

BRICKYARD

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Mike figured he could make those, and Holstein guaranteed him business if they were up to snuff.

And so it began: The backhoe and dump trucks left the garage and in came lumber, canvas, plywood, specialized profile knives, tools and a very large and very precise pneumatic stretcher. "It gives you the same tension across its entire 8-foot span," said Ann.

Kinkead lent Ann and Mike a stretcher as a prototype, and they came up with their own design that pretty much eliminates warping. "Constructive criticism helped us," said Mike. "We're not artists," echoed Ann. "You don't know what you don't know."

The problem with canvas is that it changes over time. So after an artist creates a masterpiece, when the canvas shrinks or expands it bends the frame and warps the image not good. Ann and Mike figured out a way around that, here's how:

"We start off by hand-selecting the lumber locally and ensuring it has been kiln dried," reads the process explanation on their website. They choose basswood lumber because it is hard but also light, which cuts down on the cost of mailing a piece of art. Smart. "We then let the

basswood acclimate to a room temperature of approximately 65-70 degrees F for five days. Allowing the lumber to acclimate helps reduce warping as long as the frame is in a controlled climate. Any frame over 40 inches receives cross bracing as well as corner braces. This provides a very rigid frame and also minimizes warping."

With a good design and a superior product, they launched their business Brickyard Enterprises custom-made stretchers, panels and fine art transportation five years ago this July. Since then they have grown to serve about 30 regular artists looking for panels or stretchers and a

building their capacity to do more," said Mike. "But we don't want to hire anyone yet."

"We like that it's just the two of us," Ann agreed.

When it comes time for a transport job, Mike and Ann load the art into their super-long Sprinter van. They've outfitted the van with metal frame jigs to secure the art both vertically and horizontally, and while they were at it, they built in two extra cozy dog beds for their black Lab and Shar Pei.

"We're not insured movers," warned Ann. "It's too expensive and in the end the insurance doesn't

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dozen or so one-time clients. The business became successful enough in 2014 to allow Ann, now 52, to quit her corporate gig and work for Brickyard Enterprises full time. Mike still flies planes 80 percent of the time.

"I love it," said the 39-year-old pilot. "It's the best office view that anyone ever had."

"Ya," Ann interjected. "I'm here watching dogs, cats and chickens, while he's in Aruba!"

But it works. Mike makes the precision cuts when he's home, and Ann puts it all together. "We're investing in more equipment and

cover the art because the value is subjective."

But plenty of artists have found Ann and Mike Poskas and asked them to help move art around New England, and as far as Virginia.

"A big part of our success is getting canvas quickly and locally," said Holstein. "What Mike and Ann are doing is a huge resource to Vermont-area artists. You can't beat their quality, speed and ease. There's nothing like this and I've been doing this for eight years."

To learn more about the process of building a stretcher visit brickyardenterprises.com.

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