

Sponsors' Statements

Ronald Barber,
Director
Port of History Museum

This show marks the first time that artists from around the world who create lathe-turned objects have had the opportunity to present their work in one unified exhibition. Over one hundred individuals from the United States, Australia, Canada, England, Ireland, the Netherlands, Scotland, and West Germany are participating in this historic artistic event. The Port of History Museum, in keeping with its commitment to present unique exhibits of contemporary art, is pleased and honored to join with the Wood Turning Center in staging this international exhibit.

Albert B. LeCoff
Curator

Humankind has learned primarily through these two age-old concepts: **tradition**, or the handing down orally of customs and beliefs from generation to generation, and **sharing**, or joining with others in some thought, feeling, or action. This tradition of sharing one's personal methods and rituals was initially done orally among families or tribe members. As the process of recording through drawings and writings was developed, the sharing process became a permanent record. This record proved to be valuable not just for the immediate family and local residents, but for people outside the community and for generations to follow.

To further the worldwide development within the field of turning, it is important to have internationally produced turned objects exposed for viewing and study. Through the exhibition of collective work from around the world, the individual users of the lathe and the general public will become aware of the high quality and diversity of objects being produced. For those who closely study these objects, there is the opportunity for further appreciation and stimulation. This catalog is, in essence, a continuum of that age-old *tradition of sharing*.

Today, the use of the lathe has reached an ever increasing popularity around the world. From the hobbyist to the full-time turner, from the educator to the industrial designer, from the artisan to the artist, the use of the lathe is receiving more attention and creative use now than during any other period in history.

Throughout the contemporary world artisans and artists are using the lathe to make a wide range of turned objects of various materials. These objects range from functional to decorative to sculptural. Some of these artists have spent a lifetime dedicated to the field of woodturning. They have shared their skills, philosophies, and work with the world around them. Through their teachings, writings, and bodies of their work, these individuals have furthered the growth and awareness of the use of the

lathe and turning in general. This sharing by these artists was the basis for the selection of the invited artists in this exhibition.

Art critic Victoria Donahoe states that “To stay healthy, art needs a constant sense of magic, energy, and play.” It also needs fresh ideas and new talent. Therefore, the invited artists were asked to submit work which reflected their most current direction. For the same reasons, work was also solicited to be juried. The request for submission and the research for the invited work shook the trees and bushes to uncover hidden talent unknown to the general public. Some of these people are in geographic locations (such as Tougaloo, Mississippi; Bremen, West Germany; and Chippendale, NSW, Australia) and in situations where their work has been generally undiscovered.

Some of the work selected was made by individuals who have studied art, while others, through their naiveté or self isolation, have produced work unique to the rest of the field. In any case, all the artists have made personal statements through their work.

We hope that the discovery of previously unknown work, coupled with the open sharing of techniques and ideas, will set the future of the turning field spiraling upward toward new heights of individual and collective growth.

The International Turned Objects Show, and this documentation of the exhibition, should serve as an inspiration to all those involved in furthering the growth of the turning field. To each of you I present the following challenges:

1. The turners challenge: What new work will you be doing a year from now as a result of seeing and studying the work presented here?

By example: Jake Brubaker learned how to make saffron containers from his father and grandfather. He then passed on the same technique and style to his son and grandson. In 1976 I challenged Jake, who was in his seventies, to produce something new. The following year he presented me with the result of that challenge. The object had the same acorn-topped lid and classical stem with base, but the container had a new slant. This proved to me that one is never too old or set in one's ways to come up with something personally new.

2. The collector's challenge: Look into and beyond your perceptive eye to see the innovative work being produced by new as well as familiar artists.
3. The publishing community challenge: Go beyond the surface and find out what is happening in the turning field and bring it to the attention of the general public.
4. My personal challenge: The first exhibition we organized exposed the work of North America.¹ After receiving an application from Australia, I realized that the next exhibition had to be an international collection. While organizing ITOS I received an application from Michael Brolly, and I now realize that the next exhibition will have to be an inter-galactic collection.

1. Albert LeCoff, *A Gallery of Turned Objects*, Brigham Young University Press, Provo, 1981.