

# Zina Burloiu - Chip carving workshop

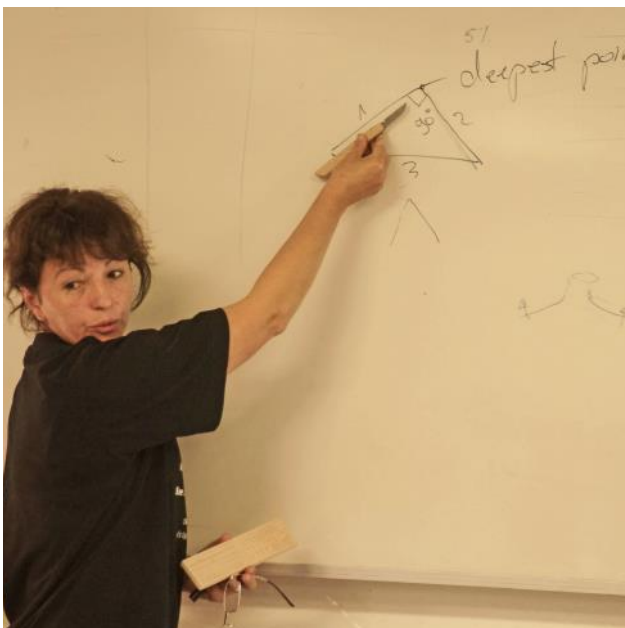
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Zina is a qualified engineer and studied sculpture for three years at the Brazov School of Arts in Romania. She trained with her uncle, a respected traditional carver and by 2013, Zina had become the most well-known and respected traditional woodcarver in Romania. She has made a name for herself as a teacher and demonstrator in the USA, Canada, France, Germany, England, Bulgaria, Poland, Holland, Sweden and Greece.

She accepted an invitation to participate in the first-ever international collaborative wood sculpture project in Dongxiang, China, followed by another invitation to compete in the World Crafts Council international wood sculpture competition held in Dongyang, China. In June 2015, Zina was invited into the international residency for wood artists run by the Centre for Art in Wood in Philadelphia, USA. During this 10-week program, Zina's work took on a new life as she created pieces that revealed depths of sensitivity and creativity that she had yearned to set free. Zina has always dreamed of visiting Australia – looking forward to trying new materials and developing new ideas based on her experiences while here.



The workshop was attended by 14 members of the Woodcraft Guild. The day included lectures and demonstrations by Zina and hands-on work by participants with Zina providing helpful suggestions and comments. The technique that Zina uses and teaches is basically “Old World” style chip carving, which can be made very fine and detailed. In its simplest form, chip carving is based on a triangle with the first two cuts made deep and at right angles to each other. Traditional chip carving was done with the first two cuts at an angle to the wood but Zina has



perfected a method in which the blade is perpendicular to the wood. The third cut is made parallel to either the first or second cut with the blade angled so that the point is aimed at the junction of the first two cuts (the deepest point).

A wide variety of patterns can be cut using this method, all based on the simple basic triangular cut. For small details, the knife is held close but for larger patterns, the knife can be held further down the handle. Internal triangles can be used to provide detail or even to hide torn grain where grain is difficult. Internal triangles need to be made deeper than the original cuts. Rosettes are another pattern that can be made with a variation of the triangular cut.

Zina also showed us how she sharpens her tools. Her tools essentially have no bevel as the whole width of the blade forms the bevel. The knives are cut back on a white stone grinder and then finished with diamond stones, water stones and finally a leather strop with finishing compound.



Chip carving can be used to enhance square or rectangular pieces such as box lids or whole boxes. However, the technique can be modified so that curved objects such as turned bowls can be enhanced. The chip carving that Zina has done within the bowl above shows what can be achieved with a little lateral thinking (and some great skills).

Members greatly appreciated the enthusiasm with which Zina tackled the teaching and demonstrations during the workshop and were inspired to continue practicing chip carving techniques.

Words: Robin Cromer

Photos: Terry Martin