

**RMIT
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RMIT DESIGN ARCHIVES JOURNAL

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Cover Image

Kempthorne Lighting.
K161 Arunya Champagne
pendant light featuring
Aboriginal decoration,
1956.
Photograph: Eric Lang.

Two recent gifts to the RMIT Design Archives which represent different design disciplines allow us to reflect on the contribution of women as leaders in Melbourne's design culture.

For much of the twentieth century, women's participation in the industrial design profession was minimal. There was no specific training available until the first diploma course was established at RMIT in 1947 and the governing body, now known as the Design Institute of Australia (DIA), was not at the time proactive in courting women to its cause. All the more remarkable then is the career of Joyce Coffey who, in partnership with her husband Selwyn Coffey, established the successful design team at Kempthorne Lighting which was an Australian leader in its field for decades. An early member of the Society of Designers for Industry (forerunner of the DIA) Coffey was regularly featured in promotional material and the press, and her achievements are reflected in the material donated to the Archives.

In contrast with industrial design, textile design has a strong tradition of women's involvement in Melbourne, a tradition consolidated around the mid-twentieth century by Frances Burke, colleague of the Coffey's, foundation member of the Society of Designers for Industry and outspoken advocate for industrial design. Burke was a dominant presence in Melbourne in the 1950s and 1960s but by 1970 the next generation of designers emerged to take her place. These included Helen Abson who established Zab Design in collaboration with Ken Abson in 1972. Zab's bold, bright textiles provided an affordable alternative to the popular Finnish products from Marimekko and Zab prospered during the 1970s and 1980s, exporting to the USA and receiving international press coverage.

Both Kempthorne Lighting and Zab Design in their different ways and scales of operation exemplify the inventive vitality of Australian design in the second half of the twentieth century, its capacity to create new local markets, compete with imports and successfully export its best products.

Harriet Edquist, DIRECTOR

ADDITION
TO THE
COLLECTION

COFFEY/
KEMPTHORNE
LIGHTING

GIFT OF CAROLINE, JEREMY AND ANTHONY
COFFEY IN MEMORY OF JAMES SELWYN
KEMPTHORNE COFFEY AND JOYCE ESTHER COFFEY

This gift includes drawings, photographs, 'Lighting Books' and brochures, typescript histories and ephemera relating to Kempthorne Lighting Company from the 1930s to the 1970s.



Joyce Coffey (1918–2001): industrial designer

Harriet Edquist

Joyce Coffey (nee Hiddlestone) is something of an anomaly in the history of Australian design, being the first woman to achieve recognition as an industrial designer in a major Australian manufacturing business, Kempthorne Lighting. Such was the low level of women's participation in Australian industrial design firms during the twentieth century that Coffey's career is remarkable, more so as she took a leading role as a designer.¹

Joyce Esther Coffey was born at Randwick, NSW, on 14 December 1918, the second of two daughters of William Hiddlestone and his wife Lily. When Hiddlestone took up a position as marketing manager at Nicholas Aspro the family moved to Melbourne and Joyce attended Fintona Girls' School in Camberwell and later Firbank Girls Grammar School in Brighton where she was equal dux in her final year. After secondary schooling Joyce was keen to study art history having been introduced to the art galleries of Britain and Italy during the family's two-year residence in England in the late 1920s. Art History was not yet an academic discipline in Australia, the closest offering being a course on the history of ornament offered by the School of Applied Art at the Melbourne Technical College, known colloquially as the Tech (now RMIT University). Joyce enrolled in 1936 taking the General Art Course and the course for the Drawing Teacher's Certificate. She was clearly a good student as Harold Brown, the Head of School, noted in 1939:

She draws competently and her design ability is excellent, she possesses a fine colour sense and can apply her design knowledge to various processes.

During the year she has taught a class for children on Saturday mornings, using new methods that aim to develop the creative faculty in her pupils. Her work in this respect has been very satisfactory.

She has taken an active interest in the corporate life of the School as Secretary of the Art Students' Association. We have a very high opinion of her ability and character and recommend her with confidence to anyone requiring her services.²

Like many graduates of Applied Art, Joyce found employment as a commercial artist³ but then returned to the Tech during 1940 and 1941 where records show that she was a part time instructor of art and architecture in her old department.⁴ This employment came to an end in 1941 when the Ordnance Production Directorate stepped in and seconded her as a draftsman to work on mechanical engineering drafting for the highly classified 'O.S. 28', code name for Australia's aerial torpedo.⁵ Joyce was one of the many Australian women who went from art and design studies in technical colleges into war work and the experience gave them a view of manufacturing and design which would previously have been inaccessible and it may have provided an impetus to their future career as designers. For example, in Sydney, Marion Hall Best worked at the de Havilland aircraft factory as did radical activist Bessie Guthrie who was appointed head draftsman of the experimental gliders factory before working on aircraft design for the Commonwealth government. This experience led to the publication of Guthrie's *Plans for Women in the Post-War World* (1945), radio talks and training films aimed at women who had been dismissed from industry to make way for returning servicemen. Margaret Lord wrote her first book, *Interior Decoration: a Guide to Furnishing the Australian Home* (1944) from her experience at Army Education producing a correspondence course for service personnel. Similarly Joyce Coffey's war work, itself the product of her design training at the Tech, was the basis from which she forged a career as an industrial designer.

Joyce's move into war-time work coincided with her marriage to James Selwyn Kempthorne Coffey. Selwyn Coffey (1913-1994) was also involved in the war effort, the entire output of his business Kempthorne Lighting, having been sequestered by the Department of Defence in 1939. Kempthorne was the brainchild of brothers Selwyn and Owen Coffey who started a lighting business, Coffey Lanterns, in East Malvern in 1931 when the former

Opposite Page
'On the ceiling' light range featured in *Kempthorne Book of Lighting*, 1960s.

was 18. Their first lights were made out of old paint and oil tins and were designed by Selwyn who was for a time enrolled in design at the Tech. He created new designs for each client and eventually the brothers were approached by a wholesaler who took their entire output. By the middle of the 1930s two other brothers, Erle and Terence, had joined the company which was renamed Kempthorne Lighting Company in honour of an ancestor Sir John Kempthorne. A romantic figure, Kempthorne was an officer in the English Royal Navy who eventually rose to the rank of Vice-Admiral. In 1669, when commander of the Mary Rose, he repelled an attack by Algerian corsairs near Cadiz for which he was rewarded



with a knighthood. Hence, when Alan McCulloch, then a young journalist and friend of the Coffey brothers, was asked to design the firm's first logo he chose a pirate theme and the products were given suitable naval names such as Hastings and Raleigh.⁶ These traditional lanterns complemented the taste for period architecture in the 1930s and were used for external lighting, wall brackets, newel lamps and ceiling lamps.



In 1937 they featured in Kempthorne's first catalogue produced along with designs in Moderne and Art Deco styles. The catalogue heralded the beginning of what would become an important feature of Kempthorne's marketing success, eventually evolving into the famous books of lighting of the 1960s. The catalogues were the responsibility of Selwyn who worked with photographers John Duncan and Polish-born

émigré Eric Lang, as well as an advertising agent and printers. The catalogues were distributed through electrical retailers.

In many ways the evolution of Kempthorne was typical of Australian industrial design in the mid-twentieth century. As designer Ron Rosenfeldt has observed:

A few people, mainly artists were engaged in designing a limited range of products. In most cases it was simply a question of styling. . . These products were mainly in the domestic category – furniture, fabrics, pottery,

lighting and a limited range of metal products from the light engineering shops. . . Generally speaking, most Australian designers in the past. . . have always had to be design manufacturers. In short, they designed products and established their own factories. Industry was not ready to gamble on products with a twentieth century look.⁷

During the war Kempthorne manufactured lamps for navy, air force and army use but Selwyn Coffey also designed and developed an army issue cigarette lighter manufactured by the Department of Gun Ammunition, a short-range daylight signalling lamp, an automatic polishing machine for reflectors (Army Issue Lamps Electric MK1), and, automatic finishing machines later used by Kempthorne.⁸ If the war had disrupted their domestic production it had also catalysed innovation and change.

New processes and techniques were brought here from overseas and developed alongside those created by our own technicians. A wealth of knowledge was gained, but more important was the growing realization of our industrial potential and the belief in our ability to do things which hitherto had been thought beyond our capabilities. Secondary industry expanded both in size and range to meet the ever-increasing demand of the war effort. Completely new industries were developed together with their specialized technical 'know-how'. New technological processes, new materials and greater demands gave an impetus to the productive capacities of the nation. It only remained to adapt these developments to the days of peace.⁹

Both Joyce and Selwyn in their various ways had been involved with this rapid development which saw the widespread adoption of modern design in the manufacturing process and after the war Joyce joined her husband as chief designer at Kempthorne. Amongst their first post-war lights were a number given classical names (Olympus, Corinthic, Delphic) and Joyce may also have been responsible for their softer tones and more elegant ornamentation. Success followed; in 1946 Kempthorne joined with a small design team who had developed a domestic fan, to form the successful subsidiary, Mistral fans, and in 1948 the factory relocated from the inner Melbourne suburb of Collingwood to the developing industrial area around Dandenong Road, Clayton.

This move inaugurated two decades of expansion built on innovation in both manufacturing and design, both evident in the Athenic pendant light. For this model the Coffey brothers invented a unique method of silk screening onto glass with ceramic colour which required innovations in furnace design and construction.¹⁰



In the immediate post-war period Australian designers were 'inspired with the task of building a new world, full of optimism and confidence', and in 1947, in Melbourne, this optimism was expressed by the establishment of both the Society of Designers for Industry and a course in Industrial Design at the Melbourne Tech, the first in the country.¹¹ Wishing to emulate the Council of Industrial Design in Britain, but recognising that it was starting from a very low base of expertise and recognition, the Society (now known as the Design Institute of Australia, DIA) set realistic aims for its first few years which were focussed on consolidating the organisation around raising public awareness of the role of design through lectures and exhibitions. Founder members included well-known figures such as Frederick Ward, Ron Rosenfeldt, R Houghton James, Max Forbes, Grant Featherston, Victor Greenhalgh, Scorgie Anderson, Selwyn Coffey, Charles Furey and one woman, textile designer Frances Burke. She was soon to be joined by Joyce Goffey. However, with new members including Colin Barrie, Clement Meadmore, Richard Beck, Fred Lowen, Gerard Herbst and Walter Gherardin, these pioneering women were always a minority. Perhaps it was their rarity that attracted the media because both women gained coverage as designers although Burke, who was a colleague of the Coffey's, was the better known. Nonetheless, in 1949 under the heading 'She's Housewife, Designer, and Mother of

Two' *The Argus* gave an upbeat account of Joyce's career. Housework was disdained, 'anything is better than housework' and the conjuring trick of combining work with bringing up two small children (soon to be four) dealt with breezily, 'You can always find the time if you are keen enough'.¹² Importantly, Joyce was described as 'chief designer' for Kempthorne, where it was 'Joyce's job to do all the designing and [the] firm does the rest'.¹³ She was presented as an advocate of modern efficiency which was reflected in the interior of the Coffey's new house in Wattle Park 'designed with all the latest labour-saving devices, so that Mrs Coffey will have the very minimum of housework'.¹⁴ In terms of the leadership of women in the design professions, Joyce had a pioneering role in Australia.

In 1956 the Olympic Organising Committee included amongst its activities an Arts Festival as part of the official Olympic Games programme. While the various committees and sub-committees established to oversee the festivities were entirely devoid of architects and designers, the Festival itself was of a more generous disposition and included, along with art, music and literature, exhibitions of architecture, commercial art and industrial design. Ron Rosenfeldt wrote the essay on Industrial Design in the official catalogue, the most significant statement to date of the state of the industry, and compiled with G Worsley the list of entries, the majority of which, not surprisingly

Opposite Page

Top
Kempthorne Lanterns. First catalogue, 1936–1937, featuring pirate logo designed by Alan McCulloch.

Bottom
Inside page of first catalogue featuring 'big installation' lantern in Geo Hume luxury flats, St Kilda Road, Melbourne, 1937.

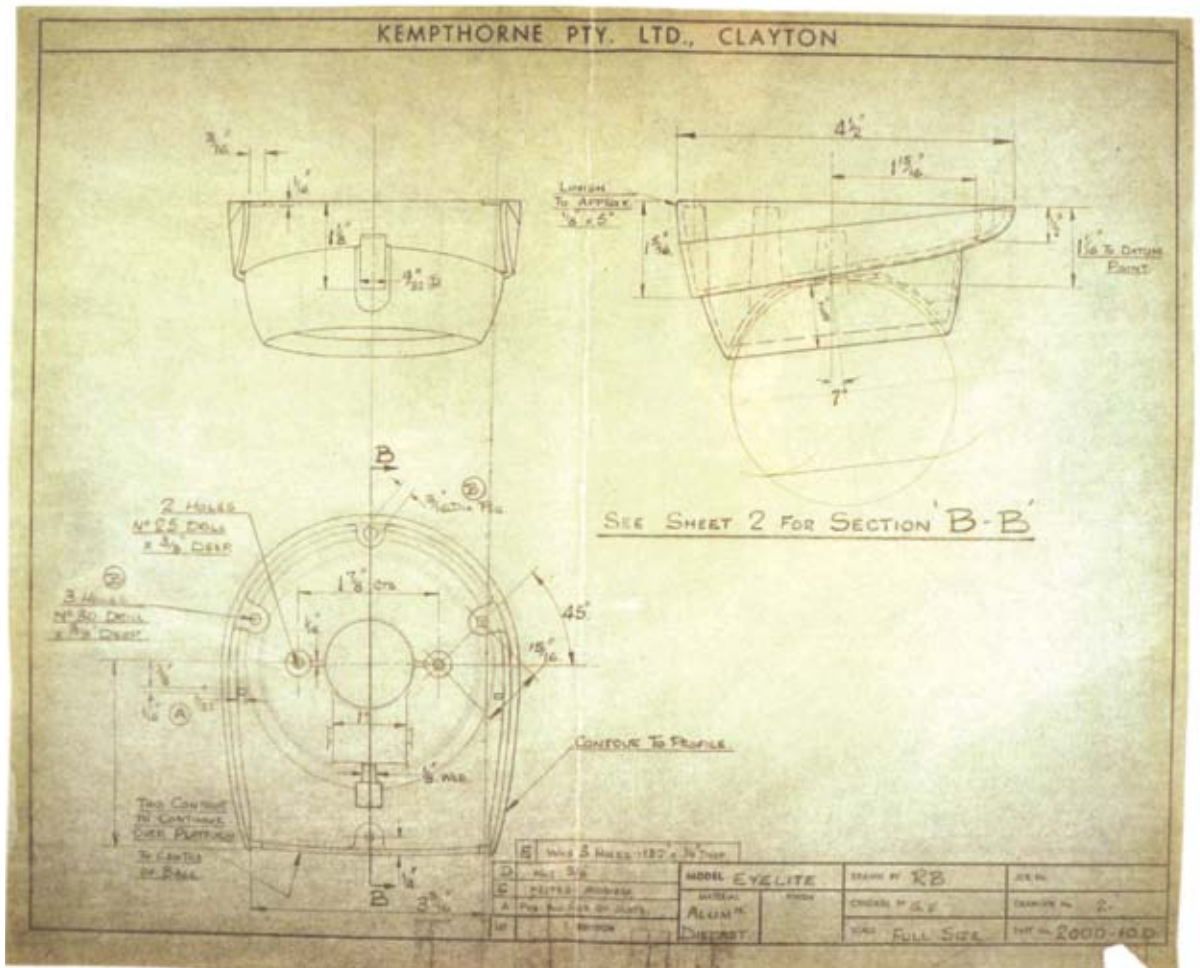
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Top Left
Athenic pendant featured in catalogue, 1940s.

Top Right
Bracket from Tempo Series, 1950s. Photograph: Ritter-Jeppensen Studios.

Bottom Left
Brochure for Tempo bracket lights, early 1950s.

Middle & Bottom Right
Respectively, cover of fold out brochure and inside pages



perhaps, were by graduates of the Tech. Several members of the DIA were exhibitors including Rosenfeldt, Gherardin, Furey, Featherston and Beck. Joyce and Selwyn Coffey entered several lights including the Tempo bracket, illustrated in the catalogue, and the Well Lamp bracket for indoor and outdoor use which was awarded a bronze medal. In the catalogue they are described as a team who 'specialize in light fittings and light engineering products'.¹⁵ Possibly inspired by the collaborative and energetic design environment encouraged by the Arts Festival of the Olympic Games, Kempthorne dropped the romantic and by now dated pirate logo and introduced a modern, upbeat and optimistic abstract sunburst complemented with modern typography, possibly designed by Joyce.¹⁶ In the lead-up to the Games, *The Age* proffered the observation under a banner 'Women's Work in Olympic Festival' and a photograph of Joyce at her drawing board at the Clayton factory:

Working at a drawing table in one of the modern new factories along Dandenong Road is attractive, red-haired Mrs Joyce Coffey, whose designs for electric light fittings will be exhibited as part of the Olympic Fine Arts Festival.

She is the only woman invited to exhibit in this field of industrial design, and one of only 45 who will have their work on display at the festival, which will have a total of more than 700 exhibits.¹⁷



Opposite Page

Top
Full scale working drawing for Eyclite lampholder, diazotype, late 1950s.

Middle
Artwork for point of sale display featuring Swivelite 220 Series and Eyclite ranges, gouache on card, late 1950s.

Bottom
Point of sale display featuring Swivelite 220 Series and Eyclite ranges, late 1950s. Photograph: Eric Lang.

This Page

Left
Advertisement for Kempthorne Lights. *Australian Home Beautiful*, June 1959, 92.

Top Right
Drawing featuring Well Glass Series bracket light range, ink and pastel on card, 1950s.

Bottom Right
Advertisement for close-to-ceiling fittings featuring Joyce and Selwyn Coffey at their drawing board. *Australian Women's Weekly*, 7 August 1963, 66.

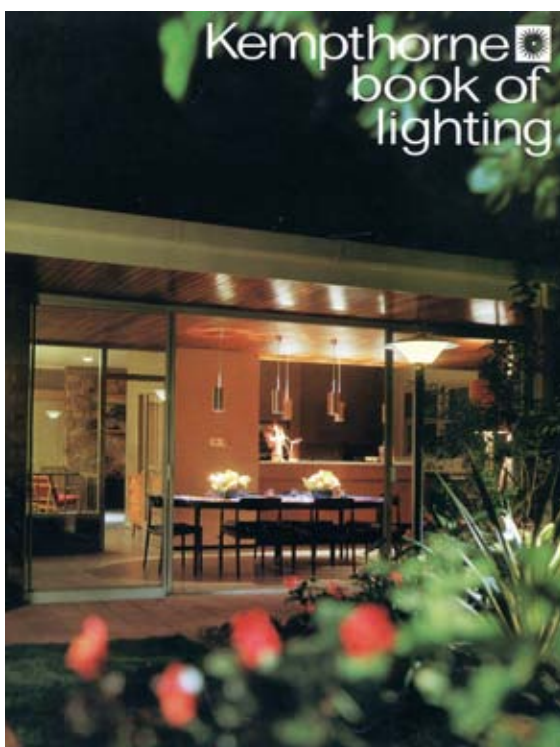
Again her role as design leader is highlighted:

*Joyce Coffey works in partnership with her husband, Selwyn Coffey. They are two of Australia's most forward-looking designers of modern decorative lamp fittings, Selwyn Coffey working on the shape of the lamps and his wife on the designs for the glass.*¹⁸

Kempthorne built on their Olympic success in a number of advertisements that appeared towards the end of the year. For example in November 1956 readers of *Australian House and Garden* were urged to 'choose an Olympic exhibit for a souvenir Christmas gift'¹⁹ while a brochure for the Tempo range promoted the fact that it was 'created by two of Australia's most forward-looking designers, Selwyn and Joyce Coffey, whose work is already attracting attention overseas as well as in this country'.²⁰ And the dual byline continued. In a feature on the flexible, all weather Kempthorne Wall Light, *Australian Home Beautiful* noted that it was 'designed by Joyce and Selwyn Coffey, A.I.D.I.A.'²¹ Both attended the World Trade Fairs in Paris, Milan and Hannover in 1959, visiting glass manufacturing and design centres in Scandinavia, Venice, Eindhoven (the Philips factory), London and New York. This, one of five overseas trips, spearheaded a successful export business, one company in Milan producing a Kempthorne light under license.²² Kempthorne entered the 1960s

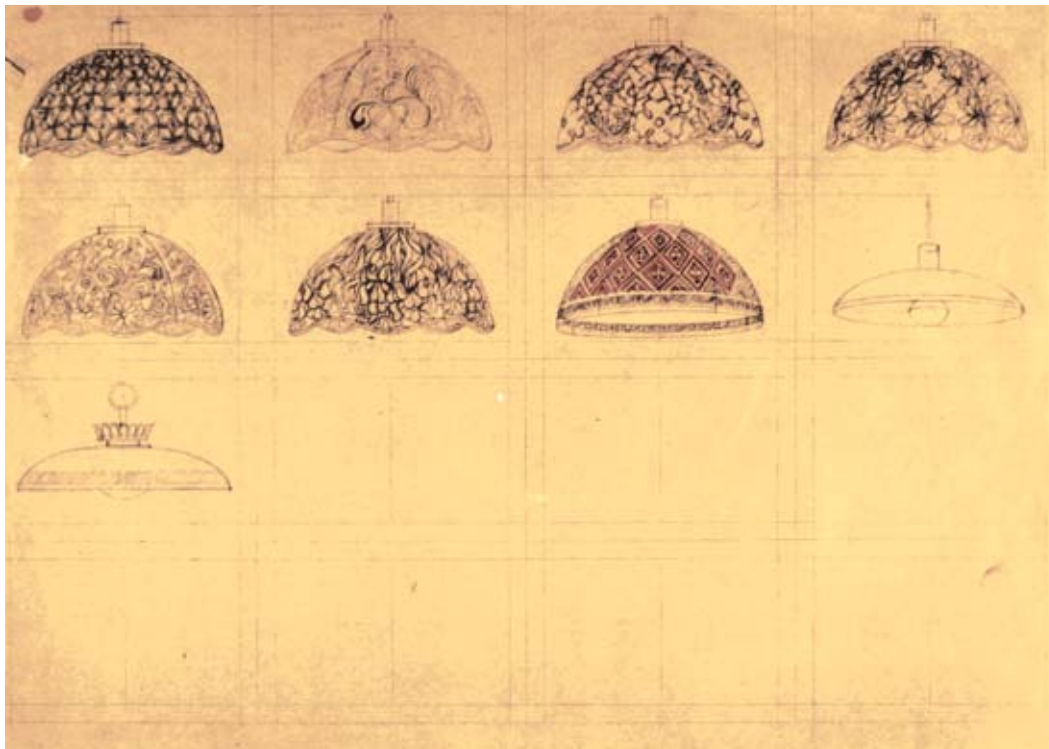
with a formidable range of lighting designs, and as a catalogue from the beginning of the decade noted 'most designs [were] by Selwyn and Joyce Coffey. All units made in Australia. Some designs are reproduced in America and Italy.'²³ In 1963 an advertisement for close-to-ceiling fittings that suited the low ceilings of modern domestic architecture, sported a large photograph of Joyce and Selwyn 'heads of the design team' at their drawing board.²⁴

From the earliest catalogues Kempthorne had used contemporary architecture as a setting and also a prompt for their products. In 1937 it was Old English while in the 1950s it was Harry Ernest's stylish Kanatopsky House in Kew which had Kempthorne lights installed throughout.²⁵ The architecture of the 1960s provided its own challenges and Kempthorne produced a range of new lights to complement the highly eclectic, bright interiors and upgraded their lighting catalogues which became glossy 'books of lighting' supplanting the earlier instruction manuals and catalogues. As Selwyn Coffey noted 'the company had [previously] used the conventional glass-bending or sagging process, but the rather vague shapes produced by this method were not in character with present day architecture needs'.²⁶ So Kempthorne developed a new semi-automatic glass-forming process to produce sharper, more crystalline lighting glassware, 'in deep drawn shapes, precise in outline



and bent to fine tolerances, from ordinary flat sheet glass'.²⁷ The process 'came into being in an attempt to make a small lighting company independent of the need to import glassware, and also independent of large Australian suppliers of blown glassware'.²⁸ It gained an Honourable Mention in the Prince Philip Prize for Australian design in 1968 and was one of a considerable number of Australian and world-wide patents Coffey took out. Kempthorne also won a Good Design Award for its Nordic Swivelites and other products.

While the Coffey brothers remained directors and managers, Kempthorne was innovative and forward looking, controlling all aspects of the supply chain. It is believed to be the first Australian lighting company to package its lights in printed cartons (these contained instruction sheets for installing the fittings), produce accompanying product bulletins, the first to use colour advertising leaflets, and the first to produce full colour catalogues.²⁹ Responsible for the introduction of track lighting in Australia, Kempthorne also established one of the first private company-owned photometric laboratories in Australia. Kempthorne was publicly listed under the name Kemtron from about 1960 and at some point in the 1960s there was an internal re-organisation of management. Of the four Coffey brothers Selwyn alone remained but retired from day to day involvement in 1970. For Joyce Coffey, who had worked closely with Selwyn, it marked the end of a remarkably successful twenty-five year career as an industrial designer.



Opposite Page

Top Left

Catalogue cover featuring sunburst logo possibly designed by Joyce Coffey, c1961.

Top Right

Back cover of *The Kempthorne Book of Lighting*, June 1963, featuring K1100 Cascade and K3020 Linea pendant lights.

Bottom

Cover of *The Kempthorne Book of Lighting*, 1960s.

This Page

Joyce Coffey, drawing of designs for pendant lamps, diazotype overpainted with gouache, 1960s.

- 1 The Powerhouse website including collection notes and Michael Bogle's entry on the D*Hub remain the only accounts of Coffey's career. <http://www.powerhousemuseum.com/collection/database/?irn=140933> accessed 4 June 2012; <http://www.dhub.org/joyce-and-selwyn-coffey-b-1913-pioneering-australian-industrial-design/> accessed 4 June 2012.
- 2 Harold Brown, reference for Joyce Hiddlestone, 7 August 1939, copy in Coffey Archive, RMIT Design Archives.
- 3 This is mentioned in an article on Joyce Coffey 'She's Housewife, Designer, and Mother of Two', *The Argus Woman's Magazine*, 18 January 1949, 4; <http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/page/1717636> accessed 4 June 2012.
- 4 Staff listing from College Prospectuses, courtesy RMIT Archives.
- 5 'Women's Work in Olympic Festival', *The Age*, 9 August 1956, 5. <http://news.google.com/newspapers?id=1300&dat=19560809&ei=MiyQAAAAI8AJ&sjid=PZUDAAAAI8AJ&pg=6912,1197346> accessed 6 June 2012.
- 6 Information for the history of Kempthorne is based on a copy of a typescript held in the Coffey Archive, RMIT Design Archives.
- 7 R Rosenfeldt, 'Industrial Design', *The Arts Festival of the Olympic Games Melbourne*, Melbourne: Melbourne City Council, 1956, 32.
- 8 J Selwyn Coffey, 'Some Aspects of Kempthorne's past', copy of typescript notes, Coffey Archive, RMIT Design Archives.
- 9 R Rosenfeldt, 'Industrial Design', 32.
- 10 Information from copy of typescript held in the Coffey Archive, RMIT Design Archives.
- 11 Ron Rosenfeldt, 'The History of the DIA', <http://www.dia.org.au/index.cfm?id=204> accessed 7 June 2012.
- 12 'She's Housewife, Designer, and Mother of Two', <http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/page/1717636> accessed 4 June 2012.
- 13 'She's Housewife, Designer, and Mother of Two'.
- 14 'She's Housewife, Designer, and Mother of Two'.
- 15 R Rosenfeldt and E G Worsley, 'Industrial Design', *The Arts Festival of the Olympic Games Melbourne*, Melbourne: Melbourne City Council, 1956, 165.
- 16 A suggestion of Michael Bogle, <http://www.dhub.org/joyce-and-selwyn-coffey-b-1913-pioneering-australian-industrial-design/> accessed 4 June 2012.
- 17 'Women's Work in Olympic Festival'.
- 18 'Women's Work in Olympic Festival'.
- 19 *Australian House and Garden*, November 1956, 52.
- 20 *Kempthorne. Guide to Home Lighting*, colour brochure issued at Clayton 1956, Coffey Archive, RMIT Design Archives.
- 21 'Kempthorne Wall Light', *Australian Home Beautiful*, May 1959, 27.
- 22 Selwyn Coffey, 'Some Aspects of Kempthorne's past', copy of typescript notes, Coffey Archive, RMIT Design Archives.
- 23 Undated (c 1961) Kempthorne Lighting catalogue, Coffey Archive, RMIT Design Archives.
- 24 *Australian Women's Weekly*, 7 August 1963, 66 <http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/page/4979255?zoomLevel=1>, accessed 2 June 2012.
- 25 'Kempthorne lights recommended by leading architects to make your home truly modern', *The Australian Home Beautiful*, June 1959, 92.
- 26 J Selwyn Coffey, notes from 'Entry into Prince Philip Prize', typescript, Coffey Archive, RMIT Design Archives.
- 27 Coffey, notes from 'Entry into Prince Philip Prize'.
- 28 Coffey, notes from 'Entry into Prince Philip Prize'.
- 29 Information from copy of typescript held in the Coffey Archive, RMIT Design Archives.

ADDITION
TO THE
COLLECTION

ZAB
DESIGN

GIFT OF MARY LEWIS
AND MILES LEWIS

This gift comprises three pieces of fabric by Zab Design from the 1970s.



Helen Abson and Zab Design (est 1972): textiles and furniture

Zab Design was established by Helen Abson and Ken Abson in 1972 when they brought out their first range of brightly-coloured printed cotton furnishing fabric. Helen Abson was born in Melbourne in 1942 and graduated with a degree in architecture from the University of Melbourne in 1965. After travel to Japan she returned home and worked in the office of architects Eggleston, McDonald & Secomb for five years. Further travel followed in Europe, the UK (working for the London firm of Austin-Smith/Salmon/Lord), Scandinavia and South-East Asia where Abson became interested in textile design and production.¹ Like Bolda fabrics established by Robin Versluys a little later, Zab's big bold geometries and strong colours were inspired by the times with its 'orange lamps, lime green laminate. Arabia and Finel enamel homewares in bright, primary colors and bold fabrics like Finlandia and the sensationally bold and bright Marimekko, from Finland, that the world was wild about'.² Marimekko was quite expensive in Australia and Zab could produce

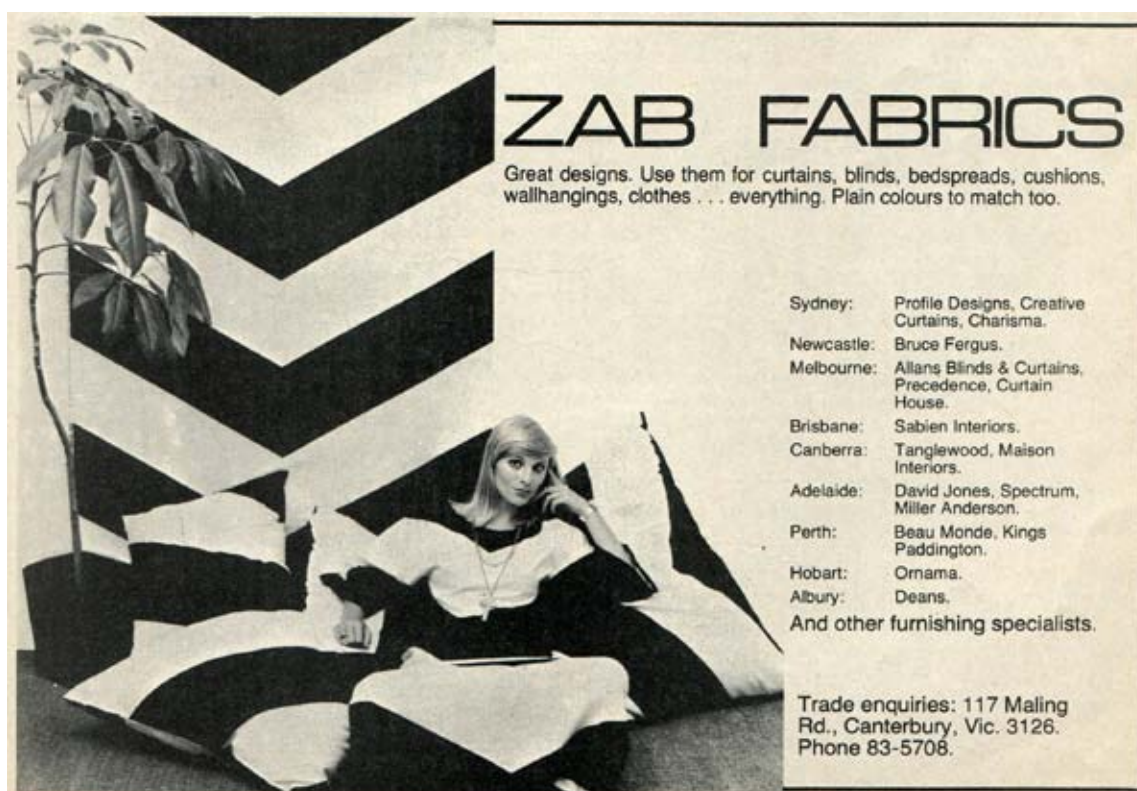
competitively priced similar fabrics that did well and were used as curtains, blinds, bedspreads, cushions, wall-hangings and clothes. In 1973 Zab Design began production of an equally vivid range of flat-pack furniture which could be assembled at home. Made from particle board, the supports were integrated into the structure, and the backs and seats of the chair were made from rubber-backed canvas fixed in position with slide-in rods.³ According to Jenny de Nijs, a former design lecturer at RMIT, by the 1980s Zab Design had established an international presence and was exporting its fabrics to the USA (New York, Boston, San Francisco).⁴ In 1985 several examples from its 'Shimmer Collection', printed on imported and dyed Japanese cotton, were published in the *International Design Yearbook 1985/1986*, edited by American architect Robert A Stern.⁵ The three pieces of Zab fabric which comprise the recent gift to the Archives are excellent examples of Abson's 1970s style and are an important addition to its textile collection.

Opposite Page

Zab Design, *Curves*, fabric piece, 1970s.

This Page

Advertisement for Zab fabrics, *Australian Home Journal*, June 1975, 65.



ZAB FABRICS

Great designs. Use them for curtains, blinds, bedspreads, cushions, wallhangings, clothes . . . everything. Plain colours to match too.

Sydney:	Profile Designs, Creative Curtains, Charisma.
Newcastle:	Bruce Fergus.
Melbourne:	Allans Blinds & Curtains, Precedence, Curtain House.
Brisbane:	Sabien Interiors.
Canberra:	Tanglewood, Maison Interiors.
Adelaide:	David Jones, Spectrum, Miller Anderson.
Perth:	Beau Monde, Kings Paddington.
Hobart:	Omama.
Albury:	Deans.

And other furnishing specialists.

Trade enquiries: 117 Maling Rd., Canterbury, Vic. 3126. Phone 83-5708.

- 1 Jenny de Nijs, *Women as Designers in Australia*, RMIT, 1986, 74.
- 2 Zinta Jurgans Heard, 'Feelin' Groovy', *The Age*, 26 June, 1994.
- 3 See 'Fabulous Easy-Assemble Furniture', *Australian House and Garden*, August 1973, 116 and 'Their furniture can be delivered in a flat box', *The Age*, 3 April 1973, 12.
- 4 De Nijs, *Women as Designers in Australia*, 74.
- 5 Robert A Stern (ed) *International Design Year Book 1985/86*, London: Thames and Hudson, 1985, 332.

FABULOUS EASY-ASSEMBLE FURNITURE

One of Australia's best known fabric makers, Zab of South Yarra, have gone into the furniture business. Below are two of their new designs, both of which are assembled in seconds by simply slotting the pieces together. The brightly painted timber and clean, uncluttered lines of the furniture complements Zab's beautiful, bold fabrics.



Above: Easy to assemble chair in yellow, orange, red, green, blue and white has padded seat and back in black or white canvas. Available from selected department stores and some decorating boutiques at approx. \$40.

Below: Simple knock-down table comes in yellow, orange, red, green, blue and white. All sections come apart and slot back easily together. Available from selected department stores and some decorating boutiques at approx. \$30.



This Page

Left
Advertisement for Zab Design knock-down furniture, *Australian House and Garden*, August 1973, 116.

Top Right
Curtains and cushions in Zab Design *Tempo* and wall-hanging in *Bamboo*, *Australian Home Beautiful*, May 1978, 55.

Bottom Right
Blind and cushions in Zab Design *Undulations*, *Australian Home Beautiful*, May 1978, 55.

Both advertisements feature Zab's knock-down table and chair.

Opposite Page

Top
Zab Design, *Waves*, fabric piece, 1970s.

Bottom
Zab Design, *Stripes*, fabric piece, 1970s.

Your Community Heritage Program Grant

This grant was awarded for the project RMIT Design Archives: Disseminating Victoria's Design Heritage. With artefacts from the Frederick Romberg architecture collection the project will produce a video installation for projection at the RMIT Design Archives building on Victoria Street and on the Archives' website. The video and accompanying self-guided tours will be launched in Heritage Week, April 2013. The project focuses on Romberg's early architectural practice and will showcase works from his student years in Zurich, memoirs of his journey by ship to Australia, and photos of early buildings in Melbourne.

PROJECT TEAM

Research Investigators: Michael Spooner, Keith Deverell, Stephen Banham, Harriet Edquist. *Research Assistant:* Leto Tsolakis. *Project Manager:* Kaye Ashton.

ARC LIEF Grant

The RMIT Design Archives is a partner in the LIEF-funded project Design and Art Australia Online: Sustainable data sharing for Australian researchers and collections. Design & Art Australia Online (DAAO) is a collaborative Open Access eResearch tool in the area of art and design. It aims to provide comprehensive coverage of the lives, works and practices of Australian artists and designers. The DAAO is expanding content in the area of design and developing infrastructure to support the sustainable exchange of data with partner organisations and complementary collections. The DAAO / RMIT partnership will result in the harvesting of selected RDA collection records by the DAAO for exposure on the DAAO portal.

PROJECT TEAM

RDA: Kaye Ashton, Harriet Edquist (CI)
RMIT Library: Craig Anderson, Maree Vaughan
UNSW: Ross Harley (Lead CI), Gillian Fuller, Jo Croucher

Correction In his discussion of the Anatol Kagan Archive published in the last edition of the RMIT Design Archives *Journal* (Vol 1 No 2 2011) Michael Bogle noted 'Kagan's official association with the Communist Party of Australia is unclear'. Subsequently Kagan's widow Dawn G Kagan has clarified that Kagan was a lifelong Trotskyist and had no official association with the Communist Party of Australia.



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