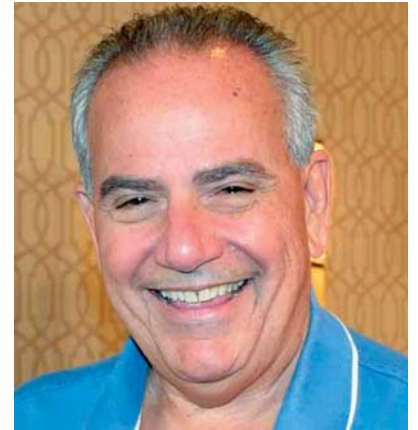


Arriving at Grand Central

BG Artforms displays its wares at a major holiday fair.



The work of BG Artforms' Barry Gross is on display at the annual Grand Central Holiday Fair, including this Blue Sea Shells fountain pen.



After retiring in 2012 from a life in medical device sales, New Jersey native Barry Gross found another life in penmaking, specializing in artisan pieces that use unique materials. His copyrights for cigar band pens, watch parts pens, fishing lure pens, and circuit board pens date back to 2009. His pen in this issue's Holiday Gift Guide is composed of fossilized shark vertebrae (p. 80). The pen on this page is composed of sea shells.

Gross explains his new Blue Sea Shells fountain pen's composition: "They're a mixture of small recycled beach shells mixed in with blue acrylic. It's like turning concrete because the shells are so frigging hard!"

It's also very hard to get invited to the Grand Central Terminal Holiday Fair, but Gross managed that one, too. For over 20 years, New York City's Grand Central Terminal—the architectural masterpiece that acts as the hub of the city's rail system—has hosted one of the New York's longest-running indoor holiday fairs. Each year, the Holiday Fair Committee finds vendors with a focus on U.S.-made, locally-sourced, socially-conscious, or simply unique products.

"Only 40 exhibitors total, and I'm the only pen person," Gross says. Those 40 exhibitors share half of historic Vanderbilt Hall from November 13 to December 24. Gross continues, "About 750,000 people go through Grand Central Terminal each day, so it's a huge show!"

The pens of BG Artforms come in fountain pen or rollerball modes. Each pen is hand turned by Gross, ergonomically crafted for an easy grip. Gross pays close attention to finishing details, ensuring that the internal workings of his pens match the care he shows the external. His cartridge/converter fountain pens come with a stainless steel JoWo nib, but Gross also offers an 18 karat gold nib upgrade. All his pens are one-of-a-kind.

Gross's other business is selling pen turning kits and supplies for the would-be and professional pen turner—Arizona Silhouette (arizonasilhouette.com). And in addition to teaching seminars in pen turning around the country, Gross sells instructional DVDs at his website and has penned books on the field, including the *Pen Turner's Workbook*. BG Artforms also makes appearances at major pen shows across the country.

Asked which material or historical item Gross most likes to work with, he hesitates only slightly before answering, "Coins." Gross explains that, in addition to penmaking, he also enjoys deep sea diving for sunken treasure—and it paid off. In 1980, he visited Nova Scotia, Canada to explore the wreckage of the HMS Faversham, and he found a literal treasure trove of ancient Spanish coins. Today, he makes pens that incorporate pure silver replicas of those originals on the barrel and cap.

Gross says, "Most of my pens are heading to New York for the show," and that will include his coin pens, beetle wing pens, and the new Blue Sea Shells fountain pen. After crushing and turning, those sea shells are polished and finished, complimented by the pen's chrome trim and clip and finished with a bicolor stainless steel JoWo nib and gold-plated trim at the cap top and ring.

If you live in New York City, or if you're planning your holiday trip there, there's a good chance you'll find yourself at Grand Central Terminal at some point. If so, make sure to stop by Vendor 19 at the Holiday Fair. You'll find both a friendly face and some unique writing instruments.

Visit grandcentralterminal.com/event/grand-central-holiday-fair/ and bgartforms.com.