

The New Look *of* Metal Frames

By Margery Schwartz

Metal is making a comeback in the world of style. It is experiencing a resurgence in home decor, office spaces, hotel lobbies, hospitals, museums, and schools—even cell phones and computers. And when it comes to framing, metal in new colors and textures have become a hot new trend. Metal frames have added richness and dimension to decor and to the artwork they surround.

Metal frames offer a lot for today's consumer and corporate client. Extruded aluminum frames are eco-friendly and attractive and provide a clean, sleek look for any decor. And there are more options than ever.

This trend has frame manufacturers working hard to develop expanded lines of metal frames with new types of finishes to satisfy the growing needs of the marketplace. For example, Dean DeLuccia, president of Frameware, Inc., which produces the Profiles and Cellini lines, says, "Our company is stepping up to the challenge by creating new frames that can be incorporated into the current trend to metal. We have just expanded our product lines to go beyond black, gold, and silver to include red, white, and blue metal frames."

Metal frames in color also reflect current trends in kitchen and bath accessories. Kitchen appliances and accessories, even washers and dryers, now come in a variety of bright metallic colors. Bath accessories also feature a lot of silver, bronze, and gold.

To incorporate these looks into picture frames, says Frameware Vice President Mark Pfund, "we are going back to the basics of simple, clean lines but are adding color and texture. These frames go with any decor and offer both a modern, contemporary edge or a traditional feel, depending

on what is being framed."

The new wave of metallic frames is being used more and more by interior designers who seek the latest contemporary looks for their clients. This is especially true for mirrors, which are one of the most prominent trends in both residential and commercial settings.

Mirrors work well with metal frames in a

design sense because they create more visual space and have a metallic "feel."

Even when the look of wood is preferred, there are metal frames that blend the texture of wood with a stylish metallic flair. Pfund says, "The Cellini Collection, for example, provides the look of antique gold leaf on an aluminum-extruded base. These are the thin, contemporary profiles that decorators are asking for, yet they are strong enough to handle the weight of mirrors—which thin wood profiles can't support."

More mirrors are being used in hospitals and other healthcare settings to open up areas and to create a welcoming atmosphere. Health clubs and fitness centers are also using these thin profiles for the wall-to-wall mirrors in their facilities.



Simple metal frames blend nicely with the decor in a quaint mountain lodge. Metal frames are being used more and more for a variety of commercial interior designs.

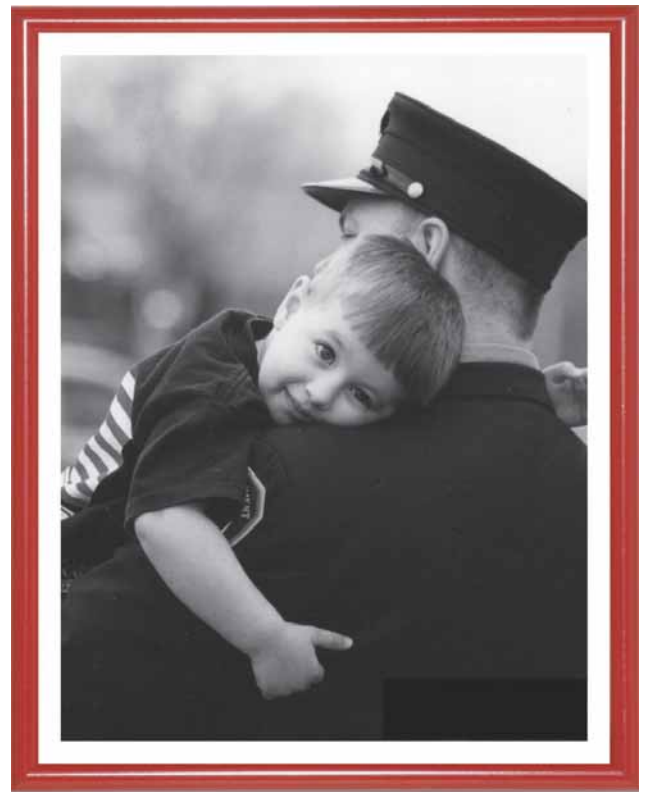


Ideal for a lobby area or waiting room, this traditional floral is surrounded by the soft, gold frame from the Profiles Collection.

House Designer Jackie Bigony of Kaleidoscope Framing, which provides framed art and mirrors to the hospitality, healthcare, and commercial markets, says, “Our clients select metal mouldings many times for framing mirrors in public restrooms, fitness centers, and other areas, especially where moisture eventually takes a toll on wood. But all types of industries are using metal now.”

Photography is very popular in commercial space, with nature and adventure scenes creating a homey feeling in offices, hotels, and hospitals. These scenes lend themselves to poster and oversized framing using metal. DeLuccia says, “Metal frames enhance photographs and have become increasingly popular for commercial applications. Metal has become the choice for framing photographic artwork in these open spaces.”

David Woodyard, president of P.S. Art Company, which provides framed art for numerous commercial clients, says, “We are seeing an increasing demand for metals after an absence of several years in the hospitality industry.” Healthcare, on the other hand, has always used metal frames in their facilities because of their clean lines and easy maintenance. “The rise in use of photography in the hospitality market lends itself to metal, especially black frames,” he says. “It goes along with the trend to a sleek,



Museums are also using metal frames. Red dramatically frames this photo by David Margules, which will be in the Ground Zero September 11th Museum Memorial in New York.

minimalist look, especially evident with the proliferation of abstract, contemporary images.”

Museums also favor metal frames for contemporary and modern photographic art. Framework's participation in an exhibit about 9/11, “From Dust 'til Dawn,” featuring photographs by David Margules at the World Trade Center site, is a case in point. Framework donated metal frames for the 100 photographs that Margules donated for permanent display at the Ground Zero September 11th Museum Memorial in New York City. The use of metal frames also follows the theme of 9/11 while preserving and presenting the photographs in a contemporary style.

Woodyard says that the design community “welcomes the variety of colors and styles in metals but are still mostly attracted to black, silver, and gold.” Metals are excellent to use, he says, because “the lead times for metal frames produced domestically and overseas are very reasonable. Plus, the ease of cleaning and maintenance is a key factor.” Even the demand for framing posters in metals is increasing again, and Woodyard says he anticipates more clients asking for metal frames in the future.

Bigony adds, “Metal is certainly a contemporary design element, and we see a wide range of textures and finishes in metals in the overall design of space. Metals are not limited

to traditional uses such as hardware, furniture parts, lamps, art, and accessories but have evolved into a 'metallics' concept that can also be found in wall covering, fabrics, carpets, and paints." She says if her designers feel metal would



A frame from the Cellinin Collection creates a traditional and elegant look with antique gold leaf on an aluminum base. Metal frames like this are also strong enough to handle the weight of mirrors.

be an asset to the decor, they don't hesitate to offer it to clients. And while using metal frames usually comes at a client's request, it does seem to be happening more often.

Another reason for metal frames' growing popularity is that they help unify an interior look, blending the decor as you walk from one room to another. Regardless of what's framed, from photographs to paintings to posters, metal frames create a common element that makes a design flow. The variety of metal frames also makes it easier than in the past to provide a unifying effect for different looks.

Bigony says that Kaleidoscope feels that it's important for manufacturers to offer a variety of metal colors and textures because designers like having the same degree of choices in metal that they have for wood, poly, and MDF moulding. DeLuccia adds, "By working with the design community, we are continuously developing new products to keep up with customer demand and the latest trends." ■

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