Hudson Hewn:
New York Furniture Now

BOSCOBEL
HOUSE AND GARDENS

April 16 – August 14, 2016

Hudson Hewn:
New York Furniture Now

Jennifer Carlquist
Curator
Boscobel House and Gardens

Boscobel House and Gardens
Garrison, New York
2016

This catalogue is published in conjunction with
the exhibition *Hudson Hewn: New York Furniture Now.*

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**Left: Attributed to Duncan Phyfe (b. Scotland 1770, d. New York City 1854)
Grecian Easy Chair, c. 1815-20, Boscobel House and Gardens**

**Right: Michael Robbins (Philmont), Wickson Armchair, 2015,
Lent by Michael Robbins**

Images: Rob Penner Photography

Foreward

Hudson Hewn: New York Furniture is the tenth annual exhibit presented by Boscobel. The contemporary furniture marks a slight departure from our customary exhibits. These usually focus on the historic art of the region by members of the Hudson River School. Our curator, Jennifer Carlquist, has assembled a masterful selection of the works by leading Hudson Valley furniture artisans. Their work reflects a tradition of excellence tracing back to the historic furnishings shown in our mansion. We continue to appreciate the valued support of the members of our Rossiter Society. Their assistance has made possible an exciting array of exhibitions in the past decade.

Barnabas McHenry
President
Boscobel Restoration, Inc.

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In his play, *The Tempest*, William Shakespeare wrote "…what's past is prologue…" These prescient words easily apply to Boscobel's 2016 exhibition *Hudson Hewn: New York Furniture Now.* The art of seventeen contemporary furniture-makers practicing in the Hudson Valley clearly shows an impressive continuation of creativity, design and fabrication harkening back to the early days of the American Republic, specifically the Federal period of our nation's history so beautifully represented in our mansion.

Our historic rooms are held in high repute by scholars and the general public alike. Boscobel is known for its outstanding collection of decorative arts and especially its furniture. *Hudson Hewn* places this legacy in a connective context linking the past with the present. We have adopted an integrated exhibition approach. In addition to a customary gallery exhibit, we have placed select pieces of new furniture with old furniture throughout our rooms. The visual "conversation" that unfolds suggests that continuity and change are not incompatible notions. *Hudson Hewn* confirms that the past can indeed be prologue.

Curator Jennifer Carlquist has organized a fascinating exhibition and written an insightful catalogue essay. We also thank the entire staff of Boscobel who work so hard to assure an enjoyable and informative experience here for visitors from around the corner and around the globe. Managing the non-curatorial aspects of the exhibition include Diane Gocha, business manager, Lisa DiMarzo, museum educator, Donna Blaney, manager of marketing and events, Carolyn McShea, administrative assistant, Ed Glisson, visitor services coordinator, and John Malone, facilities manager with our fine maintenance and security team. We are fortunate to have excellent docents who present our popular and valued mansion tours to visitors. They also act as informative gallery guides. These responsibilities will be especially important as this exhibit takes place in both the mansion and the gallery.

Steven Miller
Executive Director

Figs. 1–2 Boscobel

Hudson Hewn: New York Furniture Now

In 2016 Boscobel House and Gardens, home to a renowned collection of New York Neoclassical furniture, is pleased to showcase the work of present-day Hudson River Valley furniture makers in the exhibition *Hudson Hewn: New York Furniture Now.* Together, the permanent collection and the temporary exhibition demonstrate that New York furniture making is a dynamic and ongoing tradition *and* that Boscobel's collection can serve as a contemporary resource.

Boscobel (Figs. 1-2), a handsome frame mansion renowned for its swag-and-tassel façade, was built in 1804-08 for States Dyckman, an upstart New York loyalist who died before its completion. When the building, resurrected on a new site, opened to the public in 1961, it was as a museum of decorative arts, Dyckman's original furnishings having long ago been dispersed. In the late 1970s, led by Berry Tracy (then head of the Metropolitan Museum of Art's American Wing) and underwritten by Boscobel's founding donor Lila Acheson Wallace, the collection's focus narrowed to Neoclassical furniture made in New York City between 1800-25, just the kind of high style furnishings that might have appealed to Dyckman.

The elegant lines, crisp carvings, delicate proportions, and reflective surfaces of so-called "Phyfe-style" furniture have communicated luxury, erudition, and expert craftsmanship since their creation, and continue to impress and engage Boscobel visitors. The forms and decoration represent aesthetic influences as diverse as New York itself, from ancient Egypt, Greece, and Rome, to the French Empire and English Regency. The city's 1805 directory proclaimed that the "curious and useful art [of furniture making] is brought to a very great perfection in this city. The furniture daily offered for sale equals, in point of elegance, any ever imported from Europe, and is scarcely equaled in any other city in America."

The quantity and sophistication of Neoclassical New York furniture coincided with the city's emergence as the nation's first capitol and largest urban center. New York City exported furniture up the Hudson River (and also farther afield), as evidenced by the "fancy" chairs and settees that States Dyckman's widow, Elizabeth, purchased in 1808 for Boscobel (Fig. 3).

The furniture maker most associated with Boscobel's collection is the Scottish-born cabinetmaker Duncan Phyfe (1770-1854), who emigrated to Albany in 1784.* Phyfe might have apprenticed in Albany before moving to New York City around 1791, but only scant details survive of his time there. One of Phyfe's closest competitors was Michael Allison, who launched his business in Manhattan, but hailed from the Hudson Valley town of Haverstraw. Another known maker was John Meads, who had emigrated to Albany with his English master in 1802, and is best known today for the furnishings still in

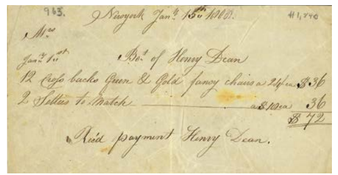


Fig. 3 Receipt from Henry Dean (New York City "gilder and fancy chair" maker), January 15, 1808. Dyckman Archives, Boscobel House and Gardens

Fig. 4 Rob Hare Studio, Ulster Park Photo: ChrisKendall.net

place in Hyde Hall (1817-1834), the grand classical historic house museum in Springfield Center, New York. Little wonder that Mead, who lived and worked so far from Manhattan, felt free to depart from Phyfe's style standards, adapting motifs and techniques from New England and elsewhere. Might the same be true of the artists in this exhibition, who cite diverse influences far beyond furniture currently made in Manhattan? The current renaissance in New York furniture making may offer insights into the historic exchange of furniture, as well as furniture makers, up and down the Hudson River.

Much like Thomas Cole and his fellow Hudson River School painters, nearly all of the artists featured in *Hudson Hewn: New York Furniture Now* are transplants from elsewhere. Some retreated up the Hudson from New York City to escape skyrocketing costs, commune with nature, or generally improve their quality of life.

Upstate living is particularly appealing for woodworkers, who need considerable space for equipment and supplies (woodworking often equals wood hoarding). Decades into his career, Robert Hare, whose furniture incorporates metalwork that he forges himself, designed and built a round barn for his studio in bucolic Ulster Park (Figs. 4-5). Hare's barn and house are set on 150 rolling acres, which—like many an eighteenth-century craftsman—he also farms. It represents a twenty-first-century ideal of the Hudson Valley lifestyle.

Cities as well as rural areas long the Hudson abound with affordable industrial spaces, remnants of the pre-1950s manufacturing economy. Michael Robbins upgraded from an old barn to an abandoned garment mill on the banks of Agawamuck Creek in the tiny town of Philmont. Christopher Kurtz made a similar move, but to a 1920s Kingston warehouse. Kurtz draws energy from the gritty history of his industrial block and interaction with

Fig. 5 Hare Studio Photo: ChrisKendall.net

nearby artists, including a small army of fabricators for the Rhinebeck furniture firm Sawkille. Jeff Johnson and his brother Jeep were pioneers of artist-driven resurgence in Poughkeepsie, where in 1999 they repurposed a 1909 firehouse into living/studio space. "The concept of artist live/workspace was so foreign when we applied for permits, that city officials didn't know the difference between a studio and a gallery," Johnson recalls. Mixed use was commonplace in the era of Duncan Phyfe, whose complex on Fulton Street served as a shop, showroom, warehouse, *and* residence (Fig. 6).

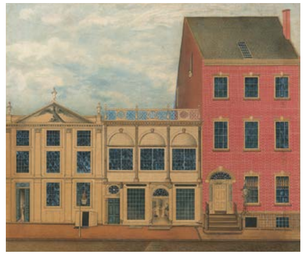


Fig. 6 Unknown artist. *Shop and Warehouse of Duncan Phyfe, 168-172 Fulton Street, New York City*, watercolor, ink, and gouache on laid paper. Metropolitan Museum of Art

Phyfe is glorified for using the best mahogany from the Caribbean, and employing solid wood and veneers for maximum visual impact as well as structural stability. But mammoth, first-growth logs of dense, heavy mahogany with richly figured grain are no longer available, and the environmental and political consequences of wood harvesting may explain why David Morton reports that few clients today choose mahogany – and that those who do also tend to collect antique furniture (which, with its zero carbon footprint, might be seen to off-set those consequences).

When high-end designers and clients demand exquisite, imported hardwoods, there are choices like the Swiss pear Christopher Kurtz employed for his elegantly attenuated **Quarter Round Console Table** (Cat. 17), or the West African bubinga of Michael Puryear's **Barrow Chair** (Cat. 34). But today's Hudson Valley furniture is best known for incorporating locally sourced and reclaimed wood. Nikolai Jacobs's **Writing Desk** (Cat. 11) and Samuel Moyer's **Smörgåsbord Wardrobe** (Cat. 29) express a delight in giving new form to cast-off materials, a practice that is ecofriendly as well as economical. Some artists relate the current interest in irregular and roughly hewn wood to George Nakashima, the mid-twentieth-century legend who popularized organically designed furniture that incorporated wood's live, or natural, edge. These roots run far deeper in the Hudson Valley, with its distinct and centuries-long tradition of environmentalism, and to such figures as Andrew Jackson Downing, the Newburgh native who promoted rustic and picturesque beauty in the mid-nineteenth century.

Most *Hudson Hewn* artists trained as sculptors and consequently, shape and finish wood differently from traditional cabinetmakers. In the nineteenth century, makers celebrated their facility with wood through low-relief surface carving and intricate inlays. While several *Hudson Hewn* artists express an interest in carving, they lament that too few clients are willing to pay for carving, and hence, there is little economic benefit to mastering that skill. Today's makers are far more likely to reveal themselves in joinery, which, paradoxically, their predecessors took great pains to hide. Contemporary furniture flaunts its through-tenons the way Phyfe-style furniture flaunts its carved decoration. Many *Hudson Hewn* artists employ milk paint and finishes derived from soap, vinegar, or pigmented wax. Their natural qualities and homespun appearance are more indicative of vernacular, than high style influences.

By contrast, the surfaces of Boscobel's collection (nearly all of which was refinished in the 1960s and 70s) glow with the burnish of smooth French polish. This reflects the emphasis on reflectivity in early nineteenth-century interiors, where light was a highly valued luxury. Brass, gilded brass, and gilt-bronze appear on Phyfe-style furniture in the form of handles, drawer pulls, escutcheons, toe-caps, inlaid strips, finials, and decorative mounts. These metal elements added radiance to a room, but were more than just an

adornment. They protected vulnerable sections of woodwork, and made elements like feet, drawers, and locks more visible in dim light. As seen in the work of Asher Israelow (Cats. 8-10) and roughly one third of *Hudson Hewn* objects, brass is back in favor today, and serving some of the same functions.

Fig. 7 New York
Trick-leg, or Treble Elliptic Card Table
1805-15
Mahogany, cherry, tulip poplar, pine, *verde antique* finish, iron mechanism, brass casters
28½ x 36W x 17¾D (closed) or
29¼H x 36W x 17½D (open)
Boscobel House and Gardens

One of the goals of *Hudson Hewn* is to compare Boscobel's permanent collection with furniture being made today. Nearly every chair in the museum can be connected to contemporary examples, but that is not true for many other furniture forms. Michael Leggett, who studies period furniture and period woodworking techniques, is among the few *Hudson Hewn* artists who interpret traditional pier tables (Cat. 20) and candlestands (Cats. 21-22)—both of which were indispensable fixtures when Boscobel was first built.

So too with the "trick-leg" card table (Fig. 7). At rest it served as a pier table, but when pulled out from the wall, friction of its casters against the carpet extends the two rear legs backwards, and with them, two supports for the unfolded tabletop. The ingenuity of the form fascinated several artists who visited Boscobel in preparation for this exhibition, but there is little demand for them today. The same can be said for the mechanical tea table, supplanted in modern-day living rooms by its younger cousin, the coffee table. Several artists took note of the tripartite dining tables at Boscobel. Each consists of a rectangular drop-leaf table to which two demilune, or semi-circular, tables can be added (Fig. 8). When placed against the wall, the demilune ends are equally useful as side tables. This flexible arrangement could be just as practical in twenty-first-century interiors yet, as one artist quipped, "Clients today can't see beyond a solid slab top—preferably with a live edge."

Securing chests of drawers for *Hudson Hewn* was problematic, as most studio furniture makers require a commission to invest the time and materials in case pieces. (Compare that to Duncan Phyfe, whose eventual economic and entrepreneurial might enabled him to maintain large inventories of case pieces, and even export them as venture cargo.) Vestiges of the stately New York sideboard can be found in today's multipurpose, and lower-profiled credenzas. The massive secretary-bookcase form that once served as writing table, library, filing cabinet, and hard drive in one, has been all but replaced by contemporary writing/computer tables

Fig. 8 New York
Tripartite Dining Table, 1790-1810
Mahogany, tulip poplar
28½H x 55½W Center: 70½L (leaves up) / 24½ (leaves down)
Ends: 27D; Extra leaf: 8½D
Boscobel House and Gardens

Fig. 9 Southern or
Mid-Atlantic states
Campeachy Chair, c. 1815-20
Mahogany, leather, brass tacks
37H x 29W x 30D
Boscobel House and Gardens

with little or no storage. Pacama Handmade's crisply geometric **Astral Desk** (Cat. 31) is spare enough to suggest that its owners have achieved an ideal, paperless existence. Early worktables were portable desks specified as either a gentleman's (for writing) or a lady's (for sewing and/or writing), and scaled, outfitted, and marketed accordingly. Contemporary desks tend to appear more gender-neutral.

Modern masculinity manifests itself in the contemporary lounge chair, which has emerged as *the* staple of twenty-first-century interiors and showrooms. Historic precedents include "Campeachy" chairs, named after the Campeche area of Mexico from whence they once originated (Fig. 9). A variant of the lolling chair type, they offered a reprieve from nineteenth-century social and aesthetic formality. (Thomas Jefferson is the most famous promoter of this languid form of seating furniture.) Contemporary equivalents by Michael Robbins (Cat. 37) and Asher Israelow (Cat. 8) recall the campeachy's sling leather design, but eschew its curves. Their taut leather seats and sharply angled legs encourage a new, urbane form of lounging—more expressive of motion than of rest.

Who, then, are the consumers of this new furniture? In much the same vein as nineteenth-century Hudson River School paintings, Hudson Valley studio furniture can hold special appeal to Manhattanites who vacation, retire, or have second homes upriver. The interest echoes that for locally grown, seasonal ingredients in restaurants and farmers' markets. Gallery representation, social media savvy, participation in design fairs, and coverage in shelter magazines, help Hudson Valley artists broaden their reach to an international audience.

No matter where it ultimately resides, the best New York furniture, be it from 1816 or 2016, signifies individuality, authenticity, and a connection to its place and time. Boscobel House and Gardens is an ideal museum to celebrate those values, as evident in *Hudson Hewn: New York Furniture Now* as in its permanent collection.

■ ■ ■

* For the definitive resource on Phyfe and his period, including an encyclopedic bibliography, see Peter M. Kenny et al, *Duncan Phyfe: Master Cabinetmaker in New York* (New York and New Haven: The Metropolitan Museum of Art and Yale University Press), 2011.

Atlas Industries
Joseph Fratesi and Thomas Wright
(Newburgh)

Wallpaper* Side Chair
2010
Lacquered solid walnut,
blackened cold-rolled steel
32H x 17W x 26D
Lent by Atlas Industries

Joseph Fratesi and Thomas Wright had been designing together as Atlas Industries for about twenty years before collaborating on this, a prototype of the firm's first side chair to go into production. The design was commissioned by *Wallpaper** magazine for its 2010 "Wallpaper* Handmade" project, an annual celebration of contemporary craftsmanship. The **Wallpaper* Chair** walnut seat cantilevers back over angular steel legs, an architectonic opposite of Mies van der Rohe's classic **MR Chair,** whose seat rounds from its back in a continuous, tubular steel curve to the floor. In 2013 Atlas Industries relocated to a former pocketbook factory in Newburgh, joining an ongoing artists' exodus from Brooklyn to the Hudson Valley.

Cat. 1 Photo: Meredith Heur

Cat. 2

Fig. 10
New England or mid-Atlantic
Bow-back Windsor Armchair
1780-1800
Painted maple, ash, tulip poplar
38H x 25W x 18D
Boscobel House and Gardens

Dzierlenga Furniture (Salt Point)

Jupiter Windsor Chair
2015
Reclaimed and bleached, spalted maple, brass
40½ x 15w x16½ D
Lent by Casey Dzierlenga

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, windsors were ubiquitous on both sides of the Atlantic. Casey Dzierlenga's version reads more like a Charles Sheeler painting of a windsor than its vernacular ancestors. Rather than traditional splayed legs with bulbous turnings and stretchers, the **Jupiter** stands tautly on upright, crisply turned legs that hold their own tension. The pale surface finish and shaped crest extension recall Swedish examples. Brass toe caps add formality to this otherwise rustic form.

Fern Handcrafted Furniture
Jason Roskey (Hudson)

Silo Armchair
2015
Black walnut, oxblood saddle leather
32½H x 25W x 21D
Lent by Jason Roskey

Jason Roskey and Maggie Goudsmit founded Fern Handcrafted Furniture in Brooklyn in 2009, and have since relocated to Hudson, a city whose resurgence is inexorably linked with the antiques and design trades. Fern limits its scope to designs that celebrate handcraftsmanship and can be customized based on each client's needs. The fiercely understated **Silo Armchair** (Cat. 3) invokes Shaker as well as Bauhaus forms, but Roskey will only confess to working towards "a dead simple upright chair that incorporates several types of joinery and a handmade seat.... Each chair features a different, and unexpected, turned pattern on the leg stretchers." The directness of Fern's aesthetic is equally apparent in its **Sawyer Bench** (Cat. 4), utilitarian and spare enough to remain timeless.

Cat. 3

Cat. 4

Fern Handcrafted Furniture
Jason Roskey (Hudson)

Sawyer Bench
2015
Black walnut
30¼H x 84W x 20¼D
Lent by Jason Roskey

Josh Finn (High Falls)

Hope Chest
2012
Walnut, white oak, Western red cedar, bronze, rope
27H x 47W x 23D
Lent by Josh Finn

For more than three decades, Josh Finn has designed and made fine furniture inspired by historic design, nature, and the "warmth, diversity, and flexibility" of wood. As evident in his **Hope Chest**, Finn's influences include "my father, William Finn, who was a sculptor, the elegant practicality of the Shakers, the work of George Nakashima, and the wooden boat building tradition."

Cat. 5

Cat. 6 Photo: ChrisKendall.net

Fig. 11 Attr. to Duncan Phyfe
(b. 1770 Scotland, d. 1854 New York)
Lady's Worktable, c. 1805-1812
Mahogany, brass
30⅝w x 24¼H x 12⅞D
Boscobel House and Gardens
Photo: Lori Adams

Rob Hare (UlsterPark)

Mary's Painting Table
2012
Figured ash, hand-forged aluminum
38H x 30W x 21¼D
Lent by Mary Hyde Ottaway

"Lady's work tables," as described in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, were developed to support such genteel pursuits as sewing and writing. They were decorative to grace formal parlors, mechanical to serve multiple functions, and portable to be moved wherever light was brightest. The very best work tables, including one that Boscobel acquired in 2005 (Fig. 11), with its handy compartments and its adjustable writing surface, carefully considered the user's needs. Rob Hare designed this mechanical table in much the same way for Mary Ottaway, who grew up with a nineteenth-century worktable in the family. Hare's sweeping legs animate the table visually and keep it stable when the leaf or drawer is extended.

Rob Hare (Ulster Park)

Essex Chair
2015 (designed 1997)
Figured maple, wrought steel
36H x 18W x 21D
Lent by Rob Hare in honor of Roger Prince

Hare credits the inspiration of his **Essex Chair** to a 1930s Gerrit Rietveld **Zig-zag Chair** that he was hired to repair. Hare describes the Rietveld chair as, "all flat surfaces and sharp corners but the sculptural form is stunning. I expected it to be the most uncomfortable chair imaginable, until my client convinced me to sit on it and I learned that flat can be amazingly comfortable. It changed my understanding of chair design forever."

Cat. 7 Photo: Rob Hare

Cat. 8

Asher Israelow (Brooklyn and Hudson)

The Ø Lounge Chair
2012
American black walnut, brass, leather
30 ½H x 20W x 27D
Lent by Asher Israelow

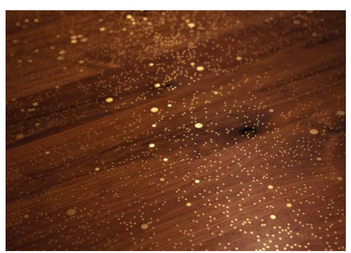
If design is a language, Asher Israelow is particularly fluent in punctuation. Like Duncan Phyfe or Charles-Honoré Launnuier did in the early nineteenth century, Israelow incorporates brass in much of his furniture to mark, contrast, emphasize, and join wooden forms.

Asher Israelow (Brooklyn and Hudson)

Coffee Table, from the Serenade Series
2015
American black walnut, brass
14H x 36 Diameter
Lent by Asher Israelow

Israelow inlays brass to map out the constellation of a date that is meaningful to each client. This **Coffee Table** (Cat. 9), designed in collaboration with the New York City Ballet, marks the anniversary of George Ballanchine's first American ballet, *Serenade*. Whether designing a building or furniture for Lincoln Center (Cat.10), "each project," insists the artist, "narrates the story of its materials and context."

Cat. 9



Cat. 9 Detail

Cat. 10

Asher Israelow (Brooklyn and Hudson)

Chair from the Lincoln Collection
American black walnut, leather, brass
30½H x 18W x 21D
Lent by Asher Israelow

Nikolai Jacobs (Rosendale)

Writing Desk
2011
Oak recycled from a laundry cart,
steel and maple recycled from an
office chair, and reclaimed laminated
veneer lumber
38H x 19½W x 28½D
Lent by Nikolai Jacobs

Nikolai Jacobs grew up in Ulster County, where as a teenager he collected antique tools and made furniture with traditional methods. He is better known today as an emerging sculptor, but maintains, "I keep coming back to furniture. There's something compelling in these functional and aesthetic objects we surround ourselves with. I'm especially fascinated by their anthropomorphic and zoomorphic forms—a barrel-chested chest of drawers, a cabriole table with gazelle-like legs, a double-doored cabinet that opens like a flasher's trench coat." Does Jacobs's **Writing Desk** reference flora or fauna? In any case, the biomorphic shape of the pedestal whimsically counters the heaviness of the desk's reclaimed, industrial materials.

Cat. 11

Cat. 12

Jeff Johnson (Poughkeepsie)

Wall shelf
2011
Walnut
32H x 32W x 10D
Lent by Jeff Johnson

Jeff Johnson collected and professionally refinished antiques before studying sculpture and furniture design. Like nearly every other *Hudson Hewn* artist, he had never been inside Boscobel before preparing for the exhibition. "Rarely do I consciously look back at traditional furniture for inspiration," Johnson admits, "but this opportunity reminds me that I am part of a continuum of designers and makers. I find it both humbling and exciting. I had never heard of a pier mirror or table [before visiting Boscobel], but seeing the space where [my **MirrorShelf/Box** (Cat. 13)] is going and imagining its matching historic mate in its reflection is just thrilling."

Johnson frequently incorporates kinetic or mechanical motion into furniture, such as the spinning action that opens his **China Cabinet** (Cat. 14). This monumental novelty relates to Boscobel's 1810s **Dumbwaiter** (Fig. 12), a rare and curious cabinet whose tambour door slid closed to hide dishes in plain sight.

Mirror/Shelf/Box
2016
Walnut, mirror glass, paint
72H x 32W x 11D
Lent by Jeff Johnson

Cat. 13 Detail

Cat. 13 Photos: Al Nowack

China Cabinet
2016
Walnut, paint
72H x 72W x 12D
Lent by Jeff Johnson

Cat. 14 Photo: Al Nowack

Fig. 12
New York City
Dumbwaiter, c. 1810s
Mahogany, tulip poplar, pine
Boscobel House and Gardens

Christopher Kurtz (Kingston)

Circle Arm Easy Chair
2011 (designed 2008)
Maple multi-ply, tulip poplar, milk paint
29H x 22W x 25D
Lent by Christopher Kurtz

The apparent effortlessness with which Christopher Kurtz articulates form may be an inheritance from his late father, Carl Kurtz, an internationally renowned calligraphy artist. Christopher Kurtz applies his talents to both sculpture and studio furniture. His **Circle Arm Easy Chair** (Cat. 15) illustrates how each informs the other. Its repeating circles recall the half-circles or "ogees" of Boscobel's suite of curule chairs, a translation of the ancient Roman *stella curulis* via English pattern books. Kurtz's version, executed in maple plywood, carved with the exactitude of a CNC (Computer Numerical Control) machine, is stronger than Phyfe's mahogany curules, which are inherently vulnerable to breakage where the legs and medial stretcher meet.

Cat. 15 Photo: Christopher Kurtz

Fig. 13 Attr. to Duncan Phyfe
(b. 1770 Scotland, d. 1854 New York)
Curule, or Ogee Chair, 1810s
Mahogany, tulip poplar, modern upholstery
32¾H x 17¾W x 16¼D
Boscobel House and Gardens

Cat. 17
(Pictured is another table from this series)
Photo: Patrick Argast

Cat. 16
Photo: Patrick Argast

Christopher Kurtz (Kingston)

Quarter Round Side Chair
2011 (designed 2008)
Black walnut, oil and wax finish
30H x 14½W x 15½D
Lent by Christopher Kurtz

Quarter Round Console
2015-16
Swiss pear
36H x 58W x 14D
Lent by Christopher Kurtz

For his **Quarter Round** series, Kurtz lathe-turns, then quarters wooden members lenthwise to form legs and stiles. He positions them with rounded sides facing outward and corners facing in, a subtle reference to his fascination with the inner workings of form.

Christopher Kurtz (Kingston)

Gingko Console
2015
Redwood
30½H x 48W x 14D
Lent by Christopher Kurtz

Eighteenth-century Europe produced a number of single-legged consoles that, like Kurtz's **Ginko Console**, require being mounted to the wall. Some antique precedents also reference botanical motifs; Kurtz's appears to grow organically from a channeled stem into an impossibly leafy surface.

Cat. 18 Photo: Cydney Ross

Cat. 19 Photo: Christopher Kurtz'

Christopher Kurtz (Kingston)

Bow Back Chair
2016
Ash
37W x 18H x 20D
Lent by Christopher Kurtz

The ongoing development of Kurtz's **Bow Back Chair** owes a debt to classic windsor chairs, whose form he has revisited to great acclaim throughout his career. Instead of bending wood into a traditional bow-back frame with inserted splats (Fig.10), Kurtz carves the back of his version to frame a carefully composed void. Like much of his work, it somehow appears lush as well as minimal, earthy and ethereal in equal measure.

Michael Leggett (Woodstock)

Demilune Table
2013
Mahogany, ash, and ebonized ash
34H x 34W x 17D
Lent by Michael Leggett

"I build using [eighteenth-century] joinery and techniques," writes Michael Leggett, "and also use many of the forms as a starting off point. While designing this [**Demilune Table** (Cat. 20)], I made an errant mark, or so it seemed as the pencil moved over the paper, that canted the inner leg at an unusual angle. This was the spark of inspiration I needed to give this traditional form and fresh look."

Cat. 20

Cat. 21

Michael Leggett (Woodstock)

Candlestand
2014
Maple
26H x 20 Diameter
Lent by Michael Leggett

Leggett's **Candlestands** (Cats. 21-22) illustrate what he describes as his obsession with the pedestal form. "It's clean, precise and seemingly simple," he observes, "juxtaposing hard facets with a smooth tapered cylinder."

Fig. 14 New York
Tilt-top Candlestand, 1800-10s
Mahogany, ash
29H x 24½W x 18¼D
Boscobel House and Gardens

Michael Leggett (Woodstock)

Candlestand
2014
Mahogany, milkpaint
26H x 20 Diameter
Lent by Michael Leggett

Cat. 22

Cat. 23 Photo: Stacy Pearsal

Fig. 15 New York
Basin Stand, or Commode, 1805-1810
Mahogany, tulip poplar, pine, gilt-brass
36H x 15¾W x 15¾D
Boscobel House and Gardens

Moran Woodworked Furniture (Gallatin)

Charred Commode
2015 (designed 2012)
Charred and clear pine
24H x 15½W x 16D
Lent by Celia Gibson and Michael Moran

In addition to their forms and functions, the very names of Michael Moran's furniture signify an appreciation for all things old. Celia Gibson, co-designer and wife, reports that their single-drawer **Commode** (Cat. 23) was modeled after nineteenth-century bedroom furniture, but is equally at home in modern living rooms.

Gibson and Moran celebrate the heritage and stewardship of trees in every aspect of their business. These self-proclaimed "arborial eccentrics" go to great lengths to salvage fallen trees, such as an 80-year-old pine from Charleston, South Carolina, from which their **Commode** is crafted. The clear and charred surface eulogize that "stately pine."

Moran Woodworked Furniture
(Gallatin)

Banded Barrel Back Chair
2015 (designed 2013)
Ash, American Martin waxed canvas
28H x 26W x 24D
Lent by Celia Gibson and Michael Moran

Cat. 24 Photo: Jeff Holt

Fig. 16 New York or England
Barrel-back, or Cabriole Chair,
1795-1805
Mahogany, beech, pine, modern upholstery
39H x 29½W x 27D
Boscobel House and Gardens

Cat. 25 Photo: Stacy Pearsal

Moran Woodworked Furniture
(Gallatin)

Maple Prime Tea Table
2015 (designed 2012)
Spalted maple, black walnut, copper
24H x 16 Diameter
Lent by Celia Gibson and Michael Moran

The **Maple Prime Tea Table** (Cat. 25) is closer in scale to antique candlestands than to tea tables, but the misnomer adds to its graphic charm. Even the **Banded Barrel Back** (Cat. 24) chair winks at historic design, expressing an effortless swank just as well today as its predecessors of the 1810s or 1930s.

David R. Morton/
Big Tree Woodworks (Kingston)

Stick Table
2014
Quartersawn, curly, book-matched mahogany;
peeled, scraped, and sanded maple saplings
30H x 78W x 31D
Lent by David R. Morton

David Morton has spent more than three decades "catering to people with carefully curated collections of eighteenth-century, Arts and Crafts, Mid-century Modern, etc. and making for them something that wasn't available then or couldn't be found." For his own house, Morton and his wife collected dozens of examples of vernacular-inspired furniture by Russell Wright and other designers. Some of these nineteenth- and twentieth-century examples incorporate maple saplings, which Morton juxtaposes against mahogany in his **Stick** series. Morton seeks "to depart from historic precedents and mix fine woodworking with rustic furniture." The freedom he feels in doing so is evident in the cabinet of curiosities that he dubbs **The Thing** (Cat. 27).

Cat. 26 Photo: David Broda

Cat. 27 Photo: Roy Gimpel

David R. Morton/
Big Tree Woodworks (Kingston)

The Thing
2015
Quartersawn mahogany; peeled, scraped,
and sanded maple saplings
50H x 40W x 18D
Lent by David R. Morton

Samuel Moyer Furniture
(Staatsburg)

Hopewell Floating Drawer
2015
Eastern black walnut, reclaimed American chestnut, architectural brass
6¼H x 18¼W x 10D
Lent by Samuel Moyer

Smörgåsbord Wardrobe
2015
Reclaimed black locust fencepost, American elm, cherry, reclaimed American chestnut, maple, black walnut
75H x 24W x 20D
Lent by Samuel Moyer

Moyer speaks for many contemporary Hudson River Valley artists when pledging his firm's commitment to "furniture that lasts, links generations and reduces waste and consumption… designed and built with the practicality of the past and ethics for the future." Like George Nakashima and other artists Moyer admires, Moyer finds wood's natural imperfections "the most beautiful components of the material. Call it slow furniture if you like," he writes, "but it's an idea and an aesthetic whose time has come."

Cat. 29

Cat. 28

Cat. 30

Munder-Skiles (Garrison)

Taconic Chair
2011 (designed 1993)
Forest Stewardship Council™–certified teak
35 ¼H x 24 W x 26 ¾D
Lent by John Danzer

Since 1992 Munder-Skiles has designed landscapes and outdoor furniture for "people who are interested in craftsmanship, interested in design, and interested in history," explains founder John Danzer. The firm's iconic and award-winning **Taconic Chair** (Cat. 30) and 160 other designs testify to Danzer's encyclopedic knowledge of design and ability to marry that history with newer technologies such as ergonomics, computer imaging, and 3-D printing. The company produces both metal and wooden furniture in Costa Rica, but since 2009, has designed, distributed, and retailed every form from its headquarters in Garrison, just south of Boscobel.

Pacama Handmade/Cedric Martin (Woodstock)

Astral Desk and Reunion Chair
2015
Oxidized Oak
Desk: 30H x 40W x 20D
Chair: 34H x 16W x 18D
Lent by Cedric Martin

Cedric Martin credits his skills and sensibilities to his Mennonite upbringing in Pennsylvania's Lancaster County, followed by formal training at the famed Center for Furniture Craftsmanship in Maine and the North Bennett Street School in Boston. In 2013 he founded Pacama Handmade in Woodstock, where he designs, makes, and retails furniture that is "aesthetically unified through the use of solid northeastern timber, clean lines, and lean dimensions.... In addition to the natural beauty of this area," Martin writes, "[my] inspiration also comes from the many great designers and craftsmen that have settled here over the years, including the Shakers, Byrdcliffe members, Russell Wright, and many others. All of that coupled with its proximity to NYC makes this an ideal location for a contemporary furniture maker looking to use the rich American history of this craft to create new pieces for the twenty-first century."

Cats. 31-32

Cat. 33

Michael Puryear (Shokan)

Chest of Drawers
1994
Maple, mahogany, wenge
36H x 17W x 15D
Lent by Michael Puryear

More than a decade spent working as a librarian, and later photographer, may have informed Michael Puryear's taste for graphically contrasting woods. As Puryear explains, "The choice of wood is based on its traditions, the nature of the technology, and the natural warmth and appeal to the hand." Puryear's **Chest of Drawers** (Cat. 33) and **Barrow Chair** (Cat. 34) celebrate both foreign and exotic wood. Their refinement communicates his aim to achieve *shibui*, the Japanese concept of elegant simplicity.

Michael Puryear (Shokan)

Barrow Chair
2003
West African bubinga, leather
27H x 29W x 32D
Lent by Michael Puryear

Cat. 34

Cat. 35 Photo: Rob Penner Photography

Michael Robbins (Philmont)

Wickson Chair
2015
Ash, American bridle leather
29H x 18¾ W x 17½D
Lent by Michael Robbins

Boscobel's throne-like **Grecian Easy Chair** (Fig. 17) is one of only two survivors of its type known, both adapted from ancient Greek, Roman, and Egyptian furniture. Michael Robbins's **Wickson Chair** (Cat. 35) manages to express the same dynamism and power with the bare minimum of solid form and material. The barrel-back consists of American-tanned bridle leather pegged into posts that extend down to the floor.

Fig. 17 New York City
Grecian Easy Chair, c. 1817
Mahogany, pine, modern upholstery
32H x 24W x 24D
Boscobel House and Gardens
Photo: Rob Penner Photography

Michael Robbins (Philmont)

Bridle Chair
2015
Ash, bridle leather, brass
34¼H x 15W x 16¼D
Lent by Michael Robbins

The more delicate **Bridle Side Chair** (Cat. 36) combines elements from vernacular ladder-back chairs and high style klismos chairs, whose scrolled back derives from ancient prototypes. The curved brass stretcher adds interest as well as structural support to its otherwise rectilinear design. Robbins emphasizes his construction techniques in every viewing angle of his work, most evident here in his **Taza Lounge Chair** (Cat. 37). Whether designing as an independent artist or for the retailer West Elm, Robbins describes his furniture as "minimal in form but large in spirit, drawing often from the richness of the Hudson Valley landscape."

Cat. 36

Fig. 18 New York
Klismos Side Chair, 1805-10
Mahogany, maple, pine,
modern upholstery
33.25H x 20.60W x 17.5D
Boscobel House and Gardens

Cat. 37

Michael Robbins (Philmont)

Taza Lounge Chair
2015
Walnut, American Bridle leather, brass
28¼H x 25W x 28D
Lent by Michael Robbins

Acknowledgments

Thanks go first and foremost to the artists who agreed to participate in *Hudson Hewn: New York Furniture Now*. As much as their furniture, their knowledge, photography, paperwork, legwork, enthusiasm, and good humor were essential to this exhibition and catalogue. In many cases, these artists parted with furniture that their family uses every day, so that it could be shared with Boscobel's visitors. Thanks to Mary Hyde Ottaway for generously doing the same. Thanks also go to Hannah Anderson, Tim Brennan, Andrew Hunter, Jonah Meyer, Kevin O'Donnell, and to Sara Pasti and Daniel Belasco of the Samuel Dorsky Museum of Art.

Olana Partnership colleagues Sean Sawyer, Evelyn Trebilcock, and Valerie Balint shared insights gained through their 2015 exhibition, *River Crossings: Contemporary Art Comes Home*. Their ground-breaking installation thoughtfully preserved the most iconic views of Olana's interiors—a model that directly informed *Hudson Hewn*. A constant, limitless resource is Winterthur Museum, Garden, and Library, which generously granted me a scholarship to attend the 2015 Sewell C. Biggs Winterthur Furniture Forum, *From New Netherland to Empire State: New York Furniture*.

I echo Steven Miller's thanks to the entire staff of Boscobel, with particular appreciation for Patricia Turner and all others directly involved in object care and interpretation. Since joining their ranks in 2015, I have advocated aligning Boscobel's special exhibitions with its great permanent collection. Thanks must go to Steven Miller for his support of that concept, and to the Trustees. The speed and efficiency with which *Hudson Hewn* was executed are due particularly to Exhibition Designer Ed Glisson, Graphic Designer Randi Schlesinger, and Museum Educator Lisa DiMarzo. Morrison Heckscher and Peter Kenny have my deepest appreciation for their many contributions to the planning of the exhibition, catalogue, and related programming. *Hudson Hewn* artists acknowledge a debt to these gentlemen for the decades they have spent advancing and sharing furniture scholarship, as do I.

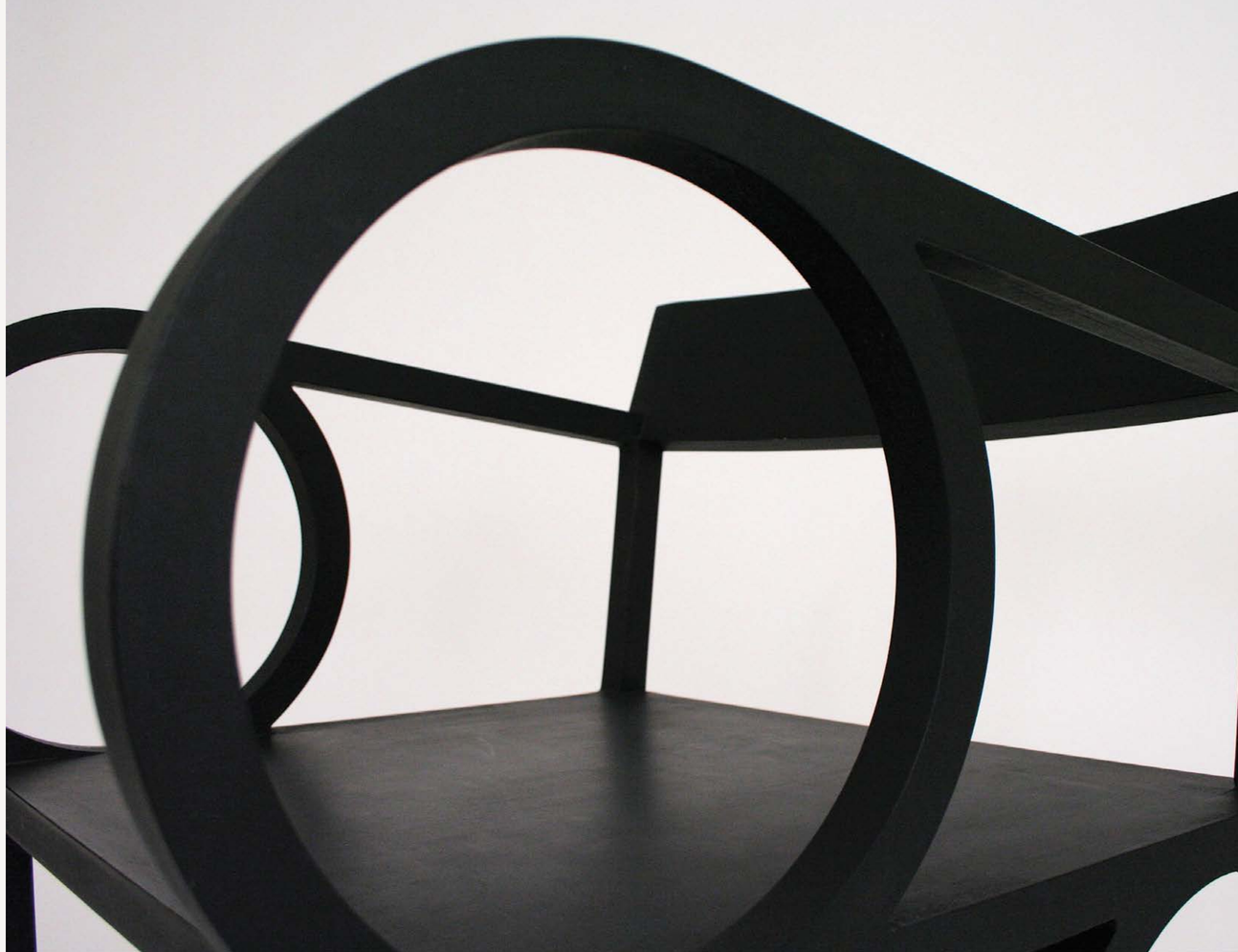
Lastly, I am enormously grateful to my husband Chad Lemke, our son Gunnar Lemke, and to his caregivers and friends at the Manitou School in Cold Spring and the Children's Center at SUNY New Paltz.

--Jennifer Carlquist, Curator

BOSCOBEL
HOUSE AND GARDENS

Boscobel, the elegant, Federal-period house museum set on lovely, landscaped grounds with a breathtaking view of the Hudson River and its Highlands, has been welcoming visitors to explore its man-made and natural beauty since 1961. The story of its demolition at its original site and subsequent rebirth and restoration fifteen miles north is well documented elsewhere. The fact that it remains a gleaming jewel in the Hudson River Valley's crown is to the credit of its many stewards over the years — its professional staffs, dedicated volunteers and boards of directors, and its early principal benefactor, Lila Acheson Wallace.

The Boscobel mansion was completed in 1808. In 2008, the museum celebrated the 200th anniversary by creating an Exhibition Gallery designed to present changing exhibits to enhance the visitor experience. The exhibitions in the gallery, along with the mansion and the celebrated collection it houses, the Rose Garden, the Orangery and Herb Garden, the Frances Stevens Reese Woodland Trail of Discovery, the museum's special events and programs, as well as the Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival's summer performances, constitute the foundation for Boscobel's mission: to enrich the lives of its visitors with memorable experiences of the history, culture, and environment of the Hudson River Valley.



BOSCOBEL

HOUSE AND GARDENS