



Museum for Art in Wood

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MUSEUM FOR ART IN WOOD HOSTS MIRA NAKASHIMA FOR A SPECIAL BOOKING SIGNING EVENT

*The renowned furniture designer and architect will meet with visitors and sign copies of her book,
The Nakashima Process Book*

Photos: [HERE](#)

Philadelphia, PA | May 22, 2024 – On June 13, from 5:30 to 8:00 p.m., the [Museum for Art in Wood](#) (141 N. 3rd Street, Philadelphia, PA 19106) hosts a [special book signing event](#) with renowned furniture designer and architect **Mira Nakashima**. Nakashima is the daughter of George Nakashima, one of the leading innovators of 20th-century furniture. During the event, visitors can meet Mira and have their copy of her book, *The Nakashima Process Book*, signed. The publication illustrates what makes Nakashima's unique handmade furniture special, featuring original sketches, the philosophy behind George Nakashima's masterpieces, and family history. The event is free to the public, with registration available [here](#). Patrons can pre-order a copy of *The Nakashima Process* from the Museum's [website](#) before the event.

Eighty-two-year-old Mira Nakashima was just three when her father, George, opened a woodworking studio in New Hope, PA to find work and fulfillment, following the family's release from an internment camp established under President Franklin Roosevelt's Executive Order 9066. Mira, who was just nominated for a Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum 2025 National Design Award as a design visionary, is a trained architect and Harvard graduate who has worked in the family business since 1970. She produces her father's iconic designs as well as her own custom-designed, hand-crafted furniture. She is currently the head of Nakashima Woodworkers as well as the Nakashima Foundation for Peace.

A Nakashima piece is a conscious simplification of design that allows wood to tell its own story. The studio's approach to design represents the rich and active legacy that, to this day, is led by a strict adherence to craftsmanship and a humble respect for wood. Earlier this year, Mira was commissioned by the U.S. State Department to create a special three-legged Pennsylvania black walnut wood table presented as a special gift to Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, the first Japanese leader to visit the U.S. as a state guest in nine years. She had previously crafted a freeform black walnut coffee table in a shape, similar to a Nakashima Peace Altar for President Barack Obama, adding a special inscription to the Obamas underneath.

In September 2023, Mira Nakashima published [The Nakashima Process Book](#), which explores George and Mira's devotion to discovering the inherent beauty of wood so that noble trees might have a second life as furniture. Nakashima Woodworkers' process remains unchanged -- embracing the unique qualities of wood to reveal the 'soul of the tree' and emphasizing the natural beauty of the wood grain and burl. No two pieces of Nakashima furniture are identical, and this book expands the understanding and appreciation of the time-consuming, individual attention spent on each piece of furniture produced.

Patrons can purchase a copy of the book at the Museum's store during the June 13 event or pre-order it through the website [here](#).

After receiving their signed copy of Mira's book, visitors are encouraged to tour the Museum for Art in Wood's exhibition and permanent collection, including the latest feature exhibition [To Understand a Tree](#) by interdisciplinary artist and woodworker [Gina Siepel](#). The exhibition stems from Siepel's work as Artist-in-Residence at MacLeish Field Station at Smith College, beginning in 2018, and was inspired by the desire to contemplate a single red oak and its forest habitat.

To Understand a Tree comprises an immersive video installation including videos of the red oak shot over a two-year period, and functional and sculptural greenwood chairs made from trees killed by invasive insects or storms. Visitors can also view observations, notes, and artifacts that were gathered through direct engagement with the red oak and surrounding ecosystem using environmentally responsible methods. The exhibition encourages visitors to consider the tree as a living subject rather than an object and challenges the often-assumed binary between living trees and dead wood. Siepel's work functions as a small-scale exploration on the place of humans in the environment, the scope and speed we consume natural resources, and what organisms are included or excluded in a definition of "community."

To Understand a Tree is generously supported by the Cambium Circle Members of the Museum for Art in Wood, Bresler Foundation, Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, Philadelphia Cultural Fund, William Penn Foundation, and Windgate Foundation. In-kind support was provided by Boomerang, Inc.

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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 to learn more.

About George Nakashima:

George Nakashima (1905–90) was a world-famous woodworker in the second half of the twentieth century and achieved fame as a leader of the modern American Arts and Crafts movement. George earned a master's degree in architecture from M.I.T in 1931. In Tokyo, Japan in 1934, Nakashima joined the architecture firm of Antonin Raymond, a protégé of architect Frank Lloyd Wright. However, after returning to the US in 1940 and spending a year in a WWII Japanese American internment camp in 1942, along with his wife and daughter Mira, Nakashima decided to pursue a new career as a furniture designer, where he championed traditional philosophies and craftsmanship. Nakashima is recognized as one of America's most eminent furniture designer-craftsman and his style of "organic naturalism" can be seen in the buildings, landscape, and furniture located in the [Nakashima Woodworkers](#) Complex in New Hope, PA, which has been recognized as a National Landmark and a World Monument. Private tours of the Nakashima studio are offered through the [Nakashima Foundation for Peace](#) and George Nakashima's work can be viewed at the [Metropolitan Museum](#) in New York, [Mingei International Museum](#) in San Diego and [Michener Art Museum](#) in Doylestown, Pennsylvania.

About Nakashima Woodworkers:

Founded in 1945 by the late Japanese American George Nakashima, Nakashima Woodworkers focuses on material and craftsmanship by creating timeless furniture pieces from sustainably harvested hardwoods, particularly American black walnut, made to be aesthetically pleasing and utilitarian at the same time. The studio works only with solid wood and with an immense respect for the material. George believed that natural materials, such as wood, should be "studied, understood and respected". They custom-mill sustainably harvested hardwoods and select the resulting planks individually for each project.