

Pierced and Carved Hollow Vessels

For this rotation, I will show the techniques I use to lay out, pierce through, shape and detail carved leaves on a hollow form.

Making Patterns:

1. Find leaves that suit your vessel and your ideas. I like white and red oak, also different types of maple. Trace these onto paper or draw by hand a smaller or larger version of the leaves you like. Use spray adhesive to attach this to thin plastic (an old Cool Whip lid, or something similar). Cut out these shapes as closely as possible to the pattern. For salamanders I use photos to make my patterns. I will also hand draw these for smaller or larger versions of the salamanders I like. (Use photo pc1)
2. Take the patterns and lay them one at a time on the vessel surface and trace them. Be sure to overlap the patterns. It makes them look more natural and it also retains the shape of the vessel. When the patterns are overlapped, you must decide which is on top and which is below. Do not draw the portions of patterns that are below other patterns.
3. After you have drawn all of the patterns on the vessel and you are happy with the layout, go over the pencil lines with pen so they don't rub off during the carving. Now color with a colored pencil (I like red), all of the spaces between the patterns that will be removed. This will help make sure not to miss some small spaces.
4. Next, remove all of the spaces (use photo pc2)
5. In a limited area about 6 to 9 square inches, start to outline the patterns (use a small straight bit) where they overlap. Working in a small area at a time helps keep your focus on which leaf is above or below the next (use photo pc3). Roughly contour these outlined leaves or patterns so they look as though they are either above or below the next leaf. Once this area is done, then move on to the next area, until everything is roughly contoured (use photo pc4).
6. Lay out the leaf veins according to what an actual leaf looks like (it's ok to use only the larger veins). With a small round burr, remove a little wood from either side of the veins, to basically raise the vein above the leaf. Reshape the leaf to this point next to the veins (use photo pc5).
7. Undercut all edges (those next to openings and those edges above other leaves).
8. After you are satisfied with the carving, you'll need to refine all surfaces. Small diamond burrs of different shapes will be handy here. Then use small sanding

discs and hand sanding. This step is most important to turn this into a beautiful work of art. (use photo pc6)

9. I use Danish oil as a finish. When wiping this finish off you will need to pay special attention to all the crevices where oil will remain. An air hose and dry brushes will come in handy here as well. After the finish has cured, I will coat the piece with Howard's wax and buff off with a fine horsehair brush (don't use a buffing wheel) (use photo pc7).

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