



**“Lidded Vessel”** by Matthew Hill.  
Maple; 8½×8½". This piece is included  
in the *Basic Black* exhibit.

Photo: Carl Shortt



**“Irish Ebony Bowl”**  
by Ciaran Forbes. Bog oak; 6×7×8".

Photo: David Ellsworth

When used in combination with other colors, black can make colors more intense or call attention to details on a woodturning. An all-black turning except for a few details, makes these details explode or at least brings the eye to quickly focus upon them. In the case of large-pored woods created in black, with the pores filled with another color such as white, a striking surface effect will be created. In these cases black is excellent at framing or highlighting important details of the work.

Taking this thought a bit further, black often does more to reveal than hide. Have you ever heard it said that black clothing shows everything? Black in an unusual way illuminates—which one would think is only the domain of bright lights. Imagine a remote and rural farmhouse on a very dark night. A single light from

that house draws attention to the farm, but it may very well be that it is not the light that calls attention, but the darkness that surrounds the house. If it was a bright day or there were many farmhouses all lit up at night in close proximity, that single farmhouse might well go unnoticed by the viewer. Black is excellent at framing what you desire to see or emphasize—is that not what a black picture frame or black matting does to a painting or photograph?

Other media certainly have explored and exploited the powerful features of black. The painters Pierre Soulages, Robert Rauschenberg, and Frank Stella created works that explored the power of just black, mixtures of

black with other colors, or the power of light as it falls onto black—revealing the depth and complexity of it. Raku pottery has its own beauty with regions and streaks of black from the firing process. The work of Pueblo potters from Santa Clara and San Ildefonso such as Maria Martinez, and Hopi potter Nampeyo, are in a league of their own in terms of elegance, beauty and mystery of their black-on-black pottery.

### **Black turning stock**

Creating the impact of an all or partially black piece has several sources for woodworkers. There are woods that are quite black in their highest grades: ebony, African blackwood, and bog oak, sometimes called Irish ebony.

### **Basic Black at AAW Gallery**

An encore exhibit of *Woodturning in Basic Black*, featuring many pieces from the SOFA Chicago exhibit, will be on display Jan. 11–April 18 at the AAW Gallery in St. Paul.