

FINISHING TECHNIQUES FOR WOOD CRAFTERS

ESSENTIAL METHODS WITH ACRYLICS, OILS, AND MORE



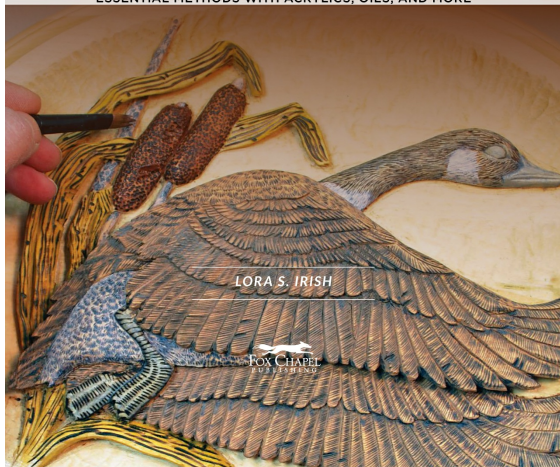
"There doesn't seem to be a medium that Lora Irish hasn't mastered or a technique she hasn't tried."

—Pyrography Online

LORA S. IRISH

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FOX CHAPEL
FINISHING

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INTRODUCTION

In this book, I will take you through the very basic steps for painting and staining any woodcarving, pyrography project, or gourd. We will look at solid coloring with acrylics, stain painting with oils, combinations of the two, and many special effect techniques. Techniques can be mixed, matched, and used on whatever project you want to work on. There are no surprise instructions here or secret techniques—just the basics that will help you create a strong, clean finished work each and every time.

The sample projects I have used throughout this book to demonstrate techniques are varied, from ice fishing decoys to a Celtic knot dragon to a wood

spirit cane topper. These are quick, easy, and innovative little carvings that can be adapted to all of the painting styles that we will explore, and are meant to impress upon you the great variety of projects that you can paint and finish.

This book does not teach you how to carve, wood burn, or create any kind of wood craft—it is made for readers who already have some experience creating with wood and who are looking for instructions on how to paint the projects on their work tables. So, while I am not providing the step-by-step carving or pyrography instructions for these painting projects, I have included the patterns for each project in case you find them useful and want to create them yourself.



In many of the photos in this book, you will see a ball-head straight pin in the base of a fish's tail. This well-set pin can be slid into a cut in a cardboard box flap that allows the fish to hang freely while drying. Place several books inside the box to keep it from tipping.



For many of the painting techniques in this book, I have used one of a small grouping of basswood “Whittle Fish” (as I call them) that I carved. Each Whittle Fish was created from a 1 ¼" x 1 ¼" x 3" (3 x 3 x 7.5cm) practice block using a bench knife, a V-gouge, a large round gouge, and 220-grit sandpaper. You can find detailed carving instructions on page if you want to practice some of the techniques we'll cover in this book on the same fish that I use to demonstrate the techniques.

TABLE OF CONTENTS



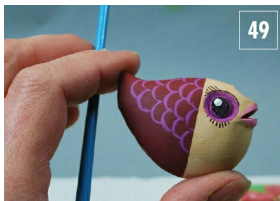
CHAPTER 1: BEFORE YOU PAINT



CHAPTER 2: ALL ABOUT BRUSHES, PAINTS, AND OTHER MEDIA

CHAPTER 3: LEARNING TO MIX COLORS

CHAPTER 4: PAINTING TECHNIQUES

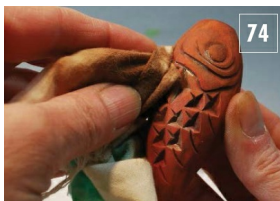


Solid Acrylic Colors over a Primer: Trick Fish
Simple Blending with Acrylics: Dotty Fish



Acrylic Wash Painting on an Oiled Surface:
Floral Fish

Dry Brushing Acrylics over Acrylics: Turtle
Marbleizing: Stone Fish



Vintage Finish: Chip Carved Fish
Acrylics over Oil: Bird
Splattering: Sectional Fish

CHAPTER 5: ADVANCED IDEAS AND SPECIAL EFFECTS

Skin Tones: Wood Spirit Cane Topper

Wood Grain Effect: Wood Spirit

Oil Staining over Dry Brushing: Canada Goose

Stone Effect: Celtic Dragon



Milk Paint Acrylics: Mayan High Priest

CHAPTER 6: BONUS: CARVING A WHITTLE FISH

CHAPTER 7: PATTERNS

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

CHAPTER 1:

BEFORE YOU PAINT

Before you even touch a paint-loaded brush to your carving or pyrography project, you need to consider several factors that will directly affect how your final coloring will appear. Let's take a quick look at how the surface texture of your project, the type of pre-treatment you use, and different primers can all affect the finished result. We'll also look at factors to keep in mind after completing your painting.



Wood Surface Textures

Whether you are carving or wood burning, the final texture and smoothness of the wood surface directly affects how evenly any coloring can be applied. Here is a summary of a variety of ways you can alter the final texture of your work and how that final texture can affect the painting. This list is sequential; you can do any number of these steps, and each step will make your surface smoother and smoother, but you don't have to do all of the steps, and you can skip around as long as you stay in order. (This is generally speaking—but there are always exceptions, so experiment and see what works for you.)

1. Flat Plane Carving or Fine Shaved Carving.

Finish your wood carving by checking for any rough stop cuts, small un-cut chips in the deep crevices, and coarse V-gouge strokes. Clean these areas with a sharp bench knife before you begin any painting steps. While those small, loose fibers of wood might not show in the unpainted wood stage of your project, once you apply color they will become very obvious.

2. Sanding with 220- to 320-Grit Sandpaper.

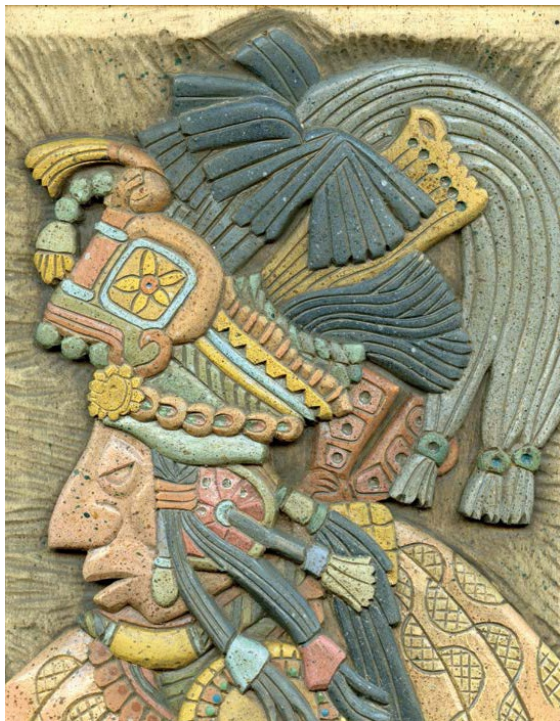
Sanding smooths wood out, dulling or removing the texture of the cuts. Sanding grit can leave very fine, shallow lines in the wood that can catch blended colors or antiquing. Work the sandpaper or sanding pad in the direction of the wood grain whenever possible.



Sanding a relief carving.

3. Removing Dust.

A dust-free surface is always ideal. Remove any dust left over from carving and sanding steps with a soft cloth. While paint may cover up a small area of dust on your work, that paint will eventually pop off the project because it never adhered directly to the wood surface.



This project was sanded well after carving, which allowed for

even application of the base colors. Of course, the splattering effect used on top of the base colors would effectively mask any uneven color application.

4. Polishing with Heavy Kraft Paper.

A crumpled 6" (15cm) square sheet of heavy kraft paper, like a piece of a paper bag or paper packing material, will polish a wood surface. Kraft paper works like an extremely fine sandpaper and removes those last few loose wood fibers or fine sanding lines.

5. Buffing with a Soft Cloth.

A lint-free, soft, cotton cloth can be used to buff or polish a wood surface after the carving or burning is finished. Not only does the cloth remove any remaining sanding dust or wood fibers, but it also can add a bit of sheen if you use firm pressure all over.

6. Burnishing.

A wood project can be burnished by rubbing the surface briskly with a small piece of similar wood. This rubbing creates a smooth, polished surface with a soft, semi-gloss sheen. Burnishing is a final step that allows you to get the smoothest surface possible,

particularly when preceded by sanding and buffing.
See page for more information on burnishing.



Burnishing is a good pre-treatment when you want easy blending of hues for both acrylics and oils.

Depth and Intensity of Carved Texture

Deep, textured cuts in your carvings will hold more shading color and more antiquing/staining than shallow cuts. You can choose to use a variety of cut depths in your carving, from very smooth, flat planes to deeply incised details, to capture more color changes in the finished project. A light texture in your carving, as shown in the tiki pieces, can accent your color work, especially when you are dry brushing or antiquing the final painting, by allowing color to concentrate in the textured areas. Heavy textures, as shown in the wood spirit, are wonderful for dry brushing, antiquing, and for faux wood, stone, and marble effects. The deep, textured cuts really grab the color.





Wood Pre-Treatments

The woods that we paint tend to be very porous—they absorb water, oils, and colors quickly.

Basswood, for example, which is the most common wood for character carving and fish decoys, is extremely absorbent and will need pre-treatment

before any painting in order to create the smoothest paint finish possible. Here are some examples of pre-treatments that can be used on wood projects before actually painting. Most of the projects in this book use one of the following pre-treatments.

Sanding Sealer

Sanding sealer is a brush-on pre-finish that hardens the top surface of the wood, making the loose wood fibers stiff enough to sand away. Usually one to two light coats are applied to the raw wood and allowed to dry thoroughly. The sealer is then sanded using fine 220- to 320-grit sandpaper. Basswood, poplar, and butternut are all common carving woods that have a soft, finely grained surface that can be hard to sand to a smooth, glass-like finish. Sanding sealer soaks into the upper surface of these woods, hardening the wood fibers and making them easier to remove. Use a sanding sealer coat before painting if you are having problems teasing out those hard-to-reach loose wood splinters. The smoother your wood surface is, the smoother your color application will be.



This fish was pre-treated with a reworkable fixative spray sealer.

Reworkable Fixative Spray Sealer

Many art media techniques need a fixative to seal one layer of work before applying additional layers of color. A reworkable fixative spray sealer does just that. It seals and protects the color work you have already done on the project, yet allows new color to

be applied to its lightly textured surface. Reworkable sealers can also be used to pretreat a raw wood surface, acting similar to sanding sealer by hardening and strengthening the upper surface of the wood. By applying one light coat of reworkable spray sealer to raw wood, you can control how much color soaks into the wood with the first application of thinned and wash coat paints.

Water Wash

For very soft woods, such as basswood or poplar, just a few light coats of water can pre-moisten a carving enough to allow acrylic or craft paints to flow smoothly onto the surface of the carving.

Acrylic Wash

Acrylic paints can be thinned with water, in at least a one-to-one ratio, to create an acrylic wash pre-treatment. Such washes allow you to blend and mix several colors or tones on the wood to create a base coat for a painting.



This dragon was painted starting with a multicolored acrylic

wash.

Oil and Turpentine Coating

Mixing boiled linseed oil with turpentine at a one-to-one ratio makes a wonderful pre-treatment that allows the wood grain to show through the paint. This oil mix is often a pre-treatment base for dry brushing both acrylics and oil paints.

Spray or Brush-On Sealer

There is a wide variety of spray and brush-on finishes that can be used to seal wood before applying color. Matte and semi-matte sealers work best because they have a small amount of texture that captures and holds the layers of paint, as opposed to super-smooth gloss sealers. Spray and brush-on sealers are most often used as the finishing coat, meant to be the last layer of work in your color application, as they completely seal the wood surface and repel water, oil, and new layers of paint from penetrating into the wood. However, when you want to slowly build up layers of transparent colors, such as when oil rouging for skin tones (see page), one light coating of a spray or brush-on sealer sets the color layer below it and provides a slick, smooth

surface for the new layer of coloring.

Primers

A primer is an acrylic base coat that is applied over the raw wood before the individual colors are painted. Primer blocks out the wood grain so that the paints take on a bright, clean appearance. There are pre-mixed primers available that have little or no shine, which allows the paint to adhere well.

However, most pre-mixed primers are pure white and have a gritty finish. If you are using a pre-mixed primer, thin it on a palette with 2 parts primer to 1 part water.

You can also create your own primer using the paints you have on hand, which is what I prefer to do. I usually thin my primer with several drops of water added to a quarter-sized puddle of primer on the palette. The extra water in the mix slows the drying rate of the paint to give you extra time to smooth out each brushful of color. The colors you will be using on your project determine what color of primer you should use, which is another reason to use your own paints as primers. Here is a breakdown of some primer color options and when to use them.

White primers work very well for pale and pastel

colors and for white areas.

If an area will be red, orange, purple, bright green, or bright blue, you can use a **pale gray primer**.

Because red and orange are pure hues, they contain no white, black, or gray coloration. This means they are semi-transparent, allowing some light to show through thin coats. A gray primer blocks the light and makes the color appear much more opaque.



Gray primer



Medium brown primer

Mustard yellow, tan, and medium brown primers work well for yellows, medium and dull greens, orange, rust, teal, and skin tones.



Blended color primer

For some projects, you may want a primer coat made up of **several blended colors**. For example, you can place a small amount of golden yellow, tan, and medium brown on your palette. As you apply the primer coat, you can randomly pick up a little color from each color puddle. The colors will blend as you brush them onto the wood, giving the primer a mottled effect. As shown in the marbleizing technique (page) and the wood grain technique (page), using a mottled or blended primer adds to the mottled, textured appearance of the color coats. If your final color application will be an uneven, blended coloring, try using a blended primer as your base coat.

Final Finishes

Once a project is complete, you may want to give all raw wood, burned wood, and painted surfaces a final sealer or finishing coat to protect them from the environment and from UV rays. As we work through the techniques and projects in this book, we will see several options for final finishes you can use. They can include boiled linseed oil (BLO) mixed with turpentine, Tung oil or Danish oil, spray or brush-on polyurethane sealer, brush-on acrylic sealer, a rub and buff wax finish, and hand buffing with a soft cloth. Here is a brief summary of each finish, followed by more details about each one.

- **Acrylic Sealer:** A soft polymer sealer, acrylic sealer is available in multiple sheens from dull matte to high gloss, dries quickly, dries crystal clear, and does not change or affect the color of the wood or paint. Use on decorative, highly detailed painted projects.
- **Paste Wax:** This is easy to apply, leaves a non-slick finish, seals the wood surface without leaving a plastic or oil feel, and can be reapplied over the lifetime of the piece.

Use on any project that will be handled, held, or gripped.

- **Hand Buffing:** Some coloring agents like watercolors, pastels, and colored pencils do need a finishing layer or sealer applied to the project to protect the colors from damage or moving. Oil paints, which penetrate into the wood fibers, and acrylic paints, which are polymer-based, do not require a protective sealing layer, as they create their own semi-hard, durable, dirt-resistant finish. To strengthen that self-sealing surface, however, you can buff the painted surface with a dry, clean cloth after the paint is thoroughly dried. Buffing acts like a polishing process, leaving the painted surface with a soft sheen and smooth feel. If you want to avoid excess use of oils or chemicals, or just want a vintage look, try hand buffing.
- **Boiled Linseed Oil:** This works as a pre-treatment that can be covered with other sealers, infuses the wood deeply with the oil, prevents the project from excessive drying,

can be reapplied over the lifetime of the piece, and does not hide or cover the wood grain of the work. Use whenever you may want to make carving or painting changes to the project after a finish is applied.

- **Danish Oil:** This leaves a soft to glossy sheen with a hard finish, is excellent for decorative items, and is easy to reapply over the lifetime of a piece. Use on any decorative project when you do not want the finish to overpower the painting work.
- **Tung Oil:** The hardest of the oil finishes, tung oil is used primarily for furniture, leaves a soft sheen, and emphasizes the color changes in the wood grain. Use on a project that will receive hard use or where you want the wood grain to be an emphasized feature.
- **Polyurethane Sealer:** The hardest of the polymer sealers, polyurethane sealer is used commonly for furniture and floor finishes, is easy to apply and quick to dry, and can be used on indoor and outdoor projects. Use on any project that will be subject to hard,

constant use.

Boiled Linseed Oil

Boiled linseed oil penetrates deeply into the wood surface. It leaves a very soft sheen to the surface of the wood and often darkens the overall tonal value of a project. To facilitate the penetrating properties of boiled linseed oil, you can mix it one to one with turpentine. You want the oil to be thinned to a thickness that can be brushed, but not as thin as water. Apply one coat at a time, brushing each coat well to avoid allowing any puddles to form. Let the coat set for about ten minutes, then wipe the project well with a dry, clean, cotton cloth. After two to three coats have been applied, allow the project to dry overnight.

Advantages: This oil finish does not leave a visually hard coating on top of the project, and instead accents the wood grain and woodworking steps. It adds long-term protection to the wood by preventing it from excessive drying while repelling excess water moisture. You can re-carve or even repaint areas of a project once the first coats of BLO dry thoroughly.

Possible Problems: Rags, cloths, papers, and

brushes that have been soaked in BLO and/or turpentine can be susceptible to spontaneous combustion. When using any oil-based finish, stain, or solvent, remove all oily rags, cloths, and papers from your work area immediately after use and submerge in a solution of water and dishwashing soap until you can properly dispose of them according to local refuse laws. Clean the brushes using a solution of dishwashing detergent and water.



1. Start applying a boiled linseed oil/turpentine mixture to the piece.



2. Apply oil all over the piece, making sure to get around the sides and edges.



3. After allowing the oil coating to sit for about ten minutes, remove the oil with a soft, clean cloth.



4. Add additional coats of oil as desired. Always make sure to remove the oil from the deep crevices of a piece.

5



5. Dry overnight. The finished effect is impressive.

Danish Oil

Danish oil is a variation of boiled linseed oil that has had varnish added to facilitate drying. It gives a hard,

water-resistant finish, and is available in soft gloss or satin sheen finishes. Although Danish oil does penetrate the wood surface, it leaves a firm, semi-hard layer of oil on top of the wood. This is a great oil finish for any project that will be heavily handled over time, providing both the oil benefits to the wood as well as a soft-feeling, durable surface. Apply straight Danish oil in the same manner as you would a BLO/turpentine mixture, allowing 4–24 hours of drying time before adding the next coat. Use the same safety precautions as you would use with BLO.

Tung Oil



Applying an oil finish.

Tung oil is the hardest of the oil finishes and is most often used as a furniture finish. It dries quickly and leaves a glossy finish on the surface of the wood. While tung oil can take up to 30 days to completely dry, it does harden to a workable finish in just a few hours. The first application of tung oil, which is applied with a rag, brush, or foam pad, will penetrate into the wood surface. All other applications then lie upon the first layer, creating a thin, high-gloss surface above the wood. Tung oil requires multiple coats to build up a strong, long-lasting finish. Follow the directions for use on the can. Use the same safety precautions as you would use with BLO.

Polyurethane Finishes

Polyurethane, whether used as a spray, brush-on, or wipe-on, is a polymer, long-lasting finish that may be either water- or oil-based. It can be used on raw wood as well as on painted projects. This sealer lies on the surface of the wood, not penetrating into the wood fibers like an oil finish does. You can find polyurethane sealers in a variety of finishes, including matte, satin, semi-gloss, gloss, and high gloss.

Advantages: A polyurethane finish can apply absolutely smoothly, without any brush strokes or ridges. You have a wide choice of sheens that are both water resistant and UV protective. This is an extremely hard, durable topcoat for any wood.

Possible Problems: Polyurethane is very fluid when applied and can puddle in the crevices of a project. Thick areas can appear darker or yellow.

Acrylic Finishes

Acrylic finishes retain their crystal-clear look for many years without yellowing. Although it is not as hard a finish as polyurethane, acrylic provides both indoor and outdoor protection, including water resistance and UV protection. Available in both brush-on and spray forms, acrylic sealer is low-odor and dries quickly. You can be working over the acrylic sealer or applying a new coat in less than an hour.

Advantages: Because acrylic sealer is the clearest of all the finishes, it provides long-term protection without distorting color work.

Possible Problems: Acrylic sealers can be affected by the weather or atmospheric environment. Avoid using this finish on extremely hot or cold days or

when there is high humidity. All three conditions can cause the acrylic sealer to dry cloudy or white in the crevices of a project.

Wax Finishes



Applying a wax finish.

Grab a can of paste wax or buff wax, also referred to as wood floor wax, when you want the wood to have a wonderful, silky feeling. It's perfect for walking

sticks, canes, wizard wands, jewelry boxes, and chess sets—any wood project that will receive heavy handling during its lifetime. In general, paste wax is applied with a soft cloth or with a soft toothbrush, working an even, thin coating over the entire piece. Allow the wax to dry for about ten minutes, then buff the wax surface briskly with a clean, dry cloth. Multiple thin layers will build up a smooth, semi-gloss finish. Although this method is more time intensive than many other sealers and finishes, it leaves a water-resistant surface that is super-smooth and comfortable when handled.

Advantages: One can of paste wax can last a lifetime. Over the life of a project, you can apply new coats of paste wax to refresh the surface and appearance of a project. It leaves neither an oily nor overly slick finish, making it perfect for any project that will be gripped or held repeatedly.

Possible Problems: Obtaining a deep, smooth finish with paste wax does take a little more time and effort than other finishes. Do not hurry the application of multiple layers when working with paste wax. Instead, allow a day or more between coats to allow previous coats to thoroughly cure. Slow and steady creates the perfect wax finish.

Spray Versus Brush-On Sealers

Polyurethane, acrylic, varnish, and even shellacs are now readily available to crafters as both spray-on and brush-on finishes. Use a spray sealer when you need a fast-drying finish or an intermediate sealing layer between color applications. There are no pans, tubs, brushes, or rags to clean up after you have applied a spray sealer layer. They tend to dry to a reworkable stage within a few minutes to up to a few hours. Use any spray sealer in a well-ventilated area or outdoors. Several light coats of spray sealer are better than one heavy coat, which can take extra time to cure or can cause dripping or allow puddles to form. Turn the orientation of the project with each new layer of spray to ensure that you seal all the cracks, crevices, and undercuts.

Brush-on sealers are often used when you want an even, controllable application. They should also be used in a well-ventilated area. Apply thin coats, brushing the excess sealer out of any deep areas of the work. Brush-on sealers tend to take longer than spray sealers to cure to a reworkable stage, so allow a little extra time to complete a project. Read the instructions on the jar to discover what solvents may be needed to clean the brush after each use.



This is a brush-on acrylic satin finish.

UV Protection

Not all wood finishes or wood sealers add UV protection to your project. Check the can or jar label if you need a finish that can stand up over time to bright, direct sunlight. Polyurethane and acrylic sealers offer the strongest UV protection. Also check the labels for indoor and outdoor use.

Wood Patina

Wood naturally changes color with age, developing a darker tonal value patina. White pine, which has a very clear, white color when freshly cut, becomes a deep golden-yellow within a decade. Birch and basswood, both common pyrography woods, darken to a soft taupe or beige-brown color.

As wood ages, it can affect the quality of a work. For example, if you work a pyrography project with very pale tonal values, over time those values can become faded and completely lost. Painting will also be affected as

the wood slowly darkens and overpowers pale and pale-medium colored areas.

You cannot prevent wood from aging. However, you can take several easy precautions to minimize the effects of aging:

- For pyrography projects, check what patina coloration changes a wood will develop before you begin burning. If the wood will darken dramatically over time, work the burning in strong mid-medium to black-dark tones, avoiding the pale tonal range.
- Use a sealer that provides UV light protection. This reduces the oxidation that causes wood to develop a patina.
 - Do not display or hang your work in full sunlight, for the same reason.
 - Avoid using oil finishes on woods that have naturally dark patinas. For example, birch plywood can take on a soft beige tone when coated with Danish oil finish or tung oil. It naturally develops a deeper beige tone through aging patina. When combined, these two factors can totally block out mid-tone values within a few years.





“After the Rain” (top) was burned in 2017, whereas “Country Church” (above) was burned in 2001. Both were burned on birch plywood, and time has created a deep golden patina on the older piece.

Tip: You can buy a set of wooden tools designed for sculpting clay that will work wonderfully for burnishing—they can get into the sharp angles and deep carved areas of a project.



Burnishing can be a finish in its own right—no paint needed.



Burnish wood with a harder type of wood.



Burnished wood is very smooth and pleasant to handle.

Burnishing

This book is primarily about paint finishes, but sometimes the very best finish is no finish at all.

This particular Whittle Fish sat untouched on my table as I was working on this book and painting and finishing countless other fish just like it. It is not that I ignored it or avoided it; I simply never came to a painting process that seemed right for this particular body. The body shape was so streamlined that it seemed any painting would take away from its simple form. So I decided to use the simplest finish

possible—burnishing— to complement that simple shape.

To burnish, use a small piece of wood, in this case a wooden spoon, to rub the entire surface of the carving using a medium pressure. You should feel the pressure against the wood, but your fingers and hand should not feel cramped. Rub the entire surface several times until the carving has an even, smooth-feeling, soft sheen. Burnishing is a wonderful finish for any carving that will be heavily handled; the finished result just feels great in your hand.

Burnishing works best when the item used to burnish is a hardwood such as ash, birch, or maple. For basswood practice pieces like this one, for example, a wooden spoon made of poplar or birch works very well. To burnish a hard wood like walnut, I would use an even harder wood like maple.

CHAPTER 2 :

ALL ABOUT BRUSHES, PAINTS, AND OTHER MEDIA

Any coloring media that can be applied to canvas or paper can be used on your wood projects. In this chapter, we will take a quick look at some different media, and then focus on painting, discussing different types of paintbrushes and how to best use them. Take the time to read through this chapter and practice the painting techniques covered; it will set you up for success when you finally turn your hand to a real project!



Paints and Other Media

Here we will review the many different media you can use to finish a wood project. While we will touch upon a variety of media, this book focuses exclusively on painting with acrylics and oils. However, many of the techniques used in this book can be executed with other media, and I encourage you to experiment.



Craft-Quality and Decorative Acrylics

Available at most hobby and craft stores, this type of painting media is very affordable for any crafter. Craft-quality and decorative acrylics tend to be opaque, giving you solid coverage. Available in a wide variety of hues, shades, and tones, you seldom have to mix your own specific colors. Color names will vary between manufacturers.



Artist-Quality Acrylics

Fine, artist-quality acrylics are often transparent or semi-transparent, and you may need a primer coat on the wood before you begin color application. This type of paint is often listed under the chemical names or chemical combinations used to create the color; for example, a red might be cadmium red medium and a white might be titanium dioxide white. See page for more information about color names.



Oil Paints

Artist-quality oil paints contain ground chemicals and minerals suspended in an oil base such as safflower oil or linseed oil. Because of the oil base, these colors dry very slowly, allowing plenty of time for blending and smooth color changes. Several mixing oils are available to thin your existing oils into wash or rouging tones, too.

Watercolors

Available in tube or cake form, these paints contain a chemical or mineral pigment that is suspended in a water-soluble binder such as gum arabic. Thinned with water, the paint penetrates the top layer of the wood, soaking into the deeper grain. Watercolors can

be blended on your wood after application with a damp brush and require a finishing sealer coat such as an acrylic spray sealer. Any project in this book that uses acrylic washes is well suited to the transparent, easy-to-blend attributes of watercolors.



Artist-Quality Colored Pencils

Shown here is a small selection of artist-quality, wax-based colored pencils. Colored pencils are

available individually, in assorted sets from 12 to 150 count, and even in pre-selected color ranges for skin tones or shading tones. Student-and hobby-quality pencils are made with pigment suspended in a chalk base, which makes the pencils hard and opaque. Artist-quality pencils use a wax base, making the coloring semi-transparent, and this allows the pencil color to be applied evenly across the work. Applied in thin layers, artist-quality colored pencils are easy to mix and match to create new color tones.



Artist-Quality Watercolor Pencils

Watercolor pencils are basically water-soluble colored pencils. After the layers of colored pencil work are completed, a damp, soft-bristle brush is

used to wet and blend the colors. Watercolor pencils can also be used over top of artist-quality colored pencils to add shading and enrich your tonal work.



Other

Beyond the purview of this book are several other

specialty coloring media you can use on wood. Among them are pastels, gel pens, and permanent markers. Although, like colored pencils, these are not technically considered painting media, they can be an important addition to any painting kit. Soft pastels can be used to add that little touch of blush to your skin tones that can be easily blended into the main skin coloring. I often use oil pastels when I want to create a thin line or outline on a design that will resist water-based colors that are applied over the line. Gel pens and permanent markers are perfect for creating even, fine lines in a design, especially when you are uncomfortable or inexperienced with a liner brush. If you want to add a personal touch with handwritten names and dates to a project, you can use a gel pen in the exact same manner as you would an ink pen on paper.



This Dragon Wizard is a pyrography project worked on 12" x 12" (30.5 x 30.5cm) birch plywood. The main coloring is worked using thinned acrylic washes (like what is used on page). To add the extremely fine detailing in the beard and hair, I used both watercolor colored pencils and fine-point permanent markers.

Brushes

Pictured here is my main brush kit, which contains many different types of brushes. On the following pages is more information about each type of brush you can use for your projects.

Fan Brushes



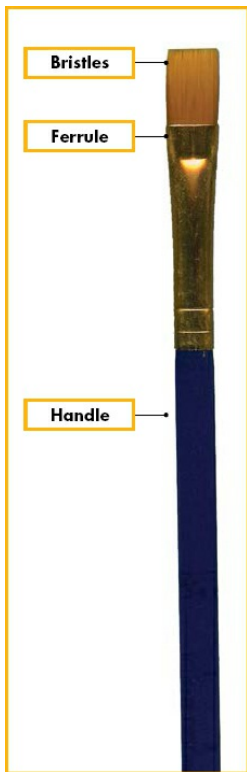
Fan brushes are perfect for applying wash coats, thinned acrylic staining, and for wood grain texture strokes. The wide, curved edge disguises the beginning of your brush strokes so that your color application easily blends into one even coating. Fan brushes can also be used to dry brush extra-large areas.

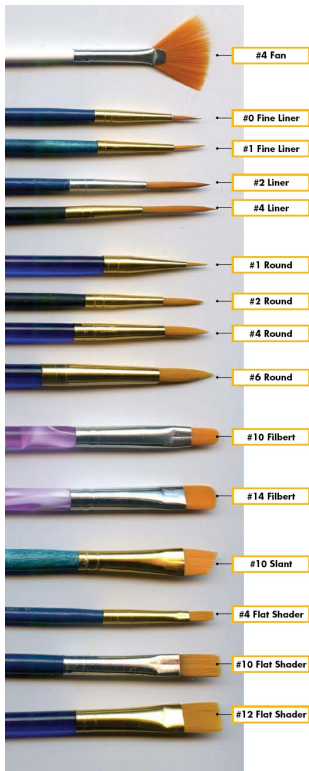
Liners



Liners are used to create fine line details in your work. Smaller liners, numbered from the small #000 through the large #1, are often called fine liners, China liners, or China dolls, as they were originally designed to paint the fine eyelashes and eyebrows on

ceramic doll faces. These sizes are usually $\frac{1}{2}$ " (1cm) long or shorter.



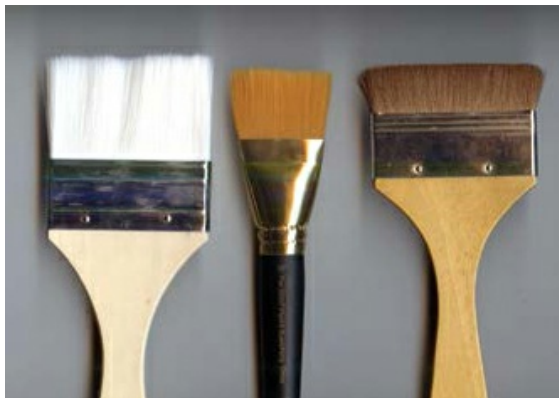


Longer liners, shown middle, which begin at around 1" (2.5cm) long, are sized from #2 up to size #24. This style of brush has extra-long bristles for maximum paint capacity that come to an extra-sharp point.

The #4 liner, shown far right in this photo, can create a finer line than the three left fine liners, and that line can be over 12" (30.5cm) long per brushful of color.

Mops

Mops can have either flat or curved leading edges. The three brushes pictured are all flat mops. Whether their bristles are synthetic or natural, these brushes have soft, springy hair that allows the brush to hold enormous quantities of color.



As their name implies, mops are used to apply thinned wash coats of color, whether you are using watercolors, acrylics, or oils. Used dry, they can blend wash colors that you have already applied using another brush. The soft bristles gently blend several different color brush strokes into a graduated coloration.

Rounds

Rounds, also called pointed rounds, give you the advantage of the fine point found in liners but with

the addition of a wider body that has a higher color capacity. This style of brush is used for full coverage and for specialty brush strokes that create shaded petals, leaves, and calligraphy strokes. Sizes for rounds are not standardized, and so may vary between manufacturers.



Flats

Flats, also called flat shaders, flat wash brushes, or brights, can either be sized by the measurement of the brush at the top of the ferrule or given a numerical size. So it is possible to have two brushes, one marked as a 3/8" (1cm) flat and one marked as a #10 flat, which are in fact the same size. This style of brush is excellent for smooth, even coverage that does not leave a ridge of paint along the sides of the stroke.



Slants

Slants, also called slant flats or angular flats, are flat brushes that have the leading brush edge cut at an angle. The slant allows you to carry as much color in the brush as you can with a standard flat brush while also providing a sharp, pointed leading edge for fine

line work.



Filberts

Filberts, also called filbert flats or filbert brights, are flat brushes that have a curved leading edge. This curve creates wonderful, fine feathering work and instant brush stroke petals.



Brush Bristles

The bristles of the brush determine how the brush is used in a project. Stiff-haired brushes are used to scrub the paint into the deep crevices of a project. Very soft, flexible bristles hold large amounts of color and are used to flood an area with paint. And natural-haired brushes have a spring action that helps create thin, long, controllable linework. Here is a guide to seven different brush bristles you may encounter and want to use (shown in the photo from left to right).



- Extremely soft, thin bristles, whether natural or synthetic, are used to hold large amounts of color with each brush stroke. This type of

bristle is most commonly found in mop brushes and used to flood an area with thinned color. Because they lay so much color onto a project with just a few strokes, they do not leave obvious brush stroke lines.

- Oxhair blends, as shown in this deer-foot stippler, are a stiff, firm bristle that has little bend or spring. When applying color, they hold the shape of the brush's profile. Use a blend when you want to use the brush's shape to make small brush stroke marks.
- Oxhair brushes are created from goat or pig hair. They are strong and stiff, allowing you to scrub the color into tight, deep crevices. Use an oxhair brush when you want overall coverage of a color that will have no small, trapped air bubble spaces. These are commonly used for primer coats, full coverage, and oil stains.
- Red synthetic bristles give you the flexibility of a natural-haired brush, similar to a red sable (see below), but without the high price. The shaders, rounds, and liners that use a red

synthetic bristle are the mainstay of our brush kit, used to fill areas and create shaded strokes.

- White synthetics have a softer, more flexible bristle than red synthetics, similar to squirrel-hair bristles (see below). White synthetics, available in shader, round, and liner styles, create extra-smooth brush strokes and are wonderful for wash techniques.
- Red sables are natural bristles that carry a large amount of color with each brushful. Sables have a natural spring, returning the brush to a fine point or fine edge as you push and then lift the brush off the project. With careful cleaning, red sables are a very durable brush bristle that can give you years of good work.
- Squirrel-hair bristles are extra-soft, natural, and hold their shape and spring even with very hard use. This bristle type gives the greatest range of flexibility to your brush stroke work. The #1 liner, shown, can begin a stroke with an extremely fine point, then be

bent to create a ¼" (0.5cm)–wide belly to the stroke, and then returned to that fine point all in one movement. Squirrel-hair is most commonly used in lettering and signcrafting.

Brushwork Hand Positions and Basics

A gentle grip with flexible movement in the fingers and wrist allows you to create long, smooth, even brushwork.



1

Hold the brush between the ball of the thumb and the tip of the index finger with a light, even pressure near the joint between the ferrule and handle. This two-finger grip lets you roll the brush between your fingers as you move through the curves of the painting work.



2

The handle of the brush now rests on the large knuckle of the index finger where the finger joints the hand. As you extend your finger grip, the handle can slide along the knuckle freely.



3

Don't hold the brush this way. Resting the handle at the mid-joint of the index finger dramatically limits your ability to extend the painting edge of the brush away from the hand. Gripping the ferrule at the mid-joint of the thumb eliminates your ability to roll the brush edge.



4

Don't hold the brush this way. This common hand position for writing with an ink pen will make any painting session more difficult as it completely limits your ability to move the brush edge freely. Keeping the brush in this grip position also requires excessive pressure on the handle.



5

Balance your painting hand on the project lightly with just your extended small finger. Keep the side of your hand, wrist, and arm suspended in the air.



6

This one-point-of-contact posture allows your hand plenty of air space above the board so that only the tip of even the longest or largest brush touches the project.



7

Move your entire arm, not just the wrist and hand, as you swing through a brush stroke.



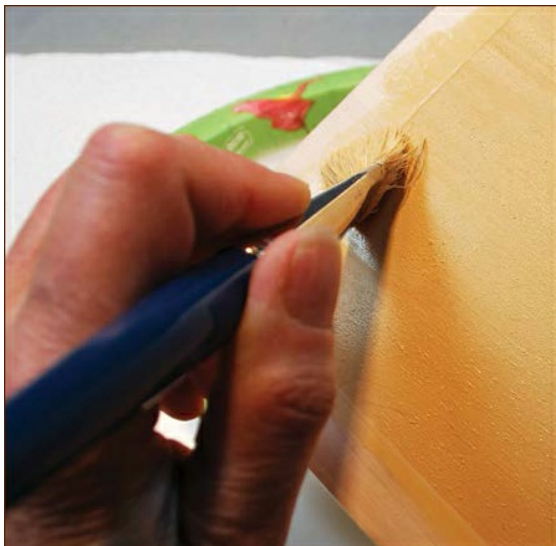
8

When you complete the stroke, lift the brush straight up off the board.

Brush Stroke Practice Board

It's not only important to choose the right shape, style, and size brush for a painting work, but also to load the brush bristles properly. Take a little time and practice the following exercises on a scrap piece of carving wood or burning plywood so that you can learn to take control of how the brush distributes the paint.

Steps 1–3: Preparing the Practice Board



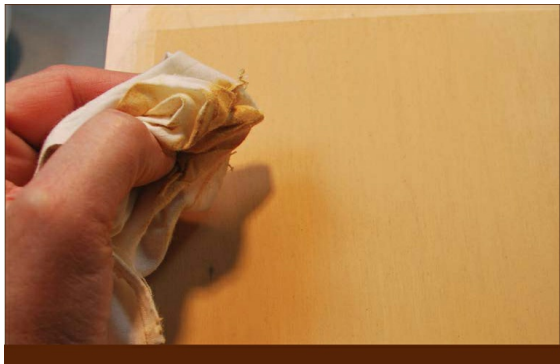
1

Apply two to three coats of primer to the board. Allow each coat to dry completely. To create my practice board, I applied three coats of a honey yellow/ white mixture to a piece of birch plywood.



2

Sand the primed board using a crumpled piece of heavy kraft paper.



3

Remove any sanding dust with a dry, clean cloth.

Tip: Always dampen the brush before loading any paint. Dip it in clean water and run the bristles up the side of the bowl to ensure that the water reaches all the way inside the brush. Then, tap or pat the wet brush on a paper towel to remove excess water.

Steps 4–6: Overloading a Large Flat Brush



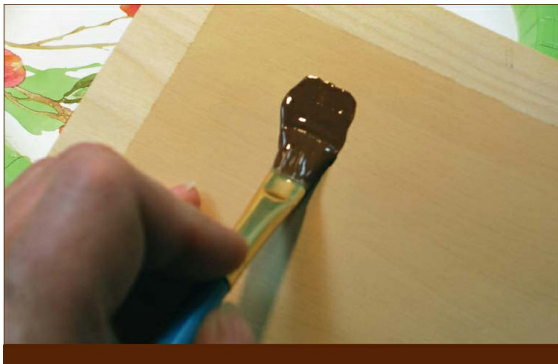
4

One not so great way to load a shader is by dipping the entire brush into a puddle of paint.



5

Dipping the brush this way places a large amount of color on top of the brush bristles. The paint lies on the brush, not in the brush.



6

When you take a brushful of paint like this to your carving, it dumps the paint in a heavy glob on either side of the brush. You'll have to spend the next few minutes trying to distribute the paint and smooth out the ridges. If the project is small or you are working in a small area, you can find yourself with too much color—an over-fill situation.

Steps 7–9: Light-Loading a Large Flat Brush



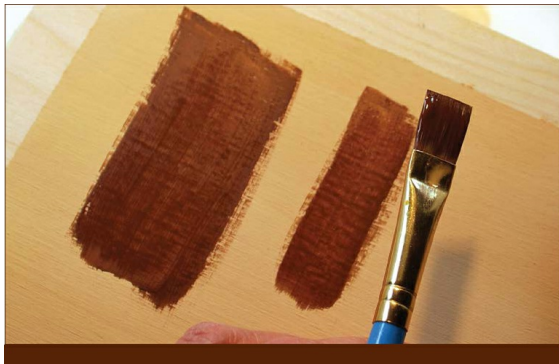
7

Let's reload the brush using a better method. Lay the bristles in the puddle, then pull a small amount of color out onto the palette. Do this several times, flipping the brush so that both sides are loaded. The paint is now in the bristles of the brush, not on the bristles.



8

Now apply a stroke of paint to the wood. The amount of paint has been cut by more than half as compared to the overloaded stroke. There are no heavy ridges of color on either side of the stroke. It also takes less time to fill the same amount of space because you don't need to spend time reworking the area to smooth out the excess ridges of paint.



9

In the time it took to clean my brush, reload it, and paint the second, light-loaded swatch, the first, over-loaded swatch still shows wet, heavy ridges of paint. Using the light-loading method, you will end up with the same coverage of paint with but without ridges or puddles.

Steps 10–12: Working into a Line or Intersection



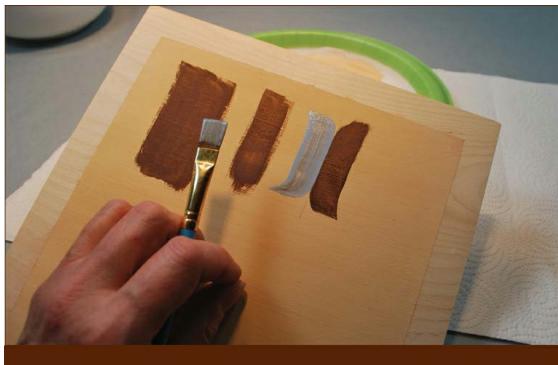
10

Walk the brush into the line, while pressing just a bit, and use the belly of the brush to create the straight line instead of using the bristle tips.



11

With a light-loaded flat brush, you can place the brush tip slightly away from a demarcation line or joint line in a carving. As you move the brush into the line in a gentle curve, apply a small amount of pressure to place about one half of the bristle length onto the wood. Now you can pull the line. (For these steps, practice by making two strokes right next to each other.)



12

When you begin to reach the end of the line, curve the brush away from the line while slowly lifting it off the wood.

Steps 13–15: Liner Work



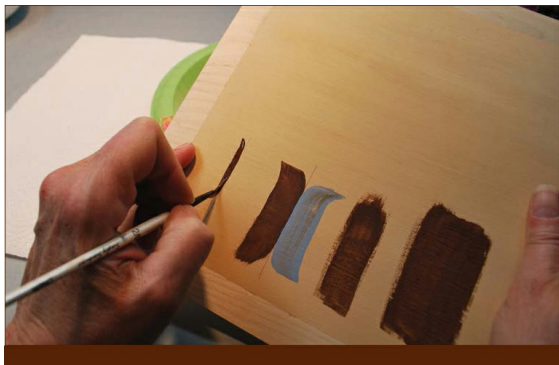
13

A liner is loaded the same way as light-loading a flat shader. Place the liner in the paint puddle, then pull the brush out into the palette.



14

Work this several times on all sides until the brush is evenly coated. A properly-loaded liner will have no glob or puddle of color on the tip.



15

You can pull a straight line or joint line with a liner the same way as described in steps 10–12 for a flat brush. Begin with the brush on its tip slightly away from the line and curve into the line while applying a small amount of pressure. When you hit the line, about half of the bristle length will be in contact with the wood. This uses the long length of the bristles at the belly of the brush to create the straight line. As you finish the line, curve away from the line while lifting the brush. You will get an even coating of paint with no side ridges, a straight line, and very little bleeding of one color into the next.

Cleaning Brushes

I use inexpensive brushes for wood painting because

the wood is coarse enough to ruin a good sable-hair brush (see box on page). But I still want the brushes to last as long as possible, which means that I always put them away as clean as possible. I strongly recommend you do the same. Follow these steps to ensure that you get the maximum amount of use out of even your inexpensive brushes.



1

Start with a puddle of dishwashing detergent mixed with a few drops of water. The sink is an easy place to do this, but I used a small saucer for these photos.



2

Load the detergent into the bristles of the brush exactly like you load paint: place the brush into the puddle, then pull the brush out toward the edge of the puddle, which works the soap into the inside of the brush.



3

Press any paint residue out of the base of the bristles with your fingers by moving your fingers from the ferrule to the bristles.



4

Move to a bowl of clean water, pulling the brush along the side of the bowl and “loading” the clean water the same way you load paint.



5

Repeat steps 1–4 several times until the soap around the brush no longer shows any discoloration. Using your fingers and a slight amount of pressure, press the excess soap from the brush bristles, moving from the ferrule toward the tip.



6

The brush is ready to return to the brush jar. The soap that is left over in the brush bristles will dry there and keep the tip of the brush flat and crisp while protecting the brush shape until it is needed again. When you start the next painting session, you simply pre-moisten the brushes, which will wash out the soap and leave you with a nice painting edge that is ready for work.

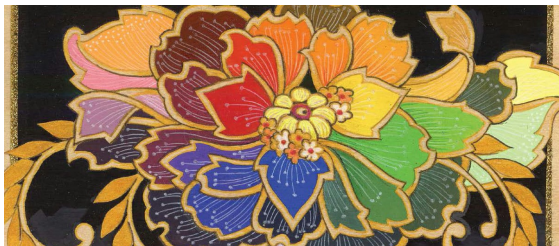
Wood is terribly rough on paintbrushes; it ruins their edge and simply wears them away. So for painting on wood, I use inexpensive synthetic paintbrush sets and throw them into my scrub brush jar when they start to lose their shape. This photo shows two sets that I use throughout the instructions in this book. Both came from a large craft supply store and cost just \$6 to \$10 per set—cheap and disposable!



CHAPTER 3 :

LEARNING TO MIX COLORS

This color wheel flower piece, destined to become the front cover of a scrapbook when complete, will take you through the steps of mixing your own color hues, tints, tones, and shades using just a basic set of acrylic colors that include the primary colors, secondary colors, black, and white. Since this project is worked on birch plywood, you will have a chance to experiment with how your brushes and painting media perform on a wood surface before you begin working on any other carving or pyrography projects. It is a great project to get comfortable with all the basic paint manipulation skills you'll need, easy for beginners, and gorgeous when completed. I highly recommend you tackle this project before moving on to the rest of the projects in this book, unless you already have experience with painting wood.



We will be working this project by mixing all of the colors from just the three primary colors—red, yellow, and blue—and with the addition of the primary neutral colors, white and black. This will help you learn the ins and outs of mixing your own

shades. While all of the colors used in the projects in this book can be mixed from these five colors, I do purchase pre-mixed colors for the secondary colors—orange, green, and purple—as well as browns—raw sienna, burnt umber, and Van Dyke brown. Because I use these six additional colors with almost every project, having them pre-mixed simply makes my painting steps quicker and easier.

An Important Note on Paint Color Names

The color names given in this supplies list and in the projects throughout the book are traditional artist-quality, professional color names. Most paint manufacturers use these chemical-based names for their artist color lines, whether those colors are acrylics, watercolors, or oils. So, for example, many manufacturers will name their pure red hue “cadmium medium red” for each different line of paint they sell.

Craft paints, on the other hand, which are made for the hobby market, usually have their own specific names for the hues, tones, and color shades, which depend entirely on the manufacturer. One company may call the pure red hue Fire Engine Red, while another will call the same color Apple Red, and a third might call theirs Candy Cane Red.

When you purchase craft-quality colors, refer to the

manufacturer's color chart, which shows all of the colors in that line of paint, and choose the purest hues possible, regardless of the name of any particular paint color. See page for a chart showing the traditional color names.

SUPPLIES

- **Large paint palette (or wax-coated paper plates or Styrofoam plates)**
- **2 bowls of water**
- **Paper towels**
- **Assorted flat shader brushes**
- **Frisket film, 12" x 12" (30 5 x 30 5cm)**
- **12" x 12" x 18" (30 5 x 30 5 x 46cm) birch plywood board**
- **220-grit sandpaper**
- **Piece of brown kraft paper**
- **Graphite tracing paper**

- **Pencil**
- **Painter's tape (or masking tape)**
- **Craft knife, bench knife, or chip carving knife**
- **Assorted gel pens**
- ***Pattern on page***

COLOR PALETTE USED **(ACRYLIC PAINTS)**

- Cadmium red
- Cadmium orange
- Cadmium yellow
- Chromium oxide green
- Ultramarine blue
- Dioxide purple

- Titanium white
- Payne's gray
- Carbon black



1

prepare the wood. Prepare the birch plywood board by sanding the surface with 220-grit sandpaper. Work the sanding in the same direction as the grain lines of the wood to avoid leaving fine cross-grain lines that can show up during the painting steps. Remove the dust with a soft, clean cloth. Crumple a large sheet of brown kraft paper and scrub

the surface of the board. Kraft paper acts as very fine sandpaper, removing any wood fibers and leaving the wood with a soft, polished sheen.

2

Transfer the pattern. Center the printed pattern onto the face of the board. Tape down the top edge of the pattern with several pieces of painter's tape. Slide a sheet of graphite tracing paper under the pattern with the graphite surface facing the wood. Then use an ink pen or pencil to trace firmly along the pattern lines. (There is no need to trace the numbers.) Remove the graphite paper, pattern, and painter's tape.



3

Prepare the frisket. Frisket film is a thin, transparent low-tack adhesive film that you can use to block off areas of a piece that you don't want to paint. To use it, cut directly into the film with a knife to remove the areas in which you want to work. Take the frisket film piece and loosen the paper backing at one corner to expose the adhesive. Place the adhesive corner onto the top corner of your board. Slowly remove the remaining paper backing while carefully laying the frisket down against the surface of the wood. Once it is down, rub the film to remove any air bubbles, working from the center of the board toward the outer edges.

4

Cut out the first area. With a craft or bench knife, cut along the inner lines of the center three petals marked on the pattern as #1. Make sure you are cutting inside the petal outline, not outside—if you look at the finished project, you'll see that we want an unpainted outline border around every petal. For each new area that we will work in this project, we will begin by cutting away the frisket film for the flower petals numbered for that step. This photo has been altered to show you clearly which sections have been cut out.

Frisket Tips

Cut pieces of frisket film can be saved and re-used on a project. Set the cut frisket aside, adhesive side up. Paint the area that has been cut and allow that area to dry completely. Then, you can reposition the cut piece of frisket over the painted area and lightly press into place. The cut piece will protect this area from the color application in the adjacent areas of the design.

For clean, easy-to-lift sections, begin each frisket cut at an outer edge corner, pulling the cut toward the center of the area. Return to that same corner and cut the second leg of the angle, again working toward the center.

Primary Colors

Primary colors are the colors that cannot be mixed or created from any other color. They are red, yellow, and blue. With these three colors, plus black and white, you can mix the entire color wheel spectrum. It can be nice to have the secondary colors pre-mixed, though.



cadmium red

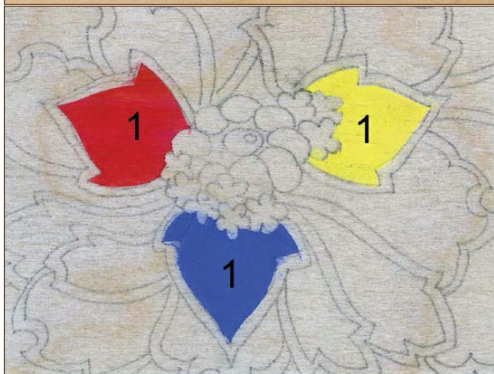
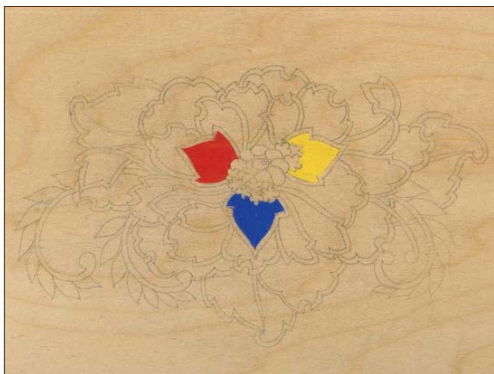


cadmium yellow



ultramarine blue

Professional-quality acrylic paints tend to be much more transparent in application than craft-quality paints. Craft paints are mixed with a float media that has some opacity to it. While the color may be a pure hue, the float helps to block the color of the wood below it.



5

Color the primary petals. Place a small amount of pure red, yellow, and blue on the palette. With a small shader, fill in each of the three petals by laying down the color in the direction of the wood grain. You can start and end each brush stroke on the frisket paper, because the film will protect the wood below. One or two light coats will give you full coverage. Allow the first coat to dry completely, losing any glossy sheen, before applying the second coat.

Secondary Colors

Mix equal parts of two primary colors to create a secondary color.

Red + yellow = mid-tone orange

Yellow + blue = mid-tone green

Blue + red = mid-tone purple



cadmium orange

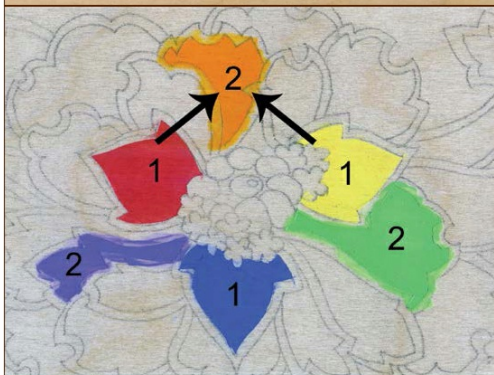


**chromium oxide
(hooker green)**



dioxide purple

Use the same shader brush throughout this project, and use it as a sort of measuring spoon for color mixing. This makes mixing colors easy and accurate.



6

Color the secondary petals. Cut and lift the frisket for the petals that are marked #2. These petals will become the secondary colors for the color wheel. Pick up one brushful of red and place it on the palette. Add one brushful of yellow to the red. Mix well. The mixed color is a secondary color: orange. Apply this secondary color to the petal that is between the red and yellow petals. Mix red and blue to make purple and mix blue and yellow to create green, applying them to the appropriate petals. Compare the orange, purple, and green mixes you have made to the pre-mixed colors from the bottle to see how accurately you can match the hues.

Tertiary Colors

Three parts of primary color are used to create the tertiary colors, as follows.

2 red + 1 yellow = red orange

1 red + 2 yellow = yellow orange

2 yellow + 1 blue = yellow green

1 yellow + 2 blue = blue green

2 blue + 1 red = blue purple

1 blue + 2 red = red purple



**deep
cadmium orange**



**cadmium
yellow orange**



**permanent
sap green**



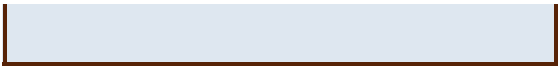
phthalo green

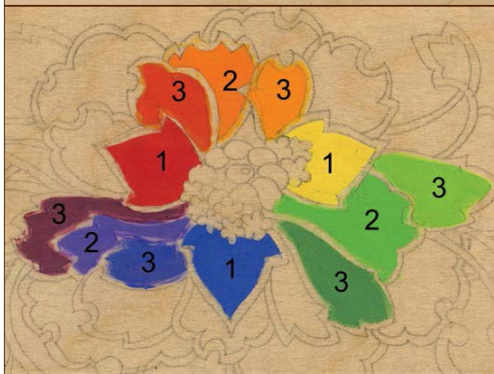


**ultramarine
violet**



magenta





7

Color the tertiary petals. Cut and lift the frisket for the petals that are marked #3. These will be the tertiary colors. You can create tertiary colors in two ways: either mix two brushfuls of one primary color with one brushful of another primary color, or mix one brushful of one primary color with one brushful of a secondary color that contains that primary color. They amount to the same thing in the end. Fill in the tertiary petals with the new colors.

Accuracy versus Ease in Color Mixing

There are times when you need accuracy in your color mixing, and other times when you just want an easy way to create new colors. For accurate color mixing, use the primary formulas, returning to the pure hues on your palette to create the intermediate colors.

For example:

2 red + 1 yellow = red orange

For easy mixing, when absolute accuracy is not as important, you can use the secondary and tertiary colors that you have already created with new brushfuls of the primary color. For example:

1 primary + 1 secondary = tertiary

In practice, the basic tertiary formula above can be

written in two ways:

1 red + (1 red + 1 yellow) = red orange

2 red + 1 yellow = red orange

If you know you are going to be mixing a large number of colors, lay out the primary colors on the palette in a triangle shape at the outer edge of the entire palette area. This will leave you room between the primary colors to mix secondary colors, tertiary colors, darker shades, and pastel tints.





2 Primary + 1 Primary = Tertiary
 2 Red + 1 Yellow = Red Orange



1 Primary + 1 Secondary = Tertiary
 1 Red + 1 Orange (Red + Yellow) = Red Orange

Additional Colors

These are not “official” classifications of colors on the color wheel in the way that primary, secondary, and tertiary colors are, but the color spectrum is essentially infinite, so these additional colors represent just another subtle level of color difference. Remember, per the below list, that adding a brushful of a primary color to its adjacent tertiary color is equal to 3 parts of a primary added to 1 part of another primary.

3 red + 1 yellow = deep red orange

3 yellow + 1 red = pale yellow orange

3 yellow + 1 blue = pale yellow green

1 yellow + 3 blue = deep blue green

3 blue + 1 red = deep blue purple

1 blue + 3 red = deep red purple



orange scarlet



yellow gold



yellow green



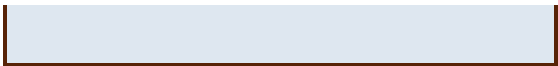
turquoise blue

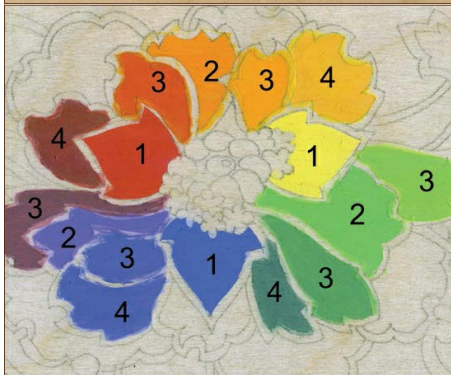


blue violet



brown madder





8

Add additional colors. Cut the petal areas marked #4. By continuing to add just one brushful of the adjacent primary color to a color mix, you can create more intermediate hues. Again, you can either return to mixing only primary colors or you can use the tertiary colors mixed in the previous step and add one new brushful of the adjacent primary color. For this project, we are only mixing 4 out of 6 possible colors this way: deep red orange, deep blue purple, deep blue green, and pale yellow orange. We are skipping pale yellow green and deep red purple.

Shades: Muted Colors

Adding black to any color darkens and mutes the pure color into what is known as a shade.

Primary Shade Mixes

1 red + 1 black = burgundy

1 yellow + 1 black = olive green

1 blue + 1 black = gunmetal

Secondary Shade Mixes

1 orange + 1 black = ocher

1 green + 1 black = deep gray green

1 purple + 1 black = deep gray purple

Tertiary Shade Mixes (Selected Shown)

1 blue green + 1 black = gunmetal green

1 blue purple + 1 black = gunmetal purple



burnt sienna



burnt umber



yellow olive



olive green



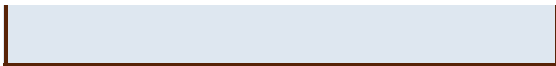
gunmetal blue



dark violet



carbon black





9

Color the shades. For this step, cut free the petals marked #5. Any color, whether primary, secondary, or tertiary, can be mixed with black to create a wide range of shades, or muted colors. Mix up one brushful of a primary color and one brushful of black to create some of the muted colors for this step. Mix up one brushful of secondary color and one brushful of black to create more muted colors for this step. And also mix up one brushful of tertiary color and one brushful of black to create the last few muted colors for this step.

Tints: Pastel Colors

When you add white to any color, the new color is officially a tint of the original color, but people commonly refer to them as pastels. Interestingly, we have a very commonly used special name for tints of red—pink—but no names as commonly used for other tints.

Primary Tint Mixes

1 red + 1 white = medium pink

1 yellow + 1 white = light yellow

1 blue + 1 white = pale blue

Secondary Tint Mixes

1 orange + 1 white = pale orange

1 green + 1 white = pale green

1 purple + 1 white = lavender



pastel pink



pastel orange



pastel yellow



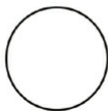
pastel green



pastel blue



pastel purple



titanium white



10

Color the tints. Cut free the leaves marked #6. Tints, or pastels, are created by adding white to any color, whether it is primary, secondary, or tertiary. Mix one brushful of white with one primary color and color in one section of a leaf. Mix one brushful of white with one secondary color and paint in the second half of the leaf.

Tones: Adding Gray

Quite simply, a tone of a color is the color plus gray. Pure gray is, of course, equal parts white and black.

Primary Tone Mixes

1 red + 1 white + 1 black = dusty medium pink

1 yellow + 1 white + 1 black = medium ocher

1 blue + 1 white + 1 black = medium blue gray

Secondary Tone Mixes

1 orange + 1 white + 1 black = dark ocher

1 green + 1 white + 1 black = Wedgwood green

1 purple + 1 white + 1 black = dusty grape



potter's pink



raw sienna



terra verte



**wedgwood
green**



**wedgwood
blue**



mauve gray



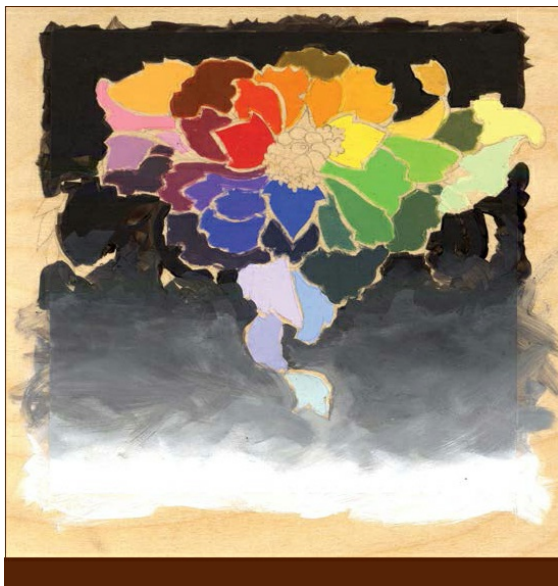
payne's gray



11

Color the tones. Cut free the leaves marked #7. For our last true color mixes, we'll look at tones, which are hues mixed with gray. You can add white to the shades (muted colors) or black to the tints (pastels) that you already created. This amounts to adding both white and black to a color, which amounts to adding gray to a color. This creates a mid-gray base

for the color. So if you add white to a shade such as gunmetal (blue + black), it becomes a medium blue gray (blue + black + white). Add tones to the remaining curving leaves.



Prepare the background frisket. Next we are going to

12

color the background with a blend of black to gray to white. Cut the frisket along the outermost color lines of the design to free and remove the remaining background frisket from the color work area. Look at the photo for the following step to make sure you are cutting the right outline—you want to cut inside the unpainted borders of the leaves and petals so that they remain unpainted, but right up to the curling vines. Then, cut along the outer boundary line of the design; this is the outer rectangle of the pattern that will create a crisp edge around the entire piece. Remove the frisket from the background inside of this cut.

13

Paint the background. Place one generous puddle of black and two generous puddles of white on the palette. Reserve one puddle of white to mix with black to create gray later. Use the second puddle for the pure white work. With a shader, start applying pure black to the top third of the background. As you reach the center third of the background, begin adding small amounts of white to the black to create a dark gray color. As you work down the background, add more and more white until the last sixth or so of the background is painted in pure white. By working the brush strokes of each new mixed color over the brush strokes of the last mixed color, you can blend the background into a smooth gradation of black to white.



14

Do final cleanup. Allow the background to dry well with no glossy sheen or damp areas on either the painted wood or the frisket. Then, carefully remove all of the frisket, using the point of a knife to lift an outer corner to get started. Check the painting for any areas where the color may have bled under the frisket film by accident. Bleeding can occur if

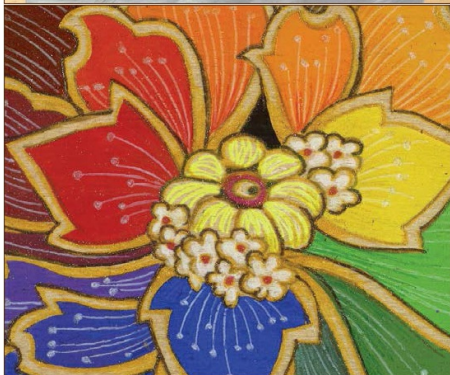
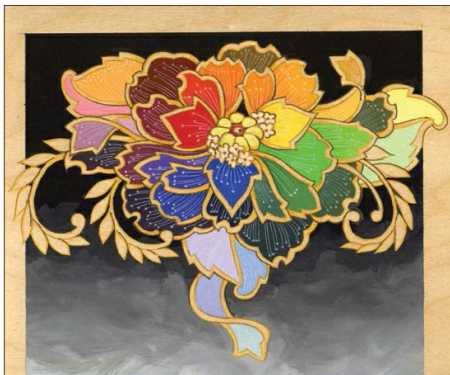
the film was not adhered well to the wood or if the paint was over-thinned with water. Clean up any paint mistakes using a craft knife or palette knife to scrap away the excess color. You can lightly sand the area if necessary.



15

Outline the pattern lines. Outline the pattern lines using a metallic gold gel pen. Gel pens are a wonderful substitution for liner brush work when you want extremely fine lines or uniform

thickness in the line work. They come in a wide variety of colors, and you can even get metallic, neon, pastel, and muted tones all in one large set. Gel pens work well on a smoothly sanded wood surface, on gourds, and over the craft paint layers of a design. Allow the pen lines to dry for about five minutes to firmly set the color.



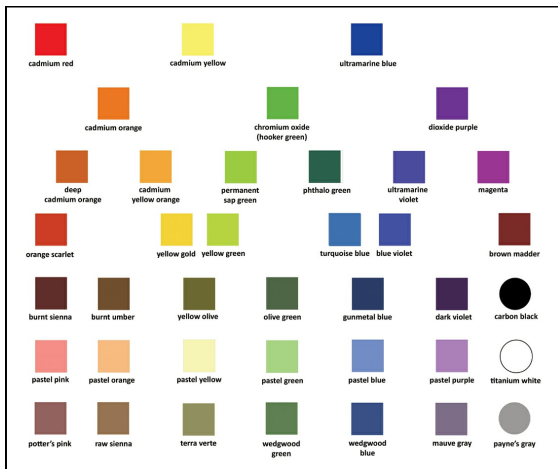
16

Add more detail. Add black gel pen line accents to the gold outlines from the previous step. As your eye glides along any outline, some areas will be gold and others will blend to black. Use yellow, white, red, and metallic gold gel pens to accent the flower center and a white gel pen to create the line details in the flower petals. Use a metallic gold gel pen to fill in the small leaves on the three curling vines (shown colored in the final project photo).



17

Finish. With the painting completed, you can choose to accent the wood further with other details if you like. I cut metallic glitter tape into strips to create the framing shown here. When you are done decorating the piece, give it two to three light coats of gloss or semi-gloss acrylic spray sealer. It's ready for you to begin adding your scrapbook pages!



Here is a color chart of the fundamental color names as well as the mixed tints, shades, and tones you created during this project and which will be used again in this book.

This finished color wheel flower contains 36 distinct colors, shades, tints, and tones, plus hues of black, white, and gray. But this is just the beginning of the number of colors you can create using a basic kit. Every new color can be mixed with other colors to create more and more wonderful shades for your next project!

CHAPTER 4 :

PAINTING TECHNIQUES

In this chapter, we will see a variety of ways to use acrylic and oil paints, tools, and techniques to create different effects in your painting. Each project is worked on a small scale to help you focus on what you're learning, but you can use these techniques on much larger-scale projects. You'll learn how to color over a primer, how to blend, how to dry brush, how to use a wash, how to antique, and more. Feel free to jump around from project to project practicing whichever technique piques your interest.



Solid Acrylic Colors over a Primer: **TRICK FISH**

I call this fish a “trick fish” because it’s done using so many different little tricks that make your painting work look spectacular—but that don’t require any special skills. We’ll use tape to make a straight line between colors, a soda straw to make perfect fish scales, a brush handle to make the lip curve, and a fine-tip permanent marker to make the fine detail lines around the eye, the eyelashes, and the pupil. Follow along to learn how each of these tricks comes together in a stunning acrylic finish. To ensure a strong, solid, smooth covering with acrylic craft

colors, a primer is first applied to seal the raw wood.



SUPPLIES

- 1" x 1" x 3" (2.5 x 2.5 x 7.5cm) basswood block
- 6" (15cm) square, 24-gauge copper

sheeting

- **Bench knife**
- **Large round gouge**
- **220- and 320-grit sandpaper**
- **Transparent tape**
- **Plastic straw**
- **Fine-tip black permanent marker**
- **Large flat shader brush**
- **Small flat shader brush**
- **Small #1 or #2 liner brush**
- ***Pattern on page***

COLOR PALETTE USED (ACRYLIC PAINTS)

- **Cadmium red**

- Cadmium yellow orange
- Raw sienna
- Magenta
- Titanium white

COLOR
CHART



Acrylics



cadmium red



**cadmium
yellow orange**



raw sienna



magenta



titanium white

STEP-BY-STEP

1

Carve the fish. Whittle a small, smooth-sided decoy fish. Upend a large round gouge to create the eye center, then cut an indented circle with the bench knife around the eye center. Sand the project well using 220-grit sandpaper. Wipe any excess dust from the carving. Wash the carving using water and dishwashing soap and rinse well. Let dry overnight. For fast drying, cook it in the microwave for 15 seconds, allow it to cool completely, then repeat for a second microwave session.



2

Add the primer. For this project, I have chosen to use a medium golden brown acrylic paint for the primer coat. Mix this color using 1 part raw sienna, 1 part cadmium yellow orange, and 1 part titanium white. Add several drops of water to thin the paint. Then, load the large flat shader with the prepared primer and brush off any excess color from the brush tip on the palette. Apply two light coats to the entire fish body, allowing a few minutes of drying time between coats. Once you're finished applying all coats of primer, allow 15 minutes of drying time. If you need to, use 320-grit sandpaper to lightly sand the primer to remove the

gritty finish. Repeat as needed until you have a uniform, solid coating on the entire carving.



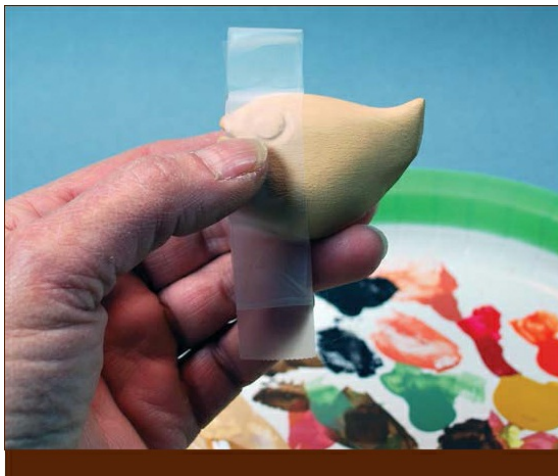
3

Polish. Because I sanded this carving, the two coats of primer paint I used will raise some fine fibers of the wood, giving the painted surface a rough feeling. If I simply go on and continue adding more paint, that roughness can build up to give an uneven, rough painting surface. To prevent this buildup and even out the primer finish, polish the carving by rubbing it

briskly with a soft, clean cloth. The polishing will leave your primer coat with a satin finish and a smooth feel. You can also use polishing as a finishing step for any acrylic painting. While it does not keep off the dirt from constant handling, it does seal the painting and give it a soft sheen.

Picking a Primer

Craft-quality acrylic paints are seldom pure colors—they usually have a tonal value that contains some content of white, gray, or black. Artist-quality acrylics do come in pure hues with almost no tonal value content. So primer coats are very important for solid coverage using artist-quality acrylics. See more detail about picking primer colors on page.



4

Use tape to divide colors with a clean line. For this fish, I wanted to do a classic half-and-half coloring, using magenta for the back half and leaving the primer color intact for the head. To make that perfect line between the two halves, use transparent tape. Cut two strips, each about 2" (5cm) longer than the area to be protected. Fold 1/8" (0.3cm) of the edge of the tape over on itself; this will give you a small grip area later when you want to take the tape off. Then, lay one piece of tape against the wood and press into place. If the carving is totally dry, the tape will not remove any color when you peel it off. Place the second piece on the

opposite side of the wood and press into place. Pinch the intersection at the top and bottom of the two pieces so there is no gap.

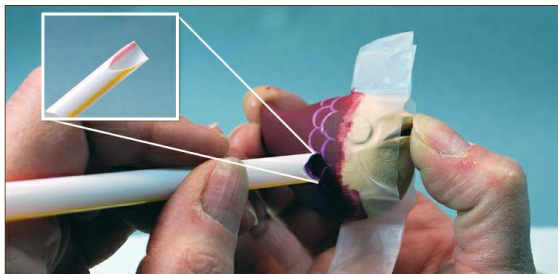


5

Paint through the tape. Add a few drops of water to a puddle of magenta. Using a large shader brush, apply two to three coats to the back half of the fish. Please note in the photo the amount of paint carried on the brush and the fact that the paint is in the brush, not on the brush (see page). Allow each

coat of paint to tack over, or lose its shiny, glossy look. That means the paint is dry enough to proceed to the next coat. The purer in hue a paint color is, the more light coats it will need for full coverage.

You need to use basic transparent tape for these steps. Don't use packing tape, because it is extremely adhesive and hard to remove. Don't use masking tape, either; it has a crepe paper backing and will leave very small gaps.



6

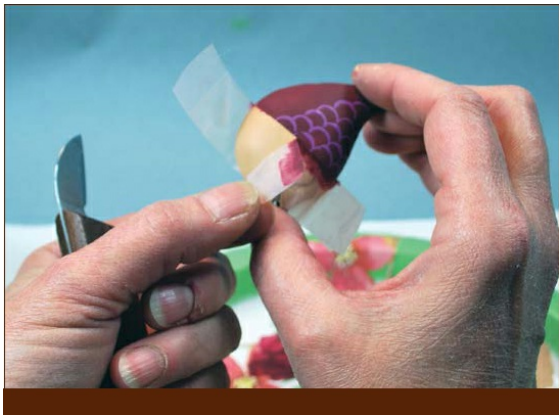
Use a straw to create scales. To make quick, easy, and consistent fish scales, use a plastic straw. Cut the straw at an angle to remove one half of the open edge. Place a small amount of magenta on the palette. Mix the magenta with titanium white to

create a pastel magenta. Dip the cut semicircle edge of the straw into the paint, tap it on the palette, then place the straw end at the highest point on the fish's back with the semicircle edge of the straw against or slightly over the tape. Press to place the paint.



7

Finish the scales. Work one row of scales at a time, working both sides of the fish. When you move to the next row, place one semicircle edge of the straw at the center point of the first arch. This will stagger the rows. Let the scales dry completely.



8

Touch up. Wash the shader well and load it with a small amount of clean water, tapping the excess water from the bristles. Use the damp shader to lift any paint that escaped into the golden brown area. Do this by touching the tip of the brush in a golden brown area near the spot and slowly pushing the brush into the protection line. This will cleanly lift the escaped paint.



9

Remove the tape. Remove the tape by cutting along the edge of the tape where the two colors intersect with a small utility/hobby knife, then gently and slowly pulling it away from the protected edge. Acrylic paints create one solid sheet of color when dry, even when one area dries over the wood and another area dries over the tape. By cutting along the edge of the tape before you lift the tape, you ensure a clean, sharp edge.

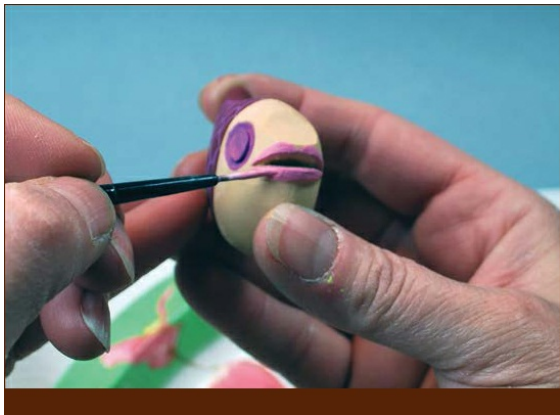


10

Start the eyes. Load a small #1 or #2 liner brush with magenta thinned with a few drops of water. Lay the tip of the liner into the indent around the eyes, allowing the side of the brush to touch the carved ridge. Pull the liner brush around the indent area to fill it with the magenta paint. Any color that goes beyond the eye ridge can be washed away with the damp shader as described in the previous step, because that color is on a polished paint surface. Fill the center of the eye as well.

Cutting the Paint

Craft-quality acrylics and artist-quality acrylics act differently in the way they bond together on a carving. Craft paints tend to leave small, independent particles of color, whereas artist-quality acrylics will create a complete sheet, bonded into one layer area. If you are using tape as a protective edge and artist-quality acrylics, before you lift the tape, you can lightly score along the edge of the tape with a very fine-bladed knife such as a small utility/hobby knife to separate the paint on the tape from the paint on the carving.



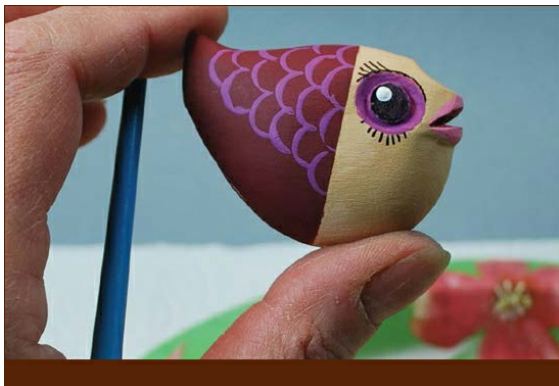
11

Paint inside the mouth. Use a small flat shader to fill the inside of the mouth with pink. Load the shader with paint, place it inside and on the wood of the mouth, then pull the shader straight out from the mouth.



12

Paint the lips using a brush handle. Mix an equal amount of cadmium red with titanium white to create an intense, pastel pink. Using the end of the brush handle, make two small dots of pink at the center of the upper lip, like a cupid's bow. Use the liner brush to pull the excess paint from these dots to the corners of the mouth. Paint the bottom lip pink with the liner brush.



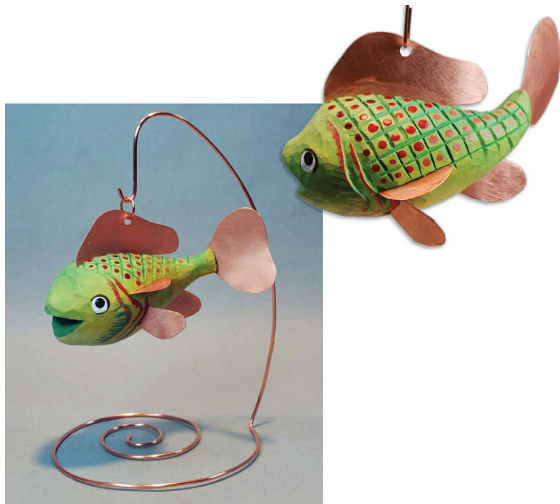
13

Detail the eyes. To detail the eyes, don't use paint—use permanent markers. They come in all sorts of sizes, from extremely thin to quite wide. Every color under the sun is available for use in your work. You can even get metallic colors, pearly colors, and glitter colors. Consider using them in your work whenever you want to create even, fine, perfect lines, such as the lines on these eyes. To cover large areas, like the black pupils in this project, you may need to apply several coats of marker, leaving a few minutes between coats for the ink to set. Use white paint on the end of a brush handle to dab on the shine.

Simple Blending with Acrylics:

DOTTY FISH

Blending acrylic paints on basswood is so much easier when the wood is saturated with water. The colors slide over the water film in the wood instead of grabbing too quickly onto dry wood. With this simple fact in your repertoire, you can learn to create beautiful, flawless blends.



SUPPLIES

- **1 ¼" x 1 ¼" x 3" (3 x 3 x 7.5cm) basswood block**
- **6" (15cm) square, 24-gauge copper sheeting**
- **Bench knife**
- **Large round gouge**
- **V-gouge**
- **220-grit sandpaper**
- **Medium flat shader brush**
- **Pencil eraser (new and unused)**
- **Small #1 or #2 liner brush**
- **Plastic straw**
- **Linseed oil**
- **Turpentine**
- **Tinfoil**
- **Clean, soft, dry cloths**

- **Latex gloves**
- *Pattern on page*

COLOR PALETTE USED (ACRYLIC PAINTS)

- Pastel yellow
- Yellow gold
- Permanent sap green
- Wedgwood green
- Burnt sienna
- Cadmium red
- Carbon black
- Titanium white

COLOR PALETTE USED (OIL PAINTS)

- Phthalo green

COLOR
CHART

Acrylics



pastel yellow



yellow gold



permanent
sap green



wedgwood
green



burnt sienna



cadmium red



carbon black



titanium white

Oils



phthalo green

STEP-BY-STEP



1

Carve the fish. Carve a fish out of a 1 ¼" x 1 ¼" x 3" (3 x 3 x 7.5cm) basswood practice block. With a V-gouge or bench knife, cut a diamond scale pattern on its back. Detail the gills and create an eye with an up-ended round gouge. Lightly sand using 220-grit sandpaper.



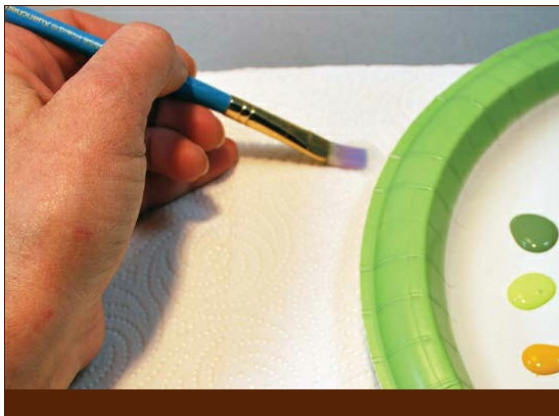
2

Wash the carving. After any work session, I often find that a carving may have dirt from my hands, pencil marks, and even pencil eraser crumbs on it. So I take the piece to the sink and use dishwashing soap to give the carving a bath. For heavily dirtied pieces, I will add a synthetic scrub brush to the process. Rinse the piece well, then lightly pat dry with a clean dishtowel.



3

Rub the carving. While the wood is still damp, rub the carving in your hands. This smooths the fine fibers that have risen because of the scrubbing process; it's like a soft version of burnishing (see page). Work the piece well until you have a smooth finish. Then, go directly to your painting table with the wet carving, or, if you need a break, dampen it again later before proceeding.



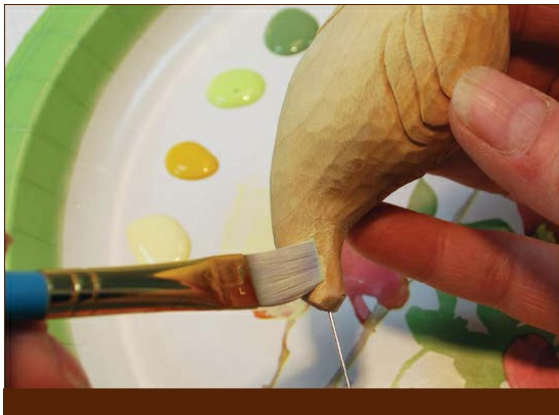
4

Prepare your paints. Lay a small amount of pastel yellow, yellow gold, permanent sap green, and Wedgwood green paint on the palette. Dip a medium flat shader in clean water and then touch the brush on a paper towel to remove the excess water from the tip.



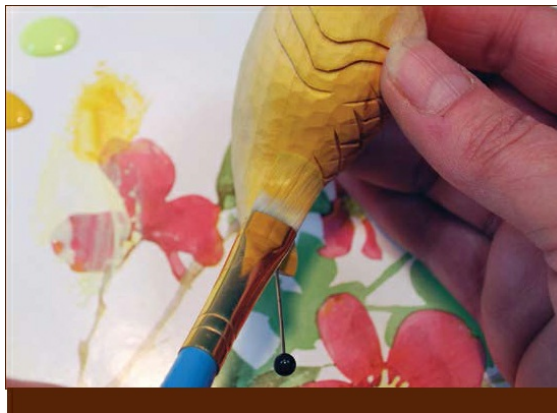
5

Thin the first color. Mix a small brushful of pastel yellow with a drop of water. Test the mix on a scrap of newspaper. If you have added enough water, you will be able to read the newsprint through the paint stroke.



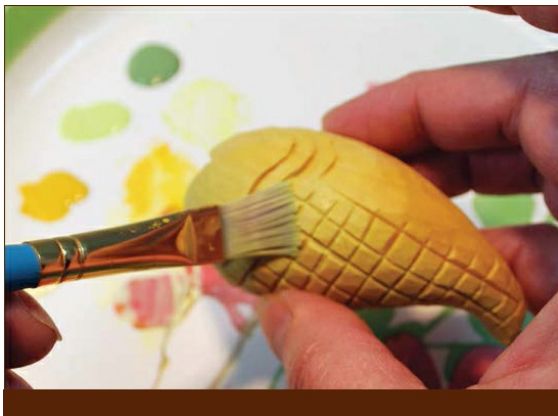
6

Apply the first color. Paint the bottom section of the fish, its belly, with a coating of the thinned pastel yellow. Where possible, work the brush with the wood grain. This first coat is thin enough that you will be able to see the grain lines of the wood through it.



7

Apply the third color. Follow right away with the permanent sap green mixed with water, applying it to the top middle area and overlapping it into the yellow gold area. This, too, will blend nicely.



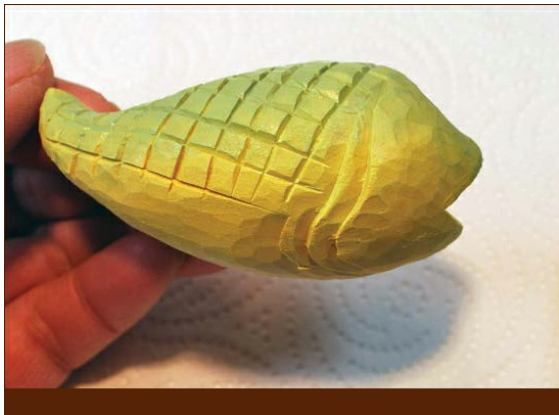
8

Apply the second color. Mix the yellow gold with water and apply this to bottom middle area of the fish, overlapping into the pastel yellow area. Because the wood is still damp from the washing, the pastel yellow will not have had time to dry. Where the yellow gold goes over the pastel yellow, they will naturally blend to become a mid-toned hue.



9

Apply the last base color. Finish up with the Wedgwood green mixed with water for the top of the fish, blending it into the permanent sap green area. If you want a more intense appearance to the coloring, repeat these application steps right away, while everything is still damp.



10

Let dry. If you are finished with the blending steps, let your carving dry for about 15 minutes or cook it in the microwave for 15 seconds.



11

Paint the mouth. The inside of the mouth gets several coats of un-thinned Wedgwood green. By using a flat shader, you can lay the brush against the roof of the mouth and pull the brush straight out from the mouth to create a perfect finished edge of green along the lip area.

Using a Microwave

15 seconds on high in the microwave is equal to 15

minutes of air-drying. Use this only on wood that has no pre-treatment or oil treatments and only with acrylic paints and watercolors. Do not microwave anything that has oil, turpentine, or chemical treatment or content. Don't spray seal something and then put it in the microwave.

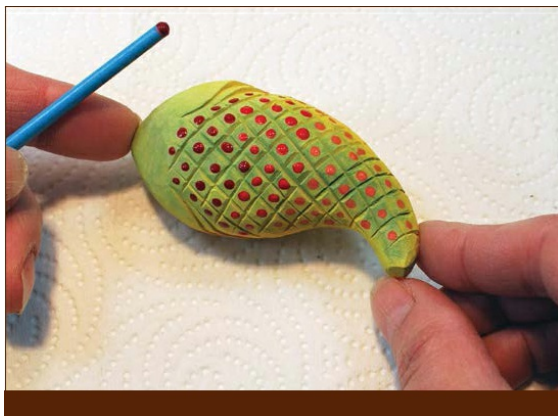


12

Practice making brush handle dots.

Decorate the diamond scale pattern by adding small dots using the brush handle. Mix a small puddle of 2 parts burnt sienna with 1 part titanium white on the palette, creating a pale rust color. Dip the tip of the brush handle in the puddle, then tap it on the palette

to test the size of circle it makes. Don't press the handle down; just touch it down. The handle will make a perfect, small dot.



13

Add dots to the scales. Dot on pale rust dots in the back half of the diamonds and cadmium red dots in the midsection. Mix a small puddle of 2 parts cadmium red with 1 part carbon black to create a deep red color. Use this to add dots in the head area. You can get several dots out of one color load, but each dot will be slightly smaller. So I did the center diamond dots first, then one diamond to the left or right, and then one more to make the dots decrease in size.



14

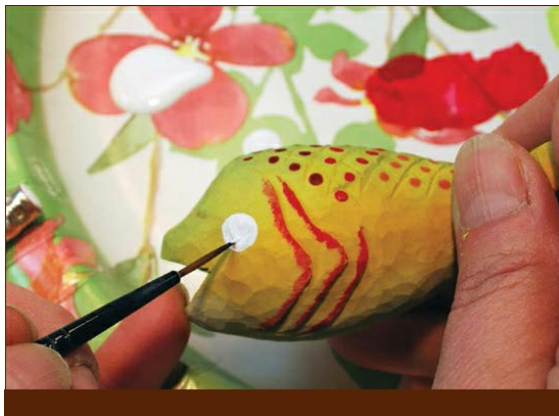
Paint the gills. Dry brush red along the gill edges. Pick up a small amount of cadmium red on the brush and work the brush two or three times in a clean area on the palette to leave just a small amount of color in the bristles. Touch the tip of the brush against the edge of each gill and pull a short, quick stroke. That will leave a ragged-edged, thin trim line along the gills.

A pencil point is another great way to make dots. You can sharpen it to a point for a very fine dot or blunt it on a piece of paper for a wider dot.



15

Add the eyes. With a new (unused) pencil eraser, make perfect little circles of titanium white for the eyes of the fish. Touch the eraser to the paint, test the dot on the palette, and then apply it to the carving. Repeat for the second eye.



16

Adjust the eyes. My larger dot did not completely cover the center of the eye, but I had a very nice circle shape along the edge. So I used a small liner brush to pull in the color already applied to evenly coat the center of the eye.

Just about anything can be used as a stamp in painting: drinking straws, brush handles, paper clips, cut pieces of thin cardboard, etc. These stamps make repeating a particular painted shape very easy and very consistent.



17

Prepare the straw. We're going to use a straw to outline the fish's eye, similarly to how we did on page, but this time without cutting the straw. Touch the end of a plastic straw into a small puddle of carbon black paint and test it on the palette.



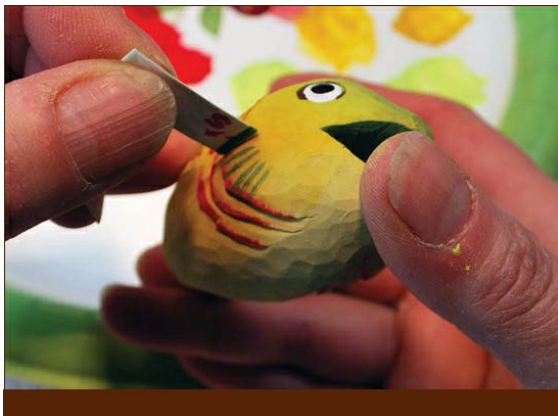
18

Outline the eye. Touch the straw loaded with black paint to the carving to outline the white eye. Since my fish's face is curved, my straw only made a three-quarters circle, but I liked this and decided to leave it like that.



19

Add the pupil. Go back to using the tip of a brush handle to dot on the carbon black pupil.



20

Add final details. I had a pack of chewing gum on my table, so I decided to cut a strip of cardboard from it that was about 3/8" (1cm) wide. I used that cardboard as a stamp to make easy, quick lines of Wedgwood green along the large outer gill.



21

Review the painted fish. The acrylic painting steps are done! Only once in this project did we need to use the brush to make a specific, controlled brush stroke, and that was to dry brush the cadmium red on the gills.



22

Seal. When you are completely done painting, allow the carving to dry well and then apply two light, even coats of spray sealer. The one used here is a gloss acrylic. Spray outside, holding the can about 12" (30.5cm) from the carving. Several light coats do better than one heavy coat. Let the sealer coat dry well, for at least one hour, but overnight is ideal.

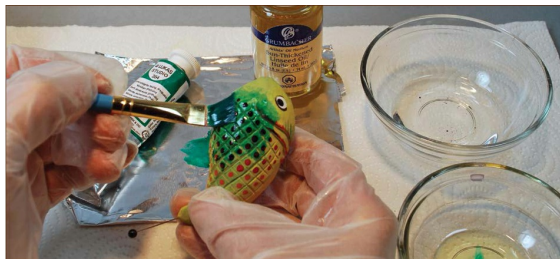
Step-by-Step Oil Stain

You can buy pre-mixed oil-based stains meant for antiquing your wood projects, but they can be expensive when you want to antique with an unusual color (something besides brown), so we are going to mix our own. You'll want to wear latex gloves for this step to protect your hands.



23

Mix the stain. Place a small amount of phthalo green oil paint on a sheet of tinfoil. Add several brushfuls of linseed oil and mix well. Add several brushfuls of turpentine and mix again.



24

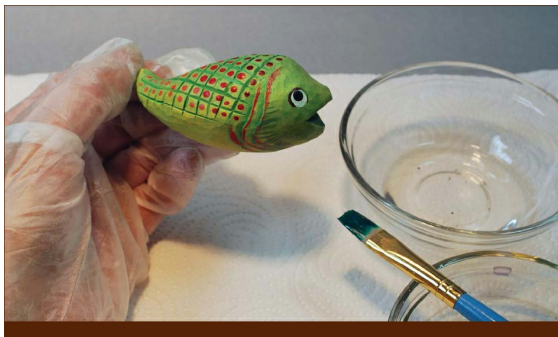
Brush on the stain. Start spot antiquing the fish by first brushing one coat of the mix you made over a small area of the carving.



Wipe off the stain. Then, with a clean, dry cloth (even

25

an old T-shirt or old bed sheet will work), wipe off the antique coloring. Repeat until the entire fish has been stained. If you want to lift more antiquing color from the high areas of the fish, wrap a clean area of the cloth around your finger and lightly dampen with turpentine. Rub the turpentine cloth over the high areas.

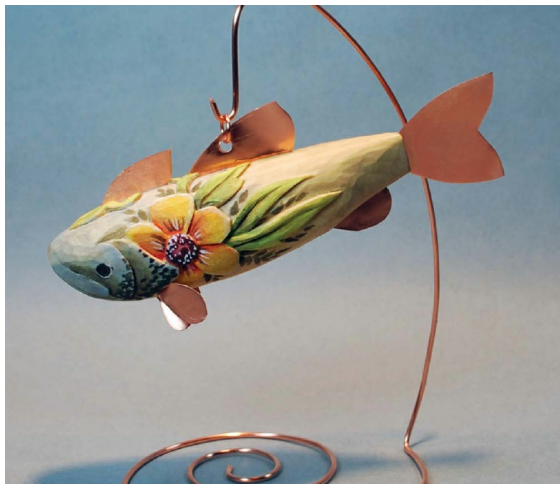


26

Let dry. Let the piece dry overnight, add two more light coats of spray sealer, add fins (see page), and proudly display your finished fish.

Acrylic Wash Painting on an Oiled Surface:
FLORAL FISH

Water-thinned acrylics can be used to paint individually carved elements of a design, like the flower pattern on this ice decoy fish. By working over a stain antiquing step, all of the colors become united because of the underlying stain. Acrylic paints flow across a linseed-oiled surface as if they were oil paints themselves. This allows easy blending, thin, semi-transparent coloration, and a china-painting style of decoration.



SUPPLIES

- **1 ½" x 1 ½" x 4" (4 x 4 x 10cm) basswood block**
- **6" (15cm) square, 24-gauge copper**

sheeting

- **Bench knife**
- **Large round gouge**
- **V-gouge**
- **220-grit sandpaper**
- **Linseed oil**
- **Turpentine**
- **Latex gloves**
- **Disposable mixing pan**
- **Soft, clean cloth**
- **Large flat shader brush**
- **Medium flat shader brush**
- **Small #2 liner brush**
- ***Pattern on page***

COLOR PALETTE USED
(ACRYLIC PAINTS)

- Yellow gold
- Pastel orange
- Cadmium red
- Brown madder
- Permanent sap green
- Wedgwood green
- Pastel blue
- Burnt umber
- Carbon black
- Titanium white

COLOR
CHART

Acrylics



yellow gold



pastel orange



cadmium red



brown madder



permanent
sap green



wedgwood
green



pastel blue



burnt umber



carbon black



titanium white

STEP-BY- STEP



1

Carve the fish. Carve the basic fish shape.

Trace a small floral pattern on each side of the fish, tucking the flower into the gill area. With the bench knife, V-gouge, and large round gouge, create a simple rounded-over edged relief carving. Sand as desired.



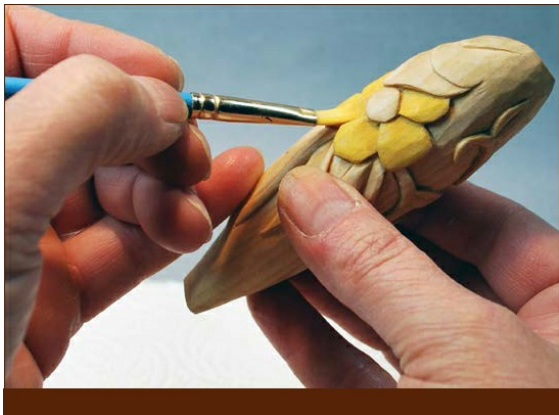
2

Oil the fish. Pre-treat the carving by mixing 1 part linseed oil with 1 part turpentine in a disposable mixing pan. With a large shader brush, flood one coat of this mix over the entire fish body.



3

Wipe off the oil. Let the oil mix set for about ten minutes, then wipe any excess using a dry, clean cloth. Repeat oiling, setting, and wiping one more time.



4

Start painting. Begin painting as soon as you have finished the second oil wiping. On a palette, place a small puddle of yellow gold, pastel orange, cadmium red, brown madder, permanent sap green, and Wedgwood green. Dampen the medium flat shader in water, and then blot any excess water from the bristles on a paper towel. Lightly load the brush with the yellow gold. Paint two light coats of yellow gold on the petals of the flowers. The first coat will be thin and semi-transparent; the second coat will give it more solidity, but you will still be able to see the grain lines of the wood.

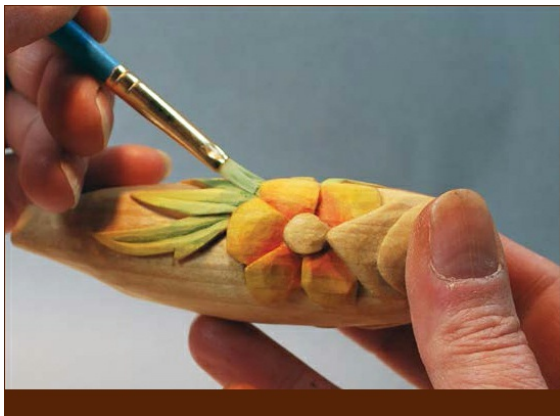


5

Finish the petals. Load the brush with pastel orange and blot it once on a paper towel so that you are carrying a very small amount of paint.

Apply the pastel orange to the low side of each petal to create a shadow. Brush over this a couple of times to blend the pastel orange into the yellow-gold areas.

Repeat this step with the cadmium red to deepen the shadow tones where one petal touches another.



6

Paint the flower centers. Fill the flower centers with brown madder. With the end of the brush handle, add small dots of brown madder along the outer edges of the flower centers (see next photo).



7

Paint the leaves. Move on to the leaves, using the permanent sap green first, then shading the leaves in the Wedgwood green where they touch the flower and along the center leaf vein.



8

Finish the flowers. Pull a few brown madder fold lines into each petal with a fine liner brush.



9

Start the face. Use the medium shader to add a little pastel blue coloring in the face area of the fish. This pastel blue stops at the bottom edge of the gills but flows back into the flower area at the top of the head. Deepen the outer edges of the gills with a second coat of pastel blue.



10

Add details. Mix a drop of burnt umber with pastel blue to make a muddy blue tone. Reshade the facial area. Use the liner tip to create a ragged dot pattern, adding small spots of burnt umber and carbon black to the lower sides of the gill. Paint the eye with carbon black and add a small outer ring of titanium white with a plastic straw (see page). Work a few tiny titanium white brush handle dots over the flower center and add a few fine white lines to the petals. To finish the painting, add small muddy blue

leaves in the body background around the carved design.

11

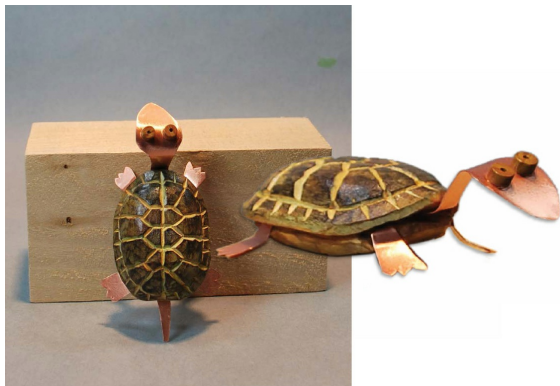
Finish. Let the fish dry overnight. The wood does not need to be sealed because of the pre-treatment with the linseed oil mix.

However, you can apply a new coating of the linseed oil mix, wipe away after ten minutes, allow to dry overnight, and buff well the next morning. A piece painted using this technique can also be finished with two light coats of spray sealer. To wrap up this fish, cut, file, and insert fins (see page).

Dry Brushing Acrylics over Acrylics:

TURTLE

Dry brushing begins with an overall solid or semi-solid base coat on the project. Layers of color are then added by dragging a lightly loaded shader brush with contrasting colors over the high areas of the work, leaving a thin layer of coloring on the high areas of the work without covering the coloring that lays in the low troughs of the cuts. The base color remains unaltered, making the carved details stand out against the overall painting.



SUPPLIES

- **1 ½" x 2" x 1" (4 x 5 x 2.5cm) basswood block**
- **6" (15cm) square, 24-gauge copper sheeting**
- **Bench knife**
- **V-gouge**

- **220-grit sandpaper**
- **Medium flat shader brush**
- **Soft buffing cloth**
- ***Pattern on page***

COLOR PALETTE USED (ACRYLIC PAINTS)

- Yellow gold
- Raw sienna
- Burnt umber
- Wedgwood green
- Carbon black
- Titanium white

COLOR
CHART



Acrylics



yellow gold



raw sienna



burnt umber



wedgwood
green



carbon black



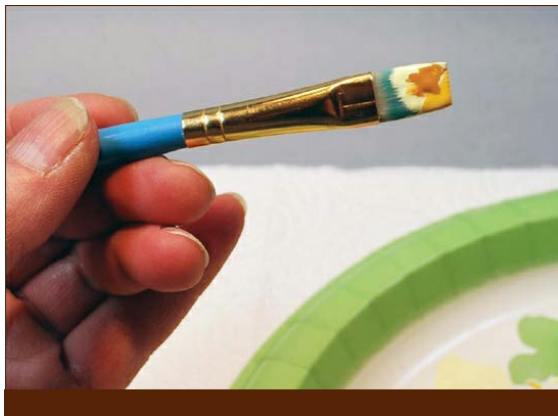
titanium white

STEP-BY- STEP



1

Carve the turtle. Work this technique on a project with many carved details. The deeper the carved details, the more dramatic the division line between the base color and the dry brushed colors. Highly detailed projects, such as the Wood Spirit Carving shown on page, can create multiple layers of color work.



2

Apply the base coat. Place a small puddle of titanium white, raw sienna, yellow gold, and burnt umber on the palette. Mix 2 parts titanium white with 1 part raw sienna to create an ivory color. Mix 2 parts yellow gold with 1 part burnt umber to create a golden brown color. On your palette you will now have puddles of white, ivory, raw sienna, yellow gold, golden brown, and burnt umber. Load the flat shader with ivory, then pick up some yellow gold on one side of the brush and some golden brown on the other. Use the triple-loaded brush to give the turtle shell one base coat of color. As you work, do not over-brush this base coat—allow each of the colors on the brush to show. Re-dip an edge of the brush as needed when you begin losing any of the three colors.



3

Allow to dry. When the entire shell is coated, allow the carving to dry for 15 minutes or cook it in the microwave for 15 seconds.

Dry Brushing Trends

It is more common to work a dry brushing light over dark. If we were painting a wood spirit, I would first

base coat with yellow gold, cadmium yellow orange, and maybe even a little Payne's gray. After that dried, I would antique the carving with a burnt umber or raw sienna tone. This would give me a dark, multi-colored base. The dry brushing would be done using paler tones—sienna, tan, cream, and lots of white in the beard. Turtle shells are the opposite, though: they have a creamy yellow tone to the V-gouge shell section lines with color tones into the dark browns and blacks in the high area of each section.



4

Start dry brushing with the first color. Add a small puddle of Wedgwood green, burnt umber,

and carbon black to the palette. Lightly load the flat shader with Wedgwood green. Move the brush onto a clean area of the palette and re-work the color into the brush bristles until it looks as if there is no color left. Place the shader flat against the high areas of the carving and drag the brush across the wood surface. This leaves just the high areas colored. Let the green dry for a few minutes, just enough time for it to lose any shine.



5

Add the second dry brush color. Follow with a dry brush coating of burnt umber, but do not cover all of the Wedgwood green areas.

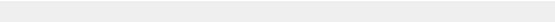


6

Add the final dry brush color. Follow with a dry brush coating of carbon black, making sure not to completely cover all of the Wedgwood green and burnt umber areas. You can continue adding layer upon layer of colors using dry brushing.

7

finish. Allow the painting to dry thoroughly, then finish with two light coats of spray sealer. Cut, file, and glue on the legs and head. Glue on small wood beads for eyes.



Marbleizing:

STONE FISH

Marble comes with a variety colors in just a single piece, and each of the colors are random in placement—there can be swirls, spots, splotches, stripes, and streaks. No two areas of a piece of marble are the same. In wood painting, marbleizing is a very messy but very fun technique. Before you try this style of coloring, get a good set of latex gloves and lots of paper towels!



SUPPLIES

- **1 ¼" x 1 ¼" x 5" (3 x 3 x 12.5cm) basswood block**
- **6" (15cm) square, 24-gauge copper sheeting**

- **Bench knife**
- **220-grit sandpaper**
- **Wooden spoon or scrap block of poplar or pine**
- **Soft, clean cloth**
- **Ball-head straight pin**
- **Paint palette**
- **Mixing bowls or tinfoil**
- **Medium flat shader brush**
- **Small liner brush**
- **Turpentine**
- **Linseed oil**
- **Latex gloves**
- **Paper towels**
- **Old toothbrush**
- **Deep disposable container**
- **Ice cold water**
- ***Pattern on page***

COLOR PALETTE USED

(ACRYLIC PAINTS)

- Carbon black
- Titanium white
- Wedgwood blue
- Burnt umber

COLOR PALETTE USED

(OIL PAINTS)

- Gunmetal blue
- Phthalo green

- Carbon black
- Titanium white

COLOR
CHART

Acrylics



carbon black



titanium white



wedgwood
blue



burnt umber

Oils



gunmetal blue



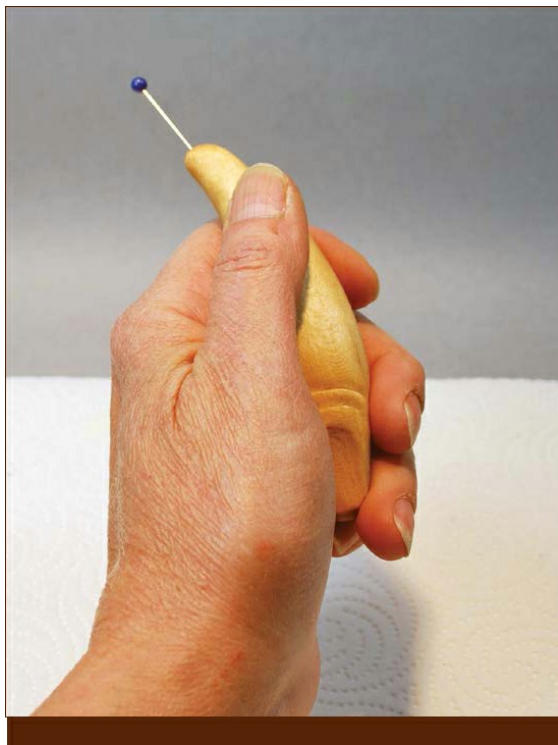
phthalo green



carbon black



titanium white



1

Carve the fish. Carve the fish body from a 1" x 1" x 4" (2.5 x 2.5 x 10cm) basswood block using a bench knife. Sand well with 220-grit sandpaper to create a smooth finish. Wipe the sanding dust from the wood using a soft, clean cloth. Pre-treat the fish by burnishing it to a bright sheen with a wooden spoon or scrap block of poplar or pine. Firmly insert a ball-head straight pin in the tail of the body for easy handling.



2

Add the primer coat. Primer coat the body with acrylics using a medium flat shader brush and a multi-colored base coating of titanium white, Wedgwood blue, and burnt umber.



3

Finish the primer. Note in the photo that the burnished surface allows the smoothest application of base coat colors that you can get. Set the fish aside to dry well.



4

Splatter white dots. Place a puddle of titanium white on the palette. Put on latex gloves. Create a splatter box with a cardboard box or fully cover

your work area with paper towels. Dampen an old toothbrush with clean water and blot on a paper towel. Load the toothbrush bristles with titanium white paint. Hold the fish in one hand and, pointing the toothbrush toward the carving, pull your thumb across the bristles. This will spray a mist of fine dots all over the carving. The thinner the paint is, the bigger the dots will be. So after you do a layer of fine dots, add a few drops of water to the puddle of white and splatter again. (See more detail on the splattering technique on pages.)



5

Add chunks of color. To add a few random, angular areas of color, pull the fingertips of the latex gloves forward a bit, enough to let them wrinkle on the tips of your fingers. Pat your glove-covered fingers in a puddle of Payne's gray (created by mixing black and white). Pat your fingertips on a clean area of the palette. Now grab the fish with those wrinkled, paint-coated fingertips to leave some random splotches. Once you are satisfied with the splotches, allow the fish to dry thoroughly—for at least another half hour.



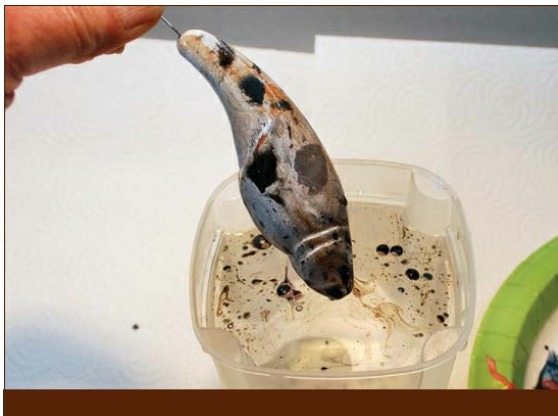
6

Prep the water. Prepare the marbleizing container by filling it with very cold water. You can even add a few ice cubes if you have a large enough container. Make sure the fish is totally dry before proceeding.



7

Add the color. On a clean palette, on tinfoil, or in small bowls/pans, mix 1 part of one dark color of oil paint with 2 parts turpentine and 1 part linseed oil. Mix well. The final mix should be fairly thin but not so transparent that you cannot determine what color it is. Repeat for the other two dark oil colors (excluding white). Then generously drop some of each of these mixes onto the cold water using a small liner. Don't completely cover the water surface—leave a little room between drops to create the swirl effect.



8

dip the fish. Gently lower the fish into the water container, twisting slowly as you do. Now slowly lift it out of the water to create instant marble swirls.



9

Repeat. Repeat this process using a white mix (the same mix used in step 7). Drying between the dipping coats is not necessary and even adds to the blending and swirling of the oil paints as they cover the wood.



10

Finish. Hang the fish to dry with some paper towels beneath it. It will drip for several moments. When the dripping stops, remove the paper towels and soak them immediately in soapy water to remove the turpentine and oil before you throw them in the trash. Let the fish dry overnight. After the fish has thoroughly dried, give it two light coats of spray sealer. Cut, file, and insert fins (see page). This fish is ready to display!

Vintage Finish:
CHIP CARVED FISH

This is the never-goes-wrong technique that any carver can keep in his or her back pocket. It is the perfect answer for that paint job that you just cannot get control of for some reason, whether you have too many brush stroke paint ridges, uneven coloring, a bad choice of colors, or some other problem. Just apply this vintage finish technique and turn that carving around into an instant winner! Work the steps right over the painting you have already done. During the sanding step, you will rediscover little areas of your original painting, which will only add to the final vintage feel.



SUPPLIES

- **1" x 1" x 3" (2.5 x 2.5 x 7.5cm) basswood block**
- **6" (15cm) square, 24-gauge copper**

sheeting

- **Bench knife**
- **Chip carving knife**
- **Large round gouge**
- **220-grit sandpaper**
- **Soft, clean cloth**
- **Large flat shader brush**
- *Pattern on page*

COLOR PALETTE USED (ACRYLIC PAINTS)

- Yellow gold
- Burnt sienna
- Brown madder
- Burnt umber

- Titanium white

COLOR
CHART



Acrylics



yellow gold



burnt sienna



brown madder



burnt umber



titanium white

STEP-BY- STEP



1

Carve the fish. Carve the fish body from a 2" x 2" x 3" (5 x 5 x 7.5cm) basswood block using the bench knife. Cut gills with the bench knife and upend the large round gouge to create the eyes. Sand to smooth away any flat planes left from shaping using 220-grit sandpaper. With a pencil, create a grid of $\frac{1}{4}$ " (0.5cm) squares across the back of the fish. You will need to vary the grid lines somewhat to adjust for the changing width of the fish body. Mark a chip carving grid design using the grid lines. With a chip carving knife, chip carve the fish body.



2

Add the primer coat. Place a puddle of yellow gold, burnt sienna, and brown madder on the palette. With a large flat shader, apply a multicolored primer coat to the entire fish (see page), including inside the chip cuts. Allow to dry for 15 minutes or cook for 15 seconds in the microwave. Apply a second multicolor primer coat and dry again.

If you are new to chip carving, this is a fun practice

piece. Because we will be distressing the fish after the painting steps, if you make small errors or have uneven sides on your chip cuts, none of that will matter when the fish is finished. So you can practice to your heart's content knowing that every practice piece will be a keeper.



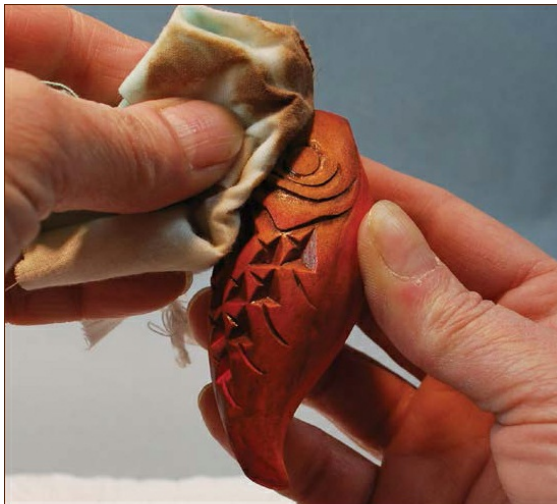
3

Polish. Polish the primer coats to a soft sheen using a soft, clean cloth.



4

Start to spot antique. Place a small puddle of burnt umber on the palette and thin it slightly with water. Working one area at a time, spot antique the fish, applying one coat to a small area, then wiping that area immediately with a slightly damp cloth.



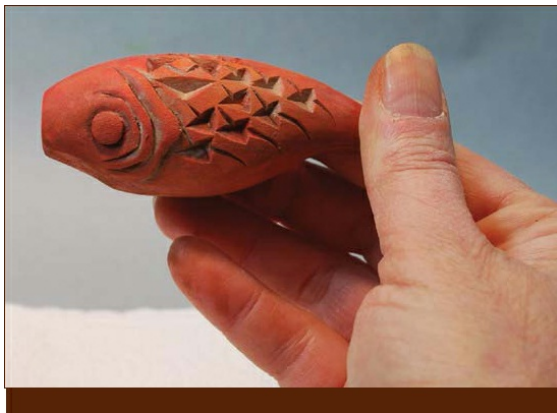
5

Repeat. Repeat spot antiquing until the entire fish has been stained.



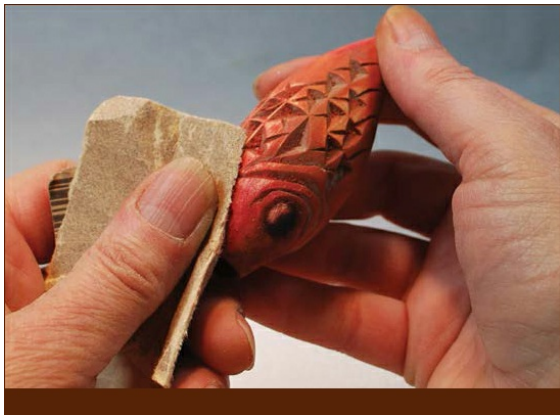
6

Spot with tan. Add a few drops of titanium white to the thinned burnt umber, creating a medium tan color. In a random fashion, apply this mix to a few unconnected areas on the fish. With a slightly damp cloth, wipe the color away as you did when you first spot antiqued.



7

Review your work. We are going for a true vintage look, not just a stained or antiqued work. Vintage wood darkens over time for three reasons. First, there is a dark layer—a black-brown layer—that comes from handling, as oils and dirt from our hands build up over time. Second, the layers of cleaning solutions and oil polishes that have been used add a dark layer of patina. But the final, top layer of patina comes from the buildup of dust. Dust looks pale gray/brown/ white and is found in the corners and crevices. So when you spot stain the fish with the tan paint, you are putting fake dust into the deep areas of the carving.



8

Sand. Allow the fish to dry for 15 minutes or cook in the microwave for 15 seconds. Then sand the painted fish using 220-grit sandpaper. Work some areas very heavily to go back to the original wood and some areas lightly to only thin the paint. Work unevenly to add to the distressed look. When you are satisfied with the final effect, wash the fish using dishwashing soap to remove the sanded paint dust. Allow to dry overnight. Cut, file, and insert fins (see page), and you're done.



Acrylics over Oil:

BIRD

Working a water-based acrylic paint over oil-based sealer or stain sounds counterproductive. Everyone knows that water and oil don't mix, so how can the acrylic adhere to the oil? But it does when it comes to painting woodcarvings. For this project, we will use acrylic craft-quality paints over two oil steps: one sealer step and one antiquing step. As the acrylics are added, they take on an oil paint look.

This technique is very similar to the one used for the Floral Fish (page). The fish, however, was all done with extremely thinned acrylics to give a transparent coloring to the work, as compared to this bird, which uses un-thinned acrylics that cover up any staining or oil treatment that was applied previously.



SUPPLIES

- **1 ½" x 1 ½" x 4" (4 x 4 x 10cm) basswood block**
- **6" (15cm) square, 24-gauge copper sheeting**

- **Bench knife**
- **V-gouge**
- **Soft, dry cloth**
- **Linseed oil**
- **Turpentine**
- **Mixing pan/bowl**
- **Latex gloves**
- **Soft, dry rags**
- **Large brush**
- **Medium #4 filbert round brush**
- **Large flat shader brush**
- *Pattern on page*

COLOR PALETTE USED
(ACRYLIC PAINTS)

- Cadmium red
- Brown madder
- Cadmium yellow orange
- Burnt umber
- Carbon black
- Titanium white

COLOR PALETTE USED (OIL PAINTS)

- Burnt umber

COLOR
CHART



Acrylics



cadmium red



brown madder



cadmium
yellow orange



burnt umber



carbon black



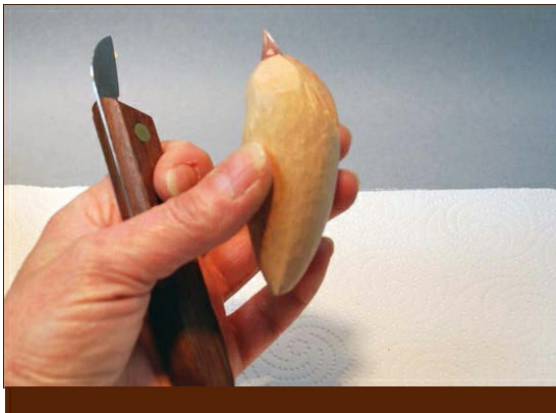
titanium white

Oils



burnt umber

STEP-BY-STEP



1

Carve the bird. Carve the bird from the basswood block using a bench knife. With a V-gouge, add fine detailing lines for the breast on the underside and finely packed short lines along the top back for feathers. Buff the carving with a dry cloth to bring it to a soft sheen.



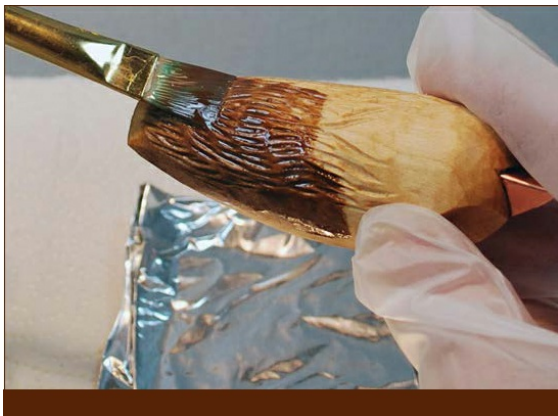
2

Apply a pre-treatment. Pre-treat the bird with a mix of 1 part linseed oil and 1 part turpentine. Brush this mix over the wood and allow it to sit for 10 minutes to soak into the wood.



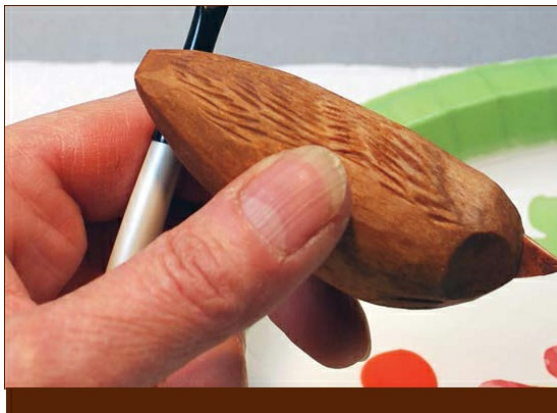
3

Finish the pre-treatment. Wipe away the oil and turpentine mix with a clean cloth. Repeat applying the mix and wiping it off one more time. This mix can also be used as a final finish for your carvings if you want a natural wood look.



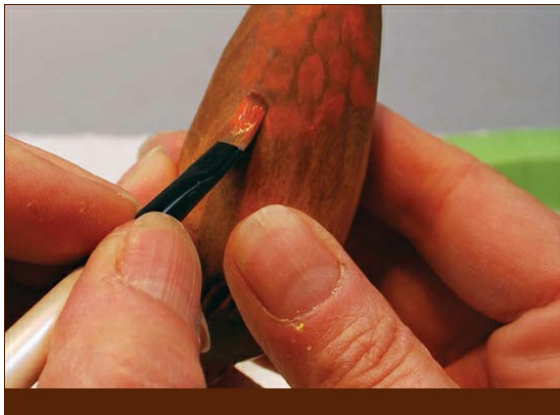
4

Add paint to the mix. To the linseed/ oil mix that is left over from steps 2–3, add a small amount—two to three well-loaded brushfuls—of burnt umber oil paint and mix well. Spot antique the bird by applying one coat of the mix to small areas at a time, then wiping off each area. When the entire bird has been antiqued, wipe one more time with a clean cloth.



5

Review the result. By pre-treating this bird with the linseed oil/turpentine mix, you can even out the final antiquing coloring. The mix prevents the end grain cuts from absorbing excessive amounts of stain, while the straight grain cuts barely take the stain. Note in the photo how even the coloration of the antique finish is. You can immediately proceed to painting now—you do not need a drying period between the oil stain and the acrylic color application. That is because to work this technique easily, you want that oil base fresh and still moist.



6

Paint the breast feathers. Place a small puddle of cadmium yellow orange, cadmium red, and brown madder on the palette. Lightly load the filbert. Working from the base of the tail toward the head, make staggered rows of small feathers using first cadmium yellow orange for the back half, then cadmium red for the next quarter, and ending with brown madder at the V-gouge breast feathers. Each brush stroke will be semi-transparent. When used over oil, acrylics do not grab instantly, so as you pull your brush, only a medium amount of paint is left on the wood.



7

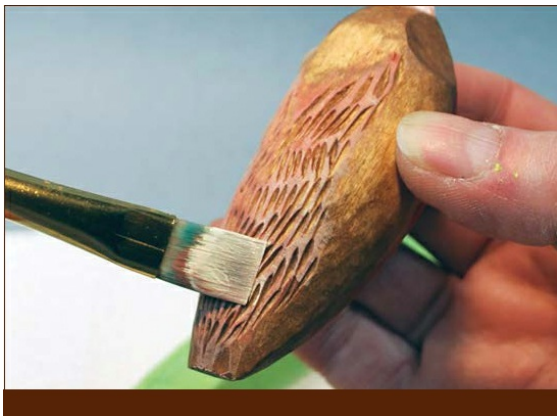
Paint the throat. While the filbert is loaded with brown madder, paint the bird's throat. Again, you will see that the acrylic takes on an artist-quality oil paint look.

A filbert is a perfect choice for painting this project. Flat at the ferrule but round at the tip, it makes perfect flower petals and, for our project, perfect small feathers. Load the filbert just as you would a flat shader, then touch the round tip of the filbert to the wood and pull straight back for the length of the feather. End each stroke with a simple lift motion.



8

Finish the breast and throat. Make any final adjustments to this area as desired. In the photo, you can see that the acrylics are clearly adhering to the oil pre-treatment and oil stain.



9

Paint the back feathers. Add burnt umber to the palette. Mix 1 part burnt umber with 1 part cadmium yellow orange to create a golden yellow brown. Lightly load a large flat shader with golden yellow brown. Dry brush golden yellow brown over the V-gouge feathers on the top back of the bird. Then, mix 1 part titanium white with 1 part of the yellow golden brown to create an ivory tone. Repeat this step using ivory.



10

Paint the sides. With a lightly loaded large flat shader brush of golden yellow brown, add color to the sides of the bird. This area will fall under the inserted wing and, although not worked over a detail-carved area, is applied as a dry brushing stroke.



11

Paint the head. Add a puddle of carbon black to the palette. Use a large flat shader to paint the head.

12

Finish. Allow the carving to dry overnight. Do not microwave this project or any project that has oil, turpentine, or spray sealer to force dry it—all three are chemical-based and flammable. Cut and file the wings and tail, as well as the beak if you have not already attached it as I had.

Dry brushing can be worked in two ways: light acrylic

colors over a dark oil stain, or dark acrylic colors over a pale oil stain. For this bird, we are using a dark oil stain to antique the crevices of the woodcarving details with paler acrylic colors dry brushed across the high ridges of those carving strokes. The acrylic craft colors, although lighter than the antiquing, are worked from the darkest dry brushing color to the palest, with several different colors in each area.

Splattering:

SECTIONAL FISH

Splattering is simply covering a painting with a fine layer of tiny dots that are created by rubbing your thumb over a paint-covered toothbrush. This fine dusting of color adds interest to areas that otherwise would have very little hue variation. It is also an excellent technique to cover areas that have heavy brush stroke lines or wobbly painting lines. Plus, it's fun, if a bit messy!



SUPPLIES

- **1 ¼" x 1 ¼" x 5" (3 x 3 x 12.5cm) basswood block**
- **6" (15cm) square, 24-gauge copper sheeting**

- **Bench knife**
- **Large round gouge**
- **V-gouge**
- **220-grit sandpaper**
- **Soft, clean cloth**
- **Large flat shader brush**
- **Small liner brush**
- **Old, stiff toothbrush**
- **Ball-head straight pin**
- **Cardboard box**
- **20- to 24-gauge wire**
- ***Pattern on page***

COLOR PALETTE USED
(ACRYLIC PAINTS)

- Cadmium yellow
- Yellow gold
- Cadmium orange
- Turquoise blue
- Carbon black
- Titanium white

COLOR
CHART

Acrylics



cadmium yellow



yellow gold



cadmium orange



turquoise blue



carbon black



titanium white

STEP-BY-STEP



1

Prepare. Carve the fish and sand it well, removing any dust using a soft, clean cloth. Apply two very light coats of matte acrylic spray sealer or reworkable spray sealer. Allow to dry. The light coating of spray sealer will inhibit the acrylic wash from grabbing into the wood, allowing you to create a thin, semi-transparent layer of paint on the fish body. Also attach the fins at this step (see page). Place a small amount of each of the paint colors on the palette. Thin each color except black with several drops of clean water to about a half-and-half mixture.



2

Paint the first body color. Load a large flat shader with the thinned cadmium yellow and apply one to two coats to the front half of the fish's body, including the front top fin.



3

Paint the second body color. Load a large flat shader with the thinned titanium white and apply two light coats to the back half of the fish, including all the rear fins. Blend the titanium white into the cadmium yellow by overlapping the color areas at the center of the fish.



4

Paint the third body color. Apply several coats of the thinned yellow gold to the front one-third of the fish body, blending the coloring into the previous layer of cadmium yellow. Also color all the front fins.



5

Paint the fourth body color. Work the back one-third of the fish body, including the tail fin, with several layers of thinned cadmium orange. Blend these layers of color application into the titanium white area.



6

Finish the body base colors. Add a small, $\frac{1}{2}$ " (1cm) stripe of cadmium orange wash between the front cadmium yellow and titanium white. Add a small, $\frac{1}{2}$ " (1cm) stripe of thinned turquoise blue between the cadmium orange and titanium white on the back half of the fish (see the photo for step 7). At this stage, the colors should blend slowly and evenly over the entire body. Allow the paint to dry completely.



7

Start the body details. Place a small puddle of carbon black, yellow gold, and cadmium orange on the palette. Do not thin these puddles with water. Load a liner brush with black. Create concentric arcs of random dots on the back top fin, back bottom fin, and tail fin. This is a touch-and-lift stroke that uses the tip of the brush only. Allow a few areas of the background color to show through the spots in the arcs. Paint the eyes carbon black.



8

Finish the body details. Repeat the arc spots on the front top fin using cadmium orange. Paint the side fins solid cadmium yellow. Allow about half an hour for the fish to dry completely.



9

Splatter. Hang the fish for splattering (see sidebar). Place a medium-sized puddle of cadmium yellow, cadmium orange, titanium white, and turquoise blue on the palette. Dampen a toothbrush with clean water and blot the excess water from the brush. The toothbrush should be damp, but not wet. Load the front half of the toothbrush with color. Tap the tip of the toothbrush on the palette to remove excess color. Point the tip of the toothbrush toward the fish, holding it about 5" (12.5cm) away from the fish. Place your thumb at the front edge of the toothbrush and slowly pull your thumb to the back of the brush. As you pull your thumb across the brush bristles, it will release a fine spray of tiny droplets that will splatter the fish with color. You can practice on just the box itself before actually splattering the fish.

Hanging a Piece for Splattering

Make a small hole in the front top fin. Slide a 6" (15cm) length of 20- to 24-gauge copper wire through the hole. Twist the end of the wire around itself above the fin to secure the fish. Make a small loop and twist in the other end of the wire. Mount the wire to the edge of a cardboard box that has been laid on its side with a ball-head pin. This will suspend the fish in the air, with the cardboard box behind it to catch the excess splatter.

Paint that hasn't been thinned with water makes very fine, small splatter dots. For large dots, add several drops of water to a paint puddle before you splatter. An excessively wet toothbrush, or over-thinning the acrylics with water, can cause the splatter dots to drip and run. This can be used to your advantage as a first splattering layer on a piece with thicker-paint small dots on top.



10

Finish. Repeat the splattering process for each of the colors on the palette until you are satisfied with the final result. Allow the fish to dry completely and seal it with two to three light coats of spray sealer.

CHAPTER 5 :

ADVANCED IDEAS AND SPECIAL EFFECTS

In this chapter, we will take your skills to a new level with more complicated, interesting techniques on larger-scale projects. You'll learn how to create skin tones, false wood grain effects, stone effects, milk paint effects, and more. As with the previous chapter, you can pick and choose what you are interested in learning how to do, so don't be afraid to dive in wherever you want!



Skin Tones:

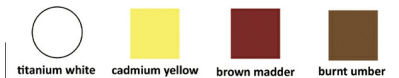
WOOD SPIRIT CANE TOPPER

Creating a realistic color for skin tones on either a carved or burned project can seem like a real challenge. In this section, we will work through the step-by-step process of both the color mixes used to create a skin tone and their appropriate highlight and shading areas.

All skin colors fall within the yellow-orange to orange-red range. All the variations of wonderful colors that the human species comes in will be created from this mix. There are no purely pink, red, yellow, brown, or black skin colors; we all have skin that falls into the orange range, and the variations

depend on the amount of yellow or red added to that orange hue.

In the color chart shown here, you can see some example mixing formulas for the four basic orange tones that create skin color. These aren't set in stone—you can often use the paints you have on hand to achieve different skin tones—but this will give you a reference point.



Result: cream or light tan skin color



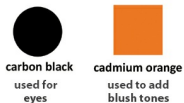
Result: medium tan or yellow skin color



Result: medium tan or red skin color



Result: dark tan or chocolate skin color



Adding skin color to a wood spirit carving, like this cane topper, can present several problems to a carver. Since the facial features blend into the wood texture or leaves of the surrounding background, there are few well-defined outlines to the face area like you would find in a more realistic carving or caricature. Plus, you want to avoid solid-toned, heavy coloring that would distract from the natural wood tones of the rest of the cane. But there is a method that will work perfectly: Dry brushing very thin coats of acrylic color to create the facial coloring will both blend the face and skin tones into the wood texture and keep the coloring soft and light in application.



For this project, I have worked a wood spirit carving into a 2" x 2" x 12" (5 x 5 x 30.5cm) butternut practice blank, but this painting technique can be applied to any wood species. Here the butternut gives a medium brown wood tone to the entire project, plus it has some delightful grain lines to add character. When you have finished painting the face, you will be able to see both the coloring of the skin and the grain and texture of the wood.

SUPPLIES

- **Linseed oil**
- **Turpentine**
- **Latex gloves**
- **Mixing bowl**
- **Soft, clean cloths**
- **Paper towels**
- **Paint palette**

- **Scrap of newspaper**
- **Large flat shader brush**
- **Medium flat shader brush**
- **Small round brush**
- ***Pattern on page***

COLOR PALETTE USED **(ACRYLIC PAINTS)**

- Yellow gold
- Burnt sienna
- Raw sienna
- Burnt umber
- Carbon black
- Titanium white
- Cadmium yellow

- Brown madder

COLOR CHART



Acrylics



carbon black



titanium white



cadmium yellow



brown madder



yellow gold



burnt sienna



raw sienna



burnt umber

STEP-BY- STEP



1

Prime the area. Mix turpentine and linseed oil half and half. With a large flat shader, apply one coat of this mix to the carving. Allow the mix to rest for about 15 minutes, then wipe the entire piece with a clean cloth. Let this coat dry for about one hour. Repeat for a second coat.



2

Prepare the paints. Every skin color has a pale tone for highlights, a medium tone for the base,

 overall skin color, and a dark tone for shading. The brightest highlights on a face can be worked in titanium white, and the darkest shadows in burnt umber, no matter what overall skin color you are using.

Pick your overall skin color from the far right column in the chart shown on page. This will give you the names of the colors you will use to mix that skin color and create all highlights and shadows. The overall skin color is comprised of about an equal amount of the first three colors listed. To create a highlight color, add more titanium white to the overall mix. To create the shading color, add a small amount of burnt umber to the overall mix.

On the palette, lay out the three main colors for your chosen skin tone (the fourth, burnt umber, will come later). In these photos, I am actually showing three sets of color for the first three different skin tones shown on page, though we are going to just use the first skin tone to execute the project itself. Pick up a small amount of each of the three colors in your group, then lightly mix them together on a clean area of the palette. Do not over mix; allow pale, medium, and dark tones to remain. Skin is not one color throughout the face. It changes depending on how thick the skin and muscle layers are over the bone structure. So by lightly mixing the colors, you create lots of different shades of skin tone that you can use.



3

Thin and test the paint. Pick up a small amount of the pale tone from the mixed color on the palette with a medium shader. Place this brushful of paint onto a clean area of the palette. Dip the brush in water, shake lightly to remove excess water, then take the wet brush into the color to thin it. You can test that you have the color well thinned by blotting the thinned paint on a scrap of newspaper. You should be able to read the print through the paint.



4

Start painting the face. Load the brush with the thinned paint, then blot the brush on a clean paper towel. There should be just a small amount of color left in the brush. Lay the brush flat against the wood and pull across the carving lines and texture. You are not using the tips of the brush hairs, but rather the body area to pull the color just across the high ridges of the carving. As you work, you will see that the color will only be grabbed by the high areas of your carving. The deep gouges and textures will remain unpainted.



5

Move onto the next color. Work two or three light coats of this thinned medium tone on the entire face, slowly building up the color tone.

Where the hair comes off the face, some skin color will show, so lightly carry this coloring into the hairline areas. Next, pick up some of the dark tone from your mixed color, thin it with water, and test it on the newspaper like you did for the medium tone. (If necessary, add a bit more of the darker pure color to your mix to darken it further.) Apply this color along the sides of the nose, the cheek areas, the upper eyelids, the lower lip, and where the forehead tucks under the hair.



Prepare paint for the first details. To add some dark

6

shadows along the upper eyelid crease, the gouge lines where the nose meets the cheeks, and along the underside of the nose tip, we need to pick up some color precisely with the brush. Start by placing some burnt umber on the palette. Using a clean, slightly damp shader, pull one corner of the brush hairs along the edge of the burnt umber paint as shown.



Load the brush for the first details. This will pick up

7

just a small amount of color on one corner of your brush. On a clean area of the palette, pull the shader several times to blend the corner color into the brush hairs. This is called half loading.



8

Add the first details. Lay the paint-carrying corner of the shader into the crease line of the eyelids and pull a stroke. This will leave a very soft, blended shadow coloring on the area. Repeat this process on the nose crease and under the nose tip along the upper edge of the mustache.



9

Add lip and cheek blush. Wrap a damp paper towel around your fingertip. Pick up a little of the deeper pure orange tone called for in your skin mixture (not burnt umber, but the next darkest pure tone). Pat the paper towel several times on the palette, then pat the remaining color on the cheeks and lower lip to add a blush effect. You can also add a small amount of cadmium orange to any skin color mix to create a more intense blush tone.



Color the hair and beard. Use the dark tone from your

10

mixed color set (as used in step 5) to dry brush the hair and beard areas just as you dry brushed the initial skin tone. You can add a bit of burnt umber if you want to make the tone darker.



Highlight the hair and beard. Using pure (unmixed)

11

titanium white, add highlights to the hair and beard areas. The brightest highlights lie against the skin areas. Also, very lightly highlight the ridge of the nose and the eyebrow areas. If you prefer a more muted highlight, add more white to your medium mixed color tone and use that instead.



12

Color the nostrils. Using a small round brush, fill the cut nostril areas of the nose with burnt umber or black.



13

Color the eyes. To keep this wood spirit skin and face muted to blend into the natural color of the butternut, use the round brush to start the eyes with titanium white. (Bright white eyes would give him a startled or shocked looked.) Then, half load the round brush with a medium gray-brown and run a shadow on the eyeball directly under the upper eyelid. This accents the natural shadow that the eyebrow and eyelid cast.



Shade the upper eyelid. Use the round brush to paint a

14

dark, solid line of burnt umber along the under edge of the upper eyelid. I do not usually paint on eyelashes or eyebrow hairs, as they often appear too artificial. But if you want to add them, now is the time.



Finish the eyes. Paint a half circle of burnt umber on the

15

eyeball against the upper eyelid edge for the iris color. Paint a small, centered half circle of black onto the burnt umber half circle for the pupil. Then, choose a brush that has a sharp or pointed handle end. Dab this handle point into some warm white, then touch that tip to the eyes to create the light highlights. A brush handle makes wonderfully round little dots of color that are easy to control.



16

Finish. Set the wood spirit aside to dry thoroughly. Once it is dry, check your work carefully. You can easily add more coloring if necessary, since this coloring was done with dry brushing. Apply one more coat of the half-and-half turpentine and linseed oil mixture from step 1. After the oil finish has dried thoroughly, this wood spirit is ready for mounting on a walking stick. After mounting, you can give it several coats of whichever finish you choose for the stick.

Wood Grain Effect: **WOOD SPIRIT**

Not all woods have a strong wood grain that we can use in our finishing techniques. Basswood, poplar, and sugar pine are very white, fine-grained woods that have little or no distinct grain lines that could emphasize the painted wood look. So for this project, we will work on creating false wood grain through paint and brush stroke work.



SUPPLIES

- **Polyurethane spray sealer**
- **Mixing bowl**
- **Linseed oil**
- **Turpentine**
- **Latex gloves**
- **Paper towels**
- **Soft, clean cloths**
- **Large flat shader oxhair brush**
- **Large, soft flat shader staining brush assortment**
- **Small, soft round brushes**
- *Pattern on page*

COLOR PALETTE USED

(ACRYLIC PAINTS)

- Carbon black
- Titanium white
- Raw sienna
- Burnt umber

COLOR PALETTE USED

(OIL PAINTS)

- Burnt umber

COLOR
CHART



Acrylics



carbon black



titanium white



raw sienna



burnt umber

Oils



burnt umber

STEP-BY-STEP



1

Cover the piece with a base coat. On the palette, mix approximately 3 parts titanium white with 1 part raw sienna (all acrylics). You want a mixture that is very close to the original color of the basswood. You can add just a couple of drops of water to this mix to thin it slightly. This will help ensure that the color easily fills the deep V-gouge cuts and tight joint lines of the carving. Using a large oxhair brush, scrub one coat of the mix over the entire work. Allow this to dry well, for about half an hour. When the first coat is dry, apply a second coat. Turn the work upside down for the second coat—this different angle will allow you to get color in areas that the first coat might have missed. Allow the second coat to dry well.

2

Create streaks of color. The streaking steps are done working wet on wet paint, all using acrylics. Do not wait for each streaking color to dry before adding the next. Instead, work the next color while the first color is still wet or damp. This will automatically blend the streaking strokes into new shades of color. To the remaining base coat mixture, add an equal part of raw sienna. Load the large brush with the new mixture, then blot off excess color from the brush. Working vertically, pull several streaks of this mix across the work. These streaks should be randomly placed and do not have to go all the way across the face of the work. Repeat this streaking step using raw sienna unmixed with any other color. Then, mix a small amount of burnt umber with the raw sienna and add a few more streaks. Add a few final streaks of titanium white. Allow this

streak coating to dry well. The carving should look fairly colorful at this point.

3

Spray seal. When the base coats of acrylic have dried well, apply several light coats of spray polyurethane sealer to the entire work. Let each coat dry well before applying the next.



4

Add the oil stain. In a small bowl, mix 2 parts burnt umber oil paint with 1 part linseed oil. You want the mixture to be thin, but not runny. Using a large, soft staining brush, apply one coat of the mixture to your work. Be sure to work the oil stain into the deep crevices. As soon as you have completely covered the work with the stain, begin wiping the piece using a clean cloth. As you work, your cloth will become saturated with the stain. As it does, refold the cloth so that you are using a clean area. Wipe until all of the excess stain is removed and the work has a light to medium brown look on the high areas and heavy staining only in the deep crevices.

5

Spot stain as desired. On large carvings, you can spot stain the work for more control over the coloring. When you spot stain, you apply an oil stain in small sections of about 3" (7.5cm) square at a time. Follow the same technique as you would when doing an all-over stain.

6

Clean up the highest areas. Moisten a clean cloth with turpentine. Blot the cloth well on paper towels. You want just a little bit of turpentine on the cloth. Now wrap the cloth around one finger and lightly rub the cloth over the high areas of the carving. This will pick up the oil stain from only the highest ridges

of the work. When you are done, allow the final oil stain to dry well, ideally overnight. At this stage, your carving should have a wood grain look with various changing color tones.



7

Add details. Refer to Skin Tones: Wood Spirit Cane Topper, page, steps 9 and 12–15 for detailed instructions on adding skin blush, eye painting, and nostril painting.

8

Finish. Set the wood spirit aside to dry thoroughly. Once it is dry, check your work carefully. Apply several light coats of spray sealer to complete this project.

Oil Staining over Dry Brushing: **CANADA GOOSE**

Adding an oil stain over an acrylic dry-brushed carving will blend, mute, and tone all the colors. Oil stains add shading in the deeply carved crevices and leave a thin coating of the oil color over all the acrylic color, uniting the final piece visually.



SUPPLIES

- Sanding sealer
- 320-grit sandpaper

- **Soft, clean cloth**
- **Paper towels**
- **Large flat shader synthetic or oxhair brush**
- **Medium flat shader brush**
- **Small flat shader brush**
- **Spray sealer**
- **Linseed oil**
- **Turpentine**
- **Mixing bowl**
- **Latex gloves**
- ***Pattern on page***

COLOR PALETTE USED
(ACRYLIC PAINTS)

- Titanium white
- Payne's gray
- Carbon black
- Pastel yellow
- Yellow gold
- Phthalo green
- Burnt umber
- Burnt sienna

COLOR PALETTE USED (OIL PAINTS)

- Burnt umber

COLOR
CHART

Acrylics



titanium white



carbon black



yellow gold



burnt umber



payne's gray



pastel yellow



phthalo green



burnt sienna

Oils



burnt sienna

Tip: This piece was created with deep undercuts all around the body of the goose. As you work a coloring with undercuts like these, you can cut and tuck a thick piece of paper or folder into those undercuts to protect the background from the paint.



1

Apply sanding sealer. Before painting, brush two thin coats of sanding sealer on the entire piece. Follow the directions on the can. Allow the sealer to dry well, for about two hours, and then lightly sand the work with a very fine-grit sandpaper. Remove any sanding dust with a soft, clean cloth. Sanding sealer keeps the basswood from over-absorbing colors and seals the end-grain cuts that can become darker during painting than the straight-grain cuts.



2

Start painting the goose body. On the palette, mix an equal amount of titanium white, burnt umber, and yellow gold. Do not mix this well—just mix lightly so that the color puddle has some areas of dark, medium, and light. Lightly dampen a large flat shader brush with clean water and tap the tip of the brush on a paper towel to get rid of any excess. Pick up a small amount of color mix on the brush tip and begin coating the front and back wing of the goose. This is a thin, watery coating that will have a wide variety of colors and shades when applied; it shouldn't be uniform or completely obscure the woodburning strokes. (Ignore the white details for now; those come later.)



3

Start painting the details. Using small and medium flat shaders, coat the cattail leaves with a water-thinned mixture of pastel yellow and yellow gold, the cattail sticks with a water-thinned titanium white, and the cattails with a water-thinned burnt umber. Coat the head marking, neck marking, and belly with a water-thinned titanium white. Coat the head, legs, and feet with a water-thinned Payne's gray. Let this first water-thinned coat dry well.



4

Add more color to the wings. Mix a puddle of burnt umber, Payne's gray, and yellow gold.

Work a second water-thinned coat of this mixture over the wings. While this coat is still damp, add a few random brush strokes of burnt sienna, yellow gold, and titanium white.



5

Paint another layer of details. Add a second coating to the cattail leaves with random touches of yellow gold, pastel yellow, and phthalo green.

Hit the highest edges of the leaves with titanium white.

Add a second coating of Payne's gray to the head, neck, and feet. Take the brush with Payne's gray into the cattails in a few random spots. Again, let everything dry well.



6

Detail the feather tips. To add a few bright titanium white tips to the edges of the wing feathers, pick up a small amount of un-thinned white on the brush tip. Work the tip several times over the palette to remove any excess color. Then drag the brush over the edges of the wings. This dry brushing will color only the highest parts of the wing tips.



7

Darken the wing tips. Using carbon black, dry brush the feather tips of the longest flight feathers, going over any titanium white you added in the previous step.



8

Finish the feathers and other details. Using a small flat shader, add dry-brushed titanium white to the shoulder feather tips and the back feathers. Touch the tail feathers with Payne's gray. And add a little dry-brushed white to the cattail leaves. Finally, trim the routed edges of the plaque using yellow gold for the inner ring and phthalo green for the outer ring.



9

Seal and allow to dry. Since we used a lot of water to thin the colors, allow the piece to dry well for at least two hours before adding two light coats of polyurethane or acrylic spray sealer to the entire plaque. Let the spray sealer set overnight. At this point, your carving should be very colorful and each area of the carving should have a wide variety of colors and color tones. This is not a coloring book where you fill in areas with solid color—it has lots and lots and lots of small, random spots of variegated color.



10

Start adding the antiquing stain. In a mixing bowl, mix 1 part boiled linseed oil with 1 part turpentine. Then, add 1 part burnt umber oil paint (a 1:1:1 ratio). This is a very thin antiquing color. Spot antique the carving by brushing the mix onto an area about 4" (10cm) square at a time. Work the color down into the burned texture of the carving, then, with a clean, dry cloth, wipe the excess stain from the wood. Next, with a clean, dry, stiff oxhair brush, work the stain in an even, thin coat in the entire background wood area. Work out any excessive puddles of color in the deep details of the carving.



11

Finish staining. By the time you have covered the entire piece, your cloth should be quite coated with the stain. You can use the cloth to spread a light, even coat of final stain on the background area of the plaque. Use a dry brush to even this coating out even more. Antique along the edges of the plaque in the same manner. Allow the antiquing to dry overnight, then lightly spray the work with two more coats of polyurethane sealer. It's ready to display!



Stone Effect:
CELTIC DRAGON

Basswood is an easy-to-carve wood that has a very clear, white coloring. Because basswood is especially porous, it does not take oil-based stains well without the use of a pre-treatment sealer like polyurethane or spray sealer. For this project, we're

going to use acrylic craft paints to create an interesting stone effect, then add a final oil stain at the end.



SUPPLIES

- **Painter's tape or masking tape**
- **Assorted flat shader brushes**
- **Old, stiff toothbrush**
- **220-grit sandpaper**
- **Soft, clean cloth**
- **Spray sealer**
- **Pale raw umber oil stain**
- *Pattern on page*

COLOR PALETTE USED (ACRYLIC PAINTS)

- **Carbon black**

- Titanium white
- Payne's gray
- Burnt umber
- Burnt sienna
- Gunmetal blue

COLOR
CHART



Acrylics



carbon black



titanium white



payne's gray



burnt umber

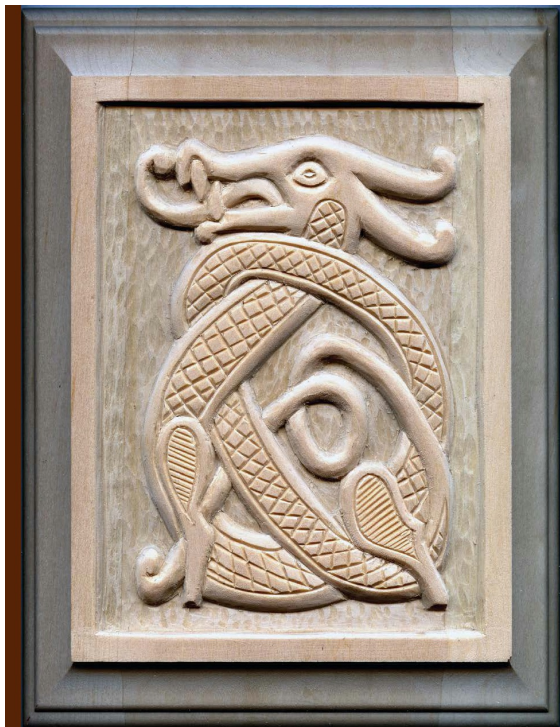


burnt sienna



gunmetal blue

STEP-BY- STEP



Apply painter's tape. Apply painter's tape outside the

1

¼" (0.5cm) border surrounding the carving. Cut long pieces of the tape, place them into position, and press firmly. Block out everything but the area shown highlighted in the photo. The painter's tape will protect these other areas from being painted.



Paint swatches of color. Place a small amount of

2

titanium white, Payne's gray, burnt umber, gunmetal blue, and burnt sienna on the palette. Thin each color with an equal part of clean water.

Brush two wash coats of white on the carved area of the plaque. Because you mixed equal parts paint and water, this coat will not give full, solid coverage. While the white coats are still damp, pick up a small amount of Payne's gray and mix it with the white on the palette. Working along the diagonal of the plaque, brush a few random strokes of the gray-white mix over the white background. Pick up a little gunmetal blue, mix it with the white on the palette, and apply it to the carving in the same manner. Next, add a small touch of burnt umber to the gray-white mix and repeat. Add a small amount of burnt sienna to the mix and repeat. The background should now contain many shades of white, gray, blue gray, and brown. Allow these coats to dry for about half an hour.



Add splatters of color. Clean the palette and then

3

place a small amount of each paint color on it. Do not thin these colors with water. Work one color at a time for this step. Use an old, stiff toothbrush to splatter a coat of each color on the carving (see pages for more on the splatter technique).



Sand. After the paint is completely dry, sand the carved

4

areas, background, and routed edges of the plaque using 220-grit sandpaper to remove some paint from the high areas of the carving. Sand gently and lightly. In some areas, only remove a layer or two of color; in other areas, sand all the way down to the raw wood. Clean the dust from the board using a soft, clean cloth.



Finish. Seal the work with two coats of polyurethane

5

spray sealer. Allow the sealer to dry thoroughly. Follow the manufacturer's instructions to apply an oil-based stain to the carving. Wipe away the excess oil stain with a soft, clean cloth. Allow the stain to dry overnight. Finally, seal the work again with one to two light coats of polyurethane spray sealer. When you add the sealer, it emphasizes the color tones of the sanded wood and the darker color tones. Even if a sealer or finishing coat is crystal clear in its own coloration, it always alters the color of the wood or paint beneath it. This is why the finished piece looks so different from the previous step's image.

Milk Paint Acrylics: **MAYAN HIGH PRIEST**

Using acrylic colors for basswood carvings is easy and quick. Since this type of paint is opaque, any mistakes can be corrected by simply allowing an area to dry completely and then applying the new, correct color on top.

To create a milk paint effect, all of your colors will be mixed with a pale cream, creamy ocher (golden brown), pale blue gray, or pale gray color to create muted pastels. In the photo at top right, you can see the creamy ocher base color that I used to mix my muted pastel tones. This base color unites all

of the color hues in the work.

You can also unite your colors by using jewel-tone paints. With this color base, a few drops of dark blue, dark brown, or black are mixed with the pure hues. This creates a muted but darker tonal coloration.



You can see here the creamy ochre base color used to mix the muted pastel tones for this piece.

SUPPLIES

- **Large flat shader brush**
- **Medium flat shader brush**
- **Small round brush**
- **Painter's tape**
- **Old, stiff toothbrush**
- **Turpentine**
- **Latex gloves**
- **Soft, clean cloth**
- **Spray sealer**
- ***Pattern on page***

COLOR PALETTE USED

(ACRYLIC PAINTS)

- **Carbon black**

- Titanium white
- Raw sienna
- Burnt sienna
- Yellow gold
- Cadmium orange
- Cadmium red
- Cadmium yellow
- Phthalo green
- Turquoise blue
- Ultramarine blue
- Burnt umber

COLOR PALETTE USED

(OIL PAINTS)

- Carbon black

- Titanium white
- Burnt umber

COLOR
CHART

Oils



carbon black



titanium white



burnt umber

Acrylics



carbon black



titanium white



raw sienna



burnt sienna



yellow gold



cadmium orange



cadmium red



cadmium yellow



phthalo green



turquoise blue



ultramarine blue



burnt umber



1

Add a base coat. Basswood, with its very plain, white grain, is an excellent wood for colored carvings. But since basswood is very soft, it is also especially absorbent, and therefore requires a base coat before the actual colors are applied. We're going to use a creamy ochre acrylic paint base coat here. Begin by mixing 1 part off white with 1 part raw sienna. Thin this mix lightly with a few drops of water, then apply two even coats to the entire carved area using a medium flat shader. Allow the coats to dry thoroughly.



Start with your first color. Sometimes it can be difficult

2

to choose a color palette that is both complementary to the carving as well as coordinated for a uniform effect. For this piece, to coordinate and unite all of the colors, mix each color you use: 1 part of the color from the tube with 1 part of the base primer mixture. This gives every color a soft, beige tone and keeps every color in the paler tonal values. On the palette, place a brushful of primer color, the creamy ocher mix made in step 1. To that color, add one brushful of the first pure color, and mix well. Brush one or two coats of the mixed color on the desired area.

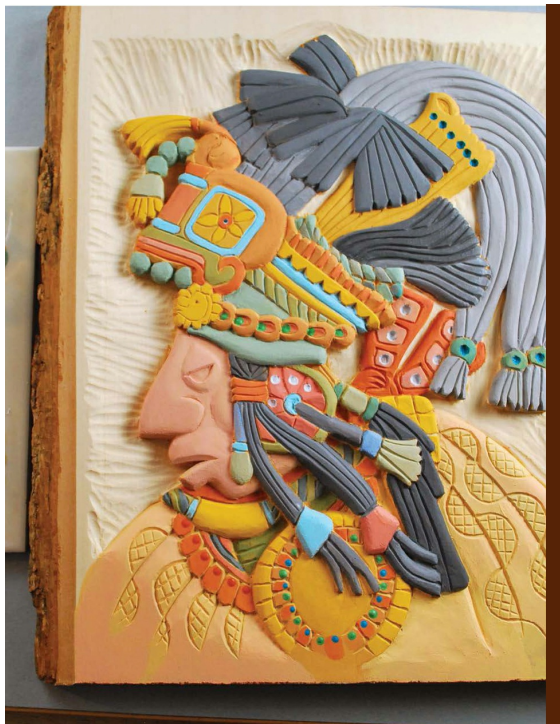


3

Add colors. Work each color one at a time, repeating the mixing method from the previous step for each color you want to add to the piece.

As you color each area, take a moment to turn the carving upside down to check that the entire area has

been well coated.



fix any mistakes. If you make a mistake, go outside of

4

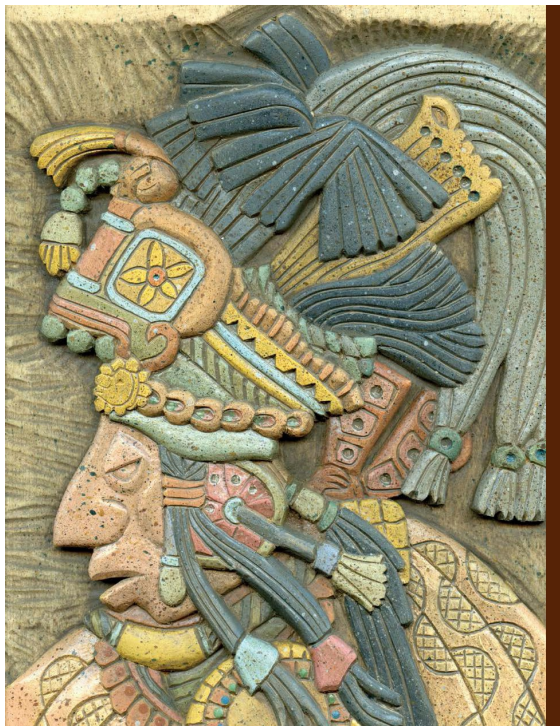
the carved area, or simply want to change an area to another color, as you can see I've done on several spots in this photo (compared to the previous photo), let the first color dry completely, then repaint the area with the desired new color. In the end, however, since this project's painting steps will include splattering and antiquing, you do not need to have pristine, crisp color edges between each element.



Add splatters of color. Stones have many colors, color

5

tones, cracks, and even spotting patterns. Few stones are just one uniform color throughout the entire stone. To create this realistic effect in your project, add fine paint splatters. Lay several pieces of painter's tape over the bark edge areas of the wood plaque. Place a small amount of burnt umber, phthalo green, yellow gold, titanium white, and carbon black on the palette. With an old toothbrush, work a layer of splatter using each color on the palette (see pages for more on the splatter technique). Allow the splattering to dry, then remove the protective tape.



Prepare for antiquing. After the acrylic paint has dried

6

completely, the carving is ready for two to three light, even coats of polyurethane spray sealer. Follow the manufacturer's instructions while applying the sealer. Turn the carving with each new coat to ensure that you have covered all the deep walls and details. Let the sealer dry for several hours before proceeding to the final antiquing. The turpentine in the oil paints that we will use to antique can cause damp sealers to become cloudy.

7

Antique with oil paint. Place a small amount—about the size of a nickel coin—of burnt umber, carbon black, and titanium white oil paint on the palette. Mix them together well to achieve a medium brown-gray color. Thin this mixture lightly with turpentine to make the brush application easy. Using a large brush, apply one coat of the mixture to the carved areas of the project—do not antique the bark edge. With a soft, clean cloth, wipe the carving to remove the mixture from the high areas of the work. You can also spot antique by applying and wiping off the mixture on small, 4" (10cm) areas at a time. The oil paint stays workable for a long period of time, allowing spot-antiqued areas to blend together well.

8

Finish antiquing and seal. If you want one area of a carving antiqued but do not want the antiquing effect in another area, fold your cloth to

a clean area, then wipe from the un-stained area into the stained area. If you want a very even finish to the antiquing effect, fold your cloth to a dirty area, then wipe over the entire antiqued surface using that one area of the cloth. The small amount of stain left in the cloth will blend the entire stained area. Allow the antiquing to dry thoroughly, ideally for several days, then seal the work using polyurethane spray sealer.

CHAPTER 6 :

BONUS: CARVING A WHITTLE FISH



SUPPLIES

- **1" x 2" x 2" (2 5 x 5 x 5cm) basswood block**

- **Pencil**
- **Bench knife**
- **Round gouge**
- **V-gouge**
- **Thumb guard or thick towel**
- **220- and 320-grit sandpaper**
- **Soft, clean cloth**
- **Wood glue**
- **2 aluminum cat food can lids**
- **Scissors**
- **Palette knife or a small piece of thin, heavy-duty paper**
- **Flat nose pliers**
- ***Pattern on page***

Ice fishing decoys are a great beginner's woodcarving project, and fun for the advanced woodcarver, too. I like to call them "Whittle Fish." This classic decoy was created as a spearfishing lure

and, although some were carved by professionals, most were handmade at home with whatever supplies were available. Because so many of the projects in this book use a Whittle Fish as a base carving, I have included the instructions for this example whittling project so that you can easily create a carved fish to practice your painting techniques if you so choose. You won't need much to complete a cute little fish like this—just a good quality, steel, short-bladed bench knife, some gouges, and a basswood block. The fin material can be anything from copper sheet (shown used throughout this book), cat food can lids, scrap leather, and even chipboard.

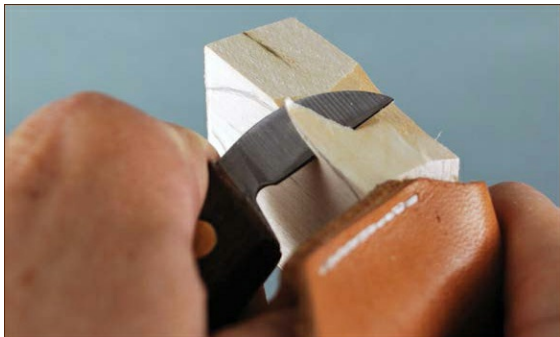
STEP-BY- STEP



1

Draw the pattern on the block. Basswood practice blocks vary widely in dimensions. Any rectangular block will do nicely for this project.

Using a pencil, draw a simple body shape on the side of the block. Make the top edge of the body into a long, shallow arch. Make the bottom edge a tighter arch with a belly area at the mid-point of the length of the block. The mouth area of the face should be placed above the center point of the height of the block—a fish decoy has more body below the mouth area than above it. Make the base of the tail approximately $\frac{1}{2}$ " (1cm) wide to allow room for the tail fin. Redraw the same pattern on the other side of the block, matching it to the best of your ability.



2

Prepare and begin carving. Before beginning to carve, hone the edge of your bench knife to ensure you have a sharp edge. For protection while carving, use a thumb guard, Kevlar carving glove, or hold the wood in a thick towel. When you are ready to proceed with carving, start by using the bench knife to shape the top of the body along the pencil pattern lines, cutting along the narrow sides of the block.



3

Roughly carve the top. This first cutting stroke is called a paring cut, done exactly as you would pare the skin of a potato. Hold the knife low to the wood to create long, thin cutting strokes, removing the waste wood above the pattern.



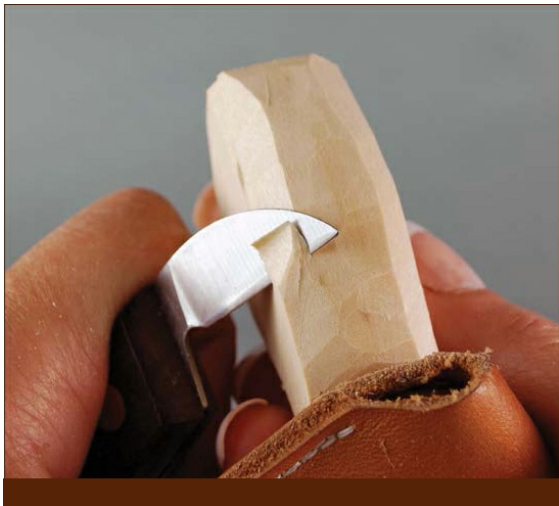
4

Roughly carve the bottom. Carve the bottom edge of the basswood block to create the general profile of the fish's belly. Use the same low-angled paring cut that you used to carve the top.



5

The roughly carved fish. Here is what your fish should look like at this stage.



6

Start to round off the edges. Use the same type of cut to start removing the harsh edges around the body of the fish.



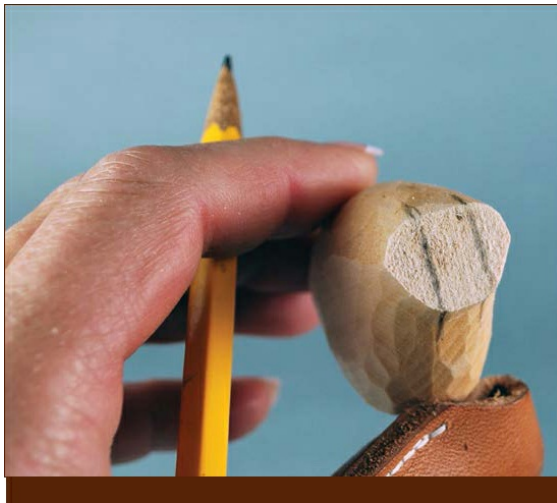
7

The roughly rounded fish. Here is what your fish should look like at this stage.



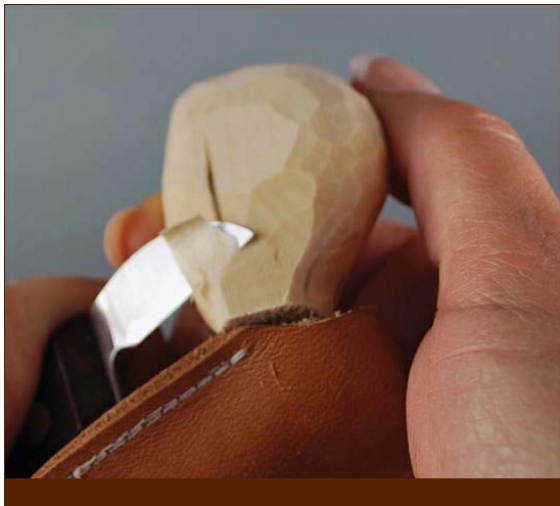
8

Round off the body. Now that the basic body shape has been defined, we will really start to round and smooth the body of the fish. Working with the grain of the wood, use the bench knife to round over the sides of the fish body. Work along both the top and bottom sides of the fish using short strokes.



9

Mark the tail area. With a pencil, mark a strip 3/8" (1cm) wide on the tail fin as shown.



10

Form the tail. With the bench knife, shape the tail base to the pencil lines.



11

Form the face. Shape the face, bringing all of the angles to the pencil point from the original drawn pattern. At this stage of the carving, the fish body should have a rounded top and bottom. The sides should taper toward the tail base and the mouth area. Using your bench knife and the same paring stroke, you can continue cutting the general rounded shape, making smaller and smaller cuts to give a smooth, even effect to the body.



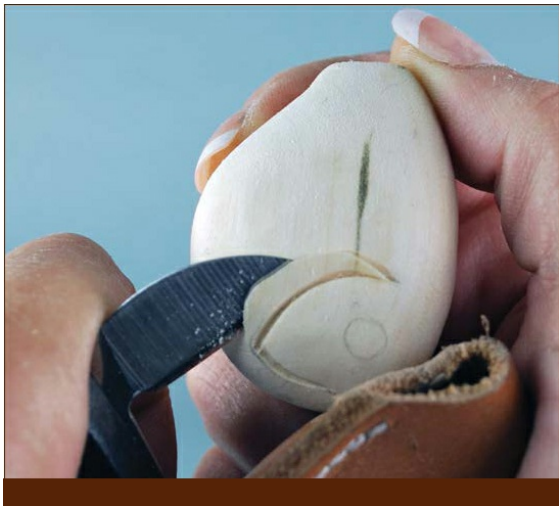
12

Sand the fish. Use 220- and 320-grit sandpaper to remove the cutting stroke planes from the fish body. First, sand with the 220-grit sandpaper to remove the harsh plane ridges. Then, sand with the 320-grit sandpaper to create a pristine surface. Remove the sanding dust with a clean, dry cloth.



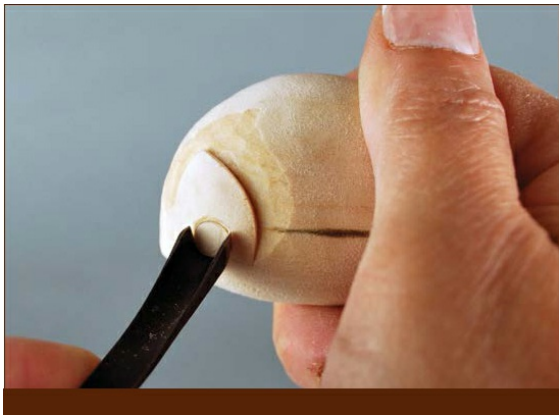
13

Mark and cut the gills. With a pencil, mark where you want the fish's gills to be. This pencil line is a curved-sided V shape that falls about $\frac{3}{4}$ "–1" (2–2.5cm) away from the mouth. Cut along the gill lines with the V-gouge, which cuts a two-sided stroke. Use several cuts to make the gill line sufficiently deep.



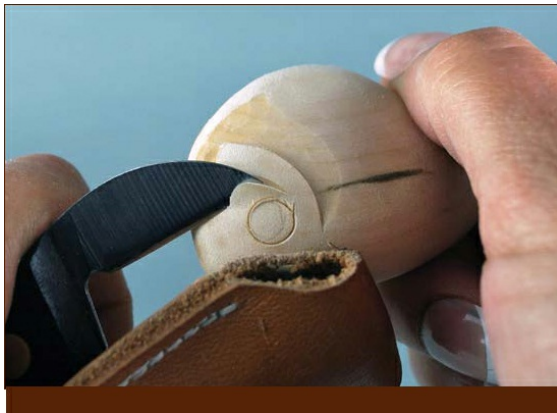
14

Finish cutting the gills. Use the bench knife to cut away a shallow piece of wood that goes up to the gill lines. Refer to the photo of the following step to see the desired result.



15

Cut the eye. Place a round gouge so that the tool is at a 90-degree angle to the wood. Roll and press the cutting edge where you want the eye to cut a perfect circle. Roll the gouge several times to create a deeper cut line.



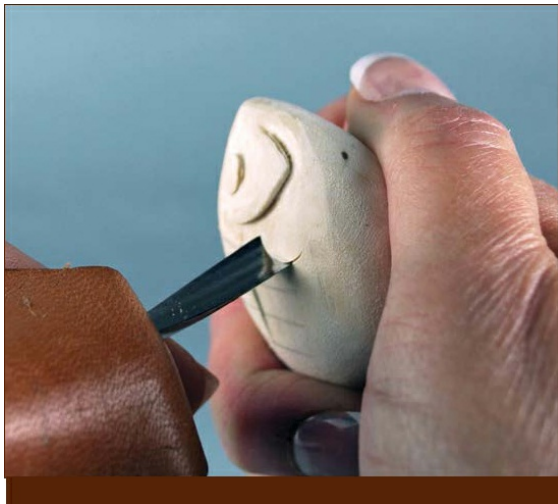
16

Finish the eye. With the bench knife, cut along the wood around the eye, similarly to how you would cut around the gills, to carve the hollow of the eye. Use the bench knife to round over the eye. Refer to the photo of the following step to see the desired result.



17

Mark scale guidelines. With a pencil, mark lines along the fish body at $\frac{1}{4}$ " (0.5cm) intervals. These will be the guidelines for cutting the scales. The size of the scales is determined by the size of the round gouge you are using. My gouge is a half-circle $\frac{3}{8}$ " (1cm) gouge.



18

Cut the scale outlines. Place a round gouge so that the tool is at a 90-degree angle to the wood, along the scale guidelines. Push the gouge's cutting edge into the wood using a light rocking motion. Cut the next fish scale by placing the outer point of the cutting edge of the gouge against the point of the first cut scale. Create one row of scales.



19

Carve the row of scales. With the bench knife, cut along the round gouge curve on the tail side of each scale to slightly lower the wood in the body. You can also use the bench knife at the intersection points between the scales to ensure a clean, sharp V shape in these spots.



20

Carve more scales. Begin the next row of scales. Set the round gouge with one edge point at the center of a scale in the first row to stagger this row against the first.



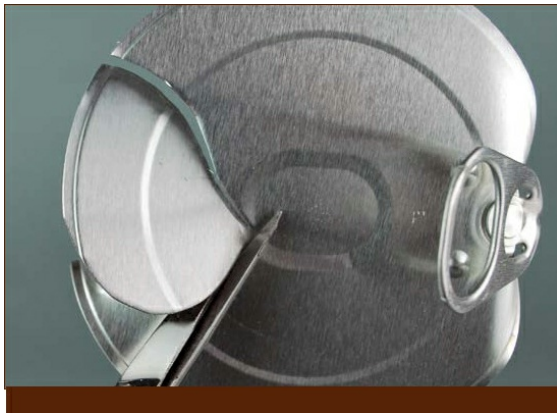
21

Finish the scales. Continue cutting and carving rows of scales until you reach the tail. Here is what your fish should look like at this stage. Each row of scales is staggered against the previous row.



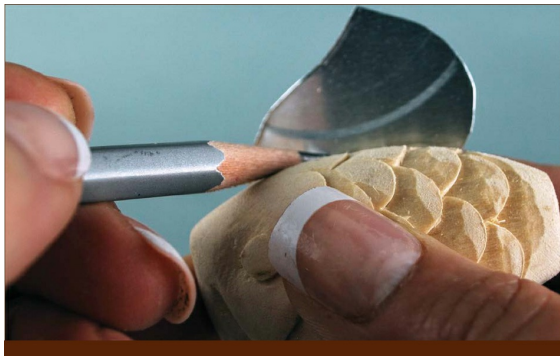
22

Choose a fin material. You can make fins from a variety of household materials—tin cans, aluminum can lids, disposable pie pans, old car license plates, copper coins, cardboard from cereal boxes, leather scraps, and even scrapbook paper. So look around the house, check out your junk drawers, and use your imagination for these next steps. For this fish, I chose two cat food can lids made of aluminum. Wash the lids well and dry them completely.



23

Cut out the fins. Mark the fin pattern onto the aluminum lid with a pencil. Cut out the fin shape using scissors. Any metal will dull your scissors, so use an older pair for this step. You don't need to worry about the shape of the base of the fin where it will connect with the body at this stage. With 320-grit sandpaper, remove any sharp edges on the fins. For this fish, you will need a top fin, tail fin, dorsal fin, and two front belly fins.



24

Finish shaping the fins. Hold each fin against the fish body. Use a pencil to mark the body profile line onto the base of the fin. Cut the fin along the pencil line.



25

Sand. Sand the newly cut side again to remove any sharp edges.



26

Insert the fins. Depending on the painting technique you want to use, you may want to wait to insert the fins after you've painted the fish. With a pencil, mark a cutting line on the fish body for the fin. Use the bench knife to cut a slit in the wood into which you can insert the metal fin. You want to push the fin approximately 1/8" (0.3cm) or deeper into the wood. Use a palette knife or a small piece of thin, heavy-duty paper to insert several drops of wood glue into the slit. Using flat nose pliers, push the metal fin into place. Allow the glue to dry well, for at least half an hour, before bending or shaping the metal fin.

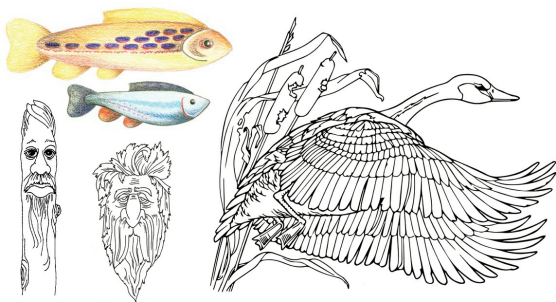


27

Get ready to paint. This fish is ready for painting! Choose a technique from this book and go for it.

CHAPTER 7: PATTERNS

This book is focused on teaching you painting techniques, not on the projects themselves. However, I would never want to show you a project without then giving you the tools to complete it! In this section you will find patterns for all of the projects shown in this book, plus some useful bonus items like colorful fish painting inspiration. Have fun making the projects that interest you.



PATTERNS

Color Wheel Flower

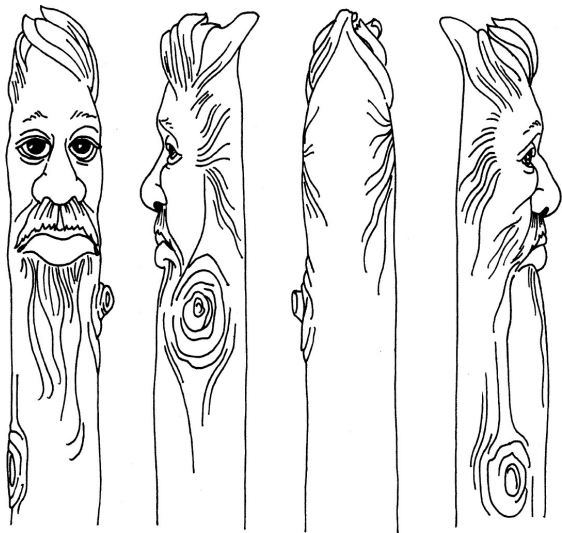


Color Wheel Flower color reference



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Wood Spirit Cane Topper



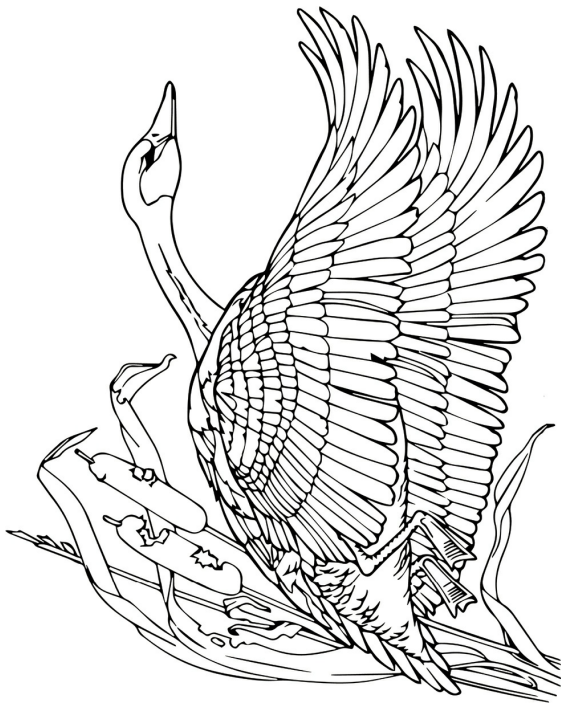
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Wood Spirit

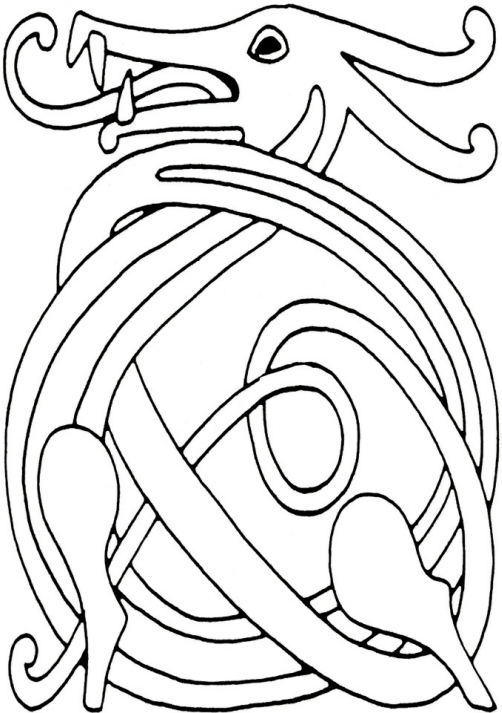


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Canada Goose

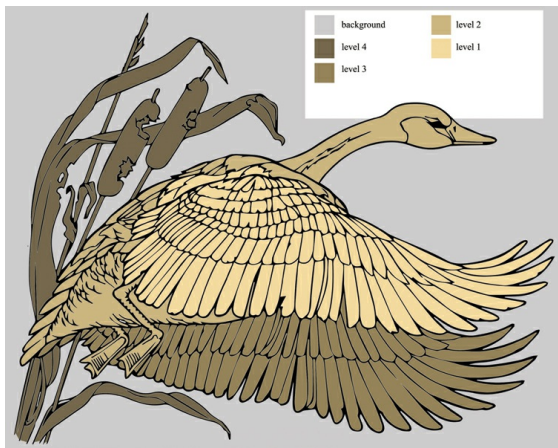


Celtic Dragon



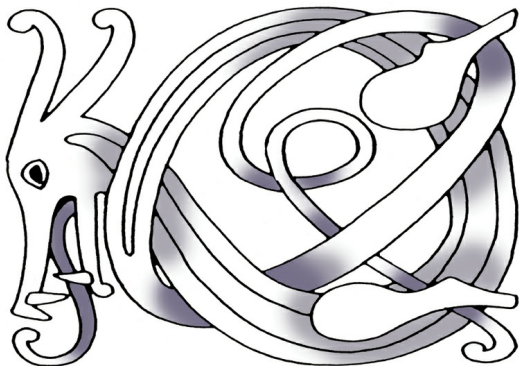
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Canada Goose carving levels (pattern on page)



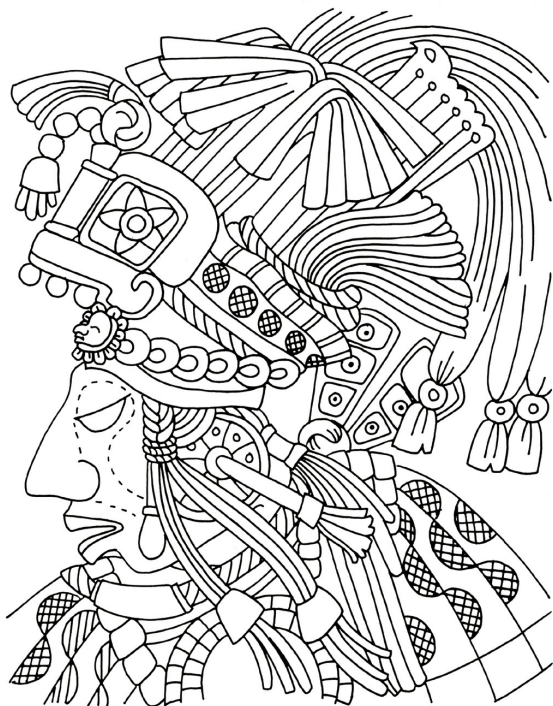
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Celtic Dragon shading reference (pattern on page)

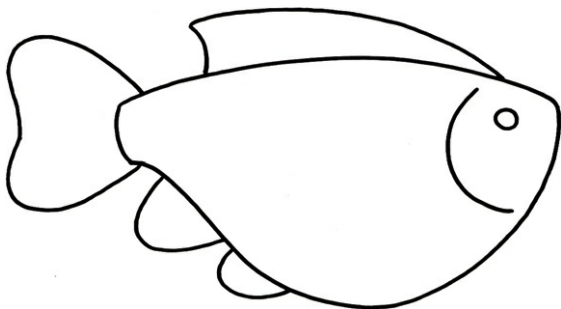


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Mayan High Priest



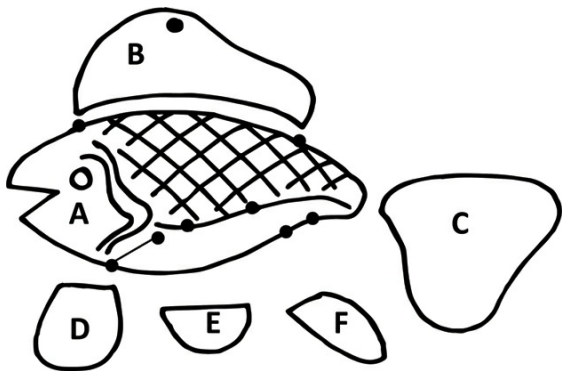
Whittle Fish



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Dotty Fish

- A - Body
- B - Top fin, cut 1
- C - Tail, cut 1
- D - Front bottom fins, cut 2
- E - Side fins, cut 2
- F - Back bottom fin, cut 1



Floral Fish

A - Body

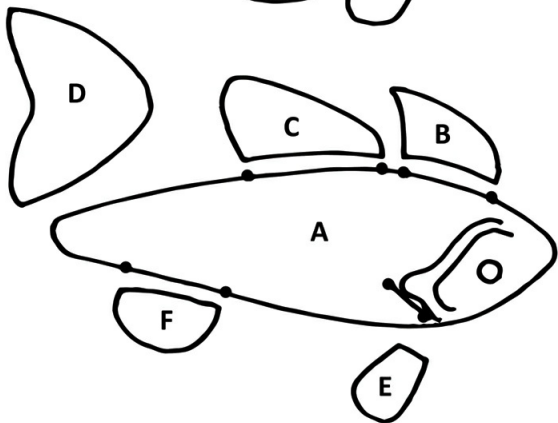
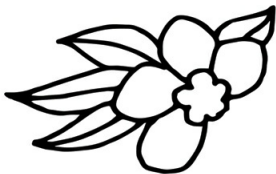
B - Front top fin, cut 1

C - Back top fin, cut 1

D - Tail, cut 1

E - Front bottom fins, cut 2

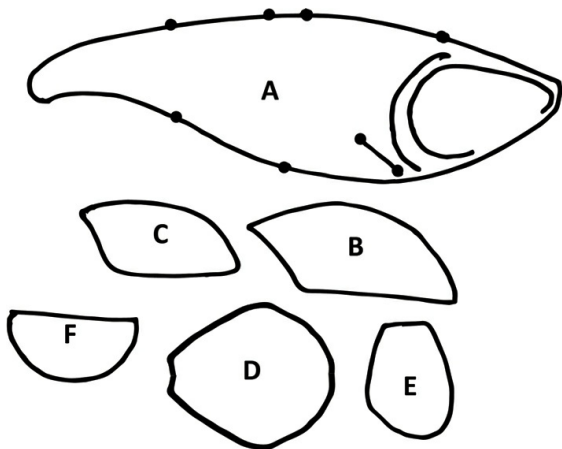
F - Back bottom fin, cut 1



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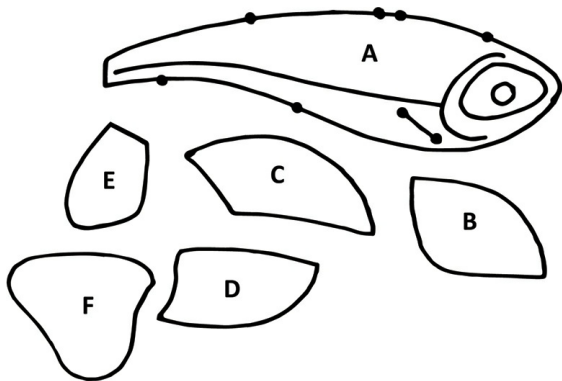
Stone Fish

- A - Body
- B - Front top fin, cut 1
- C - Back top fin, cut 1
- D - Tail, cut 1
- E - Front bottom fins, cut 2
- F - Back bottom fin, cut 1



Sectional Fish

- A - Body
- B - Front top fin, cut 1
- C - Back top fin, cut 1
- D - Back bottom fin, cut 1
- E - Front bottom fins, cut 2
- F - Tail, cut 1



Trick Fish

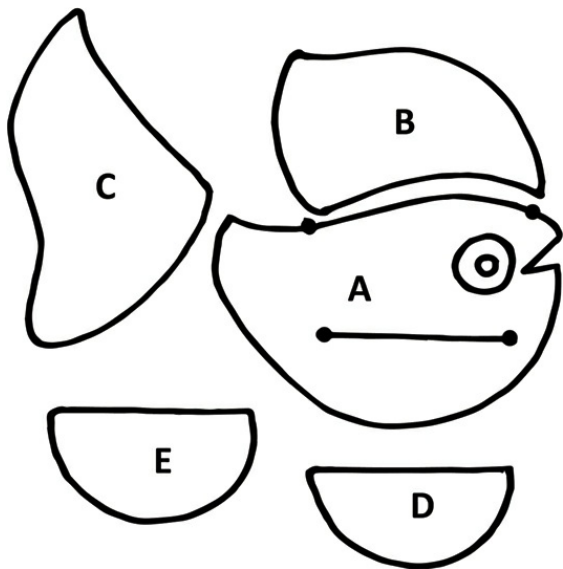
A - Body

B - Top fin, cut 1

C - Tail, cut 1

D - Side fins, cut 2

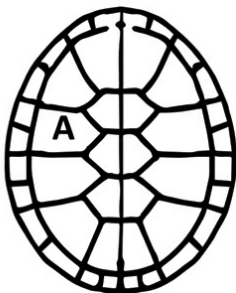
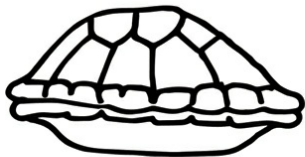
E - Bottom back fin, cut 1



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Turtle

- A - Body
- B - Head, cut 1
- C - Tail, cut 1
- D - Feet, cut 4



B



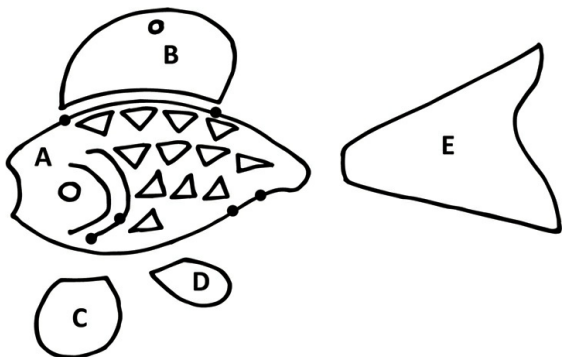
C



D

Chip Carved Fish

- A - Body
- B - Top fin, cut 1
- C - Front bottom fins, cut 2
- D - Back bottom fin, cut 1
- E - Tail, cut 1



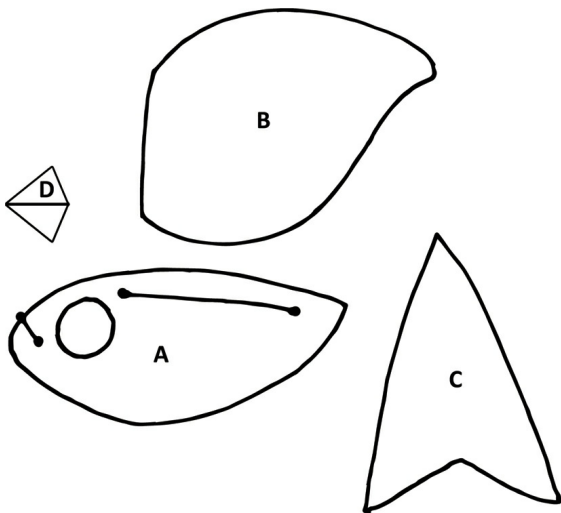
Bird

A - Body

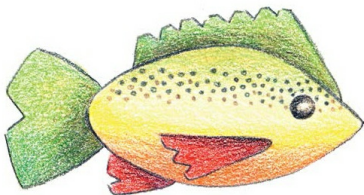
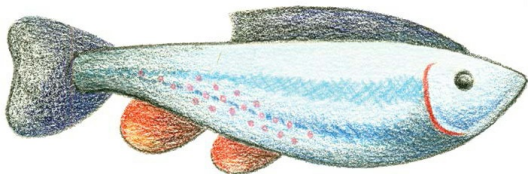
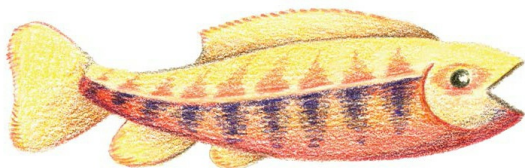
B - Wing, cut 2

C - Tail, cut 1

D - Beak, cut 1, fold along center line

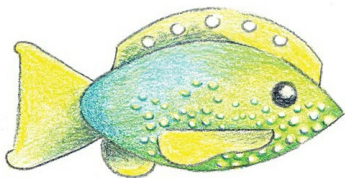
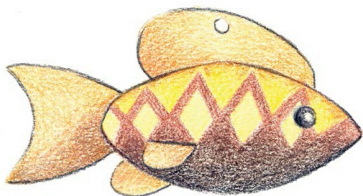
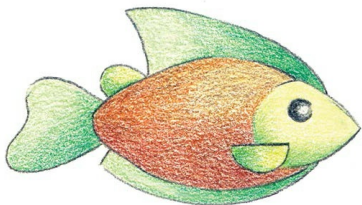


Fish color scheme inspiration



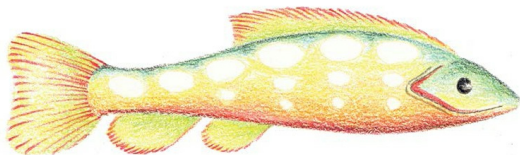
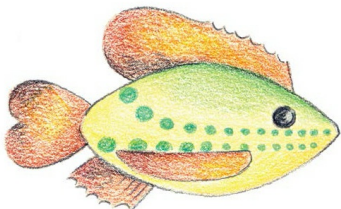
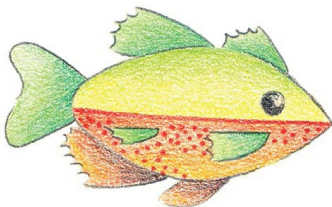
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Fish color scheme inspiration



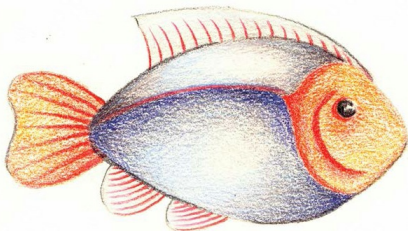
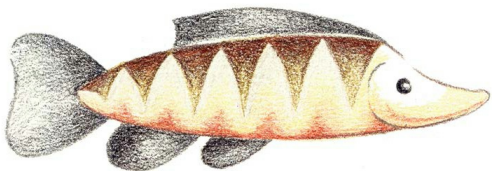
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Fish color scheme inspiration



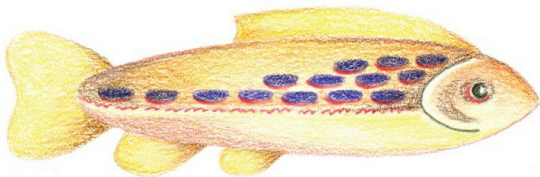
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Fish color scheme inspiration



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Fish color scheme inspiration



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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Internationally known artist Lora S. Irish is the author of 28 woodcarving, pyrography, and craft pattern books, including *Great Book of Carving Patterns*, *World Wildlife Patterns for the Scroll Saw*, *The Art and Craft of Pyrography*, *Relief Carving the Wood Spirit*, *Great Book of Celtic Patterns*, and many more. Winner of the Woodcarver of the Year award, Lora is a frequent contributor to *Woodcarving Illustrated* and *Scroll Saw Woodworking & Crafts* magazines. Working from her rural Maryland home studio, she is currently exploring new crafts and hobbies, including wire bent link jewelry, metal sheet jewelry, piece patch and appliqué quilting, gourd carving, gourd pyrography, and leather crafts. Visit her at www.LSIrish.com.

