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BELLEVUE ARTS MUSEUM

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Elegant and bold wood sculptures by Northwest artist

Michael Peterson: Evolution | Revolution

April 9 – September 20, 2009

Bellevue, WA – Following the unique trajectory of wood sculptor Michael Peterson over the past twenty years, this exhibition traces the **evolution** from the artist's early lathe turned bowls to his current, **revolutionary** sculptures devoid of the lathe. Over 30 sculptures, inspired by the geographic environment of the Pacific Northwest, will be on view at **Bellevue Arts Museum** from April 9 through September 20, 2009.

Turning, carving, sandblasting, bleaching and pigmenting the burl portion of trees such as madrone, maple, grass tree, elm and locust, Peterson creates sculptural works of sheer beauty and purity. He starts out with multiple wet chunks of wood which are carved and hollowed out using chainsaws. As the pieces dry, they shrink and warp in unpredictable ways that heighten their grain patterns and create rich textures. He then smoothes the edges and sometimes bleaches the pieces prior to layering them with multiple subtle coats of pigments which he often times wipes away to create the illusion of depth – much the same way painters do when using chiaroscuro techniques. Some of the sculptures are composed of individual hollowed-out units that, when stacked vertically, are reminiscent of how waves would toss driftwood into unpredictable positions on the beach.

"**Evolution | Revolution** honors Peterson for his organic abstract forms, including elements reminiscent of birds, stones, driftwood and landscapes – all referring to the natural, physical realm while quietly emanating a deep sense of spirituality," says co-curator Michael Monroe. More than 20 of his most recent sculptures will be on display adjacent to nearly 15 earlier works consisting of lathe-turned, bowl-like forms to contrast and highlight Peterson's artistic progression over the past 20 years.

Born in Wichita Falls, Texas, Peterson now resides on Lopez Island, one of the San Juan Islands in Washington, where he draws heavily from the surrounding environment. Peterson's work has been featured in many solo and group exhibitions over the last 20 years, and can be found in public collections throughout North America, including: the Museum of Arts and Design, New York, NY; the Mint Museum of Craft + Design, Charlotte, NC and the Renwick Gallery, Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, DC among others.

A catalogue with essays by Robyn Horn, Matthew Kangas and Kevin Wallace will accompany the exhibition.

Michael Peterson: Evolution | Revolution is organized by Bellevue Arts Museum, and co-curated by Michael W. Monroe, Director of Curatorial Affairs and Stefano Catalani, Curator. This exhibition has been made possible by the Windgate Charitable Foundation with additional support by the Institute of Museum and Library Services and the City of Bellevue.

For more information on this exhibit and other Museum-related programming or to schedule an interview with the artist, please contact Tanja Baumann (see contact information above). To download high resolution images, please go to http://www.bellevuearts.org/about_us/press.htm (password required).

Bellevue Arts Museum is the Pacific Northwest's center for the exploration of art, craft and design through exhibition, educational programs and partnerships, emphasizing the work of regional artists.

www.bellevuearts.org