

## Beauty and admiration in a living room

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Colour, texture and pattern on the walls can transform any ordinary looking living room into something extraordinary; further decoration is carried out by placing tasteful furniture, accessories and fixtures at suitable places to compliment the overall setting. However, to create a focal point, a driftwood sculpture that gives a great deal of pleasure is a great option.

From times immemorial man's creative instinct helped regular flow of new artistic items available in the world markets. Such creativity is also explored in Driftwood as well; this resulted in artistic pieces entering and occupying prominent places of pride in drawing rooms, gardens and lawns. One driftwood piece suitably displayed is bound to be an object of beauty and admiration irrespective of other expensive furniture and souvenirs present in the vicinity

Driftwood art more popular in European Union than in Asia; in India there a number of artists who create these and some of them also offer them for sale as well, more so in the hill stations. Though it is a well known art-form, but few people practise it these days due to difficulty in collecting raw material. However this art, if practised in a holistic manner can provide sustainable living besides giving future generation an opportunity to keep this practise live.

Driftwood is a piece of wood that has been drifted and scattered along a river or a stream by the action of waves; it is also found on a shore or a beach of a sea generated by the action of tides or waves; it can be a burl or a natural root or a piece of wood. These pieces while drifting along a river or a stream hit stones and boulders enroute to assume stunning shapes. They also face different weather conditions and get stuck at some destination from where they can be collected for final sculpting. During this long and hazardous journey the real texture of the wood is exhibited for it to be transformed into a sculptural marvel.

The Himalayan Rivers and streams contribute unlimited stock of naturally shaped wooden pieces during floods; these pieces can also be collected

from the wild, usually from inaccessible and dangerous places high up in the mountains and the embankments of rivers where wind plays an important role in giving them unique and natural shapes. It is also to be seen that how destructive forces of nature play artistic games to create unique shapes of birds, animals, reptiles and humans in the form of wood. It is seldom that one comes across a piece of driftwood in a complete form, but you do come across pieces where effort put to create them is insignificant.

Unlike other forms of art, each piece of driftwood is unique, the suspense and beauty lies in the fact that you are unsure of what you are going to make next until you find one. These hidden treasures from nature in the form of salvaged pieces of wood are collected and sculpted as astonishing and decorative furniture and other art forms for beautification of interiors.

Though it is advisable not to have any joints in the driftwood specimen, but by doing so, one can have unlimited options to create wonders.

When displaying driftwood sculptures in exhibitions, a suitable title should be given to each to give purpose and to distinguish one exhibit from another.

It is not a difficult art to adopt as no special tools are required. A novice can just start off with any piece of wood and gain some practice in chipping with a hammer and a chisel along with some experience of cutting with a saw before working on a piece of driftwood.

## DIY

After collecting a piece of driftwood

- Clean it thoroughly with a paint brush of suitable size; remove all mud and sand from it
- Do not remove or take out embedded stones as they enhance the beauty of the piece.
- In case there is any bark, retain if it adds beauty.
- Wash it with water and allow it to dry.
- View the piece from different angles to ultimately arrive at a final shape; this would be the angle or a position at which the driftwood piece would be displayed.

- Remove any branch or obstruction which comes in the way of final shape.
- Sculpt with a chisel and a hammer to enhance the living spirit of the wood and give it a final shape.
- Give a smooth finish with pieces of broken glass and sand paper.
- As an option, it can be spirit polished; different shades of spirit polishing can also be given to compliment the environment; however even without polishing the piece will look stunning.
- Display the sculpture as a focal point in a living room.

The finished product of driftwood does reflect a feeling of thankfulness to the creator and also to the viewer for having appreciation for it.

**Author is a driftwood artist; his Solo Exhibition of fifty sculptures was held at Punjab Kala Bhawan, Chandigarh in July 2011.**