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How To Buy Grown-Up Art Without Going Broke (Or Setting Foot In A Gallery)



Like many decisions in life, buying art is easier when you're young. After all, no one is seriously going to judge you for that "Keep Calm And Carry On" poster you've got adorning your walls when you're barely able to make rent. But once you become a home owner (or tenant) of a certain age, you start to care a little more about what's in your place (and on your walls).

In a recent survey commissioned by online art dealer UGallery, 70 percent of people have never bought artwork -- ever. And 20 percent found it to be the most intimidating shopping experience of all -- more so than shopping for real estate or an expensive car. But while real-deal art collecting does require a certain degree of savvy, simply adorning your walls doesn't. Here are 6 low-stress ways to do it, without setting foot in a gallery... or going broke.

The NADA Art Fair



Charlotte Southern/Bloomberg via Getty Images

Though not as intimidating as an actual art auction, the scene (and price tags) you'll find at Art Basel can be a lot for even experienced collectors. In an interview with GQ magazine, Chris Perez of Ratio 3 gallery in San Francisco recommends starting with the smaller, less expensive NADA Art Fair instead: "For the collector with a thin wallet, I recommend first checking out NADA...Most of the hip, younger galleries at Art Basel got their start here—it's the place to see on-the-cusp work and make exciting discoveries." Another less intimidating (and tax-deductible) place to shop: Silent charity auctions.

Paint & Sip



Pinot's Palette

So maybe you've never thought of your own work as worthy of that spot on your living room wall, but we don't recommend making that call until you've at least tried your hand at a painting or, better yet, painting while sipping a glass of wine. "Paint and sips," like the one offered by Pinot's Palette in New York City, are 2 to 3 hour painting events cropping up across the country, where locals enjoy their favorite cocktails and snacks while working alongside local artists to create masterpieces they can bring home at the end of the night. The price tag for an original piece of art: \$28 to \$48; the chance to maybe even meet someone to cuddle up next to that artwork with: Priceless.

Let The Previous Owners Do All The Work



Nico Arenallo

You'll certainly cover your bases when it comes to buying or renting your next place -- adequate square footage, ample closet space, newly refinished hardwood floors... -- but if art is important to you, it's worth checking whether the pieces used to stage your new home can be included in the deal. New York agency CORE says the inclusion of pricey art pieces may be a growing real estate trend, pointing to two listings of their own that feature pieces by Basquiat and Andy Warhol, among others. "In both cases the owners' art collection may be valued at or above the listing price of the home itself," Director of Communications, Erin Ryder, says. Check out the impressive spaces at U.N. Plaza and East 57th Street at Sutton Place.

Skip The Pricey Frame



framed & matted

So you've made the leap and purchased your first real piece of art? Bravo! You've conquered half the battle. The next hurdle? Framing it. It not only adds a finishing touch and uniformity with other pieces you're hanging, but a frame protects your art (read: increases its value down the road). Prices and quality vary wildly, however, as Cookie Vazquez of C.L.V. Art Services in Manhattan told GQ. We like online framing service [Framed & Matted](#) whose affordable (\$75 to \$250) handiwork helped create the corner gallery shown here, though for especially valuable pieces (like that Warhol we mentioned earlier) you might want to stick with an in-person pro.

Estate Sales



Twee Art via Getty Images

Somewhere past the mismatched china and overpriced furniture, you just might find a rare artistic gem. "That's how I got my awesome (albeit unfinished) canvas work for \$5," says HuffPost Home's resident shopping expert, Brie Dyas. "There were [also] complete original works by a listed artist going for as little as \$50." Before you go, check out more of her tips on navigating the estate sale scene.

Online



Warren Keating/UGallery

Boasting curated, original art from talented mid-career and emerging artists, online art dealers like [UGallery](#) and [20x200](#) are considered just as good a place to start a collection as any other these days. The added benefits of buying artwork online? Money-back return policies, details and background on the artists, and a virtual way to see what the piece will look like on your wall topped the list of things survey respondents said when asked by UGallery what would make them more comfortable buying art.