

Wood Turning Center

501 Vine Street, Philadelphia, PA 19106
215.923.8000

Cabinets of Curiosities

In celebration of the Furniture Society's seventh annual conference being held in Philadelphia from June 12 to 14, 2003, the Wood Turning Center proudly presents *Cabinets of Curiosities*. Co-organized by the Wood Turning Center and the Furniture Society, *Cabinets of Curiosities* showcases 14 cabinets of extraordinary diversity and intrigue created by 50 interdisciplinary artists.

As old as human history itself, the making and collecting of art not only defines our civilizations collectively, but also signifies our individuality. Expanding on the traditional division of labor between the artist and the collector, *Cabinets of Curiosities* creates productive dialogues between artists of diverse backgrounds who, through the collaborative effort, become both the creators and collectors.

In an effort to capitalize on the project's profound educational experience of encompassing the fields of contemporary wood turning, furniture making and beyond, the cabinets are on display either individually or in small groups during the months of March and April at various Philadelphia regional institutions before being presented as a complete ensemble at the Wood Turning Center from May 2 to July 26, 2003.

REGIONAL PRESENTATION CHECKLIST

Independence Visitor Center *Time Standing Still* March 31 to April 25, 2003

6th & Market Streets (across from the Liberty Bell),
Philadelphia, PA 19106 1-800-537-7676
racevedo@independencevisitorcenter.com
www.independencevisitorcenter.com

Po Shun Leong and Bob Stocksdale *Time Standing Still* 2002 79 x 42 x 13 in.

A former architect, artist Po Shun Leong now builds complex sculptural constructions that are metaphors of containment and renewal. In 2002 Leong built a series of ten life-sized cabinets inspired by the human figure either in motion or at poise. One of them, *Time Standing Still*, pays tribute to the massive 16th century statue of Farnese Hercules that was discovered in the Baths of Caracalla. The statue depicts Hercules at rest leaning on his club, and was highly admired by artists of the Baroque period for its powerful musculature and realistic portrayal.

Renowned turner Bob Stocksdale donated the unfinished and broken turnings for the cupboard doors. Stocksdale also contributed the figure's clock-face head, a piece which he discarded fifty years ago. There are a number of small drawers in the figure that contain pieces of wood from an actual Johnny Appleseed tree, a tree from the 15th century, a tree that stood by Lincoln's tomb, and a tree from Walden Pond, which was immortalized by author and environmentalist Henry David Thoreau. All of these wood pieces were donated by the American Forests Famous and Historic Woods and the Thoreau Institute.

The Clay Studio *Holon Form*

March 24 to April 25, 2003

139 North Second Street, Philadelphia, PA 19106
215.925.3453 www.theclaystudio.org

William Leete and Sam Chung *Holon Form* 2002 46 x 31 x 8 in.

Holon Form, a collaboration between woodworker William Leete and ceramist Sam Chung, consists of one large symmetrical cabinet with four identical forms in the center, and one narrow horizontal shelf positioned ten inches below the cabinet that contains nine small glazed ceramic objects. The cabinet's four identical forms, which are made up of two faceplate turnings that have been cut in half, carved, and reassembled in a new arrangement, slide out of their cavities and can be placed on the lower shelf for examination. Each form has three different surfaces. When returning the forms to their cavities, any one of the three surfaces can be displayed. In addition, the nine ceramic objects can be incorporated within the four identical forms themselves, in their cavities in the cabinet, or on the shelf for display.

The Academy of Natural Sciences *Seven Wonders* March 24 to April 25, 2003

1900 Ben Franklin Parkway, Philadelphia, PA 19103
215.299.1000 www.acnatsci.org

Kurt Nielsen and Dan Essig *Seven Wonders* 2002 64 x 23 x 23 in.

Seven Wonders, a collaborative effort between book-maker Dan Essig and furniture maker Kurt Nielsen, is an ambitious cabinet whose central theme is the process of evolution that occurs in our ever-turning world and the precious life forms it contains.

This circular cabinet houses seven of Essig's books, which are hand-sewn and made of all natural materials, including wood covers. Instead of text they display various specimens in the earliest stage of their life cycle. The cabinet has a revolving internal puzzle with seven secret chambers, each of which contains one of Essig's books. The door to each of the chambers displays the adult stage of the same life form held in its interior. A window on the exterior of the cabinet proper enables the viewer to peer in and see the chamber doors, one at a time. To access the chambers, the user rotates the puzzle by spinning a globe located on the top of the cabinet. Once the door and the window align, the chamber door can be opened by pushing the magnetic latch located in its upper right corner.

The Free Library of Philadelphia *Story Book* March 24 to April 25, 2003

1901 Vine Street, Philadelphia, PA 19103
215.686.5322 www.library.phila.gov

Michelle Holzapfel, David Holzapfel, Donna C. Hawes, Dan MacArthur, Kim Thayer, Steve Smith, and Brown & Roberts Hardware *Story Book* 2002 15 1/2 x 23 1/4 x 21 1/4 in.

Story Book, a collaborative effort overseen by Michelle Holzapfel, is an unusual piece of woodwork that both pleases the eye and educates the viewer/user regarding the individuals and processes utilized in its creation.

Consisting of a trompe l'oeil carved base, the "cabinet" portion of the piece consists of two cases, each of which contains one handmade book. The first book serves as a diary/journal for the entire project. The second book functions as a repository in which the viewer/user can record his or her comments regarding their reactions to the piece.

Franklin Institute *Ein Kleiner Wunderschrank (micro thaumata); Givin' Adolf His Props; and Round Guy Meets Square Guy* at its pendulum stairway

March 28 to April 25, 2003

222 North 20th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19103
215.448.1200 www.fi.edu

Doug Haslam, Linda Chow, Fred Coates, Jeff DeBoer, Debra Yelva Dedyluk, Mark Dicey, Gordon Galenza, Trudy Golley, Christina Greco, Crys Harse, Bonny Houston, Paul Leathers, Kari McQueen, Les Pinter, Colleen Rauscher, Bruce Watson, Louise Williamson

Ein Kleiner Wunderschrank (micro thaumata) 2002 16 x 13 1/2 x 16 1/2 in.

The quintessential collaborative effort, *Ein Kleiner Wunderschrank (micro thaumata)* is a fascinating cabinet whose production was overseen by Doug Haslam and contains contributions from sixteen different artists. Envisioned as a cabinet that would combine To Pao Ko, the 17th century Chinese curio cabinets, with Wunderkammer, curiosity rooms found in Renaissance Europe, the artists were faced with a further challenge in that all of their contributions had to fit into a tabletop-sized cabinet that could be held in two hands. In addition the final cabinet, when closed, was to act as a shipping case suitable for travel with all pieces stored safely inside in an intricately constructed series of compartments.

As in the cabinets and rooms that influenced its realization, the objects included in *Ein Kleiner* vary in form and subject matter. This variety enables numerous juxtapositions to occur both in storage and display, allowing countless narratives and scenarios to be imagined by the viewer.

Gideon Hughes and Adolf Volkman *Givin' Adolf His Props* 2002 49 x 27 x 17 1/2 in.

Givin' Adolf His Props is a celebration of the longtime friendship and mutual respect shared between its creators Gideon Hughes (Furniture Artist) and Adolf Volkman (Pattern Maker). Hughes has long admired Volkman's work, which, because of its nature, is rarely seen or appreciated. Volkman constructs patterns out of wood for objects or mechanisms that are eventually output in steel, aluminum, or bronze. Their collaboration results in a cabinet that highlights the inventiveness and craftsmanship of both artists.

The cabinet is shaped like a pod, meant to represent potential. It is asymmetrical, like wood's organic nature. All of the doors and windows open via a crank-and-pulley system devised by Volkman. The doors and windows are made of glass, beckoning the viewer to look inside and see the mechanisms in motion—the true curiosities of the piece.

Michael Hosaluk and Mitch Ryerson *Round Guy Meets Square Guy* 2002 77 x 24 x 14 in.

Round Guy Meets Square Guy is intended to explore the imaginary and unpredictable results of what would happen if a "round guy" and a "square guy" simultaneously jump off a cliff and meet at the bottom. The cabinet, by furniture maker Mitch Ryerson and turner Michael Hosaluk, intends to display the lively "dialogue" that would occur when the two shapes meet. The circular shapes are curious and dance around the square ones. The square ones, in attempt to support them, want to contain the circular ones. Thus a curious relationship is born with infinite possibilities. The cabinet is freestanding and approachable from all angles, inviting the viewer to experience this highly imaginative piece from all directions.

Albert M. Greenfield School *"Figurati..." (go figure yourself)* and *Football* March 12 to April 25, 2003

22nd and Chestnut Streets, Philadelphia, PA 19103
215.299.4666 www.philsch.k12.pa.us/schools/greenfield/

Amy Forsyth and Mark Sfirri *"Figurati..." (go figure yourself)* 2002 54 x 24 x 17 in.

"Figurati...", a collaboration between architect/furniture maker Amy Forsyth and turner/furniture maker Mark Sfirri, is a unique work that invites the viewer to rethink the traditional role of a cabinet. Rather than being defined by function, Narrative is powered by the imagination. *"Figurati..."* is inhabited by half a dozen figures of varying sizes and descriptions. The figures are off-center turnings of various woods whose treatments and physiognomies suggest certain types and characters. The figures are placed in an architectural context to develop imaginary interplay between them. The architecture of the cabinet, like the representation of the figures, is intentionally nondescript to suggest universality. Like a dollhouse or Italian Belle Arte characters, the cabinet encourages the viewer to draw upon his or her own experiences to create personal scenarios. The viewer is also invited to write down his or her own story in an accompanying handmade notebook that is an integral part of the piece.

Po Shun Leong and Bob Stocksdale *Football* 2002 60 x 41 x 16 in.

A former architect, artist Po Shun Leong now builds complex sculptural constructions that are metaphors of containment and renewal. In 2002 Leong built a series of ten life-sized cabinets inspired by "action figures at play." The cabinets, such as *Football*, interpret human figures into cabinets of soccer players, ice skaters, kung fu masters, dancers, and waiters. According to author Lois Fichner-Rathus, "There is a restlessness to the patterns which, coupled with a host of hidden drawers punctuating the form—some open, some closed—create a sense of constant motion."

The exhibition and educational programs are made possible in part by the Greater Philadelphia Marketing and Tourism Corporation, Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, Pennsylvania Humanities Council, Pennsylvania Historic and Museum Commission, Samuel S. Fels Foundation, Penn State Industries, Philadelphia Cultural Fund, Independence Foundation, William Penn Foundation, and Friends of the Wood Turning Center.

March 2003

For more information:
215.923.8000

<http://www.woodturningcenter.org>