

Rick Urban Woodturner

Changing the way you think about wood... One piece at a time!

Carving With Fire

Surface embellishment with wood burning and branding

Demonstration Companion Guide

Primary Audience: Beginner to Advanced

Time: About 1 hour

Prerequisites: None.

Objectives.

The object of this demo is to introduce you to embellishing your work with wood burning and branding.

I will...

- Show and explain my equipment and supplies
- Show examples and illustrate methods.
- Demonstrate techniques to produce different results.



Introduction.

- This demonstration will not make you a Graeme Priddle or Jacques Vesery, but it will get you started on the journey to find your own voice.
- I distinguish woodburning from pyrography (Jacques Vesery likes to call it “sissy burning.”) by the amount of heat used.
- You don’t need a ton of equipment, but some items will be more suitable and useful than others.
- There are lots of ways to do this. I will show you how I do it.

Equipment.

Burners. There are lots of wood burners to choose from. I have several.

- Single low power.
- Double more powerful.
- Battery charger.

Tips. Just a few of the many choices will let you do most of what you want.

- Purchased (can get expensive).
- Home made (not difficult).

Shapes (my most often used).

- Skew / knife edge.
- Spatula.
- Ball.

Miscellaneous.

- Brass brush
- Honing stone (diamond recommended 600 grit or finer)

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- Fan (blowing away from the work)
- Something to cradle the work.

Process.

Form and Design

- Start with a good form. **No amount of carving will make up for bad form!**
- And a good design. **No amount of texture will make up for bad design!**
- Doesn't have to be perfect to be pleasing and satisfying.
- If it looks like it is supposed to be exact, it better be exact!
 - Perfect comes later.
 - With practice.
 - Lots of it!
- Most patterns look better if made random.
 - Which has to be learned.
 - We tend to line things up, and when we don't do it perfectly it shows.

Designs

- Repeated shapes
 - Overlapped (illusion of depth)
 - Non overlapped (e.g. mud cracks)
 - Geometric (e.g. triangles)
 - Organic (e.g. amoeba)
- Recognizable objects
- Abstract forms (illusions / suggestions / approximations)
- Enhancing grain / spalting lines
- Positive / negative space
- Pattern or freehand
- Pencil guidelines (We tend to digress from uniformity and continuity)

Methods

- Line drawing with a knife edge / skew
 - Hot enough to cut through grain smoothly
 - Cool enough to keep up with it
- Stipling with a blunt point / ball
 - Like micro branding
 - Random
 - Rhythm
- Branding

Techniques

- Tips with edges should be kept sharp.
- Brush off carbon buildup. It acts as insulation.
- Pulling toward you affords better control.
 - Think of a knife slicing a tomato. It doesn't cut by scraping sideways.
- Heat the tip to a dull red glow.
 - Use as much heat as you can keep up with.
 - We don't want flames.
- Alcohol or acetone can cleanup much of the residues.

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Making your own tips (if time permits)

References

- See my lists of vendors and artists at...

<https://www.rickurbanwoodturner.com/resources>

For more information visit my website

<http://RickUrbanWoodturner.com/>
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