

Insight

SHOWCASING ART

Use frames imaginatively to create your own home gallery, just like Helena Barrowcliffe has done



Whether you are looking to add drama with a statement piece, or would like to display the beginnings of a collection that will grow over the years, here are a few pointers when planning how to show your art.

Frame it right

Introduce a note of cohesion to ensure a stylish effect. For instance, a modern artwork in a plain black frame creates a striking look set against period features. The opposite approach also works well: ornate vintage frames can add a grandiose element to a more contemporary interior.

For a casual look, use a range of eclectic frames. However, if they are very different in shape and style, keep the artwork similar, whether it's a collection of pencil drawings, watercolours or graphic prints. Don't overlook less obvious places, such as landings, cloakrooms and alcoves, for an effective group display. Consider proportion, too. A modest work of art hung above a sofa can easily get lost on an

otherwise empty wall, but one overscaled piece or a generous cluster of contrasting designs will instantly draw the eye.

Tricks of the trade

Hanging art – especially awkward or heavy pieces – is best done with the help of another person. It's important to be exact with dimensions, so have a tape measure, pencil and a spirit level handy.

If you are hanging a painting over a sofa, console or bed, place the art centrally, both horizontally and vertically. Ask your helper to hold the frame against the wall before you add fixings, to see if it works with your scheme and to get a sense of how it fits with all the other design elements in the room.

Decide whether your artwork should be a harmonious addition or a talking point that adds contrast. If you are trying to create a more informal installation, take inspiration from Parisian salon style, which embraces different mediums, sizes and frames. For a varied look, start in the middle of the wall and work outwards.

PROFESSIONAL ADVICE



'Regardless of current trends, display your paintings where you will be able to enjoy them at their best, whether that's in a relaxed grouping featuring several different styles and

frames, or a more formal grid format.

We usually follow gallery guidelines of hanging a frame at a distance of 156cm from the floor to the centre of the picture. However, you may need to modify this advice depending on the height of your walls. Alternatively, hang your painting at eye level, where it really becomes part of your decorative scheme.

If you are displaying a triptych or a pair of large-scale pieces, allow sufficient space between each picture so that they complement one another rather than compete for space.

Protect your display from direct sunlight, as UV light can damage artwork and also cause a glaring reflection, spoiling the visual appearance of the piece.

Place your art at a safe distance from direct heat sources such as radiators and electric heaters. Fluctuations in ambient temperature can lead to long-term damage, which will result in costly restoration treatments.

Never hang valuable artwork near damp areas such as bathrooms, spaces with poor ventilation and steamy kitchens. Over time, moisture and humidity can cause significant damage to artwork.'

ALEXANDRA SCHAFFER, VELVENOIR

ADDRESS BOOK

■ John Jones 020 7281 5439, johnjones.co.uk

Bespoke framing company specialising in the preservation and presentation of fine art.

■ Velvenoir velvenoir.com

Art consultancy and gallery focusing on sourcing, curating and hanging artworks.



For a cohesive look in a contemporary space, choose similar frames in different sizes



Create an eclectic Parisian salon style with a variety of frames and art forms

EXPERT EYE 'Avoid using string or thin wire for larger pictures. Instead, to help distribute the weight of the frame, opt for straphangers – metal hanging fixings secured to either side of the frame. Or, for support, screw a bespoke length of wood into a level wall – this is called a split batten'

TIM BLAKE, JOHN JONES LONDON