

Michael Foster – Euclid’s Phenix

Michael Foster shares this award-winning turned and carved piece with us, which was recently chosen as part of the AAW’s ‘Rising’ exhibit

I have a keen interest in maths and the sciences; both provide ample inspiration for my woodturned art. I have entered a piece for consideration in the last four special shows that the AAW curates for the annual symposiums. This year the theme selected was ‘Rising’, a nod to the host city, Phoenix, and the myth from which the name derives. Nothing came to mind for quite a while that would fit the theme. I decided to let it brew and slowly my unconscious mind developed the idea for this piece.

Here a perfect globe rises on the ashes of an imperfect, one-sided Möbius strip. This Möbius strip is a bit more complex than the most simple as there are three twists in the strip. Möbius strips are interesting to mathematicians, as they appear to have multiple surfaces but really only have one. The igniting globe has flares arranged symmetrically based on the points of a dodecahedron superimposed on the globe.

The Möbius strip was turned from a 610mm length of a sugar maple (*Acer saccharum*) log. The centre was hollowed and the outside and inside profiles were turned on the lathe. The rest of the shaping was done using rotary carving tools. The surface was coloured with airbrushed acrylics.

I wanted to turn the globe out of cherry (*Prunus serotina*) because it carves so well using pyrography. To keep the wood from splitting and lighten the globe, I decided to hollow the sphere. The sphere was turned in two halves from wet cherry with a standard turned box joint. The two pieces were glued together and dried in a microwave. The result was then re-turned to a hollow sphere. The detail in the globe was accomplished by carving the surface using a pyrography pen similar to a scalpel. India inks and dry-brushed acrylics were used to colour the sphere.

I was honoured to have this piece selected for the ‘Rising’ show. It also recently won the Rich Pagano award – best in show – at the Totally Turning Symposium in Saratoga Springs, New York. ●

Email: mfoster.vt@gmail.com

Web: www.breezyhillturning.com



‘Euclid’s Phenix’,
430mm high
× 190mm dia.
sugar maple (*Acer
saccharum*) with
a cherry (*Prunus
serotina*) sphere

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MICHAEL FOSTER

