

# HOLLY HUNT ART

## ABOUT

Alex Downs

Alex Downs was born and raised in Decorah, Iowa, at the doorstep of a small liberal arts college. There he would find inspiration in the outdoor sculptures, science exhibits, and art facilities. After exhausting the art classes available at the local high school, he took wheel thrown ceramics classes at the college, which led to a job with a local ceramicist, where he honed his craft and earned the money to purchase a potter's wheel. Soon after, he was accepted to the Kansas City Art Institute, where he studied ceramics before eventually gravitating towards woodworking. He graduated with a degree in Interdisciplinary Arts in 2005. After school, Alex moved to New York City and found work with artist Dennis Oppenheim, fabricating large scale outdoor sculptures. Around this time, Alex's mother reunited him with his old potter's wheel, bringing it with her on a charter bus to NYC. Since wood had become his preferred medium, and he had no kiln to fire clay pots, he developed a method of wood carving that involved spinning stacks of wood on his wheel and shaping them with a chainsaw blade on an angle grinder. In 2015 Alex purchased a small house in the Hudson Valley across the river from a Buddhist temple, reigniting his interests in Eastern philosophy. Creating organic mandalas, the meditative quality of Downs' work is embedded in its very process. The coarse carving blades create a multitude of textures as they interact with the surface of the wood, from fine ripples to deep gouges. Concentric, rippling lines radiate from crossing wood grains, holding contextual space. Lost in the din of a screaming angle grinder, with sawdust and shrapnel spraying in all directions, Alex finds focus and harmony.