

"Pas de Deux"



Introduction

Welcome to marquetry kit "Pas de Deux" from QJS Marquetry. This design is quite complex, and maybe a little daunting, but can still be completed by a relative novice with care. (Please note that the colours and grain patterns may differ slightly from those shown in the pictures.)

What Do I Need?

In addition to the kit you will need a sharp craft knife, a surface to work on (a craft cutting mat is ideal but a kitchen board or some strong cardboard will do), a metal ruler or straight-edge, masking tape (or clear tape) and some PVA wood glue.

Unless you have specifically requested to have unshaded veneers, some of the veneers in your pack will have had their edges shaded by being dipped into hot sand. This enables you to include more detail in your picture, with better definition between the features.

Are you Ready?

You are recommended to read ALL the instructions before starting!

At a minimum you should have followed our "Introduction to Marquetry by the Window Method" and made the "leaf" practice piece satisfactorily. Better still, you will have successfully completed one of our introductory kits such as "Hummingbirds" or "Kingfishers". These instructions will simply refer to "cut in" or "insert" and assume you have the basics.

(Basic instructions available at <http://qjsmarquetry.co.uk/downloads/instructions-window-method.pdf>)

Preparing your Background

You will first need your background. This may be supplied in two pieces. If it is, you will need to make a join as follows: Using a straightedge, carefully trim a sliver from the two edges you want to join so that they fit tightly together. Holding them flat on the table, tape the face-side of the join using two or three pieces of tape. If you stretch the tape slightly it will help to pull the joint tight. Then tape the whole length of the join. Turn the work over and rub PVA glue into the join (if you flex the joint slightly you can be sure the glue gets onto the joint surfaces). Scrape off excess glue, tape the back and allow to dry. Once dry, remove the tape from the front, but leave the tape on the back for added strength.

Getting Started

With your background ready, tape the drawing in place, ensuring the design is positioned where you want your dancers to be.

A general rule in marquetry is to work from "back" to "front" – cutting in elements that are behind others first. This allows you to extend the piece into the area where a later, more "forward", piece will come, thus ensuring a new, clean glue-line when the second piece is inserted. With that in mind, I started with the legs. I actually started with the lady's "7 o'clock" leg, but it's probably better to start with the gentleman's "6 o'clock" standing leg.

Hint: use the light transfer paper when marking onto the dark veneers – the light line can be easier to see than dark carbon marks.

The legs generally have darker middle sections and lighter highlights to the outside. It's quite feasible to cut in a whole light leg and then insert darker sections towards the middle. However I suggest working the other way – inserting a darker central section (making sure not to extend beyond the overall leg outline) as shown. The picture to the right has the dark insert piece laid over the original photograph I was working from – I later changed the insert as it was too close in tone to the background and would have looked like a “hole” in the leg. Working this way allows the basic shape of the leg to be put in place with the detailed highlights being added to each side as the work progresses.

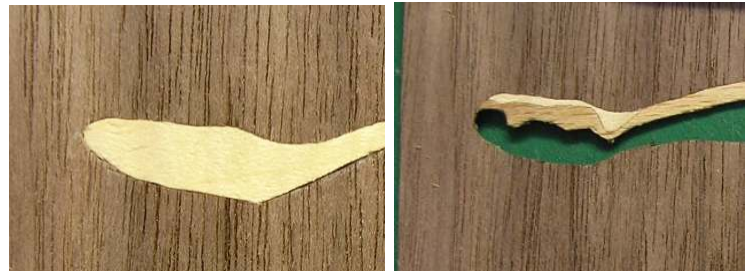


The small photograph (right) shows the central dark insert partially cut away to make the “window” for the upper highlight. The next photo shows the angled leg nearing completion, with several more veneers inserted.



Highlights

In some areas the highlighted area of a limb is very fine and would be tricky to insert. In these areas it can be easier to cut in a piece of the highlight veneer slightly over-size, then remove some of that once it is safely glued and taped in place. The first photo shows the light highlight area of the ballerina’s foot cut in oversize. In the second photo most of this has been removed when the second piece was inserted (and now part of that veneer has been removed to leave the window for the next piece).



Upper Bodies

Here it is essential to cut in the gentleman’s torso before the ballerina. The first photo shows work in progress, with quite a lot of detail still to be added.

Below shows the finished torsos. If anything I put in a little too much detail around the top of the lady’s arm and bodice – I have simplified this area in the drawing.



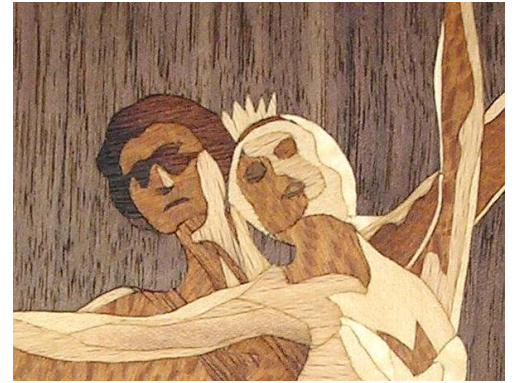
Arms and Hands

These are quite tricky at this scale. Don't try to cut in lots of individual fingers – you're likely to end up with a bunch of sausages – or even worse, bananas! Just hint at the shape and shadows



Faces

Faces are always tricky in marquetry. Most importantly don't try to cut in eyes, nose and mouth – the result rarely looks good and tends to look like a currant bun! Instead, as with the hands, concentrate on the areas of light and shade to imply the facial contours. Also be careful not to use the background colour for any of the detail as it can end up looking like a "hole". I probably could have used a better shade for the lady's left eye (as we look at it) in this regard.



The Dress

The dress is one of the last areas to be completed. Check the veneers supplied and use the lightest for the main section. If the veneer has a "quilted" figure you will want to make good use of that to represent the material. Note, however, that the quilting runs at right-angles to the grain of the veneer, and it will be easier to have the grain running into the "fingers" of the large dress area.

Finishing Off

When you have completed the picture do "stand back" and look at the overall effect. There's still time to change a piece or two, and add any extra highlights or details. In hindsight I would not have used the speckly lacewood veneer (London Plane) for the darker sections of the legs and skin tones in my first picture. A plainer dark veneer might have looked slightly better. It does work well for the gentleman's jacket through.

Variations

You don't need to follow the drawing or photo exactly – simplify areas if you wish, or change the shading. In the second version I made (shown here) I changed a number of sections and the end result is still a very pleasing picture. It's your work – let your artistic creativity show!

Preparing the Mounting Board

Assuming you wish to mount your picture onto the MDF board provided and not stick it to some other object you will need to prepare the board.

First, stick the backing veneer to one side of the board. This will be the back (so the veneer provided may not be very decorative) but will help balance the board and prevent warping. You will need two firm pieces of flat board at least as big as the baseboard, strong clamps, some soft packing material (such as newspaper) and a sheet of plastic (to protect from glue). Place the packing material on one of the boards, topped with plastic. Place the veneer on the plastic. Apply adhesive evenly to the MDF baseboard (not the veneer or it will curl) and press it onto the veneer, add the second large board and clamp firmly. When you come to glue your picture onto the board the procedure is the same, but you



need to ensure you have removed all tape from the back of the picture and that you place it **face down** onto the plastic sheet. Once glued – perhaps an hour in a warm room if you are using PVA glue - remove from the clamps and carefully trim and sand the edges.

Conventionally marquetry pictures are not framed, so the edges of the board need to be veneered as they will be visible when the picture is hung. (If you are going to put your picture into a frame you don't need to veneer the edges). Strips of both walnut and black have been provided for the edges – choose which you prefer. Cut strips of veneer slightly wider than the thickness of the board and glue them in place, holding them with tightly stretched tape while the glue dries. You can do two opposite edges at the same time, then trim those down and repeat for the other two sides. Once your board is veneered on the back and sides you can glue down your picture (this order minimises the number of exposed veneer edges visible when viewing the hanging picture). Tape the front for protection and carefully remove all tape from the back of your picture before gluing.

Once your glue is dried and you have trimmed up your picture give it a careful sanding using a moderate grit abrasive paper (180-240). Take care to remove dust (the brush on your vacuum cleaner is ideal) as contrasting colour dusts can get into the dark and light veneers and make your picture look dull. Finally a coat or two of lacquer or varnish (follow the manufacturer's instructions) will bring up the colours and make your pheasant look splendid.

More detailed instructions for mounting, sanding and polishing your picture can be found on our website at: <http://qjsmarquetry.co.uk/downloads/instructions-finishing.pdf>

For more help and information about marquetry please contact:

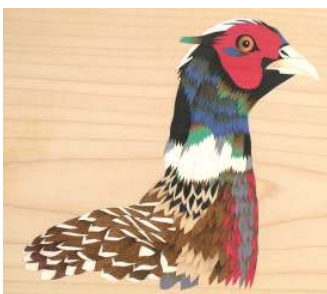
- **QJS Marquetry**
01785 850614
www.qjsmarquetry.co.uk
- **The Marquetry Society**
www.marquetry.org

Packing list: veneers, baseboard, instructions, carbon and transfer paper, Marquetry Society leaflet, practice exercise, abrasive paper

Other kits in this series (all make up to 240 x 180 mm) :



Bald Eagle



Pheasant



Motorcycle

