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PRESENTS

WHETHER YOU'RE A BEGINNING ART COLLECTOR OR YOU'VE BEEN AMASSING ART FOR YEARS, IT'S IMPORTANT TO **PROTECT YOUR INVESTMENT.** HERE'S WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW.



FOR ART'S SAKE

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PAINTINGS MAY BE the most deeply personal of all home furnishings, celebrating family members past or present; reflecting your deepest political, social, or aesthetic views; or capturing the world as you would most like it to be.

Small wonder that avid collectors drive a global art market estimated at more than \$45 billion. If you've recently joined their ranks, giving careful thought to preservation and maintenance can help to ensure that your treasures create a legacy for your life and for generations to come.

GETTING YOUR WORKS OF ART APPRAISED

Your first step is appraisal. That's a must if you want special insurance above and beyond your general homeowners policy. But there are plenty of other reasons—from valuing your estate to donating the piece (nongrant contributions over \$500 require appraisals for deductions) to the satisfaction of knowing what your collection is worth.

A good appraisal includes detailed analysis of authenticity, condition, size, current market value, and other factors, says Danielle Rahm, director of New York

Fine Art Appraisers in Manhattan. Though appraisers love to deliver good news—

Rahm recalls rummaging through one client's closet and



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finding a lost work by noted 19th-century landscape artist Sanford Robinson Gifford, valued at \$250,000—beware of any appraiser who ties his or her fee to a percentage of value, she cautions.

"You want a disinterested party," she adds—one who belongs to a national organization such as the American Society of Appraisers and follows standardized ethics codes.

And keep in mind that while excellent works are always in demand, styles do change. "Right now, contemporary is the hot segment of the market" thanks to more casual lifestyles and home-decorating choices, Rahm notes. Rest assured, tastes will shift again, so consider having your works periodically reappraised.

FINDING THE RIGHT HANGOUT

When it comes to hanging the piece, most people know that direct sunlight fades paintings. But artificial lights cause problems as well, says Brian Baade, assistant professor and paintings conservator at the University of Delaware. Attached lights may warp the frame and generate damaging heat. Modern fluorescent or LED lights, placed remotely, provide excellent lighting with little heat.

Old-fashioned eyehooks may eventually pull out of an older frame, so use D-rings with multiple screws, Baade suggests. Another step: Insert a backing board behind the picture to protect the work from damage when taking it down. As for location, stick to

walls with another room (rather than the outdoors) on the opposite side. Notes Baade, "There's a transfusion of moisture back and forth through exterior walls."

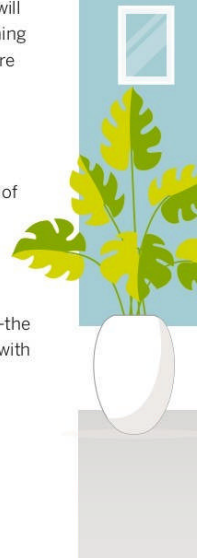
THE PERILS OF CLEANING AND RESTORING

Baade, who restores damaged paintings with his wife and fellow conservator, Kristin deGhetaldi, has seen enough horror stories that his thoughts on cleaning a painting are unequivocal. "No one should ever think about cleaning anything," he says. Most household cleaners can eat away at the surface of a painting, and a damp cloth isn't much better.

The same goes for DIY restoration. Even a careful touch-up job by a collector can destroy value, in part because paint changes color for months after it dries. "Two years from now, Grandma's going to have a yellow mole on her cheek," Baade warns. If you must clean or restore a work, take it to a professional, who will study the painting before doing anything and will make sure any applications are fully reversible.

STORING AND MOVING YOUR TREASURE

Whether you're remodeling a section of your home or your art collection simply outgrows available wall space, the time may come when you need to store your pieces. The two areas most associated with home storage—the attic and the basement—are fraught with peril from moisture.



“Eighty percent relative humidity or over is a breeding ground for mold,” says Amber Goldstein, client services manager for Minnesota Street Project Art Services in San Francisco. Fluctuations in temperature and moisture cause paintings to expand and contract, making them brittle and prone to crack over time.

A climate-controlled storage area large enough to accommodate multiple pieces is your best option. If that’s not practical for your home, consider a professional storage company, Goldstein suggests. The Minnesota Street Art Project, for example, stores and transports pieces for private clients and turns all profits back to supporting San Francisco artists.

Whenever you move a painting to another location in your home, use two people if possible and plan every step in advance, Goldstein suggests. When shipping over long distances, choose a service that specializes in fine art to ensure that your paintings won’t be exposed to potentially damaging temperatures or weather, Goldstein advises.

KEEPING RECORDS FOR PROOF AND PEACE OF MIND

Not all aspects of preservation involve care for the physical painting. Carefully preserve all your appraisals, bills of sale, lists of past owners, and even personal notes from an artist or other expert commenting on the work. Take a photograph of each painting you own, label it, and attach it to the supporting documentation. Include notes on the basic facts, such as the artist’s name, the title of the work, the medium (oil, watercolor, etc.), and the size of the canvas itself. Put this information in a secure location. Consider storing it outside your home—in a safe deposit box, for example. There are also online art collection management programs that can help you document the value of your collection.

These vital background documents are known collectively as provenance. They lend credence to the work’s authenticity and collectability. Beyond that, they become your contribution to a great and ongoing story of the value and meaning that art adds to life.

PRESERVING DIGITAL ART

The newest art needs special loving care

Think art preservation, and chances are a vision of centuries-old oil paintings and fragile sculptures comes to mind. Yet some of the most vexing challenges for collectors and preservation experts involve modern art—especially multimedia pieces.

Because technology evolves so quickly, a modern piece with, say, a video screen, can be hard to maintain or repair once that screen becomes obsolete, says Emma James, registrar of the Minnesota Street Art Project in San Francisco. James has seen artists incorporate smartphones and apps, “all of which can run into problems when you account for all of the software and hardware upgrades.”

Other pieces may include older technologies such as floppy discs, or old-style television sets. Even if they’re not always on, “TVs will need to be attended to over time,” James adds—a process known as “media refreshing.”

As one solution, museums and collectors can buy duplicates of a given piece of hardware, in order to have a backup to insert if the original goes on the blink. When you’re not displaying an item, be sure items such as VHS tapes and floppy discs are stored in cool, climate-controlled spaces, James suggests.

Even though technology poses challenges in preserving some pieces, it works wonders in preserving others, James notes. For example, high-resolution cameras capture near-perfect copies of rare photographs, enabling collectors to display images while protecting original prints. And 3-D scanners are capturing everything from oil paintings to sculptures in such detail that even if the original is damaged or destroyed, a comprehensive record of the work is maintained.



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