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collect now

START YOUR GALLERY AT HOME WITH TIPS FROM THE PROS

TOBIAS VERNON

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Building a collection is about how pieces both juxtapose and work together. If you have a monochrome piece you then probably want something more colourful next to it; if you have something intricately detailed, try placing it next to a piece that has larger, softer swathes of colour; if you have something abstract, add something figurative. Mixing different mediums – paper, ceramics, sculpture, textiles – creates a vibrant display and having work by a known artist next to the anonymous or the unknown gives a nice dimension.

Think about the narrative of your collection as a whole – what's the story behind it? What memories does it evoke? What does it say about your personality? It should be balanced, but idiosyncratic and driven from the heart.

Creating a collection isn't just about going shopping; enjoy the process and the research. Be prepared not to find the perfect piece immediately; be patient.

Instagram is incredible for sourcing contemporary work. You'll find me scrolling @waynepate, @hauserwirth, @mourlotditions and @stonemanfineart. If you see something you want to buy online, try printing it out and sticking it on the wall – it's good to step back from it and look at it away from a screen.

There are lots of ways to discover affordable art. Prints, additions and preparatory studies are a good place to start. I buy lots of unsigned etchings and artist's proofs on eBay and often pick up paintings from antiques markets. If you're wavering over buying something, it's probably not the right fit. Focus on how the art makes you feel. When you find the right piece, you'll know.

shollandstreet.com

TOURIA EL GLAOUI

Founding director of
the 1-54 Contemporary
African Art Fair

When starting a collection, do the research and see as much art as possible – speak to art dealers, galleries and artists and go to art fairs to develop an understanding of what it is you would like to collect and what's on the market. If you're not sure, don't buy something expensive first. Accumulate five or six pieces that you're drawn to and you'll start to understand the artists, mediums and eras you like.

Building a collection takes time. I find it's best not to think about how much it might be worth, just be true to your taste and buy what you love. It will likely be in your home for a while.

Art from the African continent, or South America or Asia is often more accessible as those artists are not as visible, or part of the most eminent collections which are traditionally of European or American artists. For other more affordable options, look into art coming out of residency programmes and degree shows. And don't neglect the auction houses, they can have great deals.

Rising talents I'm watching at the moment include February James (februaryjames.com), Nabeeha Mohamed (@nabeeha_m) and Michaela Younge (@michaela_younge) and my favourite art Instagram accounts are @mobaala, @afrogallionism, @princejyesi, @alicemann and @armando_marino_artist.

I suspect if you take the top hundred collectors in the world, their collections are very similar, filled with the top contemporary artists of the moment. Staying true to yourself and buying things that you like and which represents you rather than what's popular will make your collection unique and engaging. A collection should bring joy!

1-54.com

KATE BRYAN

Arts broadcaster and
head of collections
for Soho House

Find works which speak to you. Put the art first and the overall collection second, you'll enjoy it so much more. Use Instagram to connect directly with artists around the world and follow their practice. My favourite accounts are: @blueshopcottage, @sidmotiongallery, @arcadiamissa, @ablackhistoryofart, @drawingroom_ldn, @paperpatrons, @guts_gallery, @she_curates_and @newcontemps. And have a listen to the Talk Art podcast.

If you're buying art online and are unsure about anything, just ask the artist. Make sure you understand what the medium is. How does it need to be hung? Does it need to be framed? What are the dimensions? If it's sculptural, what's the depth? If it's not signed, does it have a certificate of authenticity?

Degree shows are a great way to discover young artists. Visit shows at Goldsmiths, Slade, Camberwell, the RCA and the RA. Young talents I have my eye on include poet artist Gommie (gommie.com), Holly Allan who makes embroideries (@holly_allan), vibrant painter Dawn Beckles (dawnbeckles.com), Eliza Hopewell who paints feminist plates (elizahopewellplates.com), sculptor Amy Stephens (amystephens.co.uk) and Sarah Maple, who explores identity (sarahmaple.com).

Editions are an economical way to start a collection, such as the limited-edition prints at Soho Home Editions, which I curate. Try the Other Art Fair, where artists present their own work, and the Art Car Boot Fair, where artists make a finite number of pieces. Art is an emotional and cultural investment. If you're not feeling anything for a piece then it's not right for you. Trust your gut.

katebryanart.com