

Stuck up

A quickie decorating product that's been hanging around for years gets a high-style boost.

By GWEN SHRIFT
STAFF WRITER

Chances are you've seen Spider-Man clinging to a wall, and not by using his superpowers.

Comic-book heroes have long sustained a segment of the wallcovering industry that manufactures repositionable vinyl appliques.

More recently, the stick-ons — colorful, inexpensive and widely marketed — have taken on a new identity.

Manufacturers are broadening their offerings of repositionable wall treatments aimed at style-conscious grown-ups, and sophisticated new lines are being promoted to decorators at trade shows.

Brewster Home Fashions is expanding its WallPops line, launched about three years ago to tap "that important tween market," said Paula Berberian, WallPops' creative services manager.

With its pastel pinks, lavenders and greens, the early product "went more to the 'sweet side.' It skewed 'girl,'" she said.

Now, middle-schoolers' moms and older sisters have Tribeca, a higher-style black-and-white design; in a few weeks, Brewster is issuing more in that range, as well as large wall appliques in black, white and silver Jacobean brocade and



York Wallcoverings' Room Mates brand offers these Gerber daisies.

another in an upscale hippie floral.

A bolder bid to move the appliques from the kids' bedroom to the living room is on the way, with products in Kelly green, teal and fuchsia; and in retro prints, a Jacobean floral and paisleys.

"In the industry, it's a massive trend," Berberian said.

York Wallcoverings recently debuted a sophisticated applique in a pattern of oversized Gerber daisies as part of its Room Mates brand. P.J. Delaye, who heads the Room Mates division, said the company will be issuing more decorated stick-ons in art deco, tulip and tree-branch patterns.

Repositionable stickers have been around about 15 years, but "there's been a renaissance of sorts, partly due to the fact that the designs have gotten better," said Delaye.

"We have a huge inventory of designs, and we also follow the trends — not only in the

kids, but the designer level," he said. "I think it eventually will move to a higher-end usage."

Part of the marketers' enthusiasm likely is related to recent economic contractions.

"Today's consumer is pressed for time, and now they're pressed for money more than ever," said Delaye. "It's a product that enables you to decorate in seconds, it's totally noncommittal. If you're tired of it, you can remove it in seconds."

WallPops and Room Mates are only two in a growing field. Other high-style repositionable appliques from different manufacturers are sold under brand names such as Wall Slicks!, Wallnutz, Walltat, DeZignWithaZ and Wall Stickers by Ferm Living, a Danish company.

Lauren Tracy of Buckingham, a partner in Bucks County-based Time for Design, said professional decorators might use repositionable appliques in a kitchen or hall.



Tribeca from Brewster Home Fashions' WallPops line

"The key would be adding interest either architecturally or to a small space," Tracy said.

She said she and her partner, Cheryl Roque of Chalfont, are interested in words or phrases formed into appliques: "They'll make custom quotes that you can use on your wall ... that's probably growing the most from an all-over general application."

Tracy said she and Roque also were intrigued by new repositionable products they saw at a recent trade show.

"One we really like looks like a picture frame, but the inside of it is like a chalkboard. It's a wall-art application for a girls' room or a playroom. It's really interesting," she said.

Many repositionable appliques are priced at about \$20, with large, elaborate designs selling for considerably more. They are marketed in Home Depot, Lowe's, office-supply stores, college bookstores and online through the manufacturers or at retail sites such as target.com.

Berberian said WallPops contain no vinyl and can be recycled at curbside. Delaye, of Room Mates, said his company is working on a non-vinyl version of its products.



This hanging design by Pam Danner, of Middletown, took third place. KIM WEIMER / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Ribbon winners at Phila. Flower Show

By BETTY CICHY
STAFF WRITER

The flowers and foliage are gone from the Pennsylvania Convention Center, where the Philadelphia Flower Show came to an end on Sunday. But many local gardeners who took part this year have the most coveted of all keepsakes to remember the show by — ribbons in blue, red, yellow and white from the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society.

Countryside Gardeners, a club based in Newtown, won second-place ribbons in two separate judgments for their table class entry, a scene set in a Tuscan osteria in early fall. The Italian specialties set out on the table, from the antipasto to the pizza, looked good enough to eat — though they were completely made of flowers and foliage.

Floral pizza, this time in giant slices, also played a prominent role in an arbor display by Langhorne's Four Lanes End Garden Club. The exhibit, whimsically described as "the leaning arbor of pizza," won two third-place ribbons and two honorable mentions, as well as a class commendation from the judges.

Several flower show veterans continued their winning streaks this year with ribbons in the horticulture and design categories. Sylvia Lin of Ambler, a frequent Grand Sweepstakes winner, took home 130 ribbons. Lee Gittens, of Newtown Township, won first place for her potted oregano plant in a special Pennsylvania Horticultural Society challenge class, as well as ribbons for bulbs and hanging containers. And Pam Danner, of Middletown, took home a third for her entry in the hanging design class.

Here's the list of local winners in the competitive classes at the flower show:

Countryside Gardeners, Newtown: 2nd, table (2 awards)

Pam Danner, Middletown: 3rd, hanging design; honorable mention,

miniature arrangement

Rita Marie Dennis, Bensalem: 2nd, honorable mention, pressed plants; honorable mention, jewelry

Helena Dewees, Levittown: honorable mention, general horticulture

Four Lanes End Garden Club, Langhorne: 3rd (2 awards), honorable mention (2 awards), arbor

Lee Gittens, Newtown Township: 1st, challenge class, oregano; 2nd (2 awards), honorable mention (6 awards), hanging container; 2nd, 3rd, bulb

Amanda Hayden, Ambler: 2nd, miniature arrangement; 3rd, pedestal arrangement; 3rd, pedestal

Heidi Helmich, Levittown: 3rd, honorable mention, orchid

Sr. Eileen Hennessey, Langhorne: 3rd, bulb

Stuart Hughes, Maple Glen: 1st, 2nd (3 awards), 3rd (2 awards), orchids

Sylvia Lin, Ambler: 1st (3 awards), 2nd (5 awards), 3rd (2 awards), honorable mention (3 awards), hanging container; 1st (6 awards), 2nd (5 awards), 3rd (4 awards), honorable mention (3 awards), special horticulture class; 3rd, herb; 1st (22 awards), 2nd (27 awards), 3rd (22 awards), honorable mention (27 awards)

Bob Loughery, Holland: 3rd, medium niche

Diane Loughery, Holland: 3rd, medium niche

Victoria Maciejewski, Warminster: 2nd, general horticulture (2 awards)

Joanne Markey, Lower Gwynedd: 1st, 2nd, orchid

Rachael Morris, Bensalem: honorable mention, pressed plants

Bo Peters, Yardley: 2nd, hanging container

Maria Raggousis, Bensalem: 2nd, pressed plants

Manuel Sanchez-Andrede, Yardley: 2nd, hanging container

Russell Strover, Newtown: 1st, 2nd (3 awards), 3rd (2 awards), honorable mention (3 awards) general horticulture; honorable mention, herb

Alice Szarek, Treviso: 2nd, 3rd (2 awards), honorable mention, bulbs.

Amy Welsh, Lower Gwynedd: 2nd, 3rd, general horticulture

Women should know their risk factors for heart disease



Dr. Rob

When most people think of heart attacks and cardiovascular disease, they think of their grandfather, father, uncle, brother or "that guy" who works at your favorite store.

Many are not aware that the No. 1 health menace to women in our country is also from heart disease.

It is the leading killer of men and women.

EARLY CLUES

When it comes to women and heart disease, subtle signs may precede a heart attack by one week to many months (six or more).

Even though the following symptoms may be (and often are) caused by other medical conditions, they also could be pieces of a puzzle that says your heart is in trouble.

These include but are not limited to:

■ chest pain that occurs in a predictable pattern (stress, activity, others)

■ unusual and unexplained fatigue

■ sleep disturbances

■ shortness of breath doing activities that used to be easy (climbing stairs in your home, walking, others)

■ indigestion that may or may not be related to food

■ pain in the left shoulder blade or upper back

■ unexplained anxiety or feeling of uneasiness

PROTECTING THEIR HEARTS

Heart disease kills six times as many women each year as does breast cancer.

This makes it especially important for women to shelter their hearts and to know their personal risk factors, including:

Family history: having a father or brother who had a heart attack, stroke, angioplasty or bypass surgery under the age of 55, or having a mother or sister who had a heart attack, stroke, angioplasty or bypass surgery under the age of 65

Older age: if you are more than 55 years of age.

Smoking: Even if you don't smoke, being exposed to second-hand smoke every day greatly increases your risk.

Elevated blood pressure: Your blood pressure is above 120/80 or you have been told you

have pre-hypertension or already have high blood pressure. This is especially important since the risk for this health concern is much higher in women over the age of 45.

Physical inactivity: You do not exercise (walking is a great option for many) for 20 to 30 minutes on most days.

Diabetes: You have been told that you have diabetes or take medicine to help control your blood sugar.

Cholesterol: Uncontrolled high blood levels or very low HDL cholesterol

Obesity: Ask your health-care practitioner to calculate your body mass index (BMI), which is a measure of body fat based on height and weight.

Metabolic syndrome: This looks at waist size, blood sugar, blood pressure, triglycerides and your waist to hip ratio. Speak with your physician as this is a true health condition.

Hormones and menopause: You entered into menopause before the age of 40.

Stress: If the stress in your life becomes overwhelming, it can affect your heart health.

Alcohol: A woman should limit her alcohol to no more

than one drink per day (alcohol equivalent of four ounces of wine or 12 ounces of beer).

LISTEN TO THE WARNING

Heart attack symptoms in women can be subtle.

In fact, about a third of women don't experience chest pain when having a heart attack.

Instead, they may feel a pressure, discomfort or squeezing sensation in the center of their chests. Other symptoms may include:

■ a stabbing-like chest pain

■ radiating pain to the left shoulder, neck, back, arm or jaw

■ shortness of breath or difficulty breathing

■ pounding heartbeats or a feeling of extra heartbeats

■ upper abdominal pain

■ nausea, vomiting or severe indigestion

■ sweating for no apparent reason

■ dizziness with weakness

■ sudden extreme fatigue

■ panic with feeling of impending doom

Dr. Rob Danoff is head of Family Practices at Frankford Hospitals' Bucks County campus.

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