

# Cindy Drozda

"The Fine Art of Woodturning"

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## Basic Gilding Steps

- 1 – Surface Preparation is important. Your gilded surface will only look as good as the surface you put it on. Sanding scratches, tearout, and texture, will all show through the gilding. If a shiny, smooth metal surface is your goal, the surface to be gilded needs to be shiny and smooth.
- 2 – The surface needs to be non-porous for best results. The adhesive will work best if it can't soak into the surface. You need a uniformly tacky adhesive surface for best results.
- 3 – Apply the Adhesive (Size) of your choice. Different types of size will give different working times and results. It is best to prepare a practice board and test the size to learn how long it takes to reach proper tack, and how long it can be worked with. Many different substances can be used as gilding size. All they need is to provide a tack window between the wet and dry states. Most wood finishes will do this. Official gilder's size typically provides a longer tack window, so that a larger surface can be gilded before it becomes too dry.
- 4 – Wait until the size reaches a state of drying where it is tacky but doesn't transfer to your finger (or knuckle) when touched. If it is too wet, the gilding will appear dull, if it's too dry the leaf won't adhere to the whole surface.
- 5 – Apply the metal leaf to the sized surface. Depending on the type of leaf, handling will be different.
- 6 – Tamp down the leaf to get it adhered to the surface completely.
- 7 – Wait until the size is completely dry to aggressively brush off skewings and clean up surroundings.
- 8 – Real gold doesn't tarnish, and doesn't need to be top coated. Composition metal may tarnish, so topcoating with varnish, shellac, or other fixative is a good idea. Non-gold metals may also be patinated, if desired, before top coating.