



*A Declaration of the necessity  
for the public good*



  
TEMPLE  
GALLERY  
TYLER  
SCHOOL OF ART



  
PHILADELPHIA  
HISTORICAL MARKERS  
On this site, Temple Gallery serves as a shop to produce a contemporary version of the Philadelphia stick chair by incorporating the common commercial pallet. Also known as the Windsor Chair (1725-1825), it was the principal chair used by all social and economic classes and was used during the signing of the Declaration of Independence. The pallet is transformed from a plinth of consumption, into discrete public seating, providing "A Declaration of Necessity for the Public Good"

IT'S THE LAW  
CLEAN UP  
AFTER  
YOUR  
DOG  
  
maximum  
fine \$300  
CITY OF PHILADELPHIA



PHILADELPHIA  
STICK PALLET CHAIR  
September 8 - October 21, 2004

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a declaration of <sup>the</sup> necessity for the public good

Buster Simpson

September 3- October 23



Temple Gallery is supported in part by the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts,  
the Philadelphia Cultural Fund, & the Friends of Temple Gallery.

This project is supported by an award by the National Endowment for the Arts.



NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS

## **A Declaration of the Necessity for the Public Good**

A Project by Buster Simpson in collaboration with Tyler School of Art and its students

September 3 – October 23, 2004

Buster Simpson, an artist based in Seattle who is well known in the United States and in Europe for his work in public spaces, has designed this workshop project for the production of chairs from recycled wooden pallets in collaboration with Tyler School of Art students. During the first week of the exhibition, the gallery was turned into a workshop, with Simpson building “Philadelphia stick pallet Windsor” chairs from recycled pallet wood with student assistants. Following Simpson’s residency, the gallery provides a showroom for the pallet Windsors as well as some materials that reference the design and construction processes. The exhibition also features images and documents of some of his earlier projects that relate to public sites and seating, public discourse, and agitprop.

Each pallet Windsor represents a stage in the morphing--or amalgamation--of pallet to chair. Windsor chairs were ubiquitous--as Simpson says, “the most democratic of chairs.” They produced throughout the thirteen original colonies that sent representatives to sign the Declaration of Independence, and a broad range of stylistic interpretation developed through regional and individual variations; Philadelphia was an important center of “Philadelphia stick” Windsor chair production.

The transformation of Temple Gallery from traditional presentation space to workshop and showroom manifested the cycle of production and consumption that was initiated with the use of wooden pallets as raw material. The original idea for the pallet Windsors was derived from the Windsor chairs depicted in the popular engraving by Edward Savage of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. Simpson is interested in the chairs as symbols of individual participation in democratic process; in 2000 he had proposed a set of cast bronze Windsor chairs to be placed in the historic grove on Independence Mall, and this project extends his original intentions, offering the pallet Windsors as places for citizens to rest, talk and debate during this political season. Appropriately, various components for the pallet Windsors feature imagery and language that references current political characters and events.

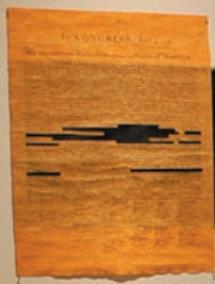
Simpson, whose projects often include sly word play, sees the pallet as a “plinth of consumerism” which will be, in the process of its transformation into public seating, “retrofitted for the ‘necessity of the public good.’” Simpson has taken this phrase, his title for the project, directly from the Declaration of Independence. It and other words and phrases from the Declaration have also been applied to some of the pallet/chairs.

This project has been organized by Temple Gallery with the sponsorship of Art Works in Different Spaces, a project of the Tyler School of Art and Providence Productions.

We would like to thank Jude Tallisshet, professor at Tyler School of Art, and her students; the Wood Turning Center and Albert Lecoff, Director; the John Grass Wood Turning Shop; and Crane Arts LLC for their generous contributions to the organization of the project.







*It has made judges dependent on his Will*

*my and which may define a Tyrant, so might this*

*this take the words of a poet to speak*

*A Prince whose character is thus marked by one*

*of these by fury*

*He delivering us in many cases of his strength*

*for transacting us beyond what we had*

*perpetrated upon us*

*We have needed a multitude of new Offices and*

*and rather former of Offices & change our*

*to our manner of*

*highly and not not this Justice*

*We have needed a multitude of new Offices and*

*and rather former of Offices & change our*

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Upson to their lists of husbandry

unacknowledged by our laws; giving his

a juster notion foreign to our constitution; and



He has affected to render the Military independent

of and superior to the Civil power

The world of a few people.

every one is a military man

The time when a man is a man is marked by



*He has made Judges dependent on his Will*













*A DECLARATION of the NECESSITY  
for the PUBLIC GOOD*

*Buster Simpson*

*September 3 – October 23, 2004*

*Reception: Friday, October 1, 7-9 PM*

*An on-going workshop constructing pallet Windsor  
chairs as a collaborative project with Tyler students.*

TEMPLE GALLERY OF TYLER SCHOOL OF ART  
45 N. SECOND STREET  
PHILADELPHIA, PA 19106  
215.925.7379

GALLERY HOURS:  
WEDNESDAY-SATURDAY, 11 AM - 6 PM AND  
UNTIL 9 PM ON THE FIRST FRIDAY OF EACH MONTH

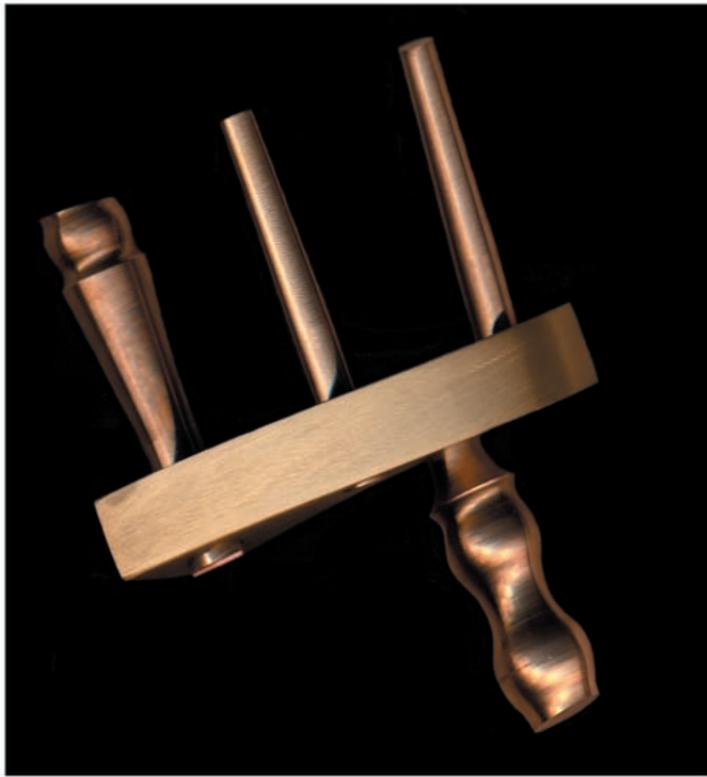
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*Front: Background image, Constellation, Independence Mall Proposal, 2000.  
Insert, Union Jack Pallet, King Cross Goods Yard, London, 1995.*

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## CONSTELLATION

Buster Simpson - September 2000

Proposal for Independence Mall  
Philadelphia, PA





## Historic Reference & Installation Rendering

*left*  
Engraving by Edward Savage c.1776,  
based on a canvas by Robert Edge Pine

*below*  
Virtual rendering of Constellation,  
looking east within Independence Mall





Independence Mall is a gathering place for the public to reflect on an event of which we are now trustees. I propose an amenity as a conceptual framework, which, when engaged with by the public becomes a social catalyst reinforcing our collective image of the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

The paintings by John Trumbull and in particular, Robert Edge Pine, depicting the constellation of signers of the Declaration gathered around the table in Carpenters Hall serves as an armature for the arrangement of this public seating proposal. This amenity creates today's situation to converse, discourse in public or private either formally or informally (including lunch). The mentioned paintings suggest these various conversational dynamics were in play during the signing. The configuration of the seating will be placed with this in mind. The seating and table will share a site line with the bronze Liberty Bell aligning themselves towards Independence Hall.

Upon examination of the painting "The Congress Voting Independence July 4 1776" by R.E.Pine one realizes the prominence of the Windsor or Philadelphia Stick Chair. Charles Santore in his book "The Windsor Style in America (volumes one and two) writes,"... Windsor furniture is, I believe, the most characteristically American and the most historically significant furniture style to emerge from eighteenth-century America. It is a democratic style, one which appealed to and used by all levels of American society. Windsor furniture was practical indoors or out, in public buildings or in private residences, in the country or in the city. It accommodated children or adults." This, I have found, is an attitude shared by others. It was a very adaptable style and accommodated change. There were many "Windsor-Makers" within the vicinity of Independence Mall during and before 1776. Thomas Jefferson modifies the writing arm Windsor with a swivel seat from which it is said he wrote drafts of the Declaration of Independence. Today's proposal applies its modifications upon the Windsor.

The proposed constellation of 13 Windsor chairs and possibly one settee will be made of silicon bronze, which can be cast, machined and welded and is suitable for structural and environmental concerns. The manner in which the bronze is worked will be similar to the original joined and keyed construction. Today's technology and craftsmen enable new approaches, fabrication will be important both from a cost effective and aesthetic standpoint. Approaches being considered range from a complete milling approach to a combination of cast components, which are then machined and fitted. The sample illustrates the level of finish. Stoutly made, the pieces will endure and embellish with use and age. I am open to discussions regarding the finish. Historically the Windsor chairs were painted a variety of colors, the bronze finish has its appeal but will naturally patina and with it, will evolve areas of polished contact through use.

Another consideration is to pierce in the seat of each of the 13 chairs the original colonies names. A recessed light in the footing below could provide a dramatic night time effect illuminating the chair and pierced state names.

After a collaborative session of arranging and discussing the arrangements, in the spirit of what this piece is about, foundations will be poured, light fixtures installed and seating secured. A top layer of decomposed granite might be appropriate when considering the pedestrian traffic and issues with “mow strips” and cleaning under and adjacent the installation. The grove of trees could play an important roll in the historical resonance of this place. Trees selected could be from the same DNA source, have a historic connection or be a scion of some historical tree creating a direct living link and compels us to be stewards of this legacy, the environment and the pursuit of happiness.