

Rochester Institute of Technology

RIT Digital Institutional Repository

Theses

4-24-1980

The Synthesis of Dichotomous Influences

Wendy Maruyama

Follow this and additional works at: <https://repository.rit.edu/theses>

Recommended Citation

Maruyama, Wendy, "The Synthesis of Dichotomous Influences" (1980). Thesis. Rochester Institute of Technology. Accessed from

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the RIT Libraries. For more information, please contact repository@rit.edu.

Rochester Institute of Technology

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of
The College of Fine and Applied Arts
in Candidacy for the Degree of
MASTER OF FINE ARTS

THE SYNTHESIS OF DICHOTOMOUS INFLUENCES

By

Wendy Lynn Maruyama

April 24, 1980

APPROVALS

Advisor: William A. Keyser

Date: 7 July 1980

Associate Advisor: Lawrence B. Hunter

Date: MAY 14 1980

Associate Advisor: Thomas Hucker

Date: May 22, 1980

Associate Advisor: Lawrence M. Williams

Date: 9 June 1980

Graduate Academic
Council

Representative: Fred Meyer

Date: 8/4/80

Dean, College of
Fine & Applied Arts: Dr. Robert H. Johnston Ph. D.

Date: 8/4/80

I, Wendy Maruyama, hereby grant
permission to the Wallace Memorial Library, of R.I.T.,
to reproduce my thesis in whole or in part. Any
reproduction will not be for commercial use or profit.

Date: July 21, 1980

Acknowledgments

I wish to acknowledge my thesis advisors, William Keyser, Lawrence Williams, Thomas Hucker, and Lawrence B. Hunter for their guidance and assistance throughout this last year. Special thanks to Judith Zerbe for her advice and criticisms in the writing of the text and to my Auntie Tae for typing up a difficult paper 3,000 miles away in California. I am also grateful to the Oliver Joiner; with our encounter this paper has gotten to a good start.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	iii
---------------------------	-----

Chapter

I. INTRODUCTION	1
II. BEGINNINGS: West Coast Background	2
III. TRANSITIONS: East Coast Background.	9
IV. SYNTHESIS: Review-Overview.	18
V. DESCRIPTION OF THE WORKS	23
Blue Mirror.	23
Sideboard.	24
"San Andreas's Fault".	26
Tray Series.	27
Side Table	28
VI. CONCLUSION	29
VII. APPENDIXES	30
VIII. BIBLIOGRAPHY	64

I. INTRODUCTION

I consider myself an artist. Webster defined the word "artist" as "... one who is skilled in or works in any of the fine arts; a person who does anything very well, with a feeling for form, effect, etc."¹

But as a visual artist, I feel that the definition goes beyond that. An artist is one who expresses his or her inner self through the hands, by making objects to convey a personal statement, feeling, or aesthetic quality. To me, making these objects is the most effective form of expression. My work can reflect my current life situation, changes, and attitudes, whether they are personal or environmental. My work speaks for me.

¹Webster's Dictionary, 2nd ed. (1970), s.v., "artist."

II. BEGINNINGS

I began my education in my home state of California and attended a small junior college in San Diego County. It was there that I took my basic foundation courses. I was enrolled in several general crafts courses where I was able to work with a wide range of materials: clay, wood, metal and fiber. Exploration of various materials not only helped me to improve my skill, but opened up my mind, feeding my imagination. By the time I had received an Associate's degree and transferred to San Diego State University, I was very much involved in working with metal and wood. Perhaps a significant reason for choosing these two materials was their two different working properties: One was a relief from the other. Metal proved to be a very plastic medium, although I found the surface to be cold and hard. Most of my metal-work has been in the form of jewelry, which is small in scale. On the other hand, I identified wood as being warm and soft (but less plastic) and in making furniture it offered a larger scale of working.

During my undergraduate years at San Diego State, California had been experiencing a great revival in the crafts movement; the movement itself was to create and nurture a whole new breed of craftsmen. This development was strongly

supported through the California State College system by the structure of the art departments.

The California crafts movement developed separately from historic crafts movements; totally devoid of indigenous folk art roots, it is representative of a conceptual and experimental probing of materials. Also, the State's fluid social structure resulted in constant changes, attributing to the influx of new ideas.²

There has been a strong shift away from the thinking of the creation of the finite object towards evolving a totality of experience. "Work becomes a palpable experience. materials are explored, manipulated and discovered. Work expresses feelings, concepts, moods, and social statements."³

This development stems from "a strongly individual, almost frontier syndrome of doing things oneself along with a broad lack of that preciousness which insulates the vision of fine art as an encapsulated separate experience."⁴ With such a philosophy, crafts became an art form.

A strong figure in the crafts movement is west coast artist Peter Voulkos, who won national acclaim in the art world. Voulkos helped to expedite the fusion of crafts to art. Using clay, he has shown that the material is equally

²Eudorah Moore, "Foreword," California Design XI, Anderson Ritchie and Simon, Pasadena, c. 1972, p. 9

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

capable of expressing an emotion, as well as serving a function.

We have come to realize the value of painting and sculpture (most notably in abstract expressionism)--color can define, create and destroy form. Voulkos works his clay in the manner of painters. He moves and uses it by slashing, dripping or building up the material for expressive forms and textures.

Manipulating and grasping control of form as far as possible in any material is feasible; but one may find that even the slightest concession to function is limiting. An artist must discover time to free oneself from that bondage to push the limits.⁵

The California State College system offers the opportunity to experiment with a broad range of materials. The curriculum encourages freedom in seeking individual exploration. This unrestricted personal direction contributes to the State's diversity in crafts. Along with metal and wood, I had taken several courses in ceramics and fiber techniques. Some of the guiding forces during my days at San Diego State were my instructors in wood and metal, Lawrence Hunter and Arline Fisch.

Larry is very innovative in the strategies he introduced that focused upon fantasy for making furniture (Appendix A, Plates I, II). Fantasy could be anything extraordinary--thus wood could be a fantasy material. With this, he encouraged us

⁵Rose Slivka, Peter Voulkos, New York Graphic Society, New York, c. 1978, pp. 137-138.

to probe every form conceivable, especially forms in nature. This was to be the take-off point towards developing my work. I was excited by creating organic furniture forms through an equally organic, natural medium. Also, southern California provided an environment conducive to the organic, nature-inspired form in crafts: sunny southern California, with its healthful, free lifestyle, and slow-paced society.

Arline Fisch was instrumental in my early development. She helped me to understand my forms, often challenging me by questioning my ideas and pointing out my weaknesses in design. Arline's teaching philosophy may be reflective of her own experiences as a student. She went to Denmark on a Fulbright scholarship to study metal technique and worked for an advisor at his factory. Of this, she said,

I would not like to see that kind of training in the United States where you make people close their eyes for five years while they learn to use their hands. Then you turn around and say how you've got to learn to use your head and your eyes. It's very segregated. It produces very conservative students. When I later taught at the same school, the students thought I was quite mad.

"Her madness was her ability to work with a freedom to which they, in the narrow confines of their discipline, were totally unaccustomed."⁶

Arline also became a window of the crafts world because of her involvement and dedication to the American

⁶Olivia H. Emery, Craftsman Lifestyle, The Gentle Revolution, California Design Publications, Pasadena, 1976, p. 20.

Crafts Council and World Crafts Council. Her achievements as a top jeweler and metalworker, as well as her strong character, are awesome. The fact that she is a wonderful example of a successful woman artist has given me a feeling of hope and additional confidence.

While I was in San Diego, there were others who impacted upon my work. Jack Rogers Hopkins, with his monumental sculptural works (Appendix A, Plate III); Helen Shirk and her beautiful metal forms (Appendix A, Plates IV and V); Wendell Castle, with his use of stack lamination; Robert Strini, who did the impossible in wood sculpture (Appendix A, Plate VI); and Tommy Simpson, with his fantasy furniture, were some of those individuals. These people have been influential not only for the sake of woodworking, but for the forms they have created, or the social statement they express through their work. They have helped to verify the merging of crafts and fine art. Their work exists "...primarily as works of sculpture--as evocative shapes whose utility, in the conventional sense, is secondary."⁷ Incidentally, Simpson and Castle are both, in fact, east coast artists who have a great deal of influence and artistic respect among craftsmen on the west coast. They both support the fantasy approach in woodworking and crafts.

⁷Thomas Simpson, Fantasy Furniture, Reinhold Book Co., New York, c. 1968, p. 57.

. . . I approach the problem through the abstraction of space, composition, line, etc., of furniture and the meaning of furniture. I desire my furniture to depict storage as an adjective as well as a noun. I see an object which is for the safekeeping of goods and take on its meaning as the depository of hopes, loves, sorrows as well as for books, foodstuffs, and underwear.⁸

Tommy Simpson

I must also mention that Sam Maloof and Art Carpenter, two established California craftsmen, are among the first to come to mind when discussing west coast woodworking. However, I have not identified their direct influence on my work.

Building furniture, to me, is equal to making sculpture. Building up masses of wood was my concentration in construction technique. This was only a preliminary step. The exhilarating part was "opening up" the mass with the body grinder, gouges, and surforms and then defining the final perimeters of the piece by insight and imagination. The extra detail was to make it functional and to compliment the human figure. Examples of my west coast work include the teak lamp and music stand (Appendix A, Plates VII, VIII). This fusion of fantasy and nature also influenced my metal-work and ceramics.

Having experienced many craft areas initially, I chose to work primarily in wood. Like my fellow woodworkers, I was attracted to the warmth of the material, as well as its natural beauty. Also, I am challenged by the strong and sometimes

⁸Ibid.

stubborn properties of wood. Not that I wanted to defeat it, but, rather, to explore ways which enable me to work with it harmoniously.

III. TRANSITIONS

By the time I had received my Bachelor's degree and was beginning my first year as a graduate student at San Diego State University, I became restless and I felt a need to move on to something new. At the same time, I had been noticing slides and photographs of contemporary furniture from the east coast. When I first saw these pieces, I dismissed them as being too conventional, too traditional. But I soon became quite curious, as these pieces not only looked different, but the construction was disturbingly different. I was not clear as to why.

Larry Hunter encouraged me to investigate east coast graduate schools. I had very little reference except for an American Crafts Council listing of crafts courses offered in all the states. I was able to view slides of most instructors' work from the main east coast schools that offered furniture design in their graduate program. The person who interested me most was Alphonse Mattia, who taught at Virginia Commonwealth University. Although his work was constructed in the traditional manner, there was the fascinating sculptural quality that I was still looking for that many other instructors did not have. (Appendix B, Plates I, II). It was important for me to remain in touch with the "art" element. If there was one thing

that I felt that I must hold onto, it was the importance of form. I needed a change, to try something different within my field. Stacking wood began to get old, and I wasn't moving in any direction. It seemed that I had exhausted my resources in California.

I transferred to Virginia Commonwealth University. It was very exciting, but the move from the glorious 70-degree weather in San Diego to the 10-degree January chills of Richmond wasn't easy. The transitions that were to be made were numerous: From hot to cold, non-traditional to traditional, liberal to conservative, and more. Needless to say, it was virtually a cultural shock, in terms of woodworking alone. My first conversation with Alphonse went something like this:

A: "What kind of work have you done?"

W: "Stack lamination and carving."

A: "And...?"

W: "What do you mean?"

A: "I mean, anything else? Have you done dovetails?"

W: "What tails?"

A: "Uh--well, never mind. What about mortise and tenons? You probably did those, didn't you?"

W: "Ah, er, what are mortise and tenons?"

A: "...Oh, jeez..." (cigarette drops from his mouth).

Reflecting on that initial conversation, it seems amusing now, but it was a very traumatic experience, growing into a frustration-filled semester, where I had to start all over again.

There was an entirely different set of tools to learn to use (I didn't know what a scraper or dovetail saw looked like) and designing, for the first time, was extremely difficult. "Design around the construction" was the east coast philosophy, and I hated it. My nice, soft, round shapes didn't conform to the straight planes of a dovetail box. I felt as if I were constantly trying to fit a round peg into a square hole. The frustrations of cutting joints and changing my design to work for a technique made me resent traditionalism and for all that it stood. I was being bound by technique, I was walking backwards, I began to understand the phrase, "You can't teach an old dog new tricks."

But in the midst of the turmoil, I also learned more about wood. My reading and work experiences were saturated with new information; this information provided me with a better understanding of the material. In California, I had an inkling about the physical characteristics of wood. I knew that wood moved with change in humidity, but had never recognized the problematic concerns within the nature of wood. Here in the east, furniture is built specifically to accommodate the movement of wood. Drastic changes in weather during the year force this consideration to be made, or the piece might self-destruct. In Southern California, the weather is constant and any changes in humidity are gradual and slight. As a result, we Californians were somewhat unaware of this phenomenon.

I was also beginning to appreciate the value of joinery. Most of the traditional woodworking joints are extremely strong, and some of them are beautiful if used with a sensitivity for proportion and design. Joinery is a trademark of traditional east coast woodworking, particularly dovetails.

Instead of pursuing a Master's degree right away, I chose to study basic woodworking for 2½ years. After one semester at Virginia Commonwealth University, I transferred to Boston University's Program in Artisanry, an outstanding new crafts program. There, I studied with Alphonse (who had accepted the Assistant professorship there) and Jere Osgood. I was also fortunate, as the program allowed me to work with an incredibly talented group of young woodworkers, all of them with the traditional east coast training. It was through Jere, Alphonse and these other students that I was able to soften my stubborn dislike for traditionalism. I learned to accept tradition as a strength, a commitment: it is something to be tied to, it was the feeling of belonging. Jere, with his gentle, yet persistent quality of teaching, made me aware of the strength of subtlety in form. This quality was inherent in his own work (Appendix B, Plates III, IV).

At this time, Jere helped me to refine my work, both technically and aesthetically. My work drastically changed to accommodate new techniques, while moving towards a new frontier (Appendix B, Plates V, VI). I became intent on developing my techniques as a design element. This became my compromise

between "design around the construction" and the west coast "construct around the design." The techniques that lend themselves to this approach were the various laminating processes, such as tapered lamination and compound lamination; staving these laminated parts created even more forms. My work became linear, less massive, emphasizing negative space as an integral element of design.

After two years of "learning the basics" in Boston, I decided that I was ready to put my energies and creativity into a Master's degree at Rochester Institute of Technology and to use the thesis work as a means of summarizing my educational experiences. I feel that this study has allowed me a period of self-direction; it has been an opportunity to define my own ideas through my work. At the same time, I've been able to experiment further with new techniques and woodworking approaches under the direction of two well-recognized craftsmen, Bill Keyser and Doug Sigler.

Historically, east coast furniture design and woodworking go much farther back than the west. It springs from the European influence, from the late 1600's to the present. Early American styles such as William and Mary, Queen Anne, and Chippendale, are attributed to the English influence, where the styles flourished in Boston, Rhode Island, Philadelphia, and New York. Eventually, each individual style began to differentiate between these locations. Our regional styles were in large part created by the influx of groups of European-trained cabinetmakers

to particular areas of this country, where their former techniques and taste were adapted to new environs.⁹ Furniture makers in different areas approached the possibilities and limitations of design and function differently: The taste of each locale developed through previous experiences and the early settlers in the area. This, in turn, conditioned those who later infiltrated the area. Taste was somewhat modified as new groups arrived, bringing new approaches to design; but basically the previous attitude prevailed unless the influx greatly outnumbered the previous settlers, which was rarely the case.¹⁰ An example of the regional differences can be cited in two chairs in the Queen Anne style (1740-1760), one from Philadelphia and the other from Rhode Island (Newport). Some characteristics of the Philadelphia style include the heavily carved, rococo ornamentation, with full, rounded parts. The joinery is comprised of through tenons (exposed), although in rare cases it is not. In the Newport chair, the two-plane style is evident; the parts are flat and straight with very little ornamental carving. The Newport chair is simple, showing the sense of delineated clarity attributed to that area. Also, most Newport chairs are constructed with hidden tenons.¹¹

⁹John T. Kirk, American Chairs, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., New York, c. 1972, p. 5.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 11.

¹¹John T. Kirk, from lecture presented for "Early American Furniture" course, fall term, 1976, Boston University.

It is interesting to note that each dominating location developed an individual approach; the result being that a man trained in one place, moving to another, might take the previous area's technical know-how with him. He would then adopt the exterior or aesthetic taste of his new home.¹² (Even to this day, regional differences still distinguish a local style from another, although the styles have changed considerably over the last 300 years.)

The Bauhaus school paved the way for modern furniture. European designers, such as Corbusier, Rietveld, Van der Rohe, and Breuer still provide a means of stimulation for contemporary designers today. Their work is held in high esteem for the innovation, particularly in the use of new materials and the maximum effectiveness of function in post-World War I form.

But it was Wharton Esherick (1887-1970) who was one of the earliest advocates of the art/crafts synthesis in wood-working: He proved that woodworking could be expressive. Trained initially as a painter, it was natural that he approached his furniture-making as an art. His style (from the mid-1920's) evolved through carved surfaces and complex lines with angular planes to the shaping of curved form. As he said, "Some of my sculpture went into the making of furniture."¹³

¹²Kirk, American Chairs, loc. cit.

¹³Miriam Davidson Plotnicov, "Wharton Esherick," Woodenworks, Minnesota Museum of Art, 1972, p. 24.

Contemporary east coast furniture today still utilizes its European influences. One notable woodworker is Tage Frid, who presently teaches at Rhode Island School of Design (R.I.S.D.). Frid studied cabinetmaking as an apprentice in his native Denmark, a country long noted for its strong woodworking tradition. In 1948, Aileen O. Webb of the American Craft Council asked Frid to teach in this country's first college program for training designer-craftsmen in wood at the School for American Craftsmen (then located at Alfred University).¹⁴ As a result, there are now innumerable reputable woodworking programs on the east coast; most of them headed by some of Frid's best students. All of them are outstanding woodworkers with their own special qualities.

As a result of the various offspring programs, there are definite styles in different areas. In most cases the style is attributed to a dominant school and its instructors. The Boston-New England area has a style that springs from Jere's "minimal" approach--chairs have a certain shape in their stretchers, the parts are thinner, the use of curve is both subtle and strong. Technique becomes a trademark for individual schools. Students at Boston University probed every aspect of compound and tapered lamination. In Philadelphia, students of Dan Jackson, Philadelphia College of Art, had developed a flair for carving; forms had a sense of

¹⁴Tage Frid, Tage Frid Teaches Woodworking, The Taunton Press, Inc., Connecticut, c. 1979, p. XI.

movement. At Rhode Island School of Design, Frid has an incredible amount of experience with veneers, his students have been able to use veneers to create elaborate works. Bill Keyser, who has developed steambending as a form source, provides Rochester Institute of Technology students a good opportunity to work on that technique. Also, work out of Rochester Institute of Technology focuses heavily on production, time-efficiency construction, many pieces are heavier and machined, with less hand-shaping. The variety of east coast work is endless--but there is the technical tradition that ties together most of the work, going back to Frid's "design around the construction."

IV. SYNTHESIS

Looking back on my experiences, and in comparing the east coast with the west, both have their unique differences. These two environments have developed their own sets of values for the crafts. What I am attempting is to synthesize these two experiences through my personal statements.

My first reactions to the east coast were not favorable, as I had mentioned earlier. But in retrospect, amidst all the reconciliation, I see disadvantages to my west coast origins. East coast woodworking is generally conservative; this assumption is perfectly legitimate. The disadvantage is based on my own observation that eastern woodworkers are less open to change, less willing to accept something that is radically different. I feel that this is attributed to their being bound by tradition--"the traditional way is the only way" as a form of dogma. I can also see that it would be very easy to be indoctrinated to certain techniques, where technique, function, and purpose often dictate the form in which a piece of furniture takes shape. This is a limitation in design. But on the other hand, tradition is a strength, spiritually (tradition as something to belong to) and physically. By saying physically, I mean that the techniques utilized in a piece of furniture are incorporated expressly for the physical

strength of the piece. Traditional joinery, when used to its fullest advantage, is almost indestructible. "Form follows function." West coast disadvantages arise from this cumulation of east coast advantages. Because of its "new frontier" evolution, there is a certain lack of tradition, a lack of technique in west coast work. Construction of furniture is somewhat less refined, and at times structurally unsound. This naivete, in part, may be attributed to the general California environment, which doesn't demand as much consideration for the movement of wood. This is acceptable, as long as the piece made in California stays in California. If the piece is shipped to the desert or the tropics, where sudden humidity change occurs, joints will crack with the expansion or contraction of the wood. Therefore, proper construction considerations are necessary.

This technological disregard actually generates new ideas, expands concepts, allows a willingness to take risks, to create new forms. West coast woodworking is still in its formative, developmental phase, and generally has a carefree attitude. There's an air of inventiveness, pushing wood beyond its normal usage. A good example of this attitude is exhibited in the work of Californian Michael Jean Cooper (Appendix A, Plates IX, X, XI). He stretches the use of wood to a heightened level of technology. In his work, the wood is machined and manipulated to where it becomes a machine and visually manipulates itself.

Another reason for inventive directions in Californian furniture is that many influential people like Cooper are artists in the sense that the work needs to be "new." The atmosphere is one of striving for the new and novel.¹⁵

But in conclusion, west coast woodworking is rapidly making progress in strengthening and refining its standards. Woodworking has become as important as its other counterparts in crafts (metal, clay, fiber, glass) and nationwide there are more people getting involved in wood. Also, new publications, e.g., Fine Woodworking, are beginning to serve to bridge communications among woodworkers, and the established crafts magazines, e.g., American Craft, Craft, are giving wood crafts-people the recognition and exposure they deserve. The influx of east coast woodworkers entering California to teach or visit will slowly introduce more technique to the west. And more Californians, like myself, have been trickling across the Mississippi to investigate new ways of working. Hopefully, with more conferences, such as "Wood '79" which was held at State University of New York at Purchase, there will be an organization with the same caliber of "Supermud" (clay) and "SNAG" (Society of North American Goldsmiths).

Reflecting upon my early work, I feel that I have progressed a long way. Increasing my technical ability has proven to be extremely valuable, allowing me versatility in

¹⁵Larry Hunter, personal letter, 1980.

my designing. Studying and working on the east coast has helped me to refine my craftsmanship and design. I have learned to accept and respect traditional woodworking.

However, my early work enabled me to explore in depth my aesthetic values. I had the freedom to move in any direction: With minimal technological knowledge, I had very little limitation. In fact, I often miss the deliriousness, the madness of west coast woodworking; the no-rule ideology of "form first" which often presented some nice surprises.

My work is the result of all things around me; the things that influence me, the things to which I respond. Life is a process, the product is the result of that process. Work in progress feeds the nuclei for new ideas. My life process is not predetermined. It is natural that the objects we artist-craftsmen make are really extensions of our bodies, and their functions should reflect also the life of our minds and spirits.¹⁶

Although my journey from west to east seems long and tedious (I've been in college for 10 continuous years), I wouldn't alter it in any way. The gradual absorption of information has proven to be a substantial learning experience, rather than a quick consolidated jaunt through graduate school.

My main objective presently is to build furniture utilizing the techniques learned on the east coast, while

¹⁶Simpson, op. cit., p. 8.

maintaining integrity for the foundations of design, which I initially explored while in California. The design, the aesthetics of a piece of furniture, is the sole driving force behind my work.

The work I am presenting here will show the cumulation of my learning experiences and background. It reflects and supports what is vital for my personal direction: Visual satisfaction coupled with function.

V. DESCRIPTION OF THE WORKS

Blue Mirror

The blue mirror (Appendix C, Plate I) was the prelude to the tray series and the side table in that it helped me to understand the strength of color. The color defines the form in a quality that is different from using wood alone, in that it changes the nature of the material. On the other hand, the color (aniline dye) is transparent and shows the grain of the wood; thus it does not deny the existence of that material.

The mirror itself, being the reflective, mystical surface, has a partially exposed edge to give a floating sensation. To frame off the entire perimeter of the glass would have locked it permanently and separated it from the viewer. The exposed edges allow the mirror to become integrated with its environment and the viewer.

Sideboard

The solid birch sideboard (Appendix C, Plates II, III, IV) shows an overview of the techniques I had learned on the east coast. It is for the most part a straightforward carcass construction using tapered sliding dovetails for joinery and a tambour for the closure. It also represents a stark visual contrast from my earlier west coast work: It is a straight linear form, with its exaggerated horizontal direction.

The concept of the piece was to make somewhat of a visual pun on the rigidity of east coast woodworking. East coast woodworkers are very scrutinizing of other woodwork, testing the validity of structure and function. I wanted to make a piece of furniture that encouraged this intense inspection ritual. I wanted to give the tambour an illusion of slowly dropping down on its bottom edge toward the left, also bowing outward near the end (a technically invalid feat). In doing this, a door is superimposed into the tambour at the left, and can be opened if you hit the right spot to activate a touch-latch.

The use of technique for a solely visual purpose has become important to me. It was a happy medium between doing sculptural work with traditional techniques. I like stretching the degree of function to the limits, almost to the point of "no-function." The twisted, compound-laminated plane is cantilevered and suspended below the cabinet to give a feeling

of tension in the piece. It also accentuates the right-to-left gesture of the overall form. The process involved in making the form was a whole new project in itself and the fact that it functions aesthetically is something I deem valuable for my self-satisfaction. It stems from my early days of "form first."

"San Andreas's Fault"

An incentive for making this piece was to make a low seating bench (Appendix C, Plates V, VI). I chose a large slab of padouk: I wanted to be able to take advantage of the physical characteristics of this wood, such as its fabulous vibrant color, and its various knots and cracks. In shaping the bench, I tried to work "with" the wood as if I were naturally eroding it. I also wanted to create a vision of what was once there, and changes have altered it to its present state. In doing this, I purposely misaligned or shifted two slabs in opposing directions. To verify the shifting, I placed a spline into one edge of a slab and opened a mortise into the other slab. It looks as if at one time the spline was fixed into the mortise but had since slipped away (hence the title "San Andreas's Fault"). Again the use of technique without function is illustrated through the use of the spline.

The leg structure is simple. One leg is shifted with the top slabs and yet the other is perpendicular to the slabs as if to lock it permanently. The split is transferred to this leg as if to eradicate any chance of permanence.

I see the bench as a more organic structure, using the earthquake as a theme and remembrance of my California days. The construction is the traditional mortise and tenon joinery.

Tray Series

The tray series (Appendix C, Plates VII, VIII, IX, X, XI) has provided a phenomenal burst of energy for me. This series is essentially a private study of form and experimentation with color. I have chosen the tray as the point of departure, from which each piece became more sculptural. It was a big step to move out of the "crafts zone." As a result, the series has unleashed a whole flurry of new ideas and concepts.

I started with the teak tray (Appendix C, Plate VII) and thereafter evolved each piece from the preceding one. As the trays became trayforms, the possibilities became endless. The colors interwove two-dimensions with three-dimensions. The use of colored epoxy resins offered another technique for surface treatment. Joinery became the embellishment.

The tray series represents a new work phase and has been one of my most valuable experiences in my thesis studies.

Side Table

The side table (Appendix C, Plates XII, XIII, XIV) is a grand finale for my thesis. It is comprised of incongruous forms which merge together from all directions to create a balance, a balance through disharmony.

There are exaggerations and contradictions throughout the piece. The table has two very different sets of legs. The pair on the left are two large heavy slabs that appear to be shifting away from each other. The other pair are two delicate tapered legs--a humorous reference to the traditional legs of Chippendale furniture.

The pivoting drawer has a very long tapered front that extends past the table top and curves slightly at the end. The colors (epoxy resins and cray-pas) serve to decorate and break up the surfaces, giving me the opportunity to work in a painterly fashion. My approach to designing this table has been similar to the way I designed jewelry--the idea of embellishing and adornment was combined with woodworking.

The table may very well signify a new direction for my work: My two distinct educational backgrounds have catalyzed each other. The table, as a product of this catalysis, cannot really be categorized as east or west coast work, in retrospect to my earlier work. This evolution is one of many growth rings.

VI. CONCLUSION

The most valuable stimulation for my work has been exposure to the fine arts: sculpture, painting, drawing, printmaking, etc. I think art is a vital part of life, and we as craftsmen should be open to it, to explore the depths of expression. Too often I think craftsmen become wrapped up in their own craft. They fail to look up and around. They start developing tunnel vision, and that can be a form of bondage.

I would like my work to be constantly exploring, maybe employing different purposes. I also want to build sculpture, perhaps even in different materials. I intend to continue building furniture and strengthening my technical abilities.

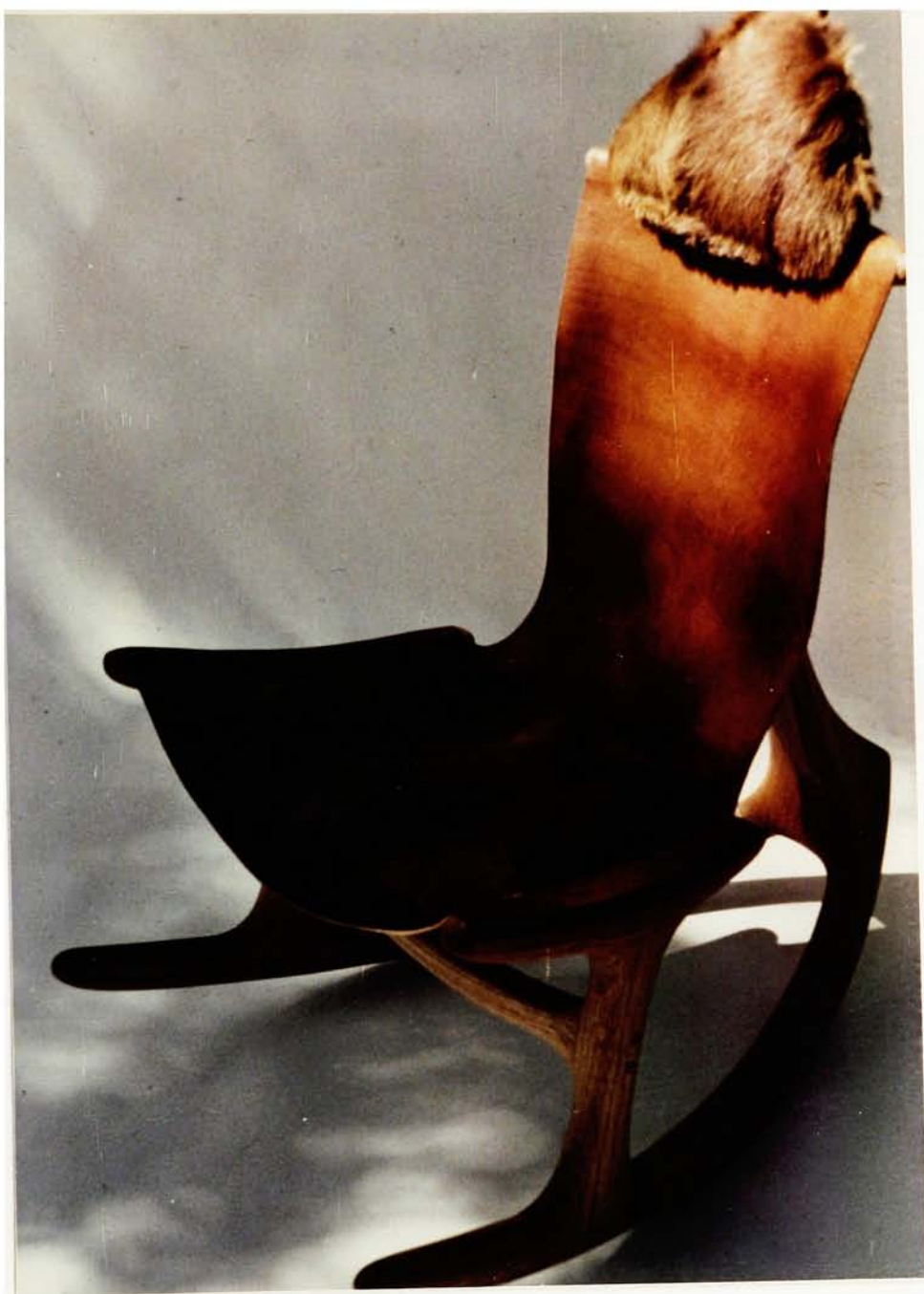
The versatility of Isamu Noguchi has been extremely influential to me. In addition to his stone sculpture, he has done theatre sets, furniture, gardens, parks, and architectural installments. All of his work shows a certain character, a certain emotion. Because of his versatility and flexibility, he is one of our most innovative contemporary artists. He has demonstrated that life is expression. Art expresses.

APPENDIX A

Plates

I.	Pair of Speakers--Lawrence B. Hunter	31
II.	Oak Rocker--Lawrence B. Hunter	32
III.	Clock--Jack Rogers Hopkins	33
IV.	Bracelet--Helen Shirk.	34
V.	Bracelet--Helen Shirk.	35
VI.	Jewelry Box--Robert Strini	36
VII.	Teak Lamp--Wendy Maruyama.	37
VIII.	Music Stand--Wendy Maruyama.	38
IX.	Vehicle--Michael Jean Cooper	39
X.	Music Rack--Michael Jean Cooper.	40
XI.	Captain's Chair--Michael Jean Cooper	41





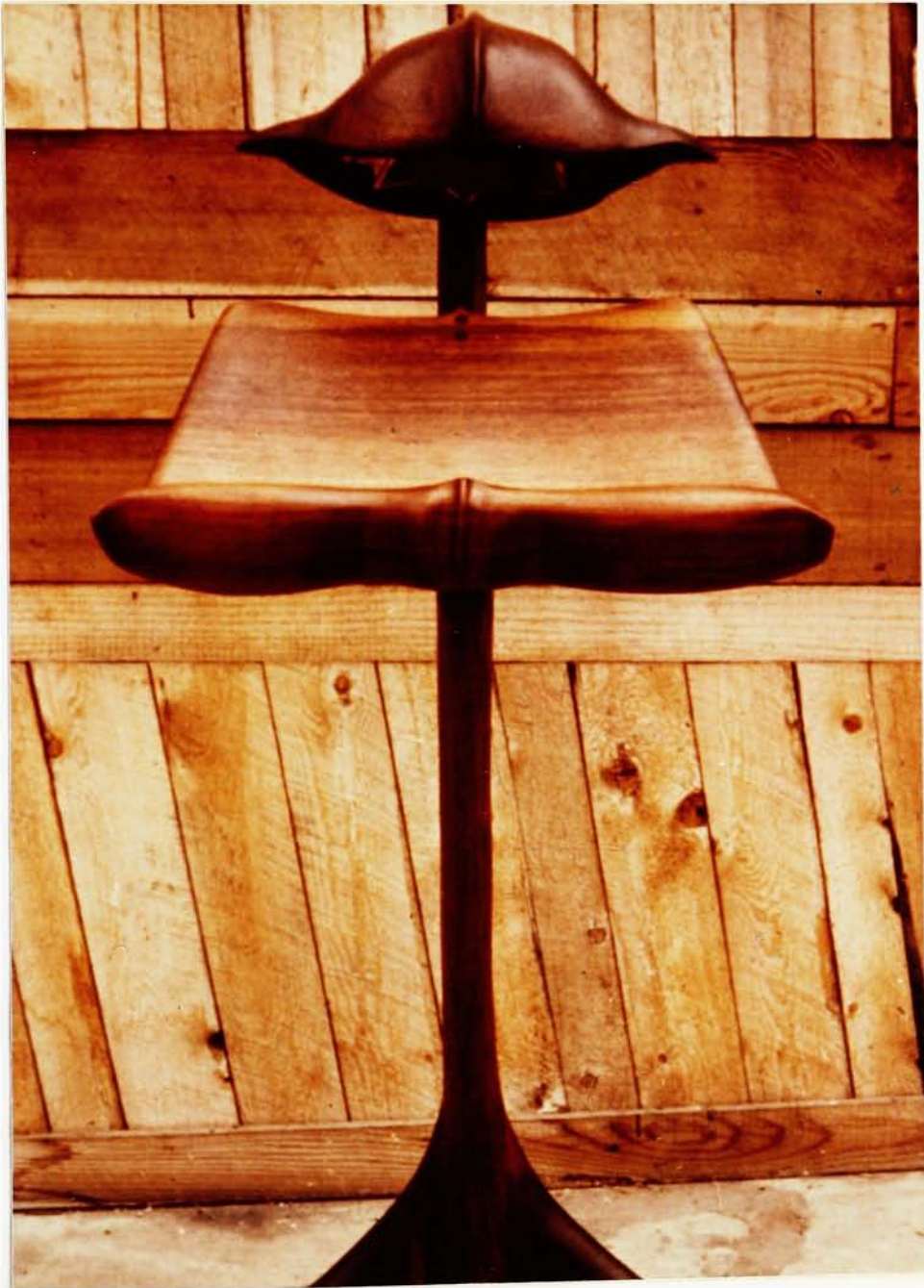


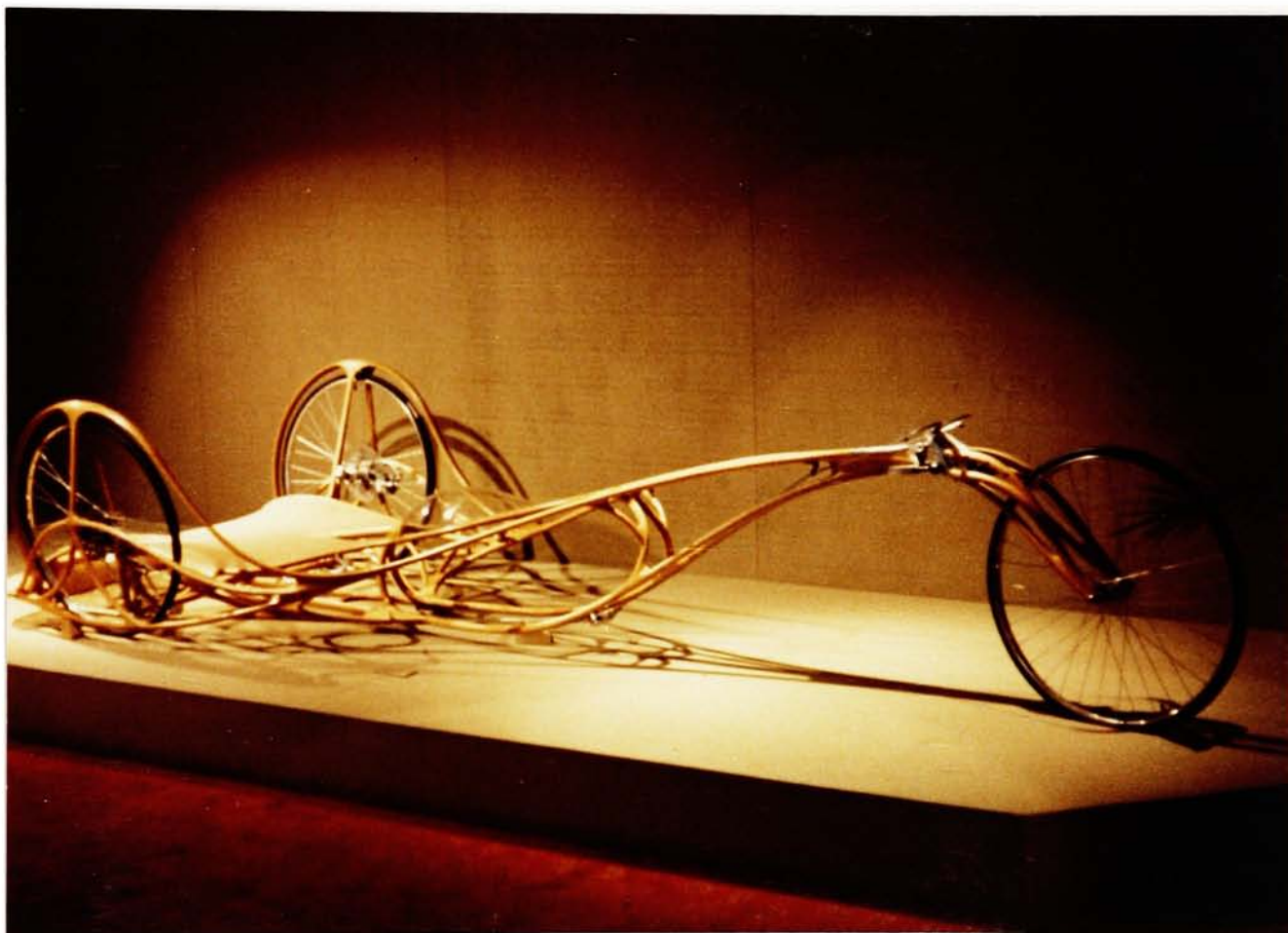
















APPENDIX B

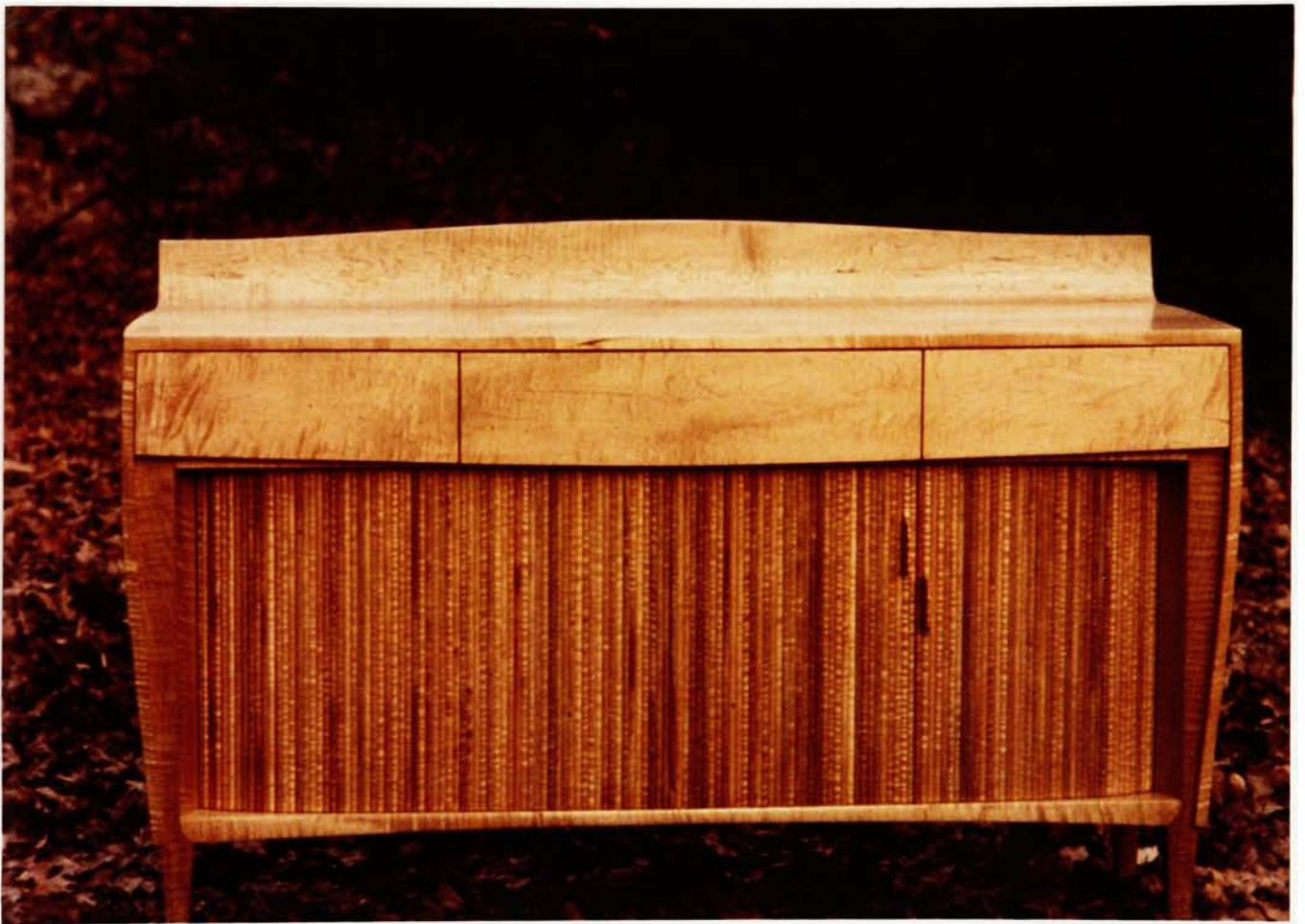
Plates

I.	Rocking Chair--Alphonse Mattia.	43
II.	Blanket Chest--Alphonse Mattia.	44
III.	Side Chair--Jere Osgood	45
IV.	Sideboard--Jere Osgood.	46
V.	Coffee Table--Wendy Maruyama.	47
VI.	Blanket Chest--Wendy Maruyama	48









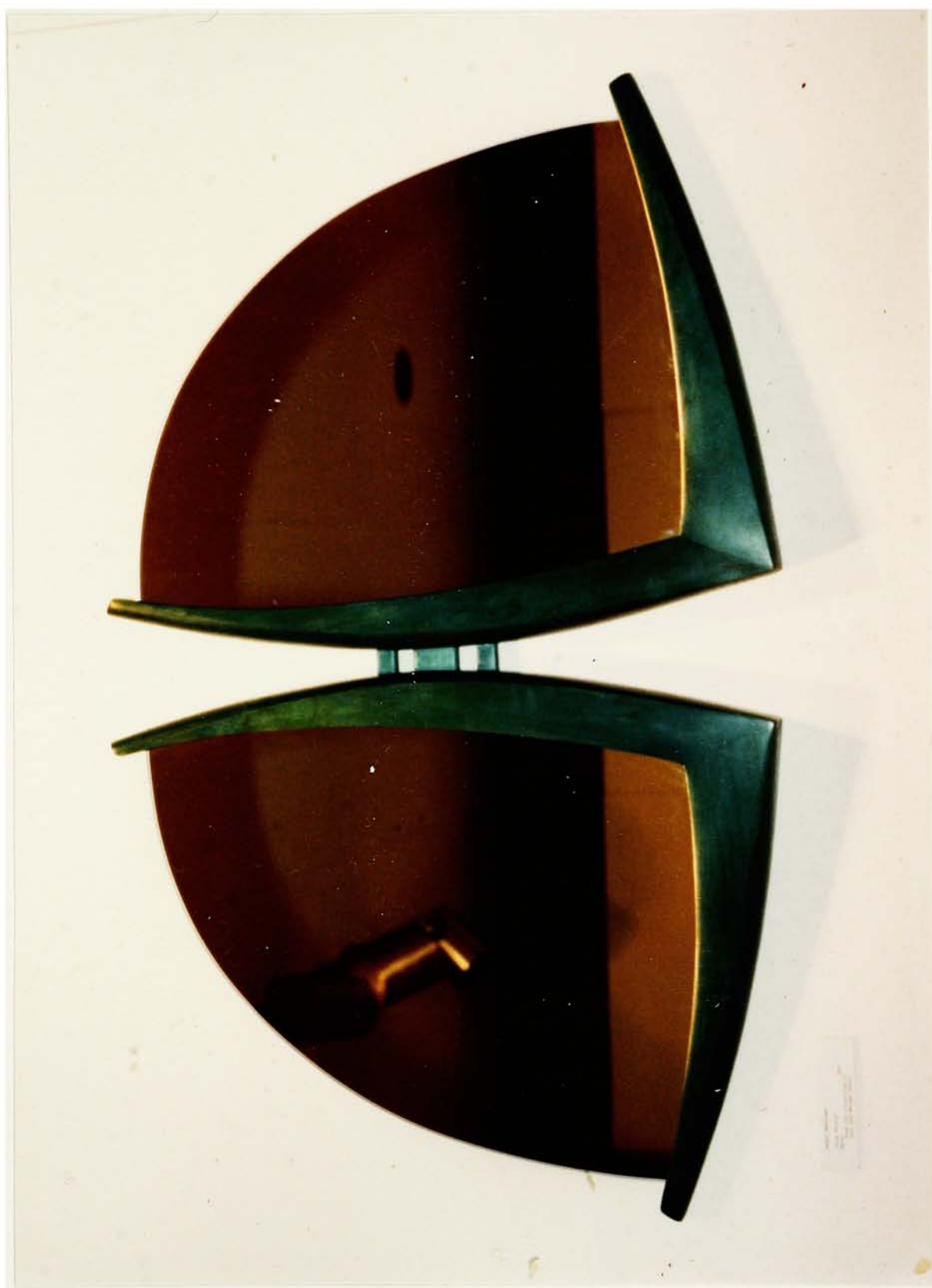


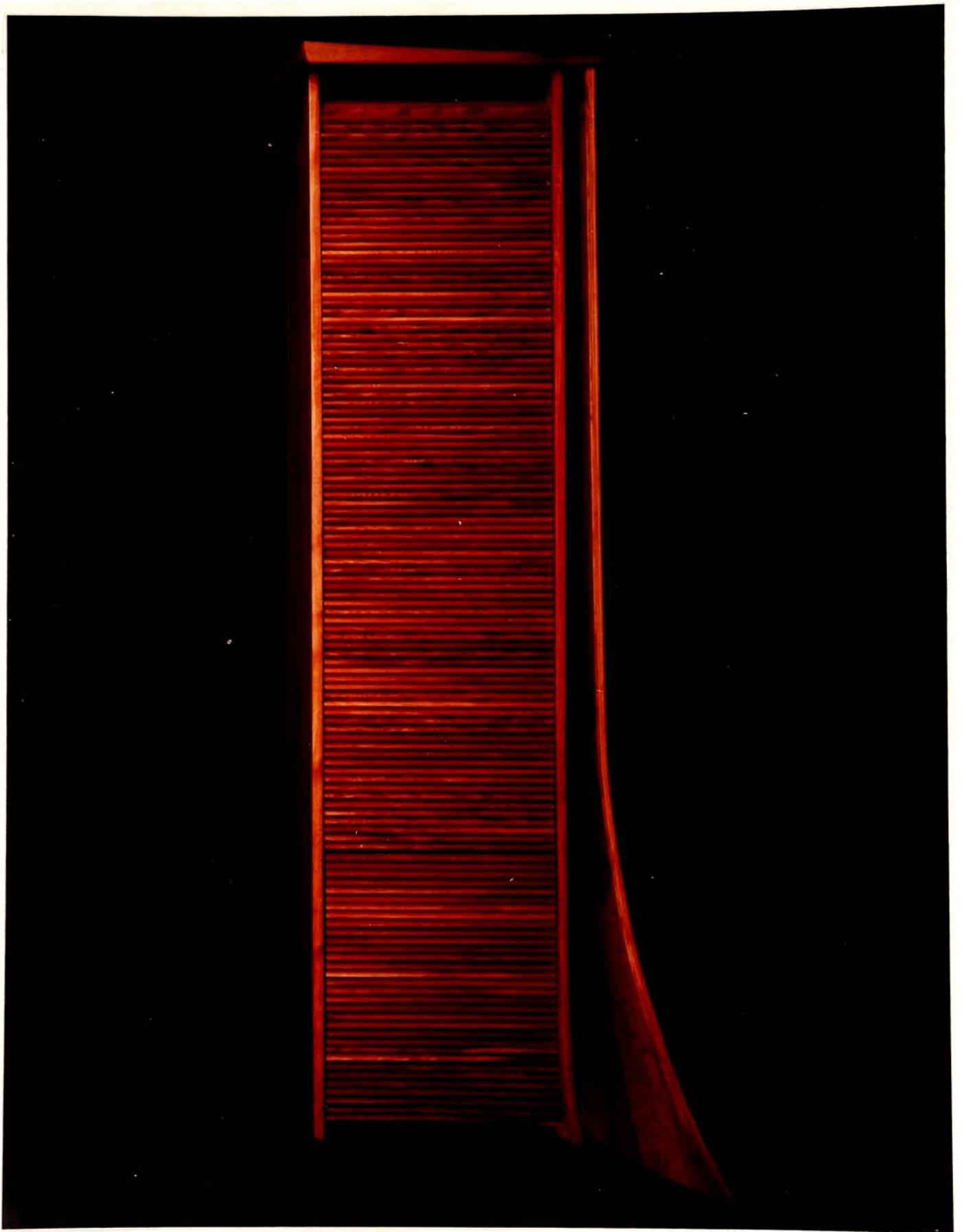


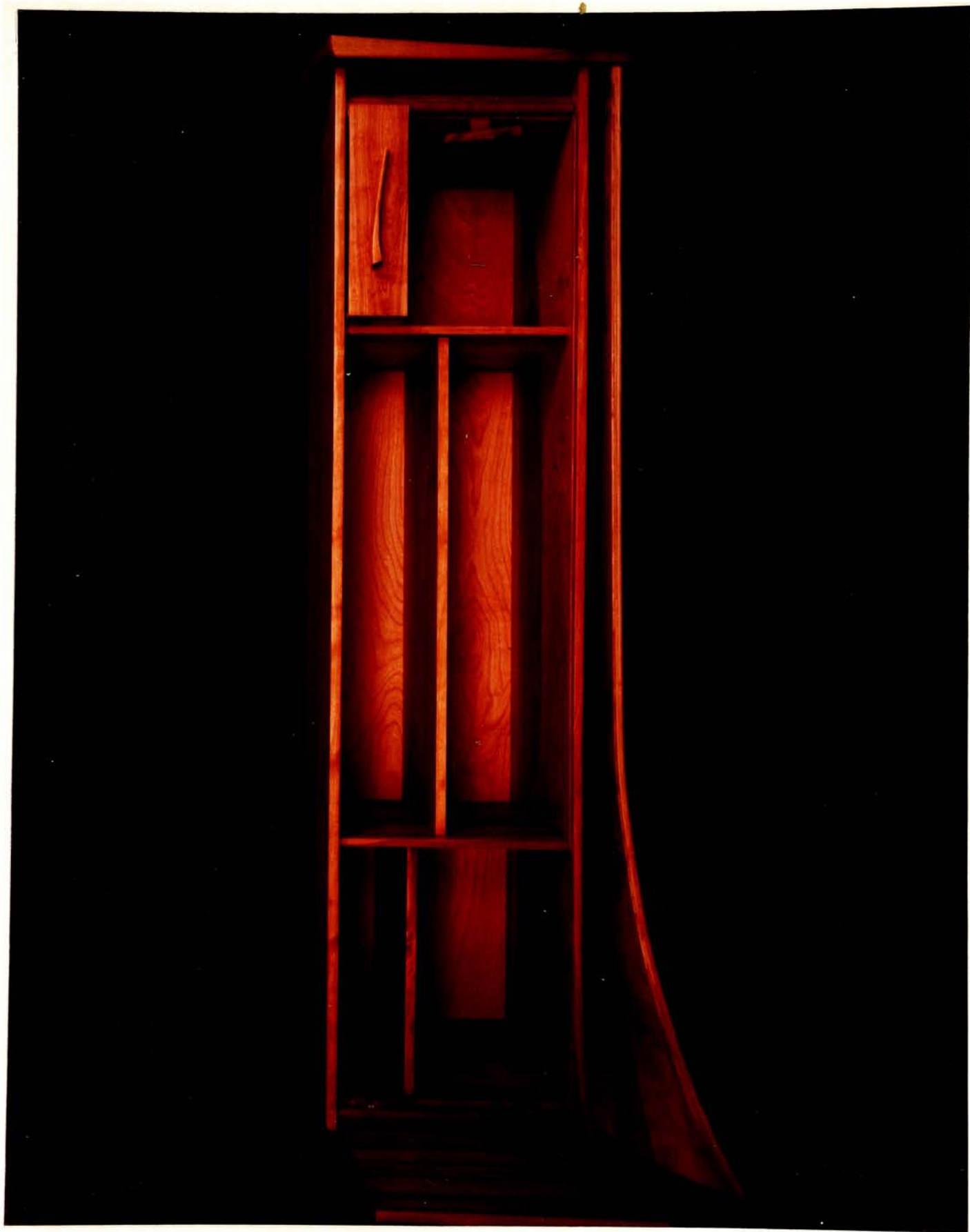
APPENDIX C

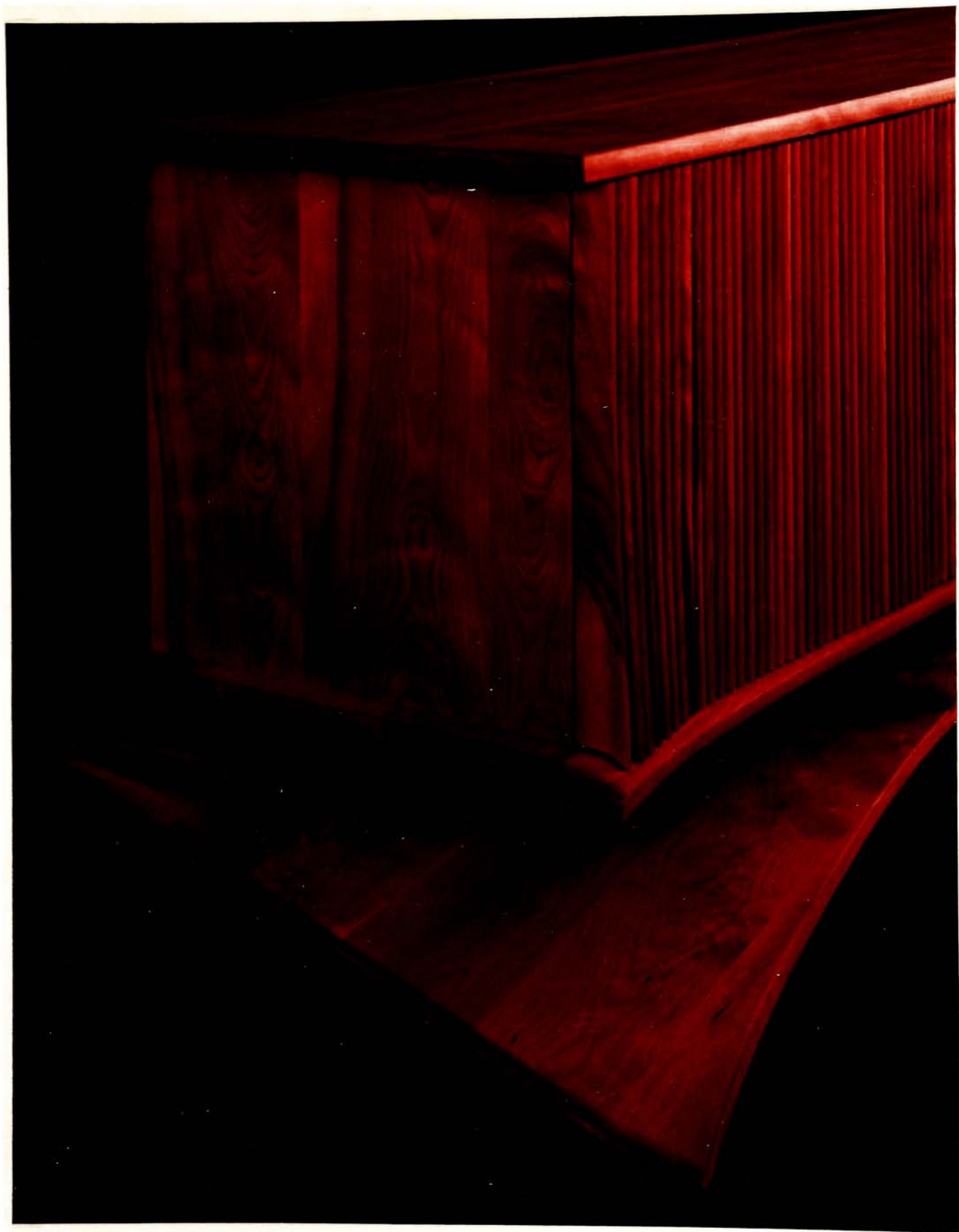
Plates

I.	Blue Mirror	50
II.	Birch Sideboard	51
III.	Birch Sideboard	52
IV.	Birch Sideboard	53
V.	"San Andreas's Fault"	54
VI.	"San Andreas's Fault"	55
VII.	Tray Series #1.	56
VIII.	Tray Series #2.	57
IX.	Tray Series #3.	58
X.	Tray Series #3.	59
XI.	Tray Series #4.	60
XII.	Side Table.	61
XIII.	Side Table.	62
XIV.	Side Table.	63

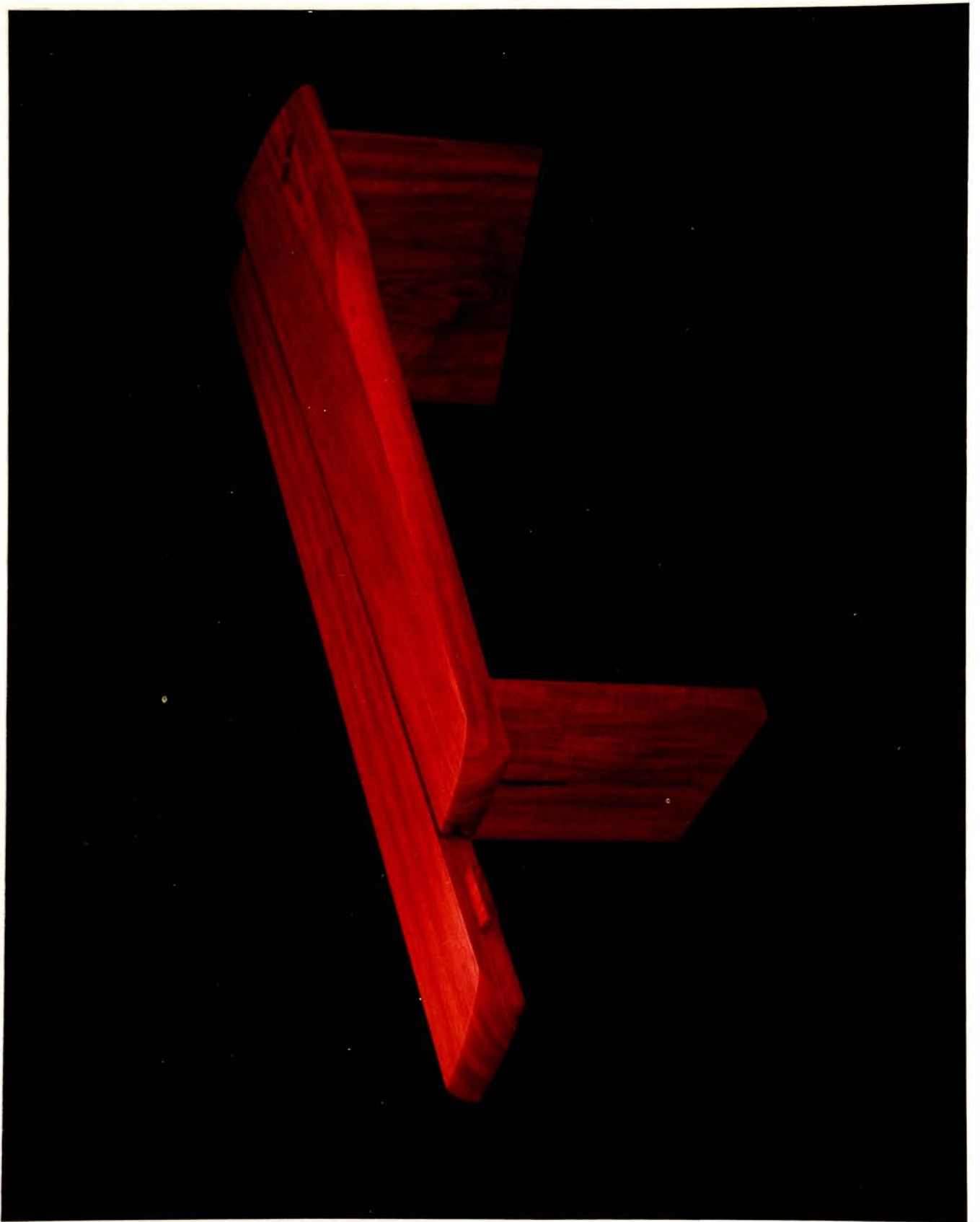








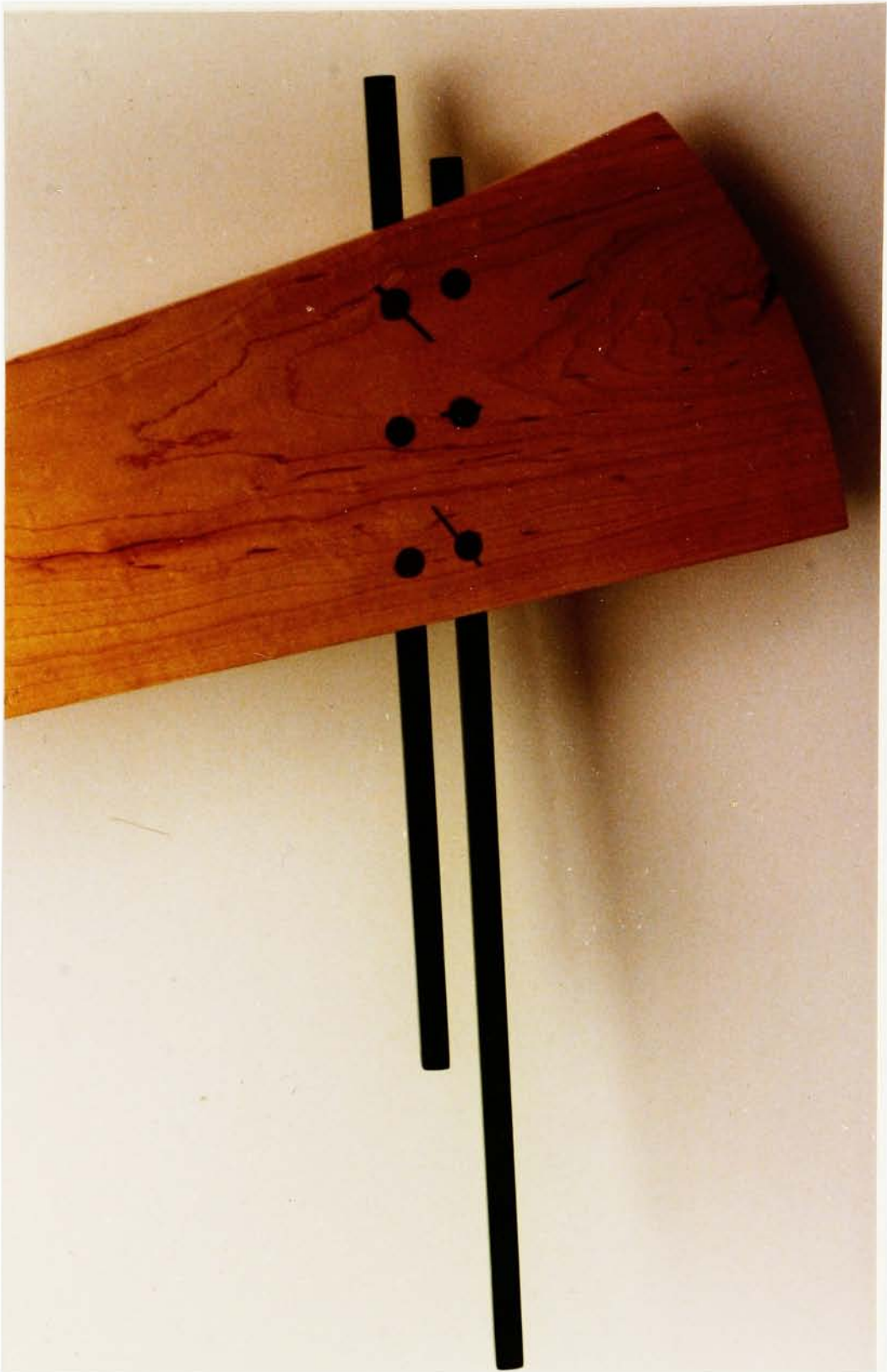




















BIBLIOGRAPHY

- California Design XI. Pasadena: Anderson, Ritchie and Simon, 1972.
- Emery, Olivia H. Craftsman Lifestyle, The Gentle Revolution. Pasadena: California Design Publications, 1976.
- Frid, Tage. Tage Frid Teaches Woodworking. Newtown: The Taunton Press, Inc., 1979.
- Kirk, John T. American Chairs. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1972.
- Simpson, Thomas. Fantasy Furniture. New York: Reinhold Book Co., 1968.
- Slivka, Rose. Peter Voulkos. New York: New York Graphic Society, 1978.
- Webster's Dictionary, 2nd ed. New York: The World Publishing Company, 1970.
- Woodenworks. St. Paul: Minnesota Museum of Art, 1972.