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CRAFTS ASSOCIATION of BRITISH COLUMBIA

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Art Liestman

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But Is It Art? Woodworking

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Work can be viewed at the following venues:

- www.artliestman.com

- Craffhouse, 1386 Cartwright St., Granville Island, Vancouver, BC tel: (604) 687-7270

Artist's Statement

My involvement in woodworking began with a desire to make musical instruments. In addition to fashioning drums and other percussion instruments, I created several experimental instruments such as a programmable automated xylophone called "Hunka Hunka Churnin' Wood". When I began to design "Hunka", I realized that I needed some turned parts, so I acquired a lathe and taught myself enough about turning to make those parts. Once that project was completed, I decided to learn a bit more about woodturning. Soon I was hooked.

Since that time, I have studied with several well-known woodturners from Canada, the US, and England. My current focus on decorated hollow vessels is a result of an intense one-on-one class with Jacques Vesery in Maine under a grant from the American Association of Woodturners. Using variations on Jacques' techniques, I have been developing my own designs.

My primary focus at the moment is on my series of puzzling illusion vessels - pieces that appear to be three dimensional jigsaw puzzles. I am also exploring several designs that incorporate both carving and coloring with dyes, inks, or paints.

In addition to my own work, I am enthusiastic about promoting woodturning and education in woodturning. To that end, I was instrumental in founding the Greater Vancouver Woodturners Guild and am currently its first President.

Image List

1. "Trading Fours", 8 1/4" x 5" diameter (photo: Kenji Nagai)
2. "But Is It Art", 8 1/2" x 5 1/4" diameter (photo: Kenji Nagai)
3. "No Dancing", 7 1/2" x 4 1/2" diameter (photo: Kenji Nagai)

Process

My hollow vessels are turned out of freshly cut (undried) wood. The outside is shaped with gouges and the inside is removed with a stabilized hollowing tool through the narrow opening at the top of the vessel. The hollowing process is particularly challenging, as one cannot see the tip of the cutting tool inside the vessel.

Most of my vessels are decorated with carving and/or coloring. With my puzzling illusion series, the holes are created with power carving tools. The outlines of the puzzle pieces are burned into the surface with a pyrography tool. The "loose" pieces are made from a turned ring of the same wood and are shaped with carving tools to appear to fit the holes. The vessels are finished with the addition of a turned collar made from a different wood.