Welcome to my studio. Yes, I call it a studio, which is common for those of us who call ourselves artists. (Artists are people who do not have enough work to call him(her)self a craftsman... but we can let that ride for now.) Photo 1 is the view from the door. What you cannot see is all the equipment in a storage room. My shop... I mean studio... is small. Most equipment is on casters, and I roll it in when I need it. This often means I roll it in, use it, roll it out, realize I had not finished, and roll it back in. That is life in a small shop. I also have a small sharpening room with a sink and a wood storage area.

I was asked “what is on my bench?” I typically have 20 projects going... alright that is an exaggeration... I guess it is probably 30-40 projects. I was only counting the ones I think about. I will give you a counterclockwise tour of the shop, which will give you an idea of the types of projects I have underway.

First stop is the lathe (photos 2A&B). Today I have a couple of bowls I am working on. They are spalted birch. Because of the heavy spalting, they could not be the most functional bowls. Thus, I made the base somewhat small. I always have something I am turning. I enjoy turning, and I typically spend some time every day at the lathe. Turning projects are usually faster than flat work, and I think it is easier to do something truly different with turning (see below).

Next stop is a small table that might look vaguely familiar to you (photos 3A&B). I made the table base as part of the mortise & tenon demonstration for the last MWG meeting. I had no plan for the table base until I noticed a beautiful piece of curly maple in my wood collection. The next thing I knew, I had a tabletop made for the base. The top has slightly curved sides and a bullnose edge. I just put the first coat of finish on the table. I used a tung oil, varnish mixture. The oil really pops the interesting grain of the top,
and the varnish will help protect it. Before finishing, I raised the grain with water followed by sanding to 400g. I feel that raising the grain with water is essential for tabletops. I will wet-sand with 600g while applying subsequent coats of finish. After a few coats, I will top it off with paste wax. I do not enjoy finishing, which probably explains why I do not have a dedicated place for finishing. I have no particular plan for this table, so let me know if you need a nice end table in birch and curly maple.

Moving further around the room, we come to my holding bench (and sometimes finishing bench). There are a couple of noteworthy projects here (photo 4). One is a small entryway table in birch and wenge for a client. I typically work from a full size drawing. The drawing for this table is on the wall over the milled parts. I still have more to mill before I start the joinery. The small case in cherry on the left is meant to be in the ‘Krenov style’. (Its drawing is rolled up behind it.) I started it last summer in a course I took with Craig Stevens at the Center for Furniture Craftsmanship. Craig was a Krenov disciple. (He would be great for the fall symposium.) This case is interesting because it has a coopered door. (It is hard to appreciate the curve and grain pattern of the door in the photograph.) I just recently decided that I should finish this case before the fall shows start.

Next is my multipurpose bench (photos 5A&B). This is where I handle shipments and repair equipment. It is also where I plan projects. Preliminary drawings for two projects are in the foreground. One is a small hippopotamus, which I will make using multi-axis turning. The idea came from a hippo I saw in an interior design magazine. I scanned it, enlarged it, and then superimposed a grid to plan the turning. The other drawing is for an asymmetric bench with storage in cherry and wenge. I will head to lumberyards today to start the hunt for the cherry. I want rift sawn for the slats of the bench top, which I know will be hard to find. I may end up ordering it. Rift sawn will give a nice grain pattern on all sides of the slats. I have
another project underway on this workbench. I decided that the paper in my life was out of control. I am organizing my equipment manuals, project ideas and useful articles in notebooks (far end of the bench). (I feel like a better person already, and the manuals might actually be useful now.) The blue notebook is always close at hand. It has things I refer to constantly including tables of safe speeds for various types of drill bits, router bits and the lathe, tables for converting among the different grit scales, set up instructions for my lock-miter and other bits, tables for converting fraction inches, decimal inches and millimeters... you get the idea. I think everyone needs a notebook like this near their bench. There are other projects on the bench that require some thought as ‘new design opportunities’ appeared during construction.

The last stop is the center of the shop (photos 6A&B). My woodworking bench, tablesaw and router table fill this area. With the addition of an insert, the workbench serves as the outfeed table for the tablesaw. My newest endeavor is on the bench. It is a... hmm... how about a sculpture. I turned a walnut limb to a cylinder leaving several large beads. I am currently in the process of cutting away waste to leave... something. I have tried almost every tool in my shop for removing waste. You might notice my brand new micromotor to the left of the sculpture, which I am using to shape segments of the beads. The sculpture has a very organic feel right now. It might end up as firewood; however, I am excited by the possibilities. Stay tuned for the progress on this one.

The last side of the shop (not shown) has space to wheel in equipment (planer, jointer, scroll saw, etc.) and the wall is covered with hanging guides and clamps.

I hope this answers the question of ‘what is on my bench’. Feel free to contact me if you have questions.

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