

Popular Woodworking

JUNE 2025 | #283

CRAFTSMAN DESK

Bur Oak and Traditional Techniques
Make This a Handsome Piece

SHELLAC FINISHES

The Late Bob Flexner's Take
On This Challenging Finish

RABBET PLANES

Cut Rabbets By Hand Using
This Specialty Plane

BUILD A

Moxon Vise

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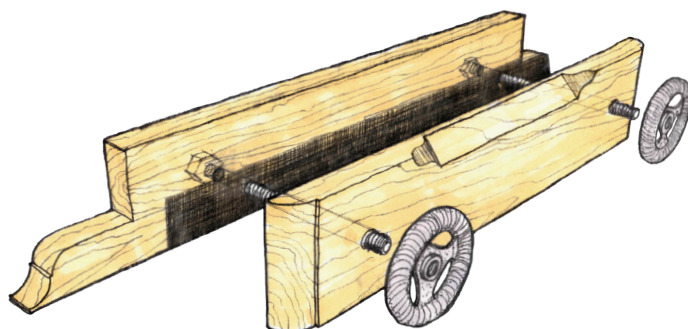
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BY CHRIS FITCH & PHIL HUBER



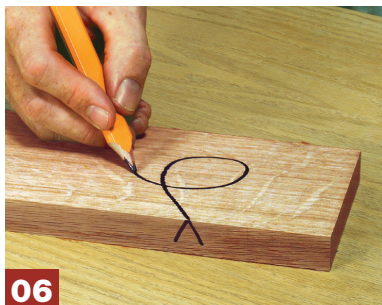
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BY LOGAN WITTMER

Rudolf Steiner School

In the basement of a Manhattan low-rise, Yoav Liberman is introducing kids to woodworking during the school day.

By Logan Wittmer

If you've followed our website for any time, you're bound to know the name Yoav Liberman. Yoav has contributed to our website for over a decade and has published numerous books on various topics. With furniture having been displayed in high-end galleries across the US, it's safe to say that Yoav's designs are unique and lean heavily upon his formal training as an architect (Israel Institute of Technology). So, what does a nationally recognized, architect-turned woodworker do? Teach young children woodworking, of course.

Last summer, I had the chance to visit Yoav at one of the many schools he teaches at — the Rudolf Steiner School in Manhattan. Located just a block off of Central Park and around the corner from the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Steiner School sits in a historic

low-rise building. The entryway is full of kids walking to class or parents dropping them off for the day.

In the basement of this esteemed school is something unexpected — a woodshop lined with benches and tools. The class quickly fills with children from 4th grade to high school. They immediately get into the shop, grab their projects, and start getting to work.

The Steiner philosophy is simple — teach kids by encouraging and curating their creativity and imagination and allowing them to use their hands to learn. None of this is more evident than in Mr. Liberman's class. Here, the kids start by simply whittling walking sticks in the earlier grades and slowly go through spoon carving, character carving, stool making, and some simple mechanical toys when they reach high school.



Having spent a few days in Yoav's class, watching these kids was amazing. Some of them took to their work like a fish to water. For others, it took a bit of convincing to focus on their projects rather than goofing around with each other. But, what is evident in Yoav's class is that these kids flourish while being taught to use their hands. Even though the kids in your life may not go to a Steiner school, I encourage you to take this approach and let them learn with their hands.



1 Between projects, students are allowed (and encouraged) to explore various techniques, such as woodburning.

2 Making small wood critters is one of the favorite projects among students.

3 Stool making introduces real-world applications of woodworking techniques.

