Cricut Crafts: Make Wood Veneer Feather Earrings with Courtney Cerruti

Chapter 1 - Introduction
Overview
(fun music) - Hi, I'm Courtney. I'm an artist, an author, I do set design and create DIY content for Creativebug. And right now something I've seen a lot of in stores is laser cut jewelry. Sometimes it's in wood, or in felt. I've designed a pair of boho feather earrings. We're gonna cut them out of wood veneer, and I'll do a little painted technique and we'll add a little gold tip at the end. I'll show you how to lay them out so that you can create a single pair or make a variety of sizes so that you can have an entire set of earrings or make a couple for your girlfriends.

Chapter 2 - Materials
Materials
- The materials you'll need for this project are really simple and they're things that you can find at the craft supply store. Of course, you'll need your Cricut Explore and a computer to interface with that. I'm using just my laptop. I recommend using the blue cutting mat for this. It's the LightGrip, and it's gonna make your life a lot easier. For our painting, I'm gonna do a little gold tip using just some hardware store gold metallic spray paint. I'm using the Valspar brand, but you can use anything, and some acrylic craft paint in the color that you want your feather to be. We're gonna do a dry brush technique with this, and I'm doing deep blue. You'll need a stencil brush, or something that has coarse bristles is gonna work best for this painting technique. We're making these earrings out of wood veneer, which is essentially a really thin ply of wood on one side and it has like a paper backing on the reverse side. This is something that you can find at the craft store, sometimes in the hobby aisle, something you can find at the art supply store. It's something that you can even find at the hardware store. You can use any size sheet. I'll show you how to adapt your earring template to fit your sheet. To turn the feathers into earrings, you're gonna need some kind of earring closure. These are just ear hooks or ear wires that I got at the craft supply store and a couple of jump rings. You can buy these in a pack, so if you're making a whole sheet of earrings, you'll be set to go. You also need a couple of sets of pliers. These are specialty jewelry pliers, but you can actually use anything, just a small needle-nose plier will work perfectly. Having two pairs is actually really handy for the jump rings, but you might be able to fudge it with like a pair of tweezers. And having scrap paper and a pair of rubber gloves is good since we're gonna be spray painting. Once you have all of your materials set, you're ready to go.

Chapter 3 - Make Earrings
Set up and cut
- I've created a feather template that's just a single pair of earring shapes for you but I'm gonna show you how to lay it out so you can do an entire sheet and you can customize it to whatever size sheet of veneer you're working with. So I happen to have a 12 by 12 sheet of veneer but you can lay it out so that you have different sizes of feathers that fit whatever you're working with. You'll open just a single pair of the feathers in your design space and you'll see here there's a little bounding box that shows up. And if you take the, any corner could be the bottom right corner, and click and drag. It'll allow you to resize the feathers without distorting their shape. So you can make them smaller or larger using this. Let's make a pair of earrings that are about five and a half inches tall. I'm

gonna bring that little box with the motifs in them just underneath the grid lines. I don't want to cut right to the very edge. I wanna leave a little bit of breathing room there. If I go over to my layers palette on the right-hand side of my screen you can see each of the feather shapes there. And right now they're grouped so if I highlight them you can see at the bottom it says ungroup in the bottom left of my layers palette. And that means then I could move each individual feather separately from the other but we're gonna keep them grouped 'cause we're always gonna be making a set of two. So to regroup them, highlight both of your layers and then select the group icon at the bottom left of your layers palette. And then now when I move them you can see that they move together as a pair. If I wanna make an entire sheet of feather earrings because that way I can economize all of my cuts, now that they're grouped and highlighted I can go to the bottom right of my layers palette and select duplicate. And I can press this numerous times to create multiple pairs. And I can arrange them and resize them on my design space. Just by selecting them and then using the bounding box to change the size I can create an entire little sheet of these earrings here. And I'm gonna remember that my palette is 12 by 12. That's the size sheet of veneer I'm working with. So I'm just gonna group as many random sizes of these little feathers in here as I can. I wanna leave a little space between each. So that's about as low as I can go. Do a couple pairs the same size. If I select one of the smaller sizes that I just changed and then hit duplicate it'll duplicate that smaller size. So you can work on this in whatever way feels the best. Let's do one more pair there. Let's make these a little bit smaller. Maybe you wanna layer several little feathers on top of each other for each side of your earring so then you can make smaller versions as well. These are highlighted so I'll just hit duplicate to duplicate that smaller pair that I just created and lay them out here. Let's make sure everything fits. Looks like I'm eeking over this 12 on the width dimension so let me just scooch these a little bit closer. I don't want them touching. And let's just get rid of that last pair. I can highlight it and once the bounding box is around it I can just press delete on my keyboard or I can press delete at the bottom right-hand corner of my layers palette. That looks good. We're ready to cut these. So once I've laid everything out the computer will economize your cuts but I like to make sure that I, I've spent all this time laying out. I want them to cut it how I see it on the screen right now. To do that you wanna select all of your layers, and you can do that by going to your top menu bar and selecting all. And then go to your layers palette, and in the upper left corner there's a little icon of a circle and a square and it says weld. If you select that it'll keep your layout exactly how you see it on the screen when it goes to cut. So that takes a minute to kinda weld it together and make it one single image. You can see that once it's welded in your layers palette all those individual layers go away and you're left with one single image that includes all of your feathers. It's a good time to save this file, especially if you're gonna make multiple sheets of all of these feathers. Let's say you're gonna give them as gifts for Christmas or for like a bridal shower or something. So we can go up to save at the top of our palette, select okay. You'll be prompted by all of the popups. And I've already called this sheet of feather earrings. You can name it whatever you like and then save it. You can play with the arrangement and the sizes until you find something that you like and then save your own file from here. We'll select go and that'll get us ready to start cutting our feathers. Our cut preview will come up. Everything's aligned within our 12 by 12-inch square. It asks in the mat preview how many projects you wanna make and you can select more than one. We're gonna cut a single sheet this time but you could cut more than one sheet if you like. We can press go in the bottom right-hand corner. And then this will prompt our machine to allow us to load the mat. Grab your wood veneer. I'm using a 12 by 12 sheet. That's how we've set up this cut. If you're using a smaller sheet then you'll line it up in the same way making sure that it's aligned on the upper left corner

here. And then we can load it into our Cricut. The mat goes under these little feed guides here and we're gonna press it up all the way to this first bar with the rollers. And then our Cricut is prompting us to actually physically load the mat in to the machine. And so this little button is flashing. This is like your insert and eject button, and this is how you're gonna load and eject mats. Your mat's loaded in there. Before we can actually cut these we wanna make sure that we have it on the right setting so that the depth and the pressure of the cut is accurate for the wood veneer. If we look at out little dial there are multiple categories here: paper, vinyl, iron-on, light cardstock, cardstock, fabric, poster board. None of these we're cutting. And then there's a custom setting. So we wanna make sure that the dial is on custom, which it is. We're gonna go back to our computer and in the middle of our little popup screen here it says set a material, and there's a dropdown menu where Cricut has loaded these custom weights. Veneer is not in here but I found that the felt setting works really nicely for cutting veneer. It also cuts twice so it's never a good idea to cut something and eject your mat, and then try to recut it because things are never gonna line up exactly. You wanna select a custom cut that actually does two cuts at once so one right after the other without ejecting the mat, which the felt does. If I select the material settings button here in the popup it'll show me the cut pressure of the felt setting and also how many cuts. It calls it multi-cut and it shows here two times. So that's already saved and loaded for us. We can select done. And now we're ready to cut. We can go back to our machine. The little C button that means cut is ready, it's flashing. Once we press that guy our machine will start cutting. Once your machine is done cutting you can eject your mat in the same way you inserted it just by pressing this flashing arrow button. You can select finish on the computer because we're done cutting and then we're gonna peel away our negative shape just on the outside of the feathers. Carefully peel away just the outside shape if you can. We don't wanna pull up the feathers themselves. This is easier to do with the larger feathers. The little feathers may wanna pull up as well. If you do peel up a feather it's not the end of the world. It's just easier to paint when they're all on the mat like this. I've got one little feather that just wanted to come up. So I'll just put him back here. And I can keep that negative space, place that back inside. Next up I'm gonna show you how to paint these so they look more like a feather and we're gonna leave them on the mat to do that.

Paint earrings
- Using a dry brush painting technique is really what's gonna make these look really brush stroke-y and feather-like. Because we're doing a whole sheet, I decided to add a few more colors of craft paint to my palette. I'm using a neon coral, the blue that I mentioned earlier, and then a teal color. I'm also using these stencil brushes, which are a coarse bristle and have a really blunt end and this will help in getting our dry brush technique. I'm gonna start with my lightest color. I'm just gonna pull out a little paint and you're really tapping your brush onto your palette there. It's not ideal to get paint directly on your cutting mat. You can rinse this under water, that'll reactivate the stickiness and remove any paint. We're definitely not gonna spray paint on this mat. But I do like to do this dry brush while all the feathers are still on the mat because we're gonna keep that negative space that later will pop out. That's the center of the feather, almost like the spine of a feather, and we're gonna paint right over top of that. It's gonna help us get a really nice concentration of paint in the center and then we'll pop it out to reveal the negative space. So let me grab my paint. And I'm just gonna carefully paint. I don't want too much paint on my brush, I want it to be a dry brush feel. Just gonna paint from the center out, kinda right along that space we're gonna pop out in a little bit. These smaller ones are gonna be the trickiest to do. Let's do a bigger one so you get a sense of it.

So just really loose, the most concentration's gonna be in the center with really light painting coming toward the edge. We still want some of that wood to show. So I'm just starting at the center and following the shape of the feather all the way down. Let's do one more coral pair. Maybe these other little ones here. We're gonna switch to a different color. You don't wanna introduce water into your brush, so if you can manage just to get most of the paint out, and then switch colors, that's kind of the best. My paint is still green, so we're good. I didn't make brown. If you make brown, you need to switch to a new brush. Just keeping it really loose. Dry. Just brushing out from the center toward the edges. You can really see it on these larger ones. Maybe save your smaller ones for last if you're trying to get the technique down. You don't have to do exactly this. I prefer the dry brush technique, but you're more than welcome to do a pair of earrings that are two different colors of feathers. You can layer the feathers like I mentioned earlier. You can even mix your paints if you want. Whatever you think is gonna look best. We are gonna add that gold spray painted tip at the end, so keep that in mind as you're paining. Let's do one more of these aqua. Keeping that dry brush technique. I really wanna keep paint on the brush, but still so I'm getting the strokes of those coarse bristles. I wanna maintain that. Okay. These last four pairs, lets do in a dark blue. So I'm actually really liking this smaller brush. I'm gonna just keep using it. Get some of that darker blue. Let's do these blue ones. You can really see with the contrast of the dark blue and that wood grain how feathery this technique looks. It's really pretty. You can always add more paint, but never really take it away so make sure that you don't have a goopy brush. I got a little paint on my mat here, which is fine, I can rinse that off. I can even just use a baby wipe on it. I think these corals could use a little extra love, so let's do some blue on top of there. I feel like a cool, two toned effect. These look really good! Now we're gonna remove them from the mat and you'll see that negative shape will pop out. They dry pretty rapidly because the wood veneer is unfinished. You may have to coax some of these a little. But you can see that by keeping them on the mat, the back stays really clean and was keeping the negative shape in too. Otherwise you'd have dark blue seeping in here. So that's why I like to keep them on the mat. I've got a little paint on my mat. That's fine, I can just wipe that off with a baby wipe or run it under the faucet. Cricket makes this little dental tool that's good for getting those little tiny shapes out. You can use little sewing needle as well. You can see how clean these shapes really are. They look manufactured as opposed to sort of hand made in this sense because we get really nice, fine detail. It would be really difficult to get this with even a sharp pair of scissors on something like wood veneer. I like how these two toned ones turned out. These ones can be layered on top, these little baby guys, if you wanna do two feathers on each ear. These look really cool and they're dry enough for us to add our spray paint. So you wanna make sure that you're working on some kind of protected surface. Ideally, you'd be doing this outside. I'm doing it in my studio here. Just add a piece of paper to work on just to protect my work surface. And I do wanna line these up because we're gonna use a mask so that we get a nice, crisp tip. So we're just using eight and half by 11 paper so we need to be able to fit these. We're gonna be masking off the top of the feather so just the tips are gold. So just arrange them in a way that you like. Because we're using spray paint and I'm gonna be holding down the paper that's acting as our mask, I'm gonna put on some rubber gloves. This is totally optional, but you might wind up with a gold manicure after this, which is not necessarily ideal. (rattling) Hold this down and lightly spray. As long as you have good coverage, just one pass is good. You can see we have a pretty crisp edge there for the tip. I like to paint the back side with the gold spray paint as well just to give it a really polished, finished look. You wanna make sure that this stuff is all fairy dry. You don't wanna get gold paint anywhere that you don't want it to be. You don't need a mask for this. When you're painting

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the back, you wanna make sure that you're definitely spraying over top. You don't wanna be spraying from the side because then you'll get spray paint back onto the front on the underneath side that you just so carefully masked out. You're gonna paint all your feathers in exactly the same way. Doing the tip first, letting them dry, which takes a few seconds, and flipping them over and spray painting the back. (whooshing) If you need to hold them down, you can. (whooshing)

Attach hooks and finish
- Putting together these earrings is really fun 'cause you can kind of mix and match the different colors, shapes, and sizes that you've made. I'm going to do a pair where we have one large dark blue feather and a second blue feather layered with a little teal feather on top. The ear wire that I have is like a vintagey brass look and has a really small little eyelet here at the bottom, I want to add a jump ring to that which is just a simple metal ring that has an opening in it so I can slip that through and then I'm going to add my feathers to that jump ring I want to make sure that the front of my feather is facing out and this is the part that would go into my ear. So holding that in place I can just slip that feather on, so this is how it would hang in my ear so that's right. Your jump ring, you're not going to press it together like this you want to open it from front to back and bring it together this way because if you press them together this way they'll just bump up against each other and you'll always be left with a little gap there. So let me show you what I mean. If you have your jump ring and you're holding it on each side with the pair of pliers these are like fancy jewelry pliers that have a rounded tip you don't need that you can just use a regular small nose tip plier. Just going to position so I can just on the left side bring the wire toward me and on the right side push it away from me so that they come together to meet. You wind up with a closed jump ring. So then your ear wire is on there. You're going to do the same thing on the other side, add your jump ring to your ear wire, make sure you know which way that's going to be oriented on your ear. Slip in both of the feathers so we've got our little one layered on top and then we're going to close this jump ring. Just by bringing the front and the left sides together to meet in the middle. You're left with a really cute pair of feather earrings. These are really customizable you could add a charm to this or some real feathers if you wanted, you could play with layering more colors of feathers, you could spray paint all of them, you could hand paint all of them, they're really fun because you get to do a little bit of painting, a little bit of jewelry making but best of all they have a really clean and sophisticated line so no one will know that you made an entire dozen at home in the afternoon.