

THE ART OF COLLECTING ART

TEXT BY GABRIELLE SHAIN-BRYSON PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF SHAIN GALLERY

“A reproduction is a pale reflection of the original.”

Collecting art is one of life’s great pleasures whether it’s for the love of art, a profit, or both. However, there is no denying there is a lot of “smoke and mirrors” in the art market. Below is some valuable information to help guide you in your journey. Other places that will help increase your knowledge and art education are art galleries, websites and art books.

TRUST YOUR GALLERY

Don’t feel intimidated by a spending time in a gallery. Look for a gallery whose reputation is for offering their clients the best they can—without compromising for market trends. A good painting has a timeless quality and will resonate with viewers in any decade and will never seem dated. Don’t hesitate to ask your dealer to justify the pricing. *(Note: avoid the mall and “production art.” Quality art is original and can’t be mass produced for multiple retail locations)*

TRUST YOURSELF

I find most people have a better instinct for art than they realize. Everyone’s response to a work of art is equal because it’s your response. Reading about art is great but just looking and looking and then looking some more is a sure way to gain appreciation—you’re contributing to your visual memory and mentally cataloging layers of comparisons.

ART IS AN INVESTMENT IN QUALITY OF LIFE

The best gallery owners and curators won’t tout art as an “investment” per se. Art is for enjoyment and for adding layers of culture, for fun.

START SMALL

This is a good way to test yourself and your instincts without breaking the bank.

You can collect wonderful pieces that aren’t necessarily expensive. I’ve seen some exciting pieces by high school students—if you can get their parents to part with it. Also, keep an eye on your own children, they may produce something frame-worthy.

COLLECT LIVING ARTISTS

You are supporting the artists and enabling them to continue doing what they do. Also, this way you’ll never wind up with a fake. In the secondary market the artist receives not a penny.

READ THE ARTIST’S RESUME

It helps to read the artist’s statement and relate it to what you are looking at and to the price you are paying.

ON APPROVAL

Any reputable gallery will want you to try the painting at home on approval and experience it for a few days. (That includes that great palm frond piece in neon that you saw in Hawaii. Like the flowered shirt, it may not be really you when you get it back home.)

ART AND THE POWER OF PLACEMENT

Art and the Power of Placement is the title of a new book, touted as definitive, about placing art. Yes, we do joke about the “over the sofa” painting; however, venue can enhance or detract from the power or the enjoyment of a piece. (This was demonstrated by the recent flak over a Pollack that was hung in a huge canyon of a space in the new MOMA where much of its impact was lost.) So

yes, it’s logical to ask yourself where you are going to put it but if you are madly in love with it—it won’t matter.

POLITICS AND ART DON’T MIX

This is a standard directive for any fine arts discipline. Good art is not politically motivated.

QUESTIONS TO ASK

- Does this painting have an emotional content?
- Does this work express successfully what it was meant to express?
- Does it “grow on you”—increases in stature every day and intrigue you every time you look at it?

HAVE FUN

The experience of visiting galleries and museums is something of a sanctuary from every day concerns. The end result could be the joy of seeing an artwork

that you admired enough to bring home, grow into a regular “family member.”*

Shain Gallery presents “Painters of the Surikov Institute, Moscow” Wine and cheese reception Friday, October 6, 6-9 p.m. Show through October 31. Located at 2823 Selwyn Avenue at Selwyn Corners, 704.334.7744, www.shaingallery.com. Gallery hours: 10 a.m. - 5 p.m., Tuesday - Saturday.

Clockwise from top left: Shain Gallery interior; Photography courtesy of David Ramsey “Still Life with Pie”, Smirnova Tsvetlana, 23 5/8 x 21 5/8, oil on canvas;

“Old Estate”, Alexander Kosnichev, 27 x 37, oil on canvas;

“Autumn Day”, Andre Smirnov, 15 3/4 x 23 5/8, oil on canvas.

