



LYNNE YAMAGUCHI: ARTIST OF THE MONTH

When I was a teenager, my family visited a town in Bavaria that is famous for woodcarving. Among the souvenirs we brought back were several finely turned bowls and a small vase, which I still have. My love of wood vessels began with those pieces. I remember returning to them repeatedly to cup them in my hands and stroke their shaped smoothness.

Many threads in my life came together when I took up woodturning. Much of what I bring to turning comes from my Japanese heritage: the philosophy of practice, as applied to crafts and more; a worldview that sees wood as an expression of living energy; an aesthetic, perhaps best expressed in the tea ceremony, that embraces the humble as well as the elegant. More concretely, the practice for several years of *shiatsu*, Japanese acupressure, refined my sense of touch. My sense of form comes directly from Japanese pottery: not only did I learn pottery making in Kyoto, but all of the various Japanese dishes I have fed myself from for as long as I can remember endure as memory in my hands. My Japanese heritage is genetic as well: my grandmother, mother, and sister are artists, too.

From my creative and professional life too come threads. In particular, as a poet, a prose writer, and an editor for more than two decades, I have learned the art of cutting. I keep handy as inspiration a quotation from Antoine de Saint-Exupéry: “Perfection is finally attained not when there is no longer anything to add but when there is no longer anything to take away” (from *Wind, Sand and Stars*). For me, in woodturning, perfection is not some artificial ideal but an expression of the wood’s essential nature, flaws and all, and one’s ability to see (and commit to) the perfection present in the raw chunk of wood is a tool that must be honed as sharp as any gouge. In this commitment to the wood and to the art of turning is the most important thread of all. As a part of my nature, passion is a quality that I bring to all my endeavors, but with woodturning, that passion has become for me a calling. Website: www.lynnemaguchi.com