

INTERIOR DESIGN



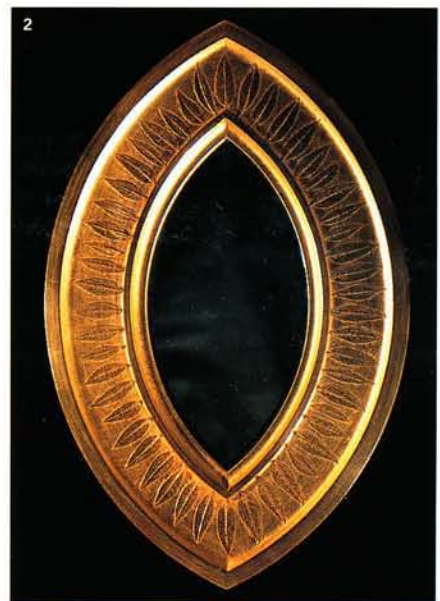
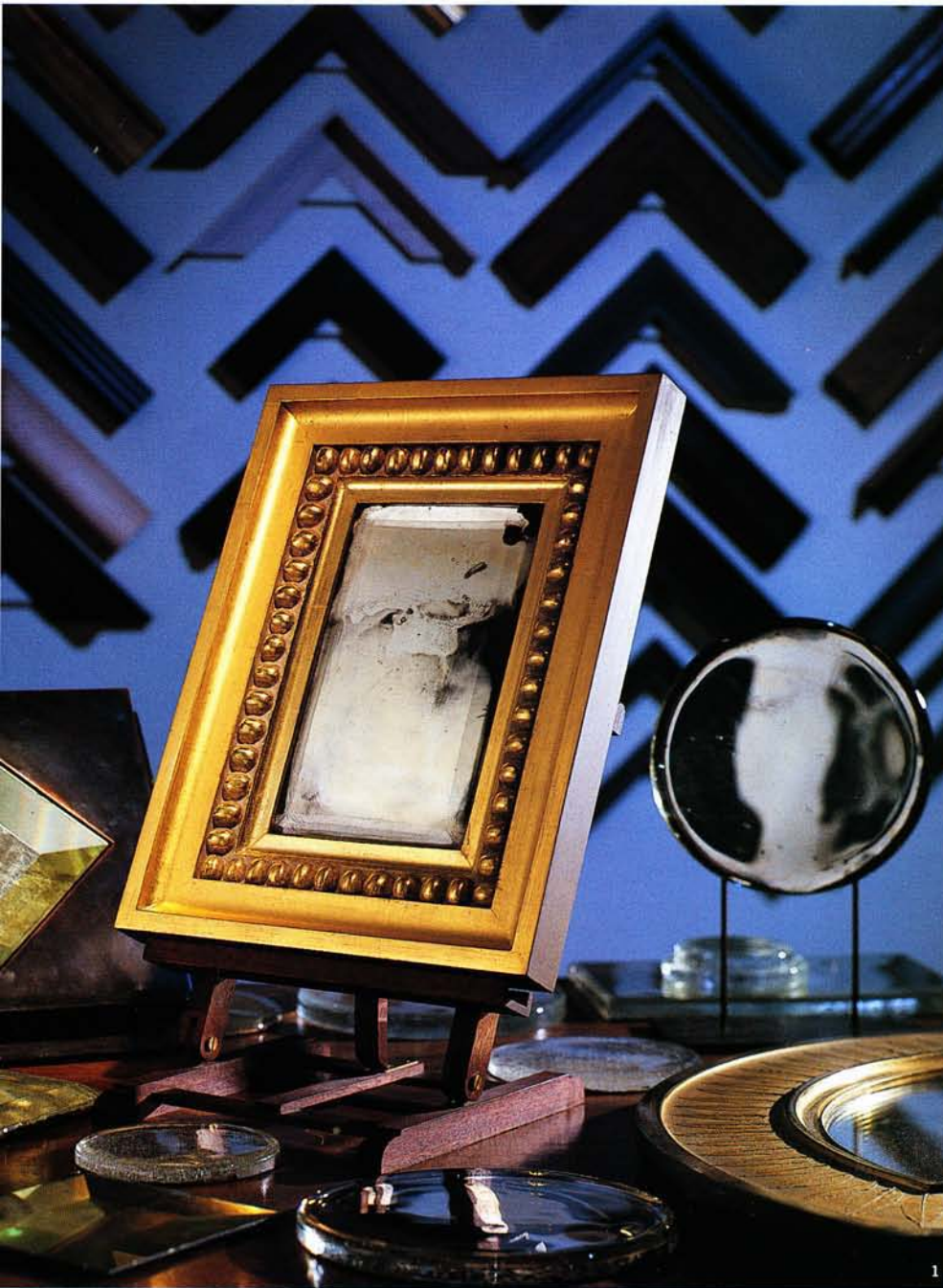
Jed Bark and Miguel Oks reinvent the looking glass.

Mirror, Mirror

MIRRORS: BIG OR SMALL, rectangular or round. Over the course of the twentieth century, mirrors have become something they didn't used to be: unadorned, generic, functional, and more than a little boring. But that may be changing fast. Designer/architect Miguel Oks and artist/framer extraordinaire Jed Bark have joined forces to launch a new collection of mirrors that reinvests the looking-glass with visual interest and mystique. These are handcrafted, wall-mounted and tabletop mirrors that you not only look at, but also look upon, with considerable pleasure.

The designers' research began more than two years ago. Bark realized he wanted to experiment with frames that were "too substantial and demanding" for the art world, and the pair recognized that the mirror was a design object ready for reinvention. They experimented with casting glass and precipitating silver, and perfected traditional techniques of applying white gold and silver leaf to give an unusually subtle, muted reflection. The frames themselves derive from varied sources, including molding profiles found in architectural treatises by Palladio, Serlio, and Vignola.

Their collection now comprises 22 pieces and keeps growing. Priced between \$1,500 and \$4,000 each, they are grouped in three suites: "Urform" (ornamented with natural materials such as acorns and eucalyptus





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leaves); “Cartography” (suggesting landscape elements and the wonder of discovery); and “Cabinets” (mirrors with hinged coverings that evoke the delight of peering into a secret cupboard or an old photograph). Each mirror is named associatively and thoughtfully; the Greek-cross-shaped Damascus, for example, suggests the intersection of two perpendicular trade routes.

With their mirrors, named and packaged as beautifully as they are crafted and conceived, Oks and Bark cultivate an art of luxurious looking that depends on a degree of functional impairment. Each mirror fragments, bends, doubles, or occludes the gaze to offer, in place of a more direct reflection, the experience of encountering an animate, resonant other—a mirror that offers an image of the world, and not just a facsimile of the viewer.

—Henry Urbach

1. The gold Ovolo mirror from “Urform” suite, set on a table in the Bark framing studio.

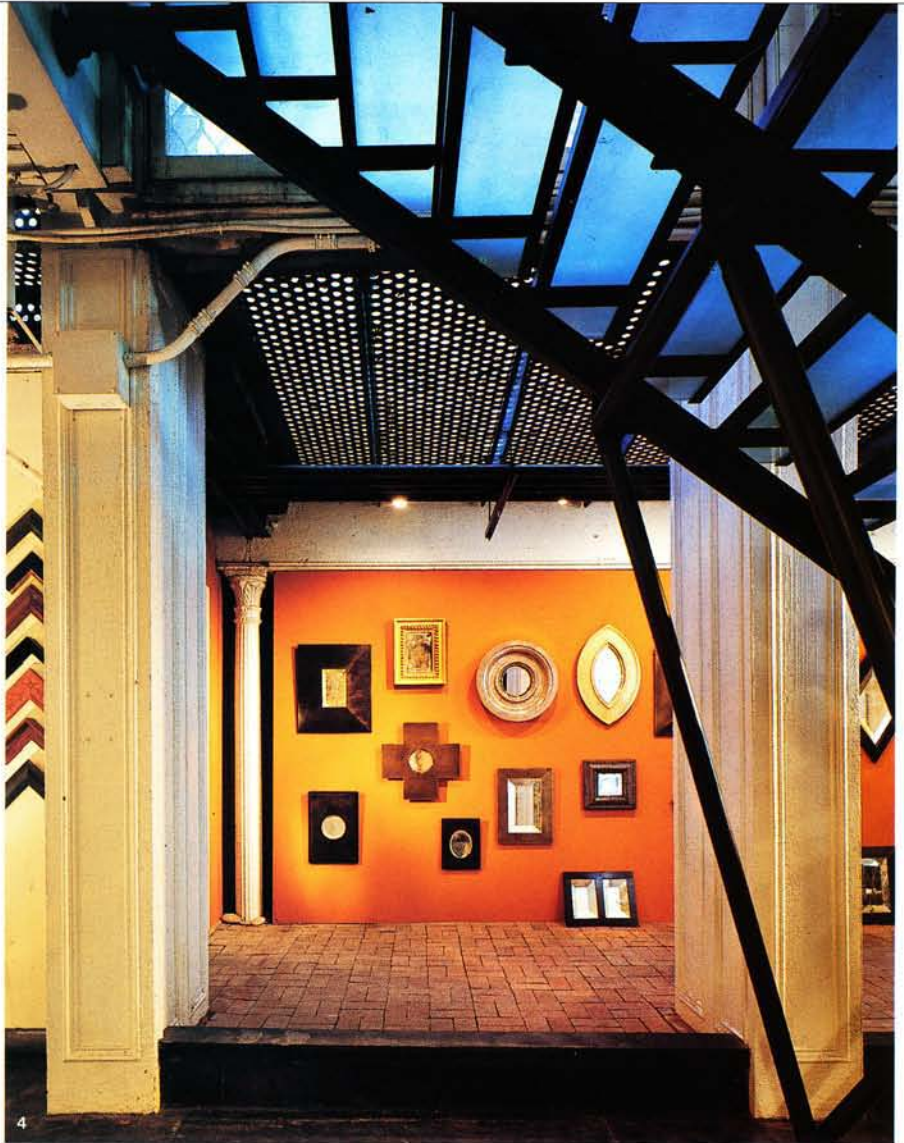
2. Also from the “Urform” suite, Mandorla is composed of hand-silvered glass and a frame that has been ornamented with tiny leaves and burnished with 23-karat yellow gold.

3. Mer de Glace, from the “Cartography” series, was named for a glacier to suggest, in Bark’s words, “the experience of stumbling upon something very surprising and beautiful.”

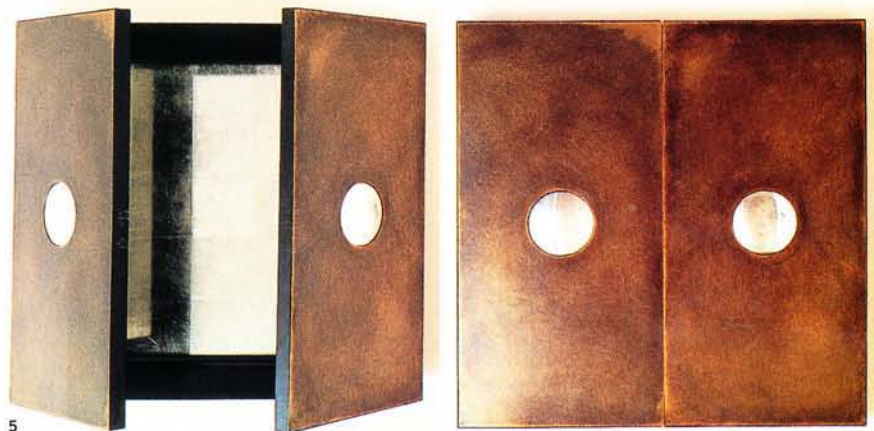
4. View of the Jed Bark atelier in SoHo.

5. One of four “Cabinets,” each named for a 19th-century photographer; the Baldus frame (interior) is based on a 17th-century Dutch profile.

PHOTOGRAPHERS: PETER AARON, ESTO (1,4), SCOTT FRANCES (2,3), DAVID JOSEPH (5)



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