

Ask the Artsperts

by Kristine Meek and Juliana Meek

Harmon-Meek Gallery, Naples, FL

Art as an Experience

Dear Artsperts:

I have read that it is better to spend money on experience than on possessions. Why should I buy art if that is just a possession?

Signed,
Possessed

Dear Possessed,

The advice to spend money on experiences rather than possessions is based on the idea that enjoyment in a possession is fleeting whereas an experience will help shape you, leaving a lasting impact that makes you happier in the long run. If this were true, none of us would remember our favorite childhood toy, our first car, or a family heirloom we hope to inherit someday, let alone attach feelings and memories to those objects. This is especially true with works of art, the very nature of which is to evoke thoughts and feelings. Collecting works of art will expand and enrich your world, providing the same lasting impact as any experience because art is at its very core something you experience.

The experience of purchasing works of art for your home begins long before the actual transaction. Before collectors begin purchasing fine art, they start by experiencing art in museums and galleries, attend artist talks, or read about art in the news and media. These are all enjoyable and educational experiences that create the desire to purchase fine art for private collection.

The initial purchase of a work of fine art is rarely an “impulse buy”, but rather takes time and contemplation about the artist and the particular work of art. A personal connection develops between the work of art and the would-be purchaser. This connection is initially based on the feelings and memories a work of art evokes in the viewer. The connection is enhanced further by learning about the artist who created the work, including the artist’s technique and inspiration. Also, learning how the work of art fits within the artist’s *raisonné* (body of works) creates more interest and understanding. We often tell a first-time purchaser, that the work of art that keeps reappearing in the mind after leaving our gallery, is the one meant for them to purchase.

Once a work of art is purchased, the experience is anything but fleeting. As art dealer’s daughters we have had the privilege of adding works to our own collections since birth. We each have works that mean so much to us that we will never let them go. Works that took on new meanings as we aged and our lives changed. Works of art that we not only get to enjoy every day, but take on more enjoyment when family and friends visit and ask about the works of art in our collections. In the case of Kristine’s young son, we now get the enjoyment of watching him experience the works of art in our collections as he ages in the years to come!

In summary, purchasing a work of art is an experience, one that will last a lifetime, giving you a great deal of enjoyment, enhancing your world and expanding your mind.

Sincerely,
The Artsperts

Kristine purchased two watercolors of red roses by Gary Bukovnik that she hung on either side of her kitchen window above her sink. These paintings make the experience of doing dishes more enjoyable as she reflects on choosing these two paintings for her home collection. She picked them because they reminded her of the red roses her partner Andrew would surprise her with, but unlike the live long stem roses, these are lasting and the experience of enjoying them is lasting.



Juliana’s favorite painting in her collection is one she’s liked since childhood. “The Balcony” by Louis Bosa. She first thought the cartoonish figures were funny, but as she matured her appreciation for the humor in the work grew. The work with all the various personalities depicted is as relatable today as it was when it won the Pepsi-Cola art challenge in 1944.

