

On Collecting Art

Boston has a lengthy and storied history of art collectors and collections, from Isabella Stewart Gardner to the countless college art collections bequeathed by various patrons over the years. The Copley Society of art has long played a part in the collecting practices of both local individuals and national groups, and we would like to offer some tips for budding collectors.

First, and most crucially, purchase art that you *like*. People all too often get caught up in market speculation and appreciation predictions, and end up with works that not only fail to increase in value, but also have no place in the purchaser's home. Trust your instincts; don't overanalyze your first few purchases.

However, impulse buys can be regrettable; to avoid them you should train your eye, build up a knowledge of your visual preferences, and thus hone your instincts to a point where even impulse buys will have actually been somewhat researched. To reach this state, go to as many galleries, exhibitions, lectures and studios as you can, ask the staff members and artists questions, read reviews and exhibition catalogues, and take note of the mediums, genres, dimensions, colors, styles, etc. that most draw you in.

Of course, some works will be out of your price range, no matter how much you like them. Budget consideration is essential for new and/or young collectors, but this need not hamper your activities unduly. Make a point of attending graduate student art shows, where you know the artists will be well-trained, but not yet established, and visit smaller galleries, where works are more likely to be moderately priced, and consider commissioning work directly, deciding with the artists upon a fair price beforehand.

Eventually, you will find yourself confident in your own preferences and capable of definitively deciding what you are willing to give for the works that pique your interest.