

Lefranc recommendations for gilding

Water gilding:

Gilding is an art that requires dexterity, savoir-faire and skill, qualities that craftsmen obtain after years of experience.

Gilding involves two specific stages:

****Preparing the surface**

****Laying the gold leaf**

When using a gilding bole, you need to prepare the surface before the gold leaf is applied. Wood is generally used because hide glues bond well to wood surfaces. The first step is to apply a coat of hide glue to the wood surface and let it dry well. Then apply 6-8 coats of gesso to the surface. Wait until the next day and sand the surface until it is smooth. Now you are ready to apply the bole to the gessoed surface. You'll need to apply 2-4 layers of bole. Once the bole is dry, you can polish the bole with a horsehair cloth or very fine oil free steel wool from Liberon.

There are two different stages to preparing hide glue:

****Hide glue is usually available in pellets or fine granular form (either rabbit or bovine skin). You need to soak the hide glue first. Add distilled water and let it soak until the glue is completely soft.**

**** Heat the glue in a bain-marie or crockpot without boiling. When the glue has melted, remove from the heat.**

Preparing the Gesso and Bole:

****Add the whiting to the hide glue, pour a teaspoon of alcohol on the top and let sit for one hour. Reheat the mixture in a bain-marie, stir gently and strain in a fine mesh filter. You are now ready to apply the mixture to the surface. The gesso is the base onto which you brush the gilding bole.**

****The Lefranc bole comes in a paste and is available in three different colours: yellow, red and black. Remove the amount of bole that you need and mix with a small amount of distilled water and stir until smooth. Mix this bole with warm hide glue. Add warm glue to the mixture until 3 drops of bole drip off the end of the brush. Pour bole thru a fine mess strainer. You are now ready to apply the bole.**

Gilding Procedure:

****Make your gilders liquor with 3 parts distilled water to one part alcohol. Use a squirrel hair brush to moisten the surfaces on which the bole was applied with the gilders liquor. Apply the gold leaves to the moist bole and leave to dry. Burnish the gold surface with an agate. Burnishing involves rubbing with an agate stone in the shape of the surface, by pressing the gold sheet into the bole. This produces a brilliant shine to the gold. There are different shaped agates to suit different contours and motifs for reliefs and sculptures.**

Gilding mixture or oil gilding:

Gilding using an oil gilding mixture is very different from bole gilding. This gilding technique is used to apply gold leaf to many different surface such as metal, wood, plastic, stone, and glass. The mixture used depends on the extent of the work to be carried out, climatic conditions and place of use. These mixtures can resist a temperature of up to -5°C. Contrary to popular belief. The surface to be gilded must be non-Porras. It's best to prepare the surface with and oil primer, shellac or latex paint (water base mixture only) before applying the mixture. When the mixture reached the proper tact it's time to lay your leaf.

LEFRANC 12-hour gilding mixture:

This mixture is suitable for large surfaces, outdoor work, in dry conditions and where there is not too much dust. To obtain the best results in terms of brilliance and depth, the 12-hour gilding mixture should be used rather than the 3-hour mixture. It will also be resistant for longer (stronger pictorial film). The mixture will reach the proper tact in about 12 hours and remain open for about 12 hours.

LEFRANC 3-hour gilding mixture:

This mixture is suitable on smaller surfaces for inside work or when the 12-hour mixture may not be used for whatever reason (wet climate or too much dust). The mixture will reach the proper tact in about 3 hours and remain open for about 3 hours.

LEFRANC Water-soluble gilding mixture:

This mixture is a quick and simple gilding method. It is suitable for indoor work only. The gold leaf may be applied 30 minutes after the mixture.