

Cindy Drozda "The Fine Art of Woodturning"

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Star Box - Turning Steps

This design starts with a dry box blank 4 3/4" x 4 3/4" x 3" thick (123mm x 123mm x 77mm)

The inlay blank is 1" x 1" x 5" long (25mm x 25mm x 127mm)

**You will also need a jam chuck blank about the size of the box blank
and a jam chuck that is bigger than the lid, with a hole through it.**

1. Cut the lid portion of the blank off on the bandsaw, and cut the box and lid round.
2. Turn a tenon on the bottom of the bowl and the top of the lid. The lid tenon can be very short (1/16"/2mm)
3. Turn tenons on the jam chucks, too.
4. Mount the bowl in the chuck, turn and sand the inside.
5. Cut a recess for the lid, debur the sharp edges and lightly sand.
6. While the piece is in the chuck, shape the top of the outside, creating an even wall thickness for the first 3/4"/19mm
7. Be careful not to get the wall too thin where the lid recess is.
8. Reverse the bowl onto a form-fitted block, or a vacuum chuck, or jam fit onto the lid blank, and finish shaping and sanding the bowl and foot with the tailstock up.
9. Index the rim for scallops, if desired.
10. Tape the piece on, remove the tailstock, and finish shaping and sanding the bottom of the foot.
11. Mount the lid in the chuck and size it to fit the recess in the bowl.
12. Hollow out the inside of the lid. Decorate if desired, and sand.
13. Turn the finial, creating a short tenon on the bottom to mount into the lid.
14. Jam fit the lid into the jam chuck with a hole in it. Shape and sand the lid.
15. Tape the lid into the jam chuck, remove the tailstock, and create a recess to fit the tenon on the finial.
16. Mark and cut the scallops on the rim, and shape on a sanding drum.
17. Finish the bowl and lid with your choice of finish.
18. Glue in the finial.
19. Sign your work.

Some design considerations:

1. It is possible to do this project in different sizes, larger or smaller.
2. The class project uses a side grain blank, but burls, curly figure, and endgrain also work well.
3. The bowl, lid, and finial can be made from the same type of wood, or all different.
4. Straight grain wood makes the best finial.
5. Using a post earring as a fastener through the inside of the lid and up into the finial reinforces the joint.
6. To minimize wood movement problems, keep the lid to 4"/100mm in diameter or smaller.
7. If the box will be used for jewelry, shallower is better.
8. A jewelry box is easier to use with a looser lid
9. Choose dry wood for the best lid fit over time.
10. Choose jam chucks with parallel even grain and consistent density.

Build your confidence:

1. Choose forgiving wood that isn't expensive so you don't worry about ruining it.
2. Concentrate on making the finial crisp and with good form and proportion, don't try to make it thin.
3. Use a shorter, simpler finial.
4. Skip the scalloped rim.
5. Wood without knots or bark will be nicer to cut, and won't dull the tools as quickly.
6. Use the tailstock, and tape, whenever possible.
7. Fitting a tenon to a recess is easier than fitting a recess to a tenon.

Challenge yourself:

1. Make a longer, thinner, or more complicated finial
2. Use a burl for the bowl.
3. Try this design with natural edge.
4. Make the foot from a separate piece of wood.
5. Gild the rim, and/or try some color.
6. Spend the time to get smooth, pleasing forms and crisp details.
7. Demand a high level of finishing without tool marks or torn grain.