

# The Van Dōp Design for Living Exhibition



JUDSON BEAUMONT

For most of us, a good piece of wood is a straight piece of wood. Life is hard enough without trying to work with things that are irregular. It never enters one's head to actually make things irregular. Yet for those who have the knowledge, skill, and tools, wood is a wonderfully flexible material. Wood is strong, light, bendable, and carveable.

Not only is wood a very workable material, it is also a beautiful material. The random patterning of the grain, the smooth warmth of the surface, the quietness of its sound; all these things are inspiring to the artist. An artist needs a mastery of their medium in order to be expressive. This necessary mastery of the artist in wood overlaps with the skill set of the furniture maker, so it is not surprising that many artists in wood like to make art furniture. By doing so, they open up a new aesthetic space - furniture can be more than utilitarian and more than decoration. It can have an aesthetic function, as much as a painting or sculpture.

The *The Van Dōp Design for Living Exhibition* at the Seymour Art Gallery presents the work of a number of Vancouver's most noted furniture artists including: Dawn Madsen, Tam Crawford, Judson Beaumont, Izabela Gereb and Ross MacMillan.

The artists in this show span a spectrum of possibilities when making furniture art. Tam Crawford emphasizes the wood itself with stains and elegant designs. The work of Gereb and Beaumont is very sculptural, and the wood is treated as a plastic medium that is often covered over with paint and not seen. Kirkley/Carswell produces Art Deco inspired custom made furniture. Often curvilinear and highly decorated with contrasting details and finishes. Ross MacMillan of Industrial Artifacts returns to the natural wood, his pieces often look like antiques - but they are made of things created in another time for other purposes, juxtaposed together. His furniture has a subliminal feel of archeology to it.



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