

WORK

by Andy McConnell



GRAY SKY GALLERY
April – June 2021



My art has evolved from the dust, muck and din of construction sites. Scribing trim became carving forms; gluing up counter slabs led to making large, stable carving blanks; finishing blackened steel developed into staining split or carved cedar. I scrounge for my materials. Much of the wood I work with has been salvaged from

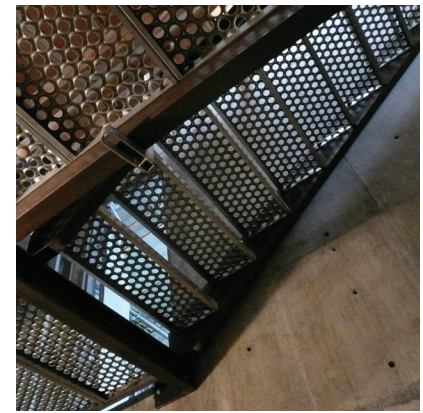
job-site dumpsters, or friend might call when they have a tree taken down. People give me boards they've been holding onto for years or I stop the car when I see a "FREE" pile on the side of the road. Occasionally, I manage to find more precious materials, like cedar burls: what gold is to aluminum, in my mind. Despite their calm compositions, making these pieces requires a lot of lifting, pounding, noise and dust.

Working outside, my love for the Pacific Northwest has deepened. Feeling the heat radiating from my hands after a day spent laboring in cold rain grounds me and pulls me into this place. On grey days, the subdued light forces me to look more intentionally and I appreciate the nuance I see. The "Here" here is everywhere for me. Sometimes, I see perfect compositions amid the ordered chaos of a job site, others, in natural settings. Regardless, I'm always looking and do my best to communicate this love of place into my art as I explore themes of difference and connection; paradox and clarity; absence and containment.

This group of pieces was made over the course of four years (2016-2020) and represents my playing with different techniques. After hollowing a pair of cedar bowls out with fire, the inside of my nose smelled like



smoke for about a week. It was a fun experiment, but I much prefer carving with a die or angle grinder or sharp gouges and crooked knives. While not the most cohesive body of work I've put out, I sought to tie it all together using many of the various techniques I've tried with "the Connector," the piece on the cover of this booklet.



I'm grateful to the following people for their help getting this show and booklet together: Matt Soma and Dave Kirkendall for sage woodworking help; Holli Margell and Arthur Nakata for their keen eyes photo documenting my work; Alek Vila for his great graphic design; my wife, Nicole Nicolaisen for putting up with my constant dust and crazy long hours working in the studio after getting home from my job; and Laura Van Horne and Genna Draper, for inviting me to share this work in their space, Gray Sky Gallery.

Please check out some of my other work on my website and follow me on Instagram.

mcconnellart.com

[instagram.com/AndyMcConnellArt](https://www.instagram.com/AndyMcConnellArt)





The Moon and Stars (jingle in the sky like wages)
23" x 25" x 5" / 2019 / carved red cedar burl scrap





Flying Bowl 1
24" x 16" x 12.5" / 2016 / carved red cedar



Flying Bowl 2
27" x 20" x 16" / 2016 / carved red cedar



Toalma

9" x 9" x 8.5" / 2018 / carved madrone on cedar base



Ptui Tui

9" x 10" x 4" / 2017 / beach rock on carved madrone



The Veil

15" x 8.5" x 1" / 2018 / carved madrone





Night Owl
16" x 16.5" x 4" / 2018 / carved red cedar



Clovis

14" x 21.25" x 2.5" / 2017 / carved red cedar burl





Leather Cat 1

21" x 25.5" x 8" / 2020 / carved yellow cedar



Leather Cat 3

20" x 23" x 7" / 2020 / carved yellow cedar



Leather Cat 2

23" x 25" x 11" / 2020 / carved yellow cedar



Backwards Music
23" x 25" x 5" / 2020 / carved red cedar





Relics I and II
11.5" x 7.75" x 6.5" / 2020 / carved douglas fir

Relic III (previous page)
7" x 10.5" x 4" / 2020 / carved yellow cedar





Inside Outside 1
20" x 16" x 5.25" / 2020 / carved madrone



Inside Outside 2
22.5" x 19.25" x 7.5" / 2020 / carved madrone



Parthenogenesis

22.25" x 8" x 6.75" / 2019 / carved red cedar



Night Floe
31" x 30" x 2.5" / 2019 / carved red cedar



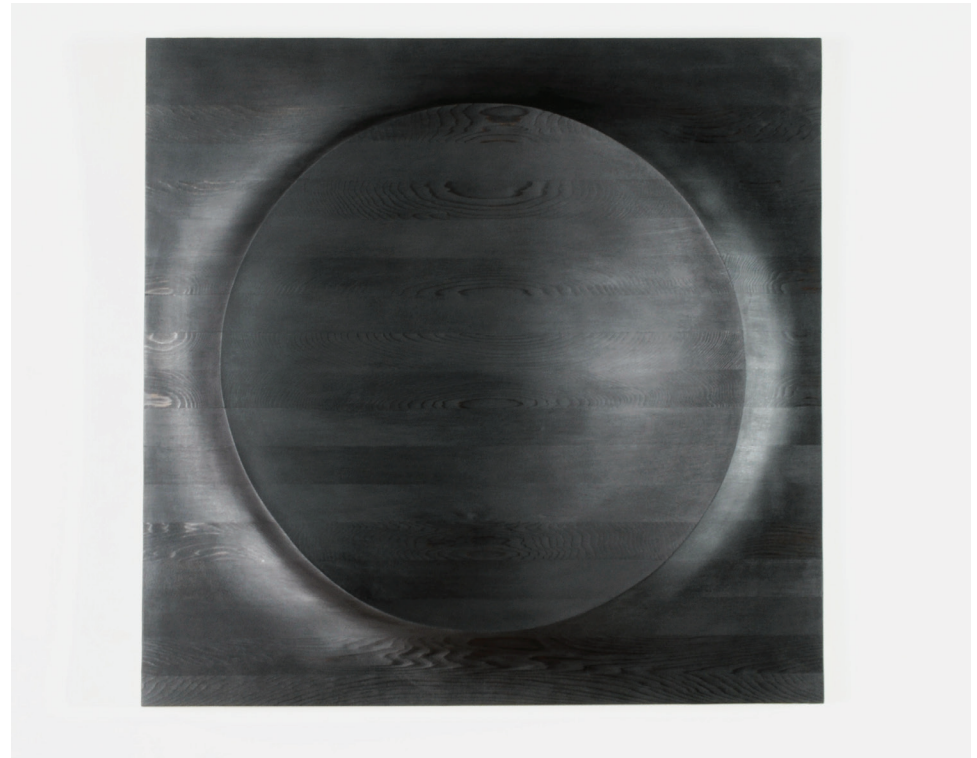
Something From Nothing 1
14.5" x 17.5" x 4" / 2019 / carved red cedar burl



Something From Nothing 2
14.5" x 19" x 3" / 2019 / carved red cedar burl



Hollow Sky
24" x 21" x 8" / 2020 / carved red cedar

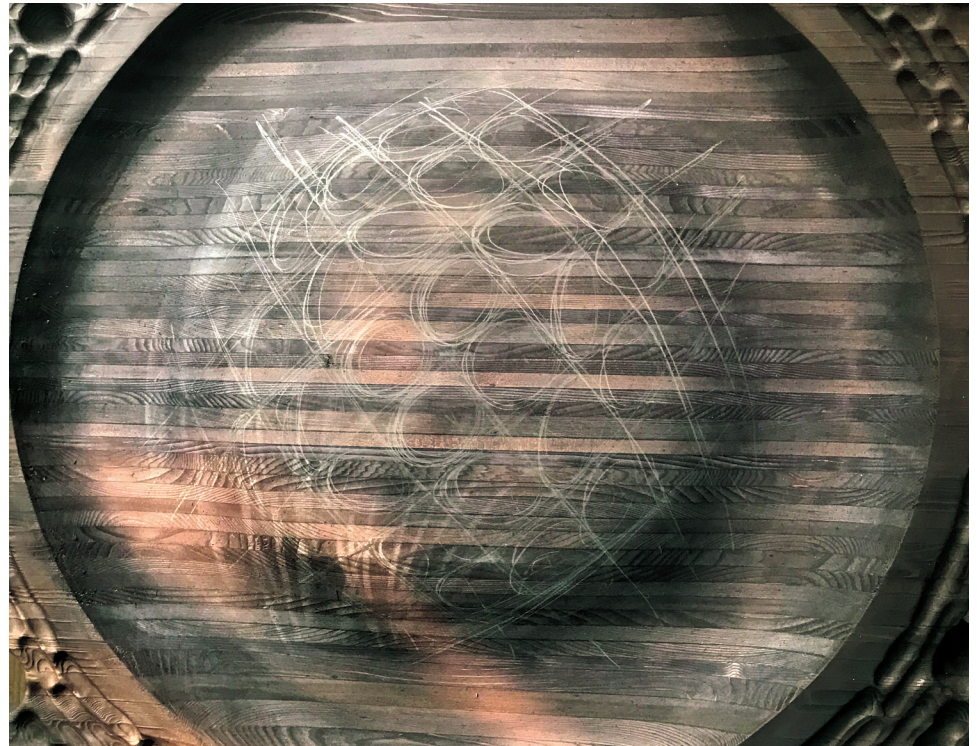
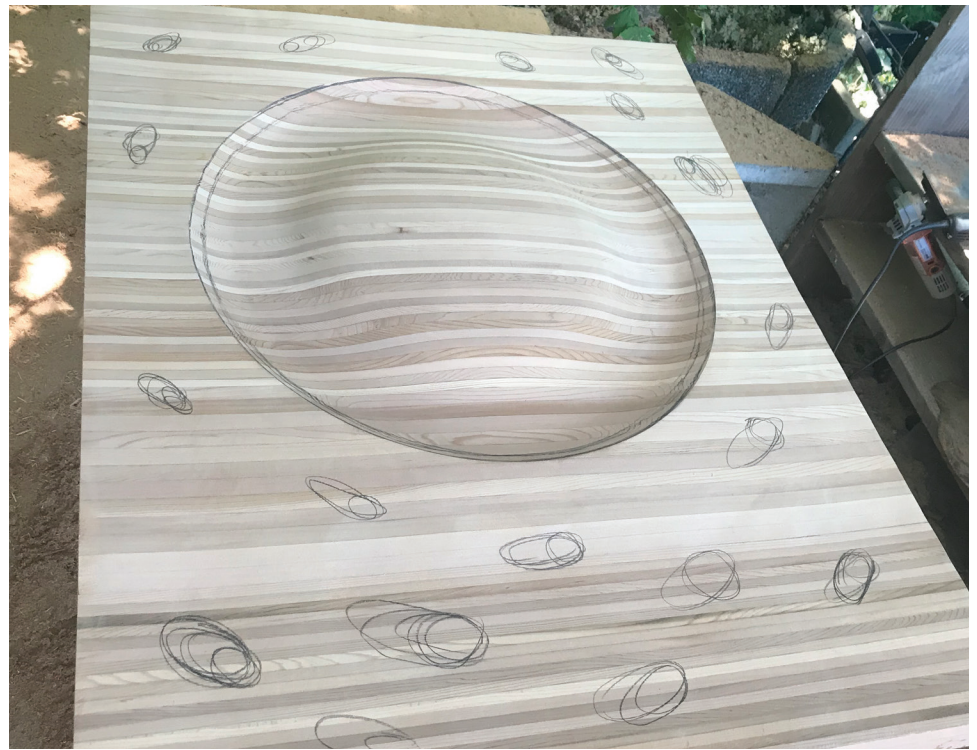


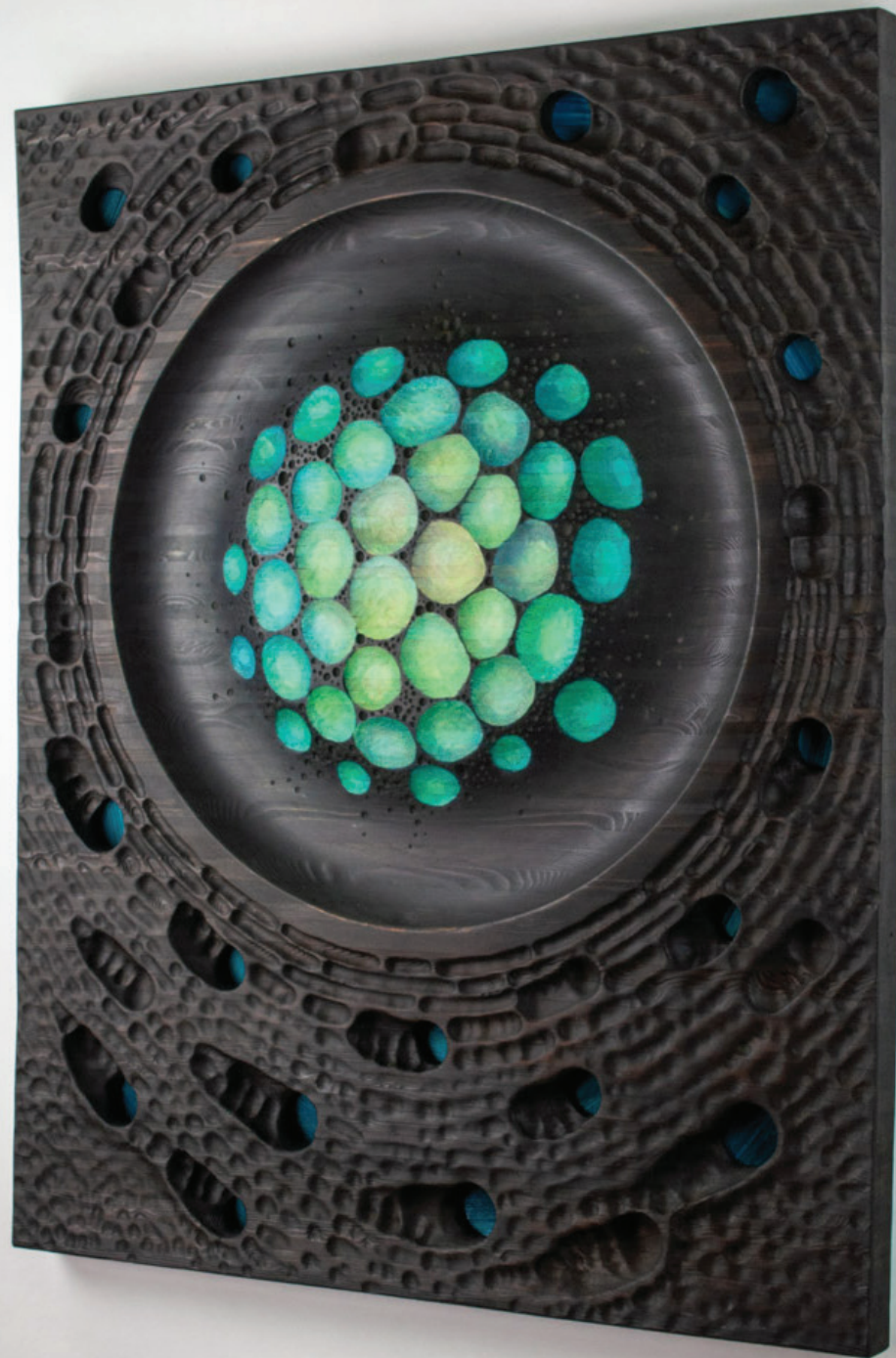
Return 1

20" x 20" x 2.5" / 2020 / carved cedar

Return 2

25.5" x 25" x 2.5" / 2020 / carved cedar





The Connector

33" x 41" x 1.75" / 2020 / carved red cedar



KEROUAC CREEK WORK TUNE

After three days of summer rain,
I'm back splitting cedar
in the hills

The horse trail
is muddy
and rainclouds dapple
the peaks.

But work goes well,
the saw and truck run fine;
cedar splits
into fifty
sturdy rails,
and by evening
- truck loaded, tools packed away -

the moon and stars
jingle in the sky
like wages.

(from THE RAINSHADOW, by Mike O'Connor, Empty Bowl Press, 1983)



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