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The Art of Art

Kenise Barnes, the Larchmont gallery owner, talks about the best ways to choose and display artwork in your home.



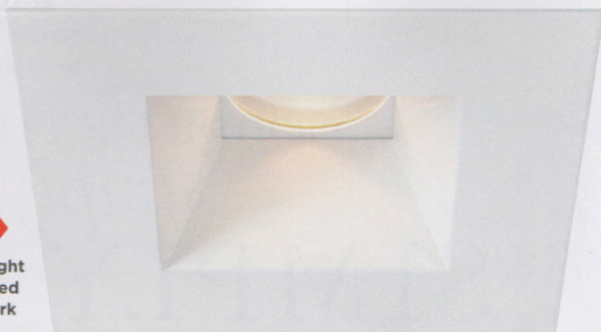
Westchester resident Kenise Barnes opened her eponymous gallery in 1994. Now at its third location in downtown Larchmont, Kenise Barnes Fine Art has a stable of 50 artists and organizes more than 20 exhibitions each year. Barnes works closely with homeowners, architects, design professionals, and the hospitality industry to select and build their art collections. Here, she offers some helpful hints on purchasing and displaying art in your home.



◀◀ Some of Barnes' favorite colors: Benjamin Moore's Silver Half Dollar and Wrought Iron and Farrow & Ball's Vardo.



The WAC Tesla light is what Barnes used to light the artwork in her own home.



Q: What is the most important advice you can give a first-time art buyer?

Buy art because you love it—don't follow a trend. Artwork shouldn't be about a color or style that's in vogue this season. Your art is going to outlast your throw pillows and upholstery; it should have an enduring quality.

Q: How can you know if the artwork you see in a gallery is going to work in your home?

We have stark-white walls in our gallery; it's a completely neutral environment. We let people take art they're interested in back to their homes for up to three days to see how it works in their spaces. I tell my customers: "Look at it with your coffee, and look at it with your glass of wine." And what I mean by that is, experience the art in various light.



Barnes likes to use D-rings to hang artwork.



One of the many pieces that can be found in Barnes' gallery.



Q: Give us an example of how you consult with a client to determine what artwork would best suit their home.

A good example is my yoga teacher and her husband. They live in a renovated center-hall Colonial in Pelham. By visiting their home, speaking with them and seeing their surroundings, I could tell they were all about gracious living and comfort. It turned out they loved landscape paintings, and while their home and furnishings are traditional, they wanted their artwork to have a more updated, contemporary feel.

Q: What type of artwork did you help those clients select?

For their bedroom, which is really their oasis, they wanted something quiet and romantic, with a feeling of tranquility. They ended up



PEOPLE TO KNOW



"Buy art because you love it - don't follow a trend."

buying work by our gallery artist David Konigsberg, whose oil paintings often contain dreamy landscapes full of puffy clouds. Downstairs, the artwork they purchased is a bit more colorful and playful, including a piece by Kevin Paulsen, who does a modern-day take on fresco painting using pigment on wet plaster, to create lush scenery peopled with whimsical figures.

Q: What is the latest trend in lighting for artwork?

My very favorite these days is multiple spot, recessed down lights. When we renovated our house recently, the brand we used to light our artwork was WAC Tesla. The fixtures fit into your ceiling and have "eyeballs" that swivel, so you can turn them 180 degrees. They're LEDs and dimmable, plus they have a square housing that looks very contemporary and beautiful.

Q: What are your favorite colors of wall paint for displaying art in the home?

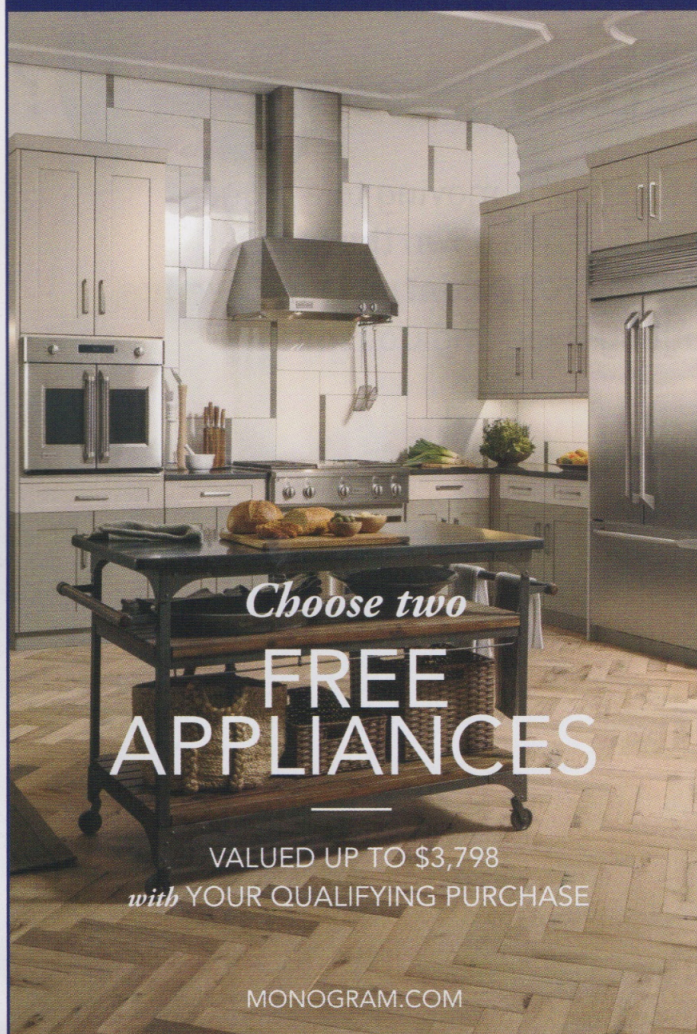
My latest addiction is Benjamin Moore's Wrought Iron, which is almost black. I used it in my foyer, and it made my works on paper, which have lots of white around them, really pop. My favorite gray is Benjamin Moore's Silver Half Dollar, which is completely neutral and has no green or blue. It looks great with photography collections. If you want to be a bit more flamboyant, try Farrow & Ball's Vardo. It's a peacock blue that looks fantastic with art hung on it.

Q: Do you have a pet peeve when it comes to artwork in the home?

Keep it straight! Lots of people take the heel of their shoe and stick a nail in the wall, then hang their art on the picture wire. It's inevitably not going to be level. We hang from D-rings, which are on either side of the painting, so it stays level. ■■■

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