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Designer Decoupage

The artistry of Scott Potter

by Jennifer Leventhal



The artist in his studio
in Portland, Maine.

In the world of decorative interiors, there has always been a fine line between opulent and over-the-top. It is a line that decoupage artist Scott Potter has never crossed. While his one-of-a-kind *objets d'art* exude both elegance and luxury, they possess an opulence that is always refined. A unique combination of classical, Art Nouveau, and modern design influences is what makes Mr. Potter's work so highly collectible. "My pieces are a nice blend of classic and contemporary," says the designer, "so that each piece can take on many new dimensions and blend well with a wide range of home furnishings and tabletop."

While a cruder version of cutting and pasting materials may be popular with arts-and-crafts enthusiasts, true decoupage is in fact a very old art form. As far back as the twelfth century, Chinese peasants used colorful paper cutouts to decorate lanterns, gift boxes, and other objects. In the late seventeenth century, lacquer

work from the Far East, especially on furniture, became especially fashionable. In Europe this art form flourished during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, as the wealthiest classes began using master painters to decorate their walls, ceilings, and furniture. Decoupage even infiltrated the court of Louis XV, as ladies-in-waiting learned the art of decorating fire screens, wig stands, hatboxes, and more.

It was the print rooms of English castles that specifically inspired Scott Potter, rooms where lithographs were displayed and local artists provided borders and other decorative elements. His decoupage collection is drawn from these eighteenth-century techniques. Mr. Potter is perpetuating an art form that requires a respect for traditional methods and the uncommon discipline to meticulously cut and layer handmade papers behind glass and then painstakingly gild them with gold, platinum, and silver leaf.

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Inspired by the print rooms of English castles, Mr. Potter's work showcases a unique combination of classical, Art Nouveau, and modern design influences.



The old art form of decoupage dates as far back as the twelfth century. With his modern interpretation, Scott Potter has established a new standard of design excellence.



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Fortunately tradition and discipline are second nature to Mr. Potter. Trained as a classical ballet dancer, he performed and choreographed professionally with many prestigious companies throughout his career. While developing his career as a ballet artist, Scott Potter's fascination with the classical genre inspired his current interest in the art form of paper collage. And now he translates the unique artistry of a principal dancer to his equally dramatic art of collage under glass.

Mr. Potter's experience with dance, theater, and costume design has undoubtedly enhanced his work as a visual artist and interior designer. With skillful attention to composition, detail, and craftsmanship, Scott Potter has elevated this

centuries-old art form to the highest levels, and, in the process, has established a new standard of decorative design excellence with his creations. His skillful reinterpretation of classic decoupage has resulted in magnificently framed one-of-a-kind collages, elegant place settings and serving pieces for the table, hand-painted glass and wooden screens, large glass vases, urns and lamps, and more—all embellished with his fine handmade papers and gilding.

Mr. Potter has received special commissions for his unique creations from an extraordinary clientele that includes art collectors, interior designers, and royal families. Each commission incorporates the elements and images chosen by the client. Mr.

Potter's most prestigious commissions have included the Sultan of Oman's royal wedding, Saudi Arabian and Kuwaiti royal family collections, and a presentation vase for the Lady Soames, daughter of Winston S. Churchill, at the launching of the naval ship named in her father's honor. Among his private collectors are Oprah Winfrey, Robert DeNiro, Maria Shriver, and Whoopi Goldberg.

Scott Potter lives and works in Portland, Maine. His work is represented at only a handful of fine stores and galleries in the world, including Asprey & Garrard in London, Henry Birks in Canada, Bergdorf Goodman in New York, Carl Greve Jewelers in Portland, Oregon and Shreve, Crump & Low in Boston. **JQ**