

Art Adventure I Sam Dalkilic-Miestowski

Anyone can be an art collector

A black beret, a black turtleneck, a long black cigarette holder, black shoes, a black belt and a matching black dog describe the typical art collector as portrayed in movies, magazines, television, postcards, and so on. Frankly, my first year in business I kept waiting for the "art collector" to walk in the gallery and say, "Wee wee, mon cheri or bonjour, mademoiselle."

Art collecting is for everyone regardless of education, wealth, background, age, gender and taste. Collecting art requires passion, patience and persistence. There is no "right or wrong" art if you, the buyer, love it. Art can be a painting, a sculpture, a vessel or even a grandmother's quilt.

Usually, there are a few basic steps to beginning an art collection. What type of art really appeals to you? Is it a landscape, a portrait, an abstract piece or a piece of sculpture? Cut out photos of the types of art you like and why. This process is the passion part and it may take some time to formulate.

The next step requires patience and persistence. Go to local art dealers, art shows, art museums, flea markets, libraries, schools, universities, auctions or anywhere art is displayed or sold. Don't limit the experience to only one community and only one gallery. Look at the art you don't like. Combine the search with vacation, sightseeing, sports. The main focus is to see art and a lot of it!

Now that you have toured Europe, Asia, Mexico, Chicago and Northwest Indiana, make a selection. This is when the work begins on the buyer's side. Find out about the artist, the artwork and any other relevant data. If you have an opportunity to meet with the artist in person, please don't miss the opportunity. It will shed insight and make the piece more meaningful to you. There is no "art police" if you don't do any research and simply purchase the piece, but even a little research will go a long way.

Several excellent books are available on art collecting. I can recommend the following four books: *Art for All* and *Buy Art Smart* by Alan S. Bamberger, *Art for Dummies* by Thomas Hoving, and *Art Collecting and Investing* by Patricia Jobe Pierce and Marco Apollo.

I did a totally unscientific ran-

dom sampling of art lovers in our area. The question I posed was, "Why do you collect art?" The answers are below.

"With all that blank wall space, I have to fill it up somehow. That may sound like I'm just kidding but there's a lot of truth to that. Our lives are so filled with noise, turbulence and clamor, I find a room filled with art, instead of a big screen, surround sound television, an important escape to peacefulness not to mention a beauty that surpasses anything on television with the possible exception of Jennifer Love Hewitt. As a writer, I find it extremely important to support and encourage other artists. It's frustrating that our society puts so little importance in the role of art whether it's written, painted or performed." — *Lawrence Arendt, a writer.*

The Rev. Joe Kelcheck from St. John the Evangelist Catholic Church lives by the famous quote by Pablo Picasso, "Art washes away from the soul the dust of everyday life."

"I have over six hundred pieces of art in my collection. I collect everything. I'm not into just one thing. I like different mediums such as paintings, original prints, lithographs, woodcuts, etchings, engravings and sculptures in wood, steel, and bronze. My favorite pieces out of my collection are the Russian and Greek religious icon paintings.

"Sometimes, we not only get soiled physically but we get soiled mentally, emotionally or spiritually. Spirituality must be refreshed from time to time. Surrounding yourself with art, pieces you love, can lift you spiritually and make your soul feel like flying. It is the same feeling as running, working in the garden. I can't understand why people wouldn't want to collect art."

The Rev. Kelcheck passionately lives by another quote, "In this world there are not many possessions which add to the spiritual stature of the possessor. Among these precious few, one must include some pieces of music, lines of poetry, thoughts of philosophers, writings of prophets, and works of art ... without these things our lives would be impoverished."

"I grew up with an apprecia-

tion for fine art when I lived in Europe and Asia. My parents and I visited many of the finest art museums around the world. My parents commissioned several pieces of art when I was in high school. . . . I started collecting underwater art several years ago to combine with displays of my own photography." — *Robert Scott, senior vice president of wealth management at Centier Bank.*

Darlene Sever, retired teacher, states, "I started collecting native artwork by accident. I began with collecting magnets but saw artwork that I could hang as a memento of my trip. I try to purchase artwork that represents the area I'm visiting either of ancient sites or activities for what the area is known. Most of the works I've bought are from natives selling along the road or in stalls in the villages. I feel that I'm helping the economy in a very small way but also bringing home a remembrance of my trip. Every piece of art has a story to tell. Generally the purchased works are very inexpensive. I not only collect art, but I also try to collect a replica of a musical instrument used in the visiting area. I also look for a replica of a typical animal known in the area. If I can't find artwork, I look for three-dimensional work that can be hung without framing. And finally, I always purchase the local music which is played in the region."

"Collecting art is like appreciating something you can't put into words. Art is a method of communicating above all verbal skills. Tapping into a form of communication, which is non-verbal, is a feeling an art collector can access whenever they want to. I often trade a piece with another artist I admire when a piece of art "speaks to me." It is the idea behind the piece which is most important, not the decorative aspect of the art." — *local painter Robert Brasher.*

In response to my last column regarding frightful painters, Salvador Dali was nominated for his scary scenes.

Finally, we've lost a special artist in the Northwest Indiana — Miss Elizabeth Hertel. She promoted the Northwest Indiana Artists unselfishly. She will be sadly missed. Thank you, Elizabeth.

The "Dog Gone" Auction was a great success, even though there were some bah-hum-buggers and and some spoiled babies that hurt the bulldogs. The Stewards of the Square's public art exhibit this summer brought a lot of joy.

For some it was a last happy memory of a lost loved one enjoying the dogs. Next time there is public art, some of you need to learn to keep your hands off someone else's property.

... The wedding of **Tracie Mikulski** and **Todd Kleven** that took place at St. Matthias Church last Saturday was a lot of fun. A few tears may have been shed but a lot of laughter

Kitty Conley's

Scratching Post

brightened a fun day for the bride and groom. The bell choir added joyous sounds.

I heard someone said that everyone needed sunglasses because the groom just couldn't stop smiling.

... There will be no parking, no Stopping and no standing of any vehicle along Hemlock Drive as it approaches Burrell Drive. Some parents, while waiting to pick up their children from the high school, have been parking on the residents' lawns. Now no one can park there.

... The public had decided, the votes tallied and the winners of the "Square-Crow" contest are: Valentino's, first; Debbie's Designs, second; The Front Gate, third.

... The **Corbins** have the greatest carved pumpkin.

... It was strange that the requests made by various Crown Point Plan Commissioners about the bike trail, number of parking spaces and width of streets was not part of the changed document. Did someone do that on purpose, causing a delay to passage of the I-65 Corridor Development Guidelines hoping Wal-Mart would go away?

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