



# Museum for Art in Wood

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## MUSEUM FOR ART IN WOOD PRESENTS NEW EXHIBITION

### ***FLOE: A CLIMATE OF RISK | THE FICTIONAL ARCHAEOLOGY OF STEPHEN TALASNIK*** **BY PHILADELPHIA NATIVE STEPHEN TALASNIK**

*The world-renowned sculptor's latest exhibition centers around a fictional narrative of a shipwreck carried to Philadelphia by the effects of climate change*

**Photos:** [HERE](#)

**Philadelphia, PA | November 17, 2023** – The [Museum for Art in Wood](#) (141 N. 3rd Street, Philadelphia, PA 19106) presents a new exhibition, [FLOE: A Climate of Risk | The Fictional Archaeology of Stephen Talasnik \(FLOE\)](#), by world-renowned sculpture and installation artist [Stephen Talasnik](#). A Philadelphia native, his latest exhibition features an *in situ* installation including an original large-scale sculpture and a selection of art Talasnik chose from the Museum's permanent collection. **FLOE** is centered around a specific, fictional narrative underscoring the looming effects of climate change. The exhibition is on display in the Museum's gallery from November 3 to February 18, 2024.

Born and raised in Southwest Philadelphia, Talasnik has centered his artistic career around exploring the links between drawing and building, ranging from intimate objects to large-scale monolithic installations. His work is informed by time and "fictional functional" ideas. He never utilizes measurement or software, instead allowing the piece to evolve organically. Talasnik was drawn to architecture at an early age and later attended the Rhode Island School of Design and Temple University's Tyler School of Art. Talasnik's earliest ephemeral structures were built at the Storm King Art Center in New Windsor, New York, Tippet Rise Art Center in Fishtail, Montana, the Japan Society in New York City, and the Denver Botanical Garden in Colorado. His art has been exhibited across the world, with works in the collections of Centre Pompidou in Paris, the Albertina in Vienna, the British Museum in London, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City.

In **FLOE**, Talasnik returns to his hometown to build a fictional narrative of a shipwreck carried to Philadelphia by a glacier. As global temperatures warmed, the glacier melted and surrendered the ship's remains, which were discovered by an imagined group of curious children based on Talasnik's own childhood. The archaeological remains and reconstructions are presented in the exhibition, alongside a structural representation of the glacier that carried the ship to its final resting place. **FLOE** features an imaginative and mesmerizing installation by Talasnik that is simultaneously local and universal, illustrated in bamboo, wood, and composite materials. The exhibition also includes works from the Museum's permanent collection, curated by Talasnik and selected to respond to the ideas and forms of the works in the exhibition.

"**FLOE** emerged from the imagination of Stephen Talasnik, an artist known worldwide for his hand-built structures installed in natural settings," shared **Jennifer-Navva Milliken**, Executive Director and Chief Curator at the Museum for Art in Wood. "The exhibition is based on a story created by the artist but touches on the realities of climate change, a problem that exposes the vulnerability of the world's most defenseless populations, including the impoverished, houseless, and stateless. Science helps us understand the impact through data, but the impact to humanity is harder to quantify. Stephen's work, through his complex

'fictional architecture' and organic, fragmented sculptures, helps us understand this loss while encouraging us to consider the truth behind storytelling.”

The centerpiece of **FLOE** is a monumental, large-scale sculpture by Talasnik, which was made from half-a-mile of bent bamboo set to a pinewood frame. Modeled on a fictional glacier that buried the shipwreck, the intricately constructed immersive work, created on-site in the Museum's exhibition space, reminds visitors of the sublime power of nature and its constant, often destructive, search for equilibrium.

Pieces in the exhibition, including *Fissure* (2018-23) and *Leaning Globe* (1998-2023), feature Talasnik's trademark use of architectural designs to create intricate wood structures from treated basswood and act as the items received from the “debris field.” In *Anatomy of a Glacier* (1998-2023), Talasnik covers his work in a shimmery exterior around a geode-like opening revealing the complex wood infrastructure that makes up its core.

From the Museum's permanent collection, Talasnik chose works complementing his own while maintaining **FLOE**'s meta-narrative, with objects of fascination and study in a Wunderkammer setting.. The *Ancient Archaeological Captive* (1990-92) by American wood sculptor Mark Lindquist plays the part of a seemingly lost artifact from the ocean depths. The large vessel sculpture was carved from spalted pecan wood featuring archaic designs routed by Lindquist in conversation with the naturally formed “worm-lines” caused by insects like bark borers. **FLOE** also includes two white ash wood sculptures by Swedish artist Per Brandstedt, in which the wood has been steam-bent into delicately arranged strands that have the appearance of undulating sea creatures. The Museum's permanent collection is one of the most extensive institutional collections of contemporary art in wood in the world, featuring over 1,300 pieces that testify to the creative range of this thriving field.

**FLOE: A Climate of Risk** by Stephen Talasnik is supported in part by a grant from the [Sidney E. Frank Foundation](#).

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

The Museum for Art in Wood is the international leader for contemporary art and creativity in the material of wood. The Museum engages, educates, and inspires the public through the exhibition, collection, and interpretation of contemporary art in wood. Founded in 1986 and sited in Philadelphia, the Museum 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 Museum's practice of keeping these resources free and available to the public emphasizes its commitment to building a democratic and inclusive community. Visit [museumforartinwood.org](http://museumforartinwood.org) to learn more.