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# Halloween pumpkins get new looks from artistic carvers

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This time of year, there are more than a few familiar faces hanging out on front porches. For decades, the jack-o'-lantern has been decked out with triangle eyes, round nose and jagged teeth. We thought it was time for a new look, so we asked several creative types in North Texas to give him a makeover. From the whimsical and spooky to the sophisticated, they delivered.

**The pumpkin master:** Julia Schloss

**When she's not decorating pumpkins:** The Palmer woman is salvaging trash and castoffs to turn into art.

**Her pumpkins:** Schloss composed her pumpkins with materials she already had. Her spider pumpkin got its legs from twisted hoses and large plastic trash bags. She found the witch's body – a child-sized mannequin – behind a thrift store. And Crazy Aunt Hattie wears a basket that once held a potted plant.

**After Halloween:** Schloss says don't get rid of your pumpkins just because Halloween is over. If they've been treated to prevent molding and caving in, just turn the pumpkins around so that the uncarved side faces out. Your Halloween decor just became fall decor.

**The pumpkin masters:** David McNair and Carl Youngberg

**When they're not decorating pumpkins:** McNair's company focuses on business leadership and development programs, and Youngberg is a professional speaker, business coach and author.

**Their pumpkin:** Grumpkin, as they've named it, is good to grow. The pumpkin was hollowed out and filled with potting soil to keep its living features – succulents, red peppers, agave – alive.

**A little help from their friends:** The pair got supplies for their fall creation from Calloway's in Richardson.

**The pumpkin master:** Mark Vaughan

## Photos



Khampha Bouaphanh / Special

Inspired by an antique scale and crowns in his store, Mark Vaughan decided to

**When he's not decorating pumpkins:** Vaughan is an owner of DH Collection and Domain XCIV in Fort Worth.

**His pumpkin:** Inspired by an antique scale and crowns in his store, Vaughan decided to create the king's severed head. He used a faux pumpkin and modeling clay to create dimension. He painted the clay to match the pumpkin.

**Halloween traditions:** Though it's been several years since Vaughan got his hands dirty carving or decorating a pumpkin, he routinely holds a pumpkin contest among store employees and clients.

**The pumpkin master:** Karen Akin

**When she's not carving pumpkins:** Akin works as a decorator.

**Her pumpkins:** Why stop at one? Akin, who lives near Uptown, gets an A for incorporating her name – carved into the smile of one jack-o'-lantern – and initial, which is front and center on another pumpkin – into her designs. She also created a centerpiece-worthy pumpkin filled with fresh flowers.

**Her tip:** Avoid the pumpkin-carving kits and stick with quality knives instead. She also says an ice cream scoop is the fastest and easiest way to get the pumpkin pith and seeds cleaned out.

**The pumpkin master:** Caroline Hughes

**When she's not decorating pumpkins:** Hughes is an art teacher at DeSoto ISD Freshman Campus.

**Her pumpkins:** Hughes aimed high with her stacked pumpkins. She carved and painted stripes on the top pumpkin and crowned it with tree limbs for added height. The bottom pumpkin was carved with organic and geometric shapes to create interest once the pumpkins were illuminated.

**A lesson for the teacher:** Hughes says next time, she'll help prolong her carved creation by using petroleum jelly on the cut surfaces to seal in moisture and keep the pumpkin from collapsing.

## THE CARVER'S TOOL BOX

We found a few items to help make scooping and carving easier.

**The circular pumpkin scoop** removes seeds and pulp from pumpkins and other large squashes. \$7.95, Crate & Barrel stores and online.

**Pumpkin Masters'** battery-operated gadget powers out seeds and fibers. It also thins pumpkin walls for easier carving. \$9.98, amazon.com.

**The Dremel Pumpkin Tool** offers precision carving that is hard to accomplish with a standard knife. \$29.95, Lowe's stores.

**Show us your pumpkins:** We want to see how you're decorating pumpkins this October. Send a photo to

create the king's severed head. He used a faux pumpkin and modeling clay to create dimension.

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