



17420 North Avenue of the Arts | Surprise AZ 85374
623.972.0635 | fax.623.972.0456 | wvam.org

Tuesday, July 14, 2009

Contact: George Palovich
623/972-0635, ext 24 8:00am—noon
gpalovich@wvam.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Mike Medow: The Second Life of Wood
February 8 through March 16, 2008

West Valley Art Museum will open the second sculpture show of the new year with Mike Medow's "The Second Life of Wood". The Surprise Museum will show Medow's sculptures ranging from figures life-sized to small fit in your hand pieces.

Carving, unlike modeling is a subtractive process, that is, the artist must visualize the work within the log, block or chunk and remove all the material that isn't necessary.

Medow was born in Chicago in 1944 and began carving 35 years ago. He is self-taught but has become so attuned to the process that he is quite capable of writing a definitive thesis on the subject. When Medow moved out west from Chicago in 1979 he was awestruck by the magnificent land forms and now those forms are echoed in the full and robust figures. The human forms reflect the rock formations, which he calls "figurescapes". This duality he creates is of course the most ancient content in all of art...the earth mother. From an innate sensitivity and intuition come the subtleties within Medow's compositions.

Medow likes to make plain in his discussion of his art the difference between modeling and carving. With modeling, an additive process, the sculptor works more or less from the inside out. The carver, however, uses a reductive process and takes material away, arriving at the final form after that subtraction. The ability to "see" the finished form within a given block or stump is critical. Woodcarving of the past also served a different purpose from modern carving. Gothic carvings were admired for craftsmanship and technique and served the needs of the Church. Primitive carvers created works also that served ritualistic functions. In modern times the works are first and foremost exercises in the expressive use of form in space with attention paid to surfaces as well as the balance of forms. There is often a special connection with wood as a material since it once was a living thing and wood carvers show a particular

West Valley Art Museum is open 10 AM to 4 PM Tuesday through Sunday. The Museum is located at West Bell Road and 114th Avenue. With five exhibition galleries, a Museum Store, *Classic Café*, and regularly scheduled education programs, the Museum welcomes all visitors. There is an admission charge for non-members. \$7 adults, \$2 students, ages 5 and under are free.

affinity for the graining, texture, tactile quality, warmth and aroma of wood. As a carver sculpts deeper into a block or log he or she may encounter knots and changes of grain that may alter the artist's original concept. In this sense the wood is sometimes "calling the shots" so to speak and dictating those changes.

Serious about his work, Mike says; "a worthwhile work of art must have true holding and staying power. It should be something of which one will not tire. Truly important art will summon the viewer back repeatedly and always offer new intrigue and interest on several levels."



West Valley Art Museum is open 10 AM to 4 PM Tuesday through Sunday. The Museum is located at West Bell Road and 114th Avenue. With five exhibition galleries, a Museum Store, *Classic Café*, and regularly scheduled education programs, the Museum welcomes all visitors. There is an admission charge for non-members. \$7 adults, \$2 students, ages 5 and under are free.