

Soft-Block Carving 201

Supplies and Tools

- Soft carving block, at least 2½ x 2½ inches
- X-Acto knife to cut block to size (if necessary)
- Speedball gouges 1 and 5
- Two-part image to transfer (Images 1 and 2)
- Pencil
- Stylus or ball-point pen
- Two ink pads, one dark and one light
- Scrap paper

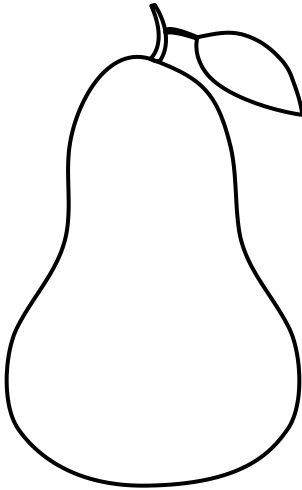


Image 1

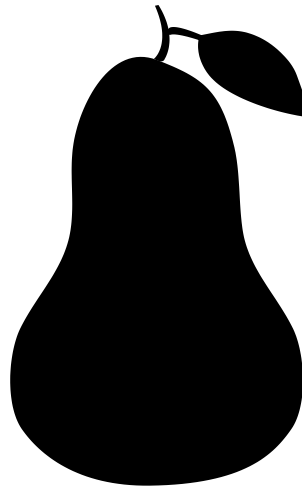


Image 2

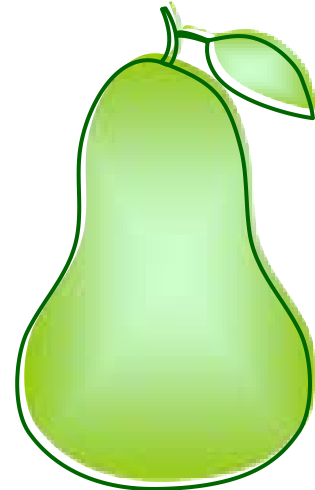


Image 3

Carving a Shadow Image and an Outline

1. On the back side of the two pear images use your pencil to draw heavily around the shape of both the outline and the shadow of the pear above. (You are creating simple transfer paper.)
2. Place one image pencil-side-down on the soft block and use the stylus (or ball-point pen) to trace around the edge, pressing hard enough so that the pencil lead transfers to the surface of the soft block. It needs to be clear enough just so you can see it. Repeat with the other image on the other side of the soft block.
3. Beginning with the shadow image, use gouges 1 and 5 to carve around the image.
Note: For the shadow image, carve away only the outside of the pear. For the outline, carve away both the outside and inside of the pear.
Tip: I like to use gouge 5 to do the gross carving first, then go back with gouge 1 to refine the carving. Periodically ink and stamp the block on scrap paper to test your carving.
4. Turn the block over and carve the outline image. Again, I like to do the gross carving first, but you will find your own preferred method. Ink and stamp the block to test your carving.
5. After you have carved each image, test to see how your images go together. Ink the shadow stamp with light-colored ink and stamp on your scrap paper. Ink the outline image with dark ink, check the orientation of the stamp so it will match the shadow, and stamp on top.
Tip: The outline looks best (in my opinion!) when it is stamped slightly off-register, as shown in Image 3.
6. If you want, you can trim the excess block away, but be careful not to cut any of the carved areas!