



After the Fall - an exhibition of contemporary Irish woodturning

Curated by Stephen O'Connell

Artists: Roger Bennett, Max Brosi, Liam Flynn, Matt Jones, Emmet Kane, Gintaras Malinauskas, Alan Meredith, Liam O'Neill.

From 4th December 2020

STAC is delighted to present *After The Fall*, an exhibition of contemporary Irish woodturning, curated by Stephen O'Connell and kindly supported by DCCI and Tipperary County Council.

This exhibition represents a survey of the very best practitioners of this craft form, with a strong emphasis on sculptural work. The selected artists/makers reflect a diverse range of methods and material approaches, as well as enviable skill and invention, showcasing what is possible within contemporary woodturning.

Woodturning historically has been viewed as a functional craft form, producing components for other crafts and industries, as well as domestic objects such as bowls and vessels. However, since the great American studio craft movement of the 1970s, its potential for producing sculptural forms and being literally and metaphorically the fulcrum for a highly considered artistic practice has grown exponentially.

In an Irish context key moments in the development of this craft include the setting up of a woodturning programme at the Kilkenny Design Workshops in the mid 1960s led by Maria van Kesteren, the experiences of turners Liam O'Neill and Ciarán Forbes at the Parnham Symposium, Dorset, which ultimately led to the foundation of the Irish Woodturners' Guild and, more recently, the international success of individuals like the late Liam Flynn, whose work transcends the boundaries of art, craft and sculpture and is highly regarded internationally.

After the Fall seeks to take a measure of where artistic woodturning currently stands in Ireland now and presents the work of a group of makers between whom there are many cyclical points of influence. We hope this work will surprise and inspire both those familiar and new to woodturning and broaden their expectations of this traditional craft form.

Bios

Exhibition curator, **Stephen O'Connell**, has many years of experience working in the field of decorative and applied arts. Formerly a decorative arts specialist at Christie's auctioneers in London, he spent a number of years furnishing historic properties for the Landmark Trust throughout the UK. Informed by a broad historical perspective, Stephen has developed a keen understanding of and appreciation for Irish and international contemporary craft across a range of disciplines and recently successfully curated his first exhibition for the Lavitt Gallery in Cork in 2019, working with a selected group of internationally recognised Irish artists/studios/craftspeople.

Roger Bennett is well-known in the Irish crafts world for his very distinctive coloured bowls and vessels. These are surprisingly thin, gracefully shaped, and many of them are dramatically inlaid with hundreds of silver dots arranged in constellation-like clusters or formal geometric patterns. A member of the Board of Visual Artists Ireland from 2005 to 2014, Roger's work has been exhibited internationally and

is in numerous private and public collections. Roger also writes regularly on a diverse range of art and craft subjects.

Max Brosi was born in Germany and is now based in the North West of Ireland. A graduate of Furniture Design and Manufacture at Letterfrack, Co. Galway, Max now teaches furniture design and woodworking skills. His artistic practice, which employs a broad set of evolving techniques, is much lauded for its heightened aesthetic character and ranges from political and social commentary to nuanced explorations of form. He is the recipient of national and international awards and is represented by leading international specialist galleries.

Liam Flynn (1969-2017) was one of Ireland's most respected and illustrious craftspeople whose work is celebrated internationally. Liam was drawn to native, locally sourced timbers, especially oak, with which he realised sublime sculptural and technically challenging forms. His work is held in the permanent collections of the National Museum of Ireland, the Victoria and Albert Museum, the Fitzwilliam Museum of the University of Cambridge, and the Minneapolis Institute of Arts. A native of Abbeyfeale, Co. Limerick, a major retrospective of his work was held at the Hunt Museum, Limerick, in 2011.

Matt Jones is originally from Wales and is now based in County Sligo where the dramatic landscape is a major influence on his work. A graduate of the Chelsea College of Art, London, Matt took up woodturning as a hobby to meet the growing need for a new challenge and it has since become his professional focus. His practice is deeply informed by the ethos that a maker should express in his work how he thinks and feels about the world and society; the object as an embodiment of values and beliefs. This is particularly true of his relationship to the environment and nature.

Emmet Kane comes from five generations of Master Craftsmen and is a self-taught woodturner. He has been based in his ancestral workshops in Castledermot, Co. Kildare since 1988 and has exhibited, lectured and demonstrated internationally. His work is inspired by the characteristics of wood and is an exploration of form and texture, informed by the natural and archaeological landscape. In 2015, his work was the focus of a solo exhibition at the National Museum of Ireland, Collins Barracks, curated by Dr. Jennifer Goff.

Gintaras Malinauskas is originally from Lithuania and now lives in County Laois. A woodworker from an early age, Gintaras joined the Midland's Chapter of the Irish Woodturners' Guild (IWG) in 2014 and has since developed his craft to focus on meticulously detailed and colourful vases and vessels. He has been a winner in the Professional Competition category at the IWG Seminar on more than one occasion and has also been a winner in the Established Maker category at the RDS Craft Awards.

Alan Meredith's work to date straddles the boundaries of contemporary craft, sculpture and architecture and has been exhibited both nationally and internationally. He graduated from UCD with a Masters in Architecture in 2015 and is a recipient of the DCCI Future Maker of the Year award (2017), RDS Craft Awards Bursary (2018) and RIAI Public Space Award (2018). His woodturning work is constantly pushing the physical boundaries of its material properties with increasingly dramatic results.

Liam O'Neill is an internationally renowned figure in the world of woodturning with vast experience and whose own influence has been widespread. An apprenticeship with John Shiel in Bagenalstown, Co. Carlow in the late 1960s brought him into contact with the methods taught by Maria van Kesteren at Kilkenny Design Workshops in the preceding years and gave him the skills to transition to artistic turning. Liam is a founding member of the Irish Woodturners' Guild and has worked closely with leading figures in the USA such as David Ellsworth.

Booking not essential however only 4 persons allowed in the gallery at any one time in line with Covid-19 guidelines. Groups – booking recommended - info@southtippartscentre.ie
Visit www.southtippartscentre.ie for more information.