

1. Turn an egg from whatever size blank. For this project, a 3" diameter blank is a decent size. Although there is no such thing as a "perfect" egg, you should strive for one that has a hemispherical (half-round) lower portion, and a slightly pointier (elliptical) upper portion. I prefer to turn the egg so that the upper portion is toward the tailstock and the lower portion is toward the headstock (held in a chuck). Prior to parting off the bottom, I take the egg out of the chuck, turn it around and place the top of the egg in a complementary jam chuck, use some hot glue to secure the egg in the chuck, and then finish turn the round bottom of the egg.



2. Once the bottom of the egg is finished, use a 1/2" diameter Forstner bit (in a Jacobs chuck, or with a morse taper) to drill a 1/8"+ deep recess in the bottom of the egg. In a *later* step you will epoxy a magnet in this recess. The recess should be deep enough to allow the magnet to sit just below the surface of the egg.
3. On the surface of the egg, with a pencil draw some irregular island shapes. These will be carved in a later step. Be sure the islands aren't all on a straight line—space them out vertically and around the entire egg. Do not draw an island on the top of the egg. Then, draw a bunch of interconnected lines that mimic a cracked egg's surface. After these lines are drawn, trace over them with a hot and sharp woodburning skew tip, striving to burn ~1mm into the surface of the egg.



4. Following burning the crack lines, carve the islands. First carve away bulk material so that the interior of the is the deepest region (has the most relief). Then, go over the entire carved surface with a small round burr to create a bunch of divets. Take care to ensure minimal flat spots between the divets. Using a propane torch (or alternative), lightly burn the surface of the egg, taking care to not scorch or heavily burn any areas, especially the carved “islands”, as this may lead to unwanted cracks or surface irregularities. Following this, use a combination of bristle discs and a nylon brush to remove any frayed edges. Burnish the entire surface of the egg with a scotchbrite pad, and then a brown paper bag (or equivalent). This will create a very smooth surface. Ebonize the entire surface with black leather dye (I prefer Fieblings USMC Black). Be sure the dye penetrates all of the cracks.



5. Time to color! Start by applying a few very thin layers of the darkest color you will use on the surface of the egg, including the carved islands. Dry brushing techniques apply—load your paintbrush with only a small amount of paint (acrylic or acrylic gouache are my preferred), and then wipe the paintbrush on a paper towel to remove any excess. Take care to not leave any obvious streaks on the surface of the egg. Once you're satisfied with the amount of dark color on the egg, begin adding the lighter colors.



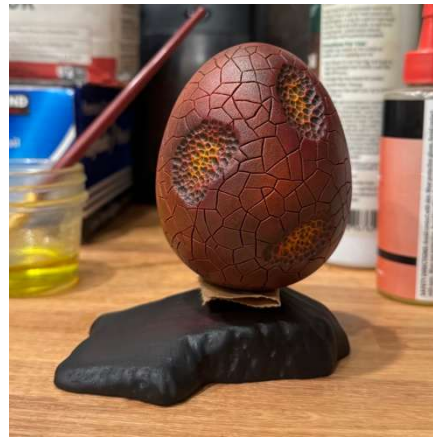
6. Continue adding colors. In the islands, include the brightest colors to signify a smoldering embers. Between the islands, strive to create gradients of color that gradually darken as you approach the borders of the islands. This takes many, many layers. When in doubt, add more layers. You can quickly dry layers with a hairdryer if time is of the essence. You can also seal the paint by spraying a thin coat of matte or satin rattle lacquer. If doing this, be sure to let the lacquer dry completely before adding more paint. Once finished painting, seal the surface with satin or semi-gloss lacquer, depending on your level of desired glossiness. The two photos below show different stages of completion, but are far from finished.



7. To create the base, cut off a piece of firewood. Strive to find a piece that has a very irregular surface. The funkier the better. Remove two of your chuck jaws so that you can reliably grip the irregular surface. Once chucked, bring up your tailstock and carefully turned the piece so that there is a gradual curve leading toward the edges. Do not make the base any thinner than $\frac{1}{4}$ " at the edge. We will carve away border a bit later. Once you achieve a nice curve, use a $\frac{1}{2}$ " Forstner bit to drill a $\frac{1}{8}$ " + deep hole as before (Step 2).



8. Your egg should sit stably on top of the base without any gaps. Test the position by adding your two opposing magnets (prior to epoxying them in place). Following turning the base, carve the edges with a rotary tool. Keep this simple—crave irregular vertical-ish lines. Use bristle discs, nylon brushes, and scotchbrite pads to smooth the surface. Embellish the surface as desired, finish with lacquer or oil. I prefer lacquer. For this example, I lightly torched and burnished the surface, and then ebonized with leather dye. After the base and egg are both finished as desired, use epoxy to glue the magnets into the recesses. Take measure to ensure your magnets are glued so that the mating surfaces attract one another (and not repel). A small dot with a sharpie can help here (easily removed with alcohol later).



9. Once everything is set and dried, go ahead and take some glamour shots to show off what you created. Bonus points if you can make up a backstory to go along with your egg.

