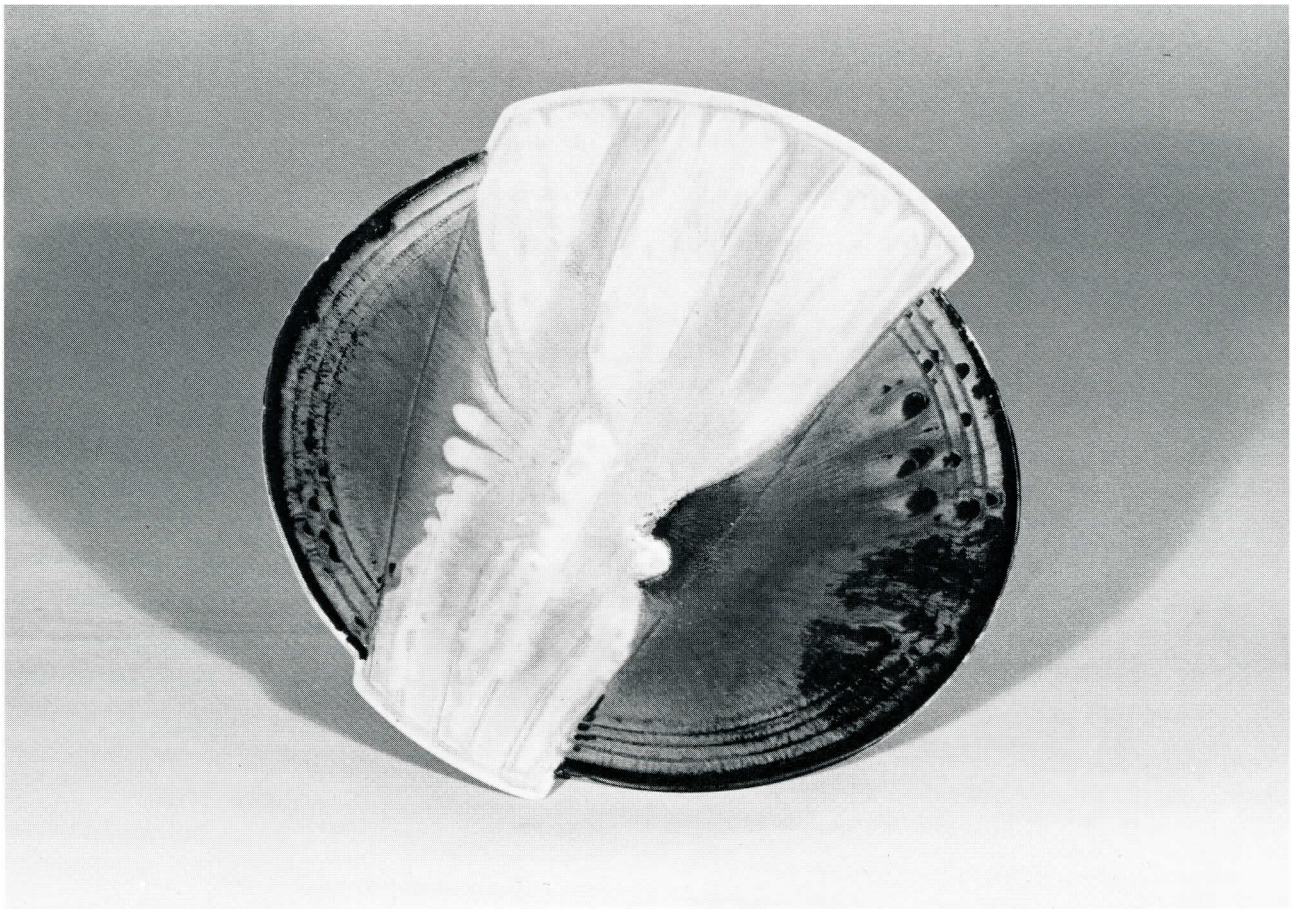


KATHY KOOP
THE OPEN SURFACE
CERAMICS

GALLERY 111
SCHOOL OF ART
UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

SEPTEMBER 10-26, 1984



Cat. #19 Three Grey Bands Between Black

Photo: Debbie Herst

KATHY KOOP – THE OPEN SURFACE

by Grace Thomson

Kathy Koop was born in Winnipeg and studied at the University of Winnipeg (1974-76) and at the University of Manitoba School of Art (B.F.A. Hons., 1980), majoring in ceramics. She has exhibited in many shows in Winnipeg and has taken part in various workshops and seminars in clay. Since 1982, she has worked as instructor to both adult and children classes in the Winnipeg Art Gallery and the City of Winnipeg studio art programs. At present she is a self-employed ceramicist and a cooperative member of the store and studio areas at The Stoneware Gallery, in Winnipeg.

Kathy Koop is a young ceramicist but the porcelain vessels shown in the current exhibition already reveal not only experience and confidence in handling of both material and design but an in-

novative spirit as well. These vessels are selected from among those made during the past year but within this group there is already change in method of structuring and ornamentation which divides the work shown into two distinct groupings in time — the early and the more recent.

Koop works in series and makes many vessels in her attempts to achieve the desired effects. Although she makes some stoneware, her favourite clay is porcelain, which is fired in a high temperature gas kiln. The reduction process gives the subtle blends of color and depth of surface that she likes. Even though each vessel is given full and directed attention to detail in the outer edge or lip, the main body, the foot and the surface, Koop allows the firing process to offer an element of

unpredictability in the final outcome. By taking these risks she is often rewarded with surprise surface effects of color, tone and movement.

Although some of the early vessels are of deep color and high gloss, on the whole, Koop's palette is almost neo-classic in its restraint and in its subdued tones of grey, pale green and blue, pink, ochre, and black, with most pieces finished in semi-gloss to semi-mat glazes. Colors filling in incised outlines or free and broken calligraphic brushstrokes are sometimes painterly in manner and frequently mottled or feathered. These effects are often derived from the kiln's unpredictability that the artist learns to use to advantage.

The shapes vary from those of small round-bodied bottles, upright vases and lidded jars, to larger planter-like vessels, and to bowls of various sizes. The exhibition however is primarily of bowls, and they are at present Koop's prime interest:

I tend to concentrate on bowls, stretching the surface, allowing for a great space to work on — paint, cut, carve, and glaze — the surface and edge are a great challenge to me.

The bowls range in size from seven to fifteen inches in diameter. The shape of many are not unlike the wide-mouthed summer bowls of the Japanese tea ceremony. They are shallow. The height, including the three-eighth to one-half inch foot, is only about four to five inches.

Koop says that she likes to work with the three-dimensionality of clay but she modifies the stock bowl form by flaring the rims of the bowls and opening up the interior surface to provide for herself an almost two-dimensional space, treating it much like paper or canvas, for her line drawings and glaze paintings. The side walls of her vertical pieces also rise in perpendicular flatness so that the exterior surfaces can open up to free ornamentation. (#64)

In the early series, Koop preconceives the shape of the vessels, using geometric forms and organic motifs as references. The circumferential boundary is cut and the rim is reinforced with a border and the ornamentation is centered within this defined space. As a result, these vessels assume a symmetrical shape and are self-contained in appearance. (#20) The small round-bodied bottle vases are of this series and the narrow necks emphasize the appearance of self-containment.

In more recent pieces, the structuring and ornamentation method is changed. The glaze painting and line drawings are placed on the clay before the rim shape is determined. The rim edge is cut according to the shape of the ornamentation so that each bowl is given uniqueness in form as well as individuality through ornamentation.

Koop says she is influenced by the art of traditional African cultures and also of the North American Indian. There is some evidence of this in her choice of motifs. The geometric forms, the parallel relief lines drawn by slip trailing, the carved and incised lines, and the use of organic forms both in structure and in ornamentation, are all found in traditional basket, fabric, sculpture and pottery designs. However, many of the vessels in the early series appear to be Art Nouveau in concept. Each

of the group of upright small vases reveals form and decoration balanced in an inseparable unity. (#58) The curved and modulated incised lines, the delicate brush work, and the scalloped edges of the rim, together describe both the plant motif and the shape of the container. The ornamentation seems to have 'determined' the form. This can also be said about some of the large very shallow bowls where the sea-shell motif is the structural symbol. The incised lines and brushwork follow and reinforce the curved contours of the shell/bowl. Among the later shell-shaped bowls, however, there is one that is more reminiscent of a headgear of an Egyptian pharaoh, in both contour and ornamentation, than a sea-shell (#29)

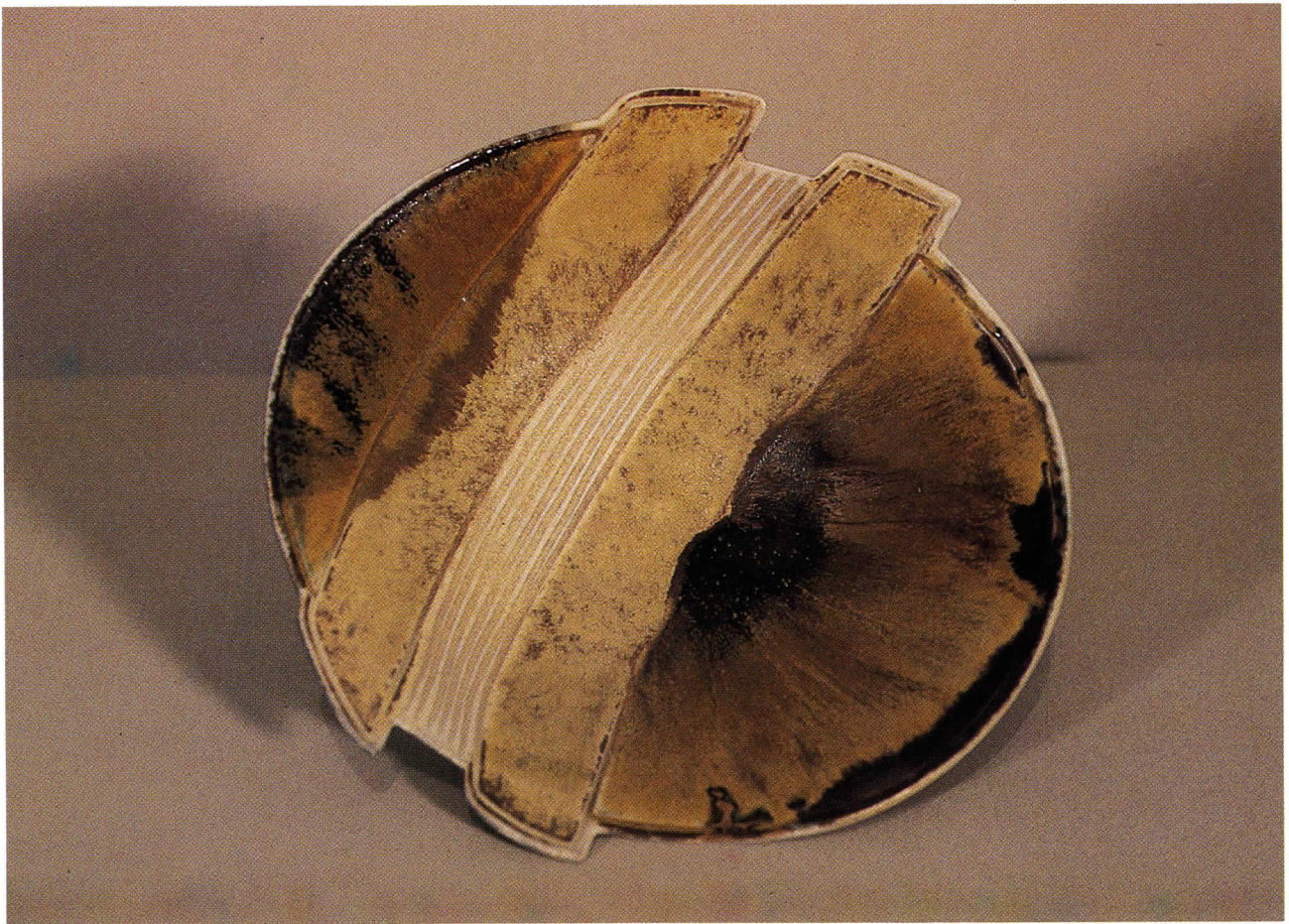
The change in the method of ornamentation and structuring of more recent vessels appear to have released Koop from traditional concerns of controlled containment and rigid representational references of motifs. It has allowed for more spontaneous expression of design and as a result the paintings and line drawings sometime appear to violate or contradict the three-dimensional concavity of the bowls.

In one work of this series, Koop continues to use the representational plant motif but abstracts and stylizes the blade form in the process of shaping the rim edge of the bowl. (#16) The two cross-blade motif is not given the freedom to grow from stem to the curved top in its natural state. It is instead abruptly cut off at both ends in an angular fashion, leaving the blunt ends to jut out beyond the periphery of the otherwise curved edge of the bowl. The geometric spaces produced around the main motif are emphasized by parallel and right-angled incised lines.

In another bowl, the plant motif is again used but leaves are fanned out in a triangular-shaped area of the interior surface (#30) The two sides of this triangle are reinforced by parallel lines done in relief slip trailing placed symmetrically on either sides of the central motif.

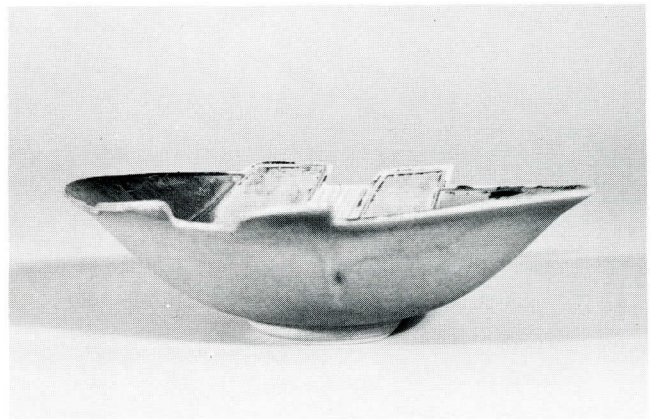
Less stylized is the bowl which has no reference to any organic motif. (#17) Three wide abstract color bands, the centre one incised, with diffused edges of mottled and feathered glazes, lie flatly and boldly across the surface of the interior without regard for the curved contour of the bowl and the ends continue beyond the edges. Energy is contained in the painting and the bowl surface is merely the 'canvas' or the 'paper' surface upon which the artist projects her images. The shape of the bowl is determined only after the painting was complete. This spontaneous approach to both ornamentation and to shaping gives vitality and freshness to this vessel and the dissonance or tension created by the deliberate indifference to the utilitarian shape of the vessel is an exciting aspect of Koop's most recent work.

It is evident that the more recent products of Koop's hands reflect her growing confidence with material and concepts which in turn reflect her inner being, expressed through the generous flaring of the rims of the bowls and through the images which spill over and reach out.



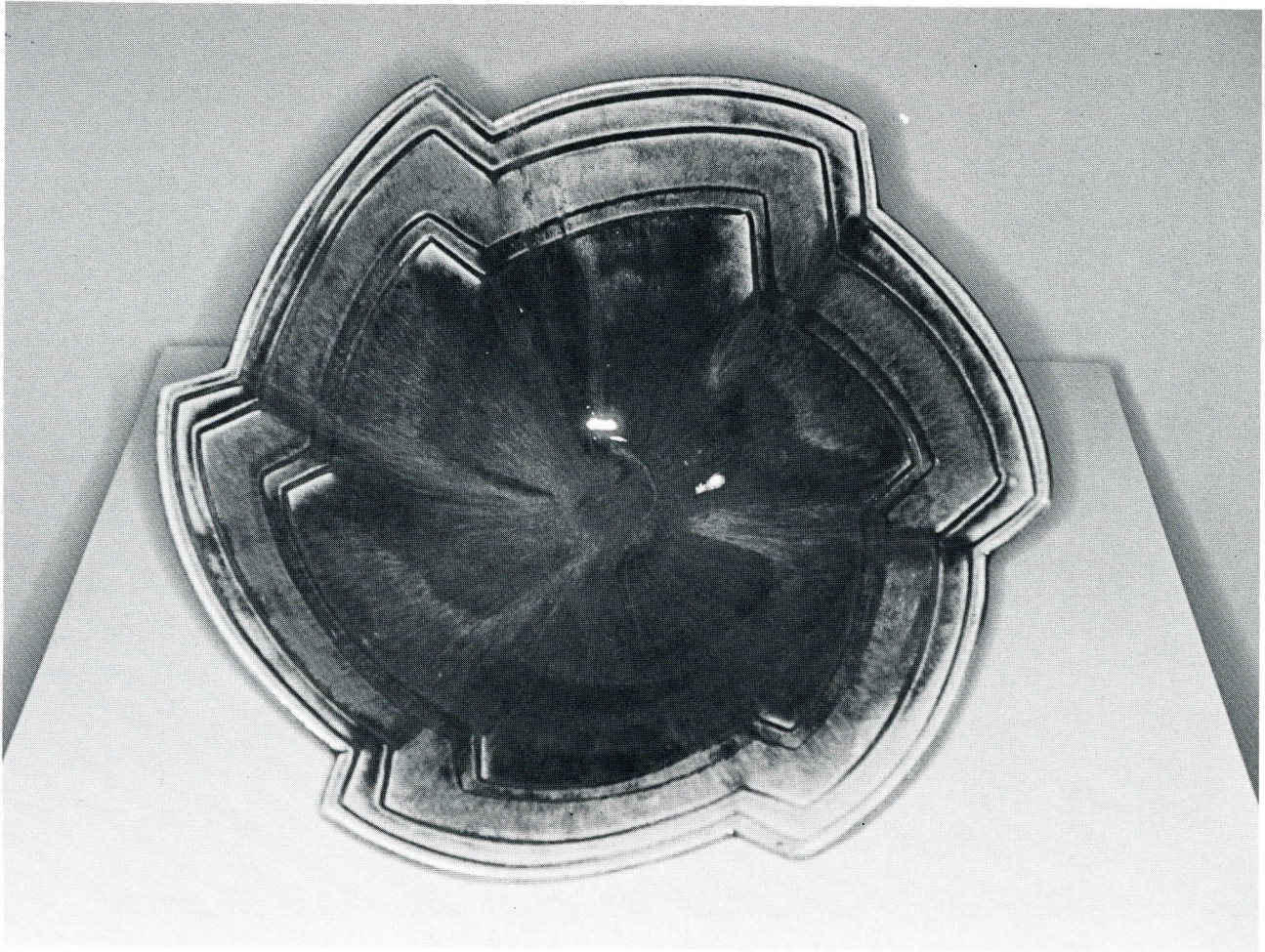
Cat. #17 Parallel Bars No. 1

Photo: William Eakin



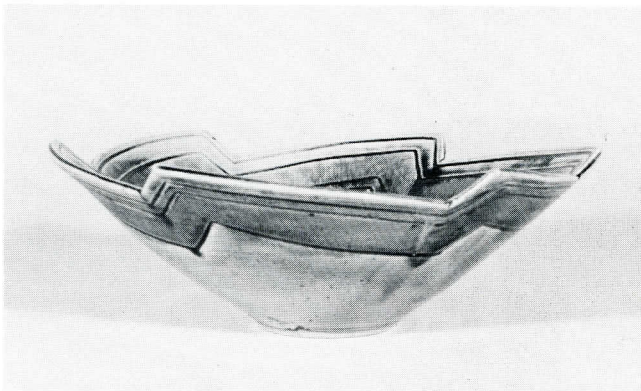
Side View of Cat. #17

Photo: Debbie Herst



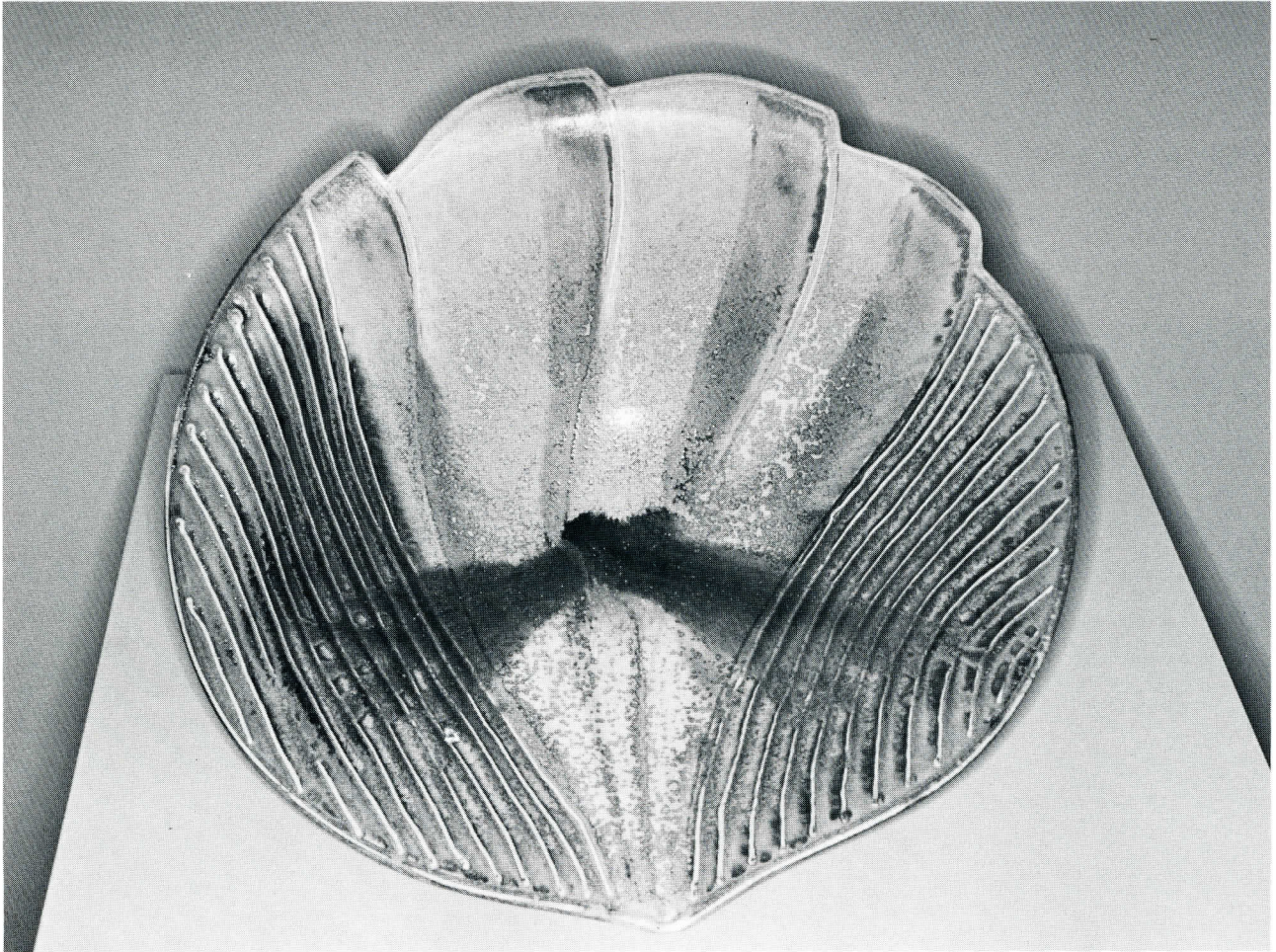
Cat. #20 Burst of Red

Photo: William Eakin



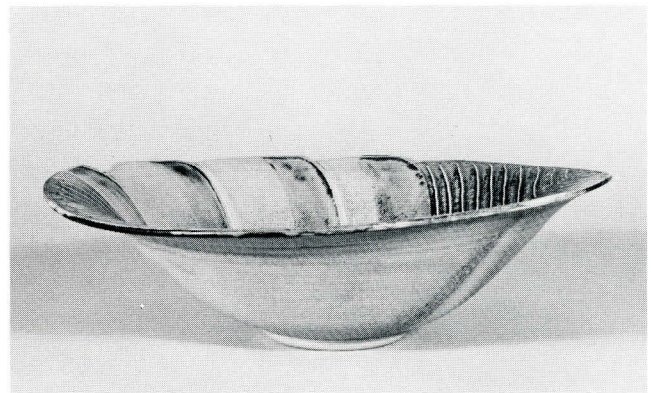
Side View of Cat. #20

Photo: Debbie Herst



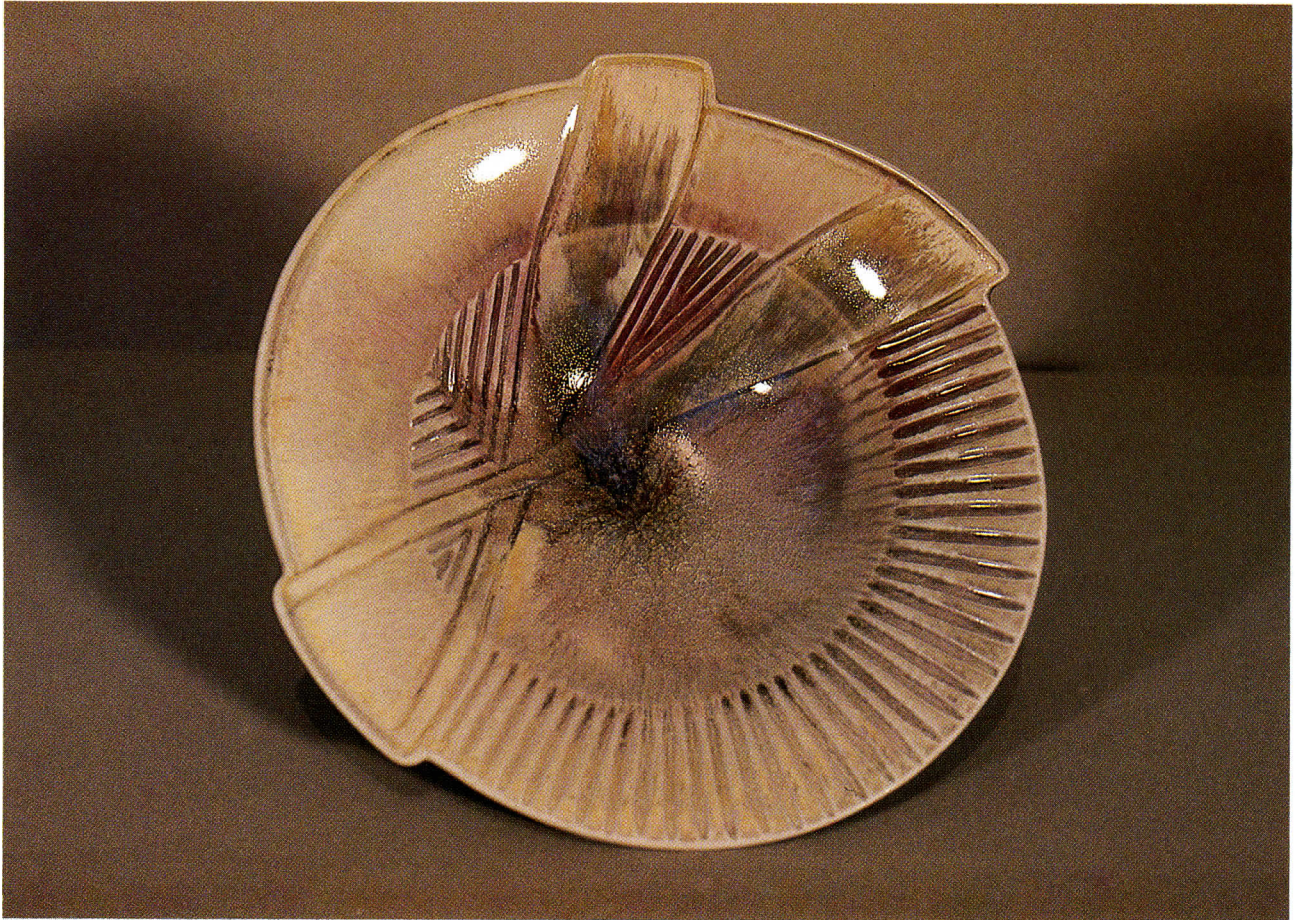
Cat. #30 Shell No. 5

Photo: William Eakin



Side View of Cat. #30

Photo: Debbie Herst



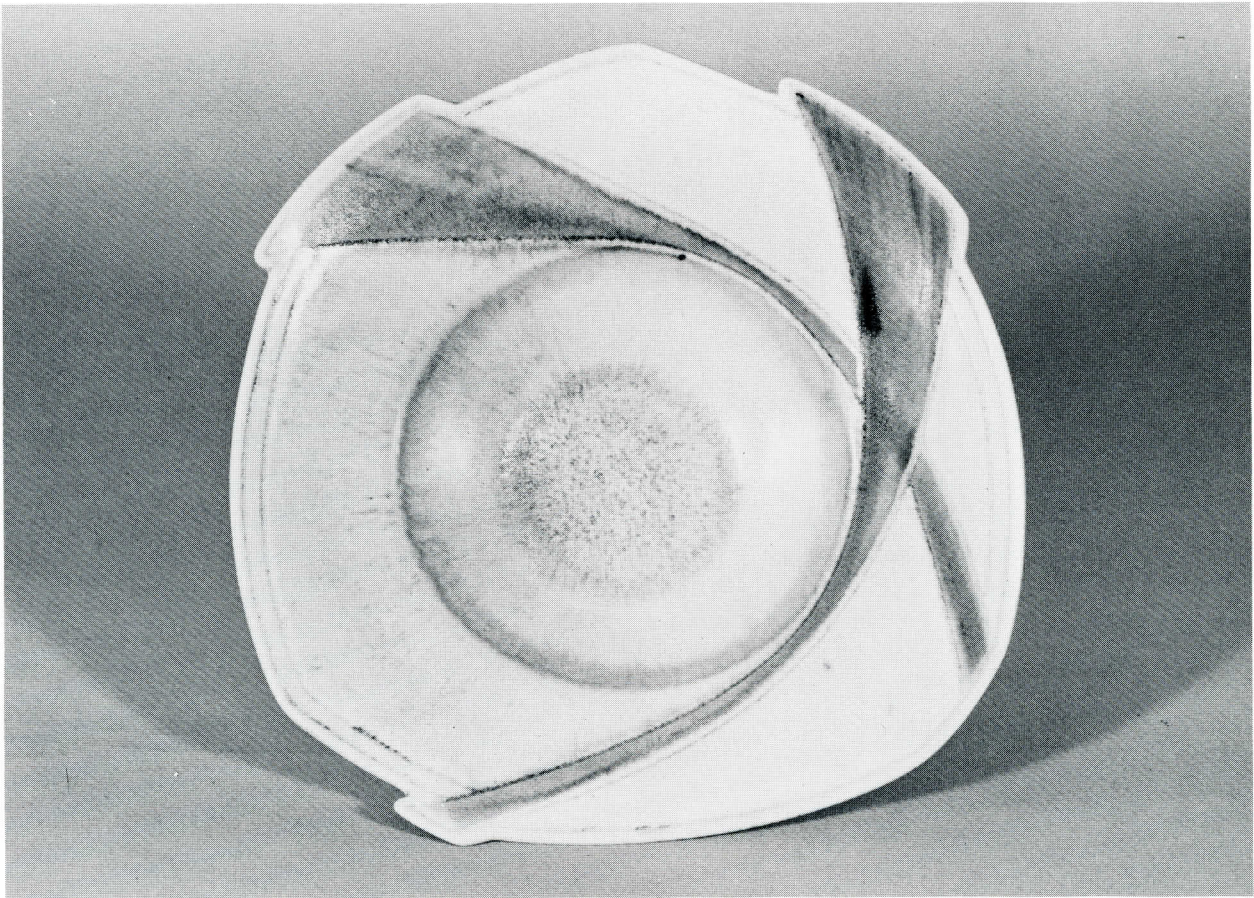
Cat. #16 Crossed Bands No. 2

Photo: William Eakin



Cat. #58 Growing Bands No. 3

Photo: William Eakin



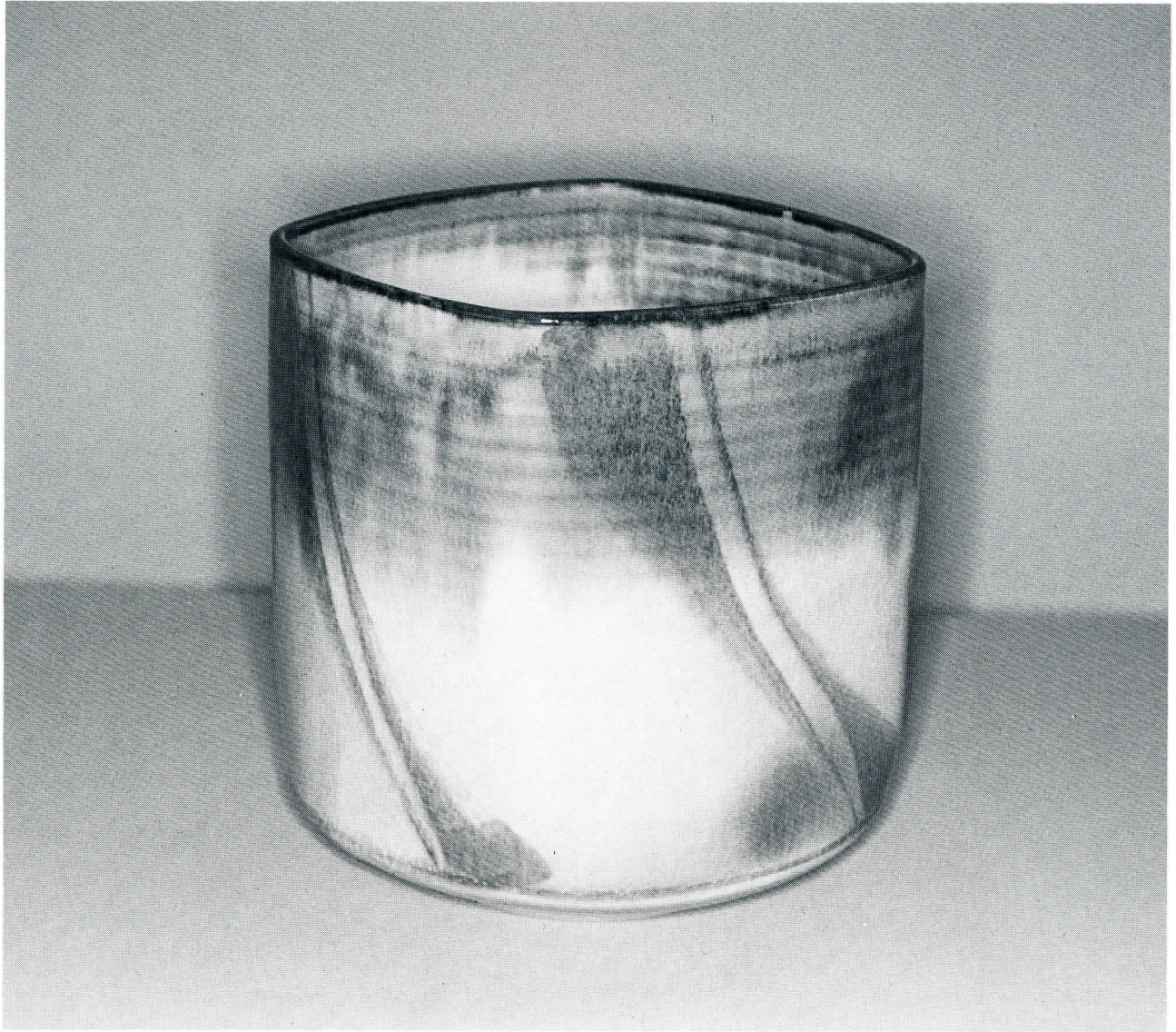
Cat. #35 Grey Crossed Bands

Photo: Debbie Herst



Side View of Cat. #35

Photo: Debbie Herst



Cat. #64 Double Bands through Blue

Photo: William Eakin



Cat. #29 Shell #4

Photo: William Eakin



Side View of Cat. #29

Photo: Debbie Herst

LIST OF WORKS

All works are of porcelain except where indicated and all works were completed in 1983-84. All measurements are in centimetres.

Small Bowls — Early Series

1. *Grey Interior, White Exterior*
17 x 17 x 5.5
2. *Stripes*
18 x 18 x 6.5
3. *Grey Lines and Dots on White*
20.5 x 20.5 x 7
4. *Grey & White Lines on White*
20.5 x 20.5 x 7
5. *Pink with Green Bands*
20.5 x 20.5 x 7
6. *Blue Centre Emerging*
21.5 x 21.5 x 7
7. *Pink Flower*
21.5 x 21.5 x 6
8. *Turquoise Shell*
19.5 x 18 x 5.5
9. *Grey Banded Shell*
20 x 20 x 6

Small Bowls — Later Series

10. *Two Feathered Bands*
20.5 x 20.5 x 6
11. *Three Blue Feathered Bands*
20 x 20 x 6.5
12. *Three Green Central Bands No. 1*
18 x 18 x 7
13. *Green Bands No. 2*
17.5 x 17.5 x 7
14. *Green Bands in Pink*
18 x 18 x 6.5
15. *Crossed Green Bands No. 1*
19 x 18.5 x 5.5
16. *Crossed Bands No. 2*
20.5 x 20.5 x 6.5
17. *Parallel Bars No. 1*
20.5 x 20.5 x 6
18. *Parallel Bars No. 2*
19.5 x 18.5 x 6
19. *Three Grey Bands Between Black*
18.5 x 18 x 6

Large Bowls — Early Series

20. *Burst of Red (Stoneware)*
35.5 x 35.5 x 12
21. *Subdued Red with Green Border (Stoneware)*
32 x 29 x 11.5
22. *Red Variations with White Lines (Stoneware)*
36.5 x 36.5 x 14
23. *Turquoise Through Pink*
30 x 30 x 8
24. *Blue Bands Through Pearl (Stoneware)*
28.5 x 28 x 11
25. *White Lines with Blue Rim*
31 x 28 x 11

Large Bowls — Shell Series

26. *Shell No. 1*
33 x 33 x 8.5
27. *Shell No. 2*
35 x 35 x 9.5
28. *Shell No. 3*
37 x 37 x 9.5
29. *Shell No. 4*
36 x 36 x 10
30. *Shell No. 5*
37.5 x 36.5 x 11
31. *Shell No. 6*
36.5 x 36.5 x 10

Large Bowls — Later Series

32. *Grey Band Through Middle*
31.5 x 27 x 9.5
33. *Three Bands Fused Between Brown*
28 x 27 x 8.5
34. *Blue Crossed Bands*
31 x 31 x 10
35. *Grey Crossed Bands*
31 x 31 x 9.5

36. *Three Feathered Bands Through Centre*
28 x 26 x 7.5
37. *Grey Divisions*
27 x 27 x 9.5
38. *Pink Variations No. 1*
30.5 x 29.5 x 9
39. *Pink Variations No. 2*
32 x 30.5 x 9
40. *Pink Variations No. 3*
33.5 x 33.5 x 9
41. *Pink Variations No. 4*
28.5 x 27.5 x 10.5
42. *Pink Variations No. 5*
26.5 x 26.5 x 9.5
43. *Pink Variations No. 6*
33 x 32 x 8.5

Platters

44. *Hints of Pink Through Hints of Green*
30 x 30 x 2.5
45. *Three Crossed Green Bands*
33 x 31.5 x 2.5
46. *Blue Bordering Grey Bands*
33 x 32 x 2.5

Small Covered Jars

47. *Jar No. 1*
10 x 10 x 9.5
48. *Jar No. 2*
10 x 10 x 10
49. *Jar No. 3*
10 x 10 x 10

Vases

50. *Black on White No. 1*
16 x 16 x 19.5
51. *Black on White No. 2*
13 x 13 x 20
52. *Round Vase No. 1*
10 x 10 x 9
53. *Round Vase No. 2*
11.5 x 11.5 x 9.5
54. *Round Vase No. 3*
10 x 10 x 9.5
55. *Set of Six Small Vases*
No. 1, 7 x 7 x 13.5
No. 2, 6.5 x 6.5 x 14.5
No. 3, 7 x 7 x 13.5
No. 4, 7 x 7 x 14
No. 5, 7 x 7 x 15
No. 6, 7 x 7 x 13.5
56. *Growing Bands No. 1*
6 x 6 x 21
57. *Growing Bands No. 2 (set of 2)*
No. 1, 8 x 8 x 24.5
No. 2, 6 x 6 x 18.5
58. *Growing Bands No. 3 (set of 3)*
No. 1, 7 x 7 x 21
No. 2, 5.5 x 5.5 x 17.5
No. 3, 5 x 5 x 13

Vertical Vessels

59. *Cream Coating Grey*
11.5 x 11.5 x 23
60. *Black Rim*
14 x 14 x 15.5
61. *Double Blue Band Through Cream*
18.5 x 18.5 x 14
62. *Green and Mauve*
19 x 19 x 15.5
63. *Thin Brown Lip*
16 x 16 x 15
64. *Double Bands Through Blue*
15.5 x 15.5 x 18
65. *Incised Stripes on Four Sides (Stoneware)*
14.5 x 15.5 x 15.5
66. *Faded Bands*
14.5 x 14.5 x 15.5

BIOGRAPHY

Education

- 1980 B.F.A. (Hons.), University of Manitoba, Winnipeg
1974-76 Arts and Science Courses, University of Winnipeg

Workshops and Seminars

- 1984 Haystack Mountain School of Crafts, Maine, U.S.A.
Canadian Clay Conference, Banff, Alberta
1983 Workshops by Walter Ostrom, Bruce Cochrane, Robin Hopper at the University of Manitoba
1982 Workshop by Jack Sures, Brandon, Manitoba
1981 Ceramics Seminar '81, Calgary, Alberta
1976-80 Workshops by Paul Soldner, Chuck Wisinger, Tony Bloom, Walter Ostrom, Patti Bauer, Don Pilcher, Kurt Weiser at the University of Manitoba

Exhibitions

- 1984 *Putting on the Ritz, By Hand, Winnipeg Artists of Mennonite Heritage (in Various Media)*, Fleet Gallery, Winnipeg
1983 *In Praise of Crafts*, Juried Show, Archives Building, Winnipeg
1980 *Photographic Images*, Janet Ian Cameron Gallery, Winnipeg

Awards

- 1984 Manitoba Arts Council, Project Grant
Crafts Guild of Manitoba, Study Bursary

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