

smart works design and the handmade

Smart works: design and the handmade is a unique exhibition of specific interest to secondary students with an interest in design and the visual arts.

It features case studies of 41 designers from Australia and New Zealand who have adapted their talents and skills for one-off handmade pieces to the demands and production techniques required for the changing global marketplace.

The exhibition poses questions and issues that the designers have had to grapple with and will suit discussion in the exhibition with your students.

Some of the issues raised are:

- How do they develop sustainable, viable businesses?
- How does production change the value of the handmade?
- Can they produce their designs themselves?
- Should they contract aspects to specialist industries?
- How do they integrate new technologies with hand skills?
- How important is their knowledge of materials?
- What are their experiences in working in other countries?
- Where are their markets and how do they reach them?

These teachers notes contain the theme panel information for preparing your students' visit. There is also a list of recommended websites and publications.

(Below) Marc Harrison, *Husque Gobble* bowls, 2006. Photo: Florian Groehn



Australian Government
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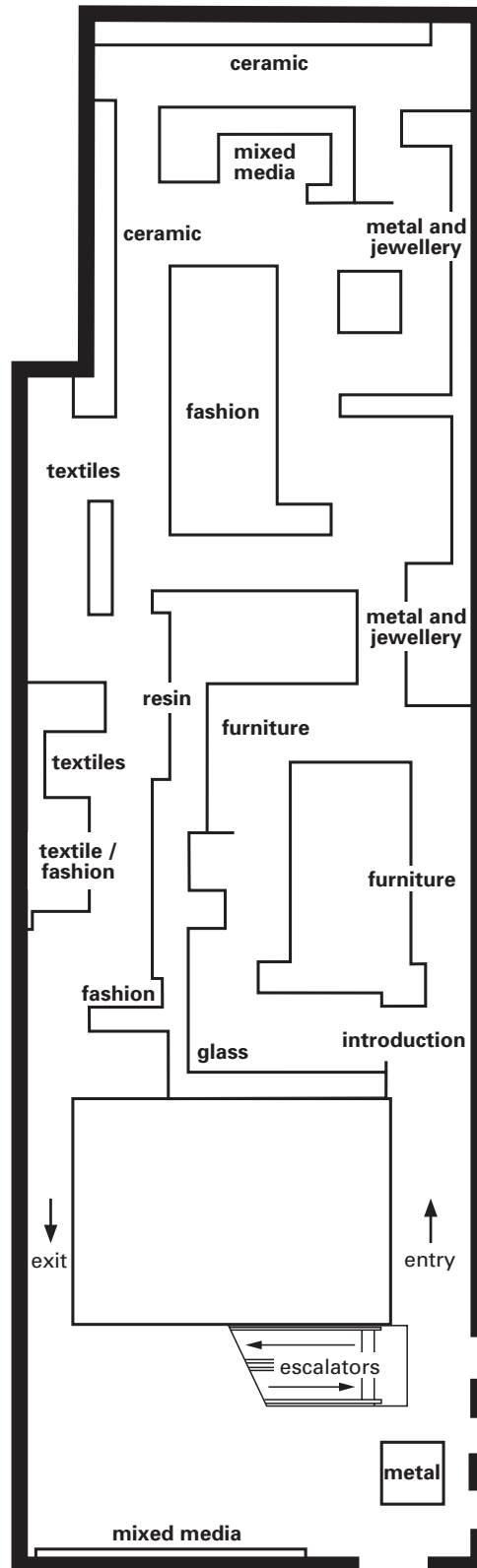


ARTS COUNCIL OF NEW ZEALAND *Te Ao Māori*

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Floor plan



Exhibitors

Rod Bamford: NSW

Ceramics: handmade and CAD; Australia and Asia

Jonathan Baskett: ACT

Glass: design in Australia, making in Mexico and beyond

Bison Australia, Brian Tunks: ACT

Ceramic tableware: local employment; global market

Les Blakebrough: Tas

Ceramics: tableware; porcelain clay development

Donna-May Bolinger: NSW

Shoes and accessories; handmade

Miranda Brown: NZ

Fashion: *shibori*-dyed and felted merino wool

Cathy Braid & Kirsten Ainsworth: NSW/Pakistan

Caravana: fashion; with women's groups in Pakistan

Jeremy Cole: NZ/UK

Porcelain: handcast lights

Ray Costarella: WA

Fashion: handmade from vintage fabrics

Paul Davis/Jacqueline Clayton: NSW

Ceramics: tableware, one-off to production

Janet DeBoos: ACT

Ceramics: tableware, one-off to production, China, Italy

Designing Futures project: WA

Malcolm Harris, lighting; **Chris Robins,** furniture

Dinosaur Designs: NSW

Louise Olsen, Stephen Ormandy, Liane Rossler:

Resin: handmade production; global market

Benjamin Edols & Kathy Elliott: NSW

Glass: one-off and production

Ernabella Arts Inc: SA

Ceramics: new production methods

Rugs: made in China; from batik design



Malpiya Davey decorating a slab-built platter with design of bush food at Ernabella Arts in 2006. Photo: Geoff Crispin

Robert Foster, F!NK & Co: ACT

Metalwork: one-off to production; design mentor

Jon Goulder: WA

Furniture: ply and upholstered; Australia and beyond

Gaffer Glass: John Croucher & John Leggott: NZ

From artist to industry; making glass for artists

Andrew Haldane, Fieldmark: NZ

Woolgrower: woven rugs; NZ and Poland

Rex Heathcote: TAS

Timber: furniture, trays; local employment

Marc Harrison, Husque: Qld

Bowls, recycled materials, macadamia husks and resin

Höglund Art Glass: NZ/Qld

Ola Höglund & Marie Simberg-Höglund

Glass: one-off and production; local employment

Marian Hosking: Vic

Jewellery: handmade, contract components

Akira Isogawa: NSW

Fashion, collaboration with Sydney Dance Company

Vivienne Jablonski: NZ

Jacquard weaver, designing for Inter-Weave, NZ

Jill Kinnear: Qld

Textiles, digital prints from baggage X-rays

Andrew Last: NZ

Metalwork, handmade and CAD/CAM

Alex Lotersztain: Qld

Global design; village industries

Donna Marcus: Qld

Metal sculpture: found objects and industry

Nick Mount: SA

Glass, one-off and production

Rohan Nicol: NSW

Metal accessories, hand and computer

Gilbert Riedelbauch: ACT

Silversmithing, rapid prototyping

Jennifer Robertson: ACT

Weaver, Jacquard and handwoven; Australia and Italy

Ann Robinson, NZ

Cast glass, limited series

Oliver Smith: ACT

Multi-layered silversmithing and design practice

Studio Hacienda: Vic

Blanche Tilden, Phoebe Porter

Jewellery: industry as inspiration

Swinburne University: Vic

Lyndon Anderson, Christine Thong

Timber research project; design with science and industry



Ann Robinson grinding the base of her *Agathis* vase, 2006.
Photo: Hannah MacFarlane

David Trubridge: NZ

Furniture and lighting; craft knowledge and computer design

Vixen, Georgia Chapman: Vic

Fashion and furnishing: printed fabrics

Prue Venables: Vic

Ceramics: tableware, one-off to production: Australia, Japan

Liz Williamson: NSW

Weaving: Jacquard and handwoven; Australia, Canada, India

Syllabi links

This exhibition is particularly suited to secondary students of Design and Technology. It also suits students studying Industrial Technology, Visual Arts and Textiles and Design. The exhibition also links to the Primary Creative Arts — Visual Arts Syllabus.

Design and Technology (Stage 4–5)

The questions raised in the exhibition will help develop students' knowledge and understanding of:

- a range of technologies and their uses
- the role of technology in society
- the impact of technology on society
- the impact of technology on the environment
- designing, making and evaluating products
- processes used in making and marketing products
- resources used in making products.

Design and Technology (Stage 6)

Through this exhibition students will be able to explore ideas and develop:

- knowledge and understanding about design theory and design processes in a range of contexts
- knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the interrelationship of design, technology, society and the environment
- creativity and an understanding of innovation and entrepreneurial activity in a range of contexts
- skills in the application of design processes to design, produce and evaluate quality design projects that satisfy identified needs and opportunities
- skills in research, communication and management in design and production
- knowledge and understanding about current and emerging technologies in a variety of settings.



Janet DeBoos working on prototypes in the Huaguang Company's factory in Zibo, China, 2006. Photo: Alistair Hay

Visual Arts (Stage 4–5) and Visual Arts (Stage 6)

Students will be able to:

- learn about the field of visual arts and design as comprising of conventions, activities, traditions and customs shaped by different values and beliefs
- hear from artists and designers about the pleasure and enjoyment in making artwork
- explore the function of and relationships between artist, artwork, world and audience
- investigate materials and techniques used to make objects
- focus on what artists do, where they work, how and why they work and how they develop their intentions.

Stage 6 students who are working in the areas of Sculpture, Ceramics, Textiles and Fibre, Designed Objects and Environments will benefit greatly from viewing the works in this exhibition.

Industrial Technology (Stage 6)

Through issues raised in the exhibition students will develop:

- knowledge and understanding of the focus area industry and of manufacturing processes and techniques used by industry
- competence in designing, managing and communicating within a relevant industry context
- knowledge and skills in producing quality products
- knowledge and skills in communication and information processing related to the industry focus area
- an appreciation of quality products and the principles of quality control
- an appreciation of the relationships between technology, the individual, society and the environment.

Textiles and Design (Stage 6)

Students will gain insight into and develop:

- knowledge and understanding of the functional and aesthetic requirements of textiles for a range of applications
- practical skills in design and manipulation of textiles through the use of appropriate technologies
- the ability to apply knowledge and understanding of the properties and performance of textiles to the development and manufacture of textile items
- skills in experimentation, critical analysis and the discriminatory selection of textiles for specific end-uses
- knowledge and understanding of Australian Textile, Clothing, Footwear and Allied Industries
- an appreciation of the significance of textiles in society.

Creative Arts — Visual Arts (Stage 1, 2, 3)

Appreciating visual arts

- VAES 1.3 recognises some of the qualities of different artworks and begins to realise that artist make artworks.



Jim Edmonds and Eddie Neale hand roll rods of coloured glass from hot glass gathered from the furnace, 2006. Photo: John Croucher

- VAES 1.4 communicates their ideas about pictures and other kinds of artworks.
- VAS 1.3 realises what artist do, who they are and what they make.
- VAS 2.3 acknowledges that artists make works for different reasons and that various interpretations are possible.
- VAS 2.4 identifies connections between subject matter in artworks and what they refer to, and appreciates the use of particular techniques.
- VAS 3.3 acknowledges that audiences respond in different ways to artworks and that there are different opinions about the value of artworks.

Tertiary students

Smart works will appeal to a broad range of students in the areas of product and industrial design, object art and design, textiles, fashion and fine arts as it features furniture, lighting, metalwork, jewellery, ceramics, glass, textiles and fashion, focusing on design processes and sustainable practice.

Making choices

Here or there: working in other countries

In the West, crafts-based industries are closing, with the loss of skills and sometimes cultural identity. The new manufacturing economies are in Asia, South America, Africa and Eastern Europe. Here skilled labour is cheaper and workers have often been exploited. Yet they also want to be modern and to make a better living from their work. Some designers decide to have some of their work produced in these countries. And sometimes industries in those countries commission foreign designers to develop new products for them.

They must ask:

- How can I distinguish between providing opportunities and exploitation?
- How can I explain designs from a distance?
- How can I manage quality control?
- What about the intellectual property of my designs?

'The entrepreneurial nature of these women is the most exciting surprise ... We have watched women who were silent transform into strong characters who know how to value their time and effort.'

Cathy Braid and Kirsten Ainsworth, from Caravana, on working in Pakistan, 2006.

Knowing about materials: does it matter?

These designers know how to make their work themselves. They know how materials behave, what tools to use and what shapes are possible. At the same time, they now have the option to design with computers and contract their work to skilled specialists.

They must ask:

- Do I still need to know about materials?
- Do my hand skills matter?
- Is it still better to make prototypes myself?
- How do I value production work against my one-off designs?



Robert Foster hammering metal, 2005. Photo: Damien McDonald

'I don't draw an ideological line between my one-off works and F!NK ... I have learned to see them as notions of operation, that dwell on a sliding scale between objects only made possible via handmaking, through to the objects only made possible by manufacturing technology.'

Robert Foster, on metalworking, 2005.

'Going into the factory ... and seeing hundreds of my cups, teapots and pourers lined up ... everything carefully finished and 'signed' with a stamp. And yet ... every piece in the factory is identical ... I now know that I am thrilled by repetition.'

Janet DeBoos, on working in China, 2006.

Collaboration: gain or loss?

Artists and craftspeople like to express their personal ideas through their handmade work.

Designers — whether anonymous or household names — are usually associated with industrial production.

Cutting, moulding, rapid prototyping, printing, polishing, casting ... More and more designers and makers are seeking specialist industries that can help with part of the process. They value those personal working relationships and talk about a two-way process of development.

They must ask:

- Is my personal vision destroyed or enhanced?
- How do I find these specialist industries?
- What working relationships are most successful?
- Does it help me to be a 'maker'?

'Collaboration is about making the whole greater than the sum of its parts ... where I can do what I do well and unite it with the strengths of another process, material or individual ... The high level of skilled craft existing within industrial settings makes me seek opportunities where it could be given greater expression.'

Oliver Smith, on working with metal industries, 2006.

Finding a marketplace: local or global?

Australia and New Zealand are remote from current — and changing — manufacturing centres, and competition in global markets is challenging for designers and makers.

They must ask:

- What options do I have for establishing a sustainable crafts/design business?
- Should I focus on high-cost or low-cost items?
- Should I give my attention to markets at home?
- How do I reach a global marketplace?

'The ideal would be to be based in Australia, to have my own company, and be outward-looking towards the world ... to keep existing contacts in Mexico and develop others in Europe and Asia.'

Jonathan Baskett, on licensing production of glass, 2006.

'Ceramica di Manfredi was born of a desire to work with Australian designers, to create special pieces for the table that fill this gap between the established great classics and the low-grade copies flooding the market.'

Julie Manfredi-Hughes, on working with Rod Bamford and ceramic factories in Asia, 2006.



Glassmakers working with hot glass, Nouvel Studio, Mexico, 2006. Photo: Jonathan Baskett

Being sustainable ... and viable

Water, forests, minerals, pollution, chemicals, supply of raw materials, climate change ... designers and makers are increasingly aware of their responsibilities towards a sustainable future.

They must ask:

- Does the world need more objects?
- Should objects be made to last or to throw away?
- Are the resources I am using sustainable?
- What about 'transport ecology' ... the environmental cost of transporting goods in global manufacture and markets?

'A real excitement is our research into using a new bio-polymer as a binder. The resins we use now are petroleum-based, but the aim is to use as much waste material as possible while being 100% organic.'

Marc Harrison, on making Husque bowls, 2006.

Technologies: between old and new

Craftspeople have always adopted new technologies ... from the invention of the wheel to the use of electricity and space age materials. So taking on computer-aided design and manufacturing technologies and new communication tools is really no different. But is it still important to have traditional skills and understand their technologies?

They must ask:

- What happens at the interface of hand skills and computer programs?
- What totally new possibilities do new technologies give me?
- What are my limitations if I don't have traditional skills and knowledge?

'The computer is critical to every aspect of what I do ... it's a tool for drawing, making and communicating. [But] however efficient computers are, CAD [computer-aided design] can never work unless it is based on solid material knowledge. You can't design for materials that you don't understand and know how work.'

David Trubridge, on designing with timber, 2006.



Miranda Brown *shibori* dyeing fabric at her studio in Auckland, 2006. Photo: Emma Bass

Further reading*

Note: all websites as at January 2007

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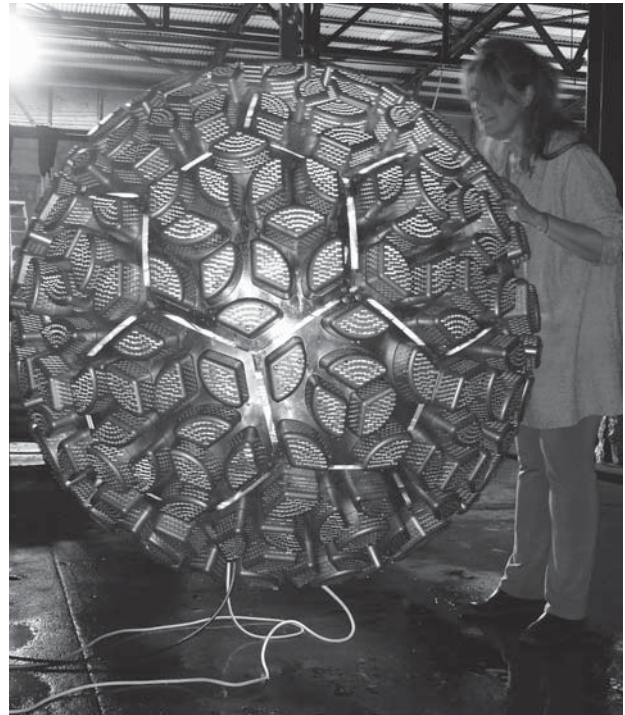
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Donna Marcus working on *Steam* in the Everything Metal factory. Photo: Alex Chomicz

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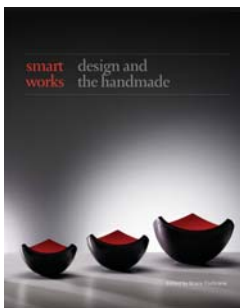
Australia

- Australia Council
www.ozco.gov.au/
- Ausglass: the Australian Society of Glass artists Ltd
www.ausglass.org.au
- The Australian Ceramics Association, and *Journal of Australian Ceramics*
www.australianceramics.com
- The Australian Forum for Textile Arts, and *Textile Fibre Forum journal*
www.ggcreations.com.au/tafta/
- *Craft Arts International* magazine
www.craftarts.com.au
- Craft Australia
www.craftaus.com.au/coa/coa.php
- *Ceramics, Art and Perception* journal
www.ceramicart.com.au

- Design Institute of Australia
www.dia.org.au
- Jewellers' and Metalsmiths' group of Australia
www.jmga.org
- *Monument*, magazine of Australian and New Zealand Architecture and design
www.monumentmagazine.com.au
- *Object* magazine
www.object.com.au/pages/magazines.html

New Zealand

- Creative New Zealand: Arts Council of New Zealand, Toi Aotearoa
www.creativenz.govt.nz
- Designers Institute of New Zealand
www.dinz.org.nz
- New Zealand Society of Artists in Glass
www.nzsag.co.nz
- Objectspace, Auckland
www.objectspace.org.nz



Publication

Smart works: design and the handmade, edited by Grace Cochrane

Through three engaging essays and the work of over 40 designers, *Smart works* explores what 'the handmade' means in relation to design and its interface with industry. Richly illustrated, *Smart works* will appeal to all those who appreciate contemporary design.

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