

The pocket guide to buying fine art

The pocket guide to buying Fine Art; Things to look for and questions to ask.

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If you are in the market for a beautiful painting with a place already picked out on your dining room wall remember you better love it because you'll be looking at it every single day. Take your time and go to as many studios, galleries and shows as possible. Talk to artists that will eventually give you the most insight about what is good and what is bad. Go online look at artist websites, galleries, artist projects, art on demand the list is endless. Contact artists via email. Go to an artist's studio and ask some questions.

Don't be intimidated!

Most artists are shy and not salesmen so asking questions may be the only way you'll get them to open up.

Here are some things to consider when talking to an artist.

Some artists find it necessary to talk about obscurities in their art, which is unfortunate because that sometimes means they don't have a clear direction. I have met artists like this and they seem more interested in making a statement than they do about making quality art. Don't get me wrong, controversial statements in art are good but the art needs to be the precipitous for a strong presentation and should have a stand-alone element.

On the other hand if an artist can't talk about their art they may not have done enough or may be at a very early point in their career. In any case it's important to know if they will be making art in a couple of years.

When an artist is excited about their work it's clearly stated in their voice and their product. So look for that excitement!

Another thing to look for is consistency and quality

There should be a vein of consistency in the artists painting style. Does there seem to be a natural progression in the work and is there more than one series of paintings?

Is there an era of sophistication in the work through a use of texture, form, space, colour and line. That may seem beyond many peoples comprehension but the more art you look at the more these elements will sublimely help you to identify what is good and bad.

How long has the artist been painting and what are their credentials.

Education/shows/collections. The reason you should know this is because the longer an artist has been creating art the more likely they'll continue to create art.

I always make sure people know I've been a painter for 30 years and that I'll be painting until I die. That

just adds a little credibility to an art career.

One of the toughest things for buyers and artists alike is to understand is pricing.

Some standards for pricing paintings are/by size/content/date created/ time taken to create the piece and in most cases, all of above. Most times, especially in an artist's studio, prices won't be posted. So don't be afraid to ask for the price even if you think it's beyond your budget. Nothing is written in stone tell the artist what you like and how much your budget is.

Generally speaking an emerging artist (recently out of art school) will sell their work for under \$1000. A mid career artist may ask from \$500-\$5000 for his work. A peak career artist will be selling work from \$10,000 – \$30,000 depending on their success and the demand for their work. Pricing is usually congruent with availability.

The bottom line is supply and demand. The more advanced the artist the longer he's been painting which means the more demand there is for his art = the price you will pay.

All means of pricing is valid and is applicable to the work you are seeing. Pay attention to how many finished paintings are lying around an artist's studio, maybe you'll pick-up an exceptional painting at a bargain. If you are attending an exhibit or gallery make arrangements to drop by the artists studio.

As you can see there may be few things worth considering when setting out to buy a painting or any piece of art for that matter. Just remember that art is more than a purchase it's an investment. An original painting will always increase in value especially as the artist's career develops. You are investing in the artist. So get to know them. Pay several visits to their studio.

Above all find something you love and have some fun buying it.

Here are a few key points of the Pocket Guide

- * Buy what you love
- * Learn something about the artist
- * Look for consistency in quality of the work
- * How long has the artist been painting?
- * How is their art priced?