

SUPPLEMENT TO GOLD TOOLING NOTES

Formula for Shellac Size - From Kurt Wehlte, *The Materials and Techniques of Painting*. Generously supplied to us by Peter Geraty.

- 10 grams borax (20 Mule Team Borax is fine)
- 30 grams bleached orange shellac flakes (Kremer Pigments, NYC, or local woodworking supply)
- 200 cc hot water (not boiling; 200 degrees F. is fine)

Heat water and pour borax in. Then pour shellac in and stir until shellac flakes go into solution - less than a minute. Remove from heat and let cool. Store in a glass jar and keep in the dark (drawer, bag, etc.)

This size works remarkably similarly to Fixor. The main difference is that Fixor should be diluted about 2/3 Fixor to 1/3 water. This size is used as is.

GOLD TOOLING: A Step by Step Guide

Preparing Drawing. Make a finished working drawing on acid free tracing paper from preliminary drawings, sketches and developed drawings.

Translate curved lines into corresponding tool numbers and mark on drawing. Pre-shrink working drawing using appropriate tools, inked with stamp pad ink and pressed onto drawing, with blotter underneath.

Transferring drawing to leather. Tape drawing onto book with Scotch tape.

Heat appropriate tools. Cool tool to a lively hiss on sponge. Carefully place tool onto drawing and press onto leather surface, using medium to heavy pressure. Continue until all lines are transferred to leather.

Remove drawing carefully, being sure that all lines are transferred.

Dry blind-tooling. Heat tools. Cool to just below hissing on wet sponge. Use moderate pressure to tool all lines again. Use this technique to stabilize, define and correct lines transferred from drawing.

Wet blind-tooling. Moisten tooled lines with cotton. Use light moisture at first. Be sure water is not puddled on leather before tooling.

Heat tools. Cool on wet sponge to a temperature low enough to not seriously burn palm of hand when left on skin 1/2 - one full second.

Using light pressure, tool all lines again at this temperature. If higher temperature or pressure is desired, increase these elements slowly. Always begin finding optimal temperature from a low temperature, optimal dampness from lightly wetted leather, and correct pressure from a light touch.

When leather is wet, it is at its most fragile. If lines need correction (not straight, curves don't transition smoothly etc.) do not try to move or adjust them when the leather is wet. Come back to the problem area when the leather has dried out.

Make all adjustments to blind tooling.

Applying Fixor. Fixor from Relma or Talas should be diluted with water before using. Use eyedropper. Mix 7 drops water to 21 drops Fixor. There is some flexibility in this ratio, but this is what I use. This amount (28 drops total) will be sufficient for almost any project. Use fine brush to apply liberal coat of Fixor to all lines where gold is desired. Let dry 1/2 hour minimum and re-apply Fixor. Let dry at least an hour before gold tooling...over-night is fine, a day or two is fine, just so it's dry.

Preparing gold and application to book. Roll out a double layer of gold onto gold cushion. Use the gold knife to drive air from between the layers and to "weld" the two layers together. Cut welded gold into strips 3/16" - 1/4" wide and as long as the sheets. Then cut strips to length as needed.

Make a pad of cotton wool and hold in right hand. With left hand, use tip of index finger to pick up end of strip of gold. Lift the strip off the gold cushion and lay it on the leather. With the cotton pad, place the strip and push the gold down onto the tooled line from above. Roll the pad over the gold, then unroll without sliding. (For lefties, reverse hands for the above.) The tooled line will be visible through the soft gold.

Gold tooling.

Heat tools. Cool to well below hissing (at sea level) and test temperature/gold/Fixor. For higher elevations, more heat will be needed. Find the temperature that makes the gold stick well without making a mess. Use firm tool pressure on the gold. Rock the tool from one side to the other in the tooled line (left to right or right to left - your choice) being careful not to rock so far that a dent is made at the end of the tool. Flip the gold over the line and tool again, and again until the gold is used up, using the cotton pad as necessary to locate the blind tooled line.

Wipe away gold crumbs with a clean cotton cloth or separate cotton pad.

Use gilders brush or other short bristle, softish brush (like a well used, clean tooth brush) to brush away any gold crumbs or dust, especially on gold lines. You can be fairly aggressive here.

Make necessary repairs to gold tooling and touch up. Clean edges of tooled lines.

Please note: This is a list of steps and hints only. It is intended to be a simple reminder of what is demonstrated using real tools and materials and extensive commentary. My hope is that this list will enable attendees to watch, listen and learn, without being distracted with extensive note taking.