
Moran Woodworked Furniture

who — Celia Gibson

Michael James Moran

location — Charleston, South Carolina

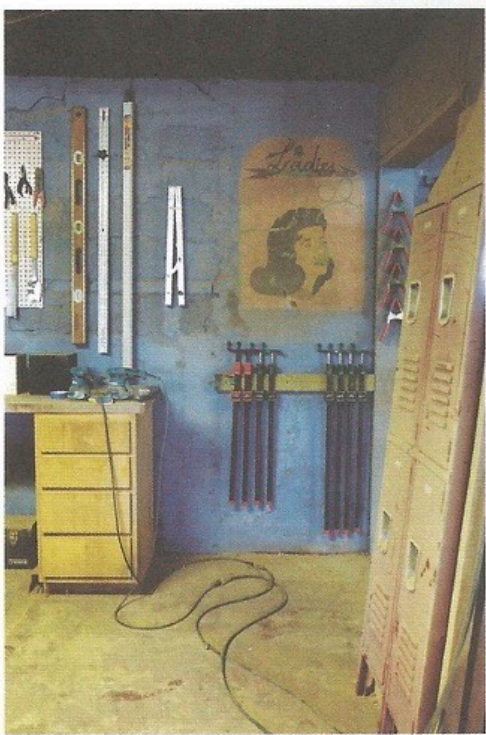
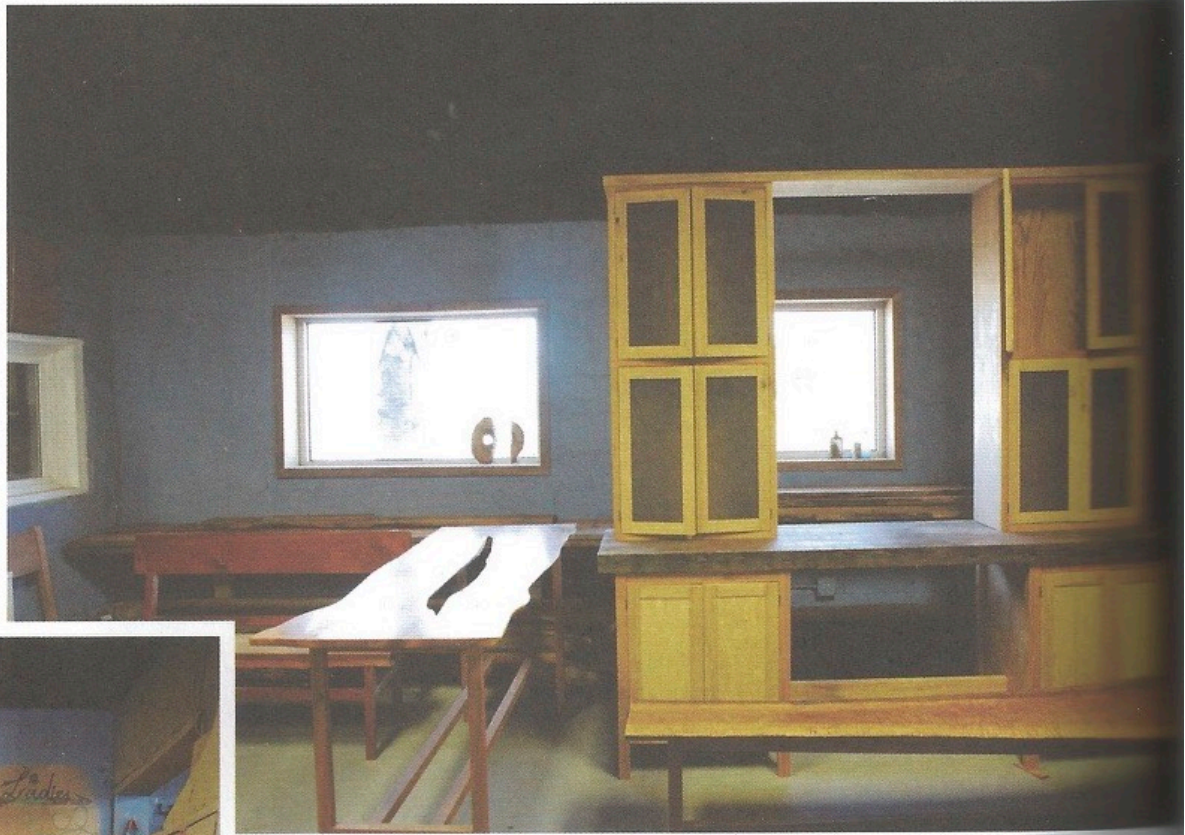
When you drive up to Michael Moran's workshop in Charleston, you may be greeted first by a friendly greyhound named Addie—soon followed by the equally welcoming Michael and his partner, Celia Gibson. On their blog, they call themselves “arboreal eccentrics.” Love of wood shines through in every aspect of their workspace: the wood-drying room Michael built with his own hands, the light-filled workshop, the beautiful office. They grow vegetables in a garden behind the shop.

A native of Kentucky, Michael moved to South Carolina to play soccer for the College of Charleston. After college, he stayed, apprenticing with a furniture maker and woodworker in town, and in 2004 he started Moran Woodworked Furniture. Celia grew up in the Southeast,

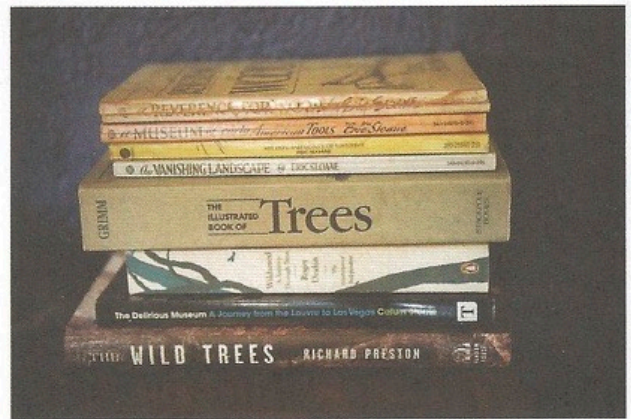
moving around between Georgia, Alabama, Tennessee, and Virginia. She studied abroad, received a master's degree in literature at University College London, then returned to the South and joined Michael. Since 2010 the couple has lived and worked together, designing and building bespoke furniture and sculpture. They collaborate on the designs, then Michael crafts the pieces while Celia handles sales.

Their furniture is classic in form and function—tables, benches, cabinets, and other household pieces—yet each work represents their distinctive, contemporary point of view. Their goal is to honor the natural beauty of wood through traditional craftsmanship, the responsible selection of materials, and a modern approach to design.





Celia and Michael's well-kept workshop is a showcase for the couple's favorite resource, trees. From the elegant Window Table to the Long, Long Bench, each Moran Woodworked piece celebrates the natural beauty of the material. In the yard, Addie, the greyhound, protects the drying planks.



How did you become interested in woodworking? *Michael:* I grew up around the notion that if you needed something, you figured out how to build it. My older sister, a metal sculptor for many years, helped to cultivate my interests and perspectives on art early in life. I've always had a great love of trees, and when I met the furniture maker I later worked for, it all fell into place.

What was the moment you decided to start your business? *Michael:* I had been apprenticing as a woodworker and furniture maker for three years. Working under a craftsman taught me more than just a skill; it helped me uncover my own priorities and proclivities. Eventually it came time for me to make my own work. I had a lot of energy, a strong notion of what I wanted to do, and no money or business knowledge. So, I guess you could say the conditions were perfect.

What is your favorite product? *Celia:* Every piece has its own quiddity, but for me building a dining table is my favorite. A table is a piece of furniture for loved ones to gather around to eat and drink, laugh and cry. It holds an intimacy that few other objects can maintain.

Michael: And every tabletop is a large, uninterrupted expanse of wood grain, the beautiful documentation of a tree's history. It represents a unique opportunity to herald the beauty of wood.

What is the most satisfying part of your making process? *Michael:* There is a spark that happens when you are in the midst of building a piece: sometimes a giant "aha," sometimes a small nod. It seems to be when you start to understand something about what you are working with, and what might be the best way to translate this beautiful piece of wood into a piece of furniture.

Where do you source your materials? *Celia:* We work only with "good wood," whose origins we know. Whether it is reclaimed from storm-downed trees or family-run mills, we support the practices we believe in: responsible stewardship, ecological soundness, locality, and respect and understanding regarding materials.





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