Carving Factsheet

Carving is a technique using wood and carving tools to create shapes, figures and patterns.

In the **process** of carving wood, the carver can use a design pattern applied to a chosen piece of wood that is the right size. Different tools are used to remove small pieces of the wood to reach the design shape, and to create a 3D pattern or figure.

A wood carver **begins a new carving** by selecting a piece of wood the approximate size and shape of the figure or pattern they will create. The **type** of wood is important. Hardwoods are more difficult to shape but last longer. Softer woods may be easier to carve, but are less resistant to damage. Any wood can be carved but they all have different qualities and characteristics. The choice will depend on the requirements of carving being done: for example a piece of everyday furniture would need to be hard-wearing, but a detailed pattern on a picture frame will hardly be touched so it can be made with a softer wood.

The **Carving knife** is a specialized knife used to pare, cut, and smooth wood.

A **V tool** is used for parting, and in certain classes of flat work for emphasizing lines.

A **gouge** is a tool with a curved cutting edge used in a variety of forms and sizes for carving hollows, rounds and sweeping curves. There are special names for the different sizes and shapes of gouge like Fish Tail, Veiner, Straight and Spoon.

The **Coping Saw** is a small saw that is used to cut off chunks of wood.

The **Chisel,** which can be large and small, has a straight cutting edge which is used for making lines and cleaning up flat surfaces.

A **Carvers mallet** is used with the chisel to help it cut through harder wood. The chisel is hit with the mallet.

Sharpening equipment, usually a stone is very important for making sure the equipment is sharp enough to create clean, crisp edges.

The **woods** used for carving vary greatly in hardness and grain. The most common woods include boxwood, pine, pear, walnut, willow, oak, and ebony.

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