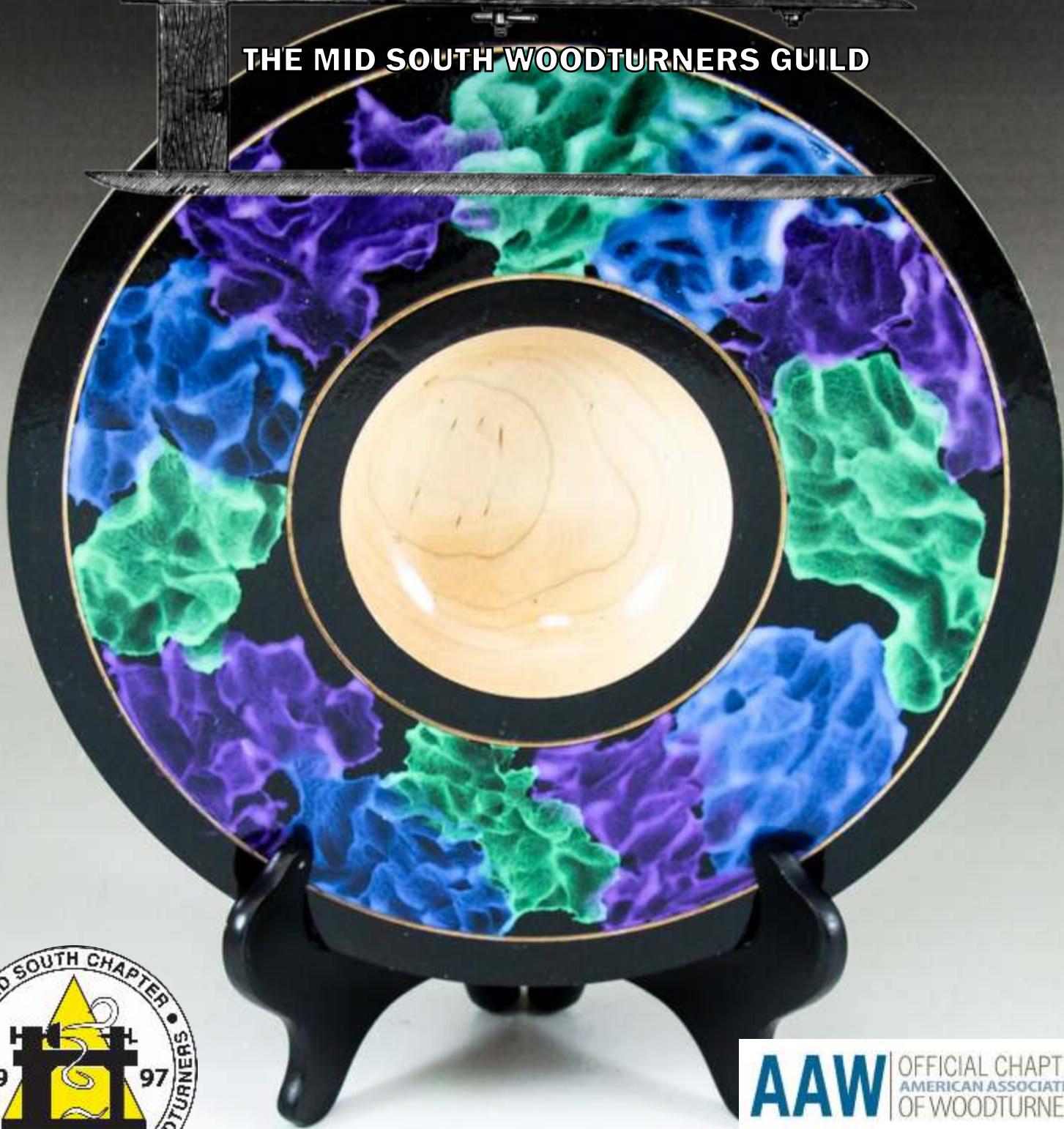


May 2018

TURNERS TALK

THE MID SOUTH WOODTURNERS GUILD



AAW OFFICIAL CHAPTER
AMERICAN ASSOCIATION
OF WOODTURNERS

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IN THIS ISSUE

Page 03 - The President's Corner

Page 05 - Shop Talk

Page 08 - Woodturning in Basic Black by Alan Lacer

Page 12 - "Ebonizing" and Coloring by Garry Knox Bennett

Page 13 - Instant Gallery

Page 21 - Upcoming Events

Page 22 - Mentors List

Page 23- Club Sponsors

At last month's meeting, Rick Stone treated us to a very interesting demonstration on making your own custom handles for woodturning tools. Especially interesting to me was the use of a brass flair nut to create a perfect ferrule at the tool end. Oh, and not to forget, another must-have tool was introduced, the "DrillWizard from ONEWAY Manufacturing. It was used to help create the detail at the end of the tool handle. I know that ONEWAY sold at least one of these based on Rick's demonstration.



Thanks Rick for another interesting demonstration.

President's Corner

By:
Mike Maffitt



You want to know what gets me pumped up about our club? When I see someone else get excited about what we are doing and goes out and purchases the materials and equipment he or she needs to lend a helping hand so they can be involved and on board. That makes my day, week, month and year. Way to go troops, it makes me very proud to be associated with a fantastic group of caring people.

We had our third session for our Beads of Courage boxes at Larry Cutliff's dude ranch and shop on May 5th and we tried to wrap up as many BOC pieces that we possibly could. Thanks to everyone who came out and participated in the event and I believe it was a great success. We accomplished quite a lot over the past three months in developing our design and learning the problems and solutions to accomplish our goals. This project, like many other projects you have attempted, gets much easier the more pieces you finish off. The hurdles hindering your success often are the product of your mind telling you that you can't do it, but deep in your mind you know that you can. Listen, if I can do it, any one of you can do it, this is a product that can be accomplished and easily mastered. We delivered 41 boxes in March to Le Bonheur Children's Hospital and those boxes represented the accumulation of approximately 16 months of donations. I am very proud to announce that we will be delivering our full quota of 50 boxes to Le Bonheur this June, which is the product of only 3

months of effort by our great club. Not only that but we will have inventory put away for our September delivery. Wow, wow, wow. Way to go people. Please bring all of your completed boxes to Saturday the 26th of May's meeting if you can. If not call me and I will arrange to pick them up.

Continuing on in our "Turn-In" events, our June event will be small bowls for our Empty Bowls charity. We will be holding this event in two different locations to accommodate everyone who wants to participate. We ran into a shortage of lathes at our last event and we don't want that to happen again. You can bring fresh wood sized to make approximately a 7" x 3" bowl or you can bring wood already turned to dry and we will finish as many as we can in the time we have allotted. To all of the beginners in our club, please come and participate. This event will give you the foundation to turn any bowl you wish to turn in the future. This, like any other process is simply repetition breeds success. The more pieces you do, the easier and more refined your skills become. We want you to succeed in your woodturning adventure so please come on out and join us.

In September we will be participating in the 2018 Bartlett Festival,



President's Corner cont.

Car Show & MBN BBQ Cooking Contest on September 28th and 29th. Is that a mouth full or what? Why are we doing this event? We have arranged with the Bartlett Festival people to demonstrate our craft and knock out one more of our charity commitments, Pens for Troops. Yes, we will be turning pens Friday afternoon between 6:00 pm and 9:30 pm and Saturday from 9:30 am to 5:00 pm. This should be an awesome event and we get the chance to showcase our talents to a throng of people. I think this will be a fantastic event and I look forward to this effort.

We purchased the new camera gear and I have received it in a perfectly undamaged package and we will be addressing the setup and punching out any problems before the June meeting. Since our May demonstrator Anthony

Harris had to cancel due to health reasons, our esteemed Larry Sefton has agreed to move his demo up a few months to help ease our burdens. Thank you Larry and I am looking forward to a great demo on resin molding.

Keep moving forward on your journeys in woodturning, my friends. I find benefits in every piece I turn. Sometimes it is a wonderful display piece and sometimes it produces a wonderful source of heat with glowing embers. See you all on Saturday the 26th.

Shop Talk

By: Eric Caron

I had the pleasure of visiting with Rick Cannon late one day, and what a treat it was. Today we enter Rick's work space, and there is a lot going on. Rick has a working shop, where finished pieces go to the marketplace at different crafts and art shows. This is where some designs make themselves known as wanted and others not as much, regardless of the maker's affinity for them. Rick embraces the sometimes-brutal reality that artists face when selling their creations.



Not many woodturners can say that a tree falling on their house was their first inspiration to start woodturning, but it is the case with Rick. While away on vacation July 22, 2003, hurricane Elvis devastated Memphis, and the twin trunk maple that once was over Rick's house fell, destroying the new back addition (not to mention the neighbor's two houses down). Rushing back home, his family helped to close the space from further damage, but Rick was faced with all the wood from the tree. His wife suggested he turn a bowl, and with that goal, he bought a Harbor Freight lathe, some tools, and turned his first



bowl from the spalted maple. He hasn't looked back since.

Personal After high school Rick went straight into the Army, and after 4 years became a civilian again, finding himself working in an oil refinery for the next 25 years. He retired 2 years ago, only to find himself working full time again, but this time for himself, continuing his journey in woodturning.

Shop Space When you first enter the main 16' x 40' shop to your left is a Jet lathe, which does not



get as much use as his main lathe, but we'll get to that in a minute. Across from that is a table saw, which he uses for his segmented pieces. A workbench/outfeed table is behind that and serves as an assembly and carving area. The space is L-shaped, kind of like a bar, but drinks aren't served here, only glue and finish. There are different clamps available depending on the need. You might notice a little sawdust here and there, but it's just a reminder that good things happen in this space. Rick participated in the East Buntn Art Show the weekend before my visit, so cleaning was low on the priority list.



Along the right wall is Rick's main lathe, a Vicmark L200, flanked on the right with a tool sharpener, and to the left with a Grizzly belt sander. The belt sander serves many purposes, but it is mainly used to sand half-rings flat to join



to other half rings when constructing segmented turnings. To the right of the tool sharpener is a dust collector, to service the Vicmark and the belt sander. Rick made a great 24" sanding disc for the Vicmark, which further helps to sand larger segmented rings. This is made of plywood and is heavy - Rick mentioned he considers having the sanding plate be made out of aluminum, for stability and lightness.



Rick has a "healthy" amount of wood stored at the back of the shop in heavy-duty racks. Having lived in Memphis for more than a few decades, Rick visited a number of the now-closed mills (Colco and Collierville), so his wood selection and variety are not an impediment to his creativity. The second shop space, 20' x 24', is primarily wood storage, though he has some tooling as well. The main bandsaw is a heavy Delta, ready for anything. While he has the riser block kit ready to be installed he has not installed it since his work has not needed it (yet). Aside from this, a couple chop saws for length cuts are positioned for more segmented work or regular use.





Woodturning inspiration Rick has many sources of inspiration, some of which are the many fellow woodturners he has worked with and consulted in the past and currently. Last year the MSWG was fortunate enough to host Graeme Priddle and Melissa Engler, who demonstrated the "antlers" that are prominent features of Graeme's work. Rick has taken that theme and applied it to his own work, creating new and unique pieces, particularly his bud vases. We saw a few examples of those last month in the Instant Gallery.



Early on, Rick met Michael Mode (based in VT) at Arrowmont, where he learned about making vessels from laminating flat stock, which greatly inspired him to create hollow vessels from 2 turned pieces that were later joined to finish the hollow vessel. Also, Malcolm Tibbetts was an influence.

Rick has many wood-turned creations, but he doesn't make just a few select pieces. From bowls to segmented urns, Rick also makes spoons, letter openers, ducks calls, salt and pepper shakers, Christmas trees, pens when needed, and even boats. You name it, I'll bet Rick can make it.

Thank you again, Rick, for allowing me to visit your shop and to share your work with our MSWG members. We look forward to seeing your turned pieces in the monthly Instant Gallery, and as an exhibitor at different art and crafts shows in the mid-south!

Woodturning in Basic Black

By Alan Lacer

Woodturners and woodworkers have long valued the use of woods either colored black or naturally having that color. The first turning book in the Western world (*Le Art De Tourner* by P. C. Plumier, first edition 1701) offers no less than five recipes for the ebonizing of wood—more than for any other color. African ebony has been highly valued for its richness, density, and almost jewel-like qualities for millenniums.

So what stands behind this enduring interest in black or blackened wood, both by makers and viewers of such work? The color black has more complexity behind it than perhaps any other color—it is even debated whether black is a color. There is certainly the psychology of black, its conflicting and often contradictory meanings and associations. Plus there is the visual impact of black as the only color used or when effectively used, in conjunction with other colors. The role of black and its impact can readily change by how it is used by the artist.

Woodturning in Basic Black, an exhibit sponsored by the AAW, opened Nov. 1 at Sculptured Objects & Functional Art (SOFA) Chicago. Alan Lacer's essay first appeared in the SOFA Chicago 2007 catalog. Reprinted with permission.

A piece of wood blackened with heavy pigments, grain filled with either finish or filler, could imitate pottery, glass, plastic, or metal—it may well be hard to know the material except through closer inspection. However, a blackened wooden piece that retains its pores and grain patterns is unmistakably wood—it has its own power and presence that separates it from these other materials.

The color of black

Anyone attempting to color wood black will make several observations. First, black is not always, well, just black. Sometimes there are hints of red, blue, violet, brown, or gray working through the black. Another challenge is finding a coloring process that allows the artist to achieve the desired look he/she is after and the fact that end-grain and face/side grain react to coloring techniques quite differently. Moreover, in some techniques, the underlying wood might contribute its own color or change the color of the blackening process to something less desirable than intended.

Woodturners who construct three-dimensional work in the round face their own set of



"Hollow-Faceted Chunk"

by Jim Partridge. 14½×11¾×11¾".

concerns. In an all-black piece you cannot hide the form from the viewer—it is a naked form. Wood grain and other colors can fool the eye when it comes to judging a piece, even its shape. Black generally makes the form less competitive with other features or colors. This unusual aspect of blackened wood is sometimes invoked as a teaching technique to instruct good form development with woodturners. The completed turning is painted black in order to better evaluate the form absent of grain, figure, or color. Likewise the blackened turned work is not relying on highly figured or rich color of other hues to create eye-grabbing work.



"Lidded Vessel" by Matthew Hill.
Maple; 8½x8½". This piece is included
in the *Basic Black* exhibit.

Photo: Carl Shortt



"Irish Ebony Bowl"
by Ciaran Forbes. Bog oak; 6x7x8".

Photo: David Ellsworth

When used in combination with other colors, black can make colors more intense or call attention to details on a woodturning. An all-black turning except for a few details, makes these details explode or at least brings the eye to quickly focus upon them. In the case of large-pored woods created in black, with the pores filled with another color such as white, a striking surface effect will be created. In these cases black is excellent at framing or highlighting important details of the work.

Taking this thought a bit further, black often does more to reveal than hide. Have you ever heard it said that black clothing shows everything? Black in an unusual way illuminates—which one would think is only the domain of bright lights. Imagine a remote and rural farmhouse on a very dark night. A single light from

that house draws attention to the farm, but it may very well be that it is not the light that calls attention, but the darkness that surrounds the house. If it was a bright day or there were many farmhouses all lit up at night in close proximity, that single farmhouse might well go unnoticed by the viewer. Black is excellent at framing what you desire to see or emphasize—is that not what a black picture frame or black matting does to a painting or photograph?

Other media certainly have explored and exploited the powerful features of black. The painters Pierre Soulages, Robert Rauschenberg, and Frank Stella created works that explored the power of just black, mixtures of

black with other colors, or the power of light as it falls onto black—revealing the depth and complexity of it. Raku pottery has its own beauty with regions and streaks of black from the firing process. The work of Pueblo potters from Santa Clara and San Ildefonso such as Maria Martinez, and Hopi potter Nampeyo, are in a league of their own in terms of elegance, beauty and mystery of their black-on-black pottery.

Black turning stock

Creating the impact of an all or partially black piece has several sources for woodworkers. There are woods that are quite black in their highest grades: ebony, African blackwood, and bog oak, sometimes called Irish ebony.

Basic Black at AAW Gallery

An encore exhibit of *Woodturning in Basic Black*, featuring many pieces from the SOFA Chicago exhibit, will be on display Jan. 11–April 18 at the AAW Gallery in St. Paul.

Gabon ebony is often considered the blackest and most consistently black form of ebony. This wood has been valued since ancient times—used as a symbol of wealth, power, trade, or as a form of currency. Other varieties of ebony (or lower-grade Gabon ebony) might have brown or white streaking, which can be beautiful in its own right. African blackwood, a true rosewood, is another source of blackish wood but with larger open pores than ebony and lacking some of its deep black richness.

A Mexican wood, katalox, is a source of very black wood, although it's a rather small tree with lots of white sapwood. Another African wood, wenge, almost looks all black, but really is a mix of black and brown. American persimmon is a true ebony and may have rich areas of deep black, sometimes referred to as carbon, or almost always has flecks of black in the wood.

One of the most fascinating sources of naturally colored black wood is timber (especially oaks) buried in peat bogs in areas of Ireland and Scotland. Logs that have lain in the highly acidic peat bogs of this region, combined with their own tannic acid and iron from the soil, impart a wonderful deep black color to the wood. The process is a slow one, often occurring over thousands of years. Similarly, buried ancient logs found in Japan also produce this rich black coloring. This wood, called *umoregi* in Japanese, has really reached the level of petrified wood, but can still be shaped into wonderful objects. Its look can be almost the same as ebony, with some figure to the material, but certainly much harder.

"Creating a wood-turned piece that is totally black is truly a challenge. Given the absence of color, the onus is put upon form, with secondary elements of the piece responsible for holding attention, and providing opportunities for discovery and subtle surprises."

—Molly Winton

Adding black

Naturally occurring black woods are rare in a world that commercially lumbers over 8,000 different types of wood. In reaction to this reality, woodworkers and woodturners have resorted to coloring the wood black. Woodturners in particular have taken this blackening process in many different directions. One method is by fire: charring in a fire or with a torch, sometimes wire-brushed or sanded, sometimes oiled and burnished, to achieve the deep charcoal black that is often the target. The amount and depth of the burning can create quite a variation of effects.

Arizona woodturner Phil Brennion utilizes one of the more unusual methods of fire—he covers the piece with gunpowder, and ignites the powder to produce



"Night Run" by Molly Winton is part of the *Basic Black* exhibit. Cherry; 5¾x3¾".

regions of black for a wonderful black speckled look that gives an ancient look to his work. Another way to blacken is by using friction while pieces are spinning on a lathe. A simple wire can create lines of black by burning into the wood, while a piece of heavy cardboard held against the spinning wood—usually at a very high speed—can create larger zones of black.

Today most black pieces are created using more traditional or obvious wood coloring techniques. There is a wide range of methods, utilizing everything from printer's inks (in paste form), India ink, acrylic- and oil-based paints, spray paints from a can, extractions of logwood, leather dyes, aniline dyes made from coal, traditional fabric dyes, pigmented paints (such as oil base or acrylic), black gesso,

pigmented stains, lacquer mixed with graphite, nails or steel wool soaked in vinegar.

One of the most intense practices of coloring wood black is the process of Japanese lacquer (*urushi*). The urushi culture of Japan has a history dating back 6,000 years. Made from the sap of a tree, this process requires great skill and considerable time to achieve the rich black, wet-looking color. The processed sap, with the addition of either iron or carbon black, creates this effect.

Today black is the most widely used color in urushi, either alone or in combination with other colors or materials such as powdered gold and silver.

The impact of the blackening often depends on whether the wood is colored with dyes or

Photos: Tib Shaw/AAW



"Inner Rimmed Vessel" by Liam Flynn is one of the pieces in the *Basic Black* exhibit. Oak; 13x8". In this piece, carving adds patterns but also changes the way light plays along the surface of the blackened work. "At its most basic, black works for me because it removes any distractions from material. What interests me primarily are form and texture, and how the grain structure interacts with the line of the vessel. The blackening process that I use does not obliterate the grain; instead it brings the structure of the wood into a sharper focus."



"Lagniappe" by Gorst du Plessis is part of the *Basic Black* exhibit. African Blackwood and turquoise; 7½x3".

pigments to achieve the effect. Think of the use of pigments as painting—small particles of color mixed with binders—while the use of a dye is much like dying fabric. Dying generally gives greater depth of coloring and more clarity, as the material is absorbing color rather than just having it floating on its surface as is the case with pigments. Each approach has its practitioners and each has its strengths and weaknesses. If you make use of pigments, the color of the wood has not quite the same factor of darkness as dye stains.

The downside of pigments is that they tend to obscure the figure and natural color of the wood more so than dyes, but this might be desirable. With dyes

"Black is the absolute color where form rules."

— Gorst du Plessis

there tends to be more clarity, if applied well, and more control over the shading of the color. Each new coat tends to darken the color, even black, whereas multiple coats of pigments, once a good base is established, will be the shade of the original pigment—remember pigments are just tiny particles of the same color. The inherent color of dyed wood contributes to the overall effect—whether desired or not. For example, the same colored dye on maple will look quite different over a red mahogany. The pigment approach will tend to color both woods more uniformly, with one great difference—maple tends to look sploshy from pigments, but looks great with dyes. A lesson to be learned when you try to color wood: Different species of wood, and sometimes individual pieces of wood, often react differently to different techniques.

The challenge for artists working in wood is to use black effectively, given its many forms and variations, the many reactions it can evoke, the variety of techniques—all point to the depth and range of this color. Explore this special exhibit slowly and methodically—and be prepared to experience the richness of black with a new appreciation.

Alan Lacer (AlanLacer.com) is an *American Woodturner* contributing editor who lives near River Falls, WI.

“EBONIZING” AND COLORING

with Clean Lines

Garry Knox Bennett

Over the course of my career as a furniture designer/maker, I have had plenty of occasions to ebonize and add color to my work. In cases where I want clean line definition between colors, I use the simple process described in this article. Each time I use this method in my work, I have a nagging suspicion that it might prove helpful to my many woodturner friends since the technique would work just as well on turned work as it does on flat pieces. When done correctly, the technique leaves a crisp, clean line between colors.

Prepare the wood

I opted to use a flat poplar board to demonstrate the process, but the

Prepare the wood



1
Use a sharp blade to incise borderlines according to your chosen design.

Add color



2
The incised lines will confine colors to a defined area. Add color slowly and carefully to allow the dye to absorb up to but not farther than the cut lines.

concept is the same for wood of any shape. Tight-grained hardwoods, such as maple and walnut, work well for this process. Lighter-colored woods are best for adding color, and you can control the color's density with the number of applications. As with any technique, practice and experimentation are advised to ensure success.

Incise a line, design, shape, or outline using either a small box-cutter or hobby knife (*Photo 1*). A clean, sharply indented, even cut is important, as the gap between the two edges bordering the cut is what will stop the dye/color from migrating. After the design is inscribed, lightly sand the surface of the cut with fine abrasive to remove any raised areas on the edges of the cut. Then vigorously blow off the piece, making sure the inscribed line is clean—any dust remaining in the cut will “carry” the dye/color instantly beyond where it should be.

Apply color

For adding color, I use water-thinned, artist-grade gouache or watercolor paint because it can be lacquered over without compromising the color. For adding black, I use Fiebing's leather dye (USMC Black) as an alternative to traditional ebonizing methods. This dye really penetrates and I have found it to be far superior to various inks or other ebonizing techniques. The Fiebing's dye is an alcohol-based formula and performs better than acetone-based versions. Apply it with a swab, brush, or rag, but wear gloves, as it will take days to wash from your hands. I do not dilute this dye but use it full strength.

With a soft-bristle brush, begin applying the dye, starting a bit back from the

cut edge and working carefully toward it. Fill in the larger areas with long, even strokes. As you bring the dye up to the cut, it will stop abruptly at the line and will not fill or cross it. The technique is to gently and slowly “float” the color just to the edge. Notice when you start just how rapidly the dye bleeds/flows into the wood. This absorption rate will vary from one wood species to another.

When applying color inside an outlined area, use the same process, starting in the center and “floating” the color to the edges. The color will stop at the cut line (*Photo 2*).

Add a clear topcoat

Before finishing with a topcoat, let the colors dry completely. Then very carefully buff the surface with fine (0000) steel wool. If you are not careful, the buffing can cause the dye to transfer to other areas. If you notice this happening, stop buffing with the steel wool, wipe down the surface, and apply a light application of the clear topcoat finish you will be using. After this coat dries, then go again with the steel wool to get a nice, burnished finish. Complete with final coats of your preferred topcoat (mine is a clear lacquer).

Practice and experiment to reveal the possibilities of using this technique. ■

Photos by A.J. McLennan.

While Garry Knox Bennett is known primarily for furniture, he studied painting and sculpture at California College of Arts and Crafts. With regard to his furniture and jewelry, he is self-taught and enjoys pushing the limits to find alternative methods. Color and contrast have always been part of his lexicon, especially in furniture. For more, visit gkb-furniture.com.



Instant Gallery

Bill Bleau



Walnut

Bob Speier



Instant Gallery cont.

Bob Wolfe



Jeff Brann



Ambrosia Maple

Instant Gallery cont.

Dennis Paullus



Jonas Nemanis



Ash



Oak

Instant Gallery cont.

Larry Sefton



Segmented Art



Segmented Art



Segmented Art



Steptohedron Form

Instant Gallery cont.

Mark Maxwell



Pete Weins

This is the bowl
from Pete's dem-
onstration at our
--- club meeting



Instant Gallery cont.

Ralph Fetsch



Rick Horton



Skip Wilbur



Cherry Burl

Instant Gallery cont.

Rick Cannon - Weed Pots



Instant Gallery cont.

Rick Stone - Tool Handles



Upcoming Events 2018

May 26	Larry Sefton - Using casting resins and making molds
June 23	Joel Benson - Chainsaws and Trees
July 28	Mike Mahoney - Streaming demonstration
August 25	TBD
September 22	Mike Maffitt - 4 Sided Triplet Weed Pots
October 20	Oktoberfest
November 24	TBD
December 15	Christmas Party

Mentor Program

All members of MSWG are invited to contact the following mentors to learn a new technique, improve their turning skills or turn something different. Mentors are volunteers and do not charge.

Contact information is on our website under Members Only and the Roster. Sessions should last no longer than 3 hours and be scheduled at the convenience of the mentor.

Benson, Joel	Wood Selection, Turning Green Wood, McNaughton Coring, Chain Saw Sharpening/Maintenance, Chain Saw Use/Safety
Cannon, Rick	Segmented Bowls
Maffitt, Mike	Bowls, Platters and Native American Flutes
Pillow, Wright	Inlaying: Marquetry, Inlace, Epoxy
Sefton, Larry	Milk Paint, Make Your Own Pyrography Unit, Hollow Forms
Stone, Rick	Finials, Bowls (incl. Natural Rim), Boxes, Spindles, Carving, Finishes, Pyrography, Making Tools, Turning Tool Basics (incl. Sharpening)
Tusant, Jim	Bowls, Hollow Forms, Pyrography, Carving, Dyeing, Tool Use
Voda, Joseph	Spindle Turning (e.g. Ornaments)
Wilbur, Skip	Bowls, Hollow Forms, Goblets, Finials

Club Sponsors

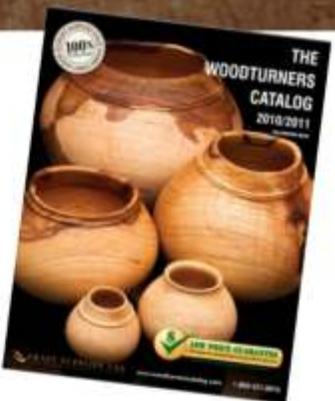
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