

New Wall Art Designs that Sell

By Michael Pacitti

Vivid colors, texture, an 'authentic' look, and use of natural products are among the latest trends for wall art in 2010

Today it is more important than ever for OEM framers to understand the direction of color in the market. Doing your homework into the latest trends in a thorough and timely way will pay off in the success of new lines of framed art and images.

To create a design that will sell, it is necessary to use all the elements and design principles at your disposal in creating the right look, which is a statement about the direction your company will take. Any introduction of a different look can have a significant impact on your market. The amount of research you do on each look you create will make or break your own new introductions. While forecast trends are important, you also need feedback about consumer needs on specific designs and trends if you want buyers to respond positively to your new lines.



A metal landscape in canvas wrap from Mercana Art Decor extends the image onto the canvas wrap to create a framed image look.



Both the art and the board it is mounted on are curved in these designs from Paragon, adding a strong sense of dimensionality to weather-proofed pieces that were created for outdoor living.



An aqua velvet sofa set with contrasting pillows from Lifestyle Furniture Collection has a satin velvet that offers a great sheen effect, contrasting with aqua greens and blues—colors that are growing in popularity.

One example of a creative new approach is the Big Fish Company of Maryland, which recently introduced a line called Art Match™. This ingenious concept allows consumers to actually match the color of their fabric sofas, drapes, or other furnishings shade for shade by using swatches with Pantone colors that can be used to easily customize printed images produced by Big Fish.

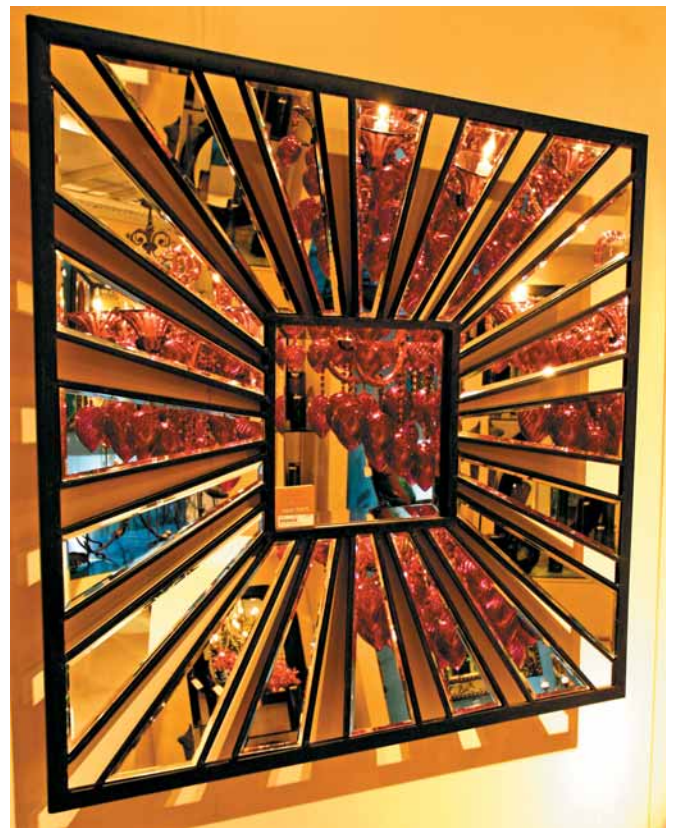
There are more than 300 wall decor companies in North America offering frames, photo frames, mirrors, flat art, framed art, lithography, giclees, and oil on canvas. Many of these OEMs offer a wide range of subject matter; they are also aware of the accessories that complement a room setting. These items include anything from a sofa and loveseat to lamps, end tables, wall hangings, clocks, and carpets. Keeping up with the latest color trends is an important way to stay ahead of the competition, especially for those who rely on a specific theme offering each season. Variety is the spice of life; it also creates make-or-break options for each season for any OEM. Walking as many trade-related home furnishing and framing shows will keep an OEM designer in touch with the latest themes and trends.

Framed OEM Images

There is a new and more classified form of art being framed by OEMs today. The look is more dimensional and protrudes from the frame. There are bent, bowed, and S-shaped media as well as lots of texture and vivid color. For example, Mercana Art Decor and Paragon showed lots of texture and dimensional art pieces at the



An Art Nouveau period metal headboard, which incorporates a framed image design of its own, is well-matched with cocoa-colored bedding.



An Old World iron-segment square mirror from Cyan Design Co. is designed to capture and reflect all the items that surround it, regardless of color or brightness.



Two popular design themes in wall art today are abstracts with round geometrical shapes and contemporary botanicals, shown here presented in natural wood frames.

High Point Spring Market.

Botanicals are also making a strong comeback as main themes in room settings, with anything from flat petals to classic antiquarian to reverse-pattern foliage being used. There are also images and designs featuring trees, branches, and natural woods scenes.

Graphics are huge this year as well, a trend that will carry over well into next year. Among the most notable touches are numerous metallic and metal finishes in artwork, including a number of tone-on-tone designs, such as green-on-green and gray-on-gray.

Among the other notable framed pieces at High Point this spring were a spectacular array of high-end mirrors, including high gloss lacquers, brushed aluminum swirl finishes, and natural reclaimed wood.

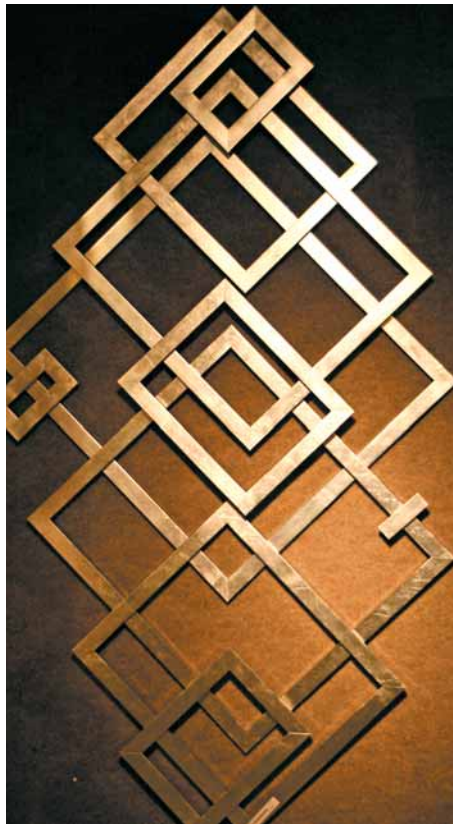
Plus there were plenty of large frames, big in both overall dimension and in moulding width, used for large graphic art images and oversized decorative mirrors.

OEM Framed Art

There are several contributing factors that lend support and guidance to the design of OEM framed art. These factors change with each new trend, such as “Global



A growing trend is to use recycled and reclaimed wood pieces to create frames, revealing an effective environmental look, as shown by Copper Classics' Blakely mirror.



This piece of wall decor was created by Rectangles & Squares Wall Decor by joining numerous brushed aluminum picture frames.



The Merlin rivet mirror from the Cyan Design Co. shows a heavy Medieval metal look that is often seen in large, bold mirror designs.

Awareness," which focuses on protecting the planet. As awareness of carbon footprints becomes more widespread, framed art designers need to recognize this trend by incorporating environmental considerations into their choice of framing products. Global Awareness seems to crop up every 10 years or so, so it is important to keep tabs on the raw materials being used for framing and how such products as mouldings are manufactured.

One interesting aspect of this is the increasing importance of reclaiming and recycling wood products. This is especially notable in the recent trend to create frames from reclaimed hardwoods from a century ago or even older to make large decorative mirrors.

Avatar, 2010 Winter Olympics, and the Oscars

Pantone hit it right on with the color prediction for 2010 last December. The High Point show revealed everything imaginable in turquoise blues and greens from leather sofas and lacquer frames to bedding and carpets. With the popularity of *Avatar*, the Vancouver Winter Olympics, and the Academy Awards, it's no wonder why this color is taking off so fast. OEM designers may want to incorporate the aqua and chocolate brown mix for artwork as it will complement many of the fabric blends shown at Las Vegas World Market and High Point this year.

Five Color Combinations for 2010

Club Metro – A condo/loft living cool that offers the sophisticated look of an urban getaway. Condo art features big, bold, colorful canvases on floater frames. There are also bright blue and white acrylics that are laminated or resin coated. White lacquered and satin finish mouldings are also part of this look.

Pan-Asian Fusion – A wonderful way to blend elements from diverse traditions. Much of Asian design celebrates the beauty of the natural world. Many Asian interiors draw upon the Japanese concept of "sabi," a philosophy that embraces a chic simplicity. Interiors that create this feeling have hidden storage for keeping clutter out of



Framed motifs of Baroque rosettes are simple and timeless and are being used quite often in today's room designs.



This photo montage of designs from the Global Views booth at High Point displays the variety and use of greens and blues indicative of the latest 2010 OEM products, designs, and colors.



A bedroom from Nick Rooms created by Lea Industries, "Make Room for SpongeBob™," shows a good balance of images and color, including framed underwater jellyfish images, that are popular in today's kids' rooms.



Tone-on-tone art, in which image colors are tailored to match walls and accessories, are being promoted by more OEMs in an effort to provide framed images that blend with furniture and surroundings.

sight, clean lines, little ornamentation, and a convergence of contrasting features that evoke yin and yang. Japanese parasols and Chinese paper lanterns are used as art. Chinese scroll painting or Tibetan wall art are used for visual pop. This style generally incorporates a mixed look of exotic woods, texture, deep reds, and blacks.

Zanzibar Luxe Lodge – A look of warm colors from the southeastern coast of Africa, featuring a magic mixture of sea and sky with blues and greens. The luxury "Spa" look continues through 2010, with carved wooden doors and lounge chairs surrounded by water.

Linen Hills – Relaxed and beachy, this look features all things coral, blue, and turquoise. What really started this aqua theme was a desire to get away to the Caribbean, far from drab economic hardships.

Villa Reale – This is a current form of the classic European style. It features large columns, with a heavy look that contains recognizable classical architectural motifs, patterns, and ornamentation.

These new trends offer plenty of ideas for creating new framed imagery that will work well with today's lifestyles. Just keep researching what's popular and weave those ideas in with your own new design concepts. The result will be framed artwork that will be right at home with what consumers are looking for now and in the near future. ■

Michael Pacitti has worked in the framing industry for more than 25 years, holding management positions with various moulding and matboard companies, while consulting with Fotiou Frames. He is currently associated with the Color Marketing Group, the Color Association, and IDEC, where he has been teaching seminars on color and design to framers throughout North America, Europe, and China for a quarter century. He has also written numerous articles on color and design.