

Mad About Yew

Some marriages are memorialized in sonnets or portraits, in fiction or family lore. For Timothy Coleman, of Shelburne, Mass., the medium was cabinetry. Building this twinned cabinet out of western yew, English sycamore, and imbuia was Coleman's way of celebrating his two-decade relationship with his wife, Mary Beth.

With its merged cabinets, shared legs, and interlaced oval stretchers, his piece embodies the symbiosis of marriage. He elaborated the theme with shallow relief carving in the lower bands of each cabinet and intertwined in the upper bands.

Coleman began by building the double stand and remembers that the imbuia filled his shop with "a spicy, cinnamon scent." To make the oval frame-and-panel cabinets, he sliced veneers from a plank of yew and bent-laminated most of the parts. In the patterned areas he glued a veneer of English sycamore over the yew and carved through it.

After four months of work, the time came to name the piece. His wife was on hand when Coleman suggested Yew and Me. "She laughed," he said, "so the name stuck."

—Jonathan Binzen



Photos: Clarkey Frisberg

