

CHARLES BURNAND GALLERY

JAN WATERSTON

AUGUST 2026

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Jan Waterston (b. Birmingham, UK) established his independent studio in 2016 following a First Class Honours degree in Furniture Design and Fine Craft from Rycotewood Furniture School and a residency at the Sylva Wood Foundation. Working at the intersection of art, craft and design, his practice is rooted in traditional cabinet making and realised through limited-edition works and made-to-commission pieces in wood.

Working from his UK studio, Waterston develops speculative works, concept-led furniture collections and commissioned projects, collaborating internationally with architects, interior designers, curators and private collectors. His practice combines traditional woodworking techniques with contemporary processes, while keeping material firmly at the centre of the making process and continuing to expand the sculptural possibilities of wood.s with architects, interior designers, curators, and private collectors.



Practice

Jan Waterston's practice explores the relationship between material, form and human experience through sculptural works that occupy the space between art, craft and collectible design. While grounded in the language of furniture, his work is less concerned with function than with the emotional and psychological responses that objects can evoke within a space. He is interested in forms that feel simultaneously familiar and unfamiliar, inviting recognition without immediate explanation.

Central to Waterston's practice is the idea of transformation. Drawing inspiration from geological formations, cave systems and landscapes shaped by erosion over deep time, he explores the simultaneous processes of growth and decay, construction and excavation. Rather than representing the natural world directly, he is interested in the forces that shape it. These ideas become a framework for creating objects that appear suspended between becoming and dissolving, as though they have emerged through natural processes rather than deliberate manufacture.

Waterston's work is equally informed by the relationship between people and their surroundings. He has described furniture as the tangible element of architecture, the point at which we physically connect with a space. His objects seek to influence that encounter through what he has described as a sense of "delicate disturbance": a subtle balance of visual softness, graphic awkwardness and physical stability that encourages a moment of hesitation before familiarity returns.

Although his work is rooted in a deep understanding of traditional craft, Waterston does not view craftsmanship as an end in itself. Instead, it provides the means through which ideas can be explored and material can be understood. Function remains present, but not as the primary objective. Rather, it provides a framework through which sculpture can enter everyday life, allowing objects to be experienced not only as physical artefacts but as catalysts for reflection, curiosity and connection.





Process and Materials

Wood is the constant within Jan Waterston's practice. He is drawn to it as a material that is both familiar and complex, one that has long shaped human life through shelter, heat, tools and the objects that surround us. Its grain records growth and environmental change, creating variations that can be understood instinctively even when they are not consciously examined. For Waterston, wood remains responsive even after it has been felled, continuing to react to moisture, temperature and the conditions around it.

His works often begin with an indistinct sense of form rather than a resolved drawing. An idea may remain in his imagination for an extended period before becoming sufficiently clear to develop through physical research and making. Geological formations provide an important point of reference, particularly cave systems, coastlines, stalactites and stalagmites, and the effects of erosion over long periods of time. Waterston may photograph these landscapes and structures, but the images are not used as direct models. Instead, he retains the physical and emotional experience of encountering them and considers how those sensations might be translated through material and form.

Central to the construction of the work is an additive and subtractive process of timber lamination. Sections of wood of varying thicknesses are joined to create mass before being carved back, rebuilt and reduced again. This repeated movement between accumulation and removal allows the work to develop gradually. It also connects the physical process of making with Waterston's wider interest in growth and erosion, as the form appears to be simultaneously constructed and excavated.

The resulting works often combine smooth, fluid surfaces with exposed grain and coarser linear details. Through this contrast, Waterston seeks to reveal a softness and organic quality not ordinarily associated with such a hard material. Viewers may initially mistake the works for cast objects or assume that they have been carved from a single tree. In fact, each piece has been built through successive layers and shaped by hand, with every mark and transition resulting from an individual decision.

Waterston's training in cabinet making provides the technical foundation for this process, but he does not treat traditional craft as a fixed set of rules. Instead, he uses its knowledge and discipline as a means of engaging directly with material. Making becomes a process of testing, responding and reconsidering, in which experience provides a starting point but does not predetermine the final form.

The work is completed through prolonged observation and continued adjustment. Waterston describes finding the point of completion as difficult, particularly when further carving risks losing something already present within the form. The process therefore requires him to move beyond caution and continue until the work reaches a balance between mass, fragility, tension and stability. Each piece carries the record of that extended material journey, from laminated timber to a form that appears grown, weathered and gradually brought into being.



JAN WATERSTON | Strata Cabinet | 2024

Ash, fumed fade lacquer
H. 202 x W. 115 x D. 94 cm | H. 79 1/2 x W. 45 1/4 x D. 37 inches

Photo: Jan Waterston



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Ash, fumed fade lacquer
H. 202 x W. 115 x D. 94 cm | H. 79 1/2 x W. 45 1/4 x D. 37 inches

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JAN WATERSTON | *Strata Sibling* | 2026

Ash, fumed fade lacquer

H. 211 x W. 119 x D. 94 cm | H. 83 1/8 x W. 46 7/8 x D. 37 inches

Photo: Graham Pearson



JAN WATERSTON | **Strata Sibling** | 2026

Ash, fumed fade lacquer
H. 211 x W. 119 x D. 94 cm | H. 83 1/8 x W. 46 7/8 x D. 37 inches

Photo: Graham Pearson



JAN WATERSTON | Strata Sibling | 2026

Ash, fumed fade lacquer
H. 211 x W. 119 x D. 94 cm | H. 83 1/8 x W. 46 7/8 x D. 37 inches

Photo: Graham Pearson



JAN WATERSTON | Strata Chair | 2025

Ash, fumed tone lacquer, cotton pile velvet
H. 79 x W. 83 x D. 89 cm | H. 31 1/8 x W. 32 5/8 x D. 35 inches

Photo: Graham Pearson





JAN WATERSTON | Self Mining | 2024

Ash (Ebonised Finish)

H. 85 x W. 93 x D. 98 cm | H. 33 1/2 x W. 36 5/8 x D. 38 5/8 inches

Photo: Jan Waterston





JAN WATERSTON | Strata Table | 2025

Ash, ebonised oil
H. 69 x W. 193 x D. 127 cm | H. 27 1/8 x W. 76 x D. 50 inches

Photo: Graham Pearson







JAN WATERSTON | Strata Table | 2025

Ash, ebonised oil

H. 69 x W. 193 x D. 127 cm | H. 27 1/8 x W. 76 x D. 50 inches

Photo: Graham Pearson



Artists Statement

My work explores duality, imbalance and connection. I'm interested in how things simultaneously grow and erode, and how forms can feel deeply familiar yet completely unfamiliar at the same time.

I draw inspiration from geological formations, cave systems, stalactites, stalagmites and coastlines shaped by erosion. These processes of deep time, where creation and destruction happen together, provide a visual language for my internal experience. The work isn't about recreating nature. I want it to feel uncertain, as though the material has either grown or been excavated. Both are happening simultaneously.

Wood is the material I always come back to. Our relationship with it is hardwired. It has kept us warm, given us tools and housed us. Even after it has been felled it continues to respond to its environment. I'm interested in taking a material that is often seen as hard and making something that feels fluid and organic. The additive and subtractive lamination process is the physical manifestation of what I'm exploring conceptually.

I grew up in Birmingham, in the shadows of factories, not in the cliché rural setting that often leads people to traditional craft. My first passion was skateboarding. Through skating I explored the city in depth, imagining what could be done with a bench or a piece of architecture.

I studied Fine Art when I was young, but I couldn't access my ideas because I didn't have the skills to express them. When I discovered furniture making, I realised those skills were the way I could begin to express something. Craft is at the core of what I do, but it isn't about heritage or provenance. Craft is a set of tools for me to engage with material and make marks. It's learning to unlearn what's considered the proper way in craft, using experience and knowledge to begin, but not following tradition rigidly. The balance between function and artistic expression feels like the right canvas for me. The objects are sculpture, but the fact they have function allows me to go on that journey.

I want people to momentarily experience a world outside the time they know, yet one that feels deeply familiar. I want them to feel they don't know an object, yet intimately know it at the same time. I want people to begin to have their own idea of an object, where it evokes something personal for them.



JAN WATERSTON | Primitive Excavations (Striations) | 2024

Ash, (Ebonised and Limed Finish)
H. 72.5 x W. 65 x D. 64 cm | H. 28 1/2 x W. 25 5/8 x D. 25 1/4 inches

Photo: Jan Waterston



JAN WATERSTON | Primitive Excavations | 2024

Ash Wood
H. 62 x W. 71 x D. 67 cm | H. 28 x W. 24 3/8 x D. 26 3/8 inches

Photo: Jan Waterston



JAN WATERSTON | Unearthed Structure | 2024

Walnut Wood
H. 71 x W. 56 x D. 61 cm | H. 28 x W. 22 x D. 24 inches

Photo: Jan Waterston



Winner
Best of Show
2025
DESIGN
MIAMI.

CHARLES BURNAND GALLERY

Charles Burnand Gallery champions contemporary collectible design, with a particular focus on Art Furniture and Illuminated Sculpture that fuse radical material integrity, emotional resonance, and intellectual rigour. Founded in 2009 by Simon Stewart, the gallery presents both emerging and established contemporary artists and designers, curating monumental, sculptural works that push the boundaries of function, perception, and craft.

Known for its forward-thinking programme and sculptural focus, the gallery exhibits internationally at leading fairs including Design Miami, Frieze, PAD London, Salon Art + Design, and Collect Art Fair.

Alongside its exhibition programme, Charles Burnand Gallery operates an in-house design and production studio specialising in the development and realisation of monumental Illuminated Sculpture, enabling artists to create ambitious works at architectural scale through a global network of specialist makers and master artisans.

In 2026, Charles Burnand Gallery opens a flagship gallery in Mayfair, London, followed in 2027 by a permanent gallery in the Cotswolds, establishing a dual-site platform for ambitious exhibitions, international cultural programming, and institutional collaborations.

Awarded Best in Show at Design Miami in 2025, Charles Burnand Gallery continues to build an internationally recognised platform dedicated to the most ambitious voices in contemporary collectible design.

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