

## Decorating with the refined gold leaf

Wrought iron is our soul but today we want to celebrate a peculiar technique: **gilding with gold leaf**. It is indeed an ancient artform that could look easy but the truth is that **only the wise hands of a skilled artisan can craft a seamless, durable and elegant piece**. No surprises, this technique involves decorating and applying gold leaf on solid material such as wood, iron or even leather.

**Preparation is the key.** The material is thoroughly prepped: sanded, cleaned and most importantly primed with the suggested primer for the material (primers for wood differ from ones for metal and so on). Then the first coat is of an adherent specific for gilding or applying metal foils and leaves. **Great care is taken not to leave any spots or to put it on too thick.** The special adherent will become tacky after it has dried a little bit. **The consistency must be perfect for the gold leaf to adhere and shine**, if it is too wet it will get dull, if it is too dry it will not stick. The foils or leaves are then carefully applied. To avoid waste the leaf can be cut and extra bits will be used to coat smaller areas and corners. After everything is coated in gold-leaf the final most important and fascinating step to make everything seamless is brushing the material, with yet another special brush made for gilding. Now to finish everything a sealer or varnish is applied.

*And so it is born a perfectly gilded object.*

The beauty of gilding lies also in the history it has within itself. The Ancient Egyptians were the first civilization to use this technique, the very one we use at [VilliZANINI](#). Of course back to that age, the adherent were organic, this is why unfortunately most of the gilding wore off through time and today we have a very different perspective of the once shiny opulent pieces. Thankfully, great restorer and art conservation specialists make sure to bring historic pieces back to their original glory.

In the area of Treviso (where we are headquartered) the historic use of gold leaf is scarce, but in Venice? **Venice was covered in gold**. In old paintings, gold leaf is seen decorating marble, limestone and metal for the architecture of the Doge's palace and St Mark's Basilica. **Inside the St Mark's church, there are 8.500 square meters of gold mosaics, the full expression of Venetian wealth.** Even houses were gilded. A good example is the façade of Ca' Contarini better known as Ca' D'oro (Gold house!). Other famous gilded objects you may have seen are the archangel Gabriel on top of the St Mark's Campanile (bell tower) and the gilded earth on top of the Customs House.

The love of gold in Venice at the time sprung from the very lively and vibrant merchant position of the city but also from its cultural proximity to the Byzantine and Ancient Roman Empire.

What a wonderful city Venice was and is! We look forward to walking in its Calle (streets) and Campi (squares) again.

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