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21 Hot Collecting Tips For The New Millennium

By John Nichols

"Collecting brings out that primitive instinct for the hunt in some of its devotees, who stalk their prey with skill." (Alicia Craig Faxon)

1. Collect forward. If you always look back on the art you could have bought in the past you might miss out on art you can collect today.
2. If you collect works of art on paper have them matted to a standard frame size to avoid the cost of custom framing. (i.e. 11×14, 16×20, etc.)
3. In buying older pieces try to examine them out of the frame. The art just might be glued down to cardboard, drastically lowering the value.
4. Carry a small magnifying glass. Learn what a reproduction looks like and what halftone dots are.
5. Don't go on Ebay after you have had a few glasses of wine.
6. If you really want to collect art as an investment look at art that has a secondary market. Can you resell it at auction?
7. Rotate the art in your home. Dedicate a closet or other space for the overflow. Don't let your art become wallpaper.
8. Insist on all acid-free materials in framing. Consider UV protective glass when needed.
9. It is impossible to develop an encyclopedic collection so develop areas of interest or themes. Concentrate on a particular medium or subject matter. You can develop collections within your collection.
10. Certain art styles go in and out of favor. Remember Southwest? Remember Dali lithographs? Good local art can be timeless.
11. Avoid "Special Occasion" art collecting. If you only go out to buy art at the Christmas season your choices are going to be very limited. Be on the lookout for what you like all year long and be ready to pounce.
12. Have fun.
13. Don't worry about insurance or appraisals unless you want to.

14. If you collect art of the quality that the Museum of Ventura County collects then you don't have to worry what's going to happen to all the art you collected after you die. It can be donated to a museum.
15. Join the Slow Collecting movement. Contact me for details.
16. Visit museums, visit galleries, visit artists' studios. See real art in person to develop your eye and taste.
17. If you are a serious art collector try not to marry one. Two collectors in the same household can be dangerous.
18. The time to buy art is when you see it.
19. If you are an artist you can also be a collector. Who do you think is going to buy your art if you don't buy art?
20. There is "Rule of Three" in collecting. Once you have 3 of anything you have a collection. If you don't want to start an owl collection then don't buy that third one.
21. Collecting art is really about the acquisition of skills not the acquisition of objects. Each new piece of art you collect and live with over time aids in the quest to better appreciate and understand your own reality. Make your art collecting a quest and not an obsession.