



# TURN YOUR HOME INTO

EVERYTHING YOU NEED  
TO KNOW ABOUT BUYING  
AND HANGING ART

**A**rt by nature is an expression of the heart created from love and collected because of love. Installing art, however, is integration of both science and feelings — a task for the mind and heart.

As a former gallery director, I am excited to share advice for acquiring and installing art in your home. A truly harmonious outcome is when the art resonates with your personality and relates in a



STORY BY **PATRICIA WILSON**

# A GALLERY

complementary manner to everything in the room.

## SET GOALS

Before you shop for art, determine your goal. Are you buying it for enjoyment? Is it for investment value and future sale? Are you building a private collection? Do you create your own art?

Be clear on styles and colors you prefer, the size of the space you are filling and your budget. If you've commissioned a piece, allow the artist plenty of time for the creative endeavor. Hire professional installers if the piece is large.

## UNDERSTAND VALUE

The value of art reaches beyond monetary worth. It includes cultural, societal and historical importance. Beauty is a powerful energy! Think about nature's birds and bees, flowers and trees. Without the beauty of flowers to attract, what would our world look like?

Contemporary art, antiques, folk art and digital designs tell stories. Art that you create speaks of your passions. What values would you like the art to convey?

The concept of original art has changed. Before reproduction capabilities, an original meant a one-of-a-kind piece, those rare high-dollar items. Much of today's art begins in the computer, making it inherently reproducible and shareable.

## ENVISION YOUR LOOK

You might decide to let your colorful, vibrant paintings stand out and make a powerful impact. You can accomplish this by keeping walls and furnishings fairly neutral, monochromatic or calm.

If you prefer colorful wallpapers and textiles with lots of pattern and movement, opt for tonal, quiet compositions of art.

## EMOTIONAL IQ

Ask yourself, "Do I love this? Does this speak to me? Am I inspired?" Your heart will guide you.

New science shows that the heart has its own neural network that communicates with the brain. According to the HeartMath Institute, the feelings, emotions and intuition of the heart work together with the logic, science and reason of the brain.

Art is a fabulous example of the heart and brain working in tandem for the outcome of enjoyment.

## SIZE MATTERS

Consider scale, proportion and balance in addition to the size. Proportion means that the piece is neither too big nor too small for the area and does not intrude physically or emotionally.

Balance ensures the art has enough breathing space around it but not too much so that it is lost in space.

You can accomplish filling a large wall in two ways: with one large piece or with smaller pieces that when grouped feel like one large installation. Make a cardboard template to see how your idea fits.

## INSTALLING

Hanging art is subjective. A common rule of thumb is to hang the center of the piece 58 to 66 inches from the floor. A common mistake is to hang art too high.

A typical guideline for gallery exhibitions, and my personal preference, is to hang art at eye level. The goal of eye level is to easily view the art without needing to look up or down.

In addition to the measured center is the visual center. The visual center is not scientific. It's your intuition and has to feel right. Your judgment is useful for deciding where to place art in large open places such as a loft, atrium or grand staircase.

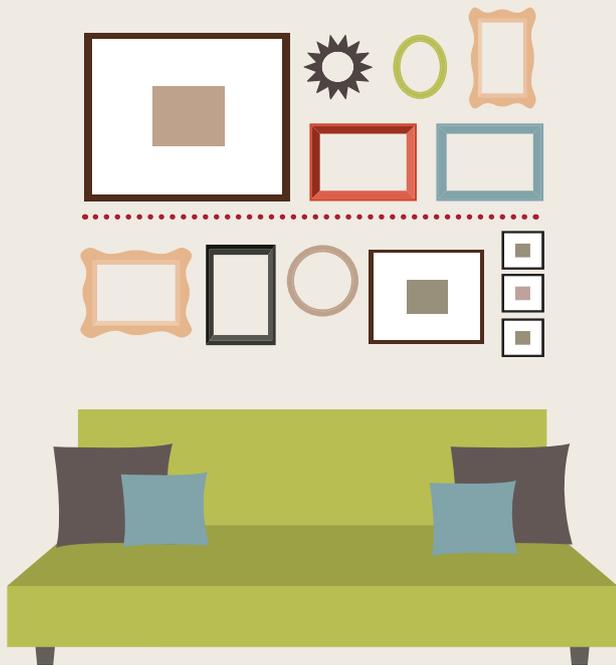
You can create a vignette by centering the art over a sofa or table, or within a group of furnishings. You might take the entire length of the room into account and center the piece on the wall. Decide whether to center the art with the door open or closed.

The sight line is where you are when you see the art. Think about whether the sight line is through the door, down the stairs or from the sofa?

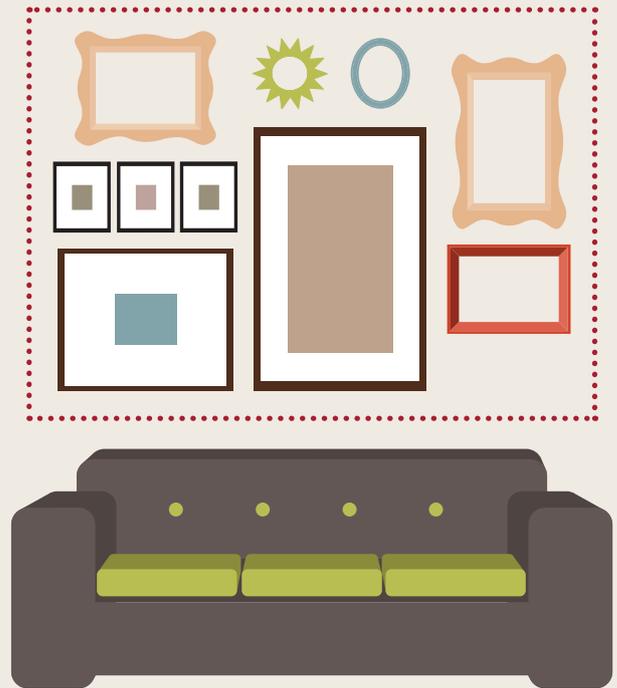
Your distance from the art is important. How far away or close do you need to be to capture and appreciate the essence of the art?

| CONT. ON PG. 90

## SURROUNDING A MIDLINE



## CONTAINED SPACE



## GALLERY WALLS 101

- 1 EDIT**  
Practice patience when it comes to building an art collection. Use flea market finds, personal investments and nostalgic pieces to reflect your interests.
- 2 FRAME AND MAT**  
Keep 50 to 75 percent of frames and mats the same color for a cohesive and clean look. Add some variation in color and texture to create visual interest.
- 3 PLAN YOUR GRID**  
Lay the pieces of art you have selected on the floor and trace their outlines on craft paper.
- 4 LABEL**  
Write descriptive labels that describe each piece to help you remember which stand-in is which. Pattern and color should figure into your layout.
- 5 CUT**  
Cut the shapes with along the hand-drawn lines to separate the dummy cutouts.
- 6 MAP**  
Hang the dummies on the wall with tape, starting with the outermost pieces to frame the space. Build around these boundaries varying the pieces by sizes and shapes. Leave at least three inches of white space between each piece.
- 7 HANG**  
Carefully hammer nails in place allowing for hangers. Tear away the paper once they're in place and hang the art.

| CONT. FROM PG. 89

Use hardware sufficient for the weight of the art. Heavy sculptures might need extra support in the wall. A professional contractor can help with installation.

If you are a collector and plan to build your own home, discuss with your architect about designing extra support into the walls.

### LIGHTING

You want light to gently wash over the entire piece. Avoid spotlight effects or

scalloped shadows.

It's important that light, including sunlight, not damage the art.

In general, art can be lit from the ceiling using moveable fixtures or wall-mounted sconces. Stained glass benefits from being backlit. Dimmers give you control over the intensity of light.

### FUNCTIONAL ART

Functional art goes beyond the aesthetic of two-dimensional visual art because it is useful. The utilitarian is

elevated to the beautiful.

Crafted by artisans, functional art includes mosaics, tapestries, area rugs a sculptural fountain, stained glass and pottery.

Beautiful architecture is a fine example of functional art.

Patricia Wilson is an artist and commercial interior designer registered with the Texas Board of Architectural Examiners. Previously she was director of Peter Paul Gallery in Sarasota, Florida. Visit her at [PatriciaCWilson.com](http://PatriciaCWilson.com).