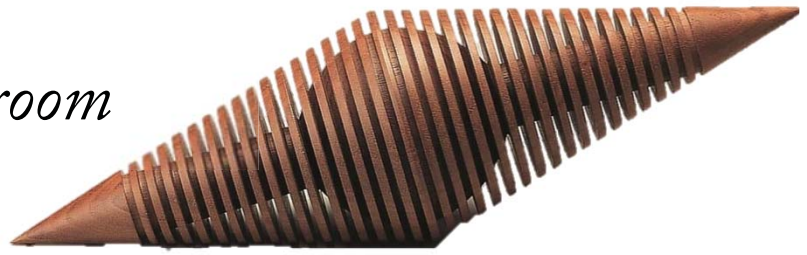


Woodson Art Museum

in your classroom



Explore Quilts & Wood
On view through February 25, 2018



Leigh Yawkey
Woodson
Art Museum



From top: Tim Stokes, *Double Cone/Sphere*, 1995, black walnut, photo by John Carlano; Barbara Martinson, *The Shores of Atlantis: Green and Gold*, 2015, cotton, wax, procion dyes, embroidery floss; digital printed, batiked, quilted; David Pye, *Study in Flower Form*, ca. 1980, wood; photo by John Carlano

Introduction

A winter visit to the Woodson Art Museum offers fresh perspectives on familiar materials of wood and fabric and the art forms of quilting and woodworking. *Explore Quilts & Wood* comprises two distinct exhibitions – [Wild Fabrications](#) and [Explorations in Wood: Selections from The Center for Art in Wood](#), which remain on view through February 25, 2018. *Explorations in Wood* features more than seventy objects from the collection of [Philadelphia's Center for Art in Wood](#), gathered over a thirty-year period. These objects showcase the diversity and unlimited potential of wood and woodworking techniques.



Kate Themel, *Red Fox, Blue Fox*, 2013

Also debuting this winter is artist Ricky Bernstein's site-specific sculpture *Destined for the Stars*, a large-scale narrative sculpture made of glass, wood, and an aluminum armature. Bernstein's wall-mounted sculpture features an ambitious character named Lois who is practicing her balancing act featuring bowling balls, brooms, cups, and tea pots. Each of Ricky Bernstein's sculptures begins with an idea or story; to read the artist's vignette that inspired *Destined for the Stars*, click [here](#).



Ricky Bernstein, *Destined for the Stars*, 2017, oil and acrylic paint, oil crayon, color pencil, mixed media objects on glass, aluminum, and wood

Wild Fabrications, organized by the [Studio Art Quilt Associates](#) (SAQA) in Hebron, Connecticut, comprises more than three dozen vibrant quilts featuring intriguing, whimsical depictions of animals.

Complementing *Explorations in Wood* is *Behind the Lathe: Selections by Wisconsin Valley Woodturners* featuring fifty-seven woodturned objects by north central Wisconsin woodworkers. Join the Wisconsin Valley Woodturners for hands-on learning on the lathe [Thursday, January 4](#) and [Saturday, January 6](#).



Frank E. Cummings, III, *Nature in Transition*, 1989, cork oak, 18K gold, exotic material, photo by John Carlano



Jim Anderson, *Vase with Finial*, 2008, cherry

During docent-led visits to *Explore Quilts & Wood*, students will:

- Compare abstract and representational forms/subjects in two-and-three-dimensions
- Discuss pattern, composition, and texture as observed in fiber arts and wood objects
- Consider and share ideas on functional vs. decorative objects
- Learn about the materials and production processes used in studio art quilts and woodturning
- Create an original mixed-media collage inspired by the textures, patterns, and materials on view

Wild Fabrications

The studio art quilts on view in *Wild Fabrications* are not your grandmother's quilts. What differentiates a studio art quilt from a more traditional quilt?

Art quilts are a maker's original exploration of material resulting in unique artworks, while traditional quilts often rely on patterns handed down through generations and tend to be utilitarian in nature. Like other visual arts, several of the artworks in *Wild Fabrications* communicate messages and invite consideration, drawing viewers in with bold palettes and lush materials and then asking them to pause and consider a deeper meaning.

Take, for example, Susan Carlson's *Polka Dodo*, a colorful fabric collage portrait of a long-lost bird. Using glue, fabric, and thread, Carlson re-imagines the gloomy fate of this flightless bird as bright and lively. Carlson writes: "The dodo lived on the island of Mauritius in the Indian Ocean and was killed off soon after being discovered in the mid-1700s. My polka-dotted specimen of that bird is proud and self-confident, displaying himself to a world that never had the chance to know him."



Susan Carlson, *Polka Dodo*, 2006



Alaska quilter Cat Larrea's large-scale depiction of a polar bear brings visitors face-to-face with a looming threat of the loss of this species.

Much like a painter captures light reflections in snow, Larrea's polar bear is dappled in colorful fabric breathing life into an otherwise monochromatic subject. What do you think the colorful fabric pieces add to the quilt? What could these colors represent in the composition? A shadow? Or perhaps the energy or health of the subject? Do you think these colors appear to be draining from the bear or expanding across its chest?

The bear's expression appears earnest, innocent, and direct, engaging viewers in a conversation on conservation. The artist writes: "Arctic sea ice provides access to seals and is the main hunting environment for polar bears. With the shrinking of the polar ice cap and a notable reduction in his prime habitat, the risk alluded to in the title is 'Now you see him . . . now you don't!'"

Cat Larrea, *Now You See Him. . .*, 2015



Sara Sharp, *Can We Save the Whooping Cranes?*, 2014

Quilter Maura McLaughlin notes her *Green-footed Dreamwalker* is “inspired by the aboriginal fabrics in this piece.”

To view more *Wild Fabrications* artwork images, check the SAQA’s exhibition website [here](#).

Techniques found in *Wild Fabrications*

**from SAQA’s exhibition educational materials*

Like the animal kingdom, the textile medium is replete with pattern and color, plus, it is a perfect substrate for additional surface design such as natural and chemical dyes, paint, and resists. Designs in commercially printed fabrics can be co-opted for realistic or fantastic fur, scales, or hints at an animal’s surroundings. The textile artist can print photos on fabric -- which can be used on their own, as templates for imagery, or foundations for intensive stitching by hand or machine. Fabric textures range from smooth to rough and can be folded, layered, frayed, and sculpted to accentuate the forms in the chosen imagery. In addition to the fabrics themselves, stitches of all types and other embellishments, both the expected and unusual, add physical and conceptual layers to the artwork.

Contrast in a composition catches a viewer’s attention and allows an artist to direct viewers to a specific area of an image or highlight an idea. In Sara Sharp’s *Can We Save the Whooping Cranes?* the right quarter of the image presents the dire possibility of the whooping crane’s absence suggested by the artist’s use of a grayscale palette, a strong contrast to the verdant scene at left. The ghostly silhouette of the whooping crane at right offers an eerie premonition of a wetland landscape devoid of this iconic and precarious species.

In her artist statement Sara Sharp writes: “Whooping cranes are endangered by drought and poor water management, which causes increased salination in coastal wetlands. On the left we see the results of adequate river inflow, while the right shows the scenario if we mismanage our resources and wildlife, seeing only the ‘ghosts’ of these birds in the future.”

Not all of the art quilts in *Wild Fabrications* depict endangered or extinct animal subjects, some, are “wild fabrications” of an artist’s imagination.



Maura McLaughlin, *Green-footed Dreamwalker*, 2015

Some *Wild Fabrications* artists use photography as templates and inspiration for their quilts, others print photographic images directly onto fabric to be embellished and stitched over. Compare these methods below using Jill Kerttula's *Murder of Crows* and Barbara Yates Beasley's *Beauty of the Beasts*.

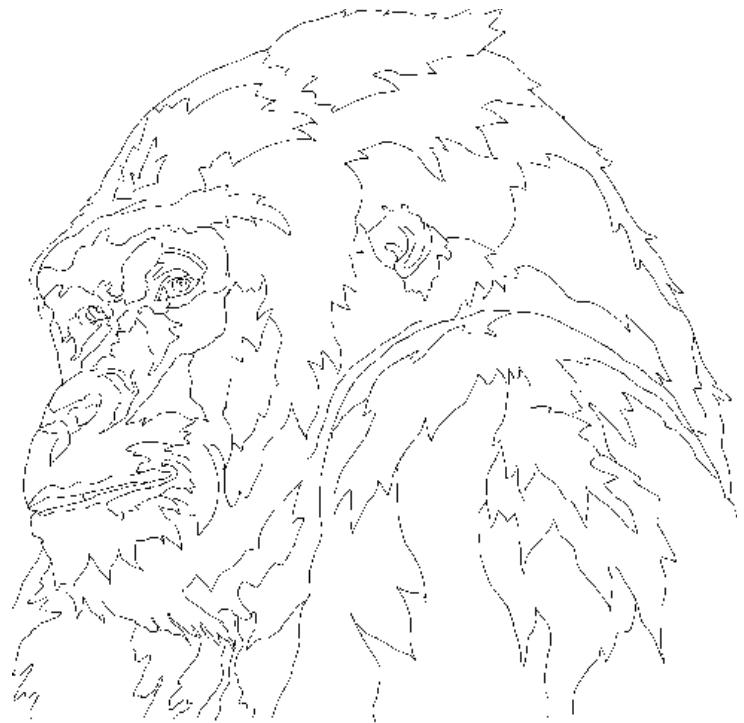


Jill Kerttula's *Murder of Crows* includes an edited Photoshop collage (at left), by the artist, which she printed on fabric and stitched over (at right).

Barbara Yates Beasley's *Beauty of the Beasts* began with a photograph of a gorilla (bottom left) the artist took at the Omaha Zoo, which she then translated to a line drawing (bottom left) for her quilt (next page).



Jill Kerttula, *Murder of Crows*, 2014





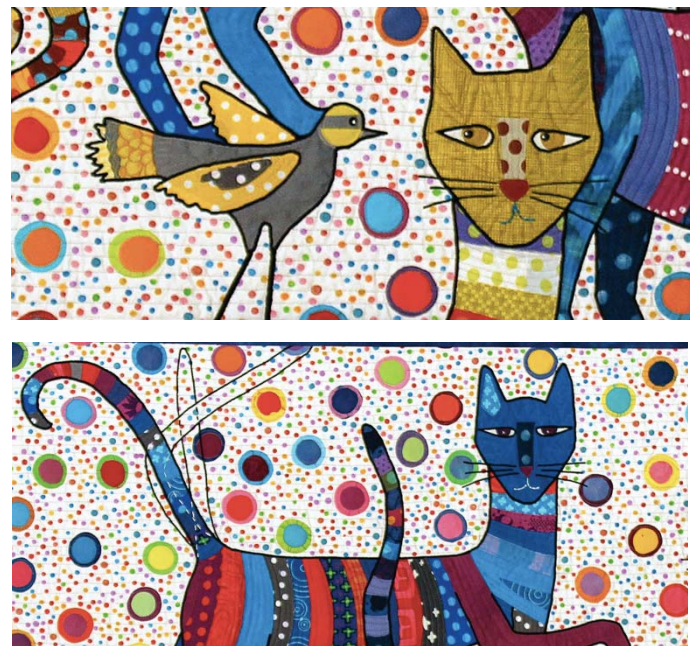
Barbara Yates Beasley, *The Beauty of the Beasts*, 2013



Christine Holden, *What Happens in the Swamp?*, 2015

Artist Christine Holden used paint and stamping in her art quilt *What Happens in the Swamp?*

Appliqué refers to fabrics shapes placed on top of a background and sewn or glued in place. Appliqué pieces can either have a raw edge or be seam finished. Raw-edge appliqué is reminiscent of collaging with fabric as seen in Kathy York's *The Long-Necked Cats and the Long-Legged Bird*.



Kathy York, *The Long-Necked Cats and the Long-Legged Bird*, 2015



Lou Ann Smith, *The Last White Rhino*, 2015

Quilters like Jim Hay added found object embellishments, such as toy cars and pen caps, to his quilt *Humans Taste Like Chicken*.



Jim Hay, *Humans Taste Like Chicken*, 2014

When shapes cut out of different fabrics are sewn together side-by-side to make a new design, it is called patchwork or piecing, a technique used by Lou Ann Smith in *The Last White Rhino*. Compare the details in *The Last White Rhino* and Kathy York's *The Long-Necked Cats* and the *Long-Legged Bird*; can you distinguish these techniques?



Creating even more texture and depth are artists like Holly Altman, who use a technique called dimensional quilting. With his technique, sewn, fabric objects literally come off the quilt resembling low-relief sculpture.



Holly Altman, *Blind As a Bat*, 2015

Explorations in Wood

Much like studio art quilters who transform fabric and thread to create textural tapestries, woodworkers manipulate and reimagine the properties of wood to create new sculptural forms, striking patterns, and unexpected vessels.

Wood's structural integrity, range of colors and grain patterns, and malleability make it an appealing medium for many artists. While some of the artworks comprising *Explorations in Wood* showcase these inherent qualities of wood, others push the limits of the material or mask it almost entirely.

Surface Treatments

Familiar vessel forms take on elegant, bright, and heavily textured surfaces; compare the three objects below. Allen Ritzman's classic *Walnut Vase* is clearly made from wood, while Wayne and Belinda Raab's *Vase-Red with Blue Square* is so sleek and shiny with lacquer it almost looks like glass, and Marc Ricourt's *Vessel #6*'s vinegar-treated oak produces a "patina" reminiscent of rusted metal.



Allen Ritzman, *Walnut Vase*, 1987, walnut;
photo by John Carlano



Wayne & Belinda Raab, *Vase-Red with Blue Square*, 1987,
walnut, curly maple, acrylic laquer; photo by John Carlano



Marc Ricourt, *Vessel #6*, 2001, oak, vinegar;
photo by John Carlano



Malcom Martin & Gaynor Dowling, *Bend II*,
2013, limed cherry, poplar, bookbinding thread;
photo by John Carlano

Artists Malcom Martin and Gaynor Dowling's collaborative elegant artwork *Bend II* features "limed" cherry wood. Transforming the typically warmer tones of cherry wood to create a white-washed appearance was achieved using lime wash – a water-and-lime solution, historically used on barns or fences to prevent insect infestations and protect exposed wood from the elements. Contemporary liming techniques use a liming wax, which is easily wiped on hardwoods to create a faded, weathered surface.

Artist Miriam Carpenter combined a liming wax with whitewash to produce a pale, luminous surface on her sculptural turned artwork, *Bliss*.

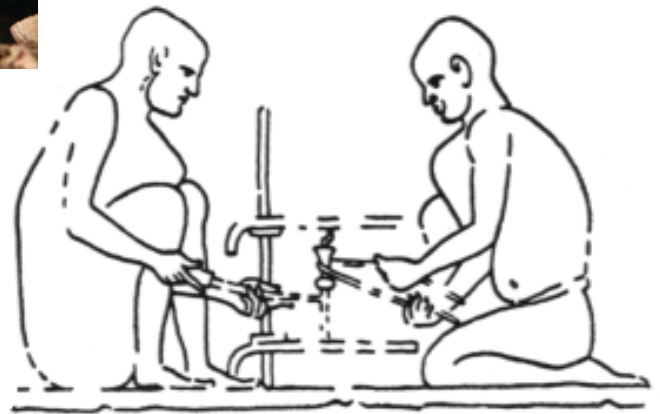


Miriam Carpenter, *Bliss*, 2014, turned and carved bleached ash,
finished with whitewash and liming wax; photo by John Carlano

Woodturning

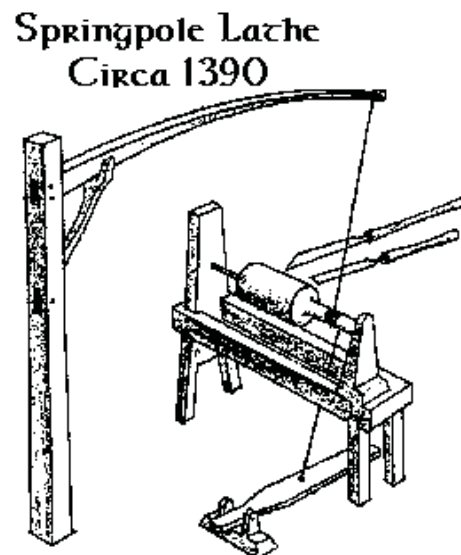
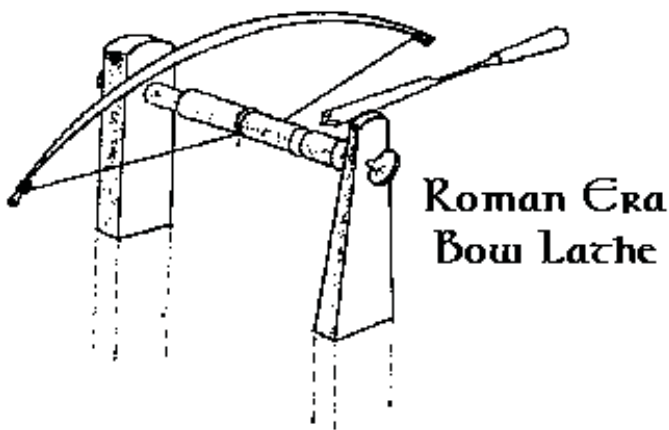


Woodturning is a woodworking process that differs from all other forms of carving and construction. As its name suggests, wood turns while the tool remains stationary. In other forms of woodworking, it is the wood that remains immobile. The process of woodturning is reliant on one distinctive tool: the lathe, which holds and spins the wood so it may be shaped and carved by the turner's hand tools. Like the joints in basic box construction, woodturning has an ancient and rich tradition originating in Egypt.



The lathe was first used in third century B.C. An Egyptian grave decorated with a stone carving depicted a craftsman and an assistant using a “strap lathe,” a type of lathe still used in modern-day Egypt. The bow lathe requires two individuals to operate it; one turns the wooden work piece using a rope while the second shapes the wood with a sharp hand tool (as pictured at right). Turned-wooden objects also were found in Egyptian tombs.

The ancient Romans further developed the lathe with the addition of a turning bow. The “bow lathe” is operated by one individual rather than two. However, the craftsman has less control over the tool used to shape the wood because he can use only one hand. During the Middle Ages, a pedal replaced the hand-operated method and yielded the invention of the springpole lathe. The springpole lathe allowed woodworkers freedom of both hands to hold tools and manipulate the wood. The springpole lathe, pictured below, remained in use with little change into the early twentieth century.



The lathe has an impressive place in history for several reasons: woodworkers claim it as the oldest machine used by man and the only machine able to reproduce itself. The lathe was a key player in the industrial revolution because of the many precision parts needed to construct steam engines. Later, electric motors couldn't be produced without the lathe. The irony, of course, is that the lathe spurred America's industrialization, which led to the dramatic decrease in hand-turned wooden objects.

There are two main types of woodturning: spindle and faceplate. In spindle turning (below, left) the wood grain of the work piece runs parallel to the bed of the lathe. In faceplate turning (bottom, right), the grain of the wood runs perpendicular to the axis of rotation. Examples of spindle-turned objects include furniture legs, pens, and baseball bats. Most bowls, platters, and vessels are faceplate turned. Both methods can be used on the same piece.



Woodworking Terms

Bevel: A *bevel* is a tool consisting of a rule with a movable arm, used in measuring or marking angles and in fixing surfaces at an angle. A bevel can describe an angle or slope, e.g., a *beveled edge* on a tabletop.

Bowl Gouge: a handheld tool with a long metal flute used to core out bowl shapes in faceplate woodturning on a lathe.

Burl: a tree growth in which the wood grain has grown in an unusual or deformed manner. Burls are round and bulbous outgrowths on tree trunks or large branches and are filled with knots in the wood. Knots are made when a dormant tree branch or bud forms, often in a burl. Although manufacturers find knots and burls problematic, woodworkers seek them out for their distinct, aesthetic qualities.

Carve: a method of shaping and detailing a hard surface (wood) to produce ornamental or structural designs, using a handheld tool like a knife or chisel.

Chisel: A *chisel* is a handheld tool with a beveled, long blade used to cut away and shape wood, metal, and stone. The handle of chisel is often struck with a hammer or mallet increasing the tools ability to carve wood.

Chuck: a holding device with adjustable jaws that center a work piece in a lathe (or center a tool in a drill).

Finish: a seal or coating that is applied to a raw material, such as wood, that gives the material a desired texture and/or color.

Fixture: the device used to secure the work piece in the machine.

Grain: the texture produced by fibers in wood often creating directional patterns.

Lathe: one of the key pieces of equipment in woodturning, this machine shapes wood or metal by rotating the material rapidly along its axis while pressing a fixed cutting or abrading tool against it.

Hardwood: the wood of numerous “broad-leaved” trees, such as oak, beech, ash. Conifers or needle-bearing trees are softwoods.

Inlay: a decorative technique in which pieces of material (usually another wood type) are embedded into the main artwork and are flush with the original surface.

Jig: a device that holds the work and guides the tool on a lathe.

Parting Tool: a pointed tool used to separate work from the lathe and to create a straight edge separating large and small diameter sections.

Rasp: a large and broad handheld tool made of steel that serves as a large file. A rasp has small sharp “teeth” on its surface and is used in smoothing or shaping wood or metal.

Roughing Gouge: used in spindle work, such as turning a table leg, to remove square corners or form a cylindrical shape.

Skew Chisel: a handheld tool with a beveled metal blade used to smooth over or plane cylindrical work pieces formed with a roughing gouge.

Softwood: the wood of needle-bearing conifer trees, such as pine or cedar.

Spalted Wood: *Spalting* refers to a process of wood coloration caused by fungi. Spalting is usually found in dead trees, however, it also can occur in stressed living trees. Despite the loss of strength in spalted wood, its patterns and colors are prized by woodworkers.

Spindle Gouge: a hand-held tool used to form a smooth or planed work piece. The spindle gouge is used to turn “coves,” rounded grooves in the surface of the wood.

Additional Resources

Below are links you may wish to use and share with your students. While watching videos, note how seemingly effortless woodturning appears to be, keeping in mind the true skill and steady hand required.

This great introductory video demonstrates woodturning and box construction of a small tea box with inner lid:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HhJPflaHa_0

Woodturning a pen: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Z8vDQPhUG8&feature=fvvr>

Woodturning a goblet with examples of different tools used, which relate to the woodworking terms above:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ftfk9AgajF0&feature=related>

For more information on woodturning and tools, the following sites are helpful:

<http://www.turningtools.co.uk/index.html>

<http://www.woodworking.co.uk/Technical/Beginners/beginners.html>

<http://www.woodworkersinstitute.com/page.asp?p=763>

@ the Woodson

During their [docent-led Experience at the Art Museum](#), students will experience *Explore Quilts & Wood*, discuss artworks in the galleries, and have an opportunity to create an original artwork. Using scissors, glue, patterned paper, and scraps of fabric, students will create a quilt-like collage focusing either on pattern and composition or creating an animal depiction – either imagined or real – inspired by the quilts featured in *Wild Fabrications*.

Activity Guides

Each participant on a docent-led Experience receives an [Activity Guide](#) to extend learning beyond the Woodson Art Museum and as a way to share the visit with friends and family.

Audio Tour App

Gain additional insights into artworks, processes, and subjects from *Wild Fabrications* and *Explorations in Wood* artists via the [Woodson Art Museum's free audio-tour app](#), available at the Museum on free iPod touch devices or for download on Apple and Android devices.

In-Depth Art Experience

Interested in going above and beyond the hands-on creative engagements described? Customized visits are always an option. Museum educators can work with you to create a more in-depth experience for your students. Material fees range from \$2 to \$4 per student. Call 715.845.7010 or email Catie Anderson canderson@lywam.org.

Woodson Art Museum Information

Please encourage your students to visit the Art Museum.



Hours

Tuesday – Friday	9 am – 4 pm
The first Thursday of every month	9 am – 7:30 pm
Saturday – Sunday	Noon – 5 pm
Closed Monday and holidays, including Christmas Eve, Christmas day, and New Years day.	

Contact

Call the Woodson Art Museum or visit the website for more information:

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