

# START SLOWLY, BUY WISELY

Top tips on art collecting, from the people who know >

By MATT BIELBY

James Tatum's 'On the Deep Woods'  
is a favourite at Tinca Gallery

# HOW TO BUY ART

**W**e've talked before about how art can be an intimidating world if you're not used to it. Everyone seems to know more than you, and plenty of them have opinions you can't even *follow* – let alone agree with. Or, at least, that's been our experience too many times in that London. The Bristol art world – though vibrant, and with its own world-class specialities – is an altogether friendlier place, and much more welcoming to the newcomer. Turns out, buying and appreciating art is about little more than educating yourself (a fun process in itself, of course) and sticking to your budget.

Attend museums and galleries. Sit at the back – on your hands is good! – at a few art auctions. Read up a little on styles, periods and values – and, most of all, decide what it is and isn't that you really like. Sure, your tastes may change over time, but it's a fool's errand trying to force yourself to enjoy something that, when it all boils down to it, you really don't.

With all this in mind, we asked a selection of top local art professionals what *they'd* do if they were starting out as art collectors right now. Here are their answers...

## **Q1: If you were to spend £200 on art this week, what would you buy? And what if we put your budget up to £3,000?**

**Tom White, Clifton Fine Art:** For £200 I'd buy a Ruth Ander monoprint; for £3,000, it would probably be a Harriet Whyatt circus painting.

**Nick Waugh, View Art Gallery:** For £200 I would go to an art studio open day. These are great places to buy direct from the artist, and for good prices. For prints, I may look online, as you can get a pretty good idea of the piece if the image is of good quality. (I would never buy original art online, unless I had already seen it in real life.) For £3,000 I would look for a painting or sculpture that satisfies the three things I look for in artwork: technique, aesthetics and narrative. The combination of these three usually results in more than one connection, and long term satisfaction.

**Sue Dean, Lime Tree Gallery:** For £200, I would buy a really good linocut or woodcut print, either the artist's original or a very limited edition. Alternatively, I might go to a graduation show at a good art school, and hope to see an original work which took my eye. At £3,000 I would expect to buy a good quality painting or sculpture by an established artist. In my case, I would probably look for a painting by the Swedish artist Mats Rydstern, or a dramatic large work by the up-and-coming painter Sam Cartman.

**Alison Bevan, RWA (Royal West of England Academy):** With either budget, I'd have a great time wandering around the RWA Open choosing something to suit. For £200, it'd probably be a small painting by a lesser-known artist; for £3,000,



Checking out Charles Emerson's 'The Fullness of Now' at Antlers Gallery and (below) Anna Rothwell's grumpy 'Little Madam'.



I'd be tempted to go for a really strong piece of sculpture, as I don't have a great deal of 3D work in my collection. Intellectually, I'd be inclined to go for a great piece by an unknown or emerging artist, rather than a minor work by a big name – but it really would depend on what I fell in love with while that money was in my pocket!

**Mark Hoddinott, It's All 2 Much Gallery:** With £200 I would buy an original artwork by one of the up-and-coming artists around Stokes Croft, probably from one of the many cafes. With £3,000 I would buy one piece from Jim Starr, and one from Fernando Messias.

**Lucy Ward, Jamaica Street Artists:** I would buy a small and beautiful drawing by Kate Evans with the £200, and I'd negotiate a good deal with Anthony Garratt with the £3,000.

**Stephen Ocquaye, Justnanco:** For £200 I'd go for a signed Artist Proof by the talented Bristol artist Julian Quaye. My £3,000, though, would be spent on originals of Julian Quaye, and some ceramics by Katharine Morling and Adrian Brough (Leach Potter).

**Sandy Prater, Fizz Gallery:** For £200, an Anna Rothwell limited edition sculpture called 'Little Madam'. It captures that little girl 'stopping' expression perfectly! (For an affordable and truly special treat, having Anna sculpt your own children is pretty magical.) For £3,000 I'd go for 'Cascade' by Clare Wright, or a Unique edition by Kerry Darlington. 'Cascade' has to be one of the most stunning pieces of contemporary art I've seen in recent years. ▷



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'Waiting For Something Wild' by  
Bristol artist Millie Gleeson, an  
It's All 2 Much Gallery pick

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**Marian Eyre, Tinca Gallery:** If I had £200 to spend on art this week I would buy a Jo Jones Bronze, a piece of Erin Cox Jewellery or a painting by Jenny Danby or Glen Carney. If I had £3,000 to spend I would buy another Jo Jones Bronze, and a painting by Rupert Brooks, James Tatum, Huw Richards-Evans or Jenny Danby.

**Jack Gibbon, Antlers Gallery:** If I had £200 I would buy one of Tim Lane's limited edition books 'Anima Mundi' (£160), plus a Kate Evans limited edition print, 'Winter Barn' (£40). With £3,000 I would buy an original Anouk Mercier (circa £1,200), a Jemma Appleby (circa £1,200), a Charles Emerson (£480) and Tim Lane's print 'Uninvited Guest' (£50). This is subject to change, though – there is *so much* art I want right now!

**Helen Legg, Spike Island:** A lot of public galleries sell small editions or multiples quite inexpensively, by the artists they work with. It's an easy way to become comfortable with buying art and, as it's done as a fundraiser for the galleries involved, your money is typically being used to support their programmes, helping them hugely. Many galleries, Spike Island included, present available editions on their websites. If I was starting out buying art right now I'd just stick to the £200 – and with it I'd buy 'Atomic Orange' by David Batchelor, which is a framed screenprint for £175 from the Spike Island website. He's a very influential artist with work in a number of major collections internationally, and this is a limited edition of just 100 prints.

## Q2: Who are the most exciting artists living and producing work in Bristol right now?

**Ruth Piper:** Dan Hunt or Brendan Lancaster for paintings, Dave Morgan Davies for photography, and Jitka Palmer or Harriet Aston for sculpture and ceramics. They all use their materials in original ways, and explore their subject matter with emotional intelligence.



'2nd Flood Warning' by Steven Lindsay, a favourite of Sue Dean at Lime Tree Gallery. Below, meanwhile, is the moody work of Huw Richards-Evans

**Tom White, Clifton Fine Art:** Most of our artists are from Bristol. Colin Vincent does edgy, voyeuristic paintings of dolls; Harriet Whyatt paints poignant studies of Romany culture; Ruth Ander makes stunning mono prints on tissue paper from £195; and then there's me. I do gritty urban scenes of Bristol.

**Nick Waugh, View Art Gallery:** My favourite Bristol artist is Beth Carter. I have watched her grow over the last six or seven years, and now she is enjoying international recognition, having recently returned to Bristol from two sell-out New York shows. I have some of her work at home, and if I had unlimited budget I would have many more. Beth usually works in bronze, and her work often has an element of anthropomorphism. Her imagined creatures always have wonderfully conflicting emotions, such as power and strength mixed with vulnerability and tenderness. The narrative is always suggested, but also left open, so we make up our own completion of the story, often stimulated by personal connection.

Another favourite of mine is Richard Twose. He is a self-taught artist who has shot to fame since becoming runner-up in the BP Portrait Award. As well as portraiture, he does intriguing scenes where the subjects have an implied story, open to interpretation. The palette is colourful yet subtle, and there is further interest with deliberate distortion of reality in perspective and scale.

**Mark Hoddinott, It's All 2 Much Gallery:** Millie Gleeson, who paints the female form on large canvases using spraypaint, acrylics, button polish and pen. Her distinctive style – strong, colourful images and the 'relaxed' effect of her brushstrokes – comes partly from her painting outdoors, which allows her real freedom of movement. I also like Jim Starr. Originally renowned for his screenprint 'pop-art' work, Jim ▶

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is just as accomplished and prolific a painter, and has now moved into a period of producing 'figurative meets abstract' works. His distinctive colour palette, together with his 'splatters and drips', easily identify his work.

**Stephen Ocquaye, Justnanco:** Julian Quaye and David Turner. I find their work assumes a new relevance to each generation, connecting to the past and feeding the future. They have a simple, rigorous beauty that commands your gaze and thoughts; they're works of art to break any heart.

**Marian Eyre, Tinca Gallery:** Jenny Danby, Huw Richards-Evans, Harry Bunce, and Colin Vincent – they are extremely talented and are producing something unique, quirky or timeless.

**Jack Gibbon, Antlers Gallery:** Bristol has one of the strongest pools of working artists in the UK. Anouk Mercier, Tim Lane, Charles Emerson, Kate Evans, Jessica Barlett and Jonny Byles are just a few. I'm personally drawn to works where you can see the skill of the artist, that have strong compositions, and that invite you to spend time with them until they reveal their secrets.

**Helen Legg, Spike Island:** Richard Long lives in the area. He has been an incredibly important figure in the development of Conceptual Art, participating in perhaps the first major exhibition to define the term, *When Attitudes Become Form*, in Bern, Switzerland in 1969. His work takes the form of walks in the landscape, which he sometimes records photographically, or makes text works from. In this point in history, when we are globally connected through the internet 24 hours a day and can be at the other side of the world within hours, it's perhaps never been more important to be reminded of our physical relationship with time and distance, and this is what he does.

### Q3: What was the most incredible piece you sold in the last year or two?

**Tom White, Clifton Fine Art:** Incredible? That would be a Dream Box entitled 'Trees 43' by Frances Bloomfield.

**Nick Waugh, View Art Gallery:** A seven foot Minotaur sculpture by Beth Carter. We sold it to a client who has placed it in their hallway, to be greeted every time they enter the house. They call it 'the boy', and it has become a member of their family. I love it when art resonates so much with people that it becomes more than just an object to look at.

**Sue Dean, Lime Tree Gallery:** A fantastic painting by Steven Lindsay called '2nd Flood Warning'. It epitomises everything we like in a painting: beautiful technique, an arresting image and an element of mystery or challenge in the subject matter.



'Honeymoon Under Lemons' by the well-regarded Harriet Whyatt

**Mark Hoddinott, It's All 2 Much Gallery:** It has to be the prints of Fuller's Bristol map – it took a monumental effort of 500-plus hours work to create the original.

**Lucy Ward, Jamaica Street Artists:** We invited some UWE students to exhibit at Open Studios 2014, and sold lots of work by a Drawing and Applied Arts student, Naomi Greeves. Naomi's work holds up next to the very best, and we're really pleased to have helped her right at the start of her career.

**Stephen Ocquaye, Justnanco:** A Katharine Morling ceramics piece that we sold to an American collector.

**Sandy Prater, Fizz Gallery:** One of Clare Wright's very large originals. It went to a lady who went out to buy curtains for her new house afterwards – and doesn't even have furniture yet!

**Marian Eyre, Tinca Gallery:** Either one of two large oil paintings by Huw Richards-Evans. Alternatively, I also really liked a bronze piece named 'Cara' by Jo Jones, and a large seascape by Michael Sole.

**Alison Bevan, RWA:** Our Secret Postcard Auction each summer is full of incredible pieces, and buyers pick up some astonishing bargains by big names – Damien Hirst, Tracey Emin, Grayson Perry, Richard Long... The fun bit is that no one know for sure whose work they were buying until after the auction, as each piece is signed only on the back, and there are people who managed to snap up work by a Turner Prize winner or Royal Academician for less than £100! We're doing it again this year, too. **CL**

## YOU HAVE BEEN READING

**ANTLERS GALLERY**  
antlersgallery.com

**CLIFTON FINE ART**  
cliftonfineart.com

**FIZZ GALLERY**  
fizzgallery.co.uk

**IT'S ALL 2 MUCH**  
itsall2much.com

**JAMAICA STREET ARTISTS**  
jamaicastreetartists.co.uk

**JUSTNANCO FINE ART**  
justnanco.co.uk

**LIME TREE GALLERY**  
limetreegallery.com

**RWA**  
rwa.org.uk

**SPIKE ISLAND**  
spikeisland.org.uk

**TINCA GALLERY**  
tincagallery.co.uk

**VIEW ART GALLERY**  
viewartgallery.co.uk