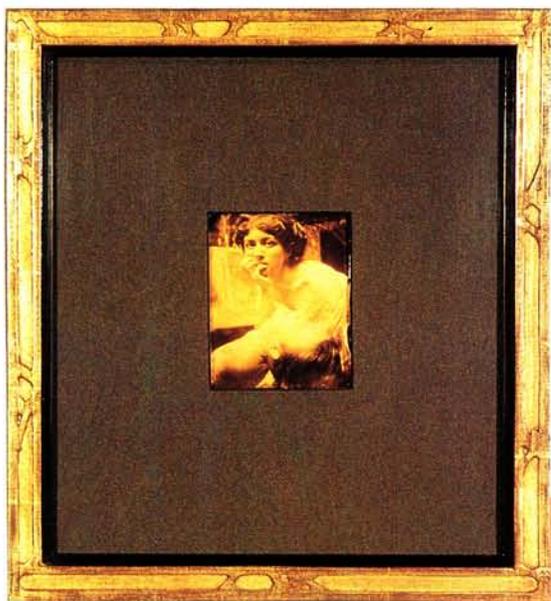
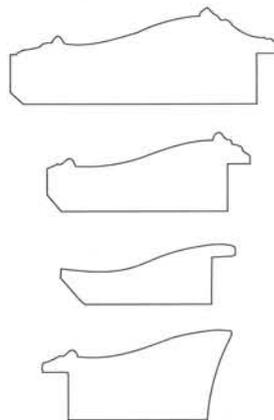


IF YOU'VE SET YOURSELF UP AS A SERIOUS PAINTER OR COLLECTOR,
CHANCES ARE YOU'VE BEEN FRAMED BY JARED BARK

A MASTER FRAMER



Bark's rubbed gold-leaf frame for an Alphonse Mucha photo from "The Waking Dream" was inspired by a Mucha poster. Right: A careful rendition of a 17th-century Dutch frame (top two moldings and first profile) yields the other three variants. Below: Bark and his studio.



The vocabulary of the framer is voluptuousness itself. Think of an expanse of golden ogee molding gliding gently onto a beaded cavetto curve; imagine a squat octagon of curly maple, its sinuous grain working beneath the water-stained surface. These are some of the exotic elements Bark Frameworks, in New York's SoHo, has been combining lately to compose astonishing frames. Without doubt, a Bark frame complements and protects its contents—but it is so subtle an object, so thoughtfully designed and made, that it not only houses an artwork, it gives it a voice.

Californian Jared Bark began framing during his high-school years in Palo Alto. In the early '70s in New York, he began to build his framing practice alongside a serious career as an artist. Now, with his partners, James Barth, Anne Grant, and Jamie Dearing, and a staff of 25 divided between the SoHo

menting with historical frame forms. "The point," he says, "is to reinvigorate the language of framing for both historical and contemporary works. We never wanted to reproduce period frames, but rather to learn their vocabulary."

This approach is apparent in the 253 frames chosen by Pierre Apraxine (for the Gilman Paper Company Collection) and Metropolitan Museum of Art curator of photographs Maria Morris Hambourg for "The Waking Dream: Photography's First Century," on view at the Met last spring. According to Morris Hambourg, "Jed is an original mind in the field of historical frame reinterpretation—an artist who does serious research, then adjusts his frames to the complexion of each print." For John Murray's 1858 view of the Taj Mahal, for instance, Bark's mottled Louis XVI molding with lamb's tongue edge hints at subcontinental motifs.

Lately, Bark has been looking at Coptic linens and plans to turn his attention soon to Islamic arabesque. Calvin Brown, senior restorer in the Met's department of drawings, finds his explorations promising: "I think Jed's move into a more historical approach, where the frame is considered a stage rather than some neutral box, derives from his continuing commitment to design issues such as proportion and texture. It's sure to yield some interesting results. After all, since he began to frame, Jed has changed the way art is presented."

studio and the Brooklyn wood-and-metal shop, Bark produces frames for major galleries, artists, collectors, and institutions—from the New York Public Library and the Leo Castelli Collection to Brice Marden (one of Bark's first clients) and Jasper Johns.

In the early days, Bark operated firmly within a spare, neutral Modernist mode. By the mid-'70s, he was exploring welded metals, mixed media, and complex surface treatments. Over the last several years, Bark has been experi-