
GOLD LEAF

materials & process



Guiding Principles:

Bigger is NOT Better (running a large fragile paper through a printer is a nightmare) (any gold leaf application mistake means wasted paper, leaf, time)

Miniature, small, cameo works best at first

No individual supply item is expensive; but all together you can nickel & dime yourself to death

2 surfaces/2 processes; one is not better than the other; each has significant rewards and challenges!

PHOTOGRAPHIC SELECTION:

Challenging!

All your great images may not work; sometimes second-rate images show the leaf nicely, but are they great images?

an image needs lighter tones in places for leaf to show through

will the gold/silver/colored leaf enhance the photo, or is the photo just better without enhancement?

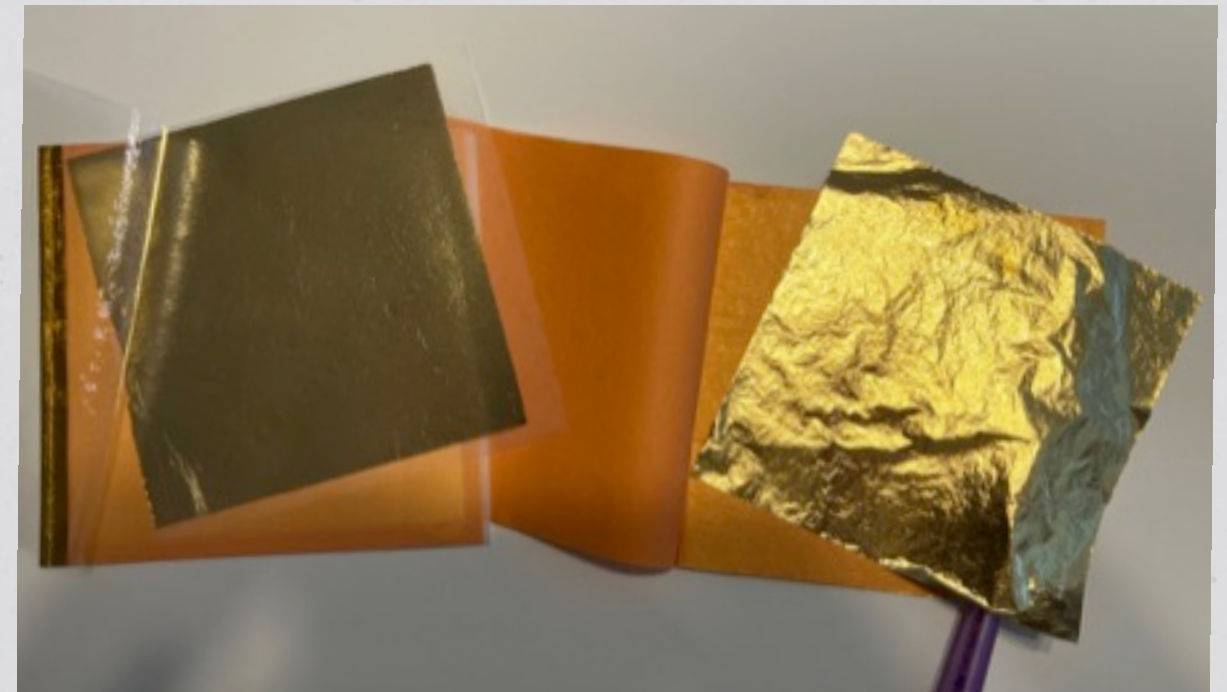
SUPPLIES

LEAF

- leaf can be purchased at Amazon, Asel Art, Dick Blick, Hobby Lobby
- there are two choices: Simple Leaf and Leaf
- Simple Leaf has a thin paper backing - convenient, costly;
- leaf has no backing and can blow away!
- leaf can be both real gold (for Lottery winners!) or metallic gold



- Simple Leaf & regular leaf



- Simple Leaf has a backing and is easier to use; regular leaf will blow away

SUPPLIES

BRUSHES

- assorted paint brushes - liquid adhesive is water soluble, water container

TAPE

- regular masking tape or “frog” tape used in painting - works best on vellum
- low-tack adhesive drafting tape for paper

OTHER

- wax paper, paper towels, newspapers, old cardboard or mat board, brayer, white cotton gloves, cheesecloth



SURFACES

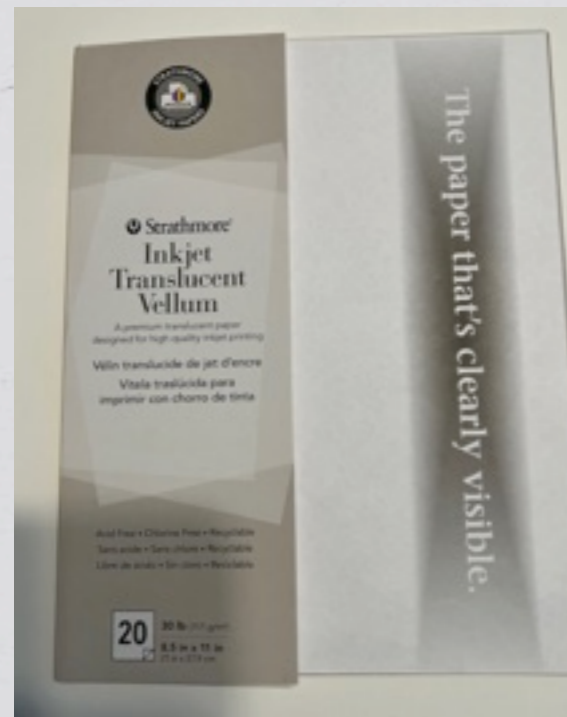
- The search for surfaces is not for the faint at heart or slim pocketbooks.
- The differences between weights is mind-boggling: some are measured in lbs others in grams

VELLUM

- best surface for beginners; thin lets the leaf shine through; thin buckles easily; too much ink on a non-porous surface will gum up the printer
- thickness of vellum varies and is hard to find; letter size is available; larger sizes are impossible to find and are often sold in large lots = \$\$\$\$. If you are a printing company and need 5000 sheets, you are in luck! Hobbyist, no.



best weight, best size, best price, will wrinkle with liquid adhesive



same as Office Depot - just that Strathmore is a brand name



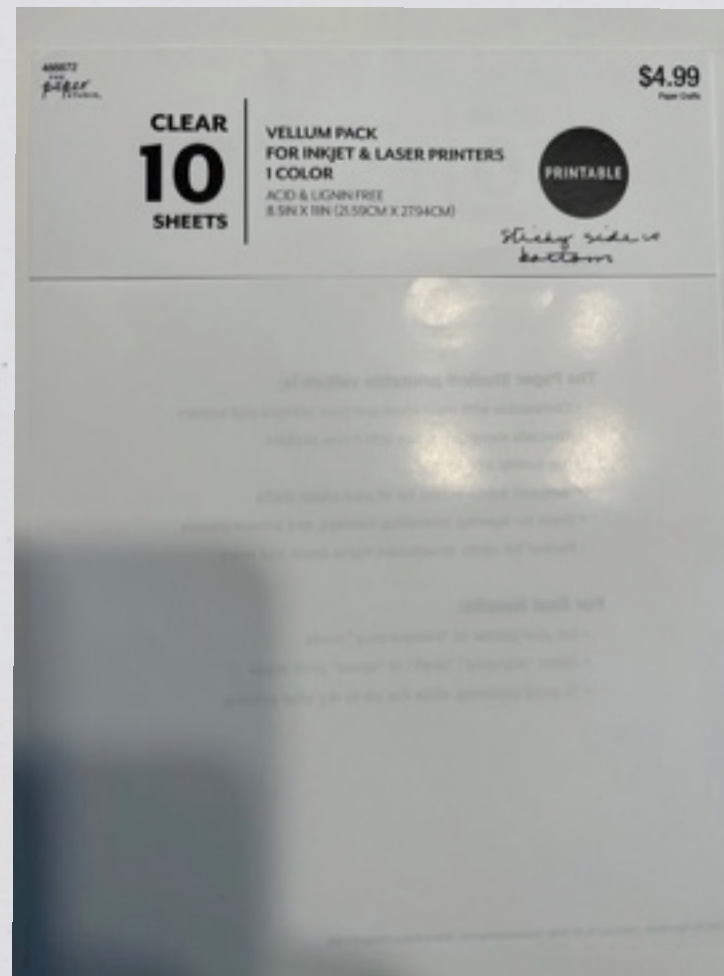
good weight, can work larger, expensive, will wrinkle with liquid adhesive, found at any art supply store



good weight, can work larger, expensive, will wrinkle with liquid adhesive, found at any art supply store



The Paper Mill Store has a variety of weights of vellum; Jazz Translucent Vellum 25lb text is the best weight
ThePaperMillStore.com



Hobby Lobby

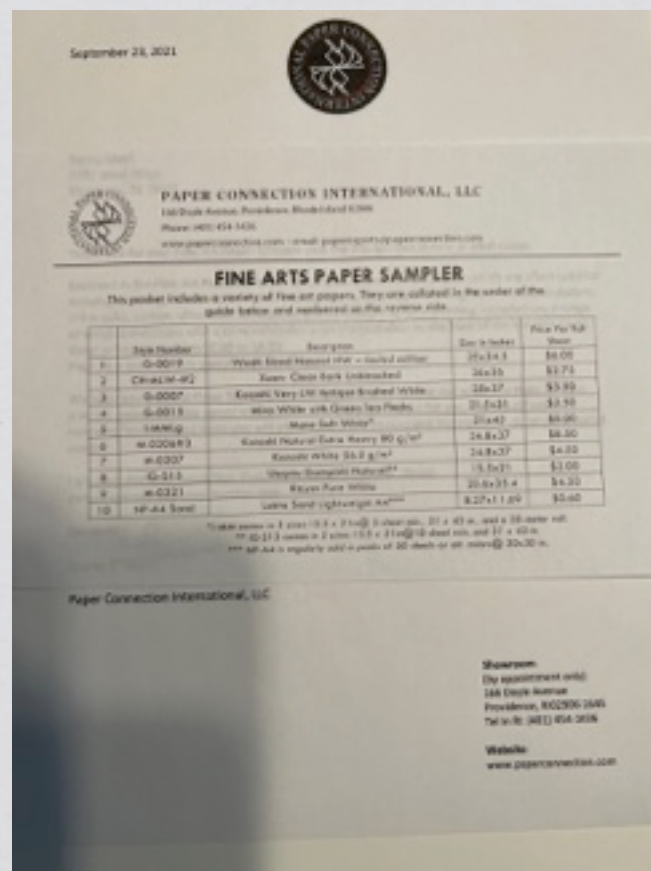


LCIPaper.com
 the only larger paper (13"x19") I can find at a reasonable price for small quantities; rather thick

SURFACES

PAPER

- best for patient personalities! Scary to experiment with expensive Japanese papers
- paper can dissolve with liquid adhesives or get stuck in printer; hard to determine paper profiles



- range of handmade/machine made papers; suggest getting a sample pack to see what is available
 - all come in large sheets, so will need cutting
 - I called and described my needs and they suggested 2 great papers
- paperconnection.com



- range of handmade/machine made papers; suggest getting sample pack to see what is available
 - paper is listed in grams
- Nyodo Kozo is 25gram and anything less is tissue paper
- hiromipaper.com



- Nyodo Kozo 25gram has been a favorite; comes in letter size, 13"x19" sheets and rolls; a natural, more yellowish color, no white available
- hiromipaper.com

SURFACES

PAPER

- Awagami Japanese papers are expensive and beautiful; this company is very old and makes exquisite handmade papers costing hundreds of \$\$\$; they do offer a few machine made beautiful papers and a few are thin enough for gold leaf; sizes are non-standard for American printers; can order from Japan (costly shipping and takes time) or B&H Photo. Depends on what is in inventory.



- sample pack of 18 is not always available
 - comes in large sheets & rolls
- bhphotovideo.com
dickblick.com (if you know exactly what you want
awagami.com (just looking at the site is wonderful!))



- I found Kozo Thin Natural and White to be an excellent paper and use it

ADHESIVES

LIQUID ADHESIVE

- SpeedBall has the market corner here, but the cheaper BEACON works fine. Hobby Lobby for Beacon; Hobby Lobby, Asel, Amazon for SpeedBall;
- can use indoors safely

SPRAY ADHESIVE

- ODIF has the market corner here, but probably any art adhesive will work. I did find some that had larger “spray bubbles” and preferred the finer spray. Hobby Lobby for ODIF; dickblick.com also.



PRINTER SETTINGS

YOU ARE ON YOUR OWN HERE!

- every printer is different; you will need to experiment
- ◆ - vellum is not absorbent - so ink wells up and smears; too little will make tiny, ugly dots on vellum; too much will smear on the roller and the vellum
- printing “Draft” or “Fine Mode” may/may not work
- with the Japanese Awagami paper there are paper profiles on their website; I used these settings for all similar Japanese papers
- other papers will need experimentation
- thin papers need a support sheet/or need to be taped to a support sheet - they can tear and jam in the printer otherwise
- I often tape a paper to a stiff backing sheet at the bottom - however, this often tears a fragile paper when removing the tape
- I find anything under 15gram weight to be tissue paper and best avoided (although they would be beautiful!)

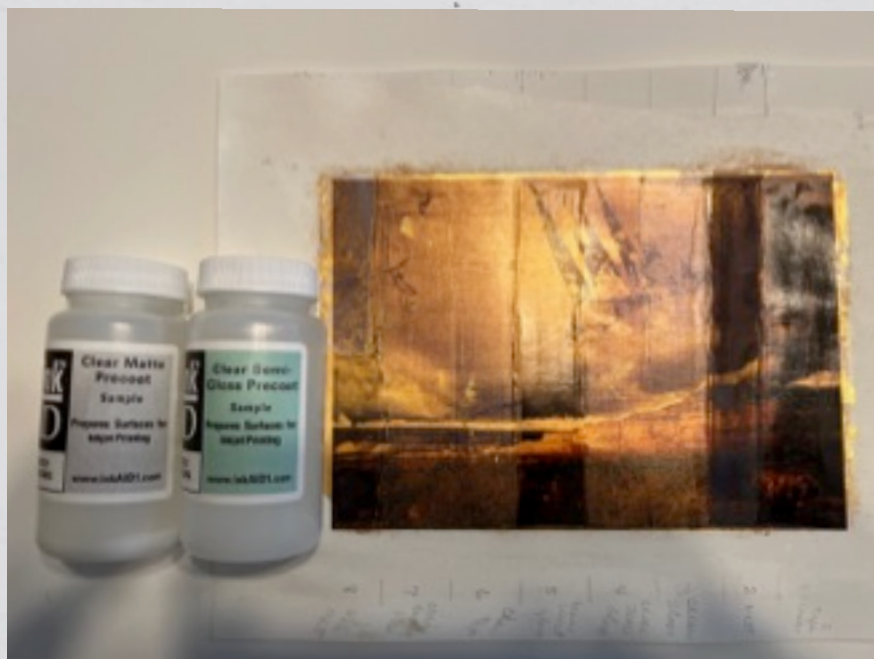
TRADITIONAL PROCESS

- select photo
- select paper substrate (vellum or paper)
- print image on substrate
- let dry a few hours
- FIND A LOCATION WITH NO AC OR FANS:
 - featherweight gold leaf will blow away; leaf dust will coat your house!
- prepare an area with newspapers, butcher paper, or matte paper
- turn the print over and tape around image on vellum; make a paper template for paper print
- let adhesive dry to “tacky”
- if you are using spray adhesive - go outside or use a ventilated area
- let adhesive dry to “tacky”
- REMOVE TAPE or PAPER TEMPLATE (OTHERWISE YOU WILL BE APPLYING GOLD LEAF TO TAPE OR PAPER!) from back of print for vellum; remove paper template for paper print
- apply leaf; rub gently with cotton glove or cheesecloth; brush and save residue in ziploc or bowl
- let dry a few days and brush with sealer for vellum; Krylon clear acrylic coating for paper



NON-TRADITIONAL PROCESS: INKAID

- select photo
- select paper substrate - ideally a heavy matte paper, textured, watercolor, smooth
- print an outline or footprint (which the image will fit into) on paper
- (I create a footprint by printing a thin line border first)
- apply gold leaf to the interior of the outline – use liquid adhesive or spray adhesive (thin paper may dissolve with liquid adhesive)
- let this dry overnight
- coat the gilded paper with INKAID – works best with heavy matte or watercolor papers (thinner papers will dissolve)
- dry 2-3 days
- print the photo over the leaf which has been sealed with INKAID
- spray with sealer



- INKAID has 8 different coatings from gloss to matte.

The print here has a different strip for each to see what the results might be;

- INKAID ships from NC and they caution that they do not ship in winter - freezing affects the solution, plan ahead!

<https://inkaid1.com/>

PHOTOGRAPHERS WHO USE GOLD LEAF:

Joyce Tenneson: <https://www.tenneson.com/> “Trees and the Alchemy of Light”

Dan Burkeholder: <https://www.danburkholder.com>

Karen Klinedinst: <https://karenklinedinst.com>

Lucretia Moroni: <http://www.lucretiamoronimagine.com/home>

Wendi Schneider: <https://wendischneider.com/>

Jim Swallow: <https://photographyongold.com/gold-leaf-collection/>

Skendzic Photography: <https://www.skendzicphoto.com/>

Watergild Studios: <https://www.watergild.com/basics.html>