

ART *and the* HOME

Lockdown is the perfect time to start collecting art. **Harriet Griffey** takes advice from the capital's finest gallerists





London is rightly famous for its great art galleries, from the National Gallery to the Tate Britain and Modern and the Royal Academy, but alongside these is a wealth of smaller, commercial galleries that are prime destinations for art lovers and buyers. Whether your thing is limited edition prints, old masters or iconic photographs, exploring the wealth and expertise of London gallerists makes art buying in the capital a particular pleasure.

“People can sometimes forget that commercial galleries also host regular exhibitions,” says Gemma Colgan at Cristea Roberts’ gallery in Pall Mall. “And this can be an invaluable way to explore what you

like and have a conversation about buying art for your home. Last year we had an exhibition of Cornelia Parker prints and while you may not have room for one of her sculptures, a print could be an option and opportunity to acquire work by an artist you admire.” Sadly lockdown has postponed an exhibition of prints by one of Germany’s most celebrated living artists Georg Baselitz. In June all being well, the gallery will be exhibiting work by Paula Rego to complement her major retrospective at Tate Britain. In the meantime, a virtual exhibition, *Richard Hamilton: Towards A Definitive Statement*, runs until 19 February.

Sid Motion, whose eponymous gallery is in South Bermondsey, also an advocate of exploring art through

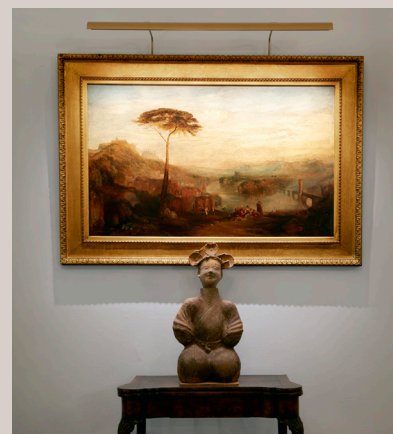
exhibition visiting, adds, “To navigate the huge choice of what’s available, it can be helpful to focus on a particular discipline or medium, explore the work you enjoy and go to exhibitions. Talk to gallery staff who will share their knowledge and enthusiasm, and when it comes to budgets, many smaller galleries show emerging artists and their work is often very competitively priced. I’d also recommend visiting artists’ own websites, following their Instagram accounts, exploring their work online and visiting exhibitions of their work.”

Emerging artists are exactly the focus of the new Saatchi Yates gallery in Cork Street, which opened its new 10,000 sq foot space in 2020 with Pascal Sender’s

augmented-reality artworks that transposed easily to digital viewing. “We wanted to open a gallery that sat amongst the most established names in Mayfair, but with a breakthrough contemporary programme,” says Phoebe Saatchi, who opened the gallery with her husband Arthur Yates. “Working with artists from the start of their careers, and nurturing and growing with them as a young gallery was really important.” In addition, the gallery will also be exhibiting and selling more established artists such as Yayoi Kusama, Robert Motherwell and Anselm Kiefer.

During a difficult time when commercial galleries have had to close for long periods, innovative new strategies emerged and online viewing

PLAYING TO THE GALLERY **Above:** Sid Motion gallery in South Bermondsey. **Overleaf:** Art is beautifully displayed to set off the staircase of this Wimbledon villa, interior designed by Juliette Byrne



LIGHTING YOUR ART

Good lighting in our homes is as important for works of arts as it is for our wellbeing, believes Andrew Molyneux, co-founder of TM Lighting, which brings museum grade lighting to the home. "Using the correct type of light is fundamental to perceive the depth, texture, detail, vibrancy and colour of an artwork, but also to preserve the artwork. Creating the right balance of light ensures the artwork is lit to its best and matches the room lighting; individually dimmable lights provide flexibility to change the visual hierarchy of the artwork and can help prevent damage. LEDs are the best source as they don't contain damaging UV or IR (infrared) light." To counter glare from glazed works of art, Molyneux also recommends correct positioning of the light fixture. "Good lighting can reduce visible reflections, but I always tell clients to avoid placing glazed artworks directly opposite large windows." Picture lights can work well in traditional and modern environments. In ultra-contemporary spaces a discreet track and spotlight provides maximum flexibility for a revolving art collection." tmlighting.com



NURTURING ART

Above: Phoebe Saatchi and husband Arthur Yates are behind the Saatchi Yates gallery in Cork Street, which promotes young talented artists; the Andy Warhol exhibition at the Halcyon can be seen as an online showcase

rooms (OVRs) appeared, with art so well-displayed the viewing experience was enjoyable as it was informative for visitors and prospective buyers alike.

For Addis Fine Art, opening their gallery in 2020 with an inaugural exhibition of Tadesse Mesfin's paintings at the new Cromwell Place art space coincided with Covid's impact, but it wasn't all negative. "The pandemic has given us all much-needed time to cement our digital presence and we have also found that collectors are more open to buying online too, which wasn't necessarily the case before," says co-founder Rakeb Sile. "Art is incredibly subjective and emotive, so I think that a personal bond with a

particular artwork is important. If a piece of art does move you, then the next step is to research the artist's career, previous shows, and any galleries they may work with. Don't be afraid to reach out to the galleries or artist for more information, images and guidance."

Gallery director Kate Brown at Halcyon agrees. "We deliberately enhanced our online presence during lockdown and this includes virtual tours with a platform for each artist, that tells the story artists like Andy Warhol, Bob Dylan, Mitch Griffiths or Dominic Harris that are currently on display as an adjunct to the gallery, and my impression is that a lot of people actually had the time to explore the idea





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of buying art online and think about what might work in their homes. We found a real buoyancy in online sales during this period as a consequence.”

“Our ethos at Halcyon is very much about the democratisation of art, the gallery is usually open to the public seven days a week, and we offer a full experience that allows visitors to explore and consider something they would love to own. Not everyone can afford an oil painting by someone whose work they love, but there’s often the option of other work by the same artist, lithographs, etchings or aquatints that are

equally beautiful and may suit a budget better.”

Some key advice from art consultant Matthew Stephenson for those wishing to collect art includes building a relationship with a trusted adviser or consultant, “this will help you avoid making mistakes early on,” he says. “Collecting is an extension of one’s personality and art has a lot to offer but it can take some time to figure out what excites you most. Whatever subject you choose, you will find it in all art media – paintings, works on paper, photography and even videoart.” **L**

TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGING

Above right: *Two Sisters*, by Bob Dylan, can be seen in a virtual tour at the Halcyon. **Above left:** Tadesse Mesfin works at the inaugural opening of the Cromwell Place art space last year

INSURING YOUR ART

“Art brings such joy to the home, making the heartbreak all the greater if something goes wrong and a cherished artwork is damaged or even worse,” says Imran Moideen, premier client advisor at Smith Greenfield.

“Art requires specialist insurance and needs expert advice to ensure you have the right cover. Our role is to bring you peace of mind.”

1. Regular valuations are key. Check with your broker but valuations every three to five years are required by most specialist insurers. If you

have a valuation just a little older, valuers can often update these at a modest cost.

2. Ensure your art is correctly hung or safely displayed, away from direct sunlight, sources of heat and from any hidden pipe work that could negatively affect it.

3. Keep all documents and provenance relating to the art safe.

4. Use an expert broker who specialises in insuring art/valuables and ask for ‘All Risk’ cover. The policy should also include restoration and depreciation cover to fully protect you in the event of damage.

5. Art is more likely to be damaged than stolen so the right broker will be certain that you are insured with a specialist insurer that has the necessary experience and relationships with quality restorers to ensure your treasured pieces are appropriately restored should this be required.

6. You may need cover for your art in another property or in transit. Make sure that you have conversations with your broker about where your art is going to be and if any special conditions will apply.
smithgreenfield.co.uk