



Left: This French Matting design was created by using 4 mm wide gold leaf strips and 18 mm wide marbled paper strips, adhered to the matboard with glue, between the drawn lines.

# Mat Decoration with Marbled Paper

by Jodie Prymke CGF



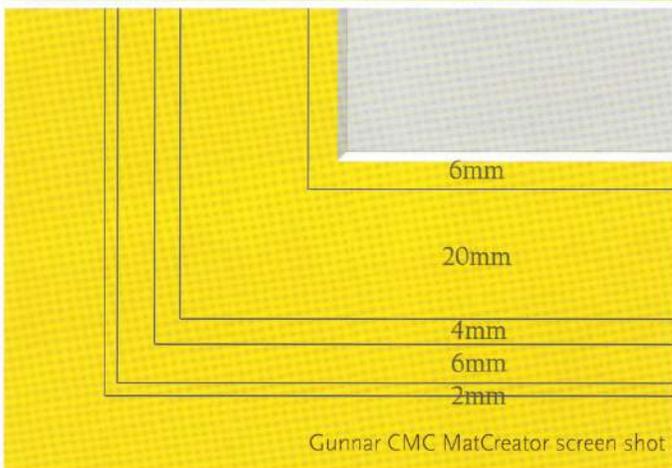
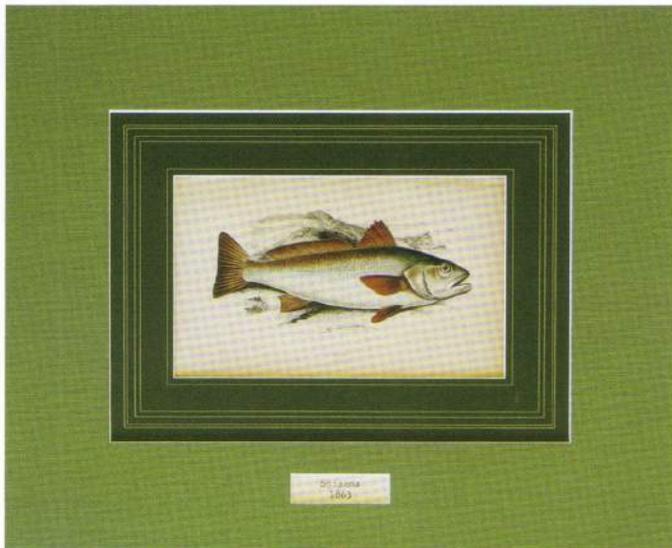
Marbled paper from [www.papermojo.com](http://www.papermojo.com)

## Introduction

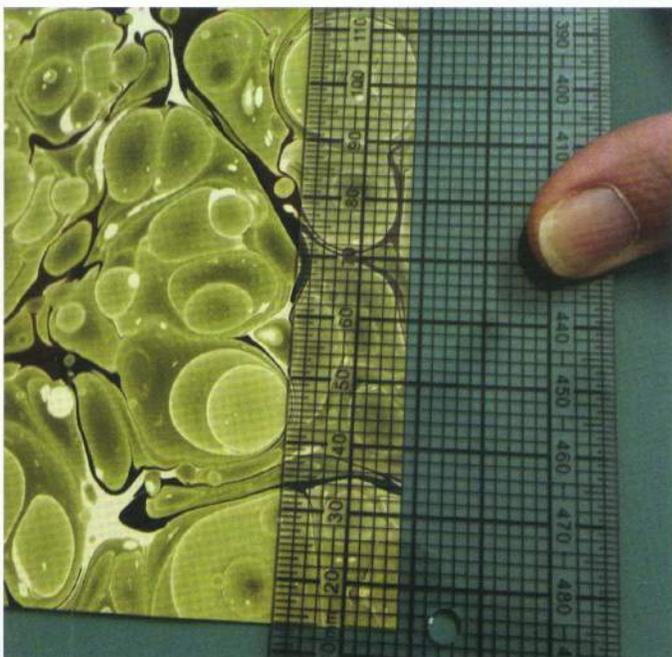
Mat Decoration with Marbled Paper is an easy and modern alternative to traditional French Matting. French Matting is an ancient technique using pale watercolour wash panels and drawn ink lines around the perimeter of a matted piece of art. The lines and panels around the image draw the eye inward, repeating the delicacy and contrasts of the artwork.

Being a one-person framing operation, I didn't have the time (or the patience!) to master traditional French Matting, so I created a quick and easy solution to still achieve beautiful and unique designs for my clients.

On the following pages you will find the simple steps I follow to create these designs using materials, tools and techniques that are accessible to all framers.



Gunnar CMC MatCreator screen shot



14 PROFILE

## Step One: The Drawn Lines

# 1

I use a Gunnar CMC with a Pen Tool, but your lines can be drawn by hand also.

The pens I like to use are Uniball Posca Markers PC-1MR 0.7mm. They are a paint pen, and give a great, smooth solid colour. I've used gold in the example.

**TIP:** If your matboard is dark, go around twice with the pen to achieve a more solid coloured line.

The spacing I've used on this example is as follows. From the cut line, draw five lines:

- + 6mm
- + 20mm (the 18mm marbled paper goes between these two)
- + 4mm
- + 6mm (the 4mm gold band goes between these two)
- + 2mm

## Step Two: The Marbled Paper

# 2

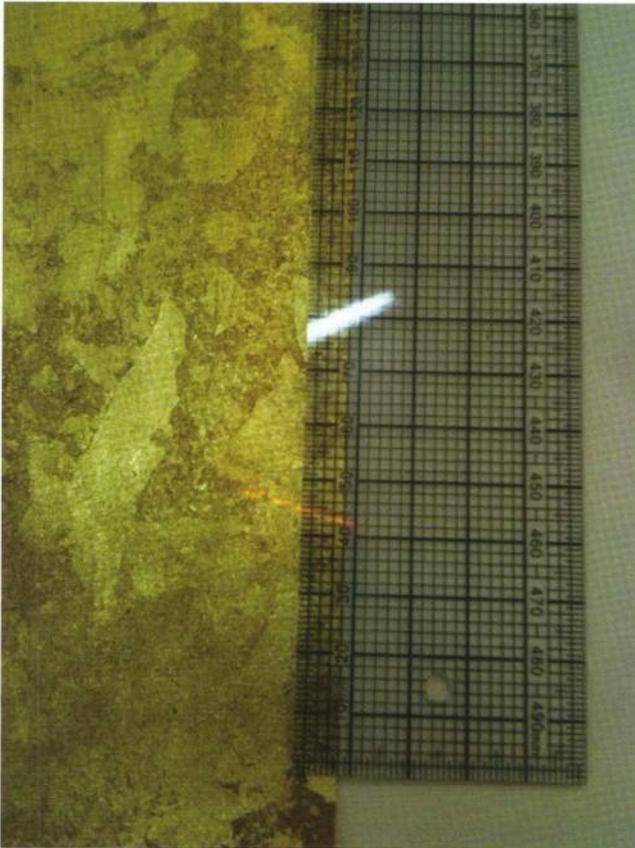
Most of my marbled paper comes from [www.papermojo.com](http://www.papermojo.com). They have gorgeous, "real" marbled papers and even some beautiful limited editions.

The marbled paper for this example is cut into 18mm wide strips.

I use a quilter's ruler as a guide (see photo left).

**TIP:** Use some heavy weights to hold the paper in place while you're cutting it.

Left: The marbled paper for this example is cut into 18mm wide strips using a quilter's ruler as a guide.



Above: Photographed here are handmade gold, bronze and copper leaf papers.

# 3

## Step Three: The Gold Leaf Band

The gold leaf band starts as gold leaf paper, and it's very easy to make. Start with a piece of brown Kraft paper, approximately 30cm wide x 60cm long.

Brush on acrylic quick gold size - I use a big brush 1". Work quickly, but evenly, and ensure the gold size is not too thick. Paint a section of about 15cm x 50cm, but longer if you need longer strips.

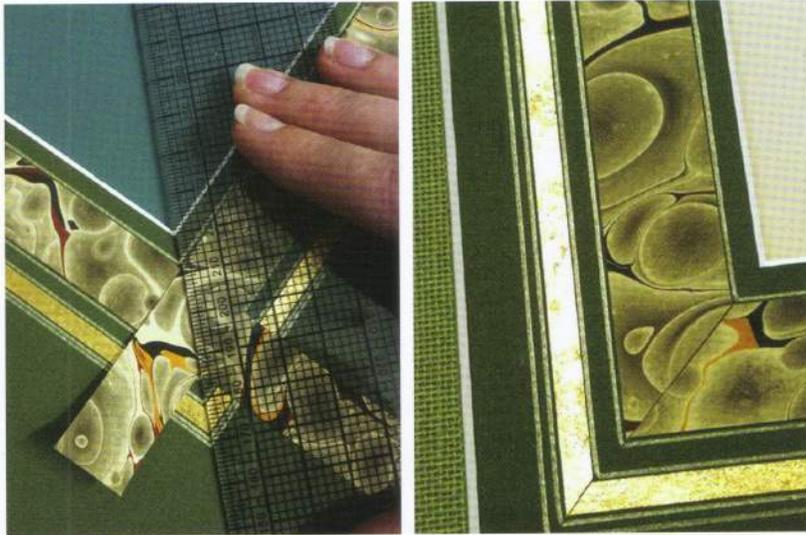
The secret with all gilding (so the gold leaf doesn't go "mushy") is to WAIT...you have to wait until the size is just tacky, 5 - 10 minutes will do with quick size, depending on the room temperature.

Apply the sheets or offcuts of gold leaf (silver, bronze and copper look good also). PRESS it into place with a cotton wool ball, don't rub, and then leave it overnight to dry.

The next day, brush off the excess leaf and apply a thin layer of shellac - blonde shellac if you don't want to add colour, yellow shellac is great for imitation gold leaf - it makes it look like 23k gold!

Once the shellac is dry, say one hour, you can cut the gold leaf paper into strips. In the example, the gold leaf strips are cut 4mm wide.

**TIP:** For a more conservation quality gold leaf paper, use 1 ply cotton rag barrier paper.



## Step Four: Completion

# 4

Adhere the 4mm wide gold leaf strips and the 18mm wide marbled paper strips to the matboard, in between the drawn lines, using an acid-free glue stick, and then trim the corners diagonally.

And that's all there is to it!

The great thing about this technique is that you are not only limited to antique prints and etchings, but it can also be applied to modern works on paper – all the while adding value to your clients' artworks. ■



## About the Author

Jodie Prymke CGF is Adelaide's only PFGA Accredited Certified Guild Framer and qualified designer. She has 28 years of design experience, and has been in the picture framing industry since 1996. Jodie is a Member of the Picture Framer's Guild of Australia and the Professional Picture Framer's Association. Her boutique gallery in North Adelaide specializes in unique frame designs, archival quality framing and restoration: [www.fineartframing.com.au](http://www.fineartframing.com.au)

To view more examples of Jodie's French Matting designs you can find them online:

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