

CHAPTER 5

The changing face of secondary school art

If Peter's influence on his students was considerable as they flourished as artists and teachers, his contribution to art education policy and the professional status of art teachers during the 1970s and 1980s could be seen to be even more significant.



5.1 Peter at Kawakawa Bay, 1971.

Accelerating developments in art education

Although the *Education (Post-primary Instruction) Regulations, 1945* (Department of Education, 1945b), with its emphasis on both arts and crafts, and *The Post-primary School Curriculum* (Department of Education, 1959) influenced the shape of art education in the 1950s and 1960s, Peter was aware that there was still much to be done if the ambitions of the Thomas Report were to be realised. He became increasingly political, writing a number of papers that made their way to Department of Education officers, evident from the names of inspectors included in the circulation lists. One paper, *Intention*

and Approach in Art Education (P. Smith, 1965), offered varying claims for the value of art as a subject yet lamented that the compartmentalised system of subject instruction in secondary schools limited effective integration of subjects, brought them into competition with each other and inhibited the enrichment of all. Indicative of his egalitarian approach to education, Peter considered the effective transfer between subjects and between school study and life situations to be essential aims. He was also concerned about the marginalisation of art.

In 1967, on behalf of the New Zealand Art Teachers' Association, he wrote a lengthy paper, *The Teaching of Art in New Zealand Secondary Schools*. Two excerpts from the paper illustrate key issues faced by art teachers at the time, one of which was teaching conditions:

The existing provisions made for art rooms are woefully inadequate. An art teacher who undertakes a full range of studio activity in the type of art room provided in our secondary schools is likely to face a career of frustration because of unsuitable facilities, and condemnation by caretakers, principals and, sometimes, inspectors for the ruination of polished linoleum floors, and varnished or delicately tinted plaster walls. To ask a teacher to carry out sculpture under such conditions is equivalent to asking a group of serious and dedicated painters to work in a living room. (P. Smith, 1967, p. 4)

At that time, Dudley Wilden, a former technical teacher, and Jean Littlejohn, with a home science background, were inspectors in the northern regional office. They had responsibility for secondary school art, including the inspection and grading of art teachers. Although Peter held Wilden and Littlejohn in high regard, a significant section of his paper was devoted to the role of the inspectorate:

Even when the non-specialist inspector, given the difficult task of assessing and advising art teachers, works with enthusiasm and goodwill, art teachers cannot be expected to be professionally satisfied with this situation. They are often aggrieved that there is no inspector available who has been trained in the subject and has taught it full-time. To assess an art teacher by reference to the tidiness or neatness or quantity of the products produced by pupils is akin to condoning the manufacture of an object which is beautifully constructed but quite useless. The evaluation of the subjective response of pupils, which in the end is the best possible measure of the teaching, is a task for people who are themselves experienced and expert in the subject. (p. 6)

Peter also believed that the slow pace of change for secondary school art education was due not so much to the lack of ability of art teachers, for by now there were many skilled and enthusiastic people working in schools,

but to the absence of incentives to attract pupils to take art beyond Form 5. In 1957 a new prescription for School Certificate art was introduced, but this revised drawing and design examination retained the two three-hour practical papers. For the latter, teachers ‘schooled’ their pupils, or, as Roger Hardie put it, “rehearsed polished artwork ‘answers’ to be regurgitated in the examinations”.¹ Within the three-hour design paper, pupils could execute passages of text in Roman lettering, design repeat patterns for wallpaper or fabric, or create book illustrations, record covers and posters. For the drawing examination, pupils made paintings on topics such as ‘a day at the beach’ or ‘a visit to a farm’. Another option was illustrating passages of verse or poetry and, invariably, an excerpt from a Māori legend. (The conscious inclusion of Māori myths and legends at this time paralleled the choice of subject matter in art works made in the 1960s and 1970s by some of the Māori art advisors recruited by Tovey.)

Although the drawing and design prescription did not excite interest from large numbers of students, enrolments in Forms 3 and 4 remained steady. Unencumbered by a syllabus, secondary art teachers enjoyed the freedom of planning and implementing programmes that encapsulated their interests and those of their pupils. A highlight of the school year was the *Auckland Star Secondary Schools Art Exhibition*. This annual event provided a major incentive for teachers to have their pupils’ art works selected for display and, more excitingly, be awarded the prizes. Held at the Building Centre in Auckland, and at the Hamilton Art Gallery, the 1969 exhibition attracted 1,800 entries from over 50 schools.

Peter was in demand, not only as a member of judging panels for the annual *Auckland Star Secondary Schools Art Exhibition*, but also as the guest speaker on opening nights. He invariably took the opportunity to promote art education. On one occasion, shown below, he paid tribute to Gordon Tovey, acknowledging that he “was responsible for the new approach to teaching art in schools ... and had the vision of what art could be as an agent of the education of all people.”²

In the 1960s, during his tri-annual visits to secondary schools to observe his art students on section teaching their ‘critique lessons’, Peter witnessed the growth of art in Forms 3 and 4. Craft activities had largely been replaced by print-making, drawing and painting, with an emphasis on developing

1 R. Hardie, personal communication, 19 March 2013.

2 P. Smith, personal papers.



5.2 Judges for the 1969 Auckland Star Secondary School Art Exhibition examining entries at the Art and Crafts Branch, Department of Education: Garth Tapper, senior lecturer in fine arts at Elam; John Ford, art advisor, Hamilton; Peter Smith, senior art lecturer, Secondary Teachers' College; Murray Gilbert, Auckland district art advisor; and Ken Buckley, principal, Glenfield College.



5.3 A copper sculpture of two mantises fighting, by Stephen Brown of Lynfield College, at the Auckland Star Secondary School Art Exhibition (date unknown), being admired by Peter, who opened the exhibition, Mr G. T. Upton, editor-in-chief of New Zealand Newspapers Ltd, and Mr Ross Sayers, editor of the Auckland Star.



5.4 Form 4 pupils, Papatoetoe High School, mounting a display of their work in the art room, 1970.



5.5 *My Teacher Miss Hooper*, lino-print by Heather, Form 4, Papatoetoe High School, 1974.



5.6 *My Foot on the Grass*, clay tile by Warren, Form 4, Papatoetoe High School, 1976.

observation skills and rendering techniques. Pupils also engaged in three-dimensional activities such as mask-making, kite construction, carving and pottery. Making ceramic murals was a popular collaborative activity, which took art beyond the art room to the school environment. Examples from Papatoetoe High School, where I began teaching in 1969, illustrate the kinds of art-making prevalent in the late 1960s and 1970s. In 1970 I was joined by Roger Chignell, another of Peter's students, who forged a reputable career over 42 years as an art teacher and head of art until his retirement in 2012.



5:7 a–e: Form 4 pupils, Papatoetoe High School, carving and erecting their posts, 1972.

Māori carver Pakariki Harrison also assisted art teachers in schools. In 1972 the art department at Papatoetoe High School was donated 150 metres of totara posts by the father of a Form 4 pupil. A Papatoetoe resident himself, Paki readily introduced my class of 4th Formers, Māori and non-Māori, girls and boys, to the kawa (protocols) associated with carving and to the forms and significance of Māori pou (posts/poles). The 12 posts made by the pupils, cut from 150 x 150 mm timber between 1.5 and 2 metres in length, were erected in the area around the school library.

By the end of the 1960s, however, Peter, along with many art teachers and tertiary educators, was becoming alarmed at the lack of support for the subject. They realised that respectability could only be achieved if art became a subject for entrance to university. Peter believed that pupils, and their parents, saw little point in studying art to Form 5 if the subject could not be taken further. Happily, that opportunity was provided by the establishment of an art history department at Auckland University. In 1965 Jim Allen, by then head of sculpture at Elam School of Fine Arts, convened a committee to explore the possibilities of introducing art history at University Entrance level. According to Peter, University Entrance Board members considered art to be a highly subjective field, but an art history syllabus would fit the pattern of formal assessment of 'factual' material. In 1967 art history was approved as a University Entrance subject in Form 6. A revised prescription, led by Tony Green, professor of art history at Auckland University, and Professor John Simpson, Ilam School of Fine Arts, Canterbury University, was published in 1971. The University Bursaries and Scholarship prescriptions in art history at Form 7 came into force in 1972. At last there could be a continuity of studies from Form 3 to Form 7. Although practical art was not available, Peter believed that the art history examinations served to "put art on the map" in terms of both practice and enrolments, and increased the status of the subject.

A change of career

In the early 1970s Peter had decided to make way for fresh blood in the visual arts department at Secondary Teachers' College. Others advised him to share his professional skills in a wider context while maintaining contact with secondary art education. The way forward was a change of career. In 1972 Peter Boag, whose association with Peter began as a student in 1953, became director of secondary education at the Department of Education (Boag had had a successful career in secondary school teaching and an active political

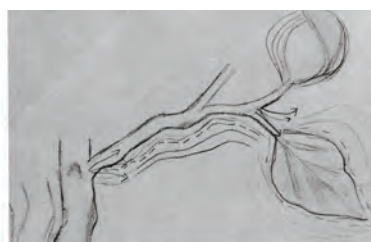
life as executive member, president and general-secretary of the Post-Primary Teachers Association). In 1974 he appointed Peter as secondary inspector, Department of Education Northern Region, with national responsibilities for art. Although substantial progress had been made in shaping art curriculum in schools, Boag considered that implementation lagged behind. Peter's departure from Auckland Secondary Teachers' College marked the end of an era. Max McLellan, a student in his 1960 art group, joined Nelson Thompson in the visual arts department.

Peter was keen to raise the development of practical art to the level achieved by initiatives in art history. In 1970 Dudley Wilden, senior inspector of schools Northern Region, was asked by the School Certificate Examinations Board to set up a School Certificate Revision Committee to explore a new prescription. He invited Peter to join the committee, which included experienced teachers, and to act as meetings secretary. Peter took the initiative of preparing for the committee's consideration a possible direction. In his paper *The Education of Vision* (P. Smith, 1970), Peter argued that if the examination were to be a measure of "aptitude" and "experience", there would need to be agreement on the criteria for evaluating these qualities. He posited that aptitude could be defined in terms of perceptual quality, creative imagination, personal technique and critical faculties, while experience was the opportunity to explore those aptitudes. His suggestions for the prescribed content included pupils demonstrating their understanding of the origins and influences in a selected field of study, such as relationships of man-made to natural environment; a selected New Zealand artist, designer, craftsman or architect; and Polynesian art and craft.

Laurie Lord (1984), education officer, Examinations and Assessment Unit at the Department of Education, reported at the 1984 Australasian Conference of Examining and Certifying Authorities that the Revision Committee had adopted the substance of Peter's paper as the framework for the new prescription (one change was that study of Māori art replaced the proposed focus on Polynesian art and craft). The emphasis in the draft prescription, presented to the School Certificate Examination Board on 5 May 1971, was on a course of practical work presented in a portfolio, awarded 60 percent of the total marks, and a workbook, valued at 40 percent, in which pupils demonstrated their understanding of the visual environment. (Among Peter's papers was the costing exercise for expendable materials, carried out by the revision subcommittee and A. D. Wilden, inspector of secondary schools. Four sheets of cardboard for each of 5,000 candidates, masking tape



5.8 a-f: Form 5 students' art-making on the theme of movement, School Certificate art, Papatoetoe High School, 1977. Photographs courtesy of Max McLellan.



to bind the folios, and a film subsidy for developing and printing photographs came to a grand total of \$7,204.)

This enlightened draft was a far cry from the external examinations required by the 1957 prescription, in which a three-hour examination could only give a limited view of a pupil's knowledge, skill and range of experience in art. When the new School Certificate Art prescription was finally gazetted in 1974, it signalled the shape of art education to come. A critical development was its status as the first internally assessed subject in the New Zealand curriculum, paving the way for assessment by portfolio. It broke new ground by abandoning a content or topics-based prescription, although there were some general requirements for the workbook. It permitted work in both two and three dimensions, and required both 'preparatory work' (process) in the workbook as well as 'finished work' (products) in the portfolio. Above all, this prescription enabled art teachers to design their own programmes, with the requirement to provide diversity and variety of media, content and technique.

Although there was debate over the prescription itself, the process of internal assessment and external moderation represented new and uncharted territory. The School Certificate Examinations Board appointed Peter as chief moderator for School Certificate art, a position he held from 1974 to 1983. Roger Hardie, then art and crafts advisor, Whangarei,³ noted Peter's effectiveness in this role:

It was significant that the process of internal assessment by teachers led the way for other curricula as the success and integrity of the approach that Peter had successfully pioneered was progressively proven. Although teachers found this revolutionary change very challenging, for they had to revise their criteria of pupil 'success' and collaborate, rather than compete with their fellows, Peter's quiet support and calm gentled their anxiety into growing acceptance.⁴

To support art teachers with the new prescription, Max McLellan, Peter's successor at Secondary Teachers' College from 1974 to 1996, produced *Art Projects 5* (McLellan, 1977), which illustrated the impact of the new School Certificate art prescription on Form 5 art. During his visits to observe his secondary art students on section, McLellan saw that many art teachers and their pupils had reacted enthusiastically to the increasing amount of freedom in school art. He noted, however, "a comparison between those Art Departments which are still taking the now, somewhat outmoded

3 The art and crafts advisors worked alongside not only primary teachers, but also secondary art teachers up to Form 5 level.

4 R. Hardie, personal communication, 19 March 2013.

‘drawing and design’ examinations, and those which are adventuring into new fields” (p. 2). McLellan invited 14 secondary art teachers, including me, to contribute an art project or unit of work for publication. Each teacher’s example illustrated how art programmes at Form 5, under an internally assessed system, could employ innovative approaches and themes that went beyond the traditional subject matter of portraiture, still life and landscape. As an example, during their School Certificate course, my students at Papatoetoe High School made art on the theme of movement, using diverse media and techniques in photography, drawing, printmaking, dance and kinetic sculpture. Peter revelled in witnessing exciting and innovative art-making that was a far cry from work produced by pupils in two three-hour examinations.

Examinations as agents of curriculum change

During his time as senior inspector of secondary schools (1974–82) and regional senior education officer (1983–84), under Regional Superintendent Pat Foley in the northern office of the Department of Education, Peter continued to play an influential role in curriculum development, assessment and moderation. In the 1980s this focus was on the development of prescriptions for senior secondary school national examinations in art and art history.

In 1980, many years after the introduction of University Entrance (UE) art history in 1969, and its subsequent revision in 1971, UE practical art became available for Form 6 pupils. This delayed passage was due, in large part, to concerns about the ‘subjectivity’ of assessing art. Ultimately, its introduction was supported by the way in which School Certificate art had helped convince the Universities Entrance Board of the validity of assessing art by portfolio using criteria. The UE art prescription, in which candidates explored one specialised area of study (two-dimensional, three-dimensional or solving design problems), focused on their understanding of the ‘processes’ of art-making, not merely on producing ‘end products’. In the same year, the Universities Bursaries practical art examination replaced the fine arts preliminary examination, which had been the entry criterion to Elam and Ilam art schools at Auckland and Canterbury. Initially, Bursary art candidates presented a portfolio in five areas of study: painting, printmaking, photography, design and sculpture. In 1983 this was reduced to three areas: drawing and two others.

Peter's official reports to principals of secondary schools and their art teachers included commentaries on prescription interpretation and marking of UE and Bursary practical art, facts and figures, and assessment advice. A report in 1983 contained analysis of candidates entered in the 1982 examinations. In UE practical art there were 2,615 candidates, making it the 12th most popular from 24 subjects. In Bursary practical art, the 483 entries made it 12th out of 23 in popularity. Teachers were also advised that the slide transparencies made available to schools were to be seen as illustrating aspects of the examiner's reports, and that it was a dangerous practice to use them as models for candidates in subsequent examinations (P. Smith, 1977).

UE external examinations in all subjects were abolished in 1985 and replaced with internally assessed Sixth Form Certificate the following year. Although Peter's contribution to the development of senior art prescriptions ended at this time, he and I spent many hours debating the merits of art examinations for pupils at Forms 5–7 (now referred to as Years 11–13). I had come to the conclusion, following the field study for my doctoral research, that although senior examinations were undeniably the agents of curriculum change, they had also become a means of control. My criticism was that the focus in senior art examination courses was on art-making that favoured a Western fine arts aesthetic rather than on cultural inclusivity (J. Smith, 2007).

During his time in the Department and at Secondary Teachers' College, Peter maintained loyal connections with the Auckland Secondary Art Teachers' Association (ASATA). Shane Foley, the association's chairperson, wrote of him:

Since its inception, ASATA has been indebted to Peter's wisdom, sincerity and professionalism. In an advisory capacity, Peter has both formally and informally volunteered of his experience and knowledge, perceptively and with sensitivity, understanding the needs and aspirations of art education in this country. While in the Inspectorate, Peter became a vital link between the association and the Department of Education. His encouragement and guidance to art teachers has been unparalleled.⁵

A dramatic turn of events

The mid-1970s saw dramatic changes in Peter's personal life. Although he and I ('Miss Hooper') had begun our life together in 1971, we were formally married at our villa in Howick on 27 August 1977. Simon Buis, one of Peter's colleagues

5 S. Foley, chairperson of ASATA, personal communication, 10 January 1986.

in the Department of Education, recorded the event. Three pupils in my Form 6 art class at Papatoetoe High School helped me screenprint the sheaths of tiger lilies on the eight pale-green panels of my wedding dress. Peter revered the dress, still in perfect condition, as a “work of art” in its own right.

In 1978 a life-changing event occurred. Peter, then 53, was especially busy at work. As well as representing Bill Renwick, director-general of education, at the International Institute for Educational Planning in Paris, he was involved in a considerable amount of travel within New Zealand. The latter was connected to the book that he and Ray Thorburn, curriculum officer (art) at head office, Wellington, were commissioned to write for the Department of Education. *Art in Schools: The New Zealand Experience* (Department of Education, 1978), a unique publication to this day, contains documented art programmes by art teachers and their pupils, including mine, across the primary and secondary sectors from the 1930s to the 1970s. The aim was to showcase the book at the International Society for Education through Art



5.9 a: Peter and me in the garden at home on our wedding day, 27 August 1977.
b: Detail of the wedding dress.
Photographs: Simon Buis.



(InSEA) Congress in Adelaide in 1978, in association with a keynote address by Renwick. Peter and I had planned to attend the Congress, but it was not to be. On 30 July, when hauling our yacht *Rebecca* out of the water at Shelley Park Yacht Club to give her a refurbish (see Chapter 8), Peter collapsed and was rushed to hospital.

On 1 August 1978 Peter was diagnosed with an advanced stage of acute myeloid leukaemia and admitted to Ward 9 at Auckland Hospital. The specialists gave him “three days to live, possibly ten”. Miraculously, he responded to remission induction chemotherapy and endured numerous blood transfusions, bone marrow tests and constant monitoring of his ‘blood picture’. Peter was visited by many people who did not expect him to survive. An especially poignant visit was from Elizabeth Ellis (née Mountain), a student in his 1965 art group (see Chapter 4). During the visit Elizabeth and her twin babies, Ngārino and Hanna, gave Peter a greenstone pendant, a taonga from her Ngāpuhi family at Rawhiti in the north. Dazed by drugs, Peter had placed the pendant on his meal tray. A few minutes after Elizabeth and the girls had left, I looked for the pendant and with considerable alarm realised that it was likely to have been washed down the sluice! To our immense relief, a Māori woman in the hospital kitchen had spotted the pendant. I am superstitious enough to believe that if that taonga had been lost, Peter would have died. But he survived, returning home on 30 August. Peter received exceptional medical care from John Matthews and his team in the haematology ward at Auckland Hospital. He also had remarkable support from family, friends and colleagues.⁶

Several months later Peter was invited to open the *8-78 Exhibition* in Whangarei, an initiative led by Alan Charlton, who taught art at Whangarei Boys’ High School. With a group of artists and educators, Charlton sought to find a way of profiling art in the absence of a suitable gallery. Their solution was to use eight smaller venues, linking them conceptually, a strategy that proved the need for a large exhibition space that was later to become Forum North. The leadership of the group passed to Roger Hardie when Charlton was diagnosed with a terminal illness. Hardie recalled how, after the exhibition opening on 4 November 1978, we joined Alan and his wife, Zela, also an artist,

6 During his month-long stay in Auckland Hospital Peter’s colleagues at the Department of Education, then located in Gillies Avenue, showed their support by hanging a large white bedsheet from the front of the building that could be seen from his hospital bed.

for dinner at their home. Soon after dessert was served Alan asked across the table, “Peter, how do you manage to face your impending death?” Hardie has never forgotten Peter’s response:

Peter replied at considerable length, quietly, with simple well chosen words, articulating his remarkable acceptance of life’s course and Alan’s place within it, using measured simple language, in a gentle rhythmic cadence a very sincere personal view expressed in poetic terms. It was a galvanising experience for all of us seated around the table with the remnants of the meal before us ... But what was remarkable was the effect on Alan; as we watched, his anger drained away, his tenseness abated, as he recovered to the normal self which we knew him by. Peter’s reflection provided an insight into a realm few of us could imagine, doing so in gentle terms as he coaxed Alan to accept the unacceptable, a remarkable aesthetic appreciation of life.⁷

Peter’s prognosis was unknown. There followed two years of maintenance chemotherapy until 4 September 1980, when he was taken off all treatments. Peter was cleared of cancer. Beating the odds, he survived a further 34 years!

In 1979 Peter resumed his position as senior inspector of schools at the Department of Education. That year Nelson Thompson retired from Secondary Teachers’ College and, in 1980, after 11 rewarding years as head of art at Papatoetoe High School, Murray Print, who by then had become principal of Secondary Teachers’ College, appointed me lecturer in visual arts.⁸ In another link to the past, Max McLellan, who had been my associate teacher on my first section at Otahuhu College in 1968, was the new head of the visual arts department. (Max and his wife, Elizabeth, had been students of Peter’s in 1960 and 1959, respectively. In 1994 their daughter Emma trained with me, and she now lectures in art at Manukau Institute of Technology.) Although the face of secondary school art had changed during the 1970s and 1980s, there was a remarkable continuity of experienced and emerging art teachers carrying the subject forward.

7 R. Hardie, personal communication, 4 November 2013.

8 Murray Print was principal of Freyberg High School, Palmerston North, where my triplet sisters Joy, Judith, and I were pupils from 1961 to 1964. Print was the catalyst for my attending Elam School of Fine Arts and becoming a secondary school art and art history teacher.

CHAPTER 6

A continuing presence in art education

Peter's connections with art education continued during his time as senior inspector of secondary schools and regional senior education officer at the Department of Education's northern office. During the 1980s and 1990s he maintained a strong presence, supporting art educators from the sidelines through advisory roles, curriculum initiatives and the wisdom of his words.

Sustaining the art advisory service

As a former advisor, Peter was attuned to the strong and effective Art and Crafts Specialist Service established by the Department of Education in the 1940s and 1950s. From 1949 to 1961, 131 third-year students were trained as art specialists in Dunedin, many entering the advisory service. In 1947, 34 art specialists worked in 327 schools. By 1952 there were 65 specialists, later increasing to 70. In large part, the success of those years depended on the saturation coverage provided by a large number of advisors. During the



6.1 Peter, 1972. Photograph courtesy of Clive Stone.

1950s, however, the post-World War II baby boom created serious teacher shortages and the number of advisory positions was reduced. From 1961 the training pattern altered and teachers with several years in the profession were recruited instead. By the 1960s Gordon Tovey was meeting opposition from department colleagues who questioned the need to sustain art so liberally when other subjects were equally well-deserving. The service was considerably reduced, with few new advisors recruited. In 1966, when Tovey retired, the last training course was held and W. (Bill) Barrett was appointed national advisor of art and crafts. In 1972 the Art and Crafts Branch, as it had previously existed, was dissolved and the advisors became members of the local district senior inspector's advisory staff. By 1975 there were only 30 art advisors attached to the teams (Thorburn, 1975). In 1992 only 15 remained (J. Smith, 1992).

From his position in the inspectorate, Peter became aware that advisors who had not experienced the benefits of the recruitment and intensive training previously offered were less confident and lacked familiarity with curriculum requirements across the primary, intermediate and secondary sectors to Form 5. Following a survey of the state of art education in schools carried out in preparation for the 1978 InSEA Congress in Adelaide, Peter wrote a position paper, *Retraining the Art Advisors* (P. Smith, 1979), in which he posited that regeneration of the advisory service was an essential step in the development of art and crafts in New Zealand schools. He believed that an advisory service that could bridge levels in schooling, demonstrate educational expertise and practical knowledge, and evolve efficient and respected ways of providing advice to schools was the logical—if not the only—vehicle for remedying and developing art education. He made a case to head office that this could only be accomplished by an intensive one-year retraining programme.

Approval for an art advisors' development programme of one year's duration was granted on 18 November 1979 by Peter Boag, acting director-general of education, with Peter appointed programme director, assisted by Murray Gilbert, acting education officer (art), Curriculum Division. An essential core of the programme was three residential courses: two from 7–18 July and 13–24 October 1980, and a third from 23 March–2 April 1981. The purpose of these courses was twofold: first, to undertake workshop explorations and activities essential for the development of up-to-date specialist expertise in art and crafts; and second, to discuss issues in art education necessary for the professional growth of the advisors and the

advisory service. The remainder of the programme was district-based. District senior inspectors were advised about the withdrawal of usual services so that advisors could consider themselves free to give all their professional energies to it. Peter described it as a sabbatical year, in which they had the opportunity to plan and carry out personal and professional work and educational studies. At an introductory conference in Hamilton in 1980 Peter delivered *A Greeting for Art Advisors*, voicing one of his recurring themes—the intellectual ranking of subjects:

Sometimes I think we have suffered more than we have gained from the Platonic conspiracy of the supremacy of intellect. It has dogged us all the way through the Renaissance aristocracy of genius to the separatism of mind and hand, of academicism and industry of today ... it has affirmed the superiority of the theoretical mind over the practical hand ... It has produced the 'aristocracy of the arts', a preserve of the privileged in wealth and power to be collectors, donors, patrons, connoisseurs, and privileged now in avant garde obfuscation, obscurantism and esotericism that ridicules the bourgeoisie that delights in the abuse showered upon it ... We must not be intimidated by the aristocrats ... They, after all, are famous for losing their heads! (P. Smith, 1980, pp. 3–4)

All three residential courses offered substantial time for 'personal specialisations' through practical workshops offered in painting, kilns and glazing, print-making and weaving, and later in Super 8 mm film-making, fibre and textiles, and jewellery. Skilled tutors included Claudia Pond Eyley, Brian Gartside, Stanley Palmer, Garth Tapper, Ian Spalding, Zena Abbott, Ruth Castle, John Reynolds and Warwick Freeman. Peter believed that one's own participation in creative activity was the best way of developing understanding, sympathy, respect and sensitivity towards the activity of others. Two other areas of study and research were 'purpose and practice in art education' and 'professional specialisations'. Advisors were required to present evaluations of progress made in their special activities and projects in the professional field, analysis of roles of the art advisor, and knowledge gained about art practice and art appreciation, core art and its implementation and guidelines, schemes and syllabi. In a progress report on the programme, Peter declared that "The concept of advisor as trouble shooter or remedial agent for 'bad' spots, or as peripatetic demonstrator, is not an adequate one today" (P. Smith, 1981a, p. 6).

In their collective evaluation of the programme, presented by Alan McIntyre (1981), the advisors were in general agreement that it had allowed members to know each other better and to respect each other's distinctions

more. (Friction had existed between those advisors who had trained in Dunedin, at their home teachers' college, and those who were subsequently recruited from the teaching field.) They had learned both similarities of interests and differences of style and expertise. Most wanted to capitalise on the experience, look for further opportunities to collaborate with others and co-ordinate future work.

An example of action arising from the retraining programme was a series of residential in-service courses initiated by Roger Hardie, then art and crafts advisor in Whangarei. Because of the widely scattered nature of art teachers in Northland and their consequent professional loneliness, Hardie wanted to encourage greater collegial co-operation. Held at the picturesque Youth Haven school camp at Parua Bay on the shore of Whangarei Harbour, these courses attracted over 30 Northland art teachers from across the sectors. Peter attended and offered workshops at each. The *Northern Advocate*, site of his first career, reported him as "praising the courses as almost unique and fully justifying the release of teachers from normal school duties for the week".¹ Hardie, commenting on Peter's contribution, said:

Peter was the leading light in presenting ideas and refining criteria. He spoke as a Northlander, rich in references to his own humble upbringing there; how his father imbued in him a love of wood and fine craftsmanship, and his mother passed to him a sensitivity to language. Peter saw the purpose of art education as extending pupils' perceptions, refining their vision, and by their own practical engagement, sharpening their personal awareness of the world around them, physically, emotionally and spiritually.²

A highlight of the Parua Bay courses was the end-of-week festivities. On this occasion we were not permitted to sit at the long dining table until we had made some 'wearable art'! Peter made a cuckoo clock hat and I picked daisies.

In 1985, although he had moved from the Department of Education, Peter directed another course with the art advisors, this time at Raupunga, tūrangawaewae of Sandy Adsett (Ngāti Kahungunu), one of Tovey's last recruits in 1961. This course focused on the work of the group developing the first national art syllabus (discussed below), and how the *Art and Craft in the Primary School* syllabus (Department of Education, 1961) had been carefully analysed during the process. Peter noted there was surprisingly

1 P. Smith, interview, *Northern Advocate*, 9 March 1984.

2 R. Hardie, personal communication, 19 March 2013.



6.2 Art advisors, National Art and Crafts Re-training Course, Secondary Teachers' College, Auckland, 1980. Standing: Lionel Gray, John Hazeldine, Peter Smith (course director), Kerk Taylor, Ian Miller, Roland Decke, Don Campbell, Mere Pouto, Judith Smith, Murray Richardson, Gary Askew, Eileen Eising, Annette Asher, Sandy Adsett, Barbara Downes, Lois Carr, Cathy Veninga, Rei Hendry; Bill Duston; in front: Alan McIntyre, Ray Stoddart, Roger Hardie, Vana Leeming, Murray Gilbert, Batch Collins, Rob McGregor, Don Sanderson, John Binsley. Photograph courtesy of Eileen Eising.



6.3 a-b: Parua Bay art course, celebration dinner, 9 March 1984.
 a: Peter Nicholson (A&C Branch), Doug Chowns (Northland Polytechnic), Alden Smith (Raumanga Primary School), Peter, Rothay Bailey (Whangarei Girls' High School), Roger Hardie (district advisor A & C Branch). b: Peter and me.



little reference to Māori art in the 1961 syllabus, a position that was being addressed. He held in high esteem Sandy Adsett, an art advisor since that time, who has had a profound effect well beyond the advisory system to those within his own community, and subsequently as tutor at Tairāwhiti Polytechnic and initiator of Toimairangi School of Māori Visual Culture in 2002. Adsett's breathtakingly sophisticated kōwhaiwhai, conveyed in subtle tones or vibrant colour rather than the customary black, red and white, explore his ancestral past, myths and legends, and the impact of colonisation (see Adsett, Graham, & McGregor, 1992.) When Sandy welcomed Peter and me to Raupunga in 1988, we were spellbound by the kōwhaiwhai patterns created by Ngāti Pahauwera and painted by him at his community's whareniui, *Te Huki*, at Raupunga. The patterns tell of the mountain, Maungaharuru and the Mohaka River, and the Raupunga design references the rau (leaf) and punga (ochre), the name of a small whānau waterfall.

Peter and I shared a particular interest in Māori art and education. I was honoured to be included in Sandy's tribute when Peter passed away:

Peter was a man with huge mana. Jill, you and Peter have offered us so much, in the respect you have for Māori art in education. I'm sure you were aware of the huge, enjoyable impact you both had on 'us' advisors during those earlier times. I think I even began to take my own art a little more seriously. I certainly enquired into Māori art education with more determination ... that has not worn off. Much aroha to you both.³

Supporting art educators from the sidelines

Peter continued to support art educators in a number of ways, among them encouraging attendance at national and international art conferences. In 1981 the country's first national art education conference, *Art Education: The New Zealand Experience*, held in Auckland from 17 to 23 May, was co-directed by Ray Stoddart and Lionel Gray.⁴ In the opening keynote address Peter considered the risks of arbitrarily defining the 'products' of the curriculum rationale, which argues for the adoption of objectives and procedures to promote desirable outcomes (P. Smith, 1981c). Other keynote presenters

3 S. Adsett, personal communication, 31 August 2013.

4 Organising the conference was one of Stoddart and Gray's 'development year' projects during the art advisors' retraining programme. An exhibition, *Educators as Artists*, held at New Vision Gallery, included work by Peter and a number of art advisors and teachers' college lecturers. Excursions for delegates included a Waitemata Harbour cruise (led by Peter), a walk across New Zealand and tours to vineyards, art galleries and pottery studios.



6.4 Sandy Adsett welcoming Peter and the art advisors to Te Huki, Raupunga, 1985.
Photograph courtesy of Roger Hardie.



6.5 a–c: Kōwhaiwhai on the heke in Te Huki: Maungaharuru, Mohaka River and Raupunga, 1988. *Photographs: Jill Smith.*

included Bill Renwick, Sidney Mead, John Watson, internationally acclaimed art educator Edmund B. Feldman and expatriate New Zealander Martin Lewis, an art advisor in the Tovey group of 1956 and subsequent professor of art education at Sussex University.⁵ Before Peter passed away, Lewis wrote to him: “Peter, you are always part of my consciousness of being and, as you may know, you have been central to the shaping of my enduring passions for art, education and the contexts they inhabit and illuminate. Much affection ... many embraces.”⁶

Immediately following this conference, Peter and I set off for Europe, for we had both been granted study leave from 22 May to 18 September 1981. In August, as a world councillor for the International Society for Education through Art from 1980 to 1985, Peter represented New Zealand at the 24th InSEA Congress in Rotterdam. This international conference was attended, for the first time, by a number of New Zealand delegates, including ‘Tovey’ art advisors Murray Gilbert, Paratene Matchitt and Roger Hardie. The conference presentations provided valuable insights into the shape and substance of art education on the international stage, including the work of art theorists Brent Wilson and David Best.

For art educators in the north, the first Auckland–Northland regional conference in 1984 was truly memorable. Peter had called his opening address *Steps to Hunua*, for he went there in the early 1950s with successive years of art students, among them some of the finest teachers and artists in New Zealand, many of whom were present. He ended, in customary style, with a personal story:

When I was a young boy, running wildly home after taking the cows to the home paddock, there was a fearful moment in the twilight of dark taraire trees brooding on the ridge of Rawhitiroa. I was to encounter that fearfulness again, in the presence of druid menhirs, at night’s fall in Brittany, and in the darkening interior of meeting houses on the East Coast, and in the presence of Colin McCahon’s landscapes, and know that others also waited for the passing of day light into night dark—the time of crossing over. (P. Smith, 1984b, p. 16)

Peter said that going back to Hunua in 1984 was to recognise this splendid confluence of art teachers, and to recognise how much had been learned across the passing of time, and how much more learning there was for all of us.

5 Following his third year of specialist art Lewis became an art advisor in Gisborne. He said that his cross-cultural international relations career in the United Kingdom was influenced by the Gisborne experiences (personal communication, 17 September 2013).

6 M. Lewis, personal communication, 2 March 2012.



6.6 New Zealand delegates at the InSEA Congress, Rotterdam, 10–16 August 1981, Sue Grogan, Murray Gilbert, June Ritchie, Paratene Matchitt, Roger Hardie and Peter Smith, enjoy a post-conference picnic, en route to Amsterdam in our campervan.



6.7 Delegates at the first Auckland–Northland regional art conference, Camp Adair, Hunua, 25–27 April 1984. Photograph courtesy of Shelley Ryde.

A major initiative: The first national art syllabus

During the 1970s the development of the new School Certificate art prescription and the introduction of University Entrance and University Bursaries practical art and art history at Forms 6–7 cemented the place of these subjects in the senior secondary school. The missing link was an art curriculum that would serve pupils from the very first to their final years of schooling. Well into the 1960s the creativity rationale for art education and the commensurate interest in personality development, so strongly advocated by Read (1943), by Lowenfeld (1947) and, in New Zealand, by Tovey and his followers, dominated the field worldwide. Peter was among a new generation of scholars and educators who, during that time and into the early 1970s, began to question that direction and to suggest that the study of art for art's sake was worthwhile. The new approach, influenced by Eisner (1972), advocated art-learning activities that fostered understanding of the world of art, awareness of the concepts, language, and approaches useful in responding to art, as well as activities that resulted primarily in art production. This was the climate in which the *Art Education Junior Classes to Form 7 Syllabus for Schools* (Department of Education, 1989) was developed.

Peter considered that the role he played from 1980 to 1985 in helping to develop and draft the country's first national art curriculum was a highlight of his contributions to the field. The National Project Team was led initially by Ray Thorburn who, as education officer (art education), for the Department of Education, played a major role in the development of the syllabus, and by Birnie Duthie, who succeeded him. The team was charged with making a case for art education as a core subject in its own right in primary and secondary schools. As part of the development team, and with ultimate responsibility as writer for the project, Peter once again revelled in vigorous debate about aspects of the proposed curriculum. In a paper to the development team, *The Context of Art*, he said:

Much of our failure to make effective demands for the place of art in general education arises from our not knowing which or what art it is that people are talking about when they are discussing art education. We assume everybody knows what we mean ... It is not a lack of public sympathy that bedevils us. It is our own marked failure to define, for ourselves and for our curriculum developers and educational administrators, those kinds of art which we can demonstrate are a significant dimension of our culture. (P. Smith, 1983, p. 16)

The extensive collection of official papers in Peter's files attests to the intensive dialogue about the development of a syllabus that was to

cater for children from their first year of schooling to pupils in the senior secondary school. The list of attendees at a national residential course at Frank Lopdell Centre in Auckland from 20 to 24 May 1985 illustrates the depth of opinion sought from art advisors, inspectors, art teachers across the sectors, principals, teachers' college lecturers, gallery officers, university lecturers and community educators. The first draft statement by the project team, issued to members by course director Thorburn, encapsulated many of Peter's pedagogical ideas about the purposes of art education in New Zealand schools and the nature of such an education.

It was not all plain sailing, however. There existed deep divides, especially between the primary and secondary school sectors. In correspondence from a number of art and craft advisors throughout the country, dismay was expressed about the lack of reference to children and the ideology of the child, and in particular Franz Cizék's ideas of child artistry and the value placed by George Hogben⁷ on children's practical work. Some advisors were deeply concerned that Tovey's belief in the children's inheritance of their unconscious roots, seen and reinforced in imaginative responses through expressive mediums of paint, clay and dance, was not evident in the draft. Others were concerned that practical activity would diminish if pupils had to learn about art works made by "adult artists". A few admitted that it was time to move on. One of Peter's skills was his ability to adopt a measured yet persuasive stance and listen to all points of view. Ted Bracey, in his response to the review of the project team's work, was "much impressed with the document as it stands and you [Peter] are to be congratulated for giving such a nice balance to all the, often conflicting, interests it embodies".⁸ Jeanne Macaskill, a lecturer in art at Wellington Teachers' College, complimented Peter on the final draft, "rewritten very thoughtfully by you".⁹

The introduction to *Art Education Junior Classes to Form 7 Syllabus for Schools* (Department of Education, 1989) articulated how the best of current practice in primary and secondary schools, the changing educational needs of society, as well as the shift and alteration in New Zealand society and its cultural and artistic character were taken into account. The 1984 exhibition *Te Maori* was cited as affirmation of the significance and richness of the

7 George Hogben was head of the Department of Education from 1899 to 1915. In 1904 he introduced a revolutionary new primary school syllabus that stressed practical teaching ('learning by doing') at the expense of grammar and arithmetic. His work was extended and complemented by that of Clarence Beeby.

8 T. Bracey, personal communication to Peter, 23 June 1985.

9 J. Macaskill, personal communication to Peter, 17 February, 1986.

indigenous art of the Māori people. The syllabus also acknowledged the many cultural groups within New Zealand society, differing markedly from the Thomas Report (1944), which emphasised social needs but failed to mention cultural aspects (although these were assumed). The most significant element introduced in the syllabus was providing a balance between the previous focus on making art and the need for pupils to gain an understanding of the social contexts and significance of art. Studies about art, ways of responding to art and the contexts for art were dimensions previously ignored, despite the recommendations of the Thomas Committee to include art and design appreciation. The philosophical and educational stance taken in the syllabus, illustrated by its egalitarian definitions of art works, indicated how far the vision for art education had moved.

Peter also assisted in the early stages with drawing up the *Guidelines to the Syllabus* (Ministry of Education, 1991), a project led by Birnie Duthie, then education officer (art). Roger Hardie, by then district art advisor, Auckland, and Allen Wihongi, then head of art department at Mahurangi College, were members of the production team. Sue McBride, head of art department at Westlake Girls' High School, oversaw the final production and collation of the resource material. Duthie said of Peter:



6.8 *The Syllabus Project Team (1984–88) at their final meeting in 1988, North Shore Teachers' College. From left: Roger Hardie, Sue McBride, Lester Flockton, Derek Olphert, Waana Davis, Murray Gilbert, Ray Neumann, Moira Fleming, Birnie Duthie (absent from photo, Ted Bracey). Photograph courtesy of Roger Hardie.*

I hugely valued Peter's support and positive advice during my tenure in the art curriculum development project. He helped me develop the strategies of using the best practitioners to demonstrate good practice in terms of the curriculum aims, a model that he understood so well and was willing to pass on without reservation. I personally learned so much from his wisdom and understanding. He was our Guru!¹⁰

Peter was to write many articles and give numerous presentations about the rationale, substance and implementation of the syllabus. In one paper, *Evaluation and Purpose in Art Education*, he explored the difficulties of our New Zealand practice being deeply rooted in doctrines of "creativity" and "individuality" (P. Smith, 1984a). His preference for posing provocative questions was evident in *Who Says It Is Art?* In this paper, a guideline to the purposes and interpretations of the syllabus, he asked "Why does the syllabus distinguish between art works and art? Are craft and design included under art works? Who says something is an artwork? On what authority?" (P. Smith, 1988c, p. 2).

From an art to an arts curriculum

The vision, development and implementation of the 1989 syllabus was critical for providing the framework for the next major curriculum development, *The Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum* (Ministry of Education, 2000). A contract was awarded to Auckland College of Education, with three co-ordinating writers. Shane Foley (the daughter of Pat Foley, who had been Peter's head at the Department of Education), Tina Hong and Trevor Thwaites were former secondary school teachers in their respective disciplines of visual arts, dance and drama, and music. They had the formidable task of establishing a rationale for the place and contribution of the arts within a national curriculum. On the one hand, they were required to observe the Ministry of Education's policy specifications for a generic arts curriculum. On the other, they had a professional responsibility to explore and evaluate the wide-ranging and diverse international territory of research on the functions of the arts in societal, cultural and educational terms. Peter claimed that their position paper (Foley, Hong, & Thwaites, 1999), in which they identified and elaborated on the theoretical bases informing the draft arts curriculum, was a significant event: for the first time in the history of art education in New Zealand a philosophical and theoretical rationale for curriculum development

10 B. Duthie, personal communication, 23 October 2013.

was presented in the public domain and made available for widespread national (and some international) scrutiny. In contrast, Ted Bracey (2003), a staunch critic of the curriculum, claimed that “the muddled conceptual ground on which [it] uneasily rests” arose from a lack of knowledge of art education theory by the writers, and that educators in the visual arts “fail to reflect critically on their enterprise ... or to systematically and critically engage with the theory on which that enterprise was founded” (p. 181).

Perhaps to calm the anxiety of arts educators across the school sectors, especially their concern that four arts disciplines—dance, drama, music and visual arts—were to be collapsed into one generic curriculum, Peter, although retired by then, was called upon by the Ministry of Education to respond to the writers’ draft curriculum statement. His paper, *The Arts Within a National State Curriculum*, delivered to stakeholders at a public forum in Wellington, focused in part on the similarities and differences between the different arts disciplines:

The significant differences between the arts means that one form is not, and cannot be, an equivalent or substitute for another. Nor can the knowledge of how to make or apprehend one art form be applied to another. Nor is there some form of embracing ‘aesthetic’ outcome from the study of a particular form which will provide us with a means of assessment or judgement about other art forms we may encounter.

The risks are that, on the one hand, attempts to give balanced provision of all four within a constrained time allocation will result in overall superficiality. On the other hand, to prescribe that only some components need to be compulsory flies in the face of the argument that each art form has its particular character and educational achievement. The most appropriate solution would appear to be to require each art form to specify and provide substantial argument for what are seen to be ‘essential’ learning objectives. (P. Smith, 1998b)

Peter’s words gave reassurance that it was possible to have a generic curriculum *and* maintain the integrity and individuality of the four arts disciplines. However, the development of this generic arts curriculum, reflecting the political, social, cultural and hence educational climate in which it was conceived, was considerably more fraught than the development of the 1989 syllabus had been.¹¹

11 See J. Smith, 2007, pp. 105–50, for a comprehensive account of the development of the arts curriculum.

Worthy tributes

In 1986 Peter was made an Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE) for services to art education, a first for an art educator in New Zealand.

The numerous accolades Peter received included a special tribute from Ted Bracey, a student in the 1958 art group and, at that time, senior lecturer in art, School of Fine Arts, at the University of Canterbury:

I, together with all those who work with me in the domain of art education in New Zealand, share the view that Peter Smith has, for more than twenty years, been the effective leader of our enterprise and has contributed more to that enterprise than any single figure in its history. It is my view, shared by colleagues, that it is through Peter's efforts, both here and abroad, that New Zealand art education has gained international recognition ... Part of Peter's extraordinary influence rests, in large measure, on his ability to inspire those who work with him. The complex sources of inspiration lie in his own example, his concern for and belief in the ability of others, his unique ability to reveal to others what is possible and worthwhile and, ultimately, in his absolute sincerity. A further, most important feature of Peter's influence and standing arises from the unprecedented level of



6.9 Peter and me at Government House, Wellington, where his OBE was bestowed by Governor-General Sir Paul Reeves on 14 June 1986.

trust and affection he is afforded by the art education community ... His modest self-effacement and a complete absence of arrogance and ill-will excite affection.¹²

Peter's international reach is illustrated in the letter of congratulations he received from Edmund B. Feldman, renowned art education theorist and Alumni Foundation distinguished professor of art, University of Georgia. He met Peter in 1981 when in New Zealand to give a keynote address at the First National Art Conference in Auckland:

I quickly realised that your influence on art education in New Zealand extended beyond the technical to the personal. I remember how privileged I felt as you conducted a group of us through the Auckland Museum and discoursed so easily and knowledgably about the exhibits, then escorted us on a boat trip through the beautiful Auckland Harbour, weaving the points of land and shore structures into a marvellous tapestry. Above and beyond your calling as an art educator, it is plain that you are a poet. You have been able to teach through word and through image, and above all, by the example of your person.¹³

In 2011 Peter was the subject of the Depot Artspace *Cultural Icons* project, which celebrates people who have contributed significantly to New Zealand's creative landscape. He was interviewed by former student Rodney Wilson, one of New Zealand's prominent museum and gallery directors, who considered Peter to be "New Zealand's most influential art educator since the Second World War:"¹⁴

Peter was one of the most thoughtful people in the arts in Auckland. And he was certainly the most benign and generous. He believed in New Zealand, all that it was, and all that it might become. He rejoiced in its individual character, its biculturalism and its contemporary cultural diversity. His is a legacy that will last, and has already been passed onto many others.¹⁵

12 T. Bracey, personal communication, 21 January 1986.

13 E. B. Feldman, personal communication, 11 January 1986.

14 R. Wilson, video-recorded conversation with Peter, *Cultural Icons*, Episode 41, 14 September 2011. See <http://culturalicons.co.nz/episode/peter-smith>.

15 R. Wilson, personal communication, 12 July 2012.