

Art History Renaissance

Gold

Using gold adds magic to paintings!
Gold means luxury, royalty, beauty,
decoration, and holiness.

Gold is a precious metal, so it is a very special kind of color to use in art. Artists have used it to show important religious people, as well as kings and queens. Because of its beauty, it is also perfect for creating lovely decorative patterns.

A gold background instead of sky or a wall makes the picture "otherworldly," or holy.



▼ "The Wilton Diptych," artist unknown, c.1395-99



Gold coin



Various tools and brushes are needed to work with gold leaf.

Gold leaf

Making gold

Gold leaf means sheets of gold. Artists often made these by beating gold coins into very thin sheets. They also used ground-up gold to make gold paint, and even sprinkled gold dust over their work.

Heavenly gold

This painting is one half of a diptych, which is a piece of art in two parts. The figure kneeling is Richard II, King of England, 1377-99. Behind him are three saints. Medieval artists loved gold. In candlelit churches, glimmering gold made art seem heavenly and holy.



Golden lady

This beautiful portrait of a wealthy woman is covered in glowing gold leaf. It was made by Austrian artist Gustav Klimt. The woman is actually sitting on a chair, but the modern style makes the picture look like a big abstract pattern. All the gold makes this woman seem like a goddess.

Type in the answers for these questions

Name 3 reasons gold is used in art:

Why?

How do they make Gold Leaf?

What happened to art with gold leaf in candlelit churches?

What effect does the gold have on the Golden Lady?

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