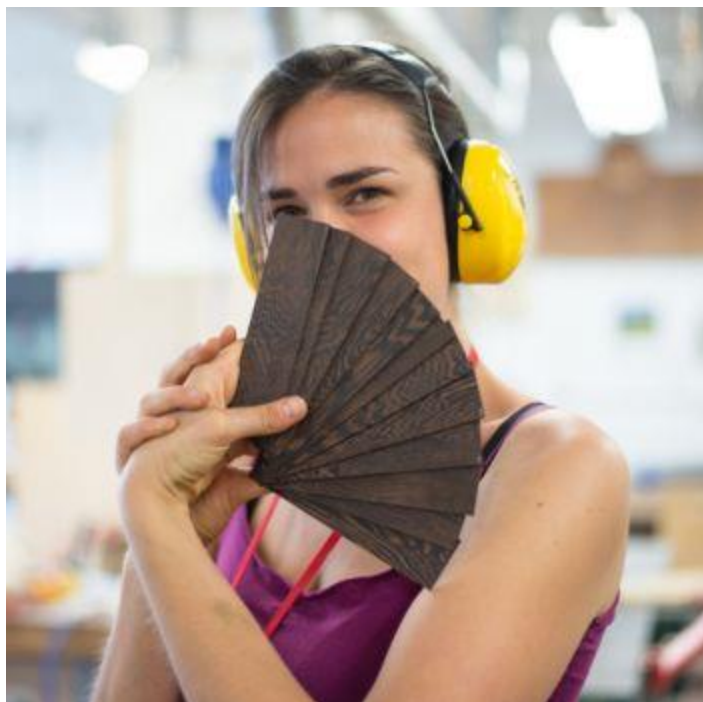


MORE WOODTURNING MAGAZINE

Meet the Turner

July 2018



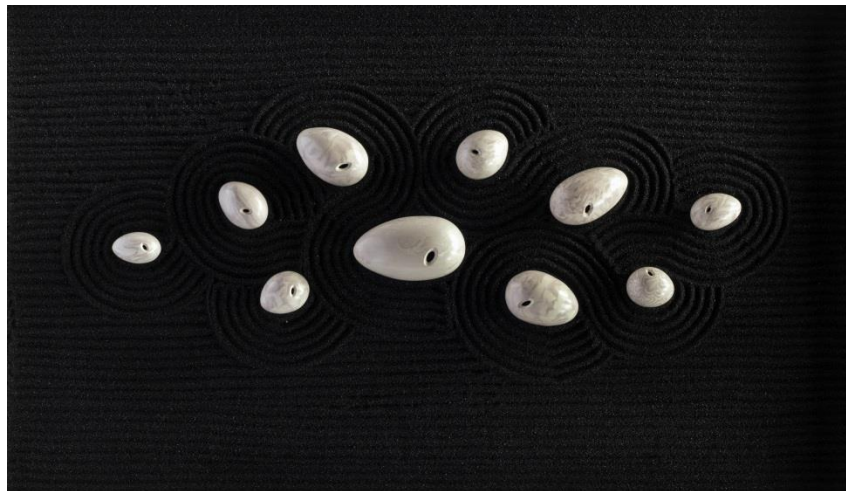
Miriam Carpenter

New Hope, PA

Miriam Carpenter is an artist, demonstrator, and designer with a great reverence for wood. Her work, such as the intricate feathers she is becoming known for, reflects her appreciation of the resilience of nature and her interest in the mathematics of patterns. Miriam is currently a resident artist at the Raymond Farm Center for Living Arts and Design in New Hope, PA where, in addition to woodturning, she creates sculptural furniture and other objects. She is represented by Moderne Gallery of Philadelphia, PA. You can view the pieces the gallery currently has for sale on their website: www.modernegallery.com.

Your work with wood has taken an interesting path, with lots of collaboration with other artists, interesting venues for displaying your work, and many prestigious awards. Would you share a little of that history with us?

I began my career designing furniture alongside Mira Nakashima for more than seven years upon graduating from the Rhode Island School of Design in 2006. In 2013, my work was exhibited in “An Evolving Legacy” which featured collaborations with Mira at the Moderne Gallery in Philadelphia, PA. In 2014, I was awarded the Windgate ITE Residency sponsored by the Center for Art in Wood together with four wood artists from Japan, Canada, West Ghana and the United States. The year following, I lived, worked, and studied with furniture makers, sculptors, scholars, and environmental stewards in Australia, Tasmania and New Zealand. Upon returning to the United States, my work was presented in a solo exhibition, “Physical Poems of Romance,” at Messiah College. In 2018, I was awarded the Windgate Artist-in-Residence spring semester term at SUNY Purchase College. I have had the honor of teaching at Penland School of Craft, Snow Farm, Messiah College, and in joining with talented artists at Echo Lake Collaboration in Bucks County, PA, Emma International Collaboration in Saskatchewan, Canada and CollaborationNZ in Whangarei, NZ. My work has been exhibited most notably at Moderne Gallery, Wharton Esherick Museum, Fuller Craft Museum, Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum, Philadelphia International Airport, SOFA, Center for Art in Wood, Salon Art + Design, and Design Miami. I am currently living and working as Artist-in-Residence at the Raymond Farm Center for Living Arts and Design in New Hope, PA and am represented by Moderne Gallery of Philadelphia, PA.

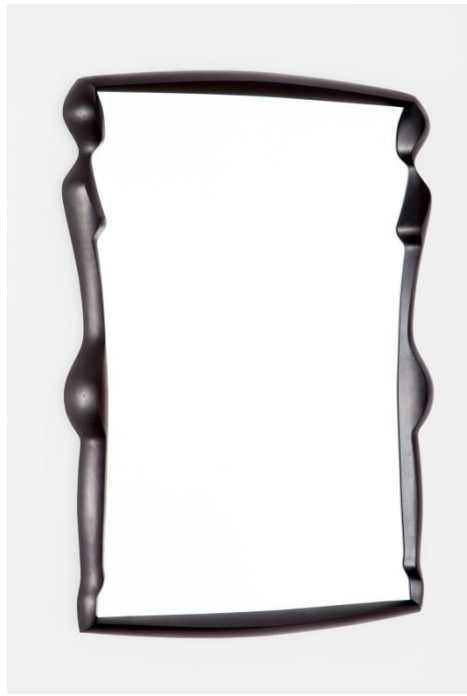


How did you get started in woodturning?

My middle school woodshop teacher nurtured my inquisitive character and allowed me to explore all tools, including the lathe, and all wood species I could get my hands on. When I was 17, I met with Mark Sfirri because I was interested in going to his alma mater, and wanted to show him my portfolio and get his advice. Soon after I graduated from Rhode Island School of Design, I became his student, discovered a new love for turning and have been inspired by his creative energy and enthusiasm ever since.

How often do you turn?

Whenever I have an idea that inspires using the lathe—or whenever I am called upon to teach a technique.



What kind of lathe do you use?

I use a Oneway lathe, when I have access (right now, my workshop space is split between three locations). Hopefully I'll be able to save and buy one of my own soon.

What kinds of turning are you doing today?

My two most recent pieces were a turned sphere that was carved into a working maze with a captured ball bearing, and a table with multi-axis split-turned animal legs.



Which of your turned pieces are you most proud of?

I am most proud of my piece called “Bliss.” It originally began as an effort to take a previous idea a few steps further, creating more severe undercuts, protrusions and a void. When the original goal was met, I proceeded to keep working—cutting the piece diagonally along one face, carving, shaping, bleaching, whitewashing and finally liming. The piece could have been finished as soon as it came off of the lathe, and I suppose I would have been happy with it. However, the experience of finishing a piece to my satisfaction and continuing to mess with a seemingly-completed form was foreign, a bit disturbing, but ultimately a blissful experience. When I look at it, I can feel how satisfied my soul was while tirelessly holding it as I worked, and I can see all of it pouring back out at me.



What is your greatest turning challenge?

My greatest challenge is remembering to breathe and drop my shoulders!

Would you tell us about a mistake you learned from?

I've learned that mistakes happen—all the time. There has never been a project I've worked on that wasn't littered with mistakes. When they happen, I spend the time to realize how and why they've occurred, and work through them as patiently and calmly as I can. The greatest challenge is clearing the nagging voice in my head that is displeased with the unanticipated hours of additional work. Other than the hand-carved feathers, I haven't ever created the same type of design more than once—so I make sure to create a file with notes on each project. These notes reference the adjustments, discoveries, and processes in case I ever decide to return.



What are you currently working on?

I am currently working on the designs for a large kitchen island of marble, bronze and wood and a large folding screen inspired by my sister's plant pathology and plant-microbe biology research.

Do you have any advice for a new turner?

Ditch the flannel. Ditch the pockets. Spandex dresses make the safest attire in the woodshop!

Any final thoughts?

Art shifts the way we move through the world and expands the way we perceive. It can be a powerful means of communication, and with the support of one another, we can move forward with integrity and relevance. The inclination to create art sets us apart from other living things on this earth. It is an active universal language that creates ties, discovers compatibility and allows us to realize connections. It is a way of actualizing our intentions and deepens our capacity to love.

If we are successful, we can draw connections, evoke something in others that might broaden understanding and help to perpetuate a passion to learn, nurture, respect and explore. I look forward to sharing creativity in life and the growth and inspiration it provides.



https://www.morewoodturningmagazine.com/meet_the_turner.php?editionid=226&profileid=