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FALL 2006 \$2.95



PARADISE IN PATAGONIA



LYNNE YAMAGUCHI

Three years ago Lynne Yamaguchi said good-bye to corporate America to pursue her artistic dream of becoming a lathe artist. At the time she had no formal training and no assurance of success. "I always felt connected to trees," explains Yamaguchi, who in her first class immediately produced a presentable bowl.



"The wood was calling me," admits Yamaguchi. Apparently, it has not stopped speaking to her since. Yamaguchi notes that she sits with a piece of wood "for a long time" before turning it. "Even when I start turning," she adds, "the wood keeps speaking. You always find surprises."

Born in Maine, Yamaguchi eventually moved to the Southwest, where she feels an artistic kinship with the region's open spirit. "That wildness and adventure are in my art," she says. "I'm very American



Wing and a Prayer, Brazilian cherry



Basin, redwood

in my sense of independence and freedom." She is also influenced by the desert's strong sense of space and possibility.

Yamaguchi's design sense, though, is undeniably Japanese. "I was familiar with the vessel form from Japanese ceramics," she recalls. Her subtle forms reveal a simplicity that feels Asian in its elegance.

"I ALWAYS FELT CONNECTED TO TREES."

"There's a concept in Japanese culture called *wabi*," observes Yamaguchi. "It means finding the beauty in the humble." Yamaguchi cites "presence" as the quality she most strives for in her work.

Her forms often start narrow and open wide, adding to their strong spatial element. Many of her bowls seem to float in their subtle curves and delicate lines. Yamaguchi is well aware that lathe art has traditionally been male-dominated. "Many people see a feminine aspect in my work," she says.

In 2005 Yamaguchi produced a series of turned pieces called *Flight*, exploring different aspects of flying. "These pieces had



Untitled, carob wood

a strong sense of gliding—the emotional sense of spilling over as a positive force," she explains. Yamaguchi, who will take part in the 2007 International Turning Exchange in Philadelphia, wants people to touch the wood. "I want them to feel the wood's energy," she says, "and to connect to the life of each piece."

Lynne Yamaguchi's wood art is available at the Tucson Museum of Art gift shop, 140 N. Main Ave., 624-2333, and at Details Art & Design in Gallery Row at El Cortijo, 3001 E. Skyline Dr., 577-1995, or check out her website at www.lynnemaguchi.com.



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