



## Oakhurst artist Christopher Cantwell to show in San Francisco this weekend

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By: Tiffany Tuell

Oakhurst resident Christopher Cantwell will be showcasing his uniquely crafted wood art pieces at the American Craft Council Show at Fort Mason in San Francisco Friday through Sunday, Aug. 3-5.

A self-taught woodworking artist, Cantwell fell in love with the art of woodworking and won first place as a 12-year-old in the Central California Art League Young Masters Art Competition for a balsa wood sculpture. The only help he had with his woodworking was in his junior high and high school shop classes. Cantwell made cabinets, guitars, small furniture, jewelry pieces, and whatever clients would request.

Since high school, woodworking is all Cantwell has done for a living and he started his own business in 1979. In 1982 he moved Oakhurst to be close to Yosemite because he was an avid rock climber.

"I like surfing, snow boarding, and rock climbing and when I started surfing at 40 (years old), you could see it in my style with how it flowed," he said.

Cantwell said he likes to work from the shapes and patterns already in the wood.

"I love the wood and it's natural beauty and playing off it with own ideas," he said. "It's exciting finding new woods and seeing how they turn out."

Pamela Diamond, director of marketing and communication for the American Craft Council, said Cantwell's work is hard to classify in terms of contemporary art, craft or even among his peers in the field of wood.

"His inlay wood work, which is strongly influenced by nature and his exploration of forms and functionality in each new piece, is unprecedented," Diamond said. "Most importantly, his work presents a bold approach to contemporary sculpture, utilizing the natural beauty of wood and the exquisite craftsmanship to instill concept and narrative. His non-traditional approach to wood working, coupled with the exclusive techniques he developed to create his work, make him a unique and welcome addition to the American Craft Council Show."

Cantwell has been regularly showing at American Craft Council Show since 1984. The show features more than 230 artists from a variety of mediums.

More than 100 galleries have exhibited Cantwell's art including Stavast Gallery in Oakhurst.

Stephen Stavast said he choose to represent Cantwell because his work was "simply amazing."

"He had a great quality and craftsmanship in what he created," Stavast said.

"Christopher's work was one of the best I've seen and I wanted to show his work along with mine, it was complimentary."

Others galleries that have shown his work include the Long Beach Museum of Art, the Museum of Art and Design in New York, and Oxo Tower in London, England.

Details: [shows.craftcouncil.org/sf](http://shows.craftcouncil.org/sf)