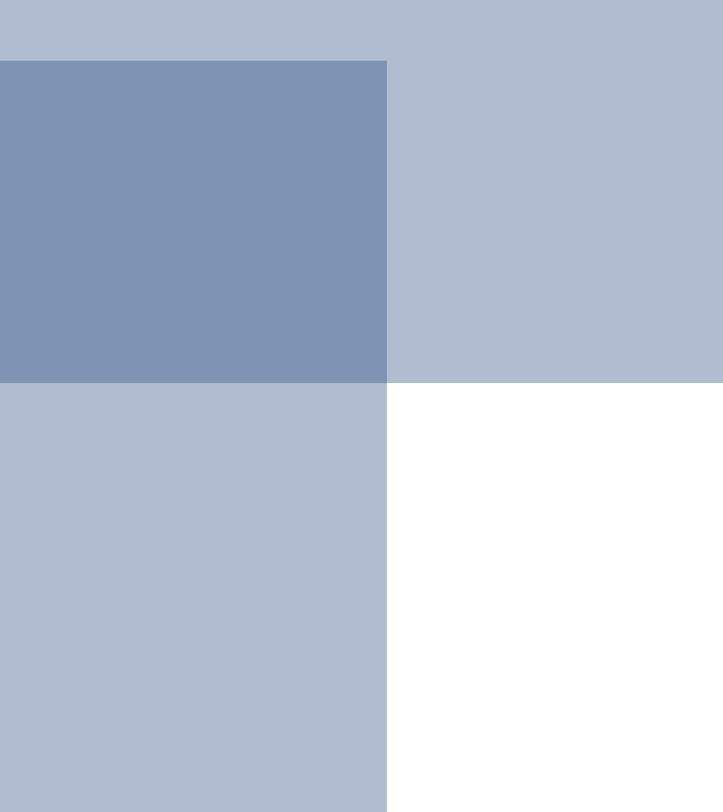


# MAKING IT

a celebration of  
30 years of the  
camosun college  
fine furniture  
program



**FOREWORD**

Caroline Riedel  
Curator of Collections, University  
of Victoria, Legacy Art Galleries

*Making It: A Celebration of the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Camosun College Fine Furniture Program* doesn't just mark an important anniversary. It marks the end

of an era and the beginning of a new one for co-curators Ken Guenter and Cam Russell as they retire and hand over the reins of a program that has contributed significantly to the regional furniture making movement. It also highlights a long-standing shared interest in furniture making, design and education between Camosun and the University of Victoria.

Ken and Cam have been a creative force since they met in 1982 through the exhibition *Cabinetmaker / Designer: Furniture Makers in the Victoria Region* at UVic's Maltwood Art Museum. Director/ Curator Martin Segger's interest in B.C. Arts and Crafts of the 1960s and 70s and his awareness of Vancouver Island's dynamic woodworking community connected many of these people for the first time. Ken and Cam were part of a group that went on to form the Vancouver Island Woodworkers Guild.

When I started at the Maltwood as a new Art History graduate in 1997, the Guild's *Explorations in Wood* exhibit was a much anticipated biannual show. It attracted new audiences who eagerly followed the gallery's upcoming exhibitions and programs. Ken and Cam also brought a new student cohort every year to the Maltwood's storage vault to examine examples of design and techniques spanning over five centuries. Innovative exhibition ideas followed. Their 2003 invitational show *They Don't Make Them Like They Used To* challenged regional makers to design a contemporary piece based on a historic one from the UVic collection. Both historic and contemporary works were exhibited together. In 2007, *Cascadia* presented studio furniture from BC, Oregon, Washington and Alaska, and was a cornerstone of the International Furniture Society Conference held at UVic.

It has been a great pleasure to work with Ken and Cam, not only for their enthusiasm and creative inspiration, but also – yes, I'll say it - for the endless clever furniture puns. We are pleased to help celebrate this anniversary and the continued success of the program and its graduates.

## FURNITURE ON SOUTHERN VANCOUVER ISLAND THE UVIC – CAMOSUN CONNECTION

Cam Russell  
Fine Furniture Program Instructor  
1987-2017

In September 1982, the Maltwood Art Museum and Gallery at the University of Victoria mounted an exhibition called *The Cabinetmaker/Designer: Furniture*

*Makers in the Victoria Region*. 22 exhibitors presented their work in a gallery setting for the first time in this part of Canada. In his catalogue introduction, exhibition curator and gallery director Martin Segger wrote: “This collection, the work of 22 Vancouver Island craftspersons, re-introduces hand-crafted custom furnishings as an art form in its own right.” None of us knew at the time that this exhibition would lead the handmade furniture movement on southern Vancouver Island, or that UVic would continue to influence the thriving furniture design and building community that continues to thrive 36 years later.

As a 25 year old, I was excited beyond description when my application to exhibit was accepted by the gallery. It was at the exhibition that I met my fellow “cabinetmaker/designers”, many of whom I was not aware of until this exhibition. I have to confess I was intimidated by many of them. A few were European-trained with many more hours of experience than I had. Others had graduated from design schools in Ontario, where they had actually studied furniture design specifics. There were several, however, who were on the same wavelength as I was, and we agreed that we had to make sure our newfound connection was not broken once the exhibition had wrapped up.

The Vancouver Island Woodworkers Guild was formed by fellow exhibitors Ken Guenter, Tom Scotcher, and me, along with a few other folks who had not exhibited at the Maltwood, but were woodworking professionally and were excited by what the Maltwood Art Museum had done for us. At our first meeting, in Ken’s backyard workshop, we took up a collection to fund the photocopying and mail-out of a newsletter to advise prospective members of upcoming meetings. Gradually, our membership grew and within a few months we were organizing another exhibition. It did not take long for the Guild to grow to sixty plus members. By the mid-1980s, the Maltwood Art Museum had invited us back for another exhibition, thus beginning a series of biennial displays that featured much more than just furniture and many more than the original twenty-two exhibitors.

Around this time, Gregory Brown, one of our fellow exhibitors in the 1982 show, offered a course through UVic’s Extension in *Furniture History and Antiques Recognition*. It was a fascinating course, which awoke my interest in furniture

history. Gregory’s course also introduced me to the amazing collection of historic furniture that lived in a storage vault below the University Centre. This furniture was bequeathed to the University by Katharine and John Maltwood and presented a wide range of high quality furniture pieces spanning a wide range of eras. This collection became a huge inspiration for me. I am happy to think of the many Camosun College Fine Furniture Program students who had access to the vault to view these remarkable furniture pieces. Every year, our students would marvel at the collection, and we often heard comments along the lines of “it’s too bad more people can’t see this...” That sentiment led Ken Guenter and me to curate an exhibition in 2003, called *They Don’t Make Them Like They Used To*. We invited twenty-two local designer/woodworkers to the Maltwood storage vault to select a piece that would inspire the design and construction of a new project. One year later the newly made items were exhibited alongside their design inspirations in the Maltwood Gallery, providing valuable exposure to a number of Camosun College Fine Furniture Program graduates and to

works that normally reside in the storage vault. This exhibition served to further highlight a bright new generation of younger designers/cabinetmakers.

Another collaboration between the Maltwood Art Museum and the Camosun College Fine Furniture Program was the annual conference of the Furniture Society, which was held on the UVic campus in 2007. Co-chaired by Ken Guenter and former Fine Furniture graduate, John Dennison, the conference brought 450 furniture design enthusiasts to UVic for a five-day get together that brought the southern Vancouver Island region to the attention of this international community. Taking advantage of this knowledgeable audience, the Maltwood Art Museum, once again, helped us curate an exhibition called *Cascadia: Studio Furniture from Oregon, Washington, British Columbia and Alaska*. *Cascadia* was widely recognized for the prodigious use of materials from the region fashioned into pieces which referenced the overall theme of the conference, *A Cultural Mosaic – Reflections from the Coastal Rainforest*.

Since the Fine Furniture Program's inception in 1987, Camosun College has accepted 18 students per year to its ten-month, 1200-hour intensive course, giving them exposure to both theory and practical experience in design, construction and finishing of furniture and wooden objects. The exhibitors in this 30 year celebration have not only completed the requirements of this program, but also excelled in their work. For an instructor, nothing is more rewarding than helping former students celebrate their achievements. It is a privilege to bring these talented graduates together to mark the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Camosun's successful program.

#### WHY A CHAIR?

Ken Guenter  
Fine Furniture Program Instructor  
2000-2017

During my years as an instructor in Camosun College's Fine Furniture Program, I often heard the question "Why a chair?" The students would ask

the question upon hearing that the designing and building of "seating" would be the final project of the course. At our year-end exhibitions, gallery patrons would enquire about the absence of other furniture forms. My response is that the designing and building of a chair is an important milestone in the career of a furniture maker.

Since 1987, students in the Camosun College Fine Furniture Program have been completing a capstone project to demonstrate their skills in the areas of furniture design, construction and finishing. Cam Russell, the program's founder, experimented with a number of projects and themes. By the time I arrived on the scene, the seating project was an integral part of the curriculum.

The final project has several design and construction criteria. The design must be functional seating and the completed piece has to fit within the shipping size requirements imposed by the most common shipping companies. If the assembled project is too large, it has to be designed and constructed so that it can be shipped in parts and easily assembled onsite. Students are given 25 board feet of a local wood species to work with, more than enough material to build most chairs.

Designing and building a chair is in fact difficult and challenges a furniture maker's skill in many different ways. The act of sitting is only part of the experience of a chair. They are among our most common pieces of furniture, and they come in all shapes and sizes. Understanding chair joinery, the measurement process and the geometry to make seating possible are critical to the project's success. The angles of the seat and the back, the height and width must all be considered in terms of comfort and function. We all know that the function of a chair is to accommodate the human body in a seated position but comfort and support should be paramount. We also experience a chair aesthetically in the lines, proportions and the tactile qualities of the materials. We assume a chair will support us. Rarely does the user give any thought toward collapse or functional failure; these concerns are the responsibility of the maker. The science of ergonomics is of major concern to the functionalists, while those who wish to make

a statement of a social or political nature require a grasp of the conceptual. When these concerns are brought together successfully, both comfortable and artful things happen.

Historically, the development of "rules of design" have helped us achieve many of our goals. Without them we may still be sitting on the ground. The function and aesthetics of design are a continuum that date back to artists' need to manipulate objects for comfort and pleasure.

Often the intent of design is to create more than a functional piece of furniture. Designs present potent symbols of ideas and ideals. The seat at the head of a dining table can be indicative of the status of the head of the family. This symbol enters our vocabulary when we speak of leaders of organizations and governments. There is power and status that is associated with that position. As we all know in post-secondary education, *when all else fails, we take it up with the Chair.*

Some chairs have become icons of an age or generation. Our traditional Western aesthetic harkens from the Greek and Roman catalogue of design. The Klismos chair of Greece (5<sup>th</sup> century BC) is an iconic example of classic design that continues to be reinterpreted through contemporary eyes and needs. During the Neoclassical period (late 18<sup>th</sup> to early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries) many cultures reinterpreted classical design as a way to create an ideological parallel between ancient Rome and their modern republics. In the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, Arts and Crafts furniture designed by William Morris attempted to democratize design and pay homage to the craftspeople who were struggling to compete with the new technologies of the Industrial Revolution. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Gerrit Rietveld, a member of the Dutch design group De Stijl, created his famous Red and Blue Chair. While Rietveld's piece has the form of a chair, it is also a three-dimensional homage to a painting by his contemporary Piet Mondrian. These are examples indicative of how design consistently reflects new attitudes and new materials.

In this exhibition, graduates from the last thirty years of the Fine Furniture Program were invited to submit seating that they had designed and made within the last five years. This time we relaxed the criteria for participation: size, function and material constraints were not imposed.

We invite you to experience the new chairs created by some of the top graduates of the Camosun College Fine Furniture Program and their instructors. It is our hope that this exhibition will be helpful in promoting high quality and well-designed furniture that is made locally.

... and that's why a chair.

**ROLAND  
BENESOCKY**

Generation Woodworks

*Sweet Piece of Ash*  
Ash, oil  
2018



Upon graduation, I had the pleasure of working for Ross Taylor of Gabriel Ross Furniture in Victoria. In 2007, my partner and I relocated to Squamish, BC where I set up a shop and founded Generation Woodworks. Since then, I have spent my time crafting custom furnishings and cabinetry for clients throughout the Sea-to-Sky Corridor and beyond. Through collaboration with Sticks and Stones Furniture (also of Squamish), I have won awards for design merit from *Western Living* magazine and the Cheng Design Awards.

To this day, I tell people that my participation in the Camosun College Fine Furniture Program was one of the most rewarding things I have done in my life. It is an honour to be invited to join this exhibition.

**TAMMY BLAIR**

Tommy Blair Woods  
Class of 2012-13

*Beaufort*  
Poplar, polyester upholstery  
fabric, natural oil finish  
2018

Inspired by a chair that has been in my husband's family for years on Canada's East Coast, I thought I could make my version of the chair for our family to last through the years on the West Coast. The joinery that I used was selected for its strength, function and visual appeal. The chair is finished with natural oil.

I have designed, built and finished custom kitchens, vanities, desks, shelving, mantle pieces, wardrobes and a dining room table. I have also refinished furniture, kitchens and hardwood floors.





**JON BRADEN**

Happy Deer Design  
Class of 2008-09

*Ro-lo Chair*  
Ash  
2018

This lounge chair is a minimal design made from large Ash dowels using bent lamination for its curves. The wood is bleached and finished with rubbed oil.

While working full time as a cabinetmaker for a high-end kitchen cabinet shop in Victoria, I started Happy Deer Design with a focus on modern home furnishings and décor and specializing in furniture for kids.

**MARTIN BYERS**

ThankU Designs  
Class of 2008-09

*ThankU Stool*  
Walnut  
2018

Originally designed to use offcuts and shop scraps, this design has now expanded into three stools of varying heights, side tables and coffee tables.

I am the sole proprietor of ThankU Designs where I design and build a wide range of items from serving platters and custom address signs to office and exam room furniture. I have focused on evolving my joinery skills and count George Nakashima as my number one inspiration. I share my work and processes on Instagram and enjoy the community of highly talented designers online. I am always willing to discuss design choices and joinery techniques or cheats. I am currently involved with Bodega Ridge on Galiano Island.





**SANDRA CARR**

Class of 1996-97

*Lounge Chair*

Douglas Fir, powder coated steel  
2018

Seating imagined as landscape object - a partition, lounge chair, privacy screen, and backyard daydream getaway. A recent trip to Mexico afforded me time to lounge about with nothing to do but read and sketch. This piece is the result of wanting to have that experience in my own backyard.

I have never made a lounge chair. I wanted to design and make a piece different from anything I have done. For me, school is always in session.

I have been working as a designer/maker since completing

the Fine Furniture Program in 1997. After a brief stint as a solo maker, I started Gelinis Carr furniture with Joe Gelinis who is also a graduate of the program. We ran Gelinis Carr together for fifteen years, designing and building bespoke furniture one commission at a time from our studio in the Cowichan Valley. I have been teaching woodworking and furniture making at Camosun for the last ten years, and in September 2017, I was lucky enough to be hired as a full-time instructor of the Fine Furniture Program when Cam Russell and Ken Guenter retired.

**JANSON CHAN**

Outlier Joinery  
Class of 2017-18

*Rusa Lounge Chair*  
Black Walnut  
2017

This chair uses mortise and tenon joinery with bridle joints and is finished with traditional Danish oil.

My business, Outlier Joinery was founded not long after my graduation, and I've mainly focused on building custom fine furniture for people and their pets. In addition, I was lucky enough to have the opportunity to collaborate with Chopvalue, a manufacturing company that produces beautiful products with recycled chopsticks. Our goal is to create products and design solutions that guide communities toward a more sustainable future. I also share my joy and passion for woodworking, by teaching seminars at Lee Valley whenever possible.





## LEO CIESLAK

Class of 2012-13

*Kees Lounge*  
White oak, vinyl  
2018

My design is inspired by a Karl Erik Ekselius sofa. Since graduating, I have worked on building three separate store interiors and multiple coffee and dining tables. I have done a lot of work for repeat clients.

## JOHN DENNISON

Class of 1996-97

*Rocking Chair*  
Eastern Maple, Port Orford  
Cedar, Garry Oak, Cherry  
2018

This project is a re-creation of a very old rocking chair made in Quebec that used only hand tools in its construction. My version was made using power tools with extensive hand joinery and shaping. It is finished with a traditional mixture of linseed and tung oils.

Following graduation, I became actively involved in the Furniture Society, attending conferences across North America. In 2007, I served as co-chair, along with Ken Guenter, as we brought 400 studio furniture makers to Victoria for the annual conference.





## CAMERON DOBSON

C. Dobson Woodworking

Class of 2014-15

*Art Nouveau in Arbutus*

Pacific Madrone

2016

My chair was designed to combine the Art Nouveau tradition with a West Coast flair. I used local Arbutus (*Madrone*) and finished it with clear lacquer.

Since graduation, I have been working out of my home shop building custom furniture and cabinets. Whenever possible, I use local wood that I have milled myself.

## STÉFANE DIMOPOULOS

Atelier Dimopoulos

Class of 2008-09

*D4 Lounge Chair*

Walnut, plywood

2018

This modern lounge chair was inspired by the works of Hans J. Wegner and Dieter Rams. Using traditional craft techniques and a modern sensibility, I set out to complete a chair with both comfort and subtlety. The frame is built with mortise and tenon joinery, and the back and seat are composed of bent-laminated panels. The chair is finished with hand-applied oil.

Since graduating, I have worked for LiveEdge Design in Duncan. I have spent every possible moment outside of work designing and developing my own furniture line. I am a founding member of the Victoria Design Collective, a group of local designers working together to showcase their work.





### **IAN ERDMANN**

Woodshop 506  
Class of 2003-04

*No Name*  
*Garry Oak*  
2014

After graduating from the Fine Furniture Program, I was employed by two different shops in Victoria. In 2010, I started Woodshop 506 where we design and build custom furniture and millwork often working alongside contractors, architects and designers in both residential and commercial spaces.

### **ROSHAAN (ROSHEE) GANIEF**

Moka Jade Studio  
Class of 2008-09

*Reclaimed Destiny Chair*  
*Reclaimed Red Oak*  
2018



I started first by sketching my ideas. After many sketches, I decided to focus on the profile of the chair as it was the most appealing to the eye. Although aesthetics are very important to me, I also kept the functionality of the chair in mind. I thought about how the chair would be used and which joinery to implement to provide the greatest support for any stresses placed on the chair. I also thought about the ergonomics – the way a person’s back would curve and make contact with the chair to ensure a comfortable sitting experience. The materials were reclaimed from a wholesale flower auction in Burnaby, BC where they framed the auction clocks that were used on a daily basis. I used multiple coats of a hand-rubbed Danish oil finish to bring out the lustre and richness of the reclaimed White Oak.

After graduating from the Fine Furniture Program, I wrote a book about woodworking projects for the scroll saw titled *Simply Wood* (2010). The book features step-by-step directions including in-depth process photographs of woodworking projects. The Camosun College Fine Furniture Program and the wealth of combined knowledge from my instructors Cam and Ken helped me finish the book with confidence. I went on to start my own woodworking business in 2012 with the help of my partner. Though I am not making furniture on a daily basis, I use the knowledge and skills I gained at Camosun every day in my business.

**JOE GELINAS**

Class of 1994-95

*Redwood Bench*  
California Redwood  
2016

After graduation in 1995, I spent three long years in a kitchen cabinet shop. While I did learn a lot and gained valuable experience, it was not where I wanted to be long-term. For the last twenty years, I have been designing and building custom furniture in the Cowichan Valley.



**ERIC GESINGER**

Gesinger Furniture  
Class of 2012-13

*Young Gentleman's Chair*  
Black Walnut  
2018

This chair is what I imagine children sitting on in J.R.R. Tolkien's fictional realm, Rivendell, where time has a different meaning and the furniture bears witness to ages.

Following graduation, I started a part-time-but-becoming-more-full-time business making custom furniture. I am currently working on developing a few core designs for my business and showing my work publicly.





### **BETH GRAYER**

Grayer Woodworks  
Class of 2015-16

*Garry Oak*  
Garry Oak, Danish  
Cord, brass  
2018

I would like to acknowledge with respect the Lkwungen and WSÁNEĆ peoples on whose traditional territory we live and who cultivated the Garry Oak ecosystems we enjoy.

This chair was designed to be at home in a Garry Oak meadow. I set out to express the gentle tension of the Garry Oak tree: the curved seat grounds the body, while the back rail offers support and lift. The brass inlay was used to absorb and reflect changing light, and the woven seat mimics the texture of the bark. The wood is from a wind-fallen Garry Oak tree milled by the Vancouver Island Woodworkers Guild. It was dried in my backyard for three years.

Immediately upon graduation, I worked as an apprentice joiner in a custom cabinet shop as well as a heritage-style window and door shop. More recently, I have brought together my former teaching career, my love of joinery and my advocacy for women in trades to teach Woodworking for Women courses through the Camosun College Continuing Education Program. My other projects include building a workshop while taking a year off to take care of my son, Oliver; digging deep into the guts of old industrial machinery; and laying the groundwork for my current custom studio furniture work.

### **STEVE GUAN**

Class of 2008-09

*Adrienne II*  
Ash  
2018

This chair is a revised design of the *Adrienne* chair that I first designed in 2013. The legs were shaped by hand into tapered ellipses for a softer, more refined appearance.

After I graduated, I established Fine Line Designs where I designed and built a line of seating and cabinetry that was exhibited at Interior Design Show West for three consecutive years from 2010 to 2013.





### **KEN GUENTER**

Of the Woods Studio  
Instructor: 2000-2017

*Lunchtime (Counter Stool)*  
Eastern Maple, Quilted Maple  
veneer, American Black Walnut,  
leather  
2018

This design is a study of the ergonomics of sitting at a dining counter. The problem presented was to create counter seating that was comfortable and easy to move around in a confined space. I wanted a design that would allow for both production and limited-edition work. The piece presented in this exhibition is “one of a kind” evoking a tension between the exoticism of Art Deco and the stark form of modernism.

Since retiring from the program last June, I have returned to my furniture design business. Over 17 years of teaching at the college level has taught me about design and making. Students can be a wealth of information; some good, some not so much. Either way, it was a valuable and inspiring experience. It is with renewed energy that I have promised myself I will not build anything larger than I can lift.



### **FLETCHER HALIHAN**

Class of 2007-08

*Prototype 5.06*  
Various reclaimed materials  
2018

The first seating I made was not very comfortable. This project has been an experiment in CNC machining and rapid prototyping. I’ve experimented with quickly cutting, tweaking, building and testing many chairs over a relatively short period of time. I’ve tried to make a piece that is not just comfortable for a single person but for many different body types. I have made a chair whose form has truly followed its function. It has also been a great foray back into the idea of comfort.

Jumping to and from a few cabinet/millwork shops for the last few years, I have been working on honing and broadening my woodworking skills. I have sought out shops that will allow me to have access for making furniture for friends and myself as well as large-scale fire sculpture design. I have made everything from hand-carved pipes to 9-foot diameter woven wooden spheres with the intention of setting them on fire-combining woodworking design with pyrotechnics and fireworks.



## **NATHAN HOLDER**

Chickadee Offcuts  
Class of 2012-13

*Subtle Bodies*  
Black Walnut, Cherry, Hickory,  
Red Oak  
2018

Through my experience working in furniture restoration, I have grown to love mid-century furniture. Subtle shaping is elegant, while simple lines provide stability to the design. This concept is the inspiration. All the wood used is offcut or discarded wood and finished with natural oil and wax.

I have had the opportunity to learn and build furniture through Trade Roots and Fawcett Manufacturing. I have gained an incredible amount of knowledge and confidence through restoring and repairing mid-century furniture. The combination of these experiences has guided me to the development of my own company, Chickadee Offcuts. Chickadee allows me to continually challenge myself in designing custom furniture and furnishings. I also restore family heirlooms and repurpose otherwise retired furniture. I work part time as the Tool Room Technician for the Camosun College Fine Furniture Program.

## **EILEEN KIYONAGA**

Conifer Coast  
Class of 2008-09

*Wilym*  
Ash, upholstery materials  
2018

This chair was designed and built in the year following the birth of my second daughter. Needless to say, I was spending a lot of time in a rocking chair scrutinizing its ergonomics and design. My goal was to make a modern rocking chair for a nursery that was both nice to look at and nice to spend a lot of time in.

After finishing the program in 2011, I began working for Brent Comber, a well known North Vancouver artist and furniture maker where I continued to work until 2015 when my first daughter was born. I moved to Squamish and started my own company, Conifer Coast, designing and making custom furniture and small housewares.



## YOSHI KONOMOTO

Class of 2016-17

*Cherry Perch*  
Cherry  
2016



This three-legged bar stool features *urushi*, a type of lacquer finish and *kumiko*, an intricate functional wooden artwork. The splayed legs flare out to the seat giving a light and tapered look.

Since graduating, I have been completing my joinery apprenticeship working at Vintage Woodworks, where I mainly build sashes for custom windows. In my home shop, I have built many projects including small furniture, plates, bowls, and a large picture frame.

## KATIE MCILLVEEN

Class of 2004-05

*Shoes Off*  
Western Maple  
2018

I used a combination of traditional joinery along with more modern manufacturing techniques to create this piece. I appreciate the beauty of good joinery, but practicality and speed sometimes win.

After graduating, I started working for John Lore at Pickle Ridge Rustic Carpentry (now owner of LiveEdge Design). For two years I worked in the wood shop building dining tables, dressers, nightstands, desks and tables, then moved my way into the office to do the drafting when a new shop, LiveEdge Design was born. That was over a decade ago, and I am still doing just that and loving it. I have my own workshop where I build a few pieces here and there, mostly for family and close friends.





**CRAIG MCWILLIAM**

Class of 2016-17

TBD  
White Oak, wool fabric, foam  
2016

This design is a refinement of the original chair that I made for the Camosun College Fine Furniture Program. I am still proud of how my original chair turned out aesthetically, but there were always aspects I wanted to improve.

I am currently working for a local company – Fawcett Manufacturing. We are Vancouver Island’s only mattress manufacturers, specializing in mattresses and furniture made using only natural and sustainable components. My job has taught me more about the upholstery side of furniture which has allowed me to make a much more comfortable version of my original chair and refine key aesthetic details.



**MELISSA MIRALLES**

Class of 2013-14

*Sartoria*  
Eastern Maple, leather, lace,  
tulle and chenille fabrics  
2018

This piece was inspired by a visit to the *Manus X Machina* exhibit at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. The exhibition compared and contrasted couture designs of years past, often with thousands of hours of handwork with today’s technologically aided equivalent. I was drawn to several pieces that layered different black materials for an incredible depth of texture. I hope my chair begs you to come closer to fully appreciate the combination of materials. In particular, the rear face of the backrest upholstery which features a hand-applied

lace design. In keeping with couture practices, much of the shaping of the chair body was accomplished by hand, using spokeshaves and rasps. I set out to create a velvety finish of the wood by first using a penetrating leather dye followed with hard-wax oil.

I am in the process of obtaining my joinery certification, having first apprenticed with a shop that primarily focused on commercial millwork. Currently, I am apprenticing in a shop that specializes in high-end residential cabinetmaking and architectural millwork.

## GLEN PHARIS

Class of 1997-98

*A Simple Side Chair... well that  
was the plan*  
Sapelle Mahogany  
2018



This project was an exercise in using compound curves to produce a chair with a pleasing, comfortable shape. The construction is a mix of template routed legs, back slats, and the seat blank's side profile. The seat blanks were tapered and glued with a stepped offset between each one to produce the side-to-side curvature. The seat was then hand faired smooth to produce the compound curves in the seat. The finish is a wipe-on varnish and oil mix.

Shortly after graduation, I built a 700 square foot workshop on my property, to which I added shop cupboards and storage, and a European style workbench with drawers – all necessities for a well-functioning shop. From that point on, I was free to design and build whatever I wanted. Not being paid has its advantages! Around this time, I was hired as the half-time Tool Room Technician for Camosun's Fine Furniture Program, where I worked for 18 years. I have built all types of furniture for family and friends over the years. As often as possible I attempt a new style or technique, forcing myself to learn (or not).

## MIKE RANDALL

Kurva  
Class of 2010-11

*HUG*  
Ash, canvas, steel  
2018

*HUG* gets its name from the gentle inward movement of the bent ash and sling seat as it cradles and wraps around you when you sit in it. This chair was designed specifically for this exhibition. My goal was to design a piece that would push the boundaries of wood bending for a modern minimalist hanging chair. I wanted to create a chair that was inviting to sit in with clean lines and simple fastenings and an aesthetic in keeping with my lighting designs. As with all my work, the glues and finishes used are environmentally and home-friendly.

In keeping with the spirit and requirements of the annual Camosun College chair exhibition, this design is easy to ship in multiples, can be stacked in a single shipping box and is ready to be assembled and sold by retailers. While it is a prototype, this design will soon be ready for small production runs in a range of seat options and wood species.

Following graduation, I started Kurva Designs in the fall of 2012. I have taken my work in the direction of designing and building modern lighting. I was happy to be selected as a finalist for the 2017 Architizer Awards in the Decorative Lighting category and to have won the Best in Fine Craft at the Victoria Arts Council exhibition *Art Victoria Now*. I try to produce beautiful, functional art with sustainability in mind.



## CAM RUSSELL

Coventry Woodworks  
Instructor: 1987-2017

*Morning Coffee in the Sun –  
Afternoon Tea in the Shade*  
White Oak, bicycle parts  
2018

This project began as a concept for an outdoor chair that you could easily move around the garden. A very brief period of sketching led to a ¼ scale concept model, more sketching, another model and finally, a full-sized mock-up. The main 'chassis' is laminated from ten pieces in an 'S' curved form. I realized very early on in my teaching career that a few students each year would be pulling out and passing me in their level of skill and ability to produce high quality, well-designed work. It is my honour to be exhibiting amongst them in this celebration of the program I was so privileged to start and teach in for 30 years of my life.



## MEAGAN SCHAFER

Class of 2003-04

*Fawn Stool Classic and Fawn  
Stool Geometric*  
Cherry, 2013  
Walnut, 2017

I designed the *Fawn Stool Classic* in 2013 and it has been made to order in various heights over the years. The geometric version was designed in 2017 and is also made to order. They are finished with Danish oil. For the past ten years,

I have worked at Emily Carr University as a Technician in the Industrial Design Workshop. During this time I have also built and outfitted my garage workshop. This is where I produce the *Fawn Stools*, as well as other custom furniture. In 2013, I completed my apprenticeship in joinery. I have recently begun a new career doing high-end finish carpentry.



## BONNIE SCHMAUS

Bonnie Schmaus Upholstery  
Class of 1988-89

*Recycle and Save the Lions*  
Recycled frame (Ireland),  
linen fabric, leather trim  
2018

This little old settee from Ireland was originally very dark and rather gloomy. One day out of desperation, I took all of the old finish off, then added a jungle print which made it much happier.

Over these many years, I have built and sold sofas, chairs, chaises and cabinets. My business has gradually morphed into mostly restoration.

## ADRIAN SITTER

Class of 2006-07

*Kitten Around*  
Poplar, upholstery  
2018

This bench is designed to be a fun location for two small children to read and dream. It is inspired by my eldest daughter's love of chasing and petting all the neighbourhood cats.

After graduation, I continued my apprenticeship with Rick Heatley at WoodStock Design. I then spent the better part of a decade working in the repetitive, but educational, kitchen cabinet industry, first building, then installing. I now specialize in residential entry doors as Head Joiner at Oak Ridge Windows and Doors.



## PHILIP SMITH

Class of 1987-88

*Josephine*  
Western Curly Maple  
(Vancouver Island),  
Planchonia (Southeast Asia)  
2018



While attending Camosun's Fine Furniture Program, a requirement was to build a small demi-lune table. I built a form to laminate the circular shape. After 30 years, I wanted to use this form again. That dictated a certain shape; hence the arms are the major structural component. The rest of the design form follows.

Following graduation, I operated a one-person shop, designing and building custom furniture for private clients and local retailers. I developed a line of boxes for galleries and gift shops and small commercial projects for institutions like the University of Victoria, Camosun College and the Provincial Government. In 1999, I was commissioned to create the *British Columbia Millennium* book, which is now in the Royal British Columbia Museum in Victoria.



## CALVIN SYTSMA

Class of 2017-18

*Solid Flexibility*  
Western Maple and  
aluminum  
2018

I like clean lines and a minimalist aesthetic. My chair is a study in these principles. I wanted to explore new and innovative methods for the seat in particular. The seat is made of solid wood but the 'kerfing' technique allows for flexibility and motion, something not possible in a traditional wooden seat. When in use, it flexes and conforms to the sitter.

## PHIL TESTEMALE

Class of 1999-2000

*Hikari Bench*  
Cherry, Jatoba  
2018

The design and construction is inspired by the simplicity of Japanese design and traditional joinery. These traditions have long influenced my woodworking and this piece was particularly inspired by a recent trip to Japan and South East Asia. All of the joinery and finish are done by hand exposing the simple beauty of mechanical construction and lines.

I ran my own small one-person woodworking business for 14 years following graduation in 2000. I focused on custom design pieces for individual clients. Since 2014, I have returned to my previous profession of urban planning, but I continue to do woodworking for my family and friends.

## MURRAY TOMKINS

Class of 2000-01

*A Plane Chair*  
London Plane (what else?),  
Western Maple, Garry  
Oak, White Oak, Red Oak,  
leather, wire, styrofoam  
2018

My chair's inspiration is a WWI biplane. The process started with making (many) drawings on my computer.

I then built a full-sized structural model to confirm the stability and comfort of the dimensions of this three-legged chair. London Plane, from the Vancouver Island Woodworkers Guild wood recovery program is the primary wood. The back leg, or tail dragger, was made of laminated oak strips gradually stacked on a form

to provide a safe but 'bouncy' ride. The seat was shaped using a Computer Numerical Control (CNC) router based on my digital drawings. A template with a router was used to shape the upper wing arms. The seat back is a bent form lamination of a 'wobble board' and veneers. The rear fuselage and tail are fabric covered styrofoam, which I used mainly because it is both light weight and shapeable. Varnish and paints were used to finish the chair.

I have completed a number of commissions for individuals and organizations since graduating: tables, chairs, benches, credenzas, entertainment centres and display cases. I have mostly built pieces for fun and with very little repetition – they all seem to be prototypes. I have exhibited in the Sooke Fine Arts Show, selling some pieces and generating commissions. My home is pretty much furnished with my work, and my children and friends are in possession of pieces. It has been great fun.





### **KAREN TRICKETT**

Coventry Woodworks  
Class of 1989-90

*Dining Chair - Version 2*  
Sapele Mahogany,  
Figured Western Maple,  
leather  
2018

This chair is number two of two. It is an evolution of a design that I have been working on for a few years.

Since graduating, I have worked at Camosun College on and off, both as a Tool Room Technician and part-time Instructor in the Fine Furniture Program. I have run Coventry Woodworks for 28 years, completing all sorts of furniture, cabinetry and automotive woodworking projects – the biggest of these was the restoration of two overhead-electric street cars for B.C. Transit.

### **IAN WALSH**

Underwood Designs  
Class of 2016-17

*Wave Vol. 1*  
Birch Plywood, reclaimed Fir  
2018

Parametric design is a process based on algorithmic thinking that enables the expression of parameters and rules that together define, encode and clarify the relationship between intent and design response. Influenced by the work of Antonio Gaudi and Oleg Soroko, this piece experiments with the relationship between form and function.

During my attendance in the Fine Furniture Program, I began working at a local custom woodworking shop that allowed me to broaden my understanding of the industry while simultaneously expanding my knowledge of woodworking techniques. My interest in the more sculptural possibilities of materials and their physical capabilities has led me to start my own company, Underwood Designs.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Ken Guenter & Cam Russell

During the last 30 years the Camosun College Fine Furniture Program has produced almost 500

graduates. Each graduate has been instrumental in the success of the program, that continues today. Without the collective participation of these students this exhibition would not have been possible. For both students and instructors, one of the wonderful successes of the program has been the camaraderie that develops among the students. Each student brings their life experience to the program and shares their own special skills. The result, year after year, has been a creative and exciting learning experience for all.

The program has benchmarks that allow students to achieve specific skills. Exercises in joinery, design and theory are part of the program's regular routine. Some of these projects are done in groups while others are individual projects. Consultation and problem solving between students is a constant. In some ways every project is both an individual and a community effort. Our initial intent was to present a graduate from each of the program's thirty years; a difficult task to say the least. For the most part that is what we have done, although there are a few years that are not represented and some that are over represented. It is our hope that all of the graduates of the Fine Furniture Program will take pride in the fact that their participation is foundational to this exhibition. This show is dedicated to all of you who are still *Making It*.

## PEOPLE'S CHOICE AWARD

Thank you to Vern Theroux of Pat Bay Leather for the donation of a fine hide of leather for the winner of the "People's Choice Award". Chair makers often use leather in their designs and the

Fine Furniture Program's chair-making project was no exception. Every year students would ask about leather upholstery. I always knew that if I sent them to Vern, they would be in good hands.

– K.G.

Guest Curators:  
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Cam Russell

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Caroline Riedel

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Roger Huffman

Publication & Exhibition Design:  
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Cassidy McConkey  
Madelynn Slade  
Amy Smith  
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