Widow Maker's Crafternoon
EPISODE 130 · CRAFT GUIDE

Bosses, Knobs, Bars, and Polished Ornaments

A few polished knobs put points of light into a dark ground.



From A Manual of Wood-carving (Leland, 1891) · public domain

"Sparing shine, wide gaps, dark ground, crossing bars."

1. **Carve the Boss**
   Carve your boss or knob hemispherical, or flatter if you like, even nearly flat. Leave it plain or carve it, but always keep the edge smooth and polish it.

2. **Place It Sparingly**
   Set your knobs or bosses wherever there are wide spaces between the patterns. Use either a few large points or many small ones, but use them sparingly.

3. **Darken the Ground**
   Prick, punch, or dot the ground to darken it. Oil will soak into the holes and darken them permanently.

4. **Polish for Contrast**
   In certain kinds of work, especially much flat-carving meant simply to ornament a surface at no great expenditure of labour, polish the stems and portions of the leaves, or sometimes all the pattern, against the darkened ground. As a general rule polish should be sparing.

5. **Cross with Bars**

It was very common at one time to cross either the pattern or the ground with bars or stripes. It is not natural, except where it is given in long and short lines to represent the graining of wood.

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Ornament Knobs and Handles

Apply this same ornamentation to door-knobs, since they are effectively bosses. Use it on handles for bureaus, cabinets, and other furniture too.