This is the first email of four in order to send you the jpeg photos needed for the WOM submission.  The file named "Coral Reef" can be used for the front page, while jpegs named "Process 1, 2, 3..." are the process photos.  The legends for all photos are as follows:

Front photo

"Coral Reef Sculpture" 24"h x 24"w x 4"d. Basswood mounted on a base of African Padauk with inset piece of Arizona sandstone. George Post, photography

Process 1

The first step is to obtain a single piece of wood of the appropriate color, workability, grain and size.  For “Coral Reef”, the American hardwood “Basswood” was chosen, a light-colored, straight-grained wood that is very workable, making it a favorite among carvers.  As shown in this photo, the size of the “Coral Reef” sculpture (24”h x 24”w x 4”d) was obtained by gluing together five pieces of 4” thick Basswood.

Process 2

The second step is to obtain the overall shape of the piece.  This begins by cutting out the overall profile of “Coral Reef” using a bandsaw, as shown in this photo.

Process 3

After the profile is obtained, the shaping step is continued using rasps, sanders, gouges and rotary burrs to achieve the final three-dimensional shape of “Coral Reef.”

Process 4

The front of the shaped piece is shown.

Process 5

The final step is to add detail carving that provides a sense of growth like the colonization of millions of coral polyps that build natural coral reefs.  This “sense of growth” was achieved by carving holes & fissures using a variety of rotary bits and hand-held rasps and files.  This photo shows the start of detailed carving, beginning on the smaller "wing" to obtain the desired organic shapes.

Process 6

Shown is the bottom of the wings, showing the detail that was used to transition the carvings from the small wings to the stem and larger wings of the piece.

Process 7

The larger wing is now being detailed carved. Both through holes (called "piercing") and stopped holes were used to achieve the lace-like organic look.  Notice the pencil marks on the non-carved surface that were used to guide the carving.

Process 8

The piercing begins at the edge of the piece, as shown here on the left-hand wing.

Process 9

The internal piercings are finally added.

Process 10

As shown here, all detail carving is now completed.

Process 11

A three-quarter view of the completed piece is shown before wood dyes were used to emphasize the edges of the wings.

Process 12

Final piece with added edge color, finished with polyurethane and finally mounted on a base made from African Padauk with an inset piece of Arizona sandstone.

The trajectory of my art has been through science. During an era of tremendous advancement in cell and molecular biology occurring in the 1970s and 80s, I gained a doctoral degree in these fields from the University of California at Los Angeles.  At this institution, I pursued a career in biomedical research while developing a keen interest in woodworking and art.  I began to seriously produce wood artwork in 2002, and have recently transitioned into a full-time wood artist.

My style and approach are my own, greatly influenced by my background in biology. In my artwork, I try to express the dynamic form of growth and  symmetry encountered in cells and tissues, as well as in whole organisms throughout the natural world.   Without attempting to accurately portray biological structures, I use organic shapes and abstract forms, like holes and fissures, to achieve the perception of biological growth in my artwork.  Often my aim is for a sculpture to appear as if it arose by the process of natural growth rather than carved by human hands.  I also enjoy the use of biological specimens, such as fossils and butterflies, as central features in my sculptures, playing off their form and symmetry.  Wood seems a natural choice of medium for my artwork, as it is derived from the processes of biological growth that my style attempts to emulate.

Mark Henry Doolittle earned a PhD in Biology from the University of California at Los Angeles, and enjoyed a career there in biomedical research. While working at UCLA, he also developed a keen interest in art and woodworking, recently transitioning into a second career as a full-time wood artist.

Mark’s work is strongly influenced by his background in biology. His work strongly reflects the growth and symmetry found in cells and tissue, as well as whole organisms. He uses organic shapes and abstract forms to foster a perception of biological grow.

See more of Mark’s intriguing work on his web site <http://www.markdoolittlestudio.com/> or on his Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/markdool>