

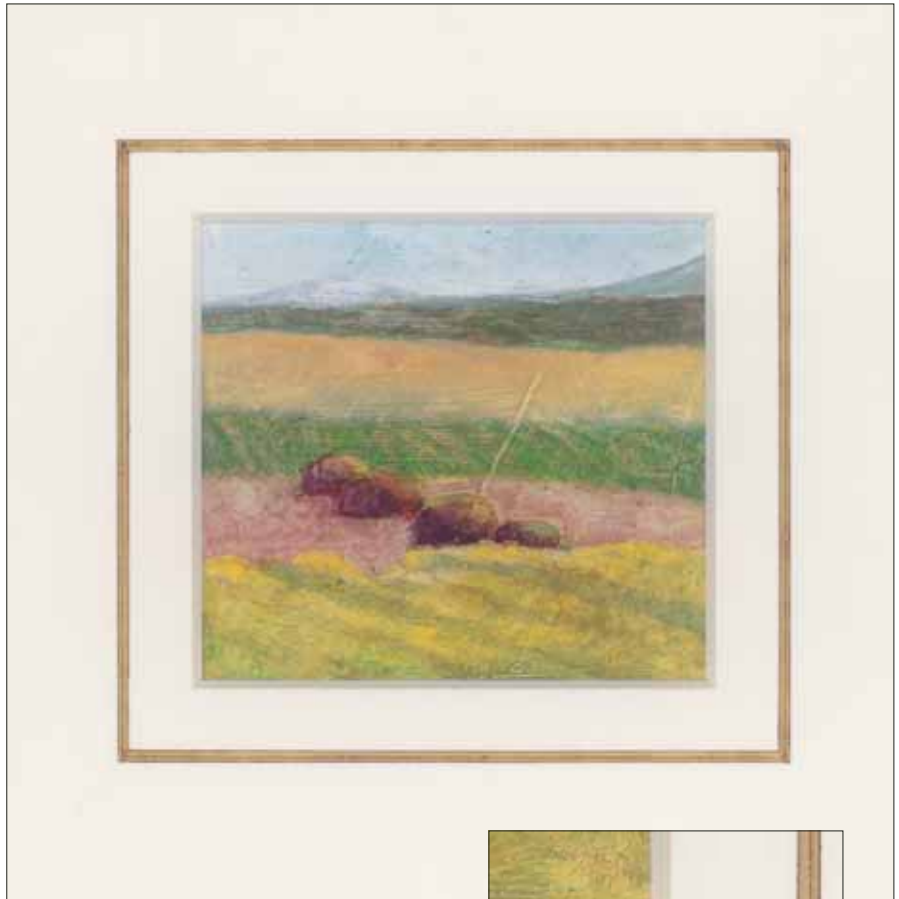
A Classic Gold Bevel

by Maria Nucci

Many framers do not consider themselves to be gilders. However, there are some simple uses of gilding techniques that even a framer of moderate skill can perfect to achieve stunning results. For this article, I've made some adaptations to traditional gilding materials and techniques. (After all I'm not a gilder.) I've found that some simple and inexpensive materials can produce great gilded bevels. *(Editor's Note: While the bevels in this article utilize metal leaf in rolls, the gilding can also be done using other materials such as gilt cream, or authentic gold. See PFM, August 1996, "Creating Gilded Mats.")*

The mat bevel, by virtue of its angle and its subtle depth, is the perfect spot for a bit of gold. Even a 4-ply bevel, tiny as it is, comes alive with a gilded accent. Using an 8-ply bevel is even more dramatic. Also, think about the face-to-face bevels of a gilded V-groove. Those are the three designs covered in this article. Now, let's get started!

First choose a work area that's clean and can be left undisturbed throughout the process. You'll be using a size (used to adhere the metal leaf to a surface), which has an adhesive quality and is a dust



The gilded V-groove was used here to highlight this landscape image.



Materials Used

- 4-ply mat
- 8-ply mat
- Red acrylic paint
- 3M Ready mask painting tape (available in hardware stores) or Scotch #811 removable tape
- Gold metal leaf in rolls (1/2") (available through gilding suppliers)
- Gold size (available through gilding suppliers)
- Spray sealer
- Sable brushes, flat 1/4" to 1/2"
- Steel wool (fine)
- Soft lint-free cloth, or cotton gloves

magnet. Also the metal leaf used for these designs is lightweight and will float away from you if you're near a window or fan. Gather all the materials you'll need before beginning.

Simple 4-Ply Gold Bevel

Cut the mat with a fresh blade and, of course, avoid overcuts. Any ragged edges on your bevel will



Photo 1: To begin the process, use tape to mask right up to the bevel. Then apply the size to the bevel to prepare for the metal leaf.



Photo 2: Next, apply the metal leaf along the surface of the bevel.

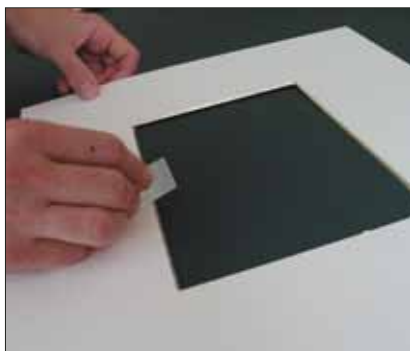


Photo 3: After the leaf has been applied and finished with spray sealer, any excess gold flaking can be removed with a razor blade.

cause a messy gilded edge and may cause the size to bleed. If you already offer painted bevels in your shop and have a technique to mask them out before you cut, go ahead and do that. (Photos 1, 2, and 3 illustrate my masking technique.)

Essentially, what you then do is "paint the bevel" with the gold size. Here I've cut the mat and am masking the bevel right up the edge (see Photo 1).

Paint the bevel with the size, being careful not to create bubbles as you apply it. Let the size set up according to the product instructions. Then, prop the mat up so it doesn't stick to your work surface. The quick size I use is usually ready to gild in five to 15 minutes, but can wait for up to 24 hours.

Next, apply the metal leaf. Roll off the leaf with its backing paper and gently, but firmly, press the leaf onto the bevel (see Photo 2). Lift off the backing paper. Carefully and lightly pat down the bevel with your finger. You just want to be sure the gold is thoroughly down. After that you can very gently rub

the bevel with a soft lint-free cloth to remove the excess leaf. Or wear a white cotton glove and use your fingers to rub the leaf down.

Lightly apply spray seal to stabilize the surface. Then, slowly remove the masking tape. If flecks of leaf remain on the top of the bevel, use a razor blade to scrape along the edge to remove them (see Photo 3). If your bevel was sharply cut, you should have a flawless edge. Some of the size might have dripped to the back of the mat. You may want to line the mat with 2-ply rag to avoid having the adhesive touch the art.

The 8-Ply Gold Bevel

Cut and mask the bevel in the same way as you would for a 4-ply mat. Here, I've chosen to paint an undercoat of red acrylic first. This color will show through the gilding when it's complete in much the same way that red clay (bole) is exposed from underneath the gold on a frame moulding.

Proceed in the same way as for the 4-ply described above; apply



This 8-ply gilded bevel was created to sharpen the design focus on these special stamps.



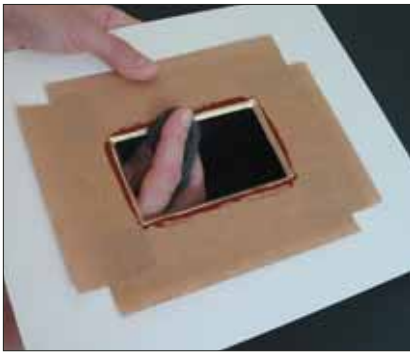


Photo 4: Use fine steel wool to expose some of the red through the metal leaf.

the size and roll on the leaf. But before removing the masking tape, lightly rub the surface of the bevel with the steel wool to expose some of the red underneath. A little abrasion goes a long way, so be gentle. Try rubbing perpendicular to the bevel rather than parallel to it for an interesting pattern (see Photo 4). A toning layer can be applied to soften the gold by mixing a milky beige solution of tempera paint and wiping it on with a cloth. Finally spray with a sealer and remove the masking tape.

The Gilded V-Groove

Gilding a V-groove, particularly an 8-ply groove, can be a real eye catcher and can be appropriate in both traditional and contemporary settings. The V-groove, being composed of two bevels face to face, is simply a matter of gilding the two

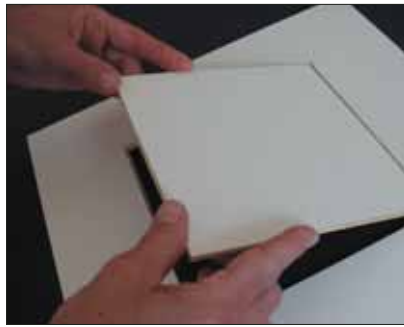


Photo 5: After both bevels have been gilded with the metal leaf, they should be reassembled.

bevels as described above and assembling them together (see Photo 5).

If you usually use a computerized mat cutter (CMC) to cut V-grooves, you may want to cut them by hand for this project so that you can gild each side of the groove separately and re-assemble them. Although it is possible to mask and gild the CMC groove, it's more difficult to get the leaf way down into the elbow of the groove.

Variations and Suggestions

Once you get used to handling the metal leaf in a roll, try some other things. For example, paint the undercoat in another color. Red is a classic, but ochre, blue, or black produce very different tones in the gold.

Also the leaf rolls used in this article are available in aluminum and bronze as well. Try aluminum



Photo 6: A gilded bevel with fabric wrap can be used to create a liner.

leaf with an ochre undercoat for a pewter look. Or, vary the shape of your bevel by sanding down the edge to create a rounded bevel. You could also gild up and over the bevel for more impact, or to use as a liner under a fabric wrapped mat (see Photo 6).

A gold bevel has universal appeal and can easily be used in a broad range of framing designs. Like the little black dress, or the navy blazer, it is timeless, elegant, and tasteful. It is a stunning accent and will always be a classic. ■

Maria Nucci, is founder of Maria Nucci Designs and FrenchMatting.com. A graduate of Parsons School of Design, she spent 17 years in the picture framing industry as a custom framer, designer, and manager before launching her own company in 2001. Providing decorative matting services to the trade, she creates classic and unusual designs.

