

# Luxe.

interiors + design®



\$ 9.95 A SANDOW PUBLICATION | LUXE SOURCE®



SEPT/OCT 2018 | DISPLAY UNTIL 11/12/18





*Gilded*  
AGE

THE ANCIENT TECHNIQUE OF VERRE EGLOMISÉ  
AND AN INSATIABLE CURIOSITY ARE TRICKS OF THE  
TRADE FOR AN UPPER WEST SIDE DESIGNER.

WRITTEN BY MIKKI BRAMMER / PHOTOGRAPHY BY EVAN SUNG









Verre eglomisé artist Miriam Ellner's Chelsea studio is filled with samples of her work. A Falling Leaves panel (top) features precious metals and reflective texture, while glass panels of various sizes are stored on the shelves (right). In her Cherry Blossom panel with 22-karat gold branches (opposite), the blossoms are executed using multiple precious metals on a palladium-leaf background.







*"I TRAVEL AND GO  
TO MUSEUMS, BUT  
REALLY I'M JUST A  
VISUAL PERSON, SO  
ANYTHING THAT  
CATCHES MY EYE  
SPARKS ME."*

**M**iriam Ellner always intended to be an artist, but her plan had nothing to do with the world of design in which she is now immersed. Rather, Ellner trained as a modern dancer and started dancing professionally in New York at age 19. Eventually, she found herself—as many do—sidelined due to age and injury, but what may have seemed like a disappointing turn of events was actually the beginning of another flourishing creative career.

Ellner had always helped design costumes and sets for her dance company, so it was only natural that she pursue a path in the fine arts. After studying at a distinguished atelier in Brussels, she returned to New York City

to start her own business doing architectural gilding and decorative painting. By chance, she encountered the medium of verre eglomisé—the application of gilding and decorative design to the reverse side of glass—and instantly realized she had “found her bliss.” After several years of exploration and experimentation, she became known for this specialized skill that combines a traditional art form—the technique dates back to Italy in 200 B.C.—with contemporary applications.

“The beauty of it is that gold is incredibly flexible, so basically what I have is this expensive piece of paper,” Ellner explains. Her varied materials—pigments she refers to as her “magic stuff”—range from 22-karat gold leaf to moon gold, palladium leaf, red gold and





*"I LOVE NOTHING MORE THAN WHEN A DESIGNER COMES IN WITH A TOTALLY NEW IDEA AND IT'S SOMETHING I'VE NEVER DONE BEFORE."*

crushed abalone. She also makes her own hardwood styluses for etching into the gold using a process that resembles shading with a pencil. Other techniques in her creative arsenal include airbrushing, oil- and water-gilding, and working with laminated glass to impart a three-dimensionality to her pieces.

A self-professed bookworm, Ellner says much of her inspiration comes from the tomes in her Chelsea studio and her home library, but it's also derived from things she sees in daily life. "I'm kind of an image collector," she says. "I travel and go to museums, but really I'm just a visual person, so anything that catches my eye sparks me."

Ellner's work adorns everything from tables, mirrors and screens to ceilings, wall panels, murals and even yacht interiors for high-profile

clients including Chanel and the Mandarin Oriental in London. "I have an insatiable curiosity," she says. "It's such a beautiful, elemental kind of medium and it really speaks to me. And I love nothing more than when a designer comes in with a totally new idea and it's something I've never done before."

One of her current projects is a 12-foot installation for a powder room, featuring intricate chinoiserie, while another design is imbued with sunflowers and pampas grasses. In fact, wander around her airy 12<sup>th</sup>-floor studio (which has an enviable bird's-eye view of the High Line) and you'll see myriad artistic influences—Art Deco, Cubism and Egyptian, to name a few. But there's one thing all Ellner's works have in common: The end result is undeniably glamorous. ■





Ellner (bottom) works on one of her eglomisé panels in her studio, which abounds with materials ranging from paint to moon gold. The artist applies 22-karat gold leaf to an in-process chinoiserie powder room panel (opposite).

