



Media Contact:
Billy Cook
billy@enroutemarketing.com
239-734-5150 (M)

**THE CENTER FOR ART IN WOOD PRESENTS THE FIRST CAREER RETROSPECTIVE
EXHIBITION OF RENOWNED WOODCARVER NORM SARTORIUS**

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Philadelphia, PA | April 6, 2022 – On May 6, the [Center for Art in Wood](#) (141 N 3rd St, Philadelphia, PA 19106) will launch its latest exhibition, [Spoons to Stir the Soul: The World of Norm Sartorius](#), featuring works by renowned woodcarver Norm Sartorius. This is the first career retrospective celebrating over 40 years of Sartorius’s career carving extraordinary sculpted spoons. Curated by craft writer and curator Craig Edelbrock, the exhibition will include many of the artist’s finest works sourced from several premier private and public collections in the United States. *Spoons to Stir the Soul* will be available to view through July 24.

The show features ornate, non-functional carved spoons and traces the dynamic evolution of Sartorius’s creative expressions throughout his prolific career. His earliest efforts as a professional woodworker in the 1970s explored a wide range of functional wooden objects before Sartorius focused on the potential of the spoon as an object of artistic expression. The exhibition shows Sartorius’s transition to the spoon as a fine-art category, which began in the 1980s and ‘90s, and culminates with his current mature vision, aesthetic refinement, and woodworking mastery.

Born in 1947, Sartorius has built a career sculpting wooden spoons that, as he says, “stir the soul, not the soup.” As a young man with no formal training, he embarked on a quest to find something tangible to make with his hands. Sartorius first learned about craft tools and techniques in wood and metal as an apprentice with versatile crafters Phil and Sandye Jurus in Baltimore, Maryland. He then moved to the remote mountains of West Virginia and became a hippie homesteader. He caught people’s attention by selling various kinds of functional woodenware at local craft fairs. Sartorius had an artistic flair that hinted at a deep creative well of ideas and forms expressed as spoon-like sculptures.

Sartorius continues to explore the common wooden spoon as a context for sculpture, using woods of exceptional beauty shaped to stand as a unique artistic statement of color, form, and texture. Advancing the art of the spoon to a very high level, each of Sartorius’s pieces is inspired by the wood itself and draws on his deep repository of creative ideas and ancient spoon-making traditions worldwide.

In addition to spoons, *Spoons to Stir the Soul* will include larger carved wood sculptures that demonstrate breadth of his artistic repertoire. The collection is presented alongside the artist’s influences, stories, and relationships that shaped his unique journey, giving patrons a comprehensive look at his artistic development.

The Center will host a special opening event for *Spoons to Stir the Soul* on Friday, May 6, from 5 to 8 p.m. For an in-depth exploration of the exhibition, patrons can register to attend a Gallery Tour led by Sartorius on Saturday, May 7, at 1 p.m., with options to participate in-person or virtually. 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 \$5 donation is appreciated.

Interviews: Please contact [Billy Cook](#) to setup interviews with the Center for Art in Wood's Executive Director & Chief Curator Jennifer-Navva Milliken, Norm Sartorius, or guest curator Craig Edelbrock.

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About Center for 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 to learn more.