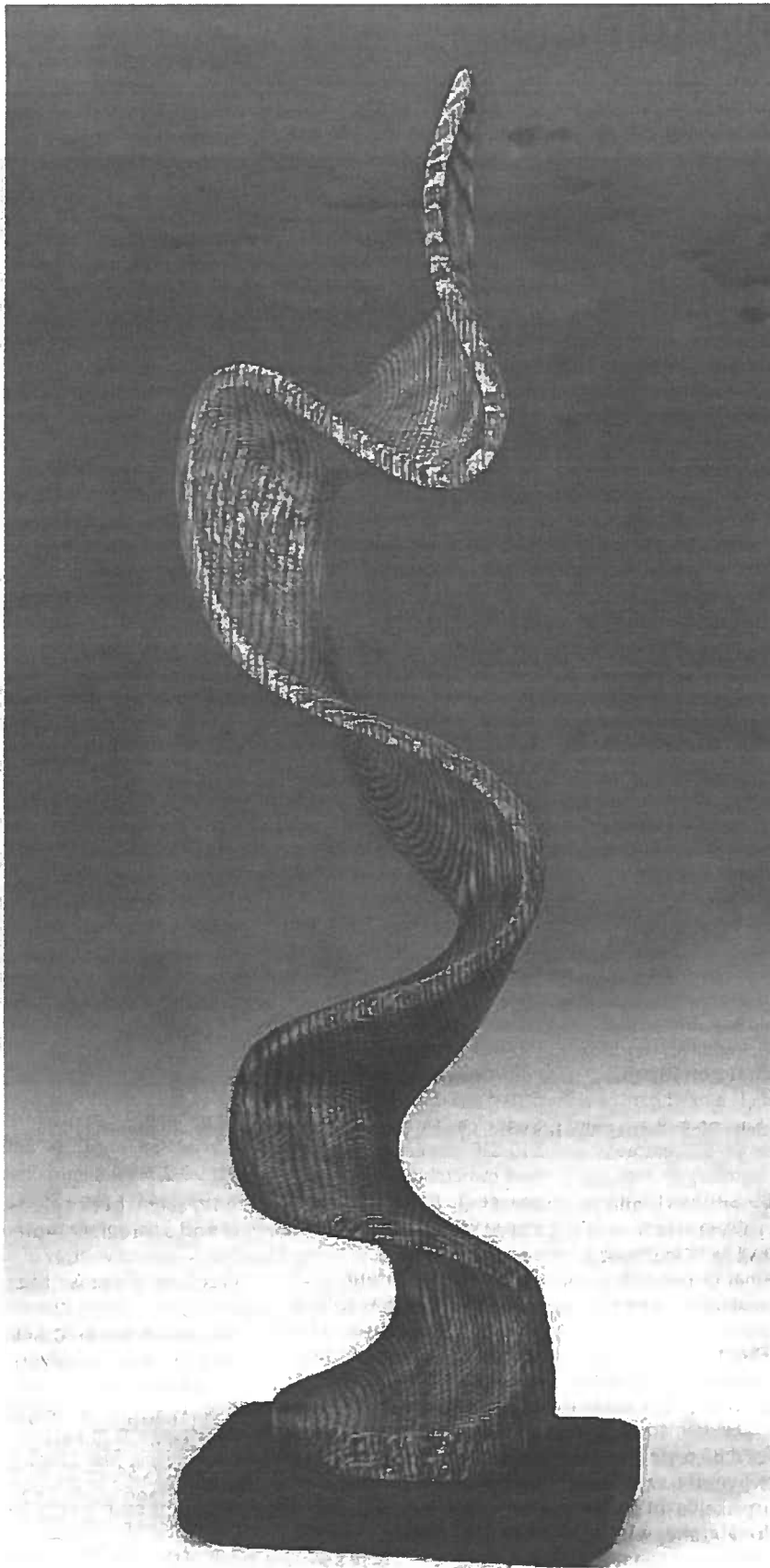


FINE ART

Artists go out on a limb for 'Works in Wood'



"Ribbon in the Wind" by Andy DiPietro Courtesy of the artist

Janet Purcell For Times of Trenton

There are some exhibits that art lovers in this area automatically add to calendars each year so they won't let them slip by. The New Hope Arts Center's annual "Works in Wood" has been one of those now for 19 years.

This is an exhibit that features fine furniture, sculptural forms and vessels. This year, works by 33 contemporary artists are on display. Jurors Adam Capone and Sarah Cutter chose the works from a field of 280 entries. There are 67 unique works included, representing artists from Portland, Oregon, New England and throughout the tristate region. It also includes several first-time artists joining local woodworkers who have often exhibited their creations in this exhibit, a few since it began.

The show, as always, is diverse, drawing from the rich cultural heritage of Bucks County, as well as vibrant and new artists bringing their new visions to the show.

The judges recognized the following artists with prizes awarded in memory of William A. Brewer that were donated by his family and friends: Best in show was given to David Washington for his "Misty," a 13-foot white pine and old-growth redwood sculpture of a woman; in the furniture category, Glen Guarino; sculpture, Andy DiPietro; wall art, Norine Kevolic; turned object/small vessel, Fred Chase; first-time exhibitor, Scott Troxel.

A fine example of the freshness brought to this show by new artists is Troxel's wood-tone, white and black "Heartbreaker." Working with poplar, azek, mahogany, acrylic pigment and tung oil, he combined various segments in a shape that loosely resembles a heart, but added vertical segments in the center, thus visually separating the sides.

Coincidentally, Clark Twining incorporated hearts in his "Mended Heart Nightstand" built from figured walnut with maple inlays and maple legs. Twining's nightstand is actually a two-level table that stands on three legs. A large heart shape serves as the top over a smaller heart shape beneath. Both have curved suture-like shapes that cross a dark grain in the walnut.

Other tables that are remarkably designed and built are Guarino's "Stacking Up," composed of northern catalpa, ebonized oak, metal and glass and Nick Cartaina's cherry and poplar "Six Hundred and Twenty Four to One." These are so unique any verbal description would not do them justice.

That is the same for most of the pieces in the exhibit. There are lamps such as Brian Skalaski's white oak "Foxglove Lamp" that is beyond description, and there is DiPietro's award-winning dyed red oak "Ribbon in the

19th annual 'Works in Wood'

Where: New Hope Arts Center, 2 Stockton Ave., New Hope, Pennsylvania

When: Through Jan. 6. Hours, noon to 5 p.m., Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays and by appointment.

Contact: 215-862-9606 or info@newhopearts.org

Wind," which causes you to look at it in wonder trying to figure out how he managed to bend and swirl wood to really look like a ribbon.

But then you come upon "Self As Guardian 4" a blackened oak, maple, lacewood and hemp chair and you are rendered totally speechless. How can you describe a chair whose backrest is a bizarre face with a wide toothy grin and long, straggly hemp hair? What do you say about the armrests that are two fists clutching tall upright spears? The thing you say to yourself is, this is what art is all about. Artists pushing boundaries, always exploring new ways to express their vision.

And that is what this particular exhibition is all about. In addition to the many boundary-pushing works, there are as many where it's clear to see the woodworker's aim was to find new ways to create beauty. Kevolic's poplar, birch and bamboo panels all have a Zen-like quality about them. They are quietly, peacefully beautiful. Each, carved in relief, is painted with a dark background. The graceful shapes rising out of the dark are highlighted with mica or gold leaf.

Carol Hall works in collaboration with Mark Hall. For their collections of small bowls and vessels, he did the turning and she drew and painted haunting images on all. "Drip," a vessel whose sides are colorfully painted, stands tilted with a Thermoplastic drip spilling out to a small puddle beneath.

And what might otherwise be utilitarian objects are turned into works of art, such as "Celebration" by John Sheridan. This is a wall bar with a door that opens to a compartment to hold wine bottles, a shelf notched to hang stemware and a drawer for the corkscrew. In a humorous vein, there is Jack Quinn's "The To-do List," giant clothespin holding a blue-lined pad and a small yellow list of chores. All were done using pine, birch, basswood and aluminum.

New Hope Arts Executive Director Carol Cruickshanks says the show "really illustrates the versatility of the wood medium since we have such exquisite examples of a wide variety of forms from furniture to sculpture, turned vessels to wall art."