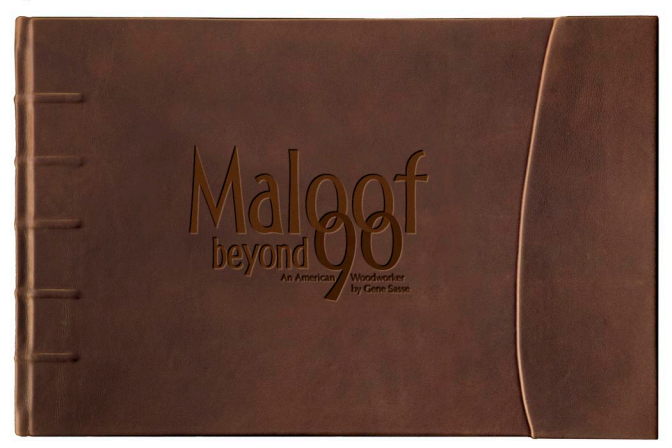


Maloof Beyond 90 Book Project

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Malloof
beyond 90

An American Woodworker
by Gene Sasse

Sam Maloof



Malloof beyond 90

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Gene Sasse

A limited edition, handcrafted book, of

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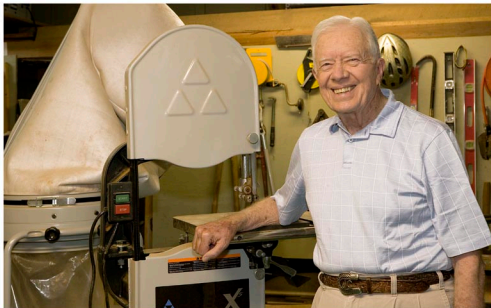
I consider Sam Maloof to be the world's finest woodworker. His integrity and personal philosophy are demonstrated vividly in the design and beauty of his exquisite furniture. For more than 50 years, he has shared his art and wood-working skills with anyone who has had the good fortune to know him. His friends have become customers, and his customers have become friends.

Sam has touched the hearts and lives of countless people with his extraordinary talent and skills as a teacher and role model, so his legacy will survive for generations to come. In recent years he has been inundated with honors, and he richly deserves even more acclaim than he has been given.

My visits with him have always been inspirational, and I consider myself fortunate to have him as a personal friend.



Jimmy Carter





70 years of age, works in his
face astonishingly beautiful
calls himself a "woodworker",
a sign at his gate: "SAM
"woodworker" inadequately

Sam Maloof -
Young
of
Spirit

Sam Maloof's work with a variety of wood has been traced back to his childhood in the mountains of Oregon. He was inspired by his father's work as a cabinet maker. When he was a young boy, he was working on a special project, Sam transforms wood into magnificent art that also, is useful. The process is comparable to an artist selecting paints; a sculptor choosing marble or clay, or an architect designing a building made of concrete, glass and steel. Sam's art includes architectural spaces, church altar and credence, dining office and conference furnishings and uniquely fashioned domestic furniture. Through self-expression, he gives tangible shape to the form self as it is drawn from the design template of his mind and soul. His sense of ideally proportioned forms translates into furniture enjoyed by everyone who cares about beauty. Those who know Sam and even his works are privileged. Although Sam's art is highly personal it is also universally appealing and understood by anyone who encounters it. Sam has been awarded several honorary Doctor of Letters degrees from notable Universities, a medal of the Society of Arts and Crafts, Boston, and a MacArthur Fellowship (living genius award), as well as the Master-Craftsman Award of Distinction

from the Garbille House of Pasadena. Yet none of these and other honors has distracted him from his singular purpose of making space and beautiful wooden furniture for thousands of patrons throughout the world.

Sam is an uncommonly gifted designer/craftsman/artist who is famous for his unwavering dedication to hand craftsmanship. Fine craftsmanship has been his calling ever since the late 1940's.

By that date, Sam was a pioneer in what evolved into a new field of woodworking that embraced thoughtful, beautiful, and well wrought craftsmanship. His furniture expresses joy in the color, patterns, and varieties of woods and of the shapes made from them. He personally selects the woods, cuts, joints, carves, smooths and finishes each piece of furniture. Sam infuses each work with his personal vision of the possible design possibilities that evolves as each work is shaped. The field that Sam pioneered in the '40s is part of a major development in America which others now call "the studio furniture movement". In the eighteenth century, such hand craftsmanship was known as "handmade" or personally commissioned work as distinct from factory produced work in the nineteenth century and beyond.

There are many who work in the woodworking are well aware of Sam's astonishing achievements and of the many publications that celebrate them. The most thorough, scholarly, and insightful work was written by Dr. Jimmy Adelson to accompany a retrospective

with early images of family members and working associates. These are the basic books for understanding the life and works of Sam Maloof. Yet in addition there continues an amazing and steady flow of public workshop demonstrations, lectures, exhibitions, catalogues, publications, magazine articles, videos, CDs, and periodical literature about Sam and his art that keeps the public informed of his creative journey as an artist/ designer/ and woodworker over his many years of life and work in Alta Loma, California. For many practicing crafts persons today and for younger artisans who aspire to achieve excellence – (whether in wood or in other crafts media) Sam Maloof is a profound influence and a role model. Briefly stated, Sam, his life and work, INSPIRE creativity.

Samuel Solomon Maloof was born on January 24, 1916 in the town of China, California, about half an hour's drive east of Los Angeles. This was a farming community where truck gardens, dairies and citrus groves flourished. Here, Sam's father, Simon Nasif Nadi Maloof, with wife Arlene and family had settled after coming to this country from Lebanon. The Maloofs emigrated to the U.S. in 1905 – having passed through Ellis Island and ventured to join relatives in Pawtucket, Rhode Island. Simon Nasif's sister, Hilda, had already moved to Santa Barbara where she operated a store. Thus encouraged to move west, Sam's parents journeyed on to California.

Sam Maloof, young of spirit, beyond 90 years of age, works in his shop daily and thereby continues to produce astonishingly beautiful works of art in the medium of wood. He calls himself a "woodworker". These spare words he carved long ago on a sign at his gate: "SAM MALOOF - WOODWORKER." Yet the word "woodworker" inadequately describes Sam's art.

True, Sam does work with huge slabs of wood selected from Mother Nature, seasoned in storage, and shaped in his integrated workshop /studio. When a splendidly figured piece of wood is selected for achieving a special purpose, Sam transforms wood into magnificent art that also, is useful. The process is comparable to an artist selecting paints; a sculptor choosing marble or clay, or when an architect designs a building made of concrete, glass and steel. Sam's art includes architectural spaces, church altar and communion settings, office and conference furnishings and uniquely fashioned domestic furniture. Through self-expression, he gives tangible shape to the inner self as it is drawn from the design template of his mind and soul. His sense of ideally proportioned forms translates into furniture enjoyed by everyone who cares about beauty. Those who know Sam and own his works are privileged. Although Sam's art is highly personal it is also universally appealing and understood by anyone who encounters it. Sam has been awarded several honorary Doctor of Letters degrees from notable Universities, a medal of the Society of Arts and Crafts, Boston, and a MacArthur Fellowship (living genius award), as well as the Master-Craftsman Award of Distinction

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Those who know the world of fine woodworking are well aware of Sam's astonishing achievements and of the many publications that celebrate them. The most thorough, scholarly, and insightful work was written by Dr. Jeremy Adamson to accompany a retrospective

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Samuel Solomon Maloof was born on January 24, 1916 in the town of Chino, California, about half an hour's drive east of Los Angeles. This was a farming community where truck gardens, dairies and citrus groves flourished. Here, Sam's father, Silmen Nasif Naqir Maloof, with wife Arissee and family had settled after coming to this country from Lebanon. The Maloofs emigrated to the U.S. in 1905—having passed through Ellis Island and ventured to join relatives in Pawtucket, Rhode Island. Silmen Nasif's sister, Holla, had already moved to Santa Barbara where she operated a store. Thus encouraged to move west, Sam's parents journeyed on to California.

Malcoof's parents began making their living by selling goods acquired on credit from Jewish wholesalers. Nasif peddled vegetables as well as dry goods from a horse-drawn cart and Anise sold her personally made lace, embroidered linens and crochet work from that same wagon. Sam's love of craftsmanship ultimately draws much from his early admiration of his mother's accomplished hand skills. In 1922 the family moved to the Imperial Valley, near Calipatria, and then back to Chino in 1924. These moves followed openings and closings of dry goods stores owned Sam's father. Briefly, between 1912 and 1914, Sam's parents and family returned to the town of Douma, a mountain village in Lebanon, to live near parents. The Malcoofs returned to California to settle business, fully expecting to return to Lebanon. But their return was prevented by the outbreak of the First World War. Hence Sam was born in the U.S. rather than in Lebanon. Left behind in Lebanon were two daughters stranded by the war with their grandparents. While Turkish soldiers occupied Douma the grandparents starved to death. The two daughters barely survived. They were returned to the U.S. in 1925 through aid of the Red Cross. By this time six siblings had been added to the Malcoof family. All lived in a home behind their store in Chino. There the Malcoofs sold dry goods and other supplies as well as Anise's hand-wrought embroidery and crochet work.

Sam retains fond memories of Chino, where, as a child, a Mexican housekeeper cared for him during the day. Many workers in the nearby sugar beet factory, spoke Spanish. Thus Sam learned to speak Spanish from the housekeeper and Anise from his parents even before English. For a few years the family moved to the town

of Ontario, to open another store. But the depression ruined that venture. Thus the Malcoofs returned to Chino to survive hard times. They lived in a crowded home where, at one time, seventeen family members shared space and tasks. They grew garden produce and earned small income through part-time jobs. Sam was already gifted and eager to help shape, fix, and improve whatever family and friends needed.

In the "thirties", while Sam was in high school, his natural abilities as an artistic calligrapher, cartoonist and graphic artist became known. He found gainful employment by hand lettering a sign "Welcome to Chino" on Central Avenue at the main entry to his town. He was also employed to hand letter store signs and paint the words "Chino Mercantile Company" on the front of a brick building in town. He was a natural draftsman who had mastered all images of Disney cartoons and dreamed of creating his own comic strip. Sam also became an accomplished athlete for the Chino High School's varsity football, basketball, and baseball teams.

Sam's life and his evolution as an artist/designer and versatile woodworking craftsman is beautifully told in Jeremy Adamson's, *The Furniture of Sam Malcoof*. Sam's journey of self discovery involves work for the Vortax Manufacturing Company, experience with night glasses in the Frank Wiggins Trade School, employment with industrial designer Harold E. Graham, graphics for the Padsu Hills Theatre, and displays for Bullock's downtown department store in Los Angeles. The journey includes induction into the Army in 1941, Sam's rise from private to master sergeant in a matter of months, his drafting and

display work for the U.S. army in Alaska, his return to civilian life and subsequent post war design work at Angelus-Pacific where he learned color separation and silk screen printing.

California's most famous artist of the time, Millard Sheets (1907-1989) was looking for a person who could produce colored silkscreen prints from his watercolors. Sam was equal to the task. Millard Sheets invited and offered him employment. Here, Sam's outlook on the world of art matured and expanded as he accomplished everything demanded by Sheets in a whirlwind of artistic activities.

In 1948, after marriage to Alfredaillard, who Sam met at Scripps College, Sam could no longer give to Sheets his undivided attention and service the irregular schedule that his studio work demanded. So, in 1949, at age of thirty-four, Sam struck out on his own. At first he made simple furniture for himself from plywood that had been used as forms for pouring concrete. He built a simple workshop, furnished with rudimentary tools, in the garage of his home in Ontario, California. This led to Sam's first commission work in 1949. That proved to be a financial disaster as the cost of materials devoured the commission price.

I first met Sam at a gathering of craftsmen/designers/educators at a conference in Niagara Falls, New York in 1966. At the time I was on the curatorial staff of the Winterthur Museum in Delaware. This is the Henry Francis duPont Museum of Early American Decorative Arts, the collections of which stopped in the year 1840. The stated purpose of the Niagara conference was to examine "The Role of the Crafts in Education" in contemporary society. Sam had some of his furniture on view in an exhibition at that conference. Since Sam is an extremely outgoing and engaging personality, not many minutes passed before we became fast friends. This friendship has endured and deepened over many years. As we walked through the exhibition together he opened my eyes to a world of craftsmanship unknown to me in modern America. We removed one of his chairs from the exhibition and tested its seating comfort. For Sam, function was inseparable from beauty. His chair surpassed the test for both elegance and comfort.

Touching Sam's furniture was a revelation. Its surfaces were taut, smooth and sensuously sculptural. Sharp and soft lines of the wood flowed together like anatomy of wind-swept beaches or plant forms—alogous to the sculptured surfaces of his furniture. Ingenious joinery held the furniture parts together. Joinery was accented with contrasting wooden plugs. I had not seen modern hand-made furniture with such a distinctive personal and highly recognizable style. Sam was already a preeminent figure in the field of the now furniture movement in America. His works captured attention in part because he was enormously productive and effective as an exhibitor. His works were widely displayed in important exhibitions. His successes proved that in the face of commercial factory production, it was possible to make a living through hand-made furniture. Despite Sam's struggles and achievements, there were still members of the conference in

Niagara who believed that the only future for furniture was through design for mass production. More than one conference participant remarked that those who made their own furniture in their individual studios/shops were impractical romantics who were bound to fail. That notion was turned on its head in 1969 with the opening of the seminal and massive exhibition "Objects: USA" at the National Collection of Fine Arts. Sam's furniture was displayed in this exhibition that toured twenty-three American cities and toured for two years in Europe. This was not the first exhibition of consequence in Sam's long journey as a studio furniture maker nor was it to be his last. Many major exhibitions displaying Sam's furniture had taken place before this and more would take place thereafter. That extensive story is best told in Jeremy Adamson's book. What needs to be stressed here is that while Sam's furniture looks wonderful in exhibitions, it is even more special when it is used. To feel the furniture is to fully appreciate the brilliance of Sam's art.

That is one of the reasons why, in 1975, I selected Sam Maloof's furniture to initiate at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, a program for public seating. I wished to let the visiting public know that fine craftsmanship in America is alive and well. I'd moved to Boston to form a new department of American Decorative Arts and Sculpture as its first Curator. The National Endowment for the Arts provided a sum that allowed Sam to make more than a dozen splendid pieces of public seating furniture for the Museum. The wall label explained that this furniture was part of the Museum's permanent collection yet at the same time allowed the public to experience sitting in a Sam Maloof chair. This initiated an acquisition program for contemporary American crafts for the permanent collections that brought in works by more than fifty other contemporary furniture craftsmen and women in America. Sam was instrumental

in advancing the prestige of American Crafts and fostering the careers of other craftspeople. No other museum in this country was blessed with such a comprehensive collection of seating furniture. One of the surprising side effects of this program was a substantial reduction in vandalism to museum objects once visitors were instructed by label to sit on the contemporary furniture and to take care to not spoil the furniture in the process. Many museums have copied this program initiated with Maloof furniture.

Sam was intrigued with and knew a lot about the imaginative power of museum installations. In September of 1979 he sent me a letter to propose developing a contemporary period room at the MFA—furnished with works made by the Fellows of the American Crafts Council—representing metal workers, weavers, potters, glass workers, and woodworkers. Sam was a distinguished and senior Fellow of the American Crafts Council. A contemporary period room could have been a unique and a marvelous display—if only museum space, means, and management support could be found for such a project in Boston. Sadly, this never happened at the MFA. However, as a voracious and astute collector, Sam has produced his own series of "period" rooms in the many chambers of his homes. His treasury of crafted works of art selected from many different hands is indeed worthy of museum display.

Sam is a creative and generous visionary who gives full energy, time, talent and devotion to every project he undertakes. Building project after project has been his destiny as needs for space, shop, display areas and storage needs forever expanded. A severe test for Sam came about when the home and shop he had built on his seven acre lemon grove in Alta Loma was threatened with demolition by invasion of a proposed California State highway.

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But the California State Legislature had designated Sam a "living treasure." This made it impossible for the transportation authority to simply purchase and demolish Sam's hand-built home and associated buildings. Negotiations settled on removing the existing buildings to a new site, reconstructing them and making additional and substantial improvements. This was a most upsetting time for the Maloofs. Before the move was achieved, Sam's wife, Alfreda who was the mother of his children, his supporter and business manager, passed away in September 1998. That was catastrophic for Sam. Intense mourning followed even as the vicissitudes of removal to the new site took place. While he was still finishing the architectural detail work with his associates at the new site on Carnelian Street, Alta Loma, Sam was honored with a lifetime achievement Award of Distinction given in Tempe, Arizona by the Furniture Society. I was privileged to present that award to Sam in February 2001.

In July, 2001 Sam married Beverly Willgate, who had been a friend of the Maloofs for many years. This was a blessing for Sam as well as bringing fresh energy and talent to the rapidly proliferating buildings and their surroundings on Carnelian Street. Development of the beautiful drought-tolerant or water-wise gardens of the new Maloof property has been among Beverly's notable achievements. In December 2001, a celebration of Sam's retrospective exhibition took place at the Renwick Museum, Washington, D.C. Present were Beverly, his son, Slimer, the business manager, Roslyn Bock, and Sam's woodworking associates: Larry White, Mike Johnson and David Wade. The exhibition was coordinated with the publication of Jeremy Adamson's book, and featured record crowds, and enthusiastic critical reviews.

Despite such adulation, Sam remains the same forthright, friendly and down-to-earth artist/designer/ craftsman who still calls himself a "woodworker". For every new generation of studio artists who work in crafts media, Sam's works and life continues to be an inspiration.

Exactly what makes Sam's works universally appeal is not easily explained. His art draws from many sources and skills mastered during his journey. The drama of the silhouette of his furniture has much to do with his confident graphic abilities. His draftsmanship is sure, his calligraphy is brilliant. His loving attention to detail, joinery, lamination, figures of wood and sculptural form were all developed over years of design refinements. Yet any attempt to decode Sam's work or imitate it fails because the magic is in the work itself. As Sam observes: "a work made by hand can have soul. It is the essence of the maker who gives a part of himself to his creation." Yet not all works made by mankind have soul. Beyond ninety, Sam can surely tell which works have soul and which do not. And Sam's works are drenched with that ineffable quality he calls "soul".

Jonathan Leo Fairbanks

Sam Maloof is an internationally acclaimed 20th century – and now the 21st century – designer who continues to thrive with his characteristic style beyond the age of 90. Regarded as a leading figure in the California modern arts movement, Maloof is a designer that not only builds on the history of modern design but also contributes increasingly to the dialogue between the worlds of contemporary art and craft.

At the boundaries between the world

of traditional and contemporary art, Maloof has become a vernacular. Maloof is undoubtedly one of the greatest artists of our time. Maloof holds on to the idea of craftsmanship as well as a "woodworker". However, by participating in the art world in the past few decades when the art world are knocking down the walls between the worlds of "craft" and "art".

Maloof speaks volumes within his specific artform of woodwork to the more fundamental formal elements of quality art-making (i.e., design, line, texture, shape, scale). For example, the subtle and highly efficient qualities of Maloof's furniture design speak heavily to the art world's traditions of minimalism and abstraction. Although the two camps of craft and art defended their individual territories with tunnel-vision intensity, it is undeniable that the formal practices and approaches within both camps were fundamentally similar.



the undeniable feeling when sitting in a Maloof chair that the function of the chair completes its purpose or function. To be in the presence of a Maloof chair and not sit in it is a very frustrating experience – and ignores the intent of the designer. Furniture is a "living thing" that needs to be in use – not in passive display as a pure object of beauty.

Maloof understood that Maloof's expression of creativity and artform equally aims to achieve the very best goals and benefits of both the contemporary art world and the functional craft art world –

which creates a dual or double challenge to overcome. Art at the service of utility is the essence of Maloof's philosophy of design. In the end, "Good" furniture must convey a feeling of function but also must be appealing to the eye." Maloof's genius is his ability to achieve both objectives with stellar and exemplary results over a career that spans well over a half century.

Maloof was all that Maloof. It is his talent, culture, his sense of purpose, the appropriate materials, tools, vision, ideas, work, and life of Sam Maloof. Maloof is a self-made genius who evolved organically. He perfected his skills and craft over many years of trial-and-error education, and he is now regarded as a master of hands-on wood craftsmanship. He holds honorary doctorate degrees from several important universities. And, it's no surprise that Maloof received the coveted MacArthur Foundation Fellowship Award in 1985 (often referred to as the "Genius" Award).

Maloof's production of thousands of great woodworks represents a monumental contribution to the lives of thousands that take daily pleasure and inspiration from his art. It has clearly established his career and international credentials and acclaim.

Maloof is also dedicated to sharing and educating others about the beauty and craft of woodworking and art. He has generously formed a non-profit foundation, Sam and Alfreda Maloof Foundation for Arts and Crafts, which serves thousands of public visitors with tours of his historic hand built home, studios, education center, art collections, visitor's center/store, and gardens. His 6.2 acre property in Alta Loma, California is a testimony to the life and work of Alfreda and Sam Maloof over 50 years, and now with his second wife, Beverly. It is an important cultural and community institution in the region.

Perhaps because of his down-to-earth and self-taught background and philosophy, Maloof is as unique of an artist as he is as a man. His vision, kindness, humor and spirit all mix together to form a one-of-a-kind man of genius. It is particularly inspiring for one to find such qualities still burning so brightly and strongly in someone beyond the age of 90.

Daniel Foster

The Genius of Sam Maloof

Sam Maloof is an internationally acclaimed woodworker of the 20th century – and now the 21st century. Maloof's skills and practice continue to thrive with his characteristic strength and vigor even beyond the age of 90. Regarded as a prominent leader of the California modern arts movement, Maloof has produced furniture that not only builds on the history of woodworking, but also contributes increasingly to the dialogue within the fine and contemporary art world.

As the boundaries between the world of craft and functional art become blurred and integrated into the fine and contemporary art vernacular, Maloof is undoubtedly one of the greatest artists of our time. Maloof holds strong to the term or classification of himself as a "woodworker"... However, inter-disciplinary art practices of the past few decades within the art world are knocking down the walls between the worlds of "craft" and "art".

Maloof speaks volumes within his specific artform of woodworking to the more fundamental formal elements of quality art-making (i.e., design, line, texture, shape, scale). For example, the sublime and highly efficient qualities of Maloof's furniture design speak heavily to the art world's traditions of minimalism and abstraction. Although the two camps of craft and art defended their individual territories with tunnel-vision intensity, it is undeniable that the formal practices and approaches within both camps were fundamentally similar.

There is the undeniable feeling when sitting in a Maloof chair that the utilization of the chair completes its purpose or function. To be in the presence of a Maloof chair and not sit in it is a very frustrating and incomplete experience – and ignores the intent of the designer. The chair or furniture is a "living thing" that needs to be in use – not languish in passive display as a pure object of beauty.

It can be argued that Maloof's expression of creativity and artform intentionally aims to achieve the very best goals and benefits of both the fine/contemporary art world and the functional craft art world – which creates a dual or double challenge to overcome. Art at the service of utility is the essence of Maloof's philosophy of design. As he states, "Good furniture must convey a feeling of function but also must be appealing to the eye." Maloof's genius is his ability to achieve both objectives with stellar and exemplary results over a career that spans well over a half century.

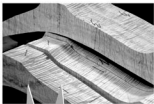
Genius – as all-too-often overused term in today's culture – is nonetheless the appropriate term for the great vision, talents, work, and life of Sam Maloof. Maloof is a self-made genius who evolved organically. He perfected his skills and craft over many years of trial-and-error education, and he is now regarded as a master of hands-on wood craftsmanship. He holds honorary doctorate degrees from several important universities. And, it's no surprise that Maloof received the coveted MacArthur Foundation Fellowship Award in 1985 (often referred to as the "Genius" Award).

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Daniel Foster



M

aloof's chairs remain strictly functional. Although sculptural, they are not conceived as sculpture per se, or as artworks that appeal to the intellect. The balance between art and utility is strictly maintained. As beautiful as it appears, a Maloof rocking chair is remarkably comfortable. Art at the service of utility is the essence of Maloof's philosophy of design. It is a motto that has sustained a tradition of fine craftsmanship.

Jeremy Adamson

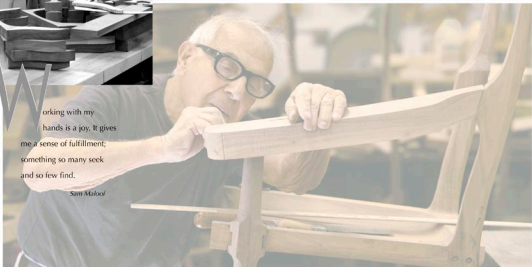




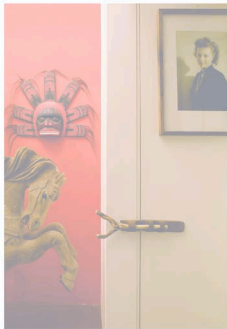


Working with my hands is a joy. It gives me a sense of fulfillment; something so many seek and so few find.

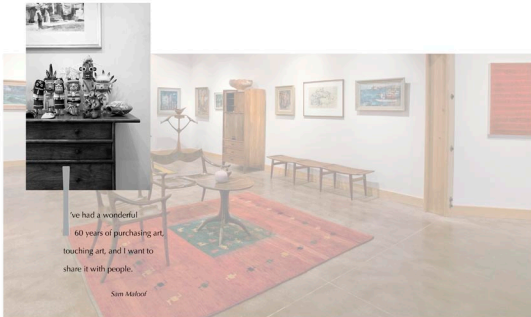
Sam Maloof











I've had a wonderful
60 years of purchasing art,
touching art, and I want to
share it with people.

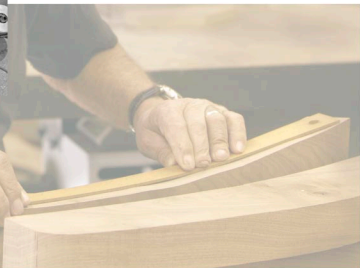
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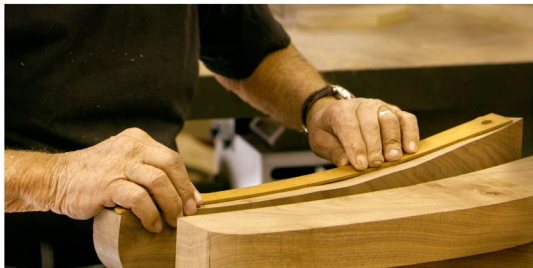




don't consider myself an
artist. I never have. I'm a
furniture maker, I'm a
woodworker, and I think
woodworker's a very good
word, and I like the word, it's
an honest word, and that is
what I am, a woodworker.

Sam Maloof



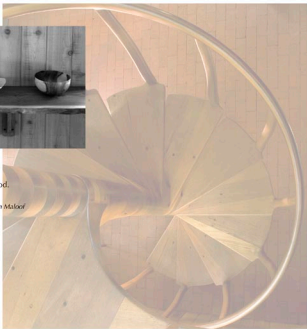


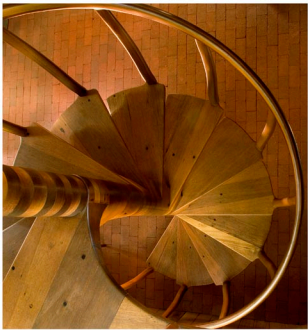


O

n creativity,
it's from God.

Sam Maloof

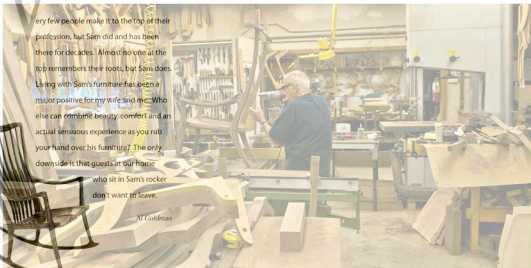


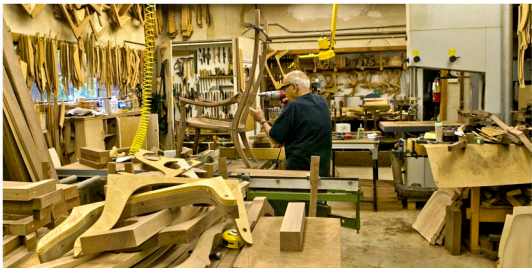


Very few people make it to the top of their profession, but Sam did and has been there for decades. Almost no one at the top remembers their roots, but Sam does. Living with Sam's furniture has been a major positive for my wife and me. Who else can combine beauty, comfort and an actual sensuous experience as you rub your hand over his furniture? The only downside is that guests at our home

who sit in Sam's rocker don't want to leave.

Al Goldman



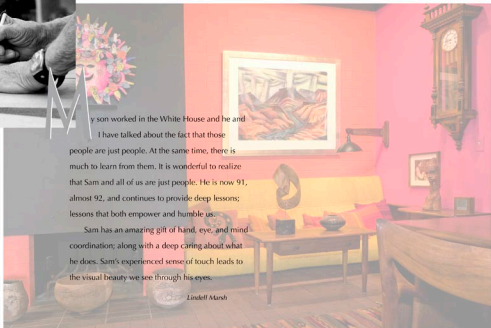


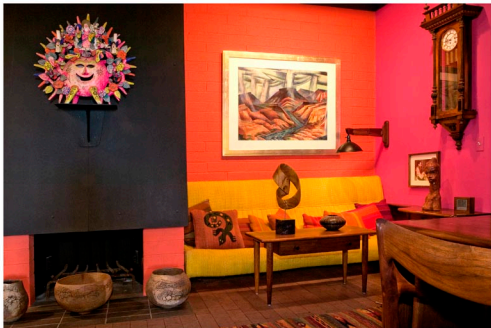


My son worked in the White House and he and I have talked about the fact that those people are just people. At the same time, there is much to learn from them. It is wonderful to realize that Sam and all of us are just people. He is now 91, almost 92, and continues to provide deep lessons; lessons that both empower and humble us.

Sam has an amazing gift of hand, eye, and mind coordination; along with a deep caring about what he does. Sam's experienced sense of touch leads to the visual beauty we see through his eyes.

Lindell Marsh

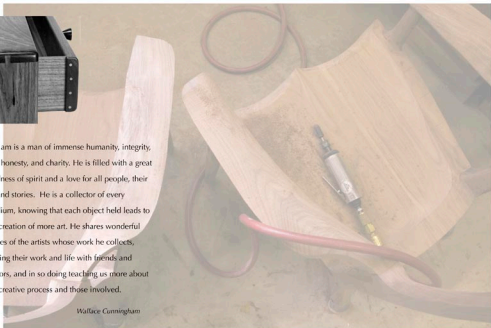






Sam is a man of immense humanity, integrity, honesty, and charity. He is filled with a great kindness of spirit and a love for all people, their art and stories. He is a collector of every medium, knowing that each object held leads to the creation of more art. He shares wonderful stories of the artists whose work he collects, sharing their work and life with friends and visitors, and in so doing teaching us more about the creative process and those involved.

Wallace Cunningham







I just happened...
I built the house like
I do furniture.

Sam Alford





Sam has known me since I was a baby. I remember him since the time I was about 11. He lived in my father, Millard Sheets' studio for a couple of years in the '40s. There he worked for Dad, building things, making frames for paintings and producing my father's silk screens. After school, I got in the habit of heading for the studio where I would carry on long conversations with Sam while he worked. By 12, I had developed a crush on this handsome man who was friendly and kind to me. He'd call me on it when I was obnoxious but usually he was simply there to talk to. He used to say, "When you grow up and we get married..." And I believed it! He was 30 and I was 12. The announcement of his engagement

to Alfreda, undid me for a time. But, luckily, I got over it in time to go to their wedding.

Sammy gave me one of his beautiful chairs for a wedding present when I was married. I treasure it, along with some pieces that were my parents, to this day. We have remained dear friends throughout the years. I loved Freda as I did Sam. When Freda died, my husband, Tom, and I worried that Sam would lose his lust for life. Several years later, however, he and one of my dearest friends, Beverly Wingate, fell in love. As Unitarian Universalist ministers, Tom and I had the great joy of officiating at their marriage ceremony. I got to say, "I finally get to marry Sam . . . to Beverly!"

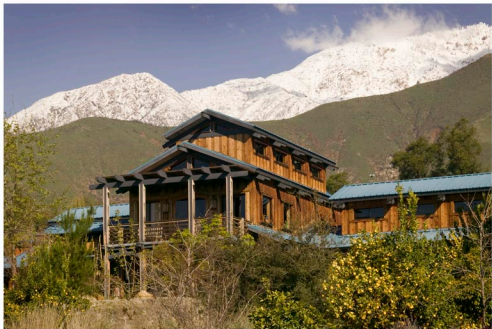




McCasso's mother said
of her son that if he
had been a soldier
he certainly would have been a
general. I have long felt that Sam
too would have been a general,
or a leader in every undertaking.

James W. Huester







I have always had the conviction that joinery is an aesthetic part of a piece of furniture, really of woodwork in general. If a joint is well made, why go to the trouble of covering it up?

Sam Maloof







Every master knows that
the material teaches the artist.







would rather be
home working

Sim Milford







For a man who is basically self-taught his draughtsmanship is absolutely beautiful and the designs faithfully reflect that vision. Over the years he's refined the work so that the extraneous is omitted leaving a beautiful piece that is visually very satisfying. And unlike many talented people, Sam is unassuming and a genuinely good man!

John Kapel





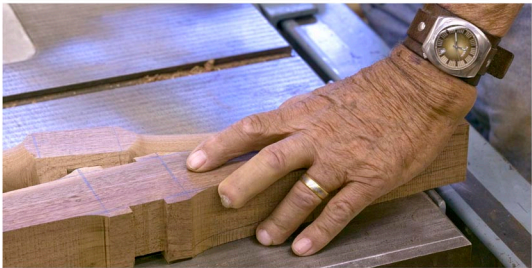
W

hich is my favorite
piece of furniture?

It's the one I'm
working on at the
time. They are all
like children, I have
no favorites.

Sam Maloof



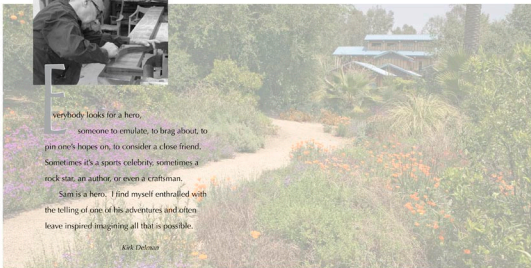




Everybody looks for a hero,
someone to emulate, to brag about, to
pin one's hopes on, to consider a close friend.
Sometimes it's a sports celebrity, sometimes a
rock star, an author, or even a craftsman.

Sam is a hero. I find myself enthralled with
the telling of one of his adventures and often
leave inspired imagining all that is possible.

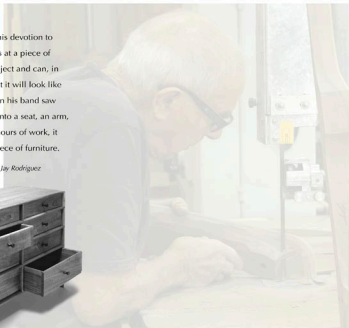
Kirk DeLover





Sam has never lost his devotion to his craft. He looks at a piece of wood as a beautiful object and can, in his mind, imagine what it will look like as he turns the wood on his band saw and freehand forms it into a seat, an arm, a leg and, after many hours of work, it becomes a beautiful piece of furniture.

Jay Rodriguez





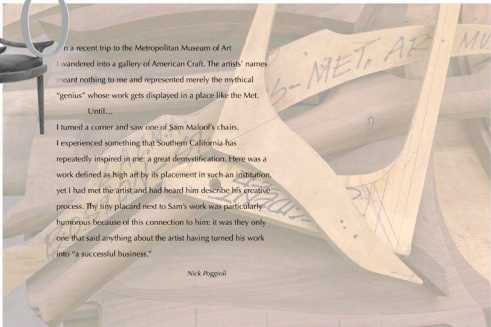


In a recent trip to the Metropolitan Museum of Art I wandered into a gallery of American Craft. The artists' names meant nothing to me and represented merely the mythical "genius" whose work gets displayed in a place like the Met.

Until...

I turned a corner and saw one of Sam Maloof's chairs. I experienced something that Southern California has repeatedly inspired in me: a great demystification. Here was a work defined as high art by its placement in such an institution, yet I had met the artist and had heard him describe his creative process. The tiny placard next to Sam's work was particularly humorous because of this connection to him: it was the only one that said anything about the artist having turned his work into "a successful business."

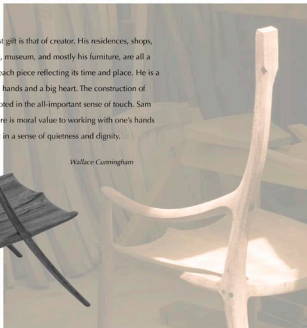
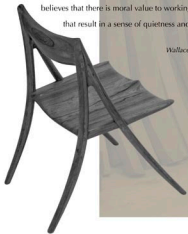
Nick Poggioli





Sam's greatest gift is that of creator. His residences, shops, warehouses, museum, and mostly his furniture, are all a portrait of him, each piece reflecting its time and place. He is a man with strong hands and a big heart. The construction of each piece is rooted in the all-important sense of touch. Sam believes that there is moral value to working with one's hands that result in a sense of quietness and dignity.

Wallace Cunningham







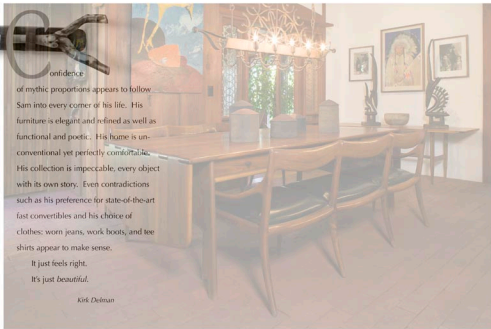
Confidence

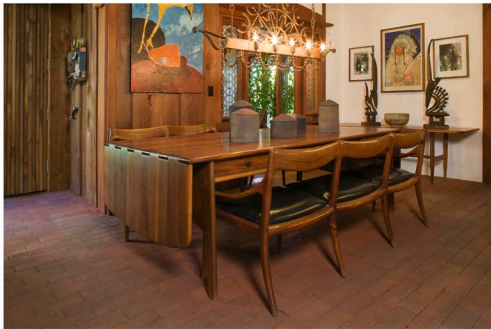
of mythic proportions appears to follow Sam into every corner of his life. His furniture is elegant and refined as well as functional and poetic. His home is unconventional yet perfectly comfortable. His collection is impeccable, every object with its own story. Even contradictions such as his preference for state-of-the-art fast convertibles and his choice of clothes: worn jeans, work boots, and tee shirts appear to make sense.

It just feels right.

It's just *beautiful*.

Kirk Deisman

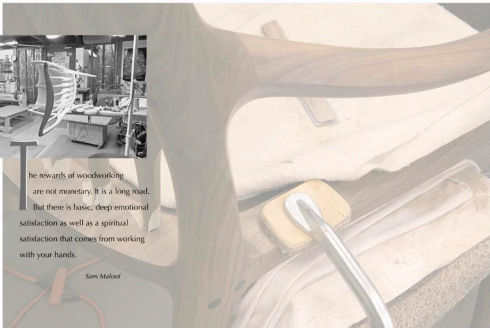


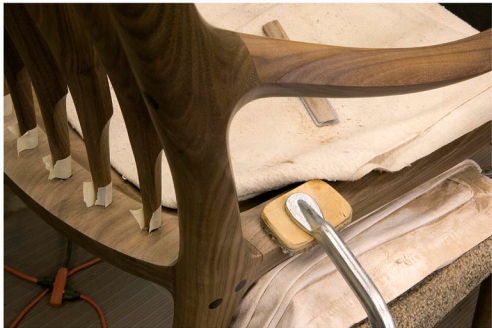


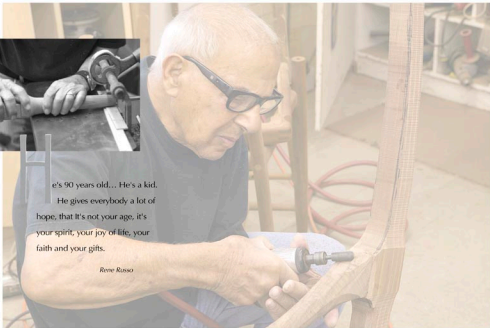


The rewards of woodworking are not monetary. It is a long road. But there is basic, deep emotional satisfaction as well as a spiritual satisfaction that comes from working with your hands.

Sara Malcof







He's 90 years old... He's a kid.
He gives everybody a lot of
hope, that it's not your age, it's
your spirit, your joy of life, your
faith and your gifts.

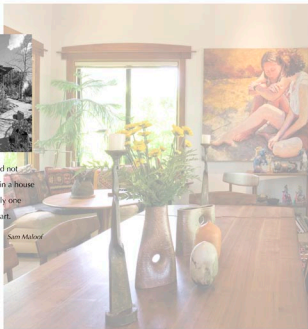
Rene Russo





could not
live in a house
with only one
kind of art.

Sam Maloof







Furniture should be felt. I think art is alive and wants to be felt, and it wants to be touched.

Sam Maloof

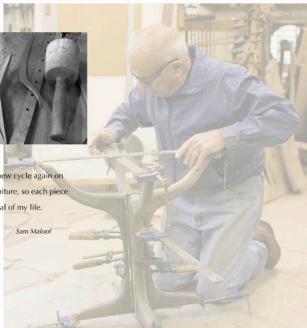


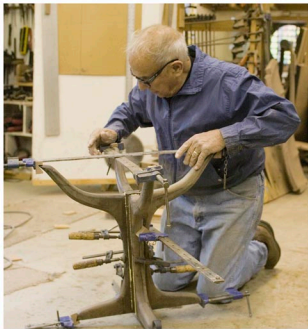




I start a whole new cycle again on each piece of furniture, so each piece I make is a renewal of my life.

Sam Maboo

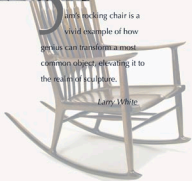






Sam's rocking chair is a vivid example of how genius can transform a most common object, elevating it to the realm of sculpture.

Larry White





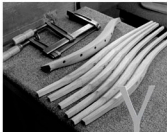


I consider Sam one of those great few friends. Whether it is his time, his knowledge, or his wonderful stories (which I call "Sammy-time") he will always come through for you "at the drop of a glue brush".

Garry Knox Bennett







You take a piece of wood and make a piece of furniture, it lives forever.

Sam Maloof







Ray Charles couldn't see my furniture, but he said he could feel that it had soul.



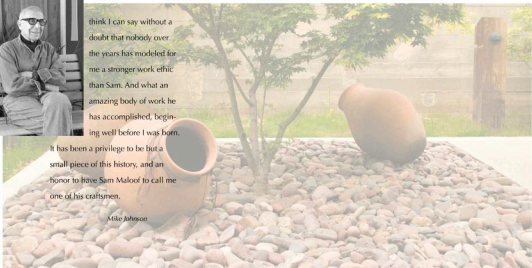




think I can say without a doubt that nobody over the years has modeled for me a stronger work ethic than Sam. And what an amazing body of work he has accomplished, beginning well before I was born.

It has been a privilege to be but a small piece of this history, and an honor to have Sam Maloof to call me one of his craftsmen.

Mike Johnson

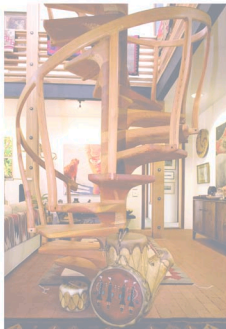




Sam always has an energy around him. He is a celebrity, everyone wants to know him and be around him.

When you are giving to others, the goodness shows through your work, and his work is still some of the most beautiful I have seen. Sam has lifted up and inspired so many of us.

Leslie Codina



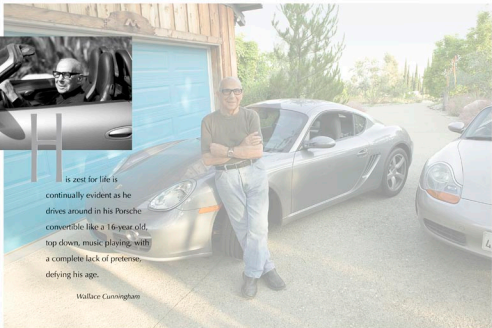


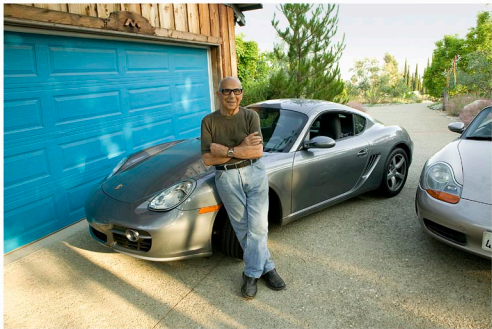


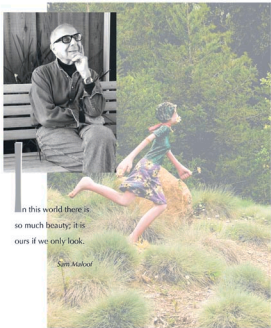
H

is zest for life is continually evident as he drives around in his Porsche convertible like a 16-year-old, top down, music playing, with a complete lack of pretense, defying his age.

Wallace Cunningham







In this world there is
so much beauty; it is
ours if we only look.

Sam Mafoof

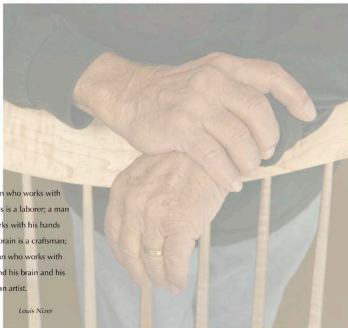




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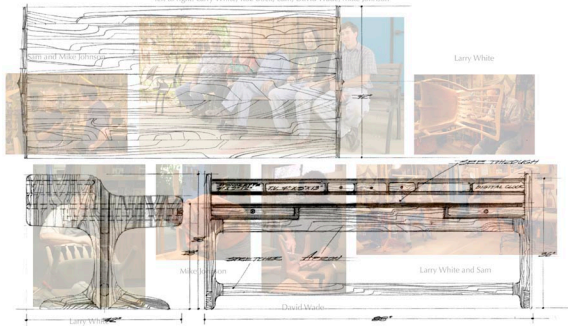
man who works with his hands is a laborer; a man who works with his hands and his brain is a craftsman; but a man who works with hands and his brain and his heart is an artist.

Louis Nizer





left to right: Larry White, Roz Bock, Sam, David Wade, Mike Johnson



left to right: Larry White, Roz Bock, Sam, David Wade, Mike Johnson

Sam and Mike Johnson



Larry White



Larry White



Mike Johnson



David Wade



Larry White and Sam



T

he sense of wonder when viewing or using a Maloof piece is what sets his work apart from mass produced objects with the same utilitarian function. Sam's work deserves study.

He approaches each project with an exacting eye for design and detail which brings out complexities in the raw materials with astonishing results.

It is my pleasure to photograph Sam's work and his life. Sam's passion for life came in to clearer focus. Even as he passes on, his passion goes forth in everything he owns or does. Art is not just something he creates and collects—his life is a work of art that I admire.

Gene Sasse

It became a driving desire to celebrate and share his extraordinary life, especially his profound ability to still enjoy making furniture well into his 90's. The goal has always been for Maloof beyond 90 to be in a class apart from mass produced books: just as a Maloof rocker is far from a generic rocker. Two years were dedicated to assuring no detail was overlooked or compromised. Every component needed to work as an instrument in an orchestra does. It is not enough that one instrument be the finest available. Every piece needed to work in concert with the others to uplift the experience in holding and reading this book. As Sam selects wood for each piece of furniture he creates, I selected photographs for the visual narrative. The finest archival museum paper was selected to show the images to their best and lasting advantage. Values of a specific weight and translucency are layered within to create a certain visual rhythm. The words of Sam

and the people who appreciate his work are used in the pages as Sam uses joinery in the chairs. All of this is bound in the finest hand-made leather in a finishing note of elegantly understated

producing this book really began in the late 1970's. I was assigned to photograph the home of William Sherman. In it were two items that grabbed my attention: a Maloof rocker and cradle. The fluid lines and craftsmanship were self-evident and

amplifiable. Starting in the mid 1980's Sam called me to photograph some of his furniture pieces for different publications. In 2004, I was asked to photo-document the Maloof's personal art collection, an effort that required thousands of images.

Along the way, my Alts Loma neighbor, Sam, and I became friends. We share a love and respect for art and artists, and are avid collectors. We have a connection to the natural world which profoundly affects our life and work. We maintain inspirational gardens. We both have successfully combined talent, skill and a passion to make a living doing the work that we love.

'Maloof beyond 90- An American Woodworker' was an intense labor of love of ultimate satisfaction. Through the active pursuit of creating a clear and compelling picture of the essence of Sam Maloof, I was granted a rare opportunity to explore the relationship between art, creativity and commerce. Now the book has come to life and new life becomes art.

There are special mentions of gratitude which need to be made. Beyond Sam and Beverly Maloof, I would like to send a message of gratitude to those who helped through the process. To my amazing daughter Erin, for her unconditional love and giving life a new perspective. To Fred Hartson - one of my 1st clients, a lifelong friend and wonderful graphic designer- this book would not be what it is without his help. And to everyone listed on the last page- your belief, your help and your assistance, allowed this book to become a work of art.

Gene Sasse
An American Photographer

If a man is called to be a street sweeper, he should sweep streets even as Michelangelo painted, or Beethoven composed music, or Shakespeare wrote poetry. He should sweep streets so well that all the host of heaven and earth will pause to say, here lived a great street sweeper who did his job well." - Martin Luther King, Jr.

In *Malcof beyond 90- An American Woodworker*, I set out to record for future generations the genius of Sam Malcof, a humble man who rose to greatness by elevating his work to the standard so eloquently stated by Martin Luther King, Jr.

There is an emotional wonder that is inherent in everything Sam produces. Sam approaches each project with more than just an exacting eye for design and detail. By taking a carefully selected, once living, piece of wood he insills the wood's beauty and soul in his work. He practices his craft by elevating functional objects into works of comforting tactile feel, a unique spirit, and a visual delight recognized by the public and connoisseurs worldwide.

It is my goal as a photographer to capture the essence and spirit of Sam's works. While observing and photographing Sam's work and his loves, Sam's passion for life came in to clearer focus. Even as he passed the age 90, his enthusiasm springs forth in everything he owns or does. Art is not just something he creates and collects- his life is a work of art that I admire.

It became a driving desire to celebrate and share his extraordinary life, especially his profound ability to still enjoy making furniture well into his 90's. The goal has always been for *Malcof beyond 90* to be in a class apart from mass produced books: just as a Malcof rocker is far from a generic rocker. Two years were dedicated to assuring no detail was overlooked or compromised. Every component needed to work as an instrument in an orchestra does. It is not enough that one instrument be the finest available. Every piece needed to work in concert with the others to uplift the experience in holding and reading this book. As Sam selects wood for each piece of furniture he creates, I selected photographs for the visual narrative. The finest archival museum paper was selected to show the images to their best and lasting advantage. Velum of a specific weight and translucency are layered within to create a certain visual rhythm. The words of Sam and the people who appreciate his work are used in the pages as Sam uses joinery in the chair. All of this is bound in the finest hand carved Moroccan leather in a finishing note of elegantly understated tactile pleasure.

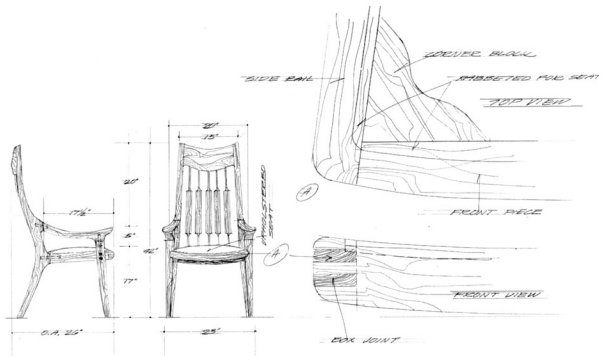
My journey in producing this book really began in the late 1970's. I was assigned to photograph the home of William Sherman. In it were two items that grabbed my attention: a Malcof rocker and cradle. The fluid lines and craftsmanship were self-evident and memorable. Starting in the mid 1980's Sam called me to photograph some of his furniture pieces for different publications. In 2004, I was asked to photo-document the Malcof's personal art collection, an effort that required thousands of images.

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Gene Sasse
An American Photographer



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Introduction: President Jimmy Carter

Forward: Jonathan Fairbanks
Curator of American Decorative Art & Sculpture
Museum of Fine Art, Boston

Photography: Gene Sasse

Equipment: All the photos were taken with a Canon EOS 1ds with various lenses except the photos of single rockers, which were shot with a Sinar C 4X5 camera.

Graphic Design: Fred Hartson

Type: Allise, Optima Roman and Optima Oblique

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Paper: Color photos are printed on Velum pages are Neenah UV/Ultra II Translucent Printing Paper.

Sasse Bio: Mary Holmes

Sasse Bio Photo: Kelly Vela

Book Binding: Michael Arnold
The Book Craftsman

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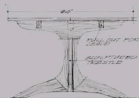
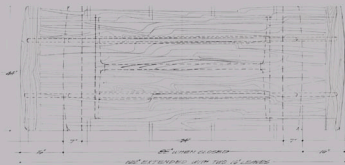
Louis Nizer
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Carolyn Sheets Owen-Towle, Rev., Dr.
Daughter of artist Millard Sheets

Larry White
Sam's Assistant



2 DETER CURVES OF HIGH SEATS
 2 DETER CURVES OF LOW SEATS
 CARVED PLAY SPINDLE
 SCANTLED IRON SHIRT



EXTENSION TABLE DRAWING TABLE FOR
 MR. AND MRS. JOHN HOOKING
 SCALE $\frac{1}{8}'' = 1'$ LINEN NOVEMBER 1874
 BALDWIN HAND RUBBED OIL FINISH

