



The completed ensemble incorporating a textured and painted surface with carefully cut glass fragments inserted. This was to prove a popular item with the collectors at the end of conference auction



The large hollow sphere form is at the centre of much of Christophe Nancey's recent work. Watching a lathe artist working, especially one who never repeats their pieces, often begs the question; do they know from the outset what the completed item will be, or is an organic process that slowly evolves? Christophe's pine log was not just wet, but soggy. A blowtorch force-dried the wood from the inside, forcing the sap out through to the exterior. Drastic, but time was short and it worked

The perfect 10



Stuart King reports on the 10th anniversary meeting of the International Turning Exchange programme

Many of the top names in the international world of woodturning gathered in Philadelphia last year to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the International Turning Exchange (ITE).

Over these past 10 years a small, disparate, but talented group of international woodturners has been selected and invited to spend nearly two months together in a well-

equipped Pennsylvania workshop. Each ITE residency year group has included a photojournalist to record the ITE programme, and for a shorter duration, the groups have been augmented by a scholar and furniture-maker.

This is some melting pot! It has been a fantastic recipe for learning from one's peers. Collaboration, pushing artistic boundaries, listening to other points of view, or

not, sometimes having to compromise; these are just some of the ingredients. The artistic results emanating from the ITE decade, and their creators, are now celebrated in a sumptuously illustrated book entitled *Connections*.

Prestigious

The ITE is the brainchild of Albert LeCoff, director of the Wood



By far the largest group of participants from overseas was the French. They have a very strong woodturning tradition, and in recent years this has provided the world of woodturning with some exceptionally creative craftsmen. Jean-François Escoulen epitomises this phenomena. Before the ITE came into being, he worked quietly in his workshop as a production turner, now he travels the world entertaining lesser mortals with his magic. Jean-François is the king of off-centre turning; here he is working with a piece of black walnut



Once the lathe work was completed, several leisurely hours of hand carving lay ahead and the eventual result was this sunflower ladle



Off the lathe Marc, is a gentleman, but turning can bring out his brutal side; having attacked the material with a chainsaw, he set it alight with a welding torch, with the end result an impressive gallery piece



Turning Center (WTC), a unique organisation based in Philadelphia. The WTC was established to foster and promote woodturning in all its many forms and disciplines. It operates from its own prestigious gallery devoted to the turning field, and is located in the 'old city' district, itself a magnate for the Philadelphian arts community.

Rather than the original two months, this special ITE reunion

was for an intensive five days, followed by a conference, Wood 2005, organised by the 'Collectors of Wood Art' and supported by some of America's leading galleries.

The well-equipped workshop of furniture-maker Jack Larimore was generously made available, and as the following pictures illustrate, some very innovative work was created.

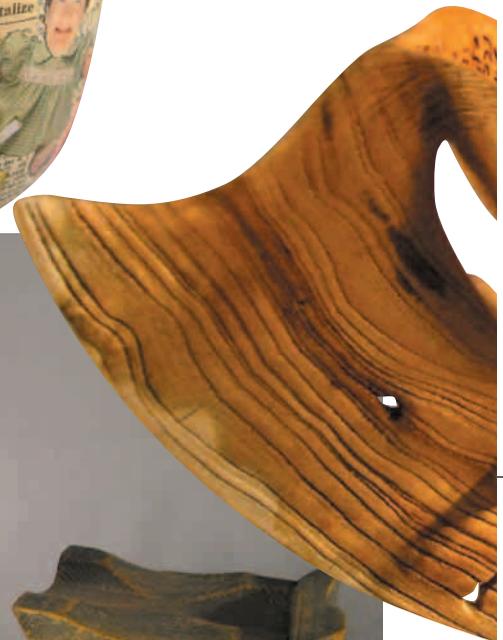
Marc Ricourt and I were both members of the 2001 residency. In common with American turner Mark Gardner, Marc drew many of his influences from the native artefacts from the Pacific Rim. In this picture we see him with a large chunk of light-coloured wood mounted on a lathe, though after what Marc does to the timber, I think the species is irrelevant!

Yours truly also did a spot of scorching, but after the incident at the Surrey woodturning club recently where the local fire brigade made an unscheduled appearance at my demo, I now keep a sharp eye open for smoke alarms!



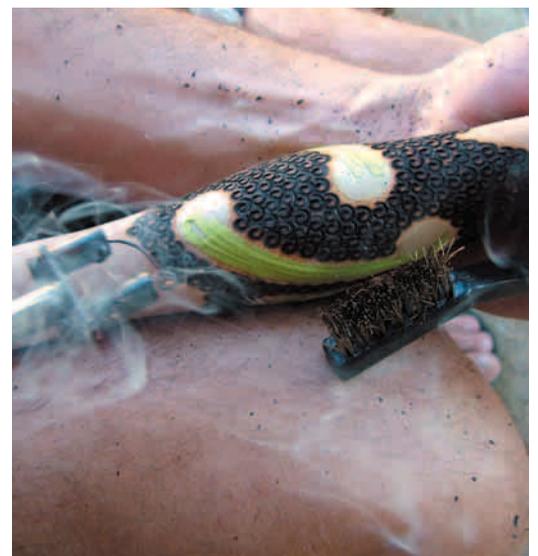
This cup, turned by Graham Priddle epitomised the ITE for me. Terry Martin took a head only digital picture of all who were working in Jack Larimore's workshop. He then printed the results and attached the heads to 'bodies' culled from a variety of glossy magazines and pasted them on to the vessel to produce a collage. Not great art, but fun, do you recognise anyone? The work was duly signed by all the participants and sold well at the auction

RIGHT Israel's Eli Avisera collaborated with Mark Gardner to fashion some end-grain textured and coloured roundels - incorporated as applied decoration to Mark's antique-inspired boxes. Eli would be the first to admit the roundel idea was inspired by the spinning tops of Bonnie Klein, but a little lateral thinking resulted in a new application for end-grain chatterwork. Collaboration between artists often yields innovative work. This was an interesting piece, and like many others, would not have been created without the coming together of diametrically-opposed creative minds



LEFT No one can pretend that this is great art, but great fun? Yes! It is interesting how each lathe artist approached decorating Laurent's tubes in their own way. Here are just a few more examples of tubular ingenuity

RIGHT Normandy-based artist Laurent Guillot supplied each of the ITE participants with one of his specialities, a turned lace wood 'tube'. We were all invited to create something interesting from these, here again is Alain Mailland using a steamer to impose some flair upon his tube. Graham Priddle chose to decorate his tube using pyrography, wood burning in all its forms seems to play a significant part in much creative turning these days





Alain Mailland is one of the world's most creative and offbeat turners. It was impossible to imagine what might transpire from this wet log. I think one of the things that attracts visitors to woodturning shows and seminars is the expectation of seeing a diverse display of work, both to admire and for inspiration. There will be the studied work of those who commit every aspect of their design to paper before picking up a tool. Then there will be the free spirits whose work will evolve organically



Alain Mailland is definitely a free spirit and the result of all his efforts was an amazing creation. The legs were steamed before bending. Is it a seed pod, a sea creature or an outer-space visitor? I like pieces that invite the viewer to ask questions.



Marcus Tatton of Tasmania turned a 'leaf stand', then issued a bentwood leaf to each participant to embellish as they so desired. Here he is contentedly holding the completed piece



Betty Scarpino worked tirelessly on this crescent piece. Betty is living proof that, what may be perceived by some as a 'man's world', is in fact all encompassing. Betty, along with a number of prominent women woodturners is an inspiration to the fairer sex

Website

To learn more about the ITE and the new book, Connections, visit the website at: www.woodturningcenter.org