The Short List

A Lifetime Of Making

FIVE YEARS AGO, TADD MYERS went on assignment, photographing craftsmen who were creating moldings for a historic building. Their skill inspired the commercial photographer, who was left wondering: In a seemingly automated and outsourced economy – how many other Americans were still working with their hands?

Portraits of the American Craftsman is an exquisite catalogue of the years that followed, in which Myers crisscrossed the country, photographing people who handcraft banjos and pipes, surfboards and saddles, cutlery and carousels, and more. “Money is but one sliver of what motivates these craftsmen,” Myers writes. “They have also realized that if they put a piece of themselves into what they create, part of it stays in the work and yet another very important part continues to live inside themselves.” With essays by Eric Celeste offering insight into makers’ motivations, materials, and processes, the book builds on the project website (americancraftsmanproject.com), where Myers continues the photographic journey he considers the most meaningful of his career.

~JULIE K. HANUS

Why We Make Things and Why It Matters: The Education of a Craftsman

IN THIS MEMOIR, PETER KORN’S first non-instructional book, the author chronicles his life as a woodworker, from his beginnings as a carpenter on Nantucket. Throughout the narrative, Korn interweaves musings on craft from his college days to the 20th anniversary of the acclaimed Center for Furniture Craftsmanship in Rockport, Maine, which he founded and where he continues to serve as executive director. Like many baby boomer-era craftspeople, Korn didn’t set out to be a maker; he just identified with ideas about living thoughtfully and with purpose. Only decades later he found he was part of a greater craft movement. His personal story holds your interest, and his thoughts on craft as a vocation are deftly presented in an accessible, honest fashion, much like the furniture he makes today.

~ANDREW ZOELLNER

William Daley: Ceramic Artist

THE LIFE AND WORK OF William Daley, ceramic sculptor, are presented from many angles in this absorbing volume. That’s appropriate, given the large-scale, geometric vessels – with interiors as striking as their exteriors – that are Daley’s signature.

In addition to curator Ruth Fine’s biographical essay, five notable contributors offer perspectives on Daley as artist, family man, and professor at Philadelphia’s University of the Arts. A photographic portfolio of his 60-plus years of work fills the bulk of the book; the ACC Gold Medalist’s belief that “structure is its own decoration” is much in evidence. Sections on commissions, Daley’s thoughts on teaching, exhibition notes, and a chronology round out the rich content.

~MONICA MOSES