

Summer Singer - by Janel Jacobson

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Had a moment and some pressure to post these. More will follow as it begins to emerge from the wood. The real cicada was from Don Fogg. It is huge compared to the cicada we have up here. They are amazing to look at with magnification!

Question: (by kwinn) Looks good so far. I'll be eager to follow this one. I'm glad to see someone else making a maquette (a clay model) before carving. I've just adopted this technique, and found that it really helps set the proportions, alignments, and reference points for a carving. The last small carving I did, I made a maquette and carved directly from it -- I never did sketch a pattern.

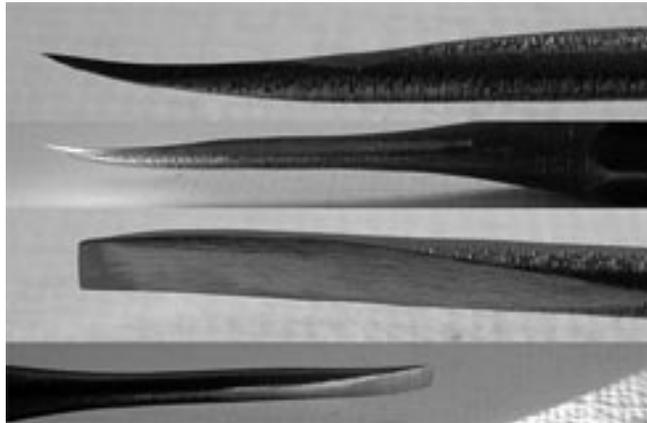
Answer: (by Janel) The clay model idea is a bit frustrating for me but the drawing was even worse this time! The clay did help orient the subjects of insect and branch within the size constraints of the wood, and gave me some guidelines for the waste wood. Getting a piece started is so much fun!



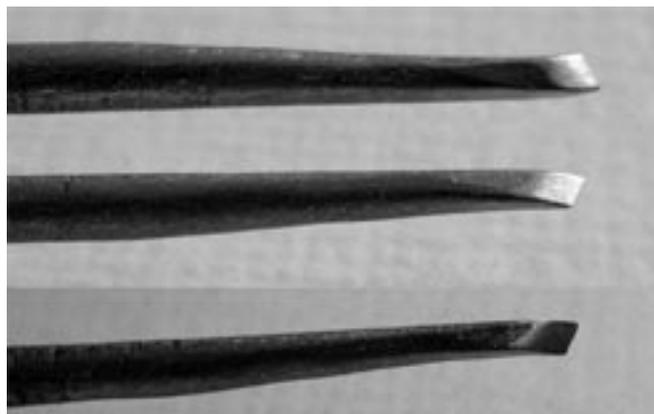
This week I've had some good, long days of carving. The trick was to eat breakfast, drive our son to school and then go to the studio. Sounds simple? Well, that means staying away from the house, >>computer<< until all of the work hours are completed, ending the day with the computer reward! I've accomplished 26 hours of carving in the past three days! Achy a little bit in the wrist, and pleased with the hours. There are many more hours left with the cicada. This morning, son is at home with a vacation day, and I am home too for a while.

I find it amazing that so many hours of work result in so little visual progress sometimes. The work this week involved revealing the underside of the cicada, and beginning to define the wood surface. The underside work required the making of a couple of new tools. I think a couple more would be helpful, I will wait and see. When I find myself picking up and putting down tool after tool, not finding the feel or angle to be just right for the next cuts, then I know that I need to devise a new tool. These new tools were cold ground with a slow rotary tool/water cooled, and whet stones. The blanks were the Craftsmen Sears pin punch style, the higher priced variety.

Found it! Here are the two new tools.



1/16" Craftsman Pin Punch



3/32" Craftsman Pin Punch



The pin punches



One step at a time. I had some good sun today and took these images:

Lots of work left!

The cicada is beautiful and is getting even more. I seen where you have made some tools, I have done so in the past and will do more as the need comes. A while back I purchased the micro set of V and U gouges from Flex Cut. They are 1/8" and 1/16" very sharp and easy to keep sharp. I had purchased them to do faces with, now I am using them on the minature carvings. Thanks for sharing all your great work with us.



It is still in progress, waiting for the oil colors to dry (cloudy and humid does not help) to add color to the branch, and to moderate the strong undercolors. I had a great, dry and sunny day on Saturday, with a quiet studio to apply the first colors.

I struggled with my decision between a monochromatic brown variation, or color. The cicada itself has such great color, and I have a hard time ignoring details... well it is colored.

Question: (by Doug Sanders) Wow! Great texture on the wood. Was this piece a follow-up on ideas stemming from the cicada you did in walrus last year?

Answer: (by Janel) Nope. It is in response to having received a beautiful, large cicada from Don Fogg towards the end of the summer. It was gorgeous, and promised a challenge. It is in the first photo on this topic.



Details: ukibori in a limited amount, to add variety to the surface once colored.

I am busy every day, the coloring is still going on. Patience and perseverance. The camera is not getting a chance to tell any stories. While waiting for one day's work to set and dry, other bits and pieces are being made. That also is evading the camera. You will just have to wait!



I had to take a quick photo of the cicada, better lighting for the best shots are necessary. The color-

ation is mostly in place, but the piece is not done. The color needs to dry, harden, what ever it does. Time needed mostly. In good daylight, the colors are effective. I still debate about a monochrome color scheme, but this choice seems to be working for me.

This week has been a quiet one on TCP. I hope that it means that we are all busily making sawdust, piles of metal filings, or what ever it is we do when we are busy being creative! I know that I have been busy, and having a good time with it!

Question: (by Kas) The past few days I've been browsing thru TCP and what a path it is!!! I'm very impressed with what I see. Your cicada is beautiful!!! What kind of paints did you use? Is it all handpainted or did you use an airbrush for some of it? What kind of wood did you use? I'm having trouble locating some boxwood. Is boxwood really necessary? How about hard maple? You can tell by my questions that I'm a real newbie!!

Answer: (by Janel) Kas, thanks for going deep into TCP and reading. Truly, it is a great source of information for those ready to learn more. The past week or so has been quiet, that happens now and then as we find our work more compelling and our lives getting busy. When we return to TCP we have more to share.

For this piece I have used artist oil paints. There is a latent 2D artist in me, having begun my artist life with painting and drawing in childhood. I love the smells and the ways color work together. This method is not traditional, and is not durable for pieces that would be netsuke and for daily use. My belief is that my work is often looked upon, and handled gently, so the choice is a fair one.

Other pieces have other colors. I've written about nut shell stains, pecan, walnut. Masatoshi's book presents yashabushi from alder cone, and incense smoking for ivories. Some folks use fabric dye, but care must be used so read the cautions. Others use acrylic paints. As Katfen says with her signature, "Creativity is limited only by the imagination."

So, try hard maple, try soft maple, try what ever is at hand. Boxwood has been an ideal wood for the most finely detailed carvings for centuries. See Katfen's topic: <http://www.thecarvingpath.com/forum/index.php?showtopic=511> for examples of such detailed work.

Keep looking for the boxwood if you seek detailed or colorable wood for carving your ideas. Try Gilmer, or Eisenbrand hardwood suppliers. They are USA sources. If you live in the southern half of the eastern US, or perhaps the northwest (not sure about that) you might find that boxwood is removed from landscapes as rubbish now and then, and might get lucky to find landscape workers who would gladly have you dispose of some of the older (larger diameter) logs. I have boxwood samples from three such occasions, from different eastern states, artist friends who were in the right place at the right time. A piece from Baltimore was excellent, I have "scraps" from a friend

who uses larger pieces, and those are from W. Virginia and are good too. I have some English boxwood, from a supplier who lives in the Seattle area. (address at studio) And I have a log from Laos, which I purchased from Eisenbrand Hardwoods.

That is what I used for the cicada. It is a little less dense than the English and Baltimore boxwoods, and a little more open than the W. Virginia boxwood, but is very carvable and colorable. The grain raises a little more than with the harder boxes when wetted, but sands down nicely.

Doug Sanders has acquired boxwood from Asia, and may share contact information with you. I will PM an address for the boxwood from Seattle, though I do not know if he is still supplying it. Jim Kelso, do you know if he is still offering boxwood?

Now, there are scores of other sorts of wood to use also. Just start cutting it with your tools and see what happens. Light colored woods can be a color canvas, dark woods support sculptural work in its own way. Figured woods are beauty of its own and the simple sculptures would likely be the choice. There are so many opportunities with wood!

Oh, hand painted. I don't have an air brush. I am a slow and steady plodder with my work. Thus, there are not many "big" new pieces with each year (big is relative...as in detailed or complex).



I've been busy working on multiple little pieces as the cicada piece settles in to its final stage. The

camera has been waiting for my inspiration, but ... I'd rather be carving I guess. When I've got the little goodies more in order, I'll tell you about the piece in progress. Meanwhile, I am going to Chicago via Amtrak tomorrow and returning Saturday. Quick trip to see a client, and taking the low stress transportation. Eight or nine hours behind the wheel vs putting my feet up and reading for as many hours is a no brainer. Except that the tickets cost more than the gas, but this way I am not using the gas and saving the environment... Where is everybody? What are you all doing? I'm busy, so maybe you all are too! By the way, Happy Spring!



Did I post a before picture?

This is on my web site. I'll pull together a montage of just before coloration, which illustrates the ukibori, subtle as it is, and the textural detail that shows up more clearly before color.

Question: (by Jim Kelso) When did you transfer it to a real twig?! I'm joking because the twig looks so real. Execution beyond belief!

Answer: (by Janel) Jim, I hadn't considered that I was responding to your twig statement! I sometimes wonder if the line I walk with interpreting realism in detail and color is enough. Should I figure out more story somehow. Don't we often wonder what else there may be needed or considered for any given work?

Also, I wondered if this should have been monochromatic, but I just couldn't do it. The beauty of the insect (the real one, a gift from Don Fogg) is in both the form and the color. I did not dare make the wings clear though.

Now, I've got a couple of peapods and a peeking peeper to complete plus the other parts to pull together and have something entirely different to present to the world.



TA-DAAA!

The last shot out of 30! I did something right, and then the battery gave up (I left the adapter cords at the house). Tomorrow I will try to do some individual piece shots. (Mopping my brow smiley, this one was not easy to shoot!)

The shell is black walnut, large polyphemus moth wing quarter: boxwood, leaf: boxwood, peapods and peeper: boxwood, moth: amboyna, pearl eyes, crow feather: ebony, shiny find: baltic amber.

Question: (by Doug Sanders) I also like your notion of incorporating the display stand into the overall presentation theme of assembled 'findings'.

Must have been tough to photograph - adjusting each piece/shadows/multiple colors...

Answer: (by Janel) Yes Doug, it was not easy. Dark and light subjects at the same time with opposing lighting needs, and the flatness of the large wing bouncing light, shiny surfaces... finally it worked.