

HOME

Making a home a work of art



UNIQUE TASTE: Artist Margaret Skowronski at her home in Blackmans Bay; from top left, her collection of paintings; brushes in the art studio; one of Margaret's ducks.

Pictures: ROGER LOVELL

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UNMISTAKABLY the home of an artist, this Blackmans Bay residence has light streaming in from every direction to highlight the artworks which are both on display and in progress.

Ten years ago, Margaret Skowronski converted the space from a cold three-bedroom house into a modern Asian-style home, gallery and studio for her paintings, sculptures, castings and woodworks.

Leaving behind her life in communist Poland in 1977, Margaret has never looked back.

"I worked in Poland at the medical academy as a senior lecturer but I

HOUSE

Jessica Howard



began to feel frustrated there," she said.

"You would do one thing and believe in another, so I decided to give up the job even though it was fantastic."

"A distant relative of mine came back to Poland and she told me she thought I would do well in Australia."

She moved to Canberra and then Sydney, spending over 20 years in both.

However, it was in Sydney the qualified nutritionist began to embrace the artist within and started turning out more and more pieces.

It was 1999 before Margaret made it to the Apple Isle, having previously spent some time here.

"My first holiday after my husband passed away, I came to Tasmania and I really fell in love with it," she said.

"When I came to live, I rented a small house with a small workshop in Howden but it was too dark – I needed more light."

"I looked at so many houses for eight months and couldn't find anything I liked. "I thought I wanted to live in the



COLOURFUL SURROUNDINGS: Clockwise from above, the covered walkway to the house; the gallery in Margaret's house; a paper mache mask made by Margaret; one of her sculptures. Pictures: ROGER LOVELL

country but there was always something to stop me.

"I like people but also to have my own space. To be right out in the country without people, I realise that's not really me, and this house is a compromise between those two things."

The former living room has been converted into gallery space, which mostly displays works by Margaret and also a few select pieces from other artists including well-known Austrian-born artist Anton Holzner.

Anton also helped Margaret with the design of her studio space in the backyard.

The timber structure with cathedral ceiling and exposed beams is connected to the rest of the home via a concrete courtyard and sliding door back into the lower level of the home which contains Margaret's sculpture and painting workshop.

The front and rear garden form an extension of the studio space, and again Margaret's deft artistic touch is evident.

"I tried to add different colours and textures,"

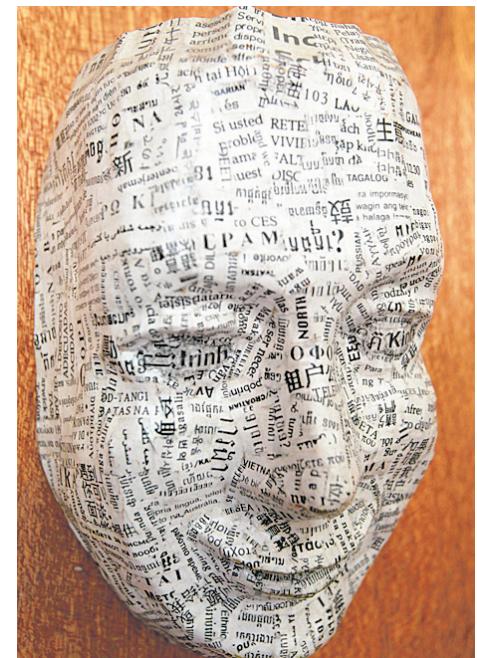
she said of her flourishing garden. "When I look through the window, I can see when the morning sun hits the garden the grevillea changes colours from yellow to silver."

Despite the suburban setting, the private and quiet property could in fact be almost anywhere in country Tasmania, a balance that is very important for Margaret who spends a lot of time in the home, working at all hours.

"Sometimes I stay in the studio long into the evening," she said. "Working and living in the same space has a lot of pluses, I like it. It can be a little isolating sometimes but you just have to find a balance between work and life."

View some of Margaret's work at www.blackmansbaystudio.com

Anyone interested in putting their own amazing home up for consideration for house of the week can email jessica.howard@news.com.au



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