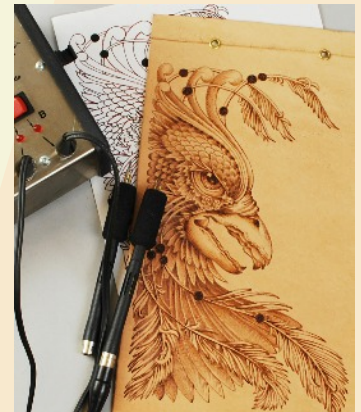


ART DECO GRIFFIN LEATHER JOURNAL PYROGRAPHY PROJECT

Lora S. Irish

ArtDesignsStudio.com

step-by-step
instructions



BURN



PAINT



BIND



INTRODUCTION

Artist's often keep an art journal through the year. This is a small book with watercolor paper or illustration paper pages where the artist can make notes, keep a dairy and add small pencil drawings or watercolor painting to the pages.

This artist's sketch book is created using two pieces of distressed leather, several sheets of watercolor paper, some tracing paper and four strings of raffia. You can burn a design into either the front cover, back cover or both. Even the pages can have wood burned accents. Plus, because of the simple lacing technique, you can add or remove pages at any time.

Once you have learned how easy this journal is to burn and assemble you can create a wide variety of small booklets using different themed patterns, scrap book papers, and even paper bag pages. cover, page and lacing materials.



SUPPLIES

variable temperature wood burning unit
standard writing tip pen
spoon shader tip pen
leather strop and rouge
2 pieces of leather
1/8" thick x 6 1/2" wide x 11 1/4" long
2 sheets of 140 lb. watercolor paper
deckled edges, 22" x 30"
18 sheets of velum or tracing paper, 6" x 11"
4 lengths of raffia, 40" to 48" long
4 rivets
hole punch or leather punch
leather needles or long eyed needle
acrylic paints:
medium cadmium yellow,
medium cadmium red
turquoise
burnt umber
black coffee
assorted small soft bristle brushes

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PYROGRAPHY UNITS

Variable temperature pyrography unit

Variable temperature systems, shown top right, have a dial thermostat that controls how cool or hot your tip is. You can adjust the temperature setting quickly, making it easy to control your tonal values in your project.

This style has two types of pens - the fixed tip pen where the tip is permanently set in the hand grip and the interchangeable pen where different wire tips can be used with the hand grip.

An inexpensive style of variable temperature burning tools is shown bottom right. This type uses a thermostat on the electric wire and screw-in brass tips.

There are many excellent burning systems available to the hobbyist. Which manufacture you chose depends on your budget, your pen style preferences, and what is available to you locally or online.



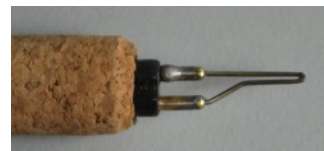
Optima Wood Burning Unit

COMMON PYROGRAPHY TOOL TIPS

Tips comes in many shapes and bends from the tight bend used in the standard writing tip to half circles that can create fish scales and even square tubes that make a textured pattern on your board. The four basic pen tips used throughout this book – the standard writing tip, the micro writing tip, large flat shader, and a small flat spoon shader.

Burning tools come in two varieties - permanently fixed tip pens and interchangeable tip pens. Fixed tip pens give even, consistent temperature control and are strongly suggested for your favorite tip profiles. Interchangeable tip pens allow you to obtain and use a wide variety of specialty tips and an inexpensive cost.

Each manufacture has their own style of interchangeable tip system, in the photo samples above the bottom flat spoon shader is shown as an interchangeable tip pen.



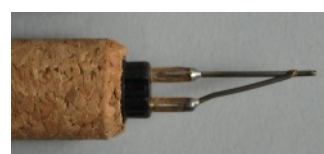
Standard writing tip



Spoon Tip Shader



Spear tip shader



Micro writing tip

RazorTip Pen Tips

TOOL KIT

You tool kit will need supplies for preparing the wood burning surface, transferring the pattern, your burning unit to create the project, sand papers or stropping compounds to clean the pen tips, and finishes to seal the wood. Many of these supplies are common household items.

TIP CLEANING SUPPLIES

As you work any pyrography project the pen tips will develop a thin layer of carbon build-up that reduces the heat to the tip and can cause blackening along the burn lines.

This build-up is visible as a darkening or blackening of the tip's color. High temperature burns can leave a white-gray ash layer on your pen tips.

To remove the carbon layer and return the tip to a pristine finish you can use fine steel wool, 4000 grit emery cloth, or as shown in the photo above a leather strop and roughing compound.

Of these three methods the strop and rouge does the least damage to the pen while polishing the wire tip to a smooth, clean burning finishes.

Strops and rouging compound can be obtained through most wood working or wood carving stores.



TIP PATINA

With use pen tips take on a bluish black sheen on the burning tip wire and the wire is tempered by the heat.

During any cleaning steps work the tip back to this natural gun metal tone, removing only the black carbon build-up or gray ash layer.



Basic tool kit



Leather strop and red oxide rouge

PYROGRAPHY SURFACES

Any natural surface can become a pyrography media including wood, gourds, cotton cloth or canvas, leather, rag content paper, and chipboard. The photo to the right shows two end grain basswood blanks with bark edges that are perfect for your pyro work.

Favorite woods include basswood, birch, poplar, and butternut as all have fine, tight grain and clean pale coloring.

Any pyrography surface should be clean of dirt, paint, and finishes; work direct on the raw surface. Avoid unknown materials or old scrap wood to avoid toxic materials.

Chipboard makes an excellent pyrography working surface. Available in white, tan, and golden yellow the compressed paper fibers burn easily at low temperature setting.



Fine grit sandpaper will create a smooth, even working surface for your burning.

SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

Since the very process of pyrography releases smoke into your environment there are some surfaces that should not be used as they can be toxin.

- Do not burn synthetic surfaces as plastic or Plexiglas.
- Do not work on wood surfaces that have an acrylic sealer, varnish, or paint layer.
- Check any natural surface, especially gourds, for mold and accumulated layers of dust.
- Do not burn woods on unknown species, check the Internet for listing of toxins found in wood.
- Always work in a well ventilated area.



Any natural, untreated, unpainted surface can be used in your pyrography.

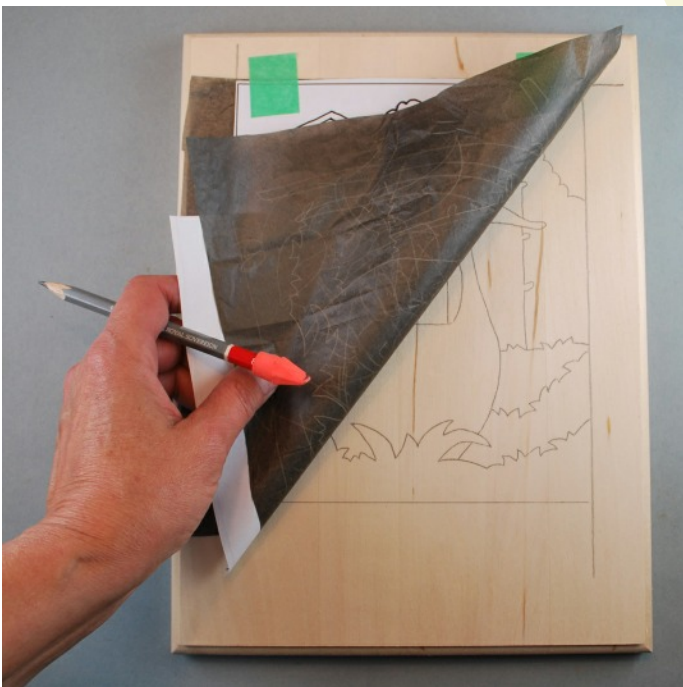
TRACING THE PATTERN

Two products that are used to transfer the design to your work surface are carbon paper and graphite paper.

Both of these products are laid under your paper pattern so that the transfer side is against your work surface. As you trace the lines of your pattern on the pattern paper the carbon or graphite paper leaves a fine line on your work surface.

Both of these tracing papers should be used carefully as they can not be easily removed from your work surface after the burning is complete. Graphite paper with its soft pale gray coloring is especially appropriate for gourds, paper mache and darker woods.

A preferred method is to blacken the back of your pattern paper with a soft pencil, covering the back completely. Place the pattern onto your work surface and trace over the pattern lines. This will leave a fine line of pencil graphite on your work surface. The pencil lines can later be removed with a white artist eraser.



Graphite tracing paper leaves a medium gray colored line that is easy to cover with your burned strokes

BURNING STROKES AND TEXTURES

Any new design or pattern will present new challenges for you as a wood burner. Each working surface has its own texture, density, and color tone that effect the evenness and final look of each burn stroke. By working a small scrap of the same material you can experiment with your pyrography insure the best burn possible on your larger project.

Five factors determine the final look of any area of burning. As you work your practice board make note of each of these directly on your grid so that you can reproduce any of your textures or stroke fill patterns.

working surface
tool tip profile
temperature setting
fill or texture pattern
hand position

To the right are four common fill texture samples from my practice board - random doodle, scrubbie, tight circles, and cross hatching. The bottom set of practice squares show three examples of texture work created by using line designs.



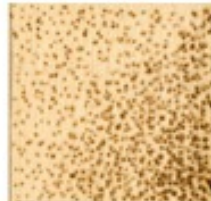
random doodle stroke



cross hatching



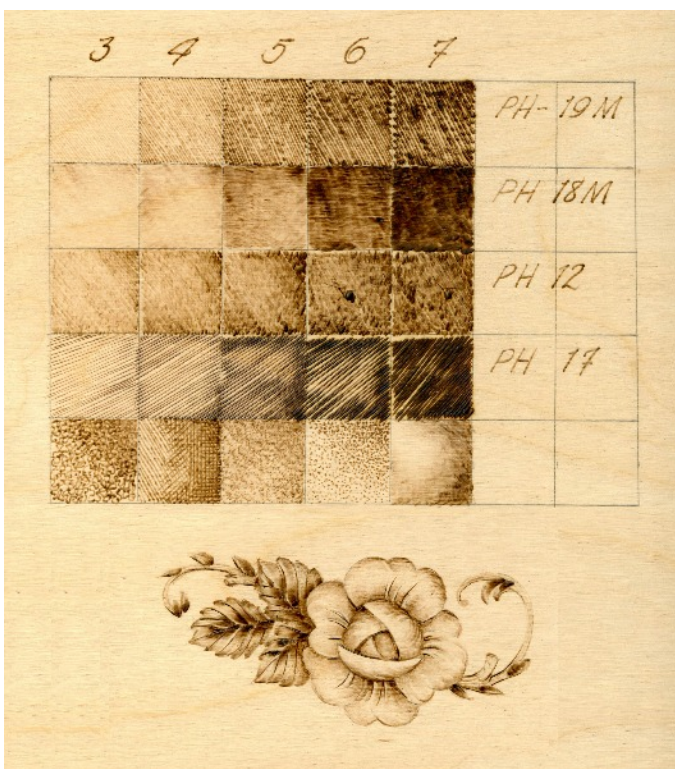
scrubby stroke



dot pattern
(pointillism)



wide shader strokes



PRACTICE BOARD

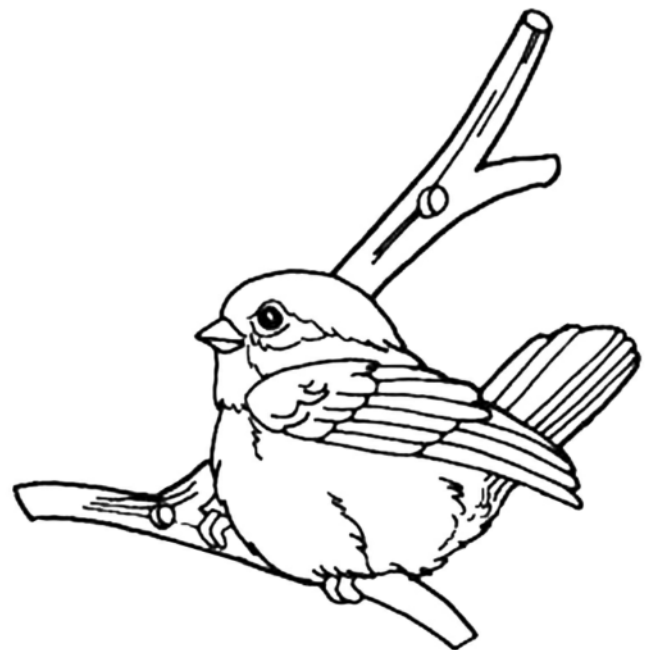
The practice board, right, has been worked on poplar plywood in preparation for the Winter Bird House tutorial that is available online at the Wood Carving Illustrated Wood Carving Forum.

The board was first marked into 1" squares using a soft #2 pencil. As I worked each square to create my graduated tonal value strip I adjusted how tightly the strokes were packed into the square and the temperature setting of the pen. The temp setting was marked in pencil on the right hand side of the square.

As I worked through the stages of the Winter Bird House I could refer to my practice board to find the exact setting and stroke that I wanted for the tonal value needed within the element.

Practice boards are excellent for experimenting with small sections of your pattern. On this board I have worked my wood grain, acorn caps, and one of my birds.

Keep your practice boards with your tool kit. As you discover new texture strokes you can add them to your board. When you need inspiration for an area in your latest project you can refer back to your board for ideas, tonal values, and line work.



Winter Bird House

12" x 18"
birch plywood

PATTERN PLACEMENT AND TRACING

1. Prepare your wood plaque by giving it a light sanding using 220 grit or higher sand paper. Remove any dust using a soft, lint free cloth.
2. With a ruler and pencil mark the center horizontal line of the plaque. Measure and mark the center vertical line.
3. Rub the back of your pattern paper with a soft #2 to #6 pencil, coating the back with the pencil's graphite.
4. Fold the pattern paper along the center horizontal line by matching the two side edges of the paper. Fold again matching the top and bottom edge.
5. Match the folds of the pattern paper with the pencil guidelines on your plaque. Use tape to secure the pattern paper into place.
6. With an ink pen trace over the main outlines for each element in the design. You do not need to trace the small detail lines at this time. Use a medium pressure with the pen; hard or extra firm pressure can indent the wood.
7. Before you remove the tape, lift one corner of the pattern paper at a time to check that all pattern lines have been transferred.
8. Using a soft #2 pencil you can strengthen any of the tracing lines.



Mayan High Priest
Pyrography E-Project

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BURNING CONSIDERATIONS

How I approach any wood burning includes far more than just considering the outline or shaded drawing and the topic or theme of that drawing. Let's look at several factors that can influence how you approach and execute your burning.

1. What art style do you want to use?

Photo realism is favor for pyrographers. As a fine artist the pyrographic pen tip can be used exactly as a soft sketch pencil for light to dark tonal values and fine line detailing. The pen and ink style of cross hatching that was common in early lithograph work is highly adaptable to this craft. Perhaps you want to use large block shading as found in abstract and pop art. You may even want to work with different textures, one texture per element, to create your pattern.

2. Which of the main wood burning media will you use?

Each media – wood, leather, paper and gourds – burn differently in the range of tonal values you can achieve, giving a unique look to your design.

Of all of the media wood provides the burner with the widest range of tonal values from extremely pale to black brown and therefore very suited for photo realism work. Leather burning takes on a three dimensional effect adding a sculptured depth to a design. Paper has a limited range of tones, stopping in the deep sienna tones and can burn unevenly which makes it excellent for the more abstract art styles or casual pen and ink styles. Gourds are perfect for large, bold blocks of shading and for designs that can be wrapped around the diameter to create a seamless design.

3. Do you want the wood burning to stand alone or will you be adding color?

Color can enhance a design but it can also detract from your fine detailing and pale tonal work. Any burning can be a fully colored art work or perhaps you want just a hint of color in a few places in the pattern to add a touch of surprise and impact. A fully colored burn may need strong line detailing to show through the coloring agent.

4. What is the main use or purpose of the project?

A wall hanging or framed picture that is protected behind glass can take very fine pale tones and extremely fine detailing where a jewelry box that will receive a great deal of handling may require stronger line work and deep tonal values to stand through the natural oils and dirt it will pick up through use. A purse may need a bold strong hand in the tonal value work to withstand the natural darkening of the leather.



Eagle Jewelry Box

Greenmen Motifs available at ArtDesignsStudio.com

PYROGRAPHY STEPS TO THE GRIFFIN LEATHER JOURNAL

When I worked the pattern drawing for this feathered griffin I wanted a strong feeling of art deco in the design. The long flowing feathers and scrolls reach out to the top and bottom of the design and are balanced by the fine scales work around the face and throat. Art deco boldly uses outlining as a way to separate one area from another. Often, as seen in old magazine advertising; each area is then floated with a solid color.

To work this pattern as an art deco piece I started by cutting two pieces of distressed leather 6 ¼" x 11" as my work media.

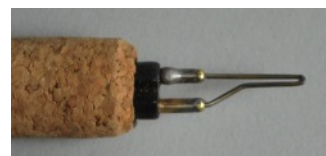
STEP 1: PATTERN TRACING

Rub the back of the pattern paper with a soft paper then place the pattern on the top surface of your leather. Trace over the pattern lines using an ink pen. Remove the pattern paper from your leather and with the soft pencil strengthen any lines that are pale or hard to see.

STEP 2: BURNING THE PATTERN OUTLINES

I began my burning using a standard writing tip on a low temperature setting, approximately 3 ½ to 4, to burn the outline of each traced pattern line in a pale sienna tone. As I have chosen to use this burning as the front cover of an artist's sketch book the outlining of the pattern will help the finished burning to remain strong as the cover naturally picks up hand oil and dirt from use.

Both the tracings steps and all of the pyrography steps will indent the leather surface. This is a natural tendency for this media. As you work this outlining step it is important to keep the tool tip in the indent line left from the tracing process to avoid a 'double exposure' effect along any line when the pencil tracing is erased.



The standard writing tip or micro writing tip creates fine even sized lines. Hold this pen in a normal writing position so that just the rounded end of the pen tip touches the leather surface.



With its wide, flat sides and rounded end the spoon shade creates a wide graduated burning.

STEP 3: MID-TEMPERATURE SHADING

The early or first layers of shading have been worked using both the standard writing tip and the small spoon shader on a low temperature setting of 3 ½ to 4. The shading has been worked over the outlining to tone an area or grouping of feathers, not individual feathers. The outlining done in the previous step let's you do large area shading without losing your pattern tracing for the finer details or elements.

Bold, solid color areas of accents are an important part of art deco. Softly shaded groups of elements with fine pen and ink detailing will be complimented with large blocks of strong color. For this griffin the beads that lie upon the feather shafts were burned at a hot temperature of 7 to 8 to add those solid, string accents.

Using your shader tip - spoon or large square - work a layer of medium value shading along the upper eye lid, the nostril ridges and along the side of the face behind the small mouth feathers.

Still using the shader and grouping the feathers according to their shape and position surrounding the face, work a wide shadow along the joint line of the lower grouping. As an example the area on the side of the Griffin's face has a group on low lying feathers on the left side, a group of longer feathers that curl under the beak in the middle area, and a third group of small feathers adjacent to the mouth.

In the longest feathers in the head dress and below the chin, work a layer of shading that starts next to the face and pulls away from that point. Treat each of these feathers individually.

Shade the upper edge of the eye ball with a medium-pale burn, use a texture stroke as a tightly packed random doodle to fill the iris, leaving the eye highlight un-burned.

On a medium-high setting fill the feather beads, nostril and eye iris with a solid fill packed dot pattern.



STEP 4: DARKENING THE VALUES WITH FINE LINE SHADING

For the third layer of burning I have turned up the temperature setting to between 4 and 5 to work in deep sienna and dark brown tones. Each feather has now been shaded as an individual element of the design.

The darkest areas of shading of this burning fall in the group of small feathers behind the eye ring feathers, below the lower beak in the both ring of neck feathers and at the top of the long neck feathers. An area of darkness is created beneath the eye ring feathers where the face joins the corner of the beak.

I have decided that I want to add some small areas of solid coloring to this design when the burning is completed. The large flowing feathers at the top and bottom of the design seem the perfect area for coloring so I have done just a small amount of shading work. Because I will be using acrylic paints on leather any fine detailing in these areas will be lost to the paint.

This second layer of shading is created using tightly packed fine lines that flow in the direction of each feather. The outer edges of the beak are worked in a tight random doodle stroke and the eye area has been re-burned at a hotter temperature to darken the detail lines.



STEP 5: USE A HOT TEMPERATURE BURN TO ADD A FINAL LAYER IN THE DARKEST SHADOW AREAS.

For the fourth layer of burning I have turned up the temperature setting to 5 to work in deep brown tones.

A third layer of shading has been worked along the joint edges of each original grouping of feathers to insure this area in each group is the darkest value in that area.

Using my spoon shader at a temp setting of 5 I have added one long line shadow along each of the individual feather units in the long feathers.





ACRYLIC PAINT ON LEATHER

Leather is most often colored using leather dyes, acrylic paints or fabric paints all of which are permanent colors that require no finishing sealer.

Artist quality acrylics provide a truly transparent coloring that allows your wood burning work to show through their application. Cadmium yellow, cadmium red and ultramarine blue are pure color pigment and can be mixed to create every color hue that you need.

STEP 1: ADDING A FEW COLOR ACCENTS

Place a small amount of acrylic color on a palette or glazed tile. Add a few drops of clean water to each color. For this project you want to thin the colors just enough that if brushed onto news print you can both see the color work yet still be able to read the newspaper article.

Working one color at a time, load a #2 sable hair liner brush or #2 round with a small amount of color. Touch the tip of the loaded brush to the edge of your palette to remove the excess color from the brush's tip.

Apply one light coat of color to all of the areas to receive that color. Allow those areas to dry for about five minutes. Apply a second coat of color to the areas if needed to intensity the color look.

I used a very limited amount of color on this project - just enough to accent a few areas while not detracting from the tonal value work of the pyrography.

Cadmium yellow - long flowing feather shafts

Medium turquoise - long flowing feather units

Cadmium red - feather beads



STEP 2: STAINING THE LEATHER

This project has been worked on a piece of distressed leather to give the finished book an aged feeling. To add to the antique look of the book cover I have randomly stained the outer edges of the leather. Real stains are seldom planned. Often you spill coffee or tea on an object or perhaps the items has picked up dirt from excessive handling over the years. As you work through the next few steps be very casual and carefree as to where your staining colors fall. Relax and have fun!

My first staining solution is $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of coffee grounds mixed with $\frac{1}{4}$ of water. Microwave this mix for about 1 to 3 minutes, not quite to boiling. Allow the mix to stand overnight. Strain the mixture through a coffee filter and set the grounds aside, we will be using the thick black coffee as the staining agent.

Fill a large round brush, sized 10 or larger, with clean water. Run the brush at random along the edges of the leather cover, saturating these areas with water. Next fill your round brush with your coffee solution and repeat the saturating step. My staining is deepest along the outer edges with several large areas of coloring near the corners.

Let these two steps dry for several moments, until the glossy shine has been lost. Then repeat these two steps until you several well developed stained areas in a rich sienna tone.

Coffee is fully transparent and will add that realistic coloration to your staining process that acrylic paints can not match. Black and green tea can also be used as staining agents as well as black walnut hulls soaked in water.

If you want to add even more realism to the staining effect try setting a coffee cup in your coffee mixture then place the cup on your sketch book cover. The cup will leave a cup ring adding to the antique look.

To finish the stained, aged look of the cover I have thinned burnt umber acrylic paint with water so that the color will flow easily from my brush but not so thin that I can read a newspaper through the mixture. Fill your large round brush with the thinned burnt umber and shake it over the sketch book cover. This will cause large drops of the mix to land on the leather, adding to



the staining effect. You can also mix burnt umber acrylic paint with a smaller amount of water and use an old tooth brush to add fine splattering.

Allow your paint to dry well, at least several hours, before you begin the binding process. When your painting and staining steps are dry you will be able to see that the coffee stains the leather without leaving a halo or ring of darker color along the outer edge of the stain. The large splatter drops of burnt umber will have the halo effect.

BACK COVER DESIGN

The back cover design, an interlocked scroll and vine pattern, is worked through the same pyrography and painting steps as used with the front cover.



BINDING THE LEATHER JOURNAL

1. Cut the leather into two pieces and bevel the edges on both sides of the leather. There is a specialty tool in leather crafting for beveling but you may also use a fingernail cuticle remover.
2. Trace your pattern onto the leather and wood burn the design following the directions for the feathered griffin.
3. Measure $\frac{3}{4}$ " from the top of each leather piece, front and back. With the blunt side of a knife score along this line to create a fold line. If you soak the leather in water for a few moments first the score line, fold line, will be more defined.
4. On both the front and back, measure in $1 \frac{3}{4}$ " from each side of the leather along the fold line and mark the points for your rivet holes. The center of each hole is 3" apart from the other hole. With a hole punch make a hole at the points. Set the rivets into the holes. Rivets are not necessary to the construction of this artist's sketch book but do add some strength as well as a small accents.
5. Watercolor papers and illustration papers are available in very large sheets that usually measure about 22" wide by 30" long. Many papers include a deckled edging on the two long sides.
6. Cut two sheets of watercolor paper into 6" wide by 28" long strips leaving the deckled edging on both of the width edges. You will have approximately 10 strips.
7. Measure 11" from the narrow edge of the paper to find the middle line point, mark this line with a pencil. Using a ruler and the blunt side of a knife score along the line to create a fold line. Fold each strip along the fold line. One folded strip creates two sheets of paper - four pages counting fronts and backs.



8. Cut 22 sheets of tracing paper 6" wide by 11" long. These sheets will be placed between each page of the watercolor paper and will protect your artwork from dirt, smudges and smears.
9. Each sheet of tracing paper and each folded strip of watercolor paper needs two holes punched $\frac{1}{2}$ " from the top edge and $1 \frac{1}{2}$ " in from the side to correspond with the rivet holes in the front and back leather covers.
10. Arrange the papers with one sheet of tracing paper on top, then one sheet of watercolor paper, alternating the two types of paper ending with one sheet of tracing paper.

The Binding Diagram for this section is found on page 23.

Please read through all of the binding steps before you begin work on your journal.



11. Use scrap paper to wrap the pages together, taping the scrap paper into place. Working the pages as one unit will be easier than trying to work individual papers during the lacing process.



12. Select three to four lengths of raffia, each about 40" to 48" long. Wet the raffia before use, and set aside as your laces. Select two short lengths of raffia, wet, and thread through a large eyed needle. Thread the needle through the rivet hole on the front leather cover then through all of the paper pages and finally through the rivet hole on the back cover. Tie this raffia into a simple square knot. Repeat for the second rivet hole working through all layers. These two threads are temporary and used to secure your book during the lacing process.



13. Using the lacing raffia, thread three to four pieces through a large eyed needle. For the first side of your artist's sketch book you will be passing the needle through the rivet hole from front to back. Work the needle through the rivet hole and pull the raffia to the back of your book. Let at least 12" of raffia on the front side to be used as your finishing bow at the end of the lacing.



14. Bring the raffia across the top of the book and thread the needle through the rivet hole. Put the raffia tight across the top edge of your book.

15



15. Thread the needle through the rivet hole to the back of the book, laying the raffia loop along the side of the leather cover. Pull the raffia tight.

16



16. Turn the book over so that you are now working on the back cover side. Thread the needle into the second rivet hole working from the back to the front of your book. Pull the raffia tight.

17



17. Bring the raffia over the top edge of the book and thread the needle through the rivet hole. Pull the raffia tight.

18



18. Loop the raffia along the side of the book and thread the needle through the rivet hole. Pull the raffia tight.



19. Both ends of the raffia are now on the front side of the book. The back side is complete in the lacing. Cut and remove the two small raffia threads that were used in step 12 to hold the book together during lacing.



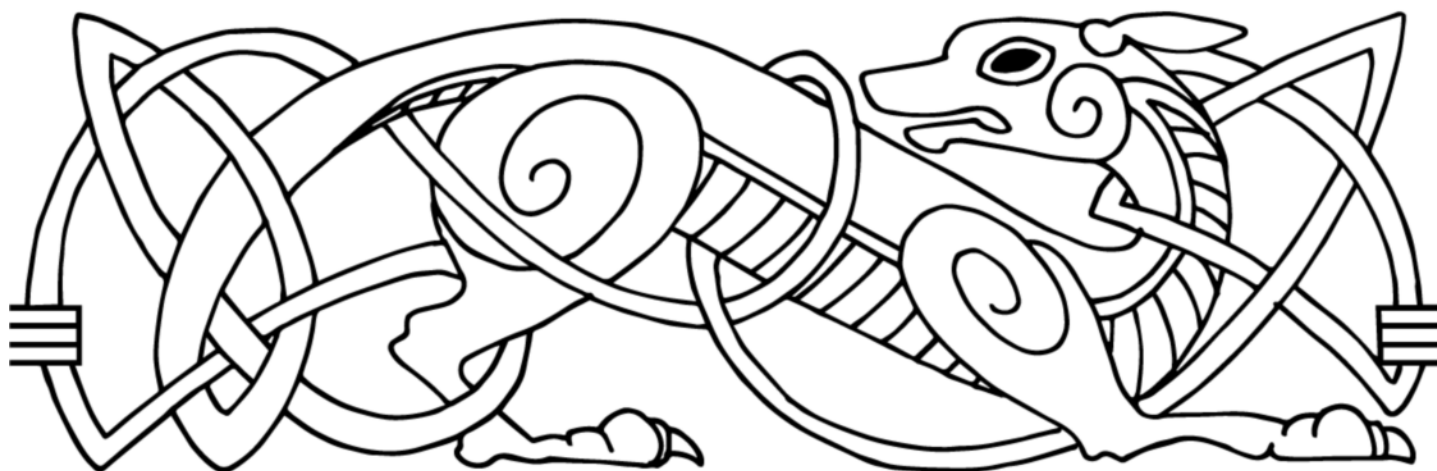
20. Working on the front side of your book, tie the two ends of the raffia into a simple square knot. Create a bow with the two raffia ends over the square knot.

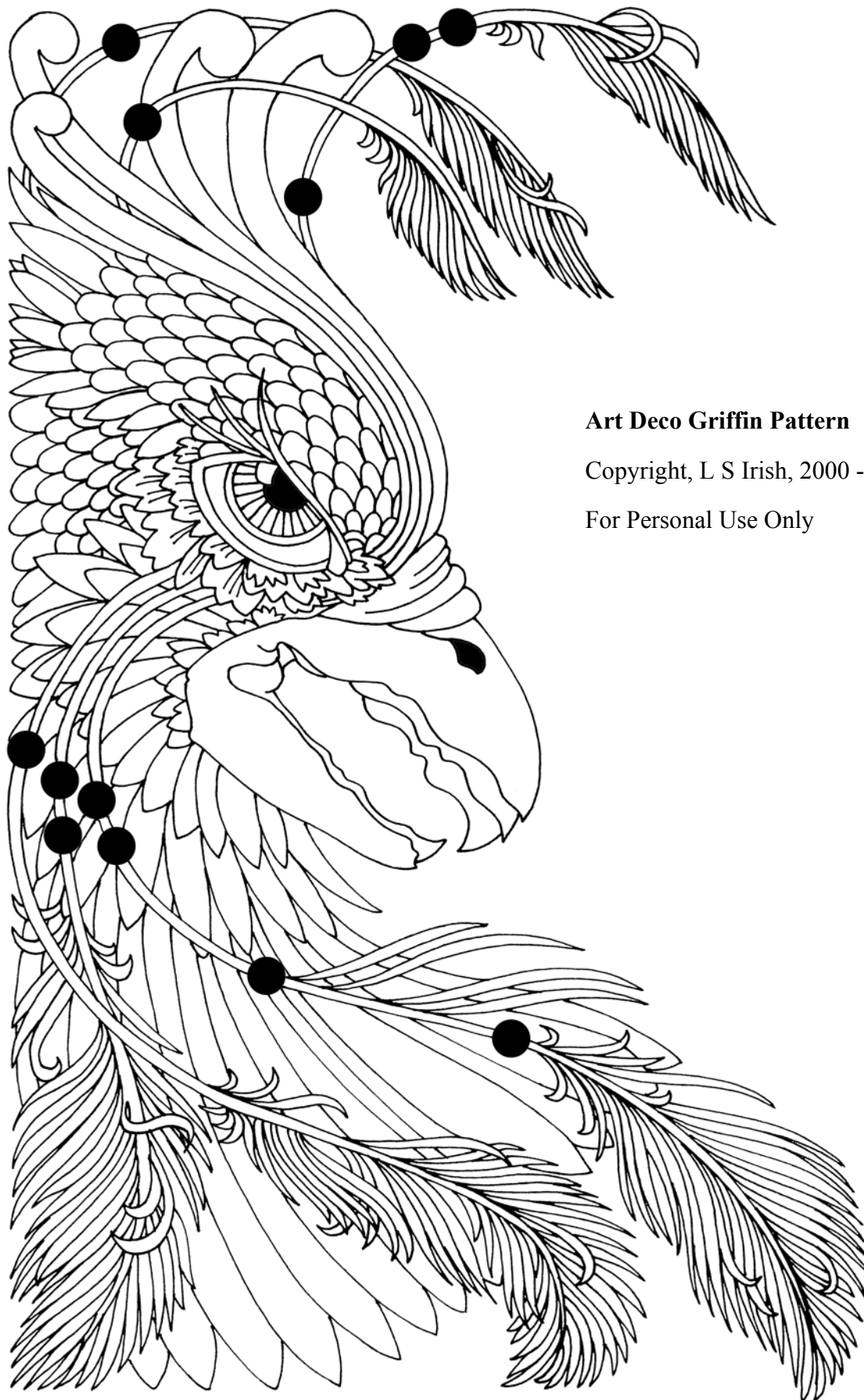


21. Trim the excess ends of your raffia bow. Clip and remove the raffia holding strings.



WRAPPING DIAGRAM





Art Deco Griffin Pattern

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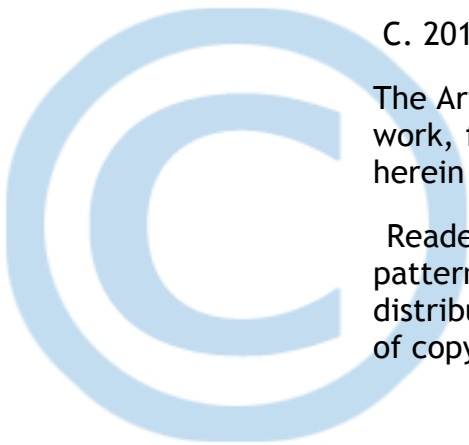


**Interlocking Scroll & Vine
Pattern**

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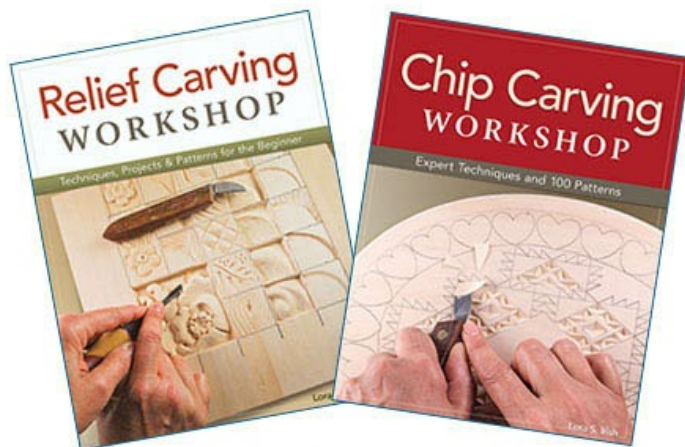
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