

DWIGHT BENNETT

DWIGHT'S SILVER BULLET STORY - HOW IT ALL STARTED

I have been a sculptor and craftsman since 1968. Late one night in my Studio on April 20, 1981 I was turning an ironwood vessel on my lathe when I saw a shiny spot flickering back at me. I turned off the lathe for a closer inspection and found that some one had previously shot the wood with a bullet. The shiny silver like bullet had wedged itself into the natural fissures of the wood. It looked wonderful: I was amazed to see the unusual patterns that I had cut into the lead. At that moment the A.K.A. "Silver Bullet" was born, an epiphany involving my relationship with wood was reached, impacting how I saw each finished piece. To this day sometimes it seems as though when I finished piece, the silver was always there, growing in the wood like in nature, where the silver flows through the veins in white quartz.

As a sculptor I like to think I flow in harmony with nature in my work. When wood dries and grows old, Mother Nature's caricature slowly creeps out, I like to take this caricature and create from it. My role is to define and shape these areas and thus illuminate, if you will, Mother Nature's birthmarks. By using my inlaid silver technique, I feel I have achieved this end. Being that I was the first to develop this method of vein striation enhancement, the silver seems to give my work a sense of harmony and flow, along with a sense of electricity and life.

It took two technicians, one metallurgist along with myself over 5 years to refine the inlaid silver technique, which you see today. After cutting and carving to emulate the pattern that nature has made, I give the piece to my technicians who make mold impressions of the wood for the casting process. The metallurgist makes the metal work for me, from the non-tarnishing of the silver to the flexibility aspect. We then inlay the cast pieces into the wood. The whole process takes three to six weeks depending on the piece. We then grind, sand, and polish the inlaid silver to fit. Finally, a hand rubbed oil finish is applied over a two to three week period producing what you see today. Now, over 31 years later, my inlaid silver technique, which has dazzled people for years, has become my trademark and the reason I'm called "The Silver Bullet".