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Clockwise from top left: *Manga Eyes*, *Bamboo*, *No Standing* and *Simply Nude*



Accustomed to original art

Affordable pieces of unique art do wonders to brighten up a room. By Joanne Sim

Like the idea behind many small businesses, Emma Webb's decision to start Original Custom Artworks grew from a frustration at not being able to find a particular product on the market.

Webb had built a house and set out to find affordable, hand-painted artworks to cover her bare walls, but all the original artworks she found were at least \$2000, well above her budget.

Armed with knowledge from a screenprint design course she had completed after secondary school, she decided to pick up the paintbrush once again.

"I just painted my own for my own house,

and then friends would come over for dinner and say, 'That is really good, where did you get that?'" she says.

"So I started painting more for family and friends, and at the same time, was searching for a job that made me feel good and where I didn't have a boss and could just work for myself, so I thought I would give this a go."

The difference with Webb's creations is that she custom-makes artworks to suit colour schemes in her customers' homes or offices. Clients often send her paint swatches or photographs of their rooms, especially if their colours are unusual.

"If you have a blue lounge room and

see (one of my paintings) in red, I can just recreate it for you in blue to match," Webb says.

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With her use of bold, bright prints and colours and use of stretched canvas rather than framed paintings, Webb's artworks suit modern houses.

There is a range of styles, but Webb says the Manga (Japanese comic-style) prints are the most popular, especially *Manga Eyes*.

Webb doesn't hesitate when asked what colour is requested most often.

"Everything bright red, sometimes I call it

Ikea red," she laughs. "Anything I paint in that colour sells a lot quicker than any other colour."

Webb hand-paints all her artworks, preferring not to use a stencil as that "would be cheating".

"I steer away from that because I really want them all to be original," she says.

"So even though they all look quite similar, they are not exactly the same. I try and do two new paintings a month." **mwm**

Webb's artworks range from \$190 to \$850 per piece. They are available online and in eight stores. For more information, visit www.emmawebb.com.au