

Tips from the teacher

By SHELAGH MERCER

Common House Sparrow: Part Six

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OUR house sparrow has now been carved and feathered. Let's continue as we set the eyes. Get yourself some dark brown 5 mm taxidermy glass eyes, some toothpicks, epoxy putty and sculpturing tools.

Figure 32 — Locate eye area by holding toothpicks to check angles and levels from the eyes' center spots, first from above to adjust the angles, and then from the front to adjust the levels. For now all angles or levels are 90° ones to either the centre line or the base (table top).

Figure 33 — (a) Eyes can be drilled with rotary tools using various cutters. I start off with a cone or round-shaped diamond or ruby type cutters, then I use a round metal cutter, but make sure it is a lot smaller than the hole itself or it could buckle.

(b) Place hot melt glue onto ends of toothpicks, then center them to each glass eye. Make sure to keep toothpicks as close to 90° angles to surface of eye as possible.

(c) Put in enough epoxy putty to fill each hole. When eyes are pushed in, excess epoxy that comes out around them can be removed, but some excess can also form membranes around the eye. Make sure eye is sunk in at least even with brow and cheekbones above and below as represented by vertical dashed line in diagram.

Figure 34 — (a) First level eye straight; then looking from above, angle eyes forward a touch without pushing down on them just yet.

(b) Now look straight on (frontal view) and push both eyes downward (at same angle) just slightly.

(c) Complete membrane around entire eye as shown. Now we can set the bird aside.

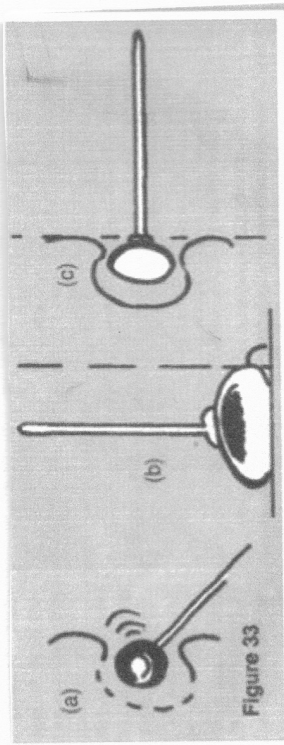


Figure 33

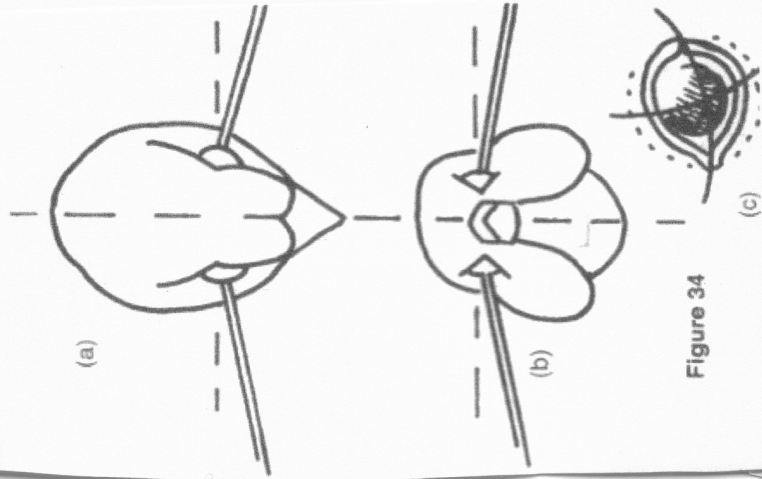


Figure 34