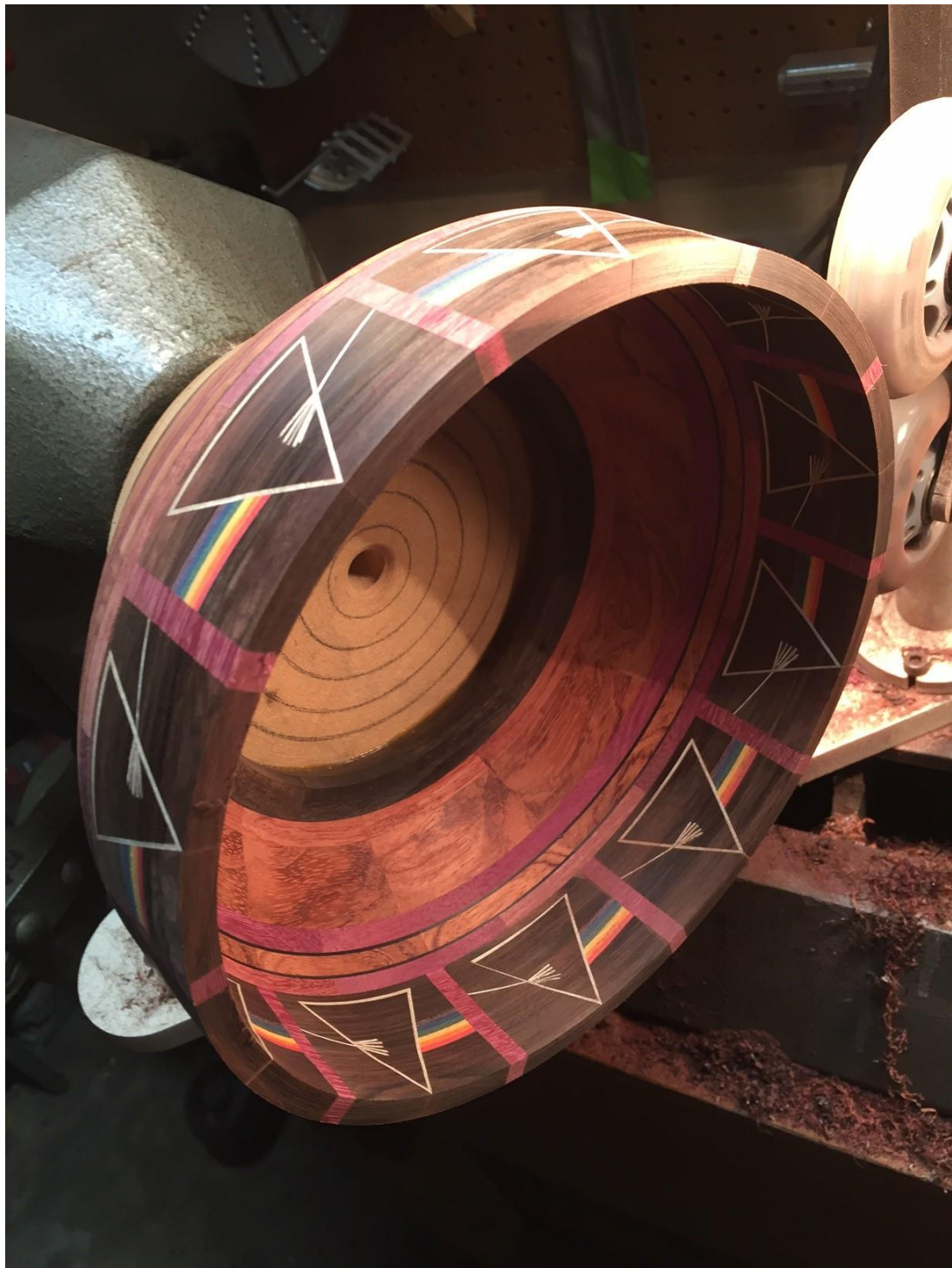


The Making of the Dark Side of the Moon



Envisioned and Constructed by Blair Swing

Vision – *noun*

5. A vivid, imaginative conception.

I have visions. Not the religious kind or anything like that. My visions involve seeing very clearly something that challenges, stretches or expands my current capabilities. The year before my vision came from an afternoon spent watching this classic cartoon.



Looking at Marvin, I thought to myself that I could turn every part of Marvin except his brush on his head. That vision became my 2015 State Fair of Texas Entry



Most people are aware of the iconic album cover from Pink Floyd, Dark Side of the Moon, first released on March 1, 1973, and stayed on Billboards top 200 for 741 weeks until 1988.



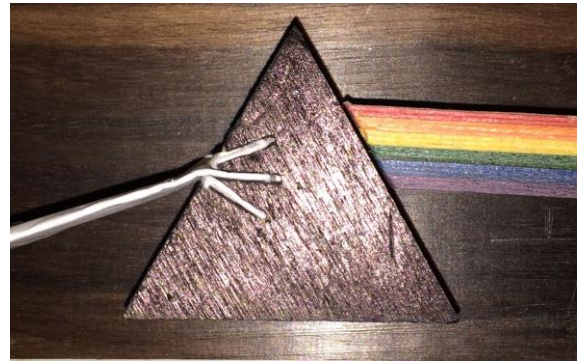
My dormitory in college had an image of this painted on the corridor wall. Therefore, you might say that this vision has been in my head quite a while, however the first time I thought about making into wood, occurred sometime around September of 2014, and soon after on September 28, 2014 I cut out this piece:



Eventually, all of those cuts would accumulate into the 776 piece of wood and 33 pieces of stained glass you see before you that makes up the Dark Side of the Moon.

The following pictures and words, detail some of the hundreds of steps it took to turn this vision into a reality.

Envisioning the Rainbow: Three layers of colored veneers make up each color in the rainbow to give enough depth, and eighteen separate pieces for each rainbow band.



I wanted the darkest wood possible, and ebony came immediately to mind. The entire design band of 10 (with two spares) came from one piece of 2" x 2" x 12" piece. My vision and the tiny bit of OCD in me dictated that I try to both conserve wood, and attempt to get the grain on the field piece, and the pyramid to be consistent across the piece. The cuts were made in a certain sequence so that the final pieces would have consistent grain across the design.



This represents the final sequence of cuts; bottom first, then the right side of the triangle, then the left. All cut by hand, while placed in a jig on the band saw to minimize loss from the blade. Prior to starting on production of all 12 segments, I decided to put one together, to learn gluing, clamping and in doing so hoped to avoid, making the same mistake 12 times.





The first completed. (*Only eleven (11) more to go!*)



Each segment of the design band contains 36 separate pieces, numbering, and segregation is important to keep track of them all!



Assembly line....

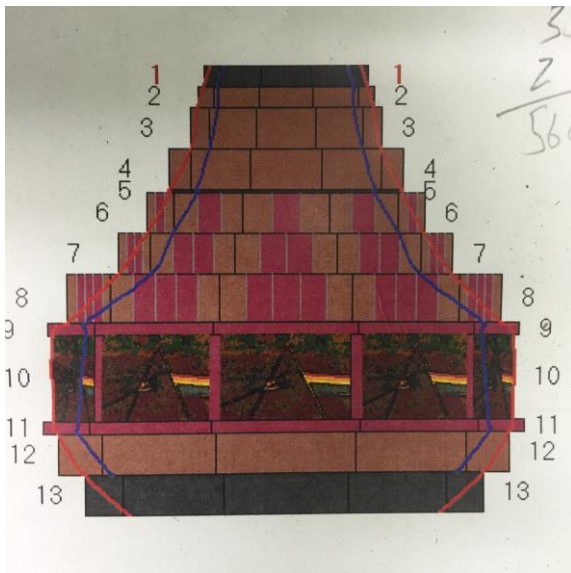
On July 11, 2015, the pieces are complete.



A trip to Alaska interrupts the process, but on August 2, 2015, I made the decision to use 10 of the 12 segments, and finished the glue-up.



Picking the woods for the rings was next, and I had found a really nice piece of waterfall Bubinga, and coupled with the Purpleheart gave me a nice look. With the design band set, the remaining design can start to develop. I have a program that helps to guide the process, but I rely on my eyes along the way to modify the original concept if I do not like what I am seeing.



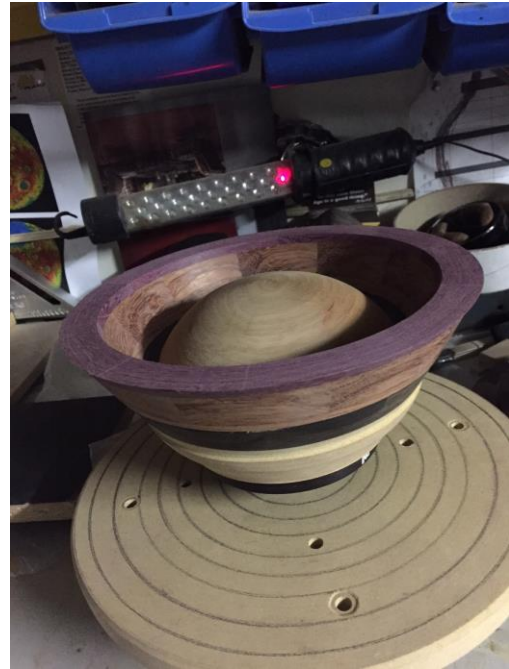
The wood for the rings is measured and cut, and on April 1 the first ring is turned on the lathe. Work starts from both ends and continues to the middle, *(or at least the way I have learned to do it)*.



April 1, 2016 – First rings glued to waste blocks

Long nights in the garage makes rings materialize overnight and the piece begins to take shape.





Somewhere in the middle of the process, I started to work on the final part of the initial vision. I meant to incorporate an actual “Dark Side of the Moon” inside the vessel. In the beginning, I saw it as small orb, near the bottom. Then, as my mind sometimes works it hit me, “wouldn’t it be neat if it had glowing stained glass craters illuminated somehow?”. A piece of Cherry became the Dark Side of the Moon and quickly turned into a hollowed out semi-sphere. My sister mailed me some stained glass from my dad’s collection from up in Nebraska, and I started on the craters.

It was also finally time to turn the design band, which is the most nerve wracking, but gratifying night of the project. On April 12, I shaved the design band down and glued it to the base,



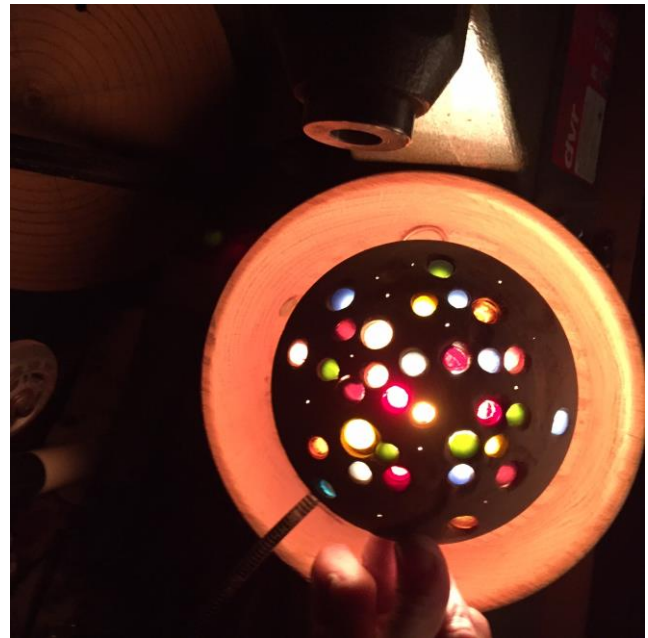
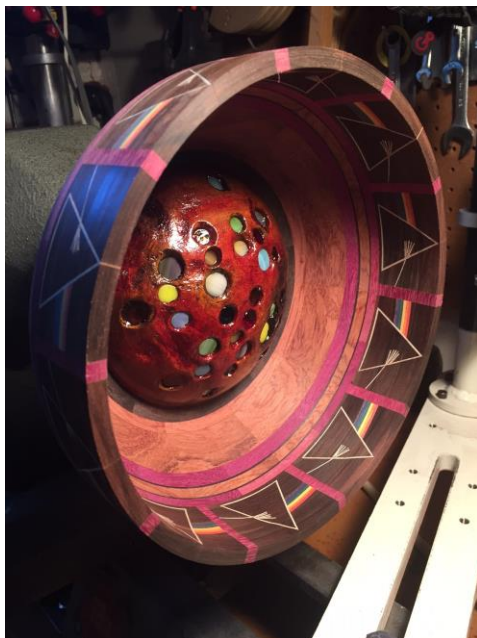
April 12, 2016



April 13, 2016

Did I mention I had been nervous about having soft, layers of veneers between pieces of one of the hardest woods in the world? Not to worry as it turns out, and is part of the reason I love this type of work, while there is some risk, the reward is so great when you pull off a concept!

The moon is actually dyed to represent an actual thermal image of the moon, and the craters were placed approximately in their relative positions. Two sizes of craters were used.



April 27, 2016



On April 28, the final rings were dry fit in place, and the two halves glued together. The moon had to be placed inside prior to gluing since it was too large to fit through the hole in the base or top. A couple eyehooks and fishing line held it in place till I could figure out how to complete the base.





The vessel portion of the project was completed on May 16, 2016 while the base was finished a month later on June 16, 2016.



From concept to completion, this project took almost two years, although there were months that it lay silent on my workbench while my mind worked quietly on the next steps.



Patience is a virtue when it comes to segmented work, and I will let you be the judge if my patience has paid off.



My deepest thanks and appreciation to my wife, Mi
and son, Brook, who put up with my very long
hours in the garage pursuing my artwork

(200 hours +/- on this piece)

To Pink Floyd, for conceiving the music that I have
listened to countless times over the years.

To my Junior High and High School Industrial Arts
teachers, who never told me I couldn't do it.

To my Dad, Mom, brothers and sister for always
believing in my work and providing positive
reinforcement.

Finally, to Storm Thorgerson, the creator of the
iconic album artwork, that inspired this piece.