

Demonstration, March 24, 2015, Mass South Shore "Woodturners"

Dying and waxing,

As like most of you, I usually turn "green wood". This process presents its own set of unique problems such as; warping, cracking, and the most annoying to me is the drying time from six months to a year and more in some cases. So let's see if I got this right, you turn a bowl or whatever, using your imagination forming it, molding it, using your best cutting techniques leave it twice as thick as it needs to be, cover it in Anchor seal, wood chips, newspaper or nothing and set it on a shelf where it will warp, crack and split only to revisit and cut several months later. Does that sound like fun, not to me. So there are times when *"We all need a little satisfaction"* and that is what I call my dyed and waxed pieces, **Satisfaction!**

Several year ago at the New Hampshire Symposium at Pinkerton Academy I saw Andy Dipietro demonstrate this technique using a variety of dyes, waxes and spray lacquers to create some simple but elegant pieces. My gears started turning and I thought "Hummm I might just be able to make this work for me!" So here's what I found and use.

Choice of woods vary. I generally use ash for this, as it is readily available, open pored wood, light in color and takes dyes uniformly. Special effect waxes fills these open pores and gives a more dramatic effect to your dying and color blending. I have used a variety of different woods such as sugar maple, oak, hornbeam and walnut to mention but a few. I have found that a dying/wax finish can sometimes resemble an aged metallic patina on tight closed pore woods such as sugar maple and hornbeam.

So let's get started.

1.) I decide whether I'm making a bowl, box, vessel or whatever and that's the extent of my planning. I turn the piece to its finished wall and bottom thickness. I will generally sand the exterior before making my interior cuts. Most times the wood is too wet to sand and clogs the sand paper so my solution is to grab a handful of shavings off the floor, spin up the lathe speed and press the shavings to the turned piece to create some friction and heat. Now I'm not trying to dry the piece out completely but just enough to sand without clogging. I generally will sand up to 400 grit but remember, circular sand marks created while sanding the work piece spinning on the lathe will be highlighted and accentuated by the dye. I always shut off the lathe and hand sand the last grit with the grain.

2.) After parting off and removing the work piece from the lathe the rest of the work is done at the workbench. I use Trans Tint dye and denatured alcohol and mix my own colors out of the basic primary colors red, yellow and blue or secondary colors purple, green and orange. I also vary the application process, from mixing one color and applying it to the work piece or laying down multiple colors using the work piece as a palette. Sometimes I sand back the previous color sometimes not, this is where your personal preferences and artsy freedom comes in, when you like the color you stop!

Aye , are we having fun yet?

*** **Special note**; on the dying process, keep in mind your going to be using colored waxes over the dye specifically white and black. Theses colored waxes will lighten up your dye in the case of the white and darken up your dye in the case of the black waxes!

Trans Tint is available at; Rockler.com Mohawk-finishing.com Woodcraft.com

2.) I generally allow the dye to dry 10 -15 minutes depending on the saturation of the wood. I use Liberon Wax exclusively. White Liming Wax (white), Black Patinating Wax (black) and Black Bison Finishing Wax (finish). In some cases I will use a fine wire brush applied to the dyed piece with the grain to open up the pores, sometime not! Apply the white liming wax rubbing it in to fill the pores of the wood. Sometimes, the liming or black effect is all you need or want at this point and you can allow it to dry 24 hours to await the final spray finish. Most times I wipe off the excess Liming/Black Patinating wax and then apply the Liberon Black Bison Finishing Wax, scrubbing it in and again wiping off the excess effects wax. The finishing wax removes more of the liming wax and some of the actual dye to give a more defined color and deeper luster. I use this same process with the Black Patinating Wax. Keep in mind as previously mentioned these waxes will lighten or darken the dyed surface and remove and blend some color.

Liberon Waxes are available at Packardwoodworks.com

3.) After a 24 hour drying period I spray the piece with Mohawk Perfect Blend Acrylic Lacquer. I generally use satin 35-40 sheen or gloss 80 sheen. I apply several LIGHT coats in the period of 10-15 minutes or so.

The pieces that I dye/wax that are vessels I fill with Danish oil (light colored), swish it around covering the entire inside of the vessel and pour out any excess and DONE! This is done after all dyes, waxes and finishing are dry and complete.

Mohawk Perfect Blend Acrylic Lacquer are available at Mohawk-finishing.com

Danish Oil Finishes are available at Home Depot or Lowe's

Be safe and happy, have fun

Jim Leatherwood