



CANOE BOWL

Bowls were carved from wood and sometimes goat or sheep horn. Some bowls were simple for everyday use; others were ornately carved with crest figures and brought out for ceremonial feasts. Canoe bowls were miniature versions of larger ocean- and river-going boats, but they were sometimes exaggerated in shape. Expanding on your knowledge from previous workshops, the Feast Bowl workshop starts looking at Northwest Coast art from a sculpture point of view. The workshop applies more symmetry and opportunities for additional experience with hand tools, like speciality gauges and finishing products.

Materials

- Yellow Cedar 3 ½" x 3 ¾" x 12 ¼"

Supplies

- Pencils: HB, F
- Eraser (gum erasers work best)
- Tracing paper
- Thick construction paper (heavy weight that holds up to tracing)
- Tape

- Flexible clear ruler (knitting ruler)

- Rubber mat (cupboard liner)

- Sandpaper – 100-, 120-, 150-, and 220-grits

Tools

- Templates
- Exacto knife or scissors
- Skew, Straight chisel, 8L/30 gauge, 9/15, 11/30 gouge
- Mallet

- Clamps (c-clamp or f-clamp)

- Straight knife, slight bent knife, bent knife

- Palm sander or orbital sander

- Bandsaw (if you have access to one)

Safety

- Eye protection
- Ear protection
- Dust mask
- Safety boots

Procedure

This procedure can be used for any size yellow cedar canoe bowl.

1. Choose a piece of clear, edge-grain cut yellow cedar with no knots. Knots in the wood on this size project will make it difficult to work with the wood.
2. Measure and draw the center line around the entire length and width of the blank (front and back).

3. Use the templates to trace the pattern onto the wood, using the center line as a guide, on both the top and side profiles.
 - A. Cut out the canoe shape with a bandsaw or scroll saw (jigsaw). I usually do the bottom of the side profile first, followed by the top. For the cuts at the top, I put in a few relief cuts and then cut off the top. Finally, use your template and cut the top profile out. At this point, you are left with a square canoe shape.
4. Re-draw all center lines around the bowl. Once these lines are drawn, draw a line $\frac{1}{4}$ " from either side of the center line from end to end.
5. Place a rubber mat on your worktable and clamp the canoe upside down on it. Use a #11/15 gouge and a mallet and start to carve the keel out on either side of the canoe. Carve the keel as evenly as possible.
6. Use a #3 gouge to remove the rest of the wood. Proceed from the keel to the edge of the bowl.
7. Draw the shape of the bottom of your bowl. You can use a template; you can also draw on one side and trace over the shape. Make sure you have drawn on the canoe's gunwales. Use the gunwales' lines as guides stops as you chisel. Use a #3 gouge and start to take the wood from the side of the canoe. Start at the side center line and work in towards the ends of the canoe. I find it easiest to clamp the bowl upside down.
8. Turn the canoe over and start carving out the center. Use a variety of gouges: #11/25, #9/25, #8L/30. Work from the outside toward the center. Try to find a position in which you can hold

the boat down with your elbow or hold it in your knees. These positions allow you to keep your hands free to hold and work the tools. It may be a little hard to excavate while using clamps. Do what works for you, but always keep your safety in mind.

9. After you have roughed out the inside, draw on the inner gunwales. We will come back to the inner part later.
10. Flip the bowl on its side. You can clamp it down with an f-clamp to use a hook or bent knife to shape the front and rear sides of the bowl. Carve up to the drawn inner gunwale lines using a variety of bent knives.
11. Flip the canoe bowl over and attach it the table. Carve the gunwales out by excavating the material between the inner and outer lines that you have drawn. I use a #9/15. The idea here is not to take away too much wood, but to highlight the gunwale. Work from the ends to the center of the bowl.
12. Prepare for finishing the bowl by going back over the whole shape with various tools. Use the traditional bent knives to clean up the high and low spots. Even out each side to match the other. This step is where most of the work is in creating this carving. Take your time and use sharp tools.
13. Begin sanding once you have got to a point where your canoe is an even thickness, and the handle is even on either side. Start with 100-grit paper. You can sand by hand, or you can use a palm or orbital sander.
14. After sanding the canoe with 100-grit sandpaper, go back over the bowl with a knife (bent or straight, depending on the part that needs attention). Clean up any uneven spots.
15. Move to 120-grit, 150-grit, and finally 220-grit.
16. Your canoe bowl is complete – add a design with acrylic paint or leave it plain, then oil to finish.

NOTE: Oil finishing is covered in another workshop.

