



For Immediate Release
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The 2018 Bob Stocksdale International Excellence in Wood Award: Ben Strear

Lecture and reception in the Rotunda, Winterthur Museum, Garden & Library, New Castle County, DE
April 14, 2019, 2:00–4:00 PM

Philadelphia PA: The Center for Art in Wood celebrates the third year of the Bob Stocksdale International Excellence in Wood Award. Supported by an anonymous donor, this \$1,000 award is presented annually to an emerging or mid-career artist whose work, like Stocksdale's, unites quality of craftsmanship and respect for materials. The 2018 recipient for the Bob Stocksdale International Excellence in Wood Award is Ben Strear of Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Strear creates sculpted wooden vessels that serve as canvasses for his meticulously hand-carved, rhythmic patterns, many of which are inspired by ancient structures and artifacts. His work is held by prominent private collections and he is the recipient of a number of awards, including The Smithsonian Craft Show and the Cheongju International Craft Competition in South Korea.

In commemoration of the 2018 Stocksdale Award, Trent Rhodes, a Lois F. McNeil Fellow and recent graduate of the Winterthur Program in American Culture, will present a lecture on Strear and renowned master woodturner Bob Stocksdale (1913–2003). Rhodes will discuss Strear's work in context with the values embodied by Stocksdale, among them quality of craftsmanship, respect for materials, and artistic innovation.

Strear's biography and catalogue of works, along with Rhodes' lecture, will be added to The Earl Powell Artist Research Files in the Center's Fleur & Charles Bresler Research Library. The artist files, book collection, journals, and image collection is available for research to the Center's members.

The inaugural Stocksdale Award was bestowed in 2016 on Jakob Weissflog, Germany; the 2017 awardee was Dean Pulver, Taos, NM. From 2019, the Bob Stocksdale International Excellence in Wood Award will be decided by a committee comprising leaders in the art, craft, and design fields. The award adjudication committee is comprised of Christine Knoke, Deputy Director of the Mingei Museum; Michael Monroe, Director Emeritus of Bellevue Arts Museum and the Renwick Gallery, Smithsonian Museums; Kevin Wallace, Executive Director of the Beatrice Wood Foundation; and The Center for Art in Wood's Artistic Director, Jennifer-Navva Milliken.

For more information please contact Katie Sorenson, at 215-923-8000 ext. 103 or katie@centerforartinwood.org.

Image captions:

Left: Ben Strear, *Cylindrical Seal*, 2017. Bass wood, turned and carved with non-repeating pattern and striated; milk paint, wax, Diam. 5.5 in. x 14.5 in.

Right: Paul J. Smith, *Bob Stocksdale (1913–2003) at his studio, Berkeley, CA*, ca. 1985, Inkjet print. The Center for Art in Wood Museum Collection, Donated by the Artist. 2016.08.01.016.05

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