

Cornerstone Creations, LLC

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Decorative Floral Relief Carving

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This class will cover the basics of floral relief carving based on traditional European woodcarving techniques. I have worked with several master carvers from around the world, and love the process of using only mallets and gouges to achieve a crisp, beautiful design.

We will start with carving a project where we learn how to work through some of the typical grain issues. This will get you started in the best way to safely hold the gouges, how to secure your wood to the bench, and how to carve a simple relief carving.

By this time, you will know whether your tools are sharp or not. We will then go through the process of sharpening the gouges to a razor sharp edge using the hand techniques that have been used for centuries. I will go over this process several times throughout the week, as this is a critical step in the art of woodcarving.

Then we will venture into carving a floral design with overlapping petals. This project will take you through outlining the design with a v-chisel, lowering down the background, carving overlapping elements in the design, and carving the details in the floral design.

We will then carve a variety of leaves and give as much realistic shape and curve as possible – oak leaves, grape leaves, and that wonderful, historic acanthus leaf (what I recently wrote my book on). We will be carving in several different types of carving woods to get the opportunity to see the differences and challenge between the wood.

If time permits, you will be allowed to design and carve your own floral decoration, based on what you have learned during the class.

You will learn tricks and techniques of making the carvings appear deeper than they actually are, how to work with overlapping elements, and how to walk through an entire carving project from start to finish.

Tools and materials:

Fingerless gloves – bicycle or weight-lifting (optional)

Pencil

Carbon paper (I will bring extra of this)

Wooden or metal mallet (about 1 to 1.5 lb.)

6 mm v-chisel (60 degree angle)

#1, 14mm (Single-bevel flat chisel (Two Cherry sells one) – bench chisels will work also)

#3, 3mm

#3, 6mm

#3, 14mm

#2, 18mm

#5, 6mm

#5, 14mm

#7, 6mm

#7, 10mm

#7, 14mm

#8, 10mm

#11, 3mm

I would recommend buying fishtail shape if available (fans out at the corners), however they are often more expensive than regular gouges. Either straight or fishtail will work fine. www.chippingaway.com provides 2 sets of good quality Pfeil (Swiss Made) gouges at a reasonable price that cover the tools recommended – “Mary May beginner Set” and “Mary May Additional Set #1”

If you have other gouges not listed above, bring them all!

If you have done any carving before this class, please bring samples of your work.

Sharpening materials (NOTE: We will have extras of the following for student use):

- Sharpening stones - any very smooth stones you have – Hard Arkansas, ceramic, Japanese water stones, diamond stones (1200 to 8000 grit), oil or water for lubricating stones
- Slip stones (small shaped stones that fit inside curved gouges)
- Leather strops

Wear comfortable shoes for standing (no open toed sandals) and lots of enthusiasm. It's going to be fun!