

## **Norman Ziolkowski**

I first took an interest in making wood art nearly thirty years ago. I was employed as a wood patternmaker, a trade requiring skills now antiquated by CNC machining. (A wood patternmaker would fabricate precise, threedimensional forms specified on engineering drawings). The distinct nature of my work at the time pointed me down a creative path.

The company I worked for made aerospace ductwork. Normally ductwork is not elaborate—an extruded rectangular shape of a size appropriate for the amount of airflow. Aerospace apparently requires something different and, in my mind, slightly artistic. The wood patterns I made had curved flowing lines, elliptical cross sections, and unusual junctions. The overall result resembled geometric sculpture. Motivated by my longstanding interest in art and my desire for a more rewarding livelihood, in the years immediately following I began to envision three-dimensional forms to make in wood and hopefully sell as art.

Several years later, however, my aspirations faded—temporarily. An extended bout with rheumatoid arthritis severely damaged my wrists and forced me to give up all forms of manual work—until recently, compelled by my deteriorating condition, I sought help from a hand surgeon.

In the past two years, with my ability to work with wood surgically restored, I have begun realize my aspirations and make the art I first envisioned nearly thirty years ago.