

Pyrography: The Art of Wood Burning

Supplies

Woodburning Unit – variable heat

Nibs and pens for woodburning

Good light – need side-lighting to show detail

Small fan and/or mask

Very fine sandpaper and/or fine sanding stick

Artist's eraser and toothbrush

Wood

Basswood is very good

Birch Plywood is great for portraits

Pine burns unevenly

Avoid using treated or exotic wood

Always keep scraps of wood for testing

Sand wood with the grain until smooth

Project Image

Choose project image

Resize to fit your piece of wood

Black and white helps to define values

Transfer image to project

Only use transfer paper NOT carbon paper

Masking tape or Frog tape

Do not use sharp pencil or pen

Trace as lightly as possible

Good reference material is critical

Practice, Practice Practice!!!

Different types of wood respond differently to burning

Practice different designs and textures

Using different nibs and pens in different positions

Learn the way different grain react in the wood you are burning

Time to Burn

Test before you burn - on scrap wood – every time you put down the pen

Temperature is critical

Shade lightly at first to determine values – touch and glide

Always pull the pen toward you

Use helping hand to turn wood

Work upside down to determine shape and value

Hold pen in different positions to create different effects

Always use side lighting

Build up value slowly

Walk away frequently

Finish segments in one sitting – your burning will vary from day to day

No harsh outlines around objects unless structures – Keep edges soft

Use full value scale

You can use very fine sandpaper or a sanding stick to lighten burns

Erase transfer marks, use toothbrush to clean wood

Keep nibs clean with very fine (1000) sandpaper

Seal with a spray acrylic varnish (matte)

Add color

Seal first to preserve details

Use very light washes

Test colors on the same type of scrap wood

Just a hint of color to accent the project

Good Luck and enjoy

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