

Old Frog, New Frog, Apple, What's on my bench this summer...

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Boxwood

I am the only one to see the thousands of carvings each piece becomes by the end of every carving session, though I always wish that I could share that part of the process (duh! that is what I am doing with these photos!). This particular round is bringing forth a limited degree of detail, toe shapes separated from the mass, leaves being undercut, bodies shaped before ukibori and details. When there are so many features, with toes, bellies, elbows, leaves, branch character, a fairly complicated order must be followed, and all parts must be worked rather equally to a point. Where one part meets another and relates to other parts, where it ends up in the layering must be determined, and the parts must flow and work together... more parts, more decisions. The last few sessions have been challenging, the old frog is not an easy concept to envision and execute, the undercutting is sometimes tricky with the grain of this piece of wood. No photos yet of the deeply undercut parts yet, but I was again left wanting for the right tools tonight!

How about just casting about in your carving area, handling all of the wood you have and daydream a bit? Sometimes a piece of wood has a number of good suggestions to make, and may “kindle” a spark of an

idea. This is aimed at Doug at the moment, but is also for everyone who might be facing a “blank canvas” or needs a nudge to get going.



Still working on it.





These images are from just before sanding before doing ukibori. The wood was wetted to raise the grain, next it is to be sanded then pressed with rounded tools. I've done that, but don't have still photos, just movies. The next step of shaving and sanding to the bottom of the compressions has taken place with the old frog, but no photos of that yet either. I was called away suddenly and have been gone for a while. More photos will be added when I get back to doing carving. . .



I was concerned about the ukibori on the old frog. I was called away in late July, and the rest of the summer was lost to things other than carving. Today I finally found the carving bench on this

beautiful sunny afternoon. Today's work completed the ukibori for the piece. The little frog - from compressions to raising, the old frog (whose compressions were shaved and sanded in late July) sat for two months waiting for the hot water. I am pleased to report that the time away was not noticed by the compressed wood! (Wiping sweaty brow smiley!) Phew! It worked!

Question: (by Jake Powning) the raised bump technique is really astonishing! It looks so natural. You compress the wood, carve and sand down to the bottom of the compressions and then immerse it in very hot water, to create that effect? I have to try this!

Answer: Jake, It works with boxwood. The technique is known as ukibori, and there is at least one topic on TCP with more information about it. If ukibori works with other woods, I have not tried it to be able to tell you about it. The fine grain, and hardness are a couple of the attributes of boxwood. The fibers of the wood need to be such that they won't all break when compressed. Now you have me curious about what else might work

I am now working on making the sockets for the four eyes, and am just beginning to saw the amber. Slow progress from now, with careful fitting...

Arrrgh! The last wipe after polishing the fourth eye, dislodged the bit of amber and it got lost! Hours of work, hours of searching. Where does a sand grain sized eye (~2mm) go to? Grrr. I've begun another one. It's a long journey! I did have a couple of lines of defenses for trapping the errant beast, but it slipped past my senses.

Last weekend I completed the piece. After much stressful consideration, I went ahead and used only oil. It was a poor choice, given the nature of this particular piece of boxwood. I had used the scraps of this particular piece of boxwood for other tests, but there was no result that hinted at anything displeasing. The sculptural qualities disappeared, and I shed many tears and wrung my hands for 24 hours. It was not enough to leave it that way, so I squared my shoulders and began to add shading with a single color of artist's oil paint. Phew! PHEW! I feel much better now.

Read about Will Dikel's 3 dimensional viewing in the Photography topic. I find that to be a fascinating technique, once I mastered the eye crossing challenge. One can move around the merged figures quite nicely once the two images are focused on while crossing the eyes. So, here goes: the following images were taken the night the piece was colored. It has dust specks, which have been gently brushed away after the paint surface was firm enough. The piece will dry/cure for a while, until it feels right, then I will brush/buff it gently to bring the surface to an appropriate sheen and feel.

Cross your eyes and find the merged image to see this piece in 3 D. Once you get the hang of it, it is a fun exercise, just a little outside of our usual experiences when viewing imagery.



How are your eyes now? Has anyone figured out how to do it to see the 3 D phenomenon? I think that I will try photographing the piece with a dark background, to see if that helps the effect and visibility.

The thought of everyone staring at the computer screen going crosseyed in the last several hours

brings a smile and a chuckle to me. Thanks!

I took just a couple shots after oiling the piece, and the lighting did help a bit, but in lighting that was not display lighting, the details were struggling to be seen. The color was a strong change for me as well this time, from the oil that is.

The old frogs I have rest with eyes partially closed/open, so it is hoped to convey the tiredness of the old...

I've done the photos on black, and will post the 3D versions. I apologize ahead of time, the file sizes are larger than recommended, but I did want to avoid pixelation. Since the earlier photos, the oil and color has solidified, leaving a touch of translucency and glow to the lighter raised areas. That is nice. I've brushed, rubbed and buffed various areas, to give a nicer tactile quality when it is handled. It takes time to reach a point when the final surface work can be completed. I may have a little more to do, but it is most likely done now. Sorry, I don't have the measurements yet, I'll add them later. It fits in the palm of my hand.

“Twilight Meeting” Boxwood, Amber Inlay







I will be adding these to my web site today. Remember to cross your eyes until you see three distinct images, and when you are focused well on the middle one, you should be able to move your eyes around the image and sense the 3D illusion