

ART SMARTS

HOW TO BUY THE RIGHT ARTWORK FOR YOUR STYLE — AND HOW TO DISPLAY IT PROUDLY

BY RON SHIPMON • ILLUSTRATIONS BY LAURA COYLE

Today, collecting contemporary art is a decision that is sometimes discombobulating. What should a novice collector look for, or be cautious about, in making their first purchase of fine art? Follow these rules and you will easily find art that will add a new dimension to your life.

1 Educate yourself. There are many avenues to explore to build your knowledge: museums, schools, libraries, galleries, art journals and the Internet. Weekend editions of regional newspapers are a great source of information about the market. Magazines like *Art in America*, *Flash Art*, *Art & Auction*, *Art on Paper* and *Artforum* are also worth checking out.

2 Go to museum lectures and don't be afraid to ask questions. Lectures are generally free with the price of admission.

3 **Attend auction house previews in your area;** this will give you the opportunity to see important works of art for free.



4 Visit art galleries. Cultivate a relationship with an art dealer. Remember, these are the people in the trenches and they can provide you with key information. Attend gallery talks and ask to visit the artist's studio. This will help you understand different art forms.

5 Only collect what you love and can afford. Collecting is about passion, not regrets.

6 Never select art to match the couch or color scheme of your décor. In fact, mixing styles will create a unique décor and add a touch of eclecticism to your home.

GETTING THE HANG OF IT: Installing Art In Your Home

Often times, artwork is brought into the home as the finishing touch. It is the element that can instantly create warmth in a space, and, make the space expand visually while creating a point of interest in a room.

- 1** Artwork should be installed so that the picture's center point is at eye level for the average person.



- 2** When installing more than one piece of art (in a grouping) remember it should be thought of as one unit. Before you pound nails into your wall, lay out the artwork on the floor, or, lay each piece out on brown wrapping paper. Next, trace each piece to determine where the picture-hanging hooks should be installed. Tape the paper up on the wall as a template for each picture-hanging hook. This will make installation a breeze.



- 3** As a general rule, when installing art over a piece of furniture, the art should not be more than 75 percent of the furniture's width. The bottom of the artwork should be within 4-8 inches of the top of the furniture.

- 4** Artwork with horizontal lines will elongate or widen a wall. It will also draw attention to the focal point of the room. Artwork with vertical lines adds to the illusion of height in a room.

- 5** Always use picture-hanging hooks rated for the weight of the art, (5 lbs., 20 lbs., etc). They can be purchased at your local hardware store.

- 6** Artwork can be lost visually unless it is properly illuminated. The right lighting will give the artwork importance. ☀