



## He waka eke noa Embarking together

### The NZLIA/ALIA Joint Conference

Wellington New Zealand  
September 26–30 1994

Thursday 29 September will commence with Keynote presentations covering management issues and the impact of economic rationalism on the workplace. Concurrent sessions in the afternoon will address issues for the profession such as total quality management, industrial reform, competency standards and communication within the context of the sectors within the profession.

The sectors include libraries in the community, education, private sector, public sector, health infor-

mation and library services to ethnic communities. The conference dinner will be held on Thursday night.

Speakers will include leading public figures from both New Zealand and Australia and key members of the profession. A profile of each speaker will be available for publication in the April edition of *inCite*.

Special conference rates have been negotiated for a range of hotels and serviced apartments. Most are located within a short walk of the

Michael Fowler Centre where the conference is being held. The conference venue is situated on the foreshores of Wellington Harbour. Many delightful restaurants and bars are located in this picturesque area.

Social events are being organised at the National Library and at the Art Gallery and there will be many special events to cater for all tastes. If you have any inquiries about the conference, staff at the National Office will do their best to assist and you are welcome to give us a call. ■

## The River Styx (sticks)

Virginia Walsh has been fascinated by an Australia-New Zealand Artist's Book Project

*Boatman, take this coin, I pray thee;  
Thrice thy fare I cheerfully pay thee—  
For though thou seest them not, there stand  
Anear me, Two from the Phantom Land.*

In this year of the ALIA/NZLIA joint conference it is appropriate that we should report on cooperative ventures involving both nations which are of interest to library and information professionals.

This Artist's Book Project is now on display at the National Library. Billed as 'a delightful and innovative look at the book as a structure with exhibits from Australian and New Zealand artists', the display embraces a variety of interpretations of the concept of *book-ness* and of the imaginative theme—*The River Styx (sticks)*.

The clever word play here between the Styx, the river across which the dead were ferried in classical mythology (and Styx River is also a river and State Forest near Armidale, NSW), and 'sticks', whether of sticks and stones or the result of an accumulation of flotsam that can bring the river to a sticky standstill, has been taken up with enthusiasm by the artists involved in the Project.

Les Petersen, Director of the Project, writes: 'There are no ready formulae for the search for *book-ness*, just as there are no ready formulae for finding the Meaning of Life. With the combination of search for *book-ness*

and the theme of the River Styx we can play with the combination of Myth and Reality: the passage from one state to another. With the bracketed echo of *sticks* we can play with the floating remnants in our streams of consciousness. In combination with the river sticking we can look into history, into memory, in our search.'

The result, 34 exhibits, challenges our concept of 'the book'. Here there are no hard- or paper-back editions of popular fiction. 'Pages' of perspex, cotton, wood, metal and stone and the use of paint, pen, dot-matrix and laser printed images certainly challenge our imagination. The artists have all responded to their brief with innovative flair and, in many exhibits, there is a clear emergence of very personal interpretations of the conventional book and the life-death nexus.

One exhibit, by local Canberra artist Gemma Black, draws on the Catholic 'Green Catechism' of the 1950s to explore themes of purgatory and hell. Gemma's work is a concertina of cotton cloth pages supporting hand scripted words and turps-released images sewn together with stitches designed to evoke the flow of the River Styx.

Helen Schamroth, a 'craft writer' from Auckland, develops her thoughts thus: stream of consciousness/river of consciousness/river of conscience/river of judgement/river styx/river sticks.

The exhibition at the NLA closes on 12 March. ■



Dennis Wild (Australia). *Sticks and Styx*.  
Letterpress, photopolymer plates, computer  
printout, paper.