



THE
CENTER
FOR ART
IN WOOD

formerly the wood turning center

Contact: Phoebe Resnick, Resnick Communications
610-872-2689 /cell 215-206-1402 prres1@comcast.net

**Turning to Art in Wood: *A Creative Journey* - 25th Anniversary Exhibition
Inaugurates The Center for Art in Wood (formerly The Wood Turning Center)**

**Celebrating the Center's new name and new location in Old City Philadelphia
Opening Celebration Weekend: November 11 – 13, 2011**

Philadelphia, PA (October 2011). . . . Philadelphia's internationally renowned **Center for Art in Wood** (formerly The Wood Turning Center) has taken a new name and has moved to an exciting new location -- both changes reflecting the growing recognition and importance of wood artists and their contemporary works of fine art and craft.

The Center for Art in Wood, now located at **141 N. Third Street, Philadelphia, PA 19106**, opens its 25th anniversary exhibition *Turning to Art in Wood: A Creative Journey* on Friday, November 11, 2011 with an **Opening Celebration Party** from 5:30-8:30 p.m. (\$100 per person). Information and reservations at **215-923-8000**.

Free **Open House/Activity Days** on Saturday, November 12 from noon to 8:30 p.m. and Sunday, November 13 from noon to 6:00 p.m. The Center's annual meeting, open to the public, is at 6:30 p.m. on November 12. See www.centerforartinwood.org

The Center for Art in Wood features changing exhibitions, a museum collection, research library and archives, and a museum store. The Center offers public outreach programs and annually hosts an International Turning Exchange residency program (ITE) for artists, photojournalists and scholars.

The Center is open Tuesday-Saturday, 10 to 5. Admission is free. Donations appreciated.

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***Turning to Art in Wood: A Creative Journey*, the 25th anniversary exhibition**
On exhibit: November 11, 2011 to April 21, 2012 www.centerforartinwood.org

More than 100 objects comprise The Center for Art in Wood's 25th anniversary exhibition, purposefully selected from the Center's collection of more than 1000 art works, dating from the 1970's and 1980's to today. All have been acquired or are promised gifts.

From extraordinary bowls, wall art and furniture to abstract sculptures and newly imagined forms, objects are grouped in “conversations” that ask viewers to consider them from new perspectives.

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Exhibition curator Gerard Brown, a faculty member at Temple University’s Tyler School of Art, “discovered” the collection while a Resident Scholar at The Center for Art in Wood. “I would occasionally ask myself, ‘what am I looking at?’ In fact, I learned I was not interested in those objects as souvenirs or relics or for their status...I *am* interested in how this collection might propel a conversation forward by creating new conversations between artists and among objects.”

The result is a challenging exhibition of exceptional works – organized into “chapters” that Brown calls Conversations, What is it? (e.g., What is a bowl?), Materiality, Color and Function, Tool Time, and Sculpture.

While there are “star” artists represented – including David Ellsworth, Mark Lindquist, Jack Larimore, Michelle Holzapfel, Garry Knox Bennett and Wendy Murayama – many pieces are by less well-known artists, such as Dewey Garrett and John Diamond-Nigh, who are influencing the discussion. In recent years, more international artists and women working in wood have come forward. Examples are Hilary Pfeifer, Jérôme Blanc, and Robin Wood.

“A collection has a use,” says Brown, “and its function is to push a field forward.”

The Center has published a 284-page full-color **limited-edition Portfolio publication**, numbered and signed by the authors, **to accompany the inaugural exhibition *Turning to Art in Wood: A Creative Journey***. It includes illustrated, insightful essays by Center co-founder Albert LeCoff, Elisabeth Agro, Glenn Adamson, Michelle Holzapfel, Robin Rice, exhibition curator Gerard Brown, and board chairman Richard R. Goldberg. These tell the fascinating story of “the creative journey” of The Wood Turning Center in Philadelphia and its historic role in fostering worldwide recognition of the finest contemporary art in wood.

Also part of the beautifully-boxed Portfolio: Exhibition cards with photographic plates showcase the more than 100 objects in the 25th anniversary exhibition and an 80-page book displays thumbnail images of all the objects represented in the Center’s museum collection, from its earliest beginnings until today. Introductory Price \$100. (\$125. after November 15) Available by calling 215-923-8000.

The story of The Center for Art in Wood is central to the development and recognition of the field of wood art and artists working in wood, particularly in the last 25-35 years. While woodturning on lathes was popular and important in industry, school “shop” classes and home workshops for generations, the idea of using the simple lathe as

an artist's tool is relatively recent. What could it possibly make? The well-known artist David Ellsworth notes that, unlike other fields - such as ceramics, fiber, glass and metal - woodturning did not have an academic or art(ful) base.

It is often said that the foundations for the Center and the idea of seeing turned wood as a serious art form began with a series of symposia organized by Albert LeCoff, his twin brother Alan LeCoff, and Palmer Sharpless from 1976 to 1980 at the George School in

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Newtown, PA. These were the stimulus for other workshops and symposia, often involving leading-edge artists, and encouraged gatherings of wood artists to talk and work together, and to learn from each other.

More and more artists, gallery owners and collectors began to come together. Books, publications, and - in later years - exhibitions featuring wood art were presented at the Renwick Gallery at the Smithsonian American Art Museum, American Craft Museum (Museum of Art and Design) in New York, Philadelphia's Independence Seaport Museum, Philip & Muriel Berman Museum of Art, Ursinus College, and Yale University Art Gallery.

According to curator Gerard Brown, "Albert LeCoff became convinced of the need for a global center that would encourage international artists and promote broader interest and scholarship in the field."

After working from his home for 25 years and acquiring an overflowing collection of wood art, in 1986 Albert, along with his brother Alan, officially co-founded The Wood Turning Center and in 2001 opened a storefront gallery and resource library at 501 Vine Street, Philadelphia. He was named Executive Director and continues in that position to this day. Alan serves on the Board of Trustees.

The move to the new building at 141 N. 3rd Street was made possible with generous support from the City of Philadelphia, Philadelphia Union of Carpenters and Joiners, Fleur Bresler, Robyn and John Horn, Gerry Lenfest, Earl Powell, Len Scherock, Ballard Spahr LLP, and many other friends of the Center.

To Albert LeCoff, the Center's visionary leader all through the years, "This is my dream come true."

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Photos are available. Portfolio publication preview on request.

Interviews may be arranged through Phoebe Resnick, Resnick Communications
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