

Title:

Hanging Art In The Home - 20 Top Tips

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Summary:

1. First decide what sort of impression you want to make with "pictures". Do you want to be fashionable and arty or do you want to display family photos, nostalgia or personal interests? If you wish you can include all of the above, but you may make a better job of it if you have designated areas for each. For example you may want to make a statement with an impressive single abstract piece in your living room, while in the hall or dining room you could display more personal ...

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Article Body:

1. First decide what sort of impression you want to make with "pictures". Do you want to be fashionable and arty or do you want to display family photos, nostalgia or personal interests? If you wish you can include all of the above, but you may make a better job of it if you have designated areas for each. For example you may want to make a statement with an impressive single abstract piece in your living room, while in the hall or dining room you could display more personal items. There are no rules as such, but try to harmonise your displays so that they do not compete for the viewer's attention. If you can try and rationalise where and why you hang each item. Ultimately you will get more out of each piece and your guests will sense yours to be an organised and methodical household.

2. Keep your choice of art in proportion to where you will hang it. If a picture is too large it will look cramped and suffocated, if it is too small it will look lost and insignificant. Many people think that if there is room for a picture to squeeze in between the mantelpiece and the ceiling it will work there. Not so, you must allow the space around the picture to become part of the framing too. All surrounding space must be balanced and equal.

3. Never try to save money by forcing a picture into a frame that neither suits it, fits it or displays it to the best advantage. A cheap frame is a false economy for you can end up with a dreadful result that simply looks "make-do".

Compared to furniture and flooring, pictures can often be thought of as of minor importance in the grand scheme of the room. This is not so at all. Think of a picture as the Tiara on the Bride or the Cream on the Cake. It is the finishing touch that will often turn into the major focal point of the room. If it looks denied its full potential splendour - so will the room.

4. Always consider the picture first when framing it and not the décor of the room. The picture will always stay the same and is a complete entity in its own right. Its position in the house or the décor of the room may change many times in its life with you, so make sure the picture is "right" in itself and is not dictated to by the colour of the curtains it hangs next to. Such influences can ensure the picture is actually diminished in stature by forcing it to conform with its surroundings.

5. Always choose images "you" like and not what "Mavis across the road" considers to be good taste. Certainly never take the advice of anyone likely to say something like "Well I think it will look good in your place but, of course, I'd never hang it in my house". Have the courage to be guided by your own taste. Other people not liking it does not make it bad. Art is very personal and you should never set out to please others outside your own family.

6. If you buy a print or painting for a good price don't allow the fact to convince you it only deserves a cheap frame. If you got a bargain - great! Now invest the money you saved on a frame that will really make it look fantastic. The value of a good picture is not necessarily determined by how much you paid for it, but much more by how it looks and what it does for your home.

7. If you have short or narrow rooms you can make them look longer by displaying long panoramic pieces that carry the eye along the wall. This works especially well along the length of a dining table or across the back of a settee. Alternatively you can use three to six smaller square pieces hanging in a balanced, evenly spaced line.

8. Another space illusion can be achieved by matching your framed art with a similarly treated mirror. Not only will this give the illusion of more space, it will also help to spread more light around the room.

9. Picture rails seem to be coming back into fashion, but think long and hard before you decide to actually use them to support your pictures. Long wires required to suspend pictures at the proper height can introduce ugly lines to otherwise clear walls and can complicate the overall effect. The best way to hang a picture is as if "by magic" with no apparent evidence for its maintained position.

10. Always insist your pictures are strung for hanging with a good quality wire and not cord. The use of cord can often ensure a future trip to the framer to repair a picture that "suddenly fell off the wall for no reason". The reason is of course fatigue and rotting which will eventually occur in most cords regardless of quality. Also insist that your wires are fitted into the back board of the picture and not to the frame itself. This is for two reasons. Firstly, such frame fixings will ensure long term pulling on the mitres which can eventually pull the corners apart. Secondly such wide wiring will also give the picture a tendency to sway more thus hanging out of line. Central back board fixings are much more balanced and sturdy.

11. The coloured cardboard edging that framers use to surround a picture when framing is called a Mount, Mat or Pass Pa Tu. Always try to include such a feature when framing a print or water colour. In truth it is often an essential component in the frames structure, used by the framer to hold the picture in place. However, it also provides another dynamic to the overall look, keeps your print away from the glass and when used properly, protects your print from any acidity in the frame that may cause damage over the years. Photographs especially benefit from a Mount as when placed against glass can often stick or give the appearance of wet patches which are at least, very unsightly.

12. The terms "Portrait" and "Landscape" are more accurately applied to the attitude of the picture, that is, "Tall" or "Wide" rather than to the picture content. A portrait does not necessarily have to be a picture of a person any more than a landscape has to feature fields and trees etc.

13. Always insist on a wooden frame as opposed to a "composite" which will be made from extruded and pressed plastic. The latter may be cheaper and lighter but they are usually hard to join securely and will often show gaps at the mitres. Larger pictures will often bow over time and require re-framing. While often very attractive, they are not the best investment in my opinion.

14. When framing family pictures consider placing more than one in each frame. Modern mount cutting equipment is computerised and a good quality framer will have such equipment to enable him to produce almost anything you ask for. It will save money too. Displaying three 8" x 10" photos in one frame can cost up to a third less than it will cost to frame them individually.

15. Non reflective Glass will usually cost you up to double the price of regular 2mm float glass in your frames. However, it will cut down glare by up to 80% and reduce the damage to your art from UV light by around 70%. Usually, after you choose non reflective glass once it is unlikely you will ever go back to the

cheaper alternative.

16. If you are buying an Oil Painting stick to these two rules: Buy what you like and spend what you can afford. Never buy as an investment as in 99% of cases - it won't be. Make sure the picture is an original painted by one artist and don't be fooled by the factory painted originals from the Far East. They often look good and are okay to buy so long as you know what you are getting for your money. The "original" you fall in love with could be just one of hundreds that look exactly the same painted on a conveyer belt principle.

17. Try and avoid fancy baroque style gold frames "unless" they suit your décor. Elaborate or fancy frames take attention away from the picture itself, the important part. The modern way is simple straight lines with more attention to clever mounting than fancy frames. Your framer will advise you.

18. Beware of Fads! Wacky art may look great when you first see it, but how quickly might it become out dated? If you are fashion conscious you must either be prepared to spend your money chasing the "latest thing" or preferably choose more carefully, selecting items that won't date so fast. Abstracts are often good at deflecting the passage of time but choose a good one, some would say "anyone could paint that" but believe me - they can't!

19. We've all seen them, those clever pictures that light up, dazzle us with flowing waterfalls, sparkling backgrounds, foil images often purchased from salespeople at the door. Well, they all fall into one category - Junk. The best advice when considering buying something along these lines is - Don't!

20. Take a look at the old pictures you have in your home right now. If you are thinking of getting rid of them - ask yourself why? Do you hate the picture itself or has the whole ensemble simply started to look tired or tatty? Very often the existing pictures in your home are exactly the new thing you are looking for, they just need smartening up. A new frame, clean glass and a different mount can make all the difference and provide something both new and familiar you will be very happy with.