

Hazrah handpainted bronze thimbles from Mauritius

I have rarely acted on impulse when deciding on a new thimble topic before. Earlier this month, whilst browsing thru the set of Friedy Kamp's *Vingerhoed nieuws* from the Netherlands, I came across brightly coloured thimbles that I had never seen before. They were described as handcrafted and handpainted in bronze – from Mauritius. They were obviously modern. I noticed that two names were used in the thimble descriptions. They were Hazrah and Saffina [sic]. The hunt for more information was on!

I am South African born, tho I have lived in Australia since 1988. I have never been to Mauritius, but it is a favourite island destination for Southern Africans. Situated in the Indian Ocean off the east African east coast, even east of Madagascar, it is a tropical island paradise. I noticed that some of the thimbles' images used were promoting the island's rich natural fauna and flora.

Hazrah Souvenir Casting Limited

In roughly 1990, they began to produce highly-detailed gold and silver handpainted jewellery and bronze miniatures. Thimbles were added to their line at a later date – into the twenty-first century.



miniatures: two dachshund playing billiards – sewing dog

Friedy Kamp first introduced these thimbles in the 2006-3 club newsletter. Here the makers were identified as three sisters from Port Louis, Mauritius with the brand name listed as Hazrah. Their thimbles last appeared in the 2009-1 issue.

The Thimble Guild (TTG) added Hazrah thimbles to their catalogue from June 2006-July 2008, describing them as souvenirs of Mauritius.

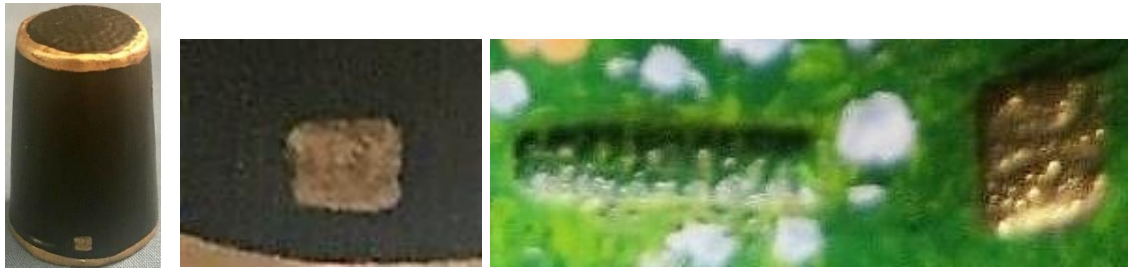
The thimbles are handcast using the 'lost wax' method. Each piece is protected by a coating or primer before applying other layers of paint. This primer is not visible once the thimble is complete.

Using fine brushes, each thimble is then handpainted. Like all handpainted items, no two can be the same – tones and expressions etc may differ. The thimbles are painted with many variously coloured backgrounds. Some thimbles have background scenes showing countryside or mountains, to suit the topic. The topic is in 3D or in relief, standing proud from the surface. The thimbles are painted on the inside and this paint colour matches the background colouring of each design: sand colour for deserts etc.

I was curious to the weight of these bronze thimbles. The average weight is 22 grams, according to the makers. A good solid weight.

From observation there are two types of apex: a flat one, often with a handpainted edge – and a highly domed apex with distinctive indentations. The thimbles are distinctive in that they are brightly coloured – many have a gold-painted apex and an interesting trellis-like edging to the rim – often in gold as well.

There is a maker's mark impressed on the verso. In 2006 Kamp advertised that they were marked with a gold 'H'. From Hazrah: "The H is in a gold square representing H for Hazrah, their registered mark under the Intellectual Property Act of 2002". MAURITIUS is sometimes stamped alongside the maker's mark.



Hazrah H mark


Who are these sisters? Safinah, Mariam and Sarah (sometimes named as Samarah by TTG) are the talented artists behind this successful enterprise. The women were trained in their art in Germany and Austria. The name Hazrah is their mother's name. Hazrah, a professional in hand embroidery and canvas work, inspired her daughters. The girls grew up surrounded by all the myriad tools needed to be an embroiderer and their mother instilled her love of all things around them in their daily lives on Mauritius.

In 2000 they named their studio Hazrah after their mother – to honour and pay homage to their inspirational mother.

I found their website at <https://souvenircastingltd.wordpress.com/>
New thimbles are being added as they are still producing thimbles today and they are sold on ebay (follow their link). Current prices are US\$75.

Hazrah name their thimbles '... on my thimble'. The names allocated in this way, below, are those that come from their 2021 website. The thimbles are not named unless shown in quotation marks.

Hazrah thimbles

 <p>'a truly Christmassy keepsake thimble' gold-painted domed apex raised, squared rim</p>	 <p>'albino rat on my thimble' flowers painted around thimble</p>
 <p>anthurium L: rim of gold circles – white ground (Kamp 2007-2) R: rainbow ground – 'orchids' (TTG September 2006)</p>	 <p>Arabian gemsbok domed apex (Kamp 2008-3 name)</p>



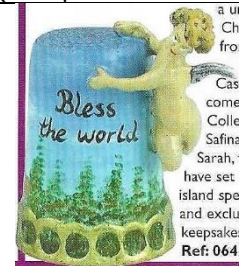
'baby tiger on my thimble'
rim of green circles



baobab
gold-painted domed apex
(Kamp 2008-2 name)



'black swan on my thimble'
rim of gold circles
pastel lake and trees scenes painted around
thimble



"Bless the world"
with angel for Christmas 2006
rim of gold circles



'bridal rose on my thimble'
gold-painted apex
rim of gold circles
R: Kamp 2008-2



'butterfly in winter on my thimble'
R: Kamp 2008-2



'butterfly near hillside on my thimble'
R: different colour ground TTG May 2007



'butterfly near seaside on my thimble'



buzzard pair on a branch
gold-painted apex
(Kamp 2007-1 name)



'camel in the oasis on my thimble'
with palms
H mark on verso
R: TTG September 2009



'chicken in garden on my thimble'
gold-painted domed apex
raised, squared rim



'chicken sitting on straw on my thimble'
rim of grey circles



'Christmas in winter on my thimble'
raised, squared rim
painted by **Safinah**

L: blue band with glittery apex with no scenery TTG 2006
C/R: Kamp 2008-4



'Christmas shoe on my thimble'
hearts
raised, squared rim



'cockerel straw on my thimble'
rim of green circles



"Corfu"



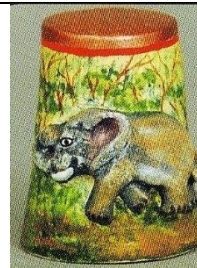
crystal snowman
rim of circles
sand grains used to gain crystal effect on
snowman
(Kamp 2007-4 name)



daisies
TTG June 2006



dolphin
(Kamp 2008-2 name)



elephants
L: Kamp 2008-3 – R: TTG July 2006



'forget me nots on my thimble'
painted band



'fox hello there on my thimble'
domed apex
gold trellis-like rim
R: Kamp 2008-3



'frog in love' holding a heart
rim of gold circles
handpainted tree with red berries around thimble



'frog near the riverside on my thimble'
L: signed **FC**
R: Kamp 2008-3



'giraffe in the savannah on my thimble'
R: Kamp 2008-4



"Gran Canaria"
dolphins and beach umbrella scene
shallowly hollowed out inside



'grapes embroidered on my thimble'
rim of pink and gold circles
R: Kamp 2007-3 rim of gold circles



'green sea turtle on my thimble'
C: Kamp 2006-3
R: TTG August 2007



'grizzly bear on my thimble'
trees with mountains painted around thimble
R: TTG April 2007
rim of gold circles



guard dog in his house
domed apex
trellis-like rim
(Kamp 2008-3 name)



halloween
(Kamp 2007-3 name)



"Happy Easter in Mauritius"
'rabbit easter eggs on my thimble'
rim of gold circles
R: "Happy Easter" TTG March 2007



'lion in forest on my thimble'
R: TTG July 2008



'ladybird on my thimble'
gold-painted apex
R: TTG August 2006



"Lanzarote"
camel rides



'lovebirds GYR falcons on my thimble'
gold-painted apex



'lucky beetle on my thimble'



lucky clover
rim of gold circles
(Kamp 2006-4 name)



'marlin sea blue on my thimble'
R: TTG February 2007



'marlin volier in deep sea on my thimble'
rim of gold circles



"Mauritius"
dodo
different colour grounds



'mute swan on my thimble'
swans swimming painted around thimble
rim of gold circles



nutmeg
(Kamp 2007-2 name)



orchid
gold trellis-like rim
(Kamp 2006-4 name)



'orchid growing on my thimble'
R: TTG January 2007



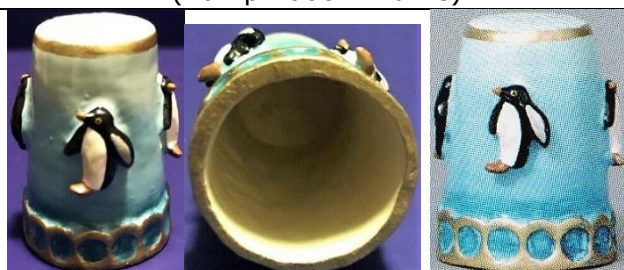
'owl in forest at night on my thimble'
gold-painted apex
C: Kamp 2007-4
R: TTG October 2006



palms
gold-painted apex
(Kamp 2008-2 name)



'pansies on my thimble'
gold-painted apex



'penguins on my thimble'
rim of gold circles
'H' lettered in apex
R: Kamp 2006-3



polar bear with snowman
rim of gold circles
(Kamp 2007-1 name)



"Protect me"
'polar bear of the Arctic'
domed apex
rim of circles

R: TTG October 2007 (no rim of colours)



'rabbit easter egg on my thimble'
brightly coloured egg
domed apex
rim of gold circles



'raw banana embroidered on my thimble'
gold-painted apex
rim of gold circles
Kamp 2008-2



rose in medallion
gold trellis-like rim
raised, squared rim
(Kamp 2008-2 name)



'scorpio zodiac on my thimble'



'shark on my thimble'
domed apex
rim of black circles



shell
gold-painted apex
(Kamp 2007-2 name)



'sleepy panda on my thimble'
rim of terracotta circles
handpainted bamboo shoots around thimble



'snowman on my thimble'
raised, squared rim



spring
(Kamp 2008-2 name)



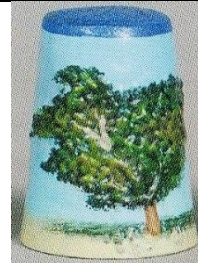
spring: tulips ladybirds
rim of gold circles
(Kamp 2009-1 name)



'squirrel eating pine fruit on my thimble'
tree on green painted around thimble
R: TTG April 2008



'stripped [sic] marlin on my thimble'
R: Kamp 2008-2



summer
(Kamp 2008-2 name)



'sunflower under blue sky on my thimble'
scenery painted around thimble
rim of gold circles



"Tenerife"
camel and beach scene



"Tenerife"
dolphins



'thimble poney' [sic]
domed apex
gold-painted apex
green trellis-like rim



'thimble seal'
domed apex
gold trellis-like rim
R: Kamp 2008-3



'thimble with cat in forest'
gold-painted apex
C: Kamp 2008-3 - TTG January 2008



treble clef

L: Kamp 2008-4 with violin on verso white ground
R: TTG July 2007 with violin and bow atop blue ground



'tulip at night' on my thimble'

Kamp 2008-1 described thimbles as 'on black lacquered bronze'



'twin dolphins on my thimble'

C: Kamp 2008-2
R: TTG June 2006



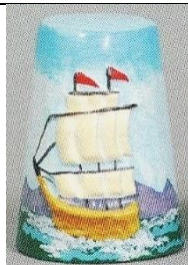
violets

(Kamp 2008-2 name – they look more like pansies?)



'wild forest eagle on my thimble'

chicks waiting painting around thimble



windjammer

(Kamp 2008-2 name)



'young fox on my thimble'

purple flowers in field painted around thimble
rim of gold circles

References

Friedy Kamp *Vingerhoed nieuws*. 2006-2009

Contributors

Pawel Brzyski | Hazrah | Friedy Kamp | Krystyna Zagajewska

This listing of Hazrah thimbles does not purport to be complete or accurate in all aspects. Rather it invites comment and contribution to add to our knowledge. My thanks to the contributors.

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