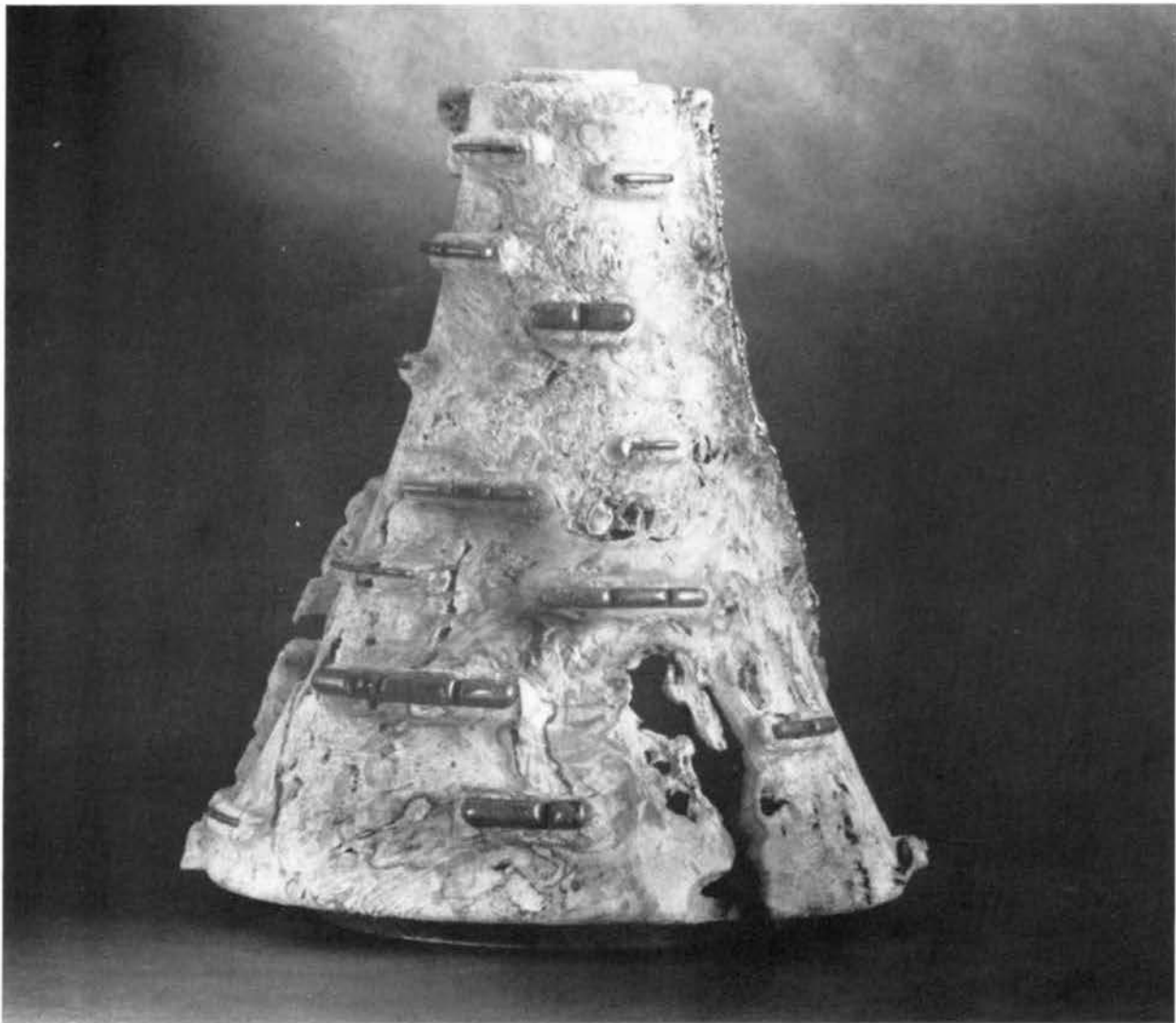


American Woodturner

The Journal of the American Association of Woodturners

December 1991 \$5.00 Vol. 6, No. 4



Dedicated To Providing
Education, Information, and Organization
To Those Interested in Woodturning

PRESIDENT'S PAGE

Alan Lacer, AAW President

The end of a year is always a good time to pause and look back as well as to glance forward to see what's on the horizon. When I do this with our organization, I am filled with optimism.

AAW is very much in existence and has had the same address for our national offices for some time now! This may not sound like much for newer members, but those who have been aboard from the beginning know what a struggle it has been to launch and stabilize a national organization. For the first four years the AAW moved its offices about once a year, tried different administrators, and grappled with its role and direction. The success of surviving those times causes us to give thanks to those who kept the association afloat. We recently set a record: The AAW offices have been in the same location and with the same administrator longer than at any time in our existence! What's more, our records and administrative functions are emphatically in the best condition ever. Renewal notices and election ballots go out on time, members receive information in a timely manner, and the journal makes it to your door when it should.

This last year has been a real turning point for the AAW. In 1990 we ended the year in the red (about \$13,000); we were not sure who our members were and had just made a big decision to move our office to Minnesota; and we changed the dates for the national symposium. Well, you stayed with us—we now have the largest membership we have ever had, we are the largest turning organization in the world, financially we have paid off our debts, and we will end the year in the black. This turn around was due to the hard work of the administrator, journal editors, board members, the many volunteers who pitched in when things were at

their darkest, and of course those members who stayed with us.

That was my backwards glance—what about the future? At long last we may not have to be obsessed with mere survival and can ask the real question: What can such an organization do for the craft and for its members?

Let's start with four areas currently being addressed: the journal, national symposiums, scholarships, and directories. The journal continues to blossom as a resource document in the field of woodturning. Each journal has a general theme with the intent of reaching a broad spectrum of skill and interest levels.

The national conferences are as strong as ever. Symposium sites will move across the country on a regular and anticipated pattern—east, central, west. We are working to be at least three years ahead of the event in terms of location, and intend to offer more variety at each conference with topics targeting the novice as well as advanced turners (focusing on design and surface treatment). The movement around the country is essential if we are truly to be a national organization. Advanced planning will allow adequate time to find a suitable site, obtain the desired demonstrators, and allow time for members to plan their vacations to coincide with the symposium. (This would be a great time to tell you that in '92 the symposium will be in Provo, Utah; the summer of '93 in Purchase, N.Y.; '94 will most likely be in the north central U.S., and '95 will in all likelihood be on the west coast.)

On the issue of scholarships, we will continue to award scholarships to individuals and local chapters. What is exciting is that one of our scholarship funds (the Daphne Osolnik Memorial) is now over \$30,000.00.

Changes are in the making for the

directory. Last year we produced a membership/demonstrators directory. This year you will receive a directory comprised of all current members, a listing of all official AAW chapters, and a list of demonstrators. This year's directory will be a dramatic improvement over our first one, and next year's will be even better. We are building toward adding a "turning resource" category of sources for materials, tools, lathes, publications, courses, and schools that are of interest to turners.

There are other ideas being considered. The notion of having small, specific conferences around the country has been met with serious interest. Two types are being mulled over: a beginner's conference (green woodturning?) and a design or marketing conference for those a bit further along. Neither of these would be for large numbers—maybe 40 to 60 individuals—and would have a high degree of direct involvement by all attending. Personally I would like to see the fall of '92 as the time to launch the first pilot.

I have also had some favorable responses concerning special video projects. I see these occurring in at least three areas: 1) specific topics such as sharpening, design, friction drives/jigs, or finishing; 2) documenting specific turners, especially some of those who have been involved in the craft for many years; and 3) the national symposiums where some classic interactions and demonstrations have occurred but where little record survives. We are working on obtaining grants to fund this type of project.

What can a national organization do for the craft and for its members? The above are some answers; we are open to others. But please keep these points in mind: we are still here; we are solvent; we are stable; and we are alive and growing!

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On the Cover

"Insight," 1991, by Hugh E. McKay, Gold Beach, Oregon.

*Height 16 inches, Diam. 15 inches
Maple burl, serpentine, pewter, turned, carved
sandblasted and inlaid*

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DESIGN—A PRACTICAL APPROACH

Frank E. Cummings III

Often an idea arrives in a rather serendipitous way, but in most cases, it is the result of a purposeful decision-making process. A good design results in a *reality* that presents or communicates the essence of the idea. This discussion is directed towards objects—which is the reality.

Every object we create is designed, but not every design is good. One measure of a good design is the degree to which it achieves its purpose or addresses the idea.

I recently listened to a dialogue on the design of a salad bowl which included the “appropriate volume,” the “normal height,” and the “proper size of the base.” I was amazed by the attempt to place such limitations on the design of a salad bowl. So many important factors were ignored. For example, was the design intended for the average consumer, for a petite four-year-old, or a robust vegetarian? Obviously, we are not talking about the same design. There was not enough definition of the purpose of the design.

A good design begins with a well-defined purpose. The form that the object takes will be determined by its purpose; from the Bauhauser philosophy—“form follows function.”

It is important to understand that the purpose of an object often far exceeds the apparent function. Example: The obvious function of a chair is to keep one's derriere off the floor and be comfortable. Why then are there so many different designs in existence? It would seem that there are functions or purposes beyond the obvious.

One must be truthful about the purpose of the object and its design. If, for example, an object is created to bring pleasure to the maker, then what is accomplished by asking others for their opinion? On the other hand, if the purpose of the object is to impress other people, then their opinions are critical to the creative process. It is important to spend time resolving and defining the purpose or purposes of the object. Limiting the number of objectives to as few as possible increases the opportunity for success. Once this is accomplished, it's time to go to work.

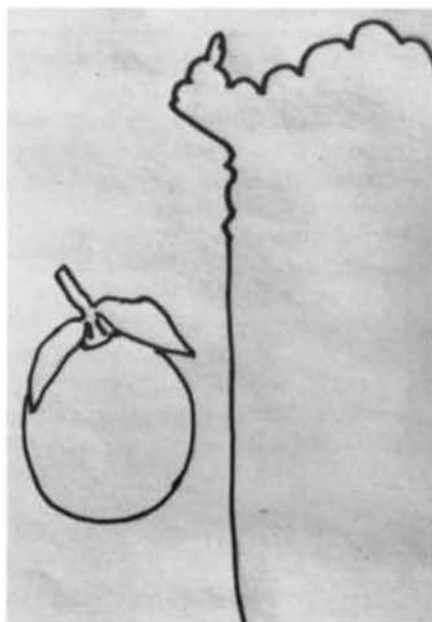


Figure 1 Line delineates shape and is the edge between the form and the space around it.

When designing an object to achieve a goal, there are a variety of design elements that can be considered, all of which will assist in establishing a visual dialogue. Design elements basically are all of the visible, tangible elements in or on the object—color, texture, shape, line, form, and volume.

These elements can be handled in various ways. Color can be bright or subdued; a surface can be smooth or rough; a line can be straight or jagged. Each design element functions as an independent force. The introduction of other elements creates interaction between elements.

Design elements are able to convey all sorts of moods, feelings, and emotions. Keep in mind, because there are so many variables, that there are no absolutes. Dark colors tend to be heavy, and light colors tend to be viewed as having less weight. Tall, thin objects tend to be elegant and proud. Short, thick objects tend to be viewed as heavy and squatty. Textured surfaces tend to cause the eye to move more methodically over a surface; a smooth surface tends to allow the eye to move quickly to the edges of the object, thereby giving the shape dominance over the surface.

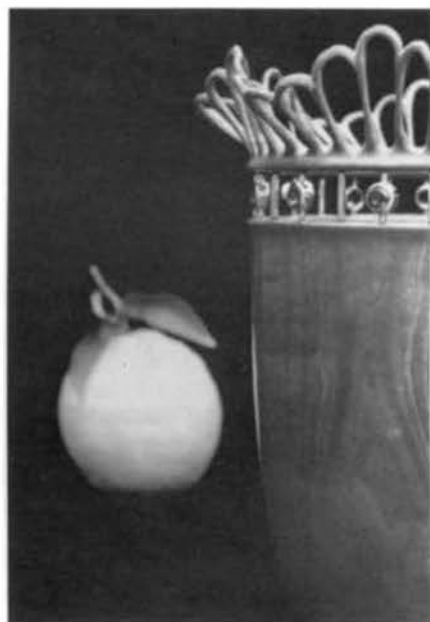


Figure 2 “Lady in Red #1,” Pink ivory wood, garnets, 18k gold. 7 inches high by 5 inches diam.

Line and Edge

A line has the ability to convey moods and emotions. It can describe or delineate shape, form, and volume. For this discussion, it is important to understand that line is the edge between the form and the space around it (Figs. 1, 2).

The edge of the form, like line, communicates or conveys attitudes and emotions. The instant viewers become aware of the form, they can begin to experience excitement or a sense of serenity (Figs. 3, 4).

All of this occurs in the blink of an eye, even before the viewer is close enough to see the surface of the form and long before they understand what the object is. In other words, the edge of the form can be used to attract the viewer and set the mood. As stated before, design elements more often than not, work in *concert* with each other. The surface quality and color can also attract attention and set the *tone*.

There are many other kinds of lines and edges, for example, the dynamic lines found in zebrawood. In this case, the dynamic quality occurs through what appears to be dark lines on a light background, sometimes the reverse. Lines and edges occur between heartwood and sapwood. Be-

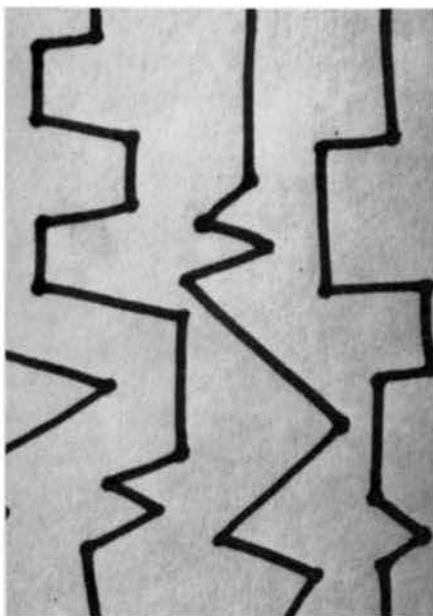


Figure 3 Line can be dynamic.

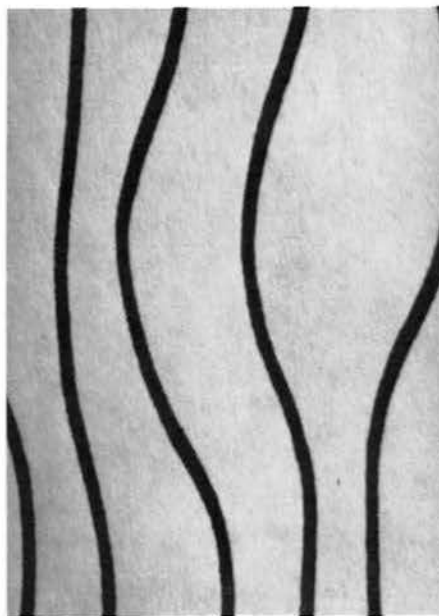


Figure 4 Line can be serene.

tween the sapwood, cambium layer, and the bark. Cracks, voids, and inclusions create lines and edges. Line can be created through texture, piercing, and relief. The line can be negative through piercing or it can be positive through relief or carving techniques.

All of these lines can be dynamic, graceful, exciting, tranquil, or sensuous and, when found naturally, can be presented or displayed for those reasons alone. However, they can be used in a purposeful way to your advantage.

In the form "Gift from Nature" (Figs. 5, 6) all of the above mentioned lines exist. The vessel form would suggest "a utensil for holding something as in a vase, bowl, pot, kettle, etc." As such, one would usually be concerned about an appropriate volume and surface for the contents. In reality, the appropriateness and quality of the interior volume as it pertains to vessels has very little to do with the true purpose. Like most of the artist's work, this vessel form is a statement of his existence. It is an expression of balance

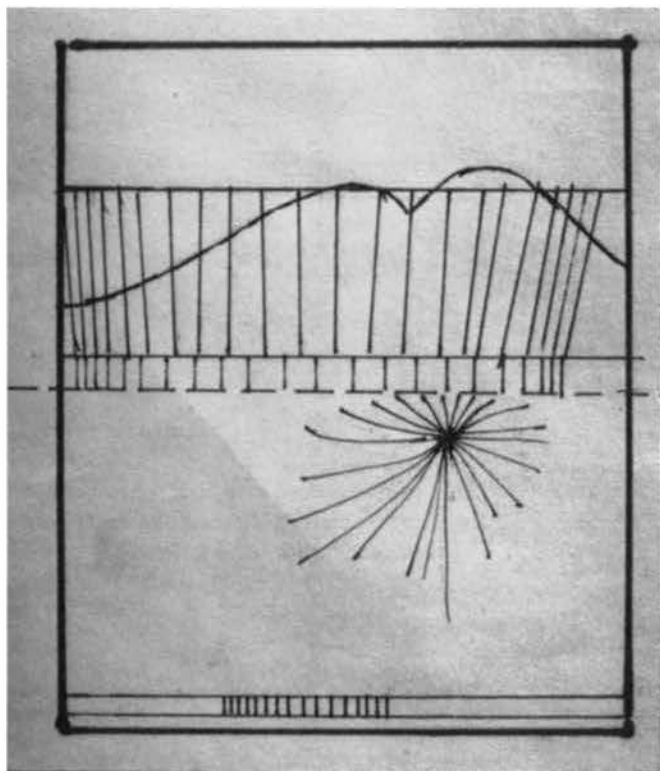


Figure 5 Lines divide and direct.

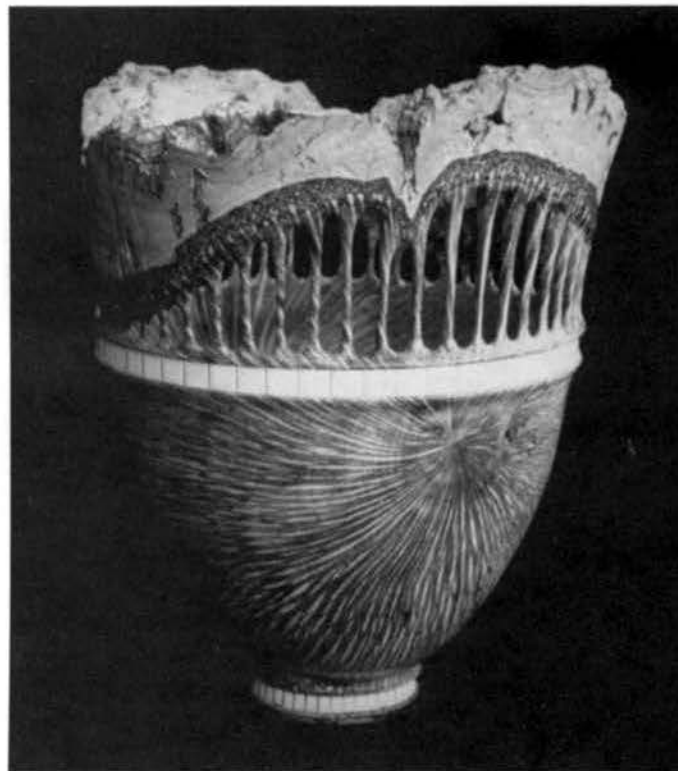


Figure 6 "Gift from Nature," Cork oak, 7 inches high by 5 inches diam.



Figure 7 Serving bowl, Japanese oak, 3 inches high by 10 inches diam.

between the maker and his environment. Lines are the primary design element used to illustrate this idea.

The divided, light-colored line at the bottom of "Gift From Nature" highlights the base which exalts the form. The wonderful, naturally occurring, radiating lines of cork oak are used to lead the eye to the outer edge in order to emphasize and accentuate the form of the body. The divided, light-colored line in the upper part of this form is used to isolate the body and serves as a transition to the linear section above it. The linear supports exalt the cambium layer and bark to a natural rhythmical crescendo. The natural effects and wonders of nature do not have to dictate what the artist can or cannot do. The artist is in control and nature assists in making the statement.

Texture

Texture is an element often seen as the repeated application of lines or marks on a surface. Texture is generally used to direct or cause the eye to move over the surface in a particular manner and dominates the surface on which it exists.

The wood for the bowl in Figure 7 was selected because it did not present any natural excitement. It is quite ordinary to the point of being uninteresting. If the surface of the form was going to be viewed as interesting or exciting, then those qualities would have to be imposed on the surface. The artist must take control and be responsible for the outcome. This texture or relief is used to sweep the eye up along the surface

to the rhythmical, wave-like forms which were, for a time, the signature of the artist.

Contrast

Contrast is the striking difference between things being compared. One of the things that contrast does well is bring attention to areas. Contrast creates focal points. This artist uses contrast to isolate areas, to bring attention to them. In the previous example, the divided, light-colored lines on the base and in the upper part of the vessel are in contrast to the warm browns of the cork oak, emphasizing, isolating, and separating the areas, yet maintaining the wholeness of the form.

In the vessel, "On the Edge Naturally" (Fig. 8), the yellow bands of mother-of-pearl and gold along with the yellow sapwood are in high contrast to the dark violet heartwood of this kingwood burl. As in the previous example, the contrasting band isolates and emphasizes the wonderful grain and luster found naturally in the body of the vessel. The vertical supports move upward through the burls yet allow them to exist uninterrupted while they exalt the sapwood's natural edge (Fig. 9). Through this vessel, the artist uses his skill and knowledge of his media to express his desire to push the edges and explore beyond the predictable—beyond what is expected. Therefore, you will find a self-portrait of the artist out on the natural edge where it belongs.

Color

Color is the most complex of the



Figure 8 "On the Edge Naturally," King wood burl, mother of pearl, 18k gold, 12 1/2 inches high by 7 1/2 inches diam.

design elements, whether you rely on the natural colors presented by nature or whether you apply pigments. Color is the most difficult and "potentially intoxicating" design element. Naturally occurring colors and applied pigments can be found and arranged into color harmonies.

Complementary-color harmonies are those colors found opposite each other on the color wheel. Complementary-color harmonies are in contrast and tend to produce strong, dynamic reactions. "On the Edge Naturally" is a good example of a naturally occurring complementary-color harmony. The deep violets and purples of the heartwood complement the yellows of the sapwood. The complement of the violet heartwood is assisted by the application of yellow mother-of-pearl and 18k gold inlay.

Analogous-color harmonies are achieved through the use of color found next to each other on the color wheel. In contrast to complementary harmonies, analogous-color harmonies tend to produce more tranquil or serene reactions. "Serenity" (Fig. 10) was created in order to achieve a calm, serene reaction. The green and yellow grain lines produce a soft, uniform, upward sweep to the jade and 18k gold inlay. The verticals rise upward in support of the delicate and graceful lacework.

Monochromatic-color harmonies are achieved through variations on one color. Like analogous harmonies, these harmonies tend to produce a tranquil and serene reaction, but lean toward specific color responses. Blues



Figure 9 "On the Edge Naturally," Self-portrait of the artist.



Figure 11 "Lady in Red #2," Pink ivory wood, garnets, 18k gold, 7 inches high by 5 inches diam.

and greens tend to receive cool responses. Yellows and reds lean toward the warm side. The vessel "Lady in Red #2" (Figs. 11, 12) expresses the warm, wonderful sensuousness of the female. The richness of the pink ivory wood rises up to the garnet and 18k gold necklace supporting the elegant lace collar.

There are many other aspects of design. This article is only an introduction to the subject. Understanding design can give your objects a clearer voice, a voice that heralds the heart, mind, and uniqueness of the maker. Without that voice, it's just another object. ☺



Figure 10 "Serenity," Vera wood, jade, 18k gold, 4 3/4 inches high by 3 1/2 inches diam.



Figure 12 "Lady in Red #2," detail.

Frank E. Cummings III, artist and designer, lives in Long Beach, California. He is a Professor and Associate Dean of the School of Arts at California State University in Fullerton. His work can be found in many publications including National Geographic the American Craftsmen.

THE BATTERIES IN CLASSIC WORKS OF ART NEVER GO DEAD BECAUSE CLASSICS DON'T HAVE BATTERIES

Giles Gilson

I have been asked to write an article on "design," so now I must fill some pages with verbiage that deals with subjective matter and intangible concepts.

The world of "Turned Art" has the quality of including industrial art and fine art in one. This is not unusual, except that it is more noticeable here than in the other fields that it happens. There is a vague difference between the two, but people have made a false wall to define these categories. Since the history of the turned object is largely utilitarian and industrial, and now there are many sculptors using this context to make successful art works which have been accepted by a noticeable audience, this is a valid context that bridges the worlds of fine/industrial art.

If I have your attention, I would like to point out that design, including aesthetic values, is not intangible and can be methodical. It's a matter of making decisions.

Design itself is a series of choices; decisions are being made throughout the process. Let's start by adopting this viewpoint: Everything is a situation. By doing this, we have just assumed that every event, no matter how small, is surrounded by many other events that make it unique in time and space. If this event happens to be a step in a production process, the operator may be affected by circumstances in his life or the robot may have a little glitch or a dull cutter. Perhaps the event is a step in the design of a piece of sculpture: The artist may be feeling very impulsive at that moment and willing to take greater risk. This would have an effect on the final product. The point is, that even if the events that make up a particular moment are seemingly insignificant, they still matter.

Next, add to the situation the concept that everything is relative. Every element in a situation or piece of work will be automatically compared to its surroundings. This includes the culture it was created in, the history of the artist, and the environment it exists in. If the forgoing assumptions are so, then we must take a look at the notion of "good/bad" and "right/wrong." These concepts are

man made and are a function of individual cultures. They are relative to any given situation in a narrow sense and relate to their surrounding society in a broader view.

This thought process leads to some serious questions, and in order to make the necessary design choices, the artist must ask and answer some questions: If there is no good/bad, how do I know what works? That's why god made history and "classics." These tell us to some degree what has worked in the past, but we must experiment and take risks to get closer to our own individual expression. This will happen as an artist continues to make pieces, learn technique, and study himself. Questions like: Why do I do this work?; What audience do I wish to play to?; Do I wish to make money or Fame or do I simply want a means of expression? are often subconscious but will surface if an artist persists in doing his work. The artist may brush off these questions as being fundamental or unimportant but they are very important. Honestly answering some of these questions can be threatening because they may force us to re-evaluate our fundamental assumptions. As an example, many people have a work ethic that states that it is "bad" to make a lot of money without doing a lot of "work." Some people believe that "ego" is "bad." A popular, though usually subconscious factor, is a concern over what other people will think. Answers to these questions are not good or bad, but they can be useful as well as a hindrance. We must gain an understanding of how our answers affect us individually and make our choices work for us.

More practical questions include: What to make? If the, What to make? is basically determined, then, What is the intent? Will the object have a utilitarian purpose, purely an aesthetic value, or both? What size will it be? What material will it be made from? The question, What audience to play to? will arise when making choices as to price range, quality, and aesthetics. Personal motives will raise hidden questions such as, Will they like it better if I do it this way? or, It *should* be done this

way.

At this point, I would like to turn to some more tangible aspects of design because there are a few basic considerations to think about. Many makers wish to "express themselves." This is fine, but expression must be allowed to happen rather than be made to happen. Give it time; do what's exciting, even if it's copying in order to learn. Eventually the work will become individual (with perseverance) and will reflect the artist's evolution.

Another point to consider is that even if the piece you are doing is an avant-garde, weird, gobbledygismo, it is wise to provide bridges for the audience so that they have something to relate to. I have seen too many pieces of sculpture, paintings, or decorative art that were acknowledged by virtue of being fashionable but had only a small "educated" audience. People relate best to things that relate to their lives. Classic works rely on stepping stones to include large audiences. This is why they keep working over long periods of time. At the top of the list of what people relate to is other people. Shapes and proportions of historic objects often reflect the human body. Also on the list is life situations. Comedy is a good example of this because it usually deals with tension-causing events and works as a pressure valve. Drama shows human dynamics. "Art reflects environment" is a saying that I have heard, and this does happen. Contemporary work often reflects "high tech" shapes and styles that are part of our lives. A hundred years ago there was a strong Victorian influence. ETCETERA.

Simplicity is important, but not as easy to achieve as it sounds. There are times that it takes work to cut through the garbage and get to the essence of the piece. Often it is better to go with an impulse instead of thinking or intellectualizing something to the ground. David Ellsworth talks about the time he was stuck about where to go with a piece, until he scolded himself for deliberating too much and ran out of his studio yelling, "Don't think." If others of us are there, we might say, "Don't think, Drink." So much for impulse.

Simplicity can mean very few elements or conversely, many repetitive elements can be used to simplify a design. Avoid creating a conflict with the composition and dynamics of the work. Conflict can be used intentionally, however, as part of the dynamics as long as it is a working element.

Have you ever noticed that some pieces have a vitality or energy that makes them stand out? This is partly due to "dynamics." Composition is the arrangement of elements that controls the audience's trip through the work; dynamics are a result of the arrangement of climaxes or high points. There is also an intangible "something" that a successful artist imparts in the work that I think of as the essence of the artist himself. This is achieved through practicing assertiveness and requires confidence. This results in the piece exuding life and energy. Some artists achieve this by accident, others do it more consistently. There are makers who attain this consistency easily, others have to work at it by taking chances, making mistakes, and by being persistent.

All of the above considerations are related and interconnected. Everything is relative. Choices made in one area will affect all other areas. In fact, from a broader viewpoint, what is done in one piece will affect other work. This can be seen by looking at an artist's past work or even by placing a piece in one group of work, then placing it in a totally different group and seeing the difference.

One specific element of any piece that illustrates the above is size. The physical size of an object will have a direct influence on all the other aspects of the work. The most obvious effect is impact. The larger the piece, the more attention it commands. This does not mean that it is better, only that it is more visible. Size also relates to how much of the overall piece can be seen by the viewer at any one time or from any given viewpoint. An example of how size relates to form can be seen by comparing a large, horizontal piece to a large vertical piece. Assuming the two works have the same volume, the vertical piece, being higher, will appear much larger and therefore will command



"The Price of One Admission is Your Mind" (Self-Portrait), 1978, spalted maple, 16 1/2" x 8" x 7" (Stapleton Collection)

more attention.

On the other side of the spectrum, very small pieces can have a feeling of being precious. The context that surrounds the object can make it more special. Jewelry is assumed to be precious because it usually contains costly materials and/or rare gems. This has been established historically so the mind set exists. The result is that small, very finely done objects, even if they do not contain precious gems, can still be very commanding.

The scale of a piece will dictate the amount of material that will be needed, and this will lead to some mechanical decisions. If wood is the material and the object is to be larger than available blocks or boards, then the material needs to be glued up. The grain must run in the proper direction for strength, and the joints and grain should also be part of the overall design. If burl or other highly figured wood is the preferred material, then joints become more of a problem. Scale may be governed by



From Scent Jar Series, 1976, production piece. Birch plywood with purpleheart and ebony, about 3" x 3"



"Stratus" mobile, 1978, 72" x 27" x 52" (Lipton Collection)



The cabinet contains two shelves and is mounted in stainless steel ball bearings. With the jar lid open, the cabinet stays upright yet swings down and lands behind the jar. When the door of the cabinet is open, it moves down to the side of the cabinet with the cabinet staying upright. If something is placed on one of the shelves inside the cabinet, the cabinet tips over and spits it out.

"Cabinet on a Jar Answering the Phone" 1981, sculptured container, cherry burl, padauk, holly, East Indian rosewood, stainless steel, about 12" high x 6" dia. (John Reich Collection)



Alder burl and exotic woods pearlescent lacquer, 1982, 6" dia.



"The Sledge Hammer Bowlophone" 1981, sculptured container, about 16" high x 6" x 6", padauk, East Indian rosewood, holly, walnut, ebony, stainless steel, and ivory (Lewis Collection)



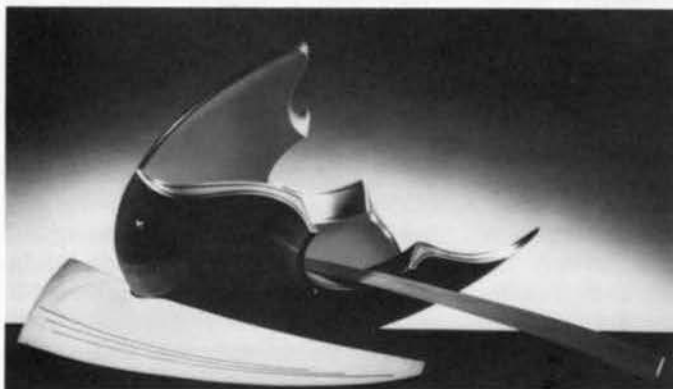
"Interpretation III" 1981, various domestic and exotic woods. Inlay on compound curve, 8" diam. (Lipton Collection)



Blue on white graphics bowl, 1986, about 7" x 11" diam.



"Rotation at Rude's" 1989



"Relationships III—Startruck the Movie, In which the Spaceship is CLEVERLY disguised as Pita Sandwich," 1990, sculpted, turned mahogany, cherry, ash, brass, lacquer, vanishing graphics.

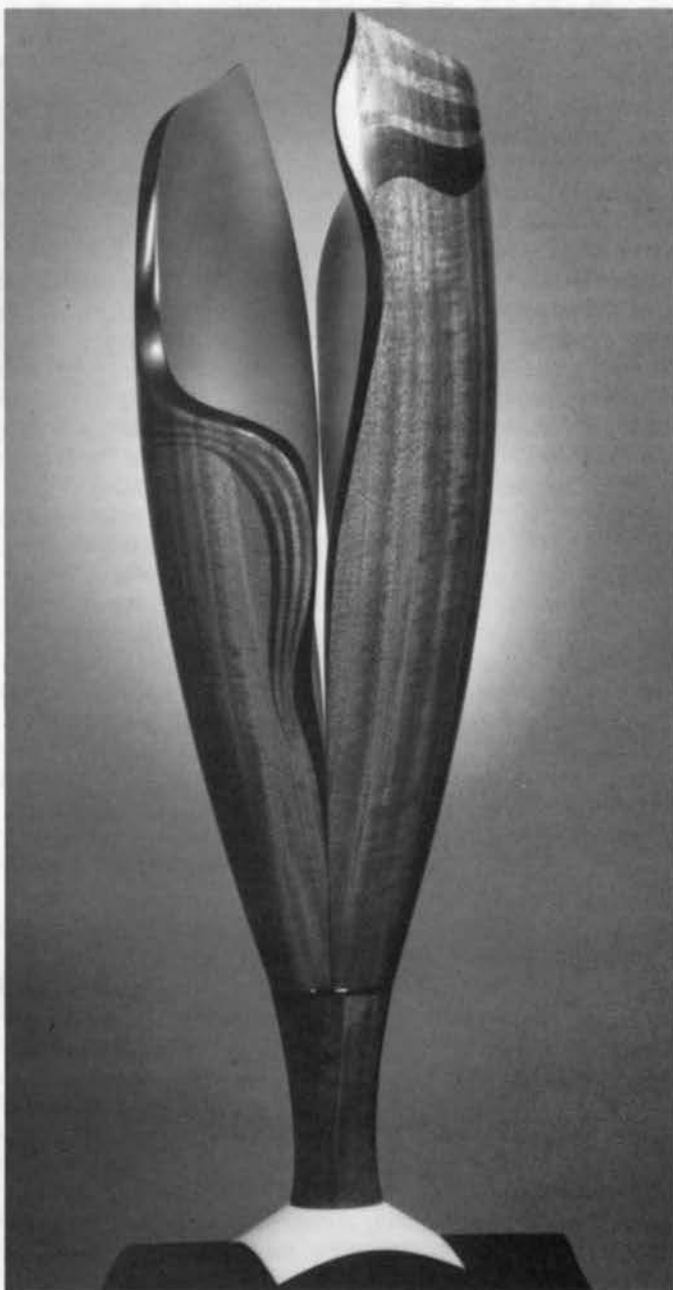
the material available.

Size will have a lot to do with the price of the piece. (Price is also dependent upon track record). Another mind set for the buying public is "larger is worth more." Like it or not, the decision on the size of a piece will affect its final "worth."

I have used the concept of size to illustrate the effect that one design choice has on other aspects of a piece of work. All parts of the ongoing situation affect all other parts, and the situation is always changing. I

would like to leave you with this:

David Ellsworth has been saying that it is time to get past technique and on to design considerations. I agree and would add that an individual's work becomes stronger with experience and dedication. As an artist grows, there are times that techniques are fascinating. This is a wonderful part of the experience and is accepted. We must also accept the more difficult and frightening place where technique is assumed to be mastered and the artist, striving for



"Relationship 2—The Insight" 1990, 27" x 8" diam. Two-part sculpted vertical form, lacquered mahogany, ribbon, graphics, light/dark blue interior, brass, walnut foot

Photos are by Rick Siciliano.

a more honest expression, must begin to face himself, find out who he or she really is as an entity. This is a little scary because we must take chances and assert ourselves as who we really are. We must commit to an idea we feel strongly about, good, bad, or indifferent and put it out there in front of the world.☺

Giles Gilson is a sculptor, an industrial designer and model maker, and a turner. He also teaches all of the above.

WOODTURNING TODAY: WHERE ARE WE?

Steve Loar

The seeds of contemporary American woodturning, sown by Osolnik, Prestini, and Stocksdales and followed by Ellsworth and Hogbin, were present during the advancement of other craft forms in the 1960s and 1970s. While the last ten years have seen an amazing growth in the number of individuals involved in woodturning, there has been no real *fundamental* shift away from its industrial/vocational/hobbyist roots, despite a lot of press to the contrary. In woodturning one can read "cutting-edge" as "tip-of-iceberg."

The crafts, in this century, have been grouped together as the Decorative Arts or Minor Arts, as opposed to the Fine Arts of painting, drawing, sculpture, and even architecture. Whether you view woodturning as one of today's most popular hobbies or as a budding art form, its emergence as a decorative art is relatively new when compared to ceramics, metals, fiber, woodworking, and glass. From World War II onward each of the decorative arts has jump-started itself anew. The focus and intensity of college programs created fertile environments for skill development, exploration, and critique. Ceramics took the lead, with the others gaining momentum in the late 1960s and on into the 1970s. Studio glass has most recently made its ascendancy.

Commentary about woodturning reveals a consistent concern regarding the growth, recognition, and credibility of the field. The dictionary defines *field* as, "the range of a subject or activity or interest." In

this case, the turning of wood; the limits of which are currently comparable to a small bottle. There has been a tremendous amount of activity and fermentation within this container, but it is a container and its neck is a small one, allowing for little movement outside. The field is reaching a point of critical mass. Studio glass reached a similar point of popularity and aggrandizement several years ago; it peaked, then degraded into a continuing bustle of weirdness.

If woodturning is to continue to prosper, woodturners will need to address several areas of concern. First is the parochial obsession with a single tool and a single medium. The lathe is indeed a wonderful machine, but the self-indulgent myth is that it stands alone, unlike any other, and in need of no other. "Wheel-thrown pottery" exhibitions or billings for "work from the table saw" or drill press invitations sound silly. Yet many cling so tightly to *woodturning*. The material, like the machine, has had a tower of uniqueness falsely built beneath it. While wood is an extremely versatile material and certainly has a wide range of color, pattern, aroma, and warmth, it cannot lay exclusive claim to any one of those qualities. Nor is it the only medium that can be turned. Wood is not the answer to all questions. A hopeful sign for the field over the last few years has been an increasing incorporation of techniques and attitudes of furniture makers and sculptors, as well as a variety of non-wood media.

The second area of concern revolves around the very nature of "making." There is nothing wrong with the fact that a majority of woodturning is done for pleasure, family, or self. That is not the issue here. The parameters of craftsmanship, artistic significance, and utility are determined from works submitted to shows and offered for sale. This work is judged in comparison to what else is currently being done and what has been done in the past. The work that most successfully joins concept, material, and process will be deemed quality goods. The work that does not will be relegated to hobbyist, amateur, or journeyman status. This, then, is where the ruckus about "amateur versus professional" truly ends. Professionalism is not really about turning full-time, sales, volume of production, or efficiency, but about quality in an end product. This quality is the result of an attitude toward making that encompasses the entire product and not simply a fastidious concern with the right tool, ground at the official angle, used on the most audacious machine obtainable, turning the prettiest grain.

* * *

Prior to the early 1900s, most cultures integrated decoration into their objects of daily use. From flat pattern and color, through incising and carving and piercing, to fully sculptural elements, the decorative additions to the purely utilitarian form were seen to *enhance*, rather than diminish the significance of the article. Decoration was derived from the



Ron Fleming



Alan Stirt

photo by Tony Keppelman

direct experiences, beliefs, and myths of the group. This allowed for highly stylized or symbolic designs, as well as more naturalistic ones, to be understood by the users. The Great Lakes Indians did not even have a word for "art"; they made no distinction between utility and ceremony. As industrialization replaced the various nomadic and agrarian lifestyles this reference to "things known" lost much of its potency. Due to the need to appeal to a broad public, decoration became ever more literal, unable to utilize a wide range of abstraction, allegory, or metaphor for a user-public which was daily less specific in its shared experiences and beliefs. Nature in general became the source of references, combined in the mid-to-late 1800s with a trend toward visual busyness. While many Victorian products incorporated extravagant groupings of decorative elements, the themes from nature were still discernable and evocative, even to the increasingly urban populace.

As the International Style took hold in the 1920s the ethos of the intellect came into fashion. The "minimal condition," "functionality," and "honesty to materials" became the articles of faith. The style that we still call "modern" was a search for definitive solutions, where a mythical pure function would be served by the simplest of possible forms, utilizing the least amount of material. A condition where ornament and emotion had no place. "Inevitably, . . . modernism was exploited as a way to cheapen unit costs by merely streamlining away the

sculptural precision and visual delight of detail and ornament, but without undertaking the fundamental redesign necessary to achieve a coherent modernist piece."¹ There are those who have come to question how the modernists could have pursued "so bland an ideal of beauty as perfection."²

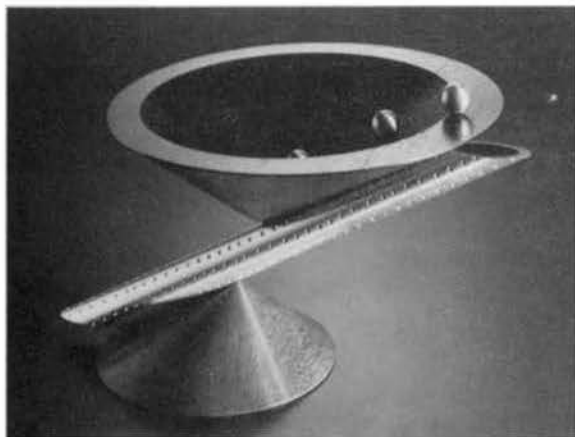
A key element of modernism, and a direct response to Victorian manufacture, was the creation of the trained designer as the purveyor of good taste. Logic was in; emotion was out. Geometry was the norm, while tactility, color, ornamentation, and any historical reference was to be scorned. The central element of modernist thinking was Gestalt—the concept of a single, immediately perceivable, unified whole. It is typical of the modernist approach that this complex view of human response was stripped down to its most logical wearisome core.

These forces of modernism can be seen in several aspects of woodturning as it exists today as a decorative art. A preoccupation with a single stark polished form is at the heart of the field's mania for the bowl/vessel. This form is only one expression of the vast potential of the lathe. Although it is a narrow vein, it has been vigorously explored by individuals who, for the most part, find creative impetus in minimizing utility while playing upon the reference to containment. It is only very recently that a few individuals have ventured into more complex compositions. Ironically, the largest body of woodturners, those concerned with prac-

ticality and use, have failed to pursue anything vaguely akin to a serious investigation of forms suitable for useful objects.

A far more disturbing result of the modernist doctrine is evidenced in a growing tide of novelty in the guise of originality. In any endeavor there will be a small handful of original thinkers and doers and a large body who follow their lead. Turning is fortunate to have not only a good many innovators, but also many who have shared their woodturning talent with the body-at-large via workshops, symposia, and articles. This readily available knowledge about original designs has spawned a body of lesser work that desperately aspires to be original, but succeeds only in being novel. This type of work uses bits and pieces of other work, but does not fully realize either the technique or the philosophy that made the original work significant. Not everyone is an innovator or an artist.

Woodturning as a decorative art lacks an academic base. College programs have not been developed to explore this craft. As a result, most of the field is self-taught, primarily concerned with media and technique, and without much artistic background. For those who do not chase the star of uniqueness, this has led to an attitude of "why bother" in regard to artistry and personal expression. The unfortunate result of this acquiescence is an unwholesome acceptance of *copying*. Leading practitioners in the field, through workshops, have actually promoted this



Michael S. Chinn



Michelle Holzapfel

trend. Students go, they learn to do the strokes just like the main man, they go back home, and they strive to do it "just like that."

Copying, per se, is not totally negative. For many people a certain amount of copy work is needed to establish a base of skill and confidence. Copying becomes intolerable, however, when it reaches the current wholesale level as seen within woodturning. Richard Raffan consistently promotes the acquisition of skill via repetition, but he also urges each person to apply those skills in their own way. Raffan makes it clear that "unique" does not need to be weird or earth-shaking, simply *personal*. What many have lost sight of or

never learned is that ALL work is personal if we are sensitive to ourselves and to what we are doing. Yes, we must always be cognizant of the tool and its interaction with the material, but it is what we bring to those strokes that is truly unique.

This returns us to the issue of amateur versus professional. The amateur goes through the motions, concerned with doing the speeds and strokes just like he read about or saw it, rarely deviating or daring to modify anything. The amateur takes directly from the source, whether it be the teacher's work, the profile of a vase, a decorative Indian pattern, or the treatment of a foot or lip. It is all borrowed verbatim in the belief

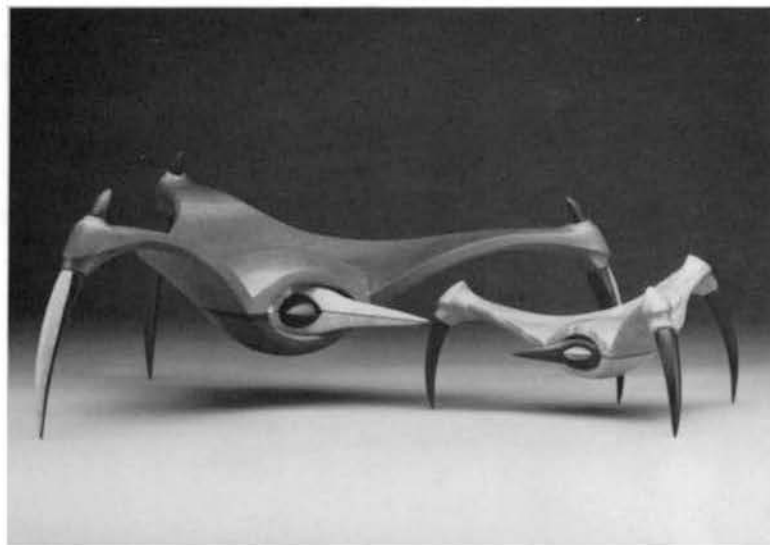
that it will make for a good, sound product. The truth is, it can never be better than the original and rarely as good because so little of the *self* was brought to it. The ultimate copyist is a plagerist or a forger, a person so skilled that he can actually do the job perfectly, beginning to end, exactly like someone else, without imbuing it with self.

This leaves us with the question: how can we produce truly personal work more easily, confidently, and consistently? The second part of this article, "Where Do We Go From Here?" will offer some possibilities.

Accompanying this article are photographs of work by ten individuals who have developed strong personal styles. Each has developed a rich vocabulary of techniques and marks that are immediately identifiable. This is not meant to be an all inclusive list, but rather, a small sample of work which represents bodies of investigation. These individuals all continue to evolve, extending the styles with which they are so closely identified. The work is the product of sustained sensitivity and insight. ©



David Ellsworth

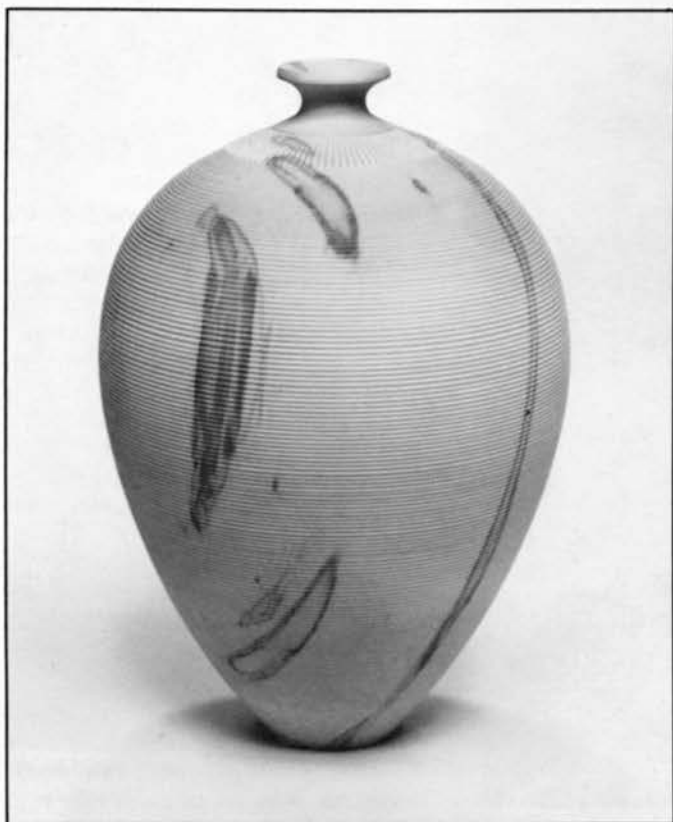


Michael J. Brolly

photo by David Haas



Todd Hoyer



John Jordan



Stoney Lamar



Mark Sfirri

1. Mike Darlow, "Woodturning," *Woodworker*, April 1990, Vol. 94, No. 4, p. 319.

2. Robert Silberman (using Susan Sontag's observation of photographer Edward Weston), "The First Moderns," *American Craft*, February/March 1989, p. 49.

Steve Loar teaches two- and three-dimensional design in the School of Art & Design at Rochester Institute of Technology in Rochester, New York. He is also a turner/sculptor, author, and lecturer and lives in Warsaw, New York.

REVIEW OF THE ASSOCIATION OF WOODTURNERS OF GREAT BRITAIN, 1991 SEMINAR

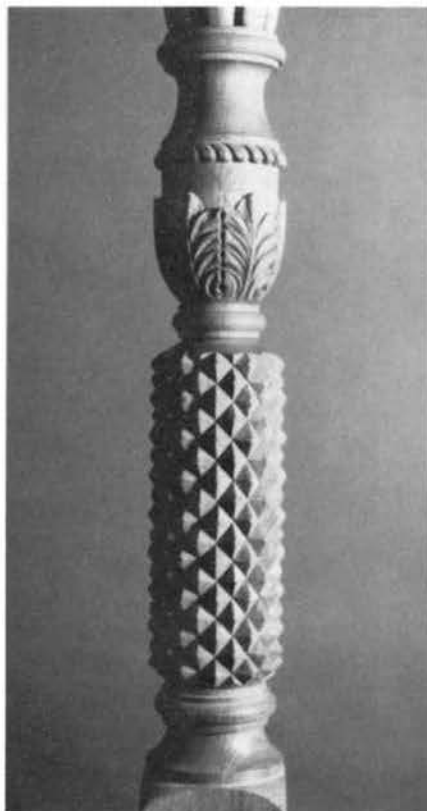
Merryll Saylan

Last year I went to live and work in England on an artist-in-residency program. The Association of Woodturners of Great Britain (AWGB) welcomed me with an announcement in their newsletter. They paid visits to me in the Grizedale Forest Centre where I worked; they opened up their homes, included me in exhibitions, and shared information. It was a wonderful and amazing experience, and I made new friends. When I was to go home this spring, I realized it was very difficult to leave. The Lake District where I was living was particularly beautiful; I enjoyed English life; and the new friends had become old friends. I learned that the AWGB Biannual Seminar was to take place shortly after I left. I felt I was going to miss out. I decided to return to Great Britain to attend the seminar. It would be an opportunity to see everyone in one location and seemed a fitting way to end the residency. And I was lucky, I picked up some workshops to defray some of the costs.

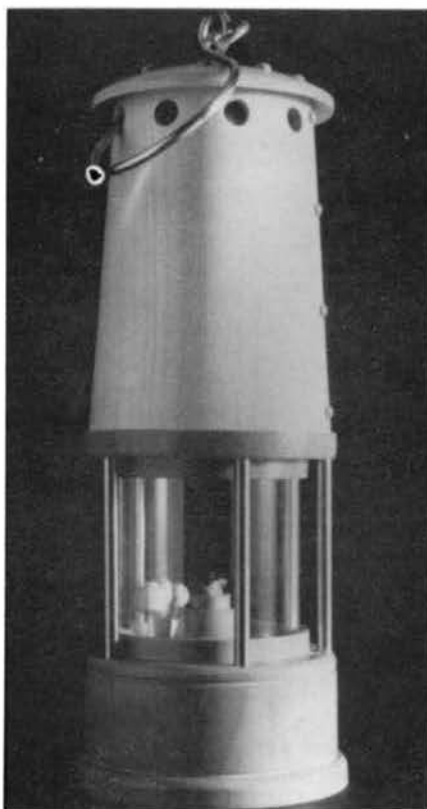
AWGB have held the seminars at Loughborough College of Art and Design in Leicester, this year on the 16th, 17th, and 18th of August. With a limited enrollment of 150-plus delegates and the addition of demonstrators/lecturers, helpers, and trade personnel, there were about 200 people in attendance. Americans were well represented with Ed Moulthrop and Dale Nish making return visits as demonstrators; Alan Stirt making his first visit; and I did a specialty demonstration on texturing and coloring techniques.

Ed Moulthrop, on a lathe built to his plans and specs on a prior visit, demonstrated his special tools, tool-rest, and methods for his large bowls. Dale demonstrated reverse turning, natural-edge bowls, and his skills as a raconteur. Al showed bowls, platters, and his particular methods and tools for fluting and carving.

Another demonstrator was Johannes Riber from Norway. Johannes is German trained, extremely prolific, and enthusiastic as well. He also gave a slide presentation that included photos of a staircase he is building in one of the wonderful, wooden stave churches in Norway. From the UK there was Paul



1790 Bedpost, Chris Pye, 7 feet high, mahogany

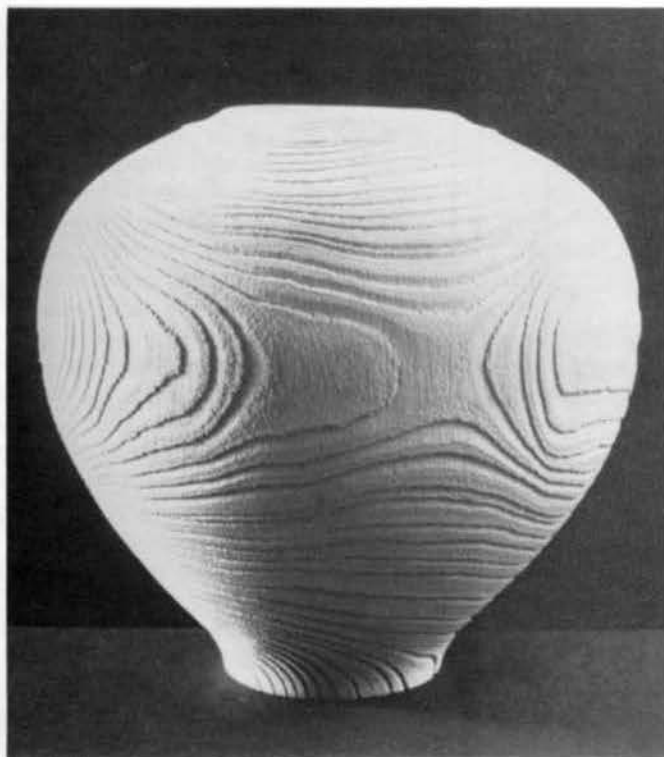


Miner's lamp, Bruce Black, 9 inches high by 3 inches diam., yew and sycamore

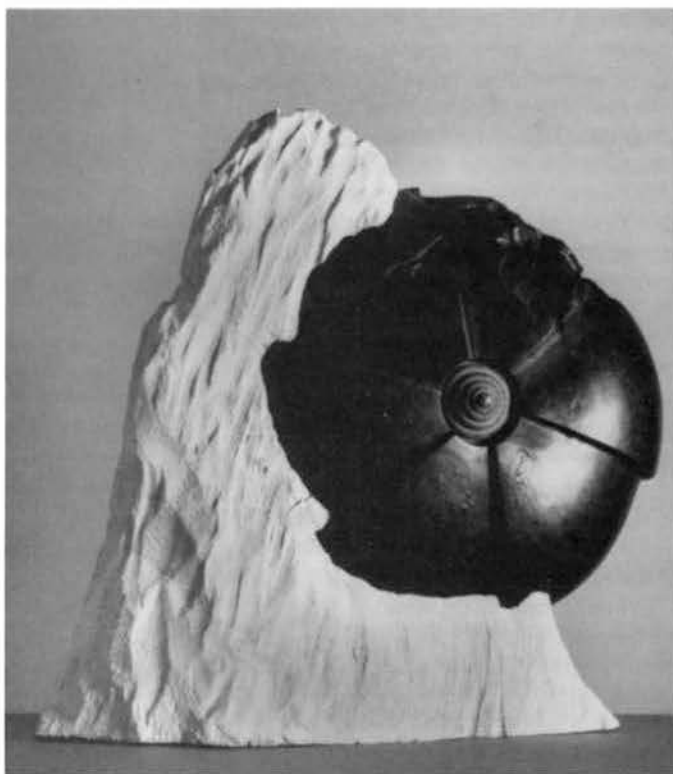
Clare from Wales. Paul's pieces are very distinctive using quite a variety of techniques: wet-turned, micro-waved, cut, stained, burned, and power-filed. Ray Jones, a Liverpoolian, specializes in spindle work. Ray served a traditional woodturning apprenticeship which is becoming rare in England. Chris Pye, who carves and does spindle work, demonstrated spindle work with carved embellishments. Chris Stott, very well known in Britain, did enclosed vessels, bowls, and boxes. Maurice Mullins did a specialty demonstration on goblets similar to the Love Goblets displayed in the ITOS exhibition. David Woodward, a former forester, now turned woodturner, demonstrated the safe and correct use of the chainsaw and cut the material for the demonstrators. Malcolm McLoed, Director of the Hunterian Museum and Art Gallery in Glasgow gave a slide presentation of vessels from around the world. Andrew Watson, photographer, ran workshops on how to photograph your work and photographed selected work from the instant gallery for a collection of 40 slides representing the exhibition.

There was a Business & Marketing Forum with Hugh O'Neill, the AWGB secretary, Reg Sherwin, former Editor of the Newsletter, and Tony Caplin, who runs a production shop as well as doing "one-offs." Cecil Colyer presented his device and methods for making nesting bowls. From the instant gallery, where participants could display up to three pieces, Dale and Alan selected the 40 pieces for the slide collection. And for those people who wanted or dared, they could place work in the Great Hall for a critique by Alan and Dale.

The organization and cooperation of the AWGB made being a demonstrator easy. Letters had gone out listing available equipment, and requests for personal needs were met with all of it there waiting. Expenses, compensation, and room accommodations were all arranged for. Most helpful was a handout of "Tips for the Presenter" containing suggestions on running a demonstration. Safety and health was emphasized with each participant given a dust



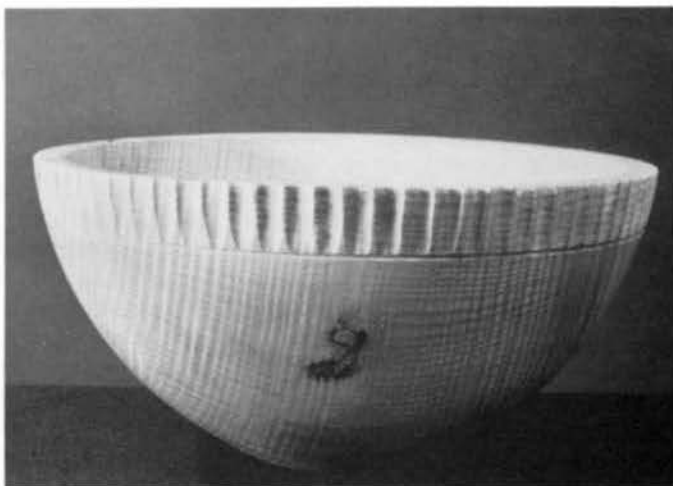
Sand-blasted vase, John Hunnex, 8 inches high by 8 inches diam., cedar



Turned sculpture, Paul Clare, burr oak and elm



21-piece coffee set, George White, sycamore



Bowl in rippled ash, Ray Key, 6 inches high by 13 inches diam.

mask, and dust extraction and airstream helmets were available for demonstrators.

There were a few minor language problems: pillar drill, angle grinder, angle poise light, and the tombola. I wondered who Tom Bowler was and why were they have a raffle in his honour. The *Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* describes a tombola as a British gambling game like bingo. In the Collins ENGLISH dictionary, a tombola is a lottery with tickets

drawn to win prizes. And the "queue," a problem we were reassured was being bettered this year at the food lines. The trade stands were there which I took advantage of buying many new finishing products and 6 English lathes I grew fond of last year. (Yes, you read correctly, six.)

British humour and good cheer was evident with a lively auction and raffle run by Mac Kemp and Tony Waddilove, the new AWGB chairman. The auction raised funds for

the Woodland Trust—each pound raised plants a tree. I think Dale Nish and Ed Moulthrop planted the most trees. Humour: someone told me they saw me put out a lot of dust—did they mean my gouge techniques or my angle grinder? Ray Key stepped down as Chairman, and he and Liz Key were presented with a gift and vote of thanks from the group with a few tears shed. I shed some tears also to leave my new country and friends. ☺

SEGMENTED PURSE MIRROR AND LEATHER POUCH

Brenda Behrens

I have been making these mirrors to help use up scraps that I could not bear to throw out. Making these mirrors never becomes boring as no two mirrors are the same. The combination of colors are endless. You can learn a great deal about setting one circle of wood into another circle of wood, and the method can then be applied to other projects and media such as stone, metal, or plastic.

Materials List

- Three woods with contrasting colors and a similar grain density. Be sure to use dry wood for laminating.
- center section, $3/4'' \times 2'' \times 2''$
- middle section, $1/2'' \times 2 \frac{1}{2}'' \times 2 \frac{1}{2}''$
- outer segmented ring, $5/8'' \times 1'' \times 18''$ cut into 8 segments
- 3" beveled mirror
- wood glue and double-face cloth carpet tape

Leather Pouch Material List

- Two circles of dyed black suede, $4 \frac{1}{2}''$ diameter, holes punched all around
 - Black leather lacing, 10 times the diameter of the suede
 - Single cordova lacing pattern on the edge
- (Source: Tandy Leather)

Mirror Construction Process

Outer Segmented Ring

Start by cutting and gluing the outer ring. Cut the 8 segments at $22 \frac{1}{2}$ -degree angles. The 8 pieces glued together will have a diameter of $3 \frac{3}{4}$ to $3 \frac{7}{8}$ inches (Fig. 1).

Number the segments in order, as they are cut from the stock, and glue them together with yellow glue in sets of two. Then glue two sets to make half of the ring. Adjust the two halves by sanding if the cuts are off by a little. Then glue the two halves together. This method will produce tight glue joints. Set aside the segmented ring to dry.

Center section

Dig through your scrap pile to find something for the center piece. Mount an auxiliary scrap block to a small-size faceplate and true it up to receive the center piece. Sand one surface of the center piece to make it flat, and mount it on the auxiliary

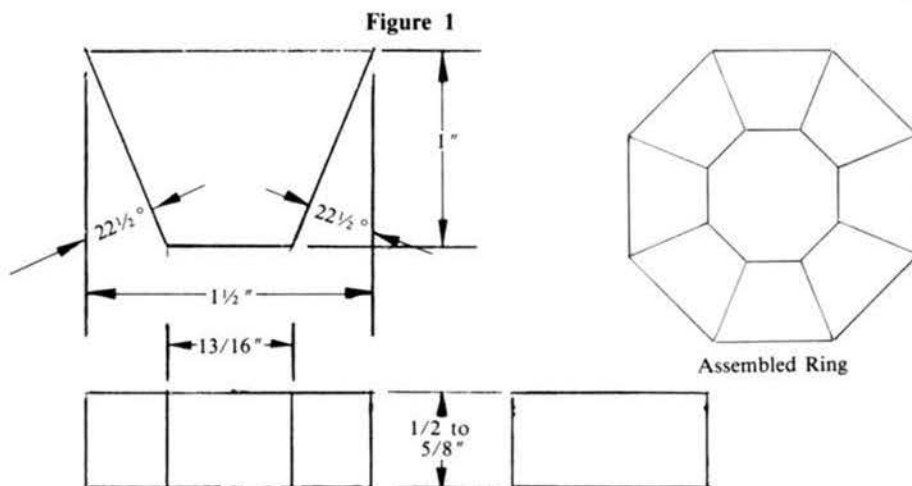


Figure 2

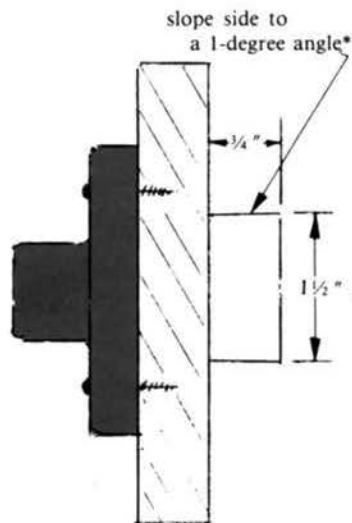
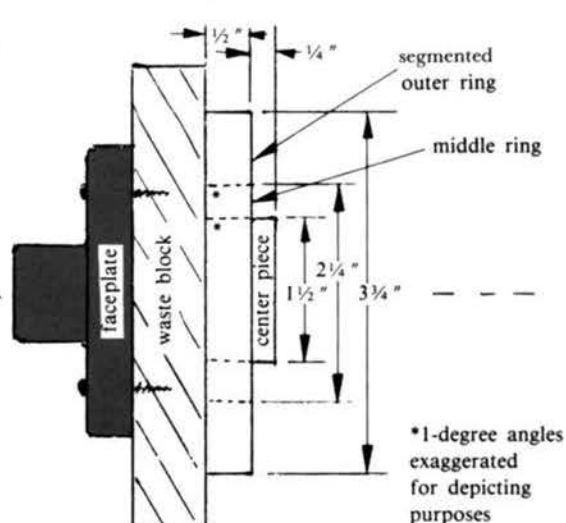


Figure 3



scrap block using double-sided tape. Press the piece on as close to being centered as possible, and give it about 30-40 seconds of firm pressure. It will hold great if your surfaces are flat. Cut the center piece to a $1 \frac{1}{2}$ -inch diameter with the side having a 1-degree angle (Fig. 2). (The side can slope one degree inward or outward depending upon how you want to orient the center piece in the mirror.) It is important for gluing purposes, however, to make the sides flat. Remove the turned piece from the lathe and set aside.

Middle section

Using a fresh piece of double-sided tape, put the stock for the middle section onto the same waste-wood auxiliary block. Turn the block to a

circle, $3/4$ -inch larger than the center piece. Next, turn out a center hole large enough for the center piece to set into the middle ring. It will take several starts and stops of the lathe to get it fit perfectly. Be sure to turn the sides (inside and outside) with a 1-degree angle (Fig. 3). Also, let about $1/4$ inch of the center piece stick out to use as a tenon to reverse chuck later on. After getting a perfect fit, glue these two pieces together, remove from the auxiliary block, and let dry.

Turning the outer segmented ring

True up one surface of the glued-up segmented ring on a belt sander and tape it, centered, to the same auxiliary block using new tape. True up the outside edge, leaving it square.

ART, ATTITUDE, and APPROPRIATION

Jay Miller, Ph.D.

Turn to a diameter of about 3 5/8 to 3 3/4 inches. Any less than that and the 3-inch mirror will not have enough wood for framing and holding it in place. Next, turn the hole with a 1-degree side angle to receive the glued-up middle and center sections. After getting a perfect fit, glue the three pieces together. Wait at least 6-8 hours for the glue to dry.

Reverse chucking to receive a mirror

Reverse chuck the glued-up piece, using the raised center section to attach it to a Nova chuck. If you do not have a chuck, you can cut a circle in an auxiliary block to receive the raised section, creating a jam-fit chuck.

Turn a recess for the mirror about 1/4-inch deep and true the bottom flat. The raised or framing edge can be finely ornamented with some beads and coves. Finish cut the outside edge at this time. Finish sand and apply a finish to the wood. I use a spray can lacquer, sprayed onto a small rag that has been saturated with lacquer thinner. I pad the finish onto the wood and buff with wool and wax. Keep the wax off of the bedding surface of the mirror.

Cut a piece of double-sided tape and stick it to the bedding surface, remove the outer paper, and attach the mirror. It will hold just great if your surface is flat. Take the assembled mirror out of the chuck.

Finishing the back of the mirror

Make a jam-fit chuck to receive the outside diameter of the mirror frame. Make a notch at the edge of the turned circle before you press the mirror into the recess. This will give you a spot where you can insert a rounded off dowel to use to leverage out the mirror after turning is complete.

Press the mirror firmly into the chuck so that you can turn the outer surface. It can be ornamented with a bead or cove or chatter work. Lightly sand and apply finish as above. Remove from the chuck.

The leather pouch is optional, however, I have found that it makes a completed useful item with the pouch. ©

Brenda Behrens is a professional turner who lives in Phillips Ranch, California.

When borrowing or adapting a design from European patterns for use in art work today, most Americans have an intuitive sense of what is appropriate. A cross might be used to decorate almost any object, but a detailed crucifixion scene would best appear only in a church context. Using something from another religion in a mocking, insulting, or hurtful way would never be approved in polite society, yet still it is done out of innocence. In a few instances, it is done deliberately to victimize a people, to render them Other, Alien, or "Inferior."

Just such misuse of other cultures' traditional symbols has come to be called "appropriation" and given political dimensions.

As an example, the groups who have most often used the charge of "appropriation" are Native Americans. As people have come from all over the world to settle in the Americas and to found their own traditions, the native people who first made this land their own have been shunned, ignored, or abused as their defense of the continent has taken other than military forms.

Throughout the Southwest and Northwest, businesses both large and small use "Indian motifs" to fuel a considerable tourist industry. In the process, portrayals of sacred beings, whether Kachinas or Hamatsa, have been taken from their religious context and used to decorate all manner of brochures, buildings, and events. True, these design symbols also continue within the native religions, but have been compromised nonetheless by tourism.

Among Native Americans, only certain families have the rights to tell particular stories, use specific designs, and visit individual holy places. Other members of the tribe respect that right because they believe that everyone and everything has a particular role to play in the grand plan. Only certain people can do, use, or apply various details, but everyone benefits from that ability. In this way, communities have defined themselves and their membership through the ages.

So it is with Native American designs and symbols. While feathers, hoops, and wavy lines seem general enough to have been used by anyone, many other symbols belonged, in the fullest sense, to tribes, communities, and families. Anything taken from a personal vision or encounter should only be used by that person. For anyone else to use it would be sacrilege. Even colors, like the purple preferred by the Kickapoo and the red/black of the Delaware, can not be used freely by members of other tribes. When they do appear, they have other explanations for them.

If you wish to appropriate Native American motifs, do so with the greatest care. Only the most general, and universal, might be used without offense. Anything specific, personal, or clearly religious, should be avoided at all cost.

The world will be a better place when we can respect other traditions and appreciate them for their differences, not what we or someone else would make of them. ©

Dr. Jay Miller is Editor/Assistant Director at the D'Arcy McNickle Center for the History of the American Indian at the Newberry Library in Chicago, Illinois. He has spent his life interpreting the many cultures of Native Americans to academic and popular audiences.

A SALUTE TO CRAFT SUPPLIES AND GARRET WADE CO.

The American Association of Woodturners raises their collective skews and gouges in a salute to Craft Supplies of Provo, Utah and Garret Wade Co., for their generous offer to insert an AAW application form in shipments this next year. Thank you! Other companies interested in doing the same can contact AAW's administrator, Mary Redig, 667 Harriet Ave., Shoreview, MN 55126, 612/484-9094.

LIDDED BOXES

Robert Rosand

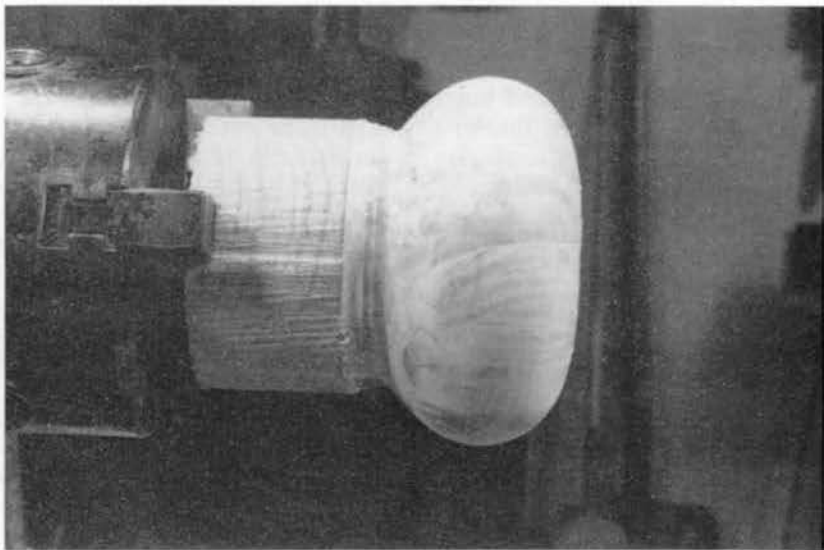
Del Stubbs, Richard Raffan, Dale Nish—the lidded boxes produced by these and other artists have always intrigued me. In fact, in all my years of craft show participation, lidded boxes have been an integral part of my display. I would like to tell you about the way I make the lidded containers I sell.

The shapes I prefer are very simple and smooth, with no sharp edges. Lidded boxes may have simple shapes or be quite complicated in design. Keep in mind that the first lidded containers you make will be much less arduous to finish if you keep ornamentation to a minimum. To take advantage of interesting grain patterns, orient the grain as you would for a bowl. In addition, I find that lids for boxes turned sidegrain fit better.

When turning, I use the smallest number of tools possible. You can generally get by with a small bowl gouge (or spindle gouge), a small skew, a parting tool, and a round-nosed scraper. If the opening to your box is very small or if the angle is very severe, you may need a "bent angle" tool.

Begin by bandsawing the box stock to a rough cylinder and gluing it to a waste block fastened to a faceplate with screws. If the lid is to match the box, you need to part off a piece about 1/2- to 3/4-inch thick and set that aside, after marking the orientation of the lid to the box. If the lid will be made from a contrasting wood, proceed with turning the box and worry about the lid later.

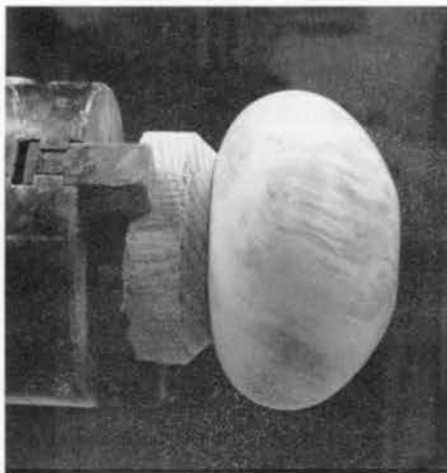
Shape the exterior of the box with a bowl gouge, leaving enough material at the base of the box to prevent chattering when hollowing the interior. Next, turn the interior, leaving a final wall thickness of about 3/16- to 1/4-inch thick. To accomplish this, first drill a 3/8-inch hole in the center to within 1/2 inch of the bottom of the box to keep from turning through the bottom of the box. From the top down, hollow, then finish the box in sections of about 1-inch deep. Proceed to the next section when satisfied with the previous one, continuing until fairly close to the bottom. I use a bowl gouge and a round-nosed scraper or a bent-angle tool where necessary.



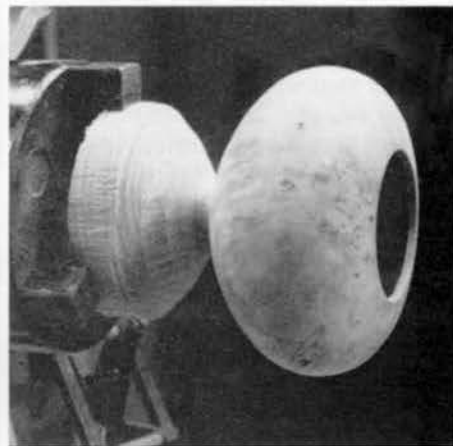
Box bottom roughed out on the lathe



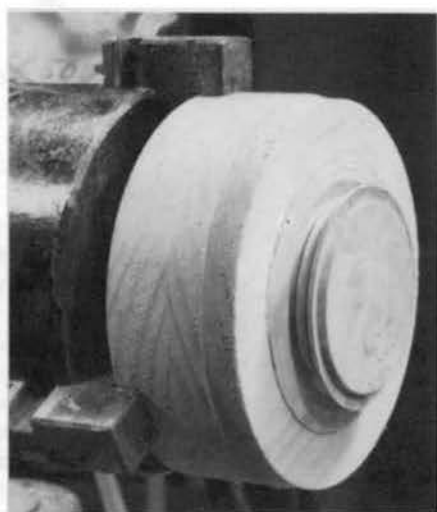
Hollowing the interior of the box



Bottom hollowed, ready to part off the lathe



Bottom friction-fitted to scrap block so that the bottom can be turned and finished



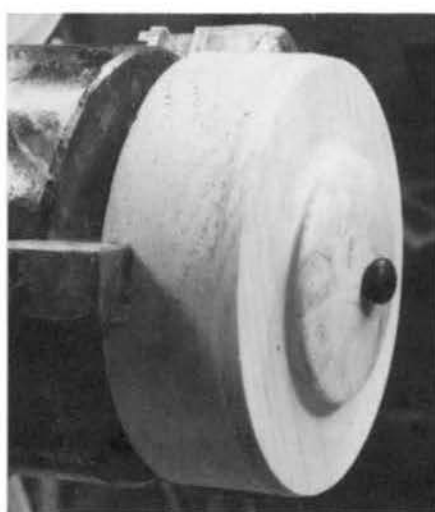
Lid held on with two-sided tape, interior of the lid ready to part off

Return to the exterior of the box to finish refining the shape. At this point, not much more than the base is holding the box to the glue block, but keep in mind that you must finish hollowing the interior, so leave adequate material to accomplish the job. Once you are finished with the outside of the box, finish turning the bottom of the inside.

Turn off the lathe and sand the box. I use small 2 3/4-inch sanding discs backed with 3/8-inch thick foam pads mounted in a hand drill. I cut sanding discs and glue them on with 3-M Feathering Disc Adhesive (available in automotive stores). You may wish to sand by hand while the lathe is running.

Part the box bottom from the lathe in one of two ways. If the box is small enough, undercut it with the long point of a skew chisel—only a small touch up at the center will be required. If the box is a little larger, cut it off with a parting tool, then friction-fit it back onto a waste block (use the glue block already fastened to the faceplate) and finish turn and sand the bottom. You are now ready to make the lid.

Attach the wood for the lid to a waste block with glue or two-sided tape. Use calipers to determine the rough diameter of the lid, leaving ample material for a final finishing cut or two. Turn the interior of the lid first, then cut the lip of the lid. The lip should be undercut enough so that the lid fits flush to the main



Top of lid friction-fitted, finished turned, sanded, and knob in place

body of the box. Since you are turning the underside of the lid, you can hold up the bottom of the box to check the final fit, adjusting the final shape accordingly. I prefer using a 1/4-inch skew to do the final fitting.

I allow the lids to fit a bit loosely because I have had one too many customers at craft shows lift the box by its lid, only to have it release from the box a second or two later and plummet to a concrete floor. A tight fit might be best, however, for your own personal use.

Part the lid from the waste block, reverse it, and again friction-fit it to allow for finish turning the other side of the lid. I turn some boxes with knobs, some without. A knob can be turned from the remainder of the lid material or from a contrasting material and fastened on later. To attach a knob later, drill a small hole in the lid (be certain not to go through it). Turn a knob with a small tenon and glue it in place later. This allows for a better and easier finish on the lid.

The simplicity of my instructions leaves lots of room for individual taste and interpretation. The shapes that satisfy me most are the result of years of trial and error combined with all aspects of my woodturning personality. Yours will do the same. ☺

Robert Rosand is a self-taught professional woodturner living in Bloomsburg, Pennsylvania. He donated the box featured in this article



Finished lidded box, 2 1/2 inches high by 3 1/2 inches diam. Robert Rosand donated the finished box to AAW's 1992 Symposium Banquet Auction (June 18-20, Provo, Utah) in order to raise funds for the Daphne Osolnik Memorial Scholarship Endowment Fund.

to AAW. It will be included in the banquet auction at next year's national AAW symposium to raise funds for the Daphne Osolnik Scholarship Fund.

THE DAPHNE OSOLNIK MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP ENDOWMENT FUND

The American Association of Woodturners administers this very special scholarship fund. Each year scholarships are awarded to deserving members so that they can attend a woodturning school or activity. This fund has now grown to over \$30,000.00—chiefly from symposium auction funds and the recent lathe raffle—with a target of soon reaching \$100,000.00. Only the interest on the principle will be used for scholarships with the hope that in time major apprenticeships and extensive training will be possible. Details for applying for scholarships are printed each year in the March issue of *American Woodturner*.

We appreciate the enthusiastic support of the many people who have already donated to this fund. We would also welcome anyone's tax deductible contribution at times other than the symposium auction. Please make your check payable to the DAPHNE OSOLNIK MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP ENDOWMENT FUND and mail it to AAW's administrator, Mary Redig, 667 Harriet Ave., Shoreview, MN 55126.

A Focus on HIDDEN TALENT

Curated by Albert LeCoff

Jack Hanson

1 Charles St.

Frazer, Pennsylvania 19355

I have been a physicist with General Electric for 25 years and have been turning wood almost as long. My craft has added a lot to my life and has been a nice compliment to my technical work in aerospace. In the past I have concentrated more on small production items but in recent years I have done larger and more involved pieces. Success with larger pieces is not as certain but the satisfaction is greater. Recently I have been adding some carved features to my turnings giving them a hint of human form.

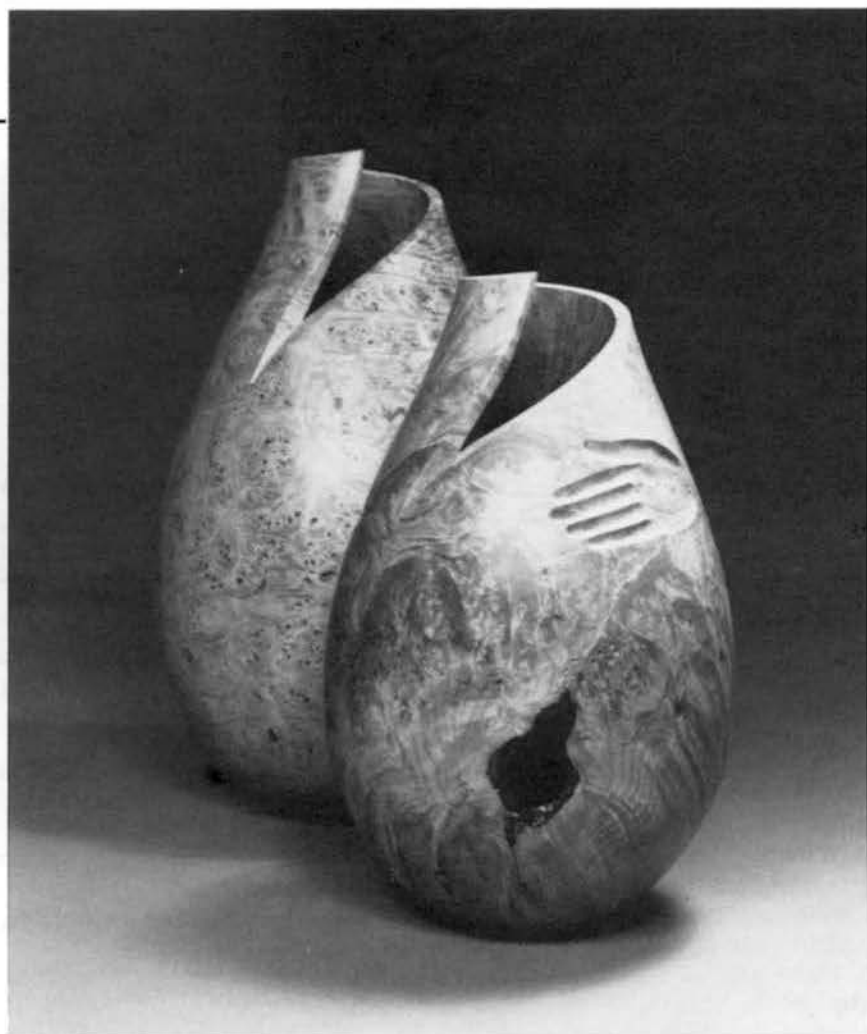


photo by Ed Bosley

"A Tranquill Moment," 1991
H. 14" x W. 16" x Diam. 8"
maple burl

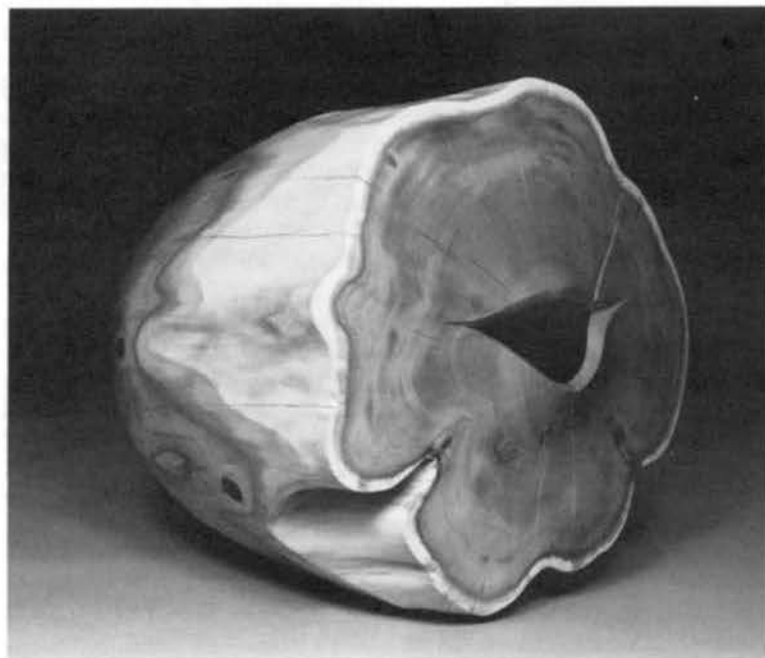


photo by Ed Bosley

"Yew Lips," 1990
H. 14" x W. 14" x Diam. 16"
Western yew

Albert Clarke

Old Marshall School House
Marshall, California 94940

My use of the so called exotic woods of the tropical rain forests has diminished in the past few years, not because of environmental pressures, but because I find the true exotics right in my back yard. What can be more beautiful, and yes exotic, than a piece of lace redwood burl, quilted or fiddleback broad leaf maple, spalted buckeye, or burly wood from a bay laurel stump? Best of all these usually are "found" woods that would otherwise have ended up in somebody's fireplace.

Sometimes I emphasize the grain structure of a piece by masking off certain areas and etching a pattern by sandblasting. In the case of "Out of Africa" I pierced all the way through, etching away the soft grain and leaving the hard grain.



photo by Art Rodgers

"Etched Redwood Bowl and Platter," 1991

Bowl—H. 1" x Diam. 17"

Platter—H. 8 1/2" x Diam. 15 1/2"

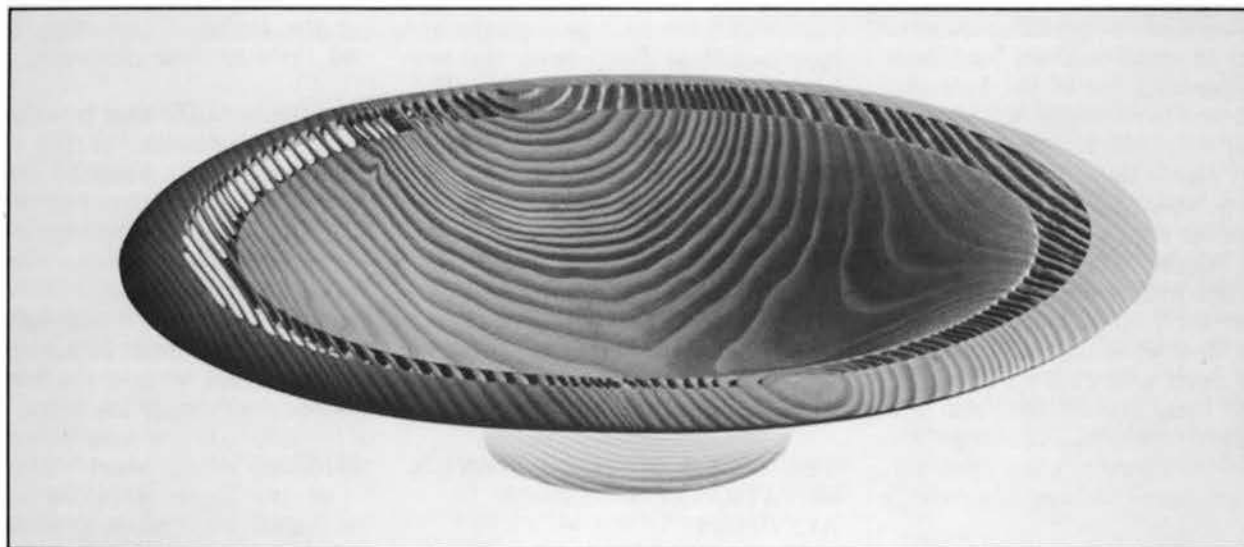


photo by Walter Knapp

"Out of Africa," 1990 H. 3 1/2" x Diam. 16 1/2" Douglas fir

These two pages are dedicated to those who make objects from the lathe. Photos are selected from the Wood Turning Center's archives. If you feel you are a Hidden Talent, send your 5" x 7" glossy b/w photos, resumé, and a personal statement to Albert LeCoff, HIDDEN TALENT, 42 W. Washington Lane, Philadelphia, PA 19144 U.S.A. Accepted photos will not be returned; nonpublished photos will be returned if a self-addressed stamped envelope is supplied

CHAINSAW SAFETY: Kickback Prevention

Alex Holsinger

This is the first part in a series relating to the use of chainsaws.

"Kickback" is one of the most destructive and often deadly forms of chainsaw accidents. It is not very well understood, even by professionals.

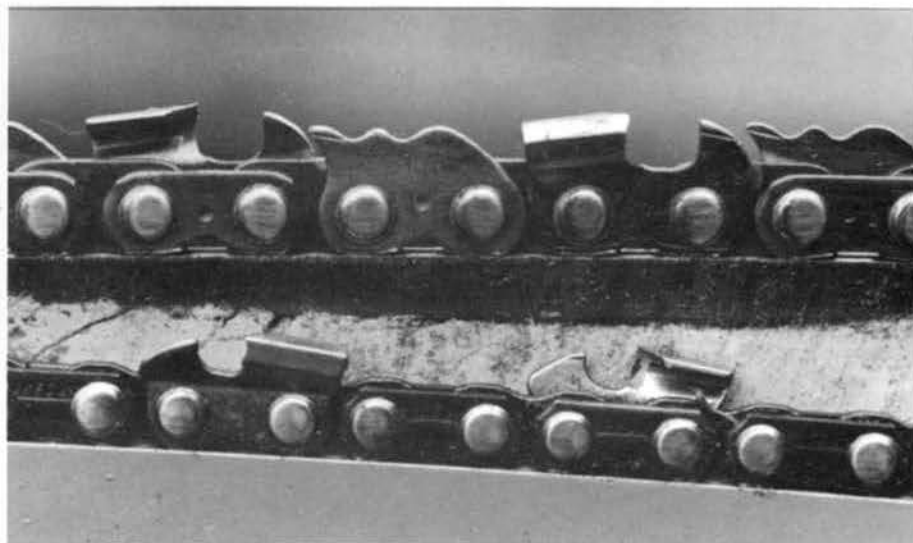
Basically stated, anything that causes the chain to stop rotating around the bar while the engine is at full power can cause a chainsaw to kickback. When the chain cannot move around the bar, the bar tries to move inside the chain. If this is not controlled in some way, lightening-fast movement of the entire chainsaw results.

There are two main types of kickback. The first occurs when the chain is pinched in some way. An example of this, when felling a tree, is when the saw kerf closes as the tree settles back on the saw bar and chain. The saw usually tries to travel straight back toward the operator. This is called a linear kickback.

To prevent linear kickback when felling a tree, cut with the bottom of the bar and use plastic wedges to keep the kerf open. If you accidentally hit a wedge with the saw chain, no serious damage is done to the chain or to the wedge. Plastic wedges are inexpensive and usually have dimples or small teeth to keep them from squeezing out of the kerf. Although you can cut and use wooden wedges, they will not last nearly as long as plastic ones.

When bucking, it is important to support the log to keep it from rolling or sagging when the cut is finished. Use wedges here to insure that the kerf stays open. Logs that move a great deal when the cut is finished are an open invitation to kickback, crushed toes, broken feet, and saw chain cuts on legs as a coasting chain touches the operator's leg when trying to get out of the way of a moving log.

The second type of kickback is the rotational kickback. These are the hardest to control and the most deadly. They begin at the tip of the nose of the chainsaw bar. As the saw chain travels around the tip of the bar nose, the cutters are exposed and can cut a much deeper slice of wood than normal. On the flat part of the bar the saw chain normally cuts a



Top chain—safety chain; bottom chain—standard or now called professional chain

chip that is .025 inches to .045 inches thick because of rakers or depth stops. At the bar tip, however, the chain may try to cut as much as .250 inches (1/4 inch) at a time because the rakers or depth stops built into the chain do not limit the travel of the tooth into the wood on this part of the bar. The saw engine cannot generate enough power to pull the tooth through a chip that thick. As a result, the chain stalls or stops going around the bar. Because the engine is still at full power, the saw begins to move inside the chain. This usually causes the saw to move up and back toward the operator. Since the chain on a chainsaw moves at forty to sixty miles per hour, the saw moves back toward the operator before he can even think about stopping it. Things happen so quickly that the operator can be badly cut on the right arm, shoulder, chest, or face long before danger is recognized.

THINGS TO DO TO PREVENT A ROTATIONAL KICKBACK ACCIDENT:

- Pay very close attention to the top half of the bar nose. Most of the time, it is not safe to cut with the nose of the bar.
- Look to see if the bar nose might catch on another tree, a fence, or vines on the other side of the tree that you are felling. If it might, clear a path around the tree.
- Always wait until the saw chain

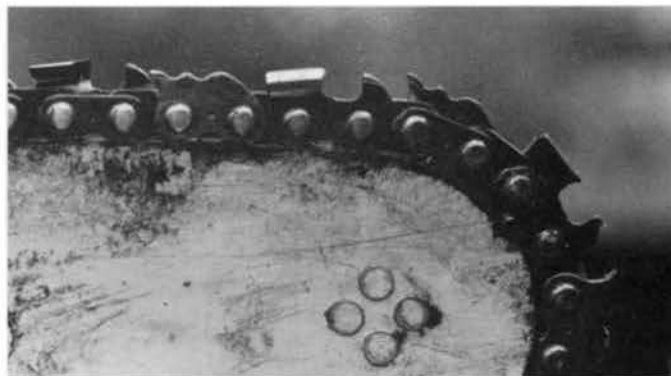
comes to a complete stop before moving around with the saw. If the chain on your chainsaw does not stop when the saw is idling, adjust the carburetor or fix the clutch. A running chain will cut you if you slip onto it or it can kick the bar up at you if the nose touches something unexpectedly.

Some chainsaws have safety features that help reduce the danger of kickback accidents. Smaller new saws sold in the United States must have at least two of these features:

- A chain brake that is designed to stop the rotation of the chain if the operator's hand or arm contacts a guard in front of the saw's front handlebar. The idea is to stop the rotation of the chain before it hits the operator.
- A "safety chain" that has modified tie straps that rotate up as the chain goes around the bar nose. The depth stops on safety chains usually have a long ramp shape instead of the short bump shape of the depth stops on standard chains. The idea is to make it almost impossible to cut anything with the bar nose. This greatly reduces the danger of rotational kickback.
- Bars with a small diameter or "banana nose" bars that reduce the size of the danger zone.
- Bar end guards. These guards are small pieces of formed metal that bolt to the bar and cover the chain



Chain-break assembly



Rear of safety-chain ramp tie strap pivots away from the bar going around the bar nose



Rubber anti-vibration handle mounts help prevent carpal tunnel syndrome



Use of wedges to hold the saw kerf open

on the bar nose. These guards are very effective at preventing rotational kickback. Bar end guards can be removed, however, to allow a sixteen-inch bar to cut a seven-inch tree.

- Hand guards. These are sometimes confused with a chain brake when looking at a saw. The function of a hand guard is to stop the operator's left hand from hitting the chain if the operator is unable to hold on to the front handle for any reason.
- Anti-vibration handles. These handles are designed to reduce saw motor vibrations transmitted to the operator's hands. They prevent operator fatigue and carpal tunnel syndrome.

The way an operator uses and maintains a chainsaw has a great deal to do with kickback prevention.

- Keep the chain sharp. A dull chain

"grabs" easier than a sharp one, causing kickback. Learn how to hand sharpen or carry a spare chain.

- Take time to look for hazards so that you will have secure footing and balance, as well as a clear escape path if something goes wrong. Look for snags that might catch the bar nose.
- Will the tree fall in a safe direction or will it settle back on the bar?
- Do you have wedges or a jack to lift the tree "over center" to get it to go the way you want?
- Will the tree fall in an area where it can be bucked safely? If the trunk cannot be supported easily, every crosscut or bucking cut will cause the tree roll or fall.

The biggest and most often overlooked factor in eliminating all chainsaw accidents is the **OPERATOR'S ATTITUDE**. Training, personal safety equipment, and

sharp, well equipped chainsaws offer limited protection to an operator with a *bad safety attitude*.

"I can get by this time." "It takes too long to . . ." "It costs too much to . . ." "I don't need that for just one cut." "I can move faster than the log if it rolls." All of us have been guilty of thoughts like these. **The most important safety tool has always been the operator's ability to recognize hazards and the desire to learn how to avoid injury.®**

Alex Holsinger is an industrial contractor who lives in Tulsa, Oklahoma. He has been using chainsaws for over twenty years and developed an interest in chainsaw safety because of chainsaw accidents he has seen. He helped start The Northeastern Oklahoma Woodturners Association and continues to be an active member.

ABOUT WOOD

Cas Grabowski

Why is a Burl?

About two years ago I was in a restaurant at Jackson Hole, Wyoming, that had a large outdoor patio. The railings, as well as the uprights around the patio, were made of slender tree trunks, from three to six inches in diameter. I gasped when I saw these trunks because all of them had regular arrangements of burls about a foot apart. It was enough to make any woodturner's eyes green with envy.

I couldn't find anyone that evening who knew anything about the history of these porch railings, but I did start to wonder about what it is that makes a burl. This wasn't easy. Though woodturners and veneer manufacturers love burls, most botanists and wood technologists don't consider them very important. I did find out that burls form as a response to injuries such as fire, abrasion, or disease. I strongly suspect that the tree trunks around this Wyoming patio were logged from an area where they had been regularly exposed to brush fires, strong enough to initiate burl formation, but not strong enough to seriously damage the tree.

A burl is a complex, irregular mass of wood, consisting primarily of buds, little knots, and sometimes bark. There are two basic kinds: 1) those that occur below ground which are a normal part of the plant's anatomy; 2) those that occur above ground and are induced by some kind of irritation. In order to understand how burls can be induced by wounding the trunk, one has to know something about how tree trunks and branches grow.

Looking at a cross-section of a freshly cut tree trunk, you can see several regions. In the center is the heartwood surrounded by a thick ring of sapwood. Heartwood is relatively inert material. Sapwood is functional tissue that carries water upwards from the roots to the leaves. But neither heartwood nor sapwood can grow by their own efforts. The only cells in a tree trunk that can divide and grow are confined to a thin layer called cambium, which lies next to the sapwood. Outside the glistening cambial layer is another thin layer of cells that carry nutrients downward from



the leaves to the roots (the phloem) and then the familiar outermost layer, the bark.

The cambium can be compared to a surgeon's thin glove, tightly fitting over the tree trunk and its branches (the glove's fingers). The cambial layer is of critical importance to the tree trunk and branches because, as these cells grow and divide, they lay down sapwood on their internal side and more phloem and bark to their outside. When a piece of bark is stripped from a tree, the cambial layer usually is also removed because it tends to stick to the bark. This portion of the tree now has lost its ability to grow.

Burls start to form when cambial layers start to grow internally rather than in their usual peripheral pattern. If, for example, you cut a limb close to the trunk you have an area of wood that is no longer covered by cambial cells. The tree responds to this injury by a layer of adjacent cambial cells slowly growing over this stump. This swirl of cambial cells continues to lay down a layer of sap-

wood internally and a mass of bark externally, the callus. The cambial cells also have the capacity to initiate one or more buds that now grow out as branchlets. If these branches are also cut or injured, another generation of swirly, irregular growth is added to the first. This is a simple example of how a burl can start to grow from mechanical damage to the cambial layer. The essential stages are 1) injuring a portion of cambium; 2) overgrowth of the injured area by adjacent cambium; and 3) the induction of branch buds from the margins of the wounded area.

Burls can also be initiated by a fire severe enough to injure some portions of the bark and underlying cambium, but not severe enough to kill the tree. *Thuja* burls, used to make elaborate veneers, were formerly deliberately induced in Africa by burning parts of the tree. Burls in olive wood have been attributed to goats eating the bark. Fungus infections that kill off patches of cambium can also initiate burl formation. Dutch elm disease is caused by a fungus that damages cambial cells and new sapwood. It also initiates burl formation, but the tree usually dies before the burl gets to any significant size. Galls are small burl-like irregular growths caused by insect damage.

Burls are not just there for woodturners to appreciate. They can help the tree survive severe damage. The deep internal pockets of living cambial cells frequently form buds which have the potential to develop into new branches. The cambium cells of burls and their buds are now protected from fire, cold weather, and wounding by several inches of external tissue instead of just one layer of bark. If a severe fire rages through the woods and seriously damages the tree, the burls can quickly give rise to new growth and keep the tree alive.

Underground burls (also called ligno-tubers and root crowns) are also irregular, folded masses of cambial tissue, dormant buds, bark, and sapwood. They do not develop in response to fire or cutting, but are a normal development of the plant. They occur in manzanita, and other trees and shrubs of the southern California chaparral as well as in some

ABOUT THAT FACE SHIELD

Ron McEwen

On the morning of September 6, 1991, I went down to my basement shop to finish a couple of small projects and clean the place up. (Unlike Alan Lacer, I try to keep my shop fairly clean.) I had made some pen sets the evening before using a very high speed on my lathe. I finished cleaning and started to leave when I noticed the big piece of olive wood that I had purchased at the National Symposium in Denton, Texas, in June. I had tried to rough out a bowl earlier, but the wood was so wet, I found it hard to work with. I had set it aside for a couple of months to dry out before completing it.

I put the rough bowl back on a faceplate and went to the lathe to see if it had dried enough to finish turning. The last thing I remember was reaching for the switch to turn the lathe on. You guessed it, I forgot to check the lathe speed. When the lathe came on at the high speed, the bowl separated with half coming up and striking me in the face just below my right eye. The piece hit me with such force it popped both of my eyeglass lenses out of the frames and scattered the eyeglasses all over the shop.

When I regained consciousness, I

was on my hands and knees beside the lathe. I looked up trying to focus my eyes, and I could see, even without my glasses, that blood was spurting out two to three feet in front of my face, indicating an artery had been cut. I grabbed some shop towels and tried to make a compress. I then ran upstairs to get the truck keys knowing I would have to drive myself to the hospital. (We live in a rural area with no emergency service, and my wife and neighbors were at work.)

When I reached the emergency room at the Edmond, Oklahoma, hospital, I must have looked like a "Wooley Booger" because everyone kept backing away from me. As bad as I must have looked, I was told to sit down and fill out a bunch of forms before treatment. The doctor used about fifty (50) stitches to close the deep cut under my right eye. The cut was caused by flying wood, not the rim of my glasses as they had to pick small wood fragments from the wound. The doctor stated that if the wound had been one inch higher I would have lost an eye, and one inch lower, it would have struck the large nerve that controls the face, possibly

resulting in some facial paralysis.

The whole thing was not pleasant, including the statement made by my wife while they were sewing on my face, "don't worry about it, doctor, there was not a hell of a lot there to work with in the first place."

To summarize: Everyone now and then forgets to check their lathe speed. The face shield may not have saved the blow to the head, but I think it would have saved the deep facial cut, a swollen discolored painful face, and the broken eyeglasses.

Oh, stop saying, "I told you so," Alan. ☺

Ron McEwen, Arcadia, Oklahoma. A similar version of this article appeared in The Central Oklahoma Woodturners Newsletter as well as in "Chatterwork" of the Northeastern Oklahoma Woodturners Association.

Note: Since writing this article, Ron has learned that a similar incident recently occurred in the northeastern part of the United States. The circumstances were almost identical, with the exception that the man was struck in the temple with a large piece of wood and died on the spot.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL INFORMATION

Yes, it is that time of year again—renewal notices will be mailed around the first of January, along with your ballot for the board of directors' election. Last year renewal time went pretty well considering it was my first year. This is a one-person office (renewals were returned at the rate of 100 a day for about two weeks, and one day I received 250 pieces of mail). All this, in addition to regular duties, kept me busy. I want to thank members for their patience and understanding during renewal time, and I will do my best to process memberships as quickly as possible.

There is a bit of confusion toward the end of the year about whether or

not a NEW member will be a 1991 member or a 1992 member. If the person specifies, I do what they request. Otherwise, a member joining after December 1st will be entered as a member for the next year, in this case, 1992.

I would like your help in one other area: Please send me a change of address when you move to avoid having your journal returned to the home office, and include your new phone number on that change of address. Thank you. ☺

*Mary Redig, Administrator
667 Harriet Ave.
Shoreview, MN 55126*

parts of Australia. These are typically areas subject to frequent fires. When the surface portions of a manzanita tree are devastated by fire, bulldozing, drought, or cold weather, new stems can sprout within two to three weeks from the inner, protected cambial cells and their collection of dormant buds. These underground burls are a protective mechanism for the plant, just as for the above-ground variety. (If you have ever turned a manzanita burl, you know now why they are full of stones and sand that do wonderful things to tool edges.)

This short article will not necessarily help you in your woodturning endeavors, but it should help to satisfy your curiosity about "why is a burl." ☺

My thanks to Dr. Jack Fisher of the Fairchild Tropical Gardens of Miami, who helped me significantly in the preparation of this article—Cas Grabowski.

ELLSWORTH SCHOOL OF WOODTURNING

Reservations for 3-day weekend workshops now being accepted for Jan/Feb/Mar 1992. Contact:

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HOW TO BUILD A FIBER OPTIC LIGHT FOR USE IN TURNING DEEP VESSELS

Joe Millsap

I am a member of the Central Oklahoma Woodturners, and I have been turning for about a year and a half. I had the same problem that other turners had with lighting the inside of deep vessels such as bowls and vases: When the light is positioned so that it will illuminate the inside of the vessel, it will also block the turner's line of vision or the turner's head will block the light.

In a discussion at one of our turners' meetings, this was brought up, and Alan Lacer, President of AAW, said that one turner used fiber optics to illuminate the inside of a vessel. Being a fairly new woodturner and needing all of the help I could get, I went looking for fiber optics. Well, here's what happened.

Fiber optics is defined as thin, transparent fibers of glass or plastic that are enclosed by material of a lower index of refraction. Transmitted light will travel throughout their length by internal reflection. They are normally used in a bundle in instruments (as for viewing body cavities in medicine). Upon further investigation, I found that one fiber optic was approximately 1/32 of an inch in diameter, and it would take more than one to transmit the needed light.

A friend of mine who owns a swimming pool business uses fiber optics for pool lighting. The material he uses has eighteen fiber optics placed in a 3/4-inch clear plastic tubing that is sealed and can be used under water. He uses a 150-watt light that is injected into the end of the fiber optics and transmitted around the swimming pool.

I purchased an eight-foot piece of the optic fiber cable and started to work. Any length of optic fiber will work. I would suggest at least 10 or 12 feet. This will allow you to place your light source on a table or stand away from your work area. I was instructed to seal the ends of the fibers with either a hot knife or soldering iron in order to make the light emerge from a single source instead of eighteen separate ones. I removed the eighteen fibers from the 3/4-inch tube and inserted them into a 1/4-inch (inside diameter) piece of flexible plastic tubing and sealed the ends with a wood burning pencil.

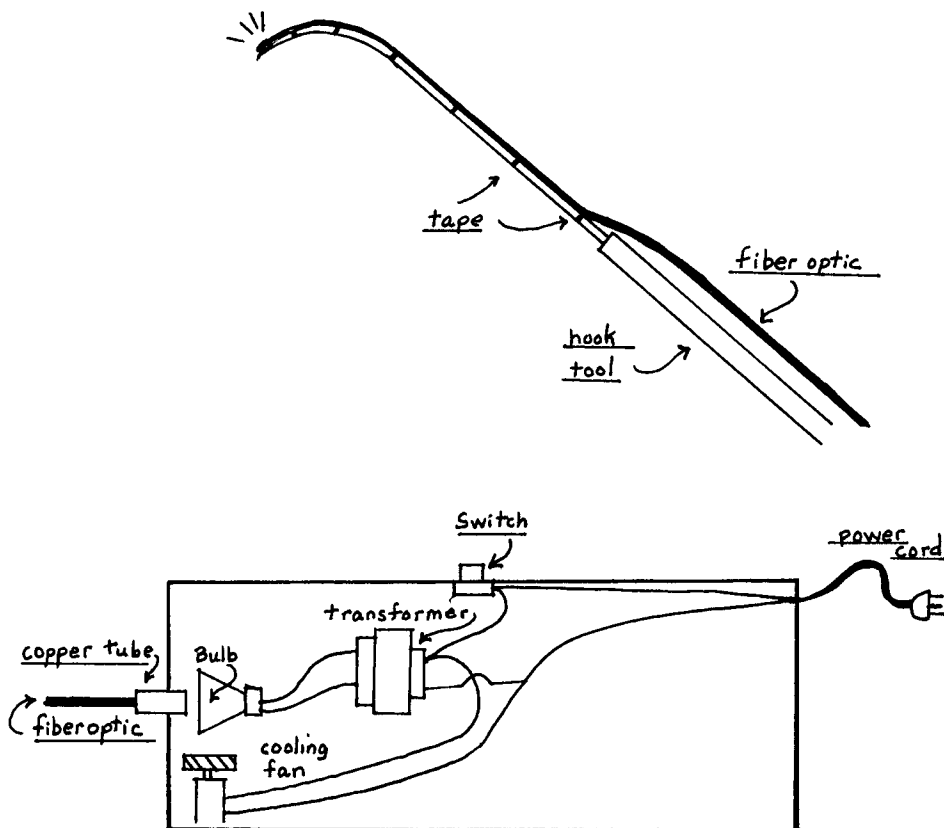


FIG. 1.

For a light source, I used a discarded light section from a micro fische reader that I had purchased at a swap meet four or five years ago for \$5.00. I assembled the light which used a step-down transformer from 120 volts to approximately 13 volts. The bulb is 85 watts and produces a very white light. This is the equipment that came with the micro fische reader. Any voltage system may be used. I would suggest using a Halogen lamp to project a white light. I have contacted two businesses that sell micro fische readers, and they have old outdated readers they will sell very cheap—you might try locating one in your area.

FIRST BIG MISTAKE: I mounted the light inside a wooden carrying case and inserted the end of the fiber optics through the end of the case in front of the light—the heat from the

light source melted the fiber optics. To solve that problem, I glued a piece of copper tubing through the end of the case to hold the fiber optics. The fan shown in the diagram was supplied with the fische reader and provides cooling for the bulb. I have used this light on my Stewart Hook Tool and am very happy with the results. I attached the fiber optics to my turning tool with masking tape. (I first tried velcro but it would not secure the optics properly.)

This light will provide enough light to use in a darkened room when turning thin-walled vessels so that you can maintain continuous wall thickness by the amount of light that penetrates through the walls. ☺

Joe Millsap lives at 4709 Woodland Park Terrace, in Spencer, Oklahoma, 73084.

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NEW USE FOR EXISTING PRODUCT YIELDS SUPERIOR WOOD FINISH

Dick Gerard

This summer I heard of a product used by aircraft manufacturers and the military to remove scratches from the canopies of aircraft windows. The product was said to produce a surface of optical clarity superior to any other. Ads featuring the product claim that it produces a brilliant shine in a third of the time, lasts fifteen times longer than ordinary abrasives, creates a minimum of dust, and produces a semi- to high-gloss "see through" finish.

Since I am always looking for ways to improve the finish of turned objects, I was definitely intrigued. I called the manufacturer of this miracle product to arrange a try out.

The people at Micro-Surface Finishing Products sent me their professional woodworkers' kit that consists of 3- by 6-inch pieces of Micro-Mesh in grits ranging from 1500 to 12,000 (!) plus a foam block and instructions for use. They also supplied some 5-inch pressure sensitive adhesive (PSA) disks. I was advised to use only water as a lubricant when doing wet sanding. (As all woodturners know, we always follow directions, right?) By the way, Micro-Mesh is an abrasive attached to a latex cushion which is attached to a cloth back. The latex cushion allows the individual grits to recede a bit from the surface, thus eliminating those unsightly scratches produced by regular abrasives when a bit of grit is larger than its neighbors.

Well, on to the test. I had received a custom order for a matched set of four goblets and a display plate. The goblets were to be used, so the finishing had to be non-toxic as well as alcohol and water resistant. I obtained some really fine cocobola (*Dalbergia negra*) from Berea Hardwoods and proceeded to turn the first goblet. Following my usual practice, I used a variety of hand and power sanding starting with 180-grit paper and continuing through 220, 320, 400, 600, 900, 1200, and 1500, using wet/dry papers I get through automotive refinishers. For a finish, I used carnuba wax, applied as the lathe was turning and buffed out to a high gloss using a piece of lamb's wool. For the second goblet, I used the same procedure through the 320-grit

paper, but then I switched to Micro-Mesh and continued through the 12,000 grit stage. Here I used only hand sanding and the foam backing pad, with water as a lubricant. Again, I used carnuba wax as the only finish. For the third goblet, I used a combination of hand and power sanding, with water as a lubricant, through the highest grit available in the PSA disk series—1200MX. This seems to be nearly equal to the 12,000 in the 3- by 6-inch sheets. For the fourth goblet and the plate, I broke all the rules. I used regular grits through 600, switched to Micro-Mesh, but used mineral spirits as the lubricant.

What were the end results? I thought the finish on the first goblet was just about the best I had ever achieved. Compared to the other three goblets, however, the first goblet looked flat and dull. I can't really say that I detected any differences in the other three goblets; they all looked super. But then they should, since they had all received nearly the same treatment. In addition, the surface of the plate had a mirror finish. I remounted the first goblet and finished it to the same degree.

What about those ad claims? It

does create a "brilliant" shine (does it ever!). It does produce a see-through finish. Since I always use a dust collector, the claim about less dust was difficult to judge. From the amount of material streaming off the piece, it appears less. (This could, however, be a function of "wet" versus dry sanding.) Does it last fifteen times longer? So far it seems to last much longer than ordinary abrasives. I have had the product all summer and half the fall, and with regular cleaning, the Micro-Mesh sheets and disks have produced four goblets and a plate, thirty one medium-size bowls, and three hundred ink pens. Do they produce a superior shine in one third the time? My friends, they do indeed!

Please note that this is not the product to use to repair torn grain produced by over-zealous scraping or poor cutting or to remove large quantities of material. It is a finishing product. And by all means, avoid using a backing material that might produce a hard edge.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor:

In the September 1991 *American Woodturner* journal you have an interesting article on "inside-out" turning by Michael F. Kehs. I am retired and do woodworking as a hobby. I have done a little of this type of turning. Where or how can I get more information on "inside-out" turning?

—Ralph S. Easley
8937 Wuest Road
Cincinnati, OH 45251

Can any of our members help Ralph Easley in his search?

Dear Editor:

I had a great experience at Arrowmont last spring that should be told to the AAW membership. Arrowmont, as most of us know, is a craft school in Gatlinburg, Tennessee, that provides classes in many disciplines but is famous worldwide for its woodturning classes. Last spring I signed up for a class with Steve Loar, a design professor from Rochester Institute of Technology in Rochester, N.Y. I signed up because that was the week I had available, and I really didn't care who was teaching. As luck would have it, the group of students included such notable woodturners as Stoney Lamar, John Jordan, Robyn Horn, Christian Burchard, Ric Stand, and David Stengel. I wondered who this Steve Loar was that he could attract this group.

This is where the fantastic experience comes in. Steve brought something new to the Arrowmont week. We spent 3 to 5 hours a day in lectures covering design principles. Then we had assignments to produce turnings applying these principles. The next day we spent time analyzing the turnings and then judged how well they fit the points of the lecture. Then we had more design principles explained, another assignment, time in the workshop and the next day, back for more discussions. This cycle went on for an exciting week.

I have been a woodworker for 30 years and a woodturner for 3 years. Many of the projects that I designed during these years would be less than "right" after I completed them. After this week with Steve I examined the many projects sitting around the house and could finally see why I didn't like them. My only regret is

that I did not have some experience with formal design teaching years ago.

In looking back I can see why the professional woodturners were there that week. They experienced the need for better understanding of design the same as I did. They were smart enough to take a week off and get the experience. I hope the AAW membership can find some way to accomplish this also. My work has certainly improved since my week with Steve.

—Robert E. Bahr, Fort Wayne,
Indiana

Dear Editor,

I have participated in a particular craft show for five or six years. In the past year or so I began producing and selling the pen offered in Craft Supplies, USA. It has become a staple of my craft show inventory, often the difference between an average show and a good show. At this year's show another turner informed me that he planned to sell the same pens. I was not overwhelmed with pleasure, but since I had not dreamed up the pen idea, I was not bothered until I discovered that he planned to undercut my price by two dollars. In a humorous manner, I attempted to let him know how I felt about being undercut. And in a serious way I tried to inform him that the pens sold very well at the price I had set. All to no avail.

Perhaps I am being overly sensitive or naive but I was highly offended by this breach of protocol. I like to think that had he sold the pens at that show prior to me, I would have, at the very least, kept my pen prices in line with his.

On one level, the issue may seem trivial, after all the pens still sold pretty well. But on another level, the problem can be more serious. I'm talking about the simple courtesy of acknowledging that you did not invent the wheel (pens in my case) to the outright theft of a fellow turner's ideas or techniques without so much as a thank you. Woodturners are some of the most sharing people I have ever come across and when we benefit from that sharing it only seems right to credit the source of the ideas and techniques we are benefiting from.

—Robert Rosand, Bloomsburg,
Pennsylvania

Dear Editor,

While reading the September issue of *American Woodturner*, the article by David Ellsworth on the "International Lathe-Turned Objects: Challenge IV" exhibition made me want to reply concerning his comments about the methods used for judging.

My wife and I were privileged to have been able to attend the opening and we thought the show was excellent not only for the individual entries but also for the breadth of the types of turning represented. We participated in the voting for the selection of the objects to be included in the traveling show and thought this was a novel idea. We soon found ourselves looking at the pieces, as David says, much more seriously.

As an amateur woodturner I was very interested in the technical aspects of the work while my wife, who does not turn, was interested in their aesthetics. We ended up making several passes through the show attempting to limit our selections to 25 pieces. Since we decided to share a ballot, our discussions as to what should be included and why (and what should not and why) were very interesting! At the end we found the process of judging them to have added to our appreciation of what we had seen and the enjoyment of attending.

I believe art exists only when there are those to experience what the artist has created. To paraphrase an old adage, would it be art if no one experienced what the artist had created? I believe the general public can make knowledgeable selections and its input is to be valued. I also think we do need jurors who possess the "professional expertise" to which David refers. Perhaps, in shows such as this, a method can be found to include the opinions of both sides in the selection process such that the "best" (as seen from many different perspectives) is chosen. Don't ask me how, as I still shudder when someone looks at a piece I have turned and says "Surely you don't expect me to buy a BOWL with holes in it."

—Rollin Hill

Several readers would like information on dust collection systems. Write to the journal editor with details on how well your system works.

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Photo by George Post

"It Certainly Was A Strange Night In Georgia" by Glenn Elvig, Minneapolis, Minnesota, 1991

40 inches tall by 24 inches wide by 10 inches deep
Turned and lacquered basswood, turned tagua nut, #3 billiard ball, slabbed and faux-finished tupelo

This piece is the third in a series that I started for a show in New York in May, 1991. The piece was partially finished when I attended the "Turners Challenge IV" opening in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. At the opening, I was moved by a piece done by Ted Hunter, from Toronto, Canada. I asked Ted to tell me about the piece. He told me of his concern about young children watching the prime-time coverage of the Gulf War on television and the effect it would have on them. His ideas, artistic vision, and sensitivity inspired me to get back into my studio and finish this piece. This sculpture was originally titled "I Hear You Ted," but it had more of a humorous visual feeling than fit the title. The new title, still based on the original inspiration, is a better fit and is in keeping with the other titles in this sculpture series. I still hear you Ted. Thanks!