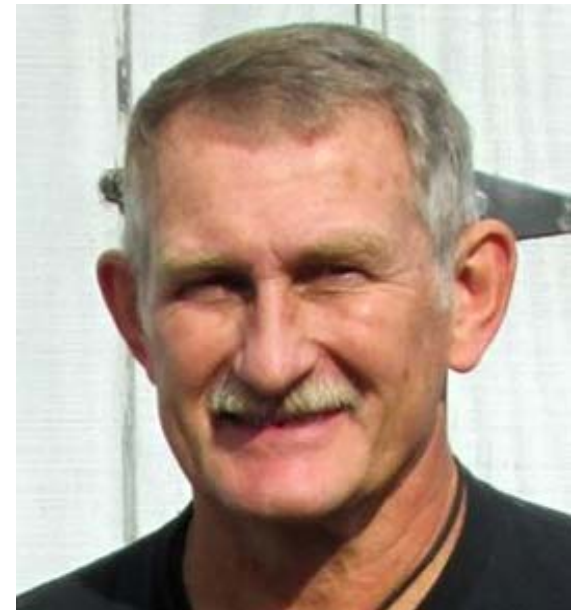


How To Make Your Carvings Come To Life

Observations by Mark Bosworth, Athol MA

Ridgway Chainsaw Carver's Rendezvous 2015



My Background Gift & Hobbies

...An artistic gift or bent to almost everything I do.

- drawing
- painting
- taxidermy



- wood carving (by hand and with power)

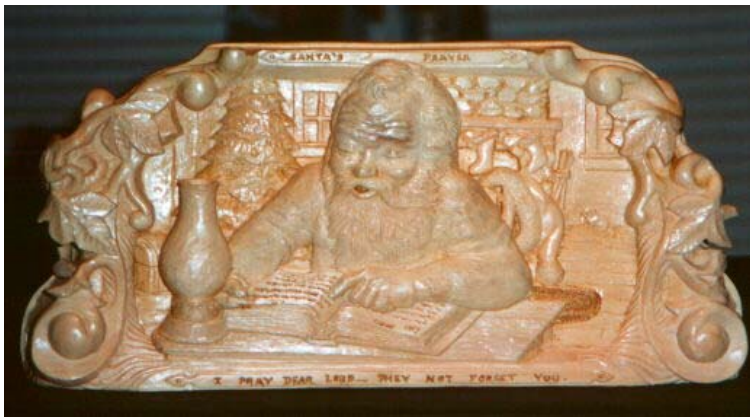
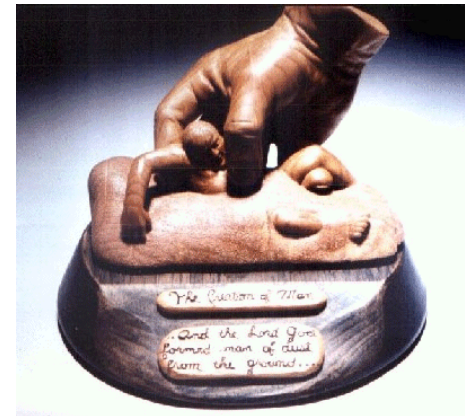
I love to hunt, hike, watch wildlife and photography

I also play guitar and do some song writing and poetry.



How I got started in wood carving, and later chainsaw sculpture

- no schooling or formal training or education in art or sculpture, nor in the my other hobbies I have pursued
- *always had a fascination with sculpture and never thought of wood as the medium... now both a passion*
- could say am “self taught”, but more inclined to say that I am merely a student of God’s creative excellence
- am still learning as I try to “recreate personal expressions” from His incredible and marvelous creation



How Do You Make Your Carvings Come To Life? *Flow*

- You need to engage the viewer with artwork that is captivating and believable
- You want to engage the viewer to the attitude emotion or action portrayed.
- The piece should have flow to it.
- Flow is a continuity of lines that will draw the viewers eyes into the piece.
- Use structure and lines that tie the piece together as a whole
- This should also include the base of the sculpture



Repeated Designs and Patterns Unique in Nature

Within nature in birds, animals, reptiles, flowers, plants, ...etc, there is a world full of repeated designs and patterns unique and yet common to each species. Learning about or helping the carver /artist see and be aware of some of these patterns or designs will –I think, greatly improve the desired and finished results.



The Style of Art or Carving You Wish to do is Irrelevant!

- There is no rule that says this is the way it should look or be done
- As chainsaw artists, we get to take from our imagination and go with it as far as we want.
- But whatever the design, it is subject to some basic principles.
- There is a need for an understanding of basic structure –the skeletal and movement capability.
- It does not matter if you are carving something -*
Realistic * Whimsical * Stylized * Humorous *
Serious or even Abstract.

Don't try to imitate others, develop your own style, be true to your own instincts

Basic Thought..

- If you're trying to make something look alive – you need to give it ***“Movement”, “Attitude” or “Expression”***.
- **Giving Your Carvings Life** -Involves some basic principals:
 - Action
 - Balance
 - Anatomy

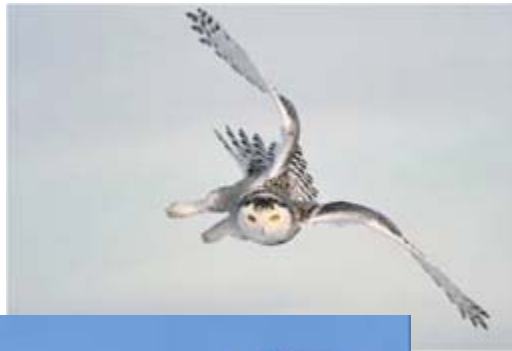
Action- *If it's not moving it must be resting, sleeping or dead*

- Action involves an extension of movement, expression or attitude.
- As simple a tilt or turn of the head, a slightly or fully lifting a wing, legs apart or extended, dropping or raising the neck head or shoulder.
- If you are going for lively or explosive action, you need to emphasize an outstretching or extension of the head and neck combined with over extension of some of the legs



Action.... or flaring or cupping the wings if carving a bird

A birds wings tend to most often mirror each other in flight, unlike arms and legs wings will only move freely completely independent of each other while perched or standing.



Notice the almost identical wing pattern as well as artistic expression in these photos

Action- For Example

...someone to your side calls your name; you turn your head to see

...in the process your head naturally tilts, your brow will raise and your eyes will open a bit more as you turn and “look” in response.

This movement creates an expression that was not there a second ago. Much of this holds true in many mammals as well.



Little nuances can sometimes make a big difference in the overall believability of your carving.

Action and Flow Lines

When drawing or planning out your sculpture try to identify and keep strong flowing lines that move in and with the direction of the desired expression of action from back to front.



Lines of Motion showing these raptor's versatility, flexibility and expressiveness



Close- Up References and Proportions of Dominant Features

Before you start your carve get close-up references of major dominant features of what ever subject you choose.



Balance

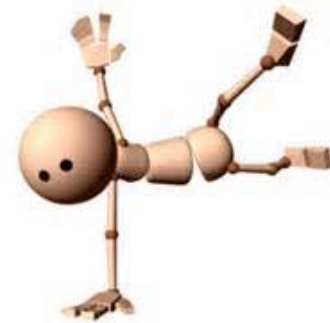
Think about the central weight of the subject
foot placement, as well as the counter
or displacement of weight

Try to mentally place yourself in the caring so
as to better feel the expression and
attitude of my subject.

If there is forward motion there is also a
backward push.

If an animal is turned sharply and looking back
the neck as well as the body on the
inside will naturally appear short and
fur will likely be bunched up as the
skin and rib cage compress, while
over extended on the other

The balance of weight may be expressed by a
wider stance or placement of the feet.



Balance- con't

With birds the balance of weight varies with species and stance. Beautiful plumage covers a very strange looking creature –if you were to see them w/o the feathers. Most have long tail feathers on relatively small bodies. But the basic form w/o the feathers is very much the same in most birds.



Balance with Asymmetry

Just by placing one leg up and close to the body and the other down lower on a post or branch you immediately create greater artistic expression and an anticipation of suspense or action as I did in this stylized carving



Anatomy... The various parts and features, proportions of the body, bone structure , muscle and their placement

Learn where they connect

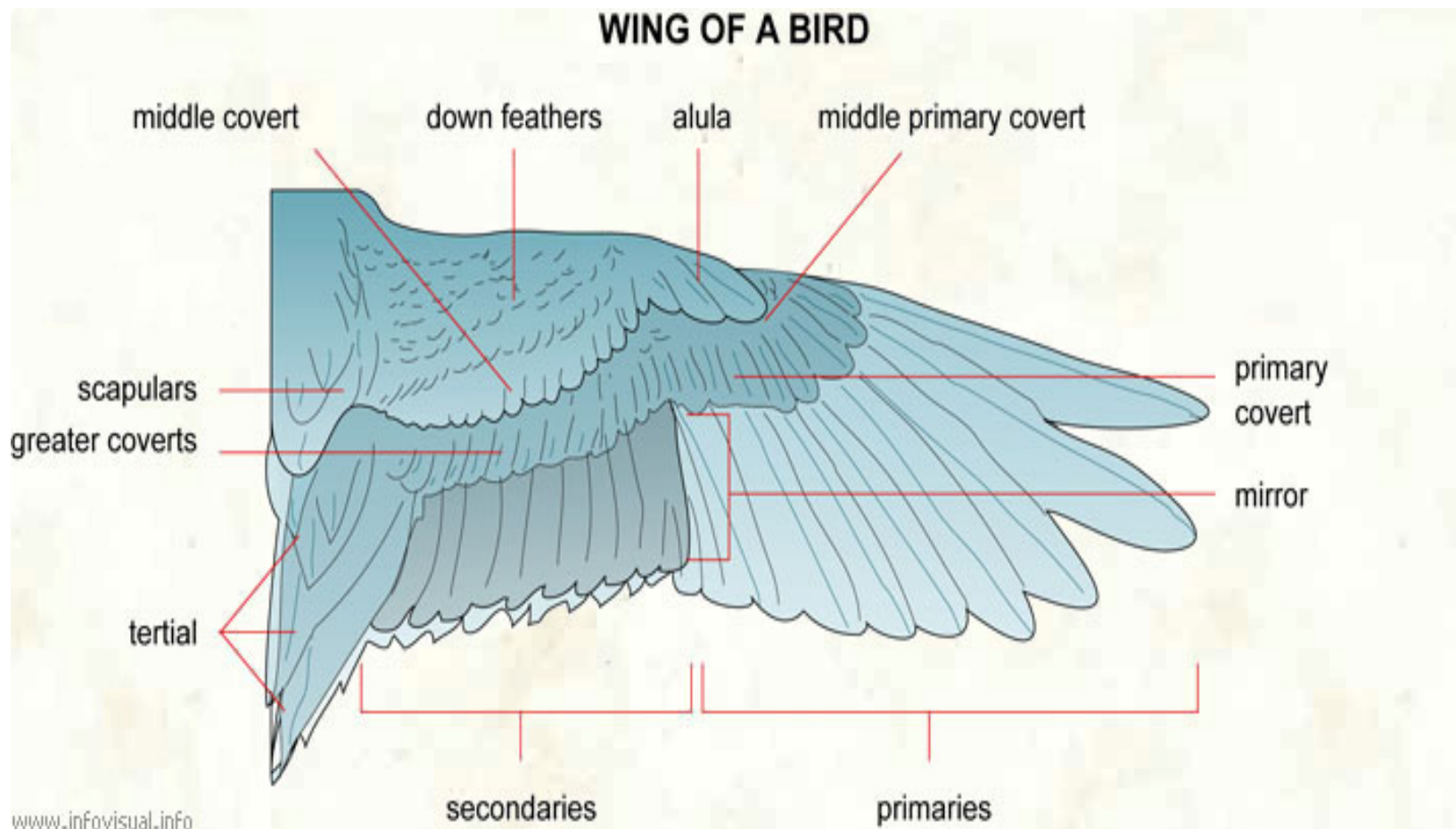
Learn how they move.

Understand your subject,



Almost every living creature, person, bird, animal or reptile etc... has a skeletal frame with joints overlaid with muscle covered with skin scales fur or feathers... having a basic understanding of your subject (I think) is very important to creating a convincing carving or sculpture, whether you are going for realism or crazy abstract, ... especially true if realism is sought for.

Understanding Bone Structure Along with Patterns Add a Lot to Realism.



*Many, many resources on the web, also browse to “images”
- they are full of information.*

Study it ! And often.... Even on very familiar subjects!

Do some home work.

Use and look at lots of references and even watch videos so you can observe your subject in motion.

Stop and replay,



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=37MNE8tOBG4>

Draw or Trace in at Least Two Views

If you can't draw well -find a picture as close to what you're hoping to create as possible and trace it.

Doing so will help to reinforce basic form, and lines and some of the major external features and characteristics of your subject.

What lies beneath the fur or feathers is actually of greater importance; because it is here that the artist with that knowledge can accurately move and even exaggerate the position to express movement.

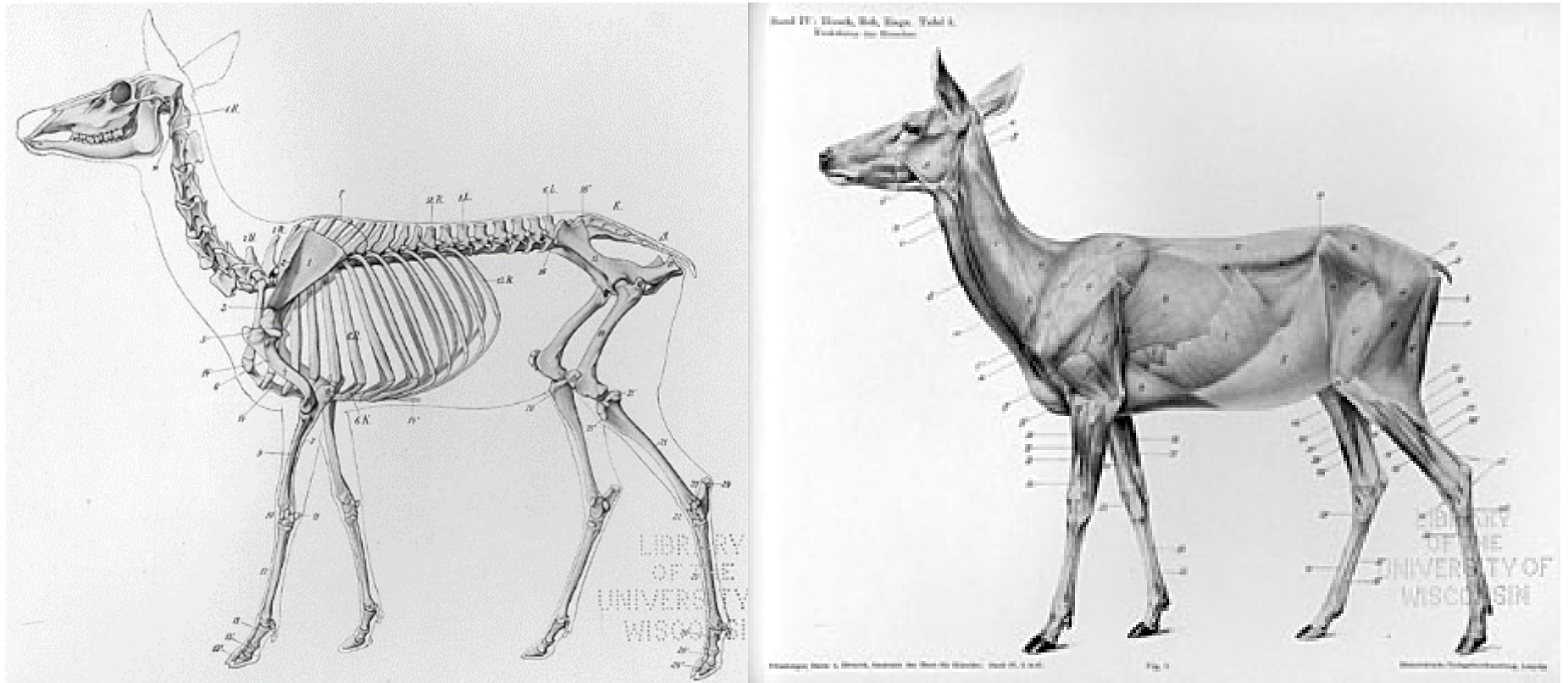
Need a good photo

Bone and Muscle Structure

As you look at bone structure, take note of placement and the natural angle of line they create

Take special note of head and scull, jaw placement

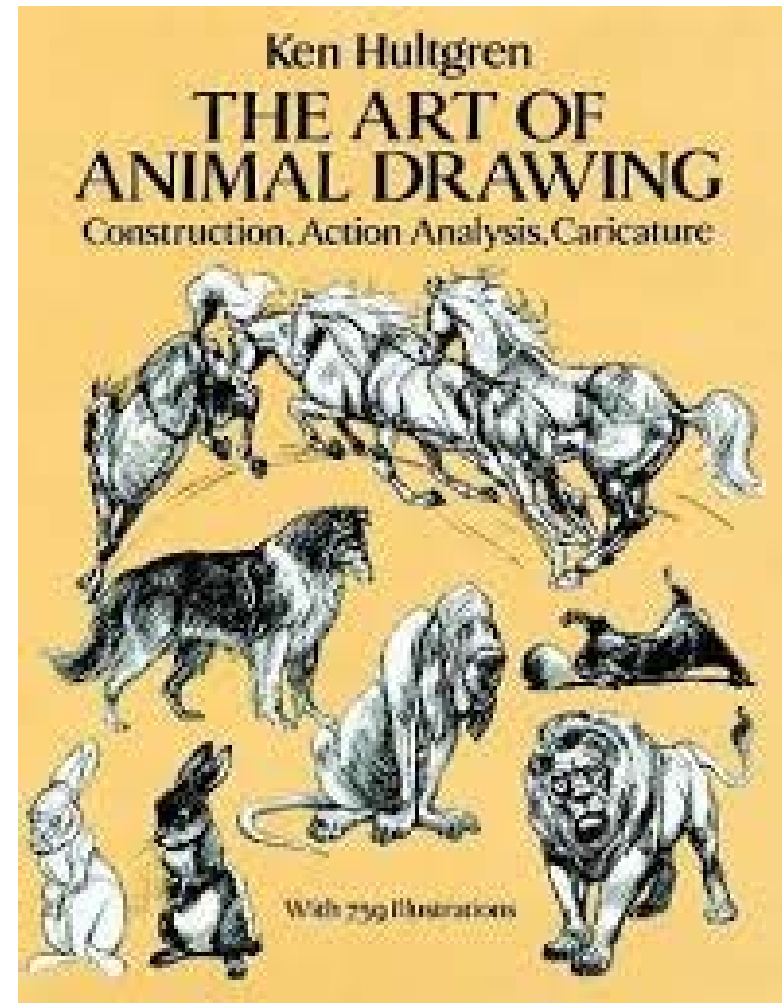
This will help when changing expression to “keep it real” and believable



These are key hints when exaggerating or moving toward a stylized carving

Resources

One of my favorite books, one I have had for years is, Ken Hultgren's "The Art Of Animal Drawing" this edition was published in 1993 a replication of the original published in London 1951 it is very well done and has more to say with example and illustrations than I can cover here.
This is one I have had for years.



If you purchase it "read the preface" in the beginning, it will help you so much more than just looking at the pictures.

There are many similar helps available, like "An Atlas of Animal Anatomy for Artists."

<http://www.ramanujanramanujan.com/folder/Ellenberger%20-%20Atlas%20Animal%20Anatomy%20For%20Artists.pdf>

Get a Thorough Understanding of Your Subject

Unless you picture and understand some of the basic characteristics and flexibility of your subject, you will be very likely to limit the pose to a drab or ridged pose. Most species are very agile and incredibly flexible, unless they are posturing, for example a strutting turkey or a rutting buck approaching a competitor buck.



Getting a Good Start on Your Piece

Before you start cutting, draw and make a rough outline of your subject on the wood, divide it into sections.

Draw and redraw on the wood often, especially for newer carvers.

Draw a profile of your carving and at least a front view, on paper and on the wood, or it might be easier for some to cut a small slab off two sides.

If you want a one piece carving the make sure it all “fits” from all angles first or you will be forced to distort the anatomy and composition, or have to resize picture or your block.

Try to cut as much of your profile out as you can from one viewing perspective at a time.

Mark's Closing Thoughts...

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Mark Bodsworth, Athol, MA

Mark will talk on: “How to Make Your Carvings Come to Life”

Gifted with many artistic interest and talents, Mark’s strongest desire and passion is sculpture. He works in many different styles, sizes and wood types from highly detailed, eye catching miniatures to larger than life chain saw sculptures.

A background in taxidermy gave Mark knowledge of anatomy, important for realism. But he says that paying attention to detail and a God given patience is key to bring to life, and almost give breath, to an otherwise lifeless sculpture. Mark will try to help you put expression and attitude into

your carvings. <http://bosart.tripod.com/art.html>

<https://www.facebook.com/mark.bosworth.104>