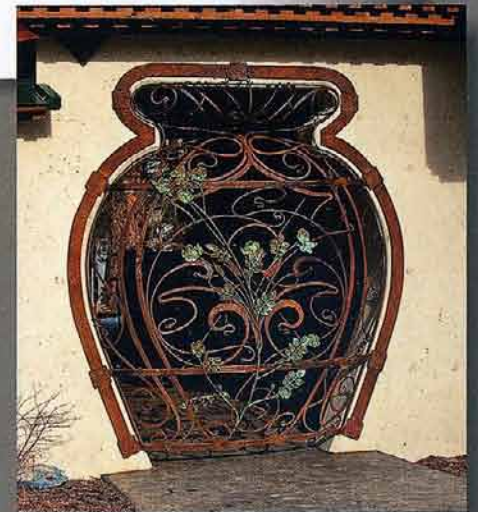


Ironwork Today 3

Inside & Out



Schiffer LTD®

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Artist's Statement

Many artist-blacksmiths think of furniture making in terms of scrolls and ornaments, forgings and "wrought iron." However, I focus on furniture design and the steel material itself instead of craft traditions. I also feel free to use any advanced technology or ancient technique that can take me toward my creative goals.

The traditional and functional forms of furniture have familiar and satisfying sculptural qualities, and I like to work within that realm. I'm not drawn to making sculpture with a furniture purpose or furniture with a fundamentally sculptural role. I think a piece of furniture only becomes a work of art when the design and the craftsmanship inspire each other and meld into a single accomplishment.

Individual Artwork

Tubendstil Tables

For *Tubendstil Tables*, I plasma cut, hot form, and MIG-weld them from sections of 6" x 6" steel tube and 1/4" plate. Then they are filed, joined, and finished, each one crafted individually or in matching sets.

Although this design requires contemporary tools and techniques for execution, it reflects the *Jugendstil* style developed by German and Austrian Art Nouveau craftsmen more than 100 years ago. *Tubendstil Tables* slightly resemble an oak tray table made by Herman Obrist in 1898, now in the Bavarian National Museum.

In developing this design, I found the opportunity for a modern twist. The *Tubendstil Table* is reversible. It can be inverted and both ways are right side up – the design carries through in either orientation. Each position demonstrates appealing shape, line, and proportion equally well.



Lee W. Badger. *Tubendstil Table*. 2006. Hot worked 6 x 6 structural steel square tube with black oxide finish and ceramic tile top. 26" h x 14" w x 14" d.

Stone Top Tables

The *Stone Top Table* design floats a stone top on a steel framework, expressing strength without heaviness. Steel has its origins in stone, and both are durable, strong, and heavy. Stock steel is consistent and remarkable in its structural strength and workability, but stone has variable characteristics and each piece can be individually unique. This design concept emphasizes the contrast between these two generally similar materials by combining singular stone tabletops with a strong and light steel support.

Stone Top Tables strike a balance between heavy and light. The table legs are cut and crafted from structural steel stock commonly known as "angle iron," and 1/2" rod forms the frame and stone supports. Carefully shaped and finished welds join the exposed corners of the frame and seamless hidden interior welds join the legs to the frame. This creates a strong supporting base with a light and uplifted appearance.



Lee W. Badger. *Stone Top Table*. 2008. Welded, cut, and filed steel angle and rod with black oxide patina and Pennsylvania flagstone top. 18" h x 24" w x 18" d.

Knotted Tables

The *Knotted Table* design came out of a traditional skill building exercise first given to me as an apprentice artist-blacksmith. It requires expert hot working control to intertwine four steel rods into a tight, symmetrical "knot." When I became interested in furniture design, I modified and adapted this knot bending exercise to form the corners of table frames to hold inset glass tops.

The design has several secrets. To make a symmetrical table, the corner knots must be left and right handed. I make each corner separately and join the sidebars with perfectly finished and hidden MIG welds. Also, I use a gas torch to bend and square the table's knots.



Lee W. Badger. *Knotted Coffee Table*. 2008. Hot worked 1/2" steel rod with brass brushed and enamel rubbed finish, inset 1/2" plate glass top. 18" h x 50" w x 25" d.



Lee W. Badger. *Knotted Table*. 2009. Hot worked 1/2" steel rod with blasted and wire brushed finish, inset 1/2" plate glass top. 18" h x 25 1/2" w x 21" d.

Quadrat-Motif Tables

Many European and American Arts & Crafts designers used the *Quadrat-Motif* – repetitive patterns of squares – to provide a decorative element without creating an excessively ornamental effect. Josef Hoffman and Frank Lloyd Wright frequently used repetitive squares as a design element. Karl Kipp and Dard Hunter often employed the decorative square motif in designs for the Tookay and Roycroft shops. Today, historic *Quadrat-Motif* designs can be seen as contributing precursors to twentieth century Modernism and the International Style.

The *Quadrat-Motif Tables* are a modern interpretation of these Arts & Crafts influences. The tables are individually crafted from laser cut and hand forged steel.

The finish is a brown oxide patina created directly from the steel surface and fixed with Boston Polish amber paste wax. The tops are 1/2" bronze plate glass with beveled edges. The inset top design allows alternate tops of wood, stone or composite solid-surface materials.



Lee W. Badger. *Quadrat-Motif Cocktail Table*. 2009. Laser-cut, forged and welded steel with 1/2" beveled plate glass top. 21" h x 15" d.



Lee W. Badger. *Quadrat-Motif Side Tables*. 2009. Laser-cut, forged and welded steel with 1/2" beveled plate glass top. 26" h x 25" w x 25" d.