

(Ebook pdf) Gold: A Book and Kit

## Gold: A Book and Kit

Metropolitan Museum of Art

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**Metropolitan Museum of Art : Gold: A Book and Kit** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Gold: A Book and Kit:

More than 60 masterpieces in gold from the collections of The Metropolitan Museum of Art illustrate the techniques and achievements of 5,000 years of craftsmanship. The kit provides full instructions and materials to make ten projects inspired by the Museum's works of art: jewelry, a mask, a fan, a picture frame, coins, and an illuminated letter.

Excerpt. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved. Chapter 1 THE MOST WORKABLE METAL IN THE WORLD Throughout history, gold has always had the power to dazzle: It is beautiful, luminous, and rare. The first people who plucked a nugget of gold from a riverbed must have thought it was a piece of the sun that had fallen to earth. Indeed, the people of many cultures believed that gold was related to the sun and fire, and they made it the symbol of their most powerful gods. From the earliest civilizations to the present, gold has inspired artists and craftsmen to test their skills and ingenuity to the fullest in making marvelous objects to place on altars, adorn kings,

reward greatness, profess love, or simply to amuse. Gold can take an endless number of forms because of its malleability. Compared to other metals it is relatively soft, which helps to make it the most workable metal in the world. Goldsmiths can stretch it, roll it, pound it, mold it, and bend it into any shape they choose. It can be woven to make cloth or beaten to make sheets only five millionths of an inch thick. Gold is virtually ready to be worked when it is found in riverbeds or in veins in rock -- it does not even have to be heated. In its native state, gold is a natural alloy, or blend of metals, mixed with some silver, perhaps a little copper, and sometimes traces of other metals. Although native gold is rarely used today, it was commonly used in ancient goldwork. To make gold harder, or to vary its color, then as now, it was deliberately alloyed with other metals, such as copper and silver. Alternatively, gold can be refined -- separated from other metals -- to make pure gold. Refining was practiced between 3000 and 2000 B.C., but it became more common as the minting of coins grew increasingly widespread in the sixth century B.C. Goldsmiths no longer have to do their own refining or make their own gold leaf or wire. But many of the techniques developed thousands of years ago are still in use today, and gold continues to inspire works that dazzle. Copyright 1998 by the Metropolitan Museum of Art