

CURRENT

RIVER-THEMED WORKS BY BILL & WENDY BALE



MORRISONVILLE
INSPIRATION: UNNAMED STREAM TO THE YAHARA RIVER,
MORRISONVILLE, WI, BIRTHPLACE OF SANDHILL DESIGNS





RIVER BED & TRIBUTARY TABLES

INSPIRATION: THE TRIBUTARIES AND SPLITS OF THE ALLEGHENY RIVER

QUIET

INSPIRATION: ALLEGHENY RIVER, WARREN, PA





CURRENT



RIVER-THEMED WORKS BY BILL & WENDY BALE

PATTERSON LIBRARY OCTAGON GALLERY
WESTFIELD, NEW YORK
APRIL 20 - JUNE 1, 2018

CURRENT

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DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to Jack-a-roo, the creek-loving Standard Poodle. His company, while we researched the waterways for this project was second to none.

Jack's appreciation of a good, ankle-deep stream and a panoramic vista enriched many travels across the U.S. His pull to the water's edge often brought a sense of wonder as we explored the local streams in New York and Pennsylvania.



MACH Johnny's Shiver Me Timbers (Jack)

April 19, 2006 - April 23, 2018

RIVER

INSPIRATION: MISSISSIPPI RIVER, MEMPHIS, TN





OAK CREEK CANYON INSPIRATION: HIKING THE OAK CREEK CANYON TRAIL

FEELING SMALL

INSPIRATION: OAK CREEK, SEDONA, AZ

CURRENT art exhibition

CURRENT is an exhibition of river-themed works by woodworker Bill Bale and artist Wendy Bale.

The concept for the show came out of Bill's foray into River Tables, a new woodworking style for the Western New York furniture maker. The exploration of slab wood, bark-trimmed live edge with added materials – epoxy resin and stone – took flight in this body of work.

The research sparked the couples' interest in local creeks, rivers and streams and also inspired Wendy's two-dimensional artwork. She took an autobiographical approach, creating charcoal drawings documenting the memorable rivers of their 42-year-long journey together. →





Mid-stream, a cut paper workshop at the Roger Tory Peterson Institute inspired Wendy to add another medium to the mix. Some of the resulting sculptures are combined with charcoal to create different graphic effects.

Chester Drawers: *a cabinet of curiosities*, Bill's whimsical multi-wood piece is filled with Wendy's nature-themed cut paper sculptures.

CURRENT is the couple's first gallery show and collaborative effort.

WHITE TAIL DEER

FROM CHESTER DRAWERS: *a cabinet of curiosities*



SPRING FLOOD: GREAT EGRET

INSPIRATION: BARK RIVER, FORT ATKINSON, WI



KENNY & DOLLY INSPIRATION: THE SONG "ISLANDS IN THE STREAM"

ARTIST STATEMENT

BILL BALE

While creating this body of river-inspired work I used the grain direction of the tree and worked with it to help infer the water's movement. In doing this I felt more connected to each piece and the work flowed out like water.

This collection of furniture is a huge break from the Arts & Crafts influenced furniture I have made for over 20 years. I've always been limited to using boards that are all the same thickness and with relatively straight edges. Using a live edge and working with the grain in a more abstract way is freeing.

I have rarely been this connected to any project. I devoted an entire winter to this show: working to find the right wood, overcoming the challenges and ultimately enjoying the feeling of accomplishment. The joy of people's reactions as they form their own connections to the waterways through my furniture is the final reward in the process.

— "Sandhill Bill" Bale, April 2018

ORIGINS

INSPIRATION: THE
HEADWATERS OF THE
ALLEGHENY RIVER.

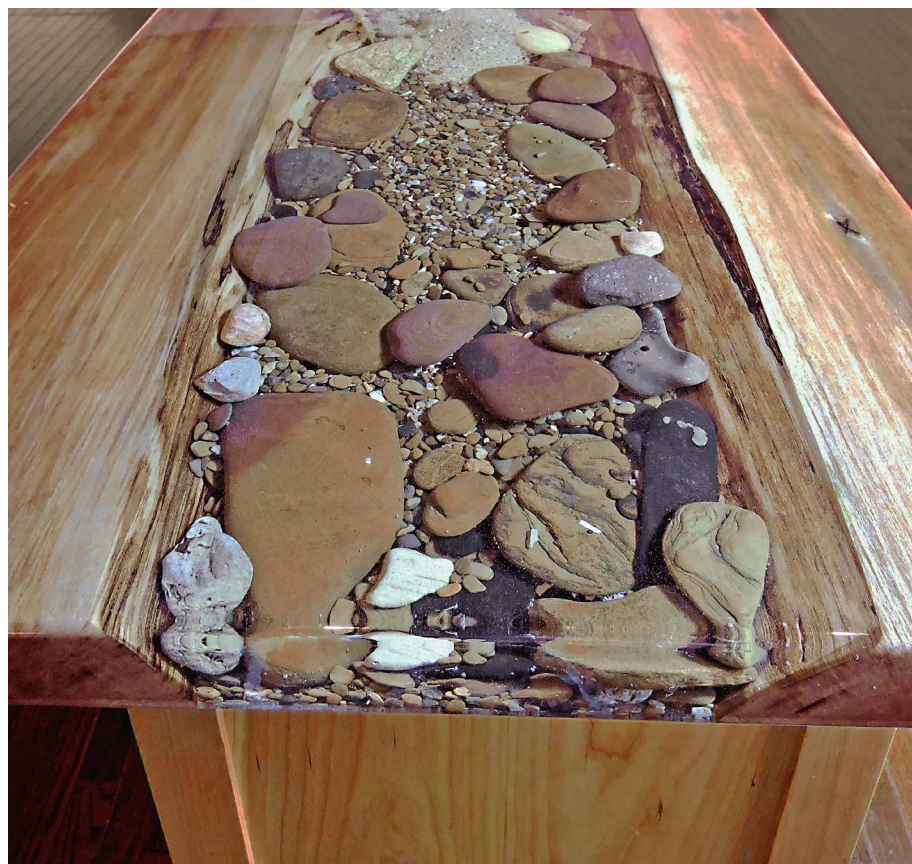




CENTER **TRIBUTARY TABLES**
INSPIRATION: ALLEGHENY RIVER

RIGHT **SAND BAR**
INSPIRATION: THE WISCONSIN RIVER,
KNOWN FOR ITS SAND BARS

RIVER BANK INSPIRATION: CHADAKOIN RIVER, WHICH RUNS THROUGH THE BRICK STREETS OF JAMESTOWN, NY





THUNDER BRIDGE INSPIRATION: LITTLE SIOUX RIVER, SPENCER, IA

ARTIST STATEMENT

WENDY BALE

My contribution to CURRENT is a collection of works on paper exploring our life's rivers and waterways. From an iconic "Thunder Bridge" near our Iowa hometown, to the pastoral creek in our rural Western New York neighborhood, these waterways have inspired my art.

I used two mediums in this body of work: one, a return to basics and, another a new-to-me art form.

Charcoal drawing— the most ancient drawing medium— was first used in cave paintings. Cut paper sculpture, a technique I recently discovered, has been a refreshing "hands-on" way of art-making after 30 years designing with a computer.

I have especially enjoyed uniting the two techniques to illustrate my love for the creeks and rivers and the memories they evoke.

— Wendy Bale, April 2018



HERON INSPIRATION: KOSHKONONG CREEK, CAMBRIDGE, WI

HISTORIC WATERS
INSPIRATION: Kiantone Creek,
Chautauqua Co., NY





TOP **PELICAN INVASION**

INSPIRATION: ROCK RIVER, FORT ATKINSON, WI

BOTTOM **LIBERTY DREAMS**

INSPIRATION: CONEWANGO CREEK, CHAUTAUQUA COUNTY, NY

CURRENT



**PATTERSON LIBRARY
OCTAGON GALLERY**
WESTFIELD, NY









ABOVE **CASCADE**

INSPIRATION: CANADAWAY CREEK, FREDONIA, NY

LEFT **DAIRYLAND CARP**, DETAIL

INSPIRATION: YAHARA RIVER, STOUGHTON, WI



CHESTER DRAWERS: *a cabinet of curiosities*

A book by Douglas Preston and Lincoln Child introduced Bill to the intriguing idea of a cabinet of curiosities. Historically used to display oddities and natural history items, the original cabinets – or often entire rooms – were the precursors to the modern museum.

The Sandhill Designs version “Chester Drawers” sports a whimsical face crafted of six species of wood. →

2 CROWS FOR JOY

INSPIRATION: COUNTING CROWS,
A POEM



23



CHESTER DRAWERS:
a cabinet of curiosities

For the CURRENT art exhibit, the cabinet's 12 drawers are filled with Wendy's nature-themed cut paper sculptures, shadowbox framed to resemble specimen trays.

The paper sculptures (not to scale) are shown on this and the following pages.







Wendy Bale



Wendy Bale







CREATIVE COLLATERAL

CURRENT kick started a number of creative avenues both during the making of the work and while the show was exhibited.

The spirit of collaboration and experimentation brought together new friends and fellow artists. Wendy learned how to make charcoal in a campfire and where to find the best views of the Allegheny.

Newspaper articles appeared in hometowns past and present highlighting the local waterways featured in the artwork.

The opening reception brought out an appreciative crowd of art-lovers and patrons curious to see the debut of CURRENT.

A small, but enthusiastic group attended a cut-paper sculpture workshop in Wendy's studio following a viewing of the work at the Octagon.

A newly-formed group of Chautauqua County woodworkers brought together through social media met at the gallery to help close out the show. Bill lead a round table discussion and answered questions about his work and process.

In addition to the many who have offered help and encouragement, the artists would like to acknowledge Nancy Nixon Ensign and the Patterson Library Octagon Gallery for their generous support.

BILL BALE

"Sandhill Bill" is an award-winning woodworker who has taken honors at art festivals across the Midwest and New York with his Sandhill Designs Arts and Crafts furniture. Over 1000 pieces of Sandhill Designs furniture can be found in homes and collections across the U.S. and abroad.

This recent body of work adds new materials, epoxy and stone, and explores new techniques. "Using a live edge and working with the grain in a more abstract way is freeing," he noted. Bill won first place at the Roger Tory Peterson Wild America Festival at Panama Rocks, NY in 2017 with his first "River Table".

You can view more of his work online at sandhilldesigns.com.



WENDY BALE

Wendy's creative design career took an artistic U-turn with this collection of works on paper. Her early career focused on print making, illustration and design, leading her to the Creative Director role for an apparel company in Wisconsin. "After 25 years of photo art direction and catalog design, it is refreshing to get back to working with my hands using traditional materials, charcoal and paper," she states. These recent works can be found on her website: wendybaleart1st.com.

Wendy and Bill are both exhibiting members of the North Shore Arts Alliance in Chautauqua County, NY

THE WORK

page 1	* MORRISONVILLE CHARCOAL ON PAPER 36 X 24"
page 2	RIVER BED & TRIBUTARY TABLES WALNUT, EPOXY RESIN, STONES; QUEEN BED 66" WIDE X 57" TALL; TABLES 18 X 22 X 25"
page 3	QUIET CHARCOAL ON PAPER 32 X 46"
page 5	RIVER CHARCOAL ON PAPER 28 X 20"
page 6	OAK CREEK CANYON AUSTRIAN POPLAR, EPOXY RESIN, STONES 26 X 28 X 18"
page 7	FEELING SMALL CHARCOAL ON PAPER 28 X 20"
page 8	WHITE TAIL DEER (SKULL) CANSON PAPER 10 X 8 X 1" SHADOWBOX
page 9	SPRING FLOOD: GREAT EGRET CUT PAPER SCULPTURE, CHARCOAL 20 X 24 X 1" SHADOWBOX
page 10	KENNY AND DOLLY WALNUT, EPOXY RESIN, STONES 15 X 54 X 30"
page 11	ORIGINS WALNUT, EPOXY RESIN, STONES 18 X 27 X 72"
page 12	RIVER BANK WALNUT, EPOXY RESIN, STONES, TUMBLED BRICK 15 X 54 X 17"
page 13	TRIBUTARY TABLES (SET, PAGE 2) WALNUT, EPOXY RESIN, STONE 18 X 22 X 25" SAND BAR WALNUT, EPOXY RESIN, STONES, SAND 20 X 72 X 41"
page 14	THUNDER BRIDGE CHARCOAL ON PAPER 24 X 20"
page 15	HERON CUT PAPER SCULPTURE, CHARCOAL 14 X 18 X 1" SHADOWBOX
page 16	* HISTORIC WATERS CHARCOAL ON PAPER 20 X 24"
page 17	PELICAN INVASION CUT PAPER SCULPTURE, CHARCOAL 20 X 24 X 1" SHADOWBOX LIBERTY DREAMS CUT PAPER SCULPTURE, CHARCOAL 20 X 24 X 1" SHADOWBOX
page 20	DAIRYLAND CARP CHARCOAL ON PAPER 24 X 20"
page 21	CASCADE CHARCOAL ON PAPER 14 X 18"
page 22	* CHESTER DRAWERS: A CABINET OF CURIOSITIES CHERRY, BUBINGA, ZEBRA WOOD, CURLY MAPLE, WALNUT, BIRDSEYE MAPLE.
page 23	* 2 CROWS FOR JOY CUT PAPER SCULPTURE 14 X 18 X 1" SHADOWBOX
page 24	HUMMINGBIRD NEST ASSORTED PAPERS 8 X 16 X 1" SHADOWBOX * CALLING CARD (SNOWY OWL) ASST. PAPERS, CHARCOAL 10 X 8 X 1" SHADOWBOX
page 25	PIN OAK (ACORNS) CANSON PAPER 6 X 8 X 1" SHADOWBOX SENSITIVE FERN ASSORTED PAPERS, CHARCOAL, GOLD LEAF 10 X 8 X 1" SHADOWBOX THE NEST ASST. PAPERS 10 X 8 X 2" SHADOWBOX
page 26	SPRING PEEPERS ASSORTED PAPERS 10 X 8 X 2" SHADOWBOX * AROUND THE POND (TURTLE) CANSON PAPER 10 X 8 X 1" SHADOWBOX * FEATHER LEAF CANSON PAPER, MAGNET; GIFT BOXED 3 X 8" UNFRAMED
page 27	* NEWT ASSORTED PAPER, MAGNET; GIFT BOXED 3.25 X 8" UNFRAMED DOGWOOD ASSORTED PAPERS 10 X 8 X 1" SHADOWBOX * CRAPPIE (FISH) ASSORTED PAPERS, GLUE 10 X 8 X 1" SHADOWBOX DANCES IN DUCKWEED ASSORTED PAPERS, GLUE 10 X 8 X 1" SHADOWBOX
back cover	TRILLIUM CHARCOAL ON PAPER, CUT PAPER SCULPTURE 14 X 18 X 1" SHADOWBOX

* PRIVATE COLLECTION



TRILLIUM INSPIRATION: HATCH RUN, GLADE TOWNSHIP, PA

