

## **CHARLES THOMPSON IS AWARDED THE 2024 JOHN D. MINECK FURNITURE FELLOWSHIP**

**BOSTON** -- October 24, 2024 -- Boston's Society of Arts + Crafts announced today that Charles Thompson is the 2024 recipient of the John D. Mineck Fellowship, a nationally recognized award given annually to an early-career furniture artist with an unrestricted \$25,000 prize.



Thompson's practice is based in the woods of Western Massachusetts, with a humble barn in the town of Heath serving as his studio base. He holds a Bachelor of Art degree from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst and a Master of Fine Arts in Writing from The New School in New York. A Nashua, N.H. native, Thompson (l., photo by Mark Adams) was raised with a variety of creative influences and in a multicultural household. His mother is Filipino and his father is Japanese and Black; Thompson says he draws inspiration from international and American folk styles of woodworking.

"I feel deeply connected to New England," Thompson says. "I don't come from a specific tradition. I create each piece by hand, drawing from different places and traditions with limitations and constraints based only on resources and style."

Originally trained in writing, Thompson's pivot to full-time furniture-making came in 2019, when he completed his first wooden chair. "Writing is strained, internal, cerebral," he says. "I wanted something more tangible. The good thing with wood is that it's not precious, and you end up with an object that can't be deleted." Thompson attended a week-long workshop on how to make a single chair from a tree, and he says the experience opened up a new way to work. "I felt like I could do that myself without heavy machinery. I could create a finished object from a living, raw material in a self-contained way. Working that way is really attractive to me."

In the early days of his practice, Thompson accepted commissions for a variety of wooden objects, and honed his particular craft and style through trial and error. "It felt great to have my own space to make a lot of mistakes and learn about woodworking. I developed my sensibility and confidence through the freedom I gave myself to play and learn," says Thompson. He now teaches regularly, offering classes and workshops in carving and woodworking



at renowned craft spaces like HatchSpace in Brattleboro, Vt., the John C. Campbell Folk School in Brasstown, N.C., and the North Bennet Street School in Boston.



Thompson plans to use the Mineck Fellowship to expand his studio capacity – investing in appropriate tools and structural upgrades – and expand his teaching practice. “I’d like to develop my studio into a teaching space, since my teaching practice fuels my creative practice,” he says. “I’m trying to teach what I’m interested in and what I want to learn more about.”

Thompson’s furniture-making style stood out to Society of Arts + Crafts jurors, according to Society President Katina Leodes. “Prior to reviewing his application, the Mineck jurors were not familiar with Charles Thompson,” Leodes says. “They selected him for the 2024 Award because of the beauty and originality of his work, the sustainability of his practice and the soundness of his plan to use the funds.”

The John D. Mineck Furniture Fellowship is one of the largest such prizes in the craft field. It is supported by the Boston-based **John D. Mineck Foundation**, which honors interests that Mineck pursued throughout his life. The Fellowship focuses on rising furniture makers whose work is contemporary and functional, and supports young artists with financial assistance to develop skills that move them toward independence. The Society of Arts + Crafts, where Mineck once served as Board president, has administered the fellowship since it began in 2007.

For more than a century, the Society of Arts + Crafts has connected artists with communities that sustain them and has been at the forefront of the American craft movement, fostering the development, sales, recognition and education of fine craft. Its mission is to support and celebrate craft makers and their creativity; its vision is to build and sustain a vibrant and diverse community and to shape the future of craft. See the full mission [here](#).

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MEDIA CONTACT: For more information and high-resolution photos, or to speak with Mineck Fellowship recipient Charles Thompson or Society of Arts + Crafts representatives, contact Jennifer Astin, JMKPR at [ja@jmkpr.com](mailto:ja@jmkpr.com) or 424-333-1718. Furniture photos in this release by Charles Thompson, headshot by Mark Adams.