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# Art Attack

**Four months into working from home, it's probably time to spruce up your walls. Here's how to gently wade into the not-so-simple world of decorative art collecting**

by CARLY OSTROFF

**B**uying art can be an overwhelming process if you don't know the right place to start. But armed with a bit of knowledge — and maybe a bit of help — now is the perfect time to start collecting.

One option is to engage an art consulting firm, such as Mason Lane. The Brooklyn-based company, which recently opened a Toronto outpost, typically works with clients in the \$5,000-\$50,000 range looking to buy collectable emerging and mid-career artists. Found-er Katherine Earnhardt suggests asking yourself a few questions before you dive in. "The first is aesthetically — is this

interesting to me?" she says. The second is to consider the media, and third is evaluating the artist's process. And while art can be an investment, Earnhardt never recommends purchasing for resale value alone. "It's not a liquid asset, it's not easy to flip," she says. To get the most of an art purchase it's important to look at factors like originality, gallery backings, notable press and displays at art shows like Art Basel. Also: whether you actually want to live with it everyday.

We asked four experts to recommend artists and works they would buy now at various price points and for various aesthetics.

## FOR THE MINIMALIST

### Approximately \$10,000

"Canadian artist Niall McClelland became known for these pared down works which are essentially large photocopies that he would fold up in various ways and carry to and from the studio. They reminded him of old paintings and tapestries that had acquired creases from folding during looting and transport during and after the second World War. He liked how that experience had embedded itself into the artwork and felt that it made them more interesting to look at." – Roenisch



Niall McClelland, "No Maps", \$6,500 at Clint Roenisch.



Revivalist South, "Cut Paper Beige By Jordan Patterson," \$375 on montanalablle.com

### Ranges from \$300-\$900

"There is a company called Revivalist South and the artist Jordan Wright Patterson does some very cool hand cut paper pieces. She will take a piece of paper and just cut it with a knife to create texture. The pieces are so incredibly subtle the viewer actually has to go up to the frame to understand what's going on. The artwork draws in the viewer and trans-fixes them with the intricate details of the hand cut paper. Such detailed and timeless pieces such as this are always worth the investment." – Labelle

### THE EXPERTS



Clint Roenisch,  
Toronto gallerist



Katherine  
Earnhardt, Mason  
Lane founder



Montana Labelle,  
Toronto-based  
interior designer



Emily-Jean Alexander,  
Director of Toronto's  
Artist Project

## FOR THE MAXIMALIST



Adam Colangelo, "Falling Waters", \$2,950 at adamcolangelo.com

### **Ranges from \$25,000-\$95,000**

"Adam Colangelo's copper work is all about materiality. He exposes the copper to different elements to really show the artistic way in which the material can be manipulated. Adam's practice is based in the premise of art being a respite of the soul which is evident in his work. His work has been exhibited across North America with speciality designations for his work in copper." – Alexander



Ricardo Mazal, "KORA C4," \$25,000-\$95,000, Sundaram Tagore Gallery

"Ricardo Mazal is a contemporary Mexican artist who uses apparatuses like brooms to drag the paint across the canvas. The combination of relatively limited palette, big strokes and a lot of saturated colour is very high-impact." – Earnhardt



Amanda Valdez, "Lost & Found," \$5,000-\$30,000 at Denny Dimin Gallery

## FOR THE MIXED MEDIA LOVER

### **Approximately \$15,000**

"Toronto-based Jennifer Murphy is known for her large-scale works based on flora and fauna. Her interest in ecology and the natural cycles of life and death is manifested in delicately stitched together collages that evoke the splendour and fragility of the natural world." – Roenisch

### **Ranges from \$5,000-\$30,000**

"Amanda Valdez is a Brooklyn based artist and what makes her work exceptional is that when she paints she is really aware of the different chemical compounds. Even when she's sticking to one material like paint, she still plays with different textures." – Earnhardt



Jennifer Murphy, "Long Necked Avocet," \$12,000 at Clint Roenisch

**Ranges from \$ 1,500-\$8,500**

“If I could buy any piece it would be from William McClure, Alex Katz or Richard Sera. They’re beautiful, classic and timeless. I think it would be passed down from generation to generation almost like a Chanel bag or a Rolex. It’s one of those things that you might have for the next thirty years, and when you’re done with it, one of your grandkids will love it and admire it.” – Labelle



William McClure, “Mixed Media Abstract,” \$11,310, similar on williammcclure.com



Dan Christensen, “Dolby ”, \$25,000-\$95,000, Berry Campbell Gallery

**Ranges from \$25,000-\$95,000**

“Dan Christensen is a painter that has painted the 20th century now into the 21st century, and he was one of the first colour field artists to work with a spray gun. It was completely novel for him to take up spray paint and start putting it on canvas and calling it fine art. He’s earned such an impressive place in art history for that work.” – Earnhardt

**FOR THE UNLIMITED BUDGET**