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Framing: Precious frames



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A gilded frame, in imitation lapis or

even with an inlay of rare species... The framer very often borrows the techniques of the cabinetmaker or the interior decorator in order to give a touch of character to the works which have been entrusted to him.

1. All that glitters...

The history of the frame as always been closely linked to that of painting and drawing. Elevated to an artistic level during the Italian Renaissance, framing has long used the expertise of prominent decorators and cabinetmakers. Mixing precious materials - such as the incomparable gold leaf - and trompe l'oeil techniques, it has sometimes tried to eclipse the

actual work. But its primary purpose remains to serve... with no limits other than the imagination of its creator.

2. Subtle variations for perfect harmony

Contemporary framers have not lost any of the imagination of their predecessors. Some secrets - learn to imitate the most precious framing materials...

- **Wood:** while veneers of mahogany, maple or walnut are still used, their richness can easily be imitated by layering and sponging colors or with distemper in water or oil, in contrasting shades.
- **Stone:** combining colors applied with a sponge, then highlighted with veins defined with a brush, finished with a matte varnish or beeswax... In this way, perfectly polished faux marble, granite and other igneous rocks are born. Even precious lapis, whose richness is highlighted by a fine shower of gold powder.
- **Some ideas from nature:** real tortoise shell has been replaced by a trompe l'oeil technique of overlapping touches of ocher and black paint, finished with a coating of lacquer. Always appreciated, the bamboo image (simulated entirely with paint), for exotic engravings or botanical plates, for example.

Did you know? Gilding...

Symbolizing wealth since the beginning of time, even today gold remains the most used finish in framing. Warm, it reinforces the luminosity of paintings. In spite of its glow, it enhances the colors of works by its neutral tone. There are two techniques for gilding:

- **Gold sizing:** with a brush apply the specialized base (sizing: available ready to use in the marketplace), then apply the sheet after the frame is dry). After this step, use an agate stone burnisher on the entire surface, to create a patina effect.
- **Plating, much more complicated:** apply two layers of an oily coating, composed of the gold plate (a clay powder or paste, available in different colors) and rabbit-skin glue, that you make yourself. The result is extremely subtle: the gilding delicately emphasizes the sculpted details of the frame.

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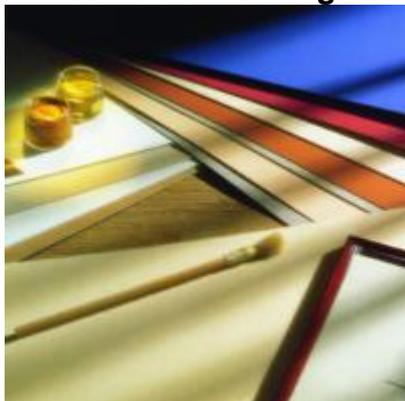
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Framing serves the needs of the artwork? and not the inverse. In framing, being meticulous is essential, and hastiness is always a mistake. Some expert advice will allow you to avoid the hidden perils.

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