

## Title:

Where And Why - The Smart Buy Art

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## Summary:

Since the days when cavemen began drawing on the walls - everyone has, at some point, displayed art in their home. In the beginning it was probably something we painted ourselves at kindergarten, aged four and a half, for mum to proudly display on the fridge in the kitchen, developing in our teens to the picture of the girl scratching her bare bottom on the tennis court or, in our later years, a genuine impressionist painting by an elephant called Tojo, purchased while on hol...

## Keywords:

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## Article Body:

Since the days when cavemen began drawing on the walls - everyone has, at some point, displayed art in their home. In the beginning it was probably something we painted ourselves at kindergarten, aged four and a half, for mum to proudly display on the fridge in the kitchen, developing in our teens to the picture of the girl scratching her bare bottom on the tennis court or, in our later years, a genuine impressionist painting by an elephant called Tojo, purchased while on holiday in Thailand. At some point we have all fallen in love with an "image" and chosen to decorate our abode with that "must have" picture which momentarily amused or inspired us.

So, "art" for the home is nothing new. What is new is its' abundance. Art is much more available now than it has ever been and the variety of things to choose from has never been more diverse. These days we can buy images of anything from architecture to erotica. We can buy it easier too. There is art on the internet, in furniture stores, high street galleries or even at the multiple outlet retailers who tempt us with their range of mass produced "two year tops - skip fodder". We are literally spoilt for choice of things to buy.

But what should we buy and where should we buy it? Anyone can hang a picture on the wall, it's easy. Buy something suitable, bang a nail in the wall, hang it up - job done! But that, dear reader, is as far from the truth as it is possible to get. In my opinion there are just three types of people who buy art. Those with

genuine artistic appreciation and an eye for real talent, those who find it hard to make a distinction between creativity and an unmade bed and, probably worst of all - the decorists. What are "decorists" you may well ask - and so you should, for you might indeed be one of them.

Decorists are that happy band of picture hunters who never go shopping without their little bag of accoutrements. This essential selection of undeniable criteria can include many and diverse items. But those most commonly in place in their "art trappers bag" will be a swatch of curtain material, a piece of wallpaper, piping from the edge of a cushion, a lump of laminate flooring or the front of a draw from the new kitchen units. These people are to be helped and understood, for they are not responsible for their actions. They suffer from a condition you could call "refititis" which is usually caused or at least irritated by watching too many telly "experts" telling them that a piece of MDF painted the exact colour to match those items in their bag, is as good to hang up in your home as something genuinely artistic that employed real talent in its creation. Pretty though that may make your home, shallow is what it makes you.

There are only two rules to apply to the purchase of a picture for personal use in a private home.

1. Buy what you truly like to look at.
2. Spend what you can afford.

Such rules can, of course, be greatly extended but, simplistically, these are the two that really determine the purchase of most pictures sold today. What is more important is to understand what a picture is and what it does for you and your home. This is a topic that should provoke the whole picture industry to book a hall at the N.E.C. for a national debate, but here it is as I see it:

- The only place you should buy your pictures from is a specialist gallery - or the artist?

That's generally sound advice. In both cases you can ask pertinent questions relating to the "art" and you should be able to expect a "sensible" answer. But watch out! Both can be biased and both are hungry to take your money off you. So, listen and take their advice with caution. Beware of the "independent" galleries that I call "Pubs". These purport to be selling quality art that "you simply must be collecting right now". What they are really doing is trying to shift their stock of sole supplier, industry dictated, over priced limited edition prints by artists who, once their day in the limelight is over, may be as worthless as that tennis player scratching her bare bottom. Essentially, there is nothing wrong with buying such pictures, the artistry is mostly

excellent and very worthy of being featured in your home, so long as you are aware that what you are buying is often a "fashionable piece" and like your hair style in your wedding photos, may look bloody ridiculous in years to come. Whether you are told, with all genuine intention, that "this is a good investment", choose not to believe it. The advice may well be right. But don't take the risk. Stick to the two rules, if you like it and can afford it buy it.

- Pictures are much cheaper at the superstores.

Yes, they certainly can be - and for very good reason. Now, call me a snob if you like but for the same reasons I don't go to Spain for my holidays to sit on a beach full of thousands of other overweight fat English people, I don't buy pictures from a pallet in Ikea. I simply don't want to make my personal space exactly the same as everyone else's. If I had been born a Cow or a Sheep I'm sure I would have walked away from the rest of the Herd or Flock to stand on my own. But, same rules... if you like it, there's no one on this planet to say you can't have it. Just don't invite me round for dinner.

- I only buy original Oil Paintings.

Very good, you are on the road to enlightenment and freedom of expression. However, you must be careful here too. There are original Oil Paintings and, wait for it, original Oil Paintings. You must be sure of what you are buying. Any oil painting is worth only what someone is prepared to pay for it. I tell my artists that a fair price to start from when pricing a work is double the amount it cost in materials and the sum amount of the hours it took to paint it, determined of course by the amount the artist expects to earn per hour. Any increment after that is essentially a grey area and inextricably linked to the quality and skills of the individual artist. Something you might choose to argue in your negotiations before you buy. This type of artwork is at least "honest" and "original" so our two rules apply again. The other type of Original Oil Painting is a very different story. I only need to say two words of warning, "Far East". China, Taiwan, South Korea etc are all wonderful suppliers of "Original Oil Paintings". They are very nice, painted by talented hands, but far from unique and even further from original. Many such paintings travel along a line of workers for each to add their individual bit, be it clouds, trees or rippling stream. The same rules apply - so long as you know "what" you are buying.

To Summarise

Shop at a reputable gallery, listen to what you are told with your ears open, ask plenty of questions, never allow yourself to be "sold" a picture, only buy

pictures not promises, unless you are an expert don't expect to buy as an investment, try to resist buying from a stack of identical pictures on a shelf, purchase strictly by the two rules and as you do, remember one last thought. The pictures on your wall tell others more about you than you might think. Consider the pictures you or your friends own now. What do they tell you about the people living in that house? Are they sporty, humorous, well travelled, pretentious, old fashioned, modern, driven by the herd, spontaneous, lovers of safe recognised artists, cultured or haven't they got a clue? You be the judge but for what ever reason, do allow yourself to enjoy your chosen art whatever it may be and to yourself be true. After all, your taste in art is as individual as you are - or it should be.