Plate 12: Ewa Pachucka
(see page 134) Detail of installation Arcadia: Landscape and bodies, crocheted figure in polypropylene and hemp over polyester foam padding, made in Hobart in 1975-77. (total installation size 244 x 396cm).

Ewa Pachucka (b.1936) came from Poland to Australia in 1971 from a background of graphics and expressionist sculpture, alongside a revival of folk textiles. One of a number of influential Eastern Europeans working in monumental forms in fibre, she had already exhibited at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, where the ‘art textile’ or ‘art fabric’ was part of the ideology of the American crafts movement. Her professional example as a ‘textile artist’ was a profound influence in Australia.
Chapter 4: Finding a place: education, money and the marketplace, the 1970s

This chapter will survey the responses of educational institutions, funding bodies and the marketplace to the wide range of the crafts movement’s ideals and activities in the 1970s, and to the wide public support it enjoyed. It will show that the crafts were supported as a separate valid force, but that this support nonetheless occurred within the expectations and constraints of the art and design worlds of which the crafts movement sought to be part. The crafts movement’s particular pursuit of art ideals was acknowledged and even fostered by the infrastructure of the visual arts, but ‘art-craft’ practice was rarely accepted by the art world.

Introduction
The many crafts organisations that now existed in the 1970s were active in using their efficient network to extend the experiences and involvement of both their members and the general public that supported them. The policies of the new Labor government in 1973 addressed most of the ‘causes’ of the 1960s. No-one, dissenters and supporters alike, could believe the scale and scope of the political, legal and institutional changes that were made. They were undoubtedly, for those in the arts, ‘heady years’.

The new policies included a commitment to help develop a national identity through artistic expression, and to project Australia’s image in other countries through the arts. The new nationalism that developed was seen to be plural, tolerant, multicultural, and also closely identified with the arts and cultural achievement.

In the arts, as well as in education, institutional emphasis was placed on two main ideals: excellence in what was provided and attained, and greater access and opportunity for more people to participate in, and experience the arts. The establishment of both the Crafts Councils’ organisational and information network and the funding facilities of the Crafts Board of the Australia Council brought increased contact for craftspeople throughout Australia and other parts of the world, and development occurred that before had not been thought possible. Travel, visitors, exhibitions, collections, workshop establishment, new courses, traineeships and publications challenged and extended both craftspeople and institutions.

307 Interview with Les Blakebrough (1986)
308 Richard White Inventing Australia (1981) 169
Craftspeople, often through their very existence, reflected much of the spirit of the time, but so also did the various educational and organisational institutions reflect their needs. There were many successful enterprises that supported and reinforced the traditional ideals of the crafts movement, and its relationship to design and industry, as a practice that was social in its purpose and practical in its effect, while still being a way of finding personal and emotional satisfaction.

However, the art world’s structure and system of dealer galleries, art museum collections, art journals and art schools remained the most effective model for making, marketing and gaining respect in the wider cultural arena. Inevitably, although this was rarely, if ever, commented on critically at the time, a pattern developed where the works that most closely approximated what was considered ‘art’, were more aspired to, and acclaimed, than others.\footnote{This was clearly not the first time that the art ideal in the crafts or decorative arts was afforded greater value (see Chapter 1, introduction); but the pattern developed again in this particular context.}

\textbf{Funding the crafts}

Towards the end of the 1960s, the first moves were made to rationalise and co-ordinate the ways in which the federal government funded the arts, a development that was to reach its fullest form in the reshaped Australian Council for the Arts, later the Australia Council.\footnote{First established as the Australian Council for the Arts under the Liberal government as a division of the prime minister’s department in 1968, to co-ordinate funding for the performing arts and consider other art needs. An advisory role to the minister, and did not include visual arts and crafts funding. In 1973 the Council gathered in all the \textit{ad hoc} committees, trusts and funds into a statutory authority, becoming the Australia Council in March 1975. See Tim Rowe \textit{Arguing the Arts} (1985), and \textit{Ariforce} 19 3} During the 1970s state governments also expanded or established funding agencies for the arts. For the first time the crafts had the same access to state and federal funds as other art forms.\footnote{For a full summary of state and federal funding for the crafts, see Grace Cochrane \textit{The Crafts Movement in Australia: a History} (1992) Chapter 7}

\textit{The Australia Council}

More than any other single influence, the Australian Council for the Arts, as it was reformed in 1973, gave a focus to the developing sense of cultural identity across all art forms. Incoming Prime Minister Gough Whitlam’s election policy speech for the arts in 1972 proposed the formation of a statutory council to administer funds to the arts through boards that would be representative of all art forms, including the crafts, and expressed a commitment to promote Australian cultural activity and identity within Australia and overseas.

‘In any civilised community’, reflected Whitlam in 1985, ‘the arts and associated amenities must occupy a central place. Their enjoyment should not
be seen as something remote from everyday life...I would argue that all the other objectives of a Labor Government—social reform, justice and equity in the provision of welfare services and educational opportunities—have as their goal the creation of a society in which the arts and the appreciation of spiritual and intellectual values can flourish...even with the most generous and imaginative schemes the arts could not be grafted onto a society that was barren and hostile to them.\textsuperscript{312}

Proposals for a revised council were largely the work of the previous chairperson, Dr H. C. Coombs, and executive officer Dr Jean Battersby. They decided to formulate a single statutory council with art-form boards—including one for the crafts—following the models of Canada and Great Britain.\textsuperscript{313} Some of the boards at least had some notion of where to start funding because theatre, music and literature, and to a certain extent the visual arts, had existing funding structures. The Crafts Board also had an advantage because of the ten years of planning that had gone into the development of the Craft Association network since 1964, as well as the benefits that would come of the Crafts Enquiry, set up in March 1972.

A preoccupation of the council was to fund excellence, but this goal became increasingly contentious, as the council was set up during a time when the notion of what excellence was, and who decided it, was being questioned. During the following years, provision for access to, and participation in the arts by the wider community also became an important consideration, and the Community Arts Committee became a board in 1977. This decision occurred at the same time that small and experimental organisations working in other art forms began to demand a fair share of funding through the reduction of support to, for example, the capital-city-based, traditional ‘flagship’ performing arts companies, and ‘blockbuster’ exhibitions.

As well as responding to grant applications and determining policies for national initiatives through the work of the boards, (through peer-group assessment and the ‘arms-length principle’), the council also encouraged state and local government participation in funding, as well as contributions from other non-arts agencies, such as the trade union movement and education authorities, and the development of cultural links overseas. During the 1980s the council initiated a number of major inquiries that dealt with issues affecting the practice of the arts, the arts industry and the status of the individual artist.\textsuperscript{314}

\textsuperscript{312}Gough Whitlam \textit{The Whitlam Government} (1985) 553
\textsuperscript{313}The council established advisory committees in various specialist fields and, started to fund music, the crafts and Aboriginal arts; a 1969 report led to the establishment of the National Film and Television school, the Film Development Corporation and an experimental film fund.
\textsuperscript{314}Their reports provided analyses and statistical data on the individual artist in Australia, education, moral rights, private sector funding, employment, multicultural arts, affirmative action, tourism, measuring community benefits from the arts, occupational health and
Other government funding
In the economic affluence of the late sixties and early seventies, and under the influence of the climate of the time which made Australian cultural development popular, state governments also started to establish arts funding agencies. Their objectives were very similar to those of the Australia Council, and as the 1970s progressed, they funded a number of joint projects with it. Some states funded programs for individuals; some developed public art programs; some were given responsibility for existing galleries, museums and performing arts companies; and a number of craft centres like the Meat Market Craft Centre and the Victorian Tapestry Workshop in Victoria, and the Jam Factory Workshops in South Australia, were established for both cultural and economic reasons.

As well as money specifically allocated for the arts, other government funds were used to contribute to arts development, as they also served to meet the needs of those departments. These included instant lottery money, casino income, employment of artists for community and public art through Commonwealth employment schemes and links with industrial development, and income through tourism. Many local governments also became involved, particularly with community arts projects.

Funding for specific projects, such as visitors and exhibitions, was also shared with agencies like the British Council, the Goethe Institute, the Australia-Japan Foundation and the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, while travelling scholarships were available from the Harkness and Churchill fellowship schemes. These were seen to advance cultural exchange. In the 1980s, the federal agency Austrade, set up to encourage trade and export overseas, included visual arts and crafts ‘products’ as part of its concerns.\(^{315}\)

The general climate of the early 1970s at least, was of a co-operative working towards the same goals. In relation to the crafts, some important initiatives were only realised because of the collaboration between these bodies.

The Crafts Board
The inclusion of a Crafts Board, as well as a Visual Arts Board, in the Australia Council was a major factor in the identification of the crafts as a separate force within the broad spectrum of the arts. It was largely the result of a strong lobby from the Crafts Council of Australia, which by 1973 had been operating as a national office for eighteen months, with ten years of state involvement behind it, combined with the personal interest of Coombs and

\(^{315}\)Organisations like the Visual Arts/Craft Board, the Crafts Council of Australia and the National Association of Visual Arts worked to use Austrade’s programs to advantage.
Battersby in the Australian Council for the Arts. Until the gradual development of state funding bodies and the increasing investment in the area by art schools and galleries, in most cases the Crafts Board was the sole funding support for activities ranging from professional to community development, for individuals and organisations. Like the Crafts Council of Australia (which the board funded), the board was interventionist and entrepreneurial where it saw fit, and played a role in negotiating politically and culturally at national and international level.

The first board reflected most of the professional skills and needs of the craft world. It set up a program for allocation of grants for individual and workshop development, and for the support of the developing infrastructure of the Craft Associations and other groups. Importance was placed on bringing exhibitions into Australia and international visitors to lecture and work through residencies. The traineeship program, which subsidised the placement of trainees in the workshops and businesses of master-craftspeople, was an early and continuing successful scheme. A network had already been established through involvement with the World Crafts Council, and for some years many visitors to Australia appeared to come straight out of the pages of the American journal _Craft Horizons_. At the same time, residencies and workshops were encouraged within Australia; national exhibitions were commissioned and toured; and lobbies were mounted to encourage crafts development in art schools and galleries. These were combined with other programs, through film-making for example, to promote public perception of the crafts as a professional practice. Les Blakebrough recalls: ‘Can you imagine what it was like, coming from Sturt where I’d started with £1 a week and my keep, having spent all those years driving up and down to meetings, to be sitting round that table on the first board with nearly a million dollars to spend? We wanted to do everything at once.’

The Crafts Enquiry (1972-1975) was possibly the first of many subsequent Australia Council surveys of professional arts employment. Its report was published as *The Crafts in Australia: Report of the Committee of Enquiry into the Crafts* in 1975, and both the Crafts Board and the Crafts Councils used the information and recommendations as the basis for the directions of their policies and programs. Its terms of reference were: to inquire into the general state of the crafts in Australia as a professional activity, relating them to industry and industrial design, and to the whole spread of experience in the creative processes; to report on organisation, distribution and development of the crafts in Australia, including financial and social aspects; and to report and

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316 Interview with Les Blakebrough (1986)
317 The Committee of Enquiry into the Crafts (the Crafts Enquiry) was set up in March 1972, with chairperson Kym Bonython, by the McMahon Liberal government, at the instigation of the Crafts Council of Australia. The new Labor government brought the inquiry into the Australia Council in 1973, and appointed three craftspeople to the committee. Felicity Abraham was appointed director in June 1973.
make recommendations to the minister responsible for the arts as to how the crafts might be assisted to achieve all these objectives.

A 70 per cent response to a questionnaire found that crafts practitioners, like the rest of the population, lived in cities or suburbs of cities. The 'typical' craftsperson proved to be a middle-aged woman, a craftsperson for less than ten years, most likely a potter, born in Australia, living in a city, educated to tertiary level, and rating above average socio-economically. Balancing this was the interest being shown in 'alternative life-styles'.

The main perceived 'problem' was the lack of a philosophical attitude of the Australian public towards the crafts, and the lack of recognition of craftspeople as serious professionals. Respondents wanted to see full-time courses for professional education and training, recognised standards, more publicity, more crafts training of primary and secondary teachers, more finance for crafts organisations, and a permanent exhibition of Australian craftwork. These issues rated ahead of requests for the need for information, the review of sales tax on both supplies and sales of work, and help with marketing.

Despite the historical associations of the crafts to industry and the domestic marketplace, a relationship to industry was not seen to be a rewarding area: the committee was aware that the industrial prestige and exporting success of countries such as Finland, Denmark, Germany and Italy, were all founded on the crafts, but found that interest among Australian industries was negligible: many of the ceramic, textile, glass industries had been closing since the 1960s following competition from abroad after the lifting of import restrictions. This circumstance served to further drive the crafts towards an 'art model' for validation.

Apart from responding to grant applications, a number of interventionist exhibition and education programs were developed during the 1970s to meet particular needs. The Crafts Board within the Australia Council was also a

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318 Of the 1205 practitioners who responded to the Craft Enquiry, 34 per cent worked full-time at their craft, 40 per cent part-time, and the rest were studying or engaged as a leisure activity. Most were middle-aged, and only 17 per cent were under 30. Only 5 per cent earned more than $5,000 a year; (by comparison in 1975, a first-year graduate schoolteacher earned $8,057 a year.) Training for craftspeople was shown to be inadequate: there was a marked difference between the training in Australia, and that in other parts of the Western world. A study of migrant craftspeople revealed a likelihood of loss of skills, as migrants were eager to leave behind old customs and traditions. It was noted that tribal Aboriginal societies recognised no distinction between arts and crafts, and as among other groups, there was a perceived lack of income, information and marketing outlets, and a danger of skills dying out.

319 One of these efforts was the concerted and co-ordinated effort to introduce glass practice as a studio production activity. Major exhibitions were mounted and toured throughout Australia in the 1970s and into the eighties, and some crafts exhibitions were sent overseas. Exhibitions were also brought from overseas and toured within Australia, often by the Crafts Council of Australia. Smaller exhibitions were also mounted which were directed...
precursor and innovator in both community art and art-in-working-life activities and programs, and in offering residencies and traineeships that provided a radical model for other boards in the early 1980s.

A 1979 policy review, based on David Williams's report, *Craft Education and Training*, was possibly the first produced by a board of the Australia Council. It attempted to provide a philosophical basis for funding, and document the shifts and changes achieved since the beginning of the Crafts Board.\(^{320}\) As a result of its deliberations, the board decided to shift its emphasis towards the development of a professional base through the individual practitioner, on which it believed all other strands of the crafts movement were seen to rest.\(^{321}\)

Thus, the Crafts Board, from 1973 until 1986, clearly recognised and supported individuals and organisations in the support and promotion of a broad range of practices, valuing and encouraging traditionally oriented studio-practices, as well as design for production and art-oriented works. As well as placing an emphasis on the development of its professional core of practitioners, it also saw value in lobbying for equal share of formal educational opportunities, developing alternative infrastructures like crafts centres, and investing in programs that developed public perceptions of the value of the crafts.

**The Visual Arts/Craft Board**

Following the *McLeay Report* in 1986, a major restructuring of the Australia Council amalgamated the boards into Performing Arts, Literary Arts, Visual Arts and Craft, and Aboriginal Arts.\(^{322}\) From 1987, the new Visual Arts/Craft Board redefined its programs into five major areas across both constituencies: professional development of artists, support for a national infrastructure, exhibitions, an international program, and arts advocacy.

towards community and public places such as bank foyers and shopping centres. From 1973 the Crafts Board had purchased works in all crafts media as a record of the time, often as part of exhibition development, a collection later transferred to the Australian National Gallery (now National Gallery of Australia) in 1980.

\(^{320}\) The Williams report looked at developments in the crafts organisational networks and the way it perceived they were meeting changing needs. It considered developments in the establishment of specialist groups, and in education, exhibition and accessibility at all levels in the crafts community in the context of the board's and the Australia Council's objectives. It also took into account the lack of increase in arts support funds after a period of initial expansion and attempted to forecast developments.

\(^{321}\) When the Australia Council's budget was reduced in the late 1970s, increasing numbers of individual craftspeople were emerging and seeking support, and controversial decisions were made to shift the emphasis of funding from organisations towards individuals, while maintaining a commitment to such networks, and to exhibition and visitor programs of national importance.

\(^{322}\) A number of other planning units were set up within the council, including a Community Cultural Development Unit.
Reactions to the amalgamation of the Visual Arts and Crafts Boards were mixed. For some time both visual artists and craftspeople feared that the other would dominate not only in ideology but also in funding, but at the same time the amalgamation appeared to contribute to providing a framework where a range of practices could be equally valued.

There were some very positive outcomes from the amalgamation of the two boards into the VACB. Many programs developed in one board were now available to the clients of the other. Visual artists and craftspeople had to address each others concerns and interests. Peer group panels found they had to learn new ways of looking at each others work - which was what was beginning to happen in most art schools anyway through the common history and theory programs and integrated assessment procedures. Equal access to joint programs like overseas studios and professional development grants put different practices on equal footing with equal stature.

But, for a range of reasons, the applications from craftspeople dropped away, so that there was a consequent greater number of applications by visual artists. Originally the two boards had had similar funds to allocate, but by 1995, statistics were produced that showed an accumulated difference of 14 million dollars over the period 1987-1995, in the funding of visual artists over craftspeople by the combined board.323

There had not been an overt expectation that one had to make craft as art, in order to get grants, but it was clear that many of the very particular programs that were relevant to crafts practice were reduced - such as workshop establishment, traineeships, residencies and different kinds of research and marketing projects. It was also considered that the ‘art’ point of view on committees tended to hold greater weight than that of crafts members. For a few years the Board mounted strong advocacy programs for the crafts, such as looking quite specifically at marketing and design initiatives, and they established a 50/50 equal money funding policy regardless of the numbers of applications - a policy that was received with criticism from visual artists, and was abandoned in 1996.

In 1995 it was announced that the Australia Council was again undergoing reform. As part of the reform, the Performing Arts Board was to be separated again into three boards of music, theatre and dance. Not surprisingly, there was a very strong, yet unsuccessful, lobby from the crafts field to redress some of the perceived inequities and separate the visual arts and crafts, once more, into two distinct boards.324

The Crafts Enquiry of 1975 had identified the main perceived problem at that time as a lack of an inclusive philosophical attitude towards the crafts (although there was a sound marketplace), and the lack of recognition of

323Research paper for the Board by Gillian McCracken, 1995
324See for example Darani Lewers 'The Crafts in Crisis' Art Monthly Australia 47 March 1992 14-16
craftspeople as serious professionals. Twenty years later, the problem seemed the same. By the mid-1990s, it was clear that after the amalgamation of the Visual Arts and Crafts Boards, the inequality of funding levels seemed to reflect, amongst other issues, a difference in the attitudes of both groups of practitioners themselves, and their peers on selection committees, about hierarchies in the relative value of their work, and about attitudes to subsidy.

Throughout all funding, education and administrative agencies, issues of where the crafts were placed, which craftspeople were selected for funding and what kind of work was supported, were dependent on the policies of each agency and the people that were appointed at different times to develop their policies. The ‘experiment’ of combining the crafts with the visual arts in the Australia Council from 1987 showed clearly that many visual artists on the committees did not know how to ‘read’ or value functional or decorative craftworks, recognise that the process of making contributed to the content of the object (even though it often did that in the visual arts as well), or acknowledge that different training, establishment and marketing strategies were sometimes necessary. At the same time, the ‘art-craft’ practices of craftspeople had to undergo the scrutiny of artists, and have their work assessed - often for the first time, and often unsuccessfully - in the arena that they had been seeking to join.

The consequence was that fewer craftspeople applied and were granted support, and of those who were successful, the tendency - despite attempts to review the approach to ‘reading’ craftworks - was to support those whose work mostly resembled ‘art’ or those people who had achieved a status that could be accepted by art world structures. This occurred despite a clear revision of objectives amongst many practitioners about the direction of their work, its audience or market (for example towards designing and making rather than ‘art’); a clear revaluation of the status of artists as part of the workforce (both issues discussed further in Chapter 6); and attempts by many on the funding committees to accommodate different working practices.325

Thus, the amalgamation of the Boards was to have both positive and negative effects on the crafts. On the one hand the crafts were considered equally alongside all other visual arts practices (which they had wanted), but on the other hand it appeared that the prevailing hierarchies of the art world worked against them in assessing value and merit.

The values and validation of the infrastructure of the fine arts over the crafts and design alternatives, still prevailed in funding terms, no matter how well established the infrastructure for crafts and design may have been in the wider field.

325 Or at least those committees that had been part of the planning effort to redress the funding imbalance. As committees changed, so, often, did their understanding of, and commitment to, previous policy decisions.
Chapter 4: Finding a place

Education in the crafts

Demands for crafts education and training from the 1950s into the 1970s, and the formal and informal opportunities that were initiated or provided, reflect not only a need for training in skills and processes, but also a desire for professional experience associated with crafts philosophies. During the seventies, education institutions increased the number of formal crafts courses they offered, picking up on initiatives such as the summer schools and short-term workshops run by crafts guilds, societies and councils.

However, the pursuit of art ideals in crafts education was encouraged by the pursuit within education institutions themselves for greater status for their courses, which caused them to place greater value on the intellectual than the practical. Significant for the crafts at this time was the change in visual arts practice towards the conceptual rather than the physical, which placed little value on materials, skills and processes.

Thus, while crafts education opportunities increased significantly during this time, by the late 1970s education values within these opportunities changed - in line with current values in the visual arts.

Informal education

In the absence of formal education opportunities, people with special interests had sought tuition and examples wherever they could find them. From the 1950s, interest in being associated with the crafts and learning the necessary skills and processes to work in them far exceeded the availability of formal training opportunities. The many efforts towards the provision of informal education during the post-war decades, through summer schools, crafts trains, crafts caravans, weekend workshops, festival events, and adult education classes were increasingly supported by the provision of funds from local, state and federal governments.

One of the phenomena that started in the sixties and lingered into the nineties were residential schools, or summer schools, as many were called. The schools attracted excellent tutors, usually because they also enjoyed the intense activity and noticeable development during such a concentrated period, and also, for some tutors, a much-needed addition to income. Summer schools developed in states where participants either felt isolated, as in Tasmania, where Bass Strait presented a physical and psychological barrier to travel, or were in fact extremely isolated, such as those who lived beyond

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326 The Handweavers and Spinners Guild of Australia ran annual Loomcraft Schools from 1959. For many years, the Potters Society and East Sydney Technical College ran Ceramic Summer Schools at the College. The Queensland Arts Council vacation school was started in 1961 and the Creative Arts Vacation School at Longreach in 1969. Craft Associations ran the Tatachilla Summer School in South Australia from 1971; the Muresk Residential School in Western Australia from 1974 and the Hobart Summer School in Tasmania from 1979. The Eastern Australia Art School was founded in 1971, becoming the Australian Flying Art School in 1974. See Grace Cochrane op cit (1992) Chapters 4 and 6
Longreach in Queensland, or in distant parts of Western Australia, the Northern Territory and South Australia.

Funding bodies in the 1970s responded to pressure from both artists and the community to provide access as well as excellence in the arts. Not only were crafts practitioners enthusiastic about what they were doing; but they were effective in promoting what they believed in - the pleasure of making things by hand, so the crafts had a large following of those who identified with what they represented. Consequently crafts demonstrations and stalls became very much part of large public events like festivals, and the crafts eventually became closely identified with the community arts movement that developed in the 1970s. Craftspersons and their work in the 1970s were symbols of independence and integrity, and few professionals did not involve themselves in these events at some stage or another.

The encouragement of apprenticeship in the crafts, and its association with the development of crafts-based industries in craft centres, also provided an important adjunct to formal education opportunities. This interest was largely because of the absence of formal opportunities at that stage, and also because of the ideological associations apprenticeship had with traditional practice. When the Crafts Board reviewed its traineeship program in 1978, the statistics showed a very high continuation rate for those who were by then working on their own. Australia was soon involved in an international committee on the subject.

Apprenticeship, often identified as traineeships, offered an alternative practical training opportunity in established workshops, a system that had already been operating in places like the Sturt workshops since the 1950s. Trainees also often used the scheme after completing a formal diploma or certificate course, in order to learn about studio management and viable production skills. Apart from the traineeship program funded by the Crafts Board, many people developed their skills within an apprenticeship framework.

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327 See Grace Cochrane op cit (1992) Chapter 7 for more extensive details on community art and festivals.

328 Two National Gatherings for Young Craftsmen concentrated on needs of courses and transitional experiences from training to making a living. First in Adelaide in 1978, coinciding with the International Society for Education through the Arts (INSEA) congress; second in Melbourne in 1980. In between, a Victorian Gathering of Emerging Craftsmen was held later in 1978. See reports of each conference by Crafts Council of Australia; and Craft Australia 1978/4 44; Crafts Victoria no III Dec 1980.

329 In 1978 the American Crafts Council held a conference on apprenticeship that discussed the lack of cohesive standards, disparity between academic and apprentice training, and the minimal comprehension of government regulations governing apprenticeship. A National Council for Apprenticeship in Art and Craft was formed, and in 1980 the International Council for Apprenticeship in the Crafts was formed at the World Crafts Council (WCC) conference in Vienna. A key text at this time was Gerry Williams Apprenticeship in Craft (1981).
Board, which had operated since 1973, apprentice-training programs were set up in various states at different times. 330

When the Visual Arts and Crafts Boards amalgamated in 1987, this grant category was subsumed into a general 'projects' grant, where craftspeople did not seem to recognise it, or visual artists value it: traineeships were usually identified with production management skills in a studio that made functional items. The numbers of traineeships declined until a review of programs in about 1994 identified it more clearly as an option.

Art and design schools
From the beginning of the 1960s, Australia's pattern for art, craft and design education was modelled (in theory if not always in practice) not only on the philosophy of developing the whole person through creative activity (a philosophy that had been especially directed towards primary school education), but also on the British example of materials-based design schools.

Britain had been preoccupied after the war with crafts training that placed an emphasis on the development of the individual, but in the mid-fifties, courses at the Royal College of Art in London changed. Courses became more specialised, and six separate materials-based design schools were established, demonstrating the vocationally biased nature of British design education. Ambiguity between vocational training and craft-based design education remained, so that even in 1986 Penny Sparke would observe that 'throughout this century design education has tended to swing between the two poles of utopianism and vocationalism'. 331

In Australia, attitudes to and relationships between art, craft, design and teacher education changed as institutions were amalgamated and as they tried to adapt to meet new needs and circumstances. 332 Because of Australia's historic links with the British system, crafts courses developed as part of art courses in technical or teachers colleges, somewhere in the middle of the dilemma between utopianism and vocationalism in the making (or designing) of objects for use: between the values associated with the personally expressive aspects of making objects, and a desire to make a worthwhile living as part of a chosen way of life. Ray Stebbins records, for example, that the founders of the art/metalwork certificate course that was established at RMIT (Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology) in 1948, recognised a need for an approach that would meet the vocational needs of relevant industries,

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330 Apart from Sturt, the most comprehensive were those at the Jam Factory in South Australia from 1974 and the Victorian Tapestry Workshop from 1976, where trainees were required to be art school graduates.

331 Penny Sparke, An Introduction to Design and Culture in the 20th Century (1986) 72

332 For a detailed summary of the history of the major schools of art in Australia; course development and key teaching staff in the crafts, see Grace Cochrane op cit (1992) Chapters 4, 7, 8.
yet simultaneously cater for the requirements of individual studio artists. Its course objectives were to promote aesthetic awareness, foster an understanding of design, and develop the use of these skills in the production of innovative works.333

The art and design schools or departments within technical colleges in Australia increasingly improved from the late 1950s, and eventually achieved the opportunity to award three-year diplomas for their (few) crafts and design courses. Peter Rushforth recalls of East Sydney Technical College:

It took the potters 13 years to convince the department that ceramics should be a serious full-time course...right from the beginning there were doubts about the adequacy of college training as opposed to apprentice training. I could see the virtues of both, and tried to steer a combined course that would best benefit the community...Then we were a research unit as well as a teaching unit...During the 1950s and 60s the Technical College was thrown open to summer schools run in conjunction with the Potters Society. Often these were the people who became the first community teachers - long before we had the establishment of ceramics courses through a network of CAEs [Colleges of Advanced Education]. They did it just for the joy of spreading the word to others who wanted to learn...Those were the days of course, when someone like Ivan McMeekin returning from England with even just a few slides could fill a theatre with enthusiastic viewers. We were so keen to find out everything we could.334

None of the universities in Australia in the 1960s included practical art courses in the way that American universities did, where people like Peter Voulkos, who overturned traditional ceramic production practices, were able to develop their work within a particular kind of questioning and intellectual framework. However, by the 1970s Australians were increasingly exposed to people from this different background, and were affected by the freedom from tradition they espoused in their work. Peter Travis (see Plate 13: following page), for example, who worked at San Jose College in the United States in 1969, said:

The people I met in America were concerned with conceptual aspects of art, and with using crafts media as an extension of their art language...I felt released from the object for its material value; what is important is the act of learning while making: learning about self, about the material and about the environment.335

In a lecture for the Australian Society of Education through the Arts (ASEA) in Perth, in 1971, visitor Nicholas Vergette seemed to combine both educational points of view:

To be meaningful’, he said, ‘the learning situation should call on our creative ability, our power of being aware sensitively. It should encourage our need to

333Ray Stebbins, RMIT course proposal (1984)
334Peter Rushforth Craft Australia 4 1978 15
335Peter Travis, in Gavin Souter ‘Peter Travis’ Pottery in Australia 13/1 1974
Plate 13: Peter Travis
(see page 120) Peter Travis tests a kite in Wentworth Park, Sydney, before his exhibition at David Jones Gallery in 1973.

Interested in the painting, but wanting to work also with light and movement, Peter Travis (b.1929) described these works as flying Colourfields: The tones and half-tones of colour, the reforming shapes and the vitality of movements would be impossible to achieve in anything other than a kite'. Trained as a designer, Peter Travis focused on ceramics and textiles from the 1960s. He became well-known for these huge kites which, by the 1980s had become complex aerial fabric installations for large buildings. Important for Travis was a 1969 visit to America: 'The people I met...were concerned with concept, about the material and about the environment.' In G. Souter Pottery in Australia 13/1 1974 tual aspects of art, and with using crafts media as an extension of their art language...I felt released from the object for its material value; what is important is the act of learning while making; learning about self, about the material and about the environment.' In G. Souter Pottery in Australia 13/1 1974
express and imagine, it should reinforce our ability to reconstruct, reorganise and symbolise... we must not set up an hierarchy in art, with the high priest’s chosen few, speaking a secret language the uninitiated cannot understand, scorning outsiders for their insensitivity, and deploring the ugliness which is being created in the environment. As teachers we must work for general participation and for a synthesis of our activities with the daily human experience. In this context I find the crafts so important in our education. They are still free of the overburdening legacy of high art.  

While the objective of personal development through the arts was generally included in the philosophy of technical college art departments, there tended to be more of a vocational emphasis on future self-sufficiency in the design departments. Amalgamations of institutions in the early 1970s were to juxtapose all philosophies, which were complicated still further by the strong interest in the fine arts themselves, in seeking the status, qualifications and resources of other disciplines. Colleges (or Institutes) of Advanced Education (CAEs), as more vocationally oriented alternatives to universities, developed from 1974 when the federal government took responsibility for funding both kinds of institution. CAEs now included art schools or art departments that had previously been part of technical colleges or teachers colleges. Often design schools and sometimes departments of teacher education were incorporated in the art schools, while in others all these departments remained separate. The CAEs worked towards establishing associate diploma, diploma and degree courses, and federal funding was put towards new buildings, equipment, resource centres and support staff.

The philosophy and experience of those such as Sir Misha Black undoubtedly influenced the setting up of parallel faculties of art and design in many Australian art schools in the 1970s. Over the past 15 years’, he said, in the late 1970s, on his retirement from the Royal College of Art in London:

...I have oscillated like an erratic weather-cock, from the view that industrial design is a problem solving activity owing allegiance to engineering, to the opinion that its allegiance with the fine arts is as important as its allegiance with technology...now... I am sure that industrial design is a definable activity with specific attributes which distinguish it from engineering design, and that education for its profession can most effectively be conducted at colleges of art and design...I am not alone in shifting...[K]nowledge and method do not alone produce socially acceptable design solutions...If a conscious aesthetic is needed, then the education of industrial designers should continue to be taken in those institutions where aesthetics are daily bread, and not a confection prescribed by peripheral studies.

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The transfer of some of the art schools from 'the Techs' and teachers colleges into the Colleges of Advanced Education had mixed benefits. On the one hand, the amalgamations provided improved status for the CAEs, an increase in the number of courses and higher qualifications, as well as improved salaries, for staff. But for some courses it was also to mean, in the long-term and with further amalgamations, diminished resources and declining independence. For many others it meant relocation to new buildings on city outskirts and away from public involvement, which proved to be unpopular with staff and students as it was seen to remove the arts from everyday life.

The state-funded technical colleges became known as Colleges of Technical and Further Education (TAFE) and, in contrast to the CAEs, directed their energies towards providing certificate courses, and also continued traditional trade apprenticeship training courses. The TAFE system was also to grow during the 1970s, receiving greater funding at this time than in earlier decades. The development of the TAFE system in Australia as a provider of craft education and training is perhaps exemplified by South Australia, which introduced craft certificate courses, with design as a compulsory subject, in 1973.338

David Williams's report, *Crafts Education and Training*, published in 1978,339 documented the institutions of the time, and the courses and qualifications they offered. In trying to define the scope of crafts practice, in order to recommend where to place emphasis on funding and educational support, he identified five categories of crafts practice:

1. **Critical Productive** practice: craft production as a means of self-expression; the production of ideas.
2. **Social Vocational** practice: central to the crafts movement and concerned with the individual production of crafts as a vocation.
3. **Vocational/Industrial** practice: with long production runs; to do with design and production of prototypes.
4. **Social Avocational** practice: crafts as a hobby or leisure pursuit in the wider community; represents the majority of people, who draw inspiration from 1 and 2 above.
5. **Therapeutic** practice: remedial, educational-developmental and occupational therapy.

338 Tim Moorhead, a potter trained at the University of California, with potter and administrator Ben Kypridakis who had returned from the United States, was involved in this change. There were 36 part-time students at first and the Craft Certificate was offered in 2 colleges. When Moorhead left 4 years later, the Arts and Crafts Certificate was offered in 12 Colleges, and 2500 full-time students were studying ceramics, weaving, jewellery and leatherwork, often in association with trade courses, such as wool-classing, shoemaking and saddlery.

339 This was a precursor to similar publications such as the Visual Arts Boards *Tertiary Visual Arts Education in Australia* in 1980, chair, Geoff Parr.
The Crafts Board itself placed top priority on the development of the individual practising professional in the first two categories, as these provided the small professional base that sustained the others. It was also responsive to objectives for access and participation, and for design for industry, and had encouraged training institutions to do the same. Later, as director of the Crafts Board, Williams summarised crafts education development in 1982:

The need for special attention to areas traditionally not catered for in an art school context, such as glass, textiles, wood and leather was considered a priority. In many cases, Australia’s leading craftspeople, themselves trained overseas, were invited to initiate professional courses, to plan and develop studio facilities and take part in course accreditation procedures. Their work has resulted in crafts specialisation being offered at certificate level at TAFE colleges and at diploma and degree level at Colleges of Advanced Education. These courses have provided most colleges with the basis for offering postgraduate diploma level study, and in a few cases masters degree studies.340

Art and craft education opportunities developed rapidly in both kinds of institutions, and a greater range and number of courses than ever before were available at all levels by the end of the 1970s.341 Government-assisted mature-age entry schemes and the abolition of tertiary education fees brought many students back to tertiary training, and the strong community interest in extending personal skills and understanding resulted in a greater number of professional part-time courses. During this period of development, a great deal of part-time work was available for artists and craftspeople, which worked to mutual benefit for both them and the institutions, who liked students to have access to committed practitioners.

However, although art and design departments were usually located on the same campus, the links within some institutions were not always close, and crafts courses were taught in the art faculty in some schools, and in the design faculty in others. This division, complicated even further by the sometimes separate departments for art teacher education, served to perpetuate media and professional hierarchies, where art was more highly regarded than the crafts and where training as an artist had a higher status than training as an art teacher. The structures and relationships within institutions often reflected

341In 1973 the Curriculum Development Centre in Canberra provided the first national source of curriculum advice and resource materials. The Visual Arts Board of the Australia Council and the Tasmanian College of Advanced Education sponsored a national seminar on tertiary art and art teacher education in 1974; the first such conference for 7 years, it attracted 75 delegates from 30 institutions. Education and the Arts, comprising 1 national and 8 state reports, was published in 1977 as a joint study of the Schools Commission and the Australia Council. In 1978 the 23rd World Congress of the International Society for Education through Art (INSEA), ‘Arts in Cultural Diversity’, was held in Adelaide: the Australian Society for Education through the Arts (ASEA), was active in the 1970s in most states, arguing for increased arts time in primary and secondary curricula, and the provision of integrated ‘related arts’ activities.
historical connections, funding sources and the personal preferences of those making decisions, rather than an educational philosophy, and the consequences were in most cases to further reinforce these hierarchies. Bernard Smith seemed to have been a lone voice in the art world of the time, when he said, in 1975, ‘If we abandon the distinction of art and craft in theory we should proceed to remove it in practice’, and similarly advocated that there should be no separate training for those planning to be teachers. In the 1980s, the connections grew much closer in some institutions, usually through the provision of common history, and later, theory courses.

Advocates for the crafts, wanting educational status as part of the status of the fine arts, had argued for their inclusion in art schools in the CAEs in the 1970s. But the visual arts at that time had moved away from materials and process-based ideals, and favoured either ‘ideas-based’ art practice, or public and community art works that made explicit political and social statements. Many lecturers in painting and sculpture were appointed to art schools who, favouring conceptual ideas, encouraged a ‘de-skilling’ in art, believing technical solutions could be found, if and when they were necessary.

While this was generally an opposite view to those teaching in crafts courses there was soon a marked increase in the adoption of this philosophy, resulting in the appointment of craftspeople with similar ideals as teachers. The production of ‘sculptural’ forms, and works expressing ‘personal or social comment’, in ceramics, textiles, glass, jewellery and metalwork was encouraged in these courses. The views of these key people were in turn reflected in funding decisions, recommendations for further institutional appointments, representation in collections and dealer galleries and in publications.

In later years, many lecturers - a number of visual arts and crafts areas - were to review these years as a time when ‘a generation of students was lost’, with regard to an appreciation and knowledge of, and training in, crafts skills and histories. The primacy placed on ‘working with ideas’ was very often not sustained by an understanding of the characteristics of the materials being used or the meanings associated with the forms and their functions that might be part of the histories of those media. Thus the ideas were often unresolved in practice.

The move of some crafts courses to CAEs and later, universities, clearly contributed to changes in the aims of crafts practice from that of a skill-based, design-oriented, audience-centred activity (that was still a means of personal expression) to the pursuit of crafts practice as an independent creative activity.

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343 Bernard Smith ‘Art, Craft and the Community’ (1975) in The Death of the Artist as Hero (1988) 53
that was closer to the ideals and aspirations of those practising the fine arts. Art programs now offered higher qualifications within university 'standards', and different ways of assessing success - ways that included greater 'intellectual' expectations which, in turn, by the mid-1980s, became more literal and theoretical.

This new orientation suited many, but disadvantaged those whose practice was based on the development of imagination and knowledge to do with design, form, materials and processes. It encouraged a 'lip-service' to the provision of an overt intellectual content where it may not have been appropriate or necessary.

Crafts centres
By contrast, educational, political and funding institutions also maintained a strong parallel commitment during the 1970s to the establishment of crafts centres, whose emphasis was less on pursuing art ideals and more on design and production towards small-workshop economic viability.

These centres provided models of professional crafts production and sometimes training associated with the ideal of a particular way of earning a living. But within the broad view, there were a number of different philosophical and economic reasons for setting up crafts centres, and different notions about what they were meant to do.

Many people were interested in enlarging, in city centres, on the example offered by rural workshops like those at Sturt, in Mittagong, which themselves were drawn from the models of crafts communities of the nineteenth century. Some took as a guide the crafts-based design workshops of Scandinavia, which had been used in turn as the model for the establishment of the Kilkenny workshops in Ireland. Norwegian, Ragnar Hansen, and German, Frank Bauer, silversmiths who came to Australia in the early 1970s, had both spent some time at Kilkenny. For about ten years from the late sixties, many Australians interested in small design-based industry visited Kilkenny - almost as a pilgrimage.

The main objective for those interested in the idea in Australia, was to set up small industries as part of a crafts and design-based economy, often allied with

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344 The Kilkenny workshops were founded by the Irish Export Board in about 1966 in the castle stables of a small medieval town, in order to improve design of industrial products and increase Irish exports. Workshops in textile printing, weaving, ceramics, cast iron, silver, wood and furniture were set up, each with a designer in charge, to produce prototypes for production. They were based on the idea of the craftsperson-designer working with industry to make well-designed production lines, while having the opportunity to do their own work as well. They had a Scandinavian or European character because of the resident designers who were selected to work there.

345 For example, delegates from the committees set up to establish the Jam Factory crafts workshops in Adelaide and the Salamanca Centre in Hobart, visited the Kilkenny workshops in the 1970s.
the current ideals of design theorists: Victor Papanek’s notions of using appropriate technology, and Ernst Schumacher’s ‘small is beautiful’ philosophy. At the same time there was a liking for the idea that such products could give a country or a state (like Tasmania and South Australia, which particularly identified with the notion) an image of quality and integrity. This found its most successful form in the establishment of the Jam Factory Workshops in Adelaide in 1973, but was also, in varying degrees, behind many other ventures.

In practice, with worthy ideals and little experience, it proved to be very difficult to combine all the cultural, educational and economic objectives that were demanded, and this was further confused in some instances by equally worthy concerns to find useful purposes for saved and restored historic buildings, which were often in the wrong location, or could not be modified enough to be useful. At the Conference of Community and Cultural Centres in 1978 in Canberra, the administrators of fourteen of these centres took stock of each other’s experiences to see what they could learn.

There had been some precursors. From the establishment of the Workers Education Association (WEA) movement in the early 1900s, universities had supported arts activities for the community, although they were often most closely associated with theatre and music. In the early 1970s, the enthusiasm associated with the visual arts and crafts was so strong that workshops were set up in most major universities, usually organised by student unions. The most important example was the Tin Sheds Workshop at the University of Sydney, which was established in 1969 to be open to all students. The workshops here were run as a co-operative venture by students and staff (mostly from architecture and fine arts), and some resident artists.

The Argyle Arts Centre was amongst the first of many centres that were later to develop in inner city buildings. One of the first development projects of the Sydney Cove Redevelopment Authority, established in 1968, the Centre’s establishment was approved in 1970. Here, small shops and studios were set up in the old Argyle Stores, and a number of craftspeople became tenants.

346 Victor Papanek Design for the Real World (1972); E F Schumacher Small is Beautiful (1973)
347 At this stage some of the centres included Brown's Mart in Darwin, the Longreach Arts and Crafts Centre in Queensland, the Jam Factory Workshops in Adelaide, the Caulfield Arts Centre in Victoria, the Carclew Arts Centre in Adelaide, the ACT Crafts Centre, the Community and Arts Centre Foundation (later Salamanca Centre), the Ritchies' Mill Arts Centre and the Secheron Textile Centre, all in Tasmania, the Brisbane Community Arts Centre, the Melbourne Metropolitan Meat Market (later the Meat Market Crafts Centre), and the Corowa Arts and Crafts Centre in New South Wales.
349 One of the first was silversmith and jeweller Walraven van Heeckeren, whose shop was an adjunct to his St Leonards studio/school. Peter Brokensha's Primitive Art Gallery exhibited, among other works, Aboriginal arts and crafts.
Bernard Smith, author of Australia's most important contemporary visual arts histories at that time, also held strong ideas of the place of art, craft and teaching in society. With others in 1976, he established the Glebe Estate Workshop in Sydney to demonstrate their ideas about artists working in the community.

The Fremantle Arts Centre in Western Australia was established in 1973 when the 'Fremantle City Council recognised that art was not a calling or profession for a selected and gifted few but was something that should be available to everyone.' In Hobart in the same year the sandstone warehouse at 63 Salamanca Place was developed as a community and arts centre. It provided the first artists studios, market stalls and meeting places in Hobart, before being burnt out some years later. However, other lobbies were mounted to persuade the state government to buy the Peacock Buildings, a row of old warehouses there, as a community and arts centre, later called the Salamanca Centre. It was thought that the buildings would provide a 'home' for crafts organisations, and that studios and workshops could provide a 'bridge' from art school. Others could see it as a base for community arts activities, and the government also entertained the idea of crafts and design-based production in the manner of the Kilkenny workshops. In due course, Kilkenny was inspected by Tasmanians as well.

In the early 1970s the Dunstan Labor government in South Australia was committed to social and cultural reform and development, and was also anxious to promote South Australia as a place where the quality of life was good, and its products distinctive. It had an associated interest in finding a way of using some of the local materials and resources, one of the most obvious being opals, to produce quality design-based commodities. After expeditions by Dick Richards (working at the Art Gallery of South Australia) and others to Kilkenny and Scandinavia, the South Australian Craft Authority was established in 1973, and it set up the Jam Factory Workshops in the old Mumzone Jams and Pickles factory in the St Peters suburb of Adelaide.

The first chief executive of the South Australian Craft Authority was Simon Blackall, who remembers that the idea was to develop craft-based industry in

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350 Fremantle Arts Centre brochure (undated 1980s)
351 The Jam Factory, with a brief to carry out both training and production, was virtually the sole project of the authority, and the authority became the Jam Factory in 1977. The first workshop was an access pottery studio, set up in 1974, and by 1978 there were also workshops in glass with Sam Herman, leather with Pietro Salemme, jewellery with Vagn Hemmingsen and textile design with Pru La Motte (then known as Medlin). A retail shop was established from the start and a wholesale department managed interstate marketing. By the 1990s, while it supported a gallery for changing exhibitions and while many of its employees retained an interest in making personal one-off art-craft items, it also operated a retail shop which marketed works interstate and overseas. The strength of the workshops remained in their ability to design and make, with semi-industrial technologies, for wider markets, including commissioned collaborative art and design projects for public places.
South Australia, but the authority thought that training should be offered first. He recalls:

There was so little to work with; there were Milton Moon's first pottery graduates, but virtually no jewellers and just a few leather-workers; and a huge problem with supplies of materials. Hides were damaged, for example, and no one knew how to deal with the opals they hoped we could use. Added to that, the notion of training caused a furore; the education authorities then wanted to do that, and provide a certificate for it. 352

The Jam Factory was not only an important training place for those who worked there: it also provided a model for other states and centres. But the enormous investment by the supportive state government was criticised at first by those elsewhere in the community who thought it might mean they would miss out on funding opportunities. It also showed how difficult it was to meet everyone's objectives, to educate and provide an image, and still produce for the economic welfare of the state.

In February 1992, now called the Jam Factory Craft and Design Centre, the organisation moved to a multi-disciplinary complex in the city. Its original objectives of offering training through production remained, but the balance between training and access had changed from time to time. Consistent with changes elsewhere, the Jam Factory Craft and Design Centre, as its new name reflected, consciously began to place more emphasis on the role of design in crafts practice. Trainees were recruited from backgrounds of working in product design or directly from design colleges. The Furniture and Design in Metal studios aimed not just to produce, but to design for production elsewhere, and to stimulate local design-based industry. This was seen as a way of creating a wider audience for craft design expertise through breaking free from high volume, low profit, manual batch production (although these areas, such as Ceramics, continued to finance the other workshops).

Lobbying to purchase the Metropolitan Meat Market as a craft centre in Melbourne started in 1974, and in 1977 the building was bought by the Victorian government. Marjorie Johnson, who had been involved in crafts development since the early 1970s, organised an exhibition there in 1978 as part of the festival, Arts Victoria '78: Crafts. 353 In April 1980 the centenary of the building was celebrated, and the main hall was used to exhibit both the Victorian State Crafts Collection which was started during the Arts Victoria '78: Crafts festival, as well as the first Australian Crafts '80 exhibition of 646 items from invited craftspeople round Australia. Thirty thousand people visited the month-long exhibition. At the opening, Premier Rupert Hamer expressed the philosophy of the time:

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352 Interview with Simon Blackall (1986)
353 The centre's identity was still obscure at that stage: when a carrier delivered one of Mark Thompson's ceramic works from Adelaide, labelled 'Meat Market', the carrier said 'There you are lady. It arrived last night but don't worry - we put it in cold storage.' Interview with Marjorie Johnson, 1986
It has to be said that our primary objective here, has got to be to develop a centre which will focus on the most professional aspects of the crafts...we aim to display the best prevailing standards and to give encouragement and opportunity to craftsmen who have already reached a high standard of performance...the community can come here and see what constitutes fine craftsmanship.\footnote{Jenny Zimmer \textit{Craft Australia} 1980/4 14}

Aware of its location in a city with a number of art schools and a supportive government, the Meat Market Crafts Centre did not attempt to deal with initial training, but instead chose to offer extension experience through access to facilities, experienced practitioners and markets. It also sought to promote sales, and provide exhibition opportunities and a professional focus for craftspeople.\footnote{Access workshops were gradually established in textiles and ceramics (1982), cold glass, wood, metal and leather (1985), and hot glass (1988), each in the charge of a supervisor, where craftspeople could come to work, and a number of encouraging awards were associated with the workshops.} By the 1980s the Meat Market started to find ways of actively marketing crafts and design products.\footnote{In 1986 a range of products was taken to the United States to contribute to an Australian promotion by the Nieman Marcus store, and a Craft Export Agency was set up in 1988 as a twelve-month pilot consultancy, assisted by the Ministry for the Arts, to investigate the potential for the further export of Australian craftworks. See report in \textit{Crafts Victoria} August 1989 13}

As a further example of the Victorian government’s interest in developing professionalism and quality products in the crafts in the late seventies, it set up the Victorian Tapestry Workshop in 1976. Until that time, commissions for tapestries were usually sent to Aubusson in France. The workshop was set up in the Gloria Glove Factory, once a ‘genteel emporium’, in South Melbourne. Walker chose artists who had already completed art school study, and she ran training courses in the workshop to teach them the skills of tapestry-weaving.

The tapestries made drew very largely on the work of contemporary painters, some of whom made paintings specifically for translation to tapestry, which raised controversy in various sections of the art and weaving communities. Criticism ranged from the use of commercial colours with commercial fibres (contrary to the prevailing ‘natural’ aesthetic), to questioning whether the workshop was merely ‘copying’ paintings rather than carrying out original woven works. Sue Walker emphasised that the works were collaborations, not copies, and that the weavers had to interpret the colours and textures in a new way, ‘to invest the artist’s original concept with the specific qualities of tapestry’.\footnote{Director Sue Walker sought early advice from Canberra weaver Belinda Ramson, who had worked at the Dovecot Studios in Edinburgh with tapestry weaver Archie Brennan, and eventually from Brennan himself, who was working at the Australian National University in 1976.} This workshop provided the first formal professional training in

\footnote{Sue Walker \textit{Tapestry and the Australian Painter} (1978)}
tapestry weaving in Australia. Many of the weavers left to work independently, thus creating an opportunity for others to train, and others established further tapestry weaving classes, for example, at Warmambool in the 1980s.

Twenty years later, most of these centres remain, although those that do have had to refocus from time to time to meet changing political and financial circumstances, and changing public taste. Some, like the Argyle Arts Centre, before it closed in the 1990s, became more a collection of tourist hobby-shops rather than a serious reflection of contemporary concerns. Others, like the Jam Factory and the Meat Market, began in the 1980s to reflect the prevailing wider shifts in ideals that included an emphasis on access to professional facilities and/or on design for production, sometimes elsewhere.

**Aboriginal crafts workshops**

Significantly, for Aboriginal people who traditionally made no distinction between art and craft and their relation to cultural and ceremonial traditions, the model of the viable crafts workshop was found to be the most appropriate way of working for what was to become an increasingly important cultural and economic art/craft industry for Aboriginal people from the 1970s.

Those involved in the contemporary crafts movement were supportive not only of the traditional aspect of Aboriginal cultural development, but also of the perceived opportunities for Aboriginal communities to develop viable art-based industries, combining aspects of traditional concerns with the philosophies and practices of the contemporary crafts movement. These philosophies included the notions of using local and natural materials for making useful items, and the objective of working towards personal expression and economic self-sufficiency.

By the 1960s, the valuing of Aboriginal artefacts as part of Aboriginal cultural expression had taken two forms. The first was a recognition by some art historians, of a place in art history for Aboriginal art on its own terms and with its own cultural meanings (rather than only as ethnographic artefacts), and the second was a realisation that arts and crafts could provide an economic activity for Aboriginal people, especially those living in isolated places.359

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359. How this might take place was rather confused by an uncertainty of whether the work should be associated with art galleries or museums, and, associated with this, whether authentic Aboriginal art could be only 'frozen' traditional forms, or could change, according to the changing circumstances and interests of its makers. Writing of the Melville Island burial posts shown in the Art Gallery of New South Wales in 1959, Douglas Stewart thought that while 'they have definite artistic merit of an elementary kind, [they] are really more in the nature of ethnological curiosities than works of art', while James Gleeson said, 'whatever their symbolic significance might be they represent an ensemble of abstract shapes of considerable aesthetic appeal'. Cited by Tony Tuckson in 'Aboriginal Art and the Western World' in R. M Berndt (ed) Australian Aboriginal Art (1964). Tuckson himself recognised that 'an Aboriginal artist's attitude is related to his totemic spiritual life, and his
In 1964 anthropologist Ronald Berndt had noted the varying success of the use of European media by Aboriginal artists, and also observed the ways in which some traditional crafts were being made at that time for a commercial market, encouraged by some missions and settlements, and with Europeans acting in varying degrees as agents. He noted that the 'quality control' was not always good, as agents and purchasers were unsure of appropriate standards, feeling it was 'not necessary for work to have meaning', and much work was being directed by European taste.

At that time, the contemporary crafts movement was gaining momentum throughout Australia. It represented a way of carrying out small production to make a living as part of an almost zealous belief that the value of what they believed in could and should be shared. In the spirit of the World Crafts Council, the crafts were seen as a uniting force for the peoples of the world.

Given all these strands, it was inevitable that those in the crafts movement and its organisations should find some elements in common with the contemporary development of Aboriginal arts and crafts. The crafts movement's enthusiasm to pass on its philosophies was a direct practical and philosophical influence on the development of arts-based workshops in Aboriginal communities, providing a professional model for the sometimes previously existing mission crafts workshops (although the crafts movement was more supportive of the use of traditional symbolism and meanings). In keeping with the philosophies of the broad World Crafts Council membership, the crafts movement in Australia was supportive of both integrating Aboriginal crafts and craftspeople into its own infrastructure, while encouraging the development of self-determination.

At the same time, Aboriginal people, especially in remote centres, found that the opportunity to develop secular versions of ritual and symbolic forms and practice for an external audience, contributed not only to local educational needs, but also to a necessary economic self-sufficiency - in somewhat the same way that the crafts movement had idealised.

conception of the world around him. His art is subjective, symbolic, based on knowledge rather than visual appearances.' Tony Tuckson in R. M Berndt (ed) Australian Aboriginal Art ibid (1964) 73

360 R. M Berndt ibid (1964) 73. Berndt cited especially the skill and popularity of painter Albert Namatjira and the Aranda (now Arrernte) watercolour school at Hermannsburg

361 As well as bark painting, this work included the making of 'carved and incised boards, spearthrowers, boomerangs, shields, and in some areas, pearl-shells, boabab nuts, emu-feather shoes or feathered baskets'. European taste included less abstraction and more figurative images of hunters, as long as there was less specific detail of genitalia and fertility images. R M Berndt ibid (1964) 73.

362 In 1971 the men associated with the school at the remote Papunya settlement in the Western Desert of Central Australia, began to participate in a mural project, painting in the style of traditional sand or rock drawings to the community. Teacher Geoff Bardon encouraged the men to tell their stories or Dreamings (ancestral beings or places whose spirits are passed on to their descendants) in this way, and at first paintings were created on anything that
Over the next decades a number of programs and schemes attempted to help local Aboriginal economies through trying to both preserve traditional work and processes, and find appropriate associated or new crafts-based industries. Little was known at first of the benefits, problems and patterns associated with both spontaneous and assisted changes and developments, the effects on cultural values, the ways such activities can reactivate an interest in tribal history, or the way in which they can bring other cultural issues to the attention of the wider world.\textsuperscript{363}

By the time the Aboriginal Arts Board was established within the Australia Council in 1973, a number of important initiatives had already taken place through which the federal government aimed to support the development of Aboriginal arts.\textsuperscript{364} These developments were also associated with strong political moves away from an ideal of 'assimilation', as it had been practised, and towards Aboriginal self-determination, which was accompanied by a resettlement of Aboriginal 'homelands'. Emphasis was placed on preserving and reviving traditional cultural practices, and also on the creation of viable industries for artists, some of which were in non-traditional media. Those who worked with Dr Coombs believed that this was a historic turning point.\textsuperscript{365}

The Crafts Council of Australia was established in 1971 with, amongst its supporters, designer and teacher Mary White, and also Ivan McMeekin, who had established the Bagot Pottery for Aboriginal trainees in Darwin in 1968, advised by British potter Michael Cardew who had set up similar projects in East Africa. Because of its interest, its constitution - and its accountant - the came to hand - linoleum, masonite or pieces of wood. Fast-drying acrylic paints were soon introduced and Bardon and his successor Peter Fannin, who introduced canvas to the artists, acted as the supplier of materials, and then the seeker of markets. This painting, however, as Tim and Vivien Johnson point out, was also 'a development within Aboriginal culture for its own purposes'. See Tim and Vivien Johnson \textit{The Painted Dream} (1991) 9, 13

\textsuperscript{363} The production of 'transitional art' amongst indigenous cultures was not peculiar to Australia; the development of Inuit soapstone carving and the changing designs of Navajo weaving in the United States are two of many similar histories, and were of interest to the crafts movement. See Erik Cohen in Kirsten Wickman (ed) \textit{Craft Reports from all Around the World} (1988)

\textsuperscript{364} Dr H. C. Coombs, the first chair of the Australian Council for the Arts from 1969, was also chair of the Aboriginal Arts Advisory Committee from 1970. He had a particular commitment to this area, as did Dr Jean Battersby and a project officer, Jennifer Isaacs. The federal government's Department of Aboriginal Affairs was established in 1972; both bodies allocated funds for arts activities and a number of joint funding programs were set up.

\textsuperscript{365} Interview, Jennifer Isaacs, 1986. The federal government had accepted national responsibility for Aboriginal concerns only a few years before, in 1968, and some states did not consider it in their interests to relinquish their control of Aboriginal people. Between 1969 and 1973, Jennifer Isaacs was one whose task was to assess the situation and discover what might be needed. Moves towards Aboriginal self-determination and cultural identity appeared to be seen as threats to development, and the travels of the staff of the Australia Council were often monitored by state officials.
Crafts Council of Australia provided one of the most appropriate arts frameworks through which funds from the Department of Aboriginal Affairs, the Australian Council for the Arts, and from 1973 the Aboriginal Arts Board could be directed to Aboriginal projects in all Aboriginal art forms. This arrangement lasted until 1979.\(^{366}\)

As part of these developments, Mary White was appointed craft adviser to the Australian Council for the Arts in 1971 (and later to the Department of Aboriginal Affairs) to explore the potential of developing the crafts in Aboriginal communities. Her emphasis was on the use of traditional skills, materials and techniques to develop a range of ‘adapted’ crafts enterprises for both economic development and cultural fulfilment.\(^{367}\) The Crafts Council assisted with projects that took craftspeople to work on projects with Aboriginal groups.

One of the most important initiatives of the Aboriginal Arts Board was the employment of crafts advisers in Aboriginal communities to assist in the day-to-day organisation of work, and help with supplies and marketing. Such enterprises were generally run as community co-operatives, and by 1979-80 twenty such enterprises were being funded.\(^{368}\) Many of these had their origins as workshops initiated by missions, such as those at Ernabella in South Australia, Hermannsburg in Central Australia and at Nguiu on Bathurst Island. Many more developed during the 1970s and 1980s.\(^{369}\) Others, as at Utopia in Central Australia, developed when homelands were returned to the traditional owners in the late 1970s. The extent to which Aboriginal cultural content was encouraged, in what were often new forms and media, varied according to the abilities and the philosophies of those who taught them.

The crafts infrastructure’s involvement in the development of Aboriginal crafts and art workshops in the 1970s was central to what was to become, in the 1980s and 1990s, a very large and lucrative, and sometimes controversial, ‘arts industry’. This development was to take place in a Western art market that made clear distinctions between art and craft, regardless of the cultural origin of the work itself. Aboriginal cultural objects, often presented in non-

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\(^{366}\)Interviews with Jane Burns 1986-87, past general manager of the Crafts Council of Australia. One of the first events organised by the Aboriginal Arts Board was a national meeting in May 1973 of 300 Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people interested in Aboriginal cultural development. Many of the resolutions from this meeting became the charter for the new board.

\(^{367}\)In 1972 White was working with twelve settlements, including Amata in northern South Australia, Hermannsburg in the Northern Territory and Mowanjum and Jigalong in Western Australia. Some of the arts activities encouraged were batik, weaving, pottery and leatherwork, as well as the continuation of traditional work for a market elsewhere. It was apparent in most cases that training was better carried out in the communities rather than by bringing people to city centres and schools. Mary White archives, Powerhouse Museum, Sydney.

\(^{368}\)See Annual Reports Australia Council 1975/76 23; 1979/80 19

\(^{369}\)See summary of workshops in Aboriginal communities in Grace Cochrane op cit (1992) chapters 4, 6, 8
traditional new media, rapidly separated into ‘art’ and ‘craft’ once they hit the markets of the Western art world, and the Western distinctions experienced by other Australian craftspeople were soon applied. The distinctions made by the marketplace, determined by art ideals, were to eventually place higher values on, for example, paintings and prints rather than batik and baskets. Artists like Emily Kame Kngwarreye, who started making batik at Utopia in the late 1970s, shifted to painting around 1988 and became one of Australia’s most well-known and respected contemporary artists by the mid-1990s. *(see Plate 14: following page).*

Rather than finding itself challenged by the anomalous relationship of art and craft in this circumstance, the crafts movement tended to welcome the situation of ‘equality’ between art and craft as one in which it believed, and itself sought to have acknowledged.

**The marketplace**

By the mid-1970s the crafts had a large, enthusiastic audience. The 1960s and 1970s saw the establishment of hundreds of crafts shops and galleries throughout Australia, often in cities and suburbs, but also in small towns and on tourist routes, where craftspeople had gone to set up studios and make a living through selling through their local outlet. Many of these shops and galleries were undiscerning in terms of the quality of the items they sold, but they celebrated the products of a way of life to a sympathetic and often similarly undiscerning public.

One of the main solutions for professional craftspeople to counter perceptions of amateurism was to seek closer connections with dealer art galleries. But while many of these galleries encouraged quality functional wares, the interest for most by the late 1970s was in art that did not value crafts traditions. This provided a further incentive for craftspeople to pursue art ideals.

Thus, both exemplary functional wares (like the ceramics of Les Blakebrough, Col Levy and Gwyn Hanssen-Pigott, and jewellers Larsen and Lewers), and sculptural works that drew on their own material and functional traditions, were accommodated in the programs of dealer galleries. The latter included exhibitions of ‘art-craft’ works like Ewa Pachucka’s crocheted figures at Rudy Komon’s gallery in 1977 *(see Plate 12: before page 108)*, Mark Thompson’s ceramic figures at Bonython’s in Adelaide in 1975 and Joan Grounds’s ceramic parcels at Watters Gallery in 1971. Marea Gazzard’s and Mona Hessing’s Clay + Fibre exhibition of ceramics and textiles, which successfully crossed both crafts traditions and sculpture of the time, challenged the values of both artists and craftspeople at the National Gallery of Victoria in 1973.

A crucial number of specialist galleries and shops also maintained a professional attitude to what they were showing and why they were doing it,
Plate 14: Emily Kame Kngwarreye
(see page 134) Textile length, Untitled, silk batik made at Utopia, Central Australia in 1988. (180 x 90cm)

Emily Kame Kngwarreye (d.1997) was one of the senior women at the Utopia homelands, a cattle station returned to traditional owners in 1977. The women learned to make batik in the late 1970s and were introduced to acrylic painting and printmaking in the late 1980s. Kngwarreye became the most famous and 'collectable' - especially for her painting - of all the very significant artists at Utopia. Her work is represented in all state and national art collections and was shown at the Venice Biennale in 1997. Her work was always an affirmation of her relationship to her country.

From the early 1970s, the crafts movement supported Aboriginal people to develop secular versions of ceremonial art (like body and ground painting) for an external audience, for educational needs and economic self-sufficiency - in the same way that the crafts movement had idealised. These cultural forms rapidly separated into 'art' and 'craft' once they hit the markets of the Western art world, and the distinctions experienced by other craftspeople were soon applied.
and tried to establish a professional profile for crafts practice, and an educational role for the public. One of the earliest private galleries to deliberately address itself to looking and operating like a crafts gallery rather than a shop was potter Ian Sprague’s Craft Centre in Melbourne which opened in Melbourne in 1964.\(^{370}\) Having practised as an architect in Australia, Sprague then studied pottery in London, and visited the Craft Centre of Great Britain frequently. On returning to Melbourne in 1962 he ‘found that nothing comparable existed...nowhere could one find any of high standard, worthily displayed, without the clutter of bad or mediocre work’. In choosing a name, he tried ‘to avoid the word “craft”, because some sort of stigma seemed to be associated with it. In those days it smacked of pressed wildflowers, shell pictures and church bazaars.’ At first he considered the name Amphora, and made a large one to put in the window on opening day, but ultimately decided to stay with the word craft, ‘since only the best was to be displayed...maybe the word would be enhanced’.\(^{371}\)

With his stress on high quality, Sprague turned many prospective exhibitors away. ‘I was particularly anxious that the Craft Centre become known to designers, architects and interior decorators as a place where there requirements could be met...but it was far too early for this sort of thing.’ To attract people, Sprague held soirees every second Friday:

> ...where the “cognoscenti” could gather to discuss the finer points of art and craft reinforced by wine and cheese...all sorts of ruses were used to make people relate to the craftwork; loaves of bread and wedges of cheese sat on boards and plates; dried branches twisted from vases, and discarded fruit from the nearby fruitshop was placed in bowls.\(^{372}\)

Accounts from those who were involved at the time give an idea of the excitement that handmade craftworks provoked, and the context in which they were received. For example, from 1967 Rie Heymans set up the Old Firestation Gallery in Perth because:

> ...in the sixties the state gallery was not doing anything; there was a crying need for someone to take risks. Craft shows always sold; everyone was always drinking out of great heavy mugs. It all coincided with growing vegies and living at Margaret River...looking back at the early jewellery and ceramics, some was pretty lumpy!\(^{373}\)

The Collectors Gallery was established in Subiaco in Perth in the early 1970s by Dr Rose Toussaint, a practising psychiatrist who enjoyed collecting art. Curator Robert Bell observed that:

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\(^{370}\) After spending a year establishing his studio at Upper Beaconsfield, Ian Sprague leased premises for a gallery in 1964 at 407 Toorak Road, South Yarra.


\(^{372}\) Ian Sprague op cit (1986)

\(^{373}\) Interview with Rie Heymans (1986)
...jewellery at that time included great chunks of iron ore and quartz crystal. Dr Rose Toussaint was an important patron, and showed jewellery along with other crafts, wearing much of the larger and spectacular jewellery herself to great effect.374

One of the most entrepreneurial crafts galleries in Sydney was Aladdin’s Gallery in Elizabeth Bay, established in the mid-sixties by Margaret Eady and Tom Bolster. They were amongst the first to introduce Asian crafts, such as fabrics, rugs, jewellery, sculpture, pots and wooden vessels to Sydney, and also encouraged Australian craftspeople through providing a venue for exhibitions and sales. As well as numerous similar key outlets375 were the galleries and spaces set up in each state by the Crafts Councils and various specialist groups like potters societies.

Aboriginal art and craft had been collected or commissioned for many decades by anthropologists, museum personnel and private collectors, and some small galleries.376 In the seventies new initiatives for marketing work were encouraged, very much in line with what was happening in the craft world.377 Probably the first major exhibition of Aboriginal crafts to tour overseas was the Art of the Aboriginal Australian, organised by Mary White working with all the interested funding and managing bodies. It toured, with Aboriginal artists, to nine Asian countries in 1973-74.378

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374 Interview with Robert Bell (1986)

375 Others established the 1960s included Aldgate Crafts in Adelaide, Marj Richey’s Coachhouse Gallery in Melbourne, Betty Beaver’s Narek Gallery in Canberra, and in Tasmania there was Alice Krongaard’s Saddlers Court Gallery, and from 1972, the Bowerbank Mill Gallery set up by Gail and Garry Greenwood. For a detailed list see Grace Cochrane op cit (1992) chapters 3, 4, 6.

376 Some collectors, like Jim Davidson, through his Aboriginal and Pacific Art Gallery in Melbourne from 1961, Stephen Kellner in Sydney from the early sixties and Robert Ypes in Sydney from 1965, sold tribal art, including Aboriginal art. Also in Sydney, Aladdin’s Gallery from the sixties, and from 1974 the Gallery of Dreams in the Hogarth Galleries sold Aboriginal art.

377 The Department of Aboriginal Affairs, through the Aboriginal Enterprises Fund, which aimed to encourage Aboriginal industries, set up Aboriginal Arts and Crafts Pty Ltd in 1971, largely to establish a gallery and marketing outlet in Alice Springs, as well as outlets in other capital cities. Mary White directed much of her energy towards this, and in late 1974 the Centre for Aboriginal Arts and Crafts in Alice Springs was opened by Dick Roughsey, chair of the Aboriginal Arts Board. For some time the company Aboriginal Arts and Crafts operated from Canberra: branches were opened in other states and in 1984 this organisation became known for a short time as Inada Holdings, before being renamed Aboriginal Arts Australia. Interviews with Jane Burns, 1986-87, and Ace Burke, 1986.

378 See Patricia Thompson Craft Australia 2 1 1972 7. Aboriginal work was also included in the Australian pavilion at the World Fair at Spokane in the United States in 1974, and this exhibition, with dancers and artists, continued to Toronto for the World Crafts Council Conference later that year. Many other exhibitions and performing groups were sent overseas during the seventies, and some collections of Aboriginal art were presented to overseas museums, such as to the Auckland War Memorial Museum in New Zealand during the South Pacific Festival of Arts in 1976.
Those active in the professionalisation of the crafts movement were often as keen to make connections with 'design' as they were to 'art'. In the late 1960s, for example, the gallery of the Design Centre in Sydney was used by the Craft Association of Australia (New South Wales branch) for its annual exhibitions. Design showrooms had developed in the 1960s, following the lead of people like Frances Burke and Fred Ward in Melbourne in the 1940s. A similar design and decorating business was that of Marion Hall Best in Sydney, which she had founded in 1939 in Queen Street, Woollahra, later moving to Rowe Street until her retirement in 1974. In an obituary in 1988 it was recalled that she ‘hated beige’; she is remembered for the daring and innovative way she brought colour to interiors through glazed walls and ceilings, screenprinted textiles such as those of Marimekko, and Indian cottons woven to her own designs. She introduced Japanese grass wallpapers, Italian ceramics and contemporary American furniture to Sydney,37 and also included the furniture of Australian designers like Gordon Andrews and Clement Meadmore in her interiors.

The imported contemporary designs and the few similar commissioned local products had had a strong effect on the postwar domestic environment. Every major city could identify at least one key person who opened up this new world. David Foulkes-Taylor (1929 -1969) in Perth exemplifies the various links that were made nationally and internationally at the time. Foulkes-Taylor had gone to school at Geelong Grammar, where the head, James Darling, was committed to the ideals of Fabian Liberalism, 'giving sons of the privileged a sense of commitment and caring for those less fortunate'.38 Foulkes-Taylor returned to Western Australia from London in 1954 at the beginning of the mining boom that was to change Perth.

He set up his Taylormade showrooms in 1956, with the small Triangle Gallery as an exhibition space for himself and others. He not only showed imported products, but also designed and made furniture from local timbers. Before this time it was very difficult for local artists to find venues to show their work. Foulkes-Taylor’s energies were put initially into the visual arts, but when the Skinner Galleries were established, he concentrated, as an alternative, more on interior design. Modernist ideas were filtering in through journals, books and, most importantly, people, and his was one of the few places that provided a sympathetic surrounding with a regular clientele of interested buyers. Foulkes-Taylor introduced seagrass matting, cane blinds, jarrah furniture, Arabia dinner sets and Marimekko fabrics.

37 Sydney Morning Herald 1 July 1988
38 His art teacher was Ludwig Hirschfeld Mack, who had worked at the Bauhaus school in Germany and had escaped with its founder Walter Gropius to England before the war. In 1947 Foulkes-Taylor studied at the School of Architecture at the Perth Technical College, then continued with Industrial Design at the London Central School. His involvement during this time of change in British design made him interested in the marketing and presentation of products. Pat Duffy (ed) The Foulkes-Taylor Years (1982) 15
Entry in award exhibitions became an important part of the professional practice for many, because they were often associated with exhibitions at conferences where the work could be discussed by peers, and usually also meant that the award-winner's work would be acquired for a major collection. The kind of work selected for exhibition and award reflected the point of view of the selectors and judges and their particular orientation towards art or design. In some cases collections developed with no coherent policy or pattern because of the diversity of opinion. Ceramics awards such as the Mayfair Ceramics Award, and the Fletcher-Brownbuilt Ceramic Award are specific examples of the extraordinary support provided this area of the crafts by industry, through a number of collections and awards that started in the 1970s. As well as participating in opportunities in Australia, craftspersons had also submitted work to important international competitions as well, most notably the ceramic competition at Faenza in Italy, and the tapestry exhibition at Lausanne in Switzerland. By the eighties opportunities for ceramics and textiles had expanded, and many people were also participating in other major national and international metalwork and jewellery, glass, paper and design events.

The number of craftspersons receiving commissions for work in public buildings had also increased slowly during the 70s, encouraged somewhat by the Crafts Board's incentive schemes, and by efforts of Crafts Councils through a number of exhibitions that attempted to bring architects and craftspersons together. Over the years, a number of attempts had been made to interest architects and planners in considering the inclusion of commissioned craftworks in their buildings. In the early 1960s this had been Ian Sprague's hope, for example, when he opened the Craft Centre in Melbourne, but despite the involvement of designers and architects on the early Crafts Council committees, most architects of those times preferred their buildings to be purely architectural statements. Special exhibitions had been planned to make such connections.

Funding opportunities provided by the Crafts Board of the Australia Council, combined with the management infrastructure of the Crafts Council of Australia, meant that exhibitions could be developed and toured within Australia and overseas. Influential exhibitions were also brought from overseas, and it is significant that in the early eighties most of the key

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381 In 1973 the annual Bendigo Pottery Award for established potters was established, having started in 1971 to encourage local pottery students. Australians also entered in the annual New Zealand Fletcher-Brownbuilt (later Fletcher-Challenge) ceramic award. The Mayfair Ceramics Award, 1976-1987, was sponsored by the company, Mayfair Hams and Bacons.
382 Crafts Council of Australia Recurrent International Events 1991
384 For example, the Living Space by the Crafts Council of Victoria and the Royal Australian Institute of Architects (Victoria) in 1976; Craftworks in Australian Architecture by the Crafts Board and the Royal Australian Institute of Architects (NSW) in 1984; and Working Together in Architecture at the Meat Market in 1988.
exhibitions to tour were art rather than production oriented. They included Image and Idea (British ceramics, 1980), International Directions in Glass Art (1982) and Fabric and Form (British textile art, 1982), as well as Cross Currents, organised in Australia in 1984 and which included jewellery from Australia, Holland, Germany and Great Britain.

Meanwhile, the main collections of Australian decorative arts were held in each of the state art museums and some history museums. Collections of post-war contemporary crafts were generally acquired in the context of fine arts and historical decorative arts collections in art museums. A number of new regional galleries were established throughout Australia during the sixties and seventies, and in many of these were also to establish specialist craft collections.

In most cases decades had elapsed since contemporary crafts or decorative arts had been acquired for state collections, and a national gallery, in Canberra, was not to open until 1982. During the late 1970s purchases began to be made again, the new interest being largely tied to a marked increase from 1978 in curatorial appointments in the decorative arts, or crafts, a measure of the broader acceptance of and interest in contemporary crafts practice. Acquisitions into these collections from this time generally reflect 'the best' of what was offered, across the range of practice. It appears that specialist crafts curators valued the best functional works alongside the best 'art-craft'.

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385 In some states decorative arts collections are divided across neighbouring institutions, for example, the Art Gallery of Western Australia holds the collections of decorative arts and crafts - except for important holdings of jewellery by James W.R. Linton, which is held in the museum next door.

386 Sometimes, in smaller centres like Darwin and Hobart, these combined collections were also linked to natural and social history museums. At the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences in Sydney the crafts were part of a historical decorative arts collection that was linked to science, technology and social history rather than art.

387 Shepparton, for example, concentrated on ceramics from 1973, the Ararat Gallery similarly started specialising in a textile collection through Biennial acquisition exhibitions from about 1974, and in 1975 the Tamworth National Fibre Exhibition was initiated. In the 1980s other special collections were set up: for example Wagga Wagga in glass, Toowoomba in jewellery, Manly in ceramics, and Hamilton in metalwork.

388 At the National Gallery of Victoria, acquisitions by Kenneth Hood from 1950s and later Terence Lane and others in the 1970s; Carl Andrew in Hobart and John McPhee in Launceston in the 1970s; Daniel Thomas in the 1970s for the Australian National Gallery's opening in the 1980s, and John McPhee as curator of decorative arts from 1980. The Art Gallery of Western Australia appointed Robert Bell specifically as curator of craft in 1978; the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery in Launceston later created a similar position, held by Janet Floyd and later Glenda King. Glenn Cooke was appointed as the first curator of decorative arts Queensland Art Gallery in Brisbane in 1982. Meanwhile, the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences in Sydney made intermittent acquisitions during the seventies, and greatly increased its decorative arts staffing to about 10 on reopening as the Powerhouse Museum in 1988.

389 These comments are made from a personal knowledge of the holdings of state and many regional crafts collections, based on inspections, catalogues and constant collaboration with curators.
works, perhaps because they were informed about both the processes and the histories involved in contemporary practice, and saw the crafts as a continuum of those histories.

However, until the 1980s, display in these galleries was rarely integrated with fine arts displays; the crafts or decorative arts works were generally exhibited in separate spaces. It was those craftspeople making art-craft who sometimes, themselves, sought to be included not just in crafts collections and exhibitions, but in the context of the fine arts - not adjacent to it, but part of it. These people would have liked, for example, their decorative objects to be considered as sculpture in art survey shows like Australian Perspecta, and art biennales like the Sydney and Adelaide biennales.

It was here, where fine arts curators were involved, and with very few exceptions, that the art world drew a line.

**Effect of pursuing art ideals**

**Popularity of the crafts**

From the beginning of the 1970s, patrons and practitioners who were denied objects in an art world that now often focused on ‘non-object’ works, appeared to find them in the crafts - whether functional or non-functional - and demonstrated a continuing interest in works that were made with a concern for finish, form, process, permanence and a sense of human scale.

The ideals of crafts practice, in all its forms, were supported enthusiastically in Australia, not only by crafts practitioners, but also by a general public who wanted to be associated with those ideals through collecting and using its products. Public interest and participation was so evident that the institutions of the art world altered to accommodate the crafts. Art schools introduced more crafts courses; galleries and museums began to show and collect craftworks more consistently; design centres formed links with the crafts organisations; publications began to appear; and special crafts centres were established by governments.

However, the popularity and accessibility of the crafts could also be identified as self-defeating. It was increasingly realised that the movement’s small professional core (which took longer to train) was not growing as fast as the vast amateur movement (which seemed to be satisfied with training comparatively quickly). This was probably largely due to the success of the crafts movement itself, through the new opportunities provided by crafts courses and the proliferation of shops selling the products of amateur producers. The perception of crafts practice and its products, and even the word itself, were increasingly seen to have been devalued by such popularity.

In 1978, speaking at the first national glass conference, Cedar Prest summarised of this most recent development in studio crafts, comments that could have applied to all areas:
Chapter 4: Finding a place

We are currently producing a flood of eager semi-trained practitioners who are working for a public more ignorant than themselves. We started with an historical background of poor design and we are seeing no improvement with the present revival. We need to take a hard look at both the systems of production now operating and be honest in realising that they cannot bring us any glass art. We need a better system based on the prerequisites that our craftsmen should have a sound design background as well as good technique in their chosen area of glass and that they should be working for people able to recognise a piece of good glass when they see it. 390

Seeking status

Despite the close connections held by many to the idea and status of ‘design’, craftspeople were still reluctant to identify too closely with industry. In any case, those industries that remained, after the closures in the 1960s of many ceramics, glass and textile industries, were reluctant to employ Australian designers because of the costs of retooling equipment, the risk of new designs and the cheaper solution of bringing in, or copying, designs from overseas.

Exhibitions in dealer art galleries provided a good solution for professional craftspeople who wanted their work to be viewed as individual objects in the ‘detached’ context of art, separating them both from the amateur works in many craft shops and from an association with industry. However, while some galleries certainly showed functional wares by leading practitioners, this choice of venue further reinforced the production of craftworks that looked like art, and where the makers addressed ‘art’ concerns - most successfully also within ‘crafts’ concerns.

The pursuit of art ideals posed a dilemma for those craftspeople who wanted to be identified as artists. Developments in art in the 1970s could not be easily adopted by craftspeople. For many craftspeople, the adoption of a ‘form’ of art was not ‘informed’ by the concerns that had generated it. While some art-craft works were clearly successful, the pursuit of art ideals also provoked an even greater production of art-craft objects made by craftspeople who were neither designers nor artists, as those terms were currently understood by either field at the time. Their works had the appearance of art (or design) without the conceptual underpinning that made them credible to the art world. However, for many craftspeople - and their supporters - if the work was ‘non-functional’, ‘social comment’ or ‘a personal expression’, they considered it must therefore be art.

For example, many craftspeople used, at first, forms and ideas in which, by the early 1970s, visual artists were becoming increasingly disinterested. They made ‘sculpture’ on pedestals, and free-form organic ‘non-functional’ objects displaying technical virtuosity in skill in, for example, glass, wood, textiles.

390Cedar Prest ‘Glass and its Development’ Craft Australia Spring 3 1979 16. Prest was a practising stained glass artist, and was later to be chair of the Crafts Board.
metal and clay that were unconvincing to visual artists and their audiences in both their ideas and forms.

A number of people successfully made connections between their practice and a strongly-held political position. And within the art world some visual artists embraced the idea of the crafts-as-art as part of a political statement. Feminist artists, for example, selectively employed crafts techniques in their own work. But in seeing ‘social comment’ simply as a path to ‘art’, many more craftspersons who had had a superficial role in the developing political position, or who could not successfully combine political ideas with form, made works that were unconvincing as either art or the area in which they were working.

Others tried to follow conceptual directions. But this form of art was not sympathetic to crafts practice. Conceptual art, which valued the artist’s intent or idea rather than the making of objects, was not only an important reassessment of the visual arts. It also confirmed art’s denial of issues that were central to the crafts: interest in materials, care and attention to process, fine finish and technical achievement. Lack of skill, naiveté, and irreverence for materials and processes were, during the 1970s, associated with expressive emotional sincerity in the artist, and intellectual rather than formal content in their work. Conversely, concern for materials and processes was seen as proof that originality and ideas were lacking: sometimes a work remained a conceptual idea only.

Many craftspersons at this time were clearly liberated by the challenges to function and utility offered by the ideals of the fine arts, and without doubt, worked successfully across, for example, both the crafts and sculpture. The most convincing new works were those that responded to the challenges of contemporary thinking in art and design, but drew also on the perceptions and understandings of the materials, processes and functions of the crafts traditions from which they came.

But while there were certainly many successful excursions into the challenges provided by an orientation towards the visual arts and its ideals, there were hundreds that failed through a misunderstanding and misinterpretation of what contemporary art ideals had been in the first place.

**Response from the art world**

It appears, from the little published critical material in the Australian craft world of the time, that few in the craft world noticed or accepted that many of the objects that were made as ‘art-craft’ were unacceptable as art, as it was understood at that time.

Despite the inclusion of crafts courses in art schools, and despite institutional support that ran parallel to the visual arts in the programs of bodies like the Crafts Board of the Australia Council, both the mainstream art world and the
alternative art world of the 1970s chose to largely ignore the crafts movement's efforts towards being accepted as art. The crafts were seen by artists and their historians to be unrelated to prevailing art values of ideas and intellect, and to have instead, historical associations with trade, domesticity and therapy and continuing obsessions with artisanship, skill, materials and technologies that were, at that time, unacceptable as art.

In 1980 art critic John Bentley Mays pointed out from the United States:

The pioneers of Modernism were...moved by skepticism and science, not by old-fashioned pieties...Hands cannot contemplate; and the creation of works for disinterested, hands-off contemplation has traditionally been a central concern of all Modern art production...Modern art itself, in all its variety, is proof that the historically anti-hand, anti-craft strategy continues to be radical and greatly rewarding. 391

In the same year metalsmith and writer Bruce Metcalf also observed of the crafts, even in the United States, so close to the source of most new art directions, 'a current “five-year-lag” syndrome...where a current idiom will show up in the crafts about five years after it appears in painting and sculpture.' While there had always been borrowings across disciplines, he pointed out that '...what irks critics today is the obviousness of the influence and the tardiness in picking up the style.' 392

In dismissing 'art-craft', visual artists tended, by association, to dismiss every kind of crafts practice as non-art. It is also clear, however, that many visual artists valued craft works that remained somehow true to their functional, symbolic and technological origins and still hold them in their personal collections.

But although the craft world had in many cases denied 'traditions' in order to enter the art world, the art world seemed more than happy to similarly deny them entry - on any level, if their record of historical documentation can be taken as a measure. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, the crafts as contemporary craftspeople practiced them, were not included in art books, in mainstream art exhibitions or in university art history courses. 393

One might expect that, given the size and dynamic of the crafts movement, some aspect of crafts practice would perhaps have been shared by Australian visual artists of the time who were seeking alternatives in their work. However, even in Anything Goes, Paul Taylor's extensive documentation of the alternative art practices in Australia in the 1970s, the considerable contemporary presence of the crafts movement and its ideals and practices was not acknowledged in any way. 394 By 1982, when John McPhee provided a survey of current crafts activity for inclusion in Leon Paroissien's Australian 1970-1980 (1984)

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391 John Bentley Mays 'Comment' American Craft 45/5 Oct/Nov 1985 38
392 Bruce Metcalf 'Crafts: Second Class Citizens?' Metalsmith 11/1 1980 16
393 Refer Thesis Chapter 1
Chapter 4: Finding a place

Art Review 2, he suggested that this review was the first of its kind in an art journal.\textsuperscript{395} Even then however, the illustrations he used did not show contemporary crafts at all: they depicted 'folk crafts' and paintings, international ceramic design of the early 20th century and an installation of Australian art (and crafts) of the 1930s.

Conclusion

Craftspeople in the 1970s reflected the spirit of the time in the kind of work they made, and so also did the various educational, funding and co-ordinating institutions reflect in their programs, by and large, all the desires of the crafts movement, which ever direction they took. The resources were available for both education and community initiatives, which in turn supported the marketplace. There was increased contact for craftspeople throughout Australia and other parts of the world: travel, visitors, exhibitions, collections, workshop establishment, new courses, traineeships and publications challenged and extended both craftspeople and their institutions.

In identifying as the main issue of concern the lack of recognition of craftspeople as serious professionals - whether making functional works or 'art-craft' works - the movement's efforts to both develop its professional base and at the same time provide access to the wider community, corresponded with institutional ideals of the time.

But while all directions in the crafts were practised (studio crafts, design for industry and art-craft), craftspeople nonetheless placed extra value on 'art-craft' works and exhibitions at art venues. The institutions of the art world - the art schools, the galleries and the art world publications - provided the best framework at that time for validation and status.

Some craftspeople were successful in their aspirations; but many more failed.

Moreover, despite the wide public profile and institutional support of the crafts movement, those writing art and cultural histories of this time did not include this movement in their narratives or analysis: the hierarchies of the art world effectively excluded it from their mainstream accounts.

The crafts movement's need to review the characteristics of crafts practice and address its ideals and values in relation to its own histories, as well as to art and design, will be discussed in the next chapter.

\textsuperscript{395}Leon Paroissien (ed) Australian Art Review 2 (1982). This publication also included a review of the exhibition International Directions in Glass, and the Women in Arts Festival in which some craftspeople had been involved.