

Lee's tips:

I have made copious notes whilst going along as there are parts of the method that I've found particularly tricky. The following observations might be of some use:

1. I used 11 layers of bole - my initial board had just 8 but it didn't allow a sufficient cushion of bole after sanding. (You raised this concern in your notes.)
2. After every application of bole the icon boards were covered with a plastic box - supported at one end to allow air to pass over the board for drying. (But preventing dust / fibres landing on the bole.)
3. The cooler the bole - the thicker and more even the coverage. Aidan recommends it is applied warm - still trying to find a happy medium.
4. Superfine wire wool achieves an excellent shine on the bole after sanding. I sanded the first gilded board with 600 wet and dry, then polished it hard with wire wool (and elbow grease) before applying the size. The second I sanded to 800 grade then used wire wool. (The final results might have been better if I'd gone further with sanding but I was concerned about lifting too much bole - even with 11 layers!)
5. The first small kivotos board was triple gilded - by the third layer I was achieving a good, even coverage. Then on the second board - with more experience - the gold was more even on the double gild - so I stopped there and tried faulting on some tiny areas where the gold was uneven or missing.
6. I tried to tamp lightly too soon. Sometimes I felt the brush drag which I realised was moisture getting onto the brush (so stopped immediately!). Water/moisture leaves a matt smudge!
7. Double gilding layer easier than first layer as by that time I was 'in the flow', also application of special gilding water (with size) much easier to estimate and control (applied sparingly) than first 'pool/flood' of water direct onto bole. (The first 'flood' was tricky on a small board with a kivotos - especially when trying to keep water away from the gold already laid.)
8. The biggest issue I had was sharpening the gilder's knife and getting the degree of sharpness correct. I also had tiny bits of the gilder's cushion (suede) appearing on the gilder's tip after I'd spread the knife on the cushion to clean the blade.
9. Slow movements are always best when a square of gold leaf is sitting on the cushion! Close all doors and turn fan oven off.
10. Large tamping brush used throughout process rather than starting with smaller tamping brush. Held brush by the belly rather than the handle - taking care not to expose fingernails. Gently pressing down with brush first, following the direction of the thin lines in gold first, then increasing the pressure gradually until very firm pressure used. I was losing so many squirrel hairs when polishing the gold with the brush that I looked for something else that could do the same job - a good quality 'micro-scrim' was perfect. (But ONLY at the polishing stage.)

11. When faulting - don't press down with cotton wool too hard (fibres stick!)

12. I found the use of masking fluid a bit problematic. It worked better when the inscribed line was firmer than a light outline. Masking fluid lifts watercolour etc easily but is more of a problem lifting layers of thin clay - the inscribed line acts as a buffer and prevents clay chipping off beyond the outline.

13. Watch Aidan Hart's demonstration videos on You Tube

<http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLFzuzMtzpZZhjM1ldgGDlyFm9rF7221rW>

14. Put hours into learning the process, first with a 'test' board approx 140mm x 110mm and then with two small boards (same size as before but with kivitos). Icon on right is burnished, icon on left is tamped then polished hard with a window cleaner's micro scrim (yes, it came free with a linen scrim order!!!)



Rosie's Gilders Tips

DO:

Make sure to cut the paper off round the edge of the transfer gold... I forgot and have blips due to stuck on bits of paper!!!

Be careful not to get the gilding water on top of the gold... I started to brush mine to shine it up and brushed water all over one side of my water gilding board without realising the brush had got water on it....and it has great dull brush marks now that I can't get out.....

DON'T

Wrap the oil gilded board (avoid bubble wrap) it really does take up every impression.... treat the surface with great care - do not prod it!

Don't start to brush the oil gilded board until you have waited several HOURS after laying the gold.... first time round I brushed half the gold off... and I would recommend the brushing as being very gentle..... I still kept making imprints in the surface of the oil gilded one by brushing too hard....

Really, *really* do not put too much oil gilding size on..... the surface of mine is all splurgy..... and has little wrinkly bits.... I then re-read the book and noticed you can add a bit of white spirit to make the size a bit runnier so you can brush it on more thinly, which I will try next time.

Janina

I tried 70 % pure alcohol rather than gilding water (3 parts water/1 part gin) for my water gilding.

Ronnie

Start with a small board. Practice the art of lifting and laying the gold leaf in one – until you get the hang of how it 'jumps' on to the water.

Rub the surface of the gilder's cushion with some bole to help prevent the gold from clinging to the cushion.

Keep the gilder's knife sharp and smooth.

Try and keep the area free of dust and pet hairs (nigh on impossible for me in my house of animals).