

MICHAEL HURWITZ'S display cabinet (24 in. deep by 36 in. wide by 78 in. tall), one of a pair, folds materials and methods of Chinese furniture making into his Japanese-tinged aesthetic. The traditional Chinese "cracked-ice" pattern in the small sliding doors is balanced by his own squiggly, bent-laminated latticework on the left. The carcase is bamboo veneer, and the solid-panel door is made from a prized plank of zelkova Hurwitz bought years ago in Japan.

J.M. SYRON AND BONNIE BISHOFF drew on details of Chinese furniture for their altar coffer's raised ends and exuberantly scrolled skirt and corbels. A Chinese tapestry inspired the seascape on the panels. Syron built the mahogany cabinet (18 in. deep by 32 in. wide by 26 in. tall) and Bishoff pieced together the stylized seascapes in marquetry fashion, using "veneers" of polymer clay. She also used polymer to create the illusion of "cracked ice" latticework over the seascape.



Photo: Dean Powell

West Meets East

For centuries, while China was closed to foreigners, Chinese forms found their way into Western furniture. From the frothy fretwork of Chinese Chippendale to the cabriole legs on Queen Anne tables and the bamboo-style turnings on Windsor chairs, China has been with us whether we knew it or not. *Inspired by China*, an extraordinary show at the Peabody Essex Museum in Salem, Mass., asked 22 American, Canadian, and Chinese makers to participate in a three-day workshop on Chinese furniture at the museum. Then each maker built a piece in response to that experience. The inspiring new pieces are on view alongside a selection of the antique Chinese furniture that inspired them. Those who miss the show will be consoled by the superb catalog (www.pem.org).

—Jonathan Binzen

Pro Portfolio Visit FineWoodworking.com for more of the exhibit, with audio commentary from curators and artists.



Photo: Dean Powell



Photo: Dennis Helmar

BRIAN NEWELL, an American who lives outside Tokyo, was so inspired by China that he traveled there after the museum workshop. His Cicada Cabinet (12 in. deep by 42 in. wide by 37½ in. tall) in zitan and boxwood found its impetus in a carved jade pendant of a cicada that he received as a gift while in Beijing. The cabinet's pierced carving is based on a pattern Newell saw in China on 3,000-year-old bronzes and stonework.