



# Objects of Art

santa fe

## Exhibition of Nakashima Furniture

### Highlights the 2018 Objects of Art Santa Fe

At El Museo Cultural August 9, 10, 11 & 12

**Founder of the American Craft Movement George Nakashima and his daughter Mira worked side by side to blend art and function, naturalism and precision creating wood furniture now gracing private and museum collections around the world**

*“To be intimate with nature in its multifaceted moods is one of the greatest experiences of life.” -- George Nakashima*

**For Immediate Release, April 2018:** Objects of Art spotlights its imaginative approach to exemplary fine art and design this August in a special exhibit of works by an artist and architect with a unique New Mexico connection and international reputation, the late George Nakashima, and works by his successor and daughter, Mira, leader of the Nakashima Studio since 1990.

Santa Fe’s first-ever major presentation of the Nakashimas’ work, *An Exhibition of George and Mira Nakashima Furniture*, will be curated by Mira from her own personal collection and those of Hunt Modern, Santa Fe; Four Winds Gallery, Pittsburgh; and a major private collector, George Fischler, Phoenix. The special exhibit, including more than 20 large and small tables, chairs desks and objects, will be mounted as a part of the Objects of Art Show, Opening August 9, in the main gallery of El Museo Cultural on the Railyard. Some of the works shown will be for sale and Mira Nakashima will both design the special exhibit and be present to visit with collectors at the show.

Born in Spokane Washington to immigrant parents in 1905, George Nakashima grew up in the forests of the Olympic Peninsula. Today considered one of the 20th century’s

most important and influential designers, he was educated in architecture at the University of Washington and MIT. But what informed his work was the rigor and precision of an ancient Japanese aesthetic and the naturalistic spiritualism of Zen Buddhism. While a contemporary of Ray and Charles Eames and regular visitor to their National Design Institute in India, Nakashima did not embrace the materials of industrial modernism. Instead, he worked, almost exclusively in wood, choosing to emphasize, rather than alter, its natural shapes and colors and to create hand crafted, rather than manufactured, furniture. It was a pathway that eventually brought him to New Mexico.

Mira Nakashima writes in her book *Nature Form and Spirit, the Life and Legacy of George Nakashima*, (Abrams, New York, 2003) that in 1970 her father “was asked by a friend, Father Aelred Wall, to design the Monastery of Christ in the Desert for a new Benedictine Community in Abiquiu, New Mexico. My father had felt a strong kinship with communal religious life since his years in the Sri Aurobindo Ashram in the 1930’s, so he embraced this commission eagerly. This group of monks took a serious vow of poverty, so he donated both his time and labor to the project as a fulfillment of his monastic vows taken in India many years before.”

Nakashima designed the buildings and a soaring chapel for the Monastery so they could be built from native adobe and rock from the site itself, which is in a canyon not far from Georgia O’Keeffe’s Ghost Ranch studio. Since its completion in 1972, the power of its fusion of Eastern and Western design has attracted international religious and architectural pilgrims for nearly half a century.

Nakashima furniture, encompassing both his work and his daughter’s, is included in private and museum collections around the world including the Nelson Rockefeller house at Pocantico Hills, NY; the Museum of Modern Art, New York City; the Metropolitan Museum of art, New York City; the Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, PA, the Michener Museum of Art, Doylestown, PA; the Morikami Museum, Delray Beach, Fla; The Museum of Fine Art, Boston, MA; and the Smithsonian Museum of American Art, Washington D.C. In the mid-1980s George Nakashima created the first monumental Altar for Peace for The Cathedral of St. John the Divine, New York City; later Mira built and placed two more at the Russian Academy of Art, Moscow and Auroville (The City of Dawn), Tamil Nadu, India.

Mira, after completing her architectural studies at Harvard and Waseda University in Tokyo, in 1970 returned with her young family to the Nakashima Studio in New Hope, PA, where she continued her training at her father’s side. Since George Nakashima’s death in 1990, Mira has sustained the Nakashima commitment to individually crafted, wood furniture as an art that honors the character of her father’s vision intertwined with her own creative sensibilities.

“After George’s death in 1990,” Objects of Art co-producer John Morris said, “Mira’s reverence for her father’s vision and her own genius were quickly recognized by both museum leaders and major collectors as she worked to not just preserve, but extend the Nakashima legacy and we are delighted to bring these important examples of true Objects of Art to Santa Fe as part of this year’s show.”

The Objects of Art Santa Fe takes place at El Museo Cultural de Santa Fe, 555 Camino de la Familia in the Santa Fe Railyard. It opens with a special champagne pre-opening cocktail hour on Thursday, August 9 from 5-6pm benefiting the Assistance Dogs of the West. The opening night party from 6-9pm benefits KNME New Mexico PBS. Tickets for the cocktail party are \$125 (this also gets you into the 6-9 Opening Night Party) and \$50 for the regular 6-9 opening festivities. The show will also be up during Antique American Indian Art Show at El Museo, August 14-17. For more information, or to request an interview, please contact Clare Hertel at 505-670-3090 or [clare@clarehertelcommunications.com](mailto:clare@clarehertelcommunications.com). Press photos are available here: <https://objectsofartshows.smugmug.com/Objects-of-Art-Santa-Fe>

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