



telopea

Editor : Irene Manion

Issue 2 July 2021



EDITOR'S NOTES

Welcome to the second issue of *Telopea*.

This edition is in a slightly different format to the first. It's an attempt to organise and post the amount of content most effectively for online viewing.

This edition features interviews with two artists who were guest exhibitors at the most recent Craftnsw exhibition entitled *Stories Told* at Barometer Gallery Paddington from 15th May to 30th May 2021, Hape Kiddle and Naoko Toakase.

In future editions, articles based on the work of a current member of the Society of Arts and Crafts will also be featured and especially any new members to the society.

Jillian Culey, who is one of the four artists who created a workshop video for Craftnsw recently

exhibited her work at the selective exhibition at the Embroiderers' Guild Gallery at 76 Queen Street, entitled *Not A Basket Case*, has written an article showcasing the work of three other artists who exhibited in this exhibition.

There are two features. One on Peter Gentenaar a Dutch artist working with paper and one on master weaver Glenda Campbell. If you click on the links, these are worth reading and/or watching.

Finally, we have Part 2 of the historical document about the history of Craftnsw.

I hope this will bring some enjoyable reading to all members, and especially to those who are back in lockdown.

Ed.

IMPORTANT DATES

July - October: Note the three dates provided individually for each exhibitor for various online platforms in preparation for the Balmain Watch House Exhibition

Friday 8 October - Sunday 17 October *The Value of Hands* Exhibition at Balmain Watch House.


Cover image: Work on Exhibit at Barometer Gallery during *STORIES TOLD*. Both costumes in forefront created by Neelam Singhal.
Photo: Irene Manion

PETER GENTENAU

THE CREATIVE JOURNEY

I sat glued in awe to the description of the amazing creative process Dutch artist Peter Gentenaar went through, after being told that he was a failure in advertising. His inner drive and curiosity could not be stifled, and he embarked on this incredible journey of discovery in a unique medium of paper, that involved a growing depth of understanding of the nature of his materials.

The fashion designer Iris van Herpen recognised his unique work and collaborated with him for one of her costume series.

Please link to this remarkable video to see an artist describing his creative journey. Once you start watching this video, you can't stop. Although the video is quite long, and spoken in Dutch, it has English subtitles. If the subtitles don't automatically appear, you can click the **settings button** , then on **subtitles** and choose **English** on the drop down menu.

Link to the subtitled video:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eW33EoHw8_s

Link to the Iris Van Herpen fashion show featuring work inspired by his work:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NvL8Hc9dKj>



REVIEW

NOT A BASKET CASE

by Jillian Culey

[Not A] Basket Case: Making a Case for Contemporary Basketry Art was an exhibition at Gallery 76 (the Embroiders' Guild of NSW) in March 2021. The exhibition brought together Australian and International basketry artists for a one-off group exhibition which showcased some of the best this medium has to offer. The exhibition showcased a range of basket weaving techniques and a variety of fibres, from natural to recycled. From this eclectic range the following three artists were chosen to illustrate the variety of exhibits on offer.

Nicole Robins is a Sydney based artist who uses traditional basketry techniques to explore plant fibre. Her work, titled *Complimentary*, was made entirely from parts of the Bangalow Palm – including the sheath, spathe and inflorescence. While Nicole restricted herself to one plant (which provides ample varieties of fibre) she explored a range of techniques including coiling, twining and kupenga. The contrast between restriction (of fibres) and freedom (of techniques) forced you to stop and examine her piece in close detail, trying to identify when the fibre changed or when she had transitioned into a different weaving technique.

<http://www.nicolerobins.com>

Asahi So is another Sydney based artist. He initially trained as a florist but has now turned his focus to ceramics and weaving. Asahi's ceramic and wire pieces are a strange contradiction. They are delicate and robust – although not in the way you expect. It is the ceramics that is delicate and the wire looping that is robust. His pieces are exquisitely formed and while they sat together comfortably as a family of figures in the exhibition, each had a personality of its own.

<https://www.studiomorningsun.com>

Felicity Chapman is a proud Wiradjuri woman living and creating on Ngaro country. Her pieces in the exhibition were interesting contrasts. Two of Felicity's pieces were more traditional and worked with hand dyed raffia, plant fibres and quandong seeds. Her third piece titled *Callous Consumerism* was constructed from discarded tech components and parts. This piece in particular encouraged the viewer to stop and examine all the various components and to try and identify the familiar. Felicity's pieces sat side by side – a contrast in materials, but constructed using some of the same techniques.

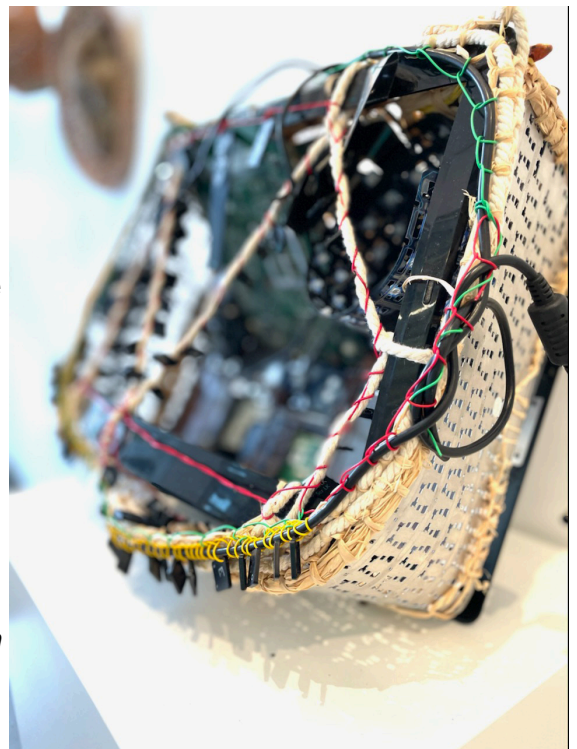
<https://www.deadlyweavers.com.au>

Images: courtesy of Gallery 76

Artists' Statements provided by Gallery 76



Complimentary Nicole Robins



Callous Consumerism Felicity Chapman



Chimera Vessel series, Asahi So.
Reduction-fired stoneware clay, looped copper and iron wire Asahi So

**THEY ARE DELICATE AND ROBUST
– ALTHOUGH NOT IN THE WAY
YOU EXPECT. IT IS THE CERAMICS
THAT IS DELICATE AND THE WIRE
LOOPING THAT IS ROBUST.**

HAPE KIDDLE

WOOD SCULPTOR

- *How long have you been working in wood and what opportunities, qualifications, circumstances, and/or choices enabled you to start working in this area?*

I have been working in timber as a sculptural form for about 23 years. I was carving at the age of 6 1/2 however that was just play. I didn't finish my furnishing degree, for family reasons, however, do have qualifications as a goldsmith.

I was lucky to have been able to study under Kevin Perkins in furniture design and feel privileged to have learned from some of the best furniture makers in the country.

I chose to work in timber because it has a language that resonates with me. I have had an inclination all my life, to be close to what is natural. Timber holds its life within its fibre. Any event that happens to a tree remains with the tree for the rest of its story. Your role as a maker from trees, is to engage with that tree's story, and that lends interest and content to the job that you do. It's a dance. Sometimes the tree dictates, at other times you actively search for a way to illustrate the story. You have this relationship whereby you are required to bring out the story.

- *Had you worked in other media prior to this? If so, how did they influence your current work?*

In the past I have worked in jade and bone, coral and tortoise shell, also carving organic materials like pumice. This was natural for someone coming from a New Zealand background. I found the medium of woodworking after living in Australia for some time.

Each material has its own language.

- *Which piece most accurately exemplifies what you are currently striving to achieve in your work and explain why it is significant in your development as an artist/craftsperson.*

There is no one single piece but a series

entitled the Mobius series. This set of pieces, illustrating the mobius form, are linked together like words in a sentence. Each one leads to the next. I would describe it as a single path rather than a single piece.

The Mobius pieces reflect the rhythms of water. A mobius allows expression through a robust form at the base, that turns into a lighter leaf like form. The growth of this form can only be guided by the water in the system.

"Song for Dao" is about a flowing and twisting around of the form. Like a tree, a pod breaks open and the seed then pushes out. This process is reliant on water.

There is this invisible dance happening around us that we are often not aware of. If you stop and allow yourself to feel it, it is there. The 'mobius' dance keeps on repeating itself in variations and forms that can be broken down to the same universal patterns. Even though we are of nature, and in nature, the less you listen the less you are aware of them.

These universal values are the foundation of my work, and I am unashamedly an environmentalist.

- *Sourcing materials is an integral part of your process. How do you go about sourcing suitable materials?*

Its through a lot of like-minded people who collect tree-bodies. When a tree has had its life, there's a group of people who spend time in bush areas, who understand the language of the trees and what I am trying to use in my work. I have these people coming to my studio, who are experts in timber and trees, and I keep the conversations going with these people.

- *Explain the role of 'concept' vs 'skill' in the production of your work.*

Concept is first. Its more listening to that inner voice. Sculpture is a physical poetry. The poetry comes first. I have forced myself to arrive at the concept, even when I felt I was under-skilled. I force myself to create that piece that had a story to convey.

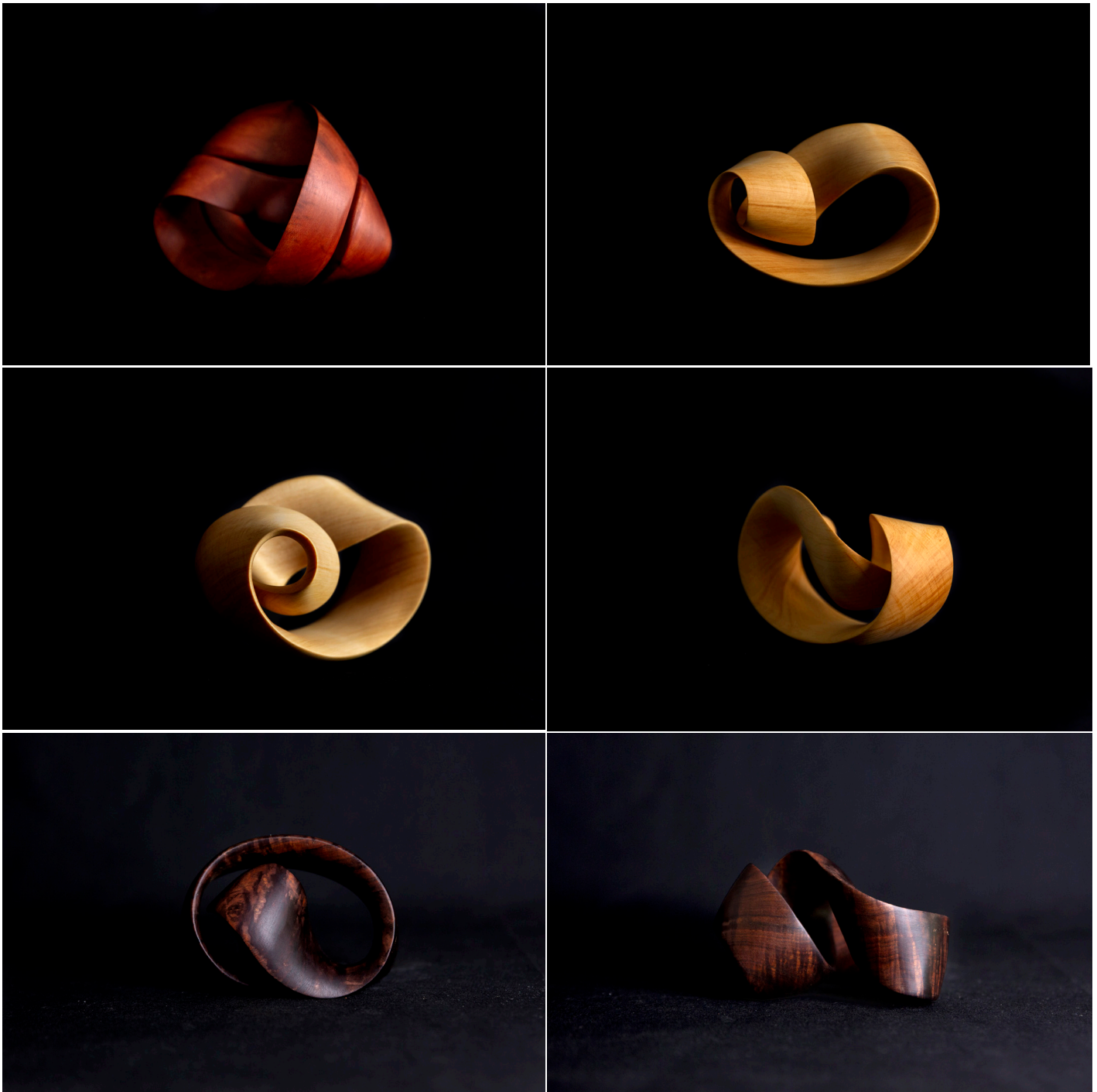
Skill is built through repetition and attention to detail.

- *What advice would you give to someone who was interested in beginning a career working in your medium?*

I'd say just begin. Just carve, just make. I made lots of mistakes. But they are how you learn. When you teach yourself you know all the ins and outs, whereas if you're taught, all you know what is you were taught.

<https://www.hapekiddle.com/>

hapekiddle@gmail.co





above: *Mobius sculpture.* Hape Kiddle
left: Image of the artist



Images courtesy of the artist

INDIGENOUS MASTER WEAVER

GLEND A NICHOLLS

PRESERVING CULTURAL PRACTICES ON A GRAND SCALE

Glenda Nicholls was part of the Victorian National Gallery Contemporary Art Triennial. She is a Waddi Waddi, Ngarrindjeri and Yorta Yorta artist. Her cultural name is Jule Yarra Minj ('little river girl') and her maternal Ngarrindjeri totem is the Writcharuki (willy-willy wagtail). Nicholls is a master weaver, constructing elaborate sculptural works that connect the present with her ancestral past. She applies cultural weaving techniques acquired from her ancestors alongside intimate knowledge of the waterways, plants and grasses on her Country. Nicholls is determined to share her cultural knowledge with younger First Nations generations, seeing this exchange as crucial to ensuring cultural practices survive into the future.

.For an article on her work by Francis Salvo for the ABC please click on the link below:

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-04-17/master-weaver-glenda-nicholls-preserving-indigenous-culture/100074988>

The National Gallery of Victoria has also posted a video of her speaking about her work in the NGV Triennial. To see the video, please click on the link below, or on the image of the video.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bdkJK_InD1s



NAOKO TAKASE

CONTEMPORARY JEWELLER

- *How long have you been working in this medium and what opportunities, qualifications, circumstances, and/or choices enabled you to start working in this area?*

I started taking a jewellery making course at SquarePeg Studios in 2016. I am not sure why I chose jewellery but starting something completely new seemed a good idea for someone who was having an identity crisis at that time.

- *Had you worked in other media prior to this? If so, how did they influence your current work?*

I studied economics and marketing and worked in finance/ accounting. I guess coming from completely different background gives you different way to understand and look at things.

- *Which piece most accurately exemplifies what you are currently striving to achieve in your work? Describe it and explain why it is significant in your development as an artist/ craftsperson.*

I made those pieces to bring more awareness to care for our environment - keeping our environment safe for our next generation, for my sons, their partners, and beautiful young people around them.

<https://www.instagram.com/p/CPbxbFpBL87/>

<https://www.instagram.com/p/PPP7Y9pBd7q/>

<https://www.instagram.com/p/CPJ0FO7BoXf/>

- *Sourcing materials is an integral part of your process. How do you go about sourcing suitable materials?*

Hoarding - My material often come from whatever I collected time to time.

- *Explain the role of 'concept' vs 'skill' in the production of your work.*

Concept – to start with

Skill – to gain with

- *What advice would you give to someone who was interested in beginning a career working in your medium?*

Stop wondering and start what you have been wondering.

Instagram :@spikethemetalsmith

<https://www.instagram.com/spikethemetalsmith/>

gmail:spikethemetalsmith@gmail.com



Ashwater earrings by Naoko Toakase



Naoko's Ashwater earrings exhibited at Barometer Gallery
Photo: Irene Manion



Jewellery by Naoko Takase. Resin cast bag of sand, silverfindings.

Beach erosion took away beautiful pandanus. Tons of sand bags were placed where once the pandanus were. Which is sillier, placing a sand bag on a neck piece or combatting climate change by sand bags?

My purpose in creating this work is to bring more awareness to caring for the environment. For our next generation - our sons, their partners and the beautiful young people around them.

Quote by Naoko from her [@spikethemetalsmith](#) Instagram account. Images courtesy of the artist.

THE HISTORY OF CRAFTNSW

In the last edition of Telopea, the first instalment of this historic document was published. The article continues.

The Arts and Crafts Society grew from an idea into a group that met in a lovely house: Duncraggin , Raglan St, Mossman, with only seven members and expanded into a fully fledged society with many members. It was never a smooth path, as our current society members would testify.

This document was researched and written by the granddaughter of Dorothy Wardill, a founding member.

We take up the story with a recollection of the Bindery studio in which Dorothy Elspeth Wardill (nee Wilson) on the grounds of Duncraggin.

My mother, Elspeth Bennett (nee Wardill), remembered from her childhood holidays with her grandmother Alice Wilson; that the special home she visited in Sydney after the long train journey from Melbourne was:

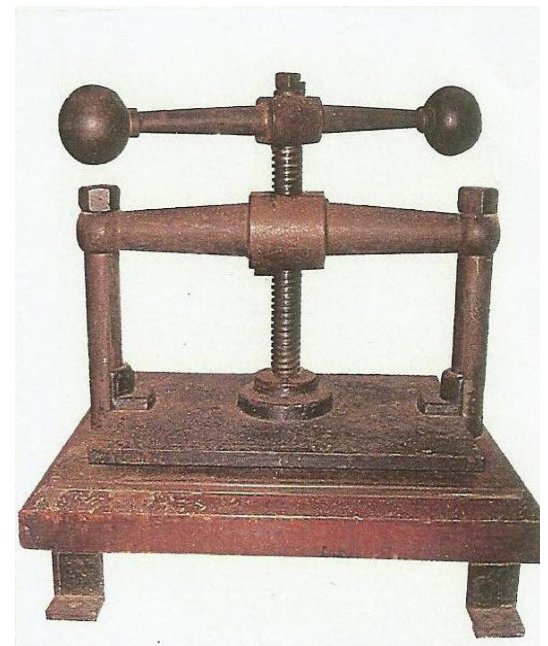
“..... an old bluestone towered house with steps that swept up from the drive to the large enclosed verandah. There was a dovecote in the grass of the large garden and a thatched roof sitting on the grass with steps leading down below the thatch to the ground where there were groves with ferns and a waterfall. I also remember the black and white chequered hall floor with a huge carved figure of palms. As I entered it was always so cool and right down the end of the hall was a bathroom with the smell of Cuticura soap. The Bindery was in the garden of Duncraggan, Raglan Street.”(See image of Duncraggin on page 14)

Elspeth continues.....

“When my mother married Richard Wardill in 1908 she moved to Melbourne and they lived in his home in Gordon Grove, South Yarra; another Bindery was built in the garden of this house where I was born. My mother continued binding her books. The home at 13 Dudley Street Brighton, where we lived from my early childhood, was built by my father with a Bindery Room next to the nursery”.



Dorothy Wardill at work in her Bookbin



Bookbinding press used by Dorothy Wardill.

THE PAST HISTORY OF THE ART AND CRAFTS MOVEMENT: ITS RELEVANCE TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF ART AND CRAFTS IN AUSTRALIA

The Art and Craft movement of Europe, and the UK (the fluid flowing lines of Art Nouveau, the stylized motifs of the Scottish architect Charles Rennie Mackintosh, and in England the flat, flowing and abstract patterning of William Morris) marked a new era with the use of animals, flowers, leaves and objects from nature.

In 1880 the English art and craft movement began to have an enormous influence in Australia. William Morris admired Ruskin and both men were influenced by the work of medieval craftsmen. The work of these craftsmen was a true reflection of the materials used; often from nature.

Morris believed in:-

- The fitness of design to function.
- A close association of the designer and maker.
- A revival of ancient craft techniques.
- Natural dyes for crafts such as book binding, woodblock and fabric printing.

From 1884 in England Handcraft Guilds involved 'both working men and hitherto unemployable young ladies in the practical creation of their own environment'.

The artists around William Morris decorated their personal environments.

From the early 20th century the Studio Art journal was available in Australia and spread ideas from England about the art and craft movement described above. The family retain Dorothy Wardill's pages from the 'Bystander' and the 'Westminster Budget' entitled 'The Connoisseur', 'A Pottery Art', 'A Designer of Book covers' and 'Some Fine Bindings'; these journals, full of ideas and designs must have influenced her work and book bindings.

In England this influence spread to rural areas too; in Australia this role continued through the Country Women's Association.



Some Australian women went to England and enrolled in arts courses that had not been possible in previous times. I think one of these was the ceramicist Ada Newman; a lifelong friend of Dorothy's.

In Victoria the first Art and Crafts magazine was published in 1895, but the movement did not start in NSW until 1906 as described above. The emphasis of both groups on Australian motives, designs and materials reflected the recent Federation.

In the early 1900's it had become fashionable in Australia, as in England, for 'gentle women' to enroll in technical courses of the Arts and Crafts before marriage and these women had done so; or learned their crafts privately from others.

One of the initiatives was from 'the girl in the bindery'; my grandmother Dorothy Wilson.

Muriel Fawcett Danvers Powers continued her memories: "The President used to take her little son for his morning walk to the Bindery in the old garden. Amid leathers of lovely hue and fascinating end papers and pictures of water and shore framed in the bindery window, she and the secretary of the new Art and Crafts society, Dorothy Wilson, used to "thrash things out".



As recorded by their President, the members:

- Aimed to exchange views and ideas about crafts.
- Meet monthly at a member's home.
- Incur a charge of 6d for a failure to attend.
- Incur another charge of 6d for a failure to exhibit.
- Pay an annual subscription of 1/-, to be reviewed in 3 months.

Is this where the modern corporate woman began her fledgling career?

At the first meeting of the group objects brought by members to view included china painting, repousse brass and leather, a mantel drape design, books and sketches.

By the fourth meeting, at Ada Newman's home, fines were abolished but it was decided that non-attendance at three meetings with an example of work meant cessation of membership!

Within 18 months the group's membership had grown to 60. With this growth there was a diversification of objects made and displayed. The objectives of the group created an emphasis on the use of Australian materials, motifs, holding exhibitions of members work, the establishment of a reference library and promoting social intercourse and good fellowship.

A year later the society obtained a more permanent home in a woodcarver's studio. This was at the home of Suzanne Gether who had studied woodwork and other crafts in Denmark. This easy chat and sharing of ideas developed into a practical event of a permanent exhibition with a sale of work. A selection committee maintained standards and 5% commission was charged.

During the early years of the group Eirene Mort, who had studied in England and been influenced

As recorded by their president, the members were expected to:

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by the work of William Morris, was a positive and strong influence. She set up a workshop in Sydney where craftsmen undertook their own work and taught others, who were interested, a range of crafts. (Printed textiles, ceramics, brass, embroidery, wood and leather). Many women worked in more than one area of craft for example: Olive Nock, china painter and embroiderer, Frances Derham from Victoria, a designer, printer, printmaker and embroiderer.

At this time exhibiting and selling work also helped 'women of standing who had fallen into reduced circumstances'.

The second annual working exhibition was held at the Royal Art Society with a high standard of chosen work to exhibit and artists plying their craft in 'miniature workshops' for the guests to see the practical application of the arts and crafts.

Eighty guests came to see metal work, jewellery, pottery, china painting, bookbinding, weaving embroidery and pokerwork. Dorothy Wilson gained 1st and 2nd Prize for her decorative bookbinding work. A range of her decorative bindings were illustrated in the Sydney Mail on 11th September 1907

By 1908 the commission for works sold at the exhibitions had been raised to 10% and

a further rise to 20% in 1909. Proceeds from sales commissions were donated to crafts people in the Girls' Realm Guild. The miniature workshops continued to be popular and the exhibition continued for four days with many sales to people wishing to send gifts overseas for Christmas.

Eirene Mort on 'Le Japon Artistique', Sir John Sulman on 'Arts and Crafts' applied to the Decoration of the Home'.

Many of these works had also been prepared for an Australian Exhibition of Women's Work in Victoria; the idea of Lady Northcote who was a patron of the arts in Australia. This exhibition took place in 1907 at the Exhibition Buildings with 15,000 attending, following the style of exhibitions in Paris and Vienna. It portrayed the scope and quality of women's work in Australia and reflected the beginning of a national heritage. Women were encouraged to realize their potential for self support through handiwork.

Women from 31 other countries contributed their works of art to this exhibition, making it truly international in the breadth and style of works displayed.

Dorothy Wilson was awarded nine prizes in the artistic bookbinding categories. Her monogram was DEW. Amongst her books was a volume of Rossetti's poems with a vellum binding she had designed with Ethel A. Stephens. The later orchestrated the painted finish on the book; listed for sale at four guineas

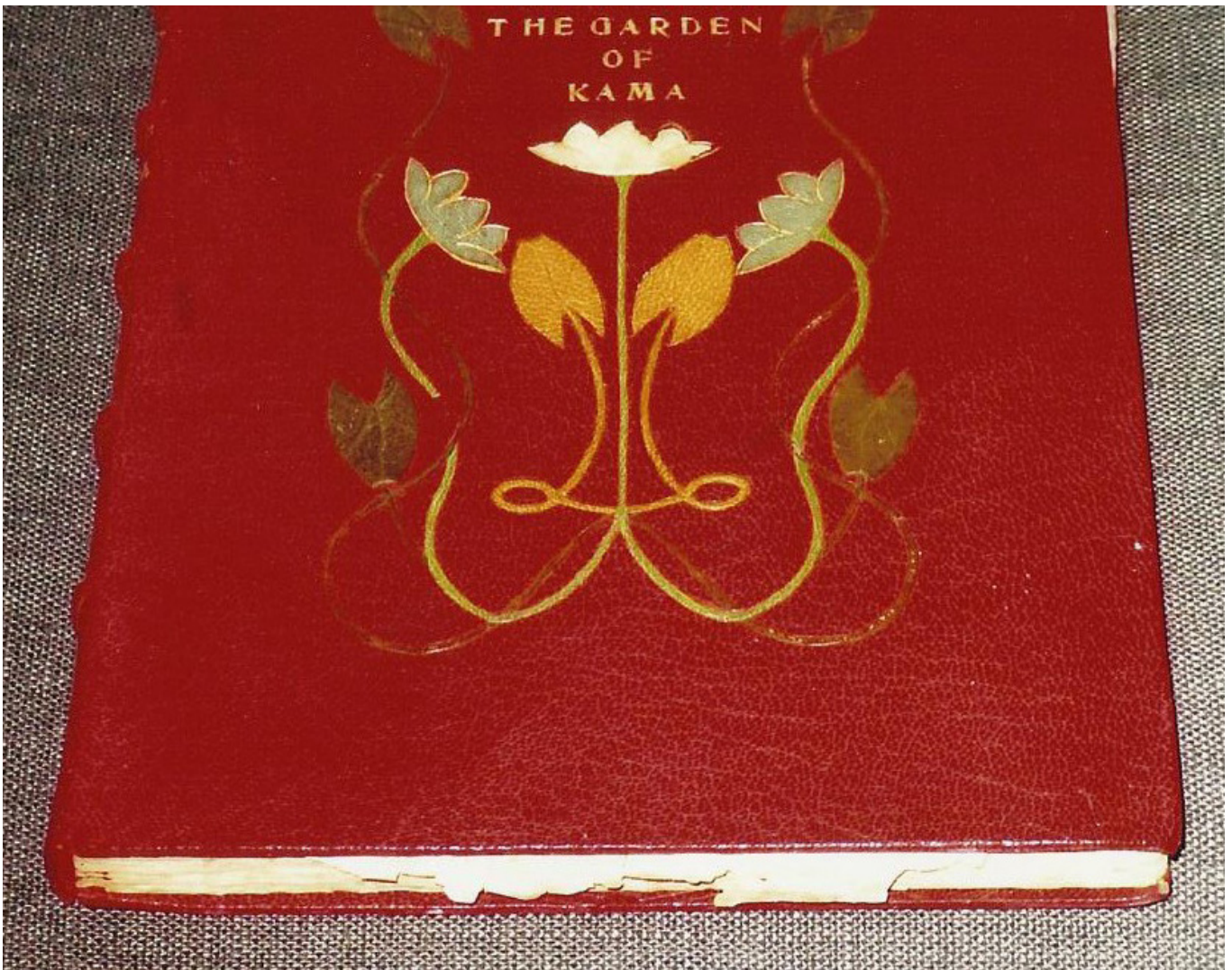
Australian exhibits encompassed needlework, cookery, art, music, literature, medical work, nursing, inventions, physical culture, dancing, games and sports, horticulture, teaching and the trades such as lace making, woodwork, hair work, interior decorating, ladies white underclothing, dyeing, cleaning, ostrich feather dressing and an exhibition of bees!

At this time Dorothy was also fulfilling commissions of bookbinding for friends in Edinburgh Scotland.

Also created was a 'beautiful en-relief leather binding for an album presented to a visiting Canadian/American actress Margaret Anglin, (Hordern House Rare Books) . Adrienne Carlson writes in her biography of Dorothy's mastery of the art nouveau style. 'The sinuous, organic lines flowing over the cover are combined with the native flannel flower to produce a strongly nationalistic Australian arts and crafts design. Every element in the work contributes to the overall design concept: the decorative handmade endpapers, the gilt edges, the maker's signature on the back endpapers and the initials 'DEW' subtly worked in the stems on the front cover. Her skill and artistry as a bookbinder are not only evident in the high-quality relief work but also in the finely tooled dedication, decorated edges and raised bands on the spine'.

In Melbourne the bookbinding continued, and Dorothy's books were exhibited at the annual exhibition of the Arts and Crafts Society of Victoria.

***Excerpt from an article written by Wendy Elspeth Coates: July 2013
grand daughter of Dorothy Elspeth Wardill***



The Garden of Kama Cover binding
by Dorothy Wardill

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Cover photo: Dorothy Wilson. Pages 8-11

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A History of the Society of Arts and Crafts of NSW

www.daa0.org.au/bio/dorothy-elspeth-wilson



The Society of Arts and Crafts of NSW trading as craftnsw

Founded 1906

Incorporated 1929

ABN: 55 000 022 195

Patron: Professor The Honourable Dame Marie Bashir AD CVO

Ambassador: Claudia Chan Shaw



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