

The Art of Décor

LEARN HOW TO SUCCESSFULLY DECORATE YOUR SPACE WITH ART.

BY DENISE BATES ENOS

When it comes to decorating with art, there's one term that makes all designers cringe: "sofa painting." That's a phrase, often used derisively, for a work of art chosen specifically to match a particular color scheme. While it's perfectly acceptable to hang artwork over a sofa, choosing a piece simply because it matches the upholstery is a no-no.

Instead, when selecting and placing art over the sofa—or anywhere in your home, "Buy what you love and want to live with," says Angela Gutekunst of Angela Gutekunst Interiors in Lake Mary. That's not to say that you shouldn't consider your overall décor and placement, she says. "Keep in mind the wall where it will go."

Gail Barley of Gail Barley Interiors in Orlando adds, "You do have to be mindful of the available space you have to display art. A 10-foot sculpture won't work in a house with eight-foot ceilings."

Both designers advise taking into consideration scale, proportion, texture and color when selecting and placing art, but Barley warns: "Don't buy art to match your décor. Your decor is a consideration, but



STEPHEN ALLEN PHOTOGRAPHY/RON NOWFEL



© EVERETT & SOULÉ/ANGELA GUTEKUNST INTERIORS

TOP: CONTEMPORARY AND TRADITIONAL DESIGNS create visual harmony with a modern painting that complements the formal setting. **Above: Architectural molding "frames"** a large landscape by Jeffrey Blondes and flanking urns, lending depth and interesting focal points.

A TRANSLUCENT SCULPTURE pays homage to this room's color palette and waterfront location.

© EVERETT & SOULÉ/PSG CONSTRUCTION



© EVERETT & SOULE/ANGELA GUTEKUNST INTERIORS



HARVEY SMITH/GAIL BARLEY INTERIORS



STEPHEN ALLEN PHOTOGRAPHY/WOLFE-RIZOR INTERIORS

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: A landscape by Florida artist Richard Currier complements a dining room's warm tones; an original Highwaymen painting by Alfred Hair takes center stage; whether it's a picture for a wall, a tabletop piece or a freestanding sculpture, consider elements such as proportion, texture and color when positioning artwork.

if you are purchasing serious investment pieces, the art should really speak to you. It may mean rearranging things to accommodate something new, but rotating art is a good way to refresh your décor." She recommends reflecting on the following questions when placing art: Do you want it to be a statement piece or something to be seen as part of a larger composition in the room? Will it be part of a grouping or will it stand alone?

When hanging a group of works, Gutekunst recommends starting with the main piece at the center, and then working outwards, spacing each piece evenly. But before driving the first nail, she has key words of advice: "A good idea is to try laying out the composition on the floor first."

And when the art is completely off the wall—in other words, a freestanding sculpture or piece of art glass, "The placement depends on the sculpture's importance," states Gutekunst. "The base should not compete with the art. Keep it simple; an acrylic base works great with many styles."

Be sure to showcase your art with proper lighting, advises Paul Gidus, owner of PSG Construction in Winter Park. "Lighting is important," he says. Recessed

lighting, eyeball lights, independent track lighting and clip-on picture lights are among the options to illuminate artwork, he says. Gutekunst advises using standard incandescent bulbs instead of fluorescent ones and choosing non-reflective glass if needed.

Properly hanging artwork is where people often misstep, says Barley. "Most people hang their art too high," she says. Art typically should be hung at eye level, with the center of the piece approximately 5 to 5 ½ feet from the floor, but "how the art is viewed is also a consideration." Art over a mantel or piece of furniture should be hung so that it visually connects to the overall composition of the pieces, and art in a dining room may be hung lower, since it will most often be seen from a seated position.

When properly selected, hung and illuminated, "The right artwork can really be the thing that takes a room from fine to fabulous," says Barley. "Art makes a space unique and should give some insight to the person who lives there." **oam**

Denise Bates Enos is a regular contributor to Orlando Arts Magazine and Orlando magazine.



HARVEY SMITH/GAIL BARLEY INTERIORS

GROUPINGS OF ART can deliver more impact than a single work, as is the case with these 19th century botanical prints. Be sure to hang them low enough to visually connect with the architectural feature or furnishings below.