

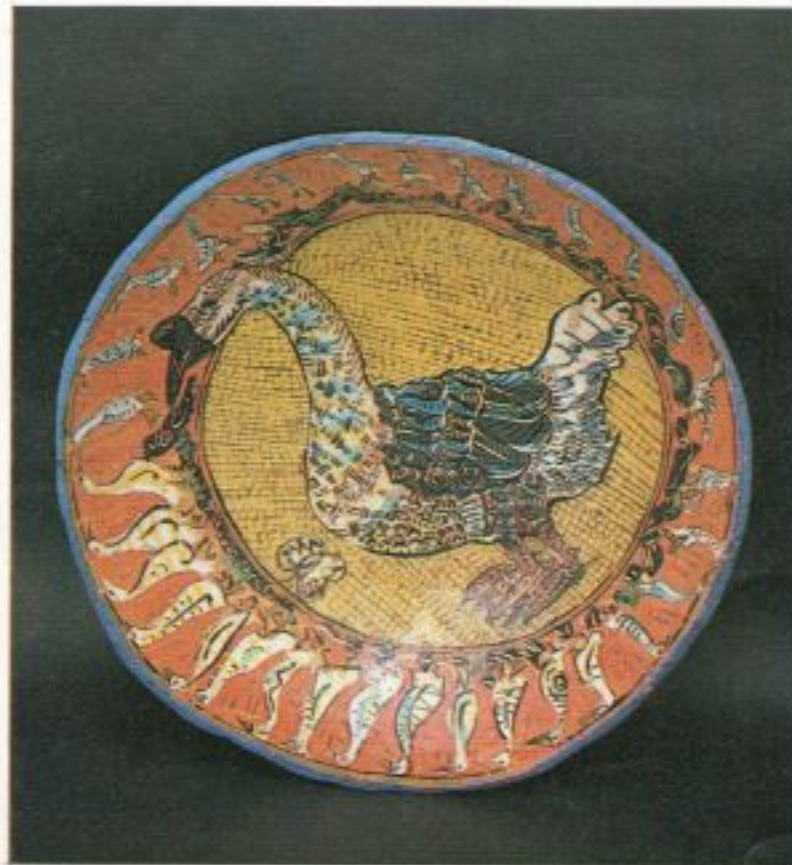
as subjects in their own right, sometimes as symbols. One of the best exponents of the theme is Pamela Leung whose beautifully crafted, often life-sized creatures have a kind of mythic significance. With work like this in the back of one's mind, Packard's pieces, mainly large-scale platters, come as a shock. They are crudely made, rough-rimmed, irregularly shaped – yet their rough and ready surfaces are decorated with such an exuberant tenderness that it is hard to resist their appeal.

Simon Packard's *The Golden Goose* at Rebecca Hossack Gallery.
See review

Simon Packard: Ceramics

Rebecca Hossack Gallery

The artist is a young man who has made a name for himself with prints of animal subjects. This summer he turned to clay and the current exhibition is a restatement of his rapport and obvious sympathy with the animal kingdom. That said, twenty four hours after seeing this exhibition, I have to confess that I am still in two minds about it. Birds and beasts have recently made a re-entry on the ceramic scene, sometimes presented



Purist protests aside, what Packard does is to use his plates as a painting medium, with a knock-on effect of movement and depth. In the best cases (and the quality is uneven) the effect is magical, like meeting entrancing characters from a favourite book. The Uley Set, as Packard describes them, on one plate include Pandora the pig, his whippet HB, plus a company of geese, ducks, hens and a recurring butterfly. In delineating his characters Packard shows a wonderful eye for colour and pattern, and in the monotone pieces, for linear, cross-hatched detail. But what comes over most clearly is his feeling for his models! In some cases anger is the predominant emotion, as in the sad-eyed ironic elephant in *They Seem Happy in London Zoo*; in others Packard seems to pick up and run with the idiosyncrasies of 'the set', so that the goose in *The Golden Goose* appears with a distinctly fishy mouth! One of the most beautifully realised of all is *Prinknash Booty*. Here the goose is displayed against a stunning red interior, framed by a richly patterned rim, and is quite bewitching. *Goodness, Gentleness and Faith*, a 3-sided stand with butterfly shaped rim where hen, owl and duck symbolise the virtues of the title, is equally beguiling. Rounding out the display are a series of drawings including a superb rendering of *The Uley Goat*. So what can I say in conclusion? Perhaps that self taught skills and their consequent bold lack of inhibition have a lot to recommend them! (to Dec 23. See colour illustration)

JANE NORRIE