

Shock of the TIMELESS

Betty J. Scarpino



Shock of the Timeless booth at SOFA Chicago, 2015.

I doubt anyone viewing *Shock of the Timeless* at SOFA Chicago (Sculpture Objects, Functional Art, and Design) was even mildly surprised by wood artists' use of color—color abounds at SOFA. Patrons unfamiliar with the history of painted wood, however, might be surprised to learn its history is rich. Painting wood has long been an

established act, artists and makers of every era concealing even the most glorious woodgrain. Kevin Wallace, exhibit curator, discusses the historical background of painted wood in his essay, "Contemporary Wood Art & The Shock of the Timeless." You can find it at tiny.cc/Timeless (case sensitive).

Color aside, the significance of *Shock of the Timeless* at SOFA was the presence of an exhibit focused on wood art, at a

venue outside the confines of the wood field. In addition, a variety of galleries carried the work of many well-known woodturners. This is good news for the wood-art field, where del Mano Gallery used to reign supreme at SOFA. Like all vacuums, the shift of del Mano from bricks-and-mortar to online sales provided an opportunity. Other galleries are beginning to fill that void quite nicely, with the Thomas R. Riley Gallery representing many artists—wood offered for sale alongside glass and ceramics sends an inclusive message.

Individual artists

As might be expected when color surfaces, Binh Pho delights. His *Shadow of Your Smile* did make me smile as those two large peacock-feather-eyes seemingly watched me circle around as I studied intricate details. Not to be outdone with color and complexity in a charged-with-color manner, Neil Turner's *Intertwined Spirits* shouted for attention from the wall. Close by, Graeme Priddle and Melissa Engler's *Incubus Triptych* appeared almost mild in comparison; I appreciated its subtle elegance.

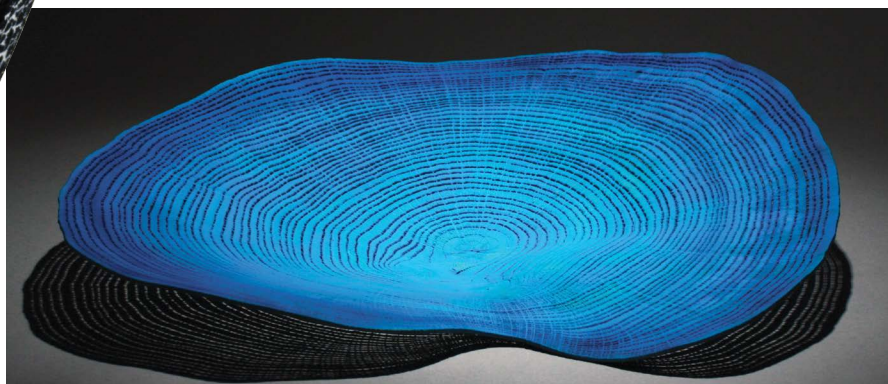
In spite of being infused with blue, Pascal Oudet's *Blue Wave* divulged "of-wood-and-turning" by thinly revealing the unmistakable structure of wood. The shadows it cast were as captivating as the piece itself.

Michael Hosaluk employed the sense of walking in his classic vessel, *Patterns of Growth*. Made in 1995, it appeared



Todd Hoyer, *Untitled Vessel*, c. 1993, Wood, grout, paint, 6½" × 4" (17cm × 10cm)

Provenance: Lipton Collection
Thomas R. Riley Galleries



Pascal Oudet, *Blue Wave*, 2013, Oak, acrylic paint, 2¾" × 13¾" × 11½" (7cm × 33cm × 29cm)
Contemporary Artifact Gallery

right at home in colorful company, as did Todd Hoyer's timeless vessel.

By early evening of the first day, many labels were festooned with a welcome color: red dots. Sales were respectable.

Sponsorship of SOFA exhibits

SOFA officials offer free booth space and discounted lights and pedestals to nonprofit organizations as part of their educational programming during this expansive three-day event. For many years, the AAW and the Collectors of Wood Art (CWA) have alternated hosting an exhibit. In 2015, instead

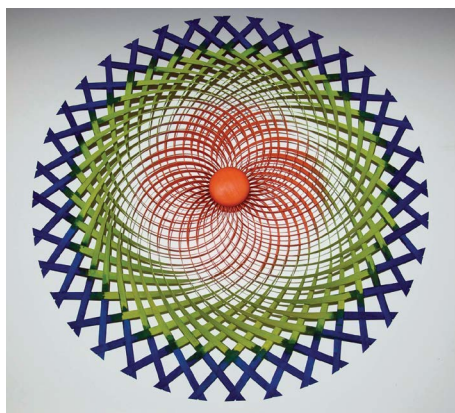
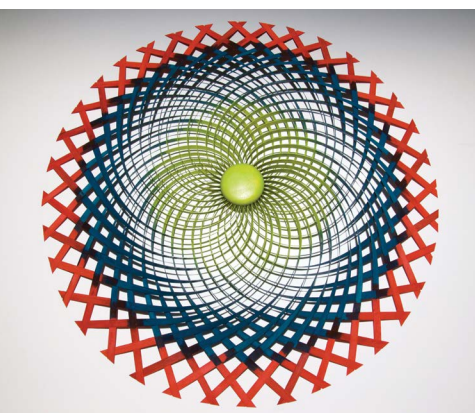
of the AAW hosting, the honor went to Beatrice Wood Center for the Arts, Ojai, California. Its director, Kevin Wallace, well known in the wood-art field, curated the exhibit.

Most of the artists in *Shock of the Timeless* were woodturners. That these artists are currently or were previously involved with the turning field should make the AAW take note. Events that showcase professional woodturners' artwork, especially ones outside the field, are always welcomed—and needed.

The CWA announced the theme for its 2016 SOFA wood-art exhibit, "WHY

WOOD? Contemporary Practice in a Timeless Material," which will be curated by Jennifer Navva-Milliken, Curator of Craft, Bellevue Arts Museum. To view the call to artists, visit tiny.cc/CWACall. For 2017, I hope the AAW will sponsor an exhibit at SOFA. Lead-time is essential to putting together a topnotch array of turned-wood art; right now is not too early to begin planning. ■

Betty J. Scarpino lives, works, turns, carves, and writes in Indianapolis. Her work can be seen at bettyscarpino.com.



Neil Turner, *Intertwined Spirits 1 & 2*, 2015, Rock maple veneers, jacaranda, ink, 2' x 2' x 1½" (61cm x 61cm x 4cm)

Thomas R. Riley Galleries

Graeme Priddle and Melissa Engler

Incubus Triptych, 2015, Monterey cypress, acrylic paint, 19" x 15" x 3" (48cm x 38cm x 8cm)

Thomas R. Riley Galleries



Binh Pho, *Shadow of Your Smile*, 2015, Boxelder, acrylic paint, gold leaf, 11" x 6" (28cm x 15cm)

Thomas R. Riley Galleries



Michael Hosaluk, *Patterns of Growth*, c. 1995, Elm, acrylic paint, hair from each of Michael's four children, maple, brass, 13" x 6" x 6" (33cm x 15cm x 15cm)

Thomas R. Riley Galleries

