For instance, a 1981 article about the potter, Elizabeth Lissaman, who made her first pot in 1920, and during the Depression became the primary earner for her family, used the title “Grandmother” of potting in reference to her.<sup>132</sup> Along with the Māori craftspeople discussed later, the individuals below – and a number of others – had their contribution recognised by their inclusion in the *Dictionary of New*

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<sup>130</sup> Robert A. Stebbins, *Serious Leisure: A Perspective for Our Time*, New Brunswick, 2006, p.5.

<sup>131</sup> See note 6 above. See also Olive Jones, 'Olive Jones Pioneer Potter', *New Zealand Potter*, 20, 1, 1978, p.11.

<sup>132</sup> Elizabeth Lissaman, 'Looking Back over Sixty Years Potting ', *New Zealand Potter*, 23, 2 1981, p.33. See also Moyra Elliott and Damian Skinner, *Cone Ten Down: Studio Pottery in New Zealand, 1945 - 1980*, Auckland, 2009, p.31.

*Zealand Biography*, thus establishing a history for the craft movement that evolved from their efforts.<sup>133</sup>

## **The Pioneers**

The pre-war ‘pioneers’ devoted much time to teaching themselves skills that had largely disappeared from the local community, and sourcing materials that were in short supply – often resorting to manufacturing their own.

Frequently, both men and women had to make sacrifices for their craft and only very rarely could they generate enough income to support themselves and truly move beyond the amateur. Men were expected to be ‘providers’ for their families and because pursuing an interest in craft would not provide sufficient income to achieve this most men would not have considered craft as a realistic career option. Women were more involved with craft but they also would rarely have considered craft as a career. Furthermore, they could seldom share with others with similar interests and often the only clubs or societies they could join were local art societies – organisations dominated by painters and sculptors. The only other association with craft was as a leisure activity. For men and women working in the arts profession, as practitioners or educators, interest in crafts was acceptable, provided it did not detract from ‘real art’ – painting and sculpture.

Many of these early craftspeople only became known to later generations of studio craftspeople and the wider public through articles in craft magazines and exhibition catalogues. Their appearance in this literature suggests the movement was attempting to contextualise its formation and establish a history. In 1999 for instance, Rodney Wilson, the Director of Auckland Museum, stated in the foreword to a catalogue for an exhibition of the weaving of the Mulvany sisters that: ‘Ten years ago, the Mulvany sisters were virtually unknown, even among New Zealand’s weaving community.’<sup>134</sup> The craftspeople profiled below, to a greater or lesser extent, all experienced a degree of anonymity during the time they were practising, but largely

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<sup>133</sup> Diggeress Te Kanawa is not included because her death occurred in 2009 and the biographies cover those in print up to 2000.

<sup>134</sup> T. L. Rodney Wilson, ‘Foreword’ in Angela Lassig and Lyndsay Fenwick, eds, *The Mulvany Sisters: Weaving & Other Adventures*, Auckland, 1999, p.xii.

because of their dedication they later provided points of reference for the studio craft movement and gained some recognition.

What follows is not a roll call of the craftspeople who had an influence on the later movement, or a list of crafts<sup>135</sup> that many practised, but rather a small sample that outlines the different ways the pioneers were introduced to craft, how they learned their craft, how they shared their knowledge, how their careers progressed and how different crafts received different levels of support. Later craftspeople often followed similar paths, but usually had better support and could access better equipment. Nevertheless, the pioneers often expressed a sense of fulfilment when questioned about the apparent hardships they endured.<sup>136</sup> Above all however, I have presented their stories here to show how both craft and art influenced their development. Their stories offered later craftspeople examples of how craft could be part of the intersecting worlds of craft and art.

The fact that practitioners in some media, such as clay and fibre, dominate the records recognises the larger numbers involved then and since; the strength of overseas influences on some crafts; and the ability of some craftspeople to earn a living practising crafts such as pottery. The dominance of pottery, for instance, continued during the Second World War, because imports of British pottery could not be guaranteed, and partly explains the strong position that pottery held in the craft world after the war. Weaving had the potential to provide a means of artistic expression and had been an important part of craft programmes in schools. These developments resulted in the history of pottery and weaving, for instance, being given more attention in the literature on craft.<sup>137</sup> It is only in recent times that the 'humbler' crafts

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<sup>135</sup> For a comprehensive list of crafts compiled by the CCUK in 1983 see Appendix 2. Many of these crafts were practised in New Zealand.

<sup>136</sup> The potter, Briar Gardner, claimed that 'given another chance she would take the primitive way all over again.' See Margaret Milne, 'Briar Gardner', *New Zealand Potter*, 9, 2, 1967, p.41.

<sup>137</sup> For example Peter Cape gave 48% of his book *Please Touch* to pottery, weaving and jewellery and 6% to what he called 'the humble arts' - woodwork, furniture making, leatherworking, cane-work, bone carving, musical instruments and others. See Peter Cape, *Please Touch. A Survey of the Three-Dimensional Arts in New Zealand*, Auckland, 1980, pp.66-150.

such as tapestry, quilting, spinning and knitting – considered crafts largely associated with women and the home – have had more attention from historians.<sup>138</sup> Jane Clifton, a feature writer in the *New Zealand Listener*, suggested that: ‘until recently, these items [quilts] were mocked as kitsch. Now, they’re widely admired and increasingly emulated’,<sup>139</sup> although, as will be seen in Chapter Six, the rise of feminism in the 1970s had raised awareness of these crafts earlier than Clifton suggests.

## Clay

The pioneer potters came from a variety of backgrounds and had a range of training – no apprenticeships were available prior to the 1960s.<sup>140</sup> They often started pottery following some art education experience and looked to Britain as the best source. Some became teachers of pottery and taught the generation that achieved recognition as New Zealand’s best potters after the Second World War. A number who were well versed in the history of art and design would have had some inkling of where their work sat in relationship to the Arts and Crafts Movement and Modernism. Others were more likely to be following a more instinctive approach to their craft. Many worked in isolation and earned most of their income from pottery, while others worked for wages during the day and made pottery during their non-work time. Some dedicated themselves to becoming ‘full-time’ potters but others always considered pottery an ‘extra’. To some extent, all believed their work to be a form of art but most produced pottery that could be used in the home.

## Olive Jones (1893 – 1982)

Three articles about Olive Jones in the *New Zealand Potter* magazine (1960, 1978 and 1995) give an indication of how the pioneers grew in stature over time. The 1960 article was written by Jones in the third person and presents an overview of the history of pottery in Auckland in which she pays tribute to

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<sup>138</sup> For instance, see Heather Nicholson, *The Loving Stitch: A History of Knitting and Spinning in New Zealand*, Auckland, 1998 and McLeod.

<sup>139</sup> Jane Clifton, 'Sew What!', *New Zealand Listener*, 9 – 15 August 2008, p.21.

<sup>140</sup> A number of apprentices started their apprenticeships at Waimea Pottery during the 1960s, but only one, Royce McGlashen, completed the training. Most training after the war was in night classes and weekend schools. See Evans, 'Head, Heart and Hand', p.44.

the early potters such as Briar Gardner.<sup>141</sup> The 1978 article was written in the first person and was largely concerned with her development as a potter. It outlined her training in England in the early 1930s, how she established her studio on her return to Auckland and how wartime shortages helped with sales.<sup>142</sup> The telling is simple and is not embellished with a philosophy of craft. The 1995 article, 'The Pioneers, Olive Jones 1890 – 1990' [sic] by John Parker repeats her life-story and adds in the final paragraph: 'From the thirties she helped establish a sympathetic climate of attitude and interest in pottery, which provided a solid groundbase [sic] for the craft revival boom of the sixties.'<sup>143</sup>

Jones was one of only two potters working independently of the ceramics industry in the Auckland area in the 1930s and 1940s. She attended Elam School of Art but first saw pottery being made on a potter's wheel in Australia. Following her sister, Gwenda to Britain, she enrolled at the London County Council Central School of Arts and Crafts and took night classes at Camberwell School of Arts and Crafts where she met Robert Field (discussed below). Olive Jones set up her studio in 1934 in Auckland, dug her own clay and continued to make pottery through to the early-1980s. Her tenacity is evident from this comment by John Parker. 'After her sudden death in 1983 [sic] at 89, there were still some leather hard pieces wrapped in plastic by her wheel, waiting patiently to be turned and finished for the next firing.'<sup>144</sup> A retrospective exhibition of her work was held at the annual exhibition of the Auckland Studio Potters in 1979.<sup>145</sup> Olive Jones, through her persistence and her position as an early starter, became a matriarch of pottery and provided a continuous link from pre-war craft to the post-war studio craft movement.

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<sup>141</sup> Briar Gardner is discussed in more detail in Chapter Five.

<sup>142</sup> Jones. See also Sandra Coney in Macdonald, Penfold, and Williams, eds, pp.331-34.

<sup>143</sup> John Parker, 'The Pioneers: Olive Jones, 1890 - 1990 [sic]', *New Zealand Potter*, 37, 3, December 1995, p.11. Olive Jones died on 26 December, 1982.

<sup>144</sup> *ibid.*, p.11.

<sup>145</sup> John Parker, *Jones, Olive Emily, 1893 - 1982* 22 June, 2007; available at: <http://www.dnz.govt.nz/dnzb/> (25 August 2008).



**Figure 7:** Olive Jones (1893 – 1982).<sup>146</sup>

### **Robert Nettleton Field (1899 – 1987)**

Robert Field was English born and trained at the Royal College of Art in London from 1919 to 1924. He specialised in figure work in painting and sculpture, working alongside Barbara Hepworth and Henry Moore and was therefore familiar with Modernist trends. Unable to find work, he emigrated to New Zealand in 1925 to take up a teaching position at the Dunedin School of Art. In 1933 – 34, while on leave in England, he attended the Camberwell School where Olive Jones was also studying. In the words of his biographer, he ‘returned to Dunedin in 1935 “mad” on studio pottery’.<sup>147</sup> The use of the term ‘studio pottery’ suggests he saw parallels between the pottery he was interested in and his painting and sculpture – all were made in ‘studios’, although it is possible the author applied the word to place Field’s pottery in a 1980s context. He became the first person to exhibit ‘pottery as an object of

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<sup>146</sup> Photo: Parker, 'The Pioneers: Olive Jones, 1890 - 1990 [sic]', p.11.

<sup>147</sup> A.K.C. Petersen, *R.N. Field: The Dunedin Years, 1925-1945*, Palmerston North, 1989, p.32. In 1940 Bernard Leach referred to both ‘potters’ and ‘studio potters’ in his book. See Leach, p.43.

beauty in its own right' with 'The 1935 Group' in Christchurch<sup>148</sup> although, of the 108 paintings, drawings, etchings and linocuts in the exhibition, only Field's six pieces of pottery were not priced,<sup>149</sup> implying an uncertainty about their right to be there. In a small country like New Zealand people such as Field, with his overseas art experience, were able to encourage the notion that pottery was a branch of the arts. In 1938, W. H. Allen, a fellow tutor at the Dunedin School of Art, also confidently aligned pottery with art.

Pottery, one of the oldest of the arts, is not practised a great deal by Dominion artists at present, but it is quite within the bounds of possibility that Mr. Field, with his great enthusiasm for the craft, and with sufficient interest on the part of the public, will succeed in establishing a New Zealand school for potters.<sup>150</sup>

After the war Field moved to Auckland and became head of the Art Department at Avondale College where he set up the first ceramic training centre in New Zealand. His students included leading figures in the post-war studio craft movement such as Barry Brickell, Len Castle, Patricia Perrin and Peter Stichbury.<sup>151</sup> They also learned from Olive Jones and were familiar with the work of another pioneer, Briar Gardner. These associations demonstrate the important role people such as Field played as the teachers of later – and often more famous – craftspeople.

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<sup>148</sup> Petersen, pp.32-3. 'The 1935 Group' was an exhibition held in October 1935 by a group made up mainly of painters.

<sup>149</sup> *Christchurch City Libraries*, 2010; available at: <http://library.christchurch.org.nz/Heritage/Publications/Art/TheGroup/pdfs/1935.pdf> (17 June 2010).

<sup>150</sup> W. H. Allen, 'R. N. Field, A.R.C.A.', *Art New Zealand*, 10, 4, 1938, p.190. Allen clearly considered pottery to be one of the arts.

<sup>151</sup> Anna K. C. Petersen, *Field, Robert Nettleton 1899 – 1987*; available at: <http://www.dnz.govt.nz/> (28 August 2008).



**Figure 8:** R. N. Field (1879 – 1987) in his more familiar role as a painter, circa 1932. Field had little doubt that pottery was a form of art.<sup>152</sup>

## Fibre

Weavers and other fibre craftspeople had an even more difficult task than potters in pursuing their craft before the Second World War. Since the nineteenth century weaving had been slow to develop in New Zealand possibly because, as a craft, it had no tradition in the Pākehā colonial environment.<sup>153</sup> Furthermore, Pākehā appear to have ignored traditional Māori weaving, perhaps because it had no cultural relevance for them or the spiritual expressiveness of Māori weaving did not match the functional needs of Pākehā. Sandra Coney has suggested that in the 1920s and 1930s many Pākehā craftswomen used Māori motifs and designs, 'though not always appropriately',<sup>154</sup> but Māori weaving does not seem to have appealed to Pākehā craftspeople.

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<sup>152</sup> Photo: Petersen, *R.N. Field: The Dunedin Years, 1925-1945*, p.21.

<sup>153</sup> Dorothea Turner, 'The Weavers', *New Zealand Potter*, 15, 1, 1973, p.32. See also Cape, *Please Touch. A Survey of the Three-Dimensional Arts in New Zealand*, p.121.

<sup>154</sup> Sandra Coney, *Standing in the Sunshine: A History of New Zealand Women since They Won the Vote*, Auckland, 1993, p.263.

Another problem weaving encountered before the war, and which continued to be a problem through to the 1960s, was a shortage of materials and equipment – particularly looms and spinning wheels. Dorothea Turner, a dominant figure in the later craft movement, describes how, even in the 1960s, spinners and weavers ‘had to spend too much time knocking on closed doors for supplies, equipment and recognition.’<sup>155</sup> Between the wars the shortages had been just as problematic.

Weavers also had to overcome social prejudices. Peter Cape suggested that the public had two negative views of weaving. First was its association with primary education where weaving was taught, but at a very basic level. This association encouraged adult New Zealanders to believe that its potential was limited to scarves and small mats.<sup>156</sup> Second was the association of weaving with various forms of rehabilitation – be it physical or psychiatric. The connection was characterised by the title ‘looney scarves’ – used to describe items made at Sunnyside [psychiatric] Hospital in Christchurch and sold at Hay’s department store.<sup>157</sup> The poor public image of weaving appears to have forced it to rely on pottery exhibitions to help establish its reputation as a serious craft.

Finally, as the later weavers discovered, ‘weaving gives a poorer financial return than pottery does for comparable hours worked’.<sup>158</sup> Nevertheless, more people took up spinning and weaving and these weavers traced their heritage to the weavers of the 1930s and 1940s.<sup>159</sup> Furthermore, the number of craftspeople involved gave this discipline a strength that would influence the politics of craft long after this period.

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<sup>155</sup> Turner, p.34.

<sup>156</sup> Cape, *Please Touch. A Survey of the Three-Dimensional Arts in New Zealand*, p.121.

<sup>157</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>158</sup> Turner, p.33.

<sup>159</sup> For instance, by the 1980s approximately 22,400 people belonged to the New Zealand Spinning, Weaving and Woolcrafts Society (NZSWWS), see CCNZ Records, 92-278, Box 35, ATL, Wellington and Turner, p.34. Spinning and weaving are linked by the need to turn raw material into products (spinning), then used in weaving.

## Sybil and Josephine Mulvany (1899 – 1983) and (1901 – 1967)

The Mulvany sisters, Sybil and Josephine, were born in 1899 and 1901 respectively, in Auckland.<sup>160</sup> Both left for Britain in their mid-twenties and undertook a three-month course in weaving at the London School of Weaving. Before returning to New Zealand they purchased all the equipment they would need and upon their return set up Taniko Weavers in 1928. The name was changed in 1933 to Taniko Loom-Craft Weavers ‘in order to avoid the “terrible indignity” of being mistaken for machine knitters’<sup>161</sup> but the similarity of the name to the Māori weaving form called ‘tāniko’<sup>162</sup> was probably not an accident. The business grew, producing a range of fashion goods, household and religious items, and selling weaving supplies as well as giving demonstrations of the craft. The success of the business during a particularly testing time for all business set an example for how future weavers needed to organise to turn their hobby into a professional career. In 1936, after the sisters married, the business closed and they both left Auckland. In the 1960s, Josephine Glasgow (nee Mulvany) helped Florence Akins establish a weaving course at the Canterbury University College of Art – the first in the country.<sup>163</sup> The course ceased when Akins retired in 1969.<sup>164</sup> The Mulvany sisters experienced many of the influences and difficulties that fabric craftspeople encountered well into the 1960s. Nevertheless, by 1970 a federation of clubs had established the New Zealand Spinning, Weaving and Woolcrafts Society and by 1973 the old reliance on pottery for support was declining. Dorothea Turner was able to report that ‘the partnership [between Wellington potters and weavers] is dissolving now only for the happy reason that everyone has too much work to submit [to the traditional joint exhibitions].’<sup>165</sup> In Chapter Seven I discuss the divisions between the crafts that became more acrimonious in the 1980s

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<sup>160</sup> Angela Lassig, *Mulvany, Josephine 1901 - 1967; Mulvany, Sybil Mary 1899 – 1983*; available at: <http://www.dnzb.govt.nz/> (1 September 2008). See also Lassig and Fenwick, *The Mulvany Sisters: Weaving & Other Adventures*, p.xii., and *New Zealand Herald* ‘A Couple of Crafty Flappers’, 5 May 1999, p.G11.

<sup>161</sup> Lassig and Fenwick, eds, *The Mulvany Sisters: Weaving & Other Adventures*.

<sup>162</sup> Tāniko refers to the ornamental border of a mat. See Hebert W. Williams, in *A Dictionary of the Maori Language* Wellington, 1975, p.377.

<sup>163</sup> *Art School 125*; available at: [http://www.artschool125.co.nz/SelectiveChronology/1930\\_1940/](http://www.artschool125.co.nz/SelectiveChronology/1930_1940/) (1 September 2008).

<sup>164</sup> Lassig and Fenwick, eds, *The Mulvany Sisters: Weaving & Other Adventures*, p.xii.

<sup>165</sup> Turner, p.32.

and the part they played in the disunity that contributed to the demise of the Crafts Council of New Zealand (CCNZ) in 1992.



**Figure 9:** Josephine (1901 – 1967) and Sybil (1899 – 1983) Mulvany, 1928.<sup>166</sup>

## **Metal**

In this example we see how the lines between a ‘normal’ occupation and craft as an art-form could easily be blurred and how some crafts were difficult to define as ‘studio’ crafts. It also shows the early influence craftspeople had in education. Much later, in the 1980s, education became a defining issue for craftspeople. Polytechnics, which developed from former technical colleges, played a key role in the way that craft education developed. In addition, many later craftspeople combined teaching whilst working on their craft.

Jewellery, between the wars and throughout the period this thesis examines, was recognised as a mainstream business in most towns and cities in New

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<sup>166</sup> Photo: Lassig and Fenwick, eds, *The Mulvany Sisters: Weaving & Other Adventures*, unpaginated.

Zealand. Manufacturing jewellers operated from shops and in small factories and were often involved in the repairing of jewellery and clocks as well. Many of the later jewellers also identified in this way, but tended to emphasise the unique nature of the items they produced to distinguish their 'craft' from the 'normal' jewellery 'trade'. Jewellers who identified themselves as studio craftsmen and women increasingly saw themselves as 'artist craftsmen and women' but their roots were based in the jewellery shops and factories of New Zealand.

### **Nelson Isaac (1893 – 1972)**

Nelson Isaac is an example of many of these influences. He attended Wellington Technical College (formerly called the School of Design) and the Royal College of Art in London before returning to New Zealand to take up the position of Head of the Art School at his old college in 1926.<sup>167</sup> The influence of the Arts and Crafts movement was initially strong at Wellington Technical College partly because of the influence of the first drawing master, Arthur Dewhurst Riley, who had been appointed in 1885 and had trained at the South Kensington Art School in London<sup>168</sup> – known for its close connections with the movement.<sup>169</sup> Isaac specialised in jewellery, enamelling and metalwork – areas that may have been influenced by his father who was a metalworker, carver and clockmaker.<sup>170</sup> He retired in 1939 at the age of forty-six and became a self-employed craftsman producing jewellery and ecclesiastical commissions. His use of kōwhaiwhai<sup>171</sup> designs influenced other jewellers such as Edith Morris<sup>172</sup> and Elsie Reeve.<sup>173</sup> The career of Nelson Isaac illustrates the way that many craftspeople balanced their craft

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<sup>167</sup> Justine Olsen, *Isaac, Wilfrid Nelson 1893 - 1972*; available at: <http://www.dnz.govt.nz/> (3 September 2008). See also Winsome Shepherd, *Gold & Silversmithing in Nineteenth & Twentieth Century New Zealand*, 1st edn, Wellington, 1995, p.153.

<sup>168</sup> Noel Harrison, *The School That Riley Built: The Story of the Wellington Technical College from 1886 to the Present Day*, Wellington, 1961, p.11. See also Donald Soucy and Mary Annj Stankiewicz, eds, *Framing the Past: Essays on Art Education*, Reston, Virginia, 1990, pp.79-80.

<sup>169</sup> By the 1960s the teaching programme was based on Modernism. See A. H. McLintock, ed., *An Encyclopaedia of New Zealand*, vol. 1, Wellington, 1966, p.96.

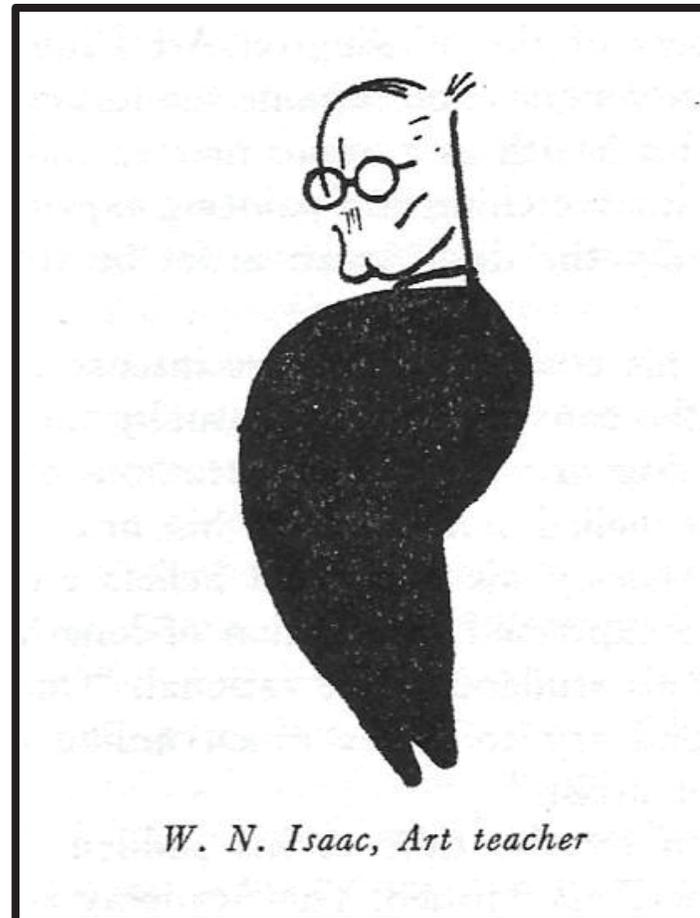
<sup>170</sup> Olsen, *Isaac, Wilfrid Nelson 1893 – 1972*.

<sup>171</sup> Painted scroll ornament, see Williams, p.152. Or painted rafters, see Anne Salmond, *Hui: A Study of Maori Ceremonial Gatherings*, Auckland, 1994, p.35.

<sup>172</sup> Shepherd, p.179.

<sup>173</sup> *ibid.*, p.182.

and their 'other' jobs. Some earned a living working within an environment that was sympathetic to their craft while others found their craft was very much a home-based leisure pursuit. To some extent, it was their level of dedication, their ability to promote themselves and the desire of later craftspeople to link their craft to New Zealand's craft traditions that decided how, or if, the pioneers would be remembered in the future.



**Figure 10:** A caricature of Nelson Isaac (1893 – 1972). Both teacher and craftsman.<sup>174</sup>

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<sup>174</sup> Caricature by T. Hall reproduced in Harrison, p.60.

## Māori Art and Craft: Mahi Toi<sup>175</sup>

The significance of Māori art/craft (mahī toi) as the third strand of the genealogy of the studio craft movement was fully recognised only in the mid-1980s when the exhibition *Te Maori* toured overseas. Previously, it had been largely irrelevant in Pākehā society unless it was co-opted as a convenient symbol of nationalistic pride, used as a means of furnishing European crafts with New Zealand ‘character’ or as a marketing tool to encourage tourists to buy crafts during their visit.<sup>176</sup> Māori-style decoration was also regularly used by Pākehā craftspeople – often with only a most rudimentary understanding of its significance. Māori traditions however, did survive between the wars, particularly in rural areas, because Māori were aware that mahī toi was a vital element in the struggle to ensure that Māori culture survived. In this section the emphasis is placed on the period leading up to the mid-1960s, although later developments are sometimes called on to show how entrenched some ideas about Māori craft were and how divisions within Māori society were often framed within debates about the use of traditional or

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<sup>175</sup> In the ‘Foreword’ to a book on Māori art and design, Professor Robert Jahnke noted that: ‘Any contemporary publication on Māori visual culture must attempt to rewrite Eurocentric notions of Māori cultural practice by addressing inappropriate and inadequate art/design terminology that undermines the mana (integrity) of Māori visual culture.’ Robert Jahnke in Julie Paama-Pengelly, *Maori Art and Design: A Guide to Classic Weaving, Painting, Carving and Architecture*, Auckland, 2010, p.6. In presenting the following explanation of the words used in this thesis I have endeavoured to respect this request. ‘Mahi toi’ (art/craft) is used in this thesis as a generalised term in place of ‘art/craft’ to reflect the close alignment between the two in Māori society. ‘Mahi ā-ringa’ specifically refers to handicraft or craft. ‘Toi’ is a traditional word that refers to knowledge, origins and sources, and to art in general, while the term ‘Toi Māori’ is now used to cover the wide range of creative activities that Māori tohunga mahi toi/ringa rehe (artists/craftspeople) engage in. Toi Māori refers to all the traditional arts such as whakairo rākau (wood carving); kōwhaiwhai (rafter patterns); raranga (weaving); tukutuku (lattice work); tā moko (tattooing); waiata (songs and chants); haka (dance); taonga puoro (traditional musical instruments); karanga (traditional call of welcome); whaikorero (oratory); and mau rakau (the art of weaponry). Toi Māori also refers to all the art forms that contemporary Māori artists are exploring such as writing, stage production, contemporary dance, film, visual arts, clay work and sculpture. See Professor Hirini Moko Mead at *Nga Toi Maori: Maori Art in Aotearoa New Zealand*, 2010; available at: [http://www.maoriart.org.nz/features/articles/nga\\_toi\\_maori\\_2](http://www.maoriart.org.nz/features/articles/nga_toi_maori_2) (15 January 2010). See also Williams, p.163 and p.431. Peter Meihana, email to the author, 28 October 2008. Opinion by Rokahurihia Ngarimu-Cameron as outlined by Dr Lachlan Paterson, email to the author, 6 November 2008 and 11 January 2010.

<sup>176</sup> Thousands of tiki imitations were imported from Germany between 1867 and 1938 and sold to tourists. See Richard Wolfe, ‘Souvenirs of Maoriland: The Art of the Early Tourist Trade’, *Art New Zealand*, Summer, 61, Summer, 1991/92, p.71. Later, Māori were able to recover some control of this trade and sell items that were made locally. See Geoff Bertram, ‘The New Zealand Economy, 1900 - 2000’, in Giselle Byrnes, ed., *The New Oxford History of New Zealand*, South Melbourne, Vic., 2009, p.561.

new materials and who was permitted to practise particular crafts. As in earlier sections, a small group of artists/craftspeople (tohunga mahi toi/tinga rehe)<sup>177</sup> will feature to demonstrate how craft was understood at the time and how an unbroken line to earlier traditions was maintained. A more detailed discussion of the issues relating to new concepts of mahi toi and developments after 1980 takes place in Chapter Six.

Before the Second World War the responsibility for ensuring the survival of mahi toi was left largely to Māori. To some extent, the establishment of a Māori Arts and Crafts Board in 1926 helped this process. The legislation establishing the Board was described as:

“An Act to Encourage the Dissemination of Knowledge of Maori Arts and Crafts.” The duty of the Board is defined as “to foster and encourage the study and practice of these arts and crafts,” and in furtherance of its objects it is empowered to establish schools of Maori art or other institutions; purchase, acquire, or vend any carvings or other articles having distinctive Maori characteristics, and take custody and control of native antiquities.<sup>178</sup>

The act emphasised the traditional nature of art and craft but it did not establish a rigid prescription for how its development should proceed. In 1927 the act provided the Māori politician, Apirana Ngata (Ngāti Porou), with the means to assist the establishment of the Māori School of Arts and Crafts in Rotorua. According to Michael King, Māori had originally been told to adapt to Pākehā ways, but by 1929 progressive leaders such as Ngata,<sup>179</sup> basing their thinking on the theory of localised development as advocated by Gilbert Archey,<sup>180</sup> the Director of the Auckland Institute Museum, decided that the retention of traditional ways, including traditional crafts, was a more

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<sup>177</sup> Artist/craftsperson *Te Aka Māori-English, English-Māori Dictionary*; available at: <http://www.maoridictionary.co.nz/> (11 November 2008). Literally, artist, artist in residence/expert, deft hand or craftsperson. In recognition of the combination of the Māori concept of art and craft as one and the same the combined name has been employed here. Tohunga is usually associated with spirituality in the Māori world. Here however, it is used to denote skill. For instance, tohunga whakairo (master carver).

<sup>178</sup> James Cowan, *The Maori: Yesterday and to-Day* Wellington, 1930, p.115.

<sup>179</sup> Michael King, 'Between Worlds', in W. H. Oliver and B. R. Williams, eds, *The Oxford History of New Zealand*, Oxford, 1981, p.301. See also M. P. K. Sorrenson, *Ngata, Apirana Turupa 1874 – 1950* 22 June 2007 available at: <http://www.dnzb.govt.nz/> (3 September 2008).

<sup>180</sup> R. H. G. Jahnke, 'He Tataitanga Ahua Toi: The House That Riwai Built, a Continuum of Maori Art,' PhD thesis, Massey University, 2006, p.20.

appropriate way to advance Māoritanga socially and artistically. This encouraged a resurgence of interest in traditional ways with an emphasis on regional difference.<sup>181</sup> But Ngata also realised that Māori craft needed to remain dynamic: ‘the time may come when new designs will be evolved according to impulses of individual craftsmen.’<sup>182</sup> Ngata’s comment suggests he was aware of the changes Modernism was having on European art and craft and felt Māori craftspeople needed to be aware also.

Pākehā tended to mythologize Māori culture, creating a philosophical conundrum for Māori and Pākehā. Barbara Brookes, in an essay on the controversy over a school booklet published in 1964 called *Washday at the Pa*, suggested that: ‘Māori women acted both to conserve specific social meanings in the name of tradition and to embrace a modernity enjoyed by white society, while many Pākehā commentators devalued the trappings of modernity and expressed longings for the simplicity of rural life.’<sup>183</sup> But Māori disrupted the unified New Zealand identity that had been constructed by Pākehā. Many Pākehā believed that the Māori contribution to New Zealand society was more acceptable as an image seen by tourists – the flax skirts and of course traditional crafts.<sup>184</sup> Traditional mahi toi, with its rural connection, made a more meaningful contribution to the way that Pākehā saw their national culture than any attempts by Māori to contemporise their craftwork. The following examples are representative of tohunga mahi toi/ringa rehe who looked to early traditions but who also retained a high degree of flexibility in the way they planned for the future of mahi toi.

## Fibre

Weaving was critical to the survival of pre-European Māori and continued to be used in its traditional form into the twentieth century – everything from

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<sup>181</sup> King in Oliver and Williams, eds, p.301.

<sup>182</sup> Erik Schwimmer, *The World of the Maori*, Wellington, 1974, p.150.

<sup>183</sup> Barbara Brookes, ‘Nostalgia for ‘Innocent Homely Pleasures: The 1964 New Zealand Controversy over Washday at the Pa’, in Barbara Brookes, ed., *At Home in New Zealand: Houses, History, People*, Wellington, 2000, p.210. For more on this controversy see Janet Bayly, ‘Finding a ‘Place’ in New Zealand’, in Janet Bayley and Athol McCredie, eds, *Witness to Change: Life in New Zealand: Photographs, 1940 – 1965*, Wellington, 1985, pp.67-71 and Ans Westra, *Washday at the Pa*, Wellington, 1964.

<sup>184</sup> Brookes, ed., pp.212-13.

mats and sails to baskets and clothing relied on weavers. Both the lauhala (pandanus) and aute (paper mulberry), traditional Polynesian weaving plants, failed in the temperate climate of New Zealand and new materials were employed – harakeke (flax), kiekie (epiphyte) and pingao (shore grass) for instance. Traditional Polynesian weaving methods were adapted to the new materials.<sup>185</sup>

### **Rangimarie Hetet (1892 – 1995) and Diggeress Rangitutahi Te Kanawa (1920 – 2009)**

Rangimarie Hetet, (Ngāti Maniapoto, Ngāti Kinohaku)<sup>186</sup> and her daughter Diggeress Rangitutahi Te Kanawa, (Ngāti Maniapoto, Ngāti Kinohaku),<sup>187</sup> made a major contribution to ensuring that those traditions were acknowledged, if not directly applied, when interest in forms of Māori art and craft increased after the war. Rangimarie Hetet was born in 1892 and learned weaving from her extended family, but it was not until 1951, when she became a founding member of the Māori Women’s Welfare League, that she began to share her skills with the community and children in schools. While Rangimarie would not take part in ‘innovations’ such as using man-made fibres instead of traditional plant fibres,<sup>188</sup> Diggeress was prepared to adapt. When asked how she would deal with the diminishing supply of natural dyestuffs she responded: ‘I guess we’ll do what our old people would have done, ... experiment with other plants to see what alternatives we might find.’<sup>189</sup> It demonstrated a blending of tradition with the innovative approach that became an important and contested aspect of the studio craft movement.

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<sup>185</sup> Coney, p.278.

<sup>186</sup> Atawhai Putaranui, *Hetet, Rangimarie 1892 – 1995*; available at: <http://www.dnzb.govt.nz/> (10 September 2008).

<sup>187</sup> *Arts Foundation of New Zealand*; available at: <http://www.artsfoundation.org.nz/diggeress.html> (10 September 2008).

<sup>188</sup> Coney, p.279.

<sup>189</sup> Quoted in Julie M. Paama-Pengelly, 'The Development of Maori Art in Education: Case Study of a New Zealand Secondary School', Master of Philosophy thesis, Massey University, 1994, p.44.



**Figure 11:** Diggeress Te Kanawa (1920 – 2009) holding a Kākahu.<sup>190</sup> The cloak was owned by Te Kanawa's grandmother and she worked on it as a child.

## Wood

For the majority of Māori before the Second World War the marae (meeting area) was the centre of community life, and within that environment, different forms of carving were integral to the design of whare<sup>191</sup> and the production of ornaments and weapons. The author Katerina Mataira (Ngāti Porou) identified three distinct waves of marae building over the previous hundred years.<sup>192</sup> From 1870 to about 1890 she believed that Te Kooti influenced the

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<sup>190</sup> Photo: Diggeress Te Kanawa, et al., eds, *Weaving a Kakahu*, Hamilton, 2006. Inside cover. Kākahu from kaka meaning garment, see Williams, p.91.

<sup>191</sup> House. The Whare may be referred to in a number of ways: the whare tipuna or whare tupuna, (ancestral house) whare whakairo (carved house), whare nui (large house), whare hui (meeting house), whare moe or whare puni (sleeping house) or whare runanga (council house).

<sup>192</sup> Katerina Mataira, 'Modern Trends in Maori Art Forms', in Erik Schwimmer, ed., *The Maori People in the Nineteen-Sixties: A Symposium*, Auckland, 1968, p.205.

style. Early missionaries had suppressed crafts such as woodcarving and it was Te Kooti who led its revival.<sup>193</sup> From 1890 to the 1920s smaller houses with carving of 'lesser quality' influenced by the "Young Māori Party" appear.<sup>194</sup> This was followed by the increasing use of European building methods but with traditional decoration.

### **Pineamine (Pine) Taiapa (1901 – 1972) and Hone (John) Te Kauru Taiapa (1911 – 1979)**

The brothers Pineamine (Pine) Taiapa and Hone (John) Te Kauru Taiapa (Ngāti Porou) trained at the Māori school of Arts and Crafts, retaining the traditional carving styles and rediscovering old techniques. Pine told Maurice Shadbolt that he rediscovered the best way to use an adze in a dream.<sup>195</sup> Pine Taiapa became the better known of the two brothers but both worked hard to advance the craft and to break down stereotypes. For example, at the launch of the Maori arts course at the National Arts Council's annual school of music held at Ardmore in 1966, Pine clarified the misconception that women were not permitted to carve:

Although it was often assumed that women were not permitted to undertake carving, this was not so. Maori tradition clearly indicated that where women were responsible for an outstanding [sic] achievement generally attributed to men, they were permitted to undertake such men's work as carving.<sup>196</sup>

This was quite unlike one of his teachers, Eramiha Kapua (Ngāti Tarawhai, Arawa), who would not let women near carvings.<sup>197</sup> And, unlike another teacher, Rotohiko Haupapa (Arawa), who according to Pine,<sup>198</sup> was reluctant to share his knowledge with other iwi, the Taiapa brothers were prepared to share their knowledge with both Māori and Pākehā. Pine wrote to a friend: 'They [visitors] exhaust me physically and make me mentally young; these

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<sup>193</sup> See also Schwimmer, *The World of the Maori*, p.125.

<sup>194</sup> Schwimmer, ed., *The Maori People in the Nineteen-Sixties: A Symposium*.

<sup>195</sup> Maurice Shadbolt, 'Pine Taiapa, Master Carver,' in *New Zealand's Heritage: The Making of a Nation*, Auckland, Vol. 18, 1978, p.2435.

<sup>196</sup> 'New Schools for Old Crafts', *Te Ao Hou*, 55, 1966, p.55. Anne Salmond claims to have known of only two cases where women have worked on 'significant projects'. See Salmond, *Hui: A Study of Maori Ceremonial Gatherings*, p.65.

<sup>197</sup> E. G. Schwimmer, 'Building Art in the Maori Tradition: John Taiapa and the Carved Meeting House of Today', *Te Ao Hou*, 28, September 1959, p.34.

<sup>198</sup> *ibid.*

young New Zealanders are sound at the core ... My heart is full and brimming over in aroha for our young men and women.<sup>199</sup>



**Figure 12:** Pine Taiapa (1901 – 1972).<sup>200</sup>

### **Extinction/Survival/Growth**

In the 1930s there were many who believed that Māori skills and knowledge were unrecoverable.<sup>201</sup> For instance, while showing admiration for the skill of Māori carvers a writer in *The New Zealand Railways Magazine*, writing about the carvings in a whare whakairo in 1934, stated that: 'It is really a very difficult matter these days to find a Maori who can explain satisfactorily the various patterns and designs. Those who had that knowledge have passed away without handing it down to others.'<sup>202</sup> Even in the 1950s writers such as Erik Schwimmer, who was an editor of *Te Ao Hou*, a magazine published between 1952 and 1976 by the Māori Affairs Department, had to prove that mahi toi were strong and dynamic. Schwimmer pointed out that the Taiapa brothers claimed that they could easily issue at least sixty-five diplomas in

<sup>199</sup> Quoted in Shadbolt, p.2436.

<sup>200</sup> Photo: 1/1-003883 Alexander Turnbull Library, National Library of New Zealand - Te Puna Matauranga o Aotearoa.

<sup>201</sup> For an overview of pre-Second World War Māori culture see Ranginui Walker, *Ka Whawhai Tonu Matou: Struggle without End*, Revised edn, Auckland, 2004, pp. 188-91.

<sup>202</sup> A. P. Godber, 'Maori Carving: Revival of an Ancient Art', *The New Zealand Railways Magazine*, 9, 7 October 1, 1934, p.39. See also Salmond, p.64.

wood carving to their students. He suggested that the craft was not dying out – but the willingness to pay carvers for their work was.<sup>203</sup> The studio craft movement slowly acknowledged the place of mahi toi as a formative influence and the work of younger tohunga mahi toi/ringa rehe, as will be seen in Chapter Six, acknowledged the strong links with the past. However, the gap between traditional mahi toi and the new work was sometimes visually reinforced. For example, in the booklet that accompanied the 'Bone, Stone, Shell: New Jewellery – New Zealand'<sup>204</sup> exhibition in 1988, Māori traditional mahi toi and Māori contemporary mahi toi were acknowledged – but separately.

Once survival of traditional mahi toi techniques seemed to be assured the question of progress was raised. Howard Williams, a craft writer, in 1993 remarked on what he perceived as the static nature of mahi toi: 'Even our tangatawhenua [sic] have yet to show a concerted contemporary direction, though they have a powerful cultural heritage.'<sup>205</sup> This implied that Māori would have to locate their work within a Pākehā craft (Modernist) framework if they were to truly be part of the studio craft movement as it moved towards its new position in the art world. The historian, Anne Salmond, writing at about the same time, held a more optimistic view: 'Today conservatism is not entrenched, and *marae* in particular display quite startling innovations in form and materials.'<sup>206</sup>

Defending Māori ways of pursuing their crafts required people such as Cliff Whiting (Te Whānau-a-Apanui) to patiently explain that different cultures understood and practised craft in different ways for a variety of reasons. He was able to successfully amalgamate traditional mahi toi and studio craft practices after the Second World War and was, as a result of his bicultural training as a primary school arts and crafts advisor and his cultural background, fully aware of the different ways in which the two ethnic groups

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<sup>203</sup> Schwimmer, 'Building Art in the Maori Tradition: John Taiapa and the Carved Meeting House of Today', p.32.

<sup>204</sup> Geri Thomas, ed., *Bone, Stone, Shell: New Jewellery, New Zealand*, Wellington, 1988.

<sup>205</sup> Howard Williams, 'Been There Done That – Where to Now?', *Craft New Zealand* 46, Summer 1993, p.4.

<sup>206</sup> Salmond, p.68.

approached craft: 'Fundamental to Māori art is the bringing together of people and materials. It is not just one person doing their thing. It has to do with the way Māori people structure themselves in the community.'<sup>207</sup> But when a resurgence of interest did take place individual examples of good craftsmanship were needed and people like Whiting looked to the work of individual tohunga mahi toi/ringa rehe, as well as past traditions, to promote the new mahi toi.

The emergence in urban society of a new generation of tohunga mahi toi/ringa rehe in the 1980s, in conjunction with the Māori political renaissance and a growing desire amongst younger Māori to rediscover traditional craft skills, demonstrated mahi toi had an important role to play as a vital part of the studio craft movement. Furthermore, when the studio craft movement did recognise the importance of mahi toi and began to nurture Māori craftsmen and women the movement gained a great deal of stored knowledge and became a comprehensive movement. Many young tohunga mahi toi/ringa rehe in the 1980s, as will be seen in Chapter Six, would prove that Māori would not be labelled by outdated perceptions. The new tohunga mahi toi/ringa rehe adapted mahi toi to new forms using non-traditional materials, such as clay and metal, and achieved recognition as full members of the studio craft movement.

### **Picking and Choosing**

A date when the studio craft movement that is the subject of this thesis started cannot be stated with absolute certainty, but the three strands discussed in this chapter established a platform for the explosion of interest in craft that had its beginnings in the late 1940s and the 1950s. However, they did not influence the studio craft movement in New Zealand equally. Most craftspeople at this time, and earlier, were not dependent on their craft to provide an income. Craftspeople, individually and collectively, selected aspects of each strand that appeared to support their ideas about what craft was in the post-war world. In the New Zealand environment where imported,

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<sup>207</sup> Katherine Vernon, 'Crafts: Relative Media', *New Zealand Home and Building*, Oct/Nov 1990, p.13.

high-quality, factory-produced ware was in short supply and functional crafts did not have to compete to the same extent as they would later, there was little conflict between those who made craft that could be used in the home and those who made items to be admired for their 'artistic' attributes. All could make craft that called on earlier craft traditions whilst still acknowledging the growing influence of the Modernist movement that set standards for art. Most were self-taught and had gained their knowledge of craft through books; they usually associated apprenticeships with the 'trades' and did not feel the same sense of loss at the demise of traditional craft apprenticeship training. Their jobs were not threatened by industrial development and they were in a position that allowed for risk-taking without dire economic consequences.<sup>208</sup> As a result, they developed the skills of individual conception, they fashioned their craft by hand and, because of the shortage of equipment specifically designed for the studio craftsman, they developed the capacity to create their own tools – although many still remained suspicious of machinery. During the formative stages no-one would have been surprised if they were told that their interest in craft was a continuation of pre-war craft conditions that had categorised crafts as a leisure-time hobby.

In the early 1960s John Wood located pottery in three distinct zones: the past when crafts were the only form of production; the present when crafts represented good design and complemented the industrial product; and the future when some craft might be considered art. Wood's premonitions about the path the newest craft movement might take hinted at the type of plurality Janet Mansfield had observed but he suggested that craftspeople were tolerant and adaptable enough to co-exist within its framework. Certainly the strands discussed in this chapter provided a sound base for the launching of a craft movement but the shared heritage was not strong enough to keep it unified. The shift from men and women making objects for use in the home or for their own pleasure to craft artists making objects for exhibitions and dealer galleries – influenced by Modernism with indigenous attachments –

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<sup>208</sup> For an explanation of hobbies and risk taking see Kenneth Roberts, *Leisure in Contemporary Society*, p.7. This subject is explored further in Chapter Three.

placed considerable strain on the movement. In the following chapters I examine the issues that lay at the heart of the disputes between craftspeople who 'stayed true' to the traditions outlined in this chapter and those who felt constrained by them.



# Chapter Two: Art/Craft: The Great Debate

The history of craft is a battle. The exclusivity of refined taste is pitted against the camaraderie of honest work.<sup>1</sup>

In this chapter the art/craft debate will be examined to determine why it developed and what impact it had on the studio craft movement. It will discuss two major aspects of the debate. First, the aesthetic and technical side of the art and craft divide will be examined. Within this discussion three broad lines of reasoning in which craft was portrayed as distinctively different, and often inferior, to art will be presented. The arguments include: the notion that art is an imaginative experience different from the physical experience that is craft; that craft works within a known realm whereas art plunges into unknown, creative territory; and finally, that craft is useful whereas art is not.<sup>2</sup> It will also discuss alternative arguments that placed studio craft in a symbiotic relationship with art. The second major theme of this chapter is the social and cultural divisions between art and craft. As the surge of interest in craft spread across the Western world after the Second World War it became apparent that the educational background and socioeconomic position of craftspeople increasingly placed them in a similar location to artists rather than their previous position as craft workers. The first part of the chapter examines the international philosophical and sociological arguments that influenced thinking about art and craft in New Zealand. The chapter then considers how the debate played out in New Zealand. Some aspects of the debate, for instance the impact on women and Māori and the influence of the Crafts Council of New Zealand (CCNZ), are dealt with as a component of the underlying theoretical framework but are also examined in more detail in later chapters.

As a practising craftsperson during part of the period this thesis covers I bring a predisposition to the writing. The art/craft debate increasingly became the subject of discussion between craftspeople as the number of exhibitions

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<sup>1</sup> Kevin Murray, *Craft Unbound: Make the Common Precious*, Melbourne, 2005. 'Dustcover'.

<sup>2</sup> C. B. Fethe, 'Craft and Art: A Phenomenological Distinction', *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 17, 2, 1977, pp.130-32.

multiplied and as prizes in competitions increased in value. To many craftspeople the work that was made everyday for craft shops around New Zealand was not 'unique' enough for these 'special' occasions.<sup>3</sup>

Craftspeople, particularly potters, often had little difficulty earning a living from producing items that could be used in the home, but as the excitement of learning new skills declined the desire to experiment continued.<sup>4</sup> Often this extended into areas where function was not a priority. In my own case, this was the development of low-temperature experimental pieces – an area of the craft that was relatively new in the 1980s. Inevitably, when this work was displayed in art galleries, questions arose about where it sat – was it art or was it craft? This chapter examines the issues that informed the debate.

The art historian E. H. Gombrich described the period from the French Revolution through the nineteenth century as 'the break in tradition'.

The academies and exhibitions, the critics and connoisseurs, had done their best to introduce a distinction between Art with a capital A and the mere existence of a craft, be it that of the painter or the builder. Now the foundations on which art had rested throughout its existence were being undermined from another side. The Industrial Revolution began to destroy the very traditions of solid craftsmanship; handiwork gave way to machine production, the workshop to the factory.<sup>5</sup>

The leaders of the Arts and Crafts movement had attempted to counter the perceived loss of craftsmanship by focussing on craft, while the new art movements challenged the whole concept of 'art with a capital A'. Throughout the nineteenth century painting, sculpture and printmaking – sometimes referred to as the fine arts – no longer filled the traditional role of portraying reality in ways that had been traditionally understood – art reflecting nature. By the middle of the twentieth century the crafts – often called the 'applied arts' – were also producing objects that appeared to have

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<sup>3</sup> In a study carried out in 1985 by Dr Kerr Inkson, studio potters were asked about issues that concerned them. Potter Y responded by saying that over the previous eighteen months there had been a move to 'one-off pieces'. See Kerr Inkson, 'Working Paper No 16, Craftsmanship and Job Satisfaction: A Study of Potters', Auckland, 1985, p.40.

<sup>4</sup> For more on this period see Peter Gibbs, 'Vic Evans', *New Zealand Potter*, 29, 2, 1987, pp.37-8.

<sup>5</sup> E. H. Gombrich, *The Story of Art*, London, 1967, p.377.

no discernible function other than to be looked at and admired. Defining the difference between art and craft had become more complex and problematic.

The roles of artists and craftspeople had also changed. During the late nineteenth century and for much of the twentieth century artists were 'understood to be unique individuals, dedicated to their "vocation", imbued with special charisma'<sup>6</sup> and often appeared to exist in a realm apart from the rest of society – a form of modern-day sage. However, as Bernard Smith, an Australian art historian, suggested in 1976, whereas in the past the artist had served as a hero – to enrich civilization – increased democratisation had eroded that privileged position.<sup>7</sup> The economic structures of the late twentieth century had made artists increasingly more dependent on the patronage of grants and public funding thus drawing artists back closer to their position in pre-Renaissance times when the terms 'artist' and 'craftsman' were intertwined.<sup>8</sup> In the meantime, craftspeople had been working in the other direction and many discovered that they could exist without government support because their products were in demand.

Some commentators in New Zealand were aware of the changes but their critique had to be expressed carefully. New Zealand in the early 1950s, when the studio craft movement began to gain support, was a country that valued egalitarian principles and was suspicious of apparent pretentiousness. Ernst Anton (E. A.) Plischke,<sup>9</sup> an Austrian Modernist architect and furniture designer, who exhibited furniture he had designed in the Helen Hitchings Gallery, phrased his understanding of the relative positions of art and craft in the 1950 *Arts Year Book* in the following way.

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<sup>6</sup> Jen Webb, Tony Schirato, and Geoff Danaher, *Understanding Bourdieu*, London, 2002, p.166.

<sup>7</sup> Bernard Smith, *The Death of the Artist as Hero: Essays in History and Culture*, Melbourne, 1988, p.8. For more on the democratisation of art see Daniel Bell, *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism*, London, 1976, pp.129-31.

<sup>8</sup> Webb, Schirato, and Danaher, p.167. An indication of the interlinking of craft and art before and during the Renaissance can be seen in the title of a 'how to' book by the fifteenth century painter Cennino d'Andrea Cennini. The book, *Il libro dell'arte*, is usually translated as *The Craftsman's Handbook*. See D. V. Thompson, Jr., *The Craftsman's Handbook, 'Il libro dell'arte' by Cennino D'a. Cennini*, New Haven, 1933.

<sup>9</sup> Linda Tyler, *Plischke, Ernst Anton 1903 – 1992, Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*; available at: <http://www.dnzb.govt.nz/dnzb/> (30 May 2008).

At all times there have been the bread-and-butter arts, ministering to the simpler and more pressing needs of humanity. ... It is useful to maintain some sort of hierarchy amongst the arts. But this must not be taken to imply that residence in the upper stories of the building in some way confers social superiority. And it is unsafe to assume that the basement and lower floors can be dispensed with; or even neglected for long. All it can be taken to mean is that there are larger or smaller contexts, different levels of intensity.<sup>10</sup>

Plischke knew the work of some craftspeople was a form of artistic expression for them and in an effort to support them he was aligning the crafts with the arts – but on a different level. The locating of the crafts in relation to the arts became the fulcrum on which the debate swung back and forth but during the 1950s and 1960s the animosity that would later split the craft movement was not evident.

By the 1980s it seemed that many craftspeople in New Zealand were making 'art' rather than 'craft'.<sup>11</sup> Craft leaders even sought to reassure craftspeople who were concerned about this trend. Bob Heatherbell, the Vice-President of the New Zealand Society of Potters (NZSP), wrote in 1986: 'Potters whose only interest is domestic ware may be suspicious of this flirtation with the arts but they can rest assured that they are far from forgotten.'<sup>12</sup> Heatherbell's reassurance however, hinted that craftspeople were divided. Increasingly, the 'craft' for sale in shops or on display in art galleries and museums did not appear to serve the traditional roles of craft.<sup>13</sup> Some commentators described this shift in emphasis as the 'ethic of freedom from function'.<sup>14</sup> In her thesis

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<sup>10</sup> E. A. Plischke, 'Bread for the People', in *Arts Year Book*, October, 1950, p.20.

<sup>11</sup> Drawing on the ideas of Sally J. Markowitz, Professor of Philosophy of Willamette University, 'art' in this chapter refers to paintings, sculpture, drawings and prints because no neutral term exists. See Sally J. Markowitz, 'The Distinction between Art and Craft', *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, 28, 1, 1994, p.57. However, a 1970s catalogue produced for an exhibition held in conjunction with a royal visit called *Art in the Sixties* listed – along with thirty-four painters, seven printmakers and five sculptors – seventeen potters. See *New Zealand Art of the Sixties: A Royal Visit Exhibition: Thirty-Four Painters, Seven Printmakers, Five Sculptors, Seventeen Potters*, Wellington, 1970. The use of the words 'art' and 'craft' does not signal a value judgement by this author.

<sup>12</sup> Bob Heatherbell, 'Some Thoughts on Our National Exhibition', *New Zealand Potter*, 28, 1, 1986, p.2.

<sup>13</sup> Naomi O'Connor, *A Brief Guide to New Zealand Art & Culture*, Nelson, 1995, p.27.

<sup>14</sup> Joanna Paul, 'Don't Lift by the Handles', *New Zealand Potter*, 29, 2, 1987, p.23.

on the crafts in Australia called 'Truth or Trap: The Australian Contemporary Crafts Movement's Pursuit of Art Ideals', Grace Cochrane recognised this trend as a paradigm shift for the crafts.

Following the lead of the visual artists of the time, ... [craftspeople] denied many of the previously agreed central ideals of crafts practice: valuing skill in the use of hands and tools, taking pleasure in working with materials, seeing the validity of function as a purpose for production and acknowledging the legitimacy of working for a client.... In doing so, while certainly changing and overturning conservative perceptions about what the crafts might be, they set in train the beginnings of a denial of their own social and technological histories and values.<sup>15</sup>

Cochrane was acknowledging that craftspeople had conceded that their craft had to embrace the attributes that identified it as art using conventional art terminology. Craftspeople and artists did not always welcome the changes that were occurring and the debate became more heated as craft gained a higher profile in New Zealand.

## **Two Reviews, Two Views**

As examples of how commentators took positions on this topic I discuss two exhibition reviews. Janet Paul, a painter and critic, wrote a review of the first exhibition held at the Helen Hitchings Gallery in Wellington in 1949 which is also the year I have suggested that the interest in craft began to gain momentum.<sup>16</sup> The exhibition was distinctive for the way it displayed both art (paintings and sculpture) and craft (pottery, furniture and textiles) as if set within a modern New Zealand home.<sup>17</sup> This form of compatibility appeared to deny that an art/craft debate existed. In fact, in a catalogue produced to accompany a 2008 exhibition about the gallery, Helen Hitchings was quoted as stating that “all forms of art [were] sources for interior decoration.”<sup>18</sup> Paul’s review however, did not mention painting or sculpture – although the gallery featured the paintings of Rita Angus and Colin McCahon alongside the

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<sup>15</sup> Grace Cochrane, 'Truth or Trap: The Australian Contemporary Crafts Movement's Pursuit of Art Ideals', PhD thesis, University of Tasmania, 1998, p.3.

<sup>16</sup> Janet Paul, 'The Helen Hitchings Gallery in Wellington', *Landfall*, 12, 1949, pp.357-9. For a discussion on the significance of 1949 to this thesis see 'Timeframe' in the Introduction.

<sup>17</sup> See figure 1 below.

<sup>18</sup> *Museum of Wellington City & Sea, Summer News*, Wellington, Issue 17, 2008, p.1.

pottery of O. C. Stephens and Len Castle – concentrating rather on craft.<sup>19</sup> This appeared to confirm that craft and art could not be discussed in the same terms. In the review Janet Paul, in an apparent effort to further separate craft from art, could not resist at least one cautionary warning to craftspeople to remember their place: ‘Generally the shapes were good but some of the pottery degenerated into the arty-crafty.’<sup>20</sup> The move by some craftspeople to attempt to break out of their traditional realm was not to be encouraged.



**Figure 1:** Helen Hitchings (1920 – 2002) admiring a portrait of her by Douglas McDiarmid on display in her Gallery circa 1950.<sup>21</sup>

In an ironic twist thirty-eight years later, Joanna Paul, Janet Paul’s daughter, and also a painter and critic, hinted that the attempt by craftspeople to move into the world of art was still not to be wholly endorsed. The exhibition she

<sup>19</sup> Jane Vial, *The Gallery of Helen Hitchings: From Fretful Sleeper to Art World Giant*, Wellington, 2008. See also Athol McCredie, ‘Going Public: New Zealand Art Museums in the 1970s’, MA thesis, Massey University, 1999, pp.53-4.

<sup>20</sup> Paul, ‘The Helen Hitchings Gallery in Wellington’. ‘Arty-crafty is a derivation of the more insulting term ‘arty-farty’ which refers to ‘something or someone ... [who] tries too hard to seem connected with serious art, and is silly or boring because of this.’ See ‘arty-farty’ in Elizabeth Walter, ed., 2nd edn, *Cambridge Idioms Dictionary*, Cambridge, 1998, p.11.

<sup>21</sup> Photo: Helen Hitchings, Museum of New Zealand / Te Papa Tongarewa, MS Papers 53, CA000124/001/0060.

chose to make her statement about the relationship between craft and art was the 1987 New Zealand Society of Potters annual exhibition. The location was the Sarjeant Gallery in Wanganui and demonstrated that pottery had already moved into art's natural territory – prestigious public art galleries. In an article entitled, 'Don't Lift by the Handles', Paul commented:

An elegant Egyptian jar<sup>22</sup> dominated a vista at the Sarjeant ... Peering inside I saw a card "Don't lift by the handles".\* But how is a 'handle' better than a handle, on a vessel that is catalogued as 'vessel'? I don't question the integrity of the maker, but the euphoric idea that art is somehow better or other than use. In traditional art, function and meaning are inseparable. ... How can a 'handle' go beyond a handle? The language of transcendence peppers the talk of ceramic artists. As a practitioner of one of the useless arts – painting – I envy the thingness of the pot and lament the impoverishment of daily life by the flight of the potter.<sup>23</sup>

Joanna Paul, presumably viewing the exhibition before the opening and perhaps hoping to encourage debate, could not resist the opportunity to comment on the conundrum the studio crafts faced. She recognised that the 'jar' was attempting to conform to the poorly understood Kantian notion of art being disinterested and therefore autonomous<sup>24</sup> and stated that she regretted that the crafts were moving away from what she considered their natural territory. Certainly, by trying to distance themselves from the tradition and 'usefulness' of craft, craftspeople were entering a world where the rules were set by the art world and for many it was unexplored territory. In this new world craftspeople were exposing themselves to "art-guilt" if they reverted to '*merely* [making] a pot, a chair, a knife, a coat, or an engagement ring'.<sup>25</sup>

Nevertheless, Paul's use of the terms 'ceramic (clay) artist' and 'potter' in the same paragraph suggested that those working with clay were straddling two different zones and, to some extent, also acknowledged the changes that

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<sup>22</sup> The object that Paul used to frame her argument was made by the author.

<sup>23</sup> Paul, 'Don't Lift by the Handles', p.23. The asterisk was inserted in a footnote by one of the judges who stated, "This warning was simply a scruple of the organizers and was removed by the opening of the exhibition. It remains, however – a metaphor. JMP."

<sup>24</sup> See Bruce Metcalf, 'Replacing the Myth of Modernism', *American Craft*, 53, 1, February, 1993, pp.42-3. For more on Immanuel Kant see Sandra Corse, *Craft Objects, Aesthetic Contexts: Kant, Heidegger, and Adorno on Craft*, Lanham, 2009, pp.33-52. Also see below.

<sup>25</sup> Metcalf, p.43. Metcalf's italics.

had taken place in this medium during the thirty-eight years since Janet Paul's review. Clearly, if the goal to become an artist was the intention of some craftspeople, they had achieved it – but some critics believed that craft was the loser.

Others were more positive in their response to the repositioning of craft. Bill Millbank, the Director of the Sarjeant Gallery, when he reviewed the 1987 exhibition was of the opinion that those exhibiting had earned their place in the art world.

It was very clear from that exhibition, and others which I have seen over recent years, that studio ceramics are firmly established in New Zealand. One exciting aspect of this is that such work no longer consists of pondering, “one-off” art pieces made by very able functional potters as they struggle to approach unclear art-gallery expectations. Rather, these are the creations of artists who see their studio pieces as their mainstream work.<sup>26</sup>

However, the two Paul reviews illustrate that a barrier existed between art and craft from the time that the studio craft movement started to develop after the Second World War. Defining and restraining craft became a persistent source of conflict both within the movement and from sources outside. The position taken was often linked to the place that the protagonists occupied within the art/craft domain and to wider social, political, cultural and economic concerns. A further issue that the reviews highlighted was the extent that crafts relied on ‘outsiders’ to define craft. This remained a persistent problem for a movement that lacked a legitimating authority.

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<sup>26</sup> John Parker and Cecilia Parkinson, *Profiles: 24 New Zealand Potters*, Auckland, 1988, p.8.



**Figure 2:** The 'Egyptian jar' made by the author and referred to in Joanna Paul's review.<sup>27</sup>

## Aesthetic and Technical Distinctions

### Earlier Ideas about Art and Craft

As the studio craft movement evolved and more craftspeople began to call themselves craft artists and more students entered the craft design programmes the differences between art and craft, as defined by philosophers and scholars, began to become more important as a means of defining who was a craftsman and who was a craft artist. Thinking about the relationship of craft to art before the studio craft movement flourished was often informed by the Kantian notion 'that an aesthetic experience could be supported only by an autonomous art object, and that the disinterested gaze of the art spectator is elicited only when art is removed from moral, social and religious values and from ordinary life.'<sup>28</sup> Craft, through its association with ordinary life and functionality, could not be an autonomous

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<sup>27</sup> Photo by the author.

<sup>28</sup> Julie Wolfram Cox and Stella Minahan, 'Organization, Decoration', *Organization*, 12, 4, 2005, p.536. This notion was also reflected in the concept of 'Modernism' which was a cultural movement that promoted experimentation, the 'eclipse of distance' and gave artists the authority to define what art was.

art object. This concept of the independent aesthetic experience excluded function – ‘and thus much of craft – from the possibility of having an aesthetic component.’<sup>29</sup> The distinction led philosophers and scholars not only to neglect craft as a subject of study but also to devalue the role of craft in art.<sup>30</sup>

## Robin George Collingwood

Robin George (R. G.) Collingwood, a British historian and philosopher within the idealist school of thought, was one observer who could clearly present an argument separating craft from art. To achieve this he called on the writings of Immanuel Kant<sup>31</sup> and Benedetto Croce<sup>32</sup> that stated that the only purpose of art was the expression of feelings and beauty. Craft conversely, according to Collingwood, was ‘the power to produce a preconceived result by means of consciously controlled and directed action.’<sup>33</sup> He then proceeded to ‘disentangle’ craft from art *proper*. I have emphasised ‘proper’ because it was through this word that Collingwood distinguished most emphatically the difference between art and craft. Art ‘proper’ divided the modern use of the word art from its ancient meaning – craft. Collingwood’s distinction involved establishing a set of six features of craft that placed art outside (i.e. that is above) craft.<sup>34</sup>

Although not widely acknowledged in New Zealand craft circles,<sup>35</sup> Collingwood’s ideas on art and craft hold an important place in this debate because he is acknowledged as one of the few philosophers who devoted any attention to the distinction between art and craft,<sup>36</sup> although he uses craft largely as a counterpoint to demonstrate that art fulfils a ‘religious’ purpose –

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<sup>29</sup> Bruce Metcalf, 'Toward an Aesthetics of Craft', *Studio Potter*, 22 June, 1994, p.16.

<sup>30</sup> Charles B. Fethe, 'Hand and Eye: The Role of Craft in R. G. Collingwood's Aesthetic Theory', *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 22, 1, 1982, p.37.

<sup>31</sup> Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, Indianapolis, 1987 (first published in 1790).

<sup>32</sup> Benedetto Croce, *The Essence of Aesthetic*, London 1921.

<sup>33</sup> R. G. Collingwood, *The Principles of Art*, London, 1958.

<sup>34</sup> See Appendix 3.

<sup>35</sup> Denis Dutton is one of the few New Zealand art critics to cite Collingwood's distinction between art and craft. See Denis Dutton, 'The Difference between Art and Craft', on Radio New Zealand. *Borderlands of Art*. Elizabeth Alley, SD, 1990. See also Denis Dutton, *The Difference between Art and Craft* Radio New Zealand; available at: [http://www.denisdutton.com/rnz\\_craft.htm](http://www.denisdutton.com/rnz_craft.htm) (30 May 2008).

<sup>36</sup> Fethe, 'Craft and Art: A Phenomenological Distinction', p.129.

the search for truth. Later, I examine a PhD thesis written by Canadian potter, Robert Kavanagh,<sup>37</sup> disputing Collingwood's arguments. Collingwood was writing in the 1930s, while the thesis by Kavanagh was presented at Concordia University in 1990 – by which time the studio craft movement was a worldwide phenomenon. I present these two contrasting examples because, while Collingwood's ideas appeared to define craft before the Second World War, they seemed less valid as a descriptor of studio craft post-war. Kavanagh, on the other hand, as a practising craftsperson, could be expected to be able to define post-war craft with some accuracy. The contrasting arguments demonstrate that the studio craft movement was fundamentally different to earlier arts and crafts movements and that Collingwood's attempts to define craft acted more as a convenient device to exclude craft from the world of art rather than as a functional means of distinguishing the new studio crafts from earlier craft forms.



**Figure 3:** R. G. Collingwood (1889 – 1943).<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Robert Kavanagh, 'The Art of Earth and Fire: The Aesthetics of Robin George Collingwood and the Craft of the Studio Potter', PhD thesis, Concordia University 1990.

<sup>38</sup> Photo: *Answers.Com R. G. Collingwood*; available at <http://www.answers.com/topic/collingwood-robin-george> (4 February 2010).

Collingwood, in his book *The Principles of Art*,<sup>39</sup> was attempting to define art. Craft was dismissed early in the book: 'The question is not whether art is this or that kind of craft, but whether it is any kind at all. ... We all know perfectly well that art is not craft; and all I wish to do is to remind the reader of the familiar differences which separate the two things.'<sup>40</sup> The studio craft movement in Britain had been developing for at least twenty years before the book was published in 1938 but Collingwood did not mention studio craft at any point in the discussion – possibly because it would have thrown some doubt on the validity of his argument. His ideas were based on pre-industrial crafts and the craft culture that persisted within industry after the Industrial Revolution. Nevertheless, his prescription for defining craft was applicable to studio craft and was willingly embraced by those, such as Janet and Joanna Paul, who believed that art and craft should be defined in purely aesthetic or technical terms.

### **Trapped between two Worlds**

In Collingwood's model no distinction is made between the work of skilled labourers or artisans and the later studio craftspeople whose work, while containing many of the features of traditional craft, had clearly been designed to be 'looked at' rather than used in some domestic sense – work that had an aesthetic quality not based on its functionality. Craft was located in a sort of no-man's land. Philip Rawson, a curator and lecturer at Durham University, highlighted this conundrum for the studio potter in his book, *Ceramics*.

Functionalism assesses works of art by what each critic takes to be their success in reflecting their function; but it cannot explain the enormous number of variations in shape among pots fulfilling very closely similar functions; nor can it explain the imponderable appeal that one pot can exercise, rather than another one very like it, through minute and functionally meaningless variations of proportion or surface inflection. Pure aestheticism, on the other hand, concentrates on the "beauty" or "expression" of a pot without any regard for its function, and is equally at a loss to explain the whole nature of humanity's pottery

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<sup>39</sup> R. G. Collingwood, *The Principles of Art*, London, 1938.

<sup>40</sup> *ibid.*, p.9. See also D. S. Taylor, 'R. G. Collingwood: Art, Craft and History', *Clio*, 2, 1973, pp.239-40.

which is unequivocally utilitarian whilst also being expressive.<sup>41</sup>

To deal with the special nature of the craft produced during the studio craft movement a careful balance between function and aesthetics was needed. The philosopher, Charles Fethe, who believed that craft was not 'poor art', suggested that '[t]o discover what makes art bad is not to learn what makes craft craft.'<sup>42</sup> He instructed craftspeople not to abandon either function or aesthetics.

[T]he craftsman's primary aim is to create objects which have an assigned place in the world of common activities but which at the same time, by virtue of their formal structures and sensuous qualities, present themselves as intrinsically valuable. ... An object which retains either function or aesthetic qualities but not both loses the special complexity which gives craft its unique appeal ... How much weight is to be given to each of these criteria may be a matter of individual preference, but at least these are the criteria which reveal the nature and aim of craft.<sup>43</sup>

## The Technical Theory of Art

Collingwood's notion that art did not exist in the physical form but only in the mind of the artist was diametrically opposed to the technical theory of art, which was, and is, the way most people think about art and craft. In its most simple form this theory states that an artist expresses his or her emotions through a work of art. The physical item, the painting, sculpture or poem for instance, is art and therefore the skill that goes into producing the work is an integral part of art and, as such, can be the subject of analysis that can determine if it is art or not. Margaret MacDonald, reporting to the 1953 Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, defended this position by contending that:

... it seems absurd to say of someone that he had painted a picture or carved a statue without the use of tools or materials. An imaginary picture or statue just isn't a picture or statue because these words stand for works which

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<sup>41</sup> Philip Rawson, *Ceramics*, London, 1971, p.1.

<sup>42</sup> Fethe, 'Craft and Art: A Phenomenological Distinction', p.131.

<sup>43</sup> *ibid.*

need hands as well as heads to bring them into existence.<sup>44</sup>

For some artists and many craftspeople this was a convincing rebuttal and, if accepted, placed the artefacts that each produced within the same sphere.

Many craftspeople found the mind/body division intolerable because it excluded them from both the world of the traditional craftspeople and the world of the artist. Bernard Leach, who had been a major influence on New Zealand craftspeople, particularly potters, since 1940, described this sense of isolation: 'The potter is no longer a peasant or journeyman as in the past, nor can he be any longer described as an industrial worker: he is by force of circumstances an artist-craftsman'.<sup>45</sup>

## **Robert Kavanagh**

After the Second World War, articles in craft magazines suggest that some craftspeople were conscious that craft was given a lower status than art but few had the theoretical tools to debate the issue with authority. Therefore, in this section I outline the ideas of Robert Kavanagh, a Canadian studio potter, who is a rare example of a craftspeople and scholar who was prepared to engage in the philosophical debate about the relationship between art and craft at an advanced academic level. I present them with caution, recognizing his obvious bias.

In his 1990 PhD thesis Kavanagh set out to prove that Collingwood's model was flawed when applied to the studio workshop environment of contemporary craftspeople. Starting from the fundamental idea that craft has two meanings – the activity of 'making' and 'the range of objects and artefacts produced by this activity',<sup>46</sup> Kavanagh attempted to link the two definitions and compare art and craft. He claimed that some craft objects

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<sup>44</sup> Margaret MacDonald, 'Art and Imagination', *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 53, 1952 – 1953, p.210. See also Margaret MacDonald, 'The Work of Art as Physical', in Melvin Miller Rader, ed., *A Modern Book of Esthetics; an Anthology*, 3rd edn, New York, 1960, pp.215-16.

<sup>45</sup> Bernard Leach, *A Potter's Book*, London, 1940, p.1.

<sup>46</sup> Kavanagh, p.18.

have characteristics that were ‘creative, innovative, expressive and imaginative ... and that these characteristics express[ed] features of the process of making as well’. Alternatively, he stated, some ‘art objects are primarily technical accomplishments, and are called ‘art’ simply by cultural associations with respect to the appearance and similarities of things.’<sup>47</sup>

Kavanagh’s main criticism of Collingwood was the ‘unbridgeable gap’ he created ‘between a doing and making ... which he [Collingwood] takes to be mental, and a doing and making which he takes to be bodily’.<sup>48</sup> Furthermore, he suggested that Collingwood, through his insistence ‘that they [artefacts] are either the result of skill or the expression of emotion’,<sup>49</sup> was out of touch with modern developments in the crafts. In other words, Collingwood, along with other Western philosophers, was locked into a mind/body distinction – the Platonic belief that divided the world of action from that of contemplation.<sup>50</sup> In this argument Kavanagh is overlooking the fundamental tenet of Platonic thought that ideas are the key to art – not things. There is little doubt that Collingwood would have classified much of the ‘craft art’ of the 1990s as art, but Kavanagh made pots that looked similar to each other and he was attempting to locate them on a higher level than mere craft.

Kavanagh called on the writings of Bernard Leach to challenge Collingwood’s arguments and in doing so showed the extent of Leach’s influence on craft in the West. Leach was aware pottery was not considered a form of art by most people; nevertheless he used the terms ‘artist-craftsman’ and ‘potter-artist’ on the first page of his influential book as if it was expected that the crafts deserved a place in the art world and probably to elevate his own position in the art world.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> *ibid.*, p.20.

<sup>48</sup> *ibid.*, p.21.

<sup>49</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>50</sup> Kevin Murray, *Design & Craft: A Discussion Paper* Craft Victoria, 2003; available at: <http://www.craftvic.asn.au/papers/craftbase.htm> (24 October 2008). See also Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, Chicago, 1958, pp.15, 169.

<sup>51</sup> Leach, p.1.

To further test Collingwood's ideas Kavanagh called on his own experience as a potter. By describing the way a modern studio functions, he argued that the distinction lay within the language, not the actions of the craftsman or the artefacts produced.

When a craftsman undertakes to make artifacts, this enterprise and these artifacts are often properly described as "creating" and "creative", even though they may be "making" and "thing" to the artisan. This may be so, *not* because the craftsman thinks more crudely than an observer or a philosopher, and not because the studio potter makes bowls and does not create beauty.<sup>52</sup>

According to Kavanagh, even when a potter made many objects that appeared similar to each other to the untrained eye, a 'master' potter knew that each one was different and some reflected a creative ideal more than others.<sup>53</sup>

Kavanagh's discourse shows that the art/craft debate was taking place, not only in different time zones, but also within completely different philosophical frameworks. Kavanagh, as a participant/observer, was interested in the 'new' craft, aligning it with art, whereas Collingwood was interested in art and was using 'old' craft only as a counterpoint to art. Collingwood's argument failed to define craft as it manifested within the studio craft movement because he ignored the new relationship that had developed between art and craft.<sup>54</sup> But, in a concession to fair balance, it could be argued that Collingwood, who rarely had difficulty expressing clear distinctions and providing lucid and apt examples, found defining the difference between art and craft 'both thorny and obscure'.<sup>55</sup> Nevertheless, his theory became the means to separate craft from art using a technical and philosophical framework.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Kavanagh's italics, Kavanagh, p.242.

<sup>53</sup> *ibid.*, p.243.

<sup>54</sup> Taylor, 'R. G. Collingwood: Art, Craft and History', p.240.

<sup>55</sup> *ibid.*, p.241.

<sup>56</sup> Howard Risatti, 'Crafts and Fine Art: An Argument in Favour of Boundaries', *Art Criticism*, 16, 1, 2001, p.63.

## Social and Cultural Distinctions

After the Second World War it was evident that the Western art world continued to rely on Collingwood's philosophy, or variations of it, to define the emerging studio craft movement. Craftspeople who aspired to become craft artists realised that conceptual skills were considered more important than traditional craft skills. Grace Cochrane, speaking about craft in Australia, noted that:

By the 1960s the visual arts avant garde had come to associate works that had been made with skill and care with a lack of originality. Through the structures of the art world, a value system became entrenched in which ideas and emotions could not be associated with sympathetic attitudes towards materials, or the skills and processes enjoyed in working with them.<sup>57</sup>

For craftspeople, those who advocated for the crafts and critics trying to integrate craft into the world of art, a discursive confusion developed. Cochrane believed that this became a fundamental barrier to the advance of studio crafts.

[T]he critical or literary parts of the craft world adopted the aspirations and language of the art world in an effort to validate their practice. In doing so, while certainly changing and overturning conservative perceptions about what the crafts might be, they set in train a denial of their own social and technological histories and values. This pattern was to remain until the questioning of cultural art hegemonies began to occur in the crafts ... in the 1980s.<sup>58</sup>

This was part of the art and craft debate within a cultural and social framework.

In 1975, Bernard Smith appeared to reject the rigidity of Collingwood's definition of art when he suggested that out-of-date art theories and archaic class distinctions were preventing the arts and crafts from becoming an integrated and integral part of the community.

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<sup>57</sup> Grace Cochrane, *The Crafts Movement in Australia: A History*, Kensington NSW, 1992, p.104. Many of Cochrane's comments about Australia are equally applicable to New Zealand, but not necessarily within the same timeframe.

<sup>58</sup> *ibid.*

There are few professional artists and professional craftspeople who want strongly to defend this distinction today. It is absurd and anachronistic to insist that those who paint or sculpt or engage in the production of graphic art be called artists while those who work creatively in ceramics, weaving, wood and so forth, be called craftsmen ... And it is equally anachronistic, apart from being élitist, to argue that the useless things be called art, and the useful, craft. These distinctions are reflections in the art world of older, more hieratic, class societies, and have no place in a modern democratic society.<sup>59</sup>

Smith then linked the abandonment of the distinction with changes to arts and crafts education and suggested that students should be required to study both art and, ideally, two crafts so they could become flexible. Smith's call for a more conciliatory approach to the division in some ways reflected the movement of the debate over the previous thirty to forty years. The earlier discussion had taken place almost exclusively on the pre-Second World War, Northern Hemisphere stage where art was compared to traditional craft. When Smith presented his ideas it was in the Southern Hemisphere in a less class-conscious society and craft was no longer bound by traditional restraints. In addition, in Australia craft education was becoming more common and establishing a more formal academic structure<sup>60</sup> – a trend that New Zealand followed in the 1980s.

## **Pierre Bourdieu**

Discussion on the art/craft debate in New Zealand before the 1990s did not call on the ideas of Pierre Bourdieu to any great extent. This was largely because his work had not been widely translated into English,<sup>61</sup> his writing – even in translation – was 'particularly dense'<sup>62</sup> and his research into French cultural taste and the relationship between cultural preference and class seemed too obscure and remote for any meaningful analysis of art and craft

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<sup>59</sup> Smith, *The Death of the Artist as Hero*, p.53.

<sup>60</sup> Cochrane, 'Truth or Trap: The Australian Contemporary Crafts Movement's Pursuit of Art Ideals', p.3.

<sup>61</sup> His seminal work, *La Distinction: Critique Sociale du Jugement*, was translated in 1984. See Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, trans. Richard Nice, Cambridge, Mass, 1984. See also Joe Green, 'Pierre Bourdieu: A Theory of Practice - Class in Action', BA (Hons) thesis, Massey University, 2001, pp.1-2.

<sup>62</sup> Alison Jones, *At School I've Got a Chance: Culture/Privilege: Pacific Islands and Pakeha Girls at School*, Palmerston North, 1991, p.93.

in New Zealand.<sup>63</sup> Regardless of his direct influence on the art/craft debate specifically in New Zealand however, his work on the place of art and craft in society is a valuable tool in this discussion.<sup>64</sup>

Bourdieu's work emphasised social and cultural factors in 'maintaining established patterns of social stratification'.<sup>65</sup> He explained society as a social space where people exist in relation to one another primarily based on their economic capital, cultural capital (educational, social, and intellectual knowledge), social capital (networks) and symbolic capital.<sup>66</sup> Symbolic capital, according to Bourdieu, in addition to being identified with honour, prestige and recognition could be linked to elements that are sometimes classified as 'taste', such as dress sense, accent and style.<sup>67</sup> Symbolic capital was usually acquired through competition, inherited from family or learned at school.<sup>68</sup> It could not be converted to other forms of capital but economic, cultural and social capital could have symbolic value.

Bourdieu referred to the areas where the social interaction involving the forms of capital took place as 'fields'. Positions within the fields were determined by the proportion of capital those involved possessed or were able to acquire.<sup>69</sup> In this thesis the fields of 'craft' and 'art' form the primary areas of struggle but different fields can be either autonomous or interrelated, therefore the struggle might be between craftspeople, artists and craftspeople, or even craftspeople, artists, educators and administrators within a number of different fields.

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<sup>63</sup> Chapter 23 in Peter and Dianne Beatson's 1994 book on the arts in New Zealand suggests that they had a working knowledge of Bourdieu's ideas, although he is not mentioned by name. See Peter Beatson and Dianne Beatson, *The Arts in Aotearoa New Zealand. Themes and Issues*, Palmerston North, 1994, pp.208-9.

<sup>64</sup> Bourdieu, p.xii.

<sup>65</sup> June Freeman, 'The Discovery of the Commonplace or Establishment of the Elect: Intellectuals in the Contemporary Craftworld', *Journal of Design History*, 2, 2, 1989, p.62.

<sup>66</sup> Tim Hallett, 'Symbolic Power and Organizational Culture', *Sociological Theory*, 21, 2, 2003, p.130. Bourdieu divided 'cultural capital' into three forms: 'the embodied state ... the objectified state ... and ... the institutionalized state'. See Pierre Bourdieu, 'The Forms of Capital', in John G. Richardson, *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, New York, 1986, pp.243-8. Bourdieu's italics.

<sup>67</sup> Richard Harker, Cheleen Mahar, and Chris Wilkes, eds, *An Introduction to the Work of Pierre Bourdieu*, Houndsmill, Basingstoke, 1990, p.5.

<sup>68</sup> Webb, Schirato, and Danaher, p.152.

<sup>69</sup> Harker, Mahar, and Wilkes, eds, p.8.

Bourdieu believed that individuals entered fields with preconceived ideas and habits that he called *habitus*. *Habitus* has been defined as a 'system of internalized dispositions that mediates between social structures and practical activities, being shaped by the former and regulated by the latter' or more simply, unconscious points of view held by people that can influence how they feel in different social circumstances.<sup>70</sup> People attempt to locate themselves in the field where their *habitus* naturally fits. Bourdieu suggested that the field was like a game where *habitus* was a trump card and inherited assets were capital: 'As positions within fields change, so do the dispositions which constitute the habitus.'<sup>71</sup> Bourdieu applies class as 'a generic name for social groups identified by their conditions of existence and their corresponding dispositions' – identified by some as status groups.<sup>72</sup> When applied to art and craft in New Zealand Bourdieu's ideas demonstrated that class status was 'not fixed by economic relations alone, nor [was] ... it permanently fixed.'<sup>73</sup>

Bourdieu explained that a dominant group, for instance the bourgeoisie in France or the well-educated middle-class in New Zealand, could control fields by indirect means such as access to education and defining artistic taste through the use of hidden (sometimes unconscious) codes he called the 'critique of taste'.<sup>74</sup> Those educated in a particular way understood the codes and used them to exclude those who had not received the same education. Bourdieu called this form of control 'symbolic violence' which could include tacit gender and race discrimination that the dominated group understood to be the accepted social and cultural norm.<sup>75</sup> Through these means the economically dominant group could reproduce social divisions.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> David L. Swartz and Vera L. Zolberg, eds, *After Bourdieu: Influence, Critique, Elaboration*, Dordrecht, 2004, p.43.

<sup>71</sup> Harker, Mahar, and Wilkes, eds, p.11.

<sup>72</sup> Rosemary Crompton, *Class and Stratification: An Introduction to Current Debates*, Cambridge, 1993, p.174.

<sup>73</sup> Robin Gardner-Gee, 'A Practice Called Craft in a Country Called New Zealand: Readings of Craft New Zealand 1982 – 1993', MA thesis, University of Auckland, 1996, p.80.

<sup>74</sup> Bourdieu, p.1.

<sup>75</sup> Symbolic violence is examined in more detail in Chapter Three.

<sup>76</sup> Christine Maree Cheyne, 'The Politics of Art-Making: A Socialist-Feminist Critique', MA thesis, Massey University, 1985, p.45.

Often the *habitus* was reinforced by rarity. Bourdieu claimed ‘that rarity [was] not an accident of beauty, but rather its cause.’<sup>77</sup> A work of art was considered beautiful because it was rare and ‘rarity is almost always expressed using words that carry a positive connotation ... Whereas what is common is valued negatively ...’.<sup>78</sup> Furthermore, art, because it was rare through limitations in the understanding of it and the ownership of it, could be made inaccessible to a large proportion of the population. Craft in the traditional sense, on the other hand, was available to many and was more comprehensible because of its utilitarian nature or the way it was made and as such had less capital value.

In the context of this thesis Bourdieu’s ideas are important because they relate to the place that ‘cultural producers’ played within the ‘new middle class’ – a group that has been identified as having a dominant role in the latter half of the twentieth century.<sup>79</sup> Moreover, the same group had a significant role to play as cultural consumers in an increasingly affluent world and, in addition, formed the antithesis of the group that craftspeople had been assigned to in the past – manual workers.<sup>80</sup> Bourdieu determined that taste, previously thought of as idiosyncratic individual choice was, in reality, a predictable phenomenon and defined by economic and social class. Furthermore, he established that consumption can be seen as the battleground where social class distinctions are fought out.<sup>81</sup>

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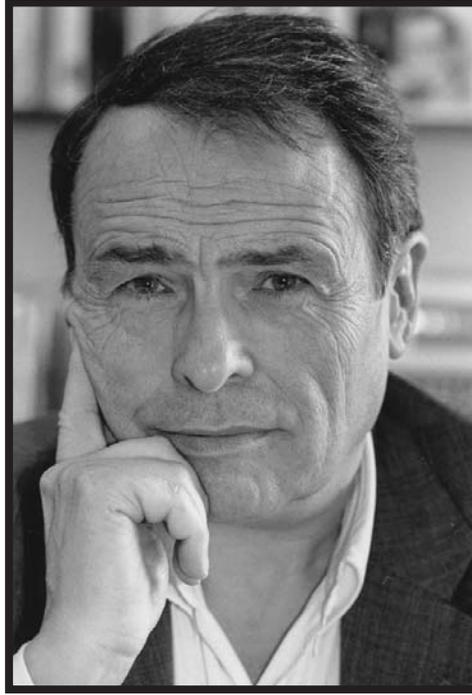
<sup>77</sup> Quoted in Murray, *Craft Unbound: Make the Common Precious*, p.10.

<sup>78</sup> *ibid.*, pp.9-10.

<sup>79</sup> Crompton, p.19.

<sup>80</sup> *ibid.*, p.175.

<sup>81</sup> Emma Shaw, 'Re-Locating Ceramics: Art, Craft, Design? A Practice-Based, Critical Exploration of Ceramics Which Relocates the Discipline in the Context of Consumption, the Home and the Everyday.', PhD thesis, University of Westminster, 2007, p.196.



**Figure 4:** Pierre Bourdieu  
1930 - 2002.<sup>82</sup>

Much of Bourdieu's research was based on his observation of the cultural preferences across the spectrum of Parisian society in the 1960s. As a result of these observations he suggested the replacement of 'traditional Kantian aesthetics' – the disinterested aesthetic disposition or separation of art from other aspects of social and practical life – with a "popular" aesthetic' which included the functional relevance of art.<sup>83</sup> His ideas were critical to the art/craft debate as a counterpoint to the argument put forward by Collingwood and others that an artist's work was designed to make some sort of statement about his or her vision or about the social universe, unlike craft which was made to earn the craftsman a living.<sup>84</sup> Although Bourdieu's general arguments were based on his research in Paris they were abstract and universal in nature and had enough flexibility to be tested in studies outside France.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> Photo: Michael Walford, *Pierre Bourdieu* 25 May 2008; available at:

[http://blogs.warwick.ac.uk/michaelwalford/entry/pierre\\_bourdieu/](http://blogs.warwick.ac.uk/michaelwalford/entry/pierre_bourdieu/) (4 February 2010).

<sup>83</sup> Janet Wolff, *Aesthetics and the Sociology of Art*, 2nd edn, Houndmills, Basingstoke, 1993, pp.19-20.

<sup>84</sup> Webb, Schirato, and Danaher, pp.149-50.

<sup>85</sup> Harker, Mahar, and Wilkes, eds, p.15. See also Michael Grenfell and Cheryl Hardy, *Art Rules: Pierre Bourdieu and the Visual Arts*, Oxford, 2007, p.9.

Bourdieu's social model of cultural production and consumption explained Kant's 'disinterested contemplation', or lack of interest in function, as an expression 'of a class ethos or habitus, itself ultimately determined by the distance or immediacy of material need.'<sup>86</sup> Conversely, an emphasis on function over form was a 'dominated aesthetic'<sup>87</sup> created by necessity. Bourdieu carried out surveys to determine which sections of Parisian society held particular forms of capital and in what proportions. In the early 1960s he observed that one group, the *bourgeoisie*, had a surplus of economic capital over cultural capital while another, the intellectuals and artists, had the opposite.<sup>88</sup> The intellectuals and artists favoured work inspired by Modernism while the *bourgeoisie* treasured the old fashioned baroque and flamboyant style. Bourdieu noted that the children of the *bourgeoisie* possessed large amounts of economic and cultural capital and therefore had economic power and an advanced taste in art.<sup>89</sup> Another group, the *petite-bourgeoisie*, emerged from the expanding service industry. This group had upwardly mobile social aspirations and identified with the ambitions of children of the *bourgeoisie* although they held less economic power. Bourdieu suggested that the modern craftsperson came from the *petite-bourgeoisie*, but rather than being trained in technical schools and undertaking traditional crafts such as upholstering and picture framing they had a higher level of education and became involved in making jewellery, printed fabrics, ceramics or hand-woven clothes<sup>90</sup> – all crafts that had the potential to be employed as a means of 'artistic' expression. The new craftspeople produced work the wealthy young *bourgeoisie* understood and desired. In New Zealand, in a less stratified environment, the social distinctions were less obvious but nevertheless, taste was determined by similar alignments of capital and, as will be seen in Chapter Three, education was the catalyst for the changes that took place.

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<sup>86</sup> Jeremy F. Lane, *Pierre Bourdieu: A Critical Introduction*, Sterling, VA, 2000, pp.142-3.

<sup>87</sup> John Codd in Harker, Mahar, and Wilkes, eds, p.142.

<sup>88</sup> Crompton, p.178. Bourdieu's reference to *bourgeoisie* refers to the generation born before the Second World War. See Editor's Introduction, Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production*, Cambridge, Mass., 1993, p.3.

<sup>89</sup> Crompton.

<sup>90</sup> Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, p.359.

## The Collingwood/Bourdieu Connection

It was in the area of cultural production that Collingwood's ideas may have had some relevance within Bourdieu's proposal. Bourdieu claimed that within the art field there were two dominant discourses that were 'bifurcated' – they divided towards opposite ends of a continuum.<sup>91</sup> At one end was the heteronomous pole and at the other the autonomous. Artists working at the heteronomous end produced work that was popular and sold well (i.e. market-driven). They did not look within themselves for inspiration but worked for pre-existing demands for particular types of work and used pre-established forms – all the conditions that Collingwood stated defined craft, not art. At the autonomous end was art for art's sake. Here, Bourdieu stated, a 'reversal of economic logic' existed.<sup>92</sup> Economic success was considered artistic failure and vice versa. For artists 'proper', to use Collingwood's term, the rewards were not necessarily financial. The audience was the *cognoscenti* – 'other artists, art critics, those who have acquired the specialised education that will allow them to understand the "in"-jokes, ... and the self-referentiality of the works'.<sup>93</sup> Ironically, artists who achieved high symbolic capital through the rejection of commercial success could often become wealthy as the prices for their work increased.<sup>94</sup> In Bourdieu's theory these artists became 'consecrated'.<sup>95</sup>

Artists, craftspeople and consumers did not occupy a pure position in the continuum between the two poles and the field was not structured in a flat linear fashion, nor was it stable or permanent. Bourdieu's model was much more complicated and multi-dimensional. In Graph 1 below, for example, Bourdieu explains how in some areas of cultural life certain aspects are consecrated and therefore understanding them requires a particular level of knowledge or symbolic capital, whereas in other areas consumers do not

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<sup>91</sup> Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production*, pp.40-1. See also Webb, Schirato, and Danaher, p.159.

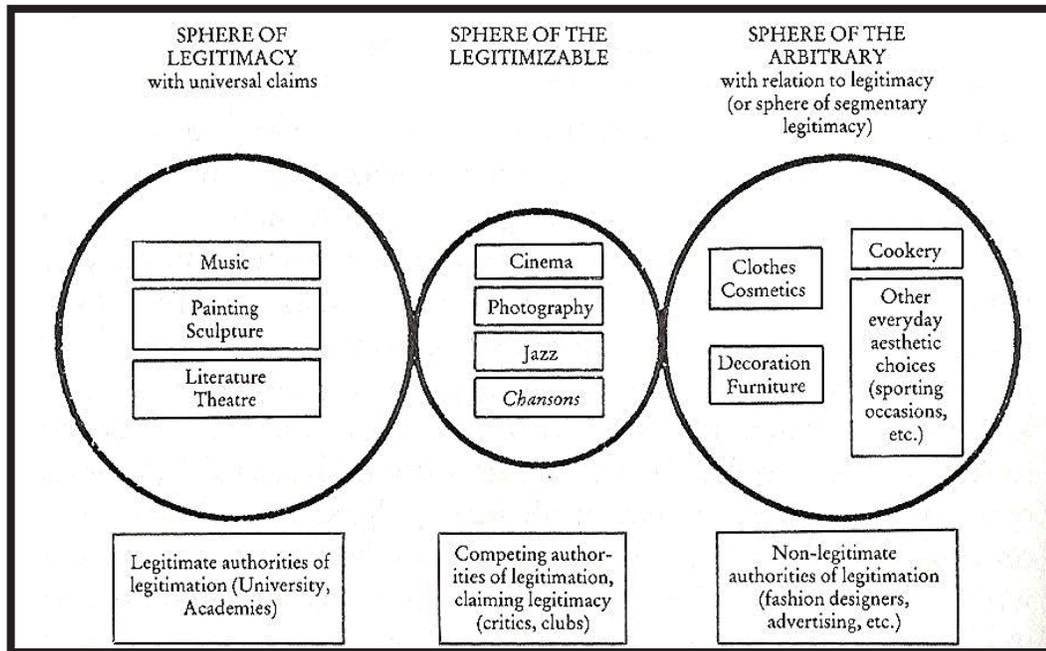
<sup>92</sup> Bourdieu quoted in Webb, Schirato, and Danaher, p.160. See also Pierre Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art: Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field*, trans. Susan Emanuel, Cambridge, 1996, p.142.

<sup>93</sup> Webb, Schirato, and Danaher, p.160.

<sup>94</sup> An example of this is the Spanish artist, Pablo Picasso.

<sup>95</sup> Webb, Schirato, and Danaher, p.161.

need the same level of knowledge and can simply enjoy the product or the experience without regard to whether it has been legitimized by the dominant group. By the mid-1980s, many crafts in New Zealand were located in the 'sphere of the arbitrary' or the 'sphere of the legitimizable', requiring little cultural capital, but the craft artists who created them, many of whom were the new graduates of the craft design courses, sought a place in the 'sphere of legitimacy', a domain dominated by the art school trained.



**Graph 1:** Bourdieu's hierarchy of legitimacies.<sup>96</sup>

This reflected one of the organising principles that Bourdieu identified as the binary relations that included privileging one term over another – for instance, art over craft.<sup>97</sup> 'Artists [or craft artists] make their work, and position it and themselves, according to what they see as possible and as being in their best interests at a given moment.'<sup>98</sup> Craftspeople in New Zealand increasingly in the 1980s spanned the full length of the continuum, but Bourdieu's binary opposites remained a restricting factor in the conversation about whether craft could be art. If a craftsperson was economically successful – and many were – they could be excluded from the artist's world where symbolic capital was more important.

<sup>96</sup> Diagram: Pierre Bourdieu with Luc Boltanski et al., *Photography: A Middle-Brow Art*, trans. Shaun Whiteside, Cambridge, 1990, p.96.

<sup>97</sup> Webb, Schirato, and Danaher, p.169.

<sup>98</sup> *ibid.*, p.171.

By the 1980s Collingwood's black and white demarcation between art and craft still remained an important determinant in the debate. However, many associated with the arts and crafts realised that with the changing social makeup of craftspeople and the changing appearance of what was being produced his rules were becoming difficult to relate to much contemporary craft. Although the social theories that Bourdieu had proposed were only beginning to emerge in English translation they appeared to reflect more accurately what was actually happening. The British craft writer, June Freeman, recognised these developments in 1989 when she stated: 'It is ... important for the crafts world to engage in the debate about the social role of culture' and further stated that 'Pierre Bourdieu and Howard Becker<sup>99</sup> have now offered notable contributions to this debate'. She suggested that they would 'help to establish how and why certain objects come to be defined as art in contemporary Western societies while others are excluded from that categorization.'<sup>100</sup>

### **Internationalism Intrudes**

Bourdieu's ideas did not go unchallenged by scholars who were familiar with his work.<sup>101</sup> Bourdieu has been accused of collapsing 'various social groups and various social experiences into a single group, a single experience in the interests of arguing for a dominant field-specific logic'.<sup>102</sup> It has also been suggested that much of his 'work on class, education and social reproduction [was] basically a very ingenious social-stratification exercise.'<sup>103</sup> Putting aside these criticisms however, the world that Bourdieu was explaining was increasingly evident within the art/craft field in New Zealand as the display of work at the Sarjeant Gallery in Wanganui in 1987 shows. Although the intensely class-conscious Parisian society that Bourdieu based his theories on was different in many ways to the more egalitarian society of New

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<sup>99</sup> Howard Becker is discussed in more detail in Chapter Seven.

<sup>100</sup> Freeman, p.62.

<sup>101</sup> *ibid.*, p.74,.note 10 and Green, p.20.

<sup>102</sup> John Frow quoted in Webb, Schirato, and Danaher, p.147.

<sup>103</sup> Nicos P. Mouzelis, *Sociological Theory: What Went Wrong?: Diagnosis and Remedies*, London, 1995, p.114.

Zealand in the 1980s, fashion and taste changes were spreading very quickly internationally. The anthropologist Arjun Appadurai explained that new technology was accelerating social and cultural changes.

They [world-wide movement of images and scripts] move the glacial force of the habitus into the quickened beat of improvisation for large groups of people. Here the images, scripts, models, and narratives that come through mass mediation ... make the difference between migration today and in the past.<sup>104</sup>

New Zealand's membership of the World Crafts Council (WCC) from 1965 also confirmed that New Zealand craftspeople and consumers were increasingly part of the international craft market.<sup>105</sup> New Zealand craftspeople were exposed to a range of different interpretations of craft and were increasingly aware that social and educational factors influenced who made craft, who critiqued craft and who purchased craft. At times this exposure to international influences was not welcomed. For instance the craftswoman, Robyn Tunstall, complained to the editor of *New Zealand Crafts* in 1988 that the selection of work for the new Craft Index – itself an overseas idea – was influenced by overseas design. She derisively described the designs as “International Noughts and Crosses and Zigzags”.<sup>106</sup> In New Zealand the changes that took place in crafts in areas such as the definition of art and craft, where it was displayed and how practitioners were educated, seemed to reflect aspects of Bourdieu's theory of intergenerational social and cultural mobility. Comments such as those by Tunstall reflected the concern that the social and educational influences on overseas craft might influence New Zealand's culture – and her dismissive language suggests that she did not believe it was a positive influence.

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<sup>104</sup> Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*, Minneapolis, 1996, p.6.

<sup>105</sup> Jenny Patrick, 'Nan Berkeley – Outrageous Visionary', *New Zealand Crafts*, Winter 1989, p.4.

<sup>106</sup> Tunstall's letter to the editor of *New Zealand Crafts*, expressed concern at this development. See Robyn Tunstall, 'Fingers Pointed at the Index', *New Zealand Crafts*, Spring 1988, p.2. Noughts, Crosses and Zigzags is a reference to the paintings of the abstract artist, Wassily Kandinsky.

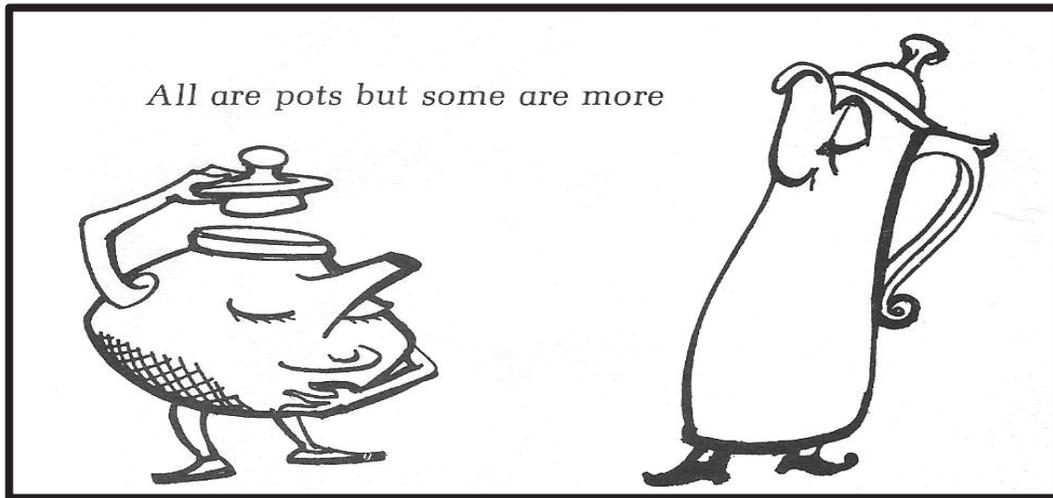
## The Art/Craft Debate in New Zealand

Before the mid-1970s discussion in New Zealand about the art/craft divide was limited. Few craftspeople were knowledgeable about the intricacies of the philosophical arguments on craft and the small number who had received training in institutions such as the Elam School of Fine Arts in Auckland and the Ilam School of Fine Arts in Christchurch were trained as artists, not craftspeople. A few who had some knowledge of the issues involved through their training, usually overseas, wished to avoid the subject if possible because they realized that it could not be debated in an environment of ignorance. For example, Jack Laird, an English-born and trained teacher and craftsman expressed his frustration when questioned about whether craft was art by exclaiming: 'It [the question] will only deliver a wrong answer.'<sup>107</sup> Nevertheless, it was clear that there were differences between art and craft and between artists and craftspeople. In the following discussion it becomes evident that whilst the philosophers and sociologists discussed above were not mentioned by name, their ideas were an underlying component of the debate. The cartoon below (Figure 5), published in the *New Zealand Potter*, showing that not all craftspeople were considered equal when their work was analysed, suggests the art/craft debate had become an issue for potters by 1977. The article accompanying the cartoon, written by Roy Cowan, was titled 'Ups downs and outs of selection' and spoke of 'silent rules' used during the selection of work for the New Zealand Society of Potters annual exhibition, suggesting Bourdieu's symbolic violence was active.<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> Margaret Pope, interview with Jack Laird, 1998.

<sup>108</sup> Roy Cowan, 'Ups Downs and Outs of Selection', *New Zealand Potter*, Autumn, 1977, p.6.



**Figure 5:** Cartoon suggesting different levels of cultural, social and symbolic capital within the studio craft movement. The cartoon also appears to support a contention of Collingwood that a hierarchical relationship existed between crafts and within the craft world.<sup>109</sup>

### Harry Davis

One craftsman who was prepared to express an opinion on the issue was Harry Davis. Davis had extensive experience within the ceramic industry as a potter, working for Bernard Leach at St Ives Pottery and operating his own studio in Cornwall. In addition, he was a self-educated art historian. In 1962 Davis and his wife May Davis emigrated to New Zealand to avoid the nuclear disaster they believed was about to engulf the Northern Hemisphere and established a pottery in Nelson.<sup>110</sup> Davis had firm opinions on the role of craft in the modern world and his opinion was respected and sought after. In this section we will consider three texts in which he presented his ideas on the relationship between art and craft. They span a period of over twenty years, beginning in 1963, with the final article printed in 1986. His views changed over the period, going from advice on crafts being concerned with their own sphere through to a fervent vilification of the trend for crafts to seek the status of fine art. The accuracy of his understanding of the relationship between craft and art in the past was at times questionable, but because he possessed considerable symbolic capital within craft circles he was very rarely challenged.

<sup>109</sup> Cartoon: Juliet Peter, in 'Ups Downs and Outs of Selection', p.6. See also Collingwood, *The Principles of Art*, pp.15-17.

<sup>110</sup> Julie Warren, *Clay: The Pottery Industry – 150 Years in Nelson*, Nelson, 1991, p.15.



**Figure 6:** Harry Davis taking a weekend pottery school in Christchurch, 18 – 20 April, 1969. The publication of a report on this school in *The Journal of the Canterbury Society of Arts* in 1969 supports the argument that pottery was considered a form of art, although the kilns in the background suggest the school was held in a pottery clubroom.<sup>111</sup>

At a conference organised in 1963 to study and make recommendations on the future of craft in New Zealand, Davis was invited to present his thoughts on how craftspeople might organise themselves to meet future challenges.<sup>112</sup> The speech he gave, entitled 'The Craftsman Today', was ostensibly about how the crafts must adapt and work with modern-day business practices and machinery without becoming corrupted by crass commercialism. The underlying theme encouraged craftspeople to experiment, but to avoid being seduced by current trends.<sup>113</sup> Davis interspersed his speech with calls for craftspeople to avoid the trap of becoming enamoured with art.

Craft movements of the revivalist type, that is to say all craft movements today, tend to get bogged down in some sort of cul-de-sac. There is a tendency to strive for ... [the] artistic with the maximum possible purity. ... There is a tendency today to put creative and artistic vigour in a place of top priority. ... Aesthetic creativity is only one of

<sup>111</sup> Photo: 'Pottery School', *The Journal of the Canterbury Society of Arts*, 25, May, 1969. Fifty people attended the weekend school conducted by Davis.

<sup>112</sup> Gerald Wakely, 'Proceedings of the First Study-Conference on the Promotion of Crafts in New Zealand,' in *First Study-Conference on the Promotion of Crafts in New Zealand*, The Victoria University Regional Council of Adult Education, 1963.

<sup>113</sup> *ibid.*, pp.23-8. See also extract, Harry Davis, 'The Craftsman Today', *New Zealand Potter*, 9, 2, 1967, p.2.

man's many creative faculties and this is why I prefer the concept of human fulfilment for the position of number one in a scale of values.<sup>114</sup>

Later he placed artists outside, but not above, craftspeople. '[T]here are those who have a horror of making two things alike. This jeopardises their souls and for them craftsmanship is out anyway. They are artists they will tell you.'<sup>115</sup> Nevertheless, he was concerned that craftspeople had an opportunity to be creative and he provided a simple definition of self-expression and creativity.

I have ... said that creative gifts are inherent in the nature of man. Some men who exercise these gifts are called artists, but these gifts are in some degree peculiar to all men, only most men never develop them. Why? The answer is that our materialistic society offers very ... little scope for the exercise of such gifts, ... Self-expression is a baffling phrase to many, but behind it there is a very simple and natural process. The creative process expressed in its simplest terms is the exercise of choice – personal choice.<sup>116</sup>

Finally, perhaps indicating his awareness of the thinking that Bourdieu would later articulate in greater detail, Davis identified the barriers to self-expression.

The creative process so defined calls for a personal subjective act of choice. We are however so overladen with pre-conceived ideas, habits, conventions, concepts of what is fashionable or "in good taste", or with just plain humbug, that to make a genuine personal choice is an extremely difficult thing to do.<sup>117</sup>

Davis' distinction between art and craft lay firmly within the mind of the individual, but was not defined by Collingwood's criteria. In fact, any craftsman, whether producing one item or many, could still define themselves as an artist – although one suspects Davis would not have entirely approved of the label.

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<sup>114</sup> Wakely, p.23.

<sup>115</sup> *ibid.*, p.24.

<sup>116</sup> *ibid.*, pp.25-6.

<sup>117</sup> *ibid.*, p.26.

After a short time in New Zealand the Davises became interested in setting up a pottery to train locals in Peru in a practical example of third world aid. To raise the necessary funds Davis gave lectures around the world – often adopting a polemical style to expound his ideas on the relationship between art and craft. One of the lectures, 'An Historical Review of Art, Commerce and Craftsmanship' was repeated in a number of countries.<sup>118</sup> Davis by now had become more assertive in his opinion and was beginning to link the distinction between art and craft with social status and functionality rather than solely creativity.<sup>119</sup> He suggested 'that pottery [had] "made the grade"', whereas other crafts had not. '... [P]otters have managed to insinuate themselves into the world of Fine Art.'<sup>120</sup> He argued that 'These arbitrary divisions [were] a post-Renaissance phenomenon' and then outlined the history of how this had happened.<sup>121</sup>

In presenting his case he was acknowledging, although not directly, that Collingwood's definition had influenced the debate.

Art has somersaulted ... now signs of skill are sufficient grounds for derogatory comment, and nowhere more so than in the world of craft revivalism. If the craft in question happens to involve a function it is difficult to dispense with skill altogether, but the status value of being associated with Art, rather than Craft, is so great that function is often gladly dispensed with.<sup>122</sup>

Davis was suggesting that the craftspeople of the post-war craft movement were increasingly abandoning the skills required to produce functional work in their pursuit of art. He was complaining, in the same fashion as Peter Fuller,<sup>123</sup> that this craft 'revival' was imitating current art trends and it was not a good thing for craft.

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<sup>118</sup> Harry Davis, 'An Historical Review of Art, Commerce and Craftsmanship,' 1968 – 70. This lecture was given in London, Copenhagen, Nelson and Sydney.

<sup>119</sup> *ibid.* Unpaginated.

<sup>120</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>121</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>122</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>123</sup> See Chapter One.

Davis was convinced that commercialism, in effect capitalism and individualism, had divided the arts and crafts and, furthermore, it had aligned art with the ruling classes and creativity while craft was aligned to the rest of the population and identified with drudgery. Creativity became a tool to be used to exert power. The ruling class suppression of creativity amongst craftspeople was achieved through the demands of employers:

[T]hose who followed the other arts, i.e. the craftsman or artigani, were losing their freedom and their dignity in the interests of commerce. Furthermore one must keep in mind the effect of repetition under the orders from an employer, with the added circumstance of subdivision of tasks, which had an inevitably dire impact on the element of creative sparkle in work done.<sup>124</sup>

In 1986, the year he died, a bitter article written by Davis under the title 'Hand Craft Pottery, Whence and Whither', was published in the *New Zealand Potter*.<sup>125</sup> In it Davis identified five strands leading to the craft 'revival' and how the dominant influence was class. The strands included the post-Renaissance separation of art from other aspects of ordinary life, the collecting cult of "gentlemen", the rise and fall of social protest linked to crafts (the Arts and Crafts Movement), the teaching of craft in art schools and finally, the setting up of St Ives Pottery in 1920 by Leach and his Japanese colleague Shōji Hamada.<sup>126</sup> Linking class and status, Davis claimed that 'Leach had been saying repeatedly that pottery and potters must be given the status and prestige accorded to painters and sculptors.'<sup>127</sup> This, Davis suggested, led to the use of the title '*Artist Potter* ... the pathetic obsession with the desire for recognition ...' and finally to the linking of language and class.

Staite-Murray<sup>128</sup> at the Royal College was soon heard to be saying that an Artist Potter must at all cost avoid

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<sup>124</sup> Davis, 'An Historical Review of Art, Commerce and Craftsmanship.' Davis reiterated this theme in a 1973 article, Harry Davis, 'Repaying Our Debt to Man's Culture', *New Zealand Potter*, Autumn, 1973, pp.8-10.

<sup>125</sup> Harry Davis, 'Hand Craft Pottery, Whence and Whither', *New Zealand Potter*, 28, 1, 1986, pp.28-31.

<sup>126</sup> *ibid.*, p.28. For more on Shōji Hamada see, Timothy Wilcox, ed., *Shōji: Master Potter*, London, 1998.

<sup>127</sup> Davis, 'Hand Craft Pottery, Whence and Whither', p.29.

<sup>128</sup> William Staite-Murray was a dominant figure in the British studio pottery movement between the wars. See Tanya Harrod, *The Crafts in Britain in the 20th Century*, New Haven, 1999, pp.32-3. See also Malcolm Haslam, *William Staite Murray*, London, 1984.

involvement with function. All this was gradually reflected in the use of language. Things were renamed and acquired subtle overtones of class. An apprentice became a student, a shop was called a gallery and the potter's place of work became a studio!<sup>129</sup>

Davis in 1986, twenty-four years after arriving in New Zealand, continued to relate the art/craft debate to events at an earlier time in Britain. He had nothing to say about the craft movement in New Zealand; partly because his formative experience was in Britain; partly because he remained detached from the craft community while in New Zealand; and possibly because he, like many other British immigrants, felt that New Zealand was so like Britain that any advice he gave on the international stage applied equally well to New Zealand. What he saw in New Zealand and elsewhere convinced him that words such as 'student', 'gallery' and 'studio', when used in conjunction with 'craft movement', were signs that art had insidiously infiltrated into the craft world.

### **Davis Challenged**

Some New Zealand craftspeople supported Davis – but with reservations. Mike Spencer, a Taranaki potter, responding to the 'Whence and Whither' article, agreed with the major thrust of the argument that Davis had made but outlined how the two environments were different. He stated that 'craft pottery in New Zealand was never the preserve of "gentlemen"; certainly had no overtones of class; nor have our potters ever had any fear of machines, or philosophical objections to them.'<sup>130</sup> Furthermore, he claimed:

the development of pottery in New Zealand was far more of a "folkcraft" movement ... today nearly all practising potters have either been self-taught, apprenticed or started from practice rather than theory. The Fine Arts departments have ... had very little to do with potters,  
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<sup>129</sup> Davis, 'Hand Craft Pottery, Whence and Whither', p.29.

<sup>130</sup> Mike Spencer, 'Letter to the Editor', *New Zealand Potter*, 28, 2, 1986, p.4. Note: Mike Spencer is incorrectly named Mike Spenser in the magazine. For an alternative opinion to the issue of potters and machinery see Vic Evans, 'Head, Heart and Hand: Studio Pottery in Nelson 1956 - 1976', MA thesis, Massey University, 2007, p.41.

<sup>131</sup> Spencer.

However, although he described the movement as healthy in New Zealand, Spencer warned that it was changing:

as New Zealand itself has changed from an egalitarian society to one with an increasing gulf between rich and poor. The aim of many potters now is towards sophistication – what Barry Brickell calls *zuit* (or is it *zoot*?) pots. This is the exhibitionist approach, where the piece is seen as an object beckoning attention ... in a race to be noticed or perhaps to win the prize. In thus attempting to give the pot a special status, ... we have the essence of the “fine arts” approach.<sup>132</sup>

Spencer predicted that this approach would:

lead to a disintegration of the New Zealand pottery tradition ... pottery will become like other “fine arts”, the preserve of galleries and collectors ... the general public will lose touch. ... Where fewer, though higher priced pieces are being made, few potters will be able to survive economically and will need to supplement incomes, probably by teaching. This in turn leads to pottery becoming “ceramic art” as practised within colleges and universities, where teachers teach students, who in turn become teachers – the whole cycle touching the general public not at all.<sup>133</sup>

Spencer continued in the letter to detail the cycle of decline, describing how it would lead to ‘ephemera and to fashion.’ Finally he asked two questions: ‘Has New Zealand pottery, in chasing immediate effect, lost a wholeness it once had [in the 1960s]? Second, are we moving from a broadly-based pottery tradition towards a closed society of self-conscious artists?’<sup>134</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> *ibid.* In 2008 Paul Melser noted that during the 1980s Brickell, and Len Castle, had ‘completely reoriented their production away from utility.’ See Paul Melser, ‘The Art/Utility Schism,’ in *Ceramicus08*, Wellington, 2008, p.2.

<sup>133</sup> Spencer.

<sup>134</sup> *ibid.*



**Figure7:** Peter Voulkos (1924 – 2002). His critics claimed his work lacked craft skills but he had the ability to make functional pottery and his skill was evident in the scale of his work.<sup>135</sup>

Spencer may have had in mind developments in the United States where, by the 1970s, the craft artist/craft educator was a dominant figure in the craft world. For some craftspeople in the United States the battle that Spencer was fighting had been lost ten years earlier. Commenting on an article about one of America's most famous potters/ceramic artists/educators, Peter Voulkos, Moishe Smith wrote to the editor of the *Ceramics Monthly*: 'With the February [1976] issue, your magazine has once again shown that craftsmanship is dead in American ceramics.'<sup>136</sup>

Both Davis and Spencer were adamant that the move by some craftspeople to produce 'art' rather than 'craft' was a retrograde step. They linked craft with purity of purpose and wholesomeness while fine art was assigned to the

<sup>135</sup> Photo: *Frank Lloyd Gallery*, 2010; available at: [www.franklloyd.com/](http://www.franklloyd.com/) (22 June 2010).

<sup>136</sup> Moishe Smith, 'Letter to the Editor', *Ceramics Monthly*, April 1976, p.7.

fickle field of fashion and ephemeral taste. Furthermore, and despite his earlier statement that craft in New Zealand had no overtones of class, Spencer connected the growth of ceramic art with the decline of egalitarianism. However, both Davis' article and Spencer's letter demonstrate that the distinction between art and craft centred on the aesthetic reasoning that Collingwood had made thirty years earlier had evolved into economic and sociological arguments, and contained many of the elements that Bourdieu had suggested influenced decisions that people made.

### **The Debate in the 1980s and 1990s**

The 1980s were a critical point in the development of the studio craft movement in New Zealand as graduates began to emerge from the new polytechnic craft courses, as craft magazines increasingly featured 'non-functional' craft and the CCNZ appeared to be favouring the new craft artist. In 1989 the CCNZ's magazine, *New Zealand Craft*, published an article by Grace Cochrane that retrospectively examined the debate during the 1980s.<sup>137</sup> In the article Cochrane, a former New Zealander living in Australia, attempted to unite art and craft in one creative and practical continuum. She described the 1980s as a decade of confusion in the crafts. The confusion, Cochrane maintained, was partly to do with language and the ways in which some words no longer described what modern craftspeople wanted to say – where words continue to convey a meaning when modern craftspeople wanted them to say something else. She explained, in a similar fashion to Davis, that craft had suffered because 'historical privilege ... [had] been conferred on the "fine arts" of painting and sculpture.'<sup>138</sup> She reiterated Davis' notion that value had been placed on fine arts for social and economic reasons and acknowledged that those working in low-status areas – craftspeople – wanted some of that status and power. Because craftspeople had approached this goal in the same way as artists their language also emulated the fine arts. Unlike Davis however, she did not detect a devaluing of the crafts. In fact, citing the public reaction to the renewed interest in craft and the use of the word in a variety of settings, she suggested that 'craft' had

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<sup>137</sup> Grace Cochrane, 'Crafts in the Eighties', *New Zealand Crafts*, Summer 1989, pp.22-3.

<sup>138</sup> *ibid.*, p.22.

a high status: 'Things can be made, they can be manufactured, they can be processed or they can be crafted.'<sup>139</sup> She acknowledged the burden that craft had borne because of Collingwood's mind/body distinction and she suggested that this had created a false perception and that both the aesthetic and the technical were exhibited in all cultural activities: 'Skills, attitudes, processes and materials have never been enough on their own; nor have ideas and imagination without practical resolution.'<sup>140</sup>

Cochrane believed that the reliance of the crafts on the language of fine arts had trapped it in an inferior position. In part, she blamed the lack of writing for the delay in the redefining of craft. She stated: '[T]he problem with the art/craft debate is that it is not an aesthetic or technological issue (which is the way in which it has been treated) but in fact a sociological one, ...'<sup>141</sup> Her statement echoed Bourdieu's 'critique of taste', the hidden agenda those in positions of power used to exclude craft from the fine arts, although she did not explicitly mention his work. Collingwood, also not referred to by name, appeared to be dismissed: 'In developing an art practice, or in making objects, it should not really matter from which position people start.'<sup>142</sup>

Cochrane was requesting that the debate take place within a framework that recognised the language of craft without the distraction of the technical and aesthetic terminology and the hidden codes that assigned symbolic capital to some groups, but not others.

Robin Gardner-Gee's analysis of the art/craft debate in two magazines, *Art New Zealand* and *Craft New Zealand*, linked the increasing professionalism of craftspeople in the 1980s with Bourdieu's theory of the role cultural, social and symbolic capital play in maintaining class divisions and concluded that craftspeople had set out to increase their status by positioning craft closer to art.

[W]hile craftspeople ... may be defined as ... middle class  
in strictly economic terms, the discourse of

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<sup>139</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>140</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>141</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>142</sup> *ibid.*, p.23.

professionalism can be regarded as an attempt to increase the status of craft within the middle classes. In particular the talk of a new urban craft may be understood as, in part, an attempt to secure and utilise the position of craftspeople as part of the image industry, as makers of symbolic goods within the middle classes rather than makers of utilitarian goods (with the accompanying working class association) or as idealistic resisters to capitalism.<sup>143</sup>

Further evidence that it was craft that was attempting to change its position was presented by Gardner-Gee when she noted that while the debate in *Craft New Zealand* was protracted it was almost totally absent from *Art New Zealand*.<sup>144</sup> She concluded that the debate was 'primarily a craft concern'.<sup>145</sup> Gardner-Gee's conclusions, coming as they do in the mid-1990s, demonstrate that once the excitement of achieving financial success had started to fade for craftspeople they sought other forms of capital – cultural and symbolic.

### **The Debate and Women**<sup>146</sup>

Feminist writers used the predominance of women in some crafts in conjunction with the claim that the number of 'famous' women artists was small because they had been excluded from history by male writers to argue that the inferior position of craft was a gender-based form of segregation. Andrea Daly, in a 1998 MPhil thesis, contended that in Western culture 'the male is linked with high art and the female to craft.'<sup>147</sup> She did not deny that both genders participated in craft 'but that there are historically specific discourses that privilege the linking of each gender with specific practice.'<sup>148</sup> In her 1985 MA thesis Christine Cheyne examined the relationship between sociology and art and concluded that: 'women's socialisation, and the

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<sup>143</sup> Gardner-Gee, p.80. By 'idealistic resisters to capitalism' Gardner-Gee is referring to the Arts and Crafts Movement.

<sup>144</sup> *ibid.*, p.39.

<sup>145</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>146</sup> Further discussion on women and craft takes place in Chapter Six.

<sup>147</sup> Andrea Daly, 'Craft Theory: Who Needs It?', MPhil thesis, University of Auckland, 1998, p.88.

<sup>148</sup> *ibid.*, pp.88-9.

structural constraints which they experience, places them in an inferior position to men who work as artists.<sup>149</sup> Furthermore, she noted that it was:

[t]he “second wave” of feminism in the 1960s ... [that] identified a hierarchy of the arts in which women are to be found predominantly in the art forms which are considered to be of inferior status, usually those activities secondary to “great” art, the crafts. Indeed, the familiar phrase “art and craft” embodies the distinction between the two activities and conveys the order of the two – with art ranking first.<sup>150</sup>

Both Daly’s and Cheyne’s theses supported Bourdieu’s contention that women, along with other groups in society, had been subjected to hierarchies of limitations that he called ‘symbolic violence’. Women were often unaware this was happening but the gender imbalance in some crafts such as weaving and the large number of women involved with craft in comparison to the number of well-known women artists, provide some evidence that, in the early days of the movement at least, this argument could be made.

Male writers also used the dominance of women in some crafts to suggest that symbolic violence encouraged women to engage in some forms of craft. In a *New Zealand Listener* article in 1988, commenting on an exhibition called ‘In Stitches’, Peter Gibbs, the *New Zealand Listener*’s arts writer, noted that although more than 4000 people<sup>151</sup> (presumably mostly women) were members of the fifty guilds that made up the Association of New Zealand Embroiderers’ Guilds, the craft was not considered a mainstream art form. He claimed that, ‘In spite of the vast support it enjoys from women, it is not taught in the white male institutions, nor shown in white male galleries. Without this official seal of approval ... it continues to be regarded as women’s work.’<sup>152</sup> While the title of the article, ‘Art of Embroidery’, suggested that Gibbs was sympathetic to their predicament he suggested that: ‘Embroiderers are partly to blame for this. Most see their work as a hobby

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<sup>149</sup> Cheyne, p.3.

<sup>150</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>151</sup> The number may have been over 10,000 according to a CCNZ estimate. See CCNZ Records, 92-278, Box 35, ATL, Wellington.

<sup>152</sup> Peter Gibbs, ‘Art of Embroidery’, *New Zealand Listener*, 14 May 1988, p.14.

activity quite separate from art.<sup>153</sup> He did however note that the exhibition was an attempt by the group called the ‘Gentle Art Company’ to dispel this image.

Daly, Cheyne and Gibbs, in different ways, recognised that women seemed to have additional obstacles to having their work recognised. They suggested that across the range of crafts some seemed to sit closer to art and often women were more prominent in those that sat at the other end of the spectrum.<sup>154</sup> In addition to the restrictions of Collingwood’s prescription and Bourdieu’s social limitations that created this situation, craftswomen were more closely associated with the linking of craft with amateurism and craft as leisure activities rather than ‘real’ work. These issues are given closer attention in Chapters Three and Six.

### **The Debate and Māori<sup>155</sup>**

As noted in Chapter One, Te Reo Māori (the Māori language) appears to have made no distinction between art and craft, with the word for art, ‘toi’,<sup>156</sup> interlinked with craft – ‘mahi toi’. ‘Mahi’ also had an association with work, for instance ‘mahi kōhikohiko’ (casual work), mahi tīpako (shift work) and ngā mahi a te rēhia, (the pursuit of pleasure, recreational activities). More commonly, a particular craft was specified either with art or craft, for instance, ‘toi whakairo’ (the art/craft of carving) or ‘ngā mahi a te whare pora’ (the art/craft of weaving), although for mats and baskets the terms ‘raranga, rangaa and rangaia’ (to weave or plait and weaving) could also apply.<sup>157</sup>

Māori were subject to a variety of pressures that either sought to restrict mahi toi to its traditional mode and to commoditise it through books and

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<sup>153</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>154</sup> See John Scott’s continuum below.

<sup>155</sup> Further discussion on Māori and craft takes place in Chapter Six.

<sup>156</sup> Toi can also be translated as: tip, point, summit, art, knowledge, origin, source (of mankind), native, indigenous, aboriginal.

<sup>157</sup> *Te Aka Māori-English, English-Māori Dictionary*; available at: <http://www.maoridictionary.co.nz/> (11 November 2008).

tourism as an exotic 'other',<sup>158</sup> or attempted to encourage the modernisation of Māori art and incorporate it into the Pākehā art world.<sup>159</sup> The latter development was associated with increased urbanisation after the Second World War. Ranginui Walker has proposed that: 'One of the consequences of urbanisation is increased knowledge of the alienating culture of metropolitan society and its techniques for the maintenance of the structural relationship of Pakeha dominance and Māori subjection.'<sup>160</sup> Referring to an observation by Paulo Friere in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Walker noted 'that knowledge of the alienating culture leads to transforming action resulting in a culture that is being freed from alienation is an apt description of the dynamic of the Māori cultural renaissance.'<sup>161</sup> Walker was suggesting that Māori were aware that their culture had been marginalised through the application of symbolic violence in the way Bourdieu described, but they had consciously resisted it. For young urban tohunga mahi toi/tinga rehe (Māori artists and craftspeople) this required an adjustment to the conventions of the Pākehā art world while retaining their cultural heritage. Whether this view can be substantiated is doubtful as symbolic violence, as suggested by Bourdieu, negates the recognition of it by its victims.

Frank Davis, the Head of the Art Department at Palmerston North Teachers' College, appeared to be perpetuating the symbolic violence by suggesting that Māori artists were better off removed from mainstream New Zealand culture. He claimed in 1976 that:

[M]ost Maori artists are little known amongst the gallery cognoscenti, and their work, regarded as rather amateur and self-conscious, is rarely shown. By and large, this is probably a good thing, as the bulk of Maori artists have not become caught up in the competitive, commercialised, ingrown, and largely sterile world of art gallery-boutiques.<sup>162</sup>

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<sup>158</sup> Peter Gibbons, 'Cultural Colonization and National Identity', *New Zealand Journal of History*, 38, 1, 2002, p.13.

<sup>159</sup> Chris Hilliard, 'Colonial Culture and the Province of Cultural History', *New Zealand Journal of History*, 36, 1, 2002, p.83.

<sup>160</sup> Ranginui Walker, *Ka Whawhai Tonu Matou: Struggle without End*, Revised edn, Auckland, 2004, p.209.

<sup>161</sup> *ibid.* See also Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Harmondsworth, 1972.

<sup>162</sup> Frank Davis, 'Maori Art and Artists', *Education*, 25, 9, 1976.

It is possible that Davis' assessment of Māori involvement reflected Walker's contention that Māori were dynamic and adaptive and that for many tohunga mahi toi/ringa rehe the art/craft debate was not only confusing but, because of their cultural background, also meaningless. However, Māori dynamism and adaptability opened mahi toi to the same aesthetic, technical, cultural and social analyses as Pākehā art and craft. Certainly under Collingwood's rules traditional mahi toi was craft, not art, but like the wider craft movement the new mahi toi became increasingly difficult to classify in the 1980s and 1990s. Similarly, as educational opportunities improved for Māori and, through education, middle-class Pākehā understanding of Māori culture improved, their social, cultural and symbolic capital increased.

Two developments in particular helped Māori increase their cultural capital. The first was the new art scheme launched by Clarence Beeby, the Director of Education, in 1945<sup>163</sup> and implemented by Gordon Tovey, the Supervisor of Arts and Crafts at the Department of Education, during the 1950s and 1960s, that introduced mahi toi to a new generation of Māori and Pākehā students.<sup>164</sup> The development was important because it was the first sign that the subordinate cultural group (Māori) had been able to overcome the symbolic violence of exclusion.<sup>165</sup> The impact of the change was slow but by the 1980s most New Zealanders were aware that mahi toi played a central role in Māori society and some undoubtedly believed that it was an important part of New Zealand's culture. However, as the educationist Richard Harker noted in 1980: 'Too often, where Maori elements have been added to the curriculum they have been divorced from their cultural context and incorporated in terms of the pedagogy and evaluation systems of the dominant group.'<sup>166</sup>

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<sup>163</sup> Evans, 'Head, Heart and Hand', p.52.

<sup>164</sup> Davis, 'Maori Art and Artists'. See also Carol Henderson, *A Blaze of Colour. Gordon Tovey. Artist Educator*, Christchurch, 1998 and Alan McIntyre, 'A Tribute to a Friend – Gordon Tovey, – 1901 – 1974', *Education*, 7, 1974, p.23.

<sup>165</sup> Jones, p.94. See also R. Harker, 'Culture and Knowledge in the New Zealand Schools Curriculum', *Delta*, 27, 1980, p.3.

<sup>166</sup> Harker, 'Culture and Knowledge', p.13.

The second development that raised the profile of mahi toi was the 1984 Te Māori exhibition. Featuring traditional Māori artwork, the exhibition at first toured the United States in 1984 and was shown in New York, St Louis and Chicago. Some commentators were enthusiastic in their assessment of the exhibition. 'It was a great success and returned to tour New Zealand, again to applause, and a swelling of Māori pride.'<sup>167</sup> A review in *Art New Zealand* claimed that, 'Western distinctions such as art-artefact-craft had been exploded by the exhibition.'<sup>168</sup> Clearly, mahi toi could no longer be relegated to the dusty shelves of the anthropology section of museums.

However, some within Māoridom thought that the upgrade had been superficial. Tipene O'Regan, for instance, thought that all Te Māori achieved was to have mahi toi items wrenched 'from the grip of white coated ethnologists – from cups of tea in the basement [of museums], to wine and cheese upstairs. ... the difference between art and artefact is that art has flasher huis [meetings].'<sup>169</sup> Furthermore, the selection of work by a curator of 'primitive' art and its location in the Hall of Primitive Art at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and at the Chicago Field Museum of Natural History in America did not erase the perception of Māori art/craft as ethnographic artefacts<sup>170</sup> – although it had approval from traditional Māori authorities.<sup>171</sup>

The exhibition was also criticised because it did not contain weaving or tukutuku (woven panels), considered women's mahi toi, or contemporary mahi toi because it did not meet the criteria set down by the American art museums.<sup>172</sup> Two distinct groups appeared to be operating different agendas. The art, museum and academic world were trying to bridge the art/artefact divide – moving artefacts from museums into art galleries. Māori, on the other hand, considered artefacts as taonga (treasures) and were more

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<sup>167</sup> *New Zealand Herald*, 'Te Maori Exhibition', 7 September 1984.

<sup>168</sup> Quoted in Philippa Jane Butler, 'Te Maori Past and Present: Stories of Te Maori', MA thesis, Massey University, 1996, p.23.

<sup>169</sup> Peter Gibbs, 'Art Words', *New Zealand Listener*, 9 April 1994.

<sup>170</sup> Butler, p.74.

<sup>171</sup> Julie M. Paama-Pengelly, 'The Development of Maori Art in Education: Case Study of a New Zealand Secondary School', Master of Philosophy thesis, Massey University, 1994, p.38.

<sup>172</sup> Butler, p.21.

interested in re-establishing the link between people and their ancestors and their land through these taonga.<sup>173</sup> As we see later, in Chapter Seven, the divided approach to the exhibition was another example of why Māori craftspeople were reluctant to become too deeply immersed in the art/craft debate.

### **The Debate and the Crafts Council of New Zealand**

For an overview of the debate in New Zealand during the 1980s and early 1990s the following discussion considers what some craftspeople and commentators said in the magazines that were established to promote their interests. Emphasis has been placed on the 1980s and early 1990s for two reasons. First, the establishment of the CCNZ in 1977 and the publication of a magazine dealing with the interests of a diverse range of crafts generated a variety of opinions on this topic and second, the 1980s was the decade in which craftspeople, both Māori and Pākehā, engaged with international trends where the crafts became less easily identified with their traditional base and more closely aligned with the art world.

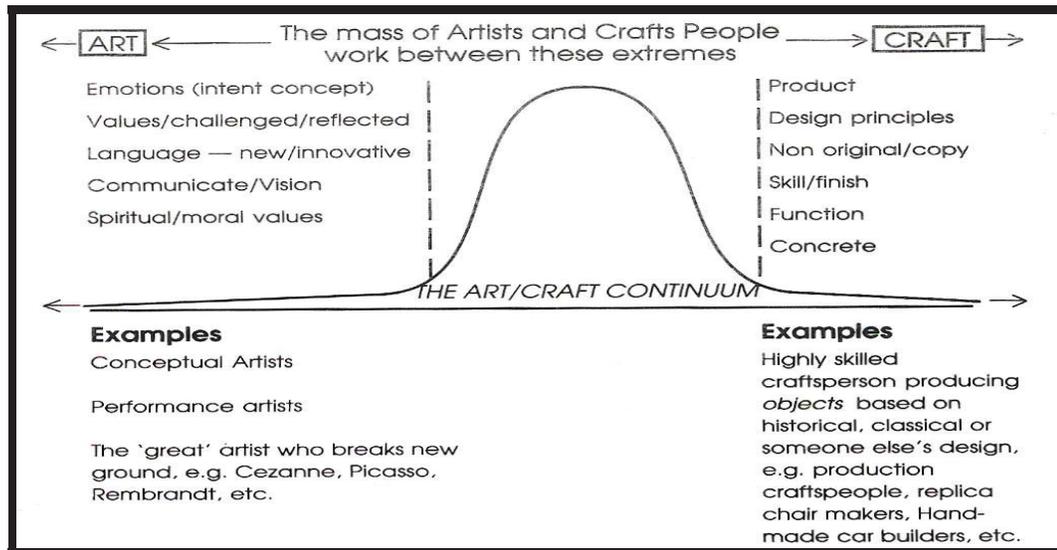
The formation of the CCNZ and its associated magazine encouraged a more informed discussion. The CCNZ however, had no authority to decide what was art and what was craft and had to frame its arguments with care so it would not alienate one side or the other. In 1989 John Scott, the President of the CCNZ, confronted the debate in an article entitled 'Art's art/craft's craft or: Tripping along the Continuum'.<sup>174</sup> His article came at a time when the CCNZ was having difficulty reconciling the views competing members had of the organisation that had been set up to represent all craftspeople. Some craftspeople valued the traditions that placed craft predominantly in the utilitarian domain while another group was trying to have their work recognised as a form of art. Scott was attempting to keep the two sides within the CCNZ framework.

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<sup>173</sup> *ibid.*, pp.75-6.

<sup>174</sup> John Scott, 'Art's Art/Craft's Craft or: Tripping Along the Continuum', *New Zealand Crafts*, Autumn 1989. See also Graph 2 below.

My short article is intended to argue that the debate over this much vexed question, arises firstly from a lack of understanding of what the two words mean; secondly from an inferiority complex on the part of many artists and craftspeople alike; thirdly (particularly as a consequence of these complexes) an undervaluing of their craft. ... While accepting that art and craft do meld, and are usually present to a greater or lesser degree in art and craft "objects", they are not the same.<sup>175</sup>



**Graph 2:** John Scott's continuum.<sup>176</sup>

Scott noted Collingwood's references to earlier times but did not outline his prescription for distinguishing between art and craft. Rather he prepared a diagram (above) to demonstrate how he believed most artists and craftspeople were positioned within a central region.

Scott dismissed functionalism or the materials used – often a way of describing craft – as a basis for the distinction, labelling them, 'erroneous, and meaningless' and attempted to include the craft artists: 'All art has a function, be it to adorn, or signify grandeur on the part of the owner, or reflect the current values of a culture or an era.'<sup>177</sup>

Scott's article was undoubtedly a response to criticism the CCNZ had received as a result of its decision to compile, in the words of Campbell

<sup>175</sup> *ibid.*, p.21.

<sup>176</sup> Diagram: 'Art's Art/Craft's Craft or: Tripping Along the Continuum'.

<sup>177</sup> *ibid.*, p.22.

Hegan, the President of the CCNZ in 1984, 'a register [index] of selected craftspeople who's [sic] work is considered to be of consistently high standard.'<sup>178</sup> The register was promoted as a means for the CCNZ to organise its slide collection but it became evident that Hegan's explanation was the true purpose for such a register. Criticism of the proposal was immediate with one craftsperson suggesting that as there already existed a 'Craft Hunter's Guide' another guide would be a duplication.<sup>179</sup> However, this was a misreading of the intention of the CCNZ. Whereas the *Craft Hunter's Guide* was self-selected the index was to have a rigorous external selection system. Again, in another attempt to allay fears, Board member Colin Slade, who had prepared the draft proposal for the index, compared it to a library, suggesting that people wishing to contact or commission a craftsperson would need some guidance.<sup>180</sup> He added that selection for inclusion in the index would meet rigid criteria, which included: 'that it will be compiled by stringent methods of selection to ensure an objective and consistently high standard of entry.'<sup>181</sup> It was a manifestation of the CCNZ's plan to become a national organisation representing 'professional'<sup>182</sup> craftspeople – a development that Bourdieu believed helped maintain social hierarchies.<sup>183</sup>

The first selection for the Index of Craftworkers took place in 1987. Only thirty-five met the criteria, with some craft disciplines, such as embroidery and weaving, not represented at all.<sup>184</sup> By the time of the second selection later in the year the number of craftspeople seeking a place on the index had slipped to nineteen and only three were selected.<sup>185</sup> The CCNZ had completely misread its membership and had provided a target for

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<sup>178</sup> Campbell Hegan, 'Letter from the President', *New Zealand Crafts*, Summer 1984/85, p.3. Later, Hegan stated in *New Zealand Crafts* that: 'All professional craftspeople' were eligible to apply for selection. In an editorial in the same issue 'professional' was defined as '(over 30 hours per week)'. 'Editorial', *New Zealand Crafts*, Autumn 1985, p.2. Further discussion on the Index takes place in Chapter Seven.

<sup>179</sup> Heidi Penck, 'Letter to the Editor', *New Zealand Crafts*, Autumn 1985, p.4. Rosemary Stewart, in another letter, also complained on the same grounds. *The Craft Hunter's Guide* is also discussed in Chapter Seven.

<sup>180</sup> Colin Slade, 'Letter to the Editor', *New Zealand Crafts*, Winter 1985, p.2.

<sup>181</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>182</sup> Professionalism is discussed in more detail in Chapter Three.

<sup>183</sup> P. Bourdieu, *Homo Academicus*, trans. P. Collier, Cambridge, 1988.

<sup>184</sup> For photos of the first selection see Appendix Five.

<sup>185</sup> Peter Gibbs, 'Craft Index Ins and Outs', *New Zealand Listener*, 26 March 1988, p.54.

craftspeople who believed it had become elitist. One reader suggested that the index was ‘possibly the most damaging action on membership for many years.’<sup>186</sup>

The ensuing storm of debate played out in the letters column of *New Zealand Crafts*. When Scott became President in late 1987 he acknowledged the criticism and suggested:

[T]hat in its current form, the index caters only for the “art” end of the scale. There is an overemphasis on the artistic content of the work. Where does the person who produces a hundred fabulously made chairs or thousands of perfectly made mugs fit into our craft index? Currently the suggestion is they haven’t got a place on it.<sup>187</sup>

The problem that Scott had identified was never satisfactorily resolved and probably contributed to the CCNZ’s demise in 1992.

Māori had been cautious from the beginning. Nga Puna Waihangā (the national body of Māori Artists and Writers) was asked to assist with the selection of mahi toi but they responded ‘that they would need more time to think about it and to see if inclusion is even appropriate to their own view of craft/art/culture.’<sup>188</sup>

A sign of the confused state that existed within the CCNZ is evident from Gardner-Gee’s analysis of the debate in *New Zealand Crafts*. She observed that the ‘construction of art and craft is surprisingly ambivalent about the value of craft, and uncritically idealistic about art.’<sup>189</sup> The CCNZ was established to represent ‘all’ craftspeople but clearly was sending out messages that it intended to represent some craftspeople (most likely craft artists) more than others.<sup>190</sup> And those who would be best represented would almost certainly be the craft artists who appeared in the Index.<sup>191</sup>

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<sup>186</sup> B. A. Milner, 'Aims and Ideals', *New Zealand Crafts*, Winter 1988, p.3.

<sup>187</sup> Gibbs, 'Craft Index Ins and Outs'.

<sup>188</sup> Lani Morris, 'Index of New Zealand Craftworkers', *New Zealand Crafts*, Autumn 1987, p.18.

<sup>189</sup> Gardner-Gee, p.41.

<sup>190</sup> Milner.

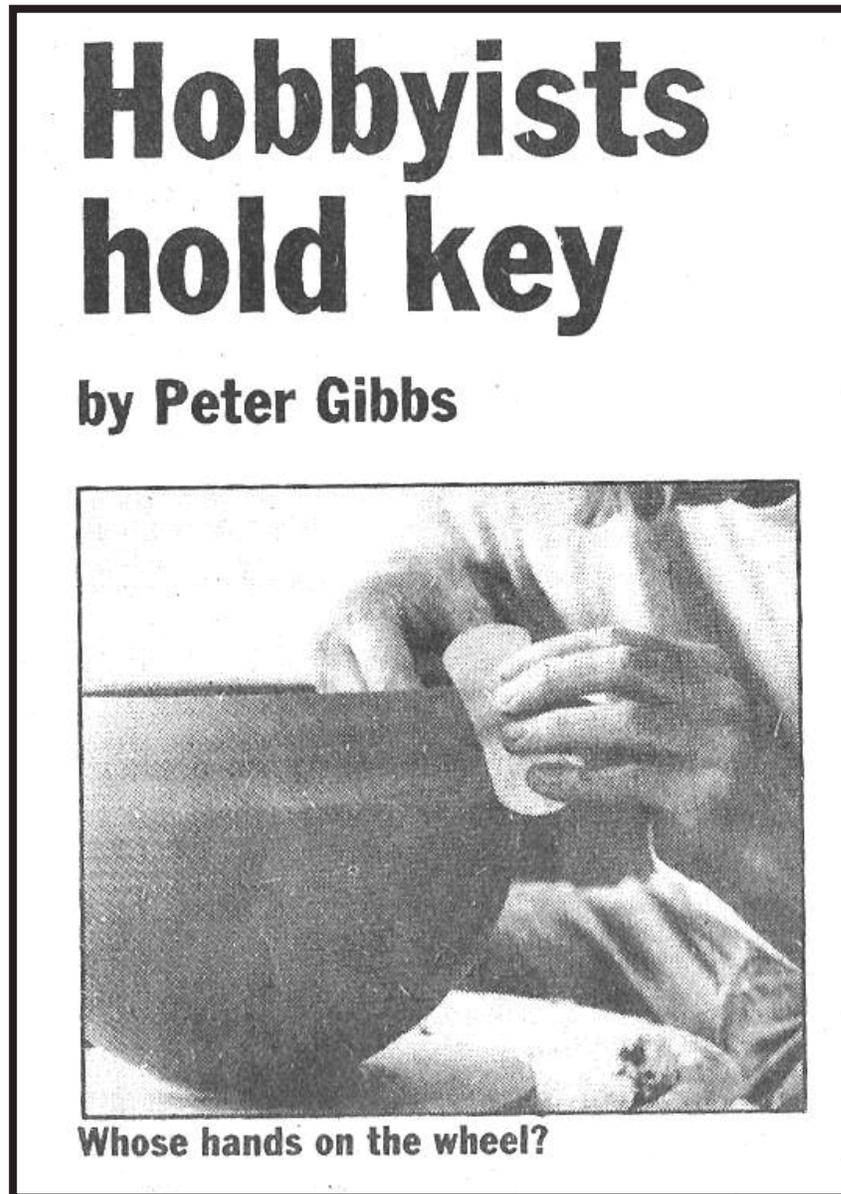
<sup>191</sup> Gardner-Gee, p.ii.

In his research Bourdieu discovered that groups of professionals used rules to maintain social hierarchies. The CCNZ's support for professionals and the formation of the Index suggest it was attempting to reward those who had similar social and educational backgrounds – professionalism was being measured by the amount of cultural and symbolic capital a craft artist possessed. A group of well-educated, middle-class craft artists who believed that the future of craft lay within the art world employed their cultural, social and symbolic capital to create different fields for craft and craft art. But many craftspeople straddled both fields – wanting to amass economic, cultural and symbolic capital. With the failure of the CCNZ to establish authority over craft the social network that may have allowed them to increase all three forms of capital disappeared and they were forced to look back to the craft-specific national organisations for social capital or join the artists who looked to the Arts Council to fulfil this role.



# Chapter Three: For Love or Money?

Hobbyists hold key.<sup>1</sup>



**Figure 1:** *New Zealand Listener* article by Peter Gibbs<sup>2</sup>

At the Annual General Meeting of the Crafts Council of New Zealand (CCNZ) held in Christchurch in 1988, the Executive was given a mandate to investigate different membership structures as a means of reinvigorating an organisation that many felt no longer truly represented New Zealand

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<sup>1</sup> Peter Gibbs, 'Hobbyists Hold Key', *New Zealand Listener*, 4 March 1989, p.33.

<sup>2</sup> Photo: *ibid.*

craftspeople. The events that led to this initiative are examined in more detail later in this chapter, but the title, 'Hobbyists hold key' in the *New Zealand Listener* article written by Peter Gibbs demonstrated the importance of hobbyists to the studio craft movement and the consequences for the crafts when the professionals tried to distance themselves from the amateurs. The separation between amateurs and professionals had been a feature of the studio craft movement since the 1950s and was usually measured by the economic success of craftspeople; but it rarely caused dissention – one either earned a living from craft or one did not. By the early 1990s however, the degree to which craft was considered art as discussed in Chapter Two had added a dimension that made the defining of professionalism much more difficult. Within four years of the 1988 meeting CCNZ had gone into liquidation, in part precipitated by its alienation of the vast majority of craftspeople in New Zealand – the amateurs, but also by the divisions that had developed between different types of professionals.

Janet Wolff, a sociologist with an interest in the arts, held similar ideas to Pierre Bourdieu and noted 'the interdependence of access to culture with economic and political position[s]'.<sup>3</sup> This chapter examines the relationship between those involved in craft at the amateur level and craft professionals. It sets out to determine how the economic definition of professionalism became entangled with social, political and cultural issues and how disputes between amateurs and different groupings of professionals became confused and, as in the case of the CCNZ, destructive. In doing so I also call on the thoughts of Pierre Bourdieu and expand the concept of symbolic violence to offer an explanation for the different positions amateurs and professionals held in the studio craft movement and to provide a framework for the arguments presented.

Symbolic violence 'is the imposition of systems of symbolism and meaning (i.e. culture) upon groups ... in such a way that they are experienced as

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<sup>3</sup> Janet Wolff, *The Social Production of Art*, London, 1981, p.96.

legitimate' – and legitimating.<sup>4</sup> Within the studio craft movement some craftspeople became 'more professional' than other craftspeople because they held higher academic qualifications in the field or their work was more closely related to art than traditional craft. The economic capital that had at first encouraged the growth of the studio craft movement became less important when the movement matured. Social and cultural capital became more valuable.

Three themes guide the chapter but all are related to the central theme – education. According to Bourdieu, education is one of the locations where powerful groups in society employ symbolic violence to impose their dominance. Bourdieu believed that class inequalities were not imposed on the population by the education system, but were 'achieved by *what is tacitly presupposed by the teaching*' and for that to work the type of pedagogy employed had to 'be accepted by all concerned as legitimate'.<sup>5</sup> Throughout this chapter this principle is related to craft education. The first section considers the way education influenced the surge of interest in crafts after the Second World War and the manner in which craft education changed from being taught at school as a means of stimulating children's creativity to education at the adult level after the commercial potential of craft was realised. The second theme considers the way in which amateurs and professionals – or 'real craftspeople'<sup>6</sup> as one writer described them – were defined by their ability to sell work and how craftspeople adapted to a changing economic environment. It will also look at the way craftspeople promoted and sold their work. The chapter will consider how and where work was displayed and sold and how this assigned new meanings to the terms 'amateur' and 'professional'. The third theme examines the hierarchical relationship between amateurs and professionals that evolved as the

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<sup>4</sup> Richard Jenkins, *Pierre Bourdieu*, revised edn, London, 2002, p.104.

<sup>5</sup> R. W. Connell, *Which Way Is Up: Essays on Sex, Class and Culture*, Sydney, 1983, p.146. Connell's italics.

<sup>6</sup> In 1982 the CCNZ claimed that New Zealand had 45,000 people involved with the crafts, with 2000 of them earning a full-time income as self-employed craftspeople. The 2000 were described in an editorial in *Craft New Zealand* as the "real craftspeople". See 'Press Statement: Taxation on Crafts', *New Zealand Crafts*, July 1982, p.15. See also, Robin Gardner-Gee, 'A Practice Called Craft in a Country Called New Zealand: Readings of Craft New Zealand 1982 – 1993', MA thesis, University of Auckland, 1996, p.71.

politicisation of the craft movement increased. Bourdieu's ideas on the relationship between social, cultural, symbolic and economic capital play an important explanatory role in this section. Here the rise and fall of the CCNZ features as an example of the way in which tensions increased between those who considered themselves craftspeople in the traditional sense and those who became involved in the widening interpretation of craftspeople as professionals, as individuals and craft organisations sought to have craft raised to higher social, political and cultural levels.

### **A Problem of Definition**

Defining the terms 'amateur' and 'professional', as they were understood during the time of the studio craft movement, is problematic. This is not a problem limited to the history of craft however; historians, across a number of fields have wrestled with applying definitions to terms that 'carry some sort of appraisal'.<sup>7</sup> At first, in the field of studio craft, an 'amateur' was someone who was involved purely for pleasure, without seeking a financial reward, while a 'professional' in the craft world was linked to the idea of professionalism in the trades, which involved apprenticeships and membership of a trade organisation such as a guild or the ability to earn a livelihood from their craft. 'Fulltime' became something of a euphemism within the movement, implying that a 'fulltime' craftsperson was a professional. In this sense the CCNZ defined professionals as those craftspeople who worked on their craft for over thirty hours a week,<sup>8</sup> even though many craftspeople devoted long hours to their craft for a very small financial return. An added complication was the feeling amongst some craftspeople that professionalism was linked to the quality and type of work produced or that some craftwork was associated with women – and so regarded as amateur – while other areas of craft were 'men's work.' Although gender is an important component of this debate the issue is covered in more detail in Chapter Six where it is a central theme.

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<sup>7</sup> For a discussion on the difficulty of defining 'amateurism' in sport for instance, see Lincoln Allison, *Amateurism in Sport: An Analysis and a Defence*, *Sport in the Global Society*, No. 21., Portland, Oregon, 2001, pp.8-10.

<sup>8</sup> 'Editorial', *New Zealand Crafts*, Autumn 1985, p.2.

Robin Gardner-Gee, in her study of *Craft New Zealand*, the voice-piece of the CCNZ, noted that the discourse in the magazine increasingly sought to construct craft as 'a highly skilled, creative but commercial business activity.'<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, she observed, 'the discourse of professionalism construct[ed] craft as a prestigious occupation.'<sup>10</sup> She divided the discourse on the professionalism into three distinct threads: excellence, marketing, and education.<sup>11</sup> Within the craft movement these aspects of craft discourse formed a labyrinth of intertwining meanings that changed and evolved over time as the movement became stronger. Her model was prescribed by Pierre Bourdieu's notions of symbolic capital within different sections of the art community which indicated that status within the art world was not decided purely on economic criteria. In fact, as craftworks became more sophisticated and craftspeople better educated in their field their social, cultural and symbolic capital increased and the means of gaining economic capital altered. Economic capital became less important as other forms of capital became more valuable to some craftspeople.

During the early period of the movement, between the late 1940s and mid-1970s when functional objects were the domain of craftspeople and before craft artists gained a higher profile, very little distinction was made in exhibition reviews, or in the publications that craftspeople read, between hobbyists and professionals. None of the craftspeople who exhibited at the Helen Hitchings Gallery in 1949 were professionals in the economic sense for example, but neither would they have thought of themselves as purely amateur. Ernst Plischke, as noted in the previous chapter, was an architect who designed furniture that was made by a furniture manufacturer. He was more likely to have called himself a designer. A. R. D. Fairburn was a poet and art critic who probably earned more from his printed fabrics than his poetry. Len Castle, the potter, was a science teacher and Avis Higgs was a

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<sup>9</sup> Gardner-Gee, p.55.

<sup>10</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> *ibid.*, pp.56-69.

painter who made scarves to bolster her income.<sup>12</sup> While these exhibitors may have referred to themselves as craftspeople they would have been unlikely to apply the title 'amateur' or 'professional' as a prefix. Furthermore, there were very limited opportunities in New Zealand for craftspeople to earn their living solely from craft. As a reviewer of an exhibition at the New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts in 1950 that included crafts noted, the two New Zealand potters exhibiting, both of whom had been trained in Britain,<sup>13</sup> could not contemplate returning to New Zealand to pursue their craft.

Their work was admired and it was purchased. They loved being home, and with any prospect of being able to carry on their work they would probably have been glad to remain here. We can only hope that they will eventually return, but we must realise that the greater their further success overseas the less our chance of getting them back.<sup>14</sup>

Nine years later, economic professionalism for some craftspeople appeared to have been established. For instance, in 1956 the potter Mirek Smišek, who combined teaching craft and making pottery, claimed to be New Zealand's first professional studio potter, but the word still lacked definition.<sup>15</sup> In an article in the *New Zealand Potter*, Mavis Jack appeared to suggest that the title 'studio potter' inferred a professional status and established a division between craftspeople based on how much they charged for their work. In a criticism of the prices charged by some potters she stated that: 'The attitude of the studio potter is bound to be different from that of the hobbyist but I hope in this article to show that potters who practically give their work away by undervaluing it are doing themselves a disservice.'<sup>16</sup> Jack's concerns reflected the growing realisation that some people could

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<sup>12</sup> Jane Vial, *The Gallery of Helen Hitchings: From Fretful Sleeper to Art World Giant*, Wellington, 2008.

<sup>13</sup> The potters were William Newland and Kenneth Clark. Both became well-known within British craft circles.

<sup>14</sup> A. Mallet, 'Craft at the Academy', *Design Review*, 3, 3, 1950, p.72. Kenneth Clark did return frequently but did not become a resident in New Zealand.

<sup>15</sup> Vic Evans, 'Head, Heart and Hand: Studio Pottery in Nelson 1956 - 1976', MA thesis, Massey University, 2007, p.1. More recently the claim has been disputed by Moyra Elliott and Damian Skinner who have suggested that the women who made pottery between the wars earned a living from their craft and were therefore New Zealand's first independent studio potters. See Moyra Elliott and Damian Skinner, *Cone Ten Down: Studio Pottery in New Zealand, 1945 - 1980*, Auckland, 2009, p.31. See also Moyra Elliott, email to the author, 22 August 2009 and the story of Elizabeth Lissaman in Chapter Six.

<sup>16</sup> Mavis Jack, 'A Studio Potter's Point of View', *New Zealand Potter*, 2, 1, 1959, p.35.

earn a living from craft and, furthermore, that conflicts would arise when those who depended on their sales to live had to compete with those who essentially were concerned with only covering their costs.

By the 1980s many craftspeople were able to earn a living from their craft and often used the term 'full-time' to define their professionalism. For instance, a 1981 booklet about the history of crafts in South Wairarapa used this definition in two of the articles — although confusion was evident here as well. James Greig, a potter and the author of an article on professional crafts in the booklet, had no hesitation in defining professionals as those who 'are distinguished ... by their full-time vocational commitment rather than by standards'.<sup>17</sup> But, confusingly, he noted that some hobbyists reached a professional level of skill and earned extra income from craft. Furthermore, he observed that the growth of interest in craft had created an 'interesting reversal' of roles with, 'the new professionals carrying on the tradition of the "amateurs" of an earlier age – "amateur" originally meant "lovers" of the craft.'<sup>18</sup> In the companion article on 'Domestic Crafts',<sup>19</sup> Robin Sanders explained that for these crafts:

Time is not a crucial factor; neither profitability; they do not depend on public acceptance of their commodity ... Their motives are more private and altruistic. There is an ideology of goodwill and generosity, or "love" as some called it, and it is, essentially, this characteristic that distinguishes these craftspeople from their more competitive, professional counterparts.<sup>20</sup>

Each author appeared to be aware of the content of the other's article. Sanders' description of amateurs lifted them into a more rarefied domain and Greig's comment about the 'interesting reversal' appeared to be downplaying the economic success that many craftspeople had experienced – perhaps to avoid having craft lumped in with small business or the trades. Both articles

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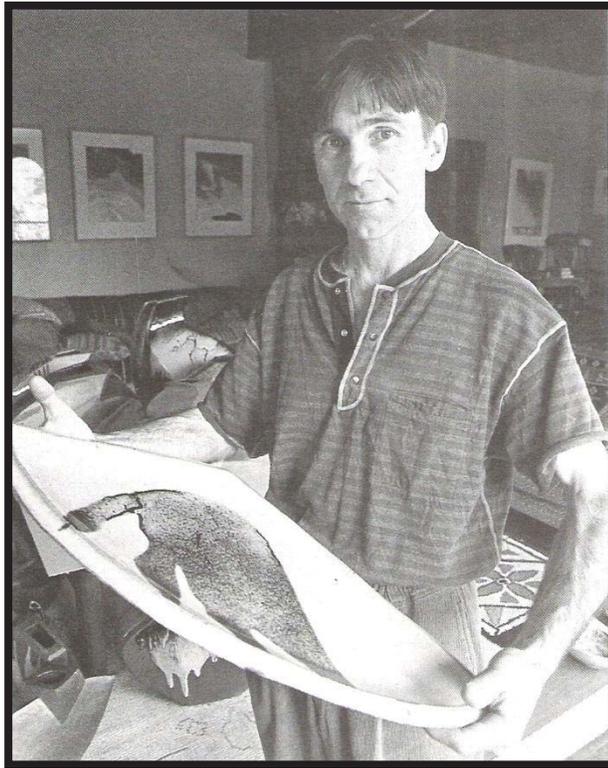
<sup>17</sup> Jim Greig, 'Professional Crafts', in *Hands over Time: A History of Crafts in the South Wairarapa*, Carterton, 1981, p.20.

<sup>18</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> Amongst the crafts included in the article are knitting, sewing, crochet, tatting, tapestry and embroidery, along with canework, wooden toys, macramé, batik, screen printing, doll making and pottery – see Robin Sanders, 'Domestic Crafts', in *ibid.*, p.32.

<sup>20</sup> *ibid.*, p.38.

were an attempt to bring the two areas of craft closer together but the difficulty in defining 'amateur' and 'professional' remained.



**Figure 2:** James Greig (1936 – 1986).<sup>21</sup>

### **Compulsory Education**

The studio craft movement had one of its foundations in a section of the education system that emphasised creativity rather than entrepreneurship or preparation for a career. Living as a 'full-time', 'professional' artist or craftsman was not considered by most people to be a realistic career ambition. Nevertheless, the growing middle-class wished to have their children introduced to aspects of culture that they believed would enhance their position in society. As Bourdieu indicated, the middle-class were searching for the non-financial assets that involve educational, social, and intellectual knowledge that children who grow up in non-wealthy but highly-educated and intellectually-sophisticated families, possessed. A person's position in society could not be judged purely on how much economic capital they accumulated or inherited. An introduction to the hidden codes of art through education had the potential to increase symbolic capital. Without

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<sup>21</sup> Photo: Howard Williams, 'James Greig: Master Potter', *New Zealand Potter*, 28, 3, 1986, p.2.

education, the codes employed by cultural producers (artists) would not be accessible to potential cultural consumers – hence the incomprehensibility of some art to some observers.<sup>22</sup> However, Bourdieu also suggested that the middle-class attempted to conceal aspects of education that portrayed an understanding of art as a learned response, thereby distinguishing between those that knew the codes because of their social ‘*habitus*’ and those who lacked ‘taste’. If craft was to be a branch of art, with the social and cultural capital that implied, rather than an aspect of trade, the middle-class needed to imbue it with codes that could only be acquired as a ‘gift’ through social distinction.<sup>23</sup> To achieve that, craft needed to be detached from function, but it would take time to establish that division and create codes of ‘craft art’. At first, craft in education swung back and forth between the trades and art.

Many of New Zealand’s first post-war craftspeople and craft consumers were exposed to some degree to the changes in art and craft education that began in the late 1930s. The changes did not have an immediate impact and the link between education, particularly primary education, and later life decisions is often not direct or linear. However, in her 1998 thesis on craft Grace Cochrane had no doubt that in Australia the connection between the Australian education system and later craft developments was clear – and by implication a similar link probably existed in New Zealand.

Changing ideals and opportunities in education clearly affected the developing idea of studio crafts practice as a professional, personally rewarding way of life. Post-war education emphasised the development of the individual as a “whole self” through creative experience.<sup>24</sup>

Certainly many New Zealand children educated in the late-1930s and 1940s had a less narrowly prescribed curriculum than their parents.<sup>25</sup> The new education environment placed more emphasis on creativity and, as a consequence, there existed a more flexible attitude to the relationship

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<sup>22</sup> Derek Robbins, *Bourdieu and Culture*, London, 2000, p.120.

<sup>23</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> Grace Cochrane, 'Truth or Trap: The Australian Contemporary Crafts Movement's Pursuit of Art Ideals', PhD thesis, University of Tasmania, 1998, p.54.

<sup>25</sup> D. G. Ball and A. E. Campbell, 'Changing Role of the Inspectorate: A New Zealand View', *The New Era*, 36, November, 1955, p.189. See also Ian Cumming and Alan Cumming, *History of State Education in New Zealand, 1840-1975*, Wellington, 1978, p.273.

between leisure activities and career decisions – the idea that one could make a living from the creative arts was not totally rejected – but would still have been considered unlikely. Nevertheless, changing economic conditions meant that many of the children educated through this period and into the 1950s had a better chance of imagining careers that would have been unavailable to their parents.

During the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s three key factors influenced the way children would be educated and four individuals, linked by a hierarchical chain, drove the sequence of events that led to the changes in art and craft education. The factors were: first, the election of the first Labour Government in 1935; second, the increasing influence of modern education theory; and third, the advocacy of a small group of educationalists that art and craft become an integral, and ultimately compulsory, part of a general education. The individuals who pushed the changes were Peter Fraser, Dr Clarence Beeby, Doreen Blumhardt and Gordon Tovey.<sup>26</sup>

### **Peter Fraser**

Under the administration of the first Labour Government more emphasis was placed on creativity in education and education became more democratic and child-centred. Peter Fraser, the Minister of Education, and from 1940, Prime Minister,<sup>27</sup> was determined that education was more than a means to a livelihood: “Education is not enough if it teaches us merely to make a living. Education must teach us how to live.”<sup>28</sup> His policies were based on his belief that the state should provide free education for all from primary school through to secondary school and university.<sup>29</sup> He linked education to a holistic approach to life. Before he became the Minister of Education he made one of his clearest statements on the relationship between education,

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<sup>26</sup> James Collinge in *Art in Schools: The New Zealand Experience*, Wellington, 1978, pp.25-8.

<sup>27</sup> Tim Beaglehole, *Fraser, Peter 1884 - 1950*, 2007; available at: <http://www.dnzb.govt.nz/> (7 April 2010).

<sup>28</sup> Quoted in Lauran Edwin Massey, 'The Educational Policy of Peter Fraser, the New Zealand Labour Party's First Minister of Education, 1935-1940', MA thesis, University of Auckland, 1968, p.44.

<sup>29</sup> Michael Bassett and Michael King, *Tomorrow Comes the Song: A Life of Peter Fraser*, Auckland, 2000, p.91.

citizenship and adult vocation when speaking to the Education Amendment Bill 1924.

If there is any attempt under this government ... to railroad the children at a premature age into vocational occupations it will be resisted by the Labour Party. We want young men and women to have the opportunity of a full cultural life, so that they may grow up into citizens learning to live before they learn to earn a livelihood.<sup>30</sup>

Douglas Price, in his study of Labour's educational reforms between 1935 and 1940, stated that Fraser's policies were more humanist than socialist, implying that they were driven by the idea that the welfare of the individual was inextricably linked to the collective wealth of the nation. This became evident when, on becoming Minister of Education, the emphasis in education shifted from training children for adult vocations through formal learning to viewing education as having 'intrinsic value in its own right'.<sup>31</sup> Furthermore, Price noted:

Education ceased to be only a means; it became a process, no less important in itself than adulthood. The actual process of child development began to take on more importance than the supposed end towards which this process should lead, and this outlook gave rise to a more liberal and experimental approach to education within the classroom itself.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> *New Zealand Parliamentary Debates* (NZPD), 1924, 203, p. 586, quoted in Margaret Clark, ed., *Peter Fraser: Master Politician*, Palmerston North, 1998, p.73.

<sup>31</sup> Douglas Gordon Price, 'A Study of the Philosophy Underlying Labour's Educational Reforms in New Zealand, with Particular Reference to the Period, 1935-1940', MA thesis, Victoria University of Wellington 1965, p.49. See also Massey, p.58.

<sup>32</sup> Price, p.49.



**Figure 3:** Peter Fraser (1884 – 1950).<sup>33</sup>

### **Dr Clarence Beeby**

Dr Clarence Beeby's background as an academic in educational research<sup>34</sup> informed his approach to the changes that Fraser sought. During his teacher training he had been inspired by the lectures given by Professor James Shelley at Canterbury College on the importance of the individual in education. Shelley, in turn, had developed his thinking on education through studying the works of Percy Nunn and John Dewey.<sup>35</sup> By the time Beeby was appointed to the post of Executive Officer of the New Zealand Council for Educational Research (NZCER) in November 1934 he was steeped in advanced educational thinking.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Photo: Alexander Turnbull Library (ATL), Reference: 1/2-005062.

<sup>34</sup> Beeby's doctoral studies in psychology were undertaken at London University and Manchester University. See Clive Whitehead, 'Book Review: To the Fullest Extent of His Powers, C. E. Beeby's Life in Education', *International Journal of Educational Development*, 20, 2000, p.431.

<sup>35</sup> See Percy T. Nunn, *Education: Its Data and First Principles*, London, 1920 and Jo Ann Boydston, ed., *The Middle Works, 1899-1924 / John Dewey*, Carbondale, 1976.

<sup>36</sup> Noeline Alcorn, *To the Fullest Extent of His Powers: C.E. Beeby's Life in Education*, Wellington, 1999, p.55.



**Figure 4:** Dr Clarence Beeby (1902 – 1998).<sup>37</sup>

When Beeby was promoted from Assistant Director of Education to Director in 1940 and Fraser was replaced by H. G. R. Mason it appeared that Beeby was the sole driver of education change. However, this perception was deceptive as Fraser and the new Deputy Prime Minister Walter Nash,<sup>38</sup> according to Beeby, finally determined educational policy.<sup>39</sup> Nevertheless, Beeby continued to advance the programme that Fraser had set in place and increasingly art and craft became a focus for the reforms which were inspired by the 1937 New Education Fellowship (NEF) conference.<sup>40</sup>

### **The New Education Fellowship Conference**

Beeby played a major role in planning the NEF conference, which was held in the four largest cities. Fraser agreed the government would pay the cost of

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<sup>37</sup> Photo: ATL, New Zealand Free Lance Collection, 1/2-031264; F, (PAColl-0785).

<sup>38</sup> Barry Gustafson, *Nash, Walter 1882 - 1968*, 2007; available at: <http://www.dnzb.govt.nz/> (7 April 2010).

<sup>39</sup> William Renwick, 'Fraser on Education', in Clark, ed., p.73.

<sup>40</sup> For more detail on the NEF in New Zealand and the conference see J. Abbiss, 'The "New Zealand Fellowship" In New Zealand: It's Activity and Influence in the 1930s and 1940s.', *New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies*, 33, 1, 1998, pp.81-93.

transporting the guests around the country and would act as guarantor up to £500.<sup>41</sup> Schools were closed during the conference; attendance by teachers cost a nominal one pound for a week of lectures<sup>42</sup> and enrolments reached 5,883.<sup>43</sup> The importance of the conference lay in the official sanction it gave to new ideas on 'educational pedagogy and practice that was to become the hallmark of post World War 2 education'.<sup>44</sup> A group of distinguished overseas educationalists were invited to present their ideas.

The NEF promoted schooling which was 'liberal, holistic and democratic, and [which] valued self-expression, dialogue and creativity'.<sup>45</sup> The conference placed considerable emphasis on the role of art and craft<sup>46</sup> as a central part of classroom programmes – particularly in the primary school.<sup>47</sup> The ideas of the Austrian Franz Cižek,<sup>48</sup> who did not attend the conference in person, were thought most important.<sup>49</sup> Cižek's notions on the creative potential of young children, and the belief that the mind of the child was qualitatively different from that of the adult, resulted in an approach to art education that moved away from more rigid forms of training, such as drawing still life towards free expression with a variety of materials.<sup>50</sup> The children learning in Cižek's schools were not training to be 'artists ... in the ordinary sense. For

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<sup>41</sup> Alcorn, p.81.

<sup>42</sup> Helen May, 'Learning through Play: A Case study on the Influence of Susan Issacs on Educational Practice in New Zealand', presented to the ANZHES Conference in Auckland, December 1990 as published in Sue Middleton and Alison Jones, eds, *Women and Education in Aotearoa*. 2, Wellington, 1992, p.89.

<sup>43</sup> A. E. Campbell and C. L. Bailey, eds, *New Education Fellowship Conference Modern Trends in Education: The Proceedings of the New Education Fellowship Conference Held in New Zealand in July 1937*, Wellington, 1938, p. xiii.

<sup>44</sup> May in Middleton and Jones, eds, p.83.

<sup>45</sup> Alcorn, p.80.

<sup>46</sup> Art and craft have been combined in the discussion on the NEF conference as the speakers did not differentiate in their lectures.

<sup>47</sup> Later the writings of the art critic Herbert Read became an important influence in art education. See Herbert Read, *Education through Art*, London, 1961 (first published in 1943) and Athol McCredie, 'Going Public: New Zealand Art Museums in the 1970s', MA thesis, Massey University, 1999, p.48.

<sup>48</sup> Franz Cižek was born in Bohemia when it was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. For more on Cižek see Stuart Macdonald, *The History and Philosophy of Art Education*, London, 1970, pp.340-9. Cižek's ideas were presented by Dr Paul Dengler.

<sup>49</sup> Franz Cižek's ideas had some influence on the 1928 Syllabus. See Thomas K. Prebble, 'Strategies of Change: A Study of Some Aspects of New Zealand Education During the First Half of the Directorship of Dr C. E. Beeby, 1940-1949', MA thesis, University of Auckland, 1970, p.89.

<sup>50</sup> Peter Beatson and Dianne Beatson, *The Arts in Aotearoa New Zealand. Themes and Issues*, Palmerston North, 1994, p.68.

him there was an underlying unity in art and craft, and he was well satisfied to think of the powers that had been awakened in his children being exercised in later life in home and workshop.<sup>51</sup> Čižek's ideas were widely accepted by 1931 in the Northern Hemisphere,<sup>52</sup> but were only recognised in the Southern Hemisphere after 1937 as a result of the NEF conference.

Dr Paul Dengler, an Austrian, expanded on Čižek's ideas explaining that they were founded on three basic principles. First was the importance of children working in a pleasant environment thereby encouraging creative self-expression. The second principle was to allow children to have freedom of choice without instruction in technique and to discourage direct assistance by teachers even when requested by children – sometimes called the expressive theory. Finally Dengler emphasised Čižek's belief that children expressed emotion in their work and that in the pre-adolescence years this was untainted by intellect.<sup>53</sup> He further explained that the aim was not to train children for a future career in the arts or crafts, but to enable 'the unconscious ego of the child to express itself joyfully through art, free from the domination of adult ideas.'<sup>54</sup>

Arthur Lismer, a British-born painter came from Canada to speak at the conference. He was also an avid supporter of education through art.<sup>55</sup> He began his series of talks in New Zealand with a speech entitled 'Art in a Changing World', in which the place of art in society was elevated to almost celestial levels.<sup>56</sup> In a second speech called 'Art and Creative Education' he attempted to democratise art by suggesting that through art 'the common man – the ordinary, work-a-day person ... [might gain a level of] self-knowledge and self-respect ...'.<sup>57</sup> But it was necessary first to understand that adults had something to learn from children in the field of art and through

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<sup>51</sup> William Boyd and Wyatt Rawson, *The Story of the New Education*, London, 1965, p.49.

<sup>52</sup> M Dimmack, *Modern Art Education in the Primary School*. Melbourne, 1958 quoted in Doug Boughton, 'The Changing Face of Australian Art Education: New Horizons or Sub-Colonial Politics?', *Studies in Art Education*, 30, 4, Summer, 1989.

<sup>53</sup> Paul L. Dengler in Campbell and Bailey, eds, p.236.

<sup>54</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>55</sup> Angela Nairne Grigor, *Arthur Lismer, Visionary Art Educator*, Montréal, 2002.

<sup>56</sup> Arthur Lismer in Campbell and Bailey, eds, p.216.

<sup>57</sup> *ibid.*, p.230.

this understanding adults could help children on their path to a more fruitful and fulfilling future. His third speech, 'Education Through Art', extended the idea of art as a democratic process and made a plea for art to be integrated into the classroom programme.

But we have considered art as a specialised thing, as depending on special talent, on potted courses and forty minute periods of theory and practice. We look for talent in the few, we fail to see the broader needs of the many. The ancient and classical peoples never separated art from life. Art served their worship and praise, their crafts of hand. It built their cities and conserved their racial records; but it was not called art, not in the sense that we today identify art as culture and knowledge. ... Today we compartmentalize art ... In times past the common people shared with the artist the meaning of art in daily life.<sup>58</sup>

The debate about whether art and craft were subjects in their own right or instruments to encourage creativity across the curriculum became the dividing issue for those who were later responsible for implementing the ideas that emerged from the conference.

### **After the Conference**

Australia and New Zealand responded differently to the new ideas about art and craft. In Australia, for instance, implementation was quite slow with most development taking place after 1940 and in some states there was even a return to a more structured approach in the mid-1950s.<sup>59</sup> It is likely that the presence of Beeby may have advanced art and craft more rapidly and more fully in New Zealand<sup>60</sup> and the more unified structure of New Zealand's education system may have also made the implementation easier.

Nevertheless, when Beeby became the Director of Education in 1940 he was confronted by the disparity between the enthusiasm of academics and teachers for the 'new freedom' in education, particularly in primary schools, and the level of support that the Department of Education would or could provide.<sup>61</sup> The department had barely changed since the 1877 Education Act

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<sup>58</sup> *ibid.*, p.232.

<sup>59</sup> Roy Knudson, an inspector of Art in New South Wales, quoted in Boughton, p.199.

<sup>60</sup> Prebble, p.140.

<sup>61</sup> *ibid.*, p.58.

and its main purpose was to support local control by distributing the statutory capitation grant.<sup>62</sup> Beeby, with the help of G. E. Overton, Chief Inspector for Primary Schools, and D. G. Ball, Senior Inspector of Schools and later Chief Inspector for Primary Schools, planned to change the role of inspectors so that they could give more assistance to individual teachers.<sup>63</sup>

Beeby kept encouraging educationalists to think about change and he maintained the rate of change as rapidly as resources would allow. Despite the paper shortage during the war he enlarged the Education Department's magazine, the *New Zealand Education Gazette*, and personally wrote editorials such as 'Why crafts?'<sup>64</sup> He adopted the idea of training specialist teachers from Philip Smithells, the first superintendent for Physical Education, and applied it to art and craft in schools.

For several months in 1944 Beeby's changes became the subject of negative criticism. Beeby was being accused of fostering policies that were termed 'playway' and the negatively perceived aspects of his changes were labelled 'Beebyism'.<sup>65</sup> The business community claimed that standards were falling in primary schools.<sup>66</sup> The Minister of Education, H. G. R. Mason, however, stood firm and decided to hold an education conference to counter the criticism. Beeby wrote the book, *Education Today and Tomorrow*<sup>67</sup> that was published under Mason's name, which outlined the changes that had taken place, the reasons for them and demonstrated the clear links with the NEF conference. In a section called 'Recent tendencies in Primary-school Practice' five areas of change were highlighted. They included four aspects of education raised at the NEF conference: an emphasis on encouraging children's self-discipline; greater freedom for teachers; more learning through activities; and a growing emphasis on children's aesthetic development –

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<sup>62</sup> *ibid.*, p.59. See note 2.

<sup>63</sup> D. G. Ball and A. E. Campbell, 'Changing Role of the Inspectorate', *The New Era*, 36, November, 1955, p.191.

<sup>64</sup> Alcorn, p.112.

<sup>65</sup> C. E. Beeby, *The Biography of an Idea: Beeby on Education*, Wellington, 1992, p.154. See also Beatson and Beatson, p.69.

<sup>66</sup> Prebble, p.72. See also Beeby, p.154.

<sup>67</sup> H. G. R. Mason, *Education Today and Tomorrow*, Wellington, 1944. See also Beeby, p.155.

although it was noted that the last aspect had developed in a patchy manner throughout New Zealand.<sup>68</sup>

The reason for the sporadic development of art and craft in primary schools and its cautious implementation, besides the war and the associated shortage of materials, was the lack of personnel with the knowledge and enthusiasm to drive the programme.<sup>69</sup> Beeby had the ability however, to recognise best practice and would often grasp innovative programmes he saw as he travelled the country. One such programme in Feilding, directed by Sam Williams, a stage designer and teacher (untrained) and later Acting Supervisor of Art and Craft in the Department of Education,<sup>70</sup> came about because of the closure of schools in and around Palmerston North in 1942.<sup>71</sup> Williams set up an art and craft centre in a community hall and scoured the district for materials to use for pottery, spinning, weaving, and puppet-making.<sup>72</sup> Beeby noted:

Williams, with his experience in the theatre, was skilled in teaching the making of puppets, and the final days of the five-week emergency [generated by the attack on Pearl Harbour] saw puppet shows and art and crafts exhibitions open to parents and the general public. Sam Williams' introduction of drama, like Smithells' stress on the aesthetics of physical education, gave emotional depth to his teaching. Both gave their subjects intellectual respectability and both had a direct appeal to the public, who could see for themselves where it all fitted into the school programme.<sup>73</sup>

These developments however seemed somewhat tentative. Policy remained largely undeveloped until after the Second World War when a debate within education circles took place over whether 'education through art' or 'education for art' should be the main emphasis in schools. Those who favoured the first called on handcrafts to achieve their goals, while 'art' as a separate subject, and with less room for craft, was the foundation of the

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<sup>68</sup> Mason, pp.17-19.

<sup>69</sup> Prebble, p.91.

<sup>70</sup> Mason, p.22.

<sup>71</sup> Beeby, p.113.

<sup>72</sup> Carol Henderson, *A Blaze of Colour. Gordon Tovey. Artist Educator*, Christchurch, 1998, p.83.

<sup>73</sup> Beeby, pp.142-3.

latter. The former became readily accepted in primary schools while 'education for art' continued to dominate in secondary schools. The conflict between the different approaches to the teaching of art and craft was a manifestation of the way that symbolic violence was employed within schools. 'Education for art' emphasised the primacy of the cultural and symbolic capital that art possessed. Craft, on the other hand, was merely a tool to be used to achieve other aims.

### **Doreen Blumhardt**

The role of craft within schools infiltrated the way that teachers were trained and affected the degree to which different sectors of the education system were prepared to embrace the new ideas. Beeby identified Doreen Blumhardt, a weaver and a graduate of the art specialist training course at Christchurch Teachers' College, as the most suitable person to trial the system in the primary sector.<sup>74</sup> She tested the 'education through art' concept in a number of primary schools in the Hutt Valley in 1943. In 1944 the Hutt Valley (Primary) Headmasters' Association lobbied to be allocated facilities so that all the schools in their area might become part of the programme.<sup>75</sup> The scheme was expanded and for six years Blumhardt travelled the country running courses for teachers, head teachers and inspectors and sourcing scarce materials.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> *ibid.*, p.143.

<sup>75</sup> Mason, p.23.

<sup>76</sup> 'Doreen Blumhardt C. B. E.', *New Zealand Crafts*, Autumn 1986, p.10.



**Figure 5:** Doreen Blumhardt (1914 – 2009).<sup>77</sup>

### **Gordon Tovey**

In 1946 Beeby appointed Gordon Tovey, whose background was teaching painting at the tertiary level,<sup>78</sup> to the position of Supervisor of Arts and Crafts at the Department of Education with a mandate to promote the scheme in primary schools.<sup>79</sup> Blumhardt and Tovey both recognised the importance of art and craft in schools, but Tovey was not convinced that Blumhardt's emphasis on craft was, in the long term, the correct emphasis for the future of art in New Zealand – although he recognised it as a useful vehicle to change teachers' attitudes.<sup>80</sup> Tovey, an artist, remained a cultural élitist imbued with the cultural capital that position carried. To some extent, this perpetuated the policy confusion that already existed – were art and craft pedagogical devices or subjects to be taught?

The persistent division between art and craft remained. Frank Dean, a painter and teacher at Dunedin Teachers College during the 1950s, and a

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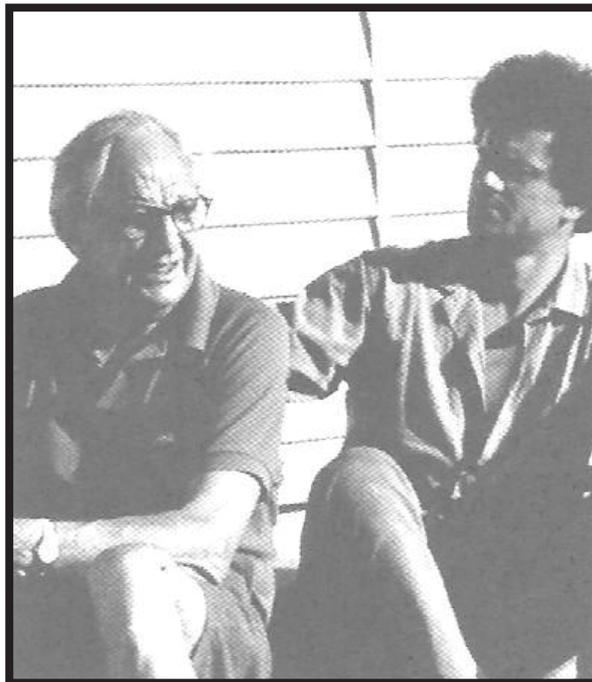
<sup>77</sup> Photo: *Creative New Zealand: Arts Council of New Zealand*, 2010; available at: <http://www.creativenz.govt.nz/> (9 March 2010).

<sup>78</sup> Carol Henderson, *Tovey, Arthur Gordon 1901 – 1974* 22 June 2007 available at: <http://www.dnz.govt.nz/> (16 December 2008).

<sup>79</sup> Prebble, p.69. note 29. Prebble gives the appointment date as 1943 but the appointment was confirmed in January 1946. See Henderson, *Tovey, Arthur Gordon 1901 – 1974* and Alcorn, p.114.

<sup>80</sup> Henderson, *A Blaze of Colour. Gordon Tovey. Artist Educator*, p.93.

supporter of Tovey, was undoubtedly influenced by the thinking of Robin George Collingwood. He suggested that there was a schism and that people were either 'poetic and imaginative' or 'logical [and] craft-orientated.'<sup>81</sup> The distinction emphasised the difference between the way that art and craft were taught in primary and secondary schools. By the 1960s, according to Cliff Whiting, Tovey's views had moderated and he saw value in both process and ideas<sup>82</sup> although 'education for art' continued to be the priority in secondary schools.



**Figure 6:** Gordon Tovey and Cliff Whiting in the late 1960s.<sup>83</sup>

### **Teachers/Artists/Craftspeople**

The system progressed under the guidance of the 1945 *Tentative Art Scheme* through a long period of experimentation and finally the publication of the *Revised Syllabus in Art and Craft for Primary Schools* in 1961.<sup>84</sup> In an interesting parallel development, many of the personnel involved in education during the period became artists and craftspeople, including Doreen Blumhardt. Others, such as Cliff Whiting, Cath Brown and Para

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<sup>81</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>82</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>83</sup> Photo: Courtesy of Carol Henderson in *ibid.*, p.216.

<sup>84</sup> *Primary School Syllabuses: Art and Crafts in the Primary School*, Wellington, 1961.

Matchitt, although not specifically trained in Māori arts and crafts, would later lead the changes in that field.<sup>85</sup> Many also became influential in craft education at the tertiary level thus giving some credibility to craft in higher education circles.

Beeby was reluctant to suggest that there was a direct link between the programme he inspired and the appearance of professional artists and craftspeople years later, and certainly, for Beeby, that had not been the primary goal of the programme. Nevertheless, he appeared to take some pride in any links – no matter how tenuous. After nine years away from New Zealand he suggested in a 1968 speech that the growth of the craft movement was not an isolated event.

It would be too much to claim that this renaissance has been due mainly to the work of Gordon Tovey and his associates a quarter of a century ago, but I cannot believe their efforts were without influence beyond the school walls. Not a few of our artists and craftsmen once worked in the Education service, and the most flourishing of New Zealand's modern handicraft, pottery and weaving, are the very ones we concentrated on in the primary schools. Whether or not the work in schools uncovered and stimulated future practitioners is uncertain ... But I am completely convinced that the schools have helped to produce a generation of people who appreciate painting and the crafts through having practised them, however humbly, in their childhood, and who have first-hand understanding of the satisfaction of creating things of beauty.<sup>86</sup>

Beeby was being modest as he knew that by 1968, as an unintended result of 'art in education', many of the students and tutors who had been a part of the programme were making a living from their art or craft. He also believed that the same programme might have provided an audience for their work: 'And, on a more material level, [those who experienced the new art and craft programme] are willing to buy them [arts and craft] and to see a fraction of their taxes spent on them.'<sup>87</sup> The art programme in schools was intended to improve education across the curriculum but it had also sown the seeds of the studio craft movement both in terms of practitioners and (Beeby hoped)

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<sup>85</sup> Henderson, *A Blaze of Colour. Gordon Tovey. Artist Educator*, p.166.

<sup>86</sup> C. E. Beeby, *Which Are the Frills in Education?*, Wellington, 1974, pp.5-6.

<sup>87</sup> *ibid.*, p.6.

consumers. The close association of craft with art, rather than the trades, also encouraged the middle-class to embrace it.

### **Craft Education for Adults**

Craft education at the secondary and tertiary level did not progress as rapidly as it had in primary schools. Secondary schools remained locked into examination schedules that restricted the experimentation that had permitted a considerable degree of freedom in primary schools.<sup>88</sup> Furthermore, the art/craft divide seemed to produce an insurmountable cultural barrier within secondary schools. There also seemed to be no clear pathway between secondary school and later training. Apprenticeships in studio craft did not exist and through to the mid-1970s most craft training at the post-secondary school level was taking place in community education classes,<sup>89</sup> craft clubs or courses at teachers' colleges and polytechnics where instructors were often only just one step ahead of their students.<sup>90</sup> However, by the mid-1970s it was clear that the studio craft movement was not a fleeting phenomenon and interest grew in the education of both practising and future craftspeople.

Artists such as R. N. Field, as observed in Chapter One, taught craft at the adult level, but the informal nature of education at this level was a problem for the middle-class people that dominated the movement. While many craftspeople were able to take on a professional status as a result of their ability to sell their work, they valued the cultural and symbolic capital that formal qualifications afforded professions and craft lacked. Robin Gardner-Gee noted the link between the increasing emphasis on professionalism in *Craft New Zealand* and 'talk about education and specialist training.'<sup>91</sup> The question was: what form should the training take? Should craftspeople head down the traditional path of craft skill-training in workshops or would

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<sup>88</sup> D. F. Couling, 'The Secondary School Teacher in New Zealand 1945-2000: Teacher Identity and Education Reform', MA thesis, Massey University, 2005, p.91.

<sup>89</sup> Community education courses were given formal recognition by the Social and Cultural Committee of the National Development Conference in 1969. See J. C. Dakin, *The Community Centre Story: Being an Account and a Discussion of New Zealand's Experiments with Community Centres and Kindred Institutions*, Wellington, 1979, p.175.

<sup>90</sup> Evans, 'Head, Heart and Hand', p.61.

<sup>91</sup> Gardner-Gee, p.59.

professionalism demand a more formal academic education in universities or polytechnics? A generation that had been part of the new primary school art and craft curriculum would be less inclined to unquestioningly accept that the only way to learn craft was through a trades-based training programme, although the distinction between trades-type training and craft education remained blurred.

## **Craft and the Economy**

In the 1950s and 1960s the relationship between developing craft skills and the role of studio craft in the economy appeared confused. The ideas of educators such as Beeby had infiltrated the thinking of influential New Zealanders outside the education system, and some of them believed they could see an economic benefit emerging from the new education system – craft was a part of that thinking. The economist, Dr William Sutch, who believed that New Zealand needed to widen its economic base, made a submission to the 1961 Commission on Education in New Zealand in which he asserted that changes in primary education could have a positive impact on the economy. In the report he advocated a broader-based definition of the word ‘skill’.

In my submissions I am not limiting the word “skill” to “general mechanical intelligence” ... Skill has a wider and more valuable meaning. In the sense that I am using it, skill means creativeness as well as precision. ... In many ways the skills required in the future are the skills of the old craftsmen – skills that involve a high degree of originality, versatility and precision.<sup>92</sup>

Sutch was writing of skills in a most general sense, but appears to recognise the way that New Zealanders had been educated over the previous twenty years. Sutch’s advocacy, although welcome, could not dispel some concerns that the expressive approach to the learning of skills, while possibly suitable for children, may not have been the most appropriate way for future professional craftspeople to learn their discipline. As Peter and Dianne Beatson noted:

Spontaneity and ease of self-expression emerge at the end not the start of a long process of training. Apprentice artists

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<sup>92</sup> W. B. Sutch, 'Education for New Zealand's Future', Wellington, 1961, p.22.

[and craftspeople] must accept with humility the task of playing the sedulous ape to others until, after much trial and error, they develop their own speaking voice. The capacity to create art is acquired, it is not given by nature or divine inspiration.<sup>93</sup>

In direct contradiction to Collingwood's definition of how art is made, this placed both artists and craftspeople somewhere between the freedom that was promoted in some primary classrooms and the rigid apprenticeship programme that operated in many trades. What was needed was a clear plan for the development of formal qualifications that built on an economic base that the largely self-taught craftspeople had established.

## **Combining Economic and Cultural Professionalism**

### **International Influences in Training**

The philosophical debate about learning that took place in Britain after the Second World War through to the 1970s played a part in the way that craft professionals defined themselves in the 1980s and early 1990s in New Zealand. The dividing issue was the workshop method of passing on skills versus the art school teaching of design. 'Design', to some extent, became the catchword that distinguished between new and old pedagogical methods. 'Design' was linked with industrial production – with 'brands, promotion, and identity', but also with the art world.<sup>94</sup> New Zealand craftspeople rarely had any training in industrial design and many had only a limited amount of craft education. Therefore, the linking of design and training was viewed with suspicion. From the mid-1960s, the preferred learning environment in New Zealand for professional craftspeople had been initially within a club or night class followed by employment in a small studio workshop where learners worked with more experienced craftspeople,<sup>95</sup> similar to the British model, or

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<sup>93</sup> Beatson and Beatson, p.69.

<sup>94</sup> Grace Cochrane, 'Australia and New Zealand: Design and the Handmade' in Sandra Alföldy, *Neocraft: Modernity and the Crafts*, Halifax, Nova Scotia, 2007, p.63.

<sup>95</sup> Apprenticeships were very rare. Only one potter completed an apprenticeship at Waimea Pottery. See Evans, 'Head, Heart and Hand', p.78.

craftspeople taught themselves in home workshops. All these locations carried associations with 'blue-collar' occupations or leisure – the trade workshop or hobbies. The new 'design' courses, on the other hand, held the promise of 'white-collar' professional status<sup>96</sup> – although it was not clear where that would be recognised. In Britain, some of the courses did not appear to be preparing craftspeople for self-employment,<sup>97</sup> and in New Zealand, where the opportunities for teaching craft at the tertiary level were limited by a shortage of positions, the courses based on the British model did not seem a suitable preparation for a career as a self-employed craftsperson – the most likely path for anyone seeking a professional future in craft. The new graduates were faced with a dilemma: compete for a small number of teaching positions in the craft design courses with the more appropriately and better qualified overseas tutors; pick up further craft skills following training whilst competing with more experienced craftspeople; or move on to other occupations having satisfied a desire to express creative ideas.

Training in craft studios remained viable largely because many craftspeople believed it was the only practical way to learn a craft. An additional reason for its continuation was the appeal it held for a section of the educated middle classes who rebelled against expectations that they would pursue careers in white-collar occupations. Some supporters also believed that an 'applied' method added a special value to the knowledge gained. Michael Oakeshott, a British philosopher whose ideas have been linked to Collingwood, argued in his 1933 book that:

practical knowledge can neither be taught nor learned, but only imparted and acquired. It exists only in practice, and the only way to acquire it is by apprenticeship to a master, not because a master can teach it (he cannot) but because it can be acquired only by continuous contact with one who is perpetually practising it.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> Tanya Harrod, *The Crafts in Britain in the 20th Century*, New Haven, 1999, p.228.

<sup>97</sup> Geoffrey Kay, 'Craftsmanship in Ceramics: A Phenomenological Enquiry', PhD thesis, Anglia Ruskin University, 2007, pp.7-9. See Appendix 4 for an extract from Kay's thesis that expands on craft training in British universities. Some of the graduates of these courses, or courses similar to them, became tutors in New Zealand polytechnics.

<sup>98</sup> Michael Oakeshott, *Rationalism in Politics and Other Essays*, London, 1962, p.11.

Michael Polanyi, a Hungarian-born British polymath, supported Oakeshott.<sup>99</sup> In his opposition to materialistic reductionism,<sup>100</sup> Polanyi 'argued for an intuitive, intellectual creativity that went beyond ... mere rationality and which was based on [a] kind of tacit knowledge'.<sup>101</sup> Neither Oakeshott nor Polanyi were craftsmen, but their ideas were supported by craftspeople. The English potter Bernard Leach addressed the question in *A Potter's Book*.

The art of the craftsman ... is intuitive and humanistic (one hand one brain); that of the designer for reduplication, rational, abstract and tectonic, the work of the engineer or constructor rather than that of the "artist". Each method has its own aesthetic significance. Examples of both can be good or bad.<sup>102</sup>

Not all craftspeople however, supported the 'incommunicable knowledge' approach to learning craft.<sup>103</sup> Norman Potter, a British furniture maker, believed that craftspeople were in limbo between old craft methods and new design education so that 'many small workshops [were] cut off from the intellectual currents of their time producing work that was self-contained, sentimental and backward-looking'.<sup>104</sup> His criticism suggested that craftspeople needed to be stimulated by a variety of influences. However, he warned that it would be 'a mistake for design theorists to suppose that every serious design opportunity must refer back to a type-form (a myth with Platonic overtones) or to special conditions of mass-production'.<sup>105</sup>

### **Craft Skills versus Conceptual Skills**

Within studio craft circles the links between old training methods and new education thinking continued to be stretched. The separation of studio craft from its trade foundation was a recognised phenomenon throughout the

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<sup>99</sup> Michael Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge: Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy*, London, 1958, pp.49-131.

<sup>100</sup> Robin A. Hodgkin, 'Michael Polanyi on the Activity of Knowing – the Bearing of His Ideas on the Theory of Multiple Intelligences', *Oxford Review of Education*, 18, 3, 1992, p.253.

<sup>101</sup> Harrod, p.227.

<sup>102</sup> Bernard Leach, *A Potter's Book*, London, 1940, p.2.

<sup>103</sup> A term ascribed to Denys Thompson, the author of *Change and Tradition in Rural England: an Anthology of Writings on Country Life*, quoted in Harrod, p.227.

<sup>104</sup> Norman Potter, *What Is a Designer: Things, Places, Messages*, 3rd edn, London, 1989, p.79.

<sup>105</sup> *ibid.*, p.81.

Western world. Peter Dormer argued that the unique environment studio craftspeople found themselves in was class-related.

The late 20th century offers the craftsperson a special economic environment to work in. The handcrafts of potting or weaving or woodworking in the late 20th century are practised under conditions unlike those of previous centuries. Handmade potting, weaving and the rest have stopped being trades as such and have changed class – changed from being working-class or artisan, commercial occupations into middle-class, creative, art-like activities.<sup>106</sup>

In the United States the move away from training in traditional crafts skills towards more art-related craft education may have started in the 1950s or early 1960s, encouraged in part by the competition from cheap factory-made products. James W. Crandall, an art instructor at Taft High School in Los Angeles, observed that secondary students with an interest in craft would in future be directed towards training in the fine arts rather than traditional craft.

Many people agree that the traditional pursuits of the potter, the weaver, or the silversmith can be called "crafts," but in an age of cheap and disposable products, these skilled craftsmen have all but disappeared. In their place a new breed of craftsman has appeared, assuming the role of artist rather than artisan. These new artist-craftsmen, although skilled in the traditional crafts [sic] techniques, are also interested in the new forms and innovations that keep their art vital, rather than just another form of decorative mimicry [sic].<sup>107</sup>

Craft in America became a part of the tertiary education system much earlier than most other Western nations and the institutions involved favoured an approach that set the direction that would become the accepted standard in New Zealand in the 1980s. 'The academy ... favored craft that resembled fine art. Exceptions were plentiful, of course, but the trend was toward an erosion of unity, a schism between academics and those craftspeople who revered function and marketplace.'<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> Peter Dormer, *The Meanings of Modern Design: Towards the Twenty-First Century*, London, 1990, p.150.

<sup>107</sup> James W. Crandall, 'Secondary School Crafts: Confusion and Concepts', *Art Education*, 17, 8, 1964, p.7.

<sup>108</sup> Janet Koplos and Bruce Metcalf, *Makers: A History of American Studio Craft*, Chapel Hill, NC, 2010, p.214.

In Britain it appeared that training in art and craft were also merging. Philip Meeson, Senior Lecturer in Art at Brighton College of Education, discussing the changes in the 1970s, stated:

Craft education in its more restricted nineteenth-century sense has now given way to a broader concept of art education within which craft or technical skill is seen only as a necessary requirement in the making of an artefact of one sort or another not as it was understood in the nineteenth century as a particular skill having a direct application in manufacture. The fine art concept of art education has also moved away from its earlier connotation which implied a close adherence to the academic tradition in art education, a tradition which attached prime importance to the skill of drawing, and has moved towards a somewhat broader view which encompasses art appreciation, art history and those various interdisciplinary and cross-subject groupings which link art with the broader pattern of learning as a whole.<sup>109</sup>

In the early 1980s the training of craftspeople in both Australia and New Zealand continued to pursue British and American models and move along the continuum towards the type of education students of the fine arts were familiar with. Grace Cochrane described these moves in Australia as contributing:

to changes in the aims of crafts from that of a skill-based, design-orientated, audience-centred activity (that was still a means of personal expression) to the pursuit of crafts as an independent creative activity that was closer to the ideals and aspirations of those practising the fine arts.<sup>110</sup>

By following the British model the New Zealand craft courses in the 1980s fulfilled Bourdieu's notion that the well-educated middle-classes would support their economically dominant position by applying symbolic violence through the education system. Between 1949 and the 1970s this group's symbolic and cultural power lay to some extent in their ability to sell their work. By the 1980s however, this afforded them less symbolic capital. To

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<sup>109</sup> Philip Meeson, 'Art or Nature: A Problem of Art in Education and Teacher Training', *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 22, 3, 1974, p.293.

<sup>110</sup> Cochrane, p.125.

maintain their dominant position they needed to gather symbolic and cultural capital from the art world and the best way to do this was to have formal qualifications from a legitimising external authority. Craftspeople would continue to describe themselves as professionals – but they might have to label themselves either professional educators and have the appropriate qualifications or professional craft artists which might also demand formal qualifications. For the new graduates a higher education level matched the higher expectations of a more culturally aware society and, consequently, afforded craft design or visual design graduates a higher symbolic status.

Bourdieu explained this phenomenon:

Whereas the ideology of charisma regards taste in legitimate culture as the gift of nature, scientific observation shows that cultural needs are the product of upbringing and education: surveys establish that all cultural practices ... are closely linked to educational level (measured by qualifications or length of schooling) and secondly to social origin.<sup>111</sup>

Paradoxically, an increase in status – from craftsman to craft artist – had the potential to make the task of earning an income more difficult for graduates of a new approach to craft training. If the work of the graduates became more art-like would they have more difficulty selling it in an already difficult art market?

### **The Reforms of the 1980s**

In New Zealand changes to craft education at the tertiary education level in the 1980s occurred at the same time as the neo-liberal economic agenda began to emerge after the election of the fourth Labour government in 1984.<sup>112</sup> The changes in education were linked to the idea that New Zealand needed to 'upskill' its workforce to be competitive in a new global economic environment. As 'blue-collar' jobs, which did not require tertiary education, declined and 'white-collar' jobs increased, it became even more important for

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<sup>111</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, trans. Richard Nice, Cambridge, Mass, 1984, p.1. For more on culture and art production as a gift of nature see Beatson and Beatson, p.68.

<sup>112</sup> Reform had also taken place in primary and secondary schooling with the intention of introducing competition and market forces. See 'Tertiary Education Policy in New Zealand', *Report by Maureen McLaughlin in Ian Axford Fellowship in Public Policy Reports*, 2003, p.13. note 2.

those considering a future in craft to gain higher qualifications to increase their symbolic capital within the new 'creative' economy. Furthermore, because students were staying at secondary school longer 'views on tertiary education – the need for it and the gains to be derived from it – were changing.'<sup>113</sup> The term 'design' and its associations with Modernism and contemporary objects increasingly became part of the discourse of craft art.

Teaching methods also appeared to be out of touch with the more qualification-orientated approach to education. The craft model of learning based on technical education – learning through practice – had been the preferred method of instruction in most craft courses being taught by polytechnics up until the mid-1970s. Some educators believed that the method was a closed system that stifled innovation.<sup>114</sup> They suggested a model that would draw craft closer to the methods used in art schools and would be more appropriate in the new environment. The Labour government decided to construct a new qualifications framework that would align polytechnic and university qualifications. From the early 1990s 'all tertiary qualifications were progressively replaced by national certificates, national diplomas and degrees.'<sup>115</sup> Craft education was included.

### **A Case Study: Nelson Polytechnic and the Nelson Community Education Service (NCES)**

A brief look at the histories of Nelson Polytechnic and the Nelson Community Education Service (NCES) will serve to show how education services started to locate professionals and amateurs in different camps and how qualifications, or the lack of them, became the point of distinction. Nelson Polytechnic had been offering hobby courses in carving, embroidery, leatherwork and pottery, along with vocationally-orientated courses in silver-

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<sup>113</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>114</sup> Ian Hall, 'Polytechnic Education in the 1990s', in *Education in the 1990s: A Series of Public Lectures*, Dunedin, 1988, pp.19-20.

<sup>115</sup> Ian Dougherty, *Bricklayers and Mortarboards: A History of New Zealand Polytechnics and Institutes of Technology*, Palmerston North, 1999, p.49. This comment is not entirely accurate as individual polytechnics continued to award 'local' qualifications for many years after this period. See Phil Sharpin, email to the author, 8 April 2010.

smithing and weaving, since 1976.<sup>116</sup> From 1983, short-term courses in weaving were amalgamated into a one-year, full-time handloom weaving course – a precursor of the nation-wide craft design courses.<sup>117</sup> By 1985 the Community Studies Department, following its 1983 merger with the NCES, the section of the Polytechnic that organised hobby courses and transition classes including trade foundation courses, divided (see below). One part became the Craft Design Department, which included short courses in craft and the first ‘professional’ training courses, while the other half continued transition work.<sup>118</sup> The shift of crafts from its amateur or trade association to a formal ‘craft art’ course was noted by Greg Hurrell in a history of the Polytechnic: ‘Ross Newman ... [o]nce head of the down-to-earth and practical Industrial Department ... was now in charge of the arts.’<sup>119</sup> In 1986 Nelson Polytechnic became one of the nine institutions to offer two-year Certificates in Craft Design<sup>120</sup> and in 1987 one of three that provided a further two-year course leading to a Diploma in Craft Design.<sup>121</sup>

The NCES, prior to the merger, had been organising short craft courses for adults in secondary schools and had also been using the facilities at Nelson Polytechnic.<sup>122</sup> In the 1980s the relationship between the NCES and Nelson Polytechnic, always fragile because of their overlapping fields, finally broke down.<sup>123</sup> The NCES saw its role as providing a service for hobbyists and

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<sup>116</sup> Dougherty, p.191. Nelson Polytechnic became ‘a self-standing technical institute’ in 1971. See Greg Hurrell, *Our Polytech: A 25 Year History of Nelson Polytechnic 1971-1996* Nelson, 1996, p.8.

<sup>117</sup> Greg Hurrell termed the course ‘near’ full-time. See Hurrell, p.58.

<sup>118</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>119</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>120</sup> John A. Codd, et al., eds, *National Evaluation of Craft Education: Final Report, Research Report: New Zealand. Dept. Of Education. Research and Statistics*, Palmerston North, 1989, p.9. By 1988 the number had increased to eleven.

<sup>121</sup> Hurrell, p.69.

<sup>122</sup> Colin Gunn, *A Brief History of the First Twenty Years of the Community Education Service (Nelson) 1976 – 1996*, Nelson, 1996, pp.4-10., and ‘A View of the Separate Responsibilities of the Nelson Community Education Service and the Nelson Polytechnic’, *Occasional Papers*, 1982. The NCES was first conceived in 1973 but did not begin to organise courses until 1976. Community education in New Zealand had a long history and included groups such as the Workers’ Educational Association (established in 1915), the Country Women’s Institute and the Rural Education Activities Programme. See *Adult and Community Education and Ace Aotearoa*, 2010; available at: <http://www.aceaotearoa.org.nz> (1 July 2010).

<sup>123</sup> Dougherty, p.191. See also Gunn, *A Brief History of the First Twenty Years of the Community Education Service*, p.21.

because the polytechnic Craft Design Department began with over ‘a hundred small evening-type courses ... [some] with the same people attending ... for up to 25 years’ and many of the courses had been initiated by the NCES it assumed it would be called on to continue to administer them.<sup>124</sup> But the NCES was shut out as Nelson Polytechnic took full control on the campus, undoubtedly incentivised by funding based on the numbers attending – no matter how amateur they might be. In 1982, in a move by the government to reduce costs and to avoid unnecessary duplication, the NCES was formally disbanded and in 1983 any courses still run by the NCES became the responsibility of Nelson Polytechnic.<sup>125</sup> A further division between informal and formal learning occurred when the polytechnic decided to devolve some hobby courses to community groups and clubs – possibly because the numbers involved were too small to justify to the funding providers.<sup>126</sup> This move was represented as means of separating out the hobbyists from those who wanted ‘professional training’ in craft.<sup>127</sup> The division between amateur and professional craft, in terms of education, was complete. Hobbyists, the very group that may have provided students for future full-time craft courses, now became disconnected from the Polytechnic.

The Craft Design Department at Nelson Polytechnic also came into conflict with local craftspeople who felt that the graduates they were training would not be prepared for the realities of the professional studio workshop. In 1992 the Diploma of Craft Design became the Diploma of Visual Arts. The change of name reflected a change of focus. Nick Channon, the Visual Arts joint head, and a graduate of fine arts programmes in the United Kingdom, believed that “seeing, thinking, conceptual skills and analytical skills” needed to be learned before “moving on into the technical skills of creation”.<sup>128</sup> Local craftspeople were firmly based in workshop learning methods and expected to be able to call on a pool of skilled practitioners. The graduates’

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<sup>124</sup> Dougherty, p.191.

<sup>125</sup> *ibid.* See also 'Nelson Community Education Service, Report No 54', 1982.

<sup>126</sup> Hurrell, p.58.

<sup>127</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>128</sup> Nick Channon quoted in *ibid.*, p.100.

expectations however, did not match those of the local professional craftspeople. Graduates expected to set up their own workshops and this was endorsed by a photo caption in the course prospectus: 'A three-year visual arts course at the Nelson Polytechnic prepares students for work as professional artists and craftspeople, including the setting up and management of a business'.<sup>129</sup> Many however, found the transition difficult.<sup>130</sup>



**Figure 7:** A visual arts student at Nelson Polytechnic post-1986. The caption for this photograph suggested the students would be able to become self-employed businesspeople after they graduated.<sup>131</sup>

### **Attempts to Coordinate Different Systems**

The confusion over the relationship between community education, with its emphasis on hobbyists and informal learning, and polytechnics seeking greater academic credibility was a nation-wide problem. Nick Zepke, in an article on the place of polytechnics in community education, observed that there was considerable variation across the country.

Some of the larger urban vocational institutions never developed a community education focus at all ... Other

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<sup>129</sup> Caption in *ibid.*

<sup>130</sup> Codd, et al., eds, *National Evaluation of Craft Education*, p.41.

<sup>131</sup> Photo: Harold Mason Photography. See Dougherty, p.190.

polytechnics operated Community Education Departments but these often taught vocational-type courses which would not fit easily elsewhere.<sup>132</sup>

He also noted that whereas community education services encouraged an “openness”, polytechnics were effectively “closed” institutions because students were expected to register for programmes that often resulted in a formal qualification.<sup>133</sup> The different approach placed polytechnics more firmly within the formal tertiary education sector and suggested a more professional credibility.

In Nelson, by the early 1990s, students planning to study craft had two options. Amateurs could enrol in craft courses through local clubs and secondary school adult night classes<sup>134</sup> but, if they wished to become a professional, they were encouraged to enrol in craft design courses, preferably as full-time students. However, to undertake this transition often required moving to an area where a craft was specifically catered for even if the region did not have strong reputation in that particular craft. For instance, students wishing to study pottery often looked to Otago Polytechnic, which had been offering a full-time course since 1972. Nelson Polytechnic’s specialty was weaving – again because the course had been established early. While Nelson did have many weavers the irony remained, given the number of studio potters earning a living from their craft in the region, that to study pottery to an advanced tertiary level a Nelson student might have to move to Dunedin. A further irony was that Nelson’s reputation as a centre for professional potters was based, in part, on the skills of craftspeople trained in the old ways – sometimes starting out in hobby classes.

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<sup>132</sup> Nick Zepke, ‘The Role of Polytechnics in Community Education’, in John Benseman, Brian Findsen, and Miriama Scott, eds, *The Fourth Sector. Adult and Community Education in Aotearoa/New Zealand*, Palmerston North, 1996, p.211.

<sup>133</sup> *ibid.*, p.212.

<sup>134</sup> Students in night classes (and weekend classes) had to be sixteen or older and not enrolled at school. See Sharpin, email to the author, 8 April 2010. The rules remain the same at the time of writing, see *Tertiary Education Commission Te Amorangi Matauranga Matua Adult and Community Education Funding*, 2010; available at: <http://www.tec.govt.nz/Resource-Centre/Rules-and-Conditions/Container-ENR-101---150/Rule-ENR515-ACE-learner-eligibility/> (8 April 2010).

The changes in tertiary education influenced the way craft was perceived in the wider New Zealand society. The studio craft movement, already the domain of a well-educated middle-class,<sup>135</sup> sought to maintain its position in society by increasing its reservoir of social, cultural and symbolic capital by emulating the training regime of artists. The first studio craftspeople were largely self-taught. Increasingly however, they realised that societal acknowledgement was informed, to some extent, by formal qualifications. The position of craft in society was changing. In his study of different methods of teaching craft Donald Ellis observed that: 'Craft's association with the university and visual arts brings with it certain conditions of residency. It is asked to jettison some of its ancestral functions in industry and the home for those of the university and visual art.'<sup>136</sup>

Craft education as an officially accredited subject dominated the thinking of both educators and craftspeople and the CCNZ sought to establish itself as the legitimating authority. In 1988 the CCNZ devoted an issue of its magazine to it. Dr Ray Thorburn, the Education Officer and national spokesperson for art, craft and design education at the tertiary level for the Department of Education, acknowledged Beeby's contribution to art and craft education, but condemned the legacy that lingered.

The real journey began in the 1950s under the inspired leadership of Dr Clarence Beeby, Director General [sic] of Education. However, ever since then a naïve belief has lingered, ie that art and craft education was all joyful discovery. Fun to do but not a serious classroom pursuit. Creative talent it would seem was a mystical power source deep inside us all, patiently waiting to bloom into innocent imagery, untutored and untarnished by adult intervention. ... The "art is fun but not work" [s]yndrome [sic] is still widespread. ... The fact that craftspeople are making an important contribution to New Zealand's economy has

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<sup>135</sup> John Benseman, in a 1979 study of continuing education at the Hawkes Bay Community College (later called Hawkes Bay Polytechnic), where craft was amongst the subjects taught, noted that the majority of students were well educated and middle-class. See John Robert Benseman, 'Access to Continuing Education: A Clientele Analysis of the Hawkes Bay Community College', M Ed thesis, Massey University, 1979, p.4. See also Dougherty, p.132.

<sup>136</sup> Donald William Ellis, 'The Hidden Hand and the Fluid Object: Craft in Three Sites of Representation', PhD thesis, University of South Australia, 2004, p.36.

been down played in favour of the more colourful human interest stories about lifestyle.<sup>137</sup>

He applauded the 1985 statement by the Minister of Education, Russell Marshall, that:

“the potential value of the craft industry for employment and as a major earner of local and overseas funds is recognised in an important feature of the Budget education package with the funding of certificate courses in craft education ... this whole programme is an exciting concept which I believe should have far reaching impacts on the quality and quantities of crafts being produced in New Zealand as well as a potential employment creator.”<sup>138</sup>

Marshall’s statement was the culmination of a period of planning that began in 1984, but Thorburn noted that within seven months of the statement nine ‘full-time, two year craft design courses had been designed, resourced and built from scratch.’<sup>139</sup> The courses included, as we have noted, an initial broad-based two-year certificate course with another two or three-year diploma course for ‘those who have shown outstanding promise or are established professionals.’<sup>140</sup> Thorburn did not state how professionals were to be defined, but presumably, given that craftspeople needed to sell their work to make a living, a professional was someone who was able to make a living through their craft. Later budget cuts placed some parts of the course under financial pressure, but the course structure was established. What was clear was that the programme was modelled on academic courses, not apprenticeship training.

Thorburn concluded his article by outlining the aims of the programme. ‘The intended outcome is a new generation of craftspeople who can produce forms of the highest aesthetic quality with cultural integrity,<sup>141</sup> equal to anything beyond our shores.’ And added: ‘The craft industry is a multi-million

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<sup>137</sup> Ray Thorburn in Ray Thorburn and Carin Wilson, ‘Craft Design Courses: The Lead-Up’, *New Zealand Crafts*, Autumn 1988, p.3.

<sup>138</sup> Quoted in *ibid.*

<sup>139</sup> *ibid.* See also ‘Appendix: Development of Craft Education in New Zealand’ in Gardner-Gee.

<sup>140</sup> Thorburn and Wilson, p.4.

<sup>141</sup> ‘Cultural integrity’ may be a reference to Māori arts and crafts.

dollar business. The need for well trained artists and craftspeople is urgent.<sup>142</sup> Thorburn's concluding statement however, failed to demonstrate the link between the economics of the craft business and the aesthetic training the student craft artists would receive. Professionals in Thorburn's account were largely defined by the aesthetic quality of their work and their formal qualification – not the ability to earn a living.

In the same issue Carin Wilson, former President of the CCNZ and a woodworker, detailed the extended background to the courses dating back to the founding of the CCNZ in 1977. He recalled a conference in Hastings in 1980 where an Australian jeweller, Norman Creighton, advocated 'a sound education foundation as a springboard for the dissemination of skills and aesthetic appreciations'.<sup>143</sup> By 1984 a number of guiding principles had been established including, 'staffing by practising professionals, who would bring an explicit master/apprentice relationship to the process' and

an intention to have a two-tiered structure established ... This would recognise that craft is practised at a level that has mainly to do with making as a repetitive and mechanical process on the one hand, and also at a highly creative and innovative level on the other.<sup>144</sup>

This statement emphasised the confused debate that was taking place in the background.

A review of the craft courses in polytechnics in 1989 demonstrated that in many courses the training needed to become self-employed was not available. In a revealing statement in the review it was noted: 'These skills [management and marketing of craft products] could not be taught very successfully in the polytechnic setting where the tutors involved did not always have an understanding of the craft world, and craftspeople.'<sup>145</sup>

Students were also aware of the deficiencies of the polytechnic system of training.

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<sup>142</sup> Thorburn and Wilson.

<sup>143</sup> Carin Wilson in *ibid.* See also Grace Cochrane, 'Unpublished Papers from Research for *the Crafts Movement in Australia: A History*', Sydney, 1992, p.88.

<sup>144</sup> Thorburn and Wilson, pp.5-6.

<sup>145</sup> Codd, et al., eds, *National Evaluation of Craft Education*, p.41.

Many students indicated that they learned most about professional attitudes from practising craftspeople – either by observing them “in action” in their working context, or by having them come into the course and talk about the ways in which they managed production and marketing.<sup>146</sup>

Visiting or visited craftspeople approached their involvement with polytechnics from a variety of positions. Some openly shared their skills and experiences; others may have been reluctant to divulge too much commercially sensitive information that had been amassed over a lifetime of trial and error, while some may have been hoping to become permanent tutors.

The statements by Thorburn and Wilson reflected the diverse influences being brought to bear on the development of the programmes. Thorburn, an educationalist, was emphasising the academic side of the programme, while Wilson, a practising craftsman, was attempting to have the historical and practical nature of craft recognized. Both acknowledged the need to promote aesthetic ideals, but it was an uncomfortable mix and reactions to the courses exposed the dichotomy.

Doreen Blumhardt, a pioneer of craft education in schools, took exception to Thorburn’s article. In particular she found his “fun but not work” statement irksome, pointing out that: ‘This was hardly the official position over the last 50 years, when hundreds of thousands of pounds ... were being spent by governments on the development of art education ...’<sup>147</sup> She also noted that moves to develop art and craft education programmes had not started suddenly in the 1950s, but had in fact been underway from the 1930s. She followed the criticism with a long and detailed history of art and craft education in schools and expressed regret that the number of art and craft advisors had been cut dramatically during the 1960s. Her response reflected the desire to relate craft education firmly to its primary school emphasis on creativity for its own sake.

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<sup>146</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>147</sup> Doreen Blumhardt, 'Letter to the Editor. Craft Education', *New Zealand Crafts*, Winter 1988, p.2.

An anonymous reader, A. Craftsperson, who appeared to have been a self-taught potter, could not see the point of the changes.

I often wonder what the so-called experts are doing. ... I know I had no formal art training, but that was what we were all trying to escape. We didn't want formal training. We didn't want foreign ideas – European ideas – we wanted to express ourselves, the bare hands response to the naked clay.<sup>148</sup>

While not specifically critical of the developments in education, the writer was attempting to articulate – albeit using twisted tautology – the divergence between untrained practising craftspeople – the old/traditional/economic professional – and those who defined professionalism in terms of formal academic qualifications.

The letter from A. Craftsperson reflected concerns and prejudices held by many craftspeople who considered themselves professional through their ability to earn their living from their craft. In a 1983 study of the New Zealand craft industry the authors reported that the main criticism directed at the two existing full-time craft courses – ceramics at Otago Polytechnic and weaving at Nelson Polytechnic – was 'not at the technical standards of the courses but at their ability to produce graduates suited to work in "the real world."' <sup>149</sup> The attendees at the meetings called to gather opinion asked on a number of occasions 'how many ... course graduates were actually making a living from their craft. They could see little evidence that the courses were setting people on the road to successful vocational craftwork.' <sup>150</sup> Although the authors of the report questioned the justification for such opinions they did note that such attitudes towards formal craft courses were quite common. Furthermore, they also detected an anti-academic bias that appeared to reflect the concerns of Michael Oakeshott and Michael Polanyi.

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<sup>148</sup> A. Craftsperson, 'Letter to the Editor. A Craftsperson Speaks', *New Zealand Crafts*, Winter 1988, p.2.

<sup>149</sup> Neil Scotts and Peter Mounsey, *Craft New Zealand. A Study of the Craft Industry, Craftspeople and Their Training Needs*, Wellington, 1983, p.9.

<sup>150</sup> *ibid.*

[Some] craftspeople appeared to condemn formal courses on the grounds of a perceived conflict between the crafts ethos and (as they saw them) the structured, academic, classroom characteristics of such courses and the institutions in which they were set.<sup>151</sup>

Not all opinion was unsympathetic and many craftspeople thought that formal courses would be beneficial in areas such as design, but these views were often limited to those living in the main centres. The overall feeling was that professionalism in the crafts was related to the ability to earn a living and while there was support for some formal education there was not universal support for full-time, formal training of an academic kind.

Those advocating a more academically oriented education programme expected government support would flow in the form of grants to individual craftspeople as had happened overseas. This disturbed some craftspeople who believed that earning a living in any other way than directly through the sale of craft was somehow less uplifting and possibly even subversive. In 1982 Roger Brittain, a potter, said that the 'most gifted craftspeople' should be able to work 'full-time in their craft.'<sup>152</sup> He cautioned that economic independence was an important element of professionalism.

It is important for their own self-esteem that the craftsperson is not treated as a charity or as a poor relation either by the community at large or by those who are craft administrators. ... I find difficulty in recognising the benefit of so-called assistance to the whole crafts movement, for example the "no strings attached" grants to individuals. ... Let's dispel the idea which is about, that some of us are surviving on handouts of the taxpayer's money.<sup>153</sup>

In the first half of the 1980s two reports, one on full-time weavers and one that included potters, were released by the Department of Internal Affairs. They showed that attitudes to income and professional status remained problematic. The 1984 report on weavers attempted to circumvent the amateur versus professional distinction by stating that: 'While there are many

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<sup>151</sup> *ibid.*, p.10.

<sup>152</sup> Roger Brittain, 'Soapbox', *New Zealand Crafts*, May 1982.

<sup>153</sup> *ibid.*

“professional” weavers in terms of attitudes to their craft and standard of workmanship there are few weavers who can sustain themselves economically as professional full-time weavers.<sup>154</sup> Given that the title of the report included the words ‘full-time weavers’ the comment was revealing. If most full-time weavers could not earn a livelihood from their craft then was the term ‘professional’ being subverted?<sup>155</sup> An earlier report included potters and divided them between those who generated less than 50% of their income from pottery and those who earned more than 50%, suggesting that above this mark was the domain of professionals regardless of whether it represented a viable living income.<sup>156</sup> By the time the certificate and diploma craft courses were operating in 1986 the model employed leaned more towards the academic learning environment suggesting that the middle-class priorities in education – recognised qualifications – had become the way to define professionalism.

### **Selling: From Craft Shops to Dealer Galleries**

In Chapter Two I explained that, as a craftsperson dependent on the sale of my work for an income, I believed that the sale of utilitarian pottery was more rewarding financially than attempting to sell through prestigious exhibitions. However, even though I was not aware of Bourdieu’s theories, I was aware that exhibiting ‘one-off’ pieces was important to my profile as a craftsperson. Unconsciously, I was attempting to increase my cultural and symbolic capital. This approach was, to some extent, also a response to changing circumstances. Economic viability was important to craftspeople but, over time, the crafts being produced and the market they were selling in changed. Many craftspeople who earned part or all of their income from the work they sold through craft shops and fairs were unconcerned about how they were perceived within the art world, but some, particularly those graduating from

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<sup>154</sup> Liz Sawkins, *Full-Time Weavers in New Zealand: A Survey*, Wellington, 1984, p.61.

<sup>155</sup> Christine Cheyne has suggested the relationship between income and craft is a feminist issue. Because women often had to combine their craft with domestic tasks their ‘seriousness’ could not be judged by income alone. See Christine Maree Cheyne, ‘The Politics of Art-Making: A Socialist-Feminist Critique’, MA thesis, Massey University, 1985, p.84. See also Chapter Six.

<sup>156</sup> David Carr, *Survey of Artists, Potters and Writers*, Part III, Wellington, 1980. Over 75% of the respondents who earned more than 50% of their income from pottery earned 90% or more of their total gross income in the 1977 – 78 year from pottery production.

the new craft courses, were anxious about their cultural and symbolic position as well as their future economic viability – as we will see below in the case of Melanie Cooper. Furthermore, those craft artists who were not prepared to compromise their ideals or were unable to sell through traditional craft outlets also sought other means to promote their work. In Australia, from the mid-1970s, some professional craftspeople began selling their work through the same dealer galleries that painters and sculptors employed, as a means of achieving higher prices and to counter the perceptions of amateurism that were associated with craft shops.<sup>157</sup> In New Zealand, with a much smaller and less sophisticated art market, this option was not as economically viable, but was nevertheless, a useful way of demonstrating ones cultural position within the craft world. Merely exhibiting work in a prestigious gallery or exhibition increased the craft artist's cultural and symbolic capital – even if the exhibitor's main source of economic capital lay elsewhere. Other craftspeople attempted to benefit from sales in both arenas – selling some work from their workplace or craft shops while retaining their 'best' work, or specially made pieces, for exhibitions and dealer galleries.<sup>158</sup> The struggle to distinguish between professionals and amateurs was apparent in the marketplace but could not always be measured in purely economic terms.

### **Professionalism in the Marketplace**

An example of the distinction made between cultural and economic capital was evident in the way the CCNZ promoted and sold its members' work.<sup>159</sup> Craft-specific galleries – a form of dealer gallery specifically catering for crafts – were both established and promoted by the CCNZ. The strategy was, in part, motivated by the lack of support for crafts in public galleries<sup>160</sup> and by the desire to rise above the ordinary craft shop. The CCNZ planned

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<sup>157</sup> Cochrane, 'Truth or Trap: The Australian Contemporary Crafts Movement's Pursuit of Art Ideals', p.141. See also Damon Moon, 'In the Beginning Was the Word: Bernard Leach and Australian Studio Pottery from 1940 – 1964', PhD thesis, University of South Australia, 2006, p.241.

<sup>158</sup> Moon, p.214.

<sup>159</sup> The CCNZ did sell non-members work but charged a higher commission – see James Bowman, 'From the Crafts Council', *Craftnews*, July, 1991, p.5.

<sup>160</sup> Douglas Lloyd-Jenkins, 'We're Younger Than You, Please Listen', *Craft New Zealand*, Summer 1993, p.3. One exception was The Dowse Art Gallery in Lower Hutt, see *The New Dowse*; available at: <http://www.dowse.org.nz> (3 July 2008).

to have a gallery at its head office in Wellington and encouraged the opening of galleries in the other main centres where chapters of the CCNZ existed. The Wellington gallery, called the New Zealand Crafts Centre, was established in May 1980.<sup>161</sup> The target audience initially was businesses and government departments, but the centre appears to have functioned more as a display centre than for the purpose of sales.<sup>162</sup> In November 1983 the centre moved, changed its name and became the Crafts Council Gallery.<sup>163</sup> By 1984 the gallery was purchasing work for resale rather than selling only on commission.<sup>164</sup> A form of selection was established based on work being 'of a very high standard and the craftsperson [having] previously had work for sale on commission at the gallery.'<sup>165</sup> The gallery also held regular themed exhibitions consisting of work from selected craftspeople or work specifically selected for the exhibition. In 1985 Edith Ryan, the Craft Programme Manager for the Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council, wrote in the *New Zealand Crafts* 'Soapbox' that no dealer galleries marketing craft existed in Wellington. In advocating such a gallery, and clearly not believing that the Craft Council Gallery fitted the role, she stated that 'as one achieves great skill, resulting in beauty of design, and a unique and clearly identifiable style and approach one needs to give up amateur behaviour and join the ranks of the professionals.'<sup>166</sup> The amateur behaviour Ryan was referring to was 'house door sales, [and] putting one's work up for sale in a craft shop to be displayed alongside all standards of work.'<sup>167</sup> Ryan, who appeared to be more concerned with the cultural location of craft than the economic circumstance of individual craftspeople, claimed that 'craft workers [would never] "come of age", be completely professional until their business [was] handled in a professional way by dealer galleries.'<sup>168</sup> In Wellington by the

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<sup>161</sup> 'What's in a Name', *New Zealand Crafts*, Dec/Jan 1983 – 84, p.29.

<sup>162</sup> The Centre had an operating loss of \$4146.00 in the 1981/82 financial year. See 'Crafts Council of New Zealand Incorporated Income and Expenditure Account for the year ended 30<sup>th</sup> June 1982', *Crafts Council News*, September 1982.

<sup>163</sup> 'What's in a Name'.

<sup>164</sup> Commission sales were vigorously opposed by some craftspeople. See James Bowman, 'Soapbox', *New Zealand Crafts*, Spring 1986, p.2.

<sup>165</sup> 'What's Happening at the Crafts Council?', *New Zealand Crafts*, Spring 1984, p.4.

<sup>166</sup> Edith Ryan, 'Soapbox', *New Zealand Craft*, Summer, 1985, p.2.

<sup>167</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>168</sup> *ibid.*

mid-1980s it appeared that professional, in some circles, equated with promotion and standards rather than economic viability.

In Dunedin, when the local chapter of the CCNZ set up a gallery in 1986, professionalism was linked to quality. John Reid, writing about the new gallery, stated:

Quality in craft work is of vital importance. The contrast to the throw-away world must be complete. And the successful work will have something of the makers [sic] personality in it as well; individuality. ... Production and sale of quality crafts implies professional control.<sup>169</sup>

But it was clear that being able to support oneself through the sale of work remained a defining aspect of professionalism in his mind. Suggesting that craft tutors needed to make their students aware of the necessity of understanding the business side of craft, Reid, in a somewhat unsubtle fashion, questioned the tutors' understanding of the 'real' craft professional – those making their living predominantly from their craft. Reflecting the divisions that still existed between professionals (in the economic sense) and academics, he stated: 'Tutors in institutions can attempt to help students to understand the pitfalls and problems on the way to a secure professional life. Unfortunately, it is difficult to be realistic while insulated from the harsh light of day by the umbrella of a state salary.'<sup>170</sup>

The 1980s was a confusing time for anyone attempting to describe themselves as a 'professional' in the crafts. Being able to earn a living through the sale of work in prestigious dealer galleries was a rarity usually associated with being an artist – which of course was the aim of many of the new graduates.

### **A Three-Tier Structure**

The difficulties that the CCNZ found itself in during the late 1980s and its demise in 1992 were, in part, caused by the alienation of amateurs. But the divisions that began to develop between the professionals who were defined

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<sup>169</sup> John Reid, 'A New Crafts Council Gallery', *New Zealand Crafts*, Autumn 1987, p.6.

<sup>170</sup> *ibid.*

as such by the quality of their work and those who defined themselves exclusively on economic grounds also played a part. Essentially, a three-tier system had developed. Amateurs were those who saw themselves as novices in their craft and generally did not depend on craft for a living. But amongst the professionals a much more confused environment had evolved. One could be an economic amateur and also a craft professional based on the standard of the work produced. One could be a professional but receive much, or all, income from grants or teaching. And of course, one could be a professional because the income earned came through the sale of craft – no matter how ‘amateurish’ the work might appear to others. In a case in point, tutors attending a National Evaluation of Craft Education Discussion Conference in Palmerston North in March 1988 responded to a debate about professional attitudes and skills in the management and marketing of craftspeople and their products by suggesting that students should be banned from selling their work in the first two years of the course.<sup>171</sup> This may have been an attempt to ensure that ‘standards’ were protected but there may have also been a fear that some students would see this as a benchmark in their career. To be economic professionals while tutors were technically economic amateurs had the potential to upset the student – tutor equilibrium. In the less controlled environment of community education or clubs, to suggest what students did or did not do with the objects they produced would have been considered outrageous.

The CCNZ had been unable or unwilling to cater for amateurs, and the professionals who defined themselves almost exclusively by their ability to sell their work (old/traditional/economic professionals) may have detected within the development of formal tertiary training courses a threat to their professional status. The growing craft education sector would have to find qualified teachers – would they redefine professionalism? Furthermore, it seemed likely, since New Zealand had no professionally qualified craft educators, that the tutors might have to come from elsewhere and possibly introduce new interpretations of professionalism. In 1988 Edith Ryan noted:

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<sup>171</sup> Codd, et al., eds, p.157.

'It is not just by chance that Arts Council funding to craft art was significantly increased last year. Professional qualifications lend respectability and win recognition.' She added:

Teaching ... is a professional business, and Council believes, in concert with the Education Department and Crafts Council of New Zealand, that tutors need some specialised input to be professionally effective. Plans are afoot to bring overseas experts to provide this essential edge.<sup>172</sup>

Ryan's article signalled that tertiary accreditation increased the cultural and symbolic capital of craft and implied that it might overcome the difficulties some graduates had earning a living.<sup>173</sup> Furthermore, she was indicating that this form of capital was more likely to be found elsewhere. One option was to recruit tutors from overseas. Another was for craftspeople seeking professional status to study overseas.

### **A Case Study: Melanie Cooper**

The problem was an enduring one for artists, and now the craft design students had to face it. Jenny Patrick had identified the problem as early as 1983, even before formal certificate qualifications were wide-spread. Patrick, writing about a New Zealand graduate of the Bachelor of Design – Ceramics course at the South Australian College of Advanced Education, Melanie Cooper, stated: 'At 28 she [Cooper] is one of New Zealand's best qualified potters. She is also without a reputation in her own country and broke.'<sup>174</sup> Cooper had trained as a teacher in New Zealand and then undertaken the one-year Ceramics Certificate course at Otago Polytechnic. She enjoyed the course but lamented that, 'I came out thinking I knew everything, built my kiln and fell flat on my face.'<sup>175</sup> She was convinced that the old ways – 'learning ... the hard way through hobby classes, weekend courses and ingenuity is a thing of the past,' and feared "New Zealand will lose its high place in

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<sup>172</sup> Individual craftspeople and craft organisations applied to the Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council for grants along with painters, actors, dancers etc. Edith Ryan, 'Arts Council Back-Up', *New Zealand Crafts*, Autumn 1988.

<sup>173</sup> Gardner-Gee, p.61.

<sup>174</sup> Jenny Patrick, 'Bachelor of Ceramics - and Broke', *New Zealand Crafts*, Sept/Oct 1983, p.4.

<sup>175</sup> *ibid.*

ceramics unless we do something about top quality craft education”.<sup>176</sup>

Patrick was familiar with earlier training pathways but was not convinced they were relevant any more.

Here [in New Zealand], reputations are made the slow way. You learn to pot while you hold down a job. After becoming known as a hobbyist, having built your kiln in your spare time and with savings from your regular job, you dare to go professional. It's not a system that favours someone who wants to train formally and fully for the job.<sup>177</sup>

In conclusion she summarised Cooper's situation:

Melanie has trained for six years. She has a degree that is equal to a law degree or a BA Hons. But there is no way that she can be helped into her career now. An equipment grant from the Arts Council or a grant to work towards an exhibition are the only possibilities.<sup>178</sup>

Patrick's article, which failed to explain why Cooper could not, after six years of training, earn a living from her craft, received a predictable response from potters who had been trained in the old way. Shona Carstens wrote:

Having read the Melanie Cooper article ... I feel sufficiently irritated to comment that, firstly, qualification(s) don't necessarily presume either reputation nor financial reward and, secondly, that saving for kiln and workshop may require creating a marketable product as well as the more esoteric object – just ideas from a provincial ex nightschool [sic] hobby potterer.<sup>179</sup>

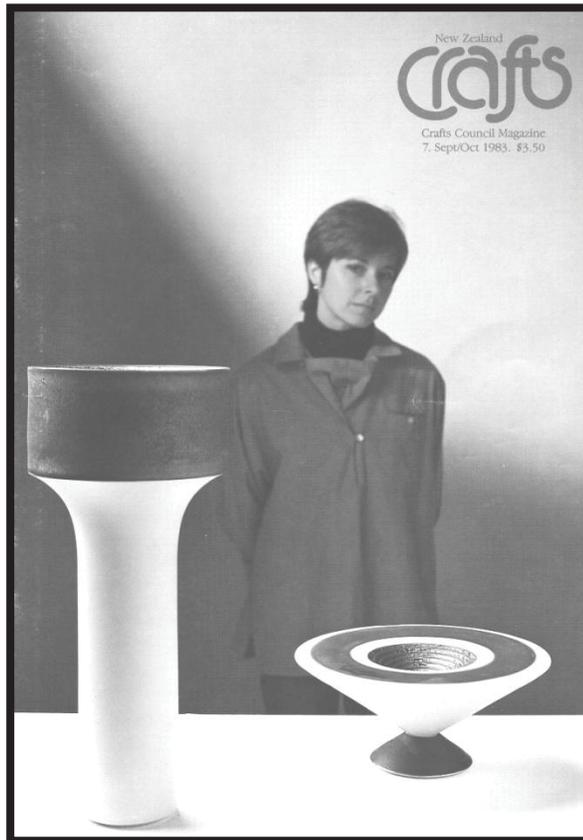
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<sup>176</sup> *ibid.*, p.6.

<sup>177</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>178</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>179</sup> Shona Carstens, 'Letter to the Editor', *New Zealand Crafts*, December/January 1983/84, p.3.



**Figure 8:** Melanie Cooper on the cover of *New Zealand Crafts*. Appearing on the cover of the magazine was symbolically valuable for the person featured.<sup>180</sup>

### **Linking the Past and the Future**

By the early 1990s the reputations of the most admired older craftspeople were being defended in terms of educational qualifications. In a 1991 editorial Edith Ryan acknowledged that many of those who were assessing the polytechnic courses had not received a formal education in craft; however, she claimed that, 'recent research has revealed that the majority of these senior greats [often self-taught New Zealand craftspeople recognised internationally] have had tertiary art education abroad or in our fine art schools.'<sup>181</sup> This dubious statement – the source of the research was not revealed – was necessary to ensure that the craft qualifications retained symbolic value. Furthermore, Ryan, adumbrating future trends, outlined where the new graduates might find work. She believed they would become

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<sup>180</sup> Photo: *New Zealand Crafts*, Sept/Oct 1983, Cover.

<sup>181</sup> Edith Ryan, 'Editorial', *Craft New Zealand*, Winter 1991, p.2. Damon Moon noted that the same situation existed in Australia, see Moon, p.117.

‘art teachers ... curators, art administrators, gallery personnel – directors, exhibition and education officers, conservators, critics, artists in industry and so on.’<sup>182</sup> It appeared that academic training was not going to produce professional craftspeople. This was a remarkable shift in emphasis from when Carin Wilson had stated, seven years earlier, that the philosophy of the programme was to ‘always have a strong orientation towards the practical. Crafts is [sic], after all, 80 – 90% practice.’<sup>183</sup> Most craftspeople reading this statement would have assumed that practical meant working as a practising craftspeople.

By 1992 the craft graduates appeared to have broken free from the restrictions of earlier craft traditions and were challenging the art world. Michael Smythe, himself a graduate of a polytechnic design course,<sup>184</sup> asked the question: ‘Should we expect art/craft/design school graduate shows [exhibitions] to point the way to New Zealand’s future? Or are we happy (and less threatened) if graduates are represented as partly formed replicas of today’s practitioners?’<sup>185</sup> Smythe supported the former and later added: ‘The university art schools [in contrast to the Polytechnics where the craft programmes were located] seem satisfied with the status quo and (arrogantly?) indifferent to the fact that they may be outclassed by their ex-trade based cousins.’<sup>186</sup> The move away from craft education based on skills training to craft as a type of art education could not have been clearer. Peter Gibbs, by now editor of *Craft New Zealand*, summarised Smythe’s argument as a choice between graduates who could demonstrate, in Smythe’s words, “authentic innovation and the ability to surprise and delight” and those who might learn ‘a solid core of skills from which to build.’<sup>187</sup> He favoured the second option explaining that: ‘After fifteen years at the clay face, making a living exclusively as a fulltime potter, I know the importance I placed on

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<sup>182</sup> Ryan, 'Editorial'.

<sup>183</sup> Carin Wilson, 'Craft Education', *New Zealand Craft*, Spring 1984, p.31.

<sup>184</sup> Smythe received a Diploma of Industrial Design at the Wellington Polytechnic School of Design in the mid-1960s. See Keri Welham, 'Take a Seat', *Masse*, November 2008, p.19.

<sup>185</sup> Michael Smythe, 'Education: The Graduates', *Craft New Zealand*, Autumn 1992, p.23.

<sup>186</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>187</sup> Peter Gibbs, 'Two Nelson Shows', *Craft New Zealand*, Autumn 1992, p.26.

acquiring skills and the difficulty of doing so while under financial pressure to produce.<sup>188</sup>

### **Out with the Old and In with the New**

By 1992 the three-tier system consisting of amateurs and the two confusing professional categories based on quality and economic success was in place. Craftspeople were amateur, 'old craft' professionals or 'new craft' professionals.<sup>189</sup> The work of amateurs and some 'old craft' professionals was labelled 'roadside stall handicrafts',<sup>190</sup> 'old crafts' were professional but, according to Douglas Lloyd-Jenkins, had 'become introspective and isolated' while 'new craft' was 'bold and confident'.<sup>191</sup> None of these descriptions fitted neatly into the economic definition used earlier in the craft movement and neither did they give a true picture of the economic viability of individual craftspeople. In the same article that Lloyd-Jenkins defined the new structure of craft he noted: 'Craft has been given a new profile, and the new artists are keen to distance themselves from the roadside stall standards of handcraft.'<sup>192</sup> Furthermore, he saw the new craftspeople selling their work in the same way that artists did. Condemning the then common practice of holding exhibitions in the same location where normal craft sales occurred, he advised the new craftspeople not to accept the old standards, but inadvertently hinted that some craft sold better than others.

Why should any artist accept gallery stock by other artists being shown alongside exhibition work? No top contemporary art gallery owner would admit to stocking pieces they themselves describe as "junk" because "after all it sells". Yet a group of young jewellers are currently at the point of withdrawing their support of a major craft gallery over this very issue.<sup>193</sup>

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<sup>188</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>189</sup> Gardner-Gee, p.64.

<sup>190</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>191</sup> Lloyd-Jenkins, p.3.

<sup>192</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>193</sup> *ibid.* The Bishop Suter Gallery in Nelson, for instance, had a craft shop which continued to operate while craft exhibitions were being held.

This article appeared in the final issue of *Craft New Zealand*.<sup>194</sup> We cannot know how craft gallery owners would have responded to this challenge, but undoubtedly some would have found Lloyd-Jenkins' directions irksome, as they often depended on day-to-day sales to support less profitable exhibitions. Gardner-Gee believed that Lloyd-Jenkins' vision was radical but it may have been more hopeful than real. Her analysis of *Craft New Zealand* suggested that the 'new craft', which she labelled 'urban',<sup>195</sup> did not displace the 'old craft', called 'skills-based professionalism' within the magazine. 'The emphasis of *Craft New Zealand* remained on professional standards expressed through the Index, on professional marketing, and on profiling professional established craftspeople.' She concluded:

the new craft ... [was] not easily accommodated within the established discourse of professionalism that dominate[d] the magazine. Rather than the old professionalism being tidily supplanted by the new professionalism, these different frameworks operate[d] simultaneously within the magazine, offering the reader conflicting versions of what constitutes craft.<sup>196</sup>

By 1992, not only had amateurs been firmly placed within a particular framework, the 'old craft' professionals, despite their economic success, were being pressured to step aside for the new professionals – the tertiary-trained craft artists. The changing definition of professionalism was, in part, a response to economic changes that were making the sale of the craftwork from the late 1970s more difficult. The lifting of import restrictions, discussed in more detail in Chapter Five, often did not distinguish between factory-produced items and those made by studio craftspeople – their loss of sales was an unfortunate side effect. However, the economic argument for change remained largely absent from the pages of *Craft New Zealand* – the magazine most clearly associated with 'new crafts' – although economic issues relating to professionalism continued to be discussed in craft-specific

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<sup>194</sup> In 1993 *Craft New Zealand* was owned by a company called Craft Print Limited set up by Peter Gibbs and Julie Warren in 1992 to avoid the magazine's assets being seized when the CCNZ was placed in liquidation. Under the new ownership it produced seven issues.

<sup>195</sup> Gardner-Gee's use of the word 'urban' is a reference to the association of the early movement with the rural environment – a theme discussed in more detail in Chapter Four.

<sup>196</sup> Gardner-Gee, p.65. The Index is discussed in Chapter Two.

magazines, such as the *New Zealand Potter*.<sup>197</sup> Some craftspeople may have chosen to ignore economic factors in their search for professional status, but it remained an important ingredient – to receive grants and commissions the craft artists relied on their reputation and the cultural and symbolic capital they had accumulated to bolster their chances. Symbols of higher value were where work was promoted and sold, prizes won in craft competitions and a recognised tertiary qualification specific to the craft artist's specialty.

None of the exhibitors at the Helen Hitchings Gallery in 1949 had formal qualifications related to their craft and few would have expected to pursue a professional career in the crafts in the future. By 1992 however, thousands of New Zealanders were, in the economic sense, professional craftspeople. They had in many cases achieved professional status in the craft world through the sale of their work. But the traditional economic support that had sustained the movement was being eroded and craftspeople needed to find new ways to support themselves whilst still calling themselves professionals. Some attempted to retain the prestige that the term 'professional' implied by placing more emphasis on the quality of work produced and formal qualifications awarded. Younger craftspeople – the graduates of the new craft courses – had expectations that often did not include working in studio crafts in the traditional sense. They used the title 'craft artist' or worked in related fields. Inevitably this led to a separation of some craftspeople from their traditional roots – the amateurs, the trades and traditional studio crafts.

In 1978 Marguerite Scott, the Honorary Secretary of the CCNZ, wrote to Allan Highet, the Minister for Recreation and Sport, seeking a grant to employ a Resource Officer and for general administration costs. In the letter she was proud that the membership of the CCNZ had increased from 3225 members in 1976 to 8600 in 1978.<sup>198</sup> Many who joined the CCNZ were former WCC members and amateurs. By 1989 the CCNZ membership was

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<sup>197</sup> 'Ceramics to Lose State Protection', *New Zealand Potter*, 26, 1, 1984, pp.36-7.

<sup>198</sup> Letter to the Hon Alan Highet, 10 October 1978, AAAC, 8756, W5333, Item 28, MN-GEN 001 – 00070, Archives New Zealand/Te Rua Mahara O Te Kawanatanga, Wellington.

down to 1400 and, as Gibbs noted, the CCNZ was probably collecting 'subscriptions from less than five percent of the people it represent[ed]'.<sup>199</sup> Furthermore, he suggested the CCNZ's 'most visible activities are seen to benefit only the top few creative people whose work features in the council's magazine, its gallery on the Terrace in Wellington, and on the controversial index of craftspeople.'<sup>200</sup> Gibbs was acknowledging that not only had amateurs been alienated, but also that the CCNZ had been unsuccessful in catering for the two forms of professionalism that had evolved over the previous decade:

In providing services to the producers [old craft professionals] and the artist [new craft art professionals], the crafts council [sic] has failed to differentiate between them, assuming everyone working in craft materials continually aspires to create and explore new possibilities within their chosen media. In fact, many craftspeople operate as small manufacturers, whose product sells well, and they see no need to aspire to art-orientated pieces which will do no better in the marketplace.<sup>201</sup>

Ultimately the inevitable call for a new membership structure made little difference. In December 1991 the Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council announced it would no longer fund the CCNZ, largely because it no longer thought it appropriate to support membership organisations – although other factors, discussed in more detail in Chapter Seven, played a part.<sup>202</sup> The CCNZ did not have the resources to continue. It went into liquidation in 1992 owing \$150,000. Those with the most to lose when the CCNZ disappeared were not the amateurs, or even the traditional professionals who often could still earn a living from their craft and had their own craft-specific organisations, but the new professionals – those who needed an organisation that could exclusively promote their enhanced cultural and symbolic position that located them somewhere between 'old craft' and art. However, if we accept the definitions that Collingwood ascribed to art and craft, as outlined in Chapter Two, the new professionals were in fact no

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<sup>199</sup> Gibbs, 'Hobbyists Hold Key'.

<sup>200</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>201</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>202</sup> These included the financially disastrous 'Mau Mahara: Our Stories in Craft' exhibition. See John Scott, 'Crafts Council in Crisis', *Craftnews*, April 1992.

longer craftspeople – they were artists. The symbolic violence that had permeated craft education from primary school through to the tertiary level had influenced who would ultimately be deemed true professionals. Unfortunately, the new professionals were now competing in a much bigger field filled with individuals who possessed more cultural and symbolic capital – the field of art.



# Chapter Four: Challenging Convention

**Narrator:** To most of [the] country [United States of America], the Be-In must have seemed like a world turned upside down. A Harvard professor exhorted the crowd to reject the traditional path to success.

**Timothy Leary (archival):** Turn on, tune in, drop out.<sup>1</sup>

In 1966, when Timothy Leary, an American writer, called on young people to ‘turn on, tune in, drop out’<sup>2</sup> he appeared to be offering direction to some craftspeople in New Zealand who saw craft as more than a vocation or a form of creative expression. Craft for these people offered a way to challenge the conventions of the society they lived in. As the craft writer Peter Gibbs later observed, ‘the time was ripe to drop out, buy a potter’s wheel and become self-sufficient’.<sup>3</sup> Not all craftspeople followed this path but aspects of Leary’s philosophy influenced the decisions some craftspeople made. For others, the representation was a distortion of their lives and vocation. Regardless of what philosophy craftspeople embraced, the way of life that became associated with Leary’s call developed into an accepted version of the studio craft movement that linked certain types of social structures and behaviour with craft. In this chapter I challenge that version of the history of craft by examining three sites where craftspeople challenged the prevailing conventions of New Zealand society. Some of their ideas were endorsed by the wider community but others were considered revolutionary and subversive.

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<sup>1</sup> *Summer of Love Transcript*, 14 March 2007; available at:

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/love/filmmore/pt.html> and  
<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/> (28 July 2010).

<sup>2</sup> Leary explained his statement in the following way: ‘Turn on’ meant go within to activate your neural and genetic equipment. Become sensitive to the many and various levels of consciousness and the specific triggers that engage them. ... ‘Tune in’ meant interact harmoniously with the world around you – externalize, materialize, express your new internal perspectives. ‘Drop out’ suggested an elective, selective, graceful process of detachment from involuntary or unconscious commitments. ‘Drop Out’ meant self-reliance, a discovery of one’s singularity, a commitment to mobility, choice, and change.’ Leary believed that the phrase was ‘misinterpreted to mean “get stoned and abandon all constructive activity.”’ See Timothy Leary, *Flashbacks: A Personal and Cultural History of an Era: An Autobiography*, Los Angeles 1990, p.253. See also Timothy Leary, *Turn on, Tune in, Drop Out*, Berkeley, 1999, pp.3-6.

<sup>3</sup> Peter Gibbs, ‘Craft Art Crossroads’, *New Zealand Listener*, 13 August 1994, p.42.

The chapter begins by discussing the belief held by many craftspeople that the strength of the studio craft movement was its history. By replicating the ways of the past, including the perception of craft as a largely rural occupation, these craftspeople believed that their vocation ought to be practised in the countryside.<sup>4</sup> The growing interest in counter-cultures and different social structures during the 1960s and 1970s provided examples of how this could be achieved. Craftspeople saw parallels with their own desire to return to what they perceived to be traditional, simpler, and healthier ways of living. The second issue the chapter investigates is the association of the studio craft movement with anti-industrial sentiments, the rejection of modern technologies and the search for simpler means of production. The term 'hand-made' became a signifier of this opposition that placed craft items made by hand, using local materials, closer to art forms and on a higher level than other forms of manufacturing. Finally, the chapter considers ideas about work and how craftspeople saw 'something almost mystical about the human nature of proper work, which transcend[ed] mere labour'.<sup>5</sup> The themes that form the three parts of this chapter are closely interrelated and consequently the discussions on rural, technological and work issues intersect throughout. Furthermore, because many of the ideas about work and technology were founded on rural nostalgia,<sup>6</sup> the first section occupies a larger part of the chapter. It will also be seen that many other aspects of the studio craft movement, discussed in earlier chapters and later in this thesis, influenced the way these ideas evolved. By 1992 the movement had changed irrevocably. However, an enduring representation of the studio craft movement remained – largely informed by the social and cultural constructions that reached a peak during the 1960s and 1970s.

Craftspeople had a variety of understandings about what the issues outlined above meant to them personally, to the movement generally, and to wider society. Many expressed their support for one of the different philosophies

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<sup>4</sup> 'Countryside' is used in its original Scottish sense as a description of rural life and economy. See Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, Rev. and expanded ed, London, 1988, p.81.

<sup>5</sup> Malcom Chase, 'This is no Claptrap: This is our Heritage', in Christopher Shaw and Malcolm Chase, eds, *The Imagined Past: History and Nostalgia*, Manchester, 1989, p.139.

<sup>6</sup> *ibid.*

through the way they lived their lives while others, a smaller group, expressed their opinions in a variety of documents – usually craft magazines. Case studies are employed in this chapter to illustrate the different ideas and to contextualise the arguments. The individuals who feature were chosen because they expressed their opinions on these issues or because they were representative of a particular group of craftspeople – British immigrants for instance. Pottery again dominates the discussion because, as indicated in earlier chapters, potters were more likely to be earning most of their living from their craft than other craftspeople and pottery was often at the centre of the art/craft debate. Furthermore, the technology of studio pottery presents an interesting example of how a craft that had strong links to the urban industrial environment was transposed into the New Zealand countryside and how rural dwellers reacted to their new neighbours.

The studio craft movement began to flourish in New Zealand during a period when many people had become accustomed to the benefits of living in a technologically advanced, prosperous and largely urban society. Craftspeople in New Zealand called on earlier traditions and employed craft processes and technologies from the past, but found themselves supported by a technological and social infrastructure that had not existed in earlier times.<sup>7</sup> Ironically, the infrastructure was made possible by the very technology that some craftspeople viewed with suspicion. For many craftspeople the studio craft movement was a new manifestation of the nineteenth century defiance of the capitalist class system – ‘craft as resistance’ – and therefore provided them with an opportunity to express their opposition.<sup>8</sup> In this sense, craftspeople modelled their thinking on artists who had defined themselves through their resistance to conventional society. The notion of the artist as a rebel was also encouraged by the art-loving

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<sup>7</sup> Gary Hawke noted the ability of a society to support potters, amongst others, as a sign that wealth was increasing. See Gary Hawke, ‘Economic Trends and Economic Policy, 1938-1992’, in Geoffrey W. Rice, ed., *The Oxford History of New Zealand*, 2nd edn, Auckland, 1992, p.448.

<sup>8</sup> Robin Gardner-Gee, ‘A Practice Called Craft in a Country Called New Zealand: Readings of Craft New Zealand 1982 – 1993’, MA thesis, University of Auckland, 1996, p.78.

public.<sup>9</sup> But, paradoxically, as the craft movement matured it became more integrated into the capitalist economic, social and cultural system and more reliant on it. The resistance to technology and other aspects of contemporary society, but reliance on modern technological and social structures, and the advance of Modernist ideas about the relationship between form and function, shape the paradox that runs through this chapter.



**Figure 1:** 'Why do you have to be a nonconformist like everybody else?'. Craftspeople sometimes felt an affinity with artists when resisting societal norms.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> James Trilling, 'Freedom and Convention: Old Arts for a New Century', *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* 10, 4, 1997, p.583.

<sup>10</sup> Cartoon: Stan Hunt in E. H. Gombrich, *The Story of Art*, London, 1967, p.469.

# The Rural Myth, Alternative Life Styles and the Counter-culture

The association of the pastoral with art and literature has been an enduring theme throughout history. Glenn Adamson noted that in the works of classical writers such as Theocritus and Virgil, the shepherd became the representation of the individual who was freed from directed labour permitting him 'to spend his time indulging in philosophical rumination'.<sup>11</sup> According to Adamson 'the shepherd is an allegory not only of removal from the city, but of the past itself, a figure distanced from all present-day, urban ... considerations.'<sup>12</sup> Within the context of the studio craft movement the craftsman, to some extent, replaced the shepherd in the minds of some, and many craftspeople and writers have been happy to perpetuate the notion.<sup>13</sup>

## The Rural Myth

New Zealanders associated urban life with congested, overcrowded, and highly industrialised cities overseas – particularly in Britain. This contrasted starkly with the bucolic rural picture many imagined best represented New Zealand. Historian Miles Fairburn addressed the question of New Zealanders' distrust of urban life in an article published in the *New Zealand Journal of History*. Fairburn claimed that: 'From the 1870s to the 1940s the social assumptions of New Zealanders were so powerful that the realities of economic and social change were forced to adapt to a common myth.'<sup>14</sup> The myth placed 'beneficent nature' on a pedestal, not only above 'unnurtured nature' – the wilderness – but also certainly above 'the forces of the city'.<sup>15</sup> It was not urban life *per se* that was feared but that when the village, which had a civilizing influence, became a city it 'violated the purity of God's Own

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<sup>11</sup> Glenn D. Adamson, 'Craft Paradigms: The Studio Craft Movement and the Avant-Garde, 1966 -1972', PhD thesis, Yale University, 2001, p.81.

<sup>12</sup> *ibid.*, p.82.

<sup>13</sup> For example, see Maurice Shadbolt, *A Touch of Clay*, London, 1974. , T. S. Eliot, *The Confidential Clerk*, London, 1954, p.39, and Ellie Smith, 'Caught in Clay', in *Radio Play*, Radio New Zealand, 2009.

<sup>14</sup> Miles Fairburn, 'The Rural Myth and the New Urban Frontier: An Approach to New Zealand Social History', *New Zealand Journal of History*, 9, 1, 1975, p.3.

<sup>15</sup> *ibid.*

Country'.<sup>16</sup> Added to these impurities was a perception the city 'possessed no productive base which it could call its own' and, because of urban drift, bred 'physical, moral, social and political ills' and moreover, 'contaminated the nuclear family institution'.<sup>17</sup> In contrast to this vision of hell the countryside, often associated with images of villagers working contentedly on their traditional crafts, was considered paradise lost or, at least, in danger of being lost.

The rural myth in New Zealand had its foundations in Britain. In the 1970s Raymond Williams described the persistent nature of this myth in Britain.

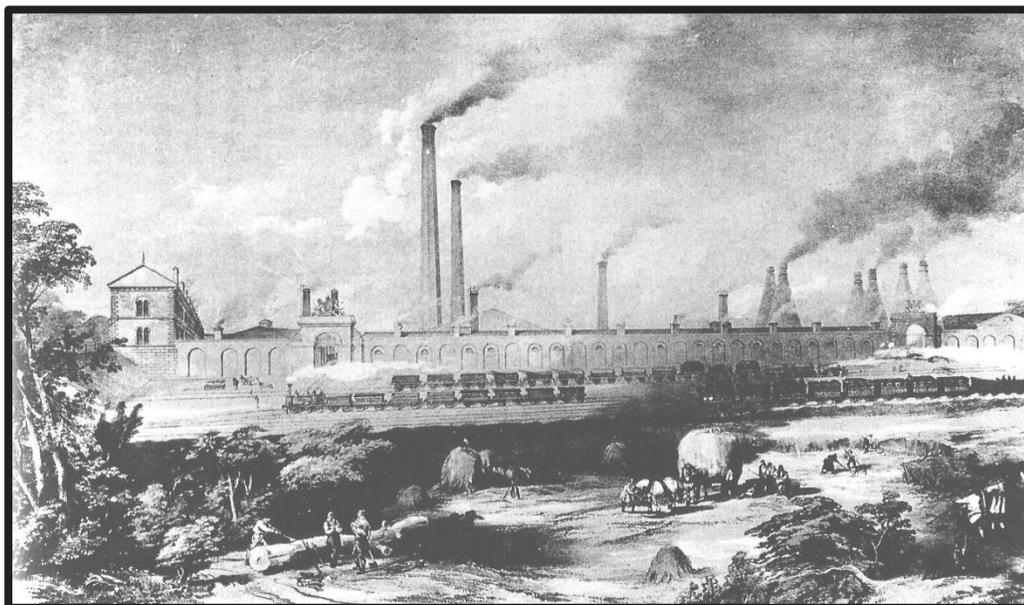
In the imperialist phase of our history the nature of the rural economy, in Britain and in its colonies, was ... transformed very early: dependence on a domestic agriculture dwindled to a very low proportion ... in a society which had become the first predominantly urban-dwelling people in the long history of human settlement. ... For it is a critical fact that in and through these transforming experiences English attitudes to the country, and to ideas of rural life, persisted with extraordinary power, so that even after the society was predominantly urban its literature, for a generation, was still predominantly rural; and even in the twentieth century, in an urban and industrial land, forms of the older ideas and experiences still remarkably persist.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> *ibid.*, p.4.

<sup>17</sup> *ibid.*, pp.4-5.

<sup>18</sup> Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City*, London, 1973, p.2.



**Figure 2:** The Cyclops Works c. 1845 – 1850 by an unknown artist. The engraving emphasises the contrast between constructions of urban and rural Britain.<sup>19</sup>

### The ‘back-to-the-land’ Movement

Craftspeople in New Zealand looked to Britain for guidance on craft traditions. Craft in late nineteenth century Britain was closely associated with the notion that the rural environment was where the ‘English’ way of life was naturally located. Those who were alarmed by the social degradation they saw in the cities and who still retained a nostalgic image of a rural Britain before the industrial revolution, could find only one solution to the problems they believed that industrialisation had created: ‘[T]he city must go, industry must be dismantled, the people must be resettled in villages and the economy return[ed] to craft workshops and guilds.’<sup>20</sup> The largely middle-class group of people who made up the ‘back-to-the-land’ movement, a loose confederation of like-minded groups, considered this solution radical without being revolutionary. The solution appealed to liberal thinkers of the time because it appeared to offer change without the fear of the mob that terrified Victorian society. The people most closely involved in the movement, and the

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<sup>19</sup> Painting: In J. Barringer, *Men at Work: Art and Labour in Victorian Britain*, New Haven and London, 2005, p.191.

<sup>20</sup> Jan Marsh, *Back to the Land: The Pastoral Impulse in England, from 1880 to 1914*, London, 1982, p.3. For a more detailed discussion of rural nostalgia in England see Peter Mandler, ‘Against ‘Englishness’: English Culture and the Limits to Rural Nostalgia, 1850 – 1940’, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, Sixth Series*, 7, 1997, pp.155-75.

early twentieth century variations of it, were the group that Pierre Bourdieu would later identify as those who valued cultural and symbolic capital the most, having already inherited economic capital. They were ‘the children of the suburbs ... the sons, and especially the daughters of those who worked in the professions, the finance houses or the upper reaches of the civil service, ... who had no pressing need for employment themselves.’<sup>21</sup> Meanwhile the working-class had no such interest in returning to a rural environment that had little to offer them.

### **The Arts and Crafts Movement and the Rural Ideal**

An example of the close association between the ‘back-to-the-land’ movement and craft was the community founded by Robert Charles Ashbee, a leader in the Arts and Crafts movement, at Chipping Campden in Gloucester in 1902. The formation of the community in the rural Cotswolds was part of an experiment to fight urban poverty. In 1888 Ashbee had established the Guild of Handcraft in Whitechapel in London as a practical expression of the aims of the Settlement movement of which he was a member.<sup>22</sup> The workers and members<sup>23</sup> of the Guild were self-taught – a method that Ashbee promoted over art schools and trade training.<sup>24</sup> He set about promoting his belief in the teaching of the ‘three Hs’ of ‘Hand, Heart and Head’<sup>25</sup> – a theme that became the motto of later craftspeople, including Bernard Leach. The twin aims of the Guild, as it was of the Arts and Crafts Movement in general, were to improve both the quality of craft and the working lives of craftspeople (usually craftsmen).<sup>26</sup> The move to the country was a means for craftsmen and their families to live a more fulfilling life. The combined goals can be seen in Ashbee’s pronouncement that:

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<sup>21</sup> Marsh, pp.5-6. For a fictional account describing the lives of these people and their relationship with craft see A. S. Byatt, *The Children's Book*, London, 2010.

<sup>22</sup> Gillian Naylor, *The Arts and Crafts Movement: A Study of Its Sources, Ideals and Influence on Design Theory*, London, 1971, p.170. The Settlement movement was a socialist organisation with the goal of providing accommodation for rich and poor to live and work in the same communities to alleviate poverty.

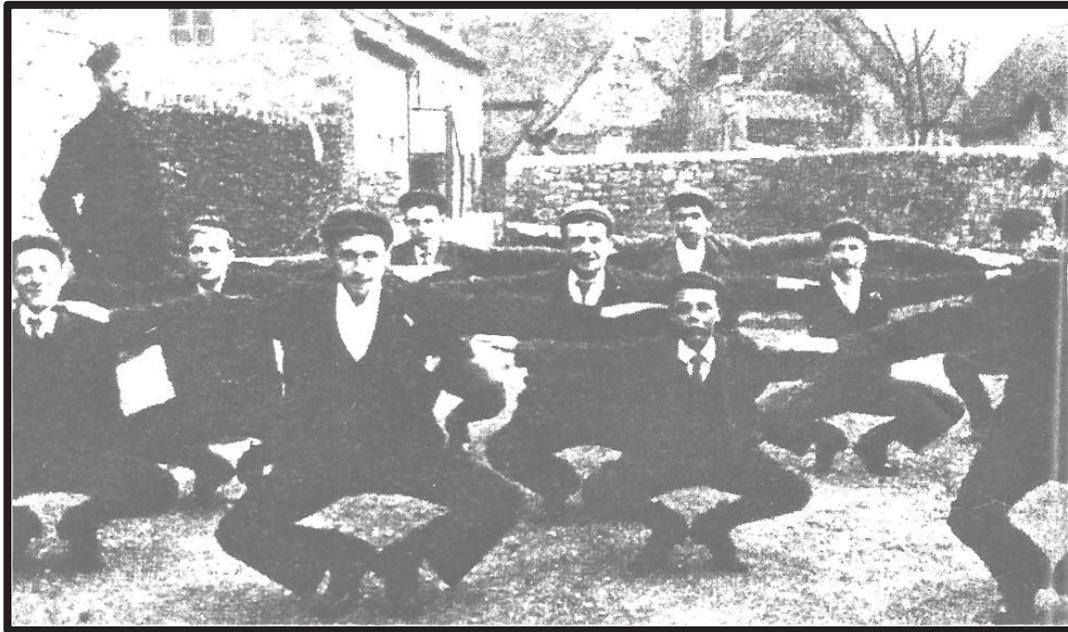
<sup>23</sup> Not all workers were members but after a period of service they could join and take up shares. All shareholders were entitled to attend meetings. Decisions were arrived at by consensus – as was the decision to move to the Cotswolds. See Alan Crawford, ‘Ashbee in the Cotswolds’, *Crafts*, November/December 1973, p.36.

<sup>24</sup> Naylor, p.167.

<sup>25</sup> Marsh, p.149.

<sup>26</sup> Crawford, p.36.

the proper place of the Arts and Crafts was in the country ... among the direct, elemental facts of life and away from the complex, artificial, and often destructive influences of machinery and the great town. Craftsmanship ought not to be the sole activity nor the sole source of income; men and women craftsmen ought to take a hand at "the elemental processes of life" such as working the land, animal husbandry, and such things of the house as cooking and baking.<sup>27</sup>



**Figure 3:** Craftsmen perform physical jerks as part of Ashbee's programme for a more fulfilling life for his workers.<sup>28</sup>

The community survived until 1908, when it went into liquidation. Ashbee was initially convinced that the move to the country was responsible for the demise of the Guild. Later, however, he added competition from machine production and from amateurs.<sup>29</sup> Both issues became the *bêtes noires* of the studio craft movement, but the countryside as the ideal location for craft workshops remained an important principle for many craftspeople. A trust replaced the Guild. In the trust deed, crafts and craftsmanship were defined

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<sup>27</sup> Donald Bush, 'Review: C.R. Ashbee: Architect, Designer & Romantic Socialist by Alan Crawford', 'The Simple Life: C.R. Ashbee in the Cotswolds by Fiona Maccarthy', 'Utopian Craftsmen: The Arts and Crafts Movement from the Cotswolds to Chicago by Lionel Lambourne', and 'Redesigning the World: William Morris, the 1800s, and the Arts and Crafts by Peter Stansky', *Design Issues*, 3, 2, 1986, p.87. See also R. C. Ashbee, *Craftsmanship in Competitive Industry*, New York, 1977, p.15.

<sup>28</sup> Photo: Crawford, p.38.

<sup>29</sup> Marsh, p.151.

as 'all such occupations with the hand, with or without the assistance of machinery, as are not usually carried on in large factories in towns'.<sup>30</sup> The inclusion of 'machinery' and the exclusion of 'large factories' in the charter recognised Ashbee's inclusive but controlled approach to technology.

## Between the Wars

Nostalgia for life in 'the 'traditional' English countryside was widespread across all sectors of British society between the wars,<sup>31</sup> based largely on the middle-class fears that 'cultural standards' were being undermined in the industrialised cities. Craft was thought to be an integral and important part of the rural economy. Those who hoped to preserve the rural way of life employed craft to a greater or lesser extent depending on their interest in craft *per se*. For example, after he returned to Britain in 1920 from a long period of study in Japan, Bernard Leach set up a studio pottery in St Ives in Cornwall. The type of village pottery he had seen in Japan inspired him to choose a rural location.<sup>32</sup> He had no interest in instructing locals in other rural skills but he employed young men and women from the surrounding district in the pottery. Also in 1920 Eric Gill established a craft community called the Guild of St Joseph and St Dominic at Ditchling, a small village in Sussex.<sup>33</sup> The community was founded on religious grounds with craft employed as a means of expressing the craftspeople's commitment to the Catholic faith. In 1925 Dorothy and Leonard Elmhirst established a community at Dartington Hall in Devon, centred around a progressive school that taught craft based on the 'learning-by-doing philosophy' that was currently popular.<sup>34</sup> Dorothy was an American philanthropist and Leonard had been involved in rural reconstruction in Bengal. The plan for the regeneration of the Dartington estate included crafts as 'efficient well-

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<sup>30</sup> *ibid.*, p.150.

<sup>31</sup> Gary S. Cross, *Time and Money: The Making of Consumer Culture*, London, 1993, p.57.

<sup>32</sup> Edward Lucie-Smith, *The Story of Craft. The Craftsman's Role in Society*, Oxford, 1981, pp.255-6.

<sup>33</sup> Tanya Harrod, *The Crafts in Britain in the 20th Century*, New Haven, 1999, p.29. See also *Ditchling Museum*, 2009; available at: [http://www.ditchling-museum.com/collection\\_guild.html](http://www.ditchling-museum.com/collection_guild.html) (10 March 2009).

<sup>34</sup> Harrod, p.137.

researched modern solutions to unemployment and poverty.<sup>35</sup> The experiments carried out using techniques from the early period of the industrial revolution, such as the combining of hand-weaving and machine-weaving for instance, were given four years to prove themselves as economically viable.<sup>36</sup> Most such experiments were found to be uneconomic but craft, although employed in an experimental manner, was not considered part of a return to the pre-industrial past but rather a means of solving modern problems in a rural setting. In all these examples craft served a variety of purposes from being the sole reason for the establishment of a community through to being one of many enterprises employed as means to an end – the revival of rural society.

### **A Case Study: Harry and May Davis**

Harry Davis, who, as was seen in Chapter Two, held firm ideas on matters relating to craft, provides us with an example of how craftspeople often believed that their craft and the way they lived were intimately entwined. In 1962 Harry and May Davis emigrated to New Zealand in search of a better life but before that they had experienced ideological-based communal living in a remote location. The Davises held firm pacifist views and a religious society called the Society of Brothers, also known as the Bruderhof Community, appeared to be an organisation that shared their views. The Community had been founded in Germany in 1920 by city intellectuals who wished to start a new life on the land.<sup>37</sup> After being driven out of Germany by the Nazi regime in 1938 the Bruderhof Community based themselves in Britain, before their German origins and their pacifist views forced them to move to Paraguay at the beginning of the Second World War. In a remote part of the country they set up a self-sufficient pacifist community where they were joined by the Davises.<sup>38</sup> Both Harry and May used their pottery skills to some extent to support the community but it was Harry's ability to construct machines from scrap metal that the community valued most. Eventually the

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<sup>35</sup> *ibid.*, p.138.

<sup>36</sup> *ibid.*, p.140.

<sup>37</sup> May Davis, *May*, Nelson, 1990, p.53.

<sup>38</sup> Harrod, p.187.

Davises became disillusioned with the patriarchal nature of the community and returned to Britain after the Second World War.

On their return to Britain the Davises established a pottery in rural Cornwall before emigrating to New Zealand to escape the nuclear conflagration they believed was imminent. The Davises' experience of communal living appeared to discourage them from advocating such communities later but their interest in combining craft, self-sufficiency and rural life, along with their international reputation as craftspeople, boosted their ideas about locating craft workshops in the countryside. As with the experiment at Dartington, their aim was not to create a replica of a pre-industrial rural pottery but to use sustainable modern methods to produce good quality pottery that would be used in the home. Harry's expression of their beliefs suggests that their ideas were a form of resistance to the prevailing norms of society – and to the divisions between art and craft.

[F]or a long time it has been our aim to find a modern and adequately efficient equivalent of the pre-industrial country pottery, which managed to make sound and fine wares for the daily needs of its day, without the elements of fine art preciousness and personality cult which is such a conspicuous feature of the studio pottery movement. I should add that the title studio potter always gives me a very chill feeling.<sup>39</sup>

Craft in a rural setting, using relatively simple machinery, was a means of achieving this aim.

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<sup>39</sup> Harry Davis quoted in Helen Mason, 'Harry Davis', *New Zealand Potter*, 28, 3, 1986.



**Figure 4:** Harry (1910 – 1986) and May Davis (1914 – 1995). Exponents of craft as a rural enterprise.<sup>40</sup>

The Davises were, to some extent, the heirs to the largely socialist, but sometimes conflicting, aspirations of John Ruskin, William Morris and Robert Ashbee. Harry's comments reflected their concerns that craft in the urban environment had become too corrupted by class issues relating to status and craft education that was becoming increasingly institutionalised and formalised.<sup>41</sup> In New Zealand however, this message became muddled, much to Harry's chagrin, and emerged as anti-machinery, anti-urban and, to some extent, opposed to art in any form.

### **The Rural Model in New Zealand**

The meaning of the term 'British craft' was revealed to New Zealanders through an exhibition organised by the British Council that opened in Wellington in 1948. The wholesomeness of craft and the rural environment were emphasised by Stewart MacLennan in his review of the exhibition in the *New Zealand Design Review*.

It was appropriate that this first important exhibition of craft in New Zealand should deal with fundamentals. The

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<sup>40</sup> Photo: Helen Mason, '10 Years of Pottery in New Zealand', *New Zealand Potter*, Special Issue, 1967.

<sup>41</sup> Discussed in Chapters Two and Three.

collection represented, primarily, good workmanship and the unconscious beauty that results from the use of natural materials worked with sympathetic skill and understanding in the production of useful objects.<sup>42</sup>

The title of the review, 'Rural Crafts in Retrospect', and the use of words such as 'fundamentals', 'good workmanship', 'unconscious beauty', 'natural materials', 'sympathetic skill' and 'useful objects' all suggested that the best craft in Britain was functional and rural. The review appeared to be giving guidance to the emerging craft movement in New Zealand.

Craftspeople also listened to visiting craftspeople and those who settled permanently in New Zealand. During the 1950s and 1960s there was a flood of immigrants into New Zealand. Many were drawn by the policy of the New Zealand government to pay most of their costs but others were probably attracted by the belief that New Zealand was essentially a rural society – Britain as it once had been. By the end of the 1960s, even though the rural population was declining proportionately and absolutely, there remained a strong belief that New Zealand still retained its frontier qualities and remained rural in character.<sup>43</sup> Harry and May Davis, and another English couple, Jack and Peggy Laird, arrived with thoughts of establishing craft workshops in a rural situation despite, in the case of the Davises, being subjected to promotional films at New Zealand House in London that depicted New Zealand as a modern industrial nation.<sup>44</sup> The Davises and the Lairds were already experienced craftspeople and had informed their thinking about the role of craft in a modern society over many years in England. They were practical people who were not locked into the romantic ideas about the type of pre-industrial paradise discussed in Chapter One. They did not fear machinery; indeed, Harry Davis wrote a book on how potters could build their own machinery.<sup>45</sup> Nevertheless, they saw value in

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<sup>42</sup> Stewart MacLennan, 'Rural Crafts in Retrospect', *Design Review*, 1, 1, April 1948, p.5.

<sup>43</sup> Graeme Dunstall, 'The Social Pattern', in Rice, ed., *The Oxford History of New Zealand*, p.455. See also Jock Phillips, *A Man's Country?: The Image of the Pakeha Male, a History*, Auckland, 1996, p.267.

<sup>44</sup> Davis, *May*, pp.121-2.

<sup>45</sup> Harry Davis, *The Potter's Alternative*, North Ryde, NSW, 1987.

some aspects of the post-war craft movement that called on Arts and Crafts ideas about locating craft workshops in rural settings.

### **A Case Study: Jack and Peggy Laird**

Jack Laird, an art lecturer with experience in pottery, wrote a paper in 1960 that outlined his thinking about the relationship between craftspeople and the countryside. He believed that craft had a role in combating rural depopulation but felt that this role had not been examined to any great extent in New Zealand.<sup>46</sup> His knowledge of the Rural Industries Bureau (RIB) in Britain informed his thinking.<sup>47</sup> He called for a more rational approach.

So much indifference for so long, and after it, over-enthusiastic, but muddled thinking, allied with a degree of preciousity, has left in the minds of many, a distorted image of the craftsman and his relationship with our present society. This may range from the romantic – the Hebridean crofter weaving on a rocky isle, aimed at attracting tourism – to the artist-craftsman’s cult of the back-to-the-land movement which produced highly sophisticated products for highly sophisticated townfolk.<sup>48</sup>

Laird was not dismissing the rustic image in its entirety but he believed that what should be encouraged lay somewhere between the two extremes. He criticised the limited use of the rural environment he observed. ‘It is a measure of the failure to take account of an overall picture of the situation in New Zealand that has led to the idea that the countryside is for farming and nothing else. And this is the prevailing attitude. It seems to be the limit of official interest.’<sup>49</sup> He suggested that rural labour shortages and the declining rural population may have been due to the better leisure and educational facilities in towns and cities, but he believed:

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<sup>46</sup> J. D. Laird, 'The Craftsman in Rural Communities and the Work of the Rural Industries Bureau in England and Its Possible Application in New Zealand', Report for Department of University Extension Victoria University of Wellington, 1960, p.1.

<sup>47</sup> Archives Network Wales. <http://www.archivesnetworkwales.info/>. The Rural Industries Bureau (RIB) was established in 1921 by the Ministry of Agriculture and was funded through the Development Commission. Its purpose was to develop rural industries by providing technical advice and assistance to country workshops. It produced various booklets and reports and the quarterly magazine, *Rural Industries*. Also, Rural Industries Bureau Papers, 1927 – 1986, GB 0223 M/RIB, Powys County Archives Service, UK. See also Kate Woodhead, 'Muriel Rose and the Little Gallery', MA thesis, The Royal College of Art 1989, pp.21-2.

<sup>48</sup> Laird, p.1.

<sup>49</sup> *ibid.*, p.2.

that there are sufficient potential workers who, by living in the country, could bring diversity, and enrich it, and at the same time gain for themselves a more satisfying life. Allied with this is the contention that there are many small industries and craft workshops which could function equally well, and perhaps with lower rents, rates, and so on, even more efficiently in the country than the city.<sup>50</sup>

The question was – how was this to be done? Laird outlined the RIB's plan to overcome the problem of rural population decline in Britain. He detailed its advisory role, loan schemes and the numerous other ways it worked to slow the decline. He was conscious of the differences between the British and New Zealand rural environment but suggested that, with perhaps a more local focus, a similar organisation could be set up.

The foundation for an organisation with a similar function to that of the English Rural Industries Bureau should ideally consist of a council with an all-embracing view of the communities' needs. ... Its concern would be with the cultural development of its area and to that end it would survey the physical, economic, and financial resources available. ... Conversely, from the English case the impetus for such activity must come from the local community and is unlikely to come from the government.<sup>51</sup>

Laird's plans were probably too grandiose for the national policy makers of the time and his main concern was the founding of his own business. In 1964 the Lairds established Waimea Craft Pottery in a rural location on the outskirts of Richmond, a small town near Nelson, with the help of a local investment company.<sup>52</sup> Waimea Craft Pottery prospered, but Laird's ideas for the rejuvenation of rural New Zealand never received support from the government. Farming remained the dominant use of rural land but, as will be seen in Chapter Seven, craftspeople and rural communities were able to work together to their mutual benefit.

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<sup>50</sup> *ibid.*, pp.2-3.

<sup>51</sup> *ibid.*, p.3.

<sup>52</sup> Vic Evans, 'Head, Heart and Hand: Studio Pottery in Nelson 1956 - 1976', MA thesis, Massey University, 2007, pp.77-8. 'Waimea Craft Pottery' was usually called 'Waimea Pottery', see Margaret Harris, 'Nelson Potters', *New Zealand Potter*, 12, 2, 1970, pp.6-7.



**Figure 5:** Jack and Peggy Laird in the showroom at Waimea Craft Pottery, c. 1964. The pottery was a semi-industrial operation located on rural land near Nelson.<sup>53</sup>

## Home Grown Rural Craft

### A Case Study: Helen Mason

The potter Helen Mason was from the same generation as the Davises and the Lairds but was New Zealand-born. She decided for different reasons to live and work in the country.<sup>54</sup> Her move to the Wairarapa in late 1965 to work alone and then her involvement in a craft partnership in the Waitakeres in Auckland were ways of overcoming the ‘suburban neurosis’<sup>55</sup> she

<sup>53</sup> Photo: *New Zealand Potter*, 12, 2, 1970 p. 7. The Lairds ran a very successful business producing a range of tableware made by employees and individual pieces made by Jack Laird and employees – usually in their own time.

<sup>54</sup> Helen Mason, *Helen Mason’s Scrapbook: Fifty Years as a Backyard Potter, a Memoir*, 2nd edn, Waipukurau, 2005, p.16 and Helen Mason, ‘Notes from a Country Potter’, *New Zealand Potter*, 15, 2, 1973, pp.16-17.

<sup>55</sup> In the 1950s and 1960s the term ‘suburban neurosis’ was used to describe the psychological depression or postnatal depression some women experienced as a result of living isolated lives in the suburbs or after childbirth. In her writings Mason appears to be referring to her experiences whilst raising children in the suburbs. See Helen Mason, ‘Helen Mason Looks Back’, *New Zealand Potter*, 19, 1, 1977, p.28 and Mason, *Helen Mason’s Scrapbook: Fifty Years as a Backyard Potter, a Memoir*. Ironically, the suburbs were

appeared to be suffering from and also a means of escaping from an unhappy marriage. Trying to earn a living from her pottery was difficult but she found the rural environment and the camaraderie of fellow craftspeople enjoyable: 'We were making a statement about a simpler and happier way of life'.<sup>56</sup> In a curious statement, suggesting that the groups she lived and worked with had pre-empted communes, or even the Māori concept of whānau, she described the grouping as 'an extended family before anybody had thought of extended families'.<sup>57</sup> Mason was describing a social structure that emerged when people with similar interests worked and lived together. Because the predominant reason the community Mason was associated with was craft it may have had a more cohesive feel to it than the Bruderhof Community that the Davises had rejected. Alternatively, when she wrote these impressions many years had passed since they had happened and she may have been influenced by a sense of nostalgia.<sup>58</sup> Helen Mason often reflected on where the movement had come from and where it might go. Her reflections interlinked the notions of simplicity and 'the value of handicrafts as a forerunner of a better world to come when every man and woman will tend their own vines and live in peace with their neighbour'.<sup>59</sup> Writing in 1977, Mason appeared to be influenced by the revival of interest in communal living in the late 1960s.

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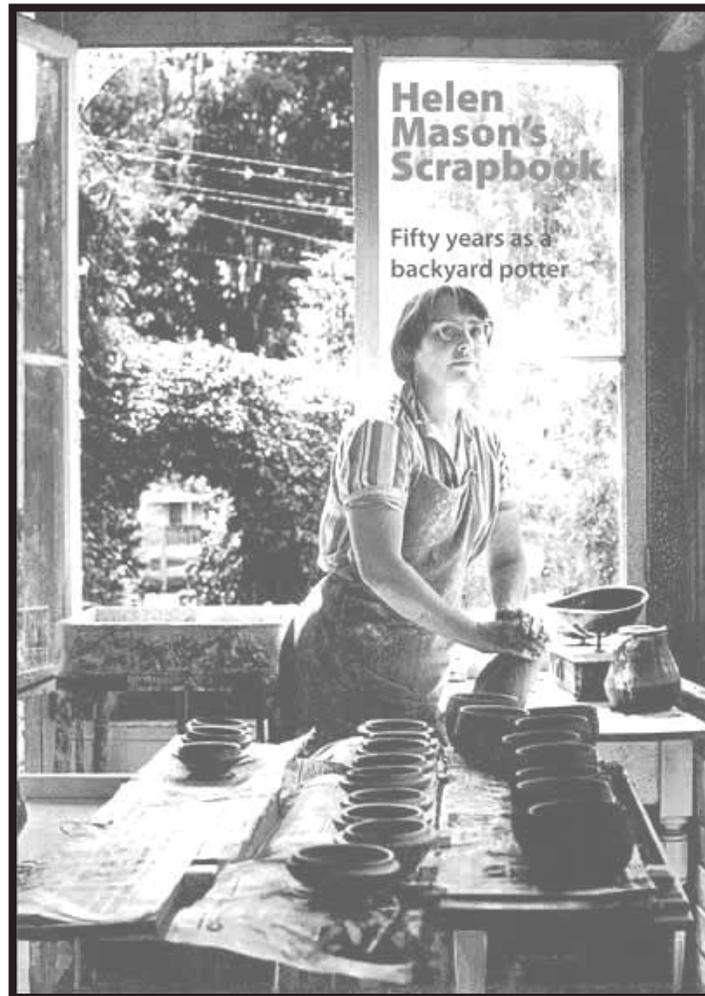
designed to replica aspects of rural life including providing space and privacy. For more on 'suburban neurosis' see Margot Roth, 'Housewives or Human Beings?', *New Zealand Listener*, 20 November 1959, pp.6-7.

<sup>56</sup> Mason, *Helen Mason's Scrapbook: Fifty Years as a Backyard Potter, a Memoir*, p.18.

<sup>57</sup> Helen Mason quoted in Peter Cape, *Please Touch. A Survey of the Three-Dimensional Arts in New Zealand*, Auckland, 1980, p.82. 'Whānau' translates as 'extended family'. For a fuller definition see the report by the Families Commission: *Kōmihana ā whānau, 'Definitions of Whānau: A Review of Selected Literature'*, 2010.

<sup>58</sup> *New Zealand Potters Society*; available at: <http://www.nzpotters.com/> (30 May 2008).

<sup>59</sup> Mason, 'Helen Mason Looks Back', p.28.



**Figure 6:** Book Cover: Helen Mason. The title of Mason's book places her pottery at one end of the studio craft production spectrum (small backyard pottery) with the Laird's operation (medium-sized, semi-industrial pottery) at the other end.<sup>60</sup>

### Alternative Life Styles and the Counter-culture

There existed many similarities between the early 'back-to-the-land' movements and the counter-culture<sup>61</sup> movement of the 1960s and 1970s. In his review of Theodore Roszak's book on the American movement, *The Making of a Counter-culture*, Richard Wasson observed:

Clearly Roszak is in the central tradition of nineteenth and twentieth century humanism, romantic variety. In fact, one might think of the book as a long term paper written at the

<sup>60</sup> Photo: Marti Friedlander in Mason, *Helen Mason's Scrapbook: Fifty Years as a Backyard Potter, a Memoir*, p.3.

<sup>61</sup> There appears to be no standard form for the capitalisation or hyphenating of 'counter-culture'. See Theodore Roszak, *The Making of a Counter Culture; Reflections on the Technocratic Society and Its Youthful Opposition*, Berkeley, 1995 and Tim Heath, 'Sam and Susana', Master of Creative Writing thesis, Auckland University of Technology, 2009, p.12.

end of a survey course covering those periods and bringing up-to-date the rejection of industrialism and technology that runs from Blake through the romantics to Morris, Ruskin, and Arnold.<sup>62</sup>

Amongst the features that many of these communities shared with earlier movements were an interest in crafts, the return to the land and the desire for a simplified life.<sup>63</sup> Peripheral features, such as vegetarianism and an interest in eastern religions were also shared characteristics.<sup>64</sup> However, there were a number of differences with earlier times that had not been anticipated. Roszak noted some of these in the introduction to the 1995 edition of his book.

Here then was a contradiction that left-wing ideologues of the past had never foreseen. Marxists had always predicated revolutionary change on the "immiserization" of the proletariat. But in postscarcity America, rebellion was breaking out where it was to be least expected: amid younger members of the very bourgeois elite whose interests the military-industrial complex purported to serve. Taking full advantage of the security permitted by the general affluence, this generation began to demand levels of freedom, self-expression, and enjoyment that suggested they saw life as something more than getting and spending. Worse, they demanded an idealism that life rarely affords in adulthood. Instead of thanking their benefactors, they mocked them in their songs and poems, and proceeded to raise issues that suggested severe doubts about the rightness and rationality of urban industrial society. They were doing no less than calling the myth of material progress into question. Some retreated to rural communes, wanting to live lightly on the earth; others rigged up wigwams and yurts and affected the lifestyle of voluntary primitives. These were galling gestures that implied our leaders might have the wrong future in mind.<sup>65</sup>

Earlier movements hoped to change society, not only for their own benefit, but also for those who were not in a position to influence their own future. The new movement, in contrast, appeared to be self-indulgent with few altruistic aspirations.

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<sup>62</sup> Richard Wasson, 'Review of the Making of a Counter Culture by Theodore Roszak', *College English*, 31, 6, March, 1970, p.625.

<sup>63</sup> Marsh, *Back to the Land*, p.7.

<sup>64</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>65</sup> Roszak, p.8.

## A Case Study: Centrepont

A New Zealand example of the link between cooperative communities, members of the bourgeois elite, and craft, was the Centrepont Community, which, from 1978, was based on rural land on the outskirts of Auckland.<sup>66</sup> The community was founded largely to provide psychological 'healing' and 'personal growth' for members through the techniques its leader, Bert Potter, had learned in communities in America.<sup>67</sup> Members of Centrepont, in keeping with the communal and anti-material philosophy of the community, were required to surrender their assets to the community, which was run as a trust.

One of the first major projects on the property was the construction of a pottery studio and kilns.<sup>68</sup> In 1979 it was reported that eight potters, three silversmiths and one fabric and dress designer worked at Centrepont. Additional craft buildings were constructed in 1981.<sup>69</sup> To some extent, craft appeared to offer more value to Centrepont as an example of a communal way of working than as a source of income. When a newspaper article and a television documentary afforded Centrepont some notoriety, sales of pottery increased.<sup>70</sup> It appeared that the public were more interested in the way the members lived; increased craft sales were a fortunate corollary. Furthermore, for what must have been a large capital outlay, the craft businesses did not seem to have contributed a great deal to the finances of the community. In 1984, for example, about 20% of the income came from craft-type activities.<sup>71</sup> Much of the remainder was from members who worked outside Centrepont.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> John Sweden, 'Feeling Free / Cottage Industry', *New Zealand Potter*, 24, 2, 1982, pp.26-9.

<sup>67</sup> L. D. Oakes, *Inside Centrepont: The Story of a New Zealand Community*, Auckland, 1986, p.26. See also Stephen Stratford, *The Dirty Decade: New Zealand in the 80s*, Auckland, 2002, pp.93-6.

<sup>68</sup> Oakes, p.30. See also Sweden, p.29.

<sup>69</sup> Oakes, p.54.

<sup>70</sup> *ibid.* The publicity featured Centrepont's unconventional attitudes to sex and nudity. The local council permitted the sale of 'seconds' (faulty pots) on-site. All other work was sold through retail outlets off-site. See Sweden, p.28.

<sup>71</sup> Pottery 1.8%, hats 12.5%, scarves 4.2%, puzzles 1.6%. See Oakes, p.142. Also see Campbell Hegan to Jenny Patrick, 30 June 1979, CCNZ Records, 92-278, 08/02, Alexander Turnbull Library.

<sup>72</sup> Members who worked outside Centrepont were expected to contribute all their income to the trust.

The communal nature of the community pervaded all aspects of life at Centrepont – craft items sent to exhibitions were chosen by consensus<sup>73</sup> – and involvement in craft was often considered part of the ‘healing’ process Potter promoted. For instance, John Sweden, one of the potters, noted that ‘there [was] a strong emphasis on communication and sharing our feelings with one another’ which he claimed helped him overcome the difficulty of making pots when he had emotional problems: ‘I can’t make beautiful pots when resentful or hostile’.<sup>74</sup> It implied that his pottery was better for the ‘openness’ the communal environment afforded him. The community eventually collapsed amid recriminations following the laying of criminal charges against Potter and some of his closest associates. To some extent, the association of craft with the community corrupted craft. The purpose of craft appeared to act as a form of legitimisation of the community rather than provide income.



**Figure 7:** Kilns at Centrepont. For a large capital outlay craft provided only a small proportion of the income of the community.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Oakes, p.160.

<sup>74</sup> Sweden, p.28.

<sup>75</sup> Photo: Oakes, p.140. Multi-chambered kilns like these were constructed to use fuel more efficiently and to produce a large quantity of pottery.

## The Hippie Connection

Craftspeople, particularly those associated with communities like Centrepoint, were often portrayed as hippies<sup>76</sup> – the most visible manifestation of a movement that first appeared in America between 1966 – 68 and which became a rallying point for disaffected young people in the 1970s.<sup>77</sup> The hippies, both an urban and rural phenomenon, were also mythologized, largely because of the extensive use of mind-altering drugs, the advocacy of ‘free love’ and the rejection of the values of contemporary society. As a protest movement the hippies appeared to have noble ideals: ‘The essential elements in the hippie ethic [were] based on some very old notions – the mind-body dichotomy, condemnation of the worship of “things,” [and] the estrangement of people from each other’.<sup>78</sup> However, the ideals were never clearly expressed and the movement lacked any unified structure. An example of the fascination of the public with this apparent aimlessness was the success of the 1968 musical *Hair*. *Hair* was described as ‘the American tribal love-rock musical’ in which nothing happened, but it offered ‘the audience a glimpse of hippie life’.<sup>79</sup> A suggestion for the prurient interest was that ‘hippies do absolutely nothing and do it with an inexplicable – surely drug-induced – enthusiasm.’<sup>80</sup>

Many hippies appeared to be interested in crafts and a number made craft items to fund their way of life. However, a lack of unity prevented the development of a craft ethos. Hippie craftspeople validated the public’s perception of craft by producing the items that the public associated with hippies – beads, headbands and leather shirts.<sup>81</sup> In America, Glenn Adamson saw the connection between hippies, rural communes and craft as a physical manifestation of the projections of those who challenged American society.

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<sup>76</sup> John Sweden was aware of this in his article, but he believed that ‘Centrepoint people [were] mostly high-energy self-motivated individuals’. See Sweden, p.28.

<sup>77</sup> John Robert Howard suggests that the term ‘hippie’ comes from the word ‘hip’, used in jazz in the 1940s. See John Robert Howard, ‘The Flowering of the Hippie Movement’, *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 382, 1969, p.44.

<sup>78</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>79</sup> Mark Kurlansky, *1968: The Year That Rocked the World*, New York, 2004, p.183.

<sup>80</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>81</sup> Howard, p.50.

Craftspeople are workers, but they are also “free” and creative, insofar as they work outside the normal channels of industrial capitalism. Craft objects themselves could be seen as sites of transference, by which the rustic could be brought into urban domestic space; the furnituremaker’s chair and the hand-craft pot became portable symbols of progressive political sympathies. Furthermore, craftspeople theoretically used antiquated technology and techniques, and so could be seen as antipathetic to industry, but they also produce objects of use. In this respect, they embodied the most productive type of pastoral nostalgia, in which critical negation of the social status quo combines with a positive embrace of older but still viable systems of production. Thus, even though the incidence of actual craft work was relatively marginal in the American economy, craftspeople served as an important symbol for radicals who operated in the pastoral terrain.<sup>82</sup>

Douglas Lloyd-Jenkins noted connections in New Zealand between the lifestyle of craftspeople and the wider community, pointing out that some New Zealanders lived vicariously through craftspeople: ‘Buying pottery allowed many toadstool dwellers<sup>83</sup> to feel like occupants of the mushroom patch’.<sup>84</sup> At times the association between craft and alternative lifestyles could be seen in spectacular fashion. In America, music festivals called ‘happenings’,<sup>85</sup> such as the one held at Woodstock in New York State in 1969, were copied in New Zealand at events such as the series of ‘Nambassa’ happenings that began in 1979.<sup>86</sup> The craft stalls where ‘hippies’ could sell their work were a feature of these festivals and most since.

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<sup>82</sup> Adamson, ‘Craft Paradigms’, p.90.

<sup>83</sup> A metaphor referring to urban sprawl, see Sue Vaassen, ‘Homes Splash Colour in Our Green Bush’, *New Zealand Woman’s Weekly*, 4 June, 1962, p.18.

<sup>84</sup> Douglas Lloyd-Jenkins, *At Home: A Century of New Zealand Design*, Auckland, 2004, p.197.

<sup>85</sup> A performance, event or situation meant to be considered as art. See Joan M. Marter, ed., *Off Limits: Rutgers University and the Avant-Garde, 1957 – 1963*, New Jersey, 1999, p.10.

<sup>86</sup> 75,000 people attended the 1979 Nambassa festival. See Colin Broadley and Judith Jones, eds, *Nambassa: A New Direction*, Wellington, 1979.



**Figure 8:** A craft stall at Nambassa. Photos such as these constructed representations of the studio craft movement that distorted understandings in New Zealand.<sup>87</sup>

The Nambassa association between craft and alternative lifestyles seemed fixed in the minds of the wider community. Craftspeople often had to defend a public image that many felt had no basis in reality. June Reay and Jane McCallum were both involved with pottery clubs in Nelson in the 1970s and 1980s. McCallum recognised that there was a disconnection between public perception and reality: ‘A lot of people thought that potters were just a bunch of hippies – but they weren’t really. They were generally businessmen or women.’ Reay was also aware of the perception: ‘There were very few potters that actually looked like what people perceived potters to look like. They actually all looked like doctors and lawyers.’<sup>88</sup> Reay and McCallum’s words reflected the desire to, in a Bourdieuan sense, ‘professionalise’ craft. The concern for some in the 1980s, as craft became more urban-based and moved closer to art, was that an association with the counter-culture and hippies would provide little cultural and symbolic capital for serious craftspeople and craft artists.

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<sup>87</sup> Photo: *Nambassa: A New Direction*, p.26.

<sup>88</sup> June Reay, 16 December 2006, OH 133 and Jane McCallum, 22 November 2006, OH 127, interview with Vic Evans, Nelson Pottery Club Members, Oral History, Nelson Provincial Museum.

## A Case Study: John and Kathleen Ing

John and Kathleen Ing represent examples of craftspeople who, as American immigrants making a living from their craft in a rural setting, could well have been mistaken for hippies. John, for instance, sporting a long, flowing beard was the image of the hippies that many associated with the American counter-culture. However, they did not express any of the alternative political ideas current in the United States in the 1970s, and they actively took part in the commercial economy. The Ings had learned pottery and weaving on the west coast of the United States in the mid-1960s.<sup>89</sup> They moved to New Zealand in the summer of 1972 after hearing about Nelson's mild climate and purchased a run-down tobacco farm near Motueka.<sup>90</sup> The Ings soon showed that along with achieving a good quality of life for their children and themselves – the main reason for settling in the countryside – running a successful business was also important. Soon after arriving in Nelson they made use of the region's reputation for craft and the developing tourist industry. In 1975, with assistance from other craftspeople in the district, the Ings started the Pokororo Craft fair, although they conceded that a pottery fair would have been a more accurate name, as most of the craftspeople involved were potters.<sup>91</sup> The Ing's philosophy was very simple. They wanted 'to make pots that [could] be used and enjoyed every day' and acknowledged that although their early work was very primitive they felt it represented their philosophy well – to the point where they became concerned when they thought, in the mid 1980s, that their work was becoming too polished.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> Karen Patterson, Nelson Ceramics, oral history interviews, Nelson Provincial Museum: John and Kathleen, 17 September 1984, OH 16. See also Julie Warren, *Clay: The Pottery Industry – 150 Years in Nelson*, Nelson, 1991, p.27 and Cape, pp.105-6.

<sup>90</sup> John Ing, 'Notes from a Pokororo Pottery', *New Zealand Potter*, 22, 2, 1980, p.27.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> Ing, p.28 and Patterson interview.



**Figure 9:** John and Kathleen Ing. Their physical appearance and their desire to make 'everyday' pottery suggested a hippy connection<sup>93</sup>

The examples examined here – the Davises, the Lairds, Centrepont community, Helen Mason, and the Ings – represent the range of ways of living and working that craftspeople employed in rural areas. Many chose to settle in a rural location for the way of life it afforded them and because of the lower cost of housing and land in some regions, but also because their craft, if it involved noisy machinery or smoky kilns, was not permitted in suburban New Zealand. A common ingredient for all was the wish to enjoy the rural environment and, to a greater or lesser extent, to engage with the world around them.<sup>94</sup> Many believed that craft had a traditional affinity with the rural environment. The rural setting for many craftspeople was a physical manifestation of their ideals. However, Modernism intruded and a new generation of craft artists saw no need to live and work in an environment that no longer catered for their cultural needs. Nevertheless, an enduring image had been created and, as Jane McCallum and June Reay discovered, it was very persistent.

<sup>93</sup> Photo: *New Zealand Potter*, 22, 2, 1980 p. 28

<sup>94</sup> Margaret Harris, 'Freedom to Live Where You Want', *New Zealand Potter*, 14, 1, 1972, p.7. One in a series of articles in this issue discussing rural living.

## Old Craft New Craft

By the 1990s the notion that one of the defining characteristics of the studio craft movement was its rural nature was being redefined by moves to improve the level of craft education, by changes in the economy, and by the new ways that 'craft art' was being marketed. Increasingly, as the graduates of the new craft design courses emerged with their diplomas and degrees, they were as likely to set up their studio in a city as in the countryside. With the increasing numbers of craftspeople and the associated increase in supplies of craft, new outlets proliferated in towns and cities. Buyers could now choose from a range of craftworks produced by many craftspeople. Where once trips to the countryside to see craftspeople living and working were a part of a 'cultural' experience, now city dwellers could visit galleries to 'invest' in craft art. In Bourdieuan terms, there was more symbolic and cultural capital to be acquired in the cities.

## Craftspeople and Technology

The history of craft has often been portrayed in terms of the uneasy relationship between craftspeople and technology. The enduring nature of this unease is evident in the statement made by Richard Sennett, a commentator on the contemporary technology, in 2008.

The greatest dilemma faced by the modern artisan-craftsman is the machine. Is it a friendly tool or an enemy replacing work of the human hand? In the economic history of skilled manual labor, machinery that began as a friend has often ended up as an enemy.<sup>95</sup>

To the supporters of the Arts and Crafts Movement the machine was to be treated with caution, if not outright contempt – handmade/good, machine-made/bad. This simplistic construction was formed as a result of the belief that the pre-industrial crafts of the medieval period were of a higher quality

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<sup>95</sup> Richard Sennett, *The Craftsman*, New Haven, 2008, p.81. Sennett's comments, written in 2008, demonstrate the enduring difficulty craftspeople have with technology. In a review of Sennett's book, the potter Emmanuel Cooper wrote that the gender-specific title suggested that the author was calling for a return to past values. See Emmanuel Cooper, 'Book Review: The Craftsman by Richard Sennett', *The Journal of Modern Craft*, 1, 3, 2008, p.435.

than factory-made items.<sup>96</sup> However, as a twentieth century critic has pointed out, we cannot compare medieval craft, where everything was made by hand, with modern machine-made items because it was mostly the items made for the rich in medieval times that survived.<sup>97</sup>

Craftspeople, both during the Arts and Crafts movement and the studio craft movement, had a tendency to focus their criticism on machinery when, in fact, what may have enraged many was the pervasiveness of technology in a wider sense. As Peter McCleary, a lecturer in architecture at the University of Pennsylvania, has pointed out, technology is more than machinery in the physical sense.

Technology is the discourse between societies and their natural environments in the production of the built environment. Technology is not only the resulting products and processes but also includes the framework of thinking generated by this dialectical relationship between man and nature, i.e. technology is both the doing and the thinking about the doing – the action and the reflection-in-action.<sup>98</sup>

Because all craftspeople employed technology, as described by McCleary, in one form or another, and all thought about how they would achieve their craft goals – again employing technology according to McCleary – then all were located within the parameters of the technological system of their time. Many craftspeople accepted the dominant paradigm that craft was, if not anti-machine, then at least wary of modern technology. The pervasiveness of this idea has already been examined in some detail but below I present a different discussion. Here I examine the thoughts of one philosopher, Lewis Mumford, who did not believe that the impact of technology was necessarily detrimental to art (and craft) and one craftsman, Harry Davis, who attempted to convince craftspeople that their thinking was flawed.

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<sup>96</sup> Reyner Banham, 'Sparks from a Plastic Anvil: The Craftsman in Technology', in *The Journal of Modern Craft*, March, 2008, p.144. See also Reyner Banham, *Theory and Design in the First Machine Age*, Cambridge, Mass., 1980.

<sup>97</sup> Banham, 'Sparks from a Plastic Anvil: The Craftsman in Technology', p.144.

<sup>98</sup> Peter McCleary, 'An Interpretation of Technology', *Journal of Architectural Education*, 37, 2, Winter 1983, p.2.

## Lewis Mumford

The American sociologist and historian of technology and science, Lewis Mumford, gave considerable thought to the relationship between humans and machines. Before we examine Mumford's ideas, however, we must understand what he meant when he used certain expressions. Mumford used the term "the machine" ... as a shorthand reference to the entire technological complex' which referred to 'the knowledge and skills and arts derived from industry or implicated in the new technics,<sup>99</sup> and ... include[d] various forms of tool, instrument, apparatus and utility as well as machines proper.'<sup>100</sup> By 'technics' he meant 'that part of human activity wherein, by energetic organization of the process of work, man controls and directs the forces of nature for his own purposes.'<sup>101</sup> And 'art' he recognised as an integral aspect of technics.

Art ... is primarily the domain of the person; and the purpose of art ... is to widen the province of personality, so that feelings, emotions, attitudes, and values, in the special individualized form in which they happen in one particular person, in one particular culture, can be transmitted with all their force and meaning to other persons or to other cultures.<sup>102</sup>

Mumford believed that people turned to technics for order and power whilst the need for playful activity, autonomous creation, and significant expression demanded the use of art and symbols.<sup>103</sup>

Mumford's emphasis on art as playful and creative and technics as ordered nature bring to mind Collingwood's distinction between art and craft. Mumford showed more interest in the struggle between humans and machines than Collingwood, and he was silent when it came to the relative internalisation of art and the externalisation of craft, but he recognised that art and craft were no longer one and the same. Art and technology for

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<sup>99</sup> Mumford borrowed the term "technics" from the historian and philosopher Oswald Spengler and used it to designate the industrial arts themselves as distinguished from their systematic study, technology. See Donald L. Miller, *Lewis Mumford, a Life*, New York, 2002, p.326.

<sup>100</sup> Lewis Mumford, *Technics and Civilization*, 7th edn, London, 1955, p.12.

<sup>101</sup> Lewis Mumford, *Art and Technics*, New York, 1952, p.15.

<sup>102</sup> *ibid.*, p.16.

<sup>103</sup> *ibid.*, p.45.

Mumford were different aspects of technics as originally conceived by the Greeks and expressed in the word *tekne* – a derivation of *τέχνη* – the word that Collingwood used to describe the original Greek integration of art and craft.

Mumford argued that machines, in conjunction with handcrafts, could have a civilising and healing influence.<sup>104</sup> He believed that some machines had the ability to help people establish security in their lives. He used weaving to illustrate his point. Citing research by psychiatrists, he claimed crafts such as weaving demonstrated the healing power of mechanical order.<sup>105</sup> He concluded that ‘once the warp is set and the threads chosen, only the smallest play of freedom is left in the casting of the weft.’<sup>106</sup> The limitations imposed, according to Mumford, gave humans a respect for the nature of the materials and processes and forced them to ‘recognize that there are certain conditions of nature that can be mastered only if [approached] with humility, indeed with self-effacement.’<sup>107</sup> Mumford’s notions may have been influenced by the way crafts such as weaving were used to rehabilitate soldiers after the First World War. Helen Hitchings, who established one of the first craft galleries in New Zealand in 1949, learned a number of crafts, including weaving, during the four years she spent in Wellington Hospital after contracting tuberculosis during the Second World War, and she credited this therapy with sparking her interest in crafts.<sup>108</sup>

In *Art and Technics*, written after the Second World War, Mumford examined the dilemma that many artists and craftspeople struggled with – the contradiction between advanced technology that promised to enhance modern life and the horrors of conflict and poverty recently experienced – which had also been magnified by technology. Mumford suggested that the great works of art of the past, such as symphonic music, were not only acts

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<sup>104</sup> Woodhead, p.19.

<sup>105</sup> Mumford, *Art and Technics*, p.44.

<sup>106</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>107</sup> *ibid.*, p.42.

<sup>108</sup> *Museum of Wellington City & Sea, Summer News*, Wellington, Issue 17, 2008, p.1.

of protest but also superb examples of engineering.<sup>109</sup> Since that time, Mumford claimed, technology had increasingly become the master rather than the servant.<sup>110</sup> He maintained that ‘modern man patterned himself upon the machine’ and ‘Western man [had] sought to live in a nonhistoric and impersonal world of matter and motion, a world with no values except the value of quantities’.<sup>111</sup> Mumford was suggesting that the protest about machines was really a protest about the loss of order, value, and purpose in people’s lives.

Rather than advocating a withdrawal from a corrupt world however, Mumford suggested readapting machines to the human personality. ‘[W]e must pour once more into the arts some of the vitality and energy now almost wholly drained off by a depersonalized technics.’<sup>112</sup> Mumford prophesied that if professional craftspeople and designers did not adapt machinery to human needs then the future of craft lay with amateurs. He did not mean this in a disparaging way; rather he was suggesting that ‘the professionals’ – those who designed the factory-made products – needed to retain the individuality and humanism of ‘amateurs’ in their designs. ‘As our basic production becomes more impersonal and routinized, our subsidiary production may well become more personal, more experimental, and more individualized.’<sup>113</sup> Mumford was suggesting a second level of production – a level that craftspeople could occupy – that would provide an example to industry.

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<sup>109</sup> Mumford, *Art and Technics*, pp.8-11.

<sup>110</sup> *ibid.*, pp.11-2.

<sup>111</sup> *ibid.*, p.12.

<sup>112</sup> *ibid.*, p.15.

<sup>113</sup> Mumford, *Technics and Civilization*, p.415.



**Figure 10:** Lewis Mumford (1895 – 1990).<sup>114</sup> Mumford believed that craftspeople could lead the way in the harnessing of technology to human needs.

### **Support for Mumford in New Zealand**

Harry Davis, an avid reader of philosophy, was an admirer of Mumford.<sup>115</sup> Like Mumford he believed that technology needed to be controlled. He 'believed that in the interests of economics, if nothing else, mechanical aids should be used anywhere they did not affect the aesthetics of the end product, or degrade the life of the worker.'<sup>116</sup> He also believed that craftspeople did not understand technology or how it could contribute to craft production and he suggested that craftspeople should not take a purist approach.<sup>117</sup> He proposed putting aside the anti-machinery position inherited from the Arts and Crafts Movement and the more recent reluctance to accept contemporary business systems. Davis used the example of 'vertical integration' in large industrial enterprises as a way that craftspeople could learn from technology. He understood vertical integration to be 'the quest for the greatest possible control, within an organisation, of all the relevant

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<sup>114</sup> Photo: Official portrait on receiving the Presidential Medal of Freedom, September 14, 1964: [www.medaloffreedom.com/LewisMumford.jpg](http://www.medaloffreedom.com/LewisMumford.jpg).

<sup>115</sup> Harry Davis, 'Potters, Zombies and Others', *Ceramics Monthly*, 33, 7 September 1985, p.36.

<sup>116</sup> Davis, *May*, p.21.

<sup>117</sup> Gerald Wakely, 'Proceedings of the First Study-Conference on the Promotion of Crafts in New Zealand,' in *First Study-Conference on the Promotion of Crafts in New Zealand*, The Victoria University Regional Council of Adult Education, 1963, p.23. As the name suggests, this was the first conference on studio craft.

activities from the extraction of raw materials to the production and even the retailing of the ultimate products.<sup>118</sup>

Davis maintained his support for Mumford for the rest of his life. In 1986, for instance, he chastised those in the nineteenth century who had condemned machines. He suggested that the ideas about the evils of machinery that were evident in the craft movement developed when:

eminent men pointed the finger on this theme, but ... mostly in the wrong direction. Ruskin, William Blake and J. J. Rousseau all had their mistaken rant about machines. ... The real foe, as Mumford makes historically so clear, is that great invisible organisational machine called variously *the system*, *the establishment*, which he terms the *megamachine*. ... It is essentially a product of *civilisation* and also the prolonged event that led to the widespread view that work is a curse which should be avoided if possible.<sup>119</sup>

Mumford and Davis attempted to rationalise the place of technology in the modern world by extending the definition of the machine to include all aspects of the structure of modern industrial society. Exchanges between craftspeople however, indicated that many limited their opposition to machinery *per se*. In Nelson, Jane McCallum recalled a debate at her pottery club in the 1970s about the purchase of a pug mill – a machine for processing clay. The club was divided on whether buying a machine that removed much of the preparatory labour contravened their ideals. Those in favour of the machine were called ‘Betty Crocker potters.’<sup>120</sup> It was a term of derision that demonstrated a limited awareness of the wider issues that Mumford and Davis were concerned with. In New Zealand there was often a confused understanding at the grass roots level of the movement about what was being resisted and why. By the late 1980s and early 1990s, many ‘craft artists’ and visual arts graduates became deeply immersed in the capitalist system. Some undertook commission work for corporate organisations,

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<sup>118</sup> *ibid.*, p.24.

<sup>119</sup> Harry Davis, 'Hand Craft Pottery, Whence and Whither', *New Zealand Potter*, 28, 1, 1986, p.30. Davis' italics.

<sup>120</sup> Evans, 'Head, Heart and Hand', p.41. 'Betty Crocker' was a brandname for a type of pre-mixed cake ingredients.

others were designing for industry, and some won prizes in competitions sponsored by large corporations – resistance to technology appeared to be more of a restricting ideology than a liberating one.

## Work

Many craftspeople held the conviction that their working life was an ideal that offered a model for the wider community or was a form of resistance to the managed society. A 1985 study of ‘full-time’ studio potters in New Zealand selected this group because it was thought that studio potters were most likely to achieve a ‘craft ideal’. The author of the report, Dr Kerr Inkson, in defining the ‘craft ideal’, was guided by the American sociologist, C. Wright Mills, but did not accept it in its entirety.<sup>121</sup>

Craftsmanship as a fully idealised model of work gratification involves six major features. There is no ulterior motive other than the product being made and the process of creation. The details of daily work are meaningful because they are not detached in the worker’s mind from the product of the work. The worker is free to control his own working action. The craftsman is thus able to learn from his work; and to use and develop his skills and capacities in its prosecution. There is no split of work and play, or work and culture. The craftsman’s way of livelihood determines and infuses his entire mode of living.<sup>122</sup>

Inkson, although noting the contrast between ‘home craft work’ and ‘factory work’ in explaining how potters controlled their work, questioned this definition as it related to studio craftspeople, commenting, ‘craft work is still embedded in economic institutions which may affect it through their own dynamics.’<sup>123</sup> It is this conflict I now consider.

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<sup>121</sup> Kerr Inkson, 'The Craft Ideal and the Integration of Work: A Study of Potters', *Human Relations*, 40, 3, 1987, pp.163-76. See also Kerr Inkson, 'Working Paper No 16, Craftsmanship and Job Satisfaction: A Study of Potters', The University of Auckland, Auckland, 1985.

<sup>122</sup> C. W. Mills, *White Collar; the American Middle Classes*, Oxford, 1951, p.220.

<sup>123</sup> Inkson, 'The Craft Ideal and the Integration of Work: A Study of Potters', pp.164-5.

## Intellectual Guidance

A number of scholars have considered the role of craft as work in Western society.<sup>124</sup> The Austrian philosopher Ivan Illich, like Bourdieu, believed that attitudes to work were established and reinforced by mass education. Furthermore, he was convinced craft had suffered because of this. He concluded that mass education had conditioned people to accept industrial working conditions as natural. Moreover, like Bourdieu, he believed that planning, standardisation and the control of occupations through the awarding of formal qualifications and licensing of 'professionals' were forms of control demanded by the education system.

Work is productive, respectable, worthy of the citizen only when the work process is planned, monitored, and controlled by the professional agent, who insures that the work meets certified need in a standardised fashion. ... The infrastructure of society is so arranged that only the job gives access to the tools of production, and this monopoly of commodity production over the generation of use-values turns even more stringent as the state takes over. Only with a licence may you teach a child; only at a clinic may you set a bone. Housework, handicrafts, subsistence agriculture, radical technology, learning exchanges, and the like are degraded into activities for the idle, the unproductive, the very poor, or the very rich.<sup>125</sup>

For many craftspeople in New Zealand this was the antithesis of what they wanted, and up until the mid-1980s there was little pressure on them, within craft circles at least, to conform to professional standards. But an aversion to being grouped amongst the idle, the unproductive, the very poor, or indeed even the very rich, encouraged the development of the very infrastructure that Illich warned against.

## Work in New Zealand

Between the 1950s and the 1970s craftspeople in New Zealand were either engaged in a 'useless' (hobbyist) activity – because their work did not meet

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<sup>124</sup> For instance, both Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Karl Marx believed that craft was the most satisfying form of work. See Alasdair Clayre, *Work and Play; Ideas and Experience of Work and Leisure*, London, 1974, p.8 and pp.51-3.

<sup>125</sup> Ivan D. Illich, *The Right to Useful Unemployment and Its Professional Enemies*, London, 1978, p.84.

the criteria that Illich outlined – or were beginning to play a ‘useful’ (professional) role in a modern industrial economy – because they were actively involved in the commercial world. Even in the early 1970s there were few formal structures for monitoring or controlling what the craft ‘professionals’ did or how they were identified and, to some extent, this was an added attraction for craftspeople who believed that many other aspects of their lives were too controlled. Craftspeople built their own equipment, processed their own raw materials and developed the skills they needed – often working on their own. These working methods became a way of rejecting mechanisation and the ‘professionalised’ world most people lived in. However, as noted in Chapter Three, by the mid-1980s craftspeople/craft artists found themselves divided. Those who had followed the ethos of self-reliance were now being compared to the craft artists who were emerging from visual art courses in the polytechnics. Would the traditional craftspeople with their range of practical skills continue to define the studio craft movement or would the new craft artists, with their specialist qualifications, supported by the megamachine, gain ascendancy?

Harry Davis was convinced that the history of the studio craft movement augured badly for the continuation of the pre-industrial generalist work traditions. In a paper presented to the Craftsmen Potters Association at Dartington Hall in 1980, Davis made it plain that most young people were unprepared to break away from the infrastructure that had developed around craft. His assessment of the studio craft movement incorporated the three issues that are the feature of this chapter.

In the developed countries, we have a rapidly growing body of young people bent on escaping from the city to find a simpler way of life. To do this they have to escape their dependence on sophisticated industrial machines. The revival of crafts is a conspicuous part of this movement, but the crafts have descended not directly from pre-industrial village or cottage industry, but via the revival of that era by romantics who hated machines. Mostly these young people are ill equipped to cope because of their urban background which saddles them

with narrow specialization and an ignorance of relevant but forgotten technology.<sup>126</sup>

Davis' grim outlook was probably a minority view, but because of his high profile and his persistent advocacy of such ideas they were respected, if not followed faithfully. Davis lived by the strict criteria he set – extracting his own materials and building his own machinery – and taking his skills to Peru in an attempt to alleviate the poverty there.<sup>127</sup> His book on the subject, *The Potter's Alternative*, was published not long after he died in 1986.<sup>128</sup>

### **A Case Study: Barry Brickell**

In New Zealand, one of the most passionate advocates of self-reliance and simple working methods was the potter Barry Brickell.<sup>129</sup> Brickell was a regular contributor to the *New Zealand Potter* magazine and also the subject of many articles.<sup>130</sup> In the first edition of the magazine in 1958 he called on readers to establish a guiding philosophy of life that was 'more natural [and] honest' than that lived by most people, which he felt was materialistic, possessive and artificial.<sup>131</sup> He suggested an approach to work that he would follow religiously throughout his working life. 'If we could work for the satisfaction of ourselves rather than be slaves to the "powers that be", we would at least be starting a firm fertile tradition. Art [and presumably craft were] ... no more than the product of honest, good work'.<sup>132</sup> Like Davis, he claimed that: 'With prepared, commercial materials, machines and men come between you and your work.'<sup>133</sup> By the mid-1960s his writing had become even more polemical.

I presume to make money one has to work. Men are equipped with bone, muscle and nerve which enables

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<sup>126</sup> The text of the paper was published in the *Ceramic Review* the following year. See Harry Davis, 'An Assessment of the Craft Movement', *Ceramic Review*, January/February, 1981, p.33.

<sup>127</sup> See more in Chapter Five.

<sup>128</sup> Davis, *The Potter's Alternative*.

<sup>129</sup> Hamish Keith flatted with Brickell in the late 1950s. He claimed that Brickell was more interested in fire and its effects on clay than pottery *per se*. See Hamish Keith, interview with Moyra Elliott and Damian Skinner, Museum of New Zealand/Te Papa Tongarewa Visual Culture in Aotearoa, Wellington, CA000801.

<sup>130</sup> Between 1958 and the late 1980s Barry Brickell was the subject of six major articles and the author of twenty in the magazine.

<sup>131</sup> Barry Brickell, 'New Wine into Old Bottles', *New Zealand Potter*, 1, 1, 1958, p.3.

<sup>132</sup> *ibid.*

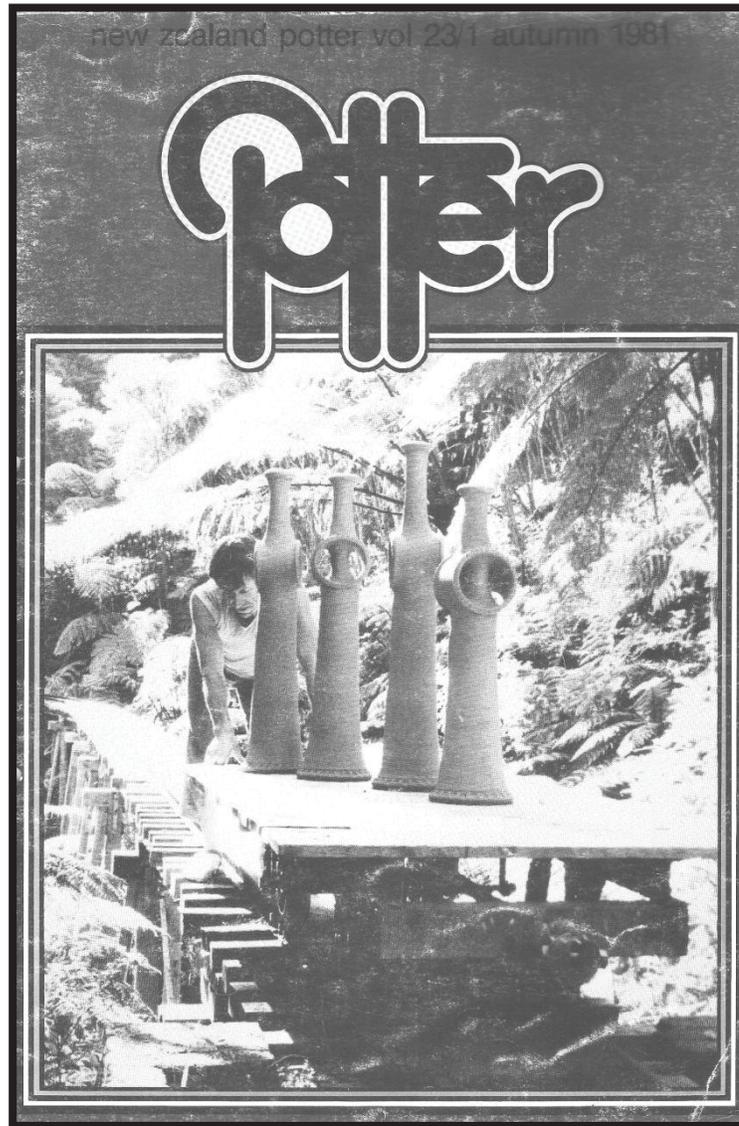
<sup>133</sup> *ibid.*

them to do this, but they have something else as well. This is the infinite capacity to vary their work and so eliminate boredom and create stimulation. However the price that most men pay to receive their weekly money packet by enduring boredom is quite remarkable. There is nothing wrong with making money. It is the way in which the money is made that I am considering. The man who is concerned with the intricacies and problems of his work there and then is a much happier character than he who cannot throw his spirit into it. If both men receive the same wages the former man becomes the richer of the two.<sup>134</sup>

The idea that undertaking a multitude of tasks meant that craftspeople could 'lose' themselves in their work to the exclusion of all else was an attractive notion. But for the more commercial-minded craftsperson, or small craft studio employing a number of people, the division of labour was as important as it was in many other modern businesses. Mundane tasks, often performed by those with fewer skills, were a part of the work that had to be done. Brickell's 'Zen-like' approach was, for most craftspeople, an ideal, not a reality. Unlike Brickell – a single man with no dependents – most craftspeople had added responsibilities such as supporting a family.

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<sup>134</sup> Barry Brickell, 'Function and Form - Futility and Fertility', *New Zealand Potter*, February, 1965, p.22.



**Figure 11:** Barry Brickell at Driving Creek Pottery. The cover epitomises a number of the characteristics that New Zealanders associated with the studio craft movement: the rural life in the New Zealand environment, the independent working life, the 'do it yourself' ethos, and the construction and use of alternative machinery.<sup>135</sup>

### **A Case Study: Waimea Craft Pottery<sup>136</sup>**

Waimea Craft Pottery operated in a way that incorporated specialisation and the division of labour, but working conditions were managed to ensure that the 'studio craft' character of the business was maintained. Jack and Peggy Laird recognised the need for craftspeople to develop their individuality and skills along with the efficient operation of a studio craft workshop. The Lairds

<sup>135</sup> Photo: *New Zealand Potter*, Autumn 1981, Cover.

<sup>136</sup> For more on Waimea Craft Pottery see Evans, 'Head, Heart and Hand', pp.79-82.

based their working methods on Bernard Leach's suggestions for operating a workshop. Leach was a firm believer in the apprenticeship system and had a deep mistrust of art-school training.<sup>137</sup> He was convinced that understanding craft from its foundations was the only acceptable approach. 'I often see electric kilns and power wheels installed in schools, and clay, pigments and glazes bought ready made. This is beginning at the end'.<sup>138</sup> He saw a natural transition from learning at school to learning in the workshop. Leach's alternative to working alone was for a craft workshop owner to employ 'untrained local labour'.<sup>139</sup> In conjunction with that, and presumably after his 'untrained local labour' had gained a sufficient level of skill, he instructed potential employers to permit 'the artists to retain control of the essentials which contribute to the beauty of the ultimate pots'.<sup>140</sup> The factory-like approach to studio pottery at Waimea Craft Pottery, including the division of labour, was sometimes misunderstood in other parts of New Zealand where individuals, who may have had other means of financial support, viewed the operation with suspicion. One apprentice, Royce McGlashen, employed initially as an 'untrained local', later suggested that the approach was so misunderstood by the New Zealand craft establishment that potters trained at Waimea Craft Pottery may have been discriminated against when work was submitted for selection at national exhibitions.<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>137</sup> Bernard Leach, *A Potter's Book*, London, 1940, pp.26-7.

<sup>138</sup> *ibid.*, p.27.

<sup>139</sup> *ibid.*, pp.257-8.

<sup>140</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>141</sup> Royce McGlashen, email to the author, 6 June 2007.



**Figure 12:** Waimea Craft Pottery, c. 1960s. A semi-rural pottery employing contemporary business methods.<sup>142</sup>

### **Work Satisfaction**

As noted earlier, Dr Kerr Inkson selected studio potters for a study of the ‘craft ideal’ because they were considered to be a group that had a high level of job satisfaction. His survey found that despite many of them suffering a loss of status because they had left ‘middle-class’ careers and incurred a loss of economic security, ‘nearly all’ were ‘satisfied’ or ‘very satisfied’ with their work.<sup>143</sup> As to C. Wright Mills’ idea that ‘[t]he craftsman’s way of livelihood determines and infuses his whole being’, 60% of the potters stated that was “totally true” and a further 27% responded that it was “mainly true”.<sup>144</sup> In an appendix to his working paper Inkson recorded the comments of three potters.<sup>145</sup> These craftspeople were concerned about a range of issues that affected their lives including: loneliness, long hours and financial insecurity but they also spoke lyrically about their love of their craft. He concluded from their responses that their understanding of the craft ideal

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<sup>142</sup> Photo: Geoffrey C Wood Collection, The Nelson Provincial Museum, 6034 fr5 3.

<sup>143</sup> Inkson, 'The Craft Ideal and the Integration of Work: A Study of Potters', p.170.

<sup>144</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>145</sup> Inkson, 'Working Paper No 16, Craftsmanship and Job Satisfaction: A Study of Potters', pp.34-43.

was aspirational rather than practical. If their work was a form of protest – and a number inferred this – then, on the whole, it was a very satisfying way of making a protest.

### **Turning on, Tuning in and Dropping out**

At different times during the period in which this thesis is set, those debating the issues surrounding rural life, technology and work could look to the studio craft movement for examples of different ways society might be structured. The ways of living and working they observed represented, in some cases, acts of resistance to the conventions of contemporary society. Many craftspeople lived in rural areas and this association created the perception that craft was a rural activity.<sup>146</sup> This was reinforced when craft studios were built in ‘hippy’ communities and craft was sold at ‘hippy’ festivals. Craft also had a long association with anti-technology sentiments and many craftspeople equated the ‘handmade’ nature of their work with resistance to technology in its widest sense. The often unexpected capacity for craft to provide a source of income and independence afforded many craftspeople the opportunity to put into practice ideas they held about these issues.

However, by the early 1990s, many of the contested notions craftspeople and others held about the movement and its relationship to technology, the urban/rural environment, and ways of working, had been submerged by concerns about whether craft, in the traditional sense, would survive at all. In Chapter Three we saw how the formation of the Crafts Council of New Zealand (CCNZ) and craft design courses became the focus of the conversation about the future of craft. For education at the formal tertiary level, craftspeople were forced, or chose, to use the very prepared material and equipment that pioneer craftspeople had railed against. Furthermore, they were required to reside in urban areas to pursue their studies. When they graduated they found they had to compete in a marketplace where the earlier enthusiasm for buying craft had lessened and where competition from

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<sup>146</sup> For instance, see Mason, 'Notes from a Country Potter', Harris, 'Freedom to Live Where You Want', pp.7-10, and Paul Melser, 'Over the Mountain to Wairarapa: I See Myself as a Country Potter', *New Zealand Potter*, 22, 2, 1980, pp.2-3.

imported items had increased. Many chose to work in other related fields such as teaching and administration, again ignoring warnings about 'the system' that the pioneers had cautioned about.

The CCNZ was aware of its roots and may have been concerned it had moved too far in support of the craft artists and the new graduates. In what appears to be an attempt to unite the movement John Scott, the Chairman of the CCNZ, writing an editorial in *Craft New Zealand* in 1990, tried to show that craftspeople were still at the vanguard of resistance but that they also had other concerns.

The founders of the Crafts Council were reacting to the worst excesses of the industrial age and the diminishing worth of the human capacity to control their own environment. The craftspeople sought to preserve "craft", and "craftsmanship", and provide support to those who shared this aspiration. ... Many craftspeople of this era have other concerns as well. Many craftspeople both deserve and demand a lifestyle which allows their partner and children choice and mobility. They are living at a time when craft is rapidly moving into the arena once the preserve of the "fine arts".<sup>147</sup>

Scott's target had moved from earlier concerns about machinery to the wider society and reflected aspects of resistance to capitalism that nineteenth century craftspeople exhibited. He advised that 'the economy, the market place, the educationalists, the industrial designers, and the consumers' threatened to dominate the CCNZ – unless craftspeople remained vigilant and active in their own organisation.<sup>148</sup> By the time that Scott wrote this the craft artists had set the direction of the CCNZ and had accumulated the symbolic and cultural capital that Bourdieu recognised was so important in maintaining dominance. The images that Peter Gibbs encapsulated in the opening quotation of this thesis that suggested most craftspeople lived in a rural environment, hated machinery, rejected capitalism society and formed unusual social groupings were, by 1992, largely illusionary. Most craftspeople, and especially craft artists, did not live in splendid isolation and,

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<sup>147</sup> John Scott, 'Editorial', *New Zealand Craft*, Autumn, 1990, p.7.

<sup>148</sup> *ibid.*

as we will see in the next chapter, they had to contend with the same economic issues as other New Zealanders.



# Chapter Five: Craft, Industry and the Economy

We used to put all these pots out in the shed. [A shop owner's] husband used to fly his huge plane down. Load it up. She would just more or less buy everything. Shocking when you think of it. Thousands and thousands and thousands of dollars worth. And I'm not talking a little wee plane. I'm talking a big plane. I suppose we suddenly all got on the bandwagon.<sup>1</sup>

In the 1970s, June Reay was member of a Nelson pottery club called Craft Potters Incorporated (Craft Potters). Reay, along with many other hobbyists at the time, had joined the club to learn pottery as 'a release' from housework.<sup>2</sup> After developing some of the skills needed to make pottery she began to sell her work through the club gallery and later supplied retail outlets around New Zealand. Her astonishment at the way shop owners were purchasing pottery in bulk shows that the commercial success of studio pottery was an unexpected development. Her use of the word 'shocking' also suggests that she had some concerns that pottery – the hobby she may have embarked on because of its 'artistic' association – was taking on the appearance of a small industry – and perhaps the skill level of those selling their work was not particularly high.

The growth of the studio craft movement was influenced by political and economic decisions made within New Zealand and overseas. These decisions were influenced by cultural and social factors. In this chapter I begin by discussing Pierre Bourdieu's ideas on the relationship between cultural and economic capital and where craftspeople were located within his framework. I continue by briefly outlining the two periods in New Zealand's

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<sup>1</sup> June Reay, 16 December 2006, OH 133, interview with Vic Evans, Nelson Pottery Club Members, Oral History, Nelson Provincial Museum. The potter/ceramic artist, Peter Lange, expressed a similar amazement. See Jeanette Cook, *Crafted by Design: Inside New Zealand Craft Artist's Studios*, Auckland, 2005, p.85.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.* For other examples see, Vic Evans, 'Head, Heart and Hand: Studio Pottery in Nelson 1956 - 1976', MA thesis, Massey University, 2007, p.58.

economic history that establish the framework of the chapter.<sup>3</sup> The first, between 1949 and 1976, was largely a period of prosperity with occasional downturns which were actively managed by the government of the day. The second, between 1977 and 1992, saw sporadic economic stagnation<sup>4</sup> and extremes of economic experimentation that increasingly saw the government allowing 'market forces' to control the economy.<sup>5</sup> In this new political and economic environment craftspeople were forced or encouraged to reassess what they produced, as well as how and where they sold their work, or in fact, whether they would continue as craftspeople at all. Many, such as Reay, had been given an economic boost during the first of the periods mentioned above but found they often had to adapt during the second. Some were able to continue largely unchanged, some became artists and educators and some abandoned their craft altogether.

To place the connection between craft and related industries in context I discuss the history of the pottery manufacturer, Crown Lynn Potteries Limited (Crown Lynn). Crown Lynn was a very large company by New Zealand standards, therefore any discussion about the relationship between such a company and the studio craft movement – in this case a sub-set, studio potters – must recognize that generally a considerable power disparity existed. Nevertheless, Crown Lynn was closely related to studio pottery in

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<sup>3</sup> In this chapter I call on the definition of 'economics' employed by G. R. Hawke. Economics is 'the logic of choice, the study of how scarce resources should be allocated among competing ends.' See G. R. Hawke, *Economics for Historians*, Cambridge, 1980, p.4. This chapter also refers to the definition of the 'economy' presented by Peter and Dianne Beatson in their survey of the arts in New Zealand. 'We are using the term "economy" broadly to refer to the zone of society where labour is carried out, nature is transformed into objects for human use, goods or services are exchanged and money circulates.' See Peter Beatson and Dianne Beatson, *The Arts in Aotearoa New Zealand. Themes and Issues*, Palmerston North, 1994, p.246.

<sup>4</sup> Chris Rudd and Brian Roper, eds, *The Political Economy of New Zealand*, Auckland, 1997, p.v.

<sup>5</sup> These dates are employed to position the events they describe within the framework of the thesis. Economists generally recognise the 1970s as a point of change. For instance Tim Hazledine uses the dates 1956 – 76 and 1977 – 96, labelling the former as the 'years of external shocks' and the latter, 'years of internal shocks'. See Tim Hazledine, *Taking New Zealand Seriously: The Economics of Decency*, Auckland, 1998, p.32. Geoff Bertram discusses three eras, locating the periods that this thesis is concerned with first from the mid-1930s to the 1970s – 'insulation and industrialisation', and the final period, between the 1980s and 2000 – as 'the swing to services and the arrival of neo-liberalism'. See Geoff Bertram, 'The New Zealand Economy, 1900 – 2000', in Giselle Byrnes, ed., *The New Oxford History of New Zealand*, South Melbourne, Vic., 2009, pp.540-1.

that it produced a similar product which sold in a comparable location and experienced the same economic conditions that impacted on the studio craft movement. A study of the interaction between the company and the craft shows how both took advantage of favourable economic conditions; how they cooperated when it suited them and how conflicts arose between them. The changing economic and political circumstances eventually began to cause problems for both Crown Lynn and the studio potters and forced the company to close down and the studio potters to adapt.

Throughout the chapter I locate events within a macroeconomic framework.<sup>6</sup> The studio craft movement was sometimes represented by policy makers, businesspeople, politicians, and some craftspeople as a model of how small-scale and sustainable free enterprise businesses should and could operate. The reasons for doing so were self-interest – craftspeople hoping to boost the economic importance of their craft – and sometimes unrealistic expectations of what the studio craft movement might become, or what it could bring to the national economy. In contrast, industry would often downplay the benefits it received through government policy in an effort to maintain them or boost the level of support received. Industry and craft existed in an environment that encouraged both cooperation and competition. Both industry and craft needed to be aware of what the other was doing to remain competitive or to anticipate future developments. In a few cases craftspeople discovered that there were economic rewards for cooperating with business but the experience could also be culturally frustrating.

### **Cultural and Economic Capital**

A feature of the studio craft movement was the effort made by ‘professional’ craftspeople to distinguish their vocation from ‘the trades’ (industry). When their livelihood was threatened craftspeople were forced to defend their craft using both cultural and economic arguments. The difficulty for them was to protect their cultural integrity whilst maintaining or enhancing their economic

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<sup>6</sup> ‘Macroeconomic’ refers to the wider economy, see Brian Easton, *In Stormy Seas: The Post-War New Zealand Economy*, Dunedin, 1997, p.30.

position. According to Pierre Bourdieu, cultural and economic capital within the field (area of struggle) of art are often located in opposition to one another. Moreover, factions within the dominant class 'continually transform their capital, maximizing the yield of such transformations by contesting the terms of exchange, via the rules of the game in the two fields.'<sup>7</sup> Craftspeople had to understand the rules to ensure the balance between cultural and economic capital was working for them. A craftsperson might have amassed great cultural capital but remain financially poor, while commercially successful craftspeople could be shunned by the arbiters of taste because of their financial success. The restraints to the accumulation of capital were controlled by the dominant classes within the economic and cultural fields. Craftspeople in New Zealand were located in a zone where commerce and art intersected and the rules kept changing.

Within the field of art the cultural capital of craft was considered less valuable than that of art because of the nature of the work produced by craftspeople and the *habitus* (internalized disposition) of the dominant class favoured art. Often craft served a functional purpose, was made in a repetitive form (sets), and lacked rarity. In addition, craft, initially at least, was not taught within the established institutions of higher learning and craftspeople lacked the recognised qualifications that institutions (universities) conferred upon artists. Those in positions of power in the field of art employed their *habitus* to establish the criteria for defining cultural value.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, these same people needed to 'sustain a myth about their innate aesthetic sensitivities or gifts and to deny resolutely that these attributes [could] be learned'.<sup>9</sup> Craft was excluded from the centre of this field, being only tolerated on the periphery, because it was a skilled activity that had to be learned rather than a gift inherited as a component of social positioning.

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<sup>7</sup> Sarah Hinde and Jane Dixon, 'Reinstating Pierre Bourdieu's Contribution to Cultural Economy Theorizing', *Journal of Sociology*, 43, 4, 2007, p.412. See also Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, trans. Richard Nice, Cambridge, Mass, 1984.

<sup>8</sup> David L. Swartz and Vera L. Zolberg, eds, *After Bourdieu: Influence, Critique, Elaboration*, Dordrecht, 2004, p.43.

<sup>9</sup> Derek Robbins, *Bourdieu and Culture*, London, 2000, p.xii.

Many craftspeople were economically successful because they could support themselves through their craft – which was often difficult for artists. However, they could not compete at the centre of this field because their economic influence in the wider economic sphere was minor; they could not become a part of an economically powerful group. Until the mid-1970s, economic success to some extent ran parallel with cultural acceptance, but by the 1980s, the flush of that conjoined success had faded and other aspects of cultural success – exhibiting in the ‘right’ galleries, winning prizes or gaining a recognised qualification, became more important. In addition, economic conditions constantly changed, necessitating the need to adapt to new rules. Craftspeople found they were continually relocating within the fields of art and economics. Straddling both fields was one means used by some craftspeople of ensuring they had a foot in both. However, by 1992 very few could claim to have established a strong position in either field.<sup>10</sup> Many craftspeople lived a dichotomous existence – reliant on an increasingly competitive economic market to earn a living while attempting to break into a cultural market where they were not wholeheartedly welcomed. This struggle for cultural and economic success sat astride two different economic periods.

### **1949 – 1976: A Benign Environment**

The dominant features of the New Zealand economy before the mid-1970s were the high level protection provided to local industries,<sup>11</sup> the number of rules and regulations controlling economic activity, the low rates of unemployment, and the close ties with Britain. The regulations associated with these policies were designed to encourage a more diversified spread of exports and to promote import substitution industries in an effort to protect New Zealand from international economic shocks. The policy also increased the capacity for manufacturing businesses to compete in the domestic market and provided an opportunity for small businesses, such as self-employed craftspeople, to develop niche markets. Some economists, such

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<sup>10</sup> See discussion on ‘fields’ in Chapter Two.

<sup>11</sup> Elkan estimated that ‘effective protection’ was over 50% in the 1950s and 70 – 75% by the mid-1960s. See P. G. Elkan, *Industrial Protection in New Zealand 1952 to 1967. Technical Memorandum of the N.Z. Institute of Economic Research*, Wellington, 1972, p.80.

as Dr William Sutch,<sup>12</sup> who held the positions of assistant secretary and permanent secretary at the Department of Industries and Commerce between 1958 and 1965, were strong advocates of this form of 'interventionist democratic state'.<sup>13</sup> On the other hand, other economists, such as Horace Belshaw, feared that imbalances would be created by the use of import restrictions to protect some industries.<sup>14</sup> An economic environment existed that nurtured industries such as the pottery manufacturer, Crown Lynn, and the growing studio craft movement – particularly studio pottery. Bob Heatherbell, a member of Craft Potters, and later Vice-President of the New Zealand Society of Potters, for example, was aware that the economic environment had helped craftspeople. He believed, a decade after the economic climate changed, that twenty years of peace and prosperity prior to 1974 and government protection of the 'industry' were key factors in the growth of the studio craft movement.<sup>15</sup>

### **1977 – 1992: A Changing Environment**

After 1976 there were increased levels of unemployment, an increasing emphasis on competition, extremes in financial speculation and a widening gap between rich and poor.<sup>16</sup> The transition that occurred was a 'response to political economic forces outside the control of those who made the changes' and were largely motivated by politicians and economic theorists who believed that government involvement in the economy should be reduced.<sup>17</sup> Real per capita gross domestic product (real GDP), one measure of economic performance, over the long term, maintained an upward trend

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<sup>12</sup> Sutch was a collector of Asian and English ceramics and a supporter of the studio craft movement. See Moyra Elliott and Damian Skinner, *Cone Ten Down: Studio Pottery in New Zealand, 1945 – 1980*, Auckland, 2009, p.93. Jack and Peggy Laird sought advice from him when planning Waimea Craft Pottery. See Evans, 'Head, Heart and Hand', p.75.

<sup>13</sup> Brian Easton, *William Ball Sutch* 2007; available at: <http://www.dnzb.govt.nz> (13 May 2009).

<sup>14</sup> A. M. Endres, 'The Political Economy of W. B. Sutch: Towards a Critical Appreciation', *New Zealand Economic Papers*, 20, 1986, p.20. See also Frank Holmes, *Belshaw, Horace 1898 – 1962*, *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, 2007; available at: <http://www.dnzb.govt.nz/> (12 May 2009).

<sup>15</sup> Bob Heatherbell, 5 November 1984, OH 16, interview with Karen Patterson, Nelson Ceramics, Oral History, Nelson Provincial Museum. By 'industry' Heatherbell is referring to the studio pottery 'industry'.

<sup>16</sup> Len Bayliss, *Prosperity Mislaidd: Economic Failure in New Zealand and What Should Be Done About It*, Wellington, 1994, p.2.

<sup>17</sup> Easton, *In Stormy Seas: The Post-War New Zealand Economy*, p.49.

throughout both periods. However, between 1987/88 and 1993/94 the New Zealand economy experienced a dramatic downturn and only returned to its normal trajectory in 1996/97.<sup>18</sup> This suggests that ‘economic necessity’, sometimes termed ‘TINA (“There Is No Alternative”)’ and often cited by politicians as the reason for the policies, was not an automatic panacea for New Zealand’s economic problems.<sup>19</sup> Nevertheless, these policies, designed to ‘increase producer efficiency’ through ‘exposing private-sector firms to greater domestic and international competition’, along with other measures, began to have an impact towards the end of the period this thesis relates to.<sup>20</sup>

As import restrictions were lifted many craftspeople found they were competing with imported work produced in low-waged economies. At the same time, a new group of wealthy individuals and businesses emerged who looked to art (and craft art) as an investment and to publicize their new economic position.<sup>21</sup> The changes forced, or encouraged, some craftspeople to look to new ways of employing their skills. The economist, Brian Easton, explained the relationship between the more difficult economic environment, as measured by the increasing level of unemployment for instance, and the increasing success in the arts by suggesting that the changing composition of the population and the maturing of the urban environment ‘gave vitality to New Zealand life which the economic commentaries overlooked’.<sup>22</sup> The increase in vitality, a sign of increasing cultural capital in New Zealand society, was seen to be a positive boost for some craftspeople. Craftspeople also looked to teaching to both increase their cultural and social capital and for employment opportunities. Formal education also gave more recognition to craft art thus promoting the ‘new’ craft in the new market.

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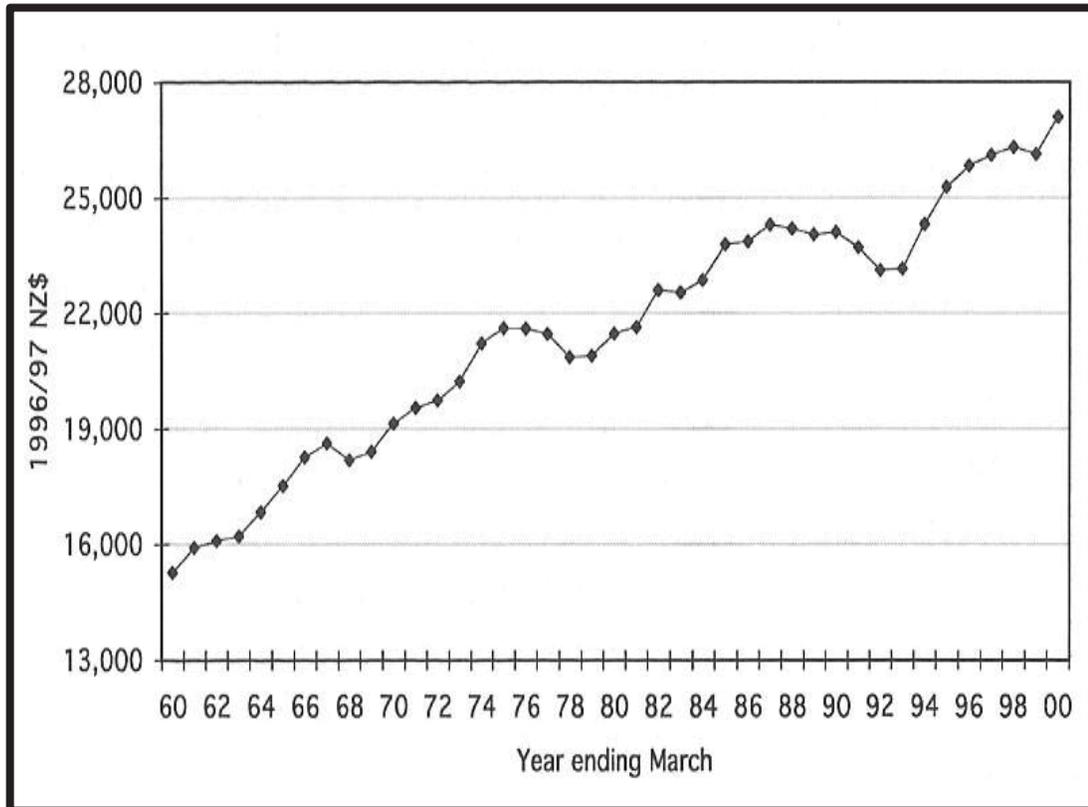
<sup>18</sup> See Figure 1 below. See also Paul Dalziel, ‘Macroeconomic Constraints’, in Jonathan Boston, Susan St. John, and Paul Dalziel, eds, *Redesigning the Welfare State in New Zealand: Problems, Policies, Prospects*, Auckland, 1999, p.62.

<sup>19</sup> Hazledine, p.53.

<sup>20</sup> Dalziel in Boston, St. John, and Dalziel, eds, pp.69-70.

<sup>21</sup> The most notable patron for pottery was Fletcher Challenge Ltd. (formed through the merger of Fletcher Industries Ltd. and Challenge Corporation Ltd. in 1981). See *The Fletcher Trust Collection*; available at: <http://www.fletchercollection.co.nz/ceramics.php> (27 June 2008).

<sup>22</sup> Easton, *In Stormy Seas: The Post-War New Zealand Economy*, p.279. See also Bayliss, p.2.



**Graph 1:** Gross domestic product (GDP) estimates the total value of goods and services produced. It excludes some production that is not sold (for example, family care) and some costs of production (for example, pollution). Real per capita gross domestic product (real GDP) excludes inflation and population growth. The graph is a guide to how a country's average standard of living changes over time.<sup>23</sup>

### A Case Study: Crown Lynn Potteries Limited

Crown Lynn Potteries Limited for many studio potters variously represented a fellow-traveller, the enemy, a supporter of craft, supplier of materials and information and, for some designers/potters, a source of work. The company's fortunes fluctuated depending on government policies, economic conditions, management decisions and public taste. Here I examine aspects of the company's history to provide a comparative study to demonstrate how the business co-existed with the studio craft movement and how both sectors managed the political and economic transition in the changing environment.

<sup>23</sup> Graph: Paul Dalziel and Ralph Lattimore, eds, *The New Zealand Macroeconomy: A Briefing on the Reforms and Their Legacy*, 4th edn, Melbourne, 2001, p.2.

## Beginnings

Crown Lynn started out in Auckland in the 1850s as R. O. Clark Limited, became the Amalgamated Brick and Pipe Company Limited in 1929 and through mergers became Ambrico c.1946 with a branch of that company becoming Crown Lynn in 1948.<sup>24</sup> By 1952 Crown Lynn produced about 20% of the tableware sold in New Zealand but it was under pressure from a rapidly increasing quantity of imported tableware from Britain.<sup>25</sup>

Crown Lynn had difficulty convincing the public that the quality of their pottery was as good as the imported ware. One method was to maintain a price that matched imported pottery, while another was to have supporters within the government promoting locally-made pottery. A National backbencher, T. P. Shand, for example, was reported in 1952 complaining, '[W]e have had some shocking rubbish by way of English crockery in the last three or four years.'<sup>26</sup> The comment suggests that some in positions of power detected a fall in the standard of imported pottery or it was an attempt to boost confidence in New Zealand design. It also suggested a reaction to the belief held by many New Zealanders that 'all' overseas manufactured products were of better quality<sup>27</sup> – a characteristic that is colloquially referred to as 'cultural cringe'.

## Diversification

In 1953 Crown Lynn moved into the 'art' market as part of a strategy to counter falling sales of their utilitarian wares.<sup>28</sup> High end 'art' pottery would give the company another market and more prestige. The idea may have

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<sup>24</sup> Crown Lynn became the pottery division of Ambrico Ltd. Ceramic products such as sanitary ware and insulators were manufactured by other subsidiary companies of Ambrico. See Christopher Thompson, 'Confronting Design: Case Studies in the Design of Ceramics in New Zealand', MA thesis, Auckland University of Technology, 2003, p.112.

<sup>25</sup> Tom Clark, the Managing Director of Crown Lynn, described the ten-year period from 1952 as the 'years in the wilderness'. See Tom Clark, 9 October 2003, interview with Moyra Elliott and Damian Skinner, Visual Culture in Aotearoa Oral History Archive, Te Papa.

<sup>26</sup> *New Zealand Parliamentary Debates*, (NZPD): *Second session, thirteenth Parliament*, vol. 297, 25 June – 15 August 1952, pp.84–7. Quoted in Thompson, p.123. New Zealand's access to imports other than British was restricted by its position within the 'sterling' bloc.

<sup>27</sup> Sutch believed this attitude to be common amongst 'colonial people'. See W. B. Sutch, *Takeover New Zealand*, Wellington, 1972, p.68.

<sup>28</sup> Gail Lambert, *Pottery in New Zealand: Commercial & Collectable*, Auckland, 1985, p.131. Thompson, p.143. See also Louis LeValiant, 'Considering Frank Carpay', *Art New Zealand*, 109, Summer 2003/04.

also been inspired by the success of the Martin Boyd Pottery, established in Sydney in 1948, where a combination of studio and industrial techniques was used to produce highly coloured pottery which was often decorated by hand by art students.<sup>29</sup> Another motivating factor appears to have been a number of speciality pottery shops that had opened in Auckland and Wellington in the late 1940s selling imported hand-made pottery.



**Figure 1:** Dish decorated by Pam Nalder, Martin Boyd Pottery, c. 1955.<sup>30</sup> Note the use of Aboriginal motifs in the decoration. Similar use of Maori motif was a feature of both mass-produced pottery and studio pottery in New Zealand.

Frank Carpay, a Dutch immigrant who had spent time with Picasso in Europe, was employed in 1953 to produce a line of hand-decorated pottery for Crown Lynn.<sup>31</sup> However, despite strenuous attempts by Tom Clark, the general manager of Crown Lynn, to promote Carpay's work, which Clark, in an attempt to locate the pottery in a framework that New Zealanders would

<sup>29</sup> Judith O'Callaghan, 'A New Direction 1940 - 1980,' in *Decorative Arts and Design from the Powerhouse Museum*, Powerhouse Museum, ed., Sydney, 1991, p.123.

<sup>30</sup> Photo: Geoff Friend. Collection: Powerhouse Museum, Sydney.

<sup>31</sup> Carpay did not make the pottery. See Valerie Ringer Monk, *Crown Lynn: A New Zealand Icon*, Auckland, 2006, p.53. See also Douglas Lloyd-Jenkins, *At Home: A Century of New Zealand Design*, Auckland, 2004, p.149.

understand, labelled 'fine china', the pottery did not sell well.<sup>32</sup> The differences in population size and composition between Australia and New Zealand may have produced commercial success in the former and failure in the latter, however, issues relating to design also had an influence. Besides having a much larger population, Australia's immigration policies had encouraged a more diverse range of European nationalities to immigrate in the 1950s, creating a market that was more open to the new designs that Modernism was fostering in Europe. Furthermore, the Martin Boyd pottery sometimes called on images of Australia for the decoration of their pieces whereas Carpay remained committed to the more abstract decorations he had learned in Europe. New Zealanders were not yet ready to embrace the more advanced forms of Modernism that Carpay's work represented. An additional factor was the protection of the Australian pottery industry by tariffs and quantitative controls on imports which existed for much of the 1950s. At the same time New Zealand's restrictions were being lifted.<sup>33</sup> Carpay was reluctantly dismissed in 1956 because of the poor sales.<sup>34</sup>



**Figure 2:** Frank Carpay (1917 – 1985) was a designer of decorative pottery who employed Modernist designs.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Thompson, p.143. Carpay's pottery was earthenware. 'Fine china' is usually understood to be the much higher fired porcelain.

<sup>33</sup> O'Callaghan, p.130.

<sup>34</sup> LeValiant.

<sup>35</sup> Photo: Lloyd-Jenkins, p.149.



**Figure 3:** Plate, Frank Carpay.<sup>36</sup> Abstract decoration such as this met resistance in New Zealand.

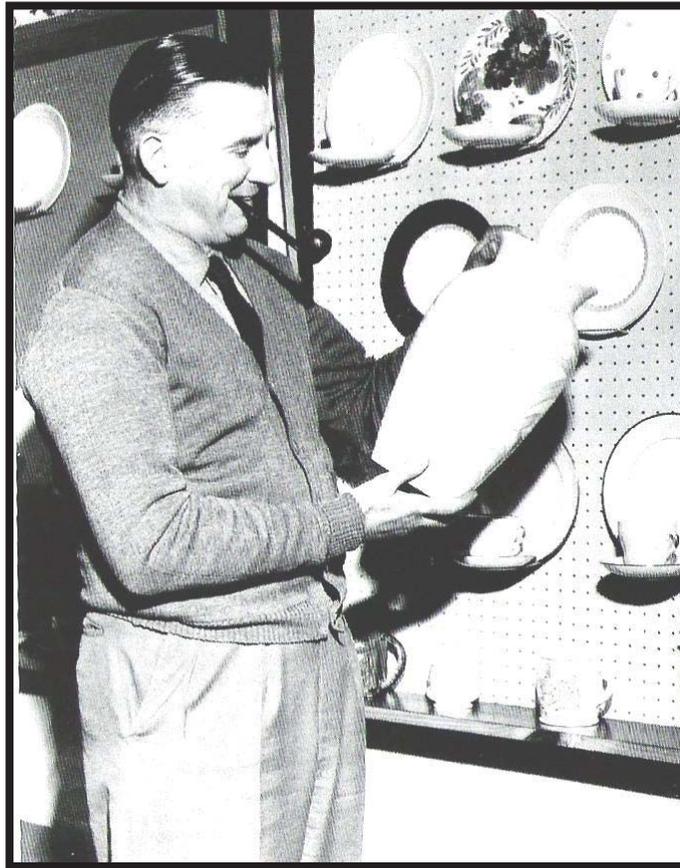
The difficulties that Clark and Carpay encountered demonstrate the challenge a commercial enterprise faced when attempting to introduce new ideas. Clark made decisions based largely on future commercial success<sup>37</sup> although by employing Carpay he showed he was prepared to take risks based on aesthetic as well as commercial factors. Carpay, who appears to have quietly accepted the commercial failure of the venture, 'was determined to wage a "war against the rosebuds" in his new country' and refused to compromise his standards no matter how unpopular his designs were.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Photo: Studio La Gonda. Photographers, Haruhiko Sameshima and Mark Adams, courtesy Valerie Ringer Monk in Monk, p.55.

<sup>37</sup> Monk, p.9.

<sup>38</sup> Carpay was employing the term 'rosebuds' to express his contempt for the type of British pottery usually seen in New Zealand. *ibid.*, p.54.



**Figure 4:** Sir Tom Clark (1917 – 2005).  
Businessman and patron of modern design?<sup>39</sup>

### **Searching for Ideas?**

Despite the unsuccessful venture into 'art' Clark, aware that retailers were constantly demanding new designs, searched for another way to produce new products.<sup>40</sup> In 1959 Crown Lynn, in conjunction with the Auckland Society of Arts, sponsored the first Crown Lynn design competition. Entrants were required to paint their designs on a prepared template which Douglas Lloyd-Jenkins described as requiring, 'little more than the colouring-in of two different-sized circles'.<sup>41</sup> Thousands of entries were received from professional designers, craftspeople and artists.

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<sup>39</sup> Photo: The Auckland War Memorial Museum Library, MS 98-34.

<sup>40</sup> Monk, p.74.

<sup>41</sup> Lloyd-Jenkins, p.194.



**Figure 5:** The winning designs Crown Lynn design competition. 'Narvik' (left) and 'Reflections'. Combining modern design and symbols of New Zealand's natural environment.<sup>42</sup>

Crown Lynn continued to support competitions which, given the relatively small cost to the company, were a very effective means of projecting an image of a benevolent and culturally aware business. The company sponsored the prizes at the 1961 Wellington Arts Festival which were won by studio potters, including Doreen Blumhardt, Roy Cowan, Mirek Smíšek, Mavis Jack and Jack Laird, all of whom would later establish themselves as leaders of the craft movement. Crown Lynn also supported the 1962 visit of Bernard Leach to New Zealand.<sup>43</sup> Unlike the Crown Lynn design competition in Auckland the winning pieces from the Wellington awards were not considered suitable for mass-production by Crown Lynn, but Clark could use the company's sponsorship of the awards to position it as a benevolent supporter of the craft movement. Dr Sutch commented that "the competition and subsequent exhibition of prize-winning work will continue to broaden the well-formed bridge between New Zealand's many enthusiastic and highly

<sup>42</sup> Photo: Studio La Gonda. Photographers, Haruhiko Sameshima and Mark Adams, courtesy Valerie Ringer Monk in Monk, p.81.

<sup>43</sup> Lloyd-Jenkins, p.194.

competent studio potters on the one hand and the manufacturers and public on the other.”<sup>44</sup> As we saw in Chapter One the linking of the handmade and machine-made was a feature of Modernist design that the European founders of the movement, such as Walter Gropius, believed would ensure a future for craft. Sutch’s comment matched ideas then current that New Zealand could emulate this linking of craft and industry.

### **Crown Lynn Continues to Grow**

By March 1963 Crown Lynn was supplying half the total New Zealand market for domestic china and was producing eighty different dinner sets and ‘a huge range of cups, saucers, plates, jugs, ovenware, ornaments, bowls, nursery ware, lamps, vases, and vitrified tableware for hotels, hospitals and restaurants.’<sup>45</sup> However, the introduction of new designs was slowing as a result of a marketing decision made by Clark and his managers. They had introduced a replacement guarantee policy whereby customers could buy parts of any pottery set for up to five years after it was first produced. The policy was based on five ‘attractive middle-of-the-road patterns’.<sup>46</sup> The policy was initially a huge success but eventually, as more designs were introduced, it became a burden. By 1965 thirty designs were available and because of the five-year availability clause changes in design became slow and difficult. For studio potters this was an opportunity to exploit their position. They could produce new designs quickly and were not constrained by a guaranteed replacement policy. Indeed, the fact that each piece was different was their marketing strength.

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<sup>44</sup> Quoted in the *Evening Post*, 18 January 1961, p.1. See Thompson, p.159.

<sup>45</sup> Monk, p.67.

<sup>46</sup> *ibid.*, p.68. See Figure 6 below.



**Figure 6:** Shasta Daisy.<sup>47</sup> This was the type of ‘attractive middle-of-the-road patterns’ that was popular with the New Zealand public. They were also the type of decoration that Carpay had resisted.

### **Strategies to Cope with Change**

By the 1970s Crown Lynn needed to update their range of pottery because New Zealanders were becoming more interested in the ‘rustic’ pottery studio potters were producing.<sup>48</sup> This had been successfully achieved by New Zealand Insulators Ltd in 1972 by commissioning Jack Laird to design a range of tableware and then building a separate tableware production unit (later called Temuka Homeware) in 1977.<sup>49</sup> Crown Lynn began to produce lines called ‘Chateau Craftware’ that was ‘as close to a hand-potted look as the factory could achieve.’<sup>50</sup> This was followed by the Stoneware series – Rusticana, Sahara, Radiance, Focus and Tosca – all designed to reflect the

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<sup>47</sup> Photo: Studio La Gonda. Photographers, Haruhiko Sameshima and Mark Adams, courtesy Valerie Ringer Monk in Monk.

<sup>48</sup> Peter Lange comments on the demand for studio pottery in relation to Crown Lynn’s ware in Cook, p.85.

<sup>49</sup> Thompson, p.187. See also *Temuka Homeware*; available at: <http://www.temukahomeware.co.nz/History.htm> (28 May 2009).

<sup>50</sup> Monk, p.119.

'earthy, homely' styles that were fashionable. In 1977 Bellamy's restaurant at parliament was serving food on pottery by Crown Lynn that featured a Māori fish hook motif.<sup>51</sup> Crown Lynn also established a shop in New Lynn to 'pass on to studio potters the results of research into local materials'.<sup>52</sup> As well as an opportunity to expand its business by supplying studio potters with materials it could also be seen that Crown Lynn was being cooperative with craftspeople.

## Sponsorship

By the late-1970s Crown Lynn's role in the field of corporate support of the arts shifted away from supporting studio pottery. The company quietly discarded the design awards – including the ceramic award – despite Crown Lynn's continuing dominance in ceramics. The gap was filled by the Fletcher Brownbuilt Pottery Award which had started in 1977 with sponsorship from Fletcher Holdings.<sup>53</sup> The formation of the award was an example of the importance of social capital (networking) for the studio craft movement. The award emerged from a conversation in 1975 between Trevor Hunt, the General Manager of Fletcher Brownbuilt, his wife Ailsa and their friends, the potter, Ruth Court and her husband Ralph while they were all on holiday in Fiji. Ruth Court hoped the award might generate income to finance premises and a teaching facility for the Auckland Studio Potters group. The first exhibition was not well supported and later comments reflected the wariness with which potters approached such corporate sponsorship. Warwick Lidgard, the President of the Auckland Studio Potters, the organisers of the exhibition, hoped 'that next year [1978] potters will put aside their personal reservations towards sponsorship and enter into the spirit of presenting to the public a high standard of exhibition pottery, and at the same time support a potters cause initiated so generously by a business firm.'<sup>54</sup> Lidgard's plea received a positive response. The awards continued and grew into one of the

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<sup>51</sup> *ibid.*, p.120.

<sup>52</sup> 'Commercial Potting', *New Zealand Potter*, 20, 1, 1978, p.15.

<sup>53</sup> *The Fletcher Trust Collection*. Available at: <http://www.fletchercollection.co.nz/ceramics.php> (27 June 2008).

<sup>54</sup> Warwick Lidgard, 'Fletcher Brownbuilt Pottery Award', *New Zealand Potter*, 19, 2, 1977, p.17. See also Thompson, p.192.

most valuable, in terms of prizes, and most prestigious ceramic awards in the world.<sup>55</sup>

### **Threats to Crown Lynn**

In the late 1980s the lifting of protection brought to an end many of the economic advantages Crown Lynn had enjoyed. Unlike studio potters, however, change had been more difficult for Crown Lynn because of its size and structure. Over the preceding ten years changing fashions; the saturation of the New Zealand market by its own tableware; the inflation-induced deterioration in the spending power of many New Zealanders; and the imbalances in the economy that Horace Belshaw had warned about had all contributed to a decline in profits.<sup>56</sup>

Crown Lynn struggled on by 'superficially' restructuring in 1979 and appointing a new design manager, Tom Arnold, who had held a similar position at Ridgway Potteries in Britain.<sup>57</sup> Arnold planned to set up a "fine art studio with potter's[sic] wheels ... so that artists of international repute can be brought in for a period of three months or so to create one-off pieces."<sup>58</sup> This was a role some craftspeople held in Britain but the New Zealand industry was too small for these positions to achieve anything more than establish token links to art. Furthermore, Arnold's plan did not appeal to the management of Crown Lynn, who may have remembered the Carpay experiment in the 1950s. They believed the best hope for the company was to restrict production to a limited range of conservative designs. Crown Lynn's fortunes continued to decline after 1985 when the new government began to dismantle protective barriers following a 1983 review of the ceramic industry.<sup>59</sup> The review recommended 'the removal of all threshold duties and import licensing controls with a seven-year phase out period, allowing

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<sup>55</sup> By 1992 the Fletcher Challenge Ceramics Award was offering a first prize of \$10,000. See 'Fletcher Challenge Ceramics Award', *New Zealand Potter*, 34, 2, 1992, pp.20-1.

<sup>56</sup> The holding company, Ceramco, was also struggling during this period having expanded enormously. By 1984 Ceramco owned more than sixty companies world-wide and Crown Lynn was only a small part of the multinational company. See Monk, p.135 and Thompson, p.195.

<sup>57</sup> Thompson, p.192.

<sup>58</sup> Quoted in *ibid.*

<sup>59</sup> 'Ceramic Industry Study Review', 1983. Dept. of Trade & Industry, Treasury and Customs.

companies such as Crown Lynn sufficient time to re-structure their operations to meet future operating conditions.’<sup>60</sup> Crown Lynn was unable to achieve this.

Crown Lynn ceased operations in late 1989.<sup>61</sup> Christopher Thompson, in his summation of the collapse of Crown Lynn, presented this analysis: ‘... the positioning of Crown Lynn as part of a corporation driven by the ideology of the free market and activated by the relentless pursuit of profit to the exclusion of the social contract between capital and labour, made the failure of the company inevitable.’<sup>62</sup> The labour-intensive nature of the business was a problem for Crown Lynn but for studio potters it was what distinguished their craft from industry. A codicil to the Crown Lynn story that indicated that studio potters were able to continue operating, despite the new environment, was the sale of Crown Lynn equipment to Western Potters Suppliers. The company had been set up in the 1970s to sell clay and glazes to studio potters and continued to operate while research for this thesis was underway.<sup>63</sup>

## **Studio Pottery**

In the relationship between studio craft, related industries and government, craft held the subordinate position and was always dependent on decisions made by others. To develop and grow within this environment craftspeople had to be resourceful, adaptable and political. In this section I begin by examining aspects of the early contact between studio craft and industry. I then look at the relationship between studio craft and government. Finally I consider the means used by craftspeople to redefine craft in a new economic, cultural and political environment that emerged after 1976. Once again studio pottery dominates the discussion because potters were more likely than other craftspeople to be earning all, or a substantial portion, of

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<sup>60</sup> Thompson, p.194.

<sup>61</sup> Monk, p.144.

<sup>62</sup> Thompson, p.198.

<sup>63</sup> Monk, p.147.

their income from their craft and were therefore more closely aligned to industry than most other crafts.<sup>64</sup>

### **Early Craftspeople look to Industry**

In Chapter One it was noted that when the early craftspeople were first developing their skills and finding materials only two sources of information and prepared materials were available to them.<sup>65</sup> A very small number of books from overseas helped expand their knowledge and some related businesses supplied a very limited range of materials – usually leftovers not required by them. Potters were fortunate in that a number of manufacturing businesses used clay as a part of their operation. Maria Louisa (Briar) Gardner, a contemporary of Olive Jones, is an example of an early studio potter who looked to industry to start her career. Gardner's family had strong connections with the ceramics industry<sup>66</sup> but Gardner, who was born in 1879, did not start making pottery until she was in her forties after one of her brothers installed a potter's wheel at his brickworks. William Speer, an expert thrower, was brought from England to operate it.<sup>67</sup> Speer reluctantly gave Briar Gardner advice but was 'often seen to shake his head at her amateur attempts to throw.'<sup>68</sup> Speer, who had unsuccessfully attempted to establish his own pottery in other parts of New Zealand, was in demand later when the aspiring potters of the studio craft movement tried to find teachers of 'this hitherto little-known, and somewhat "romantic", aspect of the pottery craft.'<sup>69</sup> Ironically, Gardner's pottery, which was not technically of a high standard when compared to the later movement, sold well – better than her critic,

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<sup>64</sup> Neil Scotts and Peter Mounsey, 'Craft New Zealand. A Study of the Craft Industry, Craftspeople and Their Training Needs', Wellington, 1983, p.11. Also see Introduction.

<sup>65</sup> By the late-1950s potters were discussing preparing their own clays. For instance see, Elizabeth Matheson, 'Using Local Materials', *New Zealand Potter*, 2, 1, 1959, p.10.

<sup>66</sup> Her uncle owned the Amalgamated Brick and Pipe Company at Hobsonville and three of her brothers operated brickworks in New Lynn. See Fiona McKergow, *Gardner, Maria Louisa 1879 – 1968*, 22 June 2007; available at: <http://www.dnzb.govt.nz/> (28 August 2008).

<sup>67</sup> Justine Olsen, 'Briar Gardner', in Charlotte Macdonald, Merimeri Penfold and Bridget Williams, eds, *The Book of New Zealand Women. Ko Kui Ma Te Kaupapa*, Wellington, 1991, p.226. 'Throwers' were potters who made pottery on a wheel by hand. Ceramic manufacturers employed them to make items that could not be made by machine such as large vinegar jars.

<sup>68</sup> Gail Henry, *New Zealand Pottery: Commercial and Collectable*, Auckland, 1999, p.106. See also McKergow, and B. Gardner, 'My Personal Work', *Auckland - Waikato Historical Journal*, 44, April, 1984, p.11.

<sup>69</sup> Henry, p.107.

William Speer in fact.<sup>70</sup> Her achievement is an early example that economic success was not necessarily determined by skill alone.



**Figure 7:** Maria Louisa (Briar) Gardner (1879 – 1968), an early studio potter who used industry as a source of knowledge and materials.<sup>71</sup>

After the Second World War studio potters continued to seek technical advice from pottery manufacturers and some were employed by them. Mirek Smíšek, for instance, worked at Crown Lynn, initially as a clay mixer and later as a designer and thrower.<sup>72</sup> In 1952 he left to establish himself in Nelson as one of New Zealand's first professional studio potters, suggesting that studio pottery was economically viable from about that date.<sup>73</sup> The employment of studio potters as designers for industry continued throughout the period this thesis covers. For instance, as noted earlier, in 1972 Jack

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<sup>70</sup> Dick Scott, *Fire on the Clay: The Pakeha Comes to West Auckland*, Auckland, 1979, p.153.

<sup>71</sup> Photo: Constance Alice Lloyd, 1/2-190384; F, Alexander Turnbull Library, G. L. Gardner Collection (PAColl-7060).

<sup>72</sup> Crown Lynn had employed an English trained potter, Ernest Shufflebottom, to make the work Smíšek decorated. See Elliott and Skinner, p.61.

<sup>73</sup> Evans, 'Head, Heart and Hand', p.1 and Monk, p.53.

Laird was commissioned to design tableware for manufacturers such as Temuka Potteries and between 1989 and 1994 Royce McGlashen undertook the same role.<sup>74</sup>

The McGlashen-Temuka partnership shows how a more sophisticated relationship evolved between industry and studio craftspeople as the movement matured. Tom Devlin, the General Manager at Temuka Potteries between 1976 and 1996, oversaw the transition from a mass-producer of heavy brown glazed ware towards a range of highly coloured and decorated pottery – something that Clark and Carpay had tried to achieve at Crown Lynn in the 1950s. Devlin believed that McGlashen was pivotal in achieving that transition for Temuka. He also believed it was necessary to change designers such as McGlashen because their designs were idiosyncratic and Temuka’s pottery would become identified with one designer’s style.<sup>75</sup> Coincidentally, McGlashen’s partner, Trudi McGlashen, also believed that a potential conflict of interest was developing because their business was moving towards a more production-oriented workshop looking to supplying restaurants – the same market that Temuka operated in.<sup>76</sup> In a sense, a studio pottery was becoming more mass-production orientated while a mass-production pottery was employing the individually-produced approach that studio potters valued.

From the early 1960s the number of craftspeople setting themselves up as potters began to grow dramatically,<sup>77</sup> encouraged by government policies that limited imports of pottery to New Zealand; by the rising standard of the work produced; by the enthusiastic response of the public to their work; and by the high prices being asked for imported handmade pottery. These

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<sup>74</sup> Lambert, p.53.

<sup>75</sup> Tom Devlin, email to the author, October 2010.

<sup>76</sup> Royce McGlashen, email to the author, 30 September 2010. See also Royce McGlashen, *Royce Mcglashen* 2010; available at: <http://www.roycemcglashen.co.nz/pages/profile.htm> (27 September 2010).

<sup>77</sup> In 1963 there were 92 foundation members of the New Zealand Society of Potters. To be a member a potter had to have exhibited in two NZSP exhibitions and at the time this was the only measure of professional status. In 1979 it was estimated there were 500 full-time potters. See Neil Grant, Howard Williams, and New Zealand Society of Potters, eds, *Then & Now: New Zealand Society of Potters Inc*, Christchurch, 2009, pp.7, 19.

factors, in conjunction with the increasing wealth of a well-educated middle class that was amassing cultural capital as well as economic capital, provided a small but enthusiastic audience. This encouraged many people to choose pottery as a hobby, and for some, a career. Pottery became the craft of choice for many people who earned some form of living from craft.<sup>78</sup>

Another indicator of the growing interest in studio craft, and particularly pottery, was the number of specialty shops that opened from the late-1940s and 1950s. Amongst these were the two branches of The Art of the Potter in Auckland, one on the North Shore and the other in Takapuna; also in Auckland, Brenner Associates and John Crichton; while in Wellington Stockton's, *Cadeaux*, and, although not a speciality shop, the Helen Hitchings Gallery, which all opened during this time.

A number of these shops and galleries were started by European immigrants, often refugees, and were selling work by well-known craftspeople from overseas, such as the English studio potter Lucie Rie. The shop owners and other refugees, such as Ernst Plischke, an architect who was also an exhibitor in Helen Hitchings' gallery, formed a small enclave of Europeans who shared an interest in the arts, and in particular, Modernism.<sup>79</sup> Wright, the owner of 'Stockton's', also sensed that the Europeans added to the cultural capital of the New Zealanders they came into contact with. He stated that the immigrants 'enriched our lives and our culture to a tremendous extent.'<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> It was claimed that 50% of craftspeople were potters. This probably meant that 50% of those earning most of their income from craft were potters. See 'Press Statement: Taxation on Crafts', *New Zealand Crafts*, July 1982, p.15. See also Interdepartmental Committee on Sales Tax on Craft Activities, AALR, 873, W5427, Box / Item 1911, Part 2, Archives New Zealand, Wellington.

<sup>79</sup> Ernst Plischke was friendly with Lucie Rie. The owners of *Cadeaux*, Hans & Olga Frenkel, were also refugees from Europe. Their link to studio pottery was established when their daughter, Lisa, married the son of Muriel Rose, the author of one of the first books on studio pottery in Britain, *Artist Potters in England*.

<sup>80</sup> Wilf Wright, 7 February 1999, interview with Moyra Elliott and Damian Skinner, Visual Culture in Aotearoa Oral History Archive, Te Papa.



**Figure 8:** Pottery by the English potter, Lucie Rie, c. 1955.<sup>81</sup> Rie was inspired by the European Modernist movement. Her work does not show the influences of Anglo/Oriental design that most New Zealand potters would have been familiar with at this time.

The shops and galleries prepared New Zealanders for the higher prices overseas craftspeople expected to sell their work for. The price of the imported work also helped New Zealand studio potters establish a market that distinguished their work as different from the pottery produced by machines – and thus more expensive. Wright noted the high cost of the imported pottery – a piece of Rie’s pottery could cost as much as a week’s wages – and while New Zealand studio pottery was cheaper, it too increased in price as the public became more accepting.<sup>82</sup>

### **Craft versus Industry and Government: The Sales Tax Question**

During these first tentative ventures into the commercial world studio craft was largely ignored by manufacturers operating in similar fields. By the 1970s, however, craftspeople such as studio potters were beginning to sell work in sufficient quantities to draw the attention of pottery manufacturers and politicians.<sup>83</sup> As studio craft and industry attempted to protect their place

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<sup>81</sup> Photo: The Blumhardt Foundation. See *The New Dowse*, available at: <http://www.dowse.org.nz> (3 July 2008).

<sup>82</sup> Wright interview.

<sup>83</sup> In 1979 it was claimed that crafts products occupied a maximum of 10 – 15% of the domestic market. See ‘Draft Memorandum for Cabinet’, Office of the Minister for Customs, 16 October 1979, Interdepartmental Committee on Sales Tax on Craft Activities, AALR, 873, W5427, Box/Item 1911, Part 2, p.5. Archives New Zealand, Wellington.

in the market or boost their importance in society – culturally and economically – the debates on these issues became confusing.

Manufacturers such as Crown Lynn had done very well from the protection policies that the government had introduced in 1958 as a means of dealing with an exchange crisis caused by falling export prices and the rising cost of imports.<sup>84</sup> Import licensing was also introduced to encourage local manufacturers using local raw materials and to reduce the flow of money overseas. Some industries, such as Crown Lynn, continued to be protected into the 1960s and early-1970s, long after the crisis was over, in part, because of the political influence of lobbyists such as Tom Clark.<sup>85</sup> The growth of studio pottery during the same period suggests there were benefits for studio potters as well. Crown Lynn had initially appeared to be, if not supportive of studio potters, then at least indifferent towards them. By the late 1970s however, it appeared that a level of animosity had developed between studio potters, particularly those producing pottery designed for the table, and Crown Lynn over the issue of sales tax.<sup>86</sup>

In 1979, in an attempt to increase government revenue and shift the revenue balance towards the taxation of goods, Robert Muldoon, the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, requested that Treasury draw up a list of all the taxes that he could impose without having to go to Parliament for approval.<sup>87</sup> Despite constitutional concerns about taxation by executive order, the list was produced and the Muldoon government imposed a ten per cent wholesale sales tax on all tableware and a forty per cent tax on 'decorative articles'. Products made by studio potters were included.<sup>88</sup> Potters claimed

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<sup>84</sup> Sutch, *Takeover New Zealand*, p.44, pp.52-5.

<sup>85</sup> Elliott and Skinner, p.105.

<sup>86</sup> Thompson, p.169.

<sup>87</sup> Helen Sutch, email to the author, 23 September 2010. Government spending as a percentage of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) had increased from 25 per cent in 1969/70 to 38.4 per cent in 1978/79. As a result tax had risen from 21.3 to 28.4 per cent of GDP in the same period. See Paul Goldsmith, *We Won, You Lost. Eat That! A Political History of Tax in New Zealand since 1840*, Auckland, 2008, p.275. See also H. C. Templeton, 'Does Government Value Craftspeople?', *New Zealand Potter*, 21, 2, 1979, p.19.

<sup>88</sup> Goldsmith, p.295. See also Michael Bassett, *The State in New Zealand, 1840-1984: Socialism without Doctrines?*, Auckland, 1998, p.355. Taxes were also imposed on boats and caravans and in 1982 more items were added, including books. In 1986 all sales taxes

that Tom Clark had lobbied the government for the tax 'to be applied to their output [as well] arguing that as they were competing in the same market they should bear the same fiscal costs.'<sup>89</sup> The sales taxes applied to a range of crafts and there were many anomalies,<sup>90</sup> but protest was most vociferous amongst studio potters because many of them earned most of their income from their craft. By the 1970s potters were becoming more organised and the issue presented them with a rallying point.<sup>91</sup> The protests, which included refusing to pay the tax, resulted in the setting up of an interdepartmental committee to investigate sales taxes on craft activities in 1979.<sup>92</sup> The committee concluded that the tax would cost more to administer than it would generate in income and recommended that only potters with a turnover of \$50,000 or more be required to register for the tax.

### **Craft – Booming or Vulnerable?**

The politicisation of craftspeople was a feature of the professional discourse of craft in the late-1970s and 1980s. An aspect of the discourse was the emphasis on the importance of economic professionalism.<sup>93</sup> Craftspeople (and politicians) would offer differing interpretations of the financial viability of craft – stressing its strength or vulnerability – depending on who was being lobbied. The issue also demonstrated that craftspeople were being drawn in two different directions. To prove they were not mere 'hobbyists'<sup>94</sup>

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were replaced with a universal Goods and Services Tax (GST) set at 10%. See Jane Kelsey, *The New Zealand Experiment: A World Model for Structural Adjustment?*, Auckland, 1995, p.3.

<sup>89</sup> Thompson, p.191.

<sup>90</sup> For instance, jewellery was taxed at 40% and leatherwork at 20%. In addition, similar items could be taxed at 0%,10% or 40% depending on whether they were defined as 'art', 'functional' or 'decorative'. See Interdepartmental Committee on Sales Tax on Craft Activities, AALR, 873, W5427, Box / Item 1911, Part 2, Archives New Zealand, Wellington. Across all goods made in New Zealand there were eighteen different tax rates and over three hundred exemptions. This resulted in some bizarre distinctions being made. For instance, men's jewellery, such as cufflinks, had a lower rate than did women's earrings because cufflinks were deemed to be a necessity while earrings were 'sheer vanity'. See Stratford, *The Dirty Decade*, p.73.

<sup>91</sup> See Chapter Seven.

<sup>92</sup> Discussed in more detail below.

<sup>93</sup> Robin Gardner-Gee, 'A Practice Called Craft in a Country Called New Zealand: Readings of Craft New Zealand 1982 – 1993', MA thesis, University of Auckland, 1996, pp.58-9.

<sup>94</sup> Described by Ivan Illich as work that society was conditioned to think of as activities for 'the idle, the unproductive, the very poor, or the very rich'. See Ivan D. Illich, *The Right to Useful Unemployment and Its Professional Enemies*, London, 1978, p.84. See also Chapter Four.

craftspeople had to show that they were financially successful. However, by demonstrating economic success they became vulnerable to the imposition of the revenue gathering policies of the government. The tautological discourse this could generate involved both politicians and craftspeople. For instance, in 1979, an Opposition Labour Member of Parliament, David Butcher, representing a group of potters in Hastings, tried to shame the government into abolishing the sales tax for studio potters. He claimed that there were 'about 5,000 potters' in New Zealand and they were 'making a very good name for themselves'. He stated that they sold their work for 'between \$3 million and \$5 million a year' giving an average income to each 'of about \$1,000 a year'.<sup>95</sup> He argued that while they might be very talented, they were not wealthy. However, his figures were misleading. While it was true that there were a large number of potters in New Zealand, most produced very small quantities of work. The potters who generated larger quantities were fewer in number but their incomes were larger proportionately.<sup>96</sup> Hugh Templeton, speaking as the Minister of Customs,<sup>97</sup> countered Butcher's argument by suggesting that: 'Pottery [could not] be viewed as a hobby when potters are engaged in a commercial enterprise of such a size; 1,000,000 kg of the tableware sold in the country [was] produced by craft potters.'<sup>98</sup> Figures such as these were used to promote studio pottery as an important part of New Zealand's culture and economy, but the data could be used in different ways depending on which issue was emphasised – the economic value of the craft 'industry' or the perception that craftspeople added to the cultural capital of the nation.

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<sup>95</sup> *New Zealand Parliamentary Debates*, (NZPD): First Session, Thirty-Ninth Parliament, vol. 424, (1979), p.1616.

<sup>96</sup> For instance, of the 272 potters who took part in a 1983 survey of craft only 30 (11.1%) had a turnover of more than \$20,000. See Scotts and Mounsey. Part 3, p.39. Another example is the claim made by the CCNZ in 1982 that of the 45,000 people the Interdepartmental Committee on Sales Tax stated were 'professional or semi-professional', only 2000 'would earn a full-time income as self-employed craftspeople'. See 'Press Statement: Taxation on Crafts', *New Zealand Crafts*, July 1982, p.15.

<sup>97</sup> He was also Minister of Revenue (1977 – 1982) and Minister of Trade and Industry (1981 – 1984).

<sup>98</sup> NZPD: First Session, Thirty-Ninth Parliament, vol. 424, (1979), p. 1618. It is unknown where Butcher or Templeton obtained their figures. Thompson claimed that Templeton's figure in particular was improbable. See Thompson, p.182.

In another example of this confusing discourse the Crafts Council (CCNZ) used the report commissioned by the government in 1979 to investigate sales tax on craft to promote the contribution craftspeople made to the economy.<sup>99</sup> Whereas in 1979 craftspeople encouraged the perception that they made little money, by 1982 the CCNZ was making a case that suggested craftspeople were doing very well indeed. The CCNZ claimed that: 'In Nelson 64 full-time potters have an annual turnover of more than \$1 million' and: 'In the Canterbury area, 25 full-time woodworkers have an annual turnover of \$1.25 million.'<sup>100</sup> In the case of the Nelson potters, averaging turnover (\$15,000 per potter) will not give a true picture because some of these potter's earnings barely covered their material costs while a few were earning quite large incomes, but it was a reasonable assessment of the average income. The Canterbury woodworkers figure seems very high (an average turnover of \$50,000 per woodworker) but may have included some furniture makers who used the term 'craft' but who produced furniture by assembling mass-produced pre-cut parts. D Wood, in her research on handcrafted furniture in Canterbury, observed that before the first Alternative Furniture Show in 1983 the nine furniture makers who participated were nervous about making a \$500 deposit each to secure the venue.<sup>101</sup> This suggests that the \$1.25 million figure was unrealistic. Statements such as these were speculative and three years earlier during the sales tax protests craftspeople would not have been eager to advertise economic success. It was a sign that the studio craft movement was attempting to use statistics to promote its importance in the wider community. In the new professionalised environment success was often measured in monetary terms.

Members of the Interdepartmental Committee also offered different opinions on the financial status of craftspeople. The debate that took place within the committee demonstrated Bourdieu's contention that cultural factors influenced the political and economic decisions of the economically powerful

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<sup>99</sup> 1979 – 1982, Interdepartmental Committee on Sales Tax on Craft Activities, AALR, 873, W5427, Box / Item 1911, Part 2, Wellington.

<sup>100</sup> 'Press Statement: Taxation on Crafts', *New Zealand Crafts*, July 1982, p.15.

<sup>101</sup> D Wood, email to the author, 19 September 2010. This research was carried out in preparation for a PhD thesis at the University of Otago.

groups in society. Helen Sutch, the Treasury representative on the committee, was convinced the task of distinguishing between art and craft was beyond the capability of tax inspectors but she was restrained by the government's determination to raise revenue by any means possible.

There was a feeling on the committee that it would not be proper to tax art as it was not a commercial product. [T]he first priority of artists was not necessarily income and profit, and the great majority were seen as struggling financially. However, crafts were seen to be different in the sense that many of them were for household use and therefore competed in the commercial market with factory-made objects. But there was a difficulty in setting consistent ground rules on how to distinguish between art and craft, or between decorative and other ware, in any way that would have been feasible for a sales tax inspector to implement fairly. At one stage a committee member said the difference was that "if you could put your hand in it, it was craft, if you couldn't, it was art." The committee did not accept this view!<sup>102</sup>

The habitus of officials was evident from the debate about the distinction between art and craft. For instance, the observation that craft was physical and art conceptual clearly showed the influence of Robin Collingwood's separation of craft from art. However, craft was amassing cultural capital and taxing cultural capital in the same way as economic capital was seen by some to be lowering its intrinsic value.

### **Creative Defiance**

All wholesale taxes, including the tax on craft, were merged into a goods and services tax in 1986. However, the imposition of the sales tax politicized craftspeople and encouraged them to become more enterprising. Some potters simply refused to pay it, but others interpreted the variety of descriptions of art and craft in the widest possible way. As a 'work of art' was exempt it was rumoured that many potters began creating 'works of art' that had handles and lids.<sup>103</sup> Other means of avoiding the tax appeared to be the

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<sup>102</sup> Helen Sutch, email to the author, 23 September 2010.

<sup>103</sup> This reaction is similar to the reported response of business people to a tax on stationery. If stationery contained the word 'school' it was taxed at a lower rate, therefore business people began to make their notes on school pads. See Goldsmith, p.295.

type of reaction the government might have anticipated. The tax applied only to craft sold in New Zealand. The appearance of articles in craft magazines about selling overseas signalled an increasing interest in exporting. In 1980 for instance, N. Holm, of the Department of Trade and Industry suggested that the reason for the increased interest in exporting was, '[r]ecent developments in taxation on craft industries'.<sup>104</sup> For a time craft magazines published articles about exporting, but as Holm pointed out: 'Export ambitions can wither overnight on the discovery that to remain competitive, the producer's return on a typical consumer article sold, for instance, on the West Coast of the United States, can often be no more than a third of the eventual retail price.'<sup>105</sup> Exporting by craftspeople appeared to be a reaction to changing financial regulations but the size of most operations made such activity impractical for most craftspeople.

### **Craft and Industry versus Government**

Whereas the sales tax issue had seen studio potters and Crown Lynn at loggerheads, the proposed lifting of import restrictions by the National Government in 1983, which would start in 1985 and continue over a seven year period, presented the two sectors with an issue that both believed threatened their future. The Minister of Trade and Industry, Hugh Templeton, was sympathetic, but made a distinction between competition potters faced within New Zealand and competition from abroad:

I agree that the craft potter has established a niche in the marketplace for his or her product which is distinguishable from the product of the larger commercial producers. ... However, whereas it is possible to make a distinction between the two types of operation at the production level it is very difficult to make that same distinction at the industry import protection level.<sup>106</sup>

Templeton, in an indication he believed that the cultural capital of craft was now strong enough to easily transform it into economic capital, went on to suggest that studio potters did not really need protection: 'I also believe that

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<sup>104</sup> N. Holm, 'Exporting', *New Zealand Potter*, 22, 2, 1980, p.10.

<sup>105</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>106</sup> Hugh Templeton, 'Extracts from a letter from the Minister of Trade and Industry, Hugh Templeton, to the N Z Society of Potters, December 1983', *New Zealand Potter*, 26, 1, 1984, p.36.

many craft potter items in New Zealand are sold, not so much on the basis of price competitiveness, but on the basis of their intrinsic merit ... this should provide a sound basis for the continual growth of the craft potter industry in this country.<sup>107</sup> Sally Vinson, the President of the New Zealand Society of Potters (NZSP), countered by offering two arguments that once again reflected the contrasting discourse used by craftspeople to defend their economic position. First, she argued that studio potters were not in competition with industry. Second, she claimed that there were few studio potters working full-time in New Zealand.<sup>108</sup> Vinson's views were not supported in an earlier submission on sales tax made by the CCNZ. It claimed that potters were 'regarded by some as being part of the commercial world' and that potters found 'it possible to be self-supporting'.<sup>109</sup> Trade and Industry were unconvinced by Vinson's arguments, no doubt because the lifting of import licensing was a key component of the Closer Economic Relations (CER) trade negotiations that Australia and New Zealand were involved with at the time. Studio potters were, by their own admission, a minute part of the ceramics industry. Vinson appeared to be using more desperate tactics when she noted that in Australia there were fewer potters and less 'good quality studio domestic tableware' but that '[p]otters and other craftspeople have ... a great deal of financial support through various arts councils who seem to have bags of money to give away'.<sup>110</sup> By the mid-1980s it appeared that the cultural capital of craftspeople was reaching new heights but the favourable conditions that had supported the growth of an economically viable 'industry' were being undermined.

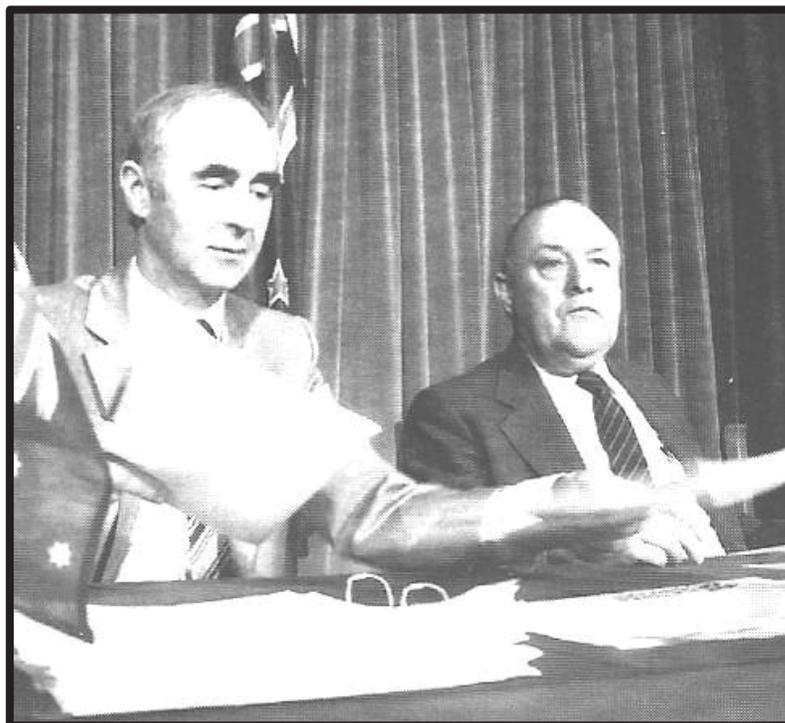
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<sup>107</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>108</sup> Sally Vinson, 'Comment from Sally Vinson, President New Zealand Society of Potters', *New Zealand Potter*, 26, 1, 1984, p.37.

<sup>109</sup> 'Submission on Sales Tax', 1979, CCNZ Records, ABRL, 7514W5068, Box 20, 4/3/8, 1976 – 1981. The only statistic offered in the submission was that between 60 – 80,000 New Zealanders 'practise a craft'.

<sup>110</sup> Vinson, *New Zealand Potter*, 26, 1, 1984, p.37. By 1992 the Q E II Arts Council was investing \$994,000 in craft programmes including the CCNZ, see Albert Stafford, 'Review of the Professional Infrastructure in the Craft Sector in New Zealand', Wellington, 1991, p.26.



**Figure 9:** Hugh Templeton and Robert Muldoon, CER press conference, October 1982.<sup>111</sup>

## Responding to Change

In 1984 the fourth Labour Government was elected to office in a snap election. The Minister of Finance, Roger Douglas, who had been formulating a plan since 1981 to stifle wage demands and reduce government spending, now had an opportunity to implement what he called ‘reforms’, but that others have called a ‘revolution’ and some a ‘tragedy’.<sup>112</sup> The government’s policy ‘was to encourage the best use of New Zealand’s resources in relation to world markets’ – a euphemism for letting the market decide which businesses would succeed and which would fail. It was a dramatic move away from previous policies which supported businesses that advanced the government’s economic plans.<sup>113</sup> As a component of this policy the government allowed the exchange rate of the dollar to be determined on the

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<sup>111</sup> Photo: Originally in the *New Zealand Herald*, reproduced in Hugh Templeton, *All Honourable Men: Inside the Muldoon Cabinet 1975 – 1984*, Auckland, 1995.

<sup>112</sup> Douglas’ plans were based on advice from Treasury. See W. Hugh Oliver in Brian Easton, ed., *The Making of Rogernomics*, Auckland, 1989, pp.18-19. For a brief overview on the ‘economic collapse’ see Stratford, *The Dirty Decade*, p.36. Tim Hazledine argues that ‘reform’ refers to the removal of abuses therefore ‘revolution’, referring to fundamental change, is more accurate. See Hazledine, pp.21-2. The reference to ‘tragedy’ is in Mike O’Brien and Chris Wilkes, *The Tragedy of the Market: A Social Experiment in New Zealand*, Nzam Academic Monograph; No. 14., Palmerston North, 1993, pp.7-8.

<sup>113</sup> Sometimes referred to as ‘picking winners’.

international money market<sup>114</sup> and instigated a policy of borrowing rather than using its power to create money to cover deficits. Interest rates had to be increased to attract lenders and imports decreased in price as the dollar rose in value internationally. There followed a marked increase in business ventures that employed loopholes in tax laws; that speculated on the value of the dollar; and used the share market to raise capital. Many of those involved in these activities appeared to have become very 'wealthy' in a very short time and looked to the art world to validate their new position in New Zealand society.<sup>115</sup> A commentator described it as 'new money chasing respectability with an enthusiasm matched only by its ignorance.'<sup>116</sup>

### **Art, Craft and Business**

Prior to the 1980s the commissioning of craftwork, or indeed of artworks, by private businesses was not common. Occasionally businesses like Crown Lynn would sponsor competitions but prizes were not large and the works were not usually purchased for collections. Artists were familiar with public works commissioned for special occasions or locations, such as the statues produced for the New Zealand Centennial Exhibition in 1940, but commissions by businesses were rare and craftspeople were usually not involved in this field. The writer and historian, John Cawte Beaglehole, noted in 1961 that 'banks and big businessmen had not entertained the idea that expenditure on the arts might be useful publicity, or might have a legitimate community value even apart from its prestige value as advertising.'<sup>117</sup>

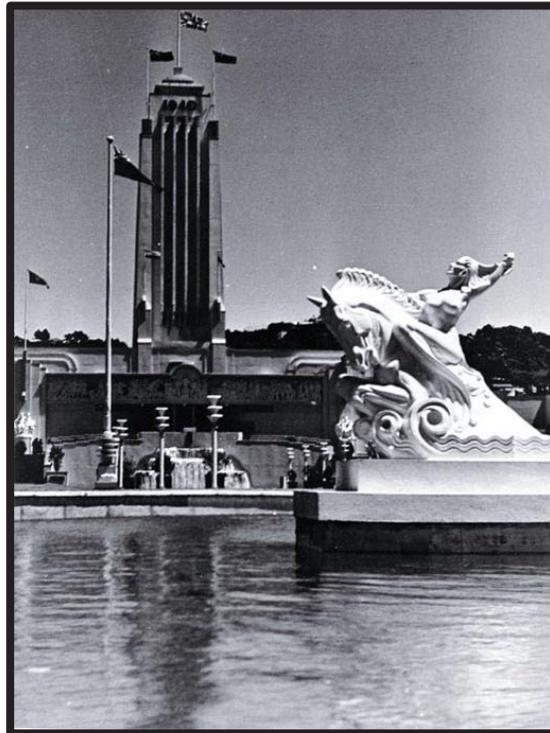
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<sup>114</sup> Referred to as 'floating the dollar'.

<sup>115</sup> The 'wealth' was largely based on the paper value of shares or heavily mortgaged property. See Stratford, *The Dirty Decade*, pp.106-7.

<sup>116</sup> *ibid.*, p.91.

<sup>117</sup> J. C. Beaglehole, 'New Zealand since the War', *Landfall*, June 1961, p.145.



**Figure 10:** Neriad (seawoman on a seahorse) in the fountain at the New Zealand Centennial Exhibition.<sup>118</sup>

Therefore, in the 1980s, when business patronage of craft increased there was some unease within the artworld. The intersection of business and art (and now craft) inferred a commercial intention by business and raised concerns that the ‘pervading idealism that surrounded art’ would be compromised by the association with business.<sup>119</sup> In addition, the new relationships often required intermediaries and invariably these people came from the art world rather than craft. The new corporations wished to be seen as patrons of the arts and, following the advice of ‘experts’, built up collections of paintings and craft art. Conveniently, the work was also thought to be a good investment with the added advantage that it was seen as a physical symbol of corporate ‘social responsibility’ – a contemporary mantra in the business world.

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<sup>118</sup> Photo: Christchurch City Libraries, CCL PhotoCD, IMG0041.

<sup>119</sup> Leo King, 'The Impact on Artists of Working for Corporate Patrons in Auckland', PhD thesis, University of Auckland, 1995, p.x.

## Craft on a Grand Scale and in the Public Domain

Some forms of craftwork were ideally suited to the new environment. Larger pieces were more in demand for the public spaces and craftspeople who produced works that were displayed on the wall found there was a surge of interest in their work – encouraged, in part, by a \$4,000 tax concession offered to public companies for purchasing artworks.<sup>120</sup> However, craftspeople encountered new ‘gatekeepers’. Their work had to be validated by ‘experts’. They were advised by those closely associated with the corporate world, such as architects, to take a new approach to their work if they were to be considered for commissioned work in the new commercial environment. The experts offered their advice in the magazines that craftspeople read, such as *New Zealand Craft* and the *New Zealand Potter*, and this appeared to validate it.<sup>121</sup> The case studies below give some indication of how some craftspeople adapted to the new environment.

### A Case Study: Paul Johnson

Commenting on the clay-work of Paul Johnson, David Clegg, a New Plymouth based craft artist, pointed out that Johnson, with his ‘working drawings, site photographs, scale models (often [with] two potential solutions to a problem) and coloured photographs of the installed commission’ worked more like Clegg himself who was involved with architectural stained glass.<sup>122</sup> He continued with a warning:

Architectural crafts [sic] does not mean simply an extra large pot or hanging but rather an artwork selected to relate on equal terms with all the other elements within a given space. It means involving artists in glass, ceramics, wood, wrought-iron and textiles in the building design process. These crafts are part of the building, not whimsical (or desperate) additions.<sup>123</sup>

Clegg was writing for craftspeople and therefore his language incorporated terms such as ‘craft’ that they were familiar with. He said of Johnson: ‘Paul

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<sup>120</sup> David Clegg, 'Letter to the Editor: Marketing Architectural Craft & Artwork', *New Zealand Craft*, Spring 1984, p.6.

<sup>121</sup> King, p.xi.

<sup>122</sup> David Clegg, 'Crafts in Architecture', *New Zealand Potter*, 26, 2, 1984, p.11.

<sup>123</sup> *ibid.*

says he is not a potter, he does not make pots. While that is true, he certainly knows how to.<sup>124</sup> But his message was that the market was changing and craftspeople could not expect to make what they liked and hope that a corporation would buy it. Clegg was unsure if the time was yet right – ‘New Zealand architecture in general has still to outgrow the catalogue-purchased ethic that evolved in the 60’s and dominated the 70’s’ – but he was convinced that craftspeople needed to adapt: ‘As always, New Zealand will come to accept such radical shifts in direction with much kicking, screaming and persecution of its early proponents.’<sup>125</sup>



**Figure 11:** Paul Johnson working on the mural ‘Craft and Architecture’, 1982.<sup>126</sup>

### **A Case Study: Howard Williams**

Howard Williams was a ‘ceramist’ who discovered that the commitment of many businesses to expressions of cultural benevolence was shallow.<sup>127</sup>

Williams trained as a potter with the New Zealand-born potter Kenneth Clark

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<sup>124</sup> *ibid.*, p.12.

<sup>125</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>126</sup> Photo: ‘Crafts in Architecture’, p.12.

<sup>127</sup> ‘Howard Williams - Ceramic Decorator’, *New Zealand Potter*, 16, 2, 1974. In 1984 Williams became editor of the *New Zealand Potter* and referred to his background as: ‘A full time potter and ceramic mural maker for 24 years’. Editors of the magazine still had to establish their credentials in terms that New Zealand potters were familiar with. See Howard Williams, ‘Letter from the Editor’, *New Zealand Potter*, 26, 1, 1984, p.6.

in Britain where he learned to make slip-cast pottery, mosaics and hand-built ceramic murals and helped Clark work on large-scale murals.<sup>128</sup> In 1971 he returned to New Zealand to establish a studio where he used these techniques to make pottery, tiles and murals. Through his mural work and social networks Williams became involved in the designing and installation of commissions in board rooms, restaurants and corporate buildings.<sup>129</sup> One of Williams' most important commissions was an installation in the Kensington Swan building in central Auckland. In 1986 the construction company Mainzeal began building a twelve-storey office block in downtown Auckland.<sup>130</sup> In April 1988 the law firm Kensington Swan occupied the five top floors and sublet the remainder of the building. Part of the planning included the installation of an art work which was to include water. Mainzeal's policy was to incorporate art work in the buildings it constructed and this reflected a growing trend in the late 1980s.<sup>131</sup> The CCNZ was consulted on the selection of the successful design indicating that the links between organised craft and the business community in New Zealand were becoming stronger.

Howard Williams' design for a mural called 'Facet Water Wall' was selected. He was required to supply working drawings, a schedule of operations, a model and samples of the ceramic forms to be used and in July 1987, after consulting with the 'public arts adviser', Hamish Keith, he signed a Memorandum of Agreement with Mainzeal Development.<sup>132</sup> During this period businesses appeared to be committed to this type of large-scale craft/art work. Williams discovered however, that when buildings were refurbished little regard was paid to the craft/art work – or to the craft artist. In 2006 Williams visited the building and found the mural had disappeared to make way for a coffee bar. He still does not know if it was destroyed or if it

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<sup>128</sup> Howard Williams, email to the author, 30 October 2010. Clark had established a reputation as a potter and writer immediately after the Second World War in the United Kingdom. He first exhibited in New Zealand at the New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts in 1950. See Chapter Three and Kenneth Clark, *The Potter's Manual*, London, 1983.

<sup>129</sup> Howard Williams, email to the author, 30 October 2010, Facet Water Wall.

<sup>130</sup> At the time of construction Mainzeal did not have a tenant. See King, p.44.

<sup>131</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>132</sup> *ibid.*, pp.46, 270. Appendix 1.

was covered by a grey metal wall.<sup>133</sup> Furthermore, of the fifteen public works he produced, he believed most had been destroyed, and in only one instance was he consulted. Such destruction of public craft and art became widespread throughout New Zealand, indicating that the cultural value of the work was limited by the fashion of the period in which it was created.<sup>134</sup>

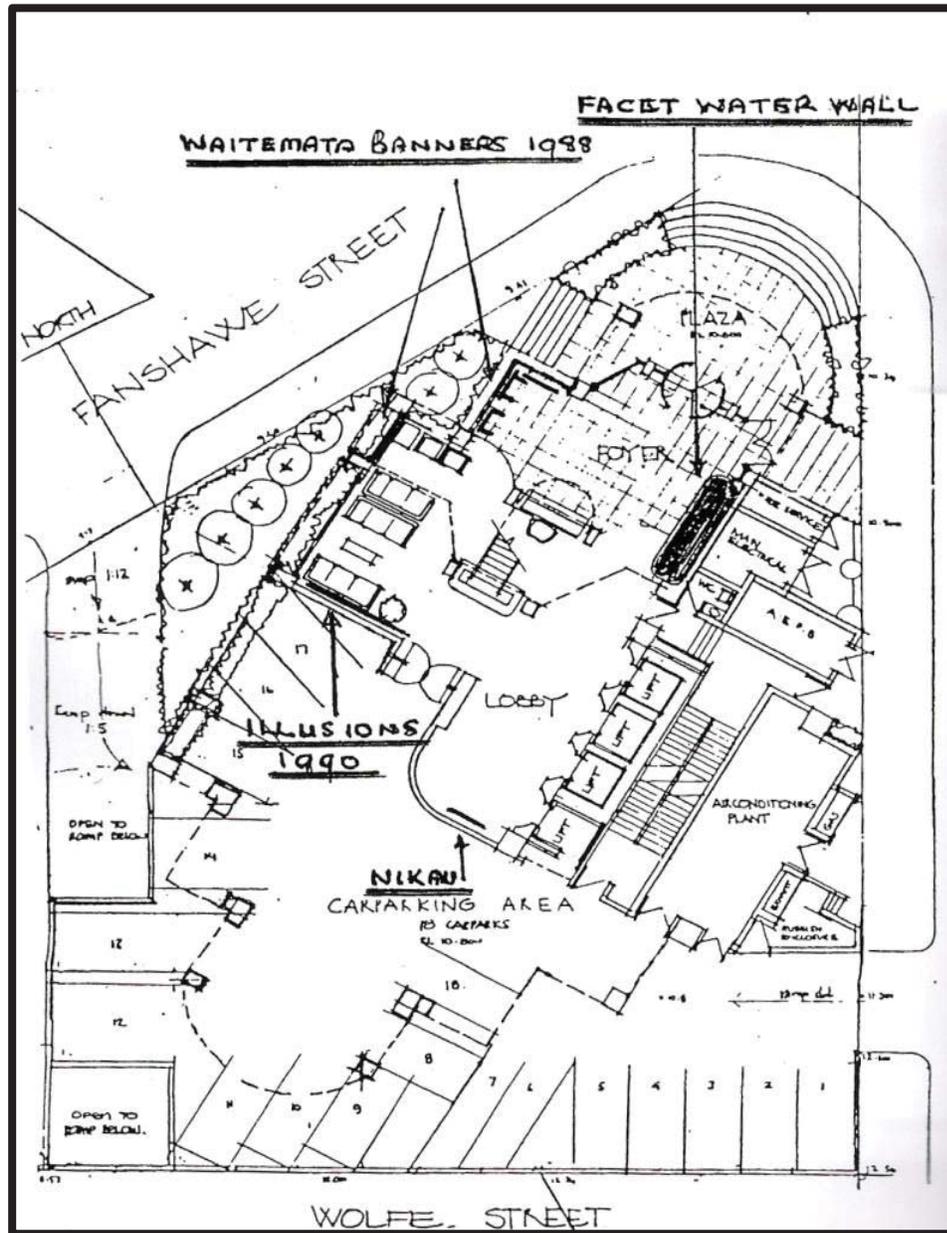
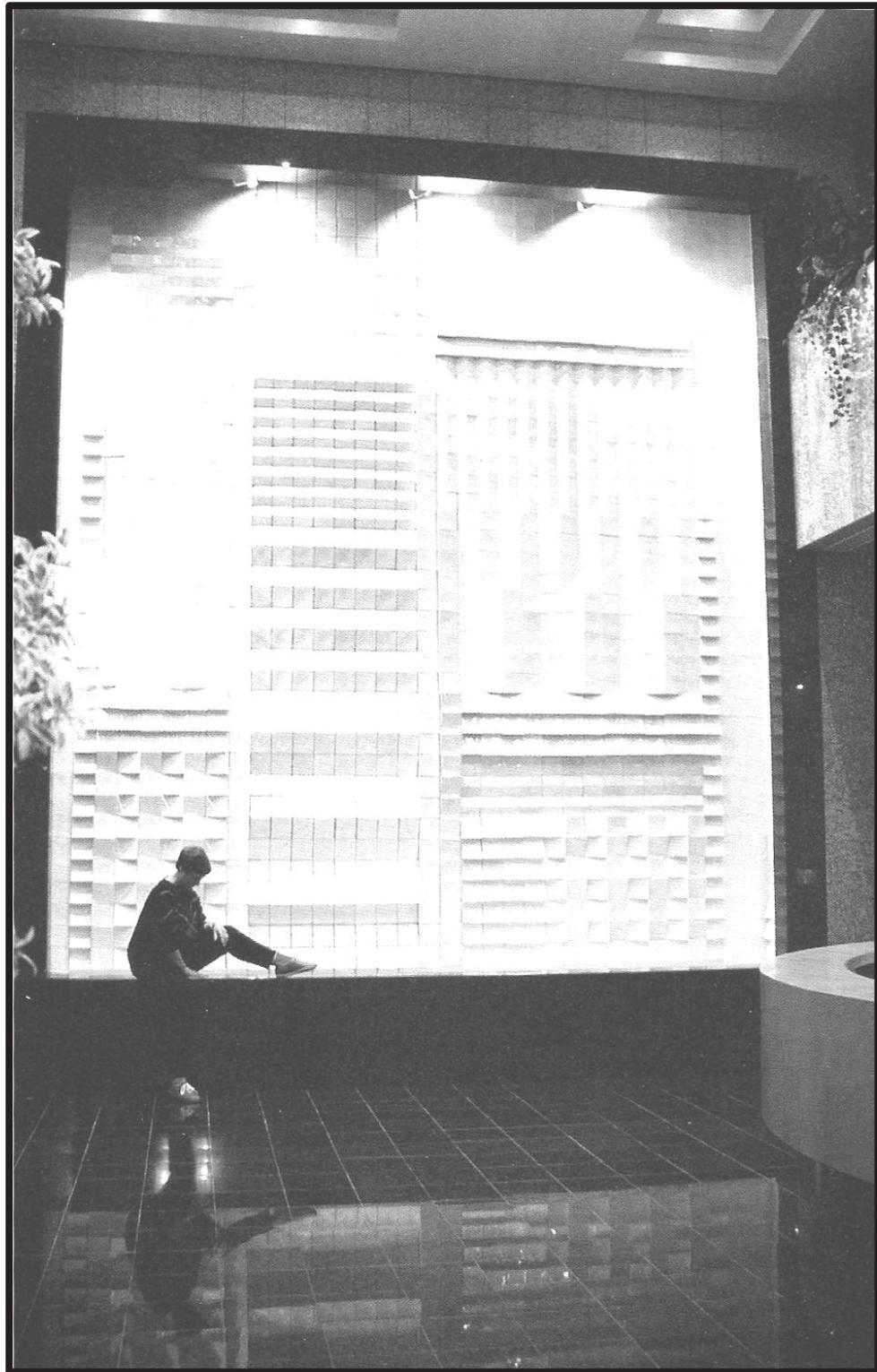


Figure 12: Kensington Swan Building plan.<sup>135</sup>

<sup>133</sup> Williams, email to the author, 30 October 2010.

<sup>134</sup> Howard Williams was aware of many works treated in such a way, including glass panels by Holly Sanford that she had removed rather than altered to make room for a walkway for a cafe. See *ibid.* In Nelson, public works by Jack Laird and Christopher Vine were destroyed when being removed.

<sup>135</sup> Plan: Prepared by David Foster in King. Appendix 5.



**Figure 13:** Howard Williams, Facet Water Wall.<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>136</sup> Photo: Anita Berman, 'Collecting Art within the Law', *New Zealand Potter*, 31, 2, 1989, p.12.

## **Craft as a Symbol of National Pride: *Expo '92***

Commissioned craft reached a peak of acceptance in 1992 when crafts (mainly ceramic work) were employed to promote New Zealand at the world expo in Seville. This 'embryonic corporate alliance between the arts, business and the state', suggested Peter and Dianne Beatson, was the means by which 'the government and the business world [could] ... imprint the brand name of New Zealand Incorporated upon the minds and wallets of potential trading partners.'<sup>137</sup> In 1991 fourteen craftspeople working mostly in clay were commissioned to produce a massive display, both in terms of the size of the pieces and in numbers, for the New Zealand pavilion at Expo '92 in Seville.<sup>138</sup> James Mack, the exhibition designer and curator, in a statement loaded with hyperbole, tried to link the works with the notion of national character. He stated that he 'chose ceramics as the medium to represent this country in this way "mainly because I believe it is the branch of the arts making the strongest portrayal of who and what we are as New Zealanders."<sup>139</sup> Mack, who appeared to be positioning himself as an authority on New Zealand craft, was at the time the Director of The Dowse Art Museum in Lower Hutt, which had gained a reputation for its willingness to exhibit New Zealand craft when most other public galleries would not.<sup>140</sup>

## **Craft and the Architect: Ron Sang**

The collecting of craft, in a similar fashion to the collecting of art, became a feature of the new moneyed society in the early 1990s. Although crafts were still seen as less of an investment than paintings and sculpture, some collectors began to influence the way that craft was incorporated into commercial buildings. One collector of craft in Auckland was the architect

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<sup>137</sup> By 'brand name ... New Zealand Incorporated' the Beatsons are suggesting the government was attempting to sell New Zealand products and New Zealand as a tourist destination in the same way a private business might. See Beatson and Beatson, p.254.

<sup>138</sup> It was jointly funded by the New Zealand Expo 1992 Committee, the QE II Arts Council and Te Whare O Aotearoa/national Museum of New Zealand. See Howard Williams, 'Seville, Expo '92', *New Zealand Potter*, 34, 1, 1992, p.19.

<sup>139</sup> Louise Guerin, 'Expo '92', *New Zealand Potter*, 33, 3, 1991, p.4. See also Williams, 'Seville, Expo '92', pp.19-23 and James Mack, 'Treasures of the Underworld: The Catalogue for the New Zealand Tour of the Exhibition by 14 New Zealand Ceramic and Glass Artists. The New Zealand Pavilion of World Expo in Seville, Spain, 12 April – 20 October 1992', Museum of New Zealand, Wellington, 1993.

<sup>140</sup> *The New Dowse*,

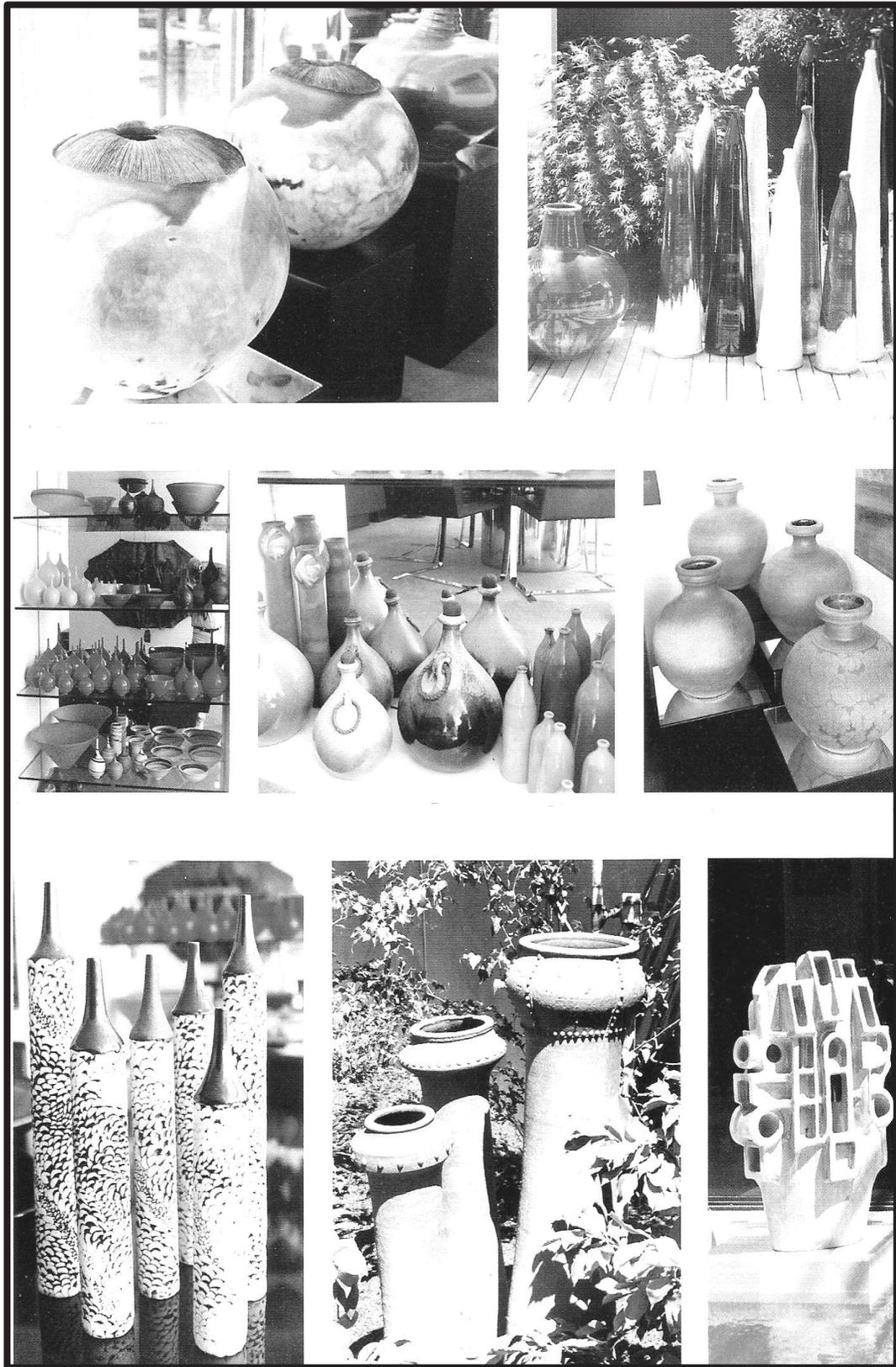
Ron Sang of the architectural firm Fairhead Sang Carnachan based in Newmarket. He began collecting pottery in the 1970s and slowly began incorporating individual pieces and, increasingly, collections of pottery in the designs of houses and commercial buildings he was working on. He also purchased pottery as gifts for clients, both in New Zealand and overseas.<sup>141</sup> In the buildings he designed he used very simple materials and suggested that to remove the craft he incorporated in the design would make his designs look “bland, unfinished”.<sup>142</sup> Collectors have always existed of course, but the notable feature of Sang’s collection was its size and the way he infiltrated the pieces into the business-world environment. Sang would probably have disagreed with Clegg’s assertion that craft had to be specifically designed for a building but he grouped his work in such a way that they took on the appearance of an individual sculpture. The difference, when compared to the murals discussed above, was that craftspeople could produce whatever they wished – although larger works appeared to be more favoured.<sup>143</sup>

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<sup>141</sup> Howard Williams, 'The Collectors', *New Zealand Potter*, 33, 1, 1991, p.20. See also Leafa Wilson, 'The Ron Sang Selection: Ceramic Works from the Collection of Ron Sang', in Waikato Museum of Art and History, Hamilton, 2005.

<sup>142</sup> Williams, 'The Collectors', p.20.

<sup>143</sup> Ron Sang did occasionally commission work. See *ibid.* See also Peter Collis, 'Commissioned – Large Pots!', *New Zealand Potter*, 30, 3, 1988, pp.26-7.



**Figure 14:** Some of Ron Sang's collection of ceramics.<sup>144</sup>

<sup>144</sup> Photo: Williams, 'The Collectors', p.21.

## Glossy Craft: Craft New Zealand

The last ever issue of *Craft New Zealand*, was published in 1993 and was dominated by a section sub-titled 'A Guide to the Leading Venues for Craft, Visual and Applied Art'.<sup>145</sup> The full-colour glossy magazine, owned by Craft Print Limited following the liquidation of the CCNZ, projected an image of success. The purpose of the issue, as the editor stated, was the promotion of the galleries that had been 'mushrooming' in 'central city locations', projecting an image of an industry that was financially successful.<sup>146</sup> The format was in keeping with the new image many craftspeople and craft galleries wished to project, but, behind the facade, financial concerns were continuing to cause problems as they had when the magazine was owned by the Craft Council.<sup>147</sup> The issue was largely an advertising feature with most of it taken up with advertisements thinly disguised as articles. The demise of the magazine soon after showed that the government funding the CCNZ had relied on to pay for the magazine was critical to its continued publication.<sup>148</sup> Craftspeople may have wished to project an image of success but few were prepared to pay for it.

Craft in New Zealand occupied an inferior position within both the cultural and economic fields. Decisions made by others rarely considered the consequences of those decisions on craftspeople or on the studio craft 'industry'. Initially, in the period this narrative covers, craftspeople benefited from the economic decisions made by governments as they attempted to ensure New Zealand's manufacturers prospered by protecting them from overseas competition and international financial crises. However, by the mid-1970s it was becoming increasingly clear that the economic and cultural climate was changing and craftspeople, like many others, would need to

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<sup>145</sup> *Craft New Zealand*, Summer 1993. Galleries paid to appear in the magazine.

<sup>146</sup> Peter Gibbs, 'Editorial', *Craft New Zealand*, Summer 1993, p.2.

<sup>147</sup> CCNZ publications, including four editions of the 'new' magazine, *Craft New Zealand*, incurred a loss of \$27,500 in 1990/91 financial year and a loss of \$30,577 in the 1989/90 year. See 'Review of the Professional Infrastructure in the Craft Sector in New Zealand (Stafford Report)', 1991, p.14.

<sup>148</sup> Gibbs, in a letter attached to the final issue, explained to subscribers that sales and advertising needed to double to cover costs. The 'normal' quarterly issues were subsidised by shareholders investing more money, an earlier advertising issue, and a grant from the QEII Arts Council.

adapt to survive. Some craftspeople moved across the cultural field towards arts and adapted well in the new corporate environment. However, they discovered that the corporate world was a harsh environment and ultimately business cared little for craft or craftspeople unless there was profit to be made. Many craftspeople adapted their production to meet the new competition from overseas, producing work that mirrored international trends and hoping their work would be seen as unique and rare – and therefore more valuable. The more established craftspeople called on their symbolic capital to continue producing the work they had always made. A very small number had already achieved a degree of financial security by the time demand for studio craft had passed its peak. Some craftspeople – and artists – became part of the new craft education programmes as formal qualifications became signifiers of cultural achievement. By the 1990s, despite strenuous efforts by many to defend and boost craft, most craftspeople remained on the periphery of both fields. Some, for instance women and Māori, as will be seen in the next chapter, had to contend with additional impediments, but many craftspeople had also become very adaptable and managed to balance economic and cultural success by constantly changing positions within the two fields.

## Chapter Six: Women and Māori: A Different Agenda

[A]s craft has come to mean the antithesis of art, female has become the antithesis of male, with both craft and women assuming negative connotations.<sup>1</sup>

Haere mai, tatou katoa — kia ako tahi, kia mahi tahi.<sup>2</sup>

Women and Māori played distinctly different roles in the growth of the studio craft movement in New Zealand but both had to overcome barriers to assert their respective positions. As noted in Chapter One, before the 1970s two distinguishing features of the craft world were the large numbers of women

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<sup>1</sup> Pennina Barnett, 'Domestic Hiss', *Crafts*, January/February, 1982, p.20.

<sup>2</sup> 'Come, let us learn together, work together'. Caption on the enrolment form for a Harakeke School taken by Cath Brown in Wellington in August 1968. See Miria Simpson, 'Harakeke Weaving School', *Te Ao Hou*, 65, December 1968, p.47.

involved and the absence of Māori from a movement dominated by middle-class Pākehā. To some extent, that reflected the nature of New Zealand society at the time – women’s traditional involvement in craft and the separation of Māori and Pākehā society and culture. In the 1970s however, the influence of the feminist movement encouraged some women to question their position in the craft hierarchy and in the 1980s Māori began to reinterpret traditional ideas about craft in an environment that was redefining craft and in a society coming to terms with its historical and cultural foundations. Both women and Māori began to insist that their formative roles in the studio craft movement be acknowledged and their ideas given equal standing with those of Pākehā craftsmen.

The role of women and Māori has been an important part of the narrative throughout this thesis, but this chapter places more emphasis on the period from the early 1970s through to 1992, as this was when feminist and Māori craft concepts began to have a greater impact on the wider movement. In the case of women, the chapter considers the social, political and philosophical issues that concerned them in a more general way and across a broader landscape than other chapters. I take this approach because although the issues that women advanced resonated across the Western world and were not unique to New Zealand, they nevertheless, had a strong influence on craft in this country. The chapter is presented, as noted earlier, by a Pākehā craftsman, and as such, relies heavily on how women and *tohunga mahi toi/ringa rehe*<sup>3</sup> (Māori artists and craftspeople) saw their world. Their ideas are gathered from the writings of historians, sociologists and craft writers – both men and women, Māori and Pākehā.

The chapter consist of two sections, divided into a number of subsections which consider aspects of the two major themes. Section one is concerned largely with Pākehā craftswomen and examines why the social and historical constructions of craft linked certain crafts to women and why these crafts

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<sup>3</sup> ‘Tohunga’, in this context, refers to ‘learned experts’. Individual craft experts are referred to as ‘tohunga’, followed by the craft. For example, ‘tohunga whakairo’. See Rāwiri Taonui, *Tribal Organisation - Social Rank* 4 March 2009; available at: <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/tribal-organisation/5> (29 October 2010).

were considered less important than other crafts. I also consider why some craftswomen were forced to choose between following feminist ideals or the dictates of a particular form of 'professionalism'. Section two consists of two different aspects of craft in New Zealand as it relates to Māori society and Māori craft and design. The first part is concerned predominantly with the role of tohunga mahi toi/ringa rehe in the new craft environment. It considers how Māori craft and design remained largely outside the studio craft movement, how some younger tohunga mahi toi/ringa rehe attempted to reconcile traditional ways with new developments in studio craft and how Māori more generally developed strategies to function in a Westernised moneyed economy. The second part considers how and why traditional Māori designs were adapted and employed by both Pākehā and Māori craftspeople and the conflicts this sometimes created. Both sections examine how tohunga mahi toi/ringa rehe reconciled the traditional functions of mahi toi and traditional work methods within the new 'professional' craft environment.

## Women

The issue of women's role in the studio craft movement must be framed within the wider arena of the place of women in New Zealand society in the second half of the twentieth century. The 'second-wave' of feminism had its beginnings in the early 1970s, particularly after the first women's liberation conference in 1972 and the founding of *Broadsheet* in the same year.<sup>4</sup> Between the 'first-wave'<sup>5</sup> and the 'second-wave' of feminism, women's primary role was as wives and mothers but, by 1976, over 32% of married women over the age of sixteen were employed outside the home<sup>6</sup> and earning a living as an independent craftswomen became a viable option.

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<sup>4</sup> James Belich, *Paradise Reforged: A History of the New Zealanders from the 1880s to the Year 2000*, Auckland, 2001, p.497. A section of *Broadsheet* was devoted to the Arts – usually reviews of books and exhibitions – but studio craft was rarely mentioned.

<sup>5</sup> *ibid.* Belich believes the first wave ran from 1885 to 1905.

<sup>6</sup> Graeme Dunstall, 'The Social Pattern', in Geoffrey W. Rice, ed., *The Oxford History of New Zealand*, 2nd edn, Auckland, 1992, p.471.

While many of the women who became involved in craft in the 1970s were not interested in feminist ideologies per se, the feminist movement, with a mantra of ‘Girls Can Do Anything’, gave many licence to become involved in crafts that had formerly been dominated by men and to consider craft as a career rather than just a hobby.<sup>7</sup>

Professionalism in craft, as noted in Chapter Three, was often framed in economic terms. Women, who formed a majority in craft overall, were a minority in the ‘economic professional’ field. A 1983 study of the craft ‘industry’, undertaken by Neil Scotts and Peter Mounsey for the Vocational Training Council, indicated that ‘while women were more strongly represented among income-earning craftspeople than among the labour-force in general, they nevertheless still formed a minority.’<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, it noted that potters aside (50% of the respondents), ‘the balance between men and women was very uneven in many crafts. Women formed a large majority in the fabric and fibre crafts, but a small minority in most others.’<sup>9</sup> Three questions were raised by the report. Why was there an imbalance? If the imbalance was gender-related was it being perpetuated? And, did it matter?

<b>Craft Groups by Gender</b>	<b>No. of Male</b>	<b>% of total: Male</b>	<b>No. of Female</b>	<b>% of total: Female</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>% of all craft</b>	<b>% of female in each craft group</b>
Potters	156	47.5	146	53.9	302	50.4	49
Stained Glass	15	4.6	8	3.0	23	3.8	35

<sup>7</sup> The phrase ‘Girls Can Do Anything’ was the title given to the ‘Positive Action Programme for Women’ by the Labour Department in 1984. See Nicky Murray, ‘Girls Can Do Anything? Women and Industry Training in New Zealand’, in *Sociological Association of Aotearoa New Zealand Conference*, Lincoln University, 2003, p.4.

<sup>8</sup> Table 1 below. Survey of 600 craftspeople compiled in 1983. Women comprised 45% of the total number of craftspeople who responded. The report also noted that the figures related only to the relative strengths of the “paying crafts” not the relative size of craft groups generally. For instance embroiderers were not represented at all because, presumably, no ‘paying craft’ embroiderers responded. See Neil Scotts and Peter Mounsey, ‘Craft New Zealand. A Study of the Craft Industry, Craftspeople and Their Training Needs’, Wellington, 1983, Part 3, pp.11-12. Note: ‘Other fibre’ refers to the use of fibres not employed in weaving.

<sup>9</sup> *ibid.* After pottery is removed women comprised 41.9% of the craftspeople in the survey.

Glassblowers	5	1.5	1	0.4	6	1.0	17
Batik, dye, print	1	0.3	23	8.5	24	4.0	96
Other fabric	1	0.3	8	3.0	9	1.6	89
Weavers	9	2.7	43	15.9	52	8.7	83
Other fibre	1	0.3	7	2.6	8	1.3	88
Leather, skin	11	3.4	7	2.6	18	3.0	39
Woodworkers/carvers	75	24.9	6	2.2	81	13.5	7
Basket, cane	2	0.6	4	1.5	6	1.0	66
Jade, bone, shell	13	4.0	3	1.1	16	2.7	19
Jewellers	18	5.5	7	2.6	25	4.2	24
Iron & other metals	6	1.8	2	0.7	8	1.3	25
All other	16	4.9	6	2.2	22	3.7	28
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>329</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>271</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>45</b>

**Table1:** Craft Groups by Gender.<sup>10</sup>

### The Gendering of Craft

In Chapter Two it was suggested that the gendering of craft had influenced whether a particular craft might be deemed to be a form of art. Craft writers have attempted to explain why some crafts were considered more art-like than others but have struggled with definitions. For example, Rozsika Parker, in her influential book, *The Subversive Stitch: Embroidery and the Making of the Feminine*, argued that the differences between craft and art were centred on ‘where they [were] made and who [made] them.’<sup>11</sup> It has also been suggested that the division of craft from art and ‘women’s’ craft from craft in general was part of a twentieth century ‘doxa’, described by Pierre Bourdieu as ‘that which “goes without saying because it comes without saying”’.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Table: *ibid.* Part 3, 2.3.

<sup>11</sup> Rozsika Parker, *The Subversive Stitch: Embroidery and the Making of the Feminine*, London, 1984, p.5. Parker’s italics.

<sup>12</sup> Pierre Bourdieu quoted in Judith Lorber, ‘Using Gender to Undo Gender: A Feminist Degendering Movement’, *Feminist Theory*, 1, 79, 2000, p.80. Original emphasis. See also Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, trans. R. Nice, Cambridge, 1977, p.167.

The gendering of craft and the associated subservience of craftswomen had a long history. In the nineteenth century, for instance, there appeared to be a direct correlation between where a craft was practised and how its place in the community was understood by the participants. As the West became more industrialised there was a decline in participation in certain crafts by women. When occupational specialization caused craft activity to move from the home to the workshop, craft formerly done by women in the home became men's work in the factory.<sup>13</sup> In addition, there was a link between how craft was defined – a hobby or a trade – and where it took place. In Britain for instance, where craft in the home and the countryside had been swamped by 'large-scale production, the division of labour, factory organisation and mechanisation', the idea of craft in the home as 'work' had largely changed to craft in the home as a 'hobby' – particularly for the middle-classes.<sup>14</sup> To a degree, the divisions between private/home and public/work were repeated in the divisions between art and craft. The 'fine' arts were public, similar to the factory or workshop, while the 'domestic' arts were private, reminiscent of the home.<sup>15</sup> Professional/public life was masculine while home/private life was feminine.<sup>16</sup>

## Education

In earlier chapters we saw how an economically and culturally dominant group could employ symbolic violence to reproduce social divisions in fields such as art and craft by professionalising them.<sup>17</sup> In a similar fashion, a dominant group could perpetuate gender inequalities. Education was the vehicle where the imposition of categories of thought were applied so that both girls and boys (and later as women and men) accepted the social order as just and 'normal'. In the book *The Gendering of Art Education*,<sup>18</sup> Pen Dalton reported how the British education system instructed girls differently

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<sup>13</sup> Margaret Mooney Marini, 'Sex and Gender: What Do We Know?', *Sociological Forum*, 5, 1, March, 1990, p.105.

<sup>14</sup> Pat Kirkham, 'Women and the Inter-war Handcrafts Revival', in Judy Attfield and Pat Kirkham, eds, *A View from the Interior: Women and Design*, London, 1995, p.175.

<sup>15</sup> Juliet Kinchin, 'Interiors: nineteenth-century essays on the "masculine" and the "feminine" room', in Pat Kirkham, ed., *The Gendered Object*, Manchester, 1996, p.12.

<sup>16</sup> Barnett, p.20.

<sup>17</sup> See Chapters Two and Three.

<sup>18</sup> Pen Dalton, *The Gendering of Art Education : Modernism, Identity and Critical Feminism*, Buckingham, 2001.

to boys after the Second World War. New Zealand schools operated under a similar system.<sup>19</sup> Dalton observed that the teaching of design and technology (crafts) in the 1960s was 'held back by the continuation of entrenched and redundant gendered attitudes and by nineteenth century masculine notions of "work", craft and manual skills.'<sup>20</sup> She also noted that the discourses around masculine, working-class identities placed boys in a position of superiority in strength and skill over girls. 'Women were a part of the necessary process of identification for the boy and supported his psychological separation from home and mother.'<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, quoting Paul Willis, she believed that the mastery over women compensated working class men for their lack of economic power.<sup>22</sup> In contrast, girls were learning craft skills that would be used in the non-productive, domestic sector.<sup>23</sup> They were taught in 'clean, quiet, safe, colourful settings' and girls enjoyed crafts such as needlework 'away from the boys'.<sup>24</sup> When thrown into the workshop environment through integration policies some girls employed coping tactics such as "feigning inadequacy with machines" and courting assistance of boys and male teachers.<sup>25</sup> The experience often convinced girls that they were not suited to those crafts.<sup>26</sup> Gender roles were also defined in the way that children's craft kits were designed (see Figure 1 below).

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<sup>19</sup> The similarity between the two systems after the Second World War was noted by the Director of Education in New Zealand, A. E. Campbell. See W. J. D. Minogue, 'Education in a Dependent Culture-New Zealand: Some Problems Relating to the British Influence in New Zealand Education', *Comparative Education*, 1, 3, 1965, pp.203-4.

<sup>20</sup> P. Tipping quoted in Dalton, p. 91.

<sup>21</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> P. Willis, *Learning to Labour: How Working Class Children Get Working Class Jobs*, London, 1977, in Dalton, p. 91.

<sup>23</sup> Dalton, p. 92.

<sup>24</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> Willis in *ibid.*, pp. 92-3.

<sup>26</sup> *ibid.*, p.93.



**Figure 1:** Children's craft kit showing the gendering of craft. The boy is the maker (the creator), while the girl is the decorator (adding to the creation).<sup>27</sup>

Subtle gender differences were also evident as students moved higher in the school system. Working with patterns, for instance, became hidden in the cover-all term 'algorithms'. But the inequalities reappeared in the distinction in value and status given to a computer specialist, for example, in comparison to a knitting expert – both working with patterns. The fashion and textile manufacturers were aware of the distinctions and worked hard to establish habits and brand loyalties in young girls.<sup>28</sup> Women saw craft portrayed as leisure in women's magazines and the publishers developed brand loyalties through the promotion of craft projects. Although the magazines did re-activate interest in craft they encouraged the recipients to rely on patterns and pre-designed kits suggesting that women were incapable of creating their own original ideas or expressing their own 'values, experiences and fantasies'.<sup>29</sup> An additional concern was that the craft discourse in the magazines, through linking crafts with 'giving and gaining

<sup>27</sup> Photo: Victoria and Albert Museum of Childhood, Bethnal Green, London. Photographed by the author, 10 September 2009.

<sup>28</sup> Pen Dalton, 'Housewives, Leisure Crafts and Ideology' in Gillian Elinor, et al., eds, *Women and Craft*, London, 1987, p.33.

<sup>29</sup> *ibid.*

love, as offerings for the family, presents for others or as gifts for charity bazaars', identified women solely as housewives.<sup>30</sup>



**Figure 2:** Women's Craft Magazines and patterns helped establish brand loyalties and reinforced gender stereotyping.<sup>31</sup>

## Women Undervalued in New Zealand

The studio craft movement in New Zealand was slow to recognise the contribution of earlier craftswomen despite the numbers taking part. In 1967 Helen Mason, who was instrumental in founding the *New Zealand Potter*, wrote a review of the preceding ten years of studio pottery. In it she made no mention of the women who were practising potters between the wars and immediately following it.<sup>32</sup> Furthermore, as Moyra Elliott and Damian Skinner discovered in their research for a book on the history of studio pottery in New Zealand, when these women were mentioned, as they were in later issues of the *New Zealand Potter*, they were 'referred to as "the lady potters", and their work in earthenware was described as a kind of dilettante activity, an

<sup>30</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> Photo: Gabreial Wyatt, *Vintage Indie* 2009; available at: <http://vintageindie.typepad.com/> (30 July 2009).

<sup>32</sup> Helen Mason, '10 Years of Pottery in New Zealand', *New Zealand Potter*, Special Issue, 1967.

amateur production with none of the seriousness of studio pottery as it developed in the post-war period under the auspices of Bernard Leach's *A Potter's Book*.<sup>33</sup> Moreover, Elliott and Skinner disputed claims by post-war male potters that they were the first 'professional' potters, citing the interwar women potters such as Briar Gardner, Elizabeth Matheson and Olive Jones, who is mentioned in Chapter One, as examples. They also draw attention to Elizabeth Lissaman who was identified as a 'farmer's wife', but who, during the Depression, achieved sales that were 'more than equal to the farm's income'. They were all, to some degree, early economic 'professionals'.<sup>34</sup>

### **Local to National**

Women were vital to the development of the studio craft movement in New Zealand and they often, in terms of numbers, dominated the committees of the national craft organisations. Their role in these organisations is examined in more detail in Chapter Seven but here I attempt to demonstrate how some women graduated from local to national craft organisations but how their influence was reduced as craft became professionalised. Craft groups formed for a variety of reasons other than the opportunity to learn the skills of the particular craft. Amongst these reasons were companionship, the desire to give expression to creative ideas and the opportunity to meet likeminded people.<sup>35</sup> In 1958, Helen Mason noted in the introduction to the first issue of the *New Zealand Potter* magazine that she had heard a woman at a pottery workshop say, "It's so nice being with you all – you're as batty as I am. At home I'm the odd man out".<sup>36</sup> Mason was trying to show that for some women craft groups offered a place where they were not expected to conform to their traditional roles as wives, mothers and housekeepers. In Auckland, Dorothea Turner invited fellow spinners to her home in Green Bay in the 1950s to spin and socialise. Some from this circle of friends became members of the Handweavers Guild formed in 1953 and Turner helped

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<sup>33</sup> Moyra Elliott and Damian Skinner, *Cone Ten Down: Studio Pottery in New Zealand, 1945 – 1980*, Auckland, 2009, pp.28-9. Earthenware was often considered inferior to stoneware. See Vic Evans, 'Head, Heart and Hand: Studio Pottery in Nelson 1956 - 1976', MA thesis, Massey University, 2007, p.61.

<sup>34</sup> Elliott and Skinner, p.31.

<sup>35</sup> For instance, see discussion on pottery clubs in Evans, 'Head, Heart and Hand', pp.55-6.

<sup>36</sup> Helen Mason, 'Untitled', *New Zealand Potter*, 1, 1, 1958, p.1.

establish the Wellington Weavers' Guild in 1963.<sup>37</sup> Both Mason and Turner became influential within the respective national organisations that formed around their crafts – Mason, the New Zealand Society of Potters (NZSP) and Turner, the New Zealand Spinning, Weaving and Woolcraft Society (NZSWWS).

Until the 1970s women's administration of the numerous craft groups that proliferated across the country was critical to the growth of the movement. Women also frequently supported male partners in those crafts where men, as the professionals, were the dominant practitioners. These 'backroom' roles did not enhance their position within the craft world where attention was generally focussed on the 'leading' practitioners. When national organisations became larger and more influential the gender balance in the senior roles became more even, or in some cases, dominated by men. For instance, the position of President of the Crafts Council of New Zealand (CCNZ), and its predecessor the New Zealand Chapter of the World Craft Council (NZWCC), had predominantly been held by women up until the end of the 1970s. From 1982 to 1992 the position was occupied exclusively by men and may have reflected the more 'professionalised' nature of craft.<sup>38</sup> Organisations such as the CCNZ could also apply selective memory when recounting the history of their organisation. In 1984 for instance, when the Executive Director, Christine Ross, claimed that the CCNZ was founded in 1976 she was corrected by a member of the NZWCC who pointed out that, in all but name, a crafts council had existed since 1965. She advised Ross to talk to the former members of the early crafts council.<sup>39</sup> All the names she suggested were women, highlighting the importance of women in the history of craft organisations in New Zealand – and the capacity for later writers to disregard their founding role.

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<sup>37</sup> Heather Nicholson, *The Loving Stitch: A History of Knitting and Spinning in New Zealand*, Auckland, 1998, p.211.

<sup>38</sup> CCNZ Records, 92-278, 06/13.

<sup>39</sup> Dorothy Pascoe, 'Letter to the Editor: History of NZ Crafts Council', *New Zealand Crafts*, June/July 1984, p.2.

## Cooperatives

Women used their organisational, craft and business skills to experiment with different ways of living and working. The women's liberation conferences of the 1970s encouraged feminists to form cooperative organisations to pool resources in areas such as education, child care and employment. For instance, in 1979, the Onekaka Feminist Front (OFF) decided to establish the Golden Bay Work Centre Trust to create 'work that fitted in with child care work' in a region with very limited employment opportunities.<sup>40</sup> After conducting a survey of the needs of women in the region, a weaving co-operative, a quilt-making business and a slipper-making co-operative were set up and skills training workshops were organised. Professionalism was emphasised: 'Shortly after the OFF seminar, two weavers rented a house in central Takaka and began to weave professionally. Suzie's weaving experience and Hess's skills as a business woman enabled them to build up orders.'<sup>41</sup> Professionalism was contrasted with amateurism: 'Weaving, like many women's crafts, is generally done as a hobby, Suzie is determined to prove it can be a profession. This will give status to the craft'.<sup>42</sup> An environment suited to women was central to the aims of the Trust: 'Childcare, creativity, and mutual support are all intrinsic to its operation.'<sup>43</sup> These were also the characteristics that women who were part of the studio craft movement valued.

## Partnerships

Many craftswomen also worked closely with male partners. Whereas the early craftspeople often worked in isolation, later craft enterprises, particularly potteries, were established as partnerships or husband and wife businesses. These partnerships operated in a variety of ways. Where the craftspeople pursued different crafts they often worked in separate studios – for instance, the weaver, Philippa Vine and potter, Christopher Vine.<sup>44</sup> Others, such as the potters May and Harry Davis, pursued the same craft but

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<sup>40</sup> Janya McCalman, 'Golden Bay Work Centre', *Broadsheet*, April 1982, p.18.

<sup>41</sup> *ibid.*, p.19.

<sup>42</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>43</sup> *ibid.*, p.20.

<sup>44</sup> Margaret Harris, 'Nelson Potters', *New Zealand Potter*, Spring, 1970, pp.4-6.

refused to identify who made which pots – simply identifying all their work as ‘Crewenna’ pottery. Other female/male potters, such as Kathleen and John Ing, worked in the same studio producing individual work. Some operations, such as Waimea Potteries, divided roles between making and administration.<sup>45</sup> Partnerships also extended to the places where craft was sold. For instance, husband and wife, Tina and Kees Hos established New Vision Craft Centre (later New Vision Gallery) in Auckland in 1965 and it operated until 1986.<sup>46</sup> In a sense, craft businesses, studios or galleries, functioned in the same way that many other small businesses operated in New Zealand.

### **Elevating ‘Women’s’ Craft**

By the 1970s craftswomen, along with craftsmen, wished to have the profile of all craft raised, but were even more determined to have ‘women’s’ craft acknowledged as an important and vital section of the studio craft movement. Furthermore, they wanted to have their crucial contribution to craft organisation recognised and rewarded. In 1975 women’s role in craft’s infrastructure was examined by the Crafts Council of Australia as a part of the celebration of International Womens’ Year. In the introduction to the report on their findings April Hersey linked the two issues:

The success of the craft movement in Australia has come primarily from the exertions of women – not so much in turning clay and weaving cloth, ... but in political lobbying, in persistence and in fierce determination not to have craft denigrated as inferior in some way to the other arts, but accepted as a vital living force in the community.<sup>47</sup>

Hersey, again suggesting that the role of women as organisers was of prime importance in the rise of the movement, noted that by 1975 there were over three hundred craft organisations in Australia.<sup>48</sup> Hersey’s comments, linking the administration of craft with the position of craft in society, became an important part of the struggle by craftswomen in New Zealand to have their

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<sup>45</sup> For more on these partnerships see Chapter Four.

<sup>46</sup> Athol McCredie, 'Going Public: New Zealand Art Museums in the 1970s', MA thesis, Massey University, 1999, p.54.

<sup>47</sup> April Hersey, *Women in Australian Craft*, Sydney, 1975. unpaginated

<sup>48</sup> *ibid.*

position in the craft world validated and ‘their’ crafts acknowledged as equal in importance to all other crafts – and to art.

The standing of ‘women’s’ craft was boosted by the emergence of the second-wave of feminism in the 1970s. For example, crafts associated with fibre, such as weaving and quilts, improved in status after they became subjects of ‘academic study and aesthetic appreciation’ by scholars and other interested writers.<sup>49</sup> This was a result of craftswomen and feminist writers linking craft to political issues, such as the use of quilts as protest banners – although in New Zealand this was less common than in the United States.<sup>50</sup> Quilting was identified as a ‘women’s’ craft linked to the domestic oppression of women and therefore its use in this way was considered to be a particularly ironic form of protest. It also encapsulated the counterculture slogan: “[T]he personal is the political”.<sup>51</sup>

### **Attacking Modernism**

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s feminist critics were part of a broader postmodern assault on earlier Modernist ideas about the relationship between art and society. They criticized the Modernist idea that artists stood ‘outside social structures and [were] therefore free to express universal experience without prejudice or limitations.’<sup>52</sup> They claimed that the ‘universal vision’ was, in fact, a white, middle-class, male perception.<sup>53</sup> The ‘universal vision’ was based on the notion that there existed a ‘Great Tradition’ – a body of work of superior quality that new work could be added to – ‘if it conformed to the same standard’.<sup>54</sup> Work accepted into it created ‘an idealist conception of art’ that often excluded women and craft.<sup>55</sup> This was not a male-only perception – many women also thought that art was located on a

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<sup>49</sup> Pat Kirkham, ‘Women and the Inter-war Handcrafts Revival’, in Atfield and Kirkham, eds, p.174.

<sup>50</sup> Gwenda Wanigasekera, ‘Transformations Anthropology, Art and the Quilt’, Master of Social Science thesis, University of Waikato, 2006, p.23.

<sup>51</sup> Quoted in Glenn Adamson, ed., *The Craft Reader*, English edn, Oxford, 2010.

<sup>52</sup> Thalia Gouma-Peterson and Patricia Mathews, ‘The Feminist Critique of Art History’, *The Art Bulletin*, 69, 3, 1987, p.332.

<sup>53</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>54</sup> Christine Maree Cheyne, ‘The Politics of Art-Making: A Socialist-Feminist Critique’, MA thesis, Massey University, 1985, p.4.

<sup>55</sup> *ibid.*, p.5.

higher level above everyday life and therefore craft, a field where women were more numerous, was excluded.<sup>56</sup> These values, Bourdieu would argue, were formed through the application of symbolic violence in the education system.

## **Feminist Ideology**

Resistance to the hegemony of the dominant group by women was not based on a single ideology.<sup>57</sup> Christine Cheyne identified three forms of feminist opposition. Radical-feminists argued that ‘there are psychological and biological differences between the sexes’<sup>58</sup> therefore women’s art was ‘substantially different’ from men’s art. Women’s work seeks to elevate women’s concerns – pregnancy, motherhood and domesticity – often through techniques and materials traditionally associated with women – embroidery and quilting for example.<sup>59</sup> Radical-feminists rejected aesthetic standards defined by males. An example of this form of opposition was the resistance by the New Zealand Spinning, Weaving and Woolcrafts Society and the New Zealand Embroiderers Guilds to joining the New Zealand Chapter of the World Craft Council in the late-1970s.<sup>60</sup> The members of these organisations were predominantly women, and although the majority of them would not have regarded themselves as radical-feminists, they were reluctant to have their work judged by others (i.e. men). At the individual level, Juliet Batten was a radical-feminist artist who incorporated ideas about ‘nurturing [and] sexuality’ in her work in fabric.<sup>61</sup> Socialist-feminists, on the other hand, considered the oppression of women across wider fields, which included social, cultural and historical concerns about how and where art or craft work was produced.<sup>62</sup> In this framework, a ‘socialist-feminist approach questions the very definition of art’, therefore the art/craft debate was placed

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<sup>56</sup> Juliet Batten quoted in Christine Dann, *Up from Under: Women and Liberation in New Zealand, 1970 – 1985*, Wellington, 1985, p.116.

<sup>57</sup> Leonie Pihama and Diane Mara, ‘Gender Relations in Education’, in Evelyn Coxon, ed., *The Politics of Learning and Teaching in Aotearoa-New Zealand*, Palmerston North, N.Z., 1994, pp.224-7.

<sup>58</sup> Cheyne, p.57.

<sup>59</sup> *ibid.*, p.71.

<sup>60</sup> CCNZ Records, 92-278, 07-10.

<sup>61</sup> Philip Clarke, ‘Juliet Batten’, *New Zealand Crafts*, March/April 1984, p.18. Batten was surprised but gratified to be identified with craftspeople.

<sup>62</sup> Cheyne, pp.72-3.

at the forefront of the discussion.<sup>63</sup> They were also interested in highlighting measurable inequalities. For instance, Cheyne, who offered arguments in support of socialist-feminist artists and craftswomen, noted that Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council grants clearly favoured male artists over female.<sup>64</sup> Cheyne suggested that a reason that women, particularly craftswomen, may have been reluctant to apply for grants was their conditioning that made them believe their work was inferior.<sup>65</sup> Another reason was the wish to avoid the bureaucratic intrusion grant applications would have subjected them to. Finally, liberal-feminists were largely concerned with the lack of access and opportunities for women but were less interested in dismantling existing ideological and political structures.<sup>66</sup> They wished to extend 'to women the same rights that were to be allowed to human beings by virtue of their capacity to reason.'<sup>67</sup> Most craftswomen could identify with some aspects of all of these philosophies.

### **Women Only**

Rather than attempt to challenge the validity of the dominant artworld élite – but also to make a statement about the effect of that dominance – some women responded to their exclusion from male-dominated establishments by displaying their work in women-only exhibitions or galleries dedicated to showing only women's work – a development termed 'cultural feminism'.<sup>68</sup> Cultural feminism was criticised by some women as a retreat into 'women's culture' because it appeared to neglect important issues such as employment, health, education and social welfare, but it was responsible for raising the profile of craftswomen.<sup>69</sup>

Events celebrating important milestones in the lives of women also provided opportunities for craftswomen to display their work and were seen as

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<sup>63</sup> *ibid.*, p.74. Also see Chapter Two.

<sup>64</sup> *ibid.*, pp.115-16. 1980-81 grants to men, \$89,000, grants to women, \$21,000. 1981-82: men, \$80,000, women, \$26,500. 1982-83: men, \$96,000, women, \$57,000. 1983-84: men, \$98,000, women, \$61,900.

<sup>65</sup> *ibid.*, p.120.

<sup>66</sup> *ibid.*, p.90.

<sup>67</sup> *ibid.*, p.99, Note 3.

<sup>68</sup> Dann, p.116.

<sup>69</sup> Rosemary Novitz, 'Women: Weaving and Identity', in David Novitz and Bill Willmott, eds, *Culture and Identity in New Zealand*, Wellington, 1989, p.58.

statements about craft. In 1979 a women's arts festival was held in Christchurch – a weekend of displays and activities – and in the same year the Waikato Art Museum displayed korowai cloaks made by Rangimarie Hetit and Diggeress Te Kanawa to coincide with the United Women's Convention held in Auckland.<sup>70</sup> In the 1970s and 1980s, feminist exhibitions making a political declaration usually combined paintings and sculpture with written statements by the artists to explain their aims. Such statements offended male Modernists who believed 'that politics (in this case feminism) spoiled art, which should be "universal" and "sexless"'.<sup>71</sup> Craftswomen were less inclined to make overt political statements, but exhibiting with women painters and sculptors in conjunction with women's conventions implied that they held similar views. In the late-1970s craft and feminism received international validation through an exhibition in the United States.



**Figure 3:** Women's Political Statements. New Zealand women were influenced by posters that were produced by feminist artists in America. In this example, the

<sup>70</sup> Dann, p.114. The first convention was held in Auckland in 1973, followed by the 1975 convention in Wellington, the 1977 convention in Christchurch and the 1979 convention in Hamilton. Two central aims of the conventions were the raising of the status and confidence of women and getting more women working on women's issues. See Brian Pink, 'Focusing on Women', ed. Statistics New Zealand Wellington, 2005, p.4.

<sup>71</sup> The case mentioned was an exhibition in Wellington by Louise Lewis in 1974. See Dann, p.112.

sardonic tone suggests that the author(s) believed that women had little to celebrate.<sup>72</sup>

## Judy Chicago

The American artist, Judy Chicago, was admired by feminist artists and craftswomen in New Zealand. At the 1975 United Women's Convention it was proclaimed that: 'Judy Chicago has helped establish a female audience for the arts, eager to see their life experience revealed and reflected'.<sup>73</sup> In 1979, at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art in the United States, Chicago, a member of the North American Feminist Art Movement (NAFAM), succeeded in breaking through both the gender and medium barrier with her installation, 'The Dinner Party'.<sup>74</sup> Described as a 'collaborative, unashamedly didactic, and [a celebration of] the low-ranked crafts of ceramics [china painting] and embroidery' the work appeared to exemplify the feminist ideal through its content, the materials used and the manner in which it was constructed.<sup>75</sup> The installation, celebrating the achievements of thirty-nine women in Western history, was created by Chicago with the help of 250 (unpaid) artists, designers, historians and craftspeople.<sup>76</sup> Women in New Zealand held dinner parties to coincide with the unveiling of the installation and sent a telegram to Chicago.<sup>77</sup> In both New Zealand and Australia the exploration and politicisation of gender issues, encouraged by Chicago's work, appeared to open up 'modes of critical inquiry into what had been categorised and marginalised as women's craft, politicising materials, techniques and approaches to production'.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Poster: Louisa Buck and Philip Dodd, *Relative Values or What's Art Worth?*, London, 1991, p. 15.

<sup>73</sup> 'Some Thoughts on Woman's Art', in *United Women's Convention 1975, 1976*, p.68.

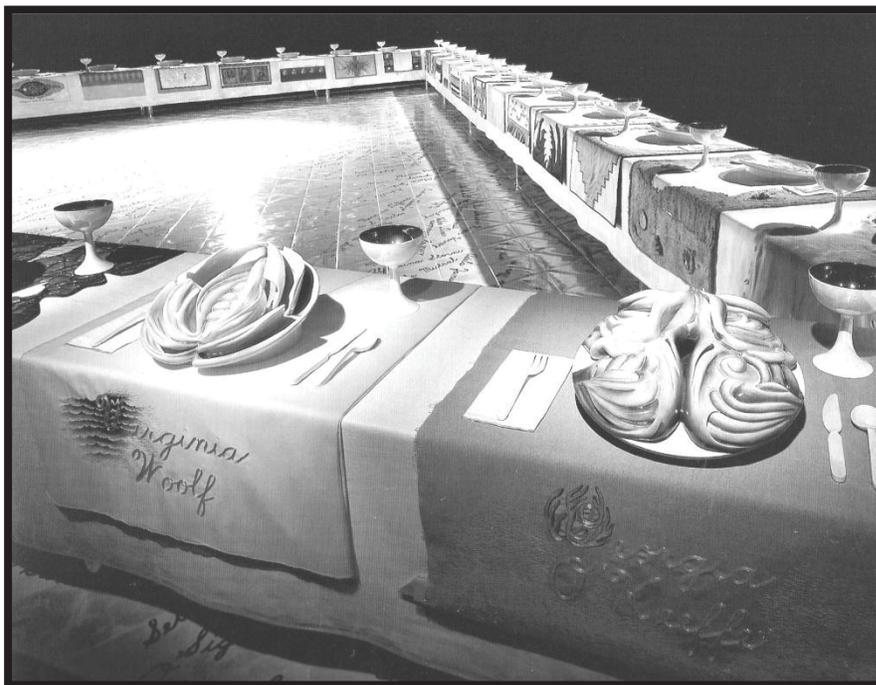
<sup>74</sup> For more detail see Judy Chicago, *The Dinner Party: A Symbol of Our Heritage*, 1st edn, Garden City, N.Y., 1979. The installation was displayed in fifteen venues in six countries across the world. It was seen by a million people. Since 2007 it has been on permanent exhibition at the Brooklyn Museum in New York City. See Judy Chicago and Donald Woodman, *Through the Flower*, available at: <http://www.throughtheflower.org/> (26 October 2010).

<sup>75</sup> Larry Shiner, *The Invention of Art: Cultural History*, Chicago, 2001, p.294. See Barnett, p.21.

<sup>76</sup> 'An International Dinner Party to Celebrate Women's Culture', *Broadsheet*, March 1979, p.37. See also Lauren Rabinovitz, 'Issues of Feminist Aesthetics: Judy Chicago and Joyce Wieland' in Hilary Robinson, ed., *Feminism-Art-Theory: An Anthology, 1968 – 2000*, Malden, MA, 2001, pp.346-52.

<sup>77</sup> Dann, p.115. See also 'An International Dinner Party to Celebrate Women's Culture', p.37.

<sup>78</sup> Robert Bell, *The Crafted Object: 1960s – 80s*, Canberra, 2006.



**Figure 4:** The Dinner Party by Judy Chicago. 'A seminal event and text for the [Women's Art] movement'.<sup>79</sup> Chicago's installation celebrated the lives of famous women by employing craft techniques and materials.

### **Feminism – Professionalism**

Paradoxically, by the late-1980s and early-1990s, feminist discourses, never very strong in New Zealand craft magazines, had almost disappeared completely. This may have been the result of legislation that had satisfied many of the demands women had been making, but for people involved in the craft movement it may have been a result of the drive to make craft more 'professional'. In her analysis of feminist discourse in *New Zealand Crafts*, Robin Gardner-Gee observed that articles framed in feminist terms were extremely rare and usually repeated NAFAM doctrine.<sup>80</sup> At times the writing in the magazine appeared to be verging on anti-feminist in its form. For example, quilting, often considered a craft dominated by women, featured regularly in the magazine from 1983, but it was a male quilter, Malcolm Harrison who featured most often. Moreover, an article on Harrison concludes with the pejorative remark: 'There can be no doubt that his skill

<sup>79</sup> Photo: Judy Chicago and Edward Lucie-Smith, *Women and Art: Contested Territory*, London, 1999, p.13. See also Clarke, 'Juliet Batten', p.18.

<sup>80</sup> Robin Gardner-Gee, 'A Practice Called Craft in a Country Called New Zealand: Readings of Craft New Zealand 1982 – 1993', MA thesis, University of Auckland, 1996, p.88.

and inventiveness have raised a pastime which was formerly regarded as one step up from occupational therapy to the level of an important art.<sup>81</sup> The remark was not ignored by a group of women artists who had attended a seminar called 'Sexism in the Arts' where the article was discussed. They pointed out that quilting had 'a long and well-established [female] tradition' and asked Harrison if the reason he denied his sources was because they were women?<sup>82</sup> Harrison and the author, Peter Shaw, responded to the letter but refused to concede that they had denied sources. However, such exchanges may have caused some craftspeople, particularly craftsmen, to frame future articles more carefully, or, as appears to be the case in *New Zealand Crafts*, to avoid feminist discourse entirely.

To some extent, the quilting debate reflected the change in emphasis that had gradually infiltrated the studio craft movement over the 1980s. Some craftswomen were aware that emphasising their feminist ideals was impeding their professional status. As the Australian craft theorist, Sue Rowley observed:

the goals of craftswomen in the late 1970s and early 1980s were not necessarily served by the celebration of women's creative but private and under-valued crafts. For these women, professional or studio crafts could not be subsumed under the rubric of women's domestic traditions without cost.<sup>83</sup>

Should craftswomen articulate feminist beliefs that emphasised sharing and cooperation – and sometimes separation; or should they pursue a 'professional' career – a career that would generate economic, cultural and symbolic capital? Feminists were trying to elevate the domestic (feminine) crafts but craftspeople knew that the 'real' value of craft, both economic and cultural, was located in public (masculine) crafts.<sup>84</sup> By validating domestic craft traditions craftswomen were seen by those in positions of power, such as the CCNZ and the QEII Arts Council, to be turning their backs on

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<sup>81</sup> Peter Shaw, 'Malcolm Harrison: Quiltmaker', *New Zealand Crafts*, July 1983, p.25.

<sup>82</sup> Juliet Batten, et al., 'Letter to the Editor', *New Zealand Crafts*, December/January 1983/1984, p.5.

<sup>83</sup> Sue Rowley, 'Warping the Loom: Theoretical Frameworks for Craft Writing', in Noris Ioannou, ed., *Craft in Society: An Anthology of Perspectives*, South Fremantle, 1992, p.173.

<sup>84</sup> This is a personal observation based on my career as a craftspeople.

excellence and professionalism. The survey carried out in 1983 demonstrated that the only crafts that ‘counted’ were professional, and by the 1990s many women saw more to be gained by becoming ‘professionals’. Cooperation and sharing – central features of the early studio craft movement and the feminist movement – were sacrificed in the pursuit of economic, cultural and symbolic capital.

## Māori

### A Parallel Craft World

Throughout the first half of the twentieth century, as was noted in Chapter One, there was a growing realisation by Māori that the preservation of their culture was ultimately in their hands. Mahi toi did not fit into the European economic model because it had traditionally been produced for social and cultural reasons as much as economic necessity. Furthermore, because of the mana (authority, power, prestige) of tohunga mahi toi/ringa rehe and the association of many mahi toi items with sacred events, these items were considered tapu (sacred, forbidden) so many Māori found the commoditisation of their craft culturally offensive.<sup>85</sup>

The 1983 Scotts and Mounsey craft industry study, largely a study of the potential of ‘professional’ craft, devoted a section of the report to mahi toi. The study observed: ‘as was expected ... this survey method,<sup>86</sup> ... turned up few craftspeople working in the Māori craft tradition.’<sup>87</sup> Their preliminary enquiries showed that because much mahi toi was carried out for social and cultural reasons rather than economic, the data they could gather would be

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<sup>85</sup> See Ranginui Walker, *Ka Whawhai Tonu Matou: Struggle without End*, Revised edn, Auckland, 2004, pp.412, 414 for definitions of mana and tapu.

<sup>86</sup> Refers to the survey methodology. A formal questionnaire, as used in the main section of the survey, was not considered appropriate. The research was undertaken by a single researcher with co-operation from the Māori Affairs Department. The income qualification for the rest of the survey was directed at those who ‘generally made \$2,000 or more a year’ but it was acknowledged that the qualification was likely to exclude many Māori craftspeople. See Scotts and Mounsey, p.5. Part 1, 2.5.

<sup>87</sup> *ibid.*, p.10. Part 1, 3.2.1.

of an 'attitudinal' nature rather than 'quantitative' nature.<sup>88</sup> They interviewed administrators, community officers, mahi toi groups, training centre staff, individual carvers and public servants. They acknowledged the absence of any interviews in the South Island, justifying this omission with the statement that, 'given the limited sample of respondents, the way they were selected, and the way the "questions" were administered, this survey does not purport to be a rigorous piece of research. Its status is more that of a discussion or information paper.'<sup>89</sup> It is not clear if this statement is referring to the total report or the section on mahi toi. However, despite the limitations, it was clear to the authors that tohunga mahi toi/ringa rehe were operating in a new setting but they were unsure how to connect mahi toi to the studio craft movement.

### **Catalysts for Changes**

By the 1970s and 1980s social and economic changes had altered the way tohunga mahi toi/ringa rehe interacted with the wider art and craft communities and New Zealand society generally. These changes were influenced by the urbanisation of Māori society between the 1950s and 1970s.<sup>90</sup> The secularisation of Māori society had diminished the strength of tapu and had disrupted the division of labour which had traditionally been based on gender, but it allowed new, and often younger, urban-based craftspeople to engage in the making of mahi toi. Their work was referenced to traditional mahi toi but usually was not produced in traditional ways. Māori feared that traditional skills would be lost. For instance, in an article in *New Zealand Crafts* in 1982 called 'Keeping Alive Korowai Weaving' Diggeress Te Kanawa expressed her concerns: 'For although many young girls learnt the skills [of weaving] ... , once they grew older they didn't have the time or motivation to start once again.'<sup>91</sup> Other teachers felt that there were too many distractions away from the marae: 'I feel sorry for our kids trying to learn

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<sup>88</sup> *ibid.*, p.1. Part 4, 2.

<sup>89</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>90</sup> In 1951 29% of Māori lived in urban areas. By 1961 that had increased to 46% and by 1971 the total was 71%. See David C. Thorns and Charles P. Sedgwick, *Understanding Aotearoa/New Zealand: Historical Statistics*, Palmerston North, 1997, p.54.

<sup>91</sup> Glenys Christian, 'Keeping Alive Korowai Weaving', *New Zealand Crafts*, December 1982, p.2.

things away from the marae because I feel that the madness of the Pakeha world bamboozles them'.<sup>92</sup>



**Figure 5:** Diggeress Te Kanawa and Tini Wirihana.<sup>93</sup>

To manage this problem the Scotts and Mounsey report suggested four ways in which Māori could adapt to the changes and retain the traditional base of their mahi toi.<sup>94</sup> The suggestions were: 'Socio-cultural training to reinforce Māoritanga; vocational training to develop specific craft skills necessary in a European-style market economy; artistic training to support the first two points; and finally, personal development – where learning craft skills [was] a part of learning "general living skills".'<sup>95</sup> The prescription offered by the report recognised that the environment for tohunga mahi toi/ringa rehe was changing, that the old ways would need to change, but that the changes should be managed so that the culture could remain viable and perhaps be strengthened. The recommendations also clearly demonstrated the commercial emphasis that played an important role in the Pākehā dominated movement.

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<sup>92</sup> Myrtle Walker quoted in Sandi Searancke, 'Nga Puawaitanga O Nga Wahine', *Broadsheet*, June, 1984, p.23.

<sup>93</sup> Photo: Gil Hanly in Walker, *Ka Whawhai Tonu Matou: Struggle without End*, unpaginated.

<sup>94</sup> Scotts and Mounsey. Part 4, 4.1.

<sup>95</sup> *ibid.*

The second issue to influence change was the realisation amongst Pākehā that Māori craft had significant cultural value. An event a year after the craft industry report was presented confirmed that the acceptance of mahi toi, both ancient and by inference, contemporary, by New Zealand society was a reality. On 10 September 1984, an exhibition of mahi toi taonga (treasured craft works) called *Te Maori: Maori Art from New Zealand Collections*, opened at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. The exhibition was shown in another three American cities. In the United States it was seen by a total of 621,000 people, before returning to New Zealand to be exhibited in the four main cities under the title *Te Maori: Te Hokinga Mai* – the return home.<sup>96</sup> Pākehā had often treated mahi toi, if not with disdain, then with indifference, therefore the reaction in America was a surprise. Ten years later, Peter and Dianne Beatson observed that the response to the works in the United States 'brought home to many New Zealanders the wealth of our indigenous heritage'.<sup>97</sup> The exhibition was the culmination of years of effort by Māori to have mahi toi recognised at the same level as Pākehā craft, and perhaps treated with even more respect, given its status as the mahi toi of the Tangata Whenua (people of the land) or the first mahi toi of the nation. A conversation began that stimulated interest and new developments in mahi toi.

## Barriers

Barriers to tohunga mahi toi/ringa rehe being accepted into Pākehā-dominated art/craft institutions could be implemented by the institutions or self-imposed. Only rarely did public art galleries make attempts to reach out to a Māori audience or deal with Māori issues. In his examination of exhibitions at the Manawatu Art Gallery in the 1970s Athol McCredie quoted the Director, Luit Bieringa.

People like Para Matchitt who were the path breakers between contemporary and traditional art were not evident at all, they weren't visible. People are invisible if nobody

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<sup>96</sup> Philippa Jane Butler, 'Te Maori Past and Present: Stories of Te Maori', MA thesis, Massey University, 1996, p.9. The other American cities were: St Louis, San Francisco and Chicago. The New Zealand cities were: Wellington, Dunedin, Christchurch and Auckland.

<sup>97</sup> Peter Beatson and Dianne Beatson, *The Arts in Aotearoa New Zealand. Themes and Issues*, Palmerston North, 1994, p. 61.

writes about them and nobody sees their work. The structures were driven by Pakeha, ...<sup>98</sup>

As McCredie pointed out, Māori were aware of Māori artists and craftspeople but because gallery audiences were largely Pākehā the New Zealand public seemed unaware of what was going on in the world of Māori mahi toi.

Tohunga mahi toi/ringa rehe might also refuse to embrace new cultural developments if they were not comfortable with them. For instance, some Māori women were convinced that cultural feminism was largely a white and middle-class distraction that achieved little for them. In the mid-1980s, just as many Pākehā women believed that the women's art movement had 'begun to "arrive"', some Māori women set out to discover their own identity.<sup>99</sup> Similarly, some Māori men could not relate to Pākehā ideas that they perceived to be based on colonialist concepts of art.<sup>100</sup>

### **Commercialisation**

The increasing demand by Māori for recognition of rangatiratanga (sovereignty) that saw the passing of the Treaty of Waitangi Act in 1975 encouraged an economic renaissance<sup>101</sup> as Māori tried to gain greater control of their financial future. Moves to achieve this gained both government and private sector support and mahi toi was a factor in this development. For instance, in 1983, Kara Puketapu, the Secretary of the Department of Māori Affairs, commissioned a report by Richard Hovis, an American consultant, to investigate business opportunities for Māori. The Hovis Report, *Maoritanga and the American Retail Marketplace*, recommended taking 'a showcase of "quality products" to the United States to obtain orders from prestigious department stores such as Bloomingdales.<sup>102</sup> A private company called 'Maori International Holdings' was formed and although it struggled financially initially, it did undertake marketing exercises and may have encouraged the Department of Māori Affairs to take an exhibition of mahi toi to Hawaii in 1984.

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<sup>98</sup> McCredie, p. 147.

<sup>99</sup> Juliet Batten 'Art and Identity', in Novitz and Willmott, eds, p.226. Also see Pihama and Mara in Coxon, ed., p.228.

<sup>100</sup> Novitz and Willmott, eds, p.226.

<sup>101</sup> Walker, p.255.

<sup>102</sup> *ibid.*, pp.156-7.

Throughout the 1980s the commercialisation of mahi toi increased as tourist numbers grew and New Zealanders attempted to format a ‘national identity’ that included aspects of Māori culture. Mahi toi, or at least representations of mahi toi, became widely available in craft shops across New Zealand with both Māori and Pākehā openly displaying mahi toi such as carved pendants, earrings and other forms of adornment. The increasing interest in mahi toi took place during a period in New Zealand’s economic history that Geoff Bertram called the ‘third era’ – the 1980s and 1990s – when ‘the new political economy opened a plethora of opportunities for Maori skills and entrepreneurship.’<sup>103</sup> Bertram was discussing the wider economy but he could well have been talking about the move by mahi toi from a largely rural and isolated environment into the mainstream New Zealand craft world.

The commercialisation of ethnic craft is often presented as a wholly negative development, but Erik Cohen, in an international study, argued that the effects could be both negative and positive.<sup>104</sup> These factors include whether a culture is vital or declining and whether the commercialisation was driven by internal initiatives or sponsored from the outside. This produced four different types of commercialisation.

Culture	Source of Initiative	
	Spontaneous	Sponsored
Vital	Complementary commercialisation	Encroaching commercialisation
Declining	Substitutive commercialisation	Rehabilitative commercialisation

**Table 2:** Four types of commercialisation and their characteristic dynamics.<sup>105</sup>

<sup>103</sup> Geoff Bertram, ‘The New Zealand Economy, 1900 – 2000’, in Giselle Byrnes, ed., *The New Oxford History of New Zealand*, South Melbourne, Vic., 2009, p.561.

<sup>104</sup> Erik Cohen, ‘The Commercialization of Ethnic Crafts’, *Journal of Design History*, 2, 2/3, 1989.

<sup>105</sup> Diagram: *ibid.*, p.162.

It is beyond the scope of this thesis to discuss Cohen's findings in depth, but his analysis suggests that Maori moved from 'rehabilitative commercialisation' between 1919 and 1939 to 'complementary commercialisation' in the 1970s and beyond. The former could lead to a change in appearance and use of craft products but may have helped 'keep alive moribund crafts, revive half-forgotten old techniques, or even whole crafts'.<sup>106</sup> The latter was craft produced for use by locals and for sale. 'With time, the locals may begin to distinguish between the production for local use and production for sale, although they continue to manufacture for sale more or less exact copies of the locally used artifacts.'<sup>107</sup> A further distinction here was whether a work served a tapu purpose or was noa – for everyday use.<sup>108</sup> Within the various craft markets in New Zealand throughout the period this thesis examines, numerous variations of these categories intermingled, but by 1986 mahi toi was thriving in a number of different social and cultural locations and, as the critic Ray Thorburn noted: 'Contemporary Maori art [mahi toi] ha[d] come of age'.<sup>109</sup>

The commercialisation of mahi toi was given considerable attention in the 1983 Scotts and Mounsey report. As expected, and clearly not aware of the variety of forms commercialisation could take, both administrators and craftspeople expressed 'unanimous distaste for the nature and quality of souvenirs that are touted as "Maori art"'. The selling of most mahi toi objects was acceptable as long as the articles faithfully represented Māori skills.<sup>110</sup> For many, the conflict lay in how the items were made. The respondents believed that the nature of the souvenir market encouraged large scale industrial production that was incompatible with the high level of skill required to make 'authentic' mahi toi.

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<sup>106</sup> *ibid.*, p.164.

<sup>107</sup> *ibid.*, p.162.

<sup>108</sup> *The Press*, 19 February 2010, pp.10-1.

<sup>109</sup> Ray Thorburn, 'Maori Art Today: Taonga Yesterday Today Tomorrow', *New Zealand Crafts*, Summer 1986, p.4. Three major exhibitions were held between April and June 1986 in Gisborne, Wellington and Auckland. See Amy Mihi Brown, 'Karanga Karanga', *New Zealand Crafts*, Spring 1986, p.4.

<sup>110</sup> Scotts and Mounsey, 'The Souvenir Market', p.6. Part 4, 5.2.

Many tohunga mahi toi/ringa rehe, both traditional and commercially minded, found the most prestigious galleries closed to them because their work was either not innovative enough or they were too commercially orientated. They were forced to look to the souvenir market, often despised by craftspeople, or the less prestigious craft shops to sell their work. Jim Timings, a Māori bone carver working in Christchurch, faced this dilemma.

### **A Case Study: Jim Timings**

Jim Timings wrote to the CCNZ gallery director in 1988 in what appears to be a dispute about the gallery's right to reject his work. He outlined his experience, his commercial history as a bone carver and businessman and his contribution to the Māori community as an employer. He stated that he made 'no apology for the fact that what I do is completely market orientated and because of the employment opportunities I have created for young Maoris I am well supported by a wide cross section of the South Island Maori Community.'<sup>111</sup> He continued that it was necessary 'to produce a type of carving which is thoroughly traditional and acceptable to the Maori Community and which can be produced economically in sufficient saleable quantities by people with varying degrees of skill' and added, 'I do not, as some do, sneer at the "\$50 Fish hook".'<sup>112</sup> Pointing out that he had paid his subscription to the CCNZ for a number of years he implied that, as a member, he had a right to sell his work through the gallery without judgements being made about it. By 1988 the CCNZ was changing the way it represented craftspeople,<sup>113</sup> placing more emphasis on *avant-garde* craftwork, and this may have resulted in some of Timing's work being rejected and returned to him.<sup>114</sup> Timings repeated his position 'as a fairly longstanding payer of subscriptions to the council', adding: 'I had some delusion that you people would see the point to the exercise and that you would serve both me and the other bone carvers in this area in some way.'<sup>115</sup> He was disturbed that the CCNZ had 'twice rejected carvings which [had]

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<sup>111</sup> Jim Timings to the Gallery Director, CCNZ Records, 92-278, Box 47. Timings later wrote a book that emphasised his commercial approach. See Jim Timings, *Bone Carving: a New Zealand Guide to Tools, Techniques and Marketing*, Christchurch, 1995.

<sup>112</sup> Jim Timings to the Gallery Director, CCNZ Records, 92-278, Box 47.

<sup>113</sup> Discussed further in Chapter Seven.

<sup>114</sup> There is no evidence that Timings was informed of the reason for his work being rejected.

<sup>115</sup> Timings to Gallery Director, CCNZ Records, 92-278, Box 47.

proven market appeal in Christchurch and the lower part of the South Island.<sup>116</sup> Timings pointed out he had far more experience in his field than they did and implied that the CCNZ should recognise this – although an anonymous handwritten note in the margin noted that, ‘He asks earlier for our direction.’<sup>117</sup>

The dispute between Timings and the CCNZ may have been one amongst many, but it highlights the challenge for *tohunga mahi toi/ringa rehe*. On the one hand, they needed to base their work on traditional designs to ensure its cultural integrity and meet the expectations of their customers, but on the other their most commercially successful craft did not fit the new CCNZ profile that demanded more innovative ‘art-like’ work. Carvers like Timing found they could amass economic capital but the price was increasingly a loss of cultural and symbolic capital.

## Māori and Pākehā Interaction

Commenting on an exhibition of bone carving by Brian Flintoff called ‘Nga Taniwha’ at the Canterbury Museum in 1984, the reviewer, Brett Riley, noted Flintoff, a craftsman with no Māori affiliations, not only had to pass the scrutiny of Māori but also ‘stand up to the critical gaze of the western eye which will see it [Flintoff’s carvings] as contemporary art.’<sup>118</sup> Riley further outlined the challenge for Flintoff.

[T]he models for the carvings were created in a vastly different context. Maori art (itself a western notion which doesn’t sit comfortably) was part of *mana* and *tapu*, part of the spiritual communication which formed the wellspring and foundation of Maori life. Its contemporary descendent, no matter who makes it, is not. It is fashioned, for the most part, to be admired for its design and execution, for its formal qualities alone. This western approach ensures that a kind of cultural juggling has to take place as we view artefact and modern *objet d’art* side by side.<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> *ibid*

<sup>117</sup> *ibid*. Underlined in note.

<sup>118</sup> Brett Riley, ‘Pakeha Taniwha’, *New Zealand Listener*, 24 November 1984, p.56. Flintoff is discussed below.

<sup>119</sup> *ibid*.

Pākehā craftspeople in the 1980s were increasingly employing Māori designs as a part of their craft or were, as in the case of Flintoff, prepared to produce work that was unmistakably 'Māori' in all aspects except the ethnic origin of the maker.

### **Māori Decoration and Pākehā Craft**

Earlier attempts by Pākehā to locate mahi toi within New Zealand's craft culture were often concerned with attempting to find a connection between mahi toi and a 'New Zealand' craft identity or mahi toi and a more 'natural' approach to craft. In the late 1950s the potter Barry Brickell, suggested that a closer examination of mahi toi would provide some direction to New Zealand potters even though there had been no tradition of Māori pottery. Brickell wrote: 'Maori "pot equivalents" created from "wood, gourds, stone and plant leaves in the traditional manner of the Polynesians" ... are at last beginning to capture the devotion of a few "pakeha" artists. It is part of the Western general awakening to the work of the "primitives"'.<sup>120</sup> Brickell was reacting to the Anglo-Oriental tradition introduced through Bernard Leach's *A Potter's Book*. Leach had looked to the peasant craftspeople of China and Japan for inspiration, but Brickell, as a New Zealander, felt that following the British or Oriental direction would be merely copying a foreign culture. His advocacy of 'primitive' forms was linked to advocating New Zealand's native culture as a source of creativity. Craftspeople, like some post-impressionist artists such as Vincent Van Gogh, Paul Gauguin and Paul Cézanne, often revered 'primitive' craft for its unspoiled honesty. The interest in 'primitive' art was a search for qualities that had been abandoned by nineteenth century European art: 'intensive expressiveness, clarity of structure and a forthright simplicity of technique.'<sup>121</sup> 'Primitive' art (and craft) was also linked to the notion that children's art was more expressive than adult art (or craft).<sup>122</sup> In New Zealand, mahi toi, despite its position as the nation's indigenous craft, was perceived by some as exotic and a primitive form of craft.

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<sup>120</sup> Quoted in Elliott and Skinner, p.130.

<sup>121</sup> E. H. Gombrich, *The Story of Art*, London, 1967, p.428.

<sup>122</sup> Pat Kirkham, *Harry Peach: Dryad and Dia*, London, 1986, p.71. See also Stuart Macdonald, *The History and Philosophy of Art Education*, London, 1970, pp.329-40.



**Figure 6:** Robyn Stewart burnished pot, 1987. Stewart's use of ancient making techniques encouraged her to use Māori decoration.<sup>123</sup>

Other craftspeople applied Māori decoration to their craft work because they believed the way the item was made had an affinity with Māori designs. Robyn Stewart, a potter, employed an ancient technique used by the Pueblo Indians in New Mexico that involved burnishing (rubbing with a smooth object) the surface of the pot before firing in a type of bonfire – often using dung as the fuel. Stewart used Māori motifs because she believed ‘the pots ... [lent] themselves to ethnic patterns.’<sup>124</sup> Others were less comfortable using Māori motifs. The potter, Mirek Smíšek, for instance, explored the use of both Aboriginal and Māori imagery but ‘came to believe that using such designs was culturally inappropriate.’<sup>125</sup> In the 1983 survey of craft, 45% of the 72 craftspeople who indicated they called on Māori tradition were following Stewart's lead by applying Māori motifs to their work.<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> Photo: John Parker and Cecilia Parkinson, *Profiles: 24 New Zealand Potters*, Auckland, 1988, p.90.

<sup>124</sup> Glenys Christian, 'Return to the Simple Things', *New Zealand Crafts*, December 1982, p.10.

<sup>125</sup> Mirek Smíšek, *Mirek Smíšek: 60 Years, 60 Pots*, Waikanae, 2009, p.23.

<sup>126</sup> See Table Three.

Type	No. of craftspeople	Non-cumulative % (of 72)
Incorporating motifs only <sup>127</sup>	33	45.8
Woodcarving	14	19.4
Stone, bone, shell	12	16.7
Jade	8	11.1
Basketware	1	1.4
Textiles	6	8.3
Other	3	4.2

**Table 3:** Kinds of modern/derivative forms of Polynesian craft items produced for sale.<sup>128</sup>

### Share or Perish

At times frustration at the reluctance of Māori to conform to the craft paradigm as it was understood within the studio craft movement was expressed openly. For example, in a 1982 article on the Pākehā bone and ivory carver, Owen Mapp, the editor of *Craft Council News*, Grant Finch, suggested that if Māori were not prepared to advance mahi toi then Pākehā would:

The carving of bone and ivory, an ancient art practised by many cultures has become a popular craft and while in New Zealand it was once the domain of the Maori, their failure or lack of desire to communicate their craft to the public has left the way open for pakeha prominence.<sup>129</sup>

Finch's perception that Māori were not passing on their knowledge may have arisen from the concerns of the New Zealand Māori Council which, during

<sup>127</sup> 'Among those stating that they utilised modern forms, or produced goods derivative of Maori or Pacific Island craft traditions, the largest group simply made use of Polynesian motifs.' See Scotts and Mounsey, p.13. Part 3, 2.3.

<sup>128</sup> Diagram: Scotts and Mounsey, p.14. Part 3, 2.3. This table reports on the craftspeople who said they used modern/derivative forms. The number of respondents was 72, although there were a total 77 answers, implying that some respondents may have been producing a number craft forms. Respondents were asked to take into account 'all [their] income earning crafts'. The lack of fibre crafts was explained by the income qualification, Māori opposition to the sale of mahi toi and the collective approach to the making of some craft. The ethnicity of the respondents was not stated.

<sup>129</sup> Grant Finch, 'Owen Mapp – Ivory Carver', *New Zealand Crafts: Crafts Council News*, July 1982, p.3.

the developmental stage of the training of Māori arts and crafts specialists, had indicated that while it believed that tohunga mahi toi/tinga rehe still retained the skills of mahi toi they did not possess the necessary teaching expertise to pass the knowledge on.<sup>130</sup> But his comment also contains a hint of frustration with the idea that mahi toi was seen by some as a static craft form.

By the 1980s there was continuity in the development of skills – even if they were being learnt informally – and the traditions were changing. In a *New Zealand Crafts* article in the same year that Finch expressed his opinion, Hepi Maxwell, a Māori pounamu (jade) carver, described his background in the Māori community in Rotorua and, while acknowledging that his work was not traditional, stated, ‘Maoris seem to like them [his carvings] and see tradition in them.’<sup>131</sup> Maxwell had lost both legs in a trucking accident and looked to carving as an occupation that did not require the use of legs.<sup>132</sup> As a young Māori with no formal craft training, Maxwell may have felt he lacked the mana to state unequivocally that his work was a valid Māori craft form, but his comments suggested that the traditional skills were being passed on and adapted.

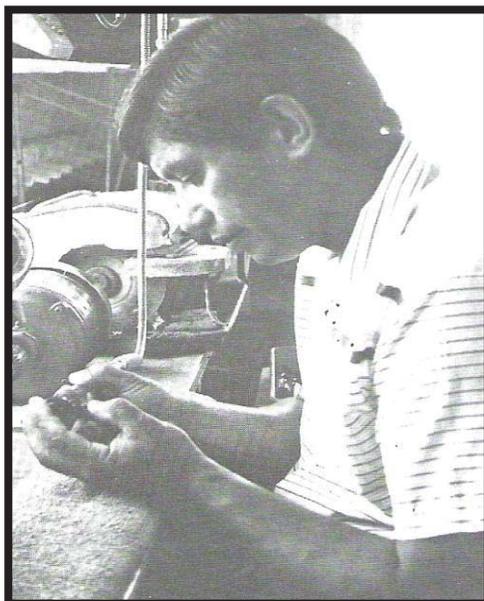
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<sup>130</sup> Huhana Smith, et al., eds, *Taiawhio: Conversations with Contemporary Maori Artists*, Wellington, 2002, p. xi.

<sup>131</sup> Glenys Christian, 'Hepi Maxwell: Mastermind Carver', *New Zealand Craft*, May 1982, p. 21. See also *Toi Maori Aotearoa: Maori Arts New Zealand*, 2009; available at:

<http://www.maoriart.org.nz/> (20 August 2009).

<sup>132</sup> *ibid.*,



**Figure 7:** Hapi Maxwell's use of modern equipment and lack of formal training may have caused him to be cautious in claiming a direct lineage to traditional Māori skills.<sup>133</sup>



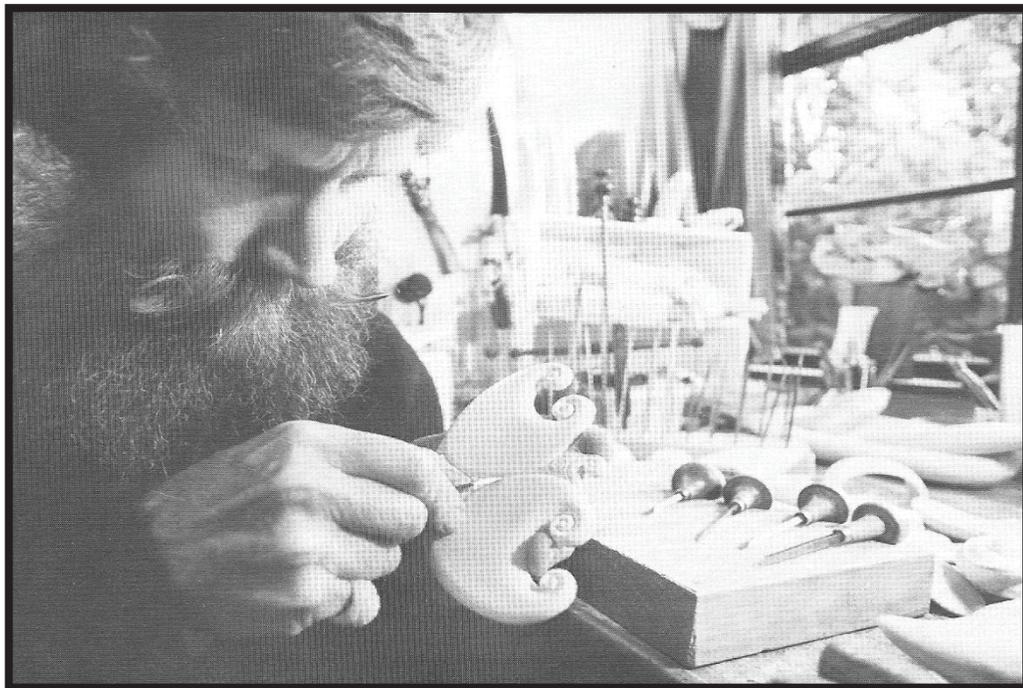
**Figure 8:** Pounamu carving by Hapi Maxwell reflected traditional designs<sup>134</sup>

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<sup>133</sup> Photo: Christian, 'Hapi Maxwell: Mastermind Carver', p.20.

<sup>134</sup> Photo: *Toi Maori Aotearoa: Maori Arts New Zealand*.

Owen Mapp, the subject of Finch's article, having undoubtedly defended his use of Māori design on numerous occasions, developed a response that suggested that the use of Māori motifs was a natural progression for craft in a multicultural society. Describing his ancestry as Viking, he maintained that he was: 'a New Zealander and grew up in a mixed culture, consequently my influences are part Maori whether deliberately or subconsciously. My interest in my Viking background remains, but it's the Maori cultural environment which is the strongest influence at present.'<sup>135</sup> He also argued that his work, in a similar fashion to mahi toi, looked to nature for design influence. He agreed with a statement put to him by Finch '*that the spirals and curves dominant in Maori carving are also the logical refinement of bonework and are a natural reflection of the medium as much as culture.*'<sup>136</sup> The comments suggest an attempt to bring some degree of separation between his work and traditional mahi toi.

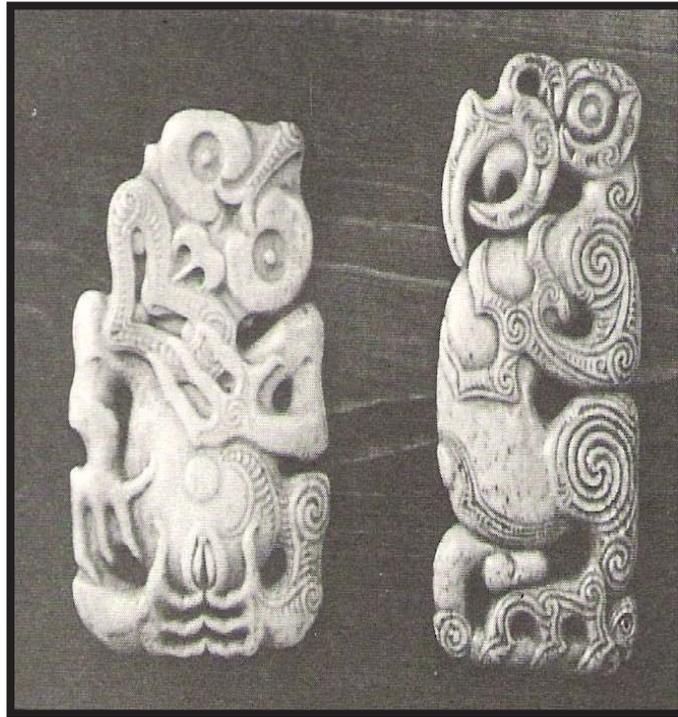


**Figure 9:** Owen Mapp. Combining Māori and Pākehā design and reflecting nature.<sup>137</sup>

<sup>135</sup> Finch, 'Owen Mapp – Ivory Carver', p.4. Mapp was a member of Ngā Puna Waihangā (Māori Artists and Writers Society) which was founded in 1973 at Te Kaha. See Sandy Adsett, Cliff Whiting, and Witi Ihimaera, eds, *Mataora: The Living Face: Contemporary Maori Art*, Auckland, 1996, p.18.

<sup>136</sup> Finch, p.4. The question was presented in italics.

<sup>137</sup> Photo: Finch, p.4.



**Figure 10:** Heitiki and Manaia. Bone carvings by Owen Mapp.<sup>138</sup>

### **Bi-cultural Craft**

Craftspeople, like Mapp, with feet in both cultural camps were treading a perilous route. In 1985, Mapp submitted a carved box to a Crafts Council exhibition called the 'Winstone Ties That Bind'. The work was rejected by the 'foreign' judge, Marlise Staehelin, who Mapp described as being 'unfamiliar with New Zealand's ethnic background and bi-cultural growth'.<sup>139</sup> He noted: 'She made the statement that anything "looking Maori" and made by a non-Maori was not selected', adding that on the rejection slip he received was written "Though I'm Swiss I don't yodel".<sup>140</sup> Clearly angry, he questioned how she could know his racial background except through the Wellington City Art Gallery, where the exhibition was being held, and condemned the director if that was the case. As if to add insult to injury, one of the works that was commended by the judge was a flax weaving by a European using traditional Māori weaving techniques. Summing up the conundrum, Mapp

<sup>138</sup> Photo: Peter Cape, *Please Touch. A Survey of the Three-Dimensional Arts in New Zealand*, Auckland, 1980, p.68. These works are indicative of some of Mapp's earlier pieces and are not necessarily the same as the work rejected by Staehelin.

<sup>139</sup> Owen Mapp, 'Letter to the Editor: New Zealand Bi-Cultural Art Versus Ethnic Art', *New Zealand Crafts*, Summer 1985, pp.4-5.

<sup>140</sup> *ibid.*, p.5.

pointed out that had Staehelin judged the carved box in Europe it could well have been rejected for being imitative of the European Art Nouveau style which Mapp claimed had similar design elements.<sup>141</sup> Mapp followed these points with questions that went to the heart of the debate about the role of studio craft in a bi-cultural society such as New Zealand.

At a time when New Zealand is moving closer to a more balanced bi-cultural situation are we, Maori and Pakeha, going to tolerate this type of behaviour from judges, selectors and art gallery staff? Are artists not permitted to explore all aspects of their own country? Are we to look over our shoulders to check whether our influences are “permissible” before we put paint to canvas or tool to wood? Now that Maoris are working in the field of ceramics are we to make the statement[:] “Sorry you are not accepted using clay, it’s not of your ethnic background”? Are Pakeha potters going to be told[:] “Sorry you can’t use any Japanese ethnic content”? And when will New Zealand Museums [sic] start recognising that what is happening in the contemporary carving,[sic] of wood, jade, bone and ivory is not a separate movement but a natural, blended, continuation from pre-European New Zealand, to our present period by the mixed blood, bi-cultural, state of the New Zealand population.<sup>142</sup>

### **A Case Study: Brian Flintoff**

Brian Flintoff, as noted earlier, was another Pākehā working ‘right at the interface of two cultures’.<sup>143</sup> Flintoff’s skill and understanding of Māoritanga appeared to convince South Island Māori of his sincerity. The ‘Nga Taniwha’ exhibition of 1984 was opened with Māori rituals and an address by Steve (later Sir Tipene) O’Regan, chair of the Ngāi Tahu Trust Board.<sup>144</sup> Although some questions about the mixing of two craft forms continued to be asked. Brett Riley, the reviewer, observed that Flintoff’s works were not copies of traditional mahi toi but were reinterpretations of legends. He admired Flintoff’s skill, particularly in those pieces ‘which depart[ed] most significantly from the tradition [of bone carving]’, but he detected, in the departure, a loss: ‘The paradox is simply that straying too far into formal abstraction and pure form can dilute the sense of supernatural mystery and fearsome power of the

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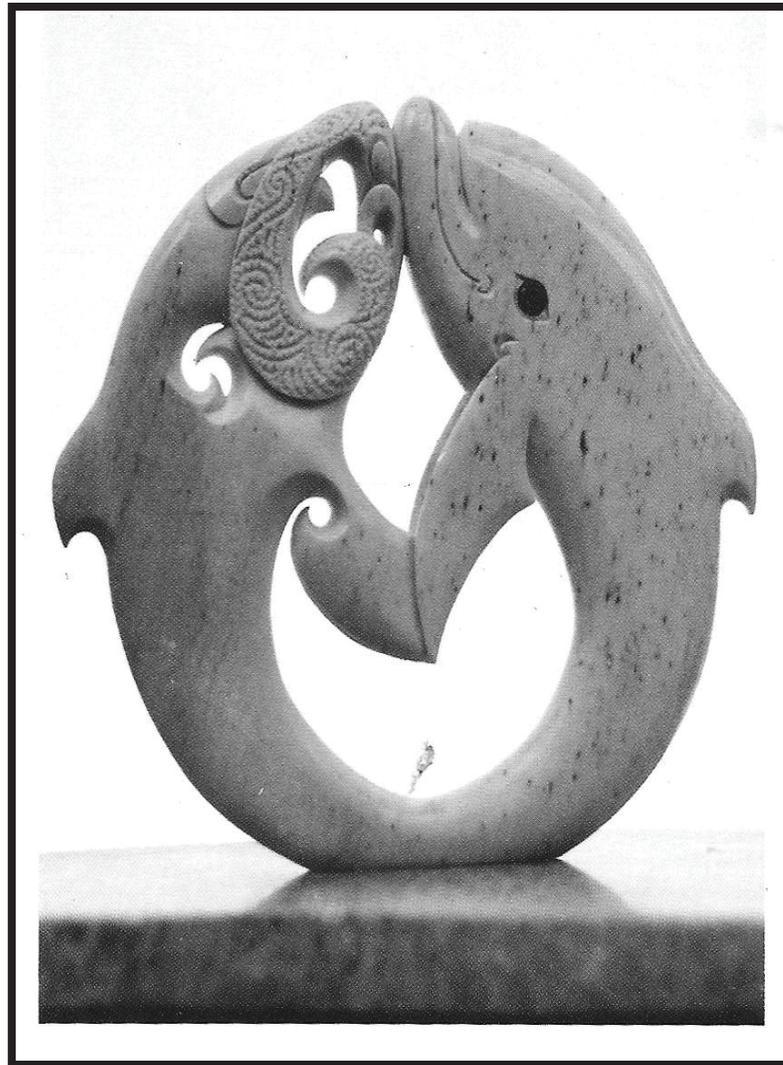
<sup>141</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>142</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>143</sup> Riley, p.56.

<sup>144</sup> *ibid.*

legendary creatures which were Flintoff's stimulus in the first place.<sup>145</sup> Riley's central point was that makers might have to decide if they were working in traditional or contemporary form – whether they in fact were traditional Māori craftspeople, which of course Flintoff could not be, or were they Pākehā Modernists, reinterpreting traditional designs? Flintoff's carvings, according to Riley, were most successful in the second form. The fusion of Māori mahi toi and Pākehā craft, it seems, could never be complete and continued to be problematic.



**Figure 11:** 'Ahoaho'. Bone carving by Brian Flintoff. This is a later work by Flintoff but demonstrates his ability to incorporate traditional or contemporary forms.<sup>146</sup>

<sup>145</sup> Brett Riley, 'Pakeha Taniwha', *New Zealand Listener*, 24 November 1983.

<sup>146</sup> Photo: Brian Flintoff, 'Ahoaho' in *Craft New Zealand*, Autumn 1992, p.41.

## A New Generation

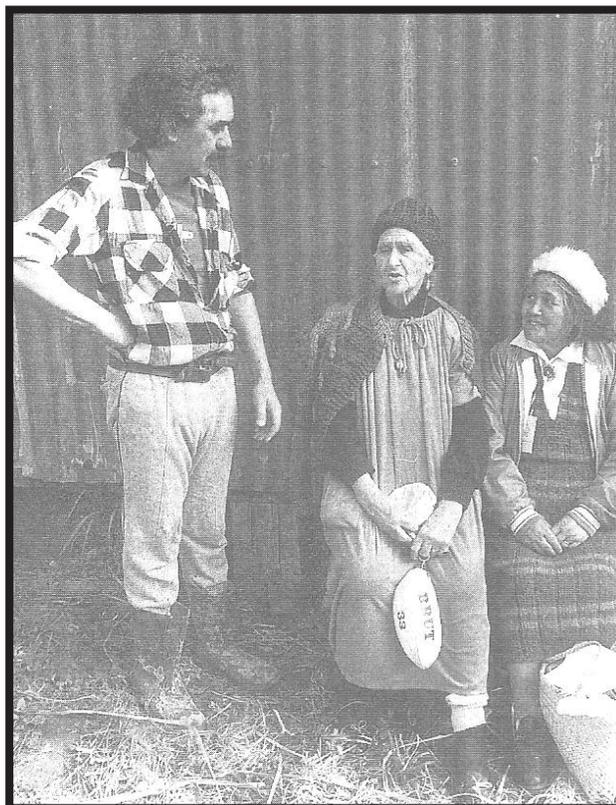
Māori activism in the 1970s and early-1980s reflected the contention of Brazilian educator, Paulo Freire, that the education process could not be neutral – it either facilitated the integration of generations into conformity or it became ‘the practice of freedom’ – how men and women discover how to participate in the transformation of their world.<sup>147</sup> The Māori economic and cultural renaissance suggested that the second of Freire’s contentions was achieving dominance. A new group of *tohunga mahi toi/ringa rehe* who were aware of the changes emerged during this time and managed to incorporate two traditions – a Pākehā craft medium and Māori-inspired decoration. Manos Nathan, Baye Riddell, Paerau Corneal, Wi Taepa and Colleen Waata-Urlich, collectively known as *Ngā Kaihanga Uku* (Māori Clay Artists) became a presence within the studio craft movement that Pākehā could not ignore.<sup>148</sup> The group were not conforming to European ceramic conventions, but they were not limiting their craft to traditional Māori materials either. Riddell wished to emphasise that the group were not separatist but stated: ‘they [the group] may develop values, and statements in clay may emerge, which are totally different from current trends or fashions in pottery.’<sup>149</sup> His statement articulated the mantra of Modernism – the search for new ideas and new forms of expression. He did not reject traditional *mahi toi* and, in fact, his ‘totally different values and statements’ suggest an infusion of Māori values into the studio craft movement – particularly in those crafts previously dominated by Pākehā materials and ideas.

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<sup>147</sup> Peter Mayo, *Gramsci, Freire, and Adult Education: Possibilities for Transformative Action*, London, 1999, p. 5.

<sup>148</sup> Walker, p. 322. *Ngā Kaihanga Uku* was formed in 1987. See also Peter Creevy, ‘Baye Riddell – Potter’, *New Zealand Potter*, 31, 3, 1989, pp.10-1. Wi Taepa and Paerau Corneal joined the group in the early 1990s, see Baye Riddell in Peter Lange, et al., *Playing with Fire: Auckland Studio Potters Society Turns 50*, Auckland, N.Z., 2010, p.37.

<sup>149</sup> Creevy, p. 10.



**Figure 12:** Baye Riddell with Kaumatua Waima.<sup>150</sup>

The group had ambitions of becoming self-sufficient but struggled to reconcile the spiritual dimension of their work with the need to be involved in a capitalist Western economy. Riddell lamented the loss of the Māori system where the community supported tohunga mahi toi/ringa rehe with the necessities of life as well as status and mana.<sup>151</sup> Riddell's mentoring came from tohunga mahi toi/ringa rehe such as Para Matchitt, Cliff Whiting, Ralph Hotere and Pākehā craftspeople, including Harry Davis and Helen Mason. Ngā Kaihanga Uku presented a challenge to the way the training of future tohunga mahi toi/ringa rehe needed to be structured. Young Māori required a specialised curriculum in mahi toi but they also needed to be part of the wider studio craft movement.

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<sup>150</sup> Photo: Jill Carlyle in Creevy, p.10.

<sup>151</sup> *ibid.*



**Figure 13:** Clockwise from the top left: Manos Nathan, 'Ipu Wairoa',<sup>152</sup> Paerau Corneal, 'Mana Wahine',<sup>153</sup> Wi Taepa, 'Ipu I',<sup>154</sup> Colleen Waata-Urlich, 'Ngarutoru'. The works combine Māori elements such as the koru (spiral) pattern and 'Pākehā' materials.<sup>155</sup>

## Changing Society – Changing Craft

The rise of feminism, with the associated questioning of the male narrative of art and craft; the advance of new notions of mahi toi by Māori; and the interest by Pākehā in Māori design all contributed to the changing face of the studio craft movement during the 1980s. Whereas both women and Māori had often worked collaboratively there was now a desire to also adapt to Western concepts of professionalism based on economic imperatives. This new environment was, in large part, the antithesis of what craftspeople

<sup>152</sup> Photo: *Pataka: Museum of Arts and Culture*, 2009; available at: [www.pataka.org.nz](http://www.pataka.org.nz) (27 August 2009).

<sup>153</sup> Photo: *Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa*, 2009; available at: <http://www.tepapa.govt.nz/pages/default.aspx> (27 August 2009).

<sup>154</sup> Photo: *ibid.*

<sup>155</sup> Photo: *ibid.* The pieces by Ngā Kaihanga Uku shown here are indicative of the range of work produced by individuals in the group.

thought were the admirable features of the early movement. In the period between the 1950s and the 1970s the co-operative approach was a feature of the studio craft movement and it was thought that by working in this way craftspeople were staying true to the methods by which craft skills and knowledge had traditionally been handed down. The way women and Māori worked frequently exemplified this approach. But the emphasis on individualism in the 1980s produced divisions within craft movement and women and Māori often had to abandon the co-operative approach if they wanted to achieve recognition that was now defined by the rules of the field of art.

Nevertheless, the presence of some Māori *tohunga mahi toi/ringa rehe* within or alongside the studio craft movement caused some craftspeople to question the individualised (and often isolated) model that many Pākehā (both men and women) believed was a distinctive feature of professionalism. In Māori society, 'far from being eccentric outsiders, artists [craftspeople] were bonded into tribal life with a recognised and respected public role to perform.'<sup>156</sup> The contrasting roles demonstrated that there was no unified social function that craftspeople could be expected to fulfil in New Zealand society in the 1980s. The growth of the studio craft movement presented an opportunity for formerly subjugated groups to write a new chapter in the narrative of New Zealand craft. The difficulty for many however, was they had to choose between collaboration and professionalism and the CCNZ, as will be seen in the next chapter, had already decided which route it would follow.

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<sup>156</sup> Beatson and Beatson, p. 9.

# Chapter Seven: United We Stand, Divided We Fall.<sup>1</sup>

Craftsmen are all very much individuals and I think they felt they might lose their autonomy if they became joiners.<sup>2</sup>

The American sociologist Howard Becker, in *Art Worlds*, begins his book with a description by Anthony Trollope of his morning ritual before he began writing for the day. Trollope engaged an old groom to wake him at 5.30am and bring him coffee. He credited his groom with being as responsible for his work (art/craft) as he was himself.<sup>3</sup> Becker, in telling this story, employed the groom as a metaphor for the larger networks of cooperation that were the central theme of his book.<sup>4</sup> Craftspeople were also reliant on networks to achieve their goals. In this chapter I study those networks to find out why the organisations that craftspeople formed at first appeared united but then fractured.

The art philosopher, Arthur C. Danto, who subscribed to the premise that anything could be art,<sup>5</sup> added a proviso to this theory: 'art can indeed be anything, but only if a loosely organised community of artists, art professionals and interested bystanders ... called the "artworld", recognised it as such.'<sup>6</sup> The formation of an art world, or indeed a craft world, requires those taking part to reach an agreement, even if it is largely unspoken, that such a world exists. Danto's 'artworld' has many of the features that Pierre Bourdieu ascribed to 'fields'. The individual's position in the field is based on the specific rules of the field, the individual's *habitus* and their capital (social, economic, cultural and symbolic). In New Zealand, between the 1950s and

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<sup>1</sup> Attributed to Aesop, *The Four Oxen and the Tiger*. See *Bartleby.Com: Great Books Online*, 2011; available at: <http://www.bartleby.com/17/1/52.html> (15 February 2011).

<sup>2</sup> Maria Gazzard, President of the World Craft Council (1982) in April Hersey, *Women in Australian Craft*, Sydney, 1975, unpaginated

<sup>3</sup> Howard Saul Becker, *Art Worlds*, 1st edn, Berkeley, 1984, p.1.

<sup>4</sup> Howard S. Becker, "'Art Worlds' Revisited', *Sociological Forum*, 5, 3, 1990, p.500.

<sup>5</sup> Arthur C. Danto, *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace: A Philosophy of Art*, Cambridge, Mass., 1981 and Arthur C. Danto, 'The End of Art: A Philosophical Defense', *History and Theory*, 37, 4, 1998, p.133.

<sup>6</sup> Bruce Metcalf, 'Craft and art, culture and biology', in Peter Dormer, ed., *The Culture of Craft: Status and Future*, Manchester, 1996, p.68.

the mid-1960s, craft, as a rule, could not be ‘anything’ – craftspeople generally agreed that the production of craft required a degree of skill in the use of hands and tools; it was largely functional in that it was based on traditional concepts of craft which linked craft with functionality: and it was usually made for someone else (a client) rather than as a means of self-expression.<sup>7</sup> This general agreement encouraged the formation of craft-specific clubs, regional groups and national organisations that provided services to members but usually did not question the concept of what craft was. However, while the participants may have believed a craft ‘world’ was developing it did not meet all of Danto’s conditions.

It is impossible to say exactly when a ‘world’ forms but the emergence of the New Zealand Chapter of the World Craft Council (NZWCC) in 1965 appeared to set the parameters for a craft world to develop. From the mid-1970s however, as some craftspeople increasingly sought entry into the world of art, the boundaries that surrounded craft were pushed out and divisions appeared. The *habitus* of those occupying it became more diverse and a struggle developed within the field to gain ascendancy – to establish a legitimating authority. The divisions made it more difficult for amateur craftspeople, professional craftspeople and interested bystanders to work together and by the early 1990s the studio craft movement began to unravel. The dominant event in this chapter is the rise and fall of the Crafts Council of New Zealand (CCNZ) as the NZWCC later became known. For many craftspeople the CCNZ represented the most important achievement in the history of the post-war movement – a national organisation claiming to represent all craftspeople. Throughout the chapter I refer to the Crafts Council (CCUK)<sup>8</sup> in Britain to provide a comparative framework. The CCUK provided an example of a national craft organisation that was able to assert its authority on craftspeople and was looked to by those in New Zealand who

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<sup>7</sup> Grace Cochrane, 'Truth or Trap: The Australian Contemporary Crafts Movement's Pursuit of Art Ideals', PhD thesis, University of Tasmania, 1998, p.3.

<sup>8</sup> The CCUK was formed from a number of earlier national craft organisations including the Crafts Centre of Great Britain (Crafts Centre), the Crafts Council of Great Britain (CCGB) and the Craft Advisory Committee (CAC). The name ‘Crafts Council’ was adopted in 1979. ‘UK’ has been used in the acronym CCUK to avoid confusion. CCUK has also been used generically in place of Crafts Centre, CCGB and CAC.

wished to do the same.<sup>9</sup> Both organisations initially attempted – notionally at least – to represent the full gamut of craftspeople that are discussed below, but when that became impractical, sections of the craft community were largely abandoned – openly or by neglect. The chapter identifies issues surrounding these decisions and examines how they were managed. Both the CCNZ and the CCUK continued to claim that they represented ‘all’ craftspeople, but it was a futile claim since neither organisation had the resources, or increasingly the inclination, to adhere to it. In Britain the CCUK became more focussed on the craft artist and encouraged traditional craftspeople and amateurs to look to other organisations to meet their needs. In New Zealand the CCNZ followed a similar pattern but discovered that the support of a small number of craft artists was not enough to guarantee its future. The CCNZ was placed in voluntary liquidation in 1992 while the CCUK continued to operate as the dominant craft authority in Britain into the twenty-first century. The chapter will identify the actions of each Council and show why one survived while the other did not.

## Worlds and Movements

This thesis is concerned with a craft ‘movement’.<sup>10</sup> In this chapter the ‘movement’ is likened to the community structures that Becker and Danto have attributed to the art ‘world’. Therefore, the word ‘craft’ might at times be superimposed on ‘art’ as many of the attributes that Becker applies to ‘art’ worlds are equally applicable in ‘craft’ worlds.<sup>11</sup> I have taken this approach because some craftspeople identified themselves as ‘craft artists’ and their transition to the world of art that Becker is describing blurred the boundaries between art and craft. An example of this intertwining of worlds appears in a

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<sup>9</sup> There seems to have been few formal connections between the CCUK and Australasian crafts councils but Australian craftspeople appeared to have modelled their national and state organisations on the British organisation. See Cochrane, 'Truth or Trap: The Australian Contemporary Crafts Movement's Pursuit of Art Ideals', p.2.

<sup>10</sup> See Introduction.

<sup>11</sup> Bruce Metcalf makes a similar connection, see Metcalf in Dormer, ed., p.69 and Sandra Corse, *Craft Objects, Aesthetic Contexts: Kant, Heidegger, and Adorno on Craft*, Lanham, 2009, p.23. To avoid the repetitive use of square brackets, it is assumed that the term ‘art’ in quotations and elsewhere is followed by [craft]. The same method has been applied to ‘craftsmen’ [craftswomen], artists [craftspeople] in sections where the flow of the narrative would be interrupted by the additional terms.

PhD thesis by Susan Wood.<sup>12</sup> Wood, in her investigation of embroidery in New South Wales, applied Becker's theory to the 'world' that was the centre of her investigation: 'On this basis [Becker's prescription] I have suggested that an "art world" developed around the practice of creative embroidery in Sydney in the nineteen sixties, and that this embroidery world co-existed alongside the more established fine art world.'<sup>13</sup> By suggesting that the 'embroidery world' possessed all the characteristics of an art world, Wood appears to be attempting to both locate embroidery in the art world and in a separate category – a craft world. During the period in which this thesis is set the polarity between the makers of, on the one hand, traditional, or popular, craft – much of it amateur – and on the other, the largely professional 'new', or progressive, 'craft art' became a recognisable point of difference between the supporters and critics of the CCNZ. The divisions that arose created a less stable but a more dynamic craft world and consequently, this chapter's primary focus is the social and historical groupings that developed around this issue and the tensions that evolved within and between them.

### **Art World Structures**

Becker defined the worlds that are the focus of his book as 'all the people whose activities are necessary to the production of the characteristic works which that world, and perhaps others as well, define as art.'<sup>14</sup> He explains that the people in this world establish 'a body of conventional understandings embodied in common practice and in the frequently used artifacts.'<sup>15</sup> The world is 'an established network of cooperative links amongst participants.'<sup>16</sup> The conventions of the world become so well established that even when the participants change, the accepted conventions continue. The advantages of such conventions are that they make 'collective activity simpler and less costly in time and energy, and other resources; but they do not make unconventional work impossible, only more costly and difficult.'<sup>17</sup> Becker also

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<sup>12</sup> Susan G. Wood, 'Creative Embroidery in New South Wales, 1960 – 1975', PhD thesis, Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology University, 2006.

<sup>13</sup> *ibid.*, p.165.

<sup>14</sup> Becker, *Art Worlds*, p.34.

<sup>15</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> *ibid.*, pp.5-6.

<sup>17</sup> *ibid.*, p.35.

claimed that these worlds did not have boundaries around them and therefore they are very fluid. Furthermore, it is not clear ‘to the participants ... whether particular objects or events are “really art” or whether they are craft or commercial work, or perhaps the expression of folk culture, or maybe just the embodied symptoms of a lunatic.’<sup>18</sup> As some crafts became more closely aligned to art the participants of the craft movement struggled with the increasing fluidness that developed in their world and the loss of boundaries.

### **Communities within Worlds**

Discussing the membership of the art world Becker later stated: ‘We can describe participants in worlds with reference to the degree to which they participate in or depend on the regularities of behavior of which the collective action of the world consists and on which its results depend.’<sup>19</sup> Becker identified four types of artists: integrated professionals, mavericks, naïve artists and folk artists. Craftspeople, as has been seen in earlier chapters, came from a wide variety of backgrounds, and manifested many different skills and levels of dedication to their craft. Furthermore, each participant brought a particular *habitus* to the ‘world’ they entered and this influenced how they functioned within the ‘world’. Therefore it is helpful, to assist with the positioning of the groups that are being examined in this thesis and to decide who influenced whom and how that was achieved, to consider Becker’s ideas on who inhabits art worlds. It should be noted however, that Becker’s description of the participants of the art world does not form a static template for craft.

### **Becker’s participants:**

#### **The Integrated Professional**

Integrated professionals are people who are so familiar with the conventions of the world they inhabit that their work is accepted as the canon of art. This is the work that is greatly admired and accepted by most people as the standard work. These people do not produce the same work over and over

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<sup>18</sup> *ibid.*, p.36.

<sup>19</sup> Howard S. Becker, ‘Art Worlds and Social Types’, *American Behavioral Scientist*, 19, 6, 1976, p.705.

again but the variations and innovations are small and within the accepted conventions. Their work is sometimes called traditional and their world, the ordinary art world. Becker suggests that most artists sit within this world.<sup>20</sup>

### **Mavericks**

Mavericks find the conventional art world constraining. They are familiar with accepted practices of the conventional art world and are often trained within that world, but no longer wish to conform to its conventions. Initially they find it difficult to have their work accepted and they try to force the art/craft world to adapt to their innovations. Modernism has encouraged the growth of this group but artists and craftspeople who look for this position find that they seek both privileged official recognition and the independence of the maverick who stands outside the system or, as one writer noted, 'they claim a privileged official standing *because* they are outside the system'.<sup>21</sup> Later, their work might become the new convention, and, as a result, they become the authority for a new group of integrated professionals.

### **Naïve Artists**

Naïve artists do not have the training that people who exist in the formal art world have, or even know these people. 'They know very little about the nature of the medium they are working in, its history, conventions, or the kind of work ordinarily produced in that medium.'<sup>22</sup> Because they have never formed the *habitus* of the integrated professionals they do not have to break habits like mavericks. Many New Zealand 'hobbyists' were in this sense naïve.

### **Folk Artists**

Finally, folk art is not considered art at all by those involved with it, although some outside the network may think the work has merit. Becker used the

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<sup>20</sup> An example of this is the potter/ceramic artist using a potter's wheel to make many items that look similar. See Kavanagh discussion in Chapter Two and Robert Kavanagh, 'The Art of Earth and Fire: The Aesthetics of Robin George Collingwood and the Craft of the Studio Potter', PhD thesis, Concordia University 1990.

<sup>21</sup> James Trilling, 'Freedom and Convention: Old Arts for a New Century', *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* 10, 4, 1997, p.583. Trilling's italics.

<sup>22</sup> Becker, 'Art Worlds and Social Types', p.705.

example of mountain women in America who make patchwork quilts.<sup>23</sup> The members of this community knew what good quality work was but no professional community existed to formally assess the work. The members of this group all knew how work was made and they work cooperatively, assigning tasks that are appropriate to the skills of each member.

## **New Zealand's Craft World**

In New Zealand, as the interest in craft expanded, hobbyists, craft professionals and craft supporters formed groups that served different functions according to the needs or ambitions of their members. Aspects of the above characteristics can be observed within the studio craft movement – although exact correlation with Becker's structure is problematic because features of one group could overlap another. The groups that formed in New Zealand might consist of informal clusters of hobbyists (naïve artists) who met as much for companionship as the advancement of knowledge of their craft. Māori carvers and weavers worked cooperatively and could be likened to folk artists – but they also exhibited characteristics of the integrated professional. National organisations provided technical and professional services or promoted the work of integrated, although sometimes maverick, craftspeople. When tensions developed in New Zealand it was between two opposing philosophies, each supported to a greater or lesser degree by different types of craftspeople. New Zealand followed a similar path to Britain where Philip Wood, in his dissertation on craft in Britain, suggested that the divisions were between, 'on the one hand a professional "artist-craft" wing, and on the other a wider, mainly amateur, band, which constitutes the "traditional" and "popular" side of modern craft practice'.<sup>24</sup> By and large, the divisions that caused the most controversy in New Zealand can be located within Wood's construct.

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<sup>23</sup> *ibid.*, p.715.

<sup>24</sup> Philip Wood, 'Craft in Britain, 1971 to the Present: A Critical and Ideological Study', PhD thesis, Keele University, 1996. abstract.

## A Warning from Peter Cape

The formation of organisations by craftspeople created problems within the studio craft movement. The craft writer Peter Cape warned that organisations formed to support members could evolve to subvert the original reasons for their existence: 'I believe that any society concerned with human activity becomes a danger to its members when it ceases to exist for their common support and assistance and becomes concerned principally with the maintenance of "standards".'<sup>25</sup> He identified a second danger: '[J]oining a society may commit us to the support of "standards" which we do not necessarily subscribe to, but the status of membership is such that we feel we must give lip-service to the official standpoint; and this ... is construed as committed support.'<sup>26</sup> He believed that the 'standards' that such organisations would defend would be the 'standards' formed by the personal concerns of those people 'who initially formed the societies' and that, over time '[t]hey are likely ... to become reactionary and regressive.'<sup>27</sup> In Cape's statement we see Becker's integrated professionals and the linking of 'standards' with 'conformity, with regularisation, with authority, and with the creation of measures.'<sup>28</sup> Cape was also describing Bourdieu's belief that the professionalization of groups was a device to exclude those who did not possess the correct symbolic and cultural capital.

A feature that distinguished the post-Second World War craft movement from pre-war developments was the formation of numerous craft associations. Whereas the earlier craftspeople generally worked alone and were unsupported by any forms of association, the later craftspeople enthusiastically formed an array of clubs, groups, societies and national organisations. These organisations might consist predominantly of one type of craftsperson as defined by Becker, but national organisations tended to encourage a wider membership to ensure they had sufficient numbers to fund their operations. The more diverse the membership the more difficult it

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<sup>25</sup> Peter Cape, *Please Touch. A Survey of the Three-Dimensional Arts in New Zealand*, Auckland, 1980, p.151.

<sup>26</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> *ibid.*

became to meet their needs and the easier it became to exclude those who lacked symbolic and cultural capital.

## **Crafts Council of New Zealand: Success and Failure**

### **New Zealand Chapter of the World Crafts Council**

Supposedly at the top of the craft organisational structure in New Zealand was the Crafts Council of New Zealand (CCNZ). Here I examine its background to determine how the tensions referred to above developed and why the wider craft community refused to accept its authority. The CCNZ emerged from the interest shown by a group of (mainly) women in the World Crafts Council (WCC). The WCC was founded in 1964 in New York principally, in the words of its founder, Aileen Vanderbilt Webb, to achieve recognition for 'the handcrafter' as 'a national asset'.<sup>29</sup> The New Zealand Chapter of the World Crafts Council (NZWCC) was formed in 1965 by Nan Berkeley, the President of the New Zealand Society of Potters (NZSP), who had attended the inaugural meeting in New York. While working together had always been a characteristic of craft, the formation of an international organisation with a New Zealand branch, indicated that some craftspeople were considering aspects of craft that went beyond the purely technical and social.

### **Asserting Authority**

By 1978 the NZWCC was positioning itself as the principal national craft organisation. It became an incorporated society and was renamed the CCNZ.<sup>30</sup> Initially the CCNZ's primary function was to act for the WCC, but it soon became clear that it needed to establish a position in New Zealand that would distinguish it from the major craft-specific organisations. In attempting to do this it created friction within the studio craft movement. This friction largely centred on the issues of standards and management which would trouble the movement for the next fifteen years. An example of this early

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<sup>29</sup> CCNZ Records, 92-278, 06/13.

<sup>30</sup> Peter Gibbs, email to the author, 29 August 2007.

disharmony is evident in the letter Dorothea Turner, the founding President of the New Zealand Spinning, Weaving and Woolcrafts Society (NZSWWS) and a foundation member of the NZWCC executive committee, wrote to the CCNZ in 1978 resigning her individual membership. Her action appears to have been sparked by a decision the CCNZ made to assist the artist Guy Ngan coordinate an exhibition of mixed craft planned for the Christchurch Arts Festival in November 1978. In her letter Turner suggests that the standards set by the NZSWWS were being questioned by the CCNZ – perhaps as a result of the decisions Ngan had made about what would be included in the exhibition.<sup>31</sup> On the 30 May 1978 Turner wrote: ‘I find ... its [CCNZ’s] exhibition procedures are too much at variance with my own beliefs for me to be listed now as a member.’<sup>32</sup> Dorothy Pascoe, the President of the CCNZ, was mystified by this statement, replying that CCNZ had only assisted Ngan, but also pointing out that they ‘are glad to do this as we are in sympathy with his insistence on excellence’.<sup>33</sup>

Her defence of the CCNZ then turned to veiled criticism of the NZWCC when she enigmatically hinted at underlying, ongoing problems: ‘Marguerite Scott and I did realise at the recent Auckland meeting how dismaying it was to have what was considered to be old ghosts of Craft’s Councils management thrown continually at us.’<sup>34</sup> Later, in 1993, Turner confirmed her frustration with the CCNZ’s selection procedures and hinted at what the ‘old ghosts’ might have been when she described the CCNZ as ‘a salaried group of non-specialists funded by the Minister to take over the voluntary work of the World Crafts Council.’<sup>35</sup> Turner’s long (voluntary) involvement and considerable influence within the NZSWWS and the NZWCC gave her resignation weight. It was a warning to the CCNZ that it must be careful at

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<sup>31</sup> Dorothy Pascoe to Dorothea Turner, June 1978, CCNZ Records, 92-278, 08/02. Ironically, because the exhibition had been planned before the formation of the CCNZ, it was presented as a NZWCC exhibition.

<sup>32</sup> Dorothea Turner to the President of the Crafts Council of New Zealand, 30 May 1978, CCNZ Records, 92-278, 08/02. See also Dorothea Turner, ‘New Zealand Spinning, Weaving and Woolcrafts Society 1969–’, in Anne Else, ed., *Women Together: A History of Women’s Organisations in New Zealand: Nga Ropu Wahine O Te Motu*, Wellington, 1993, p.464.

<sup>33</sup> Pascoe to Turner, CCNZ Records, 92-278, 08/02.

<sup>34</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> Dorothea Turner, ‘Fibre Craft in New Zealand: Some Social and Economic Aspects’, *Stout Centre Review*, September, 1993, p.9.

this very early stage in its development as to how it attempted to improve standards and stamp its authority on New Zealand craft. The CCNZ's strategy was to frame the issue in a way that emphasised the educational benefits of raising standards. It stated:

Some of these ways [of improving standards] would be by bringing here internationally recognised craftsmen and by arranging lectures and demonstrations. This would naturally be arranged in close co-operation with the respective national crafts body concerned, but in the case of leatherworkers, copperworkers, woodworkers, jewellers, fabric printers, glassblowers and others, the Crafts Council would probably be the only national New Zealand organisation in a position to act on their behalf.<sup>36</sup>

This however, was avoiding the real means of improving standards which involved establishing selection criteria for exhibitions and other promotional purposes that would be recognised as a benchmark by all craftspeople. It was a move that CCNZ must have known was inevitable, but it was not in a position to unilaterally implement it and it had other problems.

### **Membership Difficulties**

The CCNZ needed paying members to partly fund its operation, but more importantly, it needed members to give validity to its claim to be the representative body of craftspeople in New Zealand and the ultimate authority on quality. This resulted in a series of compromises that created an executive structure that was unwieldy. During its formative period, in the late-1970s, the bulk of the CCNZ's funding came from Lottery Board grants,<sup>37</sup> therefore the need to establish an authoritative 'voice' held a higher priority than recruiting paying members.

If numbers gave authority then an alternative method of boosting its right to claim to represent 'all' craftspeople was to assert the CCNZ was 'supported' by the national craft organisations or clusters of regional organisations with

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<sup>36</sup> 'General Information About Our Activities', July 1978, CCNZ Records, 92-278, 06/13.

<sup>37</sup> CCNZ income in 1982: Lottery Board grant, \$65,000 (65% of total), subscriptions and donations, \$8,500 (8%), Book sales, advertisement etc., \$2,000 (2%), Interest, \$5,000 (5%), Funds from previous year committed to forward projects, \$20,000 (20%). See, 'Where Does the Money Go?', *New Zealand Crafts*, July 1982.

their large membership. The three largest crafts organisation: the NZSP with approximately 2,000 members, the NZSWWS with 22,400 members and the Association of New Zealand Embroiders Guild (NZEG) with over 11,000, representing over 88% of all craftspeople who belonged to a craft-specific national organisation.<sup>38</sup> They were well-established and appeared to offer their members all the services they required – there appeared to be no reason for their members to belong to the CCNZ as well, or even to be affiliated with the CCNZ in some form of group membership. Furthermore, many of the craftspeople who belonged to these organisations did not want their membership fees increased to pay for some form of affiliation with a distant and amorphous organisation.

The NZSWWS in particular, could not see any benefits in either their members belonging to the CCNZ as individuals or for the organisation even to be affiliated. For instance, the President of the NZSWWS, Jenny Poore, on the 27 May 1978 wrote to all members of the NZSWWS: ‘We feel strongly that weavers should speak for weavers, spinners for spinners, ... etc.’<sup>39</sup> And, as if speaking for all craft-specific organisations, she stated:

Other National Bodies have grown independently from the grass roots of the needs of their crafts with manpower and finance raised by their own members. Should they be expected to surrender their authority to a newly constituted body unless this be in the real interest of their members.[sic] Your Executive feel that it is not in our interest to do so.<sup>40</sup>

Regional weaving and spinning clubs soon started resigning from the CCNZ. The Port Nicholson Handweavers resigned on the 18 August 1978 claiming that: ‘The majority of this club’s members spent many years trying to develop their craft within the framework of a mixed crafts association, and know from

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<sup>38</sup> A 1980s estimate of the number of craftspeople in twelve national craft groups placed these three groups in the following order in terms of their membership as a percentage of the total membership of all national organisations: NZSWWS 56%, NZEG 27.7%, and NZSP 5.1%. See CCNZ Records, 92-278, Box 35.

<sup>39</sup> Jenny Poore, to all NZSWWS members, 27 May 1978. A copy was also sent to the President of the CCNZ. See CCNZ Records, 92-278, 10/04.

<sup>40</sup> *ibid.*

sad experience that it will not do.’<sup>41</sup> The fear for organisations like the weaving and spinning groups was that craftspeople – or even non-craftspeople, from other disciplines would be making decisions about a craft they had little knowledge of. While Dorothy Pascoe, the President of the CCNZ,<sup>42</sup> denied that would occur, the probable rejection of work by NZSWWS members at the Christchurch Arts Festival exhibition in 1978 and the craft index that is discussed later show that was what in fact happened.

The CCNZ’s response was to declare that it covered a ‘wider range of all crafts and for the many members who work individually according to their own skills, it is the only national source of information.’<sup>43</sup> The CCNZ could not attempt to take over the work of the three largest craft organisations but could not ignore them either. It therefore made provision on its executive for representation from the three groups. The first Executive Committee consisted of eight elected or ‘floor’ members, three regional representatives (Northern, Central and Southern – a Hawke’s Bay representative joined in 1979) and provision for three members representing the largest craft groups. Although the NZSP and the NZEG were represented the NZSWWS decided not to participate and the position was taken by a ‘floor’ member.<sup>44</sup> As will be seen later, this structure did not replicate the CCNZ’s British counterpart and did not encourage a growth in membership.

## **Proposed Solutions to Membership Problems**

### **Affiliated Membership**

The difficulty of involving the key craft organisations and their individual members continued throughout the 1980s. In 1984, Howard Williams, a potter and craft writer, attempted to appraise why craftspeople were not joining the CCNZ. He believed that the CCNZ ‘should be ... the premiere coordination body in the country charged with looking after many of the

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<sup>41</sup> Beverley Kinsman to Dorothy Pascoe, 18 August 1978, CCNZ Records, 92-278, 10/04.

<sup>42</sup> Dorothy Pascoe to Beverley Kinsman, 29 August 1978, CCNZ Records, 92-278, 10/04.

<sup>43</sup> ‘General Information About Our Activities’, July 1978, CCNZ Records, 92-278, 06/13.

<sup>44</sup> Pascoe to Turner, CCNZ Records, 92-278, 08/02. See also Marguerite Scott to Nancy Derbyshire, 17 August 1978, CCNZ Records, 92-278, 02/01.

requirements of craftspeople.<sup>45</sup> He maintained that the CCNZ should have the support of the whole gamut of craftspeople and others who made up craft world:

[T]hose working full time at a craft and earning their livelihood ... , [t]hose working part time ... supplementing an income ... , [t]hose who are interested hobbyists ... , [t]hose teaching crafts, [t]hose who are non-crafts-practising members of the public, ... [t]hose supporting and promoting crafts ... [including] [i]ndividual craft societies,[l]ocal craft groups, [s]chools, [s]uppliers ... [b]usiness houses, ... galleries ...<sup>46</sup>

Williams' list was extensive, but central to his submission was the notion that communication lay at the heart of good organisational structure. He believed that with fewer than 1,500 members – he felt the number should be more like 40,000<sup>47</sup> – the CCNZ was not gaining the support it needed and added: 'It is not, overall, doing its job, despite its government funding ... Many craftspeople do not want to have anything to do with it'.<sup>48</sup> Williams was convinced that the problem was related to the number of organisations a craftsman could belong to. Using his own case as an example, he pointed out that, as a potter, because he belonged to the Auckland Society of Potters (ASP), with over 400 members, the NZSP with approximately 800 members and was a subscriber to the *New Zealand Potter* with about 6,000 readers he could obtain almost all the information he needed to pursue his craft. He stated that when the CCNZ selected exhibitions for overseas the relevant craft organisations were ignored. He was expanding on the concerns that Turner had expressed in 1978. However, he still believed there was a place for the CCNZ.

They [craftspeople] do need however, a body giving them contact with other crafts. A body which will co-ordinate multi-craft exhibitions. A body which carries the full weight

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<sup>45</sup> Howard Williams to the Crafts Council of New Zealand, 24 August 1984, Appendix 3(1), CCNZ Records, 92-278, 10/01.

<sup>46</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>47</sup> Supposedly the number of people involved in craft in New Zealand.

<sup>48</sup> Williams to the Crafts Council of New Zealand, Appendix 3(1), CCNZ Records, 92-278, 10/01. In 1988 the CCNZ received its first full year of funding from the QEII Arts Council in the form of a \$192,000 grant representing 36.4% of its budget for the 1987/88 year. See 'Crafts Council of New Zealand (Inc) 1987/88 Annual Report', 1987, CCNZ Records, 92-278, 01/11 and John Scott and Margaret Belich, 'Affiliation of Allied Craft Organisations to the Crafts Council of New Zealand: Discussion Paper', 1988, CCNZ Records, 92-278, 01/11.

of all craftspeople when something is affecting all crafts, such as the sales tax problem a few years ago. A body which will give a corporate identity, a unified PR face, a maximum clout political voice. In other words, an umbrella organisation co-ordinating all crafts at the national level, but not doubling up on the work done in the preserves of the individual crafts societies.<sup>49</sup>

Williams' solution was to abolish direct membership. 'ALL MEMBERS of ALL craft societies should be affiliated members of the Crafts Council, thus giving it an indirect membership of several thousand.'<sup>50</sup> He believed that when discussion of pottery, for instance, took place around the Board table there should be a representative of the NZSP there. Furthermore, he noted: 'The Crafts Council, instead of having say 1400 members paying \$30 a year, might soon have 14,000 all paying [an] affiliation fee through their own society.'<sup>51</sup> Williams did not detail how organisations such as the NZSWWS might be encouraged to take part and in this respect his submission appeared to have a major flaw.

Throughout the 1980s the CCNZ continued to try and encourage the national craft organisations to join. In a 1988 discussion paper on the affiliation of 'allied craft organisations' it gave the recently received Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council grant as a reason for its self-proclaimed mandate 'to represent the crafts of New Zealand' and added, '**a greater membership would ensure a stronger mandate on behalf of craft and strengthen the lobbying power of the craft sector**.'<sup>52</sup> One option proposed a levy linked to the membership of the national organisation while craftspeople could also remain or become individual members of the CCNZ. In a curious description of this arrangement the paper stated that 'the CCNZ would be a **product** of the allied organisations and members, rather than they [sic] joining the CCNZ.'<sup>53</sup> In favour of this option the discussion paper emphasised increased membership and the associated increase in lobbying power as a positive

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<sup>49</sup> Williams.

<sup>50</sup> *ibid.* Williams' capitals.

<sup>51</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>52</sup> 'Affiliation of Allied Craft Organisations to the Crafts Council of New Zealand: Discussion Paper', pp.3-4. CCNZ Records, 92-278, 01/11. Bold font in report.

<sup>53</sup> *ibid.*, p.5. Bold font in report.

result. Arguments against suggested that the arrangement ‘could dissipate the professionally orientated goals of the CCNZ by giving the recreational goals of the non-professional craftspeople – more emphasis’ and ‘[l]owering of high standards currently set.’<sup>54</sup> Another option was the allied organisations becoming members in a separate affiliated category of membership. Arguments in this option centred on the level of autonomy that the national organisations would retain.<sup>55</sup>

The CCNZ received responses from eight organisations and a number of individuals.<sup>56</sup> The first option received a negative response from large and small organisations – ‘the former because of the perceived difficulty of achieving real additional benefits for a largely recreational orientated membership, the latter because CCNZ benefits are already possessed by members having joint membership.’<sup>57</sup> The second option had a ‘mixed’ reception but despite the CCNZ’s optimistic forward view, the problem remained unsolved and discussions drifted until the CCNZ collapsed.

## **Regional Membership**

Another tension was the perception that the craftspeople located in the major cities were better represented than those living in the provinces. To some extent this appeared to involve an adjustment that craftspeople were making as the craft community became more urbanised. Colin Slade, the President in 1986, in a paper to the CCNZ on the regions, noted that, like a ‘political party, ... any such body that ignores or neglects its “grass roots”, does so at

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<sup>54</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>55</sup> *ibid.*, pp.6-7.

<sup>56</sup> ‘Crafts Council of New Zealand (Inc) 1987/88 Annual Report’. Agenda Item 9 : Affiliation Discussion Paper Response, CCNZ Records, 92-278, 10/01, 01/11. The eight organisations were: The Furniture Group, National Association of Woodturners, NZSWWS, NZSP, The Craft Dyers Guild of NZ, NZEG, NZ Society of Calligraphers, Dunedin Chapter of the Crafts Council.

<sup>57</sup> *ibid.* The NZSWWS did favour Option One but qualified their support by suggesting that problems might occur when the issue of standards and selection of work for exhibitions arose. See ‘New Zealand Spinning, Weaving and Woolcrafts Society Inc’, Letter to Crafts Council of New Zealand in response to ‘Affiliation of Allied Craft Organisations to the Crafts Council of New Zealand Discussion Paper’, 1988, CCNZ Records, 92-278, 10/01, 01/11.

its peril!’<sup>58</sup> For Slade the advantages of creating a structure based on regional representation was self-evident and included benefits such as increasing regional activity, increasing membership, improving the CCNZ image and, through decentralisation, improved administration efficiency.<sup>59</sup> He did note that there were some risks including: excessive demand on CCNZ resources ‘without tangible benefit’, ‘[f]riction between branches’ and an ‘[u]nco-ordinated public image for [the] Crafts Council’.<sup>60</sup> The proposal continued in more detail but the reasons for the proposed changes as outlined by Slade suggest that the lukewarm response of some of the larger craft organisations was a major factor in the CCNZ considering a more decentralised structure. The executive committee structure discussed earlier shows that the CCNZ’s compromise was to create three different types of Board positions – individual craftspeople, craft organisation representatives and regional delegates. The structure was ultimately unsatisfactory because it satisfied none of the requirements the different groups and factions wanted. In attempting to serve ‘all’ craftspeople it succeeded in serving only a select few.

## Indexes and Registers

The index of ‘top’ craftspeople started in 1987 and appeared to be an attempt by the CCNZ to differentiate between ‘professional’ craft artists and ‘amateur’ craftspeople. Pierre Bourdieu maintained that dominant groups would embed their control by ‘professionalising’ organisations, admitting only those with the appropriate *habitus* and sufficient cultural and symbolic capital and the index was an expression of this notion. In Britain a similar index had been operating since September 1974. It had caused some disagreements but the provision for craftspeople to appear in an unselected ‘Register of Makers’ and the support the Index received from Britain’s most well known craftspeople helped blunt most concerns.<sup>61</sup> In New Zealand selection for the

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<sup>58</sup> Colin Slade to the Public Relations Committee of the CCNZ, *Proposal for the Establishment of Regional Branches within the Crafts Council of New Zealand*, February 1986, CCNZ Records, 92-278, 08/05.

<sup>59</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>60</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>61</sup> Crafts Advisory Committee, ‘The Work of the Crafts Advisory Committee’, London 1971 – 74, p.7.

Index was controlled by the CCNZ and it was made clear that it would be rigorous – national crafts organisations were not invited to undertake the task on behalf of the CCNZ. A hint of the reason for the rejection of this selection method may have been given by the President of the CCNZ, Campbell Hegan, when he stated that the response from ‘craft guilds’ for ‘lists of recommended craftworkers in their respective disciplines’ was “mixed”.<sup>62</sup> It is unclear if he was referring to the number of organisations that responded or the quality of the work. The CCNZ however, could not take the risk of a ‘mixed’ index that would tarnish its reputation.

In Chapter Two it was noted that an unselected register of craftspeople had existed in New Zealand in the form of *The Craft Hunter’s Guide*, produced by Fiona Thompson in 1980 with updates in 1981 and 1984.<sup>63</sup> This was a privately run commercial publication funded by the fees paid by the craftspeople listed. CCNZ membership was not required. The existence of an ‘unofficial’ and ‘commercial’ register alongside an ‘official’ and ‘exclusive’ index soon became a point of conflict – even within the Executive of the CCNZ. Thompson, a former member of the NZWCC and an elected member on the CCNZ Executive, became increasingly troubled that the CCNZ was concerned with a small group of ‘top’ craftspeople and was neglecting the wider craft community. In her letter of resignation in 1984 she stated:

I feel that the Crafts Council with a membership of 1,000 odd is scarcely representative of the activity going on in New Zealand and the trend to being a tightly exclusive in-group even further removes it from the representative body it claims to be, and I am no longer willing to waste my time on such a small focus, ...<sup>64</sup>

The CCNZ was positioning itself to cater for the higher end of the market.<sup>65</sup> It is possible that an unselected register produced by the CCNZ from its

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<sup>62</sup> Campbell Hegan, 'Index of New Zealand Craftworkers', *New Zealand Crafts*, Autumn 1985, p.34.

<sup>63</sup> Christopher Thompson, *Objectspace: Selections from a Collection of Small British Ceramics 24th January 2009 - 21st February 2009*; available at: <http://www.objectspace.org.nz/programme/show.php?documentCode=1615> (28 October 2009).

<sup>64</sup> Fiona Thompson to John Schiff, 23 November 1984, CCNZ Records, 92-278, 03/16.

<sup>65</sup> Philip Clarke, 'Book Review: Craft Hunters' Guide: NZ 1984/85, 3rd Edition', *New Zealand Crafts*, Winter 1985, p.34.

membership and published alongside the Index would have averted many of Thompson's fears and may have encouraged an increase in membership, but any hope of a parallel Index and Register under the CCNZ banner largely disappeared with the departure of Thompson.

Dissatisfaction and resignations continued and since some were prominent craftspeople, such as Barry Brickell and Jack Laird, they carried considerable weight. Brickell wrote to *New Zealand Crafts* in 1986 rejecting the more 'polished' craft that the Index appeared to be promoting.<sup>66</sup>

This bowing and scraping after perfection which is now poisoning the aims of the Crafts Council is not only utterly misdirected but also humourless. ... As a craftsman, I want nothing to do with perfecting my work, so perhaps I should now be struck off membership of the Crafts Council, let alone attempt to be a candidate for entry into its Craft Index.<sup>67</sup>

Brickell, an integrated professional in Becker's structure, may have been reacting to the intrusion of Modernist mavericks, but he also appears to be questioning the way that the CCNZ was trying to promote craft. Laird was also appalled by the way the Index was formed. In May 1987 he resigned from the CCNZ stating: 'I find the principles and philosophy which inform my life as a craftsman are totally opposed to the present policy of the Crafts Council in its "indexing" of craftspeople, which is elitist, exclusive, and of dubious authority.' He added, by way of a parting shot: 'As is the creation of a status-object, corporate-style, headquarters and administration.'<sup>68</sup> Laird's decision was, in part, a criticism of the Index but equally a reaction to the increasing emphasis on the corporate image the CCNZ was projecting. In New Zealand the concept of an Index was not opposed *per se*, but disagreements about 'the structures and procedures' employed were common.<sup>69</sup> Furthermore, the criticism could be expressed through the CCNZ's own magazine, *Craft New Zealand*, which had started publication in 1982. Although it was rare for craftspeople to state that their work had been

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<sup>66</sup> For examples of the craft selected for the first Index see Appendix 5.

<sup>67</sup> Barry Brickell, 'Craft Index', *New Zealand Crafts*, Spring 1987, p.2.

<sup>68</sup> Jack Laird, 20 May 1987, CCNZ Records, 92-278, 01/09.

<sup>69</sup> Robin Gardner-Gee, 'A Practice Called Craft in a Country Called New Zealand: Readings of Craft New Zealand 1982 – 1993', MA thesis, University of Auckland, 1996, p.57.

rejected, the tone of many of the letters suggests that had happened. The Index failed to gain momentum and the split within the membership of the CCNZ may have contributed to its demise in 1992. Meanwhile, in Britain the Index and a 'Register of Makers' were supported by a large group of prominent craftspeople, new art graduates and craftspeople whose main focus was earning a living.

### **Advising and Influencing**

In Britain the CCUK had the authority to dispense government grants and build a collection of craft for historical purposes and for displaying in museums.<sup>70</sup> In New Zealand, by contrast, the CCNZ was not in such a privileged position. It was never given the authority or funding to issue grants or begin a collection. Graduates from the new polytechnic craft design courses were largely on their own unless they could obtain Arts Council funding and their small numbers and late arrival on the scene prevented them from becoming the influential support group as they had in Britain. The CCNZ could not build up a sufficient level of loyalty from younger craftspeople who could not call on it for financial support. In addition, it was never able to afford a collection and therefore could not establish itself as the guardian of New Zealand's craft heritage. Throughout its existence the CCNZ played a purely advisory role – offering for example, assistance to government departments and corporations with their gift or display purchases.

### **Education: The Future of Craft**

In Chapter Three the use of symbolic violence as a means of excluding individuals from particular fields was discussed in reference to craft education in schools. In Britain the CCUK was aware of the importance of education and was actively involved in advising the government on matters concerning craft in schools. However, the CCNZ in the late 1970s was devoting little time to curriculum development of craft within schools. This

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<sup>70</sup> Tanya Harrod, *Factfile on the History of the Crafts Council*, ed., Charles Bourne, vol. 3, *Factfiles*, London, 1994, p.9. Between 1971 and 1991 £1,345,342 was given specifically for setting up studios. See Harrod, p.8 and Wood, 'Craft in Britain, 1971 to the Present: A Critical and Ideological Study', p.28.

was partly because there was less conflict between formal design training and craft making in the less industrialised New Zealand, but also because the CCNZ was spending more time on issues that impacted directly on its members. On the surface this appeared to be a sensible use of limited resources but long-term it was a missed opportunity. The generation of craftspeople that the CCNZ purported to represent had been the beneficiaries of the Beeby/Tovey/Blumhardt craft education programmes discussed in Chapter Three and could have been expected to have continued that tradition. Despite some attempts by education enthusiasts such as Carin Wilson<sup>71</sup> the involvement of the CCNZ remained limited. Furthermore, the CCNZ appeared to give only marginal support to defending craft skills development in schools, which were under attack. In 1984, for instance, when the Minister of Education, Mervyn Wellington, decided to phase out clothing, dressmaking and sewing as an optional subject in secondary schools, a teacher, Noeline J. Switalla, wrote to the CCNZ seeking support for its retention.<sup>72</sup> The CCNZ passed the letter to the new Labour Minister of Education, Russell Marshall, with a request for a reversal of the National Government's decision.<sup>73</sup> The half-hearted support for Switalla suggested the CCNZ had little interest in encouraging the continuation of the teaching of craft skills in schools.

## **Establishing a Presence**

### **Sales Tax**

In New Zealand, the CCNZ was, during its formative period at least, supportive of the technical and legal needs of regional craftspeople. In 1979 it had led the fight to have sales tax on craft abolished by compiling information from its members and presenting detailed submissions to the 'Interdepartmental Committee into the application of the Sales Tax Act 1974 in relation to those engaged in craft activities'.<sup>74</sup> Craftspeople were grateful.

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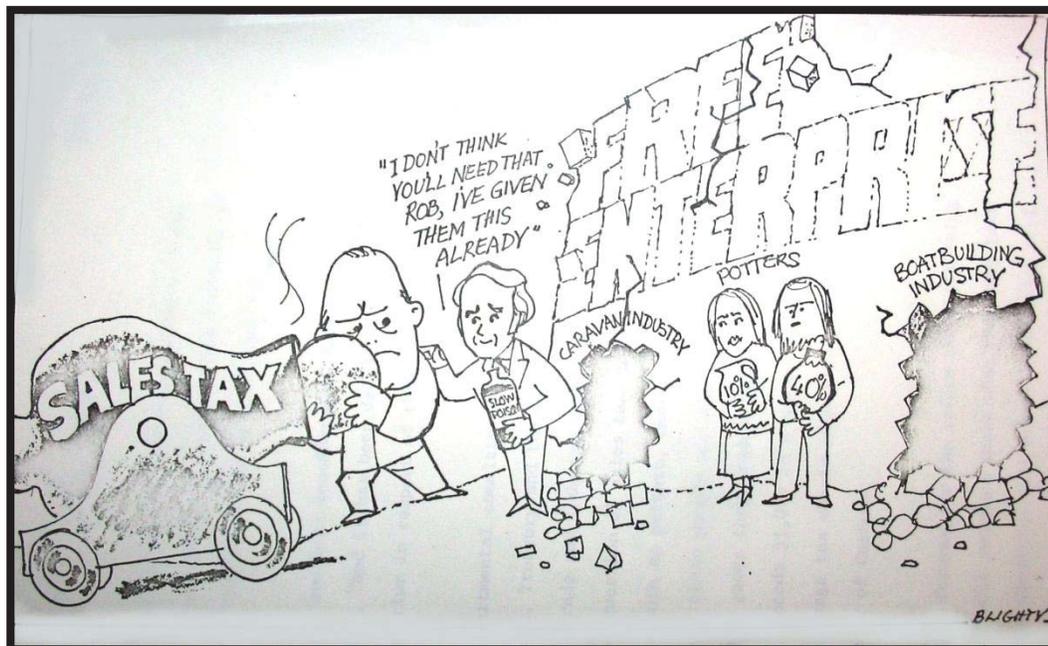
<sup>71</sup> Carin Wilson, 'A New Direction', *Craft Council News*, October 1981, pp.1-2.

<sup>72</sup> Noeline J. Switalla, 12 November 1984. CCNZ Records, 92-278, 09/07.

<sup>73</sup> John Schiff, 17 December 1984, CCNZ Records, 92-278, 09/07.

<sup>74</sup> 'Submission on Sales Tax', 1979, CCNZ Records, ABRL 7514W5068, Box 20 4/3/8, 1976 – 1981. The protests of craftspeople resulted in the establishment of the Interdepartmental Committee on Sales Tax but had little impact on the decisions that the committee made. See Chapter Five.

A member of the Craftspeople Against Sales Tax Committee (CAST) for example, in thanking the President of the CCNZ, Jenny Patrick, wrote: 'I feel the Crafts council [sic] has done itself more good over the past 5 months than in all its past existence, apart from us it has been the only group with enough coverage to tell its members not to register and to get up and fight for their right to earn a living wage.'<sup>75</sup> The formation of the CCNZ not long before the sales tax protests had given it a mission and craftspeople who belonged to groups like CAST could see a role for the CCNZ in the future: 'We thank the Crafts Council for the tremendous work done and you [Patrick] in particular for giving such strong leadership'.<sup>76</sup> Other examples of the practical help the CCNZ was giving to craftspeople were pamphlets on a range of subjects such as the financial aspects of business, marketing craft, business planning, training and working co-operatively. This selection of pamphlets was bundled into a folder entitled, *Crafts as a Livelihood*.<sup>77</sup>



**Figure 1:** Unpublished Cartoon. The threat of sales tax galvanised craftspeople to work together to oppose it.<sup>78</sup> 'This' refers to 'slow poison'.

<sup>75</sup> See Chapter Five. See also Margaret Symes to Jenny Patrick, received 28 November 1979, CCNZ Records, 92-278, Box 30.

<sup>76</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>77</sup> Bevin Fitzsimons and Crafts Council of New Zealand, *Crafts as a Livelihood: Information for Craftspeople and Others Working Independently, Co-Operatively or in Other Small-Scale Enterprises*, Wellington, 1980.

<sup>78</sup> Cartoon in letter: Keith Blight to Jenny Patrick, August 1979, CCNZ Records, 92-278, Box 30. Keith Blight, potter, cartoonist and the Northern Representative on the CCNZ,

## Factories and Commercial Premises Bill

Unfortunately, the CCNZ was unable to maintain the same level of enthusiasm in other matters. It appeared to take a more reactive stance on some issues – advising and coordinating rather than leading. The CCNZ was struggling to find a place for craft within the existing legislation concerned with factories, town and country planning schemes and shop trading hours. The undercapitalised nature of many craft studios made meeting the costs of complying with the laws and attempting to change existing legislation a heavy burden. This was particularly evident in the craft of glassblowing with its high energy costs. In late 1980, the Hot Glass Company Ltd in Devonport was trying to delay registering as a factory while a Factories and Commercial Premises Bill was in front of a Select Committee. The company owners, Peter Raos and Peter Viesnik, hoped the new act would exempt ‘home crafts’ from the existing provisions of the Factories Act of 1946.<sup>79</sup> The CCNZ had reacted quickly to the bill, making a submission on 14 March 1980 suggesting that the existing Factories Act was ‘inappropriate as it appli[ed] to family craft studios, pottery clubs, [and] co-operative spinning groups.’<sup>80</sup> The Hot Glass Company had received a letter on 3 July 1980 from the Labour Department requesting that they register as a factory. Raos and Viesnik delayed replying, but by September were being threatened with penalties.<sup>81</sup> In an attempt to delay again they pointed out to the Labour Department that because they were part of a collective all the occupiers of their premises would be required to register as factories.<sup>82</sup> The Labour Department was unmoved and on 1 October repeated the threat of penalties and added: ‘It is also drawn to your attention that it is considered the anticipated change in legislation you refer to as possibly exempting home crafts from the regulation to register as a factory would not apply to a registered company operating as

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expressed his wish to withdraw the cartoon following the announcement by the Minister for Arts, Alan Highet, that the sales tax would not apply to craftspeople earning under \$50,000..

<sup>79</sup> Peter Raos and Peter Viesnik, 23 September 1980, CCNZ Records, 92-278, 10/01.

<sup>80</sup> ‘Factory and Commercial Premises Bill: Submission to Labour Select Committee by Crafts Council of New Zealand’, 14 March 1980. CCNZ Records, 92-278, 10/01.

<sup>81</sup> J. Kelly to the Manager Hot Glass Company, 12 September 1980, CCNZ Records, 92-278, 10/01.

<sup>82</sup> Raos and Viesnik.

a business.<sup>83</sup> The submission by the CCNZ would not have prevented The Hot Glass Company Ltd from having to register as a factory but by suggesting clauses that exempted crafts such as 'co-operative spinning groups' the CCNZ was demonstrating its lack of experience. In contrast to the CCNZ, the CAST group that had successfully lobbied against the 1979 sales tax presented a generalised submission on the Factories and Commercial Premises Bill that did not suggest limiting exemption from registration to specific crafts or groups. In its submission CAST stated that it believed 'that many of its members' artistic freedoms and therefore their livelihoods would again be placed in jeopardy if they were registered under the terms of the Factories and Commercial Premises Act 1979.'<sup>84</sup> CAST simplified the CCNZ's suggested changes to:

[U]nder the Act (clause 2, sub-section2) that "No place shall be deemed to be a factory by virtue only of the fact that it is: the workshop of a craftsman whose product is designed and individually hand-made by them personally, other than with the use of simple tools."<sup>85</sup>

The submission noted that craftspeople were 'not registered as manufacturing wholesalers for the purposes of the Sales Tax Act' and that they 'must not be registered as factory operatives for the purposes of the Factories Act.'<sup>86</sup> The implication was that the government would face similar protests to the 1979 Sales Tax. The submissions of CAST and the CCNZ were successful and the new act reflected their concerns. While the CAST submission appeared to be supportive of the CCNZ, and despite the fact that CAST's handwritten submission was clearly a simplified version of the CCNZ's own submission,<sup>87</sup> some craftspeople may have believed that it was another example of the CCNZ being an unnecessary layer on top of the existing craft infrastructure. As the CCNZ tried to establish its role in the New Zealand craft community such instances may have suggested that it would be more prudent for it to emulate the CCUK and leave such things as

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<sup>83</sup> D. F. Butler to the Manager of the Hot Glass Company, 1 October 1980, 92-278, 10/01.

<sup>84</sup> Howard Williams and Craftspeople Against Sales Tax Committee to Select Committee: Factories and Commercial Premises Act 1979, 12 March 1980, CCNZ Records, 92-278, 10/01. The legislation passed was called the 'Factories and Commercial Premises Act 1981'.

<sup>85</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>86</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>87</sup> See Appendix 6.

business development and political lobbying on commercial issues to others, whilst concentrating on the promotion of aesthetic standards and other 'artistic' matters.

## **Town and Country Planning Schemes**

Town and country planning issues were problematic for many craftspeople because the legislation controlling where and how small craft businesses operated was often fragmented and out of date. In Chapter Four it was noted that, for a variety of reasons, craftspeople often wished to live and work in rural areas. In Britain, where craftspeople were considered a part of the cultural heritage of rural areas, they were supported by the Council for Small Industries in Rural Areas (CoSIRA) and the Rural Development Commission (RDC). In New Zealand, where craft in rural areas was not considered economically or culturally important, craftspeople discovered that rural councils, who had not expected any form of industry to develop in their region, were unprepared for the growth of the craft movement. Nonetheless, the requirement for craftspeople to have a legal framework to operate in and the needs of other rural dwellers created a mutually supportive arrangement between two, often disparate, communities. Farmers and other rural dwellers largely welcomed the arrival of craftspeople and their families as it increased the population, ensuring that schools remained open and other facilities such as local shops could continue to operate. They often supported changes to planning regulations as well. In 1981 for instance, the NZCC Executive Director, Christine Ross, wrote to the Chairman of the Buller County Council pointing out that the Council's scheme did not contain provisions in either the predominant or conditional use for craft enterprises and home occupations. Her submission to the Council was supported by the New Zealand Small Farmers' Association and Federated Farmers.<sup>88</sup> The Town and Country Planning Act of 1977 stipulated that all land must be zoned for residential, industrial or rural use – any deviation from permitted use, such as manufacturing in a rural zone, required a specified departure from the

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<sup>88</sup> Christine Ross to the Chairman, Buller County Council, 26 June 1981, CCNZ Records, 92-278, Box 56.

scheme.<sup>89</sup> The schemes that were produced by both urban and rural councils were restrictive documents, varied widely between different regions and lacked flexibility.

Craftspeople needed a national organisation that would lobby on their behalf, but the CCNZ's attempts to promote change were often limited in scope and unsophisticated. For instance, at about the same time as Ross was writing to the Buller County Council, she produced a list of reasons why the craft industry should be permitted as predominate users in all zones and then advised: 'Space does not permit a full examination of all the issues. If you would like advice or more information, please ask the Crafts Council, which is the national body of craftspeople.'<sup>90</sup> This approach may have reflected the urban-based administration of the CCNZ or the increasing emphasis on promoting craft artists but it appeared to lack commitment. The struggle to change planning regulations was often left to individual craftspeople, or local craft groups who also had to meet the costs involved. In Britain craftspeople had agencies that received government funding to turn to. In New Zealand there were only the CCNZ or craft specific organisations and the CCNZ's response was not encouraging.

Furthermore, craftspeople who were not members of the CCNZ could expect little direct support, even if their difficulties with local government could have set a precedent that all craftspeople might have benefited from. An example is the case of R. S. & M. P. Gregory, who battled with the Hawke's Bay County Council between 1977 and 1979 to advertise pottery for sale on their rural property. The Gregorys would probably have been categorised within Becker's structure as naïve or folk craftspeople. They made traditional utilitarian pottery and were unlikely to have been members of the CCNZ, which was often seen as the organisation that represented the 'top' craftspeople, or even the NZSP, where membership was restricted to craftspeople whose work had been selected for the NZSP's annual

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<sup>89</sup> *Town and Country Planning Act 1977* 2009; available at: <http://legislation.knowledge-basket.co.nz/gpacts/reprint/text/1977/an/121.html> (9 November 2009).

<sup>90</sup> Christine Ross to unknown recipient, 1982, CCNZ Records, 92-278, Box 56. See also Appendix 7.

exhibitions. The Gregorys already had permission to advertise and sell farm produce from their property but the conditions of their consent to establish a pottery did not permit the advertising of pottery. During their attempts to have the condition changed, the Gregorys exhausted all available means, including letters to cabinet ministers such as the Minister of Trade and Industry, the Hon. L. R. Adams-Schneider.<sup>91</sup> Adams-Schneider was sympathetic but could not help. Neither could the CCNZ in 1978 when, according to the President, Dorothy Pascoe, they lacked the resources to respond to queries.<sup>92</sup> The best they could achieve from the CCNZ was a letter of support in 1979.<sup>93</sup> What is particularly striking about this case was that while the CCNZ could only provide minimal assistance craftspeople were receiving enthusiastic support from the wider community.

### **Support for Craftspeople Spreads**

By late 1979 the position of crafts within town planning rules had become news in the Hawke's Bay region and was starting to build momentum as an issue where a national craft organisation could have shown leadership. As a result of the Gregory case there was some support from the Hastings City Council, which appeared to be taking a more conciliatory position than the Hawke's Bay County Council. In an editorial dated 11 December 1979, following an article from the previous day,<sup>94</sup> *The Hawke's Bay Herald-Tribune* congratulated the Hastings City Council on its enlightened approach and mildly rebuked the Hawke's Bay County Council: 'The Hastings City Council's sympathetic attitude to home industries is a refreshing change which craftspeople will welcome and which other Hawke's Bay local bodies could follow.'<sup>95</sup> While warning that a liberalisation of the laws should not permit unrestricted development, the council was advised that 'official blessing for the backyard potter, toymaker, weaver and others would remove a number of annoying and unnecessary restrictions from the lives of creative

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<sup>91</sup>The Hon. L. R. Adams-Schneider, 1978, CCNZ Records, 92-278, Box 56.

<sup>92</sup>Dorothy Pascoe to Keith Blight, 13 October 1978, CCNZ Records, 92-278, 02/02.

<sup>93</sup>Margaret Borwick to Jenny Patrick, received 1 June 1979, CCNZ Records, 92-278, 02/02.

<sup>94</sup>*The Hawke's Bay Herald Tribune*, 10 December 1979.

<sup>95</sup>*The Hawke's Bay Herald-Tribune*, 11 December 1979.

people.<sup>96</sup> The editorial did not indicate if selling of craft should be allowed, but by late 1980 that seemed to be a strong possibility. Certainly the disparity between urban and rural planning was becoming more noticeable. It was, of course, much easier for newspapers (and craftspeople) to paint the officials in a bad light, but the town planners were strictly controlled by schemes that had been devised by councillors, and in the case of rural areas these were often farmers who viewed urban development with scepticism but who also had to contend without outdated legislation. The CCNZ had an opportunity to increase its membership by appearing to be leading the demand for change but its priorities had changed and 'backyard' potters (naïve and folk craftspeople) were no longer important – unlike craft artists they held little cultural capital.

### **The Arts Council takes the Initiative**

In 1981 the Arts Council produced a guide on town planning for artists and craftspeople. The CCNZ was acknowledged, but this was predominantly an Arts Council initiative.<sup>97</sup> The guide was designed to assist craftspeople: 'a) to operate within the parameters of ... [the] existing scheme and b) to provide ... a set of guidelines in obtaining changes to the scheme ...'.<sup>98</sup> The initiative remained with individual craftspeople to lobby for change at the local level or the CCNZ to lobby central government. Locally, some groups were already actively seeking change. In a July 1982 article in the *New Zealand Crafts*, Graham Linwood, the President of the Hawke's Bay Association of Potters – the only organisation that the Gregorlys could have turned to – outlined the process they had experienced in their attempts to influence councils in their region.<sup>99</sup> Linwood explained that a committee composed of local craftspeople formed to deal with the four councils in the region had 'adopted a mild mannered but firm approach with the Town Planners and Councils and from the outset offered them a set of clauses to insert in their ordinances that was

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<sup>96</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>97</sup> Gerard McGreevy, et al., *Town Planning and the Arts: A Guide to Assist Community Arts Councils, Artists and Craftworkers in the Town and Country Planning Process*, 2nd edn, *Artlaw Series*, Wellington, N.Z., 1981. Preface.

<sup>98</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>99</sup> Graham Linwood, 'Potters and Town Planning or Town Planning and Potters', *Craft Council News*, July 1982, pp.16-17.

a compromise we felt we could live with.<sup>100</sup> He admitted that individual craftspeople might find the prospect of dealing with the regulations daunting but he also noted that his group had 'become very close knit' because of the process. Groups such as the Hawke's Bay Association of Potters believed that these issues often drew craftspeople together.<sup>101</sup>

The CCNZ, initially at least, saw itself as a unifying force in an unsympathetic world. In the same issue of *New Zealand Crafts* the editor, Grant Finch, took issue with the words of the Wellington Town Planner, Peter Healy, who, in an article in the *Evening Post*, commenting on the proposed use of industrial buildings on the waterfront by craftspeople, claimed that: "The waterfront ... is too good to be let to a few odds and sods ...".<sup>102</sup> Healy's comments, Finch believed, reflected 'the general public attitude to craftspeople' and in his editorial he argued for an acceptance of craftspeople as a vital part of society.<sup>103</sup> Finch's objection was not to the word 'odds', which he took to be a compliment, but to the general tone of the comment that suggested that craftspeople were not important economically or culturally. '[W]e provide a ray of hope in a society daily edging towards more "normalness"'.<sup>104</sup> Finch was being flippant, but as the voice of the CCNZ the article did not appear to take the subject seriously enough and failed to provide the leadership that many rural craftspeople could have expected from their national organisation.

## **Marketing, Sales and Recognition**

The price craft was sold for, as we saw in Chapter Three, was part of the discourse of the amateur/professional debate in New Zealand from the 1950s. When the potter Mavis Jack advised hobbyists not to sell their work too cheaply she was attempting to secure the symbolic capital of the

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<sup>100</sup> *ibid.*, p.16. The four councils were: the Hastings City Council, the Hawke's Bay County Council, the Napier City Council and the Havelock North Council.

<sup>101</sup> *ibid.*, p.17.

<sup>102</sup> Quoted in Grant Finch, 'Editorial', *New Zealand Crafts: Crafts Council News*, July 1982, p.1.

<sup>103</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>104</sup> *ibid.*

professional craftsperson.<sup>105</sup> Robin Gardner-Gee recognised a similar discourse in the CCNZ's magazine, *Craft New Zealand*, during the 1980s.<sup>106</sup> She observed the increasing amount of space given over a number of years to the marketing and selling of craft, whether in a selected format such as the Index or in unselected publications such as guides to craftspeople and galleries.<sup>107</sup> Also evident were practical articles on how craftspeople and galleries might undertake their own sales programmes or market their work. This promotional work was related to, and enhanced, the CCNZ's reputation as the standard setter (arbitrator of *habitus*) rather than being a purely economic imperative. However, the CCNZ could not ignore economic reality or take a neutral position. It had its own gallery and was increasingly under pressure to make it self-funding. Therefore the CCNZ, and sometimes individual craftspeople, found they had to take a defensive position when other organisations made claims of better service to craftspeople or claimed that they set higher standards.

### **A Case Study: Craft Shows Ltd**

Rosaleen McCarroll, in an advertising feature in the *Otago Daily Times* on 3 October 1988, wrote glowingly about how an organisation called New Zealand Craft Shows Ltd (NZCS) had helped some craftspeople, 'earn more than \$10,000 during a long weekend'. She added: [T]he Dunckley [sic] family [the owners of NZCS] ... established a craft show circuit to sell crafts, hitherto languishing in small shops and galleries[,] direct to the ... public.'<sup>108</sup> She outlined how they judged quality:

Handcrafts are chosen for their originality and excellence; and everything must be the work of the exhibitor. Nothing from kitsets or moulds, like hobby ceramics or liquid embroidery, is allowed. But where the craft is entertainment or innovative – like honey cosmetics or handmade chocolates – they make exceptions.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> Mavis Jack, 'A Studio Potter's Point of View', *New Zealand Potter*, 2, 1, 1959, p.35.

<sup>106</sup> Gardner-Gee, p.48.

<sup>107</sup> *ibid.*, p.59.

<sup>108</sup> Rosaleen McCarroll, *Otago Daily Times*, 3 October 1988.

<sup>109</sup> *ibid.*, Liquid embroidery is the painting of fabric.

The article was clearly a promotional advertisement to publicise the craft show but it annoyed some craftspeople and gallery owners. Simon King, the President of the Dunedin Chapter of the Crafts Council of New Zealand, disputed the claims, pointing out that shops and galleries could not afford to have craft 'languishing' on shelves. He also claimed that: 'Rather than the Dunckleys [sic] giving crafts people their financial independence, I would suggest that the thriving craft industry has given the Dunckleys [sic] financial independence.' In a taunt at the end of his letter King added: 'Quality is a difficult area to qualify, but is certainly not consistent at the craft shows.'<sup>110</sup> NZCS's income was derived from stall fees and door sales and quality may not have been the primary criteria when selecting participants.



**Figure 2:** Cartoon accompanying the Rosaleen McCarroll article suggesting that some craftspeople were enjoying a good income from craft.<sup>111</sup>

To add to King's concerns two days later Fiona Dunkley stated in the *Otago Daily Times* that the NZCS was 'recognised' by the 'QEII Arts Council, the head office of the New Zealand Crafts Council ... and various polytechnic courses'.<sup>112</sup> King wrote to the CCNZ stating:

<sup>110</sup> Simon King, *Otago Daily Times*, 12 October 1988.

<sup>111</sup> Cartoon: Hugh McCarroll in Rosaleen McCarroll.

<sup>112</sup> Fiona Dunkley, *Otago Daily Times*, 14 October 1988. New Zealand Craft Shows Ltd was a CCNZ member and advertised the shows in *New Zealand Crafts*.

I see the linking of the name of the CCNZ with these shows as very damaging to the Crafts Council. I have already had a number of unsolicited comments expressing surprise that the Crafts Council with its well known emphasis on quality would “support” such a mixed show<sup>113</sup>

On 20 October 1988, the Executive Director of the CCNZ, Margaret Belich wrote to Toby and Fiona Dunkley of NZCS to advise them that the CCNZ did not endorse their business and that they might be ‘in contravention of the 1986 Fair Trading Act, as it ... [related] to false representation Clause 13(f).’ She noted further: ‘We consider it quite inappropriate for us to endorse or not endorse activities such as yours, and this is a position we would hold for all such activities. It is therefore, doubly disturbing to us that you appear willing to take commercial advantage of this position of neutrality.’<sup>114</sup> Belich’s claim of a breach of the Fair Trading Act, however, looked doubtful as she had accused Dunkley of a statement that had been made in a news report in the same paper making the same claim.<sup>115</sup> Furthermore, the CCNZ could not claim neutrality when the Index clearly promoted some craftspeople above others and was selling the work of some craftspeople, but not others, in their Wellington gallery.<sup>116</sup>

The animosity that was evident between the Dunkleys and the CCNZ did not lead to a withdrawal of advertising in *Crafts New Zealand* by the Dunkleys, but it did flare up again in 1989. And it was soon clear that the CCNZ, as Peter Cape had predicted, would be more concerned with protecting itself than individual craftspeople. The dispute started when a letter by Beverley Greig, a weaver and a regular exhibitor at the Dunkley’s craft fairs, was published in *New Zealand Crafts*. Greig accused the Dunkleys of: attempting to establish a monopoly on craft shows; attempting to ban certain exhibitors from their shows; and when that was prevented by legal action, ensuring the exhibitors were inconvenienced by placing them next to a woodturning demonstration (presumably covering her weavings in wood shavings);

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<sup>113</sup> Simon King to Margaret Belich, received 19 October 1988, 92-278, Box 12.

<sup>114</sup> Margaret Belich to New Zealand Craft Show, 20 October 1988, 92-278, Box 12.

<sup>115</sup> *Otago Daily Times*, 12 October 1988. The same statement had appeared in *The Press* on 5 October 1988.

<sup>116</sup> For instance, see the Jim Timings case study in Chapter Six.

ceasing communication with offending exhibitors; harassing other craft show organisers and exhibitors or pre-empting opposition shows.<sup>117</sup> There was some evidence that several of Greig's complaints had substance.<sup>118</sup> The Dunkleys however, through a letter to the CCNZ from their solicitors, Kensington Swan, denied all the accusations and threatened defamation action unless an apology was printed in the next issue.<sup>119</sup> The apology they prepared<sup>120</sup> was not published but after negotiations between Kensington Swan and the CCNZ's solicitors, Cain & Co., a letter from Toby Dunkley was published.<sup>121</sup> The matter was also taken up with Greig but the CCNZ's solicitors believed the absence of a settlement by late-1989 was 'not a matter which need directly concern the Council, but the publication of the letter from New Zealand Craft Shows Ltd may carry some slight risk of complaint or threatened action by Mrs Greig.'<sup>122</sup> It is unclear what settlement was reached with Greig but as far as the CCNZ was concerned the issue quietly disappeared. But the actions of the CCNZ to ensure it did not get dragged into litigation had shown, in certain circumstances, craftspeople would need to look to their own resources as Cape had predicted.

### **The Fight for Survival**

In the late-1980s and early-1990s the CCNZ and the CCUK both faced reviews that threatened them with closure. In many respects the causes were similar – an attempt by neo-liberal governments in both countries to reduce public spending. Furthermore, although both the CCNZ and the CCUK had become the national organisations supposedly representing professional artist craftspeople, both faced criticism for not representing the majority of craftspeople. The CCUK, in one form or another, had been in

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<sup>117</sup> Beverly Greig, 'Letter: The Craft Shows', *New Zealand Crafts*, Spring 1989, p.2. See also Appendix 8.

<sup>118</sup> Toby, Fiona and Kim Dunkley, eds, 'New Zealand Craft Shows Ltd', *New Zealand Craft Shows Newsletter*, Issue No 14, March, 1988. See also Appendix 9.

<sup>119</sup> M. F. McClelland to Alan Loney, Editor of *Craft New Zealand*, 18 October 1989, CCNZ Records, 92-278, Box 12.

<sup>120</sup> See Appendix 10.

<sup>121</sup> Toby Dunkley, 'Letters: N Z Craft Shows Replies', *New Zealand Crafts*, Summer 1989, p.2. The original letter made a number of accusations against the organisers of an opposition craft show and may have been considered libellous by Kensington Swan, see CCNZ Records, 92-278, Box 12. The letter published in *New Zealand Crafts* answered Beverly Greig's criticisms. For Greig's letter see Appendix 8.

<sup>122</sup> Roger Chapman to Margaret Belich, 9 November 1989, CCNZ Records, 92-278, Box 12.

existence for over forty years. It had been managed by salaried staff from the beginning and although it did not have paying members as such, it had built up sufficient support within the craft community and within sections of the political establishment, to survive. The CCNZ on the other hand, now managed by a salaried staff rather than volunteers, was barely a decade old. With a membership of slightly more than one thousand and declining, almost no political patronage and with debts mounting, it collapsed.

### **The Review of the CCNZ**

In 1990 the CCNZ prepared a travelling exhibition to coincide with the sesquicentenary (the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary) of the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi. *Mau Mahara: Our Stories in Craft*<sup>123</sup> was designed to portray the history of craft in New Zealand, but it was also hoped it would enhance the profile of the CCNZ. By 1991 however, low public attendance and mediocre reviews had diminished the cultural value of the exhibition.<sup>124</sup> Furthermore, the CCNZ had borrowed to cover the cost of the exhibition anticipating that it would break even or make a profit. In fact, by May 1991, it had amassed a deficit of just under \$80,000.<sup>125</sup> To add to the difficulties the Chairman of the CCNZ, John Scott, who was also the Chief Executive Officer of the Wanganui Polytechnic, was often overseas and was out of the country during the time that the CCNZ was becoming mired in debt and controversy. The leadership the CCNZ so desperately needed was missing. However, the review the Arts Council, as the CCNZ's chief source of funds, now ordered had its beginnings a number of years earlier.

During the 1980s the CCNZ had gradually reduced the amount of technical information it provided to its members and increased its promotion of craft artists. Also during this period the convergence between what was considered 'art' and what was 'craft' had intensified. By the end of the

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<sup>123</sup> Justine Olsen, John Parker, and Cliff Whiting, eds, *Mau Mahara: Our Stories in Craft*, Auckland, 1990.

<sup>124</sup> Approximately one sixth of the projected audience viewed the exhibition in Wellington and Auckland. See Sherry Reynolds to Frank Stark, 18 March 1991, CCNZ Records, 92-278, 02/03. For an example of an unfavourable review see, *Dominion*, 9 January 1991, p.22.

<sup>125</sup> Frank Stark to David Tripe and Tony Hocking (Trust Bank), 9 May 1991, CCNZ Records, 92-278, 02/03.

decade many within the art world believed there was now little difference between an 'artist' and a 'craft artist'. In Britain the CCUK was able to point to their charter that specified that they were the representative organisation for craft artists. In addition, the CCUK received government funding that had to be used for promoting and assisting craft artists and the CCUK had supporters in positions of power. In New Zealand the evolution of the CCNZ from an organisation that catered to all craftspeople to one that predominantly promoted craft artists was still underway and had not been sanctioned by a government directive or a charter.<sup>126</sup> The organisational structure had remained member-based and while many politicians were supportive, the cost of running the organisation in proportion to the number of members was high. The review of the CCNZ caught the organisation at a difficult time economically, culturally and administratively. It was time for the art world to step in and sort the mess out.

Ironically, it was a founding member and honorary life member, Jenny Patrick, who, in her role as Chair of the Arts Council, was most prominent in deciding the future of the CCNZ. In a letter to John Scott she reflected on her involvement: 'I joined the Crafts Council when, as a young jeweller with no national body, I needed an organisation to belong to. ... But, my need to belong is not strong now. ... The next generation are the ones, I believe, who should be telling us what they need in the way of professional support.'<sup>127</sup> The next generation were the new polytechnic-trained craft artists not the hobbyists who had become full-time craftspeople as in earlier times. However, Patrick may well have been aware that a forthcoming review of the CCNZ was likely to recommend the withdrawal of Arts Council funding and was simply trying to soften the blow.

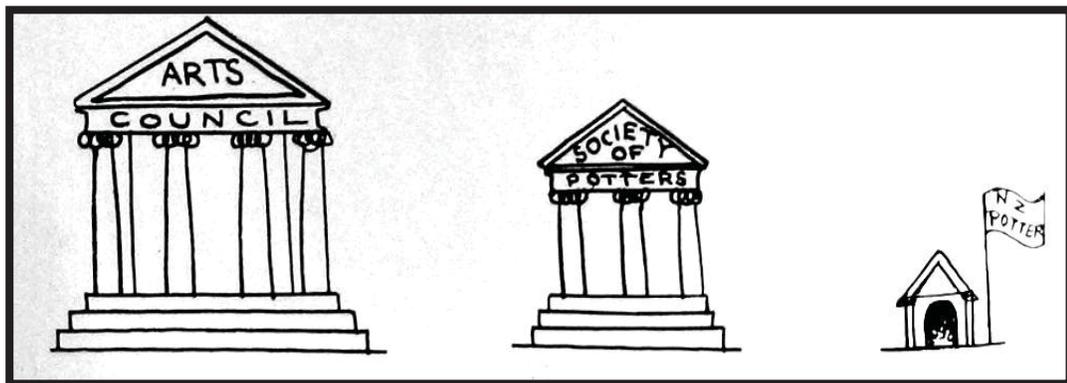
From 1987 the CCNZ, notionally an organisation funded by subscribing members, but also in receipt of financial support from the Lotteries

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<sup>126</sup> Albert Stafford, in a 1991 report on the CCNZ, noted that it was 'seen by most crafts people as trying to be all things to all crafts people'. See Albert Stafford, 'Review of the Professional Infrastructure in the Craft Sector in New Zealand', Wellington, 1991, p.25.

<sup>127</sup> Jenny Patrick to John Scott, 6 August 1991, CCNZ Records, 92-278, 03/04.

Commission, had begun to receive grants from the Arts Council.<sup>128</sup> The Arts Council, formed in 1963, was at the top of a funding pyramid that the historian, Bill Oliver, in the early 1980s, claimed represented a new development in the arts in New Zealand: 'The time of the do-it-yourself individualist had passed ... [and] [t]he era of the cultural bureaucrat, the patronized producer, and the subsidized consumer had arrived.'<sup>129</sup> The Arts Council was reluctant to subsidise a small organisation representing subscribing members but it had no other single national organisation to fund the crafts and the CCNZ was the only organisation claiming to represent 'all' crafts. For the time being, as Cape predicted, it was prepared to support a craft organisation that served 'all' craftspeople – as long as it was under its control. However, the nature of craft had changed since the Arts Council had formed and, increasingly, the craft that the Arts Council believed needed promoting was interchangeable with art.



**Figure 3:** The relationship between the Arts Council, the NZSP and potters was seen as hierarchical by some craftspeople. The relationship between the Arts Council and the CCNZ was also hierarchical.<sup>130</sup>

In 1992, when the Board of the CCNZ was made aware of how serious the financial situation was, there was bitterness that the management of the organisation had been amateurish and fears that Board members might be asked to personally meet any losses. Board member and textile artist, Jenny

<sup>128</sup> Gardner-Gee, p.33. See also 'Crafts Council of New Zealand Response to Tiered Funding Discussion Paper', September, 1990, CCNZ Records, 92-278, 01/06.

<sup>129</sup> W. H. Oliver, 'The Awakening Imagination', in W. H. Oliver and B. R. Williams, eds, *The Oxford History of New Zealand*, Oxford, 1981, p.452.

<sup>130</sup> Cartoon: NZP, Autumn, 1970, p.28.

Barraud, summed up the frustration some members felt in a letter to the Director of the CCNZ, Frank Stark:

I am still reeling after the Maumahara [sic] news at the last meeting. It so clearly demonstrated the utter ineffectualness of our Executive,[sic] that I have been aware of for some time now. An Executive made up of people interested in craft may have been relevant in the 70's & 80's but it is obviously not relevant now.<sup>131</sup>

In the opinion of this board member the CCNZ was still being managed by do-it-yourself individualists when it should have been employing cultural bureaucrats. Other Board members questioned the legality of the Executive continuing to operate while technically insolvent. In a brief, hand-written letter, Malcolm Harrison, a Board member and fabric artist, wrote to the CCNZ resigning immediately.<sup>132</sup>

### **The Coupe de Grâce**

The review of the needs of craftspeople commissioned by the Arts Council was undertaken by Albert Stafford, an 'independent' consultant. At first it appeared to be a review of the 'craft sector', but it soon became apparent that certain parts of the craft sector would be under closer scrutiny.<sup>133</sup>

Stafford set up meetings with craftspeople, educators and administrators throughout New Zealand. Despite this apparently inclusive approach however, the use of the term 'craft artist' by Stafford, rather than the words 'craft' and 'craftsperson', as used in the Terms of Reference, suggested that the final conclusions might have been already decided.<sup>134</sup> In the final report Stafford briefly responded to the combining of craft and art:

Some craftspeople have strongly put forward the need for a generic group for craft. After raising the art-craft issue with numerous craftspeople throughout the country we consider it counter-productive to get drawn into the

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<sup>131</sup> Jenny Barraud to Frank Stark, 4 May 1992, CCNZ Records, 92-278, 02/03.

<sup>132</sup> Malcolm Harrison to unknown recipient, received 10 March 1992, CCNZ Records, 92-278, 02/03. The CCNZ was placed in voluntary liquidation in August 1992 owing \$150,000. *Craft New Zealand* was purchased by Peter Gibbs and Julie Warren before the liquidation took effect to prevent it being included in any future sale of assets.

<sup>133</sup> Frank Stark to Peter Quin, 11 November 1991, CCNZ Records, 92-278, 03/16.

<sup>134</sup> For the Terms of Reference see Appendix 11.

philosophical arguments both for and against the separation of the two.<sup>135</sup>

In light of the final recommendations which, in part, looked to a future organisation that: 'Rather than merely concentrating on craft sector marketing and promotion' would 'be empowered to facilitate and coordinate marketing and promotion throughout the visual arts' this statement suggested a degree of disingenuousness.<sup>136</sup>

The CCNZ was soon convinced that it would be the target of any adverse changes. Before the report was completed Frank Stark complained bitterly that factually incorrect statements had been presented to Stafford, that there were flaws in the Terms of Reference, and that Stafford had been dismissive in his consultation with the CCNZ.<sup>137</sup> However, the attention given to the declining membership of the CCNZ by Stafford may have also prompted his concern.<sup>138</sup>

The consultation process also emphasized the divisions that had developed within the crafts movement. Stafford divided 'Professional Craft Artist[s] (Full-Time)' from 'Professional Craft Artist/Design Tutor[s]' because the former insisted that, unlike the latter, 'they didn't have the backstop safeguard of secure income from an alternative source.'<sup>139</sup> The tutors disputed this claim, saying that many craft artists also had alternative incomes. But Stafford noted that the separate classifications had shown up the different needs of each group. The craft artists wanted marketing of craft to be a priority and also some accountability in the way that grants were made. Tutors, who resented their 'lower ranking' when compared to craft artists, wanted more grants and more emphasis on education.<sup>140</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> Stafford, p.20.

<sup>136</sup> *ibid.* Executive Summary. See Appendix 11.

<sup>137</sup> Stark to Quin.

<sup>138</sup> By 30 September 1991 the CCNZ's membership had fallen from approximately 1400 in 1984 to 960, representing approximately 4.3 – 6.4% of all craftspeople in New Zealand, see Stafford, p.20.

<sup>139</sup> *ibid.*, pp.6-7.

<sup>140</sup> *ibid.*, p.7.

The Stafford Report recommended terminating the funding of the CCNZ and the establishment of an Arts and Crafts Development Board (ACDB). Ominously, for the craft sector, the ACDB would have a much larger constituency – all visual artists. The interim committee of the ACDB, called, from early 1993, the Visual Arts Marketing Board, met under the chairmanship of Albert Stafford.<sup>141</sup> With no national craft organisation to comment on behalf of craftspeople it was left to Peter Gibbs to comment on the irony of the events. Gibbs, reporting less than three year later, observed in the *New Zealand Listener* that the fears of craftspeople had been justified. He noted that: ‘Amba [sic] (the Arts Marketing Board of Aotearoa)<sup>142</sup> was quickly adapted to the prevailing philosophical view, that craft and art should be indistinguishable.’<sup>143</sup> According to Gibbs, much of the money for marketing had been spent setting up AMBA and the emphasis on the art side of craft art had been to the detriment of the former.

None of a whole phalanx of people making things with a high level of skill – potters, furniture makers, carvers, jewellers, embroiderers, blacksmiths – are now likely to receive arts council help. The council can say that it supports craft by pointing to spending on craft art, which is not quite the same thing.

At the same time, polytechs focus on design, drawing, art history and creativity, but many claim they don’t have the time or expertise to focus on training in skills and material.<sup>144</sup>

Gibbs pointed to the successful 1992 Seville Expo as an example of the level of expertise that the craft movement had produced, but he feared that the skill of those craftspeople would not be passed on: ‘The emerging craft artists of the next generation have immense creativity, but they don’t have the background skills.’<sup>145</sup>

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<sup>141</sup> 'Marketing Board Meets', *Craft Context*, February 1993, p.1.

<sup>142</sup> The Board’s final name. AMBA closed down in December 1995 after its funding from Creative New Zealand (previously the QEII Arts Council) was withdrawn. See Gardner-Gee, p.33. Note 12.

<sup>143</sup> Peter Gibbs, 'Craft Art Crossroads', *New Zealand Listener*, 13 August 1994, p.43.

<sup>144</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>145</sup> *ibid.*

There was anger within the CCNZ because some Board members believed it could have traded its way out of the financial crisis,<sup>146</sup> but there was also anger directed at the CCNZ by former members for its apparent incompetence. Judy Wilson Goode, describing attempts by a new national craft organisation, Craft Aotearoa, to wind up the CCNZ's affairs and gauge what national craft organisations wanted, stated: 'Nobody could have guessed ... how negative and intransigent the craft community had become. The Crafts Council had certainly fallen out of favour with many parts of the craft community.'<sup>147</sup> When the anger had subsided, some writers looked back at the CCNZ to identify characteristics of the organisation that had contributed towards its failure. Lawrence Ewing, a potter and tutor, recognised that the CCNZ had:

[A]lways been seen as an organisation which somehow brought together people who either had no other craft organisation to which they could belong or were more "professional" rather than recreational in their orientation to the crafts. CCNZ might also have been a way in which individuals with non-practising interests in the crafts could contribute, keep in touch and be involved in supporting and promoting craft.<sup>148</sup>

Ewing's description of the CCNZ emphasised its limited appeal to most craftspeople. The majority of craftspeople in New Zealand felt no affinity with the CCNZ and, with its small membership base, it was vulnerable.

### **Why did the CCUK Survive and the CCNZ Disappear?**

Neither the CCUK nor the CCNZ catered for the full range of craftspeople that populated their craft worlds because, as Danto noted, the community they existed in could not agree on what craft was. In Britain the CCUK recognised this and targeted its resources towards education – the craft artists of the future – and promoting craft art while still acknowledging where this new work had come from. The CCUK portrayed itself as both the guardian of Britain's craft heritage and the leader of the *avant-garde* craft artist even if, in practical terms, it gave more support to the latter. The CCUK

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<sup>146</sup> John Scott to Jenny Patrick, 15 May 1991, CCNZ Records, 92-278, 02/03.

<sup>147</sup> Judy Wilson Goode, 'Craft Aotearoa', *Craft Context*, July 1993, p.3.

<sup>148</sup> Lawrence Ewing, 'Options for a National Craft Organisation', *Craft Context*, February 1993, p.3.

had enhanced its status in the wider community by becoming involved in aspects of education at all levels in Britain and it nurtured and funded a new generation of tertiary-trained artist craftsmen and women who could see a future in education and as practising craft artists. It set up structures, for example its Royal Charter,<sup>149</sup> that gave it credibility and through influential supporters, such as Lord David Eccles, the Paymaster General, it became the recognised authority on craft art in Britain.<sup>150</sup> The CCUK had, over time, also built up a level of support that could not be numerically defined in the same way as the CCNZ's membership database.<sup>151</sup> Its constituency could not be as clearly classified as the CCNZ's, therefore, theoretically, its 'members' were 'all' craftspeople even if many had no direct link to the organisation.

The CCNZ, notionally, continued to attempt to directly serve all craftspeople. The CCNZ had been most effective and popular when it was assisting craftspeople in their fight against restrictive government regulations and laws – particularly when they had no other organisations to turn to. Over time however, expectations of what the CCNZ role was expanded and the organisation was expected to represent an increasingly diverse craft community whilst having a membership of less than one thousand. It had acquired 'a quasi-official' facade that could not be supported from within its membership structure.<sup>152</sup> In its new role it became more like the CCUK, but unlike its British counterpart, its membership could be counted and in the new economic environment of the 1980s those numbers formed a measure of the organisation's success or failure. By the late 1980s it was becoming clear to some that the CCNZ had to narrow its focus – to follow the CCUK and bring the craft artist to the fore. However, the CCNZ did not have the social capital that comes with a long history and a Royal Charter. While it had the sympathy of politicians and other influential people, art was not a

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<sup>149</sup> Harrod, p.25. The Charter was granted in 1982.

<sup>150</sup> The Paymaster General was a Treasury post with responsibility for the arts delegated from the Department of Education and Science, see *ibid.*, p.7.

<sup>151</sup> The CCUK received no funding through membership fees. See Crafts Council (UK) Annual Reports, 1973 – 1993, QA:7 and Rachel Brockhurst, email to the author, 19 December 2009.

<sup>152</sup> Peter Gibbs, 'From the Editor', *Craftlink*, August 1992, p.2.

high priority in political circles in New Zealand and craft even less so. Furthermore, by promoting the craft artist it appeared to be merging with the art world which looked to another authority, the Arts Council, for guidance and support. Albert Stafford's report confirmed for the Arts Council that if artists were to be promoted and supported they might as well all become members of the same world – the art world. The CCNZ had succumbed to the danger that Peter Cape advised societies to be wary of. It had ceased to exist for the common support and assistance of its members and had become concerned principally with the maintenance of 'standards' and the one supreme organisation that maintained standards in the art world was the Arts Council.<sup>153</sup> Attempts were made to retain a national craft organisation after the collapse of the CCNZ, including the short-lived Craft New Zealand/Mahi A Ringa O Aotearoa Inc. (Craft Aotearoa), but the craft world had become too divided.<sup>154</sup> Craftspeople who thought of themselves in the traditional sense as makers of utilitarian objects remained members of their own craft-specific organisations, if they had one, while craft artists looked to the Arts Council for support.

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<sup>153</sup> Cape, p.151.

<sup>154</sup> Gibbs, 'From the Editor', pp.2-3 and Goode, p.3. Craft Aotearoa was wound up in September 1993.

# Conclusion

The New Zealand studio craft movement emerged from the worlds of art and industry in the late 1940s and the 1950s. The craftspeople involved initially demonstrated many characteristics that are associated with new movements, such as a sense of unity forged through shared learning and a sense of discovery. However, by 1992, all pretence of unity had largely disappeared and the movement became divided along the fissures that had always existed, even when they appeared to have become irrelevant in the minds of some or not existed at all in the minds of others. The craft artists drifted into the art world, promoting their work and themselves through dealer galleries, procuring public funding through the Arts Council or applying for positions in the new craft design courses at polytechnics. Craftspeople working in a more traditional way as the makers of objects that could be used or displayed in the home continued to sell their work in a declining number of craft shops and galleries, in a market being inundated with imported objects, to a population who were looking for new objects to fill their homes. Others involved on the periphery of the movement, for instance those who had never made a living from craft or promoted themselves as craft artists, or had come to craft because it enhanced their enjoyment of life, continued to take pleasure in the companionship craft provided. These contrasting groups struggled and eventually failed to remain under one umbrella in a united movement.

This thesis set out to explain the changes the studio craft movement experienced between 1949 and 1992. It examined the exponential growth of interest in craft after the Second World War; how social, cultural and economic conditions helped many craftspeople earn a living through their craft; why conflicts arose; and why they resulted in divisions within the movement. Fundamental to this examination of studio craft in New Zealand were the structures and ideas that influenced the movement. The thesis sought to burrow down into the issues to explain why ideas that were often not referred to directly in the literature of craft were important, and describe

how they permeated through the events that unfolded. To realize this, the thesis called on the ideas of the philosophers, sociologists, political thinkers, economists and educators who proposed theories about craft, art, work, technology, education, economics and social structures. The ideas were then compared to the texts produced by craftspeople and commentators on craft, as well as the records of the craft organisations that proliferated during the period. Some crafts, such as pottery and weaving, dominated the discussions because their participants were more numerous, they tended to leave more extensive records and their organisations were more influential. The method described above was employed to compare the discourse that – at times unconsciously – inspired and guided the movement, the events that took place and the way craftspeople perceived those events and their significance.

Foremost amongst those called on to explain the structures of the craft movement and its place in New Zealand society was Pierre Bourdieu, the French sociologist and cultural economist. Bourdieu's theories have rarely been applied to the history of craft in New Zealand, but they offer a set of analytical tools that help explain why the concept of what craft was changed over time and why conflict arose. Furthermore, an examination of his theories suggests why scholarly discussion of craft has remained largely absent in New Zealand.

One further method was employed in the preparation and writing of this thesis. Sometimes called 'hindsight', it is an inexact method, but by calling on personal experience as a participant in and observer of the movement, I was able to compare the literature with what I observed 'on the ground' and this added an extra dimension to the research. As a potter and ceramic artist I was fortunate to be able to call myself a 'professional' because I earned a living from my craft. However, 'professional' is a term loaded with conflicting notions and while I based my professionalism on the fact that pottery was my full-time job and I earned my living from my craft, others measured their professionalism in different ways. Being a professional for these people might mean being the 'best' in their field and this was measured through

selection for prestigious exhibitions and receiving awards, rather than income. Professionalism also implied separation from amateurism which suggested inferior skills and a lower level of commitment to their craft.

During my career it became increasingly important for me to expand the boundaries of my 'craft' and therefore my working life was divided between my 'bread-and-butter' pottery – often pottery that could be used in the home – which provided most of my income, and work that was exhibited in galleries or submitted for awards. Like many other craftspeople, I noticed that this work usually was located within certain parameters. Generally it was not designed for use in the home, often it was larger and more imposing (perhaps to show superior skill) and it was expected to 'make a statement', although what that actually meant was unclear.

In 1987 I took part in the New Zealand Society of Potters annual exhibition at the Sarjeant Gallery in Wanganui. One of the pieces of 'ceramic art' that was displayed was made by me and was employed as a metaphor by the reviewer, Joanna Paul.<sup>1</sup> In the review she expressed concern that the changing role of potters/ceramic artists was a failure of the craft ideal. The Gallery Director, Bill Millbank however, believed that the work in the exhibition was by then indistinguishable from art and praised potters/ceramic artists for successfully making the transition. Millbank and Paul appeared to be advocating two completely different roles for craftspeople. From within the craft movement, I was aware that the craft world was divided. Only a very small number of craft artists could exist solely on 'one-off art pieces', but these works provided a store of cultural capital – a term, of course, I had never heard of – and increasingly cultural capital appeared to be as important as economic capital in the craft world I was a part of. I have used the opportunity to research and write this thesis to explore my own involvement in the studio craft movement and try to discover why I found myself straddling two different worlds.

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<sup>1</sup> The work had been subjected to a selection procedure.

The thesis began with an examination of the origins of the studio craft movement in New Zealand and overseas. Aspects of the Western history of craft were discussed to demonstrate how craft traditions, sometimes based on the erroneous interpretation of relics, were employed to establish a history for the movement in New Zealand. I explained how craft was sustained in New Zealand between the World Wars by a small number of dedicated individuals who struggled to earn a living from their craft. Many of the early craftspeople received some training overseas. Most would have been aware of the long history of craft in Britain and Europe and many were introduced to international trends in art such as Modernism. For the most part they worked alone, but often they had a desire to share their growing knowledge – the embryo of a movement was formed.

When, in the words of the Australian potter and writer Janet Mansfield, 'the craft movement proper started in the 1950s and 1960s' the new generation of craftspeople began to think about the history of 'their' movement.<sup>2</sup> They considered the largely Western version of the history of craft and looked to the pre-Second World War generation of craftspeople such as Olive Jones, R.N. Field and the Mulvany sisters, to provide examples of how the most recent manifestation might be understood by future craftspeople and craft historians. These 'pioneers' were memorialised and a received, often romanticised, version of the history of craft in New Zealand began to take shape. But the mixture of tradition and Modernism that the pioneers were exposed to also infiltrated the history and although it was rarely mentioned the potential for conflict existed. In the following chapters I sought to challenge the accepted version and examine the conflict in depth.

The relationship between craft and art was a constant source of tension between different groups of craftspeople and between craftspeople and artists. As the craft movement matured some craftspeople were clearly more interested in creating 'art' than making craft. To validate this they needed a legitimating authority to support them and establish the parameters within

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<sup>2</sup> Janet Mansfield, 'Plurality and Necessity: An Antipodean Case Study,' in *The Persistence of Craft. The Applied Arts Today*, Paul Greenhalgh, ed., London, 2002, p.149.

which their work could be framed and identified. In Chapter Two I considered different ways craft and art have been defined and sought to explain why some participants in the movement eventually identified as craft artists rather than simply craftspeople. Bourdieu's ideas on the association between education, class and the dynamics of power in relationship to craft and art suggested that the complex interaction between social, cultural, economic and symbolic capital influenced how craftspeople responded over the forty-three years this thesis covers. Craft and art were intersecting fields within which craftspeople and artists could move according to their *habitus*. The dynamic struggles of individuals and groups within these fields, as outlined in Bourdieu's theory, help explain why some craftspeople sought formal qualifications and moved across the fields of craft and art while others remained firmly rooted within the craft field where they felt most comfortable.

Bourdieu's theories make clear why the early financial success craftspeople experienced was not enough for later craft artists. The debate between those who admired the capacity of amateurs to begin earning a living from craft, a feature of the early movement, and those who advocated for the professionalization of craft through formal educational qualifications, a later emphasis, became the fields in which the conflict took place. Bourdieu explained that the value of capital lay in its scarcity. When economic capital became more abundant and more easily obtained by craftspeople, cultural capital became more important for the craftspeople whose *habitus* – formed through education and social background – encouraged them to elevate craft to a higher plane and think of themselves as craft artists. To validate this position the craft artists needed an organisation with legitimating authority to recognise their qualifications and critique their work in an informed manner. They looked to the Craft Council of New Zealand (CCNZ), which had been set up to unite and serve all craftspeople, to fulfil this role.

The debate was often defined in terms of professionalism. Craftspeople who entered into this debate soon discovered that the words 'amateur' and 'professional' could be measured in both economic and cultural terms depending on which field craftspeople hoped to, or were permitted to

operate in. Many amateurs, through the quality of their work and their training, believed they were cultural professionals, while other craftspeople defined professional status in purely economic terms and had no interest in the prestige that cultural capital might afford them.

In Bourdieu's model, education is the vehicle used to assert cultural, social and symbolic capital to legitimize the power and status of economically dominant social groups. The studio craft movement in New Zealand emerged from a time of economic prosperity which had encouraged the rise of a well-educated, economically dominant middle-class. As the movement grew, this group used its cultural and symbolic capital to maintain a dominant position in the world of craft. To move craft from its former (working-class) home to a new (middle-class) location craft was framed within a romanticised construct, supported by unquestioning promotional literature which attempted to depict craftspeople more as artists rather than trades people. To support these changes the already well-educated participants established a system of craft education based on their own *habitus* and modelled on the educational structure used by artists and art educators and informed by art philosophers. Bourdieu's notion that the increasing educational attainment of certain sections of society increased their symbolic power became evident within the movement. Craft education in the form of craft design and visual design qualifications provided an external legitimacy to craft. A form of symbolic violence developed in the craft design education system that placed art above craft.

The early studio craftspeople (pre-1970s) and some of their protégés (post-1970s) believed they were part of a holistic movement that was concerned with more than just the making of objects by hand. They discovered that craft provided opportunities to explore ideas they held, not only about art or craft, but also about technology, work, business, education and different forms of social organisation. In Chapter Four I described how craftspeople became associated in the minds of the wider community with resistance to what many believed were regressive developments in these areas. The received version of the craft movement suggested that most craftspeople lived in a rural

settling, possibly in a commune, used a minimum amount of machinery, looked like hippies and rejected normal society. It was both a romantic and nostalgic narrative that appealed to the wider public that was both fascinated and concerned by people and groups who formed social configurations that were different to the 'norm'. The move by craftspeople to seek accreditation through polytechnic courses to validate their new position as craft artists was a development that writers such as Christopher Frayling had prophesised was the only viable future for craft. The new craft artists were urban, welcomed new technology and were more closely aligned to artists. With the demise of the CCNZ they became integrated into the world of art. The earlier version persisted however, and became the defining image of the studio craft movement but was, as was explained in the chapter, a misleading narrative.

In Chapter Five I discussed the relationship between craft and the economy and looked at how craftspeople related to industries operating in similar fields and how craftspeople adapted to changing economic and regulatory conditions. For many craftspeople operating a craft studio was similar to running a conventional business and the economic climate from the early 1950s to the early 1970s generally provided a sympathetic environment in which they could prosper. However, as making a living from craft became more difficult because of changes in economic conditions and public taste, craftspeople had to decide if they would struggle on in a declining market or branch out into other spheres. Often the second option meant becoming part of the art world either as a craft artist, teacher or administrator. It also created a conundrum for the CCNZ which ultimately had to decide who it could support with its limited resources. The chapter showed that craftspeople often existed in an inferior position in economic terms but by enhancing their cultural capital it was possible to gain symbolically from their position in society. Generally this was achieved by becoming more 'artist-like', thus encouraging some to define themselves as 'craft artists', 'sculptors' or even 'multi-media artists'. It was a position the CCNZ increasingly endorsed.

Not all sectors of the craft movement wished to adopt the ‘artist alone’ model that Modernism offered. The early movement, with its ethos of cooperation and sharing, mirrored the working methods that many women and Māori preferred. Women also took leading roles in the administration of craft organisations and thus established policies and procedures that formalised the way that craftspeople interacted – often injecting their own values. Māori gradually asserted their pre-eminent position as New Zealand’s first craftspeople by taking control of their traditional designs – endorsing Pākehā craftspeople who demonstrated an affinity with them – or adapting them in the new art-oriented environment. Both women and Māori had to adapt if they wished to be part of the art world and both found old and new ideas caused conflict. Individual women often had to mimic or embrace the more individualistic approach that craft artists took to their work and Māori had to be cognisant of their craft heritage and traditional methods when working with new ideas and non-traditional materials.

Other divisions existed, often observed overseas before they appeared in New Zealand. In Britain, a struggle developed between the ‘traditionalist’ and the ‘*avant-garde*’. Two of the most vehement protagonists in this debate, Peter Fuller and Christopher Frayling, portrayed the two sides in black-and-white terms. Fuller, in support of the traditionalists, presented them as the guardians of true craftsmanship and quality, while Frayling suggested they were stuck in a time-warp and were holding back craft. For Frayling, the future lay with craft artists, usually university trained, who would provide the innovation needed to provide craft with the credentials to hold its place in the art world. Frayling’s view gained the approval of the government funded Crafts Council (CCUK). Craftspeople continued to work in traditional ways, and still do today, producing objects based on centuries-old traditions, but increasingly they had less support from the organisations they had formed.<sup>3</sup>

This was also evident in New Zealand as the CCNZ spent more time and resources on championing the ‘best’ craftspeople and less time fighting

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<sup>3</sup> For instance see, *The Guardian Weekly*, 28 May 2010.

bureaucracy over issues such as factory regulations and town and country planning rules. The Frayling model was adopted by the executive of CCNZ. In terms of national representation, Frayling's advocacy of the *avant-garde* dominated in New Zealand as it had in Britain. Pierre Bourdieu's theory of the increasing dominance of symbolic and cultural capital in the Western world during the twentieth century explained why this happened. The conflict between art and craft that permeated the development of the studio craft movement was an example of the traditionalists versus *avant-garde* argument that had dominated discussion of studio craft overseas. In Britain the CCUK was strong enough to survive the dispute and follow Frayling's direction. In New Zealand the CCNZ, by 1992 largely directionless and lacking critical mass, collapsed.

Symbolically, the conflicts that afflicted the craft world were played out through the CCNZ. In the 1980s the tertiary trained graduates of the new craft design courses were the heirs to a craft movement that had been creatively rewarding and financially lucrative for the preceding generation of craftspeople. The CCNZ had been established by people who had accumulated a store of economic, cultural and symbolic capital. But there were signs that the CCNZ was unsure about where the future of craft would be located in the new environment. Initially, the CCNZ embarked on a policy that appeared to support the founders' economic position through advice on technical matters and the marketing of craft. However, the CCNZ also believed it had a role in enhancing the cultural and symbolic capital of craftspeople. To achieve this it began to arbitrate different levels of craft – a distinction determined by traditional (and misunderstood) Kantian aesthetics – as posited in the theories of Robin George Collingwood, which were directed at elevating art to a 'higher realm'. By the late 1980s and early 1990s it was evident that Bourdieu's ideas about how dominant groups could influence *habitus* by employing their superior symbolic and cultural capital and by admitting only those who were imbued with the correct *habitus*, was in play. Combined with Collingwood's criteria, this increasingly excluded the utilitarian crafts that had dominated the studio craft movement up until the

mid-1970s and promoted the craft art that began to gain currency in the 1980s.

However, as the American craft writer, Bruce Metcalf, observed:

By nature craft looks backwards, which [in 1993] is no longer supposed to be a virtue. But all its ancient usages provide a sourcebook from which craft can clarify its essential distinction from fine art. Once that is done, craft can develop its own conceptual approach.<sup>4</sup>

He also advised craftspeople to avoid trying to enter the art world:

‘Assimilation into art is deadly to craft and should be avoided.’<sup>5</sup> But by the time he wrote this it was too late. Craftspeople had to decide if they wanted to become part of this new dominant group – as craft artists – or remain simple craftspeople and possibly slide back into the ‘trades’. If they chose the former they had to accept the rules of the art world. If they chose the latter they looked to the past and a doubtful future.

In this thesis I sought to discover and explain why the interest in craft grew dramatically after the Second World War and why the craft world, after this period of growth, became divided. My research started in the late 1940s and 1950s with the opening of shops and galleries that proudly displayed craft handmade by New Zealand craftspeople alongside paintings and sculpture by well-known New Zealand artists. The craft movement was often framed in a romantic construct and craftspeople inherited many of the characteristics that society attributed to artists – the creative individual struggling in a society that does not understand them. However, more often craftspeople were like most New Zealanders. They participated in their community with the only difference being that they were occupied in making objects by hand, usually from start to finish, most of which would not have been out of place in homes of earlier times. By the early 1990s crafts, in the traditional sense, could still be found in craft shops, often located in a rural setting, but there were fewer shops and the work rarely sat alongside painters and sculptors of

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<sup>4</sup> Bruce Metcalf, 'Replacing the Myth of Modernism', *American Craft*, 53, 1, February 1993, p.40.

<sup>5</sup> *ibid.*

any note. Meanwhile, craft art was displayed and sold in exclusive galleries – usually to be found in urban locations. For a number of craftspeople the transition from humble craft shops to exclusive galleries was symbolic of their new position in the art world. This tested the unity of the studio craft movement and by 1992 few craftspeople – or craft artists – could find a movement to be part of.



# APPENDICES

## Appendix 1: Christopher Frayling's Projections and Realities:<sup>1</sup>

### Projections:

- Crafts must be made of natural materials, preferably beige.
- Crafts must be functional.
- Crafts must be the work of one person, perhaps featuring thumbprints or surface imperfections to prove it.
- Crafts must be the embodiment of a traditional design (unless of a musical instrument).
- Crafts must be in the “artisan rather than the “fine art” tradition.
- Crafts must be rural products.
- Crafts must be untouched by fashion (which, it was automatically assumed, meant badly made “fashion”).
- Crafts must be easily understood.
- Crafts must last, like a brogue shoe or a fine tweed.
- Crafts must be affordable (even if, like William Morris's work, affordable mainly by Oxbridge Colleges, Anglican churches and collectors).
- Above all, crafts must provide solace, in a rapidly changing world.

### Realities:

- Crafts can be made with machines, and maybe even by them, if numerically-controlled technology goes on improving.
- Crafts can be made with synthetic materials, in all colours of the rainbow.
- Crafts can be non-functional, and may even conform to the American Customs and Excise definition of “art” – that it must be “totally useless”.
- Crafts can be made in limited production.
- Crafts can be designed by one person and made by another (as they often were, in fact, in the original Arts and Crafts period).
- Crafts can provide designed prototypes for industry.
- Crafts can be made in towns, and usually are.
- Crafts can be high fashion, and still be well made, although they needn't be.
- Crafts can be ideas borrowed from the fine arts of painting and sculpture.
- Crafts can be transient.
- Crafts can be very expensive indeed (again like William Morris's work ...)
- Above all, the role of crafts is to provide a challenge, often by means of an ironic statement about traditional notions of “the crafts”.

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<sup>1</sup> Christopher Frayling in Boris Ford, ed., *The Cambridge Guide to the Arts in Britain* vol. 9, Cambridge, 1988, pp.169-70.

## Appendix 2: Crafts listed in the 'Working in Crafts' report.<sup>2</sup>

TABLE 1.2 CRAFT CATEGORIES USED IN THE SURVEY

<u>Code</u>	<u>Some titles</u>	<u>Examples of goods made</u>
1	GRAPHIC CRAFTS	
10	Papermaking	Handmade paper
11	Paper shaping	Papier mache, masks, fans
13	Calligraphy	Diplomas, presentation addresses, book inscriptions
14	Illustration	"heraldic artist" Illuminated addresses, hand-painted greetings cards, signboards
15	Lettering	Lettered plaques, memorials
16	Letterpress	"hand printer" Stationery, visiting cards, books, bookplates
17	Printmaking	"screen printer" Lino cuts, etchings, engravings, greetings cards
18	Bookbinding	Books, boxes, folders
19	Decorative crafts	"marbler", "gilder" Barge art, japanning, painted and stencilled furniture
2	LEATHER	
21	Leatherwork	Belts, bags, keyrings, wallets, straps, light luggage
23	Shoemaking	Sandals, moccasins
24	Leatherwear	Jerkins, caps
25	Saddlery	Saddles, bridles, tack
3	GLASS	
31	Glassmaking	Vases, slabs, moulds, paperweights
32	Glassblowing	Goblets, plates, jars
33	Glass sculpture	Figures, framework
35	Glass engraving	Engraving and etching on goblets, bowls, solid glass and perspex
36	Glass painting	Designs and gilding
37	Stained glass	Panels, windows, lamps, terraria
38	Mosaics	Surrounds, panels
4	POTTERY AND CERAMICS	
41	Pottery	"potter" Domestic ware, tableware, teapots, cheese domes, bowls, gardenware
42	Ceramics	"ceramicist", "ceramist" Slipcast jars, slab-built vases, plaques, brooches, tiles, doorplates
43	Ceramic sculpture	Birds, animals, cottages, figures
48	China painting	Specialist work, e.g. gilding
5	SILVER AND JEWELLERY	
51	Silversmithing	"goldsmith" Rings, hollow-ware, spoons, napkin rings, company and church plate, medals
52	Jewellery	Necklaces, brooches, rings, earrings, pendants, pins, bracelets
53	Lapidary	Gemstones, netsukes, cameos, combs
54	Enamelling	Boxes, plates, plaques, cloisonne ware, ashtrays
55	Fine metalwork	"coppersmith", "pewterer" Candlesticks, snuffers, bowls, trays, goblets
5a	IRON AND STONE	
56	Wrought ironwork	"blacksmith" Bowls, fire irons, gates, screens, fire baskets, railings, weather vanes

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<sup>2</sup> 'Working in Crafts: An Independent Socio-Economic Study of Craftsmen and Women in England and Wales Prepared for the Crafts Council', 1983, pp.19-21.

57	Stone carving		Bookends, door stops, lamps, slate tabletops
58	Stonemasonry		Fireplaces, screens, church carvings
59	Sculpture		barge and cast pieces, statuary
6	WOOD		
61	Woodworking		"Wood" (no details), carpentry, boxes, shelves
62	Wood carving		Blocks, spoons, figures, chessmen
63	Wood turning	"turner"	Lamps, bowls, salt and pepper mills, lace bobbins, scoops, goblets, knobs
64	Wood specialities		Picture framing, marquetry and inlay work, pyrography
65	Furniture		Chairs, tables, spinning wheels, looms, stands
66	Cabinet-making		Desks, chests, clock cases, cheval glasses, wardrobes
67	Furniture restoring		All objects, reproductions (and upholstery)
68	Basketry		Baskets, creels, cribs
69	Cane and rush work		Seating, bowls, lampshades
7	TEXTILES		
70	Textile work		"Textiles" (no details), conservation
71	Spinning		Yarns and skeins
72	Weaving		Fabric lengths, hangings, stoles, tapestries, rugs, headsquares, sashes
73	Knitting		Hand and machine-knitted garments, jumpers, hats, mitts, scarves
74	Lace and crochet		Edgings, paperweight bases, chokers, tablemats
75	Fabric printing and batik		Cushions, bags, scarves, ties, dress materials, roller blinds, hangings
76	Embroidery		Panels, ecclesiastical items, cushion covers, dress decorations
77	Quilting and patchwork		Cushions, cot quilts, bedspreads, tea cosies, soft toys
78	Fashion and garments		Smocks, dresses, millinery
79	Fabric art		Hangings, banners, fabric collage, pictures, soft sculpture
8	TOYS AND INSTRUMENTS		
81	Toys		Toys in general
82	Dolls		China dolls, puppets, period pieces
83	Toy settings		Dolls' houses, forts, stages
84	Games and puzzles		Chess sets, board games, jigsaws
85	Figurines		Dressed and multi-media figures
86	Models and replicas		Scale models, ships, architecture
87	Musical instruments		Violins, guitars, harpsichords, spinets, bows, lutes, serpents
88	Horology and science		Clockwork, barometers, sextants, orreries
89	Automata		Animated figures
9	RURAL AND MINOR CRAFTS		
91	Corndollies		Dollies, straw work, mats
92	Natural collage		Flower pictures, featherwork, shell and sand pictures, painted stones
93	Perishables		Dried herbs, milling, cosmetics
94	Candles and casts		Candles, resin settings, plasterwork
95	Thatching		Stacks, porches, roofs

- |    |                               |                                     |
|----|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 96 | Wood trades                   | Vehicles, wheels, gypsy crafts      |
| 97 | Nautical trades               | Small boats, nets                   |
| 98 | Sports equipment              | Cricket bats, archery, fishing rods |
| 99 | Undefined/undefinable         | (Craft not stated)                  |
| 0  | ARTS                          |                                     |
| 00 | "Artist"                      |                                     |
| 01 | Drawing and painting          |                                     |
| 02 | Prints and printmaking        |                                     |
| 03 | Graphics and design           |                                     |
| 04 | Sculpture                     |                                     |
| 05 | Theatre (& mime and puppetry) |                                     |
| 06 | Music                         |                                     |
| 07 | Dance                         |                                     |
| 08 | Photography                   |                                     |
| 09 | Literature/Other arts         |                                     |

### Appendix 3: Collingwood's Distinctions between Art and Craft.<sup>3</sup>

1. Craft always involves a distinction between means and end, each clearly conceived as something distinct from the other but related to it.
2. Craft involves a distinction between planning and execution.
3. Means and end are related in one way in the process of planning; in the opposite way in the process of execution. In planning the end is prior to the means. In execution the means comes first, and the end is reached through the means.
4. There is a distinction between raw materials and finished product or artefact.
5. There is a distinction between form and matter. The matter is what is identical in the raw material and the finished product; the form is what is different, what the exercise of craft changes.
6. There is a hierarchical relation between various crafts, one supplying what another needs, one using what another provides.
  - a. The raw material of one craft is the finished product of another.'
  - b. 'In hierarchy of means, one craft supplies another with tools.'
  - c. 'In the hierarchy of parts ...' - the tasks are parcelled out and the object is assembled later.

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<sup>3</sup> R. G. Collingwood, *The Principles of Art*, London, 1938, pp.16-7.

#### **Appendix 4: Extract from 'Craftsmanship in Ceramics: A Phenomenological Enquiry', a PhD thesis by Geoffrey Kay.<sup>4</sup>**

In July 1968 I had successfully completed a three-year course of study, and was awarded a Diploma in Art and Design (Three Dimensional Studies) with the classification of First Class Honours. However that was 36 years ago. I might have forgotten everything that I learned, and the knowledge gained might have moved on, to the extent that this qualification was irrelevant. Or, was it the case that early experiences in art are especially powerful, and determine the way makers think and behave for a lifetime?

Between 1965 and 1968 I studied ceramics at Wolverhampton School of Art & Design (now The University of Wolverhampton). At the beginning of that period I knew nothing about ceramics, but by the time I had completed the course I had clear ideas about the direction in which I wanted my work to develop. With the benefit of hindsight, I can now see that my experience at that time was rooted in developments in art education that were specific to the latter part of the 1960s. Many of the attitudes towards craftsmanship I acquired at that time remain with me still, and informed this enquiry. For this reason, I wished to use the research to explore what it meant to be a student at that time, and what educationalists thought they were trying to achieve by providing courses like the one which I studied.

The first DipAD [Art and Design] courses began in the autumn of 1965. The previous qualification, the National Diploma in Design (NDD) was phased out, so for a period of two or three years students on both courses worked side by side in the colleges, gaining different awards. The NDD was first introduced in 1946, and in turn had grown out of previous national qualifications. The NDD was awarded through a highly centralised system of assessment that placed high value on traditional craft skills, but critics considered it gave very little opportunity for individual creativity. By 1972 many of the Schools of Art & Design became part of Polytechnics, and the

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<sup>4</sup> Geoffrey Kay, 'Craftsmanship in Ceramics: A Phenomenological Enquiry', PhD thesis, Anglia Ruskin University, 2007, pp.7-9.

DipAD gave way to BA(Hons) courses in Art & Design subject areas. So it can be seen that the DipAD was a short lived qualification. Many students who gained the award later took up the offer of converting it to BA(Hons), thus contributing to a rarity value for those, like me, who chose to keep their original diplomas. Whereas this brief retelling of an obscure development in Art & Design Higher Education might appear to be of interest only to education historians, or snobbish people obsessed with the letters one puts after one's name; in reality, gaining a DipAD, places the awardee in a specific time and place with identifiable values and attitudes.

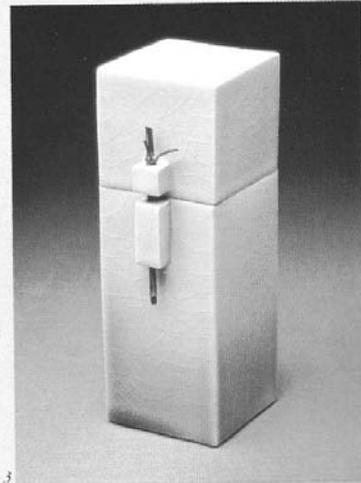
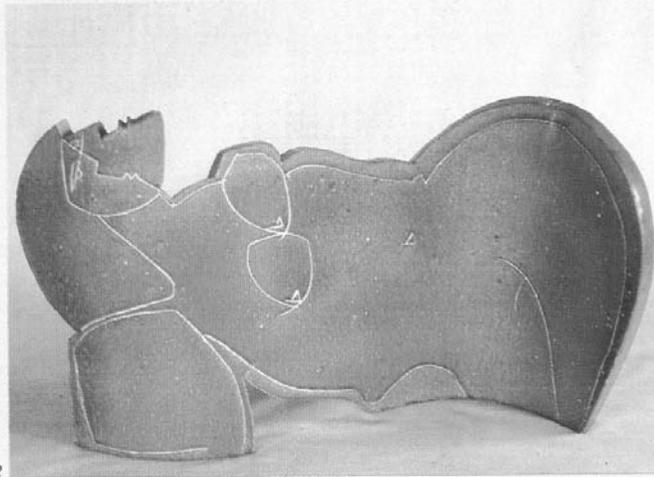
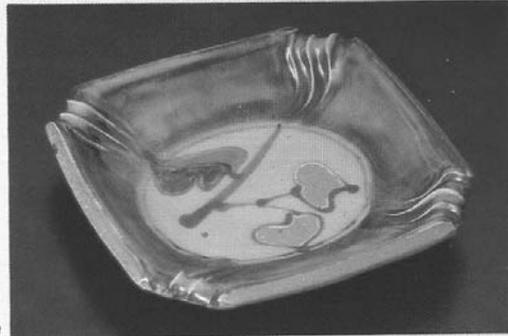
What I did not learn is as interesting as what I did learn. I was never required to do anything on a potter's wheel - although it was a skill I chose to acquire. I never made any domestic pottery - although some of my fellow students did. That meant I never learned to do repetition throwing, or handle pulling, or to make spouts and lids for teapots. Curiously, later, when I needed to know how to do those things, they were skills I acquired very quickly. I never built a kiln, or even fired one, and I certainly never went out with a spade to dig clay. I never had any careers advice, and am surprised to this day how few photographs were taken of anything we made or the environment we worked in. As far as I was concerned computers hadn't been invented, although some of my friends studying fine art talked a lot about 'cybernetics'. So, what did we do? In the early part of the course, there was a requirement that students carry out specific projects designed to introduce us to particular methods and processes, for example; to make a slip cast cylinder, and design and make an appropriate screen printed transfer to fit it. History of Art and Complementary Studies were important ingredients of DipAD courses. They legitimised some of the things I was already passionate about; such as reading novels, going to the theatre, exploring architecture, watching films and, increasingly, writing about those things. I can attribute later interests, (for example studying at Ironbridge, visiting Santa Sophia in Istanbul, joining Amnesty International), directly to the lectures and seminars that were considered 'complementary' to my main area of study.

I now know that the tutors who taught me had been required to go through a period of readjustment, as they were the product of a previous pedagogy that placed enormous value upon acquisition of craft skills. Having fought for radical change, they had to deliver it. This climate of learning on the job was exciting. There was a feeling that both students and tutors were developing together, simultaneously seeking academic rigour, and engaging in experimental and creative practices. It felt as though there was something very special about Wolverhampton, the place where I studied. It never was, or will be, a fashionable city, but it was twenty-five miles from Stoke on Trent, and this gave the college a unique relationship to the 'Potteries'. It was close enough for frequent visits to the factories and museums there to be commonplace. It was close enough for there to be a lively exchange of ideas between academics and industrialists, but far enough away from it to develop a particular approach to the theory and practice of ceramics. This meant exploiting all of the technical skills, materials and processes of Industrial Ceramics, but applying them in a manner more aligned to fine art practice, particularly sculpture.

## Appendix 5: The First Craft Index<sup>5</sup>

### Ceramics

- 1 **Meryl Wiseman.**  
*Wood Fired Platter – White stoneware Clay.*  
*Approx. 320mm square.*
- 2 **John Crawford.**  
*Reclining Figure – Ceramic Sculpture*  
*(T-shaped)*  
*Approx. 650mm.*
- 3 **Jean Hastedt.**  
*Box: Bamboo trim – Porcelain.*  
*180mmx60mm.*

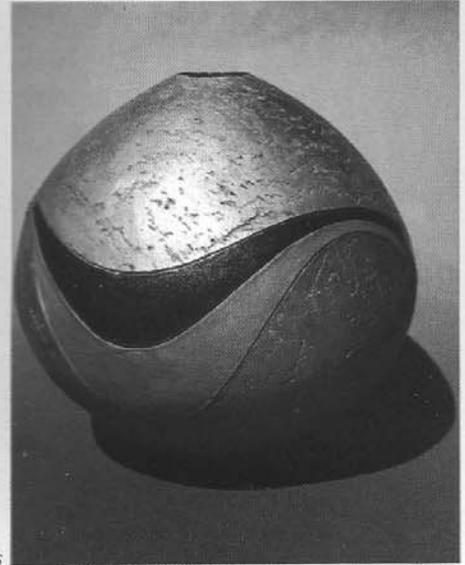
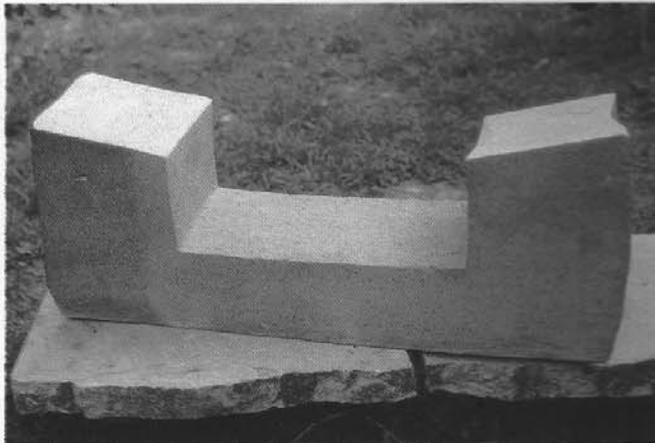
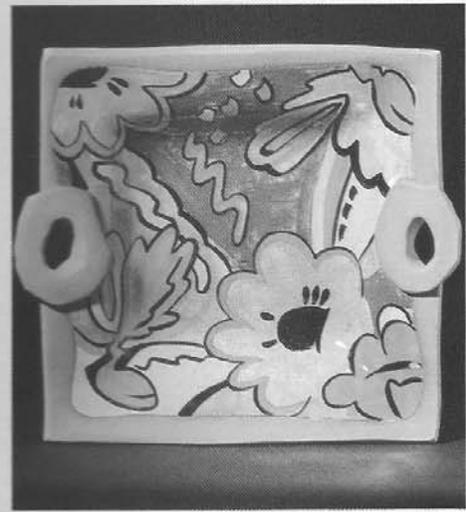
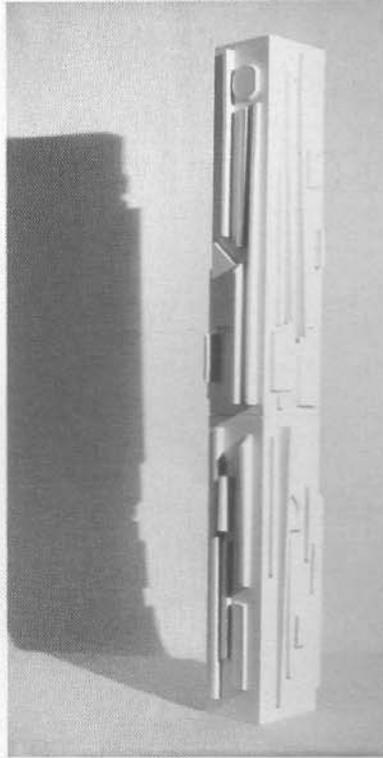


- 4 **Jon Benge & Gill Gane.**  
*Jug – Handthrown and Decorated: Porcelain.*  
*280mm high.*
- 5 **Andrea Barrett.**  
*Two Inlaid Porcelain Rectangular Vases.*  
*Slab Technique. 280mm high.*

<sup>5</sup> *New Zealand Crafts*, Autumn 1987, pp.19-26.

## Ceramics

- 1 **Leo King.**  
*Column 86" s/cast Assembled Ceramic.*  
1200mm high.
- 2 **David Brokenshire.**  
*"Great Wave" Porcelain.*  
250mmx200mmx180mm high.
- 3 **Moyra Elliott.**  
*Terracotta Dish. Slip painted Clay*  
310mmx280mmx60mm high.



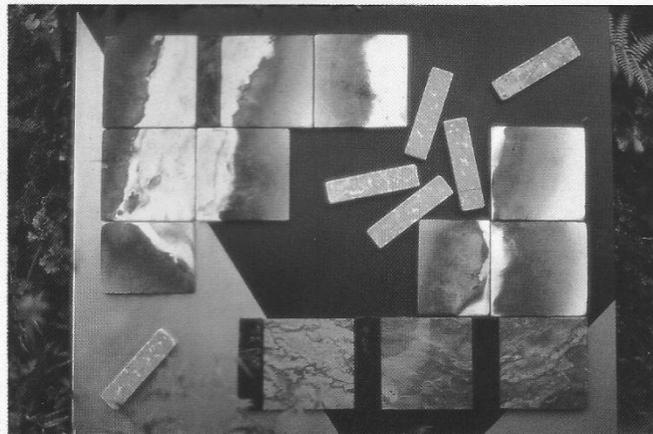
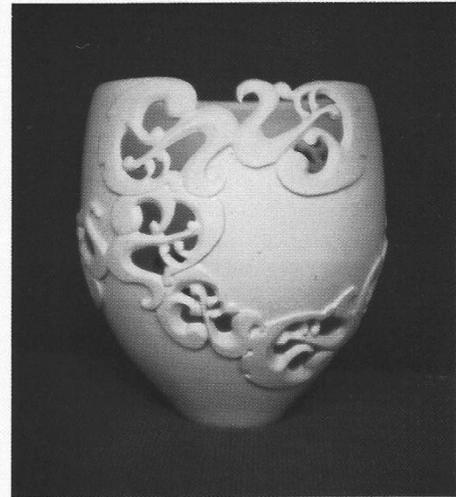
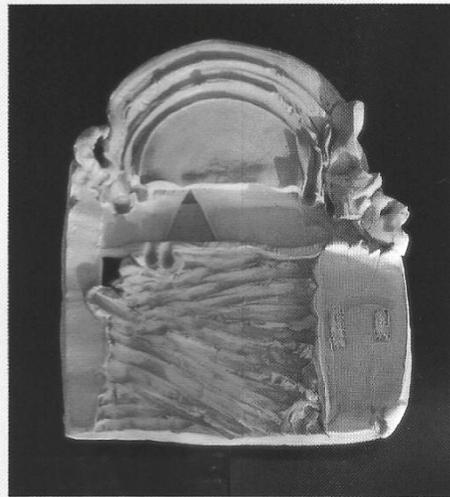
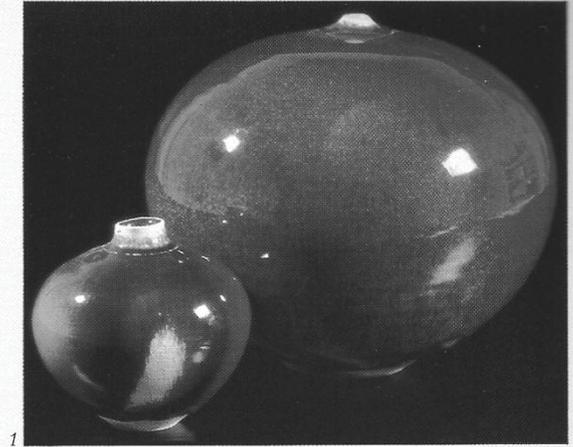
- 4 **Jan White.**  
*"Angle Still Form VII" 460mm.*
- 5 **Rick Rudd.**  
*Bottle Form - Raku Fired Clay. 380mm. high.*

## Ceramics

**1 Campbell Hegan.**  
*Copperglazed Stoneware.*  
*320mm highx180mm high.*

**2 Brian Gartside.**  
*Plate. Multifired Polychromatic Ceramic.*  
*450mm.*

**3 Anne Powell.**  
*Kowhaiwhai carved porcelain.*  
*Unglazed. Approx. 120mm high.*



**4 Paul D. Johnson.**  
*"Slate Gate 1" Ceramic, Slate, Stainless Steel & Formica. 1000mmx1200mm.*

**5 Anneke Borren.**  
*Stoneware. 400mm highx200mm high.*



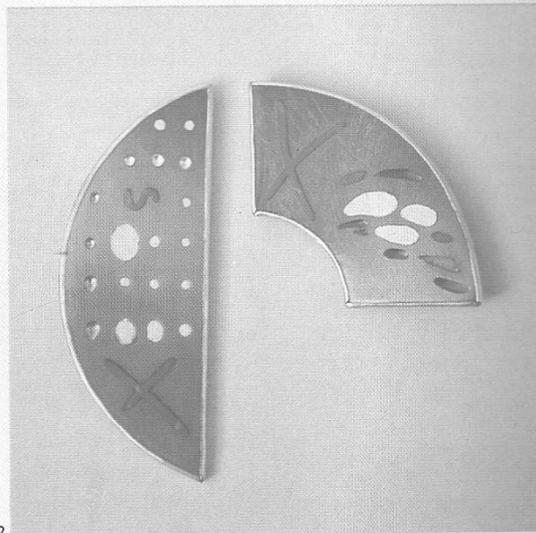
## Jewellery



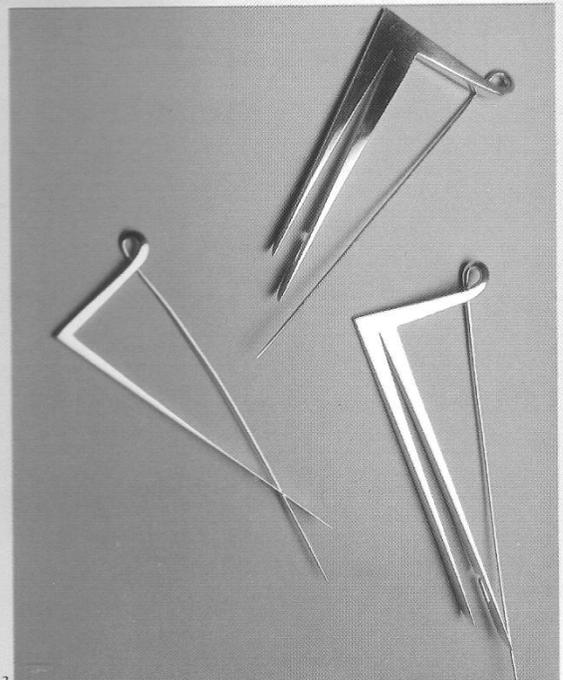
1 **John Edgar.**  
*Argillite and Copper Stack.*

2 **Eléna Gee.**  
*Two Brooches – Silver, Enamelled and Inlaid  
Titanium. 75mm.*

3 **Kobi Bosshard.**  
*Silver Brooches.*



2



3

## Jewellery

**1 Warwick Freeman.**

*Flake Necklace  
Flaked Angillite  
Pure Silk Binding  
370x100mm.*



1

**2 Michael Couper.**

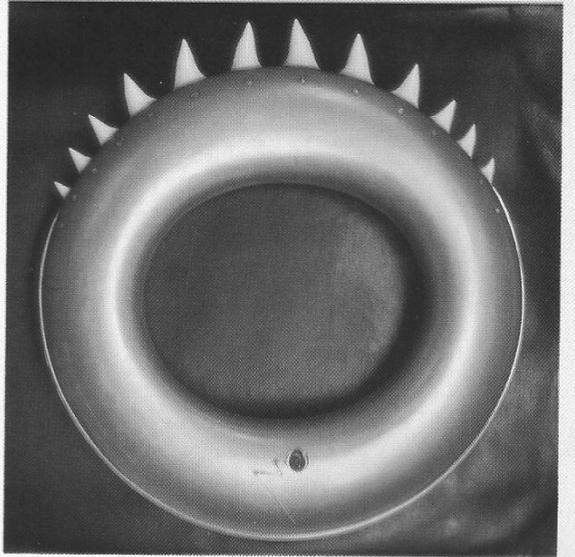
*Bracelet - Forged & Anodised Aluminium, Shark  
Teeth, Ruby & Silver.*

**3 Stephen Mulqueen.**

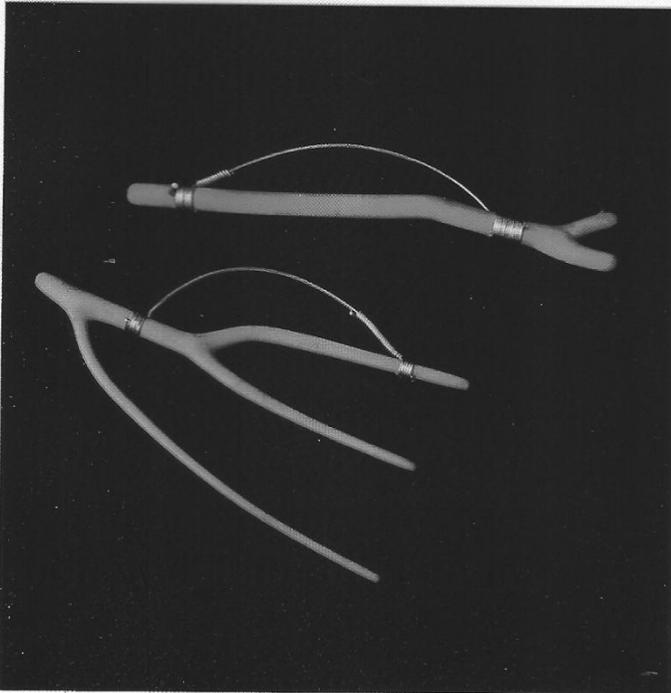
*Jewellery - Colour Dyed.*

**4 Owen Mapp.**

*Decanter, Beaker & Box. Cowbone.  
170 mm, 70 mm, 280 mm.*



2



3



4

## Textiles

1 **Malcolm Harrison.**  
*Quilt – "Lady Hawarden's Room" – No. 1*

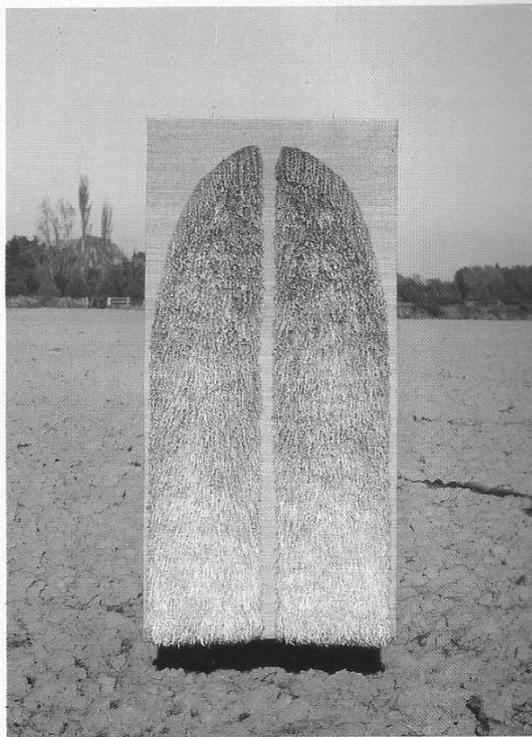
2 **Judy Wilson.**  
*"Grey Fleece" (Series II) 1984.*



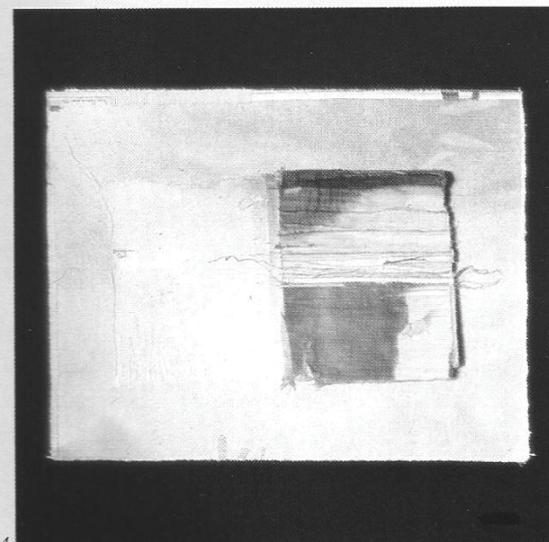
1



3



2



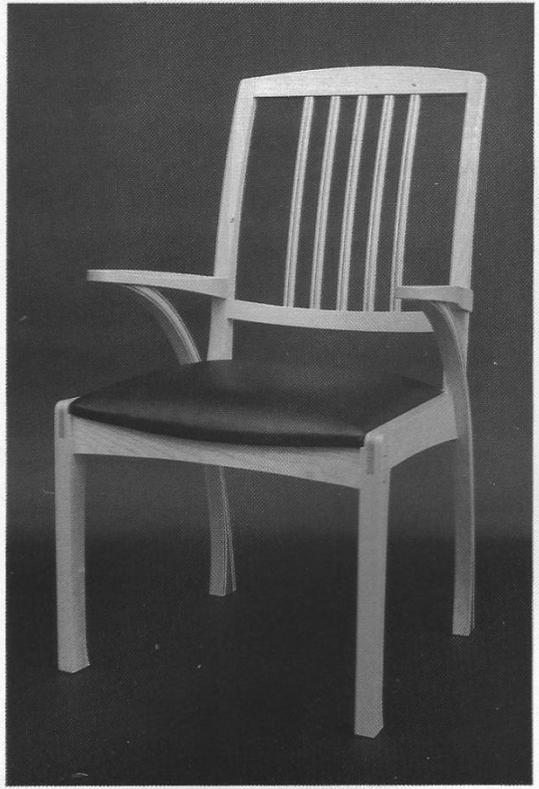
4

3 **Margaret Stove.**  
*"Rata Blossom" – Shawl. Hand Knitted.  
1100mm Diameter.*

4 **Suzy Pennington.**  
*"Another Time, Another Place" Stitched  
Canvas. 410mmx510mm.*

## Wood

- 1 **Rick Swain.**  
*NZTIF. 1986 Awards. Kauri*  
7 @ 200mm high 1 @ 350mm high.
- 2 **Colin Slade.**  
*Side Chair. Walnut. Needlepoint Upholstery*  
430mmx430mmx900mm (Approx.)
- 3 **John Shaw.**  
*Oak & Seagrass Chair*  
(to a design by Vidar Malmsten)  
520mmx500mmx800mm.
- 4 **Vic Matthews.**  
*Carver Chair in Tawa and Walnut with Brown*  
*Hide Seat.*



## Wood Glass

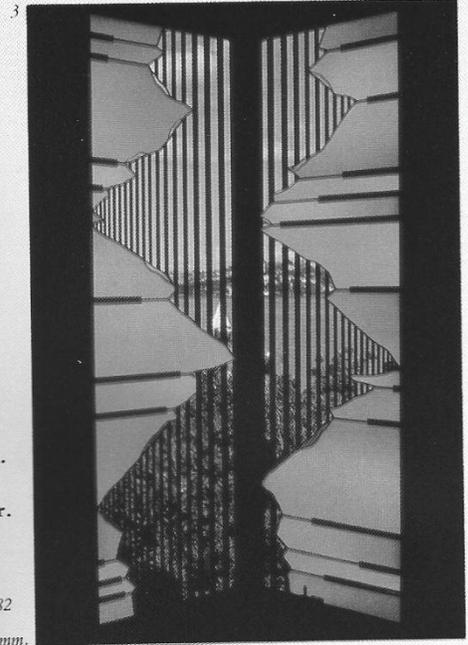
- 5 **Humphrey Ikin.**  
*Upright Chair – Laminated Tawa, Leather Upholstery. 960mm high.*
- 6 **Marc Zuckerman.**  
*Dining or Desk Chair – Heart Rimu.*



5



6

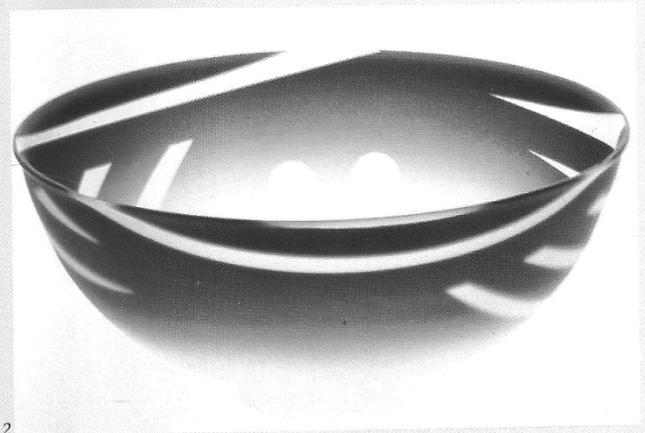


3

- 1 **Ann Robinson.**  
*Pate de Vere Bowl.*
- 2 **John Croucher.**  
*Glass Bowl.*
- 3 **James Walker.**  
*Stained glass  
"Blue Zig Zag" 1982  
Private Auckland  
residence. 1510x960mm.*



1



2

## **Appendix 6: Submissions.**

### **CCNZ Submission to Select Committee on the Factory and Commercial Premises Bill:**

Clause 2 Subsection (2) begins:

“No place shall be deemed to be a factory by virtue only of the fact that it is:”

The Crafts Council wishes to offer the following addition to Subsection (2):  
(v) a place where goods are produced by hand, by the use of hand tools, or by the use of mechanical appliances where such appliances –

(i) Do not produce the goods in a repetitive manner through the use of jigs, templates, moulds, patterns, dies, jolleys, or other similar devices, except that such devices may be used to produce the original or first unit;

(ii) Do not produce the goods other than through the direct control of the operator; or

(iii) Do not produce the goods according to a predetermined pattern of production run purposes: and the person producing such goods must design the goods and have complete and variable control over the production of every piece and every stage of production, provided that this exception shall not apply where one or more persons are employed by the occupiers in the production of the goods.<sup>6</sup>

### **District Scheme Reviews: Artlaw, Town Planning and the Arts, published by the Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council of New Zealand 2<sup>nd</sup> Edn, September 1981.**

3.3 Most local authorities are concerned about defining “handcraft” and the Arts Council has put forward the following definition proposed by the Crafts Council and adopted by the Government for sales tax regulations. This definition overcomes many of the worries of local authorities about small enterprises becoming “factories” of “noxious” industries”.

“Handcrafts are those goods produced by hand by the use of hand tools or the use of mechanical appliances where such appliances:

(i) do not produce the goods in a repetitive manner through the use of jigs, templates, moulds, patterns, dies, jolleys, or other similar devices, except that such devices may be used to produce the original or first unit;

(ii) do not produce the goods other than through the direct control of the operator; or

(iii) do not produce the goods according to a predetermined pattern of production run purposes: and the person producing such goods must

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<sup>6</sup> 'Factory and Commercial Premises Bill: Submission to Labour Select Committee by Crafts Council of New Zealand', 14 March 1980, 92-278 10/01, p.2.

design the goods and have complete and variable control over the production of every piece and every stage of production.

Provided however, that the handcrafts offered for sale are solely those produced on the property.”<sup>7</sup>

### **Final Legislation:**

- 6) Except for the purposes of the Holidays Act 1981, no place shall be deemed to be a factory by virtue only of the fact that it is a place where goods are manufactured for sale, if -
- (a) All the goods so manufactured are produced by hand, or by the use of mechanical appliances that -
    - (i) Do not produce the goods in a repetitive manner through the use of jigs, templates, moulds, patterns, dies, jolleys, or other similar devices, except to the extent that such devices may be used to produce an original or first unit; and
    - (ii) Produce the goods through the direct control of the operator of those appliances; and
    - (iii) Do not produce the goods according to a pre-determined pattern for production run purposes; and
  - (b) All the goods so manufactured are produced by persons each of whom designs and has complete and variable control over every stage of the production of all the goods he produces; and
  - (c) No person is employed in the production of any of the goods so manufactured; and
  - (d) No noxious handicraft or noxious process is involved in the production of any of the goods so manufactured.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Gerard McGreevy, et al., *Town Planning and the Arts: A Guide to Assist Community Arts Councils, Artists and Craftworkers in the Town and Country Planning Process*, 2nd edn, *Artlaw Series*, Wellington, N.Z., 1981, pp.7-8.

<sup>8</sup> *Factories and Commercial Premises Act 1981 - Analysis* available at: <http://legislation.knowledge-basket.co.nz/gpacts/public/text/1981/an/025.html> (3 November 2009).

## Appendix 7: Why crafts should be predominant uses.<sup>9</sup>

### RURAL PLANNING AND THE CRAFTSPERSON

The crafts, which use natural resources (wool, clay, wood, leather), are entirely appropriate rural activities. They are low-energy, low-capital, labour-intensive - all part of the Government's stated national development objectives. The crafts make an important economic, social and cultural contribution.

The crafts should be predominant uses (as home occupations) in all zones.

Here are our answers to some frequently-expressed objections to providing for crafts in rural zones in District Schemes.

Creation of Traffic Hazard: not a real problem. Crafts enterprises are always small-scale - otherwise they can be considered factories and placed in the industrial zone. It's unlikely that a craftsman selling from the gate would generate a steady stream of traffic - he/she doesn't have a huge turnover.

Erection of Roadside Signs: again, not a major matter. Why not allow attractive signs? Why not encourage the provision and promotion of craft symbols as a tourist attraction?

Gate Sales: as described above, the crafts enterprise is small-scale. Why not actively encourage it? It provides income for the area and a tourist and cultural attraction.

Noise, noxiousness, nuisance: these aspects can be controlled by means other than the District Scheme. A potter's wheel is a lot less noisy than a lawnmower or a practising rock band.

Subdivision: should be permitted, as should building permits for residences or putbuilding. It's very unlikely that there would ever be a proliferation of applications which would swamp an area.

Space does not permit a full examination of all the issues. If you would like advice or more information, please ask the Crafts Council, which is the national body of craftspeople.

It is important not to forget that the crafts have their roots in the countryside - blacksmithing, spinning, weaving, woodworking, pottery etc. By opening up your District Scheme to welcome crafts you are not opening yourself up to an alternative-lifestyle takeover (as we've heard it expressed) --you are encouraging a diversification of activity which has a proper place in the rural area.

Christine Ross  
Executive Director  
Crafts Council of New Zealand Inc.  
135 -137 Featherston Street  
WELLINGTON

Phone: 843-735, 727-018

<sup>9</sup> Christine Ross, 1982, to unknown recipient, CCNZ Records,, 92-278, Box 56.

## Appendix 8: Letter by Beverly Greig.<sup>10</sup>

### **The Craft Shows**

On page 17 of the Winter issue of *NZ Crafts*, there is an advertisement for N.Z. Craft Shows Ltd, inviting applications to participate in their Craft Shows.

I wonder how many other crafts people are aware of the difficulties in dealing with this Company. They consider they should have the monopoly of running Craft Shows in N.Z.

If you are accepted into their shows you are forbidden to enter Craft Shows run by anyone else, and if you do so, you are likely to receive a newsletter threatening blackmail.

I did participate in another Craft Show last year, and was banned from the four that I had previously been accepted for in that year by NZ Craft Shows Ltd. However, I had to be re-instated under the Fair Trading Act and Commerce Act.

There was even a court injunction granted against NZ Craft Shows Ltd to stop them attending and harassing stall holders at the other Craft Show.

My punishment for the remainder of the year was to be removed from the newsletter mailing list, and in one show I was placed next to a commercial firm demonstrating wood turning lathes, where I got my work and myself covered in wood shavings.

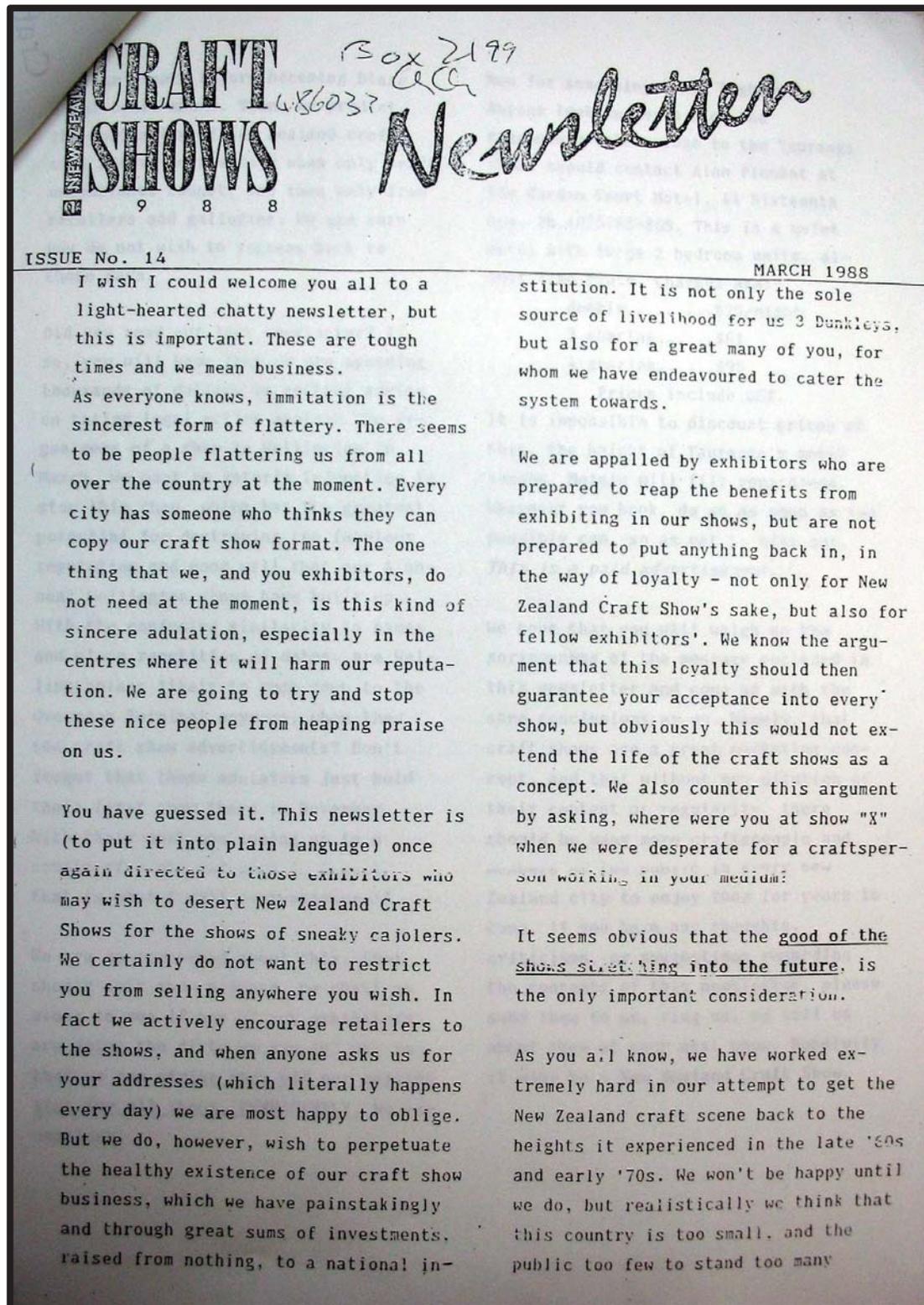
They have even held a 2nd Show of the Year in the same city 2 weeks before their competitor.

All this by a company claiming to represent and help Crafts-people!

*Beverly Greig  
Auckland*

<sup>10</sup> Beverly Greig, 'Letter: The Craft Shows', *New Zealand Crafts*, Spring 1989, p.2.

## Appendix 9: New Zealand Crafts Shows Newsletter.<sup>11</sup>



ISSUE No. 14

MARCH 1988

I wish I could welcome you all to a light-hearted chatty newsletter, but this is important. These are tough times and we mean business.

As everyone knows, imitation is the sincerest form of flattery. There seems to be people flattering us from all over the country at the moment. Every city has someone who thinks they can copy our craft show format. The one thing that we, and you exhibitors, do not need at the moment, is this kind of sincere adulation, especially in the centres where it will harm our reputation. We are going to try and stop these nice people from heaping praise on us.

You have guessed it. This newsletter is (to put it into plain language) once again directed to those exhibitors who may wish to desert New Zealand Craft Shows for the shows of sneaky cajolers. We certainly do not want to restrict you from selling anywhere you wish. In fact we actively encourage retailers to the shows, and when anyone asks us for your addresses (which literally happens every day) we are most happy to oblige. But we do, however, wish to perpetuate the healthy existence of our craft show business, which we have painstakingly and through great sums of investments, raised from nothing, to a national in-

stitution. It is not only the sole source of livelihood for us 3 Dunkleys, but also for a great many of you, for whom we have endeavoured to cater the system towards.

We are appalled by exhibitors who are prepared to reap the benefits from exhibiting in our shows, but are not prepared to put anything back in, in the way of loyalty - not only for New Zealand Craft Show's sake, but also for fellow exhibitors'. We know the argument that this loyalty should then guarantee your acceptance into every show, but obviously this would not extend the life of the craft shows as a concept. We also counter this argument by asking, where were you at show "X" when we were desperate for a crafts-person working in your medium?

It seems obvious that the good of the shows stretching into the future, is the only important consideration.

As you all know, we have worked extremely hard in our attempt to get the New Zealand craft scene back to the heights it experienced in the late '60s and early '70s. We won't be happy until we do, but realistically we think that this country is too small, and the public too few to stand too many

<sup>11</sup> Toby Dunkley, Fiona Dunkley, and Kim Dunkley, 'New Zealand Craft Shows Ltd', ed. New Zealand Craft Shows Newsletter Issue No 14 March, 1988.

Similar events before becoming blasé about craft shows. Then, we predict, the purchasing of New Zealand crafts will return to the days when only craft enthusiasts bought, and then only from retailers and galleries. We are sure you do not wish to regress back to those days.

Did you read our last newsletter? If so, you will know that we are spending thousands of dollars in getting advice on taking legal action against the organisers of a show in Wellington in March. We want an Interim Injunction to stop this show, which has the greatest potential for destroying the fabulous reputation and good will that our 4 annual Wellington shows have built up. With the confusing similarity in names and close repetition of dates, are Wellingtonians likely to rush down to the Overseas Terminal anymore, when they see craft show advertisements? Don't forget that these adulators just held their first show there in November. With their next one coming up in a couple of weeks and ours in August, that is what I call over-exposure!!

We are so concerned about this, that should this show proceed, we shall go along to see if any of our exhibitors are doing the dirty on you and us, so that we can strike them off our mailing list for all shows, PERMANENTLY. No exceptions.

Now for something a bit lighter. Anyone looking for a nice and reasonable motel close to the Tauranga show, should contact Alan Plunket at the Garden Court Motel, 44 Sixteenth Ave, Ph.(075)85-858. This is a quiet motel with large 2 bedroom units, almost like flats. Charges are:-

double.....\$70/night

3 sharing.....\$81

4 sharing.....\$96

Prices include GST.

It is impossible to discount prices at this, the height of Tauranga's motel season. Motels will fill regardless. Wherever you book, do so as soon as you possibly can, so as not to miss out. *This is a paid advertisement.*

We hope that you will weigh up the seriousness of the message enclosed in this newsletter and come up with the same conclusions as us. Namely, that craft shows are a great marketing concept, and that without any dilution of their content or regularity, there should be many more craftspeople and members of the public in every New Zealand city to enjoy them for years to come. If you have any thoughts, criticisms, or suggestions regarding the contents of this newsletter, please send them to us, ring us, or tell us about them at your next show. Hopefully it will be a New Zealand Craft Show.

## Appendix 10: Prepared Apology.<sup>12</sup>

### APOLOGY

The September 1989 issue of New Zealand Craft contained a letter from Beverly Greig. In it certain allegations were made against New Zealand Craft Shows Limited. The New Zealand Craft magazine accepts that the allegations and inferences made by Beverly Greig were actually incorrect and totally unsubstantiated and apologises to New Zealand Craft Shows Limited for any inconvenience which may have been caused.

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<sup>12</sup> CCNZ Records, 92-278, Box 12.

## Appendix 11: Stafford Report Terms of Reference and Executive Summary.<sup>13</sup>

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The terms of reference which the QEII Arts Council of New Zealand (hereinafter referred to as the Arts Council) had commissioned were as follows:

1. "to identify the perceived needs of the craft sector and the professional infrastructure required by the sector;
2. to identify the range of services which the craft sector considers desirable for its development in New Zealand;
3. to identify those services which the craft sector believes to be necessary at a national level and which cannot be provided by the membership organisations currently operating in the craft sector;
4. to identify and clarify which CCNZ functions currently make use of Arts Council investment;
5. to determine which of the CCNZ's goals and objectives are in line and which are at variance with the Arts Council's objectives in funding the CCNZ;
6. to recommend how the Arts Council can best identify and provide resources for services and structures which effectively foster the creation, presentation and distribution of craft, with particular reference to marketing, and which offers the most effective means of servicing the identified needs of the craft sector;
7. to identify any options for restructuring of the CCNZ which would deliver services to the craft sector in a more effective way and which would ensure that Arts Council support in this sector is targeted to the Arts Council's policy objectives, and recommend the most appropriate method and timing of any transition;
8. to report to the Council on any other issues of concern about the craft sector that emerge from the review process."

The emphasis which has been adopted has centred on the identification of the needs of the craft sector as expressed primarily by craftspeople, assessment of current problems and concerns, and the development of options to assist in meeting their needs and resolving concerns.

It should be noted that virtually all of the 180+ people who were consulted during this review embraced it as an opportunity to have input into the future direction of the craft sector.

The terms of reference commissioned by the Arts Council are very wide. This allowed valuable input to be provided from those both directly and indirectly involved with the craft sector, through wide consultation.

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<sup>13</sup> Albert Stafford, 'Review of the Professional Infrastructure in the Craft Sector in New Zealand', Wellington, 1991.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- \* Despite the diversity of disciplines which encompass the craft sector and the varied levels of involvement of crafts people throughout the country, a common set of needs was found.
- \* The range of services which the craft sector considered desirable reflected the predominant need to grow and develop markets both domestically and internationally.
- \* Though the various allied craft membership organisations perform a variety of services at local, regional and national level, there is a need for a well focused national body to assist the craft sector.
- \* While the Craft Council of New Zealand Inc. has catered for the needs of the craft sector in the past, the priorities of the craft sector have changed and the ability of the Craft Council to refocus itself to meet the changes is questionable.
- \* To meet the needs of the craft sector and achieve the desired policy objectives of the Arts Council, it is recommended that a new organisation be formed with a clear marketing and promotional focus.
- \* It is envisaged that the new organisation, which could be called the **Arts and Craft Development Board**, would take over the same level of grant funding which the Arts Council currently provides to the Crafts Council.
- \* Rather than merely concentrating on craft sector marketing and promotion, the new board would also be empowered to facilitate and coordinate marketing and promotion throughout the visual arts. However, the initial focus of the Board would need to concentrate its efforts toward the craft sector specifically.



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