

# Artist Portfolio

# MARIA PATTERSON

*Selected Wood Sculptures and Carvings:  
From Fine Art to Fun Art*

A technologist turned woodcarving artist based in Indianapolis, Indiana, I create whimsical wood sculptures that celebrate craftsmanship and creativity, hand-carved from the sustainably sourced bark of fallen cottonwood trees.

My work, which has been exhibited across the state and nationally, earned an Indiana Artisan designation in 2023, recognizing my dedication to high-quality artistry.

Passionate about creative wellness, I happily seek opportunities to showcase my art and engage with the community, sharing the joy of traditional crafts as a refreshing alternative to screens and modern distractions, demonstrating how inspiring and innovative these practices can be.

## ***“White Wizard”***

11" x 5" x 2.5", 1.7 lbs  
Hand carved portrait sculpture in cottonwood bark.



12.5" x 4.5" x 2.75", 1.2 lbs  
Hand carved portrait sculpture in cottonwood bark. Woman's face with hibiscus flowers.

## ***“Ava”***



## ***"Green with Mischief"***

11" x 4.5" x 2.5", 1.2 lbs  
Hand carved 'green man'  
sculpture in cottonwood bark.



11" x 4.5" x 2.5", 1.2 lbs  
Owl resting on a branch. Hand carved  
in cottonwood bark.

## ***"Spotted Owl"***





## ***“Humble Splendor”***

11" x 4" x 2", 0.8 lbs  
Hand carved whimsical fairy house in cottonwood bark.



11" x 4" x 2.5", 1 lbs  
Hand carved whimsical fairy house in cottonwood bark.

## ***“Welcomed”***



## ***"Faramond"***

11" x 3" x 2.5", 0.6 lbs

Meaning "travelers' protector". Wood spirit guide hand carved in cottonwood bark. Before and after photo.



11" x 4" x 2", 0.9 lbs

Two whimsical fairy houses, hand carved in cottonwood bark. Before and after photo.

## ***"Nestled Atop"***





## ***“Old World Santa”***



4" x 1.5" x 1.5"

Traditional “Old World” style Santa wood carving. Hand carved from basswood and painted with acrylic paints.

## ***“Christmas Tree Gnomes”***

3" x 1" x 1"

Christmas tree hat gnomes, original design. Whittled from basswood and painted with acrylic paints.



**Maria Patterson, PhD**

Woodcarving Artist &amp; Creative Entrepreneur

317-721-1258 | [maria@handtoheartwood.com](mailto:maria@handtoheartwood.com)Indianapolis, IN | [www.handtoheartwood.com](http://www.handtoheartwood.com)**ARTIST STATEMENT**

I am a self-taught woodcarving artist who turned to handcraft as a therapeutic antidote for burnout in the tech industry. Seeking relief from the demands of long hours and constant screen time, I discovered woodcarving as a way to disconnect and slow down. What began as a simple whittling hobby five years ago has blossomed into a passion for creating fine art wood sculptures that I proudly share in galleries and sell at art fairs.

As I immersed myself in this craft, I realized that woodcarving is not just an escape; it embodies the essence of putting the "A" (arts) in "STEAM." Creating within constraints—such as working with the unique grain patterns of cottonwood bark—sparks creativity and innovation. Each piece evolves organically, revealing surprises that challenge my skills and push my artistic boundaries. I use basswood for reproducible characters due to its straight grain and consistency, while cottonwood bark—harvested from dead or fallen trees—provides a sustainable medium for my fine art sculptures, showcasing its distinctive grain and features. Woodcarving encompasses everything from fun art to fine art, allowing for playful, whimsical characters as well as sophisticated sculptural forms that engage both the artist and the audience.

My woodcarving practice is a journey of mindful discovery, utilizing only hand tools to create whimsical characters that emerge from and retreat into the wood's surface. Embracing the wood's natural grain can lead to unexpected forms and features, fostering an innovative spirit akin to the concept of an innovation flywheel—where consistent, dedicated efforts compound over time, leading to significant artistic growth. Just as incremental innovations drive technological progress, regular practice in traditional crafts can cultivate creativity, skill development, and transformation.

At art fairs, I often encounter individuals—many from tech backgrounds—who express a desire to learn woodcarving or share their experiences with craft. They seek a break from their digital lives, highlighting a growing need for creative outlets promoting mental wellness. This has ignited my desire to help others find enrichment and rejuvenation through craft.

In 2023, I earned an Indiana Artisan designation, which recognizes my commitment to high-quality craftsmanship and solidifies my role within the local artisan community. My vision extends beyond personal artistry; I aim to showcase craftsmanship as a dynamic means of fostering growth and wellness in today's world. Through sharing my artistic process, I hope to inspire others to experience the meditative joy of connecting with natural materials while emphasizing how engaging in traditional crafts can facilitate profound transformation.