



WOOD FORUM

Newsletter of the Sonoma County Woodworkers Association

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October 2016

Meet the Teacher

The 28th *Artistry in Wood* Show got off to a great start Saturday evening at the Sonoma County Museum, as attendees were treated to music from the Bench Doggs while they strolled through the museum's main gallery, admiring the fifty pieces of fine woodwork on display there.

A few days before, on the evening of Wednesday, September 14, on a day known to SCWA veterans as Judgment Day, the trio of judges Mark Knize, Om Anand, and John Levine gathered with a large group of the makers and others and offered their wisdom and opinion of this year's Show entries. In the process, they singled out a number of pieces for special recognition and awards. One, the large vessel shown at right, was awarded the *Best of Show*. David Marks, the maker, named this piece *Sensei*, the Japanese word for teacher. David chose the name because he learned so much in the process of making it.

Other awards for the Furniture, Art, Turning, and Miscellaneous categories were also made, and numerous Awards of Excellence as well. And the Krenov Foundation presented its second annual award. Details about all of this may be found starting on page 2.



Makers Meeting

The October meeting of the SCWA will again be held in the Sonoma County Museum's main gallery. This time we will gather to hear from the makers themselves, providing members an inside view of the creative process. Award certificates will be presented, and the makers will discuss their show entries, where their inspiration came from, materials used, and perhaps some special technique that made the piece possible. The meeting will be an open forum; you may ask questions about the individual entries, and hear the response from the person who made the piece. It promises to be just as engaging and informative as the evening with the judges at the Museum in September. Members who entered work in this year's Show are encouraged to attend and discuss their entries. Scott Clark will serve as the moderator.

Date: October 4, 2016

Time: 7pm

Best of Show: *Sensei* by David Marks

Photo by Scott Clark



Judgment Night

by Art Hofmann

Chairman Bill Taft opened the meeting a few minutes after 7 PM. He began by thanking the makers for their efforts in producing the pieces that made up the Show, noting that this was the 28th year of *Artistry in Wood* at the Sonoma County Museum. He followed up with a few announcements. There will be an opening reception on Saturday, September 17. Bill pointed out that there was a ballot box for the People's Choice Award. Our next meeting will be Tuesday, October 4 at the Museum, when the makers of this year's *AIW* pieces will discuss their processes.

Bill then handed the floor to Scott Clark, who thanked the Museum, specifically Eric Stanley, who waved from the balcony; next he thanked the volunteers, beginning with Bill Taft, Jeff Latrell, Don Jereb, Carol Salvin, Kahlia Klivan, John Cobb, Bob Nelson, Judi Garland, Ron Frazier and Sam Brown. Scott then yielded the floor to the Krenov Foundation, represented by Laura Mays, Paul Reiber and Greg Zahl, last year's *Krenov Award* winner.

Greg took us to a coffee table by Derek Taylor, describing it as, "refined and subtle and deep, the

shape of the table follows the grain of the wood on the top. The grain on the bottom is a shade darker, which enhances the piece. Joints are perfectly fitted. Risks were taken but carried off." Greg found the piece exquisite. Paul Reiber remarked on how the shadow line between the top and legs heightens the difference. Derek Taylor accepted the *Krenov Award* with thanks.

Scott introduced the judges, already familiar from our last issue of the *Wood Forum*: Mark Knize, a turner and sculptor who works full time in various mediums; Om Anand, a custom furniture maker from Santa Cruz, and a COR graduate; and John Levine, former editor of *Woodwork* magazine, a long-time furniture maker, and currently a teacher at Westmore High in Daly City.

[Please note: The judges comments are out of the order in which they were presented, due to the fact that some makers entered multiple pieces. I am invoking a bit of literary license. A.H.]



Krenov Award winner: *Local Motif (Coffee Table)* by Derek Taylor
Photo by Scott Clark

Late in their rounds, Judges came to this same coffee table, and were largely in agreement about Derek Taylor's *Local Motif (Coffee Table)*. Om Anand had a dissenting view as to the color of the base, which he thought should offer more contrast. He found the difference between top and base too subtle. John Levine liked the way the top followed

the grain pattern, and the way the same arc carried through, all really nicely composed. Drawer fronts, rail, curved drawers as well, nicely fitted. The judges gave the piece an *Award of Excellence*.

Mark Tindley made a pair of Greene and Greene style tables recently for a client, which he entered in the show, simply entitled *Two Tables*. The judges praised the tables in general and lauded the way the cloud lift motif was carried through from the rails to the drawer fronts, the maker clearly paying attention to Greene and Greene details. They were not in favor of the draw pulls, substantial dowels, held firm to the draw fronts by posts, and felt uniformly that this called for a more inventive solution. John Levine made a plea for not giving up when one arrives at the ninety percent level, but pushing on for the full one hundred percent.



Photo by Jose Cuervo

Judges enjoyed elements of Rod Fraser's *Hall Table in Maple and Jatoba*. Om Anand, however, felt the piece was too shiny, and is in general not a fan of a plastic look. Judges also found they had to struggle with the stiff drawer guides, and recommended side hung drawers for user-friendlier furniture. John Levine recommended solid pieces in lieu of the fish motif and striped design.

Perseids, by Brian Cullen, a turning in big leaf maple that was dyed and then polished to a deep lustrous blue, shows off the wood splendidly, a very appropriate finish. Judges recommended strong light to appreciate this fine piece.

We had previously learned that Don Jereb's *Wall Cabinet* was a close runner up for the *Krenov Award*, which the reader will recall was judged by a separate panel. Our judges gave this cabinet an *Award of Excellence*. They found much to praise: the well crafted handles, the hand dovetails, the hand planed compound curves, and especially the hidden magnets that made the door close perfectly. Nicely done.



Wall Cabinet by Don Jereb

Photos by Jose Cuervo



Les Cizek's *Canyon*, a bowl in bay laurel with an oil finish, is one of two entries by him. Judges felt the foot was not integrated as well as it might be. His other entry, *Sun Platter*, was commented on by Mark Knize: this piece is turned plywood. The yellow dye on this scale really makes it pop. John Levine found the rings lend a topographical quality to this dramatic piece. The foot is quite thick. The rings could have been varied more. The back is crisper looking than the front. Good job! Great color!

Two bowls by Scott Chillcott, each simply titled *Bowl*, one in maple, the other in an unknown species, were found to be 'finely turned, super light weight and thin, with nice forms.' Judges appreciated the finishes as being 'appropriate to the pieces, one more glossy, and the other flatter, each bringing out the depth of the wood that revealed so much curl in the grain.'

Judges found Chuck Quibell's *Curvilinear Bowl* in black acacia to be a tour de force. They even admired the black filler used to treat the cracks. A large handsome bowl. Very nice.

[Cizek, Chillcott and Quibel are turners in their eighties and doing excellent work. A.H.]

Larry Stroud's piece, *Torii 2*, was awarded *Best Furniture* piece. It is a substantial chest with a curved top, sliding doors on the top with panels of tino, a strongly striped South American wood. The piece is meant to evoke a Japanese gate. Some of the praise included the phrases 'lovely piece' 'very well composed' 'pleasing proportions.' There was some discussion of a handle that seemed a bit lost looking. Om Anand found the panels somewhat compressed, on which point, John Levine found room in the drawer widths that might have been stolen in favor of the sliding doors. These were minor points in what was seen overall as a very impressive piece. Great job in matching the veneers on top.



Best Furniture: Torii 2 by Larry Stroud

Photo by Jose Cuervo

Judges moved on to two turnings by John Cobb, the first in camphor and titled *Camphor Vessel*, where the balance between the sapwood and the heartwood, they felt, could have been better; the second turning, a hollow form in spalted alder and called *Alder Vessel*, was very successful, and received an *Award of Excellence* in Turning. ‘Very thin, and a beautiful piece.’



Alder Vessel by John Cobb

Photo by Jose Cuervo

Redwood Flame by Ralph Carlson was praised for its form and beauty. Mark Knize found the base to be distracting, too much like the fumed oak found on Arts and Crafts pieces, whereas black might have worked better. This is a handsome piece of wood, naturally charred on the inside and sanded and lovingly worked on the display side, a bit of driftwood that the maker found at Jenner, an embellished piece of luck. The judges enjoyed it.

The large, handsome *Claro Walnut Bowl* by Hugh Buttrum received fulsome praise as being a successful form from a massive piece of wood, with a handsome foot, beautifully finished with no sanding scratches. The judges focused next on another bowl by Hugh, also entitled *Claro Walnut Bowl*, this one carved in rows from side to bottom and praised as richly textured to draw one in. The quality of these turnings impressed the judges, as did the next set by Bob Nelson, three bowls taken from the same piece of redwood burl entitled *Three Little Bears*. A spectacular set, very well executed.



Best Miscellaneous:
Whittled Water Dippers
by Victor Larson

Photo by Bill Taft

Kai Herd’s *Smoke* table was excellently crafted. Judges wondered at the design of the table, which was clarified by the designer of the table, Michael Masumoto. The bent, laminated legs sweeping far under the top were meant to suggest rising smoke, just levitating. Judges were impressed with this piece, particularly the execution. The finish was praised, as was the fit of the drawers.

Pair of Whittled Water Dippers, one in light wood, the other dark, by Victor Larson won the *Best Miscellaneous Piece* category. Judges wanted to buy them and take them home. Victor was present and said that he had hand carved the insides of the scoops with a hooked knife, which made the judges love them even more. A big hit, the dippers got a hand of applause from the assembled crowd.

Judges were more pleased with the flatter bowl of *Illusion Bowl Set* by Warren Glass than the taller bowl, feeling that the geometric pattern in these segmented bowls worked to better advantage there.

Steve Forrest's *Spalted Maple Bowl* was deemed a "beautiful piece, very well balanced, seems like a functional bowl, nice feel to it, nice thickness, tapers to a nice thickness on the edge."



Marquetry 1 by Vincent Van Dyke

Photo by Jose Cuervo

Marquetry 1 and *Marquetry 2* by Vince Van Dyke were both appreciated by the judges, who particularly liked the first of the two, praising the frame especially. Vince had done the marquetry in Greg Zall's class, and it was his first attempt. The first of the pieces received an *Award of Excellence*.

Joe Von Ark entered a *Jewelry/Lingerie Cabinet* that was made to commission, the starting point of which was the bookmatched claro walnut veneer for the front that dictated the 'rocket ship' shape of the entire cabinet. The front was then divided into many drawers of various depths, each treated differently internally with its own little theme. Judges wanted to see the line of the inlaid pewter descending the face converge at the bottom.

Oak Vessel, a small hollow vase turning by John Cobb with biscuit jointer stitches was lauded as being a good save for work that would otherwise have been impossible to display. One of the stitches could have been placed better. The shape was lovely.

Charles Levine made *Another Fibonacci*, and the judges found this box to be 'perfect, a swirling Fibonacci series, rift sawn on bottom, very well executed. They liked the shape of the legs, but had a problem with the length of these, and also faulted the use of a filed down brass screw for the handle. They suggested wood.



Devotional Mantle by Joshua Smith

Photo by Jose Cuervo

Joshua Smith entered two pieces, the first of which was *Display Box for Antique Flute*, where the removed lid, when inverted and replaced as a lid, serves as a display stand for a shakuhachi flute. The legs are nicely detailed, and the camellia twigs that hold the flute do a perfect job of nestling the instrument. Joshua Smith also made *Devotional Mantle*, a gothic arch in wood with a luminous background of rice straw, a technique that featured prominently in a piece by Joe Amaral in an AIW show several years ago. Joshua, who lives in Ft. Bragg, learned it from Joe. Well composed, nicely done, the framing elements reminiscent of the timber frame construction of a medieval English church, nicely thought out, with stopped chamfers. This piece was distinguished with an *Award of Excellence*.

Don Ajello made a sculpture entitled **Red Chinese Gourd Vessel** with bronze feet and head. It had a fierce and comic aspect. The judges found it whimsical.

Bill Taft's **Flower Burst**, an extensive and lovely marquetry piece was the next object of attention. Om Anand commented on the one flower in back of the other, saying that he particularly enjoyed that portion, but "other areas were harder to read, because of the prevalence of the rather darkish tones of wood choices. A pleasing piece." Bill Taft's **Butterfly Cabinet**, a marquetry piece behind which there were several drawers, judges declared "Very inventive!" Their verdict was that the cabinet is nicely spaced, very creative, very charming, nice layout, well done. They also approved of Bill's **Running Wild**, another marquetry piece of horses running at a gallop. Mark Knize wanted a horizon; Om Anand liked this piece very much, more than Bill's **Butterfly Cabinet**. Nice words were said about Bill's ability to capture the eyes and tails of the horses. Again, well done!

Judges then moved on to the alcove where they stopped before a carved medieval weapon in ebony, purpleheart and other woods entitled **In the Field** by Paul Marini. Judges comments, "We all were agog at the enormous amount of hours that went into this object. Lots of detail. Hats off to you, well done shape." Judges appreciated another of Paul Marini's medieval weaponry set; the maker clearly decided to devote himself entirely to his work, evident in the working through of every last detail. His dedication to his vision was generally praised. This particular piece was a sword in various woods, mainly dark, entitled **Hand to Hand**. A lot of work. Paul Marini's **Close Quarters**, a dagger and sheath that garnered praise for seeing the concept through, the third element of his medieval weaponry series. Again, lots of work. Om Anand found the finish, which was four or five coats of tung oil, to look too glossy. He felt this element distracted from the wood.

Thomas Vogel's **Andon Lanterns** received an **Award of Excellence**. These lanterns, featuring a screened pattern, are in a special Japanese style, kumiko zaiku, of which there are several hundred patterns. The lanterns are backed with mulberry paper pasted on with rice glue and misted to make it taut. The joinery is very demanding, and the attention to detail was noted and rewarded. Beautifully crafted. **Shimono Boxes** was a

second entry by Vogel. These were made of one piece of wood, and again this maker's work elicited deep respect from the judges, especially the blind mitered dovetails. Very well done. A third entry by Thomas Vogel was his **Items for Tea Ceremony**, a well crafted box for tobacco, an accouterment to the Japanese tea tradition. Like all of Thomas' items, the judges were also very pleased with this offering. Nicely made and finished.



Andon Lanterns by Thomas Vogel

Photo by Jose Cuervo

Lionel Murphy's **Reclaimed Galaxy - Desk** was put together from an old source and a new one. The judges had a look underneath and determined that there was a lot of work beneath, an enormous amount of detail. Mark Knize felt the table would have been better if the top had extended beyond the legs. The shape of the base is nicely integrated into the top, however, and the top itself was intriguing, a marvelous slab of wood, very well displayed. Definitely take a look underneath, was the judges advice. **Eye and the Serpent** is a low table, also by Lionel Murphy, mainly in red gum. Judges spent a long time trying to decipher its narrative, a hand reaching through the primal ooze and the ominous serpent carved of light wood in the corner. All agreed that there has been some really nice work done; they were also in agreement that the vertical laminations on the legs should have been horizontal.

Joe Scannell entered three footstools into the show, which John Levine loved. They are meant for 2-3 year old children, family members. Levine found these 'so sweet.' Judges loved the curved sides (feet), individually splayed at a slight angle, rather than just squared off. This, plus the name of individuals carved into the top takes them up to a whole other level. For one, *Kellan's Footstool*, Joe harvested the madrone some thirty-five years ago. That one was awarded *Best of Category for Art*. Another, *Will's Footstool*, was made for the grandson of a good friend from high school days. This one and *Francie's Footstool* were displayed at the entrance to the show. The stools were lauded again, as the Judges brought the evening to a conclusion. Joe commented on the wood used in the stretcher of one, hickory. He obtained the wood in 1974 while helping a friend clean out his grandfather's garage. Last year that same friend's daughter had twins, one of them Francie. So now that piece of wood has traveled from Great-great grandfather Elmer down the years to Francie Carr.



Kellan's Footstool (top view) by Joe Scannell Photo by Jose Cuervo



Best of Art: Kellan's Footstool by Joe Scannell Photo by Jose Cuervo

David Mark's vessel, *Sensei*, was awarded *Best of Show* at the end of the judges' rounds. This is a tall vessel in a stand (photo on page 1), in which no detail has been spared. This includes chased threads in the topknot cover, a finished interior and a marvelously crafted stand of bent laminations that contain graduated tapered elements. Flawless, judges admired every little element. The inside is as interesting as the outside. Great intention and great execution. Very well done.

The judges, John Levine, Om Anand, and Mark Knize received a round of applause. They thanked the group for putting on a great show and for the honor of being able to spend the day examining and pronouncing on the work. Scott Clark also received a round of applause for putting the show together. The meeting ended at about 9:00 pm.

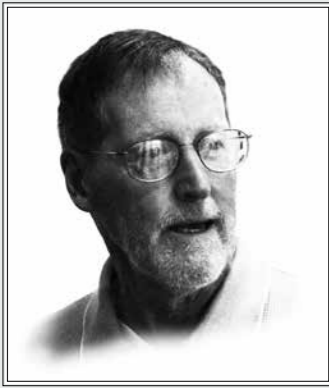


Best Woodturning: Alchemist's Vessel by David Marks

Photo by Bill Taft

David Marks had two pieces in this show which did very well. The first the judges examined was *Alchemist's Vessel*, a vase-shaped turning in spalted maple with a metallic leaf finish on the bottom. John Levine recognized the maker; these pieces have become part of David Marks' signature style, appreciated nevertheless at every occurrence. This piece has a finish on the inside as well as the outside, a luminous crackled eggshell blue finish only visible with a flashlight. Such attention to detail makes this a truly delightful object. It was awarded the *Best Woodturning*.





A Note from the Chairman

Bill Taft

I spent quite a bit of time helping Scott get this year's Show ready for the judges and then ready for the public. I enjoy doing it. For me it is a very rewarding experience. I was not alone, we had a lot of help this year. It seems to me that we had a few less pieces entered this year. I think that this is sign of the times; almost everyone is busy with other things. On October 4 we get to tell the other members all about our entries. Please come and enjoy the discussions.

Artistry in Wood 2016 is almost over. You only have until Sunday, October 9 to see it. The Show schedule and all of the information about exhibit hours is on our website. Please vote for the People's Choice Award when you attend.

For the past few weeks the board has been working with the Education Policy Committee on how we implement the Committee's proposal for supporting woodworking education in the North Bay. Basically, the proposal requests that the SCWA form an Educational Support Committee that would oversee the Association's involvement in education support for woodworking students at area schools. There will be more on this at the November meeting.

Last year we did not have a Chairman. However, we got through that year because we had a good competent board that took care of things. It looks like we won't have: a Chairman, a Show Chairman, a Programs Chairman nor a Guild Chairman next year. I don't think that it is fair to leave the remaining four board members with the burden that eight should share. Please consider taking one of these positions. The retiring board members promise to help you get acquainted with the duties. Contact any board member if you are willing to help. There will be more about this at the October and the November meetings.



Photo by Michael Wallace

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I would like to join the SCWA to meet other people interested in the craft, the art and the business of fine wood-working. Enclosed is my check in the amount of \$35 for the annual dues. I understand that this fee entitles me to attend monthly meetings and to receive the Wood Forum newsletter by email or via the SCWA's website.

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