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***The Art of the Stool* Opens at the Wharton Esherick Museum**

Winners announced for the Wharton Esherick Museum 25th Annual Woodworking Competition



Stool Light, Julia Michalski

Malvern, PA – The Wharton Esherick Museum’s 25th Annual Woodworking Competition and Exhibition, *The Art of the Stool*, opened this month celebrating the beauty and potential of everyday objects. The exhibition, on display now through December 30, includes the work of 18 woodworkers from across the country whose works draw inspiration from Esherick’s unique and inventive designs, encouraging artists to continue to reinvent the world around us.

Esherick’s iconic three-legged stools provided the inspiration for this year’s theme. Beginning in the 1950s, Esherick turned wood “scraps” from larger projects into the seats of stools. Responding to the wood grain before him, no two were exactly the same; each was a uniquely considered work of art. Juried by Miri Nakashima,

Creative Director for Nakashima Woodworkers, Albert LeCoff, Executive Director Emeritus and Co-Founder of The Center for Art in Wood in Philadelphia, and Laura Heemer, Curator for the Wharton Esherick Museum, the exhibition celebrates the next generation of artistry, craftsmanship, and innovation in woodworking.

This year’s first place went to Julia Michalski from Newtown, PA for *Stool Light*, whose spiraling angles and hidden light source harken back to Esherick’s own explorations. This piece was also awarded the Members’ Choice Award which was voted on during the opening reception. Second place was awarded to Aled Lewis of Rockport, ME for his elegant *Pi Stool*, and third place went to David Ebner of Brookhaven, NY for *Stick Stool*. The Museum also awards a special prize for elementary, middle and high school students working in wood, the Horace Hartshaw Award, which this year went to Larry Bamburg and Lumber Club of Marfa, TX for their piece, *Three Threaded Legged Stool*. The Lumber Club includes elementary-age students Mae Bamburg, Willa Bamburg, Colette Fowlkes, Abby Scott, Grace Rothey, Sofia Rothey, Stella Shepard, and Mable Melgaard. *The Art of the Stool* also includes work by Jeremy Adams, Ron Cook, Kevin Costante, Danny Kamerath, Kieran Kinsella, Wayne Locke, Ryan Meacham, Ivar Raphael, John Sheridan, Ross Silverman, Bradford Smith, Brendan Yi-Fu Tay, Geoffrey Warner, and Mark Wedekind.

Always focused on expanding the expressive potential of the functional object, next year will bring with it a new theme and new opportunities for invention by artists working in wood. *The Art of the Stool* is on display in the Visitor Center now through December 30 and is free to the public. This does not include admission into the Museum for which advance reservations are required.

About the Wharton Esherick Museum:

The Wharton Esherick Museum, located just outside of Valley Forge Park in Malvern, PA is the handcrafted home and studio of Wharton Esherick (1887-1970) and exhibits over 300 of the artist’s work including sculpture, sculptural

furniture, woodcut prints and paintings. Wharton Esherick was a leading American sculptor and artist of the early 20th century. Working primarily in wood, he is considered to be among the most influential furniture designers of the 21st century. The Museum is open for tours Tuesday – Friday (for groups of 5 or more) from 10 am to 5 pm, Saturdays from 10 am – 5 pm and Sundays from 1 pm - 5 pm (no minimum requirement on weekends). Advanced tickets are required, and can be purchased at www.whartonesherickmuseum.org. For more information call 610-644-5822 or email info@whartonesherickmuseum.org.