

Porcelain in two forms

By Fran Kenneley

Porcelain, work by Sandra Black, at Beaver Galleries, 81 Denison Street, Deakin, until September 3. Open seven days.

IN HER first solo exhibition in this region, Western Australian ceramicist Sandra Black presents two distinct bodies of work.

In the first group are 14 pieces in white or ebony porcelain cast, carved, pierced and polished. All are vessel forms — bowls, tall vases and short vases.

They are small in size but big on decoration — pierced open sections counterbalanced by solid areas. On some bowls, triangle shapes cut out around the centre of the bowl are added to small pierce marks. They are open and lace-like.

The pierced sections absorb and throw light, making each vessel interact with its surroundings. Despite their diminutive stature, they need lots of space around them, a luxury not afforded in this exhibition.

The second group, which the artist calls her "ripple" series, began as a response to the Canadian landscape during a residency there. Presumably, the ripples refer to gentle curves on the forms presented.

Four shapes dominate and are repeated in the 34 objects — jugs, bowls in two sizes and bottles.

At first glance, the only distinguishing feature between the pieces is a slight alteration in the method of glazing, as all pieces are worked in southern ice porcelain.

These works do seem to be wrought by a delicate, experienced hand, but there is too much sameness here to keep the viewer engaged.

However, three pieces with snowflake glaze are



One of Sandra Black's pierced pieces.

particularly engaging. The ripple series is simple and functional.

Number 11 in the ripple group is an interesting transition piece. Titled *Leaf Bowls*, the three pieces have small imprinted leaf shapes around the inside rims. The marks are similar to the pierced work, perhaps signifying a transition by the artist.

Black's work is held in many collections, including the National Gallery of Australia. Last year, she earned the Craft Acquisition Award of the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory.