

# Timeless Technique

*Blending artistry and science, Yuri Yanchyshyn of Period Furniture Conservation preserves treasures*

For more than 30 years, furniture conservator Yuri Yanchyshyn has worked with fine furniture and objects, keeping them stable, aesthetically appealing and historically faithful. He's known for repairing a loose chair leg or a scratch on a bureau as though such flaws never existed. Surveying collections, providing consultations or removing tarnish from a 20th-century Jensen coffee and tea service are all in a day's work.

Conservation encompasses more than simply appearance and function. "Our goal is to preserve the value, integrity and useful life of the object," says Yanchyshyn, senior conservator and principal at Period Furniture Conservation. "For that, we have to look at the original artisan's intent, technique and materials." In addition to conserving furniture and objects, Yanchyshyn and his staff educate clients and collectors through detailed condition reports, treatment records and environmental recommendations.

Prior to founding Period Furniture Conservation, Yanchyshyn worked as

a consulting conservator at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. His interest in woodworking started early, when he carved model ships as a child. After graduating from the University of Michigan and California Institute of the Arts with fine arts degrees in painting, he returned to his first passion. Over the years, Yanchyshyn has received training through the Smithsonian Center for Materials Research and Education, as well as at the Amsterdam Academy for Restoration.

With a background like that, Yanchyshyn is unusually adept at multi-faceted projects involving a wide range of materials and techniques. Many of the items that enter the studio are like complex puzzles, where the pieces interact in precise ways. Thorough analysis is required before any treatment begins. This is true even when the situation is urgent. "Not infrequently we are called upon to give immediate advice on what to do with furniture and objects in the event of a flood or other catastrophe," Yanchyshyn says. "It's crucial work and needs to be started within hours of the incident." Like a first responder, he and his staff at Period



**Above:** A set of Frederick Kiesler tables

Furniture Conservation come in and do damage control before it's too late.

Yanchyshyn's studio handles typical structural repairs, but is primarily known for more complicated procedures. These include replacing missing or damaged sections of carving, veneer and marquetry, as well as treating sophisticated finishes, such as gilding, urushi lacquer and Japanning. Because so many wooden objects incorporate other materials, the studio has expanded its offerings to include treatments for porcelain, stone, metal and glass objects. Recently, the firm was selected by the National Trust for Historic Preservation to be part of the architectural preservation team for the Philip Johnson Brick House project, a National Historic Landmark in Connecticut.

Yanchyshyn's clients appreciate his ability to preserve original artistic vision while permitting continued use and enjoyment. The results never fail to exceed expectations, which explains why the studio gets most of its business from word of mouth. "Nothing says satisfaction better than a recommendation," observes Yanchyshyn. ♦



**Left:** A detail of a Louis XV marquetry commode

## PERIOD FURNITURE CONSERVATION

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