

Fine Arts: ‘Works in Wood’ has been the centerpiece exhibition of New Hope Arts for more than 2 decades

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By [Janet Purcell](#) | [For The Times of Trenton](#)

Twenty-two years. That’s how long “Works In Wood,” the centerpiece exhibition of New Hope Arts, has been recurring annually. It has grown in size, now drawing from a broader geographic spectrum of woodworkers, but the high quality of works accepted has remained constant.

“Works in Wood honors the rich cultural heritage of Bucks County woodworking while celebrating the new visions of the contemporary artists who reside in our region and beyond,” said Carol Cruickshanks, executive director. “As a national juried show, Works in Wood features artwork from the finest talent in the country today. It is startling to see the creative expressions in wood that the artists conceive.

“In this exhibition, the notion of wood as a functional brown object is totally irrelevant, since the dynamics of graining, form, and color are introduced,” Cruickshanks explained. “Works are not limited by function but must be original in design and artists must incorporate at least 70% of wood in each piece. This year the exhibition features functional and non-functional works, studio furniture, turnings, constructions, sculpture and vessels.”

The exhibition includes seven new woodworkers joining many of those returning who were not able to participate last year. C.T. Bray encouraged his father, N. T. Bray, a retired New York set designer, to enter. His “Yellow Legged Bird” was not only juried in, but was honored with the New Exhibitor Award. The wood and clay bird painted red stands audaciously on his long bent yellow legs that match his pointed beak while his steel-tipped tail feathers reach up eighteen inches poking the air about him.

Also new to the exhibit this year are students of The George School woodworking teacher Carter Sio who has been a regular exhibitor for many years. One student, Charlie Sizer, is exhibiting his walnut and maple “Free Edge Bench” which clearly shows he’s already mastered the art of design by choosing the two different woods, cutting one end of the seat precisely and leaving the other to extend in free form.

Teacher Carter Sio’s “Bench With Storage” also incorporates two woods, walnut and white oak. He is also exhibiting two bowls, a “Vessel With Gold Lip” and “Flotsam and Jetsam,” a drift wood and found objects chair that is so aptly named.

The exhibition is a good balance of sometimes massive pieces of sculpture or furniture and works that are small and whimsical. There's Kevin Kopil's "Love Rocks," a sturdy and strong tigerwood, maple, sapele and caned rush rocking chair and Tricia Adler's tabletop assemblage "Thoughts: Coming and Going," comprising a vintage egg beater, hickory nuts, and various painted wooden balls and abstract shapes sprouting this way and that from a dome-like base.

Also the right size for on a table or chest is the collection of Rob Herion's Jewelry boxes with each inner compartment lined in colored silks. And nearby is Glen Guarino's Honduras mahogany "Desk/Lady's Makeup Table," its grace and elegance acknowledged by the Fine Furniture Award.

The Juror's Choice Award was bestowed on Douglas Wright's identical pair of white oak and cherry "Flare Stool(s)." His love of simple, yet elegant, design is also seen in his pair of black walnut and wenge "Treble Chair(s)" which he says in the accompanying online video were inspired by music.

Cruickshank's earlier reference to color playing a major role in this year's exhibition can be seen in Fred Chase's "Ribbons," an astonishing ambrosia maple bowl upon which, using Prismacolor, he painted "ribbons" of ruby red adorned with colorful organic designs. There are Bill Abendroth's "Over the Rainbow" poplar, persimmon and walnut vase whose body wears brilliant acrylic paint colors and metal leaf, Barry Hantman's wood and metal assemblages in primary colors, Norine Kevolic's wall art "Chant" in deep rich tones and Jack Quinn's large birch and pine "Iron Butterfly" of painted orange with black and colorful iron fillings.

"Over The Rainbow" by Bill Abendroth is on display at New Hope Arts Center through Jan. 9. Courtesy

The wood's inherent natural color is more subtle Ken Burton's sycamore, sapele, copper, oak and cherry wall cabinet "Darkness Spills." Ask the gallery sitter to open the cabinet's doors for you so you can read the words Burton has inscribed on the inside. He writes of boards holding treasures and memories "holding in the darkness until the doors open and the dark spills out."

An exhibit of this caliber offers that same release for us. After the darkness and concern of the past year it can be like opening the door to freshness and creativity.

But make sure you go soon. The exhibit closes Jan. 9.

IF YOU GO:

- **WHAT:** Works in Wood 22nd Annual Juried Exhibition
- **WHERE:** New Hope Arts Center, 2 Stockton Avenue, Second Floor, New Hope, Pennsylvania. Also virtually at www.newhopearts.org (ongoing).

- **WHEN:** Through Jan. 9. Hours: Special hours, 3 to 5 p.m. on Jan. 1. Otherwise, noon to 5 p.m., Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Reservations suggested and masks are required at all times.
- **CONTACT:** 215-862-9606 or www.newhopearts.org.