

1986 - 1993

AN INTENSE FEW YEARS



Figure 46. Jim Tomlin, *Te Kainga o nga uri*, 1990, acrylic on canvas, 1250 x 850 mm (Private collection).

Staff and students were now firmly set in the age of Modernism, and all were exploring a wide range of practices. The School was accredited to offer the Bachelor of Fine Arts degree, two new subjects, Craft Design and Computer Graphics were introduced, and staff nomenclature moved from 'tutors' to 'lecturers'.



Figure 47. Marilyn Webb, Jim Tomlin, Derek Ball and Peter Nichols assessing work (photograph courtesy of the *Otago Daily Times*, 13 November,

The next few years saw further programme development and full-time staff consolidation, although there was considerable part-time staff movement. Mary McLean would replace Catherine Todd as clerical assistant to Patricia Jackson in 1986 and new part-time teaching staff included Els Noordhof, MA (Fine Arts), joining the staff in 1985 to teach Drawing, and likewise, Jeannie Brown, DFA (Hons), in 1986. Mark Rossell, DFA (Hons), tutored Sculpture from 1985-1989; Clive Humphreys, Dip AD (Hons), was appointed to teach a range of 2D subjects in 1987, and Lindsay Crooks, DFAA, to teach Drawing in 1988. Chris Fersterer, CC, DCA, joined the Ceramics staff full-time in 1986, as did Julie Bartholomew, BA (Fine Arts), Dip Ed, CPC, in 1989. Ann Milner, TTC, came on to teach weaving part-time to Craft Design students in 1986, and with the tragic death of Bernard Holman in 1988, Wallace Crossman transferred from Art History to head up the Painting section and was temporarily replaced by Keith Furness from the Polytechnic's Physiotherapy Department who had a strong interest in Art History. Wayne Everson, DFA (Hons), joined the Sculpture staff part-time in 1988, and Patricia Altman, a scientific illustrator who had trained at the University of Florida and the Smithsonian Institute, and Christine Gregory, DFA. Dip Tchg, were added to the part-time Drawing and Painting staff in 1989. The same year, David McLeod, DFAA, who had been teaching a range of hard media subjects part-time since 1975, was appointed to teach Jewellery, and Matt Ryan, TC, was appointed technician in support of Printmaking and Painting.

With the resignation of Elizabeth Evans in late 1988 a search began to find a replacement to head the Craft Section. The successful applicant was Kelly Thompson, BFA (Hons), Textiles Cert, who had been teaching Craft Design at Northland Polytechnic.¹ This proved a productive appointment as Thompson, in addition to her teaching commitments in the design and textile fields, would soon be immersed in upgrading and successfully promoting the two-year Craft Design Certificate into a three year Diploma. She was ably assisted by a newly appointed Craft technician, Tony Nicholls, DFA, David McLeod teaching Jewellery, and Lynn Kelly to handle clerical matters.

Another fruitful appointment was Marilyn Webb, Dip Tchg, CAT, Frances Hodgkins Fellow, past Department of Education Senior Art Advisor and nationally acclaimed printmaker,² who joined Chris de Jong in the Printmaking section part-time in 1988, and appointed full time in 1990.

In 1988 the Department of Education approved the purchase of 8 Commodore Amiga 2000 computers at a cost of \$35,000,³ resulting in Computer Graphics being introduced as a new subject within the School. This was of particular interest to Tom Field, a computer enthusiast, along with his many other talents, who took up the cudgel of introducing students to the possibilities of computer art. Accommodation was required and a prefabricated classroom was brought onto site. The subject proved most popular, and would continue under various static and moving image guises until the present day.

An initiative of the Polytechnic that year saw the establishment of its first one-year full-time programme to be run at the Polytechnic's Oamaru Campus, titled, 'Certificate in Fine Arts', and Ken Laraman, BA. Dip Tchg. Cert Hum, who had been Head of Art at St Kevin's College in Oamaru was appointed full-time to supervise the programme. The Certificate's description read, "The course is designed to be a complete one year course which stands on its own merits. It also enables students to test their ability and aptitude and discover if they wish to prepare and present their portfolios for entry into the three year Diploma in Fine Arts course at Otago Polytechnic or comparable courses at other Polytechnics."⁴

The course covered Colour and Theory, Art History, Life Drawing, Printmaking, Painting, Photography and Sculpture, with successful completion allowing for direct entry into year two of the Diploma in Fine Arts programme in Dunedin. Laraman was assisted by a number of Art School tutors including Jeannie Brown, Lloyd Godman, David McLeod and Wayne Johnson, plus local tutors, Peter Cleverley, DFAA, Barry Walsh, DFA, and Sue Bell. The Oamaru Mail reported in November that "Oamaru Polytechnic's first full-time course ended a successful year when its 11 students graduated last week. The one-year course attracted students from Dunedin, Ashburton and Timaru as well as North Otago. Two of the graduates have already gained jobs in art related fields in New Zealand, with another now working for a design consultancy in Australia. Several of the graduates have applied for the three-year diploma course in fine arts in Dunedin."⁵

Tomlin was granted leave in June to visit art schools in Australia, during which time he visited eleven, six in Melbourne, three in Sydney, and one each in Canberra and the La Trobe Valley. His findings included: "Foundation courses, as we provide in first year DFA, no longer exist in Australian art schools. With their large population, they have no difficulty filling their specialist major subjects from the first year. I believe our system is more appropriate as students have a year in which to explore a range of subjects before having to choose their specialist subject. As most Australian students, particularly those coming directly from secondary school, consider painting to be what art is all about, there are substantial numbers of applications for this area which is invariably the largest section within each school. Ceramics and Sculpture sections were not laid out or equipped as well as ours, and our main Printmaking workshop compares favourably. However, our silk screen studio and equipment needs serious attention. (The Department of Education has recently accepted our justification for a replacement, purpose-built screen printing studio). All schools, with the exception of one, confer degrees although none are faculties of universities. Teaching staff are called lecturers and salaries are very close to ours. Lecturers teach 18 contact hours per week (3 days of 6 hours) and have a further 12 hours of duty. In general, our accommodation, equipment and student work compares favourably with that seen in Australia."⁶ A point of interest noted by Tomlin, was that even though CAD suits were beginning to appear in many Institutes, including here at Otago Polytechnic for Architectural Draughting studies, none of the schools visited had as yet initiated Computer Art/Imaging as a subject and it appears that the Dunedin School of Art was the first place in the Southern Hemisphere to do so.

Also that year, the Ceramics section received a well-earned boost through having gained in October, Department of Education approval to upgrade the Ceramics Certificate and Advanced Ceramics Certificate to a three

year Diploma in Ceramic Arts.⁷ In support of this Diploma, the School had argued, "We believe that it is essential to upgrade the two year full-time ceramics programme to a diploma level course from February 1989, so that craft design certificate students graduating from courses from throughout New Zealand have an international level ceramics diploma programme available for continuation of their ceramic studies. The facilities and equipment are the best available in New Zealand and are of international standard. The duplication of which in other centres is unnecessary and unsound economically. The four full-time tutors involved in the programme, who are professional potters in their own right, can offer a greater range of ceramics skills and knowledge than is available elsewhere in New Zealand. An extensive art/craft library is available. The expertise of the entire School of Art staff can be called upon to teach drawing, design, history, criticism and aesthetic fields." This would also provide "the opportunity for exceptional graduates to further specialise at an honours level." And provide "the opportunity for selected overseas ceramic graduates to further their studies in New Zealand."⁸



Figure 48. Printmaking student Michel Tuffery working on a lino-cut, 1988 (photograph by Lloyd Godman).

The Diploma in Ceramic Arts descriptor, stated that "This two year post certificate course aims at providing the best available advanced level programme in ceramic design to prepare students as self-sufficient vocational crafts people and ceramic artists. Emphasis is placed on the importance of combining ceramic skills with good design, the promotion of aesthetic sensitivity and the potential of ceramics as a creative medium."⁹ Course content included studio practice, kiln construction and firing, glaze chemistry, drawing and design, and complimentary studies, (aesthetics, criticism, studio management and business studies).¹⁰ Later, in 1991, this programme would be confirmed as three year degree equivalent (G I I a) for entry into secondary teacher training.¹¹

An impressive sculpture award appeared at this time as the result of a bequest by a past student, Rodney Kennedy, who had trained as a painter under R. N. Field and W. H. Allen, and through the School had become friends with a circle of painters who were to become celebrated figures in New Zealand art; Colin McCahon, Toss Woollaston and Doris Lusk. On graduating from the School he initially supported himself by carrying out anatomical drawings for the Otago Medical School, but later became known as a respected producer of theatrical works for Otago University and the Globe Theatre. "The will, which is still subject to probate, provides for a sum of \$20,000 a year – to be known as the Robert Nettleton Field Award – to be made available for six years. The award will go, in the first instance, to the most outstanding sculptor completing a course of study at Otago Polytechnic. If there is no qualified applicant, the award – at the discretion of the trustees of the will and on the decision of leading New Zealand sculptor Derek Ball – may be granted to an outstanding student from some other New Zealand art school. If the recipient chooses to spend the fellowship year in Dunedin, a further \$5000 may be available at the discretion of the trustees towards the cost of a studio."¹² Ball later commented that "The award promoted keen competition at the Honours year level, resulting in ambitious and exciting end of year exhibitions."¹³

At the end of 1989 Raymond Ward retired, having been head of the Art History and Theory section since 1967. He had been a tower of strength to many students as evidenced by ex-student, Michel Tuffery many years



Figure 49. Student at weaving loom, 1989 (photograph by Lloyd Godman).

teaching photography part-time to stage 1 and 2 students since 1985.¹⁵ Although Photography's accommodation was initially cramped, it would soon move into a purpose built suite along with carefully selected additional equipment, including 2 Durst M805 colour enlargers with CM 300 meters, and a JOBO Autolab ATL2 colour film processing unit.¹⁶

In 1990 the staff again held a public exhibition of their work, this time in the Exhibition Hall of the Otago Museum from 6th to 17th June. Twenty full and part-time tutors were involved, fourteen works were sold, the exhibition was well received by the public, and the catalogue, which featured photographs of all participants, included a comprehensive write up on the School by Brian Turner.¹⁷

This would be the last time the term 'tutor' was used to classify School of Art teaching staff. With the Diploma in Fine Arts having been recognised as degree equivalent and with the knowledge that schools of art in Australia, none of which at that time were university affiliated, titled their staff, lecturers, it seemed appropriate, and was agreed to by the Polytechnic, that the Dunedin School should follow suit.

The School was now the largest fine arts tertiary institution in New Zealand, and Stuart Scott in his *History of Technical Education in Otago* offers an amusing description of the School at this time.

"David Con Hutton would have been shocked and bewildered by the fact that most of the painting on display in the School is abstract and often grotesque, showing no signs at all of the fine draughtsmanship which he taught, practised and loved. He would seriously have questioned the validity of what he saw. Hawcridge would have been ecstatic about the outreach into ceramics, jewellery and craft design, Angus Marshall would have damned the place as an expensive playground for the uninhibited, and, as he did in his own time, ordered it out of its isolated home at the bottom of Albany Street and back to the main campus, while Field would have been pleased at the informality and artistic creativity of the two and three dimensional output of the present School, hoping however, that this genuinely expressed the inner convictions and aspirations of the artists. Gordon Tovey, expressing fears of introversion, would have nevertheless given his warmest approval to the community participation initiatives and urged an extension of them. All, even Marshall, would have delighted in the substance of the School, the qualifications of its staff, the number of its students and, above all, the standing it has achieved in the art world of New Zealand."¹⁸

later commenting during an address to the School, that he would have had difficulty graduating had he not received additional and sympathetic tuition from Mr Ward.¹⁴ The successful applicant to replace Ward was Robert Garrett, BFA. Dip Tchg, and Head of Art at Hastings Girls High School. In addition to his teaching commitments in Hastings he had been responsible for initiating an Artist in Residence programme, an interest which he would later return to in Dunedin. Sculpture technician, Arthur Skill also retired at this time and Alan Burrow, R.E.S.T was appointed as his replacement.

Computer Art had achieved major subject status within the School and the Polytechnic then agreed to the School's request that Photography receive similar recognition. The request was realised the following year through the full-time appointment of Lloyd Godman, who had previously been supervising photography as an adjunct to Printmaking as well as

Should he have written this a year later, his last paragraph may have read somewhat differently, as shortly after he made these comments, the Department of Education announced that this would be the last year in which Government funding would be available for part-time community classes, which in the future were required to be self-funding. The School's 25 part-time community classes were suddenly reduced to five, leaving only Jewellery, Photography, Ceramics, Life Drawing and Textiles, and the expertise and teaching skills of many long serving part-time staff were lost.

In August 1991 the Polytechnic's Academic Board agreed to the School applying to the New Zealand's Qualification Authority (NZQA) for approval to up-grade the Certificate in Craft Design along with the Advanced Certificate in Craft Design, which had been approved two years earlier, to a three year Diploma, along with a possible fourth year Advanced Diploma. In seeking approval, the School argued that "With the increased demand for places in advanced courses, which has been helped along by graduates from the foundation courses now available, a three year Diploma in Craft Design majoring in either Jewellery or Textiles is required. Presently, a one year Advanced Certificate in Craft Design is available to a limited number of students. Many would further their studies if it became a nationally recognised Diploma course with the possibility of a fourth year. While many Polytechnics offer Diploma in Craft Design courses, many have widened their subject areas and media to provide a general course. By concentrating on Jewellery and Textiles this course will enable students to focus their design ability and practical skills in their chosen field."¹⁹

Students would undertake Drawing, Design and Theory at all levels, plus Jewellery and Textiles in the first year, would major and minor in these subjects in the second year, and specialise in one only in the third year along with attending 180 hours of craft workshop experience. Staff listed in addition to Kelly Thompson, the Course Supervisor teaching Textiles, included; Ann Milner, Weaving, Patricia Altman, Ann Cully and Els Noordhof, Drawing, Nick Arron and Kinsie Hope, Business Skills, Georg Beer and Kobi Bosshard, Jewellery and Design, Clive Humphreys, Design, David McLeod, 3D Design/Hard Media, and Graham Price, Craft Theory, the majority of whom would be teaching in a part-time capacity.²⁰

A further and more demanding initiative, was the planning and presentation of documents to the Courses Committee of the Polytechnic on 9th August proposing that the Diploma in Fine Arts be upgraded to a four year Bachelor of Fine Arts degree, with the result that "The Courses Committee recommended to the Academic Board that the proposal should be supported and, in turn, the Academic Board recommended its approval of the programme to the Otago Polytechnic Council [and] at its meeting on 20th August 1991, the Otago Polytechnic Council approved the programme proposal worthy of submission to the New Zealand Qualification Authority."²¹

The BFA would include all studio subjects offered in the Diploma, only extended to a higher level and with a greater emphasis on theoretical and creative research. This aspect was clearly itemised a year later in the BFA Course Approval document which stated, "To encourage and extend all aspects of research activities, both supervised and unsupervised within the School, the following internal mechanisms have been put in place: (A) A Departmental Development and Research Committee has been established to; develop and foster a research culture within the School, develop strategies for research, assist students and staff to develop research projects, monitor the outcomes of research, and report on research activities to the Departmental Board of Studies Committee. (B) Research methodology for written work is introduced to all students during the first year of studies to ensure a sound base is laid down for both supervised and unsupervised assignment work. The teaching of research is then expanded at each teaching level. (C) All students are taught research techniques within their practical fields during the first two years and are required to use research processes in the development of all practical work."²²

The course approval document also explained that "External moderation/monitoring of the programme and assessment procedures will be undertaken in the following manner: 1. An external moderator is invited to participate in assessment of senior students' work. The external moderator is a professionally experienced

person selected from one of the following areas; a lecturer from a peer institution, a gallery director with a wide range of experience, an experienced artist from within the New Zealand community. 2. The Permanent External Advisory Committee is charged with the ongoing monitoring of the course and is required to report to the Otago Polytechnic Academic Board. 3. Art School staff are encouraged to visit, from time to time, peer institutions to ensure that programmes and assessment procedures are at the same or higher level of rigour as practised elsewhere.”²³

Copies of the proposal had been sent earlier to the heads of the two New Zealand university art schools and to five highly recommended Australian art schools for comment, resulting in positive and complimentary responses from all. Their replies were attached as appendices to the ‘Seeking Approval to Run’ documents forwarded to the New Zealand Qualifications Authority in late 1991.

Moves were also underway to establish a programme to help craft and fine arts students become more aware and appreciative of taha and taonga Māori, including marae visits for senior students, and discussions were being held on increasing student awareness of women’s contribution to art.²⁴ At the same time the Head of School’s attention was being drawn to a staffing imbalance, which some staff considered needed addressing. Fifty seven female and thirty six male students were graduating from the School’s eight programmes that year,²⁵ yet less than a third of the teaching staff were women; an imbalance which would take some years to rectify.

The School was fortunate in being able to support a large number of short-term visiting artists and crafts people over the past two years who had been invited to spend time in demonstrations, discussions, slide lecture presentations and critique sessions complementary to the existing programmes. These included; 6 painters, 5 printmakers, 2 papermakers, 7 sculptors, 9 photographers, 6 ceramicists, 7 jewellers and 6 textile artists.²⁶ Besides being educationally stimulating, they also contributed variety to students’ unrelenting workloads, about which a report appeared in the *Otago Daily Times* under the title ‘Art Students Say Work Load Tough’. ‘Miss Tania Vorrath never expected it to be easy, but was surprised at the hard work and long hours expected of her. ‘Even though a lot is expected, you get a lot back – I love doing art and that’s the reason I’m here.’ ‘I’ve been to varsity and the work here is a lot more demanding. At varsity you can work more on glide time, but here you have to put in at least 40 hours a week,’ Miss Ransom said. Another final year student, Mr Chris Webster, said a normal working day for him was about 12 hours. ‘People here need a great commitment to their work to keep them producing and creating. It’s a very demanding, but rewarding course’.”²⁷

Fortunately, Department of Education approved spending on new equipment and renewal items was keeping pace with the School’s expansion, with a total expenditure of \$50,592 being granted that year; including approximately, \$21,000 on computers, \$7,400 to Craft Design, \$7,800 to Photography, \$6,000 to Ceramics, \$3,500 to Printmaking, and \$4,500 to Sculpture.²⁸ Though such Departmental generosity was becoming the norm, it could not last forever.

In February 1992 the School was pleased to receive approval from the Board of the New Zealand Qualifications Authority to upgrade the two year Certificate in Craft Design and the one year Advanced Certificate in Craft Design, to a three year Diploma in Craft Design with a fourth year, titled Advanced Diploma in Craft Design, for immediate commencement.²⁹

And in late June, equally, if not more exciting news was received, stating “That the Board of the Qualifications Authority at its meeting on 23rd June recognised the application by Otago Polytechnic concerning the Bachelor of Fine Arts degree. The Board was assured that the evaluation panel was satisfied that all conditions had been satisfactorily met. It was resolved by the Board: That the Otago Polytechnic Bachelor of Fine Arts be approved [and] that the Otago Polytechnic be accredited to offer the Bachelor of Fine Arts degree.”³⁰ The many hours spent on programme development over recent years had finally paid off. The Diploma in Craft Design was already underway, and the Bachelor of Fine Arts degree, replacing the Diploma in Fine Arts programme, would commence in February the following year.

With the demise of the DFA programme in Dunedin, the possibility of it moving to the Polytechnic's satellite campus in Oamaru, which had been successfully running a Certificate in Fine Arts for some years, was now under consideration. The proposal, with accompanying documentation, was presented to a meeting of the Polytechnic's Academic Board in October 1992, which approved the programme's transfer to Oamaru for implementation in 1993.

This was reported in late August via the local newspaper as: "The three-year Diploma in Fine Arts is being transferred from the Otago Polytechnic School of Art in Dunedin to the Polytechnic's Oamaru campus. The Polytechnic's acting principal, Mr Peter Haines, confirmed last night the Academic Board had made that decision within the past two months. From next year the Diploma would run at Oamaru, attracting 36 students in the first year and increasing to about 90 over the three year period. The move enables the Otago Polytechnic to start phasing in its new fine arts degree course over the next four years. Possibly two new classrooms might be added to complement the present studio and computing facilities in Oamaru. Gradually facilities would be upgraded as numbers increased."³¹



Figure 50. Jewellery student at work (photograph by Lloyd Godman).

The report continued, "The Course Supervisor at Oamaru, Mr Ken Laraman, said the news was a positive development for Oamaru. A main reason for transferring the Diploma to the Oamaru Campus was because of the artistic talent available in North Otago. During the three year Diploma the equivalent of three full-time and three part-time lecturing positions would be created. Next year, Mr Laraman would lecture. So would printmakers, Barry Cleavin and Denise Copeland, and a staff member from the Art School in Dunedin, Wayne Everson, would lecture in sculpture at Oamaru. Mr Peter Cleverley of Kakanui would lecture in painting. An artist in residence and a photography lecturer were also being sought."³² The programme was well advertised over the next few months, along with its starting date in March 1993.

Concern over the lack of appropriate studio space and lecture rooms in some subject areas within the School's Dunedin campus, had now become a top priority. In a January 1993 memo to the Polytechnic Council, Tomlin wrote, "Current accommodation consists of wooden buildings built in 1936 for the Dunedin North Intermediate School, which probably have a life span of another twenty five to thirty years depending upon maintenance levels. To accommodate the growth the School has recently experienced (147 full-time students in 1984 to 216 in 1993) we are using in addition to our permanent buildings, fourteen prefabricated units, a glasshouse/grounds-man's shed for a staff room, and three off campus private rented studios. In order to accommodate the recent and future growth it was agreed by the Principals Team and Council in 1991 to proceed with additional accommodation for the School of Art as a top capital item priority. It is recommended that: 1. The new building design in principle [as proposed by Harrison Gillies Architects] be retained. 2. It is increased a little in size so that it more realistically fits the known requirements. 3. Architectural drawings are commissioned immediately for all Art School work. 4. February 1995 be targeted as the completion date for the new buildings."³³

Planning of the building was approved by Council in April and in December the local newspaper reported, "A \$3.5 million two-storey building has been proposed for the Otago Polytechnic School of Art. The Polytechnic will discuss the final plans and costs and consider giving its final approval for the building at its meeting tomorrow. A report to the Council from architects Harrison and Gillies said the building would be placed on the Northern edge of the Albany St site where the majority of the Art School was situated. The ground floor would



Figure 51. Derek Ball and Wayne Everson bronze casting, 1988 (photograph by Lloyd Godman).

house the computer art, craft and sculpture suites while the first floor would hold the photography suite, art history and audio visual rooms, drawing studio and offices. The Polytechnic registrar, Craig Sargison, said yesterday a new building would enable all departments of the School of Art to be on the same site. The building would also be purpose built, which would be an advantage.”³⁴ The Council gave its approval and construction would begin in 1994.

Staff movement during 1992-1993 included the full-time appointments of Linda Tyler MA, (Hons) to complement Rob Garrett in Art History and Theory, and with the retirement of Tom Field in June 1993, David Watts was appointed to head up Computer and Video Art along with the assistance of Raymond Ghirado, BA, MFA. Bruce Dehnert, MA, MFA, who had been teaching ceramics in New York, replaced Julie Bartholomew in the ceramics programme, Margaret Maloney, NDD, DA, came on staff to relieve for Kelly Thompson who was on leave for the year, and Di Halstead, DFA (Hons), was appointed to support Lloyd Godman in Photography along with Brendon Lee, DFA (Hons), as a technician and part-

time lecturer. Theresa Hollingsworth, CCD, joined the clerical staff, replacing Mary McLean, and in 1993 Jason Grieg, DFA (Hons), was appointed to the Oamaru campus to teach Printmaking.

Part-time staff movement included the appointments of Di Ffrench to teach photography in Oamaru, and in Dunedin; Blair Smith, TC, to teach Jewellery, and Philippa Wilson, DFA, Sculpture.

The Bachelor of Fine Arts degree came on stream in February 1993 with 120 applications for entry to its first year from which 44 students were selected, 43 of whom successfully completed the year. External monitors were sought and Tom Taylor, retired Canterbury School of Fine Arts Senior Lecturer in sculpture and John Coley, Director of the McDougall Art Gallery, Christchurch, agreed to inspect and report on the School's BFA progress. They visited in June and reported that “We are confident from our inspections, meetings with staff, management and students, and through the very helpful documentation and verbal reporting provided to us that the Otago Polytechnic School of Fine Arts is carrying out its undertaking to NZQA to establish a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree on a sound, professional and adequately funded basis. Monitors were grateful for the assistance of the Director, Mr Jim Tomlin and in our view he has provided a high level of leadership in bringing the course to fruition. The monitors overall were impressed with the very positive ‘tone’ of the school, and found the level of commitment and enthusiasm indicative of the excellent quality of management and committee referral systems in place. These have enabled the efficient implementation of the Bachelor of Fine Arts Course.”³⁵

An occasion for the School's ceramic students and staff appeared in May with the arrival in Dunedin of 200 plus New Zealand potters to attend ‘Clayanz’, the New Zealand Society of Potters Annual Conference, which was that year organised by Neil Grant. The accent was on glazing, firing and finishing, and guest demonstrators included Greg Daly and Janet de Boos from Australia, Brian Gartside from New Zealand, and Anthony Rubino from New York who was also the School's current resident artist. Two major ceramic exhibitions were on display during the conference, the National Cleveland Ceramic Award being held at the Carnegie Gallery, and Royal Dalton featured at the Otago Museum.³⁶

In November a productive two-day staff workshop was held on School philosophy, organised by Neil Grant and Derek Ball, which helped staff re-focus on a range of professional matters that had largely been ignored due to the pressure of developing and introducing new programmes. They recommended four topics for discussion; 1. Equality of marking procedures and standards. 2. How to achieve a more even distribution of students across subject areas in the School. 3. How to utilise staff and their specialisations more efficiently. 4. How to achieve better complementarity between subject areas in the school.³⁷

The workshop was well received by staff, and agreement was reached on some twenty recommendations, most of which would be put into practice, including: Students should be on hand to present their work and answer questions prior to assessment. That the B pass in the second year, which was required for entry into a third year major subject, be deleted. Overall subject grades should not be used at mid-year for third year students. First year students should progress to year two on satisfactory completion of course requirements rather than requiring a B pass average to continue. Comment sheets from all assessors should be made available to students. Interdepartmental contact should be encouraged between staff and students. Meetings need to be organised to promote academic discussion between departments, and visiting lecturers should be listed in the following year's prospectus to increase the School's profile.³⁸

In addition to the above recommendations, it was resolved that the following topics should be addressed at the earliest opportunity; that advocacy be established for senior students, that meetings be called as soon as possible to examine the structure of the timetables and the system by which the curriculum is taught, and that criterion based assessment be investigated as a possible replacement for the present grading system, until the point at which students leave the course.³⁹

From this point similar staff workshops would be held each year, up to and including 1999 and after, covering a broad range of topics, from student and staff research to interdisciplinary studies. All were organised and run by Grant and Ball who would then discuss their findings with the Head of School to determine how best to action agreed upon staff recommendations.

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- 32 Ibid.
- 33 Tomlin, J. R. Reappraisal of Art School Accommodation. January 1993.
- 34 *Otago Daily Times*. 8 December 1993: 1.
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- 37 Recommendations Brought Forward From the School of Art Staff Meeting. 23-24 November 1993.
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- 39 Ibid.

