

Kölner Burnishing Clays

Traditional Red, Ocher, Black, White, Blue Colors



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All surfaces should be smooth, clean, and free of dirt, dust or grease. Absorbent surfaces such as matte board, porous paper, parchment, raw wood, textiles, unglazed ceramics, porous stone, plaster, traditional gesso and compo ornaments, require a sealer before application of Kölner Burnishing Clay. Primer-P is the recommended sealer and provides a strong bond between raw wood and Kölner Burnishing Clay.

Non-absorbent surfaces require no sealer before application of Kölner Burnishing Clay: plexiglass and other plastics, glass, sealed wood, non-porous paints, and metals (which may require primer). Other sealed surfaces and smooth metals may require light sanding to promote good adhesion.

Do not use Kölner Burnishing Clay over traditional water gilding without first applying a barrier coat of shellac. Do not use Kölner Burnishing Clay to patch chips in traditional water gilding, as the systems are incompatible over time.

Kölner Burnishing Clays are used at room temperature. Prior to use, they should be thinned slightly with water, in the following ratios:

100ml (3.4oz)	Kölner Burnishing Clay	add .25oz of water
500ml (16.9oz)	Kölner Burnishing Clay	add 1.25oz of water
1 Liter (33.9oz)	Kölner Burnishing Clay	add 2.50oz of water

Stir the clay gently but thoroughly, avoiding air bubbles. Decant the amount of clay you plan to use immediately.

Use a soft, natural hair brush to apply clay in long, flowing strokes in one direction. Allow each layer to dry thoroughly before the next coat is applied; average drying time is ½-1 hour. Color lightens and is matte when dry.

A minimum of 3 coats should be applied, further coats may be desired. It is not necessary to sand between coats. Sand with a high quality emery, aluminum oxide or wet/dry silicon carbide paper. Start with 400 grit and finish with 600 or possibly 800 grit. Dry sand only.

Burnishing

Burnishing is a magical, yet sensitive technique that requires careful observation and practice. This method involves gentle pressure which compresses gold into the clay and gesso layers. There is a limited window of opportunity for burnishing. With practice, you will learn to gild only as much as you think you can burnish in a given time. You are aiming for a mirror-like reflection. If you try to burnish too soon, the leaf will pull from the clay, and will have a dull appearance. If you burnish too late, the leaf will crack, or streak with inconsistent shine.

Depending on temperature and humidity, you may wait as little as an hour and a half before beginning to burnish. You may have only a short time to burnish. Burnishing with the Kölner system generally requires gentler pressure than traditional water gilding.