

# Deck The Walls!

By Sheila Selby

While you may deck your halls with boughs of holly for the holiday season, ideas for decking your walls on a more permanent basis may elude you. One of the things that makes your house or apartment feel like your home is adorning the walls. This is especially true if you live in a rental unit and aren't allowed to paint the walls. If you're hung up about what to hang and how to arrange objects on your walls, then read on.

## What to Hang

You may immediately visualize artwork when thinking of wall hangings. Of course you can hang fine art, framed prints, or tapestries. But your walls can also be decorated with any number of objects, limited only by your imagination. Here are some suggestions:

Hanging ornamental mirrors is a great way to enhance space. Mirrors can make a room appear larger, and since they reflect light, mirrors will brighten a room. Placing a mirror opposite a window creates an instant landscape on your wall, allowing you to view the outdoors even when you're not facing the window.

A wonderful way to show off a collection is to hang it on a wall. Some collections that are easy to hang include clocks, masks, hats, and old license plates. You can also display collections on walls using shadowboxes or floating shelves.

Another idea for adorning your walls comes from the local home improvement store, where you can buy an architectural element, such as a ceiling medallion. Medallions come in a variety of shapes, sizes, and patterns, and can easily be painted and hung, creating an interesting wall display.

While you're at the home improvement store, how about buying house numbers to hang on the wall in your child's room? By varying the style, size, and finish, the numbers create an inexpensive and educational wall display and give new meaning to the surfer phrase, "Hang 10!"

## Choosing Artwork

If you want to buy artwork for your walls without spending much money, there are many stores that sell framed prints and photographs at reasonable prices.

You can also purchase original works of fine art. Since fine art is more expensive than mass-produced prints, Heather Roy, owner of Artana Gallery here in Brookline, advises emphatically, "Buy fine art because you love the image and the way it makes you feel! Don't purchase a work of original art just because it goes with your color scheme or décor. You don't want your paintings to blend in with your walls."

Since this is the holiday season, now is the perfect time to consider buying fine art as a gift for yourself or for the family. You don't have to spend thousands of dollars to buy original art. Some local galleries sell artwork by emerging artists, whose prices are significantly lower than more-established artists. Student sales at art schools and open studios throughout the Boston area are plentiful. At any of these venues, you may find reasonably-priced original artwork in a variety of styles.

## The Art of Hanging

The general rule of thumb for hanging artwork is to hang it so the center of the picture or grouping

is at eye level for the average person. But this doesn't necessarily mean *standing* eye level. In a dining room, for instance, most of your time is spent sitting down. Here, artwork may be better appreciated hung at seated eye level.

Creating a grouping perplexes many people. A grouping should be thought of as one unit. Some professionals recommend grouping by theme, such as landscapes. Others recommend using a similar frame and mat to unify the group.

As the photo shows, these recommendations don't have to be followed. I find one of the most important things when arranging a grouping is to space the pieces equidistant from each other on adjacent sides, tops, and bottoms. And balancing the grouping by having the darker, heavier-looking pieces on the bottom is a good idea.

Before you hang a grouping, lay the pieces out on the floor and move them around until they look balanced. If you place a large piece of paper on the floor first, you can create a template by tracing around the pieces. Then tape the paper to the wall to show where each piece should be hung.

## Deck Your Walls

Whether you want to deck your walls in time for your holiday festivities or after the boughs of holly come down, you now are equipped with ideas. Happy holidays!

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