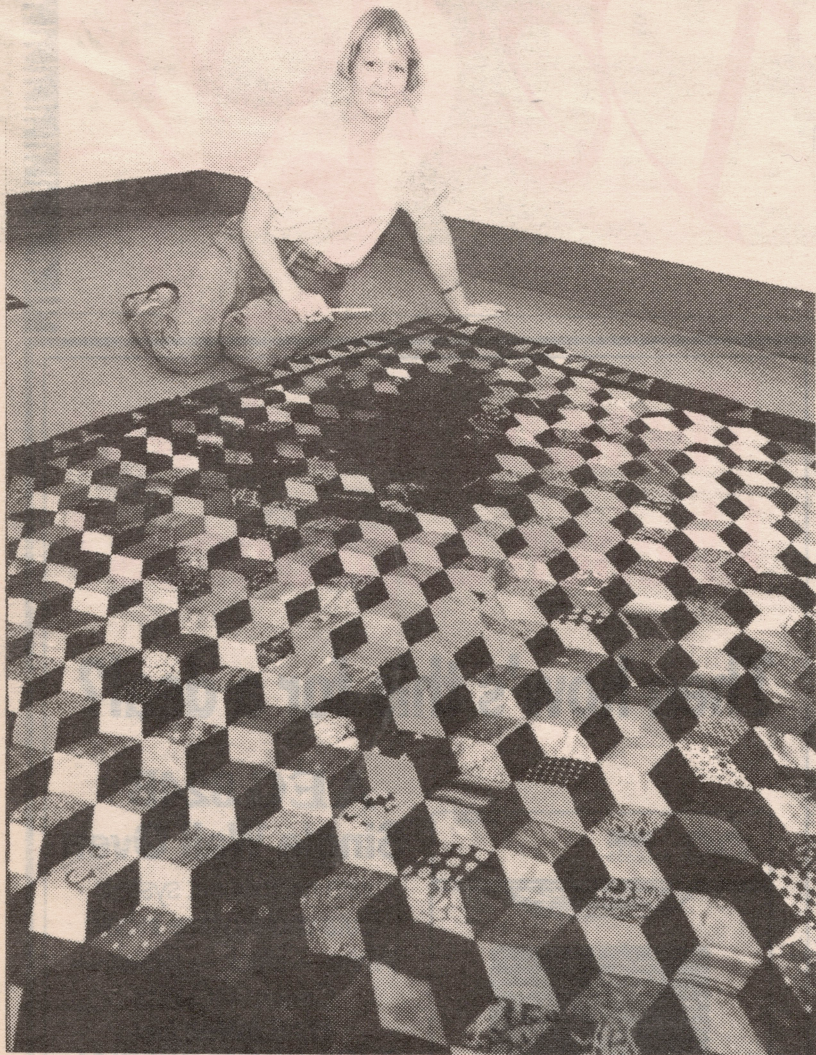


The fabric of art



The first major solo exhibition by quiltmaker Gwen Wanigasekera went on display at the Fisher Gallery in Pakuranga from February 26.

The exhibition consists of more than 20 large-scale quilts produced during the past five years by the Hamilton-based artist.

Ms Wanigasekera received a Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council Study Grant and travelled to England to research traditional forms of quilting. This highlighted for her the stories and the history that each quilt can hold.

Quilts were first used to protect the body from weapons and the cold, providing both warmth and security.

However, thoughts of their function have largely been overtaken by their artistic qualities, their colour, texture and design.

"I like working with fabric watching the interaction of the colours with the fabrics, how they affect each other," she says.

Alongside the exhibition will be a month long series of fibre workshops at the Fisher Gallery. These range from traditional patchwork and quilting techniques to the more experimental.

Skills learned at the workshops can be used on a variety of home furnishings such as bed quilts, wall hangings, cushions and soft toys.