

## ARTIST'S STATEMENT:

### ***Form Follows Nature (2019)***

Wood

**Laura Yeats, Wood Artist**

## Abstract

Artist's Statement for the cover art of *IJPS* volume 6, issue 2: *Form Follows Nature* (2019). Wood.

Key Word: Cover Art

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At first glance, my creations look simple and minimalist. However, the wood is warm and inviting, and you may be drawn in for a closer investigation. You will be surprised and delighted by the intricate visual details that you discover. It's not fancy woodwork—it's the natural, organic beauty of the wood itself. All that had been concealed by bark is now exposed in a singular form.

I transform fallen, diseased, and unwanted trees into bowls and sculptural objects. You'll see piles of logs, root balls, and gnarled limbs surrounding my studio. As I roll them around to study them, I wait patiently for my inspiration to be provoked—as if the tree itself may speak to me! I make exploratory cuts trusting that I will stumble upon what form will best express this tree's inner beauty.



Everything I make is a conversation with a tree. Because every tree is unique, so is every form. My initial chainsaw cuts reveal the character of the wood, from burls to bug trails to contrasting colors between heartwood and sapwood. When the log goes onto the lathe, I carve through the rings with my chisels, each ring a year gone by. Each layer is a discovery, and these discoveries inform the shape of the object. The form evolves as I work—I go where the wood leads me.

My best creations come when I allow myself to work in isolation, where I can tune into the natural environment and hopefully gain insight and inspiration for my pieces. In my creative process, I seek the essence of beauty, simplicity, and purity, and as a result my work is mostly free of adornment. I hope that what I create is both a pleasure to

look at and a delight to hold, but also an accurate translation of my partnership with nature.



I feel that my work radiates the nature of many things—growth and decay; inner beauty and outer; and collaborations between nature and humans. I hope that your experience of seeing the piece will be akin to my experience of creating it—that of discovering Nature's mystery and the soul of the tree.

## DESIGN FOUNDATION

As a child of the 1960s I have been most drawn to the work of the Modernists. I love minimalist design, and my formal education in design instilled in me this defining era's influence, with axioms such as 'Form Follows Function,' 'Less is More,' and 'Ornament

is a Crime.’ This conditioning is most evident in many of my early furniture pieces, in which function was foremost, and the other elements—proportion, symmetry, materials, and craftsmanship—were all refined and congruent. With time and experience I dispensed with that rigidity and tapped into trusting my collaboration with the materials. I now allow the wood—*the trees*—to influence my design decisions. Hence the revised expression, ‘Form Follows Nature.’

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Laura Yeats attended the University of Washington for architecture and planning (BA, 1989) and Urban Planning and Design (MUP, 1992). She studied furniture design and craftsmanship at Seattle’s Pratt Fine Art Center, and then traveled for intensive woodworking study at several destination arts and crafts schools including College of the Redwoods, Penland, Haystack, and Arrowmont. She established her Seattle studio in 2000, and relocated to the southwest in 2015. She currently lives and works in Galisteo, New Mexico.

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