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MITCH FRY

Reclaimed wood finds new life



Mitch Fry's wooden spheres, some topping 8 feet tall, contain hundreds of pieces of reclaimed wood and are created using geometric and simple mathematical hand drawings. The manual process is much more time-consuming than if Fry were to use a computer, and that's exactly how he likes it.

"For me, the drawing is a method of thinking and a graphic way to figure out the ins and outs of the situations I run into in the assembly process," Fry, who has been working with wood for 40 years, says. "I can't sit at a laptop and let the computer do the work, because I need to be the thinking person and not the machine. You can get to an end a lot more quickly with a computer, but it doesn't do the brain-enriching."

Fry, who studied industrial design and art and has extensive experience building furniture and cabinetry, doesn't mind the surprises that sometimes come with doing things by hand.

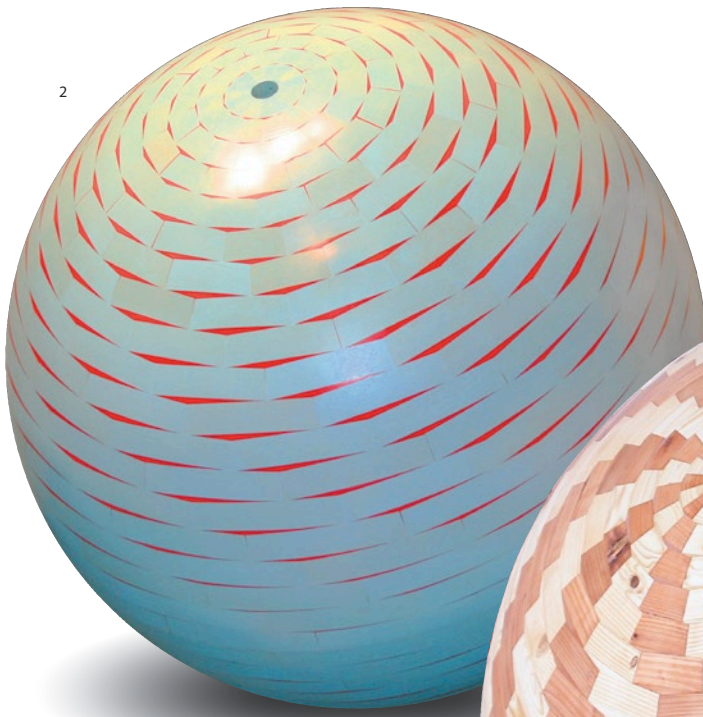
"Occasionally, you'll encounter something that comes out wrong, and you'll like that better than what you aimed to do in the first place," Fry says. For his fans, such as French Thompson, president of the Contemporary Forum at the Phoenix Art Museum, imperfections in Fry's work are undetectable.

"Mitch Fry's ability to go from concept to actualization is filled with thought, planning and the finest execution," Thompson says. "His drawings are as detailed as architectural plans for any modern-day skyscraper, and his craftsmanship is as immaculate as fine jewelers. I love seeing all the beauty and complexity he shows in something as simple as a sphere."

Fry's meticulous works of labor sometimes take up to a year to complete, as he strives to make each one unique and interesting. He's particularly excited about his latest piece, a blue sphere titled *Pierced Azure*. He says the added pigment, compared to his traditional wood pieces that give more focus to the wood texture and coloration, helps show off the shape. He plans to create more colored pieces for future collections and will be adding to what's currently on display at Bonner David Galleries in Scottsdale, Arizona, through next year.

In addition to the spheres, Fry creates wooden line pieces, such as *Line Derivation XI*. The work morphs linear sticks of wood into a single body conveying movement, which he describes as a

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1 Mitch Fry in his studio.

2 *Pierced Azure*, 2014, fir and mixed material, 40"

3 *Completing the Circle IV*, 2011, spruce and redwood, 48"

4 *Line Derivation XI*, redwood, 2014, 30 x 72½ x 5"

compressed energy piece.

"Creating the lines provides me a way to put some frustration out in a piece," Fry says, comparing his line pieces to the more static spheres. "They allow me to get more spontaneity into the work."

Fry employs an environmentally-focused mindset when creating his works, using recycled materials, such as construction pallet material.

"It's kind of a rebirthing process," Fry says. "It's satisfying for me to take something that's chucked out and turn it into something no one would expect." ●



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