

# Raised Gilding

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## Class topics and materials list

### Difference in how materials behave

- Painter's gesso is not gilder's gesso
- Modern materials *do not* behave the same as period materials
- I have worked with:
  - Acrylic-based gesso
  - Kolner Miniatum
    - Both of the above dry somewhat rubbery or plastic-y
  - Jerry Tresser's non-toxic gesso

### What we're using today

Nearly all of these materials (except \*) are available at [John Neal, Bookseller](#)

- Jerry Tresser's gesso
  - Pros:
    - Based on Cennini's recipe
    - Does not contain lead white (titanium white instead)
    - *Does* contain slaked plaster
    - Does not shrink, wrinkle, or dimple as much as other products
    - Requires only breath to activate (as opposed to a second compound)
  - Cons:
    - Can dry out in the container
    - Contains a mold inhibitor, but can still mold if not kept refrigerated
    - If refrigerated, needs time to warm up, and stir before use
- Small paintbrush
- (\*) Soft brush ("mop" or even a makeup brush) - must be absolutely clean
- Agate "dog tooth" burnisher
- 23k patent gold leaf
- Glassine paper (the envelope the leaf came in)
- (\*) Optional breathing tube of reed or paper
  - Don't use plastic straws! There's a risk of condensation dripping on your work
- Optional scalpel or exacto knife
- Optional rubbing alcohol for cleaning your burnisher

## Steps

1. Paint a thin layer of gesso
2. Let gesso dry (about an hour, maybe less)
3. Paint thicker layer of gesso: less painting and more pooling or “feeding”
4. Allow to dry overnight
5. Optional: burnish the gesso directly, or use the scalpel to clean up imperfections
6. Breathe on gesso to “activate” it, either directly or through a tube
7. Press patent gold into place with finger
8. Burnish gently through tissue to help press gold into place
9. Remove tissue and brush away excess gold with soft brush
  - a. If there’s a lot of excess, you can try to layer it on top of the gold that’s already there
10. Lay glassine paper over the gilded area
11. Burnish through glassine with increasing force
12. Optional - remove glassine and burnish directly onto gold
13. When gilding is complete, outline with ink or paint to clean up edges
14. Absolutely crucial: hold your work up to the light and move it back and forth so it sparkles; then smile proudly at what you’ve accomplished