TIPS FOR TURNING FIGURED WOOD • TURN A PUMPKIN • SPECIAL WOOD BECOMES KEEPSAKE "TROPHIES"

AMERICAN WOODTURNER

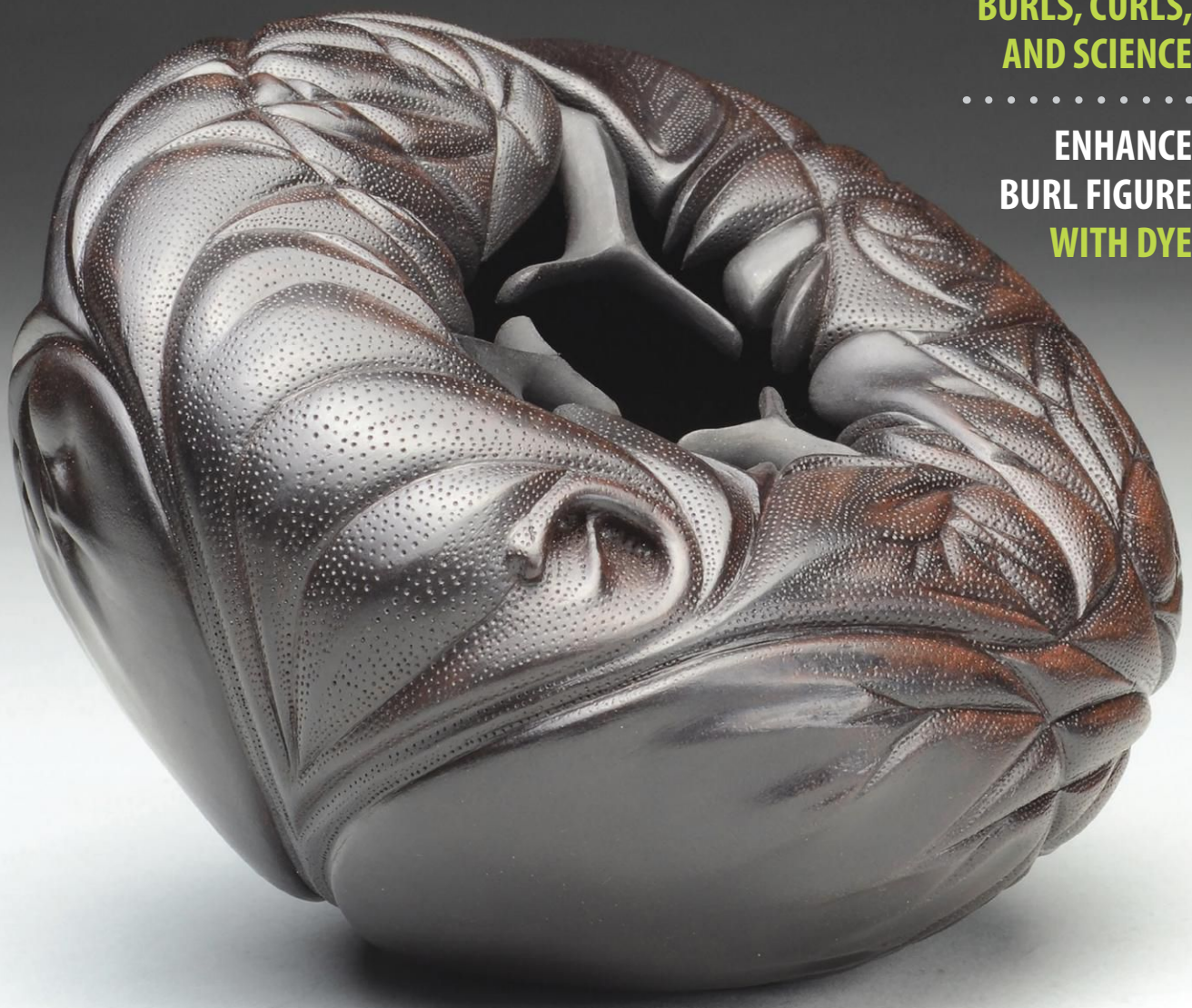
Journal of the American Association of Woodturners
October 2022 vol 37, no 5 • woodturner.org

ROLLY MUNRO
TOOLMAKER, ARTIST, DESIGNER

THIS PRESENT MOMENT:
CRAFTING A BETTER WORLD

FIGURE IN WOOD
BURLS, CURLS, AND SCIENCE

ENHANCE BURL FIGURE WITH DYE



SimonRoy Quebec, Canada

If art has to convey a message, I'm not an artist. I value skill and creativity above all, and I never cared to make any kind of statement through my craft. I just want to make nice things while developing new skills.

What got me into woodworking was the need, both mentally and physically, to move away from screens. Whether it was TV shows, video games, or mindless doom-scrolling, I used to spend an unhealthy amount of time staring at a screen. There were moments of joy in it, but once those moments were gone, there was nothing left to bring a true sense of fulfillment.

Since I saw the amazing works of Malcolm Tibbetts, Ken Cowell, and others, I became obsessed with woodturning. It was a very healthy obsession though; it unraveled something I didn't know I had in me—determination. I slowly built a workshop in my basement, one piece at a time, until I gathered all the necessary tools. I was finally ready to explore a new world full of challenges and possibilities, the wonderful world of segmented woodturning. ■

For more, visit roysbox.com.

Any Direction, 2021, Yellowheart, purpleheart, wenge, 11" × 10" (28cm × 25cm)

Searching for the Hatchlings, 2022, Maple, India ink, 17" × 8" (43cm × 20cm)

Catacombs, 2022, Maple, India ink, 11" × 9" (28cm × 23cm)

Triforce, 2020, Maple, yellowheart, walnut, 20" × 11" (51cm × 28cm)

AAW | AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF WOODTURNERS

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

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ASSOCIATION NEWS

WOODTURNERS CHATTER

GALLERY

COVER

Cover – Rolly Munro, *From the Heart*, 2022, Walnut, dyes, waxes, 2¾" × 4¾" (7cm × 12cm)

Photo: AAW/Tib Shaw

From the Heart was part of the 2022 POP exhibition and auction, *The Space Between*.

Back cover – John Beaver

Editor's Note

I have always felt a strong connection to trees, so I found Dr. Seri Robinson's article about the science of figure in wood (page 26) particularly interesting. The article offers some explanation for why patterns like curl, burl, and quilting occur. Spoiler alert—they can be due to a combination of factors, both genetic (inherent tendencies) and stress (environmental pressures).

You don't have to look far to notice that some woodturners always embellish their work, while others are steadfast in their allegiance to wood's natural beauty. (Side note, I once heard a professional wood finisher say, "If you want to retain the natural beauty of the wood, don't cut the tree down. After that, all bets are off.") Dr. Robinson's article made me wonder why. What makes a person have a proclivity for paint or pyrography, while their good neighbor wouldn't dream of obscuring the wood? What drives our creative choices?

Maybe we are like the trees—formed from a unique combination of genetics and stress factors. And maybe those beautiful irregularities are Mother Nature's form of embellishment.

Joshua Friend —Joshua Friend

From the President

"The current situation of clubs across New South Wales is clearly one that is developed in a manner which is consistent with the concept of lifecycle evolution. To survive, clubs will need to be dynamic as well as be prepared to change." –Greg Russell.

Most of us are not living in New South Wales, but the question is valid: Is your club or chapter now growing, remaining static, or dwindling? Discussion in the AAW's online Chapter Leaders Forum has brought forward ideas related to hybrid meetings, attracting new turners, design of demonstrations, newsletters, and other tactics. Here are a few best practices:.

- Where enough members have technical capabilities, develop an approach to support hybrid (online and in-person) meetings.
- Welcome and support new turners. Make sure they do not get the impression that your group is just a bunch of "old guys" who know each other and talk among themselves. Name tags for everyone are helpful. Encouraging, non-critical comments regarding turnings brought in for show and tell are helpful, while critical comments can turn a prospective new member off. Mentoring new turners with one-on-one sessions with a good teacher can develop long-term relationships.
- Open "turnaround" days with easy demos and an opportunity for the general public to turn, well publicized and located where there is foot traffic, can build interest and attendance at regular meetings.
- Demonstrations need to meet the interests and needs of the members, and demonstrators need to have good explanatory skills, be easily heard in a group setting, and answer questions with an appropriate attitude.
- Special projects like pens for troops, Beads of Courage lidded bowls, and charity bowl sales can build community support and provide a sense of purpose for the general membership.
- A club newsletter, edited well, with good photos of events and projects, and up to date with announcements of meetings and events, will build membership, especially if it is distributed effectively.

Our clubs and chapters are the lifeblood of the AAW and for most of us have been the primary means through which we learn about woodturning, gain inspiration, and develop relationships. As we adapt to our "new normal," we need to work toward maintaining and growing them.

Volunteerism

The AAW runs with just five paid staff and a few paid contracted individuals. Between the Board and various committees, dozens of volunteers meet on a regular basis and spend individual time making things happen. In addition, our annual Symposium works only because more than one hundred people step forward onsite to help with everything from welcoming registrants to videography to equipment preparation, to supporting vendors, to, well, everything. We are always grateful for their efforts, without which the AAW would not function.

One challenge of relying on volunteers is that when there is inevitable turnover or a sudden lack of availability of a key individual, there needs to be a succession plan and transfer of information and records, or major interruptions will occur. As woodturners, we are unique on our willingness to share woodturning "secrets" through our demonstrations and publications. Are we the same in the mentoring and development of our successors? It is always helpful in our clubs, committees, and boards that we know who will step in and take over when any of us cannot. Just a thought.

Keep turning,

MS MD

Mike Summerer
President, AAW Board of Directors

SAVE THE DATES!

AAW'S FALL 2022 VIRTUAL SYMPOSIUM

October 15-16, 2022

Have some woodturning experience but have a few holes in your skill set? Want to refine your foundational woodturning abilities?

- This two-day "best of the basics" online workshop is tailored to newer woodturners who want to learn the essentials—and to intermediate turners who want to brush up on fundamental skills.
- AAW's veteran instructors will teach the basics and present intriguing projects suitable for all skill levels. Instructors to include Helen Bailey, Ernie Conover, Keith Gotschall, Rudolph Lopez, Jim Rodgers, and Malcolm Tibbetts.

Kip Christensen demonstrates clean-cutting techniques at the AAW Fall Virtual Symposium, November 2021.

Join us from the comfort of your own home to learn how to get the best results and the most satisfaction from your time at the lathe!

Please visit tiny.cc/AAWVirtual or scan the QR code to find the latest information.

AAW'S 37TH ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM

Louisville, Kentucky
June 1-4, 2023

Join woodturners from around the globe for the most anticipated woodturning experience of the year in Louisville.

- Appropriate for all skill levels and interest areas
- Choose from dozens of educational demos and panels
- Learn quickly from internationally known demonstrators and top woodturning talent
- Get motivation and inspiration
- Browse stunning exhibitions of work by many of the best artists in turning today
- Share your work in the Instant Gallery, which features hundreds of pieces
- Collect exquisite wood art from the auctions; proceeds support artists, education, and outreach
- Shop the Tradeshow; browse the world's largest woodturning marketplace, which also features ongoing demos
- Connect with turners who have similar interests; reconnect with old friends

Saturday evening "Battle of the Bowls," with Mike Mahoney and Stuart Batty at the AAW Symposium in Chattanooga, June 2022.

Photo: Andi Wolfe

Symposium Venue
Kentucky Exposition Center
937 Phillips Lane
Louisville, KY 40209

Host Hotel
Crowne Plaza Louisville Airport Expo Center
830 Phillips Lane
Louisville, KY 40209

Louisville is an entirely different type of Southern.
With its booming bourbon renaissance, renowned culinary scene, and one-of-a-kind attractions like Churchill Downs, Louisville Slugger Museum & Factory, and the Muhammad Ali Center, Louisville is an extraordinary place to visit. The Kentucky Exposition Center is located just minutes from both the airport and downtown. The host hotel, Crowne Plaza Louisville Airport Expo Center, is just a short walk from the Symposium site.

MORE DETAILS COMING SOON!
Please visit **tiny.cc/AAW23** or scan the QR code to find the latest information.

Call for Entries *Form | Content*: 2023 POP Exhibition and Auction

Submission Period: December 1, 2022, to January 15, 2023

The Professional Outreach Program (POP) is pleased to announce the 2023 exhibition theme, *Form | Content*. Since 2007, the annual POP show and auction, featuring small-scale works by an international roster of talented emerging and established artists, has been a highlight of the year. The submission period starts December 1, but the time to start thinking and planning is now!

Why is the theme *Form | Content*?

POP themes are chosen to provide a springboard for creative ideas. Faced with limitless possibilities, psychology shows that the response is often to do nothing at all. Along with the size restriction (6" × 6" × 6", or 15cm × 15cm × 15cm) and the use of the lathe in the process for juried work, the POP theme provides a creative constraint that spurs thinking and imagination.

Form and content refer to two distinct but essential and interwoven aspects of an object: form is the composition, techniques used, medium, color, pattern; content is what the form communicates or evokes: subject matter, meaning, concept, feelings.

As a theme, *Form | Content* offers many possibilities—from statements on pure craft (the form is the full meaning or purpose) to thinking about how we use wood, shape, texture, color, surface design, etc., to convey meaning. As a play on words, content can also refer to the state of being content, or to the contents of a container, since turners are often vessel makers and vessels hold content(s). The theme makes space for all forms of turning.

Eligibility/submission details

- The juried portion of the show is open to any current AAW member (at any level, including Affiliate, or trial, membership) and to full-time students in art, design, or industry-related degree programs, regardless of membership status.
- All types of turnings are welcome: sculptural, functional, segmented, ornamental, green-turned, etc.
- All entries must include turning, but any material may be used.
- Work, as it will be displayed, must fit into the area of a 6" cube. No exceptions.
- Up to three works may be entered. Only one piece per artist will be exhibited, if chosen.
- Entry fee: $25 for up to three separate pieces. Fees waived for students in full-time accredited art- or wood industry-related programs or apprenticeships.
- A theme statement of no more than 100 words is required.

Where and when to apply

- Apply online at tiny.cc/Calls.
- Submission period: December 1, 2022, to January 15, 2023, 11:59 p.m. CST. All artists will be notified by January 31, 2023.

Other info

Entry images

Submit digital images in .jpg format, less than 4 MB per file. You may submit up to three images of each entry. The work is juried through photographs, so it is important that images are clear, properly exposed, and in focus. A plain background is recommended. Instagram-style images are discouraged.

On view

Form | Content will premiere at the AAW Gallery of Wood Art in Saint Paul, Minnesota, and be on view February 26 to May 19, 2023, before traveling to Louisville, Kentucky, for the 2023 AAW Symposium, June 1-4. Live/Online auction June 3, 2023.

Max Brosi, *Freedom of Speech*, 2015, Oak, steel bolts, 7½" × 5½" × 4" (19cm × 14cm × 10cm)

Photo: AAW/Tib Shaw

Merryll Saylan, *Plate of Figs*, 2015, Polychromed wood, 6" × 6" (15cm × 15cm)

Photo: AAW/Tib Shaw

Delivery and display

Accepted work must be shipped to arrive at the AAW Gallery of Wood Art in Saint Paul by February 14, 2023. Artwork must be ready for installation—freestanding or with an easel or other support provided. Support subject to approval.

Sales/auction

This show concludes with a live and online auction at the AAW Symposium. Funds raised support POP programs, including the Instant Gallery awards, critiques, fellowships, Artist Showcase, panel discussions, and other professional development initiatives. Artists may set a reserve price and retain up to 50% of the proceeds.

Catalog

Artworks will be professionally photographed and compiled in a full-color catalog. Participating artists receive complimentary copies.

For more, check the woodturner.org Calls for Entry page, tiny.cc/Calls, or contact Tib Shaw at tib@woodturner.org. ■

Call for Entries *Out of the Woods*: 2023 AAW Member Exhibition

Submission Period: January 1 to March 15, 2023

The theme for the 2023 AAW member show is *Out of the Woods*, embracing the versatile and beautiful medium we work in and referring to the many challenges and changes of the past few years. As always, artists are encouraged to interpret the theme for themselves. Our goal is to host a Symposium exhibition that showcases and celebrates the full scope of excellent work being created by our members, from perfect traditional forms to innovative sculptures, and we hope you will apply.

All work exhibited will be selected through a blind jurying process. There are two cash prizes for this exhibition: the $300 Masters' Choice, selected by the jurors or their representatives, and the $200 People's Choice, selected by attendees at the AAW Symposium in Louisville, Kentucky, June 1-4, 2023.

Eligibility/submission details

- The show is open to any current AAW member anywhere in the world, and to full-time students in art, design, or industry-related degree programs, regardless of AAW membership status.
- Work for the annual AAW member exhibition is juried through photographs; all entries are anonymous. Accepted works that differ from the submitted images may be refused at AAW's discretion.
- All types of turnings are welcome: sculptural, functional, segmented, ornamental, green-turned, traditional, etc. Please contact Tib Shaw if your project is more than 48" (122cm) tall or wide.
- Collaborations are welcome. A designated contact person is required.
- Entry fee: $25 for up to three submissions. The fee is waived for full-time students in art, design, or industry-related degree programs.
- A theme statement of up to 100 words is required. Describe your interpretation of the theme.
- You are free to use any media, but the work must be created at least partially on the lathe.
- Work must have been created in the past two years (between March 2021 and March 15, 2023).

Where and when to apply

- Apply online at tiny.cc/Calls.
- Submission period: January 1 to March 15, 2023, 11:59 p.m. CST. All artists will be notified by March 31, 2023.

Other info

Entry images

Submit digital images in .jpg format, maximum size 4 MB per file. Minimum 2800 pixels per inch on the longest side. You may submit up to three images for each entry. The main image should be an overall shot; the remaining two images can include details or alternative views. Since the show is juried through photographs, it is important that images be clear, properly exposed, and in focus. A plain background is strongly preferred for jurying. Do not watermark or include your name on the images.

On view

Out of the Woods will premiere at the AAW's Annual International Woodturning Symposium in Louisville, Kentucky, June 1-4, 2023. The exhibition will then travel to the AAW Gallery of Wood Art, Saint Paul, Minnesota, where it will be on display until the end of 2023.

Delivery and display

Accepted work can be shipped ahead to the Symposium site to arrive by May 25, or hand-delivered on Wednesday, May 31, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., or Thursday, June 1, 9:00 a.m. to noon. Artwork must be in excellent condition, be as shown in the entry images, and ready for installation. All work must be freestanding or with an easel or other support provided. Support subject to approval.

Sales

Displayed work need not be for sale, but for pieces that are sold, the AAW/artist split will be 45%/55%. Sold work must remain with the show until it closes in Saint Paul at the end of December 2023. Sold work may be replaced at the curator's discretion.

Awards

- Masters' Choice Award of $300
- People's Choice Award of $200

Catalog

A full-color catalog will be available. Participating artists will receive a complimentary copy. Collaborative projects will be allotted two complimentary catalogs.

For more, check the woodturner.org Calls for Entry page, tiny.cc/Calls, or contact Tib Shaw at tib@woodturner.org.

Dale Larson, *Oval Bowl*, 2022, Pacific madrone burl, 3½" × 10¾" × 14½" (9cm × 27cm × 37cm)

Photo: AAW/Tib Shaw

Photo: Big Event Studio

Steve Loar and Holland Bowl Mill Collaboration, *Dialogue—The Mask*, 2018, Beech, maple, cherry, mixed media, 16" × 19" × 15" (41cm × 48cm × 38cm)

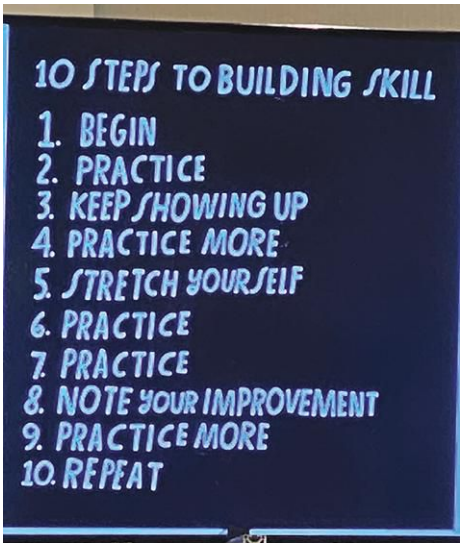
AAW Grant Recipient Attends Chattanooga Symposium

I was awarded an AAW educational grant for entry to the 2022 Symposium in Chattanooga. Since I was traveling from the U.K. on a limited budget, the grant made it possible for me to attend this incredible event. I'm relatively new to turning, less than two years, so this was my first in-person woodturning event. And what an amazing event it was.

Getting started

I was keen to do some volunteering during the Symposium, as a small way to say thank you for the grant. My wife and I helped out at the registration desk. What volunteering actually did was get me involved right from the start; I talked to a lot of people and became familiar with the venue.

I'd taken a couple of items with me for the instant gallery, so I signed them in before heading over to the welcome talk for first-timers. A lot of good tips were shared. Ron Campbell explained that it was all about friendships and encouraged us to talk to other people, including the demonstrators.



Helpful tips gleaned from the Symposium experience.

It certainly provided a warm welcome at the end of the first day.

Meeting demonstrators, making friends

As a new woodturner, I'd only seen remote demonstrations, so what a thrill it was to see and meet turners who have inspired me. Eric Lofstrom's demo on turning a multi-axis raindrop was fascinating. I was also very excited to see Barbara Dill's demonstrations. I took notes during each demo I attended and picked up so many useful tips.

During the pandemic, I saw some of the online presentations by the Women in Turning group, WIT Presents. One of the first that I saw was by Betty Scarpino, whose work has inspired me from that day. I was thrilled when I entered the exhibition area at the Symposium to see her work, and she was there, too. I introduced myself, and we chatted about her items that were on view. I was totally blown away.

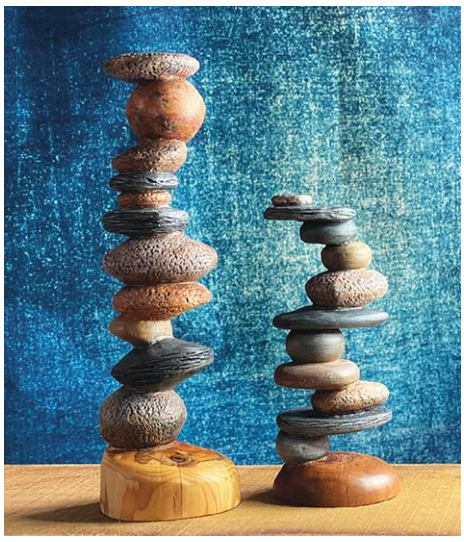
The standard of work on display was beyond my comprehension. Each day I added to the list of things I wanted to try when I got home.

Leaving inspired

The last day came around far too quickly. I'd packed in as many demonstrations as I could, wandered around the exhibitions on many occasions, and probably still missed a lot of items. But as Ron Campbell said in the welcome talk, the Symposium was about friendships, and I'd certainly made new friends and built relationships with people I had met online.

There were turners at the Symposium whom I admire greatly but didn't get a chance to talk to. I'll just have to come back next year to meet them. Thank you, AAW, for a fabulous event. It was a truly uplifting experience for me, and I have returned home to England full of inspiration and new ideas. ■

The author met and developed friendships with turners who have inspired her (above, with Barbara Dill and below, with Betty Scarpino).



Two pieces from the author's latest project, Stone Stacks, inspired by Barbara Dill. They were turned on multiple axes, textured with a power carver, and painted with acrylics and ink.

—Lou Wilde, Leicester, England; Instagram: @turningwilde

Apply for an AAW Grant

AAW Grants are available to individuals, chapters, schools, and non-profit organizations. Examples include but are not limited to outreach programs and/or events to encourage youth and under-represented populations (women, minority, disabled, etc.) to learn and pursue woodturning, support of existing or developing unique woodturning programs, educational workshops or class participation, professional development opportunities, chapter projects, etc. In addition to monetary awards, up to ten mini-lathe packages are available for award each year.

Regular AAW Grants are awarded on an annual basis. To be eligible, applications must be received by December 31 for grants given in the following year. However, Women in Turning (WIT) grants and others for under-represented populations, events, and exhibitions are awarded quarterly.

Find detailed grant descriptions and application information at tiny.cc/aawgrants. If you have questions, please contact the AAW office by calling 877-595-9094 or emailing memberservices@woodturner.org.

Call for Student Work 2023 Turning to the Future Competition

AAW AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF WOODTURNERS
Turning to the Future

Submission period: March 1 to May 1, 2023

The AAW is pleased to announce the sixth Turning to the Future competition, an opportunity for woodturning students and schools to show off their best work. The exhibition will be held in conjunction with FreshWood, one of North America's largest student furniture-making and woodworking competitions.

The competition encourages students to reach for and attain high levels of skill in the use of the lathe. It is open to all students in North America, and there is no entry fee.

Any high school student is eligible. Post-secondary students must be enrolled either full- or part-time in a degree- or certificate-awarding woodworking, art, or design program. (Students in apprenticeships or in specialty programs will be considered on a case-by-case basis.)

Prizes include $500 first-place and $100 second-place awards in each division (High School and Post-secondary). Finalists receive a one-year subscription to *American Woodturner* and a certificate for a complimentary AAW Symposium registration.

There are two divisions, High School and Post-Secondary. Up to fifteen finalists in each division will be chosen to have their work displayed at the 2023 AWFS® Fair in Las Vegas, Nevada, July 25-28, 2023. Work will be evaluated on craftsmanship, aesthetic appeal, creativity and/or utility, and process documentation. Submission period opens March 1, 2023. Deadline for submissions is May 1, 2023.

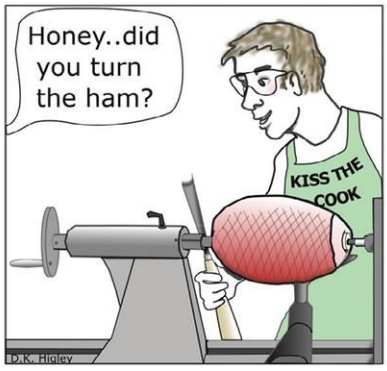
Submission details can be found at tiny.cc/Calls.

AAW Board of Directors Election Results

On behalf of the Board, Nominating Committee, and staff, I would like to congratulate Sally Burnett and Ron Day, who have been elected to three-year terms starting January 2, 2023. I would also like to announce that KC Kendall has been appointed to a three-year term starting January 2, 2023. A total of 3,513 votes were cast via online ballots, and the results of the 2023 Board election were validated by Olsen Thielen, our external auditors.

These Board changes are in keeping with the AAW bylaws, which state: "In each election, the two candidates receiving the most votes by those casting ballots will serve for three years. The third Board member will be appointed by a two-thirds majority vote of the Board of Directors." The ability to appoint one Board member helps to ensure a healthy diversity of talent, so that all areas of expertise remain fulfilled. Also consistent with our bylaws, the Board appoints members to fill and complete unexpired terms as needed.

Respectfully,
Phil McDonald
AAW Executive Director



2022 AAW Symposium Youth Lathe Winners

The 2022 AAW Symposium held in Chattanooga, Tennessee, in June was an opportunity to re-engage the AAW Youth Turning program. This year, there were fourteen youth turners, ages 10 to 18, who participated in the "hands-on" instruction taught by instructors Nick Cook, Andi Sullivan, Sally Ault, Katie Stofel, and Kailee Bosch. In addition to the instructors, dozens of volunteers helped mentor the turners to ensure it was a safe and fun-filled event. The youth turners had opportunities to participate in several rotations, and with open lathes in the sessions, a last-minute decision was made to open the sessions up to kids ages 10 to 99. It was great to see the excitement of the kids, regardless of age, and their enthusiasm for woodturning.

Lucky lathe winners

This year, the program awarded three sets of lathes and equipment used in the classes to three lucky youth participants. These prizes were limited to youth between 10 and 18 years of age. Since this program has been in place, 333 lathes—with tools, chucks, and safety equipment—have been awarded to youth participants. In addition to youth participant winners, eleven lathes and supporting equipment were awarded to Educational Opportunity Grant (EOG) recipients. These lathes will be used by groups who submitted applications to serve organized youth turning programs in schools and local AAW chapters. Winners of this year's three lathe packages were Seth Eichenberger, Eli Stalnaker, and Blaze Jones.

Fun and lively action at the Youth Program during the 2022 AAW Symposium, Chattanooga, Tennessee.

Photo: Andi Wolfe

Generous supporters

This program would not be possible without the generosity of the vendors who provided the equipment and supplies for the classes. The following vendors have supported this program from the beginning:

- JET/Powermatic (lathes and stands)
- Crown Hand Tools (tool sets)
- Teknatool International (chucks)
- Woodcraft Supply (faceshields)

In addition, the following vendors have supported the program for multiple years:

- Easy Wood Tools (tool sets)
- Craft Supplies USA (project supplies)
- Robust Tools (toolrests)
- Vince's WoodNWonders (abrasives)

The success of the AAW's Youth Program does not just happen—it is due to the support of many volunteers who give their time before, during, and after the Symposium. These individuals include Larry Miller, Linda Britt, Kip Christensen, Kailee Bosch, Linda Ferber, Denis Delehanty, Carlos Angulo, and Ron Day. Also, a special "Thank You" goes out to Larry Miller and his wife Judy Miller for their years of supporting this program. Larry has put together a systematic and well-documented approach to organizing this program, which has set the stage for its continued success. ■

—Ron Day

Prize Drawing for AAW Members

One of your many membership benefits with AAW is the monthly prize drawings. Prizes this year include gift certificates, tools, kits, books, DVDs, event registrations, and online education. Member winners are randomly selected at the beginning of each month and notified of their prize.

Thank you to the many businesses that continue supporting AAW members with these engaging prizes. If your business would like to contribute a prize, contact memberservices@woodturner.org.

When you patronize these woodturning businesses, please thank them for their support of AAW members.

- Carter and Son Toolworks (carterandsontoolworks.com)
- David Ellsworth (ellsworthstudios.com)
- Glenn Lucas (glennlucaswoodturning.com)
- Hunter Tool Systems (huntertoolsystems.com)
- Mike Mahoney (bowlmakerinc.com)
- Nick Cook Woodturner (nickcookwoodturner.com)
- Niles Bottle Stoppers (nilesbottlestoppers.com)
- Preservation Solutions (preservation-solutions.com)
- Rockler Woodworking and Hardware (rockler.com)
- Tennessee Association of Woodturners (TAW) (tnwoodturners.org)
- Thompson Lathe Tools (thompsonlathetools.com)
- Trent Bosch (trentbosch.com)

Businesses will be updated throughout the year.

To promote woodturning in our local community, Ric Davis, Program Director for Prescott Area Woodturners in Prescott, Arizona, arranged to set up a month-long display of club members' woodturnings at the public library in nearby Prescott Valley, Arizona. More than a dozen of our eighty members gathered at the library in early August 2022 to provide items and arrange the display.

The fifty-four items on display show a variety of styles and techniques that turn wood into beautiful functional and artistic objects. Our hope is that library visitors will become aware of our AAW chapter and the active woodturners in the area. Club information brochures are attached to the outside of the display for anyone who might be interested in woodturning. On subsequent visits to the library, we have found people surrounding the cabinets and intently viewing the displayed items. Regardless of whether we can trace new members to this display, we are pleased to promote the art of woodturning and to make our club better known to local citizens.

For more, visit prescottareawoodturners.com.

—Ken Allen, President, Prescott Area Woodturners

I am a life member of the Central Connecticut Woodturners, the Eastern Connecticut Woodturners, and a former member of the Western Massachusetts Woodturners. I work as a docent at the New England Air Museum (NEAM), a world-class museum located adjacent to Bradley International Airport in Windsor Locks, Connecticut. The NEAM's collection comprises more than 100 aircraft.

Knowing that I am a woodturner, the NEAM restoration team asked me to turn rocket nosecones to complete the Fm-2 (Wildcat) fighter display. I turned six rocket nosecones to mount on real rockets. Then they asked if my fellow woodturners and I would turn rockets for the UH-1B (Huey) Helicopter gunship, so visitors to the NEAM would see the rocket launch tubes with a full complement of rockets. The Huey needed fourteen rockets. Fellow club member Kip Lockhart and I completed the rockets using glued-up leftover hardwood.

Next, the restoration team asked if we could make rockets for the AH-1S (Cobra Gunship), which had thirty-eight empty rocket tubes. At this point, we invited more club members to get involved. Maple blanks were generously donated by E.R. Hinman & Sons, a sawmill in Burlington, Connecticut. We proposed the project to the clubs as a chance to practice production spindle turning, and they rose to the challenge. Peter Bozzo of the NEAM restoration team cut wrench notches in the nose cones, glued the nosecones to the rocket bodies, and painted the rockets a grey metal color. The Huey and

Cobra gunships look great with the rocket pods complete.

Later, we were contacted yet again by the restoration team, this time with a request to turn thirty-eight more rockets for a Navy A-4 Skyhawk. I did not think the clubs would be up for making more rockets, but they once again rose to the challenge. Rick Angus completed twenty-three rockets. We had five rockets left over from the Cobra, so we were only short ten, which other club members completed. Our final count was a total of ninety rocket nosecones.

—Tom Stevenson, Connecticut

Seattle Woodturners and Dunn Gardens Join Forces

A baseball bat turned by Russ Prior and pyrographed by Randi Aiken.

The Seattle Woodturners (SWT) partnered with Dunn Gardens, a historic garden trust in Seattle, to raise money for both nonprofit organizations. Having felled a large sugar maple tree, the Gardens needed to remove the trunk, which had lain dormant and in the way of future plans for two years. While the Pacific Northwest has abundant Western bigleaf maple, which is an excellent source of wood, sugar maple, or Eastern hard rock maple, is not at all common. This specimen had been transported by train across the continent and planted by Arthur Dunn in 1915, as prescribed by the Olmstead Brothers, who designed the original garden landscape. The tree thrived in the maritime climate of the Pacific Northwest for more than 100 years before it finally succumbed to age.

Enter the SWT Wood Rats Team, who were contacted by Dunn Garden's curator/head gardener to help remove the wood and make room for a new part of the garden. The Wood Rats move large pieces of wood at no charge. We carry liability insurance for protection against accidents and provide documentation to support the donor's generosity. Wood donors really like the concept of a future life for their beloved tree. It's a win-win for both—appreciative donors and woodturners on the prowl for free and big pieces of wood.

A fundraising model

The concept is simple: Dunn Gardens would provide the wood and SWT would remove the large log and turn pieces from that wood. Dunn would then organize an auction and the proceeds were to be split evenly. This is a fundraising model that can be used easily by other woodturning clubs around the country.

A call for turners was broadcast to the SWT membership. Responses included the type of piece the individual turner wanted to make. Wood was cut to accommodate the various individual requests. Of the twenty-eight turners who initially responded, nineteen donated completed pieces. In all, forty-nine pieces were contributed. The accompanying photos show some of the outstanding contributions.

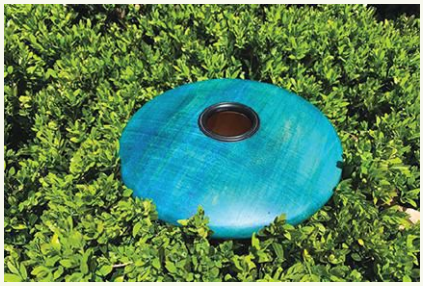
It was wonderful to see more than forty turnings made from a single tree! While the pieces ranged in style, type, and size, it was clear that they all came from a single source. Several pieces sold for the "buy-it-now" price on the first day. Others were left available for the virtual portion of the auction, which lasted a week. There was some last-minute sparring by bidders to get that perfect piece.

Dunn Gardens organized the auction day and provided space for a bring-your-own picnic. A no-host bar was set up to help lubricate pocketbooks. SWT provided a live demonstration, with Elizabeth Weber turning green bowl blanks. For many of the attendees, this event introduced them to an artform they knew nothing about.

The Wood Rats in action, from left: Jim Hogg, Russ Prior, and Norm Vigus.

The silent auction table.

Turned for auction



Clock by Barry Roitblat; shell bowl by Elizabeth Weber; Emerald City vessel by Joe Cornell; hollow form by Steve Gary.

Not only were they able to see finished pieces, they watched Elizabeth turn chunks of wood into beautiful bowl blanks.

Results

Our fundraising endeavor with Dunn Gardens raised more than $8,000! SWT's share was a significant boost to our budget. SWT looks forward to a long and happy relationship with Dunn Gardens. We hope there will be more opportunities in the future to obtain wood that is not commonly available in the Pacific Northwest. Dunn Gardens has lots of hardwood trees that need occasional culling, and the Wood Rats have the wherewithal to handle large pieces of wood.

This fundraising model could be used anywhere a legacy garden exists with wood that requires regular management. If your club has a wood harvesting program, I urge you to reach out to local gardens. We are lucky that Seattle is home to many legacy gardens. Some are owned and maintained by the City of Seattle, while others are privately owned. In our experience, the private gardens have less bureaucracy and are easier to work with. It's an easy sell: If you have to cull a well-loved tree, it's much better to make something useful or pleasing than to chip the tree for pulp. ■

This fundraising model could be used anywhere a legacy garden exists with wood that requires regular management.

For more, visit dunngardens.org and seattlewoodturners.org.

—Russ Prior, President, Seattle Woodturners

Elizabeth Weber mesmerizes a future woodturner with an entertaining demonstration.

Dual-Meeting Hybrid Format Reconnects Club Members

Breaking through the Covid aftermath has been difficult on woodturning clubs. Like many AAW chapters, The Enchanted Woodturners (TEW) of Santa Fe, New Mexico, found interest lagging and member connections breaking down during the pandemic. This became our leadership's biggest challenge—bringing members back together so we could continue sharing our passion for woodturning. We made some bold decisions to reignite our club and are happy to report that TEW membership grew in 2022 to almost fifty turners.

Dual-meeting hybrid format

Through a partnership with the Santa Fe School District, TEW has access to a great high school woodshop. In this meeting space, we were able to gather to watch an interactive remote demo (IRD) by Dennis Belcher, a woodturner from North Carolina. Dennis demonstrated his "vase from a board" project, and the presentation was an excellent motivator for our members. Dennis was very gracious and stayed online afterwards to speak with members about their individual projects.

During our planning conversations, Dennis suggested we do our own post-demo follow-up workshop without him, using club mentors for onsite support. So after the IRD, club members got busy in the woodshop to put into practice what we learned from Dennis. Three mentors assisted seven chapter members, and everyone seemed to jump in and help with their areas of expertise.

This dual-meeting hybrid format achieved two important goals: learn from a master turner and reconnect through in-person teamwork. Here are a few tips for chapters wanting to try this approach:

- Plan well in advance; it takes time for members to get back in the swing of things.
- Confirm dates with club mentors and have them make a sample project to show during the workshop.
- Create a committee that will email membership, answer questions, and follow up to confirm attendance.
- Advise members of the items needed for the project.
- Doing both the IRD and post-demo workshop in one go can make for a long day. Consider scheduling them within a week apart.
- Ensure all necessary supplies (turning tools, wood, glue, sandpaper, etc.) are on hand for the workshop.

For more, visit sfturners.org.

—Kathy Knorr, President, The Enchanted Woodturners

Meeting 1: IRD

Members of The Enchanted Woodturners enjoy an IRD by Dennis Belcher, making a vase from a board.

Meeting 2: Post-demo workshop

TEW members re-gather to work together on Dennis's IRD project.

Seattle Woodturners Host Hybrid Club Meeting

The Seattle Woodturners were excited to host its first-ever hybrid club meeting in May, after more than two years of remote Zoom demos and sporadic pixelation. The meeting format included an in-person demo by Matt Monaco that could be viewed remotely, followed by two hands-on weekend workshops with Matt. The experience taught us some valuable lessons.

Getting set up

In anticipation of finding a new home for our club in 2023, the meeting was held at a promising venue, The Brightwater Education and Community Center in Woodinville, Washington. Bright and spacious, the meeting hall was a comfortable fit for our fifty or so members in attendance, along with the AV equipment necessary to broadcast the demo over the Internet.

As the cameras were being fine-tuned, many familiar faces came back into focus on screen. We were happy to see that several newcomers attended in person for their first club meeting, and they were accompanied by our corporeal host and onsite liaison, Communications Director Joe Cornell. Together, the Zoom attendees were integral in helping our AV team, led by Dan Robbins, navigate some puzzling technical glitches. The air was abuzz with temperamental microphones, show-and-tell triumphs, and enthusiastic chatter.

Matt Monaco, a Missouri-based master turner, demonstrated techniques for turning thin-walled vessels. In the process, he also modeled a fair amount of patience and flexibility as he danced with our awkward camera equipment still finding its rhythm and embraced microphone gremlins with the courage of an open-mic performer.

Lessons learned

Since this was our club's first attempt at a hybrid meeting, the first time our current president presided over an in-person event, and the first time our communications director managed a Zoom meeting, we learned some lessons and look forward to gaining more practice. Aside from the technical details of some audio equipment glitches specific to the new venue, we also learned a few key things:

- The person moderating the Zoom session should have quick and easy communication with the AV team. We mistakenly set up Zoom on the far side of the room.
- The Zoom moderator should use over-the-ear headphones so they can monitor the audio being broadcast to the remote attendees.
- A separate camera and microphone should be readily available for people anywhere in the room (e.g., show-and-tell table, wood auction table).

Remote attendees were understandably distressed by the poor audio, with several members leaving the meeting after expressing concerns in the Zoom chat box. For other clubs interested in learning how to maximize hybrid meetings, there is now an online forum group dedicated to this subject, headed by John Kelsey. See the following article for more information. ■

—Randi Aiken, Seattle Woodturners

Hybrid meeting: in person and remote

The Seattle Woodturners' first hybrid meeting drew an in-person crowd of about fifty members. The demo, by Matt Monaco, was broadcast for remote attendees.

Follow-up in-person workshops

After the hybrid meeting/demo, club members had a second chance to learn from Matt Monaco during two hands-on workshops.

Learn More About Hybrid Chapter Meetings

Many woodturning clubs recognize that the hybrid-meeting format, with some members in the room and some participating via Zoom, is an important new member benefit. Before, you had to attend the meeting in person or you missed out completely. For the best experience, most members still prefer to attend in person. But when illness or weather or whatever keeps you at home, participating via Zoom is the next best thing. And because the Zoom meetings can be recorded, anyone can catch up at a later time. The hybrid format is perfect for snowbirds who belong to two clubs, for our busy working members, and especially for our elders.

Online forum with resources

In Spring 2022, woodturning club leaders began to meet monthly on Zoom in an open forum dedicated to the problem of hybrid club meetings. The fourth forum in the series was held on July 18, 2022, with about fifty participants on screen to learn from an excellent opening presentation by Harvey Rogers of Cascade Woodturners (Portland, Oregon). Cascade is a medium-sized club that began using Zoom early in the pandemic lockdown and went hybrid earlier this year. Harvey detailed the evolution of the club's AV setup, the parts of it that work well, and the parts that still need work. You can view the complete July 18 forum meeting, beginning with Harvey's helpful presentation, at tiny.cc/RogersHybrid (case sensitive).

The Hybrid Forum was formed by several clubs in the Mid-Atlantic region to support club leaders wrestling with this new meeting format. It's a tough nut, but by sharing information and expertise, we can make it work for everyone. We post pertinent videos and PDFs in the Library associated with the AAW's Chapter Leadership Online Community, at woodturner.org. You can peruse this Library at tiny.cc/ChapterLibrary.

Interested chapter leaders and tech/AV chairpersons are welcome to join the Hybrid Forum. Email John Kelsey at editorkelsey@gmail.com.

Video tutorials

I have also curated a series of video tutorials for non-tech club leaders who find themselves wrestling with hybrid meetings. The series covers the basics of hybrid Zoom meetings, with titles such as "Non-Tech Intro to Zoom A/V Setups," "Better Club Demos with Big TV and Camcorder," "Three Free Internet Accounts," and more. To view the YouTube playlist of these tutorials, visit tiny.cc/VideoTutorials. ■

—John Kelsey, Lancaster Area Woodturners

Tips

New life for frozen bandsaw bearings

I use the bandsaw to cut out green bowl blanks. Invariably, the wet wood clogs and freezes the bearings that guide the bandsaw blade. After replacing the bearings several times, I found that they could be cleaned and reused, as follows.


1


2


3

Pry off the bearing's dust shields with a sharp point, such as a box cutter (*Photo 1*). This exposes the clogged bearing (*Photo 2*). After detaching the covers, the debris can then be removed with an awl and blown out with compressed air. Finally, when fully cleaned (*Photo 3*), roll the bearing to test that it functions smoothly and then reattach the dust shields. Now the bearing guides are ready to be reinstalled on the bandsaw and will function just like new blade-guide bearings.

—Mark Heatwole, Virginia

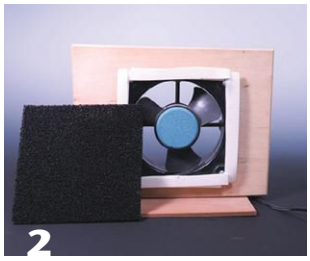
Shopmade smoke extractor

One of the dangers of pyrography is breathing the smoke. You can use a small fan to blow the smoke away from your face, but this just moves the smoke around the room. To eliminate the smoke, you can buy a commercial smoke extractor. Or better yet, make your own at very little expense—if you have a little cooling fan left over from a junked stereo system or an old computer.

To make mine, I mounted an old electronics cooling fan in a little wooden box (*Photo 1*). Then I went online and for a few bucks bought a pack of small activated carbon air filters made for a commercial smoke extractor. I attached one of the filters to the intake end of the fan with double-sided tape (*Photo 2*). I run the fan not only to absorb smoke (*Photo 3*), but also to get rid of noxious fumes when I'm working with cyanoacrylate (CA) glue.

—Rich Sabreen, Connecticut


1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3

Pill-bottle finish applicator

I like to apply finish to my projects while slow-turning them on my lathe. Applying finish from a large can or bottle usually results in too little or too much. My solution is to use a pill bottle with two holes drilled in the top. This method gives me more control over the flow, uses smaller quantities of finish, and keeps the remaining finish in its original container fresher longer.

—Jim Meizelis, Illinois

Splitting wedge aids in leveling lathe

A lathe must be level to minimize vibration. Sometimes you may need to adjust the leveling feet in order to get the drive center and live center to meet, even with a heavy cast-iron lathe. The challenge is how to lift a heavy lathe? My Powermatic 3520c weighs about 700 pounds. And it was vibrating when I turned out-of-round blanks it should have handled with ease. What to do?

My solution was to use a cast-iron splitting wedge at the corner of the foot. Gently tap the wedge with a hammer to raise the lathe enough to loosen or tighten the leveling foot. To release the wedge, I put a piece of wood at the tip and gently tapped it loose. It took a few tries adjusting a couple of the feet to level the bubbles on my spirit level in both directions. This ensured my lathe was level, with its weight evenly distributed on all four feet. The vibration disappeared with out-of-round blanks. If you do not have a splitting wedge, you could probably cut a wedge of hard wood thick enough to do the job.

—Mike Peace, Georgia

Banjo-mounted hair dryer


1


2

When I paint turned items on the lathe, I like to dry the paint faster with a hair dryer. Hand-holding the hair dryer would be tedious, so I made a tool post that holds the hair dryer for me (*Photo 1*). The post mounts in the lathe banjo, and the hair dryer is held in the post by friction, so it can be popped in and out easily.

To make the jig, I started with a scrap of wood 1½" (38mm) square and 10" (25cm) long. I turned a 5" (13cm) tall × 1" (25mm) diameter post on one end to fit into my banjo. I used a bandsaw to reduce one of the square sides on the tool post to 1$\frac{1}{16}$" (27mm) wide, then added scraps of thin plywood to either side using screws (*Photo 2*). Since the handle of my hair dryer is 1$\frac{3}{16}$" (30mm) wide, it fits in the jig with a nice friction fit. Adjust these dimensions to suit your lathe banjo and hair dryer.

—Carl Ford, New York

Keep CA bottle tip clear


1


2

My cyanoacrylate (CA) glue bottle is forever growing a dried "hat," which eventually clogs the tip. I've tried many solutions, but most damage the plastic tip to varying degrees. So I came up with a handy jig for clearing away built-up CA glue from the bottle tip.

I made the jig from a small scrap of aluminum. I drilled two $\frac{3}{16}$"- (5mm-) diameter holes $\frac{3}{8}$" (10mm) from the ends and cut a notch in one end using a hacksaw. Then I mounted the jig to my workbench, with the notch hanging over the edge (*Photo 1*). To use the jig, simply insert the glue bottle tip in slot and yank downward (*Photo 2*). The unwanted dried "hat" comes off, with tip left undamaged.

—Harvey Fein, New Jersey

Log ramp

To turn a large blank weighing over 200 pounds without a hoist to aid in lifting the piece to the lathe, you have to bring out your inner MacGyver. I rough cut the bowl blank using a chainsaw to enable the piece to be rolled into the shop. Given the weight of the blank, I could not lift it on my own and had to engineer a ramp to get the wood block up to the lathe. I made the ramp from an 8' (2.4m) length of ¾" (19mm) plywood, 12" (30cm) wide. A support was built to prop the ramp at the midpoint to prevent sagging and to hold the weight of the blank. And voilà, I was able to roll the bowl blank up the ramp onto the lathe single-handedly. *Safety Note: Take steps to ensure the ramp does not slip off the lathe bed while you are rolling a log up it.*

—Jim Williams, Ontario, Canada

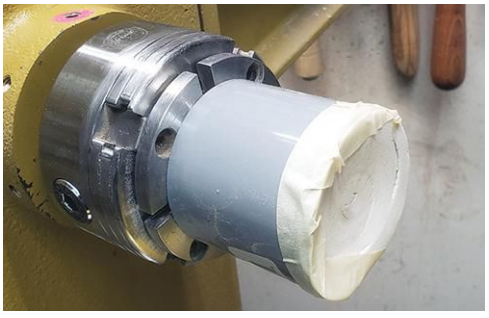
Drill chuck as small tool handle

Last year, I needed a small tool to hollow Christmas ornaments. Although I was convinced a sharpened hex wrench would work well for this task, I knew I would need a handle to effectively hold the small tool.

I tried using clamping pliers, but those only provided up-and-down support and did nothing to prevent side-to-side motion. Then I realized that a drill chuck would make a perfect handle. The chuck firmly grips the wrench on all four sides, holding it securely. An added benefit is the mass of the chuck, which helps to reduce chatter from the light-weight hex wrench.

—Mark Heatwole, Virginia

Quick PVC jam chuck



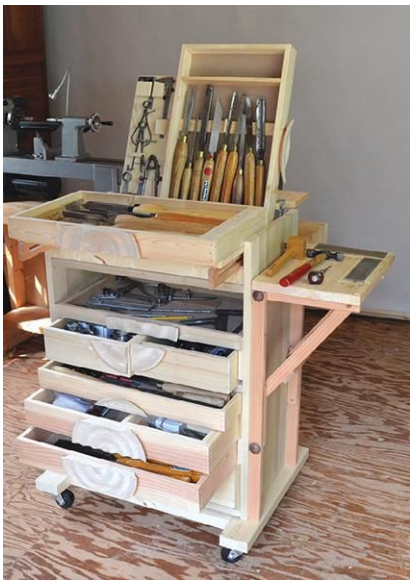
If you need a quick jam chuck for a small project, you can use a PVC coupling (or union), the kind of fitting used to connect two pieces of 2" (5cm) PVC electrical conduit. A coupling of this size stays in place when I mount it in my chuck in expansion mode. In addition, if you're looking to protect your turning where it contacts the coupling, just tape some craft foam or other suitable padding over the end. This will not only protect the wood, it will give you a little more friction to drive the piece.

—Rich Sabreen, Connecticut

TIPS

Shopmade mobile tool cart

I made this rolling cabinet for woodturning tools a decade ago and still rely on it to help organize my workshop. It holds a ton of tools and accessories. I park it within easy reach of the lathe and shift the tools or tray of tools that I'm using to the wood bench under the bed ways. Everything I need is quick to find and easy to put away, and I'm never reaching over the lathe for anything.



Construction notes

The basic case, shown in *Photo 1*, was biscuit-joined from five poplar boards—two sides, top, bottom, and structural partition—with overall dimensions 38" tall × 26" wide × 16" deep (97cm × 66cm × 41cm). If I made another, it'd be wider and deeper though maybe not taller, and I'd use medium-density fiberboard (MDF) or plywood, not solid lumber.

To make utility drawers and boxes, I usually resaw and plane clear sections of spruce, hemlock, or pine 2×4s to make clean sides that finish ½" to ⅝" (13mm to 16mm) thick. I don't have a table saw and I've never been any good with routers, so I plough grooves for the box bottoms with an old-style grooving plane, then glue the bottoms into all four sides and neatly set three or four finishing nails (*Photo 2*). I've relied on this inelegant method of making utility boxes for decades now; it's strong, quick, and inexpensive.

Journeymen woodworkers of yesteryear slid trays around inside their tool chests on wood ledgers, not metal hardware. Here, the ledgers glued to the cabinet sides are ¼", ⅜", and ½" (6mm, 10mm, and 13mm) thick, with the trays sized accordingly (*Photo 3*).

Among the only turned parts on the cabinet are the drawer pulls—a pair of maple plates sawn apart and screwed to the box fronts. There's no way to replace a drawer in the wrong spot.

The folding shelf on the right side of the cabinet uses a Pythagorean lift, or four-bar linkage system (*Photo 4*). The pins that animate this lift were turned on the lathe.

This sturdy all-wood platform folds easily up and down and locks in place, with no metal hardware. ■

—John Kelsey, Pennsylvania

Related Videos

Don't miss John Kelsey's videos further explaining this rolling cabinet. Note: The tiny URLs are case sensitive.

- Shopmade Cabinet for Woodturning Tools
  tiny.cc/KelseyCabinet
- Four-Bar Folding Linkage
  tiny.cc/KelseyFourBar


1


2


3


4

Calendar of Events

Send event info to editor@woodturner.org. December issue deadline: October 15. See AAW's online Remote Demonstration Event Calendar at tiny.cc/IRDCalendar.

Florida

January 6, 7, 2023, The South West Florida Wood Art Expo, Charlotte Harbor Event Center, Punta Gorda. An annual event that showcases the work of wood carvers and woodturners. One of the premier wood art shows in the country since 1986, it is a dynamic show with hundreds of entries for competition, vendors, demonstrations, raffle, artist displays, silent auction, and sales. For the latest info, entry forms, and more, visit swflwoodartexpo.org.

February 3–5, 2023, Florida Woodturning Symposium, RP Funding Center, Lakeland. Demonstrators to include David Ellsworth, Mark Gardner, Carol Hall, Avelino Samuel, Kent Harriss, Keith Larrett, Jack Roberts, and Kent Weakley. Event to include an instant gallery, raffle, auctions, shopping spree, and great vendors market. For more, visit floridawoodturningsymposium.com.

Michigan

October 8, 2022, Detroit Area Woodturning One Day Symposium, Central United Methodist Church, Waterford. Event to include sixteen demonstrations, instant gallery, tradeshow, door prizes, and more. For the latest info, visit detroitareawoodturners.com.

Minnesota

Multiple 2022 exhibitions, AAW's Gallery of Wood Art, Landmark Center, Saint Paul:

- September 4-December 28: *Bridging the Gap: The Craft and Art of Woodturning* (AAW member exhibition)
- Ongoing: *Touch This!; Around the Hus—Turning in Scandinavian Domestic Life*; vintage and historic lathes and turned items

For more, visit galleryofwoodart.org or email Tib Shaw at tib@woodturner.org.

New York

March 25, 26, 2023, Totally Turning Symposium, hosted by the Adirondack Woodturners Association, Saratoga Springs City Center, Saratoga Springs. Demonstrators to be announced. For the latest info, visit totallyturning.com.

Tennessee

January 27, 28, 2023, Tennessee Association of Woodturners 34th Annual Woodturning Symposium, Marriott Hotel and Convention Center, Franklin. Featured demonstrators to include Rebecca DeGroot, Stuart Batty, Nick Cook, John Beaver, and Tom Wirsing; additional demonstrators to be named later. One of the longest-running and most successful regional symposia in the U.S., the 2023 symposium will feature a tradeshow, instant gallery, people's choice award, and Saturday night banquet with auction. For more, visit tnwoodturners.org or email David Sapp at symposium@tnwoodturners.org. Vendors, contact Grant Hitt at tawvendorinfo@gmail.com.

Texas

November 18–20, 2022, Gulf Coast Woodturners Annual Hands-On Retreat, Deer Park, Houston. Club members teach a variety of classes for beginners, intermediates, and masters. Two, three-hour sessions on Saturday, one on Sunday. Each session offers eight choices of classes. Membership ($25) required due to insurance concerns. Details available at gulfcoastwoodturners.org; registration will remain open until November 1.

Virginia

CANCELLATION NOTICE: The Virginia Woodturners Symposium, which was scheduled for November at Expoland, Fishersville, will not be held in 2022. "Due to unforeseen circumstances, the VWI Board has voted to cancel the 2022 Symposium. We look forward to hosting a Symposium in 2024." For more, visit virginiawoodturners.com.

VIRTUAL EVENTS

AAW Presents

View interactive demonstrations and presentations from the comfort of your own home. Visit tiny.cc/AAWPresents for more details and to register for upcoming sessions. Join AAW for a fall full of virtual programming.

2022 DATES

- October 15-16: Virtual Symposium
- November 5: WIT Presents: Helga Winter
- November 19: TBD
- December 17: Rebecca DeGroot

Cindy Drozda, *Lidded Vessel*, 2005, Salmon gum burl, African blackwood, garnet, 24K gold, 13" × 13" (33cm × 33cm)

Photo: Tib Shaw/AAW

AAW Permanent Collection

TURN A PUMPKIN

John Beaver

2022, Norfolk Island pine, wood bleach, oil/varnish mix, 10" × 7" (25cm × 18cm)

Glass pumpkins have turned into a huge industry, and my wife loves them, so I wondered how a wood pumpkin would go over. Turns out, they go over very well. They are fun to make, and I have sold every one I've ever made. Let's take a look at how to make them.

The basic process involves turning, hollowing, and carving, which is quite similar to processes used by John Jordan and Avelino Samuel, but with a vessel shaped like a pumpkin. Sometimes, I color the pumpkins with wood bleach and/or paint. Oh, and you have to make the finial look like a pumpkin stem, which is also turned and carved. There are myriad ways to carve in wood; the following is the process I use, but certainly other methods can be used to achieve excellent results.

Shape the pumpkin

For the pumpkin I made to illustrate this article, I chose a piece of Norfolk Island pine. A set of branches was at the top of the log, so I decided to see if I could incorporate them in the top of the pumpkin. The log initially was about 14" (36cm) long and 7" (18cm) diameter, so the first thing I did was cut it to length for a good height-to-width ratio for a pumpkin; I kept the remainder of the log for the stem (*Photo 1*).

Before I mounted the log on the lathe, I searched the Internet for photos of real pumpkins to help guide me as I shaped my pumpkin. Since I wanted to retain the Norfolk Island pine branches on top, I wanted a pumpkin with a fairly flat top. I often print a picture and keep it near the lathe for easy reference during turning.

Mount the work between centers, rough-turn your pumpkin, and form a chucking tenon at the headstock side. Then begin refining its shape. The apex of a pumpkin's curve is usually about midway up, and that worked

Raw materials

The author begins with two lengths from the same log. The piece at *right* is for the pumpkin, and the piece *at left* is for the stem. Choose a log size appropriate for the height-to-width ratio you want for your pumpkin.

Rough-shape pumpkin

The log is mounted between centers in spindle orientation, for roughing and shaping. This orientation allows the author to later hollow into endgrain.

A photo from the Internet makes for a useful pumpkin gauge during shaping.

Hollow pumpkin, form stem recess

Begin hollowing by drilling with a Forstner bit to establish the depth and to open the center.

The author hollows the pumpkin using a hollowing bar. Keep the walls thick to accommodate carving on the outside of the pumpkin.

Turn a shallow recess to later accept the stem.

well for my pumpkin. I was able to start at the center, make similar shaping cuts in both directions, and then come back and blend the curves in the middle. Since I was turning a larger workpiece in spindle orientation (with the grain running parallel to the lathe's bed ways), a spindle-roughing gouge was a good choice for most of the shaping. As I started seeing what the piece would look like, I decided to deviate from the photo and make my pumpkin a little taller than I had intended. A taller pumpkin would enhance the lines of the Norfolk Island pine branches and the spalting in this log (*Photos 2, 3*).

Hollow the pumpkin

Remount the work in a chuck, and begin the hollowing process by drilling a hole with a large Forstner bit (*Photo 4*). This creates a good starting point for hollowing, using whatever hollowing tools you are comfortable with.

When I hollow my pumpkins, I leave the walls quite a bit thicker than I do for most hollow forms (*Photo 5*). There are two reasons for this. First, you will be carving into the sides, so a little extra wood for the grooves is needed. And second, real pumpkins are pretty heavy. One of the things I remember from my youth is picking pumpkins at the pumpkin patch that were too heavy for my young body to handle; I want to evoke that feeling with my wood pumpkins. I want them to feel like you are picking up a real pumpkin, so my final wall thickness is typically about ¾" (19mm).

After the piece is hollowed, turn a recess in the top to later accept a spigot at the base of the stem (*Photo 6*). I have made pumpkins with wide openings, like you might see if you carved a jack-o-lantern at Halloween, but generally I prefer a small opening, where just the stem is removable.

After I have completed the hollowing, I give the piece a light sanding so I can evaluate the wood for the placement of ▸

Sand lightly

A light sanding makes it easier to evaluate the wood to determine the placement of the grooves.

Fill voids and inclusions

The author decides to fill some voids and inclusions using epoxy mixed with sawdust.

Oil highlights grain

To further evaluate the wood for placement of the grooves, the author applies a coat of oil, which highlights the grain and spalting.

Rout and refine pumpkin grooves

With the pumpkin groove locations determined, the author routs the grooves at the lathe. A shopmade setup, along with the lathe's spindle lock, allows for straight, evenly spaced grooves.

The grooves are further refined using a rasp.

ROUTING AT THE LATHE

EXPLORE!

To access the AAW's online archives and learn more about using a router at the lathe, log in at woodturner.org and use the Explore! search tool.

- "Using a Router at the Lathe," by John Lucas, February 2020 *AW* (vol 35, no 1, page 26)
- "Router Fluting Jig," by Douglas Gillie, February 2022 *WF* (vol 11, no 1, page 23)

the grooves (*Photo 7*). In this case, there were two bark inclusions that stood out. I could have left the inclusions, as real pumpkins aren't perfect, but I decided to fill them with epoxy and sawdust. I prefer West System's G-Flex epoxy, as it is designed to accommodate wood movement, so I mixed up a small batch and added some of the shavings left over from hollowing (*Photos 8, 9*).

Form the pumpkin's grooves

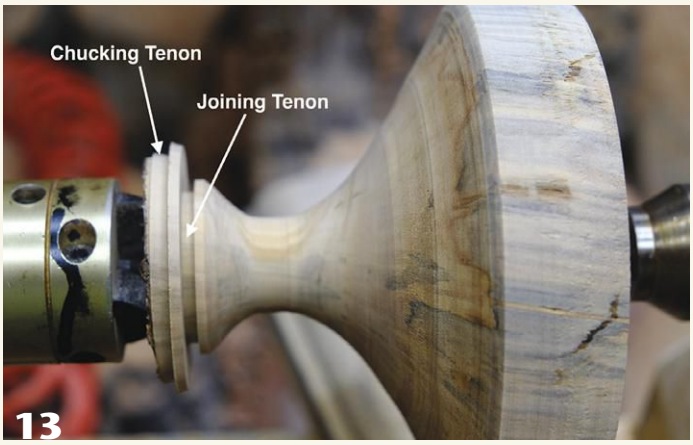
Norfolk Island pine can look rather plain until you oil it. To better see where I wanted the grooves, I added oil to the piece, which really made the grain and spalting stand out (*Photo 10*).

Pumpkins come in all shapes and sizes and can have many thin grooves, a few bold ones, or anywhere in between. Using the Norfolk Island pine branches as a guide, I decided to make eight deep grooves; good thing I left plenty of wall thickness to work with.

Using my Harvey Fein-inspired router setup with a small-radius grooving bit, I routed the grooves into the pumpkin (*Photo 11*). This step could be done by power-carving or even hand-carving, but I find the router makes quick work of this process.

After routing the grooves, I rounded their edges over using a series of rasps (*Photo 12*), then refined them with files and sandpaper. I have found that for carving on curved surfaces, especially in

Rough-turn stem



The lathe is used to establish the basic curve of the pumpkin stem and two useful tenons.

Rough-cut stem shape

The sides of the stem are drawn onto the rough turning, then cut out at the bandsaw. *For safe cutting at the bandsaw, always ensure the workpiece has a flat registered on the bandsaw table. Never cut an unsupported round object at the bandsaw, as this poses a safety hazard.*

Carve the stem

With the stem still mounted in the chuck and the chuck held in a carving vise, the author further shapes the stem using a variety of tools.

Add grooves in the stem

Twisting grooves are first drawn onto the stem and then carved, filed, and sanded.

endgrain wood, Kutzall rasps are great tools. They aren't as sensitive to grain direction as traditional rasps, and they cut on both the push and pull strokes, making this process quick and easy.

Make a stem

The stem does not have to be from the same wood as the pumpkin, but I decided to use the remaining piece cut off from the Norfolk Island pine log. When I started making the stem, I hadn't yet decided how I wanted to color it, but having grain that matched the pumpkin offered some nice options.

To make the stem, you could simply start with a scrap of wood and begin carving, but since I had a pretty big chunk of wood, I decided to use the lathe to remove the bulk of the material, accounting for a curve in the stem. Using the lathe also allowed me to form two tenons—one for mounting the stem in a chuck and one for fitting the stem into the recess at the top of the pumpkin (*Photo 13*). It is important to measure the tenon that will fit into the pumpkin accurately, as it will be difficult to re-turn it once the stem is carved. Ultimately, you may have to fine-tune the recess in the pumpkin to fit the stem.

After turning the stem, I still had a lot of wood to cut away, but you can see from the lines I drew that the turned curve established the basic shape of the stem. At the bandsaw, I cut away more of the wood in preparation for carving (*Photos 14, 15*).

With the stem remounted in the chuck, I held the chuck in my Trent Bosch carving stand. With the work held securely, I was able to shape the pumpkin stem using first an angle grinder and then a Proxxon long-neck grinder with sanding flaps (*Photos 16, 17*). The Proxxon tool is excellent for finessing the final shape and leaving a decent surface.

With the basic stem shape formed, you can begin carving the grooves in ▸

Reverse-mount, remove tenon


19

To remove the chucking tenon, the author makes a custom jam chuck.


20

The pumpkin is placed over the jam chuck and held in place with tailstock pressure. Mounted in this way, the tenon can be turned away.


21

the stem. I like the grooves to have a twist to them, so I started by drawing their locations freehand. I then used a rotary tool to cut grooves along the lines I had drawn (*Photo 18*). Finally, I eased the edges of the grooves using a round carving bit, then completed the grooves with rasps, files, and sandpaper. Since actual pumpkin stems are pretty rough, I did not feel the need to make mine too smooth. Often the surface off the rasp or file is just about right.

Use a parting tool to separate the stem from the chuck, or simply cut it off using a hand saw (with the lathe off).

Remove chucking tenon

Once the stem is separated from the chuck, check its fit in the recess in the top of the pumpkin. It may be necessary to remount the pumpkin on the lathe to refine the width of the recess.

When you have achieved a good fit of the stem to the pumpkin, it is time to remove the chucking tenon from the pumpkin. Since there is no easy way to reverse-mount the pumpkin in a chuck, I create a custom jam chuck in the form of a long dowel that reaches into the bottom of the pumpkin. Turn a dowel small enough to fit through the pumpkin's opening, then form a slight recess in its end (*Photo 19*). The recess ensures the pumpkin is pressed against a wider base and not a small point. Applying pressure from the tailstock to hold the pumpkin on the jam chuck, turn away the chucking tenon (*Photos 20, 21*).


2012, Carob, lacquer,
6" × 5½" (15cm × 14cm)

Color at will

The final decision is whether to color the pumpkin and/or stem or leave them natural. In this case, I wanted to see the grain of the wood but give the stem some contrast, so I bleached the stem with two-part wood bleach.

Just about anything goes when it comes to coloring—don't be afraid to use bold and crazy colors on your pumpkin and stem. Above all, have fun. ■

John Beaver lives in Pacific Palisades, California, where his proximity to the ocean inspires his signature Wave Bowl turnings. You can see more of his work at johnbeaver.net.

Special Wood Becomes KEEPSAKE "TROPHIES"

Rick Orr

Starting in February 2017, my grandson Jackson decided he wanted to learn a martial arts sport. He took up Taekwondo at a local facility and began his journey toward black belt in that curriculum. The sport offered valuable lessons in respect and discipline—traits that will serve him well for the rest of his life.

Jackson's journey to black belt took almost five years. Along the way, he achieved fourteen different belt levels, each requiring stringent class work and testing. He attended more than 400 classroom meetings and fulfilled many outside requirements, including maintaining a high grade-point average in school and acquiring character references from non-family associates. And, of course, Jackson broke countless pine boards over those five years.

(Top) Keepsake items the author turned for his grandson, from the broken taekwondo pine boards.

(Left) The author's grandson Jackson, holding just a few of many pine boards that were broken along his journey to taekwondo black belt.

(Right) Jackson poses with his proud grandparents, as they show their best moves.

Turning "trophies"

Jackson treasured each and every pine board he broke during his taekwondo classes and would not part with any of them. After a lot of coaxing, his mother and I finally talked him out of a few boards that perhaps his Papa could use to turn a few unusual "trophies" he would hopefully keep for a lifetime.

In most scenarios, pine is not my favorite wood to turn. I have heard professional turners say that "life is too short to turn crappy wood," but in this case, I would have to strongly disagree. I ended up turning twenty-five small keepsake items for Jackson. The turned items included a slip-fit lidded box, pens, a pencil box, a mallet (admittedly with a cherry handle), a napkin ring, tops, and miniature goblets. Many of the items were specially laser-engraved with words noting his black-belt achievement. They were turned out of love and respect for his remarkable determination and accomplishments over five important years in his young life.

The message here is not the wood-turning itself, but the value of making items from wood with special meaning. When you know some wood means something special to a loved one, don't let it be discarded. Grab it and think of how you can "turn" it into something special for that person—as a reward for a job well done or simply as a gift of love.

Our family is very proud of Jackson. I hope he treasures the turnings as much as he does the broken black belt boards. They were made as a gift of love, acknowledging his remarkable efforts. ■

Rick Orr is a past president of the Front Range Woodturners in Denver, Colorado, and a frequent demonstrator at the Rocky Mountain Woodturners Symposium. He lives in the Denver metro area with his wife Lorraine.

FIGURE IN WOOD

Burls, Curls, and Science

Dr. Seri Robinson

What is wood? Ask five people and you'll get five similar but not identical answers. Generally, however, people delineate wood from plastics, glass, and other materials by its color and grain.

The "grain" of wood is primarily made up of a tree's annual growth rings. How they appear in lumber depends on which of the three wood planes are showcased. Flatsawn wood shows the tangential plane, and the annual rings appear as arches or mountains. Quartersawn wood has the radial plane on the broad face, and the rings appear as parallel lines. The endgrain of wood, or the transverse plane, shows the growth rings as circles.

Most of the cells in wood run up and down, along the long axis of the tree. However, some cells run in and out. These cells are called rays, and they provide storage for the tree. The size of the rays in relation to the size of the other cells can create striking visuals. Quartersawn wood with large rays, like oak, beech, and sycamore, shows thick waves of cells across its surface. These are the sides of the thick ray cells. As this is a normal occurrence in these woods, this is not considered figure, but it is a good place to start in understanding what wood figure is, and is not.

So what then, exactly, is *figured* wood?

As I noted, *most* cells in a tree grow up and down, along the long axis. But when wood cells grow in any other direction in a tree, this generally produces figure in wood. When enough cells grow irregularly in a given area, light interacts differently on the wood surface, causing a visible change in its appearance. Just *how* those cells grow dictates the working properties of the wood and what name we give the figure. A few of the most common wood figures are detailed in this article.

Wood grain, three planes

The grain's appearance depends on which plane is being showcased. From left, in plain Douglas fir: tangential (flatsawn), radial (quartersawn), and transverse (endgrain).

Photos: Seri Robinson

Oak displaying large rays

An oak door exposing the radial plane and the sides of large rays.

Photo: Joshua Friend

Causes of wood figure

There are two primary causes of figure in wood: stress and genetics.

These two factors often work in tandem, but not always, so the discussion below is loosely organized by these two categories. It's important to note as well that there is no single definitive answer as to what causes figure in wood. Scientists have theories and limited data. A brief summary of current ideas is presented below, along with photos to help you connect the science with the visuals.

Stress on wood, especially when the stress comes from a tree's leaning, changes growth angles on a microscopic level. This doesn't affect the cell so much as the layers within the cell (specifically, the microfibril orientation of the secondary cell wall). Be careful with branch wood, wood that is within ten to fifteen years of

the pith (juvenile wood), and crotch wood. Wood figure in these parts of a tree is due to stress alone, and changes to the cell walls have significant strength implications. This type of wood can be pretty, but much like spalted wood, care must be taken in how it is machined and how the final project is used. Microscopic voids, or spaces between cells, decrease wood strength. Scattered microfibril angles change how wood shrinks and swells with water, leading to more longitudinal shrinkage. What's worse, juvenile wood in particular may not even look figured, yet its microfibril angles can still be "incorrect." That means more longitudinal shrinkage and less strength, with nothing pretty to show for it.

Figured woods generally have both a stress factor *and* a genetic factor (or at the very least, a regional growth factor). Many types of figured woods are localized. For instance, while birdseye can occur in any species in any region, it is very prevalent in sugar maples in the upper Midwest of the United States, particularly the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. Quilted maple, on the other hand, tends to be found more in the Pacific Northwest. Maples in particular seem more prone to figure, as do trees grown under more severe conditions (consistent rainfall, poor soil drainage, dense stands of trees, etc.).

With that said, the right combination of genetics (a predisposition to a certain type of figure) and environmental triggers (temperature, drought, rainfall, etc.) gives us what most people think of when they think of figured woods. Fundamentally, figured wood occurs when some of the upright cells in a tree no longer grow upright. They don't become ray cells—they're still the same fibers, vessels, etc., that they always were—but they are growing at various angles to the long axis. Some curl up into tight balls, some alternate every few inches and form pillow-like shapes. The possibilities and types of figure are endless.

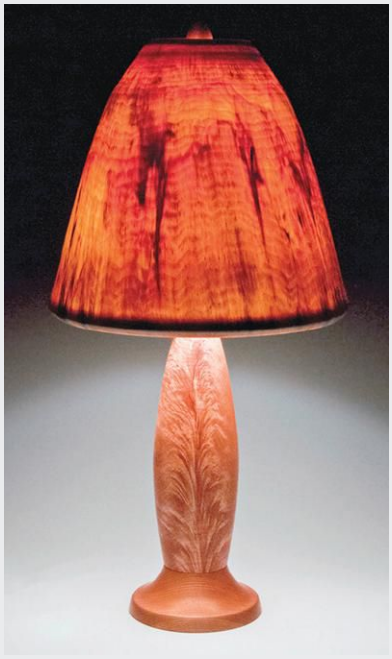
While burls appear to occur equally between conifers and deciduous trees, other types of figure seem more prevalent in hardwoods. This is likely due to the heterogeneity of cells in hardwoods. Softwoods primarily comprise longitudinal tracheids—long, tapered cells that run the length of the tree. Hardwoods have longitudinal tracheids, but they also have vessel elements—straw-like structures that stack end-to-end to form long, conductive highways from crown to stem. Hardwoods also have multiple types of parenchyma, wider ray cells, and just more variability in general. There are also more hardwood tree species than softwood tree species in the world (and a global distribution, instead of the limited growing areas of conifers), meaning more opportunities for variations to occur.

Crotch grain in faceplate orientation

From walnut log to platter, by Joshua Friend, 2011, 1½" × 15" (38mm × 38cm)

Photos: Joshua Friend

Crotch grain in spindle orientation



A lamp base showing yellow birch crotch figure, by Peter Bloch, 2013, 34" × 17" (86cm × 43cm)

Photo courtesy of Peter Bloch

Types of wood figure

Note that when it comes to naming wood figure, fiber size and angle are critical. Just because you see waves in wood doesn't make it "curly." Technically, every degree change has a different name. But since no one has come up with a comprehensive chart, the most popular types of wood figure are explained below.

Curl

Curl denotes cell growth that is at or very close to 90 degrees to the long axis of the tree. Curly figure occurs in every tree species and is perhaps the most common type of figure worldwide (although this may be due to *curl* being a common description of *any* figure). ▸

Curly maple in furniture

Curly maple chair (a prototype for a set of twelve chairs), by Janet Collins, 2009.

Photos courtesy of Janet Collins

Curly maple in a bowl

Natural-edge bowl in curly maple, by Dave Buchholz, *Potato Chip Bowl*, 2003, 2" × 4¾" (5cm × 12cm)

Photo: Dave Buchholz

It occurs in both hardwoods and softwoods and is surprisingly common in maples and tropical hardwoods of higher density. Birches also frequently showcase curl, and in the case of birch, this type of figure has a proven genetic component. Conifers produce curl as well, in particular silver fir (*Abies alba*).

Ribbon/flame

These names appear to be used interchangeably for figure that grows at 45 degrees to the long axis of the tree. It is particularly common in Midwestern birch but also occurs with frequency in maples and denser tropical hardwoods.

In some cases, ribbon is also used to describe interlocked grain, which is a type of figure common in elms and basswoods. Interlocked grain occurs when layers of cells repeatedly switch growth angle but stay in the same relative position (cell center remains the same but the angle between the cells and the long axis of the stem changes), causing shifting layers of grain. Cutting partially through the layers reveals the next orientation, causes light to reflect differently, and gives an appearance of figure. Interlocked grain causing ribbon figure is also common in the tropical hardwood *Entandrophragma*, a type of false mahogany.

Quilt/blister

Quilting occurs most frequently in Western/bigleaf/Oregon maple (*Acer macrophyllum*), which grows in the Pacific Northwest (particularly Oregon, Washington, and northern California). This figure occurs when cells grow 90 degrees to the long axis first one way, then an inch or so later 90 degrees the other way. This creates a visual "pillow" or square-like shape in the wood. At least in bigleaf maple, this type of figure appears to have

Walnut ribbon

At the woodpile, a split log of walnut reveals ribbon figure.

Photo: Joshua Friend

Maple with blistering

Winged bowl in maple with blistering highlighted by some spalting. Wood was spalted by Seri Robinson and turned by David Bloom.

Photo: Seri Robinson

Quilting on two planes

Quilting on Western maple with some spalting. The face of the board (left photo) shows the tangential plane; the spalting forms around the quilting, as the fungi follow the path of least resistance. The edge of a board (right photo) shows the radial plane; here, the quilt doesn't display as nicely and appears to transition to a sort of curl figure.

Photos: Seri Robinson

Quilting on a platter

Decoration highlights the wood figure, by Tom Gall, *Decorative Platter*, 2019, Quilted maple, inks, acrylic and metallic paints, lacquer, 1⅛" × 11¼" (29mm × 29cm)

Photo courtesy of Tom Gall

at least some genetic component. Quilting should not be confused with large blister figure, which is from a similar growth but occurs in a much smaller space. Visually, blister figure is about halfway between quilt and birdseye, but the causes are different. Blister figure occurs with some regularity in maples from the Central and Southern U.S., but can also occur when quilting gets tightly packed together, or when birdseyes "expand" wider than normal. Hence, blister can get lumped into quilting or birdseye, depending on the size of the blisters.

Blisters are also called dimples, particularly when they occur in conifers. And when they occur in conifers, blisters may be caused by the resin canals (the parts of the wood that routinely secrete pitch) expanding part way into the surrounding longitudinal tracheids, causing those tracheids to "bubble."

Quilting is sometimes thought to be associated with fiddleback figure. Unfortunately, fiddleback doesn't seem to have been described to a point of consensus—does it look like curl, flame, something in between? Some research suggests that quilting and fiddleback are the same figure but simply appear different depending on the plane of wood that is exposed. Fiddleback purportedly is the figure on the radial (quartersawn) plane, while quilting is the figure on the tangential (flatsawn) plane.

Birdseye

Birdseye figure is one of the highest-value figures, at least in North America. Birdseye primarily occurs on hard maple (sugar maple, *Acer saccharum*) in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan and other upper Midwest states, and is thought to be due to a mixture of sugar maple genetics, sandy soil, and stand density (how many trees are in an area and how tightly packed they are). However, birdseye has been found on other species, such as pine and birch (also from the U.S.) and does occur sporadically in trees around the world.

The "eyes" of birdseye figure occur from the cells "popping" away from their neighbors and forming condensed balls. This leaves intercellular spaces and means the eyes can fling out when the wood is being worked. Visiting a birdseye maple sawmill can be a real treat, not just for the expensive wood, but to hear the *ping ping* of the eyes as they pop free during the machining process.

The formation of the "eyes" appears to differ across species. While birdseye maple is thought to occur due to dense stands and sandy soils, Karelian birch, which also frequently shows birdseye figure, does so due to lacking macronutrients. ▸

Birdseye figure

Photo: Philipp Zinger, via Wikimedia Commons

Burl growth on trees

Photo: Carrie Friend

Photo: Joshua Friend

Oregon maple burl

Unfinished bowl in Oregon maple burl, with other various figure as well.

Photo: Seri Robinson

Burl pocket on a spindle turning

A spindle turning of bigleaf maple, showcasing a burl pocket commonly found in many Pacific Northwest trees. These pockets are a regular occurrence in the wood and are not associated with external burl growth.

Photo: Seri Robinson

Brown mallee burl

A platter in brown mallee burl, by Kelly "Odie" Odell, 2022, 1⅞" × 9½" (5cm × 24cm)

Photo courtesy of Kelly Odell

Red oak burl

Red oak burl bowl in progress.

Photo: Joshua Friend

Burl

Burls are irregular cellular growth within (or on) a tree, without a particular direction. While other types of figure deviate growth in regular patterns, burl growth follows no rules. Some parts of a burl may look curly. Other parts may look like a dense patch of birdseyes. There is no grain direction in a burl, no up or down, no one type of figure. Burls are chaotic and beautiful, and often quite dense due to the lack of grain orientation.

The exact cause of burls is still unknown. They appear to be at least partially a defense mechanism by the tree to seal off wounds, like from fallen branches, or to sequester areas infected by fungi and insects. Others seem to form without any outside influence, perhaps more like a tumor than we might care to think about. Burls in redwoods, which occur with a high frequency, are thought to be due to wood formation over dormant buds. Burls appear to have no species preference or regionality, but burl-like attributes can be seen in otherwise regular-growth Pacific Northwest trees, in small pockets.

Burls occur on all trees, both hardwoods and softwoods. They are often denser than the surrounding tissue,

and their irregular grain makes them frequently more difficult to work. It is likely that burls are merely a similar looking symptom across trees that result from a variety of conditions. As an example, burls on mango trees occur from an infection of *Agrobacterium tumefaciens*, which causes tumorous outgrowths. In some trees grown in the Pacific Northwest, bits, or pockets, of burl appear within the main stem and without a notable protrusion. These instances appear to be genetic.

Some trees are more prone to burls than others. Redwoods, for instance, routinely make burls, without an apparent stress trigger. It is quite possible, although not yet proven, that some tree species require only genetics to trigger burl production.

Mixed figure

Nature doesn't play by human boundaries. Wood figure seldom occurs evenly in a tree, and when one type of figure occurs, often there are others either interwoven or right next to it. The plane of wood exposed (radial, tangential, or transverse) will also dictate what the figure looks like.

An extra layer of intrigue happens when spalting fungi colonize figured wood. After eating the free sugars in the ray cells, spalting fungi begin digesting the wood cell wall. This means that they tend to follow the wood's growth patterns. If those patterns are interrupted, or growing at angles due to figure, the fungi will often follow the figure. What results is figured spalting, where the colors from the fungi follow the figure and create stunning highlights. ■

Dr. Seri Robinson, a professor of wood anatomy at Oregon State University, has been turning for over twenty-five years and works primarily with spalted and figured woods, which they also research. A list of references used in researching this article can be viewed online at tiny.cc/AWextras. Learn more about Dr. Robinson's work at northernspalting.com.

Mixed figure

Left photo: Slabbed Oregon white oak with a mixture of figure types, including curl that is spalted brown by *Fistulina hepatica*. Right photo: *Problematic Undercurrents*, by Seri Robinson, 2019, Figured and spalted Oregon white oak.

Photos: Seri Robinson

Spalting emphasizes figure

A bowl in myrtle with figure highlighted by spalting, by Terry Martin, 6½" (17cm) diameter.

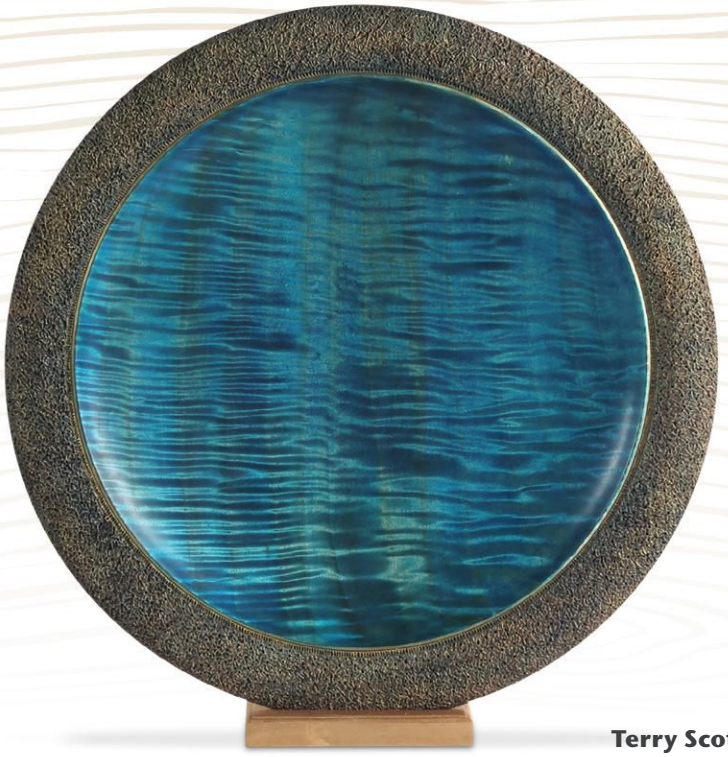
Photo: Terry Martin

Can You See Wood Figure on the Bark?

Figure starts and stops in a stem and is determined by a host of conditions. Sometimes whole trees are figured, sometimes just a small vein and nothing more. On occasion, figure is viewable from the bark alone—but keep in mind that a figured exterior does not mean that figure will carry deeply through the tree. Still, it can be useful to at least have an inkling of what lies beneath the bark as you evaluate wood for turning blanks.

Photos: Joshua Friend

Gallery of FIGURED WOOD



Terry Scott, *On the Edge*, 2016, Quilted maple, pyrography, gilders paste, lacquer, 2⅛" × 21¾" (5cm × 55cm)

Dave Buchholz, *Salt Mill*, 2003, Curly maple, 7" × 2⅜" (18cm × 6cm)

Sebastian Montagano, Untitled, 2022, Figured ash, cherry, 2½" × 3¼" (6cm × 8cm)

Mike Hunter, *Monkeypod Calabash*, 2022, Monkeypod, 4½" × 4¼" (11cm × 11cm)

Michael Nathal, Untitled, 2021, Boxelder burl, dye, 5½" × 6½" (14cm × 17cm)

Ric Taylor, Untitled, 2018, Figured bigleaf maple, fabric dye, lacquer, 1½" × 13" (38mm × 33cm)

Terry Martin, Untitled, 2021, Camphor laurel, 6¾" × 4¾" (17cm × 12cm)

Mark Palma, *Quilted Maple Bowl*, 2022, Quilted maple, 2" × 1½" (5cm × 29cm)

Jim McLain, Untitled, 2020, Curly primavera, 4½" × 5½" (11cm × 14cm)

Steve Doerr, *Trio of Hollow Forms*, 2022, Figured red camphor, dyed cherry (finial), front right piece: 6⅝" × 6⅝" (17cm × 17cm)

Ron Campbell, *Mindless Turning*, 2022, Madrone burl, lacquer, 8" × 4" (20cm × 10cm)

Joshua Friend, 2021, Oak burl, measuring cups and spoons kit

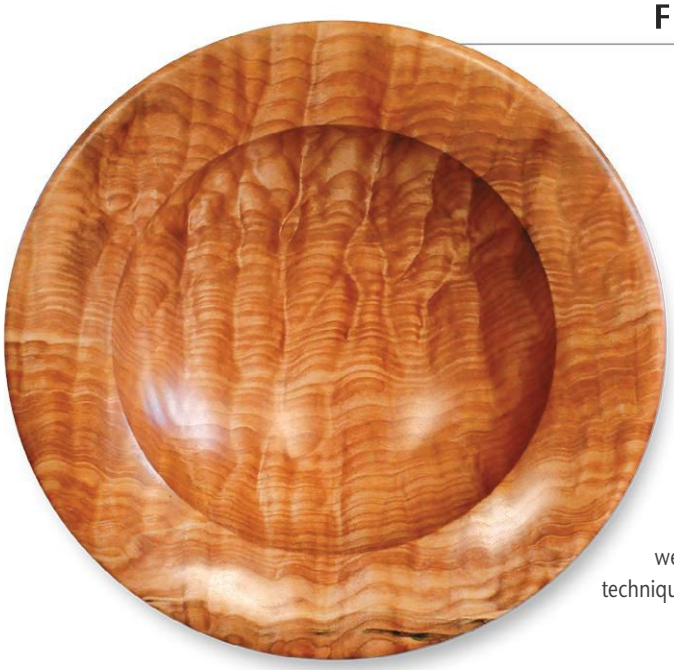
Kelly "Odie" Odell, Untitled, 2020, Walnut crotch, 2¾" × 10⅞" (7cm × 28cm)

Don Funk, *Oak Plate*, 2020, Oak crotch, 10" (25cm) diameter

Emery Roberts, *Rain in a Forest*, 2022, Spalted buckeye burl (stained blue), 12" × 8" (30cm × 20cm)

Tips for Turning FIGURED WOODS

Tom Wirsing



Quilted maple platter, 2012, 13¾" (35cm) diameter. Twisted grain is challenging to turn well, but using proper techniques, beautiful results are achievable.

I enjoy turning large platters from highly figured woods. Highly figured woods are beautiful, but they present special challenges for woodturners. They tear out readily and ripple if sanded excessively. In this article, I will explain how to cut highly figured woods successfully—to turn them absolutely smooth and tearout-free right off the tool. This reduces the need for sanding and thereby avoids rippling, resulting in gallery-quality woodturnings.

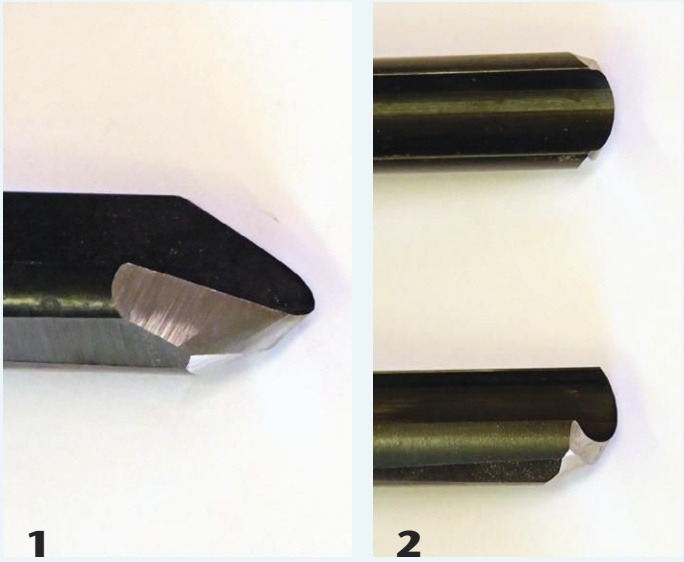
A challenging material

The figure in wood is created by irregular wood fibers. Think of wood fibers as a bundle of tiny cellulose straws. In straight-grained woods, the straws are arranged together in straight lines, hence the name straight-grained. But in figured woods, the cellulose straws grow in irregular patterns. The more irregular the patterns, the more figured the wood. The sides of the cellulose straws appear lighter and more reflective, while their open ends appear darker, creating beautiful patterns of light and dark.

As woodturners, we know that cutting into sidegrain (the sides of the straws) is easy, but cutting into endgrain (the ends of the straws) is more difficult and often produces tearout. As figured wood turns on the lathe, we are continuously cutting into a mixture of side- and endgrain fibers. Without specialized techniques, tearout is inevitable.

More sanding is not the answer. Excessive sanding on highly figure woods creates ripples because sidegrain and endgrain are intermixed, and the sidegrain abrades much more rapidly.

Gouge shape and bevel angle



The gouge *at left* has a 40-degree bevel with a deep flute and swept-back wings. It cuts fast and clean on straight-grained woods but is not ideal for figured woods. The gouge *at right* has a 55-degree bevel with a U-shaped flute. This gouge makes smoother cuts on figured woods.

Ready your tools

For most of my woodturning, I use gouges with cutting edges ground at about 40 degrees. On straight-grained woods, these gouges cut fast and clean. But on highly figured woods, the 40-degree cutting edge tends to get under the irregular fibers of dry wood and tear them out. If the gouge is sharpened with a 55-degree bevel, however, it has far less tendency to get under the irregular endgrain fibers. So for finishing cuts on highly figured woods, I prefer a gouge sharpened at 55 degrees (*Photos 1, 2*).

A dull gouge with a 55-degree bevel will hardly cut at all, but a very sharp gouge will cut like a dream. Dull tools always ▸

Sharp Tools= Better Results

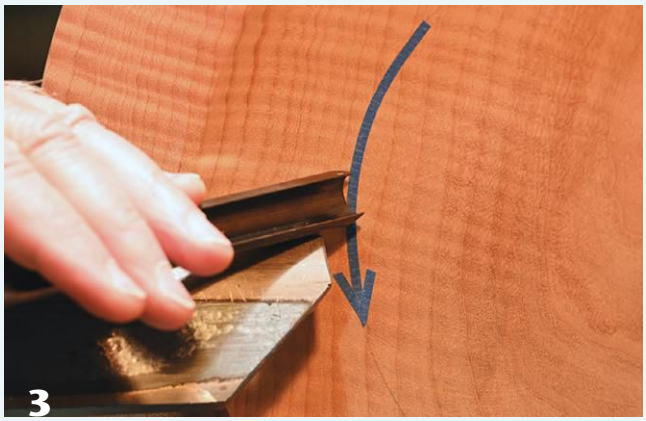
Keeping tools very sharp is fundamental to success when turning highly figured woods. To get the best results, take advantage of the technology improvements in both tool steels and grinders. Consider upgrading your tools to particle-metal. They offer significant advantages over conventional tools.

I grind and sharpen my tools on two low-speed 8" (20cm) grinders, each fitted with two CBN wheels. One grinder has an 80-grit wheel for rough-shaping tools and a 180-grit wheel for sharpening negative-rake scrapers. The other grinder has a 350-grit wheel for sharpening gouges used for rough-shaping platters and bowls and a 600-grit wheel for sharpening gouges used for finishing cuts. Consider replacing your old wheels with CBN as soon as your budget allows it. You'll be amazed at how much better they are.

Your grinder setup should *invite* you to sharpen frequently. The necessity to fiddle with anything on a grinder is a disincentive to grinding. My platforms are always set at the correct angles for my gouges and scrapers, and I never move the platforms. I can quickly regrind every tool and be back at the lathe in just seconds.

For more on tool steels and grinders, see my past *AW* article, "Modern Tool Steels and Grinders" (vol 33, no 3, page 38).

Gouge presentation



The author makes a finishing cut on figured maple. When the cutting edge is presented almost parallel to the direction of travel of the spinning wood, the cutting edge slices through the irregular wood fibers cleanly.

cause tearout, always! So keep your tools sharp. For finishing cuts on dry wood, I prefer a gouge with a U-shaped flute. Why? The U flute is broader at the bottom, and if the wings are not swept back, the nose of the tool has a longer, straighter cutting edge. If the gouge is presented to the workpiece with the bevel rubbing and the cutting edge held almost parallel to the direction of travel of the spinning wood (*Photo 3*), the cutting edge slices the wood fibers smoothly and beautifully, minimizing tearout and producing fine, hair-like shavings.

For years, I used tools made of M2 steel, which is a wonderful, conventional high-speed steel. But in recent years, I have upgraded to tools made of particle metal. I prefer them because the cutting edge of a particle-metal tool is richly supplied with tiny, uniformly distributed, carbides. There are many excellent particle metals. My personal preference is CPM 10V (an A11 metal), which contains almost 10% vanadium. Vanadium carbides are particularly hard and abrasion-resistant, which is why tools rich in vanadium stay sharp longer. For finishing cuts, I sharpen with a 600-grit Cubic Boron Nitride (CBN) wheel. It gets particle-metal tools wonderfully sharp, so they cut highly figured woods cleanly and stay sharp longer. (*See Sharp Tools=Better Results sidebar.*)

Two-step turning process

I advocate using a two-step turning process. I remove 99% of the wood with my gouges, but before sanding, I smooth and refine every square millimeter of the surface with negative-rake scrapers. These tools can smooth curves, crisp-up transitions, and remove every vestige of tearout, getting the workpiece "perfect" before any sanding commences (*Photo 4*). Negative-rake scrapers are particularly effective on dry highly figured woods. (*See Negative-Rake Scrapers sidebar.*)

You might be wondering... If the surface is "perfect," why sand at all? Under magnification, the burr on the cutting edge of a freshly sharpened NRS looks like sandpaper. It smooths the wood beautifully but inevitably leaves a pattern of fine scratches. Light sanding removes these scratches and prepares the workpiece for a gallery-quality finish. I hand-sand, usually beginning with 220-grit sandpaper, progressing through 400 grit, and ending with a very slightly dampened 500-grit Abralon® pad. This process removes all of the fine scratches left by the NRS.

In summary

Keep your tools very sharp. A dull tool will always tear the wood, and heavily sanding figured woods may cause a different problem—rippling.

Take advantage of new technologies by using particle-metal tools sharpened on CBN wheels.

When making finishing cuts on highly figured woods, choose a gouge with a U-shaped flute, ground to a 55-degree bevel. Then smooth and refine the entire surface of the workpiece with negative-rake scrapers, getting everything "perfect" right off the tool before sanding. Sand lightly but thoroughly before applying a finish. ■

Tom Wirsing is a physicist, woodturner, furniture maker, and a former AAW Board member and president. A past president of the Front Range Woodturners (Denver), Tom lives on a ranch in the foothills of the Colorado Rocky Mountains, where he turns wood, builds furniture, and grazes Angus cattle. For more, visit thomaswirsing.com.

Negative-rake scraping

After shaping with a 55-degree gouge, the author uses negative-rake scrapers to prepare the work for final sanding. The tool is held horizontally on the toolrest, and the cutting edge is "floated" lightly across the surface.

Negative-Rake Scrapers

Unlike traditional scrapers, negative-rake scrapers have a bevel on both the top and bottom, ground to the same angle. You can customize their edge profiles to match the surfaces of your workpiece.

A negative-rake scraper need not be heavy. Since effective scraping requires a very delicate touch, I prefer a lightweight tool. And since it is a finishing tool, it should be "floated" delicately across the wood with almost no forward pressure on the tool. It should not be used to remove much wood, but instead only to smooth the surface. Used correctly, a negative-rake scraper produces fine, hair-like shavings, not dust.

At the grinder

I set my grinding platform at 22.5 degrees so, after grinding both sides, the included angle at the cutting edge is 45 degrees (*Photo a*).

As the scraper is ground, a burr forms on the upper side of the grind, and in use, the scraper is held horizontally on the toolrest, burr-side up. Feel the upper edge of the tool as it comes off the grinder to make sure it has a good burr. When the burr is gone, the tool must be resharpened immediately, as the burr is the only part of the scraper that cuts. When the burr has worn away, the tool is dull and will do more harm than good. But when a freshly sharpened negative-rake scraper is used correctly, it is very effective in removing tearout on figured woods.

The author always regrinds the bevels on both sides of the scraper to get the best burr, which is on the upper side as the scraper comes off the grinder. At the lathe, the scraper is presented burr-side up.

JOURNAL ARCHIVE CONNECTION

EXPLORE!

For more information on negative-rake scrapers, log in at woodturner.org and use the Explore! search tool to find additional resources.

- "Negative-Rake Scraper: A Finishing Tool That's up to the Challenges…," by Stuart Batty, Spring 2006 *AW* (vol 21, no 1, page 24)
- "Negative-Rake Scraping: More Turning, Less Sanding," by Tom Wirsing, May 2019 *WF* (vol 8, no 2, page 37)

Enhance Burl Figure **with Dye**

Cindy Drozda

Red Wing Blackbird, 2013, Boxelder burl, dye, African blackwood, 6" × 12" (15cm × 30cm)

The Ununium Conundrum, 2007, Boxelder burl, dye, African blackwood, 11½" × 11" (29cm × 28cm)

Lilacs in the Sunshine, 2007, Black ash burl, dye, African blackwood, 4" × 3¾" (10cm × 10cm)

Burls are already naturally beautiful—why do I choose to color them? I was originally motivated to dye pieces I had turned from burl because light-colored burls didn't sell well. Maple and boxelder burls were relatively inexpensive, easy to work with, and had awesome figure, but they just didn't sell like other burls with natural color, such as amboyna and Australian red mallee. And I love bright colors!

Transparent dyes enhance the figure in burl without obscuring it like paint or pigment would. This coloring technique creates a dramatic three-dimensional quality in burl figure.

The wood

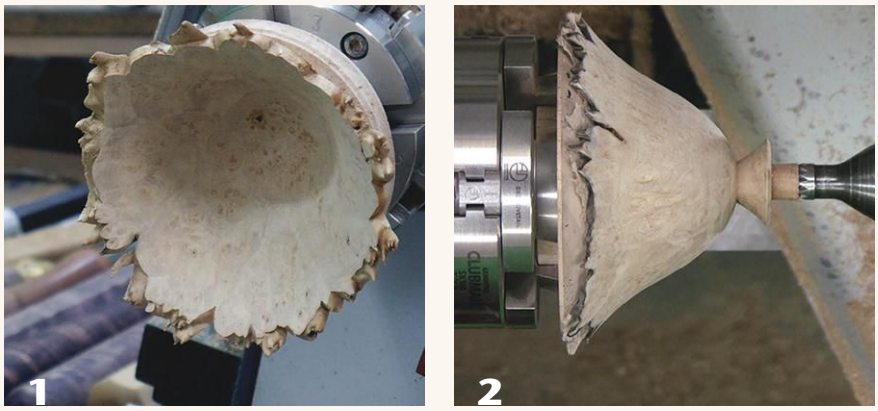
This technique works best on burls. It can also work on curly or quilted wood—but only if the shape is flat, like a table top, or very shallow, like a turned platter. To enhance the wood grain with this dye technique, there needs to be some mix of sidegrain and endgrain in the wood, like you will find with curly, quilted, or especially burl figure. A curly figured deep sidegrain bowl, or a hollow vessel, will have a lot of endgrain area and will not allow for this technique to work, even if the wood has curly figure. The endgrain areas will absorb the dye, but scraping it off will not show the curly figure like it does on sidegrain. If, on the other hand,

the surface is plain sidegrain wood with no curly figure, all of the color will be scraped off.

The best results are obtained on a relatively soft, light-colored burl that can absorb the dye (*Photos 1, 2*). Soft maple burls, like bigleaf maple or boxelder, are perfect. I've had some luck with black ash burl, but it was not nearly as dramatic. Phil Irons uses horse chestnut (buckeye) burl to good effect.

If the wood is too dense, the dye won't penetrate, and the technique described here won't work.

Burl ready for dye



The author has prepared this light-colored burl for dye using a negative-rake scraper.

The dye

I use TransTint® Dyes, made by Homestead Finishing Products. The product I use is described as "metal-acid" or "metalized" dye. This technology produces the most light-fast and color-fast dye made today. Since wood's natural colors are not very colorfast at all and will change over time, a dyed piece is more likely to retain its color through the years. Even the most colorfast dye can fade over time, especially if exposed to sunlight. Some colors will fade more than others, and some dye products will fade more than others. Black dye, of almost all brands, is very colorfast, even if the other colors in that brand's range are not.

TransTint® is concentrated and can be thinned with either alcohol or water. I thin it with denatured alcohol, sold in the hardware store paint department or as camping fuel. Isopropyl pharmaceutical rubbing alcohol and Everclear grain alcohol also work. Water works, too, but tends to raise the grain and doesn't penetrate as deeply. Homestead Finishing recommends thinning TransTint® at a ratio of 32 parts thinner to 1 part dye. That can be varied, resulting in richer or lighter colors. I like to thin at a ratio of 16:1 for a darker and brighter color. To get a deep, rich color on a finial, I use TransTint® dye at full strength.

Other types of dye work with this technique also. Look for a transparent dye, carried in either alcohol or water, that will penetrate into the wood and not obscure the grain.

The Process

Step 1: Apply the first color

This multistep process makes use of the fact that dye penetrates deeper into areas of endgrain than sidegrain. In a burl, the endgrain and sidegrain are all mixed up together. When the dye is scraped or sanded off the surface of the wood, color will be removed from the sidegrain areas and will remain in the areas of endgrain.

I apply the first coat of dye after smoothing the surface of the wood with a negative-rake scraper. Applying the dye to a surface that has been cut with a gouge or sanded with paper coarser than 400 grit will show the minute ripples from the gouge or the scratches from the sandpaper. I find that a double-bevel, or negative-rake, scraper gives the smoothest surface. I use a scraper with a 50-degree included angle (*Photos 3, 4*). Apply a dark color for the first coat of dye (*Photo 5*).

Step 2: Scrape most of it off

Using a double-bevel scraper, I then scrape a layer of wood off the surface. This leaves color in the areas of ▸

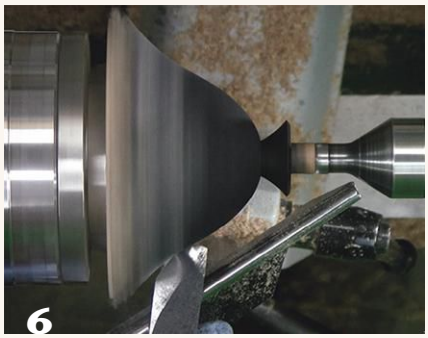
Negative-rake scraper

A negative-rake scraper has a bevel on the top and bottom. It is the author's tool of choice for preparing the burl surface for dye and for scraping off most of the dye from the first application.

Base color of dye

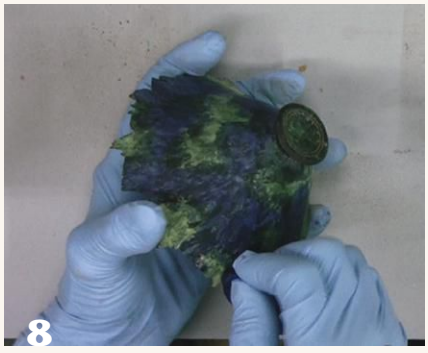
A dark shade of dye is used as the first application.

Scrape off dye



The author scrapes away most of the first application of dye. Dye remains in the endgrain areas of the burl figure, where it penetrated the wood more deeply.

Apply 2nd dye color, blend



A second color of dye is applied and then blended to the author's satisfaction. A combination of blotting and sanding may be necessary to achieve the desired results.

deepest penetration, the endgrain areas. The areas of less penetration, the sidegrain, are once again the natural wood color (*Photos 6, 7*). If the surface was not smooth, all of the cutting irregularities or sandpaper scratches will have dye in them.

Different effects can be attained by scraping more, or less, of the dye off in this step. Keep in mind that the next step, sanding, will remove even more dye.

Step 3: Sand

I like to sand the wood to at least 1000 grit. This will eliminate sanding scratches. On a dyed wood surface, sanding scratches can be more noticeable than on plain wood.

Step 4: Add more color, blend

Add more dye colors. I usually do this off the lathe (*Photo 8*). Applying a lighter color over the dark color that was scraped off will give a colored surface with the grain accentuated by the first color.

Colors blend on the wood. Applying yellow over blue, or blue over yellow, will give you shades of green. Red and blue combine to make purple, and red and yellow make orange. If all three primary colors—red, yellow, and blue—are mixed, you will get brown. Yellow over purple, red over green, or blue over orange will give you mud brown.

The dye colors can be mixed before applying to the wood, also.

To blend the colors, I spray the surface with denatured alcohol. If the color is too dark, I will wet the surface with alcohol, and blot with a paper towel to lift out some of the color. If it's still too dark, the surface can be sanded until you get the look you want (*Photo 9*).

Step 5: Finish with a topcoat

My preference for a topcoat is usually a penetrating-oil type of finish. I like the look and feel of an oil finish.

Some of the oil finishes I like are Sutherland Welles Polymerized Tung Oil, Waterlox, and Minwax® Wipe-On Poly used as an oil. The process is to flood the surface with oil, let it soak in, wipe it off before it gets tacky, and let it dry. I typically apply four to six coats of oil, one per day, depending on the wood. Some oil finishes are darker than others. A light-colored oil will keep the dye colors brighter.

On larger pieces, I like to use a glossy film finish, which makes the pieces look like glass. I love the mystery of having my wood pieces look like they might be something other than wood. The viewer often thinks the piece is glass, stone, or ceramic.

Oil finishes tend to add depth to the figure of the wood that you don't get from lacquer or polyurethane (*Photo 10*). Oil finishes also can impart an amber tone to the wood, dulling the bright dye colors somewhat. A good compromise for the cleanest color is to apply just one coat of oil to the bare wood, wait three days, then apply a film finish. If you use Minwax® Wipe-On Poly as that one coat of "oil," you won't need to wait longer than its drying time.

I sometimes create a built-up film finish, using General Finishes Wood Turner's Finish to build and fill the grain. This product is a water-based poly that builds well, dries fast, and sands easily. When I have the surface smoothed to my satisfaction, I will put the piece on the lathe and apply one last coat of Minwax® Wipe-On Poly with the lathe turning slowly. The spindle speed should be just fast enough to keep the finish from running. Too fast and the finish will migrate to the largest diameters from centrifugal force.

This last coat needs to be perfect and doesn't need to be rubbed out. It gives a clear wet-looking finish. If that coat isn't perfect, sand it smooth and try again. Thinned gloss polyurethane can work well here, too. This technique was shown to me by Steve Sinner, who achieves a wonderfully glossy film finish on his vessels.

Apply topcoat

10

The author prefers to use a penetrating-oil finish over the applications of dye.

Final thoughts

What I have described here is just the basic process I use, and I sometimes vary the steps. For example, I might apply colors after Step 2 and after sanding to at least 400 grit. That process might go like this: Sand to 400 grit, dab on a color in some places or on the whole piece, sand with 600 grit, apply more color, etc. But remember, a surface sanded to coarser than 400 is likely to show scratches in the dye.

This technique can also be done using dyes in natural wood colors. For instance, maple burl can be dyed brown-over-black to look like walnut burl. To enhance the figure without changing the natural color of the burl, use an amber dye for the base color that gets scraped off, then sand and apply a clear finish.

The natural color of the wood will mix with the dye color. If the wood has a brown natural color, the dyed wood will have an earth tone. If the wood is too dark, the colors won't have much of an effect.

This is a wonderfully creative process with many possibilities. Experiment with different colors over other colors, try it on different shapes and on different burls, and let us see what you make! ■

Cindy Drozda has been turning wood since 1984. She is a full-time demonstrator and teacher, a manufacturer of woodturning tools, and a woodturning artist. Her website is cindydrozda.com.

This Present Moment: **Crafting a Better World**

Kevin Wallace


Photo: Albert Ting


Photo: Noah Friend

A Renwick Gallery visitor admires the work of Andy Cole, a set of nested bowls titled *Hawaiian Six Pack*.

All featured artworks: Collection of the Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Jeffrey Bernstein, M.D., and Judith Chernoff, M.D. Photos by Mitro Hood Photography, unless otherwise noted.

This Present Moment: Crafting a Better World is a major exhibition of contemporary craft accompanied by an impressive publication, celebrating the Renwick Gallery of the Smithsonian Institution's 50th anniversary. The exhibition is presented on two floors of gallery space, highlighting 171 artworks from the permanent collection, seeking to explore the history of the studio craft movement while also introducing contemporary artworks that push the boundaries and expand definitions of craft in the twenty-first century.

The exhibition and catalog pay tribute to the Renwick's first fifty years, highlighting the achievements of the present, and the Renwick's role in shaping the future. It is also a celebration of the history, state of the art, and possible future of work in craft media.

This Present Moment is based upon two themes. The first is fairly straightforward, representing the current state of craft, with a selection of recent acquisitions. The second is conceptual, inspired by philosopher Gaston Bachelard's 1958 book *The Poetics of Space*, exploring the home as both an escape and a shelter for troubling times. This theme of home is broken down into five conceptual frameworks for considering craft objects: Egg, Nest, House, Nation, and Universe.

The exhibition was organized by Mary Savig, the Lloyd Herman Curator of Craft, with support from Nora Atkinson, the Fleur and Charles Bresler Curator-in-Charge for the Renwick Gallery; Anya Montiel, Curator at the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian; and Elana Hain, Collections Manager.

A rich history

The building that houses the Renwick Gallery was originally built to be not only Washington D.C.'s first art museum, but the first purpose-built art museum in the United States. At the time of its construction in the years leading up to the Civil War, the

impressive work of architecture was known as "the American Louvre." Following various incarnations, the building that houses it was saved from demolition by First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy in 1963. Two years later, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed an executive order transferring the Renwick building to the Smithsonian Institution for use as a gallery of arts, craft, and design. Following a renovation, the Renwick Gallery opened to the public in 1972, with an inaugural exhibition program that, according to curator Nora Atkinson, "resisted easy definitions and boundaries, instead radiating the possibilities of craft and design." It is interesting to note that the first exhibition at the Renwick Gallery was *Woodenworks*, featuring handmade furniture by five now legendary makers: Wharton Esherick, Sam Maloof, George Nakashima, Wendell Castle, and Arthur Espenet Carpenter.

Nora Atkinson's essay, "A Foundation for the Future: The Renwick at 50," in the exhibition catalog, shares the history of the Renwick, while discussing the field of craft over the last fifty years. Atkinson suggests that the American Studio Craft Movement ended in 2005 and that "The Craft of Now flourishes in myriad forms, from frequent nods to the handmade within the field of contemporary art to craft-like work to the revival of knitting circles." Atkinson sees craft today as being "more socially conscious, more performative, more grassroots and hipster cool" and "less about the bravura skill that was its hallmark at the height of studio craft."

The relationship between craft and the changing world is fleshed out in Mary Savig's essay, "This Present Moment," while Anya Montiel's "Respect, Reciprocity, and Responsibility: A Way Forward" utilizes indigenous thought as a means of creating a better future. The book also features short essays by nine artists in various media that offer diverse perspectives on the past, present, and future in relation to their work.

Works in wood

This Present Moment: Crafting a Better World features a number of artists working in wood, from furniture and sculpture by acclaimed masters of the medium to recent explorations that show the potential of wood as a means of self-expression. Of particular interest to readers of *American Woodturner* are the selection of works gifted to the permanent collection of the Renwick Gallery by Jeffrey Bernstein and Judith Chernoff. The gift of forty-three works in wood builds on the previous gift of Fleur and Charles Bresler, which established the Renwick Gallery as one of the preeminent public collections of contemporary wood art in the United States.

Bernstein and Chernoff acquired their first artwork in wood in 1994, but it was the acquisition of *Fusion* by Mark Nantz in 2002 that marked "a shift in their journey from curious seekers to informed advocates." As Mary Savig explains their collecting, Bernstein focuses on the importance of skill and technical ingenuity in working with wood, while Chernoff is interested in the intangible resonance of an artwork—the feeling it evokes. *Fusion*, which features a protective exoskeleton around a highly figured amboyna burl vessel, represents these criteria for collecting, as does the expansive selection of works from their collection featured in the publication.

A number of artists in the exhibition are represented by three works, including Mark Nantz, Dixie Biggs, J. Paul Fennell, John Mascoll, and Avelino Samuel, allowing a greater sense of each artist's aesthetic and evolution. The two other works by Mark Nantz are *Mottled Ebony Bowl*, a work that shows restraint in showcasing the wood with ▸

Mark Nantz, *Fusion*, 2002, Amboyna burl, ebony (turned and constructed), 11⅜" × 12¼" (29cm × 31cm)

Mark Nantz, *Artifact Series*, 2007, Maple burl (stabilized and dyed blue), ebony, silver, 14-karat gold, steel, aniline dye suspended in liquid acrylic, 10" × 6¼" × 5⅝" (25cm × 16cm × 14cm)

FURTHER READING

For additional images from and details about the Bernstein/Chernoff donation of wood art to the Renwick Gallery of the Smithsonian American Art Museum, see the April 2022 *American Woodturner* (vol 37, no 2, page 48).

J. Paul Fennell, *Offering Vessel*, 2015, Ficus, 10½" × 9" (27cm × 23cm)

Dixie Biggs, *Sweet Spot*, 2010, Jordan sugar maple, 7½" × 4¾" (19cm × 12cm)

John Mascoll, *Untitled Lidded Vessel*, 2016, Bleached chinaberry, 12¾" × 7¼" × 7" (32cm × 18cm × 18cm)

John Beaver, *Intersecting Waves*, 2016, walnut, maple, 6" × 8" (15cm × 20cm)

Cindy Drozda, *Wooden Bowl #157*, Undated, Eucalyptus gum burl, desert iron wood, 23-karat gold leaf, 3" × 6½" (8cm × 17cm)

a rim that is tastefully inlaid with silver, and a visually complex *Artifact Series* work, which has a sense of the ceremonial. The use of gold and steel, as well as solvent-based aniline dye suspended in liquid acrylic, provides an expansive approach that is fortunately more accepted today than it was during the "golden years" of artistic woodturning—with works often referred to as "brown and round."

It is difficult to imagine any museum visitor not being stopped in their tracks by J. Paul Fennell's stunning vessel *Szechwan Serenity*, while his *Offering Vessel* is an equally impressive, if considerably quieter, work. An earlier example of Fennell's pierced work, *Untitled Vessel* from 2004, shows his initial exploration of utilizing negative space and texturing in his vessels.

Two of the works by Dixie Biggs, *Sweet Dreams* and *Sweet Spot*, feature the artist's signature approach to carving, texturing, and painting vessels, while her *Dated Material* is a much more subtle work that showcases the material with a tasteful lid and finial.

John Mascoll's *Untitled Lidded Vessels* share a simplicity of form that showcases each vessel's profile, with a sense of movement or balance provided by the finials. The works show Mascoll's consistency in concept and technique.

While one of the three works by Avelino Samuel is a collaboration with Harvey Fein, his three works explore fluting to create an elegant sense of movement.

There are two works by John Beaver, Cindy Drozda, and Koji Tanaka. Both examples of Beaver's work are from his series of *Wave Bowls*, which represent a technically complex means of accomplishing aesthetically pleasing designs. Cindy Drozda is best known for her

Betty Scarpino, *Inviolate Portal*, 2007, Ash, oak, walnut, 16" × 14" × 3½" (41cm × 36cm × 9cm)

Michael Hampel, *It's Not A House, It's A Home*, 2007, English walnut burl, 11" × 13" × 12" (28cm × 33cm × 30cm)

lidded vessels with delicate finials, and *Pele (Hawaiian Goddess of Fire)* is a wonderful example, with the elongated foot matching the dramatic finial. *Wooden Bowl #157* takes full advantage of the dramatic piece of eucalyptus gum burl, juxtaposing the pattern of the burl with an interior of 23-karat gold leaf. Koji Tanaka is a wood sculptor inspired by nature, creating works that provide a Modernist exploration of negative space framed in form. His two works, *Uragoeshi (Inside Out)* and *Nagame*, show a consistent vision, allowing the grain and figure of the wood to influence the form.

There are excellent examples of sculptural approaches that are not dependent upon the lathe in the collection, including Robyn Horn's *Stone Circle*, which creates a dynamic through a sense of balance and texturing that suggests motion. Hunt Clark's *Untitled Wood Sculpture* seems inspired by an amusement park ride, with its dynamic lines and sense of movement. While Betty Scarpino employs the lathe in creating her work, she has transcended the "roundness" the lathe naturally produces to create sculptural works that are distinctive. Her piece *Inviolate Portal* uses the grain pattern to great effect.

There are a number of examples of artistic woodturning that stand out. Pat Kramer's *Night Blooming Serious* is transcendent, marrying complex and simple ▸

Holly Tornheim, *Vessel II*, Undated, Curly maple, 3¾" × 24⅜" × 5⅜" (10cm × 62cm × 14cm)

Louise Hibbert, *Cinachyra Box*, 2000, Sycamore, boxwood, polyester resin, acrylic ink, 4¼" (11cm) diameter

Ron Fleming, *Echo*, Undated, Spalted hackberry, 8" × 15" × 9" (20cm × 38cm × 23cm)

elements in a holistic manner. Sharon Doughtie's *Four Winds, Two Poles*, also created in large ebonized Norfolk Island pine, is at once dazzling and subtle. Similarly, in *Reflection*, Graeme Priddle has ebonized areas of his sculpture to create dramatic contrast between the natural wood, the blackened wood, and the areas of negative space.

Jacques Vesery's *Makana Ka Na Hoku (Gift of the Stars)* is a work that brings to mind a starfish or sand dollar, with his trademark carved feathers and a transcendent bottom of 23-karat gold. Similarly, two works by Louise Hibbert, *Radiolarian Vessel VII* and *Cinachyra Box* use bold color and texture to create works that simultaneously reflect nature and surrealistic sculpture.

Segmented and laminated work is well represented by Ray Feltz, Curt Theobald, and Hal Metlitzky—the latter creating work that echoes the early explorations of Bud Latven, with complex patterning that takes its cue from abstract painting.

There are a number of classic examples by well-known woodturners, including a work from Philip Moulthrop's *Mixed Mosaic* series and Ron Fleming's *Echo*, which celebrates the natural world with carved leaves in spalted hackberry. David Sengel's *Round Lidded Container with Legs* is an excellent example of the artist's distinctive use of thorns in the creation of a lidded form.

Sculptural wood art in perspective

With its close proximity to the White House and history of involvement by U.S. presidents and their first ladies, the Renwick provides a historic non-partisan perspective on the role of craft in the United States of America, housed in a historical work of architecture. Yet *This Present Moment* represents concerns that have been overly politicized over the last several years. For instance, with an awareness of how the permanent collection reflects a history of white male domination in all spheres, there has

Avelino Samuel, *Spiral Carved Vessel*, 2006, Mahogany, 12¼" × 6¾" (31cm × 17cm)

been an effort to expand the works of women and people of color. Over the last two years, holdings of Native American craft have also increased considerably. As Nora Atkinson states in her catalog essay, she sees the current role of the Renwick Gallery as "...looking with a critical lens to break down the barriers further, letting in people of all genders, sexualities, ethnicities, abilities, and creeds, examining all forms of craft practice with genuine curiosity, and reaping the benefits of this multiplicity of stories."

Issues of identity, racial equality, and societal changes are common in museum exhibitions of contemporary art but have not traditionally been addressed by those exhibiting work by artists in traditional craft materials and processes. Folding the recent gift of Jeffrey Bernstein and Judith Chernoff into *This Present Moment: Crafting a Better World* unintentionally makes clear that the majority of artists who utilize the woodturning process choose not to reflect the times, address social issues, or to explore meaning or narrative at all. The artistic woodturner's pursuit continues to be concerned with craftsmanship and reflecting the beauty of the natural world, rather than reflecting the past, engaging with the times we live in, or offering a path forward.

That is not to say that the quest to create beauty in this world, or to celebrate the natural world, are not worthwhile pursuits. Nor is it always agreeable to create polarization by addressing highly politicized issues. One of the best things about the American Association of Woodturners (AAW) is that it unites individuals with diverse backgrounds and ways of viewing the world through a shared interest. AAW symposia are in many ways free from disagreements about politics, race, or religion, making clear that finding common ground is an ideal way to create and sustain community. To challenge that almost familial sense of comradery would certainly impact that environment of solidarity.

That said, the world is changing, and the interests of art curators and critics are largely concerned with how the arts reflect society and the importance of self-expression. While the majority of turned woodwork exhibited or collected by museums falls under the category of the decorative arts, *This Present Moment: Crafting a Better World* makes clear that the artists being collected by the Renwick Gallery are being considered within the larger art realm.

This Present Moment: Crafting a Better World *will be on view at the Renwick Gallery of the Smithsonian American Art Museum until April 2, 2023. For more, visit americanart.si.edu.* ■

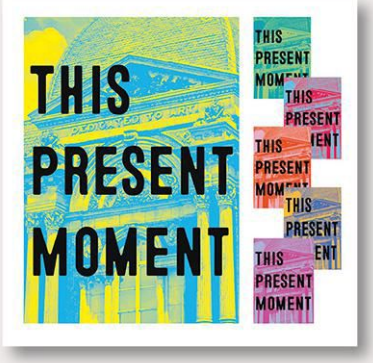
Kevin Wallace is director of the Beatrice Wood Center for the Arts (beatricewood.com) in Ojai, California. He has authored and co-authored a number of books on woodturning.

Andi Wolfe, *When I Let Go of What I Am, I Can Become What I Might Be – Lao Tzu (Carved Sphere, No. 2)*, 2008, Redwood burl, 4" (10cm) diameter

Exhibition Catalog

The exhibition catalog for *This Present Moment: Crafting a Better World* features essays that endeavor to understand American craft's past, and possible futures, through a consideration of where work in craft media stands today. I highly recommend this publication, due to both the wonderful and diverse works of art and the informative essays.

***This Present Moment: Crafting a Better World*, by Mary Savig, Nora Atkinson, and Anya Montiel, GILES, 2022, 248 pages, hardcover, ISBN: 978-1913875268**



Members' Gallery

Alan Leland, North Carolina

Many turners know me as a patient teacher and demonstrator. All my beginning and project classes focus on building or improving students' turning skills. As an aid to my teaching, I developed a lab manual, *Let's Go for a Spin*, available as part of AAW's mentoring and teaching resources. (*Let's Go for a Spin* can be found on the AAW website, woodturner.org, under the Resources/Publications tabs.)

In most of my own turning, I have focused on architectural and craft items and have rarely ventured beyond functional work. I do not consider myself an artist, but rather someone who makes functional pieces with artistic flair. However, after spending a week at John C. Campbell Folk School in a workshop taught by Don Leyden, I came away with a desire to turn nonfunctional goblets. Don used layers of dye to color his burl goblets. I prefer the look of natural wood but did choose to dye some of the goblet stems. I look forward to turning more artistic objects, while emphasizing the beauty of the natural wood.

Trio of Natural-Edge Goblets, 2021, Boxelder burl, ebonized maple, ebony, tallest: 9¾" × 2" (25cm × 5cm)

Three-Legged Stool, 2021, Ambrosia maple, padauk, 24" × 13" (61cm × 33cm)

Dan Zobel, Pennsylvania

I am a woodturner and furniture maker in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, and my work is inspired by both people and nature in my local area. People who have influenced my work include my former professor, Mark Sfirri, as well as friends and fellow woodturning artists Derek Weidman, Carol Hall, and Michael Kehs.

My color schemes are very much in the secondary range, as greens, oranges, and purples resonate with me. I believe that all aspects of artistic work should be thoroughly considered, including a proper display. I hope to continue growing with new designs and expanding on current ones.

Holey Bowley XI, 2021,
Ash, steel, acrylic paint,
6" × 7" × 7" (15cm × 18cm × 18cm)
Collection of Maryalice Birk
Photos: Derek Weidman

Charles Bell, Florida/New York

I see woodturning as a journey from beginner to seasoned craft turner. Belonging to two woodturning clubs—Sarasota Woodturners (Florida) and the Long Island Woodturners (New York)—has been the best part of that journey for me. I have had several great mentors who have enriched my life as a person and as a woodturner. My skills and achievements would not have happened without them. My best advice to any new turner is to get involved in a woodturning club; the people you meet and what you will learn will amaze you! Being part of the AAW has also exposed me to new ideas and techniques.

The idea for the vertical canister shown here came from the limited counter space in my home in Florida. I enjoy different types of tea and decided this would be a good way to store a variety of tea bags.

Tea Canisters, 2020, Norfolk Island pine, redheart, polyurethane, Stacked: 26" × 6½" (66cm × 17cm)

Nested Walnut Bowls, 2021, Walnut (carved and pierced), pyrography, India ink, largest: 6¼" × 11½" (16cm × 29cm)

White Oak Bowl, 2022, White oak (sandblasted), stain, 4¾" × 8½" (12cm × 22cm)

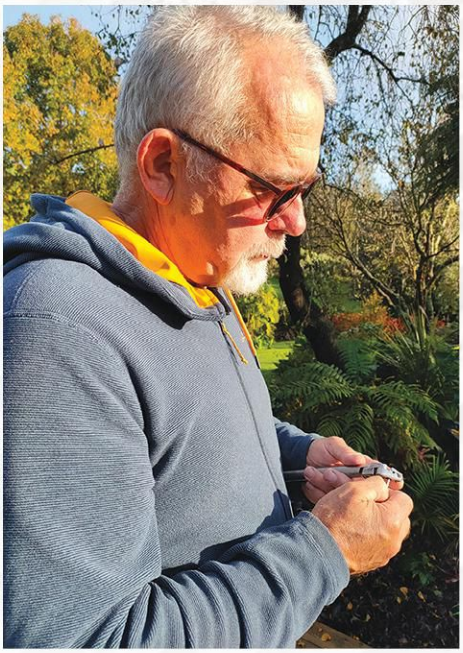
Jim Williams, Ontario, Canada

My first experience with woodturning was in a grade-7 workshop, and I continued woodworking through high school. I have always had a passion for woodworking and established my career as a licensed carpenter with an industry focus on custom-home construction. In 2017, when I started planning for retirement, I began setting up a workshop/studio dedicated to the craft of woodturning. I followed woodturners and mentors on social media and started trying different techniques and tools. I attended my first hands-on retreat in 2019, then in 2020 had the opportunity to spend one-on-one workshop time with woodturning artist Chris Ramsey. I am largely self-taught, but I found this instructional experience to be invaluable.

I enjoy the challenge of taking a rough block of wood, examining the shape, grain, and figure, and then turning it into something beautiful. I often use pyrography, piercing, carving, and coloring to enhance my work. ■

For more, see Jim's website, turningtrees.ca.

Three-Legged Live-Edge Bowl, 2022, Birdseye maple, 9" × 16" × 14" (23cm × 41cm × 36cm)



ROLLY MUNRO

TOOLMAKER, ARTIST, DESIGNER

Malcolm Zander

Photos courtesy of the artist, unless otherwise noted.

Rolly Munro is a wood artist living in a beachside home in the far north of New Zealand. I first encountered his iconic hollowing tool (the Holy Rolly) in 2003, when I visited him to learn hollow turning. On my first morning there, as I walked toward Rolly's garage workshop from his house, I saw a long continuous ribbon of wet shavings arcing all the way across the wide driveway into a neat pile on the other side. Spectacular. Rolly was at work, and I was instantly hooked.

Toolmaker

Rolly began exploring hollow turning in the early 1980s but found the available gouges and scrapers inadequate because the toolrest did not permit close support for the cutter tip. He ended up using a ½" (13mm) high-speed-steel (HSS) circular cutter on a shaft. This was first developed by Teknatool of Auckland, New Zealand, but Rolly added a guard to cover most of the cutter. The great advantage of the guard is that it allows for easier control of the circular cutter and prevents major catches. In the first model, however, the shavings failed to clear the guard assembly. After further experimenting, he developed a new guard with an aperture in it, through which the shavings could escape. This became the basis for the Articulated Hollower MK1, or Holy Rolly, first produced around 2000. That tool later evolved into the Hollower 2.

In use, the Holy Rolly's long foam-covered handle is held horizontally at center height (by the right hand for a right-hander), with the back end tucked firmly between the turner's arm and body. The left hand holds the black knob (which also unlocks the tool shaft, permitting its extension or retraction). The fixed orientation of the knob relative to the cutter plane enables the turner to know the orientation of the cutter, even when it cannot be seen inside a hollow form. The tool is steered with both hands. Lathe speed is quite slow, typically 500 rpm or less, yet the finish is very clean, as the wood is cut rather than scraped.

When dull, the circular cutter can be loosened and rotated to expose fresh sharp cutting edges before it eventually must be sharpened or replaced. The advent of fine-grain carbide cutters increased durability and eased sharpening; the user simply spins the cutter against a diamond hone. Rolly adopted these cutters and also made the tool head symmetrical. Many turners do not have swivel-head lathes and know that hollowing across the lathe

The Holy Rolly Hollower 2

The Holy Rolly introduced a guard that limited depth of cut and provided an aperture for chip ejection.

Tool production

Rolly makes his living primarily as a maker of woodturning tools, which affords him the means to produce world-class sculpture. Above: Wunderkutt 10 hollowers, ready to be shipped out. Below: The Hollower 2 alongside the smaller Wunderkutt 10.

Holy Rolly, a Closer Look

Sidebar photos by Malcolm Zander.

To make his hollowing tool less likely to catch in the wood, Rolly Munro added an adjustable guard, allowing the user to define the depth of cut (*Photos a-c*). A set screw from the underside locks the guard in place.

Two added articulations permit turning around tight corners in a hollow form, if needed (*Photo d*).

a

Guard removed, showing the circular cutter.

b

In Photo b, *the guard is fully closed—no cutting occurs. In* Photo c, *the guard is fully open, with about 1mm of the cutter exposed—an aggressive bite. The user can adjust the depth of cut anywhere between these two extremes.*

c

d

Adjustable articulations allow for comfortable positioning of the cutter head inside a hollow form.

bed while leaning to the left can be very uncomfortable. Rolly's symmetrical tool head allows the turner to run the lathe in reverse and hollow on the right side of the form, which is ergonomically better and makes it easier to see the cutting action. For more, see *Holy Rolly, a Closer Look* sidebar.

Rolly later developed the Wunderkutt 10, a smaller hollower with a ⅜" (10mm) cutter instead of the Hollower 2's ½" cutter. This smaller tool is more versatile and handles hard dry wood better, while the Hollower 2 is very good for rapid hollowing, especially of green wood.

The Munro hollowers are produced by Rolly himself. He builds the shafts and handles in his shop but outsources the cutters, cutter heads, knobs, and handle sleeves, as those parts require specialized processes and equipment. Rolly finishes the raw castings, sharpens HSS cutters (an option to the carbide cutters), and assembles, packs, and ships the tools himself. His exclusive supplier in the U.S. is Packard Woodworks (packardwoodworks.com). Abroad, he sells through MAGMA Fine Woodworking (magma-tools.com), Auprès de mon Arbre (aupresdemonarbre-tournagesurbois.com), and Wood Grain NZ Woodturning (woodgrainnzwoodturning.co.nz). Munro hollowers are used by many turners, both amateur and professional. Fellow Kiwi and wood artist Graeme Priddle comments, "[They are] still the only hollowing tools I use—the Ferrari of the hollow-turning tool world."

Artist

Rolly makes his living primarily as a toolmaker, but ever since his studies at New Zealand's Otago Art School in the 1970s, his first love has always been his artwork. By the 1990s, his sculptures were in numerous prestigious international collections.

Rolly's design inspiration has nearly always been nature. A common element is that of a form opening up, an example of which is *Papatua Form*. Rolly explains, "The idea comes from a variety of forms, like a flower bud, a seed capsule, or a crustacean. The stylized scaled surface near the opening is from crustaceans, in particular the chiton or papatua. The linear elements are meant to visually distort the symmetry while having minimal impact on the actual dimensions. One of my challenges is to take a simple turned form and apply a range of techniques to create a variety of expressions. The design elements celebrate the art forms and cultures of Oceania, a region where I have spent most of my life." ▸

Papatua Form, 2000, Pohutukawa, gold leaf, ebonized black pigments, artist oil, Danish-type oil, 8⅞" (23cm) diameter

Photo: Malcolm Zander

Collection of David and Ruth Waterbury

A master of texture

Rolly's work frequently has a dominant, attention-seeking motif that is supported by a more subtle surface design to enrich, invite, and involve the viewer. For him, texture is often the greatest contributor in creating the feel and character of a work. Rolly employs a great range of textures. He notes, "All surfaces have a texture, whether we notice it or not. We react to surfaces as much as we do to form. Our appreciation is an interaction between our sense of touch and visual perception. What we see as a textural surface, an ant would perceive as rough terrain. In a landscape we see a nearby tree and its textured bark, but when we look away at the distant forest, the texture is made up of whole individual trees."

Rolly continues, "So often we make woodwork and wood art and just simply polish it, which is possibly a reflection of wood's commonly utilitarian/domestic use. Unlike many industrial-age materials, wood is made from the bones of a living entity, often having lived many human generations. It is built of complex cellular structures forming the 'grain,' the thing we polish to see. However, the grain can be revealed and harnessed in a variety of ways, from Ed Moulthrop's massive 'glazed' vessels to Todd Hoyer's weathered and craggy geological forms, Hayley Smith's cool and controlled work, Michael Hosaluk's birch-bark overlays, and more latterly, Pascal Oudet's grit-blasted oak skeletal ware."

Rolly discovered the art forms of Oceania as an art student in Otago. He was smitten by the Micronesian and Melanesian carvings in the Dunedin city museum. These feelings peaked in his two *Puhapuha* forms, a word that means brimful, or filled to overflowing, in the Māori language. They were inspired by the opening of a *manuka* seed pod (manuka is the Māori name for a tea-tree native to New Zealand).

Both of these sculptures convey an element of architectural form and line, reminiscent of the Eiffel Tower's iron frame. Rolly notes, "I used the black

Puhapuha I, 1999, Pohutukawa, dye, ebonized black pigments, artist oil, Danish-type oil, 8" × 12" (20cm × 30cm)

Photo: John Carlano

Center for Art in Wood Museum Collection

Puhapuha II, 1999, Kauri, ebonized black pigments, artist oil, Danish-type oil, 7" × 10" (18cm × 25cm)

Photo: H. Sameshima

Collection of Fleur Bresler

Photo courtesy of Kenny Muir

Vessel, 2000, Walnut, ebonized black pigments, artist oil, Danish-type oil, 8" (20cm) diameter

Collection of Randy Pi

The use of the quilted texture, first seen in *Puhapuha II*, mirrors the pattern of the farmlands of the Canterbury plains, as seen from above. The blue-gray foothills and even the Rakaia River are evident.

to make a strong division between the upper and lower areas to create the story, while the lower vertical linear texture defines the vessel. In *Puhapuha II*, the lower surface design deliberately 'bends' the form, making it slightly voluptuous, while the upper structure has a mechanical quality."

Puhapuha I was first ebonized, then pigmented using wiping stains and artist oils. The lower section was then carved to reveal the natural red-brown wood beneath the coloration. *Puhapuha II*, made a few months later, is a unique variation. It was first painted black all over, then carved with fine slices through the black paint, so that the kauri wood color beneath was revealed. The wood was buffed to reveal its warmth. The color is far more subtle than that of *Puhapuha I*, appearing almost charcoal in normal light but easily distinguished in sunlight. Because the angle of the slices varies, the bottom section appears as a quilt of black and brown panels, coruscating as one rotates it. A striking effect.

A related work, *Vessel*, inspired by a landscape, stems from Rolly's early times flying over the Canterbury plains, a patchwork quilt of farmland running into the foothills of the Southern Alps—the mountain chain that is the backbone of New Zealand's South Island. Rolly made sketches while looking through the aircraft window, but it was only years later, when he saw Kenny Muir's professional photograph of this landscape, that he decided to make a sculpture reflecting the scene.

The textures in the 2012 *Echinoderm Form* were first used by Rolly in the 1990s and have since been emulated in variations by others. "This is an extension of the *Puhapuha* forms but uses a much more dominant reptilian skin/limpet shell-like texture and has a singularly organic character," he notes.

New and more novel textures are found in Rolly's more recent *Hapuku VII*. Randy Pi, the collector who owns *Hapuku VII*, writes, "The latest Hapuku references cubism and Picasso's Weeping Woman. It is a fish's worst nightmare, with tears, being caught in nets." (The word *Hapuku* refers to a groper fish in the Māori language.) *Hapuku VII* was cut from she oak, with the wood's medullary rays becoming the surface design template. Rolly calls it "an experiment, playing with cool/warm contrast. I wanted the color to be fishy, while allowing the warm medullary ray patterns to clearly link into the grain lines within the lips as well as give the feeling of flow."

One of Rolly's smallest pieces is *Votive*, shown in the 2014 AAW exhibition *Ceremony*. It is an intricate continuation of the shell-form theme, but much smaller, so the very delicate and fine jointing systems were a challenge. *Votive* is made from freshly felled holly and was turned, carved, sandblasted, ▸

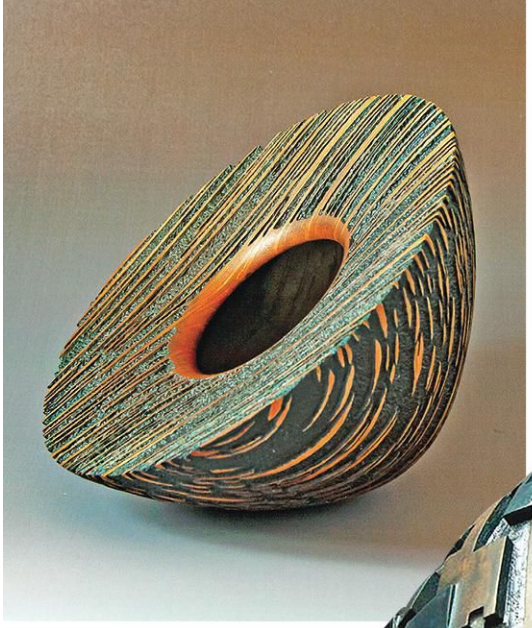
Echinoderm Form, 2005-2012, English walnut, ebonized black pigments, artist oil, Danish-type oil, 3" × 6¼" (8cm × 16cm)

Hapuku VII, 2021, She oak, acrylic inks, 5¾" × 5¾" (15cm × 15cm)

Collection of Randy Pi

Votive, 2014, Holly, artist fixative, 6½" × 2½" × 2" (16cm × 6cm × 5cm)

Photos: Tib Shaw



Stratified Vessel, 2021, She oak, acrylic inks, 2¾" × 5¾" (7cm × 15cm)

Collection of Randy Pi

Andean Relic, 2021, English walnut, acrylic inks, 3¼" × 6¼" (8cm × 16cm)

Collection of Randy Pi

and assembled while still wet, as holly is tricky to dry in thick sections and it discolors if allowed to dry slowly. Rolly chose this wood for its machining characteristics, being of dense, tight grain and a lovely creamy color.

Due to this piece's diminutive size, Rolly hollowed it using a mini version of his popular hollowing tool. He explains this small sculpture: "The minute we are born, we are subjected to the forces of nature, and when we pass, we leave a footprint, for a while at least. The life cycle of a tree: from supple green fresh wood, made into a sculpture resembling bone or shell, and then that too will eventually become dust."

Recent work

She oak is a prized Australian native hardwood with exceptionally wide and dense rays. Rolly has emphasized this feature in his 2021 bowl, *Stratified Vessel*, for which he has excavated the material between the rays and pigmented the trenches left behind to create a geological illusion.

Andean Relic was inspired by the interlocking masonry of Machu Picchu and attempts to evoke a feeling of time and place. It features fine textures and understated colors, so characteristic of Rolly's work.

Metal sculpture

Rolly Munro's metalworking skills go well beyond his toolmaking. He has executed a number of commissions for large-scale metal sculptures, including gates and bridges.

In one commission, Rolly recreated a Haast's Eagle (or *pouakai* in Māori legend). This was the largest eagle that ever existed, though it had a relatively short wingspan of 10' (3m) for its weight, 33 lb (15kg). It became extinct in New Zealand around 1400. The Haast's Eagle preyed on the giant flightless moa bird, also extinct now. Rolly created his eagle from stainless steel, using a special

Metalworking: bridge ornamentation

Bridge, Hunua, New Zealand

Collaboration—Bridge design: Leigh Munro; Approaches: Rolly Munro

The Haast's Eagle

Construction of Rolly's *Haast's Eagle*, 2016, Stainless steel, 13' (4m) wide.

Photo: Malcolm Zander

Rolly's *Haast's Eagle* captures the full majesty of this extinct giant bird. "Wow, just wow! Flight and power captured, not in solid mass, but in the spaces in between steel."
–Betty Scarpino, wood sculptor

welding technique to secure the form and limit its movement (though there is still significant flex in the wings).

Equipment

Rolly has always been an experimenter and loves playing with techniques and combinations of surfaces, trying to find links to his life experience in them. With *Echinoderm Unraveled*, the Norway maple was rather soft for accepting its very small pierced textures, so Rolly had to develop and add some new techniques to his artistic vocabulary. He notes, "Rotary tools are fast and will allow access to places where hand-powered tools will struggle; however, they create their own footprint. I initially used the NSK Presto extensively but found it has restrictions, as it spins so fast. I felt the charred surface left behind was problematic, so I cut more slowly, using tools that spun at less than 30,000 rpm. I also made small knives, scrapers, files, and tiny sanding pads mounted on shaped bamboo or fiberglass sticks to give me smoother surfaces and cleaner lines."

Rolly continues, "I also discovered the air-powered reciprocating lapping tools, which move back and forth at extremely high speeds. Instead of using the diamond files they are typically equipped with, I created very small ▸

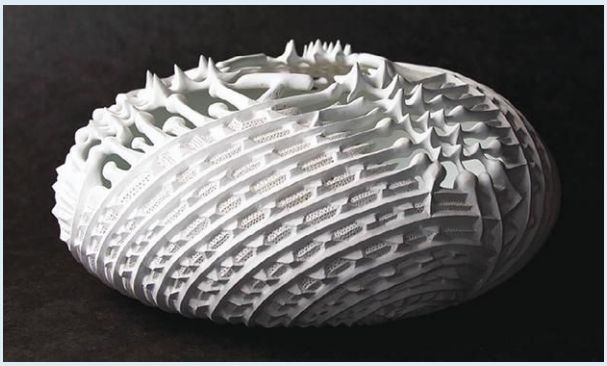
A Long Time Coming—*Echinoderm Unraveled*

In 2014, while demonstrating his Wunderkutt 10 hollowing tool on the Norwegian Woodturning Cruise, Rolly turned and began carving a Norway maple blank, with only a rough germ of an idea. The thorny upper area and the three main divisions were conceived, but Rolly felt he didn't have a concept good enough to carry the main motif. The piece sat on his project bench for years.

Finally, inspiration to break through his mental block came in the form of marine echinoderm forms. (Echinoderms will be familiar to many woodturners as the skeletons of sea urchins, often used in Christmas ornaments.) Rolly notes, "The delicate shells are rich with subtle texture and form. Usually found washed up and sun-bleached within the intertidal zone on our beaches, they are sadly prone to destruction by human feet. The pale colors are ideal for revealing gentle changes in plane and texture. The shell, being the vessel for carrying the inner workings of these creatures, has a linear texture, where I eventually saw a parallel with basketry. Design problem solved."

The piece had evolved over several years, and at one point Rolly thought he had invested a lot of time in a piece of firewood. The vessel in 2019 (*Photo a*) did not look right to him: the central motif was far too dominant, and the prickly designs didn't tie into the bulk of the work. Yet Rolly felt there was something inside worth unearthing. So, in a daring move, he cut away the lip-like borders, integrating and balancing the solid mass with negative space (*Photo b*). The surface lines remained and multiplied, giving the illusion of a weave with long continuous lines circumnavigating the outer form. The wood was variable in color and tone, so it was painted to unify the piece. Rolly air-brushed acrylic inks, shooting at a variety of angles to create subtle changes in the surface tone and hue. The final color is not exactly white but changes gently from a warm cream exterior to a subtle duck-egg blue interior.

Echinoderm Unraveled was completed seven years after its initial conception.



Echinoderm Unraveled, 2021, Norway maple, acrylic inks, 7.5" × 3" (190mm × 80mm), 2021

Collection of Randy Pi

Preliminary stage of Echinoderm Unraveled *in 2019.*

"The more static puncturing of the surface follows the wood's annular rings, creating an understory of texture as well as paying tribute to the material and its story. In almost all my work, whether stained, painted, or heavily textured, I try to retain enough woodiness to keep the viewer in no doubt of its origin." –Rolly Munro

sanding pads from leather and bamboo to fit these tools. I also 'discovered' air-powered engraving tools, again adapted from the metalwork industry. The fine puncturing following the wood grain [as seen on the underside of *Echinoderm Unraveled*] was created with this."

In his work, Rolly uses sandblasting, wire brushes, abrasives, angle grinders, drills, rotary die grinders, reciprocating tools, chisels, and scrapers.

Designer

Most of Rolly's sculptures are deliberately designed. He draws when he is trying to work out a new idea or break down a structural/mechanical problem. A prime example is *Votive*, whose intricate turned-and-carved joints could not have been made without very careful drawings. Sometimes Rolly designs directly onto a roughed-out piece, such as with the two seashore-inspired magnolia wood forms, shown in progress below. The first, *Foam*, has a distinct though delicate wavy grain, which Rolly has exploited to capture the rush and foam of an ocean wave. In the second, *Surf*, he has emphasized another knot and its surrounding grain, with the radiating lines evoking exploding surf droplets.

Rolly explains, "I feel that the elements within wood, such as grain line, intervals, and texture itself often play an important role beyond my abilities to draw. So the idea develops directly as I work with the piece. I like working this way as I feel I'm working *with* the wood, integrating its character into the design and not just treating it as a lifeless lump."

Wood artist Al Stirt has written: "During the course of forty years, I've come to realize that design is my paramount concern. I have found it impossible to separate aesthetics from technique. Without the appropriate techniques, good design is impossible. Without good design, technique lacks meaning." Each of Rolly's sculptures is an illustration of clever, carefully considered design and epitomizes Stirt's statement.

As for techniques, Rolly has a huge repertoire, and if he needs a new one, he invents it. Rolly Munro succeeds because he combines superb design and extraordinary technique. His friend and colleague Graeme Priddle sums it up: "Always impressive, [Rolly] scales designs and crosses media boundaries effortlessly and always captures the essence of an environment in his designs. Incredible attention to detail, not just in what he makes, but also the things he makes it with. He's a great innovator and designer." ■

You can email Rolly at munrotool@gmail.com.

Malcolm Zander is a New Zealand-born wood artist living in Ottawa, Canada. For more, visit his website, malcolmzander.com.

Rolly's air-powered engraver

> **Rolly Munro is one of the rare artists whose work emanates power, feeling, and energy from a radiant human. He establishes a connection with his work that seems rather magical.**
> **—Betty Scarpino**

Some of Rolly's tools

The air-driven tools 4th and 5th from the left are reciprocating lapping tools, designed for fine smoothing of metal parts. Rolly adapted them for fine sanding, texturing, and fine cutting of wood.

Designing with the grain

Foam and *Surf*, in progress, magnolia, acrylic inks

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3. Sales Through Dealers and Carriers, Street Vendors and Counter Sales and other paid or requested distribution outside USPS	1,836	1,833
4. Sales Through Other Classes of Mail Through USPS	0	0
C. Total Paid and/or Requested Distribution	13,773	13,489
D. Free or Nominal Rate Distribution		
1. Free or Nominal Rate Outside-Country Copies	441	439
E. Total Free or Nominal Rate Distribution	441	439
F. Total Distribution	14,214	13,928
G. Copies Not Distributed	483	392
H. Total	14,697	14,320
I. Percent Paid and/or Requested Circulation	96.90%	96.85%
Requested and Paid Electronic Copies	1,078	1,078
Total Paid Print Copies + Paid Electronic Copies	14,851	14,567
Total Requested Copy Distribution + Requested/Paid Electronic Copies	15,292	15,006
Percent Paid and/or Requested Circulation (Both Print and Electronic Copies)	97.12%	97.07%

I certify that the statements made by me above are correct and complete.

Philip S. McDonald, Publisher

An Original American Beauty, 2005

Robust Dealer, John Jordan. www.johnjordanwoodturning.com

Robust Dealer,
Lyle Jamieson.
www.lylejamieson.com

Robust Dealer,
Nick Agar.
www.nickagarstudios.com

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JOHN BEAVER
CALIFORNIA

Pumpkin Season!

2013, Spalted sycamore, acrylic paint, lacquer, 14" × 11" (36cm × 28cm)

2012, Sycamore, wood bleach, acrylic paint, 10" × 8" (25cm × 20cm)

Meta Pumpkin, 2014, Metasequoia, tung oil, acrylic paint, 13" × 10" (33cm × 25cm)

2014, Spalted sycamore, acrylic paint, lacquer, 12" × 10" (30cm × 25cm)

Inside This Issue!

Professional turner John Beaver makes beautiful pumpkins using a combination of hollowing, carving, and coloring. Discover his techniques in his article on page 20.