



PRESS RELEASE

26 March 2018

Southern Guild presents *Bifurcation*, a solo show of functional wooden sculpture by Adam Birch

Southern Guild is pleased to announce the opening of *Bifurcation* by Adam Birch, running from 25 April until 12 July at GUILD in the Silo District of the V&A Waterfront, Cape Town.

This is the first solo exhibition for the artist, whose functional timber sculptures have become highly sought after at international design fairs and auctions.

Adam grew up on a large farm in the Cape Winelands, where his love of trees began as a child, playing in the forests. He completed a Fine Art degree in 2000, majoring in Applied Graphics, but always dreamed of becoming a full-time sculptor. Shortly thereafter he became a tree surgeon, and began to work in his spare time with pieces from the dead trees he was cutting down, transforming them into innovative sculpted furniture. A passionate environmentalist, Adam cuts down only alien tree species and uses indigenous wood from trees that have already fallen.

The pieces in *Bifurcation* have all been carved from the part of the tree that carpenters usually discard: the fork. At this junction – where the trunk bifurcates into two branches – the wood grain becomes twisted and dense, making it difficult to cut. But in the anatomy of a tree the fork is a key point determining its stability.

“I like working with the fork because of what happens to the grain. It goes from being one series of concentric circles to two. The grain does crazy things at this juncture – all sorts of swirls and whorls,” Adam says. “Timber is such an incredible material. Plastic or steel wouldn’t be able to withstand the force of what happens to a tree in wind or a storm.” Once a tree is felled, Adam takes a trunk-to-twig approach to utilising the timber, cutting it into planks, floor boards, structural beams and firewood, with only the fork remaining. After

leaving them to dry (some for as long as five years), he carves into them with a chainsaw – a somewhat unconventional sculpting tool that requires a lot of control – before refining them with hand tools. His fascination and experience with timber as a medium is multi-faceted. “No two pieces of wood ever share exactly the same colour, form or texture.” This is directly reflected in the patterns formed by the grain and exaggerated by his design. The

natural shape of each piece informs the sculptural approach, and although the end result is refined and sophisticated, the essence of the individual tree is still present.

***Bifurcation* by Adam Birch runs from 25 April to 12 July 2018.**

Southern Guild Gallery

GUILD, Shop 5B, Silo 5

V&A Waterfront

Opening hours:

Monday – Friday 9am – 6pm

Saturday 10am – 2pm

About Southern Guild: Southern Guild is recognised as the most significant platform for collectible, limited-edition South African design. Exhibiting at the best design fairs around the world, and collaborating with leading global galleries and institutions, Southern Guild has spearheaded the high-end design category in Africa.

For more information and press images, please contact Kelly Berman:

kelly@theguildgroup.co.za

+27 21 461 2856

www.southernguild.co.za

www.theguildgroup.co.za