

Exploring surface enhancement

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Surface enhancement involves manipulating the surface of a bowl, platter, vessel, or other turned object. It can be as simple as adding a stain, paint, or reactive solution, or texturing the surface. My primary methods for surface enhancement include pyrography, texturing with rotary carving burs, texturing with carving gouges, scorching, and coloring.

The primary consideration before you decide to do some surface enhancement is to start with a good form. Enhancing a bad form will only draw attention to it in a negative way. With a good form, surface enhancement will add aesthetic value to the turned artwork.

Other considerations and topics covered:

- If using a beautiful and exotic wood, minimize the treatment to allow the wood to be the primary decorative element.
- Use transparent colors with highly figured wood.
- Don't overdo it.
- Make samplers to try out different textures and techniques.
- Study color combinations in nature, textiles, wallpaper, etc. Check out a color theory book or bookmark a website.
- Photograph textures around you and in nature to build a library of ideas and inspirations.
- Pyrography: choice of temperature controller, pen styles, tips.
- Rotary carvers and burs.
- Coloring techniques.

