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Mark Sfirri's Baseball Bats Headed to Cooperstown, NY

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The National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum in Cooperstown, New York, has acquired a set of unusual baseball bats titled "Rejects from the Bat Factory," created by [Mark Sfirri](#) of Bucks County, Pennsylvania.



JOSH RAWITCH AND BAT SET

The President of the Hall of Fame, Josh Rawitch (pictured above), had this to say, "We are excited to add this very unique piece of artwork to our permanent collection for fans to enjoy. Our Museum continues to display and collect one-of-a-kind artifacts and objects that help tell the history of our great game and Mark's work certainly falls into that category."

The set is part of a series that Sfirri began in 1993. Over the past fifty years, Sfirri has created a diverse range of wood furniture and sculpture but his variations on the theme of altered baseball bats are among his signature works. The Hall joins other prominent institutions with sets of Sfirri's baseball bat series, among them, the Renwick Gallery (of the Smithsonian American Art Institution, Washington DC), Museum of Arts & Design (NYC), The Minneapolis Institute of Art (Minneapolis, MN), The James A. Michener Art Museum (Doylestown PA), Yale University Art Gallery (New Haven CT)— as well as numerous private collections.



Photo Credit: Mark Sfirri

The Center for Art in Wood in Philadelphia also acquired a set of his bats last year. Karen Schoenewaldt, Manager of Collections and Registrar, contacted the Hall of Fame to see if they would be interested in borrowing and displaying the Center's set. Instead, the Museum Accessions Committee decided that they would acquire a set of their own for their permanent collection. "Cooperstown is the biggest stage for the sport," Sfirri said. "My father would be proud." Sfirri's work joins other baseball-related works made by artists Norman Rockwell, Armand LaMontagne, Elaine De Kooning, Alexander Calder, and Andy Warhol, among others.



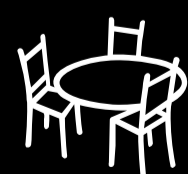
Photo Credit: Mark Sfirri

Sfirri described the inception of the series: "Our son Sam, who was six at the time, ran into my woodshop. He had just seen a baseball bat with a hollowed end on television and he wanted me to make him one. I was busy with a furniture commission and I tried to get out of it, but he was very determined. He said, 'Dad... you have the wood, and you have a lathe.....make me a bat!' I knew it wouldn't take long. The priorities seemed clear, and I obliged. He went away happy and I got thinking. I realized that the foundation of baseball bat design is function: a handle that is the perfect diameter for gripping, a knob to keep the bat from flying out of one's hands, and a larger diameter head for a greater chance of making contact with the ball. For me, though, it seemed an opportunity to use the form as a blank canvas, a chance to isolate multi-axis turning details that I was experimenting with, to impose them on this recognizable object. My first thought was to try to make it appear that the baseball dented the bat and deformed it in a way that is, of course, impossible with wood. In another design, I thought, what would it look like if a baseball was actually passing through a bat?"

Sfirri's work is currently on view at the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum. For more information about a trip to the Hall, visit their website: <https://baseballhall.org>

To see more about Mark Sfirri's work, visit his website: <https://www.marksfirri.com>

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