



# The Gilding Arts Newsletter

...an educational resource  
for Gold Leaf Gilding

CHARLES DOUGLAS  
GILDING STUDIO  
Seattle, WA

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## Quick Links

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June 14, 2016

*New York Gold Leaf Gilding Classes  
A few Spaces Still Available!*

## New York

June 21

**Gold Leaf Gilding...**  
*A Study for Fine Artists*

~

June 22 & 23

**Glass Gilding: the basics of ÆglomisÆ©**  
...exploring gilded glass art

~

June 24

**Toning for Gilded Frames & Furniture**

~

June 27-29

**Traditional Water Gilding**

~

*Coming in September...*

September 9

**Sacred Gilding: Gilding the Buddah**  
*...A Study in Oil Gilding*

[Frye Art Museum](#)

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[Society of Gilders](#)

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Join our list



**September 12-16  
Traditional Water Gilding  
and Glass Gilding**

*...a Perspective from Florence  
Emmerce yourself in a full week of the art  
of gold leaf gilding!*

To register *Scroll Below* or visit:

[www.gildingstudio.com](http://www.gildingstudio.com)

or

[www.gildedplanet.com](http://www.gildedplanet.com)

*(Gilding Kits now available  
with student discount!)*

~

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Greetings from Charles Douglas Gilding  
Studio

Dear Friends,

Greetings from New  
York! An exciting  
week lies ahead with  
classes from glass  
gilding to traditional  
water gilding.



NYCNY

It's always good to  
come back to to 'the City' where gilding began  
for me as an apprentice-of-sorts in the Visual  
Merchandising department at Saks Fifth  
Avenue over 30 years ago. So it's always a joy to  
return to meet those of you who come to  
explore this same very old artform we call  
gilding and the seemingly endless ways of

working with gold and silver leaf.

As always, my thanks goes out to Sepp Leaf and for their generosity in providing a welcoming space for us to gather to work and study in their downtown showroom studio. And now with the added passion and help of GildedPlanet.com, getting the needed materials and somewhat-obscure tools of the trade into students hands is now a little easier.

Meanwhile, I look forward to those of you who can make it to New York for a few days of intensive gilding study. And yes, we really will be darkening the back of glass with the soot of a candle before gilding it with 12k white gold leaf!

Till soon...

Peace, Health, and Clarity

~ Charles

~

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## *A Word about...Clay Bole*

*When it comes to gilding, and certainly traditional water gilding, there are many aspects that are specific and essential (e.g. never burn the glue, use fresh materials, etc) but there are also areas of*



St. Mels Cathedral in Longford, Ireland

*flexibility and that includes the use of clay bole, the material which is combined with a rabbit skin glue, or gelatin, solution and applied over a gesso ground to aid in adhesion and burnishing of gold leaf and to provide some underlying color.*

*Before we decide how many coats of bole to apply we first need to consider the effect we're trying to achieve. If we simply follow general advice without further thought we'll miss out on a world of opportunity in achieving a wide range of effects and better representation of an aged gilded surface.*

*The final appearance of water gilded gold leaf is greatly affected by the clay bole - the color and country of origin, the ratio of bole to glue solution, and the number of coats applied to the underlying gesso.*

*The topic of bole, as in the entire system of traditional water gilding, is an extensive study but as a preliminary overview there are a few important elements to consider when designing a gold leaf finish.*



*Green Bole in dry form.*

*There are of course historical differences between countries concerning the properties of bole and its application. However, if we think in terms of contemporary gilding we must also consider the popular rubbed finish where the gold or silver leaf is*

*partially rubbed off with such abrasives as fine steel wool, pumice, or with my preferred method of ethyl alcohol and whiting. This is done to reveal the underlying clay bole and the overlaps of the gold leaf.*

*If we are reproducing or replicating aged gilding we likely will rub the gilding to show wear.*

*Contemporary gilding, as often seen on picture frames and furniture, will show rubbed water gilded leaf to create a 'look' which can be thought of as the aesthetics of gilding, the interplay between the gold or silver leaf with the color of the bole, the rubbing and at times, the peeking-through of the white gesso ground. This rubbing of the gilding will leave behind patterns in the leaf itself, from gentle swirls and subtle veining to the fine lines of brush marks in the clay bole, usually a result from being insufficiently thinned or applied too cool.*

*So what characteristics are we looking for in a rubbed contemporary water gilded surface? What we want is gilding that burnishes smooth and bright and without scratching of the gold. We also want the rubbed leaf to be gently abraded to show the occasional swirl-like patterns of worn-away leaf with overlaps of about an eighth of an inch; overlaps approaching a quarter of an inch can be distracting to the eye and if on a picture frame, a distraction that can draw the eye from the art.*

*To achieve all of these goals is no easy task and is the result of a careful balance in the strength of the RSG or gelatin binder, appropriately thinned bole, and the ratio of one to the other. What I have found in practice is that the greater the quantity of bole in relation to the glue binder the more brilliant the burnish but the lesser the attractiveness of the rub:*

*conversely, the greater the quantity of glue in relation to the bole the less brilliant the burnish but the more appealing the pattern of the rub. The glue strength is also extremely important as we need good adhesion of the leaf to the bole but not so strong that scratches appear in the gold from the burnishing with the agate stone. In my gilding practice I use a 10% glue solution that is then further diluted again by half while the ratio of the 10% glue to bole, which has been thinned to the consistency of milk, is 1:1.67. An example would be 10 grams 10% RSG:5 ML Distilled Water:17 Grams thinned Clay Bole*

*Considering the complexity of water gilding it's important to be aware that there can be a little more flexible window in the approach of bole on a highly decorative surface than for a contemporary flat picture frame profile with rubbed gilding.*

*To paraphrase the words of 20th c gilder and framemaker Robert Kulicke, the longer we gild the harder it gets because the deeper we go. ~*



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**2016 Gilding Workshop  
Registration**



## *New York City*

### **Gold Leaf Gilding for Works of Art on Paper Canvas, & Panels**

*...a Study for Fine Artists*

June 21, 2016

*(Class Fee: \$250)*

[Pay Now](#)

~

### **Glass Gilding: Gilded Mirrors & Gilded Glass Art**

*...exploring the basics of Verre Églomisé*

June 22 - 23, 2016

*(Class Fee: \$450)*

[Pay Now](#)

~

Antiquing & Toning for

***Gilded Frames & Furniture***

*June 24, 2016*

*(Class Fee: \$250)*

[Pay Now](#)

*Introduction to  
Traditional Water Gilding*

*June 27-29, 2016*

*(Class Fee: \$650)*

[Pay Now](#)

Sacred Gilding:  
***Gilding the Buddah***  
...a Study in Oil Gilding

*September 9, 2016*

*(Class Fee: \$250)*

[Pay Now](#)

***Traditional Water Gilding  
and Glass Gilding***  
...a Perspective from Florence

*September 12-16, 2016*

*(Class Fee: \$1,100)*

[Pay Now](#)





12kt White Gold Leaf  
Watergilded with a black  
casein wash applied over a  
shellac topcoat

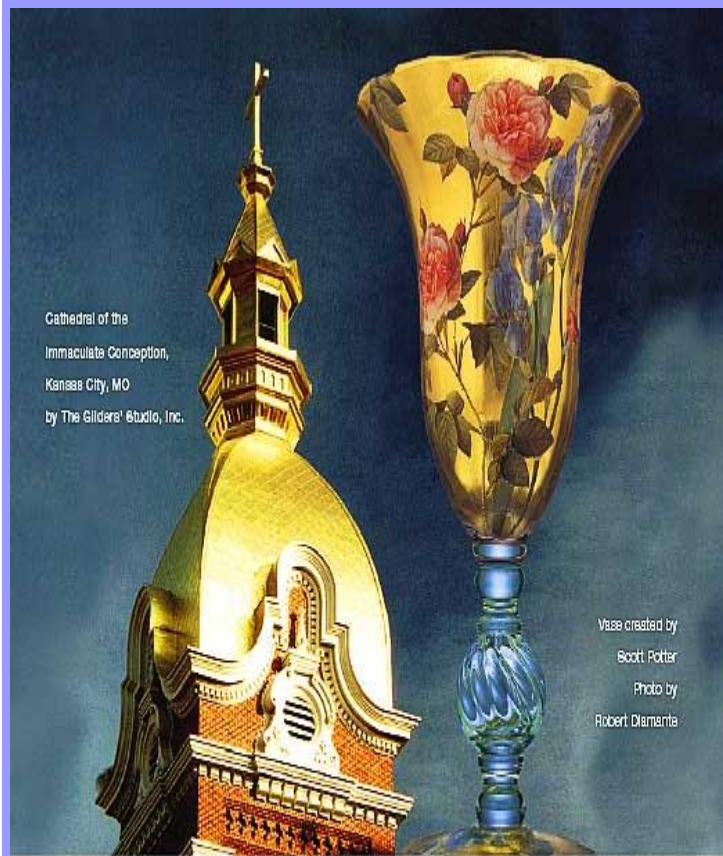


*All classes provide the use of studio tools and  
materials. For those who wish to own their own  
Gilding Kit please visit [GildedPlanet.com](http://GildedPlanet.com)  
for a student discount!*

[www.gildedplanet.com](http://www.gildedplanet.com)



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Cathedral of the  
Immaculate Conception,  
Kansas City, MO  
by The Gilders' Studio, Inc.

Vase created by  
Scott Potter  
Photo by  
Robert DiAmerica

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*Gold Leaf Gilding*



Gilding: Using the Gilder's Pad  
~ Charles Douglas Gilding Studio

## **Workshop Summaries**

### **Glass Gilding: Mirrors & Art Glass...*exploring the realm of Verre À%oglo mis*À©**

Offered as one or two day intensives as an introduction to the art of glass gilding, the basis for verre À©glo misÀ©. Learn to apply genuine 12kt white gold, preparing glass for gilding, making gelatin size, & creating special effects including candle-smoked glass, abrading gold leaf, and the combined use of water color additives.

### **Introduction to Traditional Water Gilding**

Traditional Water Gilding is an ancient craft that goes back over 4,000 years ago to the early Egyptians. This popular workshop is an intensive, hands-on class that introduces the student to each step in the water gilding method as used on furniture, picture frames, and architectural detail. Learn to prepare gesso & clay bole grounds & lay & burnish genuine 23kt gold leaf. A field trip to the [Frye Art Museum](#) to view and study the gilded frame collection is included.

### **Gilding for works of art on Canvas, Paper, and**

**Panels...a Study for Fine Artists (New!)**

Gold leaf has been used for centuries as both a component and surface background for works of art. From the earliest examples of iconography & 18th c Peruvian painters to Gustav Klimt and the modern day works of contemporary artists. This long-awaited one day intensive introduces the student to the methods & options available for the use of genuine gold leaf as a component within works of art.



Crackled gesso with 23k water gilded Pastiglia  
(raised gesso) on Canvas

~

*Class Size limited to 8 Students*

For more information visit [www.gildingstudio.com](http://www.gildingstudio.com)

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## ***New Member? Missed an Issue?***

The [Gilding Arts Newsletter](#) periodically publishes technical information concerning the various methods of gold leaf gilding. Some of these topics are in series formats such as the series on Traditional Water Gilding.



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