

# Forest Floor Amanda House

## Making a mixed-media fabric

Growing up on the edge of the New Forest, I loved exploring the area and seeing the treasures I could find.

I first worked on the technique explained in this workshop when I wanted to stitch a piece using some skeleton leaves given to me.



Autumn is my favourite time of year and the leaves really belonged in a piece that spoke of the dying, drying leaves on the forest floor. Autumn Gold was born.

Editor's Note - Amo has made a two-part video for us to accompany this workshop - Part 1 is here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IHt4Gn1yVVc&feature=youtu.be> and Part 2, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P0hG3MF11rc&feature=youtu.be>

### Materials

S80 Craft Vilene  
Scrim, open weave and lace fabrics  
Skeleton leaves  
Tissue paper  
Textured yarn or string  
Matte Medium  
Gesso  
Acrylic paints  
Gilding Paste, Treasure Gold or the like.



Using the Matte Medium, paste down snippets of scrim, netting, lace and scrunched tissue down onto the Vilene along with a few of the skeleton leaves.

The Vilene is quite thirsty so make sure you paste both it and the things being pasted (below left) and do have a Teflon™ or non-stick craft sheet under your work.



The skeleton leaves have a pronounced rib on one side so try and make sure this is uppermost as it gives more texture (above right).

When you have covered a good proportion of the surface, put it aside to dry thoroughly.

You can see, right, that some eyelash yarn has been added as well.



Using a palette knife or an old credit card, lightly add the gesso over the surface. Think of this as the soil and dirt of the forest floor. It catches in plenty of nooks and crannies and acts to unify the elements added so far. Ensure that the surface is well-covered but not entirely coated.

When you have added just enough to add interest, leave to dry.



I used a variety of acrylic paints to colour the piece. Please bear basic colour theory in mind; if you use all the primary colours, you can often end up with mud! Try and stick with one colour family with a little of a complimentary colour. I have used yellow/browns with a little bronze thrown in and a green and turquoise. Mixing the burnt orange and green makes a stunning dark brown so the raw umber was hardly used at all.

Add the colours with a wet brush so they flow through the layers and merge quite naturally. Keep cleaning the brush out too or, again, you will make the colours muddy.



The gesso almost resists some of the colour to give another contrast and the paint flows and settles down into the layers.

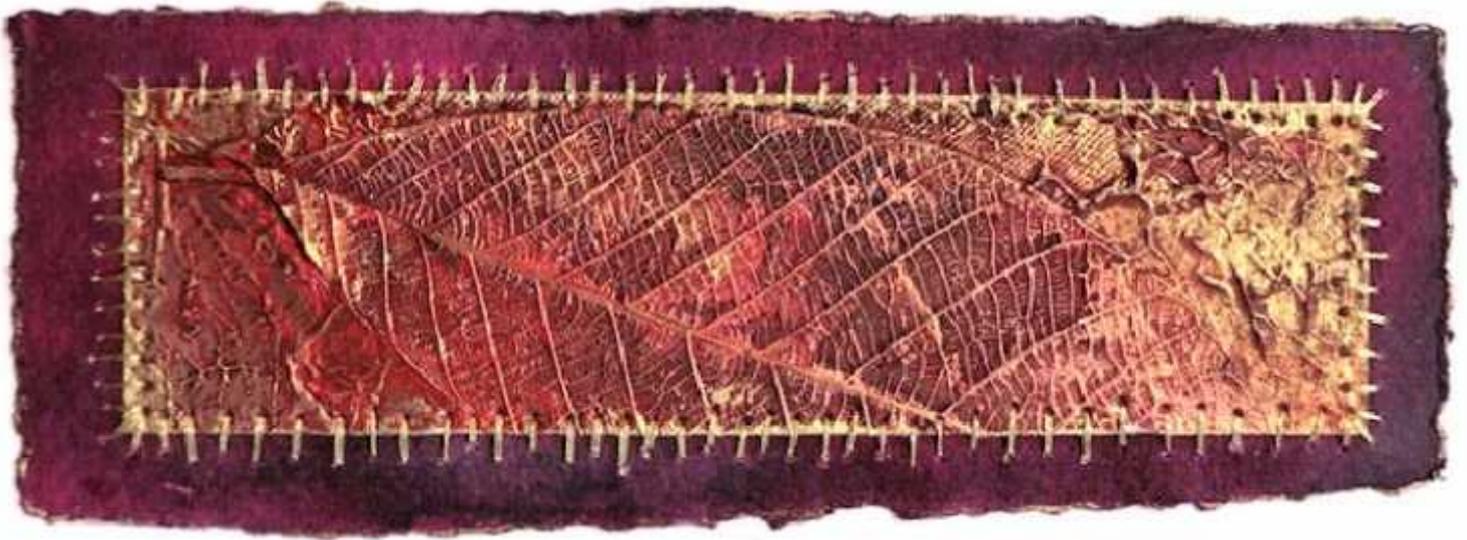


Once the piece is totally dry and you are happy with it, use some of the Treasure Gold or gilding paste to highlight some areas over the surface. Try not to be too heavy-handed. The pictures below show how lightly I've added the gold highlights (on the right). If your gold paste is very soft it pays to dab your finger in the lid before applying to even out the amount you are using. It is worth leaving the piece to dry for a day or so and allow the gold to cure before the next stage or it may rub off.



Your beautiful autumnal forest floor piece is now ready for you to stitch into and use as you please.

With this piece, below, I have roughly torn a piece of Khadi paper and coloured it before putting gold on the edges and sewing a piece of the surface to it. It was then glued to a card front.



I have added some stitch and beads to the next two pieces, before sewing to some hand-dyed wool felt. They will probably become book covers.



Finally, here are some actual books made using the leaf surface on the covers.



Amanda has a City & Guilds qualification in Creative Techniques - Textiles and is currently working on her Machine Embroidery with the Embroiderers Guild. She recently held her second Open Studios event (see News for more details).

You can find out more about Amanda on her website at [www.amanda-house.com](http://www.amanda-house.com)

Amanda is frequently found on the Workshop on the Web Members' Page, where she is the guardian of new discussions and information about what is going on with WoW and will always have tried out the techniques in the articles.

#### Suppliers

Gesso, acrylic paints, Lens Tissue, Matte Medium, Treasure Gold - Art Van Go [www.artvango.co.uk](http://www.artvango.co.uk)

Vilene S80 - Empress Mills [www.empressmills.co.uk](http://www.empressmills.co.uk)

Skeleton Leaves - Skeleton Leaf [www.skeleton-leaf.com](http://www.skeleton-leaf.com)

*USA and Canada*

Pellon Peltex #70 sew-in firm (closest match to Vilene S80) – check at Walmart [www.walmart.com](http://www.walmart.com) or [www.joann.com](http://www.joann.com)

Matte Medium and craft supplies from Dick Blick [www.dickblick.com](http://www.dickblick.com)

*Australia and New Zealand*

Pellon Peltex #70 sew-in firm (closest match to Vilene S80) - The Quilters Store [www.quiltersstore.com.au](http://www.quiltersstore.com.au)

Art supplies and mediums - Kraft Colour [www.kraftcolour.net.au](http://www.kraftcolour.net.au)