

Copyright is owned by the Author of the thesis. Permission is given for a copy to be downloaded by an individual for the purpose of research and private study only. The thesis may not be reproduced elsewhere without the permission of the Author.

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

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the
degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

In

History

at Massey University, Palmerston North
New Zealand

Vic Evans

2012

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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'.¹ 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.

My supervisors, Dr Geoff Watson and Basil Poff, have challenged and inspired me for four years. I am grateful for their patience and encouragement. Both, in my opinion, have also served their 'apprenticeships' in craft history.

As the thesis advanced my friend and senior proof reader, Phil Sharpin, sipped numerous cups of coffee, and other beverages, with me as we discussed his suggested corrections. When Phil was on his travels Martin Heine stepped in to continue the work.

Many individuals associated with the craft world have answered my questions and shown interest. They include Peter Gibbs, Mike Rogers, Trudi and Royce McGlashen, Moyra Elliott and Howard Williams. Others with an interested in events linked to the craft movement also helped; they include Helen Sutch, Tom Devlin, D. Wood and Jane Vial. Dr Lachlan Paterson and Peter Meihana helped me look into the world of Māori craft. Staff at Massey's Distance Library Service, Alexander Turnbull Library and Archives New Zealand could not have been more helpful. Many individuals and organisations have generously given me copyright to material they own.²

Numerous people from around the world helped me. Dr Grace Cochrane and Dr Damon Moon from Australia and Dr Steven Gelber from the United States answered my questions. Rachel Brockhurst at the Crafts Council in London made my visit to the UK much easier. Professor Sir Christopher Frayling, also from the UK, clarified statements he made many years ago.

I am grateful to Massey University for awarding me a Massey University Travel Abroad Bursary that partially funded my research in the UK in 2009. Ethical approval for research involving human participants was granted me by the Ethics Committee at Massey University.

I hope my children, Stefan and Vicki, will one day read this thesis and understand why it was important for me to write it. I have appreciated their interest and encouragement. And finally, my most important supporter and confidante is, without doubt, my wife Mersyna. Without her this thesis would have been impossible.

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

² Every effort has been made to identify and contact copyright holders. If any material in this thesis does not have copyright permission the owner should contact the author so that permission can be requested or material removed.

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.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	i
Abstract	ii
List of Illustrations, Graphs and Tables	iv
Abbreviations	vii
Introduction	1
Chapter One: Foundations and Beginnings	41
Chapter Two: Art Craft: The Great Debate	95
Chapter Three: For Love or Money?	145
Chapter Four: Challenging Convention.	201
Chapter Five: Craft, Industry and the Economy	247
Chapter Six: Women and Māori: A Different Agenda	291
Chapter Seven: United We Stand, Divided We Fall	333
Conclusion	375
Appendices	387
Bibliography	413

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS, GRAPHS AND TABLES

Introduction

Fig 1	Recipe book compiled by Yvonne Rust	5
-------	-------------------------------------	---

Chapter One

Fig 1	John Ruskin	51
Fig 2	William Morris	51
Fig 3	Sōetsu Yanagi and Bernard Leach watching Shōji Hamada	53
Fig 4	Lord David Eccles	57
Fig 5	Professor Sir Christopher Frayling	60
Fig 6	Peter Fuller	62
Fig 7	Olive Jones	75
Fig 8	R. N. Field	77
Fig 9	Josephine and Sybil Mulvany	80
Fig 10	A caricature of Nelson Isaac	82
Fig 11	Diggeress Te Kanawa	87
Fig 12	Pine Taiapa	89

Chapter Two

Fig 1	Helen Hitchings	100
Fig 2	'Egyptian jar' made by the author	103
Fig 3	R. G. Collingwood	105
Fig 4	Pierre Bourdieu	116
Graph 1	Bourdieu's hierarchy of legitimacies	119
Fig 5	Cartoon: All are pots but some are more	123
Fig 6	Harry Davis weekend school	124
Fig 7	Peter Voulkos	130
Graph 2	John Scott's continuum	140

Chapter Three

Fig 1	<i>New Zealand Listener</i> article by Peter Gibbs	145
Fig 2	James Greig	152
Fig 3	Peter Fraser	156
Fig 4	Dr Clarence Beeby	157
Fig 5	Doreen Blumhardt	164
Fig 6	Gordon Tovey and Cliff Whiting	165

Fig 7	A visual arts student at Nelson Polytechnic	178
Fig 8	Magazine Cover: Melanie Cooper	193

Chapter Four

Fig1	'Why do you have to be a nonconformist like everybody else?'	204
Fig 2	The Cyclops Works	207
Fig 3	Craftsmen perform physical jerks	209
Fig 4	Harry and May Davis	213
Fig 5	Jack and Peggy Laird	217
Fig 6	Book Cover: Helen Mason	219
Fig 7	Kilns at Centrepoint	222
Fig 8	A craft stall at Nambassa	225
Fig 9	John and Kathleen Ing	227
Fig 10	Lewis Mumford	233
Fig 11	Magazine Cover: Barry Brickell at Driving Creek Pottery	240
Fig 12	Waimea Craft Pottery	242

Chapter Five

Graph 1	Gross domestic product	254
Fig 1	Plate: Martin Boyd Pottery	256
Fig 2	Frank Carpay	257
Fig 3	Plate: Frank Carpay	258
Fig 4	Sir Tom Clark	259
Fig 5	Narvik and Reflections	260
Fig 6	Shasta Daisy	262
Fig 7	Maria Louisa (Briar) Gardner	267
Fig 8	Pottery by Lucy Rie	270
Fig 9	Hugh Templeton and Robert Muldoon	278
Fig 10	Neriad, New Zealand Centennial Exhibition	280
Fig 11	Paul Johnson	282
Fig 12	Kensington Swan Building plan	284
Fig 13	Howard Williams, Facet Water Wall	285
Fig 14	Ron Sang collection	288

Chapter Six

Table 1	Craft Groups by Gender	294
Fig 1	Children's craft kit	297
Fig 2	Women's Craft Magazines	298
Fig 3	Poster: Women's Political Statement	307
Fig 4	The Dinner Party by Judy Chicago	308
Fig 5	Diggeress Te Kanawa and Tini Wirihana	312
Table 2	Four types of commercialisation	316
Fig 6	Robyn Stewart burnished pot	320
Table 3	Modern/derivative forms of Polynesian craft	321
Fig 7	Hepi Maxwell	323
Fig 8	Pounamu carving by Hepi Maxwell	323
Fig 9	Owen Mapp	324
Fig 10	Bone carvings by Owen Mapp	325
Fig 11	Bone carving by Brian Flintoff.	327
Fig 12	Baye Riddell with Kaumatua Waima.	329
Fig 13	Clay work by members of Ngā Kaihanga Uku	330

Chapter Seven

Fig 1	Unpublished cartoon by Keith Blight	354
Fig 2	Cartoon by Hugh McCarroll	363
Fig 3	Cartoon: the Arts Council, the NZSP and potters	368

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