



ART as DECOR

Modern printing provides ways to collect and display creative works

BY IRENE TURNBULL

Since caveman times, we've told our stories through drawings on walls, decoration on pottery, and other artistic expressions. Through the language of art, we define ourselves as a species, bringing a sense of connection and order while making our lives interesting by sharing cultural and societal values. Naturally, art and home decor are "joined at the hip." And when it comes to uniting the two in a union of harmony, while knowledge of basic design and decorating principles is important, the real yardstick for success in selecting and displaying our treasured pieces is not only how things look, but also how we feel about what we see. It is a delicate balance of personal perception and exposure to others.

Our homes are an extension of our personalities. They reflect who we are — tell the story of our beliefs and values, and provide the stage for us to process our day-to-day living experiences. We humans are an amazing entanglement of physical and emotional responses that can be immensely comforted by our environment when it supports us. On some level we all know this; otherwise, why do we decorate, garden and want to hold on to the things that make us "feel good?"

There are many ways to bring art into our homes, and for those whose passion is collecting original art, our Lake Simcoe region is abundant with talent. By visiting some of the artists as they open their studios to the public this autumn, you're sure to find that special artist and art form that connects with you on a heart level.

Once you do, you might consider getting some professional design help to maximize its display presence in your home. But if an original doesn't fit your budget, high quality reproductions of local original art are also an excellent option, thanks to our advanced digital technology.

Digital printing has revolutionized the art world — affording opportunity for high quality art reproductions on a host of different materials — from museum quality giclee prints to stretched canvas for wall art, custom glass and metals, to name a few. This means a piece of art can be made larger or smaller to suit your space or adapt it to unique items such as shower doors and cabinetry windows.

But even more exciting for home decor, printing on high quality durable fabrics such as linens and cottons and faux leathers has

brought new meaning to personal “feel good” decorating. Original art now can be turned easily into such unique items as decorator pillows, upholstery, bed covers, draperies and so much more, including clothing, all from digital photographs.



offer an ongoing lesson in the social history of humanity, repetitively depicting changing cultural and social customs. Digital printing is just the latest and most opportune way to do the same for today’s homeowners to enjoy a practical and comfortable alternative to hanging art on the wall.

What’s even more exciting for interior design and decoration professionals is the fact that we can plan our designs so that we can have fabrics scaled and printed to accommodate our finished design requirements without having to commit to large production runs that previously made small individual projects cost prohibitive for homeowners. This opens the door to all kinds of possibilities for collecting and displaying creative works.

Practical alternative

The operative words for digital printing on fabrics for home decor items are “quality” and “serviceable fabrics” in order to meet industry performance standards for intended use. It’s also important to understand that there is a huge difference in suitability of fabrics and printing processes among digital fabric printers, with some products specifically suited to things like brand marketing banners, flags etc., not home decor products.

Printing on fabric isn’t new, but the ability to use digital technology to make small run fabric printing both practical and cost-effective adds a new element at the grassroots level.

It’s easy to see as you look back over time that art has proven to

If you want to investigate personalized fabric art decor products, here are some things to know:

- The quality of your photograph matters. Make sure your photo is the proper resolution for reproduction.
- The quality of the printing ink matters. On fabrics, reactive colour-fast dyes are important to maintain lasting fade-resistant wear.
- Fabric quality must be suitable to the intended end use and serviceability expectations. For example, upholstery should be washable.
- There’s a skill requirement involved in matching fabric production with intended use to ensure scale and proportion transfer appropriately from the original art to the finished product.
- Sourcing custom fabric printers can easily be done in the Lake Simcoe area.

Irene Turnbull has been creating award winning spaces around Lake Simcoe for 28 years. She’s an accomplished designer and author. Her new book, 17 Things To Know Before You Start Your Home Makeover Project, will help you navigate your way to home interior success. It is available at turnbullinteriors.com.

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