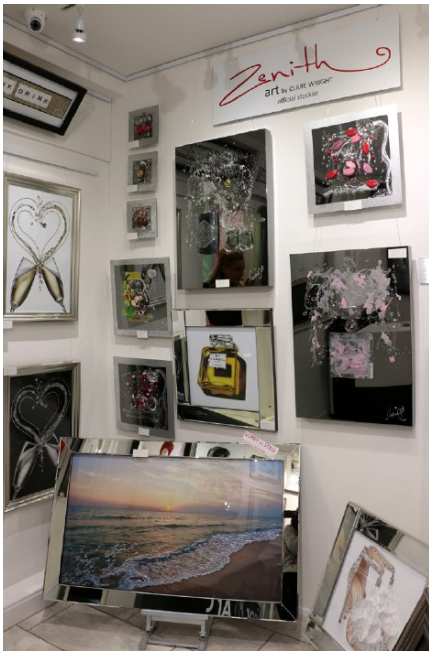
ANIMAL MAGIC

For German-born artist Jessica Reed, moving to Clent and opening a contemporary art gallery in the neighbouring village of Hagley has made Worcestershire a home from home



Mother-of-one Jessica Reed, who comes from a family of artists, originally hails from the town of Wertheim, in southwestern Germany, which she says has the same glassblowing tradition and established art scene as Stourbridge, ***writes Natalie Prior.***

"With a fine artist for a grandfather, it was inevitable I was going to be creative," she says. "But when something is meant for you, you don't always accept it straight away. I did an apprenticeship as a printer and a traineeship in glassblowing, but unfortunately I couldn't continue with that due to health reasons."

Jessica came to England 15 years ago for a one-year college course, but having met her future husband she made the life-changing decision to settle down in a new country and start a family.

Fast forward to April 2016 and Jessica, supported by her then ex-husband, made the bold decision to go back to her roots and open her own gallery called Weiser Art – a nod to Jessica's maiden name and German heritage.

The gallery specialises in high end, contemporary décor art as well as fine art, originals and prints. Work by local artists, including Jessica's own creations, is showcased and she offers a popular bespoke picture framing service.

Décor art is designed to complement your home's interior design and is available in a wide range of styles and frames by various artists.

Many of the pieces are hand-finished and hand-embellished with liquid glass, crushed glass, resins, Swarowski crystals, gold or silver leaves or glitter. Weiser Art is an official stockist of contemporary artist Claire Wright who works with liquid glass and resins to create elegant and striking pieces.

Jessica said: "This isn't art you find on every high street – the gallery is like a boutique for pictures as our stock is very much fashion-led. I source direct from Germany and Spain for interesting décor art pieces, some of which are limited, so you won't find them in other galleries or stores here.

"Popular pieces are those with embellishment such as glitter or resin. The highly artistic finish gives the picture a stunning and unique effect. However, florals and landscapes are our best-sellers."

> OUR PAINT NIGHTS ARE THE PERFECT COCKTAIL OF CREATIVITY AND CONVERSATION. YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE A SKILLED ARTIST TO TAKE PART

As an artist herself, Jessica can also create bespoke art on any theme, although she specialises in animal paintings – particularly dogs and chickens.

"If a customer shows me a painting that they like or already own I can create something in similar colours which will complement their décor," she said. "My dog portraits are also very popular. They are in a contemporary, abstract style with a plain background or a single colour and framed on canvas. All I need to do this is a photograph, so the owner can either provide one or they can bring the dog into the gallery for me to photograph."

"I am also well-known for painting chickens in acrylic. I find them fascinating creatures. My acrylic pieces are quite large and look great in country kitchens, whether next to the Aga or above the table. They have become my trademark."

Weiser Art has also recently begun holding monthly wine and painting evenings at local venues where bubbly Jessica encourages participants to try their hand at recreating one of her paintings.

She said: "Our paint nights are the perfect cocktail of creativity and conversation. You don't have to be a skilled artist to take part, as I guide you through every step and make sure you have a good time trying to create your very own masterpiece to take home. The atmosphere is fun and relaxed. We're not setting out to be the next Picasso!"

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