



This inspirational and informative book is designed to take you on a journey to develop your understanding of form, design, artistic creativity and technical knowledge in woodcarving. Seven innovative projects, which gradually increase in difficulty, introduce and build on important techniques for beginners to learn, practise and adopt. The projects include both abstract and real-life studies to aid exploration of the different art forms that can be created in this versatile medium.

Internationally renowned sculptor, Andrew Thomas, takes you through the carving procedure with clear step-by-step instructions and photographs, illustrating exactly how to approach each form and its details. Scale designs to transfer onto your wood are provided at the start of each project, plus there is a summary of the skills that you will learn and a guide to how long the project will take to complete. Finally, advice is offered on the type of finish to use and how to create a complimentary base onto which to mount your sculpture.

Projects include: Wave, Fossil Form, Cat, Female Torso, Emperor Penguin, Humpback Whale



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Also includes guidance on:

- tools and equipment
- different wood species
- the elements of design
- how to prepare and transfer scale drawings onto wood
- how to cut profiles by hand or with a bandsaw
- effective sanding

£16.99

LEARN TO CARVE IN THE ROUND

ANDREW THOMAS



LEARN TO CARVE Progressive step-by-step projects for the beginner IN THE ROUND



ANDREW THOMAS

WAVE

Difficulty level: 2/10 on the beginner's scale

Time to complete: 10–15 hours

WAVE IS A VERY SIMPLE FORM FOR THE BEGINNER TO CARVE, AND ONE THAT IS FUN TO WORK THROUGH AND EXTREMELY REWARDING TO CREATE. IT IS A REPRESENTATION OF A WAVE, DEPICTING ITS MOTION IN RELATION TO GRAVITY, ENHANCED BY THE NEGATIVE SPACE IN THE HOLLOW CENTRE.

This design is simplicity itself, as it is purely a circle within a circle but with gentle flowing lines on the edges. It will help you to understand how to approach the grain in these areas, working the contour of the mass evenly to great effect. It is also a subtle introduction to design, as the whole piece can easily be modified to accommodate your own ideas – something that is highly recommended.

There are many ways in which you can adapt this design. The first and most obvious is to alter the position or size of the inner circle, which will naturally give a different balance to the sculpture. Another option is to dispense with the separation, keeping the form solid but completely rounding over the edges. The flat square edges at the separation could also be curved so that they flow from the sides of the sculpture around to the outer edges, blending into a point rather than the square end. These are just a few ideas. Try to get your own creative juices flowing and develop and explore an original variation of the concept.

What you will learn

- How to cut a design from one profile view
- How to create a piercing through the sculpture
- The benefits of a flexible rule
- How to approach the grain and create a curved contour
- How to protect vulnerable areas of the sculpture
- The benefits of skimming the surface before sanding
- How to polish the sculpture using waxes
- How to make an appropriate base
- The effect of boiled linseed oil on walnut

TOOLS

No. 3/30
No. 7/20

WOOD

Lime

Dimensions before cutting profile: H 9 x W 11 x D 4½in (229 x 280 x 114mm)

Dimensions of Wave: H 8½ x W 8½ x D 4¾in (216 x 216 x 111mm)

Lime wood is very soft to carve and great for a first project, as it is quite forgiving if you carve it against the grain. The scale of your sculpture will depend on the size of wood that you purchase, but the height/width of the block should be approximately twice that of the depth. You must also allow at least 1½in (40mm) on the base for you to attach it to your vice.



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FOSSIL

Difficulty level: 3/10 on the beginner's scale

Time to complete: 15–25 hours

THE ESSENCE OF THIS SCULPTURE REFLECTS THE SPIRIT OF THE JURASSIC COAST, WHICH IS NEAR WHERE I LIVE IN DORSET, ENGLAND. THE PIECE EMBODIES THE ELEMENTS OF THE COAST'S NATURAL HISTORY: THE FOSSILS, SEASHELLS AND THE SEA. IT IS FULL OF MOVEMENT YET HAS SUBTLE FLOWING CONTOURS.

This project is a progression from the previous project, Wave. The centre ellipse is not cut with a bandsaw and therefore must be produced by hand with a drill and gouges. The edges of the sculpture are curved as opposed to the straight edges of Wave. Patience and time are required to create the gentle flowing contour evenly around the complete outer edge, and the angled edge that connects the top of the sculpture with the ellipse will test and improve your control skills with the introduction of the V-Tool.

What you will learn

- How to make a large piercing or hole in your sculpture
- How to use a V-Tool (No. 12)
- How to approach awkward grain
- How to carve a cylindrical form
- How to secure the sculpture to the base accurately in an upright position
- How to finish the sculpture with boiled linseed oil

TOOLS

No. 3/30
No. 7/20
No. 5/20 (new for this project)
No. 12/10 (new for this project)
Drill bit – 5/32in (4mm)
brad-toothed wood bit
Brawdawl

WOOD

English walnut

Dimensions before cutting profile: H 13 x W 8 x D 3in (330 x 203 x 76mm)

Dimensions of Fossil: H 11¼ x W 7¼ x D 2⅞in (286 x 185 x 73mm)

This sculpture is made from English walnut, which is a much harder wood than the lime used in the previous project and far more unforgiving if you attempt to carve it against the grain.



CAT

Difficulty level: 4/10 on the beginner's scale

Time to complete: 15–25 hours

THIS STYLIZED CAT IS REALLY FUN AND SIMPLE TO PRODUCE. YOU WILL BE USING HOLLOWS AND CONTOURS TO GIVE THE IMPRESSION OF THE UNDERLYING VOLUMES OF THE LEGS, TAIL AND SURFACE ANATOMY, LEAVING JUST THE EARS CLOSE TO THEIR REAL-LIFE APPEARANCE.

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In the early stages of learning woodcarving, one of the most common miscalculations is to be overly cautious when establishing the main form of the subject, thus creating a form that is too square looking. It is vital that you gather as much reference material as possible to give you a clear visual understanding of the form that you are trying to reproduce. This will help you to solve any problems with the surface anatomy and give you the confidence to understand that you are not taking too much of the mass away. To help you with this, study images of cats from all angles, preferably in the same upright seated posture as the subject that you are carving. The study and observation of a living cat will also be advantageous.

What you will learn

- How to shape the form
- How to create the cat's ears, eyes, legs and tail
- How to check for symmetry
- How to create the illusion of abstracted realism

TOOLS

No. 3/30
No. 5/20
No. 7/20
No. 7/6 (new for this project)
No. 9/10 (new for this project)

WOOD

Tulipwood (North American)

Dimensions before cutting profiles: H 10 x W 5 x D 3½in (254 x 127 x 89mm)

Dimensions of Cat: H 8¼ x W 4 x D 3¼in (210 x 102 x 82mm)

Tulipwood is quite hard in density to carve, but it is far more forgiving than the English walnut that was used for the previous project, Fossil. It also has a beautiful grain figuring with the outer sap wood being a light tan and the heart wood various shades of olive green.



FEMALE TORSO

Difficulty level: 5/10 on the beginner's scale

Time to complete: 20–30 hours

THE STUDY OF HUMAN FORM IS A SUBJECT THAT HAS OBSESSED ARTISTS SINCE TIME IMMEMORIAL, AND ONE THAT IS NOT ONLY FASCINATING BUT ALSO VERY IMPORTANT TO EXPLORE AND EXPERIMENT WITH AS YOU BEGIN TO DEVELOP YOUR WOODCARVING SKILLS.

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Working on the human figure will help you to gain valuable technical and creative experience that is essential to your progression as a woodcarver and it will be of immense value as you work through various different subjects and projects. There are many elements that will bring life to a figurative sculpture, but the most important areas of the design are concept, scale, proportion, posture, movement and harmony. The initial concept portraying the meaning of the sculpture will normally be the dictating factor in the pose and motion of the piece, but it is important that all of the various volumes or structures are carefully balanced with one another to create harmony in the finished piece as a whole.

The human body is an incredibly complex machine with almost infinite degrees of articulation and movement that can be very challenging for the sculptor to capture correctly. So, this is a gentle introduction to the subject with a fairly simple abstracted design that incorporates the correct scale of the human form and has movement in the upper body and the legs.

What you will learn

- How to add movement to a figurative sculpture
- How to form the basic shape of the human female figure
- How to abstract certain details
- How to add the subtle surface anatomy of the breast, abdomen, hips, shoulders, back, buttocks and legs
- How to add tensions to the medium
- How to make an appropriate base

TOOLS

No. 3/30
No. 7/20
No. 5/20
No. 9/10

WOOD

Lime

Dimensions before cutting profiles: H 12 x W 4 x D 3in (305 x 102 x 76mm)

Dimensions of Female Torso: H 10¾ x W 3¾ x D 2½in (273 x 95 x 64mm)

GOLDEN RULE You must understand what detail you are trying to achieve before you start working on it.



SWAN

Difficulty level: 6/10 on the beginner's scale

Time to complete: 25–40 hours

THIS DESIGN IS AN ELEGANT ABSTRACTION OF A SWAN, DEPICTING THE REAL ESSENCE OF THIS BEAUTIFUL CREATURE WITH ITS SLENDER, FLUID LINES OF THE WING OVER THE BODY AND GENTLE CURVED NECK, BRINGING MOVEMENT AND LIFE TO THIS MAJESTIC BIRD .

The design of this project can be modified in many different areas so that you can incorporate your own ideas – for example, the body does not have to be pierced through the middle; it could be one solid piece, which would make the exercise slightly easier but put the emphasis on you to solve any arising issues. The angles of the wings can be adjusted to reflect how you would like to portray them, and the curves flowing from the body, through the neck and head, can also be modified to suit your preference and vision.

The curved angles of the body and head are simple in form but quite complex to execute, as you will have to keep changing your angle of approach to the grain each time the angle of the design changes direction, especially through the head and neck. The angles here not only flow from left to right but also from front to back, requiring you to change the direction of your cut many times. This will test you somewhat but give you a great exercise in understanding grain direction and how to approach it.

What you will learn

- How and where to adapt the design to your personal vision
- How to remove large quantities of wood with a coping saw
- How to approach difficult grain directions
- Basic knife work
- How to separate different levels of detail
- How to give the illusion of different volumes
- How to make a base and mount the sculpture

TOOLS

No. 2/20
 No. 3/30
 No. 5/20
 No. 7/20
 No. 9/10
 No. 12/10
 Knife (new for this project)
 Drill bit – 5/32in (4mm)
 brad-toothed wood bit
 Coping saw (optional)

WOOD

Lime

Dimensions before cutting profile: H 10 x W 12 x D 5in (254 x 305 x 127mm)

Dimensions of Swan: H 8 x W 11¼ x D 4½in (203 x 286 x 115mm)

Lime wood was chosen for this project for its appropriate light colour which lends itself to the subject beautifully. It can be bleached to produce an almost pure white finish.



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EMPEROR PENGUIN

Difficulty level: 7/10 on the beginner's scale

Time to complete: 30–50 hours

THE EMPEROR PENGUIN IS THE FIRST OF TWO REAL-LIFE STUDIES IN THIS BOOK. YOU WILL BE UTILIZING MANY OF THE TECHNIQUES THAT YOU HAVE ALREADY LEARNED IN PREVIOUS PROJECTS ALONG WITH SOME NEW ONES TO HELP YOU TO PRODUCE A CONVINCING REPLICATION OF THIS WONDERFUL CREATURE.

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This is a gentle introduction to real-life studies and fairly simple to produce. It has just three main detailed areas to study: the head, wings and feet. These involve some delicate gouge and knife work, which will help you to develop finesse in your technique – finesse being an essential instrument in three-dimensional work.

You can never have too much reference material at your disposal, and when studying real-life subjects, it is of the utmost importance to understand visually exactly what you are trying to reproduce before you make any attempt to apply the detail. There is an abundance of appropriate Internet resources for your reference. Make sure that you are searching the image and/or video section of the search engine and use such search terms (in double quotes) as “emperor penguin head”, “emperor penguin feet”, “emperor penguin tail” and so on.

American black walnut was chosen for its strength, colour and suitability for the subject. The details of the bill, wings and feet are fragile, so it was important to use a stronger wood less likely to snap. The lighter sap wood was positioned on the front side of the penguin where it would be white in real life, helping to bring realism to the subject.

What you will learn

- How to carve with delicacy and finesse
- How to carve the detail of the bill
- How to carve the detail of the eye
- How to carve the detail of the fins
- How to carve the detail of the tail
- How to carve the detail of the feet
- Advanced knife work

TOOLS

No. 1S/5 (new for this project – optional)
 No. 2/5 (new for this project)
 No. 2/12 (new for this project)
 No. 3/20 (new for this project)
 No. 3/30
 No. 5/20
 No. 7/6
 No. 7/20
 No. 8/7 (new for this project)
 No. 9/10
 No. 12/3 (new for this project)
 No. 12/10
 Knife
 Round riffler file (optional)
 Bradawl
 Drill bit – ½in (13mm)
 brad-toothed wood bit
 Drill bit – ⅛in (2–3mm)
 brad-toothed wood bit

WOOD

American black walnut

Dimensions before cutting profiles: H 9½ x W 5 x D 4in (240 x 130 x 100mm)

Dimensions of Penguin: H 8¼ x W 4¾ x D 3⅞in (210 x 111 x 98mm)



HUMPBACK WHALE

Difficulty level: 9/10 on the beginner's scale

Time to complete: 60–80 hours

YOU HAVE NOW ARRIVED AT THE MOST CHALLENGING PROJECT IN THIS BOOK: A REALISTIC STUDY OF A HUMPBACK WHALE, DESIGNED TO PORTRAY ITS NATURAL, GRACEFUL MOVEMENT AND ITS UNIQUE ANATOMICAL DETAIL.

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This sculpture will be accomplished by employing techniques that you have already learned in previous chapters and building on them with some interesting new ones, including adding the pectoral fins on the side of the body and the tubercles (bumps) on the head, carving the delicate detail of the flukes and pinning the whale securely to the mount. These techniques should certainly stimulate your design and problem-solving faculties and they will be invaluable to you as you progress beyond this book, as they can be utilized in many different ways, whether it's in designing and creating increasingly complex projects or in simply knowing how to mount your work in a clever and original style.

What you will learn

- How to laminate (glue) a block onto your whale to enable you to secure it to your faceplate
- How to carve the surface anatomy
- How to carve the rostrum (upper head)
- How to carve the blow holes
- How to make templates to aid your accuracy
- How to carve the detail of the eyes
- Advanced knife work
- How to carve the line of the mouth
- How to carve with delicacy and finesse
- How to carve the detail of the flukes
- How to carve the bumpy dorsal ridge
- How to effectively create the tubercles
- How to carve the ventral pleats
- How to make the pectoral fins
- How to attach the pectoral fins to the body
- How to make the sea mount
- How to mount the humpback whale on the sea mount

TOOLS

No. 1S/5
 No. 2/5
 No. 3/20
 No. 3/30
 No. 5/20
 No. 7/6
 No. 7/14
 No. 7/20
 No. 8/4 (new for this project)
 No. 8/7
 No. 9/10
 No. 11/3 (new for this project)
 Knife
 Bradawl
Note: See overleaf for additional tools and materials required

WOOD

Whale body

American black walnut
 Dimensions of Humpback
 Whale: H 3 x W 13 x D 4¼in
 (76 x 330 x 108mm)

Pectoral fins

American black walnut
 Dimensions: 2 x H 3½ x W 2
 x D 1½in (89 x 51 x 41mm)

Tubercles

American black walnut, English walnut, ebony and lime ¾in and ½in (2mm and 3mm) dowels

