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GOLD LEAF FACTSHEET



GOLD LEAF TECHNIQUE

Gold leaf is gold that has been hammered into thin sheets by goldbeating and is often used for gilding. Gold leaf is available in a wide variety of karats and shades. The most commonly used gold is 22-karat yellow gold.

Gold leaf is a type of metal leaf, but the term is rarely used when referring to gold leaf. The term metal leaf is normally used for thin sheets of metal of any color that do not contain any real gold. Pure gold is 24 karats. Real yellow gold leaf is about 91.7% pure gold. Silver colored white gold is approximately 50% pure gold.

Layering gold leaf over a surface is called gold leafing or gilding. Traditional water gilding is the most difficult and highly regarded form of gold leafing. This application is used for in what's commonly known as 'Reverse Gilding' where the artwork is applied to back of glass providing a brilliant mirror finish from the outside. It has remained virtually unchanged for hundreds of years and is still done in the traditional manner.

The technique can be complimented by creating different textures like the 'Boston Gild' where you create letters with a matt centre and bright mirror outline or vice versa, the combination of matt and bright mirror textures increase the legibility of the lettering on glass.

Artwork can be taken further still by Acid Etching the Glass, creating antique mirrors, or inlaying pearl shell etc for a top end finish on window graphics or decorative mirrors for interiors.

For Fascia sign we employ a wide range of 'Surface Gilding' techniques where the gold is applied to an oil based 'size' (glue) painted on with a brush in either a matt or highly burnished (polished) finish or mix of both, this work can be done on panels in studio and fitted or carried out onsite from a scaffold.

From the ancient temples to modern day buildings, gold leaf has been an integral component of architecture to designate important structures since the dawn of humankind. Due to gold's resilience, gold leaf signs can stand up to weather, deterioration and even modern pollution, keeping them beautiful for generations, we have some stunning examples in Glasgow where the gold has outlived everything it including the painted background for over 100 years.

CARE INSTRUCTIONS FOR REVERSE GILDING

The gold leaf applied to windows is protected by a layer of paint then varnish.

These protective layers tolerate a lot and can be cleaned with various cleaning agents, however to ensure the longest lifespan of gold leaf, it is best to use a window cleaner with alcohol applied with cleaning paper or a soft rag.

Alcohol based cleaners take away silicone, wax and grease without leaving marks on glass and are safe to use over the protective varnish layer.

Sponges, window squeegees and other rubber equipment (especially any abrasive materials) should not be used.

Please do not stick anything over the gold leaf elements. Adhesive tapes and stickers may peel off the gold leaf on removal.

CARE INSTRUCTIONS FOR SURFACE GILDING

Surface gilding is most suited to fascia signs out of reach of public, the gold itself is incredibly brilliant and durable unless scratched abrasively, it is best not to varnish or lacquer the gold as it dulls the brilliance due to the sunlight no longer being able to react with the multi-directional facets in the gold's surface seen at a microscopic level.