

DAVID NITTMANN

Basket Illusion Artist

ARTIST STATEMENT

DAVID NITTMANN IS A FULL TIME ARTIST WORKING IN BOULDER, COLORADO. A professional for more than 35 years, he has been woodworking since childhood where he learned to love wood from his Grandfather, a builder of Adirondack Guide boats on Lake George, NY.

Internationally recognized for his innovative “basket illusion” series (turned wood, burned and dyed to give the visual and tactile appearance of a woven form), David exhibits his work in galleries in LA and Santa Fe as well as the finest art shows including SOFA- NY & Chicago, winning awards at the Smithsonian Show, American Craft Expo, and “Best of Show” at Westchester. His work has been placed in several museums and found in private collections throughout the world.

BASKET ILLUSION - THE PROCESS

“I use the lathe to create a “form” from a single piece of carefully selected wood, most often, non-figured and tight-grained, but occasionally, highly figured burl. Concentric beads are then cut to conform to the developed surface. The valley between each of the beads is friction burned with sandpaper while the piece spins, further defining the concentric line. Next, the indexing wheel on the lathe is used to locate a spoke, a pencil mark approximately every 10 degrees around the form. In the case of enclosed forms, the hollowing is now completed.

In the second phase, after the form has been removed from the lathe, I use my specially designed burning pen to define the marked spokes and the additional radial lines (one approximately every degree). Large platters have 40,000 separate burned marks. This hatch work of concentric lines and radial lines creates a circular grid pattern, a “wooden canvas” that gives the impression of a woven basket. Now is the time I make the final decisions about the design. The form may influence the design or the design may have defined the form.

The third phase is calculating the numerical layout of the pattern on round graph paper, and then applying archival dyes of various colors to the individual rectangles on the “canvas”. Some designs are further enhanced with airbrushed acrylics. The completed work is sealed with lacquer to prevent discoloration of the wood

Influences for many of my designs come from Native American & African basketry and Middle & Far Eastern patterns. I am always looking at the world around me; stimulated by visions in nature, architecture and art of all media.”



ABOUT DAVID NITTMANN



I was playing with wood in my Grandfather's shop as early as I can remember, and my first paid job was "sweeper" at Peters' Wooden Toy Factory. After 2 years at the University of Colorado, and 3 years in the United States Army, I enrolled at Colorado State University, receiving a B.S. with honors in Wildlife Biology and a M.S. in Watershed Science. These degrees didn't keep me out of the woods. I was employed in industrial, commercial, and residential construction before starting my own cabinet and furniture shop in 1980. Chair making and repair led me to the lathe; obsession followed.

My signature work is the "basket illusion." Using rare non-figured woods, I turn, burn, and dye to create the visual and tactile impression of a woven form. A subset of this work is the bodydrum, a decorative functional instrument. "The Corn Mother Series" combines the basket illusion and detailed carving.

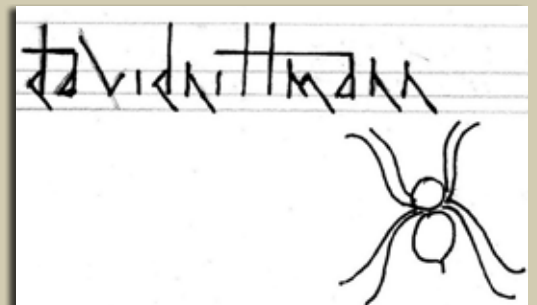
I have been involved in numerous exhibitions over the past sixteen year history of the basket illusion series, including the prestigious BYU exhibition "Beneath the Bark-Twenty Five Years of Woodturning" and have been juried into the best national art shows, including: "The Smithsonian", "The Philadelphia Museum of Art", "The American Craft Exposition" and "SOFA-New York & Chicago" (Sculpture Objects & Functional Art). I received the "Artist Silver Award" at the 2005 Smithsonian Craft Show and "Best of Show" at the 2005 Westchester Craft Show. I have been invited to participate in national "basket" shows where I invariably evoke the question... "what is a basket?"

I teach this work at the AAW national symposium, the Utah Woodturning Symposium, several regional symposia and local clubs all over the US, Canada, and England, giving back some of the knowledge I have gained from artists that initiated the surge in wood art today.



HISTORY OF A SPIDER LOGO

In 1970 I worked as a Union carpenter around Denver, Colorado. Not fearing "high-wire" work, one of my jobs was to build scaffolding for the Ironworkers, most of whom were Chicanos. They would see me climbing around the works and called me Arana-the spider. In those days each workman had to supply their own hand-tools: hammers, square, tape measure, handsaw, peashooter, chalk line, plumb bob, et al. As a method of keeping track of one's own tools, workers picked various colors of paint and put a small dot on each tool for personal identification. I, however, being "Arana", drew a stylized spider on my tools for identification—two circles and eight lines. Today I sign off, as the last gesture, this logo on each piece of art work that I create.





ART AS EMISSARY

At Wiford Gallery, we believe that art acts as an emissary to a better world. Art inspires us. The power of art is its ability to move us to the deeper places of our heart and soul...toward joy and awareness, toward meaning and revelation.

Art speaks to the emotions in ways that words cannot. It can do so because it enters the mind from a place in the heart. Art carries the energy of intention and speaks to us with a mere image. When the heart is opened, our mind is informed by inspiration and from that place we can create our world more meaningfully.

With art acting as emissary, we begin to anticipate beauty and abundance as a way of life.



ABOUT WIFORD GALLERY

Wiford Gallery is a destination for fine art in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Surrounded by a spacious outdoor sculpture garden and nestled just off Canyon Road, we represent artists of the highest caliber, whose dedication and talent are clearly displayed in their work.

We choose our artists for three reasons: the mastery of the work, the quality of joy in the artist, and their trajectory for growth. By focusing on these three characteristics - rather than a specific style or genre - we are able to enjoy and offer the highest caliber of works in an array of mediums - glass, wood, oil paintings, bronze, precious metal and mixed-media.

We hope each of our guests feels the undeniable exuberance of our artists and shares the optimism and belief translated through their work.

We are honored to represent some of the finest artists in the world. It is with gratitude that we share these beautiful works of art. Thank you for your support of the arts, and for working with Wiford Gallery.



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