

WHY SHOULD I BUY REAL ART?

“I have a painting and I want to know what it’s worth. . .”

I get calls like this from time to time at the Community Arts Center, and while it is great that people are excited about the value of art, it usually leads to disappointment on both sides of the fence. Most often because the “painting” isn’t a painting at all, but a picture of a painting mounted on cardboard – completely worthless, unless you consider the plastic frame in the price of the appraisal.

The calls that we get in this regard are not from art lovers or art collectors, because they know better. Art lovers know the value of real Art. That’s right, capital A, Art. Art lovers know the value of real art because they know the value of real artists. They’ve met the artists, shaken hands with them, attended their exhibit openings, visited their studios, breathed the same air.

They know the value of art because most often they have paid for the value of art. Full price. And it stung a little. The cardboard-toting folks expecting an “Antiques Roadshow” jaw-dropping-I-can’t-believe-what-its-worth appraisal can’t say the same. If you ask them what they paid for their unexpected masterpiece, they will most often tell you that they found it at a yard sale, in Granny’s attic or at the flea market.

Not only did they not pay full price, they were expecting a whole lot of something for a little more than nothing.

The reward for buying real art isn’t always the fact it will be worth more than you paid for it one day. While it is true the value of real art almost always increases, the greatest reward is that the art you purchase is worth something right now, to a real artist with real needs. Great artists struggle. They struggle in the spaces between what they want to say and what you want to hear. Art isn’t easy and it’s not some sideshow parlor trick to get rich. If art were a get-rich-quick scheme, it surely has to be the worst idea since the alchemists tried to turn lead into gold.

Artists don’t create art to get rich, they create art because they simply must. They have been called to create and to neglect the gift — the drive — that they have been given is along the lines of asking a river to stop flowing or for the wind to stop blowing. A river flows because it is a river and the wind blows because it is the wind. In this same way, artists must create art.

This does not come without some expense to its creator, both in the way of supplies and the time it takes to create. Although some artists come very close to accomplishing the impossible, one can’t create something

from nothing. By buying real art from a living artist, you are not only getting a one-of-a-kind-made-by-hand work of art, you are also supporting an artist's future endeavors, enabling them to purchase supplies and giving them the funding that makes their efforts worthwhile.

By buying a work of art you truly love, you are giving the artist a pat on the back, encouraging them to continue doing what they love — and telling them their vision matters. You are ensuring that the artist will continue to make work that you like. Many artists become frustrated if they feel their work is unappreciated, eventually retiring their truly visionary work in favor of going through the motions, painting predictable and typical work just to make a few sales.

Note that I previously mentioned buying art from a “living artist.” There seems to be a disturbing trend among art (and music) buyers to quickly snatch up the works of artists once they have passed away with the greedy idea of the work becoming “worth more.”

If you love the work of an artist or musician, support them while they are still alive and capable of creating more art. To experience the real value of the arts, invest in the potential of the artist rather than the art.

Many people claim they simply can't afford to buy real art to show their support, without realizing that supporting real artists can take on a variety of inexpensive forms: Buying CDs or putting a dollar in a tip jar for a local musician, attending a community theater production, taking an art class from a local instructor, or buying prints or photographs at an art festival.

One of the greatest secrets of art collectors is to visit the studios of artists. You can often find great work that the artists are willing to sell at a much lower rate than they would outside their workspace.

This technique allowed Herb and Dorothy Vogel, who are by no means a wealthy couple, to become some of the greatest collectors of modern art in New York City. A recent documentary covers their incredible collection. You have to see the film to understand their dedication and realize you don't have to be rich to have real art. Follow the link below to see the trailer on Youtube.

<http://youtu.be/eiyLAIWR95M>

In conclusion, there are many reasons to buy real art but here are a few:

- Real Art showcases your personal taste (quite refined, I might add).
- Real Art appreciates in value.

- Real Art is made by real people.
- Real Art purchases support real artists.
- Real Art is treasured (not bought in flea markets, or found in junkyards).
- Real Art on your walls impresses visitors to your home or office.