





THE A-B-C's OF FACE CARVING

The human face is two thirds wide and three thirds tall using the Rule of Three of Facial proportions. The key is to think of the face as being narrower in width than the length of the face.

Reading the photograph above left to right on the bottom row the first head block is divided into three sections of the Rule of Three: hairline to eyebrow; eyebrow to bottom of nose; bottom of nose to bottom of chin.

The second head block has the angle planes established angling up from tip of nose through the eyebrows to hair line and angling down from tip of nose through chin.

The third head block has the eyebrow notch cut between tip of nose and hair line.

The fourth head block has the hair line notched angling toward the temple area of the head. The eye brow notch has an angled notch on either side of original eyebrow notch. Three planes of the forehead are sliced from eyebrows to hair line notch. Two planes are sliced up

from the nose line to the angled notches of the eye brows, which establishes the nose ridge plane and two planes on either side of nose ridge.

Top row of head blocks on the left begins with nose nostrils angled notch cuts and additional planes on side of forehead and the beginning of dental curve.

The next head block shows the nose nostrils, smile line and mouth mound established with a three cut triangular chip cut. The mouth mound is one third of distance of area between nose and chin.

The next head block has refined the planes of the face to lay a good foundation for rounding the corners of the planes in preparation for carving in the details of the face as is depicted in the last head block on the top right.

FORM FOLLOWS FUNCTION and DETAIL FOLLOWS FORM.

Woodcarving is basically using a cutting tool to shape the wood by rounding square corners and flattening round surfaces.

While the head/face is basically made up of round surfaces, yet underneath this roundness there are angles and planes that have an appearance of flat planes. The purpose of this reference to angles and planes of the face is for the carver to have a mental image of the make up of facial features in order to carve that image into wood.

Narrowness of the face along with angles and planes of the face is the beginning step in carving the head and face to the basic form, which is ninety five per cent of carving a face. The last five per cent is carving the details of the face. Detail carving is putting the icing on the cake. Baking the cake is the carving to form analogy. Putting icing on a half baked cake ruins the cake just as carving details before there is a proper FORM foundation ruins facial carving.

WHITTLE FOLK 'POKE BUSTS



ROUNDING SQUARE CORNERS AND FLATTENING ROUND SURFACES

The head fits into the hat rather than the hat sitting on the head, thus, the head covering is carved to basic FORM first and then the head is carved to fit into the head covering. Head covering could be hair, hat, feather head band, bandanna or a bald head.

First step is to round the corners of block to make a dowel shape as most hats have a round brim or variation of roundness. Next draw a center line across the top and down the front of the dowel area to indicate the slight turn of the head or direction the face will be looking. Next, begins to shape the basic form of the style of hat by carving above the brim to gradually shape the crown of the hat. When it gets to the approximate size of hat desired then begin to shape the bottom of the brim by thinning the wood under the hat brim that will become the basic form of the head going up into the hat. While carving the form of the head visually and mentally line up head and crown of the hat all the way around. Allow enough wood for certain parts of the head like the ears, nose, hair and sideburns or beard and mustache while carving to basic form.

The two photographs above are for carving busts but the same principles applies for any carving that contain facial features.



Carving a head and face in a basswood hen egg begins by carving the head covering which in this illustration in a Mohawk hair roach that will represent the hairline for the Rule of Three of Facial Features.

Next draw a center line down the front of the egg dividing into the Rule of Three with an arching line for eyebrow, a wide "V" line for nose nostril angles and a small arching line for bottom of chin (as in the first egg on left.)

The second egg from left has the nose notches and under the chin notch carved into the egg. Above the eyebrow arching line angled planes for the forehead are sliced to flatten the round surface of the egg. The first slice removes the center line above the eyebrow line indicated with the number 1. On either side of number 1, slice another flat plane indicated by number 2. On the outside of number 2, slice another flat plane indicated by number 3 to be the temple area of the forehead.

The third egg has had the eyebrow notches carved along with facial planes on either side of nose and the dental curve area of face. The ears are also indicated with a notch cut above and below each ear in line with the eyebrow at top of ear and nose at bottom of ear.

The fourth egg shows a completely carved face of an Indian. Together all four eggs offer a comparison of the progressive steps in carving a face beginning with a round surface like an egg.



Here is another example of carving an Oriental face with a mustache and a top knot hair braid following the same basic steps as the previous example.

If a hat is the head covering on an egg, then most of the forehead portion of the face would be up in the hat but the same principles would be followed.



Carving a face in relief or half round is illustrated in the above photograph. On the flat area draw guidelines of a face indicating the head covering, the hair line, beard line and the Rule of Three divisions of the eyebrows, nose, chin and mouth line. Studying the examples above one can imagine what areas are to be left higher, which are to be lowered to create the illusion of facial features with a shorter depth of field. Once again, begin with carving the head covering and the head fitting into the hat. Two angled cuts that make a notch cut is used as often as possible to lower areas along with three cut triangular chip cuts .



Example for carving a monkey face in relief or half round or better yet look in a mirror to study a face worthy of comic relief.

WHITTLE FOLK SHELF SQUATTER



Example of carving a Shelf Squatter with the head covering carved first so that the head can be carved as going up into the hat. The first photograph above is a profile view showing the area cut out of the back of the block that will sit on a shelf along with the progressive steps of carving the hat and then the head.

The second photograph is of three progressive stages in carving of the facial features with the completed carving on the right.

WHITTLE DWARFS



WHITTLE DWARFS are carved with very simple facial features showing primarily the nose, ears, and mouth area as the eyes are covered by the floppy hat. They begin as a one inch square by an inch and three quarter block of basswood.



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