

Gold-ground Panel Painting

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Video documenting gold-ground panel painting produced by the Getty Museum:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WVyusmjiTXI&t=9s>

This video produced by the Getty museum, provides the steps involved in the creation of 16th century altarpiece panels made with gold leaves and tempera painting. The video narrates each of the steps, focusing on the craftsmanship and different materials. This is a good teaching resource to complement a lecture on the Early Renaissance because it helps the students to appreciate craftsmanship and skills involved in the creation of altarpieces, and it generates discussions on the value and cultural significance of those works. At the end of this class and after showing the video, if there is enough time, I like to show contemporary examples of artists utilizing gold leaf, such as Barkley Hendricks' *Lawdy Mama* (1969) and Chris Ofili's *The Holy Virgin Mary* (1996), and open for discussion on the different meanings of gold, past and present.

Learning Goals:

After completion of this assignment, students will be able to:

- Explain the technical and material aspects of gold-ground panel painting.
- Analyze how the technique influences the resulting artwork.

Activity

- During a class on the Early Renaissance, while looking at altarpieces by Cimabue or Giotto, I explain tempera painting and the process of gold leaf application in general terms.
- After the lecture, students watch the Getty Museum video on gold-ground panel painting, while working on a series of guiding questions that direct them during the video (sample attached)
- After the video, we discuss as a class about what surprised them in the process, and how technique might influence the resulting artwork.

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During the video

- What are the major steps in the creation of a panel painting?
- How does the artist handle application of color?
- Why the use of bright colors was important?

After the video:

- What surprised you about this process?
- How might technique influence the resulting artwork?