



# Follow Your Art

Tired of staring at blank walls? It may be time to channel your creative side. Pick up a camera and add a bit of picture-perfect uniqueness to the open areas of your home or office

This is something I hear all the time: "I don't have any art for my wall!" Well, are you a shutterbug? Do you have a camera? If so, why not create your own art? All you really need is a good eye and an outside-the-box attitude. Options for creating your own custom art to personalize your space are so affordable these days.

So, if your space suffers from blank walls or a blah generic feeling, I have some tips that will bring it to life in a way that's uniquely you.

A few years ago, my company held a \$30,000 living room makeover contest. The winners, the Agena family of Moanalua, had a long living room that the parents shared with their four young children. My big challenge was to create two separate spaces — which I did through furniture arrangement, different lighting systems and two focal points — but then I really wanted a finishing touch that would add the kids' personalities to their space.

A bunch of 8-by-10 family photos would have gotten lost in the largeness of the room. Anything I did had to be bold. I decided to showcase the kids in a fun, colorful and unique way.

Since I had chosen orange as an accent color for the room, with throw pillows and other touches, I decided that would be the color of the art.

I asked Kara Wagner to take some candid shots while I played with the kids. Then we got large, inexpensive frames from Walmart, blew up the images, had them colored in shades of orange, and to give the art more of an Andy Warhol box-like feel, we added the kids' names in a band across the bottom of each photo. This gave us the dimension we wanted so the art wouldn't feel like school photos.

The result? We got our fun splashes of color, the kids loved their pictures, and the space was instantly and undeniably theirs.

**Tip No. 1:** When taking photos of people, try to capture candid moments, and not your



**above** The Agenas love the splash of personalized art of their keiki in their living room. Richard Lowther photo

**far right** The author gets the framed images of the Agena children ready for the wall. Kara Wagner photo

**right** A black-and-white image of a street sign Courtney Tessitori photo



subjects posing and staring into the camera. You'll get much more natural, interesting glimpses into their personalities!

Here's another example: This past week, I finished staging a model apartment at Kamehameha Schools/Bishop Estate's 680 Ala Moana project (I'll be sharing more about this project in future columns). I wanted to hang a piece of art in the bathroom, but somehow nothing I found was just right.

The solution? I decided I wanted to create my own art and personalize it for the space. At first, I tried to get a photo of the vintage address sign that was up on the building at the beginning of the project, but it had been

taken down the day before. Bummer!

So, Courtney Tessitori from our office walked around the building, pointed her camera up at the street signs at the corner, and snapped a quick photo. We had the image processed, blown up into a black-and-white image and, *voilà!* we had custom artwork for less than \$20, including the frame!

**Tip No. 2:** Walk around your home or neighborhood and look for charming, beautiful or iconic images that define the place. And don't feel you need to center your shot perfectly. Sometimes, shots that are off-center or taken from interesting angles result in a more interesting image.

In one of these examples, I added vibrant shades of color. In the other, I took color out and turned the photo into a black-and-white piece of art. What will you do? Grab your camera and go create something from the heart — your own unique art!

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