

# A subtle display of delicate work

**Porcelain** by Sony Manning and Sandra Black

Beaver Galleries, 81 Denison Street, Deakin.  
Hours: Tuesday to Friday, 10am-5pm. Saturday to Sunday, 9-5pm. On until November 3.

Reviewer: **Kerry-Anne Cousins**

**S**andra Black and Sony Manning are well known Australian studio ceramics artists. They both work on a small scale with fine porcelain, and both take their inspiration from the natural world.

Sandra Black uses hand-formed and hand-built techniques to create her delicate porcelain bowls and beakers. The forms are kept deliberately simple, as their attraction lies in the decoration that is an integral part of the pot. Black pierces and carves and etches into their forms so that they become delicate webs of positive and negative shapes. In the small etched leaf bowls (Nos. 16, 17), the negative space is balanced against the positive spaces so that there is a pleasant all-over patterning, while in another "curved vine" series the flat shapes of the vine leaves are defined against a delicately pierced and textured background.

These bowls are enhanced by light, not only the light that renders the porcelain translucent, but also the light that filters through the patterns. This in effect creates another artwork, made up from the patterns of the cast shadows.

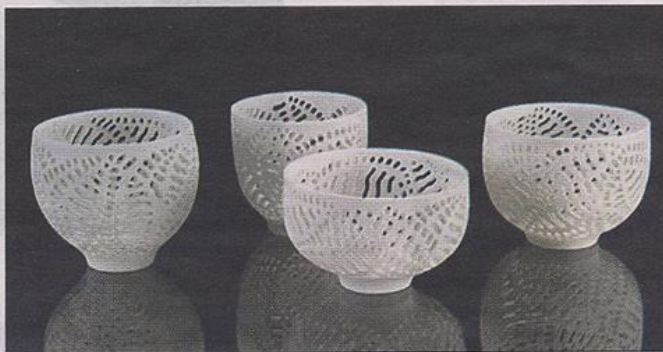
Sony Manning's hand-built forms of bowls and bottles for this exhibition came from one slab of clay, so that she felt they were all connected in one creative process. This layered clay block was inlaid with coloured slips, plastic clays and oxide pigments in black, burnt orange, yellow and green and blue hues. The artist cut across this block to reveal a cross-section of shapes and colours in the same way a millefiori effect is created in glass. In the resulting patterns, Manning saw "unexpected rhythms of landscape and figurative elements". Another level of discovery came with the porcelain firing, which also revealed



Sony Manning's Bottle, winter landscape, handbuilt, inlaid, burnished porcelain.

new colours and patterning. Manning's selection of coloured clays and oxides was inspired by recent bushfires in the Australian high country. Yet even so, it is surprising how she has been able to evoke so skilfully the mood of the bushfires solely through patterns and colours in the clay. These works invite you to pick them up and to follow the path of their changing patterns that fold around the body of the pot. In some of the most impressive works, the patterns are concentrated along the bottom of the bowls, leaving the body of the pot free with the colour subtly picked up again along the rim. In some of the smaller pots, the interiors have a beautiful deep green hue that is also a reminder of new growth and new beginnings.

This is an intimate exhibition of beautiful works on a small scale. Their pleasures will not reveal themselves immediately but will reward those who take the time to look and reflect.



Sandra Black's Etched leaf cups, thrown pierced diamond etched & polished porcelain, tallest 7cm, on exhibition at Beaver Galleries.