

1506-2

Mark Nelson shows gold, silver and copper leaf on wood beads.

Watch the video for this project online at:

<http://youtu.be/XroysgPneRY>

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Guest:



Mark Nelson



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Gilding Techniques On Wood

Adding metal leaf to wood designs enhances their aesthetic appeal and value. Leaf is available in gold, silver, copper and bronze.

Preparation

Thoroughly clean the surface being gilded. Organic materials such as wood will must be sealed with a gilding primer or lacquer.

Steps

1. Clean dust and oil from the base material.
2. Paint the item with primer, lacquer or sealing glue to ensure as little porosity as possible (experiment with color primer coats to add dimension, color or texture to your design). Allow your piece to fully dry before applying the paint-on adhesive.
3. Pour out the amount of gold-size (an adhesive varnish used to position and affix the leaf to your design) you think you'll need. Tightly reseal the container (discard any unused material after use). Apply the size to the area to be leafed. The size goes on clear and becomes tacky to the touch as it dries; it should be tacky (or even a bit beyond tacky) before the leaf is applied.

Testing Tackiness—Apply the size to a test piece at the same time you apply it to your wood object. Use the test piece to assess tackiness; fingerprints will interfere with good adhesion of the metal leaf. The adhesive is typically ready in 35–40 minutes, but it really depends on your particular working environment. Touch the test piece with the top of your knuckle. The size should grab at the skin but not take a fingerprint. Another method is to drag the outside of your pinky across the sizing, the sizing should grab at the skin and make a squeaking sound.

4. When the piece is sufficiently tacky, apply the leaf. Pull back the top sheet of paper, turn the leaf upside-down and press it onto the wood bead or other base material (keep the layer of protective paper on the leaf). Avoid directly touching the leaf until it has been pressed into the wood coated with adhesive. It will cling to your skin and will be difficult to place properly. After the leaf is pressed in place, lift away the paper and the remaining leaf.



See next page for continuing steps, notes and supply list.

⚠ WARNING! Follow all manufacturer's instructions and recommendations for safe use of gold size varnish.

Steps (continued)

5. If you're using small pieces of leaf, try using a pointed tool to pick up the leaf, then position it with a brush, or use static electricity by running the tip of a brush over your hair. This will hold the leaf while you position it.
6. The leaf sticks quickly and repositioning is nearly impossible. Use a soft brush to "tap" the leaf into place. After you have added all the leaf to your design, use the brush to remove the remaining small pieces of leaf. All residual leaf can be used again; keep a small container handy to collect for re-use.
7. After application, leave the leaf undisturbed for 3–5 minutes, then burnish with a soft cloth. You can ball up cotton in a soft rag and use twisting motions on the leaf to create interesting textures. **Please Note:** The color of the substrate (the surface under the leaf) can have an affect on the color of gold and other metal leaf material. Yellow is often used as a base for gold and blue is used for silver. Black substrates will dull the gold color and red will give it a somewhat antique coppery look. Layering can be used to deepen the metal color and give the piece a more pronounced textured look.
8. After more time, 5–10 minutes, the size cures more and the leaf can be burnished to a high shine. **Please Note:** The longer you wait for the gold-size to dry after placing the leaf, the better your results will be. To burnish, gently rub the leaf surface with a soft cloth.
9. The leaf does not need to be lacquered unless the finished piece is going to take some abuse; for example, pieces such as bracelets or rings.
10. To lacquer, use a quality spray lacquer or a paint-on lacquer specially made for gilding, such as MIDAS® Finish Seal lacquer.

Technique Notes

- Use a scalpel to cut the leaf; this ensures a clean edge.
- Use an old dry brush to scrub away the excess leaf.
- Save any leaf 'dust'; you can use it later for creating different looks.
- Use a buff to create swirl textures in your leaf.
- Apply the sizing with an old paint brush or a disposable foam brush.
- Use a cardboard mask to help apply sizing.

⚠ CAUTION! Always wear eye protection when performing these processes.

Supplies:

Order #	Description
629-867	Wood necklace
681-195	Gold-size (varnish for metal leaf)
681-128	Gold leaf
681-127	Silver leaf
681-126	Copper leaf
681-150	Bronze leaf
335-123	MIDAS® Finish Seal lacquer
201-054	Citation safety glasses
—	Razor blade
—	Foam brushes
—	Paint brushes
—	Mineral spirits