

# Demo: Painting On The Lathe For Dummies

by Carl Ford (08/18/2008), Updated: 02/12/2015, **10/8/2021**

Adding color via paint and/or stain to your turnings is a great way to spice up boring wood. It allows you to make beautiful pieces out of cheap wood.

Painting with the lathe running is easy! Anyone can do it. This demo focuses on three different easy techniques:

- Painting between the lines using Acrylic Paints
- Coloring between the lines using Sharpe Permanent Magic Markers.
- Full coverage color using Woodburst Stains

## Instructor

Carl Ford

## To Schedule a Demo:

Send email to [carl@carlford.info](mailto:carl@carlford.info) with date, time, and type of group.



Fantasy City: Painted Spindle Work



Stained and Painted Vases and Rattle

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## Demo Handouts:

### Designing with Color and Paints:

- Women love lots of bright colors. Men like lots of wood. Bright colors sell.
- Pieces that are 50% natural wood and 50% or less paint look good.
- Light, bright, and vibrant colors add cheer to your work. Yellow, red, gold, white. Avoid large area of dark and gloomy colors. Blue, purple, black. Save the dark colors for narrow accent stripes.
- Use the classic color combinations that peoples brains are already tuned into. Think school/college colors. Purple & gold, black & yellow, red & yellow, green & gold, etc.
- Picture painters use shadows to add depth and life to paintings. In nature there are no large solid areas of uniform color. Everything is shades of similar colors or shadows.  
Painting shadows with the lathe running is not practical. Use dots, hashes, etc. to break up large solid areas of paint. Or, do not paint large areas, leave them natural wood color so the wood grain breaks them up.



### Golden Paints: ([www.goldenpaints.com](http://www.goldenpaints.com))

The "Golden" brand of acrylic paints are favored by many professional turners because they are very color fast (the colors do not fade). When you are showing work in galleries and selling it you don't want to have to replace it due to cheap paint. However, the "Golden" brand of paints is very reasonably priced. So, why use anything else?

Golden acrylic paints come in 4 viscosities (thicknesses) of paint.

- **Transparent Airbrush Acrylics:** Thinnest paint. Apply with airbrush. Used while lathe running. **Updated: 10/8/2021. The new Golden "High Flow Acrylics" line replaces the old Golden "Transparent Airbrush" and "Opaque Airbrush" lines. Use the "High Flow" paints or just add "Airbrush Thinner" to "Fluid Acrylics"**
- **Opaque Airbrush Acrylics:** Apply with brush. Works great with lathe running at slow speed. Paint dries within minutes. A little transparent over wood. Thin with Airbrush Medium if you want more transparent. Use 2 coats of paint or White Gesso primer if you want less transparent.
- **Fluid Acrylics:** Apply with brush. Works great with lathe running at slow speed. Paint dries within minutes. A little transparent over wood. Thin with Airbrush Medium if you want more transparent. Use 2 coats of paint or White Gesso primer if you want less transparent.
- **Heavy Body Acrylics:** Thickest paint. Come in tubes. Apply with brush. Too thick for use while the lathe is running.



**Others:** Golden also sells a number of different gessos, mediums and gels that you can use to create thicker paints, texture effects, etc. You can intermix all of the Golden acrylic paints, gessos, mediums and gels to create any color or thickness of paint you want.

White Gesso is the only thing you may need to get started. It is like a flat primer. It dries fast. Use it as a base coat when you want to hide ugly wood or you want bright vibrant colors.

When you want an item to be mostly black. You can paint the whole thing black with Black Gesso and then paint colors over the black using "interference" paints. Golden Interference paints only show their color when used on dark backgrounds. They are transparent on white backgrounds. Top coat with spray polyurethane to add gloss to flat gesso.



You can read more about Golden Paints at [www.goldenpaints.com](http://www.goldenpaints.com)

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## Acrylic Paint Sources:

Golden Paints are stocked by any good art supply store.

- Local art supply store. My local art supply store is Catskill Art & Office Supply ([www.catskillart.com](http://www.catskillart.com)) with stores in Woodstock, Kingston and Poughkeepsie. **Updated 10/8/21: Woodstock and Poughkeepsie stores are no more! Kingston store is still open.**  
Catskill Art is often cheaper than Michaels and has big/better selection.
- Michaels, The Arts & Crafts Store. A national chain with lots of locations.
- On the web. One of many possible choices is Blick Art ([www.clickblick.com/vendors/golden](http://www.clickblick.com/vendors/golden)). Discount off list with pictures of things and on-line color chart. Beware, on-line color charts are not reliable due to variations in computer monitors. Another source is MisterArt ([www.misterart.com](http://www.misterart.com))

## Getting Started:

What colors do I need to get started? I recommend you go with one of the following options. The first option is cheaper. (All prices as of 12/22/2008!)

1. "Golden Watermedia Set" is a good deal for \$36. 10 colors in 1 oz bottles. Set Colors: Hansa Yellow Medium, Burnt Sienna, Quinacridone Magenta, Ultramarine Blue, Phthalo Blue (Green Shade), Phthalo Green (Blue Shade), Ultramarine Blue, Quinacridone Magenta, Pyrrole Red, Hansa Yellow Medium, Titanium White. **Updated 10/8/2021: This set no longer exists or is hard to find. Go with "Or, Create your own set of Golden "Fluid Acrylics" below.**



I would also purchase 1 fl oz of Iridescent Pearl (Fine), Iridescent Bright Gold (Fine). You also need 8 fl oz of GAC 100.

The blue and green in the above set a little dark for my taste. They will need to be mixed with white to create bright and vibrant colors.

The next most useful colors would probably be: Diarylide Yellow, Vat Orange, Green Gold, Cadmium Red Medium Hue, Iridescent Copper (Fine), Creulean Blue Chromium, Iridescent Gold (Fine), Iridescent Silver (Fine).

2. Or, Create your own set of Golden "Fluid Acrylics", 1 fl oz bottles. Colors: Diarylide Yellow, Pyrrole Red, Quinacridone Magenta, Cerulean Blue Chromium, Phthalo Green (Yellow Shade), Titanium White, Iridescent Pearl (Fine), Iridescent Bright Gold (Fine). You also need 8 fl oz of GAC 100.

The colors listed here are my favorite vibrant shades. They also work well when mixed with Iridescent Pearl. They are similar to colors in the above set, but require less mixing to get shades I really like.

The next most useful colors would probably be: Vat Orange, Green Gold, Cadmium Red Medium Hue, Iridescent Copper (Fine), Iridescent Gold (Fine), Iridescent Silver (Fine)

**Beware!** There are lots of different versions of GAC. GAC 100, GAC 200, GAC 300, etc. They all do different things! You want **GAC 100** for painting on wood!



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## Acrylic Painting Tips

All tips in this section have only been tried with “Golden” brand acrylic paints.

Painting on the Lathe:

- Paint between the lines. Burn lines with wire after creating a small groove with point tool. Run the lathe super fast when burning lines.
- Run the lathe **slow** when painting. 100 to 200 RPM.
- Use a round brush. No sharp edges that make mistakes.
- Use the tool rest to support the brush. **Paint with the brush below center.**
- Start brush in center of region to be painted and then move out towards burned lines.
- Start by painting light colors first. Yellow is always a good place to start.
- Clean spilled paint out of burned lines with burning wire. Run the lathe slow while using wire! Fast lathe speeds will melt surrounding paint.
- Clean brushes with water. At end of day clean with water and kitchen dish soap.



## Mixing Acrylic Paints:

- Mix roughly 30% “GAC 100” into paints to “increase film hardness, reduce tack and improve adhesion to non-porous surfaces”. Clears upon drying.  
**Beware!** There are lots of different versions of GAC. GAC 100, GAC 200, GAC 300, etc. They all do different things! You want GAC 100 for painting on wood!
- Mix “Airbrush Medium” into paints to thin them. This may be necessary when painting a large area to keep a wet edge. When you want wood grain to show thru mix paint with airbrush medium to create a more transparent paint.

Mixing with water thins paints but reduces gloss. Airbrush medium maintains same gloss.

- Mix “Iridescent Pearl” with paints to make them sparkle. However, this will change the color to a lighter shade.
- You can lighten the shade of color by adding a little white. Just a little!
- You can darken the shade of a color by mixing in the “darker” color next to the color you have on the color wheel. For example: orange is between yellow and red. Yellow is a lighter color than red. So to make orange darker, mix in red. To make it lighter mix in yellow.

You can also darken the shade of a color by adding a tiny bit of shading grey. Beware! This rarely works in the real world with small amounts of paint because it is really hard to add just the tiny, tiny little amount needed. Buying the color you need is often a better solution.

- Don’t mix more than 2 colors of paint to create a 3rd color. If you mix more than 2 colors of paint to form a new color you will probably end up with ugly brown. However, there are exceptions.
- If you want really bright or true colors then prime things with a coat of White Gesso and then paint over the Gesso. Gesso is a flat primer.



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- “Interference” paints like “Interference Violet (Fine)” only show their colors when applied over a dark color like black or the burn marks left behind by some cutting tools on end grain. A black and violet color scheme is easy. Paint something all black with Black Gesso and then use “Interference Violet (Fine)” over the black.

### **Finishing Acrylic Paints:**

- You can apply “Watco Danish Oil” over acrylic paints. Paint only needs to dry for 1 hour before oiling. However, waiting 24 hours would be safer.
- Acrylic paints are water proof after drying. After 24 hours you can coat them with Rust-Oleum “Crystal Clear Enamel” for additional protection. However, it is not really necessary.

### **Sharpie Permanent Markers:** ([www.sharpie.com](http://www.sharpie.com))

Using “Sharpie Permanent Markers” to color small areas is a lot easier than trying to paint small areas. This is just a variation on the acrylic paint between the burned lines technique. You can mix bands of solid acrylic paint with bands of checkered markers.



When it comes to using magic makers the question is are they color fast? i.e. will not fade? Sharpie says their permanent markers use fade and water resistant ink. Color fast? Other popular brands of markers are “Prismacolor” and “Tombow”. Are they color fast?

### **Getting Started:**



I wish I could tell you the names of the colors I like. Unfortunately each pen is not marked with name of color. I purchased a 29 marker set and I only like about 5 of the colors. Many are too bright/neon or too dark on wood. The color of the marker cap is virtually worthless because it is the color on white paper? The colors look very different on wood. **Always test your colors on a piece of scrap!**

The colors I like might be Red, Dandelion, Lime, Berry. No guarantee!

The markers come in lots of different tip shapes. See [www.sharpie.com](http://www.sharpie.com). I like the “Fine Point” or “Super Twin Tip”. The “Ultra Fine Point” is too small.

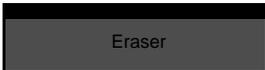
I **do not** like the “Sharpie Paint Markers”. Oil-based paint. Don’t like the colors. Too bright and/or wrong shade on wood.

### **Sharpie Marker Sources:**

Available in your local office or art supply store. See “Acrylic Paint Sources:” on page 3

### **Marker Tips:**

- Colors vary on different pieces of very similar wood. **Always test your colors on a piece of scrap!**  
Save your color samples for finish test. See next section.
- Start with light colors. It’s easier to cover up a mistake with darker color.
- Paint between the lines. Burn lines around object on lathe with metal wire then burn perpendicular lines by hand with wood burner.



## Finishing Sharpie Markers:

Putting a finish over Sharpie markers is a real problem. Many finishes dissolve the colors and they run!

- Wait at least 24 hours for markers to dry. Waiting a week or two if possible.
- Test finish the wood sample you used to test colors.
- Sometimes "Watco Danish Oil" over the makers works. Sometimes it runs the colors.
- Sealing the marked area with 1 coat of "Workable Fixatif 1306" by Krylon from a spray can seems to work best. Purchase from an art store. Use masking tape to mask off any natural wood area before spraying if you want to oil them latter.
- After sealed with fixatif you can use your favorit finish. Danish oil, polyurethane, wax, etc.



## WoodBurst Stains: ([www.barbarabutler.com](http://www.barbarabutler.com))

The "Woodburst" brand of stains are good for creating vibrant, transparent colors.

The great thing about Woodburst Stains is the colors can be blended/mixed right on your work to create endless shades of different colors. You can easily create a rainbow effect from just the primary colors of red, yellow and blue. The tung oil does not sink in immediately like water or alcohol based stains

The colors come already suspended in a tung oil base. No mixing necessary

Woodburst stains were manufacturing by Woodburst Inc. Woodburst is now out of business. Barbara Butler took over the stain business. Barbara's primary business is "Play Structures for Kids". But, she also sells just the stains in her "Color Store" on her web site at <http://www.barbarabutler.com>.

## Getting Started:

What do I need to get started?

Barbara Butler sells "59 custom colors". But you really only need the 3 the primary colors of red, yellow, and blue.

**The stains are only good for about a year.** After a year the color pigments settle to bottom of the bottle and have to be shaken. It is a common and expensive mistake. Small bottles of just the 3 primary colors are available.

**Updated 10/8/2021: The FolkArt Ultra Dye line is sort of the the same as Woodbrust stains. But not really. They can be blended and mixed on your work. But, they are water based. They feel sort of slimy when you pour them out of the bottle. They are NOT colorfast?**

It is important to note that you have to purchase 4oz bottles for \$8 each.

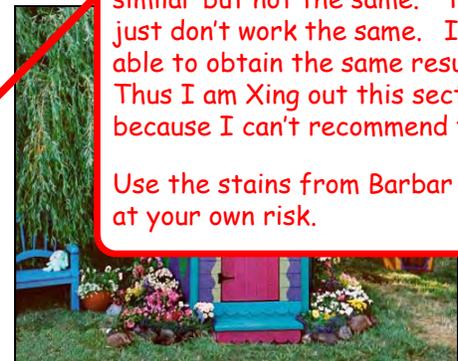
Another option is to purchase Barbara's "Basic Sampler Kit" for \$30. 2 oz bottles of 6 colors. The 3 colors shown above plus Parakeet (Green), Castle Purple, and Chalk (White). Parakeet is a nice green and is useful. The purple is to dark to be useful. You can mix the Chalk with other colors to create pastel shades.



Updated: 2/12/2015: Woodburst Inc the original manufacturer of WoodBurst Stains went out of business a long time ago.

The stains from Barbar Butler are similar but not the same. They just don't work the same. I am not able to obtain the same results. Thus I am Xing out this section because I can't recommend them.

Use the stains from Barbar Butler at your own risk.



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## Woodburst Tips:

- Painting between the lines with Woodburst stains **does not work**. It is almost impossible, due to bleeding of stain into adjacent areas. So you should **plan on covering an entire project with stain**.
- Staining is done off the lathe or with lathe stopped.
- **Shake all the bottles!** Over time the pigments in each bottle of stain settle to the bottom. If wait to long trying to mix them back in is difficult. So shake all of them even if you are just going to use one or two.
- The stain is easy to apply with a paper towel. Use the paper towel to drag the colors together to create new colors and effects.
- You can mix the colors on the wood or in advance.  
If you want to mix in advance then recycled small apple sauce plastic cups make good mixing cups.
- **Practice** your color scheme in advance on a piece of scrap wood. Same wood as your project.
- Forget about purple or use it in place of black. It is way to dark for most things.
- Yellow + red = orange, yellow + blue = green. red + blue = purple.
- Start by putting down yellow first. It is the lightest color and mixes well other colors.
- To create a rainbow effect.
  1. Put down yellow in the middle.
  2. Small band of red at one end.
  3. Very small band of blue at the other end. Just a little blue goes a long way!
  4. Drag red into yellow with paper towel to create red, orange, yellow blend.
  5. Drag blue into yellow with paper towel to create yellow, green, blue blend.
- Use Black India Ink for black. Use White India Ink for white. Transparent stains do not produce good solid black and white colors people known and love. Speedball is a good brand of ink.

## Finishing Woodburst Stain

- Allow Woodburst stains to dry 24 hours. The stain is tung oil based so it does not require a top coat.
- The stain may raise the grain. DO NOT steel wool or sand the raw stained surface. It will screw up the colors. Apply one coat of clear finish and then steel wool!
- You can top coat over the Woodburst stains with most clear finishes.
- Spray can polyurethane works well. 1 coat of Minwax fast drying gloss polyurethane followed by 1 coat of Minwax fast drying semi-gloss or satin polyurethane. Use fine steel wool or sand paper between coats to knock down the gloss and remove any dust particles.
- A coat of wax over just the oil or over the polyurethane will create a nice warm smooth finish when handled. Liberon "**Clear Black Bison**" paste wax works well. Available from Packard Woodworks at [www.packardwoodworks.com](http://www.packardwoodworks.com), etc.



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## Demo Outline

1. Introduction
  - 1.1. Show examples of 3 coloring methods. Great way to spice up boring/cheap wood. **Anyone can do it!** Just paint between the lines!
  - 1.2. Talk about how to develop your sense of color. Bright sunny day makes you feel good. Avoid big areas of dark color. Advertisements in Magazines, etc are great examples of color schemes
2. Quick "Watco Danish Oil" Demo (bring unfinished vase to demo)
3. "Woodburst Stains" Demo
  - 3.1. Full coverage. Paint between lines does not work!
  - 3.2. Talk about stains. Tung Oil. Mix in advance or on the wood. Apply with paper towel
  - 3.3. Do sample/practice board. Talk about basic color mixing. Yellow + red = orange, etc
  - 3.4. Do Rainbow vase (bring unfinished vase to demo)
  - 3.5. Talk about finishing over Woodburst stains. Wait 24 hours. Polyurethane then clear paste wax
4. Turn blank for Sharpie and Acrylic Paint demo. Flat vase shape (bring roughed out blank to demo, mount in advance)
  - 4.1. True up. Burn lines with wire. Around outside edge for Acrylic Paints
  - 4.2. Show how to burn lines with edge of sandpaper
  - 4.3. Burn cross lines with wood burner. Center only for Sharpies
5. Sharpie Magic Markers Demo
  - 5.1. Talk about markers. Color fast
  - 5.2. Show sample/practice boards. Show test patterns with colored pencils
  - 5.3. Do center area of flat vase with Sharpies
  - 5.4. Talk about finishing over Sharpies. Krylon "Workable Fixatif 1306" then Watco Danish Oil.
6. Acrylic Paints Demo
  - 6.1. Talk about "Designing with Color and Paints:" on page 2
  - 6.2. Talk about "Golden" brand of acrylic paints
    - 6.2.1. Transparent, Opaque, Fluid, Heavy Body
    - 6.2.2. Gesso, GAC
    - 6.2.3. Sources, Sets
  - 6.3. Do flat vase demo. Gold band. Black gesso with interference violet.
  - 6.4. Turn blank for Dragonfly demo (bring square blank to demo)
  - 6.5. Talk about "Mixing Acrylic Paints:" on page 4
  - 6.6. Do Dragonfly demo
    - 6.6.1. Mix in GAC, Airbrush Medium, Iridescent Pearl, White
    - 6.6.2. Thin lines over silver, Candy apple red
  - 6.7. Talk about finishing over Acrylic Paint. Not needed. Already water proof. Watco Oil



I do not paint beautiful wood! It is sacrilege!



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