

## Enameling Hints from Enamelists

### Kilns:

Warm the shelves to about 150°F before applying kiln wash. This helps the kiln wash flow on and speeds up the drying. (Paragon Kilns)

### Trivet Identification:

To mark your trivet in a class situation, write your name or initials on it with a pen that has white ink colored with titanium. It will hold up under the heat of the kiln. Sharpie "Meanstreak" and Sharpie "Poster-paint" pens are two such pens. (Bill Helwig, Coral Shaffer)

### Storing Enamels:

Vitreous enamels start to deteriorate as soon as they become wet so it is a good idea to wash only the amount that you think you will be using that day. The enamels deteriorate at different rates, some will not be harmed for weeks but others can be in days. It may be helpful to screen your enamel with a 200 mesh screen and keep the grains that pass through the screen, a.k.a. the fines, in one jar and the larger than 200 mesh grains, the ones that did not pass through the sieve in another jar. That way the larger grains will need little or no washing when you are ready to use them. (Coral Shaffer)

### Drying Enamels:

Put wet enamels in glass pie plates or some on non-metallic surface and dry them in a food dehydrator. (Karla Maxwell)

### Sifting:

Add 2 drops of Dawn dishwashing liquid to Klyr-Fire. It will wet the surface as you spray or brush it on and therefore spread more evenly. (Jean Tudor)

Attach the handle of an inexpensive electric toothbrush to your sifter. It will vibrate and do the sifting for you. (Steve Artz)

Keep small findings' holes from filling up with enamel by applying the holding agent and then inserting sequin pins (small straight pins) into the holes, and sifting. Hover a magnet over the area where the pin is and it will pull it out leaving the hole clear. (Coral Shaffer)

### Pickling:

Cover the bottom of your pickle container with marbles. That makes it easier to retrieve flat pieces. (Karla Maxwell)

Put Small pieces in a plastic berry basket in the pickle. (Coral Shaffer)

### Grinding Enamel:

Cover the back and front of a popsicle stick with double sided foam tape. Cut sand paper, micro abrasive paper etc. to size and adhere it to the tape. This makes a good, small sanding tool. (Linda Darty)

### Polishing:

To polish small pieces use plastic chair glides with a nail, attach a piece of thick felt to the flat surface. These can both be found at hardware stores. (Karla Maxwell)

### Renaissance Wax:

Warm the piece before applying the wax to make it easier to spread and then cool it before buffing. (Judith Hoffman)

### Enamel Samples:

If you can find pre-1981 copper pennies, which are mostly copper, fire the enamel onto them and store the samples in a convenient coin collectors book for pennies. (Jean Vormelker)

#### Liquid Based Enamel aka porcelain enamel:

Drying too hot or too quickly can lead to defects in the enamel. It can be dried in an oven at 300°F. (Woodrow Carpenter)

#### Painting Enamels:

Acrylic painting enamels are best used on white porcelain enamel coated steel. If used on copper, the copper should be thinner than 18 ga. or the acrylic enamel will craze. (Tom Ellis)

#### Fine Lines:

Use a pilot Razor Point felt tip pen to draw the lines and immediately sift a coat of 200 mesh opaque enamel over the lines. Tap off the excess enamel and sift on a thin coat of overcoat flux. The ink fires away completely. (Enamel Guild South)

#### Special Effects:

File a piece of fine silver with a coarse file and sprinkle the filings over a medium or dark colored enamel before firing. Fire unto "just fused". Then sift a thin coat of 200 mesh silver flux over the top and fire again. (Audrey Komrad)

Take your enamel piece out of a hot kiln (1660° F.) and turn it over on its face on a clean steel surface, a luster or "mirror" surface will occur due to the oxygen reduced atmosphere. (Bill Helwig)

#### Adding Sparkle:

Make glitter for enameling by adding bits of silver foil to water in a blender. Blenderize. Pour the contents through a sieve and dump the "glitter" on to a towel to dry. Sift onto enamel and fire. (Coral Shaffer)

Make gold or silver balls from coiled ends of cloisonné wire or wadded up foil and apply the heat from a torch. The metal will naturally form balls as it melts. (Coral Shaffer)

Thick silver foil between sheets of paper can be punched with paper punches and the punched shapes attached with a thin coat of petroleum jelly spread thinly onto a fired enamel surface. (Coral Shaffer)

#### Using Stencils:

Stencils can be made out of many materials but two of my favorites are Frisket Paper and frosted mylar, the latter sprayed with a temporary adhesive. The tackiness of these holds them firmly to the fired enamel so that the applied enamel does not seep under the stencil. (Coral Shaffer)

#### Raku:

Enamels with copper, manganese or iron oxides make good raku enamels. In the Ninomiya brand that includes N51 and N52, L91 and L92, and L33. (Shuzo Ninomiya)

#### Cloisonné:

To fill a cell with foil under the enamel, fire the wires in place first, place a piece of tracing paper over the cloison and rub with a soft pencil to get the shape. Use this as the pattern for cutting out the foil. (Merry-Lee Rae)

Cut the wires with fingernail clippers instead of scissors. It makes a straighter, cleaner cut. (James Carter)

#### Plique-a-Jour:

To test transparent color values for a future plique-a-jour piece, fire mounds of the enamels on a sheet of muscovite (clear mica) to see how the color will look without metal under it. (Coral Shaffer)