



## "Cat Coasters"



### Introduction

Welcome to marquetry kit "Cat Coasters" from QJS Marquetry. This kit will enable you to make four attractive coasters with either a silhouette or multi-colour design. (Please note that the veneer colours may differ from those shown in the pictures.)

### What Do I Need?

In addition to the kit you will need a sharp craft knife, a surface to work on (a craft cutting mat is ideal but a kitchen board or some strong cardboard will do), a metal ruler or straight-edge, masking tape (or clear tape) and some PVA wood glue.

### Getting Started

Ideally, before starting these designs you should have followed our "Introduction to Marquetry by the Window Method" and made the "leaf" practice piece satisfactorily.

(Instructions available at <http://qjsmarquetry.co.uk/downloads/instructions-window-method.pdf>)

### Decide on your Design

The simplest option is to make your coasters as one colour silhouettes. They could be all black, or you could use some of the colours provided – your choice. More complex is to make multi-coloured designs with either straight line or curved pieces.

### Preparing your Backgrounds

Take the background piece(s) and if necessary cut them into squares just larger than the coasters themselves. Tape the back of the pieces across the grain to protect the veneer when you cut out the design.

Decide the grain direction you want for the background then tape your drawing in place, ensuring the design is central, and trace through the outline. You can make all four cat designs, or make a set of coasters using just one or two of the designs ... or even use other outline designs obtained from other sources such as colouring books or the internet.

## Simple Silhouettes

Cut out each outline, just as you did with each section of the "leaf" practice exercise. Take care not to break off any vulnerable cross-grain areas of the background. Position the insert veneer (which could be black or one of the colours provided) and tape it to the background to prevent movement. Mark round the "window", cut out the insert and glue in place.

*Hint – masking tape, or even sticky labels, on the front of the insert veneer will make your knife marks easier to see when you are cutting out the insert.*

## Straight Line Multi-Colour Designs

Trace through the design outline as before, but do not cut out the whole "window". You may want to draw in the lines you intend to cut before you start, or you can just let the design "grow" as you work. It can help the design to make the majority of your lines start from places where the outline changes direction quite abruptly. The designs will also have more "balance" if the various coloured pieces are roughly the same size. Cut out and insert each piece, choosing colours which contrast well with each other.

*Hint – when inserting each piece only glue the sides which are touching the outline or another inserted piece. This way the unglued side will be a clean edge to the "window" for the next piece.*



## Curved Line Multi-Coloured Designs

Trace through the design outline as before, but do not cut out the whole "window". You may want to draw in the lines you intend to cut before your start, or you can just let the design "grow" as you work. It can help the design to make the majority of your lines start from places where the outline changes direction quite abruptly and to extend the "flow" of the outline to define each piece. The designs will also have more "balance" if the various coloured pieces are roughly the same size. Cut out and insert each piece, choosing colours which contrast well with each other.

*Hint – when inserting each piece only glue the sides which are touching the outline or another inserted piece. This way the unglued side will be a clean edge to the "window" for the next piece.*

## Preparing the Coasters - Edges

There are several ways you can finish your coaster edges.

**The "Best" Way**, but fiddly, is to veneer them. Tape your chosen veneer (black looks very smart) across the grain and then cut strips ACROSS the grain which are just wider than the thickness of your coasters. Cutting across the grain will make it much easier to curve the strips round the coaster corners. Start in the middle of one side and glue on the strips, taping them to the coaster edge. Pull the tape to stretch it slightly so it pulls the strip firmly onto the coaster edge. Join strips at right-angles and continue round the coaster. When you reach where you started, carefully trim the last strip and tape the join. Leave for the glue to set. Once set, remove the tape carefully to avoid lifting the veneer away. Wrap abrasive paper round a firm block and sand each edge of the veneer strip carefully, keeping the block flat on the main coaster surface and only moving the abrasive TOWARDS the centre of the coaster to avoid peeling off the newly glued edge – lift off on the return stroke. Finally lightly sand the face of each edge. Take care at the corners, it is very easy to sand right through the strip! Your coasters are now ready to receive the face design.



**The "Easiest" Way**, but slightly scruffy, is to leave raw MDF edges. These can be lacquered or varnished, though they are a little "thirsty" and may require several coats.

**A "Simple", but Smart**, effect can be achieved by staining the edges with a penetrating wood-stain (or for a quick fix use a permanent marker pen). Allow to dry well before lacquering and it's best to check on some scrap that the colour does not run into your chosen finish.

### **Gluing Down your Marquetry**

Draw round a coaster onto a piece of scrap paper and cut out the outline, leaving a sheet of paper with a coaster-shaped hole.

Tape the front of each marquetry design and remove any tape or glue residue from the back. Position the marquetry behind the paper "window" and ensure the motif is central. Place a coaster in the paper window, remove the paper and, if necessary, mark on the veneer where the coaster is positioned. This will just help you to glue the coaster in the right place.

You will need two firm pieces of wood at least as big as a coaster, strong clamps, some soft packing material (such as newspaper) and a sheet of plastic (to protect from glue). Place the packing material on one of the boards, topped with plastic. Place the veneer **face down** on the plastic. Apply adhesive evenly to the coaster (not the veneer picture or it will curl) and press it onto the veneer, ensuring it is in the correct position. Tape in place if necessary. Add the second large board and clamp firmly. Once glued – perhaps an hour in a warm room - remove from the clamps and carefully remove any tape.

Once your glue has dried and set, trim the edges and give your coaster a careful sanding using a moderate grit abrasive paper (180-240). Take care to remove dust (the brush on your vacuum cleaner is ideal) as the light and dark dusts can get into the opposite colour veneers and make your picture look dull.

When sanding the edges, only contact the surface veneer on the down stroke, so you don't lift off or damage the edge of your face veneer. Finally a coat or two of lacquer or varnish (follow the manufacturer's instructions) will bring up the colours and make your coasters look splendid. To finish off, stick the velour backing to your coasters and carefully trim off any excess.

NB: conventionally a backing veneer would be stuck to the back of a piece of marquetry to "balance" any pull from the veneers which might tend to warp the backing board. At coaster size there is little chance of warping, hence backing veneers are not necessary.

More detailed instructions for mounting, sanding and polishing can be found on our website at:  
<http://qjsmarquetry.co.uk/downloads/instructions-finishing.pdf>

For more help and information about marquetry please contact:

- **QJS Marquetry**  
01785 850614  
[www.qjsmarquetry.co.uk](http://www.qjsmarquetry.co.uk)
- **The Marquetry Society**  
[www.marquetry.org](http://www.marquetry.org)

**Packing list:** veneers, coasters, adhesive velour, instructions, abrasive paper, carbon paper, Marquetry Society leaflet, practice exercise

