

Your guide to buying original art



Thinking of Buying Original Art?

A Friendly Guide for Open Studio Visitors



If you've found your way into an artist's studio today, you're already doing something rather special. Instead of looking at mass-produced pictures in a furniture store or scrolling endlessly online, you're seeing art where it begins. You can smell the paint, see the sketchbooks, discover works in progress and, best of all, meet the person who made them.

For many visitors, buying original art can feel a little daunting. You may wonder whether you know enough, whether your home is "good enough" for art, or whether you should be looking for something that might increase in value one day.

The good news is that none of those things matter very much. The only question that really matters is this: Do you love it? If the answer is yes, you're already making the right decision.

Art Makes Life Better

We all spend a great deal of time making our homes comfortable. We choose colours, furniture, lighting and treasured objects because they help us feel at home.

Art does something rather wonderful too. A painting, print, sculpture or ceramic piece can lift your spirits on an ordinary Tuesday morning, remind you of a favourite place, make you stop and think, or simply make you smile every time you walk past it.

Research has shown that spending time with art can reduce stress, improve mood and contribute to our sense of wellbeing. Original art has a particular presence because every mark, texture and decision belongs to the artist who created it. It has a life and energy that reproductions rarely capture.

Living with original art is rather like living with good music or a favourite book. It enriches everyday life in quiet, lasting ways.

Original Art Isn't Just for Collectors

One of the biggest misconceptions is that original art is only for wealthy people or serious collectors.

In reality, artists make work at many different price points.

Perhaps you'll fall in love with a small watercolour, an unframed print, a hand-thrown bowl or a little bronze sculpture. Your first piece doesn't have to fill an entire wall—or your entire budget.

Many people begin with one modest purchase and gradually build a home full of pieces that each carry a memory of where they were found. Unlike buying something from a chain store, you'll always remember meeting the artist who created it.

So... What Can You Buy?

Open Studios are wonderfully varied, and every artist has something different to offer. Paintings are unique, one-of-a-kind works, whether created in oils, acrylics, watercolour or mixed media.

Original prints—such as lino cuts, etchings, screenprints and wood engravings—are genuine artworks made by the artist in limited editions. They're not simply photocopies or posters and can be an excellent way to begin collecting original art.

Sculpture brings another dimension to your home or garden. As the light changes throughout the day, so does the artwork.

Ceramics combine beauty and craftsmanship. Some are purely decorative; others become part of everyday life, making even an ordinary cup of tea feel just a little more special.

Whatever the medium, you're taking home something made by hand, with skill, patience and imagination.

Choosing the Right Piece

People often ask artists, "What should I buy?" The answer is wonderfully simple. Buy the piece you keep coming back to. Walk around. Look carefully. Don't rush. If you find yourself wandering back to the same painting two or three times, there's probably a reason.

Forget about matching the sofa. Forget about whether your friends will like it. Forget about whether someone on television would approve. Choose the piece that speaks to you. You'll be the one living with it every day.

Don't Buy Art as an Investment

Of course, some artworks become more valuable over time. But nobody—not even the artists themselves—can predict that. If your only reason for buying is the hope of making money, you'll probably be disappointed. Instead, think of the return you'll enjoy every single day. Every conversation it starts. Every memory of discovering it here today. Those are rewards that can't be measured in pounds and pence.

Looking After Your Artwork

Artists want their work to be enjoyed for many years. Most paintings simply need to be kept away from prolonged direct sunlight and very damp conditions. Dust frames gently with a soft cloth. Prints are happiest when properly framed behind glass or conservation acrylic. Ceramics and sculpture generally need very little attention beyond occasional dusting, although outdoor work may naturally weather over time.

Supporting Living Artists

When you buy directly from an artist, you're doing far more than purchasing an object. You're supporting someone who has spent years developing their skills. You're helping keep traditional crafts and creative businesses alive. You're contributing to your local creative community.

And you're taking home something that simply doesn't exist anywhere else. Every original artwork carries the marks of the human hand. In a world filled with things made by machines and algorithms, that feels increasingly precious.

Trust Your Own Taste

You don't need to know anything about art to buy art. You don't need to understand technique, movements or jargon. You only need to know how a piece makes you feel.

If it makes you pause... If it makes you smile... If you can already imagine exactly where it will hang... You've probably found your artwork.

So enjoy exploring the studios today. Take your time, ask questions and chat with the artists. They love talking about their work. And if you discover something that you'd be genuinely sorry to leave behind... Take it home. Years from now, you'll still remember the day you found it.

Five Questions People Often Ask Before Buying Art

"How will I know if it's the right piece?"

If you keep coming back to it, that's usually a very good sign. You don't need expert knowledge or anyone else's approval. Trust your own instincts. Buy the piece that makes you feel something, because you'll be the one enjoying it every day.

"Will it fit in my home?"

It's easy to worry about size or colour, but homes grow around the things we love. If you're unsure, take a photograph of the space where you think the artwork might go and measure the wall before you visit. Most artists are very happy to help you imagine how a piece will look in your home or even bring it to your home to try.

"Can I afford original art?"

Original art is available at many different price points. Smaller paintings, original prints, ceramics and sculpture can all be affordable ways to start your collection. Many artists also offer payment by instalments or can reserve a piece for a short time, so don't be afraid to ask.

"How will I get it home?"

Most artwork is easy to transport and will be carefully wrapped for you. Larger pieces can often be delivered locally or collected later by arrangement. Every artist works a little differently, so simply ask—they'll be happy to explain the options.

"Can I ask questions?"

Absolutely! Artists genuinely enjoy talking about their work. Ask about the inspiration behind a piece, the materials they've used, how to care for it, or even whether they accept commissions. Getting to know the artist is one of the pleasures of buying directly from a studio.