

Ernie's Putty Method for Lead Projects

This set of instructions for puttying will contain both the Traditional method as well as the method that I use. Before I begin the instructions let me first explain that there are two schools of thought about whether or not you need to clean the remaining flux from your solder joints before applying putty.

On the one hand you have those who say you must always clean with a neutralizer, in the opposing camp you have those who say you never have to clean the flux off if you are puttying.

I fall somewhere in the middle and feel that you don't have to clean the flux if you are using a mild one but if you use an aggressive flux then you must neutralize it.

Traditional method

There are two methods for applying putty in this method, if you apply it using your fingers it's used as it comes from the can-firm but you must knead it in your hands to warm and soften it. It can then be rolled into a rope laid along the came and pushed firmly under the edge of the came.

The second method to apply the putty is with a brush, if you choose to use this method you must thin the putty. I use boiled linseed oil. Some will tell you to use paint thinner and others will tell you to use raw linseed oil. All can be used but raw linseed oil slows the drying time and paint thinner speeds it up.

The thinned putty is pushed under the leaves of the came using a natural China bristle brush.

After you've done this to all the came on the first side you take a putty knife, hold the front edge against the glass with it at a slight tilt from the vertical and at a 45 degree angle to the came. The knife is drawn along all the edges of the came, this serves two purposes it pushes the putty in more firmly plus it removes some of the excess. This excess putty can be returned to the can.

The next step is to use a piece of burlap which is softly rubbed using a circular motion over the whole first side; this removes more of the excess putty and some of the oil.

Next you sprinkle whiting over the whole panel and using a circular motion with a clean natural bristle brush you start cleaning the whole first side. You repeat this adding more whiting until all the excess putty and oil are removed and the came has darkened.

Vacuum all the excess whiting up wait 15 minutes and repeat all the steps on the second side.

Wait 24 hours and then using a pointed dowel or wood fid you point all the came lines on both sides to remove the putty that will have squeezed out.

Using this method you'll have to clean everything in your shop that will be covered with whiting dust and make sure to wear a mask while using it, the whiting dust will contain minute particles of lead.

My Non Traditional Clean Method

I use a plastic putty knife to apply the putty so it's a soft putty method, you mix a little boiled linseed oil into the putty.

I just put a clump of putty next to each piece of came and then start working it in with the putty knife.

After all the putty is applied I use the same knife to remove the excess as described in the prior instructions.

This is where I start to really differ from the traditional.

I sprinkle whiting lightly over the whole first side.

You then take a one ft. Square of terry cloth and gently lay it over the whiting, place both hands with fingers spread atop the cloth and gently using a circular motion work the whiting into the putty.

Once this is done wait 15 minutes and then take your pointed dowel or wood fid and run it along all the came edges.

Using a shop vacuum with a Heppa filter and using a brush attachment vacuum up all the excess whiting and putty.

Then using a clean natural bristle brush you go over the whole panel first side to clean what little whiting and putty remains.

Wait 15 minutes and repeat to the second side.

Wait 24 hours point up both sides as done in the traditional method.

Explanation

I use the second method because it's cleaner, done right and no whiting nor lead is spread from atop the work bench plus you won't breath any either. It's both cleaner and safer especially to those whose studio is located within their homes. As an added bonus I find it faster too

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