

Artist Profile

by Kurt Hertzog

Marilyn Campbell

Imagine building a 36-foot sailboat from wood and epoxy in the 1970s. With no experience in the shop, but a thorough enjoyment of the boat-building experience, Marilyn Campbell was led to the lathe. She was into building and her husband, Jim, was into sailing. She wanted to learn more about the shop and Jim pointed to the lathe as a starting point. Marilyn began working on the lathe in 1981 and never moved beyond it. She continues to refine her turning and work with epoxy into the art that is now collected around the world.

Marilyn's mom had wanted her to go to the Ontario College of Art; however, her high school did not have an art curriculum. She enjoyed making things, but without more art studies, it was difficult to come up with a portfolio to be used for entrance consideration. Therefore, she pursued general study at the university rather than the art college.

At first, Marilyn's work at the lathe focused on utilitarian things that were more craft fair items. As she experimented with inlay and other construction ideas, Marilyn began to see the potential of the material with which she was already familiar—West System Epoxy. A visit to a shop in Owen Sound proved to be an important turning point. She was talking to the shop attendant about woodturning, and the attendant said that she must meet Stephen Hogbin. As a relative newcomer to the field, Marilyn was too self-conscious to believe she should be talking to Stephen Hogbin. Meanwhile, the shop attendant had already dialed his number and handed the phone to a startled Marilyn. That was the beginning of a friendship which continues today.

Marilyn credits Stephen with helping her move her work beyond the utilitarian craft fair arena into a more artistic realm. Stephen lives a bit over an hour away, and though they don't visit in person that often, they do converse on the phone regularly.

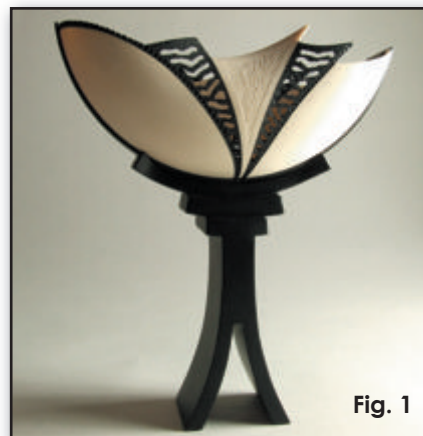
Originally inspired by nature, Marilyn's work has more recently been influenced by the elements of design. She says that a book on handbags brought about her change in inspiration. Along with being black and white, her split-bowl work incorporates the elements of design. Marilyn's work is preplanned and predrawn—almost to blueprint detail—and each piece is committed to paper and planned to completion, before she begins to work with materials.



While she fits studio time between her travel and demo engagements, Marilyn can usually create eight unique pieces each year. She doesn't repeat her designs and each piece is different; however, some elements do carry forward. Marilyn feels this allows the designs to grow and evolve. She continues to refine her work and will be expanding the work on her stands (see Fig. 1).

Marilyn persists in following her proven technique of evolution from one piece to the next. It is a continuation of ideas, and there is no huge leap between pieces, but rather, it is a gradation of those ideas. Her future direction will include trying different materials in addition to the wood and epoxy. She is also planning on taking the split-bowl format into larger and more varied work, using perhaps wall materials.

Marilyn's work can be seen on her website at www.marilyncampbell.ca.



Bon Vivant. The black and white formality invites images of grand social events with tuxedos, tails, formal evening gowns, and elegance.