Kintsugi Ceramic Repair with CBTV Live

Chapter 1 - Chapter 1
Kintsugi
^(techno music) - Hey, everybody, welcome to Creativebug. We're coming at you live like we always do on Tuesdays and Thursdays, which means you can write in and ask us questions. I love all your questions. I sound a little bit froggy 'cause I'm coming out of a cold, hopefully, knock on wood. Feel free to ask questions. Hopefully I sound don't sound too sick. I have been thinking a lot about this technique that I'm gonna share with you today, which is called kintsugi. It means golden joinery or golden repair. It's a traditional Japanese technique for repairing ceramics, sort of like this. I think we're kind of moving away from fast objects and things that are disposable and really thinking and making choices about the things that we purchase and the things that we have in our homes. And a lot of us, I know from myself especially, I have a lot of items that have a lot of meaning to me, and when they break it's really sad. So instead of throwing things out or donating them, I thought I'd show you this technique for repairing them which highlights the imperfection, tells a little bit about the history of the object and kind of honors that history, and repairing it with gold leaf or gold to really illuminate the repair. So we're kind of switching our mindset about objects that are broken and giving them kind of a new life. So I have a plate here. This is a little vintage tea plate, and it broke, sadly, but it's still something that I can repair. And you can repair almost anything. You might need to do it in stages, depending on the shape of the object. If you have a figurine, you may wanna repair part of it and then repair the other part, depending on how many hands you have helping to hold everything together. Ceramic is a little bit tricky to repair, so you really have to think carefully about the type of adhesive you're gonna use. And I have two favorites. We're gonna use Gorilla Epoxy. That's actually my favorite, is a two-part epoxy. What's great about this is that it comes in this little syringe and you can actually just use a little bit at a time. You can also try using the original Gorilla Glue. This does get puffy, so if you want a more textural repair, then I would go with this. But the epoxy itself does not puff up as it dries. So we're gonna use this just because I like the look of it. When you take this right out of the package, you might have to clip the ends, depending on the brand that you're using. And there are two parts. I'm working on wax paper here. And I'm gonna try to carefully just squeeze out just a little bit, maybe about a quarter size. Pull back the syringe, 'cause it'll help the epoxy from continuing to flow. And then you wanna put the cap back on. If you have any epoxy around the outside of those little syringes, then just use a baby wipe to wipe it off. This particular epoxy and most of them will come with a little Popsicle stick. You definitely wanna be working on something that you can throw away, because this epoxy will set up, so the wax paper is great for this. If you're working on a really large project, you can actually use the little plastic packaging that the syringe comes in. So mix this until it's thoroughly mixed. It smells a little bit like the chemicals used to perm hair, if you ever did that like in the '90s. Smells kinda funny. You do wanna work in a ventilated area if you can. And you do have a short working time. You wanna read the package instructions for whatever epoxy that you're using. And you have to make sure it's carefully mixed, because it's the two parts that come together to make the epoxy set. So I think this one I'm working with has about a five minute working time. I'm just gonna use this little Popsicle stick to apply epoxy right into the broken edge. And you want a nice, even coating. If you have too much, then that will show as it dries. And if you have too little, then your pieces will fall apart and won't set up. So I have a pretty even and generous coat here. I'm gonna apply it to both sides of this

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main portion. Like I said, depending on what you're repairing, you may need to work in sections. So you might just mix up a little bit of epoxy and then glue a couple pieces together and let it sit overnight to harden and then come back and repair the rest of whatever your item is. That's what's great about the syringe of the epoxy, 'cause you can come back and use it again. So I'm just checking and making sure that everything is on there. You can see that I have epoxy on the back. If you wanna take a baby wipe, you can gently wipe away the back. But you wanna make sure not to wipe away all of your epoxy. Know that you have that option, but just be careful that you don't wipe everything away. All right, so we're gonna start by just gluing on this piece here. And you do have to hold things until they set up. So give this just a minute. Now, I've applied glue to this side, but I don't have glue on this piece that I just adjoined, so with our third remaining piece, I'm also gonna apply glue or epoxy to both sides. Where the ceramic has cracked and broken, it's porous. It has a chalky consistency. Obviously the part on the inside had been hard-fired and has a glossy surface, but this side where the crack is is much more porous, so you just wanna make sure that you're thorough with your application. - We have our first question. - Yeah. - [Allie] Jennifer is asking, "What type of ventilation do you need for this?" - Jennifer is asking about the ventilation. So it is a little smelly. It's not anything more smelly than like a nail polish remover. I would just recommend working where you're near an open window. If you are doing a much larger project, if you're mixing up a lot of epoxy, you could do something like work in your backyard or in your garage with the door open. Good question. So I do have to hold this for about a minute. It needs much longer than that to set up. I think it's usually about a five full minutes until it starts to gel and then about 24 hours before it's fully set. You also wanna be careful to read the instructions. I personally would not do anything that you're gonna be eating like soup out of or anything super wet, so this is more for decoration, as opposed to something that needs to be food-safe. You could do this repair, though, on the edges of things that are used for food, like just for little chips or cracks. All right, so there are a couple of tricks once I'm at this stage where I'm kind of holding everything together. I actually like to use a little bit of washi tape to create some tension. It won't stick to my object and it won't stick to the epoxy either. And that will kind of act like my fingers are and hold everything in place. So I have a little bit of washi tape here. I would not recommend using a painter's tape. It's a little bit too heavy-duty. And I'm just going over the lip of one side of my plate. And then with a little bit of tension to kind of hold everything in place, I'm just gonna place maybe three pieces of washi tape onto my plate. - [Allie] Our next question is also from Jennifer, and she's wondering, "Can you do this prior to firing?" - Oh, interesting. Jennifer's asking, "Can you do this prior to firing?" I'm not a ceramicist, so I don't know all the ins and outs depending on the clay that you're working with and what the firing temperature is. You have to check the epoxy to see kind of what its limitations are. I'm gonna guess that in a firing situation, the epoxy could damage the rest of your pieces or damage the rest of what's in your kiln. I'm not a ceramicist, so I don't have a great master answer for that, but there might be something else that works better on greenware, which is what you're talking about. We should ask Linda Fahey, 'cause I'm not sure. All right, my other second trick for this, these are great questions, though, so keep them coming, is nestling this in a little bit of rice. So, I have a plate here with some rice just kind of laid in the middle, and I'm just gonna gently kinda place the rice around. If there is any epoxy on the bottom, the rice might stick to it, but you can just kinda pry it off after it's set, so check it after a couple of hours. So this is gonna set up. I wanna remove all my epoxy and get this out of here, because this stuff is sticky. You also wanna be careful of your hands. That's why I have the baby wipes. The epoxy is sort of oil-based, so you wanna give your hands a nice, good clean scrubbing with soap. You might be wondering why I'm not using Super Glue, and I

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actually don't really love Super Glue. Maybe it's like hot glue, and someday I'll find a Super Glue that I absolutely love, but right now I don't love it, and it also sticks to your fingers and causes them to stick together. The epoxy is a little bit more gentle than that and has some more working room, so I think epoxy is the way to go for this kind of a project. Remember, I think I mentioned in the beginning that kintsugi is traditionally done with lacquer and gold leaf dust, which adds to the value of the piece one it's been repaired. We're not doing that, that's a much longer and really expensive process, so we're doing our own version of kintsugi that kind of holds the same principles and honors the history of the object. So this is a plate that I've already repaired. You can see on the back it's really obvious where the cracks are. It's been glued. This piece is actually from Japan, which is just kind of a funny incident. This is from one of my china sets. But the front, you really can't see the repair too much, but we're gonna highlight it. That's the point of kintsugi. And you have a couple of options for that. My two favorites are actual gold leaf and using Liquid Leaf, which is what I'm gonna use today. But I just wanted to show you the gold leaf, because we do have a live shoot where I show you how to do gold leaf. This is what gold leaf looks like. These are fine hammered sheets of imitation gold that can be used to repair something, and it needs to be used with adhesive sizing. So those go together, and Allie's gonna post a link to the actual gold leaf tutorial. I'm instead gonna use something called Liquid Leaf, which looks like this. The color I'm using is called classic gold. You wanna give it a shake. And this also is an oil-based product, so you need to use it with a paintbrush that is not super special or expensive, because you need to wash this out immediately, and it can kinda damage the bristles. So, just like when you're gluing something, you would wanna use a brush that's kind of meant for this purpose. And we're gonna just literally paint over our cracks where our epoxy has set to highlight the repair and, like I said, honor the history of this piece. So I'm carefully... The thing that's awesome about the Liquid Leaf, I mean, it would be hard-pressed to find an acrylic paint that has this much kind of vibrance and saturation in the way that the Liquid Leafing does. It is as spot-on as the actual gold leaf. I think this would be definitely my preference. Looks fabulous with this blue and white plate. Now, you could use an oil-based gold pen, but I just love hand-painting it. I think, just because I am a painter and because I love the tradition, this is my preference. But if you wanna try the marker, you totally could. An oil-based gold leaf marker would work. You could also play with using silver or copper leafing, and Liquid Leaf come in that as well. And I think traditionally in Japan, gold is used, but also platinum, because that's even more expensive (laughs) than gold. The concept is that you're really adding value in repairing this object. It's just so beautiful. This is the part that seems the most meditative. It's like be quiet and paint. Now, obviously, the piece that I repaired and the piece I'm painting now broke in two, a tidy three pieces, which was very lucky. You can absolutely do this with more pieces. Like I said, you may need to repair it in parts, so just a section at a time until the whole thing is set, and then you can go ahead and paint it at one point. So I'm on my final seam. I think this would be just a really nice technique for anything that you treasure and value and love and wanna keep in your life. It's kind of just figuring out a way to repair it. Maybe this gets retired and is no longer used in my tea service, but it can go on the wall. Just look how pretty that is. You can see that metallic gold. The Liquid Leaf, I think, takes 24 hours to set up as well. So whatever products that you're using, make sure you carefully read the packaging. If you're using a two-part epoxy, that's gonna have its own set directions. Same thing with the Liquid Leaf or the gold leaf. If you're using gold leaf, the adhesive is what has to set up, and the gold leaf is ready to go right away. So this, you wanna make sure nothing goes into that plate, you don't touch it, because it is damp. This guy is gonna sit overnight, and then I can remove the washi tape and repair with gold as well. Do we have any other questions

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about the technique? - [Allie] We do. We have a couple of questions. The first comes from Elise, and she's asking, "Are you gonna paint the back as well?" - That's an excellent question. Elise is asking would I paint the back, and I would once this dries. Actually, I really love the backs of things. I love the back of frames, and I love the backs of old photos, because that's where people write kind of the memory. So the back of this is also really special, but I'm gonna wait until the front is set up to do that. And then you wanna make sure that you pay special attention to the edges as well when you're going onto the back so that everything is covered. And that's a personal choice. You can decide to do that. You could also just maybe write about the repair. I have a friend who, she was kind of estranged from her mother, but when her mother died she inherited a lot of her furniture, and she didn't know the stories behind them, but she started to discover these little notes that were tucked inside that said where her mother had acquired the piece. So that really connected her with her mom, kind of postmortem. And I think writing the story of maybe how this broke or what it served as a purpose in your life could be really interesting too. It just depends on how far you wanna take the concept. But I think they're so beautiful, and looking back at objects to kind of take up more space in our home and have kind of a longevity and get passed down to our children. I think this is kind of an important technique to think about, just like the slow fashion movement. You can do it to your ceramics too. - [Allie] All right, next question comes from Nicole, and she's wondering if you can add the gold leaf to the epoxy itself so that when you're squeezing it out, you're squeezing out a gold leaf epoxy. - Nicole is asking, "Can you add the gold leaf to the epoxy itself?" I would say no, and the reason is the epoxy has to be mixed for it to activate. So, we would have to mix it up into a little container like I did or on the wax paper. And then the materials in this, they're oil-based, but they also have xylene and other things that kind of break down or can cause the epoxy to deteriorate if it's mixed at the same time. So I think, one, you probably would not get an epoxy that set up quite as well, because you might have some conflicting components, and, second, because you'd mixed it into the glue, you would not get that same metallic finish. If you've ever used glitter, for example, and you kind of have painted over it or mixed it with glue or something and it wasn't meant to do that, you kind of lose the reflectiveness of the glitter. So the same thing would happen with this. It's a great idea to kind of save your steps, but I think really kind of taking a moment to slow down and be with the piece, repair it, and then paint it is kind of part of the process. So I think it's a little bit about slowing down. But maybe you'll have some other thing that you really like. Maybe if you had a water-based ceramic adhesive that might work, I don't know how strong they are. I think the epoxy really does the job for longevity. But you might be able to find something that would work for that. Good question. - [Allie] And before we answer our next question-- - Yes. - Can you tell folks at home about our one-month offer? - Yeah! If you need to get any of your supplies or if you are new to Creativebug, I mentioned that gold leaf tutorial that we taught before. We do these live shoots every Tuesdays and Thursdays. That's in addition to our thousands of classes on Creativebug. You can use the code JOANN1 to get one month free of Creativebug, and you get a 30% off coupon. So if you need to stock up on your gold leaf or your Liquid Leaf, now is the time to do it using that coupon. Sorry, Allie is going to post the link. I almost said Liana. - Almost, that's okay. - Yeah. - [Allie] All right, and next question comes from Jennifer, who is asking, "Can you use this for smaller pieces?" - Yeah, Jennifer is asking, "Can you do this on smaller pieces?" Absolutely, I have this really tiny little, I think it's like a soy sauce dish. But I just really loved it; I thought it was so sweet. I put my teabag in it. And it also broke, so I did the same kind of repair. You could do it on a small figurine, like if the hand broke off of something or you have just a tiny little chip. Maybe you don't even have the piece anymore, but if you just have a chip, you

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can just kind of skip the epoxy section and just go with your gold leaf paint and paint it to kind of highlight the imperfection. That's kind of the idea. Maybe take a second look at some of the items in your home that need a little bit of attention and repair, and you can apply this gold leaf. I knew a woman who was a photographer who did this with scars on the body, and it was such a beautiful photo project and really kind of made me rethink about what we consider broken and what we consider repaired. So it's kind of both the practice, but also the philosophy that you're bringing to your piece and to your home. Are those all of our questions? - [Allie] Those are, but I have a question. - [Courtney] And Allie has a question. - [Allie] My question is, how big does the actual broken piece need to be? Sometimes ceramics shatter into three pieces, and sometimes it's a million pieces. - Yeah, Allie has a great question. So what happens if you don't have something that's a tidy little broken piece? And I was kind of alluding to this earlier. If you have a lot of pieces, you may wanna work in small sections. So if this had maybe, let's say, this portion of this plate or this portion of this plate had broken in many, many pieces, I might just work on that section. Mix a small amount of epoxy and attach all of those little pieces and let it completely dry. And then one that little piece is done, then move on to my next piece. So you might need to work a little bit slower. That's the great thing about the epoxy that comes in the syringe, because I opened this last week, and it's no problem. I have one at my house that I opened six months ago, and it still works. As long as you cap it and you keep the little nozzle clean, then you can use this over and over and over. So don't be daunted by a larger project, because you can work in small pieces and kind of bring the piece together and back to life. - [Allie] All right, and we have one more. It's a hybrid question from two folks who are just arriving with us, so they need to catch up. Can you explain again what kintsugi is? - For anyone just joining us, welcome. We're at the tail-end of our live shoot. We always do this on Tuesdays and Thursdays. And I just finished showing kintsugi, which is a Japanese repair technique. It means golden joinery. And the concept was there's this kind of lore about how it started that this kind of very, like 500 years ago, an emperor had a piece, a tea ceremony piece of pottery that he sent back to China for repair, and it came back with staples. If you've ever gone to a museum and seen things repaired, they have these kind of staples that they repair ceramics with. And apparently the Japanese aesthetic was like, that won't do, we need to come up with something more beautiful. I don't know how true this story is. It might be slightly apocryphal. But from there, this process was born. So, using lacquer and gold dust, which is very valuable, these repairs were highlighted to kind of show and honor the history of the piece and also in using the gold leaf made the piece more valuable, and so people were not throwing things away. They were repairing them and then kind of honoring the tradition. And I like this concept. We're not using the lacquer and the gold leaf because it's a little bit pricey and hard to do. Instead, we're using a two-part epoxy and a Liquid Leaf so that we can kind of bring this into the modern era and use it in the time and space that we have here. - Last question. - Last question. (laughs) - [Allie] Comes from Phil. - Hi, Phil! - [Allie] And Phil is wondering, "Will this work on glass?" - Phil's asking, "Will this work on glass?" And the answer is yes. With glass, you're working with something that's transparent, so you're gonna get a different kind of feel. The epoxy will still work. If you're not using the Gorilla Epoxy, you need to just make sure that your epoxy will work on glass. And then you can use the Liquid Leaf, but you may need to do more than one application because you have both sides 'cause glass is transparent, unless it's milk glass. So, yeah, absolutely, you can try glass. And if you have, post it in your Creativebug gallery. I know that Phil is always here with his great questions and on our site as well, so thank you for joining us. Thank you, everyone, for your great questions. We'll see you on Thursday for our next live shoot. ^(techno music)

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