

Celebration
of the

Lidded BOX

artform

Unexpected shapes
delight the eye.

“Large Specimen” by Matthew Hill.
Maple; 12×3". “This piece was made for
a fund-raiser sponsored by an
organization offering health and
reproductive services in Oklahoma
City. The technique is one I saw
Michael Hosulak demonstrate at an
AAW symposium.”

By their nature, lidded boxes invite
being handled, opened, closed,
then opened and closed again.

The very presence of a lid suggests there may be
some small but cherished item inside. In addition
to the visual aesthetic, lidded containers can tease
other senses as well. The holder can savor the
sound and feel of the lid’s fit.

Depending on the design and intended use of
the container, as you remove the lid you may
experience a quick, decisive “pop,” a non-descript
“squish,” a long, gentle vacuum tug, or the no-
resistance fit of a lid designed to be removed with
only one hand. Indeed, the fit of the lid may be the
primary fascination in many lidded containers—
one that will never show in any photograph.

Lidded boxes offer an unparalleled exacting
challenge and opportunity for woodturners. This
is true not only in the design arena but in
execution and preparation of materials as well.

The lid and the base must have pleasing lines
and proportions independent of each other yet
when mated, form an integral whole.

Lidded containers seem to be
particularly suited to the
combination of a variety of
materials—often for inlays or
accents. However, the
preparation of materials used in
lidded containers is of
particular importance.

Often the materials are
roughed out, dried, re-roughed,
and again dried in order to
provide the dimensional stability
required for a subtle fit. Grain
direction can be crucial, as can be
compatibility of texture, color,
and other subtle characteristics.

—Kip Christensen





“Huon Pine Container” by Brendan Stemp. Huon pine and blackwood; $4\frac{5}{8} \times 4 \times 7\frac{3}{4}$ ". “This was commissioned by Vic Wood. The process involved gluing waste timber on both sides of the ‘good’ wood and turning the top surface to get the line I needed. The waste timber was then cut away, and a negative form was turned out of another block.”



“Standing Box” by Hans Weissflog. Ebony, blackwood, and amboyna; $2\frac{3}{8} \times 1\frac{1}{8}$ ". “Amboyna Burl is a beautiful wood, but without sapwood (light color), it sometimes looks too even. That’s why I added African ebony.”



“Nut & Bolt Boxes” by Stuart Batty. French boxwood; $6 \times 4\frac{1}{2}$ ". “I wanted to make a box that had more than just a bottom and lid. I decided to make the threads very noticeable and fun to open, hence the six threads per inch and six separate parts to each box. It also has a hidden chamber.”

Continued

Lidded Box

textures

Artists represented in this gallery:

- **Cindy Drozda**
Boulder, Colorado
- **Kip Christensen**
Springville, Utah
- **Gorst duPlessis**
New Orleans, Louisiana
- **Matthew Hill**
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
- **Bonnie Klein**
Renton, Washington
- **Alan Lacer**
River Falls, Wisconsin

International turners include:

- **Stuart Batty**
Buxton, Derbyshire (UK)
- **Ray Key**
Near Evesham,
Worcestershire (UK)
- **Guilio Marcolongo**
Wonthaggi, Victoria
- **Richard Raffan**
Wonthaggi, Victoria
- **Brendan Stemp**
Horsham, Victoria
- **Chris Stott**
North Lincolnshire (UK)
- **Hans Weissflog**
Hildesheim, Germany
- **Vic Wood**
Burwood, Victoria

When boxmakers explore new surfaces, it's an invitation for admiring hands to caress.

“Lidded Vessel” by Cindy Drozda. Tasmanian eucalyptus burl and African blackwood; 8×8¼". “This piece is the first that I did in this form with a lid and finial. The form is actually my favorite heart shape turned upside down. I am also influenced by Mark Gardner’s lidded vessels, which are upside-down shapes in a different proportion. Since I usually do my typical lidded forms, this piece represents my desire to break away from the ‘usual’ a little bit.”





“Container Series” by Vic Wood. Fiddleback red gum; $3\frac{1}{2} \times 2\frac{1}{2} \times 2\frac{1}{4}$ ”.

“I manipulate the wood and reveal an insight in the new form—which is often obscure before the timber has been worked. I communicate formally through geometric-shaped circles, cylinders, squares, rectangles, and spheres as well as through curved and straight edges.”

“Urn Series” by Gorst duPlessis. African blackwood and pink ivory; $4\frac{1}{2} \times 2\frac{1}{4}$ ”.

“The inspiration came from Grecian urns on pedestals seen in many formal gardens. This piece was turned with two rosettes rubbing at the same time a six and a twenty-four; the taper is 9 degrees. The inside is identical to the outside. The lid is reverse-tapered to fit the box and fluted (24). The top is a shallow-spiral cut. My major problem was chucking the piece.”

“Antler Series” by Kip Christensen. Elk antler, ebony, and coral; $3\frac{1}{2} \times 3\frac{5}{8}$ ”.

“In turning antler I discovered for myself that nature fashioned this extraordinary material to withstand considerable abuse. It is quite dense yet not excessively brittle. It has good working properties and can be turned using standard tools and techniques.”





“Royal Box Again” by Guilio Marcolongo. West Australian she-oak; 4½×3½". “While in England in 1999, I noticed royal-crown emblems everywhere. After a lot of thought, I used my scallop-cutting technique on the base to develop the crown design. The small scallop design surrounding the finial on the lid adds royalty to the piece.”

“A Flask Box” by Chris Stott. Osage orange and violet rosewood; 4¼×3⅛". “This box is inspired by Scandinavian water flasks. It’s turned on three centers. This is something of a challenge but very satisfying when completed.”



“Square-Topped Oriental Box Series” by Ray Key. African ebony bodies and rippled ash tops. “I have always had a love of oriental form, and that is what inspired a recent range of boxes. The tops were turned as squares on a vacuum chuck. I shaped the inside concave first. Then I inverted and turned the underside and executed the lid fit. Gouge and shear scraping produced a quality surface.”

Lidded box

curves Graceful curves appeal to the aesthetic eye.



“Low Rider Box” by Alan Lacer. Mesquite; 2×3”.

“I have done a series of very shallow boxes that usually are intended to be opened with the palm of the hand. With this style, I have added a small pull and a pie-crust edge for the lid.”



“Lidded Box” by Matthew Hill. Mahogany and ebony; 3½×8”. “All of the carving on this piece is done with a V gouge. Although it is simple, it requires complete focus and lots of tool control. The carvings are accentuated by covering them with an oil-based glaze that is wiped off of the high points.”



Lidded Box

detail

For collectors admiring lidded boxes, acquiring the first container is just the first step in a journey devoted to detail.

“Untitled Series” by Richard Raffan. Forest she-oak; about 2" in diameter. “These boxes have suction-fit lids. They are designed to be used, and I think they look best assembled into sculptural groups. They are architecturally inspired—initially by the Brighton Pavilions but closely followed by various magnificent buildings across Eurasia.”



“Threaded Spin Top Box” by Bonnie Klein. Holly; 3×2½". “The pure whiteness of the holly seemed like the perfect canvas to execute the rose-engine work, which I did on my Lawler ornamental lathe.”



“Assorted Boxes” by Hans Weissflog. “In some of my boxes you find palm seeds and palm fruits together with all kinds of exotic woods. However, most of my boxes include African blackwood in combination with another hardwood. Nagel, my wood dealer in Hamburg, has 120 different species available, so it is always an adventure to visit him. I like to be there when a new shipment just arrives.”



