

THOMAS HAAPAPURO

Charlotte, NC

WORKS



Cherry Bowl 2013-01, 2013, polished cherry, 17 x 6 x 3 inches, \$800



Cherry Bowl 2013-01 (all angles), 2013, polished cherry, 17 x 6 x 3 inches, \$800



Cherry 2014-12, 2014, polished cherry, 20 x 11 x 5 inches, \$1400



Cherry 2014-12 (all angles), 2014, polished cherry, 20 x 11 x 5 inches, \$1400



Cherry Bowl 2014-31, 2014, polished cherry, 10.75 x 8 x 3.25 inches, \$400



Cherry Bowl 2014-31 (all angles), 2014, polished cherry, 10.75 x 8 x 3.25 inches, \$400



Poplar Bowl 2011-15, 2011, polished tulip poplar, 13 x 8.5 x 3.5 inches, \$500



Poplar Bowl 2011-15 (all angles), 2011, polished tulip poplar, 13 x 8.5 x 3.5 inches, \$500



Walnut Bowl 2014-28, 2014, polished Eastern black walnut, 16.25 x 8 x 2 inches, \$900



Walnut Bowl 2014-28 (all angles), 2014, polished Eastern black walnut, 16.25 x 8 x 2 inches, \$900

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Thomas Haapapuro grew up in the rural foothills of Ohio's Appalachian Mountains, absorbing the natural wonder of farm and forest, stream and mountain. This landscape infused in the artist a fascination with the natural world and its subtle beauties, which is translated into the simple, elegant work he creates.

Thomas earned his degree in Landscape Architecture from Ohio State University in 2001. This profession requires both the insightful eye of a designer and the analytical skills of an engineer. He currently develops land plans for a wide variety of projects throughout the United States, ranging from skyscrapers to downtown streetscapes, from rooftop gardens to urban plazas. This background in engineering, fused with a rural childhood spent studying the natural world, has shaped a balance of organic natural forms within the strong geometric framework that influences Thomas' passion, his woodworking.

Thomas is a self-taught woodworker who explores ways to use conventional tools in unique and interesting new ways to create works that inspire the imagination and appreciation of the natural world. He works to create objects that distill the intricate and complex patterns of nature into clean, sophisticated, and modern forms.

Although Thomas carves a variety of materials, he works primarily in wood. Using local, reclaimed wood, he transforms Charlotte's fallen trees into exquisite art that is environmentally responsible and relates to a specific time and place. This authentic regionalism is seen in the native color and wood grain of the pieces he creates. Thomas prefers working in the medium of wood because of its legacy as a once living, growing material that can be harvested and transformed into new and meaningful forms.

ABOUT HIS PROCESS

HARVESTING THE TREES - All of the bowls we make and sell come from trees which have fallen or are about to be removed due to disease or development. So we save these trees, and give them an opportunity to reveal

their hidden, inside beauty. This not only saves a tree from the landfill and is environmentally sustainable and ecologically sensitive, it also provides a unique regionalism to the pieces as all of the trees come from around the neighborhood where we live and work.

The process starts when we receive a call or message that a tree is available. We load up chainsaws and winches, and head to the site to cut the tree into manageable pieces, load it on the truck, and take it back to our studio.

CUTTING THE TREE INTO SLABS - With the tree back at the studio, it is prepared when it is still green (the wood has not cured). This normally begins with a long slice down the center of the tree. This is where wood is most likely to split in the final piece, so we head this off by cutting it there to begin with. This also allows us to create very long bowls with a unique grain pattern. Most wood turners cut the trees across the grain, instead of with the grain as we do. We prefer the opportunities and aesthetics of this approach, and believe it gives our work a unique look.

LAYING OUT THE BOWL SHAPE - With a pencil, then a sharpie, a freehand pattern is drawn on the surface of the slab. The pattern will work around weak places in the log, swooping in to take advantage of an interesting grain in the wood, swooping out to avoid a knot in the tree. Since no two logs are alike, neither are two patterns ever the same.

CUTTING THE BOWL SHAPE - The pattern, which will be the outside edge of the bowl, is then cut. On smaller bowls, this can be done with the band saw. On larger bowls, this step is very carefully done using the chain saw.

ROUGH CARVING THE BOWL - With the bowl blank complete, the real work begins. To give the initial shape to the bowl, a powerful carver is used. This carver is essentially a small chain saw blade attached to an angle grinder. This tool is very good at removing material and giving a rough shape to the bowl.

FINE CARVING THE BOWL - When the rough shape of the bowl has been created, a much smaller chain saw carver is used to refine the details. At this stage, the bowl begins to take shape, and is slowly refined to make the bowl thin and light. The gentle undulations of the bowl are developed carefully at this stage.

FINAL STEPS – After the shape has been refined and finessed, the bowl is sanded very carefully. Sanding starts with very rough sandpaper, and graduates to finer and finer grits until the wood gleams. Then an all-natural finish wax, made from beeswax, linseed oil, and bear berry fruits, is applied to the bowl. This wax is burnished into the wood, creating a durable, all natural shine that protects the wood without changing the natural beautiful color of the tree. At long last, the fallen tree's inner beauty can be witnessed and cherished for generations to come.