

Maloo Beyond 90 - An American Woodworker

How do you commemorate the life's work of a craftsman who is considered both a legend and a national treasure?

For Gene Sasse, author of *Maloo Beyond 90 - An American Woodworker* (www.sassebooks.com), a typical hardcover or paperback just wouldn't do. That's why his book is a beautifully handcrafted collection of original artwork, bound in European leather and reflecting the soul of the gentleman whose work it chronicles.

The book is a handmade edition containing original images of the work of the celebrated woodworker, Sam Maloof. Heralded as a "prominent leader in the California modern arts movement", Maloof's works have been exhibited in The Museum of Fine Arts in Boston and the Metropolitan Museum of Art among many other prominent museums. The book is a poetic collection of photographs and narratives of Maloof, his work and his life. The book is tragically more relevant today with the passing of Maloof in Mid-May 2009.

"A man who works with his hands is a laborer," said Sasse. "A man who works with his brains and his hands is a craftsman; but a man who works with his hands and his brain and his heart is an artist."

The book begins with a brief biography, introducing the reader to the life of Sam Maloof. His story opens with his parent's humble beginnings in Lebanon, through their move to Chino, California, where they sold dry goods, hand made lace embroidered linens and crochet work from a horse and cart.

Sam's interest and admiration in his mother's fine needle work were an inspiration to him, according to Sasse. By high school, Sam had found employment and recognition for his calligraphy and cartooning abilities, and dreamed of becoming a Disney animator. In his twenties, Maloof found himself working for famed California artist, Millard Sheets, who helped to mature and expand his outlook on the world of art. At the age of 34, Maloof built a small studio and began to work for himself.

In a short time, he was making a modest living and was being featured in magazines and having his work commissioned. Several years later, Maloof's furniture began to be exhibited in museums. Little did he know he was on his way to greatness. When Maloof's handcrafted home was set to be demolished to make room for a highway, the state legislature declared him a "national treasure" and his home was moved to a new site.

The poetic descriptions of Maloof's work and of the man himself are inspiring to read. He was greatly admired by many people, including several Presidents of the United States.

"I consider Sam Maloof to be the world's finest woodworker. His integrity and personal philosophy are demonstrated vividly in the design and beauty of his exquisite furniture," wrote former President Jimmy Carter in his introduction to the book. "Sam has touched the hearts and lives of countless people with his extraordinary talent and skills as a teacher and role model, so his legacy will survive for generations to come."

The book would not be complete without some of Maloof's own musings about his work.

"The rewards of woodworking are not monetary," he said. "It is a long road. But there is basic, deep emotional satisfaction as well as a spiritual satisfaction that comes from working with your hands."

Maloo Beyond 90 is a work of art, much in keeping with the craftsmanship of Sam Maloof's pieces. The loving detail put into this book makes it a collector's dream. The detailed photographs depicting Maloof's work are beautifully rendered. Anyone with an interest in arts and crafts will enjoy *Maloo Beyond 90*.

About the Author

Gene Sasse is a renowned photographer and friend to Sam Maloof. He believes "a great photograph transcends language barriers." He has been featured in many design annuals, and magazines such as *American Style Magazine* Oct 2006, *Art & Antiques Magazine* April 2007, *Western Art & Architecture Magazine* Fall - Winter 2008/2009, as well as his book *Garden Thoughts - Photographs, Quotes & Inspiration for the Gardener*. He currently lives in Southern California.

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