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AMERICAN WOODTURNER

Journal of the American Association of Woodturners
December 2014 vol 29, no 6 • woodturner.org

SCALING DOWN

COMPRESSED WOOD

FINDING YOUR OWN VOICE
RECORDER MAKER ADRIANA BREUKINK

Pat and Karen Miller

Washington

As a linear thinker with a science background, my default settings naturally point me toward making objects that function. I started turning in 2010, and woodturning quickly opened a whole new world of making for me. But a few buckets of shavings and a couple of round, brown vessels do not erase all those years of function before I began considering form more seriously. My "Vaseurns," as a friend has termed them, have allowed my right brain to coexist peacefully with the left. I have combined the classic vase, or urn shape with the utility of a handle, or bail. These forms became a fresh canvas for my wife, Karen, to explore her artistic touches by way of embellishment. We are enjoying our journey of collaboration.

For more, visit patandkarenmiller.com.

Bastille, 2014, Elm, compressed maple, hardwood dowels, dye, lacquer, gilders paste, 8½" × 5" (22cm × 13cm)

(Top row, left to right)
Paniolo, 2014, Almond, compressed maple, steel wire, dye, acrylic paint, lacquer, 8" × 3" (20cm × 8cm)

Uhura, 2014, Almond, compressed maple, hardwood dowels, colored wire, dye, lacquer, 7¼" × 4" (18cm × 10cm)

Wine for the King, 2014, Birch, black walnut, compressed maple, sterling silver, thread, dye, lacquer, 12" × 5" (30cm × 13cm)

(Bottom row, left to right)
Meade for the King, 2014, Chinese sumac, compressed maple, brass, thread, dye, polyurethane, 9" × 5" (23cm × 13cm)

The Prison of Iao, 2014, Sycamore, compressed maple, hardwood dowels, steel wire, 12" × 4½" (30cm × 11cm)

Dedicated to providing education, information, and organization to those interested in woodturning

American Woodturner (ISSN 0895-9005) is published bimonthly by:
American Association of Woodturners
222 Landmark Center
75 5th St W
St. Paul, MN 55102-7704
office: 651-484-9094
toll free: 877-595-9094
fax: 651-484-1724

email: inquiries@woodturner.org
website: woodturner.org
gallery website: galleryofwoodart.org

Yearly membership in the American Association of Woodturners is $55 USA, $60 Canada, and $70 overseas and includes a subscription to *American Woodturner*.
Electronic-journal AAW membership, $45

Send dues to:
American Association of Woodturners
222 Landmark Center
75 5th St W
St. Paul, MN 55102-7704 USA

Or join online at woodturner.org

Periodicals postage paid at St. Paul, MN, and additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to AAW, address listed *above*.

Publications Mail Agreement No. 40064408
Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to:
Express Messenger International
P.O. Box 25058, London BRC
Ontario, Canada N6C 6A8

Printed in the USA by Quad/Graphics, Waseca, MN

MIX
Paper from responsible sources
FSC® C084269

Inside This Issue

December 2014 vol 29, no 6

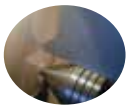
FEATURES

AMERICAN WOODTURNER

Journal of the American Association of Woodturners

ASSOCIATION NEWS

WOODTURNERS CHATTER



GALLERY

COVER

Cover – Handmade recorders by Adriana Breukink, profiled on page 46. Photo: Ronald Moelker

Back Cover – Jim Creel, *Alien Series*

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For tips on article submission and photography requirements, visit tiny.cc/AWsubmissions*.

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For address changes or journals damaged or lost in the mail:
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Download a free complete *American Woodturner* index (PDF format) at tiny.cc/AWindex*.

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Erica Nelson
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erica@pierreproductions.com

Betsy Pierre
763-295-5420
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The AAW does not endorse any product featured or advertised in this journal.

A NOTE ABOUT SAFETY

An accident at the lathe can happen with blinding suddenness; respiratory and other problems can build over years.

Take appropriate precautions when you turn. Safety guidelines are published online at tiny.cc/turnsafe*. Following them will help you continue to enjoy woodturning.

*Web address is case sensitive.

Editor's Note

One of my goals is to offer videos that will accompany *American Woodturner* articles, to further illustrate the story with action. I'm happy to announce the first one is here, in this issue. Mark Sfirri has written an account of the evolution and making of *Building Blocks*, a large turned and carved sculpture, and the video brings us closer to the experience. The callout box at the end of Mark's article, on page 45, tells how to connect to the video: type in the URL, scan the QR code with your mobile device, or, for online readers, just click the hyperlink.

Terms like hyperlink, URL, and QR code are relatively new. Recently, I perused (again) my father's *Workbench* magazines from around 1964 (yes, they predate me). Like time capsules, old magazines offer a glimpse of what things were like when they were published. The cover price was 35¢, and a subscription was $1.00 for five issues. The ads are amusing: "Make Up to $5.00 an Hour at Home" and "Throw Away Your 'Rabbit Ears' and Use the Powercord TVtenna." The woodworking projects, some of them turned, are strictly utilitarian. And each issue has a special "Women's Page."

What does the journal you now hold in your hands (on paper or on a screen) say about our current point in history? While some aspects of this December issue are traditional, such as David Fry's story about Adriana Breukink, a recorder maker, other parts are far more contemporary. There are links to external websites and videos. Malcolm Zander covers a relatively recent innovation called compressed wood, which can be used to surprising and delightful effect. The ads reflect new and different methods and improved tools and machines. The work shown often abandons traditional ideas about function.

I wonder how communications, media, and woodcraft will evolve over the next fifty years. How will today's journal seem in retrospect? What will appear amusingly antiquated? Probably, for one, the paper it is printed on—imagine that, they used paper!

Joshua Friend

—Joshua Friend

From the President

This will be my last letter as president of the AAW. I want to take the time to thank all the members who make our organization great. We are a volunteer organization of 15,000 with a paid staff of five. Without members pitching in, there is no *association*. I want to apologize up front because I know I will leave out some members who have given of their time and resources.

To Al Hockenbery, the 2014 AAW Honorary Lifetime member, thanks for all your help with the symposium each year and stepping up when we needed you. To John Hill, you have more ideas than I could work on. Thank you for your continuing advice and work each year at the symposium. To Malcolm Zander, who never stops thinking of new ideas to work on, and to J. Paul Fennell, who has guided POP. Both of you stepped up when we asked for help. Thanks to Botho von Hampeln for bringing a solid business view to the table. Thanks to David Wahl for all your help on the board of advisors.

Thanks to Jean LeGwin for all your work in reorganizing the *American Woodturner* and how it is produced. Thanks to Betty Scarpino for raising the professional level of the journal. Thanks to Tom Wirsing for stepping up and leading the organization through a difficult time.

Thanks to Hal Sanders in Texas for all your help in reviewing our many contracts each year. Thanks to Dennis Fuge for your generous help in the surveys of our membership, which brought a clearer understanding of our members and their needs. Thanks to Mark Mandell for all your advice and work on the bylaws and ethics policies. Thanks to Terry Martin for all your work on Turners Without Borders.

To our permanent volunteers each year at the symposium: thanks to Kay and Bill Haskell for running the lathe raffle; to Kristin and Wally Haugan and David and Karen Long for a great instant gallery; to Bob Hunt for organizing the cameras; to Daryl Duer for helping put together the cameras and safety shields; to John and Carol Ellis for all your work with the volunteers and craft room; and to Larry Miller and Joe Ruminski for your work in running the symposium's youth turning room.

Thanks to all the local members who step up each year when AAW brings the symposium to their city. The symposium is simply not possible without their generous volunteering of time. This year in Phoenix it was Jason Clark and Ana Lappegard and their big crew. Thanks in advance to David Dudney and his crew in Pittsburgh. Thanks to the hundreds of turners and artists who donate their work to help fund the POP and EOG programs each year. These fine programs would not exist without these many generous artists.

Thanks to Bonnie Klein for twisting my arm in 2008 to run for the board. It has truly opened the door to the world for me. Thank you to David Ellsworth for your sound advice over the years. Thanks to Philip Hauser for your financial brains on the finance committee and on the board. Thanks to Kurt Hertzog for being the hardest working member of the board. You will make a good president of the AAW. Thanks to Phil McDonald and your crew. I know you are paid staff, but you have worked above and beyond what we had a right to ask and without exception were there whenever I needed help.

Finally, thank you to the two board members who have served the past six years with me. To Binh Pho, who I learned not to bet against. This renaissance artist is owed the gratitude of our membership for bringing his strong vision of the future of AAW to the board. To Sandy Speier, who brought her unwavering common sense and a strong business background to the board. Thank you, my friends.

I leave you with this: Do you ask the question, what can woodturning do for me? Or do you ask, what can I do for woodturning? It is time for you to step up and volunteer.

Dale Larson

Thank you, AAW, for all you have given me.
Dale Larson
AAW Board President

The AAW has positively influenced many aspects of woodturning since its grassroots inception in 1986. Today, we lead the way in offering woodturners, from hobbyists to professionals, opportunities for education, information, community, and outreach. Our annual international symposium complements our expanding collection of educational publications, resources, and benefits we offer to AAW's growing member community.

The AAW's 29th annual international symposium will be held at the David L. Lawrence Convention Center in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, June 25–28. Pittsburgh is a vibrant city wrapped in three rivers, alive with natural beauty, compelling history, and a thriving cultural district. Our symposium will have something for everyone and will appeal to woodturners of all experience levels and interests. Not only will it be an excellent opportunity for you to see world-class demonstrators share their techniques, you'll also discover the latest innovations in tools and materials and be inspired by the Instant Gallery and other exhibits. You'll feel a passion in the air for woodturning and enjoy the company of others who share your enthusiasm.

TOP 10 REASONS
YOU'LL WANT TO ATTEND AAW'S 29TH ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM

PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA
JUNE 25–28, 2015

SYMPOSIUM

1 EXCELLENT VALUE
The AAW symposium packs in more high-quality learning opportunities for woodturners than any other event. Sign up early for discounted registration and special hotel group rates. You'll receive a full-color 150+ page handout book loaded with information, techniques, and insights from demonstrators. Plus, the symposium Guidebook app for mobile devices will be available again this year so you can have the rotations, demonstrators, floor plans, and messaging at your fingertips.

2 WORLD-CLASS DEMONSTRATIONS
No other event offers you as many opportunities to learn from the world's best turners. We'll have eleven rotations and sixteen rooms (more than ever before) featuring demonstrations by some of the most talented and inspirational turners around. With 176 sessions to choose from over three and a half days, you'll have more opportunities to observe and interact with top experts than anywhere else. Here are just a few of the folks you'll see: Mark Baker, Stuart Batty, Jerry Bennett, Michael Brolly, Christian Burchard, Nick Cook, David Ellsworth, Lyle Jamieson, Steven Kennard, Craig Kirks, Alain Mailland, JoHannes Michelson, Pascal Oudet, Joey Richardson, Avelino Samuel, and Mark St. Ledger. Additional demonstrators to be announced.

3 SOMETHING FOR WOODTURNERS OF ALL SKILL LEVELS
Expert woodturner? Just getting started? Regardless of your skill level or interests, the AAW symposium will offer something for you. You'll be able to select from the broad range of demonstrations and panel discussions to focus on sessions that will enhance your woodturning experience the most. Watch for "Top Picks" from Al Hockenbery and others to help you identify the perfect rotations for your skill level.

4 WORLD'S LARGEST DISPLAY OF TURNED-WOOD OBJECTS
Bring up to three pieces of your work to display in our huge Instant Gallery and participate in the largest show of turned-wood objects under one roof. Our themed exhibits will draw collectors and galleries from around the country. You'll be inspired by the broad selection of exhibition work and have an opportunity for your own work to be noticed.

5 THE LARGEST WOODTURNING TRADESHOW ANYWHERE
You'll be able to examine and purchase the newest woodturning products, visit with tool and lathe manufacturers, peruse a huge selection of turning wood from suppliers, and more in our enormous tradeshow. Enjoy ongoing demonstrations and see tools and machinery up close and in action. There is no substitute for holding tools in your own hands and having experts demonstrate tricks and techniques. Kick some tires.

6 OPPORTUNITIES TO GIVE BACK TO OTHERS
You can donate a turned item to benefit Empty Bowls and Beads of Courage, both worthy charitable causes. What's more, you'll be able to double your support by purchasing an Empty Bowl for just $25.

7 SOCIALIZE WITH LIKE-MINDED PEOPLE
Step out of your shop and tap into the vast network of the AAW woodturning community. You'll be able to make and renew lasting connections with people who share your passion for woodturning.

8 COMPANION PROGRAM
In addition to browsing our exhibitions, galleries, and tradeshow, your registered non-turner spouse, partner, or adult guest can participate in a wide variety of organized activities, including arts and crafts led by instructors from Pittsburgh's Society for Contemporary Craft, and tours while you attend woodturning rotations and demonstrations.

9 YOUTH WOODTURNING PROGRAM
You can bring a child or grandchild to sow the seeds for a lifelong love of woodturning that will leave lasting memories. The instructor-led woodturning sessions for pre-registered kids ages 10 to 18 are FREE, with a registered adult.

10 LOTS OF AFFORDABLE ATTRACTIONS IN THE PITTSBURGH AREA
The Travel Channel named Pittsburgh one of its "Best All-American Vacations 2014." Pittsburgh's got it all—great food, outdoor adventure, history at every corner, and a thriving cultural district. There's plenty to do and see, including the exhibitions at the Society for Contemporary Craft, Carnegie Museum of Art, Carnegie Museum of Natural History, Carnegie Science Center, Duquesne Incline, Frank Lloyd Wright's Fallingwater Home, Mount Washington, PNC Park, and Senator John Heinz History Center, just to name a few.

See you in Pittsburgh! For more information, visit tiny.cc/AAWPittsburgh (case sensitive).

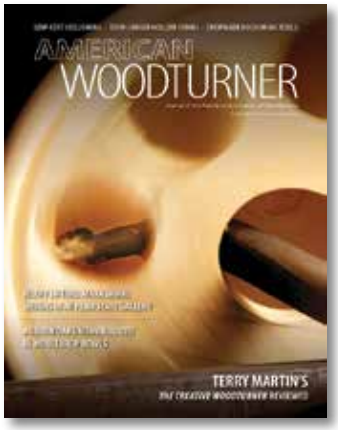
HOTELS
When you make a reservation, mention that you're with the American Association of Woodturners to ensure you receive the special group rate.

- Our host hotel is the **Westin Convention Center Hotel**, Pittsburgh (attached to the David L. Lawrence Convention Center, site of the AAW symposium). The AAW group rate is $145 for a standard king or two double beds. Complimentary wireless Internet is provided in all guest rooms and early registration begins December 1, 2014.
- AAW group rates are also available at the **Omni William Penn Hotel** (a ten-minute walk to the David L. Lawrence Convention Center). The AAW group rate is $145 for a standard king or two double beds. Complimentary wireless Internet is provided in all guest rooms.

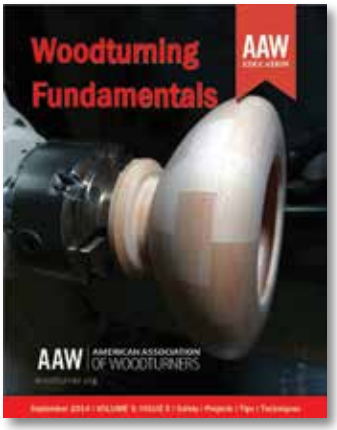
Membership

Turn to the AAW for inspiration, education, and information about woodturning tools, techniques, projects, safety, and more.

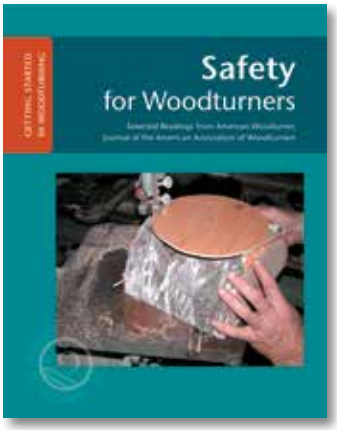
More than $120 of educational resources included with each $55 general membership.



American Woodturner
journal, six issues annually, each packed with woodturning-related articles, projects, photos, tips, techniques, and news. Plus, a comprehensive library of all past issues dating back to 1986, with a searchable, online index. Newsstand price:
$53.70



Woodturning FUNdamentals
six digital issues annually, filled with projects, tips, videos, and information on tools and techniques to build basic skills. Non-member price:
$26.94



Safety for Woodturners
this 64-page digital book will help you build strong skills at the lathe while helping you learn safe woodturning practices. Non-member price for printed book:
$14.95

Let's Go for a Spin
a digital seven-part lesson plan for instructors, designed to provide beginning and advanced students with a well-rounded set of turning skills. Non-member price:
$87.70

Photo: Andi Wolfe

Community
Being part of a dynamic community of more than 15,000 enthusiasts worldwide: **Priceless**

AAW | AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF WOODTURNERS

Join us or renew today!
woodturner.org
651-484-9094, 877-595-9094 (toll free)

Apply for an AAW Educational Opportunity Grant

AAW's Educational Opportunity Grant (EOG) fund continues to be strong, thanks to the wonderful generosity of donors and buyers at our annual symposium auction. Funds are available for worthy proposals. ***To be eligible for a 2015 grant, applications must be received by December 31, 2014. All AAW members are eligible to apply*** (except for recipients of grants in 2014). You can complete the application form and review the guidelines at tiny.cc/EOG (case sensitive).

The committee will not consider applications that are incomplete or vague, so please take care when applying. The following tips will help you with your application:

- Complete the application online at tiny.cc/EOG. Only online applications will be accepted. Submit well before the deadline!
- Provide sufficient information so EOG committee members can clearly understand what you are requesting and how you intend to use the funds. Be concise; make your points directly and clearly.
- Include details of how you will use the funds. Specific needs should be itemized. Funds will not be granted for miscellaneous, incidental, or unspecified expenses.
- Explain your educational goal or experience you wish to obtain. Keep in mind these grants are intended for educational purposes. In particular, explain how others will benefit as well.

Grant amounts are limited: up to $1,000 for individuals and students and up to $1,500 for local chapters, schools, and nonprofit organizations. Your total budget may exceed these amounts; however, your grant request should not exceed EOG limits. For special situations, at the discretion of the EOG committee and the AAW Board, grants of larger amounts are occasionally available. In addition to EOGs, the committee will award ten certificates for registration to AAW's 2015 international symposium.

If you have questions, contact Rob Wallace, EOG Committee Chair, at rob@woodturner.org or the AAW office. The AAW Board encourages you to take advantage of this member benefit.

AAW Board of Directors Election Results

Congratulations to Louis Vadeboncoeur, Kathleen Duncan, and Jeff Brockett for being elected to the AAW Board of Directors. Each person will serve a three-year term, beginning in January 2015. Serving as a volunteer on the Board requires a significant commitment of time, and we appreciate the willingness of all six candidates to put their names forward for the election. Thank you.
—Dale Larson, AAW Board President

Prize Drawing for AAW Members

One of the many benefits of membership in the AAW is our monthly prize and year-end grand prize drawings. Thank you to the vendors who donated this year's prizes, which include tuition scholarships, $100 certificates, sanding supplies, DVDs, chucks, grinding jigs, symposium registration, and lathes! Contact Linda Ferber if you would like to contribute a prize, linda@woodturner.org.

When you patronize our vendors, please thank them for their support of the AAW. To see a listing of each month's prizes and winners, visit tiny.cc/AAWDrawings (case sensitive).

At the end of 2014, we will draw another name from our membership roster to give away a Powermatic 3520B lathe. That winner will name a local chapter to win either a JET 1642 or five JET mini-lathes. The Powermatic and JET lathes are donated by Powermatic/JET. Included is free shipping in the continental USA, or up to a $500 allowance for international winners.

2014 Donors

(Others may be added during the year.)

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Hunter Tool Systems, hunterwoodturningtool.com
Mike Mahoney, bowlmakerinc.com
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Thompson Lathe Tools, thompsonlathetools.com
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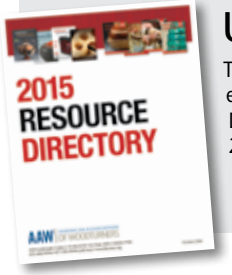
Trent Bosch, trentbosch.com
Powermatic/JET, powermatic.com and jettools.com

Call for Videographers AAW Symposium 2015

The AAW seeks videographers for its 29th international symposium in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, June 25–28, 2015. Applicants should have experience with video camera equipment, possess technical competence, and be able to make decisions regarding lighting, shooting angle, placement of microphone, etc. Applications will be accepted until January 15, 2015. Videographers selected for six rotations will receive a free symposium registration. Selected videographers will be notified in February 2015. To apply, visit tiny.cc/videographer.



Update Member Profile Information

The AAW Member Directory is available 24/7 at woodturner.org. Changes you make electronically are "live" for all to see immediately. But a hardcopy version of the Directory is also printed every two years, and the next printing is scheduled for early 2015. To ensure your member profile information is correct in the upcoming printed Directory, please login to your membership account and review/update your profile by December 31, 2014.

Woodturning Shines at Artistry in Wood Exhibit

In September, the Sonoma County Woodworkers Association (SCWA), in partnership with the Sonoma County Museum, opened its 26th annual Artistry in Wood exhibit. This six-week showcase of fine woodwork is a northern San Francisco Bay tradition anticipated by woodworkers throughout the west. Included among the sponsors of this year's exhibit was the Wine Country Woodturners, an AAW chapter.

While furniture comprises a substantial portion of entries in the show, additional categories now include art, woodturning, and miscellany. Entries are juried for craftsmanship by a panel of SCWA Guild masters; then an independent panel of judges provides subjective review of the works and assigns category and excellence awards based on concept, artistic design, and execution.

The exhibit featured sixty-two pieces by thirty-two makers, and twenty of the entries were in the category of woodturning. Hollow forms, bowls, platters, and boxes, both of single-piece stock and segmented wood, were displayed. Examples of embellished surfaces, whether carved, colored, or burned, were present along with creations featuring the natural beauty of a variety of wood species. The reemerging of turned elements in some furniture designs was encouraging, too. Of the fifteen awards given, more than a third were for turned works. Overall, the Artistry in Wood exhibit presented a nice variety of woodturning and demonstrated a continuing interest in the craft.

—*Scott Clark*

For more, visit:
sonomawoodworkers.com
sonomacountymuseum.org
winecountrywoodturners.org

Photos: Tyler Chartier

Lee Baker, *Black Box,* 2013, African blackwood, cocobolo, thuya burl, each box: 3" × 3" (8cm × 8cm)

Exhibit Award: Best Piece in Woodturning

Alan Brickman, *Segmented Flower Bowl,* 2013, Maple, bubinga, walnut, ebony, 4" × 12" (10cm × 30cm)

Hugh Buttrum, *Ginko Box,* 2012, Valley oak burl, 6" × 4" (15cm × 10cm)

Exhibit Award: Award of Excellence

Steve Forrest, *Willow Bowl,* 2014, Willow, 5" × 5¼" (12.7cm × 13.3cm)

Chuck Quibell, *Local Native Maple Bowl,* 2014, Bigleaf maple, 5" × 12" (13cm × 30cm)

Chapter Collaborative Challenge (C3) 2015

For AAW's 29th international symposium in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, the chapters and membership committee will again sponsor a Chapter Collaborative Challenge (C3).

Each AAW chapter is invited to submit one collaborative work created by as many chapter members as possible, with a minimum of six participants. Complete rules for entry can be found at tiny.cc/C3 (case sensitive).

The pieces will be prominently displayed during the symposium in an area near the Instant Gallery. During the symposium, attendees will be invited to select, by ballot, their choice for Best of Show and their favorite piece in each of three categories: Artistic, Mechanical/Technical, and Fantasy. Votes will be tallied prior to the banquet, during which the winners will be recognized. In addition to plaques awarded for the winner in each category, the AAW will provide one free symposium registration to each chapter that wins an award.

Calendar of Events

February issue deadline: December 15

Send information to editor@woodturner.org

New Zealand
March 13–21, 2015, "CollaboratioNZ 2015," Whangarei. Held biennially, this collaborative event gives seventy participating artists a chance to explore new mediums and connect with other artists. For more, visit collaborationz.co.nz.

Alaska
January 25, 26, 2015, 11th annual Alaska Woodturners Association Symposium, Hardware Specialties, Inc., Anchorage. Featured demonstrators will be Trent Bosch and Nick Cook. For more, visit akwoodturners.org.

California
September 14, 2014–March 15, 2015, "In the Realm of Nature: Bob Stocksdale & Kay Sekimachi," exhibit at Mingei International Museum, San Diego.

Florida
January 9–11, 2015, 14th annual Florida Woodturning Symposium, Lake Yale Baptist Conference Center, Leesburg. Featured demonstrators will include Alan Lacer, Trent Bosch, John Jordan, Bob Rosand, Richard Morris, Lee Sky, Bruce Hoover, and Patrick Sikes. For more, visit floridawoodturningsymposium.com.

Hawaii
March 14, 15, 2015, 6th annual Honolulu Woodturners Symposium. Jerry Kermode will be the featured demonstrator. For more, visit honoluluwoodturners.org.

Idaho
February 21, 22, 2015, Idaho Artistry in Wood Show, Boise Hotel and Conference Center, Boise. Show will include competitors from all skill levels in wood carving, turning, scroll work, fine woodworking, gourd art, and pyrography and will feature demonstrations, vendors, raffles, an auction, and banquet. For full details, visit idahoartistryinwood.org.

Iowa
August 30, 2014–January 25, 2015, "Turned Wood" Exhibition, Lewis Gallery, Figge Art Museum, Davenport. Featuring work by Steve Sinner, Lane Phillips, Galen Carpenter, Harvey Fein, Michael Mode, and Michael Peterson. For more, visit figgeartmuseum.org.

Minnesota
Ongoing exhibit: "Touch This!" featuring fascinating facts about wood and woodturning, as well as pieces you can touch. For more information, visit galleryofwoodart.org.

New Hampshire
May 8, 9, 2015, 8th annual New England Woodturning Symposium, Pinkerton Academy, Derry. Hosted by the Guild of New Hampshire Woodworkers and the Granite State Woodturners, the symposium will include woodturning demonstrations, a gallery of work by demonstrators and attendees, and a trade show. There will also be a Youth Turning Day, Friday, May 8th. For more, visit gnhw.org.

New York
March 28, 29, 2015, Totally Turning Symposium, Saratoga Springs. Presented by The Adirondack Woodturners Association. Featured presenters include David Ellsworth, Nick Cook, Dixie Biggs, Doug Fisher, John Beaver, Kurt Hertzog, Derek Weidman, Dick Gerard, Steve Mushinski, Steve Pritchard, Willie Simmons, Ralph Mosher, and Bill Meier. For more, visit totallyturning.com.

Oregon
March 6–8, 2015, Oregon Woodturning Symposium, Linn County Expo Center, Albany. Demonstrators include Mike Mahoney, Trent Bosch, Jimmy Clewes, Kirk DeHeer, David Schweitzer, Dale Larson, Molly Winton, Eric Lofstrom, Nick Stagg, and Sara Robinson. For more information, email gerrost@yahoo.com or visit oregonwoodturningsymposium.com.

Tennessee
January 30–31, 2015, Tennessee Association of Woodturners 27th Annual Woodturning Symposium, Marriott Hotel and Convention Center, Franklin. Demonstrators include Nick Cook, J. Paul Fennell, Ashley Harwood, Todd Hoyer, and Dennis Paullus. There will be an instant gallery, banquet, auction, and opportunity for attendees to have their pieces critiqued. For more information visit tnwoodturners.org/symposium, email tawsymposium@aol.com, or call 615-973-3336. For vendor space contact mine@tds.net.

Washington
March 21, 2015, Northwest Washington Woodturners' 6th annual All Day Demo, Anacortes First Baptist Church, Anacortes. Featured demonstrator will be Michael Hosaluk. For more, visit nwwwt.org/HosalukDemo.pdf or contact Rick Anderson at registration@nwwwt.org.

Book Review: *In the Realm of Nature: Bob Stocksdale & Kay Sekimachi*, Mingei International Museum/Fine Arts Press, 2014, 212 pages

Does Bob Stocksdale's legacy still matter?

Father of American Woodturning. Consummate craftsman. An American original. During his long and productive career, legendary bowl maker Bob Stocksdale (1913–2003) won these accolades and more in the world of museum quality woodworking. He was widely copied and revered by the next generation in the craft. Yet from the 1980s on, his dramatic open vessels of rare tropical woods waned in influence as many woodturners, seeking their own artistic identities, shifted away from expensive and endangered exotics to explore different forms, added color, and mixed media. A new sensibility already filled the air when the AAW was founded in 1986. Perhaps that explains why the *American Woodturner* index lists surprisingly few entries for someone of Stocksdale's stature.

New window

Fortunately, a major retrospective and catalog—*In the Realm of Nature*—now provide a fresh opportunity to reconsider Stocksdale's contribution in light of what succeeded it. Thanks to the Mingei International Museum in San Diego, visitors and catalog readers can experience up close the life and work that kindled widespread interest in finely turned bowls. As a bonus, curious turning enthusiasts can also take in the parallel show and biography of Stocksdale's wife, the renowned weaver Kay Sekimachi. A number of pictured works and the bulk of the commentary underscore remarkable convergences in their artistic influences and personal histories, but profound differences in their approaches—one favoring spontaneity, the other preconception—nevertheless stand out.

The beautifully designed, large-format catalog provides a wider frame for appreciating Stocksdale's work following the 2009 publication of Ron Roszkiewicz's *To Turn the Perfect Wooden Bowl: The Lifelong Quest of Bob Stocksdale* (Fox Chapel), the first book on Stocksdale released since his death. With more than sixty color plates—many life sized or larger—and plentiful text-embedded photos, *In the Realm of Nature* adroitly captures the evolution and lasting convictions of the bowl maker. It also provides glimpses of Stocksdale's little-known furniture and occasional use of vessel inlays, texturing, and coloring.

Beginnings

The basic facts of Bob Stocksdale's rise from humble origins have appeared in numerous publications: Resourceful Indiana farm boy hooked up his first, gas-powered lathe at age 12; turned assorted spindles to boost the family income; made his first bowl in a conscientious objector camp during WWII; and settled in Berkeley, California, where he supplied fashionable department stores with handmade vessels and ultimately gained the attention of museum curators worldwide.

As principal catalog author, Signe S. Mayfield unspools the longer story with finesse, wit, and insight, highlighting key childhood details, such as the early educational advantages of having a grandfather and uncle in the hardware and tinsmithing business. She traces Stocksdale's gradual development as an all-around woodworker building furniture for clients and mastering complex factory machinery. By age 26, "...he was fully self-employed as a cabinetmaker, specializing in walnut or cherry antique reproductions, often with carved wood." But like Sekimachi, he found

his budding career forever changed by the looming war and the dislocation it would bring. Despite the hardships of internment for his peace church allegiance and her Japanese ancestry, both seized opportunities for growth through job duties and encouragement from superiors in the manual crafts. Most important for Stocksdale, he befriended a visiting gallery owner who began to sell the bowls he had recently started turning. By war's end, he was primed to become a full-time craft maker.

Postwar pivot

Guest essayist John C. Lavine discusses at length Stocksdale's decision to abandon professional cabinetmaking for bowl turning. Surviving pieces furnishing the Berkeley house suggest how Stocksdale's work might have developed had he continued as a full-time furniture builder. Most apparent is the Scandinavian Modern influence, with its emphasis on sleek lines, minimal adornment, and utility, with form taking precedence over strong grain. But as an avid wood collector, Stocksdale prized strong grain above almost all else. In the end, Lavine suggests, "...additive [constructed] work was too far removed from the essence of Stocksdale's relation to wood: it was in the primal activity of subtractive

Kay Sekimachi, *Hornet's Nest Bowl,* 2007, Hornet's nest, 4" × 7¼" (10cm × 18cm)

Bob Stocksdale, *Ebony (Ceylon) Bowl,* 1981, 4" × 7¼" (10cm × 18cm)

Photo: Courtesy of the Center for Art in Wood

Portrait of Bob Stocksdale and Kay Sekimachi, 1992

Photo: Christopher Dube

Magazine Rack, 1950s, Wood, metal, 23½" × 25½" (60cm × 65cm)
Collection of Kay Sekimachi

lathe work that he found the perfect fusion of material, process, and form."

At the lathe, Modernism continued to infuse Stocksdale's aesthetic, undoubtedly informed by the thin, austere bowls of James Prestini, America's premier woodturner from the early 1930s to mid-century. By 1950, thin, sleekly profiled bowls in exotic woods were also emerging from the studios of Arthur Espenet Carpenter and Rude Osolnik. Equally significant, the Danish industrial designer Finn Juhl began developing the well-known ellipsoidal bowl with elevated body and smoothly undulating rim—the famous bird's mouth shape that, after sweeping refinement, became a signature for Stocksdale. The young American notably cast aside Juhl's indifference to grain orientation in such bowls by always locating the foot toward the center of the tree and approximating the outside log curvature when he bandsawed the fluid rim of his sidegrain pieces. Magically, the grain reinforced the shape while the retained sapwood added contrast, doubling the impact. This was not, of course, woodturning for mass production.

Even before Stocksdale met Sekimachi, vessels from the Far East also came to influence his forms, particularly the delicacy of the bases. As Lavine notes, "...his famous quip that Chinese potters had been copying his shapes for thousands of years was no trivial remark. Rather, it was a sly and pointed way for Stocksdale to place himself in a lineage of artisans with ancient roots."

Over the years, Stocksdale produced a wide variety of open forms, including those with natural edges, a common design of Rude Osolnik's. These resembled bird's mouth bowls, but the surface irregularities of most logs usually refused to yield the streamlined lip profiles of Danish Modern. He also turned simple hemispheres, parabolas, cones, hyperbolas, and fishbowl and Jefferson cup shapes. Occasionally he would add a flat or single scallop to enliven the upper wall/rim. Curiously, the bell curve does not seem to appear among his pieces in most public collections.

Surfaces

Stocksdale's plates deserve special attention because they reveal the maker's preoccupation with patterns in wood, even where form is minimal. How many woodturners would take the risk/trouble of turning a large plate from a ⅝" (16mm) board? But the prospect of polished grain, figure, and color proved irresistible to Stocksdale. Even so, he surely looked long and hard along his straightedge when checking the interior face and crossed his fingers when he set the finished piece aside at household humidity.

From early on, Stocksdale gravitated toward decorative wood species. Even when he produced salad bowls, he often chose beautiful timbers like teak and walnut. By the 1970s he was turning mainly exotics like the rosewoods, ebonies, macadamia, and countless others. "In combination with varying blank orientations on the lathe, he could create [in such raw materials] some spectacular effects: bull's eyes...starburst[s]...or a marvelous spray of medullary rays," Mayfield notes. Yet he was also well aware that the vibrant colors and contrast in many woods would eventually fade. ▸

Green planet

Mayfield works diligently to portray Stocksdale and Sekimachi as artistic explorers of the natural world. As Stocksdale prospected the remains of once-living stems, Sekimachi, too, often exploits the stuff of life—jute, maple leaves, hornets' nests, flax. Mayfield concludes that "Stocksdale's profound connection to wood was initiated...when his heart first opened up to the presence of a single, grand tree [of his childhood]. Mesmerizing traces of infestation, dynamic rivers of grain, or cylindrical rhythms of growth richly pattern Stocksdale's rare wood bowls."

The loftiness of this theme, however, is somewhat subverted by the book's focus on the rare woods so highly valued by Stocksdale (and many of us). A number of them, such as cocobolo and lignum vitae, are now officially listed by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species. African blackwood and other valuable trees are likely to join their ranks in coming years. Of course, this issue never really registered in the public consciousness during much of Stocksdale's lifetime. And he often recycled his shavings, reclaimed tropical lumber from building renovations, and turned non-threatened California "exotics" like blackwood acacia and pistachio. He calculated that his lifetime work represented no more than an acre of trees (although that probably did not factor in any logging roads or clearcutting). Even so, on many workdays, less than two percent of any scarce material taken from the log pile survived.

Going forward

The unhappy reality at this point is that few professional bowl makers can hope to sustain a 50-year career using solid tropical woods. The world has changed. Some turners have adapted by producing work arguably closer to Sekimachi's than Stocksdale's: honeycombed surfaces (J. Paul Fennell), leaf vessels (Ron Fleming and Andi Wolfe), and basket illusions (the late David Nittmann), to name a few. Others have collectively blazed an astonishing multitude of divergent creative paths. For those of us still obsessed by the protean landscapes in wood, a host of patterned treasures awaits discovery at the local sawmill, by the roadside, and in the wood lot. And the singing fluid lines that Stocksdale passed on are free for the taking. With or without acknowledgment, his legacy will endure.

Catalog available from fineartspress.com. Softcover, $32; hardcover, $45. ■

—David M. Fry

(Top left) Cocobolo (Nicaragua) Bowl, 1970, 4¼" × 9½" (11cm × 24cm)
Collection of Kay Sekimachi

(Top right) Black Sumac Bowl (with partial natural edge), 1988, 3" × 6" × 4½" (8cm × 15cm × 11cm)
Collection of the Oakland Museum of California

(Bottom left) Ebony (Malaysia) Bowl, 1994, 6⅛" × 5" (16cm × 13cm)
Collection of Linda A. Aurichio and R. Ellen Pearce

(Bottom right) Macadamia (Hawaii) Wood Bowl, 1986, 3¼" × 4⅜" (8cm × 11cm)
Collection of the Center for Art in Wood

AAW Chapter's Tops to Tots Program a Success

The Central Oklahoma Woodturners Association (COWA) has teamed up with Oklahoma City's Dean McGee Eye Institute to provide tops for children receiving care in under-served areas of the world. Treatable blindness is very common in many parts of the world, and the Dean McGee Eye Institute, through its Global Eye Care Program, works with the existing medical infrastructure in countries they visit to offer education and treatment.

COWA has been turning tops for school-aged children at the Land Run Reenactment Festival in Choctaw, Oklahoma, for the past six years. The tops are turned onsite and colored as each child wishes. With repeated success in this endeavor, COWA eventually created its Tops to Tots program.

COWA President Michael Reggio learned of the Eye Institute's mission and offered the possibility of tops being provided as a gift for the patients. Dr. Bradley Farris, of the Eye Institute, was very enthusiastic about the prospect and spoke at a COWA meeting. The challenge of providing 500 colorful spin tops was unanimously accepted by club members. Within a short time, the 500 tops were taken to Swaziland, Africa, where young eye patients were thrilled to receive them. A few months later, another 500 tops were headed to Sichuan Province, China, and were equally enjoyed by children and adults alike.

"We were told some even cried when they were given their own tops to take home," said Sarah Mantooth, Coordinator of COWA's Tops to Tots program. This fall, COWA members overwhelmingly voted to continue supplying tops to the Dean McGee Eye Institute and its Global Eye Care Program, which also serves patients in Lima, Peru, and poor and underprivileged patients in Oklahoma.

If you would like more information or would like to contribute tops to the program, contact Sarah Mantooth at sbmantooth9@gmail.com.

—Sarah Mantooth

Tops are easy and inexpensive to turn and a great skill builder for new turners. COWA's Tops to Tots program has received tremendous support and serves as a good model for any club wanting to give back to the community. Here are just a few of the comments we have received:

- Wayne Furr, past president of the Southwest Association of Turners (SWAT): "This extremely worthwhile project not only builds new relationships, but also gives members of the club an opportunity to bring a ray of hope to parents and children who are dealing with difficult and often life-threatening conditions in poor and destitute countries."
- Gina Crissman, novice woodturner: "Finally, here is a wonderful project that encourages participation by new turners as well as experienced ones."
- Terry Officer, COWA board member: "This project allows all turners, both new and advanced, to gain turning skills while contributing to a worthy cause. It gives everyone a warm feeling, both turner and recipient."
- Jim Clow, past president, COWA: "The look on young faces when they receive a top gives you a warm feeling in your heart. It's a grandpa sort of moment that makes you feel good all over."

From left, top row: Drs. Hildebrand, Farris, and Skuta of the Dean McGee Eye Institute; seated: Sarah Mantooth, Coordinator of COWA's Tops to Tots program, and Michael Reggio, COWA President.

A happy beneficiary of COWA's Tops to Tots program, Swaziland, Africa.

Nutmeg Woodturners Marks 25th Anniversary

From a spirit of equality

In 1989, I was shy and reserved—definitely not naturally inclined to do something like start up and run a woodturning club. But I decided to do it anyway, and that choice, it turns out, had a profound impact on my life.

From a young age, I rejected the idea of a money-chasing career. My thinking was more closely aligned with the Human Potential Movement of the 1960s, which focused on personal fulfillment, creativity, and happiness. I felt strongly that all people should treat each other with respect, regardless of anyone's position in life. I also liked the tenets of the AAW, which focused on the open and free sharing of information in a way that didn't put anyone "above" another. I was also naturally drawn to making things by hand and eventually found woodturning.

All of these factors came together when forming the Nutmeg Woodturners League. It seemed important to create a group where all people who had an interest in woodturning could meet and share with other turners. And all members would be considered equally important—no VIPs or higher-ups. Our shared interest in turning would be the great leveling force, making everybody equal.

The birth of a chapter

The Brookfield Craft Center (BCC), of Brookfield, Connecticut, seemed a likely place to host club meetings, so I approached Dee Wagner, who was BCC's registrar at the time, with the idea. Dee represented everything good about BCC: she was caring, giving, and always positive. Her like-mindedness and approachable manner made it possible for me to pitch the idea. In fact, it would be hard for me to overemphasize just how much her presence at BCC contributed to the successful arrangement between BCC and what would become the Nutmeg Woodturners.

> "Our shared interest in turning would be the great leveling force, making everybody equal.

I didn't do this alone. Along with Dee, there were two others who helped start the Nutmeg group—Dennis and Iona Elliott, a couple I met at an exhibit opening. Dennis exemplified my beliefs about equality, no matter our position in life. He was an avid, passionate woodturner like me, who also happened to be the original drummer for the rock band, Foreigner. He played with the band from 1976 to 1993 and was famous and worldly in his own right. But he was also just a woodturner who wanted to learn and share.

Another person who was key to all of this was my wife, Patti, who understood what was important to me and was always supportive. She still comes to Nutmeg meetings with me.

Forming the Nutmeg chapter changed my life. I met many wonderful people whom I never would have met otherwise. I am proud and grateful the club is still going strong today, and it has been wonderful to see others step up and lead the group over the years. Of course, a healthy membership is always evolving, and I like to think that what we started twenty-five years ago is still benefitting people today. ■

—Andy Barnum

A partial showing of the Nutmeg Woodturners, 2014. From left: Jed Walker, Jim Degen, Jim McNamara, Jay Hockenberry, Steve Robertson, Tony Bedini, Ken Rist, John Caraszi, Martin Gerndt, David Heim, Don Metz, Sergio Villaschi, Allan Brown, Buster Shaw, and Allen Nemetz.

Photo: Michele Pangle

Members of the Nutmeg Woodturners League chat with Albert LeCoff during a 2001 fieldtrip to the Wood Turning Center (now called The Center for Art in Wood), Philadelphia. From left: Albert LeCoff, Jim Degen, Ernie Krubsack, John Levin, and Jay Hockenberry.

Photo courtesy of Jim Degen

Turners Without Borders Visits Wenzhou Special School

Since 2012, Turners Without Borders (TWB), AAW's international outreach program, has been developing links with countries that either have no turning culture or have lost touch with their own turning heritage. For more than two years now, TWB has partnered with the International Wood Culture Society (IWCS) to explore and develop woodturning in China. IWCS (woodculture.org) is an American non-profit organization that promotes wood cultures around the world and has strong links with Chinese wood culture.

In 2013, Terry Martin, Chair of TWB, was invited by IWCS to visit the Wenzhou Special School in Wenzhou, China, where students with disabilities are being educated in a wonderfully supportive environment. The school already had a wood carving program, so Terry offered to work with IWCS to set up a turning program for the hearing-impaired students. With equipment donated by Vicmarc Machinery, Tormek, and Steve Fulgoni of The Woodturning Store, the program was ready to start by early 2014.

Every year IWCS hosts World Wood Day (WWD), and, as part of that event in March 2014, five volunteer AAW members demonstrated turning to huge numbers of visitors in Xianyou, China. Afterwards, they journeyed to Wenzhou to begin the task of teaching turning to the staff and students at the Special School. They were accompanied by a large number of wood carvers who had also been demonstrating at WWD.

See the video and photos

Teaching at the Wenzhou school was a deeply moving experience for all participants. Children who cannot hear are used to communicating across barriers and they coped perfectly with this invasion by foreign woodworkers. Their courtesy, curiosity, and energy were contagious for all of the visitors. IWCS has produced a marvellous video of the event. Please visit the following URL or scan the QR code with your mobile device to experience some of the emotion and joy of the Wenzhou experience: worldwoodday.org/2014/wenzhou.cfm.

For more information on TWB, visit tiny.cc/AAWTWB. ■

—Terry Martin

Bonnie Klein shows her work to Mr. Li, Principal of Wenzhou Special School, and the students.

At World Wood Day in Xianyou, Andy Chen, one of the AAW team, was besieged by children who wanted the tops he turned.

Theo Haralampou, another of the AAW turners, shows a Wenzhou teacher how to turn.

Call for Entries 2015 Juried Member Exhibit

The theme for the AAW's 2015 juried and invitational exhibit is "Merging," chosen to reflect the location of our symposium host city, Pittsburgh, which lies adjacent to where the Monongahela and Allegheny Rivers merge to form the Ohio River. We encourage you to use any interpretation of the theme for inspiration. All AAW members are eligible to submit entries.

Complete guidelines can be found at tiny.cc/2015Merging (case sensitive) and in the August 2014 issue of the journal. Entry dates are November 1 to February 3, 2014. Questions? Contact Tib Shaw at the AAW Gallery of Wood Art, tib@woodturner.org.

Tips

Vibration-dampening pads

My lathe was producing annoying vibration during turning, although I was using the feet supplied by the manufacturer. A friend in my local woodturning club suggested putting rubber pads under the feet. This worked so well that it has made turning fun again.

Using ⅜"- (9.5mm-) thick rubber from a tractor-trailer mud flap, I cut 4" × 6" (10cm × 15cm) pads and put them under the feet of my lathe. These pads dampen the vibration, allowing me to increase my lathe speed safely. Of course, you will always get vibration when turning an unbalanced workpiece too fast; rubber pads cannot be expected to prevent that from happening. But they can reduce minor vibration.

—Ted Laffey, Illinois

Share your turning ideas!

If we publish your tip, we'll pay you $35. Email your tips along with relevant photos or illustrations to editor@woodturner.org.

—Joshua Friend, Editor

Wheels for Delta 46-460

I live in a condo where we have to park our cars in the garage at night. Our garage is small, so I store my lathe in a recessed closet, which means I must move it frequently. My Delta 46-460 is plenty heavy, especially with the bed extension, so here is my solution.

I mounted ¼" × 3½" × 22" (6mm × 9cm × 55cm) steel plates to the stand using hinges, and mounted four 2½" (6cm) full-swivel casters onto the plates. I cut a ¼" (6mm) slot in a 1" (25mm) pipe to use as a lever for raising and lowering the plates. When the wheels are down, I put a block between the steel plates and the frame to hold the plates in place. The pipe is about 18" (45cm) long and gives plenty of leverage to raise and lower the lathe. I can roll it around at will. When turning small items, I leave the lathe up on the wheels. For larger turnings, I lower it.

—Barry Rockwell, California and Montana

Marking for a chuck

When preparing a bowl blank for the chuck, the live center is in the way when I go to mark the blank for a spigot. To get around this problem, I made a simple spigot marker from sheet metal. I made an initial mark at the correct location on the wood, took a small piece of sheet metal, and cut a point in it to scribe the wood. When the flat surface of the sheet metal registers on the live center, its point automatically aligns on the blank at the correct spot.

I sharpened a point on the opposite end for the other chuck I use regularly. A small rare earth magnet allows the spigot marker to be stored on the headstock of my lathe, out of the way but within easy reach.

—Ron Browning, Florida

Ornament display stand

I was having trouble finding the right display stand for some hollow-globed Christmas ornaments I recently turned. I found a solution at the grocery store—an egg whisk.

To make a quick ornament stand, I cut alternating wires at the base of the egg whisk and ended up with five long wires that I could bend around a template to get a pleasing curve. After turning a wooden base, I wrapped the wires at the end of the whisk and glued them into a hole drilled in the base.

—Richard Landreth, Virginia

Lathe curtains

I have a small basement workshop and it seemed I was spending more time cleaning shavings from my shelves and the surrounding area than actually turning. It occurred to me that some sort of curtain system could solve my problem. After searching the Internet, I found a flexible curtain rail system that works similarly to those found in hospitals.

The distance I would need to enclose my lathe was 25' (7.6m). So, using the guidelines from the website flexiblecurtaintrack.com, I ordered some flexible track along with the hardware to mount it.

I had previously attached furring strips to the exposed floor joists above my shop, so it was an easy job to mount the brackets along the line I wanted. For the turns, I mounted brackets on the joists at the beginning and end of the curve. Then, once the track was in place, I could tell where to put the bracket to support the middle of the curve. I had to add a short furring strip to be able to install the bracket in the right place.

I decided to use five bathtub shower curtains, which are 5' (1.5m) wide and easy to find. I went with cloth curtains because I was concerned about dust clinging to vinyl ones. I chose white to reflect light back on my work. Each shower curtain has twelve eyelets, so I installed sixty runners on the track. However, because I have 9' (2.7m) ceilings, I had to install 12" (30cm) spacers to make them hang low enough to catch the shavings and drop them to the floor. I just used some string I had handy, but I will probably replace it with small chain links at some point. Shower curtains also have magnets at the bottom corners, which help to keep them closed.

The curtains perform just as I had hoped. Shavings fall where I want them, I have more light on my work, and the curtains can be pushed out of the way when I've finished working. Now I can spend more time turning and less time cleaning!

—Dave Phillips, Missouri

Storage for small blanks

I have been turning only two years and until I'm ready to tackle larger projects, my passion has become pens, letter openers, bottle stoppers, fan/light pulls, kaleidoscopes, and other small items. In order to organize the various blanks I have accumulated (totaling more than sixty at this time), I created a wood blank storage system using 4" (10cm) PVC pipe.

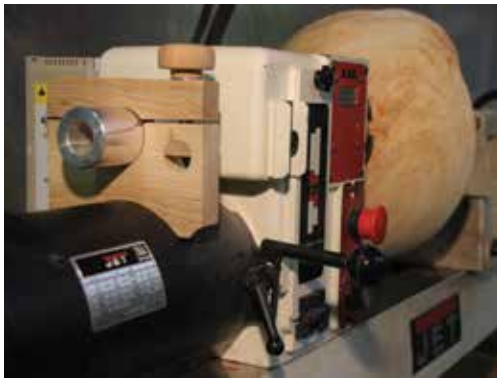
I cut the pipe into 6" (15cm) lengths and sanded the front edge with my belt sander to smooth the rough edges. I made supportive sides to hold the stacked cylinders in place. To do this, I screwed two strips of wood with a channel in them to my countertop (channel facing up), placed thin panels into the channel, and screwed the panels to each side of the upper cabinets. My storage system comprises sixty cells, but of course you can create whatever number your space allows.

I attached labels below each tube and covered them with packing tape for durability. You could also laminate a sheet of printed labels and cut them apart. My labels identify the type of wood and the country/region the wood came from, as I have found customers are interested in knowing that information when they purchase my products.

—Darcie A. Didden, Arkansas

TIPS

Alternate spindle lock for JET 1642



I found the factory spindle lock and indexing system on my JET 1642 to be cumbersome, so I came up with an alternate method of holding the spindle stationary.

I cut two pieces of scrap oak to match the outline of the motor and the spindle. I then joined the two pieces with a hinge on one end. On the other end, I drilled for a ¼" (6.4mm) bolt vertically through both pieces and drilled the bottom piece to accept a ¼" T nut that would engage the bolt. I turned a knob for the top of the bolt so I wouldn't need a wrench to tighten it.

The fixture slides on and locks the workpiece in an infinite number of positions with just a quick turn of the knob. When I'm ready to turn the lathe back on, the fixture slides back off easily after unscrewing the bolt.

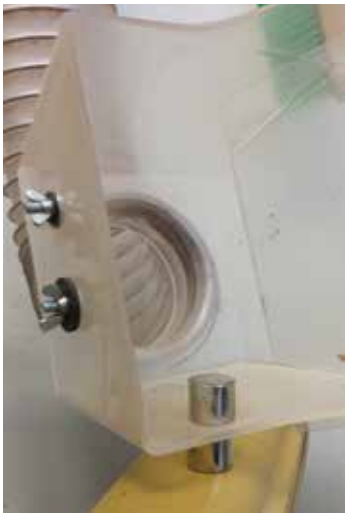
—Michael McNeilly, North Carolina

Recycle broken handles

I just can't throw a cracked or split rake or shovel handle away because I think I might use it for something in the future. Now I have been using these broken parts for small woodturning projects. Many handles are made of hardwoods such as ash and hickory, which have wonderful color and turn nicely.

Recently, I turned some rolling pins and used broken wooden parts for the axles and handles. I also turned small eggs from a broken wheelbarrow handle. Someday soon I am going to try using broken handles for pen blanks.

—Mark Choitz, Oregon



Magnet-mounted dust hood

After several failed attempts to secure the dust hood and vacuum hose to my lathe, I found that two cylindrical neodymium magnets, ⅞" diameter by ¾" tall, do the job well. I purchased my magnets from kjmagnetics.com.

I guessed at the strength needed for this task, and the 43-lb-pull-force magnets I ordered are more than enough to do the job. One magnet holds very firmly to the cast iron banjo. My plastic dust hood sits on top of this magnet, while the second magnet is placed opposite the first, inside the dust hood. The magnets are strong and stay put, but you can still reposition the dust hood by sliding its plastic housing between them.

—Skip Richardson, North Carolina

Scaling Down

for a New Perspective

Andrew Potocnik

For some people, ideas come on a grand scale, and for others, on a smaller scale. I realized a pod form I have explored in recent years could be scaled down to form a piece of turned jewelry or, as in this project, a brooch. In developing the idea, I had to rethink how components are created and later how they would be joined, considering their delicate nature. Along the way, I developed new methods of joining components and decided just how big the final item would be so it could be worn as a fashion accessory.

Turn the pods

Because of the small scale, I was able to make use of scrap wood that seemed too good to throw away. To turn the pods, mount a blank about ½" square by 4" long (12mm × 100mm) between centers and rough it to a cylinder. Mark the cylinder to indicate three key sections: stem, collar, and pod *(Photo 1)*. The collar will not end up as an element of the finished piece but will be used in remounting the piece for hollowing. Turn the pod section to the approximate shape you want, and reduce the stem section far enough so it will fit into the spindle of your lathe *(Photo 2)*.

In order to hollow the pod, remount the workpiece by feeding the stem through the chuck and into the lathe's spindle. Grip the collar section with the inside portion of the chuck (not the jaws). Before tightening the chuck, use the tailstock center to help align the wood so it will run true *(Photo 3)*.

Hollow the pod's interior with a small scraper *(Photo 4)*. Because the pod was so small, I could not use my fingers to gauge wall thickness. As a simple alternative, use a gauge made from coat hanger wire. The distance between the tips of the gauge stay the same as you slide it along the inner wall of the turning, but the gap between the outer tip and the outer wall will indicate changes in wall thickness *(Photos 5, 6)*. To sand the inside, I folded abrasive over the end of a pencil.

To complete the pod's exterior and stem, reverse mount the piece using a small jam chuck made from scrap wood. Form a tenon on the scrap so the pod will fit snugly over it, and support the stem end with the tailstock center *(Photo 7)*. Use the fingers of your left hand (if you are turning right handed) to support the stem as you reduce its diameter. As the stem gets thinner, this support will become necessary to prevent flex, chatter, or breakage. I used a combination of spindle gouges and a skew chisel to arrive at a suitable shape *(Photo 8)*.

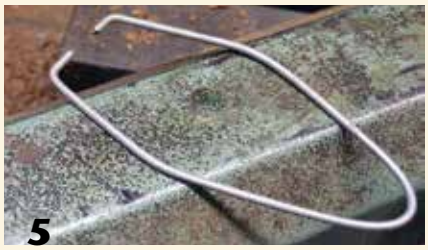
After the stem and pod are shaped and sanded, remove the piece from the ▸

1
Label the sections: stem, collar, and pod.


2
Turn the pod to its general shape and reduce the stem section to fit into your lathe's spindle.

3
Remount the pod by inserting its stem through the chuck and into the spindle, using the tailstock for alignment. Tighten the inside portion of the chuck onto the collar section.


4
Hollow the pod.


5
Use a shopmade gauge to measure wall thickness.


6


7
Create a small jam chuck to reverse mount the workpiece.


8
Support behind the cut is helpful when turning thin spindles.


9


10
Cut and sand the pod so it resembles an organic shape.

lathe. Use a jeweler's saw (or other fine-toothed saw) to cut curved openings down the side of the pod to resemble an organic shape. Refine the edges with abrasives *(Photos 9, 10)*.

Bending the stems

For the bending phase, I use a luthier's bending iron, which operates in a fashion similar to a clothes iron. Plug it in and wait for it to heat up. I soak my timber in water—less time for porous timbers, more time for denser and thicker pieces. This is a case of trial and error without hard and fast rules. I found that about five minutes was ample, as the stems were quite thin. When you are confident water has penetrated the wood sufficiently, simply press the wood against the bending iron with a little pressure. Add more water to the wood as it dries out and press it onto the iron again. Alternate these steps until the wood becomes pliable *(Photo 11)*. Working back and forth between water and the iron, gradually bend each component to the curve you desire and then put it aside to dry.

Editor's note: If you do not have a luthier's iron, John Lucas offers alternative methods of bending thin-turned elements in his article on page 22.

Build the framework

Now it is time to make several long, thin pieces that will serve as the framework for the brooch. Starting with stock about ¼" square by 3½" long (6mm × 90mm), make a small chuck to prevent a driving spur from splitting the timber when mounted between centers. For the chuck, simply mount scrap wood to a faceplate, trim it down, and cut a hole just big enough to accept the end of the blank. You still have to be careful not to split the tailstock end, but the same technique can be used there, too. After you turn the spindles thin, sand them with support from your fingers to prevent breakage *(Photos 12, 13)*.

Assembly and finishing

With all the components bent and dry, you are ready to assemble the frame of the brooch itself. Lay the frame pieces out on a piece of medium density fiberboard (MDF) and tape them in position with thin strips of masking tape. Mark where the pieces cross and use a jeweler's file to saw grooves, similar to half-lap joints *(Photos 14, 15)*. To bond the parts together, I used cyanoacrylate (CA) glue. Another piece of MDF held everything flat, and I weighed it down with a heavy scroll chuck.

I strengthened the frame using fine sterling silver pins glued into the frame, much the way you would pin a mortise-and-tenon joint. Drill a small hole (sized according to the diameter of the pins you are using) partway into the crossed pieces of wood. Mark the depth of the hole with a piece of masking tape wrapped around the drill bit. Glue the pins into the holes; then file and sand the pins flush *(Photo 16)*. I used the same assembly process to position and attach the pods to the framework.

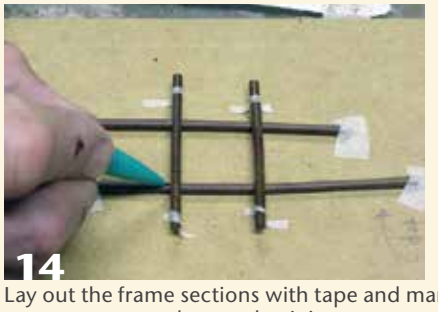
I chose and shaped a piece of highly figured blackwood to attach to the back of the brooch, providing a surface onto which the clasp could be glued *(Photo 17)*. For projects like this, I like to apply a finish to all components prior to assembly, although you may need to touch up areas where the pins have been filed and sanded.

Your turned fashion accessory is now ready to present to an appreciative fan. ■

11 Bend the soaked pod stem with a bending iron.

12 A custom chuck is one way to mount the wood to turn small, thin elements.

13 Apply counter pressure when sanding thin spindles.



14 15 Lay out the frame sections with tape and mark where the pieces will be joined. Saw grooves to create better glue joints.

16 Sterling silver pins reinforce the joints.

17 The brooch's clasp can be glued to a decorative timber attached to the back of the frame.

Andrew Potocnik has been involved in woodturning since high school. His work is represented in many private and museum collections. He was an International Turning Exchange (ITE) resident in 2004 and writes for other woodworking publications. Andrew's primary interest is sharing his passion for wood with students in a school setting.

Bending Alternatives

Untitled, 2014, Ash, compressed ash, pawlonia, 6" × 16" × 1" (15cm × 41cm × 2½cm)

John Lucas

It has been said that if you ask ten woodturners how to do something, you will get ten different correct answers. This would be true for bending wood. There are many ways to do it, each with advantages and disadvantages. Here is an overview that includes four methods you can use to bend thin-turned spindles. I have used them all to add various features to my woodturnings and I hope you will, too.

Considerations

Bending thin-turned spindles, as opposed to larger flat timber, has its own set of challenges. I often add bent turnings as elements in an artistic piece, such as my turned and bent flowers. In cases like this, I turn and sand the wood before bending and therefore, if using a form, have to use clamps that will not leave marks or indents. When possible, leave excess wood that can be cut away later to position the clamps away from finished surfaces. Another trick is to wrap an inner tube around the bent turning to hold it against the form.

Noted here are methods of bending using dry heat, steam, a microwave, and compressed wood. These methods have a few things in common. The wood needs to be straight grained. Prior to turning, select wood whose grain runs continuously from one end to the other. If the grain runs out of the wood, it will break at that point when you try to bend it. Turned details such as beads and coves will be stress points and may or may not bend successfully. Straight sections will bend well. It is much like bending metal in that the material will bend easier at the thin points. You may need to practice if you are going to bend pieces with complex contours. Pieces that would bend well prior to turning (flat) may or may not bend the same when turned. Experiment with these methods before you start on a serious project with expensive wood.

Dry heat

Dry heat has been used for many years by luthiers to bend wood for guitar

(1) A common curling iron is a good dry heat source for bending veneers and thin-turned spindles.

(2) The author's tea kettle steam setup.


3


4


5

Steam-bent spindles will hold the shape of a form when dry. Creative, non-marring methods of clamping include the use of an inner tube and spring clamps.

parts. I first learned this technique when I built a dulcimer. Years went by before I needed to do it again, and I tried a propane torch to heat a pipe and bent the wood over it. However, it was hard to control the heat and easy to burn the wood. If you do not have access to a luthier's bending iron and do not want to buy one, a simple solution is to use a common curling iron, clamped safely in a vise or other holding device *(Photo 1)*.

Simply slide the wood over the heated surface of the curling iron and bend the wood gradually until you get the shape you want. This works well with veneers and thin-turned spindles. The dry heat method gives you the most control during the bending process: you can coax the wood into shape, check it, and bend it some more to adjust the curve or even straighten it back out a little.

Steam

Steam bending is probably the most well-known method of bending wood. I learned about it while taking a Windsor chair class. The concept is simple: put the wood in a container, add steam, let it soak for several hours, pull it out, and bend it. The tricky part is coming up with a way to produce and hold the steam. Since most of my turning projects are small, I rigged up a tea kettle with some PVC pipe above it for my steam rig *(Photo 2)*. This setup works perfectly for small, thin spindles.

Be careful when removing the wood from the container, as it is easy to get burned by the steam or the hot lumber. Clamp the wood around a form and let it dry for a day or so *(Photos 3–5)*. Thicker pieces, whether turned or flat, take longer to heat and to dry. You should also expect some spring back when you pull the bent wood from the form, so experiment with scrap wood if accuracy is necessary.

Microwave

Similar to the concept of steam bending, microwave bending makes use of wet heat to soften the wood to ease bending. Wrap a wet rag or towel around the workpiece, put it in the microwave oven for a minute, pull it out, and bend it *(Photo 6)*. Again, some experimentation is in order in terms of how long to let the microwave run. And, as with steam bending, be careful of getting burned by the steam and the hot wood. Clamp the wood in a form and allow for spring back if you want a precise shape.

When I first learned of this technique in a class many years ago, we bent turned spindles to be added to other turnings. Obviously, this is limited to short pieces unless you have an industrial microwave. I have made many turned and bent flowers using this method, as it is ▸

Inside Out Flower, 2014, Pine, oak, 13" × 5" × 5" (33cm × 13cm × 13cm)

A microwave oven can provide the heat and steam necessary for bending spindles when the workpiece is wrapped in a wet towel.

Compressed walnut is bent around a form to achieve a base for *S Bowl*.

Compressed wood can be bent and twisted with relative ease. Design possibilities abound.

a quick way to add curves to the stems and petals.

Compressed wood

Compressed wood is a relatively new innovation, and I am still learning about its use. It has been fun finding ways to incorporate it into my woodturnings. Here is what I have learned so far.

I found that compressed wood requires more force than I thought to bend it. Some planning is necessary. In some cases you can simply bend it to the shape you want. Other times you will need to clamp it to a form until it has dried *(Photos 7, 8)*.

Compressed wood can be difficult to turn, especially in smaller diameter spindles, because it is far more flexible than normal green wood. This flexibility gives the wood the tendency to "climb" up the gouge. To counteract this effect, use sharp tools that do not have a small radius at the tip. Pointier tools seem to provide less control than a wide spindle gouge or skew chisel. You can also apply pressure with your fingers from behind the workpiece to counteract the forward pressure of your cutting tool.

When you buy compressed wood, it comes wrapped in plastic to hold in its moisture. Keep it wrapped until you use it. I cut a little off for the project at hand and rewrap the rest to store it.

Editor's note: For more details on compressed wood and its properties, see article by Malcolm Zander, page 25.

These descriptions only briefly introduce some ways to bend thin-turned spindles. How you incorporate bent elements into your own projects is up to you, but I hope these methods will expand your repertoire of possibilities. ■

John Lucas, a retired photographer, has been working in wood for about 35 years and also dabbles in metalworking. He also enjoys modifying machines, making tools, and sharing his knowledge through written articles and videos. He has taught classes at John C. Campbell Folk School, Arrowmont, and The Appalachian Center for Crafts.

S Bowl, 2014, Walnut, 12" × 8" (31cm × 20cm)

Untitled, 2014, Compressed walnut, figured walnut, 5" × 15" × 1" (13cm × 38cm × 2½cm)

COMPRESSED WOOD CAN EXPAND YOUR HORIZONS

Kristin LeVier, *Ominousa,* 2012, Compressed maple, acrylics, 4½" × 6" × 6" (11cm × 15cm × 15cm)
Photo: Tib Shaw/AAW

Malcolm Zander

Compressed wood is a unique product with remarkable properties. It comes in a variety of wood species and could add an interesting twist to your woodturning projects. I first saw compressed wood in 2006, when Tania Radda demonstrated its use at the SOFA (sculpture, objects, functional art, and design) exhibition in Chicago. She took strips of dry compressed wood, dipped them in a bucket of cold water for a minute, and then proceeded to wrap them around her finger or twist them into different forms. They did not spring back and retained their form when dry. No steaming, heat, or force required. I thought, "Wow, what amazing stuff!"

Other wood artists have been inspired by Tania's example. Art Liestman used compressed wood for the nose, tail, and legs of his iconic teapots; Pat Matranga for her wonderful shoes; Pat Miller for the handles and bails on his vessels; and Kristin LeVier in her *Ominousa* bowl.

How it works

Compressed wood is made by a patented process, first developed in Denmark. Clean, defect-free hardwood planks are steamed in an autoclave under pressure to increase their plasticity. The boards are then placed in a special machine that compresses them to 75%–85% of their original length, while constraining the sides to their original dimensions. During the process, the wood is altered at the cellular level, its fibers compressed, or bunched up like the center of a ▸

This small form was a prototype for my *Physalis* piece. The bottom half is hemispherical; the top half has six flat faces. When I pass it around in my demonstrations and ask people how it was made, there is a lot of head scratching. Unless they know about compressed wood, they just cannot figure it out. Once I explain, the light bulb goes on and they all say "Ah, yes!" See page 28 to find out how it was made.

Tania Radda, *Last Flight,* 2005, Basswood, compressed maple, automotive paint, 11" × 16" × 15" (28cm × 41cm × 38cm)

Tania Radda has pioneered the use of compressed wood in turned art pieces. For *Last Flight* and *Desert Dweller,* she used a bandsaw to cut the compressed wood into thin sheets or fine rods, then wetted and formed them into tendrils, leaves, legs, and wings. A hair dryer fixed them into permanent position.

Tania Radda, *Desert Dweller,* 2012, Basswood, compressed walnut, pencils, 4" × 4" × 4" (10cm × 10cm × 10cm)

Pat Miller, *Fill Me Glass, Wench!,* 2013, Birch, compressed maple, ebony, 8" × 7½" × 5" (20cm × 19cm × 13cm)

Patricia Matranga, *Brazilian Rainbow,* 2012, Compressed cherry, tulipwood, cork, 8" × 7" × 3" (20cm × 18cm × 8cm)

Art Liestman, *En Garde,* 2007, Bigleaf maple burl, compressed walnut, 6½" × 9" × 3¼" (17cm × 23cm × 8cm)

concertina. This produces a bellows effect on the cell walls. When the wood is removed from the press, it relaxes back to about 90% of its original length but is now flexible and can be bent while wet. The normally rigid cell walls can now slide, or fold over, onto themselves. When dry, the compressed wood is rigid and will retain whatever new shape it has been given.

Compressed wood is most commonly available in ash, red and white oak, cherry, and maple. It is also sometimes available in other temperate hardwood species, including beech, elm, hickory, pecan, black locust, honey locust, sassafras, sycamore, Kentucky coffee, hackberry, red gum, live oak, osage orange, mulberry, persimmon, and walnut. Wood compression does not work on any of the softwoods (coniferous species) or on kiln-dried lumber. The latter has rigid cells, which cannot be plasticized. Most imported woods are kiln dried and therefore not suitable. Tests with ipe and purpleheart have failed (quite spectacularly), placing them on the list of "not bendable," along with all softwoods and exotic hardwoods tested so far.

Maximum dimensions commercially available are 2" × 6" × 8' long (5cm × 15cm × 244cm), and compressed wood can be bent to a radius as small as five times its thickness. The product has many applications, including the making of musical instruments (such as guitar sides), boats, furniture parts, architectural elements, and wood-turned art.

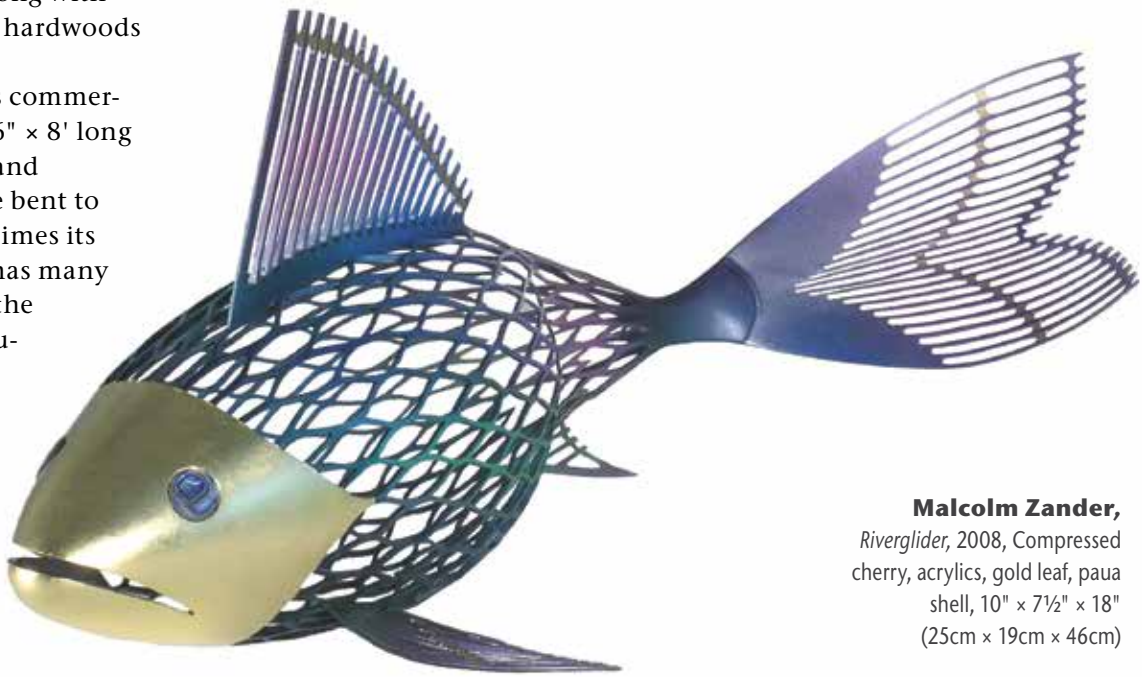
Chris Mroz, of Pure Timber, LLC, a supplier of compressed wood products, with a clock frame of 1.25" (32mm) compressed oak bent with mechanical leverage to a 6" (15cm) radius. Also pictured are snare drums made of bent compressed wood.

Photo: Malcolm Zander

My learning curve

In 2007, I saw an image of a cloisonné fish in a magazine that inspired me to make a similar turned and pierced fish, but I decided I wanted it to have a twist in the body and tail to make it more lifelike. I thought of compressed wood. However, I wanted to use it differently from the way Tania used it—to first turn it and then take advantage of the unique properties to distort the turned piece. Because I wanted stability while I turned it, I had some planks kiln dried for me (compressed wood is normally sold wet).

There were some constraints, as I soon discovered. First, because compressed wood is compressed along, but not across, the grain, it can be bent only along the grain. This meant I would have to turn the fish body in endgrain orientation. Second, because I wanted a large ▸

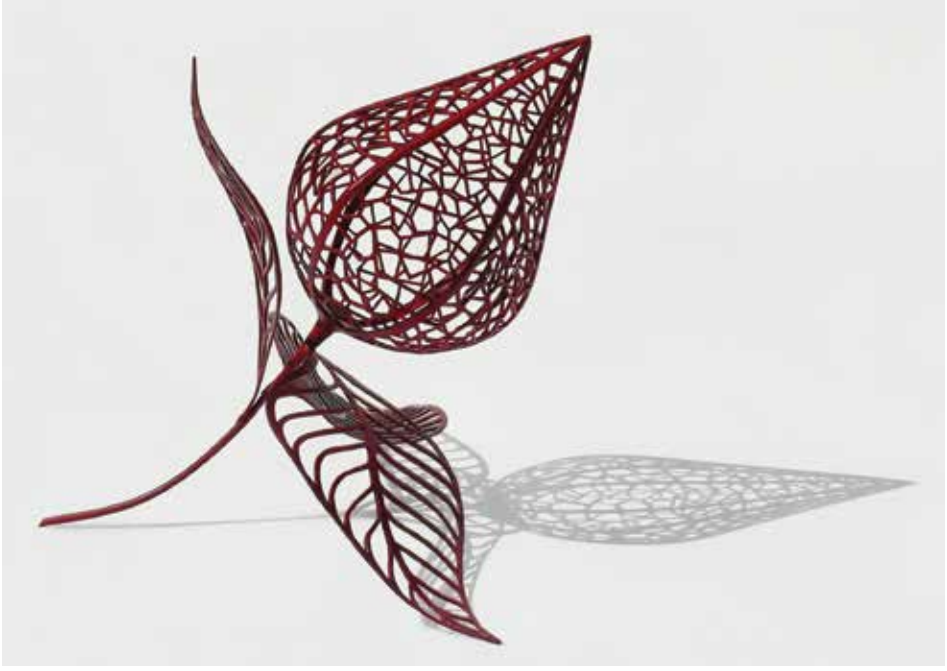


Malcolm Zander, *Riverglider,* 2008, Compressed cherry, acrylics, gold leaf, paua shell, 10" × 7½" × 18" (25cm × 19cm × 46cm)

A Chinese Lantern *(Physalis alkekengi)*, or cape gooseberry seedpod, was the author's inspiration for an intricate project requiring compressed wood.

Photo: R0015041, Wikimedia Commons

A turned parabolic form was cut to give six triangular leaves, which were individually bent, glued together, and then pierced.



Malcolm Zander, *Physalis,* 2009, Compressed cherry, acrylic paint, 7½" × 9½" × 11" (19cm × 24cm × 28cm)

The author's experimental thin-walled endgrain bowl made from three laminated pieces of compressed cherry, then wetted and distorted to an oval shape. Note failure of glue joints due to use of non-waterproof glue.

diameter body (5", or 13cm), I would have to laminate several planks together (it was available only in 1½", or 38mm thicknesses). This does work, but I found out the hard way you had better use a waterproof glue, as seen in the adjacent photo.

The third portion of the learning curve was finding that compressed wood cannot be machine jointed or planed. Those bunched-up fibers catch on the tool edge and cause massive tearout. The planks have to be band-sawn as true as possible, then further trued for glue-up by belt sanding.

My version of the fish, *Riverglider,* was turned endgrain from three laminated pieces of kiln-dried compressed cherry, cut in two with each half then hollowed, rejoined, and pierced. I then wetted and twisted the rear body. I made the pectoral and tail fins from a thin sheet of belt-sanded compressed cherry that I pierced, wrapped around a drinking glass, and fixed in place with a hairdryer.

Shortly after my work on *Riverglider*, I saw an image of a cape gooseberry (*Physalis*) seedpod and immediately thought of making a pierced version in wood. I concluded the only way to do this was with compressed wood. I turned a thin-walled parabolic form from three laminated pieces of compressed cherry, cut out six long triangular leaves, and then wet two of them and folded them inwards so their edges touched. A bead of cyanoacrylate (CA) glue held them in place. The other four petals were folded in and glued in the same way. The piece was then pierced and painted and became the head of *Physalis*.

Next, I decided to make a pierced flower from compressed wood using three concentric forms. The process began similarly to *Physalis*, with each petal individually pierced, filed, wetted, and twisted. The three forms were nested, attached, painted, and a gold-leafed button placed in the center.

I have also used compressed wood to make handles for my two pierced pink ivory teapots because pink ivory wood could not be bent to the tight radius needed. The handles were painted afterwards to match the pink ivory color. These teapots can be viewed at malcolmzander.com/laceseries.html.

Most recently, I wanted to make a silk-like ribbon for a hat I had turned and pierced. I took a long thin strip of compressed cherry and reduced its thickness on a belt sander to about 3/64" (1mm). I then bleached the wood several times and sanded again with 120-grit abrasive along and perpendicular to the grain. Then I wetted the strip, wrapped it around a caulking tube, and fixed its shape with a hair dryer. Airbrushing with a pearlescent paint helped me achieve the final result, a fashionable ribbon with a thread count of 120.

Compressed wood is quite expensive, due to the necessarily flawless required starting material and the expensive custom manufacturing machinery, but often only a small amount is needed for the making of unusual pieces. It can be used by wood artists to make bent add-ons to turned pieces, or it can be turned dry on its own and wetted and bent after turning. With compressed wood, you can make pieces that are difficult if not impossible any other way. Give it a try—it is fun to use and there are many possibilities for its use, limited only by your imagination. ■

Special thanks to Chris Mroz for providing valuable information for this article. Chris holds the North American rights to a compressed wood product called Cold Bend™, commercially available through Pure Timber, LLC (puretimber.com).

Malcolm Zander is a New Zealand-born wood artist living in Ottawa, Canada. His website is malcolmzander.com.

Flower involved turning an endgrain lamination of compressed cherry, piercing, filing, and painting.

Malcolm Zander, *Flower,* 2010, Compressed cherry, gold leaf, acrylic paint, 6" × 8" (15cm × 20cm)

Malcolm Zander, ribbon detail from *Black Lace Hat With Crimson Flower,* 2012, Bigleaf maple, madrone burl, compressed cherry, acrylic paints, 8" × 27" × 15½" (20cm × 69cm × 39cm)

Christmas from the Sea

Dennis Belcher

My search for a Christmas ornament that flows from the sea met success in the form of a series of ornaments using sea urchins.

A quick Internet search indicates there are about 950 species of sea urchins that inhabit the oceans, from the depths to the shallows. Urchins are sometimes called sea hedgehogs and come in many colors—black, green, olive, brown, purple, blue, and red. Sizes will range from about 1"–4" (25mm–100mm), depending upon the specific variety.

There are two different approaches to transforming a sea urchin into a Christmas ornament. The best approach is determined by the thickness of the shell. A sputnik urchin has a thick wall. This allows the top and bottom finials to be glued directly to the shell. Thin-walled urchins require a center post running through the shell, connecting the top and bottom finials. The shell supports none of the weight of the ornament. It is simply held between the finials.

The initial decision should be to determine which variety of urchin to use. Size, color, cost, and availability all enter into this decision. An eBay search for sea urchins provides a wide selection. My preference is the purple urchin 1"–2" (2.5–5mm) in size. This size scales well for six- to eight-foot Christmas trees. There are color and size variations each time you order. You should also anticipate breakage both in shipping and in handling the shells.

The process

Select the specific urchin for the ornament. The size of the top opening of the shells will vary and it is important to know the specific opening size as you create the top finial. Look for symmetry in the shell. Some shells are "lumpy" and do not look good when hung on a tree. Some of the shells have a deeper purple color than others. Try to picture the specific shell against your own Christmas tree as you make the shell selection.

Begin by enlarging the bottom opening of the shell. I use a small round file that comes to a point. Carefully enlarge the opening with the file. A small chainsaw file is also an appropriate tool *(Photo 1)*.

The size of the wood blank for the finials is determined by the shell opening and the ornament's length. Check the size of the top opening before selecting your blank. Generally, a 1" × 1" × 5½" (25mm × 25mm × 140mm) blank is appropriate. A dark-colored wood like cocobolo, walnut, black ivory, or jatoba complements the purple of the shell.

Mount the blank between centers and turn a tenon sized to your chuck. I typically use a Talon chuck with step jaws when turning this ornament. For the step jaws, the tenon should be about ¾" (19mm) long. A crisp shoulder significantly improves the holding power of the jaws *(Photo 2)*.

Before you start to form either finial, focus on the overall proportions of the finished ornament. Ornaments need to hang properly on a Christmas tree.


Use a small file to open the bottom hole of the shell.


A peeling cut is one way to form the tenon.


Shape the top finial.

While a long, delicate finial may challenge your skill as a woodturner, the total length of the ornament needs to be shorter than 6" (152mm) for it to hang properly on most trees. The scale of your tree should determine the overall length of the ornament.

The second element of proportion is set by the purple sea urchins themselves. To me, what looks well-proportioned is an upper finial of 1¼" (32mm) and a lower finial of 2¼" (55mm) on a 1" (25mm) diameter shell. Increase the length of both finials proportionally with a larger diameter shell.

Mount the finial blank in the step jaws and bring up the tailstock. Mark the length of the upper finial and form the top of the ornament *(Photo 3)*. Measure the shell opening and make sure it is fully covered by the base of the top finial.

After the top finial is formed, drill a hole the size of your eye screw *(Photo 4)*. I have a series of small drill bits epoxied into handles for the typical sizes needed for eye screws, but you could also use vise grips to hold the drill bit.

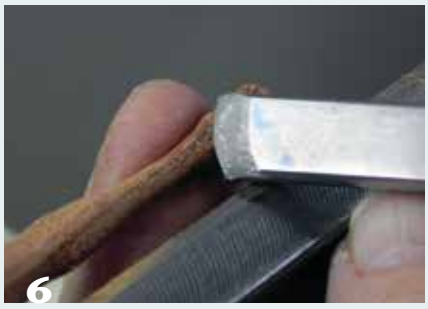
The next step is to sand the finial and apply the finish of your choice. I sand through the grits to 600 and then apply a friction polish.

Once the finish is applied, it is time to part off the top finial. A narrow parting tool works well here. Because there are slight irregularities in the shell, it is important to undercut the base of the top finial as you are parting it off *(Photo 5)*. Do this by angling the tool to the right slightly as you proceed with the cut. This will create a slightly concave bottom at the base of the finial, which will allow for irregularities in the shell and facilitate a better seating of the finial to the shell. Test fit the top finial to the shell. A superior fit is achieved when the entire opening is covered and the finial fully seated.

Remove the tailstock and begin to form the lower finial in a way that expresses your own individuality. If you experience "whip" as the diameter becomes smaller (the tendency of the workpiece to turn out of round), place your left hand under the back of the toolrest opposite the point of the tool and use your index finger to support the finial *(Photo 6)*. This counter pressure will reduce the amount of deflection in the finial as you apply pressure with the cutting tool. ▸


Pre-drill for the eye screw, using the indentation from the tailstock live center to help position the drill bit.


Undercut the top finial as it is parted off by angling the point of the tool to the right.


Support the lower finial with the left hand.


Undercut as you part off the lower finial.


Remove the nub.


Drill the finials using a shopmade jig that easily centers the hole.


Cut the skewer to fit in the upper finial. Wire snippers are a good option for this job.

When the lower finial is completed, sand through the grits and apply a finish, as with the upper finial.

The lower part of a purple sea urchin shell has an upward curve. For the lower finial to seat well, it is critical that you undercut as you are parting off. Note the angle of the parting tool in *Photo 7*.

Test fit the lower finial. If you experience any gaps in the fit of the two finials, one solution is to select a different shell that is a better fit. It may be necessary to carefully sand down any ridges or lumps in the urchin that interfere with a snug fit.

Fitting the skewer

The secret to this ornament is the use of a bamboo skewer to connect the upper and lower finials. The skewer starts in a hole in the bottom of the upper finial, runs through the shell, and fits into a hole in the top of the lower finial. This provides the strength needed to hang the ornament on the tree. I use bamboo skewers from the grocery store as the center post. These are the same skewers used for shish kebabs. A typical package of 100 skewers costs about a dollar.

On both the upper and lower finial, remove the nub left from parting off *(Photo 8)*. Carefully mark each center with an awl. Drill a hole sized to your skewer. I find that a ¼" (6.5mm) bit is the correct size. The diameters of the skewers will vary, so confirm that the drill bit is sized to the skewer.

Most of my ornament failures occur because I have incorrectly drilled the holes in the finials for the skewers. If the holes are not centered, or if they are not drilled perpendicular to the base of the finial, the final ornament is a failure. These failures led me to use a simple drilling jig *(Photo 9)*. Measure the flange of the finials and drill holes in scrap wood slightly smaller than the flange. Place the finial in the hole. When you press straight down to drill the hole, the finial will automatically center itself. Drill a hole about ⅜" (10mm) deep into both the top and bottom finials.

Cut about a 4" (100mm) length of skewer. Put a drop of medium or thick cyanoacrylate (CA) glue in the lower finial hole and insert the skewer. It is important that the skewer is straight as the glue sets. Typically, I place the glued lower finial in the drilling jig while the CA glue dries. Double-check for straightness after you place it in the jig.

Give the CA about 20 minutes to set before attaching it to the shell and upper finial. Be warned: If you spray CA accelerator onto the skewer, the blast of spray could move the skewer out of plumb.


The "Stumpy" features a short lower finial.


Make creative use of urchins that lack color by making a snowman urchin.

Cut the skewer to length and test fit without glue *(Photo 10)*. If the skewer is too long, trim it a bit until the upper finial is fully seated on the shell. Put a drop of CA glue in the upper finial hole and mate it with the skewer. Again, use the jig to hold the ornament while the glue sets. Once the ornament is resting in the jig, it is your last opportunity to adjust the alignment. Many times the shell will have a "high" side and a "low" side. A little adjustment may compensate for the irregularity.

Variations

A variation on this ornament is to replace the lower finial with a shorter one that is simpler to make. I call this the "Stumpy." In making the stumpy version, it helps to have the lower finial such that you can easily grip it with your fingers during assembly *(Photo 11)*.

About a quarter of the shells in a normal shipment are bleached out with little or no purple coloring. Initially I was discarding these shells. Then it struck me that I could incorporate the color variation into a snowman urchin ornament. The steps to make it are the same, but now the upper finial becomes the snowman's head *(Photo 12)*. This is the ornament I reach for when I send one to friends still in the North to remind them that winters by the sea in the South do not have snow. ■

Photos: Carl Ciervo

After moving from the Midwest to the North Carolina Coast and taking a two-year hiatus, Dennis is back at his favorite pastime—working with wood. More of Dennis' work can be viewed at SeaBreezeWoodworks.com.

A look at eye screws

One of the details that can ruin a Christmas ornament is the eye screw. Eye screws that break when they are screwed into hard maple, or a hole pre-drilled too large requiring the use of glue to hold the eye screw in place, are two of the things that can go wrong when finishing the ornament. Here are some considerations to help you avoid these common problems.

The first key bit of information is the metal used in making the eye screws. Brass eye screws are common but have the issues of higher cost and, more importantly, breakage. Brass is a soft metal and is easy to break as it is being screwed in. A better choice is steel eyes. The steel can be plated either with zinc (silver colored) or brass (gold colored). Whether you prefer a silver or gold look on your ornament, the steel-plated eye screws eliminate the breakage.

The size of the eye hole is another consideration. The diameter of the monofilament fishing line I use to hang the urchin ornaments is 1/32" (0.8mm). If a colored round ribbon is used, the diameter is typically 1/16" (1.5mm). An eye diameter of about 1/8" (3mm) works well with either hanging material.

Wire size used in making eye screws is expressed in gauges. As in electrical wire, the higher the wire gauge number, the smaller the diameter of the wire. For ornaments, wire gauges of 16 or 17 are appropriate, with 17-gauge being the more popular for ornaments.

Pre-drilling the upper finial keeps the finial from splitting when you attach the eye screw. This is particularity important when you use dense wood.

Finding wood bits smaller than 1/16" (1.5mm) can be a challenge. After numerous attempts, I discovered a wide variety of small drill bits available when I moved from the drill bit section of the hardware store to the tap and die section. The only issue is that the size of the bit is now expressed using a different scale.

The appropriate size of the drill bit used will vary with the wood species and the gauge of the eye screw. Test the fit in scrap wood before drilling into your finial. For a 16-gauge eye screw, I use a 1/16" (1.5mm) wood drill bit. If the eye screw is too tight, change to a 3/32" (2.4mm) wood bit or a #50 machinist's bit. If too loose, switch to a smaller wood bit, about 3/64" (1.2mm), or a #55 machinist's bit.

For a 17-gauge screw eye, start with a 3/64" (1.2mm) wood bit or a #58 machinist's bit. For a tighter fit, switch to a #60 machinist's bit. For a looser fit, use the #56 machinist's bit.

Remember that wood density makes a difference. When using a 17-gauge eye in Brazilian cherry, for example, a #58 machinist's bit gives a snug fit. Just moderate force is required to screw it in and the threads bite solidly. Change the wood to a denser variety like black ivory, and it is a struggle to screw in the eye. When you switch to a slightly larger 1/16" (1.5mm) wood bit for black ivory, you will have a solid catch on the threads and it will go in with moderate twisting force.

The final measurement is the total length of the eye screw. This is not a critical factor if you are using a properly sized drill bit to pre-drill. A 1/2"- (13mm-) long eye screw works well. The key is to have an eye screw that securely holds the ornament, without detracting from its beauty.

Special thanks to Benny Pulley (bennyswoodworks.com) for providing valuable information for this sidebar.

Eye screws are available in a variety of sizes and either gold or silver color.

Photo: Janice Levi

Snowmen ON THE MOVE

Tony Kopchinski

A fun and easy woodturning project for beginning turners is snowmen. You can make them as simple or complex as you like, and they are usually well received this time of year.

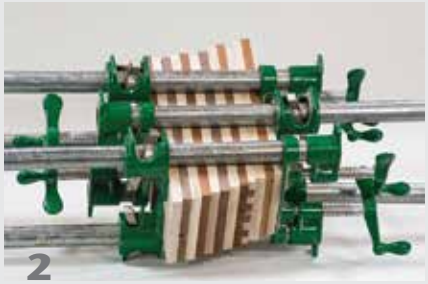
This is a great project for using all the little specialty or scrap wood pieces you may have in your shop. I have had success using solid wood blanks for the snowmen but also enjoy laminating different species to create an interesting look. I have used mahogany, soft maple, Baltic birch plywood, black walnut, cherry, and bird's eye maple. Exotic woods or burls may also be striking. I think thinner wood strips make more attractive patterns, especially when turned on an angle *(Photo 1)*.

Cutting and gluing a blank

To make a laminated snowman blank, I start by re-sawing ¾" (19mm) dried lumber on the bandsaw. Running the pieces over a jointer or through a wide drum sander will help you achieve the flat surfaces needed for good glue joints. Use lots of clamps to ensure thorough pressure during the glue-up *(Photo 2)*.

An alternate way to create a blank is to cut glued-up strips into four-inch squares and stack them in a crisscross pattern (alternating the grain orientation with each layer, *Photo 3*). The stacked blank pictured is about 4" (10cm) square by 8" to 10" (20cm to 25cm) high. Of course, you can make snowmen as wide or as high as you like.

1 You can make a snowman blank by gluing up several pieces of wood. Orienting the blank askew from the glue lines *(see center)* creates an alternate look when turned. Cutting this form into an octagon eliminates the need to cut the corners off on the lathe *(right)*.



2 Don't skimp on clamps when gluing up blanks.

3
Stacking squares of glued-up strips creates an unusual snowman blank.

4

5
The snowman form makes for good practice at basic spindle-turning techniques.

6
Drill and countersink shallow holes prior to adhering buttons and eyes.

7
A variety of found items can be perfect for embellishing your turned snowman.

Turning the body

After you mount your blank between centers and turn it round, mark the body sections and begin shaping your snowman. Turn the snowman using a small bowl gouge or spindle gouge, and, later, sand it on the spinning lathe at a slower speed. The body shape of a snowman essentially comprises three large beads. *Photo 4* shows turning from a high point to a low point (cutting downhill) to eliminate a possible catch by digging the tool into endgrain. Always finish the cut at the bottom of the bead (waist, neck, or any deep point on the figure).

The snowman's hat can be turned as part of the main blank, as in *Photo 5*, or from a different piece of wood turned separately and glued on later.

Decorations

Decorating ideas can come from anyone with a whimsical imagination. To start the faces and button holes, drill a ⅛" (3mm) hole prior to using a countersink bit, as seen in *Photo 6*. This creates a small pocket for seating and adhering beads, which can be used for eyes and buttons.

Consider using cotton for snow and for smoke coming from a pipe or cigar. Sticks are great choices for arms. Other materials you can use, but certainly are not limited to, include buttons, beads, stones, twigs, rubber, ribbons, and feathers *(Photo 7)*. When preparing buttons used as ears, try slightly contouring each button's side with a belt or disc sander to create a better mating surface before attaching them with glue.

I try to create the impression that my snowmen are on the move. Get creative with your decorations to bring your snowmen to life. ■

Photos by Roger Zimmermann

Tony Kopchinski has been turning for seven years and is an active member of the Wisconsin Valley Woodturners, an AAW chapter. He enjoys participating in the various community outreach activities his club offers, including working with the local affiliation of the Boys and Girls Clubs of America and with the Wounded Warriors Project.

TURNING AND DECORATING AN

Heirloom Ornament

Pat and Karen Miller

Our local AAW chapter sells turned pieces at a holiday craft bazaar, which helps our treasury. Ornaments are always a big seller. They are relatively quick and easy to turn, a great project for using some of those precious small pieces of stock we are reluctant to toss, and a wonderful canvas on which to hone your decorating skills. Knowing there are as many approaches as there are woodturners, Karen and I would like to show you our approach to what we call heirloom ornaments. We often collaborate on projects; with this one, I did the turning and Karen did the decorating.

Before you head to the lathe, please take a moment to review safety procedures. Are your eyes and face protected? How are you protecting your lungs and hearing? Take off jewelry that could get caught during turning; roll up loose, long sleeves; and tie back long hair. Make sure your tools are sharp, your toolrest is secure in an appropriate position, and your workpiece is securely attached. It is good to begin with a quick mental review of these important factors.

Turning the ornament body

For the ornament body, I started with a piece of hard maple 2" square

1 With the wood mounted in a chuck, shape the outside of the ornament globe. I use a ⅜" (10mm) spindle gouge.

2 Leave a good mass of wood between the globe and chuck for added stability during hollowing.

3

4 A blast of air will remove the shavings from inside.

by 4" long (51mm × 102mm) mounted between centers. I use a spindle roughing gouge to round the block and a ⅜" (10mm) detail gouge (my favorite tool) to form a tenon. Of course, these steps, as with many in this project, could be completed with different tools. I am detailing here what works for me. The diameter of your tenon will be determined by the particular chuck you are using.

Mount the block in the chuck and begin to form the basic outside shape without removing too much wood on the chuck side of the work *(Photo 1)*. Keeping as much wood there as possible adds strength and stability for when you hollow the orb. Work carefully until you arrive at a pleasing outside shape, but hold off on adding decorative touches at the top of the globe, such as ascending "steps," until after the hollowing. Sand the outside of your ornament globe.

Hollowing the globe will make the ornament lighter and more delicate, so it will be easier to hang on a small limb. I begin the hollowing by using a ⅜" (10mm) drill bit mounted in a wooden handle. Form a small centering divot in the end of the orb to give the bit a registration point. Slow the lathe to about 500 rpm and drill to the depth to which you will hollow. This is a good way to begin since hollowing tools work best when cutting outward from a central hole. I use a little hooked scraper for hollowing the smallest orbs and an ornament hollowing tool for larger shapes *(Photos 2, 3)*. Remove enough wood to eliminate the feeling of heaviness. During hollowing, clear the chips from inside the orb periodically with a shot of compressed air *(Photo 4)* or by blowing through a straw into the hollowed space.

If you need to retouch or change the outside of the piece, bring the tailstock ▸


5
Detailing what will become the top of the ornament.


6
Part the globe from the waste block. Turn the lathe speed down and, as the globe just starts to wobble, cup it with your right hand and catch it as it comes free. Alternatively, part it most of the way through, turn off the lathe, and finish parting with a fine-tooth handsaw.


7


8
A snug fit makes a good jam chuck to finish turning the top of the ornament globe.


9
The tailstock live center brought gently in contact with the top will hold the globe in place as you finish the top. The small divot left by the center point can be dressed with a bit of abrasive and will leave a handy reference point to drill the hole for a screw eye.


10


11
Finish the bottom of the drop finial using a detail gouge and, after the tailstock is removed, a bit of abrasive to remove the small divot from the tailstock live center.


12
Hold the finial as you part it off the lathe. Note the small tenon at the base of the finial, which provides a good fit into the opening of the ornament body.


13


14


15
Crumpling the pattern and graphite paper will make them easier to wrap over the globe. Tape in place and use a soft pencil to transfer the design.

16

Karen uses a shading tool to highlight the flower petals.

17

Rather than trying to "draw" lines with the burner as you would with a pencil, touch the tip of the stylus to the line and pull it away quickly at a ninety-degree angle. This will result in a more organic-looking line. With the low temperatures used here, burn flash should not be a problem. If you get discoloration, it is easily and cleanly removed by scraping with a small blade. Avoid sanding if at all possible.

18

Geometric details, such as these accent lines, are added with a tiny ball tip stippled one at a time around the piece. Stippling provides a pleasing line without the irregularities associated with trying to "draw" on the wood.

up to the opening with a cone center for support. My mentor taught me to bring the tailstock into play whenever possible and I still use that advice. I usually turn short finials this way, too, using the tailstock until the finial is turned to a very small diameter, then cutting away the final bit of support and finishing with a fine abrasive.

After the hollowing is complete, turn any details you like on the top of the orb using a spindle or detail gouge *(Photo 5)*. Part off the ornament body *(Photo 6)*. To finish turning the absolute top of the ornament, reverse chuck it onto a jam chuck. Make a small tenon cut on the waste block remaining in the chuck. The tenon should be sized for a snug fit into the opening of the globe *(Photos 7, 8)*. With the tailstock brought up for support (gentle pressure only), finish turning the design elements at the top of your ornament *(Photo 9)*. Remove the orb from the jam chuck and hand sand the small area that was inaccessible when the tailstock's live center was in place.

The drop finial

Plenty has been written regarding pleasing dimensional relationships, and your own eye is a good judge. Some finial shapes complement the ornament body better than others, and it may be a matter of trial and error or sketching prior to turning to reach the "right" proportions. I am fortunate to live with another artist (Karen), who offers valuable insights. If in the end the object looks good to both of us, it is likely to please others as well. Of course, we do have friendly moments of "creative tension" while getting to the end result.

For this ornament's finial, I chose a piece of padauk from my bin of "smalls." I really like the color, though I know it will not last, as it ages from orange to a dark brown. I did not intend to cut intricate detail on this finial, nor did it have to provide great strength, so its softer, more open grain was no problem. And I rather like the smell of padauk when it is turned.

The finial blank started about ¾" square by 3" long (19mm × 76mm). I used a chuck with four small jaws to grab the workpiece on its four flats. As with the body of the ornament, bring up the tailstock for support when possible. Alternatively, the better finial turners do not use tailstock support and work incrementally from the tailstock end toward the headstock without going back toward the finished, unsupported end. It is good to practice this method, too, as thinner, longer finials will not allow for any tailstock

pressure and need to be turned with the far end free.

Once the finial is turned and finished to your satisfaction, including a tenon to fit the opening in the globe, go back to the tailstock end and carefully trim away the support wood *(Photo 10)*. The final touch up on the tip of the finial, whether to a spire point or a rounded shape, can be handled with a bit of sanding *(Photo 11)*. Using a couple of fingers on the finial as a steadyrest helps to support the workpiece as you part it off the lathe *(Photo 12)*.

Decorating the ornament

Now that the turning is finished, it is time to decorate your ornament. Basic burning tools can be purchased for less than $50, but we suggest looking at models offering adjustable heat control and a selection of interchangeable tips. Early on, I bought a burning kit but never seemed to get the hang of the gentle touch needed. Karen got interested in wood burning and soon found she did have the touch. Her college art degree and natural ability gave her a good start; several demos by well-known artists added to her zeal and skills. Pyrography is an art itself and, as with lathe work, your skills will improve with practice.

One way to add a pyrographic scene or pattern to an object is to first draw the design using a pencil. Some pyrography artists, including Karen, are able to do this by hand, but for this project she used a pattern from a piece of wrapping paper. Although stock images for every conceivable shape or pattern can be found on the Internet, Karen often uses fabric or wrapping paper for a template. Your chosen pattern and a piece of graphite transfer paper taped to the ornament make it easy to apply the image. Simply trace over the pattern with a pencil. This method has the advantage of leaving a mark on the pattern so you can quickly see which parts you have already completed *(Photos 13–15)*. It is not necessary that every line on the globe be transferred perfectly with the transfer paper. You can easily fill in missing spots after removing the transfer paper and pattern.

Using a pyrography stylus, press along the pencil lines to burn the pattern into the wood *(Photo 16)*. On this piece, the pattern is a poinsettia, and Karen used a shading tool to draw and highlight the petals. My natural tendency would be to grab a line-making nib and draw hard lines around the petals. But you can see that ▸

After burning, add some color highlights using pens and colored pencils. Artist-grade supplies are nice, but your desk may be full of capable, colorful options.

Keep the details on the stand subtle so they do not compete with the ornament for the viewer's attention.

For those who feel a bit prickly around the holidays, perhaps fed up with the pressure of the Christmas machine, ornaments can be a creative outlet for expressing your feelings.

Karen's technique produces a much more elegant, natural-looking flower *(Photo 17)*.

A small ball tip on the burner is used to stipple the detail rings and decorate the top knob on the ornament *(Photo 18)*. After the burning is complete, Karen uses an assortment of colored pencils and artist's pens to add color details *(Photos 19, 20)*.

When all the decorating is complete, drill a small hole into the top and affix a screw eye for hanging the ornament. Attach the finial to the bottom with thin cyanoacrylate (CA) glue. Then spray a semigloss polyurethane or other finish.

Make a stand

A final touch to complement your ornament is a suitable stand. This bit of detail serves to make the ornament a stand-alone piece easily displayed in a gallery or on a mantle. Ornament stands are commercially available, but we prefer to make our own.

The ornament stand is simply a piece of hardwood (I used maple) turned to about 1" (25mm) high and 2¾" (70mm) diameter with some simple decoration. Keep the embellishments subtle, as the stand should support the ornament, not compete with it.

With the wood mounted in a chuck, turn it to your desired outside diameter and make a shallow recess in the bottom. Then reverse-mount the wood by expanding the chuck's jaws into the recess. In this orientation, you can shape the outside of the stand and add subtle decorations *(Photos 21–23)*. Drill a 3/32" (2.3mm) hole into the stand to accept the brass hanger hook.

I use 3/32" solid brass rod, available in 3' (91cm) lengths from any welding supply shop, for the hook. If you draw a template of the shape you want, it is fairly simple to hand bend the rod to this repeatable shape. If a group of ornaments are displayed, similarly sized and shaped stands are not a distraction. And the stand provides a suitable location to sign your work, if you are so inclined.

We have found that these ornaments make wonderful gifts. Family and friends will appreciate the thought and effort you put into each one. The ornaments also serve as a nice way to introduce folks to our passion for wood art. We hope you are inspired to make your own heirloom ornaments. ■

Pat and Karen Miller are long-time makers but began their collaborative journey in woodturning/decorating in 2010. Through it, they have discovered hidden talents, a path for artistic expression, and a host of new friends. Pat is soon to retire from his career in machinery sales. The two are looking forward to becoming full-time artists—and grandparents. For more, visit patandkarenmiller.com.

Building Blocks

EVOLUTION OF A TURNED SCULPTURE

Mark Sfirri

A recent commission for a large-scale sculpture proved the perfect opportunity to illustrate design development from concept to application. Considering similar pieces I have made, it was easy to trace the evolution of a recurring design element—the spherical wedge—in various contexts. This latest project was another step in my own development as an artist, teaching me lessons about working in a scale I had never attempted before and about working with a new material, aluminum. I was faced with new design and technical issues that broadened my artistic repertoire.

Building Blocks, 2014, Pine, poplar, aluminum, 144" × 52" × 52" (3.7m × 1.3m × 1.3m)

Origin of a design

Bucks County Community College (BCCC) in Newtown, Pennsylvania, where I teach and run the woodworking programs, had an open call for proposals for artwork to celebrate its 50th anniversary. I submitted a design for a ten- to twelve-foot tall wooden sculpture. I proposed that the complete, uncarved sphere at the bottom represented a person and that the support structure under and around it represented the support of family, community, and environment. Above were blocks of knowledge in the form of identical carved spheres, each one built upon the one below it, reflecting how knowledge and experience are acquired cumulatively through school and in life. I was awarded a grant to make the sculpture.

The inspiration for the design of this sculpture dates back ten years, when I used a combination of turned spheres and egg-shaped elements. I carved flat planes into them to create crescent shapes in single-axis turned legs for several pieces, such as *Slate Bench*. Developing new forms is important to me. I try not to be encumbered by the application of the form, but rather let the form evolve into something that appeals to me first. The constraints of adhering to a purpose first can inhibit creativity.

The idea of using similarly sized elements creating a repeating form was, as often happens with me, the result of experimenting with other applications. I made four or five small models of different configurations, basically three-dimensional sketches, and thought I had stumbled upon something but put them aside because other projects took precedence. The idea sat dormant until, years later, I was invited to the Poplar Culture exhibition at the Wharton Esherick Museum, in Paoli, Pennsylvania. A large poplar that stood next to the ▸

(Above) Slate Bench, 2005, Mahogany, 17.5" × 71" × 20" (44cm × 180cm × 51cm)

(Left) Continuous Column, 2011, Poplar, ash, 25" × 5.5" × 5.5" (64cm × 14cm × 14cm)

back entrance to the studio needed to be taken down, as it was posing a safety hazard. This seemed a good opportunity to make use of the repeating element idea. Incorporating the elements into a columnar form would serve as a tribute to Wharton Esherick and his sculpture, *Spiral Pole,* and to the piece that inspired his design, Constantin Brâncuși's *Endless Column*. Brâncuși is my favorite sculptor, and Esherick my favorite woodworker, so it seemed a perfect fit. The piece I created, *Continuous Column*, tapered as it rose, but the same sliced melon detail rotated ninety degrees as it ascended the column.

Since *Continuous Column* was a "straight" turning, as opposed to my typical multiaxis pieces, I did not have to face the usual balance issues and therefore was not constrained by the size of the wood in girth or length. I was pleased with the resulting piece but wanted to scale it up further. A commission for Fleur Bresler, *Foyer Table*, presented an opportunity. I designed two of these columns as supports for the top, each being five inches in diameter and straight. I was happy with the application but was interested in taking the concept larger still.

A BCCC student quartered a large ash tree that came down in Hurricane Sandy and I purchased one of the sections from him. It was about five feet long and ten inches square. I used this wood for a larger sculpture, *Continuous Column - Sandy*, but still had a desire to go bigger. That, however, presented challenges. The first was finding wood of suitable size, and the second, what to do with the piece after it was made—especially if I could not even stand it upright in my shop, let alone in a potential client's living room. As luck would have it, I was awarded the BCCC commission, and the piece would be located in a common space of a newly completed building with a soaring ceiling.

It is important to visit the space where your work will live to look at the existing colors and materials to decide what is appropriate for your design. In this case, the warmth of the wood would stand out in the cool palette of the room, and the aluminum supports would blend nicely.

Making a model

Making a scale model is important when designing a larger piece. Doing so reveals valuable insights and allows for adjustments in process and design. I made a mock-up of *Building Blocks* in mahogany. Seeing the model three dimensionally answered lingering questions in my mind and, since this was a commission, in my client's mind, too.

The model forced me to consider and work out details. For example, I discovered I needed to reconsider support of the column. And I learned there was vibration while turning the middle section, which led me to consider the ramifications for the full-sized column.

Finding the right wood

I wanted to find a beam that was dry, and I was not interested in gluing up a column as I see glue lines and color variation as a distraction. Species was not a concern, although pine, chestnut, and oak were more commonly used in barns in my area of southeast Pennsylvania. I found a local wood seller who just happened to have an 11" × 11" × 12' (28cm × 28cm × 3.7m) beam of white pine that was at least ten years old and very straight. I bought it as soon as I saw it. I used to think pine was inferior to hardwood, but it is a dream to turn and carve and has become one of my favorite woods.

Important considerations

The pine beam sat in my shop for several months, as I had other projects ahead of the BCCC commission. As time passed, I was growing apprehensive about turning it. Was the wood going to be sound enough? How easily would I be able to mount it on the lathe? Would it vibrate too much, due to its length, and how would I deal with that?

I decided to make a close-to-full-sized detail of the form using a three-foot piece of similarly sized pine. The test gave me a valuable insight. Because the wood was so soft, the safety drive center and tailstock live center (both cup centers) kept burying

Model of *Building Blocks,* 2014, Mahogany, 25" × 2" × 2" (64cm × 5cm × 5cm)

Continuous Column - Sandy, 2014, Ash, pine, 80" × 13" × 13" (203cm × 33cm × 33cm)

Foyer Table, 2013, Bubinga, maple, 33" × 60" × 12" (84cm × 152cm × 30cm)

into the endgrain. I kept advancing the tailstock, but it kept burrowing in and I knew that for the larger turning this just would not do. I would have to use a faceplate.

I decided on a 12" (30.5cm) faceplate and 4"- (10cm-) long screws. On the tailstock end, I screwed a small piece of maple to the beam to keep the live center from digging into the endgrain. Knowing that a faceplate is unforgiving in a catch (as opposed to a safety drive) made me apprehensive. When working this large, you cannot simply make a mistake and put another piece on the lathe. In fact, the value of the piece increases with every minute invested in it.

What allowed me to propose such a large sculpture in the first place was that I had the necessary equipment, namely a heavy-duty lathe with two bed extensions that provides a twelve-and-a-half-foot capacity between centers. I had never come close to using this capacity in all the years I have owned the lathe.

Because I was turning the weight of more than eighty board feet of lumber, I started at 250 rpm. When the blank was roughed into round, I increased the speed to 650 rpm. I used only two tools for all of the turning, a 1¼" (3.2cm) roughing gouge and a ½" (13mm) detail gouge with a fingernail grind. I ground the tools with a bevel close to 25 degrees (less than my normal 30 to 32 degrees) because of the softness of the wood. I found that the bevel of my typical grind was crushing the fibers, and changing to a lesser angle made a big difference in the quality of the cut. And, to my surprise, there was no vibration while turning.

Turning the spheres

Although the technique for turning a sphere has been demonstrated and written about extensively, turning a connected series of consistently proportioned spheres is a different kettle of fish. I turned the first of the spheres and used it as a guide for the rest. Once I got the first one truly round, I made a template to hold against the others as a gauge. Forming the template was easy: I found a thin white plastic that, when pressed against the turning cylinder, melted to take on the shape perfectly. The template, when rotated ninety degrees, is the perfect shape for that diameter. I used calipers to gauge and ensure consistency of the smaller-diameter connection points between the spheres.

Between turning sessions, I wedged the center of the column up to keep it straight, reasoning that if it sat overnight in one position, it would sag under its own weight. That would have necessitated truing up the column each time I began turning again, which would have compromised my original inspiration for achieving a larger scale.

Layout on a grand scale

Determining how far apart the spheres should be was critical. Too close together and they would look jammed and massive. Too far apart and the sculpture would be weak and could break. I first attempted to determine the layout in two dimensions (on paper) but had to make three-dimensional carved samples to really envision the form.

After turning the spheres, I carefully laid out four centerlines, one on each side of the beam, down the length of the piece. I was able to do this by snapping a chalk line, as the top end was not yet rounded and the bottom ▸

Just prior to turning on the lathe for the first time with the beam mounted. Several faceplate screws had to be loosened to center the piece on the tailstock.

The initial turning involved making a long cylinder.

I laid out all of the centerlines for the spheres before turning the first sphere at the base. I then turned each one, working my way up to the top. The layout helped keep the spheres consistent.

The chisel marks remain in the sculpture as a subtle texture.

segment remained square. While it was still a square beam, I marked an X on the top and bottom to aid in alignment. I also drew centerlines across each sphere for measuring purposes and additional lines around the circumferences for keeping the low arc of the crescent shapes consistent.

The next step was to draw the crescent shapes, which proved challenging because I was drawing an arc onto a spherical surface. To do this, I made a template and aligned it with certain key points: the center of the low sweep of the arc, the end point (narrow end where two crescent shapes come together), and a point on the midline. I cut out a cardboard template that I could lay on the sphere and scribe onto the wood. All this detail allowed for a consistent result. Without this layout, it would have been impossible to duplicate each element accurately.

Carving and finishing the shapes

Since I was using white pine, I was able to use hand tools, even for the rough shaping. I used a large ryoba Japanese handsaw to cut the fibers below each sphere and then worked with a heavy-duty mortise chisel and large mallet. When I got close to the final shape, I switched to a smaller chisel and mallet. The final cuts were difficult because the bluntness of the chisel's 30-degree angle was crushing the fibers while cutting along the grain. As I had done with my turning tools, I changed the hand chisel's angle to 25 degrees and was pleased with the result. I honed the chisel several times during the process because even the slightest dulling would cause the grain to crush.

I started on the sphere at the top of the column and worked my way back to the base. Because the carving reduced the cross section, the wood became a little bouncy toward the middle, but I was careful in the initial design to keep it thick enough—a little over three inches at the thickest point between the spheres.

I went back and forth on the finish, initially thinking that leaving it without finish was what I wanted to do. In the end, I decided on a tung oil. I applied four coats and rubbed it out with very fine steel wool.

A worthy base

The turned-and-carved column sits atop a base constructed of plywood with poplar banding. Two-by-four blocking inside the base supports the top surface and receives bolts that hold down the column. I routed a large chamfer along the top banding but left the area at the aluminum supports unrouted so I could connect the various elements visually with a hand-carved detail. I wanted a mottled, painted finish for the base, and texturing is a good way to accomplish that. I hammered the entire surface with a dapping tool to create rounded dimples and then painted the surface with dark grey milk paint, which was then glazed in white.

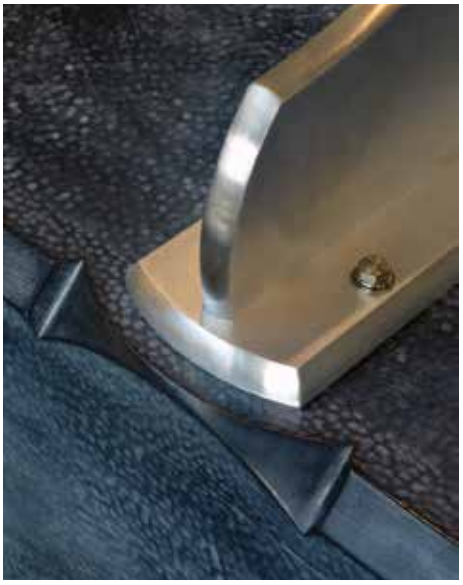
For the supports connecting the column to the base, I chose ¾" (19mm) sheet aluminum over thinner steel because I can process aluminum in my shop. Aluminum can be cut on the table saw, routed, drilled, and even run over the jointer in very light passes. The scale of each element needs to work for visual balance—even if the engineering requirements are exceeded, which they may have been with the thickness of aluminum I used. I saw the support elements as buttresses but lightened them by using radiused cutouts, which mimic the curves of the round column.

Apropos for a 50th birthday

Each of the thirteen carved spheres has three surfaces for a total of thirty-nine; the square base with chamfered corners has a total of ten surfaces; and the base sphere is one round surface. All totaled, there are fifty surfaces on *Building Blocks*—perfect for a piece commissioned in celebration of the 50th birthday of the College. I would like to say this was the result of careful planning, but... ■

Mark Sfirri, a woodturner, sculptor, and furniture maker, is a professor at Bucks County Community College in Newtown, Pennsylvania. He is also coordinator of the school's Fine Woodworking Program.

Detail of the carved elements.



Detail of an aluminum support and carved detail in the base. The aluminum has a brushed finish and the base, a dappled surface that allowed for the mottled painted effect.

You read the article—now see the video!

This article has an accompanying online video that further illustrates Mark's process in making his sculpture. To view the video, visit tiny.cc/Sfirri (case sensitive) or scan the QR code with your mobile device.

FINDING YOUR OWN VOICE

RECORDER MAKER ADRIANA BREUKINK

David Fry

Adriana Breukink with her multikeyed Eagle recorder. The full-sounding bore has more than twice the diameter of a baroque recorder's at the bell.

Often regarded as a beginner's instrument, the recorder can nevertheless claim an illustrious history dating back to the Middle Ages. Bach and Vivaldi wrote for the baroque recorder during its 18th century orchestral heyday, and Hindemith, Britten, and Bernstein created new works for it during its 20th century revival. Beyond the classical repertoire, the recorder has occasionally surfaced in bands like the Beatles, Jefferson Airplane, and Led Zeppelin. Amateurs, meanwhile, have flocked to the instrument in schools and recorder consorts. The American Recorder Society maintains that more people play recorder worldwide than any other instrument.

Of the hundreds of millions that have been produced, most are plastic, but a small fraction have originated in the workshops of a few highly skilled woodturners with long waitlists. Dutch maker and player Adriana Breukink numbers among this elite group, who continue to ply their craft despite the ongoing financial struggles of the classical music world. Like a select number of her predecessors and contemporaries, Adriana has devoted a large part of her career to overcoming the limited dynamics (volume control) and scale of the standard baroque instrument still favored by many today. She has striven to create something better and to reinstate the recorder, now transformed, within the orchestra.

This is not to say Adriana refuses to make "period" instruments. In fact, she continues to produce two lines of full-sounding Renaissance recorders, ranging from the tiny sopranino to the enormous subbass. Prices run from $1,100 to over $5,000. Two venerable German companies, Mollenhauer and Moeck, also manufacture her other pre-baroque models—the Dream Recorder and Slide Recorder. But her flagship product, the Eagle, fulfills her long quest to build a thoroughly modern instrument. Although developed in her Enschede, Netherlands, workshop, the $2,500 Eagle alto is now almost entirely made by Küng Blockflötenbau in Switzerland. But Adriana still "voices," or fine-tunes, it to the needs of the client.

Turning a recorder

In her home studio, Adriana relies largely on simple shop tools and her experienced eye and ear. For each recorder section, she rough-turns a seasoned hardwood block on her 80" (2m) wood lathe. A chucked gun drill bores through the workpiece from both ends. An attached air line flushes the chips as the bit quickly advances. She then enlarges the bore with successive tapered reamers she made on her old Myford metal lathe. The resulting conical interior provides the instrument with its distinctive recorder sound and tuning. Dozens of different reamers on the wall attest to her broad range of production and experimentation.

Reamed blocks return to the lathe for final shaping and sanding. Sockets are bored in the end sections, and barrel tenons are cut, channeled, and wound with thread for close-fitting

Assisted by a lengthy metal crook, Adriana plays her 10' (3m) sub-contrabass, the world's largest recorder of modern manufacture. The 500-year-old original resides in an Antwerp museum.

Photo: Aad Mosch

joints. Adriana adds the tone holes along the barrel section in a drill press jig.

Fashioning the head joint is what makes the recorder perhaps the most difficult early woodwind to build well. Unlike a clarinet or oboe, the recorder vocalizes through a meticulously crafted windway rather than through a reed. Miniscule variations in dimension can affect sound quality dramatically. The whistle structure begins with a slot drilled and chiseled at a strategic distance from the mouthpiece end. Adriana carves a ramp (labium) down to the lower edge of the slot. From the other direction, she advances a broaching tool that shapes the windway inside. The tool makes multiple passes as an adjustable clamp progressively lowers the head onto the cutter. She then turns a cedar plug (fipple) with a raised flat to fill the bore of the head and seal the bottom of the windway. With the plug inserted, she bandsaws the familiar "beak" at the blowing end.

The instrument is completed in a separate room, where Adriana soaks the stained sections in tubes of boiled linseed oil, which provides a durable, moisture-resistant finish. She then voices the recorder by making small adjustments to the windway, tone holes, and, if necessary, bore. It takes only a couple of hours to turn a simple alto recorder, but up to two days to finish and voice it. Skillful voicing for a player's distinctive breathing attack, fingering style, and acoustic preferences can have a huge impact on customer satisfaction. ▶

(Top to bottom)
Adriana enlarges the drilled bore with her hand-made reamers.

The Renaissance recorders have relatively simple profiles.

Great care must be taken with dimensioning and protecting the breath-splitting labium.

A broaching setup for windway cutting circumvents a daunting hand-carving challenge.

Photos: Karin van Wezel

Q&A with Adriana Breukink

A proficient player from an early age, Adriana Breukink studied with two recorder virtuosos at the Royal Conservatory in The Hague: Frans Brüggen, the most accomplished soloist of his generation, and Frederick Morgan, a highly regarded Australian maker/player visiting the Netherlands. Below are some of Adriana's reflections on the career that blossomed from this auspicious beginning.

David Fry: When you were a young student, was it your dream to become a professional recorder player or a builder, or both?

Adriana Breukink: When I was quite young, I could play very well and performed the high notes on the final exam. But I was *so* nervous always. I could also make very good instruments at the conservatory. I told myself, "There are so many people who can play very well. It's better for me to make instruments."

DF: Was your conservatory course on recorder-making sufficient to establish your own business, or did you apprentice to someone?

AB: It was a long one-and-a-half-year course. Every Friday afternoon, we met in the conservatory workshop. There were six students. It went slowly but was very inspiring. The instructor, Fred Morgan, had a waiting list of seven years for his instruments. He decided there needed to be more recorder makers and that he would teach his students how to produce them. The people in the class eventually bought specialized equipment for themselves.

DF: Are there enough makers today?

AB: There are probably too many because of the economy. Often people don't buy any more and instead repair what they have. It's very difficult now in classical and early music, with conservatories closing. It's harder for many makers these days but not yet for me.

DF: Did you enter the field by making reproductions of historical instruments?

AB: Yes, I started out copying baroque instruments. Today, with two or three exceptions, my colleagues still produce copies of these instruments, sometimes improving them but retaining their voicing and very conical bore. I don't make these anymore.

DF: Does the Eagle alto recorder have a larger dynamic range than the traditional baroque recorder?

AB: The Eagle has better dynamics, as well as a longer scale, from low E to more than two and a half octaves above. And with it you can play completely chromatically—with all the sharps and flats—as you would on a modern flute or clarinet. It's hard to manage that on a baroque instrument.

DF: Did you rely on computer modeling and acoustic testing equipment to come up with the new Eagle design?

AB: To be honest, I'm very intuitive. I still have my first wide-bore experiment here. I thought the sound of this prototype would be great with modern instruments. Then my collaborator (Geri Bollinger) and I started adding keys to it, trying, trying to make it work well. It's as though I could hear the sound I wanted in my head. Woodwinds like modern clarinets, oboes, and flutes have a wide bore with a strong fundamental (root tone), while baroque instruments don't because of their narrow bore. The two types don't resonate together. When I was finally able to get the sound I wanted in the Eagle, I sent it to Küng, which now manufactures it, and after measuring the sound with their equipment, they said, "Yes, this will fit well with a modern orchestra." And I said, "You don't have to tell me—I know."

> "It's as though I could hear the sound I wanted in my head."
> —Adriana Breukink

DF: Did you develop the keywork also?

AB: No, my collaborator did. That's the only thing I'm not able to do. I'm not interested in that kind of metal work.

DF: Is it more challenging to make a new model or to sell it?

AB: To make a new model is very inspiring. When you think you're done, you say, "Ah, now it is perfect," and then a colleague responds, "No, not yet." Finally, when the model is ready for sale, it's easy to believe people will say, "Wow, that's the best modern instrument possible." But that's not what happens. Of course, there have been some famous players who did buy the Eagle directly and made various recordings with it. But many musicians are old fashioned: What they really want is an old model that's just a bit better. It's like when Henry Ford was trying to make a car while a lot of people were just looking for a faster horse. They're only interested in the traditional way of playing. They're never challenged to perform with a really big orchestra or loud piano. A modern recorder sounds much stronger, and that extra volume has to come from somewhere. To play one well, you have to practice for a few months [to adjust to the breath requirements], but then you have a new dimension.

DF: What about the woods you use?

AB: The Eagle is made from grenadilla; it's so hard and stable that people can play three hours on it and it still works. And you don't need to oil it. Boxwood, however, absorbs water, turns black in the windway, and loses elasticity over time. The trees are small, and the tension in the wood can bend it like a banana. Pear is still available, but in twenty years, I'm not so sure. I use Canadian maple for a lot of my instruments; it works very well.

DF: How do you voice an instrument?

AB: I adjust the windway and tone holes to obtain the desired sound. I have a little machine that measures the height of the roofway and labium. But in the end, what you hear is much more subtle than what you can measure. I also play the new instrument a lot. At some point I may think, "Ah, this is not high enough here" and make a small change. Next morning, though, I may ask myself, "Why did I do that yesterday?" It takes a few days for the instrument to break in. So you have to be kind to the instrument; once you remove too much material, you have to start over.

DF: How do you know which change to make to get the sound you're looking for?

AB: That takes many years to learn. Someone working in a factory who knows only woodturning or keymaking can't voice instruments. That's really a skill in itself.

DF: When you make an instrument on commission, are customers usually satisfied when they receive it, or do they sometimes send it back for adjustment?

AB: It's very seldom they send it back or don't want it. When I know their age, sex, and way of blowing, I know what to make. They can be from Japan or South Africa—no problem. I can usually sense their personalities. If it's two German schoolgirls, I will make something one way, and if it's a skilled soloist, I will make something else. Most of my colleagues say, "This instrument is me, this is how it has to be." Of course, I have my own standards, but I love to tailor instruments to players, to make something special for them. I want people to be themselves and not play according to some archetype, especially when it comes to breathing technique.

DF: Does a good maker also have to be a good player?

AB: Yes, I think so. I feel you should make an instrument how you are, that captures your personality. When you are a good player, you make the recorder so it can do many, many things. There is, however, one disadvantage: You may make a versatile but demanding instrument that you can play but that less-skilled players cannot.

DF: Do you play every day?

AB: Five or six years ago I started more and more wanting to play. When I saw people playing on the stage, I was so jealous. Now that I have a modern instrument (the Eagle recorder), what I always wanted, I'm definitely practicing more and performing. I love it! Yes, I play every day. But if I'm not careful, too much playing can put me behind in the shop. I have a one-and-a-half-year backlog of orders. ■

David M. Fry turns wood and writes near Washington, D.C.


Photo: Karin van Wezel


Photo: Janine Joosten


Photo: Karin van der Meul


Photo: Ronald Moelker

(Top) A bath in boiled linseed oil helps protect against excess moisture. Unlike violins, recorders are more likely to deteriorate than improve with age.

(Middle left) Voicing an instrument can account for up to eighty percent of production time.

(Middle right) The Bassano Quartet uses a number of Adriana's historically modeled instruments.

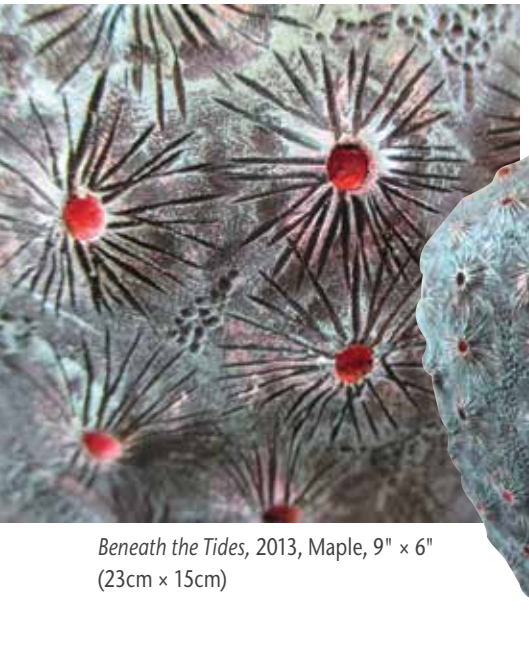
(Bottom) A rich stain gives the instruments a vintage look.

Members' Gallery

Jerry Johnson, Washington

My interest in woodworking started as a child. I watched my father, an expert craftsman, do wonderful things with fine furniture, including marquetry and restoration for collectors and museums. I started with my first lathe when I was a teenager. Later, as I neared retirement, I once again found a fascination with lathe-turned objects and have been making craft and art objects for the past sixteen years.

I like to try new and different methods in my woodturning, such as surface texturing, multi-axis turning, and embellishing with carving. Recently, I have experimented with various processes to apply surface decorations: In addition to adding texture, I have used acrylics, with some emphasis on applying interference paints.



Beneath the Tides, 2013, Maple, 9" × 6" (23cm × 15cm)

Terebra Ingenti (enormous auger shell), 2014, Myrtlewood, bronze, 53" × 24" (135cm × 61cm)

Orbicular Obsession, 2014, Maple, 16" × 26" × 4" (41cm × 66cm × 10cm)

Bruce Berger, California

As a woodturner, I strive to create distinctive, unusual objects, but inspiration toward this goal can be elusive. I am grateful for the discoveries of Robert J. G. Craig (*AW* vol 29, no 4, "Wedge Assemblies Offer a Tangential Twist"), as they have provided me with untold inspiration. I think his methods are pure brilliance.

Robert's discoveries regarding tangential wedges in an array less than 360 degrees are revolutionary to segmented work. They open new opportunities for design and construction. Pictured here are some of my attempts at using Robert's techniques, and my head is buzzing with ideas for future creations.

Spiral Illusions, 2014, Walnut, maple veneer, 3¾" × 4⅞" (10cm × 12cm)

Tangential Twist, 2014, Maple, dyed veneer, 2⅛" × 3⅜" (5cm × 10cm)

Candy Stripe, 2014, Maple, dyed veneer, ebony, black onyx cabochon, 2¼" × 6" (6cm × 15cm)

Onyx Rays, 2014, Yellowheart, dyed veneer, black onyx cabochon, 1¾" × 4½" (4cm × 11cm)

Memory (in remembrance of Robert J. G. Craig), 2014, Maple, dyed veneer, ebony, black onyx cabochon, 7¾" × 3⅜" (20cm × 8.6cm)

Members' Gallery

John Mydock, Hawaii

One of my approaches to embellishing wooden vessels is to use the age-old technique of pyrography. My learning process has led me from burning a few simple images on bowls to intricate designs that metaphorically shape-shift into birds, fish, tribal designs, and vines of interconnectedness to all life here in Hawaii.

Hapu Fern Garden, 2013, Norfolk Island pine, pyrography, 11½" × 17" (29cm × 43cm)

Pueo: Hawaiian Owls from Ridge to Reef, 2013, Norfolk Island pine, 4" × 20" (10cm × 51cm)

Bill Rosener, Oklahoma

I love turning wooden bowls. I have explored various types of rims, bases, and shapes over the years and eventually tried adding handles. Some of the handles have come from items found around the house, like a leather strap from an old purse, a bathroom tissue holder, or an embroidery hoop. Others, such as the metal handles, I fabricated using an acetylene torch and hammer.

Untitled, 2014, Pecan, embroidery hoop, 3½" × 9" (9cm × 23cm)

Untitled, 2014, Elm, metal rod, 4" × 13" (10cm × 33cm)

Corey Anderson, Connecticut

Graeme Priddle inspired me to incorporate the disciplines of turning, carving, branding, and coloring into my work. As I was driving home one evening past a tree-rimmed reservoir, I decided I would use these methods to honor trees. I would allow the wood to continue being a "tree" by creating new tree forms. Some of my "Tree Bowls" also incorporate sandblasting as a means of creating texture.

(Top left) Tree Bowl 1, 2001, Butternut, 4½" × 9" (11cm × 23cm)

(Bottom left) Tree Bowl 2, 2012, Sassafras, 7" × 14" (18cm × 36cm)

(Top right) Winter Orchard, 2008, Apple, 4" × 9" (10cm × 23cm)

(Bottom right) Tree Bowl 3, 2013, Sandblasted sassafras, 6" × 9" (15cm × 23cm)

Untitled, 2014, Elm, metal rod, 3½" × 7½" × 7½" (9cm × 19cm × 19cm)

Untitled, 2014, Maple, bathroom tissue holder, 5" × 18" (13cm × 46cm)

Members' Gallery

Raymond Puffer, New York

I enjoy turning both functional and artistic pieces and with each object attempt to present nature's materials in a pleasing and artful manner. I would get bored if I focused on just one style, technique, or type of wood. Being open to new and different forms of the craft keeps woodturning interesting for me. For more, visit RP-Woodturner.com.

Aztec Urn, 2013, Jatoba, wenge, maple, 11" × 6½" (28cm × 17cm)

Circles and Squares, 2014, Wenge, American holly, 7½" × 11½" (19cm × 29cm)

Geisha Pose, 2013, Manzanita burl, antique ivory, 10" × 8" × 2" (25cm × 20cm × 5cm)

Natural Edge Burl Bowl, 2000, Big leaf maple burl, 2¾" × 17" × 13" (7cm × 43cm × 33cm)

Joy Moss, Georgia

I love miniatures and have been a member of the National Association of Miniature Enthusiasts (NAME) for thirty years. I began turning wood about ten years ago, when I took a weekend course and then four classes at the John C. Campbell Folk School. I soon joined the AAW and three local clubs. With my 16" lathe, I was turning full-sized projects like bowls, plates, and tops but eventually decided to turn small scraps into miniature items like jewelry.

I began making small goblets, plates, candlesticks, candles (out of white Corian®), and bowls. Using twigs for natural edge bowls was fun. If you can turn a regular-sized item, why not turn it in miniature? I decided to make items representative of the work of my favorite turners and house them in a *Miniature Gallery* and, later, a *Collector's Room*. As part of a display at our local symposium, I gave credit to every turner represented in my *Gallery*, though woodturners said they could tell from looking at the pieces who inspired me.

Miniature Gallery, 2013, Maple, cherry, walnut, ebony, Corian®, 8" × 8" × 8" (20cm × 20cm × 20cm)

Collector's Room, 2014, Maple, cherry, walnut, ebony, Corian®, 10" × 13" × 10" (25cm × 33cm × 25cm)

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JIM CREEL
LOUISIANA

(Left) Alien Spring, 2014, Holly, oil paint, 7" × 4" (18cm × 10cm)

(Right) Alien Temptation, 2014, Holly, copper, acrylic paint, 8" × 14" (20cm × 36cm)

(Bottom) Alien Elder, 2014, River birch, copper with patina, 12" × 15" (30cm × 38cm)

Photos: Cindy Whittaker Photography

Growing up in the rural countryside near Baton Rouge, Louisiana, I was one with nature. Roaming the woods, I climbed trees, swung on vines like Tarzan, and wandered the old creeks that snaked through our land. I grew to appreciate the beauty and strength trees have to offer.

I have always been drawn to making things, including, eventually, my own house. As a boy, I loved whittling. Fifty years later, I carved whimsical wood spirits and fairy houses. Eventually, I learned about woodturning and, during a hands-on workshop with Trent Bosch, stumbled onto the foundation for what would become my *Alien* series. After turning a hollow vessel, I carved a curly tail from the remaining tenon. Someone said it looked like an alien pod, and why not? Alien it was. I began turning more pods from holly, river birch, and maple. I left more wood to carve bigger tails.

Then came the inevitable addition of other materials—why not? Copper, an essential element, seemed the perfect complement to my wooden vessels. As though it were scripted, I found myself in two key demonstrations at the AAW symposium in Phoenix: copper-forming with Jennifer Shirley and patinas with Carmen De La Paz. This was great! I needed to develop these skills for the direction I was going with my work—and I never knew how relaxing hammering copper could be.

I have fun with creative possibilities, just like when I was a boy whittling forms according to my imagination. Now I am enjoying the best of three disciplines—turning, carving, and copper forming—to fulfill my passion for creating. Beware, coming soon: *Alien Steampunk Warrior in Blue Armor!*