

Creative Spaces

Plunger Cove Studios

By Joyce Goodwin

Mark Wilkinson loves boats. He grew up messing about in boats on Deep Cove's Indian Arm. This mostly self trained artist/woodworker has been handcrafting wooden boats for ten years now. There is something about the attitude and posture of working boats that especially attracts him. Mark studied classical animation and has the eye of a cartoonist. "The form is great fun to manipulate, exaggerate and otherwise play around with" he says. "That is where I learned to squash and stretch shapes." He sometimes describes his work as "nautical caricature, whimsical watercraft or even folk art." The shape of pieces of cedar and his feeling for the form, often dictates the design of the finished boat. Mark uses his imagination and creates one of a kind craft, with individual character. He creates fishing trawlers, log salvage boats, sail boats, tug boats and more tugboats! If you never loved tug boats, you will love them by the

time you leave Mark. These boats have personality and stories to tell! He makes lots of them, including Cates tugs, an important feature of the maritime history of the North Shore.

Materials used are salvaged, reclaimed and recycled. Old fence posts become hulls, plumbing pipes are smoke stacks, bicycle tires and fan belts become fenders. Strips of tin painted in blue watercolour are windows, a flag tops an umbrella spike. Every boat is a labour of love. Large or small, all are sanded, painted, buffed and polished to look shipshape! Mark does commissions from photos and can customize orders with names and birthdates. He loves going to markets and festivals such as Harmony Arts and the Wooden Boat festival. People love to talk and share experiences of boats they have owned or worked on. He hears many a mariner's salty tales!



Left - Mark Wilkinson in his studio with a Tugboat and Sailboat models.

Top - A collection of carved boats in different sizes.

WHO: Mark Wilkinson

WHERE: Circle Craft in the Net Loft Granville Island and in person at the Public Market around the 15th of each month.

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