

## Pacific Art Group Opens Showroom, Design Studio

By Nancy Meyer

**EMERYVILLE, Calif.**—Pacific Art Group, an exclusive fine art brand for the national retail and hospitality industries, has opened a showroom and design studio here.

The private-label wall decor vendor, which opened its doors in January, is run by retail and art industry veterans and has a unique marketing strategy. Partnered with the largest fine artist studio in the country, Pacific Art Group offers exclusive fine art canvases and framed prints developed specifically for national retailers, from high-end catalogs and department stores to an upscale discounter.

"Unlike anyone else, we work from original art; we sell original art to cover every segment of the marketplace," said Helen Bulwik, founder and president, who has more than 30 years operating experience in retailing, merchandising, store operations and manufacturing. Most recently, Bulwik was chief executive officer of Devon Publishing Group, but had served as a senior merchant and store-line executive with Macy's and Federated Department Stores.

"We can bring our imagery to the mass market as well," through printing and laminating technology that replicates brush strokes and textures on paper, Bulwik said.

"What we're doing is so different from what the art industry has done in that we're offering high design, high quality, great prices and the exclusivity to go along

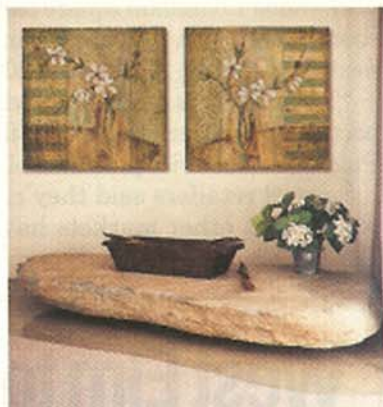
with it," Bulwik said. "We're not a printer, a publisher or framer. We create and produce the art for every level of the marketplace. We are merchants; we're putting it together with the retailers," she said.

Pacific Art Group creates products on a quarterly basis or more frequently, and all designs are proprietary and copyrighted. Originals retail from \$4,000 to \$9,000, but finished framed prints for mass retailers are priced from \$79 to \$259.

Turnaround time, from concept to store is 90 days, as goods are framed in North America and shipped from the United States. The company does have China production capabilities for very large quantities, but at this point isn't using it, Bulwik said.

"No one has been able to integrate the design, the style, production and technology to deliver fine art, and technology is a huge point here," added Barbara Berling, executive vice president of merchandising and sales. Berling has more than 20 years experience in product development, sourcing, merchandising and sales as the president of Byer California. Prior to that, she was a senior merchant for Carter Hawley Hale.

"The print, reproduction, finishing technology has re-defined where fine art can be. We start with fine artists, not from simple forms," she said. ■



Pacific Art Group's design studio features its artwork in home settings.