

# It's ethnic art

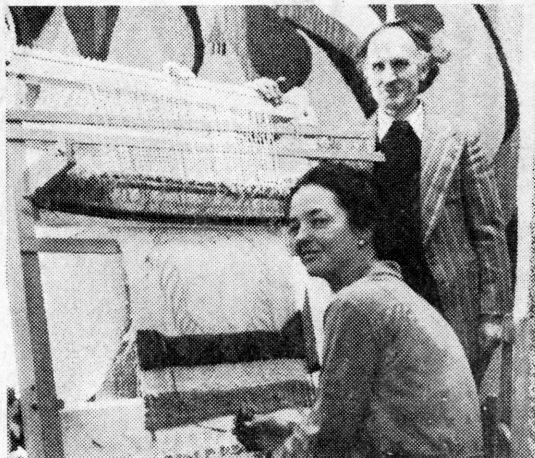
## Anne Baron.

MARIA-LOUISE AND Albert Christoph Reck's hobbies have become their livelihood.

They run a workshop in Mbabane where Albert paints designs relating to the culture of Swaziland and 18 Swazi women, supervised by Maria, weave his works on looms.

Most of the wall hangings, carpets and tapestries, which will be exhibited at Gallery 21 in Fox Street for the next two weeks, have ethnic forms and designs of Swazi origin. They capture the prints on Swazi cloths and primitive abstract beadwork seen all about the country and the Incwala, the symbol of fruitfulness and fertility of the nation.

But Albert doesn't want to dominate the creative side of the workshop. He wants to see the Swazis develop their talents and use their own methods, working on designs with him and on their own as they weave basic, bold patterns into their art works.



PICTURE Michael Herbert

The Recks have plans to expand their workshop into a small community on a farm in Swaziland.

"We've found the ideal set up," said Maria. "But we're waiting to hear whether we can get financial backing.

"It will be wonderful if it happens as our team of weavers will build huts on the land surrounding the farm house, grow vegetables, keep chickens and breed goats and sheep

so that we can produce our own wool.

"We'll also have enough premises to expand our craft industry — by making use of the outer and farm buildings and stables we'll be able to start silk screening, teach Swazis how to make lino prints, post cards and calendars, how to do copper work, not the kind sold in curio shops, batiks and the intricacies of making stain glass windows."

LEFT: Maria-Louise and Albert Christoph Reck have teamed their talents to run a workshop in Swaziland, he as an artist and she as a weaver.

When all is under way they're hoping to market their crafts in Europe.

The Recks are a large and adventurous family — they have eight children. After living in South Africa for six years they returned to their native country Germany "so the children could see what Germany is like." But they missed South Africa.

"It's difficult and expensive to travel with eight children," said Maria. "So we put all our money into a fishing trawler — my husband and six of the children took a year to sail to South Africa while I flew out with our youngest two, to get things started in Swaziland."

And now it looks as though they're there to stay to teach the Swazi people to creatively utilise their natural feel for the arts.