

 WATCH 10 VIDEOS IN THIS ISSUE SEE PAGE 34

AMERICAN  
*art*  
COLLECTOR



*Also Showcasing  
Glass, Ceramics & Wood*



It's All in the  
*DETAILS*

WOODTURNING PIONEER **JOHN JORDAN**  
REGAINS MOMENTUM AND SHOWS NEW  
WORK FOR THE FIRST TIME IN YEARS.

BY **NICKI ESCUDERO**

1  
Cherry jar with fossil  
ivory inlay, 8 x 10"

2  
Monkey pod vessel  
(detail), 5 x 6"



John Jordan's current collection at Grovewood Gallery in Asheville, North Carolina, is an emotional one. For the past couple years, Jordan experienced health issues that prevented him from creating his woodturning work, and this is the first time he's shown new work since recovering. He says regaining momentum and getting back in the game was challenging, but now that he's back on the lathe, he's felt a new sense of satisfaction in his art.

Jordan keeps busy not only with new creations, which comprise most of the collection at Grovewood, but he also sells tools he creates. He makes his own hollowing devices and calls himself a

minimalist equipment-wise, using the least possible apparatuses to get the job done. His signature technique focuses on the surface texture and details, as he employs various grinders, sanders and engravers to create unique exteriors. Jewelers' tools, wire brushes, rotary tools, rasps and reciprocating tools are in his studio, useful for creating surfaces ranging from hammered to pebble effects. Carving, detailing and texturing his vessels surfaces takes up to 10 times as long as turning the vessel itself, he says.

Besides the personal touch he's added to the work by making his own mechanisms, Jordan sources his green wood from near his Cane Ridge,

Tennessee, home. He lives about a mile away from a junkyard, where he often obtains material, as well as gathers lumber from construction sites. Jordan only turns green wood, storing surplus in a freezer in his barn to guarantee he has a variety of materials on hand. His vessels contain no intermediate turning, as he ensures the vessels consist of green wood from start to finish.

Jordan's unique style has landed his art in more than 35 public collections in the U.S. and beyond, an impressive feat considering the 65-year-old is self-taught. Jordan worked in tech in a bank equipment company before he was an artist, building furniture as a hobby, thinking he'd eventually

become a furniture maker. After starting out creating little boxes and moving on to plywood magazine holders and Queen Anne chairs and tables, Jordan found woodturning came naturally to him and began exhibiting at craft shows. He learned everything he could by researching artists and attending seminars, joining the American Association of Woodturners when it was founded about 30 years ago. He counts the association's co-founder David Ellsworth as one of his early friends in the community and has been a member of the association ever since.

It was around the time he became a member of the American Association of Woodturners that Jordan also began teaching, which he's continued for the past 30 years. He's instructed and

demonstrated in 10 different countries, from Japan to Colombia to Australia. He has also taught out of his own studio, and he continues to participate in workshops and demonstrations.

"It's fun to share with people, particularly when somebody gets what I'm sharing—and that's not always common," says Jordan. "It's fun for me when I have a student who understands what I'm talking about, and that excites them."

Jordan says he has taught more than any other woodturner he knows, and his sharing of knowledge and experience is part of what makes him stand out to Grovewood Gallery, whose exhibition is the first solo show of Jordan's at the gallery.

"John is a highly regarded and respected artist who has made significant

contributions to the growth of the woodturning field," says Ashley Van Matre, marketing director at Grovewood Gallery. "Presenting wood art of this caliber elevates Asheville as a premier arts destination and also promotes artistic woodworking as a fine art form."

One of Jordan's collectors, Robyn Horn, says Jordan is the best woodturner to ever handle a tool.

"Whenever I hear of someone wanting to learn how to turn, I tell them to go see John Jordan before they have an opportunity to develop bad habits," says Horn. "His work is exquisite, and he has made a tremendous contribution to the wood field with his expertise."

Now that Jordan is back to creating the art he loves, he says he will continue





4

3  
Red maple vessel,  
5½ x 6"

4  
Cherry burl vessel  
(detail), 9 x 10"

5  
John Jordan works in  
his studio. Courtesy  
John Jordan.

to make pieces as long as he feels up for it. Jordan says he looks forward to exploring new ideas, such as marrying cold sheet metal with his wood forms—metal can be seen in a few of his pieces at Grovewood Gallery. Jordan has worked with sheet metal for 12 years, using the medium as sculptural material, shaping and forming it with techniques similar to how custom cars are built.

No matter what he makes, Jordan is mindful to come from a pure place, creating pieces he feels passionate about.

“I’m proud of everything I do,” Jordan says. “I’ve never shown a piece I didn’t have a good feeling about. That slows me down sometimes, but I’ve found over the years, sometimes I have favorites, and no one is particularly interested in a piece I feel really connected to. Then, sometimes someone will come along and really focus on that piece...I hope people can sense the care and intent of the pieces.” ●



5

## SURFACE & TEXTURE: THE WORK OF JOHN JORDAN

**When:** Through August 30, 2015

**Where:** Grovewood Gallery, 111 Grovewood Road, Asheville, NC 28804

**Information:** (877) 622-7238, [www.grovewood.com](http://www.grovewood.com)