

# The Parkville Frame Gallery Newsletter

2025 Newsletter #25-1 (Jan/Feb)

Note: To see our latest “Top Picks” [Click Here](#)

Subject: **Gilding**

## Background

The medieval era, often called The Middle Ages, or the Dark Ages, began around 476 C.E. following the loss of power of the Roman Emperor throughout Europe. The Middle Ages spanned roughly 1,000 years, ending between 1400 and 1450. Notre-Dame de Chartres Cathedral, one of the world’s great Gothic cathedrals was constructed in France during the Middle Ages. Like many of the Gothic cathedrals, Chartres’ windows were limited in size and number because its walls had to be very thick to support the huge weight of the stone construction and an extremely heavy roof.



Like other great gothic cathedrals, there are windows in the Cathedral of Our Lady of Chartres, in fact Chartres Cathedral probably has the best display of stained glass windows of all the existing Gothic cathedrals, but even with those windows, the lack of modern-day electricity as we know it limited the available light inside those massive buildings. The interior of those buildings were lighted largely by candle light, and much of that illumination was light reflected off metallic surfaces.

[More Here](#)

During the time of the great cathedrals **gilding** was a process used to add a metallic surface to an object, a picture frame, for example. The metal of choice was usually genuine gold. Lacking electricity the light that was reflected off those gilded metal surfaces enhanced the available light in the interiors of those huge buildings.



[More Here](#)

In the cathedrals during the Middle Ages picture frames were often intricately hand-carved and gilded by highly skilled craftsmen. Any picture frame that will be gilded usually begins as unfinished wood. The wood is sanded smooth and then sealed somehow. The unfinished wood can be sealed with [gesso and bole](#). Gesso is essentially a “whiting-powder” mixed with an animal hide glue such as rabbit skin glue, with water added. Bole, is a clay-like substance, and is available in varying colors. The process of applying gesso and bole can become more complex, and other steps can be involved, however, suffice it to say that the raw wood first needs to be sealed, or primed somehow. Today oil-based primers in varying colors greatly simplify the process.

Once the wood has been sanded and sealed something called “size” is applied. Size begins as a liquid. As the liquid dries it becomes sticky, and then “tacky”. After proper timing, very thin metal “leaf”, such as genuine gold leaf as mentioned above, or imitation gold, silver, or copper leaf is carefully [“laid” onto the tacky surface of the wood](#) with a gilders-tip, basically a thin, wide brush. The leaf sticks immediately and permanently to the sized surface. Other steps such as burnishing, applying one or more topcoats, adding an antiquing effect, waxing, adding “dust of ages”, etc., completes the gilding process. I have described the primary steps that are typically used in the gilding process. A more complicated process, such as “water gilding” is sometimes involved.

Shown below are four photographs of a mid-1800’s frame that we repaired and gilded. The photographs show the frame during the gilding process. After a thick coat of white paint and sand was stripped off this frame we made some repairs (photo #1). Next we used a yellow primer (photo #2), followed by size, imitation gold leaf, and two applications of a topcoat (photo #3). Once finished (photo #4), this lovely frame became one of our Featured Frames during late summer 2024. The art shown in the frame is [By the Lily Pond](#) (1908) by the American impressionist painter Charles Courtney Curran.

We try to feature a variety of frames and finishes in the gallery to provide you with some of the many options that are available. We are always experimenting and learning new techniques. For example, we recently finished a frame that we gilded with something called “variegated” leaf—a new finish for us. You can see pictures of that frame on our website in the 2024 Nov/Dec Edition of our “Top Picks”. We encourage you to stop by the gallery to see our current Featured Frame.



#1



#2



#3



#4

# Gallery News

## **Parkville's *Fusion Art Gallery* Is Now Open**

The Parkville Frame Gallery is excited to announce that our new ***Fusion Art Gallery and Event Venue*** is now open for business. We will continue to provide our design and [framing services](#), our [Art Advisor Service](#), our popular Newsletter, our Top Picks selections, and our various other services, and we will remain in our current location, however, you can now enjoy our expanded space. Our research has shown that a fine art gallery is a much needed resource for the growing number of individuals in the Northland who have expressed an interest in fine art, and those who would like the experience of an intimate private event venue.

Our new Fusion Art Gallery will showcase the work of a growing number of [local artists](#) and their varied skill sets. The Fusion Art Gallery, located just a few short steps between two popular local restaurants will also offer a convenient event venue with an intimate gallery-setting for group events such as important family get-togethers, business meetings, art classes, art education and lectures, and other special occasions.

As we continue to move forward we will continue to offer top-tier *Giclée* reproductions of fine art, ceramics, art glass, jewelry, sculpture, and other works of art. The addition of more "original" art, professionally presented in a gallery setting, will give you a wider selection of artwork for your home or business. Please continue to follow us on your favorite social media platform, and please, tell your friends and business associates about us. Together, let's create something special.

*Enjoy fine art--well framed*



[Jason Fewin](#)

**Owner and Operator**

**You are cordially invited to visit  
The Parkville Frame Gallery  
and**



**Fine Art Gallery**

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