

MIRRORING THE PAST

In 1987, antique dealer Anouk Beerents set up a business specialised in importing and exporting antique mirrors, which she then sold in an old tobacco factory on the Oudezijds Voorburgwal.

In 1995 Anouk managed to find a large manufactory hall measuring 450 square meters on the Prinsengracht. The Prinsengracht was traditionally the “working” canal where in the 19th century factories, manufacturing businesses, shops, craft works, forgeries and the store-houses of Amsterdam were to be found. When she moved in, the hall was divided into many small little spaces, and together with her husband, the architect Hans Kodde, they removed all the partitions and redesigned the space, dividing it this time into two: An area for the workshop and one area which would be used as the architectural office.

The workshop houses a collection of over 300 antique mirrors made in the 18th and 19th centuries. Each mirror has its own story, each one of them chosen by Anouk and her team in France or Italy and restored with care, and if necessary gilded with either gold or silver leaf. The 50 meter deep hall has two huge roof lights measuring ten meters by five, which brings in sufficient light for the restoration department. The mirrors are hung three to four rows deep, attached on iron chains to a rail system created by her husband. Visitors can in this way easily see each and every one, without having to move the mirrors around.





Anouk and her husband found large antique 'orangery' doors for the hallway, and even luggage racks from an old train, the 'Hondekop', which creates more storage space. The space is ingeniously lit by a scale-lighting system made for the chicken industry, used to keep newborn chicks warm. French street lighting can also be found dotted over the ceiling, originating from French factories. Even an old Fiat 500 has been parked in the middle of the mirrors, as a message to visitors telling them to park their cars inside the workshop. Quite a relief as parking facilities in Amsterdam are scarce and terribly expensive! The result of their combined effort is an impressive collection of mirrors in an inspiring studio in the heart of Amsterdam; all reflecting international allure.

