

The ART COMPANY



Patty Glass, founder of The Art Co., and partner Ed Capannari help businesses create a pleasant environment while conveying an impression of the organizational culture.

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Picture Perfect

The Art Co. specializes in selecting artwork for local businesses

By Jenny Callison, Enquirer Contributor

What goes on the walls affects the spirits, and providing art to create just the right mood and look for an organization is the passion of The Art Co.

The company helps create a pleasant and interesting environment while conveying an impression of the organizational culture.

Making a match of artwork and setting is an art in itself. It requires a knowledge of art, an eye for design and color, a feel for space and an understanding of each client and the client's taste and needs.

It also takes time.

Patty Glass, owner of The Art Co., says she and her associates can spend more than a week just preparing for a presentation. That includes an inspection of the space involved and preliminary discussions with the client.

"Often, when we first look at the building, it's a hard-hat area," Ms. Glass said. "The drywall isn't even up yet."

Visualizing a new space means working first with furniture plans. Ms. Glass and her sales staff will mentally "walk" themselves back and forth through the building, imagining how the posters, prints or paintings will look.

And then there's the matter of choosing mattes and frames that will enhance the work and blend with the setting. Staff members pore over color boards that show wall coverings, upholstery and drapery fabric, floor and surface treatments.

"We're the largest customer of Larson-Juhl products," Ms. Glass said. "They are the largest provider of framing materials in the country. We also use other framing companies. We have the largest supply of frames in Cincinnati."

Before final decisions are made about selection and placement, company staffers set up the artwork around their office space to see how pieces look independently and together.

Said Ms. Glass: "Balance is very important. We visualize the elevation and the flow of the artwork, the function and access of each room. My job is to make sure it's a whole package."

The Art Co. has just moved to a spacious, sunlit suite of offices in Longworth Hall and is on track to do more than \$1 million in sales this year. According to Ms. Glass, growth has been steady ever since she started the company in her dining room in 1983.

"I had worked for years in a poster shop," she said. "Many people asked me to come over and tell them what looked good in their offices."

Her eye was good, her advice appreciated. When she started her venture, hers was the only business devoted to providing institutions with art, although a few galleries did so as a sideline.

"My first job was for U.S.I. (later Quantum Chemicals) located just beyond I-275 at I-71. I was incredibly thrilled and lucky to get it. It was a \$12,000 job that enabled me to never look back."

In 1985, she hired Ed Capannari, a student at UC, as a framer.

"The company kept growing, and I grew with it," he said. "I became the manager of the frame room, then just took over and started running the whole company."

Today, Mr. Capannari is a partner in the firm and handles the business operations.

Assisting Ms. Glass with sales and installation are Judy Mahan and Debbie Fredette, who have been with the company as it moved from a West Fourth Street location to a West Eighth Street location, then to Longworth Hall.



"This move was what we needed to do," Mr. Capannari said. "The space is much better for us and serves our customers better."

The Art Co. does large jobs and small jobs and has won accolades from customers. Ms. Glass said her company's greatest challenge is to make every single job unique, even if the assignment is to rework the collections of repeat clients.

Jane Olson of the FACS Group in Mason said her firm asked The Art Co. to provide art and framing for its new facility, incorporating the artwork from its old building.

"They reconfigured our old collection and mixed in new selections, creating a perception of fresh, new artwork," Ms. Olson said. "Many of our associates have commented favorably on the "new" art."

Customers range from small professional offices to huge manufacturing operations such as the Toyota plant in Erlanger. An average job might be \$5,000 to \$10,000, but Ms. Glass said matting and framing a single painting still gets painstaking thought and attention.

"This is a difficult business," she said. "We wouldn't be growing if we didn't challenge ourselves creatively."

Art Help

Along with its regular charitable contributions, The Art Co. has designed some creative ways to help other organizations in the community.

All used and mis-sized frames and matte boards are donated to Wyoming and Finneytown high schools for use in displaying student artwork.

According to Frances A. Morrison, art department chair at Finneytown, the company's generosity is "a model for how business and educators can partner for success."

Small folks benefit from The Art Co.'s recycling, too. Usable and safe materials such as brightly colored packing tubes are given to day-care centers for toys or for craft projects.

The Art Co. is at 700 W. Pete Rose Way, Suite 130. It is open to the public by appointment only. Telephone: (513) 651-5092.