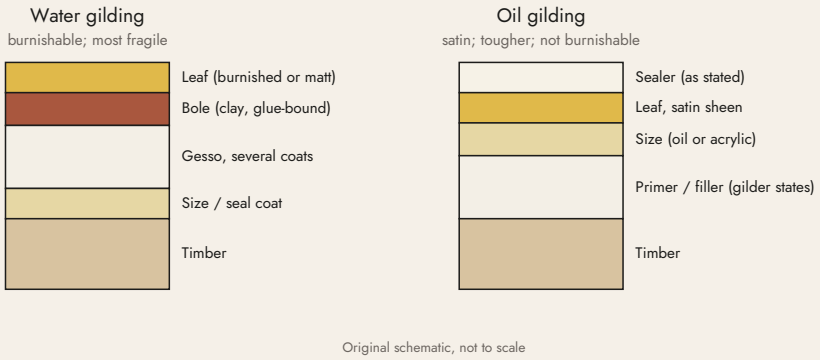
Gilding on *furniture and joinery*

Gilding on furniture and joinery: water and oil gilding set against how a piece is touched, with grounds, sealing, humidity and site touch-up. Durability and care claims are the gilder's to confirm.

AT A GLANCE

Piece or setting	System direction	Why, from the sources	Specify
Mirror or picture frame, out of reach	Water gilding is the classic choice and the only one that burnishes	Fragile, but little handled. Humidity steadiness matters most.	Burnished and matt areas; seal
Table edge, chair rail, door beading	Oil gilding is the sourced lean for handled surfaces	Our journal: oil is more robust and suits surfaces that are handled or exposed.	Sealer; touch-up method
Bar front or hospitality joinery	Ask the gilder; oil is the robust option, still needs a seal	Spills, cloths and cleaners reach the surface. No wear figure was found.	Care sheet; cleaners to avoid
Carved panel or relief	Either; the ground must follow the carving	Leaf is thin and shows every flaw in the ground (our journal).	Sample on the carved profile
Ceiling coffer or cornice, out of reach	Either; access for touch-up decides	Out of reach, so wear is low; dust and humidity remain.	Installation joints; touch-up
Behind glass	A different craft: see the verre églomisé sheet	The glass protects the leaf.	See the linked sheet

Qualitative only: no durability or wear figure for gilded furniture was found. Sources: US National Park Service, CCI (Michalski), AIC Conservation Wiki, our gilding pages. The gilder confirms every row.



Layers in water and oil gilding on timber, not to scale. The ground under oil gilding varies by base material and the gilder states it. Original drawing by Make Bespoke Studio.

SPECIFICATION WORDING

GILDED FINISH: SYSTEM AND LEAF

Gilding to [item, drawing ref]: [water / oil] gilding with [genuine gold leaf, [23] carat, shade [ ]] over the ground system proposed by the gilder for the base [solid timber / veneer / sheet board] and approved in writing. Burnished areas [ ]; matt areas [ ]; distressing or crackle [none / as approved sample ref]. No imitation or composition leaf unless named in writing.

HANDLED AND EXPOSED PARTS

Gilded parts within reach of users: [list]. The gilder is to state in writing the seal proposed for these parts and the cleaning the finished system tolerates. Handles, pulls and other contact points: [in non-gilded material / gilded, with the gilder's written agreement].

HUMIDITY, SAMPLE AND CARE SHEET

The gilder is to state the relative humidity range the system is intended for [ ] to [ ] per cent. A sample board of the proposed system on the same substrate [and on the carved profile] showing leaf, ground, seal and sheen is to be approved by [designer] before gilding starts [sample ref]. The gilder is to supply a care sheet for the handover pack: dusting method, what must never be used, touch-up method and who may do it.

SITE JOINTS AND TOUCH-UP

Joints between gilded sections, fixing points and transit damage are to be gilded on site to the approved sample by [the gilder / a named finisher], using the method on the care sheet. Gilded faces are to be protected in transit and on site until handover.

TERMS USED

Water gilding
Leaf laid on a bole wetted to reactivate its animal glue, over gesso. The only method that can be burnished to a mirror shine.

Oil gilding
Leaf laid on an adhesive size, oil or acrylic. Satin sheen, more robust, not burnishable to a high polish.

Gesso
A chalk and animal-glue ground built up in coats and sanded smooth under water gilding.

Bole
A fine clay, bound in glue, laid on the gesso; its colour shows through and warms the gold.

Burnishing
Polishing dry leaf on a bole with an agate stone to a mirror shine. Possible only with water gilding.

Craquelure
A network of fine cracks in a ground or finish. Intended in some antique looks; a defect if not specified.

STANDARDS AND SOURCES

- US National Park Service, Museum Handbook Part I, Appendix N: gilt, humidity, dusting; 2004, modified 2020.
- Michalski (CCI): Crack mechanisms in gilding: humidity and gilding.
- AIC Conservation Wiki: Gilding: water and oil gilding; a draft entry.
- No standard applies: we found no British or international standard for gilded finishes.

Full guide: https://makebespoke.com/trade/technical/gilding-on-furniture-and-joinery. Make Bespoke Studio coordinates manufacture through its partner workshops. Figures are guidance only and your specification governs; some may be superseded, so contact the studio to verify.