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*Dedicated to increasing arts accessibility
for people of all ages and circumstances.*

The Experience

Tuesday, June 15, 2010

WOOD TURNING: WHAT A TURN-ON!



TURN IN to 501 Vine Street, and you'll see what I saw in April: the curves and shapes and colors and grains that define the craft of wood turning. When I arrived, I immediately spotted the lathe, basking proudly in the light on the windowsill, and knew that this device, guided by the deft

hands of an artist, was responsible for the beautiful objects I was about to see. Albert, Ron, and William, the inspiration and administrative backbone of the organization, gave me a warm welcome, a hint of the sensory pleasure that pervades the Wood Turning Center in Philadelphia. I began my journey.

HAD I MADE A WRONG TURN? As I entered the gallery, I was struck by the apparent anomaly that I saw ahead. Pieces made from glass and linen and leather and clay in a wood center? Then I saw the sign: "Magic Realism---Material Illusions", and I understood my mistake.

Here was a special exhibit that played with expectation and its intersection with reality. On display were illusions of materials: a



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Students take part in a silk screen workshop creating slogans and designs against violence.

About Art-Reach

Art-Reach:The Experience...

Our mission is to connect underserved audiences with cultural experiences so that they may enjoy and benefit from the transformative powers of the arts. Our Blog, Art-Reach: The Experience, serves to connect Art-Reach with its constituents and the general public to celebrate our successes, share information, and highlight mission related items.

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child's cotton dress...really wood; a birch tree branch...really clay; a lacy linen corset...really glass. I had been exposed to the unexpected interconnectedness, OK... the magic... of materials!



TIME TO TURN BACK THE CLOCK by paging through the books and photographs in the next room. By perusing through the shelves that lined the walls, serious scholars, able artists, and just fascinated folks could read about the history of wood turning, the process that

defines it, and the artists who produced its most acclaimed work. Out of sight in a climate-controlled area, the WTC houses a permanent collection of wood-turned objects that are rotated out for display periodically. If time had permitted, I could have researched the past and gained even more appreciation of this special craft. Next visit!

THEIR TURNSTILE KEEPS MOVING! WTC also invites hobbyist turners to enhance their skills, experienced wood artists to find new inspiration, and researchers to expand their knowledge. Most importantly, WTC encourages the general public to discover and appreciate this very special place. There are only three craft art studios in Philadelphia, the other two devoted to either clay or fabric. The Wood Turning Center is unique: its focus is wood, and its mission is to elevate the perception of this craft art to the level of fine art! After my visit, I was a believer!



NOW, IT'S YOUR TURN. Be a visitor. You have lots of choices. Three specific and well-defined programs are available for Art-Reach members, each one offering some combination of museum history, process explanation, exhibit information, sample pieces, and lathe

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Number of Visitors Sharing The Experience

00001573

Arts Based Sites, Articles and Links

Art-in-the-Age and Art-Reach Give Back Within reach - South Philly Review
Enchanted Free Performance on December 9, 2009
Social Circuit - Philadelphia Inquirer
Hands UP Productions
Making local arts more accessible
Art-Reach on 93.3 WMMR
Michelle Obama tells international audience why the arts matter
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demonstration. Also available is a hands-on turning experience! The WTC kindly offers an "on-the-road" alternative, taking portions of the program to member sites, thereby reaching audiences unable to travel.

IT'S SOMEONE ELSE'S TURN: Do you need another recommendation? Maybe Brandee will convince you! Brandee, a young woman with many physical challenges, along with Debbie, her nurse, and Lynda, her doctor, spent the morning of April 29th at WTC. I was there too. Wood artist, Philip Hauser, a retired executive who confessed to a long-time love affair with wood, patiently demonstrated how wood is turned on the lathe. He slowly transformed a chunk of unfinished poplar into a "lidded box." As Philip worked and talked, Dr. Lynda orally conveyed the visual details to Brandee, who is visually impaired. The pleasant smell of burning wood filled the air as the turning continued. With each new curve and detail, Dr. Lynda placed the transformed creation into Brandee's open hand, thus stimulating her tactile response. Dr. Lynda's expressive narrative voice reflected the beauty of the evolving piece, enhancing the sensory experience for this special guest with limited independent abilities. When Philip ended his demonstration, he gifted the finished piece to Brandee, concluding what Dr. Lynda described as "unequivocally, one of the best experiences Brandee has ever had." She added her intention to return soon with other Rec Care folks.



However you choose to experience this craft and art, whether at the WTC site or on your own turf, you will see the curves and shapes and colors and grains. You will feel the warmth, smell the wood, and welcome the peace. Your senses will tell you... you made the RIGHT TURN!

-by Barbara Speece

Posted by Art-Reach:The Experience... at **10:34 AM**

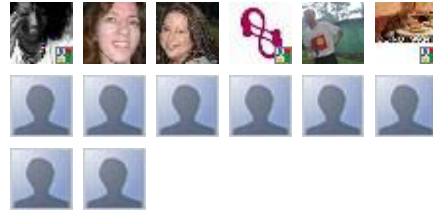
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Children played various instruments during an educational session.

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