



*Peter Haruk displays his computer-generated woodcarving.*

## A blending of art and technology

By Tim Lloyd

PETER Haruk last week produced what he reckons is a world first — a woodcut, produced with CAD-CAM computers and software and NC machinery.

He sees it as a nice tongue-in-cheek gesture — an artist producing one of the oldest forms of artwork with some of the most modern forms of machinery and technology.

Basically, Peter Haruk drew a picture on a computer screen, and was then able to "instruct" a numerically controlled three-axis milling machine to produce the finished product.

A lecturer in photography at the Nepean College of Advanced Education in New South Wales, he is one of 12 artists coming to terms with the revolution in computers, computer-aided design (CAD) and computer-aided manufacture (CAM), at a special course at the Regency College of Technical and Further Education.

The artists, from all parts of Australia, are attending a four-week national summer school organised by the Australian Network for Art

and Technology, ANAT, to teach computer-aided design and manufacture to artists, craftworkers and designers.

It is the first school of its type to be organised in Australia.

After three weeks of hard slog, Peter Haruk's conclusion is that taking a project from computer screen to manufacture "is not particularly easy".

"There are lots of areas of computer technology that are going to have to be tightened up if artists are going to use it," he said.

On other computers around Peter Haruk, artists were working on projects ranging from jewellery manufacturing to painting on-screen.

Adelaide designer Richard Brecknock was building three-dimensional images of architectural plans that would enable him to "walk through" a building, and take any view of the interior or exterior.

He said he hoped it would give him a better idea of the appearance of a building than conventional architectural models.

Adelaide sculptor Roger Noakes was using the equipment to create three-dimensional

images of his ideas for a sculpture. He also hoped to harness the computer-aided manufacturing software to numerically controlled lathes and cutters to produce a wooden model of the sculpture.

At an open day at the summer school last week, the director of the Commission for the Future and chairman of ANAT, Dr Peter Ellyard, said the project was a unique attempt to bring science, art and technology together.

Dr Ellyard said all three were essential to Australia. The difference in price between \$650 Italian shoes and \$150 Australian shoes was the Italian designer's abilities.

"But in Australia artists are locked out of the system," he said. "Artists are on no income, they are given no opportunities, and they have no access."

He said ANAT had been created with its main frame of reference being to find a way of ensuring that artists had a role along with science and technology.

The group hoped to continue to receive the support of the Australia Council during the next three years, after which it would be up to the private sector to drive the whole program.