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Grace Cochrane
 Powerhouse Museum, Sydney, Australia

The role of the real

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My task is to provide a curatorial perspective on the themes of this conference, that is, a particular view of the changing nature of the crafts, their relationship to new technologies and their place in our lives. As a curator working with objects, I think I deal with the real and to me the crafts have always been to do with that. But what, in our changing technological world, is the role of the real, and what is, in fact, real?

What is being challenged here? What is meant by a crafts approach to making or working with anything? At the outset, I need to explain my understanding of what I think we are talking about. A crafts approach to me is the development of ideas through a skilled interaction with materials and the technologies associated with them. It isn't to do with virtuoso skills alone – traditional or digital – or great ideas without satisfactory resolution. It is a combination of ideas and know-how, skills and imagination, generally built up over a considerable time. The values of a crafts approach might apply equally to writing, film-making, digital technology or painting as to the more commonly identified crafts of working with clay, metal, wood, glass or fibre. The interaction between ideas, skills and materials has always been a very tangible and often emotional relationship, both for the people making objects in this way, through feeling, touching, shaping and reshaping, and for people who use them for functional and symbolic purposes. A crafts approach involves a physical as well as an intellectual understanding of what one is working with.

But first, I'd like to take a detour, or a side-track around 'the real'. Right in the heart of Sydney, is the 283-hectare (700-acre) Rookwood Necropolis, the largest cemetery in the southern hemisphere. In the spring, its gentle hills are covered with a carpet of now rare native grasses and sweet-smelling South African freesias, as well as here and there some very old English heritage roses and very Australian eucalypts and acacias. In 1862 this Victorian-style cemetery was marked out for nine religious denominations, but now caters for around eighty. There are 650,000 bodies and 200,000 ashes interred there. It is like a town: there are streets with signs directing the visitor to suburbs of for example, Anglican, Catholic, Presbyterian and Greek Orthodox, as well as war memorials, all with characteristic headstone styles and forms of inscription, from huge vaults with impressive urns and columns to simple crosses and humble stones.

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It is like a town, but to me it is more like a museum. I've always thought that botanic gardens, zoos and cemeteries are like museums. Each has specialist collections. They are all to do with acquisition, classification, registration and conservation. Each has layout plans of their displays for audiences and a range of labels from title panels to theme labels and individual object labels. They have people like curators who manage the information about the collections and guides to show people round. They have friends' groups and sponsorship programs. Zoos have loans and gardens have merchandising in the form of seeds and propagated cuttings. Gardens and cemeteries have permanent, not temporary, exhibitions, of course. You can't move the objects around. However, they do offer thematic interpretation through tours that cross the whole place: at Rookwood you can select from the *Irish Tour*, *Plague and Pestilence*, *Ships and Shipwrecks*, *Our ANZAC Heritage*, *Murder and Mayhem*, *Our Convict Heritage* and *Flowers, Gardens and Symbolism*.

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What is most interesting at Rookwood, in relation to the theme of this conference, is the relationship between the real and the virtual, in that there are actually no longer any 'real' objects at all, only the stone labels with names and dates and occupations. The real has long gone, or it is in fact, in what we in museums might call deep storage. In fact, the label, in the form of a headstone, becomes an object itself, subject to a different form of interpretation. Now and again, in certain sections of the cemetery, there are photographs of the departed objects, and there have been theses written about how men, women and children are represented, sometimes idealised as heroes, mothers or angels. However, I was fascinated to hear recently of a company in the United States that has started to help people record digital audiovisual messages to friends and families to be incorporated into their gravestones when they die, so that at the press of a button or swipe of a card, their reassuring faces and words can appear again. When our real has gone, the virtual will provide an illusion of our presence. In fact, for many of us who never saw Elvis or the Beatles or Princess Diana at first hand, the reproduced visual movie footage of their presence is the closest we will ever get to their particular 'real'.

This isn't a new idea of course. Sarah Kenderdine, currently working with three-dimensional and panoramic visual technology to make virtual displays for the Melbourne Museum, pointed out recently that the desire for optical illusion has a long history (Kenderdine, 2004). Apart from the practice over many centuries of painting imagined realities on cathedral ceilings and making stone sculptures of departed kings and queens, there are amazing historical records of devices like the stereoscope, stereograph, kaisepanorama, géorama and kinetscope, which were all attempts to reproduce the real or make real the imagined. And the Powerhouse Museum is working with the iCinema (immersive cinema) project at the University of New South Wales in Sydney which is now making video experiences that surround a small audience and include self-negotiated journeys through a space, with interactive narratives, using the world's first 360x240 degree panoramic video camera. (iCinema web page, 2004).

To return to the task in hand, I am going to look at the impact of new technologies on the crafts from my point of view, on three particular issues:

- Access: the impact on communication, documentation, information and presentation of objects in collections
- Making: the new opportunities offered for design and manufacture, as well as for personal creative expression
- Meaning: what impact these changes might have on audience perceptions of what 'the crafts', 'skills' and 'the handmade' might mean.

My view on this subject is an Australian one, shaped by the kind of hybrid career that is typical of many curators, and also by where I work. The Powerhouse Museum in Sydney is a museum of applied arts and sciences, and is the only one of its kind in Australia. Its programs cross not only decorative arts and design but also science and technology and Australian history and culture. Our museum was established, like many similar institutions, in the years following an international exhibition, in our case the Sydney International Exhibition of 1879/80; we moved to new premises in 1988 and are, in fact, now in our 125th year.

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One of the most significant changes for us, like everyone else, has been the opportunity provided by new digital technologies to make our collections and exhibitions more accessible. We not only have the potential for better collection management systems but also for global communication and research through on-line systems. These not only make it easier to find out what artists, designers and makers are doing but also make our own museum programs more accessible. Increasingly, to provide greater access, both within exhibitions, and in web programs, there is a need to consider making the 'real' of our collections, 'virtual', through on-line databases, interactive experiences and panoramic three-dimensional images. Greater access also, of course, means we need to find new ways of managing issues like copyright and fees.

If anyone ever believed that the object 'speaks for itself', I think you could safely say that, across a wide range of museums and galleries, this would not be agreed now. Objects only speak for themselves to people who know the language they are speaking. We all spend much more time now trying to provide more information through videos, interactives, graphics and text, to share that language with new audiences: that language of designing, making, materials, tools and technologies, and of the symbolic and actual functions and uses of objects.

Audiences are changing. What they have today are their own skills of using very accessible do-it-yourself technology and instant, often abbreviated, communication systems. The amateur as well as the professional can be an interactive independent user, researcher or designer. And people are placing their creative energies in many other areas, like music, gardening, cooking and home renovation, encouraged by popular magazines and celebrity do-it-yourself television shows. These pursuits offer personal expression and enjoyment, entertainment and challenge – as we believe art does, but often with not a great deal of depth and understanding of the kinds of things you as artists, craftspeople and designers may have spent a lifetime learning. They may not do it well but they do it themselves. New audiences are very selective in what they spend their time on, these days. They resist jargon; they tend to resist anything that demands time; they like what they are seeing to make some connection with what they know; and they do need clues to what's going on. They are used to entertainment, instant information and often screen-based interaction, and we all have a great deal of competition from other forms of activity that also provide these elements.

At times there have even been arguments that we no longer need to accumulate collections or archives of real objects; that a virtual reference is simpler to organise and more effective in reaching larger audiences. As commitments to real objects in collections are sometimes questioned in favour of the virtual, so too, sometimes, is the role of the curator who deals with the real. Stephen Weil, for example, a museum professional associated with the Smithsonian Institution, argues in his book *Making Museums Matter*, that museums should pay more attention to what they can do for their audiences and what their audiences want, rather than on what they have, or, by implication, sometimes, on what they know. (Weil 2002). All museum professionals agree about providing meaningful, enjoyable, challenging experiences for visitors, although they recognise that at an extreme, those experiences can be merely entertainment or a means to bring in revenue. The issues most debated in the museum world, apart from the increasing skills needed to find sponsorship, are those of balancing entertainment versus education; scholarship versus the quick fix; blockbuster versus specialist or collection-based exhibition.

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In some of our state galleries and art museums the crafts area is being absorbed into the broad art or design collections. This means, positively, that it is integrated physically and conceptually into art or decorative arts and design collections as part of a broader material culture and therefore reaches more people, but it does not always maintain as strong a profile within them as previously, and in some cases specialist curators are not replaced, or are replaced at a lower level. Nonetheless, there are substantial audiences who are committed to the real object. People persist in wanting to see and experience something made well by someone who knew how to do it. In all these circumstances, the 'role of the real' in the crafts is something that I believe we need to keep considering. How important is the real object, the first-hand experience, the actual material, the feel of tools and the knowledge that goes with the interaction between these things?

Secondly, apart from changing communication and presentation systems, digital technologies are also central to changes in art and design making processes in all media, and it is the recognition of the impact of this phenomenon that has prompted this conference. There have been many accounts at this conference of the kinds of new knowledge and interactions can take place between the old and the new in this field. How real, in the context of the crafts, is the creative product of new technologies? Many craftspeople, like visual artists and designers, have successfully incorporated the new tools into their working practices as indeed, they have always done, including the use of electricity instead of hand and foot power which we now take for granted.

A major concern for Australians, as in some other places, are repercussions from changes in education funding. Increasingly, tertiary education institutions must find more of their operating costs through sponsored 'partnership' programs and fee-paying enrolments. And as art and design schools have to find new ways of financing their programs, many of the students who also have to finance their way through them, are changing their ideas about what they think they want to get out of them. Alongside those who remain committed to a personal passion based on material skills, others are shifting towards areas of art and design that offer greater vocational opportunities.

Many schools have dealt with this change by moving away from some courses, like those in the crafts, where running costs are high and occupational health and safety standards are inhibiting, where the skills take a long time to learn, knowledge needs a lifetime to develop and where the eventual financial rewards might not be great. Despite the acknowledged trend towards closures and amalgamations of courses and departments, and reduced staff contact hours, there are some very strong schools, courses and centres of excellence that are recognised internationally and some argue that fewer programs across the country now do the work better. At the same time as there are declining opportunities for thorough practical experience at undergraduate level, where the experience of learning all the fundamentals of a field is now condensed into a shorter staff contact period with many other competing requirements, there are now new opportunities for extended research through higher degrees since tertiary art and design education has moved into universities. Because this is a relatively recent development in Australia, many postgraduate students in the crafts and design are practitioners of long standing, who have skills and experience already embedded in their practice.

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At the same time, not all the babies are being thrown out with the bathwater. A number of art and design schools offer both sets of technologies in parallel with one another and students do move across them. Rapid prototyping takes place alongside slipcasting; laser-technology alongside hand-finishing; drawing beside digital design; and weavers like Australian, Liz Williamson, travel to Montreal to work on a special jacquard loom that combines the opportunity for large computer-aided one-off designs with the use of a handthrown shuttle.

Programs using new technologies often reflect, however, the kinds of funding sources available for research, and many of these are based primarily on the development of computer equipment and its operating programs. It is easy to see why simply becoming competent with skills in new technologies can be misinterpreted as actually making art or carrying out a design process. When there is a true interaction with ideas and technologies, where the 'craft' of the new technology is applied to ideas or where the ideas develop as part of the process of interaction, there is a most successful outcome. Many key people work between both sets of skills: architects like Frank Gehry and designers like Ron Arad and Marc Newson extensively use computer modelling programs and their direct links to manufacturing centres, but consistently start with a physically drawn or handmade prototype model to develop their ideas. Gijs Bakker, co-founder of Droog Design, speaking at this conference, also reinforced the importance of his background as a maker of jewellery that underlies his current work as a designer.

I believe that there is a real danger of losing materials-based skills and knowledge that is based on the interactive, hands-on experience of how those materials behave. These kinds of experiences do lie behind the creative process. We know from the most recent post-war crafts revival that some areas of knowledge are difficult to retrieve. Much knowledge is in the heads and hands of people whose only way of passing it on is through the example of what they know and do. In the United Kingdom, places like the Craft Study Centre in Surrey safeguard the archives of senior figures in the crafts movement, alongside the sad reality that the collections and archives of some important industries, like some of the Staffordshire potteries such as Minton's, are being dispersed.

At Sydney Design Week this year, we listened to a talk by William Sawaya and Paolo Moroni, the owners of an Italian company, making, among other things, furniture and silver. While many of their contemporaries have their work mass-produced in Korea or China, they have decided to continue to make small runs in Italy, so they can control quality through a close interaction with the makers. But it may well be that those skills, passed on in the family-based workshops so characteristic of Italy, may no longer be there in 10 or 20 years. The artist/designer/artisan relationship in places like the Finnish factories of Arabia and Iitala has always been based on close collaboration to resolve the designs put into production, but the time spent on this is now less feasible economically. I looked recently at the archives of a major textile printing company in Australia and realised that the drawing and colour separating skills used by their designers to print from up to 30 metal plates or screens will probably never be needed again. The new prototyping scanners and printers such as that at the Glasgow School of Art can copy anything perfectly and print-test it in infinite variations with no set-up costs. It is a very efficient reproduction facility, especially for small custom-made quantities and there are some design possibilities that would not be conceivable in any earlier process.

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There are many other examples in other fields, notably in printmaking and photography where digital image-making has largely superseded hand processing. Stephanie Britton, editor of the Australian magazine *Artlink*, also notes, and asks if it matters, that 'the traditional skills in painting and sculpture are also starting to decline, and quite rapidly it seems. Manufacturing techniques, fabrication by specialists and digital technologies are being widely used now, and younger artists who have not been shown how can't even cut a mount for a drawing or make a frame or stretcher any more! In this way artists are more reliant on others, and among other things this means everything costs them more to produce.' (Britton 2004). Robert Hughes, writing in *The Guardian*, observes that in the 45 years in which he has been writing criticism, 'there has been a tragic depreciation in the traditional skills of painting, the nuts and bolts of the profession...What we need more of', he says, 'is slow art: art that holds time as a vase holds water: art that grows out of modes of perception and whose skill and doggedness make you think and feel.' (Hughes 2004). You could also throw in here the issues touched on in Lynn Truss's bestselling book on grammar, 'Eats Shoots and Leaves'; the newspaper report from Melbourne of a few years ago on the dying (now probably dead) 'craft' of making 45-inch vinyl records; and the more recent one on radio about the revival of the Moog synthesiser (invented only 30 years ago) because a hand on a mouse just isn't the same as fingers on a keyboard and the sound just wasn't the same.

There are related changes in global manufacturing patterns that do affect the crafts. Australia and New Zealand have never had huge industries. There were potteries and woollen mills and glass factories, but these were generally too cumbersome to change flexibly for small production, and in recent years most have closed. So from an early time Australians and New Zealanders who were interested in production, or making one-off works using industrial processes, including in furniture and metalwork, had to develop special working relationships with manufacturers. Individuals are very good at taking from industry processes and materials they can adapt for their own purposes, like fibre-glass moulding skills, TIG-welding equipment or space-age insulation materials. Designer-makers also hire in skilled assistance, or will design, make prototypes or some aspect of their line, and contract out specific aspects of the work, like cutting, finishing or assembly. One industry that was developed by artists who needed to make their own materials, because of their isolation, is the Gaffer Glass Company, in Auckland, New Zealand, which now makes coloured glass for blowers and casters around the world, now using robots as well as real people to ladle the molten glass into moulds.

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For some time it has been evident that large, often famous and well-established industries elsewhere have also been closing their local factories to be manufactured elsewhere or selling them to larger conglomerates. Some recent examples discussed at this conference are the Finnish ceramic and glass industries, the English metal industries and the knitting mills of the English/Scottish border counties. The skills, often crafts skills, of these original industries, die out. The United States and Europe have moved some of their clothing, ceramics, metalworking and textile production to Eastern Europe and Asia. They go there for cheap land and buildings, and not only cheap, but skilled, labour. In our part of the world these global workshops are in Asia: places like Thailand, Vietnam, Taiwan and China. Fashion designers like Easton Pearson go to India for special fabrics, often with hand-embroidery and beadwork. Rugs are designed by Indigenous and other artists in Australia and hand-tufted in Taiwan and Thailand. Some exciting projects are under way with potters who are having work, whether one-off pieces like those made by Ah Xian, or production wares based on one-off work by Janet DeBoos and Prue Venables, manufactured by skilled artisans in China, where the skills have been practiced for thousands of years. Metalworker Robert Foster, who has been inventive in making his own tools for his formed aluminium objects, is also having some lines manufactured in China. Jennifer Robertson's double and triple-cloth weaving is being reproduced by Nuno, in Japan, not as it turns out by large industries but by teams of family cottage weavers. Rod Bamford and Ivan Gluch have designed coffee cups and saucers for the cafés using Manfredi coffee, and these have been put into production in Thailand, Portugal, and now Bangladesh. This most recent experience is in a factory that not only has cheap skilled labour, but also huge installations of the latest technologies – although only parts of this are being selectively used, alongside some handskills and simple automated equipment from the 1950s: mixed and matched in whatever way is appropriate for the purposes. The significance of these industries is 'mass-customisation': they can custom-make on a large scale. Their technology makes them not only cheap, but now, very flexible for production in large quantities.

This is a very interesting phenomenon: the technology available now means the production details for designs can be sent around the world to where they can be most appropriately made. It is now possible for new shapes like the organic designs by people like Gehry, Newson and Arad to be made in modular form by aeroplane and ship manufacturers rather than using conventional building construction materials. From furniture to skyscrapers, this radically changes what is possible, both in design and construction. On different scales many others are increasingly finding the most appropriate production places for their needs and are communicating with them on line. However, I still hear regularly, from craftspeople called on to make prototypes for designs developed on screen, of any number of ideas that are impossible to manufacture in quantities because the designer doesn't understand the material or the processes for working with it.

As traditional industries close, taking with them the skills of the people who worked in them, what seems to be emerging is a version of the designer-maker model, where a kind of boutique practice makes smaller customised runs or one-off objects, based on quality and identity with the hand-made, rather than the mass production of a 'look'. The 80 or so small jewellery and metalworking businesses around Birmingham are an example of this phenomenon.

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My third point is to do with changes in how our various audiences feel about the handmade object and the creative process. I believe that even people who make nothing themselves are generally fascinated with the process of making, and it is their identification with the maker, what they have made, and how they did it, that is usually behind their choice to acquire and value a handmade object. But with the decline in teacher education in crafts fields, and in decreasing provision of crafts experiences in primary and secondary education, also discussed at this conference, I think one long-term effect in the crafts could be a general public that may no longer recognise what the crafts, as we know them, represent. They see it happening less often. In recent years it may only be 'the look' of the handmade that this audience is interested in; the identity of the overall designer or maker might be significant but that of the skilled maker of the components is not. They may not necessarily be interested in identifying a link with a making philosophy – or even know there is one.

If it is indeed the case that people can't recognise the skilled work of individuals, or care about it, what implications will that have on the development of our broad constituency and, in turn, on future strategic support? We find that exposing the process of making the work and the commitment of the professional maker, remains a most important and popular aspect of the exhibitions in our museum. It helps people understand the creative process, whether art or design, and also, at times, the difference between the handmade and the machine produced.

It is clear that audience and market taste is changing - again. It is interesting that the repeated themes over several centuries in the Victoria and Albert Museum's new British Galleries are questions such as 'what was new?' and 'who set the style?' The postwar crafts movement was itself part of an earlier groundswell, of a desire for changes in priorities in a way of living. People wanted closer contact with materials and processes and the identification with human endeavour in the objects they used and had around them. From a certain point, people also wanted the status of artists. Many practitioners consider themselves artists and their work is to do with making one-off individual statements. In this area the international glass collectors' market has for some time been the benchmark to which everyone else aspires; it has kept prices high and the market buoyant, and has encouraged all sorts of innovations in scope and scale.

Despite this, during recent decades the crafts have often been defined by their popular amateur practice while aspiring to be part of an artworld that has, in turn, tended to dismiss what I believe they represent: an interaction with materials and processes in the development of ideas. Aspirations towards 'art' over time have affected parallel relationships with design and production. Current dilemmas surrounding changes in perceptions about the crafts are reflected, not without controversy, in changes in terminology used to describe the field, such as crafts and design, contemporary applied art, contemporary art objects, arts and design, and sculpture-objects-fine-art. And a recent invitation to an exhibition of jewellery in Sydney identified the makers as artisans.

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These efforts could perhaps be described as a 're-branding' to ensure a continuing ideological as well as economic place in people's minds and in the marketplace. The American Crafts Museum opted for 'Museum of Arts and Design', and curator David Revere McFadden explains that he sees the crafts as an approach to making embedded between those areas (McFadden 2003). Peter Hughes in Tasmania, Australia, is one who argues that the crafts can't be ghettoised between the two; that they have a distinct set of practices (Peter Hughes 2004). In a recent issue of the *Sydney Morning Herald* newspaper a page providing instant answers to topical issues includes a small column: 'FYI: a beginners guide to the modern world'. This time it's a guide to 'Cool craft' and it has taken its message directly from the press release issued for the *Collect* fair in London in February 2004, that is: craft is the new art, the new collectable, celebrities want it so why not you? (Tolhurst, 2004). It's an interesting angle for this newspaper to pick up, I think, because while we have generations of mature practitioners making exemplary one-off and limited series works who would call themselves artists as much as craftspeople – and who have been doing it for some time for a substantial collectors' market, so it's hardly new – the market trend in recent years for us, has been to make a link with design rather than art.

The quality of one-off contemporary works coming from crafts traditions in Australia and New Zealand is, I believe, at an all-time high. We have several generations of exemplary practice practising now and the work gets better and better. But there has been a quite distinct shift in the language of the marketplace, if not necessarily in practice, from 'craft-art' to 'craft-design', reinforced by newspapers and journals targeting specific consumer groups, and also by galleries and museums responding to pressure to expand audiences. A strength of this shift is that well-designed objects are valued for their functions in everyday life, and writers like Sir Christopher Frayling in London and Paul Greenhalgh in Nova Scotia see this as the most realistic way to go (Frayling, Greenhalgh, in *Crafts*, 2003).

One of the characteristics of this shift is the strong government support for design in some Australian states, especially Queensland's Creative Industries program and also the Victorian Design Initiative, both of which see design as a way of boosting manufacturing industry. As a result of the special Creative Industries project in the UK, and for the same reasons, we have seen a sequence of British design exhibitions coming our way, supported by designers, educators, curators and critics. Design is competitive between institutions at this level, and 'design' is the buzzword in this context.

At the same time, despite the fact that 'design' as we understand it today, is a contemporary term for both a process of working something out and a kind of product made for a client, there are pressures in some places to use it to identify all forms of production, including what have in the past been known as decorative arts or applied arts – and the crafts. What popular perception through all the lifestyle magazines calls 'design' is part of what we in museums do, for example, but it doesn't describe all of what is represented in our collection. We don't have an adequate coverall term for the broad field. In this context the handmade sometimes gets lost in the argument.

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We have come to associate a crafts approach with a particular group of materials and practices, which we have identified as 'the crafts': weaving, pottery, glassmaking, metalsmithing, woodworking and so on. People working in these crafts sometimes lean towards art and sometimes design, and having made their choice they have to live or die in those worlds as they are at any given moment. At the same time, respect for crafts values continues to be discussed not only in related creative areas like film-making, painting, writing and music but also, for example, in policy development and speech-writing and in large industries. While the author of 'Cool craft' noted somewhat scornfully that the word 'craftspeople' was 'such a folksy term', despite it being the flavour of the month as the new art, a recent billboard in Sydney advertising beer boasts that its product is 'Handcrafted with big machines.' There's a link with technology! It is in these external fields that the word, as an approach to a field of knowledge and a way of working, is most positively used. They know that a crafts approach implies knowing how to do something very well. The beer will be OK because someone working those large machines personally understands, out of a long tradition but in a contemporary context, how to make it properly.

[Figure 8]

There are signs in this rapidly changing world, that the handmade, or at least the values of the handmade, remain for many people at the heart of things. In Finland Anne Stenros spoke at a new design award about how crafted items 'bear all the values that are sought with consumer goods today', and that 'changing the course of hard technology in a softer direction [that is, adapted to the way people think and act] calls for a knowledge and awareness of skills of the hand.' (Stenros, 2003) I notice that there is a conference in Ankara, Turkey, on 'Design and Emotion', organised to identify what it is in manufactured objects that people care about. And Ricky Swallow, Australia's artist nominated for the next Venice Biennale in 2005, is a sculptor who painstakingly forms in a range of materials, currently handcarved wood, his compelling groups of 'still life pieces' that are respected perhaps as much for his skill in making them as for their presence and meaning as objects.

In conclusion, in terms of access, the new information systems are here to stay and will continue to improve our reference to both the appearance of objects and information about them. The virtual can give us access to images and especially to their context, but it can't reproduce the relationships of the real thing to human emotions and experiences and associations. There is no replacement for the particular qualities of the tangible 'real'. I believe the role of the virtual is that of enhancement of the context, for example of making and using, and reference for those unable to experience the real. But the real has an important and unique role.

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Grace Cochrane is senior curator of Australian decorative arts and design at the Powerhouse Museum, Sydney, Australia. Since starting there in 1988 she has had a key responsibility for the development of the holdings of contemporary Australian crafts and design, has worked on numerous exhibitions within the museum and is currently co-ordinating teams developing a permanent collection-based decorative arts and design gallery for mid- 2005 and a major exhibition on the theme of design, industry and the handmade, in 2006.

Born in New Zealand, Grace Cochrane has a background in both art and education. She gained a B.Ed (1976) from the Tasmanian College of Advanced Education, and BFA, MFA (1984, 1986) and PhD (1999) from the University of Tasmania. Her professional appointments have included membership of both the Crafts Board and the Visual Arts Board of the Australia Council.

She is the author of the *The Crafts Movement in Australia: a History*, NSW University Press, 1992; has contributed to a number of other publications; given lectures and papers in all fields of the crafts; and has a long record of judging awards, opening exhibitions and assessing graduating students. Following exhibition and collection research in SE Asia in 1994 she co-ordinated museum training workshops for ASEAN museum professionals in Malaysia in 1995. She received the Australia Council's Visual Arts/Craft Board's Emeritus medal in 2001.

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Fig 1
Photo:
Grace Cochrane



Fig 2
Photo:
Grace Cochrane



Fig 3
Photo:
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Fig 4
Powerhouse Museum,
Sydney

Photos:
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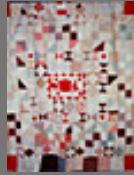


Fig 5
Medallion quilt, Mrs
'Grannie' Brown, 1895

Photos:
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Fig 6
Marc Newson,
Lockheed Lounge,
1988-90

Photos:
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Fig 7
*Still life with yellow
bowls*, Gwyn Hanssen
Pigott, 2002

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Fig 8
Photo:
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Fig 1

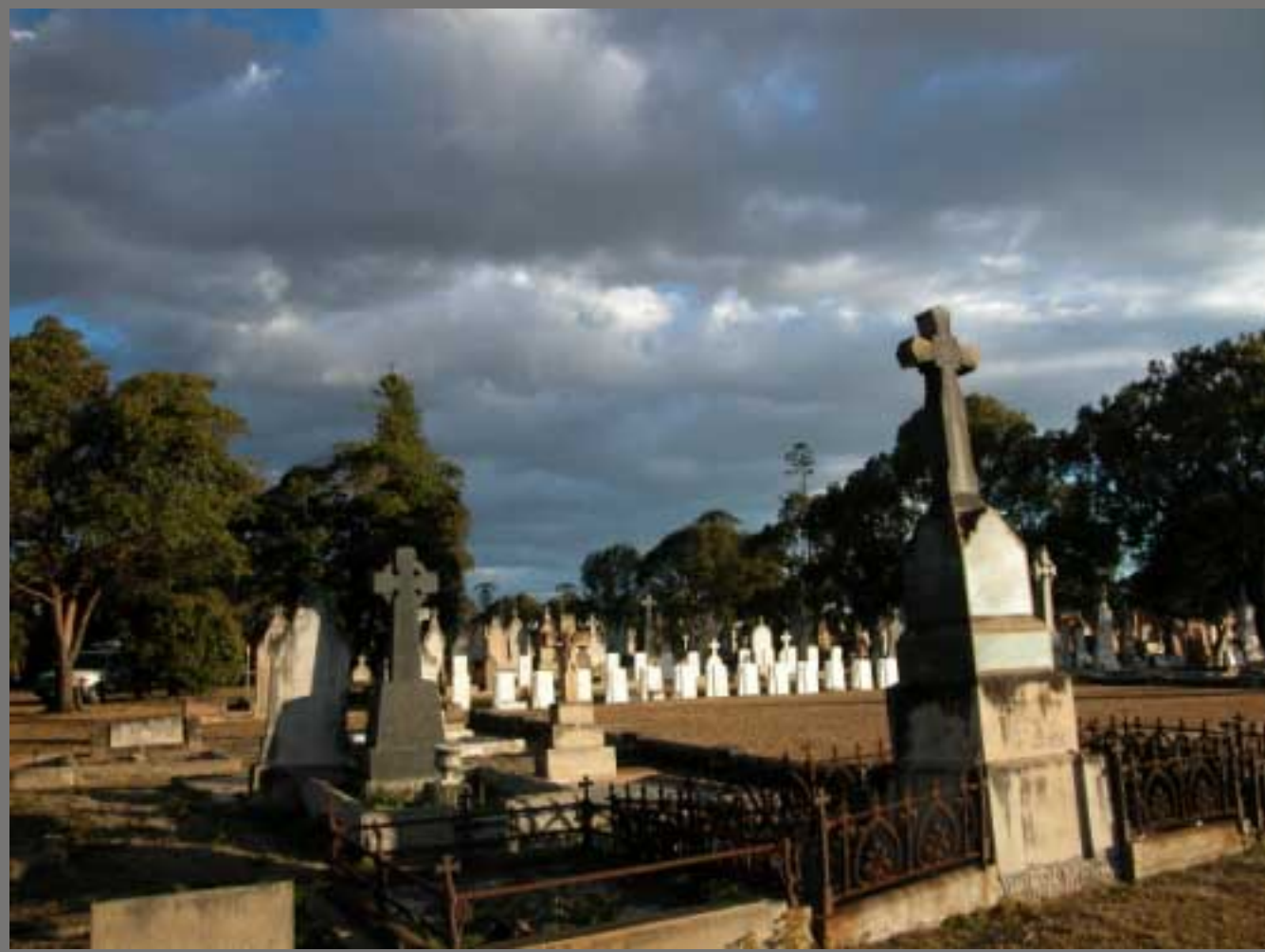


Fig 2



Fig 3



Fig 4



Fig 5



Fig 6



Fig 7



Fig 8

