



LIFE AT HOME

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TATTOO YOU

Wall tattoos put a personal
— not permanent
— stamp on interiors



Courtesy, Wall Juice

LISA KADANE
CALGARY HERALD

At 59, Kit Bright may seem past the stage of life where getting inked up is a rite of passage, but that didn't stop her from getting a tattoo — for the kitchen wall in her Lakeview home.

The three red poppies — a wall decal (also called a wall tattoo) purchased from IKEA for \$14 — stand out on Bright's pale yellow wall. They make a statement for far less fuss and expense than rolling on wallpaper or scouring Calgary for that perfect piece of art.

"I just wanted to bring in a bit of colour and I really like poppies and I really like red," she says, adding the 1.5 metre design took just minutes to put up.

"I love how it looks."

So do her three daughters, all in their 30s, proving the latest wall trend is one that spans the generations. The fad has also made the jump from design shops to big box stores, with retailers such as Rona and Home Depot wanting to tattoo you.

If you're right this minute thinking, "Wall decals, are you serious? Those cheesy stickers of unicorns from the 1970s?" cringe not. The designs have matured from their cartoonish roots; childish decals that pigeon-holed them into kids' rooms for decades.

The new generation of wall appliques is diverse, from organic patterns of branches or pussy willows to more stylized prints of utensils. It's also fun and funky, rightfully earning it the name "tattoo."

"Some of the patterns look like tattoos," explains Jacqueline Corea of Corea Sotropa Interior Design. No, they don't spell out "mom" encircled by a heart; instead, think of more stylized tattoos, such as arm bands, translating into damask decals or silhouettes of leaves.

Since wall tattoos do tend to be contemporary they work well in a modern space, Corea says.

The Calgary designer has or-

dered wall decals for several clients and is impressed with their quality and value.

"They're definitely a trend... but it's not a big investment for a fad."

Wall Juice (walljuice.com), an Ottawa-based supplier of wall tattoos, retails more than 150 decals ranging in price from \$50 to \$150. The company is one of several Canadian online retailers selling the stickers; Vancouver-based Surface Collective (surfacecollective.com) is another.

Wall Juice started up two and a half years ago offering wall murals, canvas prints and wall decals, but the popularity of the tattoos quickly eclipsed their other offerings, says John Churchill, a co-partner in the business.

He attributes skyrocketing demand to the designs' low cost, ease of application, and the fact they can be peeled right off the wall without damaging the paint when the homeowner tires of them or wants to change up a room's look. They look painted (as opposed to pasted) on, and layering them can create a mural effect. Wall Juice will custom-size decals for clients, and the company is moving toward custom designs to really personalize a space.

The finished tattoos, made of a thin, self-adhesive vinyl-based material, are rolled up in one piece and shipped to clients in tubes. (This mode of delivery is different than some of the big box outfits, where decals are flat-packed, requiring customers to assemble their separate pieces on a wall.)

Tattoos don't require the same commitment as wallpaper, either, where the same pattern appears over and over on every wall.

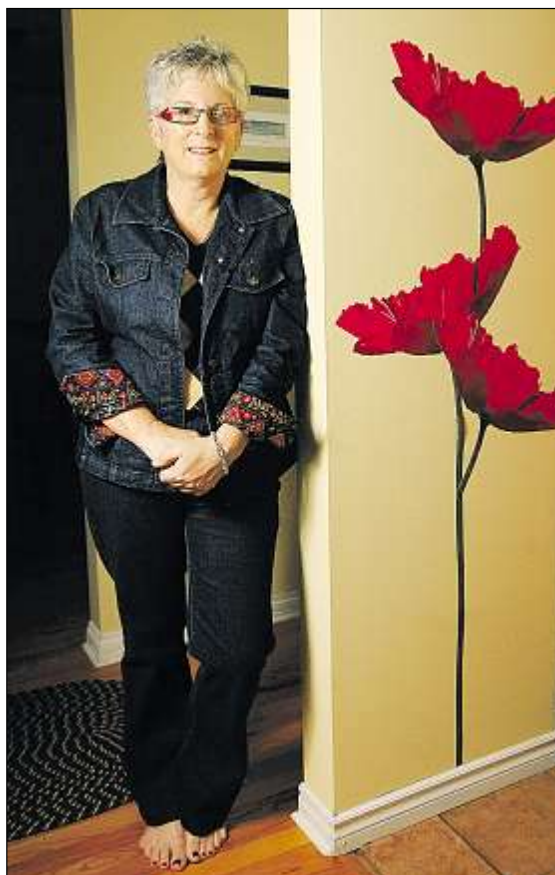
Churchill says his company's designs are timeless and believes that, as a decor application, wall tattoos — like their skin counterparts — have staying power.

"Part of the appeal is the applications are so diverse. There's generally a tattoo for you."

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Courtesy, Wall Juice
Wall Juice retails more than 150 decals.



Stuart Gradon, Calgary Herald
Kit Bright's poppy wall tattoo in her kitchen.

AROUND THE HOUSE

Is leather the new cork?

FLOORING • Leather couches are a classic home style look, but leather floors? Kensington Carpet One Floor & Home is introducing TORLYS Leather flooring to Calgary today as part of TORLYS' nationwide "Create a Sensation with Leather" event.

Touted as a "totally new kind of flooring," TORLYS Leather is made from 100 per cent recycled leather.

It comes in a selection of 12 different colours and styles, from a deep burgundy hue in a smooth finish (Geneva Cognac) to a rich brown with a crocodile pattern (Catania). The product is sold in planks or tiles, similar to cork flooring, and can even be mixed and matched with cork for a unique look.

"It's hot and new. I like that it's environmentally friendly," says Melissa Kwok with Kensington Carpet One Floor & Home. She says leather floors will appeal to people who want something sustainable without sacrificing style. They'd look great in a dining room or media room, she says.

TORLYS Leather floors cost about 30 per cent more than cork, with prices starting at \$10.99 per square foot. As for durability, their urethane finish means you can go ahead and wear those stilettos.

Orchids: Not just for corsages

EVENT • The annual Orchids Show & Sale, presented by The Foothills Orchid Society, runs this weekend at the Triwood Community Centre (2244 Chicoutimi Dr. N.W.).

It's an opportunity for flower-lovers to go beyond potted petunias and bring their love of



blooming beauties indoors. The show features local and international vendors selling a variety of rare, exotic and easy-to-grow orchids, and offering expert advice on how to care for them.

The Orchids Show & Sale runs today from noon to 5 p.m. and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Admission is \$6 or free for children 12 and under. Go to foothillsorchidsociety.com for a discount coupon.

Tripod flashlight illuminates DIY home projects

PRODUCT • When home repairs call for lighting in dark places — under the kitchen sink, for example — you can only clench a flashlight in your teeth for so long before you tire from the effort.

That's why Stanley invented its new Tripod 3-in-1 LED Flashlight, a nifty DIY tool that provides three flashlights on a rotating head supported by a tripod for stability.

You can focus light where it's needed most (each of the three lights can be switched on or off individually) and the hands-free feature makes it easier to complete jobs solo. The gadget also converts into a normal flashlight for camping trips or to use during a blackout.

The Tripod 3-in-1 LED Flashlight costs \$34.99 and is available in Calgary at Canadian Tire, Rona, The Home Depot and Wal-Mart locations.

—Compiled by Lisa Kadane, Calgary Herald

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