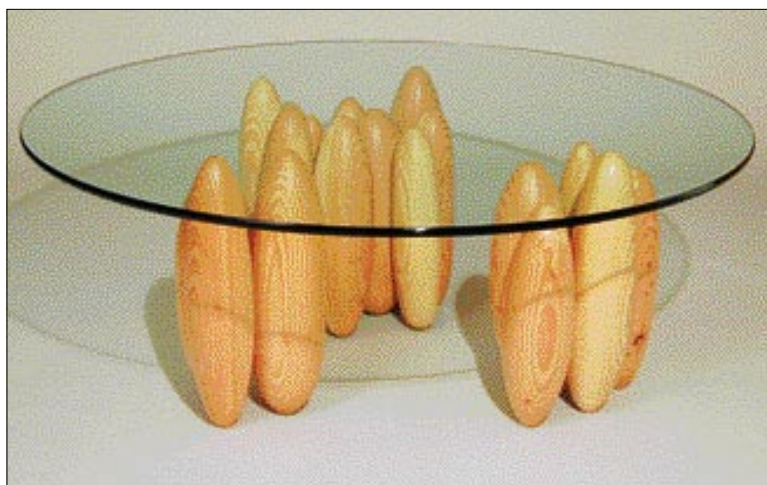


Profile: Peter Loh



Peter Loh assembling a cabinet in his shop.

"What drives me to create furniture is that it is my vehicle for creative and personal expression. This is most evident in my spec designs, but is apparent in many commissioned works as well. These designs trace their origins to a particular event, object, or idea in my life experience. The process of turning an idea into a physical object is thrilling and is what I most enjoy. Making furniture is my passion."



Another example is the *Clutch* table (left). If you look carefully in a garden, you might notice clusters of tiny yellow pods clinging to the undersides of leaves, clutches of ladybug eggs. In *Clutch*, the glass is the leaf, and the turned Douglas Fir forms are the eggs.

I also celebrate monumental forms, such as rock formations, architecture, and sculpture. The chair *Arch* (right) is inspired by the rock formations found in the American Southwest. This chair features

Clutch
Reclaimed Douglas Fir, glass
(16" h, 44" dia)

Peter Loh of Bellevue, WA approaches woodworking with the eye of a photographer. With a Masters in Fine Art, he seeks out images of nature, but rather than capturing them on film, he blows them up larger than life into functional furniture pieces.

Meet Peter in his own words:

I was exposed to woodworking in my final year of graduate school. I was visiting a friend who was teaching at the Penland School of Crafts in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Western North Carolina and decided to sign-up for a 2-week furniture class. Though I undertook a project far beyond my ability—a chair—I became familiar with the range of techniques: hand tools, machine tools, and steambending. Working 12-14 hours a day, I saw the possibilities and became captivated with the process.

After returning to complete my thesis exhibition for my Masters degree, I continued to make furniture. Visitors to my photographic studio saw my woodwork, and I received numerous purchase inquiries. As my photographic work evolved into large-scale installations, it became very apparent that furniture-making would be a more practical way to make a living.

Having a fine art background has become very beneficial in my furnituremaking. Not only am I able to do my own photography, design and other classes gave me an aesthetic sensibility to develop my own creative expression and the vision.

The natural world is a great influence on my work. I am fascinated by the complexity of things so small: a lot of shapes operating on a small scale creating interesting visual elements.

Once on a hike, I had an allergic response to a spider bite. Learning that it might have been a recluse spider, I did some research and became intrigued with its long, thin, bowed legs. This became the catalyst for the design of the *Recluse* table (upper right).



Recluse
Bolivian
Rosewood,
Zebrawood,
Maple
(35" h, 66" w,
16" d)



Atlas
Ash
(18" h,
21" dia)

sweeping arcs and soft, rounded edges, similar to the natural sculpting of rocks through wind and water. It is available in a variety of woods that reflect the colors of the rocks during dawn and dusk. *Arch* is shaped by hand, including the saddle seat.

Much of my work is commissions. I enjoy the collaboration process, and I have been fortunate to work with many wonderful clients. The *CPF* bed (on the cover) is a commissioned piece for a client wanting a bedroom set that was contemporary, but based on Ming dynasty furniture. The bed is a combination of graceful arcs, bevels, and shallow insets, with subtle shadow lines that add depth. The nightstands, *BOB*, actually poke fun at the bowl haircut that I had as a child.

However, it is my spec work that allows me to fully explore my creative expression. I show these pieces at Northwest Gallery in Seattle, WA and Kebanu Gallery in Bend, OR, as well as such shows as the *International Contemporary Furniture Fair*, *Materials: Hard & Soft*, *Bellevue Arts and Crafts Fair*, *American Craft Council Shows (San Francisco)*, *Best of the Northwest*, and *Design in Wood*. I also have been invited to provide work for the *House at Sagaponac* project in New York this Spring.

More of my work can be seen at my web site: www.refinerydesign.com.

"I approach my work with a sense of investigation and wonderment. Every project is like a puzzle to be solved. It involves the challenge of creating an object that has to satisfy the needs of function, form, and concept. While the end goal is to have a well crafted object when the project is completed, the paths taken to realize it are just as important, if not more so, than the final product."

Arch Chairs
Purpleheart, Jatoba
(30" h, 20" w, 21 1/2" d)



Leaves of Grass Coat Rack
Birch
(73" h, 26" w, 26" d)

