

MCW September 10, 2026 Panel Critique

In case you're a new MCW member and not familiar with our annual Panel Critique, here is a brief description of the concept. I wrote these words 16 years ago, and they remain true today.

Instead of a demonstration, we will have an extended Show Tell & Ask session with a formal critique of each piece conducted by a panel of three selected art and turning experts. Participants will bring one piece that you have made to have it reviewed. The idea is not to submit a perfect piece – rather, the goal is for us all to learn about design and turning and finishing techniques from the things each of us has made. Have you ever made anything you didn't think you could improve on? (I certainly haven't.) I think we're often our own worst critics, but we may not know how a piece can be improved. This is an ideal way to learn how to elevate what we are doing, from our fellow turners experiences and in the eyes of artists from other media, in a friendly and instructive environment. Each participant will be asked to say a few words about the concept and techniques involved in their piece before the critics have at it. Comments and questions from the audience will also be welcome. Don't plan to bring your ego, just your work, an open mind, and your sense of humor.

This year, our woodturner is Allen Alexopoulos, and our other artists are 2D and 3D colored pencil artist Wendy Ng and author/illustrator/sculptor Kevin O'Malley. Here is some further information about them. I think you can see that this is going to be a great Panel and that we're going to have loads of fun along with some serious examinations of our works of wood art, as other artists see them.

Allen Alexopoulos

Allen Alexopoulos - Master Woodturner - has been creating custom woodturning art in his studio in Annapolis, Maryland since 2001. Many of his pieces are turned from tree species indigenous to the central Maryland area. And most of the local timbers that he incorporates into his art are recovered from downed trees that would otherwise be dumped into landfills or burned as firewood.

Allen's artistic goal is to highlight as much of the natural figure, texture and color from the wood as possible. Simple shapes combined with graceful curvatures amplify the beauty of his turnings.

Although Allen has explored many areas of woodturning, his principal repertoire includes natural edged vessels, lidded boxes with ornate finials, hollow forms and formal vessels.

Allen has developed turned pieces that have been included in the State of Maryland and City of Annapolis Archives, the on-line Wye Oak Gallery and commercial sites like Teknatool in New Zealand and Exotic Lumber in Annapolis. His pieces can be seen on his website (www.lathescapes.com). Allen is a member and past president of the Chesapeake Woodturners, the Maryland Federation of Art and the American Association of Woodturners. He has taught basic and advanced woodturning courses at Maryland Hall for the Creative Arts. His woodturnings have earned Juror's Choice awards by the Maryland Federation of Art and Best in Show awards with the Chesapeake Woodturners.

He has done numerous commissioned turnings and sold many pieces at the HorseSpirit Arts Gallery while they were in operation.



Allen has demonstrated woodturning techniques at the Renwick Art Gallery in Washington, the national American Craft Council Exhibition in Baltimore, Woodworking Shows in Timonium, and at American Association of Woodturners (AAW) chapters in the mid-Atlantic region. He has participated in numerous MCW Panel Critique sessions.

Wendy Ng

Wendy Ng, a Howard County artist, has had a non-linear career path to her current focus as a colored pencil artist. Her early experiences and education in traditional media in western and Chinese art were put on hold while she attended to higher education in science and research. A slow and gradual return to artistic pursuits accompanied parenthood and her work in graphic design and technical writing, and a subsequent dive into teaching in alternative educational settings for her children and homeschoolers.

A chance to work with a friend on Ukrainian pysanky art blossomed simply because she thought "I can do better than that" after her first egg piece. She honed her skills with traditional pysanka designs and soon started to blend in her interests in geometric designs, optical illustrations, and tessellations, à la M.C. Escher.



An introduction to colored pencil from a fabulous colored pencil artist and fellow art gallery exhibitor led to her current art focus. She is now experimenting and earning awards with colored pencil pieces completed on two-dimensional and three-dimensional surfaces. She is now a signature member of the Colored Pencil Society of America. Lest one thinks that her arrival at her current interests is haphazard, Wendy sees many linkages and connections along the way; she followed her interests and curiosity. May the experimentation and exploration continue!

Kevin O'Malley

Kevin O'Malley is a prolific children's book author, illustrator, and physical sculptor. He grew up outside Philly but moved to this area to attend the prestigious Maryland Institute College of Art. He has lived in the Baltimore area ever since and currently works out of his home studio on Towson.

<https://www.baltimoremagazine.com/section/art/sentertainment/kevin-o-malley-prolific-childrens-book-illustrator-towson/>

He has written and illustrated over 85 children's books over a career spanning more than 35 years. Some of his most famous titles include "Once Upon a Cool Motorcycle Dude", 'Cinder Edna', the "Captain Raptor" series, and the long-running "Miss Malarkey" titles. He's been on the New York Times bestseller list, and people have given him awards -- which surprises nobody more than his parents. He is known for a



—Photography by Tyrone Syranmo Wilkens

sharp, kid-friendly sense of humor, dynamic storytelling, and mixed-media illustrations using watercolor, ink, chalk, and colored pencils.

While he is famous for 2D illustrations, he heavily incorporates 3D art into his life. To relax, find creative “flow”, and step away from the book page, O’Malley creates whimsical, mixed-media 3D sculptures. His physical sculptures are frequently featured in regional galleries such as the Fleckenstein Gallery in Baltimore, often appearing in eco-conscious exhibitions like their “Reclaimed & Renamed” showcase.

Kevin is also a member artist in the Artists’ Gallery in Ellicott City, the collaborative, artist-owned co-op gallery located on Main Street. He showcases and sells his whimsical sculptures in “Found Objects” and “Mixed-Media” categories. These pieces are constructed from repurposed materials, upcycled items, and found objects, often paired with watercolor and ink elements.