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Ceramist Eve Kaplan's Sculptural Mirrors and Artwork

Applying her own distinctive take on 18th-century decorative styles, the ceramist crafts stunning mirrors and other works of art

BY [MARCIA DESANCTIS](#)

Like any skilled alchemist, Eve Kaplan embraces the unexpected. “One thing that appeals to me about ceramics is that you can’t control everything,” she says. It is hard to discern the happenstance, however, in Kaplan’s baroquely sculptural mirrors, vases, brackets, and lamps—all variously embellished with glazes and metal leaf. The handmade pieces feature thoroughly modern, decidedly idiosyncratic interpretations of historic styles, which the artisan mastered in her previous career as a restorer. “Think wacky Chippendale or Georgian,” says New York dealer Gerald Bland, who has worked with Kaplan in different capacities for 25 years. “No one knows 18th-century mirrors better than Eve.”

Born in Norway, Kaplan grew up in suburban New York with her Norwegian mother, also a ceramist, who taught her to craft pinch pots. At Vermont’s Bennington College, where she studied painting and sculpture, Kaplan developed an interest in restoration and gilding, and, after graduation, she worked at the legendary Thorp Brothers Restoration in New York City. Eventually she cofounded Fitzkaplan, an antiques-refurbishing studio, and Bland began hiring her for her gilding expertise. Then, a decade ago, she returned to pottery and started making pieces informed by 18th-century styles and techniques. Their originality won over Bland, and the first one he sold went to designer *Michael S. Smith*, now one of Kaplan’s biggest proponents.

To create her signature mirrors—whether ornamented with spiky, rock-like, rocaille-style details or shapes such as leaves, columns, or shells—Kaplan first hand-molds and fires each small part individually, then glazes them and assembles the pieces into a frame, and, finally, applies traces of gold, silver, or palladium leaf.

Pushing her boundaries a bit, Kaplan recently gave a rectangular rocaille mirror a special matte-black finish for fashion designer and film director Tom Ford, and she's also started using amethyst and rock crystal. "I've simply never seen work like Eve's," says designer Amanda Nisbet, who displayed a chunky gilt-framed Kaplan mirror at the 2011 Kips Bay Decorator Show House in Manhattan. "Her pieces are always the star of the room."