



BRUCE JOHNSON

cedarhurst

CENTER FOR THE ARTS



Bruce Johnson, Sculptor, standing in front of ASIA

About the Artist

Bruce Johnson

Johnson, an accomplished sculptor, utilizes massive salvaged redwood elements. Ancient redwoods, born a thousand years ago and logged in the early 1900's are at the core of his work. The last old growth private forests have been cut and only a very few old growth groves have been conserved for the public. Deeply aware that the old growth redwood is a beautiful and vanishing material, Johnson uses only salvaged redwood, old growth stumps and logs left as waste by the logging industry 50 to 100 years ago. There is an echo of great forests in his work and if we can feel the power of nature and remember our connection to the natural world then perhaps these sculptures are also small acts of preservation.

Big Bang is a monumental redwood and copper sculpture weighing nine tons and standing 19 feet tall. The central element of this piece is an ancient redwood stump (approximately 1,000 years old) which has been inverted so the roots, meticulously clad with hammered copper discs reach skyward. Six great logs swing high in the air around the root core like a log jam in a whirlpool. The configuration of the logs transforms the conical root core into the vortex of a swirling galaxy recreating the chaotic energy of creation.

It is not, however, a simple jumble of found objects. Upon close inspection of the sculpture there emerges superb craft. Among the natural roots and deep recesses, gracefully shaped surfaces have been delicately defined by Johnson with chainsaw cuts. He also tapered the logs by hand with a draw knife then used copper clad ends to protect the

wood and continue the copper motif. In Johnson's world, roots are form, copper clad woods are mass, and logs are energy. Big Bang is an energetic balance of nature and the hand of man.



ASIA - Sacred portal - 2000, redwood, copper



WOOD HEDGE neolithic dolmen 2000, redwood, copper, water, 10'x11'x9'

Welcome to Cedarhurst

Nestled on a 90-acre site in southern Illinois, Cedarhurst celebrates the arts year-round with exciting visual and performing arts programs for the public. Explore rolling meadows and woods, home to Goldman•Kuenz Sculpture Park, the museum's outdoor gallery with over 60 large-scale sculptures. Visit the Cedarhurst art exhibitions in five galleries, including the Beck Family Center. Enjoy works in the permanent collection gallery by Mary Cassatt, Maurice Prendergast, Childe Hassam and more, part of the museum's American painting collection acquired by founders John R. and Eleanor R. Mitchell.

Hours: Tuesday - Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. & Sunday, 1 - 5 p.m.

EDUCATION

Beck Family Center

Located inside the Mitchell Museum, the Beck Family Center is a hands-on environment providing endless opportunities for visitors to experience the textures, color, and excitement of discovering art in the world around them. It is designed to encourage family members of all ages to discover and kindle their artistic interest.

Teacher Resources & School Programs

Cedarhurst provides opportunities for art education through performing arts programs, in-school programs, student workshops, FREE tours of exhibitions and Goldman•Kuenz Sculpture Park, and the Art Resource Lending Library, offering materials for classroom instruction.

Family Events

Cedarhurst annually presents a series of family activities, which complement museum exhibitions. Conducted by the museum's Director of Education, Family Days and Story Times are held throughout the year. Check our website for specific dates.

Shrode Art Center

Cedarhurst classes and workshops allow children to have fun while exploring the arts. Programs include the popular Cedarhurst Summer Camp, ABC's and Art for toddlers and the afterschool program Art Time!



cedarhurst
CENTER FOR THE ARTS
2600 Richview Road
Mount Vernon, IL 62864
618.242.1236
www.cedarhurst.org

Photo Credits: Front Image: Michael Banner; Back: Bruce Johnson Images by Evan Johnson; Art activity Images by Melissa Jordan.

Have fun in the classroom with wood scrap sculptures!

Artist, Bruce Johnson relies on salvaged wood for his sculptures. Check with your local lumberyard for a possible donation of scrap lumber for this project.

- Have students first experiment with composition by stacking pieces of wood in different ways.
- Use a brush with glue or glue directly from the bottle.
- Allow sculptures to dry.
- Paint wood with a variety of paint. Have students choose their own palette!
- Have fun and make sure students title their work of art!

Materials Needed:

Wood Scraps · Wood base to build on
wood glue · Brush to spread glue evenly
Tempera paint



Coast Redwoods: THE TALLEST TREES IN THE WORLD

Standing at the base of Earth's tallest tree, the coast redwood, is one of life's most humbling and amazing experiences. These California trees can reach higher than a 30-floor skyscraper (more than 320 feet), so high that the tops are out of sight.

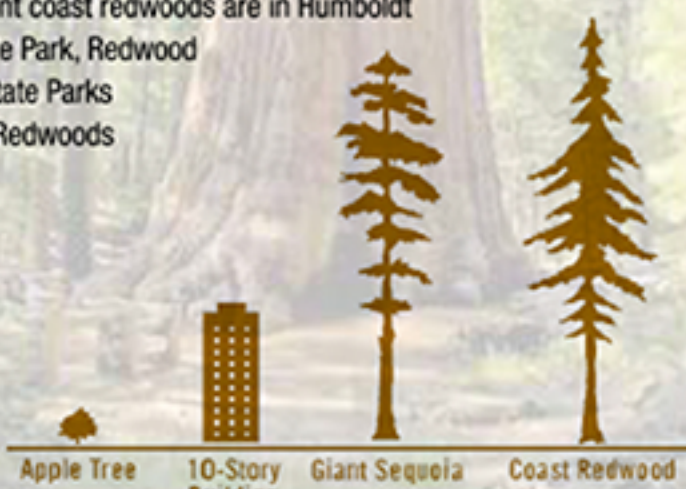
Their trunks can grow 24 feet wide, about eight paces by an average adult person! Even more incredible: These trees can live for more than 2,000 years. Some coast redwoods living today were alive during the time of the Roman Empire.

There was a time when redwoods grew throughout the northern hemisphere of the planet, around the world. Today, coast redwoods are native only in a 450-mile strip along the Pacific coast from central California to southern Oregon. We don't yet fully understand why most have gone and how some have stood the test of time.

The coast redwood is one of the world's fastest growing conifers, or cone-bearing trees. In contrast to the tree's size, redwood cones are very small — only about an inch long. Each cone contains a few dozen tiny seeds: it would take well over 100,000 seeds to weigh a pound! In good conditions, redwood seedlings grow rapidly, sometimes more than a foot annually. Young trees also sprout from their parent's roots, taking advantage of the energy and nutrient reserves contained within the established, shallow root system.

Where coast redwoods live, temperatures are moderate year-round. Heavy winter rains and dense summer fog provide the trees with much-needed water during the otherwise drought-prone summers. In fact, redwoods create their own "rain" by capturing the fog on their lofty branches, contributing moisture to the forest in the driest time of year.

The native people of California did not usually cut down coast redwoods, but used fallen trees to make planks for houses and hollowed-out logs for canoes. When gold was discovered in 1849, hundreds of thousands of people came to California needing food and housing, and redwoods were logged extensively to satisfy the demand. By the 1960s, only a small fraction remained of the original ancient coast redwood forest. This original forest covered 2 million acres (the size of three Rhode Islands). Today, after decades of logging, most of the redwood forest is young. The largest surviving stands of ancient coast redwoods are in Humboldt Redwoods State Park, Redwood National and State Parks and Big Basin Redwoods State Park.



Lets take a look:

What do you think sculpture can look like? How big or small can it be? What kind of shapes and textures can be made up in a sculpture? What can it be made of? What can it be about? What sculptures can you think of? Where can sculptures be found? How can it be displayed? Who can create sculpture?

- What do you think it might be about?
- What is your first one-word response?
- How does it make you feel?
- How do you think it was made? What materials do you think were used?
- What tools do you think the artist used? What techniques?
- When do you think it was made?
- Is it big or small? Is it the size of something in your house?
- Make some comparisons with familiar objects.
- What kinds of shapes and textures make up the sculpture?
- How would the sculpture look in a different material, size, or color?
- Is there a front or a back?
- Are you meant to look at it from different angles?
- Is it figurative (based on human form) or abstract (about color, shape and form)?



This program is partially supported by a grant from the Illinois Art Council, a state agency, and in part, by the Schneiderh Foundation.