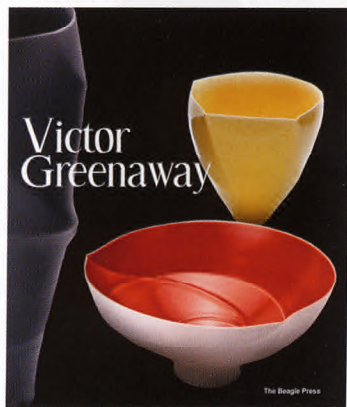


BOOKS



**Victor Greenaway
Ceramics 1965–2005**
The Beagle Press, Sydney

DURING a recent visit to the potter's studio at Nungerna with my wife Jenny, we were wonderfully entertained by Vic and Judy Greenaway, and over pizza evenings on the patio we talked about our past years in pottery, our mutual friends and the influences which had affected our careers as potters. We discussed this book, which was in the early stages of production, and picked up on the enthusiasm Vic and Judy exuded about its forthcoming publication.

It seemed that I personally had an influence on Vic's life as a potter when he produced a small green, matt-glazed bowl and declared it was one of the reasons he had decided to become a potter. Apparently, it was one of my own works which had been in an exhibition at the Craft Centre Gallery opened by Ian Sprague (whom I shared a workshop with at Mungeribar in Upper Beaconsfield, Victoria) in the early 1960s.

On receipt of a copy of this new book I was touched to think that my small bowl, made 45 years ago, had perhaps helped Vic in a direction which has culminated in such an impressive publication. Beautifully produced and lavishly illustrated, most of its 140 pages carry a single, large-format photograph of the artist's work – each piece made with such obvious love and attention to detail, backed by consummate craftsmanship and a sure knowledge of ceramic chemistry in surface finish, texture and most importantly, subtlety of colour.

These attributes are unstintingly endorsed in the foreword, written by Dr Janet Mansfield, who has been a practising studio potter for more than 40 years and is currently vice-president of the International Academy of Ceramics. She is the

Cylinders, 1988, unglazed stoneware, brushwork, black slip, tallest 70 cm
The artist at work, Mungeribar, 1971



Spiral-lipped bowl, 2004, porcelain, celadon glaze, tin white exterior, d 29 cm

author of a number of books on ceramics and is publisher/editor of *Ceramics: Art and Perception* and *Ceramics Technical*. In her foreword Mansfield writes: 'A potter cannot escape revealing his character in the work ... The pots, and the man, show care in everything he undertakes ... The porcelain bowls of Greenaway's current style have a sincerity giving them warmth despite their flawless perfection.'

The book's introduction takes the form of a comprehensive essay that traces in chronological detail the multi-layered biography of Greenaway's life and work. Sensitively written by Tim Jacobs, who grew up in South Australia and made stoneware pottery from studios in New Zealand, Tasmania and NSW from 1975–85, the text rings with authenticity and nuance concerning the potter's development and



Bowl, 1979, stoneware, dry ash glazed rim, semi-matt glaze inside with cobalt and iron brushwork, diam. 35 cm. Powerhouse Museum, Sydney



progress by someone who understands the many challenges faced by contemporary studio ceramists. As a potter, Jacobs was involved in Craft Councils at both State and national levels. From 1985 he was employed on government cultural policy and arts funding programs as Director of the Crafts Board at the Australia Council. In 1989 he joined the Victorian Government's Art Ministry, as Deputy Director, and Director from 1994–97. Subsequently, as Chief Executive of both the Sydney Opera House and the Victorian Arts Centre in Melbourne, he has continued his close involvement in the arts.

Towards the conclusion of his perceptive essay, Jacobs notes: 'Across a span of 40 years, an artist keeps on moving. Right now it all seems clearer, prompting thoughts of where it might lead next. The patterns make more sense looked at in reverse, read backwards. With this hindsight the work seems to have been saying all along what it could become.'

In a nutshell, *Victor Greenaway* tells an amazing story of the life of a clay artist through stunning biographical images of work made at different periods of his career. It is supported by artist statements, biographical notes, list of exhibitions, collections and awards and bibliography. The book is a fitting tribute to the warmth and spirit of this unique ceramic artist who is recognised as one of the most accomplished master potters Australia has produced. The calibre of *Victor Greenaway* renders it an inspirational monograph deserving of a wide readership that extends far beyond Australia's shores.

Robin Welch

Robin Welch is an internationally acclaimed ceramic artist based in Stradbroke, Suffolk, UK. He practised in Australia from 1965 to 1973 and was instrumental in lifting the profile of studio ceramics in this country.