

A Splash of Light and Color For Turnings

BINH PHO

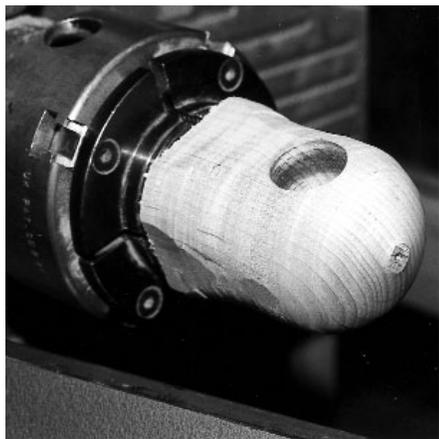
A few years ago, I watched David Ellsworth's hollow turning demonstration in St. Louis. He had a very good technique for showing viewers how his cutting tool works inside the vessel — he cut off one side of the vessel, so it was as if he had a window on the side of the piece.

I designed my Christmas ornament with this technique in mind, then added a stained glass effect with a lacquer that hardens into transparent facets of color.

Here is my step-by-step process.

Step 1: Cut a blank 2½-in. square x 4-in. long, then drill a 1-in. diameter hole through the side of the blank. The center of the hole should be about 1¼-in. from the side and 1-in. from the top of the blank.

Step 2: Mount the bottom end in a 4-jaw self-centering chuck. If your chuck is unable to hold the square blank, mount the blank between centers and turn a tenon to fit your



The bored hole becomes part of the ornament design, and also provides a window to gauge wall thickness while you are turning.

chuck.

Then shape it to your desired ornament with the holes somewhere near the center. Important note: Leave the mass at the bottom for stability while hollowing the inside.

Step 3: Now you are ready to hollow the inside. Some of you may now be wondering what's up with the hole?

1. It helps us to see the cutter working inside of the ornament.

2. Makes it easy to judge when you achieve the wall thickness 1/16-in.

3. It enables us to run the string of Christmas lights through the hole and leave one light inside to illuminate the ornament.

4. It's a nice design, offering the possibility of mounting miniature turned objects such as a Christmas tree, bell, etc., inside the ornament.

5. It allows chips to exit easily.

I use my 3/8-in. spindle gouge to drill from the top through the desired bottom. These holes will accent the decorative elements at the top and bottom of the ball. I also use the same spindle gouge to rough out the inside, then start hollowing to the wall thickness with my miniature curved-tip hollow turning tools. Watch the end tip of your cutter to gauge the wall thickness.

Step 4: Follow the contour of the ornament form to complete the outside shape and part it off. We should have one hole on top, one at the bottom and one on each side.

Step 5: Turning the decorative hanger and icicle to fit the top and bottom hole.

Step 6: Sketch with pencil and



The voids in the pierced areas of the author's ornaments are filled with a colored lacquer product to create a Faux Stained glass effect. Photos: Courtesy of the artist.

pierce the design. (See my piercing article in Summer 2000 Journal.)

Step 7: For the faux stained glass technique, I use the product called 3D Crystal Lacquer. Simply use a small applicator to outline the void (pierced area), then fill in.

This product works well with my ornament design. Steve Sinner of Bettendorf, IA, found it at a local craft store in Iowa, then discussed it with Frank Sudol, who had been trying to develop an ancient French enameling technique called "plique-a-jour" to fill voids with transparent color.

You can order this product at Sakura Hobby Craft, Torrance, CA. Phone (310) 212-7878.

It comes with several different colors such as red, blue, green, purple, yellow, etc. The most important one is the Clear color, so you can create your own shades. If you decide to do this, make sure to use water-base metal-acid dye to prolong the color.

Good luck and have fun this holiday.

Binh Pho is a turner in Maple Park, IL. He was a demonstrator at the AAW Charlotte Symposium last summer.