Widow Maker's Crafternoon

EPISODE 122 · CRAFT GUIDE

Carving in the Round

There is no wrong side to a carving finished all the way round.



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

> "Model first, round it rude, then carve away the hollows."

1 **Model It If You Can**

Carving in the round is least difficult for someone who can model, so model the whole piece in clay or wax first if you can. If that is not convenient, mark out the dimensions with compasses instead.

2 **Start with Soft Pine**

Make your first attempts at carving in the round in soft pine wood, since it is the easiest to model. Do not be discouraged if your first or second attempt turns out a failure.

3 **Block Out All Sides**

Cut out a simple object, such as a wooden shoe, a rabbit, or a fish, on a large scale, working all of its sides. Repeat this until you can do it easily, and you will have mastered the difficulty that alarms most beginners, that of blocking out from all sides.

4 **Round Then Hollow**

If you have not modelled the whole piece first, mark out its different dimensions with compasses. Bring it into form by rounding the whole into a rude shape, then very gradually cut away the hollows.

5 **Measure as You Go**

As you carve, study the work alternately in profile and full face. Continually measure it with callipers and compasses to check that you are preserving the proportions.

6

Practice on Waste Wood

If you are unsure how to cut a feature such as an eye, a lip, or a mouth, carve it first on a piece of waste wood, and repeat it there until you have no difficulty. Anyone who grudges the time for this practice will never make an artist.