



Prints charming | Lemon's evolving artwork collections

Lemon's inaugural product range, which launched the business over 10 years ago, comprised custom prints, and while the company has grown exponentially in terms of its offering since then, this remains the heart of the business, and a source of great pride for co-founder Kevin Frankental. He has made a point of setting this area of Lemon's business apart, something he's done by earning a reputation for originality. Courtesy of an in-house design team dedicated to creating original artwork and wallpaper designs, Lemon remains one of very few outfits that offer unique print products.

Over the years these collections have certainly evolved. In the early days, Lemon's mandate was to create custom work – dictated by the client – for a specific project or space. With time, this approach has changed, with the focus now on curating well-considered collections that appeal broadly to design lovers looking at enhancing their homes, or companies needing an elevating factor for a corporate space. 'When we started we only focused on custom briefs, but with time we realised that many clients prefer like to select from a carefully considered selection,' comments Frankental. 'As a result, now all of our designs are custom created by our team, with the goal of offering sophisticated and versatile imagery that works in a wide variety of spaces.'

In this regard, Lemon fits neatly in the niche between fine art and mass-produced prints, with Frankental purposefully positioning Lemon's artworks as high-quality décor accessories that work hand in hand with other interior items to create a fully realised environment. 'We don't claim to be fine art in any way. We see our prints as a decorative element that is supplementary to people's collections and furniture pieces. Our approach is graphic and through that we aim to be accessible to many people,' he says.

The works themselves range from clean and striking abstract pieces, to elegant figurative and floral forms and evocative photography. In addition, you'll also find some public domain works that add a further layer to the Lemon repertoire.

This is an area where Lemon has strived to differentiate itself as a print and artwork producer – through the varied nature of its collections – a result of Frankental's consciously collaborative strategy. By partnering with local designers and artists to create bodies of work, he has ensured an eclectic mix of styles, while at the same time supporting the local industry and its talent. Artists are chosen for their own prowess and skill first and foremost, but more than that, for the extent to which their ethos and aesthetic aligns with Lemon's mission to create understated, layered and timeless spaces.

The result is a spectrum of work within the various categories, reflecting the local design and art landscape, and offering variety for Lemon's wide-ranging clientele and the work's manifold end destinations – from residential redesigners to retail spaces or big corporate projects. 'We give the artists we work room to express themselves freely, but the ultimate goal is always to create pieces that while amazing now also have longevity and can remain relevant into the future,' he affirms.

Lemon's aversion to trend-based design has always guided the company in creating pieces that last and the art collections consistently adhere to this philosophy – rather than following or considering what's 'fashionable', Frankental and his design team rely on gut feel and emotion. 'We believe that for many people, an emotional response to design is a driving factor in their purchases – we want to appeal to this instinct, and reach them on that level,' he explains.

So what's next? For its forthcoming collection, Lemon looks again to the past for inspiration, and you can soon expect a series of prints based on classic wallpapers. As with all Lemon's collections, these will be designed to slot seamlessly into a spectrum of spaces and work easily with an existing collection.

About Lemon

To us, good design is thoughtful design. We live comfortably in the space where beauty and function meet and aim always to create pieces that are both useful and decorative.

We obsess over how our designs are made. It's crucial for us that there's a balance between the practical and the aesthetic, and that our pieces feel good to use as well as to look at - and it's the small design details that make this difference.

We design with longevity in mind. The antithesis of mass production, our pieces represent our belief in conscious consumption, the idea that less is more and that universal beauty has no expiration date.

We work with manufacturers who understand this - and who share the same passion for quality and considered design. To ensure that our quality is never compromised, we seek out specialists in their fields - from artists and metalworkers to upholsterers and carpentry aficionados. Whatever their particular skill, a shared appreciation for quality and skill is essential.

Because craft is a central tenet of Lemon's identity, much of what we create is done by hand - from prints, to wallpapers and furniture manufacturing. Our business has a huge emphasis on craftsmanship. We are not in this to mass produce, but rather to create pieces with care and made with attention to detail.

To that end we partner with young as well as established South African designers to create collections in line with our design philosophy. South Africa is a rich resource of raw and often untapped talent and our mission is to support and grow the local industry while building our own.

