

- ✓ difficulty of feeling naive at a high-end gallery
- ✓ Ask the gallery for a biography of the artist's work so you can assess how far the artist has come

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A The Art Sydney show is a chance to see a lot of art in one place
B An artwork called *The Swimmer* from Smart Art Direct

The art of good buying

Original works can make a grand statement and a sound investment. Fortunately finding them is becoming easier, writes **Robyn Willis**.



In recent years, our homes have become much more than a roof over our heads. For many of us, they are the defining statement of how we see ourselves and how we want others to see us. So filling a home with hand-me-down furniture and a few posters scrounged off telegraph poles just doesn't cut it any more. Increasingly, savvy home owners are looking to original art to fill those blank spaces on their walls.

One way of getting started is choosing a work from the Smart Art Direct collection. In-house designers come up with concepts based on current trends in interior design which are then hand painted as part of a limited edition collection. Prices range from \$89 to \$840 and allow home owners to change their artwork when they change the decor.

Another option appealing to more and more buyers is the new art market. Not only is it a chance to have something truly unique

hanging on the living room wall, but it can give a struggling artist a leg up on their way to fame and possibly fortune. And if you know what you are doing, you can pick up a new artist whose work will appreciate in value over time. The problem is most of us have no idea where to start.

Art demystified

Iain Dawson is the director of Art Sydney 07, formerly known as the Affordable Art Show. Held annually, he says it is an excellent opportunity to see a lot of art in the one place.

"For new collectors it is good for them to get a grasp of what artists are working in," says Iain. "We are showing some younger, more affordable emerging artists."

He says the art shows take away the difficulty of going to a high-end gallery and feeling a bit naive. "People feel really comfortable because they get a broad cross-section and they can make up their own minds."

He recommends the Off the Wall stand at the show which this year will be running from October 26 to 28 at the Royal Hall of Industries at Moore Park, where young and emerging artists will be exhibiting their work. Prices start at less than \$1000 for works on paper up to



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about \$5000 for artists just starting to make a name for themselves. Although most of us cannot afford to sink our money into something that is not worth the canvas it was painted on, Iain and other experts agree that the most important thing for the new collector is that they like the work.

"I always say, if you are looking with an eye to investment it is better to go with what you love because you are going to be living with it for five or six years," he says.

Owner of NG Art Gallery Nicky Ginsberg agrees that if you are interested in buying an artwork, it should be something you will enjoy having around.

"To be honest if you love something, if I was a buyer for the first time, the most important thing is to like it, to feel passionate about it," →6