



THE
CENTER
FOR ART
IN WOOD®

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

AUGUST 2017

CONTACT:

Fred Kaplan-Mayer, Director of Operations, fred@centerforartinwood.org

The Center for Art in Wood's Executive Director and Co-Founder, Albert LeCoff, to step down May 2018

Dear Members and Friends of the Center:

After 31 years of service, Albert LeCoff will retire from his role, as of the end of May 2018, as the Executive Director of The Center for Art in Wood in Philadelphia, PA. Albert will stay involved in various activities in an advisory capacity to advance the Center's mission. A national search for Albert's successor will be initiated by the Center's Board of Trustees in September 2017.



Photo Credit: John Carlano

From Albert LeCoff:

"As the Co-Founder of the Center with my brother Alan, I had the good fortune of aligning myself with Bruce A. Kaiser, the first president of the Board of Trustees, who understood my vision and helped jumpstart the reality. Many trustees over the years have helped plan and shape the Center, along with many individuals and foundations whose financial support helped make my "dream come true." It all started with an original \$5,000 challenge grant, matched by artists donating work for sale. Over 40 years, I've interacted with hundreds of international artists and enjoyed watching their growth. Dozens of talented staff members and contractors helped create exhibitions and permanent documentation of wood as an evolving art form. Collaborations with museums and schools enabled me to stage many exhibits and symposiums before and after the Center scored its own public facility in 2000, and the museum collection and the research library have grown by leaps and bounds. I look forward to meeting the next artistic leader whose charge will be continuing the Center's legacy and championing the innovative efforts of artists who create with wood."

From Board President, John Dziedzina:

"Board members throughout the history of the Center were drawn to it because Albert's passion ignited their passion. However, the Center is not a one-person show even if it can be traced back to a singular vision. Albert's collaborative spirit has grown the organization to a point where we can look towards the future. We are thankful for his commitment to the Center's continued work and we look forward to the "writing" the next chapter of this storied institution."

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What started as a "passion project" resulted in a nonprofit organization that is now recognized as one of the foremost authorities on wood art and one of the most dedicated advocates for artists who work with wood and other materials. Albert's early entry into concentrated study and appreciation of wood turning stemmed from his experience as a professional wood turner and his background as a teacher and educator. Before incorporating the Center as a nonprofit in 1986, co-founded with his brother Alan originally as The Wood Turning Center, Albert and Alan organized wood turning symposiums, ten years prior, that became acclaimed forums for makers from all over the world.

Realizing the tremendous growth of the wood turning field over the course of the symposiums, and wanting to increase public awareness, in 1981 Albert staged his very first exhibition and publication, *Gallery of Turned Objects: The First North American Turned Object Show*. More than one hundred exhibitions and twenty publications later, The Center for Art in Wood has continued to thrive, from the original symposiums through the Wood Turning Center in the house



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Albert shares with wife Tina LeCoff, to an Old City institution.

The Center now sponsors four to five exhibitions during the year; has a twenty-two year old annual international residency program, that hosts six artists, a photojournalist and a scholar; has a comprehensive library of resources dedicated to the study and documentation of wood turning, woodworking and wood artists; and houses a museum collection of over 1,100 objects.

Throughout Albert's tenure, he has played a leading role as an advocate for emerging, mid-career and established artists in the field. In 2011, the Center's mission was purposely broadened to signal a departure from solely wood-turned objects to a more expansive recognition of wood art in all its forms, facilitated by various techniques and multiple materials.

He is widely regarded for his skills in evaluating quality, craftsmanship and artistic achievement within the field of wood art.

The Board of Trustees and the Center's staff express their deep gratitude for his leadership and personal contributions to the organization, and look forward to honoring his vision and his devotion to the field going forward.

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About the Center for Art in Wood

Mission

The Center for Art in Wood nurtures and promotes the innovation of art in wood through collaborative residencies, exhibitions, education and documentation. The Center also maintains an inspirational collection and a research library to enhance the understanding and appreciation of the art.

What We Do

The Center offers activities from within several different program areas, including the Gerry Lenfest Gallery, the Museum Collection, the Fleur & Charles Bresler Research Library, the Earl Powell Artist Research Files, and the Len Scherock Museum Store.

The Center displays wood art on site and in traveling exhibitions. The Windgate ITE International Residency Program has hosted over 130 international residents from 17 countries as it continues through its third decade. The Museum Collection contains over 1,100 objects from around the world, ranging from functional, every-day objects to contemporary sculptures. The research library consists of over 25,000 images, artists' files, and books that preserve the history of wood turning and woodworking and its continuing evolution as a contemporary art form.

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www.centerforartinwood.org