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**THE CENTER FOR ART IN WOOD PRESENTS THE FIRST EAST COAST  
SOLO EXHIBITION BY BRONX SCULPTOR MICHAEL FERRIS**

**What:** On November 5, the [Center for Art in Wood](#) (141 N 3rd St, Philadelphia, PA 19106, United States) will launch a new exhibition, [Extra-Human: The Art of Michael Ferris](#), featuring sculptures by Bronx-based artist Michael Ferris. While Ferris's art has been widely displayed across the country, this will be his first solo exhibition to open on the East Coast. Guest-curated by art historian Suzanne Ramljak, the collection will display a dozen of Ferris's distinctive wood sculptures, related drawings, and painted portraits set in intricately inlaid frames. The exhibition will be available to view through April 24, 2022.

*Extra-Human: The Art of Michael Ferris* features larger-than-life figurative sculptures that Ferris created by fusing reclaimed discarded wood and pigmented grout through environmentally-conscious methods. The exhibition embodies a rich diffusion of cultural and artistic traditions and celebrates people's heroism in our everyday lives. One of the most anticipated pieces on view is *Toufic*, a 76 x 47 x 23-inch sculpture, which exemplifies Ferris's ability to capture, both in fine detail and large scale, the poignancy of human emotion and empathy. Another highlight is the larger-than-life depiction of *Rosemarie* and her two cats, *Earnest and Stretchy*, which are simultaneously contemporary and ancient, reflecting figural traditions from Egypt and India. *Rusty Finnegan* – standing over 8 feet tall – is a sight to be seen, towering over some of the other pieces in the show. *Rusty*, an early self-portrait, is composed of carved wood and the artist's signature representational oil portraits.

Originally trained as a painter, Ferris embraced sculpture 25 years ago and developed an inlay technique of his own making, inspired by intarsia woodworking familiar to his Middle-Eastern heritage. Ferris enlists his self-invented mosaic design to enliven finely carved portraits of family and friends, capturing the subject's inner life through subtly choreographed patterning. This merger of realism and decorative splendor fulfills the artist's aim to highlight both a person's psychological and spiritual complexities.

Ferris cites mythic Chinese immortals and the saints of his Lebanese-Maronite upbringing as a prime inspiration for his sculptures. While assuming human form, these spiritual beings straddle the divine and mortal spheres. Although unsung and composed of abandoned wood scraps, Ferris's grand figures likewise transcend our quotidian realm.

Ferris was born in Chicago and currently resides and works in Bronx, New York. He received his B.F.A. from the Kansas City Art Institute and an M.F.A. in painting from Indiana University Bloomington. His work has been the subject of several one-person gallery shows and exhibited widely in museums across the country. Ferris is the recipient of awards and fellowships from numerous organizations: The New York Foundation for the Arts, the American Craft Council, and Sculpture Space. His work can be found in the public collections of Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, the Illinois State Museum, and the De Young Museum, San Francisco.

The exhibition program at the Center is generously supported by members of the Cambium Giving Society of the Center for Art in Wood, the Bresler Foundation, Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, William Penn Foundation, and the Windgate Foundation. Corporate support is provided by Boomerang Inc. and Sun-Lite Corporation.

The Center for Art in Wood is open Wednesdays to Sundays, from noon to 5 p.m., and is free to the public. A suggested donation of \$5 is appreciated.

Images: [HERE](#)

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**About Center for the Art in Wood:**

The Center for Art in Wood interprets, nurtures, and champions creative engagement and expansion of art, craft, and design in wood to enhance the public's understanding and appreciation of it. Founded and sited in Philadelphia, the Center for Art in Wood serves a local and international community. It has built its reputation by providing opportunities for makers and visitors to experience craft directly through participatory programming; seminal exhibitions and documentation; and the growth, conservation, exhibition, and care of its permanent collection. The Center's practice of keeping these resources free and available to the public emphasizes its commitment to building a democratic and inclusive community. Visit [centerforartinwood.org](http://centerforartinwood.org) to learn more.