

**Anne Krohn Graham:
New Age Totems**

Elaine Pottery Gallery, San Francisco, CA
April 21–May 23, 1987
by Carrie Adell

In a statement on this exhibit, the artist declares that she was inspired by architectural structures and patterns found in urban spaces, such as lattices, grids, gratings, windows and fences.

The works themselves, 60 pieces of anodized aluminum jewelry, were grouped into three different yet visually related collections. Most visible and dramatic were the pectorals, cuffs and earrings, all of which were constructed in bread planes of gently embossed geometrics, overlaid and accented with anodized areas of color. Graham here extends concepts developed for a show at The Worcester Craft Center in October, 1985 (see *Metalsmith* Summer 1986, pp. 58–59). Now the surfaces are further elaborated, layer upon layer. Echoes of patterns on the broad, embossed surfaces appear in miniature, in photoetched and anodized areas of embellishment. Her statements are even bolder now.

A second grouping, predominantly brooches and pendants of perforated patterns and layered lattices, were small (about 2½ x 2½"), more intimate compositions, intriguing in their overlay of complex color, a counterpoint to the cutout areas. Brooches and pendants were each provided with their own appropriately signed and colored, wall plaque environment, creating dimensional designs, in the manner of Mondrian. The brooches themselves were rectangular, each framed in a

field of sterling silver sheets. These rigid armatures were finished in a soft sandblasted surface, enfolding and connecting three to six layers of anodized perforated patterns, reiterating the rhythmic regularity of the perforations in graduated tones of contrasting colors. The "frames" and layers are cold-joined with tiny decorative nuts, bolts, rivets. Different pierced and anodized patterns appear on the flip sides of all the layered brooches. They can be suspended, either side out, on a choice of neckpiece structures called *Torii*. These architectural lattices are of softly finished aluminum tubing, carefully arranged perpendiculars, the tips of which terminate in caps and finials of mechanical fitting. One open-ended horizontal tube receives the pin-stem of any of the brooches interchangeably, converting it to a pendant.

Body sculptures, exhibited in four clusters or architectural arrangements, made up the third visual grouping. The calfpiece was constructed of heavy aluminum rod, bent in a series of perpendiculars, which could be wrapped around and rested upon the wearer's calf in a choice of positions. Ankle, arm and wrist were similarly provided for, in a finer gauge of aluminum rod jewelry, festooned with fixed and mobile bands and rings, and with the subtlest of anodized colors.

Graham treats aluminum with the respect usually reserved for precious metals. She has reached her goal "to achieve a dye-colored surface that catches ambient light to create a vibrant interaction, which is perceived as an iridescent transparent surface layer." It's the most sensitive and subtlest use of color I've seen on aluminum.

William Harper

March 9–April 4, 1987
Susan Cummins Gallery, Mill Valley, CA
by Carrie Adell

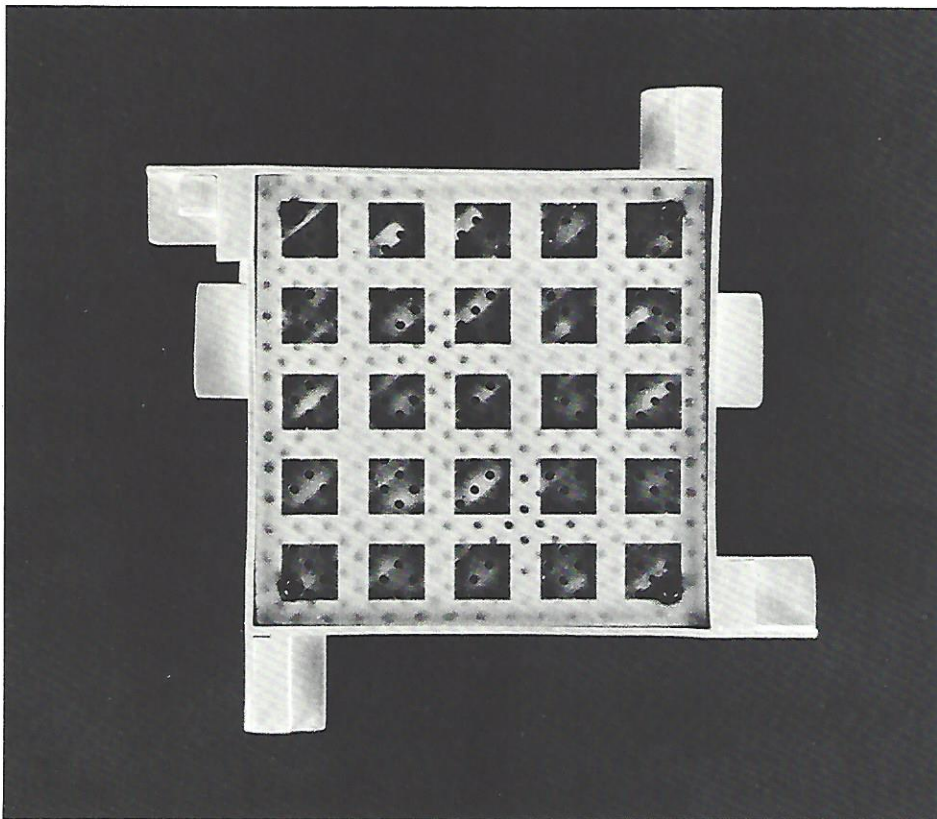
William Harper is a self-proclaimed "Eclectic Man." He draws his subject matter, symbols and imagery from myths and religions. He borrows stylistically from past cultures. His jewelry communicates the feel of the ancient, of something dug up out of the past; yet, it speaks simultaneously in a contemporary idiom. Harper wants to jolt the viewer by combining unexpected materials and techniques and by the juxtaposition of content both sacred and profane.

How then is the viewer jolted? Perhaps the jolt comes from discovering that some of the fragmented elements in Harper's elegant designs are of common origin (bike reflector bits in textured red plastic), materials seemingly inconsistent with the gold, gemstones and especially the opulent surfaces of cloisonné enamel.

It is in these enameled areas that Harper celebrates his art. Here, the viewer glimpses Harper's commitment to doing and making, his skill and dedication to delicate and time-consuming processes. The echos of cloisonné enamel areas found in the bits of bike reflectors gives us an indication of Harper's attitude towards "preciousness" and its attendant associations. He reminds us that Western contemporary values stand side-by-side with those of other places, people and circumstances.

Does the viewer get a feast of visual and conceptual complexity? I would say yes, and then some. The most recent work in this exhibit, a series of wizard's wand brooches, demonstrates visual power and strength beyond any supernatural magic with which they might be invested. Shown as vertical forms, they are mostly long brooches (up to seven inches), reassembled fragments, deeply framed, heavily enriched with cloisonné enamels, textured, offset bezels and a variety of metals and other materials. These images are less referential than found in earlier series, some of which were also shown, where masks, skulls, fetishes recall the iconography of primitive cultures, somewhat caricatured.

Harper's titles lead the viewer to connections and associations that the images alone do not communicate. They enrich the experience of the works by triggering our strong feelings and allusions to religion, morality, status or whatever is important to us about these subjects. Harper is telling us, perhaps, about the homogenized nature of the world we now live in, where we have access to the myths, histories, rituals and symbols of all cultural heritages, ours for the taking, although not always in the spirit in which they were created.



Ann Krohn Graham, *Cosmic Shower* brooch, sterling silver, anodized aluminum, 2½ x 2½", 1987