



SMARTART DIRECT

THE expense of buying original artwork from intimidating city galleries has helped spur on the success of SmartArt Direct, much to the disdain of some artists.

"We've had artists coming in here complaining about what we do, saying 'you're hurting the industry' but we don't say it's art, it's meant to be appreciated not necessarily understood," SmartArt owner Scott Hepburn said. "We call ourselves decor art. We look at local design trends and follow them.

"All our artworks are hand painted and all designed here. Or someone can come up with



a design and our artists will mock it up on the computer before they paint it."

A former property developer, Hepburn saw an opening in the market for custom-made and affordable ready-to-hang art after years of decorating new properties for marketing.

Paintings range from \$50 to \$500 and cover a broad array of styles, including City Sun (above left) and Arabian Eyes (above right).

"The demand from the domestic market was so strong that we had to expand our market beyond property developments," Hepburn said.

"The idea is to simply buy a piece that blends with your homes colour and furniture."

SmartArt Direct employs three artists and four interior designers who also customise images for clients, mocking them up on a computer before having them painted within Australia or at SmartArt's Indonesian factory.

Hepburn thought his main market would be average homeowners, but he has been surprised by its popularity among celebrities and the more affluent.

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www.smartartdirect.com