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AMERICAN WOODTURNER

Journal of the American Association of Woodturners

June 2026 vol 41, no 3 • woodturner.org

ELEANOR LAKELIN: HER TREES, HER LIFE, AND HER SCULPTURE

NATURE'S CANVAS

WOODTURNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

A BOX WITH A TWIST

Felix Votteler Germany

I work with wood as more than just a material—it is a vessel of time, memory, and transformation. My artistic practice is rooted in dialogue with this living matter, not in control. I turn fresh, green wood, allowing its natural movement during the drying process to shape the final form. These transformations are not flaws but essential expressions of the wood's own story.

The trees I work with were not harvested for profit but felled out of necessity—often from urban spaces or historically significant places. One such tree grew in Grafeneck, a central site of the Nazi "euthanasia" murders. Another stood at the Jewish cemetery in my hometown of Tübingen. Carrying the memory of place within its fibers, the wood becomes a medium of remembrance.

In my hands, each piece becomes a space for reflection—a quiet conversation between past and present. I see my objects not as finished sculptures but as carriers of human and environmental history. They ask how memory can take form, how history becomes tangible, and how material can bear witness long after the events it has silently observed. ■

Felix Votteler was awarded the 2025 Glenn Lucas Woodturning Scholarship for Professional Development. For more, follow Felix on Instagram, @felix.votteler.

(*Left*) Untitled, 2025, Oak, mineral treatment, 15" × 7½" (38cm × 19cm)

(*Right*) Untitled, 2024, Oak, iron oxide, lime, 12½" × 12¼" (32cm × 31cm)

Felix Votteler with a selection of his turned vessels.

Untitled, 2023, Oak, copper, patina,
11" × 17¾" (28cm × 45cm)

Untitled, 2023, Ash,
mineral treatment,
30¾" × 9¾"
(78cm × 25cm)

Untitled, 2022,
Oak, graphite,
15¼" × 7½"
(39cm × 19cm)

Untitled, 2025, Oak, mineral treatment,
17¼" × 12¼" (44cm × 31cm)

Untitled, 2025, Oak, iron oxide,
17" × 20¾" (43cm × 53cm)

AAW | AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF WOODTURNERS

Mission: Strengthen and empower the global woodturning community

Vision: A world where woodturning is valued, inspirational, and accessible to all

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Journal of the American Association of Woodturners

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Cover: Eleanor Lakelin, *Echoes of Amphora I & II*, 2018, Horse chestnut burl, bleached, largest: 18" × 17" (46cm × 43cm)

Photo: Ester Segarra

Back cover: Woodturning in Higher Education

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DIVERSITY STATEMENT

The AAW strives to cultivate an organization built on mentorship, encouragement, tolerance, and mutual respect, thereby engendering a welcoming environment for all. To read AAW's full Diversity Statement, visit tiny.cc/AAWDiversity*

A NOTE ABOUT SAFETY

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

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

*Web address is case sensitive.

Editor's Note

As I read and re-read the stories in this issue, I see a thread of new beginnings and returns. Terry Martin goes back to his hometown to reflect on a lifetime of making art in wood. Dr. Seri Robinson brings turning into the university classroom, reaching students who otherwise might never have found a lathe. Jim and Bryan Rinde—grandfather and grandson—collaborate to preserve a real flower mid-bloom. In Chatter, an Arizona chapter traces its roots from a Tucson Shopsmith store to thirty years of giving back, and a Pennsylvania chapter brings turning to all ages (and Smokey Bear) at state parks. Craft knowledge moving between generations and across time is happening all around us. Send me your stories (and tips!), and see you in Raleigh!

—Sarah Marriage

From the President

Symposium, Symposium, Symposium!

We are excited to celebrate our 40th anniversary as we return to Raleigh, North Carolina, for our annual symposium. For many of us, the annual symposium is a reunion—an opportunity to reunite with old friends—and an unmatched opportunity to make new friends. I look forward to seeing and meeting many of you!

Those joining us in person will experience many innovations in programming and operations. The check-in experience will bring improved flow and new conveniences. And the reimagined Saturday evening will change from a very formal program to a celebration of awards, music, and mingling, promoting community and connections.

Vendors have stepped up to produce one of the largest trade shows in recent times. So, prepare your shopping lists! Give your list to a friend if you are not making the trip.

As anyone who has attended in the past knows, it requires a lot of work to produce these events. I would like to take the unusual step of recognizing here the members of the Symposium Committee and others behind the scenes who labor for most of a year to deliver an outstanding event: Jay Brown, Chair; Keith Baizer, Incoming Chair; Melissa McGrath, Event Manager; Linda Britt, Instant Gallery; Rick Baker and Kirk DeHeer, Videography; Jeff Brockett, Tool Room; Andy Cole, Professional Outreach; Tom Lawson, Videography; David and Susan Madden, Volunteers; Mark Dryer, Pen Turning; Steve Criscenzo, Virtual Symposium; Ron Day and Kris Roberts, Youth Turning; Ted Ross and Fred Burke, Raleigh, NC, Local Liaisons; and Gretchen Wilbrandt, Executive Director; Erica Nelson, Ad and Exhibitor Sales; Patty Kealy and Noelle Grimley, Site Selection and Contracts Negotiation/Execution.

Beyond this already impressive list of contributors, this event simply would not be possible without the incredible support of our local woodturning community. A special thank you to the North Carolina Woodturners Guild and the many AAW chapters near Raleigh whose members have stepped forward to offer their time, energy, and expertise. From behind-the-scenes logistics to on-the-ground support throughout the Symposium, your contributions make a meaningful difference, and we are deeply grateful.

2027 Symposium News

We're headed to Oklahoma City for our 2027 Symposium, June 24–27. We haven't visited this part of the country in a long time, so mark your calendars!

Updating our Bylaws

Under the leadership of Linda Britt, Secretary and Chair of the Bylaws and Policy Committee, the AAW Board is updating its bylaws and other governing documents to better serve our evolving community and ensure they reflect modern best practices. In March 2026, the Board adopted two amendments designed to strengthen our leadership: Directors may now serve up to three terms of three years (increased from two terms) so as to retain experienced leadership; and the prior three-year AAW membership requirement has been reduced to one year, opening doors for more qualified candidates. Several additional proposed amendments will require a member vote per Minnesota Statute 317A. Following a final review at the Board of Directors meeting this June in Raleigh, we will release the official voting schedule for those proposed amendments to be voted on by members.

As always, your thoughts and questions are most welcome at any time.

KC Kendall, Jr

KC Kendall
President

2027 AAW International Woodturning Symposium

Join us in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
June 24–27, 2027

AAW | AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF WOODTURNERS

AAWSYMPOSIUM.ORG

2026 AAW INTERNATIONAL WOODTURNING SYMPOSIUM

June 4–7 in Raleigh, North Carolina

AAW Virtual Symposium!

Can't Make it to Raleigh? WATCH FROM HOME!

20 Demonstrations Live-Streamed, Recorded, & Available to Watch Later

REGISTER FOR THE VIRTUAL SYMPOSIUM AT AAWSYMPOSIUM.ORG

The 2026 AAW Virtual Woodturning Symposium will be livestreaming demonstrations from Raleigh, North Carolina. You will have the opportunity to learn from woodturning demonstrators from Australia, France, Japan, New Zealand, and across the United States from the comfort of your own home. Twenty demonstrations ranging from fundamental skills to innovative forms will be livestreamed and recorded. Here is just a glimpse of some of the topics being covered:

- Turning Spalted Wood
- Sea Urchin Box
- Split Turned Frames
- Roped Bowl
- Taking Your Pens to the Next Level
- Surface Enhancements 101
- Heirloom Pepper Mills
- Understanding the Skew Chisel

Photo: Andi Wolfe

Our Heartfelt Thanks to Raleigh Symposium Sponsors and Exhibitors!

We extend our deepest thanks to the many donors and sponsors who make the AAW International Woodturning Symposium possible. Your generosity brings this event to life.

From companies like JPW Industries/Powermatic, whose donation of lathes supports demonstrations and hands-on learning, to Oneway Manufacturing, whose contribution of more than a thousand lanyards helps welcome every attendee, your impact is felt at every turn—pun intended. We are equally grateful to partners like Got Wood, LLC, who ensure our international demonstrators have the materials they need to share their craft, and to Crown Tools and the many others who continue to invest in our Youth Program.

We also want to recognize our Exhibitors, who have stepped up with outstanding donations to this year's Silent Auction.

Please know this is just a small sampling. We have received many more generous contributions beyond those mentioned here. We look forward to recognizing all donors and sponsors in our event handbook and annual report. Our community is extraordinary. Thank you for making it so.

Continue the Legacy: Support the AAW

When you consider what will happen to your belongings after you're gone, it is natural to think about the people and organizations that have meant something to you. If you have been a member of the American Association of Woodturners during your lifetime and believe in our mission, you can ensure we will continue to make a positive difference far into the future.

You can easily include a bequest in your will or trust, and doing so is flexible:

- It does not affect your finances during your lifetime.
- It is private, not disclosed until after your passing.
- You can change it any time before your death.

Specify an amount or percentage

You can specify a certain amount or a percentage of what is left in your estate after expenses. Generally, giving a percentage allows for more flexibility in your long-term planning. Your gift is deductible for federal estate tax purposes, and there is no limit on the deduction. Plus, it is often exempt from state inheritance taxes.

Sample bequest language

Simple bequest language that you can provide to your estate attorney might read like this: "I give, devise, and bequeath [specific dollar amount, or percentage of estate] to the American Association of Woodturners, a nonprofit organization located at 75 5th Street W, 220 Landmark Center, Saint Paul, MN 55102 USA [Tax ID: 45-3809279], for its general purposes."

Other ways to support AAW

Giving a one-time gift, volunteering, and being an advocate for the AAW in your community are great ways to show your support. Please consider a donation to support the community you love.

Scan here to donate today.

More on planning ahead

EXPLORE!

For practical advice on preparing your shop and tools for the future, log in at woodturner.org and use the Explore! search tool to find useful articles on the subject, including:

- "Closing Up Shop for the Last Time," by Mike Peace, October 2025 *AW* (vol 40, no 5)
- "From the Benefit of Experience: Clean Your Shop!" by Dale Larson, February 2021 *AW* (vol 36, no 1)

Celebrating Year One as We Celebrate Year 40!

A letter from the Executive Director

With all the hustle and bustle that comes with stepping in as Executive Director of a nearly forty-year-old organization, I can't believe a year has already gone by! As I reflect on year one, what stands out most is gratitude, a strong sense of community, and the feeling that we are just getting started—with forty years behind us and so much more ahead.

As a staff, we are learning how to work as a new team—asking good questions about process improvement, member engagement, vendor relationships, and how our decisions will affect woodturning and woodturners. We will continue to learn from you and implement quick wins while planning longer-term strategies. There are so many good ideas in this community, and we are working to match those ideas with staff capacity, timelines, and available funding. Rome wasn't built in a day…but I'm pretty sure the AAW was built in a weekend, right?

Symposium Tour

One of my goals as I grow with the organization is to meet as many turners in their communities as possible. That started with the 39th AAW Symposium in Saint Paul—my first—and from there I kept packing my bags. I attended the Southwest Association of Turners (SWAT) symposium, Texas Woodworking Festival, Rocky Mountain Woodturning Symposium, Irish Woodturners Guild National Seminar, Tennessee Association of Woodturners Symposium, and Midwest Penturners Gathering—and at every stop I found the same thing: people eager to learn, to share, and to connect over this craft. You are a talented, generous, and creative group, and you're starting to feel like family.

As I traveled to Ireland for the IWG National Seminar, I continued to experience that sense of community and support. The demonstrations were engaging and packed to standing room only. My conversations with IWG leadership were about the future: sharing and collaboration between two organizations supporting a global woodturning community. Days after the seminar, during some much-needed time off in the Irish countryside, a local resident in Connemara struck up a conversation about a fantastic seaweed bath, the landscape, and wood. Much to my surprise, an hour later she had us scheduled to visit Richard West of West Studios (richardwestwoodturner.com). Departing his shop, he planned out our next stop to see an opening exhibit of Lou Wilde's work (turningwilde.square.site) an hour and a half north. While the woodturning world is vast, it is also so very interconnected with daily life. I found support, community, collaboration, and creativity everywhere I drove!

This June, the 40th AAW International Woodturning Symposium in Raleigh will mark my second AAW symposium—but this time I'll arrive with twelve more months of experience and a much deeper appreciation for the community I've gotten to know. I'm proud to be working with the AAW, who forty years ago spearheaded bringing folks together to continue to expand and support woodturning throughout the world.

Time on the Lathe

Amid a whirlwind year of regional events, chapter meetings, and site visits for future AAW symposia, I also had the opportunity to get time on the lathe. I took a green wood bowl class with the Minnesota Woodturners Association

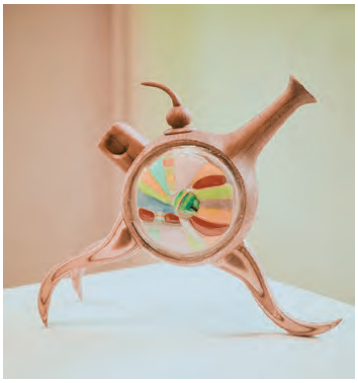
June 2025. Unfinished bowl by David Ellsworth. Minnesota.

June 2025. My first AAW International Woodturning Symposium. Saint Paul, Minnesota.

August 2025. With Gary Roberts Sr., an original AAW member, at the Southwest Association of Turners (SWAT) symposium. Waco, Texas.

September 2025. At the Turners Warehouse booth, Rocky Mountain Woodturners Symposium. Loveland, Colorado.

October 2025. Visiting Richard West's studio in Connemara. Ireland.



October 2025. Work by Lou Wilde. Ireland.

December 2025. Green wood bowl class with the Minnesota Woodturners Association. Minnesota.

(MWA)—my first bowl! While I'm a fiber gal at heart, I might be hooked on this turning thing. From there, I signed up for classes with the Mid-Minnesota Association of Woodturners (MMAW) and one-on-one lessons with the MWA. I'm lucky to be situated halfway between these two chapters—more chances to develop my skills and get to know more turners. MMAW operates out of a community makerspace, which has made my woodturning journey accessible, affordable, and inspirational.

The classes have been invaluable, but nothing beats a wonderful set of mentors I get to learn from one-on-one. If you haven't participated on either side of mentoring, I would highly recommend the experience. It has been a game-changer not only for my learning but also for building a deeper relationship with the community.

Firsts

My first day on the job began with a box. It contained an unfinished bowl David Ellsworth had turned during a demonstration, passed along to me by outgoing Executive Director Jennifer Newberg with a card saying that every leader of the organization should have a piece by David, the one who started it all. Within my first month, I was at the Symposium, immersed in the world built by the legends who started this community one pivotal weekend at Arrowmont. And then, the day after my first Symposium closed, David passed. Now as I reflect on my first year with the AAW, that first day, first month, first symposium hold that much more meaning, knowing this will be the first year—and the first symposium—without David. That carries so much weight, seeing how deeply David shaped this community. It is now with great reverence that we are the stewards to carry it forward.

Turning Forward

After year one, the staff continues to focus on processes, products, and procedures that allow us to better serve members and the general woodturning community. The Board of Directors and I are looking at long-term strategies and future directions for the organization. How do we continue to strengthen relationships within, across, and outside of the various interconnected sectors? What does it look like to participate as a vendor, demonstrator, artist, chapter, or woodturner in the community, and what could that look like in the future? The AAW is celebrating its 40th anniversary this year, and we are excited to plan for the next 40 years! We are grateful to be on this journey with you, supporting the past, present, and future of woodturning throughout the world.

Gretchen Wilbrandt
Executive Director, AAW

January 2026. With Nick Cook at the Tennessee Association of Woodturners Symposium. Franklin, Tennessee.

March 2026. Turning with a mentor. Minnesota.

Call for Demonstrators and POP Showcase Artists

For the 2027 AAW International Symposium

Application period: March 1 to June 30, 2026

The AAW's 41st Annual International Symposium will be held in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, June 24–27, 2027.

Demonstrators

This is your chance to share your expertise, inspire others, and be part of the largest woodturning event of the year. Whether you specialize in bowls, boxes, hollow forms, or creative innovations, AAW invites you to apply and share your craft on the international stage. Learn more at woodturner.org/calls.

POP Showcase artists

Each year the Professional Outreach Program (POP) showcases two wood artists at the AAW Annual International Symposium. They are either experienced artists who have made significant contributions to the woodturning field but have not received appropriate recognition, or emerging artists who have the potential to make significant contributions to the field.

The two selected artists give a presentation of their work and artistic practice, offer demonstrations, and have a shared show in the Special Exhibitions area. The awardees will also receive an honorarium and Symposium registration. Applications will be juried by the POP committee. Application details can be found at tiny.cc/POP_AS.

Emma Cook (left photo) and Jim Echter, demonstrators at the 2025 AAW Symposium, Saint Paul, Minnesota.

Photos: Andi Wolfe

Sign Up for the *Woodturning Fundamentals* Newsletter

Since 2010, *Woodturning Fundamentals* has been AAW's go-to resource for turners building their skills—packed with projects, techniques, and pro tips from experienced makers. We've heard your feedback about wanting a more structured way to keep up with new *Fundamentals* content, and we're responding. A dedicated monthly email newsletter is the first step.

Each newsletter issue will deliver the latest *Fundamentals* articles straight to your inbox. Whether you're a beginner learning to cut your first tenon or an experienced turner looking for your next weekend project, the newsletter puts it all in one place so you never miss an article.

It's a twice-monthly delivery of new articles—no hunting through the website, no wondering what you've missed.

The newsletter is free to AAW members, but you need to opt in to receive it. Sign up at **tiny.cc/WoodturningFundamentals** or scan the QR code below. Already subscribed to other AAW emails? This is a separate list—you'll still need to sign up.

Don't miss out on the projects, tips, and inspiration that have made *Woodturning Fundamentals* a favorite resource in the woodturning community for more than a decade.

Scan here to sign up.

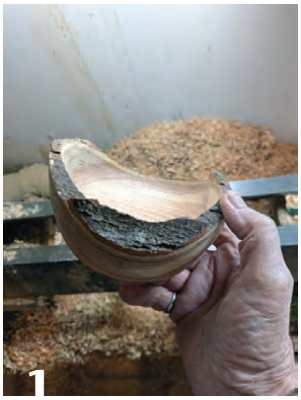
Tips

Share your turning ideas!

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

Extended Cole jaw cleats reach new purpose

In "Extend Reach of Jumbo Jaw Grippers" (*AW*, vol 34, no 6), I shared a method for extending the reach of Cole jaw cleats. Recently, I put that setup to a much more extended test. I had just finished a natural-edge bowl (*Photo 1*) and botched the application of my branding iron—the piece shifted in the press and the iron contacted only half the mortise in the base. I needed to clean out the mortise and try again, but the original tenon had been removed during hollowing. So, how to hold such an irregular piece?


1


2


3

It occurred to me to try my Cole jaws. I mounted the bowl with the cleats fully extended and shimmed one wing of the bowl to bring the base into true (*Photo 2*). After gently shaving out the partial brand, I left the piece mounted in the Cole jaws, removed the whole assembly from the lathe, and positioned it in my branding-iron press (*Photo 3*). Because the bowl was still chucked, the mortise surface was properly parallel to the iron, and the burn was perfect.

—Michael Hamilton-Clark, British Columbia, Canada, AAW member since 2013

Mobile turning station

My shop is in the garage, and I share it with two cars, so parts of the shop need to be movable. I wanted one convenient place to store everything I need for turning, and this was my solution—a rolling tool chest fitted with a shopmade tool rack. In the drawers, I have chucks, jam chucks, abrasives, waxes, other finishes, and all the gadgets that woodturners collect over the years.

—Chip Scholz, North Carolina, AAW member since 2016

Storing spindle stock

When I cut spindle stock, I usually cut a batch to standard dimensions for future projects. To keep like sizes together, I wrap them with stretch wrap and label the end. The first wrap can be slippery and hard to keep in place. A simple fix: lift one piece of stock, trap the wrap under it, and your first few winds will hold securely. Stack the neat bundles on your shelf, ready when a project calls for them. ■

—Mark Palma, Wisconsin, AAW member since 2012

Giving Back to a Desert Community

On a windy morning in Tucson, Arizona, I headed over to Flowing Wells High School to observe a meeting of the Desert Woodcrafters Association and interview some of their members about the organization. The DWA, as it is known by its members, has been around in some iteration since 1990. A group of three woodworkers, Lee Augst, Gene Sandusky, and Al Samuelson met at the Lowe's on Oracle Street when they attended demonstrations for Shopsmith products. Then they began to travel to Phoenix to attend meetings of a woodworking group there, but soon tired of the two-hour drive and agreed to meet in Tucson at the Shopsmith store owned by Augst. It was there that the group decided to officially incorporate as the Desert Woodcrafters in 1992. Years later, as the group grew, a few members decided to start a separate group just for woodturning, forming as the Southern Arizona Woodturners Association (SAZWA) in 2005. Meetings were held at the woodshop at Raytheon, a major Tucson employer, hosted by the company's woodworking club, the Woodchippers. Both SAZWA and the Desert Woodcrafters found their current home at Flowing Wells High School in 2010 at the suggestion of Ken Tower, a member who was a recently retired shop teacher there. The clubs operate in collaboration, since many people belong to both groups.

Currently, most of the members of the DWA are retirees, many of whom have recently moved to Tucson and now have a lot of time to focus on woodworking and building up their shops at home. Because most have already given lots of handmade wooden gifts to all their family and friends, they now focus most activities on giving back to the Tucson community by donating handcrafted items to a variety of organizations. Leading up to the holiday season, members build over 3,200 wooden toys to give away through the local organization Toys for Children. They also participate in the Beads of Courage project, annually giving about fifty children with serious medical conditions a handcrafted, lidded bowl for storing the beads they receive each time they undergo a medical procedure. For the local Audubon Society, they build over sixty birdhouses annually—a great project for beginners new to woodworking. As a gift for veterans, they make 2,000 pens each year, including pens turned from purpleheart for recipients of the Purple Heart medal. Members also work on their own handcrafted items, at least one hundred per year, to donate to the Arizona Diaper Bank for their annual auction.

The monthly meetings are reserved for many fun and educational activities, including a show and tell and demonstrations organized by Vice President Adrian Barton. Around thirty to forty members attend each meeting to discuss club business, items that need to be made for donation, and to learn new skills. Members bring in portable projects that showcase a unique technique or skill. Ken Tower, acting as the MC, shows them off and explains what was needed to complete each one. For the monthly President's Choice, President Bud Bencic sets a project theme—such as love, which resulted in many heart-shaped gifts for loved ones, or the 2 × 4 challenge—and members bring in their responses. At each meeting, a Bring Back raffle is held: the winner takes home a handcrafted item made by the previous winner. This new winner then brings a unique creation to the next meeting's drawing.

Many members of the Desert Woodcrafters Association and the Southern Arizona Woodturners

Members of the DWA and SAZWA gather at Flowing Wells High School in Tucson, Arizona. Background, standing (far left): Ken Walston. Background, seated (l-r): George Lewis, Mike Phillips, Paul Swane. Standing (l-r): Ron Pullen, Terry Glover. Foreground, seated (l-r): Dan Williams, Fred Frankenfeld, Alan Crosby.

Association have also joined Xerocraft, Tucson's makerspace that has its own woodshop, laser-cutting tools, and a 3D printer. All three organizations are focused on improving safety for their members and especially the children who are the recipients of the toys they make. At their March 2025 meeting, Frank Pickett gave a talk about safety regulations for wooden toys. There was also a discussion about fire safety after a member shared a recent incident in which a magnifying glass, discarded with other shop materials in his trailer, started a fire. Bob Deines, a retired firefighter, has offered to help with many fire-safety-related activities.

The group also focuses on teaching members the precautions woodworkers should take while working in a desert climate and how that can affect wood and the safety of other items. Members also teach each other new tips they have learned for laser cutters and other new technologies now commonly used in woodworking. It's clear that in addition to the new woodworking skills they develop and the community-minded goals of the organizations, members enjoy participating in this group because of the camaraderie and sense of fun. For their members—and particularly those new to Tucson or recently retired—the DWA and SAZWA offer something beyond the craft: a welcoming community built on friendship and giving back.

—Kate Stewart, archivist and writer

A pen-turning demonstration at a club meeting. Left to right: a guest, Ken Walston, Mike Phillips (in faceshield), Paul Swane.

Pens turned from purpleheart, displayed for distribution to Purple Heart recipients.

Chris Roads (left) and George Lewis assemble pens at a club meeting.

Segmented, lidded boxes made by club members for the Beads of Courage program, which provides beads to children undergoing treatment for serious medical conditions.

Woodturning as Community Outreach at Pennsylvania State Parks

When Smokey Bear lets the chips fly, people gather. Letting someone in a giant brown costume steal the spotlight is just some of the fun that can happen when the Nittany Valley Woodturners (NVW) demonstrate at a park.

Pennsylvania State Parks offer a year-round schedule of festivals and community events keyed to local culture and seasonal changes. For the last four years, NVW, headquartered in State College, Pennsylvania, has regularly attended two. Black Moshannon State Park, in Philipsburg, holds Lumber Legacy Days in July. Reeds Gap State Park, in Milroy, throws its Fall Festival in October.

Both are one-day events that run from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. One to two thousand people attend each.

It takes hours of preparation and good organization to ensure such short demonstrations go smoothly.

Watching lathe turning while listening to music from a live country band and smelling chili made by local Boy Scouts is a great way to introduce—or reintroduce—people of all ages to our hobby and gain new members. Quite often, adults will reminisce about taking woodturning in high school or how they've always meant to set up the lathe they inherited. We make sure they go off with information about our upcoming meetings and classes. Youngsters stand fascinated as they watch a top being turned. They are delighted when the finished toy is presented to them.

The demonstrations, held rain or shine, have other benefits. Members can swap tips or receive hands-on training from each other.

Smokey Bear posing with a spindle gouge. Club member Stephen Tuttle, with faceshield, stands by to critique Smokey's form. Club member Jim Hopkins, plaid shirt, takes a moment to enjoy the scene. Note: Smokey isn't turning since we didn't have a faceshield large enough to fit over his forest ranger hat!

Club member Jim Hopkins demonstrates his turning techniques while Ken Vasko (orange hat) discusses the display items with a visitor.

NVW member Dennis Snider explains woodturning techniques to potential future AAW members as Ken Vasko demos.

Friendships are formed among turners who have worked in the stifling heat, driving downpours, or biting autumn winds.

Our setup

Our demonstration setup has four zones: a working lathe, a table displaying items made by members, another table holding antique turnings, and a children's space where kids can color their tops.

The club's midi-lathe is surrounded by a Lexan shield to protect festival goers. Strategically placed folding tables prevent the public from getting close (that doesn't include Smokey Bear). While a turner concentrates on his or her work, another member

explains the techniques used. And, of course, they promote upcoming meetings or classes and keep a sign-up sheet handy for names and email addresses.

As the lathe spins, others work the crowd and talk about the new and vintage items. Festival goers usually want to know about how a piece was made and what wood was used.

We must disappoint anyone who wants to buy something they see. Pennsylvania parks do not allow us to sell. But we will give them information on our upcoming craft fairs.

At the children's area, kids can choose one from the hundreds of tops made by NVW members throughout the year. Some tops come decorated, but others need a colorful touch using the markers and paint pens provided. And sometimes, surprisingly, a watchful club member needs to teach a youngster how to use their new prize.

(*Above*) The pavilion is all set up waiting for the crowds.

(*Left*) Festival goers gather around the NVW demonstration area.

Tips for your club

When considering demonstrating at a park, check with the organizers and your club's insurance company for insurance requirements. Check with the park too to see if it plans to provide electricity or a (quiet) generator.

Preparing for a demo is front-loaded. Creating a detailed checklist is essential. The lathe must be tuned up. Tools sharpened. Blanks prepared. Sandpaper organized. Mounting hardware located.

Then there's collecting the lighting, extension cords, hats, sunglasses, comfortable shoes, snacks and drinks. (Lunch usually consists of the Boy Scouts' chili.)

Individual turners should bring their own smock, faceshield, and tools. It is best to have at least three members, but it's better with four who can rotate positions. Be aware not everyone is comfortable demonstrating in public.

While sometimes a canopy or pavilion is provided, it's good to take a pop-up or two, even in hot, sunny weather.

Depending on where the state park is located, the trip can be long. We give ourselves at least an hour to set up and tear down. When the crowds have left, we make sure to clear up any trash and shavings.

Turning at state parks has been a fun, positive experience for the NVW. It is a great way to attract future members, regardless of age. Just remember to bring a giant faceshield for Smokey Bear. ■

—Ken Vasko, President, Nittany Valley Woodturners; Paul Demmert, Vice President, Nittany Valley Woodturners; Jerilynn Schumacher, NVW Spouse Volunteer

CALENDAR

Calendar of Events

Send event info to editor@woodturner.org. August issue deadline: June 15.

Canada

October 16–18, 2026, Wood Symposium presented by Intersections Wood Collaborative, Owen Sound, Ontario. Over 15 presenters on traditional and contemporary woodworking and woodturning, vendor displays, evening banquet and keynote, and feature exhibition. Intersections Wood Collaborative was developed from the vision of Stephen Hogbin (1942-2022). For more, visit intersectionswoodcollaborative.org.

England

October 10, 11, 2026, Association of Woodturners of Great Britain (AWGB) biennial seminar, under the new name Festival of Woodturning, Crowne Plaza Hotel, Stratford-upon-Avon. Demonstrators to include Ruby Cler, Tomislav Tomasic, Ronald Kanne, Pascal Oudet, Emmet Kane, Chris Fisher, Katie Armstrong, Emma Cook, Phil Irons, and Stuart Mortimer. For more, visit awgb.co.uk/festival-2026.

Ireland

October 17, 18, 2026, Irish Woodturners Guild (IWG) National Seminar, Killeshin Hotel, Portlaoise, County Laois. Demonstrators to include Elizabeth Weber (USA), Lorin Brückin (France), Guillaume Fontaine (France), Simon Hope (UK), and David O'Neill (Northern Ireland). For more, visit iwg.ie.

California

Through August 31, 2026, *Blurred Boundaries: The Art of Merryll Saylan* exhibition, Turtle Bay Exploration Park, Redding. Exhibition of work from internationally known woodturner and contemporary artist Merryll Saylan, shifting the paradigm from simple turned works to the realm of contemporary art.

Colorado

September 18–20, 2026, Rocky Mountain Woodturning Symposium, The Ranch Events Complex, Loveland. Long-running symposium (since 1998) featuring 45 demonstrations, hands-on turning area, gallery display, and longest shaving contest. Demonstrators include Stuart Batty, Max Brosi, Kip Christensen, Beth Ireland, Elizabeth Weber, Sam Angelo, Neal Brand, Josh Buettner, Beth Buettner, Leo Louise, Mark Kielpinski, Dave Landers, Noah "Noble" Peters, Chad Schimmel, Angela Van Wiltenburg and Mark Wallace. For more, visit rmwoodturningsymposium.com.

Illinois

July 30–August 2, 2026, Turn-On! Chicago 2026, Hilton Chicago, Northbrook. Featured demonstrators to include Kirk DeHeer, Greg Gallegos, Janice Levi, Matt Monaco, and Sammy Long. Additional regional demonstrators to be announced. Event to include a tradeshow, instant gallery, banquet, raffle, and auction. For more, visit turnonchicago.com.

September 18–20, 2026, The 8th Segmented Woodturners Symposium, Hilton Chicago, Northbrook. Demonstrators to include Robin Costelle, Tom Lohman, Malcolm Tibbetts, Curt Theobald, Steve Bonny, Martha Collins, Doug Drury, Reid Gilmore, Jeff Hornung, Gerald Jensen, Lloyd Johnson, Kip Lockhart, and Al Miotke. Event to include tradeshow, instant gallery, banquet, and a spouse event. For more, visit segmentedwoodturners.org.

Minnesota

Multiple 2026 exhibitions, AAW's Gallery of Wood Art, Landmark Center, Saint Paul:

- May 31–July 26: *Art from the Lathe: Selections from the AAW Collection*
- August 10–November 30, 2026: *Turning 40* (AAW's 2026 member exhibition)
- Ongoing: *Touch This!; Around the Hus—Turning in Scandinavian Domestic Life*; vintage and historic lathes and turned items

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

Montana

September 25–27, 2026, Yellowstone Woodturners Symposium, Roaring 20's Club House, Billings. Featured demonstrator Tom Wirsing, past president of AAW and expert in platters and bowls. For more, visit facebook.com/turners18 or email Roger Kesler at rogerkesler@msn.com.

Pennsylvania

September 25–27, 2026, The Mid Atlantic Woodturning Symposium, Wyndham Resort and Convention Center, Lancaster. Demonstrators to include Derek Weidman, Colwin Way, Heather Marusiak, Tomislav Tomašić, Pat Carroll, and Mike Sorge. For more, visit mawts.com.

Tennessee

January 29, 30, 2027, Tennessee Association of Woodturners 38th Annual Woodturning Symposium, Marriott Hotel and Convention Center, Franklin. Demonstrators include Kirk DeHeer, Stewart Furini, Sammy Long, Elizabeth Weber. There will be an instant gallery, banquet, and auction. For more, visit tnwoodturners.org/symposium or call 931-580-0686.

Texas

August 28–30, 2026, SWAT (Southwest Association of Turners) annual symposium, Waco Convention Center, Waco. Demonstrators to include Doug Schneiter, Jim Burt, Ellen Starr, Travis Clayton, Michael Hardin, Bruce Pratt, and Raleigh Lockhart. Registration includes lunch each day, vendor tradeshow, and instant gallery. For more, visit swaturners.org.

Virginia

October 24, 25, 2026, Virginia Woodturners, Inc., biennial symposium, Augusta Expo Center, Fishersville. Demonstrators include Dennis Belcher, Clifton Chisum, Dennis Fuge, Graeme Priddle, Melissa Engler, Mark Gardner, Cliff Guard, Rudy Lopez, John C. Lucas, Annie Ogg, and Scarlette Rouse. For more, visit virginiawoodturners.com.

REMOTE DEMONSTRATION EVENT CALENDAR

Learn about upcoming interactive remote demonstrations (IRDs) from the AAW community at tiny.cc/IRDCalendar. Demonstrators can also submit entries to this online calendar at this link.

TURNING A GALL

Peter M. Smith

A vase turned from a sycamore gall, embellished and polished, 6" × 4½" (15cm × 11cm). Note the near absence of grain.

A friend was out walking and noticed a tree branch on the side of the road which had a large bulge on it. He told me about it, and suggested I might collect it and turn the wood. Which I did. I determined it was sycamore from the branch leaves.

Such a piece is a gall—a sort of tumor caused by an infection or insects in the wood (*Photo 1*). This is different from a burl—which is the tree's response to an injury. Both have the same bulbous shape. Burls are highly prized for their attractive wood grain, whereas galls have no obvious grain. There are some reports of galls being full of insects...so it was with some trepidation I trimmed the lump to see what was inside. No insects, hardly any grain showing.

I pondered the best approach to turning the piece since it was lumpy and unbalanced, of an ovoid shape, 9" (23cm) long, 6" (15cm) across. Should I cut it in half and make two small bowls? Or keep it as one piece and make a vase shape? I decided on the vase approach, shaped the lump with a small hand chain saw (a very useful tool) and epoxied it to a waste block of oak which was then used as a mount for a 3" faceplate (*Photo 2*).

It came into its ovoid shape fairly easily with my trusty roughing scraper, with enough bark and cracks to remind me of its heritage. Then I hollowed it out through a 1¼" (3cm) opening at the top after using a long drill bit as a depth gauge (*Photo 3*).

This is the first hollow piece I have made for a while and it was not, shall we say, thin and light (*Photo 4*). The gall wood was unexpectedly dense and only semi-wet. (Can we call it wood? Google says "plant tissue," whatever that is.)

I was not satisfied with its plain look so I embellished it with a bead on the neck and some grooves. I sanded it normally and sealed it (which in my case means a coat of shellac, which is then sanded off, to be followed by Danish oil). When this was dry I parted it from the oak and polished it via the Beall buffing system. *Voilà!* A stable but heavy vase with an interesting history. ■

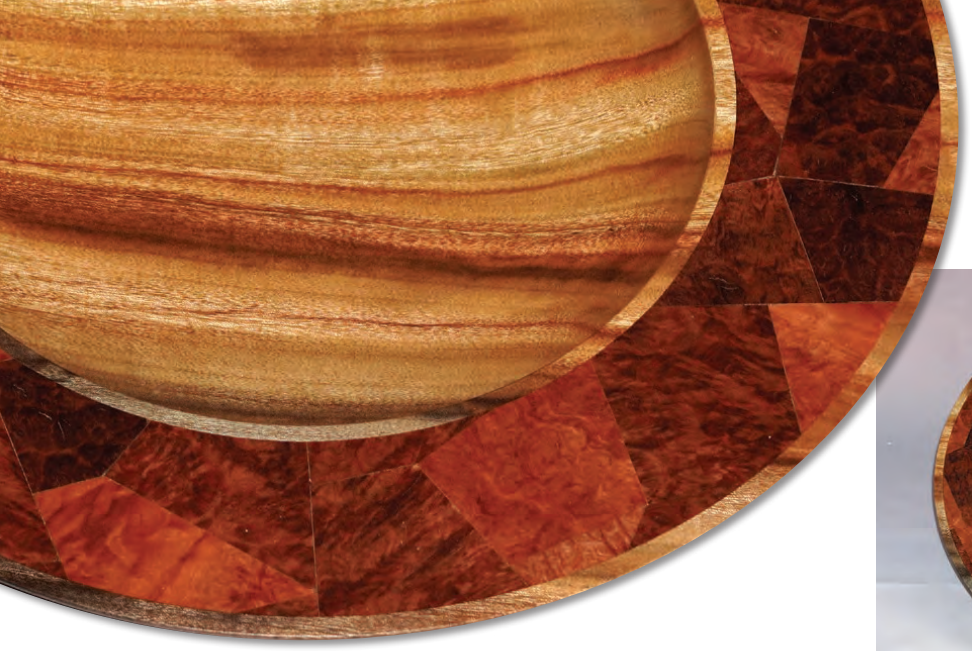
The raw gall with its "parent" branch.

The author attached an oak waste block as a mount for the faceplate.

After shaping the exterior, a long drill bit serves as a depth gauge.

The hollowed vase is ready for sanding.

Peter M. Smith has been turning for over thirty years in Princeton, NJ, where there are so many trees and woods, there is no shortage of raw material.



MOSAIC BURL PLATTER

Simon Begg

I know that I am like most woodturners and woodworkers: a hoarder of timber. Even the small bits will be useful one day, especially if they are a nice burl or exotic timber, is what we tell ourselves. For me, that pile of burl offcuts was growing and I needed to find a project for them.

Offcuts lend themselves well to smaller projects, but I wanted to go bigger. Segmented work is best with consistently sized sections, but these burl pieces were not going to be easy to work in that way. That's when I thought of mosaics. The beauty of a tile mosaic is that any sized piece can be matched to fill in the gaps, and this is why I chose it as my inspiration for this piece.

The raw materials

A camphor blank with a couple of burl offcuts.

Gathering materials

For the platter section to carry the inlay, I had a perfect piece of camphor that was 370mm (14-½") in diameter and 50mm (2") thick (*Photo 1*). This piece had discoloration along the edge for about 70mm (2-¾"), which was going to be mostly hidden by the inlay. It was probably the reason the wood sat on the shelf for so long. I started the platter like most of my other pieces—on a screw chuck with spacer rings to limit the depth of the center hole (*Photo 2*).

Shaping the bottom

The rough shaping was done with a pull cut (*Photo 3*). The key to a good pull cut is a lower handle, the gouge in a semi-open position, and the tool perpendicular to the wood. From teaching, I have noticed most catches with a pull cut come from the handle coming around too far from perpendicular, and the corner of the wing getting caught in the wood. The cut should be coming from closer to the tip of the tool.

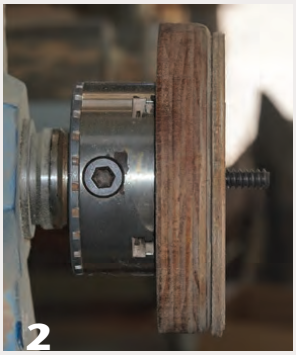
The pull cut isn't a bevel-rubbing cut and can leave tooling marks and tear out in the timber. For this reason, I then use a push cut to clean up the surface for sanding (*Photo 4*). The position of a push cut has the bowl gouge in a semi-open position, the tool handle just below level, and the bevel in contact with the wood. This is the cut where you may hear it described as riding or floating the bevel.

The profile of the platter starts with a gradual curve from the foot and is steeper at the edges (*Photo 5*). The steep edge gives me the space for the recess that will house the inlay on the face of the platter. If the edge was too shallow, there would be the risk of the recess breaking through the other side, or I would need a much wider rim for the inlay.

Designing the inlay

With the underside of the platter done, I now have the diameter of the finished piece, and I can work out the design of the face. Using a sheet of 6mm (one-quarter inch) plywood, I marked out the

Shaping the bottom



Adding spacer rings to the screw chuck limits the depth of the center hole.

The author rough shapes the bottom with a pull cut.

Then switches to a push cut to clean up the surface for sanding.

The steep edge of the platter's profile allows room for turning the inlay recess without breaking through the back.

Laying out the ring

The inner and outer diameters of the inlay are laid out on a sheet of 6mm plywood.

Creating the mosaic tiles

Triangular burl offcuts are sliced into tiles at the bandsaw, and surfaced at the linisher (belt sander).

Assembling the mosaic ring

The burl pieces are glued onto the plywood template with CA glue, while PVA glue applied along the edges between pieces allows a bit of flexibility for wood movement across the many grain directions.

inner and outer diameters of my inlay, accounting for the width of the edges of the rim (*Photo 6*).

Creating the mosaic

The burl sections are often triangular, as they would have been the corners taken off bowl blanks. Cutting parallel to the sides of these triangular sections, I sawed flat slices about 6–8mm (¼"–5⁄16") thick (*Photo 7*). When cutting them on the bandsaw, I have a sheet of plywood underneath to reduce the gap around the blade. This is helpful for cutting anything small. I then cut each thin slice into random four- or five-sided tiles.

Using my linisher (belt sander), I flattened one face of each of the tiles and cleaned up the edges (*Photo 8*). I glued the first piece on the plywood (flattened side down) with cyanoacrylate (CA) glue for its quick curing time (*Photo 9*). When adding the next piece, it was important to have the edges of the mosaic pieces glued together. I used PVA along the edges of the wood, as there is a bit of flexibility with movement, which is important with so many grain directions (*Photo 10*). I used an awl to remove any glue that spilled over into an area where another piece of ▸

wood needed to go. I also did my best to mix up the color of the burl pieces. They are fairly similar, but I did want to see some of the patchwork pattern.

With most of the bigger pieces in, the smaller gaps and edges need matching pieces. I start with sections larger than what is required. Marking side lengths and approximate angles (*Photo 11*), I take the piece to the bandsaw and sander to get the shape. It can be a bit of trial and error (*Photo 12*), which is why I leave the sections oversized at the start. I also make sure the pieces that are glued down extend beyond my pencil lines marking the boundaries of the inlay. Variations in thickness of the burl aren't an issue, as it will be trued up on the lathe.

Filling in the gaps

Marking side lengths and approximate angles on an oversized piece to fit a gap in the ring.

The fitted piece in place. Fitting is a bit of trial and error, which is why the author leaves sections oversized at the start.

Re-marking the boundaries

With the burl pieces extending beyond the original boundaries drawn on the plywood, the inner and outer diameters are redrawn onto the surface of the tiles.

Mounting the ring

A faceplate centered on the plywood. The screws sit well inside the mosaic ring, so there's no risk of interference.

Preparing the mosaic ring

With all the pieces glued in, I re-drew the inner and outer boundaries of the inlay onto the surface of the tiles (*Photo 13*). The plywood with the burl was cut into a circle and mounted to a faceplate (*Photo 14*). On the lathe, I turned the ring to an even thickness and trued up the edges to the dimensions that were originally sketched onto the plywood. I used a small skew chisel as a scraper, as I find this gives me a lot of control for fine-tuning dimensions (*Photos 15, 16*). With a marker, I wrote both the internal and external measurements into the center of the plywood, as those are needed for cutting the recess in the platter (*Photo 17*). No sanding is needed for this part, as it will all be hidden in the recess.

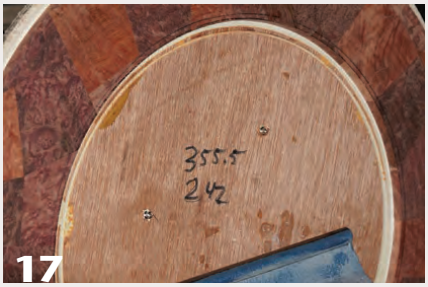
Creating the inlay recess

With the inlay prepared, the platter could be put back on the lathe and the dimensions of the inlay marked onto the wood (*Photo 18*). The inlay recess was cut with a bowl gouge and cleaned up with a small skew used as a scraper (*Photo 19*). I worked slowly towards the edges, test-fitting the inlay until there was no gap (*Photo 20*). This took me a few attempts to fine-tune. The bottom of the recess needed to be flat

Truing the ring

A small skew chisel, used as a scraper, trues the mosaic ring.

The author routinely checked the face of the mosaic ring for flatness until it was true.

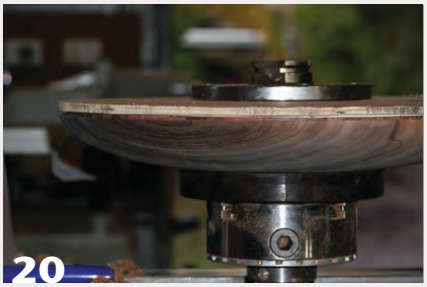


The internal and external measurements are written on the center of the plywood for reference when cutting the recess.

Creating the inlay recess


18
The camphor platter back on the lathe with the inlay dimensions transferred onto the face.


19
Cutting the recess with a skew chisel used as a scraper.


20
Test-fitting the mosaic ring in the recess. The author worked slowly towards the edges, testing the fit until there was no gap.

for good glue contact with the inlay. A depth of 4mm (5⁄32") was ideal, as it held plenty of inlaid material without going too deep and out the other side.

Setting the mosaic

When gluing the inlay to the platter, I took the piece off the lathe and filled the recess with PVA, making sure the edges had a bead of glue as well. This is much easier than doing the entire operation while the piece is still on the lathe, as the glue would have run down. I pressed the inlay in and put the assembly back on the lathe. The tailstock can work as a great clamp. Using a large caul, I applied pressure across the entire surface (*Photo 21*). I added screws through the plywood into the blank for more pressure in the middle. I am glad I had not turned the middle of the platter yet for that reason.

Shaping the top

The next day, I was able to turn through the plywood and reveal the pattern of the burl mosaic (*Photo 22*). Any small gaps were filled with CA glue and sawdust. I found scraping the burl to be the easiest way to get a clean finish. The center of the platter was hollowed with a push cut working towards the middle (*Photo 23*). When sanding, I did use a cork block on the inlaid area, as I wanted a perfectly flat surface. As I do with my platters and bowls that are more for decoration, I sprayed on lacquer for an even and consistent finish.

For a collection of random burl offcuts and a piece of average camphor, the finished piece was better than I expected. Where I used burl, exotic timber or anything with intrigue could be used. The pieces could be similar to each other like mine were, or you could mix contrasting woods to make a bolder pattern. Smaller pieces could be arranged to create an image, or consistent wedges could be cut like a standard segmented ring. There are plenty of options where your creativity could push this idea, and I am excited to see what others may come up with. Even if it is an excuse to justify holding on to every little offcut from other projects. ■

Simon Begg is a full-time woodturner in Sydney, Australia. He has taught nationally and internationally, specializing in his modern take on German ring turning, carved embellishment, and bowl turning. For more, visit simonbeggswoodturning.com.

Setting the mosaic


21
A large caul distributes clamping pressure from the tailstock across the inlay. The author also added screws in the center for extra pressure in the middle.

Completing the platter


22
After turning through the plywood, the burl mosaic pattern is revealed.


23
The author hollowed the center of the platter with push cuts working towards the middle.

Casting a FRESH FLOWER IN A RESIN BOTTLE STOPPER

Bryan and Jim Rinde

The finished bottle stopper, with a mānuka flower preserved in clear polyester resin.

Background

During the COVID-19 lockdown in 2021, boredom was a very common phenomenon. Bryan was at home studying for university over Zoom rather than living in the dorms on campus. Often, we sat to work on the patio where the setting was ideal for studying; quiet, peaceful, and full of color from the garden. After staring at the flowers long enough, we thought about whether there was a way to preserve them in their three-dimensional form without degradation. We then got to work.

We wanted to find out whether it was possible to cast a fresh flower in resin. After devising a potential method of preservation, we tested many candidate flowers to determine which ones retained their color and shape when exposed to resin.

Plenty of time was spent through trial-and-error, testing every one of the dozens of flowers we found in the garden. The characteristics we were tracking were color, shape, and texture. A select few species clearly maintained these qualities better than others, usually ones with low water content.

Since we chose a bottle stopper as our project, the flower needed to be small enough to fit inside a 1½"- (4cm-) diameter mold. We selected mānuka/tea tree (*Leptospermum scoparium*), which has flower clusters about ½" (12mm) in diameter. Other flowers that worked well included bougainvillea (*Bougainvillea glabra*), cock's comb (*Celosia*), pink breath of heaven (*Coleonema pulchellum*), California Douglas iris (*Iris douglasiana*), lavender (*Lavandula*), and firethorn (*Pyracantha*). However, most were too large for this application.

All resin systems that cure by chemical reaction (epoxies and polyesters, for example) liberate heat as they cure. If the flower has too much moisture and the temperature gets too hot, the liquid water changes state and becomes a gas, which leads

to bubbles in the casting. To prevent these bubbles, we used a relatively dry flower and first coated it with diluted polyester resin as a sealer before casting in the mold.

Day 1

Preparing the flower

To prep the flower, we spray-coated it with polyester casting resin (SIL95BA-14 from Fiberglass Hawaiian) diluted with styrene to obtain a sprayable viscosity (*Photo 1*). We used a Preval spray system intended for spraying small quantities of coating material. It consists of a glass bottle for holding the coating material and a pressure canister/spraying head.

Making the mold

While the flower's coating was curing, we prepared the casting mold. We started with a length of ABS plastic pipe with a 2" (5cm) diameter and a piece of scrap wood. We mounted the piece of scrap wood in a four-jaw chuck and turned it round. Using a parting tool, a groove was cut into the wood at the radius of the plastic pipe (*Photo 2*). This would become the base that the plastic pipe would be glued onto to create the mold.

While the assembly remained on the lathe, we glued a smaller piece of wood to the top of the base, on center, with Gorilla Glue (*Photo 3*). This small piece of wood will be visible in the final product, so care should be taken to find an aesthetically pleasing piece that complements the flower. With the tailstock for support, we turned the mount to the desired shape and drilled a hole to fit the stem of the flower (*Photo 4*). We removed the setup from the lathe to glue the flower in place and ensure it sat straight in the base (*Photos 5, 6*).

To determine the length of pipe to cut, we measured the height of the base plus the flower, with some overage included. For a clean flat cut, we mounted the plastic pipe on the lathe and cut it with a parting tool (*Photo 7*). We coated the inside surface of the pipe with mineral oil to serve as a mold release, then seated it in the groove in the base around the flower and glued it in place (*Photo 8*). When the resin cures, the mold release ensures that it shrinks away from the pipe and doesn't pull away from the flower. ▸

Preparing the flower

Spray-coating the flower with diluted resin seals the surface of the organic material before casting.

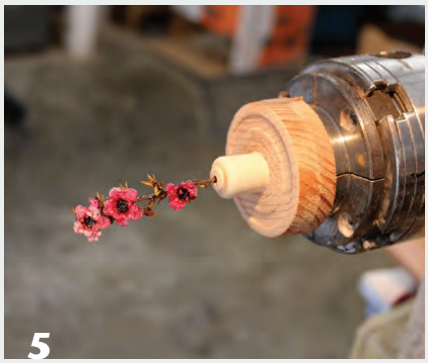
Making the mold base

(*2*) A groove in scrap wood will register the ABS pipe.

(*3*) A smaller piece of wood glued on center will serve as the flower mount.

(*4*) A small hole is drilled in the mount for the flower stem.

Securing the flower



5

The stem of the resin-coated flower fits into the turned mount.

6

The base is removed from the lathe to glue the flower in place and check its alignment.

Attaching the pipe

7

The ABS pipe is cut to length on the lathe with a parting tool.

8

The completed mold is ready for casting, with the pipe seated in the grooved base and the flower in position.

Casting the flower

For the casting, we catalyzed the resin with methyl ethyl ketone peroxide (MEKP) at a lower ratio to reduce the exotherm. The resin has a viscosity of about 9,000 cps at 20°C, medium gel time, low exotherm, and low shrinkage. We calculated the volume of polyester resin required based on the approximate volume of the mold. (*Volume of a cylinder* = π × *radius*^{2} × *height*) A typical amount of MEKP for the volume of resin we needed would be 10 to 15 drops and would cause a fast cure and high exotherm. We used one to two drops for a longer cure with very little temperature increase.

Since we used such a small amount of curing agent, the working time was extended and any bubbles that occurred during mixing had time to float to the top surface. We slowly poured the resin into the mold to avoid trapping air, then left it to cure overnight at room temperature (*Photos 9–11*).

Day 2

Removing the mold

Once cured, we mounted the mold on the lathe in the reverse direction so the plastic pipe was in the chuck. We then cut off the original wood base to expose the bottom of the casting (*Photo 12*).

Casting

9

Catalyzed resin is poured slowly to reduce the likelihood of trapping air bubbles.

10

The slow-curing resin shows no bubbles.

11

After curing overnight, the casting is ready for the lathe.

Using a 5⁄16" drill mounted in the tailstock, we drilled a hole into the bottom of the casting and manually threaded it to accept a 3⁄8" × 16 tpi screw (*Photo 13*). We sanded the bottom surface flat and finished it, as this is the surface that contacts the bottle stopper insert. Once the bottom surface was complete, we turned the casting around and screwed it onto a 3⁄8" screw chuck and brought up the tailstock for added stability. Once we began turning away the ABS pipe (*Photo 14*), the mold release on its interior allowed it to come free easily.

Shaping the casting

The surface of the casting was rough and uneven since the shrinkage of the resin is nonuniform (*Photo 15*). With the tailstock in place for support, we shaped the casting to a desirable bottle stopper form. After shaping, we wet-sanded the turning to 12,000 grit (*Photos 16, 17*), then polished on a buffing wheel to achieve a beautifully clear surface that shows off the flower nicely. All that remained was to screw on the bottle stopper insert and admire the preserved bloom inside. ■

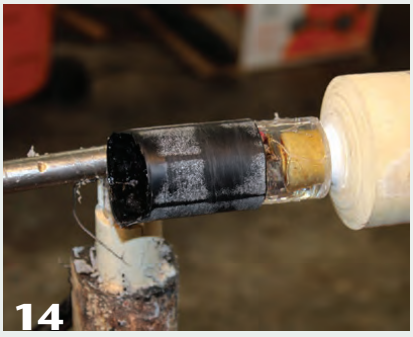
Bryan Rinde (brinde@ucsd.edu) has been learning woodturning from his grandfather Jim since elementary school. He recently graduated from UC San Diego with a degree in biochemistry and plans to work in research while preparing for graduate school.

Jim Rinde (jerinde@verizon.net) first woodturned in high school in the 1950s and returned to the craft after getting his first lathe in 1988. A retired research chemist, he worked with curable plastic resins and adhesives for twenty-five years and has written several articles on their use in woodturning.

Removing the mold

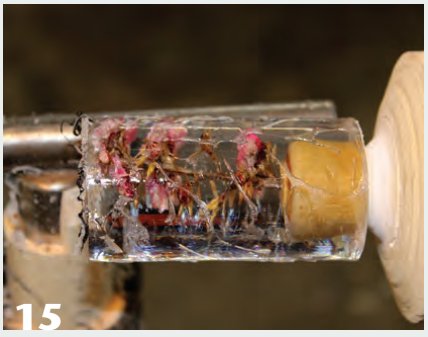
12 The wood base is cut off to expose the bottom of the casting.

13 Then a hole is drilled and tapped for the bottle stopper insert.

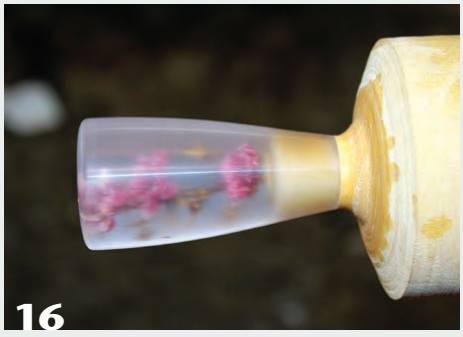


14 With the casting flipped around and mounted on a screw chuck, the pipe is turned away.

Shaping and finishing



15 After the pipe is removed, the casting is rough. The uneven surface results from nonuniform shrinkage of the resin.



16 After shaping, the resin is sanded to 400 grit, still a dull sheen.

17 After wet-sanding to 12,000 grit, the casting is transparent and ready for buffing.

A BOX WITH A TWIST

Andrew Kuby

Learning to turn on multiple axes expands your skill set and opens a realm of possibilities. This twisted box is an easy entry point that works well in intermediate turning classes. I was first taught this technique by Jimmy Clewes in the early 2000s, but multiaxis turning has been practiced for centuries (see the sidebar for further reading). This project uses four separate axes: the true center of the blank and three offset axes spaced 120° apart and twisted 120°. The concept is the same as that described in my article on twisted napkin rings, February 2021 *AW* (vol 36, no 1). The result is an impressive little box that is a lot easier to make than it seems. Once you have mastered this technique, you will find it useful for candle holders, bottle stoppers, tool handles (they don't roll off the lathe), and other spindle work.

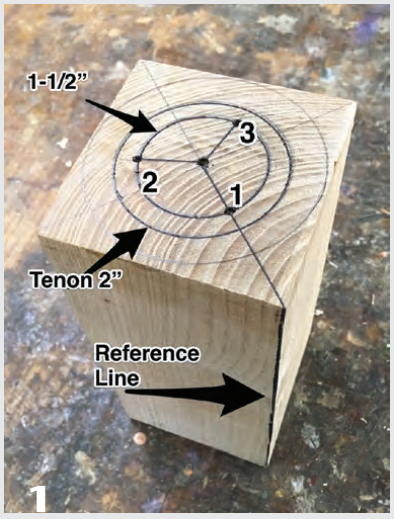
The box can be practically any size, but about 4" (10cm) tall works best. The twist will always be 120°, but a shorter height-to-width ratio makes it more pronounced and pleasing. Using the golden mean as a guide, the bottom should be about two-thirds of the overall height. The type of wood doesn't matter—use what you have on hand.

Lay out the axes

Start with a spindle blank approximately 2¾" (7cm) square and about 5" (13cm) long. Mark the center on both ends of the blank. From the center point, draw three circles: a 2"- (50mm-) diameter circle for the tenon, a 1½"- (38mm-) diameter circle on which to mark the offset axes, and a circle at the full diameter of the blank. Run a Sharpie line down one long edge of the blank. This will be your reference corner. Draw a line from the reference corner to the center point on both ends. Choose one end for the top and label the point where your line crosses the inner circle '1' To locate the remaining points, set your compass to the radius of the inner circle. Place the compass point on '1' and mark where the pencil intersects the circle. Move the point to that mark and repeat around the circle. This will give you six equally spaced points; use every other one for your three axes. Or simply use a protractor and mark points at 120° intervals. Mark the new points '2' and '3' clockwise (*Photo 1*).

On the bottom, label the reference corner '2.' Mark the remaining points '3' and '1' counterclockwise. This produces a left-hand twist. Starting with '3' at the reference corner would produce a right-hand twist (*Figure 1*). Use an awl or center punch to make a depression for your drive and live center at each of the marked points.

Lay out the axes



Mark three circles and the numbered offset points on both ends of the blank. (*See Figure 1 for details.*) Note the reference line on the corner edge.

MORE ON MULTIAXIS TURNING

EXPLORE!

For more on multiaxis turning, log in at woodturner.org and use the Explore! search tool to find useful articles on the subject, including:

- "A Systematic Approach to Multi-Axis Turning," by Barbara Dill, Fall 2007 *AW* (vol 22, no 3)
- "Multi-Axis Candlesticks," by Mark Sfirri, March 1994 *AW* (vol 9, no 1)
- "The History of a Mid-19th-Century Hat Form: A Multiaxis Mystery," by Ted Maust and Mark Sfirri, April 2023 *AW* (vol 38, no 2)

Lay out the box

Before cutting the twists, you'll turn a simple, straight-sided box. This order of work ensures the grain and twists will align later. Using a spindle roughing gouge, turn the blank between centers until it is just round. Make 2" tenons on either end for your scroll chuck. Remember the shoulders of these tenons must be flat and without a fillet at the intersection. Make a dovetail if your chuck requires it. Now lay out the box. The bottom should be about two-thirds of the overall height plus the length of the tenon. Account for the parting-tool kerf between the top and bottom—use a thin parting tool, 1/16" (1.5mm), to keep the grain aligned.

Make the lid

Mount the blank in your chuck with the top toward the headstock and part off the bottom (*Photo 2*). Face off the lid exactly perpendicular to the axis of the lathe. If the top and bottom do not meet with perfectly flat shoulders, the multi-axis turning will produce 'smiles' along the joint where the surfaces do not meet. Mark the outline of the mortise. The wall should be fairly thick—3/16" (5mm) or more—as you will be cutting part of the exterior away to form the twist. Use a spindle gouge to excavate the mortise. Plunge the gouge a short distance into the wood at the center point with the flute facing you, then pull it toward you with the flute at a 45° angle (*Photo 3*); long shavings will result as you cut with the lower wing. Refine the edge of the mortise with a box scraper, making it parallel to the axis of the lathe. Only the depth of the tenon needs to be straight and parallel; the rest of the recess can be domed, flat-bottomed, or whatever you want. Take care to leave the top thick enough for shaping later. Sand the interior, but do not sand the straight, parallel sides of the mortise. Apply a finish to the interior of the lid. After checking that you have done everything, remove the lid and chuck the bottom.

Make the bottom

Face off the bottom and mark the outside edge of the tenon to fit the mortise. Mark the inside edge as well, based on your desired wall thickness. Hollow the interior up to the inside line of the tenon first—hollowing can release tension in the wood, changing the shape subtly, so cutting the tenon afterward ensures a more stable tenon and more accurate fit. Don't hollow too deep; leave enough wood at the bottom to shape the base later. Using a spindle gouge, cut half of a cove starting at the outside and extending down to the marked outside edge of the tenon. Test-fit the lid over the cove—it should just barely fit. Twist the lid a few times to create a burnish mark on ▸

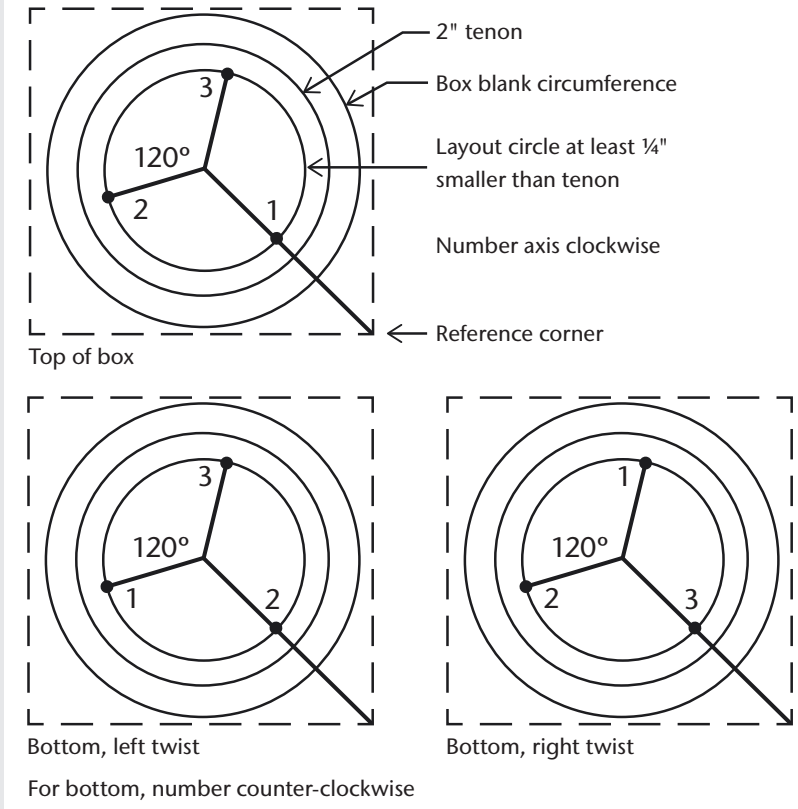
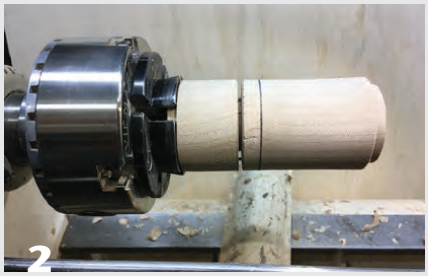


Figure 1

Turn the box



Mount the rounded blank in a chuck and mark the parting lines for the top and bottom.

Hollow the lid with a spindle gouge, plunging at center and pulling toward you.

Fit the lid to the bottom

Test-fit the lid over the cove on the bottom.

Twist the lid to create a burnish mark on the cove. This is your target size for the tenon.

Cut the tenon to fit and check for a tight, flush joint.

the cove (*Photos 4, 5*). This is your target size for the tenon. From the burnish mark, cut the tenon parallel to the axis of the lathe down to where you started the cove. Make the shoulder absolutely perpendicular to the axis (*Photo 6*). Take small cuts and test-fit often; you want the lid to fit very tightly. Finally, cut a small chamfer at the outside edge of the tenon to aid in aligning the top to the bottom.

Once the lid fits, you are ready for the fun part—the twists.

Cut the twists

Remove the bottom from the chuck and the chuck from the lathe. Install a safety drive center or small steb center. Put the top and bottom of the box together, being careful to align the grain. A reference line on the outside may help.

Make sure the top is tightly attached and secure. If the lid is a bit loose, place a strip of paper towel between the mating surfaces to increase friction and prevent slipping. Mount the box on the lathe, off-axis, with the drive center in point 1 on one end and the live center in point 1 on the other (*Photo 7*).

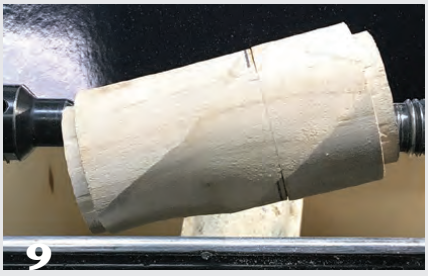
The box will be sitting at an angle to the axis of the lathe. Adjust the toolrest parallel to the lathe axis and as close to the box as possible. Rotate the box by hand to make sure it clears. This will be the toolrest position for all three twists. Cut the first twist from end to end, being careful not to cut too deep into the tenons on either end (*Photos 8, 9*). A spindle roughing gouge works well, but use whatever gouge is comfortable. A higher speed will give a smoother cut. Cut carefully to minimize the need for hand sanding. Stop the lathe frequently to check that your cut is a smooth spiral.

Cut the twists

Mount the assembled box off-axis, with the drive and live centers seated in point 1.

Set the toolrest parallel to the lathe axis and cut the first twist from end to end.

Check the spiral



Check the first completed twist for a smooth, even spiral.

Complete all three twists, ensuring crisp spiral lines between them.

Shape the top

Shape the lid as a shallow dome, starting your cuts far enough down the twist lines for a pronounced curve where the top meets the sides.

Shape the bottom


12
The author holds the box bottom in a jam chuck fitted around the outside of the tenon.


13
Shape a dome similar to the top, then cut a convex base profile, leaving a bit of the dome visible above it.


14
Leaving a bit of the dome shape on the bottom gives the completed box a visual lift.

Repeat for the two remaining twists, reconfirming toolrest clearance by hand each time you reposition. The line between the twists should be crisp and smoothly define a spiral (*Photo 10*). If a cut is not deep enough or does not align with the adjacent twist, remount the box between the centers for that twist and recut. It may take a few remounts. With the lathe off, sand the twists by hand while the box is still mounted. Do not round over the crisp line between the twists. If you were careful to make the shoulders absolutely flat and perpendicular, the joint between the top and bottom should be consistent as it travels around the box. Remove the box from the lathe and reinstall your chuck.

Shape the top and bottom

With the lid still securely attached to the bottom, mount the bottom in the chuck and bring up the tailstock. You are using the bottom as a jam chuck to finish the lid, so keep the tailstock in place as long as possible for support and alignment. Using a spindle gouge, shape the top of the box as a shallow dome. Start your cuts far enough down the twist lines to create a pronounced, pleasing curve (*Photo 11*). Keep the dome shallow enough that the divot left by the live center can be turned away after the tailstock is removed. Hand sand the top and sides of the box. Apply finish as desired. Remove the box from the lathe and set aside the lid.

To finish the bottom of the box, you will need to make a jam chuck of suitable soft wood from your box of offcuts and scraps. Jam chucks can either fit inside the box or around the outside of the tenon. If the tenon is thin-walled, it is safer to fit the chuck around the outside of the tenon, in compression (*Photo 12*). Bring up the tailstock for support. The bottom of the box should have a convex profile to sit properly on a table. However, first shape a dome similar to the top, making sure to get that nice curve between the twist lines. Cut the convex profile, leaving a bit of the dome shape above the convex portion (*Photo 13*). Now the box will have some 'lift' when it sits on a table (*Photo 14*). Apply finish and your signature. ■

Andrew Kuby, from Riverwoods, Illinois, is a member of the Chicago Woodturners and the Windy City Woodturners. He has been twirling wood for over twenty-five years and is currently an instructor at the Chicago School of Woodworking. His website is riverwoodsturner.com.

An Embellished Variation: Finishing with Fire

These boxes look good with just oil or wax, but an interesting variation is burning and wire-brushing. Once the turning is complete, use a propane torch to burn the softer portions of the grain (*Photo 15*), creating a texture. Be careful around the twist lines and edges—they will ignite quickly. Using a brass brush, gently remove the charred material, brushing along the grain (*Photo 16*). You may have to repeat the scorching and brushing process a few times to get a satisfactory texture. A wash of India ink will even out the color before you apply clear lacquer or varnish, or you can simply apply wax over the burned surface (*Photo 17*). Liming wax is another option—it accentuates the grain after the texture has been sealed (*Photo 18*). For a professional touch, remount the bottom on your jam chuck and recut the convex portion of the base to remove any scorching. Then sign the bottom of the box.


15


16


17


18

HOMECOMING

A LONG JOURNEY BACK TO MY ROOTS

Terry Martin

Since my first solo exhibition in 1990, I've shown my work more than a hundred times, but my latest exhibition was an opportunity to present my work not as an endless series of different pieces, but as the product of a lifetime of thinking about and making art in wood. In February this year I staged an exhibition in my hometown of Swan Hill on the Murray River in southeast Australia. It wasn't shaped by the expectations of general viewers, but more by a desire to share my journey with the four generations of my family who live in Swan Hill. I wanted the exhibition to reflect the deeper currents that have shaped my work: ideas, materials, and processes refined over decades of experimentation and, above all, tens of thousands of hours spent at the lathe. At the heart of it all has been my lifelong fascination with trees: their form, their history, and the possibilities they offer. Wood has always been more than just a material for me. It comes from living and breathing organisms, and it carries the imprint of the whole life of the tree, written in its grain.

Swan Hill Regional Art Gallery.

Photo courtesy the gallery.

Driving more than a thousand miles with my wife Yuriko, our car carefully packed with fifty pieces, our journey became both practical and symbolic. Over two long days the changing landscape peeled away the layers of my adult life and the country of my childhood reassembled itself around me, but it now included the Swan Hill Regional Art Gallery (*At left*), a venue that would have been unimaginable to me as a boy growing up there. It was a reminder of how much both the town and my own life have changed.

A material that chose me

Of the fifty pieces in my show, the oldest was *Nature's Work*. It's a fragment of driftwood I picked up on a beach in Papua New Guinea in 1967. It was formed entirely by natural forces—marine borers, abrasion from sand, prolonged exposure to sun and salt. At the time I found it I was not yet a woodworker, but I recognized something fundamental in it: that wood could carry its own history visibly and powerfully. Fifty-nine years later, for this show, I mounted it as a finished piece, allowing it to stand as a collaboration with

Nature's Work, Driftwood, 10" × 20½" (25cm × 52cm)

nature rather than an object of craftsmanship alone.

Uluru Bowl

In 1992, ten years after I began woodturning, I cut a redgum burl on my sister's farm near Swan Hill, and in 1993 I took that wood to Uluru in central Australia where I was Artist-in-Residence. While I was there I met a local Pitjantjatjara woman named Tiku Uluru, who was doing traditional bark painting. We watched each other work and chatted quietly until she asked if she could paint one of my bowls. I asked her to choose one and she took a bowl I had just turned from the Swan Hill burl. I sat beside her as she worked, and we talked about our lives. When it was finished, she handed it to me and said, "You keep it!" Tiku had painted traditional symbols incorporating the natural holes in the wood and on one side was her totem, the snake. Aboriginal Australians have worked with such wood for thousands of years, and I felt a deep sense of privilege that she had chosen to do this work with me. The bowl embodies a dialogue between cultures, landscapes, and histories.

Angie's Tree

Drought, intense heat and dust storms are not uncommon in Swan Hill, and the trees are formed by the sometimes brutal environment. They are twisted and dense, and traditional woodworkers would avoid them. Yet, like the hardened ▸

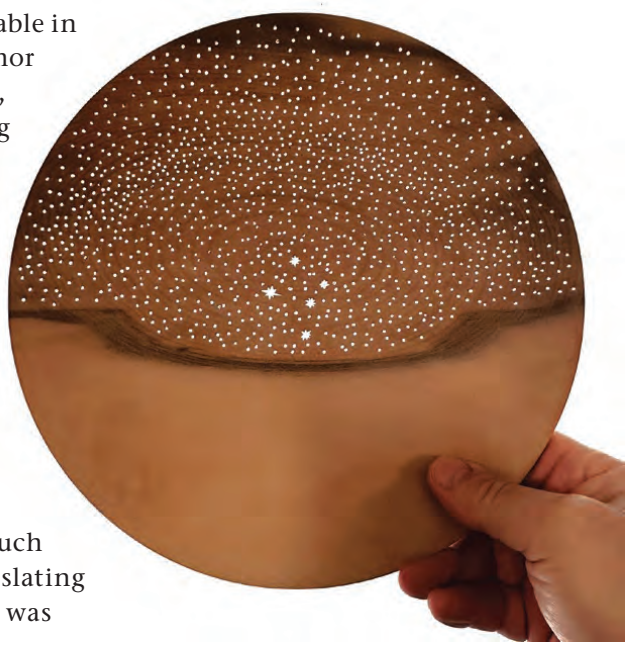
Uluru Bowl, Redgum burl, 10" (25.5cm) dia.

people of the region, they carry quiet strength and individuality. When approached with patience and respect, they reveal a remarkable character.

My niece Angie is part of that country in every sense. She has always been herself and had to fight for it. Farmer, craftswoman, lover of animals, caring mother, and downright hard worker, Angie defies easy labels and there is little she won't attempt. In the year leading up to the exhibition, I asked if she might find some burls for me to work with. Within weeks a crate of dense red mallee burls arrived at my home: heavy, complex, and full of possibilities. From that gift I created *Angie's Tree*, a piece that is not only a homage to the demanding beauty of the wood, but to Angie herself, and to the enduring family ties that made it possible. At the end of the exhibition this tree became Angie's, to keep for her daughter and granddaughter.

Yeah...Nah...

Angie and the other country people in Swan Hill have a way of speaking that is instantly recognizable in rural Australia. Their humor is dry, their words are few, and there is an underlying humility in how they express themselves. Ask almost any question and the reply may begin with, "Yeah... nah...". It usually means that things aren't perfect, but they're alright. It's a reluctance to complain, and an equally strong reluctance to make too much of things going well. Translating that sentiment into wood was difficult.



Starry Night, Blackheart sassafras, 10" (25.5cm) dia.

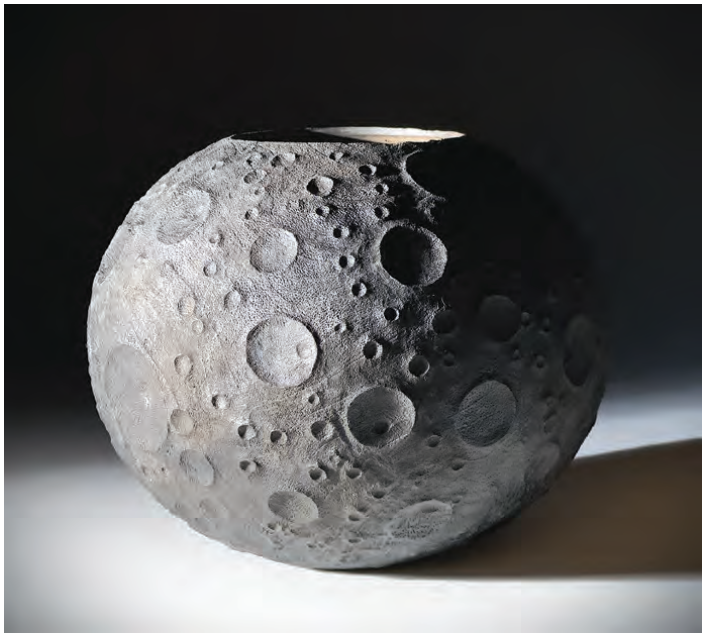
Fire is a constant threat in a huge, dry country like Australia and the land is regularly devastated by enormous bushfires. But the eucalyptus trees have evolved over millennia to endure and respond. Fire opens their seed pods, scattering life into the ash, while new shoots sprout on blackened trunks. Before long, the burnt landscape begins to stir again with green. My piece reflects that cycle: a burnt forest and a single new green shoot. "Yeah...nah... it's bad, but it's going to be good again."

Starry Night

There were other aspects of the Swan Hill environment that I wanted to

Angie's Tree, Red mallee burl, 9" (23cm) wide

Yeah...Nah..., Jacaranda, 6¾" (17cm) dia.



Total Eclipse, Mango, 6¼" (16cm) high

Frosty Morning Over the Murray, Japanese maple, 12½" (32cm) wide

reflect in pieces for the show. When I looked back into my childhood, one memory stood out: the night sky. It was filled with more stars than I have seen anywhere else. As a boy, I would lie on the grass at night and look up at the sky, marveling at its terrifying vastness. *Starry Night* is my evocation of those nights. The spalting in the lower part delineates the bed of the Murray River, while the night sky is pierced with hundreds of stars, including the Milky Way and the Southern Cross, the constellation that is featured on the Australian flag.

Total Eclipse

I also have a childhood memory of looking up at the sky during a total eclipse of the moon. I remember the sense of quiet that settled over everything as the light drained away and the moon, so familiar and constant, became something strange and distant.

This vessel was hollowed, carved, and then sandblasted, not to reproduce the moon as it was, but as how I remembered it.

Frosty Morning Over the Murray

In winter, the frosts around Swan Hill can be severe. In the early morning, the air above the Murray seems to shimmer with cold, as if the landscape itself is holding its breath. I wanted to capture those moments in *Frosty Morning Over the Murray*.

This piece is created from Japanese maple that I collected in Japan decades ago. It had sat on a shelf all that time, waiting for the right moment. I turned the wood down to a disk just 1mm (1/32") thick, which is very difficult, because I wanted to create a sense of near-weightlessness, echoing the pale, ghostly light that hangs over the river on those frosty mornings.

The disk is supported by a simple cradle, deliberately understated. Its role was only to hold and frame the disk, allowing the frosted grain of the wood to take precedence. Once again, I let the wood speak for itself.

Heart of the Tree

Many of the pieces in the exhibition required highly controlled cutting techniques, often pushing material limits. *Heart of the Tree*, for example, was turned from jacaranda wood with walls 4mm (5/32") thick. Achieving that level of fineness requires not only sharp tools, but also a sensitivity to how the wood behaves as it is thinned, how it flexes and how close it is to failure.

For thin work on a piece this large at 56cm (22") diameter, light hollowing cuts are essential. Once the wall begins to flex, it becomes increasingly difficult to maintain a clean surface without causing chatter or tear-out. Internally, gentle cuts with tools sharpened to a negative rake are the best way to avoid this and help maintain structural integrity while I'm still refining the shape. The final stages require a kind of restraint—listening to the wood as it is cut and knowing when to stop. At ▸

Celtic Roots, Jacaranda, 8½" (21.5cm) dia.

Heart of the Tree, Jacaranda, 22" (56cm) dia.

Lightning Vessel, Jacaranda, 11½" (29cm) high

4mm, you're always one cut away from failure. After many years of such risky work, I still sometimes find myself standing among the shards of a shattered piece that I have worked on for days. The good news is that it happens less often now.

The pierced pattern is derived from microscopic images of jacaranda wood's cellular structure, effectively enlarging the tree's internal architecture and reintroducing it at a visible scale. Once I have achieved the final thinness of the vessel, I draw the pattern for piercing in pencil. Using high-speed rotary cutters, I open it up incrementally to reduce the risk of sudden failure and I can respond to how the piece behaves as material is removed.

Lighting also becomes part of the design. A pierced vessel is not complete until it interacts with light, casting shadows and shapes inside the form that extend beyond its physical boundaries.

Celtic Roots

The importance of balancing wall thickness and piercing technique is even more apparent in *Celtic Roots*. This piece was made in celebration of the Irish origins of my family. It is also made of jacaranda, the wood I value most for its strength and workability, and it happens that jacaranda trees also commonly grow in Swan Hill.

Celtic Roots is 21.5cm (8½") diameter and only 2.5mm (3⁄32") thick because I wanted it to be light and airy. Working like this is sometimes called the "craftsmanship of risk", and with good reason. Unlike *Heart of the Tree*, I didn't use high-speed rotary burs because the risk of a sudden slip was too high. Instead, I used a very sharp knife to slice off translucent shavings one at a time, working carefully towards the pattern outlined in pencil. I worked on it for three hours a day over two months, and during that whole time one moment of inattention would have destroyed the piece.

Lightning Vessel

I'm particularly drawn to wood that many turners might reject, stressed or damaged by weather or trauma. These pieces often contain the most interesting grain, but they also demand a flexible approach.

Lightning Vessel came from a jacaranda tree that had been struck by lightning. The electrical charge had

travelled through the sapwood into the earth, leaving a charred internal scar which the tree later grew over. When I cut into the log, I found a stark contrast between clean, pale wood and darker, disrupted areas. When turning this piece, I worked to preserve that contrast. The final form sustains the visual tension between damage and recovery—the tree's history made visible.

Reflections on *Homecoming*

I have used this exhibition to look back over my entire woodworking life, to see it as a whole. I was once told by a collector that my work is "all over the place", and there was some truth to that. But when one particular style resonates strongly, there can be a natural expectation—both from audiences and the market—for more of the same. For me, the pull of experimentation was always stronger. I was inspired by the breadth of possibilities in woodturning and wanted to explore them rather than narrow them. It may not always have been the most financially rewarding path, but it has been more fun than I ever expected.

So the pieces I chose for *Homecoming* feel less like individual works and more like markers along an unbroken thread connecting place, material, and memory. What began as a fascination with wood has become a way of understanding the world and the passing of time itself. The forms I make are shaped not only by tools and techniques, but by the landscapes I have known, the people I am bound to, and the experiences that have stayed with me. As I look forward to my next exhibition, the story continues. ■

Terry Martin is a woodturner and writer working in Brisbane, Australia. Visit his website, terrymartinwoodartist.com, or contact him at tmartin111@bigpond.com.

(*Left*) Visitors examine a piece at the *Homecoming* exhibition.

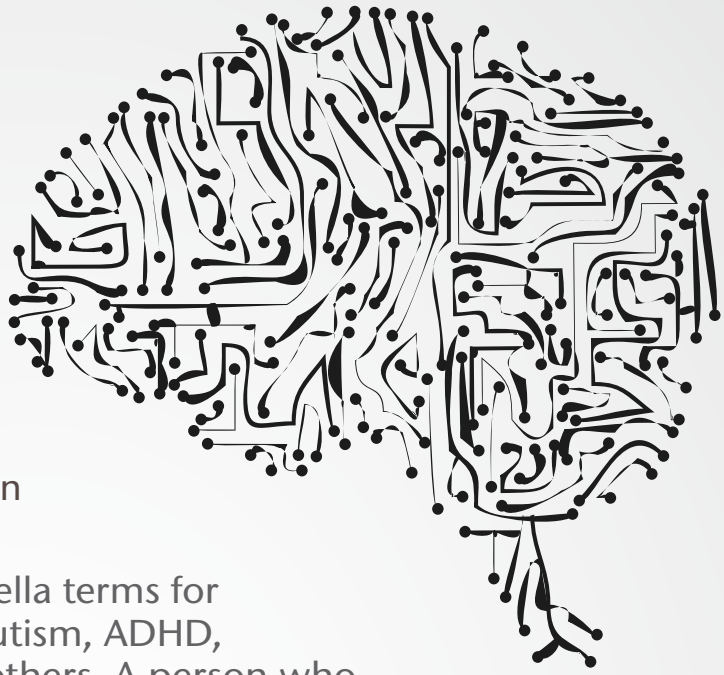
(*Right*) The author leads a walkthrough of the exhibition.

The *Homecoming* exhibition at Swan Hill Regional Art Gallery, February 2026.

WOODTURNING *IN HIGHER* EDUCATION

A Quiet but Growing Demographic

Dr. Seri Robinson



Neurodivergence/neurodiversity—umbrella terms for variations in brain function, including autism, ADHD, dyslexia, and high intelligence, among others. A person who classifies themselves as neurodivergent or neurodiverse may have one or more of these conditions or differences, and the terms have become a shorthand way of informing people that one has differences in learning styles.

I chose woodturning within the context of a science curriculum because it had diverse courses that would keep me interested in whatever was being taught. My experience with neurodiversity is centered around finding something interesting enough to continue and, for me, woodturning, and learning the science involved, is a constant fascination. The woodturning engages my whole brain by using my intellect and motor skills, both fine and gross. When I am woodturning I am fully present, combining problem solving and project planning along with creativity and aesthetics. A science-based curriculum is complemented and enhanced with the inclusion of woodturning and its attendant skills and can only serve to help any neurodiverse learners in a higher ed program.

—Third-year Wood Innovation for Sustainability (WInS) student, Department of Wood Science & Engineering (WSE), College of Forestry, Oregon State University (OSU)

I would never have understood wood and its nuance without touching and carving it with my own hands. This class makes science intuitive, tactile, and beautiful.

—Will LaChance, WInS class of 2024

We have all heard the familiar lines: *There are no young people in woodturning. Woodturning is dying out, just look at all the gray hair at this club meeting!* And while it is certainly true that the membership of woodturning clubs and guilds skews over 65 and male, it is also predominantly this group of people who have both the free time and disposable income to attend woodturning clubs and pursue what is not necessarily a cheap hobby.

This is not to say there aren't younger woodturners—the number of high school shop programs is once again on the rise under the banner of CTE (Career and Technical Education) and woodturning remains a constant, if not underutilized, specialization area in many maker spaces, craft centers, and art programs. There is a small but not insignificant number of professional woodturners under 50 who also frequently demonstrate at AAW symposia, regional symposia, and woodturning clubs.

What many are unaware of, however, is a growing body of collegiate woodturners—students generally aged 18 to 25 (undergraduate) and graduate students (aged 25 to 40), who are studying woodturning not as a craft or as an add-on to an art degree, but as a fundamental component of a wood science degree. Though this model is more common in Western Europe as part of a holistic wood education, in the U.S. these students study a common core of wood anatomy, wood chemistry, wood physics, and wood manufacturing, while simultaneously taking woodshop

classes in furniture, woodturning, and lathe-based wood sculpture. They come from backgrounds in engineering, environmental science, and art, among many others, and matriculate into jobs in the wood industry, as CTE teachers, and independent artists, but despite these differences in background and end goal, they all share one key defining feature—they are not students who sit still well.

The experience of learning woodturning as I began studying wood at the cellular and chemical levels for my wood science degree was uniquely beneficial. As a neurodivergent student, and particularly when entering new areas of research, it is very important to me that I understand as much about the subject of my studies as possible. Woodturning courses allowed me to engage with the material at the core of my studies both creatively and scientifically, and to learn at my own pace while pursuing my curiosity.

—Hayden Houck, M.S. WSE, class of 2026

It has been repeatedly observed at the collegiate level, as well as extensively discussed in outlets like the Chronicle of Higher Education, that there has been a profound demographic shift in university students. Rates of disability accommodations have soared, anxiety is on the rise, and students who have relied previously on AI for "help" with their schoolwork find themselves underprepared for critical, independent thinking. The change in students became more apparent after the COVID pandemic, but was documented several years before lockdown. COVID appears to have exacerbated the disconnect students felt between their coursework and their future, leaving those who successfully matriculated to university seeking degrees that could somehow both prepare them for a job while also capturing their imagination.

Twelve years ago, the Department of Wood Science & Engineering at Oregon State University piloted its first "Woodturning with Science" courses—studio courses meant to apply the fundamental science principles taught in wood science lecture courses. The initial goal was to better prepare students for wood industry jobs by giving them hands-on experience with wood before graduation (prior to these classes, wood science students were not allowed in the woodshop due to safety concerns).

Will LaChance with his favorite "Lindquist-era" turnings. LaChance now works at a furniture and cabinet shop in Washington state.

The two woodturning courses—an introductory course focused on basic woodturning principles as well as wood and water dynamics, and an intermediate course focused on wood anatomy and what happens when wood grows "wrong" (think curl, burl, ▸

The author presents the day's turning challenge in the advanced turning studio on OSU's campus. The beginner studio is in a nearby location—close enough for socializing, but far enough that beginners don't get overwhelmed.

The author atop a recent delivery of wood from the OSU school forests. One benefit of a wood science department in a college of forestry: all the free wood one can turn.

(*Left*) Maple chip-and-dip bowl holding a sapodilla wood teaspoon, from an exercise comparing woodturning to power carving on native versus tropical hardwoods. Work by WInS student Kimberly Vega.

(*Right*) Maple chip-and-dip bowl, an assignment comparing bowl gouges to scrapers on interior c-curves. Work by Kimberly Vega.

birdseye, etc.) immediately filled... but not with students from the wood science program. Instead, the woodturning classes drew in new students from other departments who had suddenly found an accessible on-ramp to higher education.

I'm a craftsman in several mediums, and the way a turner interacts with a piece of wood is just ... special. The act of picking up a blank, assessing it for figure, spalt, orientation, defects, etc., and seeing a form in that piece feels very different to me than the other mediums I've worked in. I feel more connected to a piece of wood I'm turning than with any other material I've used in any other circumstance. There's this aspect of play to turning; having to feel out a piece of wood, figure out how it wants to be cut, think through how to get it to do what I want it to without pushing it too hard—it's incredibly mentally stimulating...I also find major enjoyment in the physical sensation of turning - this sets turning aside from other mediums for me. I paint, and love painting, but I find it very difficult to sit and make delicate brush strokes for hours on end without getting antsy. The buzz of the lathe, the rhythm of a tool cutting wood, even the noise and feel of a grinder sharpening a tool, create an amazing sensory environment. I could spend (and have spent) hours turning scrap blanks until there's nothing left on purpose just for the feeling.

—Mo Baumgarten, Third-year WInS student

As enrollment grew and students transferred into the wood science program, the course offerings grew as well. The undergraduate program, now called Wood Innovation for Sustainability, includes an Art & Design option that allows students to focus on woodturning and furniture making within their otherwise science-based curriculum. Woodturning sculpture classes have been added, as well as courses on the U.S. Studio Woodturning movement. Where the student body had been primarily young men, the woodturning courses filled with a deeply diverse set of students from community colleges, exploratory studies programs, and more regimented programs like engineering, where passion was not being fulfilled.

WInS student Monique Council turning a large bowl in the advanced turning studio. Council will continue her woodturning studies in an M.S. program at OSU.

The students in this program span wide age ranges, from fresh 18-year-olds to retired veterans. Community members and university employees have taken the courses as well. They have a variety of gender identities, racial backgrounds, and life experiences. Their one persistent commonality? Neurodiversity.

As a non-traditional neurodivergent student at university, I was burnt out and overwhelmed by conceptual, theoretical bookwork. I thrive with experiential learning and getting to touch/hold/have a tactile understanding of the what, why, and how of wood science. I changed my degree to focus on woodturning to have more sensory engagement with wood science, and this has helped me understand/learn/retain more as a neurodivergent student.

—Monique Council, class of 2026

As a late-diagnosed AuDHD individual, I can reflect back on my university experience with a renewed understanding of why Dr. Robinson's hands-on material science courses created an environment where my brain thrived. Their fast-paced, tangible approach to complex conceptual topics within wood science and related material sciences allowed for me to quite literally tear into the layers and establish a firm understanding of anatomical variances, physical and chemical properties, and environmental factors that my traditional lecture-based courses couldn't fully bridge.

—Savannah Stanton, class of 2018

We probably shouldn't be surprised. Students drawn to crafts and trades are not usually the bookish types, preferring to work with their hands than memorize and regurgitate facts onto a piece of paper. What is absolutely fascinating about collegiate woodturning is the way that it reaches students who were bookish enough to do well in high school and get accepted to university. These students flourished under the structure provided by high school classes, and then floundered in higher ed as parents (and their insistence on getting to school, getting work done, etc.) and guardrails dwindled. These students are smart and highly capable, but struggle with long days of lecture and testing, particularly when no one is consistently reminding them to attend class. Traditionally these might be the students who begin university but do not finish, or the ones who pursue an associate's degree at a community college but believe university is outside their reach. These students have found a home and community in woodturning, and an avenue to a science degree at not just the undergraduate but also the graduate level. They have found a career path and a lifelong love that, twelve years in, most still engage with.

So what is it about woodturning, particularly, that not only draws these students in, but holds them?

I've taken many arts classes in the college of liberal arts, and I didn't resonate with the structure of them. Those classes provided a solid foundation of technical skill, but often even by the 200 level, had moved on to almost entirely consisting of conceptual exercises. The curriculum I've taken and will continue to take in woodturning are vastly *denser in technical skills than other arts classes I've taken. I have ADHD and am almost exclusively interest driven, and the challenge of continually learning, refining, and integrating new technical skills has made it incredibly easy for me to buy into the world of turning. There's ALWAYS a new technique to try, a new tool grind to experiment with, a new wood or figure pattern to figure out, and even when none of those are compelling me, there's previously learned skills waiting to be practiced and refined. I've been in the turning program at OSU for over a year now, and have never once found myself bored or lacking a challenge, a STARK contrast with my other academic and creative classes.*

—Mo Baumgarten

I've been working in the College of Forestry since 1995, always thinking it would be interesting to take a course or two for fun, as a positive distraction, and to keep learning new ▸

(*Left*) Savannah Stanton with a square burl turning. Stanton is now a high school CTE instructor and aerial performer who also teaches at the Marc Adams School of Woodworking & Time Honored Crafts.

(*Middle*) Savannah Stanton with a white oak bowl.

(*Right*) Savannah Stanton with a natural-edge maple burl bowl.

things. Over coffee I learned that a woodturning with science course was offered. Woodworking in general has always been a life hobby, so I signed up! Woodturning became a passion and certainly provided a distraction, one that I found to be meditative and therapeutic. In addition to developing the physical skills, gaining knowledge of how various fungi work to break down cellulose, demark territory, and create beautiful spalted patterns, remains a fascinating subject for me. I took the entire woodturning series.

—Sean San Romani, Research Computing Systems Administrator, College of Forestry, OSU

Students particularly with ADHD have told me over the years that woodturning is the only time they truly relax. That there is something about the amount of concentration required, and the physical feedback of turning, that helps them block out all the distractions and, for the first time, focus, *really focus*, on just one thing. They've told me that woodturning is an oasis in their day, and the studio a place where they can come to learn in a way that feels more in tune with their bodies.

Dyslexic students, too, report the joy of having courses that rely on experience and doing, not reading and writing. Autistic students who might struggle in a larger woodshop tend to do well with the quieter lathes and ample spacing between machines. Interestingly, while many students have Disability Access Services (DAS) accommodations (similar to a 504 plan at the K-12 level that offers things like longer test time, etc.), the accommodations requested are almost never relevant to woodturning classes. There are no tests in which one might need extra time, there are no lectures that require note-taking, there are no attendance sheets being passed around. If you miss a demonstration, you must check in with a classmate to learn what was missed. Work is due at the end of the term. There is maximum flexibility paired with hard boundaries. There are clear expectations and rules—much to the delight of my autistic students. You *must* have your PPE before entering the shop. You *must* finish all your work by the end of term. You *must* check in and out of shop spaces whenever you come and go, for safety. But within those immovable boundaries is a flexibility that accommodates. The flexibility builds community, and communication, and gives these students that might otherwise have fallen through the higher ed cracks a place to not only apply their science learning, but have a space where learning differences are not only accepted, but expected.

As a visual and tactile learner, I quickly found these classes filled in the missing puzzle pieces in my education. They elevated my confidence and holistic understanding of my subject matter because I was finally able to see, feel, and experience, firsthand, how anatomical variances, species density, decay, and other crucial aspects of wood science actually affected this renewable material. The woodturning units were skillfully devised to showcase how machining, tooling, species variation, type of figure, moisture content, and other external factors influenced the choices we had to make at the lathe.

—Savannah Stanton

Claudia Andersen, now a lead technical designer at CutMyTimber in Portland, Oregon, was the very first student enrolled in the Art & Design option at OSU.

Science-based woodturning studio classes are also uniquely situated to apply the concepts of Universal Design for Learning. For those unfamiliar, UDL is (via Wikipedia): "...an educational framework based on research in learning theory, including cognitive neuroscience, that guides the development of flexible learning environments and learning spaces that can accommodate individual learning differences." Wood science students can learn the equations for wood shrinkage from a lecture and then perform a calculation on a test, but they can also turn a lidded box from wet wood and try to figure out how the lid might still fit when dry. They can learn about extracellular void space caused by fibers folding in on themselves in birdseye maple and see the charts on how that affects wood strength, *and* they can put a birdseye maple blank on the lathe and hear the *ping ping* as the eyes rip from the wood matrix and bounce across the studio. UDL is considered best practice not just in university classrooms, but in K-12 education as well. The format of OSU's woodturning courses—embedded with science curriculum—has filtered into nearby high school shop curricula as well, with great success.

As a CTE educator now, who introduces high school students to woodworking, I also implement science units in my woodturning courses that help students break down difficult concepts and explore the why behind so many common lumber uses.

—Savannah Stanton

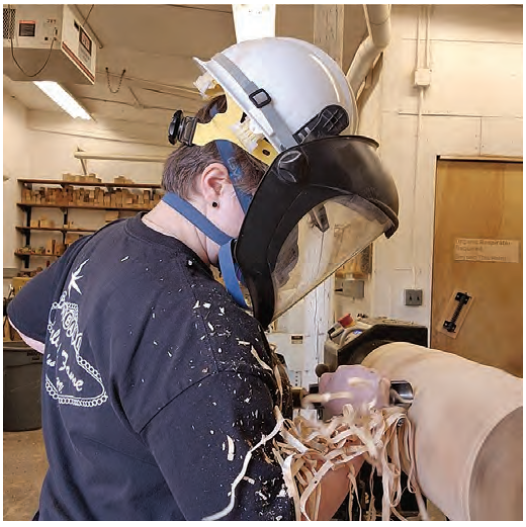
OSU's combination of the woodturning curriculum with the wood science degree has also made a massive difference in how I view the material - I blow glass, and I LOVE experimenting with the colors and forms I can create with it, but I simply lack the glass chemistry knowledge to know what's actually happening when I'm creating with it. Because of the wood science program, I understand wood on a biological and molecular level - this certainly contributes to why I feel closer to wood than any other medium...It's an incredibly open-ended and stimulating yet still technical skills- and progress-oriented environment that balances creativity with measurable results. I have grown so much as not just a turner, but a creative in general through my engagement with this program. Every single term, I am more excited about/engaged with my woodturning classes than with anything else academically, and I don't see that changing any time soon. I cannot overstate how cool, interesting, and safe of a space I have found college level woodturning to be.

—Mo Baumgarten

Realistically, science and art are intrinsically tied together. The opportunity to study wood science and apply this to a physical means through woodturning has been incredibly fulfilling and unique. I feel more connected to wood as a material through my understanding of its properties on and off the lathe.

—Ellis Lieberman, Fourth-year WInS student

WInS student Amber Williams poses with her first walnut turning.



Amber Williams works on a large table spindle. PPE in turning classes includes a half-mask respirator, safety glasses, impact-rated face shield, and when warranted, a hard hat.

Amber Williams with a body of work spanning one year of woodturning classes at OSU.

In university there is not enough use of hands on work, or any space to expend energy in a physical manner. This program offered a connection between different learning styles. In terms of learning...I can't do just one, I need the combination of art and science. I like how these two communities come together. Specifically for me, and in terms of neurodiversity, woodworking and art people are different than science people and if I am in one community for too long, I get bored. Boredom never happened in the WInS program!

—Claudia Andersen, class of 2018 ▸

This class made me realize that woodworking was a path I could take in life. I could hardly believe it at the time, but two years later I am a professional carpenter.

—Will LaChance

Every reader here knows the hum of the lathe, the exhilaration of roughing your first large bowl, the delight in a well-turned and well-finished work. Imagine then, also understanding how the unique piece of wood you're using was formed and how those cells move and interact with their environment. It is not that wood science is taught *better* using studio-based woodturning, rather it is that these studio classes offer another method of learning that is particularly engaging for one of our most vulnerable university populations. Woodturning is a retirement hobby for many, and a profession for some, but for a not insignificant number of university students, it is also a buoy and lifeline in what can feel like an otherwise overwhelming university education. Woodturning is now a *fundamental* component of wood science education at Oregon State University that helps us fulfill our land grant mission to educate the population of Oregon. I cannot think of a better use for woodturning than as not just a shared joy and passion, but as a tool that makes higher education accessible to those who don't quite fit the mold.

Half-turned, half-carved mermaid statue by Amber Williams.

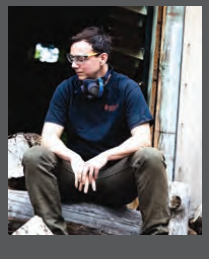
Amber Williams during a sculpture critique.

This career path would not have been possible had it not been for my hands-on, project-based woodturning classes under Dr. Robinson's instruction. They changed the projection of my post-university life—widening my career prospects in the forest products sector and deconstructing the educational silo that was separating the pen and paper science from the artistic, physical implementation of wood as a building and sculpting material.

—Savannah Stanton

A university education is supposed to be a stepping stone to a career; increasingly, for today's students, a tedious means to a dubious end where a degree can easily feel hollow, intangible, meaningless. Rather than a simple paper credential, the inclusion of real-world skills is a needed pressure valve on graduate education's years of lecture, seminar, and writing, and makes OSU's Wood Science program a complete and flexible skill and knowledge base that broadens students' futures. Woodturning, furniture-making, and design classes provide a deeper understanding and respect for the material and properties of wood, the manifestations of forest ecology and forest management principles, and the opportunity to learn from skilled professionals, artists, craftspeople, and researchers, to feel, do, and make something real.

—Amber Williams, M.S. student, WSE, OSU (BFA, B.S. psychology) ■



SYMPOSIUM DEMONSTRATOR IN RALEIGH

Dr. Seri Robinson will be a demonstrator at AAW's International Woodturning Symposium in Raleigh, North Carolina, June 4–7, 2026. Seri's students will also join them for a panel discussion on woodturning in higher education. Don't miss this chance to learn from Seri, live and in person! For the latest details, visit aawsymposium.org.

Dr. Seri Robinson, a professor of wood anatomy at Oregon State University, has been a woodturner for 30 years and works primarily with spalted and figured woods, which they also research. Learn more about Dr. Robinson's work at northernspalting.com, or help support spalting research at patreon.com/spalting.

NATURE'S CANVAS

Tib Shaw

When two distinct media are featured in an exhibition, insights occur that neither medium could produce alone. Our awareness of what makes each form unique is sharpened. *Nature's Canvas*, curated by Carol Sauvion, is a traveling exhibition by the AAW in partnership with Studio Art Quilt Associates (SAQA); it brings two media with long histories—woodturning and quilting—into direct conversation.

Two Ways of Seeing

Understandably, the physical differences come into focus first. The wood objects are self-contained. They exist within their own boundaries: the closed curve of a vessel, the finished edge of a bowl. There is nowhere for the eye to go except into the object itself. The textile works, almost entirely wall-hung, draw more from painting: you can imagine the world continuing past the fabric border.

The turners' feelings and responses often merge into the objects they create: the emotion is carried in the form, the grain, the surface itself. In contrast, the textile works are often directly representational, expressing emotion and memory through imagery and color.

Interestingly, there are only two overt references to traditional craft: Bernard Azéma's trembleur and Monique Gilbert-Oversteyns's *Joined Venture*, a nine-patch celebrating the interconnectedness of turning and textile crafts. Traditional skills are certainly evident throughout the exhibition, but are reflected in the creating, not in the creations.

Looking Inside

Reading through the artists' statements, a second pattern emerges. The turners generally write about their materials and their process—specifically, what the materials are, and what their work reveals about the finished pieces.

Eleanor Lakelin's *Eroding Earth #1* makes this vivid. Sandblasting sequoia reveals how soft spring growth erodes differently from its harder counterpart, allowing the tree's life history to emerge on the object's surface. Lakelin didn't impose lines on the wood. She unveiled the structure already there.

The textile artists, by contrast, more often describe what inspires the work—light, landscape, memory—though there are notable exceptions.

Where the Work Meets

The distinctions blur when examining specific pairings and artists who defy neat categorization. Andrea Finch, for example, engages form in ways that echo vessel traditions more often associated with wood, and addresses material and technique directly.

Shannon Conley's *Cloud Rim, Summer 1991* is another striking example. Rather than using fabric as a surface for image-making, Conley works with its physical nature directly—sculpting polyester into 3D organic forms that shift in shape, color, and depth. The flexibility of cloth is her subject as much as her medium. In that sense her piece has more in common with the turning works, manipulating the material's own possibilities instead of presenting an image.

Bill Luce and Maryte Collard are both working with processes they don't ▸

Sara Lamb (California), *Engulfed*, 2024, Hand-woven cotton fabric, commercial fabric, thread, 21" × 20" (53cm × 51cm)

"There comes a point during a wildfire when destruction is inevitable and unstoppable. The beauty of the images belies the pain and loss, and the heartbreak of remembrance. Something new will always arise sooner or later, for better or for worse."

entirely control—one using sandblasting to reveal what the tree has already lived, the other allowing two colors of dye to meet and interact in cloth. In both instances, the artists act as collaborators, unearthing the image inherent in the material's nature.

Lakelin's work pairs naturally with Judith Content's *Syncline*. Lakelin's sandblasted sequoia exposes the differing rates of seasonal growth; Content's pieced and quilted silk evokes the folded geology miles below our feet, the invisible earth made visible. Both artists are translating natural, usually hidden, phenomena—processes that may unfold over years or millennia—into something we can stand before and absorb.

Sue Dennis's *Tempest* and Betty Scarpino's *Tidal Wave* take on elemental force and form directly. Dennis captures wind through print and stitching, foliage flung across a pale surface, the batting and crisp stitches creating shape and dimension. Scarpino uses deeply carved ash and the wood's own grain to evoke water surging and cresting. Though the means differ, the emotions evoked are strikingly similar. Dewey Garrett's *Hokusai Appreciation* is a natural accompaniment.

Care for the World

What unifies this exhibition most deeply is a shared attitude toward the natural world—attentive, respectful, and in many cases deeply personal. Several artists address environmental concern directly; others find it in quieter observations. Sara Lamb's *Engulfed* addresses the pain of loss through fire, and the inevitability and uncertainty of change. Tim Heil's *Minnesota Bird Eggs* reimagines the nest as bowl—or perhaps reminds us that the nest was nature's prototype—each holding eggs scaled to five native Minnesota bird species. Diana Friend's *Trio* presents madrone blossoms, the natural burl edge suggesting fringed petals.

Roberto Ferrer and Mark Jundanian's *Respect/Reflect* is the most colorful and symbolically rich piece among the wood works. It is the exhibition's most explicit statement that care for the natural world and care for humanity are inseparable.

Julie Reuben's *Teshuvah*—"return" in Hebrew—was the first quilt she made after recovering from a shoulder injury, each hand-stitch a celebration of being able to sew again.

This exhibition reveals that artists working in very different traditions, approaching the natural world through very different means, arrive at the same place: a shared attitude of attention, respect, and care. Care for the world, *Nature's Canvas* reminds us, includes care for each other, and for ourselves as creative and complex beings. ■

Where to See *Nature's Canvas*

- Windgate Museum of Art, Hendrix College, Conway, Arkansas: May 29–August 15, 2026
- AAW Gallery of Wood Art, Saint Paul, Minnesota: 2027
- Gadsden Arts Center & Museum, Quincy, Florida: February–April 2028
- Lauren Rogers Museum of Art, Laurel, Mississippi: January 23–April 23, 2029

For more details, visit saqa.com/naturescanvas.

Diane Paquin Provost (Illinois),
Tapisserie de Feuilles d'Érable (Tapestry of Maple Leaves), 2025, Cotton, organza, 22" × 33" (56cm × 84cm)

"For the longest time, I wanted to honor my country of origin with a quilt using its most recognizable symbol, the maple leaf. The maple leaf is iconic and deeply tied to Canada's identity."

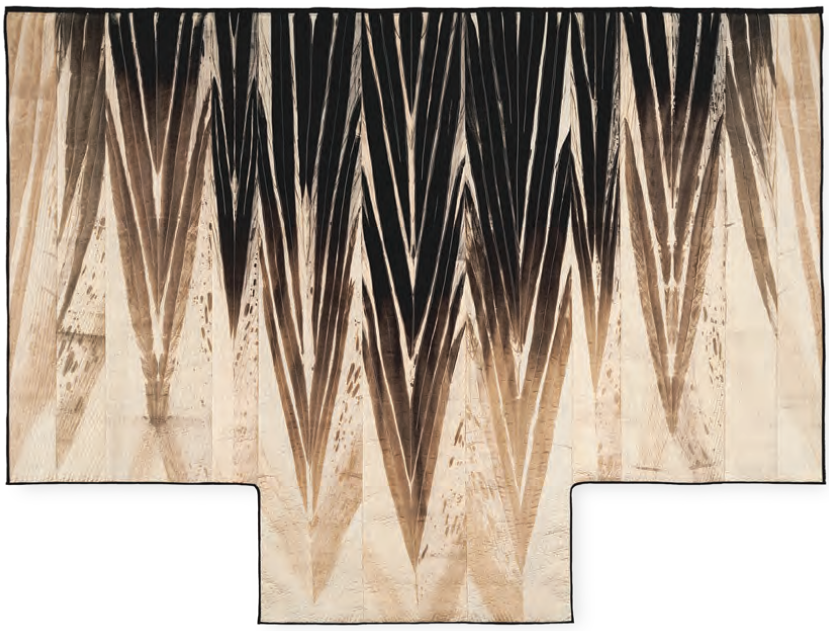
Dixie Biggs (Florida),
Season's End, 2023, Cherry, alcohol pigments, Danish oil, 6" × 5" × 5" (15cm × 13cm × 13cm)

"The two oaks—one a live oak and the other a shumard—that shade my shop have been a source of inspiration in my work for years. The natural color of the cherry, with a hint of pigment, adds a rich warmth to the look of the fallen dried leaves."

Judith Content (California),
Syncline, 2015, Thai silk, thread, sodium hydrosulfite, 58" × 78" (147cm × 198cm)

"My work has always been drawn from nature. I often create abstract landscapes inspired by my home in Northern California. I am intrigued by the rugged California coast, redwood forests, desert terrain, and foggy wetlands. I am also intrigued by California's invisible landscapes. Syncline was created in response to the earthquakes I have experienced, and the undulating folds of restless earth located miles below my unsuspecting feet."

Photo: James Dewrance



Eleanor Lakelin (United Kingdom),
Eroding Earth #1, 2025, British sequoia, iron solution, 8" × 9" × 9" (20cm × 23cm × 23cm)

"Sandblasting sequoia shows how the soft summer growth erodes at a different rate compared to its harder winter counterpart. The ridged and recessed results mirror the wood's growth between seasons: summer-fast, winter-slow. Both pieces are etched by time-grown and time-worn materiality. Cycles of organic growth and formal exploration here recall one of civilization's oldest object forms, both used to contain and commemorate. Each vessel finds itself articulated in novel form, shaped unlike its predecessors in the studio, yet still spurred on by memory's haptic suggestion."

Photo: Michael Harvey

Franki L. Kohler (Oregon), *Woodwardia Wonder*, 2013, Cotton fabric, paint, metallic and cotton thread, beads, 60" × 24" (152cm × 61cm)

"The Woodwardia fern, native to California, can easily have fronds seven to eight feet in height, so this frond is comparatively small. Its fractal-type growth and sheer size, especially when many are planted together, command attention. They are truly a wonder!"

Roberto Ferrer (Illinois) and Mark Jundanian (Illinois),
Respect / Reflect, 2024, Hard maple, acrylic and metallic paints,
4" × 13" × 13" (10cm × 33cm × 33cm)

"All human interactions should begin with respect. The central universal logo for human rights and surrounding symbols call on us to consider how we will treat humanity in the future. They ask us to reflect on human rights as they have been honored or ignored in our present and past. The four compass points direct us to look around this planet and reflect that human rights are not only for where we are standing, but are to be supported everywhere. We share this world; everyone has a right to live on it with respect for their history, their cultural identity, and their way of life."

Shannon Conley (Oklahoma),
Cloud Rim, Summer 1991, 2020, Polyester fabric, latex paint, thread,
69" × 44" × 4" (175cm × 112cm × 10cm)

"The flexibility of cloth and stitch lends itself well to creating motion and texture; organic openings shift in shape, color, and depth. This piece is part of a series capturing places dear to my heart. I spent my childhood in the dry mountains of southern New Mexico, a place where the tiniest of creeks was cause for delight. So, I well remember the urgency and excitement I felt when I got the chance to go to summer camp with a friend in Utah; a place with not only mountains and trees, but the new and wondrous experience of a lake."

Sue Dennis (Australia), *Tempest*, 2024, Cotton, thread, textile ink, fabric dye, 53" × 39" (135cm × 99cm)

"The wind howls as foliage is flung around in a tempest. I was intrigued by how I could best capture the awe-inspiring natural event of a storm using print and stitch in a very elemental form."

Photo: Bob Dennis

Thomas Kamila (Massachusetts), *The Witness*, 2025, Red oak, acrylic paint, finish, 10" × 7" × 3" (25cm × 18cm × 8cm)

"*The Witness* is a turned stave segmented form. The opening at the top leans forward to observe. The lines dancing on the surface are the annular rings of the red oak wood. My finish gives it a glass or ceramic-like appearance. Two sections of a larger turning are rejoined to create this piece."

Betty J. Scarpino (Indiana), *Tidal Wave*, 2021, Ash, dye, acrylic paint, 16" × 15" × 2" (41cm × 38cm × 5cm)

"Overwhelmed, tossed about, emotions storming. Float with the surge, ride the waves, and land safely ashore."

Photo: Wilbur Montgomery

Dewey Garrett (Arizona), *Hokusai Appreciation*, 2024, Paper infused with resin, cast polyurethane, 1" × 4" × 4" (3cm × 10cm × 10cm)

"The principal pattern of the box is a reinterpretation of the familiar woodblock print The Great Wave off Kanagawa by Hokusai. The body and lid were handturned then threaded and decorated using my homebuilt ornamental turning machine. The machine emulates the motions of historic rose engines and uses complex motions to cut both geometric patterns and imagery.

The inside and bottom surfaces are carved with geometric patterns. The top image engraving is created by moving along a fine spiral, modulating the carving depth according to the image intensity. The engraving is filled with white urethane resin. The methods used are contemporary but analogous to the motion of medallion-tracing engine turning machines."

Photo: Cleary Creative Photography

Julie Reuben (Massachusetts), *Teshuvah*, 2022, Cotton fabric, perle cotton thread, 32" × 32" (81cm × 81cm)

"This is the first quilt I made after recovering from a shoulder injury. The top is improvisationally pieced using mostly shot cottons. The stitching is freehand, although I marked out the two circular figures to know where to switch thread from cool to warm hues. The title, Teshuvah, means return in Hebrew, celebrating my ability to return to sewing. As I stitched, and the two circular figures emerged, I sometimes imagined them as beings floating through space together, perhaps returning to someplace they love."

Michael Anderson (Tennessee), *Ban Wa Renaissance*, 2024, Sapele, koa, maple, copper, 5" × 9" × 3" (13cm × 23cm × 8cm)

"Teapots are functional art. However, this teapot's sole purpose is to be aesthetically pleasing. I based this sculpture on a traditional Chinese form that dates back to the Qing dynasty. The original teapot would have been made from zisha clay and fired unglazed. Given my use of an unconventional material (wood), I chose to stray from convention and instead emulate the crackled crazing effect found in some glazed pottery. I also sought to capture the vibrant colors characteristic of the Western raku process. To pay homage to my material, I created windows that reveal the true wooden construction of the teapot. Tradition meets innovation—a Ban Wa Renaissance."

Andrea Finch (Pennsylvania),
Field Lines I & II, 2025, Recycled upholstery fabric samples, cotton and polyester thread, 15" × 13" × 8" (38cm × 33cm × 20cm)

"This piece was inspired by the lines in the farmers' fields in rural Franklin County where I live. Reusing textiles discarded by designers and decorators, I create with small bits of ephemeral fabrics from sample books. Once used, I cannot replace them. Textile production is a resource-intensive industry; the more I keep out of the landfills, the more at peace I feel with my chosen medium. Once a traditional flat quilter, my work now rises from the surface to escape the boundaries of flat surface art. It has become increasingly abstract, with sculptural elements trying to leave the quilt that taunt the viewer to reach out and touch."

Roberta Lagomarsini (California),
Manzanar: Ode to Ryozo Kato, 2024, Commercial fabric, cotton thread, 57" × 60" (145cm × 152cm)

"During World War II, Japanese Americans were interned in confinement camps. Manzanar, in the Owens Valley, is about 45 minutes from my house and is now a National Park. Staff archaeologist Jeff Burton, along with others—including some who were once confined there—has worked to uncover and preserve several of the water gardens. They feature the work of Ryozo Kato who often created "wood" out of concrete, complete with color and etched wood grain and knotholes. There is a glorious example at the site of the hospital and in many of the other gardens. Other examples that you can visit exist in Southern California. I honor him with this quilt."

Tim J. Heil (Minnesota), *Minnesota Bird Eggs*, 2025,
Curly ash, spalted maple, buckthorn, curly maple, black ash burl, holly, applewood, 3" × 22" × 14" (8cm × 56cm × 36cm)

"I used my lathe to turn egg shapes out of wood, making examples of five Minnesota bird eggs. Hummingbird eggs are small, about ½" long. The largest example comes from a loon, 3½". Other chosen examples are blue robin eggs, 1" long; barn owl eggs, 1¼"; and wild turkey eggs, 1½"."

Adam Wager (Vermont),
Silver Maple, Fall (Perspectival Forms Series), 2024,
Silver maple, acrylic paint, silver wire, botanical oil, wax finish, 6" × 5" × 5" (15cm × 13cm × 13cm)

"Growing out of my prior philosophical work in perception, the pieces in my Perspectival Forms series explore the layered surfaces that turned vessels afford and highlight the relationship between the viewer and the object. Each vessel is designed to be viewed from a particular angle—relying on the viewer's perspective to create an image out of the exterior surface, the interior surface, and the two layers of carved negative space. The texturing and directional dry brushing in the interior allow for subtle color variations depending on the viewing angle."

Photos: Paul Rogers

Monique Gilbert-Oversteyns (Belgium),
Joined Venture, 2025, Handmade Flemish bobbin lace, commercial lace, velvet, linen, artist-dyed shibori, wood bobbins, 25" × 25" (64cm × 64cm)

"I started learning Flemish bobbin lace in the early '80s. At that time, Flanders' lace-making heritage was very popular. To learn all sorts of traditional techniques, I made many samples of Flemish bobbin lace and figurative designs. I needed lots of bobbins—in multiples of four. My father was a craftsman and hand-turned my wood bobbins with his lathe machine, sometimes with a twist instead of the traditional way. He was very proud of his work."

Photo: Studio Leemans

Diana Friend (Washington), *Trio*, 2025, Black walnut, madrone burl, maple toothpick posts, leather string, epoxy, 7" × 7" × 4" (18cm × 18cm × 10cm)

"Three madrone burl blossoms lay on a canvas of variegated black walnut. As a plate, the walnut's raw, saw-cut natural edge is given a gentle curve to complement and cradle the three flowers. They are meant to look just-picked and brought in from the garden on a slab of wood. A bit of spring provided by nature, to make something of nature, displayed naturally."

Kimberly D. Winkle (Tennessee),
Red Patchwork Demi-Lune Table, 2016, Poplar, sapele, graphite, 40" × 18" × 22" (102cm × 46cm × 56cm)

"*Red Patchwork Demi-Lune Table* is a lathe-turned, painted wooden table that features a stylized Seminole patchwork motif. I am a citizen of the Seminole Nation of Oklahoma and have chosen to honor the patchwork tradition through the creation of hand-drawn stylized patchwork designs. Seminole patchwork is used to adorn garments, such as skirts, jackets, and vests, and the rows of patterns traditionally consist of bold colors of intricately pieced fabrics. I have transcribed the patterns into line drawings and freed them from the horizontal bands in which they're traditionally oriented."

Photo: Loam Marketing

Bernard Azéma (France), *Tableau Trembleur N°129,* 2024, Boxwood, solid acacia shelf, white vinegar, 27" × 6" (69cm × 15cm)

"Composition of a succession of twelve complex motifs. Description of the Trembleur from top to bottom:

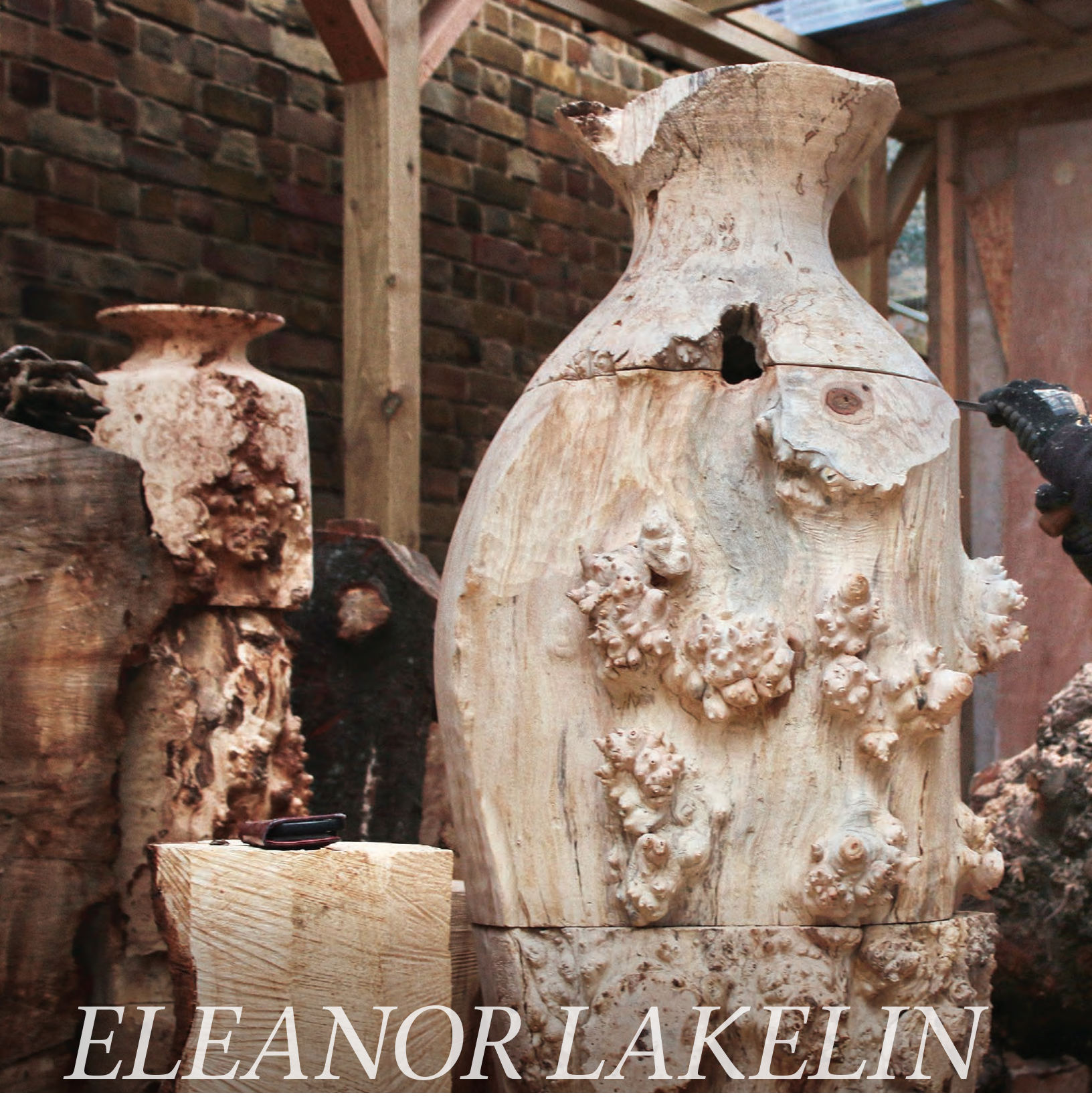
- "Double spinning top" head motif
- Sculpted and turned stylized flower
- Trio of flattened balls
- Trio of discs
- "Pinecone"
- Hollowed cylinder with quadruple torsos turned over three revolutions
- Double captive rings in an "X" shape
- Prism with sixteen micro-drilled facets"

Maryte Collard (Lithuania), *Blue Abstract,* 2024, Cotton fabric, 37" × 31" (94cm × 79cm)

"I dye my own cotton fabrics, usually allowing two colors to meet in the middle and interact, creating interesting patterns. For this quilt, I used two shades of blue and added some small details in red and yellow."

Bill Luce (1952–2022), *Skeleton Tube,* 2009, Douglas fir, 17" × 5" × 5" (43cm × 13cm × 13cm)

Photo: Tib Shaw



ELEANOR LAKELIN

HER TREES, HER LIFE, AND HER SCULPTURE

D Wood

Photos by Michael Harvey, except as noted

Photo: Evan Mason

Some internet sources, such as Wikipedia, declare with certitude that the sequoia can only be found in northern California or southwestern Oregon. But the National Trust (UK) records that in 1852, William Lobb, a British nurseryman, visited San Francisco where he learned of a giant tree that was 300 feet (91m) tall and had a diameter of over 29 feet (9m) at its base. Lobb rightly intuited that wealthy Victorians would go gaga over such exotic vegetation; he shipped seeds and seedlings to England that were nurtured into hundreds of saplings ready for planting in estates. Both literally and figuratively the sequoia became a status symbol in Britain.

Lobb wanted to be first to name the tree. *Wellingtonia gigantea* was chosen in honor of the recently deceased Duke of Wellington (1769–1852) but the Americans wanted *Washingtonia* as homage to the first President. The squabble ended when the Brits conceded to the scientific name *Sequoiadendron giganteum* to acknowledge the botanical link to the California redwood. *Wellingtonia* is still used in Old Blighty.

Whereas sequoia symbolized power and wealth in the nineteenth century, they can now be valued for their environmental contribution. Researchers at University College London (UCL), in collaboration with colleagues at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, published a paper in 2024 showing that a single giant tree extracts an average of 85 kilograms of carbon from the atmosphere each year. The fact that they grow rapidly and are one of the longest-living species—about 3,000 years—means that their use as carbon sinks is almost endless. In addition, they are fire resistant. One of the researchers stated, "We hope that these findings can help guide decisions on future tree planting and management."

The UCL and Kew Gardens scientists used laser scanners to count and measure the height and volume of the trees without damaging them. But trees do come down and, for Eleanor Lakelin, fallen sequoias are one of two species that she works with almost exclusively. The other is horse chestnut. She solicits wood from all over Britain, collecting it in her studio in London where the magic happens. The bodies of work that emanate from these trees each show a sensitivity to the material that places Lakelin at the forefront of makers of art in wood.

Intimations Studio, Eleanor Lakelin's creative heart.

Photo: Leroy Boateng

Bottle #2, 2024, Horse chestnut burr, scorched and oil-waxed, (*Intimations*, Sarah Myerscough Gallery), 14" × 18" (35cm × 46cm)

Eroding Earth I & II, 2021, British sequoia, iron-stained, (Collect, 2022), 8" × 8" (20cm × 20cm)

Bark

Lakelin's affinity with her chosen medium is lifelong. "I have a certain thing about wood. Even [as] a young child I understood the power of objects or material held in your hand and that you could be transported to a different time or place or memory. And that's what I try and convey in my work. That material can express whatever we want." She grew up on a farm in Wales where, when duties were completed, she could wander in the hills and woods and along the river. She collected bones, skulls, misshapen pieces of wood, and pebbles, and found comfort in having them in her pockets. Her treasures came to be displayed in an abandoned chicken shed, far from the house, with a hand-written sign on the door: Museum. Each item had a label with its origin or story. Lakelin worried about being teased by her family for indulging in such folly.

When Lakelin described her Welsh childhood, I was reminded of Patrick O'Brian's novel, *Testimonies*. Published in 1952, it describes the parochialism and jealousies of the inhabitants in a remote Welsh valley and the consequences for anyone who goes against the grain. When I learned that Lakelin's father sold her museum to another farmer without realizing its importance, my heart ached for her young self and I empathized with her need "to get a long way away from my very remote area."

In her teens Lakelin went to the University of East Anglia in Norwich, near the east coast of England, where her major was languages. But a formative influence was the campus' Sainsbury Centre, a museum showing art from around the world in all time periods. Lakelin recalled, "That was my first introduction to any kind of museum or place of objects. And I spent a lot of time there. The idea that there was this very calm quiet place where you could see all these objects, both contemporary and from a long time ago, was astounding." At this stage, however, she didn't recognize art as part of her world. Following graduation (1983), she went to Nigeria as part of a Voluntary Services Overseas project (similar to the Peace Corps), teaching English and managing a library for the local education board.

> "Even [as] a young child I understood the power of objects or material held in your hand and that you could be transported to a different time or place or memory.

After two years she returned to England and trained as an educator. Her ability with languages led to a job teaching refugee children and in mainstream schools formulating curriculum for students who were fluent in a different language. When that program lost its funding, Lakelin took advantage of her six-month redundancy pay to take courses to be able to renovate "a broken-down house." She learned construction and plastering and then had to tackle carpentry to fix the doors and windows. She says, "As soon as I

Vase #1; Lidded Vessels #1 & #2, 2024, Horse chestnut burr, bleached, (*Intimations*, Sarah Myerscough Gallery), 24" × 12" (61cm × 30cm), 18" × 18" (46cm × 45cm), 20" × 20" (50cm × 50cm)

went into the woodworking workshop, I thought, this is me." She immediately remembered her former love of trees. And she wasn't frightened of the environment or tools because farm chores had included repair. "Straightaway I thought, I'm going to go and train and become a cabinetmaker. It was a three-year course beginning in 1995. I got pregnant in the middle, missed the second year, had the baby, and did my second and third year in one."

Employment ensued, making sets and props for a West End London theater company. At the same time, Lakelin created small pieces of furniture like lamps and tables. Inevitably, customers began to request larger furniture items and, working on commission, she was able to help support herself and her family for about fifteen years. Accommodating the needs of young children alongside full-time furniture making was doable because it all happened in a concentrated area of London.

Cambium

In 2008 Lakelin took a five-day course in bowl turning at West Dean College in Sussex. She had the idea that she would build a shed in her garden and buy a second-hand lathe. By that point, "I was getting tired of the components and the rectangles and straight bits of wood. I often thought the most interesting pieces were actually on the floor of the workshop that I'd cut off because they were gnarly and rough." By 2009 the shed was built and "in the evening for the next couple of years, when I'd come back from my job and put the kids to bed, I would go out to the shed and teach myself to turn from books, like David Ellsworth's or Richard Raffan's. I did a short course with Nick Agar who introduced me to the work of Jim Partridge, Michael Peterson, Michael Hosaluk, and Dale Nish's wormy bowl. Enough inspiration to keep me turning late at night."

Eventually the functional turnings were good enough to be displayed and Lakelin had to be strict about declining requests from her furniture clients in order to make a go of turning. She showed her work during studio open days as well as at craft fairs. Her reputation as a woodturner was evolving. "At the beginning I was just trying to work out the properties of different woods. I don't think I even knew enough ▸

Column Vessel #1, 2024, Horse chestnut burr, bleached, (*Intimations*, Sarah Myerscough Gallery), 61" × 15" (155cm × 38cm)

> **“I was getting tired of …the rectangles and straight bits… I often thought the most interesting pieces were actually on the floor of the workshop that I’d cut off because they were gnarly and rough.**

about trees or woods, that each species was offering different things. It took a while to work out that if I thought about an idea, I could find a tree that would allow me to express that.”

The first major outing for Lakelin’s turnings occurred in January 2013 at Contemporary Applied Arts in London, a gallery renowned as a champion and promoter of the best British craft. The exhibition represented confirmation of this career choice, and Lakelin continued to explore. “I was still doing craft fairs and selling my work in shops and doing functional items. At the same time, my interest was obviously in doing more sculptural, more creative pieces. They both ran side-by-side.” In June 2016 the British Crafts Council took Lakelin and others to Design Miami/Basel, an expo for art galleries, in Switzerland. The aim was exposure of up-and-coming craftspeople to an international audience, and, for Lakelin it worked. Her objects sold, she received considerable press and she was picked up by the Sarah Myerscough Gallery, which has represented her ever since.

Sapwood

Featuring artists in *American Woodturner* such as Ernst Gamperl and Eleanor Lakelin—both of whom have been recognized by the Loewe Foundation (Gamperl in 2017, Lakelin in 2022)—may seem like overkill. After all, it would be a stretch to call Eleanor Lakelin a woodturner these days. She estimates that she spends forty percent of her time on the lathe, whereas angle grinding, carving, sandblasting, and torching are techniques that also comprise her routine. As her work grew physically, the lathe became less practical. She says, “Some of the new vessels are 2.5 meters high and 80 centimeters across so they’re too big for my lathe. With the horse chestnut burr [burl] pieces, I bleach them or scorch them. There’s so much time spent picking out little bits of bark from all the nooks and crannies. The lathe is just the beginning. I spend a lot of time not on the lathe.”

When I asked Lakelin about where she fits in the spectrum of woodturning, she replied, “If you want to create something, that denotes a certain degree of curiosity about the world or interest in how things behave, in what things can be. It’s an expression of hope, isn’t it? I’m interested in how things are made, why people have done it, [and] how different that is from the way I express myself. Other people find completely different ways to express themselves. And I think that is valid. We’re all interested in what the material we have chosen can do and mean.” Thus, her presence within this community should be seen as inspiration. An article about any high achiever is a reminder that regardless of your level of achievement, more can be explored and learned whether on one’s own or from one’s peers.

Lakelin cites an instance: In 2018 she got a Queen Elizabeth Scholarship Grant and visited Mark and Kathy Lindquist in Tallahassee, Florida, “because I wanted to think, talk through, and

Flare #1, 2025, Horse chestnut burr, bleached. 10" × 11" (26cm × 28cm)
Photo: Evan Mason

Jar #1, 2024, Horse chestnut burr, bleached, (*Intimations*, Sarah Myerscough Gallery), 20" × 20" (52cm × 50cm)

Landscape of Memory, 2021, British sequoia, iron-stained, Loewe Foundation Craft Prize finalist 2022, 11" × 17" (29cm × 43cm)

Echoes of Amphora I & II, 2018, Horse chestnut burr, bleached, (first major pieces in the *Echoes of Amphora* series; *UnEarthed*, Sarah Myerscough Gallery), 16" × 17" (41cm × 43cm), 18" × 17" (46cm × 43cm)

Photo: Ester Segarra

discuss making larger sculptural work. I had been blown away by the discovery of Mark Lindquist's work over the years—from his *Chieftain's Bowl* (1985) to his *Ascending Bowls Series* and later large-scale sculptures. It was not only his technical innovations but his understanding of the vessel as a sculptural form rich in cultural and metaphoric associations." She and Mark spent a week conferring about the movement of material at a grand scale: the logistics and costs and implications for her studio space. "We talked about how objects relate to architectural space and human scale." Lakelin says that the exchange was important at the stage of increasing the size of her turned components and she appreciated the way in which Mark pushed the boundaries of what turned wood could do or be. It may be said that Lakelin's *Pillars*, featured on the October 2021 cover of *American Woodturner*, are thanks to both Mark's and her insatiable curiosity about wood and what can be achieved with it.

Another Lakelin example, this time from a seemingly disconnected medium, is the American photographer William Garnett (1916–2006), whose aerial images seem to be un-landscapes: a sand dune might be a portion of a body or river erosion could be human veins. "His photographs taught me a lot about the idea that you can abstract things and one thing can mean something else. So I started working mainly in black and white, thinking that if I take out the color or emphasize a form, it can mean more than if it's just a bowl made of wood. I became really interested in the idea of what things could mean. Or the idea of contrast by putting one thing against the other to heighten both things. I wanted to try pushing the vessel form."

Most woodturners make vessels of one kind or another. Being motivated to explore and extend this form excites Lakelin. "My work still talks to all those things about vessels that are interesting—that we use them as humans. They're the thing that means culture to me. We've used them forever for survival but also for ritual and symbols. I still hold onto that form because I think it's amazing to be part of this long line from deep in the past and way into the future of people who make vessels. I like to push the readability of that."

Heartwood

Echoes of Amphora (2017) is the series where Lakelin felt she was hearing and seeing her own voice. She juxtaposed a classical vessel form onto horse chestnut burr, which she knew "would obviously have this clash of nature and culture. But I thought it was a great way to talk about loss. Burrs are all about survival. They're a scab that heals the tree. Metaphorically it just felt like a great thing to do and to play ▸

> **“ [Wood] already has this whole story and that’s what I hope you end up with, some kind of amalgamation of the tree’s life, and my life and this sculpture.**

around with how much fragmentation can I get away with, with how dangerous or edgy it can be.”

The horse chestnut was probably brought to England from Turkey around 1615. *Aesculus hippocastanum* was deemed attractive foliage for parks and avenues because of its wide-spreading, shading branches. It is admired for its upright white flowers in spring, and in autumn its large seeds, called conkers, provide games for children and are the focus of the annual World Conker Championship.

Through a poll conducted by the Royal Society of Biology in 2017, the horse chestnut was voted the United Kingdom’s favorite tree. It is a favorite of Eleanor Lakelin and its burrs are an inspiration. “Inspire” means to breathe or blow into, and the horse chestnut burr breathes into Lakelin and vice versa. The process is contemplative. “I spend more time looking at a piece of tree trunk than I actually do making. It feels kind of precious, this wood. Not only does it take me a long time to find it—horse chestnut burrs are becoming difficult to source—but it does feel precious. I have to feel like I have an idea, how I can show it off, how I can make the best use of it, show the most of its personality.”

Lakelin turns partially seasoned wood and, at one time, she strived to turn thin enough to avoid cracking. But with the advent of burrs in her studio, her thinking changed. “For me, now, there’s three spaces: the outside and the inside and this burr space in between, what I call the third space. There’s so much sculptural interest you can get into that third space. Now I just have to accept that the wood is going to crack, and I have to decide whether I’m going to embrace that or not follow what I think is the most interesting way to make this piece work. Now, the sculptural form of it, what it can express, is more important than if it cracks. It’s just the tree expressing itself.”

For Eleanor Lakelin it’s all about the wood. “Wood engages all our senses. From tactility, which is our first sense, to the smell of wood, everything about it. And that notion of it being a living thing, a sentient being, a life force. It already has this whole story and that’s what I hope you end up with, some kind of amalgamation of the tree’s life, and my life and this sculpture.”

For more on Eleanor Lakelin, visit her website, eleanorlakelin.com, or follow her on Instagram, @eleanorlakelin. ■

V, 2024, horse chestnut burr, scorched and oil-waxed, (*Intimations*, Sarah Myerscough Gallery), 98" × 28" (250cm × 70cm)

Vase I, 2020, Horse chestnut burr, bleached, (*UnEarthed*, Sarah Myerscough Gallery), 24" × 11" (62cm × 29cm)

D Wood designed and made furniture to earn a Diploma in Crafts and Design at Sheridan College in Canada and an MFA at the Rhode Island School of Design. In 2012, she earned a PhD in Design Studies from University of Otago. D is the editor of Craft is Political *(Bloomsbury Visual Arts, 2021) and* The Politics of Global Craft *(Bloomsbury Visual Arts, 2025).*

Members' Gallery

Dianne Looker, Nova Scotia, Canada

I came to woodturning by accident. My ex bought me a lathe when I'd asked for a drill press—he wanted the lathe. When we split up, it was mine and I had to figure out how to use it.

That was over twenty years ago. Learning opportunities were limited; I read books, watched videos, and finally found a course. I joined the Nova Woodturners Guild, an AAW chapter. The members were helpful and welcoming, and I became increasingly active, serving on the executive for years, including as president. During a year on the west coast, the Island Woodturning Guild welcomed me just as warmly—members even loaned me a lathe.

I sought out instruction everywhere: symposia, classes, online tutorials. I studied with Bonnie Klein, Jimmy Clewes, Steven Kennard, Stuart Batty, Michael Hosaluk, Marilyn Campbell, and many others. I loved it!

And I bought so many tools—because "the one who dies with the most tools wins"...

I enjoy transforming a lump of wood into something useful and/or beautiful. I love the planning, the dreaming, the "maybe I can..." These days, I can't work in the shop as long as I'd like. But the dreams and fantasies refuse to die, so I still do what I can, when I can. And I have fun!

I put my love of woodturning into a video entitled *I Love to Play on My Lathe*. Check it out at tiny.cc/LookerLathe.

Read more about Looker's woodturning journey in the Winter 2026 WIT Newsletter at tiny.cc/WITWinter2026. ▸

Antler, 2015, Walnut, 17" × 9" × ¾" (43cm × 23cm × 19mm)

Swirl Bowl, 2018, Cherry, pyrography, 6" × 4" (15cm × 10cm)

Out of the Mouths of Babes, 2024, Cherry, padauk, the artist's son's baby teeth, epoxy, 2¾" × 4" (7cm × 10cm)

(*Left, middle*) *Bowl Comin' Through*, 2019, Cherry, 9½" × 9½" × 3" (24cm × 24cm × 8cm)

(*Right*) The artist turning a spindle.

Michael Foster, Vermont

I have been turning as a hobby and passion for about forty years. Like most woodturners, I started with making utilitarian things like bowls, scoops, pens, and the like. After a while I became interested in doing more creative work, and my first exploration was making segmented forms. At the time, I was living in Alaska and my access to wood for turning was relatively limited, so segmenting seemed like a good avenue to explore. I made a number of segmented forms while there and sold most in a local gallery. I moved to Vermont in 2002 and my access to wood became pretty unlimited, and I started exploring hollow forms and coloring. This slowly evolved into finding ways to express some of my other interests in woodturning. My interests in math and the sciences became a deep well of inspiration for much of my work. I continue to produce work inspired by math and science. I am also an avid birder and bird photographer. This influence has slowly crept into my turned art. I now have an ongoing avian series of work, which is presented here. ■

The Rookery, 2025, Cherry, acrylics, tung oil finish, 7½" × 6" (19cm × 15cm)

Murmuration, 2018, Sugar maple, acrylics, India ink, glass beads, 8" × 8" (20cm × 20cm)

The Last Warbler, 2022, Maple, acrylics, glass bead, 10" × 8" (25cm × 20cm)

Elliston, 2024, Cherry, acrylics, 10" × 6¾" (25cm × 17cm)

Lifting Off, 2023, Cherry, acrylics, epoxy, stainless steel wire, 9" × 7" (23cm × 18cm)

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WHERE ARE THE **YOUNG** TURNERS?

The answer is all around us—in this issue alone, they're casting flowers in resin, turning mosaic platters, and studying wood at the cellular level. At Oregon State University, a new generation of students is learning wood science—and launching their careers at the lathe. Savannah Stanton turned this natural-edge maple burl bowl as a student in the Wood Innovation for Sustainability program, where Dr. Seri Robinson has spent twelve years integrating woodturning into a wood science degree. What began as a way to give science students hands-on experience with wood has drawn in a growing number of neurodivergent learners, for whom the lathe has become more than a tool—it's an entry point to higher education, a way of learning that engages the body alongside the mind. "As a visual and tactile learner, I quickly found these classes filled in the missing puzzle pieces in my education," says Stanton, who now teaches high school CTE and woodturning at the Marc Adams School of Woodworking & Time Honored Crafts. "I was finally able to see, feel, and experience, firsthand, how crucial aspects of wood science actually affected this renewable material." Read more about the quiet but growing movement of collegiate woodturning on page 36.