


How to buy art for your home: a guide to investing in the best up and coming artists

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The London Art Fair is open to all from April 20 to 24 2022, at Islington's Business Design Centre

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Jess Denham 21 April 2022

From paintings to photography, ceramics to sculpture, the London Art Fair is returning to Islington's Business Design Centre later this month, giving you the perfect opportunity to fill that blank wall, empty shelf or boring corner with an engaging original artwork.

Given the buzz around buying things you love that will last, it's no wonder that there is strong interest among younger generations to invest in something unique and characterful that hasn't been mass-produced.

But the art world has found it hard to shake its elitist reputation, so if the thought of going to an art fair fills you with a nagging sense of imposter syndrome, you are not alone.

However, the London Art Fair's director, Sarah Monk, has assured us that a good smattering of the 100 plus global galleries exhibiting this year are offering modern and contemporary pieces aimed at collectors of all experience levels, with a wide range of budgets.



'Yellow Is Mellow, But Tricky To Pull Off' by Charlotte Keates

Charlotte Keates/Arusha Gallery

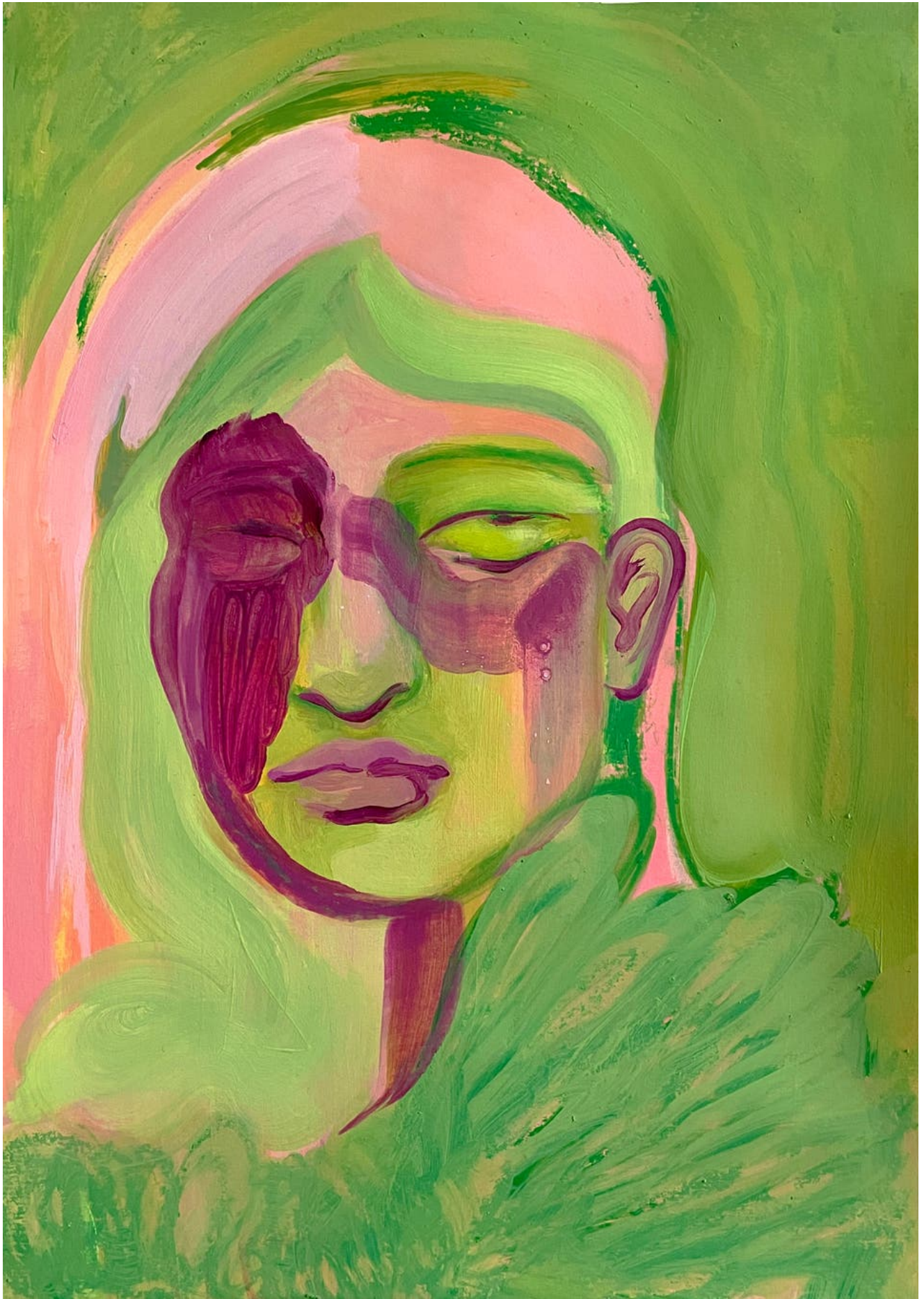
Everybody is welcome, she affirms, with all gallery owners delighted to talk to established and aspiring collectors alike, especially about their exciting array of emerging artists – defined as young or still relatively under-recognised contemporary artists.

The likes of Charlotte Keates, who paints beautiful interiors recalling the modish geometry of Sixties and Seventies design, and Athena Anastasiou, who combines paint and textiles to extend her images beyond their canvases, are just waiting to be discovered by anyone with an eye for fresh talent.

Don't assume you won't be able to afford anything

Yes, this 34th edition of the London Art Fair will feature work by the world-renowned – and eye-wateringly expensive – likes of Pablo Picasso, David Hockney, Bridget Riley and Joan Miró, but there is a lot more on offer besides, so don't assume you'll leave empty-handed if your budget doesn't stretch into the stratosphere.

The London Art Fair prides itself on offering diverse artworks at a range of prices, including entry level, as well as helpful support for first-time buyers in the way of engaging online talks (there's one on collecting and curating art for the home, chaired by freelance interiors editor Mary Weaver) and informative guided tours of the exhibiting galleries.



'Toad' by Amy Beager

Amy Beager/Wilder Gallery

"It's not just for that serious collector who is spending thousands, and sometimes hundreds of thousands, of pounds," says Monk. "It's also for those people who are wondering whether there's anything they can afford – and the good news is that there is.

"Try [Jealous Gallery](#), a popular gallery based in [London](#) that sells limited edition prints for under £300, and [Kittoe Contemporary](#), which offers amazing paintings from just £350.

There's also Wilder Gallery, which champions emerging female artists and is itself a new gallery that launched during the first Covid lockdown of 2020. They've dedicated their entire space at the fair to Amy Beager, who re-imagines figurative painting with her bold colour juxtapositions.

Starting from £500, her new collection explores and celebrates ideas of love, desire, longing, transformation, rebirth and fantasy.

Buy what you love

Investments, including those in art, will always be at the mercy of the markets, meaning a juicy return is by no means a given. Monk's advice? First and foremost, buy what you love.

"The lifetime appreciation of an artwork that you love can never be a failure," she says. "Plus, whenever you buy art, you're investing in the individual artist who created it. You're funding them professionally, enabling them to develop and grow.

"Collectors love forming a relationship with an artist at an early stage of their career and following their journey as they continue to evolve."

Investment minded? Start building relationships

If your interest in art is at least partly financially motivated, set about establishing a good relationship with gallery owners who exhibit the kind of art you are interested in, so that you can get to grips with the backgrounds of their artists.

Monk suggests asking dealers what made them identify a certain artist as somebody who they wanted to champion. What is it about their story and their work that has fuelled their own passion?



'Bringing The Past To New Horizons' by Athena Anastasiou

Athena Anastasiou/Thompson's Gallery

"Of course, gallery owners want to sell their artists' wares, but they are also great mentors and talent nurturers with valuable insights to share," she says.

"Find out what past exhibitions an artist's been involved in and ask if they are held in any notable collections. If they're more established in their careers, check whether they've featured in any major institution or public gallery exhibitions."

Don't be a slave to trends

Trends in the art world are as transient as they are in any other sphere, so be wary of hastily jumping on a bandwagon. Instead, consider what makes an artist you are drawn to unique, and ask yourself why you will remember them. Because ultimately, whether for personal or investment reasons, buying art is about initial – and lasting – connection.

One of Monk's memorable picks of the London Art Fair's up and coming bunch is a Paris-born, Belgo-Congolese artist called Tiffanie Delune, who creates multilayered pieces on cotton canvas, blending dreams and travel recollections with symbols of her mixed-race family.





'No More Battlefields, Only Flowers' by Tiffanie Delune

Tiffanie Delune/Ed Cross Fine Art

"Tiffany has a solo show with Ed Cross Fine Art, who often champions underrepresented artists," she says. "Her unusual story – she's self-taught – and beautiful paintings are immediately compelling."

NFTs are trendy but paper is still king

Predictably, given the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, the act of buying art has become much less impersonal over the past two years. Consequently, there's now a lot of buzz surrounding digital art and NFTs (Baffled? [Read our handy explainer](#)).

But equally, in response, Monk has noticed a growing appetite for physical art and the face-to-face, shared experience of visiting a gallery. "Most collectors are still buying paintings, drawings and sculpture, with works on paper remaining dominant and being taken to new experimental heights," she says.

There aren't any NFTs for sale at this year's London Art Fair, but multiple talks about the colliding worlds of art and technology feature in the 2022 programme, so it's certainly getting with the times.

"One of the things that people love most about the art world is that it's always been contentious," says Monk. "Trends come and go, but it's great to discuss these new arenas and show that we are reflecting and involved in the current conversation."

Don't be afraid to ask questions

If you're attending your first art fair, rest assured that no question is too silly.

"Our gallery owners are real experts in their field," says Monk. "They're hugely passionate and knowledgeable in their subject matter."

"Part of the reason why the London Art Fair is so successful is because galleries welcome the opportunity to come together with a community of art lovers and collectors and talk about their artists and introduce new names. So ask your questions freely."

Buying online is much safer than it used to be



'Clever Steal at Travelers Rest' by Ben Crase

Ben Crase/Otomys

The experience of viewing art in real life cannot be beaten, but the pandemic forced galleries to become more digitally savvy. Most have now developed safe, user-friendly websites and social media platforms that cater for online buying.

Many galleries now share videos of their artists working in their studios, enabling collectors to get a stronger sense of who they are, and on the London Art Fair's website, viewers can zoom in hyper closely to examine the surface of a featured artwork and see its colour and texture brought to life.

Monk is keen to shout out [Artscapy](#), a new digital platform for fine art collecting that provides a trusted environment to explore and buy quality art. Every artwork listed for sale undergoes due diligence to ensure safety and transparency, underpinned by certificates of authenticity and provenance on blockchain.

“This means that if a collector is based abroad or is otherwise unable to make the trip to London, there are still ways for them to fall in love with something in our viewing rooms, make contact with the galleries and give the artwork a new home,” she says.

“Online buying can definitely complement the physical visiting of galleries and [art fairs](#).”

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