

Styles

JULY 18-20, 2008



Party Pals:
Choc the vote
with truffles
that play with
politics | **E3**

EXPRESSNIGHTOUT.COM

HOW TO SHOP, ENTERTAIN, DRESS, DECORATE AND OTHERWISE IMPROVE YOURSELF AND YOUR HOME

HANG TIME

MAKE YOUR HOME A MASTERPIECE
WITH HIP FRAMES, AFFORDABLE ART
AND TIPS ON DECKING THE WALLS **E6**

What's the Frame Plan?

Hip ideas for decking your walls (or floors) with affordable art

It'd be dreamy if you could afford a Damien Hirst screen print for that space above the living room sofa. And you envy those hipsters who can throw together a bunch of flea market oil paintings and make their pads resemble a Brooklyn loft.

But a lack of funds, or even art-hanging ability, doesn't mean your walls need to go nude, or that you should keep those early '90s jam band posters up. If you think creatively and borrow some tips from art pros, your personal sketches, paint-by-numbers and family photos can amount to a pulled-together display rather than a boring mish-mash out of a frat house.

Before putting any nails in the plaster, determine exactly what you'd like to deck walls with, and where it might look best. A big statement piece like a large photograph, a colorful abstract painting or an antique poster can anchor a room on its own. Just remember, as Alec MacKaye, an art installer at the Phillips Collection, says: "Give space to the piece, and don't let lights dangle in front of it." And you'd never buy a bed with-

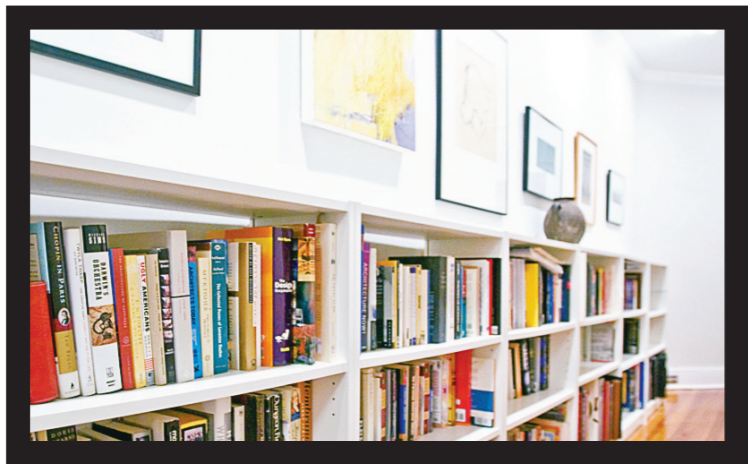
out measuring your boudoir, so why start knocking holes in drywall if you haven't planned out where your art should go? Pre-hanging, lay the pieces of your arty puzzle on the floor and move them around until you get the most pleasing composition. Then measure the wall and adjust. "The center of the frame or group should be at the average person's eye level, 60 inches from the floor," says MacKaye.

Don't be afraid to hang things closer to the floor than you'd think. "Err on the side of hanging lower than you think you should," says Allison Marvin, founder of Sightline art consulting (Sightline.biz). "It brings the work into the room and defines space."

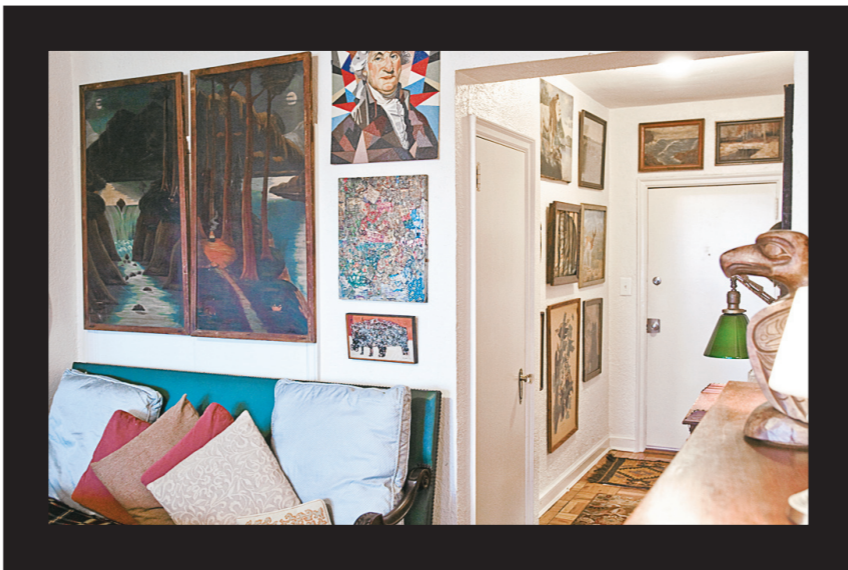
Smaller works can also look fab if you wittily mix new and old, expensive and not so much. Current trends lean toward salon-style walls, which, in the manner of 19th-century stylistas, get jammed with images. Think vintage maps from Second Story Books (2000 P St. NW; 202-659-8884) or oils from a consignment store like the Christ Child Opportunity Shop



LAWRENCE LUK



In her Glover Park house, Catherine Kuhnle Fowlkes juxtaposed art and books in a hallway, above left, and put up 45 framed photos, paintings and mementos in her tiny powder room, top.



Vintage portraits, art school landscapes and paintings of birds, beasts and even George Washington crowd the walls of Randy Rylander's Columbia Heights apartment. "I never worry about the value of something or if everything matches," he says. "I hang what I love."



(1427 Wisconsin Ave. NW; 202-333-6635). Contemporary works on paper also look nice in multiples: Originals in Transformer Gallery's (1404 P St. NW; 202-483-1102) Flat File often go for less than \$100.

Getting personal is what'll really keep your walls from looking like those of a model home or hospital waiting room. Lawyer Meredith Kelly, 29, hung an abstract landscape by emerging artist Alex Schuchard in the living room of her Dupont Circle apartment, surrounding it with a framed page from a friend's screenplay and a print of a calculator watch her brother created.

Marvin likes to display tangential products from art shows — the invitation to the opening, a catalog page signed by the artist — which are frequently free and "allow you to reference important art world people you might otherwise not be able to have on your walls." Marvin did this herself in her Chevy Chase home, framing a swatch of orange fabric that was handed out when Christo's Gates were installed in Central Park in 2005.

How do you get the lots-of-stuff-on-the-wall thing right? You could go the ultra-organized route and pack a single surface with pieces similar in size, shape or tone. Display them in neat rows or a grid à la Warhol, making sure there's the same amount of space between each. Or, for a more boho feel, cover a wall free-form, stacking different-size paintings or prints about two inches apart in a random pattern. If you experiment, it should appear delightfully fresh and polished.

Putting things in inexpensive matching frames (try West Elm, Utrecht or Ikea) gives any mini museum a sleek look. Or mix styles — a gilded gold oval here, a steel square there — to produce an eclectic vibe that says "I've been an art collector since Picasso was a kid." A good source for vintage ones: Frame Mart Gallery (3307 Connecticut Ave. NW; 202-363-5200).

Inspired by old images of artists' studios, Randy Rylander, 42, director of programming at the National Geographic Channel, decorated virtually every wall of his Columbia



Masterpieces on a Dime

Want to fill your walls but you don't have Paris Hilton's budget? Sometimes, as with Harry Allen's neo-Baroque beauty (shown, \$195, RCKNDY, 1515 U St. NW; 202-332-5639), the frame is a work of art itself. Here are some Web sites that'll help you score displayable culture without going broke. **20x200.com** puts out a new photograph and work on paper each week by up-and-coming artists. Small prints from editions of 200 are \$20, medium from editions of 20 are \$200, and large from editions of two are \$2,000. **Fine Art Adoption Network (FAAN)** (Fineartadoption.net): Write to participating artists and tell them why you should get to "adopt" one of their works — for free! If they choose you, they'll pack it up and send it out to you. Potential scores: Sheryl Oring's cages stuffed with old typewriters and Dmitry Borshch's creepy-cool cyanotypes of early 20th-century kids. **Beholder-art.com** sells paintings, photographs and drawings by emerging artists. (We like Suzanne Husky's otherworldly ink-on-paper vines and flowers.) You can search by price, and pieces begin low, at \$65. Work by artists such as Cynthia Connolly and Jay Stuckey go for \$50 to \$300. A.L.B.B.



Heights apartment with anonymous vintage portraits and '50s art-school abstractions. "I never worry about the value of something or if everything matches," he says. "I hang what I love, making sure the scale and size are balanced."

Putting art in unexpected places can add an element of surprise. MacKaye put a framed photo of vintage airplanes on a sliver of wall next to a closet in his Glover Park house. Catherine Kuhnle Fowlkes, 34, an architect, created a mini-gallery in her Adams Morgan powder room by installing 45 small paintings, friends' prints, mementos and family photos. "People take time and look at everything," she says.

You can also think off-the-wall, literally. Fowlkes tucked a small painting behind the pencil jar on her desk. "Don't shy away from taking

art off the walls to be closer to it," says Marvin, who propped a small-scale photograph on a shelf to break up a mass of books. Leaning larger framed pieces against a wall on the floor or on a shelf-like photo ledge (\$25-\$155, Potterybarn.com), gives a relaxed look that works especially well when you don't have tons of furniture. And putting a painting on an artist's easel (\$19-\$100, Plazaart.com) can lend even a non-masterpiece a sort of mystique.

In the end, it's all about what pleases your eye and fills the walls with color and life.

"Don't worry too much about making it look like something in a museum," says MacKaye. "Enjoy having done it yourself." Then step back, admire your handiwork and invite someone up to look at your etchings, already. ANNIE LOU BAYLEY BERMAN