



Preening Swan

Preparation:

Apologies if you were expecting a 'working drawing' .

If you've watched the videos you'll have seen that I started by making a clay model - and, even before that, I'd researched the swan and printed many photos to help me. To help me do what?

Visualise. Finding the form inside the block.

This swan is 3 dimensional with a beautiful turn to the neck. Two dimensional drawings or photographs wouldn't be enough for me to feel confident that I knew what I was doing and I strongly suggest that a model is also what you should make.

Modelling:

When I suggest to students that they create a model as the first step in a carving, they often blanch I've even heard them groan: Surely not; that's extra work! It'll all take longer. It's not carving! I'm hopeless at modelling! - and pretty bad at art in general...

If those are familiar feelings, stop it! Give them up. You're a carver. And making a model is as normal as drawing to anyone sculpting in 3D.

1. We are not talking about gallery level modelling. We are talking about *information*; getting your mind comfortably around what it is you are trying to carve out of a block of wood. That's all you need to do. The model doesn't have to be exact, just clear enough to help you sort out the size and forms in the subsequent carving.
2. You only need to model a part. In the workshops you see I made 3 models: the whole idea to start with, and the head and the tail when I needed to.
3. You are not going to copy your model. I stomp looking at my model quite soon, as soon as I have a grasp of the wood.
4. It's not easy to carve wood back on. It's very easy to stick more clay on, or bend it.
5. I have never made a model that didn't save me time in the long run, never mind the heartache of carving in the wrong direction.
6. You will solve problems such as wood dimensions; working profile and gluing up; first cuts; high spots, what wood to leave and what you can safely remove. Also how to use grain strength and looking for grain weakness in the design in the design
7. Clay is cheap. You are going to ditch/recycle your model when you have done with it and nobody need ever see it.

Most importantly:

8. **Relax.** Don't be too serious about your modelling, or self-critical. Keep light. Feel free to explore and change your mind. Think of what you are doing as playing. Playing with mud. That's not something to give yourself a hard time about!

Wood:

Lime (US Basswood), Sycamore, Maple - basically anything that bleaches well.
Do test on spare wood first!

Dimensions and Construction:

I enlarged my swan to the wood I had. Start by looking at your wood, whether you might have to join it and where the glue lines might end up in the carving

Tools:

- My bigger sculpture gouges: #3,7 x 1 1/4in. (30mm)
- My more 'go to' sculpture gouges: #3, 4, 6, 7, 8 x 1in. (25mm)

More regular carving tools:

- #3, 6 x 1/8, 1/4, 1/2in. (3, 6, 14mm)
- #4 x 1/4in. (6mm)
- #5 x 1/4, 3/8, 5/8in. (6, 10, 16mm)
- #6 x 1/8, 1/4, 3/8, 1/2in. (3, 6, 10, 14mm)
- #8 x 1/8in. (3mm)
- #10 x 1/8, 1/4, 3/8, 1/2in. (3, 6, 10, 14mm)

Also:

- Shortbent (spoon) gouge x 3/8in.(10mm)
- Mallet
- Rasps and Rifflers

Finish:

2-part wood bleach.

