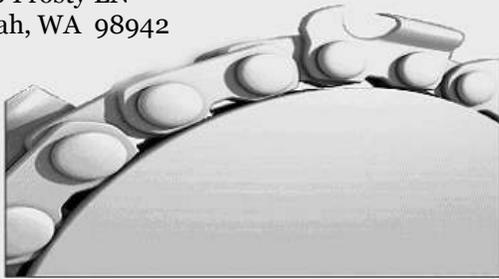


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The Cutting Edge

Since 1993

October 2007

Yves Rasch

by Angela Polglaze

During my travels these past years, while on my incredible carving life adventure, I have met hundreds of wickedly talented artists, many of whom I will never meet again. Then there are others I continually cross paths with, some of which become life long friends. One such friend, that I personally consider to be a hugely inspiring sculptor, and that I have had the pleasure to witness creating his magic several times (and joyfully anticipate doing so again) is Yves Rasch of Germany.

Yves works primarily in the abstract realm. His works suggests a simplicity of form which is in fact incredibly difficult to achieve and execute, but achieve it he does. His works are slick and often symmetrical with a smooth finish that more often than not instills in the viewer a desire to caress the piece all over. His aim is to capture a moment in time, a glimpse of dynamic energy, and accordingly his works are indicative of a snapshot in time, a freeze frame of fluid motion.

Yves, "I try to hold the moment ... I want to find a tension in my work that is positive. I want it to be like an explosion before it burns. In France they call it 'Le Petit Mort', which means orgasm and translates literally as 'The Little Death'. I like it because it is an end and a beginning all at once. It's not really sexual what I am trying to convey, but to capture that moment ... being in balance ... still and in motion at the same time."

As a child carrots were Yves carving material of choice, and to this day he will fall back on this practice when experimenting with an idea for his next sculpture. Yves has been carving with a chainsaw for three years after working with troubled youth teaching hand carving. He was impressed at how much the act of carving, or just creating in general, was able to help them discover their self worth, and he found immense satisfaction in being able to help them out in such a way. There was a woodworking space where he was teaching and so he commenced carving on a small scale for himself as well.

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Sculpture carved by Yves mentor Erich Gerber
picture taken by Michael Kneudel

**Letter from the Editor
by Jack McEntire**

Well, another summer has flown by – so many events, shows and contests. Like most of us, there are so many things to do in the summer that the season seems to get shorter every year – there's just not enough time.

With this in mind, it seems important to offer carvers a way to choose which events offer the best environment for the artists. To advance this concept the CCSG would like to ask every carver out there to rate all the events they attended this year. If you go to www.theccsg.com/rate.htm you will find a questionnaire listing a number of the aspects of a show that affect the quality of the experience for the carver. For those without internet, you will also find a copy of the questionnaire inside this newsletter. Please make a separate photocopy for each show. The results will be published in upcoming newsletters.

We would like honest reporting, so all of this is to be done anonymously. Reporting like this is for the betterment of us carvers. We hope this will let the carvers know which shows treat us best and also let the event coordinators know which areas of their show need improvement.

I can think of almost nothing more appropriate for the guild to do. I know how most of us feel – when you're talking to an event coordinator in person, all of whom put in much more time and energy than most realize, it is tempting to gloss over the rough spots and paint a rosy picture of the show. This is a chance to put it the way you really see it. Don't think we are looking only for the bad, the good things, the things that work also need to be highlighted.

Like always the guild exists to help the carvers. If you have any ideas of how we can better do this let us know. And, as always, send us your stories, tips, poems, cartoons and we'll print it.



photo by Peter Wiant, This Old Stump

Hello fellow carvers, how's it going? Really, how's it happening in your life right now? What carving related stories will make you smile or bring a look of utter dismay to your face? I can't be the only person that has the ability to write and has had a few screw ups that taught me well (in some cases the lesson was repeated until earned)!

These are the stories my friends, these are the threads that form the fabric of our carving world, and the weave is magnificent. I have heard the stories first hand, lived them in some cases, and laughed out loud for hours on end at some of the crazy ways we make our art happen! What you go through to put some grub on the table, to gas up your truck, and to make it to the job. Ah, the adventure club that we have happened to have fallen have ass backwards into, lucky huh?

We are going to have our next face to face meeting at Noelles restaurant in Edgewood, November 18th at 2:00 pm.

Last year during our revival "PRAISE THE LORD AND PASS THE AMMUNITION", I said that I could not let it die. This guild is born of pain and frustration, of dedication and forward motion, of the groundbreaking and trailblazing that helped shape almost every chainsaw carving event that takes place today. I said ALMOST EVERY ONE! so, don't start peeing on bush's and rattling your antlers, sheesh be cool.

So, in conclusion, a meeting in November, time to have the "Irish wake" or have the wake up call! Our officers need to be decided, or elected depending on if we get some volunteers. We need to focus on some new horizons. As for contests -- except for having a judging pool, and a training program for them, (paid responsible judges and a training program for them) and reporting on contests in the newsletter, The Cascade Chainsaw Sculptors Guild will have nothing to do with them (contests). That ground's been plowed, folks should give us a medal for doing it as long as we did! THE ART will be a new focus, and of course the newsletter, the lifeblood, the link. Jack and Amy have been the godsend that saved our butt. Without the newsletter, we are hollow, we are done, we could not exist, so good on you two. We can only speculate on where we would be if you had started a while back, but the history, is the history. Also, as acting president, I declare carver amnesty, everyone is forgiven, including me, a fresh start and all that kind of stuff, won't forget, but will forgive.....bye bye now.....

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www.theccsg.com

Rate the Events at:

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Amy McEntire - Editor
Jack McEntire - Coeditor

The Cascade Chainsaw Sculptors Guild exists to foster support for the art and craft of chainsaw carving by encouraging communication between carvers through every means possible, including newsletters, websites, forums, meetings, demonstrations, mutual support and the preservation of our history.

JUDGING COMPETITIONS-- by Susan Miller

Once again, competitions have happened, judges using various scoring systems have chosen carvings which they think deserve to win, some carvers are joyous, and some are disappointed. Other carvers have commented both positively and negatively about the quality of judging.

Well, it's a challenge to judge a competition, and has been so since the early 80's when Mike McVay put on one of the first competitions in Puyallup Washington. Over the years, CCSG members have tried to identify the trouble spots and offer some solutions.

Following is a list of some of the categories which deserve attention and which we have tried to address in our judging system:

- Theme or subject * Originality * Style * Artistic principles
- Unequal wood size and quality * Tools and electricity availability or permitted
- Difficulty * Craftsmanship * Finish * Points allocated for each category
- Obtaining qualified Judges * Allowing judges time to look at EVERY carving
- Adding up points correctly

After a process of many years we adopted a set of judging criteria which, used by qualified judges, seems to work pretty well, and in the next issues of the newsletter, we will present and clarify these criteria. As you may expect, we may never have the perfect system, and we welcome your suggestions. Please look over the list of problems and let us know if you see others. Winter is coming, the contest season is coming to a close, and this is a good time to look back at what did and did not work.

The Stodgy Owl, from "Seven Easy Pieces, a collection of chainsaw carvings you can do in less than thirty minutes," by Mike McVay

The previous three pieces in this series--the tiki, the scotty dog and the tortoise--didn't require you to move them around while you carved. They were parked in one spot, and you moved around them. With the OWL, that will change. You'll need to roll this one in order to carve it on all sides.

At demonstrations, I would always start with one end of the log propped up on another log, so I could roll it more easily. You can secure it in position with a block of wood wedged under each side.

Most of the carving time is expended on the front, less on each side, and very little on the back. It shouldn't be necessary to shut your saw off while you roll the owl back and forth. Given the way saws perform when people are watching, like not starting, it's a good idea to warm up your saw before you begin. I hope to make a video soon showing step-by-step cuts, but if you're anxious to carve an owl right now, start at the top and work your way down. Do the front first then roll it, first on one side and then the other. Carve the back last. There's only the tail and a little on the wings to do there; then stand it up. It's always a crowd pleaser.

The owl came about as a result of requests by people watching carving demonstrations. "Have you ever carved an owl?" they'd ask. Always quick to take a hint about what might sell (those pesky bills, you know), I set out to carve one, and then two and then a dozen. Soon the owl grew to be the most popular carving I did. I got pretty sick of them, like I am now with bears, and I'm happy to say that the thousand or so owls I carved around the West have probably all returned to the earth by now, while I keep chugging out new ones.

Historically the owl has been associated with women and wisdom, and the tradition continues today. Everybody seems to have an aunt who likes owls. They're a little like bears in that you can never carve too many of them. There were many times the cow-boys, totems, fish or dogs weren't selling, and an owl stood up and paid the rent. I'm grateful. That's all for now. Next up is the high-speed alpha-bet. See you then. Mike McVay -- Wasilla, Alaska



Tales of an International Starving Artist -- Germany

by Bruce Thorsteinson

How does one describe the trip of a life time? 6 shows in a row, 2 at the ocean and 4 in between in Europe...a mind opening, life altering, amazing experience that mere words cannot do justice to. I'll try though. First off, I'd like to thank everyone for all they did to make this trip just such an adventure.

So my tale begins in Tokeland, Washington, a small artist community on the coast that has one road in and the same road out. Woodfest is a small exhibition carve, where about a dozen of us get together to relax and create and enjoy the campfire and burning of castoff carvings, very therapeutic. We stay in the 1885 Tokeland hotel and carve on the grounds in front of it. My many thanks to the town of Tokeland for a great send off.

So despite a rear end going out on my rusted chariot and bedroom flooding from a busted water heater (glad I'm going to be sleeping elsewhere) I get it all taken care of and catch a bus to the airport and head for Hamburg. Arriving I'm met by Maria with a smile and a hug and we head for her beautiful home. Wow, I'm in Germany --too cool! There are no speed limits on the Autobahn, love caravans just off the exits, fields of corn ringed by sunflowers and you can drink beer wherever you want. Which I'm handed one when I get to the field to look at the logs. And the good thing is you don't have to drink it fast cause it'll get warm, it's already that way but still good.

Michael and Maria and the town of Steinbeck put on a first class show from steak lunches from the vendors to the 100 ft logs between 2 logging trucks to eat under, to the carver house they rented next door (where we had snoring contests) to the assembly hall where we ate our meals. A world class crew showed up to create. We had carvers from all over the world. I got the chance to meet new friends and reconnect with existing ones as we burned dicks fire sculpture from last year and were interviewed by German TV (I think), I'm not use to the media wanting to talk with me. They said I answered 5 questions with every one they asked, who me? Hehehe. Onto the next show on the tour. First I head out with the ever vibrant Uschi and her super cool husband Bernie to deliver her sculpture, then head 5 hours Southwest to their beautiful home next to acorn field with a view of the hills and a teepee in the yard. The next day finds us roaming around the local castles and taking a trip into Cologne for more sight seeing. I saw the biggest cathedral in Europe, 11 stories of sculpture with massive stained glass windows and the golden caskets of the 3 wise-men! Wow, who knew?! We have lunch outdoors by the river next to a small castle. Our way leads us to the next show, a woodmill where 6 of us get together and carve for German TV (Dmax) for 3 hours. We then get taken to a hotel to clean up, eat dinner and head back to a school bus where everyone plays poker. All filmed, no kidding! Uschi comes in 2nd and I hang out with the TV crew as my German isn't good enough for the show but getting better by the day. After 25 years of talking to each other the 2 German guys in my head are glad to have someone else to talk with. So, I eat chocolate and drink beer ..welcome to Germany .

After a late night and much fun Uschi and I head East to the next show in East Germany, where we'll be staying in the Burgermeisters (the Mayor) Mansion on the 2nd floor are rooms for everyone, on the first floor is the dining area where we'll have breakfast and dinners provided. We dine overlooking the park like yard and fields. Giant Popular logs were set up on a trail thru a park next to a black swan lake where we create in nature's shade with new carvers coming in from South America, Canada and other parts of Germany. The town purchased all of our sculptures and in a town of 400, 120 people were involved in making the show happen. Cute German girls brought juice and water and asked if we needed anything else ..hmmm well?? At night the band started playing and I banged my head like never before. We sure felt like rock stars playing our saws to the crowds approval and people handed me photos of myself working to sign. The tour continues and we head West again to England and Tatton Park. First, we have to clean and load up saws for the 6 hour drive across Germany to Holland where we stand with the north sea washing over our feet, waiting for a 7 hour ferry ride across to England. In the next issue I'll describe the shows in Scotland, England and Westport.

(Continued from page 1) **Yves Rasch** by Angela Polglaze

Two years later he met Erich Gerber, a carver of some renown in Germany, who has carved enormous works in the past, and has a workshop on the outskirts of Hamburg. Yves approached him for mentorship. Erich wasn't interested at the time and recommended a carving school for Yves, but after a year of observing Yves at work, and getting to know him, Erich decided to take him under his wing and take him on as an apprentice. Yves artistic career has flourished at a remarkable rate ever since.

Picasso, world famous for his prolific abstract imagery, once suggested that the only way for an artist to master the abstract was to master realism first, and Picassos work from his late teens shows an intense mastery of realism. Yves, working unconsciously on this suggestion originally worked mainly in the abstract, moving on for a time to carving highly realistic art, only to return to his true passion ... pure abstract form.

He finds inspiration in all aspects of daily life continually buzzing around him. Yves, "My first consideration usually is to see something in the wood, and bring it out. To add a new idea, that has evolved due to the existing stuff ... it's like a puzzle! And sometimes I might be just walking down the street, like the other day when I saw a heart spray painted on the street. I didn't see the heart at first but a three dimensional object instead."

So, as Yves experiments with the pieces of his creative life puzzle, I predict a great future for this exceptional young artist. His works are wonderful to behold and I am continually surprised at how the same piece, seemingly so simple, can appear completely different from every angle, truly 3 dimensional.

Being happy in life is important to Yves, and the pleasure that he gets from the very act of creating flows from his works and consistently makes his audience smile, while also granting them the opportunity to view the world from a different perspective, a wonderful achievement for any artist. As his partner Neele Kupper notes, "When he's carving he's calm and happy. He is so fulfilled. He comes back each day smelly and happy."

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Piece created in the English Open, Tatton Park, England, August 2007 Multiple differing views of the same creation
Pictures taken by Angela Polglaze



Piece created in the Husky Cup in Germany in May 2007. Over all 3rd place winner ... a remarkable achievement for an abstract piece! Pictures taken by Angela Polglaze





Piece created in Sandringham, England during the English Open 2005
Picture by Angela Polglaze

Upcoming Events

The events listed here are offered as a free service and are not endorsed by the CCSG. If you would like to list an event please contact the Cutting Edge at 240 Frosty LN, Selah, WA 98942, 509-697-8853, ammy@charter.net

Feb. 23rd – March 2nd
Ridgway, PA

Appalachian Arts Studio presents: Ridgway Chainsaw Carvers Rendezvous
An open invitation and a unique opportunity for chainsaw carvers to meet and share the experience of chainsaw carving.

23rd & 24th – open carve on grounds

Monday 25th through Thursday the 28th seminars will be held at the Appalachians Arts Studio 9:00 am til Noon daily.

Friday the 29th Carving on Masterpiece for the Auction at the festival grounds. Saturday, carving til noon.

Carvers donate a carving.

Auction at 1:00pm

Check website for updates and schedules.

Web Site: register, info

www.chainsawrendezvous.org

Rick & Liz Boni

Appalachian Arts Studio

Ridgway, PA

(814) 772-0400

Ridgway-Elk County Chamber of Commerce

<http://www.ridgwaychamber.com>

Phone: (814) 776-1424

Fax: (814) 772-9150

ridgwayrendezvous.com

To see a more detailed version of the upcoming events point your browsers to: <http://theccsg.com/Upcoming%20Events.htm>

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