

**President**

Bart Niswonger  
Worthington, MA

**Vice President**

Maggie Sasso  
Saint Francis, WI

**Secretary**

Sarah Marriage  
Baltimore, MD

**Treasurer**

Kathy Sharp  
Woodbury, TN

**Immediate Past President**

Forest Dickey  
Seattle, WA

**Board of Trustees**

Michael Jean Cooper  
Sebastopol, CA

Karen Ernst  
Edinboro, PA

Thomas Hucker  
Jersey City, NJ

Heath Matysek-Snyder  
Mechanicsville, VA

Adam Manley  
San Diego, CA

Jennifer-Navva Milliken  
Philadelphia, PA

**Executive Director**

Monica Hampton

**Director of Education**

Jessica Baldenhofer

**Administrator**

Erika Diamond

**CONTACT: Monica Hampton  
Interim Executive Director**

[info@furnituresociety.org](mailto:info@furnituresociety.org)

**P** (828).581.9663

[www.furnituresociety.org](http://www.furnituresociety.org)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**2019 Award of Distinction  
Bestowed on Thomas Loeser**

**Libertyville, IL February 25, 2019** -- The Furniture Society proudly announces that the recipient of its coveted 2019 Award of Distinction is Thomas Loeser. His award will be presented at a luncheon ceremony on Saturday, June 22, 2019 during the Furniture Society's conference in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

This year's jury, (Rosanne Somerson, Mia Hall, and Laura May) chaired by Wendy Maruyama – concluded in their assessment that they were searching for 'those individuals that changed the course of how the field evolved, and their nurturing of younger and less experienced makers, bringing them into the field through various routes.' And to that end, the jurors have chosen Tom Loeser due to his 'significant contributions across the areas that make up the field of furniture design; skill and inventiveness as a maker; leader in the field outside of making; educator, and a thought leader through contributions to the discourse of craft and furniture design.'

Tom Loeser's recent solo exhibition, *Please Please Please*, highlights his long-standing investigation of unconventional, invitational furniture forms begun in the early 1980s with a series of Folding Chairs, colorful seats that double as wall-hung art. In more recent years, he has made chests that swivel and slide, rocking chairs for two, rotary-action benches, and many other surprising shapes. When in use, these pieces immediately create opportunities for interaction – not only between people and objects but between people and other people, too. Accessible and entertaining, to be sure, Loeser's work also has a purpose: to shake up our habits, and to encourage us to be playful with our environment and with one another.

*"...we should ... follow the wisdom of Dr. Seuss, who observed, "adults are just obsolete children." It seems to me, following this logic, that the really impressive thing about Tom Loeser's work is not that it gets us older folks to think differently, or that it expands the formal domain of furniture. It certainly does do*

The Furniture Society  
POB 6323, Libertyville, IL 60048  
[info@furnituresociety.org](mailto:info@furnituresociety.org)  
828.581.9663  
[www.furnituresociety.org](http://www.furnituresociety.org)

Advancing the art of furniture making by inspiring creativity, promoting excellence,  
and fostering an understanding of this art & its place in society.

**President**

Bart Niswonger  
Worthington, MA

**Vice President**

Maggie Sasso  
Saint Francis, WI

**Secretary**

Sarah Marriage  
Baltimore, MD

**Treasurer**

Kathy Sharp  
Woodbury, TN

**Immediate Past President**

Forest Dickey  
Seattle, WA

**Board of Trustees**

Michael Jean Cooper  
Sebastopol, CA

Karen Ernst  
Edinboro, PA

Thomas Hucker  
Jersey City, NJ

Heath Matysek-Snyder  
Mechanicsville, VA

Adam Manley  
San Diego, CA

Jennifer-Navva Milliken  
Philadelphia, PA

**Executive Director**

Monica Hampton

**Director of Education**

Jessica Baldenhofer

**Administrator**

Erika Diamond

*those things, but I think he's aiming much higher. He's actually, genuinely, playing around."*

Glenn Adamson, **It Could Have Been Kindling**

Tom Loeser (Madison, Wisconsin) was born in Boston, Massachusetts in 1956. Loeser served as Chair of the University of Wisconsin-Madison Department of Art from 2009-2014 and has been head of the wood/furniture area at UW-Madison since 1991. He holds a BA from Haverford College (1979), a BFA from Boston University's Program in Artisanry (1983) and an MFA from the University of Massachusetts-Dartmouth (1992).

Loeser designs and builds one-of-a-kind functional and dysfunctional objects that are often carved and painted and always draw inspiration from the history of design and object making. In 1993, he spent six months in Japan on an NEA Creative Artist Exchange Fellowship. In 2003 and again in 2017, he spent six months teaching and researching in London. In addition to producing studio furniture, Loeser has also worked on a number of public commissions and site-specific installations. He collaborated with his wife, Bird Ross, on the design and fabrication of the highly kid-friendly, very interactive, and not at all traditional reception desk for the new Madison Children's Museum. In 2013, Loeser worked with willow furniture maker Dave Chapman and built three large willow and steel pod forms that are permanently installed reading retreats in the children's section of the new downtown public library in Madison, Wisconsin.

His work has been featured in many national and international exhibitions and can be found in important museum collections including the Brooklyn Museum; Fuller Craft Museum, Brockton, Massachusetts; Museum of Arts and Design, New York; Racine Art Museum, Wisconsin; Rhode Island School of Design Museum of Art; Smithsonian American Art Museum's Renwick Gallery, Washington, DC; Smithsonian Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum, New York; Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, Connecticut, and many other institutions. Loeser's solo exhibition *Please Please Please* is currently traveling to three venues in California and Texas. He was elected to the American Craft Council College of Fellows in 2012.

The *Award of Distinction* program was instituted in 2001 and is presented during the Furniture Society's annual conference to an individual or institution recognized as having had a profound impact on the field. The *Award* was intended to strengthen the fabric of the Furniture Society's community by naming and celebrating those who exemplify lives and work devoted to study, work and craft, and to the education of others. Past honorees include Sam Maloof, James Krenov, Tage Frid, Wendell Castle, Art Espenet Carpenter, John Makepeace, Alan Peters, Jere Osgood, Jonathan Fairbanks, William Keyser, Garry Knox Bennett, Judy Kensley McKie, Tommy Simpson, Michael Fortune,

The Furniture Society  
POB 6323, Libertyville, IL 60048  
info@furnituresociety.org  
828.581.9663  
www.furnituresociety.org

Advancing the art of furniture making by inspiring creativity, promoting excellence,  
and fostering an understanding of this art & its place in society.

**President**

Bart Niswonger  
Worthington, MA

Walker Weed, Wendy Maruyama, Vladimir Kagan, John Cederquist, Rosanne Somerson, Warren & Bebe Johnson, Thomas Hucker, Edward S. Cooke, and Craig Nutt.

**Vice President**

Maggie Sasso  
Saint Francis, WI

The Furniture Society is a 501(c)3 organization, our mission is to advance the art of furniture making by inspiring creativity, promoting excellence, and fostering an understanding of this art its place in society. If you would like more information about our Award of Distinction, please contact Monica Hampton, Interim Executive Director, via [executive.director@furnituresociety.org](mailto:executive.director@furnituresociety.org)

**Secretary**

Sarah Marriage  
Baltimore, MD

**Treasurer**

Kathy Sharp  
Woodbury, TN

The Society must raise funds to support such programs as the Award of Distinction and the Educational Grants program through which financial assistance is given for professional development and special education projects. Award funds received in excess of the direct program costs will be made available to the Furniture Society's Educational Grants program, which offers essential financial assistance to Society members for professional development or projects of an educational nature.

**Immediate Past President**

Forest Dickey  
Seattle, WA

**Board of Trustees**

Michael Jean Cooper  
Sebastopol, CA

The link that exists between recognizing personal achievement and educating the next generation is fundamental to the Society. Please play a vital part in the Society's programs with your tax-deductible gift. A return envelope is enclosed, or make your contribution online at <https://furnsoc.org/contribution/award-of-distinction/>

Karen Ernst  
Edinboro, PA

Thomas Hucker  
Jersey City, NJ

Heath Matysek-Snyder  
Mechanicsville, VA

Adam Manley  
San Diego, CA

Jennifer-Navva Milliken  
Philadelphia, PA

**Executive Director**

Monica Hampton

**Director of Education**

Jessica Baldenhofer

**Administrator**

Erika Diamond

The Furniture Society  
POB 6323, Libertyville, IL 60048  
[info@furnituresociety.org](mailto:info@furnituresociety.org)  
828.581.9663  
[www.furnituresociety.org](http://www.furnituresociety.org)

Advancing the art of furniture making by inspiring creativity, promoting excellence,  
and fostering an understanding of this art & its place in society.