
A few years ago, while traveling to a regional conference, my host and I ate dinner at a local restaurant. Our getting-to-know-you conversation centered on woodworking (of course), and at one point he asked, “Should I call myself an artist?” Wow, that was a loaded question. Labels matter, inwardly and outwardly. For a variety of reasons, his question fascinated me—still does. Was he asking for permission to be creative from others or for himself? From what stimulus did the question arise? Does he understand the significance of labels?

After reading Paul Stankard’s book, I now would have a better response, starting with recommending my host read Studio Craft as Career, specifically the chapter, “What’s in a Name?” where the author writes about why labels matter. Throughout the book, Stankard shares stories about his life’s journey—from making glassware for the medical industry to becoming a world-renowned glass artist, and from discussing intellectual topics of interest to craft artists. He writes sparingly, and his straightforward, conversational prose made reading this book seem as though I was having a gentle conversation with an old friend. Each personal story brilliantly supports a chapter’s title and concept. Part 2 of Studio Craft as Career, Artist Portfolio, is devoted to forty-eight other artists, two pages each. Stankard writes “An Appreciation” of the artist on the first page, and each maker offers “Advice to Artists” on the second page. Three images of the artists’ work accompany the concise text. Woodturners and potter William Hunter writes, “Bringing what you love and what inspires you into the pieces so your passion and voice are what communicate through the work.”

As the title indicates, there are many guidelines for craft artists in this book; perhaps the most compelling for me, when considering my role as a demonstrator, is Stankard’s story about wanting to learn how to recreate “the Millville Rosewood paperweight design at the torch.” Instead of being frustrated or upset about his colleague’s secrecy concerning his methods, materials, and techniques, the author realizes, “If he had given me step-by-step instructions, it might have weakened the motivation for me to create my own style.”

—Betty J. Scarpino

The woodturning field has flourished because we so freely share techniques, materials, and processes. What our field needs now, though, are makers who set aside this plethora of step-by-step instructions to venture into the realm of uncertainty where personal style can emerge. Offered within this book, through chapter titles such as, “Who Needs Education,” “How Our Perceived Limitations Can Become Our Strengths,” and “What Labor Has Taught Me,” are excellent insights to help guide you through your journey of uncertainty.

An added bonus is the quality of the book itself. The heavy paper exquisitely showcases the many full-color images of the artists’ artwork. Most of the work is breathtakingly lovely; a few are challenging to appreciate. In chapter 2, “Craft Space,” Stankard tells the story of calling his “set-aside” pieces from his early years of making. Like that exacting process of elimination, it is obvious that Paul Stankard did the same with his book: Only the best is left, in words and images.

In Memoriam: Liam Flynn

The woodturning community has been deeply shocked by the sudden death of Liam Flynn at the age of 47. Liam lived all his life in Abbeyfeale, Co. Limerick, in the south of Ireland. He started turning as a teenager, in the workshop of his father and grandfather, and went on to have a brilliant career. Examples of his work are in the permanent collections of such prestigious museums as the Victoria and Albert Museum (London), the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, and the National Museum of Ireland. He is represented by some of the leading applied art galleries in Ireland, Britain, and the United States. In 2006, he was a Fellow of the International Turning Exchange (ITE) Program in Philadelphia; in 2011, one of his pieces was featured on a special edition (Irish postal) stamp. Described by Kevin Wallace and Terry Martin as “a modern master of the neo-classical wooden vessel” (New Masters of Woodturning, Flynn was host known for his enclosed forms, usually in ebonized oak. Turned green and allowed to distort gently, these forms are often decorated with finely carved lines and flutes. He experimented constantly with the elements of his vessels—line and form, rims, feet. His enclosed rims are exquisite, creating the illusion of a smaller bowl nested inside a larger one; his blackened vessels are complemented by other coloring techniques, such as fuming and bleaching.

Liam Flynn sharing his woodturning expertise during the AAW International Symposium, Atlanta, Georgia, 2016.

Liam Flynn’s students have both a coach and a cheering section—Rob Boyer and Butch Carlson. The student is now an active member of our chapter.

In Memoriam: Liam Flynn

—Kay Liggett, Pikes Peak Woodturners

Pikes Peak Woodturners Partners with Bemis School of Art

In 2015, the Pikes Peak Woodturners (PPW), an AAW chapter, signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center, forming a four-proposed approach to promoting woodturning in the region. For a monthly meeting location, we settled on the Bemis School of Art, a well-known branch of the Fine Arts Center (FAC), located in the downtown area. Bemis provided its largest classroom, as well as storage for our club’s equipment.

In addition to rent for the meeting space, PPW agreed to provide at least three demonstrations for FAC events, one of which was an outdoor demo during a FAC “free day.” For these demonstrations, club members turned tops for children and set up a show-and-tell about woodturning for the public. PPW also agreed to teach three classes for the Art School. Our FAC education director, Mark Harry, boldly chose to offer bowl turning as our first set of classes. Bob Gibbs donated the wood, Dennis Liggett donated instruc-

This is so poignantly Liam is not forgotten.

—Roger Bennett

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