



GAP ARTWORKS

Home is where the art is...

Inspired by this week's Frieze fairs? Here's how to make the best of your own collection, according to the experts. *Jessica Doyle* writes

The elite of the art-buying world descended on London this week, as the capital's biggest art fairs opened their doors. If you're lucky enough to have cash to splurge, PAD in Berkeley Square (pad-fairs.com; until Sunday) is a feast of 20th-century art and design from high-end, mainly European galleries; while superfair Frieze and its sister Frieze Masters

(both in Regent's Park, NW1; frieze.com; until Sunday) cover, between them, the full spectrum from ancient objects to contemporary works, from more than 160 international galleries. For those with a more modest budget and an eye for the next big thing, Saatchi Art's The Other Art Fair (Truman Brewery, E1; theotherartfair.com; until Sunday) is the place to meet and buy from emerging artists. Whether you are a seasoned collector or an art rookie, and whether your penchant is for Old Masters or modern prints, to do a collection

Perfect position: grouping frames of different sizes on a shelf can add interest

justice you need to consider how to frame, hang and light it. We asked the experts for their top tips.

Buying

Art enhances a home like nothing else, but starting a collection can be an intimidating prospect.

According to Patrick Perrin, founder and CEO of Pad London, the first thing to do is not to rush: "It's important to look, observe, take your time and get advice from others - but don't follow trends; there is no point imitating other collectors. Perhaps the most important piece of advice is to avoid collecting beyond your resources. Buy the best that you can justify within your budget."

If you're starting from scratch, browsing an art fair is a great way to refine your taste - even if you can't afford to buy - while auctions, junk shops and online galleries provide a more accessible way of building up a collection. Cheaper still, the *House & Garden* website's "things to put in frames" series offers prints as free downloads, by artists including Luke Edward Hall and Susannah Garrod.

Framing

The choice of a frame can have a huge impact on how an artwork is perceived - sometimes it is the frame itself that gives a decorative effect. A group of a similar style or colour lends cohesion, and cheap frames can be customised using products such as Annie Sloan's waxes and finishes (anniesloan.com).

For more important pieces, a bespoke framing service such as John Jones (johnjones.co.uk) is invaluable, both in terms of advising on a style of frame to suit the artwork and in ensuring it is protected and preserved.

In terms of style, there are no rules, says Matt Jones, the firm's managing director: "Increasingly, older frames are coming off and we're getting an interesting crossover between traditional and contemporary. A lot of our customers are asking for modern, slim designs with a traditional finish such as gilding."

What goes inside can be equally interesting: the modern glass box is a useful device for housing anything from rare fabrics to a child's first shoes.

Hanging

Knowing how to position your art is the key to bringing out its qualities. The placement of a piece affects not only the light in which it is viewed but also the look of the entire room.

Interior designer Niloufar Bakhtiar-Bakhtiar, a Royal Academy patron and member of Tate Modern's acquisitions committee, says: "Art should be hung lower than you think. Many people fall into the trap of hanging too high, which creates an awkward focal point."

Using built-in shelving gives you the option to change your pictures quickly

YOUR ART STARTS HERE

Josef Albers, *Study for Homage to the Square: Welcome*, 1959, POA, Vertes Zurich at PAD (pad-fairs.com)



Framed poster by Mareike Böhmer, from £23.90, Junique (junique.co.uk)



A Vase of Flowers with a Watch by Willem Van Aelst, from £70 for an unframed print, Surface View (surfaceview.co.uk)



Fjøluraut Pall limited-edition print by Kristjana S Williams, £115, Outline Editions (outline-editions.co.uk)



Selvedge by Kimvi Nguyen for Inigo Scout, £1,100, Curious Egg (curiousegg.com)



and easily. "Seeing pieces from a new angle can be like seeing them again for the first time," says Bakhtiar-Bakhtiar. In the absence of shelving, try installing a couple of picture ledges; Ikea's start from £4.95 (ikea.com).

Lighting

Illuminating artworks properly is vital, and the trend is for a subtle glow, rather than a harsh, unnatural white light.

Andrew Molyneux and Harry Triggs, co-founders of TM Lighting (tmlighting.com), have created a range of lights using LEDs, which minimise UV rays and heat emission (both can damage delicate artworks), and also cut energy consumption.

They divide lighting into three main styles: collector, where every piece is lit specifically using individual lights; casual, where a key picture in a group is lit with a pool of light that spills on to other works; and intermediate, using accent lights to project a wash of light across a group of artworks.

The style of fixtures to use depends on the style of the house: modern rooms suit discreet spotlights, which also offer greater flexibility, while a classical setting might require picture lights, a more precise lighting tool.

"If you're using picture lights, consider using a finish to match other features in the room, such as door handles or other light fixtures," say Molyneux and Triggs. "Alternatively, match the finish of the picture light to the frame or wall colour."

Creating a gallery wall

The gallery wall has become ubiquitous in recent years - partly because it's a great way to display disparate works of art. If you haven't yet built up a collection, you can cheat by buying sets of framed prints that can be hung together for a unified look; Oka (oka.com) has several, starting from £85 for a set of three.

To hang a more eclectic group of different-sized artworks, start from the middle and work outwards. Mismatched frames add interest but can look overly busy, while different frames painted the same colour as other elements in a room can help to pull a scheme together.

Poppy Rooney, chief art adviser at online marketplace Artfinder.com, suggests doing a mock-up before you commit to hammer and nail: "Decide if odd or even numbers work best; even numbers of pictures work well in regimented groups of the same size, but random arrangements are better with odd numbers. Measure your wall space and lay your collection on the floor, then take photos of possible combinations. Draw lightly on the walls where the top corners of the frames will be, then measure and mark where you will need your nail holes."

The beauty of this approach is the freedom it gives you to chop and change, adding new styles and types of work as your collection grows.