Thompson lead-free Enamels

Thompson enamels currently manufactured are lead-free glass products. These products are described in terms of temperature and expansion to help you select a suitable enamel for your particular project.

The best way to select an enamel is to determine its properties in the following sequence:

1. *Fusing temperature*
2. *Fit or compatibility*
3. *Color*

They are available in various particle sizes. 80 mesh is the standard particle size available, unless otherwise specified. 80 mesh is glass ground to a particle size which is slightly finer than granular sugar. It is normally applied by sifting or wet packing.

80 mesh means there are 80 openings in a standard wire mesh screen per linear inch. 40 mesh means there are 40 openings in a standard wire mesh screen per linear inch. We suggest using a 40 mesh screen in our sifters to apply base coats of 80 mesh enamel to metal.

6/20 mesh enamels are particles that have a diameter of about 1/16" to 1/8". The 6/20 mesh enamels are ideal for bead making. Lump enamels are particles that range in size from 1/16" to 1" in diameter. These are unground, unscreened enamels sometimes referred to a "frit". A variety of painting and liquid enamels are also available.

Thompson Lead-free Enamel Color Numbering System

All Thompson lead-free enamel products are numbered into a practical coded numbering system which indicates enamel type and color. The thousands number refers to enamel type, while the hundreds number refers to the color and the final two digits indicate how light or dark the color is. Enamel type is either opaque or transparent. Opaque enamel numbers for copper, silver, gold or low carbon steel begin with a 1 while transparent enamel numbers begin with a 2.

An example is 1620 Daphne Blue. The 1 indicates that it is an opaque color for copper, silver, gold or low carbon steel. The 6 denotes a blue color while the last two digits, 20, indicates that the color is on the light side, since 20 is less than 50, the midpoint. On the color list, 1615 Atlantic Blue will be lighter and 1645 Harvest Blue will be darker than our chosen example color of 1620.

Thompson Lead-bearing Enamels

These vintage enamels are no longer manufactured and are lead bearing. If they have been stored dry, they are still useable. You should always make a test tile before using on a production piece just to make sure the color is still true. There is no organized

numbering system for Thompson leaded enamels. Some of the enamels have numbers in the 1000 range and should not be confused with the lead-free opaque enamels in the same numbering range.

Soyer Enamels

These are enamels are created in France by Cristallerie Saint-Paul. Sometimes you may hear these referred to as Bovano Enamels (they are no longer in business). These enamels contain lead. They come in 80 mesh only.