

DEZIGNLICIOUS

ALL THINGS WILD AND WONDERFUL...

MAD for MAD: "AGAINST THE GRAIN"



Lucky me. I am a Circle Member of MAD here in New York City and get to go to all sorts of private guided tours of the various exhibitions. There is nothing better than having a curator of a museum event personally guide you around an exhibit...everything you already thought was fabulous and interesting now seems just that much more so, and begins to take on new meaning.



MATHIAS PLIESSNIG, "THONET NO.18"

MAD, aka Museum of Arts and Design, (see post) is my go-to Museum for **REALLY** interesting contemporary arts & design. Every exhibition is cutting edge and beyond marvelous and will definitely force you to re-evaluate those old adages, "*what (really)is art?*" & "*what (really) is furniture?*"



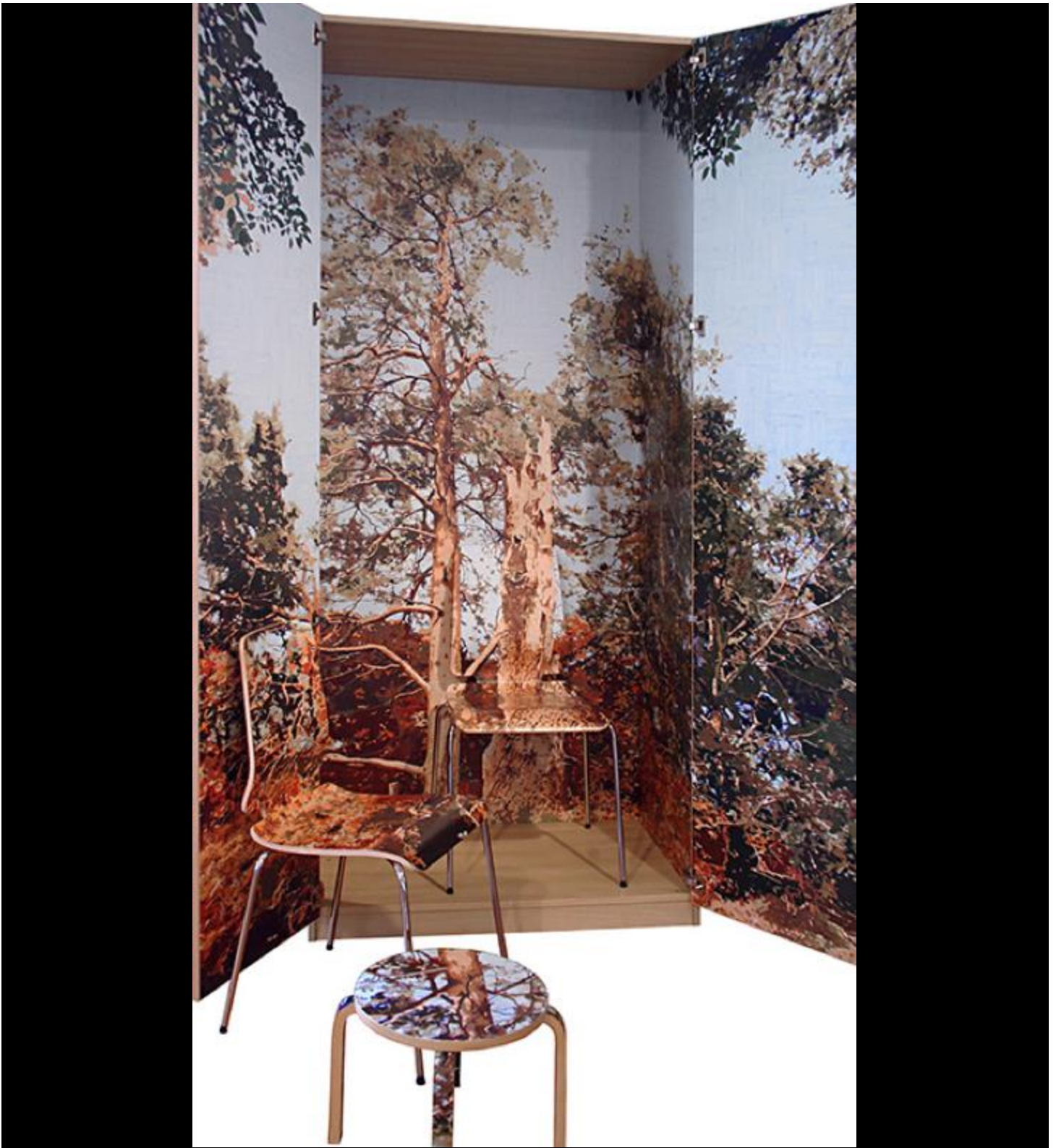
PABLO REINOSO, "TWO FOR TANGO, FOUNTAINBLEAU SUITE"

Last week I had the good fortune to tour the **"Against the Grain"** exhibition with **Lowry Stokes Sims**, the curator of the show, and a group of like minded patrons of the museum. The show is marvelous and exciting and forces you to think about wood as an artistic element in a whole different way. BTW, the name for the exhibition is rather clever, don't you think?



RICKY SWALLOW. "COME TOGETHER"

Here's the catch. Each piece comes with it's own message, some more intense than others, but all with some message about how wood can be used to transfer the idea and feelings of the artist creating the piece.



GARY CARSLY, "D.100 WAVE HILL (Tree Struck By Lightning)"

Some of the work has been crafted by hand and some by computer generated programs. Some pieces have a purely artistic theme and some have hidden political messages. Others are examples of the re-use and re-purpose of wood into artistic assemblages. Other wood creations pose questions how we live today within a highly urbanized society, while some simply are but a bit of whimsical "woodworking."

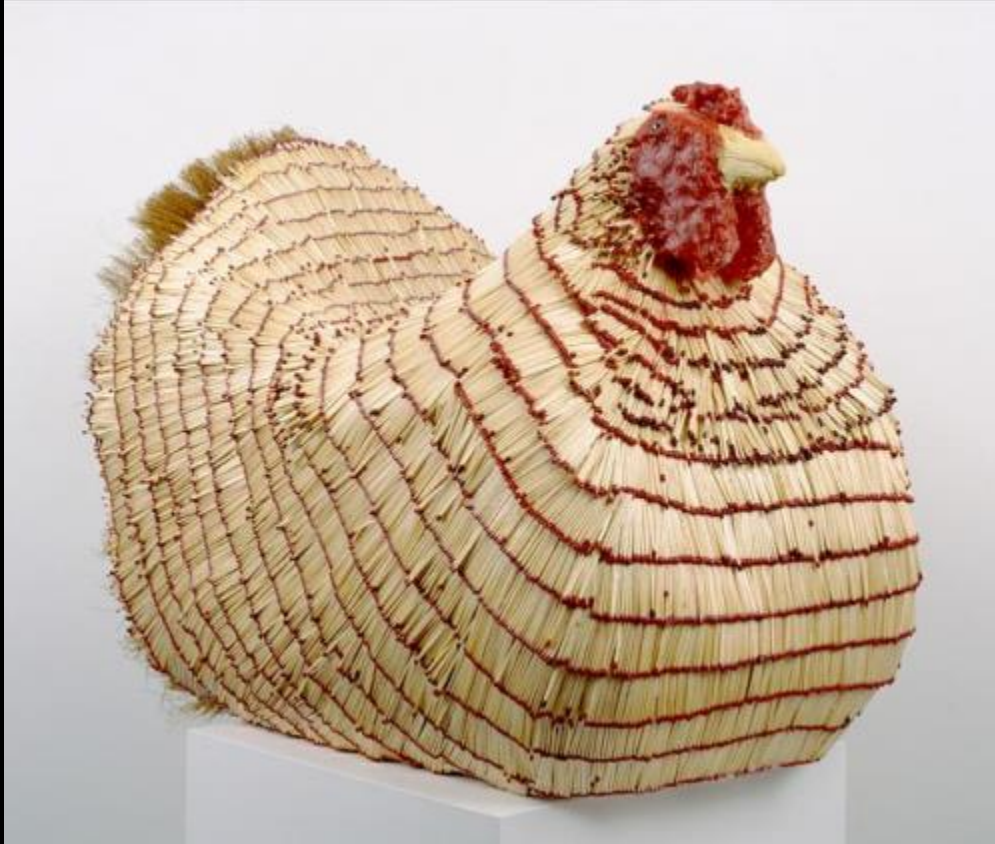


COURTNEY SWIFT, "CHEST OF DRAWERS"

In the lobby as you enter the museum is a huge assemblage of antique chairs doweled together in a circle and suspended from the ceiling. Created by **Marc Andre Robinson** and called "A Year and A Day" it speaks to the re-purposed of discarded materials and it is rather impressive.



That there could be such a thing as "political wood" is an intriguing thought. [Willie Cole](#) has constructed a large chicken entirely of wooden matches that he calls "**Malcolm's Chicken**," which alludes to Malcolm X and his incendiary comment, "the chickens will come home to roost," upon learning of the assassination of JFK.

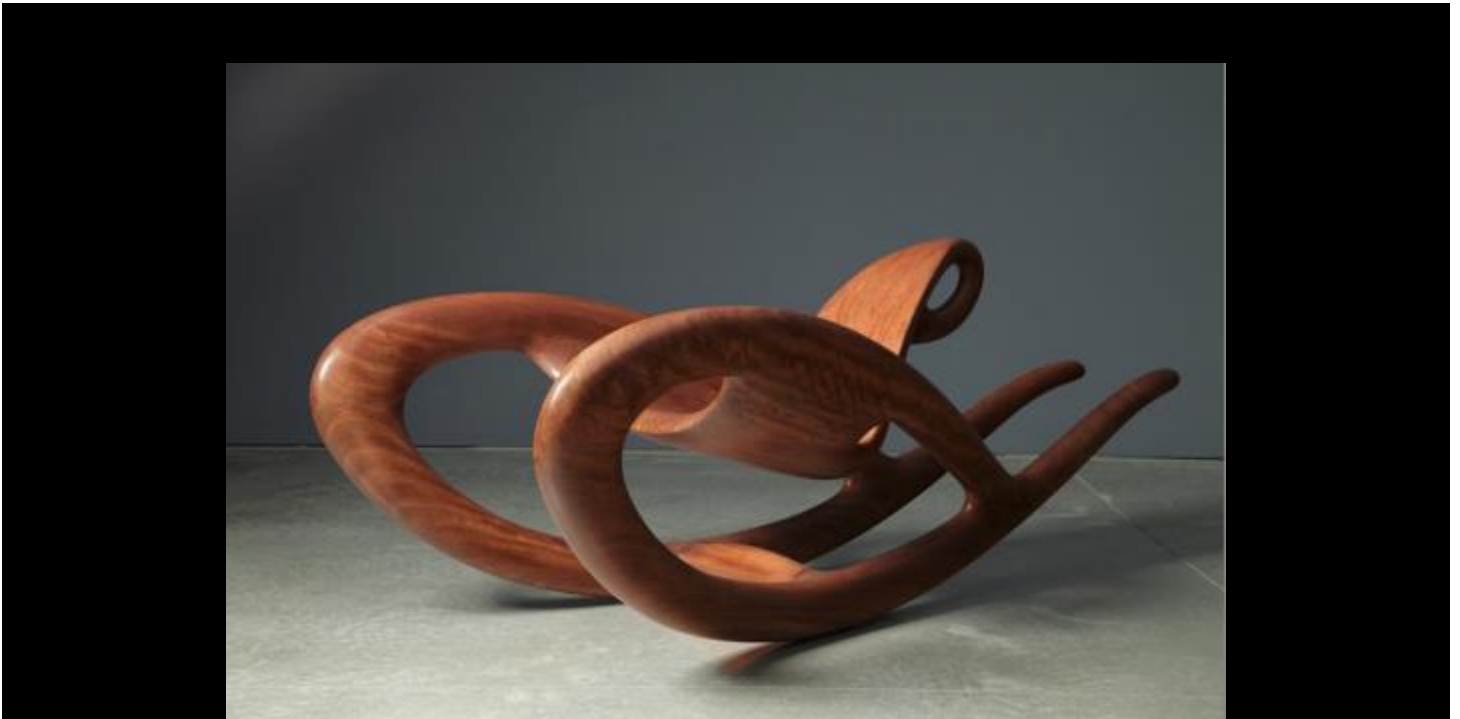


WILLIE COLE, "MALCOLM'S CHICKEN 1"

[Hope Sandrow's](#) chicken coop, influenced by the work of American artist, Sol LeWitt, is an elegant construction in large scale which looks more like a Hilton than a coop for chickens. AND my favorite studio artist, [Wendell Castle](#), ([see post](#)) has on display his beautiful "**Ghost Rider**" chair, a picture of which will easily explain whence the name.



HOPE SANDROW , "COOP LEWITT"



WENDELL CASTLE, "GHOSTRIDER"

On display was a magnificently hand executed chair by the sculptor, **Martin Puryear** called "**Skeuomorphic Wing Chair**"...please do look up that word if you are curious... which begs to be sat on. **Ai Wei Wei** has a piece called "**Grapes**" which is a grouping of antique Chinese stools piled together in the fashion of a bunch of grapes, which is a commentary on the how we integrate antiquities into our present day life.



MARK PURYEAR, "A SKEUOMORPHIC WING CHAIR"



AI WEI WEI, "GRAPES"

There is also a work by **Maria Elena Gonzalez**, called "Skowhegan Birch #1," where she replicated the patterns of the bark from a birch tree onto a player piano roll and created "music" basically from a tree! You can listen to how this actually sounds at the performance given at **MAD** when the exhibit opened if you click on the video below. Plus you can listen to some other great pianola by the superb **Randolph Herr**. I promise you will be quite amazed to listen to how this sounds!

There are more exceptional pieces than I could possibly write about in one post. This is a great show so try and visit the museum if you are a New York local or if you plan on coming into the city in the near future as the show runs through September 15, 2013.



Ciao, ciao 'til next time!