



Book Review: *Studio Craft as Career: A Guide to Achieving Excellence in Art-Making*, by Paul J. Stankard, Schiffer Publishing, 2016, 208 pages, paperback

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 woodturning (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—it 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. Woodturner and carver William Hunter writes, "Bring 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 guideposts 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 Rose 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."

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 throughout 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, "Crawl Space," Stankard tells the story of culling 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.

—Betty J. Scarpino

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-pronged 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 first education director, Mark Harry, boldly chose to offer bowl turning as our first

set of classes. Bob Gibbs donated the wood, Dennis Liggett donated instruction, and the club purchased lathes and tools. All three classes filled, with waiting lists, indicating more demand than we could meet in the first year.

The FAC gift shop added turned items to their inventory, which was an additional goal of the club not included in the contract. In addition, the club decorated a tree for the FAC winter festival and participated in the

Bemis Art School holiday art sale as a fundraiser for our educational mission.

The club teaches five students per class in a six-hour session. Each student has a PPW member as a safety officer. The participation of at least five helpers (and our videographer) in every class has made it possible for every student to produce a nice functional bowl on their first try. Many of the students have no prior experience with a lathe.

Chapter growth

Since we have been meeting at Bemis, our club has grown for the first time in several years. Many of our students are women who have taken other classes at Bemis. This population does not overlap with the class members at the local Woodcraft store, and Woodcraft views PPW as an ally, not a competitor.

AAW insurance was a big help in securing the partnership with the

Fine Arts Center. We were able to provide a Certificate of Insurance to indemnify the FAC. In exchange, we were able to obtain a hold-harmless clause for PPW. We were fortunate that Tara Sevanne Thomas, the FAC Executive Director of Education, was

willing to take the risk of working with us. We have worked diligently to fulfill our contractual obligations, which has also been extremely fulfilling for our club.

—Kay Liggett, Pikes Peak Woodturners



PPW member Dennis Liggett helps a Bemis student make a tricky cut on her bowl. One of the best things about the classes is that the students want to do the turning for themselves.



One of PPW's students has 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

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 best known for his enclosed forms, usually in ebony or 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 nestled 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.

Photo: Andi Wolfe



Self-taught, he was a consummate craftsman, an absolute perfectionist. To know his work was to know Liam: the unfussy quietness, the sophistication, and the spirituality of his pieces reflect beautifully the personality of their maker. He was universally popular, as evidenced by the outpouring of grief on social media. He had a very wide range of interests—art, music, politics, fly-fishing, cycling...

Liam recently wrote about the role of memory in his work: "Someone said to me that he thinks my work is about memory, in particular my fluted pieces, that 'ev' slice of the chisel leaves an imprint that captures that particular moment in time. There is also the memory of the piece made before and of course the memory of the actual tree itself."

This is so poignantly true: Liam's work will not be forgotten.

—Roger Bennett