



Tindell's Restoration Schools & Studios

By: DiAnna E. Tindell

DiAnna founded Tindell's Restoration Schools & Studios in Nashville, Tennessee. It is very broad scoped & has expertise in many fields to offer the best of each for restoration services. DiAnna is a member of many international groups & serves actively at regional & annual events. DiAnna has expertise from a Score of years training internationally and has taught many talented students in areas such as Graphic Art & Paper Conservation, Oil Painting & Frames, Crystal & Glass, Pottery, Porcelain, Marble, and many other Mixed Media types. She has restored many objects for museums and rare collections. She is a published columnist in many antique trade papers & magazines and has authored books on restoration. Tindell's Restoration has been featured on HGTV and other educational programs. Her website is a library of useful information & time well spent to view at: www.TindellsRestorationSchools.com.

Restoration of Gold, Silver, Brass, Copper, Bronze, Pewter and More Metallic Finishes

Some of the most striking collectibles are often those which have been decorated with an application of gold, silver, brass, copper, pewter, bronze or other metallic based substance. But while this feature may make the collectible more attractive, it also poses a major problem when the object is in need of repair. In many instances, a restorer will experience difficulty in matching the metallic features on a newly restored area with the original metallic color. For example, an attempt to duplicate the "high mirrored gloss gold" that might be found in a porcelain Tiffany cup can easily dry too dull or, in some cases, too bright (as in electro-plated jewelry).

An important objective in the application of a metallic color to a restored area is to achieve the correct "tone". Many metallic colors are placed over a base coat of hues such as red, green, black, yellow, purple or pearlescent lusters. The correct "tone" can only be achieved if the color of the base coat on the original areas is matched correctly. In some instances, the base color and metallic color can be mixed together and applied in a single coat. Generally, the most common tone is brass (has a green base-tone) which is often mistaken for gold. Other frequently seen tones include white fire, florentine, classic, roman, leaf, renaissance, silver, pewter, copper and bronze.

It is not enough, however, for the restorer to capture the correct tone. Errors often occur in the way that golds or other metallic paints are applied to the surface of the collectible. These products may be very thick and will dry quickly. If they are not applied properly, the result can be a grainy,

streaky, or smudgy look. Unfortunately, it takes a restorer many hours of practice to develop the skills needed to properly apply gold and other metallic.

Golds and other metallic colors are available in various forms. These forms include powders, foils, sprays, waxes, liquids, electro-formulae, gels, pre-cut decal transfer and true karat. A word of warning, one expedient way to apply metallic paints is by spraying them onto the target surface. By applying these colors from a spray can, however, gives you little control over the application. In earlier articles, we have discussed the advantages of the airbrush in the restoration process. The use of an airbrush in the application of metallic colors is far superior to simply applying the color from a spray can. An airbrush will allow the restorer the freedom to mix different formulae and spray them gently over the target surface using a variety of airbrushing techniques. For the professional restorer, it is wise to set aside one airbrush to be used exclusively for the application of metallic paints. Metallic colors can also be applied using "writing pens". Normally, the tip of such a device has a pressure release system. This system, however, will often allow too much paint to escape at one time. Therefore, a "writing pen" with a felt tip will give you more control over the application.

I cannot stress enough the value of using compatible products during the restoration process. Say, for example, that you are hand painting an intricate gold pattern on a newly restored area of a collectible. If the metallic paint is compatible with the materials used for the restoration, a mistake during the painting process can be easily cleaned off without damaging the steps completed thus far of the restoration area. Should the materials involved prove to be incompatible, a mistake in the painting process might not be correctable without damaging the object. Moreover, if the metallic paint is compatible with the other materials used in a restoration, but the application of too much metallic paint is applied that might "soften" the underlying layers by diluting it. If applied on purpose, the restorer can achieve a worn look that can so often be found on areas such as handles, finials or the rims of objects.

Having said that, how can one determine whether the metallic paint to be used is compatible with the other materials used in the restoration process? The following is a simple way to test whether you will be using compatible products. Select a "dummy" porcelain plate or other expendable object that is similar to the collectible being restored. Load that "dummy" item with the products such as primer and base coat used in the normal restoration techniques. Apply a small amount of each metallic paint to be used to the

"dummy" object. Then use an airbrush to apply a high gloss finishing glaze over each color. If the metallic paint is not compatible, you may observe it dissolving into a run or showing some other undesirable reaction

The true karat gold leaf most often seen in frames can also be used in the restoration of porcelain and glass. There are several different types of bonding agents that can be used in this process. But while gold leaf has a smooth and mirrored look in its packaging, this look is difficult to duplicate when it is transferred to an adhesive surface. There are electroplating processes that will give you smooth and mirrored effect. However, these processes can often be costly, allow little flexibility in obtaining the correct tone and, along with the challenge offered by the size and shape of some collectibles, will many times eliminate electro-plating as an application option.

A word of advice to anyone needing to restore an object with a gold, silver or other metallic colored design. Ask to see examples of other restorations, which are similar to the work you will need done. Also, be satisfied that the restorer you select is able to safely clean your collectible without further damaging metallic colored design.

We have included a few photo examples of objects requiring various gold leaf, bronze and various metallic faux finishes. Should you need more details, please do not hesitate to contact us at: www.TindellsRestorationSchools.com / email: tindellsrestoration@gmail.com or call 615-941-5354. ♦



"Kenny Rogers" gold leaf elephant award damaged



Damaged



Restored



Repaired Bronze statue –
Previously with broken hand and
missing fingers



Silver Tea Pot – that was in severe fire
with dents and broken off pieces.



Restored Silver Tea Pot